

HOW TO RELAX THE PELVIC FLOOR

If you've ever experienced pain during sex, it's possible that a tense pelvic floor is to blame. Too many women avoid sex altogether, struggle through unsatisfying encounters, have a decreased libido and live with reduced sexual desire all because of that pain, but the good news is that they might not have to.

Pelvic floor tension is a problem that you can do something about. And why wouldn't you? After all, sex is supposed to be pleasurable – don't let something you can fix ruin all the fun!

What follows are some simple exercises that may help you to relax your pelvic floor muscles. These can all be done in your home, discretely, and with no equipment necessary.

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING FOR PELVIC FLOOR RELAXATION:

The diaphragm works in synergy with the pelvic floor and helps to promote muscle relaxation. This is important for decreasing pain and promoting optimal muscle function.

1. Place one hand on your chest and another hand on your belly, just below your rib cage.
2. Take a deep breath in to the count of three, then exhale to the count of four.
3. When you inhale, your pelvic floor relaxes, and as you exhale, your pelvic floor returns to its resting state.
4. Practice this breathing for 5-10 minutes each day.

Note: You'll know that you are using your diaphragm correctly if you feel the hand on your belly rise and fall.

PELVIC GIRDLE STRETCHES FOR PELVIC FLOOR RELAXATION

All of the following positions are great for practicing diaphragmatic breathing!

Happy Baby Pose:

1. Lie on your back.
2. Open your knees wider than your chest and bring them up towards your armpits. You may hold your legs with your arms behind your knees or at your ankles, but try to keep your ankles over your knees.
3. You can either hold this position or gently rock on your back from side to side.



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Child's Pose:

1. Start on your hands and knees.
2. Spread your knees wide apart while keeping your big toes touching.
3. Gently bow forward, moving your torso downwards, between your thighs. Keep your arms stretched out long and in front of you.



Adductor Stretching:

1. Lie on your back with the soles of your feet together and knees out to the sides.
2. This should be a relaxing position. If you feel a pulling along your inner thighs or in your pubic bones, place pillows under your knees for support.



Piriformis Stretching:

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent.
2. Place your left ankle on your right knee, like a figure four.
3. Pull your right thigh toward your chest to feel a stretch on the outside of your left hip.
4. Hold for 30 seconds, then repeat on the other side.



WHICH LUBRICANT TO USE?

Pelvic floor tension and a reduction in natural lubrication often go hand in hand. If you experience any dryness during sex, try using lubrication to help remove friction and make sex more enjoyable for both you and your partner. Here's a breakdown of the different types of personal lubrication available:

Water-based – This is the most natural feeling lubricant and one of the most popular. Note that a water-based lubricant will dry out faster than other forms and you may need to reapply during sex.

Silicone-Based – Silicone lubricants are a bit slicker, and they may be used in water. They also last a bit longer so you won't need to apply them as often. Avoid using silicone-based lubricants with silicone sex toys.

Hybrid Lubricants – Hybrids are a blend of water-based and silicone-based lubricants. They provide the feel usually associated with a water-based product, but they won't dry out as quickly. Note that because these are typically 90% water-based, they won't work well in water.

Oil-based – Oil-based lubricants – including petroleum jelly – are the least commonly used. They should never be used with condoms, latex, diaphragms or rubber since the oil will weaken these materials and may cause them to be ineffective.