



# Pelvic Dilators

## Main uses of dilator

1. To desensitise the vaginal opening to touch and pressure.
2. To increase experiences of non-painful vaginal stimulation.
3. To release tension in “overactive” pelvic floor muscles.
4. To enable application of warmth or cold to the pelvic floor muscles and perineal tissue to allow better muscle relaxation, or relief of a perineal “burning” sensation.
5. To act as another form of perineal massage.
6. To prepare through gradual progression of dilator diameter, the ability to comfortably insert an object into the vagina (finger for examination, tampons, intercourse or speculum for pap smear test).

## Instructions for home use

- Find a quiet relaxed private time for yourself Eg. Plan a dilator session after a bath.
- To promote relaxation try quiet music, burning of essential oils (eg. Lavender) and dimming lights.
- Start with a relaxation technique (as discussed with your physio)
- Before inserting the dilator try warming it (to decrease muscle tension) or cooling it (to relieve inflammation or hypersensitivity).
- Apply lubricant to the dilator.
- Cover your legs to keep warm.
- Part the outer labia with one hand and guide the dilator in to the vaginal opening. As you do this exhale and bulge your tummy muscles to relax your pelvic muscles. Inserting your finger before the dilator can “prepare” the vagina for dilator insertion.
- Continue to insert the dilator until you feel a stretch then stop. Hold this stretch for 30 seconds, or until the skin starts to feel numb.



## OVER ACTIVE PELVIC FLOOR CONTINUED

### Muscle

#### Muscles stretching and releasing phase

During the 30 second stretch:

- Breathe slowly, deeply and calmly.
  - Imagine your pelvic floor muscles opening and releasing.
  - Contract and relax your pelvic floor muscles focussing on the letting go.
- Once comfortable try inserting the dilator deeper to achieve a tolerable stretch.

#### Treatment Time

- Aim for a 5 – 10 minute session, but slowly build up time.
- Aim for 4 – 5 sessions per week.

#### After session

#### **Notes:**

- Clean the dilator with warm soapy water. Rinse well, dry and store wrapped in a tissue in a plastic bag
- Apply ice to the perineum for 15 minutes after treatment if tender. Never apply ice directly to the skin, cover in towel. Ice assists with reducing discomfort after treatment.

#### Progressions of Dilator Size/Use

- Massage in a clockwise/anti clockwise direction eg) Start from 6 o' clock and massage up to 12 down to 6. Think of the vaginal interior as a "clock face".
- Move the dilator side to side and apply slow stretches of up to 30seconds to the right and left. Vary the direction of the force.
- Gradually increase duration of stretch to 60 seconds.
- Slowly increase speed of movements.

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