

## **Breathing Exercises**

**Practice at least 10 times every day**

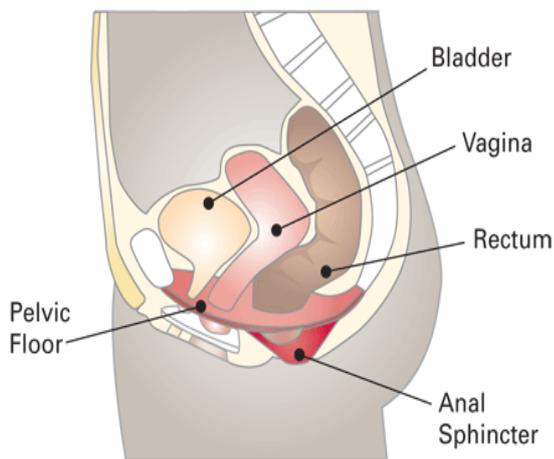
When we are anxious that something will hurt or cause discomfort we tend to hold our breath which can cause more discomfort. It is therefore really important that you use your breathing to help relax your pelvic floor muscle.

Breathe in slowly through your nose for the count of 7, your tummy should move out as though you are blowing it up like a balloon and your shoulders should be relaxed. Breathe out slowly through your mouth for the count of 11, your tummy should go down like you are letting the air out of the balloon.

Only insert the trainer on a long slow out breath.

## **Pelvic Floor Exercises**

**Practice 10 times every day**



Squeeze the muscle between your legs (it is the muscle that you use to stop yourself passing wind or the one that you hold when you really want to go for a wee but can't find a toilet). Do not hold your breath and try not to squeeze your bottom, leg or tummy muscles at the same time. Squeeze the pelvic floor muscle for the count of 3, next release/relax the muscle for the count of 6. It might be easier to do this when you are lying down.

## **USING VAGINAL TRAINERS**

1. Allow about 15 minutes for this exercise. But remember the more tense, stressed or anxious you feel, the longer you may need to help you relax.
2. Make sure you are warm and comfortable. Listen to music if it helps you relax or turn on the TV.
3. Find a comfortable position. I suggest lying on your back on top of the bed in whatever way feels comfortable. Let your legs fall apart, slightly bent at the knees and it might be easier to insert the trainer if you tilt your pelvis forward by placing a pillow under the small of your back above your hips.
4. Make sure the trainer and your vaginal entrance are well lubricated, use a lubricant like Sylk, TLC or Yes. (If you have the **Yes** oil based and water-based products use both at the same time for a 'double glide' experience- use one type on the trainer and the other around the vaginal entrance).
5. Remember to breath!
6. Start with your fingers to touch your vulva, clitoris, perineum, labia and vaginal opening. Vary the pressure and monitor what it feels like.
7. Insert the tip of your finger into the vaginal opening and then gently further into the vagina. Practice some pelvic floor exercises to ensure you can feel the difference between clenched and relaxed muscles.
8. Using the handle of the first size trainer, gently and gradually insert the trainer into your vagina, aiming towards the small of your back. It may feel a bit cold at first, but will soon get warmer. Breathe deeply and slowly and on an outward breath move the trainer a little further in. Take your time there's no hurry.
9. Push the trainer in little by little as far as feels comfortable. Don't go further than you want to. Just relax, use the breathing technique you have been taught and gradually move it in as far as you can.
10. When the trainer is in the vagina, relax and get used to it being there. Spend some time resting with the trainer in place- read a book, meditate, practice mindfulness. Then try some pelvic floor exercises, gently at first, then stronger. Do about 10 pelvic floor exercises, contracting and releasing the muscle.
11. After the pelvic floor exercises, move the trainer gently to and fro in the vagina. Vary the pace a little and focus on the sensation of movement in the vagina.

12. When you feel at ease with the trainer in the vagina, remove it slowly.
13. Finally, wash the trainer and handle with mild soap solution. The smaller trainers are a bit difficult to dry inside, so simply rinse well with hot water and leave to dry on a towel in a warm place.
14. Set time aside to use the trainer, the more regularly you use the trainer the sooner you will notice an improvement. You may feel a stretch, this is OK. Pain is not. A stretch is a sign that your muscles are accommodating something new- breathe and focus on relaxing the pelvic floor muscles.
15. Once you are able to insert the trainer comfortably and feel confident you can move on to the next trainer. It is sometimes easier to use the smaller trainer for a couple of minutes first and then use the next size.