Vaginal Dila­­tor Techniques

**An Educational Handout Download for Patients and Practitioners**

A Restore the Pelvic Floor Program

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Vaginal Dilator Techniques

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**Types of Vaginal Dilators**

What is a Dilator?

A vaginal dilator is a medical tool used to space or stretch the pelvic floor muscles and vaginal tissues. Using this tool can potentially decrease or eliminate symptoms related to bladder, bowel and sexual dysfunction. It is also can be used to relieve pain or pressure in the pelvic girdle, tailbone or genital regions.

Dilators are made of silicone, medical-grade plastic or Pyrex type glass, with a tapered or rounded tip to assist with insertion. Some vaginal dilators include a handle, grip or wider base to assist in placement and treatment techniques. They usually come as set of progressive sizes (diameter and length) so that a woman can start with the smallest comfortable dilator and work her way to a size that works for her needs. Ask your health care provider what would work best for your condition.

TYPES OF DILATORS

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Product Name** 2. **Website** | **Sizes**  **diameter x length** | **Product Descriptions Features from Website /Brochure or**  **Clinical Experience** |
| Soul Source Silicone Dilators  <https://www.soulsource.com/>  http://friendfortheride.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/soul-source-silicone-dilators-1-81.jpg | 0.5” x 2.5”  0.75” x 3”  0.875” x 3.5”  1” x 4”  1.125” x 4.5”  1.25” x 5”  1.4375” x 5.5”  1.625” x 6” | Spacing-could also be used for stretching or trigger point release  Silicone material feels comfortable and resembles body tissue.  Can be heated or cooled to address vaginismus, post-surgical swelling or radiaton therapy effects.  Available in many sizes and are sold individually and in sets. |
| Soul Source Rigid Plastic Dilators  http://www.soulsource.com/wp-content/uploads/new_grs_full.jpg | 0.875” x 9”  1” x 9”  1.125” x 9”  1.25” x 9”  1.375” x 9”  1.5” x 9” | Spacing and Stretching  Designed for progressive vaginal dilation therapy using a firmer dilator.  Used to break up adhesions, prevent scar tissue formation and maintain integrity and depth of vagina.  Can be heated or cooled Available in many sizes and are sold individually and in sets. |
| 1. **Product Name**   **Website** | **Sizes**  **diameter x length** | **Product Descriptions Features from Website /Brochure or**  **Clinical Experience** |
| Vaginismus/Amielle Comfort set  <https://www.vaginismus.com/products/dilator_set>  http://ecx.images-amazon.com/images/I/31L3WJD--tL._SL500_AA300_.jpg | 0.59" x 2.75"  0.88" x 3.5"  1.06" x 4.31"  1.25" x 5.5"  1.5" x 6.38" | Spacing and Stretching  Smallest handled size.  Graduated sizes that all fit on a single, inter-locking handle individually. Rounded tip for ease of insertion. Discreetly packaged and easy to transport for convenience. |
| Amielle Care Dilators  <http://www.owenmumford.com/en/patients-product/amielle/>  http://www.medscope.co.uk/images/Amielle_Care___Vaginal_dilators_Set.jpg | 0.75" x 3.5"  1" x 4.25"  1.125" x 5"  1.25" x 5.5" | Spacing and Stretching  Designed specifically for post-radiotherapy patients to prevent vaginal scarring and adhesions.  Smallest handled size.  Graduated sizes that all fit on a single, inter-locking handle individually. Discreetly packaged |
| Syracuse Medical Dilators  <http://www.cmtmedical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=551>  http://www.currenttechnologyinc.com/AdvHTML_Upload/set%20of%207_0001.jpg | Extra small - 0.5” x 6”  Extra small plus -0.69”x 6”  Small - 0.875” x 6”  Small plus - 1” x 6”  Medium - 1.125” x 6”  Medium plus - 1.25” x 6”  Large - 1.375” x 6”  Large plus- 1.5” x 6” | Spacing and Stretching  Total of 8 sizes sold individually for progressive dilation therapy.  Can be purchased in set of 7 (Excludes Large plus) or set of 5 (Large, Medium, Small & Extra Small).  Made from medical grade non-latex rigid plastic with a super smooth texture surface. In business since 1965. |
| Tantus Silicone Dilators  [www.**tantus**inc.com/products/silk-medium](http://www.tantusinc.com/products/silk-medium) | Sold individually in 3 sizes and colors:  Small: 0.8” x 4.25”  Medium: 1.1” X 5.25”  Large: 1.5” x 7” | Spacing-could also be used for stretching or trigger point release  Made from 100% premium silicone that is both glossy and flexible.  Easy to clean, dishwasher safe. Hypoallergenic and hygienic, surface that glide smoothly.  Curved shape enhances sensual experience. Marketed as both a sex toy and a dilator. |
| PACIK GLASS DILATORS  <http://www.vaginismusmd.com/aidsproducts/dilators/pacik-glass-dilators-set-of-3/>  vaginismus treatment with Botox and vaginal dilators | All length of 3.5’’  # 3 Dilator = 2.5’’ or 63.5 mm  # 4 Dilator = 3.25 ’’ 82.55 mm  # 5 Dilator = 4’’ 101.6 mm  # 6 Dilator = 5’’ or 127 mm  # 7 Dilator = ’’ or 139.7 mm  # 8 Dilator = 6.25 ’’or 158.75 mm | Spacing  Medical-grade tempered Borosilicate (Pyrex) glass, progressive diameters, all the same length designed specifically for vaginismus.  Hat shaped design at the end allows the dilator to sit comfortably against the vulva |

**Techniques and Safety Tips for Vaginal Dilator Use**

## ­­Preparing for Use of the Dilators

Be sure to set aside an uninterrupted 15 minutes of time for the relaxation and dilator technique(s), **slow down, breathe and get in a comfortable position before you start**. Have all your supplies (the dilator, lubricant, clean up towel, and directions) in one place before you begin.

To help the muscles respond to stretch or trigger point release, you may find it helpful to take a warm bath or apply warm compresses or a heating pad for 10 minutes externally over the perineum.

Before using the dilator wash your hands. After using the dilator, wash it with warm soap and water and rinse it thoroughly. Be sure it is dry before storing it away.

## Understanding Precautions – What you Should Feel When using a Dilator

Dilator techniques for stretching or spacing should never cause residual pain. After internal stretching techniques, some people find application or reapplication of heat helpful, or you may find cold more soothing. Limit application time of heat or cold to 10 minutes maximum.

When using the vaginal dilator internally, you should not feel tingling, numbness, or pulsing. Those sensations are associated with nerves and blood vessels and should be avoided.

When starting to use the dilator, slight blood loss and blood staining can occur. This should not be heavy bleeding or painful. The blood staining should not continue for more than a few trials. Persistent or heavy bleeding should be reported to your provider. Put your treatment on hold until advised by your health care provider.

Do not direct the stretches upward toward the pubic bone between 10 and 2 o’clock. This is where the bladder and urethra are located. If you believe you need stretching in this area talk to your health care provider.

Change the direction of pressure rather than the intensity of the pressure. More pressure is not better. Keep your discomfort to a minimum. Do not let the sensations be too intense or exceed a pain level of 5 on a 0–10 scale. Avoid forcing or pushing too hard.

On a 0–10 scale, with 10 being the most intense, start with tolerable or comfortable pressure of 2–3 or less. As you increase the pressure, stay in a range of 3–6 on your pressure/pain scale.

# **Vaginal Dilator:**

# Comments and Tips for Patients

## Additional information for patients

This educational download with individual handouts and instructions has a section for “other” or comments. This section provides comments and treatment suggestion­­­ tipsfor patients that can be cut and pasted into the templates. Not all patients need every comment.

## Treatment Considerations

* The use of a vaginal dilator can provoke many different feelings and emotions. You have taken the step to begin a therapeutic treatment program that may challenge your modesty and beliefs about what is “proper and improper” vaginal health promotion. Common feelings and concerns associated with using the dilator include feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, fear of improper use or pain. Please discuss these feelings with me, as they occur.
* Stay present to your bodily sensations while using the dilators. If you feel like you are tightening your muscles when you should not, focus on opening your hand and spreading your fingers while you relax. The body learns the signals to let go from many places.
* Maintaining muscle relaxation during your dilator practice is sometimes challenging. There is an option to rent a home biofeedback unit to practice release and relaxation before, during and after dilator use.
* You can use a finger, not a dilator. These techniques can be done with a finger before using a dilator. Start by washing your hands or putting on gloves. Using your finger can help you feel and stretch any painful spots or restrictions at the opening of the vagina or internally. If the painful spot is beyond the reach of a finger, a tool like a dilator becomes necessary.
* When starting to use the dilator, slight blood loss and blood staining can occur. This should not be heavy bleeding or painful. The blood staining should not continue for more than a few sessions of dilator use. Talk to your health care provider if bleeding persists. You may be a candidate for local medications to the area.
* Commit to your goals with the dilator and focus on them daily. Practice relaxation breathing or aerobic exercise for your physical well-being.
* If you are a breast cancer survivor withsurgical menopause, talk to your doctor about applying liquid lidocaine compresses to the vulva region before using the dilator or any penetration.
* More pressure or force with the dilators is not better. Do not let the sensations be too intense or exceed a pain level of       on a 0–10 scale. Stretching and spacing take time. Avoid forcing or pushing too hard with your dilator.
* The vaginal canal and muscles have a great range of flexibility. Some women worry that using the dilator might cause them to stretch out too much or cause more problems. This should not be a concern when you are using the dilator for spacing or stretching rehabilitation.

## Release and Relaxation Tips

* Comfort and relaxation are the first steps for successful spacing and stretching of the vagina. Choose a position that supports your head and shoulders so that you can reach the vaginal area with ease. Many women choose an empty warm bathtub because it offers back and leg support and is located in a private room in the home.
* Try breathing for muscle relaxation using your diaphragm for several repetitions. As you breathe in think of the pelvic floor muscles letting go and the space between the “sit bones” widening. When you feel the pelvic floor muscles relax, begin placing the dilator into the vaginal canal. \*\*\*There is a free download on pelvic floor release techniques available at KatheWallace.com/ pelvicresources.com.
* When using the dilator, consider using the imagery of a circle opening wider. You could also try thinking about a rose blossoming.
* Sometimes the simple awareness of muscle tightness can help you to relax and release. While using the dilators check in with your body frequently to see if you are holdingthe muscles in and around the pelvis.
* If you think you are released, try to release again, even more. Think “let go” and let go again.
* After internal stretching techniques, some people find the application or reapplication of heat or cold helpful, and you may find cold more soothing. Limit application time of heat or cold to 10 minutes maximum.

## Placement Techniques

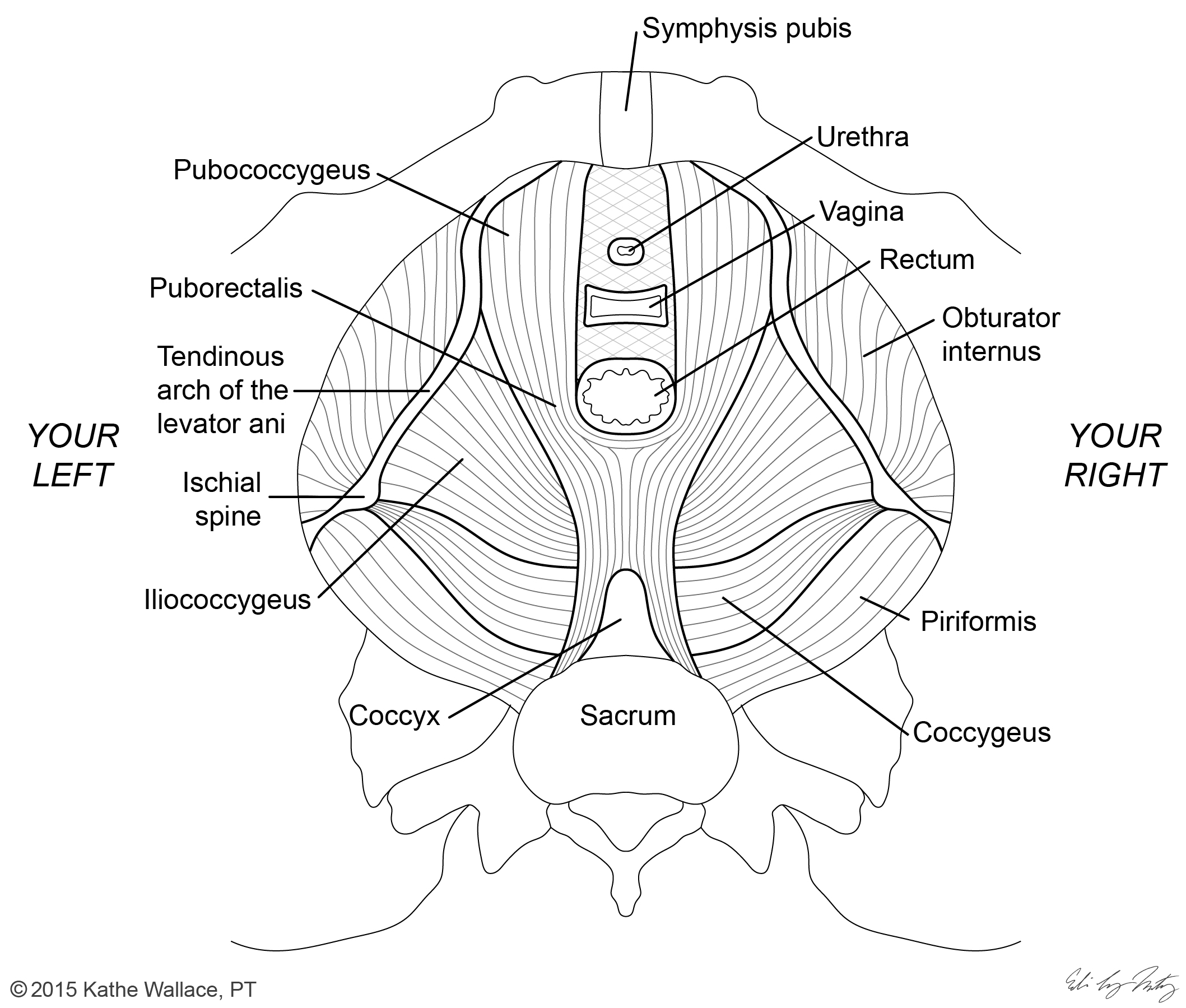
* Moving and stretching the vulvar skin before insertion can help placement. Sometimes moving the perineal body (area between the vagina and anus) and/or vulvar skin and vaginal lips, (labia minora) help the area become less sensitive to insertion.
* Don’t assume that lying on your back will be the easiest way to insert the dilator. Some women find lying on their sides with pillows between the knees helpful. Try different leg positions, torso positions, and pillow support.
* If you don’t have pain with a pelvic floor contraction (Kegel exercise) you can try a contraction of the pelvic floor followed by a release. Alternatively you could squeeze around the dilator and then try to let go more before you stretch or insert the dilator further.
* If direct placement is difficult, start by spreading the vaginal lips (labia) wider and rest the tip at the opening. Don’t try insertion, just get used to the sensation of touch with the dilator at the opening.
* Some women find gently bearing down as they insert the dilator helpful. This can open the vaginal canal.
* Some women find a rotational motion (like turning on an old fashion lamp knob on and off) easier for insertion than a direct inward placement. This rotation motion can also be done back and forth with inward pressure.
* Some dilators have a vibration feature that can cause sexual arousal, creating a natural expansion of the vagina (known as vaginal tenting).
* If you are lying on your back for the insertions, the angle of the vagina is not parallel with the bed. Angle the tip slightly downward towards the bed, to follow the natural angle. This avoids hitting the pubic boneand the sensitive portions of the vagina.

# Pelvic Floor Muscle Map

## IDentify Specific Muscles to stretch or release

This is a view from above of your pelvis showing the deepest layer of pelvic floor muscles, often called the pelvic diaphragm or levatorani muscles. Specific muscles and landmarks are labeled.

The X marks the area of the muscle that needs to be stretched or released and the bars identify the muscle name. (Your health care provider will copy and paste them to the appropriate muscle/s)

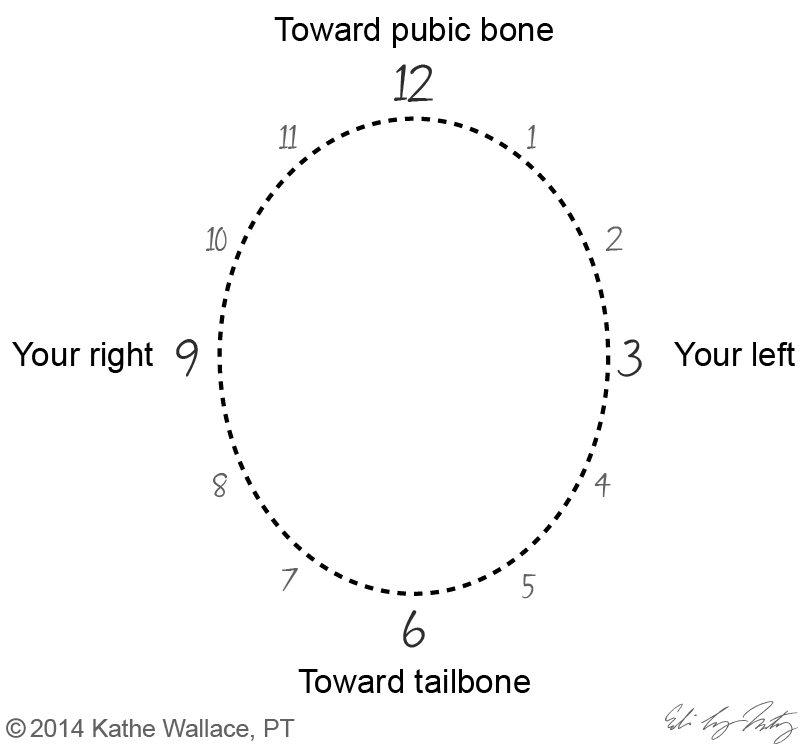


# **Initial Dilator Insertion Technique**

Preparing for Dilator Insertion

Comfort and relaxation are the first steps for successful dilator spacing and stretching. Choose a position that supports your head and shoulders so that you can reach the vaginal area with ease. Many women choose an empty warm bathtub because it offers back and leg support and is located in a private room in the home.

**Check your muscle tension and release it.** Scan your body for tension in the pelvis, shoulders, neck, and jaw. Be sure you are in a comfortable supported position. This tension check before you start can greatly reduce pain with dilator placement. Try a contraction (close and lift) of the pelvic floor muscles followed by a release. If a pelvic floor contraction is painful, try a pelvic floor release exercise before you begin dilator placement and stretching.

**Apply lubricant**. Start with a tablespoon or more. Spread open the vaginal lips (labia) so that you can apply a moderate amount of lubricant near the vaginal opening. Then apply additional lubricant to the dilator.

**Initial placement.** Hold the labia apart so that you place the dilator at the 6 o’clock position at the bottom of the vaginal opening (see figure to the right). Slowly advancing the dilator into the vaginal canal can take several attempts. With practice,the vulvar skin will stretch and the muscles will release.

## Initial Placement Technique

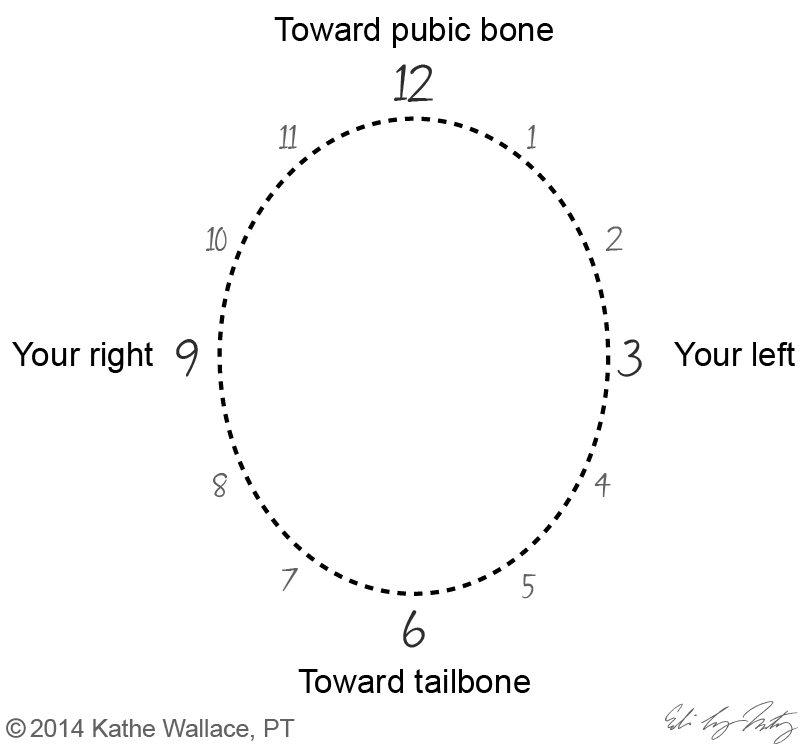
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Gently place the dilator at the vaginal opening. Insert the dilator with a downward angle, stopping when you feel resistance or pain.  Directions       x per week,       x per day.  Hold the stretch for       seconds. Release for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other |

# **Vaginal Dilator**

# **SweepTechnique**

Preparing for the Stretching and Tips for Success

**Check your muscle tension and release it.** Scan your body for tension in the pelvis, shoulders, neck,and jaw. Be sure you are in a comfortable supported position. This tension check before you start can greatly reduce pain with dilator placement. Try a contraction (close and lift) of the pelvic floor muscles followed by a release. If a pelvic floor contraction is painful, try pelvic floor release exercise before you begin the placement and stretching.

**Apply lubricant**. Start with a tablespoon or more. Spread open the vaginal lips (labia) so that you can apply a moderate amount of lubricant near the vaginalopening. Then apply additional lubricant to the dilator.

**Initial placement.** Hold the vaginal lips (labia) apart so that you place the dilator at the 6 o’clock position at the bottom of the vaginal opening (see figure to the right). Angle the dilator slightly downward toward your tailbone.

**Monitor the intensity of the stretching.** As you begin to stretch, more pressure isn’t better. Don’t let the sensations be too intense or exceed a pain level of 5-6 on a 0-10 scale. Change the direction of pressure rather than the intensity of the pressure. Avoid forcing or pushing too hard with your dilator.

## Sweep Stretching

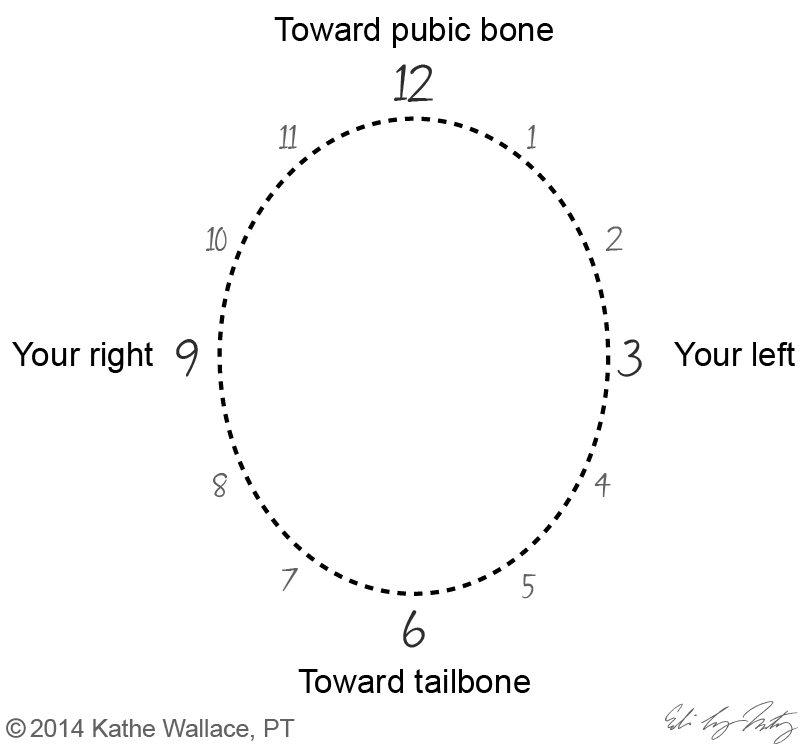
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 15 | **This sweep stretch is for thelower portion of the vagina and the perineal body area.**  With the dilator only partially inserted, sweep back and forth on the lower portion of the vaginal opening. You can do this before trying complete insertion, or as a stretch to the specific area.  Directions       x per week,       x per day.  Hold the stretch for       seconds. Release for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other      . |

# **Using a Vaginal Dilator**

# **For Downward Stretching**

1. Preparing for the Stretching and Tips for Success

**Check your muscle tension and release it.** Scan your body for tension in the pelvis, shoulders, neck,and jaw. Be sure you are in a comfortable supported position. This tension check before you start can greatly reduce pain with dilator placement. Try a contraction (close and lift) of the pelvic floor muscles followed by a release. If a pelvic floor contraction is painful, try pelvic floor release exercise before you begin the placement and stretching.

**Apply lubricant**. Start with a tablespoon or more. Spread open the vaginal lips (labia) so that you can apply a moderate amount of lubricant near the vaginal opening. Then apply additional lubricant to the dilator.

**Initial placement.** Hold the vaginal lips (labia) apart so that you place the dilator at the opening on the 6 o’clock position at the bottom of the vaginal opening (see figure to the right). Angle the dilator slightly downward toward your tailbone.

**Monitor the intensity of the stretching.** As you begin to stretch, more pressure isn’t better. Don’t let the sensations be too intense or exceed a pain level of 5-6 on a 0-10 scale. Change the direction of pressure rather than the intensity of the pressure. Avoid forcing or pushing too hard with your dilator.

## Downward Stretching

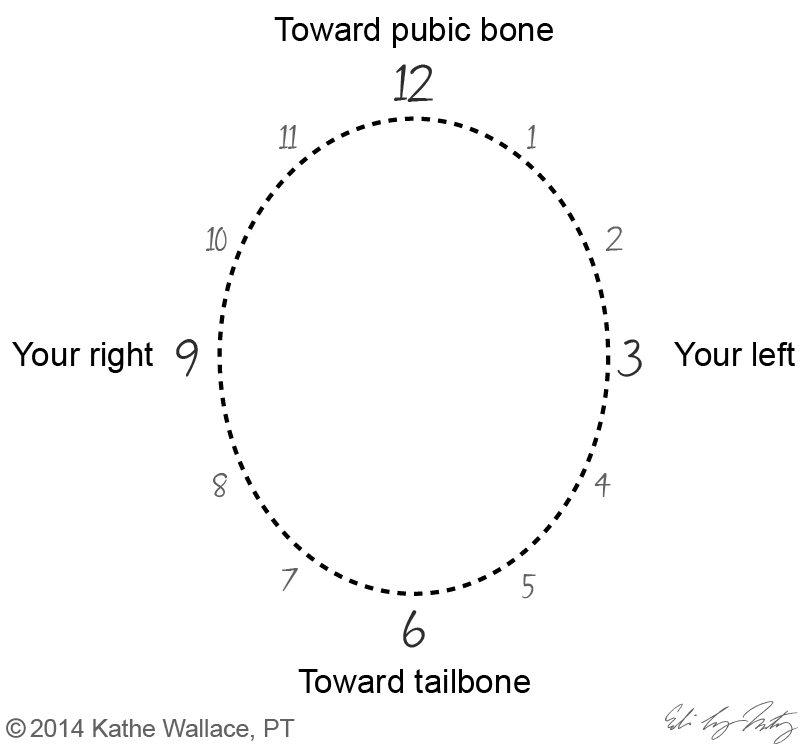
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Downward Stretch**  Gently insert the dilator, stopping when you feel resistance or pain.  Then gently press straightdown toward the tailbone.  Directions       x per week,       x per day.  Hold the stretch for       seconds.  Release for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other      . |

# **Using a Vaginal Dilator**

# **For Side Wall Stretching**

1. Preparing for the Stretching and Tips for Success

**Check your muscle tension and release it.** Scan your body for tension in the pelvis, shoulders, neck,and jaw. Be sure you are in a comfortable supported position. This tension check before you start can greatly reduce pain with dilator placement. Try a contraction (close and lift) of the pelvic floor muscles followed by a release. If a pelvic floor contraction is painful, try a pelvic floor release exercise before you begin dilator placement and stretching.

**Apply lubricant**. Start with a tablespoon or more. Spread open the vaginal lips (labia) so that you can apply a moderate amount of lubricant near the vaginal opening. Then apply additional lubricant to the dilator.

**Initial placement.** Hold the vaginal lips (labia) apart so that you place the dilator at the 6 o’clock position at the bottom of the vaginal opening (see figure to the right). Angle the dilator slightly downward toward your tailbone.

**Monitor the intensity of the stretching.** As you begin to stretch, more pressure isn’t better. Don’t let the sensations be too intense or exceed a pain level of 5-6 on a 0-10 scale. Change the direction of pressure rather than the intensity of the pressure. Avoid forcing or pushing too hard with your dilator.

## Side Wall Stretching

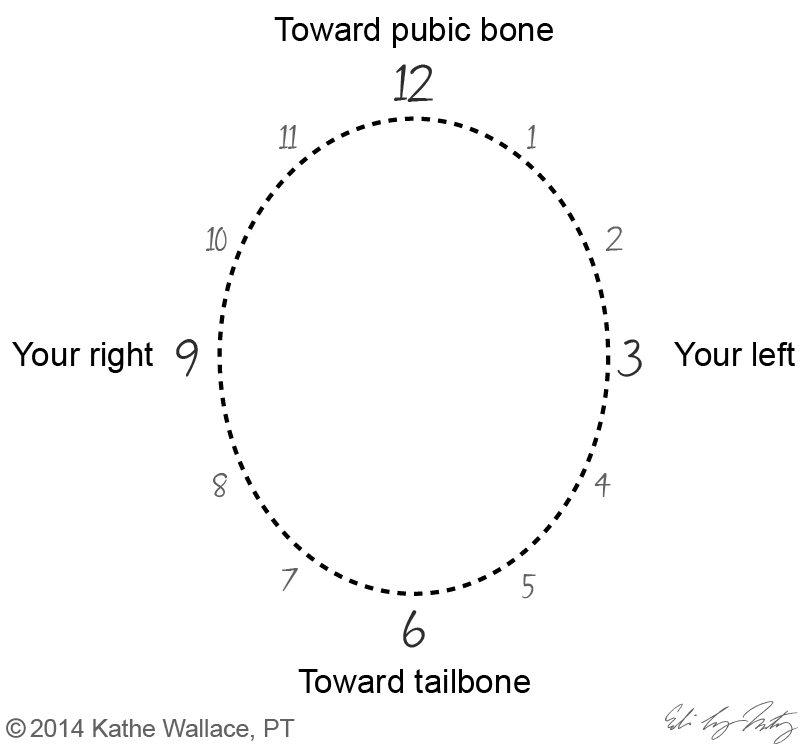
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Side Wall Stretch**  Once the dilator is in position, stretch by gently pushing to the side walls of the vagina. Stretch the side with less pain first.  Directions       x per week,       x per day.  Hold the stretch for       seconds. Release for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other      . |

# **Using a Vaginal Dilator**

# **For Angled Stretching**

1. Preparing for the Stretching and Tips for Success

**Check your muscle tension and release it.** Scan your body for tension in the pelvis, shoulders, neck,and jaw. Be sure you are in a comfortable supported position. This tension check before you start can greatly reduce pain with dilator placement. Try a contraction (close and lift) of the pelvic floor muscles followed by a release. If a pelvic floor contraction is painful, try a pelvic floor release exercise before you begin dilator placement and stretching.

**Apply lubricant**. Start with a tablespoon or more. Spread open the vaginal lips (labia) so that you can apply a moderate amount of lubricant near the vaginal opening. Then apply additional lubricant to the dilator.

**Initial placement.** Hold the vaginal lips (labia) apart so that you place the dilator at the 6 o’clock position at the bottom of the vaginal opening (see figure to the right). Angle the dilator slightly downward toward your tailbone.

**Monitor the intensity of the stretching.** As you begin to stretch, more pressure isn’t better. Don’t let the sensations be too intense or exceed a pain level of 5-6 on a 0-10 scale. Change the direction of pressure rather than the intensity of the pressure. Avoid forcing or pushing too hard with your dilator.

## Angled Stretching

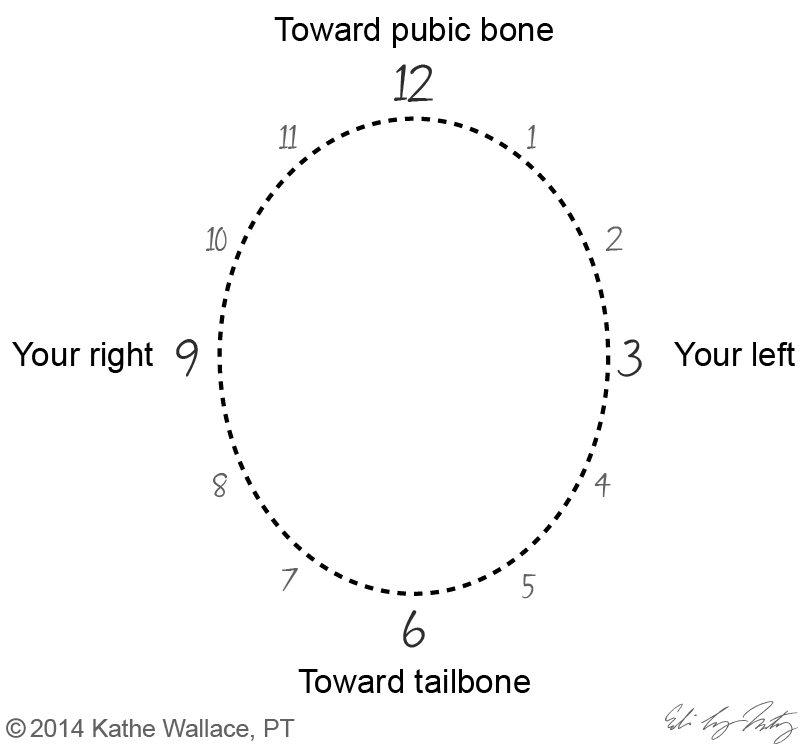
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Angled Stretch**  Use the dilator to stretch the deeper muscles by angling the tip toward the back and sidewalls. You can also aim specifically for a trigger point or a place in your vagina that feels tender or tense.  Directions       x per week,       x per day.  Hold the stretch for       seconds. Release for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other |

# **Using a Vaginal Dilator**

# **For In and Out Stretching**

1. Preparing for the Stretching and Tips for Success

**Check your muscle tension and release it.** Scan your body for tension in the pelvis, shoulders, neck,and jaw. Be sure you are in a comfortable supported position. This tension check before you start can greatly reduce pain with dilator placement. Try a contraction (close and lift) of the pelvic floor muscles followed by a release. If a pelvic floor contraction is painful, try a pelvic floor release exercise before you begin dilator placement and stretching.

**Apply lubricant**. Start with a tablespoon or more. Spread open the vaginal lips (labia) so that you can apply a moderate amount of lubricant near the vaginal opening. Then apply additional lubricant to the dilator.

**Initial placement.** Hold the vaginal lips (labia) apart so that you place the dilator at the 6 o’clock position at the bottom of the vaginal opening (see figure to the right). Angle the dilator slightly downward toward your tailbone.

**Monitor the intensity of the stretching.** As you begin to stretch, more pressure isn’t better. Don’t let the sensations be too intense or exceed a pain level of 5-6 on a 0-10 scale. Change the direction of pressure rather than the intensity of the pressure. Avoid forcing or pushing too hard with your dilator.

## In and out Stretching

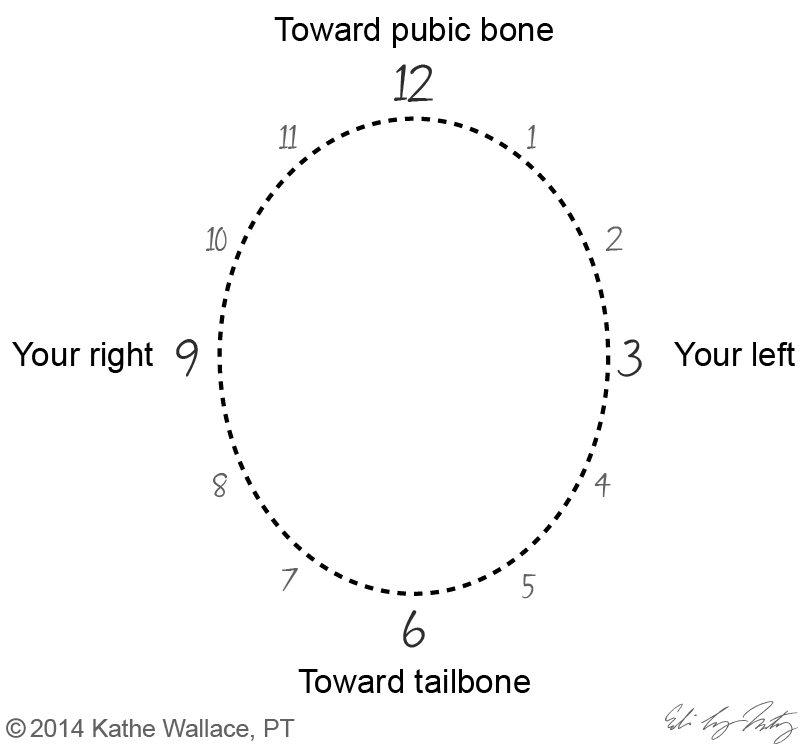
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Moving the Dilator In and Out**  This is an advanced movement technique that is started once complete insertion is achieved. This is to prepare you for thrusting movements that can be involved with sexual activity. At your preferred speed, practice the in and out motions.  Directions       x per week,       x per day.  Perform the movements for       seconds. Stop for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other |

# **Using a Vaginal Dilator**

# **With Rotational Stretching**

1. Preparing for the Stretching and Tips for Success

**Check your muscle tension and release it.** Scan your body for tension in the pelvis, shoulders, neck,and jaw. Be sure you are in a comfortable supported position. This tension check before you start can greatly reduce pain with dilator placement. Try a contraction (close and lift) of the pelvic floor muscles followed by a release. If a pelvic floor contraction is painful, try a pelvic floor release exercise before you begin dilator placement and stretching.

**Apply lubricant**. Start with a tablespoon or more. Spread open the vaginal lips (labia) so that you can apply a moderate amount of lubricant near the vaginal opening. Then apply additional lubricant to the dilator.

**Initialplacement.** Hold the vaginal lips (labia) apart so that you place the dilator at the 6 o’clock position at the bottom of the vaginal opening (see figure to the right). Angle the dilator slightly downward toward your tailbone.

**Monitor the intensity of the stretching.** As you begin to stretch, more pressure isn’t better. Don’t let the sensations be too intense or exceed a pain level of 5-6 on a 0-10 scale. Change the direction of pressure rather than the intensity of the pressure. Avoid forcing or pushing too hard with your dilator.

## Rotational Stretching

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Moving the Dilator Rotation Stretch**  Insert the dilator completely. Move the handle in a circular motion. This can be done clockwise or counter-clock wise**.**This is an advanced technique to prepare you for the movements involved with sexual activity**.**  Directions       x per week,       x per day.  Perform the movements for       seconds. Stop for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other      . |

# **Vaginal Dilator Review of**



# **All Techniques**

What is a Dilator?

A vaginal dilator is a medical tool used to stretch the pelvic floor muscles, vaginal canal and tissues. This stretching can potentially decrease or eliminate symptoms related to bladder, bowel and sexual dysfunction. It also can be used to relieve pain or pressure in the pelvic girdle, tailbone or genital regions. The stretching techniques described below are designed specifically for this difficult-to-reach pelvic floor and perineal area of the body.

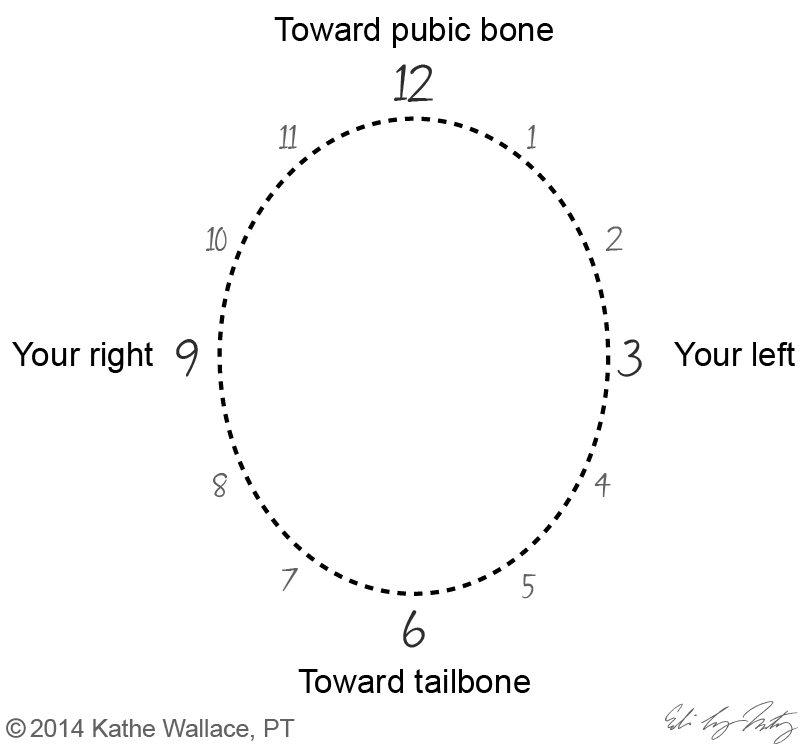
1. Preparing for the Stretching and Tips for Success

**Positioning.** Comfort and relaxation are keys to stretching the pelvic floor muscles. Choose a position that supports your head and shoulders so that you can reach the vaginal area with ease. Many women choose an empty warm bathtub because it offers back and leg support and is located in a private room in the home.

**Check your muscle tension and release it.** Scan your body for tension in the pelvis, shoulders, neck or jaw. This tension check before you start can greatly reduce pain with dilator placement. Try a contraction (close and lift) of the pelvic floor muscles followed by a release. If a contraction is painful, try a pelvic floor releasing exercises before you begin dilator placement and stretching.

Stretching Instructions and Techniques

**Monitor the intensity of the stretching.** As you begin to stretch, more pressure isn’t better. Don’t let the sensations be too intense or exceed a pain level of 5-6 on a 0–10 scale. Avoid forcing or pushing too hard with your dilator. If you feel pulsing or “nervy” type pain, move the dilator and ease your pressure to avoid irritating the sensitive area.

**Apply lubricant**. Start with a tablespoon or more. Use your fingers to spread open the vaginal lips (labia) so that you can apply a moderate amount of lubricant near the vaginal opening. Then apply additional lubricant to the dilator.

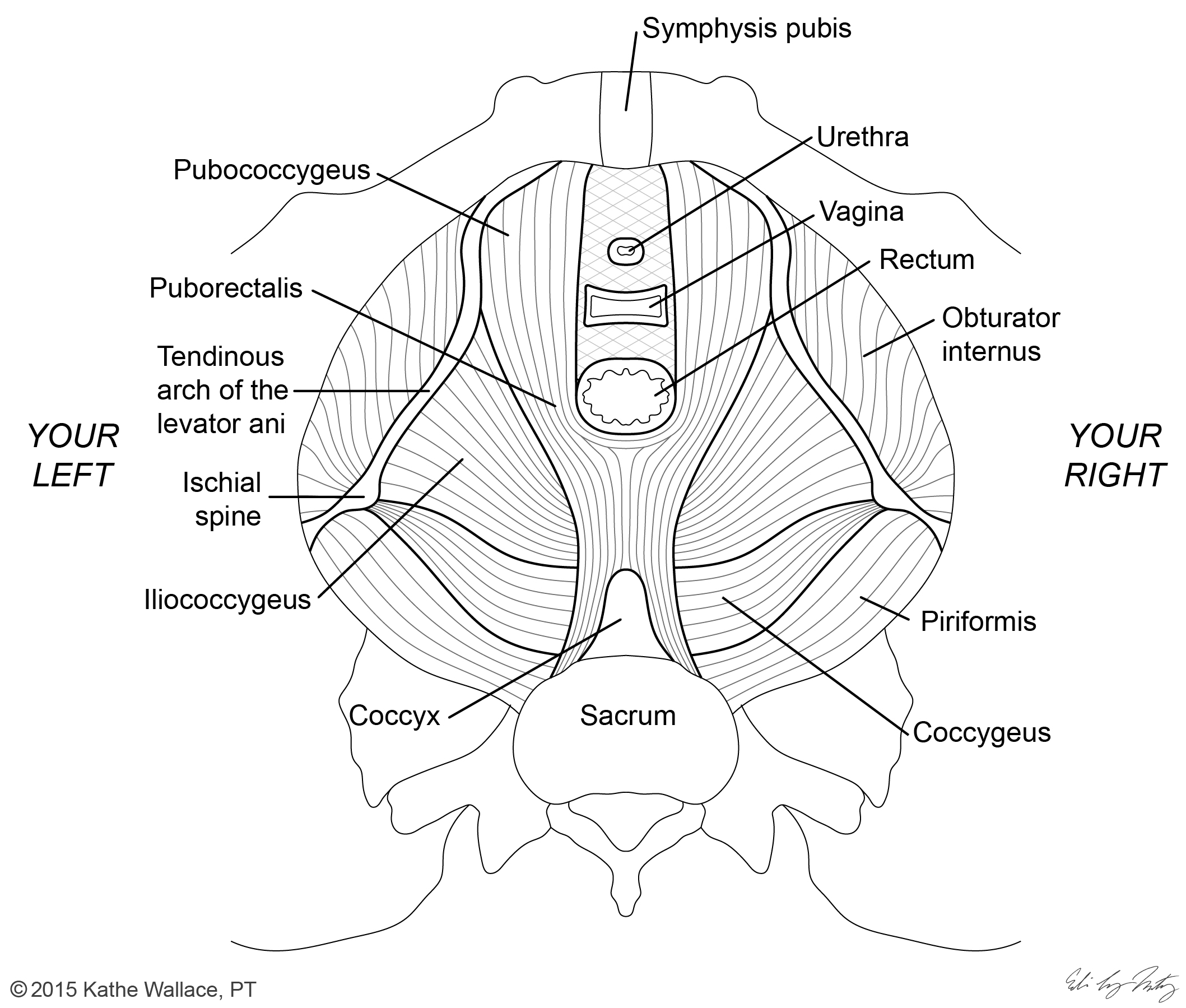
**Placement.** Hold the vaginal lips (labia) apart so that you place the dilator at the 6 o’clock position at the bottom of the vaginal opening (see figure to the right). Slowly advancing the dilator into the vaginal canal can take several attempts. There are several techniques that can help with placement.The techniques below can be done with partial insertion.With practice there will be skin stretch and the muscle release. This will allow complete insertion if this is the goal.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Initial Placement Technique**  Gently place the dilator at the opening. Insert the dilator with a downward angle, stopping when you feel resistance or pain.  Directions        x per week,       x per day.  Hold the stretch for       seconds. Release for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other |
| **Rotational Placement**  Once the dilator is placed at the opening,instead of a direct inward insertion, try rotating the dilator. This is like turning a knob back and forth, with a slight pressure inward.  Directions        x per week,       x per day.  Repeat this       times.  Other      . | Rotary 15 |
| 15 | **Sweep Stretching the Lower Portion of Vagina/Perineal Body Area**  With thedilator only partially inserted, sweep back and forth on the lower portion of the vaginal opening. You can do this before trying complete insertion, or as a stretch to a specific area.  Directions        x per week,       x per day.  Hold the stretch for       seconds. Release for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other      . |
| **Downward Stretch**  Gently insert the dilator, stopping when you feel resistance or pain.  Then gently press down toward the tailbone.  Directions        x per week,       x per day.  Hold the stretch for       seconds. Release for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other | Fig |
| **Side Wall Stretch**  Once in position stretch by gently pushing to the side walls of the vagina. Stretch the side with less pain first.  Directions        x per week,       x per day.  Hold the stretch for       seconds. Release for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other      . |  |
|  | **Angled Stretch**  Use the dilator to stretch the deeper muscles by angling the tip toward the back and sidewalls. You can also aim specifically for a trigger point or a place in your vagina that feels tender or tense.  Directions        x per week,       x per day.  Hold the stretch for       seconds. Release for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other      . |
| **Moving the Dilator In and Out**  This is an advanced movement technique that is started once complete insertion is achieved. This is to prepare you for thrusting movements that can be involved with sexual activity. At your preferred speed, practice the in and out motions.  Directions        x per week,       x per day.  Perform the movements for       seconds. Stop for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other      . |  |
| **Circle clockwise 15** | **Moving the Dilator Rotation Stretch**  This is an advanced technique to prepare you for the movements involved with sexual activity**. It can be done clockwise or counter-clock wise.**  Directions        x per week,       x per day.  Perform the movements for       seconds. Stop for       seconds.  Repeat this       times.  Other      . |

## Specific PElvic FLoor Muscles to stretch or release

This is a view of the deepest layer of pelvic floor muscles and bony support of the pelvis as seen from above. This is the muscle layer that supports your organs. It is known as the pelvic diaphragm.

The X marks the area of the muscle that needs to be stretched or released and the bars identify the muscle name. (Your health care provider will copy and paste them to the appropriate muscle/s)



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**Additional Dilator Resources/ Web links**

Beginners guide to using vaginal dilators: <http://youngwomenshealth.org/2013/10/08/vaginal-dilator-instructions/>

What is a vaginal dilator? <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-vaginal-dilator.htm>

Patient education for use of vaginal dilators: <https://www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/patient-education/how-use-vaginal-dilator>

Vaginal Dilators for treatment of vaginismus: <http://www.myvaginismusstory.com/blog/2014/01/05/7-tips-on-how-to-use-vaginal-dilators-to-treat-vaginismus/>

Vaginal Dilator tips from a certified sex therapist: <https://ourquiethope.wordpress.com/2010/01/16/suggestions-for-using-vaginal-dilators/>

Overview and sales of various vaginal dilators: <https://www.pelvicexercises.com.au/vaginal-dilators/>

Vaginal dilator use post-hysterectomy: <http://www.hystersisters.com/vb2/article_545771.htm>

Vaginal dilator use by OHSU Center for Women’s Health: <http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/health/services/women/services/gynecology-and-obstetrics/services/vulvar-health-program/upload/ohsu_vaginal_dilators.pdf>

Vaginal dilator cases and practice by the pelvic & sexual health institute: <http://www.obgmanagement.com/specialty-focus/menopause/article/vaginal-dilation-when-its-indicated-and-tips-on-teaching-it/daa4d1b01f8149a4ffa0425320407e31.html>

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