

# Perineal Massage

The perineal body is the tissue between your vagina and your anus. While we want this tissue to be strong and intact, we also want it to be flexible enough to stretch during childbirth.

- Perineal Massage Gel

## Podcasts:

- Reduce Your Risk of Tearing – ‘Know Your Options’ Bonus Episode 5 from The Birth Hour in Podcasts.
- Listen to 159| Two Birth Stories and Perineal Massage – Dr. Joanna Ellington from The Birth Hour in Podcasts.

Breathe.

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## WHAT AND WHY

- Begin at 34-36 weeks gestation
- 5 minute sessions daily or most days
- Purpose & Goals:
  - Decrease trauma and risk for perineal tearing during childbirth
  - Keep perineal tissue hydrated and mobile; increasing flexibility and decreasing restrictions
  - Decrease reactive guarding and improve understanding of sensations to be expected with perineal stretch during childbirth
  - Decrease postpartum perineal pain during intercourse



## BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Wash your hands and ensure nails are clipped
- Get lubrication ready
- Choose your position
  - Alone or with your partner
  - Sitting (edge of chair, on toilet, comfortable squat)
  - Reclined with knees bent supported resting open with pillows or on partners lap
  - Standing with one foot raised on chair, shower or toilet

# Perineal Massage

## 1 LUBE IT UP

Liberal apply lubrication to fingers before beginning and throughout session as needed to keep plenty of moisture and hydration for tissues.

- Typically index fingers or thumbs
- If partner is performing, typically have them use index fingers

## 3 SLOW & STEADY

Use various slow, controlled, and sustained stretches and massage techniques throughout your sessions:

- Sustained downward pressure
- Slow massage and sustained pressure downward and out to sides in 'U' or 'J' pattern with both fingers
- Sustained pressure down and out to sides



## 2 STRETCH IT

Insert fingers about 1 inch into vaginal opening and gentle press down towards anus

- Allow enough pressure until you feel a stretching or slight burning sensation, but not so much that it is painful
- Maintain this stretch for at least 30 seconds



This is a great time to practice deep breathing, conscious muscle relaxation and improving mental clarity of acceptance of these sensations as what to be expected and not to be resisted and guard against.

Imagine yourself in your delivery and the baby is crowning as you feel these sensations; use this imagery to help practice embracing your body sensations and keeping your muscles as open and relaxed as possible during your childbirth experience.