

Perineal Massage

A fantastic technique to help prepare the tissues of the vagina for the stretching and pressure sensations during childbirth.

Benefits

Research indicates that perineal massage may

- ✔ **Increase the flexibility of the perineal muscles.**
- ✔ **Decrease muscular resistance enabling the perineum to stretch.**
- ✔ **Help prepare for the stretching and sensations when a baby's head is born.**
- ✔ **Help relax the perineal area during birth which can help prevent tearing.**
- ✔ **Reduce the likelihood of perineal pain at three months for people who already had a previous birth.**



Evidence

- **16% reduction in cases of episiotomies.**
- **10% reduction in the incidence of tears in women who practiced perineal massage.**
- **79% of people report they would massage again.**
- **87% of people would recommend it to another pregnant person.**

When?

It is recommended to do a perineal massage once or twice a week, starting at 34 or 35 weeks.

How?

- 1 Use lubricant such as vitamin E oil, coconut oil, almond oil, or olive oil. Also, a water-soluble jelly. Do not use baby oil, mineral oil, or petroleum jelly (Vaseline).
- 2 Place the thumbs about 1 to 1.5 inches inside the vagina, and press down toward the anus and sides until feeling a slight stretching sensation.
- 3 Hold that stretched position for 1 or 2 minutes. Then, with the thumbs, slowly massage the lower half of the vagina using a U-shaped movement for 2 to 3 minutes at most.
- 4 This is an excellent time to practice slow, deep breathing techniques. Concentrate on relaxing your muscles.

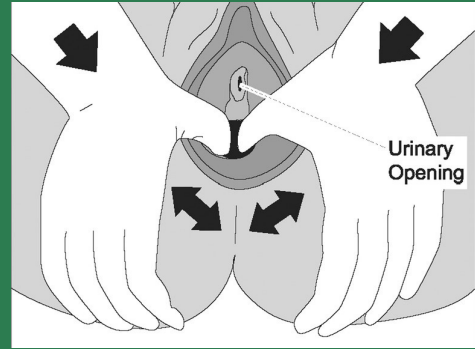


Image. [Perineal Massage] (American College of Nurse Midwives, 2016).

Tip: If the partner is doing a perineal massage, the partner uses the index fingers instead of thumbs.

To learn more:

Get in Touch!

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- Image from American College of Nurse Midwives. (2016). Perineal massage in pregnancy. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*, 50(1), 143-144. <https://doi:10.1111/jmwh.12427>
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