



Perineal Massage Guide

Hayley Kava PT, MPT

About 80% of people who give birth vaginally will have some degree of perineal tearing

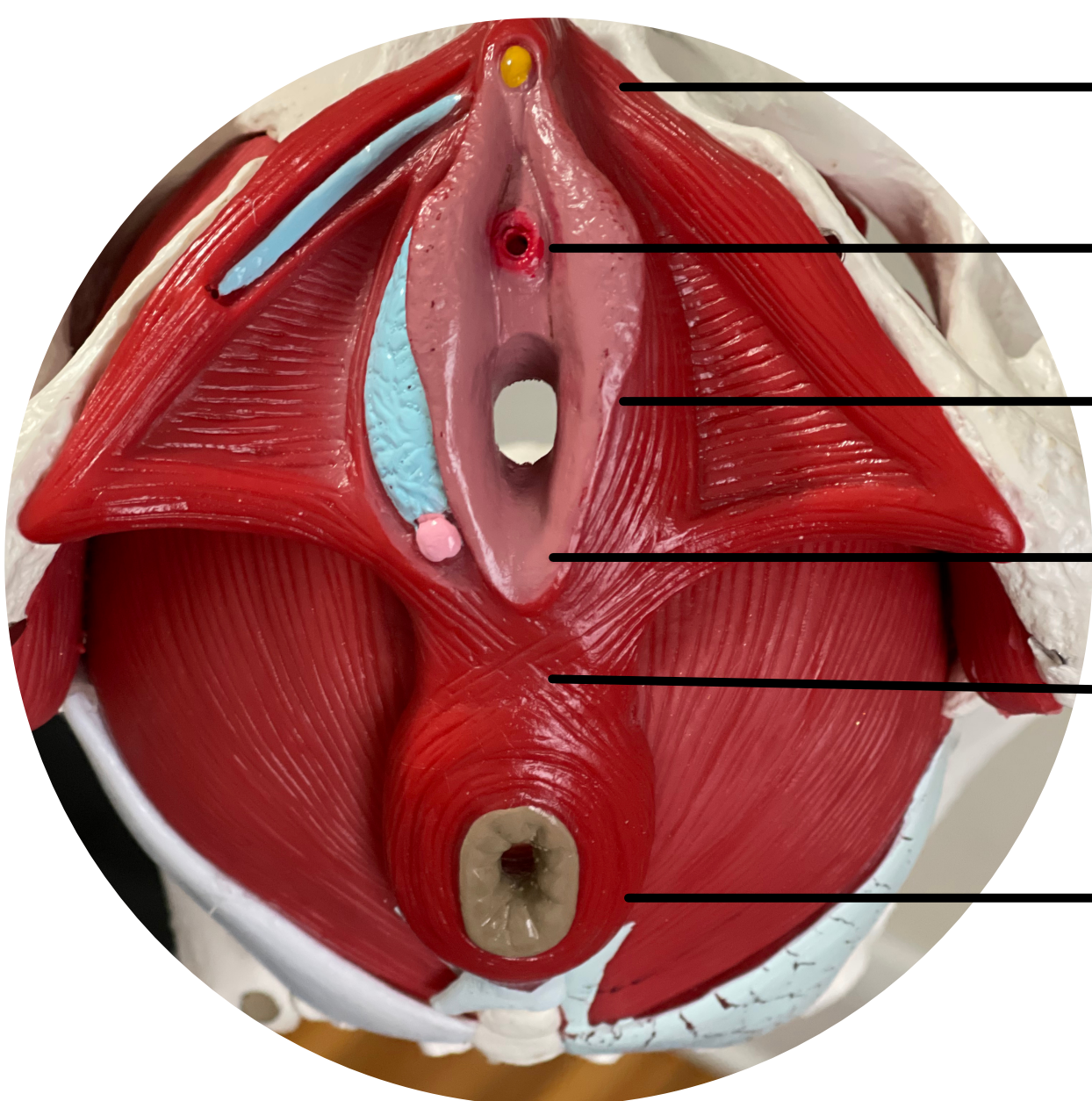
50% of birthing people (regardless of mode of birth) will have painful sex post partum

about 40% of vulva owners (all ages) will experience pelvic pain at some point in their life

Even without tearing, these superficial muscles and tissues can be sensitive/painful we will be going over how to release these muscles BOTH indirectly and directly

Perineal Massage May Help, Here's HOW

Anatomy



Clitoris

Urethra

Vaginal Opening

Posterior Forchette (bottom of vagina)

Perineal Body

Anal Sphincter

The surface tissue of the vagina or into the superficial muscles of the perineum are the most commonly torn/painful

Other types of tears can impact around the labia, urethra, deeper pelvic floor muscles and into the anal sphincter

perineal massage can reduce the risk of these more serious types of tears



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Reasons TO do perineal massage

35+/- Weeks of pregnancy

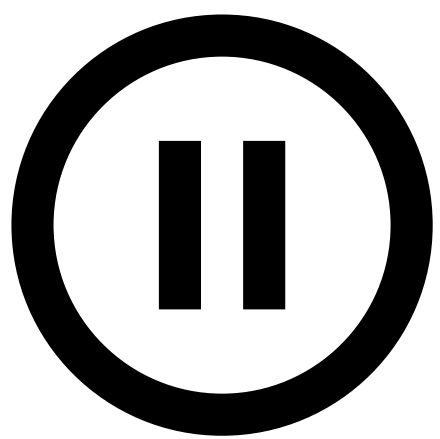
Painful Insertion of
Tampons

Painful Intercourse >6 weeks post partum
(regardless of birth mode)

>6 weeks post partum +/-
perineal tearing

painful intercourse

vaginal atrophy



ALWAYS discuss with your birth or healthcare provider prior to beginning a perineal massage program

Reasons to NOT perform, or to STOP Perineal Massage

Severe Pain
Bleeding
Active Infection
(yeast, bacterial, UTI, STI)
Pelvic Rest
Bed Rest





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TIPS

Find a place where you feel safe and comfortable. If you would like a partner to help you can.

Relaxing music, affirmations or using whatever other tools you would like for relaxation can be helpful.

A shower or bath prior may also help tissues relax!

Perineal massage is about "yielding" more than "enduring" meaning, we feel some discomfort, but then via deep breathing, or body or mind relaxation, you allow tension to release and the discomfort should subside

You are not "stuck" on your back! Try all different positions to see where it works best for you!

If you feel like tension or pain/discomfort is INCREASING as you hold, try decreasing pressure or trying a different angle or strategy from below

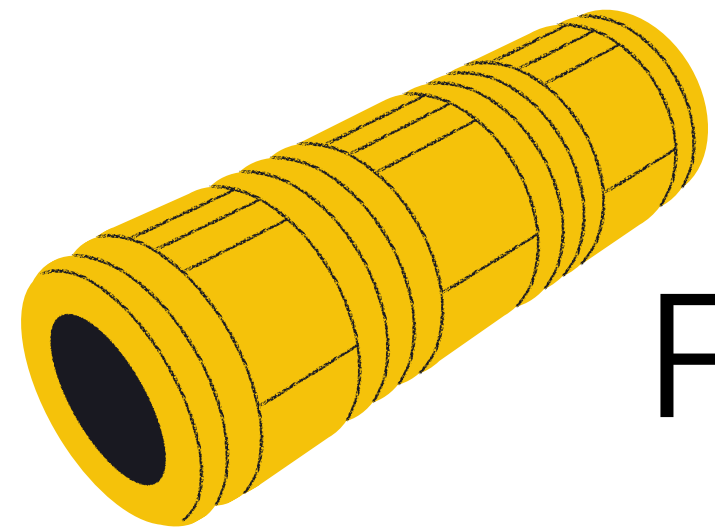
More details provided in the full video version of the guide!



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What You (Might) Need



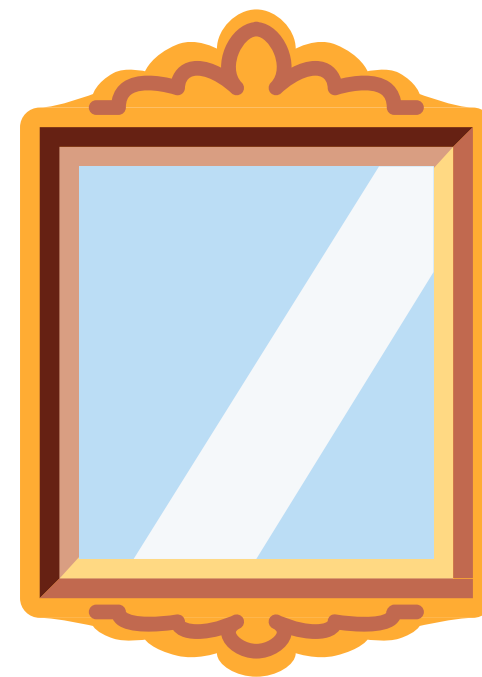
Foam Roller



Clean dry hands,
trimmed nails



Various Firmness of Balls
(tennis, lacrosse, pilates)



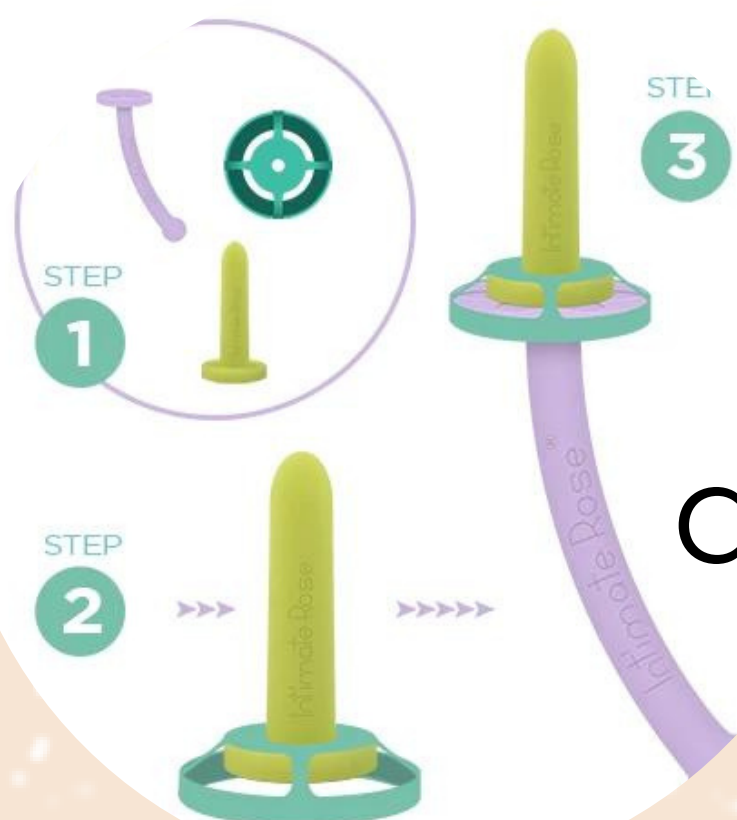
mirror if need
help to see



Pelvic Wand



Lube
(Water based
if using
wand/dialator)



dialator or dialator
with handle

More details provided in the full video version of the guide!
Most tools are optional- except clean hands for internal release



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INDIRECT

For some, working in the perinum itself is not desired, but the benefits of learning to release and relax these superficial muscles can still be achieved

These moves can also be a great "warm-up" prior to direct perineal massage

1. "Find" Your Pelvic Floor

sitting on a foam roller, or bolster or pillows the area between your two "sits" bones is your pelvic floor.

Take a few deep breaths here seeing if you can feel your pelvic floor "drop" or expand into the roller/pillow on your inhale. it may take a few breaths



Parameters

once you "find" your pelvic floor, or an area of tension, maintain pressure and breathe/relax into that tension 10-30 seconds, repeating for up to 2 mins

Pain should decrease as you hold, not increase



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INDIRECT

2. Add Some More Pressure



On the foam roller you can move into a deep squat for more pressure or roll sit bone to sit bone seeking some "tender" spots.

If you can't find any, you can progress the pressure, find a firmer roller, use a ball or vary the position. More on next page

Parameters

once you "find" your pelvic floor, or an area of tension, maintain pressure and breathe/relax into that tension 10-30 seconds, repeating for up to 2 mins

Pain should decrease as you hold, not increase



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INDIRECT

3. Get "Creative" with it



Depending on your birth plan, or when you experience tension you may want to try to "release" pelvic floor muscles in various positions.

Sitting on a chair, Standing with pressure against a wall (shown), All Fours, Sidelying ect so that you are familiar with the feeling of "releasing" your pelvic floor in various positions

*Here I am placing the ball just inside one sitbone, then adding pressure against a wall, and a chair

Also using various "firmness" and size of objects will change your experience with yeilding and releasing . A hard lacrosse ball will provide more pressure than a soft foam roller or tennis ball

Pain should decrease as you hold , not increase

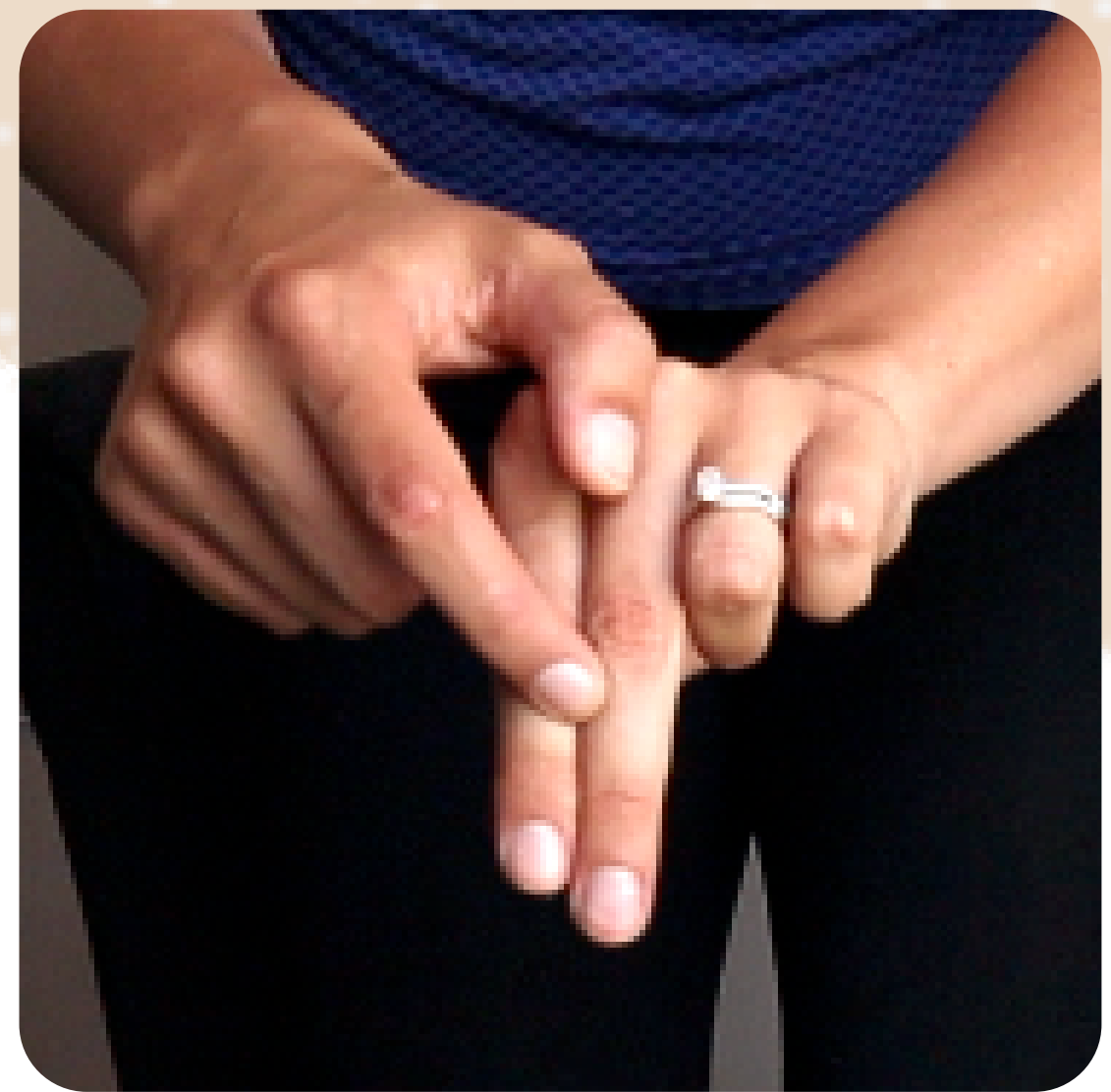
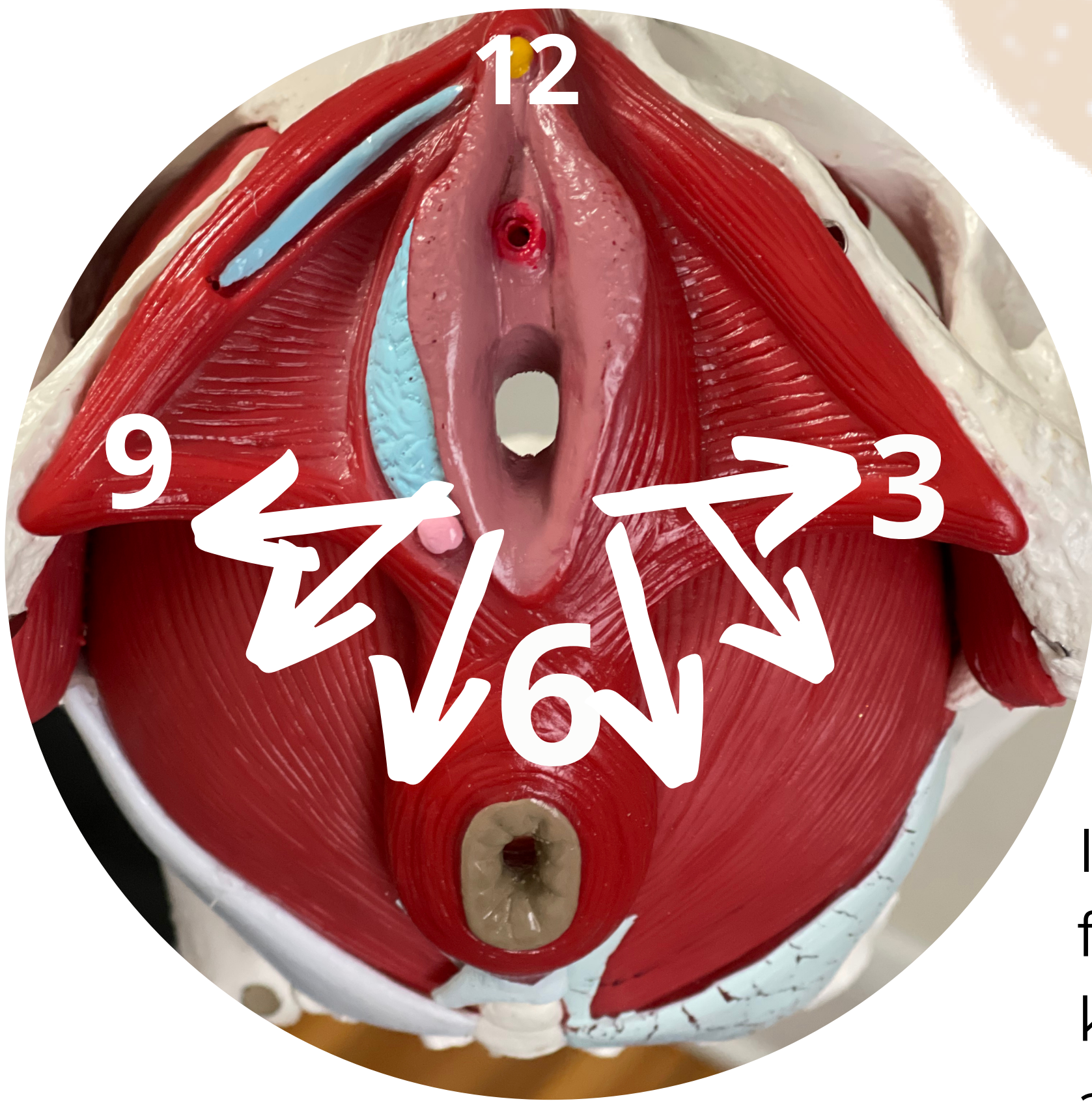
Full demos in video guide



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Direct (with or without "tools")



Insert a clean, lubricated finger, or thumb to the first knuckle if using a wand/dialtor about 1/4 to 1/2 inch

if the vaginal opening is a clock face, we will be stretching from 9 to 3 O'clock

Parameters

Hold firm pressure out at multiple spots along the bottom of the vagina, holding 10-30 seconds, breathing and practicing "releasing" these muscles for about 5 mins total

Pain should decrease as you hold , not increase



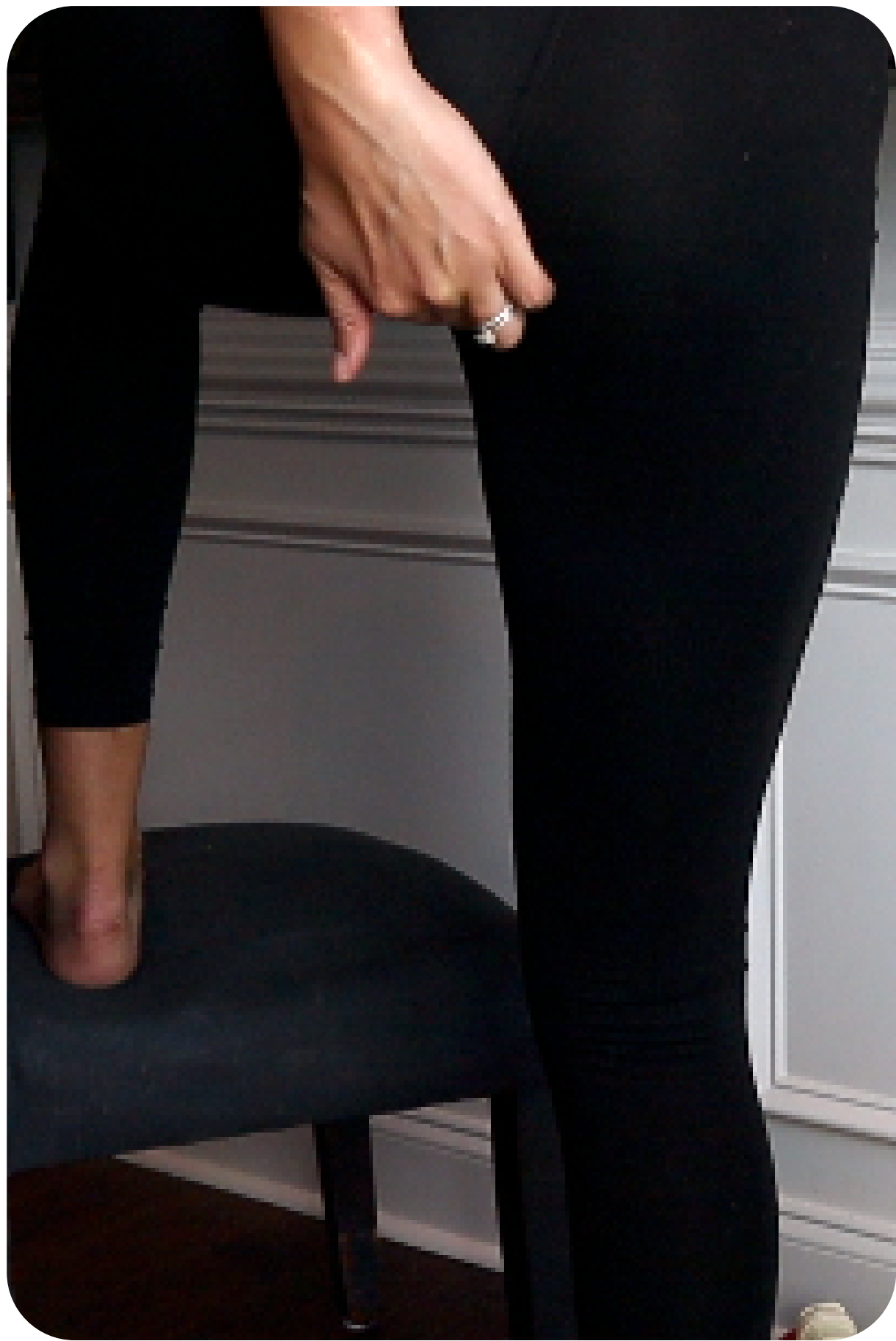
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Direct

Positions/Ideas

1. Standing/Kneeling



You don't have to awkwardly reach down the front of your body!!! especially with a bump, it can be awkward, and thumbs don't always have the best control

You can reach 1-2 fingers into vaginal opening from behind and actually have more comfortable control and pull back towards the 3-9 "zone"

This was a "game changer" for me with my second pregnancy!

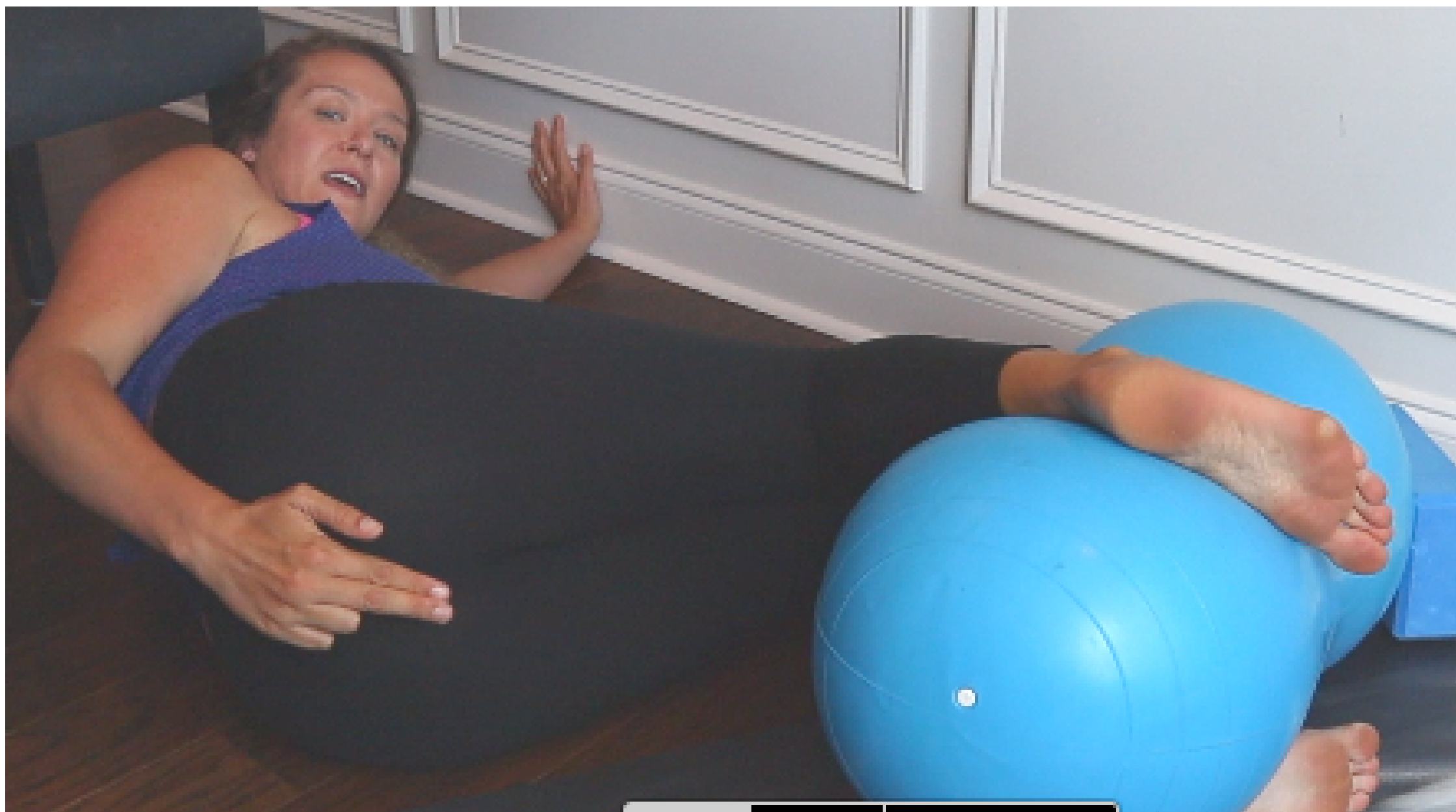


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Direct Positions/Ideas

2. Sidelying



Hip Internal rotation (feet wider than knees) is a great place to push, and also a great position to help pelvic floor relax. A peanut ball or simply a bunch of pillow between feet here can be a great option!



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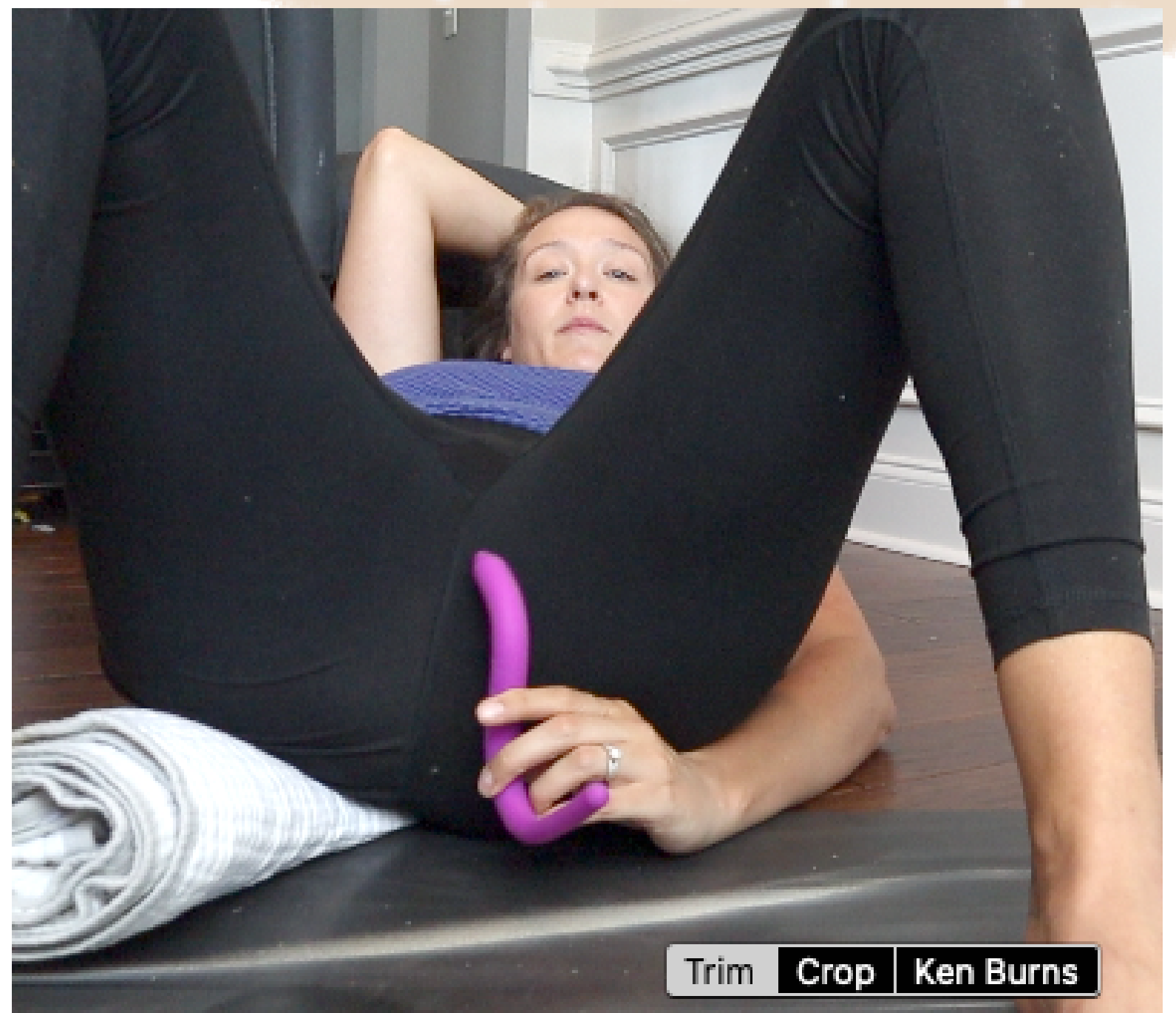
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Direct Positions/Ideas

3. Supine

Supine, while not always an "ideal" pushing position or comfortable position in the third trimester, it is an option

Reclining on pillows and propping a towel roll under one hip may help



Supine is a great position for partners to help if desired or to use a tool like a wand to help reach the vaginal opening



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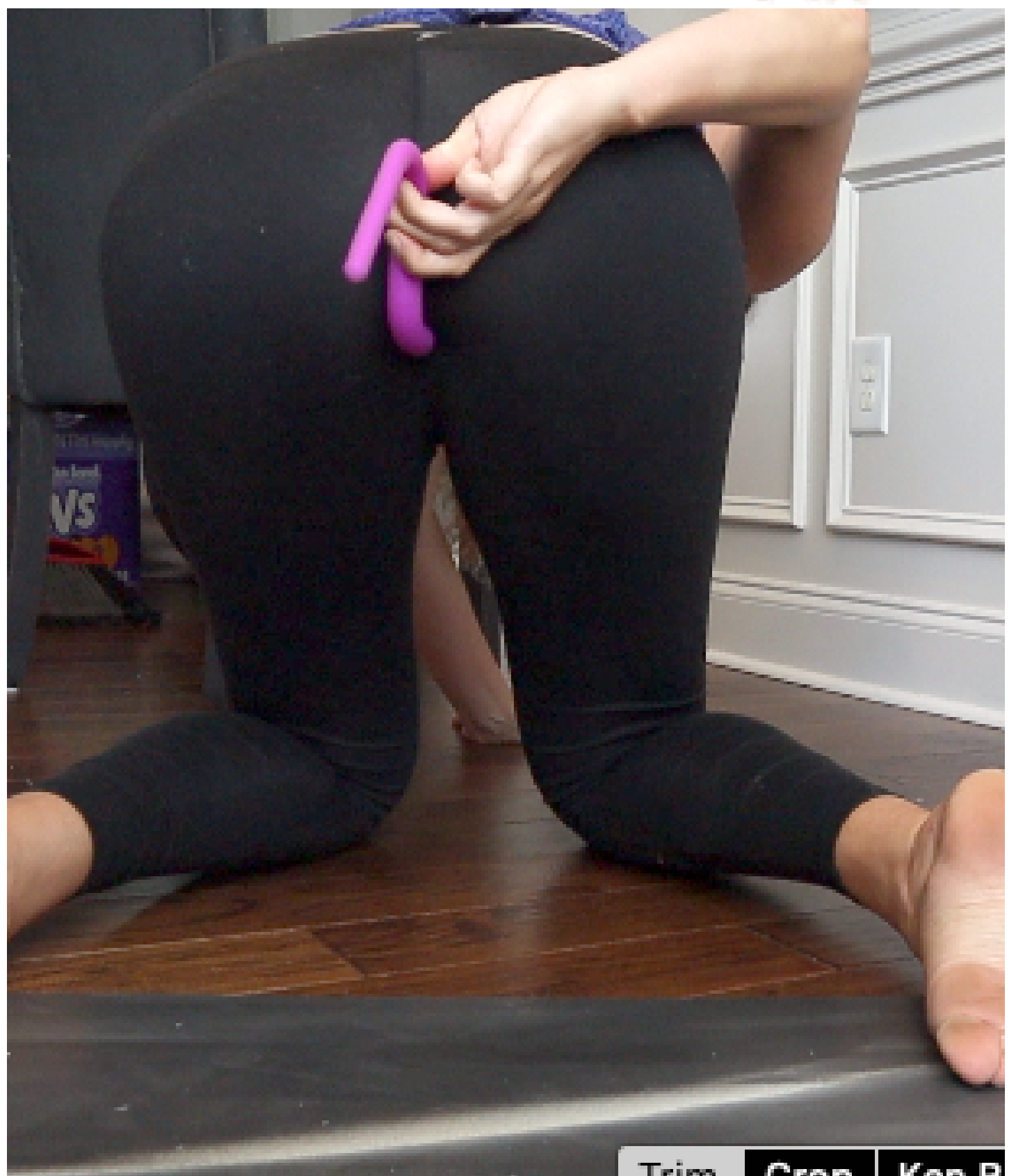
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Direct Positions/Ideas

3. All Fours

Knees wider than hips can also help pelvic floor release in this position.

You can play with different degrees of hip movement (feet in or out). Rocking forward or back. Leaning on a chair or even having forearms on the ground



All fours is another great position to get help from your partner or from a pelvic wand/dilator