

Pelvic health physiotherapy

Vaginal trainer training

Information for patients, families and carers

What are vaginal trainers?

Vaginal trainers are smooth, firm, cylinder shaped plastic or silicone devices, used to stretch the pelvic floor muscles. They come in various shapes and sizes. When using a vaginal trainer, it is important to be guided by a healthcare professional – they will make sure you are using the trainer in the best way possible, to help improve your individual symptoms.

Who may benefit from using vaginal trainers?

The following groups of people may benefit from using vaginal trainers:

- people who experience pain during sex
- those who have undergone chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- people with overactive pelvic floor muscles
- people with a diagnosis of vulvodynia or vaginismus
- people who have had pelvic surgery

Types of vaginal trainers

There are a wide variety of trainers on the market, which vary in price and size. Some can be ordered through your GP and all can be self-purchased. You should discuss the options with your health care professional. Here are some recommended examples.

Brand	Material	Sizes	Available on Prescription
Femmax	Plastic	4	Yes
Amelie Comfort	Plastic	5	Yes
Inspire	Silicone with tapered ends	5	No

Using your vaginal trainer

Before use:

- **clean** – before using, make sure you clean the trainer using a fragrance free soap and then rinse with water thoroughly. Ensure you have clean hands.
- **empty bladder** - you may find it more comfortable if you have emptied your bladder before you start using the trainer
- **lubricate** - ensure you use adequate lubrication either natural lubrication (olive or coconut oil) or a water or silicone-based lubrication (SLYK, Uberlube, YES water or oil-based lubrication) Please do not use a silicone-based lubrication with silicone trainers or sex toys as this can affect the silicone on the trainer and encourage bacteria to grow.
- **position/comfort** - it is important to be relaxed when you complete the training. Ensure you are in a comfortable position, whatever that might be for you. Consider using pillows to support your back in a half-lying position. You may find it useful to complete training after a warm bath or shower, when you are more relaxed.

What will your vaginal trainer programme include?

Your healthcare professional will provide guidance on the best programme for you. This will vary, depending on why you need to use the device.

It is likely that part of your therapy will also involve pelvic floor 'down training' or 'relaxation'. This helps to actively relax your pelvic floor muscles. The techniques will vary for each patient but may involve belly breathing, contracting and/or letting go of the pelvic floor muscles, perineal massage, stretching or mindfulness.

How often: it is recommended to complete training at least 3 times a week, up to every day

How long for: begin for a short period of time as guided by your healthcare professional. You may eventually build up to 15-20 minutes at a time.

Comfort levels: you should discuss with your healthcare professional, the use of the trainers and what, if any, discomfort you should expect. This will vary between patients.

Technique:

- Once in your comfortable position, apply lubrication to the tip of the trainer.
- Use any techniques your healthcare professional has advised, such as perineal massage, stretching, breathing or mindfulness before or during training.
- When ready, begin with the smallest trainer and slowly insert this into your vagina, pointing downwards towards your back.
- When you feel comfortable with the trainer inserted, you can either keep it still or move it in and out of the vagina slightly. You may work up to this over a few sessions.
- If you are happy to continue, you can trial gently twisting the trainer applying gentle pressure left and right.

-
- Your healthcare professional will discuss with you progression through the sizes of vaginal trainers and what is appropriate for you.
 - If you are too uncomfortable, remove the trainer. This is something that will get easier with practice. Keep the programme under review with your healthcare professional.
 - Once you have finished with training, clean the trainer with warm water and dry well with paper towel or tissues and store in a cool, dry place.

Recording change with the trainer

You may find it useful to track your programme and progression. You could make a note on your phone so that you can show your healthcare professional in your next appointment.

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at pals@imperial.nhs.uk. The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to express your concerns in **writing** to: Complaints department, Fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street, London W2 1NY

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print, as a sound recording, in Braille, or in alternative languages. Please contact the communications team on **020 3312 5592**.

Wi-fi

We have a free wi-fi service for basic filtered browsing and a premium wi-fi service (requiring payment) at each of our five hospitals.

Look for WiFiSPARK_FREE or WiFiSPARK_PREMIUM

Pelvic Health Physiotherapy
Published: September 2023
Review date: September 2026
Reference no: 5198

© Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust