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Four Steps to Relaxation of the Pelvis / Pelvic Floor Muscles:

There are four stages of relaxation to focus on to achieve release of your pelvis and pelvic floor muscles.

This should be practiced at least once daily, allow 5 – 10 minutes per session (you can not overdo “relaxation”!). Lie down in a quiet, comfortable place where/when you will have few distractions. Make sure your head is relaxed on pillows so you are not using your abdominal muscles. You may rest your knees out on pillows for support.

Step 1. Breathing: Placing your hand on your upper stomach/lower ribs to feel the air fill your chest as you breathe in, and your stomach gently rise. Then feel your ribs/stomach lower as you relax and breathe out. This breathing is at your own rate and should not be forced. Continue to focus on your breathing for four to five breaths.

Step 2. As you breathe out totally release your stomach muscles, let all the tension go in your abdomen, think about soft muscles and no effort. Let your hand and stomach muscles sink into the bed (using a hot pack can help to relax the muscles and feel heavy to help sink further into the bed). Continue to focus on your abdomen for four to five breaths.

Step 3. Release all the tension in the muscles of your pelvis as you breathe out. Feel your bottom muscles relax, your inner thighs release, your lower back soften and feel yourself sink into the bed. Picture your pelvis/lower back area completely relaxed/melted. Continue to release these muscles for four to five breaths.

Step 4. Focus on your pelvic floor muscles, visualize these muscles and let them go as you breathe out. Imagine the triangular region of the pelvic floor totally releasing and widening. The base of the triangle is the line between the bottom bones you sit on and the point of the triangle is your pubic bone. Visualize the ‘hammock’ of the pelvic floor dropping down as you exhale (do not push down, just “drop/release”). Try to give special concentration to the area/s of your pelvic floor that is particularly tight (as found by you and your therapist). Continue to do this for four to five breaths.

Repeat this cycle 2 or more times focusing on increasing the relaxation of your pelvic floor muscles. You can feel into the back of your vagina on the left or right sides to see how the pelvic floor muscles release/soften as you progress through these 4 steps. This really helps the brain to understand how to relax the pelvic floor muscles.

If you have been taught down-training exercises for your pelvic floor you should practice them after this four-step release. You may have been set a ratio of relaxation to contraction. This is to make sure your brain receives the majority of information on how to relax, however, experiences the occasional maximum contraction to learn how to relax after a contraction.

Your ratio of relaxation : contraction is 3:1 5:1 7:1 other _____

Additionally you should take some time to stretch out all your hip and pelvic muscles. Stretch these muscle groups: bottom, hamstrings, quadriceps, adductors (not if you are pregnant) and hip flexors. Be careful with all stretching if pregnant – remember your joints are already more moveable so can strain more easily. Releasing tension in these muscles will also help relax the pelvic floor muscles.

Note your posture when you are sitting and standing. You should not cross your legs or hold your thighs together. Try to relax your thighs and buttocks when you are sitting or standing, allowing some leg separation. When you are able, sit with your legs quite wide apart. When you sit down gently pull your sitz bones apart so you are telling your brain to allow the pelvic floor muscles to relax down onto the chair.

A warm bath and heat on your perineal area or bottom can also help these muscles to relax. Ideally heat or bathe prior to this relaxation.

A massage is another way to relax these muscles. Alternatively you may use a tennis ball or spikey ball to provide pressure onto your buttock muscles. You can do this lying on the bed or floor or if you are pregnant lean up against the wall so you do not strain your abdominal muscles.

You can also do this 4 Step Release many other times in your day so your brain is receiving the message many times across your day and then it will be easier for these muscles to relax when needed. Eg. in your car, sitting at work, in your lunch time, during the adverts on TV etc.