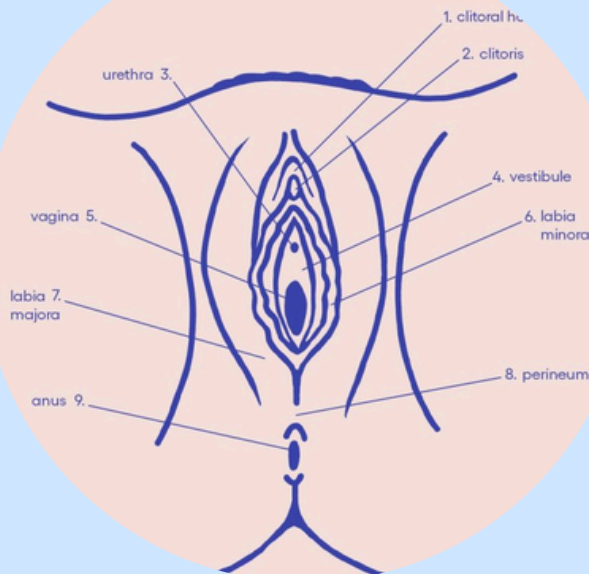




An tOspidéal Náisiúnta Máithreachais The National Maternity Hospital

Physiotherapy Department

Perineal Massage



This type of massage is helpful for all women who have had an episiotomy/tear or can help to prepare you for labour.

Await your 6 week postnatal check before commencing.

Pregnant women can start perineal thumb massage on the 34th week for 3-5 minutes 3-4 times a week.

Anatomy

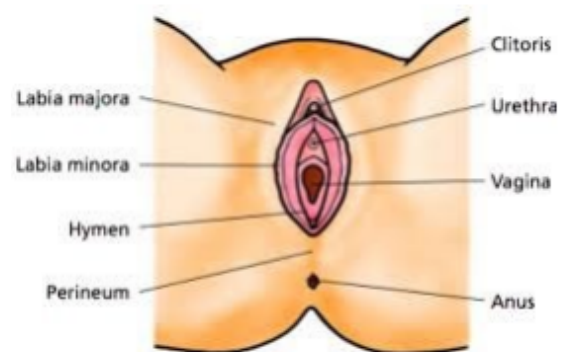
Your perineum is the area of tissue between the opening of the vagina and the anus. It attaches to the muscles that support your reproductive organs, bowels, and bladder — the pelvic floor.

What does it do?

Perineal massage is the act of stretching and manipulating the perineal tissue . Its goal antenatally is to prepare these tissues to stretch over your baby's head and body during vaginal delivery.

Postnatally these methods can be used to help mobilize the pelvic floor muscles, and to make them more supple, flexible and painfree.

These can also be great techniques for women who don't have a scar but have perineal pain.



Advice

For the perineal massage, it is helpful to use a mirror to examine the scar before stretching and mobilizing it.

You may use a variety of oils for perineal massage. The main goal with using an oil is lubrication to eliminate friction. Choosing a specific type is up to your personal preference, access, and budget.

Types to try:

- natural oils, like organic sunflower, grapeseed, coconut, almond, or olive
- personal lubricants, like K-Y Jelly, are also a good choice because they're water soluble



Pregnancy Perineal Thumb Massage

This massage works great for perineal scars, for pelvic pain sufferers, women with vaginismus, and in preparation for labour and delivery

Pregnant women can start this massage on the 34th week for 3-5 minutes 3-4 times a week.

Teaching your partner to do this massage helps in preparation for delivery

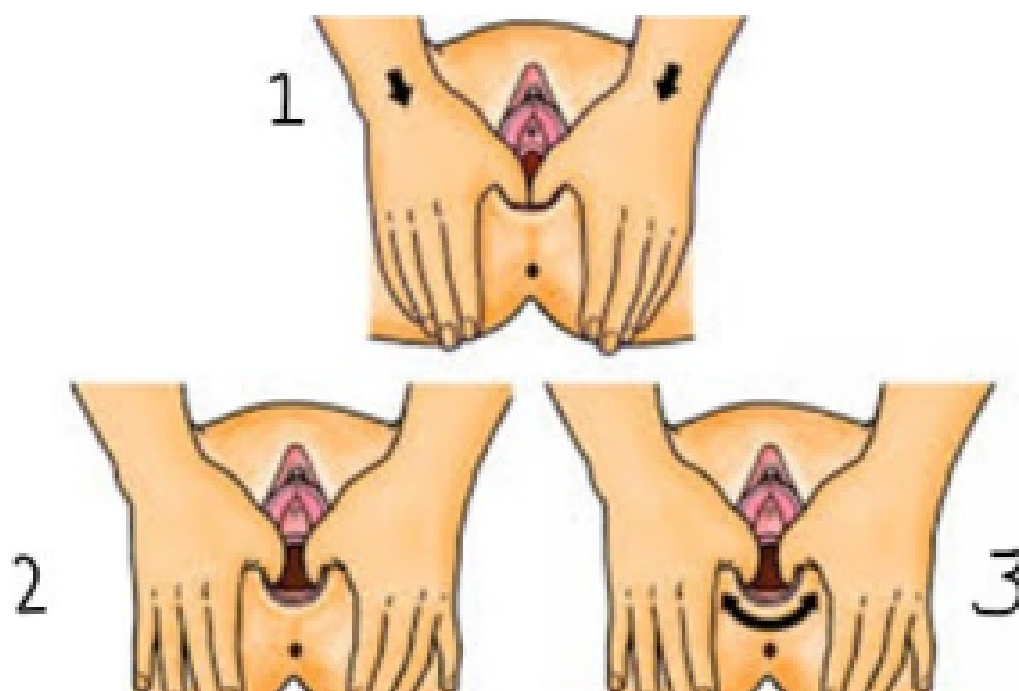


Technique

Lubricate your thumbs, insert them into the vagina up to the first knuckle, and press straight downward towards the rectum for 3-5 minutes

After 3-5 minutes, press down to the right for 30-60 seconds and then to the left for 30-60 seconds

Another technique is to do ½ moon strokes with your thumbs. Place your right thumb up to the first knuckle in the inside of your left pelvic floor muscles. Start from 2 o'clock position and take about one minute to stretch down to the six o'clock position; then change sides and perform the ½ moon strokes on the other side.



Postnatal Scar Healing

The healing of your scar begins immediately post-birth.

This happens in stages.

Stage One: Homeostasis

Blood rushes to the site of the wound and clotting occurs, stopping the bleed. This process begins immediately.

Stage two: Inflammation

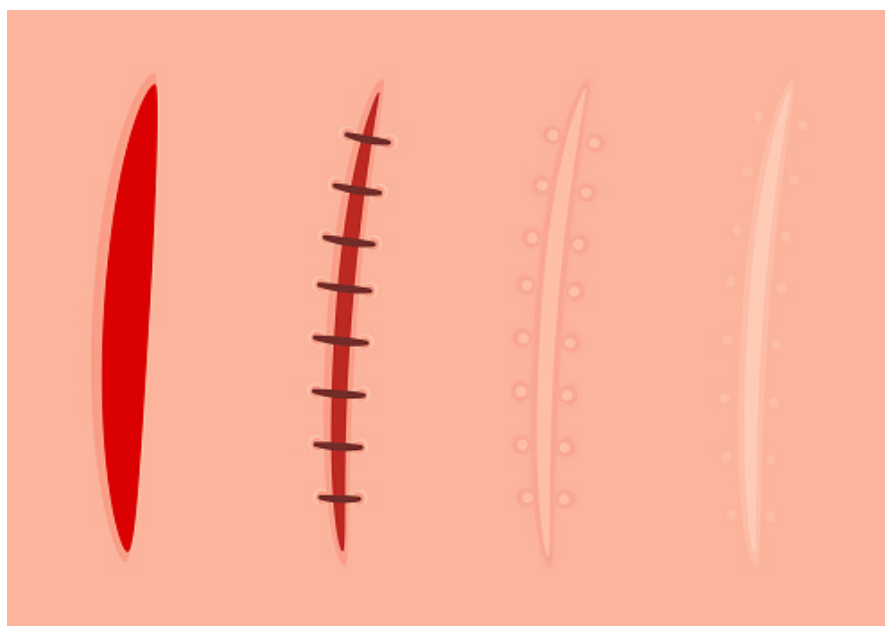
Once homeostasis is achieved (usually within a few minutes) cells are sent to repair the wound. The wound heats up, pain increases, redness spreads. This can persist up to around day four.

Stage three: Proliferation

The tissue around the wound contracts, drawing the wound smaller and closing the skin. This usually occurs from around day four up to day 21.

Stage four: Re-modelling

After around 21 days, the deeper structures begin to form, giving the wound tensile strength. This process can continue for around two years. It's during this time that problems with the scar can occur.



Postnatal scar massage

Perineal scar rolling

- Place the scar between the finger tips. You might have to place one finger inside the vagina and one finger outside the vagina, gently gripping the scar between the fingertips in order to roll it
- Roll the scar between your fingers for 2-3 minutes or as tolerated until the scar feels loose, less painful and more pliable.
- Perineal scar rolling is a great method to get the scar more flexible and mobile

Perineal body massage

- Using a trigger point release technique, press with your finger on the perineal body, and find a tender point
- Once you locate a painful area or trigger point, push on that spot for 90-120 seconds; Be gentle; do not create more than a 5/10 in pain as you press on it. As you hold the spot for up to two minutes, the intensity of the pain should decrease significantly
- Do this once a day until the perineal body is no longer tender
- For best results, try pressing into the perineal body at different angles and locations in the perineum. Hold each different direction for 90-120 seconds.



Intercourse

The thought of returning to intercourse can be worrying for some women.

Once the stitches have healed and bleeding has stopped, you can return to intercourse but do so when it feels right for you and your partner.

Hormonal changes, especially in breastfeeding mothers, can lead to vaginal dryness, which can be alleviated with over-the-counter lubricants eg YES

HEALTHY BODIES AFTER BIRTH

An information session on caring and reconnecting with your body as it recovers after birth

Topics include:

- Bladder & Bowel Care
- Abdominal Care
- Pelvic Floor Advice
- Returning to Movement
- and more!

Every Friday at 11am



Online



Physiotherapist led information session
Email njordan@nmh.ie to book your place

www.nmh.ie

References;

1. Monstrey S et al. Updated scar management practical guidelines: non-invasive and invasive measures. *J Plast Reconstr Aesthet Surg*. 2014 Aug 1;67(8):1017-25.
2. Kathe Wallace PT, *Massage For Your Abdominal Scar*. 2014
3. *Scar management, Physiopedia*. Available at: https://www.physio-pedia.com/Scar_Management (Accessed: 28 August 2024).

