

Is Pain Impacting Your Sex Life?

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If you are experiencing pain with sex, you are NOT alone. Nearly 75% of women will at some point in their life experience pelvic pain that impacts sexual functioning, quality of life and psychological well-being (The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2017).

How can pelvic floor muscles contribute to pain with sex? Your pelvic floor muscles are one of the first muscles to contract in response to threat (Van der velde, Laan, Everaerd 2001). This means that your pelvic floor will be more contracted during stressful times, even if you aren't in physical danger. This can cause soreness and tenderness due to lack of oxygen and blood flow to the tissue.

What can I do to help my pelvic floor muscles relax and decrease my pain? Diaphragm breathing is one of my favorite tools to decrease pelvic pain. It calms your nervous system, sends a safety signal to the brain and it taps into the relationship between your diaphragm and pelvic floor to relax these muscles and increase blood flow. As you breathe in, your pelvic floor relaxes and lengthens and as you breathe out your pelvic floor contracts and lifts.

The easiest way to check if you're doing this properly is if you place your hands on your lower ribs. You should feel your ribs expand outwards as you breathe in and come back in when you breathe out. Do this 15 min/day and before and during sexual activity, it can make a world of difference!