

FEM PHYSICAL THERAPY

MYTHS YOU NEED TO BUST

➔ You just had a baby, it will get better with time:



Yes, there is a natural healing time postpartum and general soreness should decrease, however if you are experiencing pain after you have been cleared for safe intercourse, then

waiting it out is not the best course of action. The earlier acute pain is treated the easier it is to treat, the longer it lingers the more changes happen to our nervous system. These changes make the area more sensitive to touch and increase the level of pain. Be proactive in finding a pelvic health PT in your area you can work with. Generally 4-6 weeks after baby is a great time to meet up with a pelvic health PT to start a program specific for you.

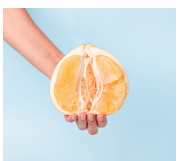
➔ Pushing through the pain will help the pain resolve:



Our central nervous system is very connected to our pelvic floor. If we continue to inflict pain, even during a seemingly enjoyable act like sex, your nervous system

will send messages to protect you from pain and involuntarily contract your pelvic floor muscles, making penetration impossible or painful. By slowly introducing insertion and managing the muscle tension, lubrication or fear and anxiety you can begin to initiate pain free intercourse.

➔ It's all about your pelvic floor muscles:



As stated previously the pelvic floor muscles do play a role but our nervous system is king. Addressing stress, fear, anxiety is a major player in decreasing pain with intercourse.

Breathing exercises and even spinal mobility is great way to also address the nervous system. Hormones or de-estrogenization could also be playing a factor and is something to talk to your physician about. This could be the issue if your tissue feels raw, dry or sandpaper.



PAIN WITH SEX Quick Guide

By Laurel Proulx, PT, DPT, OCS

Pain with sex or penetration of any kind is called dyspareunia. Inability to perform penetration due to tightness or constriction of pelvic floor muscles is called vaginismus. Any person with a vagina can experience this however there are some common reasons why people start to experience pain with sex. Changes in hormones during pregnancy, postpartum or during menopause can change lubrication and tissue quality of the vulva causing pain with intercourse. Scar tissue can cause soreness and increased tissue stiffness leading to an inability of the tissue to be able to expand and contract during intercourse.

A person who has experienced personal, sexual or even medical trauma can have pelvic floor muscles that spasm in reaction to something trying to insert into the vagina. Other injuries like hip injuries, tailbone injuries or abdominal surgeries can also contribute to pain with intercourse or penetration. Experiencing acute pain during one sexual experience due to hormonal changes, scar tissue or injury recovery can start a cycle of pain where the pelvic floor muscles constrict out of anticipation of pain even after the acute phase has healed.

Seeing a pelvic health physical therapist can help you find your causes of pelvic pain and address pelvic floor muscle response, and nervous system regulation. Also we can give you tools to help self-manage at home such as how to use dilators or wands.

Continue reading at next page >



3 Strategies You can Implement today

By Laurel Proulx, PT, DPT, OCS

1. **Deep breathing:** Taking deep breaths to expand your ribs, your abdomen and allow lengthening of your pelvic floor is key to getting full range of motion of your pelvic floor muscles. Tightened or short pelvic floor muscles can become painful to the touch and sore. Also, taking deep breaths address our vagus nerve, a key player in our "fight or flight" nervous system. By switching out of "fight or flight" and into "rest and digest" you can help decrease your pain response. By deeply breathing a few minutes a day we can physically change how our nervous system is responding. You can also try to do this in positions like child's pose to expand your pelvic floor.

2. **Lubrication:** If there are hormonal changes from pregnancy, breastfeeding, postpartum or menopause causing a decrease in lubrication then a good non-toxic lubricant can go a long way. Slippery stuff, Good Clean Love, Desert Harvest and Sliquid are all great options.

3. **Scar massage:** Scar tissue can restrict movement of the tissue it surrounds and attaches too. Vaginal tissue is intended to expand and contract during intercourse, if that's not possible then it can be pain provoking. Also, if a scars are never touched or mobilized as they are healing, then they can become sensitized to touch, causing more pain than would be expected from the given input. It's imperative to start touching your scar and working with a scar massage time frame that supports improved mobility.

What's Next: This quick guide is not intended to diagnose or provide a specific intervention for what you may be experiencing. This information is for educational purposes only and not intended for diagnosis or treatment. If you would like more specific guidance, exercises and support for pain with intercourse then check out the [Postpartum Connect All-Inclusive Program](#). If you'd like a personalized consultation, assessment and program then schedule your [free 15 minute discovery call](#) or book your appointment online at femunfolding.com