

TOP

TEN

TIPS

FOR DILATION



Whatever brings you to dilation, we believe these 10 tips will help you get on track. Perhaps you already feel confident you can move ahead; perhaps you're not sure you're ready yet or really want to do this. Try not to feel pressured. Dilating is not something you have to do right now. You get to decide. Here goes!

FAMILY



DILATION TEAM



A CLOSE FRIEND

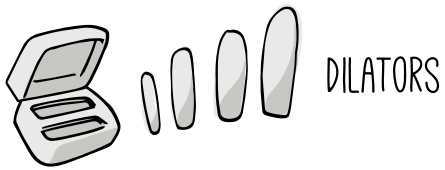


OTHERS GOING THROUGH  
THE PROCESS

- 1 -

## CREATING YOUR SUPPORT MAP

Before you start the dilation process, it is a good idea to get a team of supporters in place whom you can turn to for advice, support and a chat. Your dilation team at the clinic, a close friend, family and other women going through the process may all support you on your journey.

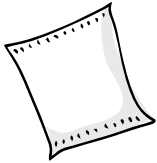


DILATORS



GENTLE SOAP

LUBRICANT

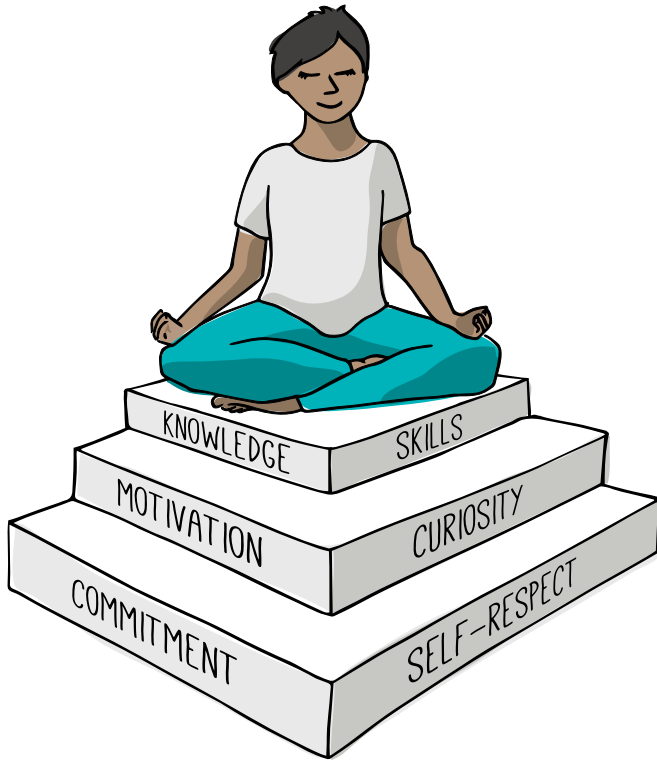


WASH CLOTH

- 2 -

## GETTING THE RIGHT ACCESSORIES

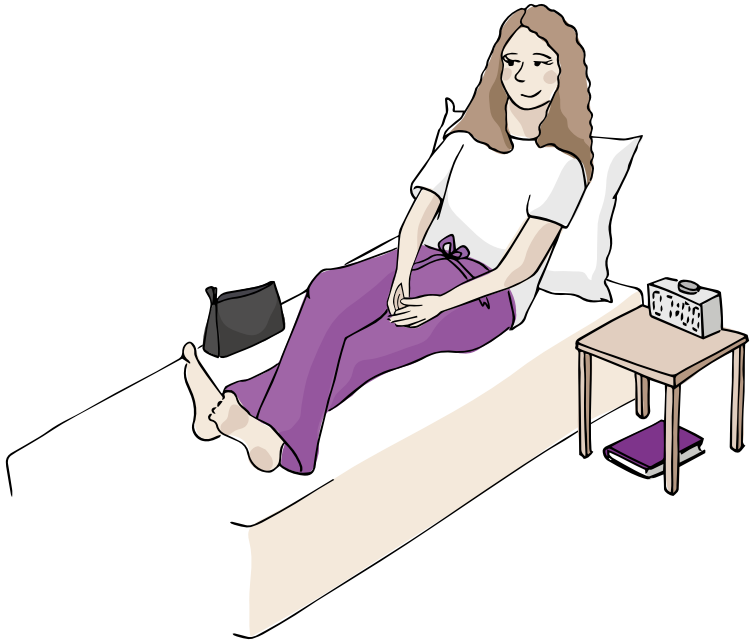
Usually you will receive a dilation set at the clinic. You can also shop online for other sets - find one that makes you feel comfortable. Use a wash cloth to warm the dilator before use. It is also a good idea to use a water-based lubricant to help you feel at ease. After use clean your dilator with a gentle soap and rinse it with water.





## GETTING THE RIGHT MINDSET

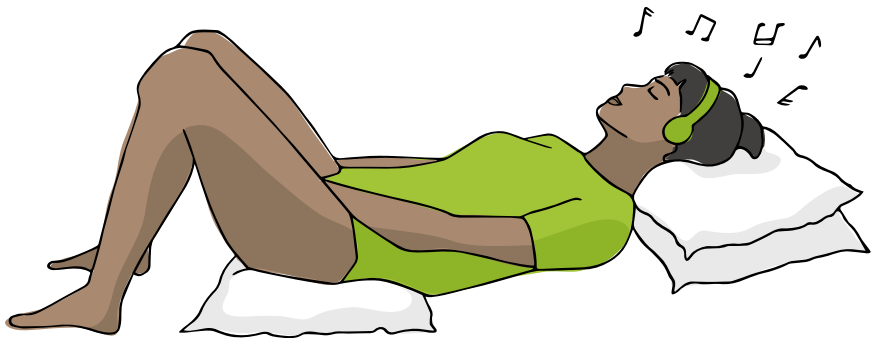
Dilation is most successful when you are comfortable with your body and want to start exploring it. In general, starting at an older age or when you are thinking about sexual intimacy can make the process a lot easier. Generally we do not advise to start dilation before the age of 16 years.



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## PLANNING SOME "YOU" TIME

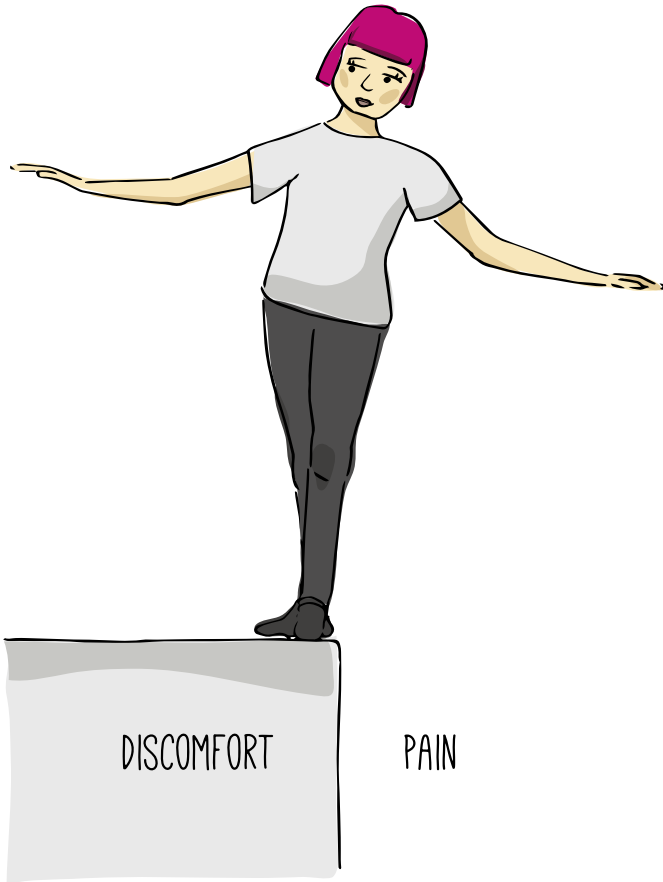
You can dilate at any time of the day. Try to dilate 30 minutes daily; some people will dilate twice a day for shorter periods, others dilate once a day. Having privacy will make you feel more comfortable. Most people choose to dilate when their body is warm and relaxed. For many women this is in the evening, others prefer to dilate in the morning. Choose a moment that fits you best.



## FOLLOWING THE INFORMATION CORRECTLY

At the clinic you will get advice on the dilation process. Positioning your body is really important. You might want to start lying down with a pillow under your lower back - when you know what you need to do you can use the position you find most comfortable.

*See the last page for more information*



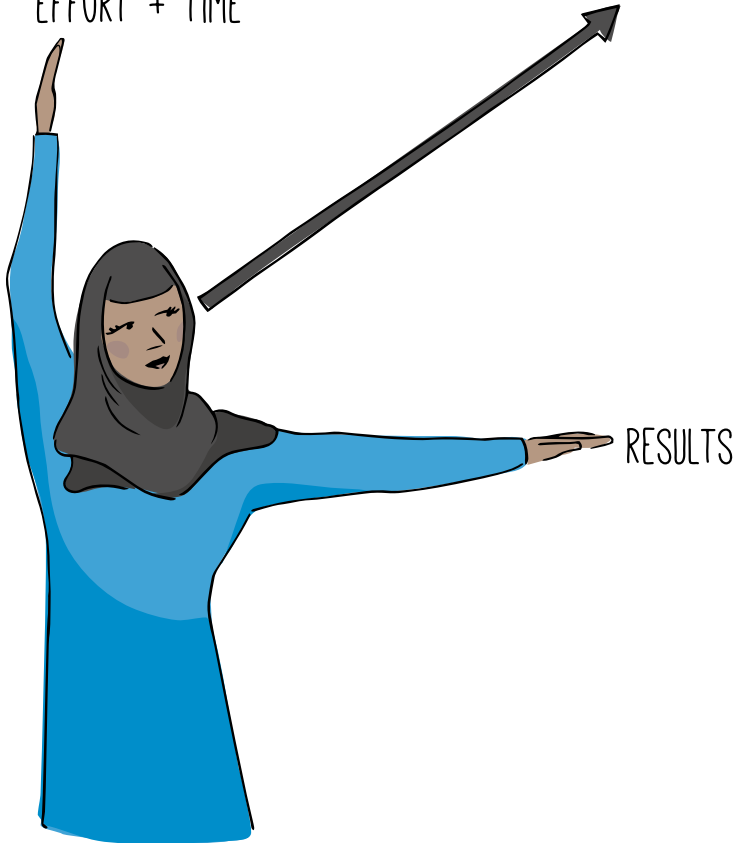
DISCOMFORT

PAIN

## WORKING THE EDGE

Apply some lubricant to the tip of the dilator and gently apply pressure to the area you have been shown in the clinic. Continue this pressure until you are at the edge of discomfort. Keep your courage! It might take a few tries to get the hang of it. Remember to keep breathing.

COMMITMENT +  
EFFORT + TIME



RESULTS



- 7 -

## SEEING IMPROVEMENT

The truth is, the more often you dilate, the quicker you will see results. Many girls see improvement and complete the process from between 3 - 6 months, although for some the process can take longer.



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## MAKING IT FUN

Dilation can be a good way to explore your body and learn what feels good through touching. The process can also be easier if you feel aroused - some women like to use a vibrator instead of the dilator or explore dilation with their partner to make the process more enjoyable. Others see dilation more as functional and prefer to disconnect it completely from sexual pleasure or intimacy.



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## CELEBRATING SMALL SUCCESSES

If you miss a day don't worry, just start again the next day. Celebrate all the times you do dilate and reward yourself - remember how far you've come.

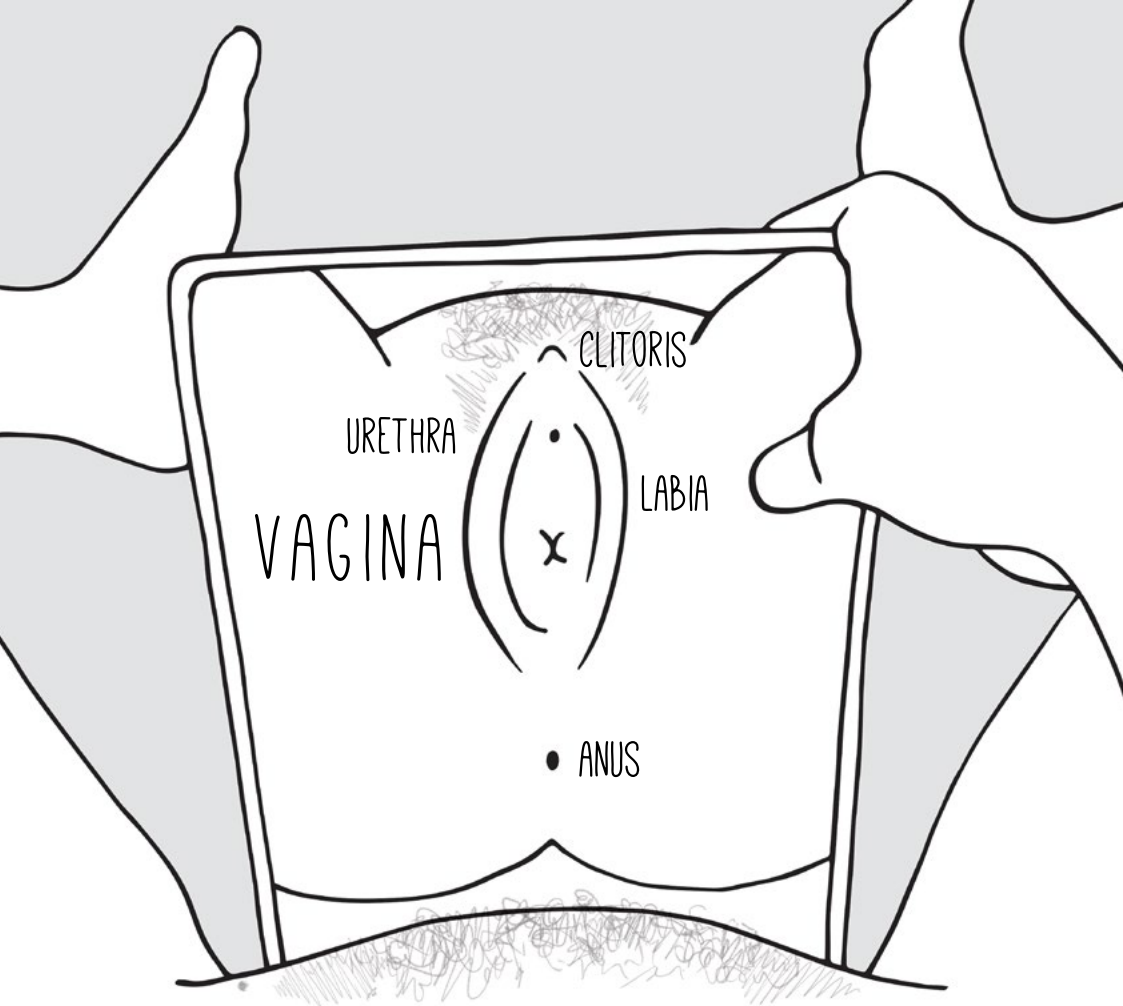


WHY ME?  
POSITION?  
PAIN?

- 10 -

## LETTING YOUR WORRIES GO

There will be points that are difficult and you may have worries or questions. The best thing to do is write everything down and discuss with people who can support you. Go back to your support map - you don't have to do it alone.



CLITORIS

URETHRA

VAGINA

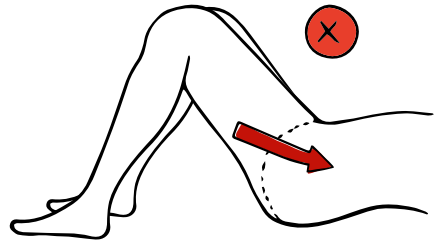
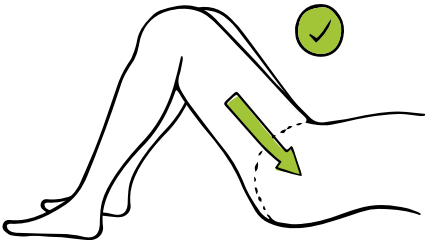
LABIA

• ANUS



# MORE INFORMATION

Everyone's labia (folds of skin that enclose the urethra and vagina) look different. Your vagina may be a dimple or a small opening. The dilator should be inserted there, angled towards your lower back. If you feel like you need to pass urine, the dilator may be pressing on your bladder, so try angling it lower towards your tailbone.



# ABOUT

This booklet is based on 'Top ten tips for dilation' developed by the British dsdteens.org and dsdfamilies.org charities. This brochure was edited by the DSD-team of the Ghent University Hospital (Belgium). Designed and illustrated by Emily Tulloh.

