

WHAT ARE ANAL/RECTAL DILATORS AND HOW DO THEY WORK?



Rectal/anal dilators should be used in conjunction with pelvic floor physiotherapy or under guidance of your treating medical professional.

Anal/rectal dilators can be helpful as part of a treatment program for painful pelvic floor issues such as levator ani syndrome, proctalgia fugax, functional constipation, muscle spasms around the anus and pelvic pain. They are also often used to treat stenosis of the anus or rectum following surgery or cancer treatments.

Whilst pain in the anus is a very physically and emotionally challenging issue, using dilators as part of the treatment program can help significantly. Anal/rectal dilators can be used to help restore or improve elasticity for better opening of the anus.

Cancer treatments and surgeries can result in painful adhesions or scar tissue around the anus creating difficulty opening the anus.

Muscular co-ordination issues and chronic clenching of the levator ani and puborectalis muscles of the pelvic floor can result in painful tender points and difficulty opening the anus and rectum.

Intimate Rose Dilators are smooth medical grade silicone cylinder shaped devices that gradually increase in size. This combination of smooth silicone and gentle progression in size allow for gentle stretching and training of the pelvic floor muscles, anus and rectum to help muscle relaxation and allow for better rectal capacity.

The dilators are used to gently stretch and open the anal canal. Some symptoms of pelvic floor dysfunction around the anus may include:

- Pain with sitting
- Sensation of spasms at the anus
- Pain or difficulty with bowel movement
- Stenosis from anorectal radiation therapy
- Scars from surgery
- Pain following a fall or injury
- Pain with anal intercourse
- Pain in the rectum with orgasm

HOW TO USE AN ANAL DILATOR

Begin each anal/rectal dilator session by washing the dilators before use with a mild soap and warm water. Pat the dilators dry with a towel. Do your sessions in a comfortable, quiet location such as your bed or a yoga mat on the floor.

Find a comfortable position to do your dilator session. Each person responds differently to positions. Some suggested commonly comfortable positions may include:

- lying on your back with knees bent
- lying on your left side (if right-handed) or right side (if left-handed) add a pillow between your legs if this is more comfortable
- on your hands and knees
- a deep squat position.

To Begin:

1. Place 1-2 tablespoons of water-based lubricant on both the anal opening and the tip of the dilator. Do not use a silicone or petroleum-based lubricants as they will ruin the medical grade silicone dilator.
2. To insert, place the tip of the dilator a 45-90 degree angle to the rectum. Breathe deeply by inhaling through the nose and exhale through the mouth, then gently ease the dilator into the anus. Continue to breathe deeply and glide the dilator deeper with each breath. It sometimes helps to gently bear down as you insert the tip.
3. Continue to gently ease the dilator into the anus until the dilator is fully inserted, that is when the rim base is in contact with the outer skin of the anus. Remain for a few breaths, and then the dilator can be removed. Treatment time should be guided by your health professional.
4. Wash the dilator with mild soap and warm water and pat dry thoroughly.
5. Once a dilator is easy to insert you can move up to the next size. The size of the dilator you continue to work towards will match your end goal.

*** Adapted from information on the Intimate Rose website*

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