

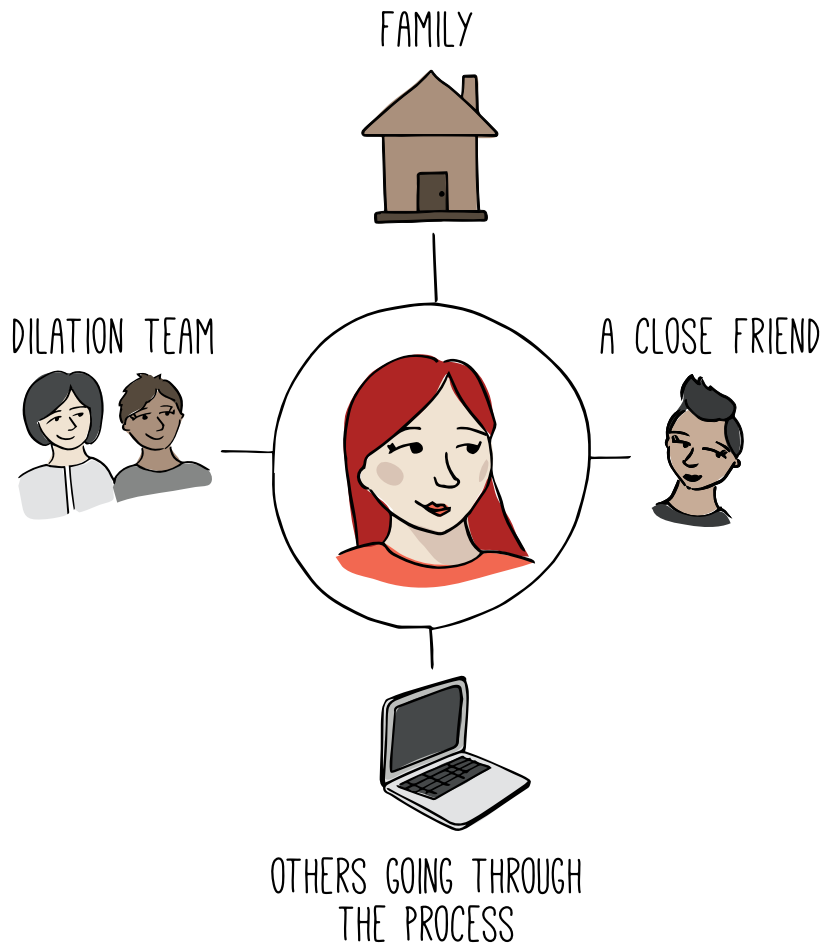
TOP

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!



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## CREATING YOUR SUPPORT MAP

Before you start the dilation process, it is a good idea to get a team of supporters in place to 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.



## GETTING THE RIGHT ACCESSORIES

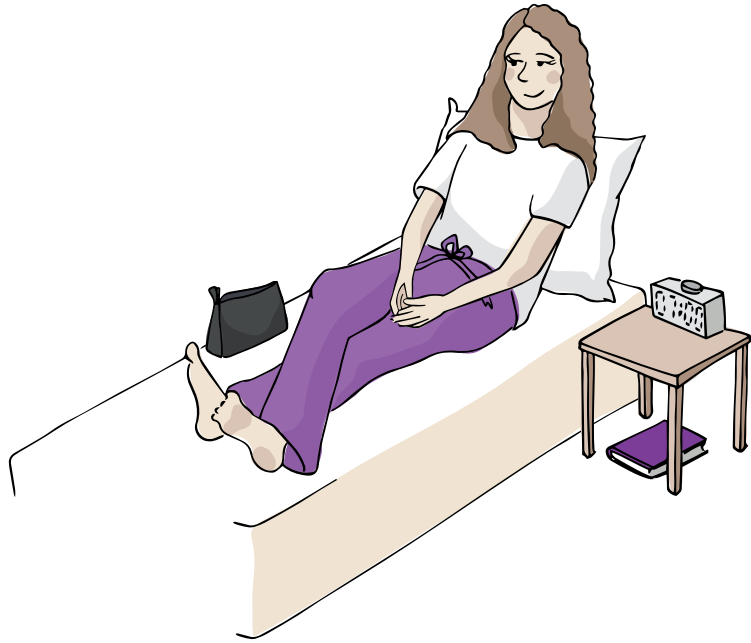
Usually you will receive a dilation set at the clinic. You can also shop online for other sets - find one that makes you feel comfortable. Use a wash cloth to warm the dilator before use. It is also a good idea to use a water-based lubricant to help you feel at ease. After use rinse your dilator with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



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## 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.



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## PLANNING SOME "YOU" TIME

You can dilate at any time of the day. Try to dilate 30 min daily; some people will dilate twice a day for shorter periods. Having privacy will make you feel more comfortable. Some people find it easier to dilate first thing in the morning when their body is warm and relaxed.

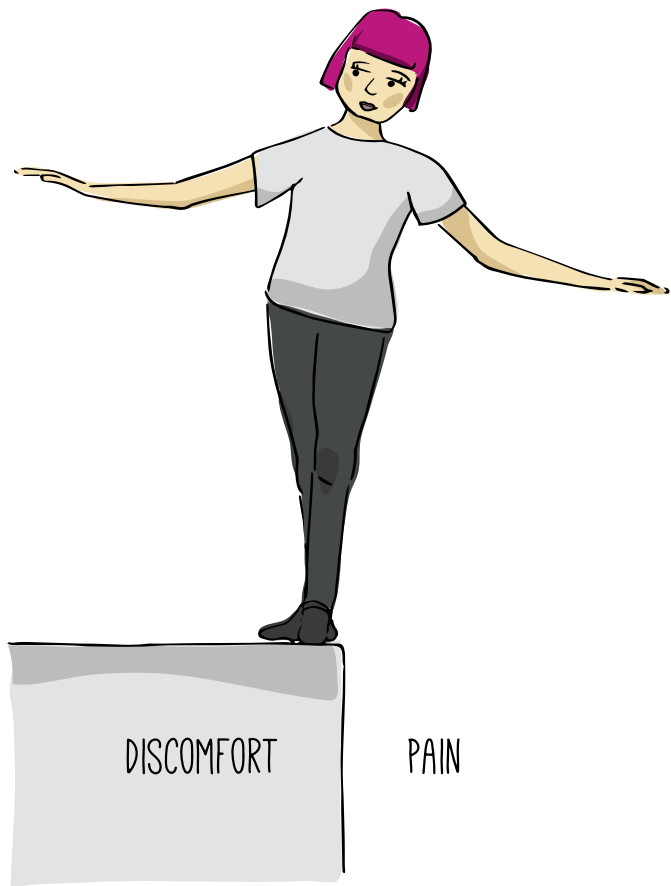


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## FOLLOWING THE INFORMATION CORRECTLY

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*

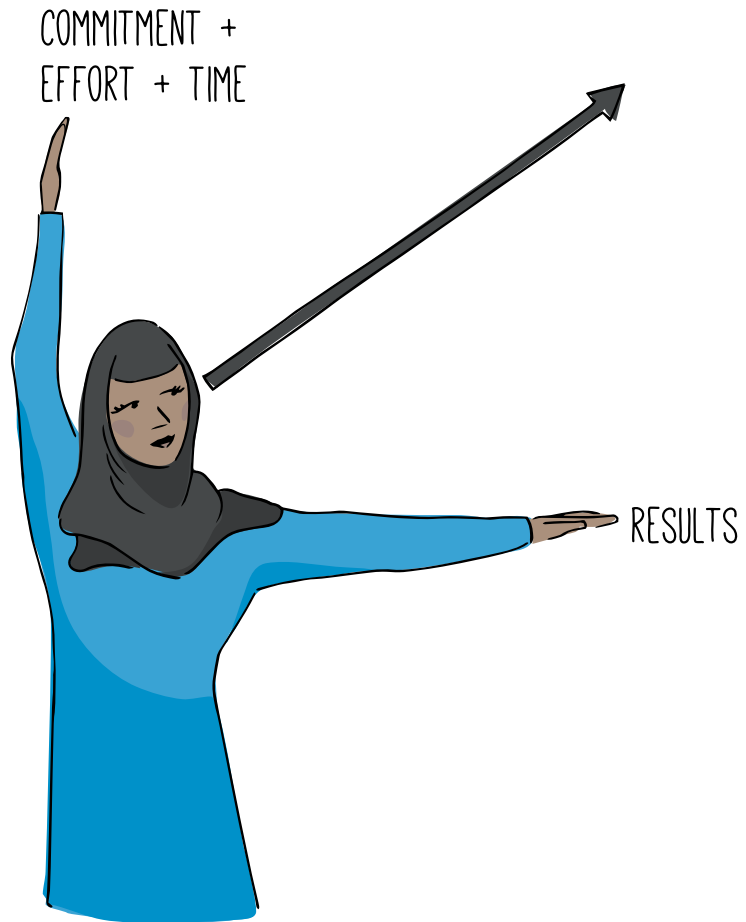


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## WORKING THE EDGE

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.

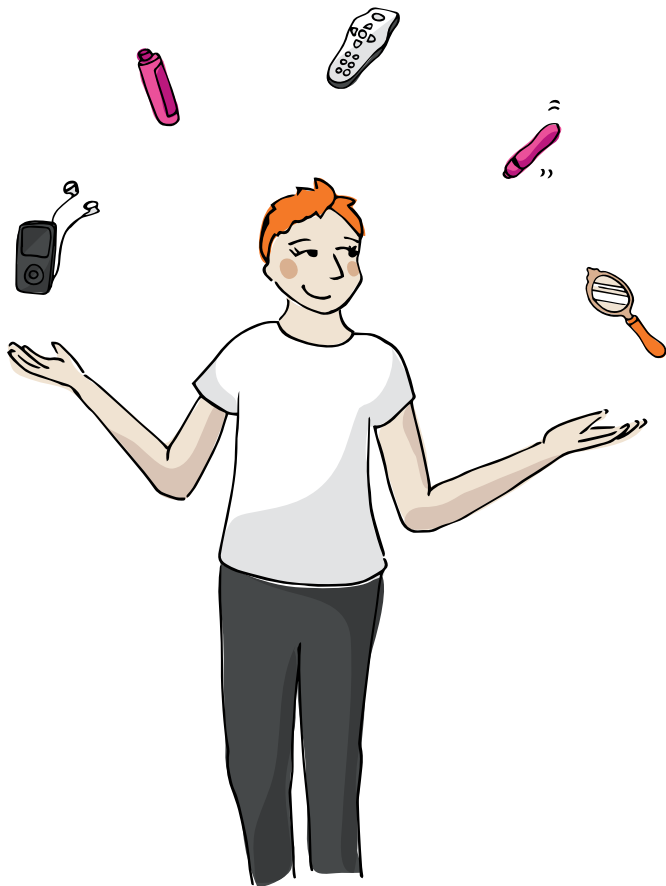




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## SEEING IMPROVEMENT

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.



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## CELEBRATING SMALL SUCCESSES

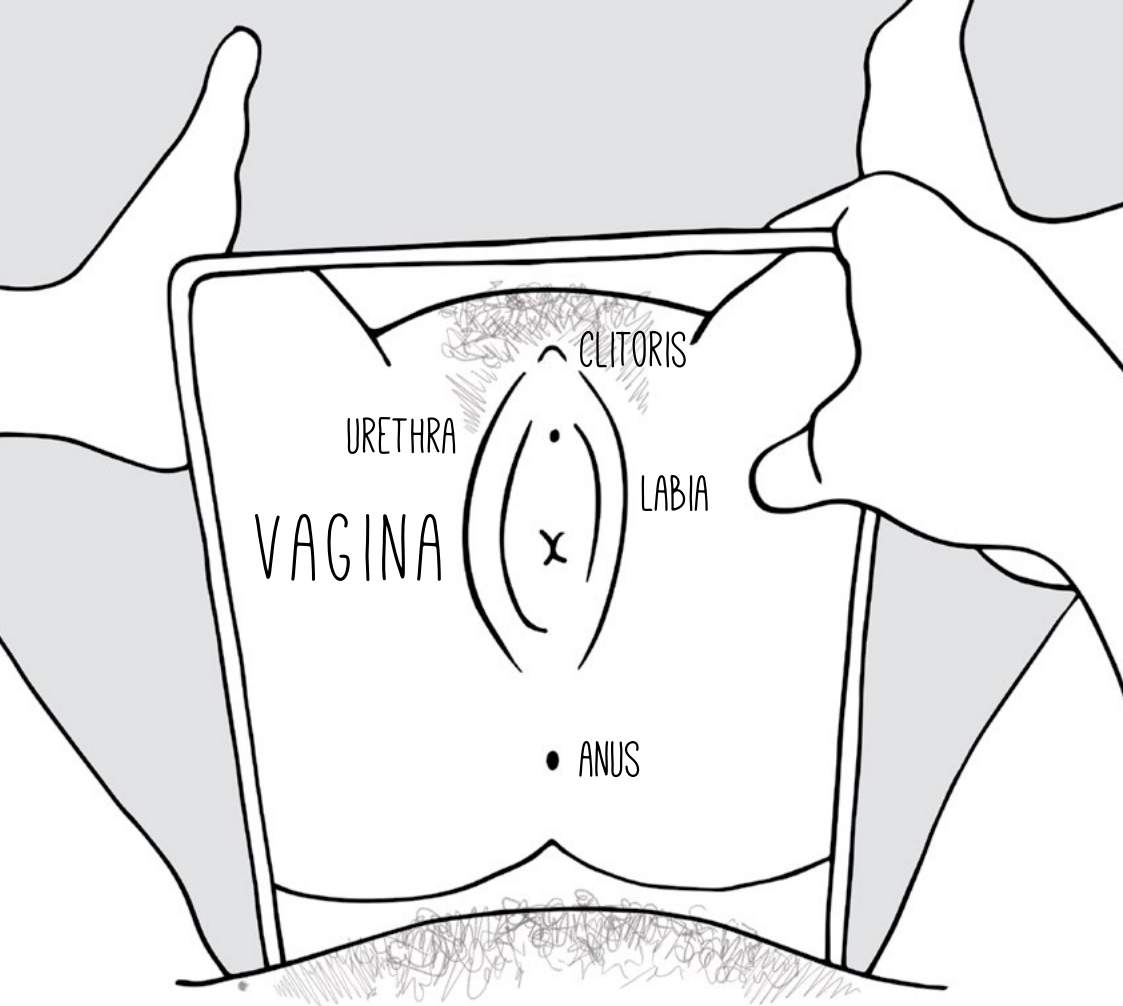
If you miss a day don't worry, just start again the next day. Celebrate all the times you do dilate and reward yourself - remember how far you've come

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## LETTING YOUR WORRIES GO

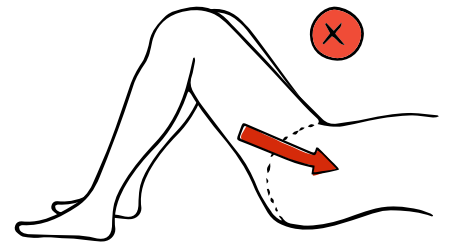
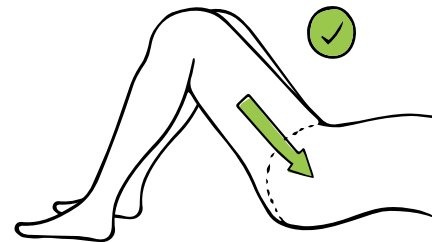
There will be points that are difficult and you may have worries or questions. The best thing to do is write everything down and discuss with people who can support you. Go back to your support map - you don't have to do it alone.





## MORE INFORMATION

Everyone's labia (folds of skin that enclose the urethra and vagina) look different. Your vagina which 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 has been created to guide young women through the process of dilation.

It has been developed by the team behind dsdteens.org and dsdfamilies.org (including Miriam Muscarella, Dr Nina Callens and Ellie Magritte). Designed and illustrated by Emily Tulloh.

We are grateful for the creative input and advice from health professionals and young women in the UK, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium and the USA. Particular thanks to Dr Lih-Mei Liao and the UCLH dilation team (London), to Dr Caroline Sanders (Liverpool) and to the dilation team in Edinburgh.

A version of this booklet is currently being trialled (Autumn 2015 - Winter 2016). If you would like your clinic to be part of the trial, or for any other information regarding this project, please contact:

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We welcome your feedback on all aspects of this booklet.