
Perineal Steams

There's a universal truth that's been found to be effective across cultures – Steam can support optimal pelvic health. Used by Maya healers and midwives, Bajos refer to a steam “down low,” this traditional use of steam supports both physical and emotional health.

Benefits of steaming

Through warming the perineum with herbal infused steam baths, chronic congestion can be addressed. Abdominal Therapy Practitioners have found that everyone benefits from this practice.

A steam softens pelvic floor muscles, stimulates circulation and brings nourishing blood flow to the pelvis.

Although traditionally used to support menstruation, fertility and post-partum healing, more recently, pelvic steams have been found useful in other ways. Including, but not restricted to, reducing undiagnosed pelvic floor pain, anal fissures, and hemorrhoids.

Abdominal Therapy practitioners who work in the medical field have reported those who have pelvic procedures experience greater ease and comfort if they've steamed beforehand.

What's in your steam?

You can use a single plant or a combination of three or four. Your practitioner can guide you to use plants from your area, or those which are readily available in your local store (organic if possible), either fresh or dried.

You'll need a double handful of fresh plants or a single handful if they are dried.

If you're able to pick your own, do so with reverence for the plant and the land from which you're harvesting. We encourage you to gather plants with intention for the healing you desire.

Most commonly used plants are:

- ⦿ Basil
- ⦿ Chamomile
- ⦿ Damiana
- ⦿ Dandelion
- ⦿ Horsetail
- ⦿ Marigold
- ⦿ Motherwort

- ⦿ Oregano
- ⦿ Red clover
- ⦿ Rose
- ⦿ Rosemary
- ⦿ St. John's wort
- ⦿ Yellow dock

When to steam

- ⦿ The week before your menses unless you suspect you are pregnant.
- ⦿ As you finish, or start your menses if there is light, brown spotting.
- ⦿ Before/after sex if intercourse is painful.
- ⦿ Before any pelvic examination/procedure.
- ⦿ During menopause.
- ⦿ Where Bartholin cysts are present.
- ⦿ Wherever there are signs of pelvic pain or congestion.

How to steam

There're many ways to steam your perineum. From the simple-bowl-in-the-toilet method, through to a specialized Korean spa steamer. Specially designed stools are available, or you can sit on the edge of a chair with your steam bowl beneath you. Whichever way you choose, make it easy and be comfortable.

You will need:

- ⦿ Water and herbs.
- ⦿ Blankets and towels to cover your lower body and keep yourself warm.
- ⦿ Saucepan large enough to hold about 2-3 lts/qts.
- ⦿ Large bowl into which you pour the hot, herbal infusion.

Preparation:

- ⦿ Choose a time of day which is calm, when you'll remain undisturbed.
- ⦿ Create an area that's warm and comforting. Maybe light a candle, burn some incense, or play that whale song CD!
- ⦿ Keep hydrated with water or your favourite tea.
- ⦿ You may like to journal, read a book or listen to an inspirational podcast.

What to wear:

Remove all under garments but keep your socks on. You want to be warm and comfortable.

Instructions:

- ⦿ Softly simmer your herbal mixture for 5 minutes then turn the heat off and let it steep for another five minutes or so with the lid on.
- ⦿ Take your herb filled saucepan and either place it under the chair/stool or pour the contents into a heat proof bowl that's placed inside your toilet and lower the toilet seat.
- ⦿ Check the temperature before you sit, you want it to be comfortable.
- ⦿ Once seated, tuck yourself in with blankets and create a 'tent' to keep the steam in.
- ⦿ Keep your top half warm and have socks and slippers on, particularly if you have a tiled floor.
- ⦿ Sit for around 15 –25 minutes, or as long as feels comfortable and whilst there's warmth coming from the steam.

Now rest...

- ⦿ Keep warm and preferably go to bed for 1 hour.
- ⦿ Resting afterwards is important so that blood that's been encouraged into the pelvic area can circulate back around the body completing the cleansing cycle.
- ⦿ Stay nice and cosy even if you have to get up after an hour to complete chores.
- ⦿ Traditional healers advise avoiding drafts the next day and to keep your abdomen warm.

Changes you might expect

- ⦿ You may feel rested and refreshed.
- ⦿ If menstruating, your next bleed might change in color and quality. This is not unusual and is in-fact a healthy sign.
- ⦿ You may feel emotional – ask for support and treat yourself gently.
- ⦿ You may want to journal your changes and share them with your practitioner.

Cautions and Contraindications

- ⦿ During your menstrual flow.*
- ⦿ During pregnancy.
- ⦿ During an active infection, such as Thrush or Herpes.
- ⦿ Don't use essential oils in your herbal mixture.

* If you have scanty menstrual flow you may be advised by your practitioner to steam at the beginning or end of menstruation.