



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

Hints and tips from a fellow sufferer and health professionals

# A DISCLAIMER

If you have been diagnosed with endometriosis, your Doctor, healthcare professional and or specialist should discuss all possible endometriosis treatments and support options available to to you.

**Please always consult your own Doctor, healthcare professional or specialist with any and all medical queries and before participating in any major dietary changes, lifestyle changes including that of exercise.**

There are many different types treatments available for endometriosis and it's symptoms, with the aim to reduce the severity of symptoms and improve the quality of life for a woman living with the condition. The type of treatment you receive or choose to take part in should only be decided in partnership between you and your Doctor, healthcare professional and or specialist.

**This PDF will not recommend / endorse / or advise any one particular treatment for endometriosis, nor offer any medical advice or medical aid.**

**It exists to simply offer and share support and ideas to people seeking help to manage their symptoms, based on their own individual experiences and appropriate to their individual circumstances. Remember, what can work well for one person, may not work for another.**

**Kaye Sedgwick-Jones is not a doctor nor do I claim to have any formal medical background. The health professionals featured in this FREE EBOOK are only trained in thier choosen field and will not recommend / endorse / or advise any one particular treatment for endometriosis.**

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# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

by Kaye Sedgwick-Jones (fellow sufferer)

Kaye Sedgwick-Jones (OhhhKaye) is a freelance illustrator and graphic designer from Kent UK. She is passionate about raising awareness of Endometriosis and women health.

Twitter: @kaye\_sedgwick      [www.ohhhkaye.co.uk](http://www.ohhhkaye.co.uk)

## MY STORY

I was diagnosed with endometriosis years 9 ago following 15 year wait of trying to find help in managing my cycle. I had been "fobbed off" by a variety of doctors and medical staff. Remarks such as "It's normal", "It's all in your head", "All lady's have it" and my particular favourite..."It will be better once you have had a baby" were received along with countless trials of analgesics, and anti-spasmodics.

As a young woman it was almost an embarrassment to admit how awful the symptoms were and I went to extreme lengths to disguise it from new friends I was making at further education and then university.

It affected me socially and emotionally. In September 2007, extremely debilitated from the constant pain, I suddenly came to the conclusion that could no longer work let alone continue to live this way and my GP finally sent me back to a Gynae. After a full history and an examination I was booked for both a Laparoscopy and Hysteroscopy. At no time was any suggestion made that endometriosis might be a cause. It was shocking to be still groggy from anaesthetic and to hear the Doctor asking if I have a partner and looking sad when I said "No". He then said it was "A case of sooner rather than later..." It dawned on me he was referring to my fertility and I suddenly felt numb. It was explained that after two and half hours of surgery, two very badly damaged ovaries, a D&C and extensive laser surgery, it was Stage 4 Endo.

Post surgery I had so many questions and I was left feeling angry, sad and lonely. After years of being told "It was nothing" I honestly expected them to find nothing.

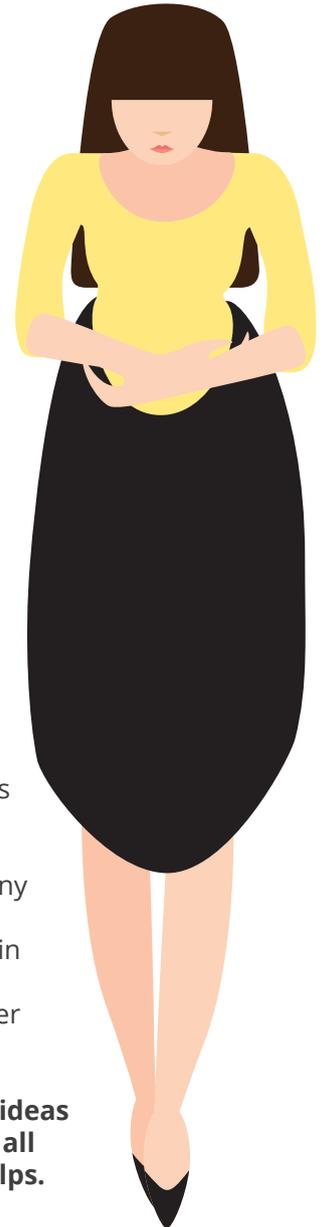
However, now there was a reason for my pain, it was not in my head nor was I feeble.

Now, I have a defiant attitude in living with this condition, its chronic pain and emotional stress; I will continue to be as strong as I can and not let endometriosis define me.

I'm learning to accept the diagnosis and finding ways to support others and as well as myself. **Hense this EBook!**

I have learnt a lot living with this condition over the years. I have also had the joy of meeting, talking and working with so many other #EndoSisters who have found ways to manage their pain as well as Doctors, Nurses and health practitioners from all over the world.

**So here is few hints, tips and ideas on #LivingWithEndo that can all be done at home. I hope it helps. Love Kaye x**



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS TALKING

Talking is a powerful tool in the fight with Endometriosis. It can not only help you emotionally, but it can also help those you love, people you work with and even help someone you don't know.

Here are three ways use talking when it comes to Endometriosis.

## RECEIVING SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING

Talk to your partner, your friends and your family about what it is like living with Endometriosis. BE HONEST.

Remember they DON'T know or can see how you feel. We ladies are good at hiding our pain, putting a brave face on things, but unless we tell someone what it is really like, they just can't start to understand. That is hard on them as well as you.

Tell them how you are struggling, but also tell them how they could help. Be honest with them that you might have limited energy, or bad pain days.

## AS A RELEASE

You can use talking as a way to release your fears, frustrations, tension, upsets. Try tell a close friend, or a family member or even someone like **Samaritans (UK 116 123)**. Just voice it out!

Tell them your struggling, that you need some help. Say if your angry, upset or confused. Just remember to "let it go" as you unburden yourself. Don't hold on to it.

If you feel you can't talk it out, try painting, drawing, dancing, singing, watch a silly film that makes you laugh... do whatever make YOU feel better afterwards.

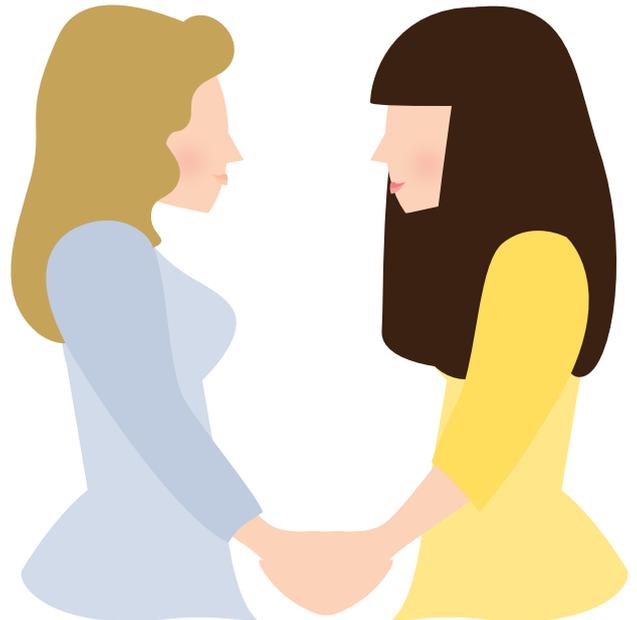
It is not selfish or weak to ask for help or to feel this way.

## A BAD CASE OF MENTIONITIS

Basically, mention Endometriosis, where and when you can. It is not dirty word. No one is going to get mad at you. Adopt a case of "Mentionitis" - drop it in to everyday conversations, tweet about it, may wear something to highlight it. Say, this is something you do know about.

We have a duty and a right to tell our story. Ask your friends if they have ever heard of endometriosis? If they haven't, tell them about it. Maybe by sharing your story, you inspire someone to share theirs. Maybe the person you talk to realises that maybe someone they love might have it too, as they recognize some of those symptoms you have just spoke about.

Maybe you will educate someone, maybe could you will help somebody. Who knows...



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)

For people with chronic pain and endometriosis the discomfort is very real, and they know all too well they feel it in their bodies, but it can take a toll on the mind as well.

*"If you are lying in bed and hurting, the pain is your whole world," - says Joseph Hullett, MD, board certified psychiatrist and senior medical director for OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions in Golden Valley, Minn. USA*

CBT has proven to be effective in reducing pain and disability when it is used as part of a therapeutic strategy for chronic pain.

People tend to go through the day going through an inner monologue. If your self-talk has become negative, then you can be 'talking yourself into' corresponding negative emotions and moods that leave you feeling bad and reinforce depression.

When we reframe, make a conscious effort to tell ourselves a different story. Instead of a negative interpretation, we interpret it in a more positive way.

Now, I know that sometimes life with endo isn't so great, but nevertheless, with some reframing, you might be able to have a different perspective on situations that might normally cause anxiety and stress which can add to the pain.

Look at you have done instead of what you haven't done! Even if it's small. Not too long ago, just getting out of bed and getting dressed was a bonus for me!

Smile, laugh and remember good things. It helps.

### HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF SELF-TALKING OR REFRAMING THAT I HAVE BEEN PLAYING WITH:

"My body is letting me down today, but yesterday was a good day and maybe tomorrow will be too!"

"I remember when I faced this situation in the past, that after a couple of days, everything got back to normal."

"I hurt today yes, but not as much as I have done in the past."

"You are doing your best, be proud of what you have done today."

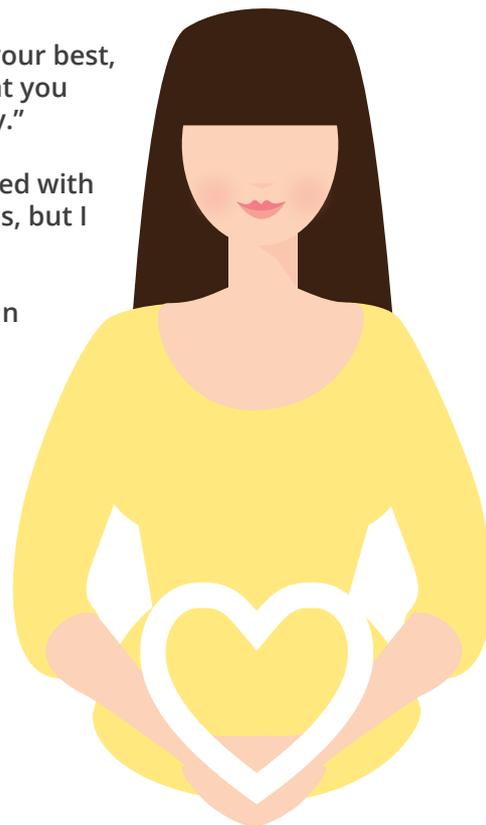
"Yes I'm frustrated with my body at times, but I don't HATE it."

"I am not alone in this."

"I am loved. Someone loves me. I must love me too"

"I am stronger than I know!"

"It will get better."



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## POSITIVE BREATH (CBT)

I find this REALLY helps me when the pain is bad and I feel stressed or overwhelmed.

If you can, try and do this in a quiet spot.

Some people can even find their “happy place” when doing this. I find after a while, I find myself mentally lying in a large field of long grass. The sun is warm on my face and I can smell the grass, hear the birds and animals, as well as sea somewhere in the distance.

I think I am in one of my memories. I think it is New Zealand. On a farm where I rode horse, counted sheep (really!) and gathered firewood off the nearby beach. I was happy there and mostly pain free there (thou there where a few really bad days).

Give it a go. See where it take you. It might be somewhere you know, it might be somewhere your subconscious makes up!

Just know it is a happy, safe and healthy place. Somewhere you want to go. Somewhere you can totally relax and be yourself. A healing place.

### HOW TO DO THIS:

Remember to try and stay positive. Take a deep, long, comfortable healing breath. Picture a warm, healthy glow (white, yellow or gold) traveling throughout your body as you breath in.

Start to center / direct it to where the pain is.

Imagine that warmth of the glow soothing the pain and adsorbing it. Slowly turning red, black, or brown as it draws the pain into it.

Then, when you breath out, take it slow.

Imagine the now dark glow (from absorbing the pain) is being pushed out of your body by the force of your breath, taking all the bad stuff with it.

Then repeat the steps again.

Try for 3 - 5 min at a time.



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## MOVING AROUND

Another form of releasing stress and a form of pain relief is with gentle exercise. Not only does it get you moving physically, it can offer you time to clear your head and shift the focus away from your body.

Gentle exercise and some relaxation techniques aid the release of endorphins. These are natural painkillers and help to elevate mood as well as strengthen the immune system.

A good form of gentle exercise is walking.

It doesn't have to be miles. Just a simple "up and down" the road, a lap around a local park or simply to your local shops and back can be enough.

You can choose to walk in silence, just take in what is around you. Listen to the birds, or the general sounds of life going on around you. Watch trees swaying, or stop to admire someone's garden.

Or maybe put an inspiring mix track on your iPod, walk to a soundtrack of your own making.

Or go with a friend or family member.

It is easy, safe and free to do.

### **BUT REMEMBER:**

Whatever exercise you choose, start slowly.

Doing too much too soon can be harmful.

Keep warm if it is very cold outside.

Keep hydrated. Drink plenty of water.

Wear comfortable clothes and shoes.

Any increased pain, STOP and consult your Doctor/health professional.



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## TREATING YOURSELF

Living with endometriosis can be exhausting, emotionally and physically. So it is good to be able to treat yourself.

This can be a treat you buy or simply just taking a bit of time out to spend on just you and your body.

### I TRY TO DO AT LEAST ONE OF THESE THINGS ONCE A MONTH:

#### TAKE A LUXURY BATH

Get out your favourite bath bomb or soak/salts. Run a nice warm bath. Light some candles. If possible, set up some relaxing tunes (I bought myself some small speakers for my iPod). Climb in, shut your eyes and just relax. If you have the energy, give yourself a good pamper. Use a body scrub, shave your legs, put a condition treatment in your hair, have a face/ body mask... Just focus on you.

#### HAVE A HOME SPA DAY

Get out fluffy towels, pop them on a towelrail and have a warm shower. Dry off and put on your dressgown. Then give yourself a little treatment. Try a facial mask or do your nails and toes! Keep it simple.

#### HAVE A REAL SPA DAY

If budget allows! I like to try and get a deep tissue massage once a month. It really helps with my stress levels, blood flow and energy. Lovely!

#### HAVE A HAIRCUT

Who doesn't feel better after a haircut! If you can find a salon that offers head massage / face massage along with your cut, even better! If you don't want a cut, look into having just a wash and blow dry. You should get the same 5\* treatment regardless.

#### GO OUT / TRAVEL

Doesn't have to be far. Maybe pop and see a friend. Or go into a city and take in an art gallery. Just leave the house. Even if it is for just a small amount of time.

#### DO SOMETHING YOU LOVE

Set aside some time to do an activity that brings you joy. This can be anything! I love to paint and go to the theatre. I don't do it enough.

Remember, you need to look after yourself **everyday as well**, even when you are feeling at your worst, try even the smallest thing:

#### ALWAYS HAVE A WASH OR A SHOWER

#### BRUSH YOUR HAIR

#### PUT ON YOUR FAVOURITE LIPPY

#### IF YOUR BLOATING:

Wear loose clothes,  
But not ugly ones!

Have something nice  
to wear on these  
days.



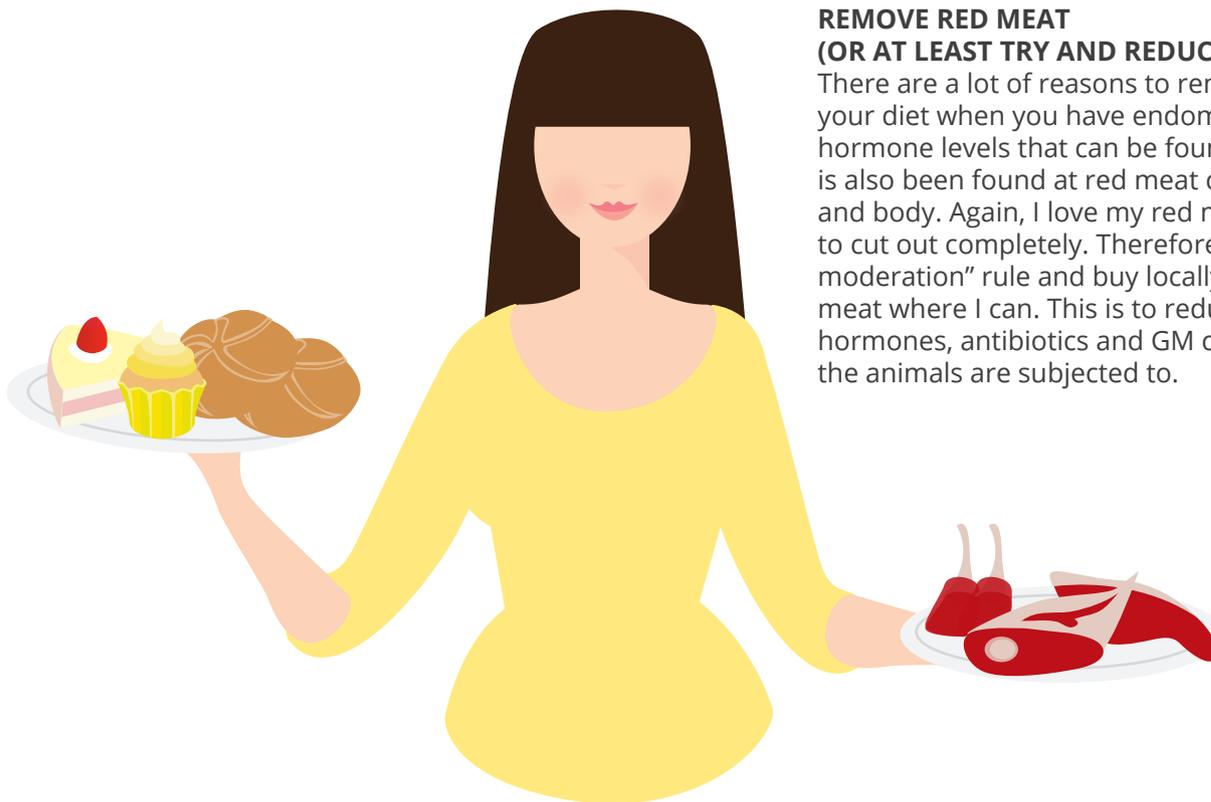
# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## DIET & DRINKS

I am not a dietician or nutritionist. I have read a lot about the subject and played about with what works for me in regards of food and drink.

I would always recommend you talk to a doctor or a specialist in these areas before undertaking anything drastic. However some small dietary changes can make a big difference in handling endometriosis symptoms and pain.

**HERE ARE JUST A FEW IDEAS ON DIET THAT HAVE WORKED FOR ME:**



### **REMOVE WHEAT (OR AT LEAST TRY AND REDUCE IT)**

Wheat has been found to have a lot of negative effects on many ladies with endometriosis. I myself bloat terribly and find that I get more pain after eating a lot of items containing wheat. If possible try and avoid, **Pasta, breads, cakes, pizzas, pastries**, to name just a few. I know this sounds very difficult! I myself love cake and bread and I have found it very hard to cut out completely. So I have tried to reduce my intake or replace items with a wheat free versions.

### **REMOVE RED MEAT (OR AT LEAST TRY AND REDUCE IT)**

There are a lot of reasons to remove red meat from your diet when you have endometriosis. From the hormone levels that can be found in the animal fats, it is also been found at red meat can cause inflammation and body. Again, I love my red meat, so find very hard to cut out completely. Therefore I have it in "strict moderation" rule and buy locally sourced and organic meat where I can. This is to reduce the level of hormones, antibiotics and GM crops found in the feed the animals are subjected to.

**TRY & EAT  
ORGANIC**

# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## DIET & DRINKS

### REMOVE DAIRY

#### (OR AT LEAST TRY AND REDUCE IT)

Like all animal proteins, dairy can increase the risk of inflammation, which can worsen your endo associated pains. Try cutting out of your diet where you can or maybe replacing it with Soya milk or even just going lactose free!

### ALCOHOL AND CAFFEINE

Caffeine is a tricky one as it has been found to increase oestrogen levels and stimulate endometriosis. Try and switch to decaf coffee and red and white Teas. If you do need a bit of a pick me up caffeine drink, make sure you drink plenty of water. This will help rehydrate you. I also find that Alcohol can cause me to feel worse regarding my endo symptoms. Again like caffeine, try and reduce your intake or stop completely. If you do have a glass or two, make sure plenty of water.

### SUGAR

This is a tough one. Again I have terrible sweet tooth, but I always tend to suffer if I've been naughty and had a binge worth of sugary sweets. Try cutting down how much artificial sugars you eat and supplemented with fresh fruit or natural sugars when the cravings hit!

### DRINK PLENTY OF WATER

I don't know it if there are any real healing powers in this. However, I find if I keep very hydrated, my pain levels are greatly reduced.

### FISH IS GOOD!

Omega 3 found in fish is super good for you as it contains anti-inflammatory properties. This of course is great news endometriosis sufferers. I love fish and again I try to get fish is locally sourced and as fresh as I can.

### GINGER

This little bit of root was my lifesaver when the pain and nausea was at its worst. I made tea with it, cooked with it, even sucked it raw! Do give it a try! I like to boil it in hot water and add a drop of honey as a nice tea, or add it to a light stir-fry dinner.

### FRESH FRUIT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Again try and get these fresh, in season and organic as you can, as this minimises the risk eating pesticides, toxins and other added chemicals. Try and get your five a day and if your struggling, why not try making smoothies and juices.



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## by Guest Authors (from around the world)

I have also had the joy of meeting, talking and working with so many other #EndoSisters who have found ways to manage their pain as well as Doctors, Nurses and health practitioners from all over the world.

I have tried everything that is mentioned in the following pages by the other authors.

Some of it works for me; Yoga, Diet, Tummy rubs, etc... Others do not.

Some of it I wish I had known before I spoke to Doctors. Some of it I still do everyday.

Whatever you choose to try, please always consult your own Doctor, healthcare professional or specialist with any and all medical queries and before participating in any major dietary changes, lifestyle changes including that of exercise.

Also remember, what can work well for one person, may not work for another.

So here are a few more hints, tips and ideas on #LivingWithEndo

**Please do get in touch and share your results or thoughts with me. I would love to hear from you.**

You can also contact /learn about each author by the links provided in their bio!

I hope it helps. Love Kaye x  
Twitter: @kaye\_sedgwick    hello@ohhhkaye.co.uk

Everything mentioned here can be done at home, and in your own time.

Things mentioned here only address treating the symptoms of endometriosis and not the endometriosis itself.

### AUTHORS

**Becca Wilcox** I'm a gynaecology staff nurse, Endometriosis-UK support group leader & advocate

**Katie McIntosh** Wife / Fur Mama / Aquaholic / Pinterest Addict / Endo Warrior / Free Spirit / Traveller / Dreamer / Nature Lover / Kind of Funny  
Visit [www.thekatieshowblog.com](http://www.thekatieshowblog.com)

**Antonia Boyton** is a 40 something year old woman who was diagnosed with endometriosis in 1994. Visit [www.antoniam-boyton.net](http://www.antoniam-boyton.net) for more about her endometriosis story.

**Helen Kasselov** is a yoga teacher and yoga therapist and the founder of "Healing from within with yoga & food" (former Yoga for Endometriosis & Pelvic pain). Visit [www.endoyoga.com](http://www.endoyoga.com) to learn more.

**Heba Shaheed** is a women's health coach and physiotherapist. She specializes in pelvic and sexual pain and is the founder of The Pelvic Expert. Visit [www.thepelvicexpert.com](http://www.thepelvicexpert.com) to learn more.

# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## PREPARING FOR AN APPOINTMENT

**Becca Wilcox** I'm a gynaecology staff nurse, Endometriosis-UK support group leader & advocate. I was diagnosed with endometriosis in 2010. Raising awareness is really important for this disease and gradually society is beginning to understand the challenges people with endometriosis face. I'm really passionate about people with endometriosis getting the right information and support.

Talking to a health professional about your symptoms and asking for help can be quite nerve-wracking.

It can be easy to go in with an idea of what you want to discuss, but find yourself leaving the appointment barely remembering the conversation or the important details of the plan.

### **IF YOU ARE SEEING A DOCTOR/CONSULTANT FOR THE FIRST TIME YOU CAN PREPARE BY WRITING DOWN THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS:**

1. How old were you when you started your period?
2. How long does your cycle last (28 days, or is it irregular)?
3. How heavy is your period?
4. If you have pain during your period, where is the pain and how would you describe the nature of the pain?
5. Do you have pain at other times of the month (when you aren't menstruating)? When?
6. Do you have pain during sexual intercourse? Would you say the pain is deep or superficial (do you feel the pain at the entrance of the vagina or is it higher up)?

7. Do you experience pain when opening your bowels? If so, is this during your period or at other times of the month, or both?

8. Have you had trouble conceiving and if you haven't had children – would you like to?

9. Have you been experiencing any of the following: low mood, fatigue, nausea or bloating?

10. Do you find yourself cancelling arrangements with friends due to symptoms?

11. Do you have prolonged sickness leave from work due to symptoms?



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Whether you have been diagnosed in the past or you are going through the diagnostic process, it may help to write a list of previous and current medications you have been on (hormones or contraceptives, pain relief) and any previous surgeries.

### **PAIN AND BLEEDING DIARY**

It is also helpful to keep a small pain and bleeding diary to give the doctor an idea of how often these occur.

Chart down the days you have pain and score it from 0-10 (0 being no pain and 10 being the worst pain) and describe the nature of the pain (sharp, dull, aching, stabbing, intermittent, tugging, dragging etc.).

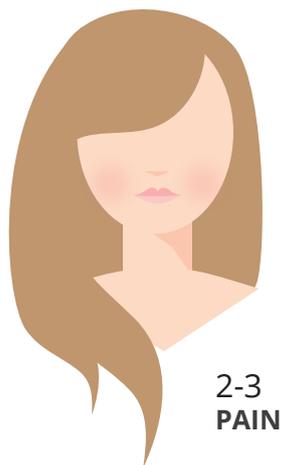
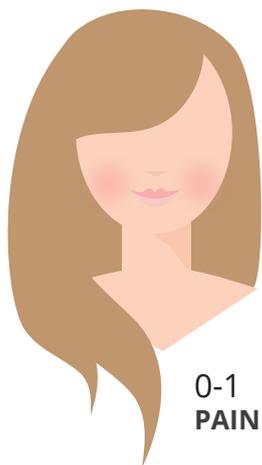
Chart down how long your periods are and how heavily you bleed. Do you need to change your sanitary product 1, 2, 3 or 4 hourly? Do you pass clots?

### **INTERNAL EXAMINATIONS:**

It is possible that the doctor may want to examine you internally. This may include a speculum examination and a digit examination (inserting a finger vaginally).

This can give the doctor a lot more information, because if you have endometriosis nodules they may be felt behind the vagina, and they can assess which areas of the pelvis are tender to touch.

If you find speculum examinations painful, tell the doctor beforehand because they may be able to use a smaller speculum for your comfort.



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## THE HEALTHY BLADDER HABITS

**Heba Shaheed** is a women's health coach and physiotherapist. She specializes in pelvic and sexual pain and is the founder of The Pelvic Expert. Visit [www.thepelvicexpert.com](http://www.thepelvicexpert.com) to learn more.

Having good bladder and bowel habits goes a long way in reducing pain associated with endometriosis. A lot of women suffering from endometriosis often experience bladder and bowel issues in addition to their pain.

Some of the common bladder symptoms include urgency, which is a feeling of busting to go to the bathroom, frequency, incontinence, bladder pain or pain whilst urinating.

### **GOOD BLADDER HABITS INCLUDE:**

Sit with your back neutral, looking straight forwards and leaning slightly forwards at the hips. Have your knees wide and feet flat on the floor, resting your hands on your knees.



### **REMEMBER:**

Always sit on the toilet.  
Do not hover or perch to urinate.

Always take your time to urinate.

Relax your belly and your pelvic floor to urinate.

Don't ever strain or push to urinate.

After you finish urinating, wipe front to back.

Avoid going to empty your bladder "just in case".

Drink 1.5-2L of fluid per day. If you are exercising, you should drink more.

Avoid drinking too much as this can overload your kidneys and bladder.

Avoid drinking 2-3 hours before bed if you are waking up from sleep because of the need to empty your bladder.

Eliminate bladder irritants such as: carbonated drinks, artificial sweeteners, smoking, caffeine and alcohol.

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## PAIN AND BLEEDING DIARY

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Have a think about what you would like to achieve with the appointment and what you would like as an outcome.

Write down any questions you may have. Take a notebook so that you can write things down that are discussed.

### REMEMBER:

When being referred by your GP to a specialist, you have the option in the UK to choose which hospital and applicable team you would like to be referred to for your outpatient appointment.

<http://www.nhs.uk/choiceintheNHS/Yourchoices/consultant-choice/Pages/choosing-a-consultant.aspx>

If you are unhappy with the plan set in your appointment, you can always seek a second opinion.



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## MAKING TIME FOR YOURSELF

**Katie McIntosh** is a Wife / Fur Mama / Aquaholic / Pinterest Addict / Endo Warrior / Free Spirit / Traveller / Dreamer / Nature Lover / Kind of Funny - her words! Visit [www.thekatieshowblog.com](http://www.thekatieshowblog.com) to learn more.

I want to share a little something about me. I have Endometriosis.

I feel a strong urge to share for the simple reason that when I was going through the diagnosis and researching how to manage the illness, I found stories from others incredibly helpful. Knowing I wasn't alone and learning from others about how they manage the illness was both comforting and useful.

When you have Endometriosis then you probably know that some (or most) days, it is hard enough to get through the day let alone get out and about on an adventure.

Hell, sometimes it is a big enough struggle to get myself dressed and ready for an adventure and I feel like I need taking a power nap after my getting ready!

It's a drain being ill all the time and the worst part is that on the outside you look pretty normal don't you?

All the while there is a constant war being waged on your insides making the simplest things suddenly very challenging.

\*If you don't have access to the Sea/Ocean try going to swimming pool.

Making the time to get out and do things you love when you have Endometriosis is certainly not easy, however it is one of my coping strategies.

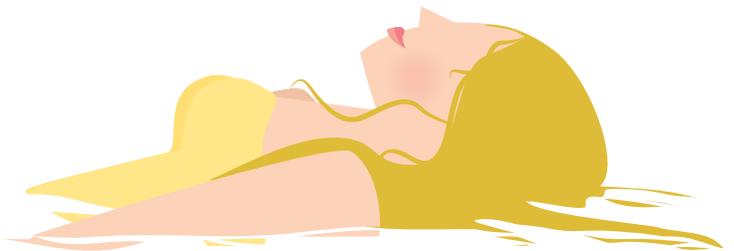
I love the outdoors, so for me venturing out and about in the great outdoors always makes me feel better - especially being in the ocean\*.

Not only is it my happy place but perhaps the buoyancy helps to take away my heavy, bloated feeling for a little while as I float through the salt water!

For me, getting out into nature is better than all the medication sitting on top of my fridge.

**THE BEST ADVICE I HAVE FOR SOMEONE WITH THIS DISEASE IS TO FIND SOMETHING YOU LOVE TO DO AND BE SURE TO MAKE TIME FOR IT.**

You already struggle enough so this little reward is needed to keep balance in your life.



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

**Antonia Boyton** is a 40 something year old woman who was diagnosed with endometriosis in 1994. She has always tried to help raise awareness alongside others and in a past life volunteered for Endometriosis UK, a charity which is very dear to her heart. Visit [www.antonio-boyton.net](http://www.antonio-boyton.net) for more about her endometriosis story.

Being in pain all of the time is exhausting. It makes it all the more so when you haven't had any sleep.

Insomnia is horrible; insomnia when added to the pain and misery of endometriosis can sometimes be unbearable.

What you have to try to remember, is that no matter how long and lonely the night is, morning will come & with it, your friends and family.

If you can't sleep try not to worry. The worst possible thing is to lie there in the dark, twiddling your thumbs.

### THINGS TO TRY:

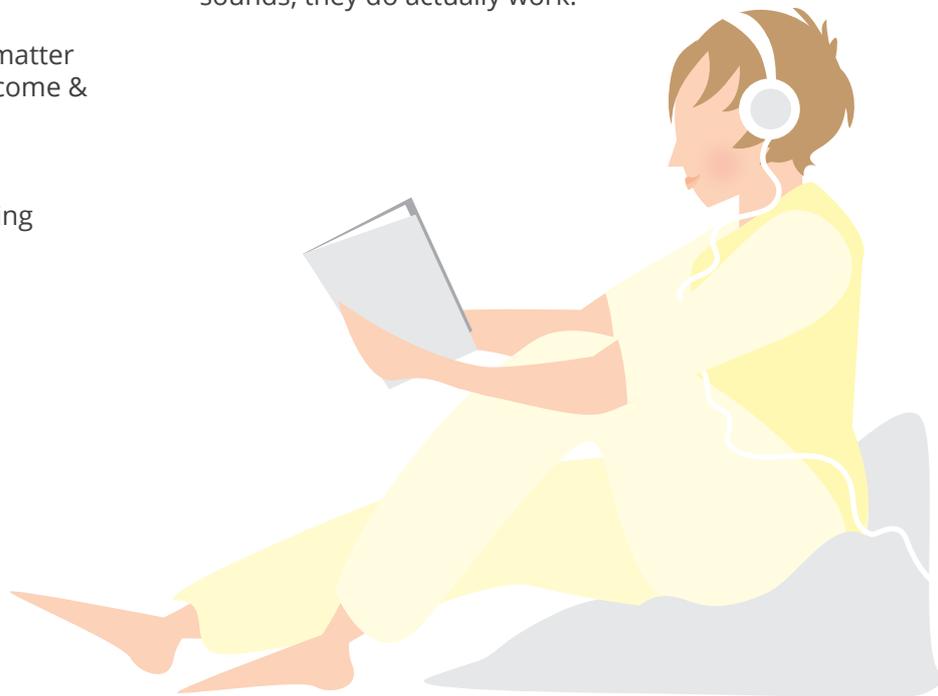
#### READING:

Read a good book. Try not read on the screen. Blue light from electronic devices can awake up your system and can stimulate your brain.

#### LISTEN TO CALMING MUSIC:

It doesn't matter too much what it is, but nothing try and keep it calming. Maybe something classical or new age.

Binaural beats and nature sounds are all available to download from App stores these days and crazy as it sounds, they do actually work.



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

**Antonia Boyton** is a 40 something year old woman who was diagnosed with endometriosis in 1994. She has always tried to help raise awareness alongside others and in a past life volunteered for Endometriosis UK, a charity which is very dear to her heart. Visit [www.antonía-boyton.net](http://www.antonía-boyton.net) for more about her endometriosis story.

### **AROMATHERAPY:**

A huge saviour of mine has been using aromatherapy oils. I have always bought essential oils and I have started buying oils from Neal's Yard. They do a lovely arnica and seaweed bubble bath, which is great for when I'm tired and in pain. A long soak in a warm bath always makes me feel better and sends me off to sleep afterwards.

Aromatherapy only works if you use essential oils. I know that they can be expensive but they're worth every penny. Pillow sprays, roll-ons for pulse points and burner oils are all much easier to buy thanks to online shopping. Neal's Yard, SpaceNK and Cowshed (to name but a few) all sell aromatherapy oils to help aid sleep.

### **POWER NAPS:**

One last piece of advice (from a pain management doctor & one that really works) is this: If you need to have an afternoon nap or a rest before going out, set your alarm so that it wakes you within an hour. If you sleep for more than an hour you get into REM sleep & thus feel much worse when waking up from your nap.

If you sleep for 45-60 minutes you wake up feeling refreshed and rested.

### **HAVE A WARM DRINK:**

At this time of year I tend to make myself a warm milky drink when I'm unable to sleep and find it helps when taking painkillers in the middle of the night.

Warm milk has a chemical in it which in turn helps us sleep. As much as I like warm milk, I prefer it when it has something added, whether it be hot chocolate or Horlicks.

And if you don't like milk, there's always herbal tea instead. Brands such as Clipper, Pukka and Joe's Tea Co. have all come up with some really nice blends of teas especially produced to help promote sleep.



# YOGA AND ENDOMETRIOSIS

## Helen Kaslove (Yoga Teacher - Sweden)

Helen Kaslov is a yoga teacher and yoga therapist and the founder of "Healing from within with yoga & food" (former Yoga for Endometriosis & Pelvic pain).

Twitter: @EndoYoga      [www.endoyoga.com](http://www.endoyoga.com)

[www.facebook.com/YogaForEndometriosis](http://www.facebook.com/YogaForEndometriosis)

[www.youtube.com/user/endoyoga](http://www.youtube.com/user/endoyoga)

Helen has a history of severe endometriosis and is today helping women with endometriosis, PCOS, uterine fibroids and other pelvic pain online with yoga, nutrition and other lifestyle changes.

Using yoga both as a tool in different kinds of healing programs, pain management, yoga has become the foundation in her work.

### HER STORY

Yoga can help you in so many ways: Physically, mentally, spiritually and as a personal development tool. Yoga has totally changed my life in so many ways!

I've been teaching yoga since 2008 and am certified in the well known Institute for Medical Yoga in Sweden. Well at least in Sweden it's well known since this yoga form is in many workplaces and health care centers in Sweden.

I've had endometriosis since I was 18 and have been successful of treating it with yoga, food & other life style changes. I know how it feels to have super intense pain. I've been there.

I help thousands of women all over the world with yogic tools. I hear all the time what difference my work do to all this people.

That keeps me going and makes me happy.



# YOGA POSES THAT HELPS YOU WITH YOUR ENDOMETRIOSIS PAIN

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The first yoga pose I want to teach you, is the long deep breathing technique. **This is a technique that is so important that you need to learn it first of all.**

You will use it in the yoga poses and often in meditations. We tend to breathe way too shallow and don't get down our breath all the way to the lower parts of the lungs, especially when you are in pain.

Breathing deeper and more complete increases the oxygen and also affects the parasympathetic nervous system that turns you into a more relaxed and balanced state very fast. Your muscles relax and your mind becomes calmer.

So what happens is that the stress hormones decrease and the feel-good hormones increase. Using good breathing techniques can affect your whole system!

So use this breathing technique on a regular basis and when you have pain.

## HOW TO DO THIS POSE:

Lie flat on your back, or sit in easy pose (cross legged). Place one hand on the navel point and the other hand on your chest, the rib cage, so you can feel the movement when you breathe. Always inhale and exhale through your nostrils. The Long Deep Breathing consists in three parts:

### 1. Abdomen

Inhale steadily through the nostrils, filling the lower part of your lungs first. Your Abdomen will push out, feel it with your hand. Exhale and the abdomen sink down again.

### 2. Chest, ribcage

Inhale and fill the middle part of the lungs, pushing out the lower ribs, breastbone and chest, feel with your hand that the ribcage is expanded. Exhale, chest sinks down again.

### 3. Collarbone

Put your hand on the chest close to the collarbone. Inhale deeply, fill the next highest part of the lungs, expanding and lifting the upper chest, and the upper six or seven pairs of ribs and collarbones. Exhale and the collarbones sink down.

Put these three parts together so it becomes only one smooth, continuous motion - the Long Deep Breathing: After you have exhaled wait a couple of seconds until you inhale again. Let the body decide when it's time to inhale again.

Continue to breathe long and deeply as long as you want. 5-10 min a day is great!



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## WIND RELEASE

Wind release pose is exactly what it sounds like. Very good to do if you need to release some wind. (Having gas can also give you pain.)

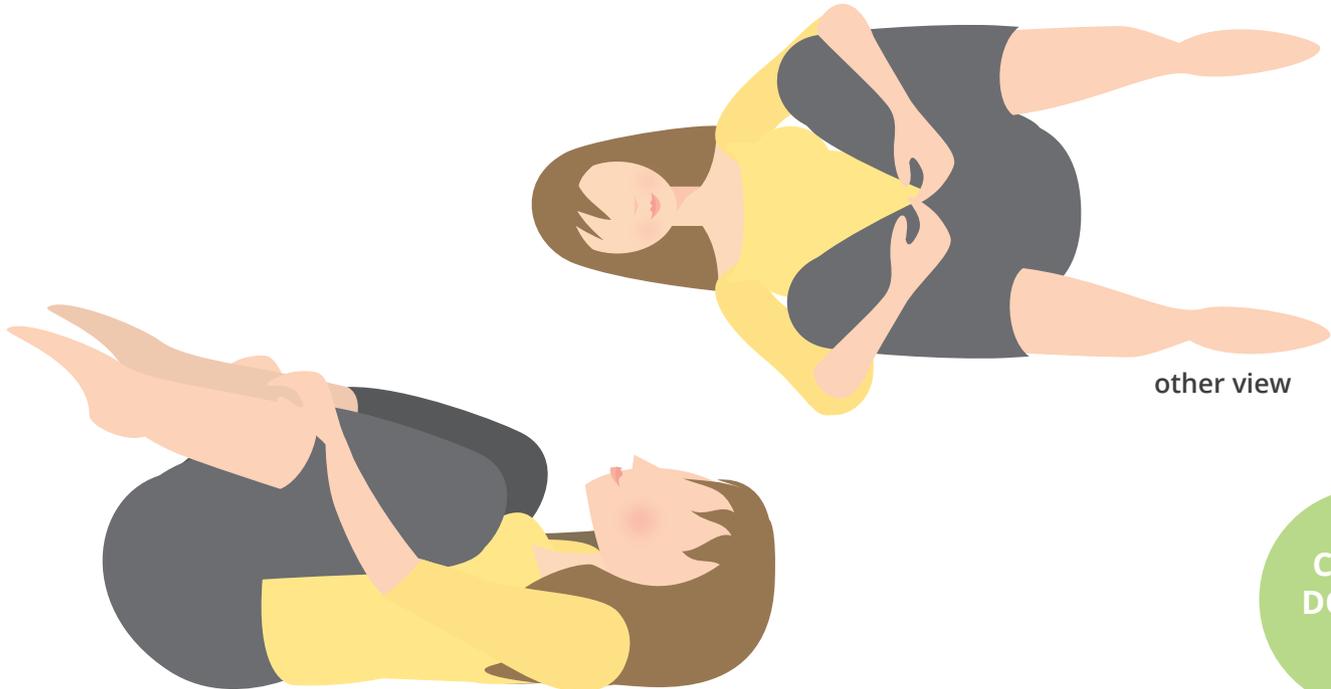
This is also a wonderful pose to do if you have endometriosis pain. It can be nice lying down when the pain is intense.

## HOW TO DO THIS POSE:

Lie down on you back on the floor or in the bed.

Pull down your knees to your chest with your legs wide apart and wrap your arms around your knees. Breathe long and deeply.

Continue as long as you need.



CAN BE  
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BED

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## SQUATTING POSE

Squatting is a yoga pose I use a lot in my programs. I found out by trying this pose, myself, that it's really great to do when you have menstrual cramps and endometriosis pain.

I know that many have a problem sitting in squatting pose, so therefore I'll also give you some modifications here.



## HOW TO DO THIS POSE:

From a standing position with your legs apart, squat down and maintain that position. The toes should be straight forward and your spine as straight as possible.

Pull in your chin so you get the straight line from your spine up in the neck. If you need to make any adjustment with your legs to be as comfortable as possible you can do that. Wrap your arms around your knees and breathe long and deeply. Feel so you breathe all the way down to your belly.

Sit in this pose for 1 min to 3 min. You can also sit longer if you want.

## Modifications:

If you find this pose difficult you can do some changes as below.

1. Place a pillow or folded towel under your heels. Many experience that it feels like you are falling backward in this position. To place something under your heels can help you with this.
2. Lean against a wall or sit on the sofa. This will also help you to sit more comfortable. If it still is difficult to do this pose (don't worry it is for many) go to the next pose instead.

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## GODDESS POSE

Pelvis opener or Goddess pose as it also is called is also good if you have pain. As the squatting pose it helps to open up in the pelvis region and increases the blood circulation there.

You can do this pose in different ways. Try it out and make it as comfortable as possible.

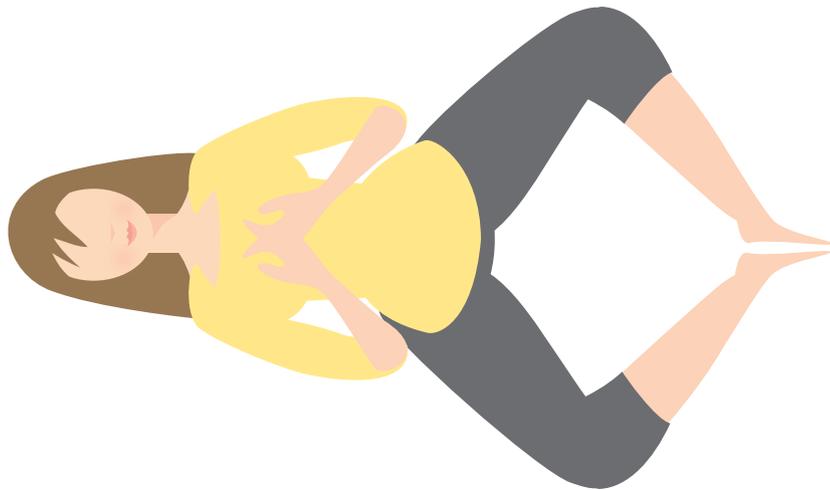
## HOW TO DO THIS POSE:

Lying down on your back, place the soles of your feet together as close to the body as possible (picture a)

Adjust the feet until you feel comfortable, it should not be painful. Tuck in some pillows under your knees and legs if necessary.

Modified version: Cross your legs (picture b).

Place your hands on your belly and breathe long and deeply.



(b - Legs)

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## BABY POSE

Baby pose is a very soothing and relaxing yoga pose.

It is sometimes used as a resting pose in between the other poses and can act as a counter pose for poses that are in the opposite direction (like cobra pose).

It helps you to relax, calms the nervous system, stretches out the lower back, the hips and thighs.

## HOW TO DO THIS POSE:

Sit on your heels. Spread your knees, leaving room for your belly if necessary.

Lean forward and rest your head on the floor. Relax your arms by your side, near your feet, palm facing upward.

You can also extend your arms upward to stretch your spine.

Long Deep Breathing 1-3 min.

You can use pillows under your buttocks or forehead to make it more comfortable.



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## COBRA POSE

If it is uncomfortable you can tuck in a pillow between your legs close to the hollow of your knees.

You can also put a pillow under your feet or knees.

Try different ways to support until you have found it comfortable.

## HOW TO DO THIS POSE:

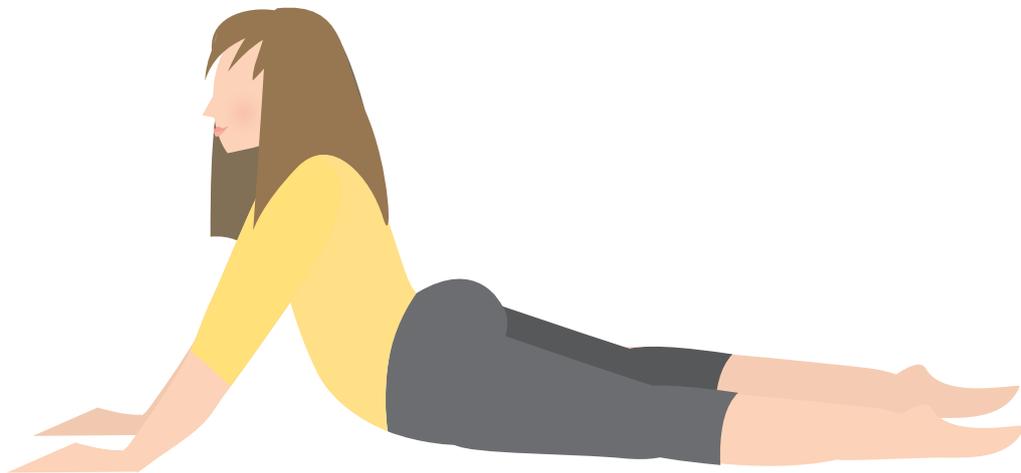
Lie on your belly and place your hands under your shoulders with your elbows by your side.

Inhale as you lift your head and shoulders, pressing your hips into the floor and tightening your buttock muscles.

Using your hands as support, arch your back up, keeping your feet as close together as possible.

Gently stretch your neck and focus on your third eye point. Breathe long and deeply. 1-3 minutes.

**Cobra modified:** If you are stiff in your lower back you can do it like this instead: Set your elbows under your shoulders and your forearms on the floor parallel to each other. Inhale and lift your upper torso and head away from the floor into a mild backbend. Long deep breathing 1-3 minutes.



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## ROCK POSE

Another great pose to do when you have pain is sitting on your heels in the "rock pose". This pose helps the blood circulation in the pelvis and is also good for digestion.

## HOW TO DO THIS POSE:

Start kneeling on both knees, with the tops of the feet on the ground.

Sit back on the heels.

Keep the spine straight.

Breathe long and deeply.

**Modification:** If it is uncomfortable you can tuck in a pillow between your legs close to the hollow of your knees. You can also put a pillow under your feet or knees. Try different ways to support until you have found it comfortable.



# MEDITATION TO BALANCE YOUR HORMONES

**Helen Kaselov** is a yoga teacher and yoga therapist and the founder of "Healing from within with yoga & food" (former Yoga for Endometriosis & Pelvic pain). Visit [www.endoyoga.com](http://www.endoyoga.com) to learn more.

Meditations are always included in her yoga programs. They always have a purpose and there are different kinds of meditations. In this meditation you are going to breathe in a specific breathing pattern, sit in a mudra (hand and finger position) and you also repeat a mantra mentally.

This is a very powerful meditation that is said to work on your endocrine system, that is so important for you hormonal balance. It is very good to practice this meditation before going to bed. If you do it in the morning or other time of the day, make sure you rest a while afterward.



## HOW TO DO THIS POSE:

Sit in easy pose or on a chair. Sit with your spine straight and pull in your chin slightly so you get that straight line from your spine up to your neck.

Bring your hands together in front of your chest at heart level. The palms facing up and your hands formed like a bowl, the sides of the hands and the pinkie fingers together. The other fingers are separated not touching each other.

Focus on the tip of your nose with your eyes slightly opened (1/10th). It can take a couple of minutes until you get used to this. If this is too difficult for you, you can focus on the third eye point, the point in between your eye brow.

Form your mouth into an O, and slowly inhale through your mouth. When you have inhaled fully, hold the breath for 5 seconds. Exhale through your nostrils in four segments. And as you do that, think the mantra SA TA NA MA each segment. When you have exhaled, hold the breath out for 2-3 seconds.

And continue in this breathing pattern. Notice so your shoulders are relaxed. Continue for 5 - 31 minutes. Start slowly and build up your practice over time.

(SA TA NA MA represents the cycle of life and is a very common mantra in kundalini yoga and Mediyoga.)

# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## BOWEL MASSAGE

**Heba Shaheed** is a women's health coach and physiotherapist. She specializes in pelvic and sexual pain and is the founder of The Pelvic Expert. Visit [www.thepelvicexpert.com](http://www.thepelvicexpert.com) to learn more.



### DO SOME ABDOMINAL SELF-MASSAGE TO HELP STIMULATE THE BOWEL EVERY NIGHT:

Massage in large circles clockwise over your whole abdomen.

Massage inwards from your ribs to 1 inch above your belly-button. Repeat 3 times each side.

Massage downwards from your sternum to 1 inch above your belly-button. Repeat 3 times.

Massage upwards from your pubic bone to 1 inch below your belly-button. Repeat 3 times.

Massage inwards from your groin to 1 inch below your belly-button. Repeat 3 times each side.

Massage in small circles clockwise around your belly-button.

Finish off with massage in large circles over your whole abdomen.

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## THE HEALTHY BOWEL HABITS

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Having good bladder and bowel habits goes a long way in reducing pain associated with endometriosis. A lot of women suffering from endometriosis often experience bladder and bowel issues in addition to their pain.

Some of the common bowel symptoms include constipation, diarrhoea, straining, painful bowel movements abdominally, painful bowel emptying, spasms, bloating and gas. Many women with endometriosis also suffer from irritable bowel syndrome.

### **GOOD BOWEL HABITS:**

Always sit in the correct position to defecate – this position allows the pelvic floor muscles that loop around the rectum to relax so that the bowel motion can come through easily:

1. Sit forwards on the toilet with legs wide and your thighs and feet well supported (can have some phone books or a stool under the feet to bring knees higher than hips).
2. Lean forwards with a straight back with forearms resting on your thighs.
3. **Bulge:** Allow abdomen to relax and fall out sideways, forwards and backwards. Pretend you have swallowed a beach ball. You should feel a release around your anus.

Try to get into a habit of sitting in this position every morning until it becomes regular.

### **REMEMBER:**

Always take your time. Do not rush.

Relax your belly and your pelvic floor.

Don't ever strain.

Stay active e.g. walking, yoga.

Drink 1.5-2L of fluid per day.  
If you are exercising, you should drink more.

Eat lots of fruit, vegetables and fibre.  
You should have at least 35-45 grams of fibre per day.

Eliminate bowel irritants which may include gluten, dairy, soy, refined sugar and high FODMAP foods.

After you finish, wipe front to back.



# LIVING WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS

## THE BLADDER - URGES

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**IF YOU EXPERIENCE URGENCY TRY THESE URGE SUPPRESSION STRATEGIES TO CALM THE URGE, AND THEN PROCEED TO THE TOILET IN A CALM MANNER:**

Sit down.

Deep breathing (relaxed breath in through the nose and out through the lips).

Distraction techniques: e.g. count back from 100 by 7, Sudoku, shopping list; positive self-talk e.g. "I can wait", "I can take control".

Stand up onto your toes tightening your calf muscles and/or curl toes.

Clenching or tightening your buttocks.

Using your hand apply pressure to the perineum (between vagina and anus).

Or sit on the arm of a chair or the corner of a table.

Or cross your thighs in sitting or standing.

