

How to Make Bottoming Easier: Tips and Tricks For Safe Anal Sex

them.us/story/tips-and-tricks-for-safe-anal-sex

Matt Baume



Bottoming isn't everything when it comes to queer sex, but it certainly is *something*. For some, it's a gateway to enormous amounts of pleasure and a way to enact deeply held fantasies. For others, it's a no-go, whether because anal sex can sometimes be painful or unpleasant, because of the unique way their body works, or simply because they prefer other kinds of sex. But if you're open to it and able, there's great pleasure to be had when inviting penetration, whether you're playing with a longtime partner, a new friend, or yourself.

As with any position, there are some challenges to bottoming effectively. Bottoming can expose you to certain infections and injuries if you're not careful. And like any sexual encounter, communication is key to avoiding hurt feelings, not to mention physical pain. In other words, bottoming isn't always easy — but there are ways to make it easier. To really maximize the experience, you'll want to be sure you prepare a bit ahead of time, set some expectations, and, of course, practice vigorous consent.

That's not to say that bottoming is more work than fun! It should be a delight for everyone involved, and if you [check out *them*'s guide on how to bottom](#), you'll be ready to have a thrilling time with your butt.

But if you're looking to troubleshoot, improve the experience, or take it to the next level, read on for best practices to make better use of time, improve your pleasure, and avoid taking any unnecessary risks.

How Do I Get Ready to Bottom?

Bottoming can happen anywhere, at any time. But if you suspect the opportunity might present itself ahead of time, you can improve the experience with a little preparation, both emotionally and physically.

One of the best ways to relieve whatever stress or performance anxiety you might have is to know your HIV status ahead of time. You [can get tested at a free clinic](#) in most major cities or take a mail-in self-test (which are often offered free, too — check out the [CDC's guide to self-testing here](#)). Communicate openly about your status, and if your partner doesn't know their own, let them know that you're looking forward to playing once they do. Part of your conversation should include your plans for condom use. Consider starting [PrEP](#) as well, a daily or event-based medication that can prevent new HIV infections in those who are HIV negative.

The communication doesn't stop there. If you've bottomed before, you know that it can be a delicate process, and you'll want to make sure you talk a bit ahead of time about what you like or what you want to try. Make sure your partner understands your boundaries and is OK with stopping if either of you need to take a break.

Talking about your hard limits will prevent any unpleasant surprises. And talking about your fantasies can be a fun way to get in the mood! Don't be afraid to go into detail about what you think would be fun to try, from positions to accessories to role-play.

If possible, you'll want to practice a little extra hygiene as well. Anal sex can present the possibility of a show-stopping mess, and many people prefer to clean themselves out with a [douche](#) (which cleans the immediate area inside your butt) or an [enema](#) (which goes deeper).

Just don't make a frequent habit of this — once a week is probably about right — because you can irritate your tissues if you're constantly washing yourself out. If you're doing frequent deep-cleans and you're feeling more pain or internal friction than you like, it's possible you've gone a little *too* tidy.

What Should I Eat Before Bottoming?

Too much douching can be harmful, but fortunately, you can tweak your diet so that you can be more prepared for action!

Advertisement

In general, fiber, raw vegetables, fruit, and whole wheat foods are best for maintaining tidy bottoms. Avoid greasy foods, red meat, and dairy, which can cause problems for the lactose-intolerant; alcohol, which can dehydrate you; and sugary snacks.

Bottom-friendly snacks include popcorn, raw nuts, berries, and lots and lots of water. Brown rice is helpful for many people, as are lentils and chickpeas. (But avoid legumes that can cause gassiness, unless that's what you want.) Yogurt can help maintain proper gut biology.

If you're having trouble getting enough fiber in your diet, a fiber supplement, like Metamucil, can be a good way to firm up your stool and make preparation easier. Some products, like Pure For Men, market themselves as fiber specifically for gay men or for bottoming — but they're the same thing as psyllium husk capsules or other kinds of fiber supplements, just more expensive.

Everyone's body is different, so you should pay attention to what you eat and the effect that it has on you. Remember, there's always a chance of a little mess. That's just a fact of life. Try not to worry about it too much; the more you relax, the more you'll enjoy yourself.

What Kind of Lube is Best for Bottoming?

When it comes to supplies, be sure there's lube and condoms available. It doesn't hurt to have some towels handy to clean up any mess. You should also try different kinds of lube to see what you and your partner like best. Consider a water-based lubricant if you're planning to use toys made of various materials (added bonus: less risk of staining). Silicone-based lube shouldn't be combined with silicone toys, but many people find that it lasts longer. You can also get lubricants that are oil-based if you're a fan of coconut oil — but remember that oil-based lube shouldn't be used with condoms.

Pay attention to the lube's thickness as well. Some folks like a watery, runny consistency, while others prefer something that's more thick and spreadable. Try out different varieties to see what works best. And as you're zeroing in on your preferred ingredients, check to see if there are any infusions, like jojoba, that are good for your skin.

Some kinds of lube have a numbing agent, but that's generally not a great idea to use — you should be able to feel pain so you know if something's wrong. Not to mention, you might experience even more pain once the numbing agent wears off.

You might also consider using a “shooter,” or a device that injects lube into your body without making a mess on hands and sheets. That can speed cleanup afterwards, and also ensure that you've got enough slipperiness inside.

How Can I Practice Bottoming?

If you really want to impress your partner, you might want to rehearse when you're apart so that you can bottom like a pro next time. The more you practice, the easier bottoming gets. (Also it can just be fun to go solo!)

For that, you'll want some lube and some private time. You can use your fingers or a toy that's made for insertion, but fingers will give you the flexibility to really get to know your body. You have two sphincters in your butt — external, which you can control, and internal, which you can't — and they both need to be relaxed before you really go to town.

It's best not to grab random objects and practice with those, because they could cause irritation or injury. Instead, opt for toys that have graduated sizes so you can find the best fit for you.

Advertisement

Start by grabbing some lube — silicone-based will be long-lasting and slick, but should not be used with silicone toys — and lubricate whatever you plan to practice with. Then just press that object (or your fingers) against whatever opening you plan to play with. It may be helpful to start with the flat of your palm to get used to the feeling of pressure. As you grow accustomed to the feeling and the temperature (it may need a minute to warm up!) you should find penetration easier to accomplish, along with plenty of pleasure.

Like measuring a room for new furniture, now's the part where you pay attention to the depth and width of your preferred insertion. Once you know just how much you can accommodate, you can guide your partner to the optimal level of insertion.

What's the Best Position for Bottoming?

Finding a good position is going to be entirely personal — it depends on the shape of the people playing and what they enjoy. But if you want to spice things up or make it easier to get in, there are a few good places to start your exploration. Switching up positions will add variety to the experience, and you'll find new ways to enjoy yourself.

One of the least fussy positions is the “cowboy” pose, with the top lying on their back and the bottom kneeling on top, facing forward. That lets the bottom control the speed of penetration, which is key to everyone enjoying themselves. In the “reverse cowboy” pose, the bottom turns to face the top's feet, which may be more comfortable for some folks.

You might also try the missionary position, which requires a bit more flexibility. In that pose, the bottom is on their back with the legs elevated, with the top lying above and thrusting down. This pose may require some pillows or rolled-up towels to get everyone in the right position.

The doggy-style pose places the bottom on all fours, with the top kneeling behind to penetrate. It's an easier one to achieve, but it's harder to look each other in the face if that's something you enjoy.

Then there's the spooning position, with both participants lying on their sides. The top comes toward the bottom from behind. This pose allows both parties to control the speed and depth, but again it's hard to maintain eye contact. There's also a standing-up version of this pose called The Bodyguard.

These are just a small sampling of the literally infinite number of poses available to you. Start here, but don't be afraid to adjust positions or get creative based on what's comfortable.

How do I Reduce the Pain of Bottoming?

A little pain is normal and even pleasurable for some people, but if you don't want it to hurt, it doesn't have to. If you're experiencing too much, you can take steps to reduce it.

The key to avoiding pain is to go slowly, use plenty of lube, and to communicate with your partner about what feels good and what doesn't. Gradual stretching is key to avoiding pain or injury. If something feels wrong, let your partner know right away: "That hurts," "back up a little," or "let's try something else." Don't be afraid to slow down or say "let's not try that again."

What if your partner's just too big for you? You still have options. Spend more time relaxing, cuddling, and stretching with fingers before full insertion. Maybe you just need more time to work up to it. Consider using more lube, or starting with a smaller toy. And as the bottom, make sure you're in full control of how deep the penetration goes, so you can listen to what your body likes and what it doesn't.

A little bit of blood is not abnormal, and it's not necessarily a cause for concern. If bleeding happens, it should go away in a day or two. If there's a lot of blood, if there's really disruptive pain, or if bleeding lasts for more than two days, you should go to a doctor or a clinic. They'll know what to do.

But don't be worried too much about pain or injury. With just a little preparation, you can mitigate the risks, and with plenty of communication, you can change course if something starts to go wrong. Remember, the whole point is to have fun and feel pleasure with someone you like. Now go get busy bottoming!