



# COMMON EXPERIENCES OF PHALLOPLASTY

A zine with  
results from the  
**PROGRESS**  
survey

A resource for adults thinking about or  
planning to have phalloplasty

Find out more information about  
PROGRESS at [progresscolab.net](http://progresscolab.net)

Hi, I'm Miles\* (he/him)

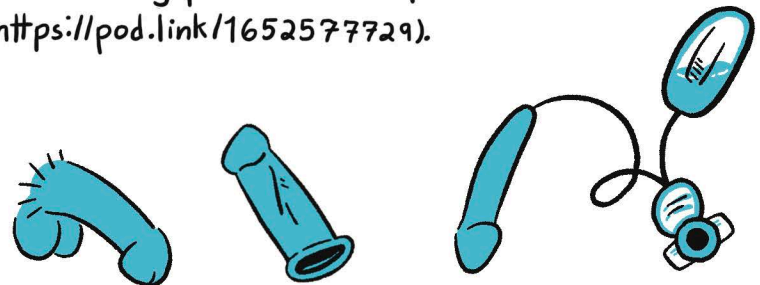


I was a participant in the PROGRESS study, and this zine explains my experience getting phalloplasty. A little bit about me: I'm 25, white, queer, and from Chicago. I had surgery in 2022, including a radial forearm phalloplasty (RFF), glansplasty, scrotoplasty, urethral lengthening (UL), and a vaginectomy. I hope this zine helps you understand what the experience is like and maybe figure out if you want to have surgery.

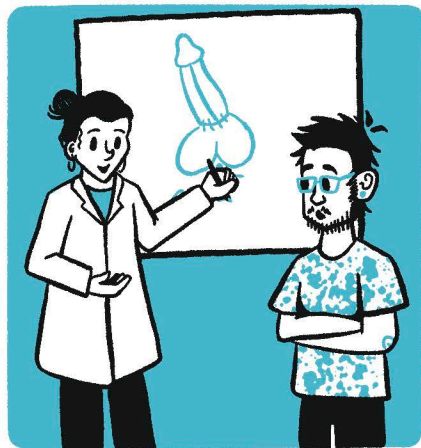
\*Miles isn't a real person, but he does represent the average of the 215 participants from the PROGRESS Study (e.g. age, ethnicity, timeline of surgeries, satisfaction, etc).

PROGRESS was a survey designed and conducted by trans people that have lived experience of phalloplasty (phallo) or metoidioplasty (meta). We used our experiences to create a study that covered topics that are important to people who have had these surgeries or are interested in learning more about them.

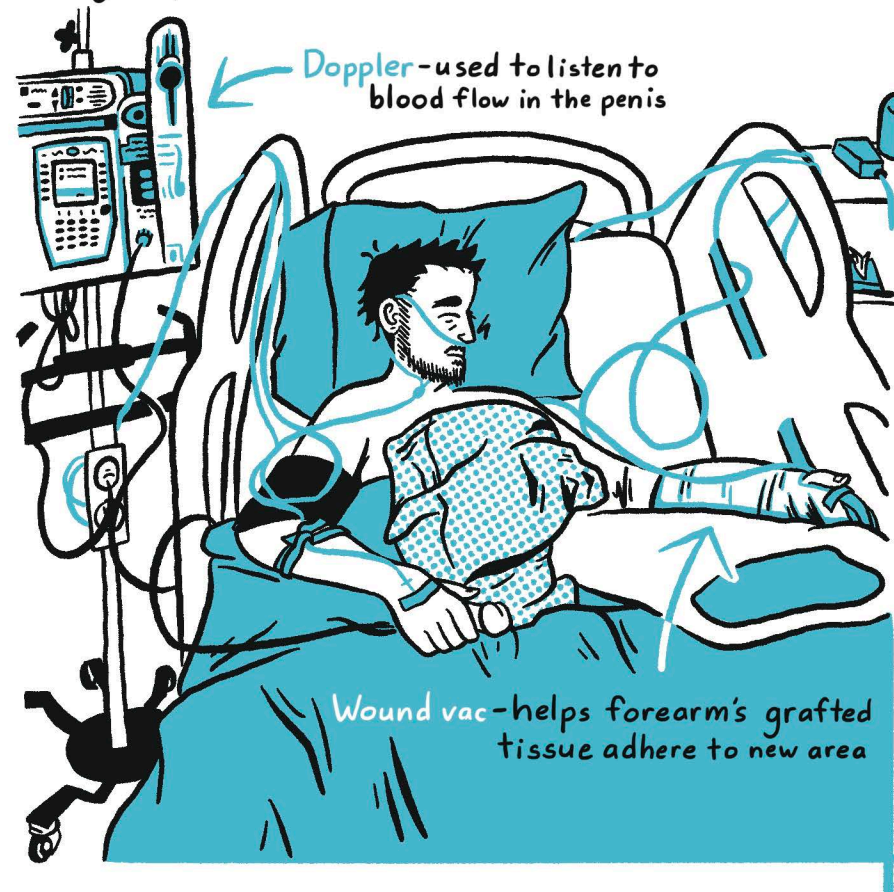
This zine shows the results that are most common among our 215 participants, including how people prepare for surgery, what resources were useful to them, how challenging recovery was, and what changed as a result of undergoing surgery (like dysphoria or sex). We focus on phalloplasty because that was what most respondents had. Check out our website for more information and infographics (<https://progresscolab.net/>). You can also listen to our podcast from any major podcasting platform via pod link (<https://pod.link/1652577729>).



It was about 2 years from my consultation to when I actually had surgery, so I had lots of time to prepare.



I knew that I wanted to have urethral lengthening, which means that they extend my old urethra to the tip of my penis, which meant that the risk of my having urethra-related complications would be high. I did end up having a fistula (an extra hole where urine was coming out) and had to have an additional surgery to fix this. Originally, I had planned to have 3 surgeries, (1) RFF with vaginectomy and scrotoplasty, (2) glansplasty, and (3) the implant. However, I've already had to have surgery to fix the fistula since getting phallo 8 months ago. Overall, I'd say that my recovery was moderately challenging, like a 3 on a scale from 1 to 5. It really helped that I took 8 weeks off of work.

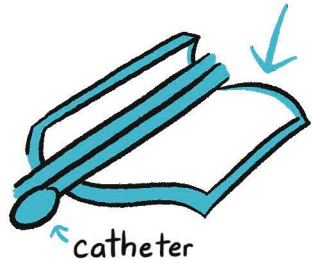
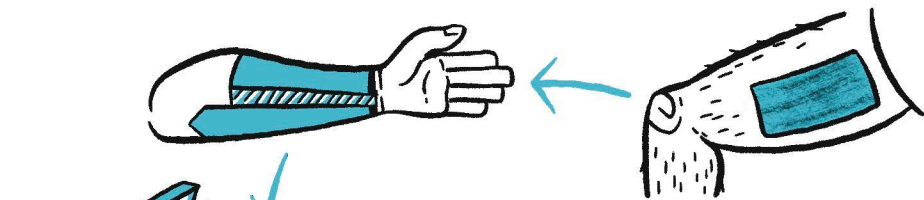


To get ready, I had conversations with others who'd had surgery, both in person and on Facebook and Reddit. I also checked out a lot of blogs and vlogs and had a few surgical consults as well. All of these were super helpful in making me feel prepared for surgery. However, the readiness assessment I had was not helpful at all and only provided the two letters I needed to access surgery.



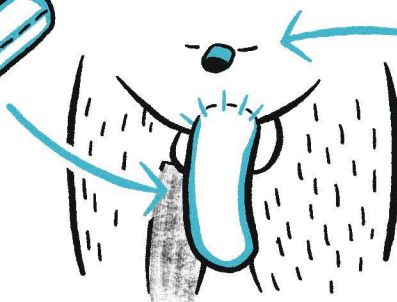
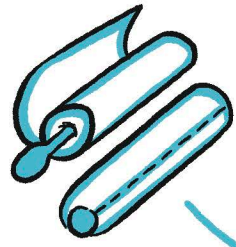
## Surgery 1\* - RFF, Vaginectomy, & Scrotoplasty

**Radial Forearm Flap (RFF) Phalloplasty** is the most common type of phalloplasty. Skin is taken with an artery from the forearm. The skin here is thin, flexible, and relatively hairless, making it ideal for surgical construction and erogenous sensation. A split-thickness skin graft from the opposite thigh replaces this skin on the forearm.



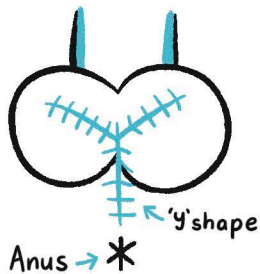
The forearm, skin and nerves are rolled into a 'tube within a tube' and placed on the pelvic bone.

**Urethral Lengthening (UL)** is done at this time. A new urethra is created from skin and is connected to the original urethra.



A **suprapubic catheter** is connected to the abdomen for a few weeks while the new urethra heals.

**Vaginectomy** is the removal of the vagina, and **scrotoplasty** is the creation of the scrotum. These are usually done together, with the scrotum created using tissue from the labia majora and placed behind the penis.



## Surgery 2\* - Glansplasty

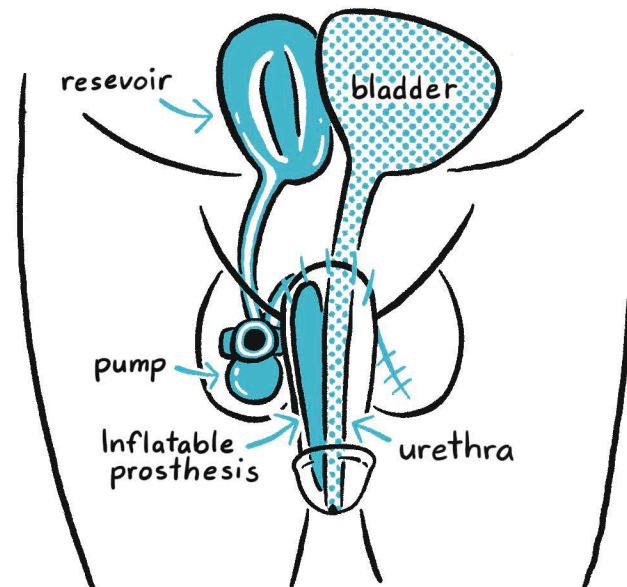
**Glansplasty** is a surgery to sculpt a ridge onto the phallus, making it look like a circumcized penis.



## Surgery 3\* - Implant

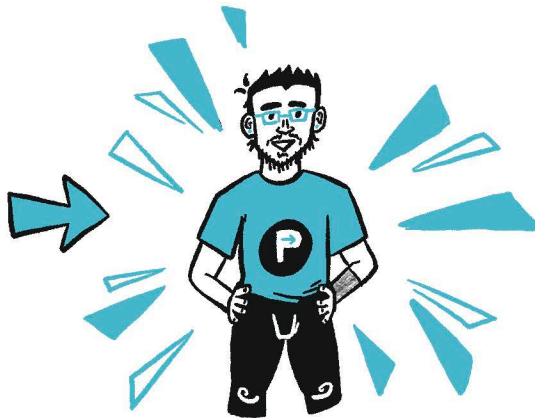
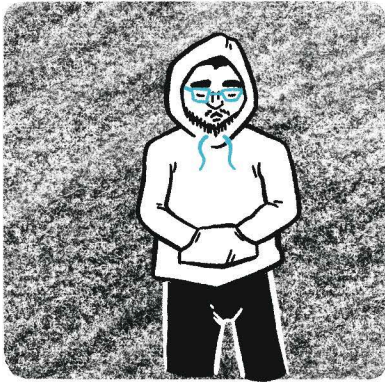
One last surgery is done to place the erectile implant.

## Post-Phalloplasty Anatomy with Inflatable Erectile Implant



\*Staging, or the order of surgeries, will depend on your surgeon. The information on this page depicts one common example, but you will need to check in with your surgeon to understand what your process will be like.

Overall, I'm really happy with the results of my surgery. Before, I would have rated my mental health as about a 2 on a 5 point scale, but now I feel much better—more like a 4.



I had a lot of trouble with dysphoria before, too, with a lot of genital-related dysphoria especially. Whereas I would have said my dysphoria was a 4 out of 5 before, now it's more like a 2.



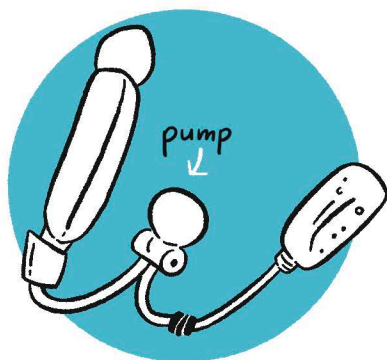
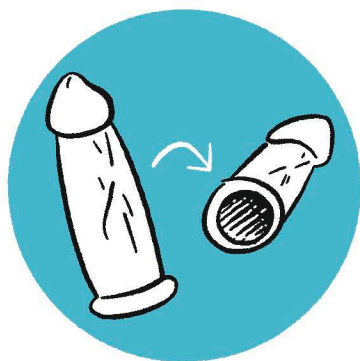
My feelings of gender-related and genital specific euphoria (feelings of happiness or joy) have also increased a ton since surgery! Before, I would have rated my euphoria about my genitals as especially low.





My surgeon just cleared me to have sex again, which has been awesome! I'm having more sex than I ever did before, even trying new things like having penetrative sex with my partner (it's tough without an erectile implant, but I got a penis sleeve that helps!). I'm much more satisfied with my sex life than I was before surgery! I'm really looking forward to getting an erectile implant so things can be even better in the bedroom!?

**Penis Sleeve**- A hollow sheath that goes over the penis during sex.



**Inflatable Erectile Implant**- Implant filled with sterile saline. The pump/valve in the scrotum is used to fill/release the erection.

Here are a few pieces of data based on our average participant's experience:

**73%** of those who had phalloplasty had **Radial Forearm Free-Flap Phalloplasty (RFF)**, **71%** had **Urethral Lengthening (UL)**, and **68%** had **vaginectomy**

**78%** of participants felt they were **well-prepared** for surgery

**58%** of our sample experience some type of **complication**, and **57%** percent had a **fistula** after **UL**

Reflecting back to **before surgery**, **51%** rated their **mental health** as good or better than good

**After surgery**, **77%** said their **mental health** was good or better than good

**After surgery**, only **1%** reported a lot of **dysphoria** as compared to **65%** reporting it **before surgery**

For **euphoria**, only **5%** reported experiencing a lot **before surgery**, but **37%** reported it **after surgery**

**75%** of participants who had phalloplasty reported feeling really **satisfied with their sex life** after surgery

To read even more statistics from our survey findings, check out our **community report**, it shares our results and what they mean. You can find it here-

<https://progresscolab.net/studyresults/>

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