



Find Comfort in Labor

Labor Environment

- Dim the lights
- Use aromatherapy
- Play music

Hydrotherapy

- Get in the bathtub and let the warm water soothe you—turn on the jets if they're available
- Take a shower and spray warm water on your belly or back
- The bath works best when you are in active labor

Massage

- Have your labor partner massage your shoulders, legs, back, or wherever feels good
- Try a light circular massage on your belly with your hands or shower spray
- During contractions, have your partner apply pressure on your lower back using their hands or a tennis ball
- Try a double-hip squeeze (partner's hands placed low on your hips, pressing in and up during contractions)
- Apply warm or cold water bottles, wash cloths, heating pads, or gel packs to sore areas

Visualization

- Imagine that each contraction is an ocean wave that crests and recedes
- Visualize yourself in a peaceful place, such as a favorite vacation spot, to help during labor, and between contractions—imagine the sounds and sensations of being there
- Use focal points, such as your ultrasound photo or an object in the labor room
- Repeat a word or a positive phrase

Vocalization

- Moan or make low, guttural sounds
- Avoid shrieking or making high-pitched sounds



This doula reads a relaxation script while the laboring mom uses hydrotherapy



This mom sits on a birth stool

Breathing

- Take deep, cleansing breaths
- Try breathing quicker or adding a pattern as labor intensifies
- Breathe in a way that feels right for you

Positions & Movement

- Try sitting, standing, squatting, getting on hands and knees, leaning forward, and side-lying
- Use movement, such as rocking your pelvis or slow dancing with your partner
- Walk the halls or climb the stairs
- Use labor tools, such as a fitness ball, squat bar, or birthing stool

Pushing

- Use a variety of positions—squatting, hands and knees, semi-sitting, and side-lying
- Try exhaling as you push, and avoid holding your breath
- Listen to your body and follow your instincts



Quiz

1. What is hydrotherapy?

- A. It's a comfort technique that uses water
- B. It's when you walk during labor
- C. It's a rhythmic way of breathing
- D. None of the above

2. Using different positions during labor and pushing _____.

- A. Makes labor and pushing more uncomfortable
- B. Increases your comfort level and helps your baby get into position for birth
- C. Can make your labor go more quickly
- D. Both B & C

3. What is a doula?

- A. An instrument the doctor uses to measure dilation
- B. A professional labor companion who offers support and suggests comfort techniques
- C. A professional who gives medical care
- D. Both B & C

4. Some effective pushing positions you can try include:

- A. Squatting, semi-sitting, side-lying
- B. Hands and knees and forward leaning
- C. Sitting on a toilet or birthing stool
- D. All of the above

5. The best thing you can do while pushing is:

- A. Hold your breath
- B. Lie flat on your back
- C. Follow your instincts; your body will tell you what to do
- D. Both A & B

Hospital Packing List

Use the following tools to help Mom.

- Holiday lights (check with your hospital first before plugging things in)
- LED candles
- Aromatherapy diffuser and oils
- Digital music player and speakers with labor play list or CDs
- Focal points (baby outfit, photo, or sentimental item from home)
- Relaxation scripts
- Meditation CDs or podcasts
- Gel packs (can be made hot or cold)
- Water bottles (can be frozen or filled with warm water)
- Heating pad (ask before using in the hospital)
- Hand-held massage tools
- Tennis balls
- Fitness ball (see if your hospital provides)
- Squat bar (see if your hospital provides)
- Birth stool (see if your hospital provides)