

Comfort Measures for Labor

Tools for the birth journey.



Working with your labor

Relaxation is the key to managing your comfort during labor. We will share with you a few ideas and tools to help you work with your body and baby.

PHYSICAL COMFORT

- ∞ Massage
- ∞ Counter pressure
- ∞ Deep breathing
- ∞ Walk or move hips
- ∞ Rest on your side
- ∞ Hot/cold compress
- ∞ Shower/bath
- ∞ Use the toilet (poop/pee)
- ∞ Companionship
- ∞ Labor project
- ∞ Slow dance
- ∞ Vocalize (moan and sigh)

EMOTIONAL COMFORT

- ∞ Labor in a safe space
- ∞ Focal point
- ∞ Distraction
- ∞ Chatting
- ∞ Music
- ∞ Meditate
- ∞ Pray
- ∞ Art work
- ∞ Silence
- ∞ Visualization
- ∞ Hypnosis
- ∞ Encouragement/affirmations



ENVIRONMENTAL COMFORTS

- ∞ Soothing music
- ∞ Comfortable temperature
- ∞ Good supportive company
- ∞ Calming scents
- ∞ Dim lighting
- ∞ Soft pillows and blankets
- ∞ Privacy

Hiring a **birth doula can be a useful investment in your birth experience. Doulas are experts at comfort measures, and work to understand what your unique needs are to better serve you during your birth. Ask your midwife for some info on great local doulas.*

*Ask your midwife for the excellent resource, **Comfort in Labor**, by Penny Simkin. She will email you a digital copy that you may print and keep as a guide for your birthing time.*

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Sample Script

For relaxation and release

Have your partner read this to you in a slow, low voice every night before bed:

Take a moment to get comfortable. Take 3 deep breaths. Now allow your breath to come to you. Think in your head: *Breathe in relaxation; breathe out tension.*

Beginning at the top of your head, feel warm, gentle relaxation spread downward, gently caressing your forehead, which becomes smooth and relaxed. Allow your temples to relax. Feel your cheeks and jawbones become flooded with warmth and let go of all the tension in them. Let the warm, relaxing sensation spread down your neck, across your shoulders and into your arms. As the warmth grows, each part that it touches releases all of its tension. Release tension in each arm, focusing as it spreads all the way out to each fingertip. Feel the tension in your upper back and chest melt away and everything to limp as the relaxation spreads down and across your lower back and abdomen. With each breath you become heavier and warmer as more of your body becomes fully relaxed. Let the muscles in your hips and bottom relax. Allow the muscles in your thighs to get limp and loose. Feel the flow of gentle warmth spread down through your knees, calf muscles, ankles and feet. Let any remaining tension flow out from the soles of your feet. Breathe deeply and allow your body to feel heavy and limp. Enjoy this feeling of complete relaxation for a few minutes. When you are ready, take a deep breath to reengage your body and mind. At your own pace, gently stretch and open your eyes.

-Excerpted from Finding Comfort, by Plumtree Baby



www.birthingnaturally.net

Using comfort tools along with different labor positions may help you cope with your labor and move your labor along.

Tools for Comfort

There are several tools to have on hand for comfort during labor:

1. Cold/hot packs
2. Fan
3. Candles
4. Vibrating massage tools
5. Wooden massage tools
6. Tennis balls
7. Birth ball
8. Rebozo
9. Hydrotherapy
10. Blankets and pillows
11. Aromatherapy
12. TENS unit – with midwife instruction
13. Printed affirmations
14. Printed photos of birth
15. An item for your baby to hold or focus on
16. Music
17. Hypnosis tracks
18. Movement, movement, movement

Reference:

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- Simkin, P., & Ancheta, R. (1999). *The labor progress handbook early interventions to prevent and treat dystocia*. Malden, Mass: Blackwell Science.