

Effective Labor Positions



Women's Integrative Health

Abdominal Lift

- Best for moms w/lax abdominal tone
- Takes pressure off back
- Improves position of the baby in the pelvis



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Straddling Chair

- Good resting posture
- Access to back for counter-pressure
- Some gravity advantage
- Straddling may help open pelvis



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Standing, Leaning on Bed

- Gravity advantage
- Open access for back massage
- Relieves back pain
- May help with rotation



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Cat/Dog Position

- Encourages rotation of OP
- May help with back pain



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Kneeling at Bedside

- Some gravity advantage
- Open access for back massage
- Helps relieve back pain
- Easier on joints than kneeling alone
- May help with rotation



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Lateral Knee Press

- Helps relieve back pain for mom confined to bed
- Provides some pelvic mobility
- May encourage fetal rotation



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Sitting, Leaning on Tray Table

- Good resting posture
- Some gravity advantage
- Open access to back



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Standing, Leaning on Chair

- Gravity advantage
- Widens one side of pelvis
- Encourages rotation of OP



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Hands and Knees

- Helps relieve backache
- May encourage rotation of the baby
- Allows pelvic rocking/movements
- Open access for back massage



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Standing, Leaning on Bed Tray

- Gravity advantage
- Open access for back massage
- More restful than standing alone



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Kneeling With Ball

- Easier on joints than hands and knees alone
- Helps relieve backache
- May encourage rotation of the baby
- Opens access for counterpressure
- Encourages mom to move/rock



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Standing, Leaning w/Support

- Gravity advantage
- Encourages emotional closeness
- Contractions more productive
- Good alignment of baby



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Kneeling on Bed w/Support

- Some gravity advantage
- Open access for back massage
- Helps relieve back pain
- Easier on joints than kneeling alone
- May help with rotation
- Encourages emotional closeness



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Knee Press

- Releases tension and pain in lower back
- Some gravity advantage



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Standing, Leaning on Ball

- Gravity advantage
- Open access for back massage
- More restful than standing alone
- Encourages movement (swaying, etc.)



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Semi-Sitting W/ Partner

- Good resting position
- Some gravity advantage
- Encourages emotional closeness



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Sitting in Rocking Chair

- Good resting position
- Some gravity advantage
- Rocking may help pelvic mobility



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Swaying on Ball

- Some gravity advantage
- Swaying may help pelvic mobility
- More comfortable than sitting on a chair



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Labor Dance

- Gravity advantage
- Swaying movement may help pelvic motility
- Encourages emotional closeness
- Open access for back massage



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Tub/Jacuzzi

- Relaxing
- May reduce intensity of pain
- Avoid in early labor (may cause contractions to decrease/ become irregular)

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Squatting With Partner

- May relieve back pain
- Good gravity advantage
- Widens pelvic outlet
- Enhances rotation and descent
- Easier to maintain than unsupported squatting and involves partner

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Squatting at Bedside

- May relieve back pain
- Good gravity advantage
- Widens pelvic outlet
- Enhances rotation and descent
- Easier to maintain than unsupported squatting and involves partner

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Asymmetrical Standing

- Gravity advantage
- Widens one side of pelvis
- Encourages rotation of OP
- Encourages emotional closeness

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Asymmetrical Kneeling

- Gravity advantage
- Widens one side of pelvis
- Encourages rotation of OP



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Squatting With Bar

- May relieve back pain
- Good gravity advantage
- Widens pelvic outlet
- Enhances rotation and descent
- Easier to maintain than unsupported squatting



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Sitting With Counterpressure

- Good resting posture
- Open access to back
- Some gravity advantage
- Straddling may help open pelvis



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Kneeling Over Back of Bed

- Some gravity advantage
- Open access for back massage
- Helps relieve back pain
- Easier on joints than kneeling alone
- May help with rotation



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Supported Squatting

- May relieve back pain
- Good gravity advantage
- Widens pelvic outlet
- Enhances rotation and descent
- Easier to maintain than unsupported squatting and involves partner



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Sitting on Toilet

- Some gravity advantage
- May help relax perineum

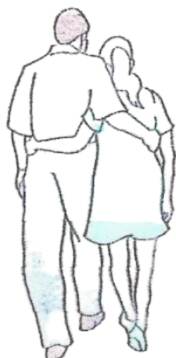


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Walking

- Gravity advantage
- Contractions generally more productive
- Baby well aligned w/angle of pelvis
- Encourages rotation and descent



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Sitting in Shower

- Good resting posture
- Open access to back
- Some gravity advantage
- Relaxing



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Climbing Stairs

- Gravity advantage
- Enhances rotation & pelvic mobility
- May speed labor more than walking



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Kneeling Lunge

- Some gravity advantage
- Widens one side of pelvis
- Encourages rotation of OP
- Easier than standing lunge



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Asymmetrical Sitting

- Some gravity advantage
- Widens one side of pelvis
- Encourages rotation of OP
- Easier than standing or kneeling



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Lap Squatting

- May relieve back pain
- Good gravity advantage
- Widens pelvic outlet
- Enhances rotation and descent
- Easier to maintain than unsupported squatting and involves partner



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The Dangle

- May relieve back pain
- Good gravity advantage
- Widens pelvic outlet
- Enhances rotation and descent
- Easier to maintain than unsupported squatting; easier for partner
- Helps "elongate" trunk



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Standing With Counterpressure

- Gravity advantage
- Open access for counter-pressure
- Mom has freedom to sway, move or rest



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Sitting Backward On Toilet

- Resting posture
- Some gravity advantage
- Open access for back massage
- May help to relax the perineum



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Squatting Stool

- Gravity advantage
- Requires less bearing down
- Upper trunk provides fundal pressure
- Feet on floor provides grounding



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Upright Pushing

- Gravity advantage
- Requires less bearing down
- Upper trunk provides fundal pressure
- Easier than squatting stool
- Easier on care provider



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Helpful Tips

- Music can be soothing or uplifting
- Encourage snuggling/loving gestures with partner
- Reflect normalcy
- Stroking the hair/head is calming
- Hand on the forehead is centering




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- Firm pressure to upper thighs may help calm tremors
 - During pushing, help her keep eyes open
 - Ask her if she wants to use a mirror
 - Be patient
 - Take care of your own bodily needs



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- Buy time - take time with all rituals, activities
 - Keep lips moist
 - Remember touching and eye contact can sometimes say more than words
 - No fingertips - touch with flat, firm hands





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Emotional Supports

- Tell her not to fight it
- Tell her she is ok
- Acknowledge how hard it is
- Encourage her not to be afraid

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- Ask her what she is thinking during contractions
 - Ask her if she's worried about anything
 - Remind her of the baby! (Pain with purpose)
 - Remind her the pain will end
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How to Use Cards

- Encourage her to take one contraction at a time
- Tell her she is strong, she can do this
- Tell her she is doing this
- Tell her what a good mother she is being

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What are you needing support for?

- Descent?
- Gravity?
- Opening?
- Rotation?
- Rest?

Choose the cards that match what you are needing at the moment.



Find more support and helpful tools at

The Essential Doula

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