



Illustrations by Shanna Finger (© 1994 Ruth Ancheta) from the upcoming book on nursing interventions to prevent or correct dystocia in labor, by Ruth Ancheta and Penny Strickn

Figure 1. Maternal positions for labor and birth. Top row, upright positions; second row, sitting positions; third row, kneeling positions; fourth row, second-stage positions. See Table 1 for explanations.

Support Person's Checklist of Comfort Measures for Labor (based on Simkin)

Homework for support people: review this checklist to ensure you are familiar with each of these techniques. For each one: how is it done? At what point in labor is it helpful? Why is it helpful? Practice these with your partner in advance! Then pack this checklist in the bag you're taking to the hospital so you can use it when you're out of ideas for what to do next.

Relaxation / Tension Release

- Relaxation
- Roving Body Check
- Touch Relaxation
- Distraction (movies, etc.)

Massage

- Acupressure
- Hand / Foot
- Effleurage (Light stroking)
- Firm Pressure

Hot Packs / Cold Packs

- On lower abdomen
- On back
- On perineum

Patterned Breathing

- Greeting / Goodbye Breath
- Slow Deep Breathing
- Hee Hee
- Hee-hee-blow
- Slide Breathing
- Variable Hee-Blow

Attention-focusing / Mental activity

- Visual focal point
- Music, voice, touch, smell
- Visualization
- Count off 15 second intervals
- Chant, mantra, song, prayer

Specific Backache Measures

- Counterpressure
- Double Hip Squeeze
- Hands and Knees
- Open Knee Chest
- Pelvic Rocking
- Walking
- Rolling Pressure
- Shower or Bath

Bearing down

- Avoiding Bearing Down
- Spontaneous
- Directed
- "Purple pushing"

Hydrotherapy

- Bath / Whirlpool
- Shower

Body Positions / Movement

- Standing / Leaning
- Walking
- Lunge
- Hands and Knees
- Sitting Up
- Sidelying
- Semi-sitting
- Supine with tilt to side
- Rocking / swaying
- Squatting / supported squat

Help from Birth Partner

- Suggestions / verbal reminders
- Encouragement / Praise
- Patience / Confidence
- Immediate response to ctx.
- Undivided Attention
- Eye Contact
- Take Charge Routine
- Expressions of love