



COMFORT MEASURES FOR

Labor & Birth

EARLY LABOR

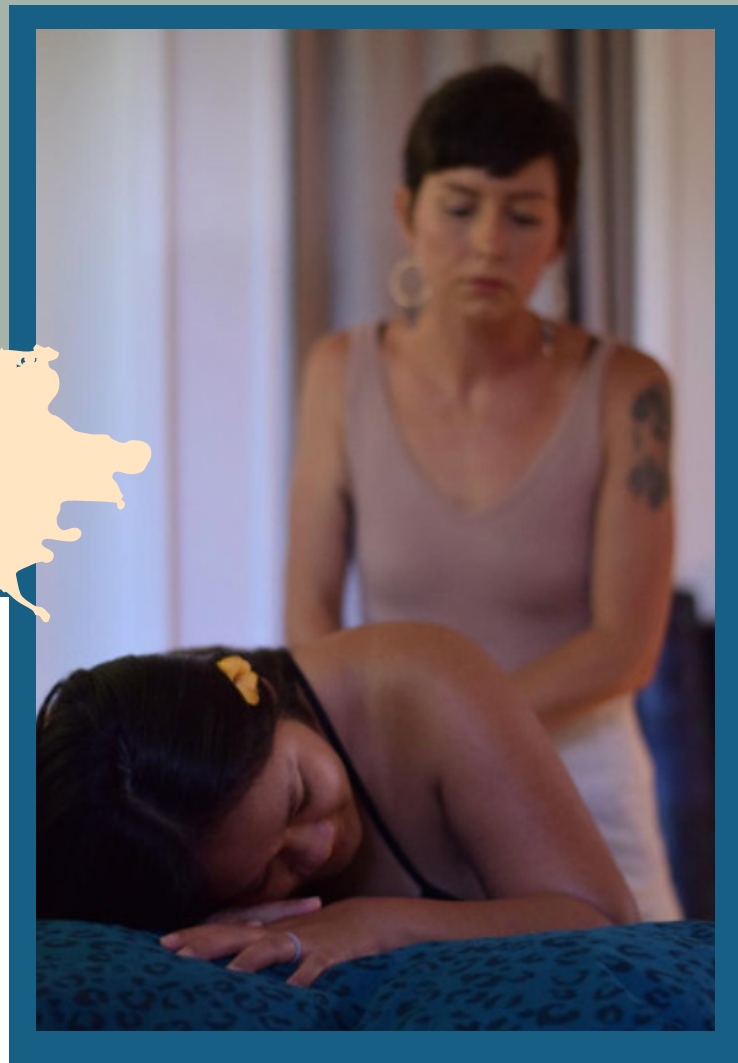
As signs of labor become present, such as bloody show or nonprogressing uterine contractions, it is best to conserve energy. Distract yourself (birthing person) by doing a craft, sleeping or watching a movie. Eat a well-balanced meal and rest. Soothe yourself with music, a hot cup of tea or a warm shower.

ACTIVE LABOR

When the cervix begins to open and is around 3 cm dilated, contractions will become longer, stronger and more frequent. Unnecessary pain in childbirth can be due to the use of reclining positions, fear, trauma, interventions and distractions.

Comfort techniques aim to bring encouragement and discomfort relief to the birthing person.

- Kneeling forward, standing, squatting or sitting upright encourage proper fetal positioning and may feel less painful than lying on the back or leaning backwards.
- Controlled breathing through labor waves can ease bodily tension.
- Visualization; seeing your baby descending into the pelvis or the cervix "melting" can release tension.
- The use of a pareo or rebozo (with a midwife or doula) can relieve discomfort during intense contractions.
- Counterpressure (pressing on the sacrum of the birthing person) is effective pain relief.
- TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) provides relief for some pregnant people during active labor.
- A warm shower with the shower head beating onto the back can be comforting to some active birthers.



Why Use Comfort Measures?

Using comfort measures in labor encourage an undisrupted physiological birth. This means, declining or minimizing interventions and using tools to birth physiologically allows the process of labor and birth to evolve naturally. When birth unfolds naturally, a wealth of benefits are to be gained for both the birthing person and the infant, like lessened rates of postpartum depression and better nursing outcomes. Using tricks and techniques to ease the waves of labor can ward off unneeded interventions and empower birthers to harness their inner strengths!

TRANSITION & BIRTH

During transition, contractions may seem to come right on top of one another. Use the same measures that relieved discomfort thus far. When contractions seem to be at their peak, total relaxation through waves while focusing on the breath and turning inward may be what is needed to dilate fully.

Once fully dilated, a pause in contractions may take place. This is the rest-and-be-thankful phase. Relax and give gratitude to your body for coming this far.

Soon enough, an urge to push or bear down will become present. Assume a safe birthing position. Squeeze a partner's hand and breathe long cleansing breaths. Short spurts of blowing candles can help ease discomfort (blow two short breaths with lips pursed every second). Visualize your baby traveling through the birth canal. Reach down and touch the baby's head for encouragement. Soon, the baby will be out and you will have a blissful break before releasing the placenta.



References

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