

Comfort Measures for Labor

What It Is	How It Helps	Comments
<p>Relaxation The goal of most of the other measures is to help you relax, as this is the most important thing you can do to be more comfortable.</p>	<p>Un-tenses birthing muscles to help them stretch more comfortably</p> <p>Raises pain threshold</p> <p>Conserves energy, reducing exhaustion</p>	<p>Passive relaxation can be done by yourself</p> <p>Touch relaxation has been shown to make a laboring woman less anxious and better able to cope with contractions</p>
<p>Breathing</p>	<p>Helps you relax</p>	<p>Slow deep breathing and vocalization usually works best</p>
<p>Focusing</p>	<p>Keeps your mind busy, with less room to recognize pain signals</p>	<p>You can focus inwardly or outwardly</p>
<p>Position Changes</p>	<p>Helps relieve nerve & joint irritation</p> <p>Upright positions use gravity to speed labor</p>	<p>The more positions you try, the more comfortable you may be, and the faster your labor may progress</p>
<p>Support</p>	<p>Labor can be very tiring, support people can help to give you a boost</p>	<p>Helps the most when there is more than one support person</p>
<p>Meditation</p>	<p>Clears your mind of disturbing thoughts and fills it with pleasant & calming thoughts</p>	<p>Scripture can be wonderful to meditate on during labor</p>
<p>Visualization</p>	<p>Visualizing normal progress helps insure it</p> <p>You may also visualize yourself in a different place to help you relax more</p>	<p>Rehearsing beforehand will make it more effective during labor</p>

<p align="center">Music</p> <p>Whatever music is soothing to you, but consider your birthing team also</p>	<p>Helps your body "go with the flow"</p> <p>Fills mind with pleasant sensations rather than painful ones</p> <p>Mellows whole environment and birthing team</p>	<p>Studies show that moms using music during labor need less pain-relieving medication</p>
<p align="center">Water</p> <p>As deep as possible</p> <p>Start whenever you feel discomfort</p> <p>Especially useful for back labor</p> <p> </p> <p>* do not submerge yourself in water after your bag of waters breaks, use shower only from that point on</p>	<p>Supports muscles & bones, leaving more energy for the uterus</p> <p>Causes relaxation of thigh, back, abdominal, and birthing passage muscles</p> <p>Allows for surrender of body & mind that is not possible out of water</p> <p>Acts like a continuous total body massage</p> <p>Bombards the nervous system with pleasant sensations, grid-locking the pathway for pain sensations to travel</p>	<p>Research shows that laboring in water is safe</p> <p>Shorter, easier labors</p> <p>C-section rate 1/3 less than women with the same risk factors</p> <p>Moms with high blood pressure showed a dramatic reduction in BP within minutes of immersing in water</p> <p>Cervical dilation was twice as fast for those in water</p> <p>Descent of babies was twice as fast for those in water</p> <p>Mothers reported feeling less pain—more gain for less pain</p>
<p align="center">IV Pain Medication and Epidurals</p>	<p>Provides immediate pain relief and relaxation so you can rest</p>	<p>Because it may slow or stop labor progression, it is not recommended for use in early labor</p> <p>** See pain medication table</p>

** Information courtesy of www.partumme.hypermart.net