Positions for labour and birth
Positions to make your labour shorter, easier and more comfortable

Firm pressure on your lower back can help ease discomfort and backache. Gentle rhythmic massage can compliment your breathing and help keep you calm and relaxed during your contractions.

Many women find rocking is comforting and supportive during contractions. If your labour needs to be continuously monitored, you might find sitting on a birthing ball or rocking chair is more comfortable than being on a bed.

Evidence suggests that warm water can be soothing during contractions and enable you to produce your own pain-killing hormones (endorphins). You and your baby’s progress can be easily monitored in a birth pool.

To help your baby ease down into your pelvis you could try swaying your hips from side to side against the wall or swaying from side to side holding onto an open door.

When you rest, try and rest with your feet lower than your bottom. This will keep your pelvis open and make more room for your baby. Make use of whatever you have to stay upright.

Although most birth rooms have a bed, labour may slow down if you lie on your back. You might like to kneel or sit up and lean forward with each contraction so gravity is working with you.

If progress slows down and you are concerned, try walking around and keeping active. Walking up stairs sideways can help your baby move into a good position as well as kneeling on one knee.

Close physical contact, encouraging and soothing words and eye to eye contact can be helpful support in labour.

NCT information sheet

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Congratulations  You did it!

If you are feeling tired, try kneeling forward as this takes the pressure off your back and opens up your pelvis for your baby to move down.

Communicate with your midwife and birth partner, as they can help you to stay more upright and active. This can help your baby move down to be born.

Some women find blowing out and breathing as their baby moves down can really help during second stage contractions.

Your pelvis will open wider if your knees are lower than your hips

“You know it’s going to be painful (but) you have absolutely no idea what it’s really like... it’s true that you soon forget. I have no bad memories. I just remember this huge rush of love and relief”

Positions to make the birth of your baby easier

Being in warm water can help you feel more relaxed, mobile and comfortable as you give birth to your baby.

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Registered address: Alexandra House, Oldham Terrace, Acton, London W3 6NH
Registered Company No: 2370573
Registered Charity No (England and Wales): 801395
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