

Breathing and Relaxation Techniques

If you feel light headed, then be sure to slow your breathing down.

Cleansing Breath

Use the cleansing breath at the beginning of a contraction for as long as it helps, and especially when your contraction is over to let go and increase oxygen to your baby.

Slow Breathing

Breathe in and out through your nose, slowly and deeply, pulling the air from just below your belly button into your rib cage and chest, and then releasing sending the air back down and continuing. Listen and focus on the sound you make as you take these slow breaths. When your contraction is over take a cleansing breath for you and then one more for your baby.

Progressive Relaxation

Release tension from the body while doing slow breathing. Begin at the top of the head, checking each muscle, and releasing tension, going slowing and deliberately until reaching the soles of the feet.

Shallow Breaths

Breathe in and out, at an even steady pace, remaining shallow in your chest as you might breathe taking a brisk walk. When your contraction is over take a cleansing breath for you and then one more for your baby.

Combination Breathing

Begin with the slow breath, and as the intensity of your contraction builds, switch to the shallow breath, and slow your breathing down as your contraction fades, ending with a cleansing breath for you and then one more for your baby.

Patterned Breathing (He-He-He-Hoo)

When labor becomes intense this technique may be useful. Just breathe into your contractions blowing quick and making the pattern sound in 2, 3, or 4 counts. When your contraction is over take a cleansing breath for you and then one more for your baby. You can pick a pattern or switch it up for distraction. For example:

He-Hoo

He-He-Hoo

He-He-He-Hoo

He-Hoo

He-He-Hoo

Vocalization

When you exhale make the sound of a letter until your breath ends, then start again. For example:

H Haaa....

U Uhhh.....

M Mmm.....

A Ahh.....

O Ohhh.....