

Forty-One Ways a Labor Partner Can Help

In early labor, a partner can:

- Help you get ready for labor
- Encourage you; say that you're strong and ready
- Make you tea or broth to drink
- Play cards or watch TV with you
- Suggest a shower
- Remind you to relax and focus

If you have trouble keeping in focus, a partner can:

- Reassure and praise you
- Give you an object or picture to look at during contractions
- Suggest a walk or a position change
- Ask extra people to leave the room
- Place hands on your face and breathe with you

If your belly hurts, a partner can:

- Remind you to go to the bathroom often
- Help you change positions
- With a light touch, massage your lower belly and thighs

If you are having trouble relaxing, a partner can:

- Place a hand over your hand
- Have you shake both hands in the air
- Touch you and remind you to relax
- Talk about a relaxing time
- Play music that helps you relax

If you have hot flashes, a partner can:

- Wash your face and neck with a cool, wet cloth
- Give you ice chips
- Fan your face and body
- Open a window

If your back hurts, a partner can:

- Help you change positions
- Put a warm cloth on your back
- Put a cold cloth or ice pack on your back
- Press on your back with hands or tennis balls
- Sit back to back with you so your backs can press together
- Have you lean against the hurt with your own fists
- Help you stand and lean against the wall
- Help you get on your hands and knees and rock back and forth

If your legs and arms shake, a partner can:

- Hold you steady so you feel more in control
- Use a soft touch or long, firm stroking on your legs and arms
- Rub your feet and hands
- Put a warm blanket on you

If your contractions stop, a partner can:

- Talk about labor and encourage you
- Tell you how strong you are
- Suggest a hot shower
- Help you take a walk
- Rub your back
- Help you rest and relax

25 Good Reasons to Use the Birth Ball During Labor

by Paulina Perez, RN, BSN, FACCE, CD

- Its use facilitates physiologic positions for labor
- It encourages fetal descent
- It assists in rotation of the baby in the posterior position
- It encourages pelvic relaxation
- It allows for pelvic rocking and body movements
- It encourages rhythmic movement
- It helps relieve back pain
- It can be used with both external and internal electronic fetal monitoring
- It encourages pelvic mobility
- It provides perineal support without undue pressure
- It takes advantage of gravity during and between contractions
- There is less strain on wrists and hands when in the hands-and-knees position
- It helps when a back rub or back pressure is needed
- The ball may enhance rotation and descent in a difficult birth
- The ball can be used as support while squatting
- Its use helps widen the pelvic outlet to its maximum dimension while used during the second stage while squatting
- It eliminates hard external pressure of a bed, chair or rocker when sitting
- It allows freedom to shift weight for comfort
- It helps take the pressure off hemorrhoids
- It encourages good physiologic resting positions
- It may speed labor
- It helps contractions to be less painful and more productive
- It is beneficial with techniques for failure to progress
- In shoulder dystocia, it can support the mother who needs to be on hands and knees to facilitate rotation of the posterior shoulder.

SUGGESTIONS FOR:

BACK LABOR

Pelvic rock

Passive pelvic rock

Hot shower

Counter pressure

Alternate hot and cold
compress

Walk

Slow dance

Rotate hips

Keep weight of uterus off back

Lunge

Birthing ball

Knee-press

Hip squeeze

Pillow placement

Urinate

POSITIONS

All fours

Side-lying

Up-right

Kneeling

Straddle chair

Lunge

Hands & knees

Tailor-sit

Squat

STIMULATING LABOR

Skin-to-skin massage

Pelvic rock

Passive pelvic rock

Walk

Slow dance

Birthing ball

Rotate hips

Request information about
nipple stimulation

Urinate

Lunge

Change position

POSITIONS

Up-right

Squat

Tailor-sit

Kneeling

Straddle chair

Lunge

RELAXATION

Hand-massage

Touch release

Visualization

Skin-to-skin massage

Soft music

Pillow placement

Focal point change

Breathing pattern

Urinate

Dim lights

Have bed remade

Reflect Mom's mood
back to her

Change position

Minimize people in room

V-massage

Massage with thumbs

Slow dance

Cool cloth

Warm cloth

Fan

Lower voices

Shower

Foot massage

Encouragement

Reassurance