

Relaxation and Breathing

Objectives:

- List benefits of relaxation during labor
- Explain two distinct uses of breathing techniques in labor

I. Relaxation Benefits

- a. Conserves energy and reduces fatigue
- b. Increases oxygen to uterus and baby
- c. Enhances feeling of control and calm
- d. Useful as:
 1. An attention-focusing strategy that reduces pain in labor
 2. A lifelong skill that reduces stress and stress-related illnesses

II. Breathing Techniques

- a. There is no right or wrong way to breathe during labor
- b. Learners should find own style of breathing comfortably
- c. Breathing techniques are used for two main purposes:
 1. Enhance relaxation — slow breathing
 2. Distract attention from pain — patterned breath

III. Teach to all learning preferences

- a. Visual — use feathers to help learners “see” breath
 - b. Auditory — “listen” to air gently flow in and out
 - c. Tactile — focus on coolness of inhale, warmth of exhale
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