

LABOUR POSITIONS GUIDE



Comfort measures and balancing methods for optimal
fetal positioning during labour

USING THIS GUIDE

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- Please do not redistribute this guide.
- This guide is the intellectual property of Chelsea Bootsman of CB Birth Prep.
- Please consult your healthcare provider before doing any of these stretches and activities.
- Please do these activities with caution and if any of them make you feel light headed, come out of it slowly, and avoid doing that particular activity.
- Warm up your muscles before doing any stretches.
- Do not do these activities alone.

ACTIVITIES TO ENCOURAGE BETTER FETAL POSITIONING

- Side Lunge On Chair
- Hip Rotations On Ball
- Rebozo Sifting
- Side Lying Release
- Open Knee Chest
- Lift & Tuck
- Deep Squat
- Dangle
- Shake The Apple Tree
- Deep Lateral
- Walchers Position
- Stair Climbing

LABOUR POSITIONS WITH AN EPIDURAL

- Butterfly Sit with rolled up clothes under each bum cheek
- Forward Resting Over Peanut Ball
- Side Lying with peanut ball between legs
- Deep lateral

LABOUR COMFORT MEASURES

- Butterfly Sit (if stuck in bed). Put a rolled up cloth under each bum cheek.
- Forward Resting Over Peanut Ball
- Sitting On A toilet
- Counter Pressure
- Double Hip Squeeze
- Side Lying with peanut ball between calves
- Hands and Knees, leaning over a ball
- “Dancing” with your partner - with your arms around their shoulders and dropping your hips.
- Belly Lifts with the rebozo

PUSHING POSITIONS

- Pushing On Back, pulling a rebozo - put a rolled up cloth under each bum cheek, if pushing in this position.
- Leaning Over A Ball or back of a bed
- Squatting On One Knee or with a squat bar, on a hospital bed
- Side Lying
- Pushing on a toilet or birthing stool

BUTTERFLY SIT WITH PEANUT BALL

- This is a great position for sitting in a hospital bed with monitors on.
- This is also a great sitting position during pregnancy, while watching t.v. or relaxing.
- To take some of the pressure off your bum and back, fold or roll up two cloths and put one under each bum cheek.
- This is an active resting position, that allows gravity to work with contractions.



DEEP LATERAL

- Do for a little break or rest during labour, for about 15-20 minutes each side.
- This is a great way to stretch and release some of the back pelvic muscles and ligaments, while also opening up the pelvis slightly.
- Do on both sides, to remain balanced, or do this if you are almost fully dilated with a cervical lip.
- If this is too deep of a stretch, a folded pillow can be placed under your knee.



PEANUT BALL BETWEEN CALVES

- Do for 15-20 minutes on each side.
- This is a great active resting position for epidurals, to help open up the outlet of the pelvis.
- For earlier labour, you could put the ball between your knees, however, after transition, when you want to open up the outlet of the pelvis, it's best to put the ball between your calves or ankles, with knees inward.
- For even more of a pelvic opener, shift your pelvis forward.
- This is a great position for epidurals.



FORWARD RESTING OVER PEANUT BALL

- This is an active resting position that can be done at any point in labour.
- The birther can rock back and forth.
- After transition, if baby is low in the pelvis, it's best to keep ankles wider than knees, to open up the outlet of the pelvis.
- This is a great position for epidurals.



COUNTER PRESSURE

- Can be done through the full duration of a contraction.
- Helps shift the coccyx just slightly, to take away back pain or pressure during labour.
- This can also be done, if a birther is laying on their side, in bed.



DOUBLE HIP SQUEEZE

- Should be done through the full duration of a contraction.
- Best done during labour.
- Helps take away some of the pressure in the pelvis. Also helps open the outlet of the pelvis.
- The birther can lean over anything, in order for the partner to do a double hip squeeze.



OPEN KNEE CHEST

- Do for at least 20 minutes.
- This is done to help correct and engage a posterior or acynclitic baby, by widening the inlet of the pelvis.
- Go down on hands and knees, and then bring your chest to the floor, with your bum high.
- A pillow can be put under your knees, for comfort.
- You doula or partner will bring the rebozo across your thighs, to keep your from falling flat, as you slide your chest forward slightly, away from your knees.



SHAKE THE APPLE TREE

- Do for as long as you can handle it.
- Best done during labour.
- Holding a lot of tension in your pelvis, and not able to relax it? Go down into knee chest and have someone drape a rebozo over your bum, and shake your bum back and forth.
- It's nearly impossible to hold onto any tension through this, and can help things move along, if labour is feeling a bit "stalled" or non-progressive.
- Open knee chest also gives babies who are a bit malpositioned, a bit more room to turn into a more ideal position.



DEEP SQUAT

- Do during contractions, for at least 4 or 5 contractions.
- Squats are great for shifting the pelvis forward to help baby engage and descend.
- This can also be done holding onto a wall bar, or by draping a rebozo over a door.
- Make sure both feet are completely planted on the floor.
- Hold this pose through a whole contraction, sway slightly from side to side, then slowly stand up, once the contraction is over, to give your legs a bit of a break.



DANGLE

- Do during and between contractions, for 15-20 minutes.
- This is a great pelvic opener during labour.
- Put most of your weight into your partners knees, and have very little weight going into my legs.
- My pelvis can be completely open, with no restrictions or tightness.
- This position might be quite intense during contractions, however, it can be very effective.



INVERSION

- Do only for 30 seconds at a time, every day or every other day.
- Can be done in pregnancy and labour.
- *This position requires a spotter. Go down gently and come out of it slowly.
- Knees should be square with your hips, on surface like a couch or stool, then go down to your elbows, to that your body is almost straight up and down.
- Can help with labour progression and fetal positioning.



REBOZO SIFTING

- Do for 15-20 minutes. Can be done in pregnancy and labour.
- This is a very comfortable labour position, especially if you are experiencing back pain. The rebozo lifting the belly, takes some of the pressure of the round ligaments, while loosening them at the same time.
- This activity is also great to do, to help correct fetal malpositioning.
- The rebozo is lifted slightly and gently, and grabbing either end of the rebozo, is shifted in a steady motion from side to side. This can be done for as long as the birther is comfortable here. When the partner is done, the rebozo is released very slowly. Hip squeezes and counter pressure can also be done in this position.



SIDE LYING RELEASE

- Do for 15-20 minutes on each side, every other day during pregnancy, or at any point during labour.
- This is a great way to stretch and release some of the pelvic muscles and ligaments, while also opening up the pelvis slightly.
- Your spine is straight in this position, not twisted, hips and shoulders stacked, and you drop your top leg over the bed or table. You can have something to sturdy yourself with, or someone can stand in front, holding you up, while doing hip squeeze, counter pressure, or glute massage.
- This is an active resting position.
- Can help with labour progression and fetal positioning.



LIFT & TUCK

- Do these during a contraction and hold it for the whole contraction.
- When the contraction comes on, lift your belly and tilt your pelvis forward. You can do this on your own, or with your partner supporting from behind.
- The lift and tuck, shifts baby's head directly over your pelvis, and puts more pressure on your cervix.



BELLY LIFTS WITH THE REBOZO

- This is similar to the lift and tuck, lifting baby directly over your pelvis, putting pressure on the cervix.
- This also works well as a comfort measure, taking some of the weight of the belly, while also giving you something to pull on.
- Drape a wrap or rebozo across the belly, cross it in the back, then pull on either end, to tighten the wrap on the bottom of the belly (it can be loose at the top). If the wrap is long enough, you can tie it off in the back.



STAIRS

- When doing stairs to progress labour, or rock baby through the pelvis, its best to take the stairs two at a time. You can do this facing forward, or side stepping up the stairs.
- Coming down the stairs, do one step at a time, for safety.
- Only do stairs that have a rail to hold onto, or have a partner or doula to hold your hand and assist.



SITTING ON THE TOILET

- Do through as many contractions as you can handle.
- Can be done at any point during labour.
- Put a pillow on the back of the toilet, lift the toilet lid, sit and relax your pelvic floor. It's even better, if you can put something under your feet to lift your knees above your hips, so that you're in a squat position.
- This is also a great place to start pushing, with a first baby, just to get the hang of what pushing should feel like.



WALCHERS POSITION

- Walchers position is only to be done during the transitional stage of labour, when baby is low, but stuck in the mid pelvis or outlet - after a stall in labour.
- This is the best pelvic opener for malpositioned or acynclitic babies.
- Lay across a large exercise ball, or hanging off a firm bed, dangling your bum and legs, from the top of the sacrum.
- Hold this position through 3-5 contractions.



PUSHING POSITIONS

PUSHING ON BACK WITH REBOZO

- This often isn't the most effective way to push, however, some people just feel more comfortable like this, and in other cases, this is what's safest for the birther and the baby.
- If you choose to push on your back, put something under each bum cheek, to give your sacrum room to flex and move as baby descends. Then, wrap a rebozo around the squat bar (that goes into a hospital bed), and pull each end, down toward your sides, while you push.
- Having ankles wider than your knees, helps open up the outlet of the pelvis, giving the baby a bit more room.



PUSHING ON ONE KNEE

- After pushing three babies out on my back, being able to push how I choose, for my fourth, was a dream. In this position I went from pushing for two hours with each of my three babies, to one push, with my fourth.
- This is also a great way to get rid of a cervical lip, before pushing. You can lean into the leg that's propped up, to put pressure into the cervical lip that remains, to help push it out of the way.



PUSHING ON BOTH KNEES, LEANING OVER BED OR BALL

- I've seen this position do great things during pushing, as well.
- Just make sure your ankles are wider than your knees, to open up the outlet of the pelvis, and then push like you're pooping! It's also okay if you poop a little, because shit happens, and that just means that you're pushing properly!

