

Comfort And Relaxation During Pregnancy



—LOVING ARMS—
CHILDBIRTH SERVICES

ACHES AND PAINS

- For leg cramps and other muscle spasms, take calcium.
- For morning sickness, try ginger - three (3) 500mg capsules.
- Physical exercise can help backache.
- Massage and acupuncture can help everything!

LEARNING TO RELAX

Relaxation is good at any time - especially as you prepare for labor. Practice responding to your partner's touch. It is helpful during labor to relax to your partner's touch, rather than to verbal command.

Your mind tells your body to tense with contractions... if you've practiced relaxation, you can over-ride that message! Relaxation can prevent or reduce pain in labor.

Try several relaxation techniques to find those you like! Try each over a week's time. Practicing relaxation regularly keeps tension from building up and allows you to reach deeper and deeper states of relaxation.

To begin, these steps will help:

- Find time and place - quiet, warm, calm, solitary, dimly lit.
- Unplug the phone and put a note on the door.
- Let your thoughts pass by as on a movie screen, don't try to suppress them or to confront them.
- Sit or lie comfortably, wear loose clothing and no shoes, uncross your arms and legs.

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Whole Body: Close your eyes and relax each body part one at a time from your toes to your head. "I am aware of my toes, I feel my toes becoming more and more relaxed..." Say something similar to this as you focus on each part. This technique helps you become aware of your body and teaches you where you habitually hold tension. It also strengthens the suggestion in your mind that, whenever you desire, you can relax any part of your body.

Relaxation Visualization: Tune in to your own personal memories and desires. See with your imagination - try using other senses. First try whole body relaxation, then visualize to link the two.

Examples:

- Imagine being in your favorite room or meadow, or at the beach, or in bed.
- Think of floating in warm water, sinking into warm sand, lying under hot sun.
- Focus on exhaling all tension and inhaling relaxation as you breathe deeply.
- Envision tensions melting into the floor or bed, getting heavier and heavier.
- Count down from 10 to 1 and feel more and more relaxed with each number. Visualize each numeral as you count.

Breathing Relaxation: Take a deep breath, exhale - feel how you automatically relax as you let your breath go. Enhance the effect by consciously participating in it. Use visualization for exhaling tension and inhaling relaxation. When you notice tension in a certain part of your body, breath into it, through it. Feel it expand with air as if it is inhaling too. Feel it relax as you exhale. OR sit quietly and just be aware of your breathing. Don't force or control it, just watch it come and go, like waves at the beach.

Differential Relaxation: This shows how you will relax most of your body while your uterus contracts during labor. Get into a relaxed position, then tense one shoulder or your buttocks while keeping the rest of your body relaxed. Combine this with touch relaxation by tensing one set of muscles and releasing to your partner's touch. Takes practice.

Touch Relaxation: Your partner learns to recognize where you're tense. Tense some part of your body, then your partner gently touches that part with their hands to draw the tension gently from you. You release the area they touch, imagining the tension going into their hands and feeling more relaxed afterwards. Practicing this is necessary to make releasing tension an automatic response to being touched. Give feedback. Try switching roles for perspective and to relax.