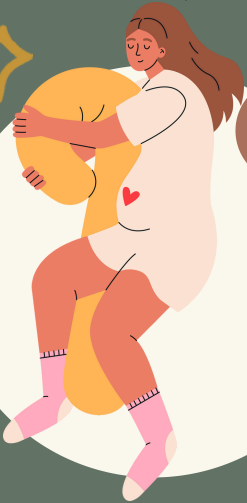


# Comfort Measures in FIRST STAGE Labor



## Side Lying Relaxation

One of the best things you can do in early labor is rest and sleep. This allows your body to conserve energy and prepare for the later stages of labor. Side-lying allows for the bed to support your body while you focus on relaxation. You can use a pillow or a peanut ball to help keep your legs comfortable and pelvis open for baby to descend.

## Stairs or Curb Walking

If you're feeling up for it, walking up & down stairs or curb walking may help with pelvic or back discomfort as your baby engages in the pelvis. It allows gravity to do its work. Keeps your body moving and distracted. You can pause or stop during contractions and be as slow and gentle as needed.



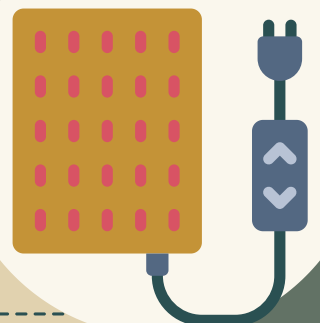
## Birth Ball Movements

Using a birth ball helps to align with the resting rule. It allows you to gently sway while sitting and alleviating pressure in the perineal area. Something that may be uncomfortable in a chair or sitting on a bed or couch. You can eat while swaying, alleviate pressure from the hips, or drink some warm tea to help the uterus work more effectively.



## Heat Pad/ Hot Water Bottle

Warmth is a great way to alleviate discomfort. Use an electric heat pad or hot water bottle on the lower back, and hips while side lying or low abdominal area near the pubic bone. You can use a rebozo to keep it in place while moving around. You can use while napping as well.



# Comfort Measures in FIRST STAGE Labor



## Counter Pressure



As active labor progresses, you'll start feeling more pelvic/hip pressure. Using counter-pressure techniques in the coccyx area and iliac crest can help significantly reduce discomfort. You can have your partner do this while you're on your hands and knees using a birth ball or lying down.



## Rebozo Body-Work

A rebozo may come in handy for your partner. This will hold constant pressure around the hips or belly so your partner can focus on massaging, touching, or feeding you. If there's a thought that the baby is not in the most favorable position, you can use your rebozo for pelvic tilts, to open up the pubic bone and allow more space for baby to rotate.



## Hands and Knees

This position helps to alleviate tension or pressure from your coccyx, along with helping with discomfort from a posterior baby. Try it in your birth pool, on the bed, or on a yoga mat to help ease some tension in your body from all the work you've been doing. Counter pressure and hip squeezes help in this position.



## Squat

During the late first stage of labor, encouraging the baby to make its way out of the pelvis you may find that squatting often brings relief. This helps to alleviate pressure from the outlet of the pelvis while opening 10-15% more. Have your partner, birth ball or furniture help support your posture while doing so. This is a great position to do in the birthtub as well.



# Comfort Measures in SECOND STAGE Labor



## Comfortable Pushing Position



There isn't a wrong or right way to push. Find the position that works best for you. You can try, side lying, hands and knees, squatting, standing, in the pool leaned over your partner, or a classic reclined position. What is most important is that you push as the natural physiology in your body tells you to. Push when you feel the urge. Hydrate and rest in between contractions.



## Warm Perineal Compress

As your baby starts to descend your midwife or yourself can apply a warm compress to the perineum to help soften and relax the muscles. This reduces the chances of tearing during the pushing phase. If doing it yourself you can really focus on the area where you most feel the need for it. Your partner can support you with this as well.



## Resting in Between Pushes

Although this is something most people forget. You can take a break from pushing to help conserve energy or to allow you and the baby to recover after pushing for some time. This allows your uterus to do the work while you conserve your energy. The uterus will help bring baby down with each contraction and slowly stretch the birth canal tissues to lessen the chances of tearing as well.



## References:

Davis, E. (2019). Heart and hands: A midwife's guide to pregnancy and birth (5th ed.). Assisting at births, Chapter 4 pp 107-118; Preparation for water birth, pp 62-63; Parents' supply list, p 288.

King, T. L., Brucker, M.C., Osborne, K. & Jevitt, C.M. (2019). Varney's midwifery, (6th ed.). Jones & Bartlett Publishers: Sudbury, MA. Part V Intrapartum, Chapter 25 First stage of labor pp.881-884 and Table 25-1 Normal physiologic birth.

