

LABOR & BIRTHING POSITIONS

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POSITIONS	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
STANDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *excellent for oxygenation for fetus *contractions more effective and less painful *speeds a pokey labor *helps create pushing urge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *poor delivery control due to difficult visualization for birth attendant
WALKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *uses gravity *contractions more effective and less painful *baby aligned in pelvis *reduces backache *encourages descent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *poor delivery control due to difficult visualization for birth attendant *not to be used with high blood pressure
SITTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *good for resting *uses gravity *uses birthing ball good for descent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * not to be used with high blood pressure *mother may become fatigued
SITTING ON TOILET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *helps relax perineum *uses gravity *open-leg and relief of pelvic pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *legs may become numb *may cause unnecessary pain
SEMI-SITTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *comfortable *good for resting and uses gravity *good for delivery *good for monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *mobility of tailbone is impaired *some stress on perineum
LITHOTOMY (flat on back)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *opens pelvis, allows fetal head to descend past pubic bone *good visibility for delivery *useful with epidural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *no use of gravity *laceration or need for episiotomy more likely *compression of all major blood vessels
SIDE-LYING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *excellent for oxygenation for fetus *good for resting between contractions *useful with epidural *contractions more effective and less painful *speeds a pokey labor *good mobility of tailbone *decreases the likelihood of laceration or need for episiotomy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *makes monitoring fetal heart beat more difficult *no help from gravity *need more help in holding leg *mother may feel to passive
LEANING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *great for posterior rotation *uses gravity *use with labor ball *contractions more effective and less painful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *hard for attendant if used for delivery *more difficult to monitor baby
LEANING (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *speeds a pokey labor 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *baby aligned in pelvis *relieves backache *facilitates use of back pressure 	
KNEELING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *helpful with posterior position and rotation *good for pelvic rocking *good for use with labor ball *less strain on wrists and arms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *hard for attendant if used for delivery *more difficult to monitor baby
SQUATTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *encourages rapid descent *uses gravity *increase rotation of baby *shift weight for comfort *good access to perineum *good for fetal circulation *may increase pelvic diameter by as much as 2 centimeters *requires less bearing down effort *upper trunk presses on fundus to encourage descent *thighs keep baby well-aligned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *tiring for mom *sometimes hard to monitor baby
HANDS & KNEES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *helps relieve bradycardia *good for low back labor *useful with labor ball * helpful with posterior position and rotation *takes pressure off hemorrhoids *best position to avoid laceration/episiotomy *good for large baby *good for shoulder dystocia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *hard to maintain eye contact with mom *hard for mom to see birth *baby must be passed after birth through mom's legs *can be disorienting for mom