



Inner Light Birth Services

Courtney Stern, Doula
(610) 420-8701

www.innerlightbirthservices.com

Positions for Labor

The first rule of labor is follow your instincts. You will know what position you need to be in to best facilitate progress. Sometimes it can be helpful to have a couple of positions to try so that you can figure out which one feels right. What follows are descriptions and photos of various positions that women often find beneficial in labor – feel free to try them out and modify them according to what you and your baby need.

Swaying or Slow Dancing



This position provides support and enhances feelings of closeness, comfort, and security.

You can wrap your arms wherever they are comfortable and rock, dance, or sway according to your own rhythm.

It is easy to move in and out of supported squats from this position, if you simply squat down and hold onto your partner's hands or a nearby stable surface.

A modified version of this position can be done without a partner as well, if you support some of your weight by putting your hands on a counter or table, on the back of a chair or couch, or wrap your arms over a birth ball that is on a bed or chair.

Squatting



Squatting opens the dimensions of a woman's pelvic outlet by as much as 25%.

If a supported squat feels best you can squat between the knees of a sitting partner, facing out (as pictured) or facing in and holding your partner's legs, waist, hands, or arms. You can also hold onto a chair, rope, counter, or anything else for stability and support. Some hospital beds have squat bars that you will be able to hold onto for support.

Sometimes it feels good to move in and out of squats with contractions.

Standing Supported Squat



This is a wonderful position for taking pressure off of your body and lengthening your torso. It does require significant endurance from your partner.

This position can be modified to be made a little easier on the partner if he or she sits on the edge of a high surface (such as a counter or a bed). You can then drape your arms over your partner's thighs and dangle in a supported squat.

Lunging



To lunge while in labor you can put one foot up on a chair, stool, or couch. Try facing forward and also try facing out to the side (turn your bottom foot perpendicular to the chair). It is important to stabilize the surface you are putting your foot on so that it will not slip or move while you are lunging. During contractions you can deepen the lunge with a static or rocking motion.

This position is good for turning a baby who is in a posterior or lateral position. It is best if you raise the leg that is on the same side as the baby. If you're not sure which side your baby is on, try both and do the one that feels the best.

It can be helpful to have a partner stand behind you or face you to offer support.

Hands and Knees



This is a great position for staying "active" while also being able to rest between contractions by lying down or leaning on a pile of pillows.

You can rock your hips, do pelvic tilts, pelvic circles, push back into child's pose, etc. Let go and move!

If your arms get tired you can support your upper body on a birth ball, pillows, or the back of a raised hospital bed.



If you would like to slow the progress of labor, or give a low-lying posterior baby more room to turn, you can modify the hands and knees position by bringing your head and shoulders lower than your hips.

Other helpful positions

~ Sitting, especially on the edge of a chair or bed, on a birth ball, or on the toilet. You can also try facing backward in a chair. Try rocking your torso or rolling your pelvis back and forth while you are sitting.

~ Lying on your side. Try throwing your top leg over as far as is comfortable. Have your partner give you plenty of pillows to support your entire body for maximum rest and relaxation.

~ Walking (stopping during contractions if necessary). Move into whichever position is comfortable during the contractions – you can stand, squat, get into hands and knees, etc.

~ Kneeling and leaning forward with support can be a very beneficial position, especially in the later stages of labor. It will allow you to make use of gravity and mimic an upright position while giving you something to rest on in between (and/or during) contractions.

If you are trying to facilitate active labor,
it is helpful to change positions every 30 minutes.

More than anything, remember to **follow your instincts!** And unless you are pushing, soften every part of your body that you consciously can.

Let your shoulders, jaw, legs, and hips be soft and open.

Your involuntary muscles will do all the work ☺