

8 Key Labor Positions Proven to Help Labor Progress

Lamaze suggests these 8 labor positions to help you progress through labor. Practice these positions at home with your birth partner and bring this sheet with you on the big day as a reminder of how you can keep moving!

Walking/Standing



Benefits

- Uses gravity to encourage descent
- Helps encourage baby into good position for delivery
- Provides a distraction
- Being upright and staying active during labor can help increase comfort, shorten labor and avoid cesarean section

How To

- Grab your partner and take a stroll

Squatting



Benefits

- Uses gravity to encourage descent
- May help rotate baby into an ideal delivery position
- May increase pelvic diameter by as much as two centimeters
- Allows the freedom to shift your weight for comfort

How To

- Squat with your feet flat on a sturdy, low surface and hold a squatting bar, sheet, rebozo, support person or strong piece of furniture for stability
- Keep feet wide and don't let your knees pass your toes
- You can also sit on a toilet or birth ball to achieve this position
- Allows partner or doula to gently massage your belly in circular motions

Slow Dancing



Benefits

All of the above, plus:

- May be more restful than standing
- Allows partner to provide physical support
- Allows you to move your hips in rhythm with contractions or music
- Moving your hips can increase your comfort and help baby descend

How To

- Slow dance with your partner and sway to the rhythm of music or your contractions
- Move your hips to increase your comfort

Using a Rebozo



Benefits

- May help increase comfort
- May help baby rotate into a favorable delivery position, especially for a baby that is face up
- May relieve uterine ligament tension or back pressure

How To

- Use a woven shawl (rebozo) or a sheet that is about 5-7 feet long
- While on hands and knees, have partner place rebozo around your belly
- Using gentle, tiny jiggling movements, shift the rebozo from side to side

Consult your professional labor support team before attempting this position.

Lunging



Benefits

- Helps open your mid-pelvis
- May help baby rotate to a more ideal delivery position
- May help relieve back pressure
- Can help when labor stalls

How To

Standing:

- Place one foot on the floor pointing forward and raise your opposite leg onto stairs or a chair positioned beside you
- While facing forward, point your raised foot at a right angle to the foot on the floor and gently lunge in toward your raised knee and stand straight again
- Don't let your knees pass your toes

Sitting



Benefits

- Uses gravity to encourage descent
- Can be used with continuous electronic fetal monitoring
- Encourages rhythmic movement
- Good for resting
- Sitting on toilet can help release perineum muscles
- Allows partner to provide back massage, counterpressure (very firm massage against the lower spine) or applications of warm or cold compresses

How To

- Straddle a chair, sit on a toilet or a firm but not hard birth ball - keep your knees lower than your hips to allow baby to rotate
- Sway right to left or back and forth

Kneeling on Hands and Knees



Benefits

- Can relieve pressure on your back
- Can help baby rotate to a more favorable delivery position
- Allows for rocking hips
- Allows partner to provide back massage, counterpressure (very firm massage against the lower spine) or applications of warm or cold compresses

How To

- Support your weight on your hands and knees, or kneel with your upper body on a birth ball or stack of pillows
- Once in this position, you can also lean forward to bring your knees towards your chest



Side-Lying



Benefits

- Helps get oxygen to the baby
- Can use with epidural
- Used during pushing and delivery, can lower chances of tearing or the need for episiotomy
- Helpful if you have elevated blood pressure
- Can slow a birth that's moving too fast
- Can relieve hemorrhoid pain/discomfort

How To

- Lie on your side with a pillow or peanut ball under your top knee for support



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