



Advice For Optimal Foetal Positioning

This information is for expectant mums and their partners to encourage your baby to go into the ideal position for birth **before** your labour begins.

If your baby is coming head first and is a single baby (not multiple pregnancies), then from 34 weeks onwards this advice is given to encourage your baby to lie with its back to your left/front. This also will encourage your baby to engage, thereby enjoying as normal and straightforward a birth as possible.

Please note this advice is only meant to complement your antenatal care and may not be suitable for all women or all pregnancies. Always consult your childbirth/health professional.

By going onto all four's, you relax the uterus and it becomes like a hammock. The weight of your baby should then help to bring his back forward. Ideally his back should be uppermost for labour. Try kneeling for at least 30 minutes a day. Washing floors/skirting boards is good.

DO:

- Regularly use upright and forward leaning postures. This allows more available space in the pelvis for your baby to turn.
- Sit with knees lower than hips, with your back as straight as possible. Use pillows or cushions under the bottom and in the small of the back.
- Sit to read on a dining chair with elbows resting on the table, knees apart, leaning slightly forward (similar posture used when sitting on the loo!).
- Sit astride chair facing the back and resting arms on back of dining chair.
- Kneel on the floor leaning over a large beanbag or cushion to watch TV.
- Use an office stool or pregnancy comfort rocker. Make sure knee-pad is wider than seat to allow knees to be kept wide apart and hips to turn outwards.
- Put a wedge cushion under bottom when driving.
- Swim with abdomen forward.
- When resting/sleeping, lie on your side, preferably **left**, with a pillow between the legs, the top knee resting on the bed.

IT IS IDEAL TO USE FORWARD LEANING POSTURES WHEN HAVING BRAXTON HICKS (PRACTICE CONTRACTIONS) AS THIS INCREASES THEIR EFFECTIVENESS WITH REGARD TO HELPING THE BABY MANOEUEVER ITSELF INTO THE OPTIMUM POSITION.

DON'T:

- Relax in semi-reclining positions that have your knees higher than your hips.
- Take long trips in cars with bucket seats. If you must, use wedge cushion.
- Sit with legs crossed.
- Use squatting as an exercise in late pregnancy as this may force the baby's head into the pelvis before it is in the correct position.

USEFUL POSITIONS DURING LABOUR
(SOME CAN WORK WELL IN A BIRTHING POOL)

If possible stay on your feet, leaning forward and rocking hips side to side / up and down with each contraction.

Keep your bottom wiggling during contractions! Lean forward over a beanbag. Hang onto something with arms well above waist height (e.g. partner's neck!) and let your body sag, turning knees outward. Sit your partner on a chair, kneel on the floor knees apart, and lean on his thighs (this is great because he can rub your back at the same time!).

Get on all fours either on bed or floor, whichever your prefer. If you are on a bed, lie on your side, preferably left. TRY TO AVOID LYING ON YOUR BACK IN A RECLINING POSITION IN BED.

NB: Effective labour has only begun when your tummy changes shape with each contraction.

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