

## *Positions for Birthing*

### *Upright Positions*

Upright positions are great at bringing your baby right down over the cervix. Gravity helps, too!

They're very useful early in your birthing time to help things establish, and walking can help you pass the time. They can make things more intense, but if you need help getting your baby moving, the intensity is worth it. Have your coach breathe and work actively with you to help you as you both help your baby.

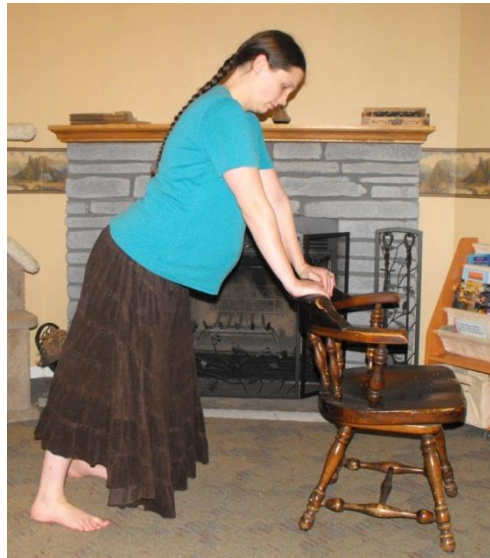
### *Walking*

Walking is a good way to keep things moving along well and to help you work with birthing energy. It's especially helpful in the early stages of birthing.



### *Leaning on a Counter or Chair*

Counters or sturdy chairs are great to lean on and put your weight into because you can ground yourself firmly while you roll and rotate your hips, or just need support during a rush. They also don't get tired ☺!



### *Leaning on a Support Person*

You can also lean into a support person. This is a versatile position because you can stand, sway, dance a little, or you can walk (your support person would be walking backwards) slowly. Since your full weight isn't on your support person most of the time, it tends to be a sustainable position.



### *Stand with One Leg Up on Something*

This position can help you feel very open. Experiment with differing heights to see what's comfortable – a low stool, the seat of a chair, or the side of a tub are good options. It's best if you can use this position with a support nearby, either an object, wall, or a person.



### *Hands and Knees*

Hands and knees is a great position that many birthing women find themselves in naturally, especially as they move deeply into their birthing times. It's a very natural position for second stage. If your baby's heart rate seems to be slowing a lot, hands and knees is a beneficial position to get good blood flow to your placenta and babe.

You can use this position in bed ☺



### *On Knees, Leaning Forward*

You'll use this position leaning forward into the seat of a chair, a stool, birth ball, the side of the birth tub, etc. It's a comfortable position that lets you keep baby positioned well, and you can rise up and move as rushes come over you. It's another you can use in bed.





### *Kneeling with One Leg Extended*

In this position you're kneeling on one knee, but have the other leg out to the side. This position is another that really opens the pelvis. It's harder to stay in for long periods, but you may want to use it to really position baby well, or use it for a few minutes, kneel to rest, then go back.



Here's a sitting variation done on a birth ball. This is a little easier to do for extended periods of time; you may want a support person nearby to help you:



### *On Knees with Torso Down (Knee to Chest)*

You can do this on the bed or on the floor. You'll probably want a pillow under your chest and face. This is an excellent position to bring baby up out of the pelvis (I could really feel my baby move out of my pelvis just while posing for this shot!) – when you go back to a more active position the hope is that baby will turn to a better position.

So you'd use this, for example, to move a posterior baby so hopefully he or she will re-settle into a better position. Follow up on this position with a good "positioning position" like rocking on a birth ball, walking, or climbing stairs.

This position can also slow things down if they're moving very fast – for instance, if you needed time to get to the hospital or birth center!



## *Sitting Positions*

Remember to use good posture when sitting – you don't want to "tuck your pelvis under". This will come much more naturally if you're using this good posture during pregnancy:

- Sit down as if your chair were slightly behind you, so your tailbone is out and the top of your pelvis is tilted forward
- Hinge forward slightly at your hips rather than curling your back

Here I am simply sitting on my birth ball, demonstrating good posture for pregnancy. I'm sitting straight, but if I wanted to lean forward on something to rest, I'd "hinge" forward at my hips rather than curling my back.



You can pull your belly in slightly (or do Tupler belly exercises) for a bit! My tummy muscles are totally relaxed in this picture.



Your pelvis doesn't need to stay stable in this position. You can feel free to rock back and forth, side-to-side, circle your pelvis around, etc. You can relax a bit, too, don't be afraid of that.

Find a point where you feel comfortable, and be aware of how your pelvis situated. You want your tailbone back, rather than "tucked under".

### *Sitting on a Birth Ball, Leaning into a Support*

This is a great position to use with your birth ball because you're able to rest nicely and still keep a good, mobile pelvis. I'm leaning forward on a chair, but a bed, couch, or the arm of a piece of furniture are all good choices. Remember, you can put a towel under you on the birth ball and have it changed periodically if it's getting damp ;)



### *Leaning Over the Back of a Chair*

This position keeps your pelvis and baby nicely aligned, and can give you a rest if you need it. It also opens your pelvis up nicely. You're not able to move too much in this position, though, so after your rest try and pick a more active position (such as the supported sit on a birth ball shown above).



### *Sitting on a Birth Stool*

A birth stool can be great, especially as you're getting close to pushing. Many women find it easy to relax as it's similar to the toilet seat ☺ There's an opening for your baby to come through, too, so you can give birth on a birth stool ;) Take a look at **Lesson 1** on tools for birthing to see a picture of one!

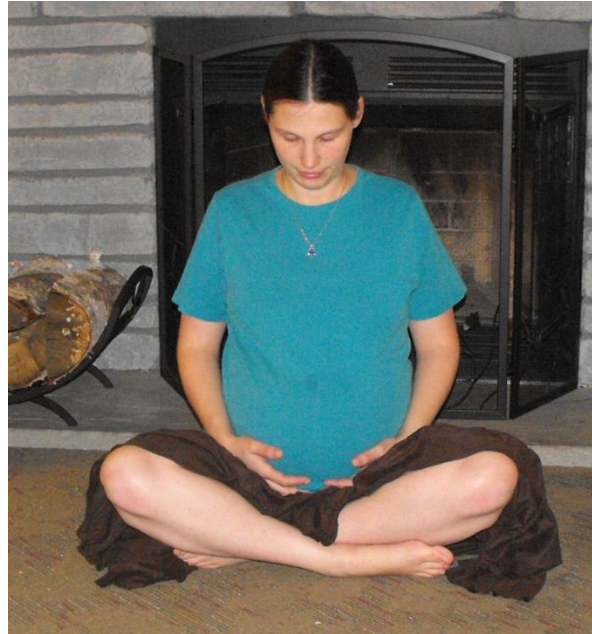
I'm actually just sitting on a regular step-stool in this picture as I don't have a birth stool around!! A birth stool would probably have you up slightly higher, but the position I'm sitting in is very similar to a birth stool:





### *Tailor Sitting or Indian Style Sitting*

Very simple sitting that helps open the pelvis. Versatile and can be used on a floor, chair, or in bed! You can also sit with the balls of your feet together to get a more open pelvis.



### *Sitting in Someone Else's Lap*

This can be a really comforting position, or a position to make you feel safer if you've just gotten settled in your hospital room or birth center room. You might also choose this position if things are particularly intense at any point and you need a lot of physical and emotional support.

Though it may not look very comfortable in this picture, it was actually very comfortable for me! It would probably be *more* comfortable for your support person if they were able to lean back in a bed or against the wall... it's fine for them to lean back!

Remember if you're using this position, or any dependent on a support person, your support person may need a break from time to time to stretch, use the bathroom, etc. Have someone else step in, lie on your left side, or support yourself with a birth ball, counter, etc. until they return 😊



### *On the Toilet*

The toilet is often a good place to sit if you can't relax because it's pretty natural to relax your pelvic muscles on the toilet seat!

### *Squatting Positions*

Remember, you want to squat with your feet flat if possible, so use a support person or object to lean into. This positions your pelvis optimally for good baby position. Like with good posture, squatting during pregnancy can help you get your body used to good squatting positions. Many prenatal yoga exercises include this ☺

### *Supported Squat*

This squat can be done in front of a birth ball, support person, bed, couch, the side of your birthing tub, etc.



### *Hanging Squat*

You do this by squatting slightly as you're hanging on your partner for support. This is a good position for actually pushing your baby out.

When we did this position for the picture, Scott said it put a lot of pressure on his lower back. You coach/support person may want to be leaning back against a wall to give *them* support. Between contractions/pushes you could also stand up straighter to take your weight back off of your coach (and just lean forward into them):





### ***Squat with One Leg Extended***

Like the other positions with a leg extended, this one can really help open your pelvis. The kneeling variation may be more sustainable for a long term, but this one gives you a lot of flexibility in your pelvis (so you can rock it back and out of the way):



### ***Squatting in Someone Else's Lap***

This is very similar to *sitting* in someone else's lap, so refer to that section above. In fact, I'm actually in more of a squat in that picture. Remember it's probably good if your support person is leaning back into something to support *him*.

### ***Lying Down Positions***

Lying down is a good way to rest (though some moms find they *can't* lie down... they just need to be up and more active). It's also a good choice when you're pushing a baby who wants to come very fast and you want to slow things down to stretch your tissues! Someone else can hold your leg up if you're on your side while you're pushing your baby out.

Lie on your left side with your belly angled down slightly, as I demonstrate in the picture:





## Notes Page

Use this sheet to write down any notes you want to have on hand:

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.