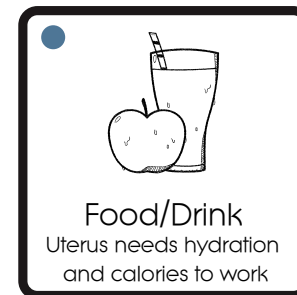
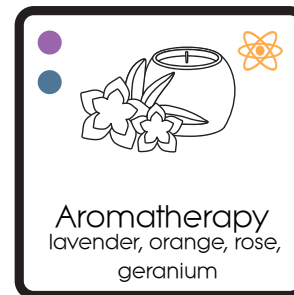
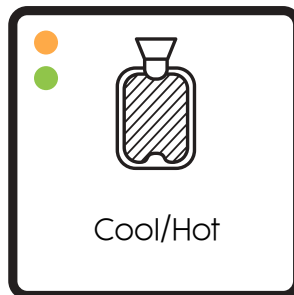
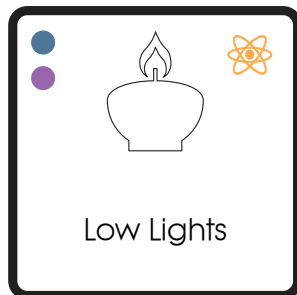
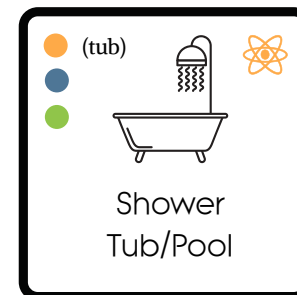
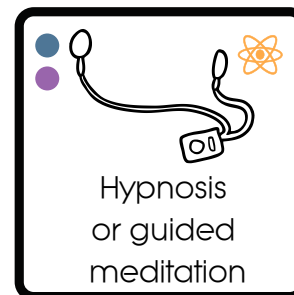
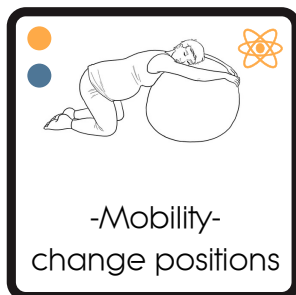
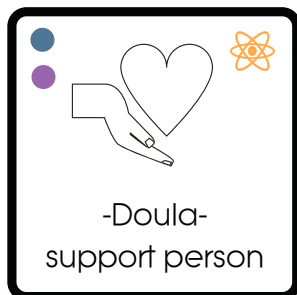


Drug-Free Pain Relief



Non-pharmacological methods to reduce pain in labor work by promoting optimal body mechanics, physical relaxation, mental relaxation, and/or ideal hormone release. Removing barriers to physiological function and sending safety signals to the brain changes how the brain responds to contractions and so the experience of birth. Try to think of contractions as power, not pain.



Scientific studies suggesting benefits

- Movement, massage, and other forms of touch help muscles relax and the mechanics of birth work better.
- Some feel-good activities act as a tonic for the nervous system, telling your brain that your body is safe. This changes the way your brain interprets and reacts to labor sensations. Environmental manipulations (music, light, people, smells) work this way.
- Mental relaxation, including not thinking, working, or controlling also works to (ironically) control pain because so much of the experience of pain is how your mind interprets the messages. Stop judging the pain and it stops feeling quite so painful.
- Adding sensations helps bring pain levels down because your brain isn't only focusing on the one feeling (contractions). It also increases endorphins (especially in the case of a second pain). Some comfort measures also work to relieve localized discomfort.

Drug-Free Pain Relief Ideas



Remove as much **fear** as possible with a good birth class and good birth stories. This will help your **confidence**. **Trust** (in birth, your body, birth team, God--you pick!) will make it more peaceful--maybe even amazing!

If you want a drug-free birth, choose a birth place and provider who regularly does that. Find someone who will support you instead of 'allow you' to have the birth you want. **Birth centers, homes, and hospitals that employ midwives and/or love doulas are the best choices.**

More ideas...

...to optimize body mechanics

- Move as your body directs--maintain mobility
- Shake Apples: Give the bum or thigh a vigorous jiggle to loosen up ★
- Hip Circles: Standing-- or sit on the ball
- Hang/pull
- Lean on a big ball
- Walk
- Sit on the toilet
- Pee regularly (reminders ★)
- Rebozo Manteada ★
- Belly Lift ★
- Dance
- Loose lips + jaw to keep pelvic floor soft (try kisses)

Learn more:
www.spinningbabies.com

...to send safety signals

- Only invite people who 100% support your birth choices and make you feel awesome.
- Choose a birth place and provider who also make you feel good.
- Avoid immobility- a danger sign for your brain
- Avoid hunger- another danger sign for brains
- Hold your partner's hand or stroke something that feels good ★
- Big, luxurious exhales paired with loving thoughts
- Yawn

Learn more:
Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering
by S. Buckley

...to promote relaxation

- Shoulder press: Using ★ whole, flat hands, press down on the shoulders
- Arm Slides: Starting at the shoulders, slide the hands down the arm ★
- Touch top down: Use massage strokes that go ★ down and out--not rubbing
- Focal Point: Choose some small point to stare at during contractions
- Horse Lips: Blow nice, full raspberries on your exhale
- Hot packs
- Hand/foot massage ★

Learn more:
Pre&Perinatal Massage
by C. Osborne

...to block or 'confuse' the pain

- Acupressure Points LI4, L3, SP6: Done intensely they work well as a 2nd pain ★
- Tailbone Pressure ★
- Painful massage ★
- Effluerage/massage ★
- Ice pack between the pain and the brain ★

Learn more:
www.bonapace.com
Trusting Birth by J. Bonapace

See also:
Complementary
Therapies in Maternity
Care by Denise Tiran

★ = Great for partners + doulas to do