

Labor Breathing: The Next Generation



why

Using receptors in the respiratory system, the parasympathetic nervous system sends messages to your brain about the way you're breathing. Breathing slowly, deeply, or consciously activates the calming PNS functions, lowers cortisol and increases oxytocin, serotonin, dopamine, and low brain waves. Most aspects of labor you cannot control. Your breath is something you can manage, and it causes physical, mental, and emotional relaxation. Find and practice a breath pattern that works for you--always go back to slow, even breaths.



Breathing is the only way to get oxygen to the baby.

Breathe with your partner to increase intimacy, bond, and awareness of each others mood and needs. Try: two seconds in, two seconds out.

When in doubt, just double, triple your exhale. Use your inhale to suck the intensity out of your body and your exhale to release it.

When you meet a challenge:
complete relaxation + conscious breathing

1

Start with awareness: Pretend you have a little puppy on your abdomen and your breathing is its breathing. Pay very close attention to how the puppy is breathing. If you're pregnant, you can imagine that it's the baby breathing. Each breath is like a little "I love you."

2

Next, you show your love to the baby/puppy by breathing slow, calming love breaths down to him. In for a slow 5, out for a slow 5. Keep it up for 5-10 minutes. Practice every day.

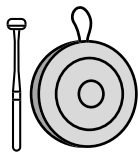
In labor, you might alternate between parts one and two and find a rhythm, a technique that helps you stay focused and relaxed (part 3).



The **smartest** way to travel is this: Sometimes you paddle the boat, sometimes you just ride the current. In labor, as much as possible, just ride the current.

3

Pick or create a rhythm or visualization to go with your breath.



Resonant Exhale:
"Mmm/Ahh/Oh"



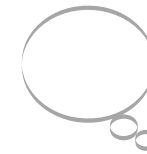
Horse Lips



Inhale: Fill the balloon.
Exhale: Let it fly.



Inhale: Into intensity's epicenter
Exhale: Relax around it in circles



Inhale: Affirmation/mantra
Exhale: Another/second half



Inhale: Count fast
Exhale: Melt, relax

Energetically, birth is like a mega-powerful yawn: It's not happening to you. You're not doing it. It's just happening. All you can do is get out of the way.