

Positions for Labor

Helpful Positions for Every Stage of Labor

Positions for the first stage of labor (from early contractions to the full dilation of the cervix)

UPRIGHT POSITIONS: These will progress your labor and help your baby descend into the pelvis and rotate.



Walking

- Provides change of scenery
- Boosts your confidence



Abdominal Lifting

- Alleviates back and groin pain
- Try abdominal lifts from the beginning to the end of several consecutive contractions



Sitting

- Good resting position
- Keep your knees lower than your hips to give the baby enough room to rotate

FORWARD LEANING POSITIONS: These can help your baby turn and align properly, progress your labor, and ease back pain.



Sitting

- Lean forward and rest your upper body against a bed, the back of your chair, or another sturdy surface



Standing

- Lean against a raised bed, a birth ball that's placed on a bed, or another sturdy surface



Hands & Knees

- Support your weight on your hands and knees, or kneel with your upper body on a birth ball
- Consider kneeling on a pillow
- Try this position during contractions, and rest in between contractions

Positions for Labor *(continued)*

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ASYMMETRICAL POSITIONS: Place legs at different heights, such as standing on the floor with one foot elevated on a stool. This opens one side of the pelvis more than the other, which helps make enough room for the baby to turn.



Stair Climbing

- Try stair climbing with a support person nearby
- Use the handrail to help maintain your balance



Kneeling Lunges

- Do kneeling lunges on a bed
- A support person is needed to help you maintain balance if you do kneeling or standing lunges
- Try lunging on both sides, and do more on the side that feels best



Standing Lunges

- Make sure that you have good traction under your feet
- Stabilize a chair or footstool that won't slide, and place it on your side
- Stand upright with one foot on the chair, and lunge over the raised knee until you feel a stretch in both thighs
- Shift your weight back to an upright position and repeat

SIDE-LYING POSITIONS: These are restful and help the baby rotate more than if you were lying down flat on your back. They are good positions to try if you've had an epidural, if you're tired, or if you're physically limited for any other reasons.



Side-Lying

- To do this position, lie on your right or left side with a pillow under your top knee for support



Side-Lying Modified

- You may prefer to roll over onto your chest with your upper knee drawn up toward you, keeping the pillow under your knee for support

Positions for Labor *(continued)*

Helpful Positions for Every Stage of Labor

Positions for the second stage of labor (pushing and birth)

PUSHING POSITIONS: There are several beneficial positions for the second stage of labor. Consider trying these positions instead of lying flat on your back, which doesn't offer any gravity advantage and may not give your baby enough room to move.



Sitting

- These positions offer gravity advantage and a little more room for your baby to rotate
- Semi-sitting or sitting upright may not always give babies enough room to move, so consider pushing in a variety of ways



Hands & Knees

- This position uses gravity to help your baby rotate
- Modify the hands-and-knees position during the second stage by leaning on the back of the bed, a squatting bar, or over a birth ball



Squatting

- Squatting has a significant gravity advantage and opens your pelvis to assist the baby's rotation
- Keep your feet flat on the floor or a sturdy lowered section of the bed, and lower yourself into a squatting position with the help of a partner (you can also use a squatting bar, which attaches to the hospital bed)



Side-Lying

- During pushing and birth, your legs will need to be far enough apart that the baby can come out
- Your upper leg will be supported by a support person or by a leg rest that's attached to the hospital bed

take NOTE

- Practice all of these positions at home with a support person (becoming familiar with them now will make it easier to use them during labor and childbirth)
- Don't attempt actual pushing before your labor begins
- It's helpful to change positions every 30 minutes, switching from being restful to being active
- If you find that a certain position or movement feels better than others, and your labor continues to progress, you may stay in that position for as long as you like
- Don't use any position that doesn't feel right or if the baby's heart rate decreases as you're using it
- Movement can be applied to most of these positions, so experiment until you find movements that feel soothing and natural