

Practicing for Active Birth by Neri L. Choma

First Phase, Reserve your Energy, support your hormonal system

0-3 cm,

<p>Breathing:</p> <p><i>Deep and long.</i> Inhale through your nose; exhale through your mouth. Make sure your chest is calm and relaxed, your belly is rising up while inhaling, (reach to your partner's finger), relaxing while exhaling. Recommended pace: inhale to the count of 4, exhale to the count of 6. Relax your jaw.</p>	<p>Positions:</p> <p><i>In all positions make sure to spread your legs , feet parallel, knees bended and dropped a little to the center to free the pelvis.</i></p> <p>Standing and leaning to a wall; sit and lean to the back of a chair; lie on your side supporting your back and belly, lifting your upper leg with a pillow; dance with your Partner; kneel to a sofa or a chair; Cat position;</p>	<p>Massage:</p> <p><u>During contractions</u> Massage the lower back. Begin at her waist going down to her buttock, and out, "throwing" the pain away; use your palms or your fists, not your fingers; lean toward her body using your weight; make sure to find a healthy and supporting position for yourself.</p> <p><u>Between contractions:</u> massage the upper back; direction – from her waist and up to her shoulders and out; Diagonal stretching from the center of the back to opposite sides of the body, Breath with her, give her affirmations and show your love.</p>	<p>General tips:</p> <p>Drink; Empty your bladder every 40 min max. and sit long on the toilet; yawning and laughing helps relax the jaw; Eat light foods; Pace your tools – begin practicing when mom can not talk or walk during contractions;</p> <p><u>Partner:</u> scan her body – shoulders, fists, neck, jaw, and feet. A change in her mood can be a sign for a progress: If she is communicating less, if you have hard time finding her in the house, if you talk to her and she does not react and seem focus inward, breathe with her, help her to break through the pain-fear-tension syndrome.</p>
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Second Phase, Active Birth- Active Mom
3-7 cm

Breathing:	Positions:	Massage:	General tips:
<p><u>During contractions</u></p> <p>Inhaling deep and long for the count of 4, exhaling “FOO-FOO-FOO” or “HA-HA-HA” while relaxing your jaw.</p> <p><u>Between contractions</u> –</p> <p>Regulate your breathing and go back to the long and deep pattern as in the first phase.</p>	<p><u>During contractions</u></p> <p>Be active, rotate your pelvis around the baby’s head helping her to engage and rotate, When standing - bend your knees a little, feet parallel, rock and dance; Tennis ball on the wall; Physic ball; Cat position with rotation of the pelvis, Kneel to the big ball and rotate your body, sitting back to back moving in circles, Use the power of your thought and visualize the baby’s head engaging and rotating</p> <p><u>Between contractions:</u></p> <p>Use the positions of the first phase</p>	<p><u>During contractions</u></p> <p>Your palms are on her lower back, from two sides of the sacrum, about an inch from both sides of the spine; shake her pelvis using the weight of your body.</p> <p>When her position allows it, massage her inner thigh to encourage relaxation of the pelvic floor muscle.</p> <p><u>Between contractions:</u></p> <p>massage the upper back; direction – from her waist up to her shoulders and out; give her affirmations</p>	<p>Pay attention to fetus movements; drink a lot; empty your bladder and stay longer on the toilet sit; It’s possible to see a little show of blood</p> <p><i>After two hours of contractions that are 1 min. long, and 5 minutes apart – it is time to go to the hospital, or if you feel any pressure toward your anus before that or if the contractions are longer than 1 min. and in rapid frequency – less than 5 min between contractions.</i></p> <p><i>Also, if any continuous pain or unexpected symptom occurs –go to the hospital.</i></p>

**Third Phase, Transition, Do I feel any pressure towards the anus?
7-10 cm**

Breathing:	Positions:	Massage:	General tips:
<p><u>During contractions</u> Use the deep and long pattern in the beginning & ending of contractions. If during the pick of contraction you feel pressure towards the anus - in order to refrain from pressing down use <i>feather breathing technique</i>: lift your chin up, inhale deep and exhale “fe-fe-fe...” toward your forehead. Make sure to regulate your breathing as soon as the pressure is gone. Use this technique only if there is a pressure.</p> <p><u>Between contractions:</u> Regulate your breathing and go back to the long and deep pattern as in the first phase</p>	<p><u>During contractions</u> If you feel pressure toward the anus use positions that will take the pressure off - Cat position, Kneeling to the big ball or on the bed if you have to be on it; Lying on your back, lifting your legs up on your partner’s shoulders or ball; If you feel no pressure at all – that might be a sign that your baby still needs to engage. Use all the positions of the active phase and add squatting positions during contractions.</p> <p><u>Between contractions:</u> Use the resting positions as in phase one.</p>	<p><u>During contractions</u> use the same massage technique as in the active phase.</p> <p><u>Between contractions -</u> Mom is probably too irritated to be touched. If she is open to accept touch then massage her upper back and shoulders, using affirmations. You may also try to massage her inner thighs to encourage the pelvic floor muscles to release, preventing her from pressing down.</p>	<p>This is the most recommended time to use the shower or the tub if possible. You may also try to give her ice chips instead of drinking if her stomach is irritated.</p> <p>Partner please remembers: it is a very intensive and emotional phase that involves hormonal imbalance, try not to let yourself become emotional, and do not get caught in her emotional storm.</p>

Expulsion Phase

Breathing:	Positions:	Massage:	General tips:
<p><u><i>During contractions</i></u> Your breath is your source of power. Regulate your breathings until you feel the urge to push; inhale deep and relax your pelvic floor muscle; exhale while using the pressure that is coming from your upper abdomen for the count of 8; repeat this pattern for three times using effectively the three pushing urges.</p> <p><u><i>Between contractions:</i></u> Regulate your breathing and go back to the deep and long breathing.</p>	<p>You may start this phase with squatting positions to help the baby descend; Options for squatting: Using the Physioball when the partner is sitting on the ball, Using a clean sheet wrapped around the partner's back when the mom is holding the ends, or wrapped around the mom's lower back and buttock when the partner is holding the ends.</p> <p>While giving birth, when the head is (+3), squatting is not recommended, since you will not be able to slow down and control the pressure on your perineum. It is more recommended to be either in cat position or lying on your side, holding your upper leg up and pulled toward you. (At the hospital, not many docs will support the cat position).</p>	<p>There is usually no need for massage in this phase.</p>	<p>It is best if the partner can stand by the mom's head. Quietly count to 8 while the mom pushes. place wet towels on moms forehead; give mom ice chips or water; bring the big mirror in if the mom wants to see the birth.</p> <p><i>Remember to take out a brand new bottle of oil and ask the nurse/doctor to massage the perineum and prevent from episiotomy, explaining that you prepared the perineum for the strains of delivery.</i></p> <p>Help the mom to remain concentrated and repeat the staff directions in her ear. When there is a need to prevent from pushing, in order to protect the perineum, remind the mom of the feather breathing by practicing yourself.</p>