

How to prepare for birth & baby

a toolkit for expectant parents

janine-smith.com | antenatal & postnatal specialist

Hello!

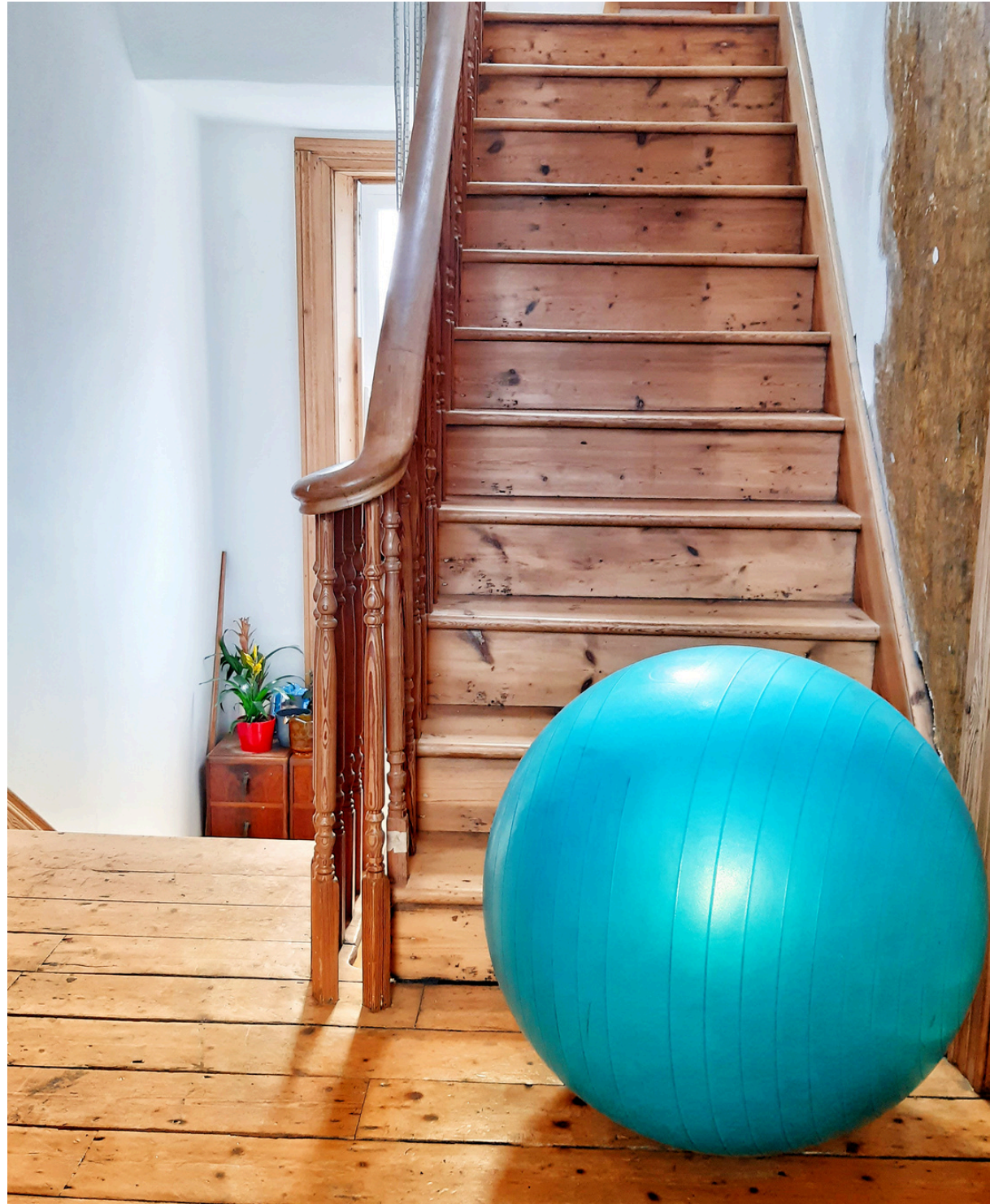
Congratulations on your pregnancy, If you are starting to think about birth and life with your new baby, this guide is for you.

No two births or babies are ever the same and, after working with expectant and new parents for over 20 years, I know that good preparation is about:

- **knowledge:** having an understanding of how labour, birth and babies work
- **mindset:** what matters to you, what support you might need
- **strategy:** for the common challenges as well as taking it all step by step

This a simple resource to help you prepare in a more strategic way - and it has been designed to be interactive, so you can make notes and focus on the essentials and what is important to you.

A handwritten signature in a cursive script that reads "Janine".



For labour & birth, it helps to know...

- how birth works
- what helps during labour & birth and what doesn't
- what you can do
- what labour & birth can look and feel like
- more about being induced
- about having a caesarean
- what the challenges might be and how you can manage them
- more than your ideal birth

What words describe birth for you?

Be honest and jot down the words that are relevant for you

What are your expectations of birth?

When you think about your labour and birth, what does it look like?

What do you
want your
birth story
to be?

How can you
work towards
this?

What could
be helpful for
you during
labour and
birth?

What might
be unhelpful?

It can be useful to consider...

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What
questions you
have about
labour
and birth?

Is there
anything you
are worried
about?

What could
make a
difference to
your labour
and birth?

How can you
have more
control?



Discomfort and pain are part of labour, birth and recovery so it's useful to think about how you feel about this and what you might need to manage it.

How do you feel about working with and managing your contractions?



Having a voice, asking questions and
being at the centre of your care
is important.

How do you feel
about saying what
you need and being
assertive?



What can you do to rest and conserve energy in labour?

As labour can be last for several hours
it can be helpful to think about how
you can rest.



How do you feel about
using positions and
movement?

Movement and gravity are essential
during labour and birth so it helps to
plan for them.



How do you feel about trusting your instincts?

Much of labour is about listening to your body and going with what feels right for you.



It can help to think about where you birth and what you might need to be as comfortable as possible and to move as you need to.

Do you know how you can make the birth space work for you?



Do you know what could
impact your needs and
the decisions you make
in labour and birth?

Your needs can change in labour so it
can be helpful to know what could
impact your options.



Knowing how to use your breathing so you can have focus and calm and head off any panic can make a big difference.

If you are feeling anxious, overwhelmed or panicky, what can you do to manage it?



What could help you
to feel safe?

It's important to feel safe and secure in
labour so you can work with your
contractions.



Do you know what
your birth partner can
do to help and
support you?

Good support can make a huge
difference to help you feel secure,
comfortable and less overwhelmed.

are you working
with your
contractions?

what do
you need?

are you going to
the loo
regularly?

do you need
to eat?

are you in a
comfortable
position?

do you feel safe?

Labour & Birth Checklist

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do you
need more
water?

could you be
more upright?

do you
understand
what's
happening?

can you let go
of tension?

can you rest
in-between
contractions?

are you
listening
to your
body?

are you focusing
on your
breathing?

“From antenatal care to support when your baby is here, Janine is calm and supportive. She gives confidence when you doubt everything you do!”



For the 4th trimester, it helps to know...

- how babies work
- what babies need
- what's normal for the first 3 months
- what the 4th trimester could be like for you
- about the importance of rest
- about your needs, your recovery and looking after yourself
- what the challenges might be and how you can manage them

When you think about life
with your new baby, what
does that look like?

What questions do you
have about having a
new baby?

How do you
feel about
looking after
your new
baby?

What could
be helpful in
the first few
weeks?

What will your
baby need?

What could
make a
difference to
your baby?

It can be useful to consider...

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Is there
anything you
are concerned
about?

What could
be unhelpful?

What will
you need?

What could
make a
difference
to you during
the early
weeks?



Prioritising rest is really important,
especially during those early days and
weeks with your baby.

How do you feel about
resting and
taking it easy?



It helps to talk about and prepare for
rest so you can be looked after.

What do you need to make rest happen?



This can often be about letting your instincts kick-in and going with what feels right for you.

How do you feel
about being able to
settle and soothe
your new baby?



The early baby days can be about taking it as easy as possible so you can rest and get to know your baby.

How do you feel about taking life at a slower pace with your baby?



How you can put
you and your baby
at the centre of
your care?

It helps to focus on what you and your
baby need, to get support and to find
what works for your family.



Recovery from pregnancy and birth takes time and it helps to prepare your home so you can be as comfortable as possible.

Do you know how you
can prepare your
home for your new
baby and your
recovery?



What could help you to
boost your confidence
with your baby?

Having a new baby brings with it a steep learning curve and it can take a while to find your feet and to feel reassured that everything is okay.



Your expectations about life with your baby may differ from reality. How do you feel about that?

You may experience challenges you didn't expect so getting support and reassurance can make a huge difference to your mood as well as your confidence.



Using your breathing can help you to feel calmer and it can help to ease discomfort. Try to talk about how you are feeling and reach out for more support if you are struggling, or something doesn't feel right.

If you are feeling
anxious, overwhelmed
or uncomfortable,
what can you do to
manage it?

do you need
some support
& reassurance?

what do
you need?

try not to
compare

eat

keep your
days simple

ask for and
accept help

Early Parenting Checklist

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drink

focus on getting to
know your baby

listen to
your
instincts

get out for
a wander

plan for rest

talk

try not to
overschedule

I love talking about birth and babies and working with expectant and parents . I am passionate about providing realistic information and reassurance, based on evidence and experience. I listen to and learn from every parent I work with and it's such a privilege to make even the smallest difference.

I have worked with expectant and new parents for over 20 years and I am also a mum and an aunt - I know that pregnancy, birth and becoming a parent is a time of transition, with fresh challenges and a world of conflicting information.

As a parent, the core of it all is you. You are the person who is pregnant, you are the person who births and it is you who parents. You make the decisions, you feel the emotions, you live with the decisions, you get through the days and you try to do the right thing. And this is why my practice is about you.

Janine



My practice specialises in...

information, support and reassurance at your fingertips during pregnancy,
for birth and when your baby is here

1:1 Sessions

These are tailored to you during pregnancy, as part of your birth & baby preparation, when your baby is here and for you as a parent.

[Find out more here](#)

Conversations

With posts, courses, videos and resources you can read, watch, learn, ask questions and focus on information and reassurance during pregnancy and with your baby.

[Find out more here](#)

Consultancy

I help organisations to inform, support and maintain a relationship with expectant and new parents through specialist content, resources and engagement.

[Find out more here](#)