



**Labour can last for several hours, leading into days if it needs to. It can be important for you to be comfortable, rested, able to work with your contractions, to be supported, to be calm and to be able to help your contractions work as effectively as possible.**

**This is a quick list to refer to in labour if you need a bit of a boost and if you need to refocus.**

Here's what can help...		Notes & Questions
<b>Do you feel safe?</b>	Do you need support/reassurance? Do you need to go to hospital? Do you need your midwife? Do you need quiet? Do you need lower lights? Do you need to focus on your breathing? What feels right for you?	
<b>What do you need?</b>	Say what you need to feel supported, reassured, comfortable and safe.	
<b>Are you comfortable?</b>	Can you change into a position that feels right for you so you are more comfortable for your contractions and to rest in-between?	
<b>Can you be more upright?</b>	If you are on the bed, you can still use gravity by sitting upright in labour and, with some support, getting up on your knees for birth.  If you don't need to be on the bed, try being off it and wandering or nesting, using a ball or a chair for support.	

<b>Are you drinking water?</b>	Regularly drinking water, even a few sips after each contraction, can help keep you stay hydrated. Pack some bendy straws to make this easier if you need to rest.	
<b>Do you need to eat?</b>	You don't have to eat a lot but nibbling on fruit and healthy snacks can help give you vital energy when you need it, especially if you are feeling hungry.	
<b>Are you going to the loo?</b>	Try to have a wee each hour so you can keep your bladder empty.	
<b>Are you using your breathing?</b>	If you are feeling tense or panicky, focus on your breathing to slow your heart-rate, to give you something positive to focus on and to get you back in control.	
<b>Are you able to rest?</b>	<p>You need to conserve your energy so flop, lean, relax, breathe and rest in-between your contractions, even if your contractions are close together.</p> <p>Use a birth ball, chairs, pillows, bean bags, lean against the birth pool or the bed to rest and relax your muscles.</p>	
<b>Ask Questions</b>	<p>If something is suggested and you don't know what it is, why you need it, or it doesn't feel right – ask for more information. No-one will mind and it can be important to feel informed and included.</p> <p>What are the Benefits of doing it?  What's wrong with continuing as you are?  Are there any alternatives?</p>	

## Remember the essentials for labour & birth...

**DRINK WATER:** so you don't become dehydrated and tired.

**WEE REGULARLY:** go to the loo about every hour, so your bladder is empty and your baby has more room to move into the right position for labour and birth.

**EAT:** you may need energy.

**REST:** to conserve your energy.

**BREATHE:** know how to control your breathing to stay calm, focused and to handle any panic or anxiety. If you can use your breathing, you can get rid of any tension.

**MOVE:** use gravity and different positions to stay comfortable and to work with your contractions.

**SAY WHAT YOU NEED:** only you know how you are feeling and what feels right.

**BE WELL PREPARED:** read well, invest in good antenatal classes so you have knowledge about your options, what may help and what may not.

**ASK QUESTIONS:** so you know what is going on and so you know what your options are.

**FEEL SAFE:** have the support you need, be where you want to be.

**DON'T FEAR YOUR CONTRACTIONS:** you need them, so don't battle with them. Try to accept them and work with them in the best way for you – breathing, movement, water, pain relief – but let them have what they need to work: relaxation not tension & gravity not being recumbent.

**DON'T WAIT FOR PERMISSION:** do what feels right and talk to your midwife so she can support and guide you.

**BE GUIDED BY YOUR BODY:** for movement, comfortable positions, rest, pushing, what feels right and what feels safe.

**This aims to be a simple but essential guide with reassuring and straightforward information. If you have any questions about preparing for the birth of your baby, if you are feeling anxious and in need of more in-depth information, support and reassurance, please don't hesitate to get in touch to arrange a 1:1 session.**

**Written by Janine Smith – a specialist in pregnancy, birth and early parenting**

### **Practical Guides To Labour & Birth**

Early Labour | Established Labour | Giving Birth | Birth Support | Relax & Breathe |  
Pain Relief | Having A Caesarean | Being Induced | Going Over Your Due Date |  
Tips for Labour | Writing A Birth Plan | Your Birth Bag | Meeting Your Baby |  
Delivering Your Placenta | Your Body After Birth

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### **Labour & Birth Research:**

The Midwife's Labour & Birth Handbook  
Royal College of Midwives (RCM) Better Births  
Maye's Midwifery  
Pregnancy & Birth by Sheila Kitzinger  
Dynamic Positions in Birth by Margaret Jowitt  
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG)  
NICE Guidelines  
Sara Wickham  
Dr Rachel Reed

### **[janine-smith.com](http://janine-smith.com)**

Packed full of information & tips and links to good support and services for parents

### **Notes For Parents**

Regular and short emails with a little boost of inspiration, motivation & reassurance