



10 TOP TIPS TO PREPARE FOR LABOUR



1. From around 34 weeks, you can encourage your baby to get into the right position for birth. Try regularly kneeling on the floor over a birthing ball or, if you don't have one, then use a chair.
2. Try and go for a short walk each day or go to a local pregnancy yoga or pilates class as the fitter and healthier you are, the more straight-forward your labour may be.
3. From around 34 weeks, start massaging your perineum (the area between the opening of your vagina and your anus) using wheatgerm oil or sweet almond oil. This can help to prevent tears.
4. Walk around during labour – this can help you to have a shorter labour.
5. If you are having a straight-forward pregnancy, you can opt for a homebirth or a midwife-led unit. There is less chance of any interventions and you are more likely to have a straight-forward delivery.
6. Snacking regularly and drinking plenty of water during labour can make a huge difference. You use up a lot of energy during labour so it's important that you build up your stamina and feed your muscles throughout. If labour slows down, sometimes all you need is a burst of energy to help get things moving again – and a short walk.
7. Using hypnosis during labour will enable you to relax and you'll be able to make full use of breathing and visualisation techniques to help you stay calm, confident and in control.
8. UFO – upright, forward and over – a great position for labour! If you're having a home birth, stand and lean forward over your kitchen worktop. If you're in hospital, pile up the pillows on the bed and lean forwards into them while standing. The baby's head will put pressure on your cervix and this can make labour shorter and easier.
9. Drinking raspberry leaf tea can help to prepare your womb for labour. Drink it four times a day after 36 weeks of pregnancy. This may mean that you have a shorter labour and need less pain relief. Breathing slowly and deeply helps you relax, helping to prevent tension in your muscles and allowing your cervix to dilate.