

THE BIRTH OF
YOUR CHILD –
A LIFE-CHANGING
EXPERIENCE

PREPARING FOR CHILDBIRTH

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TIPS AND TECHNIQUES TO PREPARE FOR AND ENHANCE COMFORT DURING LABOUR

Some women will breeze through pregnancy as the embodiment of a pregnancy goddess, floating high above the mundanities of common pregnancy niggles, their skin illuminated with 'the glow, their hair thick and glossy, with boob-expansion to die for. Others will be less fortunate – the personification of a cruel joke of nature as they're plagued by morning, afternoon and evening sickness, swollen ankles, a non-stop inferno of heart burn, snowballing weight gain, debilitating tiredness and a skin flare up that harks back to their teenage years. However, there is one great leveller in every pregnancy: natural childbirth.

In order to meet their little cherubs, goddesses and martyrs alike will ultimately face the fitting-a-watermelon-through-a-lemon-hole conundrum. But rest assured, if natural childbirth was

indeed a geometrical impossibility we wouldn't be facing the challenges of overpopulation.

That doesn't mean we have to just grin(d) and bear it though. There are various activities, tools and techniques that we have at our disposal to enhance comfort during labour. In short, we'll give you the lowdown on various ways to 'train' for childbirth.

PREPARATION

I have yet to come across a couple who fails to proclaim that the birth of their child was a life-changing experience. Since you (as a couple – not the medical fraternity) are at the helm of this momentous event, a little research and planning will go a long way in directing the course of your pregnancy and subsequent birth. In

the absence of a properly plotted roadmap and the tools and techniques to keep on course, chances are you'll run aground on the rocky crags of discomfort and disappointment.

Calmness and confidence are probably the most important aids you can take along to your birthing room. Here are some prep tips to ensure that they are acquired as part of your birthing toolkit:

• **Become informed on all pregnancy** and birth related matters: the labour and birth process, options and alternatives with regard to caregivers, birth environments, procedures, comfort measures and pain relief, to name a few. Attend childbirth classes (HypnoBirthing, Lamaze and Bradley classes teach useful natural childbirth

techniques).

• **Determine what you want** and the most likely route to get it – develop your birth plan (do an Internet search for a template as there are many examples).

• **Select the right care provider** (gynae and/or midwife) and birthing environment (hospital, birth centre or home) for you. Make sure you're up to speed with their rules and protocols, and that they're on board with your needs and wants.

• **Secure a birth companion** to support you and act as your spokesperson, coach or masseuse when required. Whether it's your husband, partner, mom, friend or a doula, make sure that they're well-informed and that you're on the same page