



## Hypnobirthing

**One to One Midwives and Hypnobirthing Practitioners  
(RM/HypB)**

**Midwives:** .....

**Contact:** .....

**Email:** .....

## Hypnobirthing birth stories

"I didn't have any pain relief not even gas and air... I just lay there and listen to my hypnobirthing CD... I felt all the contractions but it wasn't scary I was just relaxed and concentrated on the breathing that I had been taught.

It was really strange when the contractions got really strong and close towards the end I just slipped in and out of a really deep state of relaxation, they said I didn't make a sound. Once it was time for the baby to be born I automatically changed my breathing patterns and breathed him down to be born.

I was supposed to breathe him out as well but the midwife told me to push instead, so I did (wish I hadn't as I ended-up with stitches even though I did massage, baby came out too, quick head shoulders and arms).

It was definitely worth having the hypnobirthing lessons, a girl that had her baby on Tuesday said the midwives were all talking about it on the labor ward.

Baby Tom was born at 6:40pm on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October and weighed 7lb 3oz.

Thanks for your lessons, we will spread the word for you"!

### Lindsey and Tony Lloyd, Northampton.

"My husband and I found the hypnobirthing sessions informative in explaining how the female body works during the birth and how to maximise the effectiveness of it. The positive nature of hypnobirthing helped me look forward to the birth and to believe that a pain-free birth is possible.

We both felt very relaxed leading up to the birth. Unlike others in my NHS antenatal class, I never complained of sleep problems. The relaxation techniques didn't just benefit me; my husband, who frequently suffers from insomnia, experienced the best sleep of his life!

My waters broke at 5:30am. My husband and I prepared to go to hospital and were there for 7:30am. What I now know to have been the beginnings of my surges started about 7:00am.

At 9:00am, the hospital sent me home and told me to go ahead with my obstetrician's appointment the next day. I should have been more assertive in insisting that I believed I would have my baby that day. My lack of pain appeared to lead the midwives to think that labor had not started.

While I relaxed in the bath, at home, my husband timed my surges – 60 seconds long and 2 minutes apart – so back to the hospital we went. On returning there, at 12.30, I was 5cm dilated.

I cannot explain very well what happened during the first stage of labour. I continued to practice the breathing with each surge whenever I felt a tightening. At some point, my body seemed to take over. My uterus seemed to convulse, pushing downwards. This was totally involuntary on my part! The midwife felt that my body was taking over and knew exactly what to do.

During this time, my husband took over all discussions with the midwives and I was able to use the self-hypnosis techniques to totally relax, shut out the outside world and focus on my surges.

The midwives and doctors were incredibly supportive of our wishes to use the hypnobirthing techniques. My husband and I both enjoyed the birthing experience.

We felt relaxed throughout and so did Amie as it appears to have transpired. The techniques taught to use certainly helped me to relax my body, which I believe enabled me to be pain free.

I had been anxious at times during the pregnancy because of my medical condition, which could have created problems during the birth. However, the hypnobirthing sessions gave me the confidence to take greater control of the birth while respecting the need, in my case, for considerable monitoring and potentially for medical intervention.

I would certainly use the techniques again, should we have more children, and would recommend it to anyone.”

**Clare Sparks, Northampton.**

“I hope our story will inspire people to know that labour is such a natural process that is possible to have a wonderful experience. It was brilliant and without the hypnobirthing course I would never have considered a home birth.

My baby is so calm and contented and I feel this was because the birth was so relaxed and easy. Also the recovery time after this birth was considerably reduced, within a few days it hardly felt like I’d just been through labour at all.

I had no tears or wounds that needed stitching, as my body naturally took over at the pushing stage and stopped several pushes to make it a gentle passage for my baby to enter the world.

It has been the catalyst for a relaxed and loving start to my baby’s life, which I can’t thank you enough for, as without you and your course we would never have had such a wonderful experience.

Thank you for your inspirations and encouragement that has given us the best experience of our lives”.

**Mandi, London. (Mandi had her second baby at home, after a difficult first birth in hospital)**

## Language in Hypnobirthing

### Medicalised Language

#### *Instead of:*

Contraction

Deliver / Delivery

Due Date

Pain / Contractions

Water breaking / Rupturing

Birth Canal

Pushing

Complications

Mucous Plug

Bloody Show

Transition

Primip / Multip

Braxton Hicks

### Hypnobirthing Language

#### *Use:*

Surge / Wave

Birth / Birthing

Birth time / Month

Pressure / Sensation / Tightening

Membranes releasing

Birth Path

Down / Birth Breathing

Special Circumstances

Uterine Seal

Birth Show

Near Completion / Nearly Complete

First / Second Time Mum

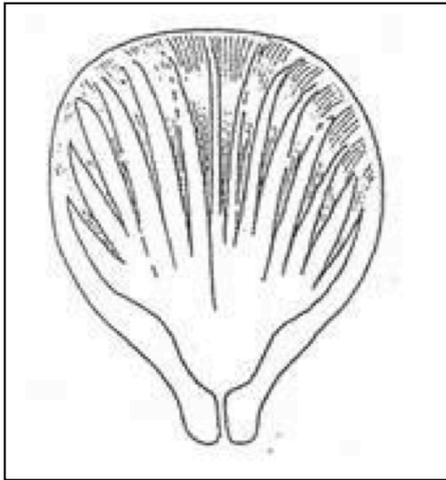
Pre-Labour Warm-ups

## How fear affects labour

The Uterus: - The birthing muscles.

It is important to understand how the uterus functions naturally, and how fear can upset the workings of this smooth birthing muscle during birthing.

There are three layers of muscles in the uterus. The layers that concern us are the outer layer that has vertical muscles and the inner layer that has circular horizontal muscles.



The vertical muscles go up the back and over the top of the uterus, drawing up the relaxed circular muscles of the inner layer.



The circular muscles are found in the lower area of the uterus. In order for the baby to move easily down into the birth canal, these thicker muscles have to be drawn up and back.

When the birthing mother is in a comfortable state of relaxation, the two sets of muscles work in harmony in a wave like motion. The surge of the vertical muscles draws up, flexes and expels; and the inner circular muscles relax, open and draw back to allow this to happen.

## Your breathing

**Upward breathing:** with body relaxed, slowly breathe in through your nose and then release it equally slowly through your mouth.

To start with, do this as you count to 15 in and 20 out, and this will increase as your practice. Use this breath in the Upward Stage (First Stage) of labour during every stage to enable you to remain relaxed and calm.

You may like to imagine the sun rising as you breathe in and, as you breathe out, the sun climbs the highest point in the sky, so that your mind is thinking “up” as your body is drawing up. Or you can imagine blowing bubbles as you breathe in and, as you breathe out, the bubbles float lightly upwards.

With the breathing and upwards visualisations, mind and body are working together, which is a powerful combination, so that you are working with your body and each surge is most efficient and comfortable.

Practice this breathing for a few minutes twice a day with your husband / partner who is supporting you in the visualisation.

**Downward breathing:** take a big quick breath in through your nose and as you slowly and gently release it through your nose, focus your attention downward towards your pelvic floor.

Use this breath in the Downward Stage (Second Stage) of labour.

You will know when your body wants to breathe the baby down. As your muscles are now helping your baby to ease downward, so your mind focuses downward to work with your body and your baby.

Any soft, open, fluid downward visualisation is helpful; for example, a beautiful full bloomed rose, ripples going out on a pond, an entrancing little waterfall in a mountain stream.

This breathing is effective and conserves energy. Practice it, with the visualisations, on the loo in the last 6-weeks of pregnancy. Also do some practice with your husband / partner, who can remind you of the prompts.

## Support during surges

These may be helpful during the Upward Breathing in the **“Up” stage of labour**

*Watch the sun rise, the beautiful pink appearing on the horizon  
Breathe-up with the sun as it rises higher in the sky  
As the sun rises, your body draws gently upwards*

*See yourself blowing bubbles and watch them get bigger and bigger  
Watch the bubbles float upwards into the sky, upwards into the sky  
Drawing upwards with each relaxing breath  
Breathe slowly and very comfortably*

*With each soothing breath your body becomes more relaxed and calm  
Breathe up as your mind and body work together in unison  
You're doing really well; that's very good  
So calm. So serene. So at peace.*

These may be helpful during the Downward Breathing in the **“Down” stage of labour**

*See a beautiful full-blown rose, so open and so soft  
Watch the ripples flowing out and out on a pond. So soft and so calm.  
Your body eases your baby gently down with each breath*

*Imagine an entrancing waterfall, with the water flowing gently downwards  
Trust the gentle downward movement of your body and your baby  
Your baby moves easily downward  
With each breath, your baby is coming to you  
Focus your attention down towards your baby  
You will soon be holding your baby in your arms*

## Head and Face Relaxation

Just allow your breathing to slow down and deepen; so comfortable and so serene. As I speak your eyes close gently and easily, so that you start to relax, serenely and confidently. Breathing comfortably, slowly and deeply.

Now let the relaxation in your eyelids spread outwards to your forehead so that it too relaxes and becomes smooth and comfortable. Enjoy the feeling of comfort and wellbeing.

Just pause for a short time and allow the relaxation to spread naturally from your forehead, flow in and around your eyes, and on downwards through your cheeks, to your jaw and neck; everything relaxing as the soothing comfort gently spreads.

Now allow your mouth to relax as well, so that it is entirely soft and relaxed, with your lips and your eyes gently smiling.

Feel your tongue relaxing completely naturally in your mouth, so that now your whole face and head are totally relaxed. Enjoy the feeling of comfort and wellbeing.

Finally, allow your shoulders to relax and sink to their natural level, so that your whole body is calm, limp and relaxed, and your breathing is soft and slow.

And now rest in the sure knowledge that this wonderful calm relaxation is there for you when you give birth to our baby so gently and naturally, filled with serenity and confidence.

## Stroking Relaxation

Gently and easily allow your eyes to close... so that you can better focus on my voice... Just allow your breathing to slow-down and deepen... so comfortable and so serene. Now feel the weight of your feet on the floor (or on the bed)... As you focus on your feet, feel all your stress and tension flow irresistibly down out of your body through your feet... down into the ground... to be replaced by a wave of relaxation and serenity, so you feel relief and comfort, as a feeling of warmth and wellbeing permeates your whole being. Your breath becomes slower and deeper; slower and deeper; comfort and wellbeing.

*[Partner] Start stroking mum's right hand and arm, speaking slowly and calmly.*

As I speak, I'll begin to stroke your hand very gently and softly. Just allow yourself to enjoy the pleasant sensation in your hand... the soothing, relaxing touch. Your hand feels as though it is safely enveloped in a silk or velvet glove... Endorphins spreading throughout your body. So soft. So warm. So safe. So comfortable.

Now you notice that all feeling begins to fade away from your hand. You can feel my touch, but all you are aware of in your hand is warmth and comfort... a slight tingling... and as your hand becomes increasingly numb...it rests relaxed, lose and senseless... As I keep stroking, so the feeling in your hand becomes less and less... you feel so relaxed, because you know your hand is completely safe and comfortable... your hand becomes completely free from sensation... now you feel nothing at all in your hand.

Now you can apply this warm, comfortable numbness where you wish to your body... all you have to do is just bring to mind the part of your body that will be free from sensation... and all feeling gradually fades gentle away... fades gently away. Enjoy this sensation... comfort and wellbeing. As you are now very relaxed, just spend a little time to:

1. Allow a feeling of well being and empowerment to permeate your body, and fill you with confidence at the birth of your baby
2. Appreciate the power of your maternal intuition, that guides and protects you and your baby through labor and birth
3. Grow in confidence that your body has been made to give birth efficiently and calmly
4. Allow your body to loosen and relax, as you do during your labor and your baby's natural birth
5. Allow your mind and body to grow in harmony for a swift and gentle labor and birth

*[Pause] when enough time has passed, stop stroking and bring mum back to normality, talking in a normal voice at a normal volume.*

This has been a special time as you become so relaxed and happy in the knowledge of the fulfilment that is before you in the birth of our baby. You now know that you are able to affect your body as your wish. But in a minute it will be time to come to me in this room, bringing the calm and confidence with you, wonderfully relaxed, refreshed and empowered, confident that our baby's birth will be relaxed and healthy, calm and quick. Knowing that, next time we do this you will relax even more deeply, your confidence will be even more profound, and you will quickly become even more free of all sensation. And now, in your own time, open your eyes - wide awake and alert.

## Statements for an Empowering Birth

I move gently forward through my pregnancy and labour with confidence and trust.

I see my baby's birth as natural, healthy, swift and easy.

I am practicing so that I am relaxed and calm during the labour.

I trust the instinctive process of birth, which flows, naturally through my body.

Birthing is a natural process of my body, my mind, and my spirit, working in unison with my baby.

I approach my baby's birth with optimism and confidence.

I practice profound relaxation, and I deepen my confidence and trust.

I am secure in the knowledge that I am fully prepared for a natural, easy and swift birth.

I have confidence that a natural birth is safe for me, and safe for my baby.

I choose the best possible caregivers during my pregnancy and the birth of my baby.

I choose the best place for my baby to be born naturally and calmly.

I enjoy the feeling of natural calm, relaxation and softness that permeates my body.

As I gently progress through labour and birth, I go deeper into relaxation and calmness.

Each breath is slow, long, deep and relaxed.

With each surge I breathe deeply, focus upwards, and work with my body.

With each breath out, I breathe out tension and stress.

With each breath in, I breathe in relaxation and comfort, peace and trust.

I feel positive, confident and optimistic, and I look forward to my baby's birth.

Throughout my labour I do deeper and deep within to my innate wisdom and intuition.

I flow with the natural rhythms of my body, which gently and swiftly ease my baby into the world.

I trust that my body and my baby are healthy, relaxed and calm.

My baby naturally moves into the best position for an easy birth.

I trust the natural process of birth working gently through my body and my baby.

Each surge of my body reminds me that I will soon be holding my baby in my arms.

I serenely accept my birthing as just right for me and my baby.

I relax more and more deeply as my labour advances and my baby moves closer and closer to birth.

I feel calm, relaxed and at ease.

With each surge my breath is slow and deep, my body is relaxed, and my mind is calm.

My baby moves slowly into the world, the placenta follows, and my blood vessels close naturally and healthily.

I eat healthily and take care of my body for me and for my baby.

My body and my baby's body and created the right size to birth naturally.

My baby is in the best possible position for a natural, swift and gentle birth.

My baby is born at the right time for a natural, swift and gentle birth.

My body is designed to give birth efficiently and easily.

I have chosen to be relaxed, calm and confident during the labour.

My baby is born healthy, alert and serene.

I welcome my baby with love and delight.

## How to encourage optimal fetal position

**From 34 weeks onwards** postural awareness and habits can encourage the fetus to adapt OFP (optimal fetal position).

Use the upright forward leaning postures regularly, thus allowing more available space in the abdomen for the fetus to rotate the spine to the front, particularly beneficial during Braxton Hicks contractions, manoeuvring baby to front. All fours, circling/swinging hips is particularly beneficial.

Sit with knees lower than hips, back vertical, use cushions is necessary.

Lean forward when sitting on the dining chair to read etc. elbows on the table and knees apart.

Sit facing chair back, leg astride.

Sit on a wedge cushion when driving or passenger in a car, car seats are especially bad for tipping your pelvis back (bucket seat).

Sit on birth ball.

Kneel on the floor cushion between upper and lower legs, lean against the birth ball or beanbag.

Swim face down and do crawl rather than breaststroke (kick can strain the soft pelvic ligaments).

Lie on the left hand side and use a pillow to support upper knee.

Respond to pressure from baby's head by changing posture to create maximum space. Pressure is a sign of lack of space for baby.

**Avoid** slumping on the sofa or any semi-reclining position, sitting with your legs crossed or the squatting position.

During labour if baby is still in OP, use leaning forward positions, hanging on to something/body and let body sag periodically (drop squat). Adopt this position for birthing an OP baby. Do the knee to chest position for up to 45 minutes at a time, very good results.

## Most Usual Position Ready for Birth

My baby is in the best position for a calm and natural birth



## My body and my baby's body work together in unison

Just notice this picture every time you pass it.

### *Positions for Laboring Out of Bed*

<b>WALKING, STANDING, AND LEANING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helps stimulate effective contractions.</li><li>• Works with gravity.</li></ul>
<b>KNEELING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May relieve back pain.</li><li>• Helps baby rotate to most favorable position: occiput anterior (OA).</li><li>• Relieves hemorrhoids.</li></ul>
<b>SITTING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uses gravity to help baby's descent.</li><li>• Allows rest between contractions.</li></ul>
<b>SQUATTING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uses gravity to help baby's descent.</li><li>• Opens pelvis to provide more room.</li></ul>

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## Colour and Calmness

It is so simple to let your breathing be completely natural, and notice just how easily and gently you are relaxing, breathing in and breathing out... breathing in and breathing out.... deeply, slowly, comfortably.

As you relax more deeply, you notice that your eyelids feel heavier, and very naturally start closing... slowly and easily... until now they are completely closed.

Now give yourself permission to imagine a warm, unstoppable wave of complete relaxation starting at the very top of your head, and beginning to wash comfortably down through your body. As it flows through every part of your body, so that part becomes completely limp and relaxed. Feel it now flowing from the top of your head down... your forehead becomes completely smooth as it totally relaxes... now your lips... and even inside your mouth your tongue relaxes. Now the muscles of your jaw soften and let go... comfortably... easily... as you go down and further down... enjoy the release.

The wave flows on through your neck, relaxing it and enveloping your shoulders, and now that feeling of warmth and ease washes down your arms, relaxing every point as it flows from your shoulders, through your upper arms, past your elbows, and down into your lower arms, and on into your hands, the back of your hands and your palms, all the way down to the ends of your fingers, allowing everything to become relaxed and comfortable. Now the wave surges gently on through your chest, relaxing everything, through your stomach, gently soothing, and the muscles of your pelvic area relax, just as they will as you give birth to your baby, and on into your legs, down your thighs, and into your lower legs, then down into your feet, where, like the surging sea, it laps at the very tips of your toes, making both your legs completely relaxed. And now you realise you are very, very relaxed. This feeling of well-being allows you to go deeper, down and further down, and each time you go more quickly, more deeply, easily and gently into ultimate relaxation. Down and further down. More and more profound.

Now you become even more deeply relaxed, as you imagine yourself in a warm and crystal clear sea, and you find that you can breathe just as easily underwater as on the surface, and so you let yourself gently and safely sink down and further down into the warm, comfortable water, observing all the beautiful coral and fish of every other colour and hue, shape and size, and as you sink deeper, you become more and more profoundly relaxed, until you find yourself on the bottom, lying gently on the soft sand, surrounded by all these beautiful colours, and completely, completely relaxed and calm.

As you lie comfortably, calmly and relaxed on the warm, soft sand, breathing easily, deeply, slowly, happily and calmly, you notice that, as the different shoals of fish come and go, twist and turn, change shape and intermingle, they create the most beautiful patterns and colours, and these colours affect your own emotions with their beauty, and your body and mind absorb their calmness and fluidity, allowing you to sink down and further down, into gentle peace.

And now you notice that, almost miraculously, the different coloured fish have separated into bands of colour, so that, like light through a prism, every colour of the spectrum can be seen before you, gently pulsating to the rhythm of your body, as the fish themselves gently twist and turn. How relaxing this is; calming and so peaceful.

Now the fish swirl silently, separate and move away out of sight, until, like a soft cloud, you see coming towards you the most beautiful purple shoal of gentle, dainty fish, ranging in colour from a soft red to a calming blue. And as the fish pass around each other, you experience the energy of the colour purple, flowing softly around and through you, bringing you confidence and trust. This has a wonderful effect on your mind, filling you with relaxation, and happiness, and serenity, bringing you the peace of mind that will be with you throughout your pregnancy, and your baby's birth. So you feel calm and confident, and these wonderful feelings allow you to trust your inner wisdom, and drift down and further down, safer and safer.

See before you now the red fish separating and leaving as a body, off into the distance, and almost miraculously the colour surrounding you and permeating you becomes the wonderful blue of the shoal that remains, clear and serene like the azure blueness of a summers day, and this blue flows softly round and through the upper part of your body, bringing you lightness and beauty into your world, and with it a gentle and soft happiness. A feeling of calmness, peace and well-being envelops and soothes you, down and further down. You notice that your breathing becomes even more gentle and easy, and this wonderful blue is in complete harmony with the area of your neck, your shoulders, and your throat, as they relax more and more, and become softer and softer. You use gentle and positive words, in your inner conversations and when you speak to your baby, and you feel as though your muscles are completely softened. You feel relaxed and weightless... a profound feeling of wellbeing and trust.

Now a group of yellow fish silently join the blue fish, which turn the colour around you to the gentle green of spring, the time of new beginnings, just as your body is so naturally and healthily vibrant with new life, and this mingling of the yellow and blue fish, each vanishing as separate colours, permeates you with the energy of green, a green that gladdens and relaxes your heart in itself, where you feel such joy and love now, and deepens even further your calmness and relaxation. Joy and love for your baby envelop you, and you experience a deeper connection with this new small being. With the new, gentle green you feel so close to nature as she caresses and enfolds you. You are wholly enveloped with that wonderful feelings of calmness and relaxation which nature brings to all she touches, down and further down.

Notice now that the blue fish are drifting away, all together, and only the yellow fish remain, like a shimmering meadow of yellow flowers, which brings peace and calm throughout the centre of your body. You feel the fish swimming gently around you, never touching, but the faint tremor of the water as they move caresses the centre of the body, and seems to flow right through you, drawing you into a state of yet deeper relaxation and harmony, down and further down, as your breathing becomes even more effortless and gentle, your muscles loose, and your body at ease.

And then you notice that the shoal is turning almost imperceptibly but smoothly into a soft orange, like the flesh of a melon, as a new shoal of red fish arrive and intermingle with the yellow ones, changing the colour from yellow to orange as their numbers increase. You feel this colour change particularly affect your abdomen, which softens even further, and relaxes, as every element with it calms and softens, and you become even more closely connected to the baby you feel growing within you. This effect soothes and softens your body throughout the area of your abdomen, and so you become more and more relaxed ready for the birth of your baby, as your mind and body move closer and closer together in serenity and peace. Down and further down.

But now the colours of the fish change yet again as the shoal of yellow fish swim away, so that all becomes deep, rich, red, bringing great calmness and relaxation which permeates your pelvic area and the lower part of your body. You are full of confidence and trust. You are calm, and peaceful, and happy, and you feel that the future holds good things for you, so you trust in nature, in your intuition, and in the natural process of pregnancy, labour and birth. You know that your body is designed to give birth naturally, and work with your baby during its smooth passage into the world. Of course these natural feelings allow you to drift down and further down, safer and safer, encompassing your entire body, mind and spirit.

Now something wonderful happens. The red fish in their shimmering haze quietly move away from you out of sight, and you notice that the dappled light, filtering through the ripples of the water, has changed the sand and you are lying on a soft bed of purest white, as if all the colours that have passed around you have left behind their very essence, and produced their natural combination of white light, on which you now rest, so gently that you can hardly feel it at all, so gently that you feel the softness saturating your very being. This feeling of peacefulness, relaxation, and confident and instinctive happiness, reminds you that the happiness and joy of a natural, swift, healthy and calm birth, for you and for your baby, is just as natural as all the colours of the beautiful, gentle fish that have swirled around you, and enveloped you with their fluid softness, and is equally a part of nature.

So now you know that all is well; all is very well. You know that your labour and birth are a completely natural process in the way that nature intended.... and you carry within you the memory of this wonderful experience of the colours and calmness.

This has been so pleasant, and there is no need for anything more in this session, so it is completely natural for you to pass from this experience to a deep and happy sleep, waking at the right time, joyful, refreshed, and relaxed, and looking forward with confidence and trust to your baby arriving so naturally, gently and calmly. If that is how you would like this session to end, just slip off to sleep now.

If you would like to come back to a state of alertness, then follow my instructions, and the energy will easily and naturally flow back to you. I will start counting now:

- 1 Starting to become aware of my count
- 2 Slowly taking control of your own muscles again
- 3 Feel the energy begin to flow back into your body
- 4 Noticing the sounds around you
- 5 And finally your eyes gently open, and you feel happy, refreshed and very calm.

Filled with confidence and trust in your body and in the natural process of birth.

### **Building Confidence Exercise**

To allow yourself to move freely forward, and your body to give birth naturally, calmly and gently, use this opportunity to write down any fears, tensions or worries that could inhibit the natural and gentle birth that you are focusing on. It could be anything to do with labour, health, what someone has said, your relationships, finances.... anything at all.

If something comes to mind that doesn't seem directly related, right it down anyway. It comes to mind now, it might also come to mind when you are in labour.

Include anything from small worries to major concerns. Then grade your list from 1-3; 1 being minor worries and 3 being major concerns.

This is your own process. Allow it to mature so it is of maximum benefit to you.

When you feel the list is complete, share and discuss it with your partner. Nobody else need see these lists, so you can be entirely honest. We will talk about them if you want to and empower you to free yourself from them in the next class.

When we have completed the release work, never look at the list again, and please destroy it completely.

You can make a list on the back of this sheet of paper.

### **World Health Organisation**

**BIRTH IS NOT AN ILLNESS – Forteleza Declaration**  
Recommendations from the World Health Organization 1985

These recommendations are taken from a report on Appropriate Technology for Birth published by the World Health Organization in April 1985 and are known as the 'Forteleza Declaration'

The recommendations are based on the principle that each woman has a fundamental right to receive proper prenatal care; that the woman has a central role in all aspects of this care, including participation in the planning, carrying out, and evaluation of the care; and the social, emotional and psychological factors are decisive in the understanding and implementation of proper parental care. They are:

1. The whole community should be informed about the various procedures in birth care, to enable each woman to choose a type of birth care she prefers.
2. The training of professional midwives or birth attendants should be promoted. Care during normal pregnancy and birth, and following birth should be the duty of this profession.
3. Information about birth practices in hospitals (rates of caesarean section etc.) should be given to the public served by the hospital.
4. There is no justification in any specific geographic region to have more than 10-15% caesarean section births.
5. There is no evidence that caesarean section is required after a previous transverse low segment caesarean section birth. Vaginal deliveries after caesarean should normally be encouraged wherever emergency surgical capacity is available.
6. There is no evidence that routine fetal monitoring during labour has a positive effect on the outcome of pregnancy/
7. There is no evidence for pubic shaving or pre-delivery enema.
8. Pregnant women should not be put in lithotomy position during labour or delivery. They should be encouraged to walk during labour and each woman must freely decide which position to adopt during delivery.
9. The systematic use of episiotomy is not justified.
10. Birth should not be induced for convenience, and the induction of labour should be reserved for specific medical indications. No geographic region should have rates of induced labour over 10%.
11. The routine administration of analgesic drugs that are not specifically required to correct or prevent a complication in delivery should be avoided.
12. Artificial early rupture of the membranes, as a routine process, is not scientifically justified.
13. The healthy newborn must remain with the mother, wherever both their conditions permit it. No process of observation of the healthy newborn justifies a separation from the mother.
14. The immediate beginning of breastfeeding should be promoted, even before the mother leaves the delivery room.
15. Obstetric care services that have the critical attitudes towards technology, and that have adopted an attitude of respect for the emotional, psychological and social aspects of birth should be identified. Such services should be encouraged and the processes that have led them to their position must be studied so that they can be used as models to foster similar attitudes in other centers and to influence obstetrical views on nation wide.
16. Governments should consider developing regulations to permit the use of new birthing technology only after adequate evaluation.

### Mary Cronk's Words of Wisdom

I am sure that many others will explain your absolute right to refuse any procedure for any or no reason. The law, and good practice is quite clear. A sensible person will listen carefully to any explanations as to why a procedure is proposed, and then should she choose not to have X Y or Z she just says 'no' or 'no thank you'. The 'allowing' is done by YOU. An assertive approach is worth cultivating. The following phrases have been found useful by women encountering difficulties, and are in order of assertiveness. You may care to commit them to memory and practice them frequently (3 times a day) in front of a mirror.

'Thank you so much for your advice which I/we will consider carefully and let you know our decision.' Sweet smile! This one is most useful in the antenatal stage, though it can be used in labour. It can take a little while to consider what you want to know, or what you decide.

'Would you like to repeat/reconsider what you have just said?' (Spoken in a voice of incredulity). This is useful and, for example, applies to the misuse of the word 'allow'.

'I do not believe you have heard what I have just said. Would you like me to repeat myself?'

'I'm afraid I shall have to regard any further discussion as harassment' (said with a look of sorrow). This is said if a person does not respect your decision or persists in pressing the subject.

'Don't you think you are being rather impertinent?'

'What is your NMC PIN number (to a nurse or midwife)? What is your GMC PIN number (to a medical practitioner)' this is used if 4 is ineffective. If the person asks why you want their pin number, inform them that it is something they might like to consider.

To be used in extremis: 'stop this AT ONCE.' Mary adds: 'I am delighted to tell you that this was used AGAINST me by a woman to whom I had taught it. I was doing a difficult VE and was being too persistent. I stopped at once and learnt a lesson'

You can always leave – or tell the person involved to leave. Get out BEFORE bursting into tears. Remember you are going to be someone's parent; a position of great importance and responsibility. You are NOT a weak and feeble woman. You are strong and powerful.

Please do not be drawn into 'fighting'. Just state your intentions clearly and calmly. Do not argue, but learn the phrases and keep them or similar for use if necessary. I am informed that it is usually only necessary to be assertive once or twice to have a much more respectful attitude from the people who are actually your professional SERVANTS.

We have been practicing Hypnobirthing and our focus is on calm and natural birth. We would very much appreciate your support in helping us create a calm and quiet environment at all times, both physically, mentally and emotionally, with no interventions and no vaginal examinations without fully informed consent and unless absolutely necessary.

If you have any questions, please ask ..... in the first instance, and not me.

Thank you so much for your help.

## Inducing Labour More Naturally

- o Lovemaking
- o Nipple and clitoral stimulation
- o Laughter
- o Visualizing an opening rosebud
- o Hypnotherapy
- o Kinesiology
- o SP 6 – Four fingers above back of inside ankle bone
- o Walk
- o Bath
- o Hot and spicy foods
- o Raspberry leaf tea
- o Aloe Vera juice
- o Pineapple
- o Evening Primrose Oil (vaginally)
- o Prunes
- o Massage down (not up) the outside of your thighs with your knuckles

## Things to Consider in Advance

You are focused on a calm and natural hypnobirthing birth, so it is very much in your best interest to carefully consider the following:

- o Membrane sweep
- o Induction (after 'due date'/after release of membranes)
- o Safe and calm place for birth
- o Vaginal examinations (also after membrane release)
- o An atmosphere of peace and quiet in labour
- o Relaxing music
- o Use the word 'pain' during labour
- o Augmentation of labour
- o Coaching during down (second) stage of labour
- o Delay cord cutting until after pulsation has stopped
- o Skin to skin contact immediately after birth
- o Injection of artificial oxytocin
- o Vitamin K required: intravenously/orally/not at all
- o Breast feeding as soon as baby is ready after birth
- o Hold my baby undisturbed for at least one hour after birth
- o Father to remain with me after birth
- o Wait for placenta
- o Natural third stage
- o Breast feeding

## Things to Remember

### Daily:

- o Upward breathing – with visualization of the Sun Rising in the sky etc. – a few minutes' morning and evening.
- o Statements for a gentle birth and Colour and Calmness – CD – Play as you go to sleep.
- o Looking at birth picture.
- o Pelvic floor exercises.
- o Perineal massage (from week 34).

- o Downward breathing – with visualization of Open Rose/Waterfall/Ripples in Water (and on loo)

**Menu:**

- o Do one before you put on your CD and go to sleep
- o Gentle back stroking
- o Head and face relaxation script
- o Calming touch script
- o Stroking and relaxation script
- o Colour and calmness script

**Also:**

- o Squatting, sitting cross-legged etc., sitting upright, funny and light hearted DVD's.

**Focus your attention on where you want to be.**

**When your baby is coming:**

- o Take your time, conserve your energy, gently keep doing what you were doing, and at some point start timing your surges. Snack to keep your energy up.
- o Watch a light hearted or funny DVD.
- o Remember to use your up breathing and visualizations during surges. You may find some prompts helpful, or you may prefer silence.
- o Call up the midwife or go to the birth centre/hospital when the surges are about three or four minutes apart and one minute long.

**Throughout the birth:**

**Mother** – Up breathing, up visualizations, moving to down breathing, down and open visualizations.

**Father** – Protecting your space and being your advocate, gentle prompts, gentle touch, arm stroking, shoulder stroking, CD. Also water (with Five Flower Remedy), essential oil of lavender, arnica.

**Enjoy your pregnancy. Remain calm and confident. Allow your birthing body to birth your baby. Birthing and caring for your baby is a natural process of being. Whatever you do is right.**

**Things you may find useful**

Lavender	General relaxation
Clary Sage	Assists with surges
Roman Chamomile	General relaxation

Use in an essential burner (if you are going into hospital, you will need an electric one), you can dilute a few drops in a base oil, e.g. sweet almond oil, and massage.

**Useful Websites**

[www.aims.org.uk](http://www.aims.org.uk)

Excellent information and check out their booklets.

[www.homebirth.org.uk](http://www.homebirth.org.uk)

Even if you're not planning a homebirth, you can access a lot of useful information.

[www.birthchoice.com](http://www.birthchoice.com)

For statistics on C-section rates etc. for each hospital.

## Books

Primal Health – Michel Odent

Ina May's Guide to Childbirth – Ina May Gaskin

## TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR BIRTH

Mothers come to hypnobirthing for a calm and gentle birth and it works well, but it is a partnership between you and your husband or partner, and your medical advisors. Before you start, I would like you to ask yourself the question, 'who is responsible for my birth?' The answer is, 'you'.

You may be fortunate in all the circumstances of your baby's birth and your caregivers, but if you are clear about how you can achieve the best possible birth, and remain focused on this goal, then the mind leads where the body follows and it is amazing how often what you focus on becomes a reality.

Here are some points to remember:

- Birth is a natural process and, if you create the most natural environment, you are setting the stage for it to progress easily.
- As a mother, your instincts are powerful and right. Follow your intuition about where and how you want your baby's birth to be.
- Your job is to focus on the birth you want. You have a midwife to consider the 'what ifs' and 'just in cases'. That's part of her job. If you focus on what 'might' go wrong, that's where your mind will tend to lead you.
- A woman in labour goes into herself and is not in a place to negotiate with anyone. A husband or partner who understands the principles of a calm natural birth and is prepared to speak for you clearly, calmly and courageously can make all the difference between an unhappy and an empowering experience.
- The person who is with you during the labour is extremely important. To have the right caregiver is beyond price. Be sure that your medical advisers will unwaveringly support you in how you want your birth to be. Be prepared to change if necessary to make sure you feel comfortable.
- Remember that the law says that no intervention may be done without informed consent. You may wish to remind your caregivers of this. Once you have carefully taken advice and made your decision, any further discussion may be regarded as harassment.
- Taking responsibility for your baby's birth includes everything that makes up your internal and external environment in body, mind and spirit. Make sure you have only positive and healthy input.
- Practice, practice, practice.
- Being a parent is a position of great importance and responsibility. You are entitled to be treated with the greatest respect in this role.
- Though mothers come to Hypnobirthing for a calm and gentle birth for themselves, remember that it also means a calm and gentle birth for your baby. A baby who enters the world drug free and alert, to be greeted by a mother who is also alert, loving and confident, starts life and forms its first relationship in this world in the best possible way. This is the blueprint for all the other relationships it forms throughout its life, and so has an effect on all the people it meets. The significance of this cannot be over-estimated.

The choices that you make now have an effect on the serenity and development of your baby. Choose wisely.

## **Giving Birth: The Endocrinology of Ecstasy**

Giving birth in ecstasy: This is our birth right and our body's intent. Mother Nature, in her wisdom, prescribes birthing hormones that take us outside (etc.) our usual state (stasis), so that we can be transformed on every level as we enter motherhood.

This exquisite hormonal orchestration unfolds, optimally when birth is undisturbed, enhancing safety for both mother and baby. Science is also increasingly discovering what we realise as mothers – that our way of birth affects us life-long, both mother and baby, and that an ecstatic birth, a birth that takes us beyond our self, is the gift of a lifetime.

Four major hormonal systems are active during labour and birth. These involve oxytocin, the hormone of love; endorphins, hormones of pleasure and transcendence; epinephrine and norepinephrine, hormones of excitement; and prolactin, the mothering hormone. These systems are common to all mammals and originate in our mammalian or middle brain, also known as the limbic system.

For birth to proceed optimally, this part of the brain must take precedence over the neocortex, or rational brain. This shift can be helped by an atmosphere of quiet and privacy, with, for example, dim lighting and little conversation, and no expectations of rationality from the labouring woman. Under such conditions a woman intuitively will choose the movements, sounds, breathing, and positions that will birth her baby most easily. This is her generic hormonal blueprint.

All of these systems are adversely affected by current birth practices. Hospital environments and routines are not conducive to the shift in consciousness that giving birth naturally requires. A woman's hormonal physiology is further disturbed by practices such as induction, use of painkillers and epidurals, caesarean surgery, and separation of the mother and baby after birth.

## **PERINEAL MASSAGE**

Research has shown that antenatal perineal massage from approximately 35 weeks gestation reduces the likelihood of perineal trauma that needs stitching. Women are also less likely to report perineal pain at three months post birth (Beckmann and Gerrett 2006).

### **What is the perineum?**

The perineum is the area of tissue between the vagina and the anus. It connects all the muscles of the pelvic floor. The pelvic floor is divided into two areas of broad, flat muscle that unite along the midline, forming a hammock. This supports the pelvic organs.

The perineum is especially important in women. Stretching or tearing of the perineum during childbirth can remove support from the back wall of the vagina, making prolapse (or dropping down) of the uterus more likely. A weak pelvic floor can also result in incontinence of bladder and bowels. Trauma to the perineum may also lead to discomfort and pain when making love. (Barrett et al 2000, Albers et al 1999, Eason et al 2002.)

Estimates suggest that 85% of women will have some degree of perineum tear during vaginal birth. (Kettle and Tohill 2008, McCamdlish et al 1998, Sleep et al 1984.)

## What is perineal massage?

Perineal massage is a way of preparing the perineum to stretch more easily during childbirth. During birth, the perineal tissues need to fan out to allow your baby to pass through the vagina.

## The advantages of perineal massage are:

- It increases the elasticity of the perineum. This improves the perineum's blood flow and capacity to stretch more easily and less painfully during the birth of your baby.
- Tears in the perineum are less likely, and you are less likely to need an episiotomy (a cut into the perineum that is sometimes performed to quicken the birth of your baby). Please note: since the 1990's, the episiotomy rate in the UK has gone down significantly in response to evidence of associated adverse (negative) effects. (Klein 1994, Kettle and Tohill 2008.)
- Helps you focus on letting your perineum open up.
- Your perineum is less likely to be painful after the birth of baby.
- It can be particularly helpful if you have previous scar tissue, or a rigid perineum – for example a horse rider or energetic dancer. But all women can benefit.

## When to start?

You can start anytime from 34 weeks of pregnancy.

## How to do it?

Perineal massage may be done by you or your partner.

You may start initially and then invite your partner to massage as it gets nearer to the time of the birth – whatever you wish. Only do this if you are happy with it.

## When to do it?

A good time is during or after a bath or shower because blood vessels in the area are dilated and this makes the perineum softer and more comfortable to touch. You are also more relaxed!

We suggest using an unscented. Organic base oil: for example olive, sweet almond or sunflower oil, to lubricate the area and make the massage more comfortable.

Comfortable positions to include:

- Propped up with pillows on bed/sofa with knees bent out and supported.
- Resting back in the bath with one leg up on the side. Then change legs.
- Standing under a warm shower with one leg up on a stool, the change legs.
- Sitting on the toilet.

Technique:

- Get comfortable and relaxed and in a place where you feel safe, secure and will not be interrupted.
- Perineal massage should be comfortable but it should also ease the perineum in a similar way to how it will open up as you give birth to your baby.
- Place one or both thumbs on and just within the back wall of the vagina, resting one or both forefingers on the buttocks. You may prefer to use only one hand.
- Pressing down a little towards the rectum, gently massage by moving the thumb(s) and forefinger(s) together in an upwards and outwards rhythmic 'U' or 'sling' type movement.
- Focus on relaxing the perineum as much as possible during the massage.

- o Massage lasts as long as you wish, but aim at around five minutes a time.
- o With time and practice, as the perineum becomes more elastic, you will increase your ability to release and you can increase the pressure towards the rectum. This will help you release as you feel the pressure in labour and the baby's head is about to be born.
- o Repeat as often as you wish. For most benefit, aim for a massage everyday or every alternate day.
- o As the hormones of late pregnancy have a relaxing affect on your pelvic bones and muscles, you can also do a few strong pelvic floor contractions after the perineal massage to strengthen muscle tone. You can do this by imagining that you are trying to stop yourself passing wind and urine by tightening, squeezing and lifting the muscles around your front and back passages. Aim to hold the contraction for up to 10 seconds, relax for 10 seconds and repeat up to 10 times. It is also advisable to do a few 'quick' contractions, tightening the pelvic floor then releasing the muscles straight away.

**Do not do perineal massage if you have:**

- o Vaginal herpes
- o Thrush or any other vaginal infection

**If you feel pain at any point, stop and try again another time.**