

The 1st stage of Labour

This is the earliest part of labour, from when your contractions start until you are ready to push your baby.

The neck of the womb (cervix) is contracting to create a “pathway” for your baby to come out. (0-10 cm)

Changing positions throughout the 1st stage of labour can **help you** in a number of ways for example:

- Movement will help with the frequency, length and efficiency of the contractions, helping you to dilate more quickly.
- It can provide a distraction as well as providing a better sense of control. By being active you can reduce the sense of being overwhelmed by your contractions.
- The pelvis in upright positions may open wider and will make more room for your baby to come through it.

*Remember to combine movement with **BREATHING, RUBBING, ROCKING** and **REST** as the best way of coping with labour.

Standing: Gravity may help baby to move down through the pelvis

			
Leaning against a wall, furniture or your partner	Slow Dancing	Dance with belly lift	Leaning at the back of the bed, with monitors in place.

****** In early labour, be active but don't exhaust yourself by walking ***all*** the way through ***Early Labour/Latent labour (0-3 cm)***. Walking is more effective in ***Active Labour (3-10cm)*** and ***Transition Phase*** (end of 1st stage & progression to pushing baby). Baby's head is in a better position to put pressure on the cervix and encourage opening/dilation. Making more effective use of your time and energy.

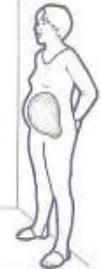
Kneeling: Can help relieve back pain and allow easy access for back rubs.

			
On all 4's	At a chair	Over a Birth ball	Knee's- Chest

Rocking/Rhythmic Motion: is a useful distraction technique and will help expand the birth canal to encourage baby down onto the cervix.

			
Sway on a ball	Stair Climbing	Rocking chair	Leaning on Partner

Positions for Back Labour: (when you feel contractions in your lower back) these contractions can be irregular or progress slowly.

			
Straddle a chair(or toilet)	Sitting under the shower.	Use the back of your couch or hospital bed for leaning onto.	Lean against the wall.(Place ice/heat in the hollow of your back).

Positions of Rest: Resting between the contractions allows you to get your breath and energy back & helps you to cope better with the next contraction.

			
Side Lying, pillow propped between your knees	Semi sitting, on your couch/bed.	Sitting with back supported and two feet elevated..	Sitting asymmetrically to help enlarge the pelvis.