

Breathing exercise

Good breathing is needed for a good supply of oxygen for the mother and baby. Take a long breath out through the mouth, pausing until you need to breath in, followed by a long breath in through the nose. With breathing out the abdominal muscles should contract, drawing in. Your diaphragm rises. As you breathe in, the muscles lengthen and abdomen gently pushes out. Your diaphragm falls and the ribcage expands. With the in breath you can visualise drawing in all you need physically and emotionally. With the out breath imagine letting go of tiredness, negative emotions or tension in your body. Deep breathing is important especially during the labour as it helps the body to produce endorphins and oxytocin, which are its natural painkillers.

Visualisation

Use your imagination in a focused way. It helps to switch off the conscious mind and tap into the power of the subconscious. You can imagine the baby in a good position, a fast but smooth baby delivery. Or if you need to relax just see yourself in a meadow with a lot of beautiful flowers. Also you can imagine your cervix to be like a flower opening out petals with each contraction.