

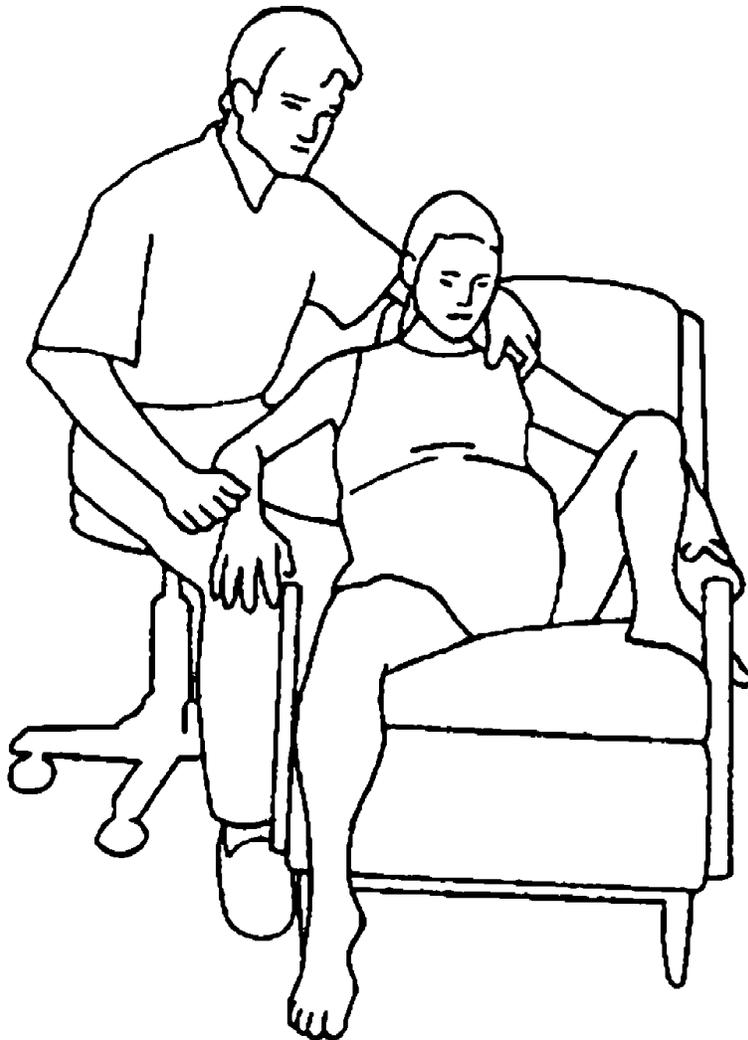
# Early Labor

Scenario: You went for a walk; now sitting down for a snack. Contractions are 20 minutes apart, and last 30—40 seconds. They are uncomfortable at the peak, but you're relaxed between contractions.

Breathing: Deep, abdominal breathing. Cleansing breaths.

Comfort: Touch relaxation—partner looks for someplace mom is holding tension, and touches her there, stroking lightly to remind mom to relax.

Benefits of this position: Good for resting. Asymmetrical positions, like this one with one foot raised up, help to widen the pelvis, and help baby rotate.



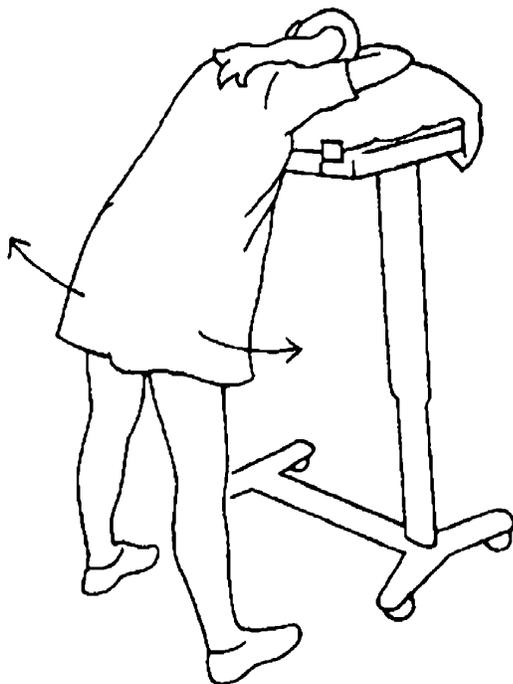
# Early Labor

Scenario: Contractions are 8 minutes apart, and last 30-45 seconds. They're uncomfortable, and you have a hard time sitting still during them, so you've gone for a walk; you stop and lean against something during contractions.

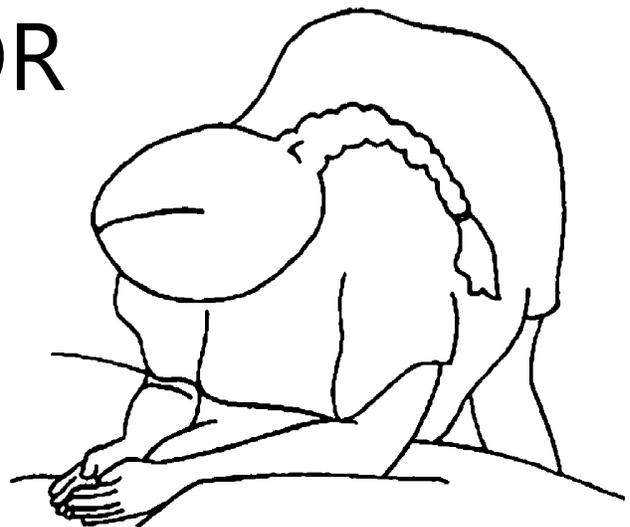
Breathing: Cleansing breath; then deep, abdominal breathing.

Comfort: Partner reassures mom, reminding her this is early labor, and that things are going well.

Benefits of leaning-over position: Leaning over a counter or table, against a wall, or on the back of the chair can take the pressure off her back. Swaying her hips back and forth will help with rotation, and progress of labor.



OR



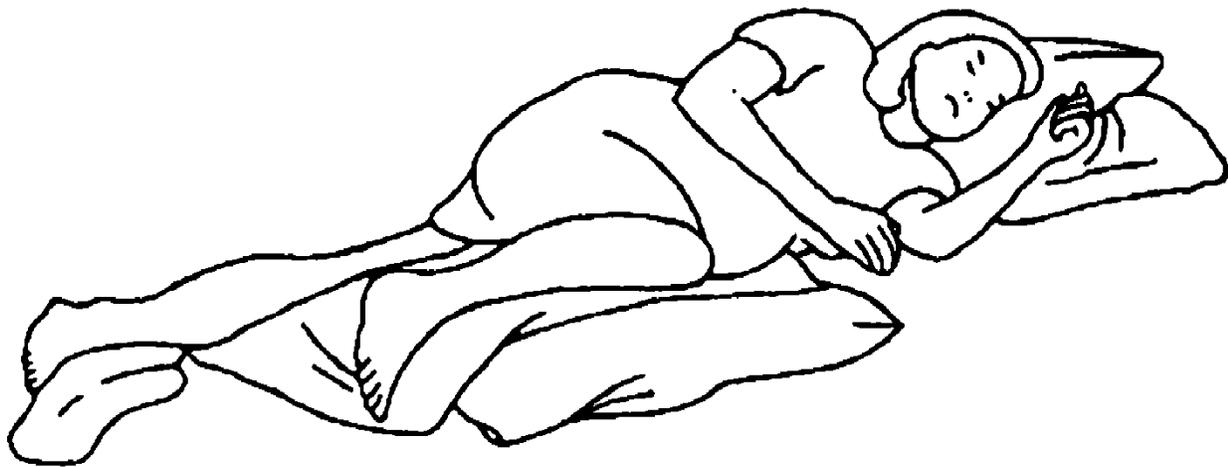
# Early Labor

Scenario: It's the middle of the night. Contractions are 15-20 minutes apart, and last 30-45 seconds. They're uncomfortable, and wake you up, but you took a warm bath, and now try to sleep in between contractions.

Breathing: Deep, abdominal breathing, or normal sleep-like breathing.

Comfort: Partners, talk her through a visualization, "Imagine yourself floating in a warm ocean... the water is holding you up, so you can let your whole body relax... your uterus muscles will do the work they need to do."

Benefits of this position: Good for resting.



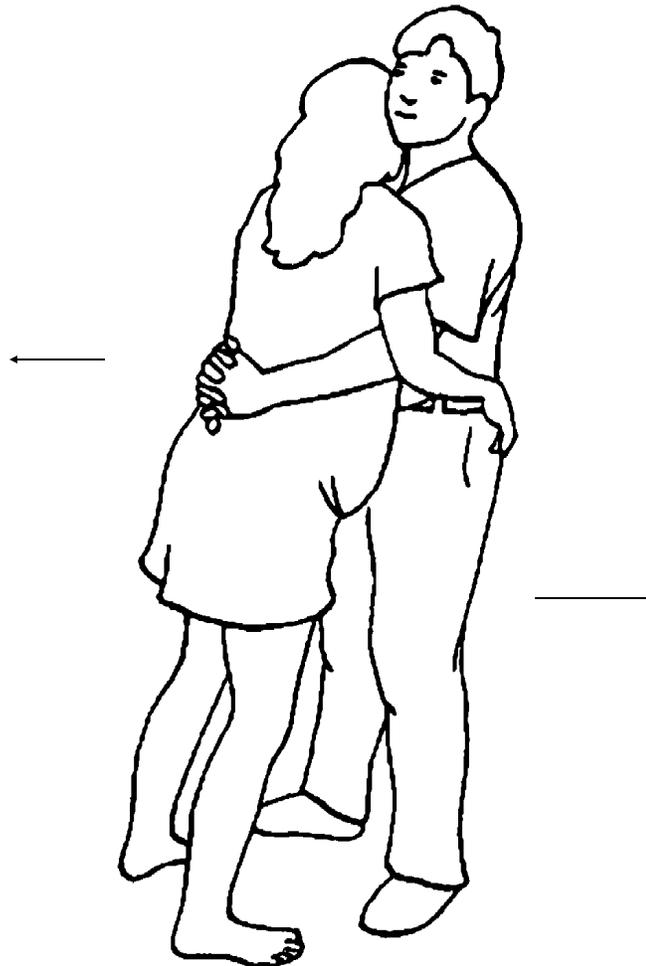
# Active Labor

Scenario: Contractions are about 5 minutes apart, and last for about 50 seconds. They are painful at the peak. In between contractions, mom can relax her muscles, but wants to focus only on labor: doesn't want any distractions.

Breathing: Deep abdominal breathing, until peak of contraction. At peak, do hee-hee breathing, return to deep breaths after peak.

Comfort: Massage. Partner can rub her back while they sway back and forth. Partner can sing to her, if desired, or "Whisper sweet nothings in her ear."

Benefits of this position: Swaying can help baby rotate. Upright position can help baby descend. Emotionally comforting.



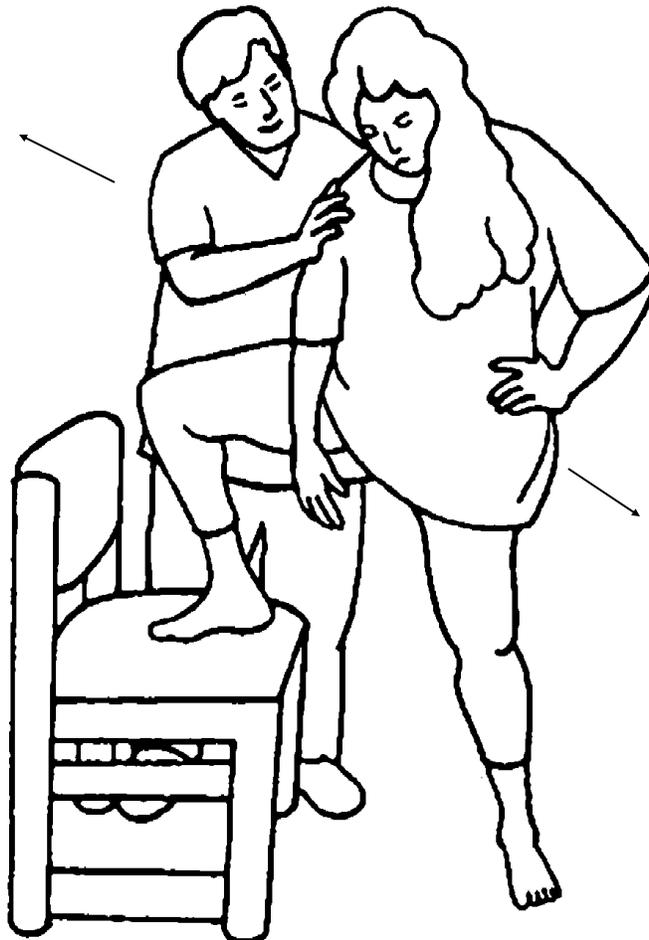
# Active Labor

Scenario: Your contractions are about 4 minutes apart, and last for about 60 seconds. They're intense, and you feel you need to be active during them.

Breathing: Cleansing breath at beginning and end. Hee-hee breathing throughout contraction, starting slow, faster over the peak, slow at end.

Comfort: Partner supports her while lunging. Lots of encouragement from partner, reminding mom that the more intense contractions are a good sign that labor is progressing and the baby is on its way.

Benefits of this position: Asymmetrical positions help to widen the pelvis, and help baby rotate. Movement helps with rotation and descent. (Put foot down and rest between contractions!)



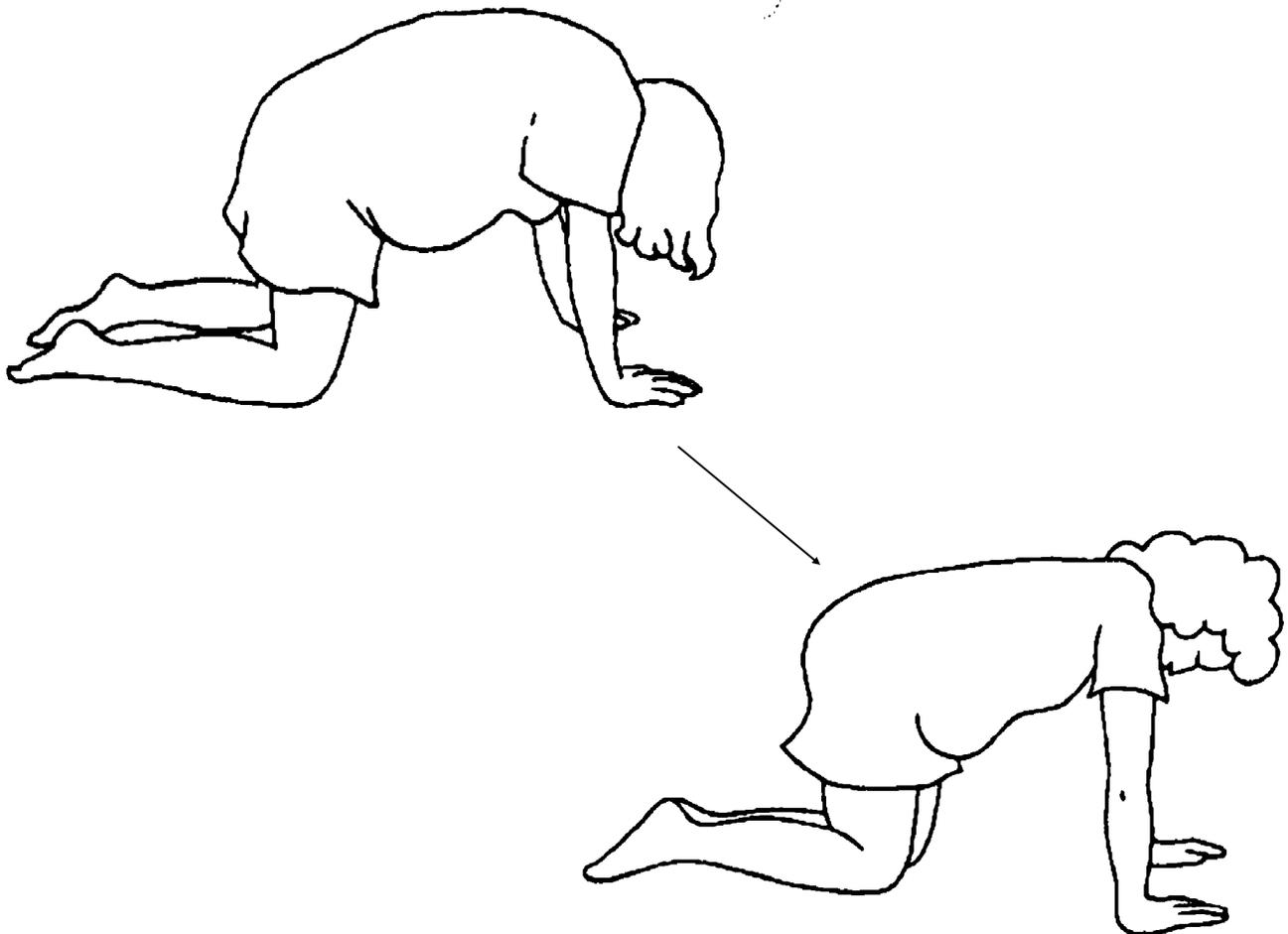
# Active Labor

Scenario: Contractions are about 3 minutes apart, and last for 60 seconds. Mom's feeling lots of pressure on her back during contractions, so hands and knees is comfortable, with a heating pad on her back between contractions.

Breathing: Hee-Hee-Blow. (Do as many "hees" as feel right to you. At least two, not more than five before each blow.)

Comfort: Do pelvic tilts. Arch your back and "tuck your tail" during hee-hees, and then let back relax to flat as you blow. (Partners, sit down next to her, rub her back lightly.)

Benefits of this position: Takes the weight of the baby off of your back, which relieves pain. Pelvic tilts help a posterior baby rotate.



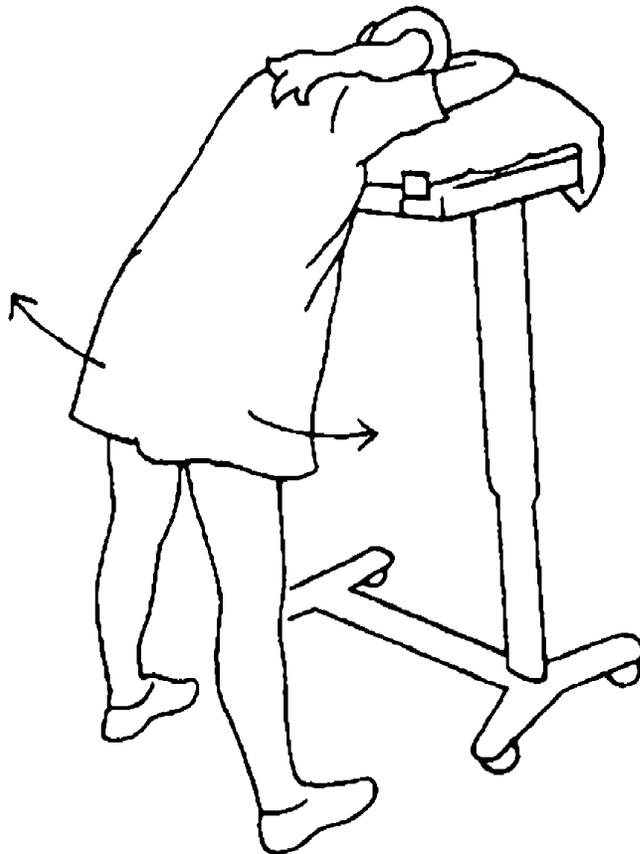
# Active Labor Plateaus

Scenario: You've been in labor for 18 hours. Contractions are about 4 minutes apart, lasting 45 seconds. You were in the bathtub for a couple hours, now you're ready to be more active, to help labor progress.

Breathing: Slow deep breaths at beginning and end of contraction. Hee-Hee Breathing over the peak.

Comfort: Partner rubs back, or uses counterpressure on her sacrum (lower back), or double hip squeeze. Mom sways hips between contractions.

Benefits of this position: Good for resting when tired, but still upright to help baby descend. Takes weight of the baby off spine. Movement can help baby rotate and descend.



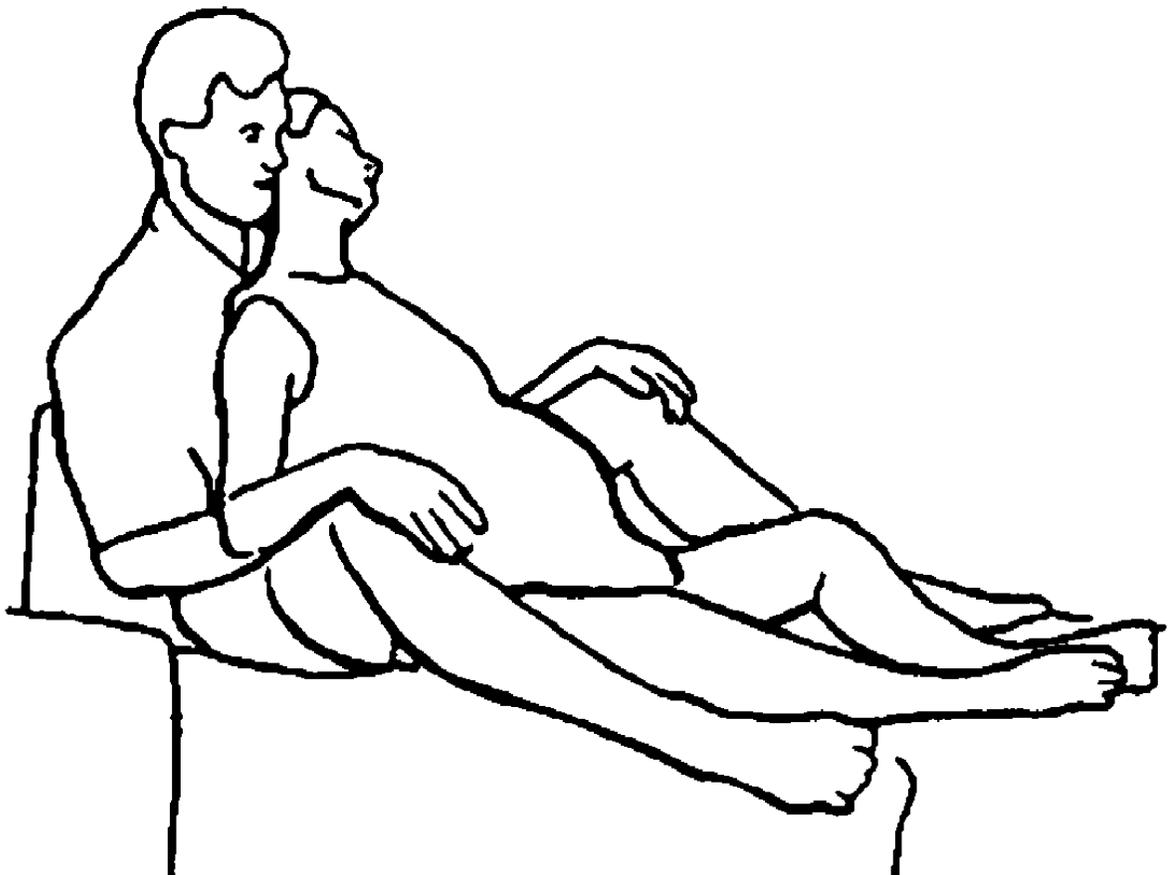
# Transition

Scenario: Contractions are only 3 minutes apart, lasting anywhere from 60 seconds each to 90 seconds. The contractions are very intense, and it's hard for mom to relax in the short period between contractions.

Breathing: Hee-Hee-Blow Breathing.

Comfort: Speak calmly, coaching her with breathing, reassuring her that this is transition and the baby will be here soon. Lightly rub hands or knees.

Benefits of this position: Emotionally comforting and grounding. Allows partner to be close to her and speak clearly without being "in her face." Gravity helps baby move down, letting leg lay out to side opens up pelvis.



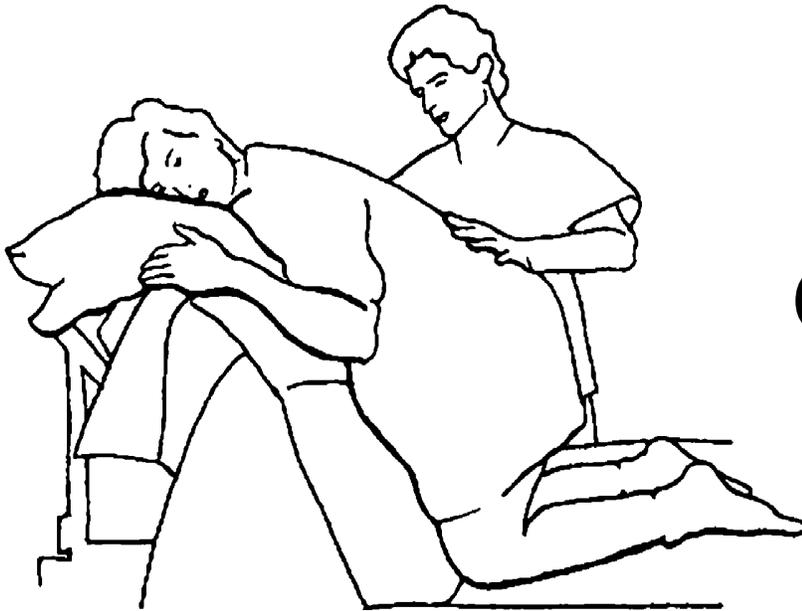
# Transition

Scenario: Contractions are 2 minutes apart, and 75 seconds long. They are very intense. Mom is distressed, demanding that you make it stop hurting. She's discouraged, saying "I can't, I can't."

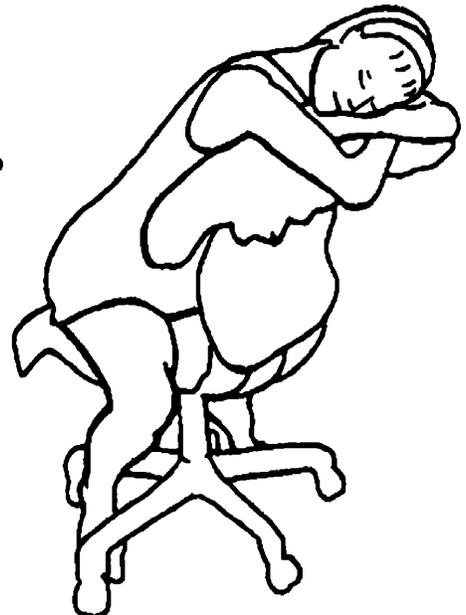
Breathing: Counted hee-hee blow breathing. Partner holds up fingers to tell mom how many hee-hees to do, then closes hand to show her to blow. He keeps his face near hers, and does the breathing with her.

Comfort: Partners stay as calm and relaxed as possible, stay close to her. Encourage her to open her eyes and look at you.

Benefits of this position: Good for resting some when tired, but still has the advantage of being upright to help baby descend. Takes weight of the baby off spine. If legs are



OR



# Second Stage (Pushing)

Scenario: Cervix is fully dilated, and caregiver tells mom it is time to begin pushing. Mom says she feels like she needs to have a bowel movement, and she is grunting and groaning during contractions.

Breathing: Take a deep breath at the beginning of the contraction. Tuck chin down toward chest, and bear down\* for five to seven seconds (partner counts out loud) while exhaling through pursed lips. Relax, taking a deep breath in, then bear down again.

Benefits of this position: Gravity helps baby move down. Open legs help to open up the pelvis. Partner support is emotionally reassuring.



\* Note for labor rehearsal. Moms should not *really* bear down during role-played contractions. *Pretend* to bear

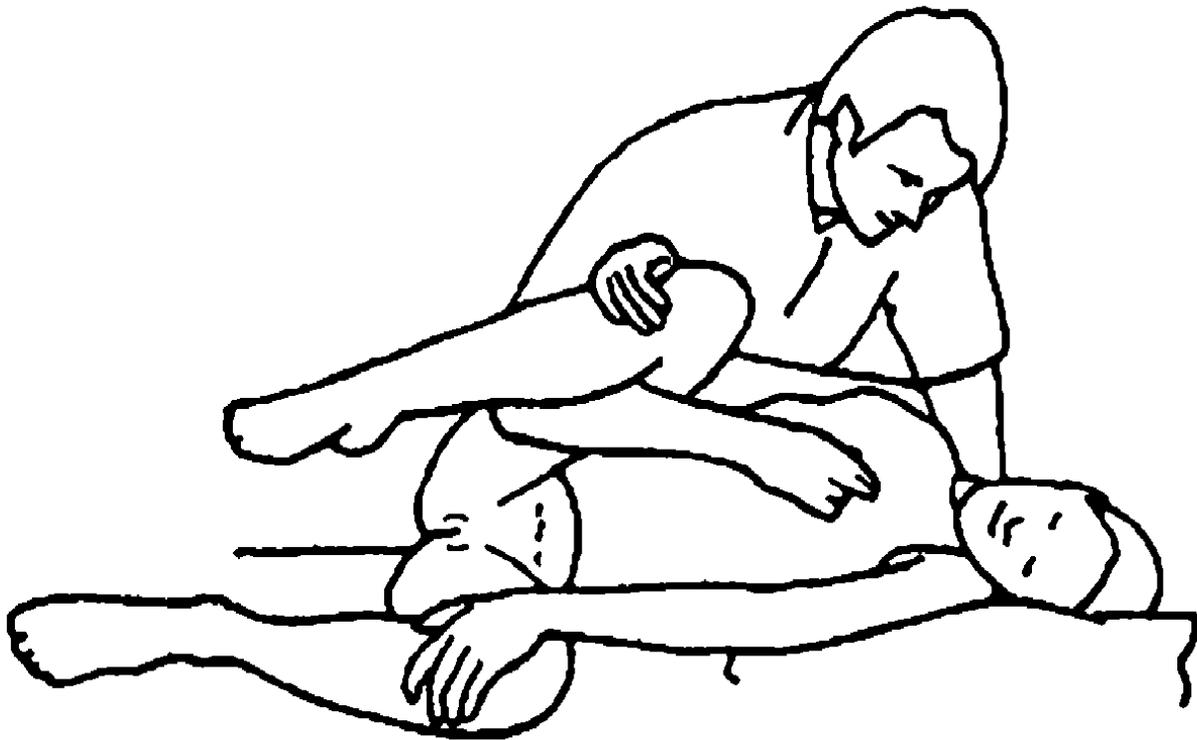
# Second Stage (Pushing)

Scenario: Second stage was going very quickly, and your caregivers have encouraged mom to lie on her side to help slow it down a little to give her perineum time to stretch.

Breathing: Since your goal is to slow labor down a little bit, you want to try not to add any voluntary bearing down efforts to contractions, so: during contraction, tilt chin up a little and pant.

Comfort: Effleurage: gentle, light stroking: of her hair, her arms, whatever. Helps to soothe her, and distract her from contraction.

Benefits of this position: Good for resting. (Partners make sure not to hold her upper leg in a position that would strain the muscles.)



# Second Stage (Pushing)

Scenario: The baby is crowning, and mom is actively pushing.

Breathing: Take a deep breath at the beginning of the contraction. Tuck chin down toward chest, and (*PRETEND*) to bear down for five to seven seconds (partner counts) while exhaling through pursed lips. Relax, taking a deep breath in, then bear down again.

Comfort: Partner supports mom in a squatting position. (Partners: be sure to get into a position that is comfortable for you!)

Benefits of this position: Squatting opens up pelvis, helping create a wider outlet for the baby to pass through.



Do some form of  
Supported Squat.

