



Using the Birth Ball During Labor

One of the most versatile and helpful labor support tools available to women is the birth ball. Proper use of it may:

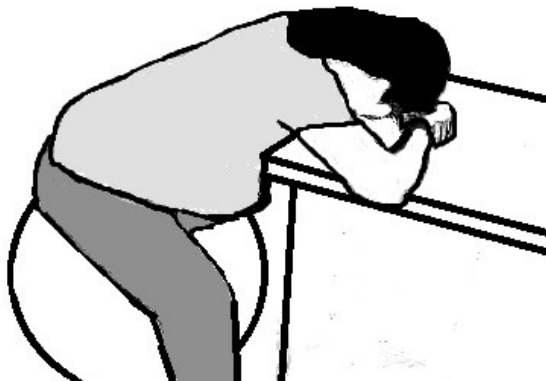
- Shorten labor,
- Make labor more efficient,
- Help the mother feel more comfortable,
- Make the passage through her pelvis easier for her baby.

Positions the laboring mother assumes when using the birth ball can help her:

- Stay active in her labor,
- Open her pelvis wide for the baby to maneuver through more easily, and keep her body upright to enable the help of gravity in bringing her baby down and out.

Sitting on the ball leaning forward

Among the other benefits listed, this position helps the mother to let go of important muscle groups, while feeling totally supported.



Kneeling with the Birth Partner

The birth partner can act as both a physical and mental support for this position. This is also a good opportunity to guide her breathing.



Standing and leaning over the ball

This is an effective position for women experiencing back labor pain, as keeping the weight forward will take the pressure off her sacrum.

This position also allows for mother to freely sway her hips through labor while the ball supports her full weight.



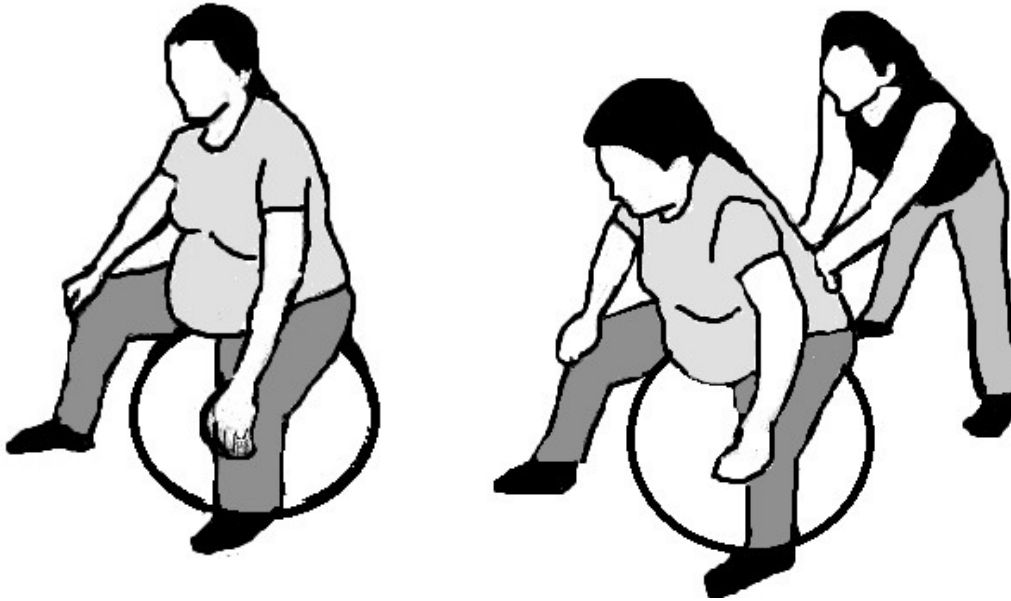
Kneeling on the floor and leaning over the birth ball

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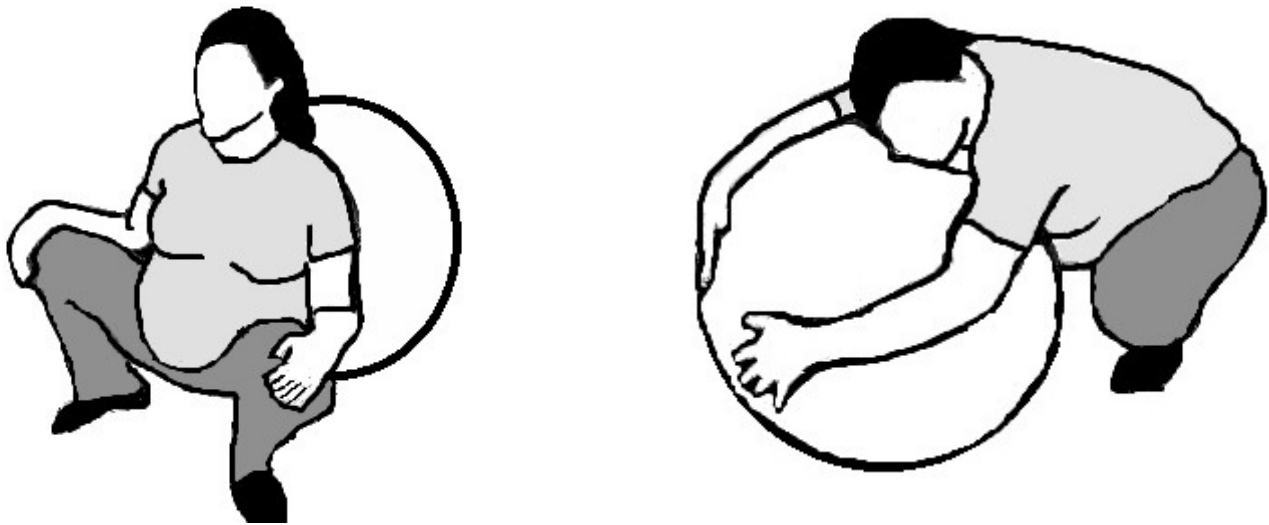
Sitting on the ball

This position allows the mother to be able to rock and sway on the birth ball, while still keeping her pelvis open and having her perineum supported. She is also in a position to allow for counter-pressure on her lower back from her birth partner.



Squatting on the floor using the ball for stability

This deep squat helps the mother open her pelvis to it's widest diameter while still being supported. The ball can be placed against a wall for support. It's important for mother to keep her feet flat on the ground to help keep her perineum relaxed.



The double hip squeeze with the birth ball

With the mother leaning forward on the birth ball and your hands on her hips, fingertips on the top of her hipbones. Rotate your hands inward (so your fingers point at to each other) to apply pressure.

Using your palms, apply pressure up and in. Your palms should be in the fleshy circle of muscle, not on the bone. Be sure to check with mom to make sure you are in the right spot and using the right amount of pressure.

