

## When Labour Begins

1. If labour begins at night, suggest she drink a big glass of water and take a warm, relaxing bath.
2. Give her a massage.
3. If labor begins during the day, take her to a place you both love where you can get used to labour together.
4. If she wants, go out shopping, to the movies, or out to eat.
5. Alternate walking and napping throughout the day.
6. Make sure she knows that you are at her beck and call today.
7. You both should sleep every chance you get – there may not be another opportunity to sleep for a long time. Play music that helps her relax or massage her scalp, shoulders or back
8. Help her to remember to drink plenty of water or juice and to eat as long as possible (don't eat heavy foods at this time, avoid greasy and high fat foods); prepare (or buy) her favourite foods.
9. Wear something she likes, and keep in close, relaxed physical contact with her.
10. Make sure you smell nice...take a shower, brush your teeth. She will be more aware of smells when in labor.
11. Take responsibility for making arrangements (pet or child care, phone calls, etc.) so she has nothing to think about except being in labour.
12. Make sure car has enough gas!
13. Make sure the baby seat is installed.
14. Make sure all items are packed in bag for birth center or hospital birth.
15. For home birth, get out your birth kit.
16. Field phone calls for her, or better yet, don't answer the phone and focus only on her.
17. Light some candles.
18. Play a game or watch **her** favourite movie or TV show.
19. Run her a bath or shower. Pour water over her back or belly.
20. Remind her to relax and focus.
21. Make her tea or broth to drink and remind her to eat small meals or snacks, especially before leaving for the hospital if you are having a hospital birth.
22. If she is having back pains, try alternating positions. All fours often helps if baby is posterior.
23. As labour progresses, help her relax by encouraging her to let her body "go limp," and stroke her gently to reassure her.
24. Synchronize your breathing with hers if she starts to panic -- help her to slow her breathing.

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25. If you are having a waterbirth, get in the pool with her, your touch and presence is important to her.
26. Don't be embarrassed to use pet names or special phrases with your doula, caregiver or nursing staff around; she needs to hear them from you!
27. In transition, speak tenderly to her between contractions, and maintain eye contact during contractions.
28. Once she is pushing, get your body close to her somehow so she feels your support and reinforcement.
29. If at the hospital and she is delivering in a bed, support her head while she pushes by putting your hand under her pillow.
30. Make sure she can see the baby crowning in a mirror, if she so desires.
31. Let her know when you can see the baby's head, and help her if she wants to reach down and touch it.
32. If you are catching the baby, listen to your provider's instructions (unless this is a planned unassisted birth) and be prepared to put the baby on mom's belly immediately after the birth.
33. Tell her you love her, during labour and especially after the baby is born.
34. During the first hour after the birth, this is the time when we "don't wake the mother", protect her space and yours as much as possible, allowing for the best bond between mom and baby, and partner and baby.