

Easier Birth Preparations

When there is a balance of muscle and ligament tension; gravity and movement will have a greater success at achieving fetal repositioning and/or a progression of labor.

- **Balance**: needs to be throughout the entire reproductive system in the muscles, fascia and ligaments. This is accomplished by the utilization of: The 3 Sisters maneuvers; bodyworkers; and daily essential exercises.
- **Gravity**: gravity friendly maternal positions help achieve optimal fetal position.
- **Movement**: is helpful especially after practicing ones balancing maneuvers. Movements include activities such as; walking, yoga, lunges, and swimming.

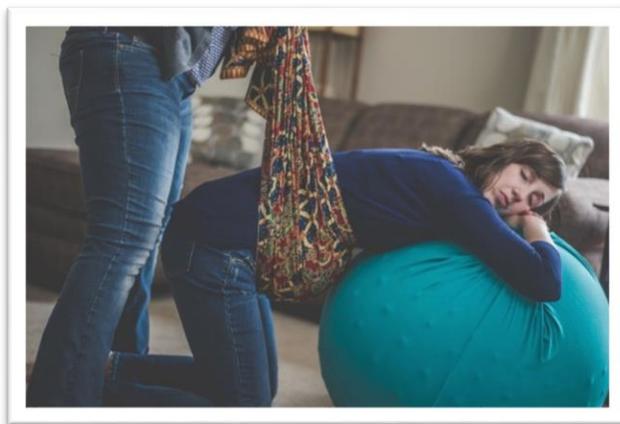
Balance

The Three Sisters

1. Rebozo sifting:

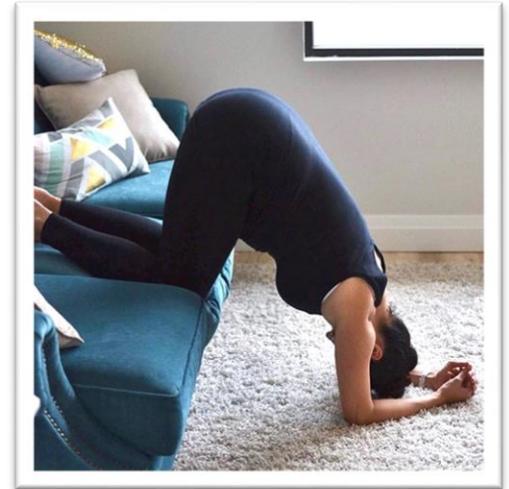
Using a long scarf or bed sheet around 70 inches in length, mother is on her hands and knees with her head resting on a ball or couch. The assistant wraps the scarf (rebozo) around the mother's belly so the bottom of the scarf tucks under her baby close to the mother's hips with the top of the scarf stretching over the top of her belly.

The assistant stands behind the mother holding both ends of the scarf, positioning your hands with your thumbs up and wrists straight. Knees are slightly bent. The assistant then gently lifts the mother belly upward and rotates their hands in a circular motion (just like a bicycle). Keep the lift and circular motion steady and slow. **Avoid jerky movements and be sure the scarf does not slide from side to side. Rebozo sifting is all about the rhythm.**



2. Forward-leaning inversion (*Do not do this balance technique if the mother has high blood pressure, any risks factors for a stroke, or a history of glaucoma and or a recent back, head or shoulder injury): Consult with your provider before inverting.*)

Start by kneeling at the edge of a firm surface such as a bed, couch or stairs. **You may want to use an assistant to avoid a fall.** Walk down with one hand at a time with your assistant guarding you. Bend down to your elbows and gently rest your head on the floor with your bottom tipped upward into the air. **Tuck in your chin and do not rest the weight on your head.** Hold this position for 3 breaths. Walk back up with your hands and push up to a kneeling position for at least one breath. **You may feel your head pounding the first few times you start forward-leaning inversion, however, this is not a problem by itself.**

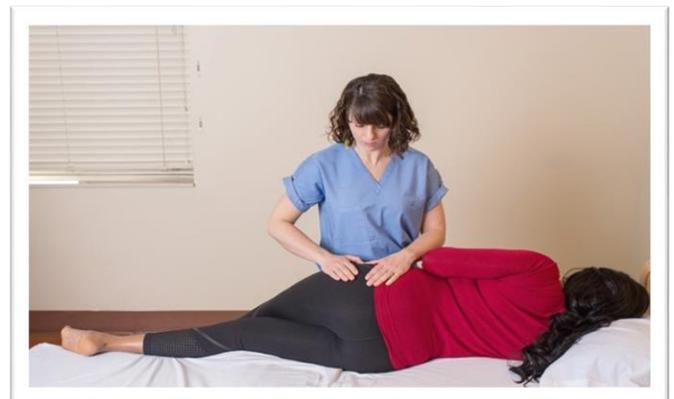


3. Side-lying release:

Start on the side of your choice, however, both sides need to be released for success. Mother comes to the edge of the bed or couch in the side-lying position. **The assistant presses their hip firmly against the edge of the mother's hip to keep her from falling off the bed or couch. Mother can also hold a chair or table near the bed or couch.**

Pay close attention to the mother's alignment. This is a key element for success. Her head should be level on a pillow and not tilted. Shoulders are to remain straight. The lower leg is also to remain straight with a flexed foot while the top leg hangs loosely over the bed or couch. **The mother's assistants must help prevent the mother's hip from leaning forward once her leg is hanging.** The assistant presses down on the hip and back just enough to keep the hips in line with each other. A slight rocking motion with your hands will help relax the muscles. Mother can rest her upper arms over her head or near her ears.

Hold this position for 2-20 minutes or until the upper leg relaxes (you will see an involuntary drop in the hanging leg). Repeat on the other side.



Gravity

Daily maternal recommended positions

- Always sit with your hips higher than your knees (don't slouch).
- Always keep your belly lower than your hips.
- Let your belly be a hammock for your baby.
- Sit on a kitchen chair **backwards**.
- When using an exercise ball, make sure your hips are not lower than your knees. Keep an upright posture by sitting on the front of your sitting bones and not on the back of your tail bone.
- In the car: Sitting on a cushion puts you and the baby at risk if there is a sudden stop; instead, sit on a small slo-mo ball using only one puff of air (see photo below). Place the ball in between your tuberosity's (between both sides of your buttock).
- **Rest Smart**. Let your baby's back settle into your "hammock." Make a little pillow nest to lie near or under your belly. With one hip over the other forming a right angle, and placing a pillow between your legs. You may want to change sides now and then to add evenness and comfort. Remember not to lean back without support because it may cause muscle cramps. ***If your health care provider asks you to avoid a position ask them why. It may be because that position is not good for either you and/or the baby.***



Movement

Beneficial activities which help make room for your baby.

1. **Calf stretches**: Step with one foot onto a rolled towel or a foam tube. Make sure your heel is grounded onto the floor. Stand straight with a slight bend of the knee. Straighten and bend the knee slightly. Change sides to the other foot. Then do both feet at the same time. **Repeat this exercise 5-10 times daily** to help the sacrum and buttocks muscles become more mobile. This helps the pelvis open easier for baby's arrival.
2. **Forward Lunges**: Follow the calf stretches with lunges to help loosen the sacrum.
3. **Squats**: Do 3 squats. *Only go down as far as you can, keeping your heels down with your toes pointing forward. Be sure to brace yourself on a trusted surface and be mindful of your abilities.*
4. **Walking**: 1-3 miles if permitted by your provider.
5. **Daily stretching**: Side to side bends; neck rolls; etc.

