

Guide your baby into an optimal position for birth and avoid a posterior labour

Posterior position is when baby is head down with its back against the mother's spine. This is called Occiput Posterior, or OP.

A posterior position during pregnancy is likely to cause the mother backache and discomfort. It can also create problems during labour.



According to Spinning Babies www.spinningbabies.com, "birth seems to go

easier when baby comes down from the left. This is due to a natural shape (called right obliquity) of the uterus to be rounder on the left and steeper on the right. The effect is that babies from the left are more likely to be curled to aim the crown of the head into the pelvis. The baby from the right may rotate to the posterior in labor due to the steep side extending the back and pointing the top of baby's head into the pelvis."

When the crown presses on the cervix the bones of the baby's skull can overlap and make the head smaller. When the top of the head is coming first the head can't mold as well so it's bigger.



If baby is in a posterior position just prior to or at the start of labour, there are likely to be difficulties such as:

- ♥ Niggly contractions may come and go for hours or days as the baby tries to enter the top of the pelvis. This can be very tiresome and uncomfortable for the mother, and increase the chance of induction being offered and accepted.
- ♥ Induction increases the chance of having an epidural. The mother will be immobile making it harder for baby to turn into a better position.
- ♥ The waters are more likely to break before contractions or with weak contractions, requiring induction to start labour. Induction usually complicates labour.
- ♥ Labour is usually longer as baby has to turn around within the pelvis.
- ♥ Labour is usually painful because baby's head presses against mother's spine and doesn't fit neatly through the pelvis.
- ♥ Backache may be present both during and in between contractions.

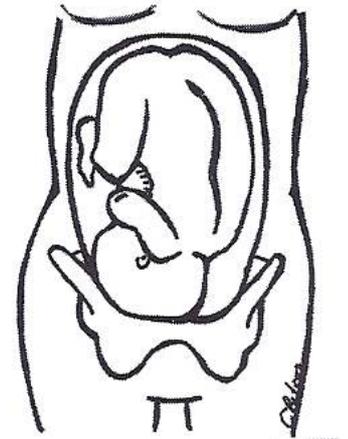
A baby may lie in the posterior position due to the position of the placenta, tight or weak abdominal muscles or an unbalanced pelvis. A chiropractor, women's health physiotherapist, acupuncturist, osteopath and some massage therapists may assist with the latter two situations by performing gentle and safe pelvic release techniques

How to improve your chances of having a well-positioned baby i.e. OA or Occiput Anterior

Occiput is the back of baby's head which is facing toward the mother's Anterior or her front.

The ideal position for a baby before birth is head down, facing sideways toward mother's right hip, with its back curved into the left side of her abdomen.

To encourage this, **right throughout pregnancy** and particularly from 34 weeks onwards, get plenty of exercise and pay attention to how you use your body every day.



PREGNANCY POSTURE

Correct Upright Posture

Head: Lift through the crown of the head, lifting the chin and aligning the ears with the neck

Shoulders and Chest: Pull your shoulders back and down, lifting the ribcage

Abs, Butt and Uterus: Contract the abdominal muscles and tuck the butt under so that the pubicbone is slightly forward

Knees: Keep your knees relaxed and bent slightly



InCorrect Upright Posture

Head: Chin pushed forward and eyes focused down, straining the neck

Shoulders and Chest: Hunched shoulders can restrict the ribcage, making breathing and digestion more difficult

Abs, Butt and Uterus: Slack abdominal muscles lead to overarching of the low back and forward tilt of pelvis. This can also pressure the bladder

Knees: Locking the knees strains the joints and pushes the pelvis forward



If your baby is posterior from around 36 weeks practice the yoga stretches on this handout and/or Spinning Babies activities every day to encourage baby to turn into a better position. Chiropractic, osteopathy, physiotherapy or massage may also help at this stage.

Posture, movement and rest

How do you stand, walk, sit and lie? Your posture and the way you move and also rest have a huge influence on your baby's position.

Think of your belly as a hammock for your baby's back to curl into. Use postures and movements which encourage this.

SITTING keep hips higher than knees and back straight with natural curves. Sit on a cushion to raise your hips and place another cushion in the small of your back to support your lower back and help you sit vertical rather than slumped. Use these options at work and while watching TV.

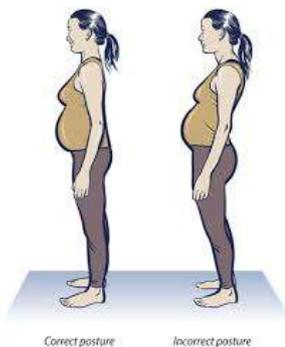


On the gym ball, tilt your pelvis forward and back, side to side, round in circles for at least 5 minutes.

DON'T sit with a rounded back, on your sacrum rather than your sit bones. This will squash your baby, prevent you from breathing properly, and encourage baby's back to rest against your back – ouch! It will also affect your pelvic floor muscles.

DON'T sit with your legs crossed.

STANDING Correct your posture – look in mirror to check or ask your physio/osteo to assess it for you. Soften your knees. Circle your hips or belly dance. To rest: lean forward over table, desk, kitchen bench, back of chair.



LYING Lie on your side rather than your back: use pillows for support and comfort. Practice relaxation on your left side.





Stop lying back on your sofa. Sit upright, lean forward or lie on your side. To watch TV or relax, sit on the floor against the lounge, kneel and lean forward onto gym ball, chair or beanbag. Be creative!

Knees lower than hips – use cushion/pillows or a folded towel.

CHECK IT OUT

Ideally see a women's health physiotherapist or osteopath who can assess your posture, massage any areas of tightness, help to strengthen any areas of weakness. You'll have a more comfortable pregnancy and birth when you're in balance.

There are specific exercises and movements you can do during pregnancy to help get your baby into a great position for birth at Spinning Babies:

<https://spinningbabies.com/start/in-pregnancy/the-3-principles-in-pregnancy/>

In particular, practice the forward leaning inversion, reboso sifting and side lying release at least once a week and more if possible. Start from 2nd trimester through to birth.

You can even download the Spinning Babies video and get moving. Highly recommended by midwives, yoga instructors and birthworkers all over the world.



PREGNANCY YOGA & BIRTH WISDOM

You gotta have friends

A girl needs her girlfriends to talk about all the challenges of pregnancy. At Fit for Birth you'll meet like-minded women who want to hear positive stories and look forward to birth. Stay for a cuppa after class on Saturday mornings and meet local women who know what you're talking about.

Tuesday evenings 6 - 7.30pm
Saturday mornings 9.30 - 11am

It's a generous, fabulous thing you're doing for the new mums of Noosa, many of whom like myself don't have family and women nearby who have experienced childbirth and mothering. You have impacted me and many other Noosa mums more than you probably realise." Leesa

EVERYDAY MOVEMENT AND STRETCHES

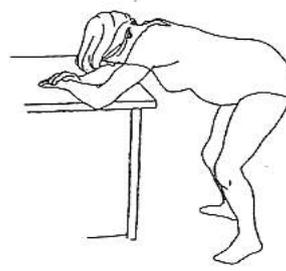
Do hip circles and stretches every day – not just once a week at yoga. Every day.

These are some great yoga-style exercises to help get your baby into a great position and also prevent or ease backache.

WALK. Good shoes, good pace, fresh air, good posture. Every day.



SWIM. Avoid froggy kicks with legs apart if you have pain in your pubic joint.



PREGNANCY YOGA & BIRTH WISDOM

You're in good hands

I have around 20 years of experience women preparing women just like you for birth.



I've worked out what you want:

- To hear other women's stories and talk about your own
- To learn all about birth and ask questions, however silly they seem

