

What is hypnobirthing?

There is no one sentence to sum it up.

Hypnobirthing is getting informed about birth

It is learning all about the process of birth

The hormones that are involved

How you can choose your birthplace

How your environment can help you to feel positive and help the process along.

It is the role of the birth partner

The stages of labour

Talking about positions to help in a slow labour

How to write a birth plan.

The more you know about the birth, the more likely it is that they will feel prepared.

Hypnobirthing is a change of mindset, knowing what the body is doing and how, can really help you to see birth as a bodily function like any other. So, between getting as informed as possible and taking in lots of positive information about birth, you can completely change your mindset from one full of fear of what can go wrong into one that expects birth to go right, whatever that means.

Feeling positive and confident at the start of labour can go a long way to help in the process, along with keeping away from fight or flight and producing lots of oxytocin.

Hypnobirthing is about learning. Those decision making tools are so important.

It's about teaching you what your rights are when it comes to birth. To remind you that you have the power and you understand how and where to get all the information you need to feel informed and confident in making decisions you may need to birth your baby.



This may be during pregnancy by getting information from third parties such as AIMS or doing their own research. It may be during labour, in which case using decision making tools designed to get as much information about their circumstances will help them to make decisions about their care. Just knowing the questions to ask to find out if it's safe to take 30 minutes to make that decision could make a huge difference to how they feel about their birthing experience. Nobody wants to make a decision in the rush when they could have taken some time to process it and ensure that their choices were understood, considered and were the best ones for their family.

Last but not least, there are the famous Hypnobirthing tools, and these are what come to mind when people say hypnobirthing, aside from swinging clocks and vagina whispering.

These tools are an incredible way to prepare for birth and remain calm and comfortable throughout. However, on their own, without all the stuff above, they're not enough.

Breathing techniques are one of the tools that people often think of when you think hypnobirthing.

Breathing ensures that after taking lots of nice, big even breaths throughout labour will to get the oxygen flowing nicely.

Breathing will help the uterus to do its job as efficiently and comfortably as possible. Breathing slowly and calm is great for distracting you from what's going on around by giving you something else to focus on.

It sounds so simple, but breathing techniques can do so much to keep you feeling calm, centred and anchored.

If you practise breathing for minimum of just 3 minutes daily during pregnancy, they will feel those benefits on the day.

Visualisations, so this is a way to almost practise birth before it's time to do it for real. By using visualisations, you are thinking about birth in your head about how you'd like birth to go. By saying it out loud can help yourself to feel more confident in your birth plans. You will be able to trick your mind into thinking it's nothing new when labour starts for real. And that can help reduce the chance of entering fight or flight and keep the oxytocin flowing.

Affirmations using the law of repetition, you can convince your brain to believe something just by showing it the same information repeatedly. Instead of talking about how you don't want your birth to go, you write affirmations and say things about how you do want it to go.

Giving your brain a bit of cheerleading can help it to believe in itself.

Instead of saying, 'I don't want to tear', you can say 'my body will stretch to accommodate my baby'.

After a while, the affirmations sink into the subconscious and then help you to have confidence in yourself which in turn will help you to feel more relaxed & encourage the hormones needed for relaxation.

This is a massive part of hypnobirthing, because as humans living in a world full of things to do, technology etc. We rarely spend time relaxing and doing absolutely nothing. And that means that our neocortex, the part of our brain responsible for rational thinking, is almost never switched off. We very much want that part of the brain to be out of the way during labour and not interfering with the process by thinking of unhelpful scenarios.

By practising relaxation during pregnancy, you can make it easier to relax on cue. This is a skill that's really handy for labour so try lying back and doing absolutely nothing on the sofa, in bed or in the bath, wherever they like. If you find it difficult to switch off, then doing something that doesn't require much thought counts as well. Colouring in, knitting, crochet, walking in nature. This might be more your thing.

Hypnobirthing tracks will help you to relax. They're usually written by hypnotherapists and help to induce a state of calm and relaxation. The words will also provide you with lots of encouragement and self belief as you'll hear how amazing your body is and how amazing you are.

Don't worry if you fall asleep listening to the tracks, they will still be going into your subconscious, even if you're not actively listening.

It's really important that we point that out - don't listen to downloads when driving or operating heavy machinery. Otherwise It's fine to listen to affirmation tracks any time for that little boost of confidence.

Anchoring is about setting up cues for your brain to associate with relaxation to help you relax whenever you want.

Tools to have you anchor incorporate all five senses and therefore make the conditions seem the same wherever they are.

A room spray
 An essential oil that
 A blanket or cushion
 The hypnobirthing tracks or relaxing music

A top tip is that using all the tools together will really show you the magic.

If you use all of this together and put the work in throughout your pregnancy and then into the labour, it really makes such a huge difference.

Reference : The Birth Uprising handbook 2022 by Jade & Alix

Find your favourite hypnobirthing download :

1. <https://www.thebirthuprising.com/the-digital-hypnobirthing-package>
2. <https://www.kghypnobirthing.com/shop.html>
3. <https://courses.thepositivebirthcompany.co.uk/p/the-positive-birth-company-digital-pack>
4. <https://thewisehippo.com/what-you-get-when-you-join/>

Doula Victoria says : Hypnobirthing is a term I'm not completely comfort with. It feels like a heavily marketed word that without having booked a specific course, we are missing out on something in our birth. When you read what it is above, you will find you already have many of these tools in your bag as part of your antenatal preparations. Practice using the key tools of breathing and day dreaming! All hypnosis is 'self hypnosis' and day dreaming is a form of self hypnosis. Finding your way to calm your nervous system down is key to promote oxytocin in the birth space".