



5 Ways to Cope in Labour During a Pandemic

I'm sure when you saw that positive pregnancy test a few months ago you never thought you would be facing giving birth during a worldwide pandemic did you?

It can be a scary thought and can bring a lot of 'what if's' and worry as you enter the final weeks of your pregnancy

Some women are facing being alone for parts of their labour and are not able to have both of their chosen birth partners with them, which may initially bring much anxiety and fear

But there are positive steps you can take to plan and prepare for this, to enter your birth knowing you are more than capable and everything you need is already within you

For a woman to feel safe to birth effectively all her biological, physical and emotional needs must be met, and thinking of all of the senses is important in labour too

Here are my 5 Top Tips to Support your Labour...

These are all things you can do for yourself if you are on your own but even better once your birth partner is with you get them to make these a priority and provide for you.

1) Meet your physical needs

I use an acronym here which will make it easier to remember all the points.

H.E.L.P....

- H – Hydration – drink little and often to keep yourself hydrated. Birth is a workout; you wouldn't do exercise without a drink.
- E – Energy from nutrition, eat little and often, keeping your energy levels up and feeding your muscles; your uterus is a muscle – the most amazing muscle!
- L – Lavatory – Go to the toilet regularly, keeping your bladder empty. If you are drinking as above your bladder will keep filling and a full bladder is going to get in the way of your baby moving down.
- P – Position – Change positions regularly, keeping upright as much as possible, using gravity to help your baby move down.

2) Feel Safe & Secure

Especially when it comes to decision making around your maternity care. I have another acronym I use here which is useful when talking to your midwives/doctors about your preferences,

B.R.A.I.N.S....

- B – Benefits – ask or research the benefits of doing x,y,z.
- R – Risks – ask or research the risks of doing x,y,z.
- A – Alternatives – What are the alternatives/are there any alternative options I could look at doing?
- I – Intuition – What is my intuition/my gut feeling telling me to do. Often, we forget to go with our instincts and what our body is telling us to do, and usually it's the right thing, trust yourself!
- N – Nothing – What if I choose to do nothing or wait a while longer before doing x,y,z? Birth can be a lengthy process and

sometimes there is no need to rush to decide, allow your body time.

- S – Smile – Smile always, smiling produces oxytocin! (Which leads me onto my next point...)

3) Love & Belonging

Oxytocin. This magic little hormone is your best friend when it comes to birth, its meaning is 'quick-birth' the more oxytocin you have the more likely your birth will go smoothly. Any hint of adrenaline (your stress hormone) will hinder the production of oxytocin. For oxytocin to produce you must feel, calm, safe, happy, and loved. Producing oxytocin when alone can be harder as it seeks connection and is best produced from touch. But there are ways you can help yourself to feel calm and happy.

Think about your environment and your senses here....

- **Sight** – Fill your birth room with visual aids that make you feel happy/positive, a photo of your family or a picture of your favourite place, or affirmation cards with things like 'I am safe' or 'each surge brings me closer to meeting my baby' on to remind you how amazing your body is.
Also think about the lighting, oxytocin is best produced in dark/dimmed light. Can you turn off the main lights/close the curtains, what can make it cosier? Battery operated candles, fairy lights work well.
- **Sound** – Most mammals won't birth if they are disturbed too much, humans are the same! We need our 'nest' to be protected so we can remain calm and feeling safe, and thus helping that oxytocin flow, the moment we feel any danger or threat our stress response kicks in (adrenaline). So, keeping your birth room quiet with minimal distractions is important.
To help calm you playing some music may help, this could be relaxing meditation tracks or if you prefer your favourite songs that give you motivation, whatever makes you feel good/happy!
- **Smell** – I love to use aromatherapy for birth, many oils can really help to calm you both physically and emotionally, lavender is a great example. Smelling peppermint oil can also be great for any

nausea in labour. But not everyone likes essential oils, so this could be your favourite perfume or your husband's aftershave – again whatever fills you with happy calm thoughts.

- **Taste** – we have mentioned above about keeping fed and watered throughout labour, but make sure some of these are your favourite things that you enjoy so you feel like you are treating/rewarding yourself for your efforts.
- **Touch** – This is the hardest one to achieve if you are alone in the early stages of labour but once your partner arrives get them to be a hands-on birth partner. Hugging, holding, rocking, stroking, massaging, touching, kissing. All will be great to help give you a real boost of oxytocin and feel safe, secure and loved.

4) Breathe.....

The power of your breath is amazing. It's a tool you always have with you any time you need it. Your breath keeps your body working effectively, feeding oxygen to your muscles, organs and systems. Just bringing your attention to your breath stills the mind and brings you present, shutting off the chatter in your head, calming and focusing you. Slow down your breath and breathe calmly and softly as you guide your baby into the world.

5) Have confidence and self belief.

Your belief in yourself to be able to birth your baby. Your own thoughts and feelings are the biggest thing here, the things you think and the narrative you tell yourself will most likely be the way things play out. If you are thinking negatively and having thoughts like 'I can't do it on my own in this pandemic, I won't cope, and things will go wrong' as harsh as it sounds it's likely that that's the way things will play out for you. Your thoughts have a big impact on your body, the mind and body connection is huge and so it's very important you are feeding your mind the correct narrative and positive inspiring thoughts.

'Focus on what you want to happen, not what you fear might happen'

This is where I can help prepare you even more

My Hypnobirthing course will provide you with all the knowledge and tools to gain control of your mind

Explore your fears and reframe your thoughts, enabling you to feel self-empowered, prepared and confident as you enter your birth in this very uncertain time

YOU hold all you need within you, now is the time to unlock your true potential and change your outlook. Just because we are in the middle of a pandemic does not mean you can't have a positive birth experience

I believe in you; all you have to do now is believe in yourself.

Are you ready?

Your next step is to book a free informal friendly chat with me today here to find out more about my course....

<https://calendly.com/kimberleyboyd/free-consultation-chat-with-kimberley>

I look forward to talking to you xx



Kimberley's story....



My passion lies with supporting women through their journey into motherhood. My extensive training and experience both professionally and personally have brought me to where I am today and the business I've created provides an outstanding service which I am proud of. I am here to hold your hand every step of the way, guiding you, reassuring you, empowering you, providing you with statistics and evidence-based information and knowledge. Ensuring you feel ready and prepared to welcome your baby into the world, supporting you through the birth or in the first few weeks of motherhood.

Here's how I've got to where I am today...

For many years I worked in the Early Years sector in varying roles alongside raising my first daughter Ella, now 14. After marrying my husband Martin in 2010 and shortly after that falling pregnant with my second daughter Matilda life really changed. I developed anxiety through my pregnancy which had had its problems, and after her birth this worsened until I was diagnosed with post-natal depression when she was 6 months. I felt a failure as a new wife and mother, and as a woman - my body hadn't done what it was designed to do! I was encouraged to join a Baby Massage class to help and can honestly say it was the best thing we did and benefitted us both hugely.

I decided to train myself to instruct baby massage in 2013 and this was where my business all began. I wanted to start giving something back and helping other new mums like myself and over the years it has been a joy to do just that and provide a safe supportive space for them to go each week. I taught classes for a few years but always wanted to do more and support women not just

once they had had their babies but before also and this is when I came across Doula's, this was it! it felt like a calling and I knew it was for me, and (with some help with funding from some very special mums in the community who believed in me too) I enrolled with the Birth Bliss Academy in 2018. The training was the most amazing life changing experience and I learnt so much, not only professionally but for me personally too - the part I did not prepare myself for was exploring my own births/postnatal journeys and I had not realised just how much my experiences had affected me - especially after all these years. Exploring this and understanding why things happened the way they did was like therapy for me and I came home from that training a different person, stronger, clearer and even more determined to educate and support other women to not have the negative experiences I had, to know their rights and choices, to empower them to be confident in their abilities and provide them with evidence based information.

Since becoming a Doula I have done more training to continue to further my knowledge and skills these include Breastfeeding Peer Support, Aromatherapy for Birth, Using Rebozo for Birth, Supporting families through Infant Loss, and most recently I joined the Positively Blooming Coach Academy to become a Women's Emotional Health Coach and Hypnobirthing Practitioner. This training again was a real game changer. The 8 step programme I went through during training really opened my eyes to how much my anxiety, self-esteem and confidence had been holding me back from progressing in my career without me really knowing it. Learning how my mind processed thoughts and feelings and reacted to situations had hugely affected me emotionally and physically. It was such a fascinating training programme and gave me so much personally as well as more to offer to my clients professionally. Having been a highly anxious pregnant woman and new mum with very little support I totally empathise with where you may be at and feel I am fully equipped to support you effectively to make your story a positive, enjoyable and memorable one. Whatever stage of your journey you are at and whatever it is you are searching for; I really hope you find the courage to get in touch to discuss how we can work together.

Testimonials....

"I had some complications in my first birth which left both me and my husband feeling anxious about the upcoming birth of our second child. The course enabled us to talk through our fears and give us ways of managing birth and a whole new way of thinking and approaching it. We were given access to further course materials and relaxation MP3s to listen to at home and Kimberley is always on hand to provide further support if needed. Thank you so much Kimberley we are now looking forward to an empowered, calm, loving, oxytocin filled birth."

"The course with Kimberley really opened my mind. She gave me the information to see that I will be able to achieve what I want to in labour, plus the options and choices that are available to me. She also made me see that labour isn't something that I should be worried about and that just because it perhaps won't go to "plan" doesn't mean that it won't be the experience I am hoping for. The course also helped my husband a great deal as he was unsure what roles he could do whilst I am in labour and so it has given him more confidence. Which gives me more confidence that I will be able to feel supported and safe when the time comes."

"From our first meeting with Kimberley we were comforted by her kindness and reassurance. I had sketched my birth plan prior to meeting Kimberley but she really helped me attend to the matters that were important that later helped me make decisions quick and easy during my long labour. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Kimberley once more for her excellent work ethic, reassuring attitude & positive demeanor during my pregnancy. She provides an outstanding service."

Book your FREE 30 min call with Kimberley here....

<https://calendly.com/kimberleyboyd/free-consultation-chat-with-kimberley>