

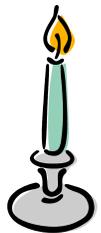


# Breathing for Labor: Attention-focusing Techniques

Sometimes you reach a point in your labor where you have trouble relaxing with deep breathing and you need something more to help you stay focused. These breathing techniques are used to keep your breathing even, easy, and a little lighter. When you use these methods, your partner will help you by counting and reminding you when to breathe or by doing the exercise with you. Try to find a pattern and rhythm in these breathing methods. If none of these seems to help you focus, find a different pattern that you like.

## Candle blow

Have your coach hold up his/her hand in front of your face with the thumb pointing up. Your coach will count to four. You will breathe in on one and smoothly blow out on two, three, and four. Pretend you are trying to make the flame of a candle flicker (the thumb is the candle). Keep your face relaxed as you breathe and blow.



## Hee-hee-hoo

With your mouth slightly open, place your tongue behind your lower teeth and breathe out the words Hee-hee-hoo. You will breathe in deeply through your nose, and then say the hee-hee-hoo pattern when you exhale. You can do a ratio of 2:1, 3:1 or 4:1 depending on what is comfortable.

## Triangle

Trace a triangle on your hand and inhale, exhale, and hold each time a side is drawn. Your partner can also draw the triangle for you on your hand or back.



## Vocalization

When using vocalization, you will make sounds during your contractions to help you focus and stay relaxed. You will breathe in deeply through your nose, and then make low sounds when you exhale. Low sounds are used because they prevent you from tightening your shoulders and chest. If you are using this method, you will make the sounds during the contractions and rest in between. You can also move or rock back and forth to add some rhythm.

Try these sounds:

- Ahhhhh
- Mmmm
- Ohhhhh
- Other vowel sounds (Ayyyyy, eeeeeee, iiiiii, youuuuuu)