



**The Clifton Practice**  
*A Centre for Natural Health*



# Self-Hypnosis



## for Childbirth

## Trance'd be a fine thing – Stefanie Newton

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The most common misconceptions of 'trance', when induced by a hypnotherapist, are that it's:

- something unusual
- something that you might not be able to 'go into' or 'come out' of
- that it somehow puts you under the control of the therapist
- that you won't remember what happened whilst you were in it, that you will be somehow 'unconscious'

In fact it's a state we're all, with very rare exceptions, familiar with. We're so familiar with it that sometimes Hypnotherapists have difficulty convincing patients that they *were* in a trance! Many people are so sure that it's going to be something they've never experienced before. They expect to feel something completely unusual. After all, if they are visiting a therapist, they're expecting important changes in their behaviour to occur, changes big enough to warrant something hugely different to bring that about. Otherwise, why haven't they been able to make those changes themselves?

We *are* all familiar with daydreaming. We *are* familiar with not 'taking in' something someone says to us while we are concentrating on something else – saying perhaps "Oh sorry, I didn't hear you. What did you say?" In fact you might have been partly aware that you were spoken to, just not enough aware to take in what was said. If you were reading, watching television or thinking about something other than what was going on around you, then your mind will be 'elsewhere', 'otherwise engaged'. In other words, you were *concentrating* on the book, the programme or your thoughts.

**When we're concentrating on *anything at all* then we're in a trance.** It might be very brief and light, such as when you might be thinking about what clothes to wear today; or what you need to buy for supper. It will be longer and deeper if you are studying something you really need to remember, say, for an examination.

A time that we'll often go into a trance is when we're doing something that we're so used to doing that we do it automatically. We do it without thinking about it consciously so our minds are free to think about something else. People who drive will understand this very well. A familiar road, not much traffic to need your attention, and you have been driving long enough so that the mechanics of it have become automatic, and you can easily find yourself thinking about something else entirely. I'm not saying that this is a good thing, it obviously isn't, but it does happen. Usually an alteration in traffic will snap your attention back to what you're supposed to be doing quickly enough. It can then make you realise just how 'far away' you were. You were in a trance.

Generally we can only concentrate on one thing at a time. This is why talking on a mobile phone at the same time as driving is so dangerous. In order to listen, make sense of what we're hearing and think of an answer takes concentration. More than we realise. We do it so often we don't really feel that we need to concentrate at all, but we do. Which is why so many accidents have happened with people talking on mobiles and trying to drive at the same time, that the government, in Great Britain anyway, has made it illegal.

When we're in a deliberately induced Hypnotic trance, it's a state of very deep concentration where both the Subconscious and the Conscious mind are taking notice of the same thing. They're both very 'present'. So that our logical, decision-making, choice

making and rationalising Conscious mind and our feeling, Subconscious mind are working together. This is a powerful combination.

To understand the difference in how we behave when only our Conscious mind is being used and when they're being used together imagine that you're watching a dramatic film or drama on television. It might be very happy, sad or upsetting. If at the same time as watching you're chatting to someone else, or for some other reason only half-watching, then you'll find it difficult to *feel* anything. You'll *know* that it's happy, sad or upsetting but you won't *feel* that unless you give it your full attention, or concentrate. That's why going to a cinema is often a fuller experience than watching a film in your own home. The cinema's dark, the screen's very large and there are very few distractions. So you concentrate and *feel*. Happy, sad or upset are all feelings and come from the Subconscious, feeling, mind.

Another example could be if you're telling someone something that you know should make them worried and it doesn't. You'll know that they're not giving you their full attention. So, you'll do something else in order to get it. You might repeat yourself, say it louder or with gestures maybe. You'll know when they *are* concentrating when they behave in the way that you expect them to – worried. Being worried is a *feeling* of Anxiety and the Subconscious mind then has to be involved because that's where feelings come from.

Imagine how impossible it would be to really enjoy a book or a film if you couldn't concentrate. How difficult it would be to study or to learn something by heart, if you couldn't somehow shut out all or part of what was going on around you - the sound of the children or the traffic or the neighbours. People can become extremely stressed when outside noises continually distract them, when they're trying to concentrate and can't – perhaps because they're too tired. Concentration takes a lot of effort and energy and we need to be relaxed in order to do it really well.

Sitting quietly and deliberately relaxing for a short period while you also deliberately think positive thoughts - pleasant things that have happened to you, or happy thoughts of a coming event maybe - for just five to ten minutes, can restore you enough for an hour or so of intense concentration. In fact people who are studying should do so in short intense lengths of time, with a complete break for ten minutes or so every hour. This maximises the study period. The stronger the concentration the more we'll remember and understand. **So trance is not only very familiar to us, it's an essential part of life.**

Only people who for some reason find concentrating difficult will be unable to go into a hypnotic trance – because all it *is* a state of concentration. Very young children can find it difficult for more than a few minutes. Some people with learning difficulties too can find concentration a problem.

Hypnotherapists induce this state deliberately to bring about change. As we live our lives we develop various patterns of behaviour. Through either repetition or a strong enough single event these patterns become locked into the Subconscious mind. If these patterns are negative i.e. 'I'm no good at relationships', 'I'm stupid', 'Everyone is better at x y z than me', etc., then low self-esteem will result and a poorer performance will be likely. Because you *have* survived, literally that you are still alive, your Subconscious can see these patterns as successful and will keep them going. It won't be very willing to change them, which is why people can repeat what seem to be destructive behaviour patterns.

Smoking is a good example. When people start smoking it's for all sorts of reasons, each one supposedly for some benefit – 'I'll feel more comfortable if I behave like my friends';

'Smoking will reduce my stress level'; 'My parents smoke and I want to fit in at home'. Your Subconscious, not being a thinking mind, has not *made* these decisions, your Conscious mind has done that, but it *has* noted the good feelings attached to them. Therefore it sees smoking as beneficial for you. If at a later date you want to stop smoking it won't want you to and it'll put up a fight.

The Subconscious mind seems to behave in many ways like a child of about seven years old. The fight that it puts up will be as if your mind is having a childish tantrum – 'Give me a cigarette or else I'm going to eat all that chocolate'; 'I have to have *something* to make me feel better'; 'I *must* have a cigarette, it's the only thing that will put me in a good mood'; 'If you want me to be happy I *have* to have a cigarette'. The feelings that it produces will be very strong, just like a child in a temper or in floods of tears, and it's very hard to go against it. In fact, of course, it's well known that smoking *causes* stress because it harms the body. The body can't be separated from the mind and what stresses one stresses the other.

In order to allow change the Subconscious has to be convinced that a change will be better than staying the same - that the new pattern being proposed will be better for your wellbeing than the old one. So we need to have access to this part of the mind and we know that it's present when we concentrate. We can communicate with it directly by just concentrating, or being in a trance, and then imagining the way we want things to be. To allow you to stop smoking without a fight the *Subconscious* needs to *feel* that smoking is harmful. We know so many facts about the dangers of smoking now that with a good therapist this isn't a difficult task. However, the patient really has to *want* to give it up. Remember that I said that that the Conscious mind *can* always overcome the Subconscious if the desire is strong enough.

Sometimes patients want the therapist to help them to 'cut down' to just a few a day. This isn't possible because the Subconscious doesn't 'think'. Either smoking is good for your wellbeing or it isn't. It can't accept an in-between! Feelings are 'good' or 'bad'. If you really 'think about your thoughts' you'll begin to notice what sort of feelings your thoughts generate.

When we want to create changes we need to imagine the change in as many ways as possible – how it looks, how it feels and sounds, even smells if appropriate! Then we need to imagine it like this many times.

Again, thinking of the Subconscious as a young child, things need to be simply and clearly explained. Pictures can do this very well. So by imagining a change as a scene, by 'seeing' yourself in the way that you want to, in a way that is somehow better than the way that you 'see' yourself now, you'll be creating good feelings. The Subconscious will then know what you want and more importantly, so that it'll fully co-operate, that this change will be good for you. When we deliberately picture in detail something we *have* to concentrate, or go into a trance, to do it.

We shall be doing a lot of picturing in this training! Showing your Subconscious exactly how you want things to be before, during and after labour. There are people who visualise more easily than others. Practise can help, but actually 'seeing' isn't so necessary as just 'knowing', or 'feeling'. So don't worry if your mind isn't full of 'visual' pictures, 'knowing' or 'feeling' pictures will be fine as well.

To put you into a trance to start with, you'll be asked to make yourself comfortable, close your eyes and think about the things I ask you to think about. The first thing we do is a relaxation exercise. This is to make you comfortable while you're lying in more or less one position for about half an hour. It also begins the trance process because you'll be concentrating on the exercise.

Then there are three tracks with different scenes for you to imagine. Each one is a pleasant, interesting and relaxing place to be. You'll decide on your favourite one and that'll become your 'special' or 'safe' place. Imagining this will deepen your trance. It'll also give you somewhere that you can always go to when you want to rest or relax. You can use it in labour, either between or even during the contractions.

During the fifth track on the CD you'll be taught how to put yourself into a trance very simply and easily. You'll be asked to picture yourself practising this and going more and more deeply into relaxation every time you do it. This is 'Self-hypnosis'.

Then there are three tracks concerning the actual birth. Each one has suggestions for a comfortable birth but they are varied. This is to make it more interesting for you, so that you don't have to listen to the same thing every day. Also it means that we can cover more ground. If I put everything I want to say onto one track it would make it too long.

When suggestions like this are given whilst you are in trance they are much more effective than if you just sit and listen. When you close your eyes, think about relaxing and then thinking about all the different things I ask you to imagine, you put yourself into a trance deeply enough to really engage the Subconscious mind. It will notice all the feelings attached to the suggestions I give you. These feelings will be very positive and so your mind will do all that it can to make what you imagine actually happen.

Tribal people often create rituals around events like birth. The mother has to be in a certain place, wear particular clothing or eat particular foods. The father often has to perform certain things too to ensure a happy outcome. These ritualistic acts in effect create a trance. The mother is convinced that as long as she follows the ritual all will be well. Therefore, too, she's more relaxed and in control.

The Conscious mind, while you are entranced is of course playing a role too. In order for any suggestions for change to be accepted by the Subconscious they first have to be accepted by the Conscious mind. Any suggestion, or picture of something, that the person in trance is thinking about, is accepted or rejected just as it is when they're not in a deliberately induced trance. Anything that is against what you *want* to think about or imagine will be automatically rejected. In just the same way as no one can make you do something you don't want to do whilst you're deep in a book or watching the television, you can't be made to do something whilst in the same state with a Hypnotherapist.

When you're concentrating on something you're *more* likely to remember it well. The same is true when you concentrate on whatever the Hypnotherapist is saying to you. If you talk you'll remember what you say, just as you would when you talk to anyone else at any other time when you're concentrating on the conversation. In fact, of course, you'll remember it better if you're concentrating.

Learning how to relax really deeply is very good for us generally and extremely good for us during labour. As I've already said, Oxytocin levels, such an important hormone during and after birth, are much higher when we're relaxed.

We know that when we're relaxed we're much more creative. We can think of solutions to problems much more easily. We don't become stuck in the 'This will never change', or the 'This is impossible to sort out' state as we do when we're stressed. Stress causes us to focus on the problem and not on the solution. Problems seem less serious when we're relaxed too. We sleep better and altogether we function better when we learn to relax. This is also why the first thing on the CD is a relaxation routine.

Watching women in labour on television is usually a harrowing experience. Often it's part of a drama, and therefore *is* very dramatic. The women are screaming and yelling. Often they hurl verbal abuse at the people around them, including the father. If you happen to be pregnant while you're watching then you will of course really concentrate on these types of scenes. It's not difficult to see that the feelings generated by these dramas will be negative. The Subconscious, if the feelings are strong enough or repeated often enough, can react very powerfully in a negative way. Oxytocin levels can be reduced as it decides that giving birth is not a good idea, that you should, for your wellbeing, avoid it!

For some time now, women in developed countries *are* finding birth more and more painful and difficult. They are opting for more and more medical intervention, for instance epidural injections and Caesarean sections. In places in the world where birth is still seen as 'natural' women don't have such painful labours. They're not expecting it to be painful therefore they are relaxed. The birth is quicker and recovery is quicker and the bonding process, for which oxytocin is also responsible, is effective and strong.

In the nineteen fifties I lived in Sri Lanka for several years. It was a fact that the women who worked on the tea plantations would carry on picking right up to the birth of their babies. They would be aware of the contractions and would only stop work when the 'bearing down', or pushing stage was reached. Then they would go into the shade with a helper and give birth, usually squatting, and be back picking tea an hour or so later. It's terrible that women had to do that in those days, but it's interesting that that was general practice then. It was obviously not to be recommended from a humanitarian or medical-safety point of view, but the pain they generally experienced wasn't like we imagine because they didn't expect it to be. Being young I assumed that somehow they were different to European women! Nowadays, Sri Lanka and India are much more developed and medical intervention is on the increase. Births are no longer seen as 'natural'. Drugs to 'kill the pain' imply that there *will be* pain and it seems that therefore there *is* pain.

Have you ever had a headache or any other discomfort and maybe gone to the cinema or a party or out with friends in spite of it, and then realised that it had either gone or that you hadn't noticed it while you were enjoying yourself? **Pain isn't fixed.** The same pain can be felt quite differently depending on what else is happening to you. If your mind is focused on the pain, thinking about how much it hurts, how miserable it makes you feel, how it's ruining your life etc., it can hurt far more than if you're occupied with something else.

With children, who run about and hurt themselves much more often than the average adult, we use distraction automatically. 'Oh, quickly, quickly let me rub/kiss it better.' 'See those children over there? It looks like they're having fun. Shall we do that too?' 'Lets go and get an ice-cream.' We do these things quite naturally to comfort and distract and we're not surprised that it works.

As adults we often forget about these tactics. We forget that we can use them just as effectively with ourselves to deliberately help with any discomfort.

Pain *is* a necessity – but not necessarily so in childbirth. Pain is a signal from the body to the mind that something is wrong and should be put right. In a normal labour nothing *is* wrong. The body is doing exactly what it should be doing – contracting the muscles of the uterus to help the baby expel itself out into the world.

Another thing to realise about the Subconscious mind is that it can't respond to a negative command or suggestion. If I say to you 'Don't think about the thing that most annoys you', what happens? You have to think about it in order *not* to think about it! It's how our mind works. So you can't deal with bad thoughts about labour by saying to yourself 'I won't think about that'; or 'It won't be like that for me'. You have to think about how you *do* want things to be, not how you don't. The same is true for anything else in life. Giving up smoking, having a good interview, being more organised, having a good labour, everything.

You must give your Subconscious clear instructions of what you want. As I've said, a good way to do this is by using your own imagination or guided imagery. This gives the Subconscious a detailed picture of how you want any event to happen. It shows it that if things were to happen in this way you would feel happy, relaxed, confident etc., anything positive for your welfare. Then your mind knows exactly what to do in order to bring this about. Your welfare *is* its number one priority after all, so you have all of your mind's considerable power on your side.

The guided imagery I've given you on the CD is very detailed and covers many eventualities, including what to do if things don't go according to plan. If all possibilities are covered you'll know from your practising just how to react for your own and the baby's benefit whatever happens. Imagining how you want things to be is not like making a precise prediction. You *can* though have an enormous influence over how this birth takes place.

Even seeming miracles can happen.

You'll have learned how to relax. You'll know how to stay relaxed by going deeper into trance if necessary, no matter what's going on around you. You'll have had many positive images and feelings to do with this event and you'll have learned to go to a safe relaxing 'place' in your mind if you need to. By using all these skills you can make the birth of your child an enjoyable and exciting experience. Many women have.

## A Natural Way with Words – Stefanie Newton

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A natural, pain and drug free birth is something that every woman wants and also every baby. In many parts of the world women can be in a nearly ideal position. Expert medical intervention is available and at hand in hospitals in case it's needed. Babies could be born naturally, in hospital, with the mother perfectly relaxed and confident that she's in the right place if anything does go wrong. Often women who want to give birth 'naturally' opt to stay at home. They fear that once they *are* in hospital they will no longer have any control over the birth. The medical profession in general assumes total responsibility, using drugs in nearly every case whether or not they are really necessary or wanted. Statements like 'This will kill the pain' frightens many women enough that they will have an epidural even if they had previously decided not to. In fact both the mother and her baby have the means and the knowledge, with teaching, to make most births pain-free, quick and rewarding.

*Early in the twentieth century a British gynaecologist, Grantly Dick-Read, delivered a baby to a poor countrywoman. She had a pain free labour and needed no help from drugs. In those days chloroform could be given for the pain although, of course, it meant that the woman became unconscious. This caused its own complications and obviously wasn't to be widely recommended. When he commented on her calm and comfort throughout the birth she said 'It didn't hurt. It wasn't supposed to, was it, Doctor?' This simple statement added to something he had already noticed in some of his patients who had pain free labours. He'd noticed that they seemed to be in a trance. Other doctors had seen the similarity to hypnosis. For the rest of his life he dedicated himself to providing, as often as possible, a pain free experience of birth. He realised that what caused pain in childbirth was fear. Civilisation had somehow brought with it an expectation of pain. This fear created tension. Tension created pain, which created more fear creating more tension and pain and so on. In 1954, having earlier moved to South Africa, he visited many tribes to see how they managed childbirth. He published a book entitled 'No Time for Fear'. Although the book is out of print I feel that the title speaks for itself. Although he caused a lot of controversy in his time he pioneered much of the work that is done today. He founded the National Childbirth Trust, which teaches natural methods of childbirth.*

As I've already said, it's impossible to be relaxed and tense at the same time. Relaxation and positive visualisations are the key to breaking the cycle of fear and tension and pain. Using hypnotic techniques to achieve this is easy and enjoyable.

As you'll know from antenatal classes, if not otherwise, pregnancy normally lasts for forty weeks. As long as proper observations are being taken by qualified medical staff, three weeks earlier or even four weeks later can happen too without complications. According to the National Childbirth Trust an induced labour often means a more difficult one. However the medical profession usually recommends induction once the due date is passed by two weeks.

Labour should be thought of as exactly that – work. There will be quiet times between contractions when it's beneficial to really rest. During a contraction the body will be



working hard to shorten and thicken the muscles in the top part of the uterus. With each contraction this shortening and thickening will increase in order to push the baby down. At the same time the lower part of the uterus will be lengthening, stretching and relaxing, and the neck of the womb, the cervix, will be thinning and gradually opening to about ten centimetres diameter to allow the baby's head to pass through.

There are contractions called Braxton Hicks contractions, which can happen from as early as twenty weeks. These are like practice contractions. They're different from labour contractions in that they come and go suddenly, can last for several minutes and then stop. Towards the end of a pregnancy they can really feel as if labour has truly started, but they don't build in intensity and they generally last longer than true labour pains.

There are three main stages of labour. The first stage is when regular and persistent contractions begin the shortening and thickening of the uterus. This can take from one to twenty-four hours depending on many factors.

These include:

- whether or not this is a first baby. First labours are usually longer
- the size and the position of the baby
- the shape and size of the pelvis
- whether or not the mother is **mobile**
- the level of **relaxation** she can maintain
- the level of medical intervention

Depending on the distance from the hospital the time to go in is when the contractions are about five minutes apart, or when the waters break whether or not there are contractions.

When contractions begin this is the time to start to thinking about what to do next. If they start in the night then **relax** as much as possible between them, put on the CD if you want to, and get as much **sleep** as you can. The CD should be able to send you to sleep if you have it on softly, because by now you'll be so used to relaxing down whilst listening to it.

If they begin during the day then **carry on as normally as possible**, maybe doing housework, going for a walk, keeping gently moving about as much as you can without becoming tired. **Practise your Self-Hypnosis for relaxation during each contraction.** Eating **small amounts frequently** is good and also gives you something to do. Enjoy what you eat! If you don't feel like eating then drinking more is a good idea. A nice soak in a **warm bath** is also calming and relaxing. So a time of **gentle exercise with periods of rest** is the aim of this early stage.

Once you are in hospital then again keep moving about for as long as it feels right. With **each contraction use your preferred relaxation technique.** As you'll learn, this can be done when you're moving around just as easily as when you are immobile. Your birthing partner can also help you relax using techniques taught later in this section. Listen to the CD if you want to. Birthing suites in hospitals usually have CD players, but check this out beforehand. Your favourite music can also help, whatever it is.

There is a stage between the first and second stage called the transition stage. It can be so short that many women will be unaware of it or it can last an hour or so. It's when there's an urge to push but the cervix is not fully dilated. This stage can be managed by

**either keeping mobile or deeply relaxing.** Pushing is not useful at this point and moving around or relaxing are the best ways of overcoming the urge to push.

The second stage is from when the cervix is fully dilated to the birth of the baby. This can be very short, even a few minutes, up to a couple of hours. If every thing is normal a hospital may wait longer before intervening. The urge to push at this stage is very powerful. The whole torso feels involved and it's involuntary. Watching births on television it usually appears as if women need to be told when to push. In fact when the need to push is there it is extremely hard *not* to. Using Self-hypnosis, relax completely between each pushing, or bearing down, urge. Oxytocin levels will be at their optimum, which makes each push strong and effective. Oxytocin also helps the placenta to separate after the birth. Sometimes, to prevent tearing of the perineum when the head of the baby is appearing, the midwife will ask you **not to push** on the next urge so that she can ease the head out gently. This is **much easier to do** if you are well **relaxed** and in **control**. You'll be less tired too and more able to push strongly when your body wants you to, but also more able to exercise control when necessary. Once the baby is born there is a wonderful feeling of relief and joy.

The most appropriate positions for the second stage are either resting on your hands and knees, crouching, squatting or lying on your side. A birthing pool is also very good. The reason for these positions is to allow the coccyx, the little 'tail' at the bottom of the spine, to move backwards. Normally it bends forwards and obstructs the opening through the pelvic girdle. It is flexible though, and if it's not pushed forward by pressure from behind, as when lying on your back, the baby's head will just push it backwards out of the way as it passes through the pelvis. Otherwise the head has to move up and over the coccyx, so in a sense the mother is pushing uphill if she's on her back. In a birthing pool the water gives buoyancy and takes the pressure away from the back.

The third stage is from the birth of the baby to the delivery of the placenta. If no drugs are given this can take up to two hours. Often in hospital the drug Syntometrine is used to speed up this stage and the use of it or not can be discussed with the midwife sometime before the birth.

Patients using hypnosis and positive visualisations before and during childbirth have noticed many benefits. Among the most usual are:

- deeper and more restful sleep both before and after the birth
- feeling less worried and anxious about the birth
- fewer digestive problems and less heartburn
- lower blood pressure – this can immensely important to anyone susceptible to high blood pressure, which causes pre-eclampsia. If this condition isn't detected early it is potentially fatal to both mother and child. Women are becoming heavier which increases the risk, as does having a child over the age of forty. Babies with hypertensive mothers (ones with high blood pressure) are smaller because due to the high pressure the blood flow through the umbilical cord is restricted, therefore the baby is less well nourished. Ironically this can also work in their favour as slightly premature or smaller babies are at less risk with pre-eclampsia than larger full-term babies.
- Relaxation is a very good tool to lower blood pressure and mothers who think that they might be more at risk should take relaxation very seriously. Listening to the first track and one of the next three twice daily should become a routine. For working mothers this is even more important. One of the times can be as you settle

down for the night. The other time will need to include one of the 'Birthing' tracks. It's better to do this during the day when you can concentrate more easily.

- labour more often than not begins spontaneously and there is less need for an induction
- when fewer or no drugs are used there is less risk of side effects for both mother and baby
- labour is shorter. When the mother is relaxed and not in pain the muscles in the uterus contract more strongly. Pain can create resistance in the muscles to contract. Oxytocin levels, the hormone in control of the strength and the duration of the contractions, are as they should be and not reduced by stress
- a shorter, relaxed labour means that the mother has more energy
- when suggestions have been absorbed during trance for being able to stay relaxed and in control no matter what happens, the mother can remain calm, stay in trance and work with the hospital staff in a manner that helps everyone
- the atmosphere in the labour ward remains peaceful and tranquil
- generally fewer interventions are needed and fewer complications arise
- babies sleep and feed better when they have fewer drugs in their systems.

Altogether, there are many reasons *for* using Hypnosis and Self-hypnosis and none *against*. It cannot cause harm in any way whatever when used as described in this handout and on the CD.

The techniques of relaxation, using Self-Hypnosis or Hypnosis using the CD, and taking yourself to a calm and comfortable place in your mind to 'chill out' can be used at any time. You can use it to give yourself a quick boost of energy or confidence whenever you need it. By imagining yourself being how you want to be you can make it happen, exactly how it happens with having a baby. This isn't magic. It takes some work and practise, but in the end what you're using is a power that we all have in our minds. It still isn't something that can be measured by a machine, although brain-scanning machines can now see the areas of the mind that are activated when this type of work is being done. So it does provide proof of a sort that this is not 'blind faith'. These skills are practical and down to earth, easily learned with almost unlimited potential – all you have to do is put in the time and relax!

## Practise makes Perfect – Stefanie Newton

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Now we reach the 'What do I have to actually do?' part. You'll find that it's easy and enjoyable, especially as now that you understand how your mind works you'll know why doing these things are so important. The results far outweigh the effort required, as you'll see.

The first thing to learn is 'Self-hypnosis'. The actual technique might seem to you to be a little *too* simple to be something that's so powerful that it can create something as important as a natural, quick and pain-free birth. Don't be deceived by its apparent simplicity – often the most effective and useful ideas and methods *are* the simplest. Simple doesn't mean stupid!

There are very many ways of going into a self-induced trance. I've chosen one that is extremely fast to do. I've chosen it so that it's something you can use anywhere, anytime, without any special circumstances. With just a little practise you'll be able to go into a trance in an instant, wherever you are, no matter what's happening around or to you.

Begin by sitting comfortably in a chair and fix your eyes on a spot on the wall. Then think about being relaxed and calm and really happy about something. Then think of a colour that feels relaxed, calm and happy. The first colour that comes to mind will probably be the right one for you but you can change it if you want to. Once you are satisfied with the colour allow your eyes to close while you make this colour beautiful and bright. Then surround yourself with it. Feel it all around you. Then surround the baby with it too. Then breathe the colour in and feel your whole body fill with this lovely colour. Imagine it in every cell and between every cell. When you've done that, open your eyes, and then get up and walk around for a minute or two. Then sit down and do it again. After three or four times, each time lasting no more than about three minutes, you'll notice it already becoming easier and quicker to do. You'll also notice the feeling of relaxation, calm and happiness deepening and becoming stronger.

Practising this several times every day will make relaxation and trance something that becomes automatic the moment you think about your colour. You'll find that you can stay in the trance even if you have to move around or talk to someone, if you decide to stay in it. You can also come out of the trance when you want to. You don't have to do anything special. You just choose what you want to do – you might not even be consciously aware of making the choice. It will probably just seem to be appropriate to stay in it or to come out of it and that's what will happen.

Your birthing partner can also help you to deepen your trance. It can be a good way for them to feel a part of the whole birthing experience. Practise a method of deepening that's comfortable for both of you. This one is good for most people so perhaps try it out first. You might think of your own variation once you understand the principle. Firstly, put yourself into a trance using your colour. Then have your partner hold your wrist and say to you 'When you feel me gently squeeze your wrist and hear my voice saying "(Your name), go deeper now, deeper and deeper", you'll go as deeply into relaxation as you need to at this time'. They should keep their voice soft, calm and low while they say the words. This needs to be practised until you can easily feel that you *do* go deeper into relaxation when your partner says to you '(Your name), go deeper now, deeper and deeper' while gently squeezing your wrist.

Holding your wrist like that and hearing those words will act like a 'trigger' to your Subconscious mind for you to go deeper into relaxation. In technical terms this is called 'Anchoring'. It 'attaches' certain actions or words to particular feelings.

Teach your partner not to use the word 'pain' for 'contraction'. Contractions are very much needed and should be wanted. They're a vital part of the birthing process, bringing your baby into the world and into your life.

When you start using the CD the first thing to do is to make yourself comfortable, either in a chair or lying down. Lying on your left side is usually more comfortable to lying on your back, well supported by cushions. In any case you can always move your position if you want to while you continue to listen. To begin with you'll need about an hour of uninterrupted listening time.

You should listen to the tracks like this:

**Track 1:** 'Fractional Relaxation' – Once or twice a day (one of the times can be as you settle down to sleep).

**Track 2, 3 or 4:** 'Safe Place' – Once a day. Decide which one you like best and then stick to that one.

**Track 5:** 'Self-Hypnosis' – Listen to this one as many times as you like until you are completely familiar with the process.

**Tracks 6, 7 and 8:** 'Suggestions for a Safe, Quick and Comfortable Birth' – Once a day. Listen to them alternately.

That makes three tracks in all to be used daily.

Most CD players can be programmed to play which tracks you choose so that play can be continuous. If you do have change the track yourself during your listening time it's not a problem. Just decide that you will return to the exact state of trance that you were in before you had to make the change and you will. You don't need total quiet either while you listen. Your ears are perfectly capable of tuning out anything you don't want to listen to when that's what you decide to do. It's the same as when you're In a restaurant or a bar, you needn't be aware of other conversations around you if you're interested in and concentrating on the one that you're having yourself.

## Visual Affects – Stefanie Newton

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This next bit explains what's on each track on the CD and gives you the transcript of that track.

If you find it difficult to *clearly* visualise the 'safe place' scenes, don't worry. Just having a general feeling of being there, using memories of somewhere similar or just *knowing* what it's like to be in a place like that will be fine. Often people find that they begin to 'see' more easily after they have listened to the descriptions several times.

*Listening to the recommended tracks regularly is essential.* Otherwise you might as well throw this article away or give it to someone else! Hypnosis isn't like a magic wand – you can't wave it once and have everything change permanently. The mind is like a muscle, and just like a muscle it's a question of 'use it or lose it'!

### **Track 1:**

This track is basic deep relaxation and is to be used whenever you feel the need to recharge your batteries during the day, also at night as you settle down to sleep. Actually going to sleep listening to it will mean that you'll sleep at a more relaxed level, resulting in a fresher and brighter feeling in the morning. It only takes about twenty minutes but used regularly will teach you generally to relax more and find that you're more in control of your life.

## Transcript of Track 1- 'Fractional Relaxation'

I'm going to start the process of this very useful experience by taking you through a general relaxation of the body and the mind ..... You might relax a little ..... You might relax a lot ..... You might relax quickly ..... You might relax more slowly ..... Everyone has their own way of doing these things ..... in their own time ..... Make yourself comfortable ..... either by sitting or lying down ..... using whatever cushions or pillows you need for your tummy or back ..... and then begin by listening to the music ..... Now ..... I want you to think about the muscles in your scalp on the top of your head ..... and I want you to imagine how they would be if they were relaxed ..... 'See' how they might look ..... or feel how they might feel ..... or think of what they might do ..... Everyone thinks in their own special way ..... so you do whatever comes naturally to you ..... Then think of the muscles at the back of your head ..... and imagine how they too might be if they were relaxed ..... Notice the muscles at the back of your neck ..... and think how they could be if they were relaxed ..... Now think about your forehead ..... and imagine those muscles ..... and how they are when they're relaxed and comfortable ..... Then think about your eyes ..... all the little muscles that surround your eyes in your eye-lids ..... and the ones that move your eyes ..... Imagine how they are when they're relaxed and easy ..... Notice your mind now ..... and think how it is when it's relaxed ..... it might feel lighter ..... or heavier ..... it might feel smaller ..... or bigger ..... it might have a different colour ..... Imagine how it is when it lets go of any tension ..... any worries ..... agreeing that during this time there's nothing else for it to do except to relax ..... and be interested ..... in this experience ..... Maybe remembering other times when you've been really relaxed and comfortable ..... times when you've been really happy ..... Then think about your jaw ..... the most complex joint in the body ..... you'll know when it has relaxed ..... because your teeth will separate a little ..... Now notice your shoulders ..... and remember how they feel at times when you're relaxed ..... Imagine that they are at ease ..... and comfortable ..... You'll be aware of all the sounds around you ..... sounds inside the house ..... maybe sounds outside the house ..... Whatever sounds you hear needn't disturb you ..... the only thing you're interested in ..... is the work we're doing here ..... You can even be surprised to find ..... that any sound you hear ..... can take you deeper and deeper into a state of concentration and relaxation ..... and the louder the sound the deeper you can go ..... I want you now to think about your chest and your back ..... think how they feel when you're comfortably warm ..... and relaxed ..... and happy .....

Notice your breathing ..... whether it's faster ..... or slower ..... or just the same ..... Now think about your tummy and your hips ..... remember how they feel when you're comfortable ..... when you're relaxed ..... maybe when you're drowsy ..... Perhaps your baby is relaxing too ..... or maybe awake and listening to the music and the sound of my voice ..... just as you are ..... If your baby is moving around ..... just let those feelings that you know so well ..... take you deeper ..... and deeper ..... Imagine the blood flowing round your body ..... from your heart to the top of your head ..... and down your arms to the tips of your fingers and thumbs ..... and flowing from your heart to your toes ..... exactly how it should ..... pulsing strongly and smoothly ..... the blood vessels allowing the blood to pass through ..... in the best possible way ..... then imagine the blood travelling back to your heart ..... smoothly and efficiently ..... the blood flow both ways ..... exactly as it should be ..... Now think of your legs ..... Think of those long muscles in your thighs ..... in your calves ..... imagine how they might be when they're relaxed ..... really relaxed ..... loose and easy ..... Now think of your ankles ..... Think how they are when they're relaxed ..... and your feet ..... and your toes ..... Notice now your arms ..... the tops of your arms ..... and your forearms ..... again, long muscles ..... imagine how they could be if they were relaxed ..... really relaxed and easy ..... and then notice your wrists ..... think how they are when they're relaxed ..... and your hands ..... and your fingers ..... and your thumbs ..... Now imagine the flow of blood to your uterus ..... think of it like a smoothly flowing river ..... just as deep and as wide as it needs to be ..... carrying all the oxygen and nutrients that your baby needs ..... all happening exactly as it should ..... your body and your mind knowing just what to do ..... You think about being as relaxed and comfortable as you've ever been ..... and you think about the love you have for your baby ..... imagine your love surrounding and comforting your baby ..... as you listen to the music .....

You find that by saying to yourself 'Now I'm going deeper into relaxation, deeper and deeper' that you will feel yourself relax more ..... and just like the self-hypnosis every time you say this you will relax more quickly and more deeply ..... so you practise this too every time you go into self-hypnosis ..... When you want to lighten your trance just imagine coming back up to reality just as far as you want to ..... and to go deeper say 'Now I'm going deeper into relaxation, deeper and deeper' ..... By practising lightening and deepening your relaxation and trance you find it happens more easily and more quickly each time ..... until it becomes automatic ..... something you hardly need to



think about ..... Relaxation is an essential part of survival and good health ..... and you can be happy knowing that you are learning such an important skill ..... that will benefit you enormously for the rest of your life ..... and particularly now will benefit both you and your growing child .....

## **Tracks 2, 3 and 4:**

These three tracks describe relaxing places for you to go to whenever you want to. They help to deepen your trance and you can use one or any of these whenever you want to relax or to distance yourself from your surroundings – perhaps between contractions or even during them if that's what you feel like doing. The first one takes you to a beach, the second for a walk by a stream in a wood and the third to a boat on a lake. Listen to the one that relaxes and interests you the most until you can easily recall it whenever you need, or want, to during the labour. Use it in the weeks leading up to the birth as part of your daily relaxation routine. It will be referred to as your 'safe place'. Again, the more often you listen to the track and visit this place the more effective it will be at relaxing you. It needs to become somewhere completely familiar to you, somewhere that you can imagine clearly, with no effort and in an instant. You can add or change anything to the image that you want to as you listen. You might choose to add some detail that is already familiar to you, or change it in your mind to make it more personal.

## Transcript of Track 2 - 'The Beach'

I want you to imagine yourself standing in the dappled shade of palm trees ..... overlooking the wide sweeping bay .....of a beautiful beach ..... Looking up you can see the fronds of the palm leaves arching high above your head ..... they move gently in the soft breeze that you feel on your skin .....You feel pleasantly warm ..... and you're aware that there's absolutely nothing else that you need to do ..... except to relax ..... You have everything with you that you need in order to relax completely ..... You feel the warmth relaxing you ..... and you can smell the air ..... fresh ..... clean ..... salty ..... You listen to the sound of the little waves ..... coming into the beach ..... and you hear them swishing in ..... and hissing out ..... a constant rhythm ..... You feel your feet in the warm sand ..... and you wriggle your toes down into it .....so soft ..... so warm ..... Small colourful birds fly amongst the palms ..... You hear the sounds that they make ..... rustling and calling ..... exotic sounds ..... Their colours are bright ..... red ..... yellow ..... blue ..... green ..... violet ..... They seem just right here ..... flashing in the sunlight ..... against the summer blue of the sky ..... darker above your head, paler and more turquoise towards the horizon ..... You decide to walk down to the water ..... your feet sinking into the sand ..... pushing up between your toes ..... The sand stretches away around the curve of the bay ..... light gold ..... with the dark green of the palm trees edging the sand ..... They lean over it ..... creating deep shadows ..... with patches of sunlight breaking through ..... As you near the water ..... the sand becomes firmer ..... cooler ..... a deeper gold ..... You see lots of small shells ..... some like little twisted cones ..... some like fans ..... some striped ..... some spotted ..... so many different designs and colours ..... Then you see a much bigger one ..... half buried in the sand ..... You pull it out ..... and take it to the water to wash it ..... it's a beautiful ivory white on the outside ..... with intricate spines ..... and when you hold it up to the light ..... you see the lovely swirling patterns inside .....of coral pinks and mother of pearl ..... You bend down and scoop some water up into the shell ..... and pour it out ..... watching it sparkle and hearing it splash into the sea ..... Feel how comfortable the temperature of the water is ..... and always you're aware of the sound of the waves ..... a quiet soothing ..... regular ..... pattern of sound ..... You walk into the sea ..... until it's just as deep as you like ..... feeling the resistance of the water against your legs ..... as you move forward ..... seeing the flashes of sunlight reflecting off the blue water ..... the water gently lifting you as each wave comes in ..... You can feel the ridges in the sand under

your feet ..... formed by the waves ..... You can see the bright wavy patterns too ..... where the sun's rays pass through the water .....The water caresses your body pleasantly ..... The sun is warm on your back and shoulders ..... Each wave lifts you as it rides into the beach ..... You may feel like lying on your back ..... feeling the water supporting you ..... rocking you gently up and down ..... up and down ..... If you remain standing you feel the water moving gently up and down over your tummy as each wave passes by ..... Your baby will feel the rhythm and movement of the water too ..... and will enjoy the feelings you're having of peace and contentment while you're here in this completely safe place ..... When you're ready ..... begin walking back into the shallows ..... and then back onto the sand ..... back up the beach ..... feeling your skin drying off as you walk ..... then settling yourself comfortably down ..... maybe to drift off to sleep ..... or to read ..... or just to lie and listen to all the sounds around you ..... the birds ..... the waves ..... in this beautiful place ..... where you feel so calm ..... so relaxed ..... so peaceful ..... so safe ..... this place where you can always come ..... to find peace and calm .....

### Transcript of Track 3 – ‘A Walk through Wood with a River’

It's a beautiful spring day ..... bright and fresh .....The sun is shining ..... Small white woolly clouds float in the soft blue of the sky ..... You're walking along a path in the countryside ..... You see it winding in front of you ..... and a little way off you can see a group of stone cottages..... their windows sparkling in the bright light .....The sun is warm on your skin ..... and there's the gentlest of breezes ..... keeping you feeling really comfortable ..... There are flowers dotted on the grass ..... and beneath the low hedgerow bushes ..... Primroses ..... and early daffodils ..... some forget-me-nots ..... like pieces of sky fallen to earth ..... bright against the green grass ..... You enter a small wood ..... The trees are well spaced ..... with speckles of sunlight ..... and shafting sunbeams that light up the undergrowth ..... Bluebell leaves are pushing up through the soft loam ..... the damp earth smelling wonderfully clean and sweet ..... and you imagine how they'll look when they're flowering ..... a beautiful sky-blue carpet under the trees ..... sunlight making patterns of lighter and darker blue through the leaves and branches ..... Some trees have their new leaves already ..... an intense light green .....They glow against the deeper green of the evergreens ..... Others have fat buds just opening ..... green curls showing ..... Birds are calling all around ..... the soft cooing of doves .....the high pitched trill of a robin ..... So many different songs, twitterings and chatterings ..... to find a mate ..... or to claim territory ..... You see them darting from tree to tree ...hear them rustling the leaves ..... You hear the trees gently creaking as they move in the breeze ..... their twigs lightly clattering ..... As you walk along ..... you can feel the slight unevenness of the ground under your shoes ..... hear the crunch of the small stones and gravel ..... The sun makes deep shadows on the ground ..... making the light areas seem even brighter ..... higher in the trees the tops of the leaves look blue where they reflect the sky ..... and glitter where they catch the sun ..... The path bends away to the left in front of you ..... and begins to slope downwards ..... cutting into a bank which forms on your left ..... while on your right the ground drops down to a small river ..... Such a beautiful river ..... the water bubbling along so cheerfully ..... shining where it flows smoothly over the rounded rocks ..... reflecting the sun, the sky and the trees..... white ruffles where it rushes over and around bigger rocks ..... Along the edges of the banks ..... water plants bend and flow with the current ..... some bright yellow celandines are flowering ..... surrounded by round deep green leaves ..... The walk energises and refreshes you ..... There is nothing to hurry for ..... You move as slowly or quickly

as you like .....knowing that this place is just for you ..... This river is how *you* imagine it and no-one else ..... How you feel here is unique to you ..... Just as every human being is unique ..... Just as your baby will be unique ..... You see ahead of you a patch of lush grass growing on the edge of the bank ..... warmed by the sun ..... where you can sit for a while ..... and a large smooth rock that is just right to lean against and rest..... You can see small fish in the shallows at the edge of the water ..... their tiny fins keeping them still in spite of the current ..... Now and then a larger fish jumps in the deeper water ..... making swirling circles where it plops back in .....You close your eyes and listen to all these sounds around you ..... the rippling water ..... the birds singing ..... the trees rustling ..... such a peaceful place ..... perfectly safe ..... a place just for you and your baby..... a place to go to whenever you want to relax ..... a place of complete calm and beauty ..... where you always feel comfortable and content ..... You come here whenever you want to ..... It will always be here for you .....

## Transcript of Track 4 – ‘A Boat on a Lake’

You're standing on a small hill overlooking a beautiful lake ..... It lies in a valley ..... surrounded by low hills ..... and woodland ..... in some areas large light grey rocks rise up through shallow soil where purple heather is flowering ..... Far away to your right ..... you can see the river where it feeds the lake ..... and the sloping sides of the valley that it winds through ..... The gravel path you're on leads gently down to the lakeside ..... and you walk along ..... noticing the plants on either side of the path ..... You see a small jetty not far below you ..... built on stilts out into the water ..... At the end of it there's a small but sturdy little boat tied to the bottom of some steps ..... You walk on down the path ..... hearing the gravel crunch under your feet ..... and the cry of a bird high in the sky ..... You look up searching ..... and then you see it ..... wheeling round in great circles ..... soaring effortlessly on the up-draughts of air ..... You can see it's reflection in the lake surface ..... which is mostly smooth and still ..... and shows the blue of the sky ..... the brilliance of the sun ..... the odd white cloud drifting ..... the purple heather ..... the rocks ..... the dark green of the conifers ..... the varied greens of other trees ..... the bright green of the grassy patches ..... You see another world ..... upside down but just as beautiful ..... The sun is pleasantly warm ..... an occasional breath of air ruffles the mirrored surface ..... and now you are down beside the clear water ..... It makes gentle lapping sounds on the shore ..... a rhythm ..... like soft breathing ..... Pebbles dot the sandy edges ..... the water brings out all their different colours ..... white ..... grey ..... soft coral pink ..... pale sienna and ochre ..... some striped ..... some with swirling patterns of these colours ..... Look carefully at these different stones ..... and choose one to pick up and hold ..... Is it cool or warm? ..... enjoy its colour ..... its weight ..... its rounded shape ..... It feels so smooth and somehow satisfying ..... You put it back in its place and walk along to the jetty ..... It's quite old and the wood is weathered to a warm grey ..... The safety rail feels smooth and bumpy under your hand ..... as you go to the end where the boat rests ..... You descend the steps holding on to the hand rails ..... They make a creaking sound ..... and you can hear the water slapping quietly against the wooden supports ..... You step into the boat ..... It has a small sail up ..... and also a motor which just needs a button pressed to start it ..... See what colour the boat and the sail are ..... There are plenty of cushions too ..... so you can make yourself really comfortable ..... See the colour and size of the cushions ..... Feel the softness of the fabric ..... and feel how they shape themselves around you ..... The

boat rocks a little as you arrange things ..... but it feels steady and reliable ..... and you look forward to this little trip you're taking in it ..... As you untie the rope the slight breeze gently fills the sail ..... and it begins to move towards the centre of the lake ..... the breeze just filling the sail enough to take you smoothly through the water ..... You look up at sky and watch the wispy clouds sailing in their own blue lake ..... The gentle rocking motion is very soothing and relaxing ..... There is nothing else for you to do here except to enjoy the warmth ..... the comfort ..... the soft sounds of the water and the boat ..... Now and then a fish breaks the surface ..... and you watch the widening circles of ripples until they disappear ..... and the reflections of trees, grass, sky and clouds are clear again ..... You reach the centre of the lake ..... and the boat stops ..... You look at the beautiful landscape all around you ..... The hills ..... and the woodland ..... The heather covered slopes ..... and the bright green of the grassy patches ..... You think of all the wonderful things that water helps to create, protect and nurture ..... You and your baby ..... all the creatures and plants in the lake ..... the clouds above you ..... all the animals and plants on the land ..... Your baby floats in your own personal lake ..... Small, but perfect for its purpose ..... It gives your baby comfort and protection during this important stage of life ..... You can stay here as long as you like ..... and when you're ready the boat will take you back to the jetty where it will be whenever you want it .....



## **Track 5:**

This one takes you through Self-Hypnosis. You've read how to bring on your colour for relaxing, but by listening to this while you're concentrating and in a good trance, you'll really reinforce what you've learned. Also the suggestions for continuing to practise regularly will help you to do it. Your Subconscious will be all for relaxation, something so beneficial to your wellbeing, and it'll help in all sorts of ways to make sure you remember and find the time to do it.

Every time you practise you'll go into a trance more quickly and more deeply. You'll notice how much easier and deeper the trance develops after even four or five times.

Once going into a trance has become natural to you, you can then learn to go deeper simply by telling yourself to go deeper. Use the words 'Now I'm going deeper and deeper, becoming more and more relaxed'.

It would be a very good idea if your birthing partner learns this as well by listening to the CD with you a few times and doing the actual exercise. Then they'll know exactly how it feels for you. This will enable them to help you much more easily if necessary during the labour.

## Transcript of Track 5 – ‘Self-Hypnosis’

I would like you now to imagine feeling completely relaxed ..... completely happy ..... you might like to use a happy memory to do this ..... the most confident that you've ever been ..... and the most peaceful that you can imagine being ..... Now bring into your mind a colour ..... a colour that represents all these feelings ..... Usually the first colour that comes into your mind will be the right one ..... sometimes though another one will appear and feel even better ..... If that happens then choose to stay with that one ..... If you have trouble seeing the colour clearly ..... don't worry ..... just *know* that it's there and *feel* it ..... Now see if you can make the colour and the feelings stronger ..... the relaxed feeling ..... the confident feeling ..... the happy feeling .....and the peaceful feeling ..... Let the colour grow ..... and see, or feel, it surround you ..... warm ..... comforting ..... like a light, soft blanket ..... and now breathe the colour in ..... feel it filling you ..... moving all through you ..... comforting ..... relaxing ..... comforting your baby ..... calming your baby .....

Now that you have your colour ..... I want you to do this exercise several times a day ..... Make yourself comfortable ..... in a chair ..... or lying on a bed ..... and fix your eyes on something in the room ..... It doesn't matter what ..... It might be on the ceiling ..... or the wall ..... anything will do ..... With your eyes fixed on a spot ..... take three easy breaths ..... just normal breaths ..... and then allow your eyes to close as you bring your colour around you ..... letting it surround you ..... seeing it or feeling it or both ..... Now breathe it in ..... Imagine it filling every cell ..... every cell in your body ..... and then imagine it between every cell ..... feeling it calm you .....feeling it relax you .....letting it comfort you like a beautifully soft blanket ..... all around you ..... and all through you ..... A beautiful colour ..... chosen by you ..... exactly right for you .....

Every time you do this exercise ..... deciding on certain times of the day ..... at least four or five times for the first few days ..... just two or three minutes each time ..... you'll find that the feelings get stronger ..... that you can feel them more quickly and deeply ..... until you find that you can do it anywhere ..... in an instant ..... Just by imagining the colour ..... with or without closing your eyes ..... you'll feel deeply relaxed, calm and comfortable ..... This must be practised as often as this ..... so that by the time you're in labour ..... you'll be able to use this technique in an instant..... hardly having to think about it ..... Going as deeply into all these feelings

automatically ..... exactly how you want to ..... and being able to maintain them for as long as you need to .....

This is Self-Hypnosis ..... It's a powerful tool that you can use for many situations in your life ..... You can, if you want to, choose different colours for different feelings ..... One for calm ..... another for self-confidence ..... another for happiness ..... Whatever feeling you want to bring to you..... in any situation .....The technique will work in just the same way as with childbirth ..... With each new colour you'll need to practice it several times a day for a few days ..... until you can do it as quickly and easily as you want to ..... and until the feelings that come with the colour are as strong as you want them to be .....

Now I want you to see yourself arranging your life so that you can practise this ..... See yourself doing it regularly ..... feeling it become more powerful ..... feeling it happening more easily and more quickly ..... You feel really pleased with yourself that you're preparing yourself so well for this coming birth ..... doing everything you can ..... for yourself and your baby ..... to make the birth as easy, calm, comfortable and satisfying as it can be .....

## **Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Tracks – ‘Suggestions for a Comfortable Birth’:**

The next three tracks are all concerned with the actual birth. After listening to Track No. 1 go to the track you've chosen for your 'safe place'. Then listen to one of these 'birthing' tracks. Each one is different. This is to give you some variety and also to cover different aspects and possibilities of the birth. Listening to these alternately every time you use the CD, will greatly benefit you when you're in labour. They will also help you immediately after the birth and in the following months.

There are suggestions for milk flow, if you want to feed the baby yourself; for a quick recovery from the birth; for good bonding with your baby and many other things that are all designed to make this time as natural and rewarding as it possibly can be. If you've decided not to breast feed your baby your mind will simply discount the suggestions concerning this aspect.

In order to make this pre-birth training absolutely realistic I've also put in special suggestions for you in case things don't go exactly according to plan. These suggestions are on Track No. 7. They are a vital part of this whole programme.

It would be very difficult for you if things didn't go exactly as you've been visualising and you had no idea what to do. By knowing how to react through rehearsing this possibility you'll be able to continue to use everything you've learned to help yourself, your baby and the medical team with you.

On Track No. 8 you'll be talking to your baby. Again, there are also suggestions for a comfortable birth for both of you. There are suggestions for the baby as to the best position to be in for the birth. Babies pick up all your feelings while they're in the womb – good or bad. You can talk either with your mind or with your voice. Babies understand and hear both. So talking to your baby is not just possible it's very important and desirable when you're communicating in a positive way.

Being able to relax and stay calm in all circumstances is a skill to be envied. Just by listening to the tracks, as I've explained, regularly you'll learn how to do that. You'll amaze yourself at the changes you notice in everyday life – in the way you handle different situations. Things that used to upset you you'll deal with calmly, your mind staying clear and unaffected by the negative feelings that prevented it giving you good, reasonable answers to problems. Therefore the problems themselves now cease to be problems. Instead they become interesting situations that you know you'll find an answer to.

## Transcript for Track 6

The day you are looking forward to ..... the day when you first hold your baby in your arms ..... is not far ahead now ..... You've been feeling the baby moving around for a long time now ..... learning to use its muscles ..... giving strong kicks ..... and turns ..... getting ready for ..... its entry into this world ..... and into your life .....

Imagine now that today is your baby's birthday ..... The contractions you've been feeling have settled into a rhythmic pattern ..... You feel so happy that the time is here at last ..... and that each contraction brings the moment nearer when you'll hold this new little person in your arms ..... You feel calm ..... and more and more relaxed every time your uterus muscles contract in the way they were designed to do ..... It feels exactly right when they tighten ..... You feel each contraction like a wave ..... From the smallest sensation it builds to just the right height ..... and then subsides ..... until the next one ..... You await each one with anticipation ..... using your self-hypnosis to relax as lightly or as deeply as you want to ..... You picture what is happening inside you ..... You know that the contractions shorten and thicken your uterus at the top ..... and that this increases with each one ..... At the same time the lower part is stretching and the cervix ..... that ring of strong muscle that forms the neck of the uterus ..... which has been holding your baby safely inside ..... is thinning .....and relaxing ..... and opening ..... to allow your baby's head to pass easily through ..... Your baby understands that these events are necessary and desirable ..... and that you are working together to accomplish this birth ..... Your baby knows what to do ..... knows how to move ..... and knows which way to turn ..... When the contractions are about five minutes apart ..... you go to the place you have chosen for the birth ..... staying calm and relaxed ..... using your self-hypnosis whenever you want to ..... When you're there you make yourself comfortable ..... changing position whenever you need to ..... You accept each contraction with calm and acceptance ..... knowing that each one brings you closer to holding your baby in your arms for the first time ..... You relax more and more deeply with each tightening sensation ..... understanding that the more you relax the more efficiently your muscles will work ..... and the shorter the labour will be ..... You find it more and more easy to relax deeply as the contractions continue ..... deeper and deeper ..... The more you relax the shorter and easier the labour will be ..... and the more comfortable you and your baby will be ..... As the baby moves down ..... right down into your pelvis

..... you might feel some pressure ..... This is good ..... exactly right ..... You know that this means that the moment when you see your baby for the first time is even closer now ..... Whenever you need to be examined or touched you relax ..... You know that this is necessary and good ..... You imagine the cervix opening easily ..... stretching as easily as old elastic now ..... as wide as it needs to ..... Allowing the baby's head to pass through into the birth canal ..... Now the sensations change ..... You feel your body beginning to bear down ..... to push ..... a perfectly natural feeling ..... your body knows exactly what to do and how to do it ..... You change your position if you want to ..... You can continue to relax while you co-operate with these new feelings ..... imagining the baby being born so easily ..... and gently ..... as you help your baby to arrive in the world ..... The baby will be doing all the right things ..... using movements that all babies instinctively know ..... to help this birth along in the most relaxed and comfortable way for both of you ..... Every time you feel the urge to push ..... you allow your muscles to push as strongly as they want to ..... You rest between each of these urges ..... using your self-hypnosis ..... and relaxing deeply ..... so that with the next one ..... you have plenty of strength to work with your muscles ..... pushing strongly and deeply ..... so that your baby is born gently and easily ..... Every time you listen to this track your confidence in your ability to give birth with ease and comfort grows ..... It becomes stronger and stronger ..... as you let your mind know how it will be ..... a deeply satisfying experience that you're looking forward to so much ..... Your baby listens to this too ..... and every time you relax while you think about the birth ..... so does your baby .....

Think of the months you've spent nurturing and protecting this new being in your body ..... feeling all the changes ..... Those first tiny fluttering movements ..... The strong kicks and rolling movements that you feel in these last weeks..... Imagine that now the baby is here ..... the birth is accomplished ..... and this beautiful child you have helped to create is in your arms ..... You lighten your self-hypnosis ..... staying relaxed ..... as you gaze into your baby's eyes ..... They gaze back ..... looking somehow wise and all knowing ..... This is a wonderful moment ..... full of love and joy ..... as you meet each other face to face for the first time ..... a moment never to be forgotten .....

You continue to relax ..... helping your milk to begin flowing ..... If you want to feed your baby yourself ..... Know that you learn quickly and easily exactly what to do

..... It comes to you so naturally ..... that both of you settle into a comfortable routine ..... You are the most important person in your baby's life just now ..... and you look forward to a happy and fulfilling time ahead with your new baby ..... You know that you've prepared yourself well and that you'll be a relaxed and successful mother.

## Transcript for Track 7

Imagine yourself in the place where you are going to have your baby ..... feeling that you are very relaxed and comfortable ..... seeing yourself looking relaxed and happy ..... and as the birthing process progresses ..... being aware of the amazing strength of your uterine muscles ..... working so well for you and the baby ..... being aware that the more strongly they contract the more you relax ..... and that the more you relax the more strongly they can contract ..... making the birth easier and quicker ..... You feel yourself to be in control of your body ..... You know how to relax ..... You know that your body works at it's best when it's relaxed ..... how relaxation will enable your mind to flood your body with all the right hormones ..... at exactly the right time ..... and at exactly the right level ..... to make this birth easy and enjoyable ..... You are working now to help yourself and your baby ..... and you look forward to the work you all will do at the birth ..... your body, your mind and the baby ..... You all have a single goal ..... to bring your baby into the world gently and easily ..... You might like to ask yourself how long you want this work to last ..... what time feels right for you ..... You might also feel that you could decide when the birth should happen ..... Just do whatever seems right for you ..... Each contraction comes just like a wave ..... and as the wave builds so your relaxation deepens ..... Each wave brings you closer to the time when you hold your baby for the first time ..... You look forward to each one ..... It seems wonderful that your muscles have such power ..... and wonderful that your body is so beautifully flexible ..... that your muscles can both contract and stretch ..... exactly as they need to ..... where and when they need to ..... You use your self-hypnosis automatically ..... bringing on your colour ..... and going just as deeply into relaxation as you need to ..... You can see yourself smiling and talking to the people with you ..... the midwives there to help you ..... the person you've chosen to be with you ..... accepting their help ..... going to the scene in your mind where you have chosen to have your baby ..... where you are always relaxed and calm whenever you want to be ..... You feel yourself to be totally in control ..... whatever the circumstances ..... You are aware that with all the preparations possible very occasionally the unexpected happens ..... If it does you know exactly what to do ..... You stay relaxed and calm ..... You co-operate fully with the medical staff ..... You use your colour to relax you ..... You deepen or lighten your trance as needed ..... You know that you know what to do ..... You can go to your safe place if you want to ..... where you can feel both at a distance and also completely reachable ..... so that you can always do anything the medical staff need



you to do ..... You feel completely calm ..... and you remain in total control of your reactions ..... You want to help your baby and the staff as much as you can ..... Your mind and your body are capable of so much more than you realise ..... All you have to do is to remain calm and relaxed ..... and your remarkable mind and body will do the rest .....

Imagining again now that all *does* go according to plan ..... and being confident that you will be relaxed and controlled in all circumstances ..... you see yourself practising your relaxation regularly ..... noticing that each time it becomes easier and easier ..... With practise you find that you can easily go deeper when you say to yourself 'Deeper and deeper' ..... You find that you can get up, walk around and still stay perfectly relaxed ..... You even find that you can talk and laugh ..... and still either stay, or go immediately back, into a state of complete relaxation when you want to ..... You know that having learnt this wonderful skill ..... so easily because it's what you want to do ..... you can look forward so much to the birth of your baby ..... before, during and after the delivery .....

You see yourself holding the baby ..... breastfeeding if that's what you want to do ..... holding the baby close to your heart ..... a sound so familiar ..... a reminder of the warmth, comfort and protection you have provided all these months ..... and will continue to provide with strength and joy ..... You use your relaxation skills whenever you need to after the birth ..... to recharge your energies ..... or to take a really good but quick break ..... You can use this remarkable tool for the rest of your life ..... and find it a tremendous help in all sorts of circumstances ..... In fact as you find during this learning time, the more you use it the more effective it is ..... It will relax you and energise you at any time and your 'safe' place is always there whenever you need it.

## Transcript for Track 8

Picture yourself as you are now ..... lying or sitting ..... and see yourself as beautifully relaxed ..... as if you are like a rag doll that has been dropped into your position ..... Feel that relaxation ..... You might feel as if you're sinking down a little ..... Your body settling down even more ..... Now think of your tummy ..... and focus your attention there ..... See its lovely curve ..... created to make a place where your baby can grow ..... in a warm, nurturing and protective environment ..... Imagine your baby ..... maybe you feel movements ..... maybe this is a resting time ..... and tell your baby just how much you're looking forward to the day when you meet each other face to face ..... Have a picture in your mind of you holding the baby close to you ..... Send this picture to your baby ..... letting the baby know how much you want to have him or her in your life ..... Feel the enormous love you have for your baby ..... and give this feeling a colour ..... See this colour surrounding the baby ..... and feel how it must feel to be loved like this ..... You might sense a return feeling ..... also of love ..... from the baby to you ..... Hold on to these feelings for a little while ..... Make them a part of your day ..... It could be for just a few seconds ..... several times a day ..... something that can become a habit ..... sending love to your baby ..... and like the self-hypnosis it will require less and less concentration each time you do it ..... Maybe too you'll find that the feelings strengthen ..... Feelings are just like muscles ..... the more you use them the stronger they become ..... Just before you go to sleep at night might be a peaceful time to send and receive love ..... from mother to baby ..... from the baby to you, it's mother.

Imagine now that it's time for your baby to be born ..... Tell your baby how wonderful you feel now that the time is here ..... Show the baby how you see the birth ..... relaxed, comfortable and joyful ..... You can send a picture to the baby of the right position he or she should be in for the birth ..... head down and facing backwards ..... Imagine stroking your hand down over your tummy ..... stroking where the baby's back should be ..... Say that this is the way to lie for a safe and comfortable birth ..... You can say too that you know that both of you will be working together ..... that you know that he or she has all the knowledge needed to make this as gentle and enjoyable experience as possible ..... Tell the baby that you've been learning exactly how to really relax ..... so that you can both relax during the labour and the delivery ..... that you will both feel in control ..... and everything will be as it should be ..... You imagine now that your baby's birthday is here ..... and you see yourself

in the place you've chosen to give birth ..... feeling yourself to be totally in control ..... relaxing as much as you want to through each contraction ..... really resting between each one ..... You feel yourself relaxing more and more deeply as the contractions strengthen ..... Rejoicing as each one brings you closer to holding your baby for the first time after all these months ..... When the time comes to push ..... you feel so controlled ..... that you can easily stop pushing if the midwife wants to slow things down ..... wants to make sure that the baby's head passes easily into the world ..... If this happens ..... then when the next urge to push arrives ..... instead of pushing you relax really deeply ..... and just let that urge pass by you ..... until it is alright for you to push again ..... and your baby arrives gently and easily ..... and is put into your arms .....

See yourself back home with your new little child ..... See yourself easily learning the needs of your baby ..... See yourself organising your life really well ..... having plenty of time for resting ..... See yourself using your self-hypnosis to get the most out of every time when you can rest ..... feeling quickly refreshed and re-energised ..... Imagine yourself enjoying the rest of your family too ..... having time for them ..... See them helping with the new arrival ..... You know that this little person will enhance your life ..... will change all sorts of things for you ..... Feel yourself welcoming the changes ..... noticing and being interested in them ..... Know that you'll be very successful at being your child's mother ..... that you are doing a very important and loving thing for yourself, your baby and all the family by learning this small but enormous skill of relaxation.

# Suggested Course Plan

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If you are dealing 1:1 normally Initial Consultation (I/C) then 3/4 sessions (sometimes more if deemed necessary. This can depend on the situation and where in the pregnancy you meet the lady. See Course Plan Options)

## Initial Consultation

- Usual Introduction
- Information gathering, usual plus expected birth date, expectations, type of birth etc
- Client metaphors
- How the Brain works
  - The Intellectual Brain 'knows what to do and how to do it'
  - The 'Bucket' and REM
  - Technical explanations of how the body mind system works at optimum when anxiety is controlled
  - The role of positively. 'Getting the picture'. The chemical response. Oxytocin
  - The physiology of discomfort/pain
  - Explanation of Rewind if appropriate
- The Plan
- Give CD (Basic CD)

# Suggested Course Plan

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## 1<sup>st</sup> Session

- Usual introduction
- Check listening to CD
- Revision. Could talk about rewind if appropriate
- Scaling
- Miracle Question
- On the Couch .....(see *General Remarks*)
- Scripting options:
  - Fractional relaxation
  - PHS for Self-Hypnosis using Colour (with suggestions to practice)
  - 'Safe Place' e.g. The Beach
  - Framing 'That picture'
- The 'Goodbye'. Reassurance
- Scaling:
  - 0 – In a pickle
  - 10 – On top of things. Happy. Enjoying your pregnancy. Doing all the things you know you should be doing. Keep it General!

# Suggested Course Plan

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Session

- Usual introduction
- Check listening to CD and practicing Self-Hypnosis using Colour
- Revision. Including rewind if appropriate
- Scaling
- Miracle Question
- On the Couch .....
- Scripting options:
  - Fractional relaxation
  - PHS for Self-Hypnosis using Colour
  - 'Safe Place'
  - General suggestions and
  - Suggestion for easy birth
  - Framing 'That picture'
- If it is a 'Rewind' session then the scripting would be adapted accordingly*
- Give Childbirth CD
- The 'Goodbye'. Reassurance

# Suggested Course Plan

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## 3<sup>rd</sup> Session

- Usual introduction
- Check listening to CD and practicing Self-Hypnosis using Colour
- Ask for details of Birth Plan
- Revision
- Scaling
- Miracle Question
- On the Couch .....
- Scripting options:
  - Fractional relaxation
  - PHS for Self-Hypnosis using Colour
  - 'Safe Place'
  - General suggestions and
  - Suggestion for 'easy' birth
- The 'Goodbye'. Reassurance

# Suggested Course Plan

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## 4<sup>th</sup> Session

- Usual introduction
- Check listening to CD
- Ask for latest details of Birth Plan/Administration
- Revision (So important)
- Scaling
- On the Couch .....
- Scripting options:
  - Fractional relaxation
  - PHS for Self-Hypnosis using Colour
  - 'Safe Place'
  - General suggestions if necessary
  - Suggestion for 'easy' birth
  - Framing 'The detail' and 'That picture'
- The 'Goodbye'

## 5<sup>th</sup> Session (if necessary)

- More of the same .....



# Course Plan Options

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## Plan Options

e.g.

### Month 4 – Average Anxiety

- Initial Consultation
- Session 1 (I am always here!)
  
- Month 7/8**
  - Session 2
  - Session 3
  - Session 4

### Month 7 – Average Anxiety

- Initial Consultation
- Session 1
- Session 2
- Session 3
- Session 4

### Month 3/4 – Severe Anxiety

- Initial Consultation
  - Session 1
  - Session 2 (Rewind)
  - Session 3
  
  - Month 5/6**
    - Session 4
  
  - Month 8**
    - Session 5
    - Session 6
- } Could be half sessions

## Framing/Reframing

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### Framing/Reframing

Use your imagination, you are at home. This is a lovely time for you. So many nice things to think about. You are enjoying organising things and enjoying pottering about. Everything is ready. If you think of something that needs to be done you go ahead and do it. You are good at that. It's time for you to walk to the school and pick up the girls. They are excited when they see you. Other Mothers are asking how you are. They are nice. On the way back you stop off at Jane's house to give her the latest news. She is going to look after the girls if the baby arrives during the day – pick them up from school and feed them. She is such a help and she enjoys being involved. The girls love being with her. Looking back you are so pleased at what you and James have done. Everything is under control. As you walk the few doors back to home you feel nicely excited but calm and relaxed.

It's Saturday evening. It has been a lovely day. The visit to the swings was a real success. Katie in particular enjoys having James around. She is a real Daddy's girl.

It's early to bed as usual. You just have a feeling that things are on the move. It is happening quite quickly now but you are so familiar with the routine you are calm and relaxed. You doze. It is all going to plan. James has dropped off so you give him a shake. Contractions are coming every five minutes or so now. It is time to telephone the midwife/delivery suite. You put the CD on again and doze some more.

### Home Delivery

The duty midwife seems very nice on the telephone. You reassure her that you are doing all the right things and she says she is on her way. You feel calm and relaxed. The midwife arrives and she is nice. You relax in your 'safe place'. It is easy even while people bustle around you.

*Insert script – Adapt Suggestion for Childbirth.*

*The tightening .....squeezing sensations .....beginning to form a pattern etc. etc.*

*Your body is working beautifully .....In your chosen place you are in your chosen place. You are calm .....peaceful.....comfortable .....each and every contraction perfectly acceptable to you.....you are using your colour .....moving towards that wonderful movement etc. etc.*

*Your body knows what to do .....your baby recognising what is happening ....because you are so relaxed it is making it easy for him.....your baby is born etc. etc.*

Everyone is smiling. You are looking at your baby. He is every bit as beautiful as you imagined. You feel good. You are thanking the midwife and she is thanking you. You tell James to go and awaken the girls .....

# Framing/Reframing

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## **Hospital Delivery**

You have that feeling that things are on the move. You tell James what you think. You are glad he has taken some time off. It has been nice having him around. The girls particularly have enjoyed having him collect them from school.

You give Jane a call. You tell her the contractions are getting quicker. She asks how you are. You are calm and relaxed. James is off collecting the children.

James and the children are back. You are telling them to fetch their overnight bags. They are off to Jane. You are telephoning the hospital and letting them know what is going on. They say to keep them in the picture.

You are telephoning again. You know it is time to make a move. James is getting the car out. You feel calm and relaxed. The journey is quick and easy. YOU smile as you remember James checking the route out and having a trial run.

You are walking into the hospital. It is quite familiar to you. You recognise some of the faces.....

*Insert scripting* .....

You are saying thank you to the staff. They have looked after you so well. You cannot wait to see the girls. They are at the front door with Jane. They look so excited. You hand the baby to Jane. You phone your mother. She asked how it all went. You say beautifully. She is travelling down to see you tomorrow .....

## Involving Partners

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A birthing partner can be anyone chosen by the expectant mother. Involving the partner as much as possible gives them the opportunity to experience hypnosis for themselves so that they have a proper idea of what it can actually do. It will also familiarise them with their partner in hypnosis – see how she relaxes, behaves etc. This obviously will improve their ability to help using their own observations and skills.

- Partners should learn how to speak to you when in hypnosis – slowly and calmly.
- They should use words such as relax, let go, go down, deeper and deeper, as you feel my hand around your wrist/elbow you go deeper and deeper etc.
- Teach partners to give hand and/or voice anchors.
- They should encourage position changing and loo trips every 1 – 1½ hrs.
- Partners should never use the word 'pain'. But should instead build a positive feeling towards the word 'Contraction' – talk of them always as something good and productive, gradually shortening and thickening the uterus to push the baby into the birth canal. Contractions are needed and wanted, a vital part of the birthing process. (see script for Suggestions for An Easy Birth)

## General Remarks

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### On the Couch

Avoid lying her flat on her back – a heavily pregnant woman's uterus could press on a main artery and compress it against the spine which could cause her to become dizzy or even faint. Have her lying on her left side – less strain on the heart – with her tummy supported by a pillow/cushion and another one under her upper leg placed in the most comfortable position.

A midwife may be concerned when a patient arrives and informs her that she is using hypnosis. They may well think that the woman will be asleep or in a comatose state and unable to co-operate. It could be a good idea to send a letter of explanation to the midwife:

### Suggested Letter to Midwife/Health Professional

Dear Midwife/Health Professional,

My client (patient) ..... has chosen to use Self-Hypnosis for the labour and birth of her baby. She has attended classes and practised these skills in preparation for the birth.

She will be inwardly focused and relaxed but totally able to move and change positions or respond to anything you may ask of her. Her partner will aid you in this too. She will not in any way be unconscious or unresponsive.

She has learned to expect to feel sensation and/or pressure – both being acceptable – but not 'pain'. It would help her with this if you too do not use the word 'pain' which could undermine the work she has done.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to know more or discuss any of these issues.

Yours sincerely etc.....

## Annex 1: Pregnancy Symptoms

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Backache, heartburn, constipation, nausea, tiredness, insomnia, oedema, high blood pressure.

Most of these are perfectly normal and are caused by hormones present at this time. However the last two are signs of a possible problem – pre-eclampsia.

If you have experienced PMT or been on the receiving end of it, you have a window on a pregnant woman's feelings ranging from: Attractive, unattractive, fat, tired, irritable, emotional and weepy, wonderfully well, scared, worried, frustrated by maternal amnesia, jealous and possessive, high libido, low libido, contented, worried etc etc....

**BACKACHE** – caused by a shift in the centre of gravity, poor posture, loosening off of the supporting ligaments under hormone influence. *Suggest – Massage, Alexander Technique, Cranio-Sacral treatment, cold compress (frozen peas). Get on all fours and waggle hips. Reflexology.*

**HEARTBURN** – caused by growing baby pressing up against the stomach, slack sphincter muscle at the top of the stomach due to hormone influence. *Suggest – Small frequent meals. Nothing fatty/greasy or too spicy. Sip ginger tea. Bricks under the head of the bed. Extra pillows. Homeopathic remedies.*

**CONSTIPATION** – caused by the loosening and slackening of the gut and bowel wall muscles. *Suggest – Exercise and drink more fluid. Reflexology.*

**NAUSEA** – caused by hormones and/or an empty stomach. *Suggest – Ginger. Eating before moving in the morning. Homeopathy. Hypnotherapy.*

**TIREDFNESS** – caused by discomfort at night. Maybe nature and subconscious saying 'slow down'. *Suggest – Rest. Careful use of time. Hypnosis.*

**INSOMNIA** – caused by general increase in metabolism, frequency of loo visits, heat, discomfort in general, active baby, dreams. *Suggest – Don't drink after 6pm. Hypnosis. Using extra pillows for support. Use hypno-CD.*

**OEDEMA AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE** – follow orders from professionals. *Use hypno-CD for stress reduction.*

**FEAR** – caused by the unknown, television, horror stories from others. *Suggest - Think about benefits of relaxation – remember how women in India for instance don't have a difficult time in labour because they don't expect to.*

**DREAMS** – Often bizarre and vivid. Often about the baby. Extremely common. Sometimes caused by worries about the baby, or ability to cope. Also hormonal. *Suggest – Hypnosis, hypno-CD.*

## Annex 2: Analgesia – Why? Why not?

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**T.E.N.S.** (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation). Four electrodes placed on the back with a box and a booster button. Background level boost during contractions. Encourages production of endorphins.

For: Is self-adjusted. Is started early.

*Against: Not complete pain relief. Cannot be used in the birthing pool.*

**ENTONOX** (Gas and air – laughing gas). Used with a mask or mouthpiece. 50% nitrous oxide 50% oxygen.

For: Increased oxygen to the baby. Effective relief for 15 seconds.

*Against: Can cause nausea/vomiting. Dizziness. Wears off after 1 minute.*

**DIAMORPHINE AND PETHIDINE** Controlled drugs given by injection.

For: Can speed up labour if not used too early.

*Against: It is heroin. Can suppress baby's respiration. Not complete pain relief.*

*10-20 minutes to take effect. Baby can be affected if given too late. Not to be given 2-4 hours before expected delivery.*

**EPIDURAL** An injection of local anaesthetic into the epidural space of the lower spine.

For: Lowers blood pressure. 100% pain control – when it works properly.

*Against: Can lengthen labour. 15% more likely to need forceps delivery. Unable to walk around. May need a catheter. Increased risk of caesarean section. Causes a severe headache in 8/1000 women, which can take 10 days to ease off.*

**MISC.** A birthing pool has only advantages – soothing, can move around, no pressure on coccyx, in more upright position that uses gravity.

**CAESAREAN SECTION** Now used in about 15% of births in the UK. In the United States it is up to 25%. Obviously when one is needed it is a lifesaver. However many women are now choosing to have one even though it is not as safe as a vaginal birth. The risks are these – heavy bleeding during surgery, thrombosis in the leg veins, post-operative infection, baby's lungs not inflated properly because of a lack of compression during normal birth. There is an associated maternal mortality of 1/3000.

## **Annex 3: Quick Guide to Labour**

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Pregnancy normally lasts for forty weeks, and labour may start between 37 and 42 weeks, sometimes up to 44 weeks. Ultrasound scanning means that many women appear to go over their expected date, even if only by a day or two! Being late means that sometimes normal pre-labour feelings may be misinterpreted. It is quite common to have practice runs of labour with contractions coming regularly but these stop and start and can be considered an assistance in gradual drifting into labour. If over their due date by 2 weeks – i.e. 42 weeks gestation – then steps will usually be taken to induce labour. This often means a more painful labour, lying down attached to a drip and a package deal – be induced and have an epidural. A failed induction leads to a caesarean section!

However, as long as proper monitoring is carried out to make sure that the vital signs are normal then there is no reason why you shouldn't wait for things to follow their natural course.

### **LABOUR**

Labour is work and sometimes is hard work, but it should not be given any other definition. There are quiet periods when you can rest and times when the body is working hard contracting the uterus. In the second stage of labour it seems as if the whole body is brought into help push down and help the baby. If all is going well, this stage does not feel like a voluntary action – unlike how it appears on the television – the compulsion to push is overwhelming. Much of the effort is provided by the subconscious mind in exactly the same way as it provides the extra effort needed in times of extreme necessity or danger. This is why if it is necessary not to push for some reason (you may be asked to “pant”) it requires a great deal of effort – obstructing the subconscious is never easy. Once the baby is born this is usually followed by a huge feeling of relief and satisfaction and gentle tiredness.

### **BRAXTON HICKS CONTRACTIONS**

These contractions are present from about 20 weeks gestation and may not be felt by the mother at all. They can be differentiated from labour contractions by the fact that they suddenly come and suddenly go and can last for several minutes. A true labour contraction will come on gradually, reach a peak and then gradually fade and will not usually last longer than a minute.

### **CONTRACTIONS**

A contraction is a shortening, contracting, of a muscle fibre lasting from 10 to 70 seconds. With each successive contraction there is a progressive shortening of the fibre, i.e. when it relaxes it doesn't quite reach its original length. There are millions of muscle fibres in the uterus and taken en masse the actual uterus progressively shortens and thickens.

The action has the effect of pushing the baby down into the lower, less muscular part of the uterus that should in turn relax and stretch. As it stretches, the neck of the uterus (cervix) thins out (effaces) and dilates thus allowing the baby to pass through.



## Annex 3: Quick Guide to Labour

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Labour can be divided into three stages with a Transitional stage between stages one and two.

### 1<sup>st</sup> STAGE OF LABOUR

From the onset of regular, persistent contractions to full dilation of the cervix. Between 1 and 24 hours can be considered normal. The length is dependent on many factors including:

- Parity (number of pregnancy)
- Size and position of the baby
- Shape/size of the mother's pelvis
- Position/mobility of the mother in labour
- Place of labour
- Levels of medical intervention
- Levels of **RELAXATION** both mental and physical

Emotional feelings will be high – fear, excitement, apprehension etc.

Physical feelings include: cramp, backache, hardening of the uterus, thigh discomfort, shooting pains, lower frontal abdominal pain, malaise, diarrhoea, wind, constipated feelings of pressure and fullness. Dampness, due to increase in natural discharges or rupturing of the membranes.

Contractions may start coming at intervals of 15 to 20 minutes gradually, reducing to every 2 to 3 minutes; or they may start suddenly every 3 minutes apart.

The 'show' is a thick jelly like substance sometimes lightly stained with blood, which can be present days before going into labour with most of it coming away just before delivery.

### When to go into hospital

- When the contractions are coming every 5 minutes apart, also remembering the time to get to the hospital.
- When membranes rupture whether or not there are contractions.
- When the cervix is between 5 and 6 centimetres dilated.

### Professional advice should be sought if –

- Contractions start coming regularly before 36 weeks gestation.
- There is reduced foetal movement.
- There is fresh i.e. vaginal bleeding – this is not normal.
- There are any other worries.

### Management of early labour at home

- Get as much sleep as possible if it is during the night.
- Exercise normally if it is during the day, continue with housework, go for a walk etc.
- Eat small amounts frequently; drink more if your appetite is reduced.  
Take a long soak in a warm bath to relax.

## Annex 3: Quick Guide to Labour

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- Listen to the relaxation CD, practise Self-Hypnosis, rest.
- BEHAVE AS NORMALLY AS IT IS APPROPRIATE TO.

### Management of 1<sup>st</sup> stage in hospital

- Stay mobile for as long as it feels right to do so.
- Listen to the relaxation CD.
- Do Self-Hypnosis to stay relaxed – with help from partner when wanted.

### TRANSITIONAL STAGE

This is the stage between the first and the second stage of labour, when there are feelings of second stage but the cervix is not fully dilated. Many women are unaware of it, or it may last a couple of hours. There may be a strong urge to push.

### Management of the transitional stage

Mobility, knees chest position or deep relaxation, hypnosis visualising full dilation of cervix, breathing exercises, whatever feels right.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> STAGE OF LABOUR

- From full dilation to the birth of the baby
- From 2 minutes to 2 hours. Some hospitals will wait longer if everything else is normal. Ideally for a first pregnancy it is about 30 to 45 minutes, and for paras (2nd time +) it is 10 to 20 minutes.

Feelings:

- Rectal pressure, urge to push, crowning as the top of the head appears and does not retract between contractions. A great feeling of relief as the baby is born.

### Management of 2<sup>nd</sup> stage

- Think of breathing the baby out with each contraction.
- Let your body do the pushing.
- Rest totally between contractions using Self-Hypnosis.
- Adopt the most appropriate position for the feeling – it may be squatting, crouching, resting on hands and knees or lying on your side.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> STAGE OF LABOUR

This is from the birth of the baby to the complete delivery of the placenta (afterbirth). If left to the natural, drug-free method it may take up to 2 hours to complete this stage. Most midwives will discuss using/not using a drug to speed up this process before labour. If the drug is used then 5 to 30 minutes is acceptable, 10 minutes being the average. Wishes regarding this natural or managed 3<sup>rd</sup> stage need to be documented on the birth plan. Syntometrine is the drug used to speed the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage and minimise blood loss.

## Annex 4: Some Reported Benefits of Using Hypnosis for Childbirth

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- Improved sleep prior to birth and afterwards.
- Reduction of heartburn.
- Control of blood pressure.
- Removal of fear and anxiety.
- Less need for induction of labour.
- Fewer drugs or no drugs mean less risk of side effects on mother and baby.
- Shorter labour – tensing and resistance of the birthing muscles as a response to pain is minimised or eliminated. Using self hypnosis for relaxation means there is no pain.
- Increased production of oxytocin – the hormone that controls the strength and duration of the contractions. This hormone is also responsible for the bonding of the mother and child. The subconscious is in charge of the production and if the mother is stressed it can be read as '*Danger*', which would not be a good time to give birth – so there will be a conflict between body and the mind resulting in a reduced production of this hormone. When there is a good supply of oxytocin contractions can ultimately be comfortable.
- An awake, energised mother due to total relaxation throughout the birthing process.
- A calm peaceful birthing atmosphere.
- Breech and posterior babies can be turned using hypnosis.
- Fewer interventions and complications during labour.
- A plentiful milk supply also due to a good supply of oxytocin.
- Babies who sleep and feed better due to fewer drugs in their systems and a relaxed birthing experience.
- Mothers who are less tired and more confident.

## Annex 5: Closing the Gate on Pain

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The Gate Control Theory helps us understand how hypnosis can “close the gate” on pain. Hypnosis can direct attention away from the pain sensations as well as transform your perception of the pain sensations. This can inhibit or slow the transmission of pain messages from the source.

At the most basic level, non-painful stimulation of the peripheral nerves (like massage and rubbing) can stimulate the fastest A-fibres, which in turn can inhibit upward travelling pain impulses transmitted by the slower A-fibres and slowest C-fibres. All of these fibres interact with each other in the back of your spinal cord.

If pain sensations are not blocked or inhibited before they travel up the spinal column, other mechanisms can still influence the final outcome; that is, how pain is perceived, and how much pain is perceived. One such mechanism is the intensity of arousal of the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system. It is activated automatically when you encounter stress or threat.

As we know, this has been called the “fight-flight response”. The sympathetic nervous system causes the release of chemical neuro-transmitters such as adrenaline and other stress hormones such as cortisol that tend to pump up the activity of the nerve fibres and transmit pain messages to the brain.

Things that turn down or turn off the fight-flight response can also modulate or turn down pain, closing the pain gate. One such factor is relaxation. This is because relaxation is associated with the activation of the opposing branch of the autonomic nervous system, the branch that controls rest and restoration of body functions. It is called the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system.

Another pain-inhibitory mechanism involves controlling and diminishing the negative emotional overlay associated with pain: a person’s negative mood states, and negative thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes. Pain associated with anxiety, depression, and anger hurts a lot more and causes a lot more suffering. Keep in the left pre-frontal cortex!