

# Giving birth: Upright positions shorten first-stage labor

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Lying down during the early stages of childbirth may slow progress, according to a new systematic review. Cochrane Researchers found that the first stage of labour was significantly shorter for women who kneel, stand up, walk around, or sit upright as opposed to lying down.

Using data from 21 studies carried out in developed countries since the 1960s, involving 3,706 women, the researchers found that the first stage of labour was around an hour shorter in those who adopted upright positions compared to those who lay down.

"In most [developing countries](#), women stand up or walk around as they wish during the early stages of birth with no ill effects," says Annemarie Lawrence, who works at the Institute of Women's and Children's Health at the Townsville Hospital in Queensland, Australia. "This review demonstrates that there is some benefit and no risk to being upright and or mobile during first stage labour."

"Based on these results, we would recommend that women are encouraged to use whichever positions they find most comfortable, but are specifically advised to avoid lying flat," says Lawrence.

The researchers stress that more information is urgently needed to understand how birthing positions relate to levels of pain, control and satisfaction among birthing [women](#).

Source: Wiley ([news](#) : [web](#))

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