

Warm showers and ball exercises may help women during childbirth

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A new *International Journal of Nursing Practice* study demonstrates that during childbirth, women may benefit from warm showers, perineal exercises with a ball, or the combination of both strategies. The study found positive effects of these strategies in terms of lessening pain, anxiety, and stress.

The study was a [randomized controlled trial](#) conducted with 128 women during childbirth who were admitted for [hospital birth](#) in São Paulo, Brazil from June 2013 to February 2014.

"When we evaluated pain and anxiety using a visual analog scale, and also evaluated the salivary release of stress hormones before and after interventions of warm showers and perineal exercises with a ball, we found greater tolerance regarding pain, reduction of anxiety, a decrease in the release stress hormones, and an increase in well-being hormones," said lead author Dr. Angelita José Henrique, of the Federal University of São Paulo.

"Our results indicate that these interventions should be encouraged because they are [safe practices](#), low-cost, and are directly related to comfort, and they should be used as an adjuvant to medications and anesthesia during childbirth."

More information: Angelita José Henrique et al, Non-pharmacological interventions during childbirth for pain relief, anxiety, and neuroendocrine stress parameters: A randomized controlled trial,

International Journal of Nursing Practice (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/ijn.12642](https://doi.org/10.1111/ijn.12642)

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