

Ice cube contraction analogy experiment

Holding an ice cube does not feel like a contraction. However, the things you can learn about coping with the moment can be helpful when you are in labor. This is modified from Pam England's [Birthing from Within](#).

With your partner or friend, gather a bowl with ice cubes, a towel, and a stopwatch or minute hand.

Sit in a comfortable position with the bowl on a table or in your lap.

Begin timing for one minute once you start to squeeze an ice cube or two in each hand over the bowl.

Just notice what you do. The idea is to find a place of relaxation while experiencing the sting of the ice.

Have your partner or friend notice what you do unless you request not to. He or she can let you know when you've reached 30 seconds, 45 seconds etc.

At the end of the minute, drop the ice and warm your hands on the towel. Your partner will continue timing through 3 waiting minutes. At minute 4:00 pick up the ice again, for another minute.

Notice again, your reactions, movements or dialogue. Write them down or talk about them.

Here is what this can show you:

If you started doing a specific technique, such as closing your eyes and breathing, or putting your focus on something else, or laughter, you are likely to find that helpful in labor.

Privacy and quietness can be a specific coping technique. You may feel you can cope better without someone else "noticing how you cope".

That said, if your partner does notice you tightening your shoulders, or furrowing your brow, he or she can remind you to release by gently touching these areas.

For most of active labor, contractions can come every 2-3 minutes lasting one to one and a half minutes. Remembering the time of **one minute** can help you get through it. Each uterine contraction that helps open your cervix and push your baby out is one less that you have to do total. You **can** do it.

The rest time between contractions is so wonderful. Use the time to find your comforts, drink, eat, pee, walk, squat, laugh, sleep, ask for what you need.

Finding something that works, a ritual, will encourage you. You will remember how it worked the last contraction, and you will know that it will work for the next. You may even notice that for your second round of ice squeezing, you found it to be easier simply because you knew what to expect and knew you could handle it.

You can try this a couple of times if you gain some awareness from it. It is not intended as a way to practice contractions (the sensations are vastly different), but as a way to possibly gain some insight and de-mystify the process.

Now, have your partner or friend try it, and notice how he or she copes in this moment. This can be the most enjoyable part...!

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