

BIRTHING NATURALLY  
**Understanding Your Body**

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This worksheet is designed to help you prepare for the upcoming birth by identifying the way your body handles stress and pain. You should think about all sources of stress or discomfort, physical and emotional. Think of recent situations you have been in and consider how you responded to those situations.

**I know I am feeling tense or stressed because my body...**

**My body reacts to tension by...**

**When I feel stressed, I can remain calm if I...**

**To cope with pain, I prefer...**

Be Alone	or	Be with People
Keep Myself Busy	or	Tune Into Myself
Distract my Thoughts	or	Explore my Thoughts
Be Quiet	or	Talk with Someone
To be Touched	or	To not be Touched
Have Someone Help	or	Work it out Alone

**What has been your experience with using the following stress and pain coping techniques?**

Slow Deep Breathing  
Massage  
Visualization or Meditation  
Vocalization  
Progressive Relaxation  
Using a Focus Point  
Prayer

**COMMON STRESS RESPONSES**

**Head**

Tension Headache  
Tired Eyes  
Grinding Teeth  
Clenching Jaw  
Ringing in Ears

**Neck**

Muscle Tightness  
Decreased Range of Motion

**Shoulders/Arms**

Muscle Tightness  
Trembling Hands  
Gripping Fists  
Biting Nails

**Chest**

Heart rate increasing  
Heart pounding  
Difficulty catching breath

**Stomach**

"Butterflies" in stomach  
Nausea

**Back**

Muscle Tightness  
Sore Back  
Bad Posture

**Skin**

Sweating  
Clammy skin  
Itching/Scratching

**Legs/Feet**

Bouncing Legs  
Trembling Feet  
Sore or Achy Feet  
Muscle Tension

**Mental Processes**

Speech Difficulties  
Inability to Focus  
Negative Thoughts  
Fear