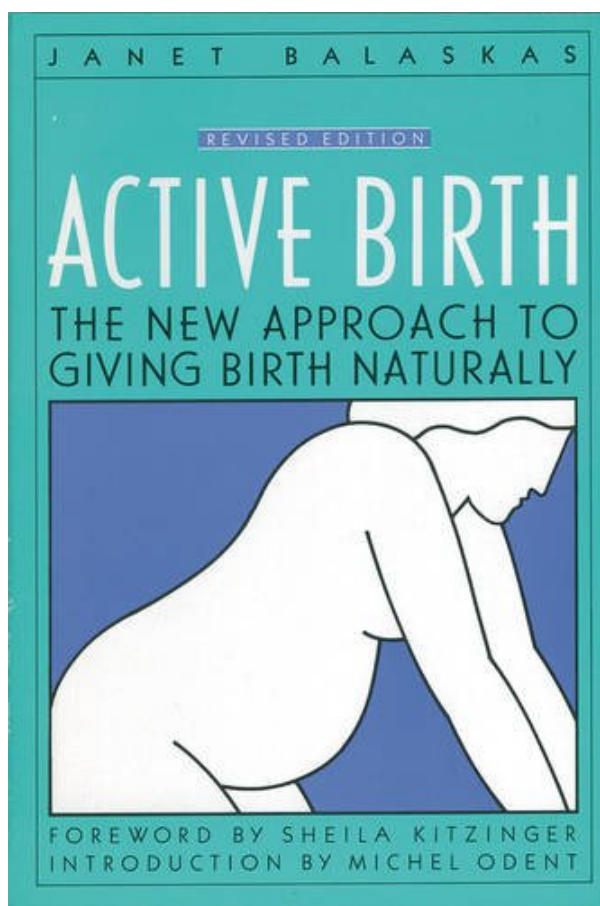


ACTIVE BIRTH: THE NEW APPROACH TO GIVING BIRTH NATURALLY BY JANET BALASKAS



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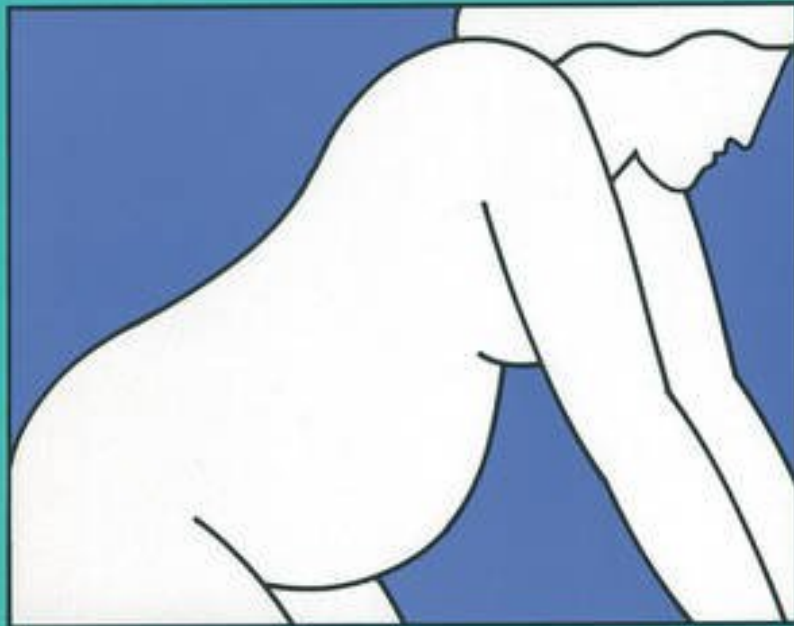


J A N E T B A L A S K A S

REVISED EDITION

ACTIVE BIRTH

THE NEW APPROACH TO
GIVING BIRTH NATURALLY



FOREWORD BY SHEILA KITZINGER
INTRODUCTION BY MICHEL ODENT

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Review

Active Birth contains a wealth of information for pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period. -- Midwest Book Review

Janet Balaskas revised edition of Active Birth is an inspiring book. She is writing to the lay public, to women anticipating a birth. However, this well written, informative and energetic book should be read by health professionals as well. -- Family Medicine

From the Back Cover

In an active birth, a mother moves about freely, finds comfortable positions for labor and delivery, and seldom needs drugs or obstetrical interventions. In Active Birth, Janet Balaskas teaches mothers to develop all of their bodily resources for giving birth, to follow their own instincts, and to take full control of their childbirth experience. Active Birth includes: Fully-illustrated exercise for a comfortable, energetic pregnancy, Massage for pregnancy and labor, Ways to create the ideal setting for an active birth in the hospital or at home, Positions for labor and birth, for maximum comfort and efficient contractions, The latest information about water birth, and how to plan one, Exercises for recovery and relaxation after birth, Helpful tips for partners and birth attendants.

Active Birth will inspire and instruct those who want to give birth through their own efforts by following their own instincts. -Penny Simkin, author of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn

An empowering approach to labor and birth. -Barbara Katz Rothman, author of In Labor and Recreating Motherhood

Clearly written, carefully documented, and copiously illustrated, this new edition celebrates the inherent wisdom on womens birthing instincts. It also serves up a complete course of preparation to guide those of us who need to be reminded just how natural childbirth can be. -Adrienne Lieberman, author of Giving Birth and Easing Labor Pain

A revolutionary book, helping women to get off their backs and find their feet in birthing. -Rahima Baldwin, founder of Informed Homebirth and author of Special Delivery

This book strips away the false complexity of modern obstetrics. Read this book. Claim its wisdom. -Roberta Scaer, co-author of A Good Birth, A Safe Birth

Janet Balaskas captures the psychological essence of giving birth and the spirit of active participation so important to a woman's self-esteem during pregnancy and delivery. -Gayle Peterson, Ph.D., author of Birthing Normally and An Easier Childbirth

About the Author

Janet Balaskas organized the first Active Birth Conference in London. A mother of four, she has written many books on pregnancy and childbirth. She runs a childbirth education clinic. For more information, please visit Balaskas' website, ActiveBirthCentre.com.

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Janet Balaskas led a movement of women who refused to give birth lying down. She has been teaching women about "active birth" ever since. In this updated and Americanized guide, Balaskas explains how to prepare for and experience a truly natural birth. She leads the pregnant woman through yoga-based stretching exercises and massage practice, and describes the stages of labor and comfortable positions for each, at home or in a hospital. Balaskas has also included a chapter on water birth as well as postpartum exercises.

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Most helpful customer reviews

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent, reasonable, science-based case/advice for natural birth

By K. Noble

I love this book. I am a physical scientist by training as well as a feminist and a HEAS (Health at Every Size) advocate (I am average weight and athletic myself) and so I can't stand much of the natural birth rhetoric about spirituality etc. but am attracted to natural birth for the physical benefits. I just want to have a birth that's best for myself and for the baby (my first). I did quite a lot of research on gestational physiology and birth mechanics online before coming across this book on Amazon. Who cares if the photos are from the 1970's, you guys - that was the height of the women's movement in this country (US) and we of later generations should be grateful for the pioneering work those women did on our behalf. The information in this book is solid, concise, comprehensive, and well-organized. There is a lot of advice on prenatal stretching/yoga to prepare your body physically for the birth, as well as advice on securing a calm, dark, stress-reducing atmosphere in the delivery room, whether that's at home, in a birth center, or at a hospital. My favorite information is on birth mechanics - the diagrams are excellent and easy to understand, and the author makes an excellent case for active birth. I did not detect any real shaming language when pain medication was discussed, which was a breath of fresh air, just rational weighing of benefit vs. risk. There was a strong emphasis on discussing what to expect in terms of physical/emotional symptoms during labor/delivery, and what's normal vs. something to be concerned about, which was very helpful to me. I do wish that there were more footnoted medical references, but if you want to search PubMed for the studies you can do so. I also bought Natural Hospital Birth and didn't get anything out of that book that I didn't already get from Active Birth. I would recommend Active Birth to the evidence-based medicine minded expectant mother who wants to prepare herself physically, emotionally, and intellectually for birth. I re-read this book once every two to three weeks to cement the information in my mind as I realize that during labor one's memory for these types of details may be compromised.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

BEST book for labor preparation !!

By Saavni

I was very much interested in having a drug-free delivery and have read/browsed a lot of books/birthing methods including Hypnobirthing, Bradley's, Ina May and a bunch of others. I liked the concept of

Hypnobirthing but don't believe it's for everybody. But I firmly believe that active birthing is something that EVERY woman who wants a natural birth can follow. It is extremely intuitive and after having a pretty quick labor I can attest to the fact that being active was what helped me the most to get through the labor with pain that I could manage and cope with. I had intense back labor and there was NO WAY I would have managed it by lying down on my back the entire time. I instinctively felt the need to get up on my feet and lean forwards on a support and I could get through my contractions without feeling the need to scream or yell or exhaust my energy in a negative way. It was easier to let the contractions do what they were trying to thereby reducing my labor period. I think that what the book tells you will come to you naturally when you are in labor and instead of fighting with your urges by lying down in the semi-reclining position, it's best to do what your body wants you to do to reduce the discomfort. Labor is intense and at a point the pain can feel excruciating but if you can let go and be active the whole time it does not become a negative experience. I was being made to lie down and offered an epidural when I was 8cm. And just because I knew that this was transition and although it was hard work I knew that I was close to meeting my baby and I was able to fight with the hospital staff and stay on my feet. I had a small tear but I am pretty sure that was all because of the pulling by the doctor while pushing when I could not fight them off. Had I been left alone to push naturally and in an upright position I am sure I could have gotten off completely unharmed. I was in a very good shape after the birth and could have gotten up and cooked a meal if need be (although I rested for quite a bit!!).

Labor is LOTS of hard work and very intense, it's not something I would call painless. I do understand that there are circumstances where a laboring woman will need medical help and I would never say she shouldn't take it. Drugs have their own place in the whole scheme of things and should be used where necessary. I have been on that side of the equation too and would never blame someone for making an informed choice. But if someone tells you that c-section is "safe and easy these days" or episiotomy is "routine and ok" or epidural is so much more fun...don't believe them blindly. A drug-free birth is painful but the pain is manageable if you have the right information and you trust your body.

And to return to a more relevant topic (as a review on this book), this book will provide you with a ton of information on how to do it. The exercises are very helpful to prep your body for the hard work and even useful otherwise to get back in shape after the birth. Information about the different upright positions, what helps what kind of labor pain etc is also extremely useful. This book made the most sense to me of all the books on labor and was something that was practically useful. I would recommend this book to everyone who is interested in a drug-free birth.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Thumbs Up!!!

By TriniGal80

This book was very helpful for me as I wanted a natural birth. My doula recommended it to me, and I did many of the positions (mostly yoga) and breathing techniques during my pregnancy. My doula also had me do these techniques to stay active during my labor. I especially loved how the author explained how to listen to your body and just let your body do what it's supposed to do while in labor, and when delivering. She also explains how you will feel and things you will say especially in the last phase of laboring pain free like, "I can't do this anymore." And that is EXACTLY what I said while laboring. So, if you are looking to have a natural birth, I highly recommend this book.

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