



# *4 Birth Prep Tools Every Woman Should be Using*

ACHIEVE A POSITIVE BIRTH EXPERIENCE

[www.strongbodystrongmama.com](http://www.strongbodystrongmama.com)

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# About Julie

MEET YOUR COACH

*Hi, Lovely Mama!*

I'm Julie Leonard, mom to 3 small blessings, founder of Strong Body Strong Mama, and an expert in Pre & Postnatal Health & Fitness. I prepare women mentally and physically for birth and postpartum so they can achieve positive birth experiences and easier postpartum recoveries.



## *What I am all about*

I believe there is a lack of support in our current birth culture. Women need more guidance and support in pregnancy and postpartum health and fitness. I want YOU to feel empowered, supported, and respected through your pregnancy. You matter. Your birth experience matters. You deserve a positive birth experience and I am here to guide you along the way.

# Why You Should Prep Your Mind and Body for Birth

## Preparation is key

There is no denying that birth is a life changing event. You will meet your baby for the first time! Your birth experience can impact you for the rest of your life, especially if it doesn't go as you'd planned. Birth is unpredictable, and is often mentally and physically challenging. You can prepare your mind and body to increase the chances of a positive birth experience.

Birth preparation can take on different forms. Educating yourself, surrounding yourself with a supportive team, and preparing your mind and body are just a few examples that can improve your experience.

My goal is for you to have the tools and knowledge to tackle birth with a strong body and mind. Adding birth preparation tools into your routine will help decrease the risk of medical interventions or injury.

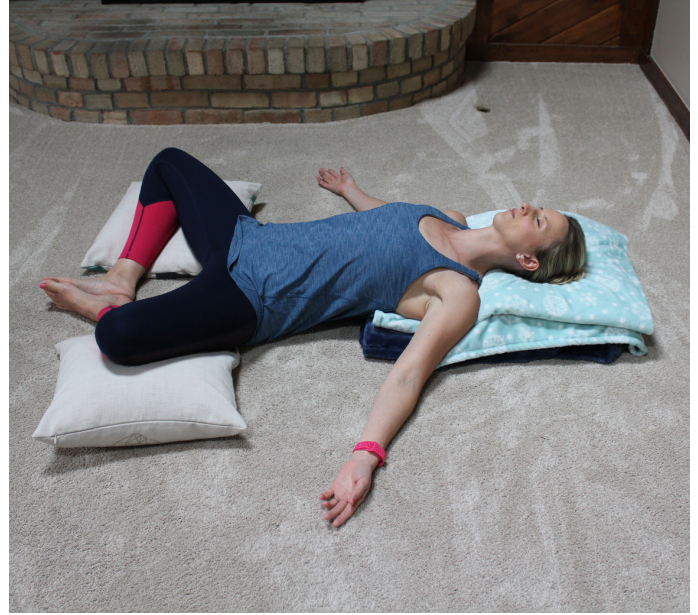




## *Diaphragmatic Breathing with Blooming Flower*



## *Pelvic Floor Release with Visualization*



# *4 Birth Prep Tools Every Women Should be Using*

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## *Chair Hip Release*



## *Deep Squat*





# Diaphragmatic Breathing With Blooming Flower

## TAP INTO YOUR PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

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In a kneeling or sitting position, place your hands on your ribs.

Keep your ribs down (do not flare your chest up) and keep a neutral spine.

Take a long breath in (4-5 seconds) and send the air outward through your ribs and down toward your pelvic floor.

Your chest and pelvic floor should be relaxed as you take your inhalation and your belly should fill up naturally with air.

Take a longer breath out (8-10 seconds), visualizing your pelvic floor as a beautiful blooming flower. Your pelvic floor should stay relaxed.

Relax your jaw, shoulders, and neck as you breathe out and say "Ahhhh".

Repeat 10 times or until you can feel your ribcage expanding on your inhale and your pelvic floor staying relaxed on your exhale.

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### *Why It Matters*

You will most likely experience some intense sensations in labor. Your breath is a great tool to help calm your nervous system down and bring you into a state of relaxation and peace. You can use this type of breathing during a contraction. Remember that your facial muscles are connected to your pelvic floor. Learning to let go and release your facial muscles will also help release your pelvic floor. Adding a blooming flower visualization is an extra tool to keep your pelvic floor open and relaxed for baby's descent into the birth canal.





# *Pelvic Floor Release with Visualization*

## LEARN TO LET GO

- Using blankets or pillows, prop yourself up into a comfortable and supported supine position.
- Place a pillow under each knee for support and to allow total release and relaxation of the body.
- Take a long breath in (4-5 seconds) and send the air down toward your pelvic floor filling up your belly naturally with air.
- As you start exhaling, visualize a downward arrow going from your chest down to your pelvic floor and out of your vagina.
- Send the air down following the arrow, keeping your pelvic floor relaxed.
- The key here is a completely relax pelvic floor.
- Repeat 10 times.

## *Why It Matters*

A lot of women carry tension in their pelvic floors. During labor, the pelvic floor muscles have to lengthen and relax to allow baby to descend into the birth canal. Practicing pelvic floor release will help your body be aware of the sensation of letting go in your pelvic area. Spending time releasing tension in the pelvic floor may help prevent or minimize perineum tearing. Practicing the down arrow breathing will become very handy in the pushing phase and help relax your pelvic floor muscles.



# Deep Squat

## STRENGTHEN AND LENGTHEN

To start with this exercise, use a partner for support or hold on to your baby's crib. As you get better, you can try to do it without support.

Place feet slightly wider than hip width apart.

Holding on to your support person, dip down into a deep squat position.

It is ok to not get all the way down to the floor. Stop wherever you feel comfortable. You can also place a rolled towel under your heels if they are off the ground.

Focus on completely relaxing your pelvic floor as you take some diaphragmatic breaths while in the squat position.

Hold this position for 15 to 60 seconds depending on your comfort level.

Repeat this exercise 3-5 times.

## Why It Matters

Deep squats are an excellent way to strengthen your legs. They also help to relax and lengthen your pelvic floor and stretch your perineum. All these actions are so important in childbirth. Practicing deep squats regularly in pregnancy can reduce the incidence of tearing and can speed up the pushing phase of labor. What's not to love?

A woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a blue tank top and black leggings with red accents, is performing a chair hip release stretch. She is leaning forward over a white wooden chair, with her hands resting on the seat. Her arms are extended forward, and her legs are straight. The background shows a brick fireplace and a wooden railing.

# Chair Hip Release

## RELEASE TENSION IN YOUR HIPS

Bend forward and rest your hands on the seat of a chair. Keep your arms and legs straight.

Untuck your bum by relaxing your spine toward the floor.

Keeping a neutral spine and your arms/legs straight, bring your hips back passed your heels.

Shift your pelvis toward the right side and hold for a second or two.

Now shift your pelvis to the left side and hold for a second or two. Keep your hips back passed your heels.

Continue to do this back and forth gliding motion between the left and right side. You should feel a nice stretch in your hamstrings, adductors and your hip flexors.

Continue this exercise for 3-5 minutes.

## Why It Matters

With a growing belly in pregnancy, our hips can get really tight. As a result, low back pain or groin pain can occur. Stretching out the hips will not only help relieve tension in the lower back but it will also help create more space for an optimal baby positioning for labor. Your hips muscles are connected to your pelvic floor. Hence this exercise will also help you release tension in your pelvic floor.





# *A Little Extra for You*

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*What are my goals for this birth experience?*

*What are my fears about my upcoming birth? Talk about it with your partner.*

*Make a list of "what-if" scenarios and talk about how you would respond.*


# *Want to Learn More?*

I AM HERE FOR YOU, MAMA!



My passion is to guide women in pregnancy and postpartum so they can achieve better experiences. Now that you know a few birth preparation tools, it is important that you practice them regularly. Set aside 5-10 minutes a day to work on getting your body and mind ready for a positive birth.

Follow me on social media and check out my website for my latest offerings. I would love to connect with you and help you on your journey to motherhood!

 @strongbodystrongmama

 @JulieStrongMama

*Love and positivity,  
Julie xo*

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