

NERVOUS SYSTEM BIRTH TOOLKIT

Somatic tools for a safe birth

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Welcome, mama.

This guide is a gift to yourself and your baby, a collection of somatic tools designed to help you prepare your nervous system for a safe, empowered, and deeply embodied birth. It's designed to help you feel **safe**, **present**, and **connected** to your innate birthing wisdom.

Why nervous system preparation matters:

Your nervous system is the control center for your body's response to labor. When your nervous system feels safe and regulated, labor can progress more smoothly, allowing you to access your body's natural ability to birth. This toolkit provides simple, effective techniques to cultivate that sense of safety and regulation.

Part 1: Understanding the Nervous System in Birth

What Happens to Your Nervous System in Labor?

During labor, your nervous system undergoes a profound shift. As contractions intensify, your body naturally moves from the thinking brain (neocortex) to the primal brain (brainstem and limbic system). This transition is essential for birth to unfold effectively. The primal brain is responsible for instinctual behaviors, pain management, and the release of hormones like oxytocin, which drives labor.

Transitioning from Thinking to Primal Brain

Think of it like this: you're shifting from *planning* to *being*. The more you can surrender to the primal part of yourself, the easier it will be for your body to do what it knows how to do. These somatic tools will support you in making this transition.

How Safety Affects Birth

Safety is **paramount**. When you feel safe, your nervous system relaxes, allowing labor to progress naturally. When you feel threatened or stressed, your body can tense up, potentially slowing or stalling labor. Creating a safe and supportive birthing environment is crucial.

Trauma Responses

Past traumas can significantly impact your nervous system's response to birth. If you've experienced trauma, your body may perceive labor as a threat, triggering fight, flight, or freeze responses. These tools offer ways to help your body feel safe and grounded, even in the face of challenging emotions or sensations.

Why Somatic Integration?

Somatic integration involves connecting with your body's wisdom through movement, breath, and sensation. By practicing somatic tools, you can integrate past experiences and create a sense of wholeness and resilience. This process empowers you to approach birth with greater confidence and ease.

Part 2: Somatic Safety Practices

These practices are designed to gently regulate your nervous system, promoting a sense of safety and presence.

Important: *Always listen to your body. If a practice feels uncomfortable or overwhelming, stop and try something else.*

Voo Sound for Vagus Nerve Stimulation

The vagus nerve is a major player in the parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest). Stimulating it helps calm your nervous system.

How-to:

1. Find a comfortable position, sitting or lying down.
2. Take a deep, slow breath in.
3. As you exhale, make a gentle "voo" sound, like a soft hum. Feel the vibration in your chest and throat.
4. Repeat for 5-10 breaths. You can visualise a gentle green light emanating from your chest as you practice, bringing ease and comfort.

Primal Movement

Gentle, intuitive movements that release tension and connect you to your body's innate wisdom.

How-to:

1. Put on some calming music (optional).
2. Close your eyes and gently sway, rock, or move your body in whatever way feels good. There is no wrong way.
3. Imagine you are a tree gently moving in the wind, and just let the movements flow from you.
4. Focus on releasing tension and connecting to your breath. Let your body lead the way. Start small, and slowly allow the movements to become bigger if that feels good.

Anchor Breath

A simple breathing technique to ground you in the present moment.

How-to:

1. Sit or lie down comfortably.
2. Inhale deeply through your nose, filling your belly with air.
3. Exhale slowly through your mouth, releasing any tension.
4. As you exhale, visualize an anchor dropping down from your body, connecting you firmly to the earth.
5. Repeat for 5-10 breaths. Focus on the feeling of being grounded and stable.

Touch & Compression

Using gentle touch and pressure to soothe your nervous system.

How-to:

1. Gently place your hands on your belly or your thighs.
2. Apply gentle, even pressure.
3. Breathe deeply and focus on the sensation of touch. Alternatively, you can use a birth ball for compression (sitting, leaning over it)..
4. You can also ask your partner for gentle massage or firm, supportive touch. Communicate your needs clearly. Ask them to imagine their hands are roots, giving you stability and grounding.

Nervous System Journaling Prompts

Reflecting on your experiences and emotions can help you process and integrate them.

Prompts:

- What sensations am I noticing in my body right now?
- What am I feeling emotionally?
- What do I need to feel safe and supported?
- What am I grateful for today?
- How can I nurture myself today?

Part 3: Daily Nervous System Birth Prep Routine (10–20 mins)

Incorporate these practices into your daily routine to prepare your nervous system for birth. Aim for 10-20 minutes each day.

Sample Routine:

1. **Voo Sound (3 minutes):** Start by connecting to your breath and calming your nervous system.

2. **Primal Movement (5 minutes):** Allow your body to move intuitively, releasing tension and connecting to your inner wisdom.
3. **Anchor Breath (3 minutes):** Ground yourself in the present moment and cultivate a sense of stability.
4. **Touch & Compression (2 minutes):** Soothe your nervous system with gentle touch.
5. **Journaling (2-7 minutes):** Reflect on your experiences and emotions using the prompts provided.

Remember to be kind to yourself and adjust the routine as needed. The most important thing is to create a practice that feels supportive and nurturing.

This toolkit is a resource for empowering you with the tools to take control of your experience during birth. By consistently using these practices, you will train your nervous system to stay calm during labour. Remember to always listen to your body, and be gentle with yourself as you prepare for this incredible journey. You've got this, mama!