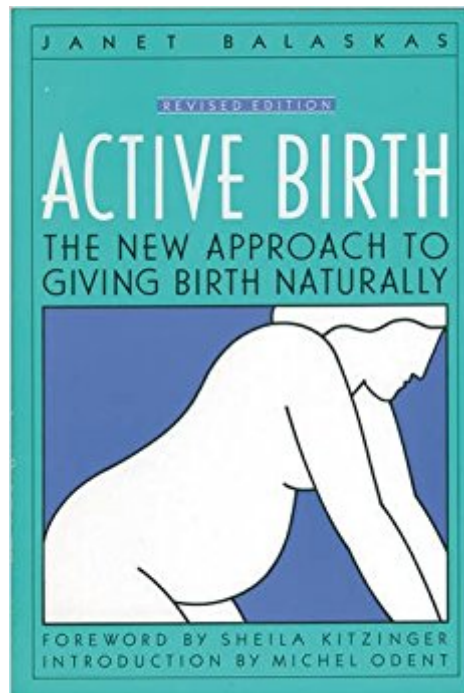




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# Active Birth: The New Approach To Giving Birth Naturally



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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

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 if 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 womans self-esteem during pregnancy and delivery. -Gayle Peterson, Ph.D., author of *Birthing Normally* and *An Easier Childbirth*

In preparing for a second natural childbirth, I wanted to find a resource that acknowledged the difficulty of choosing mobility and letting birth progress naturally over medicinal/standard hospital options, rather than painting a rosy, idealistic picture of letting nature take its course, so to speak. The birth preparation stretches and exercises are extremely helpful and practical and the illustrations and photos, although a little outdated, are also spot on. There is much less judgement in this book than in others I have read and it's extremely supportive of mamas all across the board, no matter how the birth ends up going. I highly recommend this book for all moms considering a natural/active birth and most definitely for all doulas, midwives, nurses, OBs and birth attendants. Partners can greatly benefit too!!!

I've read three other related books prior to this one and this is my favorite so far [I have 3 others to go]; I was 3/4 of the way through the book on my first day reading and finished the next day. It's written in an easy to understand yet educational manner; I do not get the feeling that the author is pushing her agenda, she just lays out the information in a matter of fact way. The book is filled with useful information on the birth process, what you will potentially experience, what the baby will potentially experience and a myriad of ways to ease the discomfort and help to speed the process. This is exactly what I was looking for - a book that just explained things that might happen and not a 300 page advertisement for a particular method. I feel much more prepared for this grand

adventure. Great book!

This book has been so helpful for me as a first time mom who is approaching birth with a different attitude than most people that I know. Active birth as described in this book is so foreign in my circle of friends and I knew I wanted to do things differently and have a different birth experience than other moms around me. It is very informative and helpful. There is a large section of the book that is focused on certain exercises and yoga positions, which I also appreciated along with the actual information.

This book was very informative. I think I literally learned more reading this book than I did in labor preparation (Lamaze plus) course that I took through the hospital for my first child. I can't believe I didn't know more of these positions, techniques, skills, etc the first time around. And I'm betting if I had, I would have had a much more positive experience. Not to mention the breathing and stretches are already helping alleviate pregnancy aches and pain. They are so simple, anyone could do them. I would recommend this book to anyone wanting to prepare for a natural childbirth. I don't think it stands alone though, and therefore; I would still recommend reading this in combination with the Natural Childbirth the Bradley way, and the Ina May book. This is definitely worth a read. Of all the labor books I've read this one is the fastest too, its a quick/easy read. They should update a few of the things though.... ie: cassette tapes? In a few years, people will ask, what are those. The core info is still relevant though.

Bought this book for pregnancy #3, determined to learn how to give birth upright and without tearing. (Baby #1 was born in a hospital with a miserable cascade of interventions and a loooong recovery. Baby #2 was born with midwives at a birth center - an indescribably better atmosphere - but still reclining in a bed and with a 2nd-degree perineal tear.) I opened this book expecting just another methodology. But, I was surprised to feel so confident and empowered reading Ms. Balaskas's words. She does a fantastic job of presenting scientific research AND addressing the very personal physical, spiritual, and emotional components of pregnancy and birth. (I loved the "How You Feel" subcategory under each stage of labor in Chapter 6, particularly because it helped me put vocabulary on things I'd never successfully communicated to my husband.) Ms. Balaskas clearly has a deep and holistic understanding of birth, and a gift for helping each woman find her natural connection to herself and her baby through the process. The book is very easy to read. The prenatal exercises and birth positions are explained and illustrated with clarity and simplicity. There are many

suggestions to help each woman figure out what type of birth environment she wants, who she wants present, and what she will want to have on hand at the birth. Everything from massage to supporting positions are laid out plainly for birth partners. For the first time in my life, anticipation is outweighing fear surrounding the actual process of delivering a baby. (I'll write an update next month after the baby arrives.) I also highly recommend "Your Best Birth" (Lake and Epstein) as well as anything by Ina May Gaskin for women who want to go into birth with awareness and preparation. \*\*\*\*\*UPDATE\*\*\*\*\* DD3 was born in the fastest, easiest birth I could have imagined! After months of effective visualization and occasional practice of the suggested exercises, it turned out like this: 1.5 hours total labor - upright or pitched forward (mostly in the 50-minute car ride to the midwifery - we just made it!) 4 pushes total - delivered on hands and knees Able to walk immediately and was home in 3 hours. WOW! I'd do it all over again. :) It was intense, but I honestly wouldn't describe the experience as painful. This is my 3rd baby in 4 years and my body is familiar with the process. (This would be an uncommon scenario for a first-time mom.) But, I can now attest to the fact that birthing upright and listening to your body makes for a much faster, easier, more satisfying and joyful labor and delivery than I ever thought possible!

I'm planning to give a natural birth and got very stressed about the whole thing. This book helped me get calm and prepare for delivery that is still in front of me but I feel much better about it. It has a lot of important and very useful information not only about actual birth but also what's happening before and afterwards. It describes everything in details so women reading that will know what happens to them exactly. I also like pictures and drawings inside.

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