



# Gentle Caesarean Practitioner Handbook



Mindful Hypnobirthing

# 1 Introduction to principles of a gentle caesarean using hypnosis and mindfulness

Go through structure of the sessions.

Why hypnosis and mindfulness of benefit prenatally.

Set goal in terms of how client wants to experience the birth.

What are the three most important things?

Introduction to a gentle caesarean. (women centered, choices)

What are my options? (refer to sheet).

Begin with 321 relax, relax, relax and four awarenesses (script 3).

# 2 Techniques Recap on last session - any questions arising

Exploring any fears. Letting go (using script... insert your own suggestions if appropriate based on their goals).

Refresh 3, 2, 1 relax relax relax.

Add 4 awarenesses (script 3).

Smell and touch anchor.

Numbing switch (script 1).

Body scan (script 2).

# 3 Pulling it all together

Go through practice guidance sheet.

Tools they can use the night before.

Tools they can use for the birth.

Tools they can use the days after.

Personalised Timetable, when to practice.

# Basic Techniques

## Breathing

Make yourself comfortable, close your eyes and as you do notice how your jaw and hands soften. Breathe deeply, taking deep breaths in and allowing deep breaths out. Place your hands on your belly as you take deep belly breaths, down into your heart centre, be aware of the rhythm of your breath soothing you. Breathing in and breathing out. Connecting with the space around you and within you, but feeling grounded and centred, relaxed and comfortable. Breathing in and breathing out. Focus on your breathing, breathing in a relaxed and comfortable way.

Let the rhythm of your breath soothe you. Be aware of your body softening. Perfect. Stay with this for a moment just allowing yourself to find your rhythm in the song of your breath.

Now open your eyes and come back into the room.

## 3, 2, 1, relax, relax, relax

Make yourself comfortable, close your eyes and as you do notice how your jaw and hands are softening. Breathing in deeply, taking deep breaths in and allowing deep breaths out. Focus on your breathing, breathing in a relaxed and comfortable way. Let the rhythm of your breath soothe you. Be aware of your body softening. Now, breathe in 321, breathe out, relax relax relax, as you do all your muscles loosening and softening. Each time you breathe in... 321 and breathe out... relax relax relax your body will soften and relax quickly and easily, choosing to be in a mindful state of deep relaxation, during birth will relax your muscles allowing them to move comfortably and harmoniously. Going deeper still now, into your breathing, breathing in 321, breathing out relax relax relax, deeper into relaxation, that's perfect, your whole body letting go. (leave quiet for a few breaths) Now bringing yourself gently up out of a state of hypnosis, still very relaxed and comfortable 123 awake awake awake. Back to a normal state of wakeful awareness.

## Deepener

Close your eyes and focus on your breathing....nice deep breaths in and deep breaths out. Perfect. As your shoulders soften and you find your way in your rhythm you become more and more relaxed. Breathing in 321 and breathing out relax, relax, relax. Your muscles softening, from the top of your head, down through your body, so soft and so relaxed now as you allow yourself to sink into where you are seated or are lying. Aware of your relaxed heaviness or lightness. Now, deepening that relaxation as I count down from **10-1**. **10** becoming more and more relaxed, **9** the more relaxed you are the easier it is to let go, **8** as you let go you sink down deeper into comfort, so soft so relaxed, **7** deeper and deeper into relaxation, **6** comforting feelings moving down through your body, **5** doubling that relaxation, **4** drifting down even deeper, **3** enjoying that sense of letting go safe in the knowledge that you are always in control of just how deeply you go, **2** very relaxed now, and **1**, one will find it very easy to drift off into this comfortable state of comfort whenever one chooses. Your body softening, expanding, comfortable, powerful, confident and relaxed. (now coming back into the room awake and alert.

# Practice Guidance Sheet

## THINGS TO PRACTICE ON A DAILY BASIS

- 321
- Deepener
- Four awarenesses

## THE NIGHT BEFORE

- Use your deep caesarean preparation track
- Letting go track
- Do some self-care, i.e. take a nice bath...

## ON THE DAY

- Before you go in for the birth, do a simple baby and body scan
- Have a welcome conversation with baby
- Use your tools to relax yourself if you are anxious
- Use your 321 or deepener to relax yourself when you are having a spinal
- Continue to use the tracks in the room to calm yourself
- Box/rectangle breathing
- As baby is being born you can use the four awarenesses to connect with your body and your experience in a positive way.

## THE DAYS AFTER

- Skin-to-skin
- Use the numbing switch to turn sensations down
- Use healing imagery track
- Breathe, baby connect technique\* or invisible umbilical technique\* (if baby is separate from parent)



\*from the Mindful Mamma First Year book

# Script 1

## Numbing Switch

Count down 321, relax, relax, relax, focus on your breathing, allowing yourself to breathe in and breathe out, slowing your breathing down. And in your mind imagine that there is a switch which you are in control of. This switch is an extraordinary switch as it will release a numbing fluid into your body. Wherever discomfort is you can flick the switch and the perfect amount of numbing fluid enters your body going directly to the area where you need it to be. When discomfort rises you can flick the switch and enjoy becoming more and more numb in the area that you direct that numbing fluid to.

And right now you may be aware of the feeling of every muscle in that part of your body just loosening up, and just letting go, and lying flat and soft like a rubber band, very deeply relaxed. And although you're aware of my voice, you can be even more aware of the wave of comfort embracing your awareness, as you continue enjoying the restfulness of not having to do anything in particular right now as you listen to my voice.

Although you continue to experience the sensations in your abdomen, your experience will seem surprisingly more pleasant, surprisingly more comfortable, surprisingly more restful than you might expect.

When you are aware of unwanted sensations, you can be mindful of its intensity, mindful of its quality, reminded there is no other meaning, but to be reminded of how comfortably relaxed you can feel. Almost as if, when you feel that unwanted sensation, you can feel an increase in relaxation quickly spreading into your abdomen and all through your experience.

Isn't it interesting to notice, as I'm sure you have before, that as you listen to me now, you might have forgotten all about your abdomen ... and yet now you can feel it ...yet previously and in the future you have forgotten to turn your attention to it. Your whole body can be separate from your immediate experience of discomfort.. Almost as if, you are just far away, and you are just, all mind, floating freely ... almost as if you could just lift right out of your body, and just float like a cloud in a beautiful blue sky.

If discomfort increases you can just flick the switch and you may enjoy it becoming more and more numb in the part of your body that you choose.

# Script 2

# Body Scan

Begin by bringing your attention into your body and your baby.

You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you.

You can notice your body seated wherever you're seated, feeling the weight of your body on the chair, on the floor. Or if you are lying down the sense of your body on the bed.

Take a few deep breaths.

And as you take a deep breath, bring in more oxygen enlivening the body. And as you exhale, have a sense of relaxing more deeply.

You can notice your feet on the floor, or the end of the bed, notice the sensations of your feet touching the floor or the bed. The weight and pressure, vibration, heat.

You can notice your legs against the chair, pressure, pulsing, heaviness, lightness.

Notice your back against the chair.

Bring your attention into your stomach area. If your stomach is tense or tight, let it soften. Take a breath. Bring your attention to your baby, notice your baby. Notice their position, notice movement. Notice the weight, heaviness of baby. Breathe in, pause, notice and connect.

Notice your hands. Be aware of sensation in your hands. Allow them to soften.

Notice your arms. Feel any sensation in your arms. Let your shoulders be soft.

Notice your neck and throat. Let them be soft. Relax.

Soften your jaw. Let your face and facial muscles be soft.

Then notice your whole body and your baby present. Take one more breath. Whole body, baby present.

Be aware of your whole body and you baby as best you can. Take a breath. And then when you're ready, you can open your eyes.

# Script 3

## The four Awarenesses

(can replace the 321 relax relax relax if your mind keeps drifting)

*This technique is a mindfulness technique. It keeps you focusing on the here and now, and grounds you in the present. This is a wonderful technique for getting off to sleep, but also good practice for switching off your "chattering monkey" in general, which naturally happens when a woman is in labour. Research shows that using mindfulness techniques on a regular basis is very good for your mental health, so we think it'll be good for your baby too!*

Get yourself comfortable. Take a deep breath and slowly let it out. Breathe comfortably and breathe easily. Pick a spot for your eyes to focus on, above your head (but not too far up as to be uncomfortable). Keep your eyes focused on that spot. (At some point, your eyes may want to close during this relaxation, and that is just fine. Just allow them to close when you feel that it is too much effort to keep your eyes open or to keep your mind focused. You can allow your eyes to close at any point, as you drift off into self hypnosis).

In the stillness of your eyes and calmness of your body, focus your attention, and notice things going on around you.

Notice four things that you can see in you direct or peripheral vision. For example "I can see the curtains, I can see a light reflecting on the wall, I can see marks on the ceiling, I can see a picture frame".

Then notice four things that you can hear. For example, "I can hear a car outside. I can hear my tummy rumbling. I can hear the clock ticking. I can hear silence". Then notice four things that you can feel. For example, "I can feel my shoulders aching. I can feel the warmth under my feet. I can feel my baby moving. I can feel my body calming."

Then, do this again, beginning with what you can see, but drop down to only three things that you can see, hear and feel (they can be the same as the last ones, or different). Then again, but drop down to two things, and then one thing, and then, if you haven't already drifted off into self-hypnosis, just allow yourself to do so.

You may find that your mind wanders – and that is just fine. Just let it drift off. If you want to, you can choose to bring it back to the four awarenesses, going back to where you left off. There are no rules or shoulds. Take a moment out to reflect on you and your baby as you feel right now, releasing relaxation hormones and endorphins as you do so.

Enjoy!

# Script 4

## Breathe-Baby-Connect

(can help to connect with your baby if they are apart from you)

*This is a colour visualisation that will help you to use your breath to connect with your baby. Colours are used a lot in hypnosis as they can carry the resonance of feelings.*

Start with 3,2,1, breathing or deepener (or combination).

- Now imagine that as you are breathing in, you breathe in a colour that is calming to you.
- As you breathe out, imagine breathing out that calming colour.
- Then imagine your baby breathing it in.
- As your baby breathes it out, you breathe in.
- Imagine that calming colour as a thread becoming a circular breath between you and your baby.

If the parent is really getting on with this technique, they may wish to wear a bracelet in their chosen colour. This may help remind them of their breathe-baby-connect technique in when they are feeling anxious.

# Script 5 The invisible umbilical cord

(can help to connect with your baby if they are apart from you)

Have your baby or a photo of them nearby. Start with 3,2,1, breathing or deepener (or combination).

1. Close your eyes and just notice where they are. Notice the space that they are inhabiting. Notice how you can sense where they are, even with your eyes closed. Now imagine a connection from you to them, like an umbilical cord. The cord can run heart to navel or heart to heart—just allow what comes into your mind.
2. Put your hand on your heart and breathe into your heart, gathering love from every part of your body like a golden light, and then moving all your love through your heart.
3. Now imagine this golden, soothing, loving light cascading through the invisible umbilical cord. Imagine that golden light of love moving through into your baby's body and into your baby's heart.

You can use this visualisation whenever you are near or apart from your child

Tip: Add a scent, like an aromatherapy oil to the technique.

# Possible Options to discuss

## **Own music**

You can choose your own playlist to have on the room. Discuss this with the midwife or doctor prior to the day and ask what device it would be played on.

## **Lowered screen**

Lowering the screen means that you can see your baby wriggle out and you can also announce the sex if this is something that you have chosen to wait for.

## **Slower delivery**

The can give baby time to clear their lungs while wriggling out. You can hear more about that on the podcast below and there are videos on line to research that show this.

## **Skin to Skin**

Often the most regretted by mothers who didn't ask for this or prepare for it. Immediate skin to skin. Ask about re-siting monitoring pads so they are not on your chest and having an open fronted top of your choice after the spinal has been sited.

## **Delay Clamping**

You may have the option to delay clamping during a caesarean depending on individual circumstances. And in some places the partner can cut the cord.

## **Further bonding**

Baby to be held by mother as she is wheeled into recovery. If for any reason mum can't hold baby, then her partner can have skin to skin.

*Ask all staff to introduce themselves, keep the room quiet as possible and to refrain from shop talk!*

## **Resources**

<https://www.fearfreechildbirth.com/blog/gentle-c-section-with-ob-andy-simm/>

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/11/>

<https://www.bellybelly.com.au/birth/delayed-cord-clamping-c-section/>

# Intake Form

Date .....

Name .....

Partner's Name .....

Address .....

.....

Due Date .....

Reasons for a caesarean birth

Any fears or concerns relating to a caesarean birth

What are the three things most important to you as part of this birth?

Medical Reason

# Guidelines and Data Privacy

## Confidentiality

These sessions are confidential. Your practitioner may take supervisory support, and in these circumstances any identifying details will not be disclosed.

## Data

Your data is kept securely, your practitioner nor mindful mamma will not contact unless it is part of your hypnosis and mindfulness work. Your data will be deleted automatically 12 months after your workshop.

## Medical

Your practitioner cannot give medical advice, they may outline possible choices and scenarios but these are **not** medical recommendations. Please refer back to your medical team if you have questions regarding your care.

Name: .....

Signed: .....

Date: .....





