

My Birth Story

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It was late at night when I realized I was about to go into labour. I was about a week overdue in the middle of summer and fair to say a little bit fed up! I had tried almost every silly suggestion to get labour to start. We'd gone on lots of walks, sped over speed bumps, gone out for curry, been romantic, talked to my belly telling him we were ready, I'd eaten about half a pineapple after reading it somewhere, but nothing seemed to happen. So I'd come to accept that he would come when he was ready. I had faith that he would come at the exact right moment, when the universe had intended him to arrive.

So now that it was finally starting I was more than excited, more than ready.

I was sitting on the couch when I felt something - I went to the bathroom and saw a small show of blood. Thinking that this could be it I told my husband Mark and we went to bed to try and get some rest early on to build up my energy, but whilst lying there trying not to be too excited about finally seeing my baby and trying to get comfortable there was no way I was getting any sleep. I started to get what felt like period cramps that each time seemed to get stronger and stronger. So I soon gave up on trying to sleep, and started to move around.

It didn't take long at all for the intensity of the contractions to build up and I'd have to stop what I was doing and be still and focus through it, so we knew this was definitely it, we would soon have our baby here. As it was a bit past midnight now we wanted to try and wait until we called Jill our Midwife and Amber my sister-in-law who'd also be a support person during the birth, so that they could get some sleep. And at the start there was nothing more we needed, we could manage just the two of us.

I had a warm shower which was nice and relaxing and Mark inflated the birth pool. I had my special spot all set up with our supplies and a couple of candles, a few photos, a crystal that had been given to me, a quote put up that always helped to calm and focus me. In the weeks leading up I had also had some of my favorite calming music picked out and really created a sacred space that I felt so comfortable and calm. I felt so blessed to be able to experience this in our home, my own environment.

As the contractions grew in intensity I tried a few different things until I found what was comfortable for me. I leaned onto the draws in our room and circled my hips, then sat on my big fit-ball and leaned onto our bed, or in the bathroom leaning onto the sink. I just wanted to lean over, hold on to something to sort of ground myself. And eventually I ended up feeling most comfortable on all fours on the ground and between contractions I would stretch into a yoga position to get comfortable.

At first I would hold my breath during each contraction, almost wincing as my uterus contracted tightly but I gradually felt like this made it negative, that I would be apprehensively waiting for the next contraction, I wanted to accept and express the pain so I started to moan softly through it. This felt wonderful, sort of expelling some of the pain. But trust me the moaning didn't stay soft for very long and let's just say it was a good thing we had warned our neighbors or they probably would have thought Mark was killing me.

And as the pain of the contractions grew Mark would press down with his wonderfully strong hands into the small of my back and I would progressively ask him to push harder and harder. I didn't want to be massaged or rubbed just for him to push down with me.

As the hours passed by with strong contractions every 5 or so minutes I began to take some homeopathic remedies and Rescue Remedy. And as the pain increased gradually with each passing contraction I felt surprisingly calm as I didn't really have to think about what to do next; I just had to let my body do what it naturally was meant to. It was kind of like going on a ride and I was just a passenger, and just like a ride I knew it wasn't going to last forever and at the end I would have the best prize of all getting to hold my baby in my arms.

By about 4am I felt I wanted a little more support so we called Amber. She knew she was sort of on call and as she lives nearby she was over in about 20 minutes. She was a wonderful help; keeping track of the contraction times, helping suggest homeopathic remedies and getting ice to chew on, but throughout the whole thing I remember most holding (or more accurately squeezing) her hand and gaining strength from her encouragement.

Around about then my contractions grew from roughly 30 seconds long to over a minute long and growing and from every 5 minutes to about every 2 minutes so Mark called Jill to let her know what was going on. She said that as it was probably still going to be a while to give her a call once we really wanted her there (I should mention that this call was made between contractions). Then I think it was only about 30 minutes later that we called her again, this time I was having a contraction and she could hear me moaning in the background and said she'd rush there right away!

Once Jill arrived things seemed to speed up or perhaps it was just that I was losing track of time, I remember briefly realizing that the sun was coming up but most of the time I had my eyes closed and was focusing inwardly, moaning and breathing. Not long after Jill arrived and had checked me over she suggested I get into the pool which felt like heaven, the water was so lovely and warm and it took all the pressure off my knees which I'd been leaning on, I could rest over the edge of the pool and hold onto Amber's hands while Mark put a warm face cloth over my back during the contractions.

But after a little while in the pool everything seemed to slow right down, my contractions weren't as strong and then they stopped altogether for about 10 minutes and didn't really seem to come back, this was not good. As much as I welcomed the break because by this point, I'll be honest, I was shattered, after many hours of this I didn't think I had the energy in me. I was really, really, really exhausted, but I'd come so far I had to keep going I just had to find the energy in me. I remember swaying my belly in the pool with my eyes

closed and relaxing into the calm warm water but after a while we really had to get things going again.

Jill suggested I try to go to the bathroom to make room for baby's head to move down but I couldn't. I changed positions sort of facing up to try and bring back the contractions but that didn't work either. Then we tried a homeopathic remedy, I had a large dose under my tongue and it started to work. But unfortunately after half an hour my contractions still weren't very strong so we discussed what to do next.

By this point my waters still hadn't broken so we decided that it'd be best to get out of the pool that would allow Jill to give me an internal exam and could rupture the membrane manually to help baby's head descend further down. I got out of the pool onto a mattress on the ground, laying on my side with Mark at my head hold my hand and Amber at my back holding my knee elevated, Jill ruptured the membranes and this seemed to do the trick. Jill encouraged me to push while I moaned and groaned into a pillow. This seemed to last forever to me, but in reality was probably the shortest part of my labour, probably because I'd just about had enough and wanted so much to get back in the pool, and for it to all be over and at last see my baby.

After much encouragement and much pushing things were finally developing and baby was on his way. I got back into the pool and I knew there wasn't long to go, this thought gave me new energy and strength as we were on the home stretch now, thank goodness. I was leaning over the edge of the pool holding on tight to Amber's hands. Mark jumped into the pool to support me and be ready to catch baby as he came out and Jill would now and then squeeze under to check baby's heart rate. After only a short amount of time with lots of pushing I could feel baby's head moving down the birth canal with the contractions and knew he was so close. Jill asked if I wanted to feel him coming out with my hands or look down and see with a mirror as he came out but I really didn't want to, I just wanted to concentrate on getting him out. And with I think only another two almighty pushes his head came out, oh the relief was amazing and with another big push the rest of him followed.

Mark picked him up out of the water and suddenly there was a beautiful baby boy in my arms, my baby was here! It's almost indescribable, so overwhelming, so much love for this tiny little wrinkly thing that you've actually made, just amazing. I looked over him in absolute awe; tiny beautiful fingers, beautiful squished up face, and tiny little bottom and legs; just perfect, and we decided on his name; Charles Allan Davies.

After a little while though I was in pain, as it turned out Charles' umbilical cord was quite short and it felt as though it was pulling as well as the general pain down there. I tried to give Charles his first breast feed but I was so sore and tired that it felt too difficult, and I was having trouble trying to deliver the placenta. So we decided to cut the cord since it had by now stopped pulsing, and mark held Charles and sat nearby me so I could still see him. With some help I got out of the pool and onto the mattress again and Jill examined me and eventually with much effort I delivered the placenta. Luckily I hadn't torn or anything like that so there I could lay a while, give Charles his proper first feed from me, and rest with my beautiful baby boy finally in my arms after about 9 or so hours of labour. Now I could begin to recover and get to know my beautiful baby boy.

Looking back at the birth of my son Charles with 6 months perspective I feel so proud and blessed. Proud because it was hard work and I did it (with wonderful support too) and with such a wonderful result; my baby boy who I love so very much and can't imagine life without. And blessed because I think I'm so very lucky to have had such wonderful support; my amazing husband who made me feel so safe and loved, my sister-in-law Amber who made me feel so strong and comforted me so well and my beautiful Midwife Jill who made me feel so confident in her care and was so very reassuring. And it all happened in my home, my environment, my little nest where I felt so comfortable, such a loving calm environment to gently bring my baby into the world.

