

12 Steps to Success

with your Birthing Pool at Home

These are distilled from our experience supporting thousands of home water births. Get most or all of the following resolved and you've given yourself the best chance possible. Note: these assume that you have discussed using water for labour or birth with your midwife and have decided to go ahead.



1	Plan for Success	Assume that you will have your home water birth and plan accordingly. To do otherwise undermines your chances of success. Labour is often unpredictable but if events take a different course you can know that you did everything you could to achieve the birth you wanted.
2	Involve your partner	Get your birth partner involved! Ask them to review the instructions and technical specification and take ownership of the set up, tap connectors, filling, temperature management and emptying.
3	Check the floor strength	If not using the pool on a ground floor, ask a wood preservation company to check the integrity of your home's floor boards and joists. They will usually do a free quote for any work required. In the UK, they can be found in the classification "Woodworm & Dry Rot Control" in Yellow Pages or on Yell.com.
4	Review instructions	Takes 10 minutes. Do it at 36-38 weeks, then follow them!
5	Check tap connectors and hose	Check that you have a tap connector that fits a suitable tap in your home. If not, look at our tap connector guide. We may be able to help you with a different connector, or you could buy one from a hardware shop or try a different tap.
6	Check hot water capacity	If you don't have an on-demand boiler, test how long it takes to fill the bath (4 times for Regular pool, 2.5 times for Mini). If it takes more than 1.5 hours, consider how to create hot water in other ways, eg kettle, urn, large pans on stove. Be careful when handling hot water. Make sure you have cold water in the pool first and keep small children well back.
7	Prepare the floor	Sweep or vacuum the floor before putting the pool down. If your floor is stone or ceramic, cover it with a blanket first to reduce heat loss through floor.
8	Warm up the pool	Make sure the pool and accessories are at room temperature before unfolding and handling. PVC is brittle below 10C (52F) and it takes 24 hours (up to 72 hours in winter) for the innermost material to warm up when the pool is folded and out of its packaging.
9	Practice set up	Practice setting up by inflating the pool between 36 and 38 weeks to discover how quick and easy it is to inflate and deflate. Any problems or questions can then be resolved before your labour starts. You can always sell the pool on Ebay later if you don't use it. A full practice including filling with water is even better and soaking in a pool can help with late pregnancy back pains and SPD. Remember to use a new liner for birth.
10	Reduce ventilation	When you start to fill the pool with water, close the windows and doors to reduce ventilation. Once the room reaches equilibrium humidity, the rate of heat loss will fall by half. Covering the pool while it is filling also helps.
11	Start filling the pool early	If your labour is progressing fast, fill the pool at 37C (98F). If it is early days but you want to get started, fill half full at 40C (104F) in preparation, and take stock before continuing to fill. Do not get into a pool with water above 37C – you will be hot in labour and overheating can be dangerous for your baby.
12	Mix the water	Mix up water before taking a temperature reading. This is especially true if you are adding hot water at the bottom of the pool.