Physiological Breech Birth Algorithm

- **Breech remains visible on the perineum between contractions**
  - **< 7 mins**
  - **NO / not known**
    - Steady progress & Reassuring fetal heart rate
      - **YES**
        - No interference
          - Quiet, calm, warm support
        - Encourage spontaneous maternal movement
        - Continuous pushing
        - Perineal sweep / episiotomy
      - **< 5 mins**
        - Rotation to sacrum anterior begins *after* birth of pelvis
        - ‘Tum to Bum’ Sternal crease / cleavage
        - Spontaneous birth expected
        - Breakdown continues
      - **< 5 mins**
        - Incomplete Rotation
        - Running start
        - Sweep down anterior arm (on side baby faces)
      - **< 3 mins**
        - No rotation – Pelvis & shoulders remain in A-P diameter
        - Rotation using flat hands / shoulder girdle grip
        - Release anterior arm and rotate back
      - **< 3 mins**
        - Fetal head extended at pelvic inlet in A-P diameter
        - Elevate occiput & Rotate
        - Guide head into pelvis & realign
      - **< 3 mins**
        - Fetal head in mid-pelvis or outlet / deflexed or delayed
        - Shoulder press, fingers below clavicle
        - Shoulder press, thumbs below clavicle
        - Rocking fetal head
      - **< 3 mins**
        - If not immediately effective
          - Maternal buttock lift
          - Scoop & flex forehead
          - Lithotomy / forceps
        - Encourage spontaneous maternal movement
        - Continuous pushing
        - Perineal sweep / episiotomy

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Designed by Shawn Walker, RM PhD
Physiological Breech Birth Algorithm References

This algorithm is free to use, provided it is used unchanged and one of the following publications is referenced:

  
  Re: Breech teams, breech specialists, increasing the rate of vaginal breech birth, generative expertise

  
  Re: Breech teams, understanding mechanisms, team review of births

  
  Re: Teaching physiological breech as ‘complex normality’, increasing breech births

  
  Re: Training based on mechanisms, videos, upright birth position

  
  Re: Encouraging spontaneous maternal movement, breech teams, breech birth in water

  
  Re: Manoeuvres used for physiological breech births, maintaining case records, initial resuscitation with umbilicus intact

Additional References:
