Sewing Outside the Lines: The Oxytocin Labour Robe in Kenya Linen

Description

Simplicity M7969 made with FS Kenya Signature Finish Midweight Linen

Oxytocin. The hormone responsible for the squishy feeling you get inside when you hug someone you love or stroke a fluffy dog. And, I found out while I was pregnant, the hormone pretty single-handedly responsible for a successful labour. Of course, thereâ??s more going on, but from what I could tell, the more of it you have, the smoother everything goes.

And although it feels like trying to conceive, giving birth and eventually becoming a mother is all a lesson in letting go, the control freak in me didnâ??t want to let go all the way. It wanted to optimise whatever I can to make that oxytocin flow from every angle.

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And when I think about good squishy feelings, of course I think about cats and hugs, but I also think about wearing clothes Iâ??ve made myself, I think about good quality linen (I really do), I even think about decadent use of yardage with puffy sleeves and long, maxi lengths. Even though everyone tells you not to bring anything to the hospital thatâ??s special, that you donâ??t mind getting ruined, I couldnâ??t imagine going through what birth sounds like, meeting my long awaited baby, without the support and comfort of a few memade items.

So I made the most decadent oxytocin-inducing labour robe I could fashion. I picked this linen in Kenya because I thought the red, earthy tones fit the moodâ??warm and human and vitalâ??as well as flattering and soft to combat what I assume will be unforgiving hospital lighting. I wanted something long enough to give me that full-body hug, but not so long itâ??s a tripping hazard, and with sleeves that donâ??t need rolling up and donâ??t get in the way day-to-day. And as I said, big puffy sleeves are an oxytocin injector in themselves.

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I chose the classic Simplicity M7969 which Iâ??ve made multiple times and which has gone rightfully viral as my basis for the pattern (see: sleeves). If youâ??re familiar with the pattern, youâ??ll know it has a bodice section and a gathered skirt. So to make a more streamlined robe silhouette, I extended the sides down from the bodice, slashing and spreading to increase the volume of the bottom of the robe. I decided not to make it truly oversized enough to fit the bump because I was already pretty late in my pregnancy and thinking more about labour (when I think itâ??ll be worn mostly open) and my post-partum period.

In reality, my birth plan turned into a game of opposites, one wish wiped off the list after another and instead of candlelight and aromatherapy, it was worried midwives and emergency surgery. But the one thing I did get was time bouncing on my pregnancy ball in the classiest, comfiest robe trying to get labour started naturally â?? which, by the way, I managed, so noise cancelling headphones, music, sunglasses and robe made for the perfect induction package. And I got to swish around the maternity ward afterwards, the most perfect baby in my arms, wearing a robe that felt fit for such a momentous moment. So you know what, control freaking, letting go, great linen and oxytocin, all for the win.

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