

POSTPARTUM SELF-CARE PLAN

TIPS FOR FINDING THE "ME" AND THE "WE" IN PARENTHOOD

by MoxieMotherhood.com

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ACKNOWLEDGE "IT"



Parenthood is a profound change, full of challenges. Psychiatrist, Alexandria Sacks, calls it Matrescence. Read **Strong as a Mother** by Kate Rope, **The First Forty Days** by Heng Ou and **The Gifts of Imperfect Parenting** by Brené Brown. Watch **The Letdown** on Netflix. Check out prenatal and perinatal psychologist, **Dr. Carrie Contey**. More resources at postpartumny.org/bookstore.

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GET SELFISH



Have you traded meeting your basics needs (to eat, sleep, or pee) to keep baby happy and photo-ready? You are the parent your child needs, already, and you deserve space to do small things to keep afloat during this transition. Get clues to what's missing by completing a self-care assessment on **Therapist Aid** or **Mother.ly**. Learn about how to set boundaries from **Sarri Gilman**.

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STATE YOUR CASE



List your top 5 needs to feel good daily and another top 5 needs for times of stress. Post them on your fridge. The former might be, "run, shower, TV time, moms' night out, nap", and the latter might be "take the baby, let me pee, bring me a snack, let me do something with both of my hands, let me take a walk around the block". Share with your support system so they know how to help you.

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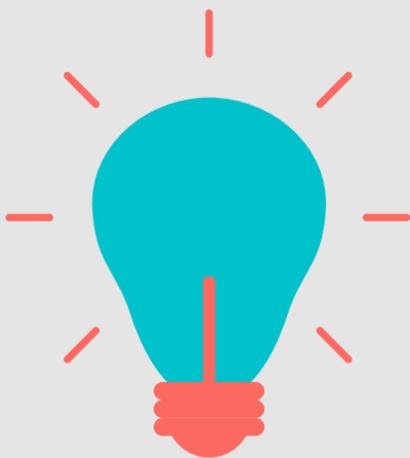
GET GONE



We tend to use breaks from parenting to catch up on laundry and emails. Tasks assuage our guilt and can make us feel productive, but they rarely refuel our souls. Instead, get some fresh air. Move your body. Enjoy doing something (or nothing) hands-free. Connect with friends or hobbies.

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TRUST YOUR GUT



Having someone to walk with, sit by, or see virtually on a regular basis can help combat isolation. Texting with other moms can be a lifeline. Unplugging from social media can be the best recipe for your recovery. Listen to your body and respect your boundaries (and those of your partner). Some people create a family blog or online photo album to update for family and friends. Others give grandparents the password to their monitor so they can check in and see Baby during naps. Whatever works for you, communicate it as soon as possible to set expectations.

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TUNE IN, OR OUT



Leave the TV or the radio on. Put on your favorite music, podcast, audiobook or the sound of waves. It serves as background noise, and a connection to the outside world. Overwhelmed by new noises at home? Try some headphones or ear plugs to dial down the volume. Light a candle. Bake some cookies. Take a bath. Massage your feet. Spend time in nature, your neighborhood, or find a view from your window that is pleasant.

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How NOT to lose yourself to parenthood

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FIND YOUR PEOPLE



Join a new parent group. The company of people who share the same phase of parenting can be a lifeline. Postpartum Support International has a list of support chapters in most major cities. If you don't find an official chapter for your state, no worries, the [main](#) PSI page will list peer support groups and mental health providers by area. For faith-based groups, contact your place of worship (eg. Christian groups like [MOPS International](#)).

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TELL YOUR STORY



Sometimes, just telling your story and admitting you're lonely, scared, anxious, angry, sad, numb, etc., can be cathartic and a first step to healing. Finding a [counselor](#) with a postpartum specialty can help you transition to parenthood with confidence. [MoxieMotherhood.com](#) has resources on mental health, solo motherhood, adoption, self-care, parenthood after loss and many more topics.

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DON'T FEAR YOUR CAREER



If you are stressed about maternity leave, FMLA, pumping laws, returning to or starting a career, read [stories](#) of other mothers on [The Returnity Project](#). Then read **Guide to Maternity Leave: Avoid Burnout, "Bad Mom Syndrome," and Other Common Pitfalls** by Lisa Abramson and **The Fifth Trimester** by Lauren Smith Brody. Watch **Workin' Moms** on Netflix.

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CONNECT WITH YOUR COPARENT(S)



Establish habits that share the parent load. Check the [resources](#) tab in [MoxieMotherhood.com](#). Fatherly, Postpartum Support International, HelpGuide.org and Knowppd.com have info on how carers can support new moms and babies, recognize when there is a problem, and how they can help themselves. Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders are real, common and treatable. Read **Good Moms Have Scary Thoughts: A Healing Guide to the Secret Fears of New Mothers** by Karen Kleiman Read **And Baby Makes Three** by The Gottman Institute and **How Not to Hate Your Husband After Kids** by Jancee Dunn. Check out **The Mother Load** by LoveThinks.com.

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SLOW DOWN



Practice being present, acknowledging your feelings and stopping to smell the roses. Schedule moments of relaxation and connection. Write about [self-compassion](#). Light a candle. Move. Dance. Practice mindfulness (eg. [Health Journeys](#)). Elevate your heart rate and/or your mood. Find strength and endurance through pre- and postnatal fitness or physical therapy. Be intentional about your healing. Read **Slow Family Living** by Bernadette Noll.