

THRIVE IN THE FIRST 3 WEEKS

|

Top Ten

Ten tips to enact before and after baby so you can enjoy your postpartum experience.

DOULAS OF CINCINNATI, LLC

THINGS TO DO BEFORE & AFTER BABY'S ARRIVAL

BEFORE BABY ARRIVES

MEAL PREP

Meals should be the last thing you're stressing about when you first arrive home from having your new baby. Plan ahead. Sign up for a Meal Train. Make freezer meals. Have a menu planned and a ClickList ready and waiting for the day before your discharge, then stop to pick up on your way home from the hospital. Or...splurge for the newest home delivery service! If there's ever a time you deserve it, it's now.

STATIONS

After we carry in the suitcase, the first thing we do as Postpartum & Infant Care Doulas is help our clients set up necessary stations throughout the house. If you have multiple floors, you'll want to set up each of these stations on each floor.



FEEDING STATION

Pick a comfy nook in your home. Stock it with extra burp cloths, a phone charger, and snacks and water for you. You may also want to have a Boppy pillow or Brest Friend nearby to help position baby. If bottle feeding, don't forget to set up an area in the kitchen for properly preparing and sanitizing baby's bottles.

CHANGING STATION

Whether it's a traveling caddy or a complete changing table, you'll want to have all the necessary supplies ready for baby's many diaper changes throughout the day and night. Lots of diapers, wipes, a couple of changes of clothes, diaper cream, and Vaseline for your baby's penis, if circumcising.

BATHROOM GOODIES

In every bathroom in your home, be sure to stock a peribottle, sensitive wipes, witch hazel pads (if using), heavy pads and Depends Silhouettes. It's not glamorous, but having all of these supplies handy when the urge to pee strikes will be a sanity saver. We promise.

VISITOR RULES & REGULATIONS

Let visitors know about your requests ahead of time. Want them to get the flu shot? Whopping Cough vaccine? Don't wait until Aunt Agnes is knocking on your door, baby gift in hand, to tell her that she was supposed to get vaccine boosters. Also, set the expectation that you'll need help. Don't be shy about asking them to move over a load of laundry, load the dishwasher or stick your freezer meal in the InstantPot. And be clear that sometimes, you might not be in the mood for a visit...or that a visit may need to abruptly end if you or your partner are feeling overwhelmed. Let them get used to your rules before they're itching to get their hands on their adorable new family member. Finally, don't forget to soak up the doting, the oooing and the ahhhhing, the fawning and praising. Take pictures. Tell your birth story. Let them share in your joy.



ONCE YOU'RE HOME

USE SLEEP SHAPING TECHNIQUES

We regularly help our clients' babies sleep long, somewhat predictable, stretches right from the start. To get your baby in tip top shape for healthy sleep habits, use our Sleep Shaping techniques. Give your baby the same, predictable environment every time he or she sleeps. Swaddle tightly, offer a pacifier once you know baby has had a full feed (it won't hurt your breastfeeding relationship, we promise), lay them down in a dark room (blackout curtains/shades are a must) with a sound machine. Ideally, you're putting them down drowsy, but awake, and they are able to drift off to sleep on their own. Your baby will be better equipped for long overnight sleep stretches when they're older if we start early with these positive cues for sleep.

Pro Tip

You may want to consider setting up a fourth station at the door for any potential guests. Be sure to include hand sanitizer and a stack of disposable masks (and a trash can for when they're headed out).

SLEEP WHEN BABY SLEEPS

Hi. We know this is cliché. But in the first three weeks, you need sleep. Let your visitors help with the necessary tasks to keep your home running smoothly and get in bed when your baby is napping (which will be A LOT in the first few weeks). Aim for at least one nap per day.

LOAD A DAY

While we're on the subject of daily tasks, try to do at least one load of laundry each day. Even if it's only a tiny load, even if your water bill gets a little ridiculous, do it. Put it in the washer before bed, stick it in the dryer in the morning. Try to fold in the afternoon. Put up before bed. It's a PITA to do laundry every day, we know. But this is only for three weeks. It will make a big difference.

CHECK IN WITH YOUR PARTNER

Plan to spend some time with your partner every day. Talk about how things are going. What's going great? What could be going better? What are you going to eat tomorrow? Who is changing the next poop diaper? Hug each other. Share a kiss. Connect. Even if only for a couple of minutes. Make it a priority.

MAKE YOUR BED WHEN YOU GET OUT OF IT

Yeah, you read that right. And before you holler 'ain't nobody got time for that!,' hear us out. Accomplishing this one task every day helps avoid depression symptoms and makes falling to sleep easier when you climb back in. It's worth it.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

The first three weeks are a time of considerable change for everyone involved. You, your partner, and your baby are practicing multiple new skills for the very first time. Sometimes we catch on quickly; other times, we need a learning curve. Give yourselves lots of patience and grace.

Pro Tip

For ten minutes every day, focus 100% on you. Download a guided meditation app and practice the art of meditation. Sit outside in the sunlight. Lay down on your (freshly made) bed. Don't scroll. Don't think about things that need to be done. Just be.

CALL IN THE PROS

Hire a Postpartum & Infant Care Doula to help you navigate the first three weeks with confidence and strength. Your doula is an expert in normal newborn behavior, postpartum healing, infant feeding and more. Whether you need her to care for baby overnight while you and your partner catch up on much needed sleep, handle light housekeeping, meal preparation, or to be a reassuring presence as you find the right path for your family, she's there. With no expectations or judgment. Just support.

