

# 10 Tips for New Dads

*Are you a brand new dad? Here are a few tips from some real experts: other dads.*

1. When the going gets tough, take a break rather than blowing a gasket. There will be moments when the world doesn't seem to be turning right and it's easy to lose your cool. Times like when you haven't slept, the baby is crying, the phone is ringing, the food is burning and you are frustrated and cranky. Turn off the stove and take as many deep breaths as you need. It's not his or her fault, so be sure not to take it out on your baby. When babies are hurt, most often it's by parents or caretakers who have lost their cool. It's much better to take a bit of time to calm down and re-group than to spend a long time feeling awful because you didn't. What you do in those moments can't be taken back or undone.
2. Make time with your baby and family a priority. When you look back on your life years from now, you won't regret not having worked longer hours or running around. What you might regret is not having spent more time with your kids. Time spent playing on the floor or watching your baby sleep is time well spent (and often a time for you to take a rest or nap too). Enjoy this great reason to hang around and "do nothing."
3. Play a lot, enjoy your child. Nothing is better than fun for dissipating tension and for forging trust and good relationships with babies.
4. Take advantage of the fact that your baby is portable. Don't be afraid to take your baby out with you and do things. In fact, it's easier to take them out before they become mobile (because they stay where you put them!). Stimulation is good for kids, and babies make great adventure companions. Besides, you and your little one will get lots of positive attention, too. Have fun!
5. Give extra patience, support, and listening to your partner. Giving birth can be traumatic, and hormones continue to ebb and flow after childbirth. If there is ever a time to be understanding of your baby's mom, and available to her, too, this is it.
6. Try not to fit too many things in one day. Everything takes longer with a baby along. If you're overscheduled, you will be overstressed...which is hard on you and your baby.
7. If you have a medical question about your baby, call your pediatrician, but don't panic. Babies are sturdier than they look.
8. Talk to other new and veteran dads and moms about your experience and theirs.
9. Take care of yourself. Keep an eye on your driving, your diet, and your risk-taking. Your baby needs you for a very long time...like the rest of your life. Being a healthy and happy dad is one of the greatest gifts you can give to your kids. If you smoke, now is the time to try to cut back or quit. Be sure not to smoke where your child is breathing.
10. Follow your instincts and intuition. Listen to the advice of others, read about parenting, consult the experts, but consider yourself the authority on your child. No one will know your baby as well as you and your partner do. The more time that you spend with your child, the more connected you'll both feel and the more confident you will become as a dad.

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