

# YOUR EMPOWERED FOURTH TRIMESTER

How to Embrace &  
Thrive in Postpartum





"POSTPARTUM  
ISN'T JUST A  
SEASON; IT'S A  
TRANSFORMATIO  
N. YOU'RE NOT  
JUST HEALING  
YOUR BODY;  
YOU'RE MEETING  
YOURSELF AS A  
MOTHER FOR THE  
FIRST TIME."

— HENG OU, THE  
FIRST FORTY  
DAYS

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# INTRODUCTION

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Hi, I'm Olivia, a postpartum doula, lactation counselor, pediatric sleep consultant, and the founder of Fox & Cub Family Wellness.

After the birth of my second child, I found myself in the depths of postpartum depression. What I had imagined as a time of joy and connection became something very different — a season of emotional heaviness, exhaustion, and the feeling that I had to somehow hold everything together while silently struggling. It was in those moments that I realized how deeply mothers need care that truly surrounds and supports them, not just physically but emotionally and spiritually as well.

I leaned into the tools that had always been a part of my own healing — Eastern medicine practices, holistic wellness, and whole-body approaches. Acupressure, herbs, nervous system regulation, mindful nutrition, and gentle bodywork became anchors in my recovery. Through them, I not only found my own healing but also a calling to reimagine what postpartum care could look like for other mothers.

That vision grew into Fox & Cub Family Wellness — a place built on the belief that no mother should ever have to navigate this journey alone. Instead of offering one piece of care, we create a wraparound circle of support, connecting families with postpartum care, lactation counseling, sleep guidance, and holistic wellness resources.



This guide is an extension of that mission. It weaves together my lived experience as a mother with the training and knowledge I've gathered, offering both compassionate understanding and practical tools.

My hope is that these pages feel like sitting with a friend who has been there — someone who understands the hard moments, but also knows the pathways back to healing, strength, and joy.

You deserve to feel supported, nurtured, and empowered as you step into motherhood. That is why Fox & Cub exists — and why this guide was created for you.

Let's get started.

With love,

*Olivia*

Founder, [@foxandcubfamilywellness](https://www.foxandcubfamilywellness.com)

# THE FOURTH TRIMESTER

*The fourth trimester is a term coined to describe the first three months after birth. It's a continuation of the incredible transformation that began during pregnancy, but instead of growing life inside you, this period is about nurturing, healing, and adapting to life with your baby outside the womb.*

*In many ways, the fourth trimester mirrors the needs of a newborn. Babies during this time are in what's often referred to as a "transitional stage." They seek the safety, warmth, and nourishment they experienced in utero, relying entirely on you to provide those comforts. Similarly, mothers are in their own transitional stage, healing physically, navigating emotional shifts, and learning the rhythms of motherhood.*

**Western culture often rushes mothers to "bounce back" and return to normal life quickly after birth, but this approach is deeply flawed.**

In many traditional cultures, the importance of the fourth trimester is deeply ingrained, and mothers are supported with rest, nourishing foods, and community care. This guide aims to help you reclaim the sacredness of this time and approach your fourth trimester with ***intention*** and ***self-compassion***.



# Physical Healing

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Your body has just done the most incredible thing: bringing **new life** into the world. But with that miracle comes the need for recovery. The physical healing process varies for every mother, depending on your birth experience, but there are some universal truths. **Rest is crucial.** Whether you had a vaginal delivery or a cesarean, your body needs time to recover from the immense work of labour and birth.

Nourishment is just as important as rest. Think of **food as medicine** during this time. Warm, easily digestible meals rich in nutrients like iron, protein, and healthy fats can support your body's healing and energy levels. Hydration is key too, especially if you're breastfeeding.

***Gentle movement, like postpartum yoga, can help improve circulation, promote healing, and reconnect you with your body. We'll delve into all of these in the following chapters.***



“If Mama ain’t  
happy, ain’t  
nobody happy.”

—Ferrell Sims

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# Emotional Healing

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## **BEYOND THE PHYSICAL**

The emotional changes of the fourth trimester can be just as profound as the physical ones.

**RULE #1:  
DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK  
FOR HELP**

Hormonal shifts, sleep deprivation, and the sheer magnitude of becoming a mother can bring a rollercoaster of emotions.

Postpartum emotions are deeply complex. You might feel elated one moment as you gaze at your baby, only to feel utterly overwhelmed or teary the next. These feelings are often influenced by the dramatic hormonal changes your body undergoes after birth, namely, the sudden drop in pregnancy hormones like progesterone and oestrogen, coupled with the rise of oxytocin and prolactin.

***Emotional changes are a natural part of this transition, and leaning into support, whether through journaling, therapy, or simply talking to someone who understands, can provide clarity and comfort.***

Beyond hormones, the sheer weight of responsibility and sleep deprivation can amplify emotions. It's important to remind yourself that it's okay to grieve your pre-baby life while simultaneously celebrating your new role. Allow yourself grace, and don't feel pressured to have it all figured out.

# The Need for Community Care

**FOR 95% OF HUMAN EXISTENCE, WE LIVED IN TIGHT-KNIT HUNTER-GATHERER COMMUNITIES WHERE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RAISING CHILDREN DIDN'T FALL SOLELY ON ONE PERSON**

1 Mothers were surrounded by family, friends, and community members who instinctively stepped in to share the load.

2 Newborns were held by many arms, toddlers were entertained by older children, and elders offered wisdom and guidance.

**Although modern life often lacks the same built-in village**

the beauty of this knowledge is that we can intentionally rebuild it in ways that suit us today. The truth is, we were never meant to do this alone, and that's something to embrace, not resist. **Community care is for our well-being**

**CREATING YOUR OWN VERSION OF A VILLAGE DOESN'T HAVE TO BE COMPLICATED. IT COULD MEAN INVITING LOVED ONES TO HELP, REACHING OUT TO FRIENDS WHO UNDERSTAND, OR CONNECTING WITH OTHER MUMS THROUGH LOCAL OR ONLINE GROUPS LIKE OUR WHATSAPP GROUP MOTHERS NEED OTHERS.**

**Just as our ancestors thrived by supporting one another, so can we.**



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# Postpartum Around the World

In many cultures around the world, the postpartum period is treated as a sacred and essential time for both mother and baby. Traditions vary, but the focus is always on rest, nourishment, and support.

***China: In Chinese culture, the postpartum period is called "zuo yue zi," or "sitting the month." New mothers are encouraged to rest completely for 30 to 40 days while family members take over household tasks. Warm, nourishing foods like soups and stews are provided to replenish the body and promote healing.***



***India: In India, postpartum care often includes a 40-day confinement period where the mother is cared for by family or a postpartum helper. Ayurvedic practices, such as oil massages, herbal baths, and specific foods, are used to restore balance and energy.***

**Latin America:** The "cuarentena," or quarantine, is a 40-day postpartum period observed in many Latin American countries. During this time, mothers are cared for by family and friends, allowing them to bond with their baby and focus on recovery. Warm, healing foods and herbal remedies are common.

**The Netherlands:** Dutch mothers benefit from a **kraamzorg** system, where a trained maternity nurse visits the home daily for up to eight days after birth. These nurses help with breastfeeding, baby care, and light household tasks, ensuring mothers get the support they need (essentially a government funded postpartum doula).

# TRANSITION

## **UNDERSTANDING YOUR POSTPARTUM BODY**

***Your body has just accomplished something extraordinary, and it deserves both respect and patience.***

One of the most immediate changes you'll notice is how your body starts to adapt after your ***baby is born.***

Your uterus, which expanded to accommodate your growing baby, begins the process of involution—shrinking back to its pre-pregnancy size



This can cause cramping, especially if you're breastfeeding, as oxytocin is released to help with the process. While it's uncomfortable, these sensations are a sign of your body doing its job.

Your pelvic floor, which supported the weight of your baby and endured the strain of birth, also needs time to recover. You might notice a feeling of heaviness or weakness, and that's completely normal. Incorporating gentle pelvic floor exercises, with guidance from a physiotherapist, can help rebuild strength over time.



Studies show that up to ***1 in 3*** women experience pelvic floor dysfunction postpartum, but targeted ***pelvic floor therapy*** can significantly improve recovery and ***quality of life.***

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"WHEN A BABY IS BORN, SO IS A MOTHER. SHE NEVER EXISTED BEFORE. THE WOMAN EXISTED, BUT THE MOTHER, NEVER. A MOTHER IS SOMETHING ABSOLUTELY NEW."

— RAJNEESH  
(OSHO)

You will also experience symptoms like postpartum bleeding (lochia), which can last for several weeks, swollen or tender breasts as milk production begins, and fatigue that feels all-encompassing. All of these changes are a natural part of the healing process, but that doesn't mean they're easy.

This is where rest and nourishment come into play. Your body has given so much, now it's your turn to give back to it. Fuel yourself with warm, nutrient-dense meals, hydrate often, and embrace moments of stillness. It's tempting to push through or try to "get back to normal," but what your body truly needs right now is rest and care.

***Healing isn't linear, and every mother's recovery is different. Whether you had a vaginal birth, a cesarean, or interventions during labour, your journey will be unique to you. Listen to your body, honour its signals, and don't hesitate to seek support if something doesn't feel right. This is a time for compassion, not comparison.***

Our **NOURISH HQ** chapter will give you the tools you need to navigate each stage of this recovery process.



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## Emotions and Hormone Dips



Just as your body is undergoing significant physical changes, so too is your *emotional landscape*. The postpartum period is a time of heightened sensitivity, a rollercoaster of emotions that can swing between overwhelming joy and unexpected tears, all in the same hour. These shifts are completely normal and largely driven by hormones.

After your placenta leaves the building, the levels of **oestrogen and progesterone**, which were high during pregnancy, plummet dramatically. The biggest and most abrupt hormone drop any human will ever experience in their lifetime. At the same time, oxytocin (the “love hormone”) and prolactin, which supports milk production, surge. These hormonal changes can leave you feeling emotionally tender, with mood swings that seem to come out of nowhere.

***Many mothers experience what’s often called the “baby blues,” a period of heightened emotion, tearfulness, and irritability that peaks a few days after birth and typically resolves within two weeks. This is a natural response to hormonal changes, exhaustion, and the enormity of becoming a mother. Normal yes; insignificant, no!***

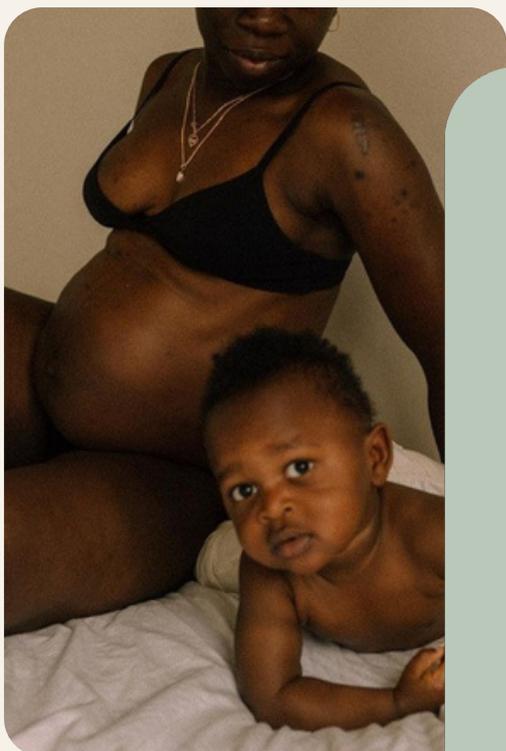
# EMOTIONS & HORMONE DIPS

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Beyond hormones, the emotional shifts of the postpartum period are tied to the life-changing nature of motherhood. You might grieve your pre-baby life or feel a loss of control over your time and identity. You might feel an intense love for your baby but also frustration or loneliness in your new role. These emotions are valid, and it's okay to hold space for all of them.

**1** One of the most grounding things you can do during this time is to find small rituals that help you reconnect with yourself. Whether it's stepping outside for fresh air, journaling about your feelings, or practicing gentle yoga, these moments of self-care remind you that you're still you, even amidst the transformation.

**2** Most importantly, be kind to yourself. Motherhood is a profound transition, and it's natural to feel a mix of emotions as you navigate this new chapter. Surround yourself with people who uplift you, and give yourself the grace to feel everything, because in the ebb and flow of postpartum emotions, there's beauty in the process of becoming.



“I HAVE FOUND BEING A MOTHER HAS MADE ME EMOTIONALLY RAW IN MANY SITUATIONS. YOUR HEART IS BEATING OUTSIDE YOUR BODY WHEN YOU HAVE A BABY.” — KATE BECKINSALE

# MENTAL HEALTH

## ***What's Normal & Noticing When You Need Extra Support***

### **Postpartum Depression: A Closer Look**

Postpartum depression (PPD) is one of the most misunderstood and complex aspects of postpartum mental health. It's estimated that **1 in 7 mothers** in the US will experience PPD, with some studies suggesting this number could be as high as **20%**. These figures make PPD one of the most common complications of postpartum, yet many mothers struggle silently, unsure whether what they're feeling is normal or something more serious.

The hallmark symptoms of PPD include persistent sadness, loss of interest in daily activities, feelings of worthlessness, fatigue, and difficulty bonding with the baby. However, many mothers are misdiagnosed—or not diagnosed at all—because their experiences don't fit neatly into this checklist. Here's the truth: what is often labeled as PPD might not always be clinical depression.

### **Are You Depressed, or Are You Doing Too Much Alone?**

Western medicine has a tendency to treat postpartum struggles through the lens of clinical depression, often jumping to medication as the first line of treatment. While medication can absolutely be lifesaving for some women, it's essential to ask whether what you're experiencing is a very normal response to an abnormal situation.

***We evolved to raise our babies in villages, surrounded by support. Physical, emotional, and practical. Yet, modern motherhood often leaves women isolated, juggling the overwhelming demands of caring for a newborn, recovering from birth, and managing a household without adequate help.***

Feeling exhausted, lonely, or overwhelmed doesn't necessarily mean you're clinically depressed. It might mean you're being asked to do the impossible: mother in a vacuum. This is where community care becomes *essential*. Before concluding that you're suffering from depression, ask yourself:

- ***Do I have enough support?***
- ***Am I getting adequate rest and nourishment?***
- ***Do I feel isolated?***

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# MENTAL HEALTH

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These questions don't dismiss the seriousness of PPD but instead help determine whether a mother's mental health challenges are rooted in **systemic issues** like a lack of care and connection. Medication can help some, but for many, the real "cure" is the restoration of a support network, rest, and compassionate care.



## **Postpartum Anxiety and Intrusive Thoughts**

Postpartum anxiety (PPA) is less discussed than PPD, but it's just as common. It's estimated that **1 in 5 mothers will experience PPA**, yet it's often overlooked or misdiagnosed as general postpartum stress. Anxiety in the postpartum period often manifests as excessive worry, racing thoughts, and hyper-vigilance about your baby's safety and well-being.

I remember my own experience vividly. After Logan's birth, I was consumed by a flood of intrusive thoughts, terrifying images of him dying or something happening to him while I slept. These thoughts weren't reflective of my intentions or desires; they were an uncontrollable part of my postpartum mental state. I didn't know how to talk about it because I feared people would misunderstand or judge me.

***Intrusive thoughts are incredibly common, affecting up to 70-100% of new mothers at some point. They're not a sign you're dangerous or a bad mum; they're a symptom of your brain's heightened protective mode. In evolutionary terms, they're a hyper-vigilant response meant to safeguard your baby, but they can feel overwhelming and terrifying in practice.***

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# Holistic Strategies for Navigating PPA and Intrusive Thoughts

## 1. **Talk About It:**

*Sharing intrusive thoughts with a trusted friend, partner, or therapist can strip them of their power. Saying them out loud reminds you they're just thoughts—not reality.*

**2. Regulate Your Nervous System:** *Practices like breathwork, yoga, and grounding exercises can calm the fight-or-flight response that fuels anxiety. Even a few minutes a day can make a big difference (more on this in the nervous system regulation chapter).*

**3. Limit Overstimulation:** *Social media, endless parenting advice, and news stories about worst-case scenarios can exacerbate anxiety. Set boundaries around what you consume, and focus on what makes you feel calm and empowered.*

## 4. **Sleep and Nutrition:**

*While sleep deprivation is part of postpartum life, even small changes, like sharing night feedings with a partner, can ease anxiety. Nutrient-dense meals rich in omega-3s, magnesium, and B vitamins can also support your mental health.*

## 5. **Seek Professional Help if Needed:**

*Postpartum anxiety can escalate & become OCD if left unaddressed. Therapies like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) are highly effective for managing anxiety and intrusive thoughts. Reaching out is a sign of strength, not weakness.*



## REMEMBER

Postpartum mental health challenges are **NOT** a reflection of your ability as a mother

*Healing often starts with naming what you're experiencing, sharing it with someone who understands, and taking small, intentional steps toward support*

# SANCTUARY

## Creating Your Space

*Your postpartum environment can have a profound impact on how you recover and adjust to life with your baby. Creating a sanctuary, a space that feels calm, safe, and nurturing, can make the fourth trimester a more restful and restorative experience.*



## **Start with Comfort**

Choose a spot in your home where you'll spend most of your time with your baby and make it as comfortable as possible. This might be your bedroom, a cosy corner in the living room, or a dedicated nursing nook. Add soft blankets, supportive pillows, and a comfortable rocking chair or sofa. Keep essentials like water, snacks, burp cloths, diapers, and your baby's supplies within arm's reach so you're not constantly getting up.

**Focus on Warmth and Calm.** In many traditional cultures, warmth is considered essential for postpartum recovery. Layer your space with textures that bring comfort, like warm lighting, plush throws, and even heating pads. Avoid harsh overhead lights and opt for lamps or fairy lights for a softer glow during those late-night feeds.

## **INCORPORATING NATURE AND PERSONAL TOUCHES INTO YOUR SANCTUARY**

- **Bring the Outdoors In:** Use fresh flowers, potted plants, or a diffuser with calming essential oils like lavender or chamomile to add a sense of relaxation.
- **Prioritize Natural Light:** Position your sanctuary near a window to allow sunlight to improve your mood and regulate your sleep patterns.
- **Create a Sense of Calm:** Declutter the area and organize essentials into baskets or trays to minimize visual stress.
- **Keep It Simple:** Focus on a few intentional additions that bring comfort and positivity without overwhelming your space.
- **Include Personal Comfort Items:** Add sentimental touches like favorite photos, meaningful art, your positive postpartum affirmations from this bundle or books and magazines to make your space feel uniquely yours.

***To make the space truly yours, incorporate personal items that bring you joy and comfort. This could be a favorite family photo, an inspiring piece of art, or even a stack of magazines or books for moments when you can steal some quiet time. These small touches remind you of who you are beyond motherhood, anchoring you during this period of transformation.***

Finally, keep your sanctuary organized and simple (your partner can stay on top of this task).

Clutter can be overstimulating and stressful, so tidy up the area and group essentials—like diapers, wipes, and snacks—into baskets or trays. This helps create a calm, functional environment where you can rest, heal, and bond with your baby without distractions. By intentionally curating your space, you're setting the stage for a postpartum experience that nurtures both your body and mind.

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# SANCTUARY

## ESTABLISHING BOUNDARIES

***Boundaries are essential during the postpartum period, yet many of us struggle to set them. We worry about seeming rude, selfish, or ungrateful. Let me tell you something real quick:***

***Protecting your space, energy, and peace is not selfish!!!***



***If it feels right to create some space, whether from visitors, unsolicited advice, or external demands, it's your right to do so. It's an act of self-preservation and love for your baby, your healing, and your mental well-being***

## *Practical Boundary Conversations*

Setting boundaries doesn't have to mean confrontation. You can communicate your needs in a way that feels firm but kind. Here are a few examples of boundary conversations you can use:

### ■ **For Visitors Who Want to Come Too Soon:**

- “We’re taking these first few weeks to rest and adjust as a family. We’ll let you know when we’re ready for visitors!” “I know you’re excited to
- meet the baby, but we’re prioritizing rest right now. How about we plan a visit in a few weeks?”

### ■ **For Uninvited Drop-Ins:**

- (Politely, at the door) “Thank you for stopping by, but now’s not a good time. We’re focusing on rest and baby care. Let’s schedule a time to catch up later.” (Text message) “Hey, I saw you dropped by! We’re not
- up for visitors at the moment, but I’d love to catch up when things settle down.”

### ■ **For Those Offering Too Much Advice:**

- “Thanks for sharing—there’s so much information out there, and we’re figuring out what works best for us.”
- “I appreciate your concern, but we’re following our instincts and advice from our care team.”

### ■ **For Needing Alone Time:**

- “I’m feeling a bit overwhelmed and need some quiet time. Can we catch up later?”
- “Right now, I’m focusing on myself and the baby. I’ll reach out when I feel ready to chat.”

### ■ **For Turning Down Offers of Help You Don’t Want:**

- “That’s so kind of you to offer, but we’re managing well right now. If something comes up, I’ll let you know!”
- “I appreciate it, but what we could really use is [specific need, like a meal drop-off or help with laundry].”

***Setting boundaries isn’t keeping people out, it’s inviting the right energy in. The people who truly care about you will respect your needs and give you the space to protect your sanctuary. You are not responsible for managing anyone else’s feelings, and saying no to something that doesn’t serve you is saying yes to your recovery, peace, and joy.***

# NOURISH HQ

Welcome to what I consider the heart of this guide—the ***Nourish HQ***.

This chapter is all about replenishing your body and soul after the incredible journey of childbirth. Nourishment isn't just about what's on your plate (*though that's a big part of it!*); it's all about holistic care for your entire being. Here, we'll dive into the healing ***power of food***, the transformative magic of ***postnatal yoga & nervous system regulation***, the essential role of ***bodywork***, and the gentle support of ***herbal allies***. Think of this as your postpartum toolkit to help you feel strong, nurtured, and whole.

***As you create your own unique Nourish HQ, think of it as more than a space or a set of practices; it's a state of being where your needs come first, where you are reminded daily that you are worthy of care and that healing is a process of patience and grace.***



## QUICK TIP

Don't forget to check out the Holistic Postpartum Checklist included in your bundle. It has links to all the cosy, nourishing elements I add to a new mama's recovery.

# NUTRITION

## *Eating To Heal*

### **FOOD IS MEDICINE**

***During the postpartum period, what you eat plays a huge role in your recovery. Your body has just done the monumental work of growing and birthing a baby, and now it's time to replenish your energy, heal your tissues, and support milk production if you're breastfeeding.***

Key Nutritional Principles for Postpartum Healing:

- ***Warmth and Comfort: Focus on warm, easily digestible foods like soups, stews, porridges, and broths. These are easier on your digestive system, which is still recalibrating after pregnancy.***
- ***Protein Power: Include plenty of high-quality proteins like eggs, lentils, chicken, and fish to aid in tissue repair and recovery.***
- ***Healthy Fats: Nourish your body with healthy fats like ghee, avocados, nuts, seeds, and oily fish, which support brain health and hormonal balance.***
- ***Iron-Rich Foods: Combat postpartum fatigue with iron-rich options like spinach, red meat, liver, and fortified cereals. Pair with vitamin C sources (like citrus fruits) to enhance absorption.***
- ***Hydration is Key: Drink plenty of water, herbal teas, and nourishing liquids like bone broth to stay hydrated, especially if breastfeeding***



# Postpartum Meal Ideas:

1.

## **HEALING BONE BROTH**

*A nutrient powerhouse filled with collagen, minerals, and amino acids to support recovery, gut health, and overall nourishment.*

2.

## **CONGEE RICE PORRIDGE**

*A traditional postpartum staple, this easy-to-digest dish soothes the digestive system, hydrates, and provides warmth.*

3.

## **STEWED FRUITS**

*Gently cooked fruits like apples, pears, and prunes aid digestion, prevent constipation, and provide natural sweetness to replenish energy.*

4.

## **KITCHARI**

*A gentle Ayurvedic meal combining lentils, rice, and warming spices like turmeric and cumin. It's nutrient-dense, easy to digest, and perfect for rebuilding strength postpartum.*



*If you want to look after a mother, feed her.*

## EATING TO HEAL

You don't need to commit to a rigid diet, but you can nourish yourself in an achievable and supportive way. Batch-cooking or asking loved ones to prepare meals can make this process even easier. Postpartum Recipe Recovery (***included in your bundle***) is a great way to hand out recipes for your loved ones to make. Also see the Nest & Nourish party chapter!



**QUICK TIP**  
*Keep a "nourishment basket" by your feeding or resting spot—fill it with snacks like nuts, dried fruit, and energy bars, a water bottle, herbal tea bags, and a mini journal or book. It's a simple way to stay nourished and cared for without having to get up every time you need something.*

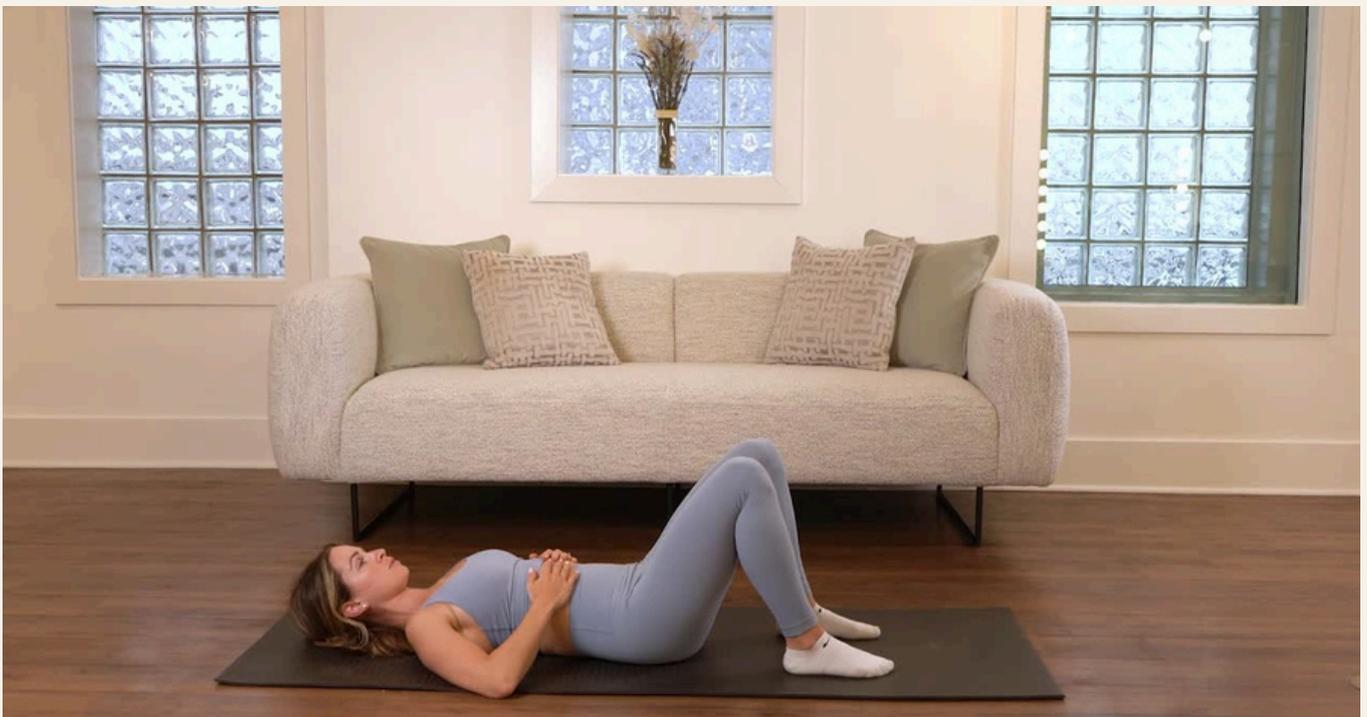


## SUPPORT

If ***You Haven't Yet***- Be sure to make a mealtrain.com account so your loved ones can sign up and commit to dropping off nourishing food packages for your family for the first few weeks.

# POSTNATAL YOGA FOR RECOVERY

Postnatal yoga is at the heart of postpartum recovery. I've seen firsthand how transformative these practices can be for pregnant & new mums. Here are some of my favourite ways to incorporate gentle movement from **weeks 1-6**.



## 360 BREATHING

Before you do anything else, connect with your breath. I know this may sound strange, because we're all breathing all the time. But your breathing mechanics are altered by all the physiological and postural changes that happen during pregnancy. In fact, rib flare is a common occurrence after pregnancy! When you were pregnant, you probably noticed it was hard to take a full breath, and you might have even felt pain in the back and sides of your ribs. Now, you get to restore proper diaphragmatic breathing, which is going to feel so good for your body.

Focus on inhaling through the nose and expanding your ribcage 360 degrees. Place your hands on either side of your ribcage and breathe into your hands, focusing on areas that feel the most stiff. Your pelvic floor should gently lengthen when you inhale – and when you exhale, it will lift passively, so don't contract your pelvic floor as you let the breath go.

## 360 DEGREE BREATHING WITH PELVIC FLOOR AND DEEP CORE CONTRACTION

Once you've mastered 360 degree breathing, it's time to add in a gentle pelvic floor & deep core contraction. Your pelvic floor and abdominal muscles were stretched to their maximum during pregnancy, and overstretched muscle has a hard time contracting. This gentle breathing exercise helps your muscles remember how to contract properly.

Place your hands on the inside of your hip bones and inhale through your nose, expanding your ribs 360 degrees. When you exhale, gently contract and lift your pelvic floor. Think about movement "up and in" as you focus on closing all 3 holes and then lifting in. At the same time, imagine bringing your two hip bones together.

Core contraction starts with a gentle lift of the pelvic floor before working its way up to lower abdominals, middle abdominals and finally upper abdominals, where your ribs knit together at the top. Be careful to avoid over-contracting or over-gripping your upper abs – we're focused on your pelvic floor and deep core here. Before you exhale, try gently squeezing a pilates ball between your knees, which helps to engage the pelvic floor!



## WINDSHIELD WIPERS

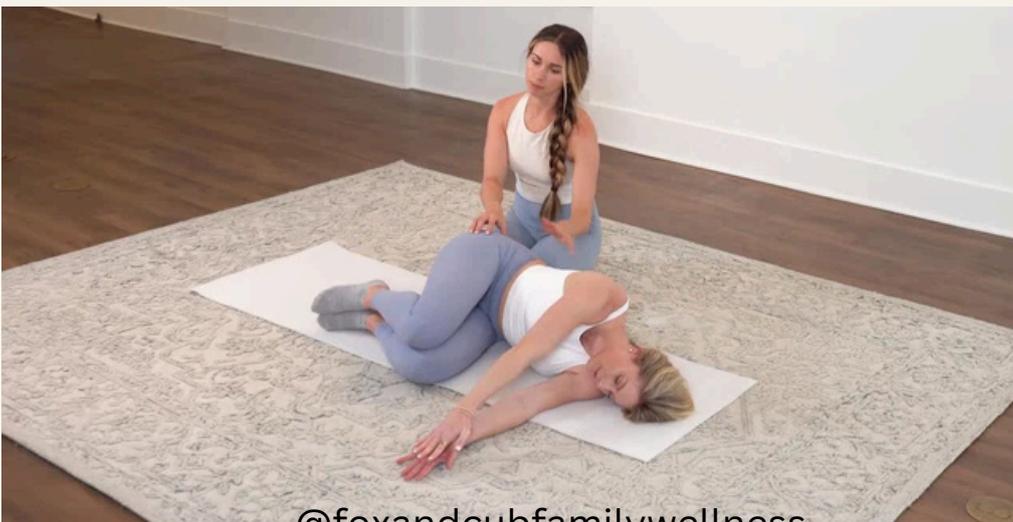
This movement feels amazing as it helps you open your pelvis and hips. Only go as far as you feel comfortable, especially if you experienced severe perineal tearing during childbirth. Start by lying flat on your back with feet hip width apart. Allow both knees to fall to one side, then slowly return to midline and repeat on the opposite side. You might need to gently tuck your pelvis if this bothers your lower back or SI joint.



## OPEN BOOK

This one is incredible for breastfeeding mums, but whether you are breastfeeding or not, you need this exercise. It helps to open the mid back and chest after all of the feeding, carrying, and lifting you've been doing. Plus, you need upper back mobility to help your diaphragm and pelvic floor carry the right balance of tension.

Everything in your body truly does work together! Start on your side with your knees as close to your chest as possible, which locks out your lumbar spine. Open up your top arm and follow it with your head. You should feel this in your chest muscles and upper back. Repeat on the other side!



## QUADRUPED PELVIC TILTS

This movement relieves stiffness and tailbone pain postpartum. It's all about finding length between the sitz bones and pelvic floor, so you'll want to isolate the movement just to the trunk. Get on all fours and inhale as you arch. Then, exhale as you gently tuck by engaging your deep core.



## CAT COW — GOAL POST ARMS

I think cat cow is everyone's favorite feel-good exercise, but this version adds a twist. Instead of getting on all fours, sit and position your arms like they're goal posts. This is the perfect post-feeding exercise, whether you're breastfeeding or bottle feeding! Inhale, arch and look up. Exhale and round your body from your lumbar (lower) spine all the way to your cervical (upper) spine, bringing forearms together. You'll feel that stretch in the upper back as you round. Squeeze your shoulder blades together to bring the upper back to life again!



**Start slowly and listen to your body. This is about healing, not pushing yourself. Even five minutes a day can make a difference.**

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## ***NERVOUS SYSTEM REGULATION***

An elegantly weaved, incredibly intelligent labyrinthine of nerves. Do you know what leaves an imprint on such an exquisite bodily system? ***Pregnancy, birth & postpartum.*** In all of my years researching, learning, and continuing to learn about our nervous system, I can confidently say that nothing helps you improve your motherhood journey than learning how to bring your nervous system back into an optimal state of homeostasis.

### ***Understanding Your Nervous System***

***Your nervous system operates in two main states:***

- ***Sympathetic Nervous System (Fight or Flight):***

***This is activated when you're stressed or overwhelmed—think racing heart, shallow breathing, or feeling on edge.***

- ***Parasympathetic Nervous System (Rest and Digest):***

***This is your body's calming state, where healing, relaxation, and connection happen.***

***Postpartum life often leans heavily on the "fight or flight" side, so the goal is to gently guide your nervous system back to a state of rest and balance. Enter, The Vagus Nerve.***

What is vagal tone, and why do we care about it?

The vagus nerve (the "vagal nerves") extends from the brainstem all the way down to the digestive system. This is the main nerve responsible for parasympathetic functions. We can access this with simple & easy to do things that are right in front of us, which is why they're perfect for postpartum.

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# NERVOUS SYSTEM TOOLKIT

*(PRINT THIS OUT & STICK IT UP WHERE YOU CAN SEE IT FOR EASY ACCESS)*

*Whether you're navigating sleep deprivation, the baby blues or simply dapting to the emotional demands of motherhood, these 'hacks' can bring you back into regulation.*

## **1. INSTANT NEUROTRANSMITTER RELEASE: HUG YOUR BABY**

TAKE A MOMENT TO REALLY BE WITH THEM. LOOK THEM IN THE EYES (WELL HELLO, OXYTOCIN, OLD FRIEND). REMIND YOURSELF HOW SPECTACULAR IT IS THAT YOU GET TO SHARE SPACE WITH THIS GLORIOUS BEING. I MEAN, YOU LIVE IN A HOUSE WITH A HUMAN YOU GREW IN YOUR BODY. HOW COOL IS THAT?

## **2. OPEN YOUR FRONT DOOR FOR 20 SECONDS AND FEEL THE FRESH AIR ON YOUR SKIN.**

(THAT'S IT. THAT'S THE ENTIRE HACK.)

## **3. TRY A FULL-BODY WRING-OUT**

BEGIN BY GENTLY ROTATING YOUR WRISTS AND ANKLES, MOVE UP YOUR EXTREMITIES, THROUGH YOUR HIPS, ABDOMEN, AND CHEST.

## **4. SIGH ALOUD. 3 TIMES.**

BONUS POINTS: RELEASE A SOUND — OR TONE — WITH EACH PURPOSEFUL EXHALATION.

## **5. FIND 2 ITEMS IN YOUR CURRENT LIVING SPACE THAT YOU ENJOY LOOKING AT. BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO EACH OF THE ITEMS.**

WHAT FEATURES DO THEY POSSESS? WHAT IS IT ABOUT THEM THAT DRAW YOU TO THEM? WHAT GIVES THEM BEAUTY?

## **6. WALK TO YOUR SPICE CABINET OR PANTRY, AND SMELL THREE OF YOUR FAVOURITE SPICES, TEAS, OR HERBS.**

## **7. OK, HERE'S THE BIG ONE: GIVE YOURSELF 90 SECONDS. FOR AT LEAST 90 SECONDS, GRANT YOURSELF PERMISSION TO LOOSEN YOUR ATTEMPT AT TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THE STORY IS (OR WHY YOU'RE FEELING SOME TYPE OF WAY), AND GIVE YOURSELF SPACE TO FEEL.**

SAD? CRY. FRUSTRATED? CRY, STOMP. ANGRY? SCREAM INTO YOUR PILLOW. ENVIOUS? LET THE SENSATION MOVE THROUGH, MOVE YOU, ORIENT YOU. ASHAMED? LOCATE THAT PART OF YOUR BODY AND LET IT SPEAK —LET IT MOVE! (YOU ARE NOT BAD. YOU ARE HUMAN. MOTHERHOOD IS HARD SOMETIMES)

# ***Bodywork Practices for Healing***

Bodywork is one of the most overlooked but transformative parts of postpartum recovery. Practices like ***belly binding, pelvic floor therapy, massage, and rituals like Closing the Bones*** can support your body's natural healing process and help you feel more connected to yourself.

## BELLY BINDING

- Helps support your core
- Promotes pelvic stability
- Encourages the uterus to shrink.

## PELVIC FLOOR THERAPY

- Helps restore strength
- Improves pelvic & uterine function

THE YOGA PRACTICES FEATURED IN THIS GUIDE ARE GREAT FOR PELVIC FLOOR RECOVERY BUT AS A POSTPARTUM DOULA I ALWAYS ENCOURAGE SEEING A TRAINED PELVIC FLOOR THERAPIST FOR A COMPLETE SUPPORT CHECKUP.

HERE ARE SOME GREAT BELLY BINDING TUTORIALS WITH DIFFERENT VARIATIONS. I PREFER THE BENKUNG BELLY BINDING TECHNIQUE BUT TRY A FEW AND SEE WHAT FEELS THE BEST FOR YOU.

***Remember, belly binding is NOT to get 'snatched' or bounce back. It's there to help your organs recalibrate and feel supportive.***

### **LINKS:**

#### **1. BENGKUNG**

#### **2. MISTAKES TO AVOID**



"REST AND SELF-CARE ARE SO IMPORTANT. WHEN YOU TAKE TIME TO REPLENISH YOUR SPIRIT, IT ALLOWS YOU TO SERVE OTHERS FROM THE OVERFLOW. YOU CANNOT SERVE FROM AN EMPTY VESSEL."

— ELEANOR  
BROWNN

# Abhyanga Postpartum Massage

Abhyanga is a traditional Ayurvedic self-massage practice using warm oil. It's deeply grounding and restorative, making it ideal for the postpartum period. The massage promotes circulation, soothes the nervous system, supports hormonal balance, and aids in healing the body after birth. Women in India **get massages everyday after birth for 40 days!!!**

## How to Perform Abhyanga Postpartum Massage

- 1. Choose Your Oil:**
  - *Sesame oil (warming and grounding) is a traditional choice.*
- 2. Warm the Oil:**
- 3. Gently heat the oil in a small bowl until it's warm to the touch but not hot. Warm oil enhances relaxation and improves absorption.**
- 4. Create a Relaxing Space:**
- 5. Find a warm, quiet room where you won't be disturbed. Sit or stand on a towel to catch any excess oil.**
- 6. Begin by massaging your scalp with small, circular motions, then work down to your neck and shoulders.**
- 7. Use gentle, clockwise strokes over your belly to support digestion and help your uterus shrink back to size.**
- 8. Use long, sweeping strokes on your limbs, moving towards your heart to encourage circulation. Use circular motions on your joints (elbows, knees, ankles).**
- 9. Massage your lower back and pelvic area with slow, firm strokes to promote healing and relieve tension from carrying and delivering your baby.**
- 10. Finish with your feet, using firm, circular motions on the soles and gentle strokes on the tops. This helps ground and relax your entire body.**
- 11. After the massage, allow the oil to absorb for 10-15 minutes if possible. Then, take a warm shower or bath to rinse off any excess oil.**



## **BENEFITS OF ABHYANGA**

- Promotes relaxation and calms the nervous system.
- Improves circulation and lymphatic drainage.
- Eases muscle tension and joint pain.
- Supports digestion and hormone balance.
- Nourishes and hydrates the skin.

# SHIATSU MASSAGE

As someone who performs shiatsu massage for postpartum mothers, I have witnessed the incredible ways it supports recovery, calms the nervous system, and helps women reconnect with their bodies after birth.

Shiatsu massage is a deeply restorative and nurturing practice rooted in traditional Japanese medicine. Using gentle pressure, stretching, and rhythmic movements along the body's energy pathways (meridians), shiatsu aims to restore balance and promote healing.



## *Why It's My Favorite Bodywork Practice For New Mothers:*

- Shiatsu supports the body's **natural** recovery processes after birth.

By stimulating circulation and lymphatic flow, it helps reduce swelling, promote uterine contraction, and encourage the repair of tissues. For cesarean births, shiatsu can also aid in healing the abdominal area and reduce tension around the scar tissue (once the wound has healed).

- Relieves Physical Discomfort

Postpartum often comes with its fair share of aches and pains, from sore shoulders and backs due to feeding and carrying the baby, to pelvic discomfort and fatigue. Shiatsu targets these areas of tension with focused, gentle pressure, providing immediate relief and long-term improvement.

- Balances Hormones

The postpartum period is a time of hormonal recalibration, which can lead to mood swings, night sweats, and fatigue. Shiatsu stimulates key acupressure points that support hormonal balance, helping to regulate mood, energy levels, and overall well-being.

# CLOSING THE BONES

**ONE OF MY FAVORITE PRACTICES TO INCORPORATE INTO MY POSTPARTUM CARE IS CLOSING THE BONES.**

*Closing the Bones is a traditional postpartum ritual practiced in many cultures, including Mexico, Guatemala, and Morocco.*

**IT SYMBOLIZES THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CLOSURE AFTER BIRTH, HELPING THE MOTHER TRANSITION FROM PREGNANCY TO MOTHERHOOD. THE PRACTICE INVOLVES THE USE OF REBOZOS (LONG, WOVEN SHAWLS), MASSAGE, AND RITUAL CARE TO REALIGN THE BODY, RELEASE TENSION, AND RESTORE BALANCE.**

*Closing the Bones can be done any time during the postpartum period—immediately after birth, weeks later, or even years later. Some mothers find it especially healing after a particularly challenges or traumatic birth experience.*



## ***How It's Performed:***

**1**

### ***Creating a Calming Environment:***

The ceremony begins in a warm, soothing space enhanced with candles, essential oils, and relaxing music to promote comfort and relaxation.

**2**

### ***Massage and Rebozo Wrapping:***

A full-body massage with warm oil relaxes the mother and stimulates circulation, followed by gentle wrapping and unwrapping with rebozos across the head, shoulders, abdomen, pelvis, knees, and feet to realign and support the body.

**3**

### ***Mindful Reflection:***

The ceremony includes moments of mindfulness or storytelling, allowing the mother to process her birth experience, release emotions, and embrace her transition into motherhood.

***THIS DEEPLY NURTURING PRACTICE HELPS REALIGN THE PELVIS, SUPPORTS HEALING, AND PROVIDES A SYMBOLIC SENSE OF CLOSURE AS THE MOTHER TRANSITIONS INTO HER NEW ROLE. BEYOND THE PHYSICAL BENEFITS, IT'S A TIME FOR MOTHERS TO FEEL HELD, CELEBRATED, AND RECONNECTED TO THEIR BODIES IN A SAFE AND SACRED SPACE.***

***IT CAN BE PERFORMED AS A SOLO CEREMONY OR YOU CAN INVITE YOUR CLOSEST FEMALE RELATIVES/FRIENDS TO ACCOMPANY YOU AND HELP YOU CLOSE THIS CHAPTER.***

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[Check Out A Video Of What It Looks Like Here](#)



## **HERBAL SUPPORT**

Herbs have been used for centuries to support mothers during the postpartum period. Gentle yet powerful, these plant-based allies offer nourishment, healing, and comfort during recovery. Whether sipped as teas, infused in baths, or applied topically, herbs can play a key role in helping your body and mind heal after birth.

### *Practical Ways to Use Herbs*

- ***Herbal Teas: Blend nettle, raspberry leaf, and chamomile for a daily postpartum tea. Sip warm throughout the day for hydration and nourishment.***
- ***Sitz Baths: Infuse calendula, lavender, and chamomile in hot water, then strain and add to your bath. Ideal for soothing tender areas.***
- ***Healing Oils: Infuse calendula or lavender in a carrier oil like coconut or sesame for perineal or scar massage.***
- ***Milk Boosters: Incorporate fenugreek into your diet through teas, lactation cookies, or capsules.***
- ***Herbal Compresses: Soak a cloth in a strong infusion of herbs like chamomile or calendula and apply to tender areas for soothing relief.***
- ***Hair Growth: Rosemary can be steeped and used in a spritz bottle to help with postpartum hairloss***

And your Postpartum Recipe Recovery & Postpartum Checklist has lots of other herbal allies I LOVE, & how to use them in postpartum.



## ***HERBAL PANTRY***

Building a postpartum herbal pantry is a thoughtful way to support your recovery with natural remedies. These are what I always have stocked in my pantry for new moms (and myself!)

- Nettle
- Raspberry Leaf
- Calendula
- Comfrey
- Chamomile
- Lavender
- Red Clover
- Fenugreek
- Fennel
- Lemon Balm
- Ginger
- Turmeric
- Ashwagandha
- Shatavari
- Marshmallow Root
- Dandelion Leaf
- Milk Thistle
- Motherwort
- Yarrow

# CASTOR OIL PACKS

Castor oil packs are a gentle and effective way to support postpartum healing. This traditional remedy has been used for centuries to promote circulation, reduce inflammation, and encourage the body's natural detoxification processes. (You can also use it on your hair & eyelashes for PP hairloss!)



## ***What You'll Need:***

- ***Organic, cold-pressed castor oil***
- ***A clean piece of cotton flannel or muslin***
- ***Plastic wrap or a reusable waterproof cover***
- ***A hot water bottle or heating pad***

## ***Instructions:***

1. ***Prepare the Pack: Soak the cotton flannel in castor oil until it's thoroughly saturated but not dripping.***
2. ***Apply to the Area: Place the soaked flannel on the desired area, such as the lower abdomen, pelvis, or lower back.***
3. ***Cover and Warm: Cover the flannel with plastic wrap or a reusable cover, then place a hot water bottle or heating pad on top.***
4. ***Relax: Lie down and rest for 20-45 minutes while the warmth helps the castor oil penetrate the skin and tissues. Use this time to meditate, read, or simply relax.***
5. ***Clean Up: After removing the pack, wipe the area with a warm, damp cloth to remove any excess oil.***

***Castor oil packs can be safely used on a cesarean scar, but only once the wound has fully healed and the skin is intact.***

***You can use the links on your holistic postpartum checklist for the brands I use with my mamas.***

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# FEEDING

*Your Personal Choice*

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## **Why It Matters**

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***Feeding your baby is an essential part of the postpartum experience, but it's more than nourishment, it's connection, comfort, and finding what works best for you and your baby.***



While I strongly advocate for breastfeeding because of its incredible health benefits and emotional connection, I understand that feeding journeys look different for every family. Whether you're breastfeeding, expressing, combination feeding, or bottle feeding, this chapter offers thoughtful, practical guidance to help you make informed decisions while feeling supported and empowered.

**THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO FEED YOUR BABY**

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## ***Breastfeeding: The Basics and Beyond***

Breastfeeding is often described as natural, but that doesn't mean it's always easy. It's a ***learned skill***, one that requires patience, practice, and support.

***From the moment your baby latches, breastfeeding sets the stage for bonding and provides the ultimate tailored nutrition for your little one. Breast milk contains everything your baby needs, from essential nutrients to antibodies that protect against illness.***

BREASTFEEDING BENEFITS BOTH MOTHER AND BABY IN COUNTLESS WAYS. FOR YOUR BABY, IT PROVIDES IMMUNE SUPPORT, REDUCES THE RISK OF INFECTIONS, AND ADAPTS TO THEIR CHANGING NEEDS AS THEY GROW. FOR YOU, BREASTFEEDING STIMULATES OXYTOCIN RELEASE, HELPING YOUR UTERUS CONTRACT AND REDUCING POSTPARTUM BLEEDING, WHILE ALSO LOWERING THE RISK OF BREAST AND OVARIAN CANCER IN THE LONG TERM.

### **WE CAN TALK ABOUT THE BENEFITS WITHOUT SHAMING OTHER MOMS**

Whether you agree or not, my personal stance is that breasts were made to feed babies. In all of my years of breastfeeding my littles, working with lactation consultants and supporting mothers on their journey, breastmilk is what is best for meeting all of babies needs. And it's okay to say that is their biological design.

What's ***not okay***, is that we use this term 'breast is best' and then offer almost ZERO support for mothers who want to breastfeed.

The first recommendation I will always give to moms who want to breastfeed is this:

***INVEST IN A LACTATION CONSULTANT. IT IS NOT A LUXURY BUT A NECESSITY. THEY CAN HELP WITH LATCH, TONGUE TIE EVALUATION, POSITIONING & SO MUCH MORE. AT FOX & CUB WE HAVE EXPERT IBCLC'S READY TO SUPPORT YOU***

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# BREASTFEEDING

- *In the U.S., 83% of mothers initiate breastfeeding at birth, but only 55% are still breastfeeding at 6 months, and this drops to 24% exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months (CDC, 2022 Breastfeeding Report Card).*
- *Globally, only 44% of infants under 6 months are exclusively breastfed, despite the World Health Organization (WHO) recommending exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months (WHO, 2022).*

**THE NUMBER ONE REASON THERE IS SUCH A HUGE DROP IN NUMBERS?**

**LACK OF SUPPORT!**

***What Can Be Done to Support Breastfeeding?***

- ***Education and Preparation: Better antenatal education about breastfeeding challenges and how to overcome them.***
- ***Access to Lactation Support: Ensuring every mother has access to lactation consultants and breastfeeding support groups.***
- ***Cultural Change: Normalizing breastfeeding in public spaces and media to reduce stigma.***
- ***Improved Workplace Policies: Providing adequate maternity leave and facilities for pumping or breastfeeding at work.***

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***Breastfeeding rates drop not because mothers don't want to breastfeed but because many face barriers they cannot overcome alone. Creating a culture of support and understanding is key to empowering mothers to continue breastfeeding if they choose to.***

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# BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

1. [FOX & CUB IBCLC'S LINK HERE](#)

2. NATIONAL BREASTFEEDING  
HELPLINE (US) (1-800-994-  
9662)

3. [US BREASTFEEDING COMMITTEE](#)

4. [GLOBAL HEALTH MEDIA VIDEOS](#)

5. [LA LECHE LEAGUE  
INTERNATIONAL](#)

6. [ASSOCIATION OF BREASTFEEDING  
MOTHERS \(ABM\)](#)



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Remember, it's not all or nothing, even one drop of breast milk is a gift to your baby.



“A BABY NURSING  
AT A MOTHER'S  
BREAST IS AN  
UNDENIABLE  
AFFIRMATION OF  
OUR  
ROOTEDNESS IN  
NATURE.”

–DAVID SUZUKI

# Expressing Milk:

## *Tools and Tips*

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Expressing milk offers flexibility in your feeding routine. Whether you're building a freezer stash, returning to work, or sharing feeding duties with a partner, expressing allows your baby to benefit from breast milk when you're not available.

### **Choosing the Right Pump**

There are two main types of breast pumps: manual and electric. Manual pumps are quiet, portable, and ideal for occasional use, while electric pumps are faster and more efficient for regular pumping. Ensure your pump fits correctly; flanges that are too small or too large can cause discomfort and reduce milk output. I like hands-free pumps like Elvie or a cheaper alternative.

### Tips for Successful Pumping

- **Timing Matters:** Pump at the same times daily to establish a routine and maintain supply.
- **Create a Calm Space:** A quiet, relaxed environment can help trigger your let-down reflex.
- **Massage and Warmth:** Gentle breast massage and warm compresses can improve milk flow.

***Expressing can feel daunting at first, but it's a valuable tool that allows you to balance breastfeeding with the demands of modern life.***



# Milk Storage Guidelines

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- Room temperature: Up to 4 hours
- Refrigerator: Up to 4 days
- Freezer: Up to 6 months Label stored milk with the date, and thaw frozen milk in the fridge overnight or under warm water. Never refreeze thawed milk.

## *Next up - Combination Feeding*

***Combination feeding blends breastfeeding with formula feeding, offering a flexible solution for families navigating low supply, returning to work, or wanting a partner to share feeding responsibilities.***

***This approach lets you enjoy the benefits of breastfeeding while ensuring your baby is fully nourished.***

## *Why Choose Combination Feeding?*

Combination feeding can alleviate the pressure of exclusive breastfeeding, making the journey more sustainable. It allows for shared responsibilities, especially during night feeds, and provides an option for mothers who may face challenges like low milk supply or latch difficulties.

## **How to Start**

***Introduce formula gradually. Start with one bottle a day while continuing to breastfeed, allowing your baby time to adjust. Maintain your milk supply by pumping or breastfeeding during your usual feeding times.***

**1**

Use a slow-flow teat to mimic breastfeeding and reduce nipple confusion.

**2**

Offer formula at consistent times, such as bedtime, to help establish a routine.

**3**

Pay attention to your baby's cues and adjust the balance between breast milk and formula as needed.

**4**

Combination feeding is not a compromise; it's a way to adapt feeding to fit your family's needs while maintaining the beautiful connection of breastfeeding.



# BOTTLE FEEDING

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Bottle feeding, whether with formula, expressed milk, or a combination, can be a nourishing and bonding experience when approached with care. Formula is a safe, nutritionally complete option that supports your baby's growth and development.

## **Creating Connection Through Bottle Feeding**

Feeding is about more than just nourishment; it's a time to bond. Hold your baby close, make eye contact, and talk or sing softly to them. Responsive feeding, offering milk when your baby shows hunger cues rather than on a strict schedule, builds trust and fosters a sense of security.

## **A Non-Judgmental Choice**

Some mothers feel guilt about bottle feeding, but it's important to remember that feeding your baby is about what works best for you both. A happy, healthy mum is just as crucial as a well-fed baby.



## ***Practical Tips for Bottle Feeding***

- Choose the Right Bottle: A slow-flow teat helps mimic breastfeeding and prevents overfeeding.
- Sterilize Everything: Ensure bottles and teats are clean and sterilized before use.
- Prepare Safely: Follow formula preparation guidelines exactly to avoid contamination.



“I DON'T KNOW ABOUT CHANGING MY PERSPECTIVE, BECAUSE MOTHERHOOD IS SUCH A GLORIOUS BLESSING AND I AM VERY THANKFUL FOR THAT. IT IS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL EXPERIENCE. I SO STRONGLY RECOMMEND IT. IT'S BLISS, LOVE, AND FULFILLMENT OF ANOTHER LEVEL.”

—AISHWARYA RAI  
BACHCHAN

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# YOUR BABY – THEY’RE HERE

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Welcoming a baby into your life is a whirlwind of emotions, adjustments, and learning curves. Whilst I’m a mother centered practitioner and my focus is YOUR postpartum, you and baby are a dyad. So this chapter is all about navigating those first weeks and months with confidence and calm. From understanding your baby’s needs to creating safe and nurturing spaces for sleep, soothing, and bonding, this chapter is here to help you trust your *instincts* and embrace your role as a mother.

***Your baby’s needs are simple: warmth, nourishment, and the comfort of your presence.***

## CONNECTION

They’ve just transitioned from the womb, where everything was constant and safe, to a world that’s full of new sensations. *Skin-to-skin* contact is one of the most powerful ways to ease this transition. It regulates their temperature, heart rate, and breathing while promoting bonding and milk production.

You might notice that your baby sleeps a lot but in short bursts. This is completely normal, as their tiny stomach means they need to feed frequently. Expect your baby to *cluster feed*, which can be overwhelming, but it’s their way of regulating your milk supply. Trust your instincts here, your baby knows what they need, and you’re more attuned to them than you think.

***The world can wait while you recover and bond. Ask for help, let people cook for you, and let the house be messy. This is your time to heal and connect with your baby. Everything else can wait.***

## ***Co-Sleeping: Nature's Way of Sleeping***

Across most cultures and throughout human history, babies have ***slept close to their caregivers***. It's only in the last few centuries, primarily in Western societies, that separate sleep spaces for babies have become the norm. Shifting our mindset about co-sleeping means understanding it as the ***natural, instinctive way babies regulate*** their needs and bond with their caregivers.

***Babies are biologically wired to stay close to their caregivers. In the womb, they were in constant contact with you, and after birth, they rely on that closeness to feel safe and secure***

### **CO-SLEEPING AROUND THE WORLD**

In Japan, families traditionally sleep on futons together, and co-sleeping rates are among the highest globally, with a notably low incidence of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

In parts of Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, babies often sleep with or near their mothers as a matter of course.

In Western societies, however, the rise of industrialization and modern housing introduced separate sleep spaces for babies, leading to the idea that babies should sleep alone. This shift coincided with cultural values around independence and privacy rather than ***evidence-based practices***.

Studies now show that when done safely, co-sleeping can actually promote better outcomes for both babies and parents.



# Why Co-Sleep?

***Co-sleeping/bed sharing helps meet these fundamental needs:***

## Regulation

***Babies are born with immature systems. Sleeping near you helps regulate their heart rate, breathing, and body temperature. Research shows that a baby's vital signs remain more stable when they're close to their caregiver.***

## Better Sleep

***Babies who co-sleep often wake less fully and settle more quickly because they can feel, smell, and hear their parent nearby. This reduces stress for both baby and parent, making co-sleeping a more restful option for many families.***

## Breastfeeding Support

***Co-sleeping facilitates nighttime breastfeeding, with studies showing that breastfeeding mothers who co-sleep get more sleep overall than those who do not. The ease of feeding without fully waking reduces exhaustion and helps maintain milk supply.***

## Bonding

***Sharing sleep space strengthens the emotional connection between parent and baby. This closeness builds a sense of trust and security that benefits the baby's emotional development.***

**Reframing Co-Sleeping Myths** Western parenting often labels co-sleeping as dangerous or indulgent. However, when done safely, co-sleeping is a natural and healthy way to meet your baby's needs. The key is understanding how to create a safe co-sleeping environment.

Contrary to the belief that co-sleeping creates dependency, studies show it fosters independence over time. Babies who feel secure in their early years are more likely to explore and self-regulate as they grow. Co-sleeping doesn't "spoil" a baby, it honors their biological instincts.

### **SAFE CO-SLEEPING GUIDELINES**

- Use a firm, flat mattress with no soft bedding or pillows around the baby.
- Avoid alcohol, smoking, or sedatives that could impair your awareness.
- Ensure your baby cannot fall off the bed or get trapped between the bed and wall.

Research has shown that breastfeeding mothers who co-sleep naturally adopt a protective C-shaped position, which keeps the baby close while reducing the risk of accidental suffocation. Safe co-sleeping practices can lower the risk of SIDS compared to sleeping away from the caregiver.

# BUSTING BABY SLEEP MYTHS

Baby sleep is one of the most talked-about (and misunderstood) aspects of early parenting. Everywhere you look, there's advice on how to make your baby "sleep through the night." But here's the thing: newborn sleep patterns are biologically designed to be fragmented.

## ***Myth 1: "Good babies sleep through the night."***

*The reality? Newborns have tiny stomachs and need to wake frequently to feed. It's not about being "good" or "bad"—it's biology.*

## ***Myth 2: "You're spoiling your baby by holding them too much."***

*Babies thrive on contact and closeness. They cannot be 'spoiled'. Responding to their needs builds trust and security, which actually supports better sleep in the long term.*

## ***Myth 3: "Sleep training is the only way to get rest."***

*Babies thrive on contact and closeness. They cannot be 'spoiled'. Responding to their needs builds trust and security, which actually supports better sleep in the long term.*



*Gentle approaches, like responsive settling or safe co-sleeping build trust and security, laying a foundation for better sleep over time—without forcing babies to silence their natural instincts for connection.*

REFRAME – THIS IS  
JUST A SEASON.

## ***Embracing Nature's Way***

Co-sleeping is more than a sleeping arrangement, it's a way to honor the deep connection between you and your baby.

By keeping them close, you're meeting their biological need for security, regulation, and love.

For many families, co-sleeping isn't just a practical solution for nighttime parenting, it's a way to reclaim an ancient, natural practice that strengthens bonds and creates a more restful postpartum experience.

Whether you co-sleep full-time, part-time, or use a bedside crib for proximity, embracing closeness at night can transform how you navigate those early months with your baby.

### **CO-SLEEPING RESOURCES**

***Follow the links below  
to learn more***

James McKenna's Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Laboratory

Renowned research on the science of co-sleeping and infant sleep.

Sweet Sleep by La Leche League

A comprehensive guide to safe bed-sharing and co-sleeping while breastfeeding.

Safe Infant Sleep by Dr. James McKenna

A detailed book focusing on the biology of infant sleep and safe co-sleeping practices.

NHS Start4Life

Practical advice and safety tips for co-sleeping

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“Mothers and children are in a category all their own. There’s no bond so strong in the entire world. No love so instantaneous and forgiving.”

—Gail Tsukiyama



# COLIC – THE MYTH

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Colic is one of those words that gets thrown around when babies cry for no apparent reason. If your baby has prolonged periods of fussiness (usually defined as crying for more than three hours a day, three days a week), you might be told they have colic. But here's the truth: colic isn't a diagnosis—it's a catch-all term for unexplained crying.

***The myth of colic often leaves parents feeling helpless, as though there's something "wrong" with their baby. In reality, crying is one of the only ways babies communicate, and it's often their way of processing an overstimulating world. Common causes of excessive crying can include digestive discomfort, hunger, fatigue, or simply a need for comfort.***

Rather than focusing on "fixing" colic, try these soothing techniques:

- Hold your baby in an upright position after feeds to reduce gas.
- Gently massage their belly in a clockwise motion to ease tension.
- Swaddle them snugly to recreate the feeling of being in the womb.
- Use white noise or rhythmic rocking to help calm their nervous system.



## BABIES CRY FOR A REASON

Remember, your baby's crying isn't a reflection of your parenting, it's just their way of navigating life outside the womb. If you're ever concerned, trust your instincts and consult a healthcare provider.

## **Resources That Call Out the Myth of Colic**

### 1. Dr. Sears: The Fussy Baby Book

- Offers a compassionate perspective on understanding and soothing crying babies, debunking the notion of “colic” as a standalone condition.
- Website: [www.askdrsears.com](http://www.askdrsears.com)

### 2. Happiest Baby on the Block by Dr. Harvey Karp

- Provides insights into the “fourth trimester” and explains how crying is a baby’s communication tool rather than an unexplained disorder.
- Website: [www.happiestbaby.com](http://www.happiestbaby.com)

### 3. Infant Behavior and Development Journal

- Research articles exploring crying patterns and their links to unmet needs, overstimulation, or digestive issues rather than the “colic” label.

### 4. The Nurture Revolution by Greer Kirshenbaum

- Challenges conventional labels like colic by exploring how crying reflects a baby’s need for connection, regulation, or physical relief.
- Available on Amazon and major retailers.

### 5. The Holistic Science of Human Milk by Dr. Michelle Henning and Cindy Turner-Maffei

- Delves into crying, breastfeeding, and the factors that often get mislabelled as “colic,” offering solutions rooted in biology and connection.
- ***These resources collectively dismantle the myth of colic, highlighting that babies cry for reasons—whether they’re hungry, tired, overstimulated, or simply need comfort—and empowering parents to respond with confidence and compassion.***

# BABYWEARING - BENEFITS, TECHNIQUES & TIPS

Wearing my babies was an absolute GAME CHANGER.

*It keeps your baby close, helps them feel secure, and gives you the freedom to move through your day with your hands free. Whether you're running errands, soothing a fussy baby, or just getting a moment to yourself, babywearing can make life with a little one so much easier.*

## BABYWEARING BENEFITS

- **Promotes Bonding**
- **Supports Baby's Development**
- **Reduces Crying**
- **Hands-Free Parenting**
- **Eases Reflux**

LEARN THE T.I.C.K.S.  
GUIDELINES FOR SAFE  
BABYWEARING:

- **Tight:** Your baby should be snug against you.
- **In view at all times:** You should always see your baby's face.
- **Close enough to kiss:** You should be able to kiss their head easily.
- **Keep chin off the chest:** Ensure their airways remain clear.
- **Supported back:** Their back should be naturally supported and not slouched.

Start Small: Practice using your sling or carrier at home before venturing out, so you and your baby get used to it.

Follow Baby's Cues: Pay attention to their comfort. If they're fussy, check their position, temperature, or hunger cues.



## Sling and Baby Carrier Options

### **Stretchy Wraps**

Perfect for newborns and early months.

Examples: Moby Wrap, Boba Wrap.

Benefits: Soft, snug fit that mimics the womb; great for skin-to-skin contact.

### **Ring Slings**

Lightweight and quick to put on.

Examples: WildBird, Sakura Bloom.

Benefits: Ideal for short trips or around the house; great for newborns and toddlers.

### **Soft-Structured Carriers (SSCs)**

Ergonomic carriers with adjustable straps and buckles.

Examples: Ergobaby, Tula, BabyBjörn.

Benefits: Offers excellent support for longer wears; suitable for both infants (with inserts) and toddlers.

### **Woven Wraps**

Versatile and suitable for newborns to toddlers.

Examples: Didymos, Oscha.

Benefits: Offers a custom fit and multiple carrying options (front, back, hip).

### **Meh Dai (Asian-Style Carriers)**

A traditional carrier with a panel and tie straps.

Examples: DidyTai, Infantino Sash.

Benefits: Combines structure with softness; adjustable for various body sizes.

### **Onbuhimo (Back Carriers)**

A buckle-free carrier for older babies.

Examples: Sakura Bloom Onbuhimo, Lenny Lamb.

Benefits: Great for back carries and quick ups and downs with toddlers.

## *My Fave IG Accounts For BabyWearing*

***@babywearingmama***

*A certified babywearing educator sharing tips, safety advice, and carrier reviews.*

***@wrapyouinlove***

*A well-known account featuring tutorials, troubleshooting tips, and babywearing inspiration.*

***@slinglibrary***

*Highlights various sling and carrier options with advice from a UK-based babywearing library.*

***@thebabywearingpractice***

*Focused on promoting safe and inclusive babywearing practices for all families.*

***@wildbird***

*Beautifully curated content featuring ring sling inspiration and babywearing in everyday life.*

***@loveandcarry***

*A mix of babywearing tips, carrier reviews, and inspiring photos for parents.*

***@ergobaby***

*The official account of Ergobaby, showcasing practical use and babywearing tips for their range of carriers.*

***@tulababycarriers***

*Offers advice and inspiration for soft-structured carriers, with a focus on family adventures.*

***@carrythemclose***

*A community-driven account sharing real-life babywearing stories, advice, and tutorials.*

***@foxandcubfamilywellness***

# Holistic Baby Care:

## *Resources and Recommendations*

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### **Why I Follow a Holistic Lifestyle**

***Living holistically doesn't mean we live off-grid or reject modern conveniences. It means I aim to create an environment where my family thrives through balance.***

We prioritize nutrient-dense foods, natural remedies, and mindful practices, but I also embrace flexibility. Holistic parenting isn't about judgment or strict ideals—it's about doing what feels right for your family while leaving space for real-life chaos.

*For me, this lifestyle is about teaching my kids how to care for their **bodies**, respect **nature**, and stay **connected** to themselves and the world around them. Whether that's through a soothing chamomile bath, or trying breastmilk before tylenol, these small choices add up to a rhythm that feels calm and intentional.*

@foxandcubfamilywellness

#### A Holistic Lifestyle That's Realistic

Being holistic doesn't mean you're never frazzled, that your house is free from plastic, or that you'll never let your baby eat a biscuit. It's about choosing to prioritize practices and products that support your family's health and happiness without chasing an unattainable ideal.



# HOLISTIC BABY CARE PRACTICES

- ***Skin-to-Skin Contact***

The simple act of holding your baby close promotes bonding, regulates their temperature and breathing, and supports their nervous system. Skin-to-skin isn't just for the early days, it's a practice that can calm an upset baby at any stage.

- ***Gentle Baby Massage***

Massaging your baby with natural oils like coconut or almond oil promotes relaxation, improves circulation, and supports digestion. A nightly massage can also signal bedtime and create a soothing routine.

- ***Natural Remedies***

- Chamomile tea (cooled) for diaper rash or as a mild digestive aid.
- Lavender essential oil (diluted) for calming baths or massage.
- Breast milk for minor skin irritations & eye goop, it's nature's miracle cure!

- ***Cranial Osteopathy***

Gentle cranial osteopathy can help release tension from birth, support digestion, and improve sleep. It's particularly beneficial for babies who seem unsettled or have difficulty feeding.

- ***Natural Teething Remedies***

Opt for natural teething soothers like chilled chamomile tea bags, or silicone teething toys. These can provide relief without unnecessary chemicals.

# Holistic Baby Resources

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## Books

1. ***The Baby Book by William Sears and Martha Sears***
  - a. A comprehensive guide to attachment parenting and holistic baby care.
2. ***Nurture by Erica Chidi Cohen***
  - a. A modern take on pregnancy, birth, and postpartum with a holistic focus.
3. ***How to Raise a Healthy Child in Spite of Your Doctor*** by Dr. Robert Mendelsohn
  - a. Encourages informed decision-making and natural approaches to child health.
4. ***The First Forty Days by Heng Ou***
  - a. Emphasises holistic postpartum care and gentle transitions for both baby and mum.

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## Websites

1. ***KellyMom*** – Evidence-based breastfeeding and parenting advice.
  - o **Website: [kellymom.com](http://kellymom.com)**
2. ***The Holistic Mama*** – Natural remedies and holistic parenting resources.
  - o **Website: [theholisticmama.com](http://theholisticmama.com)**
3. ***Green Child Magazine*** – Articles on eco-friendly and holistic parenting.
  - o **Website: [greenchildmagazine.com](http://greenchildmagazine.com)**
4. ***Natural Parenting Network*** – Resources for attachment and natural parenting.
  - o **Website: [naturalparentsnetwork.com](http://naturalparentsnetwork.com)**
5. ***Mothering Magazine*** – A wealth of articles on gentle, holistic parenting.
  - o **Website: [mothering.com](http://mothering.com)**

# Holistic Baby Resources

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## *My Favorite Instagram Accounts*

1. [@raisedgood](#)
  - Nature-inspired, gentle parenting with practical advice.
2. [@earthbasedmama](#)
  - Offers natural baby care remedies and holistic parenting tips.
3. [@theholisticmama](#)
  - Tips on using natural remedies and building a holistic lifestyle for your family.
4. [@gentleparentingmemes](#)
  - Relatable, humorous takes on gentle and holistic parenting.
5. [@nurturingnovas](#)
  - Holistic parenting tips, natural remedies, and sustainable practices.
6. [@mother.ly](#)
  - A mix of modern and holistic parenting tips, encouragement, and resources.
7. [@ourmamavillage](#)
  - Gentle parenting advice that supports both baby and parent mental health.

***These resources provide a wealth of information, inspiration, and practical advice to help you create a holistic approach to raising your baby while feeling supported and connected to a like-minded community.***

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THERE IS NO ROLE IN  
LIFE MORE ESSENTIAL  
AND MORE ETERNAL  
THAN THAT OF  
MOTHERHOOD.”

—M. RUSSELL  
BALLARD

## COMMUNITY - MOTHERS NEED OTHERS

The saying ***“it takes a village to raise a child”*** is more than a quaint phrase—it’s a truth rooted in human history. For 95% of our existence as a species, we lived in close-knit, interdependent communities where ***care was shared*** and mothers were supported. Modern life, however, often leaves us isolated during one of the most vulnerable and ***transformative times*** of our lives.

***As new mothers, we’re expected to heal, adapt, and parent with little more than Google searches and the occasional text from a friend. This isolation isn’t normal or sustainable. You need—and deserve—a community to lift you up, share the load, and remind you that you’re not alone.***



## Building Your Village

### ***Lean on Like-Minded Mothers:***

Whether it’s a local baby group, an online forum, or a WhatsApp chat, finding other mothers who understand your journey is invaluable. Shared experiences can validate your feelings and offer practical advice.

### ***Ask for Help (and Be Specific):***

People want to help, but they often don’t know how. Don’t hesitate to ask for specific support, like dropping off a meal, holding the baby while you shower, or simply listening when you need to vent.

### ***Monthly Meet-Ups:***

Join or create a group that meets regularly, like “Mothers Need Others,” to create consistent connections. These gatherings can be casual or themed—think coffee mornings, recipe swaps, or gentle baby yoga sessions.

## **EXPECTATIONS FROM YOUR PARTNER**

While community is critical, your partner is your most immediate and consistent **support system**. They're not a 'helper', they're a co-parent, an equal participant in the shared journey of raising a child. Parenthood is one of the biggest shifts a couple can go through, and fostering a sense of teamwork is crucial for maintaining balance, easing the pressure, and ensuring both of you feel valued and supported.

IN THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD, MANY MOTHERS FIND THEMSELVES CARRYING THE INVISIBLE WEIGHT OF THE "MENTAL LOAD." THIS INCLUDES NOT JUST THE PHYSICAL TASKS OF CARING FOR A BABY BUT ALSO THE CONSTANT MENTAL GYMNASTICS OF PLANNING MEALS, REMEMBERING APPOINTMENTS, MANAGING THE HOUSEHOLD, AND ANTICIPATING EVERYONE'S NEEDS. IT CAN FEEL EXHAUSTING, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOUR OWN RECOVERY AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING REQUIRE ATTENTION TOO.



Creating a strong partnership starts with communication. It's not just about venting frustrations but about openly sharing how you're feeling, whether that's overwhelmed, exhausted, or simply needing a break. Encouraging your partner to express their feelings too can help build mutual understanding and empathy. These conversations may feel uncomfortable at first, but they're essential for aligning your goals and setting realistic expectations as a team. You'll find the Postpartum Communication Starters in your bundle for helpful icebreakers!

## EXPECTATIONS FROM YOUR PARTNER

Sharing responsibilities in a way that feels fair is also key. This doesn't mean splitting tasks **50/50**, it means distributing them in a way that acknowledges each person's strengths, availability, **and the realities of the postpartum phase.**

For example, if you're breastfeeding around the clock, your partner might take on household chores, meal preparation, or nighttime settling. It's about both of you stepping into roles that balance the workload and support each other's well-being.

Beyond the physical tasks, it's important to address the mental load together. For many partners, these invisible responsibilities aren't immediately obvious. Creating awareness of everything that needs managing, **whether it's keeping track of diapers, planning the weekly shop, or remembering the baby's check ups – can foster a greater sense of shared responsibility.** Your partner stepping into this space helps lighten your mental burden, allowing you to focus more on healing and bonding with your baby.

The ***Postpartum Partner Guide*** included in your bundle delves deeper into practical strategies for navigating these shifts together. From learning how to communicate effectively to setting boundaries and sharing emotional labor, it's designed to help partners step up and show up in ways that make a real difference.

A strong partnership doesn't just make parenting easier—it strengthens your relationship. When your partner actively supports you, listens to your needs, and takes on their share of the responsibilities, it creates a foundation of trust and teamwork that carries you both through the highs and lows of this transformative time. The postpartum period is a challenging phase, but with the right support, it can also bring you closer than ever before.

**I am fiercely passionate about postpartum equity because every mother deserves a partner who steps up, a village that shows up, and a recovery journey that honours her worth as the heart of her family.**

# POSTPARTUM IS FOREVER

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Postpartum is often talked about as though it's just a fleeting stage, the few weeks or months after birth when your body heals and your baby settles into the world. But the truth is, ***postpartum isn't something you "get through" and leave behind.*** It's a lifelong journey, a transformation that changes you on every level—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

*When you become a mother, there is a clear dividing line: the person you were before and the person you are becoming.*

***You are no longer just you, you are also someone's mother. Wild right? This new identity evolves as your baby grows, as your family changes, and as you meet yourself in each new season of motherhood.***

***The physical recovery of postpartum may seem like the most immediate focus, Your body holds the story of this transformation, and it deserves care and attention far beyond the early weeks.***

***Emotionally, postpartum is forever because motherhood is forever. Each stage of their growth brings new challenges and transformations for you too.***



Spiritually, the transition from maiden to mother is profound. You're no longer just living for yourself; you're shaping and holding space for another life.

This journey forces you to confront your limits, stretch your capacity for love, and grow in ways you never imagined.

# Nurturing You

## *Outside Of Motherhood*

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While motherhood is a central part of who you are, it's not all you are. Beneath the diapers, night feeds, and to-do lists is you, the person with dreams, passions, and a unique sense of self that existed long before your baby arrived. To **thrive** in this lifelong journey, it's vital to nurture the parts of yourself that exist beyond your role as a mother

Something I always remind my client of is this:  
Motherhood is defining. But it doesn't define all of you.

Your fourth trimester and first year of postpartum will be your **motherhood era**. Lean into that and surrender to it.

But remember that you can lean in without completely disowning the 'you' outside of motherhood. It's essential to your parenting journey that you **permit yourself** to reconnect to the you outside of motherhood, too.

Embrace balance.

When you **invest** in yourself, you bring more joy, patience, and presence into your mothering.

The best gift you can give your child is a **happy, fulfilled version** of you.

# Nurturing You, Outside of Motherhood

## ● **Revisiting Your Passions**

Motherhood can be all-consuming, especially in the early days when your time, energy, and focus are centered on your baby. But carving out even small moments to reconnect with the things you love is transformative. Think back to what brought you joy before this season of life. Did you love painting, reading, writing, or gardening? Maybe it was something physical like dancing, hiking, or yoga.

**Start small.** You don't need hours of uninterrupted time, sometimes 10 minutes with a sketchpad or a favorite playlist is enough to remind you of who you are outside of motherhood. Reclaim these passions, even in micro doses to help you pour from a fuller cup.



## ● **Setting Boundaries to Protect Your Time**

Boundaries are a form of self-respect, and as a mother, they're more important than ever. It's easy to let motherhood take up every ounce of your time and energy, but protecting even small moments for yourself is essential.

Start by identifying when and where you can create space. Maybe it's 15 minutes in the morning to journal, meditate, or sip tea in peace. Perhaps it's a weekly yoga class, a solo walk, or a regular bath where no one is allowed to interrupt (Get your partner to read the partner guide and remember, **personal hygiene is NOT a mom break**).

Communicate these boundaries with your partner, family, or support network, and don't feel guilty about enforcing them. Taking time for yourself isn't indulgent or a luxury but it IS necessary for your well-being.

# Nurturing You, Outside of Motherhood

- ***Rediscovering Identity Through Exploration***

Motherhood changes you, and part of nurturing yourself outside of it is exploring who you are now. It's okay if your passions and priorities look different than they did before. Use this season as an opportunity to try new things—sign up for a class, start a creative project, or explore a hobby you've always been curious about.

Think of it as an evolution. You're not just returning to your old self; you're meeting a new version of you, shaped by the incredible experience of motherhood.



- ***Letting Go of Guilt***

Many mothers feel guilt when they prioritise themselves, as though taking time for their own needs somehow detracts from their role as a parent. But I want to tell you something loud and clear: ***the more you nurture yourself, the more you'll have to give to your family.*** You're not taking away from your child by investing in yourself, you're teaching them the importance of self-care and balance.

Imagine the lessons you're imparting when your child sees you painting, hiking, or laughing with friends. You're showing them that they can pursue their passions and still show up for the people they love.

# Resources for Nurturing Yourself Outside of Motherhood

## *My Favorite Books for Personal Growth and Inspiration*

1. ***The Gifts of Imperfection*** by Brené Brown
    - Encourages self-compassion, authenticity, and embracing your imperfections.
  2. ***Big Magic*** by Elizabeth Gilbert
    - Explores creativity, courage, and finding joy in pursuing what lights you up.
  3. ***Present Over Perfect*** by Shauna Niequist
    - A guide to letting go of perfectionism and embracing a simpler, more connected life.
  4. ***The Joy of Missing Out*** by Tanya Dalton
    - Helps busy moms focus on what truly matters and rediscover joy in the everyday.
  5. ***Self-Compassion*** by Kristin Neff
    - Offers tools for developing kindness toward yourself during challenging times.
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## *Apps for Self-Care and Exploration*

1. ***Headspace or Calm***
  - Guided meditations and mindfulness exercises to help you reconnect with yourself.
2. ***Fabulous***
  - A habit-building app that encourages small, actionable steps toward self-care and personal growth.
3. ***Goodreads***
  - A platform to rediscover your love for reading, track your progress, and connect with other book lovers.
4. ***Skillshare***
  - Learn a new skill, from painting to photography, to spark your creativity and explore your passions.

# Nurturing Yourself Outside Of Motherhood

These resources are here to inspire and guide you, but nurturing yourself doesn't have to be complicated.

It starts with small steps. Reading a chapter of a book, journaling for a few minutes, or simply sitting in silence with a cup of tea.

Rediscovering yourself is a process, not a destination, so be patient and gentle as you explore what lights you up outside of motherhood.



# Final Thoughts

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Well here we are my friends. The end of this guide but just the beginning of your journey. And motherhood is a journey like no other, an unfolding of love, transformation, and resilience that shapes you in ways you never imagined.

It's messy, beautiful, exhausting, and awe-inspiring all at once. But most importantly, it's yours.

***Your motherhood, your story, your path.***

***As you navigate this postpartum period, I want you to remember that you are enough, exactly as you are. You don't need to have all the answers or do it all perfectly. Your baby doesn't need perfection, they need you.***

***This guide is a reflection of my deep passion for postpartum care and my belief that every mother deserves to feel supported, cherished, and seen. It's a reminder that your needs are just as important as your baby's, and that nurturing yourself is essential***

Thank you for letting me be a small part of your journey. I see you. I celebrate you. And I'm cheering you on every step of the way.

With love always,

*Olivia*

***Hey - don't forget we are always here for you. I want to see you thrive in postpartum.***

***Connect with Fox & Cub on IG @foxandcubfamilywellness if you ever need any support!***



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DATE:

# WEEKLY SELF-CARE POSTPARTUM PLAN

## MY PRIORITIES

What are the most important things I want to focus on in the first few months postpartum?

My  
Support  
System

Who can I rely on for practical help (e.g., cooking, cleaning,?)  
Who can I turn to for emotional support (e.g., friends, family, community)?

Boundaries

What boundaries can I set to ensure I have time to rest and recover?  
How will I communicate these boundaries to others?

Postpartum  
Self-Care

What small acts of self-care can I realistically incorporate into my daily or weekly routine?

My  
Nourishment  
Plan

What meals or snacks can I prepare or request that will support my recovery and energy?  
How can I make hydration and proper nutrition a priority?

Connection  
with My  
Partner

How can I ensure we're communicating and working as a team?  
What small moments of connection can we create amidst the chaos?



DATE:

# WEEKLY POSTPARTUM PLAN

## MY PRIORITIES

My  
Support  
System

Boundaries

Postpartum  
Self-Care

My  
Nourishment  
Plan

Connection  
with My  
Partner

