



# THE ULTIMATE 5-STEP GUIDE TO PREPARE FOR WHAT'S AFTER BIRTH

FREE GUIDE



PLAN  
AHEAD



SAVE  
TIME



REDUCE  
STRESS



NEW MOM  
APPROVED



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*“A circle of women  
may be the most  
powerful force  
known to  
humanity”*

— JEAN SHINODA BOLEN



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# W

elcome to Raising Mama, a community built with love and dedication for new mothers.

As the heart and soul behind Raising Mama, a community built for new mothers, I understand the joys and challenges of motherhood firsthand. Raising Mama is more than just a brand; it's an inclusive and empowering space that brings together healers, contributors, collaborators, and creators from around the globe.

Our mission is to support women in pregnancy and postpartum, while uplifting women-owned businesses making a positive impact. At Raising Mama, we believe in the transformative power of community, where women can connect, share their stories, and find solidarity in motherhood. We offer valuable resources, guidance, and a genuine space where mothers can thrive.

Join us at Raising Mama, where every new mother feels cherished and supported. We are here to walk with you through the journey of new motherhood, offering a helping hand, a listening ear, and a warm embrace.

With love and warmth,

**Megan Stander**  
CEO, Founder





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- ✨ **Mindfully Crafted:** Thoughtfully designed to cater to all aspects of your postpartum experience, from physical changes to mental wellness, relationships, and baby care.
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MOTHERHOOD WITH GRACE AND PREPAREDNESS.

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# EMBRACING THE TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE OF MOTHERHOOD

Becoming a mother is an extraordinary and life-changing experience that comes with a range of emotions and uncertainties.

From the anticipation of pregnancy to the challenges of childbirth and the often-overlooked postpartum period, new moms may find themselves facing a myriad of fears and concerns.

However, with **careful planning and preparation**, many of these worries can be alleviated, empowering moms to navigate the journey to motherhood with greater confidence and readiness.

## PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH, AND POSTPARTUM: A TIME OF ANXIETIES

During pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum, a new mom might be scared of:

- Pregnancy complications and health concerns for both herself and the baby.
- The pain and unpredictability of labor and childbirth.
- Not knowing what to expect during the postpartum period and how to handle the physical, mental, and emotional changes.
- Experiencing postpartum depression or anxiety and feeling overwhelmed by new responsibilities.
- Balancing the demands of motherhood with other roles and relationships in her life.
- Coping with sleep deprivation and exhaustion.
- Adjusting to the demands of breastfeeding or concerns about the feeding process.
- Feeling isolated or lacking a support system during the postpartum journey.



# PLANNING FOR POSTPARTUM: THE OFTEN-OVERLOOKED TRANSITION

Amidst these understandable worries, planning can play a crucial role in mitigating risks and preparing for postpartum.

A well-thought-out postpartum plan can help a new mom embrace this transformative period and foster her physical and emotional well-being.

And so, we begin...

## PLANNING FOR POSTPARTUM INVOLVES:

- **Educating Yourself:** Seek out information and resources about postpartum care, including common physical and emotional changes, breastfeeding, and self-care practices. Understanding what to expect can alleviate anxieties and foster a sense of preparedness.
- **Establishing a Support Network:** Surround yourself with a strong support system of family, friends, and professionals who can offer guidance and assistance during the postpartum period. Building this network can provide a sense of security and reduce feelings of isolation.
- **Creating a Postpartum Care Plan:** Develop a postpartum care plan that outlines your preferences for self-care, feeding choices, and daily routines. This plan can serve as a roadmap to navigate the early weeks and months of motherhood with more confidence.
- **Seeking Professional Help:** Don't hesitate to consult healthcare providers, lactation consultants, or mental health professionals if needed. Addressing concerns promptly can prevent complications and enhance your overall postpartum experience
- **Practicing Self-Compassion:** Remember that becoming a new mom is a significant life transition. Be kind to yourself and allow space for self-compassion as you adapt to the changes and challenges that motherhood brings.

*While much emphasis is placed on preparing for pregnancy and childbirth, it is equally important to focus on postpartum, which can be both physically grueling and mentally profound.*





# 5-STEP ROADMAP FOR PREPARING FOR POSTPARTUM

## STEP 2: COMMIT TO LOVING YOUR BODY

If there was ever a most important time in your life to practice this, it would be during the newborn phase. **Get your mindset ready now while the changes are beginning.**

## STEP 4: LEARN ABOUT BREASTFEEDING

Preparing for breastfeeding can significantly alleviate frustrations down the line and **improve your experience of the first few months** with your newborn.

1

## STEP 1: BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE MENTAL CHANGES

The shock of new motherhood is real. Often not talked about, learning about the mental challenges of postpartum and **planning ahead can take the edge off dramatically.**

2

## STEP 3: PREPARE FOR NEW RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS

Avoid the drama. Prior knowledge about what changes you're in for and **open communication starting NOW** are key to navigating these transitions.

3

4

## STEP 5: CREATE A PLAN FOR SLEEP

Baby sleep is a complex intersection of tendencies, beliefs, methods, and limitations. **The more you know, the better they and therefore YOU will sleep.**

5



# 1 STEP ONE BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE MENTAL CHANGES

Postpartum moms often face significant mental challenges related to the shock of motherhood.

*The transition from pregnancy to caring for a newborn can be overwhelming and emotionally demanding.*

Some major mental challenges include:

## Adjusting Productivity Expectations

Understand that your productivity may change during the postpartum phase. If your happiness is correlated with feeling like you've accomplished a lot at the end of the day, this will be a major mindset shift for you.

Having a baby can make you feel like you are "really busy doing nothing". There might be a few months where your main focus is breastfeeding, sleep, and taking care of your baby. **It's important to remember that all of this is temporary and that around 12 weeks this will start to shift.**

*Instead of resisting, allow yourself time to adapt and prioritize self-care.*



## Baby Blues (and Reds)

Many new mothers experience baby blues in the first few weeks after childbirth. This includes feelings of sadness, mood swings, irritability, and anxiety. The hormonal fluctuations, sleep deprivation, and adjusting to the new role of motherhood can contribute to these emotional changes. It's important to know that this is temporary and will pass after a few weeks.

**Tip:** Ask your partner and family ahead of time for patience while you're grappling with an influx of intense emotions, especially during the first month.

**Remember, we don't punish people that yell when a building is burning.**





# STEP 1: BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE MENTAL CHANGES

## Postpartum Depression (PPD)

**PPD is a more severe and persistent form of mood disorder that can affect mothers after childbirth.**

Symptoms may include prolonged feelings of sadness, hopelessness, loss of interest in activities, difficulty bonding with the baby, changes in appetite, and thoughts of self-harm or harming the baby.

**PPD requires professional support and treatment.**

## Postpartum Anxiety (PPA)

Postpartum anxiety is characterized by excessive worrying, racing thoughts, restlessness, and an intense fear of something happening to the baby or oneself. **It can be debilitating and interfere with a mother's ability to care for herself and her baby.**

**Tip:** If you don't already have a therapist, jot down some numbers/email addresses of therapists that you can contact if down the line you suspect you might have Postpartum Depression or Anxiety. It's much harder to do this when you're in the thick of it, especially if you need to have one covered by your insurance.

## Feelings of Isolation

The demands of caring for a newborn, combined with physical healing and limited social interactions, can lead to feelings of isolation. Some mothers may struggle with the abrupt change in their social lives and feelings of loneliness.

### Tips:

- Inundate your social media with positive accounts that support postpartum moms.
- Join the Raising Mama Community to network with moms that are in the exact phase of postpartum as you are, and get advice from moms and experts alike on all kinds of issues.







# STEP 1: BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE MENTAL CHANGES

## Body Image Concerns

The physical changes that occur during and after pregnancy can trigger body image concerns in some postpartum mothers.

Adjusting to the new shape and weight of your body can be challenging and contribute to feelings of self-doubt or low self-esteem. I'll explore this further in Step 3.

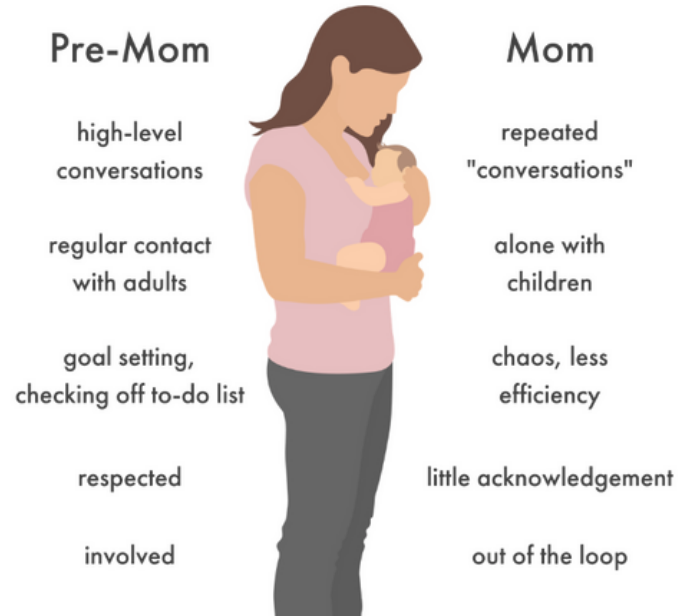
## Identity Shift

Becoming a mother brings about a profound shift in identity. Some women may struggle with the loss of their pre-motherhood identity and wrestle with reconciling their old self with their new role as a mother.

**Tip:** Be patient and have faith that while your identity has shifted, you will grow into it with time. Try and stay focused on the present and know that this phase is not for looking back longingly on your old life, but for enjoying the fleeting period of baby new-ness. **You'll be able to do all the things you loved before in no time.**



## Why do I feel like I've lost my identity? @PSYCHEDMOMMY



Credit: @psychedmommy on IG

## Fear and Overwhelm

The responsibility of caring for a tiny, vulnerable human being can create a sense of fear and overwhelm, especially for first-time mothers. Fears about making the wrong decisions, being a good enough parent, or not being able to meet the baby's needs are common.

Focus on gathering information, learning, and applying. What's out of your hands is out of your hands. **Also, none of us know what we're doing anyway.**





# STEP 1: BRACE YOURSELF FOR THE MENTAL CHANGES

## Sleep Deprivation

The lack of sleep in the early postpartum period can impact a mother's mental well-being. Sleep deprivation can exacerbate mood swings, increase irritability, and impair cognitive function.

- Until your baby can sleep through the night, there will always be a level of sleep deprivation.

### Tips:

- Ask for help so you can sleep. Don't self-sacrifice to the point where you fall apart.
- Let the house get dirty here and there. Sleep is more important.
- Cut corners where you can - get groceries delivered, eat frozen meals here and there, don't fold the laundry as neat as you want to, and release the imperfections - so you can SLEEP.



## Feeling Inadequate

Feeling Inadequate: Some mothers may struggle with feelings of inadequacy or the belief that they are not doing enough or doing things correctly. The pressure to be a "perfect" mother can lead to self-doubt and anxiety.

*You are exactly what your baby needs.  
Read that and say it to yourself often.*

IT'S CRUCIAL TO RECOGNIZE THAT THESE MENTAL CHALLENGES ARE COMMON AND CAN BE ADDRESSED WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT AND RESOURCES. SEEKING HELP FROM HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS, JOINING SUPPORT GROUPS, AND HAVING OPEN CONVERSATIONS WITH LOVED ONES CAN PROVIDE THE MUCH-NEEDED SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING DURING THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD. REMEMBER THAT REACHING OUT FOR HELP IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH, AND TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH IS ESSENTIAL FOR BOTH YOU AND YOUR BABY'S WELL-BEING.



# 2 STEP TWO COMMIT TO LOVING YOUR BODY

As your body goes through remarkable changes during pregnancy and postpartum, while difficult, it's essential to cultivate self-love and body positivity.

*In fact, if there was ever a most important time in your life to practice this, it would be during the newborn phase.*

Here's how to embrace and celebrate your body during this transformative phase:

## Ignore Society's Standards

Remember that societal beauty standards are often unrealistic and unattainable. The cultural pressure to “bounce back” is flat out ridiculous and unimportant. Focus on your body's incredible capabilities like growing and delivering a baby and let that give you confidence rather than conforming to external expectations.

**Tip:** Follow body-positive postpartum accounts on social media. Normalization of postpartum bodies is a great way to gain perspective.



## Practice Positive Self-Talk

Replace self-criticism with positive affirmations. Remind yourself of the amazing journey you're on and the gift of motherhood.

## Avoid Pressure and Guilt

Don't put undue pressure on yourself to bounce back to your pre-pregnancy body immediately. Focus on nurturing your baby and yourself during this special time.







## STEP 2: COMMIT TO LOVING YOUR BODY

### Give Yourself Grace

Your body will undergo significant changes during the postpartum period, and that's entirely normal. Be patient and allow yourself time to heal and adjust.

- Be aware that your body does not return back to normal once the baby comes out. It takes 6-8 weeks for your uterus to contract back to its normal size and **it's perfectly normal for it to take 6 months to 2 years for you to start feeling normal feelings about your body again.**
- Acknowledge the amazing thing you just did and that the way your body looks now is visual proof of that and should be celebrated
- Practice gratitude for your blessings. Focus on the good because **the newborn phase, despite being difficult, doesn't last forever.**
- Don't put pressure on yourself that could harm your experience of postpartum and memories with your newborn.
- Know that it is normal to have "out of body" experiences when looking at yourself



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*Postpartum doesn't exist for us to hate our bodies, it exists for us to bond with our baby.*



# 3 STEP THREE BE PREPARED FOR NEW RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS

The postpartum period can bring significant changes in relationship dynamics with your partner, parents, and other close individuals.

**Prior knowledge about these changes and open communication and understanding are key to navigating these transitions:**

## Partner Dynamics

Discuss responsibilities and expectations with your partner before the baby arrives.

Plan how you will support each other during this transformative period.

**Remember:** there will be imbalance no matter what because you carried the baby and are breastfeeding the baby (if that's what you choose).



**Talk to your partner ahead of time** about who will do what and explain to them what they should expect during the first few months (maybe make them read this PDF!)

### Topics to discuss:

- Making meals
- diaper changing
- night feedings
- naps
- feedings
- chores
- errands
- fatigue
- hormones,
- communication
- free time
- alone time
- date nights
- childcare options (even if it's just for an hour or two).





## STEP 3: BE PREPARED FOR NEW RELATIONSHIP DYNAMICS



### Parental Dynamics

As you become a mother, your relationship with your parents may change.

Communicate your desires for their involvement and set boundaries that respect your autonomy as a new parent.

**Your mom has been “the mom” your entire life.** Now that you are becoming “the mom”, there may be new friction since you are the one making the decisions now.

Talk to your parents before about how you want them to be involved and ask for patience and understanding.

- **Make a plan** for how you want to communicate your boundaries
- **Check-in with them often** about any changes you want to make to the plan as your and baby’s needs change
- **Don’t feel guilty** for needing space and asserting your needs

### Managing Advice and Judgment

Prepare for unsolicited advice and judgment from well-meaning individuals. Set boundaries and ask people to ask before offering advice, allowing you to control the kind of guidance you receive.

#### Tips:

- **Set boundaries** by asking people to ask you first if they want to give you advice.  
*Example: Having them ask “Are you open to receiving advice right now?” is a great way to anticipate advice and choose to receive it or politely reject it.*
- **Be confident about the decisions you are making** for yourself and your baby. Self-doubt can be confusing and you are perfectly capable of making your own mistakes and learning from them.
- No two babies are the same and you know your baby best.
- Try to get advice from people that don’t trigger you **including experts.**





# STEP FOUR LEARN ABOUT BREASTFEEDING

"Breastfeeding is a mother's gift to herself, her baby, and the earth." - Pamela K. Wiggins, author and lactation consultant.

Let me first start this with a disclaimer: it is your choice whether or not you want to breastfeed your baby and this guide does not advocate any which way. Fed is best.

Now that we've gotten that important note out of the way...

*Breastfeeding is one of the first things you will do with your baby and will take up most of your time during the first few months.*

Having knowledge about how to breastfeed your baby and the challenges you may have can help you mentally prepare so that you have less frustrations and can tackle challenges better as they come.



## Hospital Births

If you are delivering at the hospital, most hospitals have a lactation consultant on site that does rounds, but there's no guarantee as to how confident you will feel when you leave the hospital or how quickly they will get to your bedside.

## Birthing Centers and Home Births

Most midwives and doulas are great resources for lactation or have excellent local connections but having some prior knowledge before you give birth can only improve the quality of any advice you get.







## STEP 4: LEARN ABOUT BREASTFEEDING

### Understanding a Good Latch

A proper latch is essential for successful breastfeeding. Learning about **latching techniques** from reputable sources and **YouTube videos** can help you achieve a comfortable latch, reducing discomfort and promoting effective feeding.

**Remember:** Unless you choose to exclusively bottle-feed, **breastfeeding starts RIGHT AWAY after birth**. Although breastfeeding is commonplace and all over the media, the process is much harder in the beginning than you'd expect. There is a lot to learn here and it's better to start before birth.

### Normal Feeding Patterns

Familiarize yourself with the typical feeding patterns of newborns, one-month-olds, and two to three-month-old babies. Understanding what's normal can alleviate any worries about your baby's feeding routine.

**Tip:** Even though resources mention that newborns feed every 2-3 hours, it might be much more frequent than while they are developing a good latch and strengthening their sucking. Know the feeding cues of new babies. Newborns should always be fed on demand so be prepared for feeling like you're never NOT breastfeeding.

**Tip:** Talk to your partner about how they can support you while you are breastfeeding. Because it will take up a lot of your time, they will need to jump in to take care of everything else that needs to be done. Also, discuss at what point they will begin to assist with bottle feeding (recommended after 3-4 weeks to ensure a proper latch first and avoid nipple confusion).





# STEP 4: LEARN ABOUT BREASTFEEDING

## Alternative Feeding Methods

In some cases, your baby may need an additional supplemental nursing system. Learn about alternative feeding methods, such as spoon feeding, that can complement breastfeeding without affecting your baby's latch or preference for breastfeeding.

**My experience:** My second baby hated all bottles and binkies - she wanted BOOBIE ONLY. It took us 4 weeks of work getting her to take a bottle so when I needed a break or had to leave we had to spoon feed her so she could eat.



## Bottle Feeding and Hybrid Breastfeeding

While breastfeeding is wonderful, some mothers choose to bottle-feed exclusively or combine breastfeeding with bottle-feeding for various reasons including **irreparable low milk supply, work schedules, fatigue, mental health, and breastfeeding disorders**. If you plan on incorporating bottle-feeding, follow reputable tips to ensure it doesn't interfere with breastfeeding like:

- Paced bottle feeding which is the key to incorporating bottle feeding while still keeping the baby interested in the nipple. If the baby isn't working for the milk with a bottle, they might start rejecting your nipple which you might not be emotionally ready for.

**Tip:** Paced bottle feeding is a science so make sure to read up plenty about it and watching some Youtube videos on how to do it.

**Make sure EVERYONE** bottle feeding the baby knows how to do it correctly, or else you might pay for it by having a baby that doesn't want your nipple anymore.



# STEP FIVE

# 5 LEARN ABOUT BABY SLEEP

Last, but definitely not least, this can be one of the most helpful ways to improve postpartum.

Having the background knowledge on what to expect for infant sleep and know-how on whatever method you choose to assist with it (sleep-training, co-sleeping, etc) can give you the upper hand.

There's even healthy habits you can begin right away to encourage sleep for newborns.

Here's how to promote better sleep for both you and your baby:

## Educate Yourself

Learn about baby sleep patterns at different stages, especially during the newborn phase up to 3 months. Knowledge of what's normal can alleviate concerns and help you establish a routine.

## Consider a Baby Sleep Coach

For personalized guidance and tailored advice, consider investing in a baby sleep coach or **asking for it as a baby shower gift**. They can provide valuable insights and strategies to help your baby sleep better.



**Tip:** I can't recommend this enough if you have the resources. Tailored sleep tracking, coaching, and advice can speed up your learning and get you sleep faster. This can be the single-most helpful investment you make in your postpartum.

## Online Resources

Follow social media accounts or websites that provide knowledge, tips, and advice on newborn and infant sleep. Accounts like @takingcarababies on Instagram offer valuable insights from sleep experts.





## STEP 5: EDUCATE YOURSELF ON BABY SLEEP

**Baby sleep is a maze of scientific data, expert opinions, techniques, phases, baby idiosyncrasies, and personal preferences.**

Since entire books have been written on this topic, we feel it's best to **guide you toward the right resources** while giving you a checklist of all the important areas to investigate based on our own personal postpartum journies.

Ultimately, **you won't know your baby and his or her unique preferences (and even your own preferences) until you meet them.** So, preparing for the unexpected and using some guiding principles will get you off to the best start.

What's important to understand is that YOU getting sleep will play a CRITICAL role in your ability to function, take care of a newborn, and stay sane. **The commonly used advice to "sleep when the baby sleeps" is devoid of real advice and quite frankly not very practical.**

Alas, there ARE some ways to lay a solid foundation for your newborn to develop good sleep habits and lay the groundwork for better sleep in future.

Let's start with some excellent resources to check out.



[Everyday Lovens Newborn Guide: A Healthy Sleep Foundation](#)

[Baby Sleep Safety](#)

[Stanford Medicine Newborn Sleep](#)

[Sleep Regressions](#)

[Responsiveness & Routines](#)

[Common Age-By-Stage Sleep Schedules](#)

[Sleep Schedule for Baby's First Year](#)

[Dr. Harvey Karp's 5 S's](#)

[Dream-Feeding](#)

[Gentle Sleep Training](#)

[Sleep Training Science: Myths and Facts](#)

[6 Most Popular Sleep Training Methods Explained](#)

[What really happens when babies are left to cry-it-out?](#)





# EMBRACE THE JOURNEY OF MOTHERHOOD WITH

## Raising Mama PODCAST

This is Raising Mama Podcast - a hilariously honest podcast dedicated to **unveiling the realities of motherhood**.

✦ Raising Mama is more than just a podcast; it's a **movement** dedicated to **empowering women** through **education, resources, and support**, challenging the patriarchal norms that often overshadow the beauty of new motherhood.


- Feel More **Confident**
- Develop **Emotional Resilience**
- Gain a **Richer Understanding** of Parenthood
- Feel **Connected** and Less Isolated
- Enhance Your **Overall Well-Being**


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