

# Baby Steps to Bouncing Back

The  
MamaBaby  
Guide



**Natural Birth**  
**and BabyCare.com**

## The Baby Steps

### Good Days and Bad Days Are Both Normal

The biggest and most important thing to realize is that (just like people without kids) good days and bad days happen. And when there's a lot going on with your body – hormones, milk production, healing, changing shape, etc., there's a good chance some days are going to feel great and some will be not-so-great. Add in juggling baby care, your home, older kids, maybe your job, and feeling like you really know the “you” inside all your new responsibilities, and things can get downright overwhelming!

It's OK!

### Pick Your Toughest Moment – And Picture It

What's the toughest moment of the day for you, or a situation that causes a lot of anxiety? For me, transitions that have a time limit on them are tough (for example, I want to start homeschool by 8:30am) or when I really need a break (can you say “get everyone in bed already!!!”).

The times that are challenging for you may look different, but you probably have one (or, like me, quite a few more than one!). **Pick just ONE of those times.**

Now I want you to picture that time and *how you want that time to look*. Maybe it's your baby's fussy hour, and you'd like to be calm and patient as you help your baby through that hour (or three). Maybe you imagine that you're calm, even if baby is crying, and that you ask for help with confidence and without guilt. Picture that in your mind. Imagine yourself walking with your baby – maybe while you do something that gives you satisfaction like singing... or dusting all those cobwebs you notice while you're pacing 😊 Imagine your baby's sweet smell, your even breathing

even as s/he may be upset. Picture yourself asking your partner to walk with the baby without guilt or apologies. Imagine your partner taking over for 30 minutes while you take a shower or even step out of the house.

It doesn't matter what your situation is – I want you to imagine how you'd *like* it to go when you're faced with that challenge. Don't take a long time on this – **imagine for 30 seconds or so** – and commit to doing it every day.

30 seconds a day – you can do it, Mama!

As you do this, you're literally programming your brain how you want to act in this situation, and over time, that will start to come to you. You'll either feel confident handling the situation within a few weeks or your baby or child may grow out of that phase 😊 Regardless, you can start working on another sticking point.

## Think About Your Support System

A support system is really, really, REALLY important when you're mothering. In all honesty, most of us don't have the support we'd want – a group of mamas to spend time with each week who understand and who lend a hand with childcare. Or family members willing to come and help in those crazy early years of babies and toddlers.

That's OK. You may not be able to build your "ideal," but you can still build something. Start asking yourself "where can I find support" – be curious and ask yourself that question every day. Your brain will start working on the answer 😊

The next baby step in this topic is to *do* something to build support. Maybe you search for a La Leche League group in your area, or a new mom's group. Maybe you check into storytime hours at your local library. Maybe you can't fathom finding anyone close, but you can find a like-minded group of mamas online. Or, perhaps you feel comfortable heading out and about

and you take baby to a nursing home to visit once a week – hearing lots of “oohs and ahhs” and getting some wisdom from the great (great!) grandmas there while you enrich them.

Maybe it’s a combination of the above. Maybe you prefer being alone much of the time, but still need a listening ear, so connecting with another mom, a mentor, or a counselor may help you.

Whatever the case for you, it’s OK – we’re all different **but we all need support.**

Here’s a quick tip – your husband should of course help with baby and your older kids, and around the house. He should be there to listen. But don’t expect him to be *everything* for you, just like you can’t be *everything* for him. Picture a vibrant support system that includes him, but isn’t limited to him <3

## Take a Walk

A daily walk is a great way to start to clear your mind, keep your baby and toddler happy, and get your body used to moving again.

It doesn’t matter if you use a stroller, baby carrier, or carry baby in your arms – do what you need to to get out and get moving. On rainy days, try putting on some music and dancing around the room with baby. Your tots and preschoolers will have a blast, too. Have older kids who look at you strange? Just laugh, twirl with baby, and enjoy. Maybe the fun will be contagious!

Tip: If your baby tends to be fussy, try taking a walk hold him/her in your arms. As you shift your baby around to balance his/her weight, you give vestibular stimulation that many fussy babies crave. Start with short walks – even small babies get heavy when carrying in-arms!

## Eat a Snack

Many of us are really careful about what we eat during pregnancy, but when baby comes, that goes out the window. After all, baby isn't inside of you anymore. Here's the truth – you're still baby's caregiver, and if you're nursing, **you are still the sole source of nourishment**. Don't expect that starving yourself is going to help you "bounce back" faster. Eat a healthy and nutritious snack (see the snack handout if you need inspiration) – and don't skip meals.

You will feel better, have more patience, and more energy if you make sure that you eat!

## Take Your Supplements

Keep taking a prenatal vitamin while you're nursing your baby. I honestly feel you should take a prenatal vitamin throughout all your "childbearing years" – in other words, just keep taking it until you know for sure there are no more babies in your future.

You may also take other supplements to target specific needs:

If you're struggling with depression or persistent "baby blues," try a B-Vitamin Complex and a high-quality salmon oil.

If insomnia is a problem, try a cup of "magnesium tea" made with powdered magnesium (try Natural Calm) a little before bedtime

If anemia is causing fatigue, try Floradix (an herbal iron supplement) and cook some meals in cast iron

## Make Sleep a Priority

You'll hear the advice "sleep when your baby sleeps." I know it's hard. **Believe me, I know it's hard.** But it really is great advice – especially in the early weeks.

But if you're mothering a baby and other young children, I'd encourage you to at least lie down and rest during their daily naptime. It may be only 15-20 minutes, but getting a little rest into your day can make a big difference, especially if you're still working on nighttime sleep.

## Believe In Yourself (and don't feel guilty)

The early years of mothering can be really challenging in ways you never expected – but taking a few steps to start taking care of yourself can help you feel more relaxed and confident. Ultimately, that makes you a better mama to your kids.

Don't feel guilty for taking time for you. I'm not talking about resort spa weekends or long chunks of time away – I'm talking about taking time to take a walk, to close your eyes for 20 minutes, to have a healthy snack...

...think about it this way – you want to model what a healthy mama is for your kids as they grow. You want your daughters to stay healthy and vibrant as they walk the mothering journey. You want your sons to have realistic expectations and offer strong support to their future wives. You model what that healthy balance looks like now – it is a gift to them!