



A New Mother's Sleep Survival Guide

Most new mothers find getting adequate sleep to be a challenge. Getting up constantly is disruptive to quality sleep and you're not alone if you're feeling exhausted and irritable.

This survival guide will help you get more quality sleep and offers some coping strategies to make the temporary sleep loss easier to bear.

Getting More Quality Sleep:

- 1. Understand your sleep cycles.** The quality of sleep is more important than the number of hours you get. ***Most people need 90 minutes to 2 hours of uninterrupted slumber to enter into restorative deep sleep.*** New moms need methods to provide adequate rest when they're frequently getting up to care for their babies.
- 2. Use naps to supplement your night-time sleep.** Until your baby sleeps through the night, naps can help you survive. Take a nap when your child falls asleep during the day. Feeding your baby before a nap may help you both sleep longer.
- 3. Enlist your partner's help.** ***Even if you're breastfeeding, your partner can take a turn with night feeding if you express and refrigerate your milk.*** You can also get more rest if your partner brings the baby to you at night for breastfeeding so you don't have to walk around as much.
- 4. Seek out additional support.** The first weeks are often the most demanding, so think ahead to arrange the support you'll need. Your parents or other loved ones may be able to move in temporarily or you may be able to exchange mutual assistance with other parents in your neighbourhood. If your budget permits, consider hiring a temporary nurse.
- 5. Ask someone else to cover the first night-time feeding.** Having someone else do the first night-time feeding is a great way to get some hours of unbroken sleep. Even if you take-over later in the night, you'll have gotten some much needed rest.
- 6. Work towards a consistent schedule.** Rest assured that this is temporary and look forward to getting back on a regular sleep schedule. You and your family will rest better when you have regular bedtimes.

Coping Strategies for Temporary Sleep Loss:

1. Meditate. Meditation provides some of the same benefits as sleep. If you have trouble falling asleep or there's no time for a nap, ***try some quiet deep breathing.***

2. Eat a healthy diet. You can improve your sleep by avoiding excessive caffeine or alcohol. Drink lots of water because dehydration can be tiring. A balanced diet will also help provide the energy you need.

3. Do gentle exercises. If your doctor says it's safe to exercise, a gentle workout may help you sleep better. You can find resources online or at your local library.

4. Take a shower. A simple shower may help you feel refreshed fast. ***A few minutes under the shower and a change of clothes can help you feel more awake.***

5. Reduce other potential sources of stress. As a new mom, you have a lot going on in your life, so try to minimise any additional stress. Older children may be able to pitch in with more household duties. Postpone any big decisions until you can think more clearly.

6. Talk with your doctor. Sleep deprivation can have serious effects on anybody, and new mothers are already dealing with many hormonal changes. Consult your doctor if you need help managing all the changes. Your doctor can give you recommendations to keep you and your family happy and healthy.

Being a new mother is a joyful and enriching experience. Work at getting the quality sleep you need and look forward to many happy years with your new baby.

To listen to a sample or purchase the MP3 for A New Mothers Sleep Survival that accompanies this Mind Guide, please [click here](#) (available shortly)