

Navigating new parent nerves

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(HealthDay)—A newborn can bring a sense of fulfillment to your life ... and an equal amount of stress over everything from baby's health to your own parenting skills.

A few simple strategies can help both mom and dad relax.

First, expect to feel many different, often contradictory emotions. You might go from pure bliss as you look at your baby to complete panic at not being able to decipher the meaning behind his or her cries. And exhaustion from sleepless nights can cause your [anxiety levels](#) to spike.

But remember that all these emotions are normal for new parents. Keep the lines of communication open with your partner and don't heap [unrealistic expectations](#) of perfection on yourselves.

Stress can intensify when you don't take care of yourself and attempt to function on little sleep and little energy. Try to nap when baby naps and eat when baby eats, even if that means many small meals throughout the day.

As much as you'd like to be supermom or superdad and handle everything, let friends and family help. Having someone else do the [grocery shopping](#), for instance, means one less potentially exhausting chore for you.

Try mental therapy to relax, such as picturing a favorite romantic retreat as you do a few minutes of focused deep breathing.

Exercise is another great way to de-stress—just 10 minutes on a home treadmill or walking in place while you watch TV or listen to your favorite tunes can make a difference. Even better, get the whole family outside in the fresh air for a walk and you will all be together as you reap the benefits of exercise.

More information: The Mayo Clinic has great tips to help [new parents](#) better manage stress.

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