

# How to stay close as a couple now that baby is here

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(HealthDay)—There's no doubt that a first baby changes the dynamic

between spouses. Here are steps you can take to stay close.

First, you need a creative plan to get some sleep. Beyond feeling tired, being sleep-deprived affects your mood and your ability to think clearly. It can lead you to over-react to little things and argue more.

Next, prioritize your relationship. Rather than using that last ounce of energy on laundry, enjoy a few minutes of conversation when baby's napping. Share your thoughts and [feelings](#) about your changing world. Don't stew over them silently and let them come between you. Be honest and admit that parenting is harder than you thought, if that's what you're feeling.

Being stressed over baby can make you both abandon the little niceties you used to do for each other. But rather than get angry at what you view as slights, acknowledge that you're in this together and that you each may be struggling, even if in different ways.

When your [partner](#) does something positive, be appreciative—everyone responds to being acknowledged. When people come to see the baby, don't feel that you have to entertain them. Ask a close family member or friend to babysit, even if you both stay at home, to give you together time without having to jump up at the first cry from the nursery.

Even better is if you can get out of the house together for a 20-minute walk, to drop in at your favorite coffee shop or just run an errand. These little things can remind you both that you're still a couple, and not just mom and dad.

**More information:** The Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley has more ideas to [adjust to parenthood](#) and keep marital closeness strong.

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