



SELF-CARE TIPS for expectant and new dads

Connect with other dads.

Becoming a dad can be a time of mixed emotions and you may have a lot of questions. It is common to feel overwhelmed, worried, exhausted and concerned about how you are coping with it all. Having a chat with another dad can help lighten your mental load, and it can help to remind you that you're not alone. If you can arrange to meet up with a trusted friend, or even have an open conversation with a good friend at work this can help with those overwhelming feelings. Remember too that many other dads are most likely feeling the same way as you!

Start talking.

Beyond those important conversations with other dads and trusted friends is the need to know when you might need a little more support. Opening up the conversation and sharing your feelings as an expectant or new parent is the most important first step in reaching out. It can also be the most difficult.

If you are experiencing any emotional distress, and just not feeling yourself for 2 weeks or more please reach out to someone who can help you. It could be your partner, GP, boss, or a Psychologist. Relationships can go off course after a baby as well and talking about how you are going and getting some strategies can make a big difference. Talking can also reduce your isolation – you are not alone in this and just because you are a guy you don't have to 'tough it out!'.

You can find out more about accessing support here: <https://gidgetfoundation.org.au/get-support/>

Inform yourself.

Information and resources around pregnancy and early parenthood are readily available, and there are many wonderful organisations out there providing things such as fact sheets and check lists as well as various Apps. Sometimes it can help to do some reading, learn as much as you can from reliable sources and gain confidence through knowledge! A great place to start for the basics is this dads guide to pregnancy:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/pregnancy/dads-guide-to-pregnancy>

Exercise.

It's amazing how a dose of fresh air and sunshine or even a lunchtime work out at the gym can impact your emotional wellbeing! A small amount of safe sun exposure, a walk, a run or a game of football with some mates can all give you some more energy that might help you feel better about life right now! During those long, intense days and months as a new parent some exercise has proven to boost endorphins and mood, help with sleep and increase energy.

Take it easy on yourself.

It can be hard to give yourself a break at times, there is a lot of pressure on dads to be the 'rock' for their families and the one that is holding it all together. Remember that you are not alone, and that those high expectations placed on you by others and even yourself can be tough and you need to be kind to yourself. Remind yourself that you are doing the best you can, this is a big life adjustment and it can take time to feel at ease in the role of new parent and find your mojo again!