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Thriving in the Fourth Trimester: A Guide to Postpartum Recovery and Support

The journey of motherhood doesn't end with birth—it transforms. The days and weeks after delivery, known as the “fourth trimester,” are a sacred window of physical healing, emotional recalibration, and identity reshaping. Yet for many mothers, this period feels less like a supported cocoon and more like a lonely island.

In many traditional cultures, postpartum is a time when the mother is deeply nurtured by her community—fed, massaged, and nourished so she can rest and bond with her baby. But in today's culture, postpartum mothers are often left to navigate sleepless nights, hormonal shifts, and recovery from birth with little support.

It's time we shift the narrative. Postpartum recovery isn't a luxury—it's essential. Here's how new mothers can advocate for themselves by prioritizing healing, and how families, communities, and professionals can support them in doing so.

1. Ask for Help: It's a Strength, Not a Weakness

One of the hardest but most powerful things a new mom can do is ask for help. Whether it's your partner, your parents, your in-laws, neighbors, or close friends—don't wait until you're overwhelmed to speak up. Create a postpartum plan before birth and list out roles people can play: meals, laundry, holding baby while you nap, driving older kids to school or entertaining them. People want to help—you just have to ask.

2. Build Your Village

Motherhood was never meant to be done alone. Surround yourself with a supportive community of other moms, doulas, lactation consultants, pelvic floor therapists, and family members who uplift you. If your local support system is limited, look for online groups, virtual postpartum doulas, or neighborhood mom meetups. Connection reduces the risk of postpartum depression and validates the rollercoaster of feelings that come with this transition.

3. Rest Like It's Your Job (Because It Is)

Your body has done the miraculous work of growing and birthing a human. Now it needs time to recover. Prioritize sleep, naps, and stillness over productivity. Lay down when the baby naps—even if dishes are in the sink. **Deep rest supports hormonal balance, healing, and mood regulation. Remember: you are not being lazy—you are being wise.**

4. Say Yes to Childcare and Meal Support

Whether it's a postpartum doula, a part-time nanny, or a trusted family member, having help with childcare—especially if you have older children—is invaluable. Grocery delivery services and meal trains organized by friends or your church can ease the mental load and give you one less thing to worry about. Let others care for you while you care for your baby.

5. Embrace Self-Care Without Guilt

Self-care in postpartum isn't about bubble baths and pedicures (though those can help too). It's about meeting your basic needs: eating nourishing meals, drinking water, moving your body gently, and having quiet moments to breathe. Take at least 30 minutes a day just for you. Breathe. Journal. Walk barefoot in the grass. This is how you refill your cup.

6. Massage Therapy for Healing and Hormones

Postpartum massage supports circulation, lymphatic drainage, hormone balance, and emotional release. It can also ease back, neck, and shoulder tension from breastfeeding and holding your baby. Schedule regular sessions if possible—or ask a partner to give you a massage or foot rub in the evenings.

7. Chiropractic Care: Realigning the Postpartum Body

After months of carrying a baby and the physical intensity of birth, the postpartum body is often in need of alignment. Postpartum chiropractic care can help restore balance to the pelvis and spine, relieve tension, improve posture for breastfeeding, and support the nervous system in healing. **Adjustments can also help with headaches, neck pain, lactation, and the overall stress that comes with newborn life.** Regular chiropractic care in the fourth trimester helps mothers feel grounded in their bodies again.

8. Rebuild with Movement and Pelvic Floor Support

Your body is healing from significant change. Gentle postnatal movement, like walking, breathwork, and pelvic floor yoga, helps reengage your core, stabilize your pelvis, and prevent issues like incontinence or prolapse. A pelvic floor physical therapist can assess your recovery and guide you safely.

9. Nourish Your Nervous System and Adrenals

The fourth trimester is a time of constant giving, and your adrenal glands—the part of your body that helps regulate stress—can quickly become depleted.

- Consider functional medicine testing to check your cortisol levels throughout the day and get a clearer picture of your adrenal health. At our clinic, we use functional testing to create personalized healing protocols for postpartum moms.
- Drink adaptogenic teas like tulsi (holy basil), ashwagandha, and licorice root (with guidance if breastfeeding) to gently support cortisol regulation and resilience.
- Eat regular, balanced meals with protein, fat, and vegetables to keep your blood sugar and energy stable.
- Support with supplements like magnesium, B vitamins, vitamin C, and adaptogenic herbs tailored to your needs.

These practices help calm your nervous system and rebuild your internal reserves—so you can handle stress with more ease (less crying over spilled milk).

10. Normalize the Emotional Waves

Hormones shift dramatically postpartum. It's normal to feel joy, sadness, overwhelm, anxiety—even all at once. But if your emotional lows persist, talk to a provider who listens. There's no shame in needing mental health support. Postpartum depression and anxiety are common—and treatable—with a postpartum therapist, supplements, and lifestyle support.

11. Trust Your Intuition

You are the expert on your baby—and on yourself. Tune in to your body's whispers and gut feelings. Ask for what you need. Say no when something doesn't feel aligned. Create boundaries that protect your peace. This phase of life invites you to go inward, soften, and trust your inner wisdom.

Final Thoughts

The fourth trimester is a sacred time. While all eyes are on the baby, mothers deserve to be held just as tenderly. Let's create a culture where postpartum care is holistic, reverent, and rooted in community. You're not alone—and you were never meant to do this without support.

Let this be your permission slip to rest, receive, and restore.

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