



FREE QUICK-START GUIDE

The First 72 Hours

A Solo Parent's Quick-Start Guide for Coming Home With a Newborn, Alone

The exact first-three-days plan, emergency kit, and support checklist we built for solo parents free, no strings attached.

Real Enough



Practical, no-fluff support for parents doing this without a co-pilot



***A companion preview to
The Solo Parent's
Survival Kit***



BEFORE YOU START

If you're reading this before your baby arrives, or you're already home and running on no sleep, here's what we want you to know: the first 72 hours are the hardest part to plan for, and the part almost nobody actually plans for because most newborn advice assumes there are two adults in the house to figure it out together.

At Real Enough, we build practical, no-nonsense tools for the parts of parenting that don't come with a manual and solo parenting the newborn stage is at the top of that list. This short guide is the plan we'd want handed to us before a baby comes home: the same one most solo parents never get, because most of what's out there assumes a second adult is around to help figure it out. It's short on purpose. You don't have the bandwidth for a long read right now, and you shouldn't need one to get through the first three days with a plan instead of just adrenaline.

Use it exactly as it's laid out: the reality check first, then the emergency kit, then the three mistakes to sidestep, then the hour map. Everything here fits on a few pages because everything here is exactly what you need for the next three days nothing more.

— *Real Enough*



SECTION ONE

The 3-Day Reality Check

Knowing what's actually normal in the first 72 hours is half the battle. Here's what to expect, day by day, without the soft-focus version.

Day One: Survival Only

Feed, change, rest in whatever windows appear that's the whole job today. Don't unpack gifts, answer messages, or try to establish any kind of routine. If anyone is coming to help, hand them food and dishes entirely so your only job is the baby and your own recovery.

Day Two: Often the Hardest

This is frequently the toughest day physically, especially if milk is coming in or healing pain is peaking. Cluster feeding — a baby who wants to eat almost constantly for a stretch, often in the evening is common and not a sign anything is wrong. Lower the bar specifically for today: a shower and one real meal is a full accomplishment.

Day Three: The Emotional Dip

Hormone shifts and exhaustion often collide around day three, sometimes called the "baby blues" a wave of tearfulness that's common and typically passes within two weeks. If low mood, anxiety, or a sense of hopelessness persists past two weeks, or feels severe at any point, call a doctor rather than waiting it out. That's true whether you're solo or partnered but with no second adult in the house to notice, it's on you to check in with yourself deliberately.

Lower the bar for these three days specifically. A shower and one real meal is a full day's accomplishment. Everything else is a bonus.



SECTION TWO

The One-Bag Emergency Kit

Pack this before your baby arrives, or today if you're already home. It removes one entire category of stress from a stage that has plenty already.

Keep this bag by your front door, fully packed, at all times through at least the first few months. If you ever need to leave quickly an appointment, an emergency, or simply needing to get to someone's house because you're overwhelmed you won't be assembling it under pressure.

	ID, insurance card, and a backup form of payment
	A phone charger, dedicated to this bag so it's never borrowed for daily use
	One full change of baby clothes plus two diapers
	A printed list of emergency contacts and your pediatrician's number
	A folded twenty-dollar bill for cash emergencies

Print the contact list even though it feels redundant with your phone if you're ever too overwhelmed, unwell, or panicked to navigate your device smoothly, a piece of paper someone else can read and act on is worth far more than it seems right now.



SECTION THREE

Three Mistakes That Make Week One Harder Than It Needs to Be

These three patterns show up constantly in the solo parents we hear from. All three are avoidable with a small shift made in advance.

Mistake One: Treating "Anyone Who Can Help" as a Plan

A vague sense that people will step up if needed almost never survives contact with an actual 3 a.m. crisis. Name specific people for specific jobs before you need them even just one person for "if I get sick" and one for "if I just need an hour to sleep." A named plan beats a hopeful one every time.

Mistake Two: Pushing Through Sleep Debt Until It Becomes a Safety Issue

With no second adult to notice you're struggling, sleep deprivation can quietly compound past the point of just feeling tired into something genuinely unsafe: microsleeps, impaired judgment, a fog that doesn't lift with one nap. Decide your own early-warning sign in advance: a number of consecutive rough nights, a specific symptom and commit to calling for backup the moment you hit it, rather than waiting to see if you can push through.

Mistake Three: Asking Vaguely and Assuming the Vague No Means No One Cares

"Let me know if you want to help" gets you nothing, and it's easy to read that silence as people not caring rather than what it usually is: an unclear ask. "Could you come Thursday from 1 to 3 so I can nap?" gets you a real answer, almost every time. Specific, bounded requests are dramatically more likely to land than open-ended ones.

A named plan beats a hopeful one. A specific ask beats a vague one. Both cost in advance and both save you enormously later.



SECTION FOUR

Your Next 72 Hours, Mapped

Copy this onto a sticky note or your phone's lock screen. Simple, visible plans get followed. Complicated ones don't.

When	The one thing that matters
Right now	Pack or check your one-bag emergency kit (Section Two)
Today	Name one person for illness backup, one for an hour of relief
Day1	Feed, change, rest. Nothing else is required of you today
Day2	Expect it to be hard. A shower and one meal is a full win
Day3	Watch for the emotional dip. Call a doctor if it feels severe
Ongoing	Ask specifically, not vaguely, every time you need help

This map gets you through the first three days with your footing. It is not, on its own, a plan for the next twelve months of solo parenting a growing baby the sleep regressions, the return to work, the budget, the loneliness that shows up once the adrenaline of the newborn stage wears off. That's a different, longer conversation, and it's exactly what comes next.



WHAT COMES AFTER THE FIRST 72 HOURS

You've Got Day Three Covered. Here's Who Helps You With Day Thirty and Day Three Hundred.

This guide gets you through the first 72 hours with a plan instead of just adrenaline. But the newborn stage doesn't end on day three and neither do the questions. What do you do when the sleep deprivation doesn't lift by week six? How do you budget for a baby on one income? What happens the day you have to go back to work with no second parent to split the transition with? Who do you call when you're lonelier than you expected to be, on top of everything else?

The Solo Parent's Survival Kit is the full system this guide is a preview of built specifically for parents doing this without a second adult in the house, from the same practical, no-fluff approach behind everything Real Enough makes.

Inside the full guide, you'll get:

- The complete **One-Person Support System** how to build a small, reliable circle that covers everything a second parent normally would, even if your network feels thin right now.
- A full **Solo Sleep Strategy** for getting real rest without a night-shift partner, including exactly where to spend limited paid help for the biggest impact.
- A **Money Math** framework for budgeting the newborn stage on one income, plus the underused assistance programs most solo parents never think to check.
- The **Household Triage Method** what to let go of on purpose so you're not drowning in guilt over laundry while keeping a newborn alive.

A complete **Emergency Backup Plan** template for illness, childcare conflicts, and larger emergencies, built before you need it.

A full chapter on **Emotional Survival** loneliness, grief, identity, and exactly when to reach out for professional support.

- Guidance for **co-parenting logistics** if there's a parent off-site, a smooth **return-to-work plan**, and how to keep your systems working well past the newborn stage.
- Five ready-to-use **worksheets** including the full Village Map, Weekly Needs Planner, and Quarterly Systems Check-In — so none of this stays theoretical.

This preview gets you through 72 hours. The full guide gets you through the year with a system for sleep, money, support, and your own emotional survival, built specifically for a one-adult household.

Get the Full Guide

The Solo Parent's Survival Kit is available now as an instant-download PDF guide 13 chapters, five worksheets, and the complete system, ready whenever you need the next page.

→ ***Get The Solo Parent's Survival Kit***

<https://soloparent.realenoughlife.com/checkout>

Wherever you are tonight pregnant and preparing, or three days in and running on fumes you don't have to figure the rest of this out by trial and error. There's a system for it. That's what we build at Real Enough.

— ***Real Enough***

