



Back to Work After Maternity Leave

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PREGNANCY, MOTHERHOOD MALAYSIA

ARTICLE

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Tips to ease your transition to going back to work after your maternity leave ends.

Getting Back to Work After Maternity Leave

In a blink of an eye, your honeymoon period with your new child is coming to an end. As excited as you are to get back into the game, you are also having a slight case of separation anxiety leaving the little one in the care of someone else. While it's perfectly normal to go through this rollercoaster of emotions, don't be too hard on yourself with all the preparations for it. Here are some tips to ease your transition to going back to work after your maternity leave ends.

1. Resume in the middle of the week

Starting work in the middle of the week can shorten the work week a little when you

return. This helps to put a break after a few days of work so you can tweak your new routine if needed. It'll also put less stress on your mind as you switch from mum mode to work mode after a long absence. With a short week, you'll also be able to look forward to the weekend sooner where you can spend time with your little one to ease your separation anxiety.

2. Start childcare earlier

Have some practice runs to drop your child off at childcare a week before starting work so that your child can get acclimatised and settled in their new routine and environment. This will help remove the stress and anxiety of morning drop offs on your first day of work. Expect some crying to happen as it is also a transition period for your child. By getting familiar with your child's carers earlier, it will also help you be able to stay calm and concentrate better at work knowing that your child is in good hands.

3. Lactation checklist beforehand

First, get advice from your healthcare professional and/or lactation support team. Have a checklist ready on what you'll need at the office. You don't want to wait until you're at the office to figure out. Being prepared will help you stay relaxed.

4. Set expectations and prioritise

Let's face the fact, you'll not be able to work the way you used to, especially if you have to rush to pick up your child after work. No more staying late at the office catching up on deadlines, you'll need to prioritise your work and work smart instead. Minimise other distractions, and multitask if you need. Set clear expectations with your colleagues on your schedule and limitations too, so you do not go off track. This doesn't mean you're slacking though; you just have to be more efficient in it. You can also try to ask for flexibility if work allows it, such as shorter hours in the office or a hybrid work from home arrangement. Minimising time on the road can also help you be more productive in managing the demands of both work and motherhood.

5. Acknowledge your feelings, but let go of the guilt

Separation anxiety doesn't just affect the kids; mums too can have a case of it. It's hard to imagine being away from your child and missing out on milestones, and while we want to be the first to witness everything, sometimes it's just not possible as we cannot be present for every moment. You may also feel overwhelmed and stressed at work, trying to juggle work and your family. Allow yourself some grace and acknowledge your feelings, but don't let the working mum guilt consume you. Focus on why you're back at work, and cherish the times at home together. Set up reminders at work and in the car if you need to, as sometimes we might forget and be riddled with unnecessary negativity.

6. Have clear communication with your spouse

Going back to work after maternity leave is also an adjustment period for your spouse. An open communication will help set expectations on responsibilities at home now that you're back at work so that you and your spouse can shoulder the burden together instead of resenting one another. It'll also help to keep each other updated if there are any changes to childcare plans if work gets in the way.

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Returning to work after maternity leave can be challenging and painful, but it is also rewarding. Allow yourself some time to get back into the groove of working and don't put too much pressure on yourself. There will be good days, and there'll be days where you'll have to head into the office after a sleepless night. Take it all in your stride, and remember to be kind to yourself.

This article was written by Motherhood.com.my.

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