

GOLDEN MONTHS RESOURCE

Postpartum Recovery Checklist

A week-by-week guide to healing through the fourth trimester — what's typical, what deserves a call, and what you can let go of.

How to use this checklist

Recovery isn't linear, and it isn't a race. This checklist walks week by week through the first twelve weeks, so you know what's typical, what deserves a call, and what you can let go of. Print it, mark it up, ignore the parts that don't fit your body or your birth.

Call your provider right away — or 911 for emergencies — if you notice:

- Heavy bleeding — soaking a pad in an hour, or passing clots larger than an egg
- A headache that won't lift, changes in vision, or upper-right belly pain
- Fever of 100.4°F or higher, chills, or a wound that's hot, spreading, or draining
- Chest pain, trouble breathing, or a swollen, painful, warm calf
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby — you are not alone, and this is treatable

Week 1 — The tender days

Your only jobs this week are rest, food, fluids, and bonding. Everything else can wait or belong to someone else.

Task	Notes	Done
Stay horizontal as much as possible	Sitting up counts as activity in week one	
Keep a hydration station at your seat	Water, a snack, phone charger, pads, remote	
Track bleeding by pad count	Note anything that suddenly increases	
Eat something warm every few hours	Soups, stews, oatmeal — easy and iron-rich	
Set up a feeding station	Pillows, burp cloths, water, light snack	
Let visitors help or wait	'We're not ready for guests yet' is a full sentence	
Sleep when the baby sleeps — genuinely	Ask someone to hold the baby so you can	

Weeks 2–3 — Finding a rhythm

Task	Notes	Done
Short, flat walks indoors	Stop before you feel tired, not after	
Begin gentle breathing and pelvic floor awareness	No crunches, no planks, no lifting heavy	
Notice your mood honestly	Baby blues fade by ~2 weeks; sadness that stays deserves support	
Keep the feeding log going	Wet/dirty diapers tell you a lot	
Accept one concrete offer of help daily	'Could you bring dinner Thursday?'	
Rehydrate, especially if breastfeeding	Thirst is a late signal	

Weeks 4–6 — Rebuilding

Task	Notes	Done
Attend your postpartum visit	Bring written questions — you will forget them otherwise	
Ask about clearance for exercise and intimacy	Clearance is individual, not a calendar date	
Begin gentle core and pelvic floor work when cleared	A specialist beats guessing	
Screen your mental health again	Anxiety often shows up later than sadness	
Address any feeding pain	Pain is a signal, not a rite of passage	
Plan one hour a week that is only yours	Protect it like an appointment	

Weeks 7–12 — The long fourth trimester

Task	Notes	Done
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Increase movement gradually	Add one thing at a time; watch for heaviness or leaking	
Revisit sleep — yours, not just baby's	Consider night support if you're depleted	
Check in on your relationship	Name what each of you needs out loud	
Plan your return to work, if applicable	See our Return-to-Work Workbook	
Book any specialist follow-ups	Pelvic floor, lactation, mental health, nutrition	
Take stock of what still hurts	Ongoing pain at 12 weeks is worth investigating	

Questions worth asking your care team

- Is what I'm feeling in my body typical for how I gave birth?
- What signs mean I should call you rather than wait?
- Am I cleared for exercise, lifting, driving, and intimacy — and what should I start with?
- What are my options if feeding continues to hurt?
- Who do I call at 2am, and who do I call on a Tuesday afternoon?

This guide is general education from Golden Months and does not replace care from your own clinician. Your Golden Months care team can personalize any of it for you. If something feels wrong, call your provider — trust yourself.

