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# DADS ADVENTURE

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3

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## Visit DadsAdventure.com!

Dads Adventure, sponsor of Boot Camp for New Dads, offers the web's most comprehensive resource for new dads and dads-to-be. Here are a few of the things you'll find at the site:

### VIDEOS

Watch other guys as they:

- Demystify what it's like to become a dad
- Demonstrate basic baby care
- Talk about new moms
- Share what's worked for them

### FIND GREAT ARTICLES

- Information on becoming a dad
- Family safety
- What's going on with new moms
- Your finances
- And much, much more

### ASK QUESTIONS

Go ahead – ask the Boot Camp founder anything about becoming or being a dad. He promises a frank answer.

### SIGN UP FOR EMAILS

Get tips and information about what to expect and when.

### THE BLOG

- Hear the latest on fatherhood issues and tips.
- Join the conversation by leaving a comment.



## Who We Are

It started with my six brothers and I, who grew up taking care of babies. Along with working on cars and fishing for trout, it was something we learned from our dad and each other. To us, changing diapers was like cleaning fish; it just went with the territory when you have 13 kids in your family.

When I became a father, I knew what to do with our baby, and after our fourth, other dads were asking me for advice. In 1990 some friends and their babies joined me in showing dads-to-be at the local hospital how to care for and enjoy their own. For three hours they smiled, slept, cried and did what babies do and the "rookie" dads watched us take care of them without a mom in sight. When several said they had never held a baby before, we handed them ours.

We "veterans" talked about our experiences and offered advice, and we all got to know and trust each other. With everything said in the room staying in the room, nothing was left off the table. The men went home feeling "I can do this", and they did and returned several months later as veterans with their own babies to orient the next group of dads-to-be.

We call it Boot Camp for New Dads, and it has expanded to 44 states, the U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force, and it is now expanding internationally. Characterized as a "nursery in a locker room," over 200,000 men have joined us, just regular guys from all walks of life. We challenge, help and encourage each other, and in a sense, we act like my brothers did.

Sales of Hit The Ground Crawling: Lessons From 150,000 New Fathers and Crash Course for New Dads: Tools, Checklists & Cheat Sheets help fund the non-profit Boot Camp for New Dads, and we appreciate your support. These guidebooks for dads-to-be contain comprehensive coverage of the issues men participating in Boot Camp have found important over the past 19 years.

Please join us in helping each other do our best as fathers. This is our way of making the world a better place for all our children.

**Greg Bishop,**  
Head Coach, Boot Camp for New Dads

# Welcome to Fatherhood!

Being a veteran at Boot Camp for New Dads means bringing your baby to this crash course on fatherhood and telling the dads-to-be what you have learned. The soon-to-be-dads have lots of questions and since we were in their shoes not long before, it feels good to get them oriented and help develop their confidence.

We would like to pass on what we have learned to you as well, so here is our list of top things we want you to know:

**1** As men, we bring strength, practicality and creativity to being dads, along with unique parenting traits that add substantially to the richness and growth in the lives of our children.

**2** As guys, we naturally want to make fatherhood fun, which research shows is another great thing we offer our children. In fact, most babies prefer to play with dad, so count this as an essential part of your job.

**3** As dads-to-be ourselves, we had many concerns and even fears, which we learned were common and surmountable. You will too.

**4** In the months after birth, your partner will form a whole new perspective of you as the father of her child. Use this window of opportunity to strengthen your marriage and it will pay off for decades.

**5** Your baby is portable. You can take your baby anywhere. Don't get caught up in fretting about what you can't do.

**6** Trust your instincts. Most of what you need to know comes naturally. Comfort your baby, give him a bath, trust yourself, and in a few weeks you'll start feeling like a natural.

**7** You have no idea how important you will be to your child, or how important she will be to you. Just know that there is a reason so many of us give it everything we can.

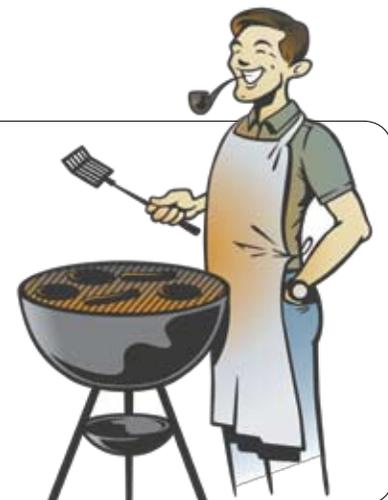
**The key to success is to get informed. Welcome to the adventure of your life!**

**The Veterans of Boot Camp for New Dads**



## WHAT KIND OF FATHER WILL I BE?

A great question to ask. How do you want to be the same or different from your own dad? Was he part of your life as a child? Did he provide warmth and respect? How about your friends' dads, who may provide good models for you? How do you want your kids to feel about you as they grow up?



“You think that a baby means that you will no longer be able to do the things you like to do. Actually, a child will provide you the opportunity to do what you always wanted to do.”



## HOW MANY MEN DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A DIAPER?

At Boot Camp for New Dads at least five: an experienced father to guide a rookie through his first diaper change, and three guys to provide color commentary and technical advice, regardless of whether they have ever changed a diaper themselves.

### Change the First Diaper

Really. Diapers symbolize the classic resistance of men to caring for babies, and there will be the expectation that you will resist, particularly from the women around you. Set the tone that you are here to play. Ask the nurse in the hospital to walk you through changing your baby's first diaper. When you get home, show mom how.

## Making It an *Adventure*

**The world of babies has been turf owned by women since the beginning of the human race. Now that we are starting to get our share, it is clear that we men and our babies have been missing out for far too long.**

Of all the powerful and complex dynamics in the circle of life, a father's critical role in teaching his baby to play has got to be one of the coolest. Playing teaches her how to laugh and take risks, develops her motor skills, speeds the development of her brain and nervous system, and of course, is the best way to bond with dad. While nurturing your baby is essential, bringing out her adventurous side is also important, and this is your job. Start early. Our experience reflects what the

researchers have told us – an important way we men connect with our babies is by imagining what they will be as they grow. And in our imaginations, our babies are doing the things we like to do, or always wanted to! So if you like to surf, fish, work on cars, climb mountains, play football, etc., or would like to start, dream on! And if you do, either it will happen, or other great adventures will! There are limits however. For example, regardless of your exuberance for the game of golf,

we have found the minimum age for training your baby to play is nine months. Prior to this, while you will find their grip strong enough to rip a fistful of hair out of your chest, they have difficulty in getting all their parts to work in unison. Of course, teaching babies anything or just caring for them requires patience, which is in short supply among us men. So work on this capability yourself, and don't be surprised when she makes an incredible leap forward.

# Getting Ready with Lists:

## MAKE A LIST OF THE THINGS YOU LIKE TO DO TOGETHER

The "list" has become standard advice at Boot Camp. Your baby will likely overwhelm you and your mate, to the point that you don't have the time or the energy to have fun as a new family. As a simple investment in your parenting partnership, sit down with your wife and make a list of the things you like to do together now. After life with a baby settles down, pull out the list and pick out something to do.

## PREPARE A LIST FOR THE HOSPITAL

Get a list together of the items you want to bring and keep it with your bag to double check before you head out. Get ideas from the hospital staff and birthing classes or talk to someone who recently delivered. Beyond what mom and baby need, our list includes:

- ☑ Change of clothes, toothbrush and shaving kit.
- ☑ Comfortable shoes, as you may do a lot of walking.
- ☑ Long sleeve shirt or sweatshirt in case it gets cold.
- ☑ Something to read to her.
- ☑ Bathing suit for you – to help mom take a shower to ease labor pains.
- ☑ Something to eat and drink; power bars and juice are suggested.
- ☑ Champagne – put your name on it and ask the nurse to store it in the refrigerator.
- ☑ Cash to have on hand.
- ☑ Folder with important documents – insurance cards, pre-admission forms, etc.
- ☑ Small boom box with her favorite music.
- ☑ Pen and pad of paper.
- ☑ Pain easing tools recommended at your birthing classes – balls to squeeze, hot or cold packs, massagers, etc.
- ☑ Cell phone or calling card, address book/lists of phone numbers to announce birth.



## Ask a Dad

What if, through the months leading up to birth and the months after, you had a dad expert that you could depend on to answer any question that popped into your mind? Well head over to Ask a Dad at [www.DadsAdventure.com](http://www.DadsAdventure.com) and start asking. There are no stupid questions, only good answers.

## ITEMS FOR HOME RECOMMENDED BY BOOT CAMP VETERANS

- ☑ Diaper Genie – eliminates the smell
- ☑ Bouncy seat (with sound and lights) – entertainment and exercise
- ☑ Swing (battery operated) – puts your baby to sleep
- ☑ Soft chest carrier – feels great, entertains babies and puts them to sleep
- ☑ Battery operated stick-on touch lights – convenient, not too bright for a baby or sleeping spouse
- ☑ Digital camera and/or video camera
- ☑ Bassinet or cradle – a small moveable alternative to the crib
- ☑ Baby bath tub with insert that helps hold newborns
- ☑ Bathrobe for mom – a nice big, soft one
- ☑ Stash of diapers, wipes, diaper rash ointments

Brace yourself for your first visit to a baby store, where it will become overwhelmingly clear that babies were invented as a marketing ploy, and moms are the happy targets.



## What We Have Learned About New Fathers & *Bonding*



### **Dads Do Not Bond Like Moms**

After carrying a baby for nine months, a mom's bond is hardwired. We need to build ours from scratch.

You've likely heard stories of dads experiencing "love at first sight", getting swept off their feet at the baby's birth and instantly bonding forever. Don't buy it - this notion of new father bonding is more for the movies than real life. If you fall head over heels in love the minute you see your baby, great, but most dads say that it took 2-6 months to feel connected, so if you don't feel close at first, you have lots of company.

### **Fathers Bond Like We Have for Millennials**

Babies are designed to steal your heart, but not right away when they come out looking like cone-heads. They often don't pull on the heart strings the first month or two, either, when their day consists of sleeping, eating, pooping and crying. If you expect something momentous to happen early and it doesn't, it can rattle you.

But bonding eventually comes naturally, just like it did for the cave man. He was a work-from-home dad, built a house, hunted to provide for his family and regularly risked his life defending them. He must have "bonded" to go through all that work.

A dad's bond can be every bit as real and important as a mom's, but it will be different. Dad's bond fills a fundamental desire to be loved and needed, to protect and be a hero to the ones we love. Being a father will make you feel more like a man than perhaps anything you've done.

### **Bonding Takes Time**

Decades actually. Building, strengthening and reinventing your relationship with your child is something you will do continually, if you do it right. While our babies are designed to slowly steal our hearts (and later our wallets), we need to give them time to do their magic. Nature will do its thing when you take care of her – walking, playing and giving baths are highly recommended by the guys. Pretty soon she'll start smiling at you and getting excited when you walk in the door. You'll be a goner before you know it.



### **The Months Surrounding the Birth: Window of Opportunity for Fathers**

Princeton's Center for Research on Child Wellbeing found that the months surrounding a child's birth are a "magical moment" during which new fathers are most motivated and receptive to support and change. Researchers in Canada have since found hormonal changes that predispose a dad to care for his child, as well as pull him from a burning building. This may explain a surge in the protective instinct many new fathers feel surrounding the birth.

# Help Your Child Work His Magic

*While bonding does come naturally, there are ways to strengthen your connection.*

## Connect With Your Baby Early

Do some simple things that make him real in your mind:

- > Track his transformation from tadpole to your son (see your baby's development week by week at [Baby.com](http://Baby.com))
- > Listen to her heartbeat
- > See him in a sonogram
- > Feel her kick
- > Imagine what you will do together as she grows
- > Buy or build something for her that's just from you

## Get Hands-On Once She Arrives

Learn to care for her right from the start and you'll be an expert on baby care within weeks. Ask the OB nurse at the hospital to walk you through that first diaper change and anything else you need to know.

*A few things to try:*

- > Learn to swaddle him – we called it a “burrito wrap” – and you will know how to put a crying baby to sleep.
- > Give him a bath – the specialty of lots of dads; research from England indicates it is great for building that special bond.
- > Learn to massage him and you will know how to soothe him when he is most irritable.

## Develop Your Routine

You'll likely be second string when it comes to caring for your baby. Get into the game with a specialty position that you own because you are the expert. Be the go-to guy for baths, massage, crying jags or stroller runs.



## Show Him The World

Babies are incredibly curious and will become quiet, watchful and even mesmerized with anything new to check out. Carry him around the house slowly and facing out, with one hand under his bottom and the other over his chest, showing him colorful or bright objects. Watch his face to see what captures his attention.

## Talk To Your Baby

Babies love to hear you talk. Tell him what you're doing, describe what you see and sing songs. As you walk around with him, describe things you encounter – the birds chirping or the dog barking outside. Babies are great listeners and will see it your way every time.

## Just The Two Of You

Get out for some time together, just the two of you. Go for a long walk, or take her to the hardware store, to see your friends or to the beach. Develop a secret handshake. This time on your own, just the two of you, is when you take your relationship to the next level. ■

*For more information on connecting with your baby, visit [DadsAdventure.com](http://DadsAdventure.com).*



# Troubleshooter's Guide to: **CRYING BABIES**

It's the middle of the night. Your son just ate an hour ago and, for no apparent reason, has spent the last 20 minutes crying. Exhausted, mom is close to losing it. You have to go to work early but pretending to be asleep is not an option. What do you do?

No worries, we got this one down 17 years ago. One of the most popular lessons at Boot Camp, it has proved effective for thousands of dads. It works because babies cry, just like when a car misfires, for a reason. Taking a proactive approach enables you to remain cool, rational and focused on finding a solution.

## 1. DEVELOP A CHECKLIST OF REASONS YOUR BABY CRIES

Starting with the most common, a typical list might include:

- Hungry
- Dirty or wet diaper
- Diaper pinching skin
- Tired
- Diaper rash
- Frustrated
- Needs burping
- Too hot/too cold
- Needs to be held
- Gas/constipated
- Clothes rubbing
- Too much noise/  
too quiet

## 2. CHECK EACH REASON IN SEQUENCE, RULING OUT PROBLEMS AS YOU TRY SOLUTIONS

Nuff said.

## 3. CHECK FOR NEW PROBLEMS

Sometimes crying is caused by random things, his finger may be bent back in his sleeve or a hair might be wrapped around his toe. Of course, if you think your baby needs medical attention, call your doctor.

## 4. MOVE ON TO NEW TECHNIQUES

Not every problem will have a single answer. Being proactive also means trying new solutions for old problems.

- Feeding
- Bicycle legs
- Bouncy seat
- Changing diaper
- Walk her
- White noise
- Burping
- Tummy pressure
- Running dryer
- Swaddling
- Infant swing
- Music
- Holding
- Frontpack or sling
- Distraction
- Rocking
- Backpack
- Massage
- Sucking
- Stroller or jogger
- Ride in the car

## 5. SOMETIMES NOTHING WORKS

Sometimes there is nothing you can do to calm your baby and make him happy. As harsh as this might seem at the time, his crying is his way of getting his system back in sync.

If you feel yourself losing control, put the baby down in the safety of his crib and walk away. Although they may be fleeting, episodes of extreme frustration due to a crying baby are extremely dangerous. Never react in anger. Getting agitated and shaking a baby can permanently damage an infant's brain and may even lead to death. Walk away before incessant crying pushes you to that point. ■

# What Happened to *My Wife*?

Motherhood will produce intense physical and emotional changes in your wife over a short period of time. While she is getting hit hard, you appear to remain relatively unscathed, so she is unlikely to be sympathetic that you are no longer the main focus in her life. She may feel like she is the only one having a hard time. "He's not going to be there for me, he wants me to make all the career sacrifices, all he wants to do is have sex..." It just goes with the territory. You may at times wonder what ever happened to your wonderful, loving mate.

Pregnancy and motherhood do not always bring out the best in a woman as far as dad is concerned and these circumstances can make it tough for you to sort out what is happening, especially if you are taking her apparent rejection personally (it happens to the majority of us dads). Her body, emotions, identity, sense of worth; her very being gets wrapped around her baby.

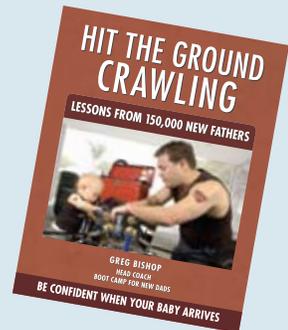
If you feel like someone who has lost his partner, welcome to the brotherhood of fatherhood. Keep in mind what she is going through mentally and physically and try to keep your sense of humor. Your sweetheart is still there inside her, and if you hang in there, you'll get her back in time.



## Hit the Ground Crawling: Lessons From 150,000 New Fathers

provides comprehensive information on the experiences and needs of new mothers and how dad can best support her, including:

- Raging Hormones & Mood Swings
- What to Expect by Trimester
- Her Fears & Concerns
- How Dad Can Help
- Getting Ahead of Her Curveball
- Going to Her Doctor Visits



## How to: Swaddling 101

We call it "burrito wrapping." Babies are swaddled right after birth in the hospital, and the nurse will be happy to give you a lesson. Do it a few times yourself and you will be a pro. Trying it with a squirming, kicking baby, though, might feel like you are roping a calf for the first time.

The main purpose once you are home is to comfort and keep your baby calm. Babies can scare themselves with their own kicking



and flailing, and wrapping them snugly in a blanket prevents this. Most babies like the security of swaddling; though some do not like to be so confined. ■

Get Ready,  
Set...

# Step-by-Step

On your way to becoming a new Dad

## Make a *Dry Run*

As the due date gets closer, make a practice driving run to the hospital. Get an idea of how long it takes to get there, traffic patterns, and if rush hour traffic might be a factor. As you get near the date, keep your gas tank topped off and make sure your car is in good working order. Try to make your trip to the hospital as smooth as possible because a woman in labor is extremely sensitive to sudden moves and even small bumps.



## Install the car seat *Early*

Hospitals require your baby to be in a car seat for the ride home, which is no time to be fumbling with instructions and adjustments on these confounding things, while mom sits tired and waiting, perhaps with a crying baby. Install it early and get used to adjusting the straps.



## Getting Ready for your baby

In addition to hearing her heartbeat and feeling her kick, spend some time doing things that will help you connect and feel ready once she arrives. And get some experience with a baby, any baby, especially alone with another father you know. Just hold the baby for a while, talk to her, and check out how she will stare at you and fully check you out. Try calming her if she's fussy by rocking or walking with her.

Go,  
Dad!



### Dad-to-be/New Dad Email Series

Our Dad-to-be/New Dad email series focuses on the issues that are affecting you not two months ago, not a month in the future, but right now. It's like a 17 month long virtual dad coach. All this and we're giving it away for free. Sign up now at [www.DadsAdventure.com](http://www.DadsAdventure.com).

# Earning Your Baby Spurs

It used to be okay for a father to say that he found his baby boring and would wait until he could throw a ball to get involved with him. Not anymore. To help you make sure you measure up as a father, we have outlined bottom line standards for you during your baby's first three months:

**1** Get hands-on involved in caring for your baby, beginning at birth. Indications that you are reluctant to do so can automatically make you a third stringer.

**2** Take advantage of early opportunities to learn the basics: holding, comforting, changing, burping, swaddling, bathing and putting your baby to sleep.

**3** Select at least one activity – like bathing, that you own. You become the designated bather, and even mom will defer to you on this issue. Swaddling, burping, and the big one – putting your crying baby to sleep, can also work.

**4** Make it just the two of you on a regular basis. Take your baby out for walks in a stroller or baby pouch, rock him in the rocking chair, show him the world starting with all the great stuff in your house.

**5** THE BIG TEST: 4 hours alone with your baby without mom. Before the end of the third month, you need to get this one under your belt, even if you have to boot mom out. Do it on your own (asking your own mother to come over and help does not count), and you will definitely earn your baby spurs.

“When she got fussy we would go on tour – at first around the house and backyard, where she found every picture, cup of soup, flower and bug intriguing – and later at the hardware store, where she found everything fascinating.”



## Important Research Findings:

### Football Provides Essential Benefits For Babies



Boot Camp For New Dads conducts research on men's interactions with babies. We know that infants are able to focus better on contrasting colors and are attracted to movement. Anecdotal evidence indicates that babies like football on TV (i.e., contrasting colors and movement), so we asked Boot Camp veterans to watch a football game with their babies. An astounding 98% reported that doing so provided

their baby important life lessons on commitment, passion, and the West Coast offense, as well as an essential bonding opportunity for dad. Due to an infant's poor vision in the critical first weeks, a big screen TV is considered essential to a baby's optimum development.

**Caution: New moms tend to be skeptical about this important research!**

# Turns out they *do* come with a manual

Get the **Crash Course for New Dads**, and discover what 200,000 dads already have: a how-to guide on supporting a new mom, caring for your baby, and becoming a great father



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