

Make an online photo book
to keep all of your cutest
memories safe

Make a change

Sarah Dawson SHARES 10 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS THAT WILL HELP YOU AND YOUR BABY HAVE A HAPPY AND HEALTHY 2019

1 TAKE IT EASY

If you've just had a baby, there's a lot to be said about 'pulling up the drawbridge'. Taking a step back and locking yourself away as a little family unit, to get to know your baby, rest and recuperate, is one of the biggest gifts you can give yourself. You'll never get that time again, so cherish that baby bubble. Trust us, no one will mind waiting a couple of weeks to meet the latest addition.

2 EMBRACE ROUTINE

When it comes to those hazy first few weeks, just go with the flow, but after a couple of months start thinking about routines. Babies love predictability and a consistent bedtime routine is an absolute gamechanger when it comes to getting a good night's sleep (them and you). A bath, a feed, swaddling, singing – whatever works for you, just keep it calm and positive. Visit the *Baby* website for lots of bedtime routine tips.

3 MAKE TIME FOR EACH OTHER

Sleep deprivation can turn even the most relaxed person into a lunatic, and it's easy to fall into the 'who's more tired' argument with your partner when you have a baby. Some days you might feel as though you haven't spoken to each other at all, apart from to ask where the wet wipes are, so making time for yourselves as a couple is essential. Whether it's a walk and chat while the baby sleeps in the pram, or a date night, you need to take time to remind yourself why you fell in love with each other in the first place.

4 DON'T FEEL GUILTY

Mum-guilt is real – but we say, make 2019 the year you're unapologetic about your choices. Want a day at home in your PJs, with just your

baby and Phil and Holly for company? Do it! Feeling pressured into signing up for baby massage classes with your NCT pals? That's fine – just say no. Can't face any more visitors this week? Be honest. Make 2019 a guilt-free zone.

5 SHARE THE LOAD

It's typical for one person to take on more parenting duties, especially if the other is at work full-time, but there's no excuse for not sharing the load. Make no mistake, having a baby can be hard work when you're doing it all solo, so make a resolution to speak up and ask your partner to get involved. If you're a single parent, ask family and friends for help when you need it – it's true what they say, it takes a village.

6 BE PRACTICAL

If you do one thing this year, book yourself onto a first-aid course. The Red Cross (redcross.org.uk/first-aid) run dedicated courses teaching first aid for babies and children, arming you with the skills you need to help in an emergency. Hopefully you'll never have to put these into practise, but you can relax knowing you've got these first-aid skills to hand if the need arises.

7 CAPTURE MEMORIES

Whether your baby's one week or one year old, the urge to capture their cuteness in all its glory is strong! Instead of leaving all those photos on your phone, do something about it. Print out your favourite photos once a month, or create a photo book online, which you can add to every month before ordering at the end of the year. It's so worth the effort – plus, Christmas gifts sorted!

8 LOVE YOURSELF

As a mum, you'll often put everyone else before you. If the pecking order at your house reads something like: baby, husband, dog, you, it's time for a change. Self-care is a necessity, not an option, if you want to stay strong and healthy, both physically and mentally. Get some exercise, even if it's a brisk walk with your little one strapped to you in the baby carrier, try and eat well and get as much sleep as you possibly can. And never be afraid to ask for help if you need a break.

9 STOP COMPARING

As if creating a little human isn't mind-blowing enough, watching them grow and develop into actual walking, talking people is another level of wonderment. Rolling over, crawling, walking, talking – there's always some kind of baby milestone on the horizon, and chances are your little one might not reach them all at the same time as others.

Instead of obsessing over everything they're not doing, celebrate what they are. Every baby hits those milestones in their own time and it's always worth the wait.

10 MAKE FRIENDS

We know there's something faintly terrifying about making new friends as a grownup, but even if you feel like you've got plenty of friends already, making the effort to meet new people who are going through the same thing as you is so important, especially with a new child in tow.

Be brave and sign up to that local antenatal class or head along to the baby group up the road. You might just end up meeting some amazing women to share the craziness of being a new mum, as well as random late-night Whatsapp chats when you're up feeding! **D**