

Parental Leave Tips

By [Matt Newkirk](http://mattnewkirk.com/parental-leave-tips) (mattnewkirk.com/parental-leave-tips)

Tips for Before You Go

- Write up a delegation/coverage plan
 - Who will handle communications,
 - What is your anticipated schedule, and
 - Who are your delegates, if applicable?
- Finalize your plan at least one month before you expect to leave (two is better),
- Share your plan with everyone (manager, reports, peers, business partners),
- Draft your e-mail auto-response early and include a link to your Parental Leave Plan,
- Draft your announcement e-mail if you plan on sending one so that you only have to fill in details and/or photos later, and
- Establish your support network: folks you can lean on if things are tough later.

Tips for When Your Leave Starts

- Let your manager (and HR, if applicable) know that your leave is beginning!
- If you wanted to send out an announcement e-mail, send that now.
- Turn on your e-mail auto-responder, and consider disabling e-mail notifications.
- Consider uninstalling work messaging from your phone and computer; you have other, more important things and people to focus on for a while!

Tips for Before You Return

- Reach out to your manager to chat, sharing any questions ahead of time so they have the opportunity to get answers before your meeting,
- Try to live in the present and enjoy the remaining extended time you have left with your family,
- If you're experiencing anxiety of things to come, talk to someone: your partner, your friends, your parents group at work, or strangers on the internet. Lean on the support network you previously established!
- Think about what your return schedule will look like and discuss it with your boss. Plan on experimenting until it feels right.

Tips for Returning

- Make an onboarding plan. Share it with your boss to avoid surprises,
- Talk with your support network as often as you need to; every day is a fine cadence,
- Find the smallest ways to feel useful and rebuild your confidence if you need to.