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## *The Longest Month of Pregnancy: Your 30-day Survival Guide*

**Ideas and activities to help you enjoy the home stretch.  
Prepare for birth and postpartum. Build your confidence.  
Nourish yourself. Bond with your baby.**



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Any information I share is based on personal and professional research and experience. I am not a medical professional. You should contact your healthcare provider if you have concerns about your physical, mental, or emotional wellness.

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## Introduction & Categories

### *The longest month of pregnancy.*

For many parents, the last month of pregnancy can seem to drag on and on. And even if it doesn't feel that way to you, I'm almost sure you're experiencing a wide range of emotions about your upcoming birth and welcoming your new baby into your family. Pregnancy, birth, and parenting are so different for each individual person and we can never predict exactly what course this transition will take. I think that's the beauty of it. Giving birth and becoming a parent is so common, yet so mysterious, and it's incredibly transformative and powerful.

This is your survival guide for your last weeks of pregnancy. I've given you 30 days worth of information, links to resources, ideas and activities. My goal is to help you prepare for birth and postpartum, help you build your confidence as you anticipate birthing and parenting your child, help you practice self-care and pamper yourself a little bit, and help you connect with your baby. Use it as you see fit. You might do every single thing I suggest and you might studiously do one activity a day for 30 days. Or you might browse through it, picking and choosing what you most want to do and setting your own timeline. When you begin is up to you. We all know that babies come at different times and they come when they're ready. I don't intend for you to start this guide exactly 30 days before your estimated due date. Start it whenever you'd like and be prepared for your baby to come before you're finished or to finish before your baby has been born.

The activities and ideas are organized into five categories. I've interspersed the categories throughout the guide instead of grouping all the activities for each category together. This way, if you do follow the guide in order, you'll have a rich variety of topics as you go through each day. Below is a short description of each of the five categories. I've also included space to write the date and take notes each day. I've listed web links as web addresses in case you're using a hard copy of the guide and need to type the address into your web browser.

I hope that this guide is a companion to you during the home stretch of your pregnancy, and that you feel more prepared, confident, relaxed, and invigorated as a result of working with it. Congratulations on your pregnancy and enjoy! You'll have your baby in your arms in no time!

### *Category 1: Prepare for Birth*

I'm sure it feels like there's so much to do to prepare for your upcoming birth. Birth is unpredictable and you can never fully plan for your birth. However, if you do some work ahead of time, you'll be better prepared to own your birth experience and remain a conscious, autonomous decision-maker throughout the process. I'll share 10 days of birth preparation; tools for comfort during labor, ideas to help prepare your body for a healthy labor, and tips on communicating with your care providers effectively so that your wishes are heard and respected. Do what you can, and then let go and trust yourself to birth your baby in the way that is best for you.



## Category 2: Plan for Postpartum Wellness

It's easy to forget to plan for your postpartum days. There is so much excitement about being pregnant and your upcoming birth! After your baby is born, you'll find yourself with many new responsibilities and the way you spend your time will be much different. You'll be so glad you took some time to make plans for a smoother and gentler postpartum transition. You can get my postpartum wellness toolkit, with a postpartum wellness worksheet, postpartum supply list, and postpartum affirmations by signing up for my newsletter at <http://www.taylordavidoula.com/postpartum-wellness-toolkit-optin/>. I'll also break down some of the steps included in the toolkit and give you 5 days of actionable ideas below.

**NOTE:** Go to <http://www.postpartum.net/Get-the-Facts.aspx> to read about signs of postpartum mood disorders and make sure that you seek support if you are experiencing these. You can go to <http://www.postpartum.net/Get-Help/Support-Resources-Map-Area-Coordinator.aspx> for assistance getting help if you need it. Remember that the sooner you get help, the better off you and your baby will be. It takes strength to ask for help and you can do it.



## Category 3: Build Your Confidence

It's normal and OK to have fears about childbirth. The mind-body connection is strong and there are things you can do before the birth to help you grow your confidence and work towards remaining in a positive state of mind. I'll share 5 different ideas to help you build your confidence and truly believe that you can do this!

## Category 4: Nourish Yourself

Along with building your confidence, you'll also want to truly take care of yourself and pamper yourself during your last days of pregnancy. For some pregnant people, these days can feel long and the excitement about meeting baby can become quite strong. I'll share 5 different ways that you can slow down and focus on your own well-being. And if you're nearing your estimated due date, or have passed it, this is a beautiful read: <http://www.mothering.com/articles/the-last-days-of-pregnancy-a-place-of-in-between/>.

## Category 5: Baby Love

The whole reason you're doing this in the first place! You'll learn so much early on about caring for your newborn in your first days with him/her. Trust your instincts and you will do wonderfully. I have found that during tough moments of pregnancy and labor, it can be so helpful to remember to connect with your baby. I'll share 5 ideas for connecting with and preparing to care for your baby.



## Day 1

### Prepare for Birth: The 3 R's and slow breathing

Today's Date:

I'm guessing that you hope to cope well with labor! "Losing it" or becoming scared, worried, or upset during labor is completely normal and OK, but what if you could learn about something that has helped other people cope well with labor?

Through her work and observations of people in labor, author, experienced doula, childbirth educator, and birth counselor, Penny Simkin, has identified 3 common characteristics birthing people who cope well with labor: relaxation, rhythm, and ritual.

While it's important to prepare for childbirth and to practice comfort measures and coping techniques, also remember that you will most likely develop coping techniques instinctively and spontaneously while in labor. This is what Penny has seen time and again while supporting families during labor. If your birth partner can help you stay grounded in your 3 R's and minimize distractions, he or she will be a huge help to you!

#### To Do:

- ✓ Watch this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mo4VmgrpHmxs>. You can practice the breathing techniques from the video if you'd like.
- ✓ Read the article titled *The 3 R's in Childbirth Preparation* under "Articles and Handout" on this page: <https://www.pennysimkin.com/articles-resources/>.
- ✓ Share these resources with your birth partner so that he or she knows what to look for in identifying that you have, in fact, found your 3 R's (relaxation, rhythm, and ritual) during labor.



#### Notes:

## Day 2

### Build your Confidence: Birth affirmations

Today's Date:

The mind-body connection is incredibly strong during pregnancy, labor, and birth. Of course there can be fear and stress surrounding pregnancy and birth, but sometimes we forget to focus on the positive as well. If you take time to build a positive birth narrative for yourself, you will increase the flow of beneficial birth hormones and potentially improve your labor and birth experience.

#### To Do:

- ✓ Take a look at the list of birth affirmations below.
- ✓ Identify the 5 or so that most resonate with you. Also, feel free to write some of your own.
- ✓ Write them on post-its and place them around your house in places you look every day AND/OR create an artistic display with the affirmations that you can also have with you when you're in labor.

#### Birth Affirmations:

I trust birth	My baby will be born at the right time
Strong contractions are good contractions	I am calm and relaxed
With each contraction, my body opens a little more	I am strong and can let the contractions be strong
Contractions help my baby to be born	The power of birth strengthens me
I relax easily	My baby's head fits perfectly in my pelvis
I welcome the change that birth will bring	My birth canal will open smoothly to birth my baby
The pain of birth can't hurt me	I am opening my mind and heart
I can separate myself from pain	I am a good parent to my child
My baby and I are working together	My baby feels my love
My baby and I are ready for the work we will do	Release, relax, let go, surrender
I am grateful for this powerful experience	Loose and limp
My baby knows what to do	Open
My body knows what to do	Stay in the moment
I feel the love of those who are helping me	One contraction at a time
I am gentle and strong	Breathe into it
I am able to labor smoothly	I can breathe my baby down and out
Rise, peak, fall, rest	I can do anything for 1 day
I share in the strength and wisdom of the parents who have come before me	

#### Notes/other affirmations: