

# A support guide: Single working parents



Juggling the demands of work and parenting is hard at the best of times, but it can be especially stressful for single parents.

Balancing the demands of work, family, and finances while still finding time for yourself can feel overwhelming.

Here are a few tips to make life a little bit easier.



## Build up your support network

It's hard to find time to socialise, but connections are essential for your mental wellbeing.

Being a single parent can be lonely, but even a small support network of friends can lighten your emotional load, enrich your life, and even help you to live longer.

Engage in activities that allow you to connect with others, be it through sports, clubs, volunteering, or social groups. Don't hesitate to reach out and discuss your feelings. Single-parent groups can be a huge support by sharing tips, resources, and encouragement, while offering a friendly ear that helps you to share your own experiences.

## Carve out time for you

Single parents can feel guilty when they do something purely for themselves, but sometimes you need to prioritise your own happiness and health. Your needs are as valid as anyone's, including your children!

It's important to make time for yourself to do something that you enjoy. Whether it's watching a movie, going to the gym, or spending time with friends, finding personal fulfilment is crucial in navigating single parenthood.

## Ask for support

It's okay to ask for support, and don't feel guilty for accepting it. People don't always come forward for fear of being intrusive, so make a list of friends and family who may help and let them know their support would be greatly appreciated. Suggest 'swap' arrangements with other parents to share childcare, school runs, or lifts to after-school activities, or ask a trusted relative or friend if they're happy to have your child stay overnight. This could result in the breathing space you need.

Be kind to yourself. Some days will be harder than others, and you may feel like you're failing in certain areas. This is okay. Acknowledge that you're doing your best, take time to recognise your hard work, and celebrate small victories. A successful workday, a fun family outing, or just making it through a particularly tough day are all notable achievements when you're a single working parent.



## Prioritise exercise

Being a single parent requires energy, and you need to keep your battery charged through regular exercise.

Physical activity is great for your body and mind, and it will give you a natural energy boost to power through your busy days. It also enhances resilience, helping you to cope with inevitable stress, and to fight off the bugs your children bring home from school!

Exercise can also help you to meet new people, get together with friends and family, and provide opportunities for social support, reducing potential feelings of loneliness that single working parents often experience. Even if you can't always make it to the gym, there's plenty of great home workouts out there. Something as simple as heading out for a walk with your children can make a positive difference for your health.

Balancing work and parenting as a single parent can be incredibly challenging, but with practical strategies, support, and self-care, it's possible to thrive.

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