

## How To Change A Nappy

If all else fails, you may actually have to roll up your sleeves and change the nappy yourself. Let every whiff that scorches your nasal hair be a reminder to you to think up some more convincing excuses for next time! In the meantime, here's how it's done . . .

Firstly, ensure your baby is laid on a flat, soft surface, ideally on a waterproof changing mat. Babies should never be left unattended unless in their cot or pram, since they can roll over and fall from a high surface.

- 1 Wash your hands well.
- 2 Remove any jewellery that could scratch the baby.
- 3 Make sure you have everything ready to clean and change the baby.
- 4 Put a couple of safe toys in the baby's sight for entertainment, although this may also be an ideal time to remember those nursery rhymes.



- 5 Remove the dirty nappy. As you take off the soiled/wet nappy, hold the baby gently by the ankles and lift the hips. Throw away the dirty nappy.
- 6 Wipe the baby clean and dry well.
- 7 Apply cream to prevent nappy rash.
- 8 Unfold a new nappy, lift the baby's hips again and slip it underneath.
- 9 Bring the front of the nappy up between the baby's legs.
- 10 Fasten the adhesive tapes as tightly as appear comfortable.
- 11 Dress baby.
- 12 Wash your hands again.

You may find yourself all 'fingers and thumbs' at first, but after a short while, you'll become extremely good at it. And that's just as well – after all, it'll be happening at least five times a day, not counting the night changes.

The above, of course, only applies to disposable nappies. If your partner has 'gone green' and decided to use the re-usable towelling nappies, brush up on your avoidance techniques or feign death.

### Father Says . . .

A baby-sitter is a teenager who gets two dollars an hour to eat five dollars' worth of your food.

HENNY YOUNGMAN

## What to Do While Mum's Away

If your partner has to go away for a few days (perhaps on business or maybe even to produce another new arrival) it may be time to start grovelling to your mother-in-law and taking back all those things you said when you thought she wasn't listening. Alternatively, you could be a man about it and take on the challenge of looking after your offspring with the aid of our survival guide.

### Prepare yourself

Start watching what your partner does while she's still at home. Learn the ropes and if you're very clever, start joining in. You might find washing the dishes or doing the Hoovering a chore, but bath time, reading stories and pillow fights (best to leave this until mum has actually gone) are all fun.

You don't want to have the attitude that if you go to the supermarket and do it really badly (by forgetting the bread and baby's formula, etc.) that you won't have to do it again. Chances are you will be made to do it again and again until you get it right. Also, it's the little ones in your life that will suffer if you mess up while mum's away.

### Learn military precision

No household can operate effectively without it. If it helps, make lists and a timetable. You need to remember that school gates normally open at 8.45 a.m. and close again at ten past three. Choir rehearsals, music lessons, ballet classes and football sessions all happen on different days. If they do, you're lucky; if they don't, make sure the car is serviced and full of petrol, the satnav is plugged in and programmed or that you

have the appropriate bus timetables. Make sure you also have directions to places you don't normally go – like the doctor and dentist. You don't want to be running around like a lunatic, carrying a child that needs medical attention, when you've got no idea where you're going.

### Cooking and shopping

In the weeks prior to your partner's departure, start watching cookery programmes and note how your partner prepares a meal. Ask her to provide you with a weekly shopping list so you don't overlook any essential items. Doing the washing without any powder or liquid will be difficult and will only result in you having to make an extra journey to buy some. Plus, you'll have to do the washing all over again. Definitely seek out your local Tesco, Morrison's and Iceland. You need to feed the children a balanced diet, although there is, and should, be room for treats (but keep these to a minimum – you are not going to be a pushover).

If you don't normally feed your children certain foods, don't suddenly introduce them into their diet just because mum's away. It will add confusion – the younger the child, the more reassurance they will need while mum is not at home – plus you may get poorly tummies (spicy spare ribs are not good for toddlers) which is not nice, especially if you're a novice at dealing with sickly kids.

### Father Says . . .

Being a parent is a big responsibility, one of life's greatest things . . . a pain in the arse.

NOEL GALLAGHER

### **Keep to the children's normal routine**

Children like routines, it makes them feel safe and secure. Don't let them stay up late watching something unsuitable on TV with you. It will only lead to nightmares, tiredness, arguments and tantrums – all of which you will have to deal with. If you have older children you are lucky, as the chances are they will know exactly where to find everything, how the microwave works and where mum keeps the cleaning kit for when the cat throws up. Use this knowledge and ask for help, but don't abuse it and expect your older children to take over where mum left off.

If you do get help, always reward appropriately, perhaps by offering to let them have friends over. Make sure you will be in though and don't leave your stash of beers on show and available – otherwise what will you have to drink?

Having coped admirably with the absence of your nearest and dearest, not only will you feel elated and proud of yourself, but your partner may start to see the 'new' man in you. But be warned – this may lead to more domestic responsibilities for you in the long run and you will definitely need a holiday to get over it in the short-term.

If you are lucky, your partner (unless struck down by illness) will probably have put everything in place for you. But, be prepared for the unexpected and keep smiling . . . even if that means gritting your teeth and going to bed early.



#### **Father Says . . .**

Little children, headache; big children, heartache.

**ITALIAN PROVERB**

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## **Friends and Family**

### **How to keep your friends and keep in with your family**

As you will no doubt be aware, having a child brings about the biggest change in your life, short of being hit by a train. You will have already noticed this if you have friends who have had children. Your best mate won't be down the pub every evening getting drunk with you while watching the football, playing pool or simply hanging out. Be prepared – this *will* happen to you, too.

### **Staying friends**

In order to deal with this change you need to cultivate relationships with your friends who already have children. Listen to the advice they can offer on how to get your toddler to sleep at night or which is the best television programme to let them watch – this will keep them entertained for a while and give you some much-needed time to do a few household chores or put your feet up and catch forty winks!

Having friends with children also means that you can arrange to do things together, allowing you to have some adult company and the kids to play together so they're not pestering you every minute. It's great fun when families get together and go out for the day, whether it's a barbecue or just a romp in the park. Your friends might also be prepared to babysit your child at their house so you can enjoy an evening out with your partner. Just remember to reciprocate or you'll find they won't offer the favour again!

While bringing up your child is a lifetime responsibility, do remember that when they have grown up and found their own independence, you will have more freedom to do things that

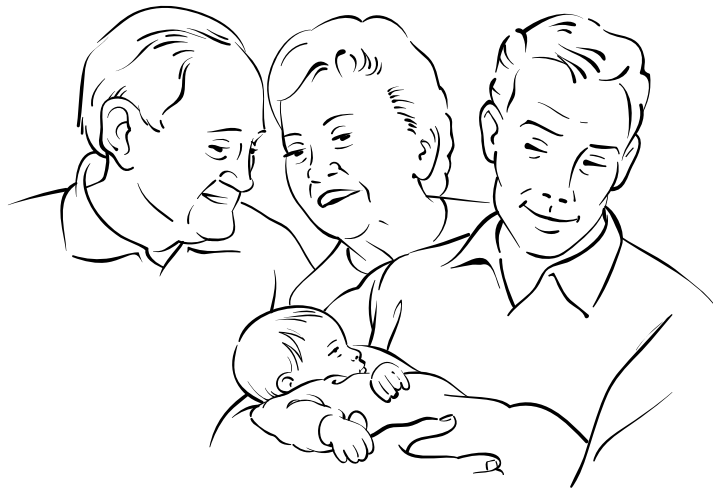
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you want to do so it's important that you have kept in touch with your friends. You won't be pulling your weight in the childcare stakes if you are out with your pals every night, but once in a while, now and again, is definitely a good idea to get some time away from the family.

### Relative problems

Once you have a child, you'll find that your entire family will want to descend on you for a visit. Great-aunt Flossie will suddenly decide that, after twenty years, it's time she saw you again, time she met your partner and time she came to stay for a week or two!

While it's perfectly acceptable for the newborn's grandparents and close uncles and aunts to want to see the baby, it's only fair on your other half to be selective and limit the amount of time she has to put up with other people in the house – especially just after coming home from hospital. Of



course, she might welcome her mother visiting for a while to help once she has come home, so it's down to you to make sure that you maintain good relations with your mother-in-law . . .

Relatives will always have advice for you as a parent, whether you have asked for it or not! No matter how good a parent you are, at some point they will frown on the way you are dealing with a particular situation and come out with one of the old chestnuts like 'My mother didn't do that!' or 'It wasn't like that in my day!' Be diplomatic. Don't start arguing. Remember – the best thing about advice is that it is freely given but it doesn't *have* to be taken.

Don't forget that the fact that you now have had a child will tend to make some of your relatives feel older – especially your mum and dad. They have gone to bed one night as parents and woken up the next morning as grandparents! They probably still see you as their little boy . . .

### Love thy neighbour

Whether you get on with your neighbours or not will direct how you approach your relationship with them when you have a child. If they are friendly, you are more likely to try to keep the noise down and be embarrassed if your child is having a screaming tantrum at three in the morning. If you don't get on at all, then you probably won't be too worried about disturbing their sleep!

Joking aside, whether your neighbours are your best friends or not, making a real effort to keep in with them will pay dividends in the long run. If you live in a block of flats or a terraced house where there is a degree of noise penetration, your neighbours will be far better disposed to the inevitable noise that a newborn baby can make if you have taken the trouble to butter them up a bit.

It is also far easier to ask a noisy neighbour to keep the din down when you're trying to get the baby to sleep if you have made the effort to befriend said neighbour first. Try to be a considerate, good neighbour, and you will find that your neighbour is more accepting on the odd occasion when there is a lot of noise coming from your house.

Neighbours can also become great friends to you and your children. If they have kids themselves, then your child has ready-made playmates next door and you have friends on hand with whom you can socialize.

If your neighbours are elderly, encourage your child to strike up a friendship with them. Your child will be fascinated by the stories they can recount of what life was like when they themselves were young. If they are able, they might enjoy joining you for a walk in the park or even doing a bit of babysitting now and again. If they are rather more frail, they will be comforted by the thought that someone next door cares for them and is looking out for them.

Being good to your neighbours generally means that they will be good to you, too.

**Father Says . . .**

Human beings are the only creatures on earth that allow their children to come back home.

**BILL COSBY**

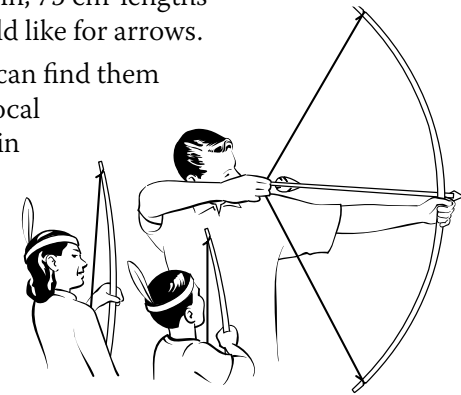
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## How to Make a Bow and Arrow

If you really want to be a hero to your kids and impress them with your skills as an outdoorsman, go wrestle a bear or a crocodile. Alternatively, you could show them how to make a bow and arrow. Follow these instructions and, with a bit of practice, you'll be hitting a target at twenty paces in no time. Make sure you use an old dart board or something suitable as a target though. Try this out on the cat, no matter how much you hate the thing, and you'll go from hero to zero faster than a speeding arrow. A mound of soft earth or sand in the garden will do as a target. This will also help to preserve your arrows and makes them far easier to retrieve than chasing a wounded cat.

### To make your bow and arrow you will need:

- ◆ A wooden staff about 1.5 m long and at least as thick as your thumb. Try to find or cut a straight length with little or no knots or offshoots. Yew is the traditional bow-making wood, but you can also use oak, elm, birch or just about any other strong, healthy wood.
- ◆ As many straight, thin, 75 cm-lengths of wood as you would like for arrows.
- ◆ Some feathers (you can find them or maybe ask your local butcher) or some thin plastic card to use as flights
- ◆ Cord or twine
- ◆ Cotton thread
- ◆ A sharp knife

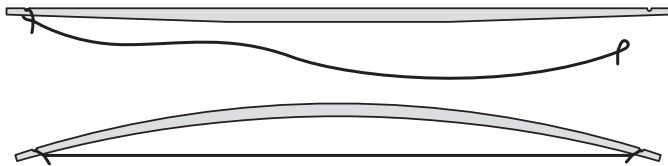


**To make the bow**

- 1 To make your bow bend and spring back you need to chamfer the ends. Mark the staff 0.5 m from each end. Shave these end sections along the inside of the bow, tapering towards the tip. You don't need to shave it too thin; you should slim the bow gradually until the tips are about half as thick as the middle. Next cut a thin groove in the unchamfered outside edge of the bow. The groove needs to be about 5 cm from the end. This is where you will tie your bowstring.



- 2 Tie the twine you are using as a bowstring to one end and bend the bow. Don't bend it too far as it will have to go further still when you are firing an arrow. Pull the bowstring taught and cut the required length.



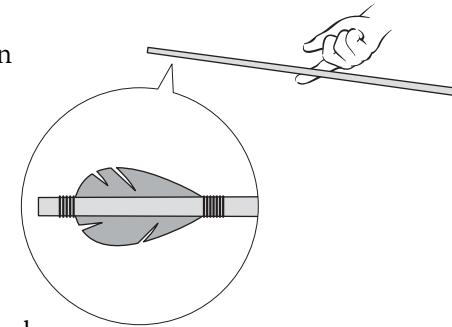
- 3 Make a loop in the open end of the string. Now slip this loop over the other end of the bow so that it sits in the notch. Always release the string when you are not using the bow so that the bow does not 'set' in its bent shape and lose its power.

**The Arrows**

- 1 The front of an arrow needs to be heavier than the back to stop the arrow tumbling through the air. Find the mid

point of the arrow by balancing it on your finger. Now you can tell which end (the shorter side) is heavier. Cut a slot in the lighter end and slide a feather in so that it sticks out on either side of the slot. This will be your flight. Wrap some cotton thread ahead of the feather and behind it to squeeze the slot and clamp the feather in place. You can use a piece of shaped plastic or card instead of a feather.

- 2 If you are feeling really macho, you can make an arrowhead by pounding a piece of flint into a thin blade or carving a sliver of bone. Arrowheads can be clamped in place using the same method you used for the flight. A very sharp arrowhead is, of course, extremely dangerous. It is safer and easier just to scorch the end of the arrow over a flame to harden it and then sharpen it with a knife. It is safer still to use a piece of modelling clay on the tip.



Now you are ready for target practice. You might want to wear a glove on your bow hand to protect you from the string because it can really sting if it catches your wrist and, unless you can turn your whimpering into an effective war whoop, you're going to look pretty stupid at that point.

You can scale down the whole process to make bows for the kids. Now look up the 'Ten Best Threats' in this book to stop them from shooting you in the backside as soon as your back is turned.