

Crying baby, sleeping spouse

A benefit in marriage or a committed relationship is the implied responsibility for both to share the burdens. Women have traditionally relied on formalized bondage in marriage to trap men into contributing to child rearing. Today, men have [demonstrated](#) they still do less of the child watching and tending than women, and [they often defend themselves](#) with the fact they must earn wages outside the house and conserve their energy.

But times are changing and men are increasingly having to share the "I work" excuse with their wives. So the problem may not be as gender specific as it once was. For this reason, the following 5 strategies can help with splitting workloads in child rearing without bias to the mom or dad:

1. **Make a Schedule**

Men traditionally think in utilitarian terms while women often dwell on the emotional aspects, so making a schedule with both "MOM" and "DAD" at the top of the page will allow the times beneath to be filled in – with complete objectivity. Too many blanks for one or the other can practically demonstrate an unfair share.

2. **Discuss in Advance**

Similar to scheduling, when a spouse discusses what will happen tomorrow there is a planning mechanism that kicks in and the practical reality of sharing becomes obvious to both parties. Talking it out makes for powerful parenting.

3. **Threaten to Call the Inlaws**

A carefully placed threat never hurt a marriage. If there is something lacking in solutions then you have every right to suggest bringing in additional resources to help with the work. But this can backfire on the mom, too. There's more than a few stories about men calling in their choice of nanny who does more to wreck the house than to restore it.

4. **Do it in the Bedroom**

We often do our best to hide life's unpleasantness from our spouses. When a diaper is full or a toilet bowl gets missed, we don't go running to the phone to tell our spouses about it. We often hide a crying baby from them, too. But a crying kid should be kept around both parents when it's a new problem or one of the parents is not pulling his or her load. Not only does it demonstrate to the child that both parents are unified in their strategy, and it also unites them in the common cause. Pulling a crying baby into the bedroom in the middle of the night demonstrates that this is a problem shared by both spouses.

5. **Get Up with Your Spouse**

One of the best ways to demonstrate support is to join in with your spouse whenever unpleasantness await them. By getting up when you don't have to in the middle of the night – "Can I get you a cup of coffee?" – there's a demonstrated sense of team that will carry over the next time it's your turn to shoulder the burden of changing the midnight diaper or waking with the roosters to feed oatmeal to the children.