

Top Five Ways to Avoid a Pregnant Pause in Romance

By Leon Scott Baxter

(Coastal Woman – Summer 2007)

Expecting fathers want the best for their pregnant partners. But, unfortunately, sometimes we're just romantically-challenged. Please realize, if we knew what to do to sooth you and to bring romance to these nine months, we would. Cut out this Top Five List for the expecting man in your life and tape it to the remote control. He'll appreciate knowing what you need, and you'll appreciate him giving it to you.

1. Take up the slack

In the last trimester, the more a pregnant woman is on her feet, the less romantic she feels. Swollen ankles, aching joints and stretching ligaments mean Mom needs a rest. That's why so many pregnant women say they feel loved and well taken care of when their partners either wash the dishes or arrange a meal,.

2. Make time for her.

Parents-to-be often create idyllic scenarios about the future as a family: Everyone curled up on the sofa reading their own books in nuclear family bliss, leaving Baby with the sitter for uninterrupted, romantic dinners out on the town, putting the child to bed early to partake in some romance.

In reality, family life, as wonderful as it often is, is also not as idyllic, and definitely not very romantic as many of us would like: bills to pay, babies to change, sleep to catch up on, houses to clean, and trying to squeeze in five minutes of adult bedroom play a month.

So, do it now. Make time for your pregnant partner while you have the time. Build that connection between the two of you so when family life gets hectic, you'll have created a loving foundation to fall back on. Schedule a weekend getaway before Baby arrives. Take nightly walks together to keep you both healthy, but also to have uninterrupted one-on-one time together. Go out on dates regularly: movies, concerts, plays, dinner. Let your partner know she's more than an expecting mother. Show her you still see her as your sweetheart.

3. Share the pregnancy.

Pregnancy is a phenomenon we men must experience from afar. Although we may try to be as much part of it as we can, we won't ever truly understand the 24-hour, seven-days-a-week, vomit-until-you're-empty, playing-soccer-with-my-bladder, what-the-heck-happened-to-my figure enigma of pregnancy that women endure. But we can be as supportive as we can, especially if we decide to learn alongside our partners every step of the way. That would include attending childbirth classes, accompanying our wives to the doctor's appointments, and reading books and magazines on pregnancy and fetus development. "He read all the same books I did," says mom Allison Stiles of her husband, "and then tried to learn more, come back and show me what he knew." In doing so, you give Mom a lab partner in this nine month experiment.

4. Tell her she's attractive.

When asked, "What's the one romantic thing your husband could have done during pregnancy?" over one-third of the women surveyed answered, "He could have told me I was attractive more often." Pregnancy wreaks havoc on a woman's hormones as well as her body: weepiness, edema, stretch marks, mood swings, weight gain and hemorrhoids just to name a few. Every week she sees changes that you may not. It's easy to lose perspective and self-confidence with such rapid and drastic changes. That's where we men come in. It's our job to remind our partners how beautiful they are, and often... more often than we might think. So, tell her she's gorgeous. Let her know you think her changing body is attractive. Introduce her as your "gorgeous wife". Take her photo often. Buy her cute outfits and sexy undies. Tell her she has a radiant glow. And, kiss her -- a lot.

5. Touch her!

We men know that a rub here and a massage there can express love in a relationship, pregnant or not. But, many of us have no idea the extent to which touch really triggers a pregnant woman's romance sensors. Three out of every four expecting moms surveyed said that touch was the number one way to bring romance to their pregnant relationships. Pregnant women's nerve endings are highly sensitive. So when you touch your expecting partner the levels of the hormone oxytocin rise, which leads to a decrease in stress levels. Passion and romance builds, and she's rewarded with the euphoria of endorphins

Lightly rub her belly. Hold her hand. Sneak up behind her and give her a hug. Wash her hair in the shower. Spoon her in bed as you go to sleep. Offer a neck rub or give her a gentle foot massage

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