

## Ditch the Cape, Supermom

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You are great at multi tasking. It's 6:30 a.m. You're ready for work, thrown a load of laundry in, taken something out of the freezer for dinner and made the grocery shopping list for the way home.

You're a Type A personality.

At the office by 7:30 and still there twelve hours later. You did the work to climb the corporate ladder while you could – before the kids came along. It worked. You kept getting promoted.

Now you're on maternity leave. What a piece of cake! Trade the office work for a few poopy diapers, story time, play time, and a walk in the park!

Except it's been a few months now, and things aren't quite the way you thought they'd be.

- You're on the go from morning till night. You tell yourself that you can manage just fine with half the sleep you're used to. But you're snapping at everyone around you.
- To save money, you canceled the cleaning lady. Your spouse said he'd help but that's not happening. You're cleaning spills and picking up toys ALL the time – especially now that your in-laws are dropping in more frequently.
- You're getting headaches more frequently but you chalk it up to out of whack hormones and ignore it.
- You're crying more than usual. Everyone just says its just 'baby blues.'
- You're having trouble sleeping at night even though you're tired.
- You have indigestion problems, cramps and heartburn.
- You feel isolated. You didn't realize how many of your intellectual and emotional needs were being met at the office. And now you feel alone.

*Stop and think.*

You've known people at work who've been on disability leave because of stress related illness. They're often the most capable, top performers, the ones who seemed to thrive on being workaholics.

Being a top performer at home can leave you burnt out, resentful, and possibly even depressed. It's vital that you figure out how not to be a Superwoman. Now.

Many of us don't recognize how stressed we really are until we reach our breaking point. Those of us who've reached that point, can, in hindsight, recognize what the signs were that we ignored.

Don't let it happen to you. If you don't get it in check now, it's only getting to worse, especially if you decide to go back to work:

- **Introduce yourself to your inner Superwoman:**
  - Recognize your superwomen tendencies. Why does the house need to be clean 24/7? Reflect on where this need comes from and resist. Give yourself permission to live with imperfection.

- **Don't wait for a mommy-promotion:**
  - STOP approaching motherhood as you did your role at the office. There's no promotion waiting for you if you work twice as hard!
  
- **Create realistic expectations:**
  - Approach your maternity leave with the end in mind. If you're thinking of going back to work, what do you need to put in place now, that will facilitate your having balance in your life then? Don't get the family used to you taking care of everything yourself. It'll be hard to give it up when you're back at work.
  
- **Keep your partner in check:**
  - Don't let your partner off the hook! Make sure he's doing his share. Stand your ground when, in a moment of frustration, he says, "But you're home all day!"
  
- **Get out!**
  - Don't isolate yourself. Unlike an office environment where there's activity buzzing around you, motherhood can be lonely work. Sign up for a stroller fitness group, join a moms' group. These bonds will serve you well later even though you may feel too tired to bother now.
  
- **Learn to ask for help:**
  - If you're going back to work, avoiding 12 hour workdays will require you to delegate. Start now. Learn to say no and accept help from others. You'll be surprised what you get if you learn to ask.