

The First 90 Days After Separation

What to do, in order, before you get overwhelmed

STILL DAD

The first 90 days are the hardest. Everything feels urgent and almost none of it actually is. Work this list in order. Don't jump ahead.

PHASE 1: WEEK 1 / IMMEDIATE SURVIVAL

- Find a place to sleep that is safe, stable, and allows your kids to visit
- Get at least 2 weeks of clothing and essentials out of the shared home
- Open a personal bank account if you don't already have one
- Move your direct deposit to your personal account
- Write down every asset and debt you are aware of: now, before anything moves
- Take photos of the house, valuable items, and any shared property
- Do not move out without consulting a lawyer if there are children involved
- Call or text your kids every day, even if briefly
- Tell one trusted person what is happening: you need a witness and a support
- Do not post anything on social media about the separation

PHASE 2: MONTH 1 / LEGAL AND FINANCIAL BASICS

- Consult with at least one family law attorney (many offer free initial consultations)
- Understand if there is a temporary order in place or if you need one
- Get on your children's school communication list directly: email the school
- Get on your children's medical records: contact their pediatrician
- Change all passwords: email, bank, social media, shared subscriptions
- Remove your ex from your insurance if legally permitted at this stage
- Set up a separate email for all legal and financial correspondence
- Begin saving every text, email, and voicemail from your co-parent
- Set up a simple budget based on your income alone: be honest about it
- Freeze your credit if identity theft is a concern
- Create a dedicated folder (paper and digital) for all legal documents

PHASE 3: MONTHS 2–3: STABILIZING

- Establish a consistent routine for your kids when they're with you
- Set up your space so it feels like home to them: their photos, their stuff
- Introduce yourself to their teachers and coaches as a separate contact
- Know the school calendar, medical schedule, and activity schedule cold
- Find one physical outlet: even walking 20 minutes a day
- Consider a therapist or men's group: this is logistics, not weakness
- Revisit your budget and look for one thing to cut
- Review your temporary order line by line: know what it says
- Write down any order violations with dates, times, and details
- Draft a parenting journal: what time did the kids arrive, how did they seem, what did you do

The goal of the first 90 days is not to win. It is to not lose ground. Staying calm, staying present, and staying documented is the work.