



TIPS FOR RETURNING SOLDIERS

1. **Plan on spending some time** with the entire family doing family things, but be flexible if teens have other plans.

2. **Show interest** and pleasure in how your family members have grown and mastered new skills in your absence and let them know you are proud of them. Comment on positive changes.

3. **Expect it will take a little time to become re-acquainted with your spouse.** Be sure to tell them just how much you care about them.

4. **Resist the temptation to criticize.** Remember that your spouse has been doing her or his best to run the household single-

handedly and care for the children while you were gone.

5. **Take time to understand how your family may have changed** during the separation. Go easy on child discipline--get to know what new rules your spouse may have set before you jump into enforcing the household rules.

6. **Don't be surprised if some family members are a bit resentful of your deployment.** Others often think of the deployment as more fun and exciting than staying at home-- even if you know otherwise.

7. **Infants and small children may be shy or even fearful around you at first.** Be patient

and give them time to become reacquainted.

8. **Resist the temptation to go on a spending spree to celebrate your return.** The extra money saved during deployment may be needed later for unexpected household expenses.

9. **Most importantly, make time to talk with your loved ones.** Your spouse and each child need individual time and attention from you. Remember, focus on the positives and avoid criticism.

Communication will help to:

- Reestablish intimate and sexual relations
- Will help to bring you closer

together

- Will help with accepting change

Remember –

Go slowly – don't try to make up for lost time

Spend quality time with each child

Accept that your partner may be different

Intimate relationships may be awkward at first

Take time to get reacquainted

Forget your fantasies





TIPS FOR MILITARY SPOUSES

1. **Do something special to welcome your spouse home**--help the children make a welcome banner, make your spouse's favorite dessert, etc., but be understanding and flexible if your spouse is too tired to notice.

2. **Give your spouse time to adjust to being home.** Don't tightly schedule activities for them. Don't expect them to take on all their old chores right away. Understand that your spouse may need time to adjust to a different time zone, a change in food, etc.

3. **Plan on some family togetherness time.** Suggest a picnic or a special family meal. Time together helps the returning spouse to get back into the rhythm of family life.

4. **Be patient and tolerant with your spouse.** He or she may not do things exactly as before. New experiences during deployment may bring changes to attitude and outlook.

5. **Stick to your household budget.** Don't spend money you don't have on celebrating your spouse's return. Show you care through your time and effort.

6. **Don't be surprised if your spouse is a little hurt by how well you were able to run the household and manage the children without them.** Let them know that your preference is to share family and household responsibilities with them no matter how well you did on your own.

7. **Stay involved with your children's school activities and interests.** Don't neglect the children's need for attention as you are becoming reacquainted with your spouse.

8. **Stay involved in your own activities and interests,** but be flexible about making time for your spouse.

9. **Don't be surprised if children test the limits of the family rules when your spouse returns.** It's normal for children to want to find out how things may have changed by acting up a bit. Consistent enforcement of family rules and even-handed discipline are key to dealing with acting-out.

Remember --

Go slowly – don't try to make up for lost time

Accept that your partner may be different

Intimate relationships may be awkward at first

Take time to get reacquainted

Forget your fantasies

Reassure your children

Seek help for family members if needed