

# when mom is down for the count



**A**s I'm writing this, I'm flat on the couch, with my knee strapped in a CPM machine (think an exercise machine for your leg) along with an ice pack snugly wrapped around my very swollen extremity. The throbbing is persistent, but I'm willing myself to keep my pain meds in check. I had recently undergone ACL knee surgery and I was ready to heal, but my knee wasn't—not by a long shot. I was down for the count.

As an active person and a mom of two young kids, being incapacitated was not something I had experience with, and I wasn't loving the process.

And of course, when mom is down, the household tends to go down with it. The house was a mess, the kids weren't eating the healthiest (cereal for dinner!), and it was hard to muster the enthusiasm to read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to my 2-year-old son Matthew for what seemed like the 100th time.

That's when I realized, sometimes when things are just plain tough—losing a job, undergoing surgery, moving to a new town—the only way to get through it is by accepting that you're doing the best you can and cutting yourself some slack. And then, look at the bright side.

Yes, the house was a wreck but my great staff and boss sent delicious (and nutritious!) meals for me and the kids. That gesture meant the world to me. And yes, I was very limited in what I could do, but my super-sweet sister Cathy took a week of her vacation time to fly out and take care of me. And sure, once she left I wasn't able to take on all of the kids' needs, but my husband and in-laws really picked up the slack and made sure teeth were brushed every night and lunches were packed every morning.

Then there was me. I had to learn to let go of everything else—let others carry the load—so I could focus on myself and getting better. And as any mom knows, that's not an easy thing to do. Moms always put their needs at the bottom of the list. But I had to change that. With a fabulous physical therapist (Charlie, you're the best!) who pushes me three times a week, a home-strengthening program that I've forced myself to make time for, and plenty of ice packs, I'm slowly healing. Hopefully by the time you read this—in the beautiful days of summer—I'll be in a much stronger, healthier place.

In the meantime, I can't help but think of the words my 4-year-old son Jack said when he saw me with crutches and a brace immediately after surgery: "Don't worry, Mommy, you will be fine in the long run." And I will be. I'm a mom.

## P.S.

Tell me about the time you were down for the count—and how you got through. E-mail me at [youSpeak@kiwimagonline.com](mailto:youSpeak@kiwimagonline.com)

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