



Breastfeeding Made Simple: Seven Natural Laws for Nursing Mothers

Nancy Mohrbacher , Kathleen A. Kendall-Tackett , Jack Newman (Foreword)

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Breastfeeding is natural, but it's not always easy. It is the biological norm, but it is not the cultural norm. By learning the seven basic principles in this book, mothers can dramatically increase their likelihood of success and make breastfeeding the enjoyable experience it should be. The seven laws taught in this book are easy for mothers to understand and are sure to help them avoid some of the pitfalls that they might otherwise face.

The seven principles include: 1. Babies Have the Urge to Self-Attach 2. Use the Power of Skin-to-Skin: A Baby's Natural Habitat 3. Breastfeed Ad Lib 4. Reach for the Comfort Zone 5. Expect Cluster Nursing 6. More Milk Out = More Milk Made 7. Babies Outgrow Breastfeeding

The book also addresses how to solve common problems and deal with special situations such as breast reductions and babies with special needs. The authors describe some of the social, psychological, and cultural reasons why breastfeeding is not currently the norm, and what this implies for mothers. In all, this is an easy-to-use breastfeeding resource for new mothers, which includes all the latest research and techniques used by those in the lactation field.

Breastfeeding Made Simple: Seven Natural Laws for Nursing Mothers Details

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Emily Monroe says

This is a very informative book on the "why's" and "how's" of breastfeeding. It is jam-packed with science and references, which I appreciate. I would have given five stars except for the lack of acknowledgement of correlation versus causation. Some of the studies referenced show how breastfeeding correlates with good health outcomes, but the authors consistently treated these pro-breastfeeding studies like evidence of causation. I think that can be somewhat misleading. Other than that, this is a fantastic resource that I will continue to reference over time.

Molly says

I wish I had read this book before I began breastfeeding my first. I've breastfed 4 children and still learned new information from this book and several things that would have helped me a lot if I had known them earlier. Too late now, but hopefully I can still use what I've learned to help other new moms! What I love most about this particular book is that it explains **why** breastfeeding works the way it does so mothers can have confidence in their actions and choices and make connections between actions and their results.

Marieke says

My five stars are based entirely on my first reading of this. I have yet to apply anything I've learned or try out any trouble-shooting. But I like the way it is organized and I liked that it keeps reiterating that most problems can be solved in most cases, which I find encouraging...the acknowledgement that this probably won't always be easy or fun, but is important, and here are solutions so don't be too quick to give up.

I'll likely have other sources of help along the way, but I do feel empowered by this book already. It was recommended to me by a lactation consultant friend who is far from being the scary over-the-top type of "lactivist." I was pleased that the tone of the book struck me as kind, but very firm in its resolve that I get the hang of this and meet my goals. It also helped me figure out what my goals will be...my mind has been blown lately by all the amazing things the female human body is capable of.

Dr. Dena says

Informative. A bit judgy. I hold a premise that breastfeeding is a partnership between baby and mother, and then the society that supports their breastfeeding relationship. More needs to be said in general about what strains or limits that relationship, such as abuse, lack of quality medical assessment and intervention, and cultural pushback to boobs for babies. Plus, that breastfeeding is not all or nothing as in by a certain time you should exclusively breastfeed, or nothing at all, or not formula feed at all, and whips shame on you if you don't manage you're not the survival of the fittest as outlined in the first chapter. For example the real concern is whether or not mothers and babies have ready access to clean drinking water for both mother and

baby whether the mother breastfeeds cross feeds or formula feeds. Clean accessible fresh water for drinking is needed in every situation to stay hydrated and alive. Somehow we forget about this, and no worse than persons in the birth world who are attempting to consult or educate new mothers are those who end up being damaging and shaming. This happens when we push an ideology over a person, and judgment on mothers as though it's their responsibilities only to follow laws of breastfeeding. This Dynamic contributes to so much of the mommy wars, estrangements, and defensiveness between women and mothers overall. This kind of approach needs to transition to more women supporting women in a circle way. Needless to say, I found the language off-putting. However, I appreciated the book for a situational reference. I will still prefer a rewrite or another book written that gives similar helpful solutions or information to mothers yet with a situational and systems awareness of the pressure they are under and a non-judgmental tone.

Echo C says

So I guess the true rating of this would be a 2.5 or 2.75 but definitely no more than a 3 star book.

Honestly, I was put off by this book from the jump. The authors came off as holier-than-thou and super judgmental. The book started off by listing the benefits of breastfeeding your baby. This wasn't surprising, you know with the book being about breastfeeding and all. What was surprising was how pushy the authors were about BF'ing and how long the tirade against formula was. It felt completely overdone and unnecessary. They were preaching fire and brimstone to the choir. I mean only people interested in BF'ing would even read this so why try to convince them? They're already believers!

Another criticism was how repetitive the book was. I understand that it's all connected. It makes sense that certain aspects of breastfeeding influence others and that they may bear repeating but still there wasn't a lot of new information... Just the same being repeated in several chapters.

My last and most pressing issue with this book is the amount of impractical advice given. At one point, the authors suggest "sleeping when the baby sleeps." Seriously? It's like they don't have children. Another helpful tidbit was to "make arrangements to have your baby brought to you at feeding times." This advice was given in the book AFTER the authors heavily criticized the idea of feeding schedules. I can't even comprehend how two women could justify giving such impractical advice.

On the bright side, there was some helpful info its pages and I appreciated the historical context provided. My advice, find something else to read if you're looking for BF'ing tips.

Emily says

Excellent researched and unbiased. This book's information came from study after study about nursing and was presented in a way that encouraged readers to take the information and use it to make the best decisions they could to meet their personal breastfeeding goals. It's one of the few books of this type (birthing/nursing/parenting) that had no undertones of superiority or guilt. I would recommend it to any mother.

Katherine says

This is one of those books that I wish I could get access to the text to be able to re-edit it. I think there's good information in here--there are a couple chapters with good diagrams and photos, as well as various troubleshooting sections that aren't too overwhelming. It also cites studies that are fairly recently published, and it was interesting to learn about some of the changes in recommendations since the early 80s

However, there's really no need to spend nearly as much time as it does on constantly re-persuading the reader that breastfeeding is better than formula. For all that it tries to be nonjudgmental, it talks about "the risks of formula" to an unnecessary degree. The organization into these seven "laws" seems pretty arbitrary, too.

I was probably fairly peeved from the beginning due to a digression where it talks about how we've been approaching learning about breastfeeding with far too much a "left-brained, instructional" focus and really it should be much more right-brained and going with our intuition...but actually that just means the writers and editors don't like organizing content efficiently. They also seem to constantly be assuming that their reader is prone to anxiety and guilt and not asking for help, which to be fair, could be based on their practical experience. I do think it's interesting that apparently there are mothers that worry that not immediately succeeding with breastfeeding means their baby doesn't like them.

How I would organize a book like this instead:

- * Benefits of breastfeeding (so you can skip over it more easily if you're already convinced)
- * How milk production works and the science behind newborn nutrition
- * Common misconceptions debunked
- * What to try in the first week and how to know whether you're on track
- * Rough signposts of how things might change over the next few months
- * Problems and how to solve them

If the chapter on weaning is still considered necessary, just keep it to debunking the poor advice and reminding folks that partial breastfeeding is always an option, it doesn't have to be so black-and-white.

Overall it felt a bit like a book written for a slightly different time/environment when advocates for breastfeeding still struggled a lot for acceptance and that gets in the way a bit of the useful information, as well as the supposed goal of supporting mothers in the choices they make due to zealously believing so very strongly in the magical powers of breastmilk.

jacky says

I saw this on many people's parenting shelves so I got it through interlibrary loan through Lewiston.

Previously, I had read the first part of the *Breastfeeding Companion* as well as sections on breastfeeding in many the other books, magazines, and pamphlets. All those other sources repeated a lot of the same information. This book, however, gave me new information. It really did help me to understand how the mechanics of breastfeeding actually work - things like you naturally make less milk in the evening and the most milk in the middle of the night and that its not the baby's sucking that releases the milk, but a hormone.

One of the most important things for me at this point was that this book gave advice on what to do when the baby's hands are getting in the way of latching on because Natalie started to have a big problem with that. Lastly, even though the nurse at the hospital was all for teaching me the football hold, not a single picture in this book is of that hold and that made me switch to the cradle hold, which has been working out way better.

Kari says

While this is a really helpful book with the basics of breastfeeding (getting started, maintaining and troubleshooting), I wish the authors had just stuck to that. It seems like a book where they would be addressing women who've decided to breastfeed or at least make a solid attempt at it. Yet I found them constantly trying to convince the reader this is the best method of supplying nutrition to babies.

Also, they slam the reader in the first few dozen pages about the importance of breastfeeding and how it makes the child's life SO much better, then randomly say something about not feeling like a failure if you can't make it work. I'm sorry, most of this book basically says there isn't anything that should stop you from breastfeeding, and if there is, you can fix it.

And don't even get me started about them barely mentioning tongue-ties and not even bringing up lip-ties...

Overall, it has good information that I'm sure I'll use with Baby #2, but I wish the authors would have just stuck with writing this book angled towards women who don't need convincing to breastfeed.

Melissa says

At the beginning of the book there is a recommendation to "not overthink" breastfeeding. They encourage mamas to go with their instincts or use "body knowledge" over "head knowledge". I found the intro and first two chapters largely skippable.

Rule # 1 - Babies and mothers are hardwired to breastfeed.

This is a true statement, but breastfeeding also takes practice and maybe some education from someone who knows how. Just because humans are biologically prone to something doesn't they will do it well. For instance, sex. No one is born knowing how to have sex in a way that is fun and comfortable for both people - they learn through practice. Breastfeeding is similar in one way: both baby and mama might need practice to make breastfeeding comfortably "work" for both.

Rule # 2 - The mother is the baby's habitat.

Please, no. The mother is NOT the baby's habitat. The confusion seems to have come from excellent study that was so beneficial for premature babies in South Africa in the 1980's. It is now referred to as Kangaroo Care, which has apparently led some women to believe they are marsupials. For mamas who are spreading this catchphrase: Human babies are not kangaroos or any other marsupial. Marsupials do not have the complex type of placenta that humans do. Instead they have choriovitelline placenta which doesn't allow their young to develop as fully before birth as other mammals. And that is why their young live on their body at first. Yes, for humans, skin-to-skin contact is shown by various studies to be very beneficial for mom and baby. But no medical staff anywhere recommends skin to skin contact 24/7 for the first months of the baby's existence.

Most caregivers are likely trying to communicate that their newborns feel safest and most content in the arms of their caregiver when they say, "I am the baby's habitat." So even though the word habitat is misleading, the sentiment behind the statement is likely true.

Also, the authors of this chapter are likely trying to encourage as much skin-to-skin as possible, so hopefully they don't mean their rule literally.

Rule # 3 - Better feel and flow happen in the comfort zone.

Despite the unclearness of this chapter's "rule", this chapter has some of the best info regarding mom and baby positioning. Good tips for efficiently and comfortably feeding baby.

Rule # 4 - More breastfeeding at first means more milk later.

This chapter cites a few research studies and shares a few unfounded opinions about how to make sure the baby is getting enough, how long to feed, and some info about breastfed babies bowel movements.

This book recommends a lot of "baby-led" interaction, including when to eat, when to switch breasts etc...

Rule # 5 - Every breastfeeding couple has its own rhythm.

Breastfeeding may feel fairly random at first, but mama and baby develop a routine. The author suggests that the routine becomes apparent around the forty day mark.

Some repetition from chapter 4. More comparing humans to marsupials in this chapter.

Rule # 6 - More milk out equals more milk made.

Chapter about how milk production changes over time.

Rule #7 - Children wean naturally.

Tips for weaning. Some helpful info.

The final chapters discuss some problems that might occur while breastfeeding (mastitis, thrush).

Overall, I would weigh the information in this book against what healthcare professionals say. Some info was very helpful, but some was completely unsupported opinion statements.

Rosely De says

I really liked reading this book, it truly helped me prepare for all the challenges I could and would potentially run into during breastfeeding. I am super glad I decided early on in my pregnancy to read this book rather than read up on my current state (just being pregnant, week 35, lol!) it helped me separate fact from fiction as you hear a lot of opinions about breastfeeding, especially from those people that never made a conscious effort...

Kelly says

This has got to be the best compendium of information just about breastfeeding. I've referred to this several times already during my daughter's first nine days. I found the details about the first week of breastfeeding, specifically how frequently to feed and how long feeds can take, to be of particular interest so far. I expect that the info on increasing milk supply and expressing will come in handy in the subsequent weeks.

Mercury1122 says

Positive comments: I feel informed about the mechanics of breastfeeding and equipped with some solid troubleshooting strategies after reading the book.

Negative comments: I specifically searched breastfeeding books by reviews that used the words "nonjudgmental" and chose this book as a result. Definitely not the case. The first couple of chapters are full of entirely unnecessary statistics related to how not breastfeeding will lead to a horrible life for your child and then follows up with a chapter that begins by saying "some mom's feel like failures when they can't breastfeed but they shouldn't." Well, of course they feel like failures!! The author just spend 40 pages telling us to feel that way! Arg! Note to authors of instructive texts: If I'm reading the book, it would be safe to assume that I'm already onboard with the concept. Please, just get to the how-to! Also, since I have to make my mortgage payment, I have to go back to work. I NEED more instructive and less judgemental information about how to formula feed AND breastfeed. In other words, I'm still searching for the right breastfeeding book.

Jenna says

This is a MUST HAVE for your breastfeeding library. It is positive in tone and filled with pertinent information. This book promotes the necessity of a good latch and how that latch can have an effect on the length of breastfeeding and other problematic issues. While this book accentuates the positives (for child) of breastfeeding, it doesn't make you feel like dirt for choosing to wean early. It gives clear information on the health risks of sudden and abrupt weaning but it discusses ALL of the information FULLY. The main point throughout the whole book is that some/any breastmilk is better than NO breastmilk.

Love this book! What a resource!

Susan says

I had a few issues with this book to say the least.

First of all, there appears to be a disconnect with the intended audience. I picked up this book as a reader who has already chosen this option and needed guidance on how to make this work. The title, *Breastfeeding Made Simple: Seven Natural Laws for Nursing Mothers* implies that it's for women who have already made this decision. And yet...the book keeps bogging itself down in research and statistics about why women should choose breastfeeding. The actual "natural laws" get lost in this and it feels really judgey--and really unnecessarily judgey at that, since it's preaching to the choir. Anyone who is reading this book and is having doubts is probably having doubts because they're having difficulties with the breastfeeding and are looking for help on how to make it work, so guilt-tripping by way of a dozen or so lectures seems particularly insensitive and unhelpful. Another area that ventures into judginess territory is the completely (I feel)

tangential section on "scientific parenting."

This leads me to my other pretty big issue. Not only did I not find it that helpful or clear because of the way it was structured (and the way the tips kept getting derailed by more lectures) but it was actually pretty discouraging. Although the author tries at one point to make the point that this is natural, that babies are programmed to attach, that you shouldn't overthink things and so forth, there's a recurring section "When the System Breaks Down" that itemizes all the things that could go wrong, and in many cases I felt that this wasn't paired with actual solutions and even (again) comes off as somewhat judgey at times. As in, if it's not working, this is what *you* must be doing wrong.

Finally, I feel like this has to be said...repeatedly in the book, the mother is encouraged to breastfeed in bed, even allowing herself to nap and nurse. There is only the briefest of mentions acknowledging the safety arguments against this, and I feel like at least half of that section falls back into advocating for co-sleeping and again, citing statistics (only on how common co-sleeping is, but noticeably nothing referencing how safe it actually is). The clear rationale for this is to dispatch with concerns by nursing mothers about how to make constant nursing work in the first few weeks especially, when the baby has their days and nights mixed up, by encouraging women to believe that there's an easy way everyone can win and no one loses out on sleep (this last part is practically a direct quote). In truth, it seems somewhat disingenuous at best, and at worst, irresponsible at the very least. It's true some bulletpoints are given with tips on safe co-sleeping, but the tone of the section really makes it feel almost like it's offhanded advice, as if it's not really that important. For a book that seems so concerned with research and citing medical studies in every other respect, this sudden departure really just confirms the feeling that this book is more agenda-driven than guidance-driven, and that's a shame. If there's one thing this book taught me, it's that clearly, there's a lot more involved than even I thought, and women need all the support they can get. Unfortunately, they're not going to get it here.
