

# Married Single Mom Survey

This survey was taken of 88 women who considered themselves 'married single moms' between October 16, 2009 and July 16, 2011. Names have been removed from comments where names were included. Some participants chose to skip questions. Not all participants left comments. All comments have been included as written (some spelling errors were corrected to aid readability).

Results quoted in *Married Mom, Solo Parent* are slightly different but were accurate at the time of writing (based on a smaller set of responses).

1. I find vehicle maintenance difficult to do when my husband is away.

	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER
PERCENT OF RESPONSES	28.7%	31.0%	25.3%	14.9%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	25	27	22	13

## COMMENTS:

- We have a very reliable mechanic. My sweet hubby really doesn't do auto work anyway...
- My husband is a mechanic so I have learned a lot and he's really good about walking me through it.
- Dad always did it and now I struggle with the "I shouldn't have to be doing this".
- Before being married I had my own house so I learned to get things done on my own.
- This is something he does every weekend. He always washes the car every chance he gets.
- It's hard to take the van in to get the brakes changed, because I always have the kids with me. And it's never fun to sit in a waiting room with 3 boys!
- Every time I have my oil changed, I'm given a list of things that could potentially go wrong if I don't have them repaired immediately.
- I do not own a vehicle.
- Man, what a stressor! And when it snows, it's amplified. My hubby tried to teach me, in 11 easy steps, how to run the snow blower while he's away. Like that will ever happen!
- I'm the mechanic, the do-it-yourself.
- He actually prohibits it completely. Unless the vehicle is not moving, I am not able to have it worked on, regular maintenance performed or anything else for that matter. He will haunt local mechanics (I live in a very small town) or anyone that helps. I've given up.
- It just seems like so much EXTRA work.
- My dad taught us basic mechanics. We had to change tires and oil before he let us drive!

- Thankfully the worst thing I've had to deal with when my husband was away was a dead battery...in my own driveway!
- This is one thing my husband always does....he takes the vehicles to our brother-in-law's shop that is near his work. My husband is never actually "away"....just usually at work.
- In a former life my husband was a mechanic and so the vehicle maintenance has always been his responsibility. One time I hit a curb (ice, winter, late, you've probably lived the same scenario) and cracked the rim. Someone from church kindly changed the tire for me, but I left the small spare on until my husband came home to get everything else fixed. I just couldn't face the idea of going to a store or phoning around to find another rim for my vehicle.
- I never think to do it and with small children, getting the car to and from the mechanics can be tough.

## 2. Disciplining the children is a heavy burden for me.

	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER
PERCENT OF RESPONSES	26.4%	39.1%	26.4%	8%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	23	34	23	7

### COMMENTS:

- We have a 4 month old who is learning to nap and go to bed at night. The hardest part for me is not having help with the crying (or rather, leaving [him] to cry when it's appropriate) when my husband has switched from day shifts to night shifts.
- Never has been but now that my son is 12 almost 13...I realize that soon he really should be hearing all the tough stuff from Dad!
- Being the bad guy all day long can wear a mom out.
- I find I have to discipline from a mom's and dad's perspective and that in a way the kids (aged 9 and 6) expect that kind of input still, so I have to switch between mother's and father's way of disciplining
- Only the middle child.
- Not a heavy burden, just another wearying task to do on my own when my guy is away.
- They are much more obedient and pleasant when my husband is around. They listen to me and do not argue as much.
- Especially as they get older. Especially the boys.
- Especially when our 15 yr old begins to whine and argue. I don't like fighting with him and so find it harder whenever Dad is not around.

3. I have trouble sleeping well when my husband is away.

	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER
PERCENT OF RESPONSES	24.1%	26.4%	25.3%	24.1%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	21	23	22	21

COMMENTS:

- I have trouble when he finally comes home. He snores so loud I lay awake all night.
- Trouble keeping on a schedule...I'm not afraid, I just find that late nights become "down time" and then I start the next day tired and sometimes become cranky and less than grace-filled when dealing with tough situations AND my husband when he calls :)
- Only if I am not sure if he is safe. Sometimes he hangs out in a bar and I worry that he'll get into a fight.
- I used to have a really hard time sleeping alone, but I have gotten used to it. It's made me a stronger person, and for that I'm thankful.
- There's nobody's warm back to warm up my icy feet!
- Not when he's away, but I do when he's home.
- The first few nights are bad, then if he's gone a long time I get over it and sleep really well.
- Oddly enough, I sleep better when he's gone.
- Like I said before, he's not usually "away" so eventually he does crawl in bed with me...then I sleep better!
- You get used to it after a while, and then it is actually more difficult for me to fall asleep when he IS in bed with me, simply because I am not used to it.
- My husband has typically been gone for 4 weeks at a time, home for 2 weeks and gone again for 4. The first few nights he is gone I don't sleep well at all. After that I go to bed when I am exhausted so I know that when my head hits the pillow, I will sleep soundly for a few hours before the tossing and turning begins. Also, I have trouble sleeping the first few nights he is home because by then I am used to a bed to myself and he sometimes feels like an intruder in my sleep pattern.
- This is when my mind starts asking what would I do if there were a fire or a burglar?

4. My children behave differently when my husband is away.

	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	OCCASIONALLY	NEVER
PERCENT OF RESPONSES	37.6%	31.8%	21.2%	9.4%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	32	27	18	8

COMMENTS:

- Our baby is often all smiles when my husband is home; my husband doesn't see the tired, grumpy side very often.
- They are MONSTERS when Daddy isn't home. For some reason, they listen to whatever he says, but it takes a lot to get them to listen to me. I don't know if it's because they don't know how far they can push him or that he demands more respect, but either way, I really wish they would listen to me the way they listen to him!
- They usually behave differently the day he leaves and the day he comes home.
- More active/ rowdy
- They miss him so much and whine about it nearly constantly. Is there any chance I'd be paid such tributes of tears if I were to go away on a trip? Hmmm...
- Much more freedom and happiness when he is gone. Lots of anger and tension when he's home.
- Much more needy.
- They behave better when he's gone. They act up for his attention when he's home.
- He's been gone so much for so long that it's become a way of life and normal for all of us. However, about twice a year my son will begin to show behavior which screams that he needs time with his dad.
- They're better behaved when he's at work.
- Not often. Usually bed time is hardest for my girls and then they really miss Daddy.

5. Our marriage suffers because of my husband's absence(s).

	<u>ALWAYS</u>	<u>SOMETIMES</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
PERCENT OF RESPONSES	40.2%	39.1%	13.8%	6.9%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	35	34	12	6

COMMENTS:

- We try very hard to talk about other things besides schedules, bills, and kids when on the phone...we guard against petty emotions
- I get resentful that he gets a mental break far more often than I do.
- Our love language is quality time, so it's hard to be apart.
- It's a mental absence. He checked out years ago.
- How can it not? It's all about him being gone, not having him around, not having our needs met, blah, blah, blah.
- Because I didn't sign up for this....we went into marriage together, decided to have kids together, my intent was never to have to do so much alone.

- It's hard to get back into the swing of things when he returns. I get used to being alone. Creating my own schedule and not considering anybody else. To switch gears to thinking of him and his needs is sometimes so hard!

6. When my husband is away I tend to cook smaller, less nutritious meals.

	<u>ALWAYS</u>	<u>SOMETIMES</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
PERCENT OF RESPONSES	25.3%	40.2%	19.5%	14.9%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	22	35	17	13

COMMENTS:

- I wouldn't say less nutritious, but less stressful.
- I used to but now that it looks like it's going to be like this for a long time, I am trying different recipes and nutritious meals.
- Less time to cook
- We eat toast. On a good day, we get popped corn and toast.
- I love cooking so I cook well whenever!
- This is a tricky one. I often cook smaller, simpler meals when hubby is gone. But I do try to make a majority of them healthy.
- ...and unfortunately those are the nights he "surprises" us by coming home early and expecting a "good" meal.
- My kids eat healthier choices than my husband does :)
- Only sometimes do I cook a "real" meal and that's only if I've invited people over. Rarely do I cook real meals just for the rest of us.
- Simple is better and makes the kids happy.

7. I feel like my husband doesn't understand how his absence affects me and our family.

	<u>ALWAYS</u>	<u>SOMETIMES</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
PERCENT OF RESPONSES	58.6%	21.8%	13.8%	5.7%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	51	19	12	5

COMMENTS:

- He does understand the sufferings of our children, but he still makes commitments to do things without the family.

- He has no idea.
- At the same time I don't know if I understand how his being away affects him.
- I think he gets it. It's hard on everyone. BUT, he loves that we miss him.
- The kids have a great longing for a connection with their father. I've grown accustomed to it, although it is not what I want.
- He says he does, but really he has no clue. Especially how it affects the kids.
- He thinks he's contributing equally b/c he's bringing home the money.
- He comes home and doesn't realize that we have lived life while he's been gone. He doesn't say it, but seems to expect that we were stagnant while he was gone and only his life changed with his absence.

8. I do a good job of taking care of myself so my kids have a healthy Mom.

	<u>ALWAYS</u>	<u>SOMETIMES</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
PERCENT OF RESPONSES	4.7%	45.3%	40.7%	9.3%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	4	39	35	9

COMMENTS:

- I put myself last. With no support system, I find it extremely difficult to take some time for myself.
- I try, but it's hard to find time for exercise when you have a 3 year old demanding your attention.
- Are you kidding? I have no time! By the time the boys are in bed, I'm exhausted!
- I eat really well but exercise is not on my to-do list.
- Not so much. Everyone else's needs are so immediate that they are tended to first. If there's time, maybe I'll get a shower!
- I run and make quiet time with the Lord a priority.
- I do a better job when he's away for a long time than when he does short stints. Those short stints kill me.
- No, but that is changing!
- I'm trying. I know how to say no to things that will overburden and stretch me too far. I don't exercise, which I'm told would help keep me healthy.

9. Due to my husband's absences I worry about whether or not we'll end up with a divorce.

	<u>ALWAYS</u>	<u>SOMETIMES</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
PERCENT OF RESPONSES	32.2%	27.6%	16.1%	24.1%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	28	24	14	21

COMMENTS:

- We did and that is why we are getting one.
- I didn't sign up for this when we married. He had a "normal" job when we met, but since changed jobs to one that takes him away, often.
- We both come from divorced families, so we know the reality of it, but I also think that because of that, we work harder on our marriage.
- Who knows what he is doing!?! Of course!
- That hadn't crossed my mind.
- It's a daily fight to choose to stay in this marriage.
- I'd like to say never, but that'd be lying.
- It is a covenant.

10. I blame God for the kind of career my husband has and the state our marriage is in.

	<u>ALWAYS</u>	<u>SOMETIMES</u>	<u>OCCASIONALLY</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
PERCENT OF RESPONSES	32.2%	27.6%	16.1%	24.1%
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	28	24	14	21

COMMENTS:

- I feel sometimes like I've lost my faith in God, but always remember that he has a plan for me. Maybe this is His way to make me a stronger person. A more independent person. A person that needs to find happiness within herself and not to rely on my husband to be happy. God knows when he is home, he is critical, unwilling to help with the children, angry and yelling all the time so that we're all walking on eggshells, upset when I have to leave the house for any length of time and leave the kids with him. I hate to admit it out loud, but I am happier when he's gone. I fall into a simpler routine, it's less stressful and quieter and no one is angry at me.
- Heavenly Father puts challenges in our path so we can go in the direction that he would like us to go. You have to think what is coming in the future that will be so much better

than the situation you are in right now. If you think negatively then you will have negative situations but if you think positively then you will find a great way to see the positive of any situation.

- However, I often remind myself that the REASON my husband has this career is because he is following God! That encourages me that God will subsequently give us the resources (and me the faith and strength) to manage.
- I thank God for the struggles that intend to draw us closer to Him which will keep us committed to each other!
- What kind of question is this? God provides for us every day. He is the creator of all the good things in my life, and if something is not making me happy, it's because of poor choices I have made, or that my husband has made. God gives us free will, He is not a puppet master. He is the only one who can make my marriage better; I would never blame Him for when our marriage struggles.
- I'm not Christian.
- My husband worked in this line of work before I met him, so I knew what I was getting into. Honestly, if anything, I am thankful that he even has a job in this economy.
- I am happy he has a job. I don't work.
- I am so thankful for my husband's work and the way God has led him to this career. His frequent absences are our reality. I fully support him, and know this is for a season.
- I blame my husband more... but when I'm really tired I lose perspective and blame God.
- Nope, I blame my husband:( (and I know part of it is me too...)
- God has done amazing things in me because of my husband's absences. I used to think I was a strong, independent woman, but have realized that I am more dependent on my husband and my God with my husband gone than I ever thought I would be. I wouldn't trade that for anything in the world. God has also done incredible things in my husband and he is taking spiritual leadership in our home. Prayers prayed for years are seeing fruition because of the absences in our home. Not that this is easy, because it isn't. Right now I have the pleasure of my husband not being away and am mostly loving having him home evenings and weekends. This is sweet and I pray it continues; however, if God should choose to have him return to his other job, or if he chooses to return to his other job, I will continue to walk holding God's hand and trusting my marriage to the One who gifted it to me.
- At least he has a job. I may not like him being gone, but it is something he enjoys doing and gets paid fairly well for. It provides what we need.