Bed Rest’s Silver Lining: 15 Benefits From Taking Pregnancy Lying Down

By Laurie Krauth

How often do the one in five pregnant women assigned to bed rest get to brag about the experience? Yet here we lie, accumulating perks unknown to our mobile counterparts. So here’s a reminder to horizontal pregnant women, and a lesson to our vertical sisters, about just 15 of the benefits I’ve accrued in taking pregnancy lying down.

1. My husband has learned to cook. And not just in the microwave.
2. He can run the house. (He no longer puts the first load of wash in the machine and leaves it to mold. He regularly fills—and empties—the dishwasher, notices when we’re out of milk, creates a shopping list, hits more than one store to get the goods, buys in bulk and looks out for sales.)
3. I am amassing a quantity of sleep-time that I won’t see again until my baby is 2.
4. I am tearing through novels, mastering (in theory) the football hold for breastfeeding and gossiping with friends with laziness that my baby won’t permit again until preschool.
5. I’m losing my type A-ness - is it possible? Before this bed rest thing, I couldn’t talk on the phone or have a friend over without also cooking or filing papers.
6. My old definition of a top-flight evening--one spent eviscerating eight items on my to-do list - has been replaced by one spent watching two videos with my husband.
7. I can stare aimlessly into space (without mentally adding tasks to said to-do list).
8. My athletic virtuosity no longer depends upon at least one sweaty set of tennis, three jogs and a night of swing dancing a week. Tackling the stairs now makes me proud.
9. Lying on the couch in the living room (aka Bed Rest Central), I savor sightings of cardinals and chubby snowflakes. Gone is the muttering about barren, skinny trees and steel gray sky. This is a cornucopia of earthly delights compared with the medical building that stared back at me from the hospital bed I occupied the other week (and could occupy again any time).
10. I relish my baby’s increasingly zealous kickboxing because I know he’s well and happy, and that matters more than anything.
11. Forget any worries that my new husband loves me conditionally - for the sex, or how I take care of business around the house, for my fanatical energy, or for my lithe body. These are a distant memory and still he treats me like his bride.

12. No doubts left about how he’ll handle Real Life with me. As our honeymoon giddiness has been replaced by his holding me from 3 to 5 a.m. while I await crisis-level bleeding, as well as preparing my meals and cleaning up after me, we’ve cruised seamlessly through a decade’s worth of marital developmental stages in less than a year.

13. Improbably, he still makes me feel like a honeymooner, despite my girth, exhaustion and periodic fear. Curling up together on Bed Rest Central beats a night at a Parisian café with a new lover. I feel this exquisite bittersweet appreciation of each moment we spend together that’s intensified by the knowledge that a hospital bed may beckon at any moment.

14. I am finally ready to have my baby. All this lying around finally put a stop to my obsessive worries about handling the transition to motherhood, leaving in its wake the searing desire to get on with toughening up my nipples and changing diapers for the kick-boxer I’m carrying.

15. I’m actually looking forward to being liberated by childbirth. While my fellow expectant mothers anticipate losing mobility and independence, I can’t wait to be off bed rest and carry my baby and his hundreds of accoutrements through the house and out into the world. I’ll be free!

Laurie Krauth is a psychotherapist and writer in Ann Arbor, Michigan, whose complete placenta previa required that the last month of pregnancy be spent at Bed Rest Central. She has a healthy, delicious seven-month-old boy.