



Return & Reunion: What to Expect

What to expect During the Reunion

- It is normal to feel nervous and anxious about the homecoming. This does not mean you aren't happy to see your partner.
- Realize the day of homecoming is stressful. Plan for homecoming day but keep your plans simple and flexible. Try to avoid high expectations.
- Expect to feel out of sync with each other at first. You both have been through separate experiences during the deployment and have changed as a result
- Avoid over-scheduling the first few days after the return. Your partner may be tired from work demands and may need a few days to adjust.

Tips for Communicating with your Partner

- Talk with your partner. Tell your partner how you feel and listen to your partner in return. The best way to regain closeness and rebuild family routines is by talking and actively listening.
- Take time to get used to each other again. Re-establishing emotional and physical intimacy is not easy after separation and/or stressful situations.
- You've both gotten used to doing what you wanted during personal time. Feeling like you need some space is normal. Be prepared to be flexible.
- Try not to be defensive when discussing decisions you have made, new family activities and customs or methods of disciplining the children. Your partner may need to hear that it wasn't the same doing these things alone, that you're glad he or she is back and that you'd like to discuss problems and criticisms calmly.
- Watch your spending and resist the temptation to celebrate the homecoming with a spending spree. The extra money saved during deployment may be needed later for unexpected household expenses. Stick to your household budget.
- Stay involved in your own activities and interests but be flexible about making time for your partner
- Reassure your partner that he or she is needed, even though you've coped during the deployment.

Everyone should show each other how much they care by giving each other a little extra attention and time to adjust. There will likely be a long list of things that need to be talked about from everyone and these things will take more than just a few days to share them.ⁱ

ⁱ Adapted from "Coming Home: A Guide for Spouses of Service Members Returning From Mobilization/Deployment", National Military Family Association.