

A DIVORCE CHECK LIST FOR DADS
BEFORE THE TRIAL

DO THIS

1. Admit to yourself that you have a problem in obtaining a just divorce.
2. Close out joint accounts, cancel credit cards and charge accounts.
3. Make sure that your wife and her attorney cannot get your financial records, move them to your office.
4. Try for an out of court reasonable settlement.
5. Contact and join a Father's Rights Organization and ask their advice about choosing an attorney.
6. Determine what the lawyers fees will be before you hire him/her.
7. If you have children, make sure that they understand that you are not divorcing them.
8. Keep a written record of all events pertinent to the divorce, names, etc.
9. Rent a P.O. Box for all your mail that you want to keep private.
10. Ask yourself which parent would be best for the children.
11. Tone down your lifestyle during the divorce process.
12. Learn about your case and your judge so that you can help your lawyer do a better job for you in court.

DON'T DO THIS

1. Move out of the house unless ordered to do so by the court.
2. Forget that you too have Constitutional rights.
3. Tell your children horror stories about your ex-spouse; there is no need to drag them through the muck.
4. Use your spouse's attorney to save money. You will only hurt yourself.
5. Use a lawyer who is Negative about your case, and the opportunity for Fathers gaining custody.
6. Leave all of your friends behind and become a hermit.
7. Discuss any proposed settlement with your wife's lawyer unless your lawyer is also present.
8. Avoid your children if you move out of the house.
9. Take your children with you unless you have planned in advance.
10. Rely solely upon psychologists or expert witnesses to win your case.
11. Buy a new car, boat, etc., or move in with a single woman.
12. Voluntarily pay for anything not in the court order. This will not win you any "points."

DURING THE TRIAL

DO THIS

1. Attend ALL depositions, court sessions, etc. even if your attorney tells you there is no need to come.
2. Obtain and keep ALL originals with copies going to your attorney.
3. Get specific visitation if you do not get custody.
4. Claim tax exemption on the children that you are supporting.
5. Keep tabs on you and your wife's attorney's fees and other costs.
6. Take a reasonable settlement at any point during the process.
7. Fight to keep the kids out of court and out of the middle.

DON'T DO THIS

1. Sign any decree or waiver unless and until you understand it fully and consult with your attorney.
2. Be afraid to change attorneys if your interests are not being met.
3. Panic if you lose temporary custody as is usually the fate of fathers.
4. Agree to alimony unless there are exceptional circumstances.
5. Agree to Child Support based solely on your income. Both owe support.
6. Agree to ALL medical bills without any strings attached.
7. Be sloppy about wills, trust and insurance; change benefactors.

AFTER THE TRIAL

DO THIS

1. Fulfill your visitation rights and see your children regularly.
2. Obey the divorce order, even if your former spouse violates it.
3. Avoid your ex-spouse as much as possible; you cannot have her back.
4. Keep complete financial records and correspondence for future use.
5. Fight off sentimentality when dealing with your children.

DON'T DO THIS

1. Review all the details of the decree with your children.
2. Be afraid to socialize, you are not a leper, you are just divorced.
3. Be overly possessive of your children, they need adjustment time.
4. Agonize over mistakes during the trial, forgive yourself.
5. Confront your ex-wife or in-laws but come to a working understanding.