

THE SLEEP
DEPT.

Naps Sleep Guide



thesleepdept.com



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Welcome

Welcome to the beginning of bettering your sleep journey.
We are so happy you have found The Sleep Dept and we can't wait to help guide you through this journey.

We have created a whole separate program for naps, because the truth is, they are much harder work than the nights AND it's important that we treat the nights and the naps in a different way, rather than both of them being put together in the same program. Although the technique we use will be similar, there are just too many outside factors that contribute to how a baby naps.

Our babies so clearly need their sleep in the day, but it can be a confusing and frustrating process to understand why they resist it so often. Naps become elusive once our nights have gotten better. It can be really disheartening, but it is a VERY common part of the process. The nights start to come good, and then the naps take a hit. Rest assured that if we put in the effort, time and patience they WILL happen.

For some babies, all we can get out of them is a catnap - 20-45 minutes, and often they need to be fed or rocked to sleep for that occur - sound familiar? There is a reason all of this is happening, and it's a combination of infant sleep science and the temperament of our babies.

This program is designed for you to better understand why naps require patience, consistency, confidence and most importantly, time and the best way...



TWO

before
we start

INFANT SLEEP

science

Yes, there is a scientific reason your baby sleeps the way they do. Melatonin - the sleepy hormone - is secreted by the brain and is what helps us all fall asleep, and stay asleep. A baby enters the world having to develop their own Circadian Rhythms and Melatonin production. This just takes time. Around 3 months is when our babies start to show day/night rhythms and when their bodies start to regulate melatonin.

development

The main reason we focus solely on awake times for babies 5 months and under is because they just aren't developmentally ready for their naps to be set in stone. We are guided by awake times from birth to around 5 months and then we can start to stick to a more structured schedule of set nap times.

Even though your baby's naps might not be perfect just yet, we still need to remember that babies NEED sleep during the day. We really just need to remind ourselves that they take work, can change often and are simply, hard work.

I always advise that while we are working on nights, it's important to not be so focused on perfecting naps just yet. These are the reasons why:

Once your baby's nights get better, the naps naturally take a hit. It seems counterproductive to be working so hard on something, when it's just your baby's body adjusting to the extra sleep they are getting at night.

It is more important that while we focus on the nights, your baby is getting enough sleep during the day, to ensure no over-tiredness comes into play when we are trying to put our babies down for the night. For now, it is much more important that your baby has enough sleep during the day - whatever that looks like! Rocking, dummies, feeding to sleep, baby wearing, it's all ok - for now! You might be thinking to yourself that you have worked so hard in getting rid of those external sleep associations at night, why in the world would we keep them during the day? The good news is that the way your baby falls asleep in the day is governed by a different part of the brain than the way they are falling asleep at night. So your baby won't be associating one with the other.

WHAT IS A
Sleep Cycle?

**0-10
mins**

STARTING TO
FALL ASLEEP

**45-60
mins**

PARTIAL
AROUSAL EASY
TO WAKE UP

**10-20
mins**

GETTING DEEPER
INTO SLEEP

A babies

natural sleep
cycle is 45 mins

**30-40
mins**

COMING OUT OF
DEEP SLEEP

**20-30
mins**

DEEP
SLEEP

AWAKE times

FUTURE SLEEP & AWAKE WINDOWS

This is a general guideline for your baby, and what to expect in terms of awake times and number of sleeps. This is a guideline only, so always be guided by your baby and their tired signs and if they require shorter (or longer) awake times.

0 - 1 month 45-60 min

1 - 2 months 60 minutes

2 - 3 months 60 - 75 minutes

The number of naps can vary greatly at this early age. Don't worry too much about how many naps your baby is having at this point. Be guided by your baby and give them their naps as needed.

Age	Awake Times	Sleep
3 - 4 months	1.5 - 1.45 hours	4 - 5 naps
6 - 9 months	2 - 3 hours	3 naps
9 - 12 months	2.5 - 3.5 hours	2 naps
12 - 16 months	approx. 5 hours	1 nap

TIRED signs

Yes, it's important to focus on your baby's awake time, but there will be days where things don't run how they usually do.

On these days, watch your baby's tired signs and be guided by these, rather than by the clock.

The most common tired signs include -

- ★ Yawning
- ★ Whinging
- ★ Rubbing eyes
- ★ Tugging ears
- ★ Becoming fussy
- ★ Shoving their fists in their mouths
- ★ Crying
- ★ Staring into space



FIRST NAP of the day

This nap is always the one our babies find the easiest to conquer before any of the other ones. It is very common that your baby will have their shortest awake window between the time they wake up and the first nap of the day. For example, if your baby has a typical awake time of 2 hours, your baby might be showing signs that for their first awake window, they can only stay awake for 1.5 hours.

NAPTIME routine

Much like the nighttime sleep, you need a naptime routine so your baby is aware when a nap is coming. However, this is much shorter than the nighttime routine, at around 5 to 10 minutes.

1. FEED
2. BOOK
3. BLINDS
4. CUDDLE
5. BED

THREE



Naps



Days 1-3

Days 1-3 will have you in your baby's room. Once again, the chair will be next to the cot and you will use your keyphrase and gentle touch. Remember not to use these if it works your baby up more — in these cases, simply being present will be enough.

As with the nights, the amount of physical reassurance you give your baby is unlimited. If your baby calms down in your arms, pick them up. You can do this as much as you need to. There is no limit. We just want to make sure your baby is falling asleep on their own, in their own sleeping space, so make sure to put your baby back down once they are calm. If your baby resists you picking them up - arching back, trying to get back into cot, pushing you away - being next to them will have to be enough. Sometimes loud shushing is all a baby needs to remain calm. This is fine to do.

You need to stay with your baby until they fall asleep OR if they are protesting, stay by their side for one hour and ten minutes. Make sure you time this.

More often than not, your baby will fall asleep within this timeframe. If not, take them out of the room and give both of you a break for 20-25 minutes. You could offer your baby a snack or some short, quiet play time.

Once 20 to 25 minutes has passed, try again for another one hour and 10 minutes. It's highly likely that by this stage your baby is so tired, they will go down. There may be some resistance, but they are more or less ready for sleep.

Stay next to them until they fall asleep OR if they are protesting, stay for the full one hour and 10 minutes. If your baby is still not going down for their nap, take them for a walk in the pram or a drive in the car and have them nap there.

Like the evening sleeps, days 4-6 involves making sure the chair has been moved to the middle of the room and offering gentle touch, as well as using the keyword every few minutes if required. Loud shushing is also fine.

Days 4-6

Days 7-10

By now, the chair is at the door and there is no touch, just your key phrase. We are now out of the room and in the hallway with your baby's door open slightly, so that your baby can still see some part of you (your foot, your face etc)

There should now be little to no protest when you put your baby to bed. If they are still a little fussy and you don't feel ready to leave them just yet, put your chair a little further away so that they can no longer see you but they can hear you and be reassured by your voice.

Days 14 & beyond

WHAT HAPPENS IF BABY SLEEPS FOR LESS THAN AN HOUR?

Go back into the room quickly, say your key phrase, use some gentle touch and try to get your baby to sleep for a longer nap. If after 20-25 minutes they still haven't gone back to sleep, it probably won't happen. Get them up and try at the next sleep. You may need to move up the time of the nap or bedtime to compensate.



cheat sheets

CHEAT sheets

Days 1-3


- 01 | Do your naptime routine before you put your baby to bed
- 02 | Put a chair or stool next to their cot
- 03 | If needed, comfort your baby by using your key phrase and comfort as much as your baby will allow you. loud shushing is also ok to do
- 04 | Stay in the room until your baby falls asleep. Count to 100 breaths before you leave the room
- 05 | If your baby is fussing, stay with them for one hour and ten minutes — make sure you time this
- 06 | If they don't fall asleep within this timeframe, take a 20-25 minute break. You can give them a snack or some short, quiet playtime
- 07 | Put them back to bed and stay with them for another one hour and ten minutes
- 08 | If they still don't fall asleep, take them for a walk in the pram or drive in the car




Days 4-6

- 01 | Do your naptime routine before you put your baby to bed
- 02 | Move the chair or stool to halfway between the cot and the door
- 03 | Get up every 5 minutes or so to use gentle touching and your key phrase/loud shushing until they fall asleep
- 04 | Stay in the room until your baby falls asleep. Count to 100 breaths before you leave the room.
- 05 | If your baby wakes up and cries, respond quickly if crying and resettle. If your baby is whining, wait a few minutes before responding
- 06 | Repeat steps 3 and 4 if needed, until they fall asleep again



**Days
7-10**

- 
- 01 | Do your naptime routine before you put your baby to bed
 - 02 | Move to the chair to the door, but still inside the room
 - 03 | Use your keyphrase every now and again to settle them, but with no touching
 - 04 | Stay in the room until your baby falls asleep. Count to 100 breaths before you leave the room.
 - 05 | If your baby wakes up and cries, respond quickly if crying and resettle. If your baby is whining, wait a few minutes before responding
 - 06 | Repeat steps 3 and 4 if needed, until they fall asleep again
-

- 
- 
- 
- 01 | Do your naptime routine before you put your baby to bed
 - 02 | If your baby is still a little fussy, put the chair a little further away so they can't see you, but can still hear your voice



**Days 14
& Beyond**



FOUR

alternative
techniques



The Leave & Check

After the naptime routine, put your baby into their cot awake, after giving them a cuddle and our key phrase. Now, we will let them cry/protest for 1 minute before responding (don't forget to start timing from the cry, not the whinge). Your baby will most likely cry once you have left the room. We want to leave them for 1 minute, to begin with, and then respond. We want to go in there, say our key phrase, reassure for approx 1 minute (30 seconds is fine if you feel they get overstimulated having you in there). We want to reassure only. When you leave the room, they may cry a little harder - this is completely normal. We repeat this process (upping the amount of time we check by 2 minutes each time until we get to 7 minutes, where we will cap the timing and continue going in every 7 minutes) for 1 hour and 10 minutes. After this time, if your baby still hasn't gone to sleep, take them out of the room for 25 minutes and give yourselves a break. Have a snack, have a cuddle. Just have a nice little break. Once you have done this, pop your baby back down and try for another hour and ten minutes. If your baby still does not fall asleep, we're in 'emergency nap' territory. Jump in the car or put your baby in their pram and have them fall asleep with a bit of help.



FIVE

sample schedules



SAMPLE schedules



*, adjust the times based on the time your baby woke for the day.

3-4 month old

We are aiming for 1-1.5 hours of awake time for a baby of this age

7am | Wake

830am | Nap 1 (*aim for 1-2 hours of sleep*)

1130am | Nap 2 (*aim for 1-2 hours of sleep*)

230pm | Nap 3 (*aim for 1-2 hours of sleep*)

530pm | Nap 4 Catnap (*aim for approx 45 minutes*)

7-730pm | Bedtime

5-month old

We are aiming for 1.15-1.45 hours of awake time for a baby of this age

7am | Wake

830am | Nap 1 (*aim for 1-1.5 hours*)

1130am | Nap 2 (*aim for 1-1.5 hours*)

230pm | Nap 3 (*aim for 1 hour*)

5pm | Nap 4 Catnap (*aim for approx 45 minutes*)

7-730pm | Bedtime

6-month old

We are aiming for 2 hours of awake time for a baby of this age

9am | Nap 1 (*aim for 1.5 - 2 hours*)

12pm | Nap 2 (*aim for 1.5 - 2 hours*)

4pm | Nap 4 Catnap (*aim for approx 45 minutes*)

7-7.30pm | Bedtime

7-month old

We are aiming for 2-2.5 hours of awake time for a baby of this age

7am | Wake

9am | Nap 1 (*aim for at least 1 hour*)

1230pm | Nap 2 (*aim for at least 1 hour*)

4pm | Nap 3 Catnap (*aim for approx 45 minutes*)

7-730pm | Bedtime

8-month old

We are aiming for 2-3 hours of awake time for a baby of this age. Around this age, you might start to notice your baby is starting to resist the last nap of the day. The best way to go about this is to increase their awake time in 15 minute increments every 3 days until you get to their new nap times. During these nap transitions, if your baby needs an extra catnap or an earlier bedtime, that is absolutely fine. By 9 months old, your baby should be well established on a 2 nap a day schedule.

7am | Wake

9am | Nap 1 (*aim for at least 1 hour*)

1pm | Nap 2 (*aim for at least 1 hour*)

4pm-430pm | Nap 3 Catnap (*aim for approx 30-45 minutes*)

7-730pm | Bedtime

9-16 months old

We are aiming for 3-4 hours of awake time for a baby of this age

7am | Wake

10am | Nap 1 (*aim for at least 1 hour*)

2pm | Nap 2 (*aim for at least 1 hour*)

7pm | Bedtime

*There is no "right" schedule for all babies, but we can be guided by sample schedules. We need to be able to have some flexibility in the daytime schedule as it simply won't run like clockwork each day. Some variation is inevitable.

A baby who naps for 60 minutes from 9 am, isn't going to be on the same clock as a baby who naps for 90-120 minutes starting at 930am.

We need to make sure that the beginning and end of their day should remain about the same (6-7am for a wakeup, and 6-7pm for bedtime). There will be times that our babies will wake earlier (or sometimes later!), and all we can do on those days is shift the schedule to accommodate the change.

FAQs

If we get rid of the dummy/pacifier for nights, do we need to for the naps?

Not necessarily. Ultimately, it comes down to what you feel is best for your baby. It is worth remembering that if you do get rid of it for the nights, and decide to keep it for the naps, your baby won't associate how they fall asleep during the day with how they fall asleep at night. Nights and Naps are governed 2 different parts of the brain.

Should my Baby's awake time be the same each morning?

We want to be aiming for the same time each morning, give or take 30 minutes. So that means if your baby is waking between 630 am-730 am each morning, they are on the right track! We want to be aiming for their awake time to be approx 11-12 hours from bedtime.

What if my baby just refuses the Catnap?

Let's say your baby refuses their last catnap of the day, what do we do?! Go ahead and put your baby down for an early bedtime. It isn't ideal, but that's what happens when life gets in the way! Get back into the swing of things the following day.

If my baby's last nap finishes early, should I include an extra nap or put my baby down for an earlier bedtime?

This is where being flexible in your baby's day schedule is important. It just isn't realistic that each day will be the same as the one before it. On the days where your baby wakes from their last nap at an awkward time, there's only a couple of things we can do (and one of them does not involve stretching your baby out to their set bedtime!)

- ★ Give your baby a 'bridging' nap. A short 20 minute power nap to help get them through until bedtime, so that they aren't overtired by the time bedtime rolls around. This nap can be done on you, in the car, in the pram, in your arms - it doesn't matter, we just want to make sure your baby gets the nap!
- ★ Bring bedtime forward. While we do want to be aiming for a set bedtime for the most part, there will be days where this just isn't possible. On these days, it's perfectly fine to have your baby in bed anytime from 545pm onwards. Yes, you might have an early wake up the next day, but it's much better than stretching your baby out an extra 2 hours and then having your baby become overtired (which can cause multiple night wakings).

If my baby has a short nap, do I adjust their awake window?

If your baby has napped for a very short amount of time (and they wake up grumpy, rather than happy). What happens when we minimise our baby's awake window is we are reinforcing the short nap. Try to keep your baby up until their next set nap. It really is about finding that balance between our baby not being overtired, but tired enough to go down to nap.



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