

Nighttime and Nap Routine Tips + Checklist

DO'S:

- Use white noise machine, low-medium level sound. Tip: We love the Hatch.
- Swaddle until 2-4 months (or until they can roll over).
- Always put back to sleep on their back.
- Use baby camera and/or monitoring device if baby will be unattended (or unwatched, such as while you sleep at night). Tip: We love the Owlet sock for peace of mind.
- Hold, cuddle, sooth, nurture with physical touch as much as possible before bedtime.
- Put the baby to bed while drowsy, but still awake.
- Room temperature should be between 68-72 degrees.
- Establish a bedtime routine before introducing flexibility, if possible.
- Maintain the 10pm/11pm feed until at least 3 months, if possible.
- Nap when baby naps, if possible.
- Have baby sleep in your room in a bassinet until 6 months, if possible.

DON'TS:

- Newborn (1-2 weeks): Don't be overly concerned about sleeping routines at this stage.
- Overdress / overheat, or too cold.
- Put noise machine too close to baby, or on too loud.
- Put any toys, blankets, pacifiers, etc. in the bassinet or crib.
- Put baby to bed while already asleep.
- Let them sleep in elevated positions, including bouncers, swings, car seats for more than a very quick nap. Monitor closely and do not leave unattended. This can be a suffocation hazard for young babies.
- Let newborn sleep without a feeding more than 4 hours (first 4-6 weeks). After that, with pediatrician approval, baby should not go longer than 8 hours at night (If they have had 7-8 good feedings during the day).
- Wake baby in "active sleep" mode.

Naps:

- Okay to nap in non-bassinet/crib settings if needed, such as sling, play yard, etc. but monitor closely and do not leave unattended. This can be a suffocation hazard for young babies.
- Use a pacifier to help them sleep only if needed (after the first month).
- Average nap length will be 1.5 hrs (1-2 months), 2 hrs (2-8 months) long.
- Frequency of naps will change over time to 5-6 naps (1-5 weeks), 4-6 naps (6-12 weeks), 3-4 naps (13-24 weeks).

- After 3 months, you can let them cry it out 15-30 min after being put down to teach them to soothe themselves.
- Naps often have a lot of “active sleep” - startled, squirming, fussing or even crying can occur but still be asleep. Don't try to comfort during these times. Just make sure baby isn't crying out of hunger, pain or a dirty diaper.
 - You can check on baby if they are crying more than 10 minutes long, but just pat on back or maybe hold for a moment to see if they calm down. Don't overstimulate or full awaken if possible.

Nighttime:

- Do a consistent nighttime routine so they know sleep is coming. They learn routines quickly.
- Keep lights dim and things quiet before nighttime sleep.
- Block out light as much as possible.
- For late night feedings (until 3 months), keep lights dim and things quiet / very uneventful. No talking, humming, bouncing, playing, etc. Just feed, burp, diaper change and go back to sleep.

Merges

- Takes 4-6 days to create a “new normal” for a routine.
- By 5 weeks, healthy baby can handle 5-hr sleep stretch, 7 weeks for a 7-hr sleep stretch, 10 weeks for a 10-hr stretch.
- Happens between weeks 3-6 | 7-10 | 10-15 | 16-24 | 24-39 | 28-40 | 46-52

Possible causes of bad napping / waking up crying:

- Environment (too hot/cold, noise, light, etc)
- Overtired/fatigued
- Sick
- Inadequate wake time or overstimulated
- Inadequate feedings / hungry
- Gassy / need to burp
- Change of diaper needed
- Diaper rash
- Growth spurt / transition time
- Mom's diet or medication (including lactose/allergy)
- Toe tourniquet syndrome (hair wrapped around body part, causing circulation cut off)