

Tummy Time!

TUMMY TIME TUMMY TIME Tummy Time is crucial for your baby's development and is approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The AAP says that babies should sleep on their backs; therefore, babies need enough Tummy Time while they are awake. Tummy Time strengthens head, neck, and upper body muscles. Tummy Time helps to build the muscles needed for rolling over, crawling, reaching, and playing. All babies benefit from Tummy Time.

Occupational therapists believe Tummy Time should be done daily with your baby to improve development, and they can help make Tummy Time a regular part of your daily routine. This sheet includes tips to consider during Tummy Time with your baby.

If you want to:

Help your baby get used to Tummy Time.



Consider these activity tips:

- Start with 2 to 3 minutes a day, and work up to at least 20 minutes per day. Daily Tummy Time can be done in several sessions or all in one session, depending upon your baby's response.
- Try Tummy Time soon after your baby wakes up. Your baby may have a better response to Tummy Time when they are well rested.
- Pay attention to signs that your baby is getting tired, such as crying or resting their head on the surface. Stop Tummy Time before your baby becomes tired.
- Monitor the time of day, length, and response to each Tummy Time session to track your baby's progress.

Caution:

- Talk with your baby's healthcare provider before beginning a Tummy Time program.
- Make sure your baby is alert and awake before starting Tummy Time.
- Always watch your baby during Tummy Time.
- Place your baby on a safe and firm surface during Tummy Time.

Position your baby to enjoy Tummy Time.



- Roll up a towel or blanket to provide extra support. Place the support under your baby's chest, and place their arms over the roll, with their hands stretching out in front of the support so nothing blocks their breathing.
- Always keep an eye on your baby when extra support is in place.
- Be sure your baby's weight is spread out evenly on both sides of their body.
- Limit the time your baby is in swings, bouncers, and other baby gear. Promote active play with Tummy Time.

If you want to:

Make Tummy Time part of your family's daily routine.



Consider these activity tips:

- Include Tummy Time in the activities you are already doing with your baby, such as towel drying after bath time, changing diapers, or applying lotion.
- When burping your baby, try laying them across your lap on their tummy.
- Tummy Time is a great time to read to your baby.

Improve your bond with your baby and get the whole family to participate in Tummy Time.



- Make eye contact and talk or sing to your baby.
- Use playful voices.
- Have different family members play with your baby.

Engage your baby's senses.



- Place a mirror in front of your baby so they can look at their own reflection.
- Lay your baby on a blanket or towel with different colors.
- Use blankets or towels with different textures, such as switching between a towel and a fleece blanket.
- Use firm surfaces but with different amounts of padding, such as switching between carpet and tile.

Increase your baby's ability to reach and play.



- Hold a toy in front of your baby's face to get their attention. This will encourage your baby to lift their head and reach for the toy.
- Arrange toys in a circle around your baby to encourage reaching in different directions.
- Use toys that are colorful or that make noises to increase your baby's interest.

If you want to:

Consider these activity tips:

Try some other ways:



Position for Adult

- Place your baby on your stomach or chest while you are awake and in a reclined position on a chair, bed, or floor. (This is a great way to begin Tummy Time with a newborn.)

Positions for Baby:

- Place your baby on a their side and support their back with your hand or use a small rolled up blanket. Bring their arms in front and slightly bend their knees up toward their chest.
- Hold your baby with their belly on your forearm. This is sometimes called a "football hold" or an "airplane hold".

Glossary:

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP): an organization of pediatricians that give suggestions for physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults

Baby Gear: any device that limits free movement of a baby such as activity standers, car seats, high chairs, jumpers, walkers, Bumbo seats, swings, strollers, bouncers, and nursing pillows

Development: a child's stage of growth, skills, and maturity

Occupational therapist: healthcare and education professionals who help people do their everyday tasks at home, school, hospitals, and clinics

Pediatrician: a medical doctor who cares for children

Summary:

Tummy Time is an important activity for babies to participate in. It helps build strength and coordination that babies need to for roll over, crawl, reach, and play. All babies benefit from Tummy Time, even newborns. There are several things you can try for success with Tummy Time, including help your baby get used to it, build it into your family's routine, make it playful, and try different positions.

Need More Information?

When there is a concern, an occupational therapist can create a plan based on the unique needs of your baby and family to help with Tummy Time.

Ask your pediatrician for more tips or look online to find an occupational therapist in your area.

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