

The Importance of Daily Naps

Newborn babies need to nap around eight hours each day. These nap hours are critically important to their health, growth and happiness.

Quality naps will help your baby sleep better at night, too!. Sleep begets sleep, when it comes to babies, so protect your little one's nap times.



Elizabeth Pantley, Author The No-Cry Sleep Solution for Newborns

Create a cozy nap place.

Newborns want to sleep when they are tired, just like they did in the womb. But before birth the environment was perfect for sleep: a controlled temperature, gentle darkness, the soft thump-thump of your heartbeat, and a fluid cradle that gently rocked his floating body.

The world outside the womb is entirely different and often hinders sleep. Since your baby cannot control his environment, he must rely on you to create a perfect napping situation for him when he is tired. Provide your baby with comfortable bedding, cozy pajamas and a dark place with gentle white background noise.

Keep awake spans short.

Your newborn can only stay happily awake for a short period of time (45 minutes to 3 hours) before needing to sleep again. Keep one eye on the clock and one eye on your baby (watching for signs of tiredness), and when it's time for sleep, create a perfect environment for your baby's nap.

Don't skip naps.

Newborns aren't very flexible when it comes to their sleep. Missing a nap can interfere with sleep for the remainder of that day and even the next day. So, if your newborn is fussy and not sleeping well, consider if sleep needs have been compromised and pay closer attention to helping your little one sleep well today.



Before birth your baby slept 20 hours a day and sometimes even more! Waking periods were random and for very short periods of time. (Much of pregnancy movement was made during sleep.) After birth, newborns begin to consolidate their sleep into defined segments. Quality naps help your baby's sleep to be the best it can be.

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Set Your Baby's Biological Clock

Sleep is regulated by an internal body clock that primes us for wakefulness during the day and sleepiness at night.

Babies are born with an undeveloped biological clock that takes many months to mature.

While biology will largely dictate the maturity timeline of your baby's bio-clock, there are many things that you can do to help the cause.



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Things you can do - Daytime tips:

- Provide frequent feedings throughout the day.
- Make your baby's awake times interesting, but avoid over-stimulation.
- Have a bit of outside time daily, early in the day when possible.
- Enjoy a few minutes of morning sunshine (either outside or by a window).
- Aim for an early bedtime aligned with your baby's signs of tiredness.

Things you can do - Nighttime tips:

- Feed your baby throughout the night whenever she's hungry.
- Keep night feedings dark, quiet and toy-free.
- Keep the house dimly lit in the hour before bedtime.
- Turn down the volume and make things peaceful in the evening.
- Maintain darkness throughout the night – use only a tiny nightlight.



There are many environmental and social cues that can promote the development of your baby's personal clock and move it in the direction of your own. It helps to be aware of these ideas, and they're worth a try because they are easy to put into action.

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Newborn Happily Awake Span

How do you help your newborn to be happier, sleep better, and be more peaceful? Respect your baby's Happily Awake Span!

The length of time that your baby is awake from one sleep period to the next will have a powerful impact on temperament and behavior. It will also affect how easily your baby falls asleep and how well your infant sleeps.



Elizabeth Pantley, Author
The No-Cry Sleep Solution for Newborns

Newborns shouldn't stay awake very long

- The natural span of awake time is very, very short for a newborn and gradually increases over time. New babies can only stay happily awake for 45 minutes to an hour or two at the most.

At about three months of age some babies still need a nap every hour or two, but some can be awake as long as 3 hours, if they routinely sleep well at night and get good, long naps.

By six months most babies can stay awake for 2 to 3 hours. However, good sleepers and frequent-wakers alike do best with short awake spans interspersed with plenty of naps.

- I call this the "happily awake span" because your baby CAN stay awake longer, but typically if she does she'll be unhappy – fussing and crying and working herself up so much that it's hard for her to fall asleep, yet hard to stay awake. It's an unpleasant situation for babies and their caregivers, too!

Long awake times can be detrimental to your newborn

- Studies show that young babies who typically have long stretches of awake time during the day (more than 3 consecutive hours) appear to have more disjointed sleep and shorter sleep stretches. So make sure your newborn isn't staying awake past the time when she demonstrates her unique signals of fatigue.
- If your baby has been awake beyond this "happily awake span" you have likely missed some sleepy signals, and your newborn is overtired. An overtired baby will be fussy and find it hard to sleep, yet won't be able to stay happily awake, either. And the more overtired your baby gets, the more he will fuss and cry in frustration, until he eventually wears out. This becomes a pattern that can disrupt sleep, growth and temperament.

Short awake periods = Happier baby

If you want your baby to be peaceful, to cry less and sleep better, keep one eye on your baby and one eye on the clock. Perhaps even set your phone to buzz as a reminder that sleep time should be near – then watch for those telltale tired signs. Don't let your newborn stay awake for too long at a time and sleep will come peacefully and easily at the right times.



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How to Tell if Your Newborn is Tired

Your newborn is a unique person and will present you with a very individualized language. However, there are many similarities among babies. The majority of newborns signal tiredness in similar ways.



Let's talk about some common signals to give you a guideline as you begin the process of learning to read your own baby's language. Once you get through the first few months you won't need a list of any kind as you will learn how to read your baby better than anyone else in the whole entire world. But in the meantime, knowing what things to look out for can speed the translation process.

Elizabeth Pantley, Author The No-Cry Sleep Solution for Newborns

Signs that your baby may be tired

- A lull in movement or activity
- Quieting down, making fewer sounds
- Losing interest in people and toys
- Looking away from you
- Appearing glazed or unfocused; staring off in the distance
- Limp, relaxed face and jaw
- Fussing or whining
- Eyes open and unblinking or slow, long blinks
- Rubbing eyes, ears or face
- Not settling down in your arms, squirming
- And of course, yawning!

Other factors that can indicate tiredness

- Being awake for one to three hours
- Last sleep session was disrupted, and your baby woke up before ready

Signs that your baby might be overtired

- Fretful crying (which can also indicate hunger)
- Arching backwards or going rigid
- Uncoordinated movements of arms and legs
- Chin down, head nodding loosely
- Drooping eyelids, slow blinking, eyelid fluttering
- Dark circles appearing under the eyes; eyes appearing bloodshot

Other factors that can indicate overtiredness

- Being awake for more than three hours



What to do when your newborn is tired

Get familiar with your baby's unique sleepy signs, and put your baby down to sleep the minute you spot the signs.

It's fine if your newborn needs your help, so rock her or nurse her to sleep - right away, the moment she seems tired. Your reward will be blissful, easy sleep.

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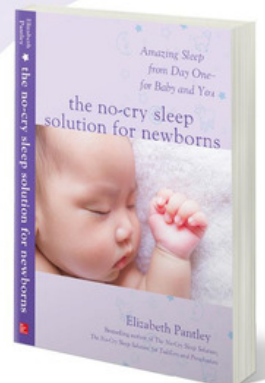
Your Roadmap to Inspire Peaceful Newborn Sleep



The No-Cry Sleep Solution for Newborns

By Bestselling Author of the *No-Cry Solution Series*, Elizabeth Pantley

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The Magic of White Noise

Four Ways that White Noise Works its Magic

The right kind of background noise is a perfect sleep aid for most newborns because it is effective in a variety of ways. Whether your baby is an easy sleeper or a more challenged sleeper, white noise can be helpful to your little one in four different ways:



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1 A gentle sound can be effective at soothing Baby to sleep.

The simple, repetitive “Shhh Shhh” sound helps to calm a baby because it mimics mother’s heartbeat. When a baby hears these types of sounds it allows him to focus on those, and then he can center himself and relax or fall asleep.

2 The sound masks harsh noises that startle your baby awake.

A steady hum of background noise can help to block out sharp sudden sounds. White noise, played just loud enough (but not too loud), softens the edges of these sharp sounds.

You don’t want to have to always tiptoe around a sleeping baby, and the sounds of the house, like talking or soft footsteps, are actually soothing, as babies love to hear the sounds of the village as they sleep. However, sharp sounds like dishes clinking, a phone ringing, dogs barking, or older siblings shouting can be intrusive sounds that wake your sleeping newborn. Having white noise playing can mask these baby-waking noises.

3 White noise sounds can act as a bridge between sleep cycles.

White noise can cover many disruptive sounds that happen during naps or in the middle of the night. When your baby is having a brief awakening between sleep cycles and hears these noises, they can gain his attention and bring him fully awake. White noise can help your baby move seamlessly through sleep cycles (when hunger doesn't interfere) so that your baby has a longer nap or fewer night wakings.

4 A sound used frequently creates a consistent cue.

When your baby hears this specific sound she knows it’s time to sleep. When you routinely use the sounds as soon as you notice signs of tiredness, your baby comes to recognize it as sleeping music. Add some warm milk and a cuddle to easily lull your baby to sleep.

White noise is conducive to sleep, but unhelpful during awake times. Turn the white noise off as soon as your baby is awake. This keeps the sound exclusive to sleep and allows your infant to hear the sounds of the world when she is awake and alert.



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Newborn Sleep

5 Easy Ways to Help Your Newborn Sleep Better

Newborn sleep problems are common – but it’s a mystery. Babies in the womb sleep up to twenty hours per day. Newborns know how to sleep, but we unknowingly get in the way of their natural process. Here are ways to help your baby get more sweet dreams.



Elizabeth Pantley, Author
The No-Cry Sleep Solution for Newborns

1 Don't Exceed Baby's "Happily Awake Span"

Newborns can only last forty-five minutes to an hour between sleep sessions. By three months of age this can extend to two or three hours, maximum. If your baby is awake longer than biology allows he'll be fussier and cry more, plus find it harder to fall asleep.

2 Learn your Baby's Sleepy Signals

Your newborn will give you signals when she's tired. If you miss the signs, your baby will quickly become overtired. On the flip side, a baby who isn't tired will reject efforts to get her to sleep. Look for that perfect sleepy moment. Babies share a few common signs of tiredness, such as losing interest in people and toys and making slower movements.

3 Correctly Identify Sleeping Sounds and Motions

Newborns grunt, coo, twitch, and shift position during sleep. These noises and movements don't always signal awakening. Rushing to pick your baby up during these occurrences can actually wake her up! So, take a pause to observe and listen. If your baby is sleeping – let her sleep!

4 Use White Noise to Mask Baby-waking Sounds

The use of quiet, rumbling white noise can soothe your baby and mask any outside sounds that wake him. Find a sound that you enjoy, too, since your baby may enjoy these sleepy sounds up through toddlerhood.

5 Feed your Newborn Frequently – Day and Night.

Your baby doesn't have a day/night body clock, so sleep and feedings occur throughout a 24-hour period. Your newborn's teaspoon-sized stomach doesn't last long without food. Newborns can't sleep when they're hungry and will keep waking up until they're fed. It's better to respond to feeding cues quickly so you can both get back to the important job of sleeping.



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