



# Best way to do tummy time for newborn

FIRST-TIME PARENTS

ARTICLE

JAN 5, 2021

3 MINS

Tummy time can start soon after you bring your baby home from the hospital. Just don't expect too much. At first your newborn will struggle to lift her head even a tiny bit while on her stomach. Tummy time is hard, tiring work! A few seconds at a time, several times a day, is a great start. You can gradually increase the amount of time your baby spends on her tummy as long as she's happy and comfortable—and always be there to supervise.

Aim for a total of about one hour per day by the time your baby is two months, broken into smaller chunks of time throughout the day. Take note of these seven tummy time tips, and little by little your baby's muscles will get stronger!

## 1. Back to sleep

Spending time on her tummy while she is awake is important for your baby. However, you should always put her to sleep on her back. This position reduces the chances of

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Fortunately, worldwide, the number of SIDS cases has fallen in the past 30 years. Always place your baby on her back for sleeping to help prevent SIDS.

## **2. Start young**

Even when she's a fragile newborn, tummy time can help your baby slowly strengthen her head, neck, and shoulder muscles. She'll need these strong muscles to develop certain motor skills, like crawling.

## **3. Choose your moments**

Your baby is more likely to enjoy tummy time when she's alert. In the early days this won't happen very often so seize the opportunities as they come. After a diaper change or when your baby first wakes up from a nap are usually great times. If she's tired, hungry, or fussy, don't pressure her. Give her a nap, feeding if hungry, or a song while holding her, then try again later. Make time every day for tummy time.

## **4. Prepare for action**

It may be hard to imagine with your tiny baby, but she will eventually learn to roll over, crawl, and sit up by herself. Research has indicated that babies who spend more time on their stomachs may roll over, crawl, and sit up earlier than babies who don't get as much time on their tummies.

## **5. Reduce head pressure**

Tummy time plays an important role in the shape of your baby's head. Spending too long on her back can cause the back of your baby's head to flatten. Spending longer periods of time each day on her tummy will help lessen the pressure on the back of her soft skull.

## **6. Stay close**

Never leave your baby alone while she is on her tummy. Her mouth or nose could be covered accidentally, which may put her at risk of suffocating.

## **7. Support her**

When your baby is a newborn and has very little head control she may need a little help to learn this skill. Place a rolled-up blanket or other support underneath her chest and armpits to give her a helping lift. Once your baby is older and stronger, and is more comfortable with tummy time, lay a blanket on the floor and place your baby on her stomach with her arms out in front of her. Or you could hold your baby on your chest as you recline on a couch or pillows for some great bonding and tummy time in one!

## **Sources**

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