

Tummy Time Tips



Tummy time is an incredibly important part of normal development for your baby. It is an essential precursor to crawling and the key to developing normal spinal curves. Tummy time also facilitates rich brain connections, integrates sensory processing, and strengthens parent/baby connections. Lying on the tummy also mobilizes the soft tissues on the front of the body which enhances the flexibility of the throat, tongue and shoulder girdle.

Just like adults, babies need to work hard to learn a new skill and build the muscles in their neck and back. As they get stronger they will learn how to hold their head up and push themselves up with their arms. Tummy time is the platform for the skills they need to roll over, reach for objects, sit, crawl, stand, and walk.

Stronger Every Day!

Begin gently as a newborn

- Being tummy to tummy with a caregiver is one of baby's favorite places to be. In the first 3 weeks, try lying on an incline with the baby on your chest so that you are tummy-to-tummy. Progress to lying flat with baby on your chest.
- Talk to baby and encourage them as they work to lift their head to make eye contact.
- Let baby spend some time in side-lying as well, as this can help them to be more comfortable in different positions, and spend equal time on both sides.



Easing into floor time

- Place a nursing pillow or rolled towel under baby's chest. This makes it easier for baby to practice lifting and holding their head up at an incline at first.



Challenges make us stronger!

- Place baby on their tummy on the floor with some toys or interesting objects nearby. Tuck their hands under their chest at first to help them push into the floor.
- It helps baby to hang out a little longer if you lie on your tummy with them and encourage them as they work hard.



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Happy Baby Tips

- Your baby loves looking at you, so lots of eye contact helps them stay comfortable in tummy time, especially in the beginning.
- Toys that rattle, make sounds or have mirrors are great distractions.
- Practice when your baby is in a content state.
- A bit of fussing is ok as they learn to work on their tummy. We don't want the baby crying hard, but try to give them a minute or two in this position if they are just fussing.

Quality Time

Aim for 4 – 5 sessions per day for 5 – 15 minutes each time, depending on the age and development of the baby. Repetition is your key to success. Each time you put the baby down to go and complete a task, put them onto their tummy. This way it is an easy reminder to do tummy time regularly as you go about your day. If your baby doesn't love Tummy Time yet, aim for shorter, more frequent sessions and build on that.

American Academy of Pediatrics Recommendations

1-2 months: 15/30 min / day

3 months: 30 - 60 min / day

4+ months: 60 - 90 min / day

My Baby Hates Tummy Time!

If you find that your baby starts fussing immediately, it may be because they are uncomfortable in this position. All babies take some time to get used to Tummy Time until they get stronger; but some babies begin to fuss and cry immediately and consistently when you put them on their tummies. Sometimes, this can indicate that they are uncomfortable extending their head and upper back because of spinal restrictions and body tension. A pediatric chiropractor with special training will be able to assess your baby to determine if this is the case and provide gentle treatments to help their spine and body move more easily.

Consider a consultation with a specially trained Pediatric Chiropractor if baby...

- Fusses or cries consistently during tummy time
- Arches their back consistently
- Has difficulty turning their head side to side
- Prefers to lie looking to one side
- Is unable to touch their face or mouth with a hand while in tummy time
- Spends less than 20 minutes per day in tummy time
- Has tethered oral tissue (tongue and lip ties)
- Has flattening of one side of the head
- Has asymmetries in the way they move
- Has feeding difficulties