



Tummy Time



What is Tummy Time?

Any time when babies are carried, positioned or played with on their stomachs.

It plays a critical role in enabling babies to develop sensory, visual and movement control, helping to strengthen legs, arms, back and neck and to establish head control.

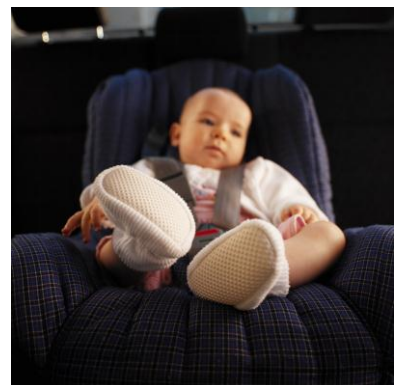
This helps them learn to push up, roll and move into a crawling position and eventually sit and stand. In turn this helps develop shoulder stability, hand strength and coordination, all prerequisites for later movement skills including writing ability. Muscles developed in the neck during head control are important for the development of speech and language skills.



Why do babies need Tummy Time?

Babies need tummy time because they are spending more and more time on their backs – in car seats, in buggies etc.

In the early 90s, the Back to Sleep Campaign successfully decreased the incidence of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) by encouraging parents to place their babies on their backs to sleep. Around the same time, the sales of infant carriers doubled as car seats and carriers became widely used



"...this has resulted in a delay in these babies reaching important developmental milestones such as crawling and walking."

Peta Smith, vice chair of the Association of Paediatric Chartered Physiotherapists (APCP) explains...

The benefits of tummy time

- * Promotes muscle development in the neck and shoulders
- * Helps prevent tight neck muscles and cranial asymmetry, or 'flat head' syndrome, where babies' skulls are still quite soft and lying in the same position on their backs all the time can put pressure on the skull, causing a flattening effect
- * Helps build the muscles your baby needs to roll, sit and crawl

"Research shows babies placed on their backs to sleep who were then placed on their front for extra time during the day were able to roll, crawl, sit, pull to stand and eventually walk earlier than those who were mainly placed on their backs."

Some suggestions for increasing Tummy Time

- * Carry your baby belly down, with your arm supporting underneath his chest. (Younger infants will need their heads and chest supported, but as your baby gains strength in the neck and trunk muscles, less support is needed).
- * Play on the floor with your baby. Remove any restrictive clothing. Place toys on both sides to encourage turning of the baby's head and reaching with both hands. (By playing with your baby, you can encourage interactions with all the family – pulling, pushing and playing with other people, objects and toys).
- * Place a pillow or blanket under the baby's chest to help your baby lift and centre their head.



Tummy time is...

- always supervised—never leave your baby alone on his tummy
- any activity that keeps your baby from lying flat in one position against a hard, supporting surface
- any time you carry, position or play with your baby while he is on his belly
- beneficial to babies of all ages
- fun, and it can be designed to be easy or challenging for your baby
- adaptable, and changes as your baby grows and develops strength
- a great time to bond with your baby
- more enjoyable when you play music or give your baby interesting toys to look at and play with.



For more information visit:

apta.org

pathways.org/awareness/parents/tummy-time/tummy-time-troubles/

bounty.com/baby/care/tummy-time

bhfactive.org.uk/userfiles/Documents/guidelinesnonwalkers.pdf

**Don't get discouraged.
Every bit of Tummy Time makes a difference!**