

Back to Sleep, Tummy to Play

Your baby should have Tummy Time as a part of his or her playtime every day because it:

- Strengthens the muscles your baby needs to roll, sit, and crawl
- Improves head and neck control
- Prevents flattening of the head or a misshapen head
- Promotes shoulder and back strengthening
- Promotes symmetry
- Provides visual stimulation



Get More Information

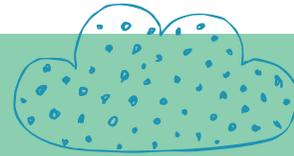
- **HealthyChildren.org**
Search for “Prevention and Management of Skull Deformities” (American Academy of Pediatrics)
- **BabyCenter.com**
Search for “Tummy Time: Why and how to do it” and “Tummy Time: How to help your baby get comfortable on his or her belly”
- **MoveForwardPT.com/resources**
Search for “Tummy Time”

To find out more about how to do Tummy Time, call the Physical Therapy Department at UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh at 412-692-5480.

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Tummy Time

Makes Your Baby Strong



What is Tummy Time? Why is it important?



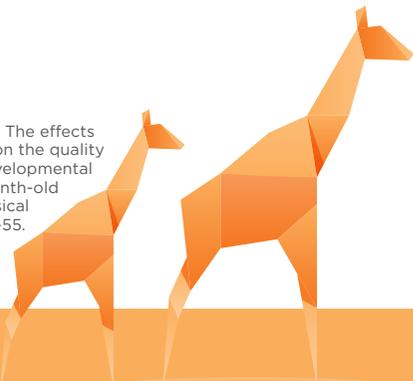
Tummy Time is defined as any time your baby is on his or her belly. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends “Back to Sleep, Tummy to Play” to promote supervised Tummy Time while your baby is awake.

Tummy Time can be achieved in a variety of ways; it does not only include time spent on the floor. Tummy Time is an important activity that should be included in daily play time.

How often should my baby have Tummy Time?

In the beginning, your baby may be unable to tolerate much Tummy Time or be able to lift his or her head for more than a few minutes at a time. It is okay to start with brief periods of time, even 1 to 2 minutes, several times throughout the day. Try to increase the time each day. Tummy Time is recommended five to six times per day. By the time your baby is 4 months old, he or she should be getting a total of 1 hour and 20 minutes of Tummy Time each day.¹

¹ Dudek, L, Zelazny, S. The effects of prone positioning on the quality and acquisition of developmental milestones in four-month-old infants. *Pediatric Physical Therapy*, 2007; 19: 48-55.



Tummy Time Guidelines

Newborn to 3 Months

ACTIVITY

Place your baby onto his or her belly starting in the first days of life. If your baby has difficulty lifting his or her head, you can use your hands, a Boppy® pillow or a towel roll under the chest.

You can provide Tummy Time on your chest when you are reclined, over your lap, or carry your baby in a football hold with head support. You want to encourage your baby to lift his or her head in this position and look from side to side.

IMPORTANCE

Your baby will begin to develop increased strength in his or her neck muscles and improved head control. This position is also helpful in decreasing prolonged pressure on the back of the head to prevent flattening or a misshapen head.



3 to 6 Months

ACTIVITY

By now your baby should have more back, neck, and arm strength and be able to prop on his or her forearms. Encourage your baby to shift his or her weight onto one arm in order to reach for a toy. Place toys on an elevated

surface to encourage your baby to push up on his or her hands. If your baby has difficulty, you can support his or her weight under the upper chest. You can continue to carry your baby in a football hold, but with less support, to encourage neck strengthening. Toys with lights or sounds may be especially engaging at this age. Begin to sit your child in a Bumbo® chair or use a front carrier.



IMPORTANCE

Your baby will continue to develop increased arm, shoulder, and neck strength. This prepares your baby for improved head control while sitting and crawling.

6 to 9 Months

ACTIVITY

At this age, your baby will have improved arm, neck, back, and hip strength. Encourage your baby to start pushing up on hands and knees. You may notice your baby rocking back and forth and beginning to crawl. You can also encourage your baby to reach with one arm to improve core and back strength. If your baby is having difficulty, you can provide support around the hips or under the belly.

IMPORTANCE

Your baby will continue to develop strength. Crawling will help your baby to further explore his or her environment. Placing weight through the hands is critical in the development of fine motor skills, including holding a small toy, using utensils, or throwing a ball.

