



The Association of Paediatric Chartered Physiotherapists

APCP Information – Tummy Time Ideas

Practical advice to help parents and carers

Tummy Time to Play – Every Day

The 'Back to Sleep' campaign has reduced the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. As a result of the campaign babies are spending less time on their tummies during the day. This, however, can lead to:

- A delay in developing movement skills
- A flattening of the side or back of the head
- Co-ordination problems in later childhood

The good news is that something as simple as Tummy Time can lessen or eliminate all of these potential problems.

Tummy Time is Important Because it:

- Helps promote a more rounded head shape
- Improves development of head control and strengthens muscles of the head, neck & back
- Assists with attainment of motor milestones
- Enhances vision and hand-eye co-ordination



Tummy Time for Newborns

Newborns will benefit from Tummy Time – start small - aim for a few minutes at a time, several times a day.

Tummy Time activities at this age are centred around holding and soothing activities:

- Lay your baby across your lap instead of upright on your shoulder, to settle or sooth them
- Lay down with your baby, chest to chest
- Carry your baby tummy side down sometimes
- Your baby may enjoy a massage after a bath, lying on their tummy



Tummy Time for Older Babies

At 3 weeks babies will begin to recognise faces and sounds – this is a perfect time to incorporate more Tummy Time activities:

- Lay your baby on their tummy on the floor and get down on the floor with him/her – encourage your baby to lift and move head to look at your face or by talking and singing to him/her
- Place a small rolled up towel under your baby's chest and upper arms to prop him/her up – scatter toys around to encourage looking and reaching
- Play aeroplane around the room

As your baby learns to roll from his/her back you will find you no longer need to 'schedule' Tummy



Important to remember:

- **Always place your baby to sleep in a flat clear space on their back**
- Begin Tummy Time from birth
- Make sure your baby is awake and is never left alone on his/her tummy
- Always place your baby on a firm flat surface
- Don't be discouraged, with practice and interaction your baby will start to enjoy being on their tummy.

Concerned about your baby's development?

Most babies will be pushing up on his/her forearms and lifting and holding his/her head by 3 months of age. The following signs may be a cause for concern:

- Difficulty lifting head
- Stiff legs with little or no movement
- Pushing back with head
- Head turning to one side only

IF YOU NEED FURTHER ADVICE ABOUT TUMMY TIME, OR HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR BABY'S DEVELOPMENT, CONTACT YOUR HEALTH VISITOR OR PAEDIATRIC PHYSIOTHERAPIST.

This leaflet has been produced after an initial review of literature and where there is a lack of evidence, a consensus of expert opinion's agreed, correct at the time of publication

APCP

<https://apcp.csp.org.uk>

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The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy is the professional, educational and trade union body for the UK's 50,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and associates.



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