

Why do babies need to spend time in a variety of positions every day?

Babies develop vision, hand skills, and movement by looking all around themselves. Each position helps babies explore in a new way. Changing positions is also important to prevent and/or treat common conditions including plagiocephaly (flattening of an area on baby's head) and torticollis (tightness of baby's neck muscle).

Here are some ideas to position baby to explore their surroundings:

Feeding:

- Alternate sides for breastfeeding or which arm you hold baby in for bottle-feeding.
- Try other positions like sitting baby up or lying them on your knees.



Playing:

- Use toys to help baby look and turn their head both ways.
- Help baby lay on their side while playing.



Carrying:

- Alternate which arm you carry baby with.
- Try different positions like facing baby forwards, on their tummy, or on their side facing outward.



Sleeping:

- Always put baby on their back to sleep.
- Alternate baby head-for-foot in their crib each night.

Equipment:

- Limit time in "containers" (swings, bouncy chairs, carseats) that make it harder for baby to move their head around or change positions.



Contact a Physical Therapist if you have concerns with baby's:

- head shape changes
- preference to look towards one side or tilt their head to one side
- delayed gross motor skills.

A Family Physician, Nurse Practitioner or Public Health office can direct you to services in your area.



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Why is tummy time important?

Tummy time is essential for motor and sensory development. Babies develop strength in their neck, shoulders, back, and core during tummy time. It is normal for tummy time to be difficult for babies at first. Here are some helpful tips and tricks!

Start early:

Tummy time can begin as soon as baby's umbilical cord falls off.

Make it a routine:

Try tummy time after every diaper change.

Short bursts:

- Start with 2 to 3 minutes at a time when baby is awake.
- If baby is enjoying it, they can stay longer.
- Each small session adds up towards your goal.

Goal setting:

- Baby should do at least 15 minutes of tummy time per day per month old.
- For example, at 3 months old, aim to do 45 minutes/day total.

Make it exciting:

- Use a mirror or exciting toys that baby can see, touch, or hear.
- Get down on baby's level on the floor if you can.

Change positions:

- Help baby tuck their elbows under their chest.
- Place a rolled blanket under baby's chest to prop them up.
- Lay baby on your chest to play face-to-face.
- Lay baby on your lap to prop them up on your knee.
- Carry baby under their tummy like an airplane.

