

## How to Get a Baby to Sleep

Leading sleep consultants offer their best tips for getting a baby to sleep at bedtime, nap time and while traveling.

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With a new baby in your life, sleep may be a distant memory. Babies tend to sleep in short spurts and stay awake in short spurts. While you might find getting your baby to sleep to be a challenge, it's also an immense hurdle for your little one, who might need some help from you in developing a sleep routine and learning to relax and drift off to sleep.

Here, leading pediatric sleep consultants offer their tried and true tips for how to get a baby to sleep in any situation. Contributors include Rebecca Nazzal of [Dream Big Sleep Consulting](#), Jennifer Schindele of [Gift of Sleep Consulting](#), Ronee Welch of [Sleeptastic Solutions](#), Visa Shanmugan of [Sound Sleepers](#), Violet Ginnone of [Sleep Baby Sleep](#), Tamiko Kelly of [Sleep Well. Wake Happy](#), Janelle Jeffery of [Sleepytime](#) and Teresa Stewart of [Stewart Family Solutions](#).

Their tips will show you how to get a baby to sleep at night and nap time -- even if naps occasionally need to happen in a stroller. They also offer advice for handling a baby's sleep routine when traveling by plane and car. As with all things parenting-related, consistency is

key, they say.

## Set the Tone

- Keep toys out of the crib.
- Keep the room very dark.
- Make sure any night lights are blue- or amber-colored to prevent stimulation.
- Keep the room at a cool temperature (65 to 72 degrees).
- Don't overdress your baby. Dress your baby as you would dress yourself for bedtime. If you're concerned about your baby getting chilly, use a sleep sack or wearable blanket instead of a blanket in the crib.

While Ginnone suggests the use of an "attachment object," often called a "lovey," to help your baby settle for the night, be sure not put it in the crib with your baby, per the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) [safety guidelines](#).

## Stick to a Schedule

- Set an early bedtime and enforce it.
- Make a routine and stick to it.
- Keep your baby's bedtime routine to 30 minutes or less.
- Keep your baby's bedtime and wake time within the same 30-minute window each day.
- Put your baby to sleep in the same place every night.
- Don't nurse or feed your baby to sleep.
- Put your baby to bed awake.
- Don't turn on the lights for nighttime diaper changes or feeds.
- Don't rock, bounce or cajole your baby back to sleep if he awakens during the night.
- Wait a few minutes before intervening with nighttime wake-ups.
- Be patient and consistent.

## Plan for Naps

Nap times are greatly improved, says Nazzal, when you "honor your baby's nap needs by planning to have him sleep at home during his nap times."

- Make sure your [nap schedule](#) is age appropriate.
- Plan to have your baby sleep at home during naps.

- Run errands and plan outings around your baby's nap schedule.
- Create a familiar sleep environment at a caretaker's home.

## **Accommodate Baby Sleep Schedule When Traveling**

- If you are traveling between time zones for fewer than 5 days, keep your baby in the "home" time zone.
- If you are traveling between time zones for more than 5 days, move your baby to the new time zone.
- Adjust your baby to the new sleep schedule by moving her bedtime and wake time back by 15 minutes each day until you reach the goal bedtime.
- Don't over-schedule activities when you are on vacation.
- Avoid late bedtimes.
- Keep the same bedtime routine and rules while you are on vacation.
- Give your baby her own sleep environment, utilizing the closet or the bathroom if need be.
- Allow your baby to fall asleep alone in your hotel room. (Go out onto a balcony or outside the door.)
- Bring a portable white noise machine.
- Don't bed share if you don't normally do it at home.
- Bring a piece of breathable black fabric to create a "sleep cave" when you are traveling with your baby on a plane.
- Complete a mini bedtime routine on the plane.

Having just flown intercontinentally with her little one, Jeffery suggests creating a bedtime routine for long plane travel. This "helps your child to wind down away from distractions," she says.

## **Consider Your Car Travel**

- Try to avoid car travel when it is close to nap time.
- Distract your child with songs, toys and drinks to help her avoid falling asleep in the car.
- If your child falls asleep for less than 10 minutes, you may be able to get him into the crib to finish his nap.
- If your child falls asleep for more than 10 minutes, take a "scenic route" home so she can finish her nap in the car.

## When You're Out With the Stroller

- Bring a large blanket to drape over the stroller to block out any light and distraction.
- Make sure you have your baby's favorite "lovey" for him to cuddle with.
- Use a white noise app on your phone, and place the phone in the basket underneath the stroller.
- Lay your baby in the stroller at her normal nap time, and use your normal cues to encourage her to sleep.

## Getting Twins to Sleep

Welch, a mother of twins, says it's OK for twins to be separated for naps (even if they room share at night). This allows each to have the opportunity to sleep without being interrupted by the sibling. Welch also recommends keeping twins on the same sleep schedule so that parents can get much-needed breaks.

Keep this list of tips handy for those times when both you and your baby are short on sleep!

And check out the [5 things to know about a sleeping baby](#).

*Lauren Stevens is a freelance writer whose work can be found on [The Huffington Post](#) and [Scary Mommy](#) as well as her blog, [lo-wren.com](#). Her piece "The Long Road," cataloging her humorous journey through the sleeplessness of early motherhood, is being published in the upcoming anthology, "Motherhood May Cause Drowsiness."*

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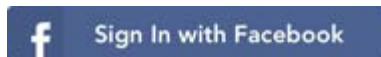
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