

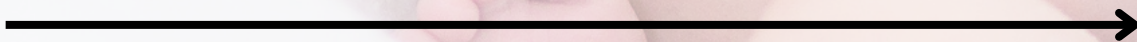
Extending your Baby's naps



Short naps are really common, especially for younger babies, and working on lengthening naps so that you can have an actual, proper break in the day is 100% worth the effort. Let's face it, there's nothing more annoying than putting your little one down, loading the dishwasher, making a cup of tea and then that tea going cold before you've even had a chance to sit down and drink it. Parenting is hard, and lots of us have come to rely on those regular breaks to get through the day! So how do you go about lengthening naps and finally getting those breaks?

ENVIRONMENT: Ensure that your baby's sleep space is set up perfectly for sleep. Use brown or pink noise playing for the duration of the nap, dress baby appropriately for the temperature, swaddle newborns and use blackout blinds to make the room dark.

TIMING: Follow age appropriate wake windows for your baby so that they aren't under or overtired at nap time. Shorten the wake window if the previous nap was short and keep your eye out for sleep cues.



TEACH SLEEP

A kind, common sense, holistic approach

SLEEP-EAT-PLAY: I recommend following a basic sleep-eat-play routine for younger babies. Feed your baby on waking so that they take in enough calories to see them through to the next nap. This will also give them time to digest their milk and get rid of any uncomfortable wind before you put them down again.

WAIT: If your baby wakes up early, try not to respond immediately. Give them ideally 10-15 minutes to resetttle before you intervene.

RESETTLE: Do anything you can to get your baby back to sleep. Rock, cuddle, shush, pat! Keep the room dark and your voice low and calm.

SELF-SETTLING: You can start teaching gentle self-settling at nap times. This means putting your baby down awake and letting them fall asleep independently. Once they have learnt this skill they should be able to link their sleep cycles during naps and go for longer before waking.

PRACTISE! Don't put too much pressure on naps. If you need to go out in the pram to get a long nap, or take a drive, that's fine. But just keep practising and have faith: long naps will happen for you so keep going!