

BABIES · 4 MIN READ

The tummy time survival guide (for babies who hate it)

Why tummy time matters for strength and head shape, how much is enough at each stage, and honest, practical tactics for babies who protest loudly.



● Why tummy time matters

Tummy time builds the neck, shoulder and back strength your baby needs for rolling, sitting and crawling. It also takes pressure off the back of the head, which helps head shape. Think of it as your baby's first gym session, except the gym is a blanket on the floor and the personal trainer is you.

● How much is enough?

Little and often beats long and miserable. From birth, aim for a few minutes at a time, several times a day, building up as your baby gets stronger. By three months or so, many babies manage twenty to thirty minutes spread across the day. There's no prize for doing it all in one go.

● Tactics for protesters

Start on your chest: lie back, place your baby tummy-down on you, and chat. That counts. Try tummy time across your lap, or with a rolled towel under the chest and arms forward. Get down on the floor face to face; you are the best toy in the house. Use a mirror, high-contrast cards or a singing sibling.

Time it well: after a nappy change, not straight after a feed, and never when tired. Stop before the meltdown, not after. Ten cheerful thirty-second bursts beat one grim ten-minute battle.

● When to seek help

If your baby cannot lift their head briefly by around two months, seems much stiffer or floppier than other babies, only ever turns one way, or tummy time always ends in real distress despite the tricks above, have a chat with your health visitor or book an assessment. Sometimes a small tightness is making the work genuinely harder, and it's very fixable.

This guide is general information written by a paediatric physiotherapist, not medical advice about your child. If you are worried, trust your instinct: speak to your GP or health visitor, or get in touch with us.



Written by Lucy Jolliffe BSc MSc, HCPC registered physiotherapist (PH142090), Little Movers Physiotherapy. Clinics in North Walsham and Aylsham, plus home, school and nursery visits across North Norfolk.

Call or WhatsApp **07842 898949** · info@littlemoversphysio.co.uk · littlemoversphysio.co.uk

Families can book directly, no GP referral needed. Professionals can refer at

littlemoversphysio.co.uk/refer. Read this guide online at littlemoversphysio.co.uk/guides/tummy-time-survival-guide.