

Newborn Sleep Starter Kit

A gentle, realistic guide for the nights when baby only sleeps in your arms

Quick Start Checklist

- A safe sleep space: firm, flat mattress + fitted sheet only
- Room set for night: dim light, phone on silent, water bottle for you
- 2-3 muslin cloths (burps/spit-up happen)
- Wearable sleep sack or swaddle (age-appropriate)
- White noise (fan/white noise machine/app)
- A plan for the next wake-up (see the 3-step plan below)
- One support plan (partner/family shift or 1-hour help block if possible)

Before You Start

- If you are recovering from stitches or pain, choose positions that reduce pressure and ask for help with night changes
- Keep expectations newborn-realistic: progress is often 20 minutes at a time
- Safety first: avoid sofa/armchair sleep with baby if you feel you might doze off
- Track 5-7 nights before deciding a method 'doesn't work'

Gentle Fixes for 'Won't Sleep Unless Held' Nights

Tier 1: Do Tonight

Start with these high-impact, low-stress steps:

Deep sleep transfer

- Wait 8-10 extra minutes after baby falls asleep in your arms
- Lower bottom-first, then shoulders, then head
- Keep your hands on baby for 20-30 seconds before lifting away

Hands-on cot settling

- After placing baby down, keep a gentle hand on chest/tummy for 20-60 seconds
- Shush softly or keep white noise steady
- If baby escalates, pick up - calm - try again

Warm the cot surface (safe way)

- Warm the sheet BEFORE baby goes down (then remove the heat source)
- Check the surface feels neutral-warm, not hot

Make nights boring

- Dim light only, minimal talking, quick feed/change, back to sleep
- Repeat the same short phrase each time (example: 'Sleep time now')

Tier 2: Build Better Nights ★★

Once Tier 1 helps a little, support the daytime foundation:

Prevent overtiredness

- Earlier wind-down often works better than 'keep baby awake'
- If naps are short, contact naps can reset sleep debt in early weeks

Day vs night cues

- Day: bright light + normal noise
- Night: dim light + calm + boring

Intentional feeding

- Try full feeds + burp breaks to reduce quick wake-ups
- If baby seems uncomfortable after feeds, discuss with a clinician

Tier 3: Troubleshooting ★

Use these when things still feel stuck:

Wakes 5-15 minutes after being put down

- Try longer upright time after feeds (while you are awake and alert)
- Re-check transfer timing (wait those extra minutes)

Startle reflex wakes baby

- A swaddle/sleep sack can help (stop swaddling when baby shows signs of rolling)

Day-night confusion

- Increase daylight exposure in the morning
- Keep nights dim and calm (no play)



Your 7-Night Gentle Progress Challenge

- Night 1: Choose ONE Tier-1 step and do it consistently for every wake-up
- Night 2: Keep the same step + add hands-on cot settling for 30 seconds
- Night 3: Focus on preventing overtiredness (earlier wind-down)
- Night 4: Make nights boring (dim light, quick feed, back down)
- Night 5: Try to get the FIRST stretch of the night in the cot
- Night 6: Track wake times and look for one pattern
- Night 7: Keep what worked. Drop what clearly didn't. Celebrate any small win



Success Tips for Exhausted Parents

1. Start small

- Pick 1-2 changes only
- Repeat them for 3 nights before judging

2. Focus on safety

- Firm, flat sleep surface; keep the sleep space clear
- Avoid dozing off with baby on sofa/armchair

3. Track simple data

- Write down bedtime + wake times for 5-7 nights
- One note: what helped most

4. Ask for support

- Even a 60-90 minute help block can change your night
- If possible, split the night into shifts

5. Measure success differently

- Count calmer transfers and longer first stretch
- Celebrate progress, not perfection



Common Sleep Problems & Gentle Solutions

Wakes instantly when put down

- • Cause: Transfer attempted during light sleep; startle reflex
- • Solution: Wait 8-10 minutes longer; bottom-first transfer; hands-on settling

Short naps (20-30 minutes)

- • Cause: Normal newborn sleep cycles; overtiredness
- • Solution: Protect naps; earlier wind-down; use consistent sleep cues

False start bedtime (wakes after 30-45 minutes)

- • Cause: Overtiredness; hunger; unsettled tummy
- • Solution: Earlier bedtime; full feed; burp breaks

Fussy evenings / witching hours

- • Cause: Normal newborn behavior; overstimulation
- • Solution: Dim lights; reduce noise; soothing routine; fresh air in late afternoon

Gas discomfort after feeds

- • Cause: Swallowing air; fast feeds
- • Solution: Burp mid-feed and end-feed; slower feeding; talk to clinician if severe

When to get medical advice

Contact a clinician/health visitor/GP/pediatrician if your baby has:

- Fever, breathing difficulty, unusual lethargy
- Poor feeding or poor weight gain
- Repeated vomiting or signs of pain after feeds
- Anything that feels 'not right' to you

Safe sleep reminder: place baby on their back on a firm, flat surface with a clear sleep space.

 Created by InfyNotes | <https://infynotes.com>