



TUMMY TIME 101

Helpful tools:

- Boppy pillow or rolled towel
- Black and white toys
- Toys of various heights
- Mirror
- Wrap or carrier for baby wearing
- You!

When should you start?

It is safe to start tummy time day one as long as your baby does not have any medical concerns or injuries from birth. This doesn't mean you have to put your 1 day old baby in the floor and just let them figure it out. There are lots of ways for your newborn to get tummy time (and snuggles) in! You will see some examples in the Variations of Tummy Time Section below.

Why is it so important?

My full answer is lengthy, but in a nutshell:

#1 The Safe Sleep Campaign recommends all babies sleep on their backs to reduce risk of SIDS. Your baby will be asleep more than they are awake, which means there is sustained pressure on their soft little noggins for hours and hours. Tummy time helps counteract this pressure.

#2 Studies show that babies who participate in adequate tummy time reach motor milestones sooner than those who don't. That being said, it's not a race. However, earlier mobility = earlier exploration, which leads to lots and lots of learning, which doesn't hurt, right?



#3 Tummy time provides a different sensory experience for your baby by changing the position in which the sensory systems are working. Example: the visual system is seeing something completely different in tummy time vs. back time.

#4 Tummy time stretches out muscle groups that are shortened from being scrunched up in the womb. Even the deep neck and tongue muscles benefit which can improve feeding! It also strengthens muscles that run all along the back of the body, which are necessary for rolling, crawling, and walking.

#5 Tummy time helps counteract time spent in containers such as carseats and strollers. Same concept as #1.

How long should baby do tummy time?

My favorite answer... it depends.

A great goal to shoot for is 60 total minutes per day. This can be broken up into 5 minute increments or 30 second increments depending on what your baby tolerates and your family's schedule. You may not reach that 60 minute goal every day or it may take a few weeks to build up to it. Squeezing it in between baby napping and eating can be difficult. Give yourself grace and just be mindful of incorporating it when you can. It's also important to educate all caregivers of the baby, so that they can help you get tummy time in! Remember, there's a multitude of ways to work in tummy time. See some examples of the variations below!

Variations of tummy time



Chest supported on a high contrast blanket



Talking with Daddy



On a ball with support



On a high contrast blanket



Awake in wrap or sling



Over boppy on the couch



"Flying" on Mom's arm



Over boppy with weight through hands



At the pediatrician's office



Inclined on knees



Chest propped on pillow

These pictures span from 0 weeks to 15 weeks of age. I hope you can see that tummy time can be versatile and that you can use these positions to work it into your day. I should note that though it does not have to be the *only* position you use, “free space” tummy time on a firm surface is very important and should be incorporated daily. The other positions are a great way to sneak it in and get pressure off of baby’s noggin and provide gentle stretching and strengthening, but movement is somewhat restricted, which does not allow for as much free exploration and motor learning. The next section shows you some of my favorite toys to make tummy time fun and engaging! This is not a conclusive list, but you’ll be set up for a great start with a few of these on hand.

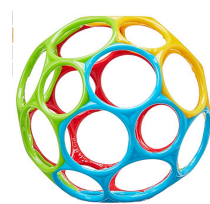
Tummy Time Book/Mirror



Crinkle Squares



O-ball



High Contrast Blocks



Play Gym



Boppy



Dangling chime toys



Fold Out Book

