

DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS

TUMMY TIME

Tummy time is an important motor experience that helps babies begin to develop purposeful, controlled, and coordinated movements of the body. Babies start by propping themselves on their forearms and gradually become strong enough to push up onto their hands. They will then begin to lift arms and legs off of the floor during tummy time and finally gain the strength to reach for toys with one hand and even begin to pivot around to reach a toy behind them.

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Positioning your baby on his or her tummy for play promotes:

- Hand-eye coordination and head/neck control
- Hand and upper extremity strength
- Strengthening of the tongue, jaw, and throat muscles
- The development of the sensory systems

Tummy Time Play Ideas

Many babies whine, cry, and even scream as soon as they are placed on their tummies. But there are ways to make Tummy Time more fun and comfortable for your baby!

- Try lying in a reclined position, resting the baby on your chest and singing or talk to him.
- Hold your baby on her tummy out in front of you on your forearms, showing her different people and things around the room.
- Lying on your back on the floor, bend your legs and place your baby on your shins, face-to-face with you. Gently sway or bounce to soothe him.
- Even though babies should never sleep with blankets or pillows in their beds, it's okay to use these things as props as long as you're always close by to supervise. Roll up a small towel or blanket and place it under your baby's chest for extra support or prop him up on a firm cushion.
- Older babies might even like trying tummy time on an exercise ball (with you holding on carefully, of course!)
- Use your baby's favorite toys, books, and rattles to keep him entertained during tummy time.
- Limit the amount of time your baby spends in a car seat, carrier, stroller, or swing.