



Tummy Time Helps Babies Develop Muscle Strength

Newborns need help to grow strong muscles. Tummy time is one of the best ways to help babies develop important muscles in their neck, shoulders and back that eventually help them sit up and roll over.



Babies spend a lot of time on their backs, whether it's sleeping or resting in a stroller or carrier. Tummy time is when you place your baby on her stomach on the floor so she can lift her head up and look around. This helps build those key muscles.

Tummy time can start when your baby is a newborn. To make tummy time comfortable for your newborn, place your baby on her tummy on your lap for a minute or two. For a 1- to 3-month-old, lay a blanket on the floor and place him on his tummy. Place books or interesting toys nearby for him to look at, and encourage your baby to lift his head by holding toys at eye level in front of him. Use toys that are soft, safe for infants and colorful to attract attention.

It's best to start practicing tummy time with a short period of time, such as a few minutes, several times a day. Gradually increase this time as the child grows and becomes stronger. Your baby should always be awake and supervised during tummy time.

Some babies do not like tummy time at first. It's a new experience and hard work. Adding time very slowly will help him adjust and become more comfortable. Songs and play can also help distract her if she's uncomfortable.

For more information about supporting a child's development, visit the [Encouraging Healthy Development section](#) of the website.