

# How to Train Toddler to Put Self Back to Sleep During the Night

By Meredith Jameson, eHow Contributor

Toddlers often have difficulty falling back asleep at night on their own.

*Toddlers who wake up during the middle of the night often get used to having a parent or caretaker help soothe them back to sleep. However, this can eventually develop into a pattern of being unable to fall back asleep on their own, which ends up robbing both the child and the adult of much needed rest. Teaching a toddler to fall back asleep on their own at night will result in more sleep for everyone.*

## Instructions

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Establish a regular bedtime routine to help your toddler understand when it is time to sleep. Put the child to bed at the same time every night and follow a regular pattern prior to bed, such as having a bath, reading books and then being put to bed.

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Provide a soothing setting for your toddler's bed, including a favorite lovey such as a stuffed animal or blanket that she finds comforting. Place a nightlight in the room so that the room will not seem scary when the child wakes during the night.

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Be calm, soothing and brief when the toddler wakes up during the night. Tell the child that it is time to sleep, give them a kiss or a hug and then leave the room. Wait at least five minutes before returning. Tell the toddler again that it is time to sleep, give them a brief kiss or hug, and leave again.

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Repeat increasing the intervals you are gone by two minutes each time. In other words, wait five minutes, seven minutes, nine minutes and so forth until you reach 15 minutes. Then continue waiting 15 minutes before returning to the room. If you remain calm and consistent, the toddler will eventually fall back asleep.

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Repeat nightly as needed until the toddler starts to fall asleep faster and cry less. It may take several nights of repeating this pattern, but most toddlers will begin to be able to self-soothe at night within a week.

## Tips & Warnings

- Be prepared for the first night of training to be the hardest. It will continue to get easier.
  - Do not attempt sleep training if the toddler is sick or if changes to the routine are imminent, such as a vacation.
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# Baby sleep: Helping baby sleep through the night

**Tired of being awake at all hours with your baby? Use these simple tips to help your baby sleep through the night.**

By Mayo Clinic staff

If you haven't had a good night's sleep since your baby was born, you're not alone. Sleepless nights are a rite of passage for most new parents — but don't despair. You can help your baby sleep all night. Honestly!

## Developing a rhythm

Newborns sleep 16 or more hours a day, but often in stretches of just a few hours at a time. Although the pattern might be erratic at first, a more consistent sleep schedule will emerge as your baby matures and can go longer between feedings.

By age 3 months, many babies sleep at least five hours at a time. By age 6 months, nighttime stretches of nine to 12 hours are possible.

## Encouraging good sleep habits

For the first few months, middle-of-the-night feedings are sure to disrupt sleep for parents and babies alike — but it's never too soon to help your baby become a good sleeper. Consider these tips:

- **Encourage activity during the day.** When your baby is awake, engage him or her by talking, singing and playing. Stimulation during the day can help promote better sleep at night.
- **Follow a consistent bedtime routine.** Try relaxing favorites such as bathing, cuddling, singing, playing quiet music or reading. Soon your baby will associate these activities with sleep.
- **Put your baby to bed drowsy, but awake.** This will help your baby associate bed with the process of falling asleep. Remember to place your baby to sleep on his or her back, and clear the crib or bassinet of blankets and other soft items.

- **Give your baby time to settle down.** Your baby might fuss or cry before finding a comfortable position and falling asleep. If the crying doesn't stop, speak to your baby calmly and stroke his or her back. Your reassuring presence might be all your baby needs to fall asleep.
- **Consider a pacifier.** If your baby has trouble settling down, a pacifier might do the trick. In fact, research suggests that using a pacifier during sleep helps reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- **Expect frequent stirring at night.** Babies often wriggle, squirm and twitch in their sleep. They can be noisy, too. Unless you suspect that your baby is hungry or uncomfortable, it's OK to wait a few minutes to see if he or she falls back asleep.
- **Keep nighttime care low-key.** When your baby needs care or feeding during the night, use dim lights, a soft voice and calm movements. This will tell your baby that it's time to sleep — not play.
- **Don't 'bed share' during sleep.** This can make it harder for your baby to fall asleep on his or her own. Bed sharing might also increase your baby's risk of SIDS. If you'd like to keep your baby close, consider placing your baby's bed in your bedroom.
- **Respect your baby's preferences.** If your baby is a night owl or an early bird, you might want to adjust routines and schedules based on these natural patterns.