WEEK 1 of Newborn Sleep Schedule

In truth, during the first week there is one goal with regards to newborn sleep... encourage your newborn to take full feeds. At one week old, of course, the baby doesn't need to be put on a type of routine yet. They are learning how to feed, sleep, and be alive!

How to keep them awake long enough to feed:

- Rub their feet and hands
- Wipe their forehead, neck, and face with a wet wipe
- Strip baby down to their diaper and un-swaddle or wrap them so they are not too warm and snug
- Burp thoroughly when you change nursing sides, or halfway through with the bottle

When you begin nursing, encourage your baby to take a full feed. This will vary depending on the baby, but it will not be 5 minutes, then falling asleep. If your baby falls asleep after only a few minutes, gently rouse them and encourage them to continue feeding. If you can get your baby to take full feeds for the first week they'll naturally rest well, both day and night.

Important Related Reads:

- 11 Quick and easy tips to help your baby sleep well (for the long run)
- Mentally Surviving the Newborn Phase
WEEK 2 of Newborn Sleep Schedule

By now you are probably well and truly exhausted. And, if your baby has their days and nights mixed up, even more so. As you keep working on giving your baby full consistent feeds (probably every 2 to 3 hours), you can also begin working on their day/night confusion. Sounds scary? It doesn't have to be!

How to clear up day and night confusion:

- During the day when baby is awake and feeding, open windows, turn on lights, and keep things very bright
- At night, 8:00 pm and later, do all feeding, hugging, cuddling, diaper changing, in very dim or dark conditions
- After feeding your baby during the day, attempt to keep them awake for at least a few minutes by singing, cooing, playing, and bonding
- If your baby seems fully awake in the middle of the night, try turning on very bright lights which will cause baby to shut their eyes (I've heard good things about this trick)
- Don't allow more time than 3 hours between feedings during the day, even if they are still sleeping. Wake them up and feed them again if they continue sleeping. You don't want a 5 hour stretch to happen during the day, you want it to happen at night
- At night, feed them whenever they wake up and are hungry, but let them determine how frequent that is
- At night, avoid stimulating, playing, cooing, singing, or any other behaviors that will encourage baby to stay awake

At this point your baby is getting the hang of the outside world and you are getting the hang of this period. Continue feeding your baby full feeds as you look forward to the next week or two when a more routine day can be expected for both you and baby.

Important Related Reads:

- [The Baby Sleeping Myth That Backfires Every Time](#)
- [Must Know Swaddling Tips for Newborns](#)
WEEK 3 of Newborn Sleep Schedule

Now that your baby is getting the hang of full feeds and has their days and nights mostly fixed, it's time to start thinking about teaching your baby to fall asleep on their own. Why worry about this so early? Here's why... because they are already doing it at this point.

Weeks old babies go to sleep on their own without much fuss easily, and if you want that to continue then now is the time to start good habits. As babies get bigger they’ll stop this and that’s when you get in a pickle. Having to jump through hoops and use newfangled vibrating equipment, washing machines, and cars to get baby to sleep.

How to get baby to go to sleep on their own:

- Do not let your little one get overtired (more on that here)
- Learn the fine art of putting your baby to sleep awake but drowsy. This means before your baby has fully conked out, but while they are yawning, doing the "eye roll" or rubbing their eyes, you can set them in their crib to do the final hard work of falling asleep on their own
- Give the baby a pacifier. This is one of the best ways to help your baby learn to calm down on their own. The pacifier also becomes a positive sleep association (here’s what sleep associations are and do) and gives your baby a way to soothe themselves into sleep. This is my preferred pacifier because it rarely falls off and by 3 months babies can hold it themselves.
- Perfect your naptime or bedtime routine (effective wind-down routines can be found here) as another positive sleep association. Songs, rocking, hugging, and patting are great ways to help baby calm down. Diaper change, lights down low (even in daytime), and white noise communicate "sleepy time."
- When baby is well fed, changed, and not overtired, simply put the baby in their own crib while they are drowsy and let them learn to fall asleep on their own. They will likely stare off into space for a time, if not fall right to sleep. This is okay. This is right!

Next, we'll talk about finding and crafting a good routine for a baby that meets all their needs in a timely way that encourages full bellies and rested babies.

Important Related Reads:

- [10 Reasons Your Baby Can't Sleep](#)
- [How to Encourage Your Baby or Toddler to Sleep In and Take Longer Naps](#)
WEEK 4 of Newborn Sleep Schedule

Now that both you and baby are good and used to one another, it's time to find a mutually beneficial routine. A routine that serves the needs of your infant for nourishment, sleep, and lots of mommy bonding. As well as a routine that allows mom to take care of herself, meet the needs of other children, and maintain a working and functioning home.

How to find a good rhythm or routine:

- Determine the average time between feeds. If your baby usually goes between 2.5 to 3 hours between feeds, create a routine based on those times.
- Start your day at a consistent time. Choose a time each morning (say, 7 a.m.) and feed the baby every single day at that time. Soon your baby will sleep until 7 and that'll be your normal start to the day.
- Write down a feasible schedule that allows 2.5 to 3 hours between feedings with nap times in between each feed. See my sample newborn routine here.
- Make sure general feeding times don't coincide with other major activities you can't change like car pickup, dinner time, or the bedtime routine of older children. Of course, you'll have to be flexible, but take these times into consideration and attempt to feed before or after those events.
- See my entire book on Routines, Rhythms & Schedules here which has 25+ routines including printables for each.
- Make sure to wake baby up to maintain your routine during the day. Don't let baby sleep for 4 hours during the day because, inevitably, she'll need to feed twice during that period at night to make up for it. At night, let the baby sleep as long as they are able between feeds. You determine day, they determine night.

If you still have questions about how to craft a routine, here are my routine archives full of practical tips age by age.

Important Related Reads:

- The Easiest Way to Get Your Baby To Sleep Later
- Is Baby Sleep Training Selfish?
- 7 Tips to Get All Your Kids to Nap at the Same Time
WEEK 5 of Newborn Sleep Schedule

The dream feed is one of the most important feeds of the day. Or night, rather. Why? Because it's what will help baby get a longer stretch of sleep through the middle of the night and it's what'll help you do the same! A dream feed is essentially a feeding you give the baby between 10:00 pm and 11:00 pm or so. It helps "top the baby off" so to speak and will hopefully allow you both an extra hour or two of uninterrupted sleep.

This feed is important because it works to fill the baby's tummy during early evening hours so they learn to sleep long stretches. It is also the last feed you'll likely drop. When you have only one nighttime feed left (and your baby is sleeping until your desired morning time) this will be that feed.

Dream Feed Basics:

- Baby will not likely wake for this feed since they'll have had a couple of feeds just a few hours earlier in the night. This means you will wake the baby, likely right before you go to sleep, and feed her.
- Babies can be historically sleepy at this feed and not drink very much. When you wake baby, do a diaper change, re-swaddle, and try to feed the baby as much as they'll take. If they nod off after a few minutes, use a wet wipe to wake them up and get them drinking again.
- If your baby won't wake up, wait 20 minutes and try again.
- Feed in a dim or dark room so baby does not associate this feed with stimulation, but simply feeds half asleep then goes back down in their crib fast asleep.
- This feed will be maintained until baby is sleeping fully through the night until morning. And I don't mean 5:00 am. I mean 6:00 am or later. You'll drop early morning feeds and be left with the dream feed. When you feel confident your baby can sleep through the entire night without milk, then you drop this feed.

This feed may be tricky to get the hang of since baby is so drowsy, but it's worth its weight in milk. Erm, gold!

Important Related Reads:

- [Wind Down Routines Guaranteed to Help Baby Sleep](#)
- [How Diapers Affect Sleep](#)
WEEK 6 of Newborn Sleep Schedule

This is one of the most important habits you can start with your baby. Why decide a morning wake time? Well... it's simple. If you feed them at a consistent time each morning, that's the time they learn to sleep until. So, if you feed your baby at 5:30 am and then start the day... their metabolisms and body clocks will get used to waking up for good at 5:30 am.

You probably want to avoid this.

How to choose a morning wake time:

- Choose a time that is suitable to your family routine and consistently feed them at this time.
- Every morning, aim to feed your baby at this time even if they've fed as soon as 1.5 hours before.
- If need be, gently rouse your baby up around 4 or 4:30 am and feed them as full a feeding as they will take, then wake them up again at the time you've determined is their "morning wake time."
- If they wake earlier than this time but are not crying for milk, cuddle, hold, play with, and rock baby until that time comes. If the baby is extremely hungry, feed baby of course. Try to get a full feed in there and then get back on routine throughout the day.
- Remember consistency is key. Your baby's body will get used to eating at a certain time and will slowly but surely start sleeping a lot closer to that time.

At this point your baby takes full feeds, has a good routine, is learning to put himself to sleep, and has established dream feeds and morning wake times. You are nearly there!

Important Related Reads:

- [Getting Baby to Sleep Well at Someone Else’s House](#)
- [Sleep Props and Sleep Associations... And Which You Should Avoid](#)