



## TUMMY TIME WORKSHOP

### SAFETY

Tummy time is a completely safe activity for your baby if the following guidelines are followed:

Always put baby to sleep on their back. For more details around safe sleeping please refer to The Lullaby Trust, [www.lullabytrust.org.uk](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk) for more information.

Tummy Time is a shared activity with a parent or carer. If you need to leave baby, even for a very small amount of time, always take them out of the tummy time position first.

Please check all toys and equipment at home for small parts or choking hazards before letting baby play with them.

Tummy Time is an enjoyable and beneficial activity so have fun!

### When to start Tummy Time?

Tummy Time can start from birth. Follow the positions given and build them up till baby is ready to be placed on the floor.

### How much time should my baby be spending on their tummy?

Healthy babies should begin with 1 - 5 minutes, 3 - 4 times a day from birth.

Build up their exposure, adding 1 minute every 3 - 4 days.

Healthy babies from 3 months plus should be aiming for 60 - 90 minutes a day. This can be in 10-minute sessions 6 - 9 times a day.

If a baby is happy in tummy time but can not change their own position yet, change it for them after 15 - 20 minutes.

### Why is tummy time important?

Tummy time is important as it allows babies to have a balanced play diet. Tummy time allows babies to move their muscles against gravity which in turn gives them strength. Tummy Time supports spine development for crawling and walking. Tummy time gives the skull a chance to develop normally and stops "flat head syndrome" Tummy time encourages sensory processing and co-ordination. Tummy time builds back, neck, tummy, and shoulder muscles, which develops head control and motor skills. Tummy time supports breathing by encouraging the diaphragm position and development. Tummy time now allows your child to be "school ready". It develops excellent posture for sitting and learning and good motor skills. Tummy time is a fantastic way to bond with your baby.

## When is the best time for Tummy Time?

Make sure you pick the best time in your baby's day for tummy time. We are looking for the calm alert stage. This is when baby is happy, they have been fed and changed and are not tired. They are open to learning and spending quality time with you. This time is different in each baby's day, so it's down to you to decide when that is. You are the expert on your own baby and will understand by reading their infant cues.

## Why should I avoid baby containers?

Baby containers such as jumperoo's, door bouncers, sit in walkers, and bumby's do NOT support your child's development. They can delay and even hinder your baby. They force a baby into unnatural positions and keep them contained, preventing their body moving against gravity. Babies' minds learn from activities so if a baby, for example, is in a door bouncer, they will learn that when their feet hit the floor they need to push upwards. When your baby tries to stand, they will think they need to push upwards, and their feet must leave the ground. What we need to encourage is a firm flat foot on the floor. Children who have spent prolonged periods in a container as a baby will often walk on tiptoes.

Instead, try to maximise time on the floor in tummy time. Use a donut or saucer cushion or a floor activity gym. You could use a playpen or travel cot to keep baby safe if you need to.

If you do decide to use a baby container the recommended time frame is 15 minutes over a 24-hour period. This should be broken down into 3 x 5-minute time frames.

## What can I do if my baby doesn't like tummy time?

My advice is to start back at the beginning. Sometimes babies can feel too exposed in a tummy time position on the floor, especially if they can't see their parent. Remember, you are your baby's activity centre. They look to you to entertain them. Everything you need for successful tummy time is already available to your baby. Start back at the newborn positions and time frames. Allow baby to feel comfortable in your arms on their tummy. Your reassuring presence will confirm to them that this is all o.k., and they can still feel safe on their tummy. Talk to them, sing to them, and make it a fun activity.

If you have any questions that you want to ask me, then feel free to drop me a message. Enjoy this activity with your little one. You can use the suggestions I have given, or you can make up your own activities. Sometimes it's the simplest things that get the biggest response from baby.

Love and Kindness,

Evelyn. x

Tummy to Mummy – lie flat with a pillow under your head. Place baby on your tummy facing you. Have FACE TIME with them. Make eye contact, smile, or sing a song. This encourages babies to lift their heads and supports communication skills.

Love whispers – whisper “I love you” in baby’s ears moving from ear to ear. Baby will look up and move their head from side to side. This supports auditory input and processing.

Here I am peek-a-boo – while baby is facing you, lying on your tummy, close your eyes and then open them saying “peek-a-boo”

Tummy to lap – Place baby across your lap. Make sure their airways are clear and arms over your leg. You can place one hand on their bottom to act as an anchor and make them feel secure.

Wake up strokes – If you have been on an infant massage journey with me then use the strokes taught to massage your baby. If not use a few simple strokes of your hand along baby’s back from shoulder to bottom. Try to avoid running your fingers along baby’s spine. This helps to send Proprioceptive messages back to the brain. The proprioceptive system is in our muscles and joints. It provides us with body awareness and detects and controls body force and pressure.

Gentle Bounce – Lift one leg and then the other off the ground. This introduces vestibular input (balance) You could sing See-saw Marjory daw.

Tummy time on a bed – Take the duvet off the bed so baby is lying on the mattress. Ensure airways are clear and baby’s arms are over the side of the bed. Sit in front of baby on the floor so you are face to face. Talk to baby and sing songs.

Tummy time in the nude – Let baby have some naked time on a soft blanket. You can put a waterproof mat or bamboo cotton nappy under their bottom area. This helps their tactile system to develop. Make sure the room is warm and check baby every minute or so to make sure they aren’t getting cold.

Tigers walk and talk – use the tiger hold demonstrated and walk around the house or garden talking to baby about the things they can see and hear. Remember to switch baby to the other arm so they get the stretch on both sides of their neck. Also, a fantastic position to ease colic or tummy pain.

2 - 4 weeks

Aeroplane – Sit on the floor with your knees raised. Place baby on your thighs with their head over your knees. Encourage baby’s arms forward for early propping and weight bearing. Use scarves and ribbons to sway in front of baby. Great for tracking and ocular motor skills. You can place board books or a picture in a frame on a low table or chair for baby to look at. Go for contrasting or bright colours. This helps their visual and visual perceptual skills.

Rolled up blanket – use a rolled-up blanket to support baby under their arms, you can make a cocoon around them to feel safe. Sit in front of baby and play with scarves, rain makers, or even do a puppet show!

2 - 3 Months

Rolled up blanket – use the same technique as before. As baby gets older and gains strength then you can slowly start to unroll the blanket, so they are relying on their own body weight and strength more. You can use all the above suggestions and add in some more of your own. You can use fairy lights under a muslin, so they twinkle. Keep the face contact with baby and lie on the floor with them.

Gym ball – Place baby with their tummy on the gym ball. Place your hands either side of baby's body so you are always supporting them and keeping them safe. Gently roll baby on the ball backwards and forwards. Don't overextend as this in turns put pressure on the spine. You could sing Row, Row, Row your boat. This is a great position for providing vestibular input to the brain.

Tummy down football hold – Place baby over your forearm with their tummy down and face towards your wrist and you hand cupping their jaw. Do not cover baby's face with your hand or put pressure on their throat. Try this position in front of the mirror and allow baby to see them and you. You could always sing Twinkle, Twinkle little star.

### 3 - 4 Months

Mirror time – Place baby in front of a full-length mirror or prop a mirror up in a horizontal position on the floor. This can be fun if you have more than one baby. You can lie next to baby and allow them to see you both together.

Tissue paper – Lay baby on their tummy on some tissue or wrapping paper. Let them explore the textures and sound of the paper. Keep an eye on any small pieces of paper that can be hidden in small hands.

Two headed Cobra pose – Both you and baby lie on the floor and face each other. Lift you body up by pushing through your arms. This will encourage baby to do the same. You can also play Peek-a-boo this way and helps baby to understand you are still their even when they can't see you.

Gym ball – It's the same premise as before, only a slightly different hold. Place one hand on baby's back and gently roll them back and forth, careful not to overextend. This is a more challenging position and baby will tire from a full workout. You can place something in front of baby on a sofa, for example, which encourages baby to reach out. This gives their limbs a full workout against gravity and informs their brain which part of their body is the base of support.

Leg time – Have baby across you knee as before but put a basket of toys nest to your leg so it's underneath their face. Allow baby to explore the content of the basket.

This is a great age to introduce sensory play. You can use water mats, homemade sensory bottles, sensory bags, and musical instruments. Have fun discovering what you baby likes.

### 5 - 6 Months

By now your baby should be confident on their tummy. Keep changing activities for them to do to keep it exciting. You can blow bubbles and explore shadow puppets. You could use a muffin tray and have a different item in each hole. You could make a nature box with shells, leaves, a pinecone, and natural sponge. Allow baby to practice leg and arm movements needed for crawling. Have tummy time with friends or pop baby in a very shallow bath and support their head under the chin so it raised out of the water. This can build the muscles up even more as they are working against the water.