

A calmer bedtime starts here

Good Nights

Five evidence-informed methods. One clear 7-night plan. Practical steps for babies around 6 months and up.

A note before you begin

For every tired parent.

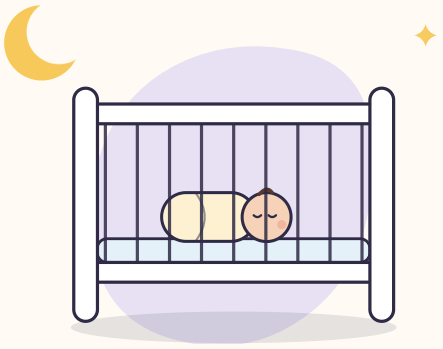
If you're reading this at 3 a.m., we see you. Months of broken sleep is one of the hardest parts of parenting a young baby, and it affects everything: your mood, your patience, your health, and your relationships.

You may also be feeling torn. You want your baby to sleep, but you've heard that sleep training is harmful, or you're not sure you could stand to hear them cry. Those feelings are completely valid.

This guide gives you the research, honestly, including the debate. Then it gives you five methods, from very gentle to faster, so you can choose what fits your baby and your values. There's no single right way, and you don't have to leave your baby alone to cry to improve sleep.

Better nights are possible. Let's get you there.

Wanting more sleep does not make you less responsive. It means your family needs a workable plan.





What the research says

Behavioral sleep interventions have been evaluated in controlled trials and long-term follow-up. The evidence is useful, but it is not perfect.

What the research says

20 to 30%

of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers have significant bedtime problems or night wakings. You are far from alone.

Mindell and colleagues, Sleep, 2006

What the research says

Most studied methods helped

Reviews report improvement for many families, but studies use different methods and outcome measures. No approach works for every baby.

American Academy of Sleep Medicine review, Sleep, 2006

What the research says

No detected harm at age 6

A randomized trial followed 326 children for five years and did not detect differences in emotional or behavioral problems, stress, or the parent-child relationship.

Price and colleagues, Pediatrics, 2012

What the research says

Gentle works too

In a 2016 randomized trial, both graduated extinction and gentler bedtime fading helped babies fall asleep faster, with no adverse effects on stress or attachment a year later.

Gradisar and colleagues, Pediatrics, 2016

What this means for you

In the populations studied, behavioral methods improved sleep for many families and did not show long-term harm. Safe sleep, feeding needs, health, and your family's comfort still come first.

What's inside

1 **Understanding baby sleep** 7
Sleep needs, night wakings, and readiness.

2 **Set up for success** 13
Safe sleep, environment, routine, timing, and feeds.

3 **Choose your method** 20
Five methods, from gentle to faster.

4 **The 7-night plan** 29
Night by night, with a sleep log.

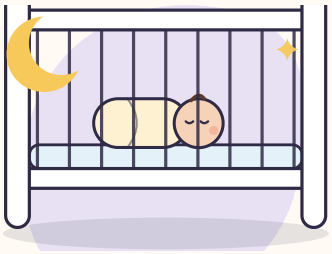
5 **Naps** 36
Schedules, nap training, and short naps.

6 **Troubleshooting** 40
Early waking, regressions, travel, and getting help.

\+ **Printables** 47
Our plan, sleep logs, and sources.

Need a plan tonight?

- What the research says
- The bedtime routine
- Comparing the methods
- Night by night



Part 2 5-min read

The bedtime routine



The same steps, in the same order, tell your baby's brain that sleep is coming.

What the research says

Routines help

In a randomized study, introducing a consistent nightly bedtime routine improved young children's sleep and mothers' mood within weeks.

Mindell and colleagues, Sleep, 2009

A simple 20 to 30 minute routine

1. **Feed.**
   Start here, in a lit room, so feeding and falling asleep become separate steps.
2. **Bath or wash.**
   A bath doesn't have to be every night. A warm washcloth works too.
3. **Pajamas and sleep sack.**
   Dim the lights and turn on the white noise.
4. **Books and a song.**
   Same ones, same order, most nights.
5. **Into the crib, awake.**
   Say your goodnight phrase and follow your chosen method.

Your goodnight phrase

Goodnight, sweetheart. I love you. Time for sleep.

Part 3 Method

Bedtime fading

The gentlest approach. You temporarily move bedtime to when your baby naturally falls asleep, then gradually move it earlier.

1. **Track for a few nights.**
   Note what time your baby actually falls asleep, however long it takes.

2. **Set a temporary bedtime.**
   Start the routine so your baby goes into the crib around that natural sleep time.

3. **Keep it short.**
   If your baby isn't asleep within about 15 to 20 minutes, take them out briefly, then try again.

4. **Move earlier gradually.**
   Once they fall asleep quickly for a couple of nights, move bedtime 15 minutes earlier, until you reach your goal.

Tips

Keep wake-up time fixed every morning. That's what makes the new bedtime work.

Good to know

Bedtime fading helps with falling asleep, but may not reduce night wakings on its own.

What the research says

Faster sleep onset

In the 2016 trial, babies in the bedtime fading group fell asleep significantly faster than controls, with no adverse effects on stress or attachment.

Gradisar and colleagues, Pediatrics, 2016