

FIRST TIME MUM DIARIES

FREE NEWBORN SLEEP GUIDE

From Arms to Bassinet

The gentle 3-step plan for when your newborn only sleeps in your arms and wakes the second you put them down.



Inside: **safe sleep basics** · **tired signs** · **awake times by week** · **the 3-step transfer** · **what to do if they wake**

First, you're not doing anything wrong

Newborns have spent nine months being held, rocked and kept warm. Wanting your arms is completely normal. The aim isn't to stop cuddles. It's to help your baby learn that the bassinet is a safe, cosy place too, so you can rest.



Safe sleep, every sleep (Red Nose)

- ✓ Always put baby on their **back** to sleep
- ✓ Keep their **head and face uncovered**: no hats or beanies in bed
- ✓ A **firm, flat mattress** and fitted sheet, with nothing else in the bassinet: no pillows, bumpers, toys or loose blankets
- ✓ Keep baby **smoke-free**, before and after birth
- ✓ Sleep baby in their **own safe space in your room** for the first 6 to 12 months
- ✓ Breastfeed if you can

Spot the tired signs early

Most "failed" transfers start with an overtired baby. Start settling at the **first** tired signs, before the crying starts.



Yawning



Rubbing eyes



Clenched fists, jerky arms, frowning



Staring or turning away

How long can they stay awake?

Newborns sleep about 14 to 17 hours a day, in short stretches. These are rough guides only. Your baby's tired signs always win.

Age	Usual awake time (including the feed)
0 to 4 weeks	45 to 60 minutes
4 to 8 weeks	about 60 to 75 minutes
8 to 12 weeks	about 75 to 90 minutes

The 3-step transfer



1. Wait for deep sleep

Give it 10 to 20 minutes after they drift off. Look for floppy arms, a relaxed face and slow, even breathing. Put down too soon and they'll wake.



2. Bottom first, then head

Lower them slowly and keep your body close as you go. Laying the head down first can trigger the startle reflex.



3. Hands on, then slowly off

Keep a gentle hand on their chest for a minute or two. Add rhythmic patting and a soft "shhh". Lift your hand away slowly.

Wrapping helps calm the startle reflex. Wrap firmly but not tightly, so their hips can bend and their chest can move, and stop wrapping as soon as your baby shows signs of rolling.

If they wake up straight away

This happens to everyone, often many times a night at first. Here's what to try, in order.

Try this

- ✓ **Pause for a moment.** Newborns are noisy sleepers. Grunts and stirs don't always mean awake.
- ✓ **Settle in the bassinet first:** hand on chest, pat and shush for 5 to 10 minutes.
- ✓ **Still crying?** Pick them up, calm them fully, then try the 3 steps again.
- ✓ **Feed if hungry.** Newborns feed often, around 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.
- ✓ **Practise in the day.** Try one nap a day in the bassinet, drowsy but awake.

Quick checks

- ✓ **Hungry?** Look for rooting and sucking on hands.
- ✓ **Wind?** Burp them before you start settling.
- ✓ **Too hot or cold?** Feel their chest or back, not their hands.
- ✓ **Overtired?** Start earlier at the next sleep.
- ✓ **Startling?** A safe wrap can help.

Look after you too. If you feel yourself nodding off while holding your baby, put them on their back in the bassinet. Never fall asleep with your baby on a sofa or armchair. If the crying gets too much, put your baby down safely, step away for a few minutes and breathe. Never shake a baby.

When to get help

If...	Do this
Trouble breathing, blue or very pale, floppy, or hard to wake	Call 000
Under 3 months with a temperature of 38°C or more	See a doctor urgently
Feeding poorly, fewer wet nappies, or a cry that sounds different	See your GP or call 1800 882 436 (Pregnancy, Birth and Baby, 24/7)
Struggling with sleep, settling or your own mood	Your child health nurse, Tresillian 1300 272 736, Karitane 1300 227 464, or PANDA 1300 726 306

This guide is general information only, not medical advice. Every baby is different. Always follow the advice of your midwife, GP or child health nurse. Safe sleep information is based on Red Nose Australia's safe sleep recommendations (rednose.org.au). © First Time Mum Diaries.