



# Why is it harder to sleep at this time?

At bedtime everything is working in your baby's favour to fall asleep - It's dark, their body temperature has dropped, melatonin levels are rising and sleep pressure has been building throughout the day to make it easier to drop off.

The first half of the night - typically from 7pm through to midnight - is categorised by deep sleep - that means lots of babies are less likely to wake and will have their longest stretch of sleep during this time. If they do wake up you might notice they can fall back to sleep quite quickly (this could be assisted or by themselves.)

Then things start to change because the second half of the night is categorised by a lighter stage of sleep - that means it's easier to wake up and harder to fall back to sleep unless the conditions are right.

By 4.30am melatonin levels are decreasing rapidly and cortisol levels are rising.

Now I know we all think of cortisol as a stress hormone but it's also the hormone that helps us to wake up naturally in the morning, peaking at 8.30am when most of us will feel our most alert (if we haven't been up since 5am that is!)

So at 5am when your baby wakes up, they might need more sleep but there are lots of factors making it harder for them to drift back off.

And surprise surprise you get caught in a bit of a catch 22 - with a baby who regularly wakes up early, can't go back to sleep and struggles to remain happy and awake during the day.

So let's troubleshoot what might be going on? Remember It can take 1-2 weeks to turn those early morning wake ups around so commit to the changes and be patient!

## Early Morning Wake Ups

Early morning wake ups are typically any wake ups that happen between 4.30am - 6am.

Any earlier than 4.30am and this is really a night time wake up. And after 6am? Well your baby is just waking up to start the day and although you might like the idea of a 7am start this is a normal biological wake up time for lots of babies.

# REASONS

## 01 | LIGHT

- Light tells the body clock it's time to start the day. It also stimulates the brain which makes it much harder to fall back to sleep when we have woken from a very light sleep
- **Use blackout blinds to make it as dark as possible until at least 6am. I'm talking 8/9 out of 10 dark**

## 02 | COMFORT

- We all sleep better when we are comfortable, not too hot or cold.
- **Use my temperature infographic on instagram to gauge what to dress your baby in for a comfy night sleep**
- **If your baby is having multiple night feeds consider a nappy change after 1 of those feeds so your baby isn't waking with a sodden nappy at 5am (or go up 1 nappy size for nights)**

## 03 | OVERTIRED

- When you are really tired your body produces cortisol to help you stay awake. When babies are overtired from lots of short naps AND/ OR late bedtimes it can cause those early morning wake ups.
- Why? Remember cortisol levels naturally rise from about 2am to help us wake up in the morning - if your baby goes to bed with a higher base level of cortisol then their cortisol levels are also going to be higher than they should be at 5am, making it easier to wake up and start the day.
- **Don't be afraid to bring bedtime forward if your baby has a day of short naps, seems tired or normally has a late bedtime**
- **Best case scenario an earlier bedtime means your baby wakes later in the AM**
- **Worst case scenario they wake at their normal time in the AM but got some extra sleep during first part of night**

## 04 | FIRST NAP TOO EARLY AND LONG

- A morning nap that is too early and too long actually reinforces the early morning wake up as the body clock starts to recognise that nap as a continuation of night time sleep - i.e. the body clock thinks 'why would I need to sleep in closer to 6.30/7am when I have this nice long nap at 8am around the corner?!'
- **Try to get closer to 9am for the first nap even if it means your baby is grizzly during this time for 2-3 days. The older your baby is the easier you will find it.**
- **If your baby is 6 months or under and clearly not going to make it do a short power nap to get them through to first nap time and keep the day on track.**

# REASONS

## 05 | REINFORCING

- If your baby wakes up early and you get them straight up what do you think happens? It reinforces that early morning wake and tells the body clock this is the start of the day. And this cycle will continue!
- **Opt to resettle your baby instead - that means keeping your baby in their room, in the dark and using the normal way they fall until as close to your desired wake up time as possible before getting your baby up if they didn't go back to sleep.**
- **Remember it's very normal that it could take 30mins to fall back to sleep at this time so don't give up if it's been 5 minutes!**

## 06 | TOO MUCH DAY SLEEP

- You can only sleep so much in a 24 hour period so if you want your baby to sleep 11-12 hours at night you need to ensure their daytime sleep isn't stealing from their night time sleep allocation.

### **My routines usually recommend**

- **5-6 Months: 3-3.5 hours day sleep**
- **7-9 Months: 2.5 - 3 hours day sleep**
- **10-12 Months: 2.5 hours day sleep**
- **12-18 Months 2- 2.5 hours day sleep**
- **18 - 24 months: 2 hours day sleep**

## 07 | HUNGER

- Lots of babies will need 1 night feed until 6-9 months but many will continue to have a feed around 4.30/5am long past 9 months (even if they didn't wake from hunger) they aren't likely to refuse it!
- **To rule out hunger try to ensure you focus on full milk feeds during the day and if your baby is easily distracted make sure you are phone or screen free and you are in the most boring environment possible!**
- **Opt for 3 hourly feeds instead of 4 to get additional calories in during the day or add 1-2oz to each daytime bottle**
- **Start introducing solids post 6 months**
- **Just remember If you're happy to feed your baby at this time in the morning and they go back to sleep, go for it!**

# REASONS

## 08 | YOUR BABY CAN'T FALL ASLEEP INDEPENDENTLY

- If your baby can't fall asleep independently at bedtime then they aren't going to be able to fall back to sleep by themselves if they wake up around 5am and could do with a few extra hours of sleep.
  - That means you will need to help them fall back to sleep at this time by giving them their normal sleep association - that might be the dummy, rocking, feeding, patting etc.
  - You might think, what's wrong with that? Nothing if it works and you are happy to keep getting up to give them a helping hand back to sleep.
  - But the tricky thing is that as babies get older and they become more alert, our presence can actually be overstimulating and it can take longer and longer to get our babies back to sleep if they wake or they don't fall back to sleep at all!
- The best way around this is to teach your baby to fall asleep at bedtime and use the same settling strategy to encourage your baby to fall back to sleep by themselves when they wake up in the night and aren't due a feed.
  - Babies who can fall asleep independently tend to wake less frequently at night, and if they do it's no big deal because once they are confident with this skill they will be able to put themselves back to sleep without your intervention.
  - Teaching this skill isn't scary and as my clients often tell me it can feel really empowering - but to have this experience you do need the right settling technique for your baby and the confidence to know how to use it in every scenario.
  - Independent sleep skills are a huge part of my age appropriate workshops so if you want your baby to learn this is the best place to start.
  - All of my workshops include email support so if you run into any issues, or just need the confidence to get going you can reach out to me.

## SLEEP WORKSHOPS

### 4-6 MONTH SLEEP WORKSHOP | £39

4 hours of content split of 12 videos to watch in your own time. We'll look at everything from sleep environment, age appropriate routines, teaching independent sleep (including 3 techniques) and gradually dropping night feeds. This workshop includes a troubleshooting section as well as email support to help with common night & nap issues

### 6-12 MONTH SLEEP WORKSHOP | £39

3 hours of content split of 12 videos to watch in your own time. We'll look at everything from sleep environment, age appropriate routines, teaching independent sleep to dropping night feeds. This workshop includes a troubleshooting section as well as email support to help with common night & nap issues

# WANT MORE HELP?

There is an overwhelming amount of sleep advice out there and yet most of the parents I speak to have really struggled to change their child's sleep. I'm honestly not surprised because so much of it is conflicting!

I work with families on a 1-1 basis to help identify

- Why your baby is having difficulties sleeping
- What you need to change
- How to do it in a way that suits your baby's temperament and supports your parenting style

I'm then on hand to support you through the process, tweaking your baby's sleep plan day to day based on how they respond, guiding and giving you the confidence to try new things.

## 1-1 SUPPORT OPTIONS

### SLEEP SUPPORT CALL | £120

Detailed questionnaire, 1.5 hour recorded video call, individual sleep plan and routine

### CONSULTATION WITH 3 DAYS FOLLOW UP SUPPORT | £230

Detailed questionnaire, 1.5 hour recorded video call, individual sleep plan and routine, 3 days whatsapp support from 7am - 7pm, instant reply bedtime support on night 1

### CONSULTATION WITH 2 WEEKS FOLLOW UP SUPPORT | £350

Detailed questionnaire, 1.5 hour recorded video call, individual sleep plan and routine, 2 weeks whatsapp support from 7am - 7pm, instant reply bedtime support on night 1

## REACH OUT FOR A CHAT :)

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