

Wake Window Quick-Reference Card

Age-appropriate wake windows to prevent over- and under-tiredness

Wake windows are the stretches of awake time between sleeps. Getting these right is the single biggest lever for easier naps and faster bedtime settling. Too long and your baby is overtired (wired, fussy, fights sleep). Too short and they're not tired enough (short naps, bedtime battles).

| AGE | WAKE WINDOW | NAPS/DAY | TOTAL DAYTIME SLEEP | NIGHT SLEEP | SIGNS OF TIREDNESS |
|--------------|-------------|----------|---------------------|-------------|--|
| 0-4 weeks | 45-60 min | 6-8 | 8-9 hours | 8-9 hours | Staring, jerky movements, fussing |
| 4-8 weeks | 60-75 min | 5-6 | 7-8 hours | 8-9 hours | Yawning, turning away from stimulation |
| 2 months | 60-90 min | 4-5 | 6-7 hours | 9-10 hours | Eye rubbing, fussiness, zoning out |
| 3 months | 75-120 min | 4-5 | 5-6 hours | 10-11 hours | Decreased activity, clingy, whining |
| 4 months | 90-120 min | 3-4 | 4-5 hours | 10-12 hours | Rubbing eyes/ears, arching back |
| 5-6 months | 2-2.5 hours | 3 | 3.5-4.5 hours | 10-12 hours | Pulling ears, burying face, crankiness |
| 7-8 months | 2.5-3 hours | 2-3 | 3-4 hours | 10-12 hours | Clumsiness, losing interest in play |
| 9-10 months | 3-3.5 hours | 2 | 2.5-3.5 hours | 10-12 hours | Demanding to be held, rubbing eyes |
| 11-12 months | 3-4 hours | 2 | 2-3 hours | 10-12 hours | Fussy, irritable, uncoordinated |

MORNING VS. EVENING

Wake windows tend to be shorter in the morning and longer before bed. A baby who wakes at 7am might need a nap by 8:15am, but their last wake window before bed could be 30-45 minutes longer than average for their age.

How to Use Wake Windows

- 1 Note the time your baby wakes from their last sleep (nap or morning wake-up).
- 2 Set a soft alarm for the START of their wake window range.
- 3 At that point, start watching for tired cues. Don't wait for a yawn — earlier signs like staring and turning away count.
- 4 Begin your pre-sleep routine when you see the first cue, or at the END of the wake window range, whichever comes first.
- 5 Track what worked. If they fell asleep easily, that wake window was right. If they fought it for 20+ minutes, try extending by 10-15 minutes next time.

IMPORTANT

These are guidelines, not rules. Some babies consistently run shorter or longer than average. Track your own baby's patterns for 3-5 days and adjust from there. The best wake window is the one that results in your baby falling asleep within 10-15 minutes without a meltdown.

Common Wake Window Mistakes

Undertired Signs

- ✓ Playing happily in the crib
- ✓ Taking 30+ minutes to fall asleep
- ✓ Short naps (under 30 minutes)
- ✓ Not fussing — just awake
- ✓ Babbling/rolling instead of sleeping

Overtired Signs

- ✗ Hysterical crying at sleep time
- ✗ Falls asleep in under 5 minutes
- ✗ Wakes 30-45 minutes later screaming
- ✗ Frequent night wakes
- ✗ Early morning waking (before 6am)