



3 GENTLE APPROACHES TO FALSE STARTS AT BEDTIME

Nurturing Touch Holistic Sleep Coach

1. *Total Amount of Sleep in a 24hr Period*

Our understanding of how much sleep our babies should be having, comes from large studies that have investigated sleep totals in a 24hr period by age.

Although you might be surprised to hear that there are very few studies examining daytime naps and how long a baby should be awake for. Any information you come across about napping times and awake windows is purely based on general observation and varied clinical experience.

So when I support families I base my gentle approach on how much sleep a baby needs within a 24hr period by age. Keep in mind that these 24hr totals can vary between babies approximately the same age i.e. some babies are on the lighter side of these totals while others are on the heavier sleep needs side of these totals.

Total Amount of sleep in 24hrs by age

0-3mths	14hrs-17hrs
3-5mths	13hrs-15hrs
5-7mths	12hrs-14hrs
7-9mths	12hrs-14hrs
9-12mths	11hrs-14hrs
12-18mths	11hrs-14hrs

**** This includes wake ups overnight for feeding & resettle back to sleep****

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2. *Mid Afternoon Nap & Awake Times*

For our bodies to take the sleep we naturally need, we require something called "sleep pressure" to be high enough to induce sleep. This is a hormone that builds up in our bodies the longer we are awake & babies sleep pressure will build quicker than for an adult. Therefore this is the sole purpose of naps, to reduce the rising sleep pressure and allows their bodies to rest.

As our babies get to around 7-9mths (can be as early as 7mths) of age their overall sleep needs can start to change again & they require a longer period of awake time before bedtime, for sleep pressure to be high enough to take the first block of sleep at night. So that mid afternoon nap that was working really well, might actually be taking the edge of the raising sleep pressure and then your baby is not tired enough at the usual bedtime. This presents like wake ups within 45mins after going to bed &/or multiple wake ups before midnight.

My suggestions are:

- Rearrange the daytime naps so they are not morning heavy & your little one isn't exhausted early in the evening i.e. an early bedtime of 5pm-6pm.
- Space the day naps evenly over the day so that the last nap of the day isn't too late in the afternoon.
- Consider the last awake time of the day to be the longest but not to the point where your little one is absolutely wrecked.
- If your little one is wide awake (like they have taken a nap in the day) after going down for the night you can try:
 1. Just get them back up again, keep things low key, quiet play & try again in 1-2hrs.
 2. Push your scheduled bedtime a little later to allow for the sleep pressure to rise high enough i.e. from 7pm to closer to 8pm and observe behaviour for changes in tired cues.



3. Later Bedtime

Many popular parenting books, blogs & social media have parents thinking that the magical bedtime for your baby is 7pm. Well this is simply not the case for all babies and if this is you, read on.

Many parents I support have experienced "False Starts" or multiple wake ups after a bedtime of 6pm or 7pm & are confused as to why this is happening. There are reasons why this occurs and it's all do with sleep needs changing, evolving sleep pressure and child development.

There are practical reasons why this occurs:

- Naps are morning heavy and not evenly spaced throughout the day
- Naps are too close to bedtime i.e. mid afternoon naps
- Not enough time for their evolving sleep pressure needs, to build high enough to take a larger block of sleep, instead they nap at bedtime.
- Time awake in the day has lengthened without us realising it and we can confuse those tired cues with "I'm bored" cues.

Another point to highlight here is that generally babies from 3mths old onwards, only require approx. 9-11hrs of overnight sleep in that 24hr period well into toddlerhood.

Case Study Example:

A baby who is about 7mths of age
Naturally wakes at 6am

If you count back 10hrs from 6am you get a bedtime of about 8pm.

If you are trying for a bedtime of 6:30pm-7pm and you get a false start, it could be that their sleep pressure is not high enough for an early bedtime.

Now you could try to rearrange the opportunities to nap in the day more evenly. Drop any mid/late afternoon naps, as they could be interrupting the naturally rising sleep pressure & push bedtime out a little too closer to 8pm.



Thank You...

Congratulations! You now have some fantastic tools and strategies to try with your baby.

What's next? Start your plan today on how you are going to incorporate what you have learned from this guide in addressing "False Starts" at bedtime for your baby.

Need more support? Every baby will respond differently and you might like to have more guidance on this or on other aspects of your baby's sleep. I can work privately with you! Go to my website for further details.

www.nurturingtouch.co.nz

I'm social! Follow me on social media for further freebies, updates or upcoming courses. Check out my website where you can review my qualifications, blogs, services & client reviews.

*Approach Sleep with a Nurturing
Touch
Sleep Well, Karla*

