* **Routine (Rhythm) – up to 12 weeks**
* your baby’s current rhythm is an awake-time of approximately 45 minutes to a maximum of 1-½ hours. By the time he is 12 weeks old he will be awake for approximately 1½ hours and then by 6 months approximately 2 hours, maybe longer. Some 6-month-old babies can stretch out to 2½ to 3 hours – this all depends on the individual baby and also how he is feeding.

your baby’s naptime currently is approximately 1½ hours but can be longer. It is your baby’s sleep rhythm that indicates how often he feeds because once he is awake then it is feed time. As a baby grows they can learn to wait for food; however, a baby under 12 weeks needs food within a few minutes of waking. Babies feed better once they have had a good sleep i.e. awake for 1¼ hours, napping for 1½ hours = feeding every 2¾ hours.

* **Swaddling**
* This is your baby’s first sleep cue. Although he may not be too keen on some of the swaddling techniques you have tried, you may find that he will love the ‘snow angel’ swaddle (please refer to my website). This works for the majority of babies who find the other ways of swaddling uncomfortable.

Otherwise, if not swaddling, then I would recommend you use a sleeping bag as their first sleep cue.

* **SELF-SETTLING TOOLS**
* The ‘Engulf’ Hold
* Cupping and patting
* Shushing
* **The ‘Engulf’ Hold**
* As its name suggests, this hold provides as much body contact as possible, giving your baby the sense of being completely contained as if in the womb.
* It positions your baby in such a way that you can initiate other settling techniques simultaneously. In addition, it provides warmth, intimacy and the meditative beat of your heart.
* Most mothers/fathers prefer using their dominant arm to support the baby’s body from underneath. Choose whichever side feels most natural to you.
* Hold your baby so that his head is resting on the upper region of your non-dominant arm. For mothers, this ensures that their baby is not too close to their breast where he could be easily distracted by being close to their milk supply.
* Draw your baby in close so that you are pressed tummy to tummy with his face nestled just below the top of your shoulder. Your palm will be on your baby’s bottom with his legs tucked up into your body and supported by your forearm.
* With your non-dominant arm, reach around your baby’s shoulder and take hold of his arm to steady it, in other words to control the startle movement.
* For this technique to be effective, there should be no eye contact or communication between you and your baby. Allow your own body to do the nurturing.
* **Cupping and Patting**
* Cupping is a stronger action and is done with a cupped palm, incorporating both cupping and a short but gentle thrust forward of baby’s body.
* Patting or cupping your baby’s bottom or lower body mimics your baby’s heartbeat and reassures your baby of your presence.
* Patting is a rhythmic, firm and repetitive action done with your palm flat.
* Both patting and cupping can be done in your arms or adapted for the cot.
* **Shushing**
* Shushing is a long, low sound, resembling air being released from a tyre. It should be loud enough so that your baby can hear it over her crying.  It is thought that babies respond to shushing because it is similar to the sound in the womb.
* **Dummies (optional)**
* If you allow your baby to wind down before offering a dummy, it becomes a settling tool rather than a prop.

**Props**  
Babies do not need to be rocked or walked around the block to encourage them to sleep. While movement may seem an obvious method to help soothe a baby to sleep, it becomes the hardest habit to break and interferes with self-settling. It is an unnecessarily labour-intensive approach that often delivers little reward.

Instead, imagine that your body takes the place of the cot in which baby will eventually sleep independently; it makes sense that you remain stationary when settling him.

All props, including music, white noise, movement that cannot be done in a cot, dummies (when given straight away to a baby) create bad habits and interfere with a baby’s ability to learn self-settling.

* **Sleep, settling and resettling**
* **“Allowing your baby to sleep in your arms is not a cop out. On the contrary, it instills a sense of security that makes them feel nurtured and ready for sleep”.**
* **Sleep, Settling and Resettling in the First Twelve Weeks**
* Much of your baby’s first 3 months is spent establishing feeding and sleeping rhythms. His digestive system is still maturing and his sleep patterns are still evolving.
* In the first 12 weeks your aim is to teach your baby, in a nurturing way, how to settle and find sleep unaided and how to stay asleep.
* How your baby’s sleep patterns evolve in the first 12 weeks will much depend on you and your household. Keep in mind that daytime rhythms will affect the night rhythms.
* This routine is repeated throughout the day and night. With time, the amount of assistance with settling should decrease and eventually your baby will learn how to self-settle. Once your baby learns how to settle and resettle, he will eventually be able to sleep anywhere.

You can’t spoil a baby at this age; they need lots of nurturing and reassurance.

Teaching good sleep habits requires **TIME, ACCEPTANCE, CONSISTENCY** and **TRANQUILITY (TACT**).

* **Self-Settling**
* I believe one of the most important skills that parents can teach babies is that of self-settling. It teaches babies how to gain control over their emotional state and this in turn leads to them developing their emotional backbone as they grow. It does not happen overnight and needs to be taught in a nurturing way.
* When you go to bed you read a book, meditate, watch TV, or chat with your partner – a baby can only do one thing and that is cry. There is nothing unhealthy about a baby crying before going to sleep. As a parent, it can be difficult to listen to but as long your baby is happy and contented generally, crying is just part of life. Remember you are not leaving him there to cry it out; you are leaving him there to give him the ability to find his own sleep. You will not get anywhere by leaving your baby to cry for hours. You will succeed quicker by giving him space and then helping him find his sleep.
* Self-settling is the key to establishing healthy sleep patterns. It gently teaches babies how to find sleep naturally, without the use of sleep aids, props or interference.
* It is that small window that occurs when your baby starts crying until the moment you intervene to help him find his sleep. This window initially may be for only a minute or two but as baby grows it increases until eventually he will be able to find sleep independently. It is a crucial step in Baby’s sleep development.
* **Self-settling does NOT involve leaving your baby to cry it out alone to finally fall asleep due to stress and exhaustion.**
* **Resettling**
* This is how to get your baby to sleep and to enable them to stay asleep.
* Resettling teaches babies how to progress from light to heavy sleep. This is essential to avoid the pitfalls of frequent waking and catnapping. In a sense, resettling is the second stage of teaching baby how to find sleep and does demand more time and patience than settling (TACT).
* Most babies stir or wake when progressing from light to heavy sleep and this occurs anywhere between 20-45 minutes. In the beginning the idea is not to let your baby wake fully during this transition; a sleepy baby is easier to resettle than a wide-awake, crying baby.
* However, as he grows you will need to step back and allow your baby the ability to try and resettle without any intervention. When you do this you will use your settling cycles.
* Generally a baby who does not learn how to resettle will have short sleep cycles and wake during the night without the ability to fall back asleep on his own. The aim of resettling is to ensure your baby sleeps for not less than 1½ hours per sleep rhythm.

**Resettling and Feeding**

* Many mothers opt for feeding as a way to resettle their baby. This is an example of what appears to be the easy way becoming the more difficult option, as the result is a sleep-deprived baby who is more problematic to settle. More often than not the baby is not hungry but is instead seeking comfort through sucking. They are feeding for comfort, not hunger. So instead of feeding, try offering a dummy or finger.
* **Settling in Arms or Cot Settling?**
* Many mothers find settling in arms easier than cot settling and enjoy the contact and intimacy. I tend to refer to this as ‘attachment parenting’ or ‘4th trimester’. For some households cot settling is more practical.
* Whether you choose to settle your baby in your arms or in the cot, it is vital that all babies begin their sleep cycle by being placed in their cot while still awake. This gives them the opportunity to familiarize themselves with what will soon become their primary sleeping place.
* In the first 12 weeks, whichever you choose, it is important that when your baby cries you respond immediately. At this young age, do not let him cry himselfself to sleep alone. It is not healthy for a young baby.
* Place your baby in his cot while still awake.
* Leave the room – dump and run, and don't hover like a helicopter.
* When your baby cries, respond immediately by going in to his room (this may be immediately or can take up to a minute)

You then have the following options based upon whether you choose to settle your baby in your arms or in a cot:

**Settling in Arms**

* Pick your baby up and remain calm while still allowing your body and mind to nurture your baby. Think of this as your body being their bed.
* **Sit down in a quiet place and ‘ride the storm’.**
* Initially, hold your baby in the Engulf Hold. There should be no rocking, cupping/patting, shushing, talking or eye contact.
* The following times are guidelines it will depend on how baby responds and your choices. Allow him to cry in your arms from 2 to 5 minutes; sometimes you may need to do it for longer.

your baby’s cry may escalate for a few minutes then taper off or could stop and start like a car engine. Remember it is just his way of de-stressing and winding down.

* your baby may cry, then settle himselfself and fall asleep. If baby continues to cry then intervene with cupping and shushing, and if necessary offer a dummy. If your baby continues to cry then stop the cupping and shushing and allow him to cry for up to 5 minutes and then intervene with the cupping and shushing. You should repeat this until you can actually calm him down and help him find his sleep.
* The time frames given are only guidelines and in the beginning you will probably not do more than a minute – but over time you will increase the time frame as your baby grows.
* As your baby drifts off to sleep, replace the cupping and shushing with patting until he is asleep. Remember this is his ‘light’ sleep.
* **Resettling in arms**
* If your baby stirs, start cupping and shushing until he returns to sleep. It is possible that during the light sleep phase that your baby will alternate between sleep and stirring before eventually moving to a deep sleep cycle. Once asleep, switch to gentle patting and shushing. By now an hour may have passed.
* You may choose to let your baby sleep the entire nap in your arms. Alternatively you may transfer him to him cot once he has progressed from light to deep sleep. This takes approximately 1-¼ hours of holding your baby.
* If you choose to transfer your baby to his cot at this stage then continue to pat his bottom during the transition. Once baby is in the cot then place your other hand firmly on his chest, providing as much connection as possible. This is what I call “engulfing in the cot”.
* Slowly remove your hand from your baby’s chest and reduce your patting to the point that you eventually withdraw your hand to end up patting the air, then leave the room.
* If your baby wakes, repeat the process and stay with him until he returns to sleep.

**Settling Your your baby in the Cot**

Allow your baby to cry from 1 to 5 minutes depending on what you choose to do before intervening. Pick him up and burp him.

Return baby to his cot and place your hand firmly on her /his chest. With your other hand start cupping and shushing. This is reassuring for your baby and establishes as much contact as possible without having to hold him. This is called engulfing in the cot. At this stage you can offer him a dummy as well.

* Continue cupping and shushing until baby falls asleep then gently roll him onto her back, continuing to pat with your hand on his chest.

* Once you sense that your baby is asleep, remove your hand from his chest and lighten the patting until eventually you can withdraw your hand, continuing to pat, as if patting the air.

If your baby stays asleep, leave the room promptly and quietly.

If, as you exit, your baby stirs or you hear him crying once you have left the room, return and repeat the process.

* If baby does not settle, you may choose to pick him up and settle in your arms (see above).
* **Resettling in the cot**

In the beginning it is important to respond immediately when your baby begins to stir as it is easier to resettle a baby before he wakes too much. Eventually you will need to step back and allow him the ability to do this on his own.

* Respond by cupping and shushing until your baby falls asleep again, continuing to pat on his chest with your hand. Offer him a dummy as well.
* Once you sense that your baby is asleep, remove your hand from his chest and lighten the patting until eventually you can withdraw your hand, continuing to pat, as if patting the air.
* If your baby stays asleep, leave the room promptly and quietly.
* If, as you exit, your baby stirs or you hear herhim/ crying once you have left the room, return and repeat the process.
* If your baby does not settle, you may choose to pick him up and settle him in your arms (see above).
* **Mixing it Up**
* Some mothers find it easier to practice cot sleeping in the mornings when they have more energy and opt for settling their babies in their arms in the afternoon.
* **Settling Cycle for babies under 12 weeks in a cot**

**First Stage**

Cry 0 up to 5 minutes

Comfort – cupping and shushing and patting and shushing. Offer a dummy and stay with your baby until he goes to sleep

**Next Stage**

Cry 0 to 5 minutes

Comfort – cupping and shushing and patting and shushing. This is to reassure and not to put baby to sleep.

Cry 1 to 5 minutes

Comfort – cupping and shushing and patting and shushing. Offer a dummy and stay with baby until he goes to sleep.

* **Getting Up**
* When you go to pick your baby up from his cot whether it is after a nap or in the mornings, open up the room before picking baby up. This encourages baby to play or lie in his cot; he will also learn that when you walk into the room you are not going to pick him up straight away. I always chat to my babies when I go in, while opening up the room. I also use this time to put away clothes etc.

This is a way of teaching your baby how to feel secure in his own space and your presence and soothing voice signals to him that he is safe without you having to scoop him up in your arms.

**Settling Your Baby after 12 weeks**

Twelve weeks marks the end of the 4th trimester and is an ideal time for most babies to begin spending the majority of their sleeping hours in a cot.

This is often their first major step in recognising themselves as individuals who are separate from their mothers. It is especially important that this transition is carried out with consistency, tenderness and patience. This step I refer to as nurturing within boundaries.

**First Stage**

Leave to cry up to 5 minutes STOP THINK and ACT – the ACT may be to leave your baby for another 5 minutes OR

* Provide comfort with cupping/shushing. Remember this is to reassure and should be shorter than the crying time.

Then leave to cry up to 5 minutes, you may choose to do just 2 or 3 minutes here to begin with - STOP THINK and ACT

* Provide comfort with cupping/shushing then patting and shushing. Stay in the room until your baby goes to sleep. At this stage if your baby does not go to sleep then you do have the option of picking him up and putting him to sleep in your arms (see engulfing notes).

**Second Stage**

Leave to cry for 10 minutes then STOP THINK and ACT- the ACT may be to leave him for another 5 minutes OR

* You may choose to do just 2 or 3 minutes here to begin with - STOP THINK and ACT

Provide comfort with cupping/shushing then patting and shushing. Stay in the room until your baby goes to sleep.

* Provide comfort with cupping/shushing. Remember this is to reassure and should be shorter than the crying time.

Leave to cry up to 5 minutes, - STOP THINK and ACT

Provide comfort with cupping/shushing then patting and shushing. Stay in the room until your baby goes to sleep.

**Third Stage**

Leave to cry up to 15 minutes then STOP THINK and ACT – the ACT may be to leave him for another 5 minutes OR

* Provide comfort with cupping/shushing then patting and shushing. Stay in the room until your baby goes to sleep.
* Leave to cry up to 10 minutes, - STOP THINK and ACT

Provide comfort with cupping/shushing then patting and shushing. Stay in the room until your baby goes to sleep.

**Fourth Stage**

Leave to cry up to 20 minutes STOP THINK and ACT

* Provide comfort with cupping/shushing. Remember this is to reassure and should be shorter than the crying time.

Leave to cry up to 10 minutes, - STOP, THINK and ACT

Provide comfort with cupping/shushing then patting and shushing. Stay in the room until your baby goes to sleep.

**Reminders on settling**

You need to take small steps so depending on how you feel you can do the full cycle above or start with doing two lots of crying and at the end of the second cycle cup/pat/shush off to sleep.

Always try and settle in your baby in his cot. It’s harder to resettle him if you take him out of the cot, but trust me there will be times that you will do this.

Try not to use movement as a calming tool or to put your baby to sleep – this is the hardest habit to break.

When comforting don’t talk or give your baby eye contact – both of these stimulate. Instead, you can use the shush noise and let your body talk to him. Also try and stand to the middle or bottom end of his body when comforting. Remember we all do end up giving eye contact it is human nature; however, try to avoid doing it as much as possible.

You need to work within both your and your baby’s comfort zone. It is not about leaving him alone to cry until he is exhausted and goes to sleep, but it is about giving him space to find his sleep.

The crying isn’t to be crying at the top of his lungs for this length of time. your baby may start out loud and slowly reduce and also stop and start.

If the crying is constant at one level and goes for a long time then you need to reassure and see what is happening.

The crying time does depend on the cry but try not to go in under the time frame that you are working with - nothing is set in stone but you do have to push the boundaries to get results.

Do this settling up to 10 days – if it is not working then you need to reassess what you are doing. You may need to step back and allow him more time to find his sleep.

* **Resettling**
* This is how to get your baby to sleep and to enable him to stay asleep.
* Resettling teaches babies how to progress from light to heavy sleep. This is essential to avoid the pitfalls of frequent waking and catnapping. In a sense, resettling is the second stage of teaching baby how to find sleep and does demand more time and patience than settling (TACT).
* Most babies stir or wake when progressing from light to heavy sleep and this occurs anywhere between 20-45 minutes. In the beginning the idea is not to let your baby wake fully during this transition; a sleepy baby is easier to resettle than a wide-awake, crying baby.

Resettling is not about calming them down or staying until they just start to drift off, it is about staying with your baby until they go into a deep sleep.

However, as he grows you will need to step back and allow your baby the ability to try and resettle without any intervention.

The aim of resettling is to ensure your baby sleeps for not less than 1½ hours per sleep rhythm. Your baby can also sleep longer than 1-½ hours – ideally 2 to 2 ½ hour naps are what you are working towards.

Generally a baby who does not learn how to resettle will have short sleep cycles and wake during the night without the ability to fall back asleep on his own.

**Resettling Suggested Cycle**

**First stage** – you may choose to miss this stage and go onto the next stage.

Respond immediately.

To coax your baby into his deep sleep, place one hand over his chest (this is what I call ‘engulfing’ in the cot) and with the other hand begin the cupping action and then progress to gently patting and shushing him back to sleep. You can also turn your baby on his side facing away from you and then do the cupping action.

Remove hand from chest and then pat lighter, ending up patting the air. If your baby does not change his sleep pattern then leave the room. If your baby wakes then you need to repeat the process and stay with him until he goes back into a deep sleep.

**Second stage**

Leave to cry up to 5 minutes

Provide comfort by cupping/shushing then patting and shushing. Stay in the room until your baby goes to sleep. At this stage if he does not go to sleep then you do have the option of picking him up and putting him to sleep in your arms.

**Third stage**

Leave to cry up to 10 minutes

Provide comfort with cupping/shushing then patting and shushing. At this stage stay in the room until your baby goes to sleep.

**Fourth stage**

Leave to cry up to 15minutes STOP THINK and ACT

Provide comfort with cupping/shushing then patting and shushing. At this stage stay in the room until your baby goes to sleep.

Comfort - two ways of doing this, you stay in the room until your baby goes into a deep sleep and then you leave OR you can attempt to calm him down then leave and give your baby an appropriate time to see if he will resettle.

If your baby does not go back to sleep then you will need to stay with him until he goes into a deep sleep.

Always try and settle in his cot. It’s harder to resettle if you take him out of the cot, but trust me there will be times that you do this.

You can’t spoil a baby at this age; they need lots of nurturing and reassurance.

Do this settling up to 10 days – if it’s not working then you need to reassess what you are doing.

An example of resettling could be that your baby sleeps for 45 minutes wakes and it takes you another 45 minutes to coax them back into sleep and then they will sleep for another 45 minutes or less or sometimes more. Eventually over time your baby will not wake but continue to sleep through this wakeful period.

**Waking Up**

When your baby eventually wakes from sleeping, enter the room but avoid immediately picking him up. Instead reassure your baby with your voice, talking whilst opening the curtains. He will feel reassured with your presence.

This process is a subtle way of teaching your baby that his crying doesn’t automatically lead to him being immediately picked up and therefore not to stress about it.

It is a balance of letting your baby know you are there for him yet by not going straight to him, you are giving him a crucial opportunity to experience his own space and his own emotions, all the time knowing that you are coming to him.

**Note:**

The suggested routine above is only intended as a guide and should be used as such. Remember YOU are your baby’s mum so listen to your heart and your instincts. No, we don’t all do it by the book, or get it right the first time – you need to

make ‘mistakes’ to get it right for you. It’s a time of learning a little person’s personality and figuring out what works for your home life.