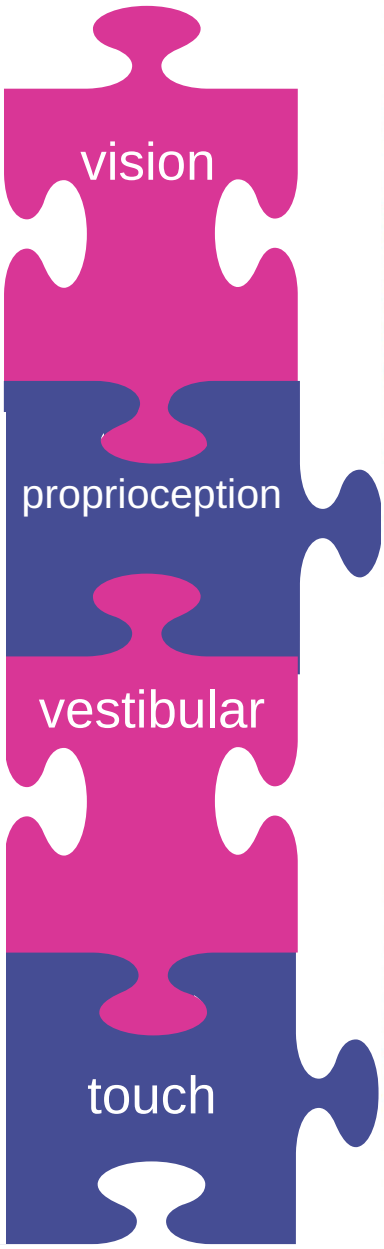
# tummy time



tummy time is really important for babies, not only does it help to strengthen their neck, back and shoulder muscles it helps with motor control, finger and hand strength and is a gateway to their crawling skills.

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# tummy time

Tummy time is amazing at helping our little ones gain their strength. Most of the time our babies are lying on their back, while they are sleeping, playing, in bouncers or carseats so it is really important that we change their position to help their strength & co-ordination and to prevent areas of their head becoming flattened. The best thing is that you don't need any complicated equipment, just a blanket on the floor or a playmat.

Tummy time is a very different sensation for babies so it is no surprise that most babies can be fussy about being on their tummies. The key to successful tummy time is to doing it little and often and giving your little one lots of comfort and contact, stroke their backs, talk to them and let them know you are still there. As soon as they become fussy, lift them and give them a big cuddle. Don't try to keep an upset baby doing tummy time activities and please don't avoid doing tummy time, it is an important part of development. If your little one doesn't enjoy it do it little and often and offer lots of reassurance.

It is really important to do it from birth and even just for a minute or so at at time building up time gently. Make sure your baby is not hungry or tired when you do it and it really isn’t a great idea to do it straight after a feed as placing your baby on a full tummy can be uncomfortable.

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# tummy time activity ideas

- distraction is key to successful tummy time. Introduce a new toy and get down on the floor or playmat next to your little one
- share a book, show them the pictures and read them a story
- hold your baby in tummy time by resting them along your arm, sliding your hand between their tummy and legs and using the other hand to support their neck and head. Hold your baby close.
- keep toys low and close to encourage them to lift their head
- offer new things to explore, keep tummy time interesting
- use a musical instrument or a rainmaker to encourage them to lift their head
- incorporate a little massage with your baby on your lap, rubbing your little ones back while they are on their tummy can be relaxing and your little one will enjoy the contact with you.
- recline on the sofa with your little one lying on your chest, talk to them and encourage them to raise their head to look at you
- lean a small baby safe mirror against a wall or the furniture
- once your little one has their head control, encourage them to do a little weight bearing through bended arms
- incorporate tummy time in activities you are already doing, for example towel drying after a bath
- encourage the whole family to be involved, get down opposite baby and initiate eye contact while chatting.

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# tummy time activity ideas

- no mess painting or a water filled pat mat is a great for encouraging hand function in tummy time
- play peek-a-boo using a chiffon or a blanket
- put toys of different shapes in their reach to encourage them to use different hand grips
- once your little one is weight bearing through their arms, move toys slightly further away to encourage them to weight bear and reach for the toys
- when they are using weight bearing through their arms bend their knees underneath them (while supporting them) to introduce a crawling position
- try tummy time in a tunnel
- do tummy time with another baby, they'll love looking at each other
- use different blankets and fabrics so they are experiencing lots of different textures
- turn off the lights and use some light toys or a projector, ensure that they are suitable for babies
- Secure small toys in a bottle for your little one to look at or pop some rice in the bottle for them to shake

Please ensure that your little one is supervised at all times when participating in the activities - in eye sight and arms reach.

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