

## Month 2: Trunk Control Infant Activities

### Tummy Time

While baby is awake, it is important to have tummy time.

- Important muscles used for moving and exploring are strengthened (legs, arms, back, and neck).
  - Whenever possible, remove baby from bouncy seat, highchair, or off your knee and let her move and explore on the floor.
  - If baby doesn't like being on tummy, try placing on tummy for short periods while you play with him. Some babies enjoy tummy time more when they are lying on you!
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- Lie on your back with baby lying facing you on your tummy
  - Dance with baby while holding and supporting her on her tummy
  - Lie on your back and lay him on your legs on his tummy. Lift him up and down gently.
  - Read a book to her while she is on her tummy.
  - Massage him after a bath while he lies on his tummy.
  - Roll a ball in front of her while she lies on her tummy so she will lift her head to watch it.
  - Blow bubbles near him so he can watch them move.

### Songs to sing in tummy time:

#### **Hickory Dickory Dock**

Hickory dickory dock,

*(touch baby's toes, knees, hips)*

The mouse ran up the clock.

*(tickle up his back)*

The clock struck one,

*(touch his neck)*

The mouse ran down,

*(tickle down his back)*

Hickory dickory dock.

*(touch is toes, knees and hips)*

#### **Itsy Bitsy Spider**

Itsy, Bitsy spider

Climbed up the waterspout

Down came the rain

And washed the spider out.  
Out came the sun  
And dried up all the rain  
And the Itsy Bitsy spider  
Went up the waterspout again.

*Use your hand to be the spider that climbs up your child's back or arm. Your child might like to be the spider and use her fingers to climb up your arm!*

### **Round and Round the Garden**

Round and round the garden, went the teddy bear.  
One step, two steps,  
Tickle under there.

*Walk your fingers around you child's lower back. Take steps with your fingers up their back, and then tickle the back of their neck or armpit.*

### **Rolling**

Rolling helps infants to develop balance, strength, and their eyes. Most babies learn to roll from back to front, and then front to back.

#### **Roll Around**

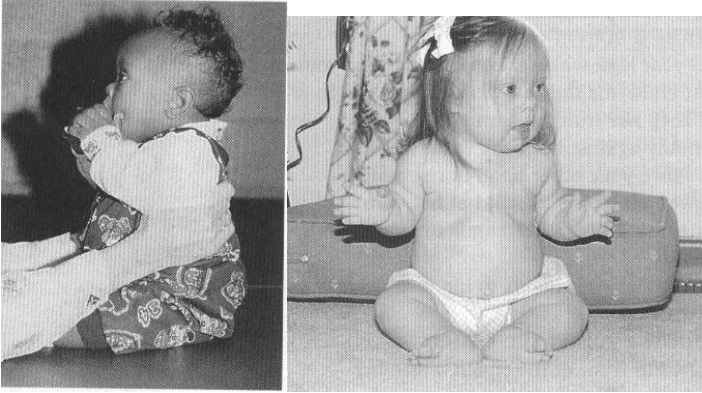
- Lay baby on her back and gently lift her leg up (not too high). While holding the other leg down, slowly move the raised leg in a small circular movement. Repeat with the other leg.
- Lay baby on his back and gently lift up his leg (not too high). While holding the other leg down, cross the lifted leg over the leg on the floor to the other side and roll him over onto his tummy.
- Lay baby on a raised surface so there is a slight incline. Gently roll her down the incline. Go back to the top and roll the other way.

**Rock and Roll ...** to develop a sense of balance and upper body strength.

Slightly deflate a small beach ball and set the baby on it, belly down. Hold him securely, while gently rolling him on the ball back and forth, and side to side. Sing a song while you roll to make it even more fun.

#### **Sitting Balance**

Be sure to place your infant in supported sitting from a very young age (3-4 months). Provide as much support as your baby requires to maintain this sitting position, but as your child's trunk strength and sitting balance improve, you should be able to reduce your support. You can also place a nursing pillow or cushions around your baby so that if they do fall over while learning to sit, they will be protected.

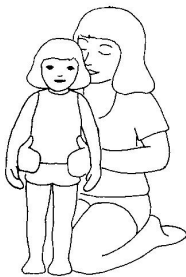


Once your baby is sitting on their own (around 6 months) challenge their sitting balance even further by placing their toys just out of reach in front of them, to the side and even behind them. Can they stretch out to reach their toy and return to sitting position? If so, their sitting balance is getting even better.



### **Standing Balance**

When your infant is just learning to stand on their own, try to help them stand in front of a mirror by holding their pelvis or thighs only. Try to reduce your child's tendency to grab you or hold your hands by giving them a toy to hold while you are helping them stand. As their standing balance improves, try to move your hands even lower – from pelvis to hips to lower thighs, to calves and finally to ankles.



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### **Baby Yoga Poses** ([www.pampers.co.uk](http://www.pampers.co.uk))

Baby Yoga helps with neural development, motor skills, balance and more. Here are some things to remember when doing yoga with your baby:

1. Make sure you always work at your baby's pace and stage of development.
2. Maintain eye contact and talk your baby through what you're doing – it will help the bond between you.

3. Wait to start baby yoga until your baby is 4 months old and has good head control.
4. Remember, baby yoga is meant to be fun for you and your baby. If your baby doesn't seem to be in the mood – don't worry – simply try again another day.

### **Hippo at the Water Hole**

A 3-part movement that's an excellent way to massage baby's tummy, helping with digestion and wind. It also helps with spinal mobility and balance.

- a) Kneel on the floor with your baby lying on her back, facing you.
- b) Hold her calves and gently bend the knees towards the tummy.
- c) Hold for a few seconds before releasing. Repeat this 3-4 times.
- d) With the legs still bent, rotate the knees in a clockwise direction, so the thighs massage the tummy. This will help strengthen your baby's digestive system.
- e) Finally, keeping the knees bent, gently roll your baby from side to side a few times. Then bring your baby back to centre.



### **Rolling Cub**

This movement will encourage your baby's sense of coordination and balance. It can also help strengthen the spine and legs.

- a) Sit on the floor, with your baby between your legs facing outwards into the room.
- b) Take both of your baby's hands and gently roll them around each other. Bring the baby's arms in for a cuddle.
- c) Then roll again and take the arms out.



- d) Roll again and take the arms down – your baby will naturally lean towards the floor.



- e) Finish by taking the arms up, allowing your baby to stand if they are ready and in the mood to. Remember always go at your baby's pace and stage of development.



- f) You can also do this exercise with the legs. And to exercise the brain a bit more, you can repeat these movements, rolling in the opposite direction.

### **Tiger in a Tree**

A 'miracle move' to help settle a baby. It can soothe wind and colic, gives your baby a new perspective on the world, and even protects your back.

- a) Kneel with your baby on your lap, facing out.
- b) Put one arm across the chest, and the other arm through the legs.
- c) Now bring one knee up, then stand.



- d) Once you're standing, gently tilt your baby forward, so her belly and chest are resting across your lower arms. Make sure both her arms are hanging over yours.



- e) You can gently swing your baby back and forth for a little bit of fun. Make sure your arms and shoulders are relaxed. Change sides to prevent straining your shoulders.



### Airplane Baby



1. Lie on your back with your baby lying on her tummy on your shins.
2. Ensure the baby is secure on your legs. Hold the baby's hands, if you need to provide additional support hold the baby around her chest.
3. Lift your legs up and down giving the baby a ride.
4. A song to sing while playing:

*Zoom, zoom, zoom  
We're going to the moon  
Zoom, zoom, zoom  
We're going to the moon  
If you'd like to take a trip  
Climb aboard my rocket ship  
Zoom, zoom, zoom  
We're going to the moon  
5,4,3,2,1...Blast off!*

Try some of the progressions listed below once your baby is strong enough and needs more challenging exercises:

- a) *Place the baby on his tummy on your legs, holding on to your hands, but have his chest forward and not resting on your legs.*
- b) *Place baby on his tummy facing your feet. He holds onto your ankles and you hold his knees/ankles.*
- c) *The most challenging exercise is to have baby balance his hands on your knees. You hold his knees (he's facing away from you) and you move the baby up and down. This exercise only has two points of contact the baby's hands on your knees and your hands on his knees, which makes it very challenging. Only progress to this exercise when the baby is strong.*

### **Curl-Up**

1. Place your baby on her back, legs slightly apart with knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
2. Sit in front of her and let her grasp your index and middle fingers. Close your fingers over her hands.
3. Make sure your grasp is firm and then raise your baby into sitting. Continue to bend her body forward slightly into sitting and lower her into lying.
4. As she gets stronger allow her to do more of the work to crunch up into sitting.

### **Front Lean**

1. Hold your child against you facing a mirror. Place one hand on her knees and the other on her hips.
2. Let your child lean forward with straight back toward the mirror, keeping balance and control, but not touching the mirror. The mirror allows you to check your hand support and watch how your child reacts. Play with her by talking, imitating facial expressions, etc.
3. Vary where you stand, turn slightly so your child has to lean forward and to the side in order to see her reflection in the mirror. Don't forget to do this on both sides.

### *References:*

*Invest in Kids Foundation. (2001). What a child will be depends on you and me: A resource kit for a child's first five years. Toronto (ON): Invest in Kids Foundation*

*SPARC: Sports and Recreation New Zealand (2008). Balance: swinging, spinning and rocking. Active Movement.*

*Stern, L., Steidle, K. (1994) Pediatric Strengthening Program Reproducible Exercises. San Antonio (TX): Therapy Skill Builders*

*Jungle Yoga [www.pampers.co.uk](http://www.pampers.co.uk)*