



# **THE 3-STEP SYSTEM**

## TO HELP YOUR BABY SLEEP

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*Nicole Johnson ~ The Baby Sleep Site™*

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## Introduction

Unfortunately, we cannot *make* our children sleep. You may have heard the saying “We can lead a horse to water, but we can’t make him drink.” Well, we can lead our children to their crib or bed, but we cannot make them sleep! We can only provide the opportunity for sleep and help them learn the skills we all need to sleep well. Sometimes, all we need to do, as parents, is get out of their way and the rest will come. Sometimes we, parents, perpetuate the very habits we want to break. While some babies only need a slight encouragement, others will need very firm limits and lots of consistency. And, then there are all the children in between.

This e-Book will help you tackle the most common problems babies and children have when it comes to sleep in the first few years of life. With the topics covered in this guide, you should be able to get to the heart of what you *really* need to know to solve some of your sleep problems. This guide may not be a cure-all as everyone’s situation is unique, but you should be able to develop a great foundation, if not solve most of your problems. What works for you may not work for someone else and what works for many might not work for you! I hope this guide will begin to pave the way for you and your family to get more sleep.

Healthy sleep habits are very important for all of us. **The same way sleep deprivation and sleep fragmentation is hard on you, it is hard on your child.** Well-rested babies make happy babies and well-rested parents make happy parents and happy parents make *better* parents.

Let’s get started on helping your child sleep!

***Below is an excerpt of The 3-Step System To Help Your Baby Sleep. This excerpt is the introduction to the chapter on sleep training methods, and how to implement them at home.***

## How to Sleep Train

It is unlikely that breaking sleep associations and changing rules on how a baby goes to sleep will be met without at least *some* protest. You are changing all they have known for however long you've been putting them to sleep the way you have been. They may not like it, at first, just like you may not like to learn how to stop sleeping with a pillow. **But, with time and consistency, we all can learn a new way to sleep.** We can all learn a new skill (way to sleep) with time, patience, commitment and PRACTICE! You cannot expect to make changes without allowing them to practice the new skill, just like riding a bike. If you always hold on, they will never learn to balance themselves.

All of the below methods I describe will indicate that you do your baby's bedtime routine and then put him down DROWSY, BUT AWAKE. Ideally, drowsy is when baby is just about asleep, eyes closed and when you put him down he re-settles himself and goes to sleep. We are not always successful at achieving the perfect drowsiness level, but you want your baby as relaxed as possible before you put him down. However, you do not want to take an hour to do this, either. Most nap routines are about 10 minutes and bedtime routines about 20-30 minutes (longer for colicky or spirited children who need more soothing). Do not make routines so long that you are putting baby down too late just to get the perfect drowsiness because then he will become overtired making it harder to fall asleep and probably lead to more crying.

During initial "training" you should opt for an earlier bedtime, not a later one. Many people figure they will keep baby up longer in hopes of "tiring them out" only this backfires because baby will be overtired and overtired children have more trouble falling asleep and staying asleep (have I said that enough times yet?). **They also cry longer and harder.** This is even true after you train. Depending on how sensitive your baby is to overtiredness,

he may be going to sleep just fine for 2 weeks and then cry hard one night and you'll wonder what's wrong. This could mean bedtime was too late and he was overtired.

If baby falls asleep during the routine, some people feel they need to jostle the baby awake in order to make sure they are semi-awake when they go into the crib. I disagree. This is unnecessary. Just try to put him down sooner in the process next time. However, if your problem is night-wakings and not bedtime, I do encourage parents to start the night how they expect the rest will go. If you put baby all the way to sleep at bedtime and then when he wakes up during a sleep cycle and you let him cry, for example, this is confusing to baby and, in my opinion, unfair. He should fall asleep initially at bedtime the same way he is to go BACK to sleep the rest of the night. In fact, learning how to fall asleep at bedtime can and will pave the way for him to know how to go BACK to sleep at night. Note: Some babies master going TO sleep much sooner than going BACK to sleep, though. Similarly, with any of the below methods, you should handle bedtime and night-wakings using the same method.

I usually recommend starting sleep training with nights and then work on days. Some people like to do both at the same time to be consistent, however different parts of the brain handle each day and night sleep. So, actually, you can continue to rock/nurse/etc. to sleep for naps and not at bedtime and nights, but it is up to you who knows your baby best to know what will have the most potential for success. I recommend starting with nights because parents usually see results much faster at night, compared to days, giving you confidence to stick with it. Naps can take up to 2 weeks or longer while some of the methods above can take only 3-4 nights. Once you start to see progress, you will have more wherewithal to continue with the training. Also, at night you have very little doubt your baby is tired, so that will help you stick to it and not second guess yourself.

## Concluding Remarks

No one sleep training method will work for everyone and that's why I don't recommend one over another. The method that will work for you and your family is dependent on your philosophy as a parent and the temperament and personality of your child. I can't tell you which method YOU will be able to commit to 100%. Consistency is the key to any method's success. Studies have shown that all of the methods can and do work with *consistency*. As long as babies know what to expect they will adapt to your family's lifestyle.

Sleep training is often not a cure-all. There will be teething, travelling, illnesses, etc. that might set you back along with developmental milestones. Babies change rapidly during their first year. Thankfully, a previously sleep trained child will bounce back to normal after a setback with just a "refresher" course. Some people feel they are "training" non-stop and that's because they have more difficult sleepers. But, for many, there really is no alternative.

I slipped back with my eldest son many times because one night staying with him when he was sick led to staying with him for an hour or more when he was better again. I could not continue to rob him of his sleep when it clearly affected his behavior every day. So, we had to train and re-train many times over. Just like a diet can have setbacks, you have to change your *lifestyle* rather than look for the quick fix. I will say that over time, once my son was good at putting himself to sleep, I could let him fall asleep at bedtime, nursing, and he'd continue to sleep all night. He just needed the knowledge and experience first of knowing how to fall asleep without my "help" all night first.

I hope this guide has been helpful for the sleep deprived and it will help lead you to many nights of restful sleep for your entire family.

## Additional Resources

As part of The Baby Sleep Site<sup>®</sup> community, I invite you to take advantage of:

- For personalized advice and support for your unique situation, at an affordable price, consider our sleep consulting services (<http://www.babysleepsite.com/services>). Read parent stories (<http://www.babysleepsite.com/testimonials>) and our FAQ (<http://www.babysleepsite.com/sleep-helpdesk-faq/>).
- *Mastering Naps and Schedules*, a comprehensive guide to napping routines, nap transitions, and all the other important “how-tos” of good baby sleep. With over 40 sample sleep schedules and planning worksheets, *Mastering Naps and Schedules* is a hands-on tool ideal for any parenting style. (<http://www.babynapswell.com>)
- For both new parents and parents who are expecting again, *Essential Keys to Your Newborn's Sleep* is a practical, hands-on e-Book with tips about how you can influence some of the factors that affect a newborn's sleep and for setting the stage for better sleep, both now and throughout the first year. <http://babysleepsite.com/newborn-essential-keys>
- With *The 5-Step System to Better Toddler Sleep*, get back in control with this comprehensive toddler sleep guide. This toolkit of strategies, sample schedules, and sleep logs will put your toddler on the right sleep track. <http://www.toddlersleepswell.com/>
- Join our *Members Area* packed with premium content and resources: e-Books, assessments, detailed case studies, peer support, and more. **Costs less to join than buying products separately!** (<http://www.babysleepsite.com/become-a-member>)
- Our regularly updated blog, which contains *free* articles on topics related to infants, toddlers, and sleep. (<http://babysleepsite.com/blog>)
- Visit us on Facebook where parents come together to support one another and answer questions. (<http://facebook.com/babysleepsite>)
- Our product recommendations to help your child sleep (<http://babysleepsite.com/resources>)

## About the Author



My name is Nicole Johnson and I am a married mother of two wonderful boys, as well as the Senior Baby Sleep Consultant and owner of The Baby Sleep Site<sup>®</sup>.

When my eldest son was a baby, he had a lot of sleep problems. Sleep like a baby? Yeah, right! You had better hope you never sleep like my baby did. He would wake up every one or two hours, *all night long*. I had to do so much to get him through the night.

By thoroughly researching the key literature and scientific reports, I became an expert in sleep methods, scheduling routines, baby and toddlers's development needs and more. I overcame my son's sleeping issues in a way that matched my own parenting style, and knew it was my mission to help other tired parents "find their

child's sleep."

I started by leading an Internet-based message board and helped countless parents just like you overcome their own sleeping challenges much quicker and faster than I had. I then created this website in 2008 and expanded my offerings to include e-books, articles, a blog, and customized sleep consulting. The feedback around the world has been incredible!

I would love to help you with your challenge. Know that I never offer one-size-fits-all advice or pass judgment on your parenting philosophies. I incorporate who you are and what your child is undergoing to create a unique service. And I will give you the support you need to see your challenge through to the end.

***To order your copy of The 3-Step System To Help Your Baby Sleep, visit [www.babysleepswell.com](http://www.babysleepswell.com).***

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