

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep

Simple Ways to Help Your Baby Sleep Through the Night

Table of Contents

I. LET US HELP YOU HELP YOURSELF	3
II. UNDERSTANDING THE WHY, HOW AND WHAT OF BABY SLEEP.....	6
III. CREATING A PLAN TO HELP BABY SLEEP.....	13
IV. ROCK-A-BYE BABY – SIMPLE STEPS TO HELP YOUR BABY SLEEP THROUGH THE NIGHT	17
V. FINAL WORDS FOR YOU AND BABY – CONTINUING THE GOOD WORK.....	28

I. Let us help you help yourself

Jenna and David were excited first parents. They had planned for their baby's arrival for months. They had gotten the nursery ready, picked up all the toys and clothes, the stroller and the car seat, the crib and the rocker. Wanting to leaving nothing to chance, both Jenna and David read up on as much information that they could on how their baby would react, and how they were to handle her.

When Maisie was born, Jenna and David were delirious. Jenna had a near perfect delivery, and they both could not wait to take her home and enjoy their new baby. For the first few days, things were all right. Jenna had been advised to wake the baby up every 3-4 hours to feed her and while David would take care of the house and occasionally of Maisie, Jenna would quickly catch up with some sleep and shower. Their excitement was still sky-high and they thought they were managing fine.

Slowly, however, Jenna began to realize that she was feeling more and more tired everyday. The baby would sleep for just two hours at a stretch at any point and for Jenna it would seem like it took forever for her baby to either go to sleep or after a waking, go back to sleep. She had to resort to breastfeeding Maisie back to sleep or give her a pacifier, rock her, swing her or at times, David would have to take her for a ride in the car. Maisie would wake up frequently during the night and during the day, she would not nap easily or would take vary short naps. Jenna was hardly getting any sleep either during the day or night, had forgotten when was the last time she had a proper shower, or properly brushed her hair or sat down to a peaceful meal. David was doing the best he could around the house but he could not help her much when the baby seemed to need her mother so much. Jenna knew that she needed help and needed help fast. The one or two 'sleep expert' books that she had read seemed to advise her to let the baby cry herself to sleep. After the one and only time she tried to do that, Jenna swore that Maisie was too precious for her and that there was no way she was going to allow her to cry herself to sleep. With a crying baby in hand and on the verge of crying herself, Jenna wondered if there was not a better way of helping a baby sleep?

Yes, there are, and this book intends to suggest to you some simple steps of putting your baby to sleep and if you are like Jenna, this one book will give you all the

information that you need to help your baby and thus hopefully you as well, to sleep through the night. The book has drawn on the experiences of many mothers, young and seasoned, of the troubles they faced and the solutions they came up with, the advice they sought and the advice they got. Putting together information gleaned through research reports and the personal experiences of families, the book has organized these ideas into a general plan of how you could help your baby to sleep. It also suggests specific steps you could try the next time you have to put your baby to sleep.

Most of the times when you find yourself in a situation as mentioned above, you do not have time to digest all the information that is available out there. You find numerous books, articles, advice from other new parents, advice from older parents – information is plentiful but confusing. You will soon see why.

When you speak to or read any of the books written by experts, you will find that there seem to be two schools of thought on how you can help your baby to sleep. There will be those who believe very strongly that a baby be allowed to cry until she learns to fall asleep by herself. At the other extreme, there are those who strongly advocate that every time your baby makes a crying sound, you jump out of bed and rush to her side because as a parent that is what you are supposed to do, nurture her and care for her. The reality is the solution is usually somewhere in between these two extreme stands. Yes, you need to be nurturing and caring and yet there has to be some relief in it for you. Yes, you need to tend to baby when she cries but maybe, just maybe it is OK for her to cry for a while till you figure out whether it is longer lasting or just a temporary waking. And you should be able do all this without feeling guilty and selfish that you are thinking about yourself when you feel you should be thinking only about your baby. You should be clear that you need your baby to sleep, you need to sleep and you need helpful suggestions now.

So regardless of how many books, and articles and stories you go through, you will almost always find lengthy observations on why baby does what she does or there are long lamentations on how parents have to deal with this. Neither of which is going to help you. Not that there are no helpful books or guides out there but you simply do not have the energy or time now to collate all the information from these books and guides to form a plan for yourself. That is where this book comes in.

The book does not aim to give you one rigid solution with a fixed number of steps to follow, come what may. No, instead it is a framework, which you can adopt, modify and use as you choose. You can use some or all the guidelines that we offer in forming a general plan to helping your baby to sleep. Similarly, we give you an exhaustive set of simple steps that you can try the next time your baby won't go back to sleep and you are desperately hunting for suggestions.

This book aims to help you help yourself. It does not force you to do anything that makes you feel distressed or uncomfortable and in fact gives you the full freedom to use only those suggestions that really appeal to you. The methods suggested in here are loving, caring and yet highly effective. Even if you use a few of them, you will be able to help your baby and yourself sleep better at night.

II. Understanding the Why, How and What of Baby Sleep

To understand why babies, especially the young ones have such tough times sleeping through the night, you have to understand a little of how we all sleep and a little more of how babies sleep. It would also help to know that even undetected medical conditions can result in sleep interruptions.

- Do you sleep like a baby?

Give a little thought to what you do before you go to bed. After changing you're your nightclothes, you will usually not immediately hit the pillow and go off to sleep. You will have your own nighttime ritual, a ritual that helps you to relax and unwind – you may read a book, listen to some soothing music, catch up with a favorite serial on TV. As you gently go to sleep, your brain centers gradually begin to shut off and you start to enter the stage of deep sleep or what is called as non-REM (non Rapid Eye Movement). This is the part where your body is the quietest and your mind is least active. People who are in deep sleep have shallow regular breathing and their muscles are completely relaxed. Studies have shown that after about an hour and half of this deep sleep, your mind starts to wake up a little. This is the stage where you may have dreams, try to turn over, cover yourself with the bedcovers all without actually waking up. In this stage, the fact that your brain is active and working is seen by the movement of the eyes under the eyelids.

What is interesting is that these cycles of light and deep sleep occur alternately every couple of hours for the next eight hours. So, though you may feel that you have slept well for a total of eight hours, you would have actually had only two hours of deep sleep with the remaining six hours spent in light sleep.

- Does your baby sleep like you?

Let us now see how a baby tends to sleep. Usually you will either rock or walk or even nurse your baby to sleep. She will be in your arms as she slowly starts to

nod off to sleep - her eyelids begin to droop and though she shuts her eyes, her eyelids still continue to flutter occasionally and her breathing is still irregular. You will notice that her hands are balled into fists and she may continue to show small signs of waking – like twitching or being startled or even smile with her eyes closed. If you try to put your baby down at this stage, she will more than likely wake up and start to cry. This is because she was still not fully asleep and in the deep sleep stage but had just entered the light sleep stage.

The next time around, try to do the same thing but do it a little longer, say about twenty minutes longer. Do the same things as before – rock her or nurse her till she starts to fall off to sleep again. This time hold her in your arms till your baby stops twitching, her breathing becomes more shallow and regular and you can feel her whole body relaxing in your arms. You will see that her fists are now uncurled and her arms and legs are completely weightless. These are sure signs of deep sleep. Your baby is now most certainly in deep sleep and you can put her down assured that she is at last fast asleep and is resting comfortably.

What is important to remember is that babies cannot be just put to sleep, at least not all babies. Most need help from their parents to go to sleep. A few babies can be put down while they are still a little drowsy and in a state of light sleep and still manage to drift off to sleep. A majority however needs some time to get to that stage and till then they need help by being rocked or sung to sleep. The reason is that unlike adults babies do not directly enter into the stage of deep sleep. They first go through a brief period of light sleep and enter into deep sleep only after twenty or so minutes. After that, they gradually enter into deep sleep from which they are not very easily awakened.

You will therefore need to remember that there is no point in rushing your baby to sleep, you will only end up disturbing her sleep and end up feeling frustrated yourself. Be patient, try to recognize the various signs of what sleep stage your baby is in and then make the transition, either from your arms to the crib or from your bed to the crib. As babies grow older, the time of their light sleep reduces and they can enter the deep sleep stage more quickly.

- Short yes, but sweet....?

If you ever wanted to be convinced that your baby goes through various stages of sleep, try this experiment. Once you have put your baby to sleep, just stay close by and watch her sleep. You may think she is in deep sleep but after an hour or so, she will start to twitch or squirm a little uncomfortably, her breathing gets irregular and her muscles may tighten. This means she is entering into the stage of light sleep. If there is something bothering her, like a wet diaper, or hunger then she will wake up around this time. If she does not wake up then, she will just quietly drift through in this period of light sleep and slowly go back into deep sleep. This happens with adults too, with the entire cycle of light sleep and deep sleep lasting for about 90 minutes. With babies, this cycle is much shorter and lasts for just 50-60 minutes. This means they have more frequent periods of light sleep when they are likely to wake up.

Here is what you could do when you see your baby entering the light sleep phase. Just pat your baby gently as soon as you sense her stirring, sing a soothing song or very quietly change her or nurse her and put her back to bed. You will be able to do all this without her actually waking up too much.

It should be mentioned that not all babies are alike – and you will be hearing this a lot in this book. Some babies manage well by themselves in this period of light sleep, even if they do wake up, they comfortably get back to sleep. Others need some help from their parents; a familiar voice, sound, or even nursing will help put them back. Understanding these complex patterns of sleep and learning to appreciate the differences between the way we sleep and babies sleep will make you more sensitive and more aware of what you need to do provide the kind of environment that will help your baby negotiate the vulnerable periods of her sleep.

- Tread on eggshells

Another interesting aspect of babies' sleep is that not only do babies require more time to go to sleep and they go through a lot many periods of light sleep when they are likely to be disturbed, but even the lighter sleep is lighter than that

of adults, making them very susceptible to loud sudden noises. However, what you need to do is to understand that babies sleep the way they do for a reason. As caregivers, you need to understand your baby's sleep cycles so that you can create routines and an environment that will help her natural sleep cycles.

- All for a reason

What always adds to the stress in the first few months of a new baby is that her needs are the most in these months and her ability to communicate those needs is at the lowest. Suppose your baby did manage to get through most of the night without any major wakings. How would this have affected your baby? Firstly, she may have slept through, being cold or with a wet diaper on. Also small babies have smaller stomachs and they digest milk very quickly. So it is quite possible that though the baby was hungry, she may have slept through it, which is not a healthy thing.

Years of research have tried to provide an explanation of why babies have such different sleep patterns. They seem to indicate that the frequent periods of light sleep are what protect babies. If babies always slipped into very deep sleep for a very long time then that might seem like a wonderful thing to you but for a little baby, it could possibly be dangerous. Your baby could be hungry, cold or even feeling suffocated. A baby in deep sleep is unable to react and respond to these stimuli, as she would just keep on sleeping.

The reality however is that babies do go through frequent light sleep periods and do frequently wake up but that is the only way they can communicate their needs or protect themselves from what could be threatening their safety. Research strongly supports the theory that these frequent periods of REM are aimed at protecting babies and making sure that their well-being is not threatened in any way. It is therefore very important that you do not try to get a baby to sleep soundly too quickly. Having to deal with sleepless nights day after day may make you desperate enough to listen to advice or guidance on how to make sure babies sleep through the night. But remember a baby wakes up so often for a reason. You are threatening your baby's development and well-being by forcing her to sleep for long too soon. Instead, by working on a routine that will take into

account these sleep patterns and possibly help your baby go back to deep sleep naturally, you will be assisting your baby's overall development.

- It all happens in good time.

Right now as a parent of a baby who never sleeps, even the near future sounds very far away. But it is true. As babies grow big, they attain more maturity in their sleep patterns. If you want an exact time, that is difficult to predict as different babies settle in their sleep patterns at different ages. Some babies may manage to go into deep sleep very easily but wake up often. Other babies may take their own sweet time in going to sleep but do manage to sleep for longer. You may have a baby who has a great reluctance to go to sleep and a greater reluctance to stay asleep for long.

What is common to all these babies is that in the first three months, they do not and cannot sleep for more than three hours together without having to wake up for a feeding. As mentioned before, little babies have little tummies and they need frequent feedings. Yes they may sleep for a total of fourteen to eighteen hours in a day but they will do so in small 3-4 hour bursts. By the time they complete three months, babies start to sleep for longer periods at a stretch at night and less during the day. There may be only be a couple of nightwakings during the night. Also the number of light sleep periods decrease and your baby will be able to very quickly go back to deep sleep.

Throughout all this you have to remember that the way your baby sleeps is no reflection on you or your parenting style. It is more a reflection of your baby's personality and temperament.

- Babies do what babies do.

Even way after you think your baby has settled down into some steady sleep pattern with less night wakings, she will still wake up at night. The reasons vary. Simple ones are physical discomfort like when your baby has a cold or teething pain. However, sometimes, when your baby has achieved a major developmental milestone like sitting up or starting to crawl, she is excited and

wants to practice it over and over again. This excitement keeps disturbing her sleep patterns for a while. Again between one or two years of age when your child is more aware of her surroundings, she may wake up from nightmares or separation anxiety from her parents.

- Medical Problems

One of the most common reasons why a baby who has settled down into a steady sleep pattern may suddenly start waking up at night could be a medical reason. If you notice any of the symptoms below, consult a pediatrician for causes of her distress.

- If your baby is crying non-stop
- If your baby complains of stomach pains
- She is usually a good sleeper who is suddenly unable to sleep for a few nights together
- You sense that there is something wrong

Here is a list of some common medical problems, which are usually not noticed since they are not as obvious as say teething or ear infections.

1. Stomach Pain.

Sometimes when a baby is lying down flat on her back, the stomach acids that are supposed to help her digest her food may also cause her pain, similar to the heartburn that adults experience. This is easily treated by smaller feedings (though you may need to feed her more frequently), by adjusting the crib so that the baby does not lay completely flat and of course, medication.

2. Food allergies.

Some babies have allergies to formula milk, or to the milk that breastfeeding mothers consume. If you notice that your baby is unusually gassy and restless through the night, this is a possibility

3. Ear infections.

If your baby has a yellow discharge either through her nose or her eyes, she could be having an ear infection.

4. Pinworms

These are more common in families where other members already have

pinworms. If your baby tends to scratch more around the anus or if you actually see small white worms that are thread-like somewhere around the anus you should get her checked for pinworms.

You are the best person to judge if your child is unusually fussy and if you suspect a medical condition. For example, if your baby is equally fussy during the day then you can be sure that there is something bothering her. Speak to your doctor and make sure the causes are sufficiently investigated and suitable treatment suggested.

All the above points are to explain why your baby sleeps the way she does, how you can build up a routine around that and allow yourself and your family to get some sleep at nights.

III. Creating a Plan to Help Baby Sleep

As your baby grows older, you can slowly work on helping her sleep by herself, which means managing through the light sleep period without waking up completely. Once you know what your baby's sleeping pattern is, you need to build a routine which will take into account these patterns without causing any dramatic changes to the rest of your family's day to day routines. You need to have a general plan of action – note the word general, because there will always be changes – of helping your baby go to sleep everyday. Later, we will be giving you specific suggestions on what you could do to put her to sleep but right now we will help you build the general environment and routine, the consistent use of which will ease your baby's transition into a more mature sleep pattern.

The very first thing that you may have to do as you work on a plan to help your baby sleep is to learn to differentiate between the noises that your baby makes even when she is sleeping, called sleeping noises and noises she makes when she may be stirring awake, called awake noises. Please understand that this does not mean that should your baby start to cry, that you do not respond or try to go to her. In fact, if you do not respond quickly and your baby does get up crying and screaming, she is going to be so distressed that she will find it harder to go back to sleep. No, you need not wait till that happens. Instead, what we are suggesting you do is to always keep an ear on the kind of noises she makes even as she is sleeping. Either keep the door open or use a baby monitor to do so. As and when she makes a noise, wait for just a little while and listen carefully. If you pay close attention to the various noises that she makes, you will learn to differentiate between the noises she makes even when she is fast asleep and the noises that she is making just before she wakes up fully. The main aim of this plan is to help your baby manage this period of light sleep without her having to fully wake up. With your help, she will be able to get back to deep sleep quicker and quicker and while you may not and should not eliminate night waking all together, this plan will at least allow baby, yourself and the rest of the family members catch up on some restful sleep at night.

Remember there is nothing sacred about the plan – you do not have to follow the exact same stages. Understand the concept behind it and modify it to suit you and your baby's requirement.

Stage One:

Once you are sure that your baby is not just making sleeping noises but is actually stirring awake, go to her right away. Comfort her in whatever way is convenient for you. You could get your baby and sit in a rocking chair to rock her to sleep. Else you could try nursing her or singing to her. Do so till she starts going off to sleep again – her eyes will slowly close and her breathing will start to slow down. At that point, she may not yet be fast asleep. Just stand up with baby still in your arms and keep rocking her or singing to her. Do not lay her abruptly in her bed or crib; she is bound to notice the difference. Your body is warm and the bed is hard and cold. Any sudden change will only wake her up. Make sure that you are gentle in your movements, especially when you are putting her down. Keep your arms around her even as you putting her to sleep. Once you feel she is more settled, you could slowly remove your arms from around her. She will quite likely slip into deep sleep. However, if she does move, again gently pat her or sing to her, till she is asleep. If she starts crying, you may need to pick her up again and go through the whole process. If at any point, you are too upset to go through the process, just put her to sleep in your usual way and try again the next day. Slowly she will start getting used to being moved to her crib or her bed and will learn to go into deep sleep even there. She will still be very dependent on you to help her go to sleep but because she now actually goes to sleep in her crib or bed, she is one step closer to going back to sleep by herself in her bed. When you are confident that this is working most of the time, you can move to the next stage.

Stage Two:

In this stage, follow the same process as above. Try and comfort your baby to sleep when she wakes up. This time however do not wait till your baby is actually falling asleep. You will sense when she has actually settled down and feeling very drowsy. But you know that she is not nodding off to sleep. At that point, make the transition to her crib or bed. Use the same technique as above – do make any sudden movements but gently put her in her bed with your arms around her. Even though she is still awake, you

can slowly remove your arms but be next to her. Let her slowly drift into deep sleep. If she does stir, put a gentle hand on her to comfort her or pat her or speak soothingly to her. She should be able to go back to sleep. If she does wake up, try the same routine again. Again, if at any point, you feel frustrated or upset about repeating this process, put the baby to sleep as you usually would. Gradually, however, your baby will learn to get comfortable in her bed or crib even as she is awake and will learn to go to sleep by herself. Just as in Stage One, once you are convinced that your routine is working fine and your baby is managing to sleep well despite being put down when she is not asleep, you can move on to Stage Three.

Stage Three:

In this stage, we are trying to make baby more independent. When you are sure that she is waking up, go to her but this time, DO NOT PICK HER UP. Just speak soothingly to her at the same time patting her or playing some of her favorite bedtime music. You could go so far as to put an arm around her till she goes back to sleep. In case, this does not work and your baby only ends up crying, do what you did in Stage Two but this time make the process shorter and put her back in her crib. You could in fact even stand in the doorway and try speaking to her from there and go closer only if she stirs more and more. Try various combinations till you know that when you put your sleepy baby down, more often than not, she is going to go to sleep. You are now ready for Stage Four.

Stage Four:

At this stage, even if your baby is stirring, do not go to her right away, do not even stand in the doorway. Stay in some spot just outside the doorway from where she can't see you but you can hear her. Speak softly to her or sing soothingly and she should soon be fast asleep.

This plan is just a way of guiding you in devising a plan that will help you follow your intuition and allow you to take your baby's concerns into account. The idea is to take one step at a time towards helping your baby manage the periods of light sleep well and establish her independence from you while going back to sleep.

You can change this plan any way you want to, stop and start anytime you want to. The beauty and strength of this plan is that you are given the freedom to decide what is working and what is not working. There is no right or wrong way and you can use whatever method you like to help your baby to sleep. As it is parents are under a lot of pressure when their baby does not sleep because in addition to having to deal with sleep deprivation they have to deal with suggestions that somehow this reflects on their parenting style. This plan makes no such judgments and aims only at helping you and your baby move slowly and steadily towards the goal of having your baby sleep through the night with as few wakings as possible.

IV. Rock-a-Bye Baby – Simple Steps to help your baby sleep through the night

While helping you formulate a plan to help your baby sleep longer without getting disturbed, we have suggested that you use various comforting methods to help her go to sleep. We will now make practical suggestions that you can use to help your baby go to sleep or help her go back to sleep, if she wakes up in the night, mixed with a few dos and don'ts.

1. Be realistic about parenting, especially at nighttimes.

Parenting is exciting but most of the time, it is hard work, especially nighttime parenting. You have to be realistic about the kind of expectations that you set for yourself. Your goal should not be to get your baby to sleep longer, as quickly as possible. Instead your goal should be to help her develop a long-term healthy attitude towards sleep. She should feel comfortable about going to sleep and not anxious. So the best thing you could do is to create an environment that your baby feels secure and comfortable in so that she can go to sleep easily without any feelings of anxiety. In fact, the way your baby feels about sleep is carried over even as she grows old. And if she has not developed a healthy attitude toward sleep and still carries some anxiety towards it, it could lead to sleep disorders at a later stage. So be patient and put your energies in instilling a restful attitude towards sleep in your baby so as she grows older, she will learn to sleep even better.

2. Be wary of sleeping aids or sleeping trainers.

Parenting has always been serious business and you will find many well-intentioned books trying to give sleep-deprived, desperate parents quick solutions to help their baby sleep through the night. However, if you look carefully you will realize that all are just variations of one method – letting your baby cry herself to sleep. They may even sugarcoat it enough for you to be convinced that what you are doing is right for your baby. This complemented with a variety of gadgets like crib vibrators or breathing teddy bears, give hope to a parent that there is a simple solution to their problem. Take this with a pinch of salt. Most of these techniques take advantage of

tired, desperate parents who are looking for some relief and who do not have the time or energy to thoroughly vet the product. However, remember that it is your baby we are talking about. What does your inner voice say? Are you really ok leaving your baby to cry with a teddy bear when every instinct of yours is telling you to go to her? Follow your instincts; they will always be the best judge when it comes to decisions about your baby.

Instead of resorting to some sleep-training gimmick, work on the plan mentioned earlier. Make some changes in your lifestyle and your nighttime routine so that you can better meet your baby's needs. After all, it is much easier for you to make changes in your life and your responses – your baby's responses are always going to be more unpredictable.

3. Be patient, be flexible.

Even though you may be offered suggestions on how to make your baby go to sleep, remember that all babies are different. There can never be one single approach that will be guaranteed to work with all babies. The best thing would be to try one method and if that does not work or is making you too uncomfortable, switch over to another method. Remember that your method has to allow your baby and your whole family to sleep peacefully. You will therefore have to work on different methods which will allow you to not dramatically alter your family's lifestyle and at the same time, develop a consistent approach to helping your baby sleep. Do not be rigid about not trying any approach; just make sure you follow your heart while making decisions.

4. Find where your baby sleeps best.

Part of being flexible is that you cannot say that there is a right or wrong place for your baby to sleep in. It is absolutely all right to allow her to sleep in her crib without feeling guilty about it if she is comfortable there. On the other hand, just because there have been suggestions that a baby should sleep in her bed or crib, does not mean she cannot start off by sleeping in your bed. Most parents in fact go through two or more sleeping arrangements till their child is at least two years old and starts to really sleep by herself. All you need to do is be prepared that things are going to

change and that you will need to make adjustments in your sleeping arrangements whenever that happens.

5. You cannot force your baby to sleep.

However frustrated you may feel when your baby does not go to sleep, you have to realize that you cannot force your baby to sleep. You can only create an environment in which she feels comfortable and secure so that when she does start to get tired and feeling sleepy, she does not resist it but instead peacefully goes to sleep.

6. Sleep associations can be very helpful.

Most approaches to helping your baby sleep through the night follow the theory that when a baby goes to sleep in a certain way, she almost always looks for the same things when she wakes up at any point. Like if she has been rocked to sleep, she will wake up hoping that she will be rocked to sleep again. If she has been nursed to sleep, she may want you to nurse her to sleep again. Therefore, try different things on different nights so that your baby does not become too dependent on just way of falling or staying asleep.

7. Understand daytime effects

It is always helpful if your baby is well attended to even during the daytime. Letting her cry because it is day and not so imperative that she or any other member of the family sleep could be a big mistake. By end of day, she could be so anxious and tired that it translates into nighttime anxiety as well and it is going to be twice as difficult to get her to sleep. Take the time out to attend to your baby even if you have a load of things to attend to. It will also be helpful if you set up regular daytime nap routines as well. You could lie down with your baby to not only get her to sleep well but also to give you some break during the day. It has been proved that babies who follow regular, consistent daytime nap routines are more settled at night and more prone to sleeping better and longer.

8. Work on building consistent bedtime rituals.

Most babies like routines and more importantly they like to follow a consistent bedtime routine. It helps them to go to sleep more easily and have less night wakings. However, with busy lifestyles, managing a consistent bedtime routine is never easy. As working parents work longer in the offices, they often return home late and babies tend to sleep late. In such a case, make sure that your baby has a late afternoon nap as well.

Work on setting up a bedtime routine, which you should do your best to follow every night. This could include a warm bath, followed by a massage and then reading something to the baby till she starts feeling sleepy.

9. Feed your baby well during the day.

Babies do not know what nighttime or daytime is. They have to learn that daytime is for eating and playing while nighttime is mostly for sleeping. At times, babies are so excited during the day that they forget how hungry they are and even miss some feedings. This only causes them to wake up more during the night. For starters, feed your baby every three hours so that you make sure she is not hungry during the day. Next, at baby's first waking, try to feed her to the full so that she goes back to sleep feeling full and can go longer without getting disturbed.

10. Nurse her to sleep

You can always nurse or bottle-feed your baby to sleep. She will always be most comfortable in your arms and the transition from warm bath to warm arms to warm bed is a lot smoother than anything else.

11. Get father to do his share.

You may be surprised but it is not just a mother's soothing voice that helps baby go to sleep, even the father's deep voice gives out pleasant vibrations that helps the baby sleep. Try putting your baby on your chest, with your chin on her little head, speaking soothingly to her and then slowly rock her to sleep. If your baby does not

fall asleep even after some time, try lying down with baby still on your chest and baby nestling in your neck and letting her go to sleep there. Once you know she is asleep, put her gently into the bed.

12. Rocking baby or walking up and down with baby.

You could try sitting in one place and rocking your baby to sleep. If you have the energy, walk to and fro with your baby in your arms, singing to her or just patting her on her back till she falls asleep.

13. Snuggle down with baby.

Some babies simply do not want to be left alone. The moment they sense separation from you, they are going to stir and complain. The only solution is for you to finish nursing or rocking her and as she goes to sleep, you can lie down next to her till she is really into deep sleep.

14. Help them wind down.

As babies get a little older, they are very excited about their surroundings; they respond more and more to you and to what you say. In fact, at times they are so excited that they have great difficulty in winding down for the night. You will need to help her settle down before trying to help her to go to sleep. One of the best ways of doing so may be to put your baby in a baby sling and carry her around for some time, helping her to relax and unwind. You will know that she is fully asleep when you can sense her deep breathing and her limbs go completely limp. When you are sure that some time has passed since she fell deeply asleep, you can move her into a bed. If your baby is used to unwinding while nursing and then lying in a mother's arms, maybe her father can take her once she is done nursing and then help her to relax.

15. Use gentle swings for winding down.

Swinging a baby gently may help a baby to wind down and if you have neither the energy nor time to help your baby unwind every evening, a mechanical swing may

be a good option. Sometimes babies tend to associate their parent's arms with playtime and get all excited when they are picked up by them. It is very difficult for them to wind down in either parent's arms and a mechanical swing may be more helpful in such situations. However, you will never know for sure whether these mechanical swings will work every time or if your baby will only cry harder to be picked up. Before you get desperate and go and buy one of these mechanical swings, see if you could borrow one for some time and see if your baby will go for it. Chances are she will still want you and you may just need to think of more creative ways of dealing with this problem.

16. Try driving her around for some time.

One of the most popular techniques vouched for by a vast majority of parents is to try driving your baby around. If you have tried all other at-home methods like nursing, rocking or swinging her to sleep, you may want to try this method. Put your baby in a car seat and gently drive her around. Make sure you do not drive into noisy areas or places, which could distract her or further excite her. A drive through some wooded areas at a gentle pace should put her to sleep. If you have the energy and the time, you could wait for her first night waking. After you help her get over that and into deep sleep again, you could drive back and put her into her own bed.

17. Cuddly bears.

The fact that mechanical gadgets that work on helping your baby sleep, are now a roaring business is proof of how desperate parents are for their baby and themselves to have a good night's rest. As a temporary solution or as a method of getting some much-needed relief, one or two of these gadgets may be a good idea. One such gadget is a teddy bear, which has a hidden tape player and could sing as well as breathe rhythmically. Your baby can snuggle up to this teddy bear and listen to the singing or relax against the breathing. However, a sustained use of such gadgets or too many of them may not be a healthy idea.

We have now offered you many practical suggestions on how you can get your baby to sleep. Next comes the part of how you can get your baby to stay asleep or at least minimize the night wakings. At this point, many may tell you to let your baby cry herself

to sleep. That you need not go to her and that you may be making her more dependent on you if you run to her every time she cries. However, with what modern research now shows us, babies wake up often for a reason and not allowing their sleep patterns mature on their own can not only cause your baby to lose trust in you but also cause great damage to their overall development. So, just as you had done when you had to get your baby to fall asleep, try any of the various suggestions we have outlined to help her to stay asleep.

1. Getting baby ready.

You have to train your baby to associate certain conditions with nighttime sleep, which will help her to unwind and relax.

One of your nighttime routines could be to swaddle your baby before putting her down to sleep. Babies especially infants, like to feel warm and secure and one way of doing that is to swaddle them tightly in a comfortable cotton blanket. As they grow older, babies like looser clothing. To make baby settle into a night time routine, you could put looser clothes during daytime while swaddling her at night letting her know when it is time for her to sleep longer.

Another way of making sure that your baby knows that it is nighttime and that she needs to sleep, could be switching off unwanted lights and ensuring that there is enough quiet in the house, especially in the bedroom. Most babies do tend to get used to household noises and yet sudden noises will tend to disturb her. Make sure small things like creaky joints and springs are taken care, the dog is let out and the phone ringer volume is reduced.

2. Building up some familiar sounds to sleep by.

Most parents will find that babies can go to sleep more easily if they hear some familiar sounds over and over again. Like the sounds of a fan, or an air conditioner. Even vacuum cleaner sounds seem to help. Putting baby in a car seat and then placing that on a running washing machine is another method that is highly spoken about. The theory is that these kinds of repetitive almost humming sounds seem to give babies the same sense as they had when they

were in their mother's womb. In fact you will be surprised at what else will induce a baby to sleep - a bubbling fish tank, a gentle ticking clock, even running water from a tap. You could also try other soothing sounds like the sounds of breaking waves on the ocean or waterfalls all of which you can find recorded on CDs.

3. Trying music.

If your baby likes lullabies, you could try playing a CD, which has a collection of special nighttime lullabies. In fact, you can find a collection of classical numbers of masters like Beethoven, Mendel and so on which help many babies relax and wind down. You could always cut a CD with some of your baby's very own favorite lullabies and play it for her at night.

4. Making sure baby is full

Getting your baby to stuff herself before she goes to bed may not be a good idea. However, trying to feed her a little extra, like a couple of teaspoons more of cereal or fruit before bedtime may not be a bad idea. Little babies have little tummies and they digest whatever they have eaten very quickly. This is why when babies are really small, you are advised to feed them every 3 – 4 hours at night. Even as they grow older, more often than not it is hunger that wakes up them from sleep. So you could try giving her a full feeding before she goes to sleep or at her first night waking.

5. Reduce discomforts.

Sometimes actual physical discomforts stop a baby from going to sleep or staying asleep.

- a. Change your baby's soiled or wet diapers. Though some babies manage to sleep through the night even with wet diapers on, most do not like the feeling of discomfort. Rather than have her wake up because of wet diapers, you could at some point, change her diapers so that she sleeps through. One helpful tip: try changing your baby just before she finishes feeding because as soon as she finishes feeding, she is more than likely

to fall asleep. Just to warn you, some babies could have bowel movements immediately after or during feedings which means you may have to change diapers again.

- b. Unblock her nose. If your baby has been suffering from a cold, she may find it difficult to breathe even though she could breathe through her mouth. Try unblocking her nose before you put her down to sleep. Sometimes allergies caused by dust and dirt can keep your baby awake. Make your baby's bedroom as dust-free as possible by removing fuzzy toys that could collect dust, fuzzy blankets and even down comforters.
 - c. Consider if she has teething pain. Slightly older babies begin having teething discomfort though she may not be able to communicate that to you. You may not be able to feel her teeth in her mouth but there may be some symptoms, which could indicate that she is teething. Slightly swollen gums, excessive drooling, slight fever all may indicate that she is teething and may even be in some pain. Speak to a doctor and see if you can give some pain and fever medication so that your baby can sleep without too much discomfort.
 - d. Put comfortable clothes on her. It is quite possible that your baby is allergic to a certain kind of clothing and that you are completely unaware of it. Most babies show some kind of rashes because of these allergies while some are just restless. If you have run through everything possible and cannot find any other cause of your baby's obvious discomfort, try changing your baby's clothing to an all cotton one and see if it works.
 - e. Eliminate irritants in the air. Some very common irritants are baby powder, hair spray, dust from stuffed animals, dust from furniture, even animal dander. Cigarette smoke can be an irritant and very dangerous to a baby's health.
6. Make sure the bed is warm.

When you are moving your baby to a bed, you are essentially removing her from the warmth and comfort of your arms to a place that is possible cold and still. That is bound to disturb her. Try keeping a warm towel on her bed just before you put her in so that she can feel the warmth even in the bed.

7. Making sure that the bedroom has the right temperature.

You need not be afraid of your baby suffering in the winter or summer. Keeping the temperature in the bedroom consistently around 70 degrees Fahrenheit is best. Also if the air is too dry, it may leave your baby with a dry nose while higher levels of humidity breed molds that can cause allergies. You could try getting a warm-mist vaporizer to maintain the right level of humidity in the bedroom. As an added bonus, the vaporizer generates a monotonous hum, which many babies find soothing and helpful to sleep.

8. Finally, what should you do when your baby does wake up at night? You need to work on a parenting style that will help your baby go back to sleep without being rushed into it and yet at the same time, recognizing that others in the family too need their sleep. Some babies very quickly manage to get back to sleep but others need some kind of comforting, some kind of knowing that they are not alone before they can go back to sleep. You could try some of these solutions to get your baby asleep again.

- a. Gently pat her or just lay an arm around her. What is your baby like? Is she generally the low-attention kind who even during a waking manages to comfort herself and then drifts back into deep sleep? Or is she the high-attention kind of baby who simply cannot go back to sleep unless she is properly attended to? If your baby is of the second type, you may want to go to her as soon as she shows any signs of stirring so that you can attend to her before she completely wakes up. Try to put a protective arm around her or try patting her gently back to sleep. Only after you are sure that she has slipped into deep sleep, remove your hand.
- b. Sometimes, fathers can do a lot to help a baby get back to sleep. If your baby has woken up for a feeding, after the mother is done nursing, maybe the father could hold the baby in his arms or lay her on his chest to help go back to sleep.

9. Look for and treat medical causes of night wakings.

It is quite possible that you have tried all the above techniques and your baby is not able to go to sleep or has frequent wakings. As we have mentioned before,

you may need to find out if there is a medical reason for it. From GER (gastroesophageal reflux), which can cause tummy pain to allergies from formula milk, anything could be causing great discomfort to your baby. Normal night wakings are normal; night wakings because of medical reasons are painful. In fact you can make out from the way your baby reacts, if she is waking up because of her hunger or because of the pain. Never hesitate to discuss these with your doctor or pediatrician as the earlier the problem is diagnosed and treatment, the sooner your baby will be able to sleep peacefully.

All the above suggestions are aimed not only in helping you and your baby sleep better but more importantly, they aim to develop in your baby a healthy sleep attitude which will stand her in good stead throughout her life. And therein lies your true success.

V. Final words for you and baby – Continuing the good work

After reading this book, you may have already started working on your plan to helping your baby sleep. You may already gone through your fair share of ups and downs. What is important is that you be able to handle the stress and distress that comes with the job and continue doing the good work to build a solid foundation for your baby.

- As you continue on your journey of helping your baby settled into regular routines especially at night, you are bound to go through periods of elation and periods of great frustration. All by yourself you may find the going very tough and this may undo the tremendous progress that you have achieved so far with your baby. In fact, you may be surprised to know that almost all new parents go through these kind of anxieties and periods of distress and loneliness.

When your baby came in, you immediately felt a connection for her. And as she grew, so did your attachment to her. You could not bear to see her cry and in fact, now you cannot bear to see any other baby cry. You knew that you wanted only the best for her and so even if you are told something by friends, doctors, family, or books, you want to be thoroughly convinced that that is what is best for your baby. You trust your instincts and even if following them means suffering from time to time, you are willing to bear it for your baby's sake. However there are times when you simply lack the energy, the motivation and the confidence that you are doing the right thing and if so why is your baby still having these problems?

Your baby will eventually settle down in to a comfortable sleep pattern but till then you should be looking after not only her but after yourself too. Take occasional breaks and get help from whoever is willing to help. You will find that this rejuvenates your mind and your spirit and you are ready to be with your baby and help her again.

- At times of extreme frustration and anxiety, you may find it helpful if you have someone to just speak to or someone whose shoulder you can cry on. You have followed your heart and decided that you do not want to let your baby cry herself to

sleep but the other alternatives are not easy and not quick either. It may help if you have support from friends, family, or even your pediatrician. This does not always work as at times the advice and feedback that you get are conflicting and you end up more confused than ever. In such situations try talking to other parents who have gone through what you are presently going through. You could join support groups for new parents where you will find people who have actually experienced the same problems as you have and have tried to look for solutions as you have. If there is no local support group, try to look for one on the Internet. There are a large number of parenting sites with helpful discussion boards and chat rooms where you will find advice or if nothing else, a place to vent your frustration. You can be sure you will find a huge number of sympathizers. All this will help you stay motivated and committed to doing the right thing.

- When you woken up for the fourth time in the night and nursed your baby and rocked her back to sleep, only to realize that it is already six and you need to be getting ready for office that you feeling like burying your face in your hands and having a good cry. Be assured, you are not the only parent to feel so and you will not be the last one to feel so. What is crucial at this point is to have just a little more patience. Take a deep breath, dig into those inner reserves of strength and say to yourself that you will be strong. You know that you will have to deal with this for a little while longer and that your baby's well-being depends on you being strong. You have to believe that very soon, your baby will be sleeping, literally like a baby and you will be able to move on to more exciting phases in your parenthood assured in the knowledge that you did not give up.
- When you put in the effort to help your baby no matter what suffering it causes you, you instill in your other children and unknowingly to you in your baby, a sense of decency, a sense of caring. They will learn from you what is right and what is wrong. They will help you and share your burdens and make you realize how successful you have been in nurturing your children. Even though there would have been times when you would have been racked by self-doubts, your would have followed your heart and looking at your children, you will realize that you took the right decision.

Similarly one day this small baby will grow up and sleeping problems will seem distant. However what will stay in their memories is how you followed only those

methods and accepted only those solutions that made sense to you, which you were convinced were aimed at not just solving a problem for that moment but would actually contribute to your baby's overall health and growth. They will, as a result, grow up to be more humane and more sensitive children, more attuned to the problems and sufferings of others. Thus the foundation that you lay today for your child will result not only in its physical well-being but also help her be a better person.

Of course, parenting challenges do not end here and you will soon have to turn your attention to other concerns. However, the last few months would have created a special bond between you and your baby. You know that you can trust your abilities to decide what is best for your child and your child trusts you. Together you are ready to face every challenge and enjoy every minute of being together.