



# BABY SLEEP *Cafe*

BEDTIME ROUTINE GUIDE



# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



**Why is the bedtime routine important?**

**Do I even need a bedtime routine?**

**What is the purpose?**

**When can I start the bedtime routine?**

**What if I'm just so tired at the end of the day that I don't even want to implement a bedtime routine?**

The fact of the matter is, when you consistently follow a bedtime routine, it becomes easier to put your little one to bed each night because they can predict what will happen thus making bedtime quicker and less stressful.

In this guide I will answer all of the questions above as well as give you a sample bedtime routine you can read and follow tonight!



# ALL THINGS ROUTINE

I don't know about you but I love routine. I love waking up in the morning, grabbing a cup of coffee, and sitting down to read and go over what I need to accomplish during the day.

I also love my bedtime routine where I take a shower in the evening, put on my face lotion, brush my teeth, get in my comfy jammies and sit and watch a show or two with my husband. I also remember when I had young children that I couldn't WAIT until my babies were in bed for the night! I mean, don't get me wrong...I sure did love those little ones but, let's be honest...the days can be LOOOOOONG!

The bedtime routine is so important because it is a signal to your little one that it is time to go to bed. This transition actually helps your little one to know what to expect when everyone is tired (including you) at the end of the day. It also helps to prepare them for sleep.



## THIS ROUTINE IS BENEFICIAL FOR YOU AS WELL

because the more that you do it, the quicker and easier it can be done. The time I recommend from start to finish is 30 minutes. The routine starts with a bath and ends with putting your child in their sleeping space awake.



# WHEN TO START



## HOW EARLY CAN I START?

When should I start the routine?  
You can start this routine the moment you bring your baby home from the hospital.

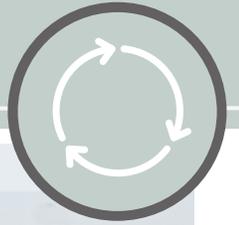
---

Obviously this will be very short and will not include all the things, but the more that you consistently practice this routine, the easier it becomes.

---

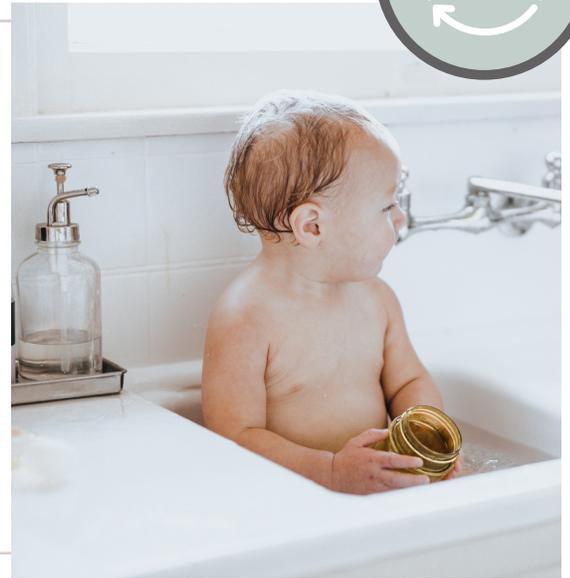
Of course, this will take several months for your little one to catch on, but doing the same thing every night is a great start.

# THE 30 MIN ROUTINE



## BATHTIME

The first thing that signals it is time for bed is the bath. It is ok if your little one has a fun time in the bath. The purpose isn't to light the candles, put on spa music, pour in the bubbles and relax (that might be for YOU later in the evening!) Rather, it is a time to signal the start of the bedtime as well as get clean. You and your baby should enjoy it! If your pediatrician recommends only giving a bath every other day due to skin issues, then you can still do a "bath" with a washcloth.

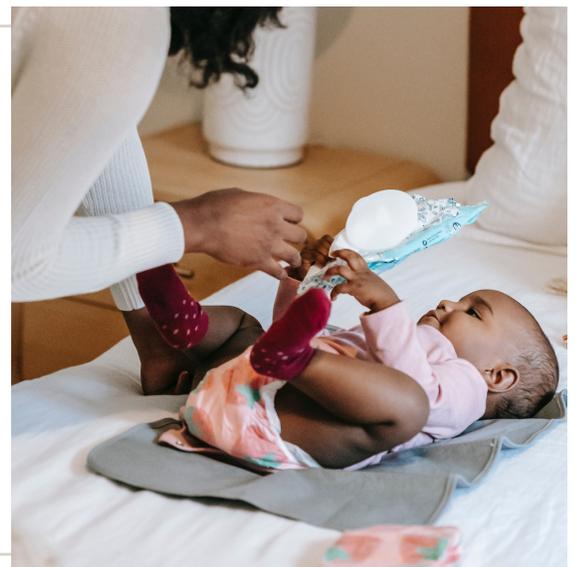


## MASSAGE

Next, it's time for a massage (if you choose to do this step). This doesn't have to be long and drawn out, but it can have a calming effect for a baby toddler or preschooler. A few minutes from head to toe is sufficient. I don't know about you, but having lavender lotion rubbed on me nightly would be something I would look forward to each night. Grab that lotion and put your masseuse skills to work. There are some simple techniques you can implement for baby massage but the most important thing is to have a calm and sweet time with your baby.

## DIAPER + FEED

The next steps are to put your baby in a diaper and onesie and feed him. If your child is over a year old you would skip this step as they don't need a bottle or feed at this age right before bed. The lights should be low, if possible. This should continue to be a nice and calming experience. Make sure that your little one does not fall asleep. This is probably the most important part of the bedtime routine as well as anytime during the day before naps. To establish healthy sleep habits, do not feed your baby to sleep.





## SWADDLE

After feeding and burping your baby, put him in his swaddle or sleepsack. If your baby struggles with reflux, you might want to do this before feeding.

## READING TIME

Depending on the age, you can read a book or two or perhaps even just the cover if they are very young. When your baby is very young, you can choose the same book or books during the bedtime routine as it is another signal that they can rely on for a sleep cue.



## WIND DOWN

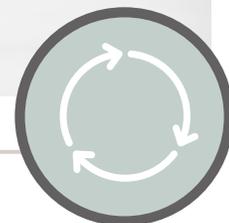
Next, turn off the lights, turn on the sound machine and either sing a song or say a prayer. I recommend doing the same song or prayer every night. During this time, make sure your baby is not falling asleep.

## GOODNIGHT

Finally, put them in their crib or bassinet awake and say goodnight and leave the room (and sigh a big sigh of relief and a pat on the back knowing that you made it through another day!)



REMEMBER IT'S ALL ABOUT SIGNALS





# CONGRATULATIONS

## NOW IT'S ALL ABOUT CONSISTENCY

Doing these same steps consistently night after night even starting when you have an infant, will help signal that it is time to wind down and go to bed.

They will start expecting that after bath there will be some mommy or daddy time together and then bedtime. Babies really do catch on early and start craving the bedtime routine. The more that you implement this, the calmer and more predictable these moments will be with your little one.

Soon you will find yourself having quiet and calm nights so that you can actually get some time for yourself as you do your own bedtime routine.





# BABY SLEEP *Cafe*

I'D LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR SUCCESS  
WITH THIS BEDTIME ROUTINE

feel free to reach out  
[becci@babysleepcafe.com](mailto:becci@babysleepcafe.com)  
 @babysleepcafe