

All the timings are essentially up to you. You can go faster or slower according to how well your child is coping with all the changes. It won't be harmful either way, and it will work, if you're consistent and patient. Remember, you may be MORE tired and inconvenienced in the initial stages! It's ok to press the pause button at any point, or even to abandon it and re-start another time if you think you haven't got the energy for it!!



**Further Information on children's sleep:**

[www.isisonline.org.uk](http://www.isisonline.org.uk)

**For further information on CSH Surrey Children & Families services:**

**Health Visitor advice line**  
**Mon –Friday 9:30-1pm 0208 979 6464**  
**[www.cshsurrey.co.uk](http://www.cshsurrey.co.uk)**

## Sleep

**How to gently reduce the amount of help your child needs to fall asleep**



If you are helping your child to fall asleep by using any of the following:

- Breastfeeding
- Bottle feeding
- Rocking
- Holding
- Bouncing

Then you are not alone! Most parents need to support their children to fall asleep. This is only a problem if it is becoming a problem for you. Before you start, please remember: **If you need to rock, feed, or hold your baby to sleep, then bear in mind that anything else you do is going to be harder work, take more time, and probably result in even less sleep initially. Only start when you are sure it is the right time for your family, and you have support from friends, family or a partner.**

Step 1) Immediately:

- Try to prolong the daytime naps to prevent over-tiredness
- Initiate a bedtime story or some other calming activity pre-bed
- Add in some extra sleep cues – such as patting/stroking, a sleep phrase, a favourite bedtime teddy/comforter, a lullaby, scent etc. WITHOUT removing the one your child needs
- Consider dietary causes, hunger and mealtimes
- Keep doing whatever is easiest to get your child to sleep at the moment, whilst adding in the new cues

Step 2) In 4-6 weeks' time:

Breastfeed/bottle feed/rock/bounce as usual, with the extra sleep cues as well, but stop just as your child is falling asleep. Keep doing all the other sleep cues until she is asleep.

Step 3) 2-3 days later (*these timings are entirely dependent on how well they adjust to the changes– it may be more like a week if they find it hard. Do not move on until your child is tolerating the changes*): Breastfeed/bottle/rock/bounce as usual, with your extra sleep cues, but this time, stop *just before they fall asleep*. Do this for every subsequent wake-up. At this point, keep doing all the other sleep cues until your child is asleep.

Step 4) 2-3 days later still:

Breastfeed/bottle/rock/bounce only very briefly, just to calm your child, but keep doing the other sleep cues. Stop as soon as they relax but keep holding your child in your arms. Pat/stroke, shush, sleep phrase, white noise etc. until they are asleep.

Step 5) 2-3 days after this (*warning – this is a tricky step as they are not getting a breastfeed/bottle/rock at all – keep calm and be consistent and persistent. This step may take longer than the others*):

No feeding or rocking (feed earlier in your routine – perhaps before the bath? - so that they don't fall asleep), just the other sleep cues until your child is very sleepy, then down in the cot. Continue patting/stroking, white noise and sleep phrase etc. until they are asleep.

Step 6) 2-3 days later (*warning – this is a tricky step, as they are going in their cot awake – keep calm, and have patience!!!*):

Hold in your arms and do all your sleep cues for a few moments until your child is calm but awake, then put them down in the cot. Pat/stroke, shush, sleep phrase, white noise etc. until they are asleep.

Step 7) 2-3 days later:

Straight down in the cot, and pat/stroke, shush/white noise etc. until they are **almost** asleep.

Step 8) Once this is working reasonably well:

Put your child straight down in the cot, and pat/stroke, shush etc. until they are relaxed. Stop the most annoying sleep cue – probably the patting/stroking – earlier than the others. Wean off any remaining sleep cues that you find difficult in the same way. It is quicker to remove patting/shushing as they are unlikely to be as addicted to them!