



Early Morning Wake Ups



**EARLY MORNING  
WAKE UPS**

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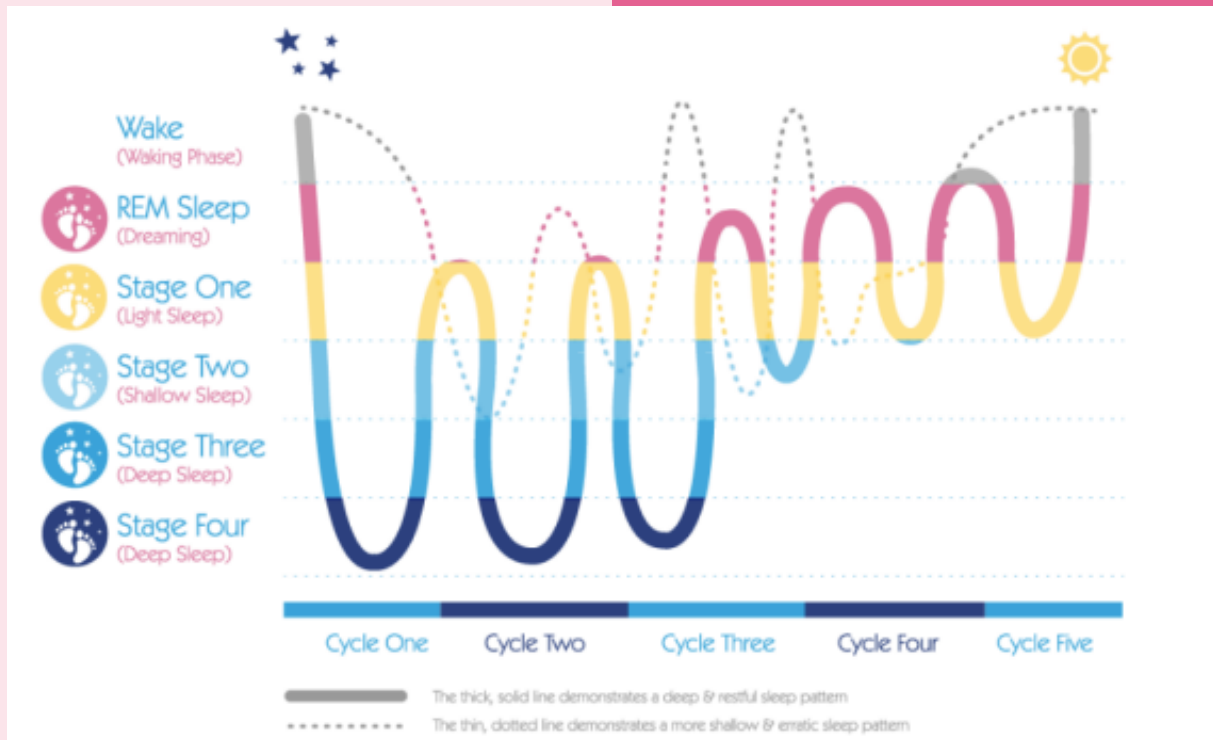
# CONTENTS

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1. Understand the Biology of early starts
2. Environmental factors that affect early wake ups
3. A continuation of night sleep
4. Self-settling
5. Late nights
6. Zeitgibers what are these
7. Why gentle sleep training sometimes doesn't work
8. Why you shouldn't start your day at 5am
9. Why your sleep training clock isn't working
10. 4 different solutions to choose from
11. Signs your sleep solution is working
12. 1 Sleep log to print and use

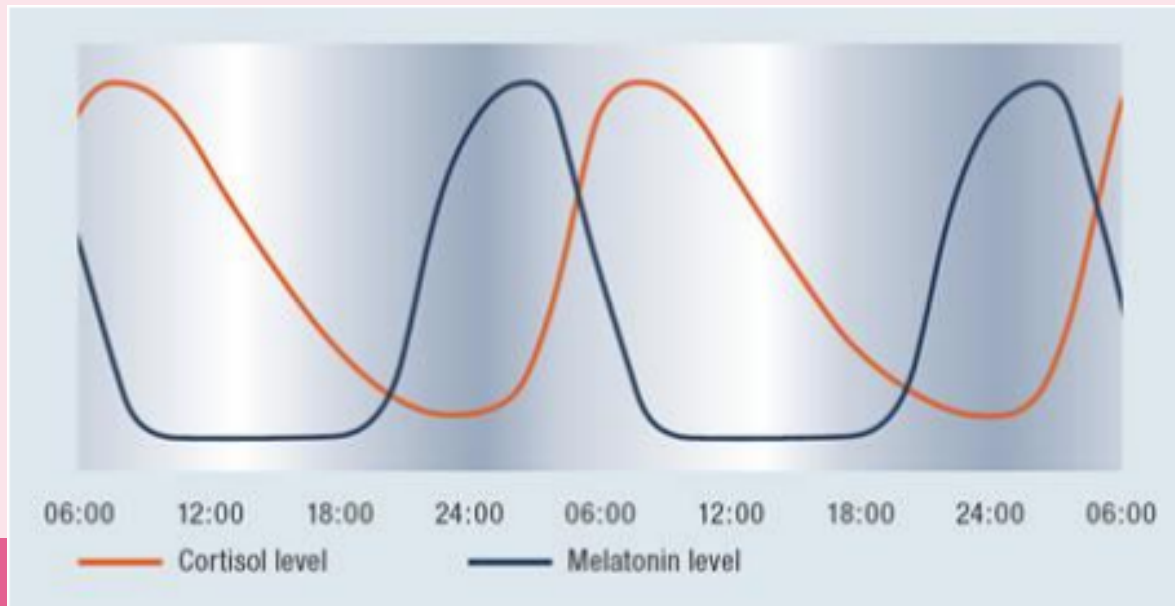
## *The Biology of Night Sleep*

Understand the biology of early morning wake ups is very important, once you understand this you can stop thinking your child is just genetically the worst sleeper you have ever met! You have the ability to work with your child's natural sleep cues, and their biology rhythm and teach them to sleep soundly until 6-7am.



This chart demonstrates the stages of light and deep sleep which our babies and toddlers are going through each night. You can see as the night goes on the child spends less time in the deep sleep, and has more short cycles which only hover into stage 1 or 2.

This means your child is having what we call small partial awakenings, and the time spent in a light sleep means they are easily awoken by outside noises, and why we might hear them chatting and carrying on in the wee hours, and sometimes think they haven't slept at all since 4am! But they have probably dozed off for the short periods you see in the chart.



This chart shows you how much our melatonin levels drop off from midnight to morning, this hormone is responsible for keeping us asleep. Combine this with rising cortisol levels which actively wakes us up, and you can see why early morning wake ups are so much trickier to solve than night sleep issues, and why they are a problem for so many of us

# *Environmental Factors that Contribute to Early Wake Ups.*

**Tick Any that Apply to Your Situation.**

- Child too cold - consider sleeping bags, good quality PJ's, heaters in winter.
- Thirsty - ensure you offer water with all meals, and a drink before bed.
- Child too hot - use fans in summer, natural fibers  
Room too bright - need black out blinds.
- External noises - bird, dad getting up for work, trucks driving past.
- Hungry due to lack of protein or needing a night feed until 9 months old.

## *A Continuation of Night Sleep*

- Timing of morning naps affects whether your baby views the morning nap as a continuation of their night sleep or not. If they do view it as part of their night sleep, you are asking them to sleep 7pm-10am, and thus they will wake early to have enough awake time to build enough sleep debt, to sleep until 10am once they go down for their nap.
- Once your baby is 6 months + ensuring your morning nap is later than 8.30am will help keep away early wake ups.
- Preferably 9/9.30am, especially after 8 months, BUT this needs to coincide with extension of the night sleep past 6am or your baby will be awake far too long to cope
- Naps earlier than this can be seen as a continuum of night sleep, and encourage the early starts.
- Restricting the length of the morning nap to 60-45-30 minutes (depending on age) can also help keep away early starts.
- Use a 10-20 minute bridging nap at 7.30/8am if your baby can't wait until 9am, but has woken before 6am. This is a SHORT TERM solution.



## *Can Your Child Self-Settle?*

- If your baby or toddler relies on you to go to sleep at the start of the night, or throughout the night, then we can't expect them to put themselves back to sleep at 5am.
- Your first port of call would be working on self-settling. You can do this at the start of the night, and throughout the night, as well as your naps. Once your baby can self settle at bed time and throughout the night, we can work on early wake ups. For more help on self-settling check out
- [www.babysleepconsultant.co.nz](http://www.babysleepconsultant.co.nz)
- [www.babysleepconsultant.com.au](http://www.babysleepconsultant.com.au)
- Or sleep packages are what you need to get started, I would recommend a phone or email consult for a straight forward plan and received quickly.





## *Late Nights – Early Wake Ups*

- Over tired hormones, cortisol and adrenaline are not conducive to good sleep, they cause more wake ups overnight, this exasperates the overtired issue and contributes to early starts.
- Over tiredness is the driver behind early wake ups, most children who habitually wake early are chronically over tired unless they also go to bed at 5pm.
- Solution: Earlier to bed! Try 6pm in bed for around 3-7 days.



## *What are Zeitgebers?*

- A zeitgeber is any external or environmental cue that entrains or synchronizes an organism's biological rhythms to the Earth's 24-hour light/dark cycle and 12-month cycle.
- Food, light, social interaction, we need to eliminate these 3 factors between 5am-7am. So no talking, growling, chatting, singing, bottles, breastfeeding, snacks, light from behind curtains, hall doors open with light shining in.

## *Why Gentle Sleep Training Sometimes Doesn't Work for Early Starts?*

- Gentle sleep training involves a parent in the room with the child, and often a lot of interaction. This means that the 3 factors we are trying to eliminate are often present, food, light and social interaction. Even if we remove the food and light, some children are sensitive to the social interaction of a parent being there and we need to remove the parent for success.

- A gradual reduction of interactions is needed to resolve the early start, either moving towards the door as explained below, or leaving the room at intervals.

# *Why I Don't Recommend You Get Your Child Up at 5am*

- Reinforcing the circadian rhythm with social and environmental cues.
- Consider gradually moving your 5am start by 15 minute increments over a period of 1-3 weeks, these options are explained below. 5am starts are ok when your baby can nap to catch up, but once your toddler drops their naps you are left with a toddler trying to cope over a 14-15 hour day with no nap. This is where most toddler tantrums and behavior issues stem from, over tiredness!



# *Why Your Toddler Sleep Trainer Clock is Not Working?*

- Inconsistent approach, like all sleep training, using a clock needs complete consistency to work.
- Inconsistent or lack of consequences, these also need to be consistent. So be really clear!
- Child is too young 2.5 -3 years is the best age to kick this in
- Solution?
- Clear consequences, both positive and negative, stickers on the hand, high fives, stamps and immediate positive consequences. Negative might be door shut, silent return or similar.
- Consistency for 3 weeks, your toddlers habits won't change quickly, hang in there!



## *Solution 1 – Fast and Effective*

- Choose your appropriate awake time, ensure it is age appropriate
- Ensure your child is not hungry, or cold and their sleep environment is not waking them up.
- Ensure they do not go to bed over tired.
- Ensure you are confident your baby or toddler is safe and can self-settle
- Leave your baby or toddler from their early wake up, until you set wake up time each day, you will need to use a baby gate or shut door for a toddler. Or you can do a silent return EVERY single time they get up from 5am-7am, until they stay in bed, or its 7am.
- Ensure your morning nap is not sabotaging you.
- Be consistent for 1-3 weeks
- The older your child is, the longer this will take.
- If your baby is under 9 months old and doesn't go back to sleep before 7am, use a bridging nap.

## *Rules Before Starting Any of These Solutions 1-4*

1. Child not hot or cold
2. Protein adequate
3. Child not over tired (early to bed)
4. Bedroom safe if child can get out of bed
5. Cot safe if child in a cot
6. Morning nap not too early or long
7. Room doesn't have light creeping in
8. Child can self-settle



## *Solution 2 – Quick and Less Crying*

- Similar to solution one, but you will set your appropriate awake time just 15 minutes later than the time your child wakes now. For example if 5am is normal you will leave your child or do silent returns until 5.15am for 3 days. Then 5.30am for 3 days, and then 5.45am for 3 days.....
- Every 3 days move this wake up time by 15 minutes.
- This means if you have a 5am wake up today, you will have a 6am wake up in 12 days, and a 7am start in 24 days.
- You would expect to start to see your baby or toddler extending how long they sleep for in each 3 day increment.
- You will need to ensure all the rules of solution 1 are followed
- You will need to ensure all the rules of solution 1 are followed. If your toddler gets up, you will either have to lock/bungy/baby gate the door shut, or do silent returns, absolute no talking.

## *Solution 3 – Gentle But Consistent*

- Give your child 5-10 minutes to try to go back to sleep once they wake up in the morning, if they do not re-settle on their own, start your plan.
- Sit by their cot or bed, and use your voice to re-assure them intermittently. Try to give them 2-5-10 minute spaces between time when you re-assure them, so you are not constantly talking to them.
- If they stand up, occasionally lie them down. (every 5-10 minutes' max)
- If they get out of bed, put them back to bed silently.
- Repeat this until 6am at which time you can pretend you are happy and it is morning time.
- Week 2 repeat this until 6.30am, but sit 1-2 meters away from their cot/bed.
- Week 3 repeat this until 7am, and sit closer to the door, no lying your baby down, but put your toddler back to bed, IF they get out.
- Week 4, sit outside the door with it open a fraction.
- Ensure all the rules are followed from solution 1.

## *Solution 4 – A Little of Both*

- Give your child 5-10 minutes to try to go back to sleep once they wake up in the morning, if they do not re-settle on their own, start your plan.
- Check they are safe, lie them down if standing, pop them back to bed silently, if they have gotten up. Shush them for a few seconds, but don't interact or speak. Just check and console, and leave. Get out of the room after maximum 1-2 minutes!
- Give them 10 minutes to re-settle before checking and consoling again.
- Repeat until 6am for the first week.
- Repeat until 6.30am for the second week.
- Repeat until 7am for the third week.
- Ensure all the rules from solution 1 are followed.

## *Signs What You are Doing is Working?*

- Your baby cries with less anger or emotion.
- Your baby cries for less time, but doesn't go back to sleep.
- Your baby starts to go back to sleep.
- Your baby starts to lie down as you approach the cot.
- Your toddler starts to stay in bed longer.
- Your baby or toddler starts to wake later
- Your baby or toddler sleeps until 6.30/7am.
- Your baby or toddler wakes happy
- Keep a record of what you are doing, and the results you are seeing.

# *You Now Have All the Tools You Need*

- Some times parents need a little support and guidance from a sleep consultant.
- You can book 2 weeks support from any of our consultants for just \$77.00
- Email us at [admin@babysleepconsultant.co.nz](mailto:admin@babysleepconsultant.co.nz) or [admin@babysleepconsultant.com.au](mailto:admin@babysleepconsultant.com.au) with the subject line Early Wake Up - Follow Up.
- We'll review your chosen solution, your sleep logs and call you twice a week for 2 week, ensuring your success.

# A Sleep Log For You to Print to Use For the Sleep Training Time.

	Time	Activity	Notes
<b>Morning</b> 12am-10am			
<b>Midday</b> 10am-4pm			
<b>Evening</b> 4pm- 12am			



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