



Awake to asleep in the cot in 10 days.



**LEARN HOW TO
PUT YOUR
BABY DOWN
AWAKE.**

CONTENTS

- Why putting your baby down awake helps.
- Why drowsy but awake isn't the answer.
- Calm but awake is the key.
- Benefits of putting your baby down awake.
- What if they cry?
- Habit stacking before setting from awake to asleep for newborns.
- Hands on 0-4 months.
- 3-9 months.
- 9-12 months.
- What if they don't settle for a nap?
- What if they don't settle at bed time?
- Hurdles to your success.

Why putting your baby down awake helps.

If you've followed me for a while on social media, you'll know that I'm always encouraging you to learn how to put your baby down awake.

It might seem like an impossible feat at the moment, especially if you're currently stuck holding, feeding, or rocking to sleep.

I'm here to tell you it's not impossible, and once you learn how to do it, and your baby learns how to go to sleep in their crib, cot or bassinet sleep starts to become, easier, less stressful, longer, and more restorative!

When your baby falls asleep in your arms, and you transfer them to their cot or bassinet, a couple of things can happen.

1

If your baby is older than newborn and is not longer swaddled, you might find that they startle awake, and you can't actually transfer them. You're stuck holding, or they simply wake each time you pop them down.

2

Or if they're younger and swaddled, you might be able to get them down to take a nap, but then when they wake after a sleep cycle; they're no longer in your arms, so they cry out for you to pick them back up. This leads to short naps and often an over tired baby.

The solution to both these problems is settling from baby from awake to asleep in their cot.

Why drowsy but awake isn't the answer.

You might have also heard about the phrase drowsy but awake, and maybe you've thought this is the answer!

I disagree. I believe the phrase was developed with good intentions, but my experience with over 100,000 clients, tells me its confusing.

How drowsy?

How awake?

Most of my clients who try this strategy end up holding until their baby is asleep or 99% asleep, then try to transfer.

The other question this strategy brings up is how to progress from drowsy but awake to awake, and when.

It's all very ambiguous and, therefore not my favorite strategy.

Calm but awake is the key.

Instead of drowsy but awake, your plan is simply going to be to do a pre-sleep ritual which ensures your baby is calm before their nap, or bed time.

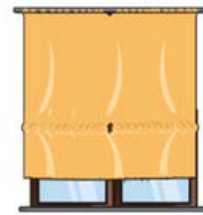
Calm and ready to sleep, but no need to make them drowsy.

Examples of your pre-sleep ritual could be, shutting curtains, popping sleeping bag or swaddle on, big cuddles, maybe sing a song or two, be patient and be the calming influence that helps your baby transition from awake and play time to asleep.

Pre- Sleep Routine



baby transition
from awake and
play time to asleep



shutting curtains



popping sleeping
bag or swaddle on



big cuddles

Or singing a song



Benefits of putting your baby down awake.

If you're still on the fence thinking about learning to put your baby down awake, let's chat about some of the benefits I see in my clients once they learn how to do this, and their baby learns how to also do this.

- Easier settling at the start of naps.
- Longer naps.
- Easier bedtime settles.
- No more cat napping.
- Anyone can put baby to bed.
- Longer nights.
- Easier routine transfer.
- Less sleep regressions.

You can see why I'm passionate about parents learning this skill!

What if they cry?

A recent social media poll of over 50,000 people showed the biggest fear parents had when it came to putting their baby down awake was their baby crying.

I get it.

No one wants to hear their baby cry, and there is NOTHING wrong with you if you feel like this.

My philosophy on crying is understanding that crying is communication.

What could they be trying to communicate with the crying?

Maybe they don't like that you're changing their sleep association (you settling in your arms).

Maybe they're crying because they're tired.

Or frustrated.

Could be confused if you've changed your approach a few times.

Maybe they're annoyed?

What ever it is, you are allowed to listen and respond you don't have to silence them and ensure your baby never cries.

Once you understand crying is communication you can start to respond instead of reacting.

I recommend responding to crying by stopping, listening and making a decision on what to do/try.

For newborns this might be a side settle, pat and shush, or a dummy. For older babies this might be a hand on them, a shush or a pick up.

Learn more about these strategies below.

Habit stacking before settling from awake to asleep for newborns.

If you have a newborn who loves to be held or fed to sleep and you haven't managed to put them down awake and settle them yet...

Try habit stacking patting for 3-7 days, then we'll try putting them in the cot!

How to?

When you're feeding or holding to sleep, start to also pat your newborns back or bottom while they settle and sleep.

If they fall asleep, keep patting in your arms for 5-10 minutes.

We are teaching your newborn to associate patting with going to sleep.

Once you've done this for a few days (minimum 3), you can start to cuddling until calm, and then putting your baby down awake and pat to sleep. (more on this below under 0-4 months).

You have stacked into your baby's settling tool kit patting, and now we can use to teach them to settle from awake to asleep in their cot!

Hands on 0-4 months.

Learning to settle your baby aged 0-4 months from awake to asleep is a hands-on strategy. This is because newborns are typically neurologically not ready for self-settling. This is an older baby strategy.

But also keep in mind that some newborns can become overstimulated by hands on settling around 3 months, and they're ready for you to back off and let them do a bit more.

But you will still be needed to help them calm down if they get upset.

You just won't have to assist them all the way to sleep.

1

Set the scene, make sure when you are trying to help your newborn settle to sleep from awake in their cot you have a great sleep environment set up. Nice and dark and not too hot. Your baby is in a swaddle, with their arms inside, either up in a love to dream, or down inside a zip up or wrap around swaddle. Most 0-4 month olds sleep better swaddled than unswaddled. You could try some white noise to ease the settling, and try the habit stacking strategy previously discussed to introduce patting to sleep.

2

Bring your baby to their sleep room 5-10 minutes before they are due for a nap. Shut the curtains, turn on some white noise, ensure they're not hungry, and they're in a clean nappy. Give them a big cuddle. I recommend cuddling and patting for 3-7 minutes to ensure your baby is nice and calm and ready to sleep.

3

Pop them down awake and see how they respond to this. Do they lay happily in their cot?

Yes? Leave the room and see if they drift off to sleep without you. If they start to cry follow the steps outlined below. If they cry immediately, follow the steps outlined below.

Baby cries

Place your hand on their chest and give a slight jiggle and shush near them. Give this 30 seconds to 3 minutes to work.

Stop crying?

Keep going for a further 3 minutes and then stop shushing, reduce jiggling and keep your hand on them for another 5 minutes before leaving.

Don't stop crying

Roll baby to their side facing you, ensure they're arm is in a comfortable position and they are not lying on it. Hold them on their side with one hand and pat their back with the other hand. Pat firmly and quickly if crying hard. Once crying is reduced, try a rhythmic tik tok patting pace, and less firm. They should be used to the patting as you habit stacked it in for 3 days, and they associate this with sleep.

Still crying?



Give the pat to sleep strategy 5 minutes to stop your baby crying. If they don't stop in 5 minutes, pick up and pat in your arms until they stop crying and are nice and calm. Move back to stage 3 as above and start this cycle again.



Patting works and baby stops crying?



Continue to pat with a tik tok rhythm for 5-10 minutes, becoming less and less firm as long as baby stays happy and sleepy. Finish with just a hand on the back giving firm pressure making baby feel secure. Roll in 3 stages to their back. Being careful to not jolt baby awake. Leave your hands on their chest for a minute or 2, slowly easing off the pressure before leaving the room.

Cycle through the stages for 20-30 minutes, increasing how long you hold each time to ensure the baby becomes very calm.

If after 30 minutes your baby is not asleep in their cot, hold and pat to sleep in your arms. We need to continue to create the habit of patting as a sleep association to improve your success in settling in the cot from awake to asleep with patting. Place down to sleep once they have been asleep for at least 10 minutes in your arms.

Continue to try the above, reading your baby's cues and trying not to panic, or rush through the process. They are learning a new skill with your assistance, it takes some time and practice.

3-9 months

This approach is aimed at 3-9 month olds. There is overlap with 3-4-month-olds as some 3-month-olds have outgrown the hands-on approach above, and are ready for less assistance from you. If they are in that 3-4 month window you will choose the more gentle approaches from the options below if they start to cry. They likely still need some help from you to get clam enough to go to sleep from awake in their cot.

1

Set the scene, make sure when you are trying to help your baby settle to sleep from awake in their cot you have a great sleep environment set up. Nice and dark and not too hot. Your baby is in a sleeping bag. You could try some white noise, and optional is a cuddly for your baby to hold.

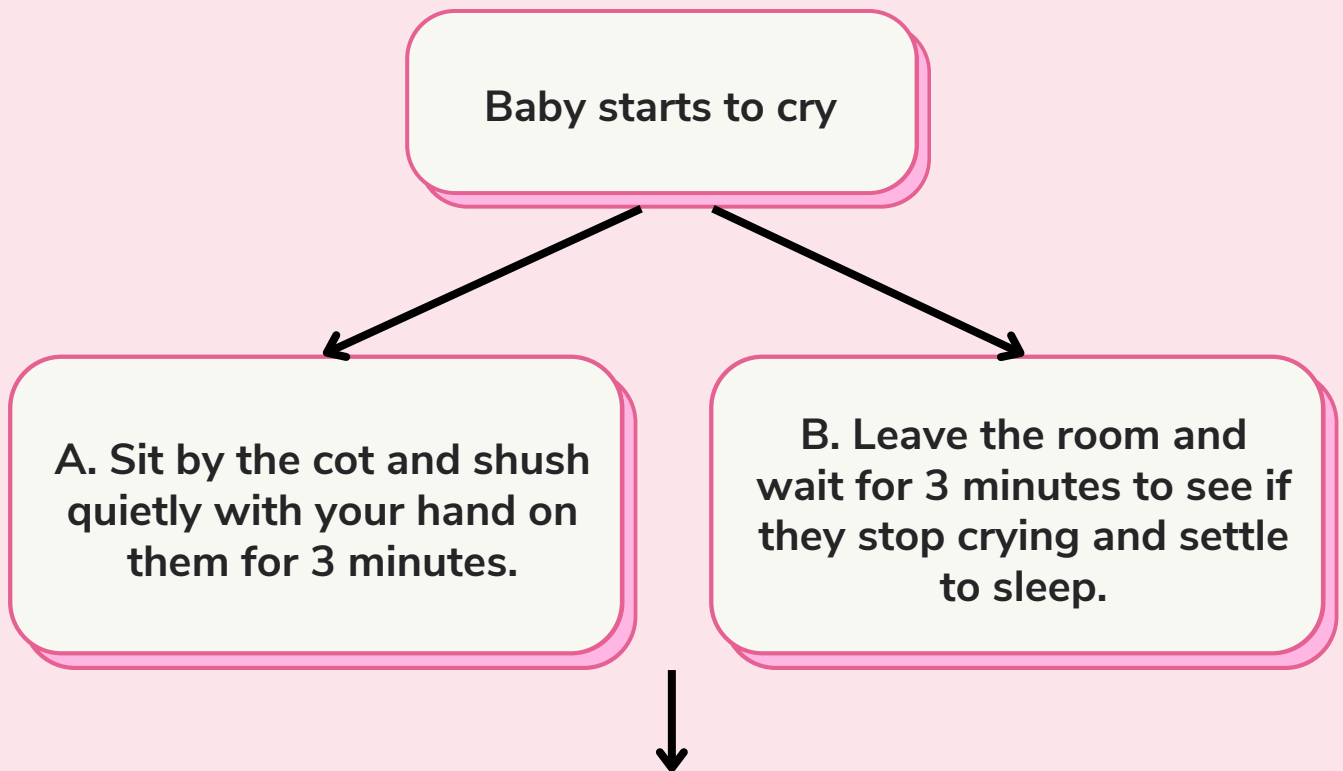
2

Bring your baby to their sleep room 5-10 minutes before they are due for a nap. Shut the curtains, turn on some white noise, ensure they're not hungry, and they're in a clean nappy. Give them a big cuddle. I recommend cuddling and patting for 3-7 minutes to ensure your baby is nice and calm and ready to sleep.

3

Pop them down awake and see how they respond to this. Do they lay happily in their cot? If yes, leave the room and let them sleep. If they start to cry, follow the process below.

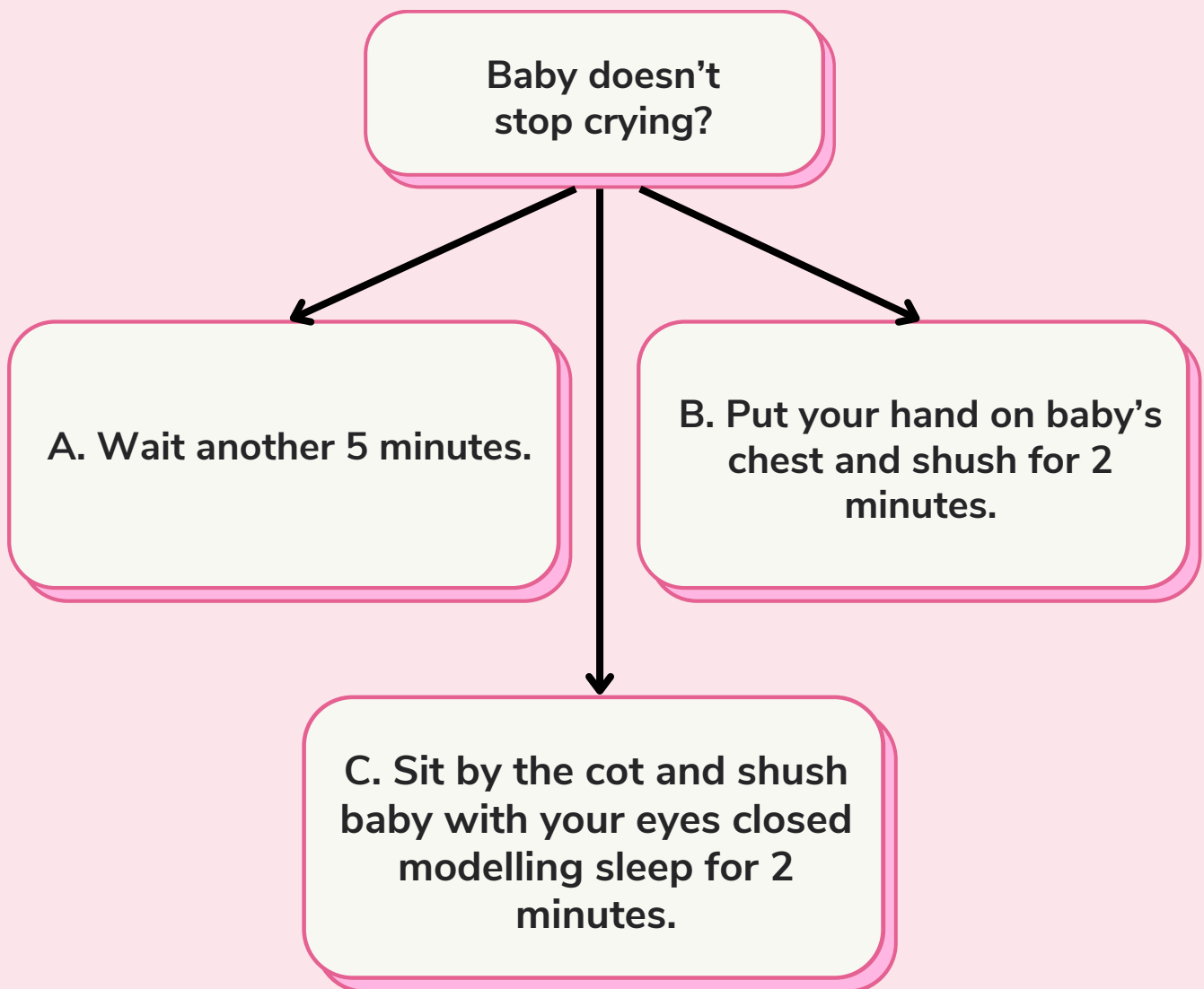
Stage 1: Choose from A or B



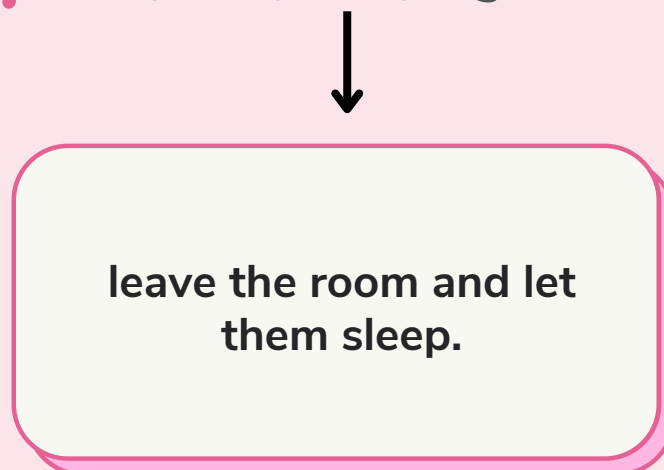
Baby stops crying from A or B?

Leave/stay out of the room, and let them sleep.

Stage 2: Choose from A B or C



Stage 3: Baby stops crying from A, B or C ?



Stage 4: Baby doesn't stop crying from
A B or C

Choose from D or E

**D. Leave the room and
wait for 5 minutes.**

**E. Pick up and cuddle to
calm for 3-5 minutes. Hold
and pat or rub their back,
you can shush, but don't
pace or bounce, or switch
from side to side. This can
be too stimulating. Place
back in the cot awake and
calm.**

If baby is crying again, move back to stage 2 and choose again.

If baby stops crying, leave the room and let them sleep.

Cycle through the stages for 30-60 minutes, using a pick up to calm as needed to ensure your baby calms down.

If after 30-60 minutes your baby is not asleep in their cot, cancel the nap and try again later or tomorrow. If this is bedtime, try a top-up feed to ensure they are not hungry. Cuddle until very calm, and try again.

Continue to try the above, reading your baby's cues and trying not to panic, or rush through the process. They are learning a new skill with your assistance; it takes some time and practice.

9-12 months

This approach is aimed at 9-12 month olds.

At this age your baby is learning to sit and stand, and this can start to interfere with sleep.

The strategy is similar to the previous strategy with time allowed for lying your baby down if they're sitting or standing.

If they get right back, just lie them back down, but don't force them to stay down.

You can apply a gentle hand on their back, but if they fight you, let them sit or stand and lie them down again.

Each time you do this, repeat it 3-4 times, then move on. They will gradually learn to lie down in order to go to sleep.

9-12 months

Because babies this age are smarter and more determined, we need to be clearer in our approach.

That is why we do any cuddles with them still in the cot so the message is very clear.

You need to stay in the cot to go to sleep.



1

Set the scene, make sure when you are trying to help your baby settle to sleep from awake in their cot you have a great sleep environment set up. Nice and dark and not too hot. Your baby is in a sleeping bag. You could try some white noise, and optional is a cuddly for your baby to hold.

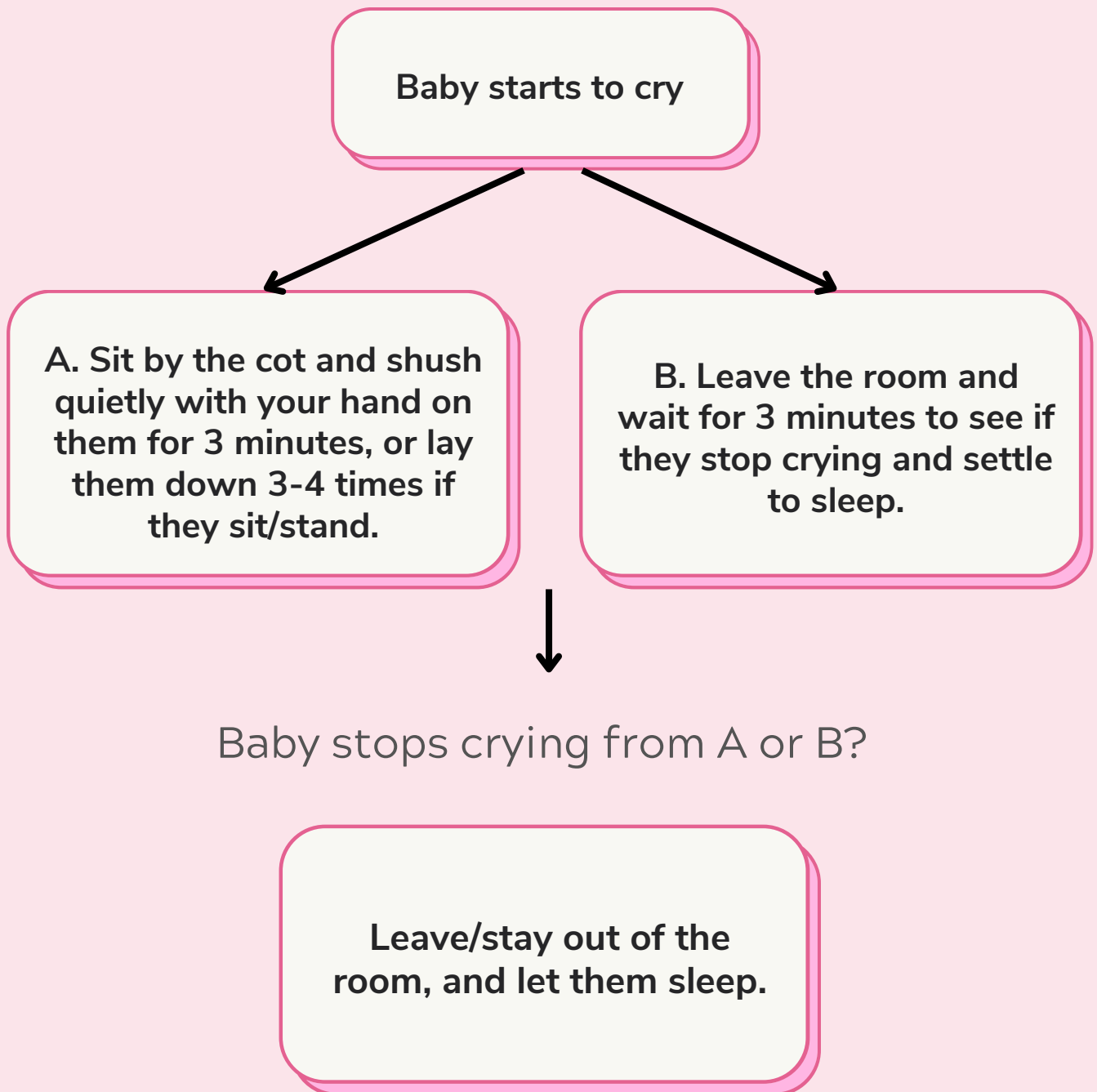
2

Bring your baby to their sleep room 5-10 minutes before they are due for a nap. Shut the curtains, turn on some white noise, ensure they're not hungry, and they're in a clean nappy. Read a book, and give them a big cuddle. I recommend cuddling and rubbing their back for 3-7 minutes to ensure your baby is nice and calm and ready to sleep.

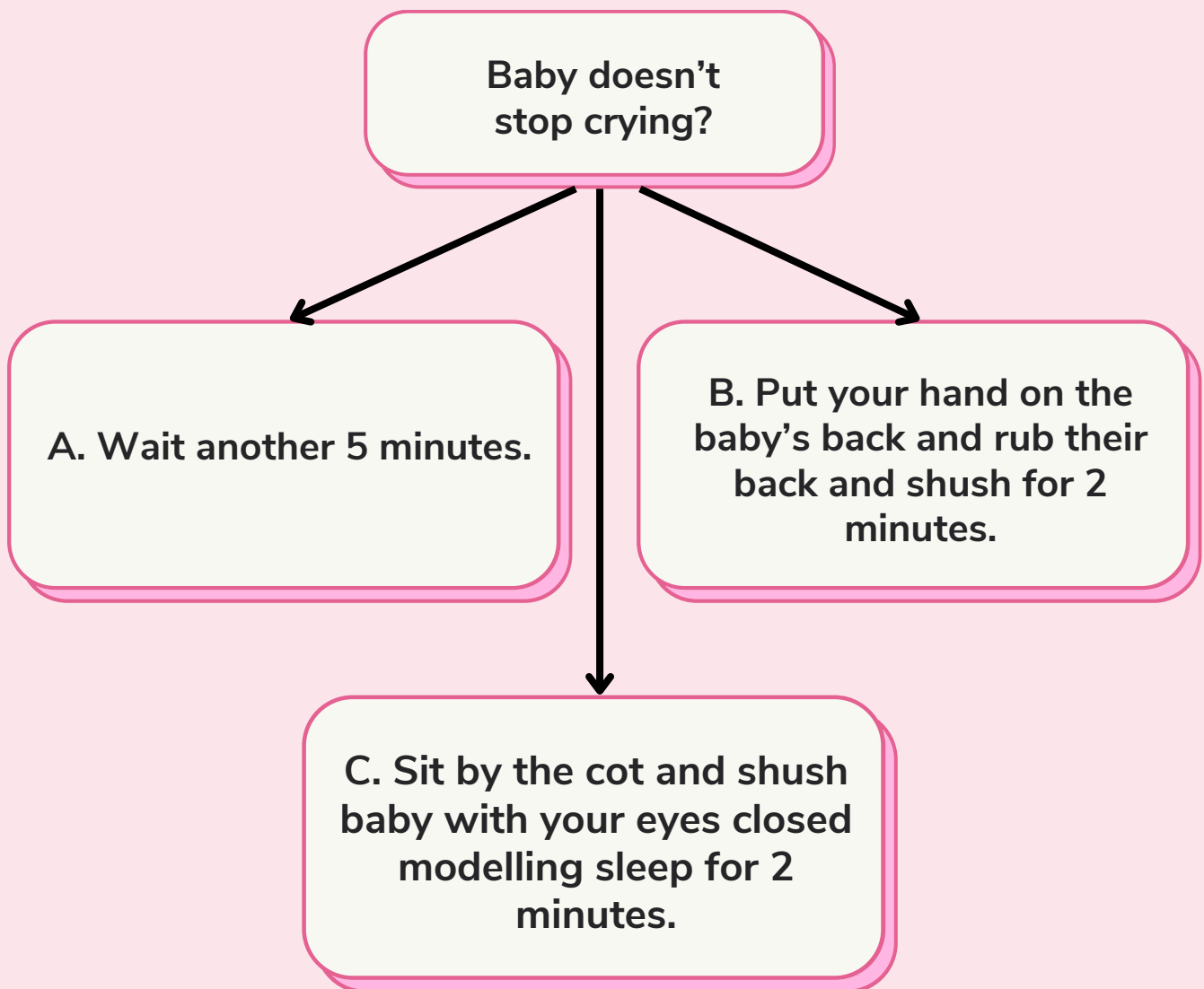
3

Pop them down awake and see how they respond to this. Do they lay happily in their cot? If yes, leave the room and let them sleep. If they start to cry, follow the process below.

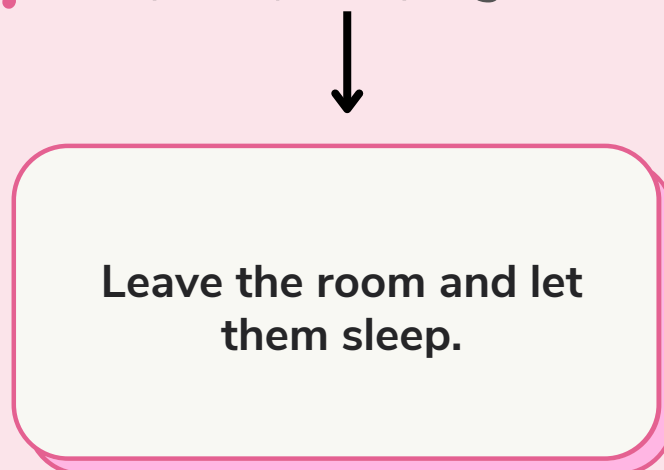
Stage 1: Choose from A or B



Stage 2: Choose from A B or C




Stage 3: Baby stops crying from A, B or C?



Stage 4: Baby doesn't stop crying from
A B or C

Choose from D or E



**D. Leave the room and
wait for 5 minutes.**

**E. If standing give a cuddle
over the cot bars, give
them 30-60 seconds and
lay them down. If they stay
down you can rub their
back for 2-3 minutes. If
they stand or sit up, lay
back down and try again.
Give this 5 minutes.**

If baby is crying again, move back to stage 2 and choose again.

If baby stops crying, leave the room and let them sleep.

Cycle through the stages for 30-60 minutes, using a cot cuddle as needed to ensure your baby calms down.

If after 30-60 minutes your baby is not asleep in their cot, cancel the nap and try again later or tomorrow. Try a top-up feed to ensure they are not hungry if this is bedtime. Cuddle until very calm, and try again.

Continue to try the above, reading your baby's cues and trying not to panic, or rush through the process. They are learning a new skill with your assistance; it takes some time and practice.

What if they don't settle for a nap?

If you've been trying your strategy above for the time allocated for a nap, and they don't settle to sleep... cancel the nap. This means leave the room, shut the door, turn around come back in and turn the light on with a big smile and say "Hello baby x, was that a good sleep?"

We are pretending the nap is over and time to get up.

Get your baby up and have a play and a feed, they might need solids if they're over 6 months. They then won't last a full awake window, so you'll need to put them back down shortly after this cancelled nap.

For this following nap you can choose to try again with putting them down awake, or assist to sleep like you previously have and simply work on one nap attempt a day.

You don't have to go all in to work on naps.

If they're a newborn, when you get them up, they might be due a feed and quickly feed to sleep. This is fine, allow them to take a nap in your arms or the cot, and try again for the next nap or tomorrow.

Patience is key for this skill.

New skills take teaching time, and each time you try is another possible teaching session.

What if they don't settle at bedtime?

Night-time sleep is a lot easier than day sleep due to rising levels of melatonin (the hormone that makes us sleepy), and the sleep pressure from that day. Combined with a lovely bedtime routine usually means putting baby down awake in the evening is a lot easier than for naps.

However, if you find after 60 minutes, your baby is not asleep. Try a top-up feed to rule out hunger, and then start again with your strategy. Paying close attention to whether you are maybe doing too many picks, or too many cot cuddles, or not enough and baby isn't calming down.

Remember initially your baby is learning to go to sleep in the cot from awake, so you helping them calm down is totally ok!

You can encourage them to start to calm themselves down more and more as they master the cot sleeping and it is more familiar to them.

Hurdles to your success.

Usually, parents struggle with putting their baby down awake as they can't cope with them crying. Have a read over the crying is communication comments at the top and decide before you start how you will respond to crying.

Other hurdles are overwhelm. Parents often come into this with the best intentions and decide to go all on naps and night sleep, and are quickly overwhelmed. Start out slow, work on one nap and work on it until you master it. Give yourself and your baby some grace.

Hunger: Lots of people worry their baby is hungry that's why they're crying. You can remove this concern by offering a top up feed before a nap if you wish, and simply ensure that baby goes down to bed awake.

Under tired over tired, both of these options can make it hard for your baby to settle to sleep regardless of how you're settling them. Avoid these situations by looking at the awake window chart below.

Age	Average Awake Window
0-3 weeks	40-60 min
3-6 weeks	60-90 minutes
6-9 weeks	90-100 minutes
9-12 weeks	90—110 minutes
3 months	110- 120 minutes
4 months	2 hours
5 months	2 hours 15 min
6 months	2 hours 30 min
7 months	2 hours 30 min
8 months	2.5-4 hours
9-12 months	2.5-4 hours

Important notes.

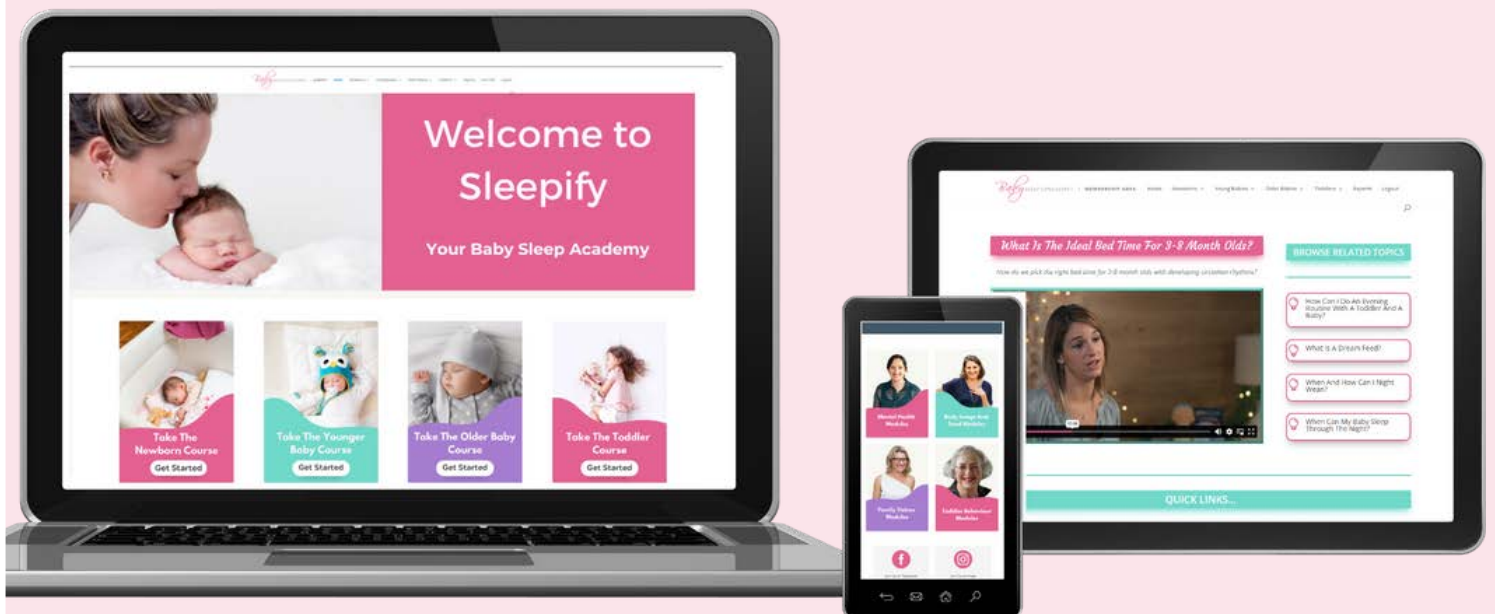
When awake time increases to 4 hours this is from the end of nap 2 to bedtime, not between naps.

When your baby is under 6 months, their awake time from nap 3 to bedtime, they might want less than their awake window between naps. Watch for early tired signs.

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Emma is the owner and founder of Baby Sleep Consultant, she is a Certified Infant and Child Sleep Consultant, Lead Educator for Baby Sleep Consultant Training, Happiest Baby on the Block Educator, has a Bachelor of Science and Diploma in Education, she is a Gentle Sleep Expert and Mother of 3.