

Your 21-month-old's sleep

Personalized guide · sleep rhythm, challenges, schedule and tips for this stage

AWAKE TIME 5 h – 6 h	NAPS PER DAY 1	TOTAL SLEEP / 24 H 11–14 h	NIGHT · NAPS 11 h · 2 h
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What's happening with sleep now

By 19 to 24 months your toddler's sleep has settled into a wonderfully predictable rhythm. Most little ones now run on one solid midday nap of around two hours, usually after lunch, followed by a long stretch of awake time. Wake windows have grown to roughly five to six hours, and the night has consolidated to about eleven hours, bringing the total to somewhere between eleven and fourteen hours in a day. The developmental leaps that used to shake up sleep have largely quieted down, and what you're left with is a stable, dependable pattern.

That means the questions on your mind now are usually behavioural rather than developmental. Your toddler has opinions, and bedtime is a favourite stage for expressing them. Expect some resistance, a bit of stalling and the classic string of "one more" requests, one more story, one more sip, one more hug. This is your child testing where the edges are, not a sign anything is wrong. Around this age some toddlers also start attempting to climb out of the cot, and the first flickers of night-time fears can appear.

The eventual move from cot to a toddler or floor bed is on the horizon too, though there's no rush if the cot is still working and safe. Through all of it, the thing that carries the day is not a new trick but the same calm, warm consistency you've been building. Predictable routines and gentle, steady boundaries help your toddler feel secure enough to let go and sleep.

A sample day

7:00 wake-up		If they wake at 6:00	
7:00 AM	Wake up	6:00 AM	Wake up
12:30 PM – 2:00 PM	Nap 1	12:00 PM – 1:30 PM	Nap 1
8:00 PM	Bedtime 🌙	8:00 PM	Bedtime 🌙

Common challenges — and what helps

Bedtime stalling and resistance, the endless "one more story, one more drink, one more cuddle" that stretches lights-out later and later.

Keep the routine short, predictable and the same order every night so your toddler always knows what comes next. Build the small requests into the routine on purpose, for example two stories then done, a final sip of water already on the shelf, one last hug at the door. Name the plan out loud and hold the boundary warmly and calmly. The resistance usually eases once your toddler learns the edges are steady and loving rather than negotiable.

Climbing out of the cot, which is both a sleep disruption and a genuine safety concern if your toddler could fall.

First make the cot as safe as possible by lowering the mattress to its lowest setting and removing anything that could act as a step, such as bumpers, large toys or pillows. Keep the room itself safe as a backstop, anchoring furniture to the wall and clearing anything that could tip or be climbed. If climbing continues or your toddler is tall enough that the cot rail sits low, it may be time to move to a toddler bed or a floor bed. Return your child calmly and consistently, without a big reaction, so climbing doesn't become a game.

Early rising and an out-of-balance nap, where a nap that runs too long or starts too late quietly steals from the night. If mornings are creeping earlier or bedtime is a battle, look first at the nap. Cap it at around two hours by gently waking your toddler, and make sure it finishes with enough awake time before bed so the wake window can do its job. Protect an early-enough, consistent bedtime, keep mornings calm and the room dim until an age-appropriate wake time, and avoid starting the day too early. Small adjustments to when and how long the nap runs often settle both early waking and bedtime resistance.

What's coming next

As your toddler approaches two to three years, you may notice a bump around the second birthday, often tied to the two-year molars coming through and to a new burst of independence, which can briefly bring more bedtime pushback or the odd rough night. Some toddlers begin resisting the nap around now, but most still genuinely need that midday sleep to around age three, so it's usually worth protecting rather than dropping too soon. The nap does eventually go, most often somewhere between three and four years, and it tends to fade gradually. The best preparation for all of it is the routine you already have, keep it consistent, calm and predictable, and if anything about your child's sleep or health worries you, check in with your pediatrician.

What helps most right now

- ☾ Keep a short, predictable bedtime routine in the same order every night, a bath or wash, pyjamas, teeth, a story or two, then lights out, so your toddler always knows what's coming.
- ☾ Offer small controlled choices to feed their growing need for autonomy, such as which pyjamas or which two books, so your toddler feels some say within limits you set.
- ☾ Cap the midday nap at around two hours and give it an "again time," waking gently if it runs long or late, so the nap doesn't borrow from the night.
- ☾ Keep the sleep space safe: mattress on its lowest setting, no bumpers, pillows or large toys to climb on, and furniture anchored to the wall, moving to a toddler or floor bed if climbing becomes a safety issue.

Safe sleep

Toddler safe sleep: keep the mattress firm and the space simple. As soon as they start **climbing the rail**, drop the base to its lowest setting or move to a toddler/floor bed to prevent falls, and keep cords and blind pulls out of reach. A small comforter or lovey is generally fine at this age, but keep the cot clear of large objects.

When to check with your pediatrician

When to check with your pediatrician: sleep varies a lot from baby to baby, but do mention it to your doctor if you notice **loud snoring, pauses in breathing, or very laboured breathing**, if your baby isn't gaining weight or is feeding poorly, if they consistently sleep far less (or more) than expected and seem unhappy or unusually drowsy, or if anything about their development worries you. This guide is general guidance and not a substitute for medical advice.

And tomorrow, and next month?

This guide is the average for their age. The Nana app learns your baby's real rhythm and adjusts naps and bedtime every day. Free to start → [nanababy.app](#) · Also online: <https://nanababy.app/21-month-old-sleep-schedule/>