

Your 5-month-old's sleep

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

AWAKE TIME 1 h 45 min – 2 h 45 min	NAPS PER DAY 3	TOTAL SLEEP / 24 H 12–16 h	NIGHT · NAPS 9–10 h · 4–5 h
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What's happening with sleep now

By five months, many families feel the ground steady under them again. The big shift of the four-month change is behind you: those adult-like sleep cycles are now your baby's permanent way of sleeping, and both of you are learning to work with them. Wakings often become a little less dramatic as your baby gets more practised at moving from one cycle into the next, especially when they've had chances to settle in their own cot.

A three-nap day is usually emerging around now. Wake windows stretch to roughly one and three-quarter to two and three-quarter hours, and the day tends to organise itself into a solid morning nap, a good midday nap, and a shorter third catnap in the late afternoon that bridges the gap to bedtime. That last catnap is doing important work: it takes the edge off so your baby doesn't arrive at bedtime overtired. Overall your baby still needs about twelve to sixteen hours of sleep across twenty-four hours, roughly nine to ten at night and four to five in naps.

Night sleep is also becoming genuinely capable of consolidating into longer stretches. That doesn't mean every night will be unbroken, and feeds may well still be part of the night for your baby. But the maturing brain, paired with a predictable rhythm and a calm bedtime, gives your baby the foundation to link more cycles together and settle more smoothly when they surface.

A sample day

7:00 wake-up		If they wake at 6:00	
7:00 AM	Wake up	6:00 AM	Wake up
9:30 AM – 10:30 AM	Nap 1	8:45 AM – 9:45 AM	Nap 1
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Nap 2	12:30 PM – 1:30 PM	Nap 2
4:30 PM – 5:30 PM	Nap 3	4:15 PM – 5:15 PM	Nap 3
8:00 PM	Bedtime 🌙	8:00 PM	Bedtime 🌙

Common challenges — and what helps

Waking for the day very early, around five in the morning, and not resettling.

Early waking has a few common causes: a room that lets in early light, a last nap or bedtime that leaves the night too long or too short, or building overtiredness. Make the room as dark as you safely can, keep pre-dawn wakings calm and boring with minimal light and interaction, and check that the final wake window and bedtime aren't leaving too big a gap. Small, patient adjustments over several days work better than one big change overnight.

The move from four naps to three is bumpy, with some days needing a fourth nap and others not.

Nap transitions are rarely clean. On days when naps run short or your baby seems wrecked before bedtime, it's fine to offer a brief fourth catnap or bring bedtime a little earlier to protect against overtiredness. On days the three naps hold, let them. Follow the day in front of you rather than forcing a fixed schedule, and lean on tiredness cues and age-appropriate wake windows of about one and three-quarter to two and three-quarter hours to guide each transition.

False starts, where your baby settles at bedtime but wakes fully thirty to sixty minutes later.

A false start usually means your baby completed their first short sleep cycle and woke as it ended, often because the last wake window ran too long and overtiredness crept in, or the wind-down was too rushed. Try a calm, unhurried bedtime routine in a dark room, and make sure the final awake stretch isn't too long. Respond gently and keep things quiet and low-key, helping them resettle the same way they went down at the start of the night.

What's coming next

The months ahead bring big developmental leaps around six to eight months, as your baby learns to sit and then to crawl. New skills are exciting but often ripple into sleep, because babies love to practise them at the worst possible moments, including the middle of the night. Somewhere around seven to nine months many babies move from three naps to two as wake windows lengthen further, and you may hear about an 'eight-month regression' on the horizon, which is usually these leaps and the nap shift arriving together. Keep leaning on your predictable rhythm and calm routines; they're exactly what carries your baby through each new stage.

What helps most right now

- ☾ Aim for wake windows of about one and three-quarter to two and three-quarter hours and let the last catnap protect against an overtired bedtime.
- ☾ Make the sleep room as dark as you safely can to help with both naps and early-morning waking.
- ☾ Keep bedtime calm and unhurried, and treat night and pre-dawn wakings as quiet, low-stimulation moments.
- ☾ Hold the line on safe sleep: back to sleep, firm flat mattress, no loose bedding, pillows or bumpers, in their own clear sleep space.

Safe sleep

Safe sleep (the essentials): your baby sleeps best and safest **alone, on their back, in a clear cot** — firm flat mattress, no pillows, duvets, bumpers or soft toys. Room-share without bed-sharing, especially before 6 months, and avoid overheating. If you ever have concerns about your baby's breathing or rest, talk to your pediatrician.

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/5-month-old-sleep-schedule/>