



Home Repositioning Instructions For Babies with Neck Tightness or Positional Preference

Sleeping and Naps:

Swap the end of the crib in which you place your baby to sleep each time you lay him or her down. This will ensure that he or she is not 'stuck' looking at the same thing each time, i.e. if the door is on his or her right side or the wall is on his or her left side, he or she may pick a preferred side to lay to get the best "views".

Diaper Changing:

Swap the end of the changing table in which you place his or her head when you are changing diapers. This is for the same reasoning as above- when the scenery changes your baby will be more likely to look around.

Playing and Wake Time:

Place toys on the "stiff" side of his or her stroller, swing, crib, or infant seat. The goal here is to encourage your baby to use his or her neck muscles on the limited range side more frequently.

Throughout the day, continue to interact with your child on the "stiff" side, where neck turning movement is limited.

Provide supervised "Tummy Time" 3-5 times per day. Start with only a few minutes as babies will initially fuss and disagree with being on his or her tummy. Gradually, increase the time as your baby learns to tolerate (and enjoy!) this time. Tummy time will not only help to improve the head shape but will also improve your child's muscle strength (neck, arms, shoulders, chest, and back!) as well as encourage additional age appropriate motor development. (Ask your clinician for a Tummy Time handout to provide additional information!)

Carrying/Car Rides:

Swap the hip and arm in which you carry your baby. Like with tummy time, this may be met with resistance and fussing initially as your baby has to turn his or her head in different directions to "see", depending on how he or she is being carried. This will improve with time as muscle mobility improves.

When he or she is in the car seat, a cushioned head support may be necessary to support your baby's neck. Your baby will likely turn his or her head and neck towards the side of least resistance so you will need to encourage him or her to look in the opposite direction. When possible, swap his or her car seat location so that your baby has pleasant things to look at in the direction of the tightness. You can do this by incorporating a parent, sibling, window, or toy into the car seat arrangement.

Stretching:

If your baby has been diagnosed with torticollis, you should perform neck-stretching exercises at each diaper change. These exercises will be specially prescribed by your doctor and/or physical therapist.