

Helping my Baby Learn through Play: Rolling Over to Move and Explore

How does rolling help my baby?



- Rolling is important because it gives your baby **freedom to move** – a very important skill.
- The more your baby moves the more they **learn!**
- Rolling also helps babies go on to **learn other things**, like sitting without support, crawling, and walking.
- Rolling over helps your baby learn how different **parts of their body work together**.
- Your baby will grow **stronger** from the movement and effort.
- Learning to roll helps your baby start to **learn about spaces, distances, and their surroundings**.
- When rolling, your baby will learn about **using touch and vision**.

Play ideas

What are the signs that my baby is ready to start rolling over?



Generally, babies start to roll over purposefully **around 4-6 months old**.

Around the time your baby is **starting to roll**, they usually will also:

- ✓ enjoy playing in different positions: on their **tummy, side, and back**
- ✓ be able to **hold their head up** without getting tired
- ✓ **lift their arms and legs up** well off the floor when playing on their back
- ✓ **turn their head** to find out where **sounds** are coming from
- ✓ **follow you with their eyes**
- ✓ react to and **copy some facial expressions** that you make



- When your baby learns to roll, it is usually the first time that they will be able to **move from one place to another without help**.
- **All babies are different:** some learn how to roll tummy-to-back first, and others will start rolling back-to-tummy. What matters most is that your baby is **finding ways to move by themselves and starting to explore**.
- Always make sure that your baby is **awake and supervised** by an adult when they are playing on their tummy.

SAFETY NOTE: Your baby must be supervised during these activities at all times. Never leave your baby unattended.

Look out for your baby’s communication cues to let you know they are tired, hungry or just had enough and not comfortable. Babies communicate with you through their behavioural cues and changing colour, squirming, getting irritable or crying means time for a break!

How can I get my baby started with rolling?



Your baby learns most when they **move by themselves**. Just a gentle hand can provide support and encouragement

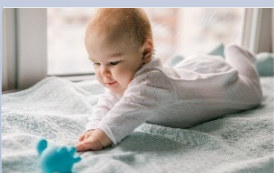
Playing while they are **lying on their side** allows your baby to try different movements that might start a roll backwards or forwards. Use your baby's favourite toys to encourage them to shift their body weight, reach, and move.

The first few times your baby rolls, they might seem surprised. **Allow your baby time to initiate the movement**. Slow controlled movements build confidence and skills and help your baby discover different ways to move.

When babies are first learning to roll from back-to-tummy, **they might initially find it difficult to bring both arms forward**. If this happens: **first, wait a little** and see if they can move their body weight off their arm by themselves. If they need a little help, **lift their body weight up a little on one side** to allow your baby to move their arm out from under their body.

Play ideas

How can I help my baby learn to roll over?



- Babies learn new movement skills by **trial-and-error**: there's no right or wrong way to learn!
- Let your baby **play freely on the floor** as often as possible throughout the day.
- A **firm but soft surface**, such as a mat on the floor, helps your baby to move and is soft enough to be comfortable. A bed can be too soft for your baby to move easily.
- Babies also learn by trying to **copy what they see**.
- If you get down on the floor too and play with your baby, they will be more likely to try to **move towards you**.
- Arrange toys in different ways to **see what works best for your baby**.
- Put toys **where your baby will have to reach a little** to get them.
- Use lights, sounds, moving toys, mirrors, and your voice and face to **hold your baby's interest**.
- Help your baby to **play with their feet** when they are on their back.
- Your baby might move more if they can feel more on their skin. Try taking one layer of your baby's **clothes and socks off** for playtime if it is not too cold.
- **Have fun playing together!**

SAFETY NOTE: Your baby must be supervised during these activities at all times. Never leave your baby unattended.

Look out for your baby's communication cues to let you know they are tired, hungry or just had enough and not comfortable. Babies communicate with you through their behavioural cues and changing colour, squirming, getting irritable or crying means time for a break!

Play is how a child learns. This leaflet was created to provide ideas for activities for learning to roll through play. Development varies from child to child and if you have any concerns about your child speak to your GP or health visitor and ask for a referral to your local therapy service .