

MOTHERWIT DOULA CARE

# CONNECTING WITH YOUR BABY



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**You, Sweet Parent, are the architect of your baby's brain. This is a huge challenge as well as a remarkable opportunity! Milk, shelter, and LOVE are the things Baby needs most to thrive.**



Your body (and the bodies of Baby's other close loved ones) is a powerful source of nervous system nurturing for your little one/s. A baby being held skin to skin MOST of the time in the first three months of their lives will have more optimal:

- blood pressure
- respiration
- nutrient absorption
- capacity to receive calming

Hearing your voice and heartbeat and being responded to consistently actually wires a baby's brain to feel safe in the world. This has a lifelong impact!

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Skin to skin, tummy to tummy also has the benefit of helping your baby:

- integrate primitive reflexes
- receive the sensory input they need
- learn head control
- gain weight optimally
- begin to learn emotion regulation
- digest well
- feel safe



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## WHEN THINGS GET STRESSFUL...



There will be times you may feel overwhelmed by the constant needs of your baby/ies, and this is normal! Ensuring you can get a break once in a while to calm and fill your own emotional tank is important. But in the wee hours when it's just you and a fussy baby, some of the things that can help bring calm to a stressful situation are:

- taking a deep breath in to the count of 4, and exhaling to the count of 6 slowly, several times
- reminding yourself with great humour that you are the adult and that this moment is not meeting your expectations at all
- knowing that even if your baby is upset, holding them generates neurochemicals that buffer the stress of their crying
- if you feel angry, DO put your baby down for a short break

This means that even if you aren't DO-ing anything, your BE-ing with Baby means a LOT to them. A baby crying alone in a room and a baby crying in your arms may sound exactly the same, but inside, their biochemistry will be completely different

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## TUMMY TIME TIPS

When your baby is a few weeks old, you can begin to introduce them to Tummy Time on the floor. The floor is actually one of the safest places for a baby to be if you need to dash into the other room for a minute, as they cannot roll off anything.



The best way to do Tummy Time is to have a dedicated place in your home with a blanket on the ground.

- Before you begin, hold your baby close to you and take some deep breaths. Really connect in your heart with your little one.
- Take some time first with Baby on their back. Look them in the eyes and practice “serve and return”. This means you make faces and coo at each other. Making Baby’s facial muscles move is very important for their brain development. Once their little face is moving, tuck Baby’s arm to their chest, and gently roll Baby onto their tummy.
- Get down in front of your baby so you can continue to look at them. If they are breathing and vocalizing with a grunty sound, as long as they’re happy, just keep talking to your baby and playing “serve and return”.

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- When Baby moves from excited to “not seeming so happy”, this wave of tummy time is over!
  - Roll Baby onto their back, pick them up, and hold them to your chest for some breaths. Sooth them however they wish. Then try this sequence again, 3-5 times per session. This session can be done throughout the day 3-5 times.

You will often hear that you should keep your baby in Tummy Time for a certain amount of time, but every baby is different. We want Baby to LOVE Tummy Time, as it helps them grow and move and develop in ALL the good ways. They NEED this.

Short amounts of Tummy Time with you carefully watching your baby for signs of their being “done”, helps you develop your communication with your baby. Tummy Time is good for EVERYONE in the family!



If you need support, MotherWit Doula Care can help by:

- Providing you with postpartum doula care in your home, day or night
- Consulting with you about your baby’s sleep
- Tailoring a Tummy Time routine that will encourage symmetry and optimal movement
- Offering you coaching to deal with those difficult parenting times