



early Therapy In Perinatal Stroke

# Play Time

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## Play Time

The pictures in this manual show examples of the types of toys that you might use with your baby.



We are unable to recommend specific brands but different manufacturers make similar toys.

New toys come on to the market all the time while others are withdrawn making it unwise for us to specify brands.

What is important is how you use them. Presenting toys to your baby and teaching your baby how to play with them can be hugely enjoyable for both of you.



You don't always need to buy expensive baby toys instead you can use everyday objects such as a wooden spoon, or you can make toys.

Here a bright baby sock has been stuffed with cellophane and sewn up to make a crinkly toy.

An internet search for "homemade baby toys" will give you lots of other ideas.

**SAFETY NOTE:** Always supervise your baby during play and ensure that any toys you make and the everyday objects you choose are safe for your baby.

## Play Time - the early months

Your new baby spends his or her first months of life becoming more and more aware of the world around them.

Playing with your baby gives lots of opportunities to develop all your baby's abilities of moving, socialising, and learning about the world by using all the senses.



In the first few months your baby will rely on you to show them toys and demonstrate how they work and what they do.

In the early weeks your baby may mainly just look at the toy you are showing.

As your baby gets a little older he or she will start to show more active interest in the toys.

Your baby will increasingly reach out to touch the toys so really encourage your baby to do this by praising all attempts to reach even if unsuccessful.



Opening the hand to grasp toys begins after your baby has learnt to reach, around three months of age but this can vary.



The main thing to remember about play time is to position yourself at your baby's **RIGHT** side or sit centrally to your baby.

You should also try to follow the general tips for toy play on the next page.

## General Tips for Toy Play



- ◆ Show your baby just one toy at a time.
- ◆ Present the toy to your baby's **RIGHT** side.
- ◆ Hold it within sight and reach of your baby.
- ◆ Move the toy slowly so that your baby can focus on it and then follow it with his/her eyes.
- ◆ Talk to your baby about each toy, for example “It’s Colin the Caterpillar”.
- ◆ Always give your baby plenty of time to respond. He/she may want to just look at the toy to begin with.
- ◆ Always reward interested responses (looking, moving, gurgling, smiling) with lots of spoken praise and smiles from you.
- ◆ If your baby looks upset at the sight of a particular toy quickly change to a different one.
- ◆ Change the toy often. This will interest and motivate your baby to reach and later grasp toys.
- ◆ Use toys...



... which are black and white especially in the first few weeks



...with bright contrasting colours



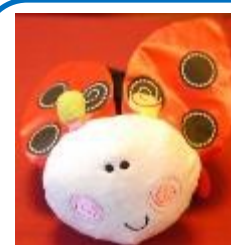
...with mirrors



...with different textures



...with faces



...which make a noise, light-up or move when touched.

## Tips for Positioning Your Baby for Play

It is very helpful for your baby's development that he or she experiences a variety of positions during the day. Play time provides a good opportunity for this.

Here are some examples of possible play positions:

### The lap hold:



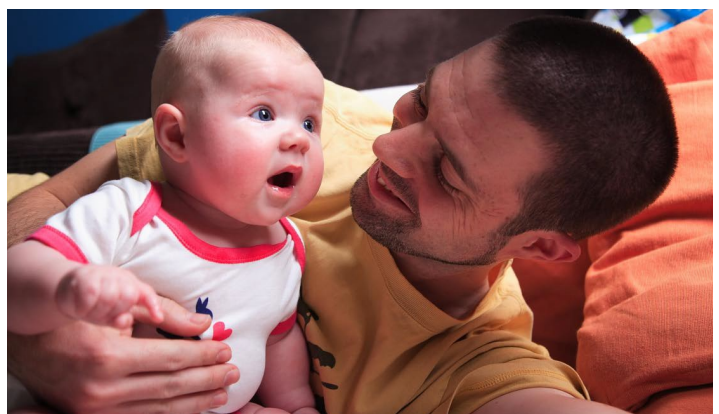
### The cradle hold:



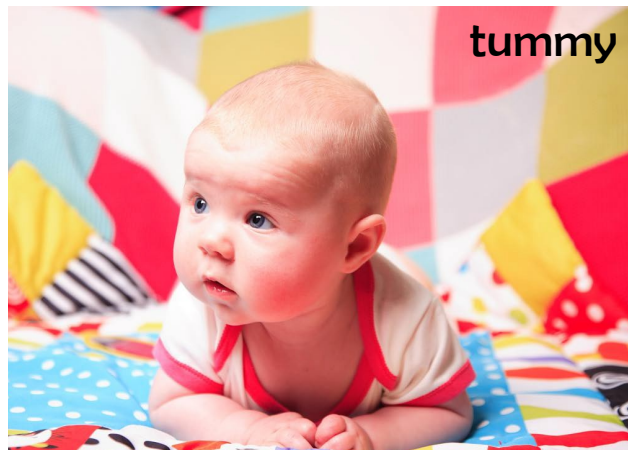
Held supported in sitting (but only once your baby has developed good head control):



### In a bouncer or rocker chair:



## On the floor on a play mat or folded towel, with baby lying on....



## In the pram or car seat when you are out and about:



### **GOLDEN RULE:**

Present the toys to baby's **RIGHT** side  
and try to approach from the **RIGHT** the majority of the time

## Tips for Floor Play

Lie your baby on his or her back on a play mat or folded towel.

Some play mats make crinkly noises when your baby moves and this sensation can encourage your baby to move more.



Sit or lie on your baby's **RIGHT** side.

Encourage your baby to reach out to touch toys.



Once your baby begins to open his or her hand to grasp toys make sure the toys are small enough to get hold of.



You may need to hold the toy in a way which makes it easier for your baby to grasp.



Sometimes place a rattle or other toy which makes a noise when moved by your baby's **RIGHT** foot.

In time your baby will learn that kicking causes toys like this to make enjoyable sounds.



Remember to present toys to your baby's **RIGHT** side.

Once your baby is grasping toys encourage your baby to bring both hands together to handle toys.

Two handed play is a very important skill to learn and will gradually develop during the first year of life.



### Examples of Toys for Floor Play

Follow the general play principles listed earlier.

Here are just a few examples of baby toys you can use for floor play:



## Wrist Rattles and Socks or Booties

Wrist rattles may be sold separately or are sometimes sold in sets together with either socks or booties.



Place just one wrist rattle on to baby's **RIGHT** arm.



In this way baby is encouraged to look at this arm and this will help baby to become visually aware of his or her **RIGHT** side.

You may need to lift baby's **RIGHT** arm to allow baby to see the wrist rattle and become aware that it is there.





With these socks or booties place just one on baby's **RIGHT** foot.

Baby can then be encouraged to look at that foot and later may try to reach for it.



You may need to lift baby's **RIGHT** foot to allow baby to see the sock.



Don't worry if your baby eventually learns to pull the sock off, that's a great skill!



Baby can also wear a rattle and a sock or bootie on the **RIGHT** wrist and **RIGHT** foot at the same time.

## Tips for Tummy Time Floor Play

From early on it is really important to put your baby on his or her tummy a few times every day.

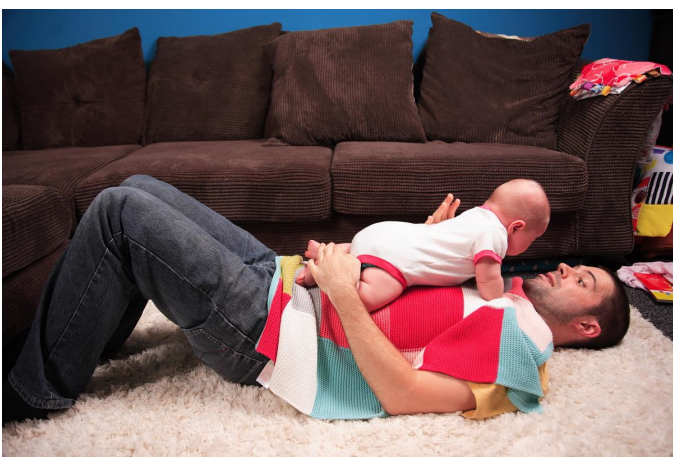
This encourages your baby to lift up his or her head which will strengthen the neck and back muscles.

Time spent on the tummy helps your baby to develop strong muscles needed to learn to crawl later on.



Very young babies often dislike lying on their tummies. If your baby isn't keen to lie on his/her tummy on the floor you can begin by lying baby on your chest.

In the first couple of months your baby will be developing neck strength but will not yet be able to lift his or her head or control the movement of it.



Time spent on tummy will help your baby to gain head control so gradually build up the amount of time that your baby spends in this position.



You can then try lying baby on a padded mat or folded towel on the floor.

Lie beside baby on baby's **RIGHT** side.

Place a small rolled up towel under your baby's chest and arms.



This can help your baby to lift his or her head and move the arms.

A towel works perfectly but you can also buy rolls especially for use with baby for tummy time.



Place an interesting toy in front of baby, slightly to baby's **RIGHT** side.



**SAFETY NOTE:** Always supervise baby during tummy time: don't let them sleep in this position, see Safer Sleep in Time for Bed section

## Tips for Side Lying Floor Play

Side lying is a good position to encourage your baby to use his or her **RIGHT** arm.



It also encourages your baby to bring both hands together which is an important skill to learn.

Lie baby on his or her **left** side so that the **RIGHT** arm is free to move and reach for toys.

Support your baby using your left hand or a rolled up towel.

Sit or lie on the floor beside and facing your baby.



Place toys within easy reaching distance and follow the general play principles listed earlier.

It's fine to lie your baby on the **RIGHT** side occasionally too.

**SAFETY NOTE:** Always supervise and support your baby during side lying, otherwise baby may roll on to his or her tummy.

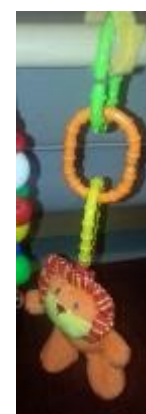
## Tips for Using Baby Gyms

Baby Gyms come in lots of different designs and can include fixed or detachable toys. Baby gyms can help to encourage your baby to reach for toys.



In order to use baby gyms to encourage your baby to move his or her **RIGHT** side try to do the following:

- ♦ Hang just one toy from the baby gym at a time.
- ♦ Lie your baby underneath it on a padded mat so that the hanging toy is on baby's **RIGHT** side.
- ♦ Sit yourself on the floor on baby's **RIGHT** side.
- ♦ Demonstrate to baby what to do.
- ♦ Praise your baby's attempts to reach for the toy.
- ♦ Use straps and linkies to position the toy at a reachable distance.
- ♦ Follow the "Tips for Toy Play" as described earlier.



## Toys to Hang from Baby Gyms and Toy Bars on Chairs

There are some lovely toys that can be attached to your baby's play gym and also to the toy bars of baby's bouncer chair, pram and car seat. They will also attach to baby's cot.

Remember to use just one toy at a time and change to a different toy often.

The following examples of toys are likely to be attractive to baby and encourage movement of his or her **RIGHT** side:

New born babies like high contrast black and white toys because they don't see colour straight away.

A combination of monochrome toys and toys with bright, contrasting colours can help your baby's visual development.



Toys with mirrors are very attractive to babies because babies love looking at faces including their own! They often come with loops to attach them to baby gyms and toy bars.

Toys like this are colourful and have different textures, sounds and mirrors. They are also easy to grasp and explore.

