



## Reversing Day-Night Reversal

Some babies, however, settle into the newborn sleep routine dreaded by many expectant parents—the so-called day-night reversal. As the description implies, newborns are known on occasion to mix up their days and nights. These temporarily backward-sleeping babies often begin to increase the amount of sleep they get each time they go to sleep according to plan, but simply do so more during the day while demanding to be fed, changed, *and* entertained throughout the night. As painfully exhausting as this upside-down approach to sleep may be for those of us accustomed to getting most if not all of our sleep at night, the assurance that this too shall pass once again comes to mind. We can all but guarantee you that hope is not far away. In most instances, the fact that your newborn is learning to replace lots of short little catnaps with longer stretches of sleep—whether they happen to fall during the day or at night—bodes well for a more “civilized” sleep routine in your not too distant future.



### Lights On, Lights Off

If your baby seems determined to “play” during the night and sleep during the day there’s really no quick fix, but there are some easy things you can do early on to set the stage for more acceptable sleep habits in the future. During your first few weeks at home with your baby, try to establish an atmosphere that clearly differentiates night from day. A good night’s rest may not result overnight, but this approach can help get you there sooner.

- **Allow for active sleep.** During the day, don't worry if your baby falls asleep in more “active” areas of the house - in rooms with light or music on, for example. Similarly, don't be afraid to run an occasional daytime errand, even if this means your newborn may not quite make it all the way home before falling asleep.
- **Consistent contrast.** Don't spend much time worrying about background noises such as talking, telephones, or music during daylight hours. In contrast, try to make your nighttime interactions calm and quiet.
- **Maintain focus.** Whenever possible, take a more focused approach to your nighttime interactions—limiting them to feeding, burping, changing, and gentle soothing when necessary.
- **Soft-spoken approach.** Get in the habit of taking the aforementioned measures in a dark room using a soft voice whenever you want to signal to your newborn that it would be a fine time to sleep.

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