

THE SLEEP CHIEF

TRAVEL SLEEP GUIDE

WELCOME TO YOUR TRAVEL SLEEP GUIDE



IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR!

Time for a glorious, hopefully sunny holiday that may just be a little less relaxing a time than it was before babies. Maybe! But if you are wanting to make sure you have a restful trip away and also keen to protect any hard work that you may have put into getting your baby sleeping well, then this sleep guide is for you. It's really important for us as the parents to have some relaxing moments whilst away, so hopefully you will find some of these nuggets of wisdom helpful.

In the following pages you'll find my top tips for your baby's sleep (and more) for before, during and after your holiday.

EMILY HOULTRAM

THE SLEEP CHIEF



DIFFERENT TIME ZONES - PREPARATION



If you're going somewhere with a time difference of a couple of hours then a good recommendation would be to get onto local times and stick more or less with your normal routine. So during our holiday to the Balearic Islands last year with a one hour time difference we did an 8am – 8pm day for our little one rather than 7am – 7pm.

If you're going further for longer it could be worth doing some adjusting in the run-up like you would do a clock-change. So, adjusting your bedtime by 15 minutes per day in the days before you travel which will help them adjust a little quicker to the new time zone once there.

LONG DISTANCE AND JET LAG



If you are going somewhere with a bigger time difference then there will usually be some jet lag symptoms and disturbance to sleep. This will typically pass within a few days but there are some things you can do to help with this:

- Keep your baby hydrated before and during the flight. A bottle, breast or dummy to suck on during take-off and landing can really help too.
- Upon arrival, try to get onto local time and into some kind of rhythm, even if it's not your exact routine. Aiming to eat and sleep at the right times in the new time zone.
- Go outside and spend as much time in daylight over the first few days. Some exercise and natural light will help to re-set the body clock.
- During the night you want it as dark as possible, take a travel black-out blind with you in case the accommodation is lacking in this area. If your baby is awake for a duration in the night, keep it as dark and sleepy an environment as possible rather than getting up and turning lights on.
- Try and avoid super long naps and wake little ones up if they nap too long to avoid too much awake time at night.
- Avoid caffeine after 2pm if you are breastfeeding.
- Keep a consistent bedtime routine which will help your little one to feel secure in what's happening. And bring as much familiarity from home – slept-in cot sheet, sleeping bag, favourite book, comforter, etc.

PACKING LIST - PLANE



TRAVEL BUGGY

We took the Besrey airplane stroller with us on our last holiday and wow, what a genius product. Being able to fold the buggy down to backpack size so that you can actually take it with you on-board is a game-changer. We had long passport control queues at both ends where our little one was approaching needing a nap so not having to carry him for that entire time was gold.



BOTTLES/SNACKS

For babies who are still having milk, having a bottle or breast to suck on upon take-off and landing really helps. The pre-made formula cartons can be helpful for this for bottle-feeding parents. For older babies and toddlers: snacks, snacks and more snacks! My top tip? Mini boxes of raisins can keep a little one busy for a lonnnng time.



BAG OF TRICKS

We have a canvas bag that we call "the bag of tricks". This bag contains an ever-increasing number of small handheld toys, crafts, stickers, stress-balls, wind-up toys etc. that Jago doesn't have access to when at home. We bring this bag out on long journeys, in restaurants, beach bars, coffee shops etc. Essentially, whenever we would like to stay for more than a few minutes! We add some new toys for each new abroad holiday so there is some novelty and new things to look at. Each one generally costing around £3 but each one is going to buy you a bit of entertainment time.



AMAZON FIRE

Our little one is not that into TV so the tablet is not something which can sustain him for a long time but the Amazon Fire certainly helped for "something else to do" for both plane rides and when he was particularly fractious in a restaurant whilst away.



STICKER BOOKS/ACTIVITY BOOKS

For toddlers, sticker books and activity books can be a great way to keep them occupied for a stretch of time.



WANTING TO ENCOURAGE A NAP ON-BOARD?

If you'd like to get your little one napping on the plane as it will be over their usual nap time then one tip would be to find the kids play area in the airport and spend some time playing in there and burning some energy prior to take-off. But take the pressure off for their nap to be as good as it is at home, as there will be lots of excitement and distractions on board

PACKING LIST – SLEEP ESSENTIALS



TRAVEL BLACKOUT BLIND

We take our travel blackout blind with us every time we go away, whether in the UK or abroad so that you can make sure your accommodation will be as dark as at home.



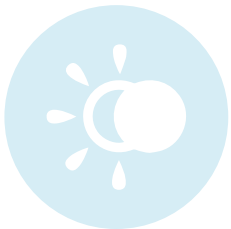
BEDDING AND FAMILIARITY FROM HOME

Take your baby's slept-in cot sheet, sleeping bag, comforter (if they have one), favourite books (see some of our favourites here). All of these things will be familiarity from home which will really help when they are sleeping in a new room and travel cot.



FORMULA CARTONS

For the breast-feeding mamas you are super well-equipped for travel! But for formula fed or for babies over 1 who are on cow's milk, we took formula cartons for both the plane and for the first night in the hotel (to use before we were able to source some fresh milk). These were lifesavers!



SNOOZE SHADE

For naps out and about in the sun the Snooze Shade is superb for giving you a blackout environment that also protects up to 98% of UV rays.



NAPPIES

You will need plenty of regular nappies as well as plenty of swim nappies for each day if you are going on a pool/beach holiday.



MORE OUTFITS THAN USUAL

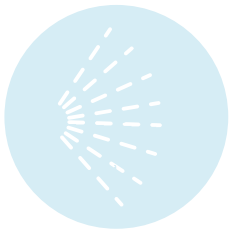
You forget how often you are doing laundry loads at home so packing a good few more outfits than days (particularly if your little one is eating solids) works well so that you are allowing for the inevitable food-covered outfit changes!

PACKING LIST – OTHERS



AEROSOL SUN CREAM

It's just easier, spray them down and done in seconds.



MOSQUITO SPRAY

Especially if your little one is out in the evenings with you.



POOL SHOES

If are going on a "pool" holiday and your little one is walking/toddling then some baby crocs-style shoes or the non-slip wetsuit style shoes are essential to stop them from falling over onto their bottom repeatedly!



LITTLE BAG OF SMALL TOYS

Most under three years old will need some other forms of stimulation other than just the pool/beach itself so taking some small toys with you will be good for when they're done with having a paddle. This could be beach toys or some figurine type toys. We took small Peppa Pig hand-held water squirters that provided a lot of entertainment on our last holiday.

For all of our favourite baby travel and sleep products checkout [The Sleep Chief Amazon storefront](#).

HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION TIPS

GROUND FLOOR ROOM

We contacted the hotel before to request a ground floor room. As we were in an all-inclusive resort we thought this might just mean that one of us was able to sneak to and from the bar in the evening after Jago went to bed. And it did the trick! A terrace accessible from our bedroom meant that we could still enjoy a drink and a bit of an evening.

ROOM WITH A DIVIDE/ PARTITION

So far for holidays we have sought out hotel rooms/suites which specifically had an adjoining living room/seating area and used this separate area as a bedroom for Jago. Both times we've been abroad have been 12 months+ into the time he had been sleeping in his own room at home so we found that this worked better for sleep than when we've attempted to all share a room whilst staying with family in the UK. If you are all sharing a room and worried about how that will work, the Snooze Shade travel cot blackout cover is a good option.



BABY CRÈCHE

We holidayed with Tui year and specifically chose a totally family-friendly hotel which had a baby crèche. Lots of family hotels have "kids clubs" but there are only a handful which have crèches suitable for under twos so you can use this to filter down hotel choices if it's something you're looking for. It was amazing to have a couple of hours each morning of baby-free adult time.

ROUTINE WHILST AWAY

As mentioned earlier, if you're going somewhere with a time difference of a couple of hours then a good recommendation would be to get onto local times and stick more or less with your normal daytime routine from home, especially if you are a routine person and that suits you. Here is a blank routine template that you can print and use for filling in your adjusted timings to help keep you on track whilst away:



..... **BABY AWAKE AND FEED**
Baby should be awake and feeding at



..... **BREAKFAST**



..... **NAP**
Should be settled and in sleeping bag in crib for



..... **PLAY**
Playtime/getting out and about



..... **FEED**



..... **LUNCH**
Lunchtime, a nice filling lunch before the longer lunchtime nap is a good idea



..... **NAP**
Start winding down at to be sleeping by *If they wake earlier, try to settle using your chosen settling technique first before getting them up*



..... **FEED**



..... **PLAY**
Playtime/getting out and about



..... **NAP**
A short cat nap can be taken before if the lunchtime nap was short



..... **DINNER**
A balanced filling meal alongside water to sip



..... **BATH**



..... **FEED**
Baby should be clean and dressed and ready to feed



..... **STORY, CUDDLES**
Have the lights dim and read a story together, give the last of the milk feed and have cuddles before putting your baby down awake



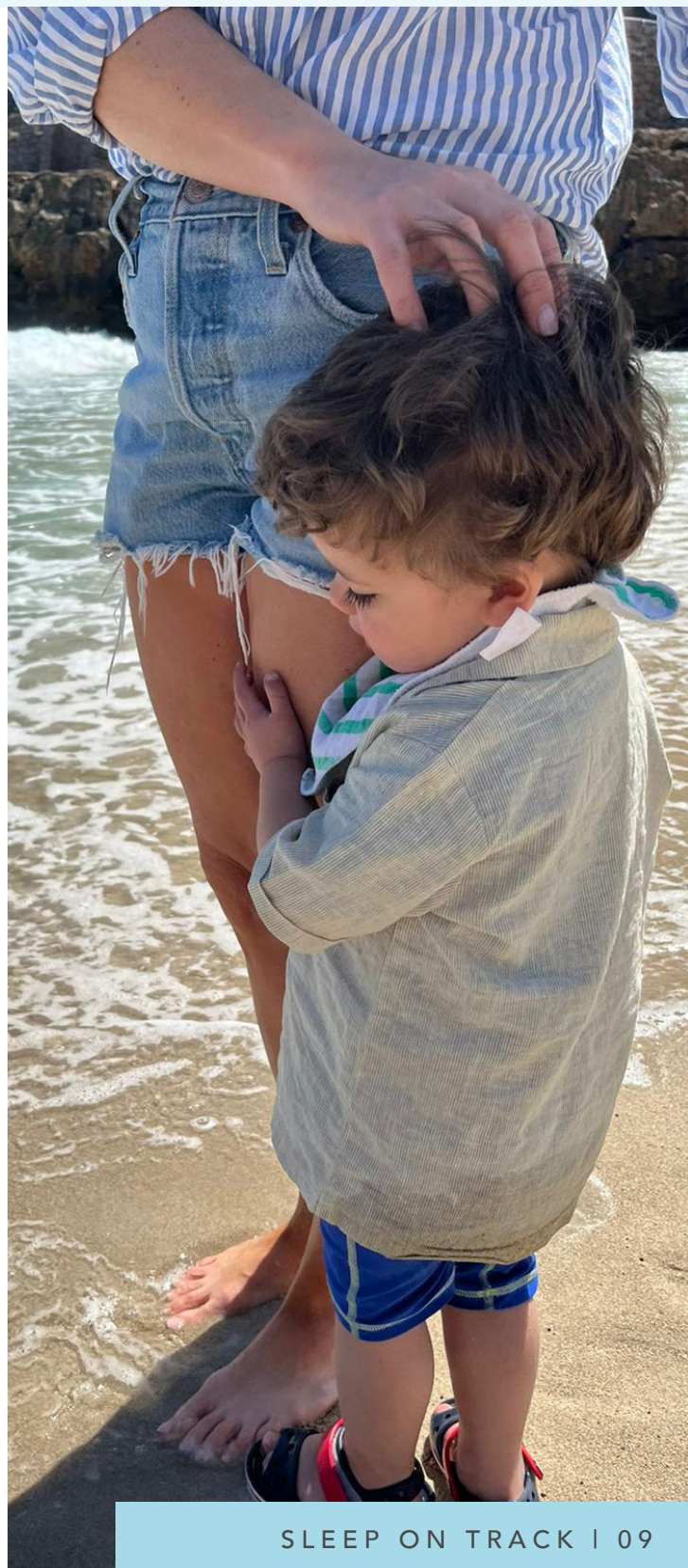
..... **SLEEP**
Baby should be in their cot and sleeping by

GETTING SLEEP BACK ON TRACK POST-HOLIDAY

It's really normal for sleep to go a bit pear shaped while you are on holiday either with time differences, far-from-ideal flight times, everybody sharing a room whilst away and disturbing each other – the possibilities are endless! But just know that even if naps and bedtime went out of the window or you have been doing more assisting to sleep whilst you are away - you have not undone all of your hard work and you are definitely not back to square one!

Babies and toddlers simply get used to whatever is happening at the time. I love the saying, "babies get used to what they're introduced to", so if that is falling asleep on mum by the pool for a few days, or all sleeps in a pram, that's what they will get used to for those days. When you get home it's about "reminding" them (rather than teaching them from scratch) how to settle themselves to sleep in their cot once more.

Once you are home and have recovered from any jet lag, get back onto your usual daytime routine as soon as you can (militantly!). And then re-introduce a settling method if you need to, for example, if you've been doing more assisting-to-sleep whilst you've been on holiday and they've gotten used to that. Also simply getting them down for an early night will always help if and when you have a day where your naps have been short or lacking – like on your travel day back home.



SETTLING TO SLEEP METHODS

If you are re-introducing a settling method then bedtime is the best time to do this after a good day of naps (naps can be done however you need to – pram, contact, sling etc.). Bedtime is when melatonin – the sleepy hormone – levels are the highest and your little one will have built up sleep pressure from being awake during the day. Here is a reminder of step-by-step how to do each of our two settling methods:

CONTROLLED COMFORTING

In our experience, controlled comforting tends to work best with babies under 6 months. With this method you are going to be staying in the room with your baby until they have fallen asleep or are calm and starting to fall to sleep.

You will:

- Put your baby into their cot awake after completing your bedtime routine. Say “I love you, sleepy time” then wait in the room standing or sitting next to the cot.
- If they start crying, do slow, clockwise circular strokes on their tummy (or on their back if a tummy sleeper). Think massage speed.
- Keep the room dark with no other stimulation. If they are crying, accompany your strokes with long, continuous “shhh” sounds, but otherwise stay quiet and just stroke their tummy.
- If your baby stands in the cot, you can lie them back down and say “lie down” quietly each time.
- Once your baby is settled and starting to fall asleep take your hand off and then move away or leave the room. The key thing with this method is to be attempting to move away/leaving the room before your baby is fully asleep. If you are there until they are fully asleep this is what they will be expecting to see the next time they come out of a sleep cycle.
- If you attempt to leave and they start to cry again, return and continue with your stroking.
- For the first bedtime this might take up to 45 minutes if your baby is tired (not overtired)
- Repeat this same method for night wakes, aside from those that are hunger wakes.
- For daytime naps, have a shorter cut-off time of 25-30 minutes for attempting to get them to settle using this method. If they are not settling then use a “plan B” nap instead such as a pram or contact nap in order to keep daytime sleep on track while you are getting your little one used to settling in their cot again.

CONTROLLED CRYING

With this method, you are going to be leaving the room where your baby sleeps and returning at regular intervals to soothe and reassure them, but giving them space to fall asleep independently.

You will:

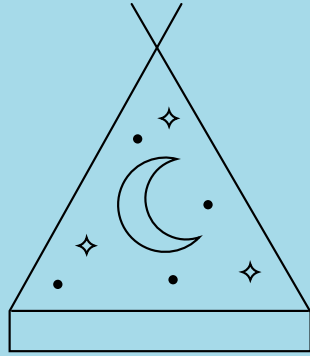
- Put your baby into their cot awake after completing your bedtime routine.
Say "I love you, sleepy time" then leave the room.
- Set a timer for an amount of time you feel comfortable with. We recommend starting at 1 minute or 2 minutes for the first night and introducing this gently.
- If they are still crying at the end of the timer, go back into the room, put your hand on their chest and say one continuous "shhh" for around 3 seconds with your hand on their chest but no other stimulation.
- After that, leave the room even if they are standing or still crying, and reset your timer. If they are crying at the end of the timer, go into the room and do your 3 seconds of "shhh" with your hand on their chest.
- For the first bedtime this might take up to 45 minutes if your baby is tired (not overtired).
- If you hear pauses or gaps in the crying or it starts to become more of a whinge than continuous crying then switch off the timer and just give some space at this point. Observe your little one on the baby monitor as these pauses are a good sign that they are settling.
- After the first bedtime, if you feel comfortable you could increase the interval by 1 minute (so try 2 minute intervals instead of 1 minute), or if you feel they need you more frequently leave the interval at the same amount.
- Repeat this same method for night wakes, aside from those that are hunger wakes.
- For daytime naps, have a shorter cut-off time of 25-30 minutes for attempting to get them to settle using this method. If they are not settling then use a "plan B" nap instead such as a pram or contact nap in order to keep daytime sleep on track while you are getting your little one used to settling in their cot again.



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

If you're back from holiday and have tried to get things back on track with your little one's sleep but are still struggling, we are here to help. Sometimes additional support can be exactly what is needed to get past your current hurdles which is where our one-to-one consultations come in. All pricing and details for one-to-one consultations can be found on the website.

[FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ONE-TO-ONE CONSULTATIONS HERE](#)



THE SLEEP CHIEF

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