

Well  
**Rested  
Babies.**

Evidence-based. Responsive. Realistic.  
Sleep support for families.

# Forget Wake Windows

## FIND YOUR BABY'S REAL SLEEP NEEDS

A practical, research-backed guide to uncover your baby's unique 24-hour sleep needs and build routines that work.



# Introduction:

## WHY 24 HOUR SLEEP MATTERS MORE THAN WAKE WINDOWS:

Most parents are told to follow wake windows - short stretches of awake time between naps, meant to guide when your baby should sleep.

Like many in the sleep world, I once taught them too.

But as I've continued studying the science of infant sleep, I've learned that **wake windows are based on averages, not on research** about individual babies. They don't account for how much total sleep your child actually needs in a 24-hour period. And since every baby's sleep needs differ, what works for one may not work for another.

If you've ever felt like your baby didn't "fit the chart," you're not alone. I've been there too.

Over time, I've shifted to a 24-hour sleep approach because it's grounded in how babies truly build sleep pressure and balance rest across night and day.

When we focus on total daily sleep instead of chasing the clock, we uncover each child's unique sleep needs. **Many sleep struggles come from a baby not having enough awake time - not too much.**

Think of the 24-hour approach as an upgrade to wake windows:

Instead of timing short fragments, we look at the whole day — because total sleep matters more than arbitrary intervals.



### In this guide, you'll:

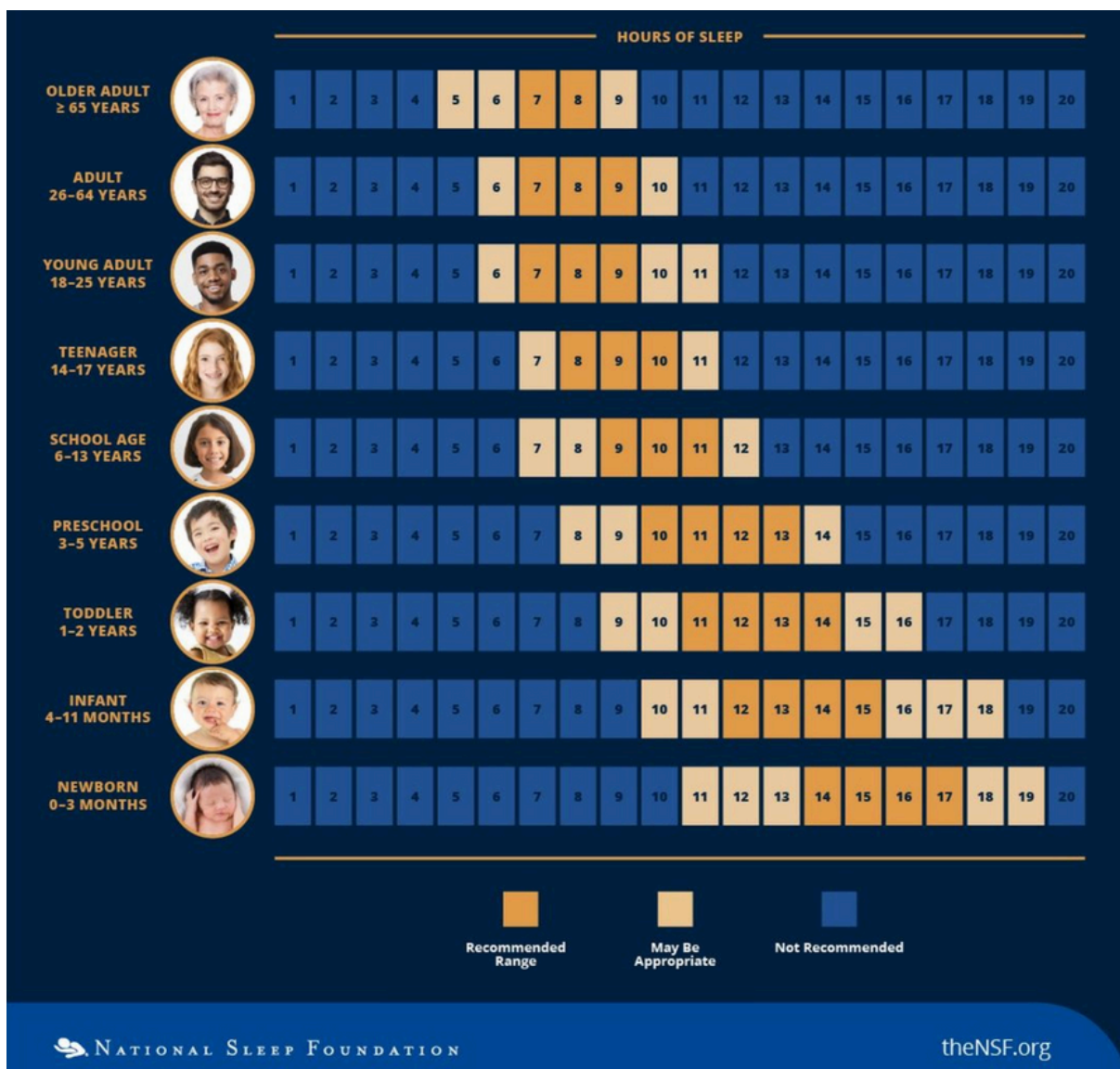
- **Calculate** your child's 24-hour sleep need
- **Use** it to build a simple day plan (naps + night)
- **Adjust** when things don't go as expected

# What does the research say?

The **American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM)** provides research-based sleep recommendations, endorsed by the **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** and the **Sleep Research Society**.

Babies' sleep needs vary widely by age, and within each age group. Some need more, some less. **Both can be healthy.**

Here's a look at typical 24-hour sleep needs by age:



**Use this as a guide, not a rule. Your baby's number might sit anywhere within these ranges.**

# How do I track sleep?

## STEP 1: TRACK ALL SLEEP FOR 5-10 DAYS

Start by logging **all** sleep in a 24-hour period - day and night.

### What to include:

- All naps (even contact naps, car naps, or short snoozes.)
- Night sleep (from first falling asleep to final morning wake-up, minus awake periods)
- Sleep while feeding - if they are clearly asleep, it counts!

### What NOT to include:

- Time spent lying awake in the crib.
- Feeds where baby is clearly awake and alert (opening eyes)

Use any method to track:

App (Baby Connect), spreadsheet, notes or pen and paper — accuracy matters more than the tool.



**DON'T cap sleep while tracking. Let sleep happen naturally. If you cap sleep, you might miss how much sleep they truly need.**

# EXAMPLE ON HOW TO TRACK:

## Example for an 8-month old on 2 naps/day:

(Your baby's numbers will look different — and that's okay.)

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<b>MORNING WAKE:</b>	<b>6:00AM</b>	<b>5:55am</b>	<b>5:50am</b>	<b>5:45am</b>	<b>5:45am</b>
<b>Nap 1 time:</b>	9am-10:30am	8:30-9:30am	8:30-10:15am	8:30-10am	8:45-9:30am
<b>Nap duration:</b>	<b>1h30min</b>	<b>1hour</b>	<b>1h45min</b>	<b>1h30min</b>	<b>45min</b>
<b>Nap 2 time:</b>	2-2:45pm	1:30-2:15pm	1:45-3:15pm	1:45-2:30pm	1:30-2:45pm
<b>Nap duration:</b>	<b>45min</b>	<b>45min</b>	<b>1h30min</b>	<b>45min</b>	<b>1h15min</b>
<b>TOTAL DAY SLEEP:</b>	<b>2h15min</b>	<b>1h45min</b>	<b>3h15min</b>	<b>2h15min</b>	<b>2hours</b>
<b>Bedtime:</b>	6:30pm	6:30pm	6:30pm	6:30pm	6:30pm
<b>TIME BABY FELL ASLEEP:</b>	<b>6:50pm</b>	<b>6:45pm</b>	<b>6:50pm</b>	<b>6:40pm</b>	<b>6:45pm</b>
<b>Night Wake 1:</b>	7:50-8pm	11-11:30pm	7:15-7:30pm	8-8:30pm	7:40-7:50pm
<b>(Length:)</b>	<b>10min</b>	<b>30min</b>	<b>15min</b>	<b>30min</b>	<b>10min</b>
<b>Night Wake 2:</b>	-	2-2:10am	3:10-3:15am	1-1:10am	10:25-12:40am
<b>(Length:)</b>	-	<b>10min</b>	<b>5min</b>	<b>10min</b>	<b>15min</b>
<b>Night Wake 3:</b>	-	2:30-2:45am	3:45-3:50am	2:15-2:20	3-3:10am
<b>(Length:)</b>	-	<b>15min</b>	<b>5min</b>	<b>5min</b>	<b>10min</b>
<b>Night Wake 4:</b>	-	-	4:30-4:45am	3:50-4am	
<b>(Length:)</b>	-	-	<b>15min</b>	<b>10min</b>	
<b>Night Wake 5:</b>	-	-	-	5:15-5:30am	
<b>(Length:)</b>	-	-	-	<b>15min</b>	
<b>TOTAL NIGHT WAKES:</b>	<b>10min</b>	<b>55min</b>	<b>40min</b>	<b>1h10min</b>	<b>35min</b>
<b>TOTAL NIGHT SLEEP</b>	<b>10h55min</b>	<b>10h10min</b>	<b>10h15min</b>	<b>9h55min</b>	<b>10h25min</b>
<b>TOTAL 24H SLEEP</b>	<b>13h10min</b>	<b>11h55min</b>	<b>13h30min</b>	<b>12h10min</b>	<b>12h25min</b>
<b>AVERAGE 24H SLEEP NEED:</b>	<b>12h38min</b>				

## STEP 2: ADD IT UP

At the end of each 24-hour period, calculate:

- **Total night sleep**

### HOW TO CALCULATE NIGHT SLEEP?

Measure the time from when your child falls asleep at bedtime to their final morning wake (the wake that starts the day).

Then subtract any awake time during the night.

Example (See table Day 1):

- Asleep at bedtime: 6:50 pm
- Final morning wake: 5:55 am
- Duration in bed: 11h5min
- Minus overnight awake time: 10min

**Total Night Sleep: 10h 55min**

- **Total nap sleep**

### ADD ALL DAYTIME SLEEP:

Example (See table Day 1)

- Nap 1: 1h30min
- Nap 2: 45min

**Total day sleep: 2h15min**

- **Total 24hr sleep (night + naps)**

### HOW TO CALCULATE TOTAL 24-HOUR SLEEP?

Add all daytime sleep (naps) to night sleep.

Example (See table Day 1):

- Day sleep: 2h 15min
- Night sleep: 10h 55min

**Total Sleep: 13h 10min**

## STEP 3: FIND THE AVERAGE & PATTERNS

Sleep naturally fluctuates (good nights vs rough nights). But across several days, you'll see:

- An absolute average (your child's real 24-hour sleep need).
- Whether they fall in the low, mid, or high needs range for their age.

### HOW TO CALCULATE THE AVERAGE 24-HOUR SLEEP NEED

Add each day's total sleep together, then divide by the number of days you tracked.

Tip: Do the math in minutes first, then convert the final result back to hours and minutes (HH:MM).

Example:

13h10min (790min) + 11h55min (715min) + 13h30min (810min) + 12h10min (730min) + 12h25min (745min) = 3790min/5days  
= 758min/day  
= 12.63hrs (0.63x60=38min)  
= **12h38min**

**Use this average as your daily sleep cap.**

(e.g., 12h38min - cap at ≈12h40min) to prevent the “good day / bad day” rollercoaster.

### WHY 24 HOUR SLEEP MATTERS:

Sleep ranges are broad. Some babies thrive on 12 hours in 24, others need 16 hours, and both can be healthy.

**Every baby has a finite amount of sleep they need in 24 hours.**

If your baby's total is 12h40min (as in the example above), they physically can't nap 3 hours a day and sleep 11–12 hours at night.

That's why some babies:

- take short naps
- drop naps earlier
- need longer wake times

It's not that something's "off." Their body may already be getting what it needs.

**KNOW THE TOTAL . PLAN THE DAY. REDUCE GUESSWORK.**

## STEP 4: PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Once you know your child's 24-hour sleep need, you use this number to guide daily sleep totals.

For example:

**8 month old's sleep average = 12h40min** (The next step is to distribute this total across the day in a balanced way.)

Start by allowing **10–11 hours for night sleep**, adjust slightly if your baby consistently takes less or more.

From there, **divide the remaining sleep across naps.**

Here's how that might look like in practice: **(There can be variations.)**

- |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Wake 6:00 am              | <b>Night sleep: 10 hours</b> |
| • Nap 1 9:30–11:00 (1h 30m) | <b>Day sleep: 2 h40min</b>   |
| • Nap 2 2:45–3:55 (1h 10m)  | <b>Total: 12 h40min</b>      |
| • Bedtime 8:00 pm           |                              |

Let's look at the same 24 hour total at different ages:

- 5 months: 3 shorter naps
- 6–12 months: 2 medium naps (example shown)
- 12 months+: 1 long nap



**Every baby's sleep can be distributed differently — what matters is that the total 24-hour sleep aligns with their individual needs.**

# More to consider:

Even with the right 24-hour plan, there are other factors that can affect how well your baby sleeps.

Here are a few key ones to keep in mind:

- **Sleep environment:** A dark, quiet, and cool space reduces distractions and helps your baby fall and stay asleep more easily.
- **Routines:** Predictable wind-down steps before naps and bedtime cue your baby that sleep is coming.
- **Sleep associations:** What your baby connects with falling asleep (like feeding, rocking, or contact), often becomes the same thing they look for to settle back to sleep when they wake between cycles.
- **Sleep pressure:** How much awake time your baby needs before falling asleep easily. Too little can make falling asleep harder, while too much can cause dysregulation.
- **Developmental leaps:** Periods of rapid learning and growth can temporarily affect sleep. These changes are normal.
- **Teething or illness:** Physical discomfort often interrupts sleep.

Remember that **sleep isn't linear**. It is **complex** and **ever-changing**.

The key is to understand sleep, how it works, what affects it, and what your baby truly needs to rest well.



**A perfect schedule alone won't fix sleep — but understanding how these pieces work together helps you see the full picture of your baby's sleep.**

# FEELING STUCK? LET'S FIGURE IT OUT TOGETHER.

If you're stuck in a cycle of:

- Short naps
- Bedtime battles
- Split nights
- Early morning wakings
- Or just second-guessing every piece of sleep advice you see online.

You're not alone. And you don't have to do this by trial and error anymore.

I work 1:1 with families to create responsive, research-backed sleep plans that honor your baby's unique sleep needs.

We'll look at your baby's real sleep patterns, figure out what's getting in the way, and build a plan that actually works for your family.

## READY FOR BETTER SLEEP?

Book a free 15-minute call so we can talk through what's going on and whether support would help:



Let's take the guesswork out of sleep - together.

You don't have to "wait it out," you and your baby can get the rest they need!

*Sweet Dreams!*  
*Margaretha*

# FIND YOUR BABY'S SLEEP AVERAGE:

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<b>MORNING WAKE:</b>					
<b>Nap 1 time:</b>					
<b>Nap duration:</b>					
<b>Nap 2 time:</b>					
<b>Nap duration:</b>					
<b>Nap 3 time:</b>					
<b>Nap duration:</b>					
<b>TOTAL DAY SLEEP:</b>					
<b>Bedtime:</b>					
<b>TIME BABY FELL ASLEEP:</b>					
<b>Night Wake 1:</b>					
<b>(Length:)</b>					
<b>Night Wake 2:</b>					
<b>(Length:)</b>					
<b>Night Wake 3:</b>					
<b>(Length:)</b>					
<b>Night Wake 4:</b>					
<b>(Length:)</b>					
<b>Night Wake 5:</b>					
<b>(Length:)</b>					
<b>TOTAL NIGHT WAKES:</b>					
<b>TOTAL NIGHT SLEEP</b>					
<b>TOTAL 24H SLEEP</b>					

**AVERAGE 24H SLEEP NEED:**

# FIND YOUR BABY'S SLEEP AVERAGE:

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<b>MORNING WAKE:</b>					
<b>Nap 1 time:</b>					
<b>Nap duration:</b>					
<b>Nap 2 time:</b>					
<b>Nap duration:</b>					
<b>Nap 3 time:</b>					
<b>Nap duration:</b>					
<b>TOTAL DAY SLEEP:</b>					
<b>Bedtime:</b>					
<b>TIME BABY FELL ASLEEP:</b>					
<b>Night Wake 1:</b>					
<b>(Length:)</b>					
<b>Night Wake 2:</b>					
<b>(Length:)</b>					
<b>Night Wake 3:</b>					
<b>(Length:)</b>					
<b>Night Wake 4:</b>					
<b>(Length:)</b>					
<b>Night Wake 5:</b>					
<b>(Length:)</b>					
<b>TOTAL NIGHT WAKES:</b>					
<b>TOTAL NIGHT SLEEP</b>					
<b>TOTAL 24H SLEEP</b>					

**AVERAGE 24H SLEEP NEED:**