



Work Hard, (Try to) Sleep Hard:

HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS FOR THE PARENT RETURNING TO WORK

As a working parent, returning to work after the arrival of your baby can be a challenging transition. One of the keys to maintaining your well-being during this time is establishing a nourishing sleep routine for yourself. This tip sheet will provide you with practical strategies to help you create a restful and rejuvenating environment for your family.

JOSIE'S TOP 10 TIPS FOR CREATING A NOURISHING SLEEP ROUTINE:

1. **Consistency is your BFF:** Establish a consistent bedtime and wake-up time for you and your baby. Sticking to a schedule promotes better sleep quality, leaving you feeling more rested and ready to take on the day.
2. **Sync your schedules:** As you return to work, syncing your baby's feeding and napping schedule with your workday can be a game-changer. A well-timed bottle, snack, or nap before a big meeting or task can ensure your baby is content, and you can focus on work. As the saying goes, "Happy baby, productive parent!"
3. **Tackle tomorrow, tonight:** Studies have shown that writing a "to-do tomorrow" list can reduce sleep-disrupting thoughts. Spend a few minutes jotting down those tasks and give your brain the break it deserves!
4. **Journal your way to dreamland:** Physically writing down your stresses can make you feel lighter. Try creating a gratitude list too - it's like giving your brain a feel-good hug!
5. **Partner power:** Connection can boost love, happiness, and trust - the ultimate relaxation trifecta. Make time for snuggles and pillow talk to wind down.
6. **Visualize for Zzzz's:** Let's be real, parenting is a 24/7 job, and your mind might still be in full-on "parent mode" even when it's time for bed. To help you shift gears, put down your phone and try visualizing yourself in a serene, kid-free paradise - think tropical beach, tranquil forest, or floating on a cloud. Studies show that guided imagery can help calm a busy mind and ease you into a peaceful slumber.



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7. **Try a breathing exercise.** Dr. Andrew Weil developed “4-7-8” breathing technique as a variation of pranayama, an ancient yogic technique that helps people relax as it replenishes oxygen in the body:
 - Allow your lips to gently part.
 - Exhale completely, making a breathy whoosh sound as you do.
 - Press your lips together as you silently inhale through the nose for a count of 4 seconds.
 - Hold your breath for a count of 7.
 - Exhale again for a full 8 seconds, making a whooshing sound throughout.
 - Repeat 4 times when you first start. Eventually work up to 8 repetitions.

8. **Guided meditation magic:** Let a soothing voice lead you to relaxation paradise with a guided meditation. It's like a spa for your mind! Try this fantastic 12-minute [YouTube meditation](#).

9. **Soak your way to slumber:** A warm bath can work wonders for relaxation. The science behind it is simple: warm up, cool down, and voilà! Sleepiness ensues *poof!

10. **Snack your way to sleep:** Cherries, grapes, strawberries, nuts, oats, and melatonin-rich foods can be your bedtime BFFs. Pair with a warm herbal tea for the ultimate sleep-inducing treat. (Note: 1-2 cups of herbal tea is considered safe when breastfeeding but we recommend consulting a provider to ensure the best decision for you and your baby.)

There you have it - a fun, research-backed guide to creating a nourishing sleep routine for you and your baby. Remember, every family is unique, so give yourself time to find what works best for you. Sweet dreams!

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

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