

Discover My Sleep Sharing Minutiae:

- Here are 34 ideas for you to try out!

By Charndra Josling

Do You Sleep Share (with your baby in the same bed) or Co-Sleep (With your baby in the same room)? We do, and always have – It is the normal thing for our family.

In this 'e-guide' I am Listing My 'Sleep Sharing Minutiae' - Tips I have used to aid sleep sharing, as it is a quite different approach that seems to have very little useful information available beyond the tedious controversy over it.

I've made it downloadable so you can save it to your computer for easy access, or share it with your friends. Please leave any links intact.

(I love the word minutiae) Minutiae are 'small or trivial details' - the *little* things that I do to help baby to relax to sleep and to stay asleep all night long, only briefly rousing (transitional waking) to find the boob for a feed, or have a wee in the potty, or rather the bowl that we use at night.

Baby has so seldom woken at night past the itty bit stage, he always gets a solid sleep, although my sleep is segmented! Sleep sharing minimises my sleep segmenting as well, so it is easier to meet his instinctive needs as a baby and young toddler.

This is called a 'paediatric' approach to parenting, and is part of 'Attachment Parenting', or Natural Parenting, and similar terms that are about what is closest to instinctual that we can access in our modern societies...

Why I feed to sleep

"The process of breastfeeding itself regulates baby's temperature and heart rate and lowers his blood pressure, and puts him to sleep. This helps your baby develop a healthy attitude about sleep, where baby views sleep as a safe, comforting, natural state...It is normal, natural and healthy for your baby to fall asleep nursing. Nursing babies fall asleep so quickly - how can anything so perfectly designed be worrisome?" Source: Kellymom's [Nursing to Sleep and other Comfort Nursing](#)

- It is nature's way of helping my baby to fall asleep and stay asleep.
- It helps me to go to sleep, and back to sleep - the hormones work both ways!

- It gives the baby a first point of focussing his attention or concentration, stilling his mind and body so sleep can take over.
- It helps the baby to 'tune out' externals - noises and so on, so he can focus and relax to sleep.
- It is a natural base on which to add other sleep associations over time, so that sleep time is always a peaceful time as baby grows and learns to fall asleep over time naturally.
- It works, it is easy for me, normal and programmed into baby - I'm not messing with nature and then getting a baby that finds it hard to get to sleep!

My role:

My role is thus very simple - help baby to go to sleep and then to stay asleep all night, so that he has relaxing, peaceful sleeping.

Meanwhile ***supporting his need to seek the various supports provided by boob access***, as he needs it at his early cues, so that he only experiences transitional waking during the night. That way, when he is ready, in neurobiological terms, to sleep all night, he will do so easily. It has worked really well; in between his "Boobathons", he sleeps longer stretches with no manipulations on my part, these stretches are lengthening naturally as he gets more mature.

How I feed to sleep

- **Boobing off** - feeding to sleep is the underlying way to help baby relax to sleep. This is the natural method built into our evolution. He lays on his side at boob height while I feed him and breathe on his head. Quiet feeding and sleepy breathing was almost all we needed for at least six months to relax him into sleep. We've slowly added other sleep inducers in over time as he's needed them. No tears thanks.

Added to boobing off over the months are other ways I have learnt from fellow Mums, books, websites, or discovered myself, to help baby to relax into sleep, and help him to stay asleep. By doing these things at the same time as 'boobing off', they are becoming relaxing sleep associations.

I was astounded at the range of things we have used over time, as I just say "I feed to sleep". Sometimes he drops into sleep in two minutes, other times it takes up to an hour - a couple of times longer, but only recently - turns out that was related to a burst of mental development.

OK - Helping Baby to Go to Sleep in a Sleep Sharing Environment:

Here are 34 ideas for you to try out – I always find ACTION is better than despairing the babe will EVER drop off!

- **Team Breathing** - breathe in and out slowly and audibly - baby starts to mimic me and *it also helps me to relax* as I am focussing on my breathing. I breathe really slowly, out loud through my nose or mouth as if I am already asleep – he begins to imitate me, relaxing him to sleep. As a focussing activity for me, I aim to time my inhaling breaths with one of his. Ragged to silent breathing, just like that!
- **'Sleepy Breeze'** - if he's wiggling, and I know he doesn't need to have a widdle, I breathe out onto his face, he'll go still and then relax to sleep. Works a treat! (breathing rather than blowing) I think it reassures him that I am there, that I am relaxed, so he can be, too.
- **Sleepy Noises** - linked in with our team breathing, basically pretending to be asleep so he can see/feel that, I'd find making little 'sleepy' noises "eh", "uh", "mm" at odd intervals helps him to relax and learn to fall asleep. I started this by copying the noises he'd make falling asleep some times - reinforcing his own cue?
- **Squashing** - I put my arm or wrist over him, or my leg on his - the pressure helps him to relax and drift off. I put my top leg over his for a short while, sort of resting on it a bit, lightly – it relaxes him.
- **Boob Swapping** - once the milk flows, swapping him from side to side (while side-lying) often helps him to relax as he'd have to focus on the flow, drawing in his attention and doing the trick. Gotta get all that milky help!
- **The Milk Squirt!** - I gently squeeze my milk ducts to give a faster flow into his mouth so he has to give the milk flow his full concentration - helps a lot.
- **Koala Pose** - I arrange him so his hands and feet are on or touching, or bent against my body - it is comforting to him, and was a pose he'd so often adopt himself when a newborn. It is gorgeous.

- **Block That Ear!** - I'll rest my hand over his ear to block any sounds, stroke his head, now hair, gently and slowly with my thumb.
- **Boob Sandwich** - he used to sleep with his hand/s between the boobs when an itty bitty as it relaxed him, or feet between my thighs - I guess that the warm feet helps him sleep - I know it helps me - I like to wear socks to bed!
- **Sleepy Eyes** - when there is light around, every time he glances at my eyes, I sleepily, slowly close them. Usually, in a very short while, the tired bubby mimics this, the closing happens more and more frequently, and he can't keep his eyes open! So cute!
- **Hands up in the air!** - more so when he was smaller, when he'd often sleep arms above his head, if I encouraged his arm over his head or face, it would actually help him drop off faster - not sure why.
- **Sleep Buttons** - a technique that is really helpful is to gently press on the 'points' on the sides of the forehead - even by just putting my hand across his forehead - really relaxes him fast! Some nights his breathing goes from ragged to even, then quietly asleep, rolling away in literally one or two minutes! It is a trick that only works sometimes, as he hates the sensation other times -but if he is a bit sleepy he'll drop off faster when I do this, I sneak my hand to his head. Works on the meridians.
- **Cue Words** - "*Sleepy time, close your eyes*", stroking over his eyelids to close them. "Relax" as a cue word - spoken quietly WHEN he is relaxed.
- **Thinking "Love"** - speaking in my mind to him, loving words, sleepy peaceful words - also helps me to relax. Relaxing my mind also seems to help. If I am buzzing, he won't or can't relax.
- **Stroking** - stroking his thigh, or holding it firmly helps him to relax.
- **Massage** - massaging the top of the back, along the channels of the spine relaxes the respiratory system, helping an excited bubby to relax.
- **High Patting** - rapid yet gentle patting high on baby's back helps him to focus and relax.

- **Finger Drumming** - I'd drum my fingers from fast to slow, from stronger to lighter pressure on his back, leg, wherever I could touch. I guess it is a focus point - draws his attention, gets him to focus, then the change of pressure, rhythm draws him down to slumber.
- **Foot Massage** - massaging the feet is a known way to relax the breathing of a newborn within five minutes. Pressing his feet with my legs would be enough to help him relax back to deeper sleep at times. Simply wearing socks would be enough warmth for him to help him sleep.
- **Head Massage** - Rubbing along the 'sutures' of the skull is a tip I discovered while having my head relaxed at the Chiropractors - I do it by rubbing back and forth with my finger tips, ending by rubbing / pulling his skin forwards to his face, smoothing in that direction. It's GOLD!
- **Head Pressure** - sleeping with my arm pressing the top of his head helps him relax. Pressing there at wiggling sometimes relaxes him.
- **Cooling the Poppet** - chucking off the covers as he relaxes would help him relax faster - once he was able he'd do this himself, and I'd notice he'd go to sleep faster. 17 degrees Celsius is a good temperature to drop down to induce sleep - so if he is having trouble dropping off, I'd uncover him for a spell.
- **Pillow Arm** - baby sleeps laying on the bed; sometimes at an early morning wake-up feed, I could have him rest on my upper arm as a pillow, and hearing my heart beat would help him to drop off again. Then I could slip my arm out, press the top of his head, and hop up.
- **Humming** - low humming of lullabies helps him to relax. Fading out the volume.
- **Lullabies, Singing** - the usual, so long as they are low and monotonous, fading out the volume and pace over time.
- **'Breath' Singing** - singing with breath, but not sound!
- **Wrapping Moments** - occasionally on buzzy nights he enjoys being wrapped for just a few moments as he starts to feed, then gets unwrapped again. He actually starts to wrap himself when he wants this help, astounding.

- **Up Again, Around and Down** - an extra lap of the bed or the room, or the house is what he needs at times to expel that bit of extra energy before bombing. Usually this is when I am just about over the buzzing, then he relaxes so easily! Fhew! This is expelling nervous energy and hormones, as mentioned in this article: [The Importance of the in-arms phase](#)
- **Acupressure** - two points for sleeping are on the side of the hand below the pinkie and pressing the web between the thumb and pointer - hold firmly until you feel a pulse.
- **1000 Kisses** - Baby was up for fifteen out of the sixteen hours between waking early and bed, so was buzzing. I was trying all my sleepy tricks - breathing on him, boobing him, darkness, squishing his legs with mine; he kept bouncing up for more and I was *so shagged!* So I started kissing his head. Really fast, all over his forehead and hair, his cheeks. He calmed right down from struggling-squawky to giggly squawky, to stillness then relaxing, booby and sleep. I was really pleased (although I felt like a fish from all the lip pursing and pecking) as I was so tired and over it, doing this made me smile and happy and relaxed! Of course, because kisses relax us - endorphins are released, so I had 'forced' myself to relax! He just looked at me when I peeped at him, smiling, and kept going! He had a little smile on his face then. I am so excited to find such an exciting and lovely new way of relaxing him. It must have taken 3 - 5 minutes tops!
- **The Giggles** - if he is simply not relaxing, or has bounded up with a new lease of energy after a feed (when he was obviously tired before), I discovered that giving him back or belly tickles, head tickles (pressing and wiggling my head on his belly), funny faces and silly noises, whatever gets him to giggle for even thirty seconds - amazing, but really, the giggles release calming hormones, (endorphins) and help him to relax really quickly.
- **TV** - goodness, but turning on the TV one odd morning when he woke up at 4am due to the cold and couldn't get back to sleep for two hours - I used every trick to help him - (basically the second time this has happened at night, both times over 15 months), Daddy turned on the TV, he fell asleep in five minutes. Go figure! Slept for two and a half hours more!!!
- **Chicken Hypnosis Technique** - stroking basically his sternum made him pass out the first time I tried it - after remembering as kids we would 'hypnotise' chickens by stroking them from under their beak down their body. It was hysterical - the chicken would go limp and just lay there relaxed looking at you!

- **Nuzzling and Libbling** - nuzzling his head with my nose, or 'libbling' - nibbling him with my lips - it REALLY relaxes him, he loves it! I guess it is an instinctual memory of licking? "Libbling" is silly word for it I made up! It sends him in to hysterics of giggles at times - *"I'm gonna Libble you!"*

Helping baby to stay asleep

Some of these are very suitable to helping baby to stay asleep, in their lighter, flippy sleep stages due to teething, growth, illness, stress or whatever it might be!

So, repeated below are the 9 I find most useful for easing a wriggling baby back to sleep:

- **Keeping in Touch** - Reassurance of touching moments. Just a touch is enough to reassure him back to sleep a lot of the time.
- **MY NUMBER ONE SOLUTION is the 'Sleepy Breeze'** - if he's wriggling, and I know he doesn't need to have a wee, I breathe out onto his face, he'll go still and then relax to sleep. Works a treat! (breathing rather than blowing) I think it reassures him that I am there, that I am relaxed, so he can be, too. The carbon dioxide in my breath relaxes his breathing.
- **Team Breathing** - breathe in and out slowly and audibly - baby starts to mimic me and *it also helps me to relax* as I am focussing on my breathing. I breathe really slowly, out loud through my nose or mouth as if I am already asleep - he begins to imitate me, relaxing him to sleep. As a focussing activity for me, I aim to time my inhaling breaths with one of his. Ragged to silent breathing, just like that!
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I always have a 'blank moment' when I need to think of another aid, that's why I have created this as a free .pdf – in case they can help you, too!

Night time is not a rational time to start learning new skills - one of the reasons I won't sleep train, apart from the fact I believe sleep to be a developmental milestone rather than a skill. Seems crazy - we don't expect babies and toddlers to eat like adults, walk like adults (they fall over a lot), talk like adults, or dress themselves, or wash themselves, or toilet, yet 'society' and 'they' expect babies and toddlers with their immature brains to sleep like adults? Bizarre. That is another thought I think to keep my mind's thoughts in perspective. Another is to simply LOOK at my baby - he is SO LITTLE!

Share your Gentle Sleep Sharing 'Minutiae' tips!

8 More Wonderful ideas shared by Tribal Baby Visitors:

Ask the Angels for help!

Remembering to ASK the angels for help. When I start to get frazzled and it seems like it's taking forever for Lotus to fall asleep, I ask her angels to come and help her drift to sleep quickly and peacefully. And when I do this it works almost immediately. Whether it's a change in my energy from frustration to trust, or whether angelic help really does come along, either way it works a treat.

Shared by Alice from [Bongo Baby](#) - EC Gear and hand made creations.

The Squish and Plip

When baby is flutter sucking (or fairy sucking, or butterfly sucking - whatever your word for it) and does THE PAUSE, squish your nipple flat on either side of their mouth, so the boob isn't touching their face, and plip out the nipple. Only pop it out in the pause, though.

Shared by Belinda

Five more minutes then "Close Your Eyes"

I usually give him 5 more minutes of whatever he's doing - playing, TV etc while I close the curtains, set the lounge up with pillows and teddy, turn the lights off. Then it's boob time. He has teddy under one arm and usually pats my face or squeezes my boobs/nipples. I gently rub his hair and face and tell him "Close your eyes" over and over and he's usually asleep in a couple of minutes. Once he drops off my boob he stays in my lap for half an hour or so until he's well and truly asleep then I pop him into bed. I find breastfeeding to sleep so easy. Even when he *thinks* he's not tired a quick breastfeed and he will nod off.

Shared by Nicki

Sweeping with Blankie and 'Nigh nigh' music

One that I use is to gently sweep "Blankie" across her cheek. Her eyes almost always start rolling back immediately!

I also know her favourite bedtime story off by heart, so if she's really not in the mood to sleep, I tell it to her wherever we are.

She also has 'nigh nigh' music, and if she's really finding it hard to go to sleep, I get up and sit on the computer and play it in the dark. This is yet to fail!

Shared by Elvencreature

Smoothing and soothing baby's aura:

Another way is to visualize running my hand along the length of Lotus, a couple of inches above her body, from head to toe. In my mind's eye I am stroking her aura and smoothing it out, helping her relax. It really works, and helps me relax too. I keep repeating this until she is asleep which doesn't take long. The power of the mind is an amazing thing. I have found this to work really well, every time.

Shared by Alice from [Bongo Baby](#) - EC Gear and hand made creations.

The trick for using sleepy cue words...

Echoing his sleepy noises always helps and using sleepy cue words in a sleepy gentle voice which tell bub what to do: "Close your eyes, rest your head, suck your thumb..." work really well after you use them for a while. The trick is to say the words as bub is doing the action, not before they do it otherwise they don't know what it means! My son does exactly what I say when I use these words now!

Other sleepy cue words might be phrases like "Mummy's here. Go to sleep now" or "night night close your eyes". Once bub knows the words well, you can use them to resettle your baby when they stir a little in the night.

Shared by Leonie MacDonald

Nuzzling baby's head and stroking baby's legs works a treat

I nuzzle the top of his head with my mouth and blow warm air across his head, kissing him at the same time as he feeds. He now kisses the top of my head in the same way when he hugs me!

I sing his favourite song which is "the wheels on the bus" very softly and slowly, changing the words to "the babies on the bus close their eyes" etc

I stroke his forehead with my fingers very gently.

I've tried rubbing his feet because that works a treat on me, but it annoys him, so instead I use long firm strokes along the length of his legs which really relaxes him.

Shared by Daisy

Shared smiles for the sleepy times:

As Teva falls into slumber and I know his eyes are on me while his eyelids slowly get heavy, I keep a tiny, gentle smile on my face so that the last thing he will see and feel is happiness, before he nods off to sleep. (And it also has a wonderful effect on ME to fall asleep with a smile on my face!)

Shared by Khaira

P.S Do you have any unique little co-sleeping tips you'd like to share here? I'd love to hear them - I can use them too! Contact me: Charndra@tribalbaby.org

Visit Tribal Baby.org to discover how to connect with your baby and use fewer nappies or diapers. My Free eGuide ["The 7 Secrets to Elimination Communication"](#) and \$2.99 eBook ["Part Time EC"](#) will help you out!