

## Wee Beginners (0-18 months): Motor Skills



### Why Are Motor Skills Important?

Motor skills are essential for baby's physical strength and movement. These skills are used everyday throughout our lives, and they help us move and do everything from lifting heavy items to typing on a keyboard. Motor skills and motor control begin developing after birth and will progress as children grow. These skills are broken into two categories; Gross motor, which are movements related to large muscles such as legs, arms, and trunk and Fine motor, which are movements involving smaller muscle groups such as those in the hand and wrist.

### Why does my child need motor skills?

- To be able to move and complete tasks independently
- To be able to explore the world around them, which promotes cognitive, speech, and sensory development
- To give them confidence and independence
- To meet developmental milestones
- To possibly help prevent early motor delays and conditions that can interrupt development

### When should my baby start developing motor skills?

As a newborn! They will begin developing core motor skills as soon as they start moving.

### How often should my child work on their motor skills?

The short answer: every day! As they get older, your little one will be working on their motor skills every day just by going about their daily routine and getting more involved in activities. Make sure you are encouraging physical movement and development of these skills on a daily basis.

### Why Sleep Matters for Motor Skills?

Changing baby's sleep direction can help strengthen baby's neck muscles and head control. Changing head direction can help prevent positional plagiocephaly (flat head) and positional torticollis, by encouraging baby to move their head and strengthen both sides of their neck. When baby faces different directions as they lay, they also vary the direction they turn their head in response to a noise (such as a parent entering the room). This strengthens neck muscles more evenly on both sides, and changes the places where baby puts pressure on their head as they lay.

### What are some behaviors to watch out for that could affect my child's motor skills?

Children outgrow many of the behaviors that can interrupt motor development. Some common ones to watch out for include:

- Toe-Walking
- Chewing on items they shouldn't be chewing on
- Falling often or having trouble lifting their head
- W-Sitting

If you suspect a motor delay, reach out to your baby's healthcare provider to find out what may be causing this delay. Early intervention is essential for addressing development issues and preventing further delays.

while you are having fun, your child is also learning.

Source: <https://bit.ly/3upAR5F>