



**Playpak Factsheet #04:
Playpak Therapy Guide -
Prone (Tummy Lying)**

All of the activities outlined in this Factsheet are also available to follow by using our animated and narrated online guide. Watch it at www.fireflyfriends.com/playpak

Prone (Tummy Lying) - why?

Tummy time is a difficult position for children as it means they have to struggle against gravity to lift their heads, however it's especially important when developing and strengthening muscles. Remember to use easier activities at first.



Cognitive goals

As children learn to hold their heads up and prop on their forearms, their shoulders and arms are giving sensory feedback about their position in relation to their body and environment. As this works together with the eyes and environment when reaching for toys, their spatial awareness is also developing.

Communication goals

Tummy lying may make it more difficult for your child to make sounds (vocalise), as their chest is compressed in this position. However communication goals are a good way to provide the motivation they need to practice this important developmental position.



Physical goals

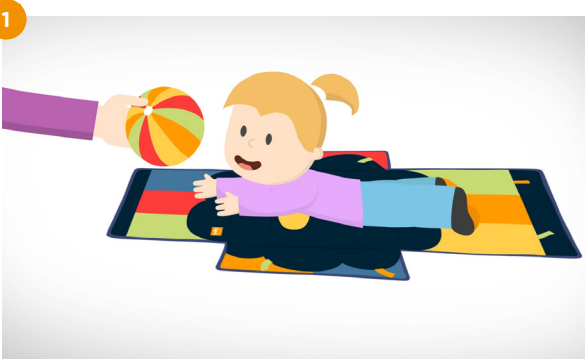
Lifting a child's head and shoulders up against gravity helps to strengthen the straightening (extensor) muscles of the trunk. This is helpful for children with floppy (low tone) muscles. It is also an important foundation for the development of sitting.

Sensory goals

With reasonable head control, children will be able to play for some time in this position, continuing to strengthen their muscles, while exploring their environment and looking around.



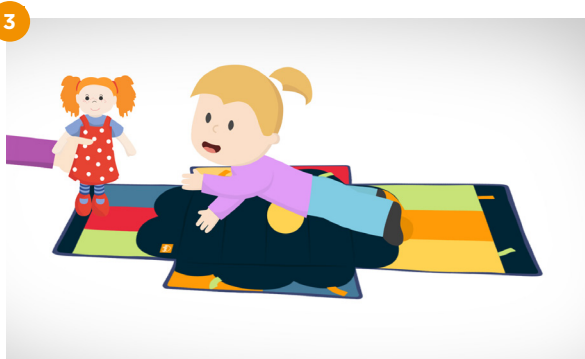
Prone (Tummy Lying) Activity Suggestions



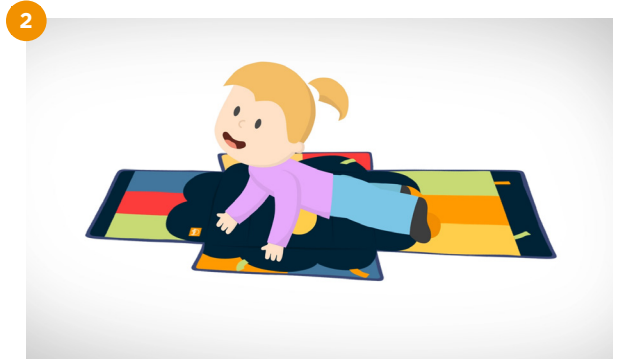
Encourage your child to lift her head up - use a favourite toy to motivate her. To make this a little more difficult, try moving the toy slowly from side to side, so baby has to turn her head to follow it.

Sing your child's favourite songs and action rhymes to encourage him to look up at you. Change the tone (intonation) and emphasis (inflection) of your own voice to link to the movements and to help your child to focus on the key words.

To help her learn new words, remember to bring any toys you use into her line of vision before you name them.



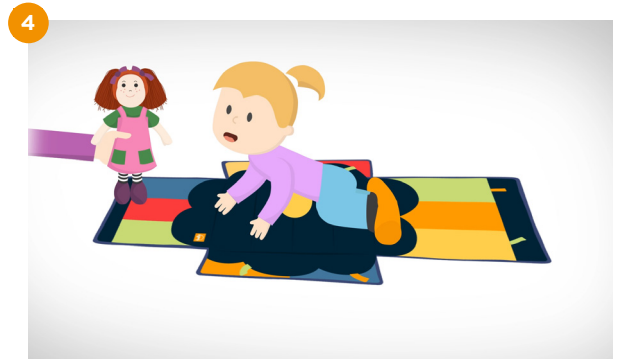
While baby has her head lifted up, encourage her to reach and grasp with one hand, then the other. This helps to develop trunk and lower spine extension - the start of the lumbar curve. The weight shift involved when using one hand at a time uses more complex muscle control - this helps later for sitting up and using the arms against gravity.



Encourage baby to "push-up" on straightened (extended) arms with open hands. This will strengthen her shoulder and upper trunk, and encourages weight bearing through her arms - a building block for four-point kneeling. It is also a very early building block for finer motor skills which depend on stability at the shoulder for the control needed.

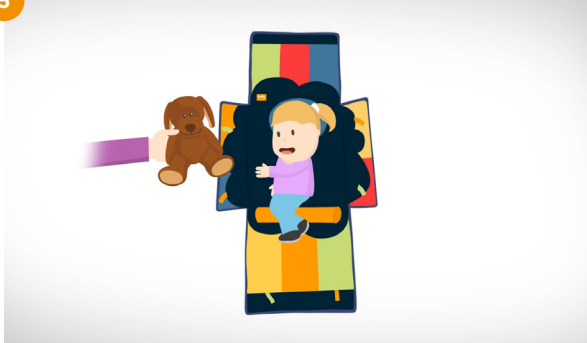
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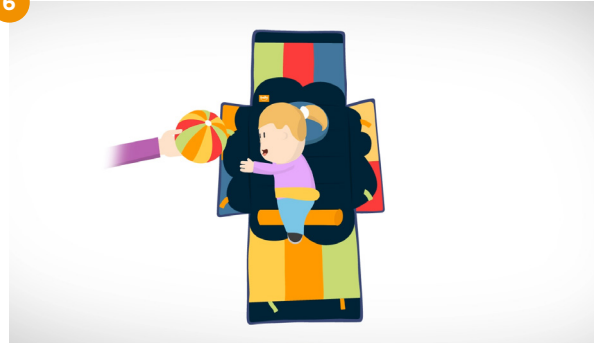
Place your child in a curled up position on her tummy, ensuring her airway is clear. Make sure her hips, knees and ankles are bent (flexed), and place a roll firmly behind her feet. Show her an exciting toy, and she should start kicking, pushing herself forward. Tickle baby's feet, and place them against the roll to encourage movement. This is a building block for commando (belly) crawling and four point crawling.

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To encourage rolling, place baby midway between back lying and side lying. Encourage her to reach or kick for a toy so she can begin to roll onto her tummy in a controlled, fluid manner. Help her to move at first by moving her hips or legs, while she works to turn her shoulders.

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Make rolling a little more difficult by holding the lower half of the body steady using your hands or the positioning strap. Encourage the child to roll leading with her top half. Position toys just out of reach of baby. As her top half turns, allow her lower half to follow.