

How to encourage your child to develop crawling and standing skills



- All babies develop at different rates and this is completely normal. Sometimes though babies can get “stuck” and not progress in their gross motor development.
- By using the positions and activities on this sheet as part of play time you can help your child develop gross motor skills and their ability to explore.
- In order to keep your child interested in moving try and offer them different toys everyday, or use their favourite toy for difficult tasks to increase motivation!

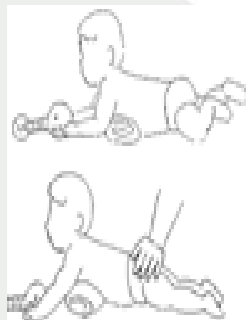
Why is my child not crawling?

- Some children really dislike being on their tummy and there can be many reasons for this, for example having significant reflux or colic. If your child has not spent time playing on their tummy they will not have developed the strength in their arm and back muscles which is needed to progress to crawling.
- Children who dislike tummy time tend to become bottom shufflers rather than crawl and tend to be advanced in their sitting skills. Bottom-shuffling involves moving around the floor in sitting using legs, and sometimes arms, to propel themselves forwards or backwards. They may use a variety of techniques to do this - some lean to the side and use one arm and leg, some use both legs together and some bounce. This is not normally a cause for concern in a child who uses both hands for play.
- Children can often move around very quickly by bottom shuffling and therefore have little motivation to attempt to crawl; stand or walk. Bottom shuffling is not a cause for concern as it still allows your child to explore their environment. However it is a good idea to practise the activities in this leaflet to develop the muscles that will allow your child to take weight through their legs in standing and walking, as bottom shuffling does not encourage this.

How can I help my child?

Tummy Time play

- By using Tummy time activities in playtime with your child every day – your child is likely to protest at first, especially if they have disliked this in the past! Little and often is best – preferably each session should end with smiles and not tears!
- Here are some ways to encourage tummy time:-



Place a rolled up towel under their chest. This will help them to prop through their shoulders and lift their head up to look around. Put their favourite toys in front of them. Or lie on your tummy on the floor in front of them so they are motivated to lift their chest up to look at you.

Lie your child on their tummy on your chest. Give them support under their chest to encourage them to push up onto elbows or straight arms. They will want to look at you and interact and so will be encouraged to stay in position. Sing and talk to them for distraction!

Place your child on their tummy over your legs whilst you are sitting on the sofa or on the floor. Push down gently on their bottom to encourage them to take weight through their shoulders. Look at a favourite book together with the book on the floor in front of them. If they move a hand to point at the book even better!

Progressing to shuffling/crawling

- Now your child should have begun to build up the strength in their back and arm muscles. The next stage is to encourage your child to move on their tummy (commando crawling).



Place them on their tummy with a toy within arms reach. This will encourage them to transfer weight over onto one arm so that they can reach with the other arm to get the toy (this weight transference is needed for crawling).

Place a toy they like just out of their reach in front of them. Bend up one leg and hold this in place to encourage them to push with their legs towards the toy. When they have moved a little with one leg switch and hold the other leg. This will be easier on laminate flooring rather than carpet to start with. They should start to push by themselves with their legs to move forwards.

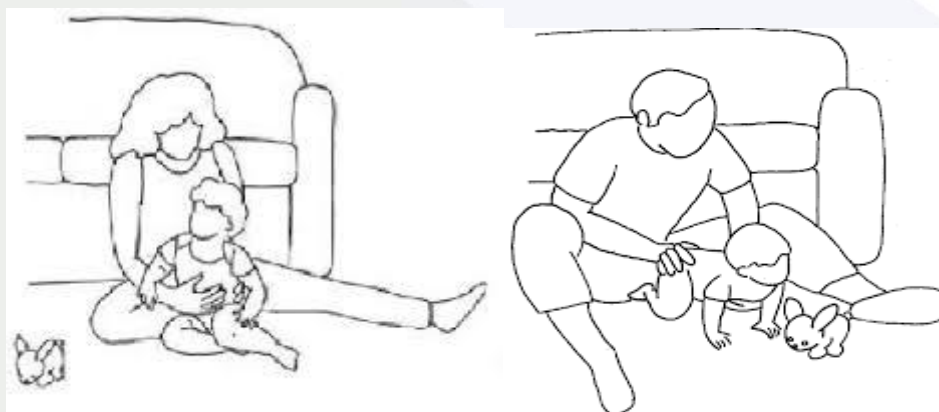


Once your child can do this encourage them to climb over your legs or some pillows to get to a favourite toy. This will encourage them to place more weight through their arms and legs.

Moving into 4 point kneeling (crawling position)

You can help to encourage your child into 4 point kneeling position by:-

- Helping them get into 4 point kneeling position from starting on tummy or sitting posture



- Start with your child in sitting
 - Turn their legs gently so both knees are pointing the same way (side-sitting)
 - With your hands around their middle, gently guide child over to the side, encouraging them to put both hands down on the floor
 - Gently help them to lift their bottom up and get into a crawling position
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- Start with your child on their tummy
 - Encourage your child to push up on their hands with arms straight
 - Hold your child around their hips. Gently guide their bottom up and forwards slightly so their knees are under their hips
 - Give some support under their tummy if their arms tend to collapse. Gradually reduce this support

Supporting your child in 4 point kneel (crawling) position

Ways to do this include:-

- Adult sits on the floor with their legs out straight. Place your child on their tummy over your legs with their hands on the floor – this teaches them to take body weight through their arms.
- Place your child over a roll and carefully rock them forwards so they have to place their hands on the floor, taking their weight through their arms. You can use a large towel rolled up tightly if you do not have a roll.



Encouraging kneeling and pulling to stand

- Encourage your child to pull themselves up onto their knees. This can be against you or at a low piece of furniture such as a sofa. Place them in position if are unable to get there themselves and have their favourite toy or food in front of them for motivation.

At first you may have to assist by placing your hands on their tummy and under their bottom, or by holding their pelvis as in the picture. As they get stronger reduce your support. Kneeling helps to improve strength and stability at the hips and pelvis as well as preparing for taking weight through legs in standing.



If your child attempts to push up into standing from this position go with it! If they attempt to pull one leg forwards help them position the foot flat on the floor and hold the leg in position as they use their arms to pull into standing. They may need a little push from their bottom to achieve this initially but reduce support each time until they can do it themselves.



Encouraging taking weight through legs in sitting

This is an important stage in learning how to sit to stand from sitting. Ways to encourage it include:-

- Sitting with your child on your lap so that their knees are bent and feet can be flat on the ground. Use your hands to give gentle pressure down through the legs by pressing down just above the knees.
- Use toys held in front of your child, or on a piece of furniture, to encourage them to lean forwards and take weight through their legs. To progress place the toys lower down, i.e. on the floor.



Holding your child in standing against your body, as shown in picture, is also a good way to promote taking weight through legs in standing. As they improve you can move your support down from pelvis to hips and then knees.

Helping your child to move from sitting to standing



- Once your child has got used to taking weight through their legs in sitting you can progress to helping them to move from sitting to standing. Help your child to stand up from your lap by placing their favourite toy or other objects on a low table or sofa. Place your hands around their pelvis and encourage them to take their hips forwards and to stand up to reach for the toy.

When your child can pull into standing independently from sitting you no longer need to help them by placing your hands on their hips. For safety it is recommended to stay very close and hold onto the support they are pulling on to stop it from tipping over.

Well done! You should now have a baby who is happy to take weight through their legs in sitting; kneeling and standing.

If you have tried all the suggestions without success, or would like further information, please contact the Children's Physiotherapy team in your local area. The contact details for your local Physiotherapy team can be found via this link - <https://www.ncic.nhs.uk/services/childrens-physiotherapy>

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