

Help! My baby tilts his head to one side all the time!

Activities you can do NOW to help your baby.

Why does my baby tilt her head to the same side all the time?

There are a few possibilities for why babies might have a preference for head tilt to one side.

- *The way the baby was positioned in utero.* The baby may have been cramped in the same position for a long time. This is often the case with multiples. If this happens, the baby's neck muscle can become shortened and the baby will end up with a preference for tilting his head to one side after birth. If the baby is cramped the baby's head can also develop a flat spot according to the forces that are on it, therefore the baby's head is flat on one side from the position in utero and the baby rotates head to the flat spot after birth.
- *The way the baby prefers to lay after birth.* Babies do not have the strength to hold their head in the middle after birth, depending on how the baby is positioned, he may have a preference to hold his head to one side in the bassinet or the bouncy seat. If the baby does this to the same side all the time, then the baby's muscles will become tight and result in asymmetrical head position. Check out the blog post [Take Caution with Elevated Sleeping for Baby](#) on at www.babiesfirstfitness.com.
- *True Torticollis.* A true torticollis is when a baby has a fast delivery or is pulled out quickly. The Sternocleidomastoid muscle of the neck has some trauma and as a result shortens causing the baby to tilt their head to one side and rotate their head to the opposite side.

Whatever the reason for the tilt is, it is important that you see a pediatric physical therapist to determine your child's exact range of motion limitations, movement preferences and strength limitations as head tilt not only affects the head position, but affects development of the arms, legs and trunk as well. While you are waiting for your appointment with your Physical Therapist, you can try some of these suggestions based on your own observations.

My goal at www.babiesfirstfitness.com is to provide EVERYONE with exercises they can do NOW with their babies. Therefore, I created this chart that you can start to use now while you are waiting for your evaluation or if your doctor has asked you to wait until the next visit to determine if your baby needs therapy. The purpose of this chart is NOT to avoid physical therapy but rather to get a head start on what they might tell you at your first visit.

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Exercises you can do TODAY to help your baby with a head tilt or rotation preference.

To use this chart: Lay your baby on the ground. Stand above him. Observe your baby's head position. Make a checkmark as to what you observe. Follow the exercise suggestions for those sides. Typically, if a baby side bends to one side they rotate to the opposite side, but this is not always true.

Remember, this is just a start to exercises you can do at home. It is not a replacement for a qualified, individual evaluation by a pediatric physical therapist with individualized exercise program just for your baby.

<input type="checkbox"/> My Baby Side Bends/Tilts to the RIGHT 	<input type="checkbox"/> My Baby Side Bends/Tilts to the LEFT 
<p align="center">Exercise Suggestions</p> <p>Left side bending Hold the right shoulder down and bring the right ear away from the right shoulder. Hold for 1 minute. Do after each diaper change. Do NOT force this, you are just opening the space. You are not stretching.</p>	<p align="center">Exercise Suggestions</p> <p>Right side bending Hold the left shoulder down and bring the left ear away from the left shoulder. Hold for 1 minute. Do after each diaper change. Do NOT force this, you are just opening the space. You are not stretching.</p>
<p align="center">Holding Suggestions</p> <p>Right side holding position – Hold baby in your right arm with belly OUT. Your right elbow is between her right ear and right shoulder. Be sure belly is OUT.</p>	<p align="center">Holding Suggestions</p> <p>Left side holding position – Hold baby in your left arm with belly OUT. Your left elbow is between his left ear and left shoulder. Be sure belly is OUT.</p>
	
<p align="center">Positioning Suggestions</p> <p>When you place a baby in a bouncy seat or swing, place a rolled up blanket on both sides of baby under her shoulders and hips to keep the weight in the center.</p> 	<p align="center">Positioning Suggestions</p> <p>When you place a baby in a bouncy seat or swing, place a rolled up blanket on both sides of baby under her shoulders and hips to keep the weight in the center.</p> 



My Baby Rotates head to the LEFT



Exercise Suggestions

Right rotation – Rotate head to the right and let the chin come over the right shoulder. Hold for at least a minute. Do after each diaper change. Do NOT force this, you are just opening the space and increasing range, do not push, you are not stretching.



Holding Suggestions

Snuggle with right rotation – Sneak in close snuggling with head rotated to the right.



Right neck rotation holding position – Hold baby in your left arm with belly DOWN. Head is rotated to the right as much as baby tolerates. Be sure belly is down. Use this as one of your holding positions when you are carrying baby.



My Baby rotates head to the RIGHT



Exercise Suggestions

Left rotation – Rotate head to the left and let the chin come over the left shoulder. Hold for at least a minute. Do after each diaper change. Do NOT force this, you are just opening the space and increasing range, do not push, you are not stretching.



Holding Suggestions

Snuggle with left rotation – Sneak in close snuggling with head rotated to the left.



Left neck rotation holding position – Hold baby in your right arm with belly DOWN. Head is rotated to the left as much as baby tolerates. Be sure belly is down. Use this as one of your holding positions when you are carrying baby.



<p style="text-align: center;">Positioning Suggestions</p> <p>When you place a baby in a bouncy seat or swing, place a rolled up blanket on both sides of baby under her shoulders and hips to keep the weight in the center.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">Positioning Suggestions</p> <p>When you place a baby in a bouncy seat or swing, place a rolled up blanket on both sides of baby under her shoulders and hips to keep the weight in the center.</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">Activity Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bathe baby so head is to the RIGHT • Change baby's diaper with head rotated to the RIGHT • Place toys in the play gym to the baby's RIGHT • Do visual tracking exercises form center to baby's RIGHT by having the baby follow a toy with her eyes. Very young babies will prefer a face over a toy • Place baby in the bassinette or the crib so that you are coming to the baby from the RIGHT • Use the TBS rule when you are putting your baby down. Check out this blog post What is a Baby Container and Why is it Bad? at www.babiesfirstfitness.com 	<p style="text-align: center;">Activity Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bathe baby so head is to the LEFT • Change baby's diaper with head rotated to the LEFT • Place toys in the play gym to the baby's LEFT • Do visual tracking exercises form center to baby's LEFT by having the baby follow a toy with her eyes. Very young babies will prefer a face over a toy • Place baby in the bassinette or the crib so that you are coming to the baby from the LEFT • Use the TBS rule when you are putting your baby down. Check out this blog post What is a Baby Container and Why is it Bad? at www.babiesfirstfitness.com

Check out www.babiesfirstfitness.com and like Babies First Fitness on Facebook for more information on activities you can do today with your babies and toddlers to progress their development.