



Sleep Training Twins

From 5 Months - 5 Years



10 Tried & Tested Tips for Sleep Training Twins

You may have found there aren't a ton of resources available on sleep training multiples! It is either an area that authors are not interested in tackling, or one that is not understood by paraprofessionals and coaches. I have worked with countless sets of twins, triples, and even quadruplets (quads just *once* - but it was a BLAST)! Can sleep training be done when you are outnumbered? It sure can!

Just like every area of your life with twins (or more!), it may appear tough at first glance until you get into a rhythm. I tip my hat to you, parents of multiples and think you are true superheros, for what it's worth. I don't have twins myself, but I'm blessed with twin nephews; I know how exhausting (and rewarding) it can all be!

This short guide provides you 10 Tried and Tested Tips for Sleep Training Twins! This material is meant for ages 5 months and up, and this should also take into account *adjusted age* the first year. Why 5+ months? Because you'll want to set your little ones up for success and make sure they are developmentally ready to handle the process of sleep training. If you haven't done so yet, I recommend the [Sleep NEEDS Course](#) to ensure your tots (and YOU) are good to go and primed for sleeping independently. The PAT Method is my sleep training method of choice for both babies and children (including twins). It is a considerate sleep training method that piggy backs off of the Sleep NEEDS Course.

Check out all the courses at www.babysleepcentral.com or use your own preferred system if you feel confident! Let's get into these tips to aid sleep training for your multiples!

#1 - Use a Sleep Log/Tracker (in Fact, Two!)

It's the middle of the Night. Twin A is calling for you, and Twin B is still asleep. Flash forward to naptime, and Twin B is rubbing his eyes and Twin A is ravenous for more food. Wait, or was it the other way around?

It is tough work knowing whether you are coming or going sometimes with multiples. Whether you are parenting 6-months-old or 3-year-olds, it is often hard to keep straight who is doing what in terms of behaviors. Why? Because we never had to pay that close attention before - as parents, we respond to needs as they are happening. We don't have time to mentally note the whys and hows each time an occurrence happens; we just know we need to fix it!

Aha, yes that is true. But, when you are working towards sleep goals we have to have what is called a baseline. You need to understand your starting point. The best way to do this is to keep a sleep log handy. This can be a notebook that you keep in your diaper bag, or even a app on your latest smart device (I'm a fan of the boring NotePad app). Start [this log](#) pre-sleep training. This is going to be your data and help you piece together your action plan.

Start by logging the following, and keep a SEPARATE sleep log for *each* child:

- 1) Morning Wake Time
- 2) Nap Time(s) and Durations
 Action Taken to Help Each Child to Sleep
- 3) Bedtime Routine Time and Applicable Notes
- 4) Actual Bedtime (Asleep)
 Action Taken to Help Each Child to Sleep
- 5) Middle of the Night Wake-ups
 Action Taken to Help Each Child to Sleep

Now, I am not aiming to make even more work for you, but I want you to be efficient. You should have two logs - one for each child so that you can truly decipher who needs help in which area. The results may surprise. Log as long as you like, or until you are ready to take action. I also recommend using this log (starting over) once you begin sleep training.

#2 - Before Sleep Training, Access Sleep NEEDS

So often, sleep training doesn't work (say, some parents). But why? Why does it work for some and not work for others? Sure, we know by now that no two children are the same. But, I think the same could be same for all *parents*. After all, when parents tell me they aren't interested in sleep training their child, I say, "Good - because the sleep training is more for *you*. Not them".

It's true. Babies and children are typically responding to our behavior. We are their trusted advisors and caregivers. They follow our lead, our cues, and read our actions and emotions. Therefore, sleep training is more about YOU, as a parent. But, Sleep NEEDS, on the other hand: these are all about your children. Little ones must have their needs met, and this goes beyond physical components. Before you consider sleep training and shaping YOUR behavior, you need to also set your children up for success by assessing their Sleep NEEDS. The NEEDS acronym stands for the following:

- N = Needs (Physical)
- E = Emotional Engagement
- E = Environment (Sleep)
- D = Dependencies
- S = Scheduling and Routines

If just one of these areas is off course, your littles cannot be expected to sleep soundly through the night. I want you to feel confident and sure of yourself when sleep training. And you can't feel that way if you are second guessing your child's wellbeing at 3am. Start with covering the bases and making sure you understand your children's security to their bed and bedroom, their optimal sleep environment components, how to create a loose schedule that works, and how to break cycles of feeding and rocking to sleep. This is all important to have a handle on before you jump into sleep training. You want your children ready to go, and whether you have one child or 20, evaluating Sleep NEEDS is the best place to start.

#3 - Determining Your Readiness for Change

I talk to parents all the time that have these epiphanies in which they don't understand why they're speaking to me. Yep, you read that right. I have met people at events and even started to consult families that weren't sure they were ready for a change. I am never going to try to convince you that you need to do something you're uncomfortable with or uncertain towards! I point those parents towards the Sleep NEEDS Course (no tears) and have them start there!

You have got to ask yourself this very important question before you start. Are you ready for change? Do you want your children to sleep independently?

You can break this down by considering the following: WHY are you considering sleep training?. Here are some hints that you may not be ready: 1) You don't know why you are doing this. 2) You are opting for sleep training because you've been influenced by friends/family. 3) Your doctor said it's time to sleep train.

These are not strong reasons. It is important with any parenting decision that you feel informed and confident. If you aren't sure why you are doing this, but you just *think that you should*, this is the associated result I typically see: Parents throw in the towel night 1, or even a few days in. They aren't confident, they are wavering, and because they were unsure the entire time, they never gave it their all to begin with!

But, here are some good indicators you are ready for change: 1) You want more sleep for yourself and your children. 2) Because your doctor supports your ideas to help your children get more sleep. 3) You are not feeling as connected or present as a parent due to sleep deprivation.

These are fantastic reasons to tackle sleep in your house! This is telling that you recognize the benefits, and you understand the importance that sound sleep has on your entire family.

After meeting your children's Sleep NEEDS, there's one more thing to consider.

#4 - What Sleep Method is Right for You?

Twins, Triplets, or a Singleton, choosing a sleep training method is tough! It can feel a little bit like test driving cars, but more emotional. Often, you don't know whether it is a good fit for you until you are knee deep! That is how it goes for most of us, and you are allowed to feel the way you feel.

What Not to Do:

Listen to outside advice from a friend, fellow mom, or neighbor: Listen, everyone wants to help, but the this is the thing: these are completely different children, behaviors, temperaments, and needs we are talking about (or actually, NOT talking about). And don't get me started on all the various parenting approaches.

What to Do Instead:

Research, and more research. Listen, I have my own sleep method. I think it is for everyone. But, I think you should evaluate everything out there. Remember when I said in Tip #2, that the Sleep Training method needs to mesh with YOU, not so much your child. This has to be a process you can proudly stand behind and also follow thru with! When you dissect and compare the Sleep Training Methods on the market, find the one that resonates with you.

If you find that you don't like *any* of them, I would without question suggest you circle back to the Sleep NEEDS Course. Empower yourself and your children and meet needs. Only after this will you feel more confident taking the next step towards your children's sleep.

Oh, and my professional opinion: Cry-it-Out (CIO) approach takes the same amount of time often as a softer method. Therefore, I would support the child with a more considerate solution (but will I knock you down if you try CIO? No Way!)

#5 - All Hand on Deck - Round up the Troops!

You are only one person, and if you are reading this guide you most likely are trying to wrangle more than one child. Before you consider sleep training, consider your support at hand. Do you have a partner that is on-board and willing to assist? Perhaps a close friend or family member that can step up during the process?

Now, sleep training can be grueling. Besides managing your crying children, you are suffering from sleep deprivation yourself! So, if you are not interested in nighttime help, perhaps consider a trusted individual to help you obtain some zzz's during the day. I've been in your shoes - sort of. I have helped families by taking on all of the night time sleep training when they couldn't pull it off - meaning I stayed the night and helped their children find their way! But, I was able to go home afterwards - to my own home without multiples, so I will never know how it truly feels. All I do know, is that support is key. Besides the benefit of sleep on the toughest nights (often - just the first few evenings), you will benefit from having emotional support.

I also recommend you to map out beforehand your middle of the night plan. Meaning, who is tending to each child? Who is conducting the feeds (if applicable)? Who is taking what shift, or which kiddo? (Taking shifts is much more organized than an *every other time* deal between parents - this falls through the cracks. Plus, shift taking with earplugs at least helps buy you some sort of sleep stretch during the night).

My point is this: having as many details ironed out in advance helps you to be more successful. Have a brief huddle in your house every evening, before the *fun* begins.

#6 - But Wait, Do Both Children *Even* Need Help?

So, by now you have been keeping the separate sleep logs, and you have possibly uncovered some secret truths! So often, a parent will find that one child is more sensitive with their sleep and is a more challenged sleeper than the other. Twin A may have a tough time setting for sleep periods, wake multiple times a night, and also struggle with early rising (before 6am). But, Twin B may just be roped into Twin A's routine antics! This is what you are trying to uncover with the help of your makeshift sleep log (you can also use my version, [here](#)).

If you find that you only need to work one child's sleep (or baby), here is the best way to accomplish this in two steps:

- 1) Keep both children in the same room (current sleep environment)
- 2) Sleep train the challenged sleeper even though sibling is nearby

Yes, it is that simple and also that complex. You will not want to disturb your better of the two sleepers, so you will leave him in his own bed or crib. You will find when you are sleep training, especially with the PAT Method, that you are not going to be causing any commotion. You are quiet and supportive, not talking or making a production out of anything. There is no doubt your children are somewhat used to each other cries (don't worry, I'll get to that soon), and there is more of a benefit to both children being in the room if one is already off to a good start.

You can't remove the challenged sleeper to sleep train in another room, because you need to help him be accustomed to his sleep space and this routine of sleeping well in his sleep space. And, it's not a great idea to remove your good sleeper from the room either, because you may throw off his sleep even more than enduring his sibling's cries. Trust me, of all the ways to do this, this is the best way.

But, what if both are very challenged sleepers, and there is only one of you? Let's read on!

#7 - When, How, and Why to Separate Twins

Don't panic. This is temporary. I only suggest this to a parent who doesn't have the emotional strength or physical bandwidth (help) to work with two children at the same time. Hey, I still think you are superhero, regardless. But, only you know your children's personalities, temperaments, strengths, and challenges. And, only you know your own, too!

If you have two challenged sleepers, feel free to keep them together, in the same room (I do recommend separate beds after the infant stage), but ONLY if you have some help. If two children need sleep help, then one caregiver should be paired with each child. One on one. Now, you can alter the pairing from one night to the next, but I wouldn't make a switch within the same evening. So, it is possible, *with help*, to keep the multiples together in the same room.

But, if you don't have the night time support to sleep train (hey work happens, life happens), there is a plan for this. And that plan is to separate the children and focus on one at a time. Hey, I said I had a plan, not an easy plan. This is effective when you have more than one child that need work. I recommend you work on one at a time. So, you still may need some help to look after the second child, or perhaps they sleep better in your room or your space, so that you can tend to the child you are sleep training. Remember, when you are working on sleep training, the child needs to be in their own optimal sleep environment for success to unfold.

Once your child is sleeping much better and waking less or not at all through the night, I then recommend introducing your second child back into the room for round 2. Now, you will be able to focus on the second child's sleep and it will be a bonus that this child will witness the remarkable turn of events with their sibling's sleep.

If your children are old enough and have the receptive language skills, try to keep the lines of communication open (during the day), reminding them that their sibling will be back soon, and you just have to help him sleep first.

#8 - White Noise Machines for the Win!

If you have already taken the Sleep NEEDS Course, then you already know my love for white noise is strong and true. It doesn't matter if your baby is brand new or 5 years old, I can't say enough good things about them.

Now, the problem is this: not all sound machines are created equal. Sadly, not any ole one will do. If you don't have one yet (or two), I recommend the [Marpac Dohm](#). It is conditioned for little ears, and doesn't have a ton of gadgets, frills, or settings. I love how it plays a traditional fan sound - so it's not invasive or unnatural. I am not a fan of crickets chirping, ocean waves, or thunderstorms because those sounds are intriguing. They aren't as constant as the fan or white noise settings, because there are disruptions in the sound stream and peaks in volume. I don't think this would actually *wake* your children, but if they are working towards putting themselves back to sleep upon stirring, I try to eliminate anything that may stimulate or excite (aim for boring and predictable - always)!

But, if you have twins in the same room, the recommendation for you is TWO! Two sound machines are especially important while sleep training. Sure, your children may be somewhat used to each other's cries, but let's at least do our best to promote some sound sleep for each! I suggest placing one sound machine in between the two cribs or beds, and the second one near the largest source of sound (such as a window, or the door). It is important to do your best to keep them in a safe place so your children won't interfere, such as a shelf.

It is important these run all night long and also during nap periods. The idea is for the white noise machines to drown out exterior sounds and lull your children back to sleep. I personally own the Dohm machines (three of them) and can't imagine life without them (or at least sleep).

#9 - Always Consider the Wake Time Allowance

You've heard all about overtiredness, but what does it really mean? Who would of thought a child's sleep can be so complex. Won't they just sleep when they are tired? Ugh, we wish, right? Overtiredness is the result of a child going beyond their sweet spot for a sleep period. And once that happens, watch out!

You have most likely seen this all before. Your children are yawning and looking ready for sleep, but suddenly, they're wired and ready to rock! What the heck happened? When our bodies (adults too) push through sleep, we have no choice but to accommodate with a second wind. A child's body tries to fuel him to keep functioning, so by the time you try to wrangle him for sleep, his body is not able to simply shut down. This is in response to the cortisol hormone which provides a feeling of adrenaline.

Overtiredness can snowball out of control, affecting naps, night sleep, early rising, and cycling into the next day. Or longer. It can affect behavior, learning, and other important areas. So, how can you get on top of this? Enter in the Wake Time Allowance Chart!

Find your child's age, and refer to the third column. Use this range to determine your when your child(ren) should optimally take their next nap or plan bedtime. More about [Wake Time Allowance here](#) and how to use the range!

Child's Age	Average Daily Naptime Hours	Typical Wake Time Allowance
First 4 Weeks	Anything Goes!	30 - 45 Minutes
1 - 2 Months	5 - 8 Hours	45 Mins - 1.25 Hours
2 - 4 Months	4.5 - 7 Hours	1 - 1.75 Hours
4 - 6 Months	4 - 5 Hours	1.25 - 2 Hours
6 - 8 Months	3 - 5 Hours	1.75 - 2.5 Hours
8 - 10 Months	3 - 5 Hours	2 - 3 Hours
10 - 12 Months	3 - 4 Hours	3 - 4 Hours
12 - 15 Months	2 - 3 Hours	3 - 4.5 Hours
15 - 24 Months	2 - 3 Hours	4.5 - 6 Hours
2 - 3.5 Years	1 - 2.5 Hours	5 - 7 Hours
3.5 - 5 Years	Anything Goes!	Up to 12 Hours

#10 - When in Doubt, Start with Night Sleep

My last, but not least tip for multiples (and all children) is to start working on night sleep first. Naptime is an adventure in itself, and the creeping daylight and fun that lurks will not simplify the process. Starting at night is equally daunting, but I have two good reasons why I suggest this (trust me):

1) It is Much Easier for Parents & Children to Master Night Sleep First

At night, you have less obligations. It is easier for parents to manage their tots' sleep, when they don't have to be a hundred different places! During the day, it's challenging to dedicate your time crib-side to work with your children when you have to also prepare meals, run errands, clean, possibly work, care for other children, or goodness - take a breather for yourself! Working on naps first pushes many daily responsibilities to the wayside. Finding daytime support day in and day out may also prove challenging if you are working with 2+ children! And, spoiler alert - naps take longer to master than night sleep! Children know they will eventually get up from a nap, and so do the parents. This makes it tricky to decide when to end the sleep session (and then, momentum is lost). Because of all the reasons I just mentioned, it is often too difficult for parents to endure day after day of starting with nap training. Consistency is key with any sleep training method, and daytime events can be such a wildcard. You'll get naps solidified, but table them until night sleep is squared away!

2) Oftentimes, Nap Training is NOT Necessary after Night Sleep is Established

Once children are sleeping through the night (2 weeks), naps often come together all on their own. Now, doesn't that sound better than camping out bed-side for a few weeks during the day? When children start to sleep through the night (longer durations, sound sleep without crying/disturbances), they learn how to put themselves back to sleep between sleep cycles. Plus, they also grasp what is expected of them during their time in bed: to sleep! This allows the children to become accustomed and secure in their sleep space along with the process of falling asleep independently without a ruckus! Therefore, I always

recommend starting with night sleep. Even working on both night sleep and day sleep at the same time creates the same daytime challenges. Just wait it out, and implement daytime training after night sleep is underway. It doesn't go perfect don't be too hard on yourself. After some consistency, your children will piece together that this is all too familiar and succumb to nap training.

While this sleep information is deemed safe, this e-book is no substitution for any medical advice. You're advised to contact your medical professional for all inquiries related to your child's sleep, nutrition, or overall development. Consider advice at your own risk.

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