



# Sleepy HOLIDAY

Sleep tips for a restful holiday

BY ERICA HARGADEN

It's that time of year where we all try to get some much needed rest and relaxation by taking a family holiday. Let's face it, this year more than ever we are probably hoping to head for some much needed sun on our bones. Whether you choose fun in the sun or a staycation, each will bring their own sleep challenges. New environments and different routines will have an impact on your child's sleep but by preparing in advance & taking on board

these tips you will have made the first step towards a restful holiday for all.

**1** On the day you are travelling do what you can to get your child to nap. Don't overthink this. It doesn't have to be a cot nap if that is where they normally nap. A nap in buggy, car, arm or sling will be just fine. Whether you are travelling by car or air you will need to work around your travel schedule in order to land a

successful nap. An overtired baby will be harder to settle when you get to your destination than one who has had some sleep during the journey.

**2** While travelling pack a blanket that they are familiar with for the journey. If your child has a bedtime companion, teddy or soft toy perhaps, ensure this is with you while travelling also. These items from home will help to make them comfortable and feel secure on the

move. Lots of clean soothers available, if your child takes one, will be essential. I am a fan of travel in pyjamas for babies. What's not to love? They are comfortable and snuggly for little ones. I know you all might like that Insta perfect travel photo but the reality is that comfort for your little ones, & you, will be far more practical!

**3** Pack good quality black bin liners and tape into your case. A darkened room is essential for sleep as it promotes the production of the sleepy hormone melatonin. Simply stick some black bin liners to the windows and you have DIY black out blinds! I have stayed in all levels of hotels & accommodation over the years with our children and rarely have the room blackout solutions been what you would have at home. You'll thank me for this tip in the future!

**4** I recommend to all parents that you take the fitted sheet and worn sleeping bag from their cot on the day you travel. Don't be tempted to pack fresh ones from the cupboard. The ones that have been slept on will have a sent of home. This will bring an extra level of comfort to your little one and help them to settle into their new arrival upon arrival.

**5** While on holiday your baby's sleep environment will be brand new to them, so allow them some time to get used to their new place of sleep upon arrival. Set it up with the sheets and familiar sleeping things. Then pop them in with some toys giving them some play time there while you are getting settled in and unpacking the cases in the same room. Play peek a boo with them, make it a little fun and interactive. Allow them



to see that it is a safe place that will be fun for you all.

**6** On arrival day ensure your baby gets to bed as close to their normal bedtime as possible. This will stop overtiredness setting in, making them even harder to settle. You will see the benefit of this the following day when your child has had a restful nights sleep.

**7** Bring your monitor with you if you are not room sharing. It will leave you feeling secure that you will hear or see your baby if they wake and allow you to get a good nights sleep, which is also very important.

**8** If you are room sharing and regular room sharing is something that you have moved on from at home then parents can be a little anxious that it will 'undo' good sleep. The use of white noise throughout the night may help to muffle noises that you fear might wake little one while you all try to sleep in the one room. If little one does wake then respond in the same way that you would at home. In doing that you are remaining consistent to your established sleep norms. Expect that your first few nights in a new environment could be somewhat disrupted. By discussing this with your partner in advance and having a plan to allow each other catch up on sleep during the day you may be able to navigate this disruption

together. Perhaps schedule this catch up time during baby's naps.

**9** Holiday time is one for getting out and about and enjoying new experiences. Routine however is very important when it comes to healthy & settled sleep. I would encourage that you try for at least one cot nap a day. That way your child is getting some hard core consolidated sleep that will keep overtiredness at bay that only contributes to sleep disruption. The rest of the naps can be on the go! I recommend investing in a blackout solution for your buggy. Options like the SnoozeShade are ideal and reliable. It will keep little one cool while allowing them to have a super nap in a dark environment.

**10** Have fun. If some little sleep habits outside of your normal routine start to form while on holiday, don't fret. By practising a consistent routine and getting back on track as soon as possible when you get home you will be back to your normal sleep routine in no time.

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