Physiotherapy for left torticollis

Your baby has a left torticollis. This means the neck muscles on your baby's **left** side may be tight, and the neck muscles on the **right** side are weak. Your baby prefers to look to the **right**, and her head may be tilted to the **left**. These activities will help strengthen the neck muscles to correct the problem.

Positioning

- **Keep surroundings interesting.** Try to have interesting things to look at (like toys, people or pets) on your baby's left side
- **Play on your baby's left side.** Have his eyes follow you or a toy on that same side. Try to get your baby to look to the side and up, then to the side and down (instead of just to the side).
- **Make baby's neck do the work.** If you can, firmly hold your baby's right shoulder back so only her neck turns (instead of her entire body)
- **In the crib-**place your baby so that he must turn to his left to look at toys or anything interesting.

Head righting activities

These activities are very important and will help strengthen the weak neck muscle on your baby's right side. Your baby's right neck muscle isn't strong enough to pull her head to the middle (or neutral) position. These activities use gravity to help strengthen this muscle. You can do them throughout the day, as you feed, carry or play with your baby. Make sure your baby is looking straight ahead.

Picking baby up. When picking your baby up, first roll him on his left side, keeping his right side up. Next, slowly lift your baby. You should notice that your baby starts to lift his head up. Try this when it's time to change the diaper, or when picking your baby up from the crib or floor.

Carry your baby tilted sideways with her right side up. Try to tilt your baby at several different angles to strengthen the muscle through the entire range. You should notice your baby's eyes leveling up towards a horizontal line. Try to make a habit of carrying your baby this way, instead of on your hip or against your chest.

Horsey ride! While you are sitting, straddle your baby across one of your thighs. Face your baby forward. Slowly tilt your baby to the left, keeping the right side up. Try to cover as many angles as possible. You should notice your baby's eyes leveling up toward a horizontal line.

Seat tilt. While your baby is sitting to play or eat, use a wedge under his right buttock (bum!). This will help your baby work the muscles for a longer time. **You must stay with your baby all the time when doing this exercise.**

Tummy time!

Tummy time is important for all babies, but especially for babies with torticollis.

Tummy time will help:

- Keep your baby's head nice and round, or to re-shape it if it has started to flatten
- Strengthen your baby's neck and shoulders
- Develop skills like sitting, crawling and walking

Try to have your baby play on her belly as often and for as long as she can. Keep trying, even if your baby doesn't like this position. If your baby keeps crying, try shorter 'tummy time' periods more often.

- Use a rolled up towel under your baby's chest for more support
- Use your own leg instead of a roll
- Try a softer surface
- Place your baby on your tummy when you are lying down.

Remember to keep placing toys on the left, so your baby has to turn to the left and look up, level and down.

Torticollis therapy at a glance ...

	Helps your baby with:	Do these activities:	Tips:
Positioning	Head turning preference	Often, throughout the day	Block the right shoulder
Strengthening (head righting)	• Head tilting preference • Strengthening the weaker side of the neck	While carrying your baby throughout the day	• Make sure baby looks straight ahead • Keep baby's left shoulder down • Don't provide a head rest (babies 3 months and older)
Tummy Time	Head shape, neck strength, motor skills	At least 1 hour total every day	• Use a roll under baby'schest • Don't pick baby up too fast • Have short, frequent sessions

Questions?

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