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Ten Twin Tips

As a twin Mum, here are my top tips when it comes to twins and sleep:

1. Start where you want to end up

If you plan to have your twins share a room in the long term, let them become accustomed to each other and each other's sounds at an early age. Maybe you want to keep your twins separate, or separate naps and together for night time. Do what works best for your family. Whatever you foresee your longer-term plan being, start where you want to end up!

2. Work towards having them self-soothe

I know all about trying to settle two babies at the same time – it's not easy! Gradually work towards having your twins self-soothe to sleep rather than needing your assistance. You can do this very gently over days/weeks/months depending on your twin's age. Practice putting them both down drowsy but awake, particularly at bedtime (this is the easiest time for your child to fall asleep, naps can be trickier) and do less and less as the nights go on.

3. Have them on the same routine

This was something I struggled with when my twins were small babies. When one twin would wake, I found it hard to wake the second, leading to inconsistent feeding and sleeping patterns throughout the day. However, at 6 months we really focused on moving them to a similar routine – same nap times, same bedtimes and same feeding times. In order to keep this schedule intact, wake your babies within 15-20 minutes of each other and try to keep feeds within 15-20 minutes of each other also.

4. Identify the sensitive sleeper

There is always one twin who is that little bit fussier when it comes to sleep. If put down for their nap 15 minutes early they refuse to sleep as they are not tired enough. If put down 15 minutes late they are overtired and difficult to settle. Once you identify the sensitive sleeper, watch out for their sleep cues and stick to their schedule.

5. White noise

I have used white noise in my twins' bedroom since they were 6 months old – they have just turned 3 and we still use it for naps and at night. Not only can it contribute to a calmer, deeper sleep, it also works as a sound barrier between the twins.

6. The Dreamfeed

If your twins are feeding at night, consider giving each a dreamfeed around 11pm. This will fill up their bellies, aiming for a longer stretch before the next feed. When one twin wakes for a feed at night, dreamfeed the sleeping twin to ensure their schedule remains intact.





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7. Adjusted/Corrected Age

Many twins are born prematurely. When it comes to anything sleep related always adjust your twins age as if they were born on their due date. Use this adjusted age to determine sleep requirements, regressions, leaps, wake windows etc. For example, if your twins were born at 36 weeks and they are now 7 months old, their adjusted age is 6 months as they were 1 month premature.

8. Keep a log

It is so hard to remember all of the pieces of the puzzle - especially times two! Who ate what, who drank what, who went to sleep when, who woke when, who woke happy, who was still tired, who was fussy, who was sick... the list goes on! I remember trying to track it all in my head but it was too much so I began writing everything down. Keeping a log will make it much easier to stick to a schedule adding structure your day and help to identify patterns or where something needs tweaking.

9. Give them time to return to sleep

If your twins are sharing a room and one wakes, try not to rush in to prevent one waking the other. Babies often wake and fuss for lots of reasons but if given time they can fall back to sleep themselves. Give your little one the chance to fall back to sleep before going in to them too quickly. Allowing the twins to hear each other will help them to acclimatise and sleep through the other twins' noises.

10. Everything else applies!

- **Avoid overtiredness:** Age-appropriate nap times and bedtimes are key when it comes to having your twins sleep through the night. When a child is overtired, their body responds by secreting cortisol which acts like a mild form of adrenaline, making it difficult for them to fall asleep.
- **Consistency:** Consistency is key! If you are not consistent in your responses, your child will not know what to expect or what you are trying to achieve. This will cause confusion and may inadvertently create more crying.
- **Bedtime routine:** Implement a strong bedtime routine - bath, dim light, soft music, books and verbal reassurance will all contribute to calming your twins before they go to sleep.
- **Light:** Ensure your twins bedroom is adequately dark. Melatonin is the hormone our body creates to help us sleep. If a bedroom is too bright, this can inhibit the production of melatonin and lead to overnight wake ups and early rising. Ensure there is no light spilling into the bedroom and if you use a night light ensure it is dim. Blackout blinds are also a great sleep aid, particularly in the summer months.
- **Temperature:** Regulate the bedroom temperature. Your child will not sleep well if they are too hot/cold. Also consider the clothing they wear to bed and the tog of blanket/sleeping bag used.

