How and when can I help my baby learn to crawl?

Strong shoulders, tummy and hips are needed for babies to learn to crawl on their hands and knees. Your baby also needs to learn how to move from a sitting position to her hands and knees by herself before learning how to crawl. The following photos illustrate play positions that can help prepare your baby for crawling on hands and knees.

Help your six to eight month old baby learn to twist in sitting by placing both hands on the floor. This will strengthen the shoulders for crawling. Practice baby ‘push ups’ in play to build shoulder strength.
Once your eight to ten month old infant has developed shoulder strength, she will begin practicing shifting her weight from front to back and from side to side, reaching for toys while holding herself up on her hands and knees. She must be able to do this rocking movement before she learns to move herself forward.

Help your baby with one arm play while bearing weight on both on hands and knees. Learning this movement and being strong enough to sustain the position for more than a few seconds is the key to crawling.

Crawling on hands and knees independently is a skill most babies achieve by ten to twelve months.

Remember to create a safe environment for your busy baby. Cover cords and outlets; remove sharp or breakable items within her reach. Check lower cupboards and drawers throughout your home and remove toxic or dangerous household items, including all cleaning liquids and pesticides.

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult your doctor.

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