

Children's Physiotherapy

Left sided Torticollis

What is torticollis?

- Torticollis is a term used to describe the asymmetrical positioning of the head and neck.
- Babies present with a shorter neck muscle (the sternocleidomastoid muscle, or SCM). This causes their head to tilt to one side, and rotate to the opposite side. For example, a **left torticollis** means they **tilt their head to the left side but look to the right**.
- Babies treated early with physiotherapy programmes usually respond well to treatment. This involves stretches and positioning.

For the following stretches try sitting with your back against a wall and your knees bent. Place your child in your lap, facing you with their knees tucked up (as shown in the picture).



Side flexion

Hold your child's **left** shoulder down with your **right** hand. Place your **left** hand on top of the **left** side of the child's head and slowly bend the head towards their right shoulder.

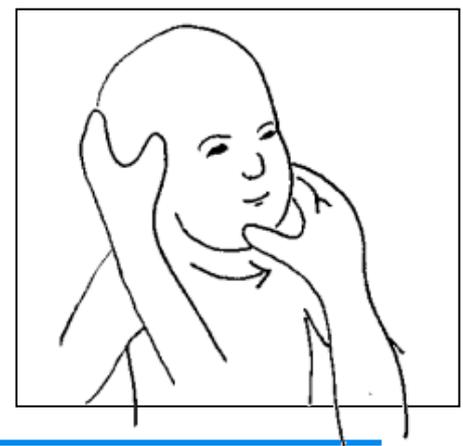
Repeat 5 times, hold for 10 seconds, do with every nappy change.



Rotation

Place your **left** forearm against your child's left shoulder and cup the child's head with this hand. Use your **right** hand to hold the child's chin. Slowly rotate the child's face to their **left**.

Repeat 5 times, hold for 10 seconds, do with every nappy change.



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Tummy time

When the child is on their tummy, position all of their toys so that they have to turn their head to the **left**. Start with 30 seconds once every hour, gradually increasing this.



Carrying

Hold your child facing away from you, in a side-lying position. The child's **left** ear should be resting against your **left** forearm. Get your forearm between the child's ear and shoulder to help stretch the tight muscles. Place your right arm between the child's legs and support their body.



Side-lying

Position your child to play while lying on their side. This position allows gravity to do some of the work of stretching the neck and bringing the hands to the middle of the body. Bringing hands to the middle is an important step for feeding, hand and eye coordination, and other areas of your child's development.



Other Suggestions

1. Position your child in the crib so that activities in the room encourage them to look **LEFT**.
2. While bottle-feeding, position your child to face **LEFT**.
3. While holding your child across your shoulder, position them to face **LEFT**.
4. When not in the car, don't use the car seat as a place to put your child for playtime.
5. Your therapist can show you ways to use rolled-up baby blankets and towels to help keep your child's head in a neutral position.

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