

What's your baby's SLEEP PERSONALITY?

Discover the secrets that will help him sleep more easily...

Fact: some babies sleep more easily than others. Some little ones naturally sleep through the night when they're no more than a few weeks old, nap when they're meant to and carry on snoozing even when their teeth are coming through. And some don't do *any* of these things. Why? It's all to do with their temperament: their individual, inbuilt traits and tendencies.

'Temperament is a deeply ingrained thing,' says sleep expert Nicole Johnson. 'We're all born with certain tendencies and we can't change them, but we do learn ways of modifying them as we grow up.' Some temperamental traits make sleep easier, and others make it harder to come by. 'And once you know your baby's key



**MEET THE
EXPERT**

Nicole Johnson is a mum of two, sleep consultant, and author of *Baby S.T.E.P.S. to Better Sleep* (£10.57, KW Publishing), babysleepsite.com

characteristics, you'll discover what helps him to settle and sleep,' promises Nicole.

There are five sections to the *M&B* sleep personality quiz, each of which will help you determine a different element of your baby's sleep personality. Your answers will reveal where he is on the spectrum for each trait: for example, if he's sensitive or chilled. If you discover he's at the end of the spectrum that hinders sleep, then we have all the tried-and-tested secrets you need to improve his shuteye. Answer all five sections of the quiz, and adjust your routine to tailor-make it to suit his particular character traits.

Do read the advice too, if your baby is in the middle of the spectrum, and bear it in mind at bedtime, as it will help you avoid sleep issues in the future. ➔





PART 1

How sensitive is your baby to his environment?

Your neighbour throws a noisy party. As a result, your baby...

- A** Wakes up as soon as the music starts and can't get back to sleep.
- B** Wakes up when the party spills out onto the street.
- C** Doesn't bat an eyelid and sleeps through everything.

It's chilly and your central heating comes on in the night. Your baby...

- A** Wakes up as soon as the pipes start rattling or the room gets warmer.
- B** Stirs when the heating comes on, but doesn't wake up.
- C** Sleeps longer and better than he does in the summer.

While your baby is asleep in his pram, you pop into a public loo. When you turn on the hand-dryer he...

- A** Wakes with a start and starts wailing uncontrollably.
- B** Opens his eyes to see what's up, then closes them again.
- C** Doesn't miss a beat and stays fast asleep and snoring happily.

IS YOUR LITTLE ONE SENSITIVE TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES? FIND OUT HERE...

MOSTLY AS: SENSITIVE BABY

MOSTLY Bs: RESPONSIVE BABY

MOSTLY Cs: CHILLED BABY

'The difference between a sensitive and a chilled baby is how strongly he reacts (or not) to environmental changes,' explains Nicole. 'So a sensitive baby will often react strongly to noises like hand-dryers or people shouting, and get upset. He may find it hard to sleep if it's too light in his room or if he's put down from your warm arms onto cold sheets. These things won't bother chilled babies. Responsive babies might notice and fuss at some changes, but not as regularly or as emphatically as sensitive babies.'

Help your sensitive baby sleep better

'Your sensitive baby is finely tuned to what's going on,' says Nicole. 'That's great, because

DO THIS NOW!

Move his bath time to the morning. Lots of babies have a bath as part of their bedtime routine, but this can be too stimulating for a sensitive baby. It can actually be detrimental and put him on high alert, rather than soothing him ready for sleep. A bath means a change of environment and a change of temperature - and that's unsettling for your sensitive baby.

he's observant and switched-on, but this means he has a tendency to be a light sleeper and take longer to unwind in the evening. He needs a longer bedtime routine than other babies to help settle him into sleep: if the average baby needs between 15 and 30 minutes, your sensitive baby might need 30 to 40 minutes, and a sensitive toddler even longer.' A longer bedtime routine will help your sensitive baby unwind, work through any disturbances or new experiences he's had during the day, and get used to being in his (or your) bedroom. It can really help if you spend some time doing some gentle play in the room he sleeps in before starting the bedtime routine. With a young baby, try looking at a tactile book together, with a toddler spend a few minutes doing some colouring in. Gentle activities like these will help prepare your child for a calm and contented night's sleep.

'These children are often sensitive to noise, so it's a good idea to use white noise throughout the night to help him block out other sounds,' says Nicole. 'If you can, keep the bedroom door shut, so he's not disturbed by the rest of the family. Stick to familiar fabrics: if he's used to cotton sheets, he'll be upset if you switch to flannel ones. And if he's less than four months old, he may respond well to being swaddled. This will help him feel secure and keep his temperature fairly constant, which he'll prefer.'



WHAT WORKS FOR MY SENSITIVE BABY

'Grace gets worried by loud noises, such as fireworks, balloons and thunderstorms. And although she sleeps well once she gets to sleep, it can often take her a long time to settle. She'll have lots of thoughts buzzing around in her head and they can keep her up. As she's got older I've learned that what helps her is to have things explained: if I explain what thunder is and why it happens, she finds it easier to deal with and can put it out of her mind. Reassurance and explanations equal a great night's sleep!'

Claire Sheridan, 34, from Ipswich, is mum to Grace, three, and Ava, six months





PART 2

How dramatic is your baby when there's a change?

It's time to steady your nerves and move your baby into his own room. When you make the change he...

- A** Almost explodes with rage and unabashed indignation.
- B** Fusses and finds it hard to settle in his new environment.
- C** The move to a new room doesn't phase him and he settles down happily.

When it's time to take your baby out of his bedtime bath, you...

- A** Feel like putting in earplugs so you're not deafened by his end-of-bath tantrum.

B Sing a 'bath-time's over' song to warn him that he's only got a couple of minutes left in the water.

C Lift him out of the bath and get him into his pyjamas. No biggie.

Your baby loses his favourite bedtime snuggly. He...

A Howls like a werewolf - and you know the tears are here for a long spell.

B Cries like a baby - his sniffles and snuffles will end fairly soon, though.

C Whimpers like a kitten and fusses a bit, but sleep wins out quickly.

DOES YOUR BABY RESPOND IN A MAJOR WAY TO MINOR ISSUES? FIND OUT HERE...

MOSTLY AS: DRAMATIC BABY

MOSTLY Bs: TELL-IT-LIKE-IT-IS BABY

MOSTLY Cs: EASY-GOING BABY

'Dramatic babies express themselves intensely when they feel something deeply,' says Nicole. 'He may be fairly chilled most of the time, but when he loses it, he *really* loses it! Tell-it-like-it-is babies express themselves, but not so strongly, and easy-going babies are more likely to accept it when things don't go their way.'

Help your dramatic baby sleep better

'If something - anything! - happens to upset your dramatic baby at bedtime, it can impact on his sleep because he gets very worked up,' says Nicole. 'He finds it hard to come down



DO THIS NOW!

Learn sign language to say 'I love you' and 'good night' at babysignlanguage.com, and teach it to your baby by making the gesture as you repeat the words. Before you turn off the light, using sign language will give your dramatic baby a quieter way of expressing himself.

from that pitch of feeling, and reach the point where he's relaxed enough to sleep.' But there's lots you can do to help him find it easier to sleep. Make it your goal to get - and keep - him calm at bedtime and nap time. So if he gets worked up once you've put him down, stay with him in the room, as he'll find that reassuring. Open a picture book and start reading the story: that will keep you calm and lure him into wanting to look at the pictures or hear your voice. Or sing a lullaby, as the rhythmic sounds will soothe you *and* your baby. Cuddling can also help, as it raises his levels of the hormone oxytocin, which reduces stress. Bright light intensifies emotions, so using a



WHAT WORKS FOR MY DRAMATIC BABY

'Amelia wants everything her way! One of her most-used sentences is, "Amelia doesn't want to do that!" If I'm spending time with her sister or brothers, it's, "No cuddles for you! Amelia's turn!" She's my third child and by the time she arrived, I already had a set-in-stone bedtime routine. But I always ask, "What story would you like?", so she feels she's in charge. Once she's in bed, she normally falls asleep quite easily.'

Katie Booth, 31, from Manchester, is mum to Edward, 17 weeks, Amelia, two, Olivia, six, and Jack, eight

dimmer switch will help subdue his outburst. 'A dramatic baby may react strongly to changes in his sleep routine,' says Nicole. 'For example, he may resist the change from sleeping in your room to sleeping in his own room.

So it's best to make small, incremental changes to his routine. In this case, you could start off by having bedtime routine in the new room, but sleep in the old room. Then move to bedtime routine plus naps in the new room. Then try putting him down in the new room and staying with him until he falls asleep.'

Pick your battles too: decide what's non-negotiable, and be more relaxed about other, less important, issues.



PART 3

How unpredictable is your baby?

Your baby gets sleepy...

- A** At a different time every evening - there's no telling when.
- B** During his bedtime routine - he finds it really soothing.
- C** At exactly the same time every night, without fail.

When you put your baby down for a nap you know...

- A** There's no guarantee he'll go to sleep any time soon.
- B** That he might fuss for a while, but he'll be snoozing before long.
- C** That his eyes will shut as soon as his head touches the sheet.

Your baby wakes up in the morning...

- A** Whenever he feels like it. It could be 5am, it could be 8am.
- B** Between 6am and 7am every day, hardly ever earlier or later.
- C** At exactly the same time, to the minute, every day. You can rely on him better than an alarm clock.

DOES YOUR BABY SLEEP LIKE CLOCKWORK OR QUITE THE OPPOSITE? FIND OUT HERE...

MOSTLY As: CRACKERJACK BABY

MOSTLY Bs: GOOD-ODDS BABY

MOSTLY Cs: PREDICTABLE BABY

'You can set your watch by predictable babies. They eat, sleep and get wet nappies at around the same time every day, so it's easy to work out when they need their naps and when they'll wake,' says Nicole. 'A good-odds baby will be mostly predictable, but now and again his routine will hit a blip. But if you have a crackerjack baby, it's anyone's guess when he'll do anything! His internal clock seems to change daily, and you'll never know when he'll sleep.'

Help your crackerjack baby sleep better

Feeling a bit bleary-eyed? We're not surprised, because many aspects of sleep can be hard if you have a crackerjack baby. 'You might find it hard to get him to sleep, you might find him waking at any time of the night and getting up early. You might generally struggle to get him

DO THIS NOW!

Setting your crackerjack baby's internal body clock will help him settle. So give him lots of exposure to natural light and fresh air during the day: in particular, get outside with him as soon as you can in the morning. And keep him away from the bright lights of the television, your phone and any computer screens when he's indoors, as these can have a negative influence when it comes to settling down for a good night's sleep.

to nap, or find that his naps are really short,' says Nicole. 'So if yours is a crackerjack baby, the trick is to tell yourself that you can only do so much. You can provide him with the opportunity to sleep, but you can't make him sleep. There is a lot you can do to help, though: the more unpredictable your baby is, the more important it is that you stick to a schedule. That sounds counter-intuitive, but the truth is that the more irregular you are, the more irregular your baby will become.' So make a schedule and stick to it. Put him down for naps at the same time every day, and ditto for bedtime. Use the same sleep routine for both nap time and bedtime. And apply your approach to the little things as well as the big things. So, for example, open up the curtains at the same point in your routine each day.

Encourage him to be as active as possible during the day too, to help him get tired. Obviously this will get easier as he gets older, but even as a young baby make sure he's having tummy time. Ensure his bedroom is at a good temperature for sleep, around 18 degrees. If you're breastfeeding, try cutting out all caffeine (the caffeine in chocolate too) for a couple of weeks and see if that helps your baby sleep. And refocus your expectations: instead of worrying that your baby isn't sleeping, concentrate on giving him regular opportunities to rest.

WHAT WORKS FOR MY CRACKERJACK BABY

'There's no consistent time Alexander will get sleepy for naps or bedtime. But he always goes into his cot at 7pm. Some nights he'll go straight to sleep. Others he'll gurgle away for ages. But I'm trying to help him understand that 7pm is night-time. I only put him in a sleep bag at bedtime, so when he's zipped up and given his snugly, he knows it's night. Now, even if he's awake, he doesn't fuss when he's in his cot, so I think the cues are helping him settle.'

Sacha Dobrin, 35, from Dartford, is mum to Alexander, seven months, and Lyra, four





PART 4

How flexible is your baby?

After some patient work, you've got your baby into a great sleep routine. Then he falls ill. Once he's feeling better again...

A He's absolutely convinced that long cuddles and being rocked to sleep is the new normal. You have to start your sleep training all over again.

B It takes him a few nights to adjust, but within a week he's back to settling himself.

C He reverts back to his great sleep routine straightaway. Bliss!

At home your baby sleeps pretty well. When you go away he...

A Can't settle - he wakes up in the night and early in the morning, and seems to be out of sorts.

B Takes a bit longer than usual and wakes a bit earlier than usual, but his sleep settles down after the first night or so.

C Still sleeps pretty well - not quite as well as at home, perhaps, but certainly nothing to be concerned about.

You decide to have a night out and get a babysitter. When you're out, your baby...

A Wakes up, sees the babysitter and goes absolutely bananas!

B Wakes up, has a bit of a fuss that it's the babysitter and not you, frets for a short while, then goes back to sleep.

C Doesn't wake up once while you're gone. You get back to a sleeping baby and a relaxed and happy babysitter!

DOES YOUR BABY
NEED EVERYTHING TO BE
THE SAME TO SLEEP WELL?
FIND OUT HERE...

MOSTLY As:
KNOWS-HIS-
OWN-MIND BABY

MOSTLY Cs:
SOCIAL BABY

MOSTLY Bs:
ADAPTABLE
BABY

'Social babies are very flexible. They'll happily adjust to new people and new places, so you can leave them with a babysitter and have a night out without worrying,' explains Nicole. 'Knows-his-own-mind babies are the opposite! They like routine and having things the way that suits them. Adaptable babies are in the middle of the scale, preferring routine but usually reacting to change fairly well.'

Help your knows-his-own-mind baby sleep better

'Your baby is probably a very good sleeper -



DO THIS NOW!

When you need to change your baby's cot sheets and sleep bag, pop the new set into bed with you the night before you use them in his cot. It will make them smell of you, which is reassuring and relaxing for a knows-his-own-mind baby.

as long as he's in his own home, with his normal routine and the normal people around him,' says Nicole.

'The problems start when something changes: you go on holiday, have a babysitter or are out and about at nap time.' So the key thing to remember is that your knows-his-own-mind baby needs consistency. Give him a clear bedtime routine, and a shorter version of the very same routine at nap time, every day.'

If you're going on holiday, expect that he won't sleep as well, but try and give him the best chance of decent sleep by keeping his sleep environment consistent: so take the same sheets with you, along with the same white noise, and the

same sleep bag. Introduce him to his travel cot before you go away too, by putting him down for his naps in it for a week or so in the run-up to your holiday. He will fuss about it, of course, but it's easier to deal with that fuss at home.

'The other thing that can disrupt a knows-his-own-mind baby at bedtime is if someone arrives unexpectedly in the middle of the bedtime routine,' says Nicole. 'Even if it's someone he's very used to, like Dad, his unexpected appearance, plus the new smells and change in temperature he brings into the room, will be enough to knock him off course. So ban helpers at bedtime!'

WHAT WORKS FOR MY KNOWS-HIS-OWN-MIND BABY

'Isaac is very definite about what he likes and what he doesn't like. He likes being with men rather than women and he hates broccoli! He started sleeping through at 11 months, but before that he would be up three or four times in the night. He wasn't hungry or wet - he just wanted to know we were nearby. When we worked that out, we'd spend up to 45 minutes giving him a bath, reading to him and cuddling him before he had his milk. Having that focused attention and time relaxed him and helped him settle and sleep better.'

Emma Hillyard, 27, from Northampton, is mum to Isaac, 15 months



PART 5

How curious is your baby?

If you're out and about at nap time you...

- A** Grit your teeth as your baby stares around, bug-eyed, when he's meant to be napping.
- B** Put a cover over the pram so your baby nods off.
- C** Don't think twice. Your baby will sleep when he needs to, whatever's going on around him.

You put a new mobile up in your baby's room. Your baby...

- A** Is still staring at it, wide-eyed, at midnight.
- B** Looks at it, but quickly gets used to it and loses interest.
- C** Doesn't notice it's there - he's too busy sleeping.

Your partner arrives home unexpectedly in the middle of the bedtime routine. Your baby...

- A** Springs into action. Forget sleep, it's playtime!
- B** Gets excited and needs a bit of extra attention to get back into his routine.
- C** Demands a cuddle, then focuses on the routine again.



IS YOUR BABY'S
CURIOUS NATURE
AFFECTING HIS SLEEP?
FIND OUT HERE...

MOSTLY AS:
CURIOUS
BABY

MOSTLY Bs:
SUSSED
BABY

MOSTLY Cs:
CALM
BABY

'Curious babies will rip away the muslin when you're feeding them so they can peer out and see what's going on. They're interested in everything and everyone and will fight sleep because they don't want to miss out - they need to be in the mix, exploring everything, *all the time*,' explains Nicole. 'Sussed babies take stuff in, but aren't as bothered by it, while calm babies just go with the flow.'

Help your curious baby sleep better

Your curious baby will always be interested in what's going on around him - which is great, most of the time! 'But the hardest sleep issue with a curious baby is getting him to nap when you're out and about, or persuading him to sleep at nursery, when he's surrounded by other children,' says

DO THIS NOW!

Lose the night light. If your child is under 12 months, he'll likely be fine sleeping in the dark. If he's older or separation anxiety has kicked in, he may be happier with the door left slightly ajar with the hall light on - he'll find this less distracting than a night light.

Find out more about your baby's temperament, and how it affects his sleep, at babysleepsite.com

Nicole. 'The answer is persistence, along with removing as many stimuli as possible. If you want him to sleep in the pram, try covering part of the opening with a thin, breathable shade, to restrict his view. Remove any dangly toys, so he's not distracted by them. If that doesn't work, try walking the same route every day at nap time: once it stops being a novelty, he'll find it easier to sleep.' At nursery, ask the staff to stick with putting your baby down for a nap at the same time every day, so that he gets used to it. It's worth looking for a nursery where the staff have a policy of all the children having their nap at the same time.

'When you're at home, keep your baby's bedroom a place for sleep, and not for playing in, so he doesn't associate it with playtime,' suggests Nicole. 'Stick to the same pictures you've always had on the wall. Avoid hanging mobiles or glowing stars or dancing lights as they'll stimulate your curious baby and keep him awake. If he has siblings, they'll also be a huge distraction, so try and make the period before sleep a calm, one-on-one period with you, so he relaxes and can rest.'

A soothing head-stroke works wonders to settle a curious baby. As he lies in his cot, gently stroke his head about 100 times. Count softly aloud as you're doing it. The combination of gentle, regular touch for him to focus his busy mind on, a soft soothing voice and the growing familiarity of the numbers will soon be working like magic!



WHAT WORKS FOR MY CURIOUS BABY

'Ava is hyper-aware of what's going on: if I pick something up, she shoots over to find out what it is. I've made a point of keeping bedtime really relaxed, so she doesn't get stimulated. She's in bed at 8.30pm and for half an hour before that we have "downtime": lights low, no toys and no telly. She sits on my lap having a cuddle and a story and then she gets carried to bed. We use black-out blinds, dark curtains and have no mobile or toys near the cot.'

Emma-lynn Bailey, 36, from Croydon, is mum to Ava-lynn, 11 months, Alfie, 10, and Lewis, 15

