

HOW TO SURVIVE THE 4-MONTH SLEEP REGRESSION

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My first son was sleeping quite well until we hit the 4 month mark. At that point of course I was clueless, had never heard about sleep regressions, and was frantically on Google and calling any been-there-done-that mom who would listen. I'd wake up numerous times to nurse him back to sleep every time being bolt upright resenting the fact that he didn't sleep, trying all the tricks of the trade, putting in half hearted efforts that were listed in all the gentle and not so gentle sleep training literature out there and [giving up soon](#).

Around the 8-month mark another sleep regression hit though we were not as yet done with the first one. It was then that it just hit me. I've been running around looking for answers, I blog myself hoarse about trusting my own instincts, then why am I ignoring my baby's? and driving him, myself, and everyone else nuts? I've elaborated more on that in [this post](#).

Immediately I began co-sleeping again and everything changed. I'd nurse on demand in my sleep and not rouse myself to wake up and not resent him waking up and hence all of us slept better. At around 18 months I began telling him that he can't wake up to nurse until the sun came up and we night weaned finally by 20 months. After the realization at 8 months I slept much much better at night knowing what I was doing was natural for my baby and me.

This time round I have learnt from previous experience and have kept my baby next to me from the first minute of his birth. Till about 3 and half months he was sleeping for 6 hours at a stretch at night. Yes it's true. Of course the 4-month sleep regression hit and once again I had a baby waking every 2 hours and that 2-3 hour night waking continues to this day at 5 months 10 days. (Though his day naps have gone back to being really good and night sleep is improving.)

How do I survive it?

We co-sleep, baby rouses me in his sleep, I turn towards him, we fall back to sleep. In the morning I normally have no idea how many times he woke, at what time, whether he woke or not and I definitely don't resent it enough for it to wake me up fully.

Yes there have been tough nights where the baby didn't go back to sleep easily and I landed up keeping him on my chest and rocking him and tried to pass some wise comments to my snoring husband waking him up and doing the whole charade. But those nights have been few and far in between.

On the whole the 4-month sleep regression has been manageable because I expected it. I didn't allow it to disturb me. I didn't try to change things around or try to make baby fall asleep on his own before he was ready. I knew it was normal baby behavior and I was ready this time to be there for him

Which brings me to the point that many times when it comes to baby sleep it's expectations from a culture of bottle feeding that makes us look at things very differently and we expect a baby to be sleeping a certain way. **That's when the struggle happens. When expectations and reality are**

distorted.

New mothers are taught about schedules, told that their baby 'should' learn to fall asleep on her own, they 'should' be sleeping this much. But that's not how it works at all. This advise is all against the natural instincts of the baby of course.

Yes, the breastfeeding mom bears the brunt of it. My second son cannot be consoled by anybody but me at night and needs me to wear him or nurse him or just hold him to sleep. (during the day he is absolutely ok with my help or my husband). So yes it is me who has her work cut out. However being mentally prepared really helped.

I know now that this too shall pass. I know now that he will be a 3 year old who will say, you go away mamma. (sob sob) and I know this baby gurgly mass will not be doing this forever. I know I will get undisturbed sleep again.

For a first time mom there is a lot of guilt associated with nursing the baby to sleep every time, not trying some form of sleep training, not having regular intervals for feeds etc. Honestly it's all this contrasting advise that makes a new moms life really difficult.

So here's what helps with sleep regressions and frequent night wakings:

- Set your expectations right. Yes your 10 month old, 1 year old, 14 month old and so can wake up multiple times a night to nurse. It's fine and natural and they will grow out of it at some point.
- No you are not ruining their sleep if you don't sleep train. (my 3 year old sleeps perfectly fine now)
- By co-sleeping you are minimizing your disturbance as you can nurse and pat in your sleep once you master nursing lying down. (Which every new mom MUST master btw).
- No, nothing lasts forever. When co sleeping is no longer working you will find a way to talk your older child to move to his or her own room or to talk him or her into night weaning if it no longer works for you.
- Many strategies to stop babies from needing you in the night are short term and almost everything comes back with a vengeance ever so often so you may have to repeat the work again and again. Isn't it easier to just offer the breast and sleep?

I'm not trying to paint a pretty picture! Believe me infant sleep sucks!! **I just feel it's far better to accept it for what it is, know that it will pass, make the most of it, and save the guilt for when they're two year olds** and you don't recognize yourself anymore with the amount of screaming you end up doing!

On that rosy note, thanks for reading! Hit me up in the comments, did you go with the flow or did you stay up and fight?

Oh and one more thing? STOP googling 4 month sleep regression right now J

