



# Under the Stars 'Sleep Regression Guide'



"lets get sleep sorted"

**Ami Rock**

**Certified Infant Sleep Consultant**

[www.underthestars-sleepconsultant.com](http://www.underthestars-sleepconsultant.com)  
[ami@underthestars-sleepconsultant.com](mailto:ami@underthestars-sleepconsultant.com)



# CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. What is a Sleep Regression?
- 3-4. The science
5. Common ages for Sleep Regressions?
6. Signs of a Sleep Regression?
7. How long do they last?
8. Teething -v- Regression
9. How to navigate them?
10. When to seek help
11. How I can help
12. My contact details

*"lets get sleep sorted"*



# INTRODUCTION

Hello, I'm Ami, a qualified baby & toddler sleep consultant. I live in Quarry Bank, West Midlands & I am a Mom to 4 fantastic children: including a set of identical twin boys.



I have certainly had my fair share of sleepless nights over the years, and have felt the impact of sleep deprivation first hand. Its not fun!!

I felt very lost during this time & couldn't seem to find reliable information that actually helped. There is so much conflicting information 'out there' – & this is what inspired me to train to become a Sleep Consultant. To reliably, accurately & lovingly help exhausted families get there sleep back.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my Sleep Regression Guide. I hope you find it useful.

Ami x



# WHAT IS A SLEEP REGRESSION?

**Definition:** A temporary period where baby or toddlers sleep is disrupted. An otherwise 'good sleeper' could suddenly begin sleeping poorly. Waking more at night, fighting naps & bedtime battles, are all common during a regression.

There are a number of sleep regressions which happen at key ages and developmental milestones:



4 months



8- 10 months



12 months



18 months



2 years



**Key Point:** Regressions should not last longer than a **few weeks**



Babies do not always go through all of these regressions & some skip regressions entirely!



# THE SCIENCE BEHIND SLEEP REGRESSIONS

The word 'regression' is misrepresentative of what is actually happening for your baby:

## **Progression-not- Regression:**

Sleep regressions are a result of developmental progression. They are temporary disruptions in sleep that occur when a baby is learning new skills or experiencing major developmental changes.

As your baby/toddlers body & brain are developing sleep can be disrupted, whilst their growing nervous system integrates new hormones, skills & cognitive capabilities.

## **Key Biological & Developmental Factors:**

Circadian Rhythm  
Maturation

Motor  
Development

Separation  
Anxiety

Brain  
Development

Hormonal  
Changes

Increased Sleep  
Cycle Awareness



## **Brain Development:**

During growth spurts, the brain undergoes rapid development forming neural pathways. This heightened brain activity can make it hard for a child to settle to sleep.



## **Circadian Rhythm Maturation:**

The Circadian Rhythm which is regulated by the release of Melatonin & Cortisol, become more stable between 3-6 months. Sleep cycles maturing at 4 months can impact sleep.



## **Increased Sleep Cycle Awareness:**

Babies transition from deep sleep to lighter sleep more frequently as their sleep cycles mature; often waking and needing support to restle.



## **Separation Anxiety:**

Around 8-10 months of age, and again at 18 months; cognitive and emotional leaps lead to babies becoming more aware of their caregivers absence, causing distress when they wake alone.



## **Motor Development:**

Physical milestones, such as rolling, sitting, crawling & walking activate motor neurons, sometimes making it hard for children to relax for sleep. A desire to want to practice new skills, can lead to wakefulness.



## **Hormonal Changes:**

Growth spurts trigger increases in growth hormones and cortisol, both of which can impact sleep. Teething also increases cortisol, leading to restlessness.

# COMMON AGES FOR SLEEP REGRESSIONS?

Here is a table of the most common sleep regressions & the reason for their occurrence:

AGE	REASON
<b>4 Months</b>	Transition from Newborn sleep cycles to mature sleep cycles
<b>8-10 Months</b>	Physical & cognitive developments including crawling, standing & separation anxiety
<b>12 Months</b>	Language development, increased mobility (walking) & transitioning to 1 Nap
<b>18 Months</b>	Toddler independence & boundary testing
<b>2 Years</b>	Language explosion, big emotions & transitions (i.e cot to bed)

Not all babies experience all regressions & some babies will skip some regressions entirely: especially if milestones are achieved gradually or your baby has strong sleep foundations.



# SIGNS OF A SLEEP REGRESSION

Every baby experiences sleep regressions differently. However if your baby is going through a sleep regression, you may notice things such as the following:



**Frequent Night Wakes (When they used to sleep well)**



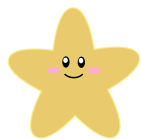
**Shorter Naps or Nap Refusal (They used to be a pro-napper)**



**Difficulty Settling at Bedtime**



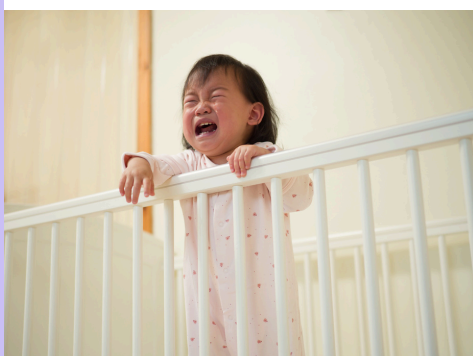
**Early Morning Wake Ups**



**Increased Fussiness or Clinginess**



**Needs You More to Help Them Sleep Then They Previously Did**



It's important to note that sleep regressions are different from other factors that impact sleep such as; hunger, illness & overtiredness.  
***Regressions usually only last for 1-2 weeks***



# HOW LONG DO THEY LAST?

The length of a Sleep Regression varies between babies but **typically they last 1-2 weeks** (sometimes up to 4 weeks).

## QUESTION

**How can you tell if your baby is sleeping poorly due to a sleep regression or sleep association ?**

Sleep regression	Sleep Association
<b>Cause:</b> Developmental milestone (eg. crawling)	<b>Cause:</b> Baby depends on external support to fall asleep (e.g. rocking/feeding)
<b>Duration:</b> Temporary disruption which resolves on its own once milestone achieved (usually 1-2 weeks- sometimes up to 4 weeks)	<b>Duration:</b> Sleep disruptions persist until baby learns how to fall asleep independently
<b>Onset:</b> Occurs suddenly, often around predictable ages (e.g. 4 months, 8 months)	<b>Onset:</b> May develop gradually over time due to repeated sleep habits
<b>Behaviour:</b> Baby resists sleep, wakes more frequently, practicing new skills (e.g. standing in cot)	<b>Behaviour:</b> Baby wakes frequently & requires help (e.g. rocking/feeding) to return to sleep
<b>Resolution:</b> Improves by itself once baby adjusts to developmental changes	<b>Resolution:</b> Requires changes in routines to teach independent sleep skills

# TEETHING -v- REGRESSION



Teething can feel endless! And it can sometimes be hard to tell whether your babies sleep is being disturbed by teething, a regression (or something else).

## KEY POINT:

Discomfort & fussiness associated with Teething, usually doesn't last longer than 8 days.

## KEY POINT:

The 24-72 hours before a tooth erupts is typically the time of most discomfort.

### Signs of Teething

- ★ Increased dribbling
- ★ Less interested in solids
- ★ Chewing on fingers/ toys
- ★ Swollen gums with white nubs

### Signs of Regression

- ★ Protesting naps or bedtime
- ★ Shorter naps
- ★ Waking in the night
- ★ Increased separation anxiety

If your sleep struggles are lasting weeks, rather than days, then it is typically not teething causing the disruption



# HOW TO NAVIGATE SLEEP REGRESSIONS?

Sleep regressions can be confusing and tiring periods for families, but here are my top tips to deal with them:

1

**Understand the Regression**- recognise they are *temporary* & occur due to developmental milestones being achieved

2

**Practice new skills during the daytime**- practicing LOTS during awake time can make the new skill seem less exciting at bedtime

3

**Pay attention to sleep needs**- as babies get older their wake windows & sleep needs change- makes sure what you are following is age appropriate, adjust if necessary

4

**Plan for active awake time**- fill your babies awake time with lots of activities that stimulate them physically & mentally. This helps better sleep for naps & nighttime

5

**Maintain healthy sleep habits**- be consistent & maintain good routines such as calming bedtime routines/ pre-nap routines

6

**Manage separation anxiety (8m+)**- playing games like 'peek-a-boo' / 'pop up' toys can help with the concept of 'object permanence'

# WHEN TO SEEK HELP?

Now you understand what a sleep regression is, how long it is likely to last & how to tell the difference between teething & sleep associations – here is some advise on when you may want to consider seeking extra support with your baby or toddlers sleep:

If your baby or toddlers sleep problems have **persisted** beyond a few weeks

You are concerned your baby is not getting the sleep **they need**

You would like to help your baby learn to **sleep independently**; would like to reduce the amount of night wakes or reduce bedtime battles

You are **exhausted** & the lack of sleep is beginning to have a negative impact on parents

Heres how I can help



## Here's how I can help:



- ★ Personalised Sleep Plans- that suit your babies exact sleep needs
- ★ 1:1 Daily Support to help you whilst you sleep train your baby or toddler
- ★ I use responsive, loving, attachment focussed sleep training methods to gradually develop healthy **independent sleep** for your baby/toddler
- ★ Sleep Rescue Calls
- ★ I can help you improve your baby/toddlers sleep in just 1-2 weeks
- ★ If sleep has been a struggle for a long time- don't keep waiting 'hoping' it will change. If you do nothing different, its unlikely to change.



If you are ready to make positive changes to your babies sleep then:

"lets get sleep sorted"

Ami x



# MY CONTACT DETAILS



**Instagram:** [under\\_the\\_stars\\_sleep\\_uk](#)



**Email:** [ami@underthestars-sleepconsultant.com](mailto:ami@underthestars-sleepconsultant.com)



**Website:** [www.underthestars-sleepconsultant.com](http://www.underthestars-sleepconsultant.com)



**Free 20 Min Intro Call** – book via Website or Instagram

Under the Stars Sleep Consultant advises that all parents follow all of the Safe Sleeping Guidelines that are applicable in their country of residency.

The advise provided in this guide is not to be used to replace any advice from a GP or Paediatrician.

If you feel that your child's sleep issues are due to a medical condition then medical advise should be sought on the matter.

The advise in this guide is undertaken at your own risk.