



The Cruising-to-Walking Playbook

A first-time parent's gentle guide to the wobbiest, sweetest months

Welcome

You're holding the months between "she's just sitting up" and "she's running across the lounge with my phone" — and it's genuinely one of the most beautiful, exhausting, watch-her-like-a-hawk windows of the whole first year.

This isn't a clinical guide. It's a calm, week-by-week walk through what cruising looks like, what your home needs, and how to stop bracing every time she pulls up on the sofa.

Take the bits that help. Skip the rest. There's no quiz at the end.

— *The NoBooBoos team*

What "cruising" actually is

Cruising is the in-between move. After sitting up confidently and crawling, but before walking unaided.

She'll pull up on the coffee table. Edge sideways along the sofa. Reach for the next piece of furniture and *almost* let go to make the gap.

That gap is where the bumps live.

The whole window — from first pull-up to first independent steps — usually runs **9 to 14 months**, sometimes earlier, sometimes later. Both are normal.

What's happening in her body:

- **Quads + glutes** strengthening enough to hold a standing pose
- **Vestibular system** (the inner-ear balance system) recalibrating in real time
- **Hand-eye coordination** maturing — she's tracking obstacles, then forgetting them
- **Core stability** — her trunk learning to twist while her feet are planted



What's happening in her *brain*: she's running a constant cost/benefit. *Is the next handhold close enough? Can I trust this surface? What if I let go for a second?* That instinct to test the gap is exactly how she'll learn to walk. The bumps along the way are the data she's collecting.

Your job isn't to prevent the bumps. It's to make the bumps soft.

6 to 9 months — the build-up

Week 1-4: Sitting becomes a pose, not a struggle

By around 6 months, she's holding a sitting pose without using her hands. This is the foundation of everything that comes next. If she still flops to the side often, that's fine — the strength is still building.

What you might notice:

- Toys held in two hands at once
- Eyes tracking objects across the room
- Tipping forward to reach, then catching herself

What helps:

- Floor time, shoeless, on a soft rug or play mat
- Toys placed *just* out of reach (not so far it's frustrating)
- Sitting WITH her at her level — your face is the best toy

Week 5-8: First crawling shape

She'll get on hands and knees. Rock back and forth. Maybe scoot backwards before forwards. Some babies skip crawling entirely and go straight to pulling up — also fine.

What you might notice:

- "Commando" crawling on her belly
- Bear-crawling on hands and feet
- Bottom-shuffling

There's no "right" crawl. The point is mobility.

Week 9-12: First pulls



She'll grab the edge of the sofa, the coffee table, your leg, and *try* to stand. This is the cruising starting point.

What you'll definitely notice:

- Falling backwards from standing — onto her bottom, sometimes onto her head
- The sofa edge becomes the most-loved object in the house
- Her face when she stands for the first time and realises *she's standing*

This is where the head protector earns its place. The fall isn't if. It's when, and how often.

9 to 12 months — full cruising mode

Week 1-4: Side-stepping along furniture

She holds with one hand and edges sideways. The sofa, the coffee table, the bed frame — anything that's the right height becomes a runway.

Watch for: the moment she lets go with one hand to reach for something else. That's the gap. That's where falls happen most.

What helps:

- Soft-shell back-of-head protection during this stage (she falls *backwards* most often, not forwards)
- Removing decor from coffee tables — no candle-jars, no glass photo frames in fall zones
- A soft floor surface in her main play area (rug or play mat)

Week 5-8: Letting go (briefly)

She'll cruise to the middle of the sofa, look at you, and *just let go*. For a fraction of a second. Then grab again.

This is the standing balance test. She's recalibrating with her vestibular system every time. Each near-fall is a lesson.

Week 9-12: First steps (between supports)

She lets go of the sofa. Two wobbly steps to the armchair. Both arms out. Falls on the way more often than she makes it.



This is the moment most parents say "*oh.*"

The bumps are now *real* bumps — wood, tile, the edge of furniture. Her head is heavy relative to her body. When she falls backwards, the back of her head is what hits first.

12 to 18 months — confident walking

Month 12-13: First true walking

She walks across the room. Then *runs*. Then turns around to grin at you. Then trips on the rug and lands on her bum.

What you might notice:

- "Bear" walking with arms out for balance
- Toes pointed slightly outward
- A wide stance — feet far apart for stability

This is normal. The narrow stance and graceful step come around 18 months.

Month 13-15: Running before walking properly

Babies often run before they walk gracefully. Their balance hasn't caught up to their ambition yet. Expect:

- Falling forward more often than backward now
- Tripping over rugs, thresholds, and her own feet
- Stairs becoming the new favorite obstacle

Month 15-18: Climbing, carrying, exploring

She walks with a bag in one hand. She climbs onto the sofa, the dining chair, the coffee table. She wants to do the stairs herself.

This is when **stair gates** become non-negotiable, the head protector becomes more about climbing falls than cruising falls, and her fall reflexes start protecting her — she'll catch herself with her hands more often than her head.



Room-by-room safe-cruising setup

Walk into each room and do a 60-second "what would she fall onto?" check. Here's the breakdown.

The lounge

- **Coffee table corners:** foam corner protectors (cheap, ugly, but effective). Or move the coffee table for a few months.
- **Glass-fronted units:** shatterproof film on the panels.
- **TV stand:** anchored to the wall. Top heavy items are the #1 cause of furniture-tip injuries.
- **Power sockets:** covers on every accessible outlet.
- **Cables:** hidden behind furniture or run along skirting boards under cable covers.
- **Floor lamps:** weighted bases, or move them out for a few months.
- **Rugs:** rubber non-slip pads underneath. A slipping rug is the #1 trip cause for new walkers.

The kitchen

- **Cupboard locks:** the under-sink cupboard especially (cleaning products + reach). Magnetic locks are nicer than visible plastic ones.
- **Oven door:** a heat-protector strip if you have a low-fronted oven.
- **Hot drinks:** never on a low table. Coffee at 60°C will burn an adult — at 70°C it'll scald a baby instantly.
- **Tea towels and tablecloths:** she will pull on these. Move them up.
- **Bin:** lockable lid OR moved into a cupboard with a lock.

The hallway / stairs

- **Top of stairs:** hardware-mounted gate (not pressure-mounted). Pressure gates fall.
- **Bottom of stairs:** pressure-mounted gate is fine here.
- **Stair rungs:** if your bannister has gaps wider than 10cm, perspex panels behind the spindles.
- **Threshold strips:** secured flat. A loose threshold is a guaranteed face-plant.

The nursery

- **Furniture anchored to the wall:** dressers, bookshelves, changing units. Top-heavy is dangerous.
- **Cot:** nothing inside (no bumpers, blankets, soft toys until 12+ months).



- **Window blinds:** cordless, or cords tied up high out of reach.
- **Floor:** soft surface — a rug or play mat for her play area.

The bathroom

- **Bath mat:** non-slip, on the bottom of the bath.
- **Bath thermometer:** 37-38°C is the right range. Less than 37 feels cold. More than 39 risks scald.
- **Door:** closed when not in use. Toilets are a drowning hazard.
- **Medicines and razors:** locked cabinet, top shelf.

When to gently check in with your doctor

Most cruising-stage babies hit milestones in their own time. There's a wide range of normal.

A few things that warrant a calm chat with your GP/paediatrician — not a panic, just a check:

- Not bearing weight on legs at all by 12 months
- Not pulling up to stand by 13 months
- One side of the body consistently weaker than the other
- Loss of skills she previously had (regression in mobility)

This isn't a diagnostic list. It's a "let me ask someone who knows" list. Trust your gut.

You're doing great

The first time-mum bracing-instinct is exhausting. You're tracking her constantly, reaching out before she falls, holding your breath during cruising laps. That's love working overtime.

The protector helps. The home setup helps. But mostly, what helps is *you* — present, watching, ready to scoop and kiss it better when the bumps come.

The bumps will come. They're how she learns. And then one day she'll just — walk. Across the room. Without grabbing anything. And turn around to grin at you.

You'll remember every wobble.



Keep going

If anything in this playbook helped, share it with another first-time parent who's bracing.

If you want more — milestones to track, sleep tips for the cruising window, or just a calm check-in — keep an eye on the inbox. We send small, useful, non-spammy emails.

Thank you for being here.

— *The NoBooBoos team*