HARVEY KARP, MD
HAPPIEST BABY ON THE BLOCK

These printouts will help you remember key points from this workshop:

- From Step 2: The Five "S's"
- From Step 3: The 1st "S" Swaddling
- From Step 4: The 2nd "S" The Side/Stomach Position
- From Step 5: The 3rd "S" Shhh
- From Step 6: The 4th "S" Swinging
- From Step 7: The 5th "S" Sucking
- From Step 8: Calming the Colic Naturally
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To trigger the calming reflex, understand what life is really like before birth. Inside the womb, your baby is jammed into the fetal position packed in tight and surrounded by the warm wall of the uterus. On top of the tight accommodations, she is constantly being rocked, jiggled and bounced all day long. And forget quiet! She is surrounded by a constant strong shushing sound, a hum so noisy, it's louder than a vacuum cleaner! And you wondered why a quiet room and a soft lullaby were not doing the trick?!

That's why triggering the calming reflex requires carefully recreating the womb experience. Over the years, I've developed a technique called the Five "S's" -- Swaddling, the Side/Stomach Position, the "Shhh", Swinging and Sucking. By following these five techniques in order and doing them exactly right, you can actually return your baby to a state of relaxation and sleep much like what she experienced in the womb. Moms are certainly the feeding experts in the family, but one of the fun things about the 5 "S's" is that, with a little practice, dads often become the best baby calmers in the family!
STEP3: THE 1ST "S" - SWADDLING
YOUR LITTLE BUNDLE OF JOY

There is nothing more important to a newborn's development than touch! It’s as more
important as milk! Studies show that babies who are held and touched all day long grow
stronger than those who are not. Babies find touch to be calming because it stimulates their
skin and mimics the close quarters of the womb. The world is too big for our babies. They
don’t need freedom, new babies need security and cozy holding and that’s exactly where
swaddling comes in. A good swaddle will help you calm your baby when he’s fussy and
keep him sleeping better at night. Wrapping is the cornerstone of calm and will make all the
other "S's" work better!

To make a swaddle, wrap your infant tightly in a big 43" blanket with the arms straight
down, leaving his head exposed. If you live in a warm climate, wrap her in just a diaper;
make sure she's not overheated. Your newborn's arms should be by his side. If your baby's
arms can wiggle free, then the technique will not work. That said swaddling may not
instantly calm your baby. In fact, it may cause a momentary increase in fussiness. Many
babies fight the wrapping at first, but once you add some of the other "S's" you'll find that the
swaddling will keep your baby calmer longer! While it may seem unnatural at first, swaddling
has been used for centuries. Believe me, it's safe and effective! In fact, correctly done
swaddling has been shown to decrease the risk of SIDS.

A good, tight swaddle will help your infant focus on what is working to calm him. It will
actually help keep her from whacking himself in the face and getting even more upset.
In real estate, the most important rule is location, location, location. But in baby calming, I like to say its position, position, position! There is no question that fussy newborns are easier to calm when they are lying on the side or stomach. Your infant may be happy to snooze on her back when she is in a good mood, but it's the worst position to calm her when she's cranky. Why? For one thing, infants feel insecure on their backs. While all of your baby's reflexes are not fully developed at birth, her "moro" or "falling" reflex is intact at an early age. If an infant is already feeling uncomfortable or cranky, being positioned on her back can trigger a sense of free-fall. Have you ever dreamed you were tumbling from a tree only to be jolted from a dead sleep? Imagine your helpless infant feeling that same kind of a scare.

Babies love being on their sides or stomachs because it closely resembles life in the womb. By placing your infant on her side (rolled slightly towards her tummy or even right on the stomach), you can actually activate deep "position sensors" which turn on the calming reflex. One word of caution, the back is the only safe sleeping position for babies. The side or stomach work great when you are holding your baby, but you should never let an infant sleep on the side or stomach due to an increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS. Infants should always sleep on their backs in a crib without any bulky blankets or toys nearby.
STEP5: THE 3RD "S" - SHHHH
SUCH A SOOTHING SOUND

If you ever got in trouble as a child for talking in the library, the sound of a librarian's harsh Shhhh, is probably anything but comforting. As adults, we find being "shushed" offensive. But to your baby, the sound of "Shhhh" is music to his ears, think of it as the sound of love! How can this be? Have you ever found yourself lulled to sleep by the rhythmic whoosh of a fan or the rumble of a jet while you are traveling 30,000 feet in the air? Because of our womb experience, white noise is comforting to adults and babies.

How do we know exactly what babies want to hear? In the Seventies, doctors placed tiny microphones into the wombs of women in labor. They were pretty surprised to learn the sound an infant hears in the womb is louder than a vacuum cleaner! That is more than seventy decibels! As shocking as it may sound, when your baby is fussy, the last thing he wants to hear is a lullaby. To trigger the calming reflex, you need to mimic the sounds your newborn knows best. The process is easy. Place your mouth a few inches away from your baby's ear. With your lips pursed, start releasing a Shhhh sound. Very quickly, raise the volume until it is close to the level of your baby's cry. This is not a polite "shush." Your Shhhh should be loud and constant. If you don't have the time or patience to recreate this sound for a long period of time, try using my award-winning Soothing Sounds CD or a vacuum, or a hair dryer to create a soothing sound for your baby. And once your baby starts to calm, reduce the intensity of the sound to the strong whoosh of a shower. Don't worry your newborn might get overwhelmed by the sound or you might damage her hearing. What sounds loud to you is perfect for turning on her calming reflex.

In fact, most babies who are swaddled and hear strong white noise all night long instantly sleep an extra 1-2 hours at night! And, the sound will be like a white noise "teddy bear" helping your baby sleep better, even through teething and growth spurts, for the first year and more!
STEP 6: THE 4TH "S" -- SWINGING
JIGGLING YOUR WAY TO CALM

Getting your baby into the swing of things is almost like instinct to a parent. By now, I'm sure you have swayed your infant back and forth many times. Swinging a baby is so important, we even learn about it in childhood. Remember, “Rock-A-Bye baby in the tree top”? But why do babies love to swing?

Babies spend nine months in a state of near constant jiggly motion. If mom is on the go, so is baby. Think about this, in many cultures, mothers almost never put down their infants and these babies suffer from virtually no colic. Why? Well, a big part of the reason is that jiggly motion switches on the calming reflex. That’s why babies love car rides and slings so much!

You know how we fall asleep on a plane or train or in a hammock, well babies love motion even more! You can recreate this womb-like sense of comfort with small, trembly movements. Just an inch back and forth, fast, like a constant shiver! The Swinging movement works best when your infant feels it in her head. Of course, you should cradle and support your newborn’s noggin and neck but don’t cup your hands too firmly. Your hands should be open enough to let your child’s head wiggle a bit, like gelatin quivering on a plate! Your vigor of motion should reflect the level of your baby’s crying. Gentle movements for sleepy infants, fast tiny movements whenever your baby gets agitated again. When you get tired, or it’s time for dinner, you can use a motorized baby swing on the fast speed to replicate these movements. You may find that your baby only calms with the fast swing, swaddling, being belted in properly and having strong white noise all at once!

One other note here, vigorous swinging with your baby’s head supported is not the same as shaking your child. Swinging is a fast tiny movement, just an inch back and forth but shaking as in Shaken Baby Syndrome, is a large violent movement with the head whipping back and forth.

The 5 S’s are great for helping parents avoid the frustration that can build up when your baby cries and cries. However, if you can’t calm your baby and you’re getting frustrated please put your baby down and take a break. And tell that to everyone who is helping you with your child.
STEP7: THE 5TH "S" - SUCKING THE ICING ON THE CAKE

Whether it is a breast or a pacifier, you have probably seen the joy your little one feels when he is happily sucking on something. This action is more than just comforting; sucking is necessary for a baby's survival. It's the only way an infant can get milk! And like an actor rehearsing for a starring role, your little one has had a lot of practice sucking. In fact, he started sucking his fingers in the womb! How could he help it? The soft walls of the uterus perfectly positioned his hands right by his face. But during the first months after birth, the fourth trimester, your baby has no such luck. His arms are not coordinated enough to get his hands to his mouth. That's where you or a pacifier comes in.

Sucking is the final trigger of the deep calming reflex. Scientists have found premature babies who suck pacifiers grow faster and, once the breast feeding is well established, full-term babies given paci's at night may have a lower risk of SIDS. The key to a good suck is to follow your baby's cues. If he starts wailing shortly after you put the "paci" in, he's basically sending his plate back to the waiter. It's as if he's saying, "Hey, I ordered milk, not rubber!" But, if he takes it without complaint, he's ready to relax! When you buy pacifiers, I recommend you buy clear, silicone ones. The yellow, rubber ones can deteriorate, getting sticky and perhaps even releasing chemicals. Never dip a "paci" into sweeteners like honey or syrup. These can cause a very serious paralyzing disease called baby botulism. And remember to keep the pacifier clean with soap and water at least once a day.

Once you have mastered the five "S's" you will soon discover how quickly your baby's calming reflex will kick-in and the crying will end. If you want to learn more, you can also visit out my website to find a Happiest Baby class being taught in your community!
STEP 8: CALMING THE COLIC
NATURALLY
ADDITIONAL TECHNIQUES GUARANTEED TO SOOTHE

Touch is extremely important to a newborn. One of the most magical ways to bond with your baby is a nightly massage. Dim the lights, play soft music and use a light vegetable oil. Think of it as a miniature spa visit for your little one and for you! Studies show that mothers who massage their babies feel more relaxed and less stressed.

For most of our existence, humans lived outdoors. It is no wonder then that your little one craves fresh air. Try calming a colicky infant by putting him in a cozy sling and taking a walk. The fresh air, gentle breeze and motion of the carriage can be quite soothing.

The world can be cold and cruel, especially for a newborn accustomed to the warmth of her mother's womb. You can help simulate a little of that heat with some cozy comforts. Try soothing a little one with a warm bath, a gently heated blanket or a cozy hat.

If your newborn has blood in the stools, breaks out in a rash or continues to fuss even after doing the 5 S's, she may have a food allergy. Ask your health care professional what to eliminate from your diet and how to gauge your infant's reaction.
STEP9: TASK LIST

Here's a simple task list of steps you can use as you work to calm and soothe your new baby.

1. Understanding the concept of the fourth trimester is key! Realize for the first three months your newborn is a bit more like a fetus than a little human. Study the five S's and be prepared to use them in order.

2. Be ready to swaddle your baby as soon as she is born. Buy a large, square blanket that you can use for a proper swaddle for the first 4 months of your baby's life. You can find easy to follow demonstrations of swaddling on The Happiest Baby DVD or illustrations for proper wrapping in my book.

3. Experiment with the right style and volume of Shhh for your infant. Use a recording, like the Soothing Sleep Sounds CD, or a sound machine. CDs are particularly convenient because you can use it to help keep your baby calm in the car and they are easy to carry with you when you travel away from home. And, if you choose to wean your baby from the sound, it is easy to gradually lower the CD volume until your baby no longer needs it.

4. Learn several good ways to hold your newborn in the side/stomach position. Watch The Happiest Baby on the Block DVD for demonstrations of some easy-to-do holding techniques your baby will enjoy.

5. Get in the swing of things. Rock and swing your baby with a vigor that matches his crying. Buy a sturdy infant swing, sling or exercise ball to sit and bounce on. Those are great ways to keep your infant happy.

6. Follow your infant's sucking cues. Purchase a couple of good quality pacifiers. Clean them regularly with soap and water. And please don't clean a dirty pacifier in your mouth. You can spread germs that way.

7. Match the level of your infant's cries with your sound and jiggly action. If your baby doesn't calm easily when you do the 5 "S"s" double check that you are doing them exactly right.

8. Remember, sometimes a colicky baby is signaling a larger issue. If her cry is super-shrill or sounds like a persistent loud moaning or if you are sure you're doing the 5 S's correctly and your baby continues to cry, do not hesitate to consult with your physician to make sure your infant is not ill.