

## The 5 S's for Soothing Babies

Dr. Harvey Karp

### The 1st S: Swaddle

Swaddling recreates the snug packaging inside the womb and is the cornerstone of calming. It decreases startling and increases sleep. And, wrapped babies respond faster to the other 4 S's and stay soothed longer because their arms can't wriggle around. To swaddle correctly, wrap arms snug—straight at the side—but let the hips be loose and flexed. Use a large square blanket, but don't overheat, cover your baby's head or allow unraveling. Note: Babies shouldn't be swaddled all day, just during fussing and sleep.

### The 2nd S: Side or Stomach Position

The back is the only safe position for sleeping, but it's the worst position for calming fussiness. This S can be activated by holding a baby on her side, on her stomach or over your shoulder. You'll see your baby mellow in no time.

### The 3rd S: Shush

Contrary to myth, babies don't need total silence to sleep. In the womb, the sound of the blood flow is a shush louder than a vacuum cleaner! But, not all white noise is created equal. Hissy fans and ocean sounds often fail because they lack the womb's rumbly quality. The best way to imitate these magic sounds is white noise. Happiest Baby's CD / Mp3 has 6 specially engineered sounds to calm crying and boost sleep.

### The 4th S: Swing

Life in the womb is very jiggly. (Imagine your baby bopping around inside your belly when you jaunt down the stairs!) While slow rocking is fine for keeping quiet babies calm, you need to use fast, tiny motions to soothe a crying infant mid-squawk. My patients call this movement the "Jell-O head jiggle." To do it, always support the head/neck, keep your motions small; and move no more than 1 inch back and forth. I really advise watching the DVD to make sure you get it right. (For the safety of your infant, never, ever shake your baby in anger or frustration.)

### The 5th S: Suck

Sucking is "the icing on the cake" of calming. Many fussy babies relax into a deep tranquility when they suck. Many babies calm easier with a pacifier.

### The 5 S's Take PRACTICE to Perfect

*The 5 S's* technique only works when done exactly right. The *calming reflex* is just like the knee reflex: Hit one inch too high or low, and you'll get no response, but hit the knee exactly right and, presto! If your little one doesn't soothe with *the S's*, watch the *Happiest Baby* DVD / Streaming Video again to get it down pat. Or, check with your doctor to make sure illness isn't preventing calming.