BASED ON: THE HAPPIEST BABY ON THE BLOCK

All babies cry—and that’s a good thing. How else would we know if our helpless infants were cold, hungry, lonely or in pain? Being outside of the womb is a scary experience! The rhythms experienced inside the womb trigger a reflex that keeps babies relaxed. This [*calming reflex*](https://www.happiestbaby.com/blogs/blog/what-is-the-calming-reflex) is a virtual off-switch for crying and on-switch for soothing. Parents have long turned to similar womb-mimicking tricks, like going for car rides and turning on the vacuum cleaner to soothe their babies. The calming reflex is triggered by The *5 S’s:* Swaddle, Side-Stomach Position, Shush, Swing and Suck.

**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](https://www.happiestbaby.com/blogs/blog/dudu-swaddle), wrap arms snug—straight at the side—but let the hips be loose and flexed. At first, your baby may be upset with swaddling, it may be difficult. After 5-10 times it will be as easy as changing a diaper. Have your doula show you!

**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.

**The 3rd *S*: Shush**

Babies do not need silence! In the womb, the sound of the blood flow is a shush louder than a vacuum cleaner! The best way to imitate these magic sounds is white noise.

**The 4th *S*: Swing**

While slow rocking is fine for keeping quiet babies calm, you need to use fast, tiny motions to soothe a crying infant mid-cry. Dr. Karp calls this movement the “[Jell-O head jiggle](https://www.happiestbaby.com/blogs/blog/shaken-baby-syndrome).” To do it, always support the head/neck, keep your motions small; and move no more than 1 inch back and forth. Imagine trying to imitate a strong vibration. (Never shake your baby in 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](https://www.happiestbaby.com/blogs/blog/everything-you-need-to-know-about-pacifiers-sucking).