Harvey Karp's 5S's

Dr Harvey Karp author of Baby Bliss(Happiest Baby on the block) believes that a baby has a "missing" 4th trimester, and to help calm them and adjust to the outer world we as newborn parents need to create a "womb-like" environment.

The 5S's were created to do just that as it helps to activate the calming reflex in newborn babies.

What are the 5s's?

Swaddling	Side/Stomach	Shushing	Swinging	Sucking

In what order should I use them?

Firstly take a deep breath and compose yourself. The 5S's can work in isolation or in an order of steps. The 5 S's will only work if you do them "just right".

The first 2 S's prepares the calming process.
The 3rd and 4th S breaks the cycle by fully triggering the calming reflex.
The 5th S sends your baby into deep relaxation.

You need to find your babies unique cuddle cure by trying a combination of the 5S's.

3 keys to S's success: Precision, practice and vigour

My baby hates swaddling!?

Yes, it could be true, but like any skill one has to practice these S's to become an expert.
After a week of swaddling babies stop their fighting attempts.
Practice swaddling while your baby is calm.

Does all white noise sounds work equally well?

No only low pitch white noise is effective, droning and hypnotic and fantastic for lulling to sleep. This works much better than rain, heartbeats and waves.

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Swaddling

Wrapping your baby mimics the touch and snug environment of the womb. When a baby cries, their involuntary arm movements can make them more upset.Do not worry if your baby struggles against the wrapping, it will most likely not calm them instantly. Swaddling should NOT be done loosely. The secret is to keep the arms snug and the hips and knees loose. Try not to let the blanket touch the baby's cheek as this sets off the rooting reflex and will cause frustration. Make sure you use a large enough blanket that is lightweight or a cotton swaddle suit. Never thick blankets

Begin to swaddle your baby from day 1. Swaddle your baby when it is time to sleep. During the first two weeks, swaddling can make babies very sleepy, so make sure not to skip a feed. Swaddling is recommended for babies up to 6 months because swaddling stops rolling, reduces unsafe sleeping and it boosts breastfeeding.

Swaddling will help your baby notice the next S.

Side/Stomach

This is the 'feel good position'. Some babies get upset when they are on their backs as this sets off the Moro Reflex (falling reflex - arms shoot out) and this can frighten your baby. Rolling your baby to the side/stomach will encourage a womb like feeling in the inner ear. Occasionally this is all a baby needs to calm down.
NB. Back sleeping is the only safe sleep position for babies.

Shushing

Strong shushing is like music to your baby's ears. It is similar to the sounds they hear in the uterus. It's a powerful start for the calming reflex. When your baby cries loudly, your shushing should be just as loud to help soothe your baby. Bring the volume down as baby calms down. Continued moderate white noise will keep your baby calm and also asleep. You have to find the perfect pitch (if you use your phone, make sure it is on airplane mode). When baby is asleep reduce the sound to 65 dB to help keep baby asleep.

Swinging

After nine months of rocking and swaying as you walked around while you were pregnant, your baby may feel uncomfortable in the stillness of his new environment. Rhythmic movement is a very powerful soothing tool.
An alternative to the standard swinging: If your baby is very upset, swaddle your baby, sit in a chair with your knees touching and your feet flat on the floor. Place baby on his side and in the groove of your legs, his cheek and head will be in your palm and his ankles on your hip. Slide your other hand under his head so your two hands overlap where his head is cradled but loose. Roll him towards his stomach, take a deep breath and let your body relax. Start to shush and do it as loud as his cries. Now swing your knees side to side, the swinging and motion need to be quite fast, let the baby's head jiggle more than the body. Try to follow your babies lead and as your baby calms down, gentle rocking is enough to trigger the calming reflex. The motions are fast but tiny and the head must always be supported. Finally offer a pacifier.

Sucking

Pacifier sucking (non-nutritive sucking) switches on the calming reflex. Nutritive sucking also triggers the calming reflex and relieves hunger. So you are welcome to use any type of sucking depending on what your babies' needs are. Sucking is the most calming of the 5 S's.

Sucking a pacifier reduces SIDS risk by 50%. Breastfeeding also reduces SIDS.
Sucking would be the second S to phase out after swaddling usually by four-six months.

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