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Pedi-cures

Easy exercises to support baby's natural ability to heal.

Reflexology can help with imbalances in sleep cycles and digestion, as well as encourage caregiver-infant bonding, explains Amy Kreydin, board-certified reflexologist and owner of The Barefoot Dragonfly (thebarefootdragonfly.com) in Austin, Texas. In addition to seeking professional services, she suggests trying the following techniques at home.

Soothe move

Solar plexus reflex: This calming point works on both babies and adults. Think of it as a hug around the heart.

TRY IT: Find the space just under the ball of the foot (about a third of the way below the toes), and use your thumb pad to apply gentle, steady pressure for 30-45 seconds.

I L[ove] U

Colon reflex: Helpful in times of constipation and colic, this routine supports baby's digestive system by stimulating the movement of gas.

TRY IT: Start with your thumb close to the heel line and near the outer edge of baby's right foot. Using small, inchworm-like movements, work your thumb upward from the heel to the middle of the foot, completing the "I." Next, turn your thumb and work across the right foot from the outside edge over

to the arch. Move over to the left foot and continue the imaginary line from the arch to the outer edge of the left foot; this completes the "L." Finally, inchworm down toward the heel along the outer edge of the left foot, ending at the heel line; this completes the upside-down "U."

This little piggy

Cranial reflex: More than just a fun game, this well-loved nursery rhyme stimulates reflex areas that correspond to the gums and mouth, the brain (which controls sleep-wake cycles), and the sensory organs of the eyes, ears and nose.

TRY IT: Gently hold each toe between your thumb and forefinger (while singing the rhyme, if you'd like). Note: Teething babies or those with earaches might have sensitive toe pads, so be gentle and hold for only a few moments. You can repeat the exercise again every hour or so.

