Tonight will cover:

- Newborn Health and Safety
- Understanding Newborns
- Studio Set Up & Lighting
- Wrapping Techniques

- Poses
- Props
- Editing
- Business Development
Newborn Health and Safety

- SAFETY is the MOST important factor in newborn photography.
- Certain poses are dangerous to the babies hips and/or neck. They can also have a risk of falling. Know exactly how to do them and always use a spotter.
- Immunisation is a must. Don’t put babies at risk.
Understanding Newborns

• Learn the newborn cries and cues
  - Neh/Nah/Now (hungry)
  - Ow (tired)
  - Eh, eh, eh (burp me)
  - Air (lower wind pain)

• Be aware of the rooting reflex (don’t touch cheeks when settling)

• Understand the sleep/feeding schedule (feed every 3 hours, for up to 1 hour)

• Be careful of the fontanel

• Be prepared for wee and poo
Settling Techniques

- Simulate the womb (dark, warm, white noise, heart beat, well fed, wrapped)
- Gentle pats and rocking
- Stroking forehead to nose
- Shh-ing/white noise/lullabies/heart beat (use phone apps)
- Warmth (room temp at 24°C + can use heaters/heat pads/hot water bottles)
- Sucking dummies or fingers (always ask parents first)
- Stroking eyes brows can help to close babies eyes.
- Feeding often can help, but 1st time mums in particular might not be aware of their babies needs and will be anxious to follow the instructions of their midwives (i.e. feeding every 3 hours).
New Parents

• Newborn photography must be done between 4-10 days old (preferably, otherwise never over 3 weeks old).
• First time parents in particular will be anxious and unsure of themselves.
• All parents will be tired beyond belief!
• Day 4-6 are the worst for “baby blues”.
• Don’t impose (i.e. bring your own food and water)
• Other post-partum complications to be aware of: post natal depression, breastfeeding issues, post-partum pain (c-section mothers in particular will be immobile and in quite a lot of pain).
• Be gentle, calm and confident. You are the expert and they will look to you for advice. They need to trust you and feel comfortable with you being there and handling their baby.
Studio Set Up & Lighting

- Safety
- Beanbags, pillows, throws, stands, etc.
- Natural diffused side lighting with reflectors
- Diffused studio light with reflectors
- Outdoor shoots
Use natural, diffused window light with reflectors
Smoothing backdrop and getting parents to hold it:
Soothing bubba back to sleep:
Always check images between shots
Re-compose / adjust settings (as necessary)
The Final Image:
Easy DIY set up
Newborn Poses

• **Easy** (anyone can attempt)

• **Intermediate** (attempt with practice)

• **Difficult** (experienced newborn photographers only – don’t attempt these without a spotter and a clear understanding of exactly how to do it – watch YouTube clips to help you)
Easy Poses

• Use the natural environment of the home.
• Shoot on the bed, in the nursery, use window backlighting for mood
• Use natural window side lighting with reflectors
• Parents holding baby
• Create a natural workflow (see below)
Lying on back – looking at camera
Hands under head
Lying on side
Photographing with Parents

• These tend to be the easiest photos and the most cherished – definitely will be the ones ordered for prints and get the most FB likes!
• They are easier as babies will settle better for Mum and Dad
• They are safe as bub is being held
• Parents can sometimes be self conscious or not know how to stand/sit, etc. some gentle instructions and posing will be necessary.
• Helpful to have a print out of several different poses for parents (and you) to look at.
• Make sure you check where the shadows are falling and use reflectors if need be.
Posing with Mum:
Catch the Natural Moments
(these are both just after breast feeding)
Breastfeeding Pics:

• When mum is breast feeding just ask if they would like a photo of it. Some will, some won’t.
• Be discreet and highlight the relationship, not the breast.
Posing with Dad:
Low Key / Dad’s Hands:
During the lunch break I caught this moment with Dad 😊
The Whole Family:
On the beanbag:
On the Bed:
Focus on feet:
Through a door
(creates a sense of intimacy)
Diptych of the Same Pose:
Develop a Natural Workflow

It can take a long time to settle a baby, so once settled, make the most of it:

• Use different camera angles and compositions to get a range of photos.
• Do some close ups (use macro lens if desired)
• Add in a prop, wrap, parent, sibling etc. to the existing pose to change it up.
Same pose - 3 angles
Same pose – 4 compositions (SOOC)
The best image:
Same pose - change hands slightly:
Close ups are easy once baby is settled
I always do feet, hands etc. as part of an existing pose, just modify camera angle / lens / aperture / crop / wrap
Add a wrap around the feet:
Close up with reverse macro lens
Ask parents to hold their hand:
Or give them a kiss:
Add a hat / wrap / sibling:
Posing with Siblings:
Intermediate Poses
Towels under each end
Curled up – towels underneath
Same pose without towels:
In a hole:
In a bundle (using the heater as light)
Difficult Poses & How To Do Them
(All of these are potentially dangerous - advanced newborn photographers only)

• Hanging branch
• Froggy Pose
• Burrito
• Posed on something
The babies position in utero will affect their ability to pose in particular ways. Be careful not to damage babies hips by forcing them into unnatural positions. This baby was breached and stuck in this position when born by C-section. It is therefore able to pose this way without damaging its hips. Save this stuff for the very experienced photographers.
Before you attempt this or any other dangerous shot: you MUST YouTube a tutorial on how to do it safely.
These poses are dangerous and tend to look kind of ridiculous. If you MUST do them:
• Use an assistant to hold the baby
• Have a beanbag very close underneath, as well as a spotter holding out hands ready to catch
• Photograph branch, etc. separately and merge in Photoshop later.
• Make sure you watch videos first of how to do it.
A Nicer Alternative
(still difficult and risky, but less tacky and more natural)
Froggy Pose

• One photo of top of head (while bottom is supported)
• One photo of bottom of head/legs while top of head is supported
• Merge later in PS
Photoshop together, using layers and masks:
Burrito:
Posed on something
Use blankets + held by dad

Dad right next to baby, holding baby securely.

Heater on a boom arm and heavy duty stand, secured by 2 straps in case one fails.

Soft blanket to keep baby warm so baby will not stir. Notice baby's arm is tucked since guitar is fairly thin. We need the best balance possible.
Beanbag at back + ready to catch

I’m shooting with a lens that allows me to be very close to baby.

There is a beanbag behind this guitar, blanket is over beanbag as well. In an emergency, Dad would grab baby and pull toward him, plush beanbag is there in case anything goes off balance.
Full shot of guitar. You can see baby resting comfortably in beanbag.

I'm now shooting further away to get the whole guitar, since baby is now safe.
Add all together in Photoshop:
Some easier and safer alternatives:
Make sure these types of photos are meaningful to the parents
Newborn Wrapping

- Use a variety of wraps
- Layer wraps
- Set up a wrap workflow
- Ask parents to choose 1-2 colours they like
- Use cocoons
- YouTube newborn wrapping techniques before doing your first few shoots and practice on a doll.
Some ways to use wraps
When wrapping, try to let at least one hand be visible.
Use wraps or cocoons to frame head/baby
Using wraps/scarves for modesty:
Use cocoons to frame baby:
Props:

• Ask parents if they have anything they want photographed with the baby. Or anything in the nursery, etc.
• Only shoot things that are meaningful to the family.
• Hats and headbands can help to show gender.
• Baskets, buckets, bowls, pumpkins etc. should be used sparingly.
• Beware the tacky props – think simple and timeless.
Editing

Using Photoshop (this is what I generally do):

1. Curves adjustment layer
2. Duplicate layer and do touch ups (spot healing, patch tool, clone tool)
3. Hue adjustment layer to fix skin tones (reduce reds/purples) + masking out lips
4. High pass sharpen + masking
5. Blurring background and sometimes skin (sparingly)
Some Before and After Shots:

SOOC  →  Basic Edit
Adding negative space, textures and flooring to achieve a creative effect:
Added a sleeping face from a different pose later in the shoot and then had to try to add a shadow on her face to look natural:
How to Develop Your Business:

• Offer to assist professional photographers for free
• Offer to shoot pregnant friends/family/etc. for free. Do at least 4 shoots before marketing yourself professionally.
• Offer to do free promotional photos for prop companies in exchange for new props/wraps/etc.
• Use social media – Facebook, Instagram, etc.
• Develop a website and marketing strategy – business cards, pamphlet drops, blogs, etc.