"Baby massage is learning to communicate your love for your baby through touch. You do a particular stroke and they smile at you - and you keep that forever"

Your Baby Massage Guide

soothe a baby amuma

Benefits of Baby Massage

Relaxes your baby

Loving touch can reduce tension, unsettledness, and irritability. In turn massage is a wonderful way to lessen stress for the parent. Release of feel-good hormones such Oxytocin & endorphins increases for both parent & baby throughout the massage.

Enhances bonding

Touch communicates nurturing, safety & love. These are essential components for growth, emotional development, brain & muscle development.

Aids growth and development

Studies have shown increased weight gain and immune function. Myelination of nerves is also increased. Which helps with brain and muscle development.

Promotes communication

Helps parents become more aware of baby's nonverbal cues. One to one attention communicates love & security.

Improves sleep patterns

As the massage becomes familiar to your baby, they will learn to relax, disconnect and sleep more deeply.

Aids wind, colic and constipation

Helps relax the abdomen & release trapped wind, as well as encouraging smooth gut function. The tummy massage gives parents a tool to help a baby with tummy ache.

Tips for Baby Massage

- Choose a warm room with low lighting.
- Play some relaxing music (it is good to use the same music each time).
- Start with a few deep breaths to relax.
- Ensure your hands are warm and clean and remove any jewellery.
- Choose a comfortable position.
- From 4-6 weeks old, if you wish, add some natural, organic oil such as sunflower oil or coconut oil in small amounts to help your hands glide.
- Begin with long sweeps down baby's front to introduce the touch with firm but gentle pressure.
- Watch and listen to your baby's cues.

Enjoy this special time with your baby!

When not to massage your baby

These are general guidelines of when it is best not to massage your baby;

- Do not wake your baby for a massage.
- Never force movements or go against your baby's will. Stop or adapt if your baby is unhappy. Massage is done with your baby not to them.
- Do not massage a hungry baby, and be cautious with the tummy massage if baby has just fed.
- In the 24 hours after immunisations.
- If your baby is unwell i.e. running a fever, lethargic, reluctant to feed etc.
- Recently bruised or broken skin should not be massaged.

Baby Massage Strokes

The following is a reminder of the baby massage strokes we have learnt together. The nursery rhymes are also included at the back of the booklet.

Starting the massage

Begin your massage together…

As a guideline aim to repeat each stroke 6 -8 times.

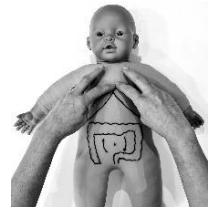
Chest – helps tone the chest muscles, encourages deep breathes & helps keep chest clear of mucus.

Resting Hands – Place both hands on baby at their chest & shoulders. Let your hands to go heavy and relax. Take a couple of nice deep breaths to settle yourself and bring your attention down onto your baby. Tell you baby 'We're going to do your massage now." Wait for baby to be happy to continue.

Velvet cloak – From starting position with resting hands slide both hands all the way down the front of body. Replace one hand at a time to the chest to repeat. Long and slow to introduce the massage.

Sunglasses – Circling outwards on the chest with the fingertips with 2 or 3 fingers.

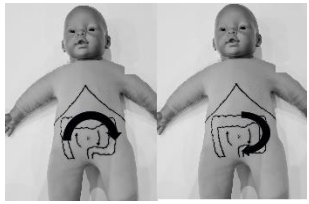
Kisses – Sweep one hand from the bottom of the ribs on one side across and over the opposite shoulder. Repeat in the other direction to make a big X across the chest.



Tapping with Incy Wincy Spider – Gentle finger tapping with loose wrists on chest, and up under the chin.

Tummy (always clockwise or left to right as you are looking at your baby) – helps to relax the abdomen to aid release of trapped wind and assist with constipation.

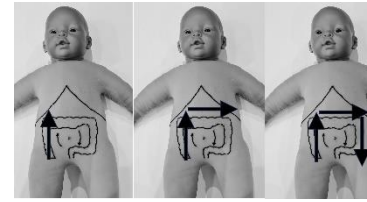
Warming the belly – Clockwise circular movements around the abdomen to warm and soften the belly muscles.



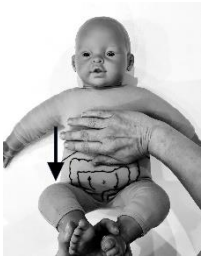
Sunset and half-moon - Right hand semi-circles over naval (from 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock) and left-hand half-moons from 12 o'clock to 6 o'clock on the left of baby's abdomen.

Windy waves – Slide across the abdomen above the naval with the heel of your left hand and gentle fingers feathering back to keep all the active movement in the left to right direction.

Chasing the wind away – Walking fingers across tummy above the naval from your left to right.



I Love U-Stroke – slide 2 or 3 fingers of your right-hand down the right hand side of baby's abdomen (as you are looking at them) for the "I". Draw upside down "L", from left to right above baby's naval & joining up with your "I". Starting on the left as you look at your baby do an upside down "U", coming up on the left, right across above the naval, and down on the right.



Lift & stroke – Lift and support baby's legs at the ankles, taking them into a "squatting" position, and stroke down the tummy with your other hand.

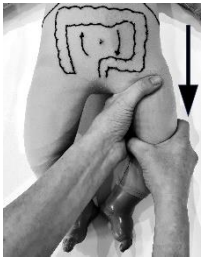
Hand over hand paddling down – replace the legs to the floor and sweep down the abdomen one hand after the other.

Row row – Holding the lower legs gently rock the knees into the tummy and out, allowing them to move in a natural V position.

Rockaby – Place soles of the feet together, knees splayed outwards and gently rock side to side. Frying pan variation – hold baby at lower legs, bend in at the knees and gently rock side to side.

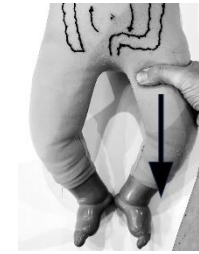
Legs - helps aid circulation, tone Muscles and promote movement & body awareness. Usually relaxing for babies too.

Frogs legs- One hand on each leg in a C shape, slide the hands from the thighs to the ankles.



Hand over hand warming the muscles – Hands in a "C" shape, go hand over hand all the way down each leg from thigh to ankle. Be vigorous! firm gentle movements aid circulation.

Gentle squeezes – Make a ring with forefinger and thumb and gently squeeze down the leg, missing out the knee. A couple of squeezes above the knee and a couple below.



Twist and squeeze – Holding leg at thigh with both hands gently work down the leg with a sweeping, twisting motion gliding over the knee.

Jelly on a plate – Holding the thigh between both hands roll it backwards and forwards. Repeat on other leg.

Footballer's knees – Circle your thumb around the knee.

Train tracks – Support the lower leg in both hands and sweep the thumbs up and down either side of the shinbone. Repeat on other leg.

Tiny ankles – Small circles with thumbs or fingers around the crease of the ankles.

Swedish milking – "C" chape hands sweeping up the leg from the ankle to the thigh. Repeat on other leg.

Frogs legs – Sweep down both legs at the same time from the thighs, round the back of the knees and pulling down the calves to the ankles.

Feet – these strokes stimulate many areas of the body through reflexology points and calm the baby.

Press for calm – Allow your thumbs to drop down from ball of foot to the natural cleft of the ball of the foot. Press gently on both feet and take a deep breath yourself.

Unwind - Hold a foot in each hand, starting with your thumb in centre of sole rotate thumbs outwards over the ball of the foot in a spiral movement.

Sweep down the instep – Sweep your thumbs down the instep of the foot from the big toe to the heel.

Soothe the sole – Reverse your sweeping movement to run your thumb up the centre of the foot from the heels to the toes.

Round the garden – Trace a figure of eight with your thumb around the ball and heel of the foot.

Tiny toes with "This Little Piggy" – A gently roll and a slide up each toe in turn.

Arms – these strokes are good for muscle tone, circulation and body awareness.

Resting hands – Hold baby at the upper chest and shoulders to give them a moment to adjust as we move from one end of the body to the other.

Nice and straight – Bring arms down by the sides with palms facing inwards, but don't push or force baby's arms. Follow the arms with gentle sweeping motions until they are ready to relax.

Hand over hand down each arm – Hands in a "C" shape, sweeping hand over hand from shoulder to the wrist – as with legs.

Gentle squeezes – Making a ring with your forefinger and thumb, gently squeeze down each arm, skipping over the elbow.

Over and across – Hold each hand/forearm and bring each arm in turn across the chest taking baby into a slow roll if the head follows (just in to the middle & out again if not) and open out to the side.

Open Shut Them – Bring both arms across the chest together and open out to the sides.

Hands – these strokes are good for encouraging opening of the hands and body awareness.

Round & Round the Garden – Thumb circles round the palms of both hands.

Circling over the back of the hand – As above but circling over the back of hands.

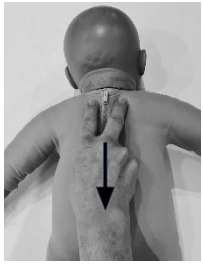
Tiny wrists – Little circles with thumb or fingers all the way around the wrists.

Tiny fingers (with Tommy Thumb) – A gentle roll and slide up each finger in turn.

High Five Palm stoking – Sweep your own palm against baby's to gently encourage them to open their hands.

Back – these strokes help with muscle tone, encourage tummy time and circulation.

Velvet cloak – Bring hands all the way down the back, down to ankles.



Down the spine – Running two fingers in a 'V' shape all the way down the ridges of the muscles either side of the spine.

Hand over hand paddling down – Making sweeping movements from nape of neck to sacral area, one hand after the other.

Warming the heart – Nestling the palm or heal of the hand into the sacral area and rotating the hand in a circle.

Kneading dough - Gently kneading buttocks inwardly with your thumbs.

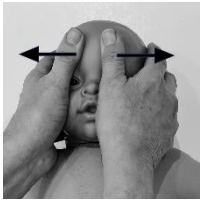
Pat-a-cake – Little fingertip pats on the bottom.

Gentle finger tapping – Tapping fingertips on upper back, down to the buttocks and legs and up again.

Feathering the back – Light, gently stroking down the back with fingertips.

Head and Face – these strokes are calming and soothing and can help with teething and blocked noses.

Shampooing the scalp -Finger circles with fingertips over scalp.



Open book – Spread thumbs out across the forehead to the temples.

Temple bells – Gently rotating fingers or thumbs around temples.

Waterfall – Press fingers gently at top of nose or the corners of eyes and stroke downwards to the nostrils, gently press under nostrils.

Victorian moustache – Stroke out across top lip and across the cheekbones to in front of the ears.

Jaw relaxer – Gently rotating thumbs or fingers at jaw hinges.

Gum soother – Massage with tiny circles on the lips giving the gums a rub underneath.

Smile – With one finger or thumb from each hand, stroke out from the centre of chin to the ear lobes. Give the ear lobes a rub if baby likes it.

Loving cradle – Cradle head in hands.

A couple of sweeps down the whole body to end massage.

Nursery Rhymes for Baby Massage ♪

Singing to your baby enhances communication, bonding and speech development. Indicates the massage stoke.

Incy Wincy Spider -

Chest Tapping

Incy-Wincy spider, climbed up the waterspout,
Down came the rain and washed the spider out,
Out came the sunshine and dried up all the rain,
So, Incy-Wincy spider climbed up the spout again!

Row row row your boat -

Row row

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream,
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.
Rock, rock, rock your boat,
Gently to and fro,
If you do it hard enough,
Into the water you go!

Jelly on a plate –

Jelly on a plate

Jelly on a plate, jelly on a plate
Wibble wobble wibble wobble
jelly on a plate.

Open shut them

Give yourself a cuddle

Open shut them, open shut them,
Don't get in a muddle,
Open shut them, open shut them,
Give yourself a cuddle.

Round and round the garden

On hands

Round and round the garden,
Like a teddy bear,
One step, two step,
Tickle you under there!

Tommy thumb

Tiny fingers and palm strokes

Tommy Thumb, Tommy Thumb,
Where are you?
Here I am, here I am,
How do you do?
..Peter Pointer, Peter Pointer (Index finger)
...Toby Tall(middle finger)
.. Ruby Ring (ring finger)
Baby Small (little finger)

This little piggy

Tiny toes

This little piggy went to market,
This little piggy stayed home,
This little piggy had a massage,
This little piggy had none,
And this little piggy cried, “Wee! Wee! Wee!”
All the way home

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