

## Infant Massage Promoting Nurturing Touch

Infant Massage When you were pregnant, you imagined blissfully holding your infant all day, getting to know him or her, bonding, feeding, and napping. Not so suddenly, the baby's on the outside, and you find out that there's a lot of stress for you and your baby. You're not getting enough sleep; you worry every minute that you're doing something wrong; you wonder if what you're doing at this tender age will make your child one day sit on the therapist's couch and say, "You know what my mom did when I was a baby?" You both just need to relax! But how? Truthfully, you both need a massage. We'll leave your massage up to you and your ability to drop not-so-subtle hints to your partner, but your baby's massage, and subsequent relaxation, can be a very relaxing experience: for both of you!

Benefits of Infant Massage Perhaps the most important benefit of infant massage is its ability to help baby sleep - a top concern for parents of infants. Because infant massage can assist in the reduction of stress for baby, it relaxes babies and encourages more sound sleep - something everyone in the family will benefit from. Feeding and digestive problems, such as gas and colic, can make a baby and parent miserable. One of the many benefits of infant massage, according to The International Association of Infant Massage, Inc, is the increased production of oxytocin in the breastfeeding mother, allowing more complete feedings. Regardless of how you feed your baby, infant massage also benefits baby and parent by increasing baby's circulation and decreasing gas, constipation, and symptoms of colic. One of the best benefits for parents and baby is the connection that it provides. Infant massage connects parents with children, both physically and emotionally. Babies thrive on touching and skin-to-skin contact. According to Deborah Olsen, a licensed massage therapist in Hershey, Pennsylvania, infant massage is "not a new concept. It's been around for thousands of years, but unfortunately our culture has gotten away from it. Touching is a very important aspect of early development." This touching, in fact, improves communication and trust between infant and parent. Spending time touching baby and figuring out what is pleasurable to your baby and what is not, improves communication and trust between the infant and parent. After practicing with different massage techniques, parents learn to read their baby's cues more accurately and therefore, are better able to respond to their baby's needs. Massaging your baby gives you confidence in your ability to care for your baby; in addition, it can be a time when you actually enjoy your baby, in a different way than feeding and changing diapers allow. As parents become more responsive through massage, babies cry less, and the parent and child become more attached and less stressed, providing a better basis for which the two of you to begin to know each other. Another plus: Infant massage also stimulates your baby's brain development and improves his sensory awareness. With infant massage, your baby may one day say, "I'm glad my mommy massaged me!" The process is not complicated; simple techniques can provide a multitude of benefits for parent and baby, foster relaxation, bonding, and stimulate emotional and physical growth.

## About the Author

Katie Franklin is a researcher and writer on parenting, children and child development. She is a regular contributor at [Child Development Media Inc](#) She also contributes at [Quality Toys and Hobbies](#)

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