

A guide on how to do Baby Massage & Yoga

If you haven't already then please read the blog 'Infant Massage and Yoga' on our website, this gives you information on why and how infant massage benefits your baby, the right products to use and how to do a patch test correctly. It also explains when the best times to massage your baby is and when you **should not** massage a baby.

Preparation:

1. Prepare your baby for the massage. Put baby on the floor on a towel or soft blanket between your legs, creating a cocoon and warm space, making baby feel safe. Make sure the time seems right for them.
2. Put a small amount of oil on your hands and rub them together, making a swishing sound. Hold your hands over baby's face so s/he can hear the sound and make eye contact.
3. Ask permission by showing baby your oiled hands, verbally asking permission, then "reading" your baby's response cues. Start by greeting your baby's legs with resting hands. If baby appears happy, keep gentle eye contact and begin humming/chanting Om 3 times.

Legs and Feet Massage Routine – Week 1

1. Leg warming stroke - Hold one foot in your opposite hand. Gently glide your hand up the leg from ankle to hip, circling the hip several times and then return down to the ankle before switching hands to glide up the other side of the leg. Repeat 3 times on each side of the leg. **Song** – Incy Wincy Spider
2. Cup & Glide - Hold babies' ankle with one hand. Create a C shape with the other hand and gently glide up the entire leg to the hip. Repeat 6 times. **Song** - One potato, two potato, three potato, four....
3. Hug and Glide - Place both hands in a C shape around baby's ankle, gently hugging the leg as you glide the hands up the leg to the top of the thigh, in a twist & turn motion and back down to the ankle.
4. Thumb press - Gently support ankle with hands place both thumbs at the base of the heel & gently apply pressure from heel to base of the toes. Repeat six times.
5. Thumb over Thumb - Gently support ankle with hands place both thumbs at the base of the heel & gently glide thumbs one over the other, up sole of the foot to base of toes. Foot relaxer using thumbs draw little circles all over the top of the foot and around the ankle. Then draw little circles on the sole of the foot and around the heel. Repeat 3 times.
6. Toe rolls - Gently massage each toe between your thumb and forefinger. Gently swivel fingers from base of each toe to the top and gently squeeze each tow as you release them. Repeat twice. **Song** – This little piggy went to market...

7. Calming Point - Place thumb between big and middle toe. Hold for up to 40 seconds.

8. Top of foot and ankle circles

Gently support ankle with both hands. Using the thumbs apply gentle pressure in a circular motion from base of toes on top of the foot out to sides around the ankles. Repeat 6 times.

9. Leg Rolls

Gently support thigh between open palms and begin rolling the leg between palms gently glide hands back down to ankle ending with resting hands.

Song – Jelly on a plate...

Baby Yoga – Week 1

Hip opening sequence

Aims: Open the hip and knee joints in order to tone the deeper muscles of the body around the base of the spine.

Note: There is a great deal of variation in the suppleness of baby's joints. Be gentle and do not force a movement: you may notice one hip joint is less flexible than the other, which is fairly common.

1. Knees to chest – Stimulates digestive system and can produce a bowel movement.

Hold top of legs just under the knees and bend them open, slightly wider than the hips. Press knees firmly on the sides of abdomen, just under the ribcage.

Release pressure and repeat 2-3 times, taking your time and relaxing completely in-between without lifting your hands.

Note – If baby seems uncomfortable, and abdomen feels hard, massage it gently and try the movement again later.

2. Knees from side to side

Hands in same position as before, bring the bent knees together in alignment and move them to the left and then to the right. Press firmly on each side of the abdomen as above, taking your time to release the pressure before changing sides.

3. Pedal Stretch

Vary the previous stretch by moving the legs alternately toward the rib cage and stretched toward you, in a slow pedaling action.

4. Half Lotus – continues the asymmetrical movement

Holding feet, bring left foot toward the right hip in half lotus position. Press the heel on the side, where it reaches easily. Release and do the same with the right foot.

5. Butterfly – Open's Baby's hips

Hold ankles with both hands and bring soles of feet together. Gently push them towards the abdomen.

6. Closing the hips

Holding ankles as before, bring them together, drawing them slightly toward you. Repeat this movement slowly two or three times, your baby's eyes will close as you draw his knees in.

7. Leg Stretch and drop – shows baby the contrast between stretching and relaxing by combining both in one movement.

Still holding baby's ankles, lift the legs very slightly extending them at the same time, then let them drop loosely. Say 'stretch' and 'let go' in a lively sing song voice to make it more fun, and stress the contrast between stretching and relaxing. Repeat 3 times.

Tummy Massage Routine – Week 2

1. Resting Hands/Connecting movement - Rest both hands lightly on baby's tummy (below rib cage and above top of nappy) for a few moments, allowing the healing warmth from your hands to flow to your baby.
2. Water Wheel - Start to move hands from resting position, making scooping movements (below baby's rib cage to the top of the nappy), moving one hand after the other - much like a turning a water wheel. Use light pressure, just firm enough so your baby's skin moves slightly in response to your touch.
3. Water Wheel with legs up - Keeping one hand on baby while your other hand holds baby's feet up - continue scooping with one hand this allows for a little more depth to the water wheel stroke.
4. Belly Button Smile - Placing your thumbs together at the level of baby's belly button, gently glide them outwards to the sides of the waist. To finish, lightly place your hands over your baby's abdomen and encourage him or her to let go of any tension.
5. Sun & Moon - This technique can really help calm babies with colic. Look at your baby's tummy like a clock. Starting at 6 o'clock to 12 o'clock (bottom to top) use your left hand to move around baby's bowel. Now use your right hand and massage in the opposite direction 12 o'clock to 6 o'clock (top to bottom). Repeat 6 times to gently move any trapped wind, gas, bubbles around and out of baby's tummy. **Song** – Hickory Dickory Dock...
6. I love you - Wonderful bonding massage stroke and excellent at expelling gas and easing comfort. Make a gently 'I' 'L' 'U' movement across baby's tummy. 'I' start on the left side under baby's ribs - making a gentle stroke from under rib to top of hip. 'L' start on right side under baby's ribs - gently stroke across to body then down from ribcage to hip to form an 'L'. 'U' start on the top of baby's right hip - draw a line up to the bottom of rib cage, then across to the body and down to the top of the left hip. Repeat 3 times.

Gently but firmly press the palms of your hands against the soles of baby's feet. Release and repeat. S/he may resist against your hands. When you feel her/him responding, increase the pressure. You may also press on one foot at a time, which will encourage kicking.

6. Leg lift & drop – relaxing posture to end this sequence. It shows baby the use of the breath.

Holding a foot in each hand, gently lift her legs perpendicular to her body and then let them flop down relaxed. Inhale as you lift, exhale as you leg go.

Caution: Don't lift baby's hips off the floor until s/he is ready for a bigger lift.

Baby Massage Sequence for the relief of Colic/Gas

This massage routine can be used when problems like tummy pain, gas, constipation, or colic occur. Repeat this series of strokes three times, 2-3 times a day, for at least 2 weeks. This takes about 5-10 minutes, some alternate techniques, which can also help are: Resting hands, Touch relaxation and Containment holds.

Resting Hands

Begin taking a few deep breaths to relax, rest your hands on baby's tummy for a few seconds – making eye contact and checking in with baby.

Water Wheel

Stroke with alternating hands from ribcage to legs. Repeat 6 times with each hand.

Knees up

Bring baby's knees together and gently press them into tummy. Hold for a slow count of 6.

Sun and Moon

One hand draws a clockwise full circle. The other draws a half circle (from approx. 10-15 on a clock)

5. Knees up – Repeat as above and do touch relaxation, gently bouncing legs.

Chest, Arms and Hands Massage Routine – Week 3

Chest:

1. Resting Hands/ Warming stroke - Place both hands on your baby's chest for a few minutes then start to stroke gently outward from her sternum to shoulders. Repeat 3 times. Note- Age 6 weeks to 3 months use 3 fingers/ 3-6 months palm of hands.
2. Loving heart stroke - Beginning at her sternum, trace a heart shape bringing both hands up to her shoulders, then down and back together. Repeat 3 times.
3. Open Book - Place your hands together palm to palm, in a 'praying' gesture, with your fingertips pointing towards baby's face, your thumbs pointing up. Imagine that your hands are a closed book and your thumbs are the spine. Place your little fingers against baby's skin and 'open' the book by spreading your hands, until your thumbs - still touching each other - reach the baby's skin. Separate your hands and continue to move them outward across your baby in one smooth motion. Repeat 6 times.
4. Butterfly/Loving Crisscross - In a crisscross pattern, stroke diagonally from one side of your baby's hip, up and over the opposite shoulder, and back down to her hip. Repeat 3 times each side. **Song** – Hot Cross buns...

Arms:

1. Love tap - With one hand, hold baby's wrist. Relax upper arm by tapping lightly from wrist to shoulder.
2. C-Shape Glide - Hold wrist with one hand and hold your other hand in a C-shape around baby's wrist - gently stroke up the outside of the arm from wrist to shoulder and back down. Repeat 3 times.

3. C-Shape Twist - Gently cup index and thumb around baby's wrist - move hands one right above the other, stroke from wrist to shoulder with both hands rotating in opposite directions, as if you were gently wringing a towel. Repeat 2-3 times.
4. Arm Relaxer - To complete the arm massage - gently squeeze and release the arm muscles working from the top of the arm to the hands.

Hands:

1. Hands - Wrist circles - Massage her wrist by moving your fingers in small circles.
2. Thumb to Palm massage - Gently rest baby's hand, palm up in your hands, gently massage palm moving thumb over thumb from heel of hand to fingers. **Song** – Round and round the garden, like a teddy bear...
3. Palm Stroke and finger rolling/coining - Keep hands in the same position and begin to gently roll each finger between your thumb and index finger. Gently squeezing and pulling at tip of each finger. Repeat 2 times.

Baby Yoga – Week 3

Arm and Shoulder stretch – Opens chest, expands breathing, strengthens back muscles and opens baby's trust.

1. Out Stretch and loving cuddle

Hold wrists as you inhale. Exhaling as you slowly stretch them out to the side until you feel resistance. Bring arms back crossing them over each other, changing arms in the cross the second time. Repeat 2 times.

Song: Open shut them, open shut them don't get in a muddle, open shut them, open shut them give yourself a cuddle.

2. Circle Stretch

Hold baby's wrists and gently bring them up over her face and open them out in a wide circle before coming back again. Be attentive with the flow of your breath with the movement.

3. Star Stretch

Bring one hand and opposite foot toward each other across the body. Bring one foot to touch the nose. Repeat 3 times.

Face, Head and Back of the Body Massage Routine – Week 4

1. Forehead relaxer - Cradling your baby's head in both hands, placing your thumbs between your baby's eyebrows and gently stroke from center of forehead, above nose, to the temples. Repeat 3 times. Keeping hands in position as above, places pads of index finger or thumb at the bridge of baby's nose. Using gentle pressure, stroke down the sides of the nose out over the cheeks continuing out over the top of the ear. Repeat 3 times.
2. Nose/Cheek stroke/decongestor - Using finger tips slide down either side of the nose. Repeat 3 times and on 3rd stroke as you reach the outside of baby's nostrils pull each side gently for a count of 5-10. Using your fingertips, massage the jaw in small circles.

Teething Sequence:

1. Gum Massage - Place a clean forefinger into baby's mouth and make gentle circular motions along the gum line where teeth are trying to emerge. Repeat as long a baby is happy.
2. Heart - Place pads of fingers at the front of the ears, in one sweep stroke over and behind ears then along the jaw line tracing a heart shape on your baby's face, bringing your hands together at the chin.
3. Jaw circles - Place pads of fingers at the front of the ears and make small spiral movements along the jaw to the chin.

4. Smile - Place pads of thumbs above the center of the top lip and sweep up and out in the shape of smile. Repeat under the bottom lip.
5. Pout Press - Place pads of forefingers together under the nose, with a gentle pressing motion, trace the shape of the mouth moving fingers from top of lip to meet in the middle at the bottom.
6. Angel kiss overhead and ears - Cradling your baby's head in both hands, using small circular movements massage the scalp with your fingertips, as if you're shampooing. (Avoid the fontanel - soft spot on top of baby's head) ending at ears, making small circles between your thumb and index finger.

Back of body:

1. Back Massage - Entire back of the body warm up - Place baby on tummy horizontally in front of you, or lay her across your outstretched legs. Keep her hands in front of her, not at her sides. Start at baby's heel, gently glide hands up each leg, over buttocks, continuing up the back, then cup the shoulders and gently glide down the arms to the hands. Slide hands back to arm pits and back down to heels. Repeat 6 times.
2. Back Circles - Keeping hands at the same position glide hands to top of legs, under bum, using thumbs or fingertips massage small circles over buttocks, up either side of the spine - avoid pressing on spine directly - to the shoulders massaging them in small circular motion. Glide hands back down to ankles. Repeat 6 times.
3. Back and Forth - Holding your fingers like a rake, stroke down her back. Gently move each hand back and forth (keeping them going in opposite directions) from the base of the neck to buttocks. Repeat 3 times.
4. Bottom Relaxer - Gently tap into baby's bottom with pads of fingers. Then cup the hands and gently tap bottom.

5. Lift and Glide - Cross hands over baby's back - draw both hands up towards the spine, lifting them up and switching the cross as you go - all the way to the shoulders. Slide back down. Repeat 3 times.

6. Combing - Gently glide the index finger and middle finger either side of baby's spine from neck to bottom. Alternating hands.

Baby Yoga – Week 4

Tummy time

- For babies not fond of tummy time
- Building core, back, neck and arm strength and develop cervical curve.
- Encourages rolling over and crawling
- Alleviates wind/constipation

Caution:

- Do not put pressure on any of baby's joints
- Baby drum is safe from newborn, others only after 16 weeks.
- Build up slowly, do not attempt all in one go with all the reps.

1. Baby Drum

Sit with baby across your legs on their tummy outstretched, with arms in-front of them. Gently lift legs in cycling motion while drumming baby's back with cupped hands. Open legs to give baby a stretch and relax. Repeat 3 times.

2. Mini Cobra

In the same position making sure baby's chest is fully supported, bed your legs under baby's legs keeping hold of the ankles and supporting under the chin. Gently lift baby's legs up and watch them reach towards the floor. Repeat 3 times.

3. Baby Plank

Kneel with baby in-front of you lying face down. Gently lift under the chest and pelvis so they float to plank. Allow them to take a tiny amount of weight in their arms and hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 3 times.

4. See-saw

Sitting with baby in the winding position on your legs support front and back, allow them to lean forward then help to correct back to upright – seated position. Repeat 3 times.

Development: Add on See-saw stand – as above with assisting baby to lean forward and to a standing position.