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## Settling and soothing your baby with massage

Do you love a good massage? Ever wondered if your baby would too? Massage could help your baby relax, encourage communication and help you bond.

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\_ [2] \_ [3] \_ [4]



## Settling and soothing your baby with massage

Do you love a good massage? Ever wondered if your baby would too? Massage could help your baby relax, encourage communication and help you bond.

Wednesday, September 11th, 2019

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### Massaging is a way of learning to communicate in a different way

Your baby has just had a bath. Wound up in their bathrobe, they wriggle energetically, give a hint of a first smile, and pronounce their first sounds. Massage prolongs and enhances this tender connection that you wouldn't miss out on for anything in the world. This art of touch is another way of communicating with your little one.

**Babies acquire the sense of touch at around the six month of life in the womb.** The "skin to skin" contact of massage from birth can mimic the contact experienced by baby in the warmth of the mother's womb. It initiates a body language that enables mums and dads to express their **tenderness**.

If your baby cries without you being able to guess what is wrong, then don't tear your hair out.

Settle yourself down comfortably with your baby and see if they would like a massage. Magic! This special and tender moment will hopefully be calming for you both.

Take the time to massage your baby regularly to enable them to become gradually aware of their body.

Here are some useful tips on the art of massage.

## Effective massage

**Timing?** When baby is relaxed. Before bedtime, after having changed the nappy or just after the bath. The most important thing is that both of you are available and calm for sharing a few minutes of tenderness and communication.

**Place?** A warm, quiet room, with no bright lights. You can lie baby on the changing table or on a bed. You can also try sitting with your baby on a blanket or pillow on your raised knees. If your baby cries or does not appear to feel at ease then they probably do not feel like having a massage. You can try again later on in the day or another day altogether.

Babies should not be massaged like adults so **don't take yourself for a physiotherapist!** Begin gently bearing in mind that it is baby's well-being that is important not your skills. Begin with gentle strokes. If you feel you need more support then why not see if you can join a course!

**How long?** You can start soon after your baby is born, they love your gentle touch. To begin with, keep it short but regular rather than spaced out and lengthy.

**Until what age?** There is no official limit. Your child will tell you, or let you know in other ways (e.g. getting upset) if they no longer wish to receive a massage.

**What products?** You may not need any special products for massaging. If you're going to use any creams or oils, make sure they are baby-safe. Your baby's skin is very delicate and you don't want to damage their baby sensitive skin.

## The right way to do it

Remove any jewellery to avoid injury to your baby. **Wash your hands** then rub them together for a few minutes to warm them up. Explain to your baby what you are going to do. You can sing or chat to your baby while massaging to reassure your baby. Stop as soon as your little one becomes restless.

**Legs:** Massage each leg alternately with the palm of the hand, from the top of their leg to the ankle. Press the soles of the feet lightly with your thumb (careful, they are very sensitive!) from the heel to the toes.

**Tummy:** place your hands on the tummy for approximately 1 minute. Massage in a clockwise motion with the flat of the hand. Then slide one hand after the other to each side of the tummy.

**Arms and hands:** massage the inside of the arms with the palms of your hands. Circle the arm with your hand and descend slowly while pressing lightly. Massage the fingers and the palms of the hands by drawing small circles.

**The back:** Once your baby is old enough to lie on their tummy, massage the back gently one hand after the other, firstly from the base of the neck to the bottom of the spine then up again.

[Read more](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

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