

Try baby massage



Massage isn't only for adults - your baby can love it too with our easy guide. Try these basic massage moves today and share this special bonding experience.

Bonding with your baby is such an intimate experience and very important for their development, both mentally and emotionally. Baby massage is the perfect bonding experience, and it can also help with colic, disrupted sleep, immune problems, digestion, and circulation.

Preparation

At least half an hour after feeding or before their meal is best for them and use a flat, cushioned surface. Also, pick a time when you won't be disturbed and you're relaxed too. There's no point in doing it at a time when your mind is on other things – like the next load of washing! Your baby will pick up on your non-verbal cues and if you're rushing or not relaxed, then they won't enjoy it.

Set the room temperature to 25°C and then undress your baby completely, covering any bits that aren't massaged with a soft blanket or towel. Make sure that there aren't any drafts in the room and the door is closed.

Your hands will glide more easily if you use a cream or specially-formulated baby massage oil.

Starting the massage

Look directly at your baby so you help stimulate all their senses and talk to them when you're massaging them. Many experts advocate asking your baby if it's alright if you massage them, but frankly your baby can't reasonably dissent or consent!

Use your judgement if you think they're in a good mood – if they've been fussy or distressed then best wait until they've settled a bit. And, wait until they're fully revived from their nap. You shouldn't massage baby before the age of four weeks and if they've been immunised recently. You should always work from the top down, using soft, floaty strokes.

Four basic moves

Their chest and abdomen

Using both hands, take the two fingers along from your thumb, and place them in the centre of your baby's torso, and glide them upwards towards their shoulders before rotating counter-clockwise. Repeat five times.

Their hands

Babies' hands naturally curl up, so this is designed to relax their hand muscles. Form a circle around one of their wrist's with your hand, and with your free hand, take your thumb and stroke the heel of their hand up to each of their fingers, pulling them gently.

Their feet

Gently bend your baby's leg at the knee and support their ankle with one hand, with their foot pointing up in the air. Using your free thumb make rotating, circular motions up their foot, then finishing by tenderly pulling each toe, like the nursery rhyme, 'This Little Piggy Went To Market.'

Their back

Very carefully and slowly, turn your baby over on to their tummy. Take both thumbs and starting from their neck, make circular motions while moving down their back, on either side of their spine.

Words: Sarah Ewing

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