

It all begins with that FIRST TOUCH[®]

A Guide To Infant Massage

Getting Started

- A massage should last only about 15 minutes.
- Keep it simple and relaxed, when your baby is not hungry or cranky.
- Set the mood; play gentle music if you wish.
- The room should be comfortably warm.
- Your baby needs a soft surface to lie on.
- A clean diaper or soft towel should be nearby.
- A small amount of a mild baby oil or lotion can be used.
- Make sure your hands are warm by rubbing them together.
- Gradually increase the pressure of your touch to avoid tickling.

TIP: It's best not to apply oil or lotion to red or irritated skin. If a rash develops, discontinue use. Always be sure to read the label before using any product.

Basic Techniques

Face



Giggle and Grin: Baby's face may accumulate a great deal of tension through sucking, teething, crying and generally interacting with his world. With your thumbs, make smiles on the upper and lower lips.

Chest



Valentine: With your hands together at the center of the chest, push out to the sides, following baby's rib cage, as if you were flattening the pages of a book. Without lifting your hands, bring them around in a heart-shaped "Valentine" motion.

Arms



Under Arm: First lift the arm and stroke the armpit a few times.



Milking: Encircle your hands one on top of the other around baby's arm at the shoulder and move toward the wrist as if you were milking. Now move your hands in the opposite direction, from wrist to shoulder.

Stomach



Water Wheel: Using the outside of each hand, make paddling strokes on baby's tummy, one hand following the other, as if you were scooping sand toward yourself. This playful stroke is called the Water Wheel. Hold up baby's legs with your left hand and grasp the ankles. Then repeat the paddling motion, using the right hand only.



I Love You Stroke: You can do a three-part I Love You stroke. For "I," make a single downward stroke with your right hand on baby's left belly (your right). For "Love," make an upside-down "L" going from your left to right. For "You," make an upside-down "U" going from your left to right.



Fingertip Tiptoe: Using your fingertips, tiptoe across baby's tummy from your left to right.

Legs



Milking: Encircle your hands one on top of the other around baby's leg moving from ankle to hip as if you were milking. Then reverse direction using the same stroke from hips to ankle.

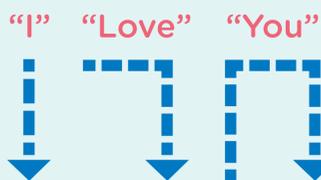


Leg Roll: Roll baby's legs from knee to ankle between your hands.

Back



Back Rub: Start with your hands together at the top of baby's back, at right angles to the spine. Move your hands back and forth, in opposite directions, going down the back to the buttocks, then up to the shoulders, and back down once again.



Remember that until you are skilled you should not practice on real babies, and special techniques and training are required for preterm massage.