

Baby Care Basics:

Massage



Massage has many proven benefits. It can contribute to healthy weight gain, promote relaxation before bedtime, and help your baby be more alert and social when awake. Read on for different massage techniques you can try with your baby.

How do I prepare?



Warm your hands and the room



Have a clean diaper and towel nearby



Use a mild baby oil or lotion



Lay your baby on a soft surface



Start at the bottom

- Loosen the legs:** Hold your baby's heel and use the other hand to gently stroke his leg from top to bottom. Reverse the motion, stroking from his foot up.
- Play with those piggies:** Gently rotate each toe while singing "This Little Piggy." Then, with your thumb pressed against the sole of your baby's foot, flex the foot up and down.
- Be ready to roll:** Roll your baby's legs between your hands from the knee to the ankle, using the same smooth motion you would to roll strings out of soft clay.

Move to the middle

- Do the heart good:** With your hands resting flat on your baby's rib cage and pointing slightly inward, trace the shape of a heart—up, out, and around her chest.
- Rub that belly:** Place one hand on your baby's belly and stroke downward, following closely with the other hand. Repeat. As a variation, raise your baby's legs.
- Go up and over:** Start with your hands next to each other on top of your baby's rib cage, then stroke up her chest, over her shoulders, and all the way down her arms.



Top it off

- Get in some face time:** Slide your hands down your baby's forehead and gently massage his temples, then place your thumbs along his nose and move your hands across his cheeks.
- Squeeze those cheeks:** Make small circles on the sides of your baby's jaw under his ears. Move to the back of his ears and make larger circles, then come up under his chin and press his jaw forward.



Always keep massage length to 15 minutes or less.



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