

Infant Massage

Begin each session: Prepare the space. Relax and center yourself. Connect with your baby. Ask permission.

Legs and Feet

BEGIN SEQUENCE WITH LEFT LEG:

Indian Milking: Milk the leg with the inside edge of each hand, one following the other, from hip to ankle. The opposite hand gently holds the foot at the ankle. Repeat 2-3 times.

Squeeze and Twist: Using full hands, hold the leg as if you were holding a baseball bat. Move hands in unison from thigh to ankle, twisting in opposite directions and squeezing lightly.

Windshield Wipers: Using a thumb-over-thumb stroke, massage the bottom of the foot from heel to toe. Repeat 5-6 times.

Little Piggies: Using thumb and index finger, gently squeeze, roll and press each toe, beginning with small toe working inward.

Undertow: Using your index finger, gently press under each toe.

Ball of Foot: Using your index finger, press just above the ball of the foot.

Thumb Press: Using your thumbs, gently press all over the bottom of the foot.

Top of Foot: Using your thumbs, one following the other, gently stroke from toes to ankle.

Ankle Circles: Make small circles around the inside and outside anklebones, using thumbs or fingers.

Swedish Milking: Milk the leg from the ankle to the hip, one hand following the other. Repeat 2-3 times.

Sausage Roll: Roll the leg between your hands from knee to ankle.

REPEAT SEQUENCE WITH RIGHT LEG, THEN:

Bottom Relaxer: Massage the buttocks using small circular strokes.

Leg Stretches: Holding one leg in each hand at the knee, gently stretch legs out, hold for 1-2 seconds; bend legs in, hold, then stretch out again. Repeat 2-4 times.

Leg Crosses: Holding one leg in each hand at the ankle, gently cross legs over one another in front and hold for 1-2 seconds; release then repeat cross over, with opposite leg on top. Repeat 2-4 times.

Bicycle: Alternate rotating baby's legs as if peddling a bicycle.

Integration Stroke: After massaging each leg and foot, feather or sweep the legs from hip to feet. First stroke down the front, then down the back.

Stomach

Resting Hands: Lay your hands on baby's tummy and watch for cues.

Waterwheel: Using the outside edge of each hand, make paddling strokes on tummy, one hand following the other, as if you were scooping sand toward yourself.

Modified Waterwheel: Hold up baby's legs with one hand, as if you were changing diapers, and make paddling strokes with other hand.

Thumb Spread: With thumbs flat at baby's navel, push out to the sides. Be sure to use the flat thumb and do not poke.

Sun & Moon: Using the finger pads of your left hand, make a full clockwise circle ("the Sun") on baby's tummy. At the same time, use the finger pads of your right hand to make a clockwise half-circle ("the Moon") moving from the 8 position to the 4 position on the clock. While the right hand is above, the left hand is below. While the left hand is above, the right hand is off baby and repositioning to the 4.

I Love You: Make a single I-shaped stroke with your right hand on baby's left belly. Make an upside-down L-shaped stroke going from your left to right, then down baby's left belly. Make an upside U-shaped stroke, going from your left to right.

Walking Fingers: Using your fingertips, walk across baby's tummy from your left to right.

Chest

Resting Hands: Lay your hands on baby's chest and watch for cues.

Open Book: With both hands together in the center of the chest, push out to the sides, following the rib cage, as if you were flattening the pages of a book. Repeat 2-3 times.

Open Heart: With both hands together in the center of the chest, bring them out and around in a heart-shaped motion to the center of the lower rib cage. Repeat 2-3 times.

Butterfly: Both hands begin at baby's side at the rib cage. Your right hand moves across the chest diagonally, and over the baby's right shoulder, then back to position at the side. In a fluid motion, your left hand repeats the stroke across the chest diagonally to baby's left shoulder and back. Repeat 2-3 times.

Pit Stop: Using small circles, stroke the armpit a few times, massaging the lymph nodes in this area.

Arms and Hands

BEGIN SEQUENCE WITH LEFT ARM:

Indian Milking: Milk the arm with the inside edge of each hand, one following the other, from shoulder to wrist. Repeat 2-3 times.

Squeeze and Twist: Using full hands, hold the arm as if you were holding a baseball bat. Move hands in unison from shoulder to wrist, twisting in opposite directions and squeezing lightly.

Open Hand and Finger Rolls: Open baby's hand with your thumbs. Gently roll each finger with your thumb and index finger.

Top of Hand: Gently stroke the top of the hand. Relaxing stroke is away from wrist to fingers; stimulating stroke is toward wrist.

Wrist Circles: Make small circles around the wrist.

Swedish Milking: Milk the arm from the wrist to the shoulder, one hand following the other. Repeat 2-3 times.

Sausage Roll: Roll the arm between your hands.

REPEAT SEQUENCE WITH RIGHT ARM, THEN:

Arm Stretches: Holding one arm in each hand, gently stretch arms out, hold for 1-2 seconds, then release. Repeat 2-4 times.

Long Arm Crosses: Holding one arm in each hand, gently cross arms over one another in front of chest and hold for 1-2 seconds; release then repeat cross over, with opposite arm on top. Repeat 2-4 times.

Midline Crosses: Hold baby's left arm in your right hand, and baby's right leg in your left. Stretch baby's limbs outward, then bring them in and cross over diagonally in front, holding for 1-2 seconds. Release, then stretch and cross over, with opposite limb on top. Repeat 2-4 times with one side, then repeat with baby's right arm and left leg.

Integration Stroke: Feather stroke or sweep the arms from shoulder to wrist. Repeat 2-3 times.

Touch Relaxation: Gently bounce the joint to decrease flexion and enhance relaxation.

Back

Resting Hands: Lay your hands on baby's back and watch for cues.

Back and Forth: Start with both hands together at the top of the back at right angles to the spine. Move hands back and forth in opposite directions, going down the back to the buttocks, then back up to the shoulders.

Open Book: With both hands together in the center of the back, push out to the sides, following the rib cage, as if you were flattening the pages of a book. Repeat 2-3 times.

Butterfly: Both hands begin at baby's side at the rib cage. Your right hand moves across the back diagonally to baby's right shoulder, then back to position at the side. Your left hand repeats the stroke across the back diagonally to baby's left shoulder and back. Repeat 2-3 times.

Short Swoop: Keep one hand stationary at the buttocks. With the other hand, begin at the neck and swoop down the back to the buttocks, keeping good contact with the full inside edge of your hand. Repeat 2-3 times.

Long Swoop: Keep one hand stationary at the feet. With the other hand, begin at the neck and swoop down the back past the buttocks to the feet, keeping good contact with the full inside edge of your hand. Repeat 2-3 times.

Back Circles: With fingertips, make small circles all around the back, larger circles on the buttocks.

Combing: With one hand open and fingers spread apart, firmly stroke baby's back downwards, starting at the neck and moving to the buttocks. Repeat 2-3 times, where each stroke is progressively lighter, ending in a **Feather Stroke**.

Face

DO NOT USE OIL ON BABY'S FACE

Resting Hands: Lay your hands on either side of baby's head and watch for cues.

Raindrops: Interlace your fingers on top of baby's head, then gently let them slides down the sides in a feathery stroke. Repeat 2-3 times.

Open Book: Using flat thumbs, stroke out from the center of the forehead

Relax the Eyes: With thumbs, stroke over closed eyes.

Nose and Cheek: With thumbs, push up on the bridge of the nose, then down across cheeks and outward.

Smiley Face: With thumbs, make an upward "smiley stroke" across upper lip. Repeat for lower lip.

Relax the Jaw: With fingertips, make small circles around jaw.

Ear Swoop: Using fingertips on either side of baby's head, go over the ears, around the back of the ears, and pull up under chin. AVOID IF BABY HAS EAR INFECTION.

Scalp Circles: With fingertips, make small gentle circles all over baby's head, scalp and back of neck.

End each session: Close with a containment hold. Thank your baby for a lovely session. Relax and center yourself.

Adapted from: *Infant Massage: A Handbook for Loving Parents* by Vimala McClure. New York: Bantam Books, 2000.