

Massage during labor

Massage is part of the birthing process in virtually all tribal cultures of the world. It can help you relax between contractions, reduce pain from tight muscles, and provide emotional support and encouragement. Because stress interferes with production of labor-inducing hormones, there is even evidence that massage can promote a speedier birth.

You are lucky, indeed, if you can arrange to have your professional massage therapist present at your labor. As an alternative, you may want to share with your birthing partner some massage techniques you find relaxing. Body N Soul Massage offers a pregnancy partner massage workshop for this.

Postpartum Massage

In the postpartum period, nature sets about undoing in eight weeks what it took nine months to create. Though it may be difficult, it is as important to care for yourself now as during your pregnancy.

Massage can help you handle the physical demands of caring for a newborn by reducing tension and increasing energy. If you are nursing, a relaxing massage can help since tension interferes with milk letdown. Psychologically, massage can nurture and comfort you whether or not you are experiencing postpartum “blues.”

When to schedule your first postpartum massage will depend on how your delivery went and what your healthcare provider advises. Talk with your massage therapist about what is right for you. Also ask about the infant massage workshops to learn how to massage your baby.

Is massage for you?

Massage cannot completely relieve the discomforts of pregnancy. After your massage, the extra weight is still there, the hormonal changes are still happening, and the stresses of your life are right where you left them.

However, regular massage during your pregnancy and postpartum weeks can relieve your physical symptoms and help you cope with stress.

Because it supports your physical health and vitality, massage can help you more easily adjust to the many changes in your body and the demands of your new life. Just taking time out for a massage can improve your outlook on life, making everything seem easier during this time of so many changes.



PREGNANCY MASSAGE



Body N Soul Massage

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*For Your Health
and Your Baby's*

Pregnancy is a time of changes, some eagerly embraced, and others less welcome. Your entire body adapts to the new life growing within you. You also face important life changes at home or at work, with family or friends. You need and deserve support, especially since two people now depend on your health and vitality.



Massage is a wonderful way to relax, increase your energy, and relieve discomfort during your pregnancy. The caring touch of massage can help you experience your changing body in a positive, accepting way. Massage can also be something special for you at a time when so much of your attention is on the baby to come.

Coping with stress and fatigue

Change, even welcome change, is stressful. The tension caused by stress, along with the physical changes of pregnancy, can sap your energy for coping day-to-day. A soothing massage can relieve physical and emotional tension, help you sleep better, and boost your energy.

Massage loosens tight muscles and calms the nervous system. It also increases circulation, bringing energy-producing nutrients to your cells and carrying away metabolic waste products that can make you feel listless. In a massage, you also become more aware of your body, which helps you recognize tension as it builds during the day and consciously release it.

Easing Aches and Pains

Massage can help with many of the aches and pains you experience as your body changes during pregnancy. Massage can:

- Relieve pain in your muscles and joints that must support added and redistributed weight;
- Increase flexibility, making it easier for your body to adjust to a changing shape;
- Ease constipation, gas and heartburn as general relaxation stimulates intestinal movement;
- Reduce excess fluid retention by gently pushing fluid into circulation where it can be eliminated;
- Slow the progress of varicose veins as enhanced circulation lowers pressure on bulging veins;
- Relieve headaches caused by tension, constipation, or buildup of metabolic waste products.

Is Massage Always Appropriate?

Massage is healthful and enjoyable during a normal pregnancy. However, because massage is not appropriate for some conditions, your massage therapist will want to know about your general health and your pregnancy. Give as much information as you can and always tell your massage therapist about any changes, even if you are not sure they are important. It is also very important to give your massage therapist a written note from your primary healthcare provider verifying that you are having a normal pregnancy and may receive massage. Remember, any condition you have now affects two people, one of whom is very small.

Your Comfort During A Massage

You will be comfortably supported on a specially-designed pregnancy pillow allowing you to lay on your stomach. You will be draped with a sheet everywhere except the part of your body being massaged. Ask for a lighter drape or less heat in the room if you are too hot. It is fine to interrupt your massage when you need to use the restroom.

Be sure to ask any questions you have about massage in general or your session in particular. Tell your massage therapist if anything feels uncomfortable or if there are areas that you would rather not have massaged (for example your abdomen). If you are not sure about something, be conservative and see how you feel after each massage.

Preparing for labor

Massage can help you prepare for the birthing process in at least two ways. First, through massage you can increase your awareness of tension in your body and learn how to consciously release it. You can also prepare for labor by practicing focus, breathing and relaxation techniques while a tender area is being massaged. The result will be increased confidence and control during labor.

