

Aromatic Infant Massage

By

Beverley Hawkins



Disclaimer

The information contained in the booklet is not meant to take the place of diagnosis and treatment by a qualified medical practitioner. Essential oils are to be used at your own discretion. The author disclaims any liability arising directly or indirectly from the use or misuse of the essential oils.

Copyright © 2000 Beverley Hawkins
Revised 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2007
All Rights Reserved
ISBN: 978-0-9810802-3-9

Contents

Introduction	4
Patch Test.....	6
Benefits of Baby Massage	7
First Routine	10
Full Baby Massage Routine (from 2 months of age).....	11
The Legs	11
The Stomach	12
The Chest	13
The Arms and Hands.....	14
The Face	15
The Back.....	16
Gentle Movements.....	17
Remember.....	18
Bibliography	19

Introduction



Infant massage is an integral part of life in India, both for its soothing effects and for its role in affectionate, nonverbal communication.

An Indian mother regularly massages everyone in her family and passes the techniques on to her daughters.

Anthropologist **Ashley Montague** has said, *“People don’t realize that communication, for a baby, the first communications it receives and the first language of its development, is through the skin. If only most people had realized this they would have all along given babies the kind of skin stimulation they require.”*

The sense of touch has been detected in human embryos less than eight weeks old. Nature begins the baby’s massage long before he/she is born. First they rock and floats and then their world surrounds them ever more closely. The gentle caress of the womb becomes stronger, gradually becoming the contractions that rhythmically squeeze and push, providing massive stimulation to the infant’s skin and organ systems.

Infants are accustomed to the tactile stimulation of constant movement. They need the reestablishment of those rhythms after they are born. In recent studies mothers in one group were asked to carry their infants for extra periods of time each day, in a soft front pack, in addition to carrying during feeding or crying. These infants were compared with infants normally held and carried; at six weeks the infants who received the extra touching and movement cried half as much as the others.

Adult behaviour and personality characteristics are shaped by the events of infancy and childhood. The baby’s whole body responds with emotion, with every feeling there is a muscular impression. These impressions accrue and are visible in the postures and movements of early childhood. Happy children are confident, resilient and optimistic and their emotional state is directly reflected in their physical being – upright, open, free and relaxed. **Dr Ashley Montague** has further said, *“The infant’s need for body contact is compelling. If that need is not adequately satisfied, even though all other needs are adequately met, he or she will suffer.”*

Most commercial baby oils are mineral oils. These are not readily absorbed into the body and tend to lie on top of the skin, blocking the pores and preventing the skin

from breathing. Using a pure cold-pressed vegetable, fruit or nut oil, like grapeseed, sweet almond and coconut oil to ensure that it is easily absorbed into the skin.

Babies have a highly developed sense of smell and only very small amounts of essential oil should be used around them.

Baby massage should be very light and for a very short period of time. For a baby massage you can add **one drop essential oil** in 30ml or 1 oz, of carrier oil.

Essential oils that are safe to use with baby include Roman chamomile, lavender and mandarin.

If you wish to add essential oil to the baby's bath, one drop of chamomile would be diluted in 5ml full fat milk and well blended into the bath water before bathing the baby.

For babies under six months add just one or two drops of Roman chamomile, lavender or mandarin to a vaporizer.

After six months you can add an extra drop. A baby's sense of smell is very acute and too much essential oil in the atmosphere could cause the baby to become restless and irritable instead of contented and happy.

If a baby is in pain due to colic, they could be soothed by a very gentle massage on the tummy with a massage oil made up of a teaspoon of carrier oil with 1 drop of chamomile or 1 drop of lavender.

Work around the abdomen with firm but gentle movements for about five minutes always in a clockwise direction. If baby does not respond to this you could try gently massaging the lower back.

Patch Test



Place one drop of carrier oil or lotion on the baby's breastbone, or behind its ear. Leave for 12 hours. If there is no adverse reaction, dilute one drop of the essential oil in 30 ml of carrier oil or lotion, and rub the mixture on the baby's breastbone or behind the ear.

Allow 12 hours for any reaction to show. An allergic reaction usually consists of red blotches, which will disappear within an hour or two.

Benefits of Baby Massage



There are a number of benefits for both parent and infant:

- It opens a totally new dimension in the relationship between parent and child.
- It provides a unique, meditative interval for direct physical contact and affectionate expression.
- It fosters more trust and confidence in parent and baby.
- It develops the parent's confidence in their ability to handle the baby.
- It induces a more relaxed state in the baby.
- It encourages muscular coordination.
- Creates ease throughout the baby's body.
- Calms the emotions and relieves trauma.
- Soothes the body and relieves pain.
- Provides an antidote for hypertension and anxiety.
- Helps promote sleep.
- Stimulates the baby's immune system and circulation.
- Aids digestion and elimination.
- Visibly improves the texture of the skin.
- Deep-cleanses the pores of the skin.
- Helps retain the skin's elasticity and resilient qualities.
- It is the perfect preparation for coordinate movement and mobility.
- It is a natural response to the baby's inherent need for tactile stimulation.
- It fosters fluid, relaxed movement.
- Provides a unique period of mutual pleasure.

Contra-indications to Massage



- Don't wake the baby up for a massage.
- Never massage a baby against his/her will.
- Always stop if the baby gets upset.
- Babies will probably not want to be massaged if they are not well.
- It is usually best to wait for forty-eight hours after immunization to see how it will affect the child. If they appear fine massage avoiding the injection site. After about a week, if it is no longer sensitive you can begin gently to massage the affected area to disperse any 'lumps'.

Before You Start



- Make sure your hands are clean and warm.
- Ensure that your nails or jewelry cannot scratch the baby's skin.
- The room should be warm and draught-free.
- The baby should not be hungry or full.
- You should be undisturbed for about an hour.
- You are sitting comfortably and relaxed.
- The baby is lying on a soft, clean, cotton surface, the combination of wool and oil may irritate the skin.
- You should keep the oil away from the baby's face as it can blur vision if it gets into the eyes.
- Always stop if the baby cries. You cannot force a baby to relax. This is a time for mutual pleasure, not a battle of wills.
- Check your breathing rhythm to assess your general state of relaxation. You need to be relaxed and stress free otherwise these feelings can be passed onto the child in the massage.

First Routine



1. In the beginning when the baby is tiny your touch should be very soft and gentle. As the baby grows stronger you can use a firmer touch.
2. Once the baby is happy to be undressed and enjoys being naked start to introduce a light massage lying next to the baby on a soft towel.
3. Baby is lying on its side facing you. With well-oiled relaxed hands, stroke down the side of the baby's body from shoulder over the arm, chest, hip and leg. Repeat for about a minute.
4. Now use a clockwise movement and stroke around the top of the baby's back. Repeat for about a minute.
5. Massage the back of the baby's hips and base of spine, again clockwise for about a minute. Now turn the baby over onto the other side and repeat these three steps.
6. If the baby is happy to lie on its back, stroke gently down the front of the body from the shoulder to the feet for a minute or two.
7. If the baby is happy to lie on its tummy, or belly to belly on yours, stroke gently hand over hand down the back, from shoulder to the base of the spine for about a minute or two.
8. Once the baby has become used to this ten-minute routine you can move on and introduce the full baby massage routine.

Full Baby Massage Routine (from 2 months of age)

Start with baby lying on its back facing you. Make sure your hands are well oiled.

The Legs



1. “Indian Milking”. Milk the leg with the inside edge of each hand, one following the other. The opposite hand gently holds the foot at the ankle. The outside hand should move over the buttock. The inside hand moves inside the thigh and up the leg to the foot.
2. “Squeeze and Twist”. Hold the leg as if you were holding a baseball bat. Now move hands up the leg together, turning in opposite directions, and squeezing slightly.
3. Push the bottom of the foot from heel to toe with your thumbs, one after the other.
4. Squeeze each toe.
5. With your forefinger pull back gently on the balls of the foot.
6. Press in with your thumbs all over the bottom of the foot.
7. Using your thumbs, push the top of the foot toward the ankle.
8. Make small circles all around the ankle with your thumbs.
9. “Swedish Milking”. Hold the foot with one and with the other milk the leg from ankle to hip.
10. “Rolling”. Roll the leg between your hands from knee to ankle.
11. After massaging each leg and foot, massage the buttocks with both hands and stroke the legs to the feet.

The Stomach



1. The “Water Wheel”. First make paddling strokes on the baby’s tummy, one hand following the other, as if you were scooping sand toward yourself, then hold up baby’s legs with your left hand and grasp the ankles. Then repeat the paddling motion, using the right hand only.
2. With thumbs flat at baby’s navel, push out to the sides. Be sure you use flat thumbs and do not poke.
3. “Sun Moon”. Your hands will circle around the baby’s tummy. Move in a clockwise direction. The left hand will make a full circle around the tummy, while the right hand will make an upside-down half-moon from your left to right. While the right hand is above, the left hand is below.
4. “Walking”. Using your fingertips, walk across baby’s tummy from your left to right. You may feel some gas bubbles moving under your fingers.

The Chest



1. “Open Book”. With both hands together at the center of the chest, push out to the sides, following the rib cage, as if you were flattening the pages of a book. Without lifting the hands from the body, bring them around in a heart-shaped motion to the center again.
2. “Butterfly”. To begin this movement, both hands are at the baby’s sides, at the bottom of the rib cage. The right hand moves across the chest diagonally, to the baby’s right shoulder, then, pulling gently at the shoulder, the hand moves down across the chest and back to its original position. Now the left hand moves across the chest diagonally, to the baby’s left shoulder, repeating the same motion. Follow one hand with the other, rhythmically crisscrossing the chest.

The Arms and Hands



1. "Pit Stop". First stroke the armpit a few times, massaging the important lymph nodes in that area. Some babies will resist having their arms massaged, and will protectively hug their arms close to their chest. Rather than pulling outward on the baby's arm, massage it toward the direction in which it is holding it. Support it in protecting itself, massaging the arm in its "hug" position. When the baby begins to feel relaxed and supported, he/she will begin to relax his/her arms and "give" them to you to massage. "Indian Milking". Holding the baby's wrist with your left hand, milk the arm with your right hand, starting at the shoulder and moving to the hand. Immediately follow with your left hand and then the right, and so on. Use the inside edge of your hand, at the point where the thumb connects with the index finger.
2. "Squeeze and Twist". Hold hands together around baby's arm at the shoulder (as if you were holding a baseball bat). Then move hands in opposite directions, back and forth, from the shoulder to the hand, gently squeezing as you do.
3. Open baby's hand with your thumbs. Roll each tiny finger between your index finger and thumb.
4. Stroke the top of the hand.
5. Massage the wrist, making small circles all around.
6. "Swedish Milking". Milk the arm from the hand to the shoulder, with one hand following the other.
7. "Rolling". Roll the arm between your hands from shoulder to hand.

The Face



1. With the flat part of the fingers, start at the middle of the forehead and push out to the sides, as if flattening the pages of a book.
2. With the thumbs, gently press lightly over the eyes.
3. With the thumbs, push up on the bridges of the nose, and then down across the cheeks.
4. With the thumbs, make a smile on the upper lip and then on the lower lip.
5. Using your fingertips, make small circles around the jaw.
6. Using the fingertips of both hands, go over the ears, around the back of the ears, and pull up under the chin.

The Back



The back is often a favorite with babies and toddlers alike. To massage the back turn baby onto his/her tummy, either on the floor, or on your lap with your legs outstretched.

1. “Back and Forth”. Start with both hands together at the top of the 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 again.
2. Keep the right hand still at the buttocks. Now beginning at the neck, the left hand swoops down to meet the right hand at the buttocks.
3. Hold up the legs with your right hand. Your left hand will repeat the “swooping” motion, this time moving all the way down the legs to the ankles.
4. Make small circles all around the back with your fingertips.
5. With your right hand open and fingers spread apart, the fingers “comb” the back, starting at the neck and moving to the buttocks. Each stroke will be progressively lighter, ending with a “feather touch”.

Gentle Movements



Remember that these are simple movements that gently stretch baby's arms and legs, massage the stomach and pelvis and align the spine. Repeat four or five times.

1. Holding baby's arms at the wrist, stretch them out to the sides, then cross them at his chest twice.
2. Hold one arm at the wrist, and the opposite leg at the ankle. Gently bring the arm down to the crotch and the foot up toward the shoulder, then cross the leg and arm so that the arm goes to the outside of the leg. Now stretch them out in opposite directions. Repeat with opposite arm and leg. Note: With an older child, bring the knee, rather than the foot, up to cross with the arm.
3. Holding the legs at the ankles cross them at the stomach four times, then stretch them out straight.
4. Push the knees together up into the tummy, then stretch them out straight. If baby resists straightening his legs, shake them gently and encourage him to relax.

Remember



1. Keep your hands relaxed.
2. Turn off your thoughts.
3. Check your breathing is relaxed.
4. Replenish your oil frequently.
5. Do not continue if your baby cries.
6. Look into your baby's eyes.
7. Sing and/or talk to your baby.
8. You can stop at any time, return and continue where you left off.
9. You do not have to complete the whole routine.

This should be fun for both you and your baby!!



Bibliography

Vimela Schneider McClure, *Infant Massage, A Handbook for Loving Parents*, Bantam Books, New York, NY, 1979, 1982, 2989

Peter Walker, *Baby Massage*, St. Martin's Griffin, New York, NY, 1996



Beverley Hawkins, Registered Aromatherapist®-RA®, EOT®, Di.SPE., BFRP, owns the West Coast Institute of Aromatherapy, an aromatherapy school which offers one the opportunity to take home study aromatherapy courses.

Beverley has many years of experience as an alternative health care professional. She is a Registered Aromatherapist, massage therapist, reflexologist, Reiki master and educator. In addition to teaching she also maintains a private practice. Beverley is a member of a number of Aromatherapy Associations including AIA, NAHA (in the United States), CFA, BCAA, (in Canada)



The West Coast Institute of Aromatherapy offers you the chance to go to aromatherapy school - at home!

Become an aromatherapist from the comfort of your own home at your own pace!

Visit our web site at: www.westcoastaromatherapy.com