

early Therapy In Perinatal Stroke

# Baby Massage

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## Baby Massage

**Baby massage is a wonderful way of helping your baby become aware of his or her body.**



**Baby massage involves gently stroking your baby using smooth rhythmical movements.**

**Applying gentle pressure to the muscles and nerves gives your baby increased awareness of his or her body parts.**

**By focussing the massage mostly on baby's **LEFT** side you can help your baby develop increased awareness of that side of his or her body.**



**Using a combination of touch with gentle pressure, soft lighting, music and aromas baby massage can provide your child with a very valuable multisensory experience, which will aid your baby's general development.**



**Best of all it helps you and your baby create a close bond.**

## Tips for Baby Massage

We suggest giving more massage to baby's **LEFT** side to increase your baby's awareness of that side of their body.

### Find the right time

Allow 20 - 30 minutes for each massage and try to do this every day.

Ideally your baby should be between feeds and not too sleepy.

After a bath and just before bedtime may help your baby to relax ready for sleep.



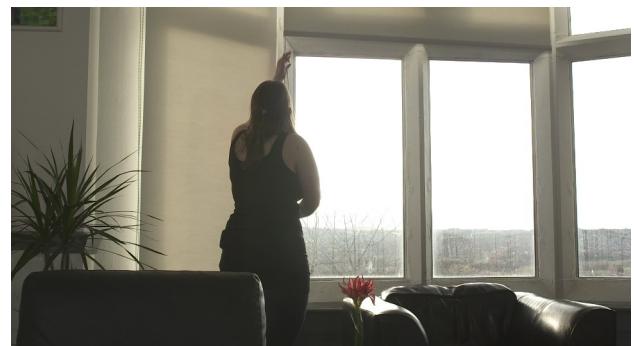
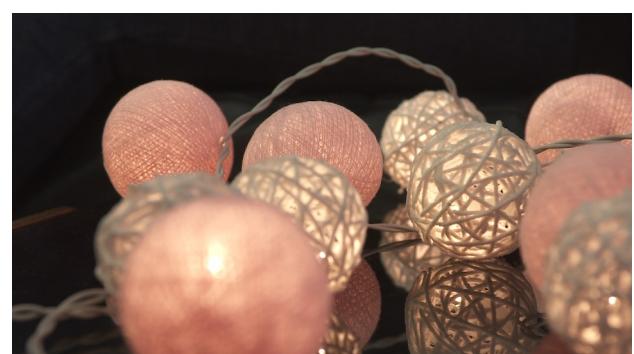
### Find the right place

You need a warm room, free from draughts and distractions.

Turn off your mobile phone and the TV or radio.

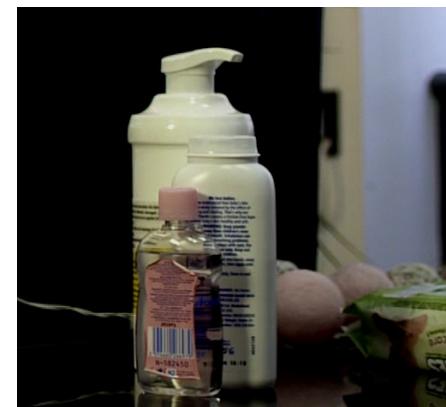
Lower the lighting levels by one or more of the following:

- turning off bright lights
- using a table lamp only
- using fairy lights
- pulling the curtains or blinds across the window, either fully or just partially



## Gather everything you need

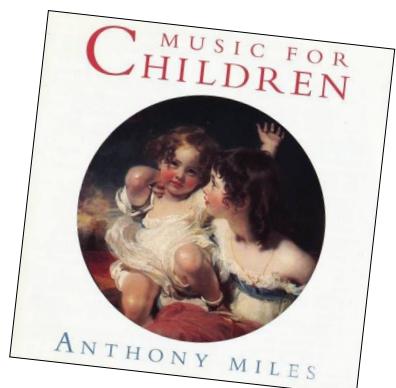
- A soft mat and/or towel for baby to lie on
- Clothes for baby to wear afterwards
- Music
- Oil or lotion (optional)



After your baby is one month old baby oil or lotion can be used to help your hands glide easily over baby's skin ([see safety note](#))



Playing gentle music, talking softly, humming or singing quietly will give reassurance to your baby while you are massaging.



There are a number of music compilations designed to be relaxing for babies. They are available for download and/or to buy on CD.

**SAFETY NOTE:** Baby oil or lotion should not be used until your baby is at least a month old.

For any other oils or massage products you should first check that they are safe to use with babies.

Some products and ingredients may be too harsh for your baby's delicate skin.

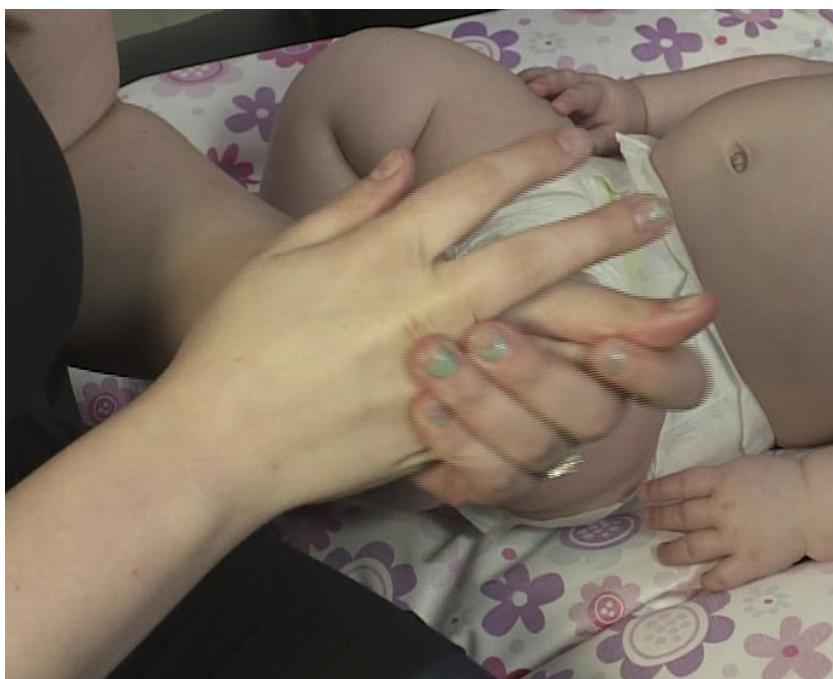
Always test products on a small area of baby's skin and leave for 30 minutes to check for signs of allergy.

## Prepare baby

Lie your baby on his or her back on the mat so that any lights or the window are to baby's **LEFT** side.



Undress baby, either completely or you can leave his or her nappy on.



If you are using oil or lotion ensure your hands are warm before applying it and rub your hands together to warm the oil or lotion before touching baby.

**SAFETY NOTE:** If in doubt about how to massage consult a health professional for further advice.

Remember to remove any watches, rings and bracelets which you may be wearing.

**When massaging baby you should apply firm pressure which is gentle enough so as not to cause pain or discomfort to your baby.**



**Very light touch may feel unpleasant to your baby. Use slow, calming movements and never press on baby's tummy.**

**Throughout the massage carefully watch your baby's reactions, give reassurance when necessary and stop if baby becomes upset.**

**Some babies may need short massages to begin with.**

**You can gradually build up the time over the next days and weeks.**



**You can spend more or less time on each step depending on whether your baby is enjoying the massage or not.**



Here is a step by step guide to giving your baby a massage.



### Step 1 Begin at baby's head

Gently cradle baby's head and massage the forehead with your thumbs using small circular movements.



Then stroke both sides of baby's face, moving down to the chin.

Repeat 5 times.

**SAFETY NOTE:** Take great care to keep oils and lotions away from baby's eyes and mouth.

### Step 2 Slide your hands down baby's arms

Stroke along the length of both arms, from the shoulders to the hands.

Repeat 5 times.



### Step 3 Slide your hands down baby's body



**Stroke both sides of baby's body from the shoulders to the hips.....**



**.....and continue all the way down both of baby's legs to the feet.**



**Repeat 5 times.**

## Step 4 Baby's LEFT arm

Gently hold of baby's **LEFT** hand. Apply gentle pressure as you slide your other hand down baby's **LEFT** arm.



As your hand moves down from the shoulder wrap it around baby's upper arm applying gentle pressure and move your hand all the way down the arm and hand to the finger tips.

As your hand approaches baby's wrist begin with the other hand at the shoulder again so that as one hand is approaching the wrist the other hand is beginning at the shoulder.



Repeat 10 times.

## Step 5 Now take baby's LEFT hand

Gently massage the palm of baby's LEFT hand using small circular movements of your thumb.



Then using the same gentle pressure, stroke along the length of each finger from the base to the tip.



Now open up the web space between the thumb and index finger, and gently stretch baby's thumb out.

Spend around 1 - 2 minutes massaging baby's hand in this way.

## Step 6 Now roll your baby on to his or her **right** side

This position allows you to massage the **LEFT** side of baby's body.

Encourage baby's two hands to come together to touch palm to palm or hands to mouth while you massage the **LEFT** side.



Use one hand for support to keep baby lying on the **right** side.



Use the same gentle pressure to stroke down the **LEFT** side of baby's trunk from just below the shoulder, down to the hip....



....and all the way down the **LEFT** leg to baby's toes.

Repeat 10 times.

## Step 7 Gently roll baby back on to his or her back

This position allows you to use both of your hands to massage baby's **LEFT** leg.

Wrap your hand around baby's **LEFT** thigh and apply gentle pressure as you move your hand all the way down to the toes.



As your hand approaches baby's **LEFT** ankle begin with the other hand at the top of the thigh again. So as one hand is approaching the ankle the other hand is beginning again at the thigh.

Repeat 10 times.

## Step 8 Massage baby's **LEFT** foot and toes

Use small circular movements and keep baby's ankle bent as you do this. Only massage the heel and the ball of the feet but take care to avoid the arch of the foot because this may feel unpleasant to baby.



Spend about 1 - 2 minutes massaging baby's foot in this way.

## Step 9 Begin at baby's head

**Gently cradle baby's head and massage the forehead with your thumbs using small circular movements.**



**Then stroke both sides of baby's face, moving down to the chin.**

**Repeat 5 times.**

## Step 10 Slide your hands down both of baby's arms at the same time

**Use gentle pressure to stroke along the length of both arms, from the shoulders to the hands.**

**Repeat 5 times.**



## Step 11 Slide your hands down baby's body

**Stroke both sides of baby's body from the shoulders to the hips and continue all the way down both of baby's legs to the feet.**

**Repeat 5 times.**



**To finish:**

**Hopefully your baby will now be in a relaxed and calm state.**

**If the massage is just before bedtime, dress your baby and put him or her to bed quietly.**

**If the massage is during the day you may need to gradually increase the light so as not to startle your baby. Do this by opening the curtains slowly or by gradually turning on more lights.**

**Remember that sometimes babies may need short massages to begin with, gradually building up the time over the next few massages.**

