



## ***Pre-natal & Postpartum Massage Therapy***

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### **What is Pre-natal massage?**

Pre-natal massage has risen to prominence over the last decade, along with society's increasing awareness of personal health and wellness. Today it's considered an integral part of an intelligent approach to pregnancy.

Just like regular massage, it's a therapeutic workout that loosens the muscles and joints, improves the circulation, relieves fatigue and, in aiding the body, also benefits the mind and spirit. The difference is that prenatal massage is performed by a trained specialist and targeted to the unique needs of mothers-to-be.

### **What are the benefits of Pre-natal massage?**

- Reduces stress and promotes relaxation.
- Reduces and alleviates neck, back, and joint pain caused by posture, muscle weakness, tension, extra weight, or imbalance.
- Relieves muscle spasms, cramps, and fibrosis.
- Alleviates stress on weight-bearing joints and musculo-fascial structures (sacro-iliac joint, mid-back and lumbar spine, hips).
- Combats tension, fatigue, and headaches, soothe nerves to help with sleep problems, and possibly reduce blood pressure through relaxation and stress reduction.
- Increases blood and lymph circulation and supports the physiological process of gestation, by supporting the work of the heart, increasing cellular respiration, reducing edema, and contributing to sympathetic nervous system sedation. Reduces the possibility of problems with swelling, varicose veins, and leg cramps.
- Helps maintain skin elasticity to ease stretch marks and uncomfortable tightness.
- Assists with the management of digestive complaints such as constipation, gas, nausea, and indigestion.

- Encourages deeper, easier breathing.
- Enhances self-esteem and self image, helping the pregnant woman feel more at home in her changing body.
- Develops the sensory awareness and relaxation necessary to be an active and responsive participant in the birth experience. (In order to birth, the musculature of the legs, back, abdomen, and pelvic floor must release to allow the uterus to labor with no resistance).
- Provides a pregnant woman with the experience and model of loving, nurturing touch that encourages her to touch her baby lovingly.

### **What should you Expect?**

A thorough massage session takes at least one hour, during which you will be comfortably supported in a side-lying position and draped for your comfort. Only the body part being worked on is exposed. The room will be quiet and comfortable. It is fine to interrupt the massage to use the restroom, however, for maximum comfort, avoid heavy eating and drinking for two hours before your session.

### **When should you start?**

The best time to start is after the first trimester, when the greatest hormonal and physical changes have taken place and morning sickness is abating. The frequency is up to the individual - typically anywhere between once a week and once a month.

### **Any Precautions?**

Many massage therapists do not recommend massage in the first trimester. Also, women with certain health conditions may not be able to have pregnancy massage. It's best to consult your doctor before undergoing any therapeutic massage.

### **Post Partum Massage**

Postpartum massage focuses on helping to restore the body to its pre-pregnancy condition and to address the demands of breast feeding and of course, the physical and emotional stresses of carrying and caring for a newborn.

Massage therapy helps to speed a woman's recovery by restoring tone to the muscular and connective tissue, realigns body weight to its original distribution, tones overstretched areas of the skin, increases circulation which assists in the removal of excess fluids, reduces swelling and nourishes the body.

As with all massage, postpartum massage eases muscle tension and stress from the overall responsibilities that correspond with caring for a newborn. Sleep deprivation, hormonal changes, and postpartum blues can all be reduced through massage

**Post Partum Massage may help in these ways:**

- Re-establishes pelvis structural integrity
- Supports healthy lactation
- Reduces stress hormones
- Facilitates the healing of bladder disorders, post-episiotomy soreness, and Cesarean Section
- Relieves neck/shoulder/back pain
- Supports healthy emotional state
- Aids in maternal bonding

**Some Useful Articles on Pregnancy Massage:**

<http://www.pregnancytoday.com/articles/comfort-in-pregnancy/the-art-of-prenatal-massage-2189/>

[http://www.massagetherapy.com/articles/index.php/article\\_id/44/Pregnancy-Massage](http://www.massagetherapy.com/articles/index.php/article_id/44/Pregnancy-Massage)

<http://www.babiestoday.com/articles/moms-health/after-baby-massage-187/>