

**HUGGIES**  
BRAND

# Baby Massage Guide



endorsed by  
**Plunket**



Taking time out to massage your baby can be a gift for both of you. It is time to focus on each other in an uninterrupted way.

## Benefits

- ★ Allows 'time out' from the stresses of the day for both parents and baby and gives an opportunity for one to one bonding time.
- ★ Massage stimulates the production of certain 'feel good' hormones including endorphins and oxytocin.
- ★ Endorphins released with massage are a natural source of pain relief for the body.
- ★ Massage enhances your baby's awareness of their own body (e.g. size and location of body parts).
- ★ Some babies hold their bodies more tightly while others are 'laid back' and even overly relaxed. When we approach massage in a holistic manner we tend to add more stimulus for the 'laid back' baby and a more slow 'deliberate' approach for the 'tense' baby.
- ★ Massage supports maturation of the nervous system and in turn assists brain/body communication.
- ★ Babies who have had invasive procedures, separation from family, a difficult birth or other event may carry anxiety about/or expressed through touch. Focused time 'listening' to your baby and approaching the massage with respect and sensitivity can help to heal fear and rebuild trust and enjoyment of the 'skin' they live in.
- ★ Through mum or dad jostling and stretching baby's limbs your baby more readily learns to do this for themselves and this is a great way to release tension from the body.
- ★ Massage supports a healthy immune system and promotes good circulation of blood and lymph around the body.
- ★ Giving massage to your baby helps them to discern what is 'safe' touch and therefore to recognise, as they are growing up, what is not.
- ★ Massage may facilitate a peaceful sleep.
- ★ Massage is a great way to let your baby know they are loved and cherished.

Information contributed by Anne White – Nurse, Massage Therapist and IAIM trained Infant Massage Instructor  
This brochure is intended as a short guide to baby massage. For more detailed information on infant massage visit [www.huggies.co.nz](http://www.huggies.co.nz)

You can contact the New Zealand Chapter of International Association of Infant Massage (IAIM) by visiting [www.nz.iaim.net](http://www.nz.iaim.net)

# Preparation

- ★ Find a space on the floor in a warm room.
- ★ Place a changing mat or yoga mat and cover with a towel. Have a spare towel or blanket available to wrap baby in if necessary.
- ★ Turn off your mobile and let the answer phone take messages.
- ★ Make sure you are dressed comfortably in light clothing and avoid having long nails or wearing any jewellery that could graze your baby's skin while massaging.
- ★ Put on some soothing music that you and your baby will enjoy.
- ★ A warm bath before commencing massage may enhance relaxation – particularly helpful if it is before the night time sleep.
- ★ When you settle your baby on the massage surface you have created for them, sit with your legs either side and draw them in close. This will help them feel secure and assist eye contact.
- ★ Ask your baby if they would like a massage. Let them see you open the bottle of oil or lotion adding a small amount to the palm of your hand and warming it ready for massage.
- ★ Including your baby in the preparation for massage helps build trust and partnership and also makes it easier at subsequent massage times for them to be ready and looking forward to what is coming.
- ★ If your child has special needs or a medical condition please consult your health professional before using this massage guide.



## legs and feet



### Milking leg

Hold the leg with one hand and wrap your other hand around the thigh. Pull through to ankle. Repeat, alternating the hand that holds and the hand that strokes so that you have a 'milking' effect.



### Balls of fingers on Sole of foot

Cradling the foot in both hands use the balls of your thumbs to 'walk' over the sole with even pressures.



### Stroking upper Side of foot

Still cradling the foot stroke the upper side, from toes upward, with the side of your thumb. Repeat.



### Embracing foot

Embrace the foot and pause. "This is your foot!"



### Rolling leg

With your fingers together place your hands either side of the thigh and rotate all the way to the ankle (giving the effect of 'rolling out' – great for play too!). Repeat.



### Embracing leg

Embrace the leg with both hands and pause. "This is your leg!"

Repeat  
sequence on  
other  
leg/foot

## abdomen



### Stroke clockwise

With fingers together apply sweeping clockwise strokes circling the abdomen first with one hand and then the other. Make sure your hands are below the ribs at all times and avoid pressure over the bladder. **Note: baby sucking = her showing her comfort and enjoyment.**



### Fold knees into tummy

Fold knees into abdomen and hold for 10 seconds then release knees, cradle legs and give a little jiggle to loosen up. Repeat. **Note: hand in mouth = a happy and relaxed baby.**



### Rest hands on tummy

Rest hands on tummy and pause. "This is your tummy!" You may want to try the abdominal massage with each nappy change if your baby is prone to colic or constipation.

## chest



### Centre chest

With fingers together, place hands on centre of chest then smooth outwards until hands are aligned with armpits on each side of chest. Repeat. **Note: baby's hands hold yours = comfort, participation and joy!**



### Smooth outwards



### Hands on chest

Rest hands on chest and pause. "This is your chest!"

arms



**Milking arm**

Hold the arm with one hand and wrap your other hand around the upper arm. Pull through to wrist. Repeat, alternating the hand that holds and the hand that strokes so that you have a 'milking' effect.



**Rolling arm**

With your fingers together place your hands on either side of the upper arm and rotate down to wrist (giving the effect of 'rolling out' - great for play too!). Repeat.



**Embrace arm**

Embrace the arm with both hands and pause. "This is your arm!"



**Embrace hand**

Embrace the hand with both hands and pause. "This is your hand!"

Repeat  
sequence on  
other  
arm/hand

face



**Cup hands over face and peek-a-boo!**

Cup your hands over the face then move them apart with a smoothing action over the brow as you greet your baby. "Peek-a-boo!"



**Circles on the spot**

With your fingertips apply moderate pressure over cheeks, doing circles on the spot. You can also repeat this action behind the ears.



**Cup head**

Cup the face with both hands and pause. "This is your face!"

## back



### Swooping head to foot

With both hands cradling the crown of the head, fingers together, stroke all the way to the toes. "See how long you are!" Repeat.



### Embrace back

With one hand on the back of the head and one on the trunk embrace and pause. "This is your back!"