

# the power of touch

Take time to bond with your baby and massage your way to calm and contentment. By Lyndee Savage.

**Infant massage** can help your baby to feel relaxed and happy, and encourage her to self-settle. It's also a positive and rewarding way for you to learn about this brand new little person.

New parents can feel frustrated and stressed when they don't understand what their baby is trying to communicate to them, and often find that certain times of the day are more difficult than others. Determining whether your baby is hungry, tired, wet or stressed can be daunting at first, but the beauty of massage is that it helps you to understand how your baby is feeling and therefore, what she needs from you. It's a wonderfully calming experience for both the parent and baby!

If you're unfamiliar with infant massage techniques, you may choose to attend classes with a Certified Infant Massage Instructor (CIMI) who will help you to communicate with your baby through baby massage techniques. You'll be given the tools to practice what's known as "positive touch" that can initiate some intimate and precious moments with your baby.

## Tips for a great massage

You'll soon learn to recognise cues indicating whether your baby is ready for massage.

- Find a comfortable place where there are no distractions.
- Turn on the answering machine.
- Make sure the room is warm.
- Use soft lighting and gentle music to help your baby relax.
- Make sure your hands are warm.
- Apply your massage strokes in a gentle, rhythmical, way.

## What to use

If you're unsure what type of cream or oil to use during a massage, opt for cold-pressed vegetable oils such as jojoba, sunflower, sweet almond or an organic oil, unless there is an underlying skin condition that warrants use of another product. These oils are safe for baby and replenish the skin. Always do an allergy test patch on your baby's inner wrist before using any oil – any reaction will occur after 30 minutes.

## Join a class

Infant massage classes are fun and social. They're a great opportunity to find support from other mothers in a safe environment, and they can also help to reduce the symptoms of postnatal depression. **BB**

■ To find a class near you, contact Lyndee Savage, President of the International Association of Infant Massage (IAIM) Australia on (02) 6292 1032 or visit [www.iaim-us.org](http://www.iaim-us.org)

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## 5 REASONS TO MASSAGE YOUR BABY

- Improves baby's sleep and wake states
- Relieves colic and tummy discomfort
- Improves digestion
- Helps you to understand your baby's body cues
- Improves brain and body communication.

