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**Benefits of Infant Massage for Both  
Child and Caregiver**

Catherine McDowell  
OTR/L, LMBT, YT,  
RYT-500

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**Course Objectives**

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As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

- 1) By the end of this course, participants will be able to recognize foundational knowledge of infant massage and will be able to identify three populations who would benefit from infant massage.
- 2) By the end of this course, participants will be able to describe the therapeutic effects of infant massage.
- 3) By the end of this course, participants will be able to list three infant massage strokes with 30% competency

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**Infant massage is the process of rubbing an infant's muscles and stroking the infant in a manner specifically designed for them.**

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- ❖ Ancient India as an aspect of Ayurvedic Medicine.
- ❖ Document use in China as early as 1700's.
- ❖ South Asia daily massage by mothers.
- ❖ Introduced to the US in the 1970's.
- ❖ Complimentary Alternative Medicine.

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## **Benefits**

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### **Massage Effects:**

- Circulatory and digestive systems
- Hormonal and immune systems
- Coordination and balance
- Learning and concentration
- Muscular development and growth
- Mind and body awareness

### **Infant Massage Helps Relieve:**

- Gas and colic
- Constipation and elimination
- Growing pains and muscular tension
- Teething discomfort
- Cramps

### **Relaxation Response:**

- Improved sleep patterns
- Increased flexibility and muscle tone
- Regulation of behavioral states
- Being calm and being able to calm themselves
- Reduction in stress hormones

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## Special Needs

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There are additional benefits that can be derived from infant massage to elicit positive outcomes for premature infants and disadvantaged mothers.

They include:

- Cross-cultural studies show that babies who are held, massaged, carried, rocked, and breast fed grow into less aggressive and violent adults who demonstrate a greater degree of compassion and cooperation.
- Recent research demonstrates benefits for premature infants, children with asthma, diabetes, and certain skin disorders.
- Mothers with postpartum depression have shown improvement after starting infant massage.
- Teenage mothers have shown improved bonding behavior and interactions with their infants.

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## Participants

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- ❖ First choice to massage the baby is the mother, father, grandparent, or guardian. Equally important are the people who care for children outside the home such as, nurses on neonatal intensive care units (NICU) that work with premature babies and those who work with the disabled.

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## Areas of intervention

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- ❖ Well Baby
- ❖ Mothers & Fathers
- ❖ Grandparents & Caregivers
  
- ❖ Developmentally Delayed
- ❖ Substance Use Disorder
- ❖ At Risk Populations: Homeless, Mental Health, Teen Mothers, Foster Care Providers & .....

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## Setting the Space

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**Temperature**

It is important that the room in which you are massaging is warm and comfortable for the baby during massage.

**Lighting**

Incorporating lighting in order to set the atmosphere.

**Sound**

Loud, sudden noises can cause young babies to startle and not fully relax.

**Space and equipment**

Gather the supplies you need and set the massage spaces prior to starting, so that you don't need to interrupt the massage.

**Position**

Choose the position that is comfortable for the caregiver and infant.

**When to massage**

The best time to massage a baby is when they are in what is known as the 'Quiet alert stage' (shortly before bed)

**Singing/talking**

It is important to model and encourage talking or singing nursery rhymes to the baby.



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# The Strokes

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'I'  
'LOVE'  
'YOU'

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## Caregiver Benefits

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- Provides all of the essential indicators of intimate parent-infant bonding and attachment: eye-to-eye, touch, voice, smell, movement, and thermal regulation.
- Encourages pre-verbal communication between caregiver and infant
- Helps parents feel more confident and competent in caring for their children
- Helps parents to ease their stress if they are a working parent and must be separated from their children for extended periods during the day
- Provides parents with one-on-one quiet time or interactive play with their children
- Creates a regular time of intimacy between parent and child.
- Increases parents' self-esteem by reinforcing and enhancing their skills as parents, and validates their role
- Gives parents the tools for understanding their child's unique rhythms and patterns
- Teaches parents how to read their infants' cues and recognize their states of awareness
- Gives parents a special way to interact with their children who may be hospitalized. Helps parents feel a greater part of the healing process
- Daily massage helps parents to unwind and relax
- Provides a positive way for fathers to interact with their infants/children
- Promotes social and emotional development furthering self-awareness and self-regulation

Read more: <http://www.healthofchildren.com/-/K/Infant-Massage.html#ixzz44fAu7gWo>

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## Bonding

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- ❖ Bonding has been defined as a “unique relationship between two people that is specific and endures through time.”
- ❖ Delayed Bonding.
- ❖ Massage may be helpful in encouraging the connection between caregiver and child as children grow.
- ❖ Father who provides infant massage.

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### **Contraindications to infant massage**

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- Acute infections
  - Recent Surgery
  - Fever
  - Open Sores
  - Sickness
  - Less than 72 hours after immunization
  - Diarrhea
  - Inflammation
  - Undiagnosed lumps and bumps
  - Jaundice
  - Contagious Disease
  - Meningitis
  - Serious Skin Complaints
  - Recent Hemorrhage
  - Varicose Veins
  - Childhood Leukemia
- The treatment of eczema can be contraindicated if the eczema is weeping or infected.

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## **Continuing Education/Training**

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- ❖ **Infant Massage USA**  
<http://www.infantmassageusa.org/become-an-educator/training-information/>
- ❖ **International Association of Infant Massage**  
<http://www.iaim.net>
- ❖ **International Association of Loving Touch**  
<http://www.lovingtouch.com>

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## References

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- See more at:

<http://www.unionleader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20150426/NEWS12/150429358#sthash.P6CGhgIz.dpuf>

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✦ (Porter, 1984, 1985, 1987; Porter & Knicely, 1985; Porter, Youssef, Shaaban, & Ibrahim, 1992).

[http://mchb.hrsa.gov/research/documents/finalreports/porter\\_r40\\_mc\\_1063\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://mchb.hrsa.gov/research/documents/finalreports/porter_r40_mc_1063_final_report.pdf) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, report, . SAMHSA newsletter on substance abuse and mental health, 2013, Department of Health and Human Services, Rockville (MD)

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3 J. Hepworth, Prominence of withdrawal symptoms in polydrug-exposed infants, *J Perinat Neonatal Nurs*, Vol. 14, Iss. 4, 2001, 46-60

4 S. Choi, J. Ryan, Co-occurring problems for substance abusing mothers in child welfare matching services to improve family reunification, *Child Youth Serv Rev*, Vol. 29, Iss. 11, 2007, 1395-1410

5 K. Lutz, C. Burnson, A. Hane, A. Samuelson, J. Poehlmann, Parenting stress, social support, and mother-child interactions in families of multiple and singleton toddlers born preterm, *Fam Relat*, Vol. 61, Iss. 4, 2012, 642-656

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## Questions?

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❖ Email:

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