

## **Before starting a massage session, listen to or read the Relaxation Exercise.**

Begin by undressing the baby and get into a comfortable position for massaging, something that provides enough support for parent's back, but gives secure support for baby.

Sit crossed legged with baby on mat in front of you; pillow in lap with baby on pillow and lean against a wall.

Start with a touch – gentle touch to head, to make initial contact, and let baby know that something is going to happen.

Swish the oil between your hands, loud enough so that baby can hear it.

Show them your open hands, and ask for permission – can I massage you now?

Wait for baby's answer and then begin.

### **Working with the Feet**

Most babies prefer this since it is non-invasive and gradual. Working with the feet helps with balance and posture as baby spreads her toes and opens up her feet. Working with the feet can be very soothing when baby isn't feeling well. Working the legs helps to promote co-ordination; strengthens the lower back; maintains flexibility of knees and ankles and hips; and removes or prevents stiffness in muscles and joints. Babies start out very flexible – they can suck their own toes. Babies that stand more than they sit are prone to hip flexibility. If they are 'standers', the hip routine is especially important to maintain flexibility.

### **Routine – should take 2-3 minutes each side**

#### **Use the example pictures for reference**

1. With well oiled hands, begin to knead and rub the tops and soles of baby's foot with your thumbs (about 20 seconds)
2. Roll each toe between forefinger and thumb, gently separate the toes so that they fan out slightly (about 20 seconds)
3. Using both index fingers, apply steady pressure at the base of the toes and at the heel, where the arch begins (20 seconds)
4. Press in with your thumbs all over the bottom of the foot (20 seconds)
5. Make small circles all around the ankle with your thumbs (20 seconds)
6. Pull the whole foot, hand over hand, through the palms (20 seconds)

7. Flex the ankle and extend the heel by turning the foot outward with one hand while rubbing the calf with the other (about 20 seconds)
8. Repeat on other foot
9. Hold both legs by the ankles and loosen them by gently bicycling them (20 seconds)
10. North to South Milking – pull the baby's leg through well oiled palms, downward in a hand over hand movement from thigh all the way down to the feet (repeat 4-5 times)
11. Twisting – hold the baby leg with both hands as if you are holding a baseball bat. Move hands in opposite direction, in unison, from thigh to foot, squeezing slightly (repeat 4-5 times)
12. South to North Milking – pull the baby's leg through well oiled hands, from ankle to hip, one hand following the other, using the whole hand. (repeat 4-5 times)
13. Rolling – roll the leg between two hands, from knee to ankle (repeat 4-5 times)
14. Clap the soles of the feet together, with the knees bent outward (about 20 seconds)
15. Using your right hand, hold the baby's right foot on her tummy, with her knee bent outward. Hold this position with your right hand while you gently massage her right buttock with your left hand (about 20 seconds), then gently and slowly shake her leg straight. (about 10 seconds)
16. Repeat with the other leg.
17. Hold both of the baby's legs at the ankles, perform a few bicycles and clap the feet together. Push both feet gently into the baby's belly.
18. Gently shake both legs, straightening and bending them (repeat 4-5 times)
19. Stroke down the front of baby's legs, using the weight of your relaxed hands (repeat 4-5 times)
20. After both feet and legs have been done, gently cup and massage the buttocks with both hands, and then lightly sweep down the tops of both legs, to let the baby know that you are moving to another area, or that you are done for this session.