

# Benefits of Massage During Pregnancy

During pregnancy, a woman's body undergoes tremendous changes. Some of the by-products of these changes result in a number of uncomfortable conditions. Massage during pregnancy helps relieve many of these complaints through the positive physiological effects of soft tissue manipulation.

The overall goals for pregnancy massage are to help minimize stress, promote relaxation, and prepare the muscles for child birth. In addition, there are specific techniques and movements which are designed to help relieve particular conditions, including the following:

- Low back pain
- Swelling of hands and feet
- Headaches
- Calf cramps
- Insomnia
- Sciatic Pain
- Sinus congestion

## How Pregnancy Massage Helps

Massage involves manipulation of the soft tissues, and is the physical movement, stroking, and stretching of muscles, tendons, ligaments, and other soft tissue. One major physiological effect of this manipulation is an increase of blood circulation to the muscles being



manipulated. This results in more oxygen availability to these tissues, which then encourages the cellular enlargement that occurs during pregnancy. The heat of the massage also relaxes the muscles. Some other major physiological benefits of pregnancy massage include improved circulation, reduced stress, and increased relaxation.

### Precautions

In most instances, pregnancy massage is safe. However, there are some contraindications that your massage therapist should be aware of. If you have any medical conditions, your primary health care provider should be consulted before you receive a massage. The following are some contraindications where massage should be postponed:

- Heavy vaginal discharge
- Pre-eclampsia
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Compromised immune system
- Bleeding or bruising
- Fever
- Abdominal pain
- Unexplained dizziness
- Low platelet count
- Unexplained pain

### Considerations

Position: The best position for a pregnant woman is on her side. During a pregnancy massage, it is important to keep the woman's feet elevated. This helps to reduce swelling. The massage therapist should avoid deep tissue massage during the first trimester. This is due to the possibility of miscarriage.

**Therapeutic Massage**

# Massage During Pregnancy

...the process

### Therapist

...massage therapist... use techniques... to ensure the safety of the pregnancy.

### Massage Session

...massage session... the therapist will use... techniques to help... the pregnant woman.

### Hand and Infant Massage

...hand and infant massage... the mother of the child.