



# STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO BABY MASSAGE

Written by  
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**VitalTouch**  
FEEL LIFE





“TOUCH IS A BABY’S FIRST LANGUAGE”

Katie Whitehouse

This booklet is an easy to follow **STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO BABY MASSAGE**.

It has been written by **KATIE WHITEHOUSE**, expert Massage Therapist and Baby Massage Instructor.

Katie has brought touch into the lives of many hundreds of parents and babies through her writing and her own classes.

Katie is the founder of **VITAL TOUCH**, who make the **NATALIA** natural products collection: created to support you through your journey from pregnancy to parenthood. Completely natural, nourishing and extremely gentle for you and your baby.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE TOUCH

Positive touch is vital for our wellbeing. Whether we are a baby, a mother, a child, a middle aged man or an elderly woman - we all need touch to thrive.

Of all our senses – touch is, in a way, the greatest. Our skin is actually the largest organ in our body, yet it is often taken for granted. The benefits of touch, although now well researched, are largely ignored.

This is partly because our basic need for touch is, ironically, intangible: when we need a drink we feel thirsty, when we need food we feel hungry... but if the need for touch is not satisfied the consequences of this are less obvious and so they are easily overlooked. However the consequences of long term touch deprivation are actually profound:

### WHEN WE ARE TOUCH DEPRIVED:

WE MAY EXPERIENCE:

- INSOMNIA
- DEPRESSION
- AGGRESSIVE FEELINGS
- LOW SELF ESTEEM
- INCREASED STRESS HORMONES
- ISOLATION
- HYPERACTIVITY

### WHEN WE ARE TOUCHED POSITIVELY:

WE MAY EXPERIENCE:

- BETTER SLEEP PATTERNS
- STIMULATION OF ENDORPHINS
- FEELINGS OF WELL BEING
- INCREASED SELF ESTEEM
- RELAXATION
- ABILITY TO RELATE TO OTHERS
- REDUCED PAIN





#### HOW YOUR BABY SAYS YES

- EYE CONTACT
- AWAKE
- ALERT
- COOING
- OPEN ARMS
- SMILING
- RUBBING FEET
- RELAXED
- EXCITEMENT
- REACHING OUT

#### HOW YOUR BABY SAYS NO

- NO EYE CONTACT
- SLEEPY
- FUSSING
- CRYING
- CLOSED ARMS
- GRIZZLING
- HEAD TURNING
- TENSENESS
- MOTTLED SKIN
- RIGIDITY

## MASSAGING YOUR BABY THE BEST POSSIBLE START IN LIFE

As a parent you have the opportunity to set a positive blue print for your baby's life by massaging them gently from birth and as they grow.

A baby's first language is touch, so massage is a wonderful way of establishing trust and confidence in your early relationship.

Massaging your baby regularly allows you the time to really focus on each other. You have the opportunity to tune in with the many ways your baby communicates with you without being able to speak.



## BENEFITS OF MASSAGE FOR YOUR BABY

- helps improve sleep patterns
- promotes a quiet, alert state
- stimulates circulation
- stimulates immune system
- benefits co-ordination
- promotes good digestion
  - stimulates myelin (nervous system)
- stimulates lactation so can help breastfeeding babies
- safe positive physical contact

## BENEFITS OF MASSAGE FOR YOU THE PARENT

- helps with bonding
- a way of developing a non-verbal language of communication with your baby
- has been shown to reduce post natal depression
- something that both mums and dads can do
- dads are rewarded by more recognition from their babies

For a father it is a way of being as close to your baby as breastfeeding – with all the benefits of skin to skin contact that breastfeeding brings.

## THE BEST OIL TO USE FOR BABY MASSAGE

Particularly with very young babies, I advise parents to use a plain, simple cold pressed organic oil for baby massage with no essential oils in it. This is because your baby is making sense of their world through touch and smell, so the smell of you, their mother or father, is really important.

What you put on your baby's skin can be as important as what you feed them. Their skin is delicate and very absorbent.

**NATALIA BABY MASSAGE OIL** is organic cold pressed sunflower oil which matches the pH of your baby's skin sebum. It is perfectly pure and natural to care for your baby's delicate, precious skin.

Skin is a living absorbing organ – purity and nourishment are really important when choosing what to use.



PURITY

QUALITY

INTEGRITY



## WHEN NOT TO MASSAGE

Massage is very safe, but there are times when it would be uncomfortable for your baby to receive massage:

- when they are too full, or hungry
- if they have a fever or seem unwell
- do not massage directly over skin that has sores, cuts, burns, inflammation or infectious rashes

If you are in any doubt, consult your GP or health visitor.

## WHEN TO MASSAGE

You can massage your baby any time but many parents like to massage in the evening, after bath time and before bedtime, as part of their baby's routine.

### NOTE:

**NEVER MASSAGE AGAINST YOUR BABY'S WILL**  
If your baby starts to cry or give you other negative cues, stop the massage – pick them up and comfort them. When your baby is relaxed and happy again, continue the massage where you left off, or wait until the next day.



**MOST IMPORTANT:**

Is your baby in the mood for massage?

## GETTING STARTED

Before you begin massage make sure that:

- the room is very warm with no draughts
- the lighting is soft
- you have prepared a comfortable surface, such as a folded blanket covered by a towel on the floor (keep one towel especially for massage) for the baby to lie on
- you are comfortable. Sitting on the floor with your legs apart is a good position to try; or legs together with your baby on your lap if he/she is very young
- your hands are warm and clean, free from jewellery and scratchy nails
- the oil is within reach
- are you relaxed? Shake the tension out of your arms and hands and take three deep breaths, letting go of tension with each out breath

**MOST IMPORTANT:** is your baby in the mood for massage?  
(see 'How your baby says YES and NO' page 6)

## HOW TO MASSAGE YOUR BABY!

Massaging your baby will probably come naturally, but here are some guidelines to help you on your way.

Use these pictures and instructions to give you confidence – and be flexible too – all babies are different so use your initiative and instinct. Your baby is your best guide.

Baby massage is about interaction and fun. Both you and your baby should enjoy it. Introduce games and singing and try to keep eye contact as much as possible. You can play music if you like, but your baby will enjoy the sound of your voice just as much, or more! You'll find they will join in – singing and cooing with you.



“BABY MASSAGE SHOULD BE FUN  
– NOT A SILENT, SERIOUS RITUAL”  
Katie Whitehouse



## LEGS

Your baby's legs are a good place to start the massage as this is a non-invasive part of the body and you can keep good eye contact and make sure your baby is enjoying the session and see when they have had enough.

Warm some oil between your hands, rub them together and make eye contact with your baby saying "Time for a lovely massage!". Always start your sessions in the same way – your baby will soon take this as a cue for massage and will let you know if they are in the mood for it or not.

If they are giving you YES signals (see page 6), take one leg and give it a gentle shake. With one hand holding the ankle, use the other to glide up the front and down the back of the leg. REPEAT 1-3 times. Then gently stroke the whole leg again, hand over hand from hip to foot.

Use more oil as necessary.





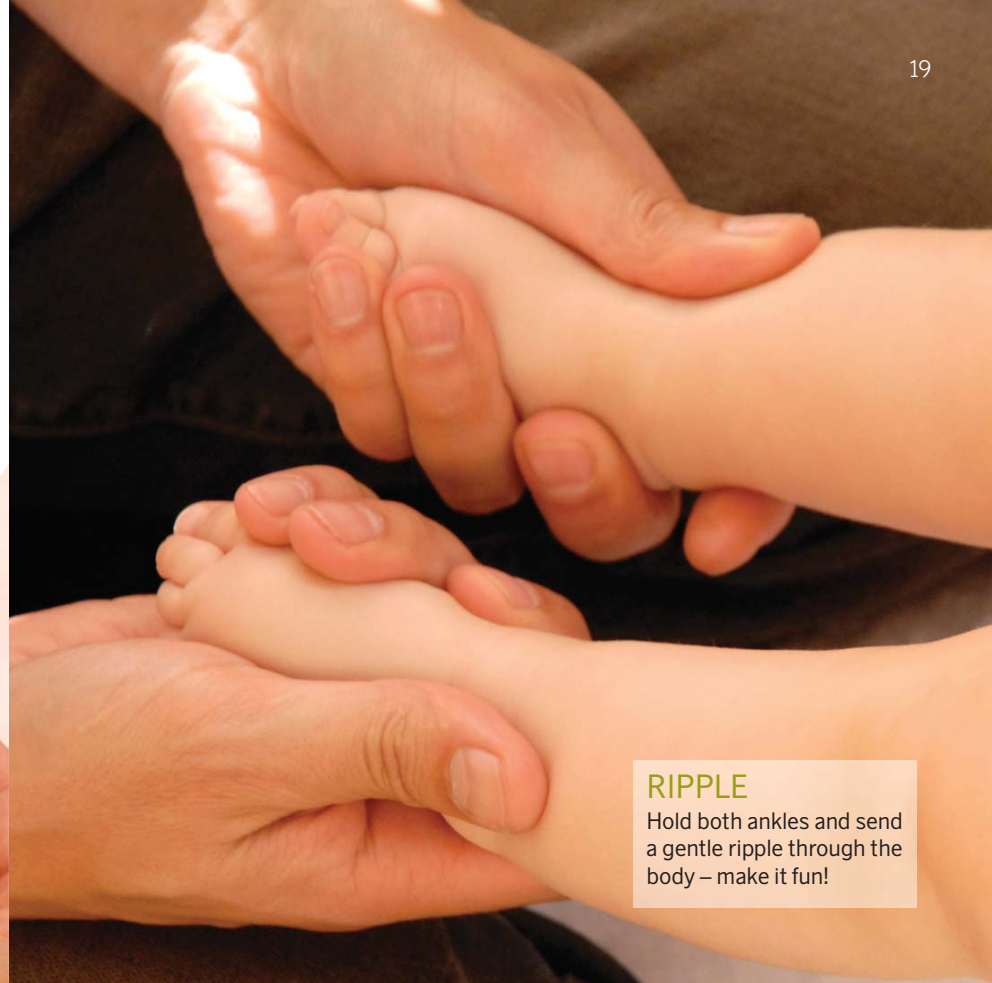
## FEET

By massaging the feet, we relax the whole body. This is a massage that you can perform almost anywhere, without having to remove your baby's clothing, to relax and calm your baby. Using your thumbs, massage the sole of the foot with little circles. Be firm so it does not tickle.

## TOES

Play with and pull on each toe gently between your forefinger and thumb. Play "This Little Piggy". Massage the top of the foot and around the ankle with your fingers.

**REPEAT** the leg, foot and toes massage with the other leg and foot.



## RIPPLE

Hold both ankles and send a gentle ripple through the body – make it fun!



## TUMMY

If your baby has just been fed, it's better to leave out this part of the massage until next time.

The tummy is the emotional centre of our bodies. If you feel your baby's tummy, it will feel soft when they are relaxed and happy, but tight when they are not.

Start by resting both hands gently on your baby's tummy. Your hands will feel lovely and warm and comforting. Hold for a while, smiling and singing.

Use the weight of your relaxed hand to stroke in big clockwise circles around the tummy. Start very lightly, and increase the pressure slightly as your baby's tummy relaxes.



### NOTE :

If your baby is very windy or colicky – try holding your baby's ankles or lower legs, and gently allow their legs to bend so that their knees move towards their chest. This can relieve wind. Be very sensitive to your baby's responses. Also keep a nappy handy!!



## CHEST AND ARMS


Using both hands, start in the middle of the chest and gently glide out and over the shoulders and back round to the chest.

Now slide over the shoulders and down both arms. You could play “This Little Piggy” with the fingers.

Open and cross their arms gently across the chest – do not force them – this will relax the shoulders and can be really enjoyable.

Stroke down the whole body with both hands. Don't forget to keep eye contact and keep it fun!





If you think your baby is still in the mood for massage, turn them over slowly onto their tummy so you can massage their back.

## BACK

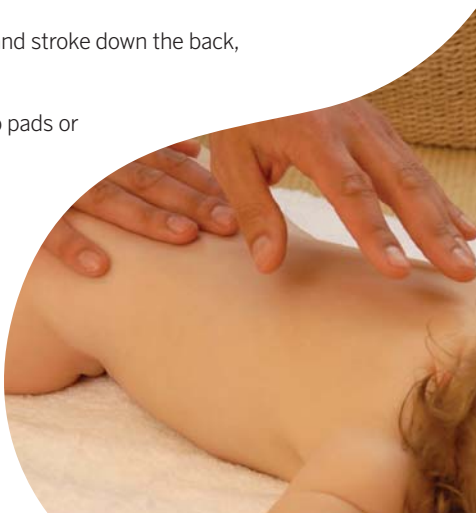
When a baby lies on their front, this gently stretches their tummy, so can help to relieve wind and colicky pain. It will also begin to strengthen the back and neck muscles.

Take some more oil between your palms and stroke down the back, hand over hand.

Use a circular movement with your thumb pads or fingertips all over the back and buttocks.

Finish by stroking slowly down the whole back of your baby's body from neck to feet using both hands.

Let your strokes get slower and slower until you finally stop, just resting your warm relaxed hands on your baby's lower back.



### NOTE :

ENSURE THERE IS NO PRESSURE ON YOUR BABY'S SPINE – keep to one or other side of it.



## AFTER THE MASSAGE

Wrap your baby in a soft towel or dress them slowly. They may well be ready for a feed and bedtime. It can be part of a really enjoyable regular bedtime routine: bathe your baby first, give them a massage and put them to bed in a happy, relaxed state.

## DON'T GIVE UP!!

Although some babies respond well to massage straight away, others may take a little longer to get used to it – usually 3 or 4 sessions at the most.

Whilst your baby may enjoy this whole routine once they are used to massage, a few strokes will be enough at first. See what they like best and build up slowly. Always respect your baby's likes and dislikes. It is well worth persevering – the benefits could well be long lasting and have a positive impact on family life in future years.

## FINDING A BABY MASSAGE INSTRUCTOR NEAR YOU

There are now baby massage classes running in most towns in the UK. You can find a baby massage instructor near to you by looking on [www.GICM.org.uk](http://www.GICM.org.uk) (Guild of Infant and Child Massage) and [www.IAIM.org.uk](http://www.IAIM.org.uk) (International Association of Infant Massage).





## OTHER IDEAS AND TIPS

### SCALP

A soothing scalp massage can be done at any time and is useful for stimulating good circulation and preventing cradle cap (use **NATALIA BABY MASSAGE OIL** or **NATALIA BABY SPECIAL SKIN BALM** if your baby has cradle cap).

### MASSAGING OLDER BABIES

As your baby grows up they will of course become more mobile – you will need to adapt their favourite strokes to new positions, such as sitting and even crawling! The more fun you keep the massage, with singing and laughter, the more your baby is likely to let you continue to massage them as they grow up.

### HANDS ON DADS

Fathers are getting more and more involved in family life. Right from the start fathers are present and supportive at the birth of their babies, they are changing nappies and carrying their babies in slings ... but it's not all plain sailing.

Your first baby totally changes everything – the shift from being a couple to becoming a small family can lead to new fathers feeling excluded by the close bond they see developing between mother and new baby.

Baby massage offers men a chance to feel included in the intimacy of a new relationship with their baby. It also gives the mother a break.

Fathers who massage their babies regularly establish a warm, positive relationship that continues as the child grows, but they may also experience increased self-esteem and confidence as new parents, due to the increased involvement with their newborns. Babies who are massaged by their dads for 3 months have been seen to reward their fathers with more eye contact, smiling, vocalising and reaching out responses.



## BRINGING TOUCH INTO EVERYDAY LIFE

We live in a touch deprived and busy world. Whether we were massaged as babies or not, and whether or not we massaged our own babies ... in my experience it is never too late to start.

It can be very simple to bring massage and positive touch into our everyday lives. With the clear boundary that touch must always be wanted and that we should be able to say no to unwanted touch, I believe that a profound difference could be made very simply.

As well as massaging your baby you could also try:

- Offering someone you know who is elderly and possibly rarely touched (maybe your own parent or grandparent) a hand massage next time you visit. It is unintrusive but really relaxing and easy to carry on talking while you do it.
- Offering your children a very gentle soothing back massage before they go to sleep. Simply stroke downwards from head/neck to the base of their spine. You can do this over their pyjamas so they are able to stay relaxed and drop off to sleep.
- Offering your partner a 5 minute neck and shoulder massage this evening.

## VITAL TOUCH THANK YOU

A big thank you to the well massaged and lovely **NATALIA** babies with their parents in this booklet:

Martha with her dad, James  
Mahni with his parents Heidi and Dominic  
Poppy with her mum, Chloe

Do try this at home!

*Katie Whitelance*

DESIGN:  
[strawberry-design.co.uk](http://strawberry-design.co.uk)

IMAGES:  
[katemountphotography.co.uk](http://katemountphotography.co.uk)

ALL TEXT AND IMAGES:  
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## VITAL TOUCH NATALIA

**NATALIA** products are 100% natural, packed with gorgeous organic ingredients and handblended with care in Devon, UK. **NATALIA** has been tested and approved by experts as well as tried and loved by real parents for many years.

**NATALIA** natural products invite you to bring the benefits of relaxation, positive touch and pure natural plant ingredients into your whole pregnancy, birth and parenting experience.

We have a strict buying policy, endeavouring to find sources which preserve and support the environment. We incorporate organic, wild-crafted and sustainably grown plant material and seek out fair-trade suppliers.

In addition all **NATALIA** products are cruelty-free and biodegradable, using no animal ingredients, no SLS or parabens, no artificial scents or colours.

## NATALIA PRODUCTS

**NATALIA** prenatal, labour and baby products are available individually and in wonderfully supportive gift sets. To see the full range and stockist information visit our website: [WWW.VITALTOUCH.COM](http://WWW.VITALTOUCH.COM) or call us on +44 (0)1364 644781



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