

Baby Massage - Gentle Stretches & Arms

Gentle Stretches

These are simple movements that gently stretch baby's arms and legs, massage the stomach and pelvis, and help to align the spine. They're like yoga poses for baby.

Cross arms. Hold baby's arms at the wrists and gently stretch the arms out away from the body, then bring them towards the body and cross them over. Alternate which arm is on top and then open again in a 'cross, cross, cross, open' rhythm.

Cross arm & leg. Hold one arm at the wrist and the opposite leg at the ankle. Gently bring the arm towards the tummy and the foot up towards baby's shoulder, letting the knee bend. Alternate the arm and leg being on top in a 'cross, cross, cross, open' rhythm. Repeat with the other arm & leg.

Cross legs. Hold baby's legs at the ankles and gently stretch the legs out straight, towards you. Then cross the legs over the tummy and alternate which leg is on top in a 'cross, cross, cross, straight' rhythm.

Up and Down. Straighten the legs towards you then push the knees together towards the tummy (letting the knees bend). Repeat several times.

Bicycle. Gently push the knees towards the tummy, one leg then the other, like your baby is riding a (very small) bicycle.

This routine of gentle stretches is great for baby after a long car journey.

Arms & Hands

As with the legs, start by gently bouncing the arm to relax it. Say gently 'relax' to your baby as you do this.

Once you feel the arm relax smile and say 'well done' to your baby. This tells baby it is a good thing when they relax and again gives a cue association.

Hold the arm gently but firmly at the wrist with one hand. Place the other hand around the shoulder and move out towards the hand in a fluid motion.

This is an Indian massage technique which focusses on drawing tension away from the body.

Gently squeeze and release the muscles of the arm working up and down the arm several times. With your thumb massage in small circles over the upper arm on top followed by underneath. Gently stroke over the elbow then do small circles over the lower arm on both sides.

Draw little circles with your thumb on the back of the hand then into the palm, gently stretching the hand open as you go. Repeat several times. Massage each finger between your thumb and forefinger, squeezing gently as you release.

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Stroke back up the arm towards the shoulder. This helps the blood flow back towards the heart.

Give the muscles of the arm a gentle rub down to get rid of any remaining tension. You can do this to the rhyme below.

"Jelly on a plate, jelly on a plate, wibble wobble, wibble wobble, jelly on a plate."

Finish by stroking up the arm several times with a light, tickly touch. Repeat for the other arm and hand.

By massaging your baby's arms you can help increase flexibility, suppleness & co-ordination.