

Massage in Labour

Massage is communication by touch.

It can be very comforting and soothing in labour because it:

- > encourages relaxation
- > decreases anxiety and tension
- > can help you to manage discomfort and pain

These positive effects help you to be open to the natural processes of labour.

Massage can also make you feel more connected to your partner or support person. Their massage and touch can communicate feelings of support, care and reassurance that helps you to stay positive during your labour. This can improve your emotional experience of labour.

Because massage is a two way process it also helps your partner or support person to connect with you and to be sensitive to your needs during labour.

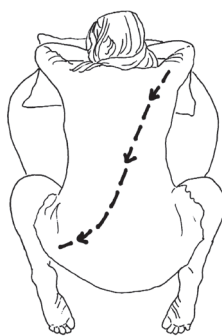
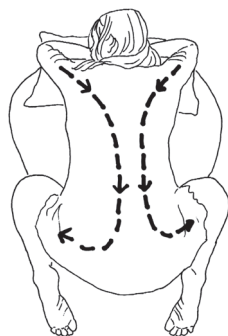
Massage does require a little practice to discover what feels good and which areas of your body you like being touched and massaged.

As well as firm touch or holding, the basic massage consists of stroking or kneading.

When supporting a woman in labour, stroking and kneading the muscles of her upper back and shoulders can decrease tension and encourage relaxation. Deeper or firm stroking over her lower back, pelvic area and thighs may help her cope with the discomfort of contractions.

Use the diagrams on this sheet to guide you as you get started.

Use 2 hands for long strokes



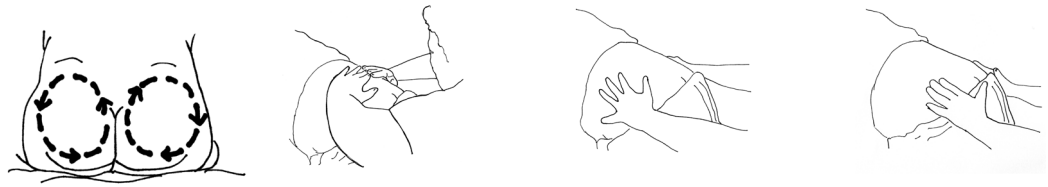
Beginning at shoulders, work your way down either side of her spine with small circular pressure.



Tension releasing shoulder massage



Use both hands with firm pressure



Use 1 hand or 2 hands together



Buttock and upper thigh



Hand massage



Foot massage



Firm pressure holds at hip or shoulders



It is important to remember that some women in labour do not want to be touched, even if they have enjoyed massage previously, therefore it is important to follow her lead.

Perhaps a different part of her body could be stroked, or the depth of the touch altered.

Enjoy the experience!

For more information

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