

# Birth Support Massage



Note: This information is intended for educational purposes only. You should seek further advice and instruction from your chosen healthcare professional.

## **Warning: – Never use essential oils directly on the skin except for true lavender and peppermint and then only 1-2 drops**

– The essential oils mentioned above (true lavender and peppermint) ARE NOT recommended before the 3rd trimester.

## **Benefits of Massage During Labour**

The Potomac Massage Training Institute (USA) has collected evidence indicating a lower epidural rate and caesarean deliveries as well as shorter labour time for pregnant women who receive massage by their support person and/or partner. In addition, there was a reduction in tears and forceps deliveries.

The information collected indicates that babies also benefit and this is possibly due to the mother being more relaxed and therefore a quicker labour, which means that there would be less foetal distress. Essenture has received positive feedback from women who received massages during labour and from their partner/support person.

### Mother

*"I felt I was able to better cope with my labour."  
"Made me feel more relaxed."  
"It helped me to deal with my labour pain because it relaxed me and took my mind off the pain I was in."*

### Partner/Support person

*"I was able to do something positive for my partner."  
"Not only was able to give moral support, I was able to help in a practical way."  
"It was a great feeling to be involved in such a positive way during the birth of our baby."*

It is during the last 4 -6 weeks of pregnancy that you can practise massage techniques that will provide an opportunity for couples to:

- Establish comfortable massage positions for the mother.
- Benefit by spending quality time together prior to the birth of their baby.

Midwives and other health professionals are becoming more open to the use of aromatherapy oils during birth. You should only use 100% pure essential oils from plants. Oils can help you prepare your mind and body for childbirth. Pure essential oils are absorbed through the skin and through our olfactory system (breathing through the nose). They then travel to the different systems (eg to affect respiratory or digestion).

There are so many different pure plant extracts, some of which are not suitable for use during pregnancy or during labour. You should always seek the advice of a qualified aromatherapist or health care professional. In addition, it is probably better to err on the side of caution and use only the milder oils that have already been tested.

**Essenture Labour Massage Oil** can be used from 36 weeks during pre-labour and through the birthing process. This blend combines the beautiful essential oils of true lavender, rose, clary sage, jasmine, neroli and sandalwood. Ideally practise your massage techniques with this oil to tone the uterus and it will also help your partner to understand your likes and dislikes during this special time.

## ***Partner/Support Person Massage Techniques***

### ***Onset and First Stage***

Start early in the labour so that you can work together taking the lead from the woman. Early communication will help you to understand her needs (i.e. not so hard, firmer etc).

Massage of the legs, allows eye contact to continue and a focal point for your partner. Massage strokes should be firm and rhythmical and in an upward direction towards the heart. The upward direction is important as blood is carried back to the heart via veins. Massage strokes should also coincide with the mother's breathing - (i.e. up on the in breath and down on the out breath.)

When contractions come, the partner (masseur) needs to do deeper work, loosening off to slower more relaxing strokes by the end of the contraction.

***Tip for Mum*** - Visualise contractions as the uterus massaging the baby, down and out in waves, like the sea meeting the shoreline.

### ***Hip Massage for Mum***

Tight buttock muscles can delay the birthing process. The person massaging should be behind the women (you can be kneeling over the bed or cushions). With hands directed upwards, move up to waist level then separate and come across and down the outsides of the buttocks. Repeat this action using firm yet rhythmic strokes. By using deep circular movements you will be able to relax the deeper muscles. Pelvic rotations and birthing balls allow the opening up of your pelvis and assist your labour to progress smoothly. The gentle rocking encourages your baby's head to descend quicker while there is no pressure on the perineum. Warm compresses across the lower abdomen and lower back can be beneficial for the pelvic pressure and lower backache.

### ***Thigh Massage***

Your legs may get cold and shaky. If this happens your partner can massage the thigh up and down either sides to relax you and reduce tension.

### ***Face Massage***

Get your partner or support person to give you a gentle face massage between contractions. You should find this calming and reassuring. Stroke up the forehead, into the hairline - one hand following the other.