



Pregnancy and Massage Therapy

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Pregnancy is a wonderful experience, but your joy and excitement is often accompanied by feelings of lower back pain, pain in the buttock's region and exhaustion. You do not have to deal with all of these symptoms alone. Massage therapy can help alleviate the discomfort of pregnancy.

The first trimester of pregnancy lasts from the first day of the last menstrual period to the end of week 12. Many women keep their pregnancy private during this time, but it is important to let your massage therapist know you are, or suspect you are, pregnant and if there are any complications. Your massage therapists keeps your personal information confidential. They are careful to not apply deep pressure around your abdomen or lower back to ensure the safety of the baby. The massage is focused on symptomatic relief and relaxation.

The second trimester includes weeks 13 to 26. It is now safe to have massage to your abdomen and lower back. Massaging the abdomen also massages the baby and may start to teach your baby how to enjoy massage. Because your abdomen is increasing in size, your center of gravity starts to shift, which can cause discomfort in your lower back, pelvis, neck, shoulders and calves. An increase in the hormone called "relaxin" causes laxity in the joints and ligaments to prepare your body for labor. The increase in relaxin can cause joints to become misaligned due to more play in the joint spaces. Muscles then tighten to prevent injury to the joints. Massage therapists are trained in techniques to gently guide your joints into proper positioning, decreasing the pain and discomfort. Using an extra pillow between your legs while you sleep on your side props up your leg, keeping your pelvis and lower back in alignment.

The third trimester includes week 27 up until labor (38-42 weeks is considered full term). Carpal tunnel syndrome, thoracic outlet syndrome, and sciatica are all common conditions resulting from edema, or swelling. Massage therapy can help relieve symptoms by aiding in circulation to decrease edema and relaxing tight muscles.

If you are unsure whether or not massage therapy is right for you during your pregnancy, please consult your doctor.