



Philip Bayliss

## St Albans Osteopathy

43 Thames Street, St Albans, Christchurch 8013  
Phone: (03) 356 1353 Website: [philip-bayliss.com](http://philip-bayliss.com)

### Baby Massage

Massaging your baby is beneficial on many levels including relaxing your baby, helping to reduce crying while improving the immune system, and strengthening the growing bond between you.

#### Step 1: You will need

- Cream or baby oil (no essential oils)
- A soft mat or blanket
- 2 towels

#### Step 2: Setting up

It is best to practice when your baby is calm and at least a half an hour after eating. It is important that the room temperature is warm, approximately 24C, as the baby should either completely undressed or wearing a nappy. A good time is right after the bath since the baby is already undressed and the room is warm. It is also important to have everything set up ahead of time so that you can focus on your baby. Lay a towel over a soft mat or blanket and place the cream or oil within easy reach. Dry your baby thoroughly if just bathed, and lay them down on the towel face up. Place a little cream or oil in your hands and warm it by rubbing the hands together.

#### Step 3: Face and head

Using the pads of your fingers and extremely light pressure, begin making light strokes on the forehead, starting at the brow line and going up to the top of the head. Remember that this is supposed to be fun. Talking, singing, and other verbal communication will stimulate your baby's mind and reinforce the developing bonds between you. Continue with strokes from the bridge of the nose along the cheekbones towards the ears, and then do circles around the

mouth. You will then trace the jaw line back from the chin and arrive at the back of the head and neck where you can make gentle strokes down to the shoulders.

#### Step 4: Shoulders and arms

Begin making smooth strokes from the shoulder down to the hands, letting your baby grasp your fingers as they slide off. Next hold the arm between the thumb and index finger and gently glide down the arm, using caution at the arm pit and elbow as these are sensitive areas.

#### Step 5: Chest and stomach

Now bring your fingers to the centre of the baby's chest and make smooth movements from the centre out towards the shoulders, starting just below the collar bones and slowly moving down until you reach the stomach. This is a powerful part of the massage as it helps promote good digestion, move wind and relieve colic. This is often called the "I Love U" stroke, as the movements will be like the letters I, L, and U. You begin the "I" by starting under the ribs on YOUR right side and make a stroke down. Next, start under the ribs on your left side, stroke across and then down forming the "L." Then for the "U" you will start on the lower belly to your left, move up under the ribs and over, and down the right side again. Repeat this several times and finish with some circular strokes over the entire belly, always moving in a clockwise direction.

#### Step 6: Legs and feet

Move down to the legs and make gentle strokes from the thigh to the ankle, and then take the leg between the fingers of both hands and lightly roll the leg back and forth as you move down. Repeat this several times on each leg. Now take both legs and gently press them against the belly, flexing the hips and knees. Stretch the legs out and then repeat several times. Gently lay down one leg and begin lightly squeezing each of the toes, then massage the soles of the foot down to the heel. Return to the toes and repeat, then continue with the other foot.

#### Step 7: Back

Carefully roll your baby onto his or her stomach. Starting at the head, make long general strokes down the neck, the back, over the legs and down to the feet. Alternate hands and repeat. We want to avoid any direct pressure on the spine, simply making light contact. Starting near the neck, start massaging the shoulders and upper back with your fingertips, then continue making circular movements over the rest of the back. Now with one hand, place a finger on either side of the back bone lightly wiggle back and forth as your hand moves down. Repeat this several times. Move the hands down to the legs and make smooth downward strokes to the heels, being especially gentle behind the knee.

#### Step 8: Finishing strokes

Once more make full body strokes starting at the top of the head towards the feet. After two or

three times let the hands float off.