

## What is Prenatal Massage?

The goals of prenatal massage are similar to many of the goals of regular massage. It is meant to ease sore spots, improve mobility, circulation and relax tense muscles. Of course, many women have it just to feel awesome! Specifically, prenatal massage is tailored to the dynamic needs of pregnant women, along with their changing physique. There are therapists who are trained in the area of prenatal massage and they are able to adjust their techniques to accommodate each client.

### How do you lie on the table?

The majority of women may find it uncomfortable to lie on their tummy facedown from the beginning of their pregnancy, due to their swollen and tender breasts. If you find you are unable to lie facedown on a traditional massage table once your belly has begun to grow, don't worry, the massage therapist will have a variety of positions you can try. Once you are past mid-pregnancy, it is not recommended to lay flat on your back either, as the weight of your uterus places too much pressure on the vein that is responsible for returning blood from your legs to your heart.

The prenatal massage therapist has special pillows available to accommodate your belly and may use a custom table or pad that has hollowed out areas to make you as comfortable as possible. These pillows can help to accommodate your breasts so that you are able to lie facedown comfortably. If however, you find that this position places stress on your lower back, or if only a traditional massage table is available, you may opt to lie on your side with a full-length pillow or wedges for support between your legs.

### How can prenatal massage help me?

There has not been much study given to the therapeutic benefits of pregnant women. Some evidence suggests that massage may help people who suffer from chronic headaches or from low back pain, though these particular studies have not been done on pregnant women. In the majority of cases, massage can deeply promote relaxation and decrease stress. It can help one cope with discomfort, even if it doesn't prevent or alleviate it.

When you are pregnant, carrying a baby inside puts a lot of stress on your abdominal muscles, neck, shoulders, neck and back since your center of gravity has changed. Pregnancy additionally relaxes your ligaments; therefore, your pelvic joints are less stable. This may change your posture as your pelvis is pulling forward. You may find you have quite an extensive lower back ache, with this change in posture combined with the extra weight from pregnancy.