

***Baby Bliss
Instructor***
LESSON 1 – HISTORY OF BABY
MASSAGE



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***Learning
Outcomes***

By the end of this session, you will:

- Understand the history of baby massage
- Be able to explain how Baby Massage is used today in Western Society



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History of Baby Massage

- Massage therapy dates back thousands of years to ancient cultures that believed in its medical and healing benefits.
- It is defined as,

"the rubbing and kneading of muscles and joints of the body with the hands, especially to relieve tension or pain."



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History of Baby Massage

- Historians have found evidence of baby massage dating back over 3000 years and in regions as diverse as India, Africa, Asia, New Zealand and the Caribbean.
- Even today in these countries infant massage is still considered a routine part of childcare, from the moment of birth until the baby is weaned and walking



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History of Baby Massage

- Infant massage was introduced formally into the US in 1978, when a yoga practitioner (Vimala McClure) developed a training program for instructors at the request of childbirth educators.
- An early research study by R. Rice in 1976 had showed that premature babies who were massaged surged ahead in weight gain and neurological development over those who were not massaged.



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How is it used today?

Some western cultures believe that too much holding and touching can spoil the infant, however around the world it is used in many ways:

- In Fiji parents massage a baby as a night time ritual.
- In India massage is used from birth and older generations massage younger ones.
- Hawaiian mothers massage their baby's faces as they believe it makes them beautiful.
- Balinese, Mongolians and Australian Aborigines massage to relieve headaches and stomach aches.
- Tibetan parents are told massaging their baby is essential for full development.



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How is it used today?

- Russian mothers believe massage develops the nervous system.
- Maori mothers massage leg joints to help a child's suppleness and gracefulness.
- Zinacantecos of Mexico believe a baby must be massaged and embraced frequently or he will lose his soul.
- In Korean culture it is believed that massaging the baby's legs routinely will encourage growth and make the babies tall.
- After birth Samoans usually massage the baby with either blood from the placenta or the umbilical cord.



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How is it used today?

- Cuban mothers massage babies' abdomens with oil and garlic to ease upset stomachs.
- In South Asia, mothers perform daily infant massage in the belief that it will install fearlessness, harden bone structure and enhance movement and limb coordination.
- Nigerian mothers massage their infants in belief that it will promote their health and well-being.
- In China they believe that even babies can benefit from increased blood flow to different parts of the body through massage.
- In Korea it is believed that regularly massaging the legs will make a baby taller.



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Is it simply a touching exercise?

- The answer to this question is no.
- Although a massage session is obviously centred around touch, there are other key elements to consider that are of equal importance:
 - 2 way communication
 - Touch
 - Sight
 - Sound
 - Smell



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Task – Worksheet 1

- Why do you think these elements are important in baby massage?
 - 2 way communication
 - Touch
 - Sight
 - Sound
 - Smell



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