



## **Pregnant? You Need a Massage!**

by Leslie Jaeschke, LMT, Certified in Prenatal and Postpartum Massage

Prenatal massage is therapeutic bodywork that focuses on and accommodates the special needs of the mom-to-be as her body goes through the miraculous changes of pregnancy. It relieves the aches and pains of a growing belly, relaxes foot and lower leg muscles from the extra body weight, relieves mental and physical fatigue, and nurtures the mom-to-be. Prenatal massage not only eases the discomforts of pregnancy, but also helps the mom-to-be prepare for labor by way of allowing the body to relax easier through focused breath and a calm mind. Research has shown that prenatal massage can be instrumental in women's prenatal care.

### ***Prenatal Massage Research***

Studies indicate that massage therapy performed during pregnancy can reduce anxiety, decrease symptoms of depression, relieve muscle aches and joint pains, improve labor outcomes, and newborn health. Massage is recommended during pregnancy because it addresses many common discomforts associated with the skeletal and circulatory changes brought on by hormone shifts.

### ***Benefits of Prenatal Massage***

The benefits of prenatal massage include a wide range of physiological, emotional, and psychological benefits.

- Alleviates stress on weight-bearing joints and structures
- Assists in remedying many of the common discomforts experienced during pregnancy: muscular discomforts, lower-back pain, upper-back pain, headaches, leg cramps, sciatica, stiffness, tension and knots, carpal tunnel syndrome, heartburn and acid reflux, fatigue, varicose veins, nasal congestion, shortness of breath, edema of the lower extremities, neck pain, interscapular pain, sacroiliac and hip joint pain, and constipation
- Increases blood circulation, which provides more oxygen and nutrients to both mother and fetus, and stimulates the lymph system, thereby increasing immunity and removal of toxins
- Stabilizes hormonal levels and helps relieve depression or anxiety caused by hormonal changes
- Soothes and relaxes the nervous system by releasing endorphins into the mother's body. As a result, the expectant mother feels more relaxed and at ease, and has ability to sleep more easily and more deeply
- Prepares the mom-to-be for an easier delivery with its sedating effect on the nervous system, promoting relaxation and stress relief
- Offers a natural, safe, drug-free alternative choice for pain relief, since taking medications are often limited during a pregnancy for the sake of the unborn child

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- In addition to the physical benefits, prenatal massage provides expecting women with the emotional support and nurturing touch provided by human contact and energy.

### **What to Expect When You're Expecting (massage-wise)**

Prenatal massage can begin in the first trimester and continue through labor. I recommend pregnant patients to receive their first massage later in the first trimester or when morning sickness has decreased/stopped. I recommend two more during the second trimester and at least three during the third trimester (up until due date and beyond). I use a specially designed pregnancy body cushion that allows and accommodates a growing mom-to-be to lay face down. Moms-to-be are typically unable to and therefore love the ability to lay face down. Sessions are 60 minutes.

### **Ready to Get Your Prenatal Massage at The Ommani Center?**

Contact The Ommani Center to schedule your appointment with me. I am certified in prenatal and postpartum massage and love working with moms-to-be.

**September, 2015 Leslie Jaeschke, LMT joined The Ommani Center this July. She is a dynamic massage therapist with many areas of training and experience; prenatal/postpartum massage is one of many areas of expertise. She's passionate about patient education. Call 262.695.5311 to schedule an appointment today.**

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*Article written using information from the following sources:*

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