

## BENEFITS OF THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE DURING PREGNANCY

Therapeutic Massage:

- ❖ **Alleviates physical discomfort** caused by the weight of the growing foetus, postural adaptations and movement of internal organs.
- ❖ **Alleviates lower backache** caused by postural shift and change in centre of gravity.
- ❖ **Improves breathing** through the application of therapeutic massage around the diaphragm. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> trimesters the foetus is positioned high in the uterus impeding the function of the diaphragm. Instead of using the diaphragm to breath, the neck and shoulder muscles are used. This can lead to muscle strain and thoracic outlet syndrome or a numbness and pain down the arm.
- ❖ **Alleviates sciatica**. The hips begin to spread due to connective tissue that softens to allow the pelvis to expand and joints to loosen. As a result muscles of the legs, hips and buttocks must provide joint stabilization leading to muscle strain and sometimes sciatica.
- ❖ **Encourages fluid movement** to alleviate swelling in the legs and feet caused by the impingement of lymph vessels.
- ❖ **Encourages body-mind integration** and body awareness.
- ❖ **Assists the mother-to-be** in an emotionally sensitive time when she may not always feel attractive.
- ❖ **Alleviates fatigue** and sleep disturbances and focuses on comfort and nurturing.

Therapeutic massage therapy is beneficial unless contra-indicated by specific circumstances or complications. For optimum results it is recommended that therapeutic massage form a regular part of ones health maintenance programme.

Please note that it is a legal requirement for Therapeutic Massage Therapists to be registered with the Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa.



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