

Bodywork Basics for Parents

What is a bodyworker?

A bodyworker is a professional who has a hands-on license to touch and extensive continuing education hours in CranioSacral therapy, Myofascial release, etc. A licensed professional may be an occupational, physical or speech therapist, chiropractor, osteopath, nurse, massage therapist, among others.

What a typical session looks like:

Bodywork sessions are held in an office space which is comfortable and relaxed. Some practitioners provide home visits. A bodyworker may treat baby while you are holding baby or nursing, positioned on a bodywork table, the floor or in a bodyworker's lap. The bodyworker will complete hands-on assessment of your baby's whole body, particularly the **feet, hips, trunk, shoulders, head and neck, as well as inside baby's mouth** using a light touch. Additionally, baby may be moved in different positions to allow the natural forces within the body to help with soft tissue integrity and natural alignment. The bodyworker will also observe and assist baby's tummy time skills.

What to expect:

Gentle, slow movements, bodyworker pays close attention to baby's subtle facial expressions, breathing patterns and relaxation response in the body and provides the just right amount of touch to allow the soft tissues to "unwind" and reorganize. Babies are typically interactive with the practitioner during the session and ought to experience the touch as pleasant and non painful. Occasionally babies experience an increase in arousal level and may gently cry during a session. This is natural as crying is a way babies communicate, if you feel uncomfortable at any time please let the bodyworker know immediately. You should also be educated on activities you can provide at home to support baby's continual progress.

How many sessions will my baby need?

Most bodyworkers recommend between 2 and 10 sessions, depending upon the severity of tongue and/or jaw restriction, as well as how fast baby is improving with mobility, latch/breastfeeding and TummyTime!™ abilities.

How long is the appointment?

Most baby bodywork sessions last between 30 and 90 minutes, depending upon the practitioner's specialty and range of skills.

How much does it cost?

It depends on your location and cost of living, most bodyworkers charge between \$50.00 and \$150.00 for a session.

Some improvements you may notice after a session:

- Increased tongue movements and jaw opening
- Increased head and neck turning to both sides
- Improved comfort in babywearing, car seat etc.
- Calm and more relaxed appearance, less tense, more interactive
- Improved gastrointestinal function (easier passing gas, stooling, less reflux)
- Improved latch and breastfeeding abilities

How bodywork helps:

Practitioners use hands-on assessment to locate areas of decreased mobility, tightness or restriction and gently help to mobilize the area using gentle experienced touch. Bodywork helps baby with body awareness and maximizes baby's access to postural reflexes and natural movement inclinations through the nervous system. Bodyworkers understand that the whole body plays a part in breastfeeding, not just the tongue and jaw, so there are improvements noted in all areas. Baby bodywork is always gentle and tuned into baby's unique needs.