

Profile on...



Kathie Smithson

Kathie is a 1993 graduate from the Canadian College of Massage and Hydrotherapy and she received her certification as a registered doula (childbirth and labor support assistant) from Douglas College in 1999. She is registered with Doula Services of B.C. and has reached out to the birthing community working as a pregnancy massage therapist -loving the ever changing flow of the female body and the energy pregnant women and new mothers have to share with the world. Kathie also draws on her post-graduate training in neuromuscular therapy (St. John Method), muscle energy technique, Muscle Balance and Function: postural re-alignment along with a progressive exercise plan, postural re-education, deep tissue sculpting and trigger point therapy. These therapies combined, can bring about tremendous changes in posture and chronic discomfort.

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL

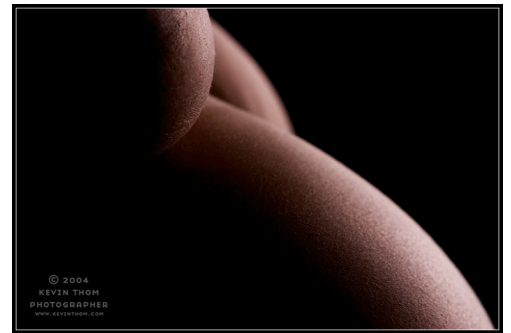
Massage Therapy for the childbearing year

Pregnancy is a profound journey in a woman's life. A natural, experiential event of discovery unique to every woman and her family. An experience that invites her to move with the rhythm of the subtle and more palpable adjustments relevant to each trimester, labor, birth and the postpartum period.

I believe that the childbearing year is a time to embrace the developing child within you. It's also a time to become two people working together; mother and baby. Clear your mind of any preconceived expectations and judgments that may cloud your own experience. I think that having this mind-set will help decrease stress and anxiety, which can have a negative effect on maternal and infant health, as well as reducing the common discomforts associated with pregnancy. I understand the underlying intricacies of the significant structural, hormonal and physiological changes that occur during pregnancy and I provide an educated, caring and supportive treatment to help ease most of the expectant mother's complaints.

With the woman comfortably settled into cozy pillows, bolsters and other specialty cushions in a side-lying or semi-reclining position she can relax into and be nurtured by numerous forms of soft tissue manipulation specific to her presenting signs and symptoms, and of course being mindful of any contraindications. During the childbearing year techniques frequently used may have to be significantly modified while others are eliminated. Swedish and lymphatic drainage techniques assist in increasing circulation to hypertonic muscles and enhance toxin removal, reduce stress, fatigue, nausea and other digestive disturbances.

Neuromuscular, deep tissue and myofascial release is all helpful in pain management reducing muscle spasm, cramping, uterine ligamentous pain referral and headaches. Muscle Balance and Function, postural realignment with complimentary exercise routines and postural re-education, all create homeostatic self awareness resulting in a healthy mind/body perception. Equally important during a treatment session is making time to teach



diaphragmatic breathing, guided imagery and visualization skills that if practiced throughout pregnancy are invaluable when used during labor and childbirth.

I integrate my massage therapy and doula experiences by providing continuous physical and emotional support while working to make the childbearing year a positive memory. I reinforce and encourage the mother to waken to her inherent ability, wisdom and courage that will make her experience one of joy, and gracious fulfillment.

Kathie Smithson, RMT

Hot or Cold: Knowing When to Apply Each (part 2)

Continuing with part 1, some points to remember for safety when using hot and cold:

- 1) People become desensitized with repeated exposure to hot or cold, so be careful if after several applications of heat, it doesn't feel hot anymore. If you make it hotter, you could cause burns;
- 2) Individuals vary in their ability to tolerate hot or cold. The elderly and the young have the least tolerance. Babies lose heat much more quickly

- than adults or older children;
- 3) Different areas of the body vary in sensitivity to hot or cold. So, if you test the temperature with your hand and it feels fine, it may be too hot or cold for another area of the body;
- 4) The larger the body area exposed to hot or cold, the less the person can tolerate;
- 5) Moisture conducts heat better than air, therefore, a moist application should not be as hot or as cold as a dry one;

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#218-2475 Bayswater Street,
Vancouver, BC, V6K 4N3

Phone:
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Hot or Cold: Knowing When to Apply Each (part 2)

(continued from page 1)

6) Never apply heat if there is a possibility of bleeding;
7) Never use cold if there is impaired circulation, numbness, if the skin feels cold already or is bluish, or if the person is shivering or his temperature is below normal.
Should the heat or cold be moist or dry? Most of the time, it doesn't make that much difference. Remember that moisture conducts heat better so if you need quick relief, you may want to use it. However, wet application will not stay hot or mid as long as a dry one.

Dry heat is applied with a hot water bottle, electric pad, aquathermia pad, disposable heat pad, heated cloth or heat lamp. Moist heat can be used by compress, hot pack, soak, shower, sitz bath or full bath. Dry cold means using ice bags, collars, gloves or disposable cold packs. Moist cold is a compress or pack, soak, or cool or tepid sponge bath. Cold showers or baths are usually not recommended because they can cause unwanted reactions to the entire body.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each method. Hot water bottles are convenient and inexpensive, but can cause burns or leak and eventually cool off. Electric heating pads stay warm indefinitely, provide constant, even heat, and can be molded to body parts. However, they also can cause burns, start fires or give an electric shock if used incorrectly. Don't forget to turn them

off when not in use, and avoid folding sharply or wadding the pad. Never use safety pins or other sharp objects in the pad. If it is not a moisture-proof pad, be sure the area where it is applied is dry to avoid electrical shock. There is a new gel-filled pack on the market now which can be frozen or heated in the microwave or in boiling water and is reusable and inexpensive.

You can purchase a heat lamp for home use or improvise with a gooseneck lamp. Care must be taken that the lamp is in good working order, you do not touch the hot bulb, you do not get burned from leaving it on too long, and you do not fall asleep under it – possibly causing burns or a fire. Heated cloths will work if you have nothing else. They lose their heat faster and must be replaced often, but they work just as well and can be heated in a skillet on the stove, or in the oven or microwave. Just make sure they do not burn while heating.

Hot soaks, showers or baths are relaxing, relieve pain, enhance cleansing and healing of wounds or sores, and provide an easy way to medicate a large area by putting medication in the water. Hot soaks or baths or showers cannot be used with some types of wounds, especially when there are stitches. You need to check with your doctor in this case.

(part 3 in next issue)

Peter J. Roach RMT, CNMT

Introducing Low Level Laser to Our Centre

Laser pointers, hair removal, high tech surgery? No. We are only the 3rd office in Vancouver to offer a revolutionary, non-invasive (no needles), non-toxic, easily applied and highly effective alternative to curative therapy.

Make no mistake about it however. I have searched for some time to find a therapy that compliments our structural Neuromuscular therapy, having an effect at the cellular level to produce changes and healing in conjunction with biomechanics, posture and soft tissue.

But what is it you ask? Well let me tell you. Laser therapy (also known as Low Level Laser, Cold laser or Photobiotherapy) is the manipulation use of monochromatic light emission from a low intensity laser diode or an array of high intensity Super Luminous Diodes to treat musculoskeletal injuries, chronic and degenerative conditions and to heal wounds.



Look for our newsletter designed especially for Laser Therapy, titled appropriately "Laser News". This field of treatment is blooming right before our eyes. Keep up to date as to how Laser can become part of your health care program.

Peter J. Roach, RMT, CNMT