



# Sample Session Outlines for Typical Client Needs

an online resource  
created to accompany

## ***Pre- and Perinatal Massage Therapy:***

*A Comprehensive Guide to Prenatal, Labor  
and Postpartum Practice  
(Third Edition)*

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(Handspring Publishing Ltd. 2021)

**this resource links to:**

**Chapter 4, page 121**





## Sample Session Outlines for Typical Client Needs

The book's Technique Manuals have taught you individual techniques by body areas and for before, during and after giving birth. We have collected here some starting places for orchestrating those techniques with your other skills to create fluid and effective sessions.

The sequences below focus on three of the most common reasons prenatal clients seek massage therapy:

- low back and pelvic pain
- relaxation, stress reduction and help with sleeping
- upper back, neck and shoulder pain

In addition, further below are two more sample sessions:

- preparation for labor preparation
- an initial postpartum session

All of these sample session outlines follow the same format: The name of the technique and figure number – as used in the third edition of *Pre- and Perinatal Massage Therapy*. Elsewhere in these online resources we have video demonstrations for some of the book's techniques.

Those are designated with a “V” after the figure number.

These sample session outlines consist of techniques presented in the third edition, organized in a meaningful sequence, and can be fit into a typical 50 minute to an hour session format (or can be expanded and slowed down to fit a longer session format). Those therapists enrolled in our 32-hour specialization workshop, Pre- and Perinatal Massage Therapy, will learn additional techniques to fold into these sequences.



All of these techniques, and their combination into sequences, have been refined by extensive clinical use.

Use these potential routines as a starting point or a basic recipe, but don't interpret them as a required or necessary protocol. Avoid getting routine in their use by individualizing them to each client, each time you work with them. In most cases, taking into consideration general session guidelines and time requirements, there are multiple and individualized other sequences that could make sense for you and your client. Use your intake, assessment and clinical reasoning skills (see guidance on this in Chapter 8) to assist your tailoring of each session to that client's current needs and safety concerns.

Look in Chapter 4's online resources for those entitled "Session Notes" for the records of three different therapists' work with three unique pregnant clients, during and after their babies' births, including photographs documenting those sessions. We hope that this will inspire you toward a continuum of care for your clients and offer you a sense of how to create sessions based on an individual client's ever-changing childbearing needs.



## Low Back and Pelvic Pain (Sample Session Outline)

Things to keep in mind:

- This sample sequence is good for a wide variety of lower back and pelvic complaints, including symphysis pubis dysfunction, “sciatica” and similar sensations.
- Use active listening and somato-emotional integration throughout your session.
- Guide her in structural balance education (4.15, 4.16, 4.17 & V) prior to undressing.
- Complete the following techniques in sidelying position and then repeated on other side.
- For best results, wait to apply lubricant until noted in the sequence.

### SEQUENCE

*Start with client in sidelying position.*

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| 1. Breathing Enhancement                                 | 4.11 (V) |
| 2. Occiput Traction and Rocking                          | 4.14 (V) |
| 3. Cervical Transverse Rocking                           | 4.12 (V) |
| 4. Lumbosacral Joint Decompression (Passive Pelvic Tilt) | 4.22     |
| 5. Pelvic Girdle Decompressions                          | 4.33     |
| 6. Hip Joint Decompression                               | 4.46 (V) |
| 7. Sacroiliac Joint Rhythmic Deep Tissue—Knee Vector     | 4.38     |



8. Sacroiliac Joint Rhythmic Deep Tissue—Foot Vector 4.39
9. Paravertebral Deep Tissue Sculpting 4.23
10. Swedish massage to back (apply lubricant to back only)
11. Laminar Groove Inching 4.19 (V)
12. Foot Reflexive Zone Therapy 4.13
13. Lateral Pelvis Deep Tissue Sculpting 4.20 (V)
14. Lumbosacral Joint Decompression  
(Passive Pelvic Tilt) 4.22
15. Pelvic Alignment Education  
(include on last side only) 4.32

*Transition client to supine or semireclining positioning.*

16. Hip Joint Internal Rotation and Rocking 4.47
17. Symphysis Pubis Rebalancing 4.41-42
18. Lumbar lengthening 4.21

*After your client is dressed again, perform baby lift (see online resources for Chapter 4) and review structural balance education.*



## Relaxation, Stress Reduction, and Help with Sleeping (Sample Session Outline)

Things to keep in mind:

- This sequence is also helpful for relieving normal pregnancy-induced edema.
- Use active listening and somato-emotional integration throughout your session.
- Guide her in structural balance education (4.15, 4.16, 4.17 & V) prior to undressing.
- Complete the following techniques in supine or semireclining, depending on trimester and her comfort level when supine for an extended period.
- For best results, *wait* to apply lubricant until noted in the sequence.

### SEQUENCE

*Start with client in supine or semireclined position.*

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Breathing Enhancement                                       | 4.11 (V)    |
| 2. Occiput Traction and Rocking<br>(adapted to semi-reclining) | 4.14        |
| 3. Pectoral Girdle Mobilizations                               | 4.24-25 (V) |
| 4. Occiput Traction and Rocking repeated                       | 4.14        |
| 5. Cervical Transverse Rocking                                 | 4.12        |
| 6. Pectoral Girdle Deep Tissue Sculpting                       |             |



- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| (in areas you've assessed to be in need)                                   | 4.26-30     |
| 7. Arm Swedish Massage (apply lubricant to arm)                            | 4.48        |
| 8. Abdominal Massage (apply lubricant to abdomen)                          | 4.18 (V)    |
| 9. Hip Joint Infinity Mobilization<br>(adapted to semireclining)           | 4.44-45 (V) |
| 10. Hip Joint Decompression  | 4.46        |
| 11. (or, alternate to previous)<br>Hip Joint Internal Rotation and Rocking | 4.47        |
| 12. Anterior Hip Deep Tissue Sculpting                                     | 4.43        |
| 13. Leg Swedish Massage (apply lubricant to leg)                           | p. 145 (V)  |
| 14. Foot Reflexive Zone Therapy  | 4.13        |

*Transition client to sidelying position for these techniques, choosing her most comfortable side.*

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 15. Lumbosacral Joint Decompression (Passive Pelvic Tilt)          | 4.22       |
| 16. Autonomic Sedation Sequence 3-1-1<br>(apply lubricant to back) | 4.8-10 (V) |
| 17. Swedish massage to back  |            |
| 18. Laminar Groove Inching   | 4.19       |

*After your client is dressed again, show her how to create a supportive, comfortable sidelying position in bed.*



## Upper Back, Neck and Shoulder Pain (Sample Session Outline)

Things to keep in mind:

- This sequence is also useful for other issues related to the area – ribcage pain, shortness of breath, hand and arm numbness, etc.
- If your client has heartburn, modify for semireclining position and work stomach and chest foot zones.
- Use active listening and somato-emotional integration throughout your session.
- Guide her in structural balance education (4.15, 4.16, 4.17 & V) prior to undressing.
- Complete the following techniques in sidelying position, and then repeat on the other side.
- For best results, *wait* to apply lubricant until noted in the sequence.

### SEQUENCE

*Start with client in sidelying position (for the duration of this sequence).*

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Breathing Enhancement                 | 4.11 (V)    |
| 2. Occiput Traction and Rocking          | 4.14 (V)    |
| 3. Cervical Transverse Rocking           | 4.12 (V)    |
| 4. Pectoral Girdle Mobilizations         | 4.24-25 (V) |
| 5. Pectoral Girdle Deep Tissue Sculpting | 4.26-30     |
| 6. Ribcage Deep Tissue Sculpting         | 4.34        |
| 7. Ribcage Trigger Points                | 4.35        |



- (special attention at rectus abdominus attachments)
8. Pectoral Girdle Cross-fiber Friction 4.31  
(apply lubricant to friction locations only)
  9. Wrist and Flexors Deep Tissue Sculpting 4.49
  10. Wrist Passive Movements 4.50
  11. Wrist Acupressure p. 148 & 7.3 (V)
  12. Wrist Retinaculum Cross-fiber Friction 4.51  
(apply lubricant to arm)
  13. Arm Swedish Massage 4.48
  14. Paravertebral Deep Tissue Sculpting 4.23 (V)
  15. Swedish to back (apply lubricant to back)
  16. Pelvic Girdle Decompressions 4.33
  17. Lumbosacral Joint Decompression (Passive Pelvic Tilt) 4.22
  18. Swedish to legs (briefly) (apply lubricant to leg) p. 145 (V)
  19. Foot Reflexive Zone Therapy 4.13  
(emphasis on spine, neck, shoulder, arm ribcage reflex areas)

*After your client is dressed again, review structural balance and breathing enhancement education.*



## Labor Preparation (Sample Session Outline)

Things to keep in mind:

- Use active listening and somato-emotional integration throughout your session.
- Guide her in structural balance education (4.15, 4.16, 4.17 & V) prior to undressing.
- Complete these techniques in semireclining position.
- For best results, *wait* to apply lubricant until noted in the sequence.

## SEQUENCE

*Start with client in semireclined position.*

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. Breathing Enhancement<br>(focusing on correcting any paradoxical breathing) | 4.11 (V)   |
| 2. Thigh Adductors Passive Relaxation  | 5.14       |
| 3. Hip Joint Decompression   | 4.46 (V)   |
| or, alternatively: Hip Joint Internal Rotation & Rocking                       | 4.47       |
| 4. Anterior Hip Deep Tissue Sculpting  | 4.43       |
| 5. Abdominal Massage (apply lubricant to abdomen)                              | 4.18 (V)   |
| 6. Leg Swedish Massage (apply lubricant to legs)                               | p. 145 (V) |
| 7. Foot Reflexive Zone Therapy   | 4.13       |

*Switch to sidelying and perform all of the following techniques that you are able to do on both sides without making a third positional change.*



- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 8. Autonomic Sedation Sequence 3-1-1                     | 4.8-10 (V) |
| 9. Lumbosacral Joint Decompression (Passive Pelvic Tilt) | 4.22       |
| 10. Occiput Traction and Rocking                         | 4.14 (V)   |
| 11. Cervical Transverse Rocking                          | 4.12 (V)   |
| 12. Spinal Rocking                                       | 4.40 (V)   |

*After your client is dressed, reinforce structural balance education and breathing enhancement.*

*Allow 15-20 minutes to teach her or her partner how to do several labor supportive techniques described in Chapter 5, such as:*

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 13. Prenatal perineal self-massage     | p. 159     |
| 14. Abdominal Effleurage for Labor     | p. 187     |
| 15. Sacral Counterpressure             | 5.13 (V)   |
| 16. Labor Stimulation Points           | 5.12       |
| 17. Cervix and Pelvic Floor Relaxation | p. 188 (V) |
| 18. Grounding Hold                     | 5.11 (V)   |



## Postpartum Session (Sample Session Outline)

Things to keep in mind:

- Use active listening and somato-emotional integration throughout your session.
- Guide her in structural balance education (4.15, 4.16, 4.17 & V) prior to undressing.
- Complete these techniques in supine position. Modify procedures relative to degree of post-Cesarean recovery, until after 8-10 weeks postpartum, and for supine position.
- For best results, *wait* to apply lubricant until noted in the sequence.

### SEQUENCE

*Start with client in supine position.*

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Foot Reflexive Zone Therapy  | 4.13                   |
| (focus on pelvis/uterus areas, and areas of discomfort and dysfunction) |                        |
| 2. Diastasis recti evaluation   | (see online resources) |
| 3. Uterine Fundal Massage   | 6.16 (V)               |
| (only necessary if seeing client in first two weeks postpartum)         |                        |
| 4. Uterine Positioning  | 6.17                   |
| 5. Abdominal Kneading (apply lubricant to abdomen)                      | 6.9                    |
| 6. Abdominal Vibration  | 6.10                   |
| 7. Cesarean Scar Massage  | 6.13A-D                |



8. Iliopsoas Structural Balancing	6.14
9. Abdominal Trigger Points	6.12 (V)
10. Abdominal Tapotement	6.11
11. Occiput Traction and Rocking	4.14 (V)
12. Cervical Transverse Rocking	4.12 (V)
13. Pectoral Girdle Mobilizations	4.24-25 (V)
14. Pectoral Girdle Deep Tissue Sculpting	4.26-30
15. Arm Swedish Massage (apply lubricant to arm)	4.48
16. Wrist Passive Movements	4.50
17. Wrist Retinaculum Cross-fiber Friction	4.51
18. Wrist and Flexors Deep Tissue Sculpting	4.49
19. Lumbar lengthening	4.21

*Transition your client to a seated position on a stool or bench.*

20. Spinal Seated Fascia Stretching	6.15A&B
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*After your client is dressed, remind her of standing structural balance education and guide her alignment as she does childcare activities.*