

# Abdominal/Belly Massage Self Care Guide

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The intention of these techniques is to restore proper position to your uterus and abdomen to improve the flow of blood, lymph, nerve impulses and circulation. These massage techniques serve to assist the body's innate healing ability by removing obstacles to homeostasis, or balance within. These two areas must be simultaneously addressed with this treatment to bring about healing and return of optimal functioning to both the upper and lower abdomen.

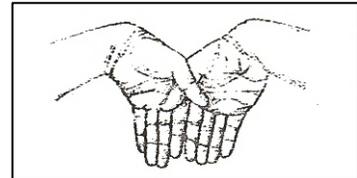
## Preparation

- Create a quiet, peaceful environment to relax for 5-10 minutes and empty your bladder.
- Wear loose fitting clothing with no zippers or buttons over the abdomen.
- Lie on your back and place a pillow under your head and your knees (if desired) to soften your abdominal muscles. (If you have uterine prolapse, it may also be helpful to also place a pillow under your hips to elevate your pelvis.)
- Breathe deeply and slowly for a few moments until you feel relaxed.

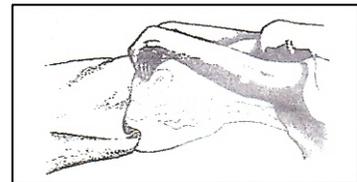
## Lower Abdomen Pelvis Massage

In her proper, or optimal position, your uterus lies centered in the middle of your pelvis below your navel and about one and a half inches above your pubic bones. She is held in place by your muscles, vaginal wall and ligaments that attach to the front, back and sides of your pelvis.

1. Bring both of your hands together with your index fingers side by side and tuck one thumb under the other. Bring all eight fingers close together, slightly ~ and relaxed. > See diagram
2. Through your clothing or a sheet locate where your pubic bones meet in the middle with your index fingers, and place these fingers on the small indent. Slowly slide off the top of your pubic bones while keeping your fingernails in contact with the bones. Press as deeply as it is comfortable for you into the soft tissue space above your pubic bones. > See diagram



- (If your uterus is too low, you will feel resistance like the consistency of a water balloon.)
3. While maintaining the same pressure, gently and slowly move your fingertips toward your navel, stopping about 2 inches below the navel. Repeat this stroke from your pubic bone to just below your navel:



4. With the same hand position, move your fingertips to one side of your pelvis with one little finger on the end of one of the pubic bones and the other little finger on your hip bone. Again, bring all eight fingers close together, slightly bent and relaxed. Slowly slide off the bones and press as deeply as it is comfortable for you into the soft tissue space of the pelvic bowl.
5. While maintaining the same pressure, gently and slowly move your fingertips toward your center. Keep your hand next to the pubic bone in contact with that bone as you stroke toward the center. Repeat this stroke from your pubic bone to your navel.

Repeat #4 and #5 on the other side of the pelvis. (If your uterus is tilted to the left or right, you will feel resistance like the consistency of a water balloon before you get to the midline.) Note: When your uterus is in position, you will feel a deep, open space above the pubic bone as well as a deep, open space on each side. The space on each side should be very similar when the uterus is centered.

**REPEAT: Strokes for a total number of 30 strokes – 10 strokes in each area of the lower pelvis for 10 repetitions. Feel free to add more strokes or less depending on your body's response to the massage.**

## Upper Abdomen

The upper abdominal massage is just as important to learn as is the pelvic massage. Organs, just like any other part of our bodies can become congested, malpositioned, stagnant and overloaded with cellular debris and toxins.

6. Apply oil or lotion to your fingertips. With your hands - face the palms of your hands toward each other and curl your fingers so that the fingernails of all eight fingers touch. Place your fingertips on the center of your upper abdomen just below the ribcage. Press as deeply as it is comfortable for you into the soft tissue space. While maintaining the same pressure, gently and slowly move your fingertips toward your navel.
7. Place your fingertips on one side of your upper abdomen just below the ribcage. Press as deeply as it is comfortable for you into the soft tissue space. While maintaining the same pressure, gently and slowly move your fingertips diagonally

toward your navel. **Repeat this stroke from** each side of your rib cage to your navel. If you find areas of tenderness, pain or congestion, adapt your pressure so that you can continue to relax.

**REPEAT: Strokes for a total number of 30 strokes – 10 strokes in each area of the upper abdomen for 10 repetitions. Feel free to add more strokes or less depending on your body’s response to the massage.**

### Additional Massage Strokes:

**Working the Cement Post** – there is an area down the middle of the abdomen from the sternum to the navel that can hold restrictions, tension and stress. We refer to this as the “cement post”. After performing the above massage strokes, take time to gently massage from the sternum to the navel with zig zag motions – up and down for a count of 6 (more or less) depending on your personal experience.

**Clockwork spiral** – starting at the navel, gently massage in a circular manner working out ward with larger circles and then back in to the navel with smaller circles.

**Lymphatic stroke** – starting with both hands/palms at your hips/groin area, gently (the weight of a nickel) rub your hands in a circular motion for the count of 5. Then bend your knees and put your feet on the bed, reach as far as you can with your hands to your knees and gently glide your hands back to your navel, 5-10x.

Breathe and continue to massage the area. If pain persists, even with a light touch, stop for now. If you experience pain initially, it should gradually diminish with each self-care massage. These techniques are best performed as you exhale. Initially, you may feel discouraged if you feel that you are not doing the self care massage correctly. Simply follow these instructions as best you can. After practicing the self Care day after day, you will become more familiar with the massage and more confident in your touch. Tara will guide and support you to ensure you are achieving the results you are looking for.

### After Self Care

- Drink plenty of water to hydrate your body and support the healing process.
- Honor your experience by paying attention to the changes and responding with what you need. For example, write your feelings in your journal or diary or share them with a trusted friend or therapist. .
- Repeat the self-care massage everyday except 5 days prior to and during your period or as advised by Tara.

### When To Modify or Avoid Self Care Massage

This modality to improve the health and well being of your body, mind and spirit. When done effectively, these techniques are safe to perform for your self under my guidance and support. I am aware there are times when these techniques need to be either modified or stopped. Please consult with me if you have any questions or concerns.

- 5 days prior to and during your menstrual bleeding, do not deeply massage the uterus, but you may continue doing the rest of the abdominal massage strokes, over the lymph nodes and the upper abdomen. It is okay to very gently and superficially massage over the uterine area prior to and during your period.
- During pregnancy, self care massage can be appropriately adapted after you complete your 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy.
- After abdominal surgery, you must wait until the tissue has healed, and your physician or health care provider has cleared you for normal activity. For example with Cesarean birth and hysterectomy, 8-10 weeks after surgery is usually recommended.
- If you are taking pain medications or other substances that may mask discomfort and pain, self care massage is contraindicated.
- If you have an intra uterine device (IUD) for birth control, direct massage over the uterus is contraindicated.
- If you are under treatment for abdominal or pelvic infection or cancer, self care massage is contraindicated.
- If you experience intense emotional pain during the self care, it is important that you seek professional support to help you pass through the gates of emotional healing.
- If you experience intense pain or discomfort during the self care massage or have a sudden onset of abdominal pain. Stop your self care.
- If you use a pessary for organ prolapse – you must remove this before applying these massage techniques.
- If you are under the treatment of GERD (gastro esophageal reflux disorder) proceed with caution. Discuss this with your practitioner.
- If you are working with Fertility Enhancement, direct massage is contraindicated if you suspect a pregnancy.

Notes: