

# YOGA MASSAGE

## For Pregnancy, Labor & Postpartum

The School of Thai Acupressure's  
Collection of Treatment Protocols for  
Common Pregnancy & Postpartum  
Complaints & Discomforts



A Practitioners' Guide  
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# HEARTBURN

1st, 2nd and 3rd trimesters

## What is pregnancy heartburn?

- Many women experience heartburn for the first time during pregnancy. Although it is harmless, it can be quite uncomfortable, disturb sleep, may become painful, and trigger vomiting.
- Heartburn (Acid reflux) is a pain or a burning sensation that rises from the stomach through the chest to the throat. This happens when stomach acids rise into the esophagus. The esophagus is the muscular tube that allows food to travel from the mouth to the stomach. Heartburn is worse when lying down.
- According to a heartburn prevalence study with 607 women, 22% experienced heartburn during the 1st trimester, 39% during the 2nd trimester and 72% during the 3rd trimester.
- The common belief that symptoms decrease in the last weeks of pregnancy has not been observed.

## Possible causes

- The pregnancy-induced fluctuations in progesterone (and also estrogen) trigger heartburn.
- Progesterone slows down digestion, causing the stomach to produce less digestive acids. Less stomach acids (though it may seem counterintuitive) slows down digestion, creating acid reflux.
- Progesterone inhibits uterine contractions during pregnancy and relaxes the smooth muscle in the uterus. This allow it to grow to accommodate the baby. This process is not selective and relaxes other smooth muscles and tissues in the body. It also relaxes the valve (esophageal sphincter) at the lower end of the esophagus that keeps digestive acids in the stomach, allowing acid reflux to occur.
- Later in pregnancy, the growing baby compresses the stomach, pushing stomach acid and possibly under-digested content back up into the esophagus.

## TCM point of view

- One can view pregnancy heartburn as difficulty of the digestive track to keep its natural flow downward, due to an upward flow of blood to the breast for the creation of milk.
- Additional factors are a natural increase of heat in the pregnant body together with excessive emotional stress and acidity in the upper abdomen and chest.

## Some advice

- Correct diet and eating habits are necessary. Eat small meals and sit straight. Try to make your main meal at lunchtime. Try to avoid eating a couple hours before going to bed. Chew slowly. Sip water and liquids throughout the day, but avoid liquids while you eat. This dilutes your digestive juices. Do not lay down after a meal, but take a walk instead. Avoid tight fitting clothes that puts even more pressure on your stomach.
- Avoid fatty, fried, hot, acidic foods including: Alcohol, sugar, coffee, chocolate, onions, tomatoes, citrus fruits, mustard and large quantities of meat that may takes hours to digest. Iron supplements can cause heartburn.
- Eat alkalizing foods that help prevent heartburn: Cucumber, almonds, avocado and most vegetable, particularly green papaya, fresh ginger and fermented foods (raw sauerkraut, kim chi, kefir).
- Drink raw apple cider vinegar (1-2 teaspoon vinegar with 1 cup water). Sip throughout the day and an hour before meals), fresh lemon in water, coconut water and yogurt. Drink ginger, fennel, anise, peppermint and chamomile teas.
- Use orange, bergamote, and or lavender oils mixed or single in an evaporator or 2 drops of each in 1 tablespoon of almond oil and apply on acupressure points Ren -12 and Ren - 6.
- Sleep with your torso propped up on folded blankets or hard pillows.

## General instructions:

- In your treatment, use pressure and stretches to create more space for the stomach by working the middle back, belly, ribs cage and shoulder girdle. Use twists to work the middle back, ribs cage and "stomach belt". Use extensions to stretch the front middle line from the throat to the pubic bone. Use tractions to stretch the torso away from the lower body.
- Focus on the prescribed lines and points to release the "stomach belt", encourage a downward flow in the digestive track and to release excess chest and abdominal emotional stress, heat and acidity.
- Your treatment will relieve the symptoms for a week or so. Your client will need a weekly treatment to relieve the increasing pressure on the stomach put by the growing baby.

## Yoga poses:

Use Thai massage postures, stretches and acupressure that are inspired by these Yoga Asanas. These asanas may be performed only under the permission, guidance and support of a Yoga teacher.



legs up the wall pose



Reclining bound angle pose



Reclining cross-legged pose



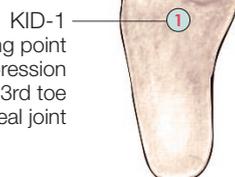
Reclining hero pose

## SUPINE POSITION

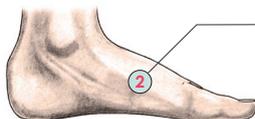
1. Give her a foot massage and thumb press points 1 and 2

Press between 5-15 seconds and release pressure. Repeat 1-3 times. Use the amount of pressure that suits her. Work the foot diaphragm area.

A usually very pleasant, relaxing point at the sole of the foot, in a depression immediately posterior to the 3rd toe metatarsophalangeal joint



KID-1



Inner foot-7 (SP-4)  
2 fingers anterior to Inner ankle • below the base of the 1st metatarsal bone

2. Palm press her inner leg and focus on the 1st line (SP)

Use your body weight as you start at the foot, work up to the groin and back down. Repeat 1-3 times.



Steps 1-2, p.80



### 3. Palm press her outer leg and thumb press lines 1 and 2 (ST)

Start at the foot, palm press up to the hip and back down. Repeat 1-3 times. Now, thumb press up and down and repeat 1-3 times.



Steps 1-3, p.84



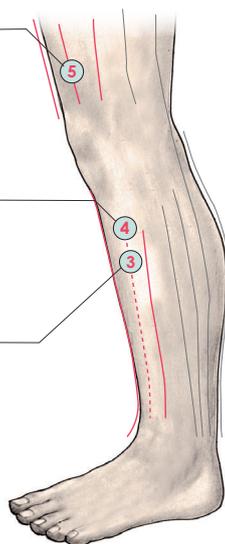
### 4. Thumb press points 3-5

Press between 5-15 seconds. Release pressure. Repeat 1-3 times. Use the amount of pressure that suits her.

Leg 2nd outer line-5 (ST-34)  
2 fingers above the patella • in a shallow depression between the muscles rectus femoris and vastus lateralis • or alternatively, just anterior to the iliotibial tract

Leg 2nd outer line-3 (ST-36)  
4 fingers below the lower border of the patella • on the tibialis anterior muscle, about 1 finger lateral to the tibia crest • radiates to the foot

(ST-37)  
1 finger width from the anterior crest of the tibia • 6 fingers below the patella. press on tibialis anterior



### 5. Give her a gentle abdominal massage

Use your full hand to pull and push down and up, from side to side **but do not press on the belly directly and do not use penetrating pressure.**



Focus on gently pulling the belly down and away from the ribs cage.  
Steps 1-2, p.98-99

### 6. Give her a chest massage

Use gentle techniques that you are familiar with or follow the instructions. Focus on massaging and introducing movement to the ribs cage especially its lower half. Gently stroke the 2 sides of the xiphoid process down 10-20 times. Work on the skin level.  
Steps 1-4, p.102-103



### 7. Try these stretches

Use the range of twist that suits her. Pull her lower back with your hands or with a towel to bring her to a mild Yoga bridge pose and gently rock her.



Steps 24-25, p.86-87

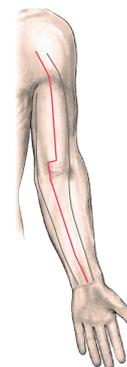
Steps 1-3, p.96P.120,121

### 8. Palm press her inner arm and thumb press Mid-in-arm line (PC)

Use your body weight as you start at the wrist and palm press up to the armpit and back down. Repeat 1-3 times. Now, thumb press Mid-in-arm line up and down and repeat 1-3 times.

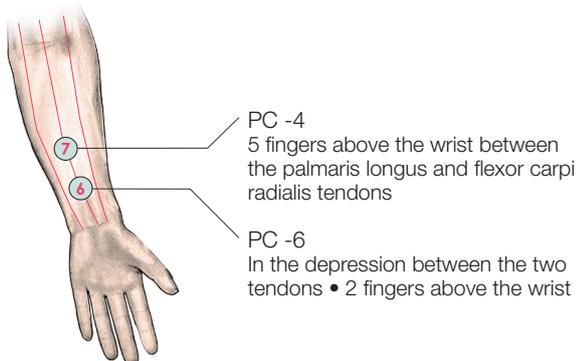


Steps 1+3, p.110



### 9. Thumb press point 6 and 7

Press between 5-15 seconds and release pressure. Repeat 1-3 times. Use the amount of pressure that suits her.



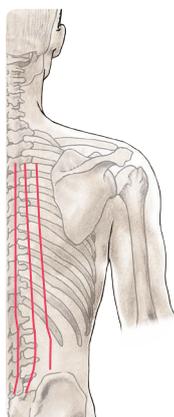
### SIDE POSITION

### 10. Palm press her back and thumb press the 3 back lines (Jiaji, BL1&2)

Palm press from the sacrum up to C-7 and back down. Repeat 1-3 times. Now thumb press the lines up and down and repeat once or twice.

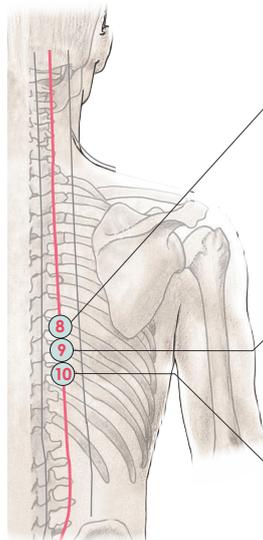


Steps 1-4, p.152-154



### 11. Thumb press points 8-10

Use your thumb to gradually build pressure on the point. Press for 5-15 seconds. Release pressure and repeat once or twice. Use the amount of pressure that suits your client.



**Ancient point 10**  
*When heartburn*  
(BL-17)

1.5 fingers lateral to the gap between the spinous processes of T-7 and T-8  
• just above the level of the lower tip of the scapula  
• on the highest point of the paraspinal muscles

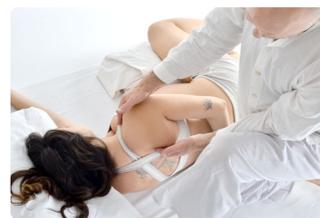
2nd back-13  
(Weiguanxiashu)

1.5 fingers lateral to the spinous process of T-8  
• below the level of the lower angle of the scapula  
• on the highest point of the paraspinal muscles

2nd back-14 (BL-18)

1.5 fingers lateral to the spinous process of T-9  
• 2 fingers below the lower angle of the scapula  
• on the highest point of the paraspinal muscles

### 12. Try all shoulder and shoulder blade mobilizations and stretches



Steps 4-14 p.158-162

### 13. Try these stretches

Work slowly and gently when applying stretches. Only use stretches which are comfortable for her.



Steps 1-6, p.180-182

### SUPINE POSITION

### 14. Try these stretches

Work slowly and gently when applying the stretches. Stop if a stretch is uncomfortable for her.



Steps 1, 6, 7, 8 p.202-205

### SITTING POSITION

### 15. Try these stretches

Stop when she dislike a stretch.



Steps 5, 7, 8, 9 p.210-212

Steps 13-26 p.216-219