



# International Journal of Research in Academic World

Received: 28/November/2025

IJRAW: 2026; 5(1):43-45

Accepted: 10/January/2026

## Therapeutic Benefits of Rocking Chair

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### Abstract

Benjamin Franklin invented the Rocking Chair. A Rocking chair is a type of chair with two curved bands of wood (also known as rockers) attached to the bottom. The chair contacts with the floor at two points only, giving the person the ability to rock back and forth by shifting weight lightly with his/her feet. Rocking chair is previously a part of all our babyhood. We were playing in a rocking chair, often. Rocking Chair" is a tool used once as a chair for relaxation in elders. Now science has entered into the rocking chair to analyse the movement, its benefits. In the competitive world of today, we want each and every child to be healthy, mentally as well as physically. For this reason, scientifically proven advantages are prescribed to pregnant women also. It can be understood that, Nutrition, Genetics & Environment plays vital role in neural development of foetus. At six to seven weeks, embryo's brain & Nervous system begins to develop. The brain grows at a rate of 2,50,000 neurons per minute for next twenty-one weeks. It is thus advisable for any pregnant women, to nourish herself in environment related factors also to bear healthy young & successful breeding. This study done at RMMCH (GCMCH) describes the health benefits of rocking chair, for pregnant women in special as well as for all age group.

**Keywords:** Rocking chair, pregnant women, neural development of foetus.

### Introduction

Rocking chairs are most commonly made of wood. The basic structure of the rocking chair has remained the same. Unlike a conventional chair with four points of contact, the rocking chair allows its occupant to sway back and forth using minimal shifts in their weight. A simple rocking chair, due to the arcing motion, will need enough space to effectively move. Every widely available rocker is made from "hardwood", so that humidity changes doesn't create any crack in chair.



President John Kennedy, often used a rocking chair on Air Force One to help relieve his back problems. He owned 14 rocking chairs, which he relied on for their palliative effects. His rockers were relatively simple. They were made with oak frames and woven-cane seats and backs. The chairs are still available today. His best rocking chair's official name is the "Carolina Rocker"

### Therapeutic Benefits of Rocking Chair

Rocking can be an effective therapy for treating numerous physical conditions, including arthritis, back pain, it can help speed recovery after surgery. The increase in blood circulation sends more oxygen to the knees and joints which results in providing relief from the pain & inflammation process. Improved circulation is also good for the heart and can help combat cardiovascular disease and other circulatory ailments. Due to its sensory qualities, a rocking chair can even help relieve symptoms of depression. It's an easy way to burn approximately 150 calories an hour. The act of rocking stimulates the balance mechanism in the inner ear. Science has proven that a rocking motion tends to strengthen the muscles and joints.

A rocking chair can be an ideal place for a short nap for seniors who feel drowsy. Seniors can even pair rocking chair exercise with a favourite activity, such as knitting or reading. Improved balance can help prevent frequent falls. Moreover it

can help to lessen Parkinson's symptoms. This provides a familiar, consistent setting and can produce feelings of calmness. Anyone, when they are in emotional distress the smooth and calming motion of rocking chair releases endorphin. In a rocking chair the blood pressure falls and respiration slows. Relieving pressure by gently rocking backward is the advantage of rocking chair, there was no safe way to produce this motion

Stereotypic movement disorder is a condition in which a person engages in repetitive, often rhythmic, invariant behaviour pattern with no obvious goal or function. Stereotypic behaviour is evaluated in terms of frequency and duration. In some ASD children, the movements may result in self-injury. For this behavior to be considered as a disorder, the repetitive movements must continue for at least four weeks, and they must interfere with the person's normal daily functioning. It is more common in childhood or adolescence than adulthood but can occur at any age and is more common in boys than in girls. The treatment approach used for children with this condition are aimed at reducing stress that may trigger the movements and changing behaviors. Controlled sensory input can be a way of Occupational Therapy treatment, using Swings, Rocking on Therapy balls, as per Occupational Therapists plan of treatment, ROCKING CHAIR can also be used.

The physical act of rocking taps into a pleasure center located in the brain. Studies conducted at the Medical College of Virginia on 'kinetic therapy' The constant, gentle motion of a rocking chair starting with TEN minutes a day on first week, increasing the exercise period by 10 minutes in the next week, "settles a natural rhythm that harnesses incredible powers of regeneration", says Dr. Heinrich Addleheim of the Kinetic Therapy Clinic.

### Pregnancy and Rocking Chair

Research in women by Dr. Massey, Director of clinical nursing at the University of Texas, proved that those who

practice rocking experienced an earlier return of bowel function than those who did not use rocking. Frequent use of a rocking chair reduces muscle pain, anxiety. Women, who use Rocking chair for an hour a day recover faster after a C-section delivery, reporting less gas pain after surgery & they have ability to walk faster if they have rocked in the hospital itself. Not only in pregnancies, in post natal period also, are rocking chairs much beneficial. In the womb, babies are lulled to sleep by the natural movement of their mother's body but after delivery, rocking chairs re-create some of this natural movement and help newborns to relax. The back & forth motion of a rocking chair provides social, emotional and motor development. It helps calm crying babies, makes them smile and hold their heads up. Its roomy seat and armrest are high enough to make breastfeeding or bottle feeding easy and comfortable. Rocking chairs re-create some of this natural movement and help newborns to relax. This helps in getting the babies to sleep and reduces the odds of apnea, according to T. Farrimond, Rocking Chair Therapy website. Any vein in our body may become varicose, but the veins most commonly affected are those in legs and feet. That's because standing and walking upright increases the pressure in the veins. But in pregnancy, increases in hormone levels and blood volume, causes veins to enlarge. In addition, the enlarged uterus adds increased pressure on the veins. This problem could minimize, when rocking chair is used.

A rocking chair in pregnancy could be made by combining comfort, effort. It is essential to select a best chair. A good rocker is built with a back support that provide a wide range of sitting angles for pregnant women & a wide arm in chair gives perfect angle for comfort. A footstool may be necessary for some women to rest feet for avoiding swelling in between rocking. Anne Ayres recommends that at the start of the 10th week of pregnancy, women can use rocking chair 5-10 minutes twice a day.



For fulfilling certain health benefits to pregnant women, we used Rocking chairs in the treatment. Pregnant women, used the rocking chair. Participants in this study were practicing, music relaxation & MUDRA in RMMC&H, during the headship period of Dr. S. Viswanathan, as (former) Medical Superintendent & Director of Yoga studies, RMMC&H (GCMC&H) Chidambaram.

This study adopted a pre-experimental one-group pretest-post-test design to evaluate the effectiveness of a combined non-pharmacological intervention consisting of Rocking Chair Therapy, Padma Mudra Therapy, and Music Therapy on stress and anxiety among pregnant women. A total of 30 antenatal women between 12 and 16 weeks of gestation were selected through purposive sampling from Department of

Obst & Gynaecology, RMMC&H (renamed as GCMCH at present). Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants who met the inclusion criteria received the combined therapy for 20 minutes daily over a period of two weeks. Psychological outcomes were assessed before and after the intervention using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) and the State Anxiety Inventory.

### Description of Tools

State Anxiety Inventory is an assessment tool designed to measure temporary emotional condition characterized by feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and heightened autonomic nervous system activity. It assesses how an individual feels at a particular moment, rather than a

stable personality trait. It is especially useful in intervention-based, experimental studies. In this scale, total scores range from 20 to 80 & higher scores indicate greater levels of state anxiety. For pregnant women, using the State Anxiety Inventory (Spielberger *et al.*, 1970), a 20-item self-report, anxiety levels experienced pre & post intervention was scored.

Perceived Stress Scale-10 (PSS-10) is used to assess the degree to which individuals perceive their lives (during pregnancy) as stressful, during the past one month. The PSS-10 consists of 10 self-report items, responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Total score ranges from 0-40. Higher scores indicate greater perceived stress.

### Description of Therapies Used

- **Rocking Chair Therapy:** Gentle rhythmic vestibular stimulation to induce relaxation. Ayres recommends that pregnant women begin rocking for 5 to 10 minutes twice a day, starting from the 10th week of pregnancy, to promote the development of the fetal nervous system. In Occupational Therapy, slow and steady rocking is used as a calming tool. Hence, Therapy program was devised on this base.
- **Padma Mudra Therapy:** Yogic hand gesture promoting emotional balance and calmness
- **Music Therapy:** Soft instrumental music played during sessions (Head phones used)

This therapy enhances parasympathetic activation, reducing stress and anxiety.

**Table 1:** Number of participants, are classified in following table, by gravida status (G1, G2) for THIRTY participants.

Age Group (Years)	Gravida 1 (G1)	Gravida 2 (G2)	Total
20–24	6	3	9
25–29	8	5	13
30–34	4	3	7
≥35	1	0	1

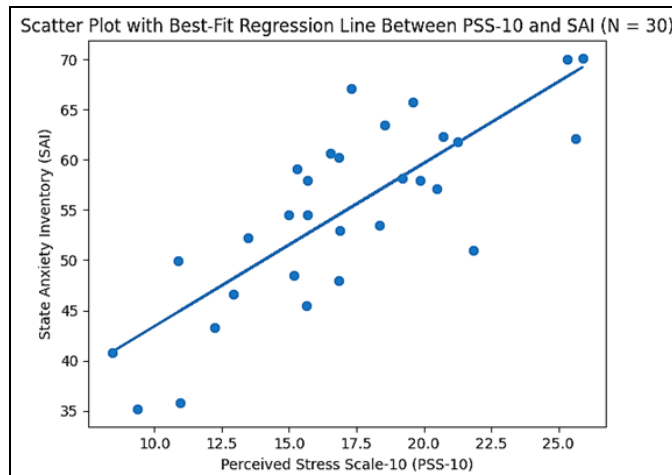
The following table indicates state anxiety among pregnant women.

### Pregnant Women (12–16 Weeks Gestation) Receiving Combined Therapy (N = 30)

**Table 2:** State anxiety among pregnant women.

State Anxiety Inventory	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention
High Anxiety	22	6
Moderate Anxiety	8	20
Low Anxiety	0	04
Total	30	30

It could be noted that, a marked reduction in high anxiety was observed following the combined therapy intervention. In pre intervention, Twenty two women were having high anxiety. After therapy, the number reduced to six women. They experienced only moderate anxiety. Similarly in preintervention, eight women reported moderate anxiety. After intervention, the symptoms reduced to low anxiety level for four women.



A scatter plot for Perceived Stress Scale-10 (PSS-10) scores and State Anxiety Inventory (SAI) scores among 30 participants. The plot demonstrates a positive linear trend, indicating that higher perceived stress is associated with higher levels of state anxiety.

A significant positive correlation between State Anxiety Inventory scores and Perceived Stress Scale-10 scores Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between state anxiety and perceived stress among 30 participants. It revealed, ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that higher perceived stress was associated with elevated state anxiety.

### Conclusion

The combined intervention of rocking chair therapy, Padma Mudra, and relaxing music was associated with a significant reduction in stress & anxiety levels among antenatal women. Hence it is suggested to use rocking in a chair as an essential exercise for pregnant women, after getting suggestions from the medical practitioner & therapist. It's Cost effective, easy to use, contains various advantages. Rocking chair could be made as essential furniture of today for its therapeutic benefits at their home. The study done proved the already said therapeutic benefits.

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