

# Chest Wall Development and Beyond: What to Watch and When to Worry

Dr. Mary Massery, PT, DPT, DSc

## Faculty

Dr. Massery has been a practicing physical therapist for 40+ years. Her doctoral research pioneered the concept of managing trunk pressures as a new way to visualize core stabilization. She has presented 1,000+ lectures and courses linking motor behaviors to breathing and postural mechanics in all 50 US states and in 18 countries. Dr. Massery has received the American Physical Therapy Association's highest clinical award, *The Florence Kendall Practice Award*, for "outstanding and enduring contributions to the practice of physical therapy," and she was named *Outstanding Alumnus of the Year* by each of her three universities. She continues to maintain a private practice in Chicago, specializing in breathing and postural dysfunction.

**Disclosure:** Mary Massery receives an honorarium from Education Resources. She has no relevant non-financial relationships to disclose.

## Course Description

Newborns, struggling to survive from prematurity, heart/lung conditions, rare syndromes, etc., work hard to breathe. This often creates atypical mechanical forces on their rapidly developing chest walls and may result in acquired chest wall deformities. We'll look at how the chest wall develops in healthy 0 - 12 month old babies and compare that to infants struggling to survive (increase work of breathing). We'll follow at-risk children for secondary chest wall deformities and reflect on clinical signs that therapists could use to screen babies/young children for earlier interventions. We will also discuss congenital chest wall deformities vs. acquired deformities. Is there a difference in how you would approach these conditions? Finally, we will follow some long term cases to see what interventions might contribute to positive postural and/or structural changes in congenital vs. acquired chest deformities.

## Learning Objectives

- Describe Identify normal chest wall development trends of 0 - 12 month, healthy, full-term infants.
- Identify adverse biomechanical forces that contribute to consequential chest wall deformities for infants/young children with conditions that cause them to increase their work of breathing or other survival strategies.
- Identify the difference between congenital and acquired chest wall deformities and how the origin of the chest deformity might change how you treat that child.
- Choose clinical screening tests for your clients to identify signs of at-risk secondary chest wall deformities.
- Correlate consequential chest wall deformities to potential adverse health and postural development impacting mobility and participation in daily activities through long-term case studies.
- Apply therapy interventions to mitigate (as able) atypical biomechanical forces on infant and young children's developing chest walls and resultant posture promoting improved health and participation in childhood activities.

## Audience

PT, OT, SLPs who work in pediatrics from birth to young adults

## Schedule Day 1:

### 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm EST (US)

6:15 – 6:30 Webinar Registration/Zoom Course Opens

6:30 – 7:30 **Focus:** Rib cage and spine anatomy of a newborn. Typically chest wall maturation in the first year of life in healthy infants. Comparisons to babies at-risk for secondary chest wall deformities. How does an increased effort to breathe adversely affect the developing rib cage?

7:30 – 8:30 **Focus:** Clinical signs of adverse chest wall development. Suggested therapy interventions. When is a referral to a specialist (therapist or doctor) warranted? Multiple long-term cases: acquired and congenital chest wall deformities. Therapeutically, what works, what doesn't.

## Financial Disclosures

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## Additional 2026 Courses by Mary Massery

- Mary Massery's LINKED: Breathing & Postural Control Part 1 (live webinar)  
March 13 and 14, 2026
- Mary Massery's LINKED: Breathing & Postural Control Part 2 (in person)  
March 28 and 29, 2026  
Chicago, IL
- When Reflux Comes Up, Everything is Affected (live webinar)  
April 7, 2026
- Mary Massery's LINKED: Breathing & Postural Control Part 2 (in-person)  
April 25 and 26, 2026  
Winter Park, FL
- Mary Massery's LINKED: Breathing & Postural Control Part 1 (live webinar)  
May 1 and 2, 2026
- Mary Massery's LINKED: Breathing & Postural Control Part 1 (live webinar)  
October 2 and 3, 2026
- When Reflux Comes Up, Everything is Affected (live webinar)  
November 16, 2026
- Mary Massery's LINKED: Breathing & Postural Control Part 1 (live webinar)  
December 4 and 5, 2026

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## Credits

Coming soon.

## Webinar Date and Time

June 17, 2026

6:30 pm ET • 5:30 pm CT • 4:30 pm MT • 3:30 pm PT (US)

Registration is for the one session. Log-in instructions and course materials will be emailed/added to your ERI account 2-3 days prior to the first date of the webinar.



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**LIVE WEBINAR:**

**Chest Wall Development in Infancy and Beyond: What to Watch and When to Worry**

**Mary Massery, PT, DPT, DSc**

**June 17, 2026**

**Course Registration Form**

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