

Abhyanga Self-Oil Massage

Abhyanga is the Sanskrit word for Ayurveda massage.

(The Sanskrit word Sneha can be translated as both “oil” and “love.” It is believed that the effects of Abhyanga are similar to those received when one is saturated with love. Like the experience of being loved, Abhyanga can give a deep feeling of stability and warmth.)

Self-oil massage has many important benefits to the health of the body and the mind. It is usually practiced in the morning as part of healthy daily routine. The benefits of Abhyanga are related to the oil properties and the physical touch.

The Benefits:

- Nourishes the entire body—prevents dehydration, decreases the effects of aging
- Softens and smooths skin; wrinkles are reduced or disappear
- Improves immune system function – builds ojas
- Assists in elimination of impurities from the body (moves toxins-ama from the tissues back into the digestive tract to be released)
- Stimulates lymphatic system -moves the lymph, aiding in detoxification
- Imparts muscle tone and vigor to the tissues of the body
- Imparts a firmness to the limbs
- Lubricates the joints-(reduces injuries to the body)
- Increases circulation
- Stimulates the internal organs of the body
- Calms the nerves – stabilizes the mind
- Relieves fatigue and stress
- Benefits sleep—better, deeper sleep
- Improves self-esteem and self-love (The process of self-massage creates a profound and loving relationship with the body, notably parts that are not often shown care or parts of the body we tend to criticize.)

How to do Abhyanga:

Oils that are used for self-oil massage are based on the dosha that you are trying to bring back into balance or reduce. Each oil has special properties that help to bring the dosha back into balance. Use food grade organic oils.

VATA=Sesame, Almond, Olive, Ghee

PITTA= Coconut, Sunflower, Olive, Ghee

KAPHA= Safflower, Mustard, Corn Ghee



Best Touch for Each Dosha:

VATA: Soothing, calming, nourishing, loving. Slow strokes, light to moderate depth, broad hand contact. Avoid deep pressure.

PITTA: Nurturing, especially when burned out. Slow, broad hand contact. Cooling, stable, light to moderate depth.

KAPHA: Strong, deep, stimulating, purifying. Fast strokes with friction.

Process:

- Place cold-processed, organic oil into an 8 oz glass bottle
- Warm your oil:
 - Pour oil into a mug and warm using a coffee-cup warmer.
 - OR
 - Boil a pan of water. Remove pan from heat and place 8oz bottle in hot water to warm oil.

VATA-Use large amounts of oil (1/4 C) and massage

PITTA-use moderate amount of oil

KAPHA-use smaller amount of oil

- Sit or stand in a warm room.
- Start from your head: place oil on top of your head and work slowly out from there in circular strokes. (spend a couple of minutes massaging your entire scalp -home to many other important marma points—points of concentrated vital energy)
- Face: Massage in circular motion on your forehead, temples, cheeks, jaws, ears/ear lobes. (always moving in a upward movement. Put a couple drops of warm oil on the tip of your little finger or on a cotton ball and apply to the opening of the ear canal. Be sure to massage your ears, especially your ear-lobes—home to essential marma points and nerve endings)
- Arms and Legs: Use long strokes on your limbs and circular strokes on the joints (elbows and knees). Always massage toward the direction of your heart
- Massage the abdomen and chest in broad, clockwise, circular motions. (On the abdomen, follow the path of the large intestine; moving up on the right side of the abdomen, then across, then down on the left side)
- Finish the massage by spending at least a couple of minutes massaging your feet. (Feet are a very important part of the body with the nerve endings of essential organs and vital marma points)
- Sit with the oil for a few minutes. The longer you let it stay on your skin, more oil will absorb and penetrate into the deeper layers of the body. (meditate, read)
- Bath or shower using a mild soap on the essential areas only.
- After bath/shower blot dry your body with the towel instead of rubbing vigorously your body dry.



Short Daily Abhyanga practice:

- Apply oil after shower daily. Towel dry your body, then apply smaller amount of oil.

Adding Aromatherapy to Abhyanga

- Adding aromatherapy in your abhyanga oil can enhance the therapeutic effects of abhyanga self-care massage. (can be used to treat stress, relieve pain and enhance feelings of calmness and relaxation)
- Aromatherapy is powerful because the sense of smell provides the quickest and easiest pathway to the brain.

