

Self-Abhyanga

The simple oil treatment
you can do at home



From the records of ancient cultures, we know that the positive effects of oil treatments have been known and appreciated since thousands of years. Physicians of Ayurveda have traditionally utilized the beneficial effects of treatments with medicinal herbal oils to prevent and cure a variety of health disorders and diseases.

Abhyanga in particular is a valuable addition to every modern person's body care, soothing the mind and helping us to be fully present in the Now.

The Sanskrit word Abhyanga simply means "anointing with oil". For us, Abhyanga represents a very gentle, pleasant, and systematic whole-body oil treatment using stroking movements. Anointing and oiling the body to improve the mental and physical condition is one of the oldest natural healing methods. Just as every bird oils its feathers every day as a protection against wind and weather, and just as every mammal protects and cares for its fur by keeping it somewhat greasy, applying oil on the skin can also have a positive effect on us humans.

Daily Self-Abhyanga

It is recommended to do a self-Abhyanga every day, to simultaneously cleanse the body and relax the mind. After all, the skin is the largest organ in the human body, connected to all internal organs via nerve pathways and reflex arcs. By gently touching our skin, we create a natural connection to ourselves and give ourselves loving attention.



At the same time, the entire metabolism is activated and the numerous transformation processes in the body are stimulated.

Abhyanga:

- stimulates the circulation;
- energizes the entire physiology;
- strengthens digestive power;
- removes toxins;
- prevents diseases;
- balances the entire hormonal system;
- softens and strengthens muscles, tissues, and joints;
- makes the skin smoother, more radiant, and younger;
- soothes the nervous system;
- improves sleep;
- strengthens emotional balance.



Self-Abhyanga – The easy oil treatment you can do at home

Upon regular application, Abhyanga improves health on all levels. First of all, you may “just” notice that you are feeling more alive, walk with more of a bounce, or that your muscles feel stronger. You may also experience less fatigue than before. If you do Abhyanga daily, you’ll probably find that you don’t catch colds as often, that your hay fever is gradually getting better, that your complexion is healthier, and that your hands and feet are warmer from better circulation. At the same time, you’ll also notice that something is changing regarding your mood and emotional well-being. This is because when metabolic waste products are reduced, the inner intelligence is better able to permeate the human physiology.

Experience it first-hand

A daily full-body Abhyanga is a treat for body and soul. It improves individual health and the radiance of the skin and increases the zest for life.

However, there are times when oil treatment is not recommended, such as immediately before or after a meal, as this would interfere with the digestive work going on in the gastrointestinal tract. Abhyanga is also not recommended during acute illnesses, as the body is fully occupied with fighting off the disease and cannot devote further energy to additional detoxification measures. For women, it is further recommended to refrain from oil applications during the first 3 days of the menstrual period.

The best time for Abhyanga is early in the morning, right after bladder and bowels are emptied.

The oil should be warm, about 40°, to better enter the skin. The easiest way to heat it up is to fill the amount you need for the day in a small container, then put that on the radiator or in a bowl with hot water.

| | VATA | PITTA | KAPHA |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|
| Type of oil | pure, ripened sesame oil; alternative: almond oil | pure, ripened sesame oil; alternative: coconut oil | pure, ripened sesame oil |
| Oil temperature | very warm | not too warm | very warm |
| Room temperature | cozily warm | comfortable | warm |
| Amount of oil | plenty; make it slick | average | sparingly |
| Stroking | very calm and slow, caressing, with flowing, movements, keeping your hands on the skin | briskly, with medium speed, keeping your hands on the skin | quick but even-paced, keeping your hands on the skin |
| Pressure | gentle, with little pressure | average | firm and strong but pleasant |

*The sesame oil should be cured and preferably it should be organic. Ripened oil is absorbed by the skin more easily. It is available e.g. from: Maharishi Ayurveda Europe. You can also buy uncured oil and cure it yourself by shortly heating it to 110 °C. Leave it to cool down before you fill it into the bottle again.



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A basic point of Abhyanga is that we should use the entire surface of the hand as much as possible, whichever part of the body we are treating. This ensures a light and even pressure over larger areas.

HEAD

Dip your fingertips into the warm oil and gently go over your scalp, under the hairs. Oil the entire scalp, face, and the ears. Stroke back and forth over the scalp several times, then thoroughly massage the ears, which have a particularly large number of reflex points. Give more attention to areas of the face where you feel it's needed.

NECK

Use straight strokes up and down. Be gentle on the throat, give more pressure to the back of the neck.

ARMS

Do the arms moving from the shoulder to the wrist. You can move in circles on the shoulder joint, the elbow and the wrist; the upper and lower arms are treated with long strokes back and forth. Women start with the left arm, men with the right arm.

HANDS

Circular motions on the back of the hand and the palm are very pleasant. Do the fingers with longitudinal strokes. Also very agreeable are movements outward from the palm, like when thoroughly washing your hands.

BREAST & BELLY

You can move back and forth over the rib cage with even strokes or circular motions. The belly should always be done in large clockwise circles, following the motion of the bowels: Begin just under the rib cage, stroking from right to left, then move down and complete the circle. Repeat several times. Doing this supports the natural movement of the bowels.

BACK

The best way to treat the back is with longitudinal strokes; any other movements are usually uncomfortable when you do a self-massage, and therefore do not lead to the desired and beneficial relaxation. Many people find it pleasant to move in small circles on the lower spine and in large circles on the buttocks.

LEGS

You can treat the legs in symmetry with both hands. Start with the hip joints and give them a little more attention, likewise the knees and ankles.

FEET

Your feet carry the full load of the body. Therefore, they should be pampered extensively. Again, remember to use flat, stroking movements – whether circular or straight – with your full hand contacting large areas wherever possible, to treat them very evenly. Also the toes and the spaces between them deserve your attention: your feet are rich in sensitive reflex zones that can invigorate all the body's organs.





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Duration of the treatment

As a timeframe for the actual oil treatment, usually 5 to 10 minutes are recommended, because the oil takes time to penetrate the epidermis. After 2 to 3 minutes, the oil starts to travel towards deeper skin layers; it reaches them after about 10 minutes. There it starts to bind to fat-soluble metabolic residues (Ama). Therefore it's best to leave the oil on the skin for at least 10 minutes. While the oil is being absorbed, you can e.g. brush your teeth or boil some water for tea. Others use this time to do a few yoga asanas or to meditate. After 20 minutes total, you can rinse off the oil with a warm bath or shower. If you don't use soap or shower lotion, you won't need to apply skin cream afterward. A pro-

TECTIVE oil film covers the skin, but without sticking to your clothing.

Wash your hair with shampoo, once or twice, depending on how much hair you have.

In any case, and for all Dosha types: Listen to your inner intelligence. After each Abhyanga, you should feel completely comfortable. Your individual experience tells you how much pressure to use, how much oil, which stroke movements, and what the temperature should be of the oil and the room.

So give yourself a treat and try your hand(s) at Abhyanga!