

How to Practice Abhyanga (Self Massage)

Abhyanga is an ancient Ayurvedic practice of self-massage that offers numerous physical and mental health benefits. Abhyanga can help you relax, improve circulation, promote skin health, and balance your doshas. Make it a regular part of your self-care routine to experience the full benefits of this ancient Ayurvedic practice. Follow these steps.

Before You Begin:

1. Choose the Right Oil: Select a high-quality, warm, and organic oil such as sesame, coconut, or almond oil. The choice of oil can be personalized based on your Ayurvedic constitution (Dosha).
2. Prepare Your Space: Find a quiet, warm, and comfortable place to perform the massage. You may want to lay an old towel or mat on the floor to catch any oil drips.
3. Warming the Oil: Heat the oil slightly by placing the container in a bowl of hot water for a few minutes. Ensure it's warm, but not too hot to touch.

The Abhyanga Process:

1. Begin at the Head: Start with a small amount of warm oil and gently massage your scalp in circular motions. Use the pads of your fingers, not your nails. This helps to relax the mind.
2. Ears and Face: Move to your ears and face. Massage the earlobes and around the eyes, using gentle strokes.
3. Neck and Shoulders: Pour more oil into your palm and massage your neck and shoulders with long, sweeping strokes. Pay attention to any tense or sore areas.
4. Arms and Hands: Continue with the arms, using long, downward strokes on the upper arms and circular motions on the joints. Pay special attention to the hands and fingers.
5. Chest and Abdomen: Move to the chest and abdomen, using gentle clockwise, circular motions. This aids digestion and relieves stress.
6. Back: Reach your back as best as you can, or seek assistance if available. Use long strokes and circular motions to cover the entire back.
7. Legs: Move on to your legs, using long strokes on the thighs and circular motions around the knees and ankles. Spend extra time on the joints.
8. Feet: Finish by massaging your feet, making sure to pay attention to the soles, toes, and heels.
9. Marma Points: If you're familiar with Ayurvedic marma points, consider applying gentle pressure to these energy points during your massage.

Post-Massage:

1. Rest and Absorption: Allow the oil to sit on your body for 15-20 minutes. You can relax during this time or practice deep breathing.
2. Shower or Bath: After the absorption period, take a warm shower or bath to wash off excess oil. Use a mild, chemical-free soap

Additional Tips:

- Perform abhyanga in the morning to energize or in the evening to relax.
- Customize the oil type and massage intensity based on your Ayurvedic constitution (Vata, Pitta, Kapha).
- Maintain a consistent routine to experience the full benefits of abhyanga.
- Be mindful and present during the massage for a calming effect on the mind.

