

## Abhyanga - Ayurvedic Daily Oil Massage

Our skin is the largest organ of our body. It weighs about 6 to 10 pounds and is about 16% of our body weight. Biologically it is a very active organ: it is alive, it breathes, it self-repairs, and it gets rid of toxins. But most important, what scientists are finding out is that the skin is the richest source of all hormones that we can find anywhere, including the hypothalamus in the brain. Also, when we stimulate the skin we can literally cause a shower of healing chemicals into our bloodstream. The most important of these are growth factors or growth hormones. If our skin is the richest source of growth factors, then we can cause these growth factors to be released into our bloodstream by simply stimulating the skin.

It is important to realize that touch is about ten times stronger than verbal or emotional contact. Like the other organs, the skin is also a seat of emotions. We can influence emotions, feelings, and desires through our skin as a result of the release of these hormones.

A 5-minute oil massage from head to toe harmonizes mind and body and creates a sense of energy and buoyancy throughout the day.

A scientific study on post-coronary patients (patients who have had heart-attacks) is indicating that if after the heart attack they receive a massage in the coronary care unit, then growth factors are released into the bloodstream. This release opens up coronary vessels and also opens up collateral blood vessels, increasing the blood supply to the heart. You can cause the same release of these growth factors through your skin by giving yourself a massage.

The Ayurvedic oil massage is said to strengthen and balance the whole physiology, improve circulation and vitality, and rejuvenate the skin.

We recommend to all our patients that they give themselves a daily oil massage before bathing in the morning. When we sleep at night, fatigue is dissolved and toxins are produced which are deposited in the colon and skin. That is why the first thing we do in the morning for personal hygiene is eliminate and bathe, preventing these toxins from backing up into the system.

### Instructions for how to do the massage

Sesame oil is the recommended oil because it doesn't allow bacteria to grow and it gets absorbed through the skin. Current research indicates that sesame oil decreases free-radical and thereby prevents aging. Sesame oil can be purchased at any grocery store. It is recommended to use unprocessed, cold-pressed sesame oil. If sesame oil is unsuitable, you can use olive oil or coconut oil. Coconut oil doesn't have to be cured or heated because it is used for its cooling properties.

1. Use comfortably warm sesame oil that has been cured. Keep a portion of your oil in a plastic flip-top bottle, and warm it each day.
2. Curing oil, a one-time process, causes the molecular structure of the oil to alter just enough so that the oil is better absorbed by the skin. Curing is done with heat. One is cautioned never to burn the oil: curing is finished when a drop of water, dripped onto the hot oil, jumps.
3. Once you are undressed, apply a small amount (to 1/2 cup) of warm oil to your entire body, allowing the oil to have maximum time of contact (10 minutes is good).
4. Using the flat of the hand, do a brisk massage. It is not a deep, kneading massage. Apply moderate pressure over most of the body and light pressure over abdomen and heart.
5. Use circular motions around the joints, and straight strokes up and down over the arms, legs and torso.
6. Follow the oil massage with a 10- or 15-minute warm bath or shower.
7. If you don't have time to do the whole massage, at least put the oil on and get in the shower and wash it off.

~ A little bit every day is better than a whole lot every other day. ~