

HOW TO RUB OIL ON YOURSELF

Sneha (oil) affused [sic] on the human organism imparts a tone and vigor to its root-principles (Dhatus), in the same manner as water furnishes the roots of a tree or a plant with the necessary nutritive elements, and fosters its growth, when poured into the soil where it grows. The use of sneha at a bath causes the sneha to penetrate into the system through the mouths of the veins (siras) and the ducts (dhamanis) of the body, as also through the roots of the hair, and thus soothes and invigorates the body with its own essence.

Under the circumstances, affusions [sic] and anointments of the body with oil or clarified butter should be prescribed by an intelligent person with due regard to one's habit, congeniality and temperament and to the climate and the season of the year as well as to the preponderance of the deranged Doshha or Doshas in one's physical constitution.

Sushruta Samhita, Vol.2, ch24:21



Daily Self-Massage - sanskrit: Abhyanga

Set aside some quiet time for your massage. 5-15 minutes is enough time to massage the oil on your body (preferably before you shower)– though if you have no time, rub the oil on your skin (instead of soap) in the shower. Do this daily.

You will need:

- **Warm room:** make this a comfortable and special time for yourself.
- **Oil:** sesame oil vatas, sunflower or coconut oil for pittas and olive or mustard oils for kaphas.
- **Squeeze bottle:** for easy access throughout the massage fill a squeeze bottle with oil
- **Hot water in a bowl or in the sink:** put the squeeze bottle in the warm water and allow the oil to warm to at least body temperature
- **Towel or mat:** choose something that you don't mind getting oily. You might want one to stand on and one to dry off with.

Abhyanga: Oil Self-Massage

- Undress completely and stand on your towel or mat.
- Starting with a small amount of oil in your hands begin to gently rub the oil into your scalp. Massage the oil into your scalp and hair with your fingertips. If you would prefer to keep the oil out of your hair simply omit the use of oil for this part of the massage.
- Vigorously work down your body until the oil has been massaged into every part of your body. Use long strokes on your limbs and circular strokes over all your joints, chest and abdomen. Cover every inch of skin, attuning to your bodily tissues with your hands. Spend extra time on areas that are less integrated (for some this is thighs, buttocks, breasts).
- Take ample time to massage the soles of your feet as this can have a particularly relaxing and soothing affect.

Rinse off the oil in the shower. Take time in the shower to allow the oil on your hands to mix with the water from the shower to massage your face and ears. Use gentle circular strokes to massage your cheeks and forehead, move out towards the ears in stroking motions around the eyes and lips. Soap is drying to the skin, including to the anus; try switching to oil instead.

