# Herbalized Oil Massage—Abhyanga

A full body, warm oil massage before showering in the morning is recommended for most everyone. This daily regimen provides a powerful preventive and rejuvenative effect on the body. This procedure is an important technique to help reconnect the physiology with its underlying biological intelligence.

**Benefits include:**

• Improving circulation in the body. Commonly a part of the body that has become stiff or flabby has poor circulation and little feeling. Ayurvedic oil massage to these areas can help re-establish proper circulation and nervous system activity.

• Providing a purifying and cleansing influence to the physiology. When we rub and press the body, we help break up the accumulated deposits of toxins and impurities that have localized in the tissues. The motion also creates heat and friction and increases the flow of fluids through the blood and lymph vessels. This helps to cleanse and open these important channels of circulation and elimination.

• Maintaining the suppleness and youthfulness of the skin. When warm oil is applied to the body, some of it is absorbed by the skin. Even after showering there remains a softness and suppleness to the skin. Oil application helps prevent the skin from becoming dry and helps to maintain its youthfulness.

• Creating a stabilizing and balancing effect on Vata. Sesame oil is one of the most balancing of all substances for Vata. Classic symptoms of Vata imbalance are fatigue and lack of mental clarity. When the entire body surface area has absorbed Ayurvedic oil and herbs, these symptoms are reduced and there is greater evenness, strength, and stability during the day.

• Increasing the secretion of hormones from the skin. These hormones, including growth hormone and endorphins, help confer strength and immunity on the system.

**Instructions for abhyanga:**

Sesame oil in which herbs have been boiled is the usual abhyanga oil. There are a variety of excellent herbalized oils available. They are discussed at the end of this appendix.

1) In the morning, heat about 1/4 cup of cured oil to slightly above body temperature. The massage should be done with the open part of the hand rather than with the fingertips. Start by rubbing the head. Place a small amount of oil on the fingers and palms and begin to massage the scalp vigorously. Spend proportionately more time on the head than you do on other parts of the body.

2) Next apply oil gently with the open part of the hand to your face and outer part of your ears. You do not need to rub these areas vigorously.

3) Rub both the front and back of the neck and the upper part of the spine.

4) You may want to now apply a small amount of oil to your entire body before proceeding. This will allow the oil to have maximum amount of time in contact with the body.

5) Next rub your arms. The proper motion is up and down over your long bones and circular movement over your joints. Massage both arms, including especially the hands and fingers.

6) A very gentle circular motion should be used over your heart. Over the abdomen a gentle, clockwise, circular motion should be used, following the colon from the right lower part of the abdomen, moving toward the left lower part of the abdomen.
7) Rub the back and spine. There will be some areas which you may have difficulty reaching.
8) Rub the legs. Like the arms, use an up and down motion over the long bones and a circular motion over the joints.
9) Finally, rub the top and bottoms of the feet. The feet are considered especially important, thus proportionately more time should be spent here than on other parts of the body. Use the open part of your hand and massage vigorously back and forth over the soles of the feet.
10) The effects will be significantly greater if you can leave the oil on the body for 15–20 minutes before taking a bath or shower. This is easily done by putting on some light clothing and doing things around the house for 15–20 minutes before showering.

**Important Additional Points!**
1. Use liquid soap to shower after abhyanga to prevent drains from clogging.
2. Buy inexpensive towels to be used to dry off after showering, and wash them separately with extra detergent and oil removing preparations.
3. Dry the towels on lower heat in your dryers to avoid combustion of any remaining oil residue under intense heat.