

Ayurvedic Daily Home Oil Massage (Abhyanga) By John Douillard, D.C.

The purpose of Ayurvedic daily oil massage, also called abhyanga, as part of the daily routine is to assist in preventing the accumulation of physiological imbalances and to lubricate and promote flexibility of the muscles, tissues, and joints. The classical texts of Ayurveda also indicate that daily massage promotes softness and luster of the skin as well as youthfulness. The following are some simple instructions to assist you in learning the Ayurvedic daily oil massage. Follow this self-massage with placing oil in your ears and nose to help prevent colds, flus, sore throats, sinus congestion and allergies.

1. **Head Massage:** Heat ¼ cup of cured oil to slightly above body temperature. Start by massaging the head. Place a small amount of oil on the fingertips and palms and begin to massage the scalp vigorously. *The massage for the head and for the entire body should be with the open part of the hand rather than with the fingertips.* Since the head is said to be one of the most important parts to be emphasized during Ayurvedic Daily Massage, spend proportionately more time on the head than you do on other parts of the body.
2. **Face and Ears:** 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 massage these areas vigorously.
3. **Neck:** Massage both the front and back of the neck, and the upper part of the spine. Continue to use your open hand, in a rubbing type of motion.
4. **Body Application:** You may want to now apply a small amount of oil to your entire body and then proceed with the massage to each area of the body. This will allow the oil to have maximum amount of time in contact with the body.
5. **Arms, Hands and Fingers:** Next massage your arms. The proper motion is back and forth, over your long bones, and circular over your joints. Massage both arms, including the hands and fingers.
6. **Chest and Abdomen:** Now apply oil to the chest and abdomen. A very gentle circular motion should be used over your heart. Over the abdomen a gently circular motion should be used, following the bowel pattern from the right lower part of the abdomen, moving clockwise towards the left lower part of the abdomen.
7. **Back and Spine:** Massage the back and spine. There will be some area which you may have difficulty reaching.
8. **Legs:** Massage the legs. Like the arms, use a back and forth motion over the long bones and circular over the joints.
9. **Feet:** Lastly, massage the bottom of the feet. The feet are considered especially important, and *proportionately more time should be spent here* than on the 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. This completes the Ayurvedic Daily Oil Massage. Ideally, about 10-20 minutes should be spent each morning on the massage. However, if this time is not available on a particular day, it is better to do a very brief massage than to skip it altogether. Once you have added this Daily Oil Massage into your daily routine, the benefits will naturally inspire you to continue it on a permanent basis

Ayurvedic Massage Oil Recipe by Alicia Randolph-Lucchesi, BA, MA, CLO

1 1/4 cups sesame oil
1/4 cup Shea oil
1/2 cup coconut oil
Dosha-balancing essential oil blend (*see below*)

Heat sesame oil in a pan with a drop off water. Once the water boils off, add remaining oils. Stir and remove from heat. Add essential oils, stir again, and pour into amber glass jars. Allow to cool completely before sealing; store in a dark, cool location.

Dosha-balancing essential oil blend (*approximately 70 drops total per above recipe*)
Follow your instincts when it comes to how many drops you choose for each oil.

Vata

sandalwood
basil
rose

Pitta

grapefruit
Rosemary
lavender

Kapha

basil
patchouli
wintergreen