



## **Abhyanga a Unique Concept of Ayurveda – A Review Article**

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### **ABSTRACT**

'The science of life' is how Ayurveda is literally defined. In Ayurvedic medicine, being free from illness is not the only definition of health; one is considered truly healthy when their body is free from illness and their mind, senses, and soul are in a condition of equilibrium that promotes happiness. It follows that preserving excellent health was essential for long life.

The term 'Samhana' has been employed by Maharishi Charaka to refer to the body's density. A compact body has well-kept joints, symmetrical and well-partitioned bones, and well-maintained blood and muscles. A person is highly powerful if their physique is well-formed; if not, they are feeble. Consequently, a patient's body compactness should be assessed during an examination.

For this reason, preserving good health has been given top priority in Ayurveda, whether through rigid regimens and particular activities or through the use of medicinal techniques like Panchakarma and Rasayana, among others. Using basic or medicated oil on a specific body region according to the need, abhyanga is a Panchakarman therapeutic method. Unknowingly, we attempt to use massage to ease whatever physical discomfort we may be experiencing.

Key words: Ayurveda, Abhyanga, Dinacharya, Samhanan, Panchakarma.

### **Introduction**

A doctor's understanding of the entire body has always been deemed necessary; otherwise, it would be deemed insufficient. In earlier times, abhyanga was a regular practice. Since it is very important for the body—improving physical growth, reducing stress, etc.—it is typically incorporated in Dinacharya. Since it is a subtype of Purvakarma and Bahya Snehana for all main Panchakarma healing processes, it has become extremely important to Panchakarmas.

Its practice and virtues are referenced in almost all classical books of Indian origin. It has been applied therapeutically and preventively with good outcomes. However, since the world changed quickly, abhyanga became a well-known Ayurvedic massage all throughout the world. Today's world moves quickly, and in order to keep up with its ups and downs, a person must run faster than they are capable of.

The modern person is drawn to easily accessible massage therapy because of all their pains and pressures. Ayurveda holds that being healthy is more than just not having any ailments; a person is considered healthy when their body is disease-free and their mind, senses, and soul are in a balanced state that allows them to be happy. Thus, it is evident that preserving excellent health was necessary for long life.

Worldwide, there are over 250 different kinds of massage treatment. Regarding the significance of Abhyanga, Ayurveda takes a stand. Now is the perfect moment to inform the world about this incredibly potent, natural, and renewing Abhyang technique. According to some, abhyanga should be performed in the anulom direction, or the direction in which hair grows. To reap the full benefits of abhyanga, one must be aware of the position of the joints, muscles (basic, insertion, and course), and posture. It is necessary to carry out massage techniques and their physiological interpretation for this reason.

Among all the senses, our skin has the biggest surface area, making it the medium for Abhyanga. The skin is most suited to receiving different signals and reacting to them. One of the first sensations to be engaged is touch. Touch has calming and restorative properties. Massage is a long-standing, traditional method of contact, healing, and well-being that has been used by humans.

Massage works on both levels on the body:

- Physiological :-

Body rubbing creates heat and increases blood circulation, affects the lymphatic system and provides more nourishment to the blood.

- Psychological:-

Through psychological touch, massage acts on the nervous system and affects the circulation of growth hormone.

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## Need of Study

Our Samhitas (Ayurvedic Classics) contain sufficient details about Abhyanga and its benefits. But there is no detailed description of the procedural techniques, as everything is described in shloka format. Then, over time, many commentators on the classics have tried their best to provide some further explanation of this process. Yet with the progress of modern science, they are now insufficient.

The demand to easily relax with a massage therapist is growing due to today's busy lifestyle and urban dwellers' dislike of the antiquated daily oil massage practice. [4] Thus, in order to distribute crystals. It is important to research what Abhyanga, or Ayurvedic oil massage, is and its health advantages.

It is crucial to understand the Shadanga body in its whole, including all of its parts, including the bone, head, muscle, tavacha, marmand dhamani kandara, etc. Since any successful treatment is built on their knowledge. The doctor needs to learn about anatomy and physiology in order to accomplish this. Even though there are many kinds of massage techniques, all effective treatments basically require a fundamental understanding of human anatomy. It is necessary to describe precisely how our body responds to oil massage therapy as the classics do not provide a proper explanation of the abhyanga's mechanism of action.

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## The importance of Twacha in Abhyanga

Another way that direct touch stimulation can be beneficial is via the lens of modern physiology. The senses shouldn't be overly agitated or overly loving, according to Acharya Vagbhata. The Charaka Samhita's first chapter on principles includes a description of how pleasure and pain impact the body: "The triple cause of mental and physical ailments is excessive use, improper time management, and use of the intellect and sense subjects." illness of the body. The body and the mind are both sites of illness and pleasure. A description of this triple cause of sickness can be found in a later section.

Excessive use of tactile objects, such as hot and cold objects, in baths, massages, and consecrations, leads to indulgence, while absolute abstinence is negative. Distorted use, uneven surfaces, injury, and dirty objects can cause pleasure and pain.

A key sensory organ, the skin is, according to contemporary human physiology. Millions of nerve endings beneath the surface of the skin act as sensors, alerting the body to changes in its environment. The senses of light touch (Meissner corpuscles) and pressure (Pacinian corpuscles), together with pain, heat, and cold, are all sensed by the body through specific receptors. It has long been known that sensory stimulation may evoke strong emotions in people. This stimulation of the senses is described as natural and pleasant in classical writings. physiology by delivering pleasure via the skin, the touch sense organ. Pleasure from touch is mediated by the limbic system, which results in the production of hormones associated with happiness and physical health. The two real master systems of the body—the endocrine and neurological systems—are calmed down by massage. As circulatory systems that connect all cells with information about bodily events, the nervous and endocrine systems offer guidance and instructions for integration and control. From the perspective of contemporary physiology, it has been discovered that massage or contact increases growth hormone release. [5]

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## Abhyanga in Ayurveda

Abhyanga therapy, an ancient practice dating back to the Vedic period, involves therapeutic considerations like dosha, dhatu, and prakriti. It helps maintain health and can be used as medicine for certain disorders. It is suitable for everyone and can be incorporated into a routine suitable for everyone. Early humans practiced this to maintain flexibility, strength, mobility, and memory.

The Sanskrit word sneha means "oil" and "love" and the effects of abhyanga are similar to the effect of saturation with love. Both experiences can give a deep sense of stability, warmth and comfort.

Ayurvedic classics describe various benefits of abhyanga, with opposite indications. Dalhana suggests applying abhyanga downwards, while Sri Kastur suggests practicing it in the direction of child development. This is because it may cause discomfort and hair breakage if applied in the opposite direction. The circular movement at joints may be due to lymph nodes and co-lateral venous networks, which can improve lymphatic and venous drainage. Overall, abhyanga is a vital aspect of Ayurvedic medicine.

The abhyanga procedure has gained great importance in clinical practice. This process of manipulating the skin and muscles is highly recommended for regular practice in Ayurveda, even for a healthy individual who is conscious of a happy healthy life. Acharya Charaka likens that wooden wheel which becomes smooth and strong with proper application of oil on regular basis and thus prevents wear and tear, similarly the application of oil to the body on daily basis i.e., Abhyanga The procedure prevents degenerative changes of the body. Body. [6]

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## Methods of *Abhyanga*

The patient is dressed in minimal clothes and placed on a Dhara table. Oil is applied to the entire body, from scalp to soles. The patient is then placed on their back, which is ideal for anointing oil to the chest, abdomen, and anterior limbs. The face is also manipulated in the same position. The patient is then advised to rest on their left side, which allows easy access to the right side of the body.

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## Indications of *Abhyanga*

### 1. *Abhyanga* as a daily routine:

It has been included in the *Dinacharya* (daily routines) by our *Acharyas* to improve the progress in health in hale and healthy. Regular practice of *Abhyanga* is mainly advocated for the purpose to maintain the physical fitness on daily basis.

### 2. *Abhyanga* in trivial manifestations:

Natural urges need to be voided as and when they manifest, otherwise they causes Imbalance of *Dosha* and produce symptoms. Suppressing these urges will produces certain symptoms. Among these some of the symptoms *Abhyanga* has been advised for the treatment and they are suppressing the urges of *Mutra*, *Shakrit*, *Shukra*, *Adhovata*, *Vamathu*, *Kshut*, *Nidra*, *Shramaswasa* etc.

### 3. Seasons wise *Abhyanga*:

*Abhyanga* is advised to protect the body from the biting cold of *Hemant Ritu*. Similarly extreme cold as well as dry weather is characteristic of *Shishira Ritu*. *Abhyanga* is beneficial in this season to counteract the detrimental effect of the cold weather.

### 4. *Abhyanga* in different diseases:

*Abhyanga* is mainly indicated in Vata predominant diseases. *Abhyanga* (Oleation) along with *Swedana* (sudation) brings down the painful and deformed body parts due to aggravated *Vata* into normalcy.

The simile given by *Acharya Vagbhata* about *Abhyanga* is worth explaining here. *Vagbhata* says that proper *Snehana* and *Swedana* given to an lifeless dry stick will help to bend the same, then what to say about the living body.

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## Contraindications of *Abhyanga*

*Abhyanga* is an efficient therapeutic as well as health promoting procedure. In spite of these therapeutic benefits *Abhyanga* is not ideal to practice in the following conditions like; from *Aama* condition), *Saamadoshha* (having vitiated dosha in *Aama* state), *Navajwara* (suffering from fever of short duration), *Santarpana Samutha Roga* (diseases caused by over nourishment), *Agnimaandya* (suffering from impaired digestive activity).

### Therapeutic utility of *Abhyanga*

*Abhyanga* is not only application of oil rather it maintains the excellence of body tissues, if the oil applied is according to the nature of the patient. So, it is recommended in normal persons for routine daily practice. Further, when the oil is selected according to disease specific in the diseased, it cures the diseases also.

This text describes various beneficial effects of certain herbs, including *Mrijaprada*, *Varnaprada*, *Twakdardhyakara*, *Vyadhikshamatwa*, *Jarahara*, *Vatahara*, *Kaphahara*, *Abhighata Sahyatva*, *Kleshasaha*, *Shramahara*, *Balavan*, *Dhatupushti Janana*, *Priyadarshana*, *Swapna Kara*, *Drishti Prasadakar*, *Pushtikara*, and *Ayushkara*. These herbs help cleanse dirt, improve body complexion, restore immunity, rejuvenate body tissues, alleviate stress, relax muscles, relieve fatigue, and promote physical strength.

### Absorption through skin

Subcutaneous absorption in humans occurs primarily through hair follicles, which are a small portion of the body's internal organs. Absorption through sweat and sebaceous glands is generally minor. When a medication is rubbed on vigorously, the quantity of substance forced into hair follicles and glands increases. Rubbing also forces material through the stratum corneum without molecular dispersion and diffusion through the barrier.

### Role of *Bhrajaka Pitta* in mode of action of *Abhyanga*

*Bhrajaka Pitta*, located in the skin, is responsible for determining the color and luster of the skin. It plays a crucial role in producing normal and abnormal skin colors and body temperatures. The *Bhrajaka Pitta* also functions like *Deepana* and *Pachana*. Substances like *Abhyanga*, *Lepana*, and *Parisheka* are absorbed and assimilated by the *Bhrajaka Pitta*, allowing them to act properly after digestion. Proper *Abhyanga* procedures can reduce skin roughness and hardness, suggesting that proper *Abhyanga* can improve skin quality by digesting it.

## KAALA FOR ABHYANGA (TIME FOR PROCEDURE)

Preparation of the patient: Early morning hours are ideal for Abhyanga Karma. The patient should be in empty stomach and the food that is consumed in the previous day should be digested properly.

SN	Name of the Dhatu (body tissue)	Penetrating time of oil
1.	Roma Kupa	300 Maatra (95 sec)
2.	Twak	400 Matra (133sec)
3.	Rakta	500 Maatra (160sec)
4.	Mamsa	600 Maatra (190sec)
5.	Meda	700 Maatra (228sec)
6.	Asthi	800 Maatra (240 sec)
7.	Majja	900 Maatra (280sec)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Abhyanga, a concept in Ayurveda, is not fully explained in the main classics due to its Sutra form and lack of manuscripts. Commentators have attempted to establish their thoughts on the Abhyanga based on the main texts. Rubbing improves female complexion, beauty, cleanliness, and suppleness, while the friction mechanism pacifies Vata and cures itches, rashes, and eruptions. The heat generated by rubbing balances cold Vata and helps liquefy impurities, facilitating elimination channels.

Acharya Charaka explains that appetite is normalized by applying sesame oil, which helps regulate digestion. The digestive fire determines the body's ability to use sesame oil through Bhrajaka Pitta. Sesame oil promotes balanced functioning by balancing Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, ensuring food is moistened and loosened for digestion. This contributes to a better life and offers numerous side-benefits.

Sesame oil enhances the functioning of sense organs by lubricating and releasing toxins, allowing tissue to become stronger and more flexible. Regular application of sesame oil can improve hearing, taste, touch, vision, and smell. Massage therapy, popular in western countries, is summarized using anatomical explanations of part-wise body massage techniques. Clinicians must know the anatomical structures related to each part to prevent damaging any structures with inappropriate techniques. Regular application of sesame oil can lead to good hearing, taste, touch, vision, and smell.

Modern pharmacology suggests that body rubbing improves skin absorption, a concept also mentioned in classical texts. Massage affects the nervous and endocrine systems, which are interconnected. Excitation of these systems can impact other body systems. Massage has local and systemic effects, affecting the nervous and endocrine systems, and increasing blood circulation to the skin. This circulation reduces muscle fatigue, soreness, and aids in the removal of toxins and waste products from the muscle, thereby relieving muscular tightness, fatigue, stiffness, and spasms.

## CONCLUSION

Abhyanga benefits the autonomic and central nervous systems by stimulating them. It is beneficial for preventing hair root damage and aiding lymph and venous drainage in joints. Regular Abhyanga practices, particularly in Anuloma, promote hair growth and help empty vessels. Anatomical knowledge is crucial for effective Abhyanga. Regular Abhyanga practices can improve overall health.

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