

Massage of the Body

The Ten grams of oil absorbed by the body during massage provides strength equivalent to that obtained by digesting 50 gms of pure cow ghee. This clearly illustrates the importance of massage.

Oil massage provides vigour and robustness to the body and the ability to withstand strain and injury. Longevity is assured along with the arrest of premature old age.



Oil massage is an excellent remedy for aggravated vata. It strengthens the muscles and makes the body flexible and agile.

During winter one should apply mustard oil, in summer sandalwood oil or Kshirbala oil, and during the rainy season one should apply sesame oil on the body to derive special benefits.

Benefits and Advantages of Massage

The Digestive power is enhanced with regular massage and the stomach is cleansed. It strengthens all Dhatus, Rasa, blood, etc. The five sense organs and the five organs of action become extremely sensitive and potent. The aging process slows down and a person lives for a hundred years. (Sushrut, Chikitsasthana: 31)

With body-massage the skin is cleansed, made supple and lustrous, the muscles are strengthened and made free from diseases and wrinkles.

Blood circulation is improved generating strength and vigour. Afflictions of the sweat glands and the excretory system are eliminated.

The digestive system is strengthened which improves digestion and facilitates smooth and regular bowel evacuation.

A weak physique becomes robust and well built, while on the other hand excess fat, if any, is reduced, controlling obesity.

The Lungs, kidneys and intestines become stronger enabling them to excrete toxins from the body and keep it healthy.

All parts of the body receive adequate lubrication and thus become flexible and supple, facilitating a healthy growth of the body.

The body receives direct nourishment through the skin thereby gaining quick strength.

Insomnia, bodyache, headache, joint pains, tremors of the hands and feet, disorders of Vata and other related afflictions are eliminated.

The aggravated Vata is eradicated.

Not only does oil massage improve health, it also improves the appearance and protects one's youthful vigour. It is stated in the Charak Samhita that oil massage makes the skin soft, nourished and beautiful. The body becomes strong and attractive. Signs of old age are hardly noticed on the skin.

Method of Massage

Massage can be done whenever convenient during the day or night, but a minimum of three hours after meals. One should begin at the soles massaging from toes towards the heels, then upwards towards the knees, to the thighs, to the fingers and palms, shoulders, then stomach, chest, face and head, neck and waist this should be the sequence followed during the massage.

The best time for massage is early in the morning. Massage should be done only after proper bowel-evacuation. Take a stroll for a little while after massage and rest for a little while before taking a bath.

After the head, it is the ears and feet that need oil the most. Drops of oil put into the ears prevent ear diseases including deafness and protect the eardrum from the ill-effects of noise pollution; and also keeps Vata-induced diseases at bay.

An oil or ghee massage to the soles of the feet relieves fatigue and gives one deep and peaceful sleep. Pains in the legs, knees or joints and other such ailments are avoided. The soles of the feet remain soft and do not develop cracks.

One's eyesight remains good upto old age if one applies pure mustard oil everyday to the big toe of each foot before taking a bath. Eyesight is also improved by walking barefoot on grass early in the morning and eating amla.

Massage of the Head

Everyday one should lightly massage the head for 4 to 5 minutes using plain coconut oil or with amla and other herbs added to it. This makes the hair soft, black, thick and long, preventing early greying. Dandruff and hair loss are also controlled.

Advertisements lure people into buying oils marketed by commercial firms and the companies make hefty profits in the process. Most of them contain chemicals and artificial perfumes that are harmful to the hair. Do not fall prey to such hair oils and avoid being cheated. Those who spend lakhs of rupees on advertising their products are bound to recover the cost manifold from gullible consumers.

Young people do not like to apply oil to their hair because of fashion but they are only opening the doors to many afflictions in the future.

Massage on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday helps eliminate many illnesses and enhances facial beauty.

When to Avoid Massage

Maharshi Vagbhatta states,

Anyone suffering from indigestion caused by immature Rasa, afflicted by Kapha disorders, or one who has undergone body-cleansing by the process of vomiting or purgation should refrain from massage on that particular day. (Ashtanga Hriday)

Heart patients, people suffering from skin diseases like scabies, eczema or leprosy, TB patients and extremely debilitated people should refrain from a massage.

One should observe the rules laid down in the Holy Scriptures regarding oil massage:

Oil should neither be applied on the first, sixth, eighth, eleventh, fourteenth lunar days nor on full moon or new moon days, Sundays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. (Markandeya Purana, Brahmavaivarta Purana and Vishnu Purana)

The ill-effects of oil-massage on particular days can be avoided by mixing flowers with the oil on Sundays, soil on Tuesdays, Durva grass on Thursdays and Cow-dung on Fridays. (Nirnaya Sindhu)

Those who massage daily remain immune to the ill-effects of oil-massage done on any particular day. (Shiva Purana)

Other than during eclipses, mustard oil is never spoilt. Oils with the essence of flowers and other ingredients can be applied on any day. (Shiva Purana Bhagwant Bhaskar)