

Abhyanga: The Anti-Aging Miracle

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Abstract:

According to ayurveda Twak is one of the important place of Vata dosha. Application of Sneha on twak is always beneficial to maintain vata in normal state. The normal functioning of vata helps to keep the other doshas in normalcy. Regular practice of abhyanganourishes the body tissues, provides strength, enhances complexion, delaying aging etc. Massage enhances the functioning of Nervous system, musculoskeletal system, circulatory system, immune system etc.

Keywords: Abhyanga, Vata, Doshha, Twak

Introduction:

Ayurveda has two main aims- to maintain the health of a healthy person and to treat the diseased. To attain these two goals different modalities are advocated. One of these therapies which is given prime importance as a daily regimen for the better health and is equally important for the management of certain diseases is *Abhyanga*. *Abhyanga* is the most popular and most used process in ayurvedic practices. According to Charaka, sparshendriya which is located in skin, is an important site of Vata. So application of sneha over the skin pacifies the vitiated Vata and if practiced regularly, helps in preventing occurrence of diseases due to vitiated Vata. *Abhyanga* is a type of Bahyasneha used for relaxation as well as for giving tone to the muscles promoting blood circulation and treating various disorders specially Vataj.

Etymology of Abhyanga:

'Abhi' upsarga with 'Anga' dhatu makes *Abhyanga* (Amarkosh) which means to induce specific movements. *Abhyanga* indicates some movements done on the body by using taila ,ghrita etc.

Definition:

Massage of the body with the help of sneha in the same direction of body hairs (anulomangati) is called *Abhyanga*.

Types:.

0According to

A. Vatsyayana Kamasutra:

1. Samvahana
2. Keshha mardana
3. Utsadana

B. By character of technique:

1. Stroking
2. Pressure
3. Percussion
4. Vibration

C. By which depth of tissue approached:

1. Light massage
2. Deep massage

D. By which part of body used:

1. General massage
2. Local massage

E. By means of application of pressure:

1. Manual massage
2. Mechanical massage

F. By which basis of nature of drug used:

1. Dry massage
2. Powder massage
3. Sneha massage

G. Other Methods:

Everyone has practice following techniques such as rubbing i.e.gharshan, kneading i.e.peedan, twisting i.e.udwartan, stroking i.e.trasan, percussion

i.e.prahara, vibration i.e.kampan, joint movement i.e sandhi chalan & touch i.e.sparsh.

Rubbing:

In this technique pressure is given on muscular part & gentle pressure on bony part. Due to this technique blood circulation is improved. This process can be done towards the heart & away from it, round, circular, zigzag.

Kneading:

This technique is of two types – avpeedan&prapedan. The superficial process is named as avapeedan while that of deep is named as prapedan. This technique is used to improve superficial & deep circulation.

Twisting:

In this technique rolling & twisting are carried out.

Stroking:

In this technique more or less pressure is given on head, back, chest & abdomen.

Percussion:

In this technique stroking is done to improve metabolism & local temperature of body.

Vibration:

This technique is used to remove obstruction from channels.

Joint Movement:

In this technique massage is done with gradual increase in joint movements to improve flexibility.

Touch:

At the end of the massage patient is given gentle touch for soothing effects.

When oil is applied & rubbed in, toxins are dislodged from the tissues & returned to the blood system. Certain strokes of abhyanga match the movements of the five types of Vayu like-

1. Stroke that begins with head & move towards the navel removes excess Pranvayu&improves the senses.
2. Stroke that begins with navel & end at the head removes excess Udanvayu ,carbondioxide, mucus & saliva.
3. Clockwise strokes around the navel balances Samanavayu that improves digestion, metabolism, smallintestine & liver.

4. The strokes moves from the heart to periphery & back, balances Vyanvayu improving blood circulation & lymphatic system.
5. Moving the hands from the navel to the urethra Apanvayu improving discharge of urine,feaces& menstrual fluid and improving parturition in women.

Benefits of Abhyanga:

1. It delays the aging process by nourishing dhatus.
2. It relieves fatigue.
3. It helps in promotion and regulation of vata and corrects illness caused by vitiated Vata.
4. It helps in to get sound sleep.
5. Abhyanga provides sturdiness of the body.
6. Abhyanga improves complexion and luster of the skin.
7. Abhyanga increases strength of the body.
8. Abhyanga nourishes the indriyas.
9. Abhyanga improves vision.
10. Abhyanga prevents stiffness of muscles.
11. Abhyanga corrects digestion & blood pressure.
12. Abhyanga rejuvenates the whole body.

Contraindication of Abhyanga:

1. Just after sanshodhan karma like Vaman, Virechanetc
2. Contraindicated in person suffering from atisar, Karan Roga Netra Roga etc.
3. Immediately after taking food
4. Immediately after Snehapan
5. Contraindicated in Ajeerna, Nav jawara.
6. Burns
7. unhealed Fractures

Time of Abhyanga:

It is indicated once in a day or once in two days or three days.

Procedure of Abhyanga:

1. First Sneha, commonly oil is applied to scalp, ears, palm and sole
2. On limbs sneha (oil) is massaged in anuloma direction i.e. from centre to periphery.
3. On joints and abdomen, circular massage is done.

4. For proper massage of body seven postures are in order are recommended -
 - a. Sitting
 - b. Supine
 - c. Right lateral
 - d. Prone
 - e. Left lateral
 - f. Supine
 - g. Sitting

In each position *Abhyanga* should be done for five minutes. If *Abhyanga* is done in a specific body part (local), it should be done for minimum fifteen minutes.

Effect of *Abhyanga* on various Dhatus:

The effect of *abhyanga* is described according to its duration -

1. When *abhyanga* is done for 300 matras- the oil reaches to hair roots.
2. When *abhyanga* is done for 400 matras- the oil reaches in skin.
3. When *abhyanga* is done for 500 matras - it reaches in Rakta dhatu.
4. When *abhyanga* is done for 600 matras- it reaches in Mamsa dhatu.
5. When *abhyanga* is done for 700 matras- it reaches in Meda dhatu.
6. When *abhyanga* is done for 800 matras- oil reaches in Asthi dhatu.
7. When *abhyanga* is done for 900 matras - oil reaches in Majja dhatu.

Effect Of *Abhyanga* on different Systems:

Effects on cardiovascular system:

1. *Abhyanga* dilates superficial blood vessels & increases the blood flow.
2. *Abhyanga* cardiac stroke volume
3. *Abhyanga* causes vasodilation
4. *Abhyanga* prevents atherosclerosis
5. Massage reduces swelling.

Effect on Blood clotting:

1. *Abhyanga* reduces chances of development of DVT

Effects on Nervous System:

1. Massage has been used to relieve pain
2. Gentle massage is also having a seductive effect on nervous system
3. *Abhyanga* improves quality of sleep
4. *Abhyanga* reduces depression & anxiety

Effects on Musculoskeletal System:

1. *Abhyanga* relieves muscle spasm
2. Massage improve the strength of tendon, muscles & ligaments.

Effects on Respiratory System:

1. *Abhyanga* improves the pulmonary function by strengthening & improving the tone of muscles involved in respiration.

Effect on Skin:

1. Massage improves the function of sebaceous & sweat gland

Effect on Digestive System:

1. Massage increases the body's secretion & excretion.
2. Massage increases the production of gastric juices, saliva & urine

Mode of Action of *Abhyanga*:

1. *Sneha* used in *abhyanga* reaches up to different dhatus then it subsides the disease of that particular dhatu.

By properties of *Sneha* drug used for *Abhyanga*:

1. Snigdha Guna:

Snigdha Guna acts by its vatahara, Kapha hara & vrishyaguna.

2. Guru Guna:

Guru guna is having the properties like vatahara, kaphakar. so it increases the body strength.

3. Sheet Guna :

It helps to keep mind healthy. It helps in stabilizing the muscles and organs.

4. Mridyuguna:

It decreases the stiffness

5. Picchilguna:

It aggravates kapha & gives strength to body.

6. Sukshmaguna:

It helps the drugs to enter in sukshmastrotasa

Conclusion:

Abhyanga is an easy procedure which is very economic & effective. It improves blood flow, lymphatic flow etc. *Abhyanga* nourishes the skin. It provides overall improvement in physical health & quality of life. A daily *abhyanga* restores the balance of the doshas & enhances well being & longevity.

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