

## Abhyanga Garshana

This is a simple and quick technique to assist the lymphatic system, by cleansing the skin so that toxins can be eliminated from the body more efficiently. If pores are clogged, the elimination from the skin is impaired, and the overworked liver and kidneys have to eliminate the toxins. It is estimated that one third of all impurities which leave the body are eliminated through the skin-- more than one pound of waste per day! As you can see, it is a very good reason to keep the skin functioning as an eliminative organ.

By removing dead surface cells, the skin is nourished and oxygenated. This prevents premature aging and degenerative diseases. Dry brush massage stimulates blood circulation, the nervous system, and the oil-producing glands in the skin. Muscle tone is assisted; fat deposits are more evenly spread; improved blood flow will also assist in the break down and removal of cellulite tissue. The massage should only take about 5 minutes and is best done as a daily ritual upon rising or before bed.



**Tools:** Purchase a personal hand sized, soft, natural bristle brush with a long handle, or mukū mitt. All are available at your health food store. Traditionally, Ayurveda uses silk gloves to perform garshana. Avoid synthetic fiber brushes and puffs because they are too rough.

**How to dry brush:** Brush nude in a private quite space, before bathing. Be gentle at first, the skin will become seasoned after a few weeks. Take extra care of tender areas. Avoid any problem spots, such as rashes or sores. As you become accustomed to the sensation, rub your skin quickly and fairly vigorously. Over the long bones of the arms and legs, use sweeping, back-and-forth strokes. Change to small circular movements when you reach the joints of the shoulders, elbows, wrists, etc. Begin with the soles of the feet and then brush your way up each leg. Pay special attention to the body parts where you might experience regular pain, such as the knees. If cellulite is an issue spend some time giving positive attention to those areas. Always finish any area with gentle strokes towards the heart. Progress from the legs to the hands and arms, brushing towards the shoulders. Next brush the head, ears and down the neck. Finish with the torso. Using the long wooden handle, brush your entire back then proceed to the front. A circular notion feels good. Going in a clockwise motion around the belly button helps digestion. Be aware, this is a time to enjoy being with your body. Breath deeply while you brush. You can say nice things to yourself, such as "I love this body and see it radiantly healthy and filled with vitality."

**Abhyanga:** If you received an Abhyanga flyer you should perform this treatment after Garshana.

**Bathing:** Now have a warm shower or bath. For kaphas and pittas, finishing with a cool to cold rinse is beneficial as it closes the pores of the skin and stimulates circulation. Wash the brush with warm soapy water every two weeks. Each month take one week off from dry brushing. See and feel the wonderful difference!

### Benefits:

- Increases body appreciation and encourages feeling
- Stimulates hormone function
- Activates pores to remove waste material
- Increases blood and lymphatic circulation
- Helps digestion and colon function
- Removes excess heat of pitta and stagnation of kapha

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A full body, warm oil massage *before* showering in the morning is recommended for everyone. This is one of Ayurveda's most important and powerful preventive medicine and rejuvenation procedures. Massage is an important way to reconnect the physiology with the underlying biological intelligence. Ideally, about 5 - 10 minutes should be spent each morning on massage, but it is better to do a briefer massage than to skip it all together. If you are busy, do it 2-3 times per week. Do it more often if you are exposed to dry or windy conditions. If you are getting a professional massage, take your medicated oil for the massage therapist to use.

### Recommended oil:

Use the provided medicated oil from India or you can extend this oil by cutting it up to one half with:

Vata: Sesame

Pitta: Sunflower or Coconut

Kapha: Corn, Sesame or Mustard seed oil

**Heating the oil:** Upon arising, place the squeeze bottle of oil in a container of very hot water and place on an electric cup warmer. As this is a light massage, you'll use a scant quarter cup of warm oil.

**Garshana/Exfoliation:** First use a loofah or bristle bath brush to rub off the layers of dead skin and simulate the circulation. Exfoliation allows the oil to be more readily absorbed and makes the skin look smoother and brighter.

### Benefits:

- Helps maintain or restore circulation
- Provides purifying and cleansing influence to the physiology
- Maintains suppleness and youthfulness of the skin
- Increases the secretion of hormones from the skin
- Provides stabilizing and balancing effect on Vata



Circular motion over joints  
Back and Forth over long bones

### Performing the massage:

Start at the head and work towards the feet. The proper motion is back and forth over the long bones of your body and to use circular motion at the elbows, shoulders, chest, stomach and lower abdomen (clockwise). Spend proportionately more time on the head and the bottoms of the feet. When you have more time, work deeper into sore or inflamed areas of the body to provide extra nurturing.

**Showering:** Keep a thin, almost undetectable film of oil on the body, as this is very beneficial for toning the skin, balancing Vata and keeping the muscles warm during the day. Therefore you should wash with warm water, not hot, and use as little soap as needed.

**Drying off:** Use an old towel on the days that you perform abhyanga, as the towel will absorb some oil from your skin and pick up the odor of the oil. To break down the oil, add 2 TSB of Dawn dishwashing liquid along with your regular detergent.

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