

Chapter 06. Abhyangam (Body Massage / Table Massage) with Video demo

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Today's focus is on conducting a **full-body Ayurvedic massage** on a **massage table** rather than a traditional floor mat. We'll explore how to **blend** classical Ayurvedic techniques with a **modern spa** environment to deliver safe, effective, and dosha-tailored treatments.

Abhyangam detailed video

1. Introduction: Adapting Ayurveda to a Modern Table

In traditional Ayurveda, **Abhyanga** is often performed on a **floor mat** or a **wooden droni** (massage table specifically designed for oil therapies). However, many contemporary spas use **standard massage tables** outfitted with towels or specialized linens.

Why Use a Table?

1. **Accessibility:** Easier for therapists to maintain posture and control pressure.
2. **Client Comfort:** Familiar setup for clients accustomed to Western or standard spa massages.
3. **Integration:** Allows combining other treatments (like hot towel compress, mild steam) in a streamlined environment.

2. Key Distinctions from Floor-Based Abhyanga

1. **Table Height & Therapist Posture**
 - Therapists can adjust table height for correct **ergonomics**, minimizing back strain.
 - Freed from kneeling or bending on the floor—improves maneuverability around the client.
2. **Oil Management**
 - Excess oil can drip off the table, so **proper draping** and **oil collection** measures are important (e.g., protective plastic sheet beneath towels).
 - The table might be narrower than a droni, so be mindful of how the client shifts.
3. **Client Movement**
 - Turning a client **supine to prone** or side-lying might feel more conventional on a table. Provide stable assistance if the table is high.

3. Setting Up for Ayurvedic Table Massage

1. **Room Environment**
 - Maintain a **warm**, draft-free space.
 - Have an **oil warmer** or hot water bath to keep the oil at a comfortable temperature (~39–45°C).
2. **Linens & Drapes**
 - Typically, a **sheet** covers the table, with additional towels or disposable drapes.



- For very oily protocols, use an **oil-resistant** covering or plastic layer under the main sheet to protect the table.

3. Client Comfort

- A small **bolster or pillow** under knees (if supine) or under ankles (if prone) can relieve lower back tension.
- Adjust face cradle or pillow for neck alignment.

4. Ayurvedic Massage Technique on a Table

Step-by-Step Flow

1. Starting Position

- Many practitioners begin with the client **prone** (face down) to address the **back**, then move to **supine** (face up).
- Alternatively, some start **supine** for front-of-body and end with the back. Consistency is key—choose a routine flow.

2. Oil Application

- Warm the herbal oil in your palms, gently apply to the **legs, arms, back, or abdomen**, depending on the segment you're working.
- Work in **sections**: e.g., do left leg and foot, then right leg, then the back, etc.

3. Strokes & Pressure

- Use **long, gliding strokes** (effleurage) along the length of muscles—always toward the heart to help venous return.
- **Circular** motions around joints (knees, shoulders, hips).
- Adjust pressure based on **dosha**: gentler for Vata, moderate for Pitta, and more vigorous for Kapha.
- Incorporate subtle **marma** awareness if trained, pausing or using gentle pressure at vital points.

4. Transition to Front / Supine

- Ask the client to turn over carefully, assisting if needed.
- Re-drape to maintain modesty.
- Repeat the process on the front: legs, arms, abdomen, chest (if appropriate), neck, shoulders.

5. Head & Face (Optional)

- Some therapists include a **mini Shiro Abhyanga** or facial marma stimulation.
- Keep a small **towel** under the head to catch any dripping oil if working with hair.

5. Duration & Frequency

- **Full Body**: Typically **45-60 minutes**, though can extend to 90 if thoroughly relaxing and including face/head.
- **Short Sessions**: 30 minutes focusing on problem areas (lower back, legs, or shoulders).
- **Frequency**: Clients might come weekly or bi-weekly for well-being; daily sessions are more specialized (like Panchakarma retreats).

6. Practical Considerations & SOP

1. Temperature & Re-Warming Oil

- Keep a side table with an **oil warmer**. Re-warm small amounts as needed, never letting the oil get cold or overheated.

2. Communication

- Check in with the client about **pressure**, comfort, temperature, or any sensitivity.
- Explain each step if they're new to Ayurvedic massage, highlighting differences from standard Western massages.

3. Post-Massage Wipe-Down

- Offer a **warm towel** or quick shower if the client prefers. Some enjoy leaving a light coat of oil on the skin for extended nourishment.

4. Contraindications

- Similar to Abhyanga: avoid if fever, active skin infection, open wounds, or major medical issues unless cleared by a professional.
- Always adapt strokes and pressure if the client has injuries, fractures, or extreme dryness/sensitivity.

7. Indications & Contraindications

Indications

- **General Wellness:** Stress relief, muscle tension, mild dryness, Vata or Kapha concerns.
- **Circulatory Boost:** Sedentary lifestyles, mild fluid retention, or dull skin.
- **Intro to Ayurvedic Bodywork:** Familiar table environment for those new to Ayurveda.

Contraindications

- **High Pitta or Inflammatory Skin Conditions**:** Excessive friction or heavy oils might overheat. Adjust technique or choose cooling oils if needed.
- **Acute Illness, Fever:** Postpone until stable.
- **Severe Hypertension or Cardiac Conditions:** Use caution, ensure light pressure, possibly omit certain strokes.

Conclusion

Adapting **Ayurvedic oil massage** to a **massage table** merges **ancient** holistic principles with the **conveniences** and **familiarities** of modern spa setups. By **adjusting** your strokes, draping, and overall environment, you can continue delivering **dosha-specific** care, providing clients the comfort and ease they expect in a professional setting.

You've learned how to transition from traditional floor-based Abhyanga to a **table massage** format that suits contemporary spa norms. Next, we'll explore **Podikizhi (Powder Bolus Massage)**, another unique therapy for Kapha issues and detox support. Embrace each technique to broaden your **Ayurvedic** cosmetology skillset!

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