

6. Full-body oil application techniques

Full-Body Oil Application Techniques

(A complete, repeatable way to cover the whole body safely, efficiently, and therapeutically)

1) Purpose & first principles -

Why oil? Warm medicated oil lowers skin-fascia friction, carries herbal actives, and cues the parasympathetic system.
Core rules - light first, then depth; **distal → proximal** for limbs (but **clear proximal basins first**); match **pressure, direction, intention** to the person and the goal.

2) Set-up: oil, temperature, hygiene, draping -

Oil & heat - choose per doṣa/season; warm to **38-40 °C** in a water-bath.

Quantity - 90-150 ml for a standard 60-min session (see table for region split).

Hygiene - short nails, clean hands/forearms; patch-test sensitive skin. Keep floor **non-slip**, towel ready for drips.

Draping - uncover only the area being worked; maintain client warmth and modesty throughout.

3) Global sequencing logic -

Proximal “clear” → distal “move” - briefly prepare **inguinal/axillary** basins so venous/lymph flow has somewhere to go.

Axis → sides → local - sweep the midline (*Suṣumṇā*), balance left/right, then address local concerns.

Warm → work → seal - spread a thin film, deliver therapeutic strokes/marma holds, finish with a quiet hold (heart or crown).

4) Standard 60-minute protocol (table/mat) -

Position order - Supine (front) → Prone (back) → Seated/finish. Adjust to context.

A) Supine lower body (10-12 min)

- **Priming film** - 5-7 ml per limb, quick spreads from ankle upward.
- **Foot & ankle** - talahrdaya heel press; gentle ankle pumps.
- **Shins & calves** - long **distal → proximal** glides; light cross-scoops around tibia (never sharp).
- **Knee & thigh** - broad palm over **Jānu** margins; forearm glides along quads/adductors; finish with brief holds at **Ūrvi**.
- **Proximal clear** - 30-45 s light skin-stretch at inguinals before switching legs.

B) Abdomen & chest (8-10 min)

- **Abdomen** - 6-8 ml; **clockwise** circles following colon; small spirals around **Nābhi**.
- **Rib arcs & sternum** - intercostal thumb glides on exhale; **Hṛidaya** broad palm rest (no deep vertical pressure).
- **Breath cue** - “Inhale 4, exhale 6.”

C) Supine upper limbs (8-10 min)

- **Hand-forearm-arm** - light film; **distal → proximal** glides; avoid cubital fossa compression.
- **Wrist & elbow** - palm circles at **Maṇibandha**, cross-fibre **Kūrpara** edges only.
- **Axilla clear** - 30 s feather spirals at **Ani** (oblique, not vertical).

D) Neck, face, scalp (4-5 min)

- **Anterior neck** - feather-light lateral strokes (avoid carotids); ear-to-clavicle sweeps.
- **Face/brow** - **Sthapanī** circles; jaw release along masseter (light).
- **Scalp** - oil-optional; slow crown hold to settle.

Transition wipe - remove excess oil; invite prone turn safely.

E) Prone posterior chain (20-22 min)

- **Feet & calves** - repeat distal → proximal with longer forearm passes; Achilles along-fibre only.
- **Hamstrings & gluteals** - forearm ulnar glides; optional **elbow** on dense knots (never over sciatic notch/marmas; dose modest).
- **Sacrum & low back** - heel/palm decompression along sacral groove; **no direct spinal jabs**.
- **Thoracic & scapular region** - long paraspinal glides; rib obliques; scapular borders (lower trap/serratus facilitation).
- **Shoulder line** - posterior cuff along-fibre; finish with **Apasthambha** paraspinal holds (breath-timed).

F) Seal & finish (3-5 min)

- **Midline sweep** - sacrum → crown with foot or palm (1-2 passes).
- **Seal** - broad **Hṛidayā** or crown hold, 2-3 quiet breaths.
- **Clean-up** - wipe excess oil; assist client up slowly; single line of homework.

5) Side-lying & seated modifications -

Side-lying - ideal for pregnancy, reflux, or shoulder focus: place pillows between knees and under waist; work top side fully (leg, hip, flank, shoulder) then switch.

Seated finish - for Kapha heaviness or dizziness risk: brief neck/scalp work and chest seal upright.

6) Tool choices & pressure dosing by region -

- **Thumb** - sūkṣma marmas/borders, short holds, oblique angle.
- **Palm/forearm** - long fascial planes (thighs, back), energy-efficient.
- **Elbow** - dense non-vital tissue only, slow entry, exit slower.
Keep intensity $\leq 5/10$; follow the **rule of thirds** for depth.

7) Dosha & climate adaptations -

Vāta↑ (cold, tense) - sesame-bala oil; slower tempo; longer distal holds (feet/ankles); optional light steam finish.

Pitta↑ (hot, irritable) - coconut-manjistha; even tempo; avoid friction; cool cloth on face post-session.

Kapha↑ (heavy, puffy) - kottamchukkādi; brisker light strokes; brief podi-kizhi before limb glides; seated finish.

8) Common mistakes & quick fixes -

- **Too much oil too soon** - film first, top-up every 5-7 min so you can still feel tissue.
- **Skipping proximal clearing** - always ready the groin/axilla before heavy distal work.
- **Pressing vertically on agni marmas** - switch to broad, breath-timed contact.
- **Overworking one spot** - once **heat rise + pulse soften + sigh** appear, move on.
- **Therapist strain** - hinge at hips, stack joints; switch to forearm before wrists complain.

9) Clean-down & integration -

Wipe excess oil; offer water; advise light movement (short walk) and no intense heat/alcohol for a few hours. Note what changed (warmth zones, breath, ROM) for next visit.

Summary Tables

A) Region timing & oil guide (60-min session)

| Region | Time (min) | Oil (ml) | Key notes |
|----------------------------|------------|----------|--|
| Feet & lower legs (supine) | 5-6 | 10-12 | Distal→proximal; ankle pumps |
| Thighs & knees (supine) | 5-6 | 12-14 | Forearm along-fibre; brief Ūrvi hold |
| Abdomen & chest | 8-10 | 8-10 | Clockwise abdomen; broad Hṛidaya |
| Upper limbs (supine) | 8-10 | 10-12 | Clear axilla; avoid cubital fossa depth |
| Posterior legs (prone) | 8-10 | 14-16 | Long forearm glides; light hamstring pin-and-stretch |
| Back & shoulders (prone) | 10-12 | 14-18 | Paraspinal long; rib obliques; scapular edges |
| Head/neck & seal | 3-5 | 2-4 | Feather neck; crown or heart seal |

B) Pressure & tempo by tissue

| Tissue target | Depth | Tempo | Tool |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| Skin/lymph | Feather | 3-5 cm/s | Palm pads |
| Superficial fascia | Light-moderate | 2-3 cm/s | Palm/forearm |
| Muscle belly | Moderate, held | 0.5-1 cm/s | Forearm/palm |
| Tendon edge | Short, specific | Slow, brief | Thumb |
| Joint capsule | Decompress | Traction, no jab | Heel/palm |

C) Dosha adaptation quick-ref

| State | Oil & temp | Pace | Emphasis |
|--------|--------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|
| Vāta↑ | Sesame-bala, warm | Slow | Feet/ankles, long holds |
| Pitta↑ | Coconut-manjistha, neutral | Even | Chest/face light, avoid friction |
| Kapha↑ | Kottamchukkādi, warm-hot brief | Brisk | Limbs, podi-kizhi primer |

D) Quick protocol variants

| Duration | Focus | What to include |
|----------|----------|--|
| 20 min | Reset | Feet→legs flush, spinal sweep, Hṛidaya seal |
| 45 min | Balanced | Lower limbs, abdomen/chest, back, crown seal |
| 90 min | Deep | Full 60-min + extra scapular/hip focus + marma triad |



E) Safety snapshot

| Risk | Avoid | Safer alternative |
|--------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Varicose veins | Deep local pressure | Gentle surrounding glides, elevation |
| Agni marmas | Vertical force | Broad, breath-timed contact |
| Acute inflammation | Heat/friction | Cooling oil, distal drainage |
| Pregnancy | Deep abdomen, strong steam | Side-lying, light lymph, brief chest holds |

Key take-aways

1. **Film first, depth second**—feel tissue, don't just slide on oil.
2. **Clear proximals, move distals**—that's how venous/lymph return stays smooth.
3. **Match dosage to *doṣa* and tissue**—oil, pace, and tool are your prescription.
4. **Seal the session**—two quiet breaths at heart or crown anchor the change.

Use this template as your default full-body flow, then tweak volumes, timing, and marma emphasis to the person in front of you.