

Unit 5: Customization and Practical Application

PAPER 7 — Herbal Preparations & Oils

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(Tailoring oils • Oils + strokes + marma • Swedana integration • Consultation & selection • Hands-on practice)

1) Tailoring herbal oils for individual clients and conditions -

Customization starts with **what the tissue needs today** (vikṛti), then respects **constitution** (prakṛti), **season**, and **setting** (heat tolerance, allergies, skin type).

Read the tissue.

- **Cold, dry, stringy (Vāta):** wants **warm, snigdha** (unctuous) input. Choose **sesame** base; consider **Dhanvantaram/Kṣīrabala** if depleted or irritable; layer **Navarakizhi** later if fatigue dominates.
- **Hot, irritable, reactive (Pitta):** wants **cool, even** input. Choose **coconut** base; consider **Pinda/Manjiṣṭhādi** for soothing finish; avoid friction/strong aromatics.
- **Heavy, boggy, puffy (Kapha):** wants **light, mobilising** input. Use **thin sesame** or **brief mustard** primer; consider **Kottamchukkadi** regionally; pair with brisk-light strokes.

Choose a delivery strategy.

- **Single oil:** when the state is clear and uniform.
- **Layered staging:** brief **warming** (around the focus), then **cooling** to settle; or start **cooling** then finish with **nourishing** if depleted.
- **Blends (percentages):** keep simple—e.g., **sesame:coconut 2:1** for guarded but warm tissues; **sesame + 15% castor** for dense peri-joint rings.

Dose with the four levers.

Concentration × Area × Time × Temperature = total dose. Increase one lever → reduce another. For first sessions, **low concentration, small area, short time, moderate temperature**.

Skin and scent sensitivity.

Prefer plain carriers first; add medicated oils only when tolerance is confirmed. Offer **unscented** options and document preferences.

2) Combining oils with strokes and marma stimulation -

Oil is the **chemical** lever; strokes are **mechanical**; marma is the **regulatory** lever. The win is in the order:

1. **Open with oil** (thin film): set thermal feel and slip/grip.
2. **Mobilise with strokes:**
 - **Thirumu** (long glides) to hydrate fascia and move fluids **distal→proximal**.
 - **Eduthu-Thirumu** (lift-kneads) where density persists.
 - **Akam-Thirumu** (inward centring) to seat joints/scapulae.
 - Traction/decompression at **sandhi** (joint rings), not vertical jabs.
3. **Regulate with marma:** 4–6 points max, **broad, oblique, breath-timed** holds. Choose **sthānika** (local) + **srotas-related** (regulatory) pairs (e.g., **Jānu + Ūrvi, Krikatikā + Sthāpanī, Talahridaya** to seal).
4. **Integrate:** midline sweep, then seated finish.

Matching oil feel to technique.

- **Warm sesame** supports **slow forearm glides + traction** (Vāta).
- **Coconut** supports **even, quiet glides** with minimal friction (Pitta).
- **Mustard short-dose** suits **brisk-light flows** (Kapha) before switching back to sesame.
- Keep oil **thin** over **sūkṣma** (neurovascular) and **agni** (heart/umbilicus/pelvis/crown) fields to preserve tactile detail.

3) Integrating herbal steam (Swedana) with oil massage -

Use steam as a **primer or polisher**, not a hammer.

When to steam.

- **Before oiling** for Kapha heaviness (brief **nāḍi sweda**—targeted tube steam).
- **After oiling** for Vāta stiffness (short **snigdha** fomentation to deepen unction).
- **Skip or keep neutral** in hot, Pitta-irritable states; cool cloth may replace steam.

Practical guardrails.

- **Contact temperature:** aim for **pleasant warmth**, not reddening heat.
- Keep exposure **short & cyclical**; re-test skin each pass.
- **Never stack heat + pressure** on **Hṛdaya, Nābhi, Basti, Ādhipati**; work **around**, not on, high-risk marmas.

Pairings.

- **Kottamchukkadi + brief steam** → Kapha morning stiffness.
- **Dhanvantaram + soft fomentation** → Vāta posterior-chain tightness.
- **Pinda/Manjiṣṭhādi + no steam** → Pitta flare or reactive skin.

4) Client consultation and selecting appropriate preparations -

The consult protects safety and sharpens your choice.

Intake essentials.

- **Red flags:** fever, hot swollen joint, chest pain, new neuro deficit, suspected DVT/PE, acute abdomen, fresh trauma—**refer**.
- **History:** allergies (sesame/coconut/mustard/milk), dermatologic issues, meds (anticoagulants), pregnancy, heat intolerance.
- **State read:** sleep, appetite, stools, stress, energy; tongue (āma?), skin temperature/texture.
- **Goals & context:** pain relief, range, sleep, stress; scent preferences; time of day/season.

Selection steps.

1. Choose **base** (thermal feel).
2. Decide **medicated** vs **carrier** (specific action vs sensitivity).
3. Set **dose levers** (concentration/area/time/temp).
4. Pick **stroke emphasis** and **marma set**.
5. Plan **steam** (yes/no, when, how much).
6. **Consent & patch-test** if new oil.
7. Record plan in **S.O.A.P.** format and debrief after.

5) Hands-on practice: preparing and applying oils in therapeutic settings -

Lab 1 — Warming & staging oils (20 min).

- Set a **water bath** to ~38-40 °C. Warm **sesame** and **coconut** in separate amber bottles.
- Practice **thin-film application** on forearm (two learners swap roles): one line with sesame (slow cadence), one with coconut (even cadence). Note tactile differences.

Lab 2 — Layered protocol drill (30-40 min).

- Case card: "Cold, puffy knee; no acute heat."
- Sequence: **thin sesame film** → **Thirumu distal→proximal** → **Jānu ring traction** → **short Podi/Ela primer around joint (optional)** → **Ūrvi soft hold** → **Gulpha traction** → **seated pumps**.
- Debrief: which lever did you change first? (time/temp/area/concentration)

Lab 3 — Sensitive skin / high-risk area (20 min).

- Case card: "Neck pain with Pitta irritability."
- Sequence: **coconut film** → **parascapular glides** → **Krikatikā decompression** → **Sthāpanī hold** → **palm Talahridaya seal, no steam**.
- Focus: keep oil **thin**, angles oblique, breath-timed holds.

Clinic hygiene mini-SOP.

- Patch-test unfamiliar oils; single-use bowls or sanitised pumps; no double-dipping; wipe nozzles between clients; label bottles (oil, batch, date); discard oxidised oil; document scents used and client feedback.

Summary Tables

A) Decision matrix — choosing oils, strokes, marma, steam

Tissue state (today)	Oil choice	Stroke emphasis	Marma set (examples)	Steam
Vāta: cold, dry, stringy	Sesame / Dhanvantaram / Kṣīrabala	Slow long glides; traction	Krikatikā, Ūrvi, Talahridaya	Short, snigdha (after oil)
Pitta: hot, irritable	Coconut / Pinda/Manjiṣṭhādi	Even, non-frictional	Sthāpanī, Śaṅkha, Apālapa (broad)	None; cool cloth if needed
Kapha: heavy, boggy	Thin sesame; brief mustard primer; Kottamchukkadi regionally	Brisk-light, distal→proximal	Ūrvi, Ani, Indrabasti	Short primer (before oil)

B) Layering & blending at a glance

Method	When to use	Example
Staging (warm → cool)	Kapha with irritability after mobilising Kottamchukkadi around → Pinda finish	
Staging (cool → nourish)	Pitta with depletion	Pinda regionally → Dhanvantaram global
Blend (simple %)	Guarded yet reactive tissue	Sesame:coconut 2:1; thin film only
Local fortify	Dense peri-joint rings	Sesame + 15% castor (regional)

C) Safety & consent checklist

Step	Yes/No
Red-flag screen completed; referral if positive	
Allergy/dermatology/meds/pregnancy reviewed	



Step	Yes/No
Patch-test done for new oil or scent	
Dose levers set and documented	
High-risk marma rules applied (no heat + pressure stack)	
After-care given (hydration, warmth, gentle mobility)	

D) S.O.A.P. documentation template (copy into LMS)

- **S** (Subjective): main complaint, goals, tolerances (heat/scent), stress/sleep.
- **O** (Objective): skin temp/textture, range, tender bands, tongue/āma, vitals if taken.
- **A** (Assessment): doṣa tilt (today), tissue map, risk notes.
- **P** (Plan): oil(s) + dose levers, stroke emphasis, marma set, steam plan, home cue (1 breath + 1 movement).
- **Response/Notes:** immediate effects, any reactions, adjustments for next visit.

E) Hands-on kit list (per station)

Item	Qty	Notes
Amber bottles: sesame, coconut	2	Labeled, dated
Water bath + thermometer	1	38–40 °C
Towels, drapes, wipes	-	Fresh each client
Gloves (for patch-tests)	-	Optional
Documentation sheet	1	S.O.A.P. format

Key take-aways

1. Customize by **state first** (vikṛti), then refine for **constitution** and **season**.
2. Order matters: **oil to open → strokes to mobilise → marma to regulate → midline to integrate**.
3. Steam is a **dose tool**, not a default—brief, targeted, and never stacked over high-risk marmas.
4. Safety rides on **dose levers, consent, and records**; change one lever at a time and write it down.
5. Practice with **short, repeatable drills**—that's how customization becomes reliable at the table.