Abhyanga
The Art of Self- Massage

The word for oil, Sneha, also means Love. Being saturated with oil is believed to have a similar effect as being filled with love. When you take your massage, do so lovingly and with self-nurture.

Abhyanga is a part of morning Dinacharya. Practice before leaving the house grounds the Vata for the day. However, I like to relax and take more time in the evenings for Abhyanga. Practice creates a restful night's sleep.

Materials:
Dry Brush or exfoliating gloves
½ cup organic, unrefined sesame oil (almond or sunflower for sensitive skin)
Old towel
Flip flops (optional)

Dry Brushing: *Start at the feet and work up towards the heart. Long strokes on the limbs and circular on the joints. This should take 5 minutes.*

Abhyanga: *Warm the oil by putting the jar in hot water. Make sure the room you oil in is warm enough. Get all situated before you start. Think about protecting things like doorknobs if you are going to have to travel to the shower. Put out your towel and sit down. Breathe deeply a few times and give thanks for this space. Begin to love yourself by applying oil with love and patience. Rub it in well, especially areas that trouble you. Use long strokes on the limbs and circular on the joints, wide clockwise circles on the chest and abdomen. Do the head and face last, massaging the oil into the scalp well. Use your little fingers to put oil in the ears and nose. ½ cup will seem like a lot. Keep going until you don't think your skin can absorb anymore, this process should take 15 minutes.*
Lay back on your towel and relax for 5-30 minutes. Maybe burn a candle or play soft music. Now enjoy a hot shower (wipe feet first so you don't slip). Do not use soap, except on the face. To shampoo the hair, apply shampoo before wetting. After shower, pat dry. Your skin may still seem a bit oily, but it will be absorbed.

Note: When your towel becomes very oily, putting it in the dryer after washing is a fire hazard. Better you hang dry and replace periodically.

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