Ayurvedic self-massage during the Wisdom Years

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As we go through life we go through many cycles. Ayurveda, the holistic medicine system from ancient India, recognizes that every phase in our life presents new challenges and also new opportunities. In Childhood, we are in our “Kapha” time of life, a time when it is said, that mainly the earth element is activated. As a child, we are grounding into our experience of who we are and figure out our place in our family or tribe. On a physical level, the Kapha period can also show itself as an expansion period as we gain more height and body-mass. Our bodies are well lubricated, full of “baby fat” and mucus.

In our adult years, puberty to 60, we are in our Pitta time of life. Pitta is mainly associated with the fire element. Pitta time of life is a time of pioneering. We stake out our profession, partners, and land. We focus on our transformation and expression of our ego. On a physical level this fire infused period can be experienced as an increased inflammation in the body and hormonal changes/sexuality.

Finally, in the Wisdom Years of life, 60-120 years of age, we enter the Vata time of life. This is a time in which the Air/Space element is dominant. In this period, the body loses mass and lubrication, becomes more refined, ethereal. Earthly concerns or fiery ambitions may transform into a more spiritual outlook. On a physical level, the body becomes drier, and our bone frame become lighter.

Using the elemental theory in Ayurveda, dry, light, cold, rough and irregular are all contributes of this time in our life. To balance and compensate the challenges of this period, Ayurveda suggests bringing the qualities into our life that are of an opposite nature to the Vata element. Therefore, desired elements or aspects that should be increased are warm, soft, moist, regular and stable.

One of the most prescribed Ayurvedic remedies to the challenges of aging is Ayurvedic massage. Many thousands of years ago, a famous Ayurvedic scholar named Charaka said that receiving a warm oil massage is the best antidote to old age. In Sanskrit, this ancient warm oil massage is called “Abhyanga”, often translated as “loving hands”. Receiving this kind of massage is an act of self-love, as it is not just the body that benefits but it is also extremely soothing to our psyche. According to Ayurveda, the benefits of a regularly practiced Ayurvedic self-massage are as followed:

* Lubrication and nourishes to the skin tissue
* Strengthen the bones and joints
* Aid digestion and circulation
* Activate stagnating lymph fluid
* Beautify the skin and adds a charming glow
* Support organ health
* Calm the mind and supports better sleep at night

This is just to name a few as the long list of health benefits is seemingly endless.

In the Vata time of life, our body can truly become our temple and our massage our ritual to remind us of its sacredness. When the body’s health is supported and disease is not occupying all our attention, our Wisdom Years can become an enlightening time, full of richness. Tapping into the ancient wisdoms of Ayurveda can support us on our journey through time and offer many time-tested methods, of which the warm oil massage is one of the most important ones.