

Prana Touch Class #1

The Head Massage Sequence

In this class we cover the first step in Ayurvedic massage which begins with infusing the oil with prayer and then gently 'dotting' the oil onto key marma points.

In this sequence we address the many marmas found on the head including the SImanta and Adhipati marmas and learn how to apply directed energy "aka Pranic energy".

Traditionally the massage starts with the client seated and then moves to the table. Based on my experience working in spas in the US, this is not practical so instructions are provided to begin the massage with the client supine.

Prana Touch Ayurvedic Massage

Prana Touch is a luxurious warm oil massage that embraces Ayurveda, the ancient Indian science of life. Prana Touch is named for the Sanskrit word that describes the life sustaining force inherent in all of us. A rhythmic massage that strengthens the body, Prana Touch alleviates pain and soreness and frees up blockages to the free flow of prana in the bodies vital centers of energy, the marma points. The ultimate goal of Prana Touch is to induce a deep yet balanced state of relaxation.

The Prana Touch Method

Generally, the massage is done in silence, instruct your client before the session starts to inform you if anything you do creates pain or discomfort. When doing Prana Touch we use of whole hand as much as possible. The hands are held in a relaxed manner and contour to the body. The thumb is held close to the hand, never abducted. Pressure is specific to the doshas: Kapha-Firm, Pitta-Medium, Vata-light. Massage strokes are long and flowing, similar to Esalen style massage. Most importantly, the massage is performed with a deep awareness and reverence for the bodies we touch. By giving our full attention to the massage we gain awareness of the unique needs of those we touch.

How to Practice Prana Touch

- A massage of any kind performed with Metta (loving Kindness) will be beneficial.
- Intention will keep you focused.
- Presence will insure that the massage is unique.
- Posture will protect and nourish both giver and receiver.
- Practice enables us to focus on our highest goals.

Class #1 Quick Reference Sheet

Head Massage Sequence-Seated

- Step 1.** Oil top of the head (Simanta marma), massage 30 seconds.
- Step 2.** Oil top of the head at fontanel (Adhipati marma) massage 30 seconds.
- Step 3.** Oil and massage Krikatika marmas-2 points at the junction of the head and neck.
- Step 4:** Lift the head up off the body by pressing forehead and Krikatika. Repeat both sides and hold 10 seconds each time.
- Step 5:** Oil and massage above the temples (Utkshepa marma) for 30 seconds
- Step 6:** Squeeze the entire head from just above the ears
- Step 7:** Combing
- Step 8:** Swimming
- Step 9:** Brushing
- Step 10:** Plucking
- Step 11:** Catching
- Step 12:** Head Sweeps
- Step 13:** Tapotement

Head Massage on Table-Client is supine on table.

- Step 1.** Oil top of the head (Simanta marma), massage 30 seconds.
- Step 2.** Oil top of the head at fontanel (Adhipati marma) massage 30 seconds.
- Step 3.** Oil and massage Krikatika marmas-2 points at the junction of the head and neck.
- Step 4.** Oil and massage above the temples (Utkshepa marma) for 30 seconds
- Step 5:** Squeeze the entire head from just above the ears

Turn Head to One Side

- Step 6:** Combing
- Step 7:** Swimming
- Step 8:** Brushing
- Step 9:** Plucking
- Step 10:** Catching

Rotate Head to other side, Repeat

- Step 11:** Tapotement

Head Massage

Traditionally, the head is the first part of the body that massaged in Ayurvedic massage. Typically, the client is seated on a chair or stool and is asked to sit upright. In Prana Touch we will cover both the head massage sequence for seated massage and then work through the head massage with the client lying supine.

Effect of Head Massage:

- Srotas: Benefits and stimulates Pranavaha (carry prana) and Manovaha (carry thoughts)
- Vayus: Prana Vayu (a sub-dosha of vata, connected to the life force)
- Physical Body: Benefits the central nervous system, sharpens the senses, enlivens the hair slowing hair loss and graying, relieves insomnia and balances the vata dosha.

Oils for Head Massage

- Black Sesame Seed Oil-One of the best oils for Head massage. Contains, linoleic acid, which is an important enzyme for brain function.
- Mustard Oil-Nourishes brain and eyes, slows graying. Best mixed with other oils as it can sometimes irritate the skin.
- Coconut Oil-Very cooling and soothing. Promotes long and lustrous hair.
- Neem Oil-Good for dandruff, eczema, itchy scalp (always dilute neem oil in a carrier oil such as sweet almond oil to 10%, never use neem essential oil directly on skin).
- Sweet almond Oil-Aids memory
- Bala Thailam-enhances complexion, anti-inflammatory and strengthens the nerves, the heart and the immune system.
- Bringamalakadi Thailam-Known for its anti-inflammatory properties, recommended for sinusitis, gingivitis, defective vision, defective hearing, hoarse voice, loose teeth, pharyngitis and laryngitis.

Head Massage Sequence

Client is seated with back held erect.

Step 1. Pour a quarter size (about a tablespoon) amount of oil into your non-dominant hand. Set your intention for the massage and infuse it into the oil. Pour the oil onto the top of the head which equates to the Simanta marma-a large area encompassing the junctions of the frontal bones with the parietal bones and the junction of the occipital bone with the parietal bones. With a light touch make concentric circles on the head using your full palm. The circles become bigger and bigger. Continue for about 30 seconds.

Effect: Calming and relaxing. Sets intention for massage. Opens the bodies energy to connect us to the universal consciousness. Promotes sleep, calms the nervous system. Also see step 2.

Step 2. Again, pour a tablespoon of oil into your palm and pour it onto the Adhipati marma, which is the vertex or very top of the skull. You may feel a small depression behind the vertex. Also known as the fontanel. With a light touch make concentric circles on the head using your full palm. The circles become bigger and bigger. Continue for about 30 seconds.

Effect: Opens the 7th chakra (sahasrara), stimulates hormone production at pineal gland, benefits Majjavaha srota equating to the nervous system and prana vayu which gives us vitality. This marma rules over entire body via the brain and therefore crucial to preparing the body for massage.

Step 3. Pour out another ½ tablespoon of oil and rub it into both your palms. Touch both palms to the Krikatika marma-2 points at the junction of the head and neck, just inferior and lateral to the external occipital protuberance. After touching the marmas, run your hand up the back of the head and onto the sides of the heads just superior to the temples. Return to krikatika on the right side with your right hand. Support the front of the head on the forehead with your left hand and palm circle over this marma region for 15 seconds. Switch hands and repeat. Stronger acupressure may be applied here if necessary.

Effect: Benefits posture, aids circulation to the brain, lubricates brain (tarpaka kapha), supports upward moving prana (udana vayu) , accesses the subconscious mind by balancing emotions and instincts. Enlivens third eye chakra. Physical benefits include reducing stress at sub-occipital muscles.

Step 4: Using the same contact in step 3, press firmly and lift the head up off the body. Repeat both sides and hold 10 seconds each time.

Effect: See step 3

Step 5: Pour out another ½ tablespoon of oil and rub it into both your palms. Touch the thenar eminence portion of your thumbs to the Utkshepa marma. The marma is located 2 finger lengths above the temples and is found on the temporalis muscle. Circle gently for 30 seconds directing pressure through the muscles that control your thumb.

Effect: Calms the mind, balances vata dosha and apana vayu (function of elimination).
Physical: Benefits large intestine and sense of smell.

Step 6: Using a full-palm contact, squeeze the entire head from just above the ears. Pressure should be firm, if acceptable to client.

Effect: Internalizes the consciousness of receiver. Allows one to “go deeper” into themselves.

Step 7: Combing

Using the pads of the all 10 fingers and not the nails, comb from the front of the hairline to the base of the occiput. Return to the hairline, move slightly lateral and repeat. Repeat again another 3-4 times until you are stroking around the ears.

Effect: Distributes oil to the entire scalp. Stimulates hair follicles, calms the nervous system, relaxes the fascia of the scalp.

Note: These effects are the same for steps 7-11 and 13.

Step 8: Swimming

This step is performed with the middle portion of the fingers (no thumb). “Swim” from the hairline posterior as in step 7. Repeat 3-4 more time until you are swimming around the ears.

Step 9: Brushing

Place all fingers at the base of the occiput. Run fingers up the head until you reach the top of the head and then shift to an open hand. Press your hand into the scalp until you reach the hairline. Repeat 3-4 more time until you are brushing around the ears.

Step 10: Plucking

Starting at the anterior hairline, grab some hair between with your fingertips and gently twist and pull it upwards. Move about an inch posterior and repeat. Continue all the way to the hair line at the neck. Return to the anterior hairline and repeat 3-4 more times until you are plucking around the ears.

Step 11: Catching

With a full hand, grab as much hair as possible and pull it upwards. Repeat to cover entire scalp.

Step 12: Head Sweeps

Place one hand on the side of the head. The base of the palm of the other hand comes to the forehead, sweep your hand around the side of the head until your 2 hands touch. Use moderate pressure. Repeat 3X and then switch sides.

Effect: Harmonizes and integrates the nadi's and vertical channels of the head.

Step 13: Tapotement

Brings hand together in prayer position, lightly tapote the entire scalp.

Effect; Sedates nervous system if done lightly, slowly and rhythmically. Stimulates nervous system if performed fast, forcefully and irregularly.

Head Massage on Table

Client is supine on table.

Step 1. Pour a quarter size (about a tablespoon) amount of oil into your dominant hand. Set your intention for the massage and infuse it into the oil. Rub the oil onto the top of the head which equates to the Simanta marma-a large area encompassing the junctions of the frontal bones with the parietal bones and the junction of the occipital bone with the parietal bones. With a light touch make concentric circles using only one hand on the head using your full palm. The circles become bigger and bigger. Continue for about 30 seconds.

Effect: Calming and relaxing. Sets intention for massage. Opens the bodies energy to connect us to the universal consciousness. Promotes sleep, calms the nervous system. Also see step 2.

Step 2. Again, pour a tablespoon of oil into your palm and touch it to the Adhipati marma, which is the vertex or very top of the skull. You may feel a small depression behind the vertex. Also known as the fontanel. With a light touch make concentric circles on the head using your full palm. The circles become bigger and bigger. Continue for about 30 seconds.

Effect: Opens the 7th chakra (sahasrara), stimulates hormone production at pineal gland, benefits Majjavaha srota equating to the nervous system and prana vayu which gives us vitality. This marma rules over entire body via the brain and therefore crucial to preparing the body for massage.

Step 3. Pour out another ½ tablespoon of oil and rub it into both your palms. Cup your palms to the Krikatika marma-the 2 points at the junction of the head and neck, just inferior and lateral to the external occipital protuberance. Massage the marmas in a circular manner with the pads of your fingers for about 30 seconds. Apply a short duration (10 seconds) of steady fingertip pressure using your 3 middle fingers, providing traction to the head and neck. To finish, allow your fingertips to brush up the head to the crown.

Effect: Benefits posture, aids circulation to the brain, lubricates brain (tarpaka kapha), supports upward moving prana (udana vayu) , accesses the subconscious mind by balancing emotions and instincts. Enlivens third eye chakra. Physical benefits include reducing stress at sub-occipital muscles.

Step 4: Pour out another ½ tablespoon of oil and rub it into both your palms. Touch the thenar eminence portion of your thumbs to the Utkshepa marmas. The marma is located 2 finger lengths above the temples, on the temporalis muscle. Circle gently for 30 seconds directing pressure through the muscles that control your thumb.

Effect: Calms the mind, balances vata dosha and apana vayu (function of elimination).
Physical: Benefits large intestine and sense of smell.

Step 5: Using a full-palm contact, squeeze the entire head from just above the ears. Pressure should be firm, if acceptable to client.

Effect: Internalizes the consciousness of receiver. Allows one to “go deeper” into themselves.

Turn head to one side

Step 6: Combing

Using the pads of the fingers of one hand and not the nails, comb from the front of the hairline to the base of the occiput. Return to the hairline, move slightly lateral and repeat. Repeat again another 2-3 times until you are stroking around the ears.

Effect: Distributes oil to the entire scalp. Stimulates hair follicles, calms the nervous system, relaxes the fascia of the scalp.

Note: These effects are the same for steps 6-10.

Step 7: Swimming

This step is performed with the middle portion of the fingers (no thumb). “Swim” from the hairline posterior as in step 7 with one hand. Repeat 3-4 more time until you are swimming around the ears. You will need to rotate your palm at the crown so that you can continue to do this comfortably to the back of the head.

Step 8: Brushing

Place all the fingers of one hand at the base of the occiput. Run fingers up the head until you reach the top of the head and then shift to an open hand. Press your hand into the scalp until you reach the hairline. Repeat 2-3 more time until you are brushing around the ears.

Step 9: Plucking

Starting at the anterior hairline, grab some hair between with your fingertips and gently twist and pull it upwards. Move about an inch posterior and repeat. Continue all the way to the hair line at the neck. Return to the anterior hairline and repeat 3-4 more times until you are plucking around the ears.

Step 10: Catching

With a full hand, grab as much hair as possible and pull it upwards. Repeat to cover entire scalp.

Rotate head to other side, repeat steps 6-10

Step 11: Fingertip Tapotement

Using the fingertips, lightly tapote the entire scalp.

Effect: Sedates nervous system if done lightly, slowly and rhythmically. Stimulates nervous system if performed fast, forcefully and irregularly.

Next Week: Face and neck massage, marmas of face and neck. See you then!