



## THERAPY OF THE MONTH

# Ayurvedic massage

There's a wonderful world of complementary therapies out there just waiting to be discovered. This month, we shine a light on Ayurvedic massage

***Ayurveda, the traditional medicine system of India,*** is the art of harmonious, healthy living. Dating back 5,000 years, its name is derived from two Sanskrit words – 'ayur', meaning life and 'veda', meaning knowledge or science. Different cultures from around the world still draw upon traditional remedies often dating back many millennia, to help prevent disease and achieve a balanced lifestyle and Ayurveda is one of these practices.

Prevention is paramount and this therapy focuses on the maintenance of physical, emotional and spiritual balance. This is achieved through nutrition, herbal remedies, yoga, meditation and massage.

Central to Ayurveda is the concept that everything in the universe is made up of five basic elements - space, air, fire, water and earth. These combine in the body to form three energies, called

doshas, and it is the balance of these three that govern our physical, mental and emotional health.

The doshas are called vata (space and air), pitta (fire and water) and kapha (water and earth). Everyone has a unique combination of all three, but one is usually more dominant.

Ayurvedic massage aims to help balance these by working 107 vital energy (marma) points on the body, with each corresponding to different internal organs and body systems.

The therapist will use a variety of different massage techniques, including tapping, kneading and squeezing, as well as stroking or effleurage movements during a session.

Some of these will involve working the whole body, while others will focus on one area. To find a therapist offering Ayurvedic treatments, visit [fht.org.uk/findatherapist](http://fht.org.uk/findatherapist)

## ON TRIAL

**Everything you need to know about your first session**

Ayurvedic sessions start with a consultation to assess your current health and establish if any adaptations to treatment might be necessary. You will be asked a range of questions to determine your dosha type. A massage treatment, tailored to your individual needs, will then be carried out, with the therapist using herb infused oils, compresses or pastes, or special tools that complement the treatment. Oils should be kept on for as long as possible after the treatment to maximise the benefits.