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Arvigo Maya Fertility Massage: More Than a Belly Rub

In the interest of making 2010 our year of wellness, Daphne Oz is on the case to find the ultimate in total mind, body and spirit care.

First, she explored the uses of aromatherapy

(<http://www.oprah.com/health/Aromatherapy-Basics-for-Good-Health-Daphne-Oz>).

Then, she went a bit deeper with alternative medicine by looking into acupuncture

(<http://www.oprah.com/health/Sticking-Points-of-Acupuncture-Daphne-Oz>). Now, she

investigates Mayan abdominal fertility massage.

BY DAPHNE OZ ([HTTP://WWW.OPRAH.COM/CONTRIBUTOR/DAPHNE-OZ](http://www.oprah.com/contributor/daphne-oz))



PHOTO: PIXLAND/THINKSTOCK

When you first hear that there is something called "Mayan abdominal fertility massage," I know what you're thinking: How could a belly rub possibly bolster fertility? When I first experienced the treatment as part of Soho House New York's Wellness Week in January this year, I was just as skeptical. I have had a bunch of cats in my lifetime and recall that one of their favorite pastimes was to knead my stomach, every once in a while poking me with an outstretched claw. It was incredibly uncomfortable, and I feared that I had just signed up to have the human equivalent performed.

Perhaps because of this initial skepticism, I ended up leaving my 90 minutes positively raving. Not only was it delightfully relaxing, but my massage therapist's explanation of how your digestive and reproductive tracts can both benefit from external abdominal manipulation makes complete sense.

That masseuse, Loretta Young, practices Arvigo Maya abdominal massage, a modern adaptation of ancient Mayan healing techniques that adds modern knowledge of anatomy, physiology and herbology. Through noninvasive massage, this technique gently manipulates the muscles and tendons that hold all the belly organs in

place to bring all things back into alignment and promote proper functioning.

Arvigo Maya abdominal therapy was developed by Dr. Rosita Arvigo, a naprapath—someone who specializes in realigning the connective tissue—from Chicago who has spent the past 30 years living in the heart of Belize's rainforest. Dr. Arvigo was an apprentice of Don Elijio Panti, who, when he died at the age of 103, was recognized in his *New York Times* obituary as "the last Mayan master healer in Belize." For those who think herbal medicine is antiquated, 25 to 40 percent of all prescription pharmaceutical medications are derived from just 0.05 percent of the world's planet species—including birth control of aspirin, both of which are made from wild yams. Imagine what medical miracles are hidden in the 99.5 percent of species that have yet to be analyzed for their medicinal properties.

Using Don Elijio's techniques, Dr. Arvigo created Arvigo Maya abdominal massage in the early 1990s, teaching workshops in the United States and at her campsite in the jungle. In one of the weeklong seminars, Rosita and her staff first teach the art of self-care, stressing that in order to heal others, one must first be able to treat and understand the dynamics within one's own body.

As part of the core curriculum at Arvigo's workshops, students undergo rigorous spiritual intensives. All ancient Mayan medicine is based on the gratitude one must show for the bounty that the earth provides by giving thanks to God(s), and to the plants of the forest that work together in harmony to protect and prolong human life. Recognizing a force that exists external and internal to everyone, and connects all life, is fundamental to possessing the true healing power offered in these therapies. I felt this during my session with Young when she placed both her hands on my head as a way of introducing our energies and harnessing a universal energy and higher power to aid in the healing process.

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