

Review Article

Enhancement of body resistance (Immunity) through Ayurvedic regimen

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Abstract

In today's world of information and inter planetary voyages, most of the people find it difficult to devote time towards their health and fitness. This has led to drastic increase in health problems and health related stress. Unlike the early part of the century when infectious diseases were the leading killers, today's health problems are mostly related to life style. In this competitive modern or scientific era it is difficult to follow the old classical fashion of life for a better health. Most of the diseases are caused by Low body resistance (Immunity). The ayurvedic concepts of "vyadhi-kshhamatwa" the potential intrinsic factor against disease is more relevant to this context of immunity. Ayurveda has stressed the need of the proper Life style elaborating the way to Dincharya, Ritucharya, Sadvritta & Rasayan etc.

1. Introduction

Body resistance is described in modern medical science as immunity, which in ayurveda classics explained as vyadhi-kshhamatwa. It is a process by which one can prevent himself from disease producing agents. The process of defense against foreign microorganism or macromolecules is the science of immunology. In Ayurveda the term vyadhi-kshhamatwa used by charak (Ch.Su. 28/2) denotes the resisting power of the body. Relating to body resistance the concepts of ojas and bala is vividly described in ayurveda. Ojas is the vital essence of all seven dhatus from rasa to rakta. Though it is lodged in heart, but of circulating nature, responsible for maintenance and protection of the body and creates resistance to degeneration of the body and immunity against disease. Similarly 'Bala' is used to explain the term vyadhikshhamarwa, which comes under the normal function of the 'kapha dosha'. As per ayurveda; there are ample evidences present in relation to factors modulating body resistance. These are considered as immune-enhancing factor. The different regimen and code of conduct described in ayurveda can prompt the body resistance as immune-enhancing and thus prevent disease. These are Dincharya, Ratricharya, Ritucharya, Sadvritta, consideration of Dharniya and Adharniya vegas, use of Achar Rasayan, practice of prakruti virudha, Ahar-Vihar, Proper dosha sodhan, Proper Nidra, practice of Brhamacharya [1-6].

2. Dinacharya (Daily Routine/ Daily Regimen)

The ayurvedic classics give us detailed descriptions of how to maintain a healthy and disciplined lifestyle. According to the science of life, the average span of life for human beings is one hundred years, which may decrease if the prescribed good conduct is not adhered to. The ancient medicinal form suggests that in order to achieve the fourfold objective of life - dharma (virtuous duty), artha (wealth), kama (enjoyment) and moksha (salvation), we must have good health. To serve the purpose, the Ayurvedic practitioners have formulated a dincharya (in Sanskrit, din means 'day' and Acharya means 'to follow' or Routine). One should regularly use or follow such things which are conducive to maintain a good health and are capable of preventing the attacks of diseases.

> Arising

Ayurveda acharya suggested that the ideal time to wake up is during the 14th period, which is about two hours prior to dawn, around 4.30am to 5am. In fact, it is the most fresh and pure time of the entire day. Barring a few exceptions like very young or old people, parents with small children and people suffering from fevers, indigestion or diarrhea, everyone should wake up during the designated time. After waking up right after you wake up to start the day, you should take a moment to see your true nature.

Advantages:

- This is primarily due to the fact the oxygen in the air is at its maximum during that time. Take deep breath for around 5-10 minutes during that time for nourishing our body cells.
- Ayurveda believes that, before a Muhurta to the sunrise time known as 'Brahma-muhurta' and one should awaken during that time, to maintain a good health.
- Such a routine prevents old age naturally.

> Morning abolition:

Eliminate One of the first things to do after waking up is to empty your colon and bladder. In fact, if you wait to eliminate the waste from your body, you are actually poisoning yourself slowly. Therefore, it is always suggested not to wait until later in the morning or during the day, to defecate. After waking up one has to drink 1-2 glass of luke warm water, through which the physical force creates and even the peristaltic movement of intestines will stimulates will lead to urge of defecation (bowel evacuation), thus the waste products of the body deposited overnight will flush out. Defecation once or twice daily is good for maintaining complete health.

Advantages:

- Regular bowel habits help one to prevent borborygmy, distention and heaviness in the stomach.
- It will allow the body rest to correct the system before the disease sets in.

- After the bowel movements, one should clean up the anus, hands and feet thoroughly well it helps to prevent many diseases and keep the body and mind clean.

➤ **Oral Hygiene:**

A soft brush can be made by biting and chwing the tips of fresh stems of Karanja, Karavira, Arka, Malati, Kakubha (Arjuna), Asana, Vata, Ashwatha, Babbula, Nimba, Bakula etc. One should daily use the fresh 'teeth cleaning stick' collected from the trees which are having astringent, pungent or bitter in taste. The stick should be about 12 Angulas (around 9 inches) long, whose top/one end portion make it crushed and it is in such a way(make it smooth) that the gums are not being affected.

Advantages:

- Mastication of stems acts as good exercise for teeth and gums.
- Brushing removes the excretions i.e. Tarter on the neck of the teeth mucoid secretions collected in mouth and tongue over night.
- It cleanses teeth and mouth and the person feels fresh and appreciates the taste of food in better way.

➤ **Anjan:**

Eyes are the sight of Pitta Dosh (Alochak pitta) and they are specially susceptible to Kapha Dosh, therefore this therapy drains the vitiated Kapha Dosh from the eyes and is good for keeping vision clear. A strong Anjan must not be applied to the eyes during the day time as the eyes weakened by drainage will be adversely affected at the sight of the sun. Thus, the Anjan meant for drainage should as a rule be applied only during night. For caring the eyes and prevent it from various eye disorders, one should daily apply 'Sauviranjana' made from antimony.

➤ **Dhumrapan:**

Ayurvedic medicinal smoking can be defined as inhaling smoke of medicine through the nose or the mouth. Smoke contains very minute dispersed particles of medicine is burnt. (Ch.Su. 5/15-18)

Advantages:

- It prevents vata-Kaphaj disorders of nose, mouth, throat and air passages situated above the clavicle.
- It exerts its tonic effect on larynx, sense organs and sinuses.
- It prevents premature graying or discolouration and falling of hair.
- It prevents heaviness of head, head-ache, chronic rhinitis (running nose), ear-ache, pain in eyes, cough, hiccough, dyspnoea, asthma, obstruction in throat, weakness of teeth, discharge from the morbid ear, nose and eye, purulent smell coming from nose and mouth, tooth-ache, anorexia, lock jaw, stiffness of neck, pruritus, infective conditions, paleness of face, excessive salivation, impaired voice, tonsillitis, uvulitis, alopecia, sneezing, excessive drowsiness, loss of consciousness and hypersomnia .
- It exerts a soothing action on sense organs, Speech and the mined.

➤ **Pratimarsa Nasya:**

Putting two drops of any oil (Anu Tail) in each nostril daily helps to prevent wrinkling of facial skin and premature graying of hair. It helps to keep the nose, eyes and years clean, intact and healthy. It performs a protective layer on the olfactory nerves and exerts a soothing effect. It helps to prevent diseases such as stiffness of neck and jaw, tremors of the head and facial symmetry. It is supposed to prevent premature graying of hair and baldness.

➤ **Abhyang:**

Fatty substances like oil, ghee or animal fat can be used for massage. However Til oil being easily available, cheap and having Vata Shamak action is commonly used. Massage whole over the body, but in case of short of time, at least do massage of ayurvedic oils on scalp/head, ears & soles of both feet daily provide relief.

Advantages:

- Skin becomes soft, Strong and its complexion improves.
- Oil provides nutrition to the hair follicles.
- The bleeding vessels and the nerves in the skin are toned up.

- By increasing the muscular tone it increases the exercise- tolerance, strength and stability of the body.
- It enhances peripheral blood circulation and encourages quicker removal of metabolic waste; relaxing the body.
- Relieves fatigue and the feeling of sense of exhaustion.
- Has tonic effect on all the tissues and the body as a whole and promote longevity.
- Induces sound sleep when the body is massaged with oil, at night
- Delays the aging process and promotes longevity.

➤ **karna Purana:**

One who does Karna puran regularly in proper dosage (usually 4-5 drops in each ear for healthy one) prevents from ear diseases due to vitiated vata dosh, stiffness of neck, lock jaw, difficulty in hearing and partial deafness.

➤ **Vyayam:**

Exercise can be defined as a systematic body activity aimed at increasing strength & stability. Muscular contraction and relaxation constitute the main part of the exercise. Exercise keeps the body fit and strong. It is better to take exercise in the morning, on an empty stomach and after abhyang. During sleep due to inactivity of the muscles, the nutrients from the night's meal are not fully utilized; they remain in the body tissue causing heaviness. Kapha dosh predominates. In order to assimilate the kapha nutrients, morning exercise is essential.

Advantages:

- Regular exercise increases the body's stamina and resistance to diseases by facilitating the immune system.
- Clearing all Srotas (channels), promoting blood circulation up to the body cells & remove body waste from the cells and destroying excess fat from the body tissues.
- The Body becomes lighter as exercise results in the utilization of stored nutrients in the body.
- It Increases work efficiency by strengthening the muscles and tendons.
- In Increases the appetite and digestion power.
- It reduces the stored fat.
- It increases the general resistance.
- It delays old age and maintains youth.
- Tridosh shamak.

➤ **Yoga:**

Anxiety and tension are two major gifts of this age to the humanity. Industrialization had only brought a polluted atmosphere, but the communication tools have polluted the minds of the people. Yoga & Ayurveda in the mean time reopened the old door for a healthy mined & body for the betterment of humanity. The Astang Yoga of Patanjali (Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana & Samadhi) have gained victory over millions of people around the different corners of world. Always prevention is better than cure and in the first step, Yoga has fulfilled this aim. Adptation of Yama and Niyama simplifies the life & embeds a clear heart.

Asana or Yogic exercises differ from the usual physical exercise, in that the movements are slow and merge steadily from one posture to another. They are meant to improve the functions of internal organs rather than to develop muscles. Any steady and comfortable posture is defined as "Yoga" (Asanas) by Patanjali. For a steady and comfortable posture one has to control the natural urge to move various parts of the body and to relax muscles voluntarily. The aim of the modern man is to improve the health of his body, get rid of physical ailments and enjoy worldly happiness as long as possible. It is therefore advisable of yogic exercises which primarily are to build and strengthen mental faculties by controlling its various processes. Pranayama purifies the tracks or channels of the body. Pratyahara, Dharana & Dhyana serve the inner consciousness with a better concentration and the highest stage of yoga the Samadhi leads to salvation.

➤ **Sareera Parimarjan or Udavartana:**

One who does massage of Ayurvedic herbal powders on whole over body regularly before half hour of bath, through which the body eliminates bad smell, excessive sweating, feeling of heaviness in the body, drowsiness, itching and even removes undesirable dirt. Kapha dosh nasak, decreases of Meda and Twaka Prasadana.

➤ **Bath:**

Daily bath is essential. It removes dirty perspiration, removes itching, scratching & stimulates appetite, adds strength and vitality, freshness, eliminates fatigue, reduces body heat and promotes freshness of mind and Ojaswakara.

➤ **Clothing:**

Put on loose, clean dress according to the season like winter session; dark and woolen. Summer season; white, cotton, light clothes/dressed etc. It promotes freshness of mind and smartness.

➤ **Offering Prayer to God:**

Improves self confidence and concentration, makes saturation of mind and soul, enhances mind and body power and keeps one from untruth & violence etc.

➤ **Food:**

Ahara is the primary input to maintain and promote harmonious functioning of our body. Food is rightly considered to be the prana (life) as luster, the physical growth and development, appearance, intellect, the voice, physical and mental strength, stamina and lastly our existence itself all are attributed to food. During the ill condition healthy diet is equally important as a person will not need any medicine if he is taking wholesome or healthy diet; also for a person who is ill and does not follow the dietetic regimen then medicines without wholesome or healthy diet will not cure disease. In brief ayurveda regards "food as the greatest medicine" if consumed properly.

➤ **Ratricharya:**

When the body gets tired and mind turns away from the sense organs owing to the increase of the quality of Tamas in the mind, person falls asleep, just as we require proper food, rest to the body and mind are also essential. Happiness and misery, obesity and leanness, strength and weakness, sexual vigor and impotence, consciousness and loss of sensory acuity, life and death all depend upon proper and improper sleep. Early to bed and early to rise keeps the man healthy wealthy and wise. Coupling or sexual behavior is a biological need. Therefore a healthy person should enjoy sex every 4th day in autumn and spring, ones in 15 days in summer and monsoon and to one's satisfaction in winter. Those who regulate their sexual energy will have increased memory, power, intelligence, health and longevity.

➤ **Ritucharya:**

Ayurveda advocates specific life style to maintain good health in different seasons. Strength and digestive power are the best in winter and minimum in summer and monsoon hemant i.e. early winter is the healthiest season while the monsoon is the unhealthiest season. Hence the restriction of diet, activity and sex are minimum in hemant and maximum in monsoon. The changes in nature in different season have various effects on the body. Therefore specific dietary intake, life style, dresses, work capacity sleep, sex etc. are to be strictly followed in order to preserve and promote health in all the seasons.

➤ **Natural urges:**

The natural physical urges as Urin, Defecation (bowel evacuation), Flatus (Apan Vayu) and semen ejaculation, hunger, thirst, sleep, sneezing, yawning, vomiting should not be suppressed for good health & simultaneously mental urges like anger, fear, worry, fulfillment of un-natural desires etc. should be controlled.

➤ **Sadvritha:**

Ayurveda prescribes certain rules for maintaining healthy mind. These are principles of right conduct that are applicable to all people at all times and places. Practicing them gives balance and peace to the mind. Mind has a strong relation to the thridosha balance and thereby health.

Sadvritha rules are:

- Always speak the truth.
- Do not lose your temper under any circumstances.
- Do not get addicted to sensory pleasures.
- Do not harm anyone.
- As far as possible, do not expose yourself to hardships.
- Try to control your passions.
- Endeavor to speak pleasant and sweet words.
- Meditate everyday for tranquility of mind.
- Observe cleanliness in all things.
- Observe self control.
- Try to distribute knowledge, good advice and money to others.
- Whenever possible, devote your services to God, to the wise and to respectable or elderly individuals.
- Be straightforward and kind.
- Avoid irregularity in daily activities.
- Avoid over eating, overdrinking, too much sexual activity, too much or too little sleep.
- Behave according to the time and place where you are residing.
- Act always in a courteous and polite manner.
- Control your sense organs.
- Make a habit of doing all that is good and avoiding all that is bad.

➤ **Rasayan:**

Rasayan promotes health and will being by improving the qualities tissues. It improves general health, strength and delays the process of aging thus leading to longevity. It improves the complexion of skin and increases sexual vigor. It tones up sensory and motor organs and the highest mental faculties. Rasayan increase tissue resistance to diseases. Therefore to maintain the good health and for promotion of body resistance, vatapika rasayan as described in ayurveda should be taken.

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