

International Research Journal of Ayurveda & Yoga

Vol. 5 (4),81-84, April, 2022

ISSN: 2581-785X; <https://irjay.com/>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2022.5410>



Dincharya: an Anatomical and Physiological Overview

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Article Info

Article history:

Received on: 26-02-2022

Accepted on: 18-04-2022

Available online: 30-04-2022

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ABSTRACT:

Ayurveda is one of the world's oldest holistic healing system. In *Sanskrit*, *Ayurveda* means “The Science of Life.” *Ayurveda* places great emphasis on prevention and encourages the maintenance of health through close attention to balance in one’s life, right thinking, diet, lifestyle and the use of herbs. Knowledge of *Ayurveda* enables one to understand how to create this balance of body, mind and consciousness according to one’s own individual constitution and how to make lifestyle changes to bring about and maintain this balance. To maintain the health some activities are mentioned in *Ayurveda* under the term *Dincharya*. Here we are going to talk about this *Dincharya* (daily regimen) as well as its anatomical and physiological effects by following or not following it.

Keywords: *Dincharya*, Regimen, Health.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda means knowledge of life and longevity. *Dincharya* (*Sanskrit*: दिनचर्या "daily-routine") is a concept in *Ayurvedic* medicine that looks at the cycles of nature and bases daily activities around these cycles. *Ayurveda* contends that routines help establish balance and that understanding daily cycles is useful for promoting health.¹ Many chapters in the ancient classics are dedicated to the *Dincharya* (daily regimen). If we go on the word *dincharya* it really means “*dine dine charya dincharya*” it means the functions which are required to do on the daily basis. The classics tells that the causes of diseases are many, but has two main components-regimen and food, the former is in the definite frame of time is divisible into two-daily regimen (*Dainamadina*) and seasonal/periodical regimen (*Artva*). The daily regimen is narrated in the chapters of

Bruhatrayi and hence its name is given *Dincharya*.

Further, this science is dedicated to the maintenance of life. This is done by two methods- maintenance of positive health (*Svasthanvrita*) and medicine (*Aturavrita*). The first one, *Svasthanvrita* is depicted from the chapter named *Dincharya*.²

Activities Under *Dincharya* are

1. *Brahmmuhurte jagarana* 2. *Malotsarga vidhi* 3. *Danta dhavana evam Jihvanirlekhana* 4. *Anjana*, 5. *Nasya* 6. *Gandhusa* 7. *Dhoomapana* 8. *Tambul bhakshana* 9. *Abhyanga* 10. *Vyayama* 11. *Snanaa*.

AIM

To review, discuss and elaborate the various concepts and principles related to *Dincharya* along with its anatomical and physiological overview.



MATERIAL AND METHODS

This review article is based on various *Ayurvedic* texts such as *Ashtang hridaya*, *Charak samhita*. We also searched and referred various websites to collect the relevant information regarding this topic.

Classical Review:

Ayurveda gives equal importance to the maintenance of health by prevention of ailments and in curing them. The branch of *Ayurveda*, which deals with the maintenance of *Avasthya* or the state of well-being (steady state equilibrium), is known as *Svasthanavrita*. *Dincharya* includes the daily routine, which is to be followed by a healthy person. It begins with waking up in *Brahm-muhūrta* according to *Vagbhat acharya*, *Anjana* (Collyrium) according to *Acharya Charka* and *Dant dhavana* (Brushing of the teeth). After rising up the person should analyze his body and evacuate of excreta.

After this one the person should chew the *Danta dhawana*. One desires of clarity, taste and good smell of mouth should keep the chew stick in his mouth.³ For this the *Acharya Charka* as well as *Vagbhata* used the *Katu*(pungent), *Tikta*(bitter) and *Kashaya*(astringent) *Rasa*. The brushing should be done in such a way that the gums are not affected. Further *Vagbhata* mentions The *Jiwha nirlekhan* (Tongue scraping). The dirt deposited at the root of the tongue, obstructs expiration and gives rise to foul smell, so the tongue should be scraped regularly. *Sauviranjanam* is pleasing to the eyes and hence can be used daily. With its use, the eyelashes will become unctuous and thick; the eyes with well-defined tricolours (black, white and red in appropriate areas), clean, beautiful and with sharp vision. Further *Acharya Charka* mentions that a strong collyrium must not be applied to the eyes during the day time as the eyes weakened by drainage.

The next step to be followed in the *Dincharya* (Daily Regimen) is *Nasya* or *Navana* One who practises nasal therapy in time according to the prescribed method, his eyes, nose and ears are not affected by any morbidity. His hair and beard never become white or grey, he never experiences hair fall, diseases like torticollis, headache, facial paralysis, lock jaw, rhinitis, hemicrania and tremors of the head are cured thereby. Being nourished by inhalation, his veins, joints, ligaments and tendons of head and neck gain greater strength. His face becomes cheerful and his voice becomes sweet, stabilised and stertorous. All his sense organs become clear and there is considerable

strength in them. Diseases relating to head and neck do not attack him all of a sudden. Even though, he might be growing old, old age does not affect his head (in the form of grey hair, etc.)⁴

One should perform *Gandhusa* (Oil Pulling) after *Nasya*. Til oil gargling is beneficial for the strength of jaws, depth of voice, flabbiness of face, excellent gustatory sensation and good taste for food. One used to such gargles, never gets dryness of throat, nor do his lips ever get cracked; his teeth will never be carious and will be deep-rooted; he will not have any toothache nor will his teeth set on edge by sour intake; his teeth can chew even the hardest eatables.

After it *Dhoompana* should be performed according to *Acharya Vagbhata*. Smoking cures heaviness of head, headache, rhinitis hemicrania, earache, pain in eye, cough, hiccough, dyspnoea, obstruction in throat, weakness of teeth, discharge from the morbid ear, nose and eye, purulent smell from nose and mouth, toothache, anorexia, lock jaw, torticollis, pruritus, infective conditions, paleness of face, excessive salivation, impaired/voice, tonsillitis, uvulitis, alopecia, greying of hair, falling of hair, sneezing, excessive drowsiness, loss of consciousness, and hypersomnia. It also strengthens hair, skull bones, sense organs and voice. Clarity of mind, throat and sense organs, lightness of head and elimination of the above mentioned *Doshas* are features of correct smoking. If untimely done or overdone, smoking causes such troubles as deafness, blindness, dumbness, bleeding from different parts of the body and giddiness.⁵

Tambul bhakshana (betel chewing) should be performed after it. *Abhyanga* (oil massage) should be performed after *Tambul bhakshana*.

Daily application of oil on body is recommended. This retards ageing, overcomes fatigue and annihilates effects of aggravated *Vata*. It improves clarity of vision, renders nourishment, longevity, good sleep, good skin & a sturdy physique. It should be particularly practiced on head, ears and soles.⁶ One who applies til oil on his head regularly does not suffer from headache, baldness, greying of hair, nor do his hair fall Strength of his head and forehead is specially enhanced; his hair become black, long and deep-rooted; his sense organs work properly, the skin of his face becomes brightened, applying til oil on the head produces sound sleep and happiness.

The benefits of the oiling of the ears: Ear diseases due to vitiated *Vata*, torticollis, lock.jaw, hardness of hearing and deafness are prevented if oil is regularly dropped into the ears. As a pitcher, a dry skin, and an axis (of a cart) become strong and resistant by the application. By massaging oil in

the feet, roughness, immobility, dryness, fatigue and numbness are instantaneously cured, tender ness, strength and steadiness of feet are effected, the eye sight becomes clear and *Vata* (vitiated) is relieved thereby. Prevention from sciatica, cracking of feet, constriction of vessels and ligaments of feet is ensured if (oil) massage is applied to the feet, so by the massage of oil the human body becomes strong and smooth-skinned; it is not susceptible to the diseases due to *Vata*; it is resistant to exhaustions and exertions.

A person should daily perform exercise according to his capacity.⁷ The practice of physical exercise renders body light and efficient in activities, improves digestive power, lowers obesity, renders finely chiseled contours and consistent body structure.

Snanaa should be performed after doing exercise. Bathing kindles *Agni* (improves digestion), provides health, longevity and enhances sexual drive, energy and strength. it tackles *Kandu* (itching) *mala* (dirt), *Srama* (fatigue), *Sweda* (sweat), *Tantra* (lethargy). *Trishna* (thirst), *Daha* (burning feet) and *Papma* (ill feeling).⁸

Modern Review:

If we see these daily regimen steps according to modern point of view then, waking up early one can benefit out of it since the body provides more energy. It also helps in the proper functioning of the body that include increased supply in blood muscles, tissue repairs, bone repair, lowered blood pressure and relaxation of the body. According to the research, people who wake up early have better brain function, superior critical thinking and problem-solving skills.⁹ Joerg Huber of Roehampton University in London found that "Morning people tend to be healthier and happier as well as having lower body mass indexes."

After rising the person should chew the *Danta dhawana* (Brush) sticks meant for cleaning the teeth. Oral hygiene is inevitable for the maintenance of proper health. materials of sweet, salty and sour tastes are not advised for brushing teeth, as these may cause decay of dentures, especially enamel, if continuously used. Improper brushing causes gum recession, that may cause "pockets" or gaps, form between the teeth and gum line, making it easy for disease causing bacteria to build up. If left untreated, the supporting tissue and bone structures of the teeth can be severely damaged, and may ultimately result in tooth loss. Gum recession is a common dental problem. The first sign of gum recession is usually tooth sensitivity, or the person may notice a tooth looks longer than normal. Typically, a

notch can be felt near the gum line.¹⁰

One should daily apply the collyrium called *Sauviram*, which is beneficial to the eyes, by this eyes become beautiful, sharp to see even minute objects. The herbal treatment contained rose extracts is generally used to treat for patients with dry eyes, conjunctivitis and pterygium. The reductions are also seen in postoperative cataract cases.

After it *Anutaila* is to be dropped into the nose. The medicines administered through the *Nasya* it travels through the paranasal sinuses, It works specifically on disorders of ear, nose and throat. The medications administered through the nostrils pervade into the nervous (Brain) and venous system (Blood circulation) present in and around the nostrils. Medicated oils or powders stimulate some vital centers of brain that reduce pain perception. *Nasya* clears the nasal cavity thereby relaxing nervous system.¹¹

Several studies have found that oil pulling can help reduce the number of bacteria in the mouth, preventing tooth decay. practitioners believe that oil pulling can clear the sinuses, reduce headaches, and reduce inflammation in the body.¹²

Actions which produce weariness to the body are called exercise or *Vyayama*. Regular physical activity can improve the muscle strength and boost endurance. Exercise delivers oxygen and nutrients to the tissues and helps the cardiovascular system work more efficiently. Resistance exercise affects muscles by increasing the formation of myofibrils, thereby increasing the thickness of muscle fibers.¹³

Abhyanga (Massage) of the body subsides, *Kapha*, dissolves the fat, produces firmness to the limbs and gives good appearance to the skin. Head massage can help improve circulation to the head and face. Improved circulation brings nutrients and oxygen to the head and neck area, improving brain function and increasing the removal of toxins. Enhancing the delivery of nutrients encourages healing throughout the body and promotes better health. Ear massage triggers the release of the body's natural painkillers, endorphins. Studies have demonstrated that ear stimulation increases levels of endorphins in both the blood and cerebrospinal fluid.¹⁴

Snana (Bath) stimulates digestive fire, when a tense body enters a warm bath, the hot water increases the body temperature and relaxes the tense muscles and helps the arteries and veins to expand and carry blood more effectively throughout the body.¹⁵

DISCUSSION

Waking up at a decent (early) hour is essential for optimal health. The human body and brain have evolved to follow a circadian rhythm that helps to regulate sleep and wake patterns that are set by our natural environment, this natural circadian rhythm also corresponds with the body's natural cortisol levels, a hormone well known for its role in our metabolism, immune system, stress response and energy levels. In a balanced state, cortisol levels start to rise 2-3 hours after the onset of sleep and continue to rise into the early morning helping to wake us. Cortisol levels in the body then peak around 8:30 am or 9:00 am and continue to gradually decline as the day continues. Therefore, following the body's natural circadian rhythm and cortisol levels is a simple way to maximize energy levels, productivity and overall health. Brushing is important to prevent cavities, to remove plaque, brushing also stimulates the gums, which helps to keep them healthy and prevent gum disease. The collyrium nourishes the eyes and eyelashes. The Nasya (nasal drops) cleanses Sinuses, soothes the nasal passage and clears the sinuses to promote breathing, heals Migraines and Headaches. Highly effective in treating chronic headaches and migraines, Expels Mucus buildup, Improves Voice, Releases Toxins, Improves health. Oil pulling helps with overall health by clearing toxins from the body. *Ayurveda* believe that oil pulling can clear the sinuses, reduce headaches, and reduce inflammation in the body. Exercise helps to control body weight, reduce the risk of heart diseases by strengthening the heart and improving the circulation, Helps the body to manage blood sugar and insulin levels, Strengthen the bones and muscles. The body massage reduces stress, reduces pain and muscle soreness and tension, improves circulation, energy and alertness, lowers heart rate and blood pressure, Improves immune function. Bathing can relieve muscle pain, can make the heart healthy, burn calories, relieve cold and flu symptoms.

CONCLUSION

As we see in the both Ayurveda and modern literature that how a daily regimen reduces disease risks and give a person healthy life. By following *Dincharya* (daily regimen) one will be able to follow a healthy lifestyle thereby maintaining health. A daily routine is absolutely necessary to bring radical change in body, mind, and

consciousness. Routine helps to establish balance in one's constitution. It also regularizes a person's biological clock, aids digestion, absorption and assimilation and generates self-esteem, discipline, peace, happiness, and longevity.

Acknowledgements:- Nil

Conflict of Interest – None

Source of Finance & Support - Nil

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How to cite this article: Sharma S, Dr. Harvendra Devpal H, Sharma DK “*Dincharya*: An Anatomical And Physiological Overview” IRJAY.[online]2022;5(4);81-84. Available from: <https://irjay.com>
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47223/IRJAY.2022.5410>