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# Role of *Vyayama* (Exercise) in maintenance of Health - An Ayurvedic and modern view

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has a focus on the importance of *Dinacharya* (daily regime), *Ratricharya* (night regime) and *Ritucharya* (seasonal routine). These three are important in the prevention of disease and promotion of ideal health. According to Ayurveda, to maintain a healthy and disease free life everyone should follow a daily routine mentioned in Ayurveda texts. *Vyayama* (physical exercise) is an important regimen explained in the context of *Dinacharya*. *Vyayama* plays key role in the maintenance of health and prevention of disease. Ayurveda suggests that a daily routine of proper physical activity, affects not only your body, but has a positive influence on your mind, emotions, senses and spirit. The benefits of *Vyayama* are achieved as you focus on your chosen activity in awareness of your breathing, physical responses, and sense of well-being. When you exercise according to Ayurvedic tradition, your energy and vitality are enhanced by the appropriate demands placed on your body and you are left with a feeling of joy.

**Key words:** *Vyayama*, Exercise, Health.

## INTRODUCTION

*Vyayama*, or physical exercise, is an essential component of Ayurveda's system of preventative health care, rejuvenation and longevity. The ancient Ayurvedic texts describe *Vyayama* as the movements and body postures designed to stabilize and strengthen your body. Ancient Indian history was divided into Early Harappa civilization, Harappa civilization, Post Harappa civilization, Vedic period, Epic Age, Jaina and Buddha period and Hindu period. Up to the Harappan period no searched literature was

discovered, unless the seals etc. But in the Vedic period Vedas and Upanishads was develop. There was a very little reflection of *Vyayama* (Exercise) in *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. However, in Ayurvedic text (a major Upa Veda) *Vyayama* culture was strongly present and it would reflect the culture of ancient India. Ayurveda is the science of long and healthy life and it believe human is the combination of body, mind and soul. For the body, they suggested *Vyayama* (exercise) and *Krida* (sports). For mind and soul they suggested *Yoga* techniques: *Asana*, *Pranayama* and Meditation etc. *Vyayama* is derived from *vy* (specific) + *aa* (particular) + *yam* (control) + *ghamg* (by which it is done), and in complete sense it means specific and particular body control. By applying *Vyayama* in our daily life we can get rid of many disease and it has its importance in preventive aspect too.

## Benefits of *Vyayama* - Ayurveda View

Act which produces tiredness in body known as "*Vyayama*".<sup>[1]</sup> *Vyayama* vary according to individual body strength, age, diet pattern, season and climate.<sup>[2]</sup>

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*Vyayama* is not like to daily domestic or outdoor activity while they also produce tiredness but *Vyayama* is active phenomena which accept voluntarily taken and need some plenty time for perform. Benefit are, strength to the muscles, body stable long time in healthy state. It has been done in appropriate quantity.<sup>[3]</sup>

### Matra (symptom of right Vyayama)

Symptoms of right *Vyayama* are clearly explained in *Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana* chapter seven is respiration rate increase, body enlighten, sweating occur, felt some obstruction at cardiac region, *Vyayama* should be stopped after these appear of these symptoms.<sup>[4]</sup>

Concept of *Balardha* given by *Acharya Sushruta Chikitsasthan* chapter 24, Symptom of *Balardha* is *Vayu of Hridayasthan* exit from mouth means breathlessness occur, one should stop *Vyayama*.<sup>[5]</sup>

Other symptoms of *Balardha* is sweating from axial, forehead, tip of nose, all joints of limbs, and mouth become dry. *Balardha Vyayama* means individual should practice of exercise in half of own power.<sup>[6]</sup> *Vyayama Kala* also has been described.<sup>[7]</sup>

According to *Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana*, if daily practice of *Vyayama* symptoms appear in body like lightning (*Laghuta*), strength maintain during long work, exhaustion not felt early, body stable not early symptoms express in body even adverse condition like heat, cold, thirst, and hunger (*Sthairya Dukhsahishnuta*). *Vata Pitta Kaphadosha* are pacified (*Doshakshaya*). Digestive fire increase (*Agnivridhi*).<sup>[8]</sup>

Benefits of *Vyayama* according to *Acharya Sushruta Chikitsasthan*, are if a person is ugly after *Vyayama* they get beautiful look, because add weight lost, muscles get proper distribution and body become compact, figure proportionate (*Sudarshana*). Digestive fire enhanced, increase metabolic rate, thyroid function normal. Old age not attack early.<sup>[9]</sup>

One of benefit of *Vyayama* is loss of added fat (*Medakshaya*), so beneficial in obesity.<sup>[10]</sup>

Through *Vyayama*, body become strengthen so compared with lion, and diseases not attack easily so disease compare with weak antelope in *Sushruta Samhita*.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Types of Vyayama

*Niyudha, Bahuyudha, Adhva, Shilanirghat, Padaghat, Chankraman* types of *Vyayama* describe in *Samhita Grantha*. *Niyudha* and *Bahuyudha* may be correlated with wrestling, *Adhva* and *Chankraman* means walking for long distance or simple walking *Shilanirghat* throwing or pulling stone, *Padaghat* means massage by feet.<sup>[12]</sup>

Even *Acharya Charaka* explain varieties of exercise in for *Kaphaja Roga* in *Sleshma Prakruti Purusha* are *Padaghat* (massaging with feet), swimming, horse, elephant, chariot riding, practicing weapons, rotating weight, pulling rope, shooting arrow.<sup>[13]</sup>

After *Vyayama*, massage should be done to relax muscles and absorb sweat through skin again.<sup>[14]</sup> But now a day various home set up of *Vyayama* available. Gym, treadmill, warm up exercise, physical yoga practice etc. Procedure which are convenient in daily practice in *Vyayama* are *Surya Namaskar, Sukshama Vyayama, Yogkriya Kapalbhathi*, various stretch and relax technique may be considered.

### Complication

Before practice of *Vyayama* consider some factors like age of individual, strength and physical tolerance, diet pattern, season, habitat (*Sadharan, Aanoop, Jangamdesha*). *Vyayama* always beneficial for who are physically strong and taken fatty diet (*Snigdha Ahara*).

Complication of over *Vyayama* is, *Kasa, Svasha, Kshaya, Shosha, Jwara, Raktapitta, Bhrama, Klama*, may be correlate with respiratory disease, bleeding disorder, weakness, vertigo, tiredness.<sup>[15]</sup>

### Contraindication

*Vyayama* is contra indicated in condition of Old age, for children, in pregnancy, state of depression, *Vataprakruti*, state of hunger and thirst, indulge in

over sex, speak loudly, angry men, just after intake of food.<sup>[16]</sup>

### Modern view on Vyayama

Exercise is any bodily activity that enhances or maintains physical fitness and overall health and wellness.

It is performed for various reasons, to aid growth and improve strength, preventing ageing, developing muscles and the cardiovascular system, honing athletic skills, weight loss or maintenance, improving health and also for enjoyment. Many individuals choose to exercise outdoors where they can congregate in groups, socialize and enhance well-being.

### Benefits

Even with risk factors for heart disease such as high blood pressure, diabetes or high cholesterol, people who enjoy regular physical activity have lower death rates than people who have no risk factors but who aren't physically active. What's more, people with heart disease who are physically fit live longer and have fewer heart attacks than heart patients who aren't physically fit. The facts are clear: Regular physical activity benefits people who have heart disease as well as those who don't.

Regular physical activity helps:

- Lower blood pressure.
- Decrease LDL "bad" cholesterol in your blood.
- Improve blood sugar.
- Reduce feelings of stress.
- Control body weight.
- Improve quality of sleep and reduce the time it takes to fall asleep.
- Improve memory and reduce the risk of dementia and depression.

### Weight control and Exercise

Obesity is characterized by excess adipose tissue, which can be identified by an increase in body weight or body mass index (BMI).

- However, body weight and BMI are not in themselves an accurate measure of obesity. Analysis of body composition gives a more accurate measurement of fat and lean tissue, which can vary among individuals with the same body weight. However, in clinical settings weight is the easiest variable to measure and in the majority of studies it is the only measure of obesity given.
- Exercise increases energy expenditure and therefore should theoretically result in significant weight loss. However, in studies that prescribe exercise as the only treatment for obesity only very modest weight loss is observed and the effects can take at least nine months to become evident (Kirk, 2003).
- When increasing activity levels, a negative energy balance must be achieved for weight loss to occur. When prescribing exercise it is therefore essential to ensure that energy expenditure completely compensates for caloric energy intake. For significant weight loss an individual needs to exercise 3-5 times per week for at least 45-60 minutes, at an intensity of 60-70 per cent of that person's maximum heart rate (calculated as 220 minus their age in years).
- However, for sedentary individuals this prescription is too demanding and drop-out rates are high. Strategies must be employed to ensure that patients are eased into exercise programmes in order to increase adherence. For those who have led previously sedentary lifestyles, moderate intensity exercise is suitable for effective weight management, preventing weight gain and producing weight loss in young adults (Donnelly, 2003).
- Modifications to diet, activity and attitude that enhance a person's weight loss should be encouraged.

### Psychological well-being

In addition to the physiological benefits, regular physical activity has been reported to improve general

psychological well-being. Exercise in combination with moderate energy restriction over 12 weeks resulted in improvements in obese patients (Nieman, 2000; Cramer, 1991). Improved psychological well-being gives previously sedentary people the confidence to continue exercising while minimizing feelings of depression and anxiety, which can be the cause or result of an inactive lifestyle

### Muscular strength

Resistance exercise consists of activities that overload muscle. Examples include weight training, exercises against body weight and exercises in water. Resistance training for three days per week has been shown to increase basal metabolic rate (BMR) and muscular strength (Dolezal, 1998). Increased muscular strength helps maintain mobility of joints and can help to improve and/or maintain posture that can deteriorate with a sedentary lifestyle.

An increased BMR indicates improved lean tissue composition and will facilitate weight loss and serve to maintain desired weight when this has been achieved.

### Exercises for a fitter pregnancy

If you are pregnant, try to fit the exercises listed in this section into your daily routine. These types of exercise will strengthen your muscles to help you carry the extra weight of pregnancy. They'll also make your joints stronger, improve circulation, ease backache, and generally help you feel well.

### Stomach-strengthening exercises

As your baby gets bigger, you may find that the hollow in your lower back increases and this can give you backache. These exercises strengthen stomach (abdominal) muscles and may ease backache, which can be a problem in pregnancy: start in a box position (on all 4s) with knees under hips, hands under shoulders, with fingers facing forward and abdominals lifted to keep your back straight pull in your stomach muscles and raise your back up towards the ceiling, curling your trunk and allowing your head to relax gently forward. Do not let your elbows lock hold for a few seconds then slowly return to the box position

take care not to hollow your back: it should always return to a straight/neutral position do this slowly and rhythmically 10 times, making your muscles work hard and moving your back carefully only move your back as far as you can comfortably

### Pelvic tilt exercises

Stand with your shoulders and bottom against a wall keep your knees soft pull your tummy button towards your spine, so that your back flattens against the wall: hold for 4 seconds then release repeat up to 10 times

### Pelvic floor exercises

Pelvic floor exercises help to strengthen the muscles of the pelvic floor, which come under great strain in pregnancy and childbirth. The pelvic floor consists of layers of muscles that stretch like a supportive hammock from the pubic bone (in front) to the end of the backbone (spine).

If your pelvic floor muscles are weak, you may find that you leak urine when you cough, sneeze or strain. This is quite common, and there is no reason to feel embarrassed. It's known as stress incontinence and it can continue after pregnancy.

You can strengthen these muscles by doing pelvic floor exercises. This helps to reduce or avoid stress incontinence after pregnancy. All pregnant women should do pelvic floor exercises, even if you're young and not suffering from stress incontinence now.

### How to do pelvic floor exercises

Close up your bottom, as if you're trying to stop yourself going to the toilet at the same time, draw in your vagina as if you're gripping a tampon, and your urethra as if to stop the flow of urine at first, do this exercise quickly, tightening and releasing the muscles immediately then do it slowly, holding the contractions for as long as you can before you relax: try to count to 10 try to do 3 sets of 8 squeezes every day: to help you remember, you could do a set at each meal, As well as these exercises, practice tightening the pelvic floor muscles before and during coughing and sneezing.

**CONCLUSION**

In today's world where lifestyle is very sedentary and the prevalence and incidence of non-communicable disease at its high rate so it's very important to adopt exercise and physical activities in our life so that we can have a healthy life.

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