



ISSN 2456-3110

Vol 8 · Issue 1

January 2023

Journal of  
**Ayurveda and Integrated  
Medical Sciences**

*www.jaims.in*

**JAIMS**

An International Journal for Researches in Ayurveda and Allied Sciences



**Maharshi Charaka**  
Ayurveda

**Indexed**

# Conceptual study of *Shatkarma* for Prevention of Disease

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## ABSTRACT

The *Yoga* recommended various preventive methods, like as *Shatkarma*, in addition to emphasizing curative techniques to health care. In order to make progress along the spiritual path that is safe and fruitful, it helps to cleanse the body of pollutants. In this essay, we've tried to shed some light on how *Shatkarma* can be used in our regular practice. *Shatkarma* can be practiced for a better quality of life not only by those who are ill but also by those who are in good health. It is essential for both the treatment and prevention of many disorders. The three humors or *Doshas* in the body - *Kapha* (mucus), *Pitta* (bile), and *Vata* (wind) are balanced by the *Shatkarma* (wind). Regular *Shatkarma* practice aids in the body's purification. People who are overweight or have extra *Shlesma* and *Medas* should engage in *Shatkarma*. The goal of such cleansing procedures, according to yogic science, is to make the body pure so that it can support higher forms of practice like *Asana*, *Pranayama*, and meditation.

**Key words:** *Shatkarma*, *Yoga*, purification practices.

## INTRODUCTION

The *Yoga Upanishads'* description of *Hatha Yoga* describes *Shatkarmas* (*Dhauti*, *Basti*, *Neti*, *Trataka*, *Nauli*, *Kapalbhati*).<sup>[1]</sup> *Shatkarma* means "six" and *Karma* means "action," and these purifying methods work together to assist one reach a healthy body and clear mind. The six *Yogic Kriyas* or purifying techniques are known as *Shat-Karma* (six actions). The *Shatkarma* are used to balance the three *Doshas* or humors in the body: *Kapha* (mucus), *Pitta* (bile), and *Vata* (wind). As

*Doshas* are the fundamental concepts of *Ayurveda*, the end consequence of all of them is *Dosha Saamyata*. *Shatkarma* assists us in achieving our higher life goals. Regular *Shatkarma* practice helps the body become cleansed. People with excess *Shlesma* and *Medas* (fat) should practice *Shatkarma*.<sup>[2]</sup>

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* is just one of the several ancient *Yogic* scriptures that discuss these purifying techniques. The *Shatkarma Sangraha* of *Raghuvira*, the *Gherand Samhita*, the *Shiva Samhita*, and numerous more texts.<sup>[3]</sup>

The aim of *Shatkarma* is to create harmony between the two major *Pranic* flows, *Ida* and *Pingala*, thereby attaining physical and mental purification and balance.<sup>[4]</sup>

These practices are also used before *Pranayama* and other higher *Yoga* practices in order to purify the body of toxins and to ensure safe and successful progression along the spiritual path.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is literary study, for fulfilling the above aims, the literary resources were collected from *Hath Yoga*

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Submission Date: 15/11/2022 Accepted Date: 23/12/2022

### Access this article online

Quick Response Code



Website: [www.jaims.in](http://www.jaims.in)

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*Pradipika, Gherand Samhita, Ayurvedic Physiotherapy and Yoga* By Dr. K.Mehta and Dr. Raghunandan Sharma, *The Essence of Yoga* by Dr. Manglagowri V. Rao, *A Comprehensive Guide To Swasthavritta* by Dr. P. Sudhakar Reddy, *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha* by Swami Satyananda Saraswati and related information from various research papers, journals, articles and internet.

## DISCUSSION

The six *Shatkarma* are as follows;

1. **Neti:** a process of cleansing and purifying the nasal passages. Practices included in this category are, *Jala Neti* and *Sutra Neti*.<sup>[5]</sup>

### *Jala Neti* (Nasal Cleansing with Water)

**Method:** A pinch of salt is combined with warm water. It is taken with a *Netipot* with nozzle. One should tilt their head to the opposite side to expel the water after inserting the nozzle in one nostril. Water automatically pours out of the other nostril.

**Benefits:** *Jala Neti* clears mucus and debris from the sinuses and nasal passages, allowing air to circulate freely.

- Infections in the respiratory system are prevented and treated.
- It promotes the preservation of healthy throat, eyes, and ears.

### *Sutra Neti* (Cleansing Nose through a Thread)

Traditionally, a specially prepared cotton thread, *sutra* was used. the width was about 4mm and the length 36 to 45cm.<sup>[6]</sup> Nowadays, we can practice this more conveniently performed by using a thin, rubber catheter lubricated with melted ghee, butter, edible oil or one's own saliva, so that it slides easily through the nasal passage.

**Method:** Take a comfortable position, tilt your head back slightly, and gently enter the catheter's narrow end into your throat. Next, put your index and middle fingers into your mouth when the catheter reaches the back of your throat. Slowly remove the catheter through your mouth. On the first try, gently pull the

catheter back and forth no more than 15 times, grasp each end with your fingers, remove it carefully through your nostril, and then repeat the operation with the other nostril.<sup>[7]</sup>

**Benefits:** *Sutra Neti* can rectify the problem of deviated septum.

If nostrils are not flowing freely due to fleshy outgrowths, the regular friction of *Sutra Neti* causes these obstructions to disappear within a few months.

## 2. *Dhouti* (Washing up of the Digestive Tract)

*Dhouti* means to washout. This process is suggested for washing stomach, and intestines. There are 3 type of *Dhoutis*.<sup>[8]</sup>

a) *Jala Dhouti* b) *Vastra Dhouti* c) *Danda Dhouti*

### a) *Jala Dhouti* (Induced Vomiting)

- Drink lukewarm saline water continuously till you feel like vomiting it out.
- For better vomiting to be induced, stimulate vomiting by putting to index and middle finger of the right hand in the mouth and trickling at the back of the throat.
- When all the saline water ingested has been smoothly vomited out, wash the mouth and face with clean water.<sup>[9]</sup>

### b) *Vastra Dhouti*

Slowly continuously, swallow a four finger wide and about fifteen meter long wet piece of soft cloth, with the near end of the cloth firmly caught in one hand.<sup>[10]</sup>

- If the cloth is found to stick up, drink some water.
- Bring the cloth out slowly and gently.

**Benefits:** Digestion is improved

- Hyperacidity of stomach is definitely reduced.
- Beneficial in *Asthma*, *eczema* and other allergic disorders.
- It is useful in *Kasa*, *Swasa*, *Pleeha*, *Kustha*, and all 20 types of *Kaphaja Rogas*.<sup>[11]</sup>

**c) *Basti*:** The term *Basti* generally means colon flushing or colon cleansing.

*Basti* is of two types; one is *Jala Basti* and the other *Sthala Basti* or *Suska Basti*.<sup>[12]</sup>

**Apparatus:** Enema pot with rubber tube.

**Material:** Plain water / warm water / soap water.

**Method:** The enema patient should lie on their left side with their upper leg up.

- Insert the lubricated nozzle into the lying person's rectum.
- After the enema pot has been completely emptied, slowly remove the tube's nozzle and check your intestines until all the water that has been introduced has come out.<sup>[13]</sup>

**Benefits:**

- Colon gets washed out.
- It relieves constipation
- Colonic gases are expelled out.
- Chronic colitis is relieved.
- It is also relieving diseases of spleen, *Gulma* and *Udara*.<sup>[14]</sup>

4. **Nauli:** "Nau" means a boat and "Li" means to cling, *Nauli* is similar to a boat anchored in a stormy sea. One should move the stomach and intestines from one side to other side. This process is called as *Nauli*.

**Method:** Being upright spread the legs one foot apart in *Tadasana*, bending the knees gently, and bending the forward.

- Hands should be raised above the knees.
- Chin should be positioned in *Jalandhara Bandha*, the notch between the two collarbones.
- Pull the abdomen inside till it touches the spine while taking a deep breath in and a strong exhalation, followed by the *Kumbhaka*.
- Maintain this stance by pushing the abdominal recti forward to the best of your ability.
- Slowly inhale while letting the stomach relax.<sup>[15]</sup>

**Benefits:** Cures all variety of disease and increase bodily fire.

5. **Kapalabhati:** *Kapala* means skull and *Bhati* means light or shine. In this *Kriya* inhalation is passive and exhalation is forceful.

According to *Gheranda Samhita* it is of three types, namely *Vama Karma*, *Vyutkrama* and *Sitkrama*.<sup>[16]</sup>

- a) **Vama Karma:** Inhale it through the left nostril and exhale through right nostril, then inhale through right nostril and exhale through left nostril. This is more famous as *Anuloma Viloma*. It destroys *Kapha* disorder.
- b) **Vyutkrama:** Drink water through both the nostrils and expel it through mouth slowly. This process destroys cough disorders.
- c) **Sitkarma:** Drink water through mouth and expel it through nostrils to get a beautiful body like that of *Kama Deva*. This prevents old age and disease. The body becomes healthy elastic and free from *Kapha* disorder.

According to *Hathyoga Pradipika*, *Kapalabhati* is of only one type. it is forceful inspiration and expiration as the black smith bellows, which dries up the *Kapha*.

**Precaution:** One should stop the process on experience of pain and dizziness.

**Contraindication:** Heart disease, high blood pressure, vertigo, epilepsy, stroke, hernia, gastric ulcer.

**Indication:** *Asthma*, *Bronchitis*, *Indigestion*, *Diabetes Mellitus*.

6. **Trataka:** The word *Trataka* means "to look" or to "gaze" One should continuously look at some small object till eyes tear, this is called as *Trataka*.<sup>[17]</sup> This technique one can attain *Sambhavi Siddhi* very fast. It destroys all eye diseases and gives good vision.

*Trataka* is classified into 2 types: *Antaranga* and *Bahiranga*.

*Bahiranga* is further divided into distant and near.

In distant *Trataka* one gazes sun, moon, stars, etc.

In near *Trataka* one gazes at the objects like candle, light, nose tip, red cloth, *Bindu* (point), line (*Rekha*), reflection, fire etc.

**Indication:** Vision problem, anxiety, tension, enhances memory power and concentration power.

## CONCLUSION

An imbalance in the *Doshas*, according to *Ayurveda* and *Hatha Yoga*, will lead to sickness. The three humors or *Doshas* in the body, *Kapha* (mucus), *Pitta* (bile), and *Vata* (wind) are balanced through *Shatkarma*. The *Yogic* lifestyle may significantly contribute to the improvement of the health of our society, and *Shatkarma* has a great deal of promise in the prevention and management of lifestyle problems and diseases. It is crucial to receive personalized instruction on the best times and ways to do the *Shatkarmas* based on each person's unique needs and restrictions.

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**How to cite this article:** Deepika Das, Sasmita Tripathy, Jagadish Mishra. Conceptual study of Shatkarma for Prevention of Disease. J Ayurveda Integr Med Sci 2023;01:81-84.

**Source of Support:** Nil, **Conflict of Interest:** None declared.

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