

Role of Vyayam (Exercise) in Daily Life-An Ayurvedic Perspective

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Abstract

Vyayam (exercise) has been an important part of the *ayurvedic* routine for thousands of years. Our Ancient Scholars have given much emphasis on it because *vyayam* has much benefits on mind and body. Nowadays, people are suffering from many diseases such as obesity, Diabetes mellitus, Cardiovascular disease, various joint diseases and diseases due to ageing etc. The cause of these diseases is found to occur due to lack of proper exercise. Exercise in proper way, enhances firmness, endurance in the body and increases ability to do work. It pacifies all three *doshas* and creates balance in them when conducted as per *prakriti* (constitution), age of the person and season. Vata types need less exercise, so lighter activities such as walking are best. Pitta_ types need moderate amounts such as swimming for example and Kapha types need more intense exercise, such as jogging and aerobics, in order to stay in balance. Regarding season, if one wants to increase exercise, winter and spring are the best times. In hot weather, one needs to decrease exertion and stay out of the hot sun. As for age, children have more capacity for exercise and older people need less, although daily exercise is essential at any age Exercise enhances the digestion, and if done properly, it dissolves impurities in the tissues. It enhances immunity, eliminates fatigue, stops early aging, and retards weight gain and can thus improve one's quality of life.

Keywords: *Vyayam* has much benefits on mind and body, Diabetes mellitus, Cardiovascular disease.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is an ancient holistic science of life. It not only describes the principles of preservation and promotion of health but also states the treatment of various ailments. As per *ayurveda*, a person is regarded as healthy when doshas, agni, dhatus and malas of his body are in equilibrium condition and in addition to these, his soul, mind and other sense organs are in pleasant state. And, for keeping the body and mind healthy, ayurveda states many regimens eg., dinocharya, ritucharya, swasthavritta etc. Vyayam (exercise) is a unique practice described in ayurveda in detail. It is good for mind, body, and soul. And, it is not possible for one to keep good health without proper exercise. But, excessive exercise is not good for health. It should be performed as per person's prakriti (constitution), vaya(age), ritu (season), desha (habitat), kala (time) and diet described in ayurveda, otherwise, the person will suffer many diseases.

Definition of Vyayam (Exercise)

The work involving exertion of the body is known as vyayama (physical exertion). After doing it, one should press the body gently all over [1].

Maharshi Charak has defined exercise in following way-

Such a physical action which is desirable and is capable of bodily stability and strength is known as physical exercise. This has to be practiced in moderation [2].

Advantage of Exercise

As per Maharshi Charak, the utilities of exercise are as follows-

Physical exercise brings about lightness, ability to work, stability, resistance to discomfort and alleviation of doshas (specially kapha) [3].

Effects of Excessive Exercise

As per Maharshi Charak, physical exercise in excess causes exertion, exhaustion, consumption, thirst, bleeding from different parts of the body (raktapitta), pratamaka (a type of dyspnoea), cough, fever and vomiting [4].

Salient Features of Proper Exercise

Perspiration, enhanced respiration, lightness of the body, inhibition of the heart and such other organs

of the body are indicative of the exercise being performed correctly [5].

Contraindications of Exercise

Exercise is contraindicated for persons who are emaciated due to excessive sexual activity, weight lifting and by travelling on foot and for those who are in grip of anger, grief, fear, exhaustion. It is also contraindicated for the children, for the old persons and for the persons who are having vatika constitution and having profession of speaking too much. And, also one should not do exercise while he is hungry and thirsty [6].

As per other acharyas, exercise is also contraindicated in indigestion and in diseases caused by *vata* and *pitta doshas*.

Types of Exercises and their benefits:

- **Morning Walk:** Morning walk is the first and most common exercise and is suited in almost all constitutions. Diabetic patients should do morning walk regularly as morning walk is very good for their health.
- **Gymnastic Exercises:** one must do gymnastic exercises only under the guidance of an experienced trainer. Gymnastics may be positively injurious to weak constitutions.
- **Yoga:** Yoga helps us to control our mind as well as body. Yoga is a mixture of physical, mental and spiritual exercises. Yoga is very good for everyone. One must do yoga regularly. To give more importance to yoga now in our country, Yoga Day is also celebrated on 21st June every year.
- **Free –Hand exercises-** These are the simple exercises that can be easily followed by everyone.
- **Aerobics:** Aerobics means using or requiring more oxygen. These exercises are done to make body consume more of oxygen. Aerobics help to improve the condition of the circulatory system and the heart Example: Cycling, Swimming etc.
- **Anaerobic:** It means not using or requiring more oxygen. These exercises are highly intensive and therefore done for a short duration of time. Example: Weight Lifting.
- **Flexibility:** It means to stretch one's body as much as one can without any difficulty. These exercises are done to improve joint flexibility and muscular mobility. Example: Stretching.

CONCLUSION

Both mental development and physical exercise are very much essential for healthy and happy life. Exercise is necessary for having a sound mind in a sound body. It increases energy level and delivers oxygen and nutrients to whole body helping it to work more efficiently and boost one's endurance .Limbs

grow stronger by constant physical work. But, excessive exercise is detrimental to health. So, taking out some time to rest is as important as exercise and one should do exercise as per his prakriti (constitution), vaya (age), ritu (season), desha (habitat), kala (time) and diet, otherwise, it will cause many hazards. To succeed in life, both mental and physical development are important. Therefore, exercises are really essential for the overall development in one's life.

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