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Dinacharya

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In **Sanskrit** *Dina* means daily and *Charya* means following, moving. **Ayurveda** recommends that in order to be optimally healthy we should tune our bodies to the nature's master cycle which in turn regulates the various other rhythms.

Everyday two cycles of change pass through us, each bringing a Vata, Pitta, or Kapha predominance. The approximate times of these cycles are as follows:

First Cycle:

6 A.M. to 10 A.M. - Kapha

10 A.M. to 2 P.M. - Pitta

2 P.M. to 6 P.M. - Vata

Second Cycle:

6 P.M. to 10 P.M. - Kapha

10 P.M. to 2 A.M. - Pitta

2 A.M. to 6 A.M. - Vata

Considering the above cycles the ideal schedule should be like this :

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Morning

Time to wake up: A healthy person should get up two hours before sunrise. During this hours the Vata element is dominant. Waking up two hours before dawn you utilize the Vata qualities in the nature. Vata is light, subtle and clear and this helps in tuning the body to the delicate messages the nature sends. This is the time when there is the most **sattva** in the air and environment. It is the most fresh and pure time of the day. Some exceptions to this rule of rising are the very young, the old, parents with small children, and people with diseases.

Elimination: Drinking a glass or two of warm water helps in the elimination. As soon as possible empty your colon and bladder. Proper elimination ensures your body's proper functioning. If you wait until later in the morning or during the day you are slowly poisoning yourself (due to accumulation of toxins and wastes) and creating an opportunity for chronic conditions to arise.

Cleaning of Senses: Wash the eyes with water. Preferably use rose water and Triphala to purify the sight. Brush the teeth and scrape the tongue with a tongue cleaner to purify your mouth and the taste buds. **Ayurveda** considers the coating of the tongue as an indicator of 'Aama' or toxins in the colon. Gargle with warm water or herbal tea to purify your voice and strengthen your teeth. Fill your mouth with sesame oil and keep it a few minutes before spitting. This strengthens the teeth, improves the

sense of taste, lubricates the palate and is good for eyes. Put a little oil in your nose to purify the sinuses and your sense of smell. The traditional Dinacharya also recommends that you inhale the smoke of medicinal herbs every morning to purify the mind, head, face, neck and lungs.

Massage: Abhyanga is the name for oil massage with sesame oil. This is typically a self massage. It is one of the main ways that **Ayurveda** keeps us strong and prevents us from aging. This massage need not be long and cumbersome. Massaging the Scalp, forehead, **temples**, hand and feet for about 5 minutes is sufficient.

Exercise: Vyayama is the name for physical exercise. This is usually some **Yoga** postures and breathing exercises (Pranayama) but it can be anything including a walk, a swim, sun salutes or whatever. This early morning exercise removes stagnation in the body and mind, strengthens the digestive fire, reduces fat and gives you an overall feeling of lightness and joy as it fills your body with good, fresh and pure Prana. It is not to be strenuous. In fact, exercising at one fourth to one half of your capacity is recommended.

Bath: After exercise bath to remove any excess oil and dirt. Both showers and bathtubs are recommended in the classics. Usually warm water baths are suggested. Put on clean clothing after the bath.

Prayer & Meditation: Praying and worshipping God by offering flowers and food is done to purify one's mind and to surrender ego and the results of all actions to God. Then meditate for a few minutes to an hour and see who you really are, put your attention towards Awareness. This is the most important aspect of Dinacharya. Simply be quiet, sit in Peace.

Breakfast: This should be warm, nourishing and wholesome.

Study / Work: Do what you do from now until noon.

Noon

Lunch: It should be taken early between 12 and 1 P.M. This coincides with the peak Pitta period, Pitta is responsible for digestion. Ayurveda recommends that the lunch should be the largest meal of the day consisting of wholesome food with all the six tastes. After the meal it is good to take a little walk, a couple hundred steps only, to help the food digest.

Siesta: Anything more than a short nap should be avoided because sleeping in the day is prohibited in Ayurveda due to the fear of accumulation of vitiated kapha.

Study / Work: Do what you do from now until supper.

Sundown

Sundown is a special time of balance between day and night. In this balance it is easier for your mind to stop long enough so that you can see your Self. This is the time for evening prayers and meditations in many cultures around the world.

Dinner

It should be taken around 6 - 7 P.M. It should be lighter than the lunch. The dinner should be at least three hours before bedtime as gives the body ample time to digest the food. Sleeping just after the dinner with a heavy stomach is not conducive to a **sound** sleep.

Walk to aid digestion for about 10 - 15 minutes.

Ease: From dinner to bedtime just take it easy. Spend time with family, interact with friends, read, and relax.

Bedtime

Go to sleep around 9 - 10 P.M. so that you can get 6 to 7 hours of sleep before 4:30 am. A good practice is to massage the soles of your feet with oil before going to bed. This will calm your system and promote well being.

And remember to take your Triphala before sleep. This will nourish your eyes and also will ensure proper digestion and elimination.

One should try to keep the routine as close to the recommended Dincharya as possible. The body might resist the change for a first few days but if you do manage to persist then you are bound to get rewarded with a much healthier and satisfying life.

Notes

Research has shown that any new activity continuously done for 21 days, naturally and automatically becomes part of your routine and that the body and mind get accommodated with it.

References

[1]

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