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Pancha Karma: Ayurvedic Detoxification and Rejuvenation Therapy

More and more people in search of good health and vitality are increasingly turning to Ayurveda, the oldest holistic health system in the world.

Although revealed in India more than 5,000 years ago, Ayurveda is highly relevant today. Allergies, environmental sensitivities, immune system disorder, chronic infection, insomnia, flu, and fatigue have reached epidemic proportions and are causing high rates of absenteeism in schools and the workplace. The Western medical model – so proficient at naming ailments and offering (often high-tech) symptomatic treatment – knows little about prevention and has found no long-term cures.

In contrast, proponents of Ayurveda contend many of the ills besetting modern men, women and children are the natural – and inevitable – result of drifting away from simple, natural living. Working with individual clients, Ayurvedic practitioners recommend daily and seasonal diets, exercises, hygienic practices, adequate rest and other routines that consider each person's age, strength, locale, and innate constitution.

Most important, Ayurveda recommends periodic “tune ups” for the body. These rejuvenating and detoxifying treatments are known as Pancha Karma. The body, like an automobile, requires regular servicing to insure good health and long life. The body's filters must be regularly cleaned and the accumulated toxins removed or else the channels that carry life's sustaining substances become blocked. Without such upkeep, minor and then major breakdowns in bodily functioning lead to disease and eventually to death. Although we are given only one body per lifetime, few of us service and detoxify our bodies with the same care, attention and regularity that we offer our automobile.

The situation however, is changing. Increasingly people are acknowledging health hazards of living in overcrowded, overstressed, polluted environments and recognize the need to remove the resultant toxic buildup from their bodies in order to stay strong, healthy, energetic and resistant to disease. The ancient Ayurveda system of Pancha Karma may well be easiest and most efficient way to cleanse and rejuvenate the system. It's not a self-help treatment. The ancient texts specify that treatment must be administered in a certain order according to a set schedule by trained therapist using special equipment.

No matter where you fit in the wellness spectrum, Pancha Karma can greatly enhance your life. If you are already healthy, it will increase your vitality and prevent the build-up of toxins that can lead to health problems later on.

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If acute or chronically ill, Pancha Karma provides a pleasant yet effective way to remove old, stagnant waste material. If you experience constipation or irritable bowels, headaches, allergies, bloating, bad breath, PMS, insomnia, fatigue, arthritis, dry or blemished skin, mental dullness, depression, irritability, general aches and pains or frequent colds and flus, chances are high that your body is suffering from toxicity.

The need for a Pancha Karma “tune-up” is intensified for those who live in overcrowded, overstressed, and polluted environments where toxins can rapidly build up in the body. Busy working men and women often eat poorly, irregularly, and on the run. They sit behind computer terminals under artificial light, watch hours of television, take medicinal or recreational drugs and live in a concrete and plastic world far from nature’s beauty and life-giving substances.

Why Pancha Karma?

There are many cleansing programs available on the market today and most have value. Few, however, consider the suitability of the treatment to each individual constitution and their current state of health. In contrast, Ayurveda understands that we are all uniquely different and require specific recommendations. Most important, no other detoxifying program takes the all-inclusive approach of Pancha Karma. This means preparing the body carefully for detoxification followed by eliminative procedures that systematically remove impurities from each zone of the body. Additionally, other detox programs do not properly cleanse the whole body and often leave it depleted. Pancha Karma, however, gently cleanses and then systematically rebuilds and strengthens the whole body through herbs and rejuvenative therapies.

Pancha Karma provides unique psychological benefits. It is a nurturing experience in which therapists touch, reassure and guide their clients. The safe, loving and supportive atmosphere assists the release of emotional negativity as well as physical toxins. Once the old patterns begin to be released, space opens up for the seeding and growth of fresh new energies and beliefs. As a result, Pancha Karma can profoundly and positively affect one’s psychological and spiritual growth.

Clearly, the sages of ancient India considered the interrelationship of body, mind and spirit when they designed cleansing programs as part of the complete medical, metaphysical science known as Ayurveda. Whether we are seeking greater physical health, mental peace, or deeper integration of our spiritual self, Pancha Karma can support us greatly in transforming our lives.

From “Light on Ayurveda”, Pancha Karma: Ayurvedic Detoxification and Rejuvenation Therapy by Dr. Sunil Joshi

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