



## Self Care By Aryurveda Elements

Daily routine is *dinacharya* in Ayurveda. The term 'dina' means day and 'carya' denotes routine, the word 'carya' coming from the root 'car', which means 'to move, to follow or to walk'. Hence Dina-carya is the path we follow to the beat of nature's heart leading us to joy and enlightenment. This is why a teacher or master is known as 'acarya', or one who flows with nature's rhythm.

The small habits we perform consistently on a daily basis have immense accumulative benefit in our life. Ayurvedic daily routines teach us to ride nature's waves so we can effortlessly float through each day. Dina-carya is the foundation of health, happiness and spiritual advancement. Ayurvedic daily routine is just to optimise human physiology and psychology.

The following is a sample day with some suggested times. Adjust it according to your schedule's convenience. A steady routine gives your physiology a healthy rhythm. Once we resonate with the rhythm of mother nature she embraces us in the cosmic dance of growth and vitality. Aim to minimise stress and tend to your highest priorities. The ideal time and daily practices are given below. You need to practice it in a practical and convenient way. A good practitioner can tell you what are the most important practices for your current health.



**5-7 am:** Awakening. Visualisations and affirmations. Emptying bowels and bladder. Brushing teeth, scraping tongue, washing mouth and cleansing nose eyes and ears. Exercising. Massaging body, face and scalp. Shower.

**7-8 am:** Yoga asanas -Pranayama. Meditation/ reading from a spiritually enlivening text. Dressing and grooming.

**8-9 am:** Prepare and take breakfast.

**9-12 noon:** Perform daily duties in the most positive consciousness.

**12-1 pm:** Lunch and a gentle walk, appreciating nature.

**1-5 pm:** Continue daily duties. Plan the schedule for the following day.

**6-6.30 pm:** Foot massage. Shower or bath. Pranayama and meditation.

**7-8 pm:** Dinner. Spend some time with family.

**8.30-9 pm:** Have a gentle walk. Assess your performance during the day and contemplate the lessons given.

**9.30-10 pm:** Prepare to sleep.

**10 pm:** Bed time

### **How to practice daily routine**

**Awakening:** Observe how animals rise with the sun. They are in tune with the natural circadian rhythms of the universe. Similarly we can aim to rise and rest early. Our minds have greatest clarity in the morning so this is the best time for spiritual and intellectual practices. The morning sunlight is filled with life force (prana) whereas the noon sun can drain us of life.

**Visualising / affirming:** Imagery is very potent at the three transitional points of your day. This is known as samkalpa in ayurveda or yoga. It can be practiced at any time, the best time being early in the morning, upon waking, at twilight and before sleep. Ideally creative visualisation (imagery) is performed in a quiet room at a time when you won't be disturbed, however it can be done anywhere at any time.

If you prefer to sit while visualising, place your feet flat on the floor, your palms in your lap or by your side, keeping your spine straight and your head in alignment with your body. You may prefer to lie down in which case keep your legs slightly apart, your palms by your side, facing upwards and your head in alignment with your body. Gently close your eyes and relax your whole body. Bring your awareness to your breathing. Feel your whole body becoming heavy and sinking into the floor as if you were resting in a warm cloud.

A simple visualisation is to picture your ideal state of physical and emotional wellbeing. See yourself effortlessly and joyfully moving through the day spreading love and light to everyone you contact. A simple affirmation is "every day in every way my life is getting better and better" or "I embody health, vitality and love."

**Physical cleansing:** Proper evacuation of wastes ensures good health whereas incomplete evacuation is the harbinger of all disease. The morning is the natural time for emptying the bowel and bladder. This ideally occurs before eating. Once the internal world is pure you can ingest fresh energising food.

Signs of health include an easy and complete bowel motion and urination. They should be regular, without a strong smell, colour or shape. Stools shouldn't sink or have a fatty look or contain undigested food particles. Cleansing of all orifices is considered important to protect our sensory clarity. The teeth, tongue, eyes and ears

are all purified in the morning. Brushing the teeth and scraping the tongue should be done in the morning before we ingest anything. Scraping the tongue can be very beneficial for the prevention of gum, dental and heart diseases. A smooth edged steel, copper or silver tongue scraper. Alternatively a spoon can be used.

Self massage: This is essential to improve the circulation. Self-massage is a wonderfully relaxing and grounding meditation. It is best to use cold-pressed sesame, olive or almond oil that has been warmed slightly.

Exercise: Exercises are performed preferably after self massage. This nourishes our entire body especially our neuro-muscular system and lubricates the joints. Toning, stretching, cardio etc are some major aspects of exercise.

### ***Is exercise different from yoga (asana)?***

*Yes. Both have components of consciousness and muscle actions. Asana uses more consciousness and exercise uses more actions. Hence asana can't be exercise. We need both, at the right proportion.*

Shower: A lukewarm shower or bath is always preferable. Hot water is detrimental to one's vision and hair hence it should not be used on the head. Body brushing during or before a shower is extremely beneficial to remove dead skin cells and stimulate the deep and superficial circulation. Bathing should be done either before meals or 2-3 hours after eating. Never take a shower or bath on a full stomach as this diverts the circulation from the digestive process.

A bath or shower has the following effects: clears the mind, cleanses the etheric body, improves the quality of sleep, purifies the skin, improves immunity, acts as a circulatory stimulant and aphrodisiac.

Breathing – pranayama: This is the best done after exercising and bathing. These simple yogic breathing techniques purify our lymphatic system, raise immunity and boost energy reserves.

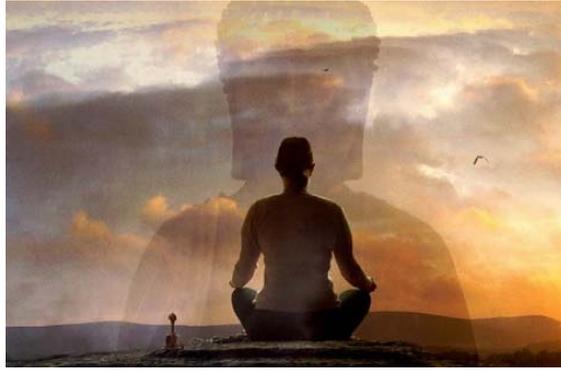
### ***Is Pranayama done before or after asana?***

*Technically, Pranayama should be done after asana. And, asana should be practiced after exercise. Exercise should be based on your body type. Large people are not designed for running. Light people can benefit from running and jogging.*

Meditation: As the body and breath are exercised and stretched, this is the perfect time for chanting, repeating some positive phrases or mantras or creative visualisation. Meditation improves focus and brings one in touch with the self or awareness.

### ***What if I can't meditate?***

*No one can meditate for the first 10 or so years even if they try hard. In the beginning you can learn progressive relaxation or listening to calming music in resting position. Then you can introduce a focus. Now it is meditation.*



***Is meditation silencing mind?***

*No. No one can silence their mind. Any live mind will be thinking. Mind's job is to think. If it doesn't thin, you will be clinically brain dead. Meditation is to streamline your thought process and thus make it more efficient.*

**Eating:** This involves three major components, namely the cook, the food and the eater. Preparing food with love improves absorption. It is not how much you eat. It is how much you absorb from the food you ingest that is of prime importance.

***Should I go on a diet to be healthy?***

*You may not. Food, eating, time, combination, your digestion, your absorption etc are some aspects to consider to be healthy, if they are relevant. Many people eat right at the wrong time. One aspect performed wrong, may destroy the effect of the food. Only an expert can figure out which element of nutrition is applicable to you. Even then, it will be mostly 'educated' trial and error.*

There is a wise saying “what you put on your mind is more important than what you put on your plate”. We also have to consider the compatibility of the food to our system, though it is healthy food. There should be different textures and all six tastes in a meal.

To make it more complete and meaningful, the eater should involve all their five sense organs whilst eating. After sunset our body starts winding down. All bodily functions slow down. Our pulse rate and blood pressure drop. Since the digestion is dull at this time a light dinner is always better. It is also good for a quality sleep. This allows the body to rest rather than pouring energy into digestion. If it is late and you are really hungry just have a light, tasty soup. See the rules of eating to optimise nutrition and digestion.

**Daily service:** Perform meaningful and fulfilling work with utmost devotion, love and mindfulness. Take 10 minutes out during the day to connect with nature and listen to your inner yearnings.

**Reflection:** Reflecting on what the day taught you and what could be improved is the best way to counter negative conditioning. Thank a higher power for helping you achieve your goals and have gratitude for the blessings in your life.

**Retire:** Mentally and physically prepare for sleep.

***I sleep for 8 hours. Isn't enough to be rejuvenate?***

*No. What time do you fall asleep, is it easy to fall asleep, is your sleep peaceful, do you wake up refreshed etc are just some questions to be answered before we can make sure that 8 hours is enough. Refining your sleep is one of the most fundamental elements of building health.*



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