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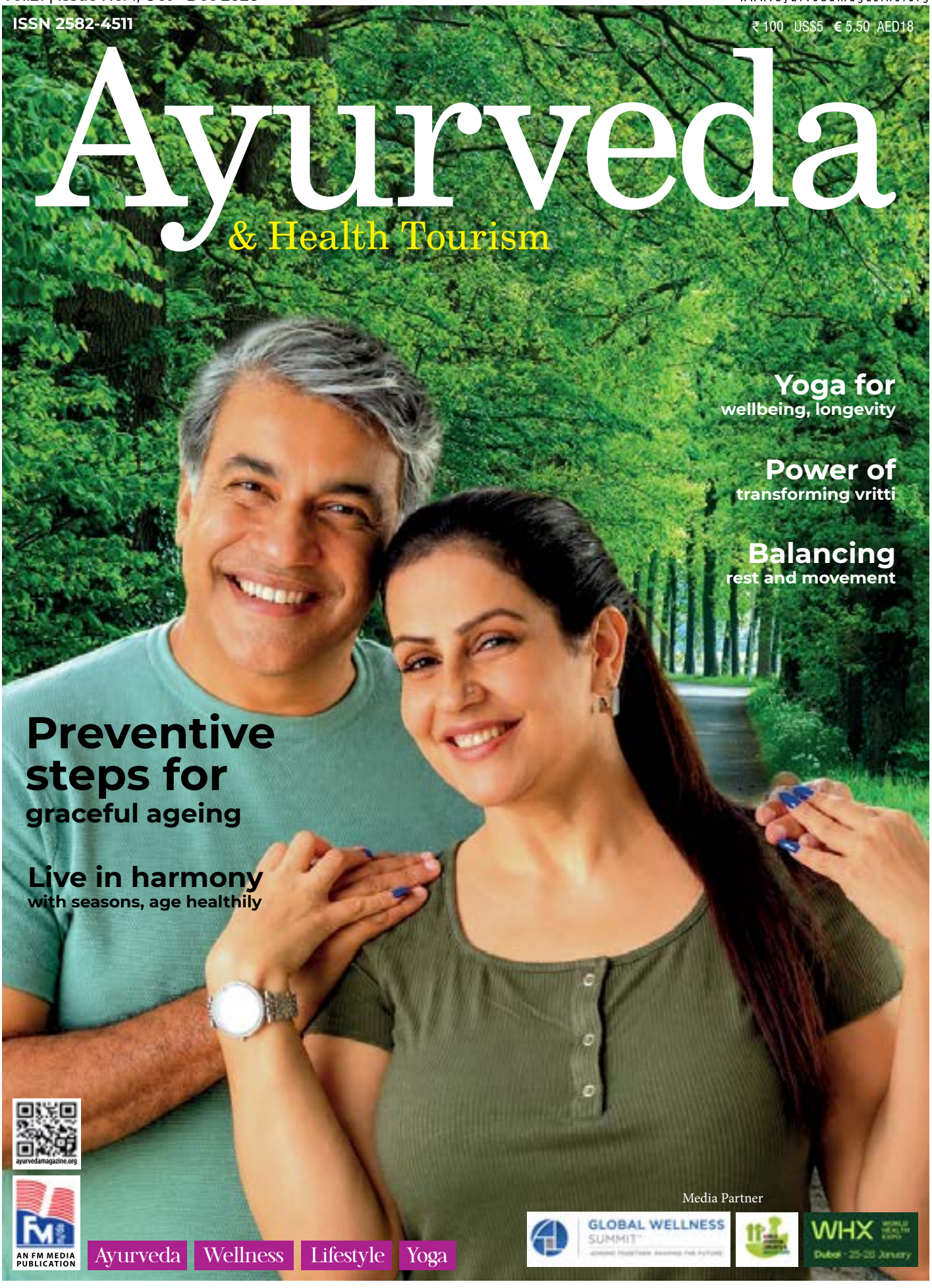
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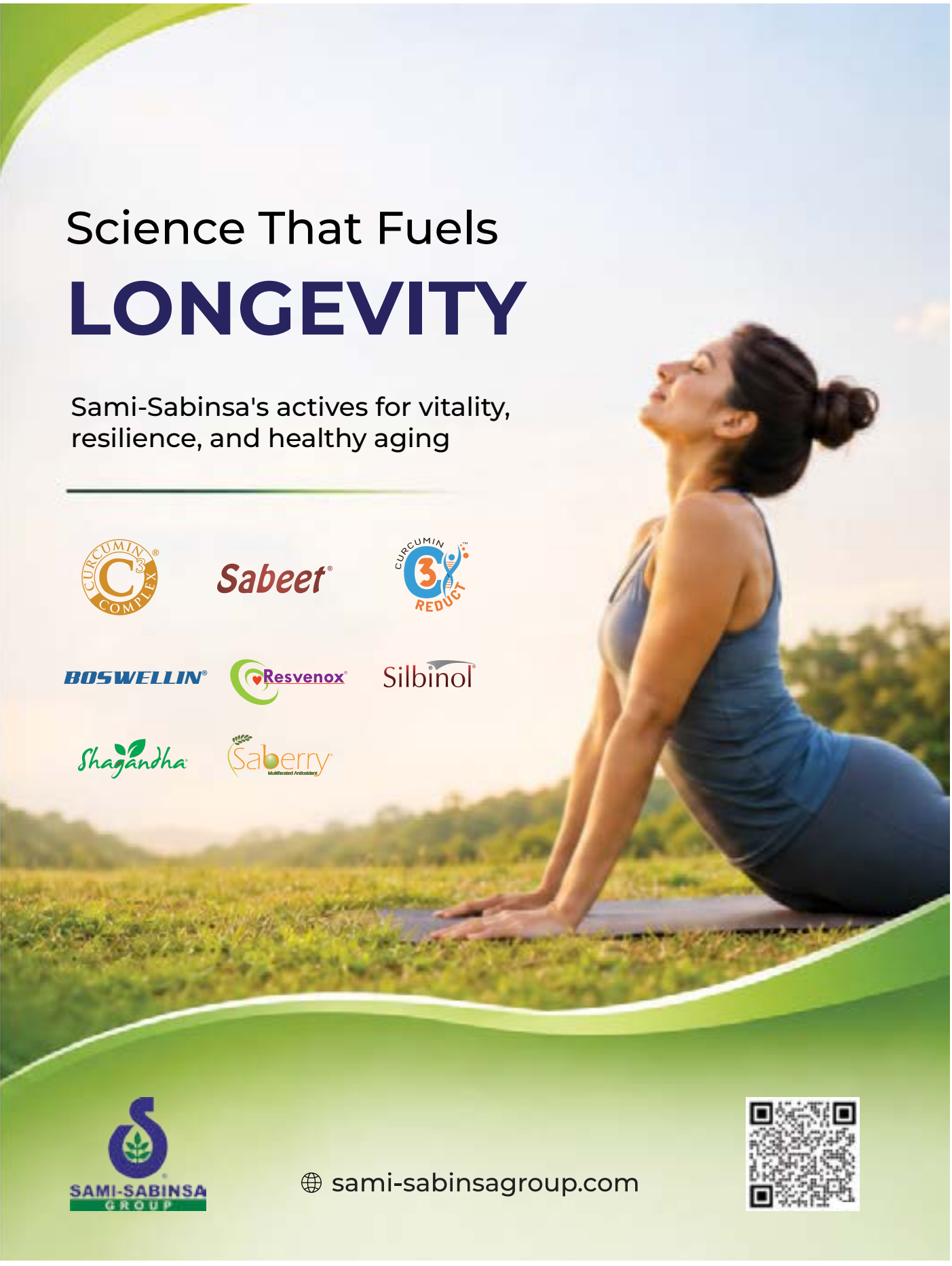


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Ayurveda & Health Tourism

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Longevity Through Ayurveda: The Art of Living Well, Ageing Gracefully and Healing Naturally

As we approach the auspicious occasion of Dhanvantari Diwas, the celebration of Ayurveda and the divine physician, it is timely to reflect on a profound truth: health is not merely the absence of disease, but the art of living in harmony with nature, body and mind.

The rising global interest in longevity, gerontology, geriatrics, rehabilitation and wellness offers Ayurveda an important opportunity to reaffirm its timeless wisdom. Long before longevity became a scientific pursuit, Ayurveda recognised *Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam*—the preservation of the health of the healthy—as its foremost objective. Its philosophy reminds us that the best medicine is often our way of life.

Healthy ageing begins with everyday choices. *Dinacharya* (daily routine), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), wholesome nutrition, adequate sleep, physical activity and mental discipline form the foundation of preventive healthcare. Equally important is *Vritti*—our thoughts, attitudes, habits and behavioural patterns—which influence emotional balance and overall well-being. Cultivating positive thoughts, moderation, compassion and contentment can contribute significantly to a healthier and more meaningful life.

Yoga, breathing practices and meditation offer practical pathways to maintain flexibility, strength, balance and mental resilience as we age. Traditional practices such as the rejuvenating oil bath, or *Abhyanga*, help us experience the power of gentle massage, touch, nourishment and relaxation. Such practices support holistic wellness.

The challenges of an ageing population call for greater attention to geriatric care and rehabilitation. Ayurveda's personalised approach, combined with modern geriatric medicine, physiotherapy and evidence-based rehabilitation, can help older adults preserve mobility, independence, dignity and quality of life. The goal must not simply be to add years to life, but to add health, purpose and vitality to those years.

As Ayurveda and health tourism continue to evolve, India has the opportunity to present well-being by blending traditional knowledge with contemporary healthcare standards.

This Dhanvantari Diwas, let us renew our commitment to a simple yet powerful message: the best medicine is a balanced way of life, and the true measure of longevity is the quality of life we live. Let us make healthy ageing a shared social responsibility and wellness a lifelong practice.

Surekha Krishnan

Executive Editor

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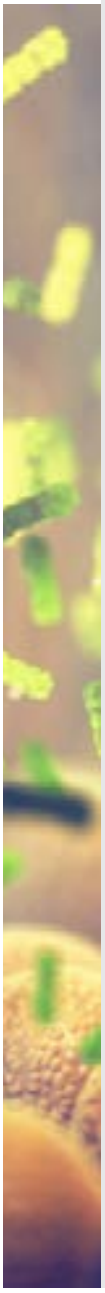


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Contents



08 News And Events

22 Lifestyle, Not Medicine: Ayurveda's Biggest Contribution To Longevity

26 From Vritti To Healing: Transforming The Mind At Its Roots

30 Let's Make Our Sunset Years Active And Meaningful

34 Geriatrics And The Ayurveda Challenge— Strengthening The Ai Dimension

38 The Ecology Within: Ayurveda, The Microbiome And The Secret Of Longevity

42 Healthy Ageing: Awakening The Hope Within

44 Ayurveda In The Global Longevity Conversation

46 Ayurveda & The Growing Global Market For Healthy Ageing

50 Ayush Quality Mark – India's Quest For Global Acceptance

54 Yoga For Healthy And Graceful Mobility Of Hands And Legs

58 Meyam: Integrating Ayurveda And Modern Ergonomics For Longevity

62 Longevity In The Time Of Rising Temperatures

66 Rasayana And Longevity: Ayurveda's Contemporary Solutions To Healthy Ageing

70 Travel, A Pathway To Longevity

72 Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart 2026: Putting Wellness Tourism On The Global Map

74 When Recognition Stops, Morale Suffers: What Happened To Kerala's Tourism Awards?

76 Incompatible Food And Its Effect On Longevity And Aging

78 Yoga For Longevity: Nurturing The Heart, Brain And Mind

82 Healing The Heart: Yogic Rehabilitation After Cardiac Surgery

86 The Healing Power Of Oiling: An Ancient Ritual For Modern Wellness

88 Stay Young, Stay Safe: Herbal Hair Dyes For A Cancer-Free Sheen

90 Ageing Gracefully: An Ayurvedic Approach To Skin And Hair Nourishment

94 Powders With A Healing Touch












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Kerala Tourism Minister Relaunches Ayurveda and Health Tourism Website — www.ayurvedamagazine.org



Kerala's rich Ayurveda heritage is set to reach a wider global audience with the relaunch of the revamped Ayurveda and Health Tourism website. The platform was officially relaunched by Kerala Tourism Minister PC Vishnunadh in Thiruvananthapuram on October 28, in the presence of Editor and Publisher Benny Thomas.

Congratulating the magazine, the Minister praised its efforts to promote authentic Ayurveda worldwide, noting that Kerala Tourism's focus this year is on Ayurveda, yoga and wellness. He also reiterated the state's ambition to emerge as a medical value tourism hub.

Published from Kerala for over 25 years, the quarterly magazine has championed India's traditional systems of health and wellness. Its revamped digital platform brings this editorial legacy to a wider readership, covering Ayurveda, yoga, naturopathy, medicinal herbs, lifestyle, wellness research and developments in traditional medicine.

Blending expert insights and research with personal experiences and traditional home remedies, the website offers readers a window into India's diverse wellness practices and health tourism destinations.

The relaunch marks a significant digital milestone, connecting Kerala's authentic healing traditions with growing global interest in holistic health and wellness travel.

Global Health Groups Urge WHO to Tighten Drinking Water Nitrate Limits

The safety of drinking water has come under renewed scrutiny, with 85 international health and environmental organisations urging the World Health Organization (WHO) to reconsider its decades-old nitrate limits in light of emerging health concerns.

According to an AFP report published by ETHealthworld on November 3, the coalition, which includes Greenpeace International and the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA), wants nitrate prioritised in WHO's review of drinking water quality guidelines.

The existing WHO limit of 50 milligrams per litre, introduced in 1958, primarily protects against methemoglobinemia, or 'blue-baby syndrome'. However, campaigners argue that emerging research links prolonged nitrate exposure to colorectal cancer, premature births and other adverse pregnancy outcomes.

Nitrate contamination is commonly associated with intensive agriculture, particularly the use of synthetic fertilisers and livestock farming, which can pollute groundwater and surface water. Children and pregnant women are considered particularly vulnerable.

A Danish government-commissioned expert panel has recommended a much stricter limit of six milligrams per litre,



with Denmark moving towards its adoption.

The appeal highlights the need to update drinking water standards as scientific evidence evolves. A revised WHO guideline could strengthen global water safety and help protect vulnerable populations from potential long-term health risks.

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Youth Must Lead India's Fight Against Tobacco: Union Minister



India's battle against tobacco can succeed only when young people take the lead in challenging its social acceptance and turning the fight into a nationwide people's movement, Union Minister of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav has said.

Launching the fourth edition of the 60-day Tobacco-Free Youth Campaign (TFYC 4.0) at Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi, on October 28, Jadhav urged students and young citizens to become ambassadors of a tobacco-free India. He emphasised that preventing nicotine addiction among the younger generation was vital to building a healthy nation.

With universities and colleges as the primary focus, this year's campaign aims to create tobacco-free educational campuses through awareness, law enforcement, community participation, digital outreach and cessation support.

According to the Health Ministry, over 5.8 lakh educational institutions and 73,000 villages were declared tobacco-free during the previous three editions.

Highlighting the dangers of tobacco, Jadhav noted that tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including toxic and carcinogenic substances. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can also impair brain development, memory and learning.

Ultimately, the campaign's success depends on young people resisting peer pressure, discouraging tobacco use and encouraging users to quit. A tobacco-free India requires sustained collective action and a change in social attitudes.

Ayurveda's Role in Preventing Stroke and in Recovery

A stroke can change lives in an instant, making awareness, prevention and timely treatment crucial. Observed on October 29, World Stroke Day highlights the importance of brain health and the need to act swiftly when symptoms appear.

According to the World Health Organization, approximately 11.9 million new strokes occurred worldwide in 2021, while 93.8 million people were living with stroke-related consequences. The World Stroke Organization estimates that one in four adults over 25 will experience a stroke during their lifetime.

Ayurveda offers a complementary perspective through its emphasis on balanced nutrition, physical activity, adequate sleep, stress management and healthy daily routines. Its classical literature describes conditions such as Pakshaghata, traditionally associated with Vata imbalance. However, these concepts differ from the modern medical understanding of stroke.



Controlling blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol, avoiding tobacco and limiting salt are essential preventive measures. Equally important is recognising warning signs: sudden facial drooping, arm weakness or speech difficulty requires immediate hospital attention. Traditional remedies must never delay emergency treatment.

For survivors, supervised Ayurvedic practices may complement evidence-based physiotherapy and rehabilitation. The message is clear: embrace healthy living, but rely on modern emergency medicine for stroke treatment.

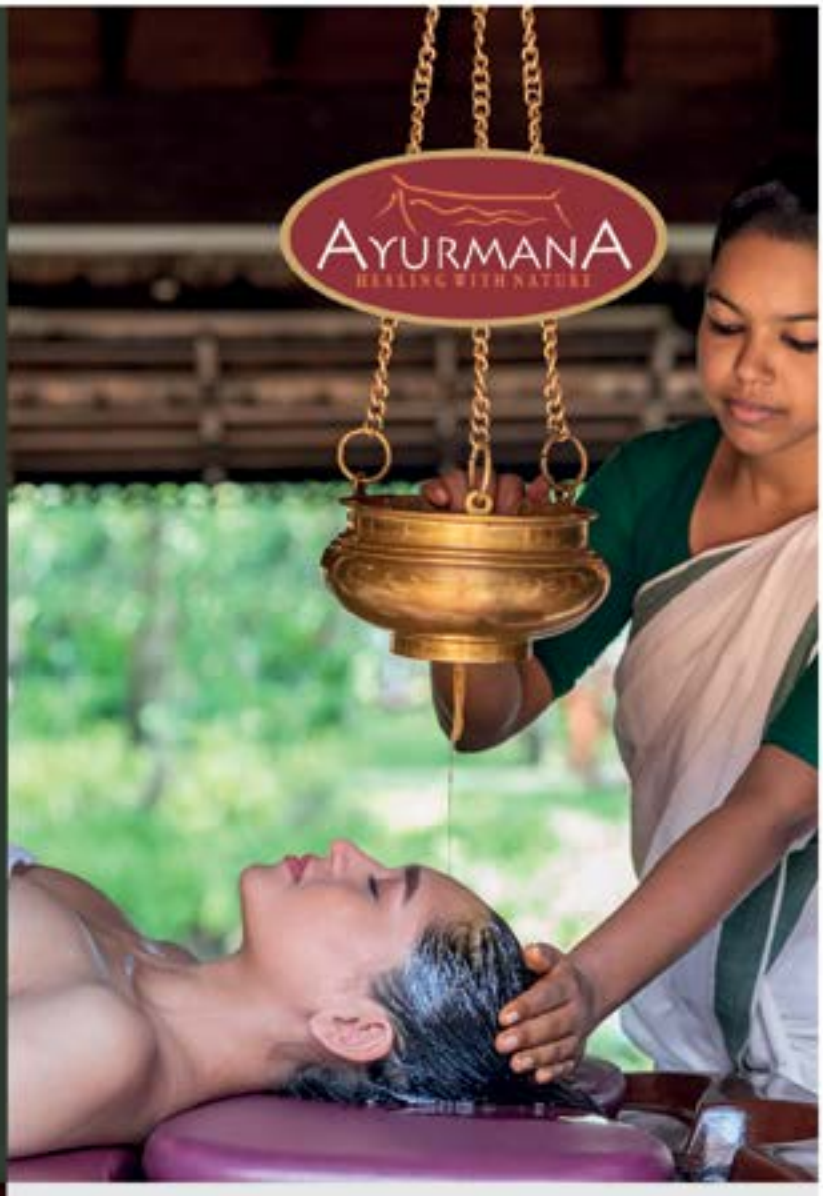
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Obesity Emerges as a Major Global Public Health Threat



Obesity is no longer simply a lifestyle concern but one of the world's most serious and preventable public health threats. The Lancet Commission on 21st Century Global Threats to Health has ranked it as the leading threat in terms of avoidable years of healthy life lost.

The commission estimates that obesity could account for 23.1 billion cumulative disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) between 2025 and 2100, surpassing projected health burdens associated with climate change, pandemics and antimicrobial resistance.

The growing crisis is driven not only by individual choices but also by unhealthy food environments, sedentary lifestyles and aggressive marketing of processed foods.

The implications are particularly concerning for India, where excess abdominal fat, lower muscle mass and metabolic complications can increase health risks even at relatively low body mass index (BMI) levels. Obesity is also a major risk factor for type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and certain cancers.

The commission's warning calls for urgent, collective action. Governments must prioritise affordable nutritious food, healthier school meals, walkable neighbourhoods, regular screening and accessible treatment.

Ultimately, tackling obesity requires more than individual willpower. Creating healthier environments through sustained cooperation among governments, healthcare providers, industries and communities is essential to preventing avoidable illness and premature deaths.

Menopause: Ayurveda Emphasises Awareness and Holistic Care

Menopause is a natural stage of life, not an illness to be feared. On World Menopause Day, observed on October 18, the Ministry of Ayush has highlighted the importance of awareness, preventive healthcare and evidence-based approaches to supporting women through this transition.

Through the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), the Ministry is promoting Ayurveda's traditional understanding of menopause, known as Rajonivritti, while encouraging scientific research and evidence-based care.

Usually occurring between the ages of 45 and 55, menopause marks the permanent cessation of menstruation. Symptoms may include hot flushes, disturbed sleep, mood swings, anxiety, vaginal dryness and joint pain, affecting both physical and emotional well-being.

Ayurveda advocates an individualised approach combining balanced nutrition, yoga, meditation, counselling and traditionally used herbal preparations. Adequate protein, calcium and other essential nutrients are also important for maintaining bone and muscle health.

Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush, emphasised the need for sustained attention to women's health throughout life. Prof Rabinarayan Acharya, Director General, CCRAS, highlighted ongoing research into



traditional formulations for their potential role in women's health.

The Ministry calls for open conversations, timely medical guidance and compassionate care, enabling women to navigate menopause with confidence and dignity.

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International Day of Older Persons: Ayurveda's Perspective on Living Longer, Better



South-East Asia is undergoing a demographic transformation, with the proportion of people aged 60 and above projected to nearly double from 11.3% in 2024 to 20.9% by 2050, according to the World Health Organization. On the International Day of Older Persons, observed on October 1, the focus is increasingly on ensuring not just longer lives but healthier, more fulfilling ones. This year's theme, The Age of Longevity: Rethinking Systems for Longer Lives, highlights the need for a holistic approach to ageing.

Ayurveda has traditionally viewed ageing as a natural stage of life requiring attention to diet, sleep, physical activity, mental well-being and social relationships. Its Rasayana tradition focuses on maintaining vitality and supporting healthy longevity.

Practices such as dinacharya (daily routine), balanced nutrition, regular movement and adequate rest resonate with modern approaches to healthy ageing. Emerging clinical research is also examining the potential benefits of Ayurvedic Rasayana therapies, though further evidence is needed.

Ultimately, healthy ageing is about preserving independence, mobility and dignity, not reversing age. Ayurveda and modern healthcare share a larger goal: ensuring that longer lives remain active, meaningful and fulfilling, supported by families, communities and accessible healthcare.

Longevity Biotech Market Could Reach $617 Billion by 2045

The global longevity biotech industry could generate $617 billion in annual revenue by 2045, as pharmaceutical companies increasingly explore therapies targeting the biology of ageing, according to a new report by Longevity.Technology.

The Longevity Biotech Report 2026 tracks 781 companies and 3,580 therapeutic assets worldwide, with more than 1,000 programmes already undergoing human trials, indicating the sector's growing clinical maturity.

Investment is also accelerating. Funding in longevity biotech reached $18.4 billion in 2025, up from $4.7 billion in 2024, while another $12.1 billion was invested in 2026.

The report estimates potential peak annual sales of $230 billion



from therapies targeting established diseases. A further $173 billion could emerge if regulators introduce a dedicated pathway for treatments directly targeting ageing biology.

However, the projected $617 billion market depends on assumptions about treatment pricing, patient adoption and regulatory approval. Neither the US FDA nor the European Medicines Agency currently recognises ageing as a standalone therapeutic indication.

The forecast is therefore a potential market scenario, not a guaranteed outcome. Nevertheless, rising investment, expanding clinical pipelines and growing pharmaceutical interest suggest that longevity research is moving beyond scientific speculation towards a major commercial opportunity.


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World Ayurveda Congress and Arogya Expo in Bhubaneswar



The global Ayurveda fraternity is heading to Eastern India. The 11th World Ayurveda Congress (WAC 2026) and Arogya Expo 2026 will be held from 10 December 2026 at Janta Maidan, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Organised by the World Ayurveda Foundation and supported by the Ministry of Ayush, Govt. of India and Govt. of Odisha, the four-day mega event will conclude on December 13. The theme this year is 'Integrative Ayurveda for Global Health'.

Bhubaneswar will host over 6,000 delegates from 60+ countries – including practitioners, researchers, policymakers, students, startups and industry leaders.

The Congress will feature plenary sessions, scientific paper presentations and panel discussions across 11 key themes such as wellness, oncology, nutrition, One Health, antimicrobial resistance, drug development and tech integration.

Alongside, the National Arogya Expo – India's biggest AYUSH health fair - will

run daily from 10 am to 8 pm showcasing Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy products, wellness technologies, herbal and nutraceutical innovations, and medical tourism.

For Odisha, the cultural capital of Kalinga, hosting WAC 2026 is a landmark moment to place traditional medicine at the centre of global healthcare dialogue.

Ayurveda and Health Tourism magazine is a media partner for the event.

India To Host WTTC Global Summit In New Delhi In 2027

India will host the World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) Global Summit in New Delhi in 2027, bringing together international tourism leaders, investors and policymakers to discuss the sector's future.

WTTC Chairman Manfredi Lefebvre d'Ovidio said India was selected from a field of 21 destinations. He said the summit would bring global leaders together to strengthen collaboration and explore investment opportunities across India's tourism sector.

"We are delighted to bring the world's most important Travel & Tourism event to India in 2027. New Delhi will provide the perfect stage for global leaders to come together, drive collaboration and continue shaping the future of the sector," Lefebvre d'Ovidio said.



WTTC President and CEO Gloria Guevara said India's tourism potential, economic growth and expanding global connectivity made it a strong choice to host the event.

"India is a country with extraordinary tourism potential and a sector that is already delivering remarkable economic growth. Its scale, ambition and growing global connectivity make it a natural place to bring the world's Travel & Tourism leaders together," Guevara said.

He said the summit would showcase India to WTTC's global membership, strengthen public-private partnerships and explore ways to attract a greater share of international travel demand.

Queen Suthida to Open Global Wellness Summit's 20th Anniversary in Phuket



Thailand's Queen Suthida Bajrasudhabimalalakshana will inaugurate the Global Wellness Summit's (GWS) 20th anniversary on November 11 at Angsana Laguna Phuket.

The summit, held in Phuket, Thailand, from November 10 to 13, brings together international leaders and innovators to examine the future of an estimated $6.8 trillion global wellness economy.

Queen Suthida's appearance places a prominent royal figure at the centre of a global conversation about health, fitness and the expanding wellness economy. Her connection to the sector extends beyond ceremonial patronage. Her sporting pursuits have helped shape an image of modern royalty grounded in physical discipline, athletic achievement and public engagement.

In 2025, she helped steer Thailand's sailing team to a historic gold medal at the Southeast Asian Games, serving as strategist and navigator. The same year, she ran the half-marathon at the Amazing Thailand Marathon Bangkok alongside Olympic marathon great Eliud Kipchoge. She has also become the first Women's Global Ambassador for the International Ice Hockey Federation, advocating greater visibility for women in sport. These accomplishments have positioned the Queen as a prominent advocate of active living in Thailand, where wellness is increasingly associated with preventive health, fitness and quality of life.

Ayurveda and Health Tourism Magazine is a media partner of the event.

Dubai's World Health Expo Set For January 25–28, 2027

World Health Expo (WHX) Dubai will take place from 25 to 28 January 2027 at Dubai Exhibition Centre, Expo City, and Dubai World Trade Centre. Formerly known as Arab Health, the event is organised by Informa under the patronage of UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention and brings healthcare professionals, manufacturers, investors and policymakers together for an exhibition and conference programme.

For 2027, WHX spans two venues, with a dedicated Labs zone at Dubai World Trade Centre. WHX Labs is now integrated into World Health Expo, WHX Tech and WHX Leaders bring additional technology and leadership perspectives to World Healthcare Week.

Organisers forecast more than 90,000 attendees and over 4,200 exhibitors, with participants expected from 195 or more countries. The programme will cover medical equipment, diagnostics, laboratory services, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, digital health and wellness. WHX Labs will be integrated into the wider event, connecting laboratory and diagnostics specialists with the broader healthcare community.



The 2026 expo drew 68,000 attendees and 4,042 exhibitors from 193 countries.

It marked WHX's first edition at Dubai Exhibition Centre, building on the long- running Arab Health event. UAE Vice President and Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum opened the 2026 exhibition, accompanied by senior UAE health and government officials.

Ayurveda and Health Tourism magazine is a media partner for the event.

Kerala Tourism Pavilion Attracts Attention at World Travel Market, London



Ahead of the inbound international tourism season, Kerala showcased its riveting tourism packages and products at World Travel Market (WTM), London, attracting a steady stream of visitors and business partners since the three-day expo opened on November 3.

WTM London is a premier tourism fair that showcases top destinations to tourism buyers and sellers from across the world.

Kerala Tourism, Cinema and Culture Minister PC Vishnunadh led the Kerala delegation to the event, where top travel and hospitality representatives converge. Kerala Tourism Director Anjana M was present.

Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Rajya Sabha MP Sudha Murty were also present.

Vishnunadh said Kerala's paradigm shift to experiential tourism has appealed at the expo where stakeholders signed partnerships and enduring collaborations.

"There has been a renewed interest among travel enthusiasts in the unique attractions Kerala offers–whether the charming nature, vibrant culture and local community experience or Ayurveda-based wellness," Vishnunadh noted

"Our tourism sector has unpacked holistic packages that encapsulate multiple experiences at the expo. Since this strategic shift is being received well around the world, we are expecting a further surge in arrivals during the upcoming season," Vishnunadh added.

The Kerala Tourism Pavilion covers100 sqm space with the theme, 'State of Wonder' – bringing the vibrant spirit of Pooram festivals to life and the state's rich cultural heritage, the grandeur of Kerala's traditional festivities, including caparisoned elephants, colourful parasols and spectacular cultural displays.

Dubai To Host Third Forbes Middle East Medical Tourism & Wellness Summit

The third edition of the Forbes Middle East Medical Tourism &Wellness Summit will be held in Dubai on December 8–9, 2026. Held under the patronage of the Ministry of Economy and Tourism and in partnership with American Hospital Dubai, the summit will bring together leaders shaping the future of global medical tourism and wellness.

As patients become more informed and mobile, expectations are shifting beyond treatment to include preventive care, wellness, recovery and long-term

wellbeing. Advances in longevity science and digital innovation are



also reshaping how healthcare is delivered and experienced.

The summit will examine how destinations can respond by connecting healthcare, tourism, hospitality, technology and investment. Discussions will focus on creating seamless patient journeys, strengthening international partnerships, attracting investment and building experiences that support patients from arrival through treatment and recovery.

Policymakers, healthcare executives, investors, wellness innovators, hospitality groups, technology providers and destination authorities are expected to explore

the strategies and partnerships needed to develop the next generation of medical tourism ecosystems.

With the UAE expanding its role in global healthcare, tourism and wellness, the event will provide a platform for dialogue on the policies, technologies and investments influencing the sector.

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LIFESTYLE, NOT MEDICINE: AYURVEDA'S BIGGEST CONTRIBUTION TO LONGEVITY

Ayurveda's preventive philosophy is not lifestyle instead of medicine, but lifestyle as an essential partner in preserving health.



Dr GG Gangadharan



Dr Anjali Asok

The Art of Remaining Well

What if the greatest secret to longevity lies not in a medicine cabinet, but in the quiet discipline of everyday life—in our food, sleep, thoughts, and relationship with the world around us?

Amid fascination with medical breakthroughs and anti-ageing interventions, Ayurveda offers another perspective: preserving health through daily habits, seasonal adaptation, emotional balance, and ethical conduct.

This philosophy is captured in the classical principle, *Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam*—the preservation of



the health of the healthy. Rather than waiting for distress, Ayurveda encourages us to become attentive custodians of our health. Longevity is not merely adding years to life, but preserving vitality, dignity, and quality of life.

From the Treatment of Disease to the Preservation of Health Ayurveda, the traditional science of life, approaches health as equilibrium rather than simply the absence of symptoms, encompassing body, mind, and senses.

The Sushruta Samhita defines health:

"Samadoshah Samagnishcha Samadhatu Malakriyah, Prasannatmendriyamanah Swastha Ityabhidhiyate."

A healthy person, broadly interpreted, has balanced doshas, digestion and metabolism, functioning tissues and elimination, and a contented self, senses, and mind. Health integrates physiological function and psychological well-being.

Swasthavritta, the discipline of maintaining health, is central to preventive living. It includes *Dinacharya* (daily routines), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimens), *Ahara* (nutrition), *Vihara* (lifestyle), and *Sadvritta* (wholesome conduct). Health is cultivated through ordinary actions repeated with awareness and consistency.

Modern preventive healthcare also emphasises healthy eating, activity, sleep, stress management, and early detection. Ayurveda places these within a philosophy of living in accordance with one's constitution, rhythms, environment, and stage of life.

Dinacharya: The Healing Power of Daily Discipline

The body thrives on rhythm, yet contemporary life often celebrates irregularity: late nights, hurried meals, screen exposure, sedentary routines, and postponed rest. Ayurveda's *Dinacharya* reminds us that the structure of our days can influence the quality of our lives.

Classical literature describes practices supporting cleanliness, activity, nourishment, rest, and composure. Today, a regular waking time, adequate sleep, daily movement, mindful meals, hygiene, and quiet reflection provide a sustainable foundation. Their value is cumulative: a morning walk renews, a regular bedtime expresses self-respect, and an undistracted meal reconnects us with hunger and satiety.



Ahara: Food as Nourishment, Not Merely Consumption

In Ayurveda, food is more than calories: it is fundamental to nourishment and well-being. Classical texts consider its quality, quantity, suitability, preparation, and timing.

Three ideas guide this dietary philosophy: *Hitabhukta*, eating what is wholesome; *Mitabhukta,* eating in moderation; and *Ritabhukta,* eating in accordance with the season. They encourage awareness of food, climate, and individual needs.

In practice, this means a varied diet of vegetables, fruits, pulses, whole grains, and appropriate protein; moderation in processed foods and added sugar; and attention to portions. Ayurveda also emphasises *Agni,* traditionally understood as digestive and transformative capacity. It is not directly equivalent to a single modern physiological mechanism, but underscores nourishment, digestion, and individual tolerance.

Traditional dietary concepts should not replace evidence-based nutritional guidance or prescribed dietary management for chronic illnesses. Preventive dietary practice should make nourishment more intelligent, not more restrictive.

Ritucharya: Living in Harmony with the Seasons

Temperature, humidity, daylight, food availability, and activity change through the year. *Ritucharya* adapts diet and lifestyle to seasonal conditions.

Today, it encourages environmental awareness: hydration and activity may need adjustment with temperature, food choices can reflect local availability, and routines may change with daylight and weather.

Modern research recognises seasonal variations in physiology and disease patterns, but the preventive effectiveness of specific Ayurvedic seasonal prescriptions remains incompletely established. *Ritucharya* reminds us that health depends on knowing not only what is beneficial, but when it is appropriate.



Nidra and Vyayama: Rest and Movement

Sleep is often sacrificed for productivity. Ayurveda recognises *Nidra* as an essential support of life. The *Charaka Samhita* describes *Trayopastambha: Ahara* (food), Nidra (sleep), and *Brahmacharya* (regulated conduct, depending on context).

Contemporary science links adequate sleep with attention, mood, metabolic regulation, and general functioning. A regular schedule and suitable sleeping environment help protect it. Rest is not an indulgence; it is integral to a healthy life.

Ayurveda addresses physical activity through *Vyayama,* or exercise. Walking, cycling, swimming, yoga, and strength training support cardiovascular health, strength, mobility, and psychological well-being. The combination depends on age, ability, and health. Movement belongs in ordinary life, helping preserve the ability to do what makes life meaningful.

Sadvritta: The Preventive Value of a Balanced Mind

Health is shaped by how we respond to the world. Persistent stress, conflict, isolation, and emotional exhaustion can affect sleep, behaviour, relationships, and healthy habits.

Ayurveda addresses this through *Sadvritta,* a framework of wholesome personal and social conduct. Traditional teachings emphasise truthfulness, self-restraint, compassion,

respectful relationships, and responsible behaviour. The *Charaka Samhita* also discusses *Aachara Rasayana,* associated with the health-promoting significance of ethical conduct and mental discipline.

Practical expressions include supportive relationships, boundaries, gratitude, restorative breaks, and professional psychological support when needed. This is not a demand for constant positivity or a reason to blame those who suffer; emotional well-being deserves attention alongside physical health.

Prakriti and Individualised Living

Prakriti, the constitution in Ayurveda's traditional framework, reflects the idea that one prescription may not suit everyone. Age, capacity, occupation, medical history, and personal circumstances shape a sustainable routine.

However, *Prakriti* should not be treated as a scientifically established substitute for clinical assessment or validated medical risk prediction. Preventive care is most useful when appropriate, achievable, and sustainable for each person and their circumstances.

The Art of Prevention: Recognising the Limits of Lifestyle Alone

Ayurveda's preventive orientation is not a rejection of medicine. Lifestyle and medical care are complementary; healthy routines may reduce certain risks but cannot guarantee freedom from disease.

Natural does not necessarily mean harmless: some Ayurvedic preparations may contain harmful substances or interact with prescribed medicines. Routine health assessments, age-appropriate screening, vaccination, and timely medical consultation remain essential components of preventive care.



Thus, Ayurveda's preventive philosophy is not lifestyle instead of medicine, but lifestyle as an essential partner in preserving health.

Longevity as a Practice, Not a Promise

The modern pursuit of longevity focuses on breakthroughs and extending lifespan. Ayurveda asks a more immediate question: how well are we living the years we already have?

Dinacharya highlights daily rhythm; *Ahara*, nourishment; *Ritucharya*, environmental awareness; *Nidra* and *Vyayama,* rest and movement; and *Sadvritta,* the link between health, conduct, relationships, and mental composure.

These principles do not guarantee longevity, and traditional prescriptions require scrutiny. Their value lies in treating health as a continuing responsibility, not an emergency addressed only after symptoms appear.

No system of medicine can promise longevity. It is influenced by biology, circumstance, healthcare, environment, and daily living. Ayurveda invites us to participate more consciously in that process.

The true art of longevity may begin not with the question, "What medicine will make me live longer?" but with a more fundamental one: "What way of life will help me live better?"

Prof. (Dr.) G G Gangadharan, *an Ayurvedacharya and PhD holder, blends traditional Ayurvedic expertise with modern management insights from McGill University, Canada. A renowned advocate for holistic health, he specialises in Ayurvedic solutions to combat modern lifestyle diseases effectively.*

FROM VRITTI TO HEALING: TRANSFORMING THE MIND AT ITS ROOTS

We often treat emotional distress by quieting its symptoms, through medication or meditation, without addressing what created it in the first place. Ayurveda offers a deeper perspective: healing begins not with controlling emotions, but with transforming the thoughts that give birth to them. This is the principle behind Chit Yog Sadhana©.





Dr S Ajit

A thought repeated becomes a Vritti. A Vritti repeated becomes a Samskara. A Samskara left unexamined can contribute to disease. Why neither the pill nor the meditation cushion alone can break this chain, and what the Vaidya must do instead.

In more than four decades of clinical practice, I have watched the language of human suffering change. Patients once came speaking of Chinta (anxiety) or Shoka (grief). Today, they arrive with diagnoses such as panic disorder, burnout, chronic depression, IBS and autoimmune conditions. Many carry two lists: chemical prescriptions and mindfulness apps. Yet, beneath modern medical terminology lies the same fundamental disturbance that Maharishi Patanjali

identified and Acharya Charaka addressed: the restless movement of the mind, the Vritti.

Modern medicine often seeks to regulate symptoms through pharmaceuticals, while wellness practices offer relaxation through meditation and breathing exercises. Neither alone necessarily transforms the underlying thought patterns. This is where Sattvavajaya Chikitsa (Ayurvedic psychotherapy and mental restraint) becomes essential. It is not an optional addition to Ayurvedic treatment, but a central component.

From Thought to Disease: Understanding the Genesis Chain

Western psychology often examines how emotions affect the brain. Ayurveda asks a deeper question: where did the emotion originate?

Classical Ayurveda distinguishes Mastishka (the physical brain) from Manas (the mind), which is constantly moving (Chanchala) and generating thoughts or Vrittis (C.Sha. 1.18–21; YS 1.2).

In my clinical approach, every emotional disturbance follows five links:

1. Mind State: The balance of Sattva (clarity), Rajas (agitation) and Tamas (inertia).

2. Thought (Vritti): The perception or mental story generated.

3. Deed (Karma): The action or reaction arising from that thought.

4. Impact: The consequences of that action.

5. Emotion: The resulting psychological and physical response.



When Rajas and Tamas dominate, thoughts become reactive and emotions distressing. This reflects Pragya Aparadh, or failure of Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti (C.Sha. 1.102). The presenting emotion is the last link, not the first. Treating it without examining its originating thought can leave the underlying problem unresolved.

Where Suppressed Thoughts Become Disease

Anger (Krodha), for instance, may originate in resentment, humiliation, insecurity, jealousy or unmet expectations. Anxiety (Chinta), fear (Bhaya) and sadness (Vishada) may arise from rejection, unresolved trauma or feeling disrespected.

Two patients with identical diagnoses may therefore have entirely different emotional roots. A Vaidya must look beyond the diagnosis to identify the underlying Vritti.

Unresolved thoughts may become Samskaras (deeply ingrained impressions), influencing behaviour, breathing, posture and bodily responses. Ayurveda describes disturbances in Manovaha Srotas through Atipravritti (hyperactivity), Sanga (stagnation) and Vimarga Gamana (misdirection).

In my clinical framework, prolonged emotional distress may interact with digestive and metabolic disturbances, affecting Agni and contributing to Ama formation. This is why emotional assessment must complement physical treatment.

Why Meditation Alone Is Not Enough

Pranayama and Dhyana can promote relaxation, but observing a Vritti is not the same as transforming it. A patient may experience temporary calm during meditation and return to the same resentments and destructive thought patterns afterwards.

Without Svatma Vichara (self-inquiry) and Pratipaksha Bhavana



(cultivating opposing thoughts) (YS 2.33), meditation may become a form of spiritual bypassing.

Chit Yog Sadhana©: A Three-Step Roadmap

Charaka describes mental therapy as Sattvavajaya Chikitsa, restraining and redirecting the mind away from unwholesome influences (C.Su. 11.54). Chit Yog Sadhana© is the practical framework I have developed over four decades to apply this principle through three steps.

Step 1: Stabilising the Vessel

The 21-Meal Mind Audit examines weekly food choices through three Ayurvedic categories:

- Sattvic foods promote clarity and balance.
- Rajasic foods are traditionally associated with agitation and restlessness.
- Tamasic foods are associated with heaviness and inertia.

Alongside appropriate nutrition and Dinacharya (daily routine), this step aims to strengthen Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti.

Step 2: Nourishing the Mind

This step combines individualised Medhya herbs such as Brahmi, Mandukaparni and Shankhapushpi, appropriate therapies such as Shirodhara, and a simple nightly review (Svadhyaya).

Before sleeping, patients examine their thoughts, actions and unresolved expectations. This encourages daily emotional processing rather than allowing unresolved concerns to accumulate.

Step 3: Transforming the Root Vritti

Once the mind becomes steadier, patients identify underlying fears, resentments and negative beliefs. Through Pratipaksha Bhavana, they consciously cultivate healthier opposing thoughts. The objective is not to erase memories but to reduce their emotional charge and influence over present behaviour.

Chit Yog Sadhana© complements existing medical treatment; it does not replace psychiatric care or justify abruptly stopping prescribed medication.

Guidance for Vaidyas and Seekers

For Vaidyas, the priority is to look beyond the presenting emotion, stabilise the patient's physical health before deeper emotional work, and monitor progress through appropriate clinical assessment.

For seekers, the practice is equally simple: review your day before sleep, examine the fears and expectations behind strong emotional reactions, and combine meditation with self-inquiry.

The Way Forward

Pharmaceuticals can help manage suffering, and breathwork can promote physical calm. But lasting emotional wellbeing also requires examining and transforming the thought patterns that influence our responses.

By bridging classical Sattvavajaya Chikitsa with Chit Yog Sadhana©, Ayurveda offers a structured approach to emotional healing, helping individuals move towards greater physical vitality, resilience and enduring peace of mind.

Dr S Ajit *(BAMS) is a pioneer of authentic Ayurveda in the Western world with over 47 years of clinical experience—including 17 years as a clinical officer and physician in India, and 30 years practicing, establishing, and teaching Ayurveda across New Zealand and Australia. As the Founding Director and Senior Lecturer at the Australasian Institute of Ayurvedic Studies (AIAS), he leads Australasia's premier Ayurvedic training institution. He regularly presents at global health conferences, medical symposiums, and academic panels, advancing the integration of classical Ayurveda with modern healthcare. He developed Chit Yog Sadhana© a proprietary clinical health framework*





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LET'S MAKE OUR SUNSET YEARS ACTIVE AND MEANINGFUL

Ageing is natural. One can live healthily through one's span by making mindful choices and listening to the needs of the body and mind...



Prof (Dr) Divya P

> ***"Health in later years is rarely luck; it is the quiet reward of the care we give ourselves every day."***



As we age, true health is not merely about living longer, but about living well. It is the ability to digest food comfortably, sleep peacefully, think clearly, and move independently. These simple, everyday functions are the foundations of a fulfilling life. Yet we often overlook their importance until discomfort begins to disrupt our daily routines. Ageing is natural, but how we experience it depends on the choices we make every day. By understanding our changing needs and nurturing our body and mind through mindful living, we can make our later years healthier, more active, and more meaningful.

1. Digestion: The Foundation of Health

Ayurveda places immense importance on Agni, the digestive and metabolic capacity, the fundamental path to health. This is why diet occupies such a central place in Ayurvedic practice. No single diet is ideal for everyone. What nourishes one person may cause discomfort in another, depending on their digestive capacity, constitution, age, and state of health.

Often, the earliest signs of declining health appear as subtle changes in digestion. Reduced appetite, bloating, acidity, or irregular bowel movements may seem like minor

inconveniences, but they deserve attention. At this early stage, simple dietary and lifestyle corrections may help restore digestive function and prevent further complications.

How, then, can you assess your digestion? Begin by asking yourself three simple questions:

1. Do you feel genuine hunger? Or do you eat simply because it is mealtime, without any real appetite?

2. Do you digest your food comfortably? Or do you regularly experience gas, bloating, acidity, or other discomfort after meals?

3. Do you pass well-formed stools regularly? Or do you struggle with constipation, excessively loose stools, or irregular bowel movements?

If your answers are reassuring, your digestive system is smooth. Notice changes in these everyday functions; they may be the earliest signals that something needs attention.

2. Sleep: Your Body's Essential Reset

Sleep is not a luxury; it is a biological necessity. Poor sleep can affect almost every system, from blood sugar regulation and hormonal balance to digestion, cardiovascular health, and cognitive function. Even short periods of sleep restriction can reduce insulin sensitivity and impair glucose regulation. Over time, persistent sleep deprivation is associated with an increased risk of metabolic disorders, cardiovascular disease, and cognitive decline.

Never compromise your sleep for things that can wait. As we age, our circadian





rhythm—the body's internal biological clock—often shifts. We may naturally feel sleepy earlier in the evening and wake up earlier in the morning. Rather than forcing ourselves to follow modern lifestyles that encourage late nights and late mornings, we should respect these changes and adjust our daily routines accordingly.

It is equally important to understand that alcohol may make you feel sleepy, but it can disrupt sleep quality. Sleep medications should not be confused with natural sleep and must be used under appropriate medical guidance.

If sleep becomes persistently disturbed, identify the underlying cause rather than simply accepting it as a normal part of ageing. In Ayurveda, therapies such as Abhyanga (therapeutic oil massage) and Shirodhara (a continuous stream of liquid, traditionally oil, directed over the forehead) under the guidance of an Ayurvedic physician augment relaxation and sleep.

3. Mental Clarity: Nourish the Mind Through Connection and Purpose

Mental well-being cannot be nurtured through medicines and diet alone. Human connection, meaningful relationships, laughter, and a sense of purpose are a must. An enjoyable evening with like-minded people, sharing stories and laughter, may do more for our emotional well-being than we often realise. We need something to look forward to each day—a hobby, a meaningful conversation, a creative pursuit, or simply the joy of being with people we love.

Ayurveda speaks of the Sattvic state of mind, but its deeper meaning is often misunderstood. We strive to eat Sattvic food, follow Sattvic routines, and cultivate Sattvic habits, hoping to attain an ideal state of being. Yet, there is an interesting paradox here: the very desire to become Sattvic can itself be Rajasik. Rajas is characterised by activity, ambition, desire, and the constant urge to achieve something. When we become preoccupied with attaining a supposedly perfect satvik state of mind, we may end up creating the very restlessness we seek to overcome.

Sattva is not a trophy to be won or a lifestyle to be performed.

It is a state of clarity, balance, and contentment in which we are no longer driven by the constant need to become something more. We can still work, contribute, pursue meaningful goals, and make a difference in the world—but without being consumed by ego, excessive desire, or attachment to outcomes.

Perhaps the wisdom that comes with age is learning to make this distinction: to live meaningfully without constantly striving to prove ourselves, and to accept life without losing the willingness to contribute to it. The goal is not to struggle to become Sattvic, but to cultivate the wisdom that allows Sattva to arise naturally.

4. Mobility: The Freedom to Live Independently

As we age, our bones, joints, muscles, and balance undergo changes that can affect our mobility. Joint degeneration may occur, but the extent to which it affects our daily lives is also influenced by our lifestyle, physical activity, nutrition, and timely healthcare. Never dismiss persistent joint pain or difficulty moving as an inevitable part of ageing. Left unaddressed, some conditions can progressively limit mobility and increase dependence on others.



One of life's greatest gifts is the freedom to move—to walk outdoors, climb stairs, travel, pursue our interests, and enjoy time with loved ones without constantly worrying about our bodies. Losing this independence can affect not only our physical health but also our confidence and quality of life.

Suitable exercises, adequate protein intake, physiotherapy, and carefully selected Ayurvedic therapies may help maintain strength, flexibility, and function, depending on the underlying condition. Seek professional advice early rather than waiting for pain or disability to become severe.

Ageing may be inevitable, but avoidable dependence need not be accepted without a fight. Take care of your joints, seek help when needed, and protect your ability to live independently for as long as possible. After all, the purpose of healthy ageing is not merely to live longer, but to remain free enough to enjoy the life we have.

At sixty, we can live with the vitality of forty or the limitations of eighty — the difference lies in how we care for our body and mind ■

Dr Divya P *is an Ayurvedic and Healthcare innovator. She is the chief innovation officer at Dr Krshna Lifesciences Ltd and the Director of Ragdima Academy. She is pursuing an Executive MBA at IIM, Kozhikode*

GERIATRICS AND THE AYURVEDA CHALLENGE—STRENGTHENING THE AI DIMENSION

In an age when Artificial Intelligence is revolutionising healthcare, can Ayurveda help address the growing challenges of an ageing population?



S Jalaja IAS (Retd)

Introduction

Globally, about 10.4–10.7% of the population—roughly 855 million people—are aged 65 and above. In India, the figure is approximately 7.4%, or 108 million, according to UNFPA's 2025 population profile.

Although India's population is younger than the global average, its absolute number of older people is large and rising as life expectancy increases and fertility declines.



In Kerala, people aged 60 and above accounted for around 15% of the population in 2021, a proportion projected to reach 30% by 2051, according to the International Institute of Migration and Development.

This demographic shift presents a major challenge: not merely extending life, but ensuring that added years are lived in good health, with dignity, independence, and quality of life. Can Ayurveda contribute to geriatric care through artificial intelligence (AI)?

Ayurveda, Longevity and Healthy Ageing

Ayurveda has been serving people for centuries, particularly in Kerala. Its distinguishing feature is its emphasis on maintaining health and vitality throughout life. It views ageing as natural and seeks to preserve strength, balance, and independence.

Longevity is not synonymous with healthy ageing. The objective should be to extend the years during which people remain physically active, mentally alert, and capable of independent, dignified living.



Ayurvedic Practices Relevant to Geriatric Care

Several Ayurvedic concepts are relevant to older people. Rasayana concerns rejuvenation and preservation of vitality, though its effectiveness requires scientific assessment.

Pathya refers to wholesome diet and regimen, while Ahara emphasises food suited to individual constitution, digestive capacity, and stage of life. Herbs such as Amla, Ashwagandha, and Brahmi are commonly used. However, potential interactions with prescribed medicines and contamination of certain products with harmful metals make qualified medical advice essential.

Ayurveda also emphasises Swasthavritta (daily routines) and Vihara (lifestyle and physical activity). Adapted exercise and regular routines may help preserve mobility, balance, and emotional well-being. These principles should complement, not replace, proven medical treatment.

Ayurveda and Mental Health

Ageing brings challenges beyond physical illness. Bereavement, loneliness, declining mobility, and reduced independence can affect emotional well-being. Depression, anxiety, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease are important concerns.

Ayurveda recognises the mind-body relationship. Yoga, meditation, and calming routines, adapted to individual needs, may complement conventional care. Equally important are companionship,



meaningful activities, and social engagement. No system of medicine can replace the emotional support of human relationships.

Ayurveda and Modern Medicine: A Complementary Approach

Ayurveda pays attention to diet, lifestyle, individual needs, and the mind-body relationship. Modern medicine provides established methods for diagnosing diseases, managing chronic conditions, and evaluating treatment safety and effectiveness. Where appropriate, both may complement one another under professional supervision and scientific guidance.

AI and Ayurveda: A Framework for Responsible Integration

AI is transforming healthcare through early disease detection, personalised treatment recommendations, remote monitoring, and medical record management. However, healthcare must not be reduced to diagnosis and treatment alone. Technology should strengthen, rather than diminish, its human dimension.

How AI Could Strengthen Ayurveda

Ayurveda faces challenges in establishing the scientific validity of diagnostic methods, evaluating treatment efficacy, and ensuring herbal medicine safety. AI could assist researchers, although it cannot independently establish treatment effectiveness.

Tridosha refers to Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, traditionally used to understand bodily and



mental processes. These relate to Prakriti, an individual's constitutional type.

AI-based analysis could investigate whether measurable patterns in genomic markers, metabolomic profiles, heart rate variability, and other biological data correspond to traditional classifications. Machine learning could identify statistical patterns in large datasets and examine whether Prakriti categories have measurable biological correlates.

AI might also assess diagnostic methods such as Nadi Pariksha through pulse-waveform analysis. Other applications include chronic disease management, wearable-based monitoring of mobility and sleep, remote healthcare, traditional-text analysis, drug discovery, clinical trial optimisation, and detection of herb-drug interactions and contamination.

AI could identify Rasayana formulations that merit scientific investigation and help develop personalised care plans that integrate Prakriti, nutrition, and medical history. However, rigorous validation remains essential.

The WHO's Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 emphasises scientific evidence, safety, quality, and responsible integration. AI-assisted findings must likewise meet standards of transparency, reproducibility, independent verification, and peer review. Clinical decisions must remain subject to professional judgement.

India has an opportunity to bring its traditional medical heritage into constructive dialogue with modern science.

National Initiatives on Ayurveda for the Elderly

India's Ministry of Ayush supports geriatric healthcare through national programmes. The National Ayush Mission promotes healthy ageing through initiatives such as Vayo Mitra, while the Ayurswasthya Yojana includes public health components addressing geriatric care.

State Initiatives

Kerala, with its elderly population and long association with Ayurveda, is well placed for innovation. The Kerala Senior Citizens' (Care and Protection of Rights) Bill, 2026, offers a legislative basis for strengthening elderly care.

Kerala could pilot integrated models, integrating evidence-based Ayurvedic preventive practices, modern medical monitoring, and AI-assisted remote care, particularly in rural areas, generating evidence for future policy.

The Future: Bringing Wisdom and Technology Together

The future holds potential for a partnership between Ayurveda, modern medicine, and AI, each complementing the others to promote holistic, effective, and personalised healthcare.

Success should ultimately be measured by tangible improvements in people's lives, especially older citizens.

The real promise lies not in choosing between ancient wisdom and modern technology but in bringing them together judiciously to foster a healthier, more humane society. The task is neither to romanticise tradition nor worship technology, but to hold both to standards of evidence and human benefit—especially for those in later life who deserve the wisdom of the past and the best the future can offer ■

Jalaja Sinha, IAS (Rtd), *former Secretary, Department of AYUSH, New Delhi and trustee, Life Science Foundation, New Delhi, looks at the therapeutic value of common weeds which regularly invade our gardens and backyards and how to conserve them*

THE ECOLOGY WITHIN: AYURVEDA, THE MICROBIOME AND THE SECRET OF LONGEVITY

What if longevity depends on how we digest what we eat? Take a look into Ayurveda's concepts of Agni and Rasāyana in dialogue with modern microbiome science



Dr Antonio Īśvara Morandi

We are often told that "we are what we eat." Ayurveda suggests something more profound: we are not what we eat; we are what we digest.

This distinction may be particularly relevant to longevity. Modern science increasingly shows that the biological effects of food depend not simply on its nutritional composition but also on how it is transformed.

We know that we do not digest alone. Trillions of microorganisms inhabit the human body, particularly the gastrointestinal tract. Together with their ecological environment and interactions, they constitute what we call the microbiome. They actively transform food, producing metabolites and interacting with our metabolism, immune system, intestinal barrier, and nervous system. Increasing evidence links the microbiome with healthy ageing and longevity. Remarkably, the idea that humans coexist with minute living entities also finds expression in Ayurveda.

The Caraka Saṃhitā describes kṛmi, living entities associated with different sites and substances in the human body. Some clearly correspond to visible parasites. Others are described as aṇu, meaning minute, and apāda, meaning without feet. Most strikingly, Caraka states that some are adṛśya, or invisible, because of their minuteness (sūkṣmatvāt), an explicit description of living entities too small to be seen.



An even more intriguing distinction appears in Caraka's classification. While discussing pathological kṛmi, the text explicitly excludes sahaja kṛmi. Sahaja literally means "born together with," "co-arising," or naturally coexisting. Ayurveda, therefore, does not simply describe invisible living agents as enemies that produce



disease. It recognises living entities naturally associated with the human organism, while also describing conditions in which kṛmi may participate in pathology. This is remarkably close to the ecological principle underlying the modern concept of the microbiome.

It would be anachronistic to claim that Ayurveda possessed modern bacteriology, microbial genetics, or today's taxonomic classifications. Nevertheless, the classical description contains essential features of a host-associated microbial ecology: naturally coexisting living entities, different organisms associated with different bodily environments, forms invisible because of their minute size, and relationships with the host that can vary according to biological conditions. Nutrition becomes central to this relationship.

Ayurveda considers āhāra, or food, one of the fundamental supports of life. Yet it does not regard the effect of food as an intrinsic property of food alone. Caraka describes eight determining factors—the āhāravidhi-viśeṣāyatana—that shape the effects of what we eat: the intrinsic nature of the food (prakṛti), its processing (karaṇa), its combination with other foods (saṃyoga), quantity (rāśi), geographical and environmental context (deśa), time and season (kāla), the manner in which it is consumed (upayoga-saṃsthā), and, crucially, the individual who consumes it (upayoktṛ). This is a remarkably relational view of nutrition. Food does not have exactly the same biological meaning for everyone or under all circumstances. Its effects emerge from the interaction between food, transformation, context, and the individual.

Central to this process is Agni. Usually translated as "digestive fire," Agni expresses something broader: the organism's capacity to transform what comes from the external environment into something compatible with its own internal organisation. Caraka explicitly states that the appropriate quantity of food depends on the strength of Agni (āhāramātrā punaragnibalāpekṣiṇī) and connects appropriately digested nutrition with strength, well-being, and longevity.

The microorganisms in our gastrointestinal tract actively participate in the transformation of food. They metabolise dietary substrates, including components that our own digestive enzymes cannot fully process, and produce short-chain fatty acids and numerous other biologically active molecules capable of influencing metabolism, immunity, intestinal integrity, and nervous-system function. Diet simultaneously modifies the composition and activity of these microbial communities. Thus, "we are what we digest" acquires an ecological meaning. What we ultimately obtain from food emerges not from food alone, but from a dynamic interaction between diet, individual digestive and metabolic capacity, microorganisms, and the internal environment they collectively create.

Seen in this light, Caraka's descriptions of sahaja kṛmi and minute living entities inhabiting different bodily environments acquire particular significance. Together with the individualised model of nutrition and Agni, they suggest a systemic view in which health depends not simply on eliminating microorganisms, but on maintaining appropriate relationships between the host, its internal environment, and the living entities that share it.

The Collaborative Medicine and Science (CoMS) framework—Reformulation, Modelling, and Localisation—allows this relationship to be investigated without forcing one-to-one translations between Ayurveda and contemporary biomedicine. Rather than claiming that kṛmi simply "means microbiome" or that Agni simply "means metabolism," CoMS reformulates the functional relationships described in the classical model, represents them as interacting processes,

and then asks where these relationships can be localised and measured using contemporary science.

The resulting model can be expressed as:

Food + individual + environment → Agni/transformative capacity ←→microbiome → microbial metabolites ←→ host response → modification of the internal environment.

Importantly, this is not a linear pathway but a continuous feedback loop. Food modifies the microbial ecosystem; microorganisms transform food; their metabolites influence the host; and the host's physiological state and internal environment, in turn, influence which microorganisms flourish and how they behave.



From this perspective, personalised nutrition is not simply the selection of different foods for different people. It is the continuous management of an individual's ecological relationship with food, transformation, the host, and microorganisms.

This dynamic relationship may be particularly important for longevity. Research on healthy ageing suggests that there may be no single "ideal" microbiome. Studies involving thousands of individuals have found that healthy ageing can be associated with increasingly individualised microbial configurations. What may matter, therefore, is not simply the presence of particular microorganisms, but the resilience and adaptability of the entire ecosystem.

This resonates strongly with the Ayurvedic concept of Rasāyana, traditionally associated with longevity and rejuvenation. Rasāyana is not merely the use of particular herbs or supplements. It encompasses nutrition, behaviour, sleep, mental equilibrium, and lifestyle—the maintenance of conditions that allow the individual to remain resilient and adaptive throughout life.

Perhaps longevity, then, should not be understood simply as resisting ageing. It may depend on preserving our capacity to adapt.

Food is not merely fuel. It is information entering a living ecosystem. The emerging dialogue between Ayurveda and microbiome science, therefore, points beyond the search for a perfect diet or a perfect microbiome. The future of longevity nutrition may instead lie in understanding and preserving the unique



and continuously changing relationship between food, digestion, microorganisms, host, and environment throughout life.

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HEALTHY AGEING: AWAKENING THE HOPE WITHIN

Ageing is a time to rediscover oneself, bond, and strengthen hope. Beyond longevity lies the need to feel loved, valued, and lively



Baiju Varghese

Imagine a home once filled with children's voices, family conversations and everyday responsibilities. Over time, children leave to build their own lives, careers end, and familiar social circles gradually shrink. The home remains, but its sounds change. For some, this transition brings freedom; for others, it leaves an unexpected emptiness.

Ageing can sometimes feel like becoming invisible in a world that moves forward. A person who once cared for everyone may begin to wonder who needs them now. Loneliness, feeling unwanted or neglected, emotional dullness and fear of dependence can quietly enter everyday life. When walking becomes unsteady or familiar activities become difficult, confidence may diminish further.

Yet ageing is not simply a story of loss. It can also be a time to rediscover meaning, nurture relationships and find new reasons to look forward to tomorrow.



The Human Need for Hope

When we exercise, our contracting muscles act as an endocrine organ, releasing small signalling proteins called myokines—popularly known as 'hope molecules'. These tiny chemicals travel through your bloodstream to the brain, where they lower stress, reduce inflammation, and stimulate new brain cell growth. Acting as natural antidepressants, hope molecules provide a direct biochemical link between physical movement and improved emotional resilience, proving that every workout actively boosts your mood.

Small Practices, Meaningful Changes

Move gently. Shoulder rolls, ankle rotations, comfortable stretches and chair-based yoga can help older adults remain engaged with their bodies. Suitable walking, strength and balance exercises can support mobility and independence.

Breathe consciously. Sit comfortably and notice your breath for a quiet pause. Gentle breathing, meditation and guided relaxation may help settle the mind.

Practise gratitude. Remembering a kind conversation, enjoying the morning sunlight or appreciating a familiar song can bring attention to moments that still hold meaning. These practices do not erase grief or loneliness; they offer gentle support to life's difficulties.

A Daily Ritual for Healthy Ageing

A few simple practices can bring movement, calm and connection into everyday life.

- **Morning –** Awaken the body (5 minutes): Sit comfortably, breathe naturally, roll the shoulders and gently rotate the wrists and ankles.
- **Move with confidence (10–20 minutes):** Enjoy a suitable walk or chair-based movements. Include strength and balance exercises, with professional guidance when needed.
- **Pause and breathe (3 minutes):** Observe the natural breath without forcing or holding it.
- **Connect with someone (5–10 minutes):** Call a family member, speak to a neighbour or share a meaningful conversation.
- **Practise gratitude (2 minutes):** Recall one thing you appreciate, one person who matters and one activity to look forward to tomorrow.
- **Evening – Rest and reflect (5–10 minutes):** Relax comfortably, release unnecessary tension and prepare for a regular sleep routine.

Consistency matters more than perfection. Adapt activities based on health conditions and mobility. Unsteady walking warrants professional assessment and appropriate support.

From Being Cared For to Feeling Valued

The elderly need to be heard, consulted, respected and included. A family phone call, a community gardening activity or an opportunity to share a skill with younger generations can nurture belonging. The goal is not merely to keep older people occupied,



but to help them experience connection and purpose. Loneliness is not always visible. Someone may smile and continue daily routines while feeling deeply alone. Regular contact, genuine invitations to participate, and conversations that let people express their feelings can make a difference. Persistent emotional dullness, loss of interest, and hopelessness deserve compassionate attention and, when necessary, professional support.

Healthy ageing is not about denying the passage of time or expecting everyone to remain endlessly active and cheerful. It is about creating conditions in which people can experience dignity, comfort, connection and choice.

Longevity gives us more years. Connection gives those years meaning. Movement opens possibilities. And hope reminds us that life can still hold something worth waking up for ■

***Baiju Varghese** is a PhD Scholar in Yoga.*

AYURVEDA IN THE GLOBAL LONGEVITY CONVERSATION

The search for ways to age healthily brings modern science and traditional medicine into an exciting new conversation. Can Ayurveda contribute to this emerging global longevity movement?



Dr Madan Thangavelu

Spain has the highest life expectancy in the European Union, with Madrid leading all EU regions at 86.1 years at birth in 2025, well above the European average of 81.5 years. Its remarkable longevity has earned it the 'Blue Zone 2.0', surpassing even renowned Blue Zones such as Sardinia, Ikaria, Okinawa, Nicoya and Loma Linda.

These developments were among the highlights of the International Longevity Summit 2026, held at the Real Academia Nacional de Medicina de España (RANM), Madrid, on September 30 and October 1. Established in 1734 by royal decree of King Felipe V, the Academy today has King Felipe VI as its Royal Patron. Interestingly, the North American ARDD 2026, the sixth Annual Aging Research and Drug Discovery conference, was held from October 1 to 3, bringing together leading researchers exploring the molecular, cellular and organismal basis of ageing and possible interventions.

On the second day in Madrid, the Madrid Longevity Declaration was read, emphasising that better longevity policies should result in "less medical expenses and more health for all citizens". Japanese biologist Shinya Yamanaka, the 2012 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine, and Australian biologist David A Sinclair of Harvard University were among those associated with the Declaration.

Sinclair's research on dietary restriction and small-molecule interventions to slow ageing resonates with certain aspects of Ayurveda. His laboratory has investigated NAD-related biology, dietary restriction and potential interventions in ageing, although the evidence from human studies remains a separate question.

The Molecular Connection

CD38, NAD+ (nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide) and mitochondrial sirtuins are important players in emerging research on ageing. NAD+ is present in every cell, essential for energy metabolism, while SIRT3, a mitochondrial protein, regulates several metabolic processes. NAD+ levels decline with age, with CD38 contributing significantly to this decline.

Computer-aided molecular docking research has identified compounds such as quercetin, genistein, apigenin and noreugenin as potential CD38 inhibitors. These compounds occur in plants, fruits, vegetables and traditional medicinal sources.

However, small-molecule targets represent only one part of the larger longevity story. Ayurveda offers more complex and



individualised interventions. Its contribution could be explored through research questions examining how personalised assessment, diet, daily routines and multi-component interventions influence health span.

Understanding the Human Body as a System

When examined through the lens of systems biology, some mechanisms being explored in modern research resonate with principles described in Ayurvedic texts.

The human body is not a machine governed by a single blueprint. It's an intricate system of systems, maintained through a dynamic network of interactions between organs, tissues and the external environment. Health is therefore not a static condition but an ongoing process of adaptation, regulation and homeostasis.

Different traditional systems may address different dimensions of this complex human organisation. The challenge is to understand their contributions through appropriate scientific frameworks rather than assume that one intervention or system can explain the whole.

Who Can Bring These Systems Together?

Institutions connecting traditional medicine with contemporary research have an important role to play. WHO's Global Traditional Medicine Centre in Jamnagar, India, can help create an evidence and policy bridge between traditional medical systems and global health research.

WHO Europe has also placed ageing on the agenda of its 76th Regional Committee session in Copenhagen, with a proposed strategy titled Ageing is Living: A Strategy for Promoting a Lifetime of Health and Well-being in the WHO European Region 2026–2030.

Longevity education platforms can provide another avenue for dialogue. The Longevity Academy, associated with the Longevity Center Europe, describes its approach as practitioner-focused and evidence-based, offering education in longevity medicine and health span. Its founder, Miguel Caeiro, spoke at the Madrid summit on preparing leaders and organisations for the age of 100-year living—a lifespan familiar to Ayurvedic thinking.

Likewise, the Phaedon Institute, which supports the growth of ageing and longevity sciences, represents another potential platform for interdisciplinary engagement.

Conference organisers and professional societies can contribute by creating structured, evidence-focused sessions that bring Ayurveda into discussions on longevity without implying that traditional interventions have already been scientifically validated against modern molecular approaches.

The Way Forward

The global longevity movement is increasingly concerned with preserving health throughout life rather than merely extending lifespan. Ayurveda's emphasis on prevention, individual variation, daily routines and the relationship between people and their environment offers valuable questions for this emerging field.

The objective should neither be to claim equivalence with modern geroscience nor to dismiss traditional knowledge. Instead, the opportunity lies in building respectful and rigorous collaborations that examine specific practices, establish safety, and evaluate outcomes transparently.

With WHO advancing its traditional medicine agenda and longevity receiving growing policy attention in Europe, the conditions for such a dialogue are taking shape.

The future is exciting. The time may be right for Ayurveda to engage with the global longevity community—not merely as an ancient system of medicine, but as a source of research questions and questions and approaches that deserve careful scientific exploration.

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AYURVEDA & THE GROWING GLOBAL MARKET FOR HEALTHY AGEING

The global focus is shifting from lifespan to health span. The growing demand for healthy ageing is opening up exciting opportunities for Ayurveda, particularly its age-old wisdom of Rasayana. Can this ancient science find a new place in the modern longevity economy?



Vaidya Harish Kumar

The world is undergoing a major demographic transformation. By 2030, approximately one in six people worldwide will be aged 60 years or older. This remarkable increase in longevity has created a new healthcare challenge: it is no longer enough to add years to life; the objective is to add health, vitality and independence to those years.

This has brought increasing attention to health span—the period during which an individual remains healthy, active and functionally





independent. Healthy ageing involves much more than the absence of disease. It includes preserving physical strength, mobility, cognition, emotional wellbeing, metabolic health and social participation.

Healthy ageing and longevity have also emerged as important areas of scientific and commercial interest, creating opportunities for preventive healthcare, nutritional supplements, Ayurveda, yoga and the broader wellness industry.

The Growing Healthy Ageing Market

Consumer attitudes towards ageing are changing. Increasingly, people are seeking ways to maintain health before significant disability or chronic disease develops. This has fuelled demand for products and services addressing healthy ageing.

The market encompasses nutritional and herbal supplements, functional foods, personalised nutrition, fitness and rehabilitation programmes, yoga, meditation, sleep management, stress reduction and digital wellness technologies.

Consumers are particularly interested in products supporting energy, memory, immunity, joint and muscle health, cardiovascular and metabolic health, digestion, sleep and stress management.

The commercial opportunity is significant, but so is the responsibility. Ageing is a complex biological process, and no single supplement can be presented as a solution for longevity. The industry's future depends on combining innovation and traditional knowledge with credible scientific evidence.

Ayurveda and Rasayana

Ayurveda has addressed healthy longevity for thousands of years. Rather than focusing exclusively on treating disease, it emphasises preserving health through appropriate diet, daily and seasonal routines, physical activity, adequate sleep and mental wellbeing.

The Ayurvedic concept of Rasayana, commonly described as rejuvenation therapy, is particularly relevant to modern discussions on healthy ageing. It extends beyond herbal preparations to incorporate nutrition, lifestyle, behaviour and selected botanical interventions intended to maintain vitality, resilience and overall wellbeing.

This philosophy closely resembles the modern concept of healthspan: maintaining functional capacity and quality of life for as long as possible.

Ayurvedic Botanicals and Healthy Ageing

Several Ayurvedic botanicals have attracted considerable scientific and commercial interest.

Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera) is among the most internationally recognised Ayurvedic herbs. Research has investigated its potential benefits for stress management, sleep and physical performance, all important factors in maintaining quality of life as we age.

Amla (Phyllanthus emblica), or Indian gooseberry, is traditionally regarded as an important Rasayana. Rich in bioactive compounds, it has attracted research interest for its antioxidant and cardiometabolic properties, including potential effects on lipid and glucose metabolism.

Brahmi (Bacopa monnieri) is particularly relevant to cognitive ageing. Clinical research has examined standardised preparations for their potential effects on memory and cognitive performance.

Turmeric (Curcuma longa), particularly its curcuminoids, has become a major global natural-health ingredient. Its effects on inflammatory pathways have generated research interest, especially in relation to joint health and mobility.

Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia) has a long history of Ayurvedic



use and is traditionally associated with Rasayana and general health support. Its commercial use highlights the importance of botanical identification, appropriate dosage, quality assurance and safety monitoring.

Traditional use should provide a foundation for scientific investigation, not substitute for it. Claims must reflect the evidence available for each specific ingredient, extract and dosage.

Healthy Ageing Goes Beyond Supplements

Healthy ageing cannot come from a capsule alone. Balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, maintaining muscle strength and healthy body weight, adequate sleep, psychological wellbeing and social engagement remain fundamental.

Yoga can complement this approach. Appropriately adapted practices may support flexibility, balance, mobility, muscular strength and stress management. Meditation and breathing practices may further contribute to emotional wellbeing.

Integrating Ayurveda, nutrition, physical activity, yoga and preventive healthcare therefore offers a more comprehensive approach than relying on supplements alone.

From Traditional Wisdom to Evidence-Based Products

The growing healthy-ageing market provides Ayurveda with a major global opportunity. However, credibility depends on scientific evidence, standardisation, quality control and responsible regulation.

Herbal products require correct botanical identification, appropriate plant parts, standardised extraction methods, marker compounds and batch-to-batch consistency. Testing for microbial contamination, pesticides, heavy metals and adulteration is equally essential.

Claims such as "reverses ageing" or "extends lifespan" should be avoided without compelling clinical evidence. Instead, products should focus on specific, evidence-based benefits relating to stress, sleep, cognition, mobility and general wellbeing.

Integrating Tradition, Science and Wellness

The global interest in longevity presents an important opportunity for Ayurveda. Its greatest contribution may lie not in claiming a cure for ageing, but in its longstanding emphasis on prevention, personalised diet and lifestyle, mind-body balance and Rasayana.

The future calls for stronger clinical research on standardised Ayurvedic interventions, using measurable outcomes such as physical function, cognition, sleep, metabolic health, mobility and quality of life.

Ultimately, the true achievement of longevity is not simply living longer, but living longer with health, vitality, dignity, purpose and independence.

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Formulating Longevity With Purpose

NIRAAMAYA LIFE



At the intersection of India's traditional wellness heritage and contemporary luxury hospitality, Niraamaya Life brings together personalised wellness, preventive care and destination-led experiences to encourage a more conscious approach to living well.

Led by CEO Allen Machado, the brand views wellness as a personalised journey. Its philosophy integrates Ayurveda, yoga, meditation, mindful nutrition, sound healing and nature-led experiences to support individual well-being, vitality and quality of life.

PERSONALISED WELLNESS FOR MODERN LIFESTYLES

At the heart of the approach is a consultation-led wellness experience. In-house Ayurvedic doctors understand each guest's individual needs and recommend suitable therapies and experiences based on their wellness priorities.

Dedicated programmes address contemporary lifestyle concerns, including sleep, stress and weight management. Available across five, seven, fourteen and twenty-one-night durations, these programmes combine Ayurvedic therapies, yoga, meditation and mindful nutrition to encourage healthier lifestyle practices.

The experience extends beyond treatments to include balanced cuisine, mindful movement, sound healing and opportunities to reconnect with nature, bringing traditional wellness knowledge into a contemporary luxury setting.

WHERE THE DESTINATION BECOMES PART OF THE EXPERIENCE

Niraamaya Life's destinations are integral to its wellness philosophy. From the Arabian Sea coastline and Kerala's tranquil backwaters to forested highlands and culturally rich landscapes, each setting offers a distinct connection with nature.

Thoughtfully prepared cuisine, outdoor activities, local traditions and personalised hospitality create experiences that extend beyond the treatment room, allowing guests to slow down and reconnect.

REDEFINING LONGEVITY THROUGH PREVENTIVE WELLNESS

As global interest in longevity and preventive wellness grows, Niraamaya Life seeks to bring India's traditional knowledge systems to an international audience through contemporary wellness practices and personalised hospitality.

For the brand, longevity is not simply about extending lifespan; it is about enhancing healthspan, supporting vitality, maintaining independence and improving quality of life. Its approach places emphasis on the foundations of long-term well-being: balanced nutrition, restorative sleep, mindful movement, stress management and individualised wellness guidance.



Allen Machado
CEO, Niraamaya Life

Under Allen Machado's leadership, the brand is evolving towards a broader longevity proposition, where wellness extends beyond the duration of a retreat and becomes part of everyday living. The ambition is to inspire guests to embrace healthier practices long after their stay.

By bringing together India's wellness heritage, distinctive destinations and meaningful hospitality, Niraamaya Life offers a considered perspective on luxury wellness and the pursuit of healthier, more fulfilling years.

Niraamaya Life
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AYUSH QUALITY MARK – INDIA'S QUEST FOR GLOBAL ACCEPTANCE

The Ayush Quality Mark aims to strengthen global confidence in India's traditional healthcare systems by aligning their products and services with internationally recognised standards



Anil Jauhri



Ayush represents India's traditional knowledge in healthcare and has an important place in a world beset with health challenges. However, while it has been formalised in India as a system of medicine, it is yet to be fully appreciated. Its journey in the global market has been even more chequered. While Yoga enjoys global popularity and is widely practised, the other Ayush systems have only a fragmented presence overseas.

The current government has backed Ayush like never before and has taken several initiatives to promote it. These include the creation of a separate Ministry of Ayush in 2014, the introduction of systems for certification of Yoga professionals in 2015, certification of traditional healers in 2017, and accreditation of Ayurveda training courses in 2021.

The Ayush Quality Mark, launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 19 December 2025, represents another initiative to promote the global acceptance of Ayush products and services by demonstrating their adherence to internationally recognised standards.

It was at an international conference held in Gandhinagar in April 2022 that the Prime Minister first spoke about an Ayush Mark for products and services to promote their global acceptance. This was, by far, the most ambitious exercise, covering a wide range of unspecified products and services.

What followed was a prolonged period of conceptualising the system and debating various options with experts.

Ultimately, in January 2025, the Ministry of Ayush set up a

Working Group (WG) of experts to develop the system that would eventually be christened the Ayush Quality Mark.

The WG deliberated on various options for determining what would constitute a global standard. For each identified category—medicinal products, botanicals, medicinal plants, product testing laboratories, hospitals/day care centres/ clinics, wellness centres, and medical value travel facilitators—it developed criteria and procedures for the grant of the Ayush Quality Mark. These relied on existing regulatory approvals, certifications, and accreditations conforming to identified global standards.

Broadly, the WG identified the following criteria:

a) Overseas regulatory approvals: These demonstrate that Ayush products have penetrated international markets.

b) Globally accepted systems of benchmarking, standards, certification, and accreditation: An example is the system under the aegis of the International Society for Quality in Health Care External Evaluation Association (ISQua EEA), established by the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) in 2018 to deliver its external evaluation services. ISQua EEA provides third-party external evaluation services to health and social care external evaluation organisations and standards-developing bodies around the world.

c) Standards prescribed by the World Health Organization (WHO): These include WHO Good Manufacturing Practices for herbal medicines and WHO Good Agricultural and Collection Practices for medicinal plants.

d) Standards prescribed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO): These include standards considered relevant to Ayush, with certification provided under the international systems operated by Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated (GACI).

e) Other recognised standards with global acceptance: These include standards for organic production and food safety, particularly in the case of botanicals and herbal products.

In each category, whether Ayush medicinal products or hospitals, the industry has been provided with multiple options to demonstrate compliance with global standards.

Ayush medicinal products may qualify on the basis of overseas regulatory approvals, a Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product (CoPP), or the Ayush Premium Mark under the voluntary certification scheme operated by the Quality Council of India for the Ministry of Ayush.

In the case of hospitals, wellness centres, and medical value travel facilitators (MVTFs), two routes are available:

- Healthcare accreditation under the ISQua EEA system; or
- Certification against relevant ISO standards, such as ISO 9001 or ISO 7101 for healthcare organisations and ISO 22525 for MVTFs, under the GACI system.

The Programme is being expanded to cover two additional areas: education and training. These are currently addressed through the rating system of the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM), the Yoga Certification Board (YCB),





and the Ayurveda Training Accreditation Board (ATAB). However, their criteria for accreditation and certification need to be aligned with globally recognised standards to qualify for the Mark.

While education has a voluntary global system of equivalence through organisations such as the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), the WG has identified ISO 29993 as the relevant international standard for training, which falls under the category of Learning Service Providers.

While the vision is to have the Ayush Quality Mark Programme managed by an independent organisation in the future, it has, for the time being, been housed within the Ayush Export Promotion Council (Ayushexcil).

Details of the Programme are available on its website: https://ayushqualitymark.in/.

The Programme covers not only the criteria and procedures for the grant of the Ayush Quality Mark, including additional requirements in certain cases where generic global standards need to be supplemented with Ayush-specific provisions, but also the accreditation and certification bodies whose accreditation or certification the Programme relies upon.

It is important to understand that this is a recognition programme that recognises what is already available in the market. It does not envisage any industry audit for the grant of the Mark. Instead, it follows a desk-review process based on documentary evidence provided by the applicant to demonstrate compliance with the identified global standards.

It is hoped that the Programme will enhance the global credibility of Ayush products and services and help them gain their rightful place in the global healthcare landscape.

(Reproduced with thanks from author's column in mediamap.co.in)

Anil Jauhri *is the former CEO of the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) and currently is a Visiting Fellow at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a Ministry of External Affairs think tank. He chaired the Working group set up by the Ministry of Ayush to develop the Ayush Quality mark programme*

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YOGA FOR HEALTHY AND GRACEFUL MOBILITY OF HANDS AND LEGS

Leading an active life with balanced routines and yoga practice can contribute to healthy movement and physical comfort.



Himalayan Siddhaa Akshar

Mobility: The Foundation of an Active Life

The ability to move freely is a great gift. From walking and climbing stairs to writing, lifting objects and performing everyday activities, our hands and legs play an essential role in maintaining independence and quality of life. However, prolonged sitting, sedentary lifestyles, repetitive movements and age-related changes can gradually influence joint mobility, muscular strength and coordination.

In traditional Indian wellness practices, movement is closely associated with Vata Dosha, which governs bodily movement, nerve impulses and joint functioning. Maintaining an active lifestyle, following a balanced daily routine and practising yoga regularly can contribute to healthy movement and physical comfort.

Yoga offers a comprehensive approach through a combination of controlled movements, postures, breathing techniques and body awareness. Healthy movement develops through a balance of strength, flexibility, stability and conscious coordination.

Understanding Joint Health and Mobility

The shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees and ankles are the principal joints for movement. Their healthy functioning depends on muscular strength, connective tissue health, joint stability and coordination with the nervous system.

Each joint contributes to the body's overall movement patterns. Healthy shoulder mobility supports everyday arm movements, flexible hips contribute to

comfortable walking, and strong ankles play an important role in balance and stability.

Regular, controlled movement helps maintain functional range of motion. Yoga encourages practitioners to explore their natural movement capacity gradually while developing flexibility, muscular support and stability.

Yogic Practices for Healthy Hands and Arms

Our hands perform countless movements throughout the day. Giving dedicated attention to the fingers, wrists, elbows and shoulders helps maintain their mobility and coordination.

1. Wrist and Finger Movements: Extend both arms forward, gently open and close the fingers, and rotate the wrists clockwise and anticlockwise. These movements encourage joint mobility and coordination.

2. Shoulder Rotations: Place the fingertips on the shoulders and slowly rotate the elbows in circular movements. This practice promotes shoulder mobility and releases accumulated muscular stiffness.

3. Gomukhasana (Cow Face Pose): The arm position of this posture provides a stretch across the shoulders and upper arms. Practitioners can gradually work towards bringing their hands closer behind the back according to their flexibility.

4. Hasta Uttanasana (Raised Arms Pose): Raise both arms overhead while maintaining an upright posture. Coordinate the movement with breathing to encourage shoulder mobility, upper-body extension and postural awareness.

Yogic Practices for Strong and Flexible Legs

The legs support our body weight and enable walking, standing, climbing and maintaining balance. Developing strength and mobility in the lower limbs is essential for preserving physical independence throughout life.

1. Ankle Rotations: Sit comfortably and rotate each ankle clockwise and anticlockwise. This simple practice encourages ankle mobility and improves joint awareness.

2. Tadasana (Mountain Pose): Stand upright with the feet grounded and the body aligned. This posture develops postural awareness, stability and balanced muscular engagement throughout the legs.

3. Vrikshasana (Tree Pose): Balancing on one leg develops coordination, concentration and stability while strengthening the supporting leg.

4. Baddha Konasana (Bound Angle Pose): Bring the soles of the feet together while sitting upright. Allow the knees to move towards the floor within a comfortable range. This posture encourages hip mobility and stretches the inner thighs.

5. Vajrasana (Thunderbolt Pose): This seated posture encourages upright alignment and awareness of the lower limbs. Practitioners can gradually build comfort in the posture according to their individual knee and ankle capacity.

The Connection Between Breath, Movement and the Nervous System

A distinctive quality of yoga is physical movement with conscious breathing. Breath awareness encourages relaxation, concentration and greater control over physical movements.

Every movement becomes more meaningful when aware. Paying attention to breathing, posture and muscular engagement helps you understand the body's capabilities.





Gentle pranayama practices complement physical postures by cultivating respiratory awareness and relaxation. This integration of breath and movement makes yoga a valuable practice for developing overall physical coordination and mind-body harmony.

Graceful Mobility at Every Age

Mobility is a lifelong requirement. Children benefit from practices that develop coordination and flexibility, adults require regular movement to counter prolonged sitting, and older individuals benefit from appropriately adapted exercises that support balance, strength and functional independence.

The intensity and selection of yoga practices should correspond to individual age, health and physical capacity. Movements should progress gradually, with attention to joint comfort. Individuals experiencing persistent pain, swelling or significant movement restrictions should seek appropriate medical assessment.

Consistency: The Key to Healthy Movement

Maintaining mobility requires regular attention. A dedicated fifteen to twenty minutes of daily yoga, incorporating joint movements, standing postures, balancing practices and conscious breathing, can become a valuable part of a healthy routine.

Yoga is about body, breath and mind harmony. The objective is to cultivate strength with ease, flexibility with stability and movement with awareness.

Healthy hands and legs help navigate everyday life. Through consistent yogic practice, we can nurture physical confidence, functional independence and graceful mobility at every stage of life.

True mobility is the ability to move with strength, balance, awareness and ease ■

Himalayalan Siddhaa Akshar *is a writer, coloumnist, founder of Akshar Yoga Kendra and yoga and spiritual leader*

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MEYAM: INTEGRATING AYURVEDA AND MODERN ERGONOMICS FOR LONGEVITY

Connecting Ayurveda's Timeless Wisdom with the Needs of Modern Living





Dr Yogesh Prabhakaran

Human life expectancy has increased considerably over the decades, thanks to advances in healthcare, nutrition and living conditions. Yet, living longer does not necessarily mean living healthier. The true measure of longevity lies in maintaining physical vitality, mental well-being, independence and happiness throughout life.

In today's fast-paced world, sedentary lifestyles, prolonged screen time, poor posture, repetitive movements, irregular sleep and chronic stress have become common challenges affecting mobility and quality of life. The question, therefore, is not simply how long we live, but how well we live.

True longevity is not merely about adding years to life; it is about adding life to our years.



Ayurveda: A Holistic Perspective on Healthy Ageing

For centuries, Ayurveda has emphasised balance between the body, mind, daily routines and the natural environment. Its traditional approach to well-being highlights preventive care, personalised lifestyle practices, appropriate nutrition and restorative therapies.

These principles remain relevant in modern society, where work, travel and technology often leave little room for rest and recovery. When integrated with contemporary knowledge of physical activity, ergonomics, sleep and stress management, Ayurveda offers a holistic perspective on healthy ageing.

However, healthy ageing requires more than traditional therapies alone. It calls for a practical understanding of how we work, move, eat, sleep and manage everyday pressures.

The Missing Link: Modern Ergonomics

Many contemporary health challenges arise from the way we interact with our surroundings. Extended hours at a desk, poorly designed workstations, repetitive movements and prolonged sitting can contribute to muscular discomfort and physical strain.

Ergonomics addresses the relationship between the human body and its working and living environment. Improving posture, adjusting workstations, taking regular movement breaks and incorporating appropriate physical activity can make daily routines healthier and more comfortable.

Recognising this need, MEYAM was developed as a researched and customised wellness framework integrating Marma, Ergonomics, Yoga, Ayurveda and Meditation to improve well-being and quality of life.

MEYAM: An Integrated Framework for Healthy Living

MEYAM brings together five interconnected dimensions of holistic wellness:

- **Marma:** Draws on traditional Ayurvedic practices involving vital points of the body, with appropriately administered techniques intended to support relaxation and bodily awareness.
- **Ergonomics:** Focuses on posture, movement, workstation design and preventing avoidable physical strain in daily life.
- **Yoga:** Incorporates suitable postures, movement and breathing practices to support flexibility, strength, mobility and physical balance.
- **Ayurveda:** Contributes individualised lifestyle guidance, appropriate dietary practices, daily routines and physician-recommended therapies.
- **Meditation:** Encourages mindfulness, relaxation and greater awareness of mental and emotional well-being.

The strength of MEYAM lies in bringing these dimensions together according to an individual's needs, occupation, lifestyle and physical condition.



For instance, a professional experiencing neck and shoulder discomfort may benefit from an ergonomic assessment, regular movement breaks, suitable yoga practices and stress-management techniques, alongside professional evaluation when necessary. Someone seeking to maintain well-being with advancing age may focus on mobility, sleep, nutrition, physical activity and sustainable daily routines.

MEYAM aims to translate holistic wellness principles into practical lifestyle guidance and supportive care, rather than treating wellness as an occasional luxury.

Personalisation: The Foundation of Sustainable Wellness

Healthy ageing requires an individualised approach based on age, lifestyle, occupation and physical condition.

A personalised wellness programme may combine Ayurvedic therapies, yoga, meditation, ergonomic guidance and recommendations for nutrition, sleep and physical activity.

The objective is to build sustainable daily habits that support long-term well-being. These practices should complement, not replace, evidence-based medical care when required.

Making Longevity a Way of Life

Healthy longevity begins with everyday choices: physical activity, balanced nutrition, adequate sleep, stress management and preventive healthcare. By integrating Ayurveda's holistic wisdom with modern ergonomics and lifestyle practices, MEYAM offers a personalised framework to support well-being, maintain independence and enhance quality of life.

The goal is not simply to live longer, but to live healthier, happier and better.

Dr Yogesh Prabhakaran *is an award-winning Kerala Ayurveda physician and wellness hospitality expert with nearly 30 years of experience. He has pioneered the integration of Ayurveda into luxury hospitality, working with international brands including Marriott, Oberoi, The Leela and Mandarin Oriental. He leads Thriphala Ayurveda & Spa Consultancy and, together with his team, developed MEYAM, a researched and customised wellness framework integrating Marma, Ergonomics, Yoga, Ayurveda and Meditation for contemporary living.*
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LONGEVITY IN THE TIME OF RISING TEMPERATURES

As climate change pushes temperatures higher and days become increasingly intense, staying cool is no longer just about comfort but about longevity. Ayurveda offers timeless wisdom on protecting the body's vitality, preserving balance and ageing well in an increasingly hotter world





Dr Bhaswati Bhattacharya

Keeping Cool the Ayurvedic Way

In a world experiencing rising temperatures and increasingly intense summers owing to climate change, longevity also depends on how well we protect our bodies from heat.

Greeshma Kala, or summer, is a time to protect the oils that lubricate your muscles, tissues, brain and body. The intense heat pulls away (greesh) moisture from your muscles and tendons, drying out the body's precious oils that line each cell. The best defence is to lubricate your channels, keep the mucous membranes of your vessels and organs moist, maintain suppleness and lower body temperature to prevent heat stress.

Prolonged heat exposure could cause joint pain, restlessness,



fatigue, nausea, dizziness, headaches, a racing heart, muscle cramps and excessive sweating. This is particularly concerning for children, older adults, people with chronic illnesses and those working in hot environments, including construction sites, factories, kitchens and other workplaces.

Heat stress refers to the body's inability to rid itself of heat generated by the environment or internally through muscle activity. Prolonged exposure can overwhelm thermoregulation, the body's temperature-control mechanism. Core temperature and heart rate rise, while the body's normal cooling responses, including sweating, hydration and seeking shade, may become insufficient.

People accustomed to moderate weather may find extreme heat particularly challenging. Regular exercise, hiking, biking, long walks and even swimming or cold showers can become stressful when the body is not conditioned to temperature extremes. Inflammation, common in conditions ending in '-itis' and chronic diseases such as diabetes, can further increase susceptibility to heat stress.

Three Ayurvedic Pearls of Wisdom

1. Exercise less during Adana Kala: From the spring equinox to the summer solstice, increasing sunlight and heat place greater demands on the body. Ayurvedic wisdom recommends exercising at around 50% of one's capacity and avoiding over-exertion. During Visarga Kala, from the summer solstice to the winter solstice, exercise can gradually increase according to individual capacity.

2. Avoid preserved and processed foods: Food preservatives and additives can burden digestion. Choose natural foods and clean drinking water rather than relying heavily on processed beverages and chemically treated products.

3. Keep your head cool: Use a cool washcloth on your head, take cool showers and protect yourself from excessive heat. If wearing a helmet, consider a cotton handkerchief with coconut oil for its cooling properties. Coconut oil hair massage before showering is another traditional practice.

Ayurveda focuses on two goals during hot days: strengthening the digestive power— Jatharagni; and improving cellular metabolism — Dhatvagni. Poor digestion and metabolism can contribute to the formation of 'Ama', or toxins.

To prevent this and maintain balance, Ayurveda emphasises three pillars: Ahara, Vihara and Aushadham.

1. Ahara – Foods

Some foods have a cooling effect when digested, while others increase internal heat. Processed foods, additives and chemicals that the body cannot properly digest may contribute to inflammation.

Pomegranate is one of Ayurveda's best fruits for strengthening digestion. Fresh brassica vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage and kale, along with antioxidant-rich fruits such as berries and black currants, support protection against inflammation.

Avoid excessive refined white sugar and choose jaggery or misri instead. Chew on iksu (sugarcane) rods to enjoy their natural sweetness. Remove white flour (maida) and its products from your diet. Prefer traditional, minimally processed oils such as coconut oil, ghee and olive oil.

Whole grains (atta) and unpolished, non-GMO local rice are preferable to refined grains. Small quantities of fresh cow's milk, slowly boiled at home, may be nourishing when well tolerated. However, if pure milk is unavailable or commercial milk causes digestive discomfort, avoid consuming large quantities during summer.

2. Vihara – Lifestyle

Lifestyle changes are often the hardest, particularly for people whose work schedules disregard the body's circadian rhythm. Rising early rising, exposure to morning light and a cool shower offer a refreshing start to the day. Spending a few minutes outdoors at sunrise and sunset can help maintain a natural daily rhythm.

During hot days, coconut (kera) oil is traditionally preferred for self-massage. A light coat of a 1:1 mixture of Dhanvantaram oil and coconut oil may help cool and moisturise the body.

Upavasa, or fasting, is another traditional practice, commonly observed twice a month on Ekadashi, the eleventh day after the full and new moons. Alternatively, abstaining from heavy foods once a week may provide digestive rest.

Sheetali is a cooling breathing practice, inhalingthrough a rolled tongue. It is traditionally used to promote cooling and relaxation.

Sleep is equally important. Artificial light after sunset can disrupt the circadian rhythm and melatonin release. Dim the lights, spend quiet time with family and friends, massage sesame oil on your soles, and go to bed early. An earlier



routine, waking around 5 am and sleeping by 10 pm, allows better alignment with the body's natural rhythms.

3. Aushadham – Ayurvedic Formulations

Cooling formulations containing ushira (vetiver), coriander and fennel are traditionally used during hot days. The right formulation should suit individual body constitution without creating congestion. Choose preparations with minimal unnecessary binders, fillers, preservatives and additives.

Ayurveda emphasises realignment with the great forces of Nature. Staying cool involves conscious choices in exercise, food, lifestyle and appropriate formulations. Your body needs restoration and nourishment so that your cells can participate joyfully in a cool, long and healthy life.

Dr Bhaswati Bhattacharya, *MPH MD PhD, is the Chief Medical Officer at LYBL Healthcare, a startup healthtech venture codifying evidence-based holistic medicine, and a NY and CA licensed family physician serving as assistant professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College*

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RASAYANA AND LONGEVITY: AYURVEDA'S CONTEMPORARY SOLUTIONS TO HEALTHY AGEING

The goal of Graceful Ageing is to die young as late as possible – young at heart, in body, mind as well as in spirit!

— Montague Francis Ashley-Montagu



Dr Pratibha Shah



Introduction

Population ageing is one of the defining public health challenges of the twenty-first century. As life expectancy increases, the central question is no longer how long people live, but how well they live as they age. Modern gerontology and Ayurveda's classical discipline of Rasayana offer complementary perspectives on this challenge. While gerontology investigates the biological and psychosocial dimensions of ageing, Rasayana offers a holistic approach to preserving vitality, supporting well-being, and promoting longevity. Exploring these perspectives creates opportunities to integrate traditional knowledge with contemporary ageing research.

1. Modern Gerontology: Definition and Goals

Gerontology is the multidisciplinary scientific study of ageing and older adults. It examines the biological mechanisms of ageing, psychological changes across the lifespan, and social, environmental, and economic factors influencing health and well-being. Unlike geriatrics, which focuses on the medical care of older adults, gerontology takes a broader view of ageing as a lifelong process

influenced by multiple interacting factors.

A major goal of contemporary ageing research is to extend healthspan—the period of life spent in good health and functional independence—rather than merely increasing lifespan. Other goals include preventing age-related diseases, preserving physical mobility and cognitive function,



reducing frailty and disability, supporting mental health, and enabling older adults to maintain autonomy and social participation.

Current research investigates mechanisms such as cellular senescence, chronic low-grade inflammation, mitochondrial dysfunction, altered nutrient sensing, and declining tissue repair. These processes may contribute to age-related functional deterioration. The World Health Organization's concept of healthy ageing likewise emphasises developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables well-being in older age.

These goals resonate with Ayurveda, which focuses not merely on treating or preventing disease but also on building strength, resilience, and optimal human functioning. More specifically, Rasayana, the eighth branch of Ayurveda, aligns with several goals of gerontology.

2. Rasayana: Concept, Definition, and Goals

Rasayana specialises in rejuvenation, longevity, nourishment, strength, memory, intellect, and preservation of health. 'Rasa' refers to nutritive essence, while 'ayana' loosely translates as pathway or circulation. Rasayana therefore encompasses approaches to ensuring quality nourishment and optimal functioning of the tissues (dhatus) and their channels.

The Charaka Samhita describes Rasayana as a means of promoting longevity, sharpening mental faculties, enhancing strength, and improving overall well-being. Its scope extends beyond medicinal preparations to include nutrition, lifestyle practices, and appropriate conduct. Achara Rasayana emphasises discipline, mental composure, moral practices, ethical behaviour, and harmonious social relationships.

The central goal is not simply to delay visible signs of ageing, but to preserve the quality and dignity of life by supporting physical vitality, cognitive function, tissue nourishment, and resilience. Rasayana interventions are individualised according to constitution, age, digestive capacity, and health status.

3. Rasayana and Contemporary Healthy-Ageing Research

The continuing relevance of Rasayana lies in its multidimensional approach, which offers several concepts for investigation alongside contemporary ageing science.

A few examples of convergence with modern geroscience include:

Targeting fundamental ageing mechanisms: Modern geroscience investigates biological drivers such as oxidative stress, mitochondrial dysfunction, chronic low-grade inflammation (inflammaging), and loss of proteostasis. Rasayana herbs such as Ashwagandha and Guduchi have been investigated for their potential to enhance antioxidant enzymes, including superoxide dismutase, and reduce lipid peroxidation markers such as malondialdehyde (MDA).

Nutritional dynamics and cellular bioavailability: Rasayana relates to the pathway of nutritive essence (Rasa), emphasising optimal digestion (Agni), tissue metabolism (Dhatu), and nutrient delivery at



the cellular level to counteract degeneration.

Shift from disease management to health preservation: While conventional geriatric medicine typically treats age-related chronic illnesses after they manifest, Rasayana emphasises long-term preservation of physiological function, memory, skin integrity, and immunity to delay Jara (age-related decline).

Circadian and behavioural alignment (Achara Rasayana): Ayurvedic codes of conduct (Achara Rasayana) and daily and seasonal regimens (Dinacharya and Ritucharya) parallel modern scientific understanding of circadian rhythms, stress management, and lifestyle medicine in maintaining homeostasis and mitigating non-communicable diseases.

These parallels are conceptual starting points, not proof that traditional and modern frameworks are identical. Research is increasingly exploring the potential efficacy of Rasayana concepts and interventions in achieving gerontology goals. Continued clinical research will help determine which interventions are safe and effective, for whom, and under what conditions.

Conclusion

The science of Rasayana resonates with modern gerontology's shift from lifespan towards healthspan and quality of life. It provides an opportunity to develop an integrated approach to healthy longevity that considers physical health, mental function, nourishment, behaviour, and the individual's broader life context.

Bridging these traditions requires respect for classical knowledge and scientific rigour. By investigating carefully characterised Rasayana interventions through well-designed clinical studies, researchers can explore their potential contributions to healthy ageing without overstating their benefits. Ultimately, Rasayana is concerned with longevity and the capacity to remain active, mentally engaged, socially connected, and independent throughout life ■

Dr Pratibha Shah, *BAMS, MD, MPH is an Ayurveda consultant; trained in Traditional Health Sciences as well as Public Health. She distills Eastern wisdom with an understanding of Western principles. She is the founder-president, board of director (BOD), Council for Ayurveda Research; founder, president, BOD, Wholistic Health Alliance; founding BOD, National Consortium of Ayurveda Medicine, Senior Consultant with Boston Ayurveda School and faculty, Sai Ayurvedic Institute, Yoga Veda Institute*

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TRAVEL, A PATHWAY TO LONGEVITY

By encouraging movement, novelty, social connection, and alignment with nature, tours strengthen the body's most vital systems.



Dr Vishnupriya PS

For centuries, a sojourn has been a breather from routine. Today, science attests to what tradition hinted: travel is a powerful catalyst for health and longevity. Studies show frequent travellers often have lower mortality rates, with benefits spanning cardiovascular, cognitive, and metabolic systems. Travel refreshes the mind and strengthens the body's vitality.

New environments stimulate the brain in remarkable ways. Immersion in unfamiliar landscapes and cultures enhances neuroplasticity, helping guard against cognitive decline. Travel can reset circadian rhythms, improving sleep and energy regulation. Physical movement, whether strolling along a coastline or wandering through local markets, supports cardiovascular fitness, while moments of awe in nature have been linked to reduced inflammation. Social connections formed along the way further bolster emotional resilience and psychological well-being.

Women, in particular, gain measurable advantages from regular breaks. Research indicates that women who take at least two vacations a year face significantly lower risks of heart

disease. Even short getaways can reduce cortisol and blood pressure, easing cardiovascular strain during midlife. Wellness retreats build on these benefits, offering structured support for challenges such as chronic stress, post-childbirth fatigue, and hormonal transitions like perimenopause and menopause.

Beyond physical health, many women describe this phase of life as a deeper shift in how they experience their bodies and energy. Changes in sleep, metabolism, and emotional rhythms often encourage a more conscious relationship with self-care. In nurturing environments, these transitions become opportunities to recalibrate, with nourishment, restorative therapies, and mindful practices restoring balance and vitality.

Nature immersion plays a vital role. Research suggests that spending at least 120 minutes a week in natural surroundings is linked to improved health and well-being. Sunlight, silence, open landscapes, and fresh air support the nervous system and help regulate hormonal balance in ways urban life rarely can.

Ayurveda offers a complementary lens, viewing travel as a therapeutic journey that harmonises body, mind, and environment. Rasayana therapies emphasise rejuvenation through nourishing diets, herbal formulations, and balanced routines that support cellular health. At the same time, Ayurveda acknowledges that constant movement can aggravate vata dosha. Grounding practices, warm oil therapies, restorative yoga, wholesome meals, help counter fatigue and restore equilibrium.

This fusion of science and traditional wisdom has inspired the idea of 'longevity vacations', travel experiences designed not just for rest, but for sustained well-being. Structured programmes combining yoga, meditation, therapeutic treatments, and mindful nutrition often yield noticeable improvements in sleep, stress, and energy within weeks. These shifts encourage habits that endure long after the journey ends.



In this evolving wellness landscape, SwaSwara, CGH Earth's eco-luxury retreat in Gokarna, resonates. Nestled along Karnataka's serene coastline, SwaSwara offers a tranquil environment where guests reconnect with themselves and with nature. Rooted in Ayurveda, Naturopathy, yoga, and nature-based experiences, the retreat is designed as a space for reflection, restoration, and renewal. Days unfold gently through mindful movement, nourishing cuisine, treatments, and quiet moments overlooking the Arabian Sea.

For many, the experience becomes a journey inward, bringing clarity, renewed energy, and a deeper sense of purpose. In the calm rhythms, wellness is approached holistically, allowing individuals to step away from daily pressures and rediscover healthier patterns of living.

Ultimately, travel is more than leisure; it is a pathway to longevity. By encouraging movement, novelty, social connection, and alignment with nature, it strengthens the body's most vital systems. For women navigating hormonal transitions and for anyone seeking renewal, such journeys to SwaSwara provide not only rest and rejuvenation but also a chance to rediscover meaning in the pursuit of well-being ■

Dr Vishnupriya PS *is an Ayurveda Counsellor with CGH Earth Wellness*

MADHYA PRADESH TRAVEL MART 2026: PUTTING WELLNESS TOURISM ON THE GLOBAL MAP

The state is all set for wellness tourism, reflected in MPTM, which concluded recently



As tourism shifts from mere sightseeing to experience-centred health, relaxation and rejuvenation, Madhya Pradesh is gearing up to position itself as an emerging wellness tourism destination. The seventh Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart (MPTM) 2026, held in Bhopal from October 7 to 10, provided a significant platform to showcase this potential to the domestic and international travel industry.

Organised by Madhya Pradesh Tourism, the four-day event brought together over 600 tourism stakeholders, including more than 100 international tour operators from 34 countries and 180 domestic operators from 15 states. With 10,263 business-to-business meetings and proposed tourism investments of approximately ₹3,729 crore, the event opened fresh avenues for tourism development and private-sector participation.

While the state is renowned for its heritage monuments, wildlife reserves, spiritual destinations and natural landscapes, stakeholders believe its wellness tourism potential remains largely untapped.

> ***"Madhya Pradesh has tremendous potential to further develop yoga and wellness tourism, alongside nature-friendly and experiential activities. This can attract more domestic and international travellers seeking sustainable and meaningful experiences"***



Unniraj
Silverling Travels

Unniraj of Silverling Travels was impressed by the state's diversity and opportunities. "Madhya Pradesh has tremendous potential to further develop yoga and wellness tourism, alongside nature-friendly and experiential activities. This can attract more domestic and international travellers seeking sustainable and meaningful experiences," he said.

Beyond Sightseeing: Nature's Healing Touch

Madhya Pradesh's forests, rivers, hills and spiritual centres provide a natural setting for wellness experiences combining relaxation, culture and immersion in nature. The Narmada's sacred banks at Omkareshwar, Maheshwar and Amarkantak, the tranquil surroundings of Pachmarhi and the forest trails around its national parks offer possibilities for yoga retreats, meditation, mindful walks and nature-based rejuvenation.

Photographer Vikas Rai captured this connection between nature and well-being: "In the heart of India, wellness has long come from the land itself. Madhya Pradesh's forests, rivers and hills have drawn seekers of stillness for centuries." He also highlighted the continuing relevance of Ayurveda and the herbal knowledge of tribal

> *In the heart of India, wellness has long come from the land itself. Madhya Pradesh's forests, rivers and hills have drawn seekers of stillness for centuries*



Vikas Rai
Photographer

communities, adding that the sounds of nature around national parks offer a welcome escape from modern-day distractions.

Wellness was also reflected in the curated activities for Travel Mart delegates. Participating hotels conducted yoga sessions, while shikara rides, heritage walks and birdwatching introduced visitors to more immersive travel experiences. Of the 338 activity selections recorded by 149 delegates, yoga accounted for 38. Shikara rides emerged as the most popular activity, followed by heritage walks and birdwatching.

Investment and Sustainable Growth

The Travel Mart also highlighted opportunities for wellness-oriented hospitality. A proposed ₹848.40-crore project at Ramgarh in Sehore includes a wellness resort, golf course, villas and luxury hotel. Letters of Award worth ₹252 crore were issued for 14 tourism projects covering hotels, wellness resorts, luxury tented camps and eco-tourism facilities.

> *Its forests and medicinal plants make a perfect setting for Ayurveda retreats, and a mild climate across nearly three-quarters of the state welcomes visitors all year*



Ambuj Tyagi
Travel agent

Travel agent Ambuj Tyagi sees considerable scope in the state's natural resources. "Its forests and medicinal plants make a perfect setting for Ayurveda retreats, and a mild climate across nearly three-quarters of the state welcomes visitors all year." However, he cautioned that tourism must grow responsibly, respecting ecological limits and ensuring local communities benefit. Protecting villages, rivers and forests, he believes, could make Madhya Pradesh a model for wellness travel.

Madhya Pradesh's wellness ambitions will require clearly defined circuits, professionally managed retreats and partnerships with Ayurveda institutions, yoga organisations, naturopathy centres and hospitality groups. Trained personnel, credible quality standards and authentic wellness experiences will be equally important.

> *MP is not as experienced as Kerala, but it is improving with every edition and attracting more tourists. Despite its relative lack of experience, MPTM was organised well and received a good response, reflected in the rising number of visitors. The state plans to tap its potential further in wellness tourism*



Manoj Kumar
Tour operator





Tour operator Manoj Kumar offered a measured assessment of the state's progress. "MP is not as experienced as Kerala, but it is improving with every edition and attracting more tourists. Despite its relative lack of experience, MPTM was organised well and received a good response, reflected in the rising number of visitors. The state plans to tap its potential further in wellness tourism," he said.

The MPTM 2026 has created momentum through industry connections and investment interest. The challenge now is to translate this into distinctive, sustainable wellness experiences. The ambition is to position Madhya Pradesh not merely as the Heart of Incredible India, but as a destination where travellers can reconnect with nature, restore their well-being and return home feeling better.

WHEN RECOGNITION STOPS, MORALE SUFFERS: WHAT HAPPENED TO KERALA'S TOURISM AWARDS?

The question of who recognises the people who make Kerala tourism work lingers...





Rajesh PR

Kerala proudly presents itself as a global tourism destination. Every year, thousands of people—tour guides, tour operators, drivers, hoteliers, homestay owners, travel agents, artisans and tourism entrepreneurs—work behind the scenes to create the experience Kerala sells to the world.

But the question of who recognises the people who make Kerala tourism work lingers.

The Kerala State Tourism Awards were conceived as an important mechanism to acknowledge excellence across the industry. The last completed awards cycle prominently available on the Kerala Tourism website is 2016–17, covering categories such as tour operators, hotels, heritage properties, Responsible Tourism, innovative tourism projects and Best Tourist Guide of Kerala.

The official awards page continues to identify the programme as 2016–17, with registration marked closed. However, in January 2026, the Government issued an order revalidating administrative sanction for the Kerala State Tourism Awards 2023–24, referring to their announcement and distribution. The order records an earlier sanction of ₹69.266 lakh for the project.

This indicates some movement, but it also raises a larger question: Why has Kerala not maintained a transparent, predictable and genuinely annual awards system?

The Government intended to introduce annual tourism awards to motivate stakeholders and encourage excellence. That objective



is important. However, recognition loses its impact when awards for a particular year are announced several years later.

Tourism Is Not Built Only by Campaigns

Tourism statistics, international awards and promotional campaigns helped Kerala receive national and international recognition for initiatives such as Responsible Tourism. But do individuals and businesses offering tourism experiences get recognition?

A guide who learns history, architecture and local traditions; a driver who safely transports guests; a homestay owner who welcomes visitors; a local artisan; and a tour operator who creates employment are all part of the human tourism infrastructure tourism.

Their contributions cannot always be measured through visitor numbers or revenue.

What Happens When Recognition Disappears?

When professional awards become irregular, the damage may not immediately appear in tourism statistics. But it can affect morale and motivation.

For professionals working long hours, including weekends, festivals and holidays, an award is more than a trophy. It tells them that their work matters. It gives young professionals something to aspire to, encourages experienced workers to improve and creates healthy competition.

Most importantly, it builds a culture of excellence.

Stakeholders Must Not Become Spectators

Kerala Tourism's Industry Connect initiative, announced in 2024, sought to create a mechanism for stakeholder concernsnt at district and state levels. Such initiatives are valuable, but consultation must translate into action.

Stakeholders should see their contributions reflected in policies, budgets, professional recognition and institutional mechanisms. They are not merely beneficiaries of tourism policy; they are implementing it.

Recognition Is an Investment, Not an Expenditure

The State Tourism Awards should become an annual mechanism. A transparent system should include a fixed calendar, clearly published categories and eligibility criteria, independent evaluation committees, dedicated recognition for tourist guides, drivers, women-led and community-based tourism, and an online archive of winners.

Kerala often speaks about sustainable tourism, experiential tourism, heritage tourism and becoming a 365-day destination. All these ambitions ultimately depend on people.

The guide who tells the story of a monument, the driver who waits patiently, the homestay owner who serves a traditional breakfast and the hotel employee who solves a guest's problem at midnight are Kerala tourism's ambassadors.

They deserve more than applause during Tourism Day celebrations. They deserve an institutional system that recognises excellence every year.

The issue is whether Kerala genuinely values the people who sustain its tourism economy.

After years without a consistent awards cycle, it is time to restore the State Tourism Awards as a credible annual institution and ensure that the voices and contributions of tourism stakeholders are not sidelined.

Because when the people who build tourism every day feel invisible, the destination ultimately pays the price.

Rajesh PR *is an approved tour guide*
Ph: +91 98955 09301

INCOMPATIBLE FOOD AND ITS EFFECT ON LONGEVITY AND AGEING

"Pathye sati gadartasya kim aushadha nisevanaih, pathye asati gadartasya kim aushadha nisevanaih..." (If diet is right, there is no need for medicine; if diet is not apt, then what is the point in taking any medicine)



Dr Damayanthie Fernando

Viruddha Ahara: The Importance of Food Compatibility in Ayurveda

According to Ayurveda, we have five sense organs: taste, smell, vision, touch and hearing. Among these, the sense of taste involves the intake of food, which comprises the largest amount of external material entering the body. This is why Charaka says that eating in proper Matra (quantity) and at the proper time leads to longevity.

Ayurveda places utmost importance on the quantity of food. The entire Matrashithiya chapter in Charaka Samhita teaches us that even popcorn can become heavy in larger quantities. Equally important is eating only when truly hungry. Ayurveda also recommends avoiding food in three emotionally disturbed states: anger, grief and fear.

Further, clear guidelines in the form of Ashta Vidha Ahara Vidhi Visheshayathana (eightfold special factors in dining) have been described. These include Prakriti (nature of the food), Karana (processing methods), Samyoga (combination of food items), Rashi (quantity), Desha (place of food growing and place of intake), Kala (time), Upayoga Samstha (rules of dining) and Upayokta (individual preferences).

Ayurveda considers food intake as a 'pooja' (religious ritual) — Warm, slightly oily food in proportionate quantity, according to one's liking, time of day and season. Pay attention to food, eat in a calm atmosphere, without stressful companions and without walking or standing. Combination of food articles should be given due imporance.



Understanding Viruddha Ahara

Viruddha means incompatible food articles. Ayurveda describes 18 varieties of incompatibility linked to season, locality, digestive capacity, quantity, individual constitution, allergies, hygiene and personal preferences. Even force-feeding children can be considered Viruddha Ahara, as it involves feeding something unappetising to a child or toddler.



Classic examples include mixing sour fruits (citrus) with cow's milk, combining equal proportions of honey and ghee, consuming heated honey, taking a bath immediately after a meal and mixing cow's milk with salt.

'Viruddha Ahara' is a unique Ayurvedic concept addressing food-processing interactions. Classical texts associate its continuous intake with several disease conditions, including skin diseases, anaemia, indigestion, intestinal disorders, inflammation, fever, infertility, ascites, fistula, neurological disorders and other systemic illnesses.

How Incompatible Food Affects the Body

According to classical texts, long-term intake of 'Viruddha Ahara' can trigger the production of 'Ama', or partially digested material, which may be absorbed and carried to different tissues of the body.

According to Ayurveda expert Dr. Mukund Sabnis, "Viruddha Ahara taken regularly could induce inflammation at a molecular level, disturbing the eicosanoid pathway, creating more arachidonic acid and leading to increased prostaglandin-2 and thromboxane. This inflammatory effect is important because these are among the basic pathological processes underlying several metabolic disorders."

He further explains that the formation and accumulation of AGEs (Advanced Glycation End Products) increase during normal ageing and accelerate considerably in diabetics. These compounds are implicated in age-related disorders, including diabetic vascular complications, neurodegenerative diseases and cancers. Their interaction with receptors (RAGE) can generate oxidative stress and alter gene expression. Dietary AGEs may also contribute to these processes. Studies suggest that restricting dietary AGEs can reduce inflammation and improve insulin resistance, and help prevent age-related disorders.

In simple terms, incompatible food may disrupt digestion, absorption, and metabolism, allowing partially digested material to affect body tissues. According to Ayurveda, prolonged accumulation of 'Ama' can disturb the body's natural balance and contribute to disease.

Therefore, it is vital to eat healthy, follow appropriate dietary practices and avoid incompatible food combinations. Food is not merely nourishment; when properly chosen, combined and consumed, it becomes a foundation for health and longevity.

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YOGA FOR LONGEVITY: NURTURING THE HEART, BRAIN AND MIND

Living longer should be healthy, active and emotionally balanced. Yoga, with its integrated approach to the body and mind, offers simple yet powerful practices to support healthy ageing and improve quality of life.





Rtn Prof Dr BT Chidananda Murthy

Longevity is not merely about adding years to life; it is about maintaining health, clarity of thought, emotional balance and vitality. Ageing brings physiological and psychological changes that influence overall health and quality of life. From a yoga and naturopathy perspective, healthy ageing begins with daily habits that support the body's natural functions. The heart, brain and mind are interconnected, and caring for one strengthens the others.

Yoga offers a holistic approach through asanas, pranayama, meditation and mindful living. Modern research suggests that regular yoga practice may support cardiovascular health, cognitive function, sleep quality and emotional well-being.

1. Yoga for a Healthy Heart

The heart continuously supplies oxygen and nutrients to every tissue. High blood pressure, chronic stress, physical inactivity and metabolic disturbances can increase cardiovascular risk.

A 2023 meta-analysis published in Current Problems in Cardiology, involving 64 randomised controlled trials and 16,797 participants, found that yoga was associated with improvements in blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose regulation and body mass index. These findings support yoga as a complementary lifestyle intervention for cardiovascular health [1].



Suitable practices include Tadasana (Mountain Pose), Vrikshasana (Tree Pose), Marjariasana (Cat–Cow Pose), Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose) and Baddha Konasana (Bound-Angle Pose). Nadi Shodhana (Alternate-Nostril Breathing) and Bhramari Pranayama (Humming-Bee Breathing) may promote relaxation and help manage stress.

Yoga should complement regular physical activity, appropriate nutrition and medical care.

2. Yoga for Brain Health and Cognition

Healthy longevity also means preserving memory, attention, learning and decision-making abilities. Research published in Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics reported benefits of yoga-based mind–body practices on memory, executive function, attention and processing speed among older adults [2].

Yoga combines physical coordination, breath awareness and concentration, encouraging both mental and physical engagement.

Useful practices include Vrikshasana for balance and concentration, Tadasana for coordination, Padmasana (Lotus Pose) for meditative sitting, Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose) for spinal mobility and Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog) for whole-body engagement, where appropriate. Trataka (Steady-Gazing Meditation) and breath-awareness meditation can further cultivate attention and mental focus.

These practices encourage cognitive engagement but are not established treatments for dementia or cognitive decline.

3. Yoga for Better Sleep

Sleep is essential for physical recovery, memory consolidation, metabolic regulation and emotional stability. Poor sleep can influence blood pressure, concentration, appetite and daily energy.

A calming evening yoga routine may include Balasana (Child's Pose), Supta Baddha Konasana

(Reclining Bound-Angle Pose), Viparita Karani (Legs-up-the-Wall Pose), Makarasana (Crocodile Pose) and Shavasana (Corpse Pose). Gentle diaphragmatic breathing, Bhramari Pranayama and Yoga Nidra (Guided Yogic Relaxation) may further support relaxation and sleep quality.

A 2020 systematic review and meta-analysis published in BMC Psychiatry found that yoga interventions improved sleep quality among women experiencing sleep problems [3]. Maintaining regular sleep timings and reducing stimulating activities before bedtime can further support restorative sleep.

4. Yoga for Emotional Well-being

Emotional stress influences how we breathe, sleep, move and respond to everyday challenges. Regular yoga practice offers an opportunity to develop self-awareness, emotional regulation and mental calmness.

Sukhasana (Easy Pose), Tadasana, Balasana, Setu Bandhasana and Baddha Konasana can form part of a gentle, relaxation-oriented session. Bhramari Pranayama, Nadi Shodhana, mindfulness meditation and Yoga Nidra may help reduce perceived stress and promote emotional well-being.

A systematic review of randomised controlled trials among older adults also reported promising benefits of yoga for depression and certain cognitive and psychological health outcomes [4].

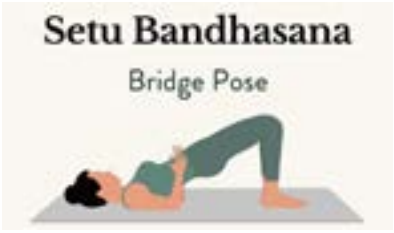
5. Wisdom from the Yogic Scriptures

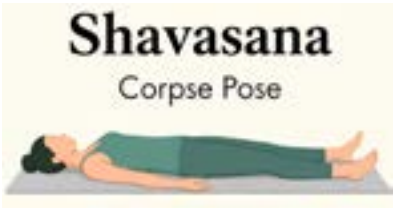
Patanjali's Yoga Sutra states:

"स्थिरसुखमासनम्" — Sthira Sukham Asanam (Yoga Sutra 2.46).

The posture should be steady and comfortable. This reminds us that

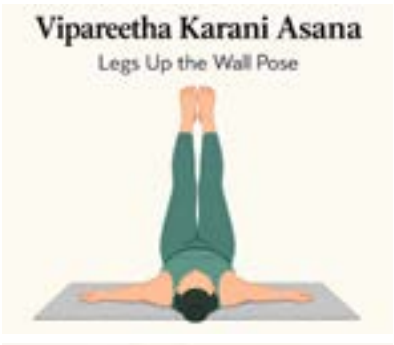














yoga is not about pushing the body beyond its limits, but cultivating stability, ease and awareness.

The Bhagavad Gita further teaches:

"युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु। युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा॥" (Bhagavad Gita 6.17)

This verse emphasises moderation in food, activity, work, sleep and wakefulness—a principle central to sustainable health.

Conclusion

Yoga brings together movement, breathing, concentration and relaxation to support heart health, cognitive function and emotional well-being. Combined with balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, adequate sleep and preventive healthcare, it can become a valuable part of healthy ageing.

People with cardiovascular conditions, uncontrolled blood pressure or other significant medical concerns should seek professional guidance before beginning yoga. Practices must be adapted to individual age, fitness and health status.

True longevity is not simply about living longer; it is about living with a healthier heart, a clearer mind and a more balanced life.

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HEALING THE HEART: YOGIC REHABILITATION AFTER CARDIAC SURGERY

Cardiac surgery is only the beginning of recovery. Yoga, through gentle asanas, pranayama, meditation and lifestyle modifications, offers a holistic approach to restoring physical strength, emotional balance and overall well-being



Dr Divyalakshmi PS





Yoga After Cardiac Surgery: Rebuilding the Heart, Body and Mind

Surgery can restore blood flow to the heart, but true recovery depends on what follows. Yoga, a mind-body practice combining physical work through asanas and shatkarma, psychological balance through meditation, and secondary prevention through a disciplined lifestyle, offers a gentle yet profound path to rebuilding the heart, body and mind.

Understanding Heart Disease

Heart disease broadly covers conditions affecting the structure and function of the heart. These include hypertensive heart disease,



coronary (ischaemic) heart disease and other conditions such as heart failure, cardiomyopathies, arrhythmias, and valvular, pericardial, rheumatic and pulmonary heart diseases.

Coronary heart disease is classified as chronic (stable) or acute (unstable). Two common revascularisation procedures are angioplasty with stenting and coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG).

Cardiac Rehabilitation: A Holistic Need

Cardiac rehabilitation is recommended for coronary disease, heart failure, atrial fibrillation, pulmonary hypertension and other conditions. Beyond exercise, it includes dietary changes, sleep and stress management, freedom from tobacco and alcohol, and improved mental health. Coordinated care involving physicians, physiotherapists, dietitians and counsellors is essential. Yoga complements this approach by addressing these dimensions together.

When to Begin

Yoga may be introduced during the third phase of cardiac rehabilitation, the long-term phase combining exercise, emotional support and healthy-living education. Timing and intensity depend on clinical stability, surgical recovery, functional capacity and the cardiologist's recommendations.

For stable coronary disease, yoga may begin around 12 weeks after the procedure, once adequate strength is regained. Following an acute or unstable event, recovery may take longer, sometimes around six months. Medical reassessment is essential before beginning.

The Pancha Kosha Approach

Yoga views the human being as comprising five sheaths (koshas), each addressed during rehabilitation:

- **Annamaya Kosha (physical body):** Balanced through Hatha Yoga, including kriyas, sithilikarana vyayama (loosening exercises) and dietary modifications, improving exercise tolerance.
- **Pranamaya Kosha (vital energy):** Balanced through pranayama. Ayurveda regards the Hridaya as the chetana sthana, the seat of prana and consciousness.
- **Manomaya Kosha (mind):** Balanced through Raja Yoga,

meditation, devotional sessions and group activities.

- **Vijnanamaya Kosha (intellect):** Nurtured through Jnana Yoga, spiritual discourse, health education, psychotherapy and counselling.
- **Anandamaya Kosha (bliss):** Approached through Karma Yoga, relinquishing attachment to the fruits of action and cultivating acceptance and equanimity.

Choosing Asanas: Isometric or Isotonic?

Yogic practices must consider cardiovascular status, exercise tolerance and surgical recovery. Isometric asanas involve sustained muscular contraction, potentially increasing peripheral resistance and blood pressure, particularly with breath-holding. Long holds in Navasana, Virabhadrasana and Phalakasana, and inversions such as Sheershasana and Sarvangasana, require caution and should generally be avoided unless approved by the treating team.

Isotonic asanas involve rhythmic movements that may support circulation. Gentle practices such as Bhujangasana, Shalabhasana, Pavanamuktasana and Marjariasana may be considered according to individual capacity.

Begin with approximately 15 minutes of sookshma vyayama, followed by gentle Tadasana, Bhujangasana, Paschimottanasana, Pavanamuktasana, Gomukhasana and Katichakrasana, as appropriate. Padmasana and Shavasana may also be included to improve mobility, flexibility and muscle function.

For hypertensive heart disease, blood pressure regulation is central. Gentle, low-intensity asanas, avoiding prolonged static holds and inversions, may be complemented by Shavasana and Makarasana.



Pranayama

Comfortable, gentle breathing may promote relaxation and manage stress and anxiety. Breathing should remain effortless, without forced inhalation (pooraka), exhalation (rechaka), breath retention (kumbhaka) or straining.

Anulom Vilom, Sheetali and Sheetkari may be considered without breath retention, beginning with one round and gradually increasing to five, according to individual tolerance and medical advice.

Dharana and Dhyana

Dharana (concentration) may be practised in a comfortable meditative posture, with Shanmukhi Mudra if appropriate. Dhyana may include mantra meditation, Om meditation, guided meditation or Yoga Nidra in Shavasana for 10–15 minutes, promoting relaxation, reducing anxiety and cultivating inner peace.

Yama, Niyama and Lifestyle

Cardiac rehabilitation involves education as much as treatment. Stress, poor sleep and excess body weight are modifiable



risk factors. Yama and niyama encourage regular sleep, weight management, freedom from smoking and alcohol, and self-discipline, supporting secondary prevention and a return to daily activities.

Precautions During Cardiac Rehabilitation

Patients must obtain clearance from their cardiologist or cardiac rehabilitation team before beginning yoga. Restrictions involving surgical wounds, sternotomy, lifting and shoulder movements must be respected. Avoid forceful breathing, breath retention, strenuous postures and excessive abdominal pressure.

Monitor blood pressure, heart rate and other vital parameters as advised. Avoid headstands, Kapalabhati, Bhastrika and intensive cleansing procedures such as vamana dhauti and shankha prakshalana. Stop immediately if chest pain, unusual breathlessness, dizziness or palpitations occur, and seek urgent medical assessment for concerning symptoms.

Yoga should be taught by a suitably trained instructor in coordination with the healthcare team. Individual assessment is essential; no single sequence suits every patient.

The Golden Rule

Above all, do not overdo it; there is no use flogging a tired horse. Yoga after cardiac surgery is not about performance but balance. An individualised session, practised patiently under medical guidance and with a trained teacher, can support healing not only of the heart but of the whole person.

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THE HEALING POWER OF OILING: AN ANCIENT RITUAL FOR MODERN WELLNESS

In our fast-paced world, where stress, fatigue and disconnection from our bodies have become commonplace, an ancient ritual offers a simple path to wellness. Oiling, practised across civilisations for centuries, is more than skincare; it is an act of nourishment, healing and self-love



Dr Ranjani Krishnan

Across centuries and continents, our ancestors understood something we have largely forgotten: skin is not merely a barrier keeping the world out, but a living doorway to holistic wellness. Ancient civilisations honoured this knowledge through the practice of oiling.

In Ancient Greece, oiling was woven into daily life, athletics and healing. Greek athletes applied olive oil before wrestling to protect their skin, condition their muscles and impart a healthy sheen. Physicians like Hippocrates prescribed botanical oils infused with soothing resins to address joint stiffness, mental exhaustion and digestive imbalances.

Similarly, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) harnessed oils in Tuina massage and Gua Sha, using warm herbal oils along meridian pathways to stimulate the flow of Qi (life force) and restore internal harmony.

In India's Ayurvedic tradition, oiling is known as Sneha, a word that delightfully translates to both "oil" and "love". Ancient texts like the Charaka Samhita advocate Abhyanga (warm oil massage) as a daily ritual to nourish tissues, lubricate joints and calm an overactive nervous system.



Kerala's Unique Heritage: The Pinnacle of Therapeutic Oiling

While many cultures practised oiling, Kerala's lush tropical landscape elevated it into an intricate medical and lifestyle tradition. Blessed with monsoon-drenched forests rich in medicinal plants, Kerala developed oiling practices of remarkable depth.



Here, oiling is seasonal and tailored to an individual's constitution (Dosha). Unlike an ordinary massage, where oil simply reduces friction, traditional healers use intensely medicated herbal oils such as Dhanwantharam Thailam and Kottamchukkadi Thailam, prepared with roots, leaves and barks.

Practices like Shirodhara, where a continuous stream of warm herbal oil flows rhythmically over the forehead, are particularly associated with Kerala's Ayurvedic tradition. These treatments are not merely spa luxuries but therapeutic practices intended to relieve stress and promote wellbeing.

The Neuro-Sensory Science of Touch

Why can a simple oil massage make us feel so overwhelmingly safe? The answer lies in human neurology. Our skin, the largest sensory organ, is covered with specialised receptors. When warm oil is applied with rhythmic pressure, it stimulates nerve fibres known as C-tactile afferents. Unlike nerves registering sharp pain or movement, these fibres respond to gentle, affectionate touch and communicate with brain regions involved in emotional processing, including the insular cortex.

This pathway helps explain why the warmth and deliberate rhythm of massage can make us feel protected and relaxed. The amygdala, the brain's internal alarm system, may also become less reactive.

Activating the Parasympathetic Nervous System

In our hyper-connected modern lives, many of us remain trapped in chronic sympathetic activation—the perpetual "fight-or-flight" mode marked by shallow breathing, clenched jaws and elevated stress hormones.

Oiling and massage can encourage a shift towards the parasympathetic nervous system, our "rest-and-digest" state. The combination of gentle touch, rhythmic pressure and warmth may support vagal activity, helping the body relax.

As this happens, heart rate may slow, breathing becomes more comfortable and the body can devote greater attention to digestion and recovery. This helps explain why regular massage may improve relaxation, support sleep quality and ease anxiety.

Rediscovering the Ritual

In our pursuit of quick, clinical efficiency, modern life has taught us to view skincare as a dry, transactional chore. Yet, the ancient art of oiling invites us to slow down and reclaim our physical vessel.

Take ten minutes to warm a little sesame or coconut oil and mindfully massage it into your limbs before a warm bath. You are reconnecting with a lineage thousands of years old, soothing your senses and giving your body the attention it deserves.

Oiling is more than skincare. It is a ritual of touch, nourishment and self-care—a quiet, enduring armour of peace in an increasingly stressful world.

Dr Ranjini Krishnan, *is the founder and CEO of bodytree.in*

STAY YOUNG, STAY SAFE: HERBAL HAIR DYES FOR A CANCER-FREE SHEEN

Grey hair may be a natural sign of ageing, but for many, accepting it is never easy. While synthetic hair dyes offer an instant solution, concerns about their chemicals and side effects are driving people towards natural alternatives. Ayurveda offers a treasure trove of herbs and plant-based colours that promise a gentler approach to hair care...

N S Arunkumar

Nobody wants to accept age as a grim reminder. Even in our late 40s or 50s, we remain young at heart, hardly able to accept the grey hairs appearing above. This is why we turn to hair dyes. Yet, most synthetic dyes cause irritation, ranging from mild itching to blisters and eruptions. In severe cases, allergic reactions force people to consult dermatologists. Concerns have also been raised about the long-term health effects of certain chemical dyes. But age offers no compromise. So, is there a safer solution? Yes, Ayurveda has alternatives.



What is a Dye?

A dye is a colouring substance with an affinity for hair fibres. It usually contains two components: a colouring agent and a mordant or developer that fixes the colour. Common developers include hydrogen peroxide and ammonia, which can damage hair proteins and irritate the skin. Dyes may also contain antioxidants, alkalizers, wetting agents and fragrances. Colouring agents include metal oxides and amino compounds.



The Chemistry of Colours

Ayurveda identifies several natural sources of pigments. Haritaki and Vibhitaka fruits contain tannic and gallic acids, which act as mordants and help fix colour. Amalaki nourishes hair with emblicanins and ellagic acid. Bringaraj and Neeli provide luteolin and apigenin, while fermented Neeli leaves yield indigotin, a blue dye. Henna (Madayantika) contains lawsone, producing red-orange hues. Walnut offers regianin for dark brown, while Patanga wood provides haematoxylin for black.

Synthetic Colours

The first artificial dye appeared in 1856. Today's dyes fall into five categories: metallic, vegetable, temporary, semi-permanent and permanent. Temporary dyes last one wash, while semi-permanent dyes last four to five washes. Permanent dyes are the most popular and include oxidation dyes containing p-phenylenediamine and progressive dyes. These require chemical developers to penetrate hair shafts and fix colour, but may also cause dermatitis and allergic reactions.

Why Hair Turns Grey

Greying is natural with age, but is now increasingly common among young people owing to drugs, cosmetics, pollution, poor diet, stress and psychological disorders. Hair colour depends on melanocytes, which produce melanin. Reduced melanin production leads to greying.

Ayurveda on Greying

Ayurveda calls greying Palitya, a minor disease. It distinguishes premature greying (Akala Palitya) from age-related greying (Kala Palitya). Premature greying is associated with excess Pitta dosha. Vitiated Pitta, carried by Vata, affects the hair follicles and causes metabolic changes leading to greying. Senile greying, meanwhile, follows natural ageing.

Ayurvedic Cure

Ayurveda's Kesaranjana (hair dyeing) is a prolonged process supported by herbs and nutraceuticals. Classical texts recommend Avanakk (castor), Kadukka, Thannikka, Nellikka, Kayyoonni, Neelayamari, Mailanchi (henna), Akrott (walnut), Pathimukham, Uruvanchi (soap nut), Shikakai and Karinjeerakam (black caraway). These herbs are traditionally used to impart natural colours.

Banana Heart Herbal Dye

Banana heart (vazhakoombu) petals, especially from Musa balbisiana, are potential sources of natural pigments. Rich in anthocyanins, they can produce different shades when combined with herbs such as black caraway, indigo, false daisy, soap nut, gooseberry, shikakai and hibiscus.

Preparation:

- Collect 5–8 banana hearts, separate the petals, wash and mince them.
- Grind into a paste and mix henna powder with lemon juice.
- Heat the banana paste with the henna-lemon mixture until it thickens and darkens.
- Sun-dry and store in an airtight container. Before use, mix with aloe vera gel and apply.
- Wash after 30 minutes.

The preparation is traditionally claimed to retain colour for up to 50 days, even after repeated washes.

Takeaway: Herbal hair dyes offer an interesting natural alternative to synthetic colouring products. Banana heart-based preparations, in particular, deserve further exploration for their potential to keep hair naturally coloured while helping us stay young at heart.



AGEING GRACEFULLY: AN AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO SKIN AND HAIR NOURISHMENT

Pamper your body, skin and hair with gentle care as they change...

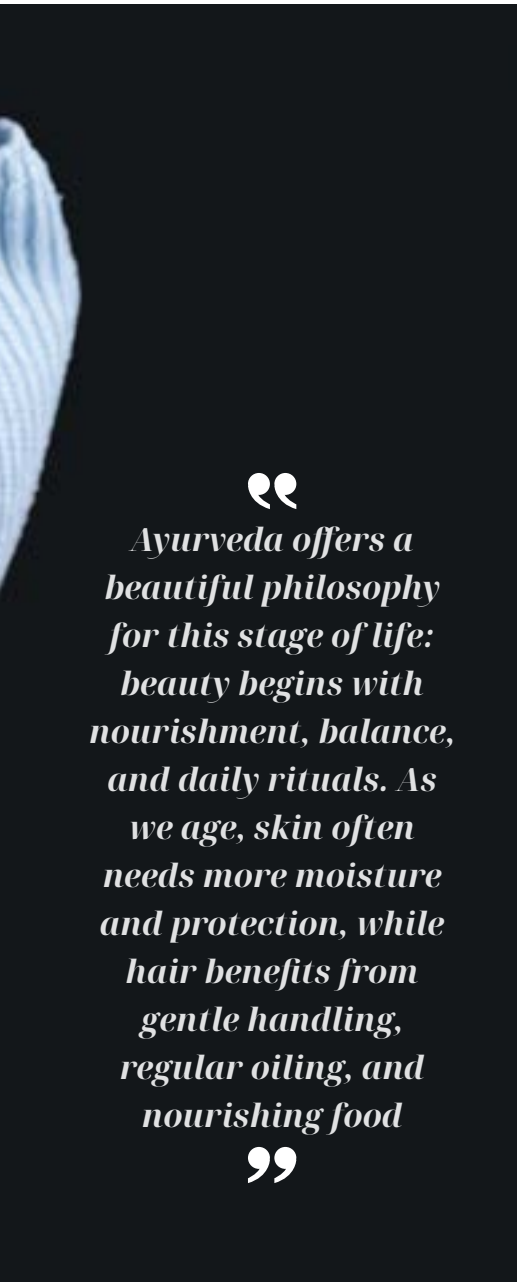


Shahnaz Husain

When beauty is an obsession, maintaining aesthetics is a must. Instead of indulging in endless beauty procedures and trying to defy age, the best thing you can do is age gracefully. Ageing gracefully isn't about erasing every fine line or grey hair. It is about giving your body, skin, and hair the nourishment and care they need as they change.

Ayurveda offers a beautiful philosophy for this stage of life: beauty begins with nourishment, balance, and daily rituals. As we age, skin often needs more moisture and protection, while hair benefits from gentle handling, regular oiling, and nourishing food.

Here are simple Ayurvedic-inspired ways to care for your beauty from the inside out.



> *Ayurveda offers a beautiful philosophy for this stage of life: beauty begins with nourishment, balance, and daily rituals. As we age, skin often needs more moisture and protection, while hair benefits from gentle handling, regular oiling, and nourishing food*

Begin With a Nourishing Diet

As we age, eating well becomes increasingly important because our diet shapes our muscle strength, overall health, and skin. Rather than searching for a single miracle food, the focus should be on fresh, wholesome meals that provide much-needed protein, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals.

Add more of these to your plate:

- **Amla:** Traditionally valued in Ayurveda and naturally rich in vitamin C.
- **Seasonal fruits:** Guava, pomegranate, papaya, and citrus fruits.
- **Colourful vegetables:** Carrots, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, and leafy greens.
- **Protein:** Dal, beans, chickpeas, paneer, yoghurt, eggs, or fish.
- **Nuts and seeds:** Almonds, walnuts, sesame, and pumpkin seeds.
- **Healthy fats:** A little ghee, sesame oil, or coconut in everyday meals.

The Ayurvedic approach is not about eating more but about choosing foods that genuinely nourish the body.

Hydrate From Within

The most noticeable change in the skin is its texture, which often tends to dry and show signs of dehydration in mature skin, making hydration an important part of beauty care.

- Drink water regularly according to your thirst.
- Include cucumber, seasonal fruits, and lightly cooked vegetables.
- Enjoy nourishing soups and broths.
- Choose warm water, green tea infusions, or gentle herbal infusions if they suit you.
- Limit excessive alcohol and very sugary drinks.

Hydration from within, combined with moisturizing from outside, can help skin feel more comfortable and supple.

Nourish Your Skin Gently

Mature skin generally benefits from gentle, consistent care rather than aggressive treatments.

- Cleanse gently and avoid very hot water.
- Apply moisturizer while the skin is slightly damp.
- For dry body skin, massage lightly with sesame or coconut oil before bathing.
- Use aloe vera or finely ground oats occasionally if your skin tolerates them.
- Avoid excessive scrubbing and harsh exfoliation.
- Protect your skin from strong sunlight with shade, hats, clothing, and suitable sunscreen.



Give Your Hair a Weekly Ritual

Hair can become drier, finer, and more fragile with age. Traditional Indian hair care offers a simple approach: regular oiling and gentle handling.

Try a weekly champi:

- Massage the scalp gently with coconut or sesame oil.
- Amla- or bhringraj-infused oils can be incorporated into a traditional routine.
- Use your fingertips rather than vigorously rubbing the scalp.
- Wash gently afterward.
- Minimize frequent heat styling.
- Detangle with a wide-toothed comb.
- Avoid tight hairstyles every day.
- Let your hair air dry in summers and avoid blow drying frequently.

Nourish Hair Through Food

Hair needs nourishment from within, too. Include protein and a variety of nutrient-rich foods regularly.

A simple beauty plate could include:

- Dal or paneer for protein
- Cooked seasonal vegetables
- Leafy greens
- Rice or roti
- A little ghee
- Yoghurt, if it suits you
- A few almonds or walnuts
- Fresh seasonal fruit

This balanced approach is more sustainable than depending on a collection of beauty supplements.

Sleep, Routine, and Radiance

Ayurveda's emphasis on dinacharya, or a consistent daily routine, is especially relevant as the body ages.

Make space for:

• Regular sleep and wake times.

• Gentle daily movement.

• Relaxation and mindful breathing.

• Unhurried, regular meals at regular times.

• Time outdoors for a brisk walk.

• A calming evening routine with chamomile tea or rose tea.

Sometimes the most valuable beauty ritual is simply giving the body enough time to rest and restore.

Ageing beautifully does not require an endless collection of products. It requires nourishment from within, hydration, gentle skin care, regular hair care, wholesome food, adequate rest, and time devoted to yourself. The goal isn't to look younger. It is to feel well-nourished, cared for, and radiant at every age.





Shahnaz Husain *- Founder, Chairperson and Managing Director - The Shahnaz Husain Group in India is globally recognised for her pioneering work in promoting Ayurveda and herbal beauty care and recipient of Padma Shri in 2006. Her remarkable journey—building a globally recognized brand without traditional advertising—has been featured as a Harvard Business School case study, exemplifying innovative entrepreneurship. She has lectured in MIT, University of Oxford and London School of Economics. Shahnaz represented India at former US President Obama's World Summit for Entrepreuners and was named 'World's Greatest Woman Entrepreneur' by Success Magazine in 1996*

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Powders with a Healing Touch

Grandmothers passed on healing and beauty recipes that they used for ages. Sourced from the garden, these organic, healthy concoctions are a household name. Let's take a look at a few powders that have come in handy...

AHT Desk

'Chukku Malli Herbal' Powder



Used to ease seasonal chills, digestive discomfort and a heavy feeling mostly in Kerala households.

Ingredients

- 50 g dried coriander seeds
- 25 g dried ginger (chukku)
- 15 g cumin seeds
- 10 g black pepper
- 5 g cardamom

Preparation

1. Clean all ingredients and ensure they are completely dry.
2. Gently dry-roast each ingredient separately.
3. Allow them to cool.
4. Grind into a fine powder.
5. Sieve and store in an airtight glass jar.

Infuse a small quantity in hot water as a spiced herbal drink.

'Sukku Milagu Thippili' Powder



In Tamil, Siddha and household traditions, this powder is used for respiratory comfort and digestion.

Ingredients

- 30 g dried ginger
- 20 g black pepper
- 15 g long pepper (thippili)
- 20 g coriander seeds

Preparation

1. Check and clean the dried ingredients.
2. Dry-roast gently and separately.
3. Cool completely.
4. Grind to a uniform powder.
5. Sieve and store in a moisture-free container.

Add in warm herbal preparations. Take after

infusing in boiling water in small quantities.

Note: Long pepper and black pepper can interact with certain medicines and may irritate sensitive stomachs.

'Jeera Ajwain' Digestive 'Churna'



This dry concoction is used in homes across India for gas, bloating and post-meal digestive discomfort.

Ingredients

- 40 g cumin seeds
- 30 g fennel seeds
- 20 g ajwain (carom seeds)
- 10 g coriander seeds

Preparation

1. Clean and dry the seeds.
2. Roast individually over low heat.
3. Cool and grind.
4. Sieve into a fine churna.
5. Store in an airtight container.

Used as a culinary digestive spice blend, particularly after heavy meals.

Amla Haritaki Herbal Powder



Traditionally associated with bowel regularity and digestive wellnes, it is a recipe common in Rajasthan.

Ingredients

- 40 g dried amla
- 30 g dried haritaki
- 30 g dried bibhitaki

Preparation

1. Source properly identified, food-grade dried fruits.
2. Remove seeds and unwanted woody material.
3. Dry thoroughly.
4. Grind the fruit material separately.
5. Combine the powders and sieve.

These three fruits form the well-known Ayurvedic preparation Triphala.

Important: Triphala can affect bowel movements and may interact with medicines. It is not appropriate for everyone, especially during pregnancy or with certain gastrointestinal conditions.

Methi Ajwain Saunf Powder

This digestive preparation is generally used in places with cold winters.

Ingredients



- 30 g fenugreek seeds
- 30 g fennel seeds
- 20 g ajwain
- 20 g cumin seeds

Preparation

1. Check and clean the seeds.
2. Dry-roast separately.
3. Cool completely.
4. Grind coarsely or finely according to preference.
5. Store in an airtight jar.

Incorporate into savoury dishes, millet

preparations and traditional spice mixes.

Note: Fenugreek may lower blood sugar and can interact with diabetes medication.

Tulsi Neem Herbal Leaf Powder



Used for household seasonal wellness and skin-care practices.

Ingredients

- 40 g dried tulsi leaves
- 20 g dried neem leaves

Preparation

1. Select correctly identified, clean, pesticide-free leaves.
2. Wash if necessary and dry thoroughly in shade with good ventilation.
3. Remove stems and damaged leaves.
4. Grind the leaves separately.
5. Sieve and store in an opaque, airtight container.

Traditionally, this plant powder is applied externally for general skin health and various issues.

Dry Ginger and Turmeric Herbal Powder



Traditionally incorporated into winter food preparations and household wellness drinks.

Ingredients

- 40 g dried turmeric
- 30 g dried ginger
- 20 g coriander seeds
- 10 g cardamom

Preparation

1. Buy clean, food-grade dried turmeric and ginger.
2. Break into small pieces.
3. Dry-roast the coriander and cardamom separately.
4. Grind each ingredient.
5. Combine, sieve and store in an airtight jar.

May be used as a culinary spice blend in warm milk or plant-based milk.

Rose Fennel Cooling Herbal Blend



This dried flower and seed blend is a summer refreshment and digestive comfort.

Ingredients

- 30 g food-grade dried rose petals
- 35 g fennel seeds
- 25 g coriander seeds
- 10 g green cardamom

Preparation

1. Ensure the rose petals are food-grade and pesticide-free.
2. Clean and dry the seeds.
3. Lightly roast fennel and coriander separately.
4. Cool and grind the seeds.
5. Crush the rose petals and cardamom.
6. Combine and sieve.

Used as an aromatic ingredient in a cold or room-temperature infusion, or added to traditional sherbet preparations.



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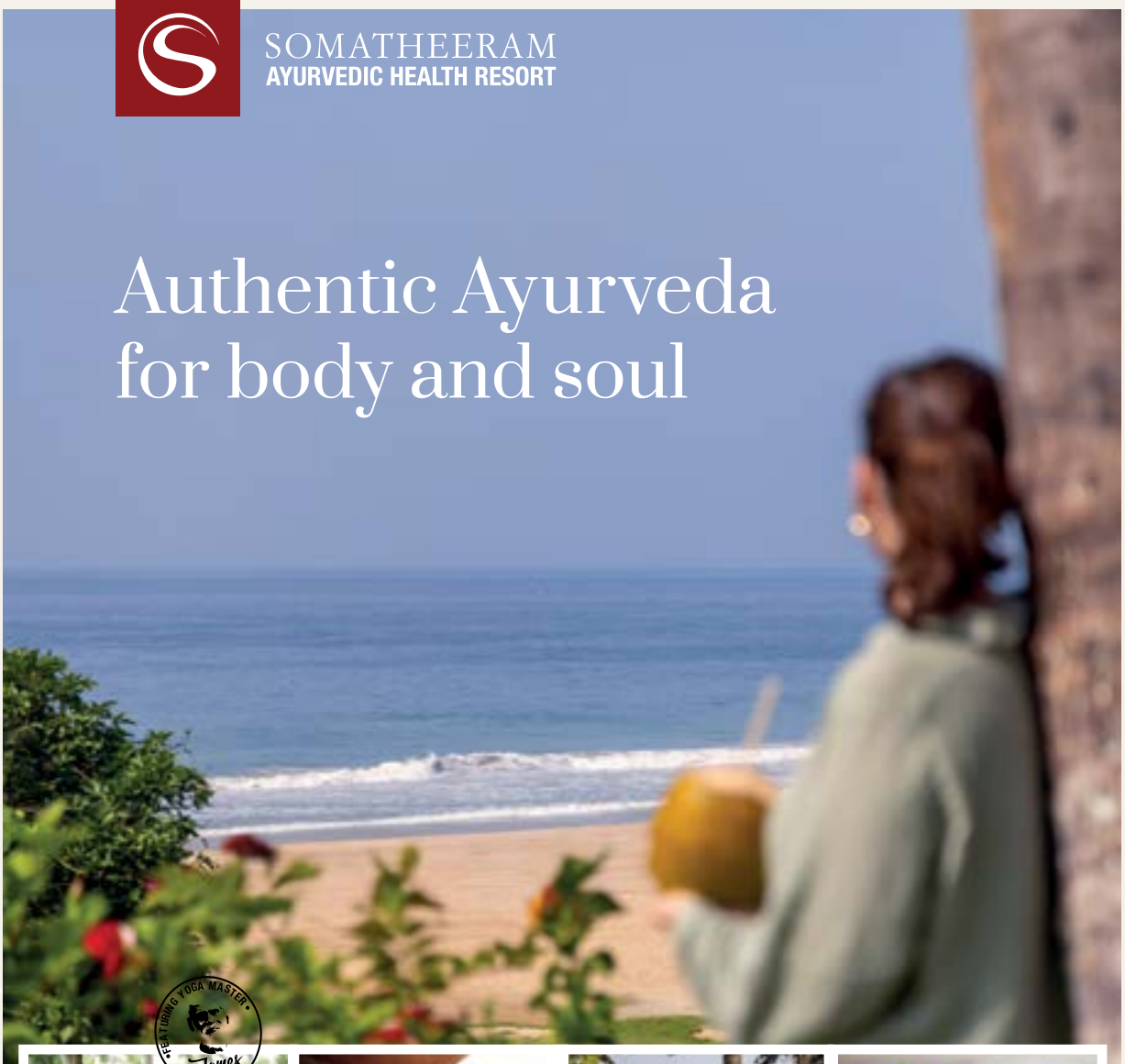
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