

## FOOT CARE THROUGH AYURVEDA

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### ABSTRACT

It is important to realize that Ayurveda is not confined to life only; it takes the whole subject of life in its various ramifications. It is said that on the mind and soles of the foot can be found points that are connected to every organ and part of the body. Ayurveda is the rich storehouse of time-tested and effective recipes for the treatment of several diseases including that of feet.

**KEYWORDS:** Pada, Herbal Foot Bath, Padabhyanga, Vipadika, Kadhara, Yoga Poses for Feet.

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is termed as the science of life wherein are laid down the good and bad of life, the happy and unhappy life, and what is wholesome and what is unwholesome in relation to life. It is important to realize that Ayurveda is not confined to life only; it takes the whole subject of life in its various ramifications.

**Pada - The foot**

Pada in Ayurveda refers to foot<sup>1,2</sup>. Our ancestors were very clever and they advocated many techniques to take care of each and every body part. Caring the feet go beyond the cosmetic purposes: it benefits the whole body and nervous system, the feet is very important part of the body where many vital points (marma points) are situated. Marma are the points in our body where energy is concentrated. They form a matrix of 107 energy points which stimulate the functions and responses of the body. Hence caring the feet give us very good health.

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If the mind and soles of the feet are regularly pressed and massaged person becomes relaxed and healthy. If these marma points (vital points) are not taken care of then the person may suffer with the following symptoms.

1. Poor circulation to feet and legs, numbness, feet injuries.
2. Pain in feet, leg injuries, dropped arches.
3. Ankle and foot injuries and swelling,
4. Ankle problems, arthritis, reproductive problems.
6. Muscle cramps in calf, varicose veins.
7. Knee injuries, arthritis, and edema.
8. Pain and cramps in thighs.
9. Infertility, Constipation, Hernia, Menstrual problems.

### HOW TO CARE THE FOOT?

#### Ayurvedic Foot Bath

For tired feet and hard skin, soaking the foot in the ayurvedic herbal water can do wonders. Herbal warm water stimulates your feet and your whole body, and softens your skin of the feet. The goodness and pleasant smell of herbs provides relaxation through the sense of smell.

#### Technique

Boil 3 liters of water. Make a small pouch of any of the following herbs: lavender, licorice, rosemary. Place the pouch in a big bowl or bucket and pour the boiling water over it then immerse your foot in that water or you can boil either one of the herb or together with 3 liters of water and use.

Duration- 25 to 30 minutes.

Add cold water, if necessary, to reach a comfortable temperature between 100 and 115 degrees Fahrenheit.

Soak your feet in the water for about 25 minutes. Gently rub the herbs on your feet but do not scrub. Dry feet thoroughly with a clean towel.

#### Padabhyanga – foot massage

Traditional Indian foot massage (padabhyanga) has a special place within ayurvedic medicine. Application of oil on the feet followed by massage is popularly known as Padabhyanga. Foot massage is an important route of drug administration in patients suffering from disease of the feet and eye. It is suggested that padabhyanga is practiced as a daily ritual, especially before sleep improves the eye sight and induces good sleep.

According to the Indian scriptures, diseases do not go near one who massages his legs and feet from knee to toes before sleeping, just as snakes do not approach eagles.

The benefits of the massage may be enhanced by the choice of the massage oil. Medicated Sesame oil is the most commonly used oil for foot massage. Sesame oil is rich in fat soluble vitamins, has a high mineral contents. Sesame oil is a powerful antioxidant, is easily absorbed and is very nourishing for the skin<sup>3</sup>.

#### Procedure

1. First wash your feet thoroughly with herbal soap and warm water. Wipe your feet nicely and sit in a comfortable position so as to reach your feet.
  2. Apply oil to one of your feet for lubrication.
  3. Start by gently rubbing the base of your little toe.
  4. Then at the base of the next toe.
  5. Next, apply slight pressure between the 5th and 4th toes nicely.
  6. Then, apply the oil between the 3rd and 4th toes thoroughly.
  7. Next, massage, stretch and pull the big toe gently and rub each side of the nails.
  8. Then massage the flesh (calcaneal region, heels) of your foot in a circular motion. Apply gentle pressure on both sides of your heels below the ankle joints,(neither too much pressure nor very little pressure) followed by circling around your ankle joint with both hands in a clockwise and anti-clock wise motion. This improves blood and oxygen circulation and the energy level of the body.
  9. Finally massage your calf muscle to release tension. Repeat the same steps on your other foot.
- The oil applied enters into the root of the hair follicles in about 96 seconds.  
In about 128 seconds oil reaches the full thickness of the dermis.  
Oil enters in to the blood circulation in about 160 seconds.

### Benefits

1. Clears roughness of the soles.
2. Cures stiffness Or any limitation of the movement of feet
3. Corrects the excessive dryness of the feet
4. Prevents or cures crack foot
5. Effective relieves the strain or exertion of the feet
6. Cures numbness of the feet.
7. Promotes the strength of the feet.
8. Improves eyesight( In Ayurveda it is stated that there is a nerve which connects the feet to the eyes)
9. Feet become soft and smooth.
10. Protects from risk of sciatica.
11. Alleviates the morbid vata dosha
12. Prevents the cramps of the muscles of feet. Cures deformities.

### Vipadika- Crack Heels

Walking barefoot on rough surfaces or excessive exposure of bare feet to the sun, wind or water causes cracks on the heels.

Dry and cold weather increases vata dosha in body and causes cracks on the heels. The same weather conditions worsen the already cracked foot on heels and tend to create pain and bleeding.

People who have vata body type tend to develop cracked heels easily.

Continued pressure on feet causes cracking heels. This may be due to prolonged standing or over weight.

Thin soled shoes, Open backed shoes, heel spurs, Surgery of lower extremities, flat feet, high arched feet and diseases like psoriasis, eczema etc also cause fissured heels<sup>4</sup>.

### Care for cracked heels

1. Avoid thin soled shoes or footwear and open backed shoes.
2. Use pumice stone bars to remove thick, dead skin of heels.
3. Apply medicated herbal balm which keeps the skin of heels soft and closes fissures.
4. Liberal application of herbal moisturizing lotion keeps your feet soft and attractive.
5. The skin of feet lacks oil glands. Hence apply herbal moisturizing lotion before going to bed and put on cotton socks especially in the winter. This tip helps to maintain the softness of skin of heels.
6. Reduce body weight and do not stand for a long time.
7. Never cut hard edges of fissures with blade, scissors or razor.
8. Diabetic patients should immediately consult their physician if the fissures persist for a long time and show color changes.
9. A regular foot bath and foot massage helps to keep the skin on heels healthy and soft.

### Home Remedies Crack Heels

1. Take about two tablespoons of bees wax and mix one teaspoonful sesame oil in it. Warm it a little and apply on the affected areas.
2. Apply warm sesame oil or ghee cooked with turmeric and hareetaki (*Terminalia chebula*) powder on the affected areas.
3. Apply a mixture of 1 teaspoon of mango tree sap and 1 tablespoon water to the cracked skin.
4. Soak the feet in the warm salt water and remove the softened cracked skin through pumice stone bar.

5. Use ayurvedic formulation such as jeevantiyadi yamakam or tiktakam lepam.
6. Apply the mixture of castor oil and turmeric powder in cracks
7. Apply the same paste with tripala (three fruits of Ayurveda) which is more effective

### Kadhara - corns

Corns develop from an accumulation of dead skin cells, it can affect any part the feet. Constant pressure and friction from footwear can press these areas and cause pain.

### Remedies through Ayurveda

1. Heat one dried tuber of turmeric (One Side) and apply on the corn.
2. Repeat daily until corn falls off.
3. Massage feet ayurvedic vata hara herbal oils to soften skin and prevent the recurrence of corns.
4. Use jeevantiyadi yamakam herbal oil every day.
5. Put asphatalm solution on the corns every day.

### Preventing Foot Odor

Smelly feet can result from perspiration, dead skin cells and bacteria. Synthetic shoes and socks increase the problem by not letting your feet breathe. The following recipe naturally deodorizes your feet.

1. Perform the herbal foot bath by preparing the herbal solution with neem powder, basil leave powder, turmeric powder and sandalwood powder.
2. Mix 1 part corn starch, and 3-4 drops of peppermint or lavender essential oil and half bucket of warm water and clean your feet with this solution Do this procedure every day for a month or until problem disappears, then twice a week. You can also sprinkle the powder mix in your shoes or socks during the day.
3. Wash your feet with antiseptic solution morning and evening. Don't keep the socks inside the shoes; always keep the socks outside. Change it once in two days.

### Yoga Poses for Feet

Although the body as a holistic system benefits from yoga practice, certain poses are especially beneficial for the feet, such as adho mukha svanasana or downward-facing dog virasana or hero pose baddha konasana or cobbler pose and viparita karani or legs up the wall. According to the Women Fitness website these poses invigorate feet, increase natural body flows and positively stimulate pressure points associated with various parts of the body.

### CONCLUSION

Ayurveda is the rich storehouse of time-tested and effective recipes for the treatment of several diseases including that of feet. By daily practice of these recipes can prevent and cure of many diseases of the feet.it is up to you to decide

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