



## MODE OF ACTION OF PADABHYANGA – A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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**ABSTRACT** Abhyanga is a procedure wherein anointing of oil is done. It may be carried out sarvanga or sthanika based on disease/purpose. Padabhyanga is practised as a part of sarvanga abhyanga but as a disease specific or as a daily regimen it is usually not practised. But padabhyanga has action locally and also systemically. Acharya Charaka has mentioned padabhyanga in Dinacharya in the context of Swastavrutta, as disease preventive, for promotion of health, also in management of diseases like Insomnia, eye disorders, foot disorders, etc. Padabhyanga has also been considered one among Chakshushya varga.

**KEYWORDS :** Abhyanga, Padabhyanga, Dinacharya, Swastavrutta, Insomnia, Chakshushya varga

**Introduction :**

Padabhyanga is a type of bahya snehana wherein anointing of medicated sneha to the foot is done in different maneuver to get local and systemic benefit. In context of Sadvritta, as a preventive measure padabhyanga is mentioned in Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita. As a part of Sarvanga abhyanga, Padabhyanga to be carried out is mentioned in Ashtanga hrudaya, Yogaratnakara<sup>1,6</sup>. In detail procedure of padabhyanga is not mentioned in classics. So in seven position and different maneuver padabhyanga can be done to get desired effect. Local effect of padabhyanga may be due to local absorption and sneha used for the procedure. Systemic effect may be due to stimulation of disease causing area.

**Benefits**<sup>1,2,7</sup>

Pada kharatwa, stabtada and suptihara	Drusti prasada, sira snayu sankocha
Bala and sthairya to pada	Gridhrasivata, pada sputana
padatwak mrudukara	Shramahara, Nidrakara

**Duration :**

900 matrakala is the time mentioned for abhyanga by Acharya Sushruta<sup>3</sup>, which comes approximately 5mins. So in each maneuver 5mins abhyanga can be performed to get desired effect. When padabhyanga carried out as a part of sarvanga abhyanga time can be reduced according to the need.

**Yogya kala :**

Abhyanga is Contra-indicated after food, but it is generally for sarvanga abhyanga. So when exclusively padabhyanga is done, then it can be followed anytime of the day. In specific disease like anxiety, stress, insomnia padabhyanga done at night hours has good effect.

**Taila yoga for padabhyanga<sup>8</sup> :**

When padabhyanga is carried out as dinacharya, selection of taila according to prakruti can be made

No.	Prakruti	Taila
1	Vata pradhana	Himasagara taila
2	Pitta pradhana	Chandanadi taila, Ksheerabala taila
3	Kapha pradhana	Triphaladya taila

Meanwhile, when it is performed for disease, selection of taila according to disease can be made.

No.	Disease	Taila
1	Crack foot/ vaipadika	Vaipadikahara taila, Madhuchista taila
2	Eczema	Marichadi taila
3	Fungal infection	Chakramarda taila
4	Peripheral vascular disease	Pinda taila
5	Degenerative joint disease	Ksheerabala taila, Ashwagandha balalakshadi taila
6	Calcaneal spur	Vishagarbha taila, karpooradi taila

If any of the oil not available, then Murchita tila taila can be used.

**Procedure<sup>8</sup> :**

- 1) Purva karma
- 2) Pradhana karma
- 3) Paschat karma

**1.Purva karma :****It includes :-**

- 1) Sambhara sangraha – Abhyanga room with table – clean and calm place.

Medicated oil, Water bath to heat oil, Powder to clean oil, Towel.

- 2) Preparation of patient –Wash feet and tap dry with soft, clean towel. Explain the procedure to patient and make to lie in supine /sitting position on abhyanga table.

**2.Pradhana karma :** Padabhyanga is carried out in different position and in different maneuver.

**i) Supine position :-**

- a) Linear maneuver to dorsum of foot
- b) Circular maneuver to sole pads
- c) To-fro maneuver to soles
- d) Linear and circular massage to toes
- e) Linear massage on web spaces

**ii) Lateral position :-** Linear maneuver on right and left lateral sides of foot

**iii) Prone position :-**

- a) Linear maneuver to the soles
- b) Thumb poking on soles

**3.Paschat karma :**

In swastha, Rest for 15-30min, clean with powder later wash feet with hot water.

In disease condition, several hours or till next application oil can be retained. Later clean with powder, wash with hot water.

**Discussion****Mode of action :**

Local action like snigdghata can be attained by the sneha used for abhyanga. The strokes which is done in padabhyanga increases the local blood circulation. So, in Supti (numbness), Sankocha , Stambha(Stiffness) are relieved. Kharatwa/ Rukshata (dryness/cracks) are also tackled by the snigdgha guna of sneha. Along with these local action it has systemic action in Anidra(insomnia), also acts as Chakshushya and has effect in gridhrasi.

- **Probable mode of action as chakshushya :**
- In nadi vigyana, nadi darpana it has been quoted that there are 10 nadi in head among which 2 are related to eyes.<sup>5</sup>
- Gandhari- surrounds Ida nadi , which extends from paada and ends

in left eye. Hastijhwa- surrounds Pingala nadi, which extends from paada and ends in right eye.

- Acharya vagbhata also mentioned , 2 siras situated in the centre of foot which is connected to the eyes.<sup>9</sup>

During padabhyanga, these nadi's are stimulated and leading to chakshusya effect.

- **Probable mode of action in anidra**

1)Abhyanga<sup>10</sup> → locally lymphatic drainage increased → lymph contains aminoacid like tryptophan which increase by abhyanga

↓  
As level of tryptophan increases in plasma, it accumulates and stimulates pineal gland

↓  
Secretion of melatonin and serotonin

↓  
Melatonin- sedation and pleasant feeling Serotonin – induce sleep and also helps to control mood of person

2)Chinese massage – Rub the top of foot in the depression between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> toe to relieve insomnia<sup>11</sup>.

3)In foot area called solar plexus – stimulation of this area reduces stress, anxiety and induce sleep<sup>12</sup>.

- **Probable mode of action in gridhrasi/ sciatic pain :**

Gridhrasi, is a condition where pain starts from low back which radiates to buttocks, thigh, leg upto foot, which simulates with the sciatica- pain along sciatic nerve course.

Sciatic nerve originates in the lowback from lumbar spine, passes underneath the gluteal muscles, runs down the leg and ends in the heel of the foot. There is a sciatic reflex area on the feet which is a band that run horizontally across the middle of the heel where the sciatic nerve ends<sup>13</sup>.

Padabhyanga done at the sciatic reflex area may help in preventing sciatica also pain management in sciatica.

### Conclusion

Padabhyanga, eventhough a small procedure the benefits of this procedure is broad spectrum i.e, from locally to systemic effect. So, padabhyanga as a part of dinacharya and also in vyadhita condition is beneficial. Based on the prakruti of patient, dosha involved in vyadhi medications and duration of procedure can be varied to get desired effect. Thus padabhyanga rather practising only as a part of sarvanga abhyanga, need to be practised as a individual procedure for the prevention of disease and promotion of health. Various clinical studies can be conducted in cases like insomnia, sciatica, eye disorders to see the efficacy and to understand the mode of action of padabhyanga.

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