

DOING IT WRONG WAY: WALKING AFTER DINNER: AN AYURVEDA PERSPECTIVE

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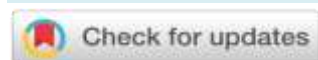
<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj2311052023>

(Published Online: May 2023)

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Article Received: 29/04/2023 - **Peer Reviewed:** 04/05/2023 - **Accepted for Publication:** 12/05/2023.

**ABSTRACT**

In the present era, everyone is getting more and more aware of health. In the wish to get healthy, everyone is trying so many things without knowing the actual working principle behind it. Thus, they are following the wrong practices for good health. The most accepted way to get fit is to do 'vyayama (exercise)'. The vyayam or exercise is done by people anytime or every time possible. Most people walk as a part of exercise after having dinner. Because of the fast-moving lifestyle of people, they don't get time to do exercise and thus they do exercise or go on a walk after having dinner. The ultimate result of walking after dinner is the active transfer of blood from the gastrointestinal tract to the exercising part of the body. Hence, this leads to many diseases like being overweight, arthritis, anaemia, and many more. The reference regarding this is given by *Acharya Sushruta* in his *Samhita* in detail.

Keywords: active blood flow, passive blood flow, *vyayama*, *aama dosha*, digestion, *vata vyadhi*, gym death.

INTRODUCTION

What does Vyayama mean-

The physical movements which are intended towards bringing stability to the body and increasing the body's strength are called *vyayama*. The activities should be done in moderation and not in excess¹. *Acharya Sushruta* has explained *vyayama* as any process which requires effort to make it done².

Limit for doing vyayama-

- *Acharya Vagbhata* has stated that the exercise should be done till '*ardha shakti*'³. Where the '*ardha shakti*' signifies the condition where perspiration could be noted in the forehead and auxiliary region (*svastha- vrutta samuchaya*).
- *Acharya Sushruta* has given the limit as "*Bal-ardha*". He has described the limit as – when the *vayu* residing in the '*hrudaya*' that is '*samana vayu*' comes out from the mouth, which is when the person starts suffering breathlessness or tachypnoea.
- *Acharya Charaka* has given the limit as⁴– when. Thus, the '*ardha shakti*' or "*Bal-ardha*" signifies the limit for doing exercise.

What if the exercising person crosses the exercising limit:

According to *Acharya Vagbhata*⁵, *Charaka*⁶, and *Sushruta*⁷, excessive exercising causes - excessive thirst, body wasting, fainting, haemorrhage, excessive tiredness, fainting, cough, fever, and vomiting. *Acharya Charaya* elaborated it more by giving one example of a lion trying to pull a dead elephant⁸. *Acharya Charaya* said that no doubt the lion is the most powerful animal in the forest. It can kill other animals, but if the lion tries to do work more than its power it will ultimately perish. Thus, the lion no doubt can kill the elephant, but if the lion tries to drag a dead elephant, then the lion may perish. Similarly, no doubt people can do exercise, but if they try to do it more than the "*ardha shakti*" or "*bal-ardha*" then people may perish. This may explain why young people are dying in the gym while doing strenuous exercise.

The benefits of “vyayama” done in an appropriate manner –

According to *Acharya Charka*⁹, *Acharya Vagbhata*¹⁰, and *Acharya Sushruta*¹¹ -the exercise is done in the right manner can benefit a person with- lightweightness, strength to work, providing endurance towards distress, stability, mitigates *dushita dosha* and by increasing the digestive fire in the body. The exercising person may get a well-toned body as well.

Who should not be exercising –

Acharya Vagbhata has said that the person who is suffering from the *vata* and *pittaja* diseases, the person suffering from indigestion, children, and an aged person should not be exercising¹². *Acharya Sushruta* has excluded people suffering from haemorrhagic disorders, cachexic people, people suffering from tuberculosis, cough, asthma, or diseased, the ones who had food recently, are thirsty, and a person suffering from vertigo¹³. *Acharya Charaka* said that the one who indulges in excessive sexual activity, jobs requiring speaking out loud (teachers, singers, etc), the person laughing out loud, or a person walking excessively, should not be exercising.

When we look at the common exclusion criteria told by *Acharya Charaka*, *Acharya Sushruta*, and *Acharya Vagbhata*, we can say that everyone has excluded a person suffering from indigestion or one who had his/her food recently from the eligibility criteria for exercise. But, when we observe the routine of people, they prefer to take a walk after having dinner. *Acharya* has given different rules regarding eating habits called '*aahara-vidhi-vidhana*'¹⁴, and '*aahara-vidhi-visheshayatna*'¹⁵. The food taken by not following the aforesaid rules is called '*Virodhi Aahara*'. While explaining the '*Virodhi Aahara*', *acharya Charka*¹⁶ and *acharya Vagbhata*¹⁷ have said that the food or medicine which elevates the *dosha* in the body but does not expel the *dushita dosha* (elevates) from the body is called '*Virodhi Aahara*'. The food taken by not following the aforesaid rules may lead to diseases like¹⁸: impotency, blindness, herpes, ascites, urticaria, psychosis, vertigo, unconsciousness, anaemia, *aama-visha*, vitiligo, irritable bowel syndrome, and death. *Acharya Sushruta* said that after having food, one should sit like a king until the clumsiness or drowsi-

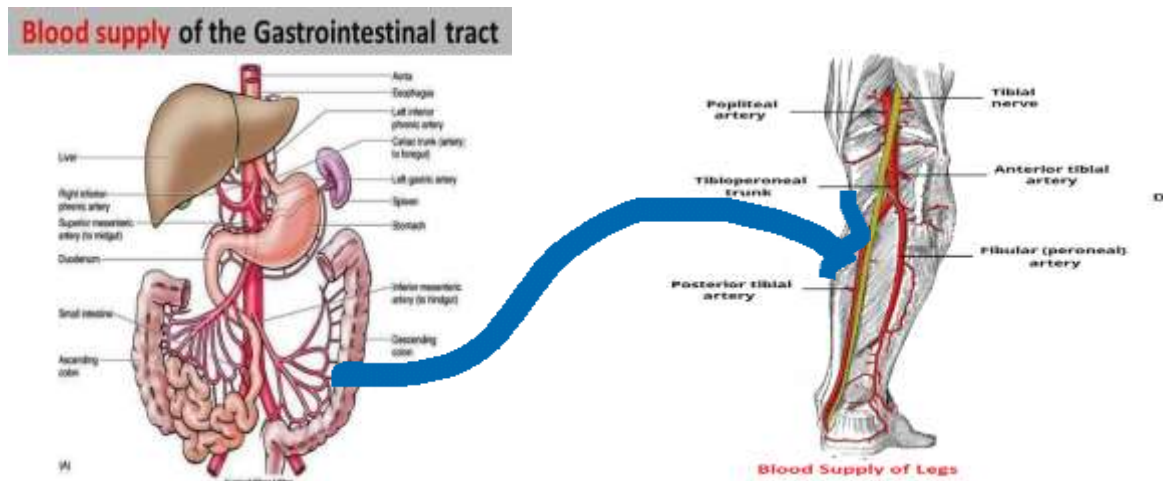
ness due to the food is gone. King-like sitting implies a straight posture of the waist, back, chest, and head. After that one should walk for not more than a hundred steps. The one who had his/her food recently should not be doing things like sleeping for long, sitting for long, drinking too much liquid, swimming, walking, or riding¹⁹.

The scientific explanation for avoiding exercise after having food:

Acharya Yoga-Ratnakara has said that, after having food one should sit for at least 48 minutes. One should avoid sexual activities, exercise, riding, etc.

Sleep taken after eating helps in the nourishment of bodily *dhatu*. Whereas the physical or mental activities done after having food lead to death. *Acharya Yogaratnakar* used the word 'Mrutyu-dhavati-dhavatah', to signify the graveness of the situation.

Exercising is an active process. Whereas digestion is a passive process. The active as well as the passive processes require blood flow to be performed. Thus, when we exercise after having the food, the passive blood flow is compensated for the active blood supply. Which leads to the improper digestion of the food, and hence multiple diseases.



BLOOD SUPPLY COMPENSATION FROM GI TRACT TO THE LEGS

Image 1

Acharya Charaka have mentioned 18 types of *Virodhi aahara* (antagonistic food habits) such as²⁰: *guna viruddha, samyoga virrudha, desha virudha, kaala virudha, agni virudha, saatmya virudha, dosha viruddha, Sanskar virudha, virya viruddha, koshta virudha, avastha virudha, krama virudha, Parihar virudha, paka virudha, samyoga virudha, hrudaya virudha, sampada virudha, vidhi virudha*²¹.

Table 01:

Sr.No.	<i>Virodhi aahara</i> type	Definition	Example
1.	<i>Guna viruddha</i> ²²	Incompatible in qualities	Milk with fish
2.	<i>Samyoga virrudha</i> ²³	Incompatible on combination	The vessel used for frying fish is used for roasting pippali
3.	<i>Desha virudha</i> ²⁴	Antagonist with the place of living	Eating oily, high glycemic index food in <i>Anupa desha</i>
4.	<i>kaala virudha</i> ²⁵	Incompatible with the season	Having cold and dry food in cold seasons
5.	<i>Agni virudha</i> ²⁶	Incompatible with the digestive power	Having light food by a person with strong digestive power
6.	<i>Saatmya virudha</i> ²⁷	Having food, one is allergic to (or not habitual to)	One habitual with stringent taste is forced to eat sweet food
7.	<i>Dosha viruddha</i> ²⁸	Having food or medicine of the same qualities as a	Eating the same kind of food everyday

		<i>dosha</i> for long	– eating pizza everyday which increases <i>vata dosha</i> perpetually
8.	<i>Sanskar virudha</i> ²⁹	Incompatible with the cooking process	The meat of peacock barbequed using the bark of castor
9.	<i>Virya viruddha</i> ³⁰	Cold-potency drug is taken along with hot-potency drugs	Having milk with fish
10.	<i>Koshtha virudha</i> ³¹	Having food or medicine not according to the <i>koshta</i> (excreting power)	Giving mild purgative to a person with <i>krura koshta</i>
11.	<i>Avastha virudha</i> ³²	Antagonist with the physical condition, workout	A person indulges in excessive sexual activity having empty calory
12.	<i>Krama virudha</i> ³³	Not following the proper sequence of eating	Eating while having the urge to defecate
13.	<i>Parihar virudha</i> ³⁴	Not following the rules of eating	Drinking cold water after having <i>Ghee</i>
14.	<i>Paka virudha</i> ³⁵	Food cooked the wrong way	Half cooked rice
15.	<i>Samyoga virudha</i> ³⁶	Incompatible combinations	Citrus food with milk
16.	<i>Hrudaya virudha</i> ³⁷	Incompatible with one's choices	Forcing vegetarians to eat nonvegetarian food
17.	<i>Sampada virudha</i> ³⁸	Having food or medicine with incomplete qualities	Eating curd which is not prepared yet
18.	<i>Vidhi virudha</i>	Not following the rules of eating	Talking while eating

Thus, from the above, it is clear that exercising after eating is '*Parihara virudha*'.

CONCLUSION

Thus, from the above, it is clear that one should not exercise beyond one's own capacity. Neither one should exercise after having food. The reason for death in the gym could be people exercising beyond their own capacity. People who are going on a walk after having dinner are under the misconception that it's a healthy trend. Whereas it's in no way a healthy trend. Thus, we can say that our *Samhita* has given very minute dos and don'ts. Thus, to increase the acceptability of Ayurveda we need to work on stating the scientific principles behind every Ayurveda thing.

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Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Sonali N. Fulkar et al: Doing It Wrong Way: Walking After Dinner: An Ayurveda Perspective. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2023 {cited May 2023} Available from: http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/1153_1158.pdf