Spanda® Yoga for Resilient Aging™: Rejuvenation

Ayurveda means "Science of Life." It is an ancient holistic science and system of health and longevity. Everyone wants to live a long life in good health. Life today is stressful with environmental toxins, overwork, less than optimal diet, and general rushing around the norm. From an Ayurvedic view, this creates *ama*, which is the cause of deterioration and normal functioning. One of Ayurveda's primary goals is *"swaasthasya rakshanam"* or preserving health.

Of Ayurveda's eight clinical specialties, is the science of rejuvenation called ***Rasayana***. It is included in the preventative aspects of Ayurveda, versus its curative ones. Rejuvenative practices and techniques revitalize the senses, detoxify the body, nourish the tissues, increase resistance to disease, and restore youthfulness as well as have the potential to increase lifespan. Rasayana is sometimes translated to mean, "the path of juice," and more literally "that which enters the essence." Another definition given here in Sanskrit, *"yat jara vyadhi nashanam tat rasayanam"* means, "that which negates old age and disease."

When one encounters Rasayana practices, herbs, spices, special foods, metals, and other ingestives are often the focus, however yoga asana practice, appropriate cardiovascular exercise such as swimming, walking or dancing, lifestyle recommendations, such as winding down before bedtime, and even positive thinking and meditation are part of this path of rejuvenation.

Primarily Rasayana deals with three operations:
(1) Boosting tissue quality (nutrient value of plasma),
(2) Activation of *Agni,* a person's ability to "digest" what comes, and
(3) vitalization and circulation of *prana*, or the energy that is and supports all life.

Agni Sara Preparation: *Uddiyana Bandha* without retention
Do this exercise when the stomach is empty, first thing in the morning before breakfast is a good time, or 3 hours after a meal. Begin on hands and knees or bend forward from the hips and place hands or elbows on a table or chair back.

1. As you exhale and draw abdominals in toward spine.
2. As you inhale, gradually release them.

Oilination and Massage (*Abhyanga*)
Regular Ayurvedic massage (*abhyanga*) is a traditional way to remove stress and relax the body. Oil massage increases skin tone and helps prevent and reduce dryness, and loss of moisture from the skin. It can be invigorating as well as relaxing. The sheer act of massaging increases the skin's ability to hold its tone appreciably. Using warm, organic, cold-pressed almond oil is recommended for most skin types, because it lubricates the skin, cleanses the pores, and penetrates the lipid barrier, replacing toxin-clogged lipid cells with fresh lipid cells. Swami Rama used to say, "Don't put anything on your skin you would not be willing to eat." As our skin ingests through its pores lotions and oils we rub onto it.

Vata Types can also use sesame oil as it is warming and a bit heavy, while pitta types may choose coconut oil for its cooling properties. Almond is good for Kapha types as is dry skin brushing with a soft natural bristle brush or skin gloves (garshana gloves.) You can follow yourself massage (abhyanga) with a warm bath if time allows to allow the impurities that have been dislodged to flow into the digestive tract, from where they can be easily eliminated. Massage also helps sleep, so you can do the entire body and take a bath or more simply massage your lower arms, legs, hands and feet before going to bed.

You don't need to be a professional massage artist to do a great job. The main idea is to massage back and forth over the long bones and in circular motions around the joints.