



Dinacharya and Holistic Well-being: An Ayurvedic Perspective on Healthy Daily Living

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Abstract

Modern life has brought remarkable convenience, but it has also changed the way people sleep, eat, work, rest, and interact with one another. Long working hours, sedentary habits, irregular meals, inadequate sleep, prolonged screen exposure, and continuing psychological stress have become part of everyday life for many people. These changes have increased interest in approaches to health that focus not only on treating illness but also on preventing it and cultivating overall well-being. Ayurveda, the traditional Indian system of health knowledge, has long emphasized the importance of daily habits in maintaining health. One of its important concepts is *Dinacharya*, the practice of following an appropriate daily regimen.

This paper examines the relevance of *Dinacharya* as a holistic approach to healthy living in the present context. A conceptual narrative review was undertaken using classical Ayurvedic texts along with selected contemporary literature on lifestyle, physical activity, sleep, circadian rhythms, mental well-being, preventive health, and traditional medicine. The discussion suggests that several underlying principles of *Dinacharya*—including regularity, moderation, personal hygiene, physical activity, appropriate food habits, adequate sleep, mental discipline, sensory regulation, and self-awareness—remain relevant to contemporary health concerns. At the same time, traditional practices need to be understood within their original context and examined through appropriate contemporary evidence rather than being presented as universally established scientific facts. The paper also discusses the educational potential of *Dinacharya*, particularly in health education, teacher education, student well-being, and Indian Knowledge Systems. It argues that *Dinacharya* can be meaningfully adapted to modern life when its underlying principles are retained while allowing flexibility according to individual needs, circumstances, and evidence.

Keywords: Dinacharya, Ayurveda, holistic well-being, daily regimen, preventive health, Indian Knowledge Systems, healthy lifestyle, health education

1. Introduction

People today live in a world of constant activity. Work can continue beyond office hours, meals are often taken while looking at a screen, sleep is frequently compromised by late-night digital engagement, and opportunities for quiet reflection are becoming increasingly limited. Although modern technology has made many aspects of life easier, it has also encouraged patterns of living that may not always support physical and psychological well-being.

Health, therefore, cannot be understood only in terms of whether a person has a particular disease. It is also reflected in the way a person sleeps, eats, moves, works, rests, manages stress, maintains relationships, and responds to the surrounding environment. The World Health Organization's broad understanding of health includes physical, mental, and social well-being (World Health Organization [WHO], 1948). This multidimensional understanding has considerable resonance with the holistic perspective found in Ayurveda.

Ayurveda approaches health from a preventive as well as therapeutic perspective. Rather than waiting for illness to appear, it gives considerable importance to maintaining balance through appropriate food, behaviour, daily routine, seasonal adaptation, and mental discipline. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe a healthy person not simply in terms of physiological balance but also in relation to the well-being of the mind, senses, and self (Charaka & Dridhabala, n.d.; Sushruta, n.d.).

Within this broader framework, *Dinacharya* occupies an important place. The word combines *dina*, meaning day, and *charya*, meaning conduct or regimen. In simple terms, Dinacharya refers to the way a person organizes daily activities to support health and balance. Classical texts describe practices relating to waking, oral hygiene, cleansing, exercise, bathing, food, personal care, and rest (Charaka & Dridhabala, n.d.; Vagbhata, n.d.).

However, Dinacharya should not be understood merely as a fixed list of things to be done at particular times. Its deeper message lies in the importance of rhythm, moderation, awareness, and consistency in everyday life. In this sense, it raises a question that is particularly relevant today: Can the way we organize an ordinary day contribute to the way we experience health and well-being?

This question becomes important in the context of contemporary lifestyle concerns. Irregular sleep, insufficient physical activity, prolonged sitting, unhealthy eating patterns, psychological stress, and excessive digital stimulation are now widely discussed as challenges to healthy living. Contemporary health guidelines, for example, emphasize regular physical activity and reduction of sedentary behaviour (WHO, 2020).

Recent Ayurvedic literature has also revisited Dinacharya in relation to present-day health concerns (Asutkar et al., 2023). Such discussions suggest that traditional knowledge may offer useful perspectives for contemporary lifestyle education, provided that it is approached thoughtfully and critically.

The purpose of this paper is therefore not to claim that every traditional Ayurvedic recommendation has already been scientifically established. Rather, it seeks to understand the underlying principles of Dinacharya and examine how these principles may contribute to a more balanced approach to contemporary living.

2. Literature Review and Research Gap

2.1 Dinacharya in Classical Ayurveda

The idea of maintaining health through appropriate daily conduct is deeply rooted in Ayurvedic literature. The *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* discuss various aspects of daily living, including personal hygiene, oral care, exercise, bathing, food, rest, and appropriate conduct (Charaka & Dridhabala, n.d.; Sushruta, n.d.; Vagbhata, n.d.).

The *Ashtanga Hridaya*, for instance, presents a relatively detailed account of daily practices. These include cleansing the teeth and tongue, oil application, exercise, bathing, and other forms of personal care (Vagbhata, n.d.). Such practices were not presented as isolated health tips; they formed part of a broader way of living in harmony with one's body and environment.

This holistic orientation is important when interpreting Dinacharya today. Removing individual practices from their philosophical context may result in a fragmented understanding of the concept.

2.2 Dinacharya and Preventive Health

One of the most interesting aspects of Ayurveda is its strong preventive orientation. Maintaining health is considered an ongoing process rather than something that begins only after illness develops.

Contemporary reviews have examined the possible relevance of Dinacharya to health maintenance and disease prevention. Asutkar et al. (2023), for example, discussed the application of daily Ayurvedic regimens in the context of present-day health concerns. Thakare and Badwaik (2023) examined Dinacharya and Ritucharya as components of a healthy lifestyle.

At the same time, much of the literature remains descriptive or narrative in nature. There is a need for more carefully designed studies that examine individual practices as well as the combined effect of a structured daily regimen.

2.3 Dinacharya and Circadian Rhythms

The relationship between routine and biological rhythm provides an interesting area for interdisciplinary discussion.

Human beings have biological rhythms that influence sleep, metabolism, hormone secretion, body temperature, and several other physiological processes. Disturbances in circadian rhythms and sleep patterns have been associated with a range of health consequences (Potter et al., 2016).

Mishrikoti et al. (2024) specifically examined Dinacharya in relation to circadian rhythm and cell rejuvenation. Such work provides an interesting point of dialogue between Ayurvedic concepts of daily routine and contemporary research on biological timing.

However, this relationship should be interpreted carefully. The existence of circadian rhythms does not, by itself, establish the scientific validity of every practice described in classical Ayurvedic literature. The two perspectives can be placed in dialogue without treating them as identical.

2.4 Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour

Physical movement is another important component of Dinacharya. Ayurveda describes *Vyayama*, or exercise, as part of healthy daily conduct and emphasizes that activity should be appropriate to an individual's strength and circumstances.

This principle has particular relevance today. Many occupations involve prolonged sitting, while leisure time is increasingly spent on digital devices. The WHO recommends regular physical activity and reduction of sedentary behaviour as important components of healthy living (WHO, 2020).

The Canadian 24-hour movement guidelines similarly bring together physical activity, sedentary behaviour, and sleep, reinforcing the idea that daily behaviours should be considered as an interconnected pattern rather than separately (Ross et al., 2020).

2.5 Personal Hygiene and Oral Health

Personal hygiene has traditionally been an important part of Dinacharya. Practices involving oral cleansing, bathing, grooming, and general cleanliness are described in classical texts.

Reddy and Beena (2014) reviewed Dinacharya practices with particular attention to oral hygiene and discussed the available evidence relating to traditional oral-care practices. Their work also highlights an important issue: traditional practices require systematic evaluation before strong conclusions about their efficacy can be drawn.

This is an important principle for contemporary engagement with Ayurveda. Respect for traditional knowledge and scientific evaluation do not have to be contradictory; rather, they can complement one another.

2.6 Mental Well-being and Self-regulation

A genuinely holistic approach to health cannot ignore the mind. Contemporary life exposes individuals to numerous sources of stress, including work demands, academic competition, social comparison, financial concerns, and continuous digital communication.

Mindfulness-based approaches have received considerable attention for their emphasis on awareness and present-moment attention (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Although mindfulness and Ayurvedic approaches should not be treated as identical, both provide useful ways of thinking about attention, self-awareness, and the regulation of everyday behaviour.

Dinacharya can similarly be viewed as an opportunity to create moments of intentionality within an otherwise busy day.

2.7 Research Gap

The existing literature points towards several areas that require further exploration.

First, much of the available literature discusses individual Dinacharya practices rather than examining the daily regimen as an integrated lifestyle framework.

Second, there is scope for greater interdisciplinary dialogue between Ayurveda and contemporary research on sleep, circadian rhythm, physical activity, mental well-being, digital behaviour, and lifestyle-related health concerns.

Third, the educational dimensions of Dinacharya remain relatively underdeveloped. Its possible contribution to health education, teacher education, student well-being, and Indian Knowledge Systems deserves greater attention.

Finally, the need for stronger evidence in traditional medicine has been recognized internationally. The WHO Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 emphasizes evidence generation, safety, quality, and appropriate integration of traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine (WHO, 2025). The WHO's 2026 global research agenda further identifies areas in which evidence concerning traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine needs to be strengthened (WHO, 2026).

These developments make it timely to examine traditional concepts such as Dinacharya through both their original knowledge framework and contemporary research perspectives.

3. Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To understand the conceptual foundations of Dinacharya in classical Ayurvedic literature.
2. To examine the major dimensions of Dinacharya in relation to holistic well-being.
3. To explore the relevance of Dinacharya to contemporary lifestyle challenges.
4. To examine areas of convergence between selected principles of Dinacharya and contemporary approaches to healthy living.
5. To explore the educational significance of Dinacharya in health education and Indian Knowledge Systems.
6. To identify areas in which further empirical research on Dinacharya is needed.

4. Methodology

The paper follows a **conceptual narrative review approach**. The intention was to understand Dinacharya as a holistic lifestyle concept rather than to test the effectiveness of a particular Ayurvedic intervention.

Classical Ayurvedic sources, particularly the *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, were considered for understanding the traditional foundations of daily regimen.

Contemporary literature relating to physical activity, sleep, circadian rhythms, mental well-being, oral hygiene, preventive health, and traditional medicine was reviewed to place the discussion within a current context. Dinacharya-specific review literature was also considered.

The literature was examined thematically under the following broad areas:

- regularity and daily rhythm;
- personal hygiene;
- physical activity;
- food and eating behaviour;

- sleep and rest;
- sensory regulation;
- mental well-being;
- self-regulation;
- social relationships; and
- connection with the natural environment.

The discussion deliberately distinguishes between what is described in classical Ayurvedic literature and what is supported by contemporary research. Where the two perspectives appear to converge, the paper describes this as a potential area of correspondence rather than assuming scientific validation.

Since the study is conceptual and literature-based, it does not involve human participants, primary data collection, intervention, or statistical analysis.

5. Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Regularity: Giving Shape to the Day

Perhaps the simplest but most powerful idea within Dinacharya is regularity.

A person's day has a rhythm. When sleep, meals, work, physical activity, and rest occur in a reasonably predictable pattern, everyday life often becomes easier to organize. In contrast, constantly changing schedules can make it difficult to maintain healthy habits.

Modern life, however, frequently encourages irregularity. People may sleep late because of work or entertainment, skip meals because of professional commitments, or spend long periods sitting without realizing how much time has passed.

The Ayurvedic emphasis on routine therefore offers an interesting way of thinking about modern health. It does not necessarily require everyone to follow exactly the same timetable. Rather, it draws attention to the value of giving the day a healthy structure.

This idea also finds some resonance in contemporary research on circadian rhythms and sleep (Potter et al., 2016).

5.2 Personal Hygiene as Everyday Self-care

Hygiene is one of the more visible aspects of Dinacharya. Brushing or cleansing the teeth, cleaning the tongue, bathing, grooming, and maintaining cleanliness are integrated into the daily routine.

What is interesting from a holistic perspective is that these activities are not treated merely as chores. They can become regular acts of self-care.

For contemporary health education, this distinction is useful. Students can be encouraged to understand hygiene not simply as a rule imposed from outside but as a routine through which they care for their own bodies.

At the same time, traditional procedures should be evaluated for safety and effectiveness before being recommended as substitutes for established healthcare practices.

5.3 Movement and Exercise

A healthy day should include movement.

The Ayurvedic concept of *Vyayama* reflects the importance of physical activity and also recognizes that the appropriate amount of exercise varies between individuals.

This is particularly relevant today, when sitting for long periods has become part of both professional and educational life. Regular walking, stretching, Yoga, exercise, sports, or other suitable forms of movement can be incorporated into a daily routine.

The important lesson is not that everyone needs an intensive exercise programme. Rather, movement should become a regular part of everyday life.

This broad principle is consistent with contemporary public-health recommendations concerning physical activity and sedentary behaviour (Ross et al., 2020; WHO, 2020).

5.4 Food: Not Only What We Eat, but How We Eat

Ayurveda gives considerable importance to food, digestion, quantity, timing, and individual suitability.

Modern eating habits can sometimes be quite different. Meals may be hurried, taken while working, or consumed in front of a screen. People may also eat in response to stress or boredom rather than hunger.

A contemporary interpretation of Dinacharya can therefore encourage greater awareness of eating. Sitting down for meals, eating without unnecessary distractions, recognizing hunger and satiety, maintaining dietary variety, and choosing nutritionally appropriate food are practical ways of bringing greater awareness to an everyday activity.

Ayurvedic dietary principles, however, should not be converted into universal prescriptions. Individual nutritional requirements differ, and therapeutic dietary advice should be provided appropriately.

5.5 Sleep: The Importance of Rest

Sleep is often the first thing sacrificed when life becomes busy.

Yet sleep is closely associated with physical recovery, cognitive functioning, mood, and general well-being. The Ayurvedic emphasis on appropriate sleeping and waking habits can therefore be interpreted meaningfully in the context of modern life.

Importantly, a contemporary understanding of Dinacharya should not reduce the idea to “waking up early.” Early rising without sufficient sleep is not a healthy routine.

The more meaningful principle is to maintain a reasonably consistent sleep-wake pattern and allow sufficient time for restorative sleep.

5.6 Making Space for Mental Well-being

A busy day often leaves little room for the mind to slow down.

People move from one task to another, respond to messages, attend meetings, scroll through social media, and remain connected to work long after formal working hours have ended.

A daily routine that deliberately creates some quiet space may therefore be valuable. Meditation, prayer, breathing exercises, reading, journaling, music, time spent in nature, or simply sitting quietly can serve this purpose.

The particular activity may differ from person to person. What matters is the creation of a regular opportunity to pause, reflect, and reconnect with oneself.

5.7 Dinacharya and Digital Well-being

One of the most interesting contemporary applications of Dinacharya concerns technology.

Classical Ayurvedic texts obviously could not have addressed smartphones or social media. Nevertheless, their broader emphasis on moderation and appropriate sensory engagement can be thoughtfully interpreted in relation to digital life.

Many people begin and end their day with a mobile phone. Notifications interrupt work, meals, conversations, and even rest. Continuous exposure to information can leave little opportunity for mental quiet.

A contemporary Dinacharya could therefore include practical boundaries such as screen-free meals, periods without notifications, reduced recreational screen use before sleep, and deliberate time away from digital devices.

This is not a classical Ayurvedic prescription. It is a modern application of the broader principle of moderation.

5.8 Balancing Work and Rest

A healthy routine cannot consist entirely of productivity.

Contemporary culture often celebrates being busy, sometimes at the expense of recovery. Work can continue into evenings, weekends, and holidays, particularly when digital connectivity makes it difficult to disconnect.

Dinacharya offers a useful reminder that a day should contain different kinds of activity. Work, movement, meals, relationships, recreation, reflection, and rest all have a place.

The goal should therefore be sustainable productivity rather than continuous productivity.

5.9 Relationships and Social Well-being

A person does not live in isolation.

Family interaction, friendship, community participation, compassion, and service are important aspects of human life. A daily routine that leaves no time for meaningful relationships may be efficient in one sense but impoverished in another.

A holistic understanding of Dinacharya can therefore include time for people as well as time for tasks.

This is particularly important for children and young people, whose emotional development is closely connected with supportive relationships.

5.10 Reconnecting with Nature

Modern urban life can create considerable distance between people and the natural world.

Spending time outdoors, walking in green spaces, gardening, caring for plants, or simply observing natural surroundings can provide opportunities for physical activity and mental respite.

Ayurvedic thought traditionally places human life within a larger natural order. A contemporary interpretation of Dinacharya can therefore include environmentally conscious living and meaningful contact with nature.

In this sense, holistic health need not stop with the individual. It can also include a sense of responsibility towards the environment in which human life is sustained.

6. Major Findings

The analysis suggests several important points.

First, Dinacharya is fundamentally concerned with how everyday life is organized. Its value lies not in any single practice but in the larger pattern created by regular and appropriate habits.

Second, regularity appears to be a particularly relevant principle in contemporary life. Stable patterns of sleep, meals, activity, work, and rest may provide a useful structure for healthy living.

Third, Dinacharya is holistic in scope. It does not separate physical health completely from mental, social, behavioural, and environmental well-being.

Fourth, the concept is inherently adaptable. A healthy routine cannot be identical for a child, an elderly person, a teacher, a student, a manual worker, or a person with a health condition. Individual circumstances matter.

Fifth, several principles associated with Dinacharya—physical activity, adequate sleep, hygiene, moderation, and behavioural regularity—have clear relevance to contemporary health promotion. However, this does not mean that every classical practice has been scientifically established.

Sixth, the principle of sensory moderation can be extended meaningfully to the modern problem of digital overload. This provides an interesting area for future research.

Seventh, Dinacharya has potential educational value. It can help students think about health as something shaped by everyday choices rather than only by medical treatment.

Finally, the existing literature points to the need for stronger empirical research. Future studies could examine individual practices as well as structured Dinacharya-based lifestyle programmes, while carefully considering safety, individual differences, and measurable outcomes.

7. Educational Implications

The educational value of Dinacharya deserves particular attention because schools and universities are increasingly concerned with student well-being.

7.1 Health Education

Dinacharya can make health education more practical and culturally meaningful. Instead of discussing healthy living only as a collection of recommendations, educators can help students think about how an entire day is structured.

Questions such as *When do I sleep? How much do I move? How do I eat? How much time do I spend on screens? Do I have time to relax?* can encourage self-reflection.

7.2 Teacher Education

Teacher education programmes can use Dinacharya as an example of Indian Knowledge Systems that connects traditional knowledge with contemporary concerns.

It can be discussed alongside educational psychology, health education, Yoga, physical education, mindfulness, and lifestyle management.

For teachers themselves, the idea is also relevant. Teaching is demanding work, and teachers may benefit from developing sustainable routines that include adequate rest, movement, reflection, and boundaries around work.

7.3 Student Well-being

Students today face a combination of academic expectations, social pressures, digital stimulation, and changing sleep patterns.

Educational institutions can encourage healthy routines through physical activity, Yoga, outdoor activities, mindfulness sessions, healthy eating awareness, and digital-well-being programmes.

The purpose should not be to impose a rigid Ayurvedic timetable but to help students understand the relationship between daily habits and well-being.

7.4 Indian Knowledge Systems

Dinacharya provides a particularly accessible entry point into Indian Knowledge Systems.

Students can examine an ancient concept and ask contemporary questions about it: What was its original purpose? Which principles remain relevant? Which claims require further evidence? How might the concept be adapted to present-day life?

Such an approach moves IKS education beyond simple celebration of the past and towards critical engagement with traditional knowledge.

7.5 Self-regulation and Life Skills

A routine can also become a practical tool for developing self-regulation.

Learning to manage time, sleep, food, physical activity, screen use, study, and leisure requires awareness and discipline. These are important life skills that extend beyond academic achievement.

7.6 Respecting Individual Differences

Perhaps the most important educational consideration is flexibility.

A daily routine should not become another source of pressure. Learners differ in their developmental stage, health, abilities, family circumstances, cultural practices, and individual needs.

Therefore, the educational message should be **“develop a healthy routine that works for you”**, rather than **“everyone must follow the same routine.”**

8. Conclusion

Dinacharya offers a thoughtful way of looking at an issue that is surprisingly easy to overlook: **the health implications of an ordinary day.**

Much of modern healthcare understandably focuses on diagnosing and treating illness. Yet health is also shaped gradually through sleep, food, movement, work, rest, relationships, and the ways in which people use their time and attention.

Ayurveda recognized this importance centuries ago. Through Dinacharya, it placed everyday conduct within a broader framework of health maintenance and balance.

Its contemporary relevance does not require us to reproduce every classical recommendation exactly as it was described. Nor should traditional practices be presented as scientifically proven simply because they have existed for a long time. Instead, the deeper principles of Dinacharya can be examined thoughtfully and, where appropriate, interpreted in the light of contemporary knowledge.

Regularity, moderation, movement, personal care, adequate rest, mindful eating, mental space, meaningful relationships, and connection with nature remain relevant concerns even though the circumstances of modern life are very different from those of the classical period.

The digital age adds another dimension to this discussion. Managing screen time, protecting sleep, creating periods of quiet, and maintaining boundaries between work and personal life are contemporary challenges for which the broader Ayurvedic principle of moderation may offer a useful conceptual lens.

For education, Dinacharya provides an especially valuable opportunity. It connects health, self-regulation, Indian Knowledge Systems, and everyday life in a manner that students can understand and apply. It also encourages a shift from thinking about health as something that is addressed only when problems arise to understanding health as something that is cultivated continuously.

At the same time, the concept deserves more rigorous research. Future studies should investigate specific Dinacharya practices and integrated lifestyle programmes using appropriate observational, qualitative, and intervention-based methodologies. Research should also pay attention to individual differences, safety, cultural context, and measurable outcomes.

Ultimately, the strength of Dinacharya lies less in prescribing a perfect timetable and more in encouraging **consciousness about how we live each day.** In a world increasingly marked by speed, distraction, and irregularity, this simple idea has considerable contemporary relevance.

Dinacharya can therefore be viewed as a living knowledge tradition—one that invites us to explore how ancient principles of balance and moderation might contribute, carefully and critically, to healthier and more holistic ways of living today.

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