

**BALANCING SHADCHAKRA THROUGH PANCHAKARMA: AN AYURVEDIC
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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda and yogic sciences, human health is perceived as a fluid equilibrium of physical, mental, and subtle energies. A significant subtle structure is the concept of Śaḍcakra, which refers to the six primary energy centers (chakras) aligned along the spine, responsible for regulating various physiological, psychological, and spiritual functions. The blockage or imbalance of these chakras, often caused by lifestyle choices, emotional trauma, or disturbances in the doṣas, can result in illness and a disconnection from one's higher self. Panchakarma, the fivefold detoxification and purification therapy in Ayurveda, is well-known for effectively eliminating accumulated doṣas and restoring systemic homeostasis. Moreover, Panchakarma has a profound impact on the nāḍīs (subtle channels) and prāṇa (vital life force), playing a vital role in rebalancing the chakras and aligning the subtle body. This narrative review investigates the relationship between Ayurvedic Panchakarma and chakra theory, offering a theoretical framework that links specific therapies such as Vamana, Virechana, Basti, Nasya, and Raktamokṣaṇa with their respective chakric imbalances. Each therapy is examined for its effectiveness in balancing doṣas and regulating prāṇa, as well as its capacity to facilitate chakra purification and activation. The review also emphasizes the significance of sattva, mind-body integration, and spiritual readiness fostered through Panchakarma, positioning it as an effective preparatory practice for advanced yogic activities like meditation and prāṇāyāma. While there is classical support for this subtle application, the article stresses the necessity for interdisciplinary research to substantiate this integrative methodology within clinical and wellness environments.

KEYWORDS: Śaḍcakra (Six Chakras), Chakra Balancing, Ayurvedic Detoxification, Prāṇa and Nāḍīs, Doṣa Imbalance, Energy Healing, Mind-Body Medicine.

INTRODUCTION

In the practices of Ayurveda and Yoga, the human body is viewed as a complex entity that transcends mere physicality, consisting of sharīra (body), manas (mind), and ātman (spirit). One significant framework that encapsulates this intricate nature is the system of Śaḍcakra, which identifies six primary chakras: Mūlādhāra, Svādhiṣṭhāna, Maṇipūra, Anāhata, Viśuddha, and Ājñā. Each of these chakras is believed to influence particular physiological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of an individual's being.^[1]

Panchakarma, a fundamental component of Ayurvedic detoxification and rejuvenation techniques, consists of five key procedures: Vamana, Virechana, Basti, Nasya, and Raktamokṣaṇa. Although its main objective is to eliminate doṣas, there is a growing acknowledgment of these therapies' impact on achieving psychosomatic equilibrium and enhancing prāṇic flow. This review explores the relationship between the cakras and Panchakarma, suggesting that Ayurvedic therapies may

contribute to the realignment of these essential energy centers.^[2]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**Aim**

- To explore the interrelationship between Śaḍcakra (chakras) and Panchakarma therapy in Ayurveda, and how Panchakarma may be utilized for chakra balancing and psycho-spiritual healing.

Objectives

- To describe the physiological and subtle functions of each of the six chakras in relation to Ayurvedic concepts.
- To analyze the impact of Panchakarma therapies on the body's doṣas, nāḍīs, and prāṇa.
- To correlate each Panchakarma modality with specific chakra imbalances.
- To examine the role of Panchakarma in managing psychosomatic disorders through chakra

rebalancing.

- To suggest a theoretical framework integrating Panchakarma with chakra-based therapy protocols.
- Materials and Methods

This is a narrative review based on classical Ayurvedic texts, modern yoga literature, and contemporary integrative medicine sources. The methodology involved:

Textual Review: Classical texts such as Charaka Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, and Yoga Upanishads were examined to identify correlations between doṣas, nāḍīs, prāṇa, and cakras.

Modern Literature Review: Books and journal articles on Ayurvedic Panchakarma, chakra theory, and mind-body medicine were analyzed to support theoretical integration.

Understanding Śaḍcakra: Yogic and Ayurvedic Context

Chakra	Location	Element	Function	Associated Doṣa
Mūlādhāra	Base of spine	Earth	Stability, survival, grounding	Kapha
Svādhiṣṭhāna	Sacral region	Water	Creativity, reproduction, fluid balance	Kapha–Pitta
Maṇipūra	Navel/Solar plexus	Fire	Digestion, power, transformation	Pitta
Anāhata	Heart	Air	Love, emotional balance	Vāta–Pitta
Viśuddha	Throat	Ether	Communication, expression	Vāta–Kapha
Ājñā	Between eyebrows	Mind	Intuition, perception, higher knowledge	Tridoṣa

When the cakra function is interrupted, individuals may experience both mental and physical imbalances. These disturbances are frequently associated with imbalances in the doṣas, which means they can often be effectively addressed through the practice of Panchakarma.^[3]

Panchakarma: Ayurvedic Detoxification and its Subtle Role.^[4,5]

Panchakarma eliminates āmā (toxins) and restores agni (digestive fire), thereby revitalizing physical and mental faculties. Each therapy also influences subtle channels (nāḍīs) and can impact cakra activation and alignment.

1. Vamana (Therapeutic Emesis)

- Best suited for Kapha disorders—blocks in Mūlādhāra and Svādhiṣṭhāna.
- Enhances clarity, lightness, and flow of prāṇa.
- Emotionally clears stored grief and attachments.

2. Virechana (Purgation Therapy)

- Targets Pitta-related blocks, especially Maṇipūra.
- Improves emotional digestion, personal power, and will.
- Detoxifies liver and intestines—seat of transformation.

3. Basti (Medicated Enema)

- Works on Vāta, governing Anāhata, Viśuddha, and Ājñā cakras.
- Rebalances the nervous system, calms mental restlessness.
- Enhances elimination and rejuvenates prāṇa vāyu.

4. Nasya (Nasal Therapy)

- Clears head and throat region (Viśuddha and Ājñā).
- Improves clarity, speech, mental focus.
- Channels subtle prāṇa into upper cakras.

5. Raktamokṣaṇa (Bloodletting)

Supports cleansing of Anāhata, removing impurities affecting emotions. Balances excess heat in blood (Pitta), supporting heart chakra purification.

Balancing Śaḍcakra through Panchakarma

The Śaḍcakra, or six cakras, are essential psycho-energetic centers that are aligned along the spine and play important roles in various physical, emotional, and spiritual functions. Traditional practices such as yoga, meditation, and prāṇāyāma are commonly utilized to stimulate and balance these cakras. In addition, Panchakarma serves as a significant preparatory and supportive approach by detoxifying the body and reestablishing the balance of doṣas, which can hinder the proper functioning of the cakras. Ayurveda conceptualizes health as a state of equilibrium among doṣas, dhātus (tissues), malas (waste), agni (digestive fire), and manas (mind). These components also affect the flow of prāṇa through nāḍīs, which meet at the cakras. When there is an imbalance in doṣas or the accumulation of āmā (toxins), it can obstruct the flow of prāṇa, resulting in psychosomatic issues related to specific cakras. Panchakarma effectively removes these obstructions and fosters a return to harmony.^[5]

Below is a detailed exploration of how Panchakarma therapies correspond with each chakra:

1. Mūlādhāra Chakra (Root Chakra) – Earth Element^[6]

Associated Issues: Fear, insecurity, lack of grounding, chronic constipation, lower back pain
Doṣa Link: Predominantly Kapha and Vāta

Balancing Therapy

- Vamana – Clears Kapha congestion and emotional stagnation

- Snehana + Svedana – Grounding and nourishing
- Basti (Nirūha) – Stabilizes Vāta in pelvic region
Effect: Promotes physical stability, security, and rootedness

2. Svādhiṣṭhāna Chakra (Sacral Chakra) – Water Element^[7]

Associated Issues: Reproductive issues, suppressed emotions, guilt, addiction Doṣa Link: Kapha-Pitta

Balancing Therapy

- Virechana – Clears excess Pitta affecting reproductive organs
 - Basti (Anuvāsana) – Nourishes apāna vāyu
 - Nasya – To uplift and stabilize emotional energy
- Effect: Restores emotional fluidity, creativity, and sensual vitality

3. Maṇipūra Chakra (Solar Plexus Chakra) – Fire Element^[8]

Associated Issues: Digestive disorders, anger, lack of willpower, metabolic disorders Doṣa Link: Pitta

Balancing Therapy

- Virechana – Main therapy to remove Pitta from liver, intestines
 - Svedana – To regulate agni and remove blocks
- Effect: Strengthens digestive fire, enhances confidence, and empowers personal will

4. Anāhata Chakra (Heart Chakra) – Air Element

Associated Issues: Grief, emotional pain, asthma, heart problems Doṣa Link: Vāta-Pitta

Balancing Therapy

- Basti (Nirūha) – Calms prāṇa and vyāna vāyu

- Raktamokṣaṇa – Clears blood heat and emotional congestion
 - Snehana – Supports emotional nourishment
- Effect: Enhances love, compassion, forgiveness, and emotional balance

5. Viśuddha Chakra (Throat Chakra) – Ether Element

Associated Issues: Thyroid imbalance, communication issues, rigidity in expression

Doṣa Link: Vāta-Kapha Balancing Therapy:

- Nasya – Directly clears channels in the head and throat
- Basti – Balances vāta contributing to nervous blockage

Effect: Improves articulation, creativity, and emotional release through communication.

6. Ājñā Chakra (Third Eye Chakra) – Mind Element

Associated Issues: Confusion, poor memory, sleep disorders, lack of intuition Doṣa Link: Tridoṣa (with dominant Vāta)

Balancing Therapy

- Nasya – Enhances clarity, memory, and concentration
 - Basti (mātar basti) – Nourishes mind via apāna-vāta stabilization
 - Shirodhara (supportive therapy) – Calms central nervous system
- Effect: Promotes wisdom, perception, insight, and higher consciousness.

Integrated Framework: Panchakarma + Chakra Healing

Chakra	Blocked Doṣa	Primary Panchakarma	Supportive Modalities
Mūlādhāra	Kapha/Vāta	Vamana, Basti	Grounding āsanās, sesame oil
Svādhiṣṭhāna	Kapha/Pitta	Virechana, Anuvāsana Basti	Dance therapy, creative work
Maṇipūra	Pitta	Virechana	Agni dīpana herbs, solar prāṇāyāma
Anāhata	Vāta/Pitta	Nirūha Basti, Raktamokṣaṇa	Heart-opening meditations
Viśuddha	Vāta/Kapha	Nasya, Basti	Chanting, expression therapy
Ājñā	Tridoṣa	Nasya, Shirodhara, Basti	Dhyāna, trataka, silence

The process of balancing the Śaḍcakra through Panchakarma is a genuine therapeutic alignment of physical, mental, and energetic systems rather than a mere symbolic gesture. When Panchakarma is conducted in a sattvic atmosphere, combined with mindfulness, appropriate lifestyle choices, and clear intentions, it has

the capacity to eliminate profound energetic obstructions and stimulate elevated states of consciousness. This methodology emphasizes the interconnectedness of the body, mind, and spirit, which is fundamental to the principles of Ayurveda.^[9]

Mechanism of Chakra Balancing via Panchakarma

Panchakarma	Target Chakra(s)	Primary Doṣa	Effect on Prāṇa and Manas
Vamana	Mūlādhāra, Svādhiṣṭhāna	Kapha	Uplifts grounded energy
Virechana	Maṇipūra	Pitta	Clears mental/emotional heat
Basti	Anāhata, Ājñā, Viśuddha	Vāta	Balances prāṇa, calms mind
Nasya	Ājñā, Viśuddha	Tridoṣa	Enhances intuition & expression
Raktamokṣaṇa	Anāhata	Pitta	Purifies heart emotions

DISCUSSION

The combination of Ayurveda's Panchakarma system and the energetic model of Śaḍcakra provides a distinctive perspective for holistically addressing imbalances in the physical, psychological, and spiritual realms. Unlike conventional medicine, which often focuses on specific symptoms or organ systems in isolation, Ayurveda recognizes the interconnected nature of health, mental clarity, and the flow of energy. This review elucidates the role of Panchakarma, demonstrating that it serves not merely as a detoxification method but also as a means of aligning the subtle body and harmonizing the chakras.^[10]

From a traditional perspective, imbalances in doṣas—especially Vāta—are believed to hinder the flow of prāṇa through the nāḍīs. Given that chakras are positioned along the suṣūmṇā nāḍī, which is influenced by prāṇa, any accumulation of doṣas can result in either stagnation or excessive activity within a chakra. This is evident in clinical manifestations such as emotional instability related to Anāhata dysfunction, difficulties in digestion and assertiveness linked to a Maṇipūra block, or issues like confusion and insomnia associated with an Ājñā imbalance.^[11]

Each Panchakarma therapy targets not only a specific dosha and area of the body but also influences the manovaha srotas (mental channels) and prāṇavaha srotas (vital energy channels). For instance, Nasya, which is focused on the head, significantly affects cognitive functions, memory, expression, and consciousness, thereby aiding in the balance of the Viśuddha and Ājñā chakras. In a similar manner, Basti, which is primarily designed to calm Vāta in the colon, has been shown to have beneficial effects on nervous system disorders, anxiety, and fertility, linking it to the regulation of the Anāhata and Svādhiṣṭhāna chakras.^[12]

Recent studies suggest that detoxification plays a crucial role in regulating neuroendocrine balance, modulating the gut-brain axis, and influencing psychoneuroimmunological processes—concepts that align with chakra-based frameworks of holistic health. For example, emotional trauma affecting the heart chakra (Anāhata) can lead to issues such as autonomic dysregulation and inflammation.^[13] These conditions may be addressed through therapies such as Raktamokṣaṇa and Virechana, especially when coupled with appropriate Ayurvedic psychotherapy known as satvavajaya cikitsā. Additionally, Panchakarma is known to enhance sattva guṇa, which pertains to qualities of purity, harmony, and clarity.^[14] Sattva is vital for engaging in subtle body practices such as dhyāna (meditation), pratyāhāra (withdrawal of senses), and dhāraṇā (focus)—all of which are necessary for activating and sustaining chakra alignment. The elimination of āmā not only resolves physical blockages but also enhances the perception of energy, thereby making practices like chakra meditation more effective.^[15]

Seasonal Panchakarma therapies, such as Virechana in the spring or Basti during the rainy season, correspond with the natural rhythms of both the body and the universe, which can facilitate transitions in energetic patterns. This idea is echoed in Yogic philosophy, which posits that energetic transitions are more likely to happen during specific periods of the year or day, particularly in relation to chakra-based spiritual practices.^[16] Despite the potential benefits, there is a lack of clinical research explicitly establishing a connection between Panchakarma and chakra balancing. The majority of findings are based on personal accounts or anecdotal evidence derived from individual healing experiences. However, the inclusion of objective measures such as heart rate variability (HRV), electroencephalography (EEG), quality-of-life assessments, and psychological evaluations could help substantiate the effectiveness of Panchakarma in promoting subtle body healing and establish a scientific foundation for chakra-oriented therapies.^[17]

CONCLUSION

The combination of Panchakarma therapy with the energetic framework of Śaḍcakra provides a comprehensive and multifaceted approach to healing that goes beyond conventional physical medicine. Traditionally used to address aggravated doṣas and āmā, Panchakarma also plays a role in influencing prāṇic flow, mental stability, and the overall harmony of the subtle body, making it an effective method for balancing the chakras. Each of the six chakras is linked to particular physiological areas, emotional experiences, and elemental energies, all intricately regulated by the interaction of Vāta, Pitta, and Kapha. When customized appropriately, Panchakarma therapies can help release blocked energy, restore harmony within the nāḍīs, and revitalize both the body and mind. For example, Virechana aids in clearing Pitta and releases repressed anger associated with the Maṇipūra chakra, while Nasya enhances the Viśuddha and Ājñā chakras, promoting clarity, intuition, and communication. This analysis highlights that Panchakarma not only prepares individuals for advanced yogic practices but also acts as a significant method for re-aligning internal energy centers, facilitating sattva (clarity), well-being, and spiritual growth. This integrative model is particularly pertinent for addressing contemporary psychosomatic issues such as anxiety, depression, emotional trauma, infertility, and autoimmune conditions, many of which have both physical and energetic components. Although classical Ayurvedic texts provide indirect support for these connections, further structured clinical and interdisciplinary research is essential to authenticate these ancient perspectives. The amalgamation of chakra diagnostics, Panchakarma therapy, yoga practices, and modern psychophysiology has the potential to pave the way for new therapeutic options in both preventive and restorative healthcare.

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