

ANCIENT REMEDIES IN A MODERN WORLD

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*shares her insight into the
world of Ayurvedic skincare with
PROFESSIONAL BEAUTY.*

Ancient remedies are as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago, particularly with increasing knowledge surrounding artificial and chemical ingredients which can be detrimental to the skin and our general wellbeing.

Ayurvedic skincare products and protocols are on the rise thanks to the availability of numerous potent skin rasayanas (rasa - essence, ayana - enter). Skin rasayanas have earned their name because they can deliver holistic benefits to the skin without side effects or damage.

The value of rasayanas is maximised when they are used in natural topical formulations in combination with emollients such as milk, cream, yogurt or honey – or exfoliating substances such as natural clay, salts, grains, lentil flours, vegetable base oils, floral waters and pure vegetable oils which act as the 'yogavahi' (the carrier which delivers the benefits of the herbs to the skin).

Both the herbs themselves and other ingredients in the formulations can be chosen for a specific skin type, or balanced to suit all skin types. Formulations that are 'tridoshic' (suitable for all skin types) generally have many more added herbs and ingredients to avoid aggravating an individual 'dosha' (body type). The herbs should not be exposed to high temperatures, and should be fresh and of high quality. Formulations that add herbs to chemical bases or that contain artificial preservatives

or fragrances are not as effective in maintaining skin health and appearance, because the herbs in such formulations are not as active or have been processed.

Vata skin, which is space or air predominant, is delicate and tends to be naturally dry. Skin rasayanas that benefit Vata types are mainly nourishing, with subsidiary benefits such as enhancing natural glow or purifying the skin. Such herbs also balance Vata dosha by calming and settling the mind and supporting stress management and mind and body coordination so that the ravages of worry and excessive mental pressure do not show on

the skin as fine lines, sagging and bags under the eyes. Nourishment and deep, ongoing rehydration is essential if Vata skin is to look healthy, plump and youthful.

Brahmi (Bacopa), Shatavari (Indian asparagus), Amla (Indian gooseberry), Gotu kola (Indian pennywort) and Ashwagandha (winter cherry) are potent Vata-pacifying skin rasayanas that help support skin elasticity, moisture balance, texture and radiance. They are ultra-nourishing, help to regenerate skin cells and keep skin looking youthful. Triphala, made from equal parts of Indian gooseberry, Beleric Myrobalan and

Chebulic Myrobalan, are also excellent for Vata skin because it combines nourishment with a gentle detoxifying effect to enhance skin clarity.

Pitta skin, which is fire-predominant, is sensitive and generally neither dry nor oily. Skin rasayanas that support the health of Pitta skin are mainly cooling and soothing, with some element of nourishing and purification as well. These rasayanas also balance Pitta by regulating emotions and strengthening the heart and mind so that inner serenity and emotional balance are reflected on the skin as a healthy glow, and angry eruptions and redness are avoided by the inclusion of herbs that help cool and calm the skin. Pitta skin also requires protection, because it tends to be more photo-sensitive than other types of skin.

Amla, Bhringaraj (Eclipta alba), Kumari (aloe vera), white sandalwood, red sandalwood and Lajawanti (Mimosa Pudica) are considered to be Pitta-pacifying skin rasayanas. They draw out excess heat, support the skin's natural ability to withstand the ravages of the environment and keep skin clear and healthy. They nourish sensitive skin without irritating it. Triphala, Manjistha (Indian Madder) and Neem are also helpful for Pitta skin because they purify and clarify the skin without depleting it of moisture or youthfulness.

Kapha skin, water or earth predominant, is oily, and tends to be congested and susceptible to attracting dust and grime. Skin rasayanas for Kapha skin purify, detoxify and clarify whilst also nourishing and rejuvenating. These herbs also help balance Kapha dosha by reducing the congestion that dulls Kapha skin.

Neem, Manjistha (Indian Madder), Triphala, Tulsi (Holy basil), cloves and turmeric are potent Kapha-balancing skin rasayanas. They help detoxify the skin while nourishing it at the same time. They balance oil content to enhance clarity and brightness.

Tridoshic formulations (for all skin types) draw on skin rasayanas from each group to offer the combined benefits of nourishment, detoxification, protection and balanced temperature. Ayurvedic formulations in the form lotions and creams do not contain water, therefore they appear thick in consistency. The base is generally oil and beeswax in which herbs are infused for maximum potency. Massaging in the cream or lotion helps the skin to absorb the goodness of the herbs and ingredients. **PB**



POPULAR AYURVEDIC HERBS:

Turmeric: brightens the skin

White Sandalwood: improves skin ailments and alleviates allergies.

Red Sandalwood: helps to calm and soothe skin

Neem: deeply cleanses the skin

Basil: rich in beta-carotene and vitamin A, basil helps reduce the appearance of scars and blemishes

Aloe Vera: soothes skin and helps reduce irritation.

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