

## SENSITIVE DRY SKIN (VATA)

Delicate skins that tend to be dry belong to the Vata skin type. 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 in the physiology, calming and settling the mind and supporting stress management, which are often manifested as fine lines, sagging and bags under the eyes.

To help you appreciate some of the unique ingredients used to address this skin type here is a list of some of the ingredients you will find:

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, helping 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. Topical formulations for Vata skin infuses these herbs with nourishing oils using traditional methodology that make the formulation effective.

## NORMAL TO SENSITIVE SKIN (PITTA)

Pitta skin is predominantly sensitive and is 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 purifying as well. These rasayanas also balance Pitta in the physiology, balancing the emotions and inducing inner serenity and emotional balance that are reflected on the skin as a calmer skin. Pitta skin also requires protection, because it tends to be more photosensitive than other types of skin. Ingredients to look for are:

Amla, Bhringaraj (Eclipta alba), Kumari (aloe vera), White Sandalwood, Red Sandalwood and Lajawanti (Mimosa Pudica) are considered the pre-eminent 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 tissue 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. Topical formulations for Pitta skin combine these herbs with soothing oils.

## OILY SKIN (KAPHA)

Kapha skin is predominantly oily, congested. Skin rasayanas for Kapha skin are therefore first purifiers that detoxify and clarify, with subsidiary properties of being nourishing and rejuvenating. These herbs also balance Kapha dosha in the physiology, invigorating the mind and body so that the skin appears alive and vital, reducing the congestion that dulls Kapha skin.

### Ingredients include:

Neem, Manjistha (Indian Madder), Triphala, Tulsi (Holy Basil), Cloves and Turmeric are potent Kapha-balancing skin rasayanas.

# Ayurvedic approach to Beauty using Ancient Remedies in a Modern World

by Yasmin Sadikot

Ancient remedies are as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago. More so with the increasing knowledge that artificial and chemical ingredients can be detrimental, not only to the skin, but for general wellbeing as well. What is put on the skin is absorbed, as the skin is the largest organ of the body. Skin is an outer protective covering which protects the face, body and scalp. One of the main reasons that Ayurvedic skincare products and protocols are becoming highly popular worldwide is due to the availability of numerous potent skin rasayanas in the Ayurvedic herbal treasury.

Skin rasayanas (*rasa* meaning essence and *ayana* meaning enter) are so called because of their ability to deliver penetrating holistic benefits to the skin without side effects. Whatever the skin type and its needs for balance, there are Ayurvedic skin rasayanas that can help. Further, when used in combination, as dictated by Ayurvedic tradition, there is the added benefit of synergy, with the combined formulation being exponentially more beneficial than any single herb in the formulation. These rasayanas should be seen as nutritional supplements to provide support to the skin, face, body and hair in topical formulations where the benefits are delivered transdermally. It should be noted that true Ayurvedic formulations for internal or external use are only effective when used in combination with other herbs to help alleviate or balance a problem.

The therapeutic value of the rasayanas is maximised when they are used in natural topical formulations in combination with emollients such as milk, cream, yoghurt or honey, exfoliating substances such as natural clay, salts, grain or lentil flours, vegetable base oils, and floral waters or pure vegetable oils. In this way they release the healing values of the herbs to the cells and tissues. Both the herbs themselves, as well as the other ingredients in the formulations, can be chosen specifically for a skin type, or balanced to suit all skin types.

Formulations that are classified as tridoshic are suitable for all skin types and generally have many more herbs and ingredients to avoid aggravating an individual body type known as dosha. The herbs should be fresh, high quality and not exposed to high temperatures. Formulations that add herbs to chemical bases or that contain artificial preservatives or fragrances are not as effective in maintaining skin health and appearance, just as processed food is said to have less nutrients than fresh food.



They help detoxify the skin while nourishing it at the same time. They balance oil content in the skin and enhance clarity and brightness. Because of their effective detoxification properties, these rasayanas keep Kapha skin squeaky clean, so that it stays healthy and naturally radiant. Topical formulations for Kapha skin combine these herbs with light oils.

Tridoshic formulations (which means for all skin types) draw on skin rasayanas from each group to offer the combined benefits of nourishment, detoxification, protection and balanced temperature.

Another important thing to remember is that Ayurvedic formulations such as creams and lotions do not have water in them, therefore they appear to be thick in consistency. The base is generally oil and beeswax in which herbs are infused for maximum potency. The importance of this is that they should be viewed as concentrates and can be made lighter on application by using wet fingertips to massage them in. Massaging the cream or lotion helps the skin to absorb the goodness and impart the benefits. Some herbs have strong colours like turmeric, red sandalwood, manjishta (madder), saffron. Products made to traditional formulations will reflect the herbs used in them as well as their aromas.

### HERE ARE A FEW OTHER AYURVEDIC HERBS THAT ARE FREQUENTLY USED IN BEAUTYCARE:

**Turmeric (Haldi) – Curucuma Longa:** Turmeric is mainly used to ensure a glowing, bright skin. Turmeric facemasks are extensively available for their skin-friendly treatment that prevents bacterial infection. Turmeric pastes are beneficial for pigmentation, restore pH balance and can be used on face and body to enhance the complexion and brightness of skin.

**White Sandalwood (Chandan) – Santalum Album:** The external application of chandan is through oil, powder and paste derived from the herb. The aromatic essence of chandan has made it a favourite of the beauty industry. It possesses various soothing qualities that effectively work to improve skin ailments and alleviate allergies. Herbal facemasks and scrubs made from sandalwood powder effectively cleanse and cool the skin.

**Red Sandalwood (Rakta Chandana) – Pterocarpus santalinus:** Red sandalwood powder is used for facial tonics, creams and lotions. It has antiseptic properties and is used for healing wounds and also has calming and cooling properties.

**Neem – Azadirachta indica:** This herb is used as a skin cleanser for acne, psoriasis and eczema-inflicted skins and to treat common hair problems like dandruff.

**Basil (tulsi) – Ocimum sanctum:** Effective against scars and blemishes. Basil leaves contain many health benefits such as eugenol, citronellol, linalool, citral, limonene and terpineol. These compounds are known to have anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties. The Basil herb contains exceptionally high levels of beta-carotene, vitamin A, cryptoxanthin, lutein and zeaxanthin. These compounds help act as protective scavengers against oxygen-derived free radicals and reactive oxygen species (ROS) that play a role in ageing.

**Aloe Vera:** This is used in many skincare formulations. It is beneficial for skin irritations and scars. The primal effect of this herb comes from its soothing properties. **APJ**

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