



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY HEALTH SCIENCES

ISSN: 2394 9406

## Review Article

### Concept of *Udvartanam*

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**Abstract:** *Udvartan* is narrated in many *Samhitas* as a part of *dinacharya* (daily regime of personal hygiene) and part of treatment for obesity & emaciation and many dermatological diseases. It is a very significant procedure in *panchakarma*. Before starting any type of research, an Ayurvedic research scholar is required to go through critical literary review. This is a lantern in the direction of the pathway of that particular work. This review article deals with *nirukti* (Origin) *paribhasha* (definition), classification, benefits, procedure, modern review of the *Udvartan* and hypothetic reasoning of its action on the basis of *samanya-vishesh siddhanta*.

**Key words:** *Udvartanam, Medavilayan, Srotas, Samanya-Vishesh Siddhanta*

## Introduction:

*Ayurveda*, the science of life, has given much importance to primary and secondary preventions of diseases. In *Samhita* the various procedures are implemented under *Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya*, which is a part of *Swasthavritta Palana Siddhanta*, and explains the prevention of diseases at different levels. The procedures like *Udvartana*, *Abhyanga*, *Vyayama*, are explained in *Dinacharya* with an aim of maintaining one's own physique. By considering the benefits of *Udvartana* it is an ideal procedure for many diseases like obesity, dermatological diseases (and other *khapha vata* related conditions). *Udvartana* is defined in very short which requires to be highlighted and described broadly. Hence, this review deals with *nirukti* (derivation), *paribhasha* (definition), classification, benefits, procedure, and modern review of *udvartan* and hypothetical reasoning of its action on the basis of *samanya-vishesh siddhanta*.

**Aims and Objectives:** To review *Udvartana* from available compendia, various texts, journals and its allied modern literature.

**Material and Methods:** Various *Ayurveda* compendia with their commentaries by different others, various text books journals, dissertations, web search and peer review journals were revised to acquire the present knowledge of this topic.

## Nirukthi:

The word '*Udvartana*' is derived from *ud + vrith + bhavae + karaneva lyud*  
This means *vilepana or Gharshana*.

Different meanings of *Udvartana* from the *Sanskrit Dictionary - Monier Monier Williams* are as follows:

- Rubbing
- Rubbing or kneading the body
- The act of rising
- Going up
- Ascending
- Increasing
- Laminating
- Grinding
- Pounding
- Causing
- The springing up the plants or grain
- To shuffle
- To smearing with fragrant powder

## Paribhasha:

The word *Udvartana* is self-explanatory. The simple procedure of massaging the oil or powders of herbs in direction opposite to the hair follicle over the body is called *Udvartana*. *Udvartana* is a procedure of applying powders of herbs to the skin and rubbing it to form wicks with gentle strokes directing towards heart, with the palm evenly spread on the surface of the skin.

Monier Monier William states in his *Sanskrit dictionary*, meaning of '*Udvartana*' as rubbing to cleanse the body with fragrant powders.

*Venimadhav Shastri Joshi* states in his *Ayurveda Mahakosha*, meaning of '*Udvartana*' as

1. *Gatramardnam (dravyam kriya cha)*
2. *Twakgharshnam*

While understanding the process of '*Udvartana*' through the *Samhita*, it is observed that there are various words used to explain the meaning of '*Udvartana*'.

*Amarakosha* in 2/6/121 states that 'Udvartana' and 'Utsadana' are synonymous.

*Udvartane utstadane dve same/*

In *Charaka Samhita* and *Ashtang Hriday*, the word, 'Shariraparimarjanam' also indicates 'Udvartana'.

In simple words, *Udvartana* means rubbing of the body. It is a cleaning procedure. It cleanses *kleda* (waste products) of skin by using fragrant drugs. The concept of *Udvartana* is as rightly explained in the oldest text *Charaka Samhita* and almost all the other *Samhitas*.

### 1. *Charaka Samhita* (Ch. Sa.):

*Acharya Caraka* in *Sutrasthan* (Su) explains *Udvartana* in the context of *Matrashitiya Adhyaya in Swasthavritta Chatushka* as *Sharira Parimarjana*. He says that

*Dourgandhyam gauravam tandra  
kandumalrochkam/  
Swedvibhstata hanti sharirparimarjnam//  
Ch. Su. 5/93*

*Parimarjnam udvartnam eti/ Chakrapani*

It destroys *Sharira Dourgandhya* (Body odour), *Gurutwa* (heaviness), *Tandra* (drowsiness), *Kandu* (itching), *Arochaka* (anorexia), *Sweda* (sweating), etc.

### 2. *Sushruta Samhita* (Su. Sa.):

*Acharya Sushruta* explains *Udvartana* as *Udvartanam vataharam kaphamedovilapanam/*

*Sthirikaran anganam twakprasadkaram param/*

*Siramukhviviktatwam twakthasthagnech tejanam/*

*Uddharshastadanabhyam jayetamsashayam/*

*Utsadanat bhavet stinam vishesat kantimdwapuh//*

*Praharshsoubhagyamrujalaghvadi gunanvitam/*

*Uddhrshanam tu vidyeyam kandu kothanilapaham/ Su. Chi 24/51-56*

It helps to maintain *Prakrutatva* of *Vayu* by pacifying increased or vitiated *Vayu*. It decreases the fat and *Vikruta Kapha*. It cleans and provides smoothness to the skin and firmness to the body. He further mentions that it also dilates the orifices of *Sira* and stimulates *Bhrajaka Pitta*. He is the first person to document the types of *Udvartana*.

### 3. *Astang Hridaya* (A. Hr.):

*Udhvartnam kaphaharam medasah pravilayanam/  
Stirikaran anganam twakprasadkaram param/ A. Hr. Su. 2/15*

As per *Acharya Vagbhata*, *Udvartana* normalizes *Vikruta Kapha* and liquefies the *Meda dhatu*. It provides firmness to body, smoothness to skin and increases the complexion of the skin.

In *Sarvanga Sundari Vyakhya*, *Arundatta* describes

*Estasadhantwakthandwarudvartanam vidhite – udvartanam eti/*

*Pravilayanam – dravikarnam dravikrutya medasah shoshanamitityaatha/*

i.e. *Pravilayana* refers to the *dravikarana* of *Medas* followed by making it *Shoshana*.

*Udvartanam kashayadi churnagatrod-dhshranam/ A. Hr. Hemadri Su. 12/12*

The commentator has also mentioned about the use of *Kashayadee choorna* for *Udvartana*, hence he defines *Udvartana* as giving friction to the body by *kashayadee choorna*.

#### 4. *Yogaratanakara: Vaidyaprabha Hindi tika*

*Udvartanam kaphaharam medoghnam shukradam param/*

*Balyam shonitkrutkantitwakprasadamud-twakruta//*

In the context of 'Nitya pravruithi prakarana, 68, author has mentioned that Udvartana normalize the increased Kapha and diminishes meda dhatu. It is beneficial for Shukra dhatu, gives strength to body, increases formation of Rakta dhatu, improves complexion and smoothens the skin.

#### **Classification:**

According to Sushruta, Udvartana can be classified as two types:

1. *Udgharshana*
2. *Utsadana*

#### 1. *Udgarshana* (Reinforced friction):

*Ud + gharshana gatradi garshanam*

*Asnehaoushadh churnadibhi gharshanam/*

*Su .Sa. Chi. 24/52-56*

When dry powders of the herbs with no addition of oil or any liquid are rubbed against body then it is referred as 'udgharshana'.

It gives benefits of Vata Shamana, helps in removing *Kandu- Sphota- Pidika, Sira shodhaka, Twak gata Agni vardhaka*, and stimulates *Bhrajaka Pitta*.

Friction of body with powder excites the heat of skin (*twakasth agni*), destroys itching and rashes etc.

#### 2. *Utsadana* (Rubbing):

*Snehakalkena udgharshnam utsadanam/*

*Su .Sa. Chi. 24/52-56*

The procedure of rubbing against the body with dry powder mixed with oil, is called 'utsadana' i.e. friction of body with drugs mixed with *sneha* or medicine mixed with oil or other *dravya* in the form of *kalka* is called as *Utsadana*. The benefits of this are: it improves complexion of skin, gives good appearances, cleans, and beautifies.

According to *Vaatsyaayana*, in *Vidyasamudyeshiya Prakarana*, rubbing is one of the 64 arts recognized in India. In *Vatsyayan Kamsutra Jayamangal Tika, Trutiya Adhyay Sloka 15*, Udvartana is described as:

*Utsadane sanvahane kesmardane ch kou-shlyam eti |*

*Mardnam dvididham padabhyam hasta-bhyam ch/*

*Tatra padabhyam ath mardnam tat ustadanam uchyate/*

*Hashtabhyam yath shiroabhyang – karma tath keshmardnam/*

*Keshanam tatra madyamantvat tad-vyapadeshah sheshangeshu sanvahanam//*

This reference indicates classification again as follows,

- *Utsaadana* – rubbing done with legs.
- *Keshmardanam* – rubbing with hands.
- *Samvaahanam* – rubbing done to the parts of body other than head.

The treatment advised for *medasvita in Bheshaja Yojana Chatushka*, while describing *Ashtaunindita Adhyaya, Charaka* describes two variety of Udvartana named as

- *Snigdha udvartana*
- *Ruksha udvartana*

#### **Beneficial effects of Udvartana**

It has been said in the *Ayurvedic* literature that, *Udvartana* opens the circulatory channels, facilitates the metabolic activity

and improves the complexion in the skin. By virtue of these therapeutic effects one can obtain the following benefits from *Udvartana* treatment.

1. Alleviates vitiation of *kapha dosha*.
2. Reduces excess of fat in the body.
3. Corrects imbalance of *Vaata dosha*
4. Promotes the excellence of skin.
5. Increases the stability of extremities.
6. Leads to sense of lightness in the body.
7. Eliminates the bad body odour.
8. Reduce excessive sweating.
9. Prevents untimely drowsing.
10. Cures itching sensation.

Comparison in benefits of *Udvartana* mentioned in different *Samhita* is shown in table 1.

#### **Difference between *Abhyanga*, *Udvartana* and *Mardana*:**

The main difference of *Udvartana* from *Abhyanga* is that *Udvartana* is done in *pratiloma gati* (against hair follicles) and *Abhyanga* is done in *anuloma gati* (in the direction of hair follicles). However the main intention behind *Udvartana* is to bring about *rukshaguna* in the body.

The procedure that mimics the *Udvartana* is *Mardana*:

*Acharya Dalhana* comments *Mardana* as:

*Mardanam tu gaadham padaabhyam aarambham kati paryatnam/*

*Su .Sa. Chi. 24/83*

i.e. *mardana* is a process of giving deep pressure from foot to waist, which is in *pratiloma gati*. However *Mardana* is being considered as a type of *abhyanga* as *sneha Dravya* are used.

#### **Procedure of *Udvartana***

*Snanat purva twakgharsnarth upyujyamanam churnam amlakyaadi/ Kaphaharam medas pravilapnam shtirikaranam anganam twakprasatkaram param/ Venimadhav Shastri Joshi, Ayurveda Mahakosha,*

- The best time for *Udvartana*, as mentioned in daily regimen, is in the early morning i.e. between five and nine and before bathing.
- Bladder and bowel should be emptied.
- Blood pressure, pulse rate, heart rate and respiratory rate should be recorded.
- *Udvartana* should begin from legs, arms, chest, abdomen, and back and gluteal region and should be in upward direction i.e. centripetally.
- Generally the duration is 30 – 45 minutes.
- After *Udvartana*, patient should take rest for 15 minutes, to relax.
- After relaxation, hot water bath is advised.

*Udvartana* is an external process. Hence, knowledge about the structure and function of the skin, anatomy and *marma vidnyan* (important vital points of body) is essential.

#### **Rubbing – Mode of Action**

Rubbing helps in the absorption of effusions, relief of blood stasis and carrying away the morbid products in the system. Deep pressure massage helps the interchange of tissue fluids by increasing the circulation in the superficial vein and lymphatic. The pressure helps the contents of the vessels move towards the heart, if applied strongly and quickly, it has a stimulating effect. It increases nutrition in all tissues. It removes fatigue, carrying

away the increased products of combustion. Also it assists the absorption of serous fluid. Important qualities of rubbing are –

- It has got great influence on the muscles. It gives them a mechanical stimulation causing them to contract
- It increases circulation mainly in the veins. The alternate pressure and relaxation brings fresh blood to the part
- It improves the nutrition of the particular area
- It raises temperature locally
- It increases elimination of waste products
- It increases secretion and absorption
- It improves the condition of the nervous system by stimulating the cutaneous nerve endings
- It influences the general metabolism when applied on large areas
- Helps to breakdown thickening and adhesions in sub-acute and chronic conditions
- Also helps in the reabsorption of inflammatory products and absorption of fat in fatty tissues.

When rubbing is done lightly on the nerves for a short time it stimulates them. If applied down on each side of the spinal column stimulates the spinal nerves and in a reflex way strengthens the heart. It affects the vasomotor nerves and there by widens the blood vessels also influences the secretory nerves for increasing their function.

#### **Physiological effect of rubbing:**

The pressure of deep massage exerts a simultaneous influence upon all the tissue

of the body within it reach upon the skin, fasciae, muscles, peripheral nerves, blood vessels, lymphatic and central nervous system. Further it accelerates the activity of the heart, helps the assimilation of food and influences general metabolism of the body. As the skin covers nearly the whole body its surface is affected by massage as well as the structures, which lie beneath it. It increases the cutaneous circulation and benefits the sensory nerve ending and influences the vasoconstrictors and vasodilators in the skin.

The effect of rubbing upon muscle tissue is of vast importance. This affects removal of fatigue products. Muscles in action exert a kind of massage upon each other. Ordinary movements of the voluntary muscle are a means of accelerating the blood by their alternate contractions and relaxations. At every contraction blood is pressed out of the muscle, at the same time it receives an impulse to return to the heart, while during each relaxation fresh blood comes to the muscle. Muscular fatigue from over exertion can be relieved by massage. Toxic materials must be removed from the tissues in order to restore the normal functions of the body and this can be accomplished by rubbing.

Influence of rubbing upon the circulation of fluid is also of great importance. Both the venous and lymphatic circulations are accelerated towards the heart. Deep manipulations cause the veins and lymphatic to be mechanically emptied and the fluid cannot return on account of the valves within the vessels. More space is thus made for blood returning from the deeper parts.

The rubbing may be said to act both by pressure and by suction. Massage

diminishes the blood pressure without increasing the activity of the heart. But the blood vessels are relaxed, distended and stretched by this. So that it can be said that circulation of blood gets improved without overworking of heart. The stored amount of blood may be brought in the systemic circulation instead of them remaining dormant in the stored system.

Lymph flow is helped by rubbing exercises for the limbs both, passive and active, increases the lymph flow. But prolonged inactivity tends to impend normal nutrition because of defective drainage by lymphatic.

Rubbing stimulates both motor and sensory nerve endings to various parts of the body. This stimulation is carried along the sensory fibers of a nerve to the spinal cord and hence to the brain.

Motion of the molecules participates in chemical activity. It is known that all materials participating in nutrition and support of the vital powers undergo radial chemical changes in their course through the organism and that it is only by and through these chemical processes of composition and decomposition that the evolution of vital power in any of its form is possible. The motion of the circulating fluids, vascular and intravascular is necessary to bring the elements for chemical change. Motions secure impact between the separate and distinct molecules. This impact converts motor into chemical energy. The special and energetic use of pressure motions is therefore the first and natural means adapted to overcome the effects. Ill health co-exists with the presence of sub-oxides, and that the degree of health, is measured by degree in which the oxidizing purpose

of the system is attained. The true remedial relevancy of rubbing is readily seen, since its purpose and effects is to increase the degree of oxidation, to convert sub-oxides into complete oxides, which only are compatible with health.

A short gentle stimulation applied to nerves containing both vasoconstrictors and vasodilators tends to produce a contraction of blood vessels but a strong and continuous stimulation will produce dilatation, the skin becomes red and the part feels warm. Rubbing is an excellent form of passive exercise. It is a part of physiotherapy, which will relieve pain, improve the strength and mobility.

#### **Discussion:**

The principle objective of *Ayurveda* is not only to cure but to prevent diseases. In different classics *Udvartana* is mentioned as a daily regimen as well as the part of treatment also. Many qualities are described about *Udvartana*. An important property is, it reduces *kapha*, *vata* and excess accumulation of *meda*. This literary study gives us proper idea about the procedure and its benefits.

#### **Liquefaction of subcutaneous fat (Medavilayana):**

*Udvartana* process possesses *kapha-medavilayana* property. If any *Ruksha* drug is used as *udvartana dravya*, the effect of *medavilayana* occurs. To enhance this *medavilayana* property, *katutikta rasatmak*, *ushnaviryatmak laghu ruksha*, *tikshna gunatmak udvartana dravya* should be selected. We can explain the *medovilayana* process on the basis of *samanya vishesh siddhant*.

*Sarvada sarvabhavanam samanyam vrudhikaranam Hrashetuvishecha pravrutu ubhaystu || Ch. Su. 1/44*

According to this *siddhant*, *udvartna* process acts as *kriya vishesh* and *Udvartandravya* acts as *gunavishesh* as well as *kriya vishesh* (quite opposite properties of *dravya* i.e used drug)

Acharya Sushruta mentions:

*Siramukhviviktatwam twaksthasthaangech tejanam| Su. Chi. 24/51-56*

It clearly indicates that *udvartana* dilates *siramukh*. We may say here that it also dilates veins i.e. *sira* and it increases the temperature of the skin (*tvakastha Agni*). Thus, *Udvartana* increases complexion of skin (*twak prasadan*) if we use either *snigdha* or *ruksha dravyas* according to skin type in a proper way.

1. *Gharshan* (friction) of drug to *twacha* (skin) occurs. This leads to increase in local *ushma* (temperature) due to which dilatation of *sira* (veins) and *siramukh vishodhan* (relives obstruction of skin pores) occurs.
2. *Twakastha agni* gets stimulated. This leads to absorption and digestion of the drug and further to *pravilayana* of *medha dhatu* (liquefaction of subcutaneous fat) below *twacha* may occurs.
3. *Medadhatu* and *kapha* have *ashraya-ashrayibhav* (connection or correlation between *khapha* and *meda dhatu*). They have *snigdha, sheet, guru, sthira,* and *picchila guna* (properties).
4. If selected *dravyas* have *katutiktarasa, ushnavirya, ruksha, laghu, sukshma guna* (properties) which are quite opposite to that of *medadhatu* and *kapha*.

5. In *sthaulya* there is increase in *vikrut-medadhatu* which increases *kleda*.
6. Due to *kleda srotas* (channels) get obstructed and *abaddhamedadhatu* (loose fat) is formed. This may lead *dhatuagnimandya* (decreased molecular level fire of *medadhatu*)
7. Due to *ushna, tikshna, laghu* property of the *dravya* and procedure, it acts as a *strotogami* and *medogami*. Due to *ruksha guna* of *dravya* and *ruksha udvartana*, *kleda* gets absorbed (*Shoshane ruksha|| Hemadri*) Thus *abaddhatva* of *medha* and *kapha* might have reduced.
8. Due to all these properties there may be increase in *medadhatuagni*. Thus, here *dravya* acts as *guna vishesh* (opposite properties of *dravya* and *medadhatu*.)

While reviewing the literature some references were found, which say:

1. Rubbing is passive exercise.
2. Due to mechanical force applied during rubbing or due to deep pressure there is increase in circulation in the superficial vein and lymphatic drainage. It has stimulating effect. The alternate pressure and relaxation brings fresh blood to that part. It rises temperature locally, increases secretion and absorption and elimination of the waste products.
3. Due to rubbing absorption of drug also increases.

All above modern references supports to *udvartana* as it acts as *kriyavishesh* (procedure opposing the functions of *meda* and *kapha*).

**Conclusion:**

The present study leads to the following conclusion.

*Udvartana* possesses *kaphamedohar* property. It reduces general symptoms of increased *khaphavata doshas* and improves the health of patient.

*Twak prasadar karma* of *Udvartan* occurs if proper *dravyas* are selected according to skin type and procedure will do in proper way. *Sanhanam* (stability) is maintained as *Udvartan* acts as passive exercise.

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Comparison in benefits of *Udvartana* mentioned in different *Samhita* can be understood as follows:

+ Mentioned

- Not mentioned

Sr. No.	Benefits	Charaka	Sushruta	Vagbhata	Yogaratanakar
1	<i>Dourgandya hara</i>	+	-	-	-
2	<i>Gourava hara</i>	+	-	-	-
3	<i>Tandra hara</i>	+	-	-	-
4	<i>Kandu hara</i>	+	-	-	-
5	<i>Mala hara</i>	+	-	-	-
6	<i>Aruchi hara</i>	+	-	-	-
7	<i>Vata hara</i>	-	+	-	-
8	<i>Kapha vilayana</i>	-	+	-	-
9	<i>Meda vilayana</i>	-	+	+	-
10	<i>Anga sthirikarana</i>	-	+	+	-
11	<i>Twak prasadakara</i>	-	+	+	+
12	<i>Kapha hara</i>	-	-	+	+
13	<i>Meda hara</i>	-	-	-	+
14	<i>Shukrada</i>	-	-	-	+
15	<i>Balya</i>	-	-	-	+
16	<i>Kanthi</i>	-	-	-	+
17	<i>Twak mrudutwa</i>	-	-	-	+