

Painless detoxification

Spring is traditionally the time for detoxifying. *Svedana*, or sweat therapy, adds to the benefits of massage by helping the body cleanse itself through the pores, while a cleansing diet eases the pressure on digestion, promoting radiantly clear skin and boundless vitality.

steaming

For deep cleaning the skin, steam baths offer an easy solution and the benefits are instantly noticeable. The moist heat allows

the pores to open and sweat flushes out impurities. Steam softens the outer layer of skin, encourages renewal by increasing circulation, and helps shed the dead cells — traditionally removed with a metal scraper. For those who can't stand damp heat, or who suffer from an excess of kapha dosha, a sauna may be an effective alternative.

Start with a shower, then oil your skin while still damp, before entering the steam room, to nourish the skin and bring your dosha back into balance. Shower again after

steaming, and finish the treatment with a refreshing cool splash: the combination of hot steam and cold pool or shower is profoundly revitalizing.

At home, enjoy the benefits of steam by running a very hot bath and oiling your skin while you relax beside the bath and wait for it to cool. Throw a bag of herbs into the water, choosing a blend to suit your skin or your dosha. When the bath is a comfortable temperature, massage the oil off with an *ubtan*, or herbal powder, then bathe off the residues and finish with a cool shower.

a cleansing diet

Rigorous fasts can cause health problems, including a serious vata or pitta imbalance, but semi-fasting for a few days can help clear accumulated waste. Choose vegetables, fruits and grains that suit your dosha.

- Start the day by drinking a cup of hot water with a dash of fresh lemon juice, and add some honey if you wish.

◀ Oil your skin before a steam bath and shower afterwards, using a massage mitt or sponge to slough off dead skin and leave yourself glowing.

▷ A bath offers two ways to benefit from the effects of hot water. Run it very hot and sit beside it, luxuriating in the steam. When it's cooled enough, step in and relax.

