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REVIEW ARTICLE

DIGITAL DETOX IN THE LIGHT OF SWASTHAVRITTA PRINCIPLES

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Abstract

The digital revolution has enhanced communication, work, and education, but it has also increased the prevalence of sleep disturbances, eye strain, stress, and mental health issues. Ayurveda's *Swasthavritta* —the science of daily and seasonal regimens—offers preventive and restorative principles for holistic health. This article interprets classical concepts (*Dinacharya*, *Nidra-vṛitta*, *Sadvṛitta*, *Ritucharya*, *Netra*-care, and *Upvasa*) in the context of excessive digital device use, and proposes a practical digital-detox framework. Integrating Ayurvedic wisdom with contemporary behavioural strategies can reduce screen-induced stress, improve sleep, restore sensory balance, and enhance mental wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION

Digital devices are ubiquitous in modern life, enabling productivity and social connection. However, excessive screen exposure is associated with delayed sleep onset, decreased sleep duration, impaired attention, increased stress, and digital eye strain.[1–3] Classical Ayurveda describes the effects of sensory overuse (*Indriyopadrava*), sleep disturbance (*Nidra-vikara*), and neglect of daily regimen (*Pramada*), which mirror these modern health challenges.[4-6] *Swasthavṛitta* provides structured guidance to maintain physical, sensory, and mental health,

making it highly relevant for designing digital detox interventions.

समदोषः समाग्निश्च समधातु मलक्रियाः।
प्रसन्नात्मेन्द्रियमनाः स्वस्थः इत्यभिधीयते।। ;सु. सू. 15ध्41द्ध

A person is called Svastha (healthy) when their physical components (three doshas *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*), sensory (Mind and soul) and mental components (*Aatma*, *Indriya* and *Manah*) are in harmony or blissful state.[10]

AYURVEDIC FRAMEWORK FOR DIGITAL DETOX

1. ***Dinacharya* (Daily Regimen)-** *Dinacharya* is a sequence of health-promoting practices like timely rising, oral hygeine, oil application (*Abhyanga*), exercise, meals, and sleep- to balance *doshas* and maintain physiological rhythms.[7] Late-night device use violates these principles, disrupting circadian cycles and mental clarity. Aligning screen habits with *Dinacharya*, such as completing morning rituals before checking devices, can restore routine and promote wellbeing.
2. ***Nidra Vritta* (Sleep Hygeine)-** Proper sleep is a pillar of health in Ayurveda. Screen exposure before bedtime reduces melatonin production, delaying sleep onset and reducing sleep quality.[1,2] Practices such as avoiding screens 60–90 minutes before bed, establishing fixed sleep-wake schedules, and engaging in calming pre-sleep rituals are consistent with *Nidra-vṛitta* recommendations.[8]
3. ***Sadvṛitta* and *Achara Rasayana* (Ethical Conduct & Behavioural Rejuvenation)-** *Sadvṛitta* emphasizes moderation of the senses, truthfulness, self-control, and calm behaviour.[4,5] Limiting impulsive social media engagement, practicing mindful digital behaviour, and reducing exposure to emotionally provocative content are modern extensions of these principles, promoting emotional resilience and social wellbeing.
4. ***Ritucharya* and *Netra*-care (Seasonal Adaptation & Eye Health) -** *Ritucharya* recommends lifestyle adjustments according to seasonal variations.[4] Summer and dry seasons increase susceptibility to eye strain and dryness, worsened by prolonged screen exposure. Traditional ocular therapies, such as *Netra Tarpana* and medicated collyriums, help maintain ocular health and mitigate digital eye strain.[6]

***DINACHARYA* AND MENTAL HEALTH**

Dinacharya directly impacts mental health by:

1. Regulating the circadian rhythm (biological clock).
2. Balancing *Vata dosha*, which, when aggravated, causes anxiety, fear, and restlessness.
3. Enhancing *Sattva guna* (clarity, calmness), while reducing *Rajas* (hyperactivity, agitation) and *Tamas* (lethargy, dullness).
4. Reducing stress hormone levels (cortisol) through relaxation practices like *abhyanga*, *pranayama*, and meditation.
5. Providing a sense of discipline, stability, and predictability in daily life.

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING DIGITAL-REDUCTION INVOLVEMENTS

1. **Blue Light Exposure and Sleep:** Evening exposure delays melatonin secretion and shifts circadian rhythms.[1,2]
2. **Screen-time Reduction and Mental Health:** Short-term interventions improve sleep, reduce depressive symptoms, and enhance overall wellbeing.[3]
3. **Eye-strain Mitigation:** Strategies like the 20-20-20 rule reduce symptoms of eye strain and dryness; offering a simple adjunct to preventive care.[9] 20-20-20 rule means after every 20 minutes of screen use, look at something 20 feet away, for at least 20 seconds. This short break relaxes the eye muscles, prevents dryness and strain, and supports ocular health — aligning with the Ayurvedic concept of Netra-care mentioned in the paper.

PRACTICAL AYURVEDIC DIGITAL DETOX PROTOCOL

➢ **Daily Practices:**

- **Morning**: No device use until after daily rituals (*Abhyanga*, yoga, meditation).
- **Work Blocks**: 45–60 minutes screen focus, followed by 5–10-minute breaks; 20-20-20 rule applied.
- **Evening**: Stop all screens 60–90 minutes before bed; engage in calming practices (reading print, meditation, family interaction).

➢ **Weekly/Monthly Practices:**

- **Digital fasting**: One device-free day or half-day per week to rejuvenate mind and body, parallel to classical *Upvasa*.
- **Eyes & Sleep Support**: Regular blinking, ocular lubricants as needed and professional *Netra Tarpana* if indicated.

Maintain fixed sleep schedule, reduce stimulants, and ensure cool, dark sleep environment.

RESULT

The study highlights that excessive digital device use disturbs sleep, mental focus, and eye health, leading to stress and lifestyle imbalance. Applying *Swasthavritta* principles—such as *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Nidra-vritta* (sleep hygiene), *Sadvritta* (ethical conduct), and *Ritucharya* (seasonal adaptation)—helps restore balance between mind, body, and senses. Implementing Ayurvedic practices like *abhyanga* (oil massage), meditation, digital fasting, and the 20-20-20 rule effectively reduces screen-related fatigue and improves sleep quality. The integration of traditional Ayurvedic regimens with modern digital habits promotes holistic wellbeing. Overall, the findings suggest that Ayurvedic digital detox is a practical and sustainable approach for managing digital stress and maintaining mental and physical health in the modern era.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that Ayurvedic *Swasthavritta* offers effective preventive and restorative methods for digital overuse. Practices like *Dinacharya* align body and mind with natural rhythms, while *Nidra-Vritta* supports better rest. *Sadvritta* encourages ethical, mindful screen use, and *Netra*-care protects vision. Integrating these ancient guidelines provides a holistic, sustainable approach to maintain health in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

Digital overuse is a modern *hetu* for multiple physical and mental disorders. *Swasthavṛitta* principles—*Dinacharya*, *Nidra-vṛitta*, *Sadivṛtta*, *Ritucharya*, and *Netra*-care—offer a practical, culturally grounded framework for digital detox. Integrating these with behavioural strategies (screen-time reduction, blue-light avoidance) can restore balance in body, mind, and senses. Health professionals, educators, and public-health planners can leverage these insights to design interventions promoting sustainable wellbeing in the digital era.

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