

# A Review on Applicability of Rukshana Karma in Panchakarma

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## ABSTRACT:

Panchakarma which helps elimination of vitiated Doṣhas and restoration of physiological balance. The success of Panchakarma therapy largely depends on proper **Purvakarma**, which include Dipana-Pachana, Snehana, and Swedana. In general considered as Purvakarma in certain condition where rukshana karma is indicated prior to shodhana like the diseases of kapha and meda predominance santarpana janya vikaras. Rukṣaṇa is not merely an adjunct but a crucial Purvakarma modality that ensures that the body is adequately prepared for Shodhana procedures when direct administration of Snehana is contraindicated or ineffective.

Clinically, Rukṣaṇa plays a vital role as Amahara thereby promotes agnideepana, which are prerequisites for effective Shodhana. By improving Jatharagni and Dhatvagni, Rukṣaṇa facilitates proper digestion and metabolism, thereby reducing the pathological substrate responsible for disease manifestation. The reduction of Kapha and Meda through Rukṣaṇa enhances Doṣha vilayana and it helps for proper shodhana such as Vamana and Virechana.

Rukṣaṇa is achieved through various modalities including **Udvardana, Takra pana, Rukṣa Ahara sevana, Langhana** and administration of **Dipana–Pachana Auṣhadhi** like Trikaṭu, Musta, Chitraka, and Pippali. Udvardana, in particular has shown significant clinical utility in reducing Meda dhatu, improving circulation, alleviating Srotorodha, and promoting laghutva in the body. Dietary interventions emphasizing Laghu, Rukṣa, and Ushna foods further complement these procedures by sustaining Agni and preventing re-accumulation of Ama.

**Keywords:** Ama, Santarpana vikara, Panchakarma, Shodhana, Rukshana.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the science of life, has two primary objectives:

1. **Swasthasya Swasthya Rakṣaṇam** – maintenance of health
2. **Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam** – treatment of disease

To achieve these goals, Acharya Charaka described Śhaḍvidha Upakrama like Langhana, Bṛuṃhaṇa, Rukṣaṇa, Snehana, Swedana, and Stambhana. These are further classified into:

- **Santarpana Chikitsa:** Bṛuṃhaṇa, Snehana, Stambhana
- **Apatarpana Chikitsa:** Langhana, Rukṣaṇa, Swedana <sup>1</sup>

Rukshana is procedure which causes Rukshata, kharatva, vishada to body<sup>2</sup>. Chakrapani says that Rukshana is achieved by the absence of Sneha and it does Shoshana to the body. Ruksha, Laghu, Khara, Tikshna, Ushna, Sthira, Apicchila, Katina are the Gunas of Rukshana. Aruna Datta explains that qualities which are opposite of Ruksha like laghu, Sheeta etc. can also act as Rukshana karma.

## **RUKSHANA**

### **NIRUKTI**

According to Shabdakalpadruma, Ruksha is Aprema, Achikana. The quality which is devoid of stickiness is Ruksha.<sup>3</sup> The other meaning is, Snehashoonye that is devoid of Sneha or absence of Sneha

### **GUNAS OF RUKSHANA DRAVYA**

The Dravya having the qualities like Ruksha, Laghu, Khara, Ushna, Sthira and Apicchila are Rukshana in nature<sup>4</sup>

**RUKSHANA YOGYA:** Rukshana Upakramas are indicated in four conditions caused mainly due to Kleda bahulvavastha<sup>5</sup>

1. Abhishyandhayuktha Vyadhi-Drava Pradhana Kapha Vikara like Prameha. Kushta.
2. Mahadosha Vyadhi- Kapha Vriddha state of Bahudosha like Prameha, Udara etc.
3. Marma-sthanasthita Vyadhi
4. Urusthambha.

**RUKSHANA AYOgya:** Rukshana is contraindicated in the conditions like Ruksha Nithya, Krusha persons. Vyayama, Deepthagani, Udavarta, Vataja Kasa, Shosha.<sup>6</sup>

**SAMYAK RUKSHANA LAKSHANAS:** The features of Samyak and Atiyoga of Rukshana Karma are the same as those of langhana Samyak and Atiyoga Lakshana.<sup>7</sup> Proper elimination of Vata, Mutra, Purisha, Klama, Tandra. Attaining proper Gatra laghava, Hrudaya, Kanta and Udgara shuddi, Kshuth and Pipasa.<sup>8</sup>

**ATIYOGA OF RUKSHANA:** The signs and symptoms of Excessive administration of Rukshana chikitsa are Parva bheda, Angamarda, Kasa, Mukha Shosha, Kshuth, Aruchi, Trushna, Dourbalya in Srotra and Netra. Bhrama, Deha and Agni Bala Nasha. <sup>[9]</sup>

### **Types of Rukshana**

#### **Abhyantara Rukshana**

1. Ruksha Ahara
2. Vihara

#### **Bahya Rukshana**

1. Choorna pinda sweda
2. Valuka sweda
3. Isthika sweda
4. Seka
5. Udvardana.

### **AHARA AND VIHARA HAVING RUKSHANA PROPERTIES**

**Ahara:** Agrya dravya for rukshana is udhalakanna.<sup>10</sup> Ahara producing ruksha guna in body are Khala, takra, udhalaka, makshika, priyangu, syamyaka, mudga, kodravam<sup>11</sup> kulattha, chakramudga, adhaki beeja, yava, venuyava.<sup>12</sup>

**Vihara:** Madhya Nitya Sevana, Vyayama, Vyavaya, Chinta, Shokha etc.<sup>13</sup> Other Dravyas having Ruksha Guna are Triphala, Shunti, Maricha, Pippalimula, Chitraka, Jiraka, Shatapushpa, Kutaja, Shigru, Shyonaka, Bilwa, Ela, Kiratatikta, Katuka, Vidanga. Etc.

## RUKSHANA IN PANCHAKARMA

### 1. Vamana: Purpose

Vamana is mainly indicated in Kapha-pradhana disorders.

Excess Kapha is guru, snigdha, manda, and sthira, making expulsion difficult.

#### Role of Rukṣaṇa

- Reduces Ati-snigdha and Bahu-kaphata
- Helps in Ama-pachana
- Converts Sama Kapha into Nirama Kapha
- Facilitates easy mobilization of Kapha from shakha to Koṣṭha

#### Indications

- Prameha
- Sthoulya
- Kaphaja Kuṣṭha
- Kaphaja Kasa, Swasa

**Without Rukṣaṇa,** Vamana may result in:

- Ayoga
- Utklesa without proper expulsion
- Complications like nausea and heaviness

### 2. Virechana:

Virechana is of two types snigdha and ruksha. Rukshna virechana is caused by administering dravyas which are having ruksha guna. Acharya charaka explains that snigdha virechana is contraindicated in ati snigdha purusha, in this condition ruksha virechana is indicated.<sup>14</sup>

<i>Virechana Drugs</i>	<i>Indication</i>
<i>Trivrut Churna</i>	<i>Kapha Pittaja Disorder Kushta Prameha Sthoulya</i>
<i>Aragvadha Phala Majja</i>	<i>Pitta Kapha Disorders Skin Disorder</i>
<i>Triphala Churna</i>	<i>Mild Ruksha Virechana Kapha Meda Dominance</i>
<i>Nimba – Trivrt Yoga</i>	<i>Kushta Kapha Pittaja Vikara</i>

#### Role of Rukṣaṇa

- Reduces Kapha and Meda obstruction in Pittavaha srotas
- Enhances effectiveness of Virechana dravyas
- Prevents Ati-snehana complications

**Indications**

- Yakrut vikara
- Medaja roga
- Pitta-kapha janya kuṣṭha

**BASTI:**

Though Basti is mainly for Vata, many conditions are Avaraṇajanya or Kapha-Meda associated. Some basti which act as rukshana are Vaitarana basti, Kshara basti, Lekhana basti, Dashamoola kshara basti, Erandamoola niruha basti etc

Type of basti	Rukshana action	Indication
Lekhana basti	Lekhana and rukshana guna	Kapha – medo vridhhi, sthoulya , prameha etc.
Vaitarana basti	Tikshna, ruksha, avarana bhedana	Amavata etc.
Kshara basti	Shoshana and lekhana of meda	Granti, medo vridhhi etc.

**Special Importance in:**

- Medovṛta Vata
- Prameha
- Sthoulya
- Amavata

Without Rukṣhaṇa → Basti may become ineffective or cause Gaurava and Adhamana

**4. Nasya**

Nasya treats Urdhvajatrugata Kapha and Pitta disorders.

**ROLE OF NASYA**

Aspects	Role of Rukṣhaṇa in Nasya Karma	Ayurvedic Explanation / Importance
Dosha	Specifically acts on Kapha Doṣha	Kapha is snigdha, guru, picchila, Rukṣhaṇa, counters these qualities
Lekhana karma	Scrapes adhered Kapha	Useful in chronic & picchila Kapha disorders
Shirovirechana	Eliminates morbid Doṣhas from head	Rukṣha dravyas facilitate expulsion of Kapha
Prevention of recurrence	Reduces kleda & snigdhatā	Prevents repeated Kapha accumulation
Enhances drug penetration	Improves absorption of Nasya dravya	Rukshana allows better action of tikṣhṇa dravyas
Indicated in chronic diseases	Effective in dirgha-kalina Kapha vikara	Chronic Kapha disorders need Rukṣhaṇa before Sneha

<i>Sleşhma kşhaya</i>	Reduces excess mucus in <i>nasa &amp; shiras</i>	Helps in clearing nasal blockage, heaviness of head
<i>Srotoshodhana</i>	Clears obstructed <i>nasa &amp; shira srotas</i>	Removes <i>Kapha</i> -induced <i>srotorodha</i> enabling proper <i>prana</i> flow
<i>Kapha-avarana nivṛtti</i>	Removes <i>kapha</i> covering <i>vata</i>	Restores normal <i>Vata gati</i> in head region
Balancing <i>Guna</i>	Opposes <i>Guru, Snigdha, Picchila</i>	Restores <i>guṇa-samya</i> in <i>shiras</i>

### Indications

- Kaphaja Pratishyaya
- Sinusitis
- Shiroroga
- Medaja disorders of head

### DIFFERENT TYPES OF NASYA

Name of <i>Nasya</i>	Reason / Basis	Main doşha targeted
<i>Gudardraka nasya</i>	uses <i>tikşhṇa-rukşha dravyas</i> dries and expels <i>kapha</i>	<i>kapha</i>
<i>Pradhamana nasya</i>	powder blown into nose → strong <i>rukşhana, lekšana</i> action	<i>kapha</i>
<i>Shirovirechana nasya</i>	causes expulsion of <i>kapha</i> from <i>shiras</i>	<i>kapha</i>
<i>Virechana nasya</i>	<i>shodhana</i> of <i>kapha</i> using <i>rukşha-tikşhṇa</i> drugs	<i>kapha</i>
<i>Rukşha avapiḍa nasya</i>	<i>swarasa</i> of <i>katu-tikta</i> drugs → <i>rukshana</i> effect	<i>kapha</i>
<i>Kalka nasya (tikşhṇa dravya)</i> .	paste of <i>rukşha</i> drugs scrapes <i>kapha</i> ex: <i>pippali, maricha, vacha</i> etc	<i>kapha</i>

6. Raktamokşana: is used in Rakta-pitta-kapha disorders, especially when blood is dushta and thick.

Role of Rukşana

- Reduces Snigdhatā and Bahulatā of Rakta
- Makes Rakta easily flowable
- Enhances elimination of Ama-yukta Rakta
- Rukşana improves efficacy and safety of bloodletting.

### BAHYA RUKSHANA UPAKRAMAS

1. **Choorna Pinda Sweda:** is a specialized Ayurvedic Swedana used primarily for relieving pain, stiffness and inflammation in musculoskeletal and neuromuscular conditions. The term "Choorna" refers to herbal powders, "Pinda" means bolus, and "Sweda" denotes sweat or fomentation. In this treatment, specific medicinal powders-such as Kottamchukkadi choorna, Kolakulatthadi choorna etc.

heated made into pottali. These heated pottali are then massaged onto the affected body parts or the whole body, inducing sweat and promoting healing.

DISEASE	PREDOMINANT DOSHA	CHURNA USED (Example)	ACTION /BENEFIT
<i>Amavata</i>	<i>Vata + Ama</i>	<i>Kolakultadi churna</i>	<i>Ruskshana, Ama Pachana, sothahara</i>
<i>Sandhivata</i>	<i>Vata</i>	<i>Rasnadi churna</i>	<i>Vedana sthapana and srotosodhana</i>
<i>Vataja katishoola</i>	<i>Vata</i>	<i>Dashamoola churna</i>	<i>Vatahara, shoolahara brimhana</i>
<i>Gridhrasi</i>	<i>Vata+kapha</i>	<i>Kolakulattadi+Dashamoola</i>	<i>Vatakaphashamana +shoolahara</i>
<i>Vataja janu Sandhigata</i>	<i>Vata</i>	<i>Rasna churna</i>	<i>Vatahara sandhishoola hara</i>
<i>Kapha-pradhana Sandhishoola</i>	<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Mustadi churna</i>	<i>Kaphahara rukshana sothahara</i>
<i>Sthoulya</i>	<i>Kapha + meda</i>	<i>Triphala + mustadi churna</i>	<i>Lekhana + rukshana + medohara</i>
<i>Paṇḍu with Ama</i>	<i>Pitta+ kapha+ ama</i>	<i>Trikatu churna</i>	<i>Dipana and amapachana</i>
<i>Stambha &amp; Gaurava (Body stiffness)</i>	<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Trikatu + kolakualattadi churna</i>	<i>Rukshana + srotosodhana</i>
<i>Kapha-pradhana Sotha</i>	<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Punarnavadi churna</i>	<i>Shothahara vatahara</i>
<i>Vataja Sotha</i>	<i>Vata</i>	<i>Punarnavadi choorna</i>	<i>Shothahara vatahara</i>
<i>Kapha-pradhana Amavata</i>	<i>Kapha + amavata</i>	<i>Kolakulattadi+ mustadi</i>	<i>Amapachana + rukshana + shotha hara</i>
<i>Mamsa-Meda Dushti</i>	<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Yava + triphala churna</i>	<i>Lekhana + rukshana</i>
<i>Vatakaphaja Sandi Roga</i>	<i>Vata+kapha</i>	<i>Rasna+kolakulattadi churna</i>	<i>Vatakapha shamana + shoola hara</i>

- Valuka Sweda:** Valuka Sweda is a type of Ruksha Sweda described in Ayurvedic classics under Bahya Rukshana procedures. The term Valuka means sand, and Sweda refers to sudation or fomentation. Hence, swedana karma using heated sand, especially indicated in conditions dominated by Kapha and Meda.

In this procedure, clean, dry sand is heated and placed inside a sterile cotton or muslin cloth to form a pottali. The affected area or the entire body is then fomented by gently rubbing or pressing the pottali until Swedana lakṣhaṇa is achieved.

Indications: Amavata, Sthoulya, Kaphaja-vataroga, Sandhigatavata, Medoroga.

- Ishtika Sweda-** it is a type of Ruksha Sweda, mainly performed in Kaphaanubanda Vata condition like Vatakantaka. Sweda is performed by pouring Dashamoola Kashaya on Ishtika and patient is asked to touch his heels over the Ishtika based on the tolerance capacity of the individual. It helps to Pacify the Vatadi Tridosha and acts as Vedanahara and Shophahara.

Indication: Vatakantaka

- Seka:** The warm medicated liquid is poured over the Sarva Shareera (sarvanga dhaara) or affected part (Ekanga dhara) in a uniform stream the procedure is called as Pariseka. Commonly used preparations which acts as Rukshana are: Dhanyamla dhara and Dashamoola parisheka, takra dhara etc.

<i>Takra Seka</i>	Absorbs <i>kleda</i> , reduces <i>Kapha</i> & itching	<i>Kandu, Vicharchika, Dadru, Kapha-dominant Kushta</i>
<i>Dhanyamla Seka</i>	Strong <i>Ruksha</i> and <i>Ushna</i>	<i>Shopha, Amavata, Sandhigata disorders, Kapha-Vata conditions</i>
<i>Kanji Seka</i>	Reduces stickiness and moisture	<i>Kushta, Vrana with srava, Medaja vikara</i>
<i>Gomutra Seka</i>	<i>Lekhana, Kleda-hara</i>	<i>Kushta, Kandu, Pama, Krimi-janya twak vikara</i>
<i>Triphala Kwatha Seka</i>	<i>Ruksha, Shodhana, Ropana</i>	<i>Dushta vrana, Netra roga, Kleda-yukta twak vikara</i>
<i>Nimba Kwatha Seka</i>	<i>Tikta-Kashaya, Kapha-Pitta shamana</i>	<i>Kushta, Visarpa, Kandu, Pitta-Kapha twak roga</i>
<i>Aragvadha Kwatha Seka</i>	Mild <i>Ruksha</i> & <i>Shodhana</i>	<i>Srāvi kushta, Pitta-Kapha skin disorders</i>
<i>Lodhra Kwatha Seka</i>	<i>Stambhana &amp; Rūkshana</i>	<i>Srāva-yukta vrana, Raktapitta-janya twak vikara</i>

5. **Udvarthana:** The method of massaging the body with medicated powders in Pratiloma Gathi is called Udvarthana. It pacifies Kapha Dosha and causes liquification of Meda, it gives stability to the body parts and improves skin texture. The drugs used in the procedure have the properties of Ruksha, Ushna and Sukshma by the virtue of which, it helps in reducing the excess Meda and Kledha.

Indication: Sthoulya, Prameha

<i>Rūksha Udwartana</i>	Dry herbal powders ( <i>Kolakulathādi chūrna, Triphalā chūrna</i> )	Absorbs <i>kleda</i> , reduces <i>Kapha &amp; Meda</i>	<i>Sthoulya (obesity), Medoroga, Kapha-vruddhi</i>
<i>Udgharshana</i>	Fine dry powders without oil	Strong <i>Rūksha</i> & <i>Lekhana</i>	<i>Amavata, Gaurava, Kapha-pradhana disorders</i>
<i>Udwartana with Tikta-Kashāya dravya</i>	<i>Nimba, Vacha, Haridra</i>	<i>Kleda-hara, Kandughna</i>	<i>Kandu, Kushta, Pāma, Dadru</i>
<i>Udwartana with Ushna dravya</i>	<i>Musta, Chitraka, Pippali</i>	<i>Kapha-vilayana, Agni deepana</i>	<i>Medovaha srotodushti, Sthoulya</i>
<i>Takra-chūrna Udwartana</i>	Buttermilk-processed powders	<i>Ruksha &amp; Grahi</i>	<i>Kleda-yukta twak roga, Kapha-Pitta disorders</i>
<i>Kulattha-churna Udwartana</i>	Horse gram powder	<i>Lekhana, Medohara</i>	<i>Sthoulya, Granthi, Galaganda</i>
<i>Triphala Udwartana</i>	<i>Triphala powder</i>	<i>Ruksha, Shodhana</i>	<i>Twak roga, Dushta vrana, Kleda-dominant disorders</i>
<i>Vacha-Haridra Udwartana</i>	<i>Vacha &amp; Turmeric</i>	<i>Kandughna, Krimighna</i>	<i>Kandu, Pāma, Krimi-janya twak vikāra</i>

## Discussion

Rukshana is an essential therapeutic principle in Ayurveda that plays a decisive role in the clinical success of Panchakarma therapies. It is primarily employed to counteract excessive Snigdha, Guru, Picchila, and Sheeta qualities associated with Kapha Dosha, Meda Dhatu and Ama.

Clinically, Rukshana is used both as a **Purvakarma** and as an independent therapeutic modality. Before administering Shodhana therapies like Vamana, Virechana, or Basti, Rukshana helps in reducing excessive snigdha and stabilizing the Doshas, especially when patients present with Bahu snigdha Sharira, Sama

Dosha or Meda vruddhi. Without proper Rukshana, Sneha administration may aggravate Kapha and Ama, leading to complications such as nausea, heaviness, and impaired digestion. Thus, Rukshana enhances the safety and efficacy of Panchakarma procedures.

In clinical conditions dominated by **Kapha Dosha**, such as Sthoulya (obesity), Prameha, Kaphaja Kasa, Shwasa, in this condition Rukshana is indispensable. External Rukshana therapies like Udvartana, Valuka Sweda, and Ishtika Sweda are routinely used to relieve heaviness, stiffness, and lethargy. Udvartana, in particular, has proven clinical utility in reducing subcutaneous fat, improving lymphatic drainage, and enhancing peripheral circulation. It also stimulates Dhatvagni and helps correct metabolic disorders, making it clinically valuable in lifestyle diseases.

Rukshana is especially beneficial in **Ama-dominant disorders** such as Amavata. In these conditions, Sneha and Snigdha Swedana are contraindicated during the initial stage. Clinically, Ruksha Sweda like Valuka Sweda helps in reducing pain, swelling, and stiffness without aggravating Ama. This facilitates subsequent Shodhana therapies and improves patient tolerance. Thus, Rukshana plays a critical role in stage-wise disease management.

From a clinical standpoint, **Bahya Rukshana** is highly effective in localized disorders. Procedures like Seka (Takra, Kashaya, Dhanyamla) are used in inflammatory conditions, skin diseases, and musculoskeletal disorders. They reduce localized Kapha, improve circulation, and open obstructed channels. In dermatological conditions such as Kushta and Vicharchika, Ruksha therapies help reduce oozing, itching, and thickening of skin. This demonstrates the wide clinical applicability of Rukshana beyond systemic disorders.

**Abhyantara Rukshana** is equally significant in clinical practice. Dietary regulation (Ahara) with Ruksha, Laghu, and Kapha-pacifying foods helps in controlling Ama formation and improving digestion. Lifestyle modifications (Vihara) such as increased physical activity, avoidance of day sleep, and adherence to Dinacharya support the therapeutic effects of Panchakarma. Clinically, patients who follow Ruksha Ahara–Vihara show better tolerance to Shodhana therapies and faster recovery.

Among Shodhana therapies, **Vamana** holds prime importance in Kapha-dominant disorders. Rukshana prior to Vamana ensures proper mobilization of Kapha and prevents complications after Vamana karma. Similarly, **Virechana**, when used after appropriate Rukshana, effectively removes Doshas and reduces internal Snigdhatata. In chronic metabolic and inflammatory disorders, this combination yields superior clinical outcomes.

**Ruksha Basti and Lekhana Basti** have immense clinical utility in conditions like obesity, dyslipidemia, and chronic musculoskeletal disorders. They help in scraping excess Meda, correcting Vata-Kapha imbalance and restoring normal physiological functions. Clinically, these Bastis improve bowel function, reduce abdominal fat, and enhance energy levels. **Nasya** with Ruksha drugs is useful in chronic sinusitis, headaches, and Kapha-related ENT disorders, highlighting the regional utility of Rukshana.

**Raktamokshana**, though not purely Rukshana, contributes to internal purification and reduction of Dushita Dosha. Clinically, it is beneficial in inflammatory and congestive conditions involving Rakta and Kapha, such as varicose veins, abscesses, and certain skin disorders. Its judicious use enhances therapeutic outcomes and reduces recurrence.

## CONCLUSION

Rukshana is the important Poorvakarma in Panchakarma, Particularly for Kapha and Meda-dominant diseases. It corrects Ama, enhances Agni, Srotosodhana and enhances the effect of shodana. Clinically,

Rukshana has demonstrated significant benefits in managing obesity, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, atherosclerosis, and other metabolic disorders.

In the era of lifestyle diseases, incorporating Rukshana before Shodhana enhances efficacy, ensures safety, and achieves better long-term outcomes. Hence, Rukshana as Purvakarma is not merely a preparatory step but a therapeutic intervention of great clinical utility in modern Ayurvedic practice.

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