

# Expert brings ayurveda to sports

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**Bangalore:** Be it Sachin Tendulkar's severe cramps during the India-Pakistan match in World Cup 2003, or Srinath's 'rotator cuff' shoulder problem, or a soccer player's groin or calf muscle problem, it can now be treated through Ayurveda, India's ancient medical system.

Thanks to a Bangalore-based health centre, this is the first time in the world that an ancient, traditional form of alternative medicine is being applied to the vast and increasingly important field of sports

medicine. Atreya Resorts for Traditional Healing (ARTH) has already successfully treated 208 cases, and is aiming for at least a 100 more before publishing a paper in a reputed medical journal with an aim to popularise Ayurveda as a new option in sports medicine, complementing the already existing methods.

Dr Sanjay Sharma, the managing director of ARTH, says that Ayurvedic scriptures, dating back to 2000 B C, first written by Sage Atreya, prescribed methods for treating common injuries among soldiers of that era, similar to

those faced by sports persons today. "We adapted the treatment prescribed for soldiers in Ayurvedic scriptures centuries ago and found that the treatment schedules were quite effective," says Sharma.

Explaining in greater detail, Dr Sharma said that persisting problems in the lower lumbar region (lower back) like those faced by Sachin Tendulkar, a few years ago could be effectively dealt with through a treatment called "Kati basti".

In this non-invasive treatment process, the precise location of the problem is identified and a circular

dam-like diminutive bund is built around the spot using wheat flour or Moong dal flour (lentil). The space within is then filled with warm oil mixed with specially prescribed Ayurvedic herbs and kept for a period of 20 minutes during the first session, which is then gradually increased to an hour over the next seven sessions in as many days.

Another treatment for muscular injuries in different parts of the body is the "basti", which is medicated enema given to the athlete using Ayurvedic medication with luke warm water. "This is found to strengthen

muscles, and is even prescribed for paralysis of the limbs or even optoarthrititis," details Sharma.

In Ayurvedic parlance, when injuries occur, there is an imbalance of "vata". "Vata" is one of the three basic constituent complexes in the physiological system called "doshas". "vayu" or "vata", "pitta" and "kapha" or "sleshma" (wind, bile and phlegm, respectively) form the "tridoshas" which sustain body metabolism.

In Ayurveda, the same problem affecting two different persons requires different treatments based on the stress of each of these

three constituents, and each person is as distinct as fingerprints, explains Sharma.

Further, sports injuries can be treated using Ayurvedic treatment methods on the lines of deformations caused by the imbalance in "vata", which was how injuries caused to soldiers in ancient Indian battles were treated, according to scriptures, he says.

Presently, ARTH is working with the Bangalore-based Hospital for Orthopaedics, Sports Medicine, Arthritis, Neuro and Accident Trauma (HOSMAT) and Bangalore Children's hospital.