



The Tongue Scraper – Ayurveda's Secret Tool

-By Leah Collmer

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The idea of tongue scraping might sound primitive to those from the West, but in India this ancient Ayurvedic tradition is a daily practice by the entire Indian nation and is one of the best modern daily routines for overall health. Tongue scraping is the perfect DIY (Do It Yourself), morning habit to take on. It's easy, quick and a great way to start your day.

The art of tongue scraping, known as Jihwa Prakshalana, is an Ayurvedic oral health practice that removes toxins from the tongue and bodily systems which brushing cannot achieve. The tongue reflects what is happening on a deeper level in our body. During the night as we sleep the body's systems are at work, assimilating nutrition, digesting food, processing toxins (ama), and absorbing fluids. Any waste from this process shows up on the tongue. Once you become aware of the details of your tongue, you'll be surprised to know it is constantly sending you messages!

So, what do these sneaky toxins look like? Toxins manifest themselves as a coating on the tongue. A morning coating on the tongue can have different qualities to it, such as heavy, light, or patchy. Additionally, a morning coating can have a discoloration of white, cream, yellow, green or even black, depending on the severity of the toxins present. Tongue scraping removes these excreted toxins,



liberating your tongue and organs from this accumulated waste, ready to start the day afresh.

It is essential to do tongue scraping on an empty stomach, after you wake up. Morning is the best time to remove these toxins that have accumulated overnight. This will prevent any eliminated toxins from being re-ingested into your system, allowing your organs and systems to work more effectively. Tongue scraping also aids morning bowel movements, diminishes bad breath, removes bacteria and best of all improves your sense of taste! It is one of Ayurveda's cornerstones for preserving health.

How to Tongue Scrape:

1. Stand in front of a reflected surface like a mirror that allows you to get a full view of your tongue. (While traveling I have used windows and even my smart phone to accomplish this.)
2. Gently open your jaw and stick your tongue out. Your tongue muscle should be relaxed and flat (not pointed and constricted).
3. Take the tongue scraper and insert it into your mouth bringing the base and curved part of it to the back of your mouth and bring it in contact with your tongue.
4. Smoothly pull the tongue scraper down your tongue towards the tip, removing any coating along the way.
5. Completely rinse the scraper. (Hot water is best, but if that isn't available then use the water that is. If water isn't available, use something to wipe off the film.)
6. Repeat the process over again, approximately 5 – 10 times or until the tongue scraper looks clean after pulling it over your tongue.

Got it?! If it is a little bit strange in the beginning, that is normal. You are learning something new! As time goes on the art of tongue scraping will get easier and easier, and soon you will become a master. The important thing is to relax and get scraping!