

Daily and Seasonal Ayurvedic Practices

Daily Routine (Dinacharya)
I. Waking Up
Time: Sattva Time, 5-6 a.m. (this is the best time to awaken to greet the sun as it is the calmest part of the day, which reduces anxiety and worry) Sattva - the quality we are all, consciously or unconsciously, seeking. Sattva is associated with clarity, purity, peace, balance, harmony, health, happiness, and universal love.
II. Cleansing
• Teeth-cleaned morning, noon, and night
• Tongue-scrape every morning and any other time that the teeth are brushed. Use a stainless steel scraper made of gold, silver, or copper Benefits: Cleanses coated tongue, removes bacteria, and stimulates gastric fire
• Gargling: Triphala decoction (triphala is a common herb that has many health benefits) Benefits: strengthens teeth and gums, and improves oral hygiene
• Face (each specific body constitution has a protocol) Vata - warm water Pitta - cool water Kapha - warm water Benefits: Removes sweat and natural secretions; improves circulation, prevents skin infection, acne, and discoloration of skin
• Eyes - Wash with water at room temperature Rotate eyes in clockwise and counter-clockwise direction; up and down; side to side Benefits: Prevents eye problems, enhances vision, reduces discharges
• Whole body - bathe at least once a day, as it is refreshing and cleansing Benefits: Cleanses the skin of sweat and impurities; brings alertness and energy to the body and reduces fatigue
III. Exercise
Physical exercise - Everyday exercise is beneficial to everyone. The exercise you choose will depend on your body constitution type (Prakriti); Yoga stretches are recommended for all constitutions. Benefits: Reduces fat, fatigue and lethargy; builds and tones muscles, increases endurance, improves digestion
IV. Massage
• Whole body - gently massage head and body with warm oil (oils to be used according to body constitution) Vata - sesame oil Pitta - coconut oil Kapha - sesame oil Benefits: Prevents aging, improves circulation, reduces Vata dosha, calms the mind, softens the skin, prevents wrinkles
V. Perfumes (essential oils/aromatherapy)
Vata - aromas should be calming and pacifying (basil, orange, geranium, clove, and rose) Pitta - aromas should be cooling and sweet (sandalwood, mint, rose, and jasmine) Kapha - aromas should be stimulating and spicy (juniper, ginger, eucalyptus, clove, and saffron)
VI. Mealtime
Breakfast Vata - moderate Pitta - heavy Kapha - light or skip
Lunch (times to eat for proper digestion) Vata - 11a.m.-noon Pitta - noon Kapha - noon-1 p.m.
Supper (times to eat for proper digestion) Vata - 6-7 p.m. Pitta - 6-7 p.m. Kapha - 6-7 p.m.
After meals -Take a 15-20 minute nap lying on your left side, or take a leisurely walk (1000 steps)
Nightly Routines (Ratricharya)
I. Bedtime
• Sleep - strategies that promote sleep Oil massage (Abhyanga) on the soles of feet and scalp A cup of warm milk (almond, coconut, hemp, etc.) Example: Golden milk (1/4 tsp of tumeric, 3-4 oz. of warm almond milk, cinnamon, and nutmeg) Meditation
• Sex (sex can be depleting depending on the season, which wreaks havoc on the nervous system) Spring and fall sex should be reduced to twice a week Summer sex should be reduced to once a week Winter sex should be performed daily or alternate day
Seasonal Routines (Ritucharya)
Fall and Winter (Vata Season)
I. Diet
Foods and drinks with warm, moist, and heavy qualities to counter the dry, cold, and light qualities of the Vata season
• Foods: (just some examples) oatmeal, cream of wheat, and tapioca; stews, soups, and gravies, steamed vegetables, and basmati rice dishes; nuts such as pecans and almonds
• Foods to avoid: salads and raw vegetables; pungent, astringent, and bitter tastes
• Foods to favor: sweet, salty, and sour tastes

II. Drinks
Herbal teas made with cumin-coriander-fennel, or ginger-cinnamon Morning drink of warm water, wedge of lemon, ginger (fresh or ground), and 1 tbsp of raw honey (helps facilitate digestion for first meal of day and helps to produce a bowel movement) A cup of warm milk at bedtime (almond, coconut, cow's milk, hemp, and rice) Avoid cold drinks
III. Massage
Apply warm sesame oil throughout the body and take a warm shower
IV. Exercise
• Yoga - Poses: Lotus, forward and backward bends, vajrasana, spinal twist, camel, cobra and cat asanas. Sun salutations in moderation
• Breath work (Pranayama, i.e. alternating nostril breathing)
V. Sleep
Take a short afternoon nap
VI. Dress
Wear warm clothing such as red, yellow, and orange
Spring (Kapha Season)
I. Diet
• Food and drinks with hot, dry, light qualities to counter the cool, moist, and heavy qualities of Kapha Types of food - baked, broiled, or grilled warm foods, legumes, vegetables, and hot spice, oily foods, and cold drinks Add - pungent, bitter, and astringent foods Avoid - sweet, salty, and sour foods, dairy products and heavy foods
II. Drinks
Drinks made with ginger, calamus and clove Emphasize herbal teas (cumin, coriander, and fennel) Warm water (can add lemon)
III. Massage
Use dry herbal powders such as haritaki, ginger, or heating oil Use sesame oil as it is tridoshic
IV. Exercise
Yoga - Poses such as sun salutations, fish, boat, bow, loin, and camel poses, head stand or shoulder stand
V. Sleep
Avoid sleeping during the day
VI. Dress
Bright warm colors like gold and orange
Summer (Pitta Season)
I. Diet
Foods that are cool, heavy, bland foods and drinks to counter the hot, bright, and sharp qualities of Pitta Salads, basmati rice, steamed vegetables, cucumber raita. Light meat, turkey or chicken. Melons, plums, pears, and apples. Avoid - hot, spicy, sour, and pungent tastes and hot drinks Add - fruit and more vegetables
II. Drinks
Lassi, lime juice, and coconut water
III. Massage
In the morning with coconut or sunflower oil
IV. Exercise
Swimming, walking on green grass Yoga poses such as cow, cobra, fish, boat, tree, and moon salutations
V. Sleep
Take a short nap after lunch
VI. Dress
Cotton or silk clothing
Colors such as white, grey, purple, and green

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