

Perfect Digestion with Yoga, Meditation, Ayurveda.

Ayurveda

The Ancient holistic models of health ask us to be truly aware that all health conditions stem from our inability to digest food and life well. Traditional Indian medicine, Ayurveda, stipulates that our digestion be perfect so that we can function in a healthy way, both mentally and physically.

Being very mindful of what we eat, and how we eat it is also of extreme importance. This really involves knowing your own personal constitution and the elements (fire, earth, air, ether, water) that constitute your own form. In knowing this you can make wise food choices to suit your body.

Morning Routine (for a peaceful mind and energised healthy body)

- Rise before the sun between 4am and 6am.
- Empty bowel and bladder upon awakening
- Spit excess toxins from mouth, and scrape tongue with tongue cleanser (copper is best) (This removes toxins that have accumulated overnight and reduces the chance of these toxins being placed back in the system).
- Breathing: take 10 deep breaths to draw prana into the system. This also increases gaseous exchange. Oxygen in, carbon dioxide out.
- Meditate from anywhere between 20minutes to 1 hour.
- Yoga exercises for 20minutes to 1 hour to improve digestion, lymphatic drainage, and circulation of blood and prana/chi.
- Sip digestive lemon ginger and honey tea (in warm water)
½ tsp freshly grated ginger
1 tspn fresh lemon or lime juice
¼-1/2 tspn honey
- Daily self- massage with Ayurvedic doshic oil specific to your constitution.
- Eat breakfast before 8am if suitable to your constitution.
Choose warming foods and spices for sluggish or irritable digestion.

Mindful food choices

Choose foods wisely that are very fresh, seasonal and organic, containing prana (energetic force of life). The foods you choose affect your body and your state of mind.

Coffee, meats, fermented yellow cheeses, onions, chillies, tomatoes, onions, chocolate all aggravate the mental state and can reduce our calm sense of being.

Do not microwave your foods, or eat stale foods (24 hours the life force is gone), or overcook your foods. Avoid all pre-packaged foods, canned or frozen foods.

Food Choices and food combining

In Ayurveda and Chinese Medicine it is well recognised that foods have different qualities, tastes, and energies. It is important to combine foods well so that we promote digestion, absorption and assimilation, rather than hinder it, leading to toxins (ama), disease. Here are some tips on how to do this:

- Avoid large amounts of **cooked and raw foods** together. Raw food takes longer to digest than cooked. A small amount of raw food before a meal will stimulate the digestive fire.
- Avoid combining **fresh and leftover** foods
- **Leftovers** should not be consumed after 24 hours.
- **Fruits** should be eaten alone. They digest quickly and can be taken 20 minutes before a meal if required. Fruits should be never taken after meals, and they create fermentation in the gut that impedes the digestion of other foods.
- **Vegetables** can be combined with most foods.
- **Whole grains** can generally be combined with all other foods, but try and just eat one form of grain per meal.
- **Proteins** should not be mixed. For example: Avoid meat with beans or milk. Avoid eggs and cheese. Avoid two different meats or seafoods. Fish may be taken with coconut lemon and lime once weekly.
- Never heat **honey** above 75 degrees. Ayurveda suggests that its nutrients are diminished and it becomes toxic to the system when heated.
- Avoid milk and **yoghurt with sour fruits**.
- Try and avoid **fermented** products and **soy products**.
- **Avoid cold fluids and fluids with meals**. Sipping small amounts is fine as excessive fluid intake dilutes the power of the digestive enzymes.

If after eating you feel heaviness, sluggishness, heartburn, bloating, gas, you must listen to the body. The digestive system is not working as well as it could be, so implement changes.

Mindful Cooking

Cook with wholesome and loving intent, with a relaxed state of mind. The energy of your thoughts and feelings are absorbed into the food you prepare. Actually in a monastic environment, often the most advanced monks are in charge of the cooking.

Ayurvedic Doshas

	vata	pitta	kapha
SKIN	Dry, thin, fine-pored, cool to the touch, maybe dry and flaky.	Warm to the touch, reddish or freckled complexion, sensitive to sunlight	Thick, moist; cool to touch; pale complexion; large pores.
HAIR	Thin, dark, tends towards dryness; prone to dandruff	Normal to fine; thinning; tends to grey prematurely	Normal to oily; thick, wavy, shiny.
LIPS	Thin, often dry/cracked	Medium, red or pink	Thick pale
PHYSIQUE	Thinly built frame	Medium frame, well built	Large frame
WEIGHT	Difficult to gain	Medium weight	Easy to gain, hard to lose.
SLEEP	Interrupted, light	Sound, medium length	Sound, long, heavy
TEMPERAMENT	Nervous	Motivated	Content
ENDURANCE	Poor, easily exhausted	Moderate, but focused	High
MEMORY	Quick but absent-minded	Sharp, clear	Slow, steady

Ayurvedic Spice Mixes

Spice Mixes can be used to make stir fries, curries, or even sprinkled over foods before eating to supply nutrition, digestive aid and natural flavour.

Vata Types: Ama toxins accumulate in large colon, and effects nervous system, bones, causing dryness, anxiety, fatigue, and constipation and irregular appetite

Vata spice Mix:

- 1 tablespoon cumin seeds
- 2 tablespoons coriander seeds
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard seeds
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- 1/2 tpsn cinnamon
- 10 clove buds

Roast each spice individually before grinding.

Kapha Types: Ama accumulates with the phlegm in the stomach and moves to the lungs and lymphatic system causing swelling, odema, sluggish digestion, and lung disorders.

Kapha Spice Mix:

1 tablespoon cumin seeds
2 tablespoons coriander seeds
1 tablespoon yellow mustard seeds
1 tsp black peppercorns
1 teaspoon cardamom seeds

Roast each spice individually before grinding.

Pitta Types: Ama accumulates with acid in the small intestine, and moves into the liver and small intestine causing skin problems, burning, nausea, loose bowel motions, irritability.

Pitta Spice Mix:

2 tablespoons coriander seeds
1 tablespoon fennel seeds
1 tablespoon cardamom seeds
10 clove buds
12 strands saffron or 1 tspn dried powder turmeric

Roast spices individually, but not saffron. Mix saffron with fennel and then grind all spices.

Mindful Meditative Eating

- Wash hands, face, or bathe before eating.
- Eat mindfully, slowly, tasting all foods. Slow eating can have amazing effects on digestion, and even weight loss. If you eat emotionally or for the sake of eating, you really need to practise slow mindful eating. This will reduce overeating, and indigestion.
- Sit in a peaceful environment, free of disturbance from television, radio, phone calls, and excessive talking.
- Have regular meals at appropriate times: before 8am, midday, around 6pm.
- Allow time to pass between meals so all is digested before eating again. (2-3 hours, 4 hours for meat).
- Try and reduce strenuous exercise 1 hour before and after eating, but a short 10 minute walk after eating will promote digestion. Try and avoid lying down or sleeping straight after eating.

Prana

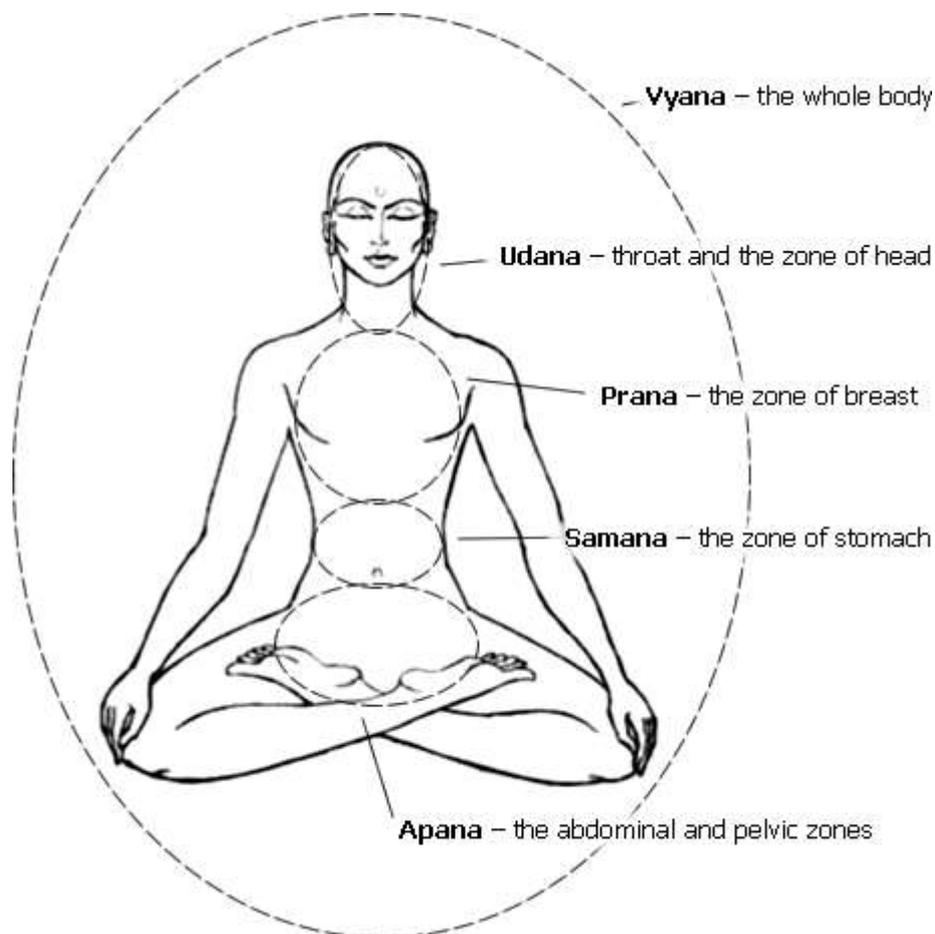
Prana is from our air, food, water, everywhere that is also contained within us. It gives us our sense of strength, and growth and continuation. If prana is imbalanced and undercharged, it forms toxins in our body and mind, or a blockage.

You have a full prana bank when born and you can choose to squander it, or use it wisely.

In yogic traditions, Pranic control and force is used to attain higher consciousness, health, peace, deeper awareness.

The 5 Pranas

1. Prana: Prana governs upper body and the head, and supplying prana to the sensory organs.
2. Apana: Downward flowing prana from waist down that controls bladder, bowels, reproductive, excretory.
3. Samana: Prana in navel area and governs digestive system.
4. Udana: Prana supplied to stomach lungs and throat.
5. Vyana: Prana supplied to limbs and controls all muscular movements, pervading all of the body, regulating and coordinating, activating all other sub pranas.



Yoga

Lastly, we ask of ourselves that we have a healthy body that is free of stress, anxiety and ill health, so we can digest what we put in perfectly. If a person has anxiety, stress, or depression, then we can quite often see that their digestion will reflect this. If the digestion is poor, Yoga postures can greatly help re-ignite sluggish digestion, or cure nausea, reflux, burning or irritation of the track. You can learn some simple yogic exercises you can do daily to bring back perfect digestion. Yoga poses can also be practised suitable to ones Ayurvedic constitution.

Yoga POSES for DIGESTION

Cow Pose
Bitilasana



Cat Pose
Marjaryasana



Wind Relieving Pose
Pavanamuktasana

Pose Variations



Reclined Spinal Twist
Supta Matsyendrasana



Daily self massage (abhyanga)

5-10 minutes using warmed Ayurvedic oils suited to your constitution.

Vata: USE VATA OIL or cold pressed black sesame oil/almond oil (warming, heavy and grounding)

Pitta: USE PITTA OIL or organic coconut oil (lightening and cooling)

Kapha: USE KAPHA OIL or mustard seed oil. (light, penetrating and warming)

1. Place very small amount of oil in tiny container and over a bowl of hot water to warm before applying to body.
2. Start massage on left foot for female, right foot for male.
3. Massage with long strokes over limbs, and circular motions over joints and chest and abdomen. Target problem areas of congestion or pain.
4. Work all the way up to the head, massaging the face also. It is ideal, but optional to massage the head with oil. (try to do the head with oil at least once per week)
5. A shower can be taken after application of the oils, or beforehand. For Vata constitutions it is best to leave the oils on the body.
6. Use old clothes and towels, which can be soaked weekly in napi-san to remove oil. Drops of eucalyptus oil in wash will remove oil smell.

NOTE:

Vata and Pitta massage should be long, slow and calming strokes.

Kapha massage can more vigorous and penetrating to the muscles and lymphatic system.

This is a very self- nurturing practice that restores health and vitality back to the body, mind and soul. It can be performed morning or night, and is extremely helpful for those who have disturbed sleep at night. It benefits the muscles, tissues, and lymphatic system. It promotes self-awareness, and a meditative, calm state of mind. It cultivates prana and life energy, and is very grounding for those suffering from anxiety.

Use Daily the Ayurveda kitchen herbs, wholesome foods, meditation, massage and Yoga to achieve your perfect digestion and lifestyle.