



**HEALING THE BODY
INTUITIVELY
THROUGH AYURVEDIC
PRACTICE**

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Ayurveda

An Intuitive Understanding of the Body

Ayurveda is a Sanskrit word that translates to the wisdom of life. It is an ancient holistic healing system that originated in India over 3,000 years ago. This discipline emphasizes maintaining balance and building awareness of your body and mind constitution as well as exploring your body's unique needs. It is a great preventative health measure and compliments medical treatments for chronic conditions.

One of my favorite aspects of Ayurveda is how simple and practical it is. There are also many different perspectives or branches of Ayurveda. There are some that lean heavily on the scientific side and others that focus more on the subtle energetic side. Today we will be focusing on a little of both, with our main goal being to tune into our bodies and all the wisdom they hold.





Delving into the Qualities

There are 20 qualities included in the Ayurvedic system. Each quality is paired with an opposite. Due to this, we can balance qualities in our body when we notice an excess or deficiency of certain ones. The qualities are always in a constant flux of change. For example, each mental process or emotion is made up of certain qualities, and each season brings about specific qualities, so these factors continuously affect our internal balance. Therefore, knowing and understanding the qualities can help you to navigate seasonal as well as personal changes.

Opposite Qualities

Heavy

Light

Dull/Slow

Sharp

Hot

Cold

Oily

Dry

Slimy/smooth

Rough

Dense

Liquid

Soft

Hard

Static

Mobile

Subtle

Gross

Cloudy

Clear

The Doshas & Qualities

Vata



Dry, Light, Cold, Rough,
Subtle, Mobile, Clear

Pitta



Hot, Sharp, Light, Liquid,
Mobile (spreading), Oily

Kapha



Heavy, Slow/Dull, Cool, Oily,
Liquid, Slimy/Smooth,
Dense, Soft, Static, Sticky,
Cloudy, Hard, Gross

Qualities Meditation Reflection Questions

- Which qualities did you choose? Why do you think you chose those qualities?
- How can you use practices or routines to bring more balance into your daily life?
- What are some ways you can use opposite qualities to help achieve balance?

Dinacharya

Holistic daily practices that support our physical, mental, emotional
& spiritual wellbeing

"Ayurveda recognizes that, when we change our mornings, we change our days and ...viola! Our lives change."

-Dr. Claudia Welch

Dinacharya is a simple morning routine that includes practices that are nourishing to the mind, body and soul. From our work with the qualities, we know that most people in our culture have a vata imbalance due to the high speed, high stress lifestyles that we are pushed to be living. Having a set routine, however long or short, can help to pacify vata by lessening the scatteredness and giving us a moment to escape from our fast paced lifestyles. These practices range from physical toxin reducing practices such as tongue scraping, brushing teeth or using nasya and sesame oil to more energetic and spiritual practices that include asana, meditation, and/or abhyanga.

Your dinacharya should change over time. As seasons shift, we should make changes to our routines to ensure we support each level of health and remain in tune with our bodies. This means that there isn't a "one size fits all" morning routine for success; as most things in Ayurveda, it "depends". I know that this grey area may be intimidating or even frustrating at first because we generally like to have standard guidelines or systems, but try thinking about it as an exploration to see what works for you and what gets you in tune with your body.

Now, we will go through some practices that you can easily work into your morning or evening routine. It is important to only choose one new practice per week at most. We don't want to overwhelm ourselves by trying to implement all these new practices at once (even if they all seem awesome and helpful). One of the main goals of this class is to continue to build bodily awareness, so that you are able to make choices regarding practices and routine essentials.

Dinacharya: Physical Practices

- **Tongue Scraping** - using a stainless steel or copper scraper, scrape your tongue 6-8 times. Noticing the color of the coating on your tongue can help you determine how well your body is digesting
- **Oil Pulling** - swish coconut oil or special oils made specifically for oil pulling to help rinse the bacteria from your mouth
- **Sesame Oil Gum Massage** - use a little bit of sesame oil to massage your gums, this helps to keep your gums healthy
- **Warm Water** - drink a cup of warm water (you may add lemon or lime if you would like). This helps to wake up your digestive fire and helps stimulate elimination



Dinacharya:

Mental, Emotional, Spiritual & Energetic Practices

- **Gratitude** - Name 3 things that you are grateful for in your life
- **Gentle Movement:** Qigong, yoga or a yoga pose, MELT, walking, jogging. These types of movement practices can help you to ground and move energy through your body.
- **Meditative Practice:** Seated or walking meditation, journaling or insight card reflection
- **Pranayama** - Breathwork is a great way to regulate the physical, energetic, emotional and mental body. For example, nadi shodhana (alternate nostril breathing) is great for bringing balance to both hemispheres of the brain
- **Dry Brushing or Abhyanga** (best to do before you shower)- if you would like more information these practices check out my free guide on my website: <https://www.solefulbeginnings.com/shop>



Ratricharya

Ayurvedic Evening practices are important for allowing our body time and space to heal. Your evening routine in the Ayurvedic tradition generally starts a few hours before bed. According to Ayurveda, it is ideal to go to bed by 10:00pm. This is because 10:00pm is when we switch from the kapha energetic, that favors rest, to the pitta energetic which can be responsible for that hunger or second wind you feel after 10:00pm. By going to bed by 10 your body uses that extra energy or second wind for healing vs. keeping you awake.

A few hours before bed:

- limit use of devices.
- limit caffeine intake
- turn off overhead lights and use low light such as lamps to help our body prepare for sleep.
- read, journal or allow time for any relaxing hobbies such as knitting or cross-stitch.



Ratricharya Practices

Warm Beverage with Calming Spices

A warm beverage can be very calming for the nervous system and adding in some spices that help with nervous system regulation and digestion is an added plus! Here is a link to one of my favorites. The base is milk, but feel free to substitute dairy milk with any dairy free milks that you enjoy!
<https://www.halepule.com/blog/simple-ayurvedic-recipe-spiced-milk>

Restorative Practice

There are many relaxing yoga poses and practices that you can do once you are already in bed. You can hold these poses for as little or long as you would like. Here are a few poses that can help your body relax and get ready for a great night's sleep!

- Child's pose
- Constructive rest
- Legs up the wall
- Knee to chest
- Deer Pose
- Supported Bridge



Ratricharya Practices

When you settle into bed:

Focus on the Breath

The breath helps to control our thoughts and reel in our very overactive minds. Try these breathing techniques to help prepare you for sleep!

- Square breathing (inhale 4, hold 4 counts, exhale 4 counts, hold 4 counts)
- Left Nostril breathing- block off your right nostril with your thumb and breath in and out through the left nostril

Visualizations

This technique helps us to relax as well as process! One technique that I learned from my Ayurveda teacher, Katie Silcox, is that when you lay down start to go through your day in reverse and just pass through each event. This isn't a time for judgement; it's just letting the events of the day process through. I find that just remembering the events of the day in reverse order keeps me from falling into judgement and most of the time I only make it through half the day before I drift into sleep!



Lee Albert's Daily Stretches

Hold each stretch for 1 minute

Shoulder Stretch



The shoulders are one of the major areas of tension in the body. We are almost always leaning forward and hardly ever leaning back. To balance the overstretched back muscles, it's important to slacken the back muscles and stretch the tight chest muscles by bringing the shoulders back.

Psoas Stretch

The psoas is not only affected by our physical activity, but it is also affected by our past trauma, emotions and experiences. This muscle can be very tight from sitting and can be the cause of lower back pain.



Quad Stretch

Instead of stretching your hamstrings, it's time to start stretching your quads! The quad muscles are typically tight, which means the hamstrings are overstretched. Therefore, in order to find relief for our hamstrings we must stretch our quads.



Lee Albert's Daily Stretches

Hold each stretch for 1 minute

QL Side Bend

These muscles become tight from sitting and any forward leaning movements such as using a computer. To perform this stretch simply bring your arms overhead and tilt to one side, this slackens one side of the QL and stretches the other.



Crossing legs or Spinal Twist

The outside of the thighs tend to be very tight and can be the cause of both hip and lower back pain. One way to tell if you have tight outer thigh muscles is to lay down and relax your feet, if your feet fall out to the sides you have tightness in your outer thighs. For this stretch, there is a seated version & supine version



Reflections

Morning & Evening Routine

Morning Routine

Evening Routine

Favorite Practices

References & Resources

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