



Our Theme of the Month, learn more about...

Ayurveda

Thousands of years before modern medicine provided scientific evidence for the mind-body connection, the sages of India developed Ayurveda, which continues to be one of the world's most sophisticated and powerful mind-body health systems.

Ayurveda is a science of life (*Ayur* = life, *Veda* = science or knowledge). It offers a body of wisdom designed to help people stay vibrant and healthy while realizing their full human potential.

The two main guiding principles are

- 1.) The mind and the body are inextricably connected,
- 2.) Nothing has more power to heal and transform the body than the mind.

Freedom from illness depends upon expanding our own awareness, bringing it into balance, and then extending that balance to the body. This process isn't as complicated as it may sound.

For example, when you meditate you effortlessly enter a state of expanded awareness and inner quiet that refreshes the mind and restores balance. Since the mind and body are inseparable, the body is naturally balanced through the practice of meditation. In the state of restful awareness created through meditation, your heart rate and breath slow, your body decreases the production of "stress" hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline, and you increase the production of neurotransmitters that enhance wellbeing, including serotonin, dopamine, oxytocin, and endorphins.



Here are a few of the most important aspects of the Ayurvedic approach and suggestions for applying them to create perfect health in your own life:

Understand your unique mind-body type and the specific needs that derive from it.

Ayurveda is a personalized approach to health, and knowing your mind-body type allows you to make optimal choices about diet, exercise, supplements, and all other aspects of your lifestyle.

Eat a colorful, flavorful diet.

Next to breathing, eating is our most vital bodily function. To create a healthy body and mind our food must be nourishing. Ideal nutrition comes from consuming a variety of fresh foods that are appropriately prepared and eaten with awareness. A simple way to make sure that you are getting a balanced diet is to include the six Ayurvedic tastes (sweet, salty, sour, pungent, bitter, and astringent) in each meal. Doing so will ensure that all major food groups and nutrients are represented. When you include all six tastes, you will also notice that you feel satisfied and that the urge to snack and overeat will diminish.

Along with the six tastes, filling your plate with the colors of the rainbow promotes a long and healthy life. You can literally ingest the information of the universe into your biology. Foods that are deep blue, purple, red, green, or orange are leaders in antioxidants and contain many nutrients that boost immunity and enhance health.

Get abundant restful sleep.

According to Ayurveda, sleep is the nursemaid to humanity. During sleep, our body repairs and rejuvenates itself. A lack of restful sleep disrupts the body's innate balance, weakens our immune system, and speeds up the aging process. Human beings generally need between six and eight hours of restful sleep each night. Restful sleep means that you're not using pharmaceuticals or alcohol to get to sleep but that you're drifting off easily once you turn off the light and are sleeping soundly through the night. If you feel energetic and vibrant when you wake up, you had a night of restful sleep. If you feel tired and unenthusiastic, you haven't had restful sleep.

Live in tune with nature.

The phrase "living in tune with nature" has a precise meaning in Ayurveda: having healthy desires that match what you actually need. As nature made you, what you need and what you want shouldn't be in conflict. When you're in balance, you naturally desire only that which nurtures your health and life. When you slip out of tune with nature, your desires become non-nurturing and you may crave junk food, neglect to sleep and exercise, and indulge in compulsive behaviors. Overtime, a little imbalance can become a disorder and then a disease, bringing on more stress.

You can make choices that keep you in harmony with your inner intelligence and rhythms by tuning into your body's messages. The body always expresses itself through signals of comfort and discomfort. When choosing a certain path or behavior, ask your body, "How do you feel about this?" If your body sends a signal of physical or emotional distress, pay attention and consider a different choice. If your body sends a signal of comfort and eagerness, you may proceed. Whereas the mind lives in the past and the future, the body resides in the now and never doubts itself. It knows the truth and will guide you towards the most evolutionary choices.

Strengthen your digestive power.

As Ayurveda teaches, good health is dependent upon our capability to fully metabolize the nutritional, emotional, and sensory information that we ingest.



Here are a few Ayurvedic practices to strengthen your digestive fire:

- Always sit down to eat (don't eat in front of your computer or TV or while you're driving).
- Eat in a settled atmosphere and not when you're upset.
- Don't eat until you're definitely hungry.
- Dine at a moderate pace. Don't gulp down your food or eat too slowly.
- Minimize raw foods, which are much harder to digest than cooked ones.
- Include all six tastes at each meal.
- Drink hot water with ginger throughout the day.
- Practice some form of moderate exercise on a regular basis.
- Perform a daily oil massage with herbalized oil that balances your mind-body type.
- Spend time in the quiet of meditation every day.
- Use detoxifying herbs such as triphala, ashwagandha, guggulu, brahmi, ginger, turmeric and neem.

Take the test to discover your Body-Mind Type: "The Dosha"



Vata



Pitta



Kapha