



THE DOSHA HANDBOOK

VATA

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INTRODUCTION

We've created this booklet to give you a better understanding of how your body and mind work.

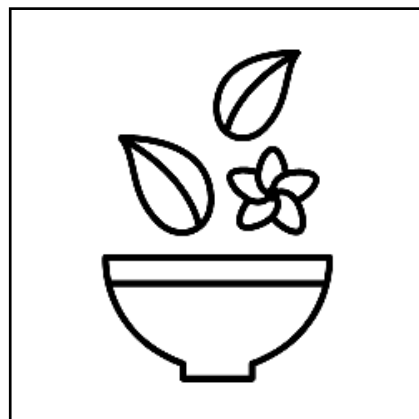
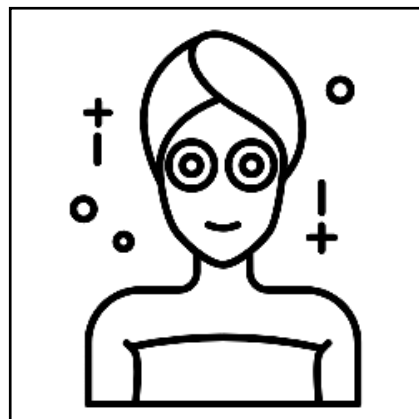
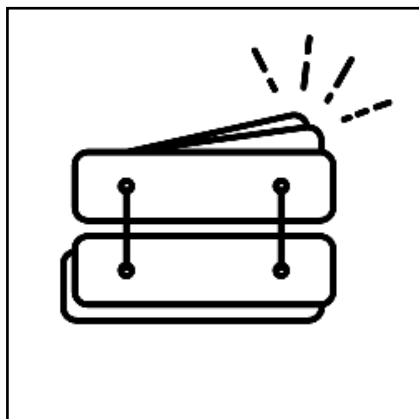
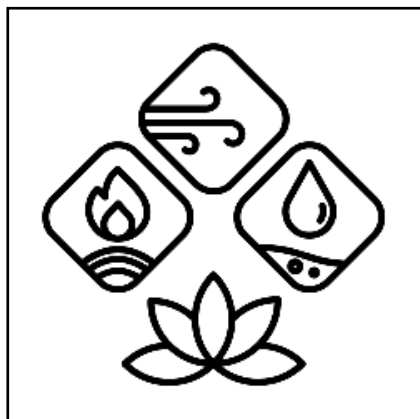
Did you ever wish life came with a playbook? I sure did growing up. This handbook is just that—a guide on how to live, based on your Ayurvedic body-mind type, or dosha. In this handbook, you'll find

- New insights into how your body and mind work
- The foods that give you more energy (and less trouble!)
- Lifestyle choices suited to your type
- Herbal supplements to help you feel balanced and at ease.

The guide is designed with three main sections—food, lifestyle and supplements—sections you can use as an ongoing reference. Whether you print it out, stick pages to your fridge, or save it to your phone, there are plenty of ways to use this guide so that Ayurveda becomes easy, convenient, and useful.

So, feel free to read ahead, or jump straight to the section that interests you.

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AYURVEDA

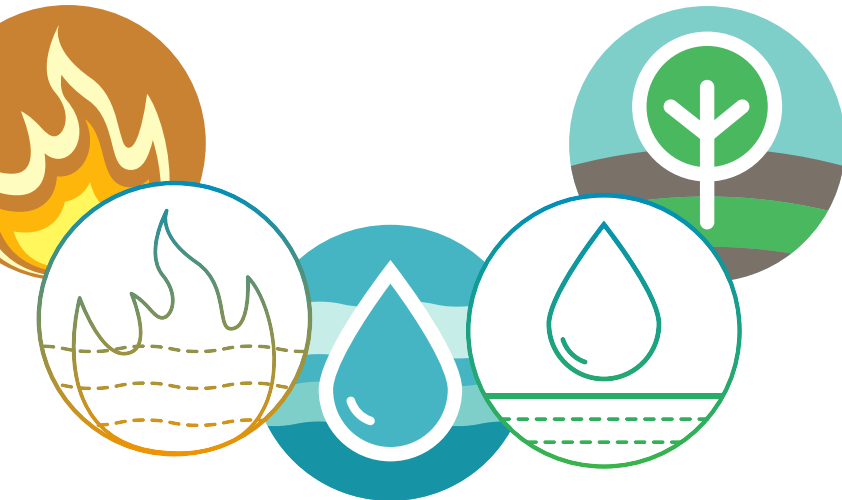
The Science of Life

VATA



People are different. It's part of what makes being a human being so special, there is no one just quite like you. But why? For thousands of years, people have been asking what makes us different. Why are some people able to eat more than others? How can some leap out of bed in the morning, ready to face the day, while others take hours to fully wake up? Is there a reason why some people can handle the cold better than others?

Answers to these and many more questions can be found through the ancient holistic practice of Ayurveda, the healing branch of yogic science. Ayurveda literally means the "knowledge of life and longevity." Many modern healing practices have their roots in Ayurveda, including massage with medicinal oils, dietary therapies, herbal remedies, psychiatry, acupuncture, color and gem therapy and meditation.



PITTA

KAPHA

Ayurveda tells us that people are not “one size fits all.” They come in three body-mind types, or combinations of types. For example, physically, some of us are tall and thin, some are mid-size, and some have a stocky frame. The Sanskrit names are vata, pitta, and kapha.

Humans have vata, pitta, and kapha traits in various combinations and proportions. One trait is usually predominant, one secondary, and the third is least prominent. In that way, each of us has a particular combination of physical mental and emotional traits that make up his or her type, or prakruti. Just like we have unique fingerprints, we also have unique “energy prints,” proportions of vata, pitta, or kapha that are uniquely our own.

Once you know your dosha, you can use that knowledge as a blueprint for a happier, healthier life. Your custom diet and lifestyle plan will include knowledge of the foods, herbs, activities, climates, and places that are right for you.

Balance is our normal state of order. When in balance, physically, mentally and emotionally, good health follows. When out of balance, the result is disease. The root of the word disease is dis-ease, a state where we feel tense, out of balance, and out of whack. Ayurveda is all about coming to a state of ease—relaxed, balanced, and abundant with energy.

**WHAT
IS AN
AYURVEDIC
TYPE?**

What is an Ayurvedic Type? Your Ayurveda type is your physical, mental and emotional blueprint—all of the physical traits and mental tendencies present when you were born. It is what makes you YOU.

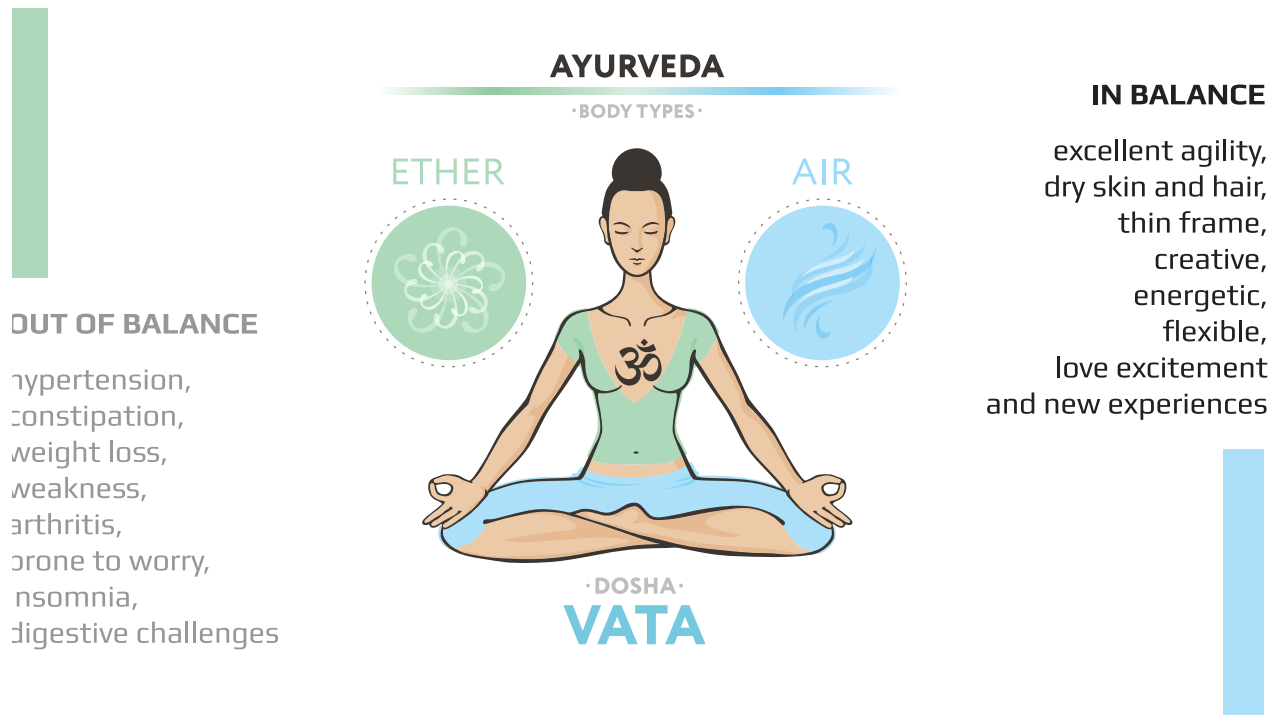
Modern medicine calls this blueprint a genetic code. Ayurveda calls it your prakruti, your “essential nature” or individual type. It is your own combination of physical, mental and emotional characteristics.



Knowing your type is essential to understanding how to maintain inner balance and correct imbalances that may arise. What may be good for one person may not be good for you. Learning about your Ayurvedic body-mind type will give you valuable information for nurturing your body’s inner intelligence. You can identify the foods, activities, and lifestyle that have the greatest benefits for you. This understanding will allow you to make the best choices for your own health and wellbeing.

By following the lifestyle that best suits your type, you better your chances to stay fit, energetic, healthy, and happy.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TYPE



If vata is your primary dosha, your nature is movement and change. You are creative and love excitement and new projects. Many times, vata folks are great at starting things, yet tend to become restless and may fail to follow through.

Unfortunately, vatas can spin out of balance more quickly than the other doshas. Therefore, they may benefit most from an established routine of regular eating and sleeping habits. In terms of climate, vatas tend to feel more comfortable in warm or hot weather and have trouble tolerating cold or windy weather.

Although related to the air principle, vata does not refer to the air we breathe. It refers to the subtle energy of the body, it's life force or prana, our vital life essence. Prana is the pure essence of vata.

Physical Traits

Those who are vata in nature are usually very tall or very short, non-muscular, with thin, bony limbs and have a quick gait with short, fast steps, and above-average agility. Vatas tend to have thin skin that is both dry and cool especially the hands and feet. Their hair is thin, dark, curly and coarse. Face is usually long and angular, often with an underdeveloped chin. The neck is thin and scrawny. Nose is small and narrow or sunken. The teeth are irregular often set in receding gums. Those with Vata dosha typically have a weak, low voice and their speech is fast, often with interruptions. Their digestion can often be sensitive and their sleep light.

Dosha Imbalance

Vata dosha imbalance may manifest as weight loss, arthritis, osteoporosis, low immunity, and irregular digestion. They are more likely to be anxious, nervous, and restless. The vata response to stress or overwhelm is typically to blame and question themselves.

Excess vata may present as

- Constipation
- Indigestion
- Dry and brittle skin, lips, hair, and nails
- Insomnia.

MEDITATION FOR YOUR DOSHA

Vata dosha (out of balance) becomes easily distracted, gets anxious at the idea of meditating and avoids sitting still.

Japa meditation: The tactile sense of passing mala beads through the fingers while reciting a mantra offers a more tangible tool for cultivating concentration and indefatigable focus.

Rudraksha mala beads are known to relieve the stress caused by anxiety and depression, improve concentration and ease the pain often associated with vata disturbances.

If you are not inclined to use mala beads, you can use rosary beads or any other kind of beads—the objective is to offer the mind something tactile on which to bind its attention.

Om Namaha Shivaya can be used as a mantra or, in lieu of a Sanskrit mantra, you can recite a prayer or any positive affirmation that resonates with you.

Do your meditation while seated (avoid lying down) in a comfortable, yet attentive position with eyes closed.

Read the full article, and many more
[▶ aolrc.org/blog](https://aolrc.org/blog)

VATA DIETARY GUIDE

If your constitution is primarily vata, a vata-reducing diet can help keep you grounded and balanced. Remember the slogan for vata, “Stay Calm and Keep Warm.” Follow these nutritional guidelines for a vata-balancing diet.



Foods for Vata Balance

Fruits Apples, berries, figs, dates, and sweet fruits

Vegetables Cooked vegetables, asparagus, sweet potatoes, beans, pumpkin; limit leafy greens.

Grains Rice and quinoa

Beans Small beans such as lentils, black beans, soybeans (tofu) and mung beans

Nuts All nuts

Dairy Butter, cheese, milk, and ghee

Oils Sesame, olive, coconut, and avocado

Spices Turmeric, black pepper, salt, cinnamon, ginger, thyme, vanilla.

Foods to Avoid

- Chilled food, including frozen
- Dried food
- Junk food

Balancing Tastes

Sweet, sour, and salty.

General Dietary Tips

- Eat in a peaceful place with a calm mind.
- Eat only when you feel hungry.
- Avoid cold drinks just before and after meals. Don't quench the digestive fire (agni).

Weight Management

Vatas are born with a slender build and may have trouble gaining weight. Three warm, cooked meals are recommended daily. They should be eaten at the same time every day, as vata digestion tends to be irregular.

RECIPE

CCF TEA (Cumin, Coriander, and Fennel)

1 tsp. cumin seed

1 tsp. coriander seed

1 tsp. fennel seed

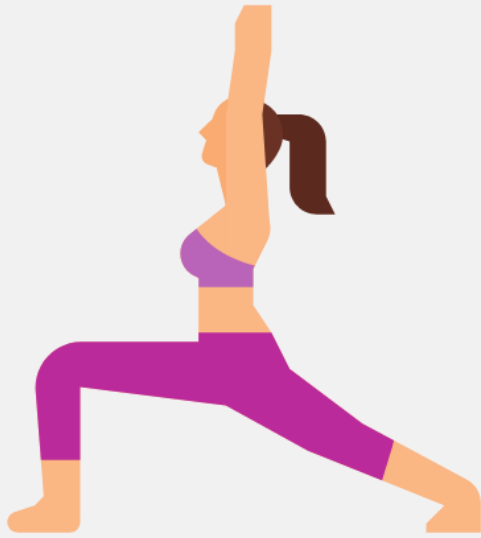
16 Oz water

Lemon or lime

Bring seeds to a boil in a small pot. Turn down heat down to low and simmer uncovered for 15 minutes. Strain into a mug with juice of half a lemon or lime.



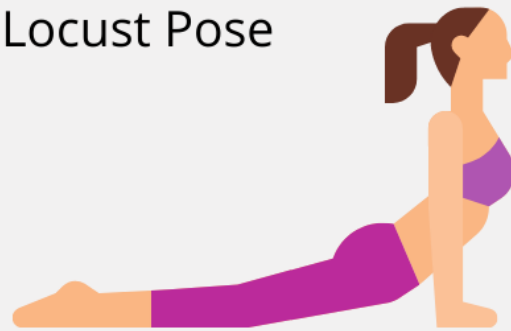
LIFESTYLE FOR KAPHA



Warrior Pose



Locust Pose



Cobra Pose



Cow Face Front Pose
(shoulders and neck)



Forward Bend Poses

Exercise

When creating a fitness plan, make sure it is something you enjoy so you can stick with it. The plan should also be well-suited for your body-mind type. For example, vatas love moving fast and being active. They are attracted to trying new sports and new workouts.

The best forms of exercise for vatas are rhythmic and calming, such as rowing, walking, swimming, yoga, and Tai Chi. Strength training is also beneficial for building muscle mass.

Yoga

Vata types tend to suffer from arthritis more than the other doshas, especially after the age of fifty. Yoga helps by stimulating the production of healing joint fluid (synovial fluid), cushioning and nourishing the surface of each joint.

More important than which poses you do is how you do them. Vata types should do yoga at a slow, steady pace with smooth transitions, like a graceful dance. Remember to gently return your awareness to the breath and the body when the mind wanders.

Here are seven recommended yoga poses that are therapeutic for vatas:

- Sun salutation (slowly and consciously)
- Shoulder and neck rotations
- Standing postures
- Wind-Relieving Pose
- Forward Bends
- Cobra Pose
- Locust Pose

LIVING WELL TIPS

5 Keys to Vata Balance

When you start to notice the symptoms and effects of vata imbalance, you can start to adjust your eating and make other choices to take on other qualities that will cure your vata imbalance.

Here are five tips you can easily incorporate into your lifestyle. Start feeling more relaxed and grounded today:

1. Keep warm no matter what the season (steam baths and saunas are highly recommended).
2. A regular routine for eating, sleeping and working.
3. Massage the body daily with sesame oil.
4. Vata soothing music, incense and company.
5. Gentle exercise, which could include walking, yoga, or tai chi.

Herbal Supplements for Vata

Vata types benefit from Ayurvedic herbs that improve digestion, elimination, and sleep. These natural herbs also boost immune function and detoxify the body, especially in the intestines.

Ashwagandha is often recommended to boost energy and concentration. It calms the anxious vata's mind and soothes the nervous system.

Triphala, "the three fruits," is a powerful blend of three herbs from trees that grow in India. The three fruits are dried and ground into a powder: haritaki, amalaki, and bibitaki. Of the three, haritaki is especially good for balancing vata. Besides being packed with healing antioxidants, Triphala gently cleanses and detoxifies the colon.

Check out the Kapha Balancing Kit available at [SriSriTATTVA](#).

LIFE IN BALANCE

Our constitution is our body-mind type present at birth. It does not change. When we eat the proper food and follow the lifestyle that suits our constitution, then we better our chances to stay fit, healthy and happy for life.

The three doshas are three sets of qualities that make up our nature. Each of us is a different combination. The doshas could also be called the governing principles of your life. If you understand your dosha, your constitution, you can understand how your body-mind functions on an energetic level. You can then design a lifestyle and nutrition plan for your life, based on your personal nature.

Vata people are energetic, creative and flexible. However, vatas may spin out of balance more quickly than the other doshas. When out of balance, vatas suffer from anxiety, stress and insomnia.

If your dosha is primarily vata, use the tips given in this guide to stay warm and stay calm: enjoy warm steam baths or a sauna in winter. Practice Abhyasa, daily self-massage, with warm sesame oil. Try a vata-reducing diet and gentle yoga asanas. Ayurvedic herbs like ashwagandha and triphala are also recommended.

“A physician, though well versed in the knowledge and treatment of disease, who does not enter into the heart of the patient with the virtue of light and love, will not be able to heal the patient.”

—Physician-Sage Charaka, one of the founders of
Ayurvedic medicine



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