



Registered Yoga School

Intro to AYURVEDA PHILOSOPHY (Bhagavad Gita & Sutras) MUDRAS

Introduction to Ayurveda

Ayurveda is derived from two Sanskrit words: **Ayur** meaning *life* and **Veda** meaning *knowledge*.
Ayurveda is the science of life and longevity.



Ayurveda Background *What makes Ayurveda special?*

- It is a holistic system of healing that heals the physical body, relaxes the mind, soothes the soul and renews the spirit
 - It respects the uniqueness of the individual
 - It is deemed the oldest form of healthcare being a 5000 plus year old tradition
 - It treats the body as a whole – in Ayurveda the mind and body are never treated separately.
 - It emphasizes preventions and offers natural ways of treating diseases and promoting health
- It has no side effects
 - It empowers everyone to take responsibility for their own well-being

Ayurveda Basics

Each person has a unique blueprint; just the same way everyone has a unique fingerprint, which is comprised through the five basic elements: space, air, fire, water and earth. These five elements combine into three functional principles, **dosha**, which are present, in varying degrees, in everything and everybody.

The three doshas are:

Vata: combination of space and air; energy of movement

Pitta: combination of fire and water; energy of digestion and metabolism

Kapha: combination of water and earth; energy of lubrication and structure

All people have all of these three doshas, but one of them is usually primary, one secondary and the third least prominent. This particular pattern of energy is an individual combination of physical, mental and emotional characteristics. Health depends on maintaining this proportion of balance.

Toxins and Diseases

Health is order; and imbalance is disorder and disorder creates disease. Health and disease are processes. Disease is a process of abnormal movement of the doshas, while health is a process of their normal functioning.

Agni, is the biological fire or heat energy that governs metabolism. It can be compared with digestive enzymes involved in breaking down, digesting, absorbing and assimilating our food. Agni maintains the nutrition of the tissues and the strength of the immune system.

Toxic food, water, air, toxic emotions like greed, envy, fear and toxic relationships cause a formation and accumulation of toxins in the body. This accumulation in turn impairs the body's agni and leads to the creation of **ama**, undigested residue. Once ama is present the process of disease begins and if not caught early and cleansed from the body ama can spread to the rest of the body. Therefore, when the body's agni is weakened poor health is the result.

Guidelines for determining your dosha

Circle the observation or attribute that best describes you.

Then total the columns and the column with the highest number reflects your primary dosha.

Observation	Vata	Pitta	Kapha
Body Size	Slim	Medium	Large
Body Weight	Low	Medium	Overweight
Skin	Thin, dry, cold, rough, dark	Smooth, oily, warm, rosy	Thick, oily, cool, pale
Hair	Dry, brittle, thin	Straight, oily	Thick, oily, curly, wavy
Teeth	Protruding, big, thin gums	Medium, soft, tender gums	Health, white, strong gums
Nails	Dry, rough, brittle, break easily	Sharp, flexible, pink, lustrous	Thick, oily, smooth, polished
Eyes	Small, sunken, dry	Sharp, bright, sensitive to light	Big, beautiful, calm, loving
Belly	Thin, flat, sunken	Moderate	Big, potbellied
Joints	Cold, cracking	Moderate	Large, lubricated
Appetite	Irregular, scanty	Strong, unbearable	Slow but steady
Digestion	Irregular, forms gas	Quick, causes burning	Prolonged, forms mucus
Elimination	Constipation	Loose	Thick, oily, sluggish
Taste	Sweet, sour, salty	Sweet, bitter	Bitter, pungent
Physical Activity	Hyperactive	Moderate	Sedentary
Emotions	Anxiety, fear, uncertainty, flexible	Anger, hate, jealousy, determined	Calm, greedy, attachment
Sleep	Scanty, broken up, sleeplessness	Little but sound	Deep, prolonged
Total			

General Dosha Guidelines

Each person's dosha is unique and therefore through awareness of food, relationships and environment you can create the best routine and guideline for optimal health.

Ayurveda is a natural alternative focusing on prevention. It does not substitute nor intends to circumvent medical care and attention.

Prevention

The key to health is awareness. The more you are alert to how your mind, body and emotions react to changing circumstances; the more you are aware of your dosha balance and the choices you make to maintain health, the less opportunities you create for becoming sick. As your awareness broadens in the practice, empower yourself to be proactive in your body, mind and spirit well-being.

Ayurveda & ASANA

Ayurveda and yoga are two symbiotic principles. Both are disciplines of honoring the body and healing from within. Daily yoga practice, pranayama and meditation are a strong protective armor against the seeds of disease. The daily practice awakens layers of physical stress, digestive imbalance, emotional clutter and spiritual unease.

Suggested Yoga Asanas for Vata:

- Vrksasana
- Tadasana
- Savasana

Suggested Yoga Asanas for Pitta:

- Adho Mukha Svanasana
- Balasana
- Savasana

Suggested Yoga Asanas for Kapha:

- Virabhadrasana
- Utkatasana
- Savasana

Philosophy – Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita, also referred as Gita (The song of Bhagvan or God) is a 700 verse-scripture that is part of a Hindu Epic Mahabharata. The original verse is written in Sanskrit Language and to date it has been translated into numerous languages. The first English translation was in 1785 by Charles Wilkins only 174 years after the translation of Kings James Bible.

The Gita is set in a dialogue form between Arjun, a Pandava prince and his Charitoer Lord Krishna. Arjun is facing a personal dilemma between fulfilling his duty to be a warrior and killing his relatives in war. Inserted in this appeal to his heroism is a dialogue between diverging attitudes and methods toward attainment of liberation.

Different scholars with widely differing views on the essentials of this dilemma have written numerous commentaries of the Gita.

Various commentators read relations between Individual self and Supreme Self (God). While the setting of Gita is in a battlefield, it has been interpreted as an allegory for the ethical and moral struggles of the human life.

Gita has Eighteen Chapters. As per some commentators, these are divided in three parts

Chapters 1 thru 6 deal with Self – Karma Yoga, the means to final goal

Chapters 7 thru 12 deal with Supreme Self (God)- Bhakti Yoga or devotion

Chapters 13 thru 18 deal with the relationship between individual Self and Supreme Self – Gyana Yoga or Knowledge, the goal itself.

There is another interpretation of Gita.

Arjun- The Pandava prince has Supreme Self Lord Krishna as his Charioteer. The Chariot has 5 Horses driving the Chariot. Arjun is sitting and Krishna is driving the chariot. It depicts 5 Human Senses- Sense of Touch, Sense of Smell, Sense of Taste, Sense of Seeing and Sense of Hearing.

Arjun is the mind and Krishna is the intellect, consciousness. The Battlefield is all human emotions, sentiments, despair, hope, desire, jealousy, greed and ignorance. The fight is all inside the Self and how to deal with the issues is another interpretation by the learned commentators.

Philosophy – Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

- **8 Limbs of Raja Yoga**
 - o 196 lessons on how to live an abundant life
 - o Step-by-step plan for living right
 - o Principle-centered practices

- **Yamas** – self-restraint, self-control and discipline; Your Moral Life
 - o Patanjali’s 5 Moral Restraints:
 - Ahimsa – non-violence
 - Satya – benevolent truth
 - Asteya – non-sharing
 - Brahmacharya – self-control/non-sexual energy
 - Aparigraha – non-appropriation, non-hoarding – only hold what you need

- **Niyamas** – your personal honor, integrity, self-discipline
 - o Patanjali’s 5 Observations:
 - Shauca – purity
 - Santosha – contentment
 - Tapas – zeal – authentic inspiration
 - Svadhyaya – self-study, self-knowledge
 - Ishvarapranidhana – trust in higher power; devotion to a higher power

- **Asana** – seat of soul; your physical practice

- **Pranayama** – mastering energy; your breathing practices

- **Pratyahara** – managing your senses
 - o Managing body chemistry
 - o Managing compulsiveness
 - o Perception vs. instinctual action
 - o Indications to practice pratyahara: addiction; at the mercy of/powerless to someone/something

- **Dharana** – meditation, awareness, heightened consciousness

- **Dhyana** – mental sharpness; focus and concentration

- **Samadhi** – childlike awareness, spiritually awake, freedom; Universal Oneness

Mudras – Five Fingers

The meaning of mudra is attitude or symbolic gesture. In yoga, mudras are meant to affect the subtle, energetic body and are primarily used during pranayama practice. Their energetic effects also work on a subtle level of the mind and attitude.

- Gyan Mudra – Knowledge
- Shuni Mudra – Patience
- Surya Mudra – Vitality
- Buddhi Mudra – Wisdom

5 fingers related to the 5 elements.

- Thumb represents Fire.
- Index finger represents Air.
- Middle finger represents Ether.
- Ring finger represents Earth.
- Pinky finger represents Water.

There are so many various mudras.

What are some that you may be aware of?

Adjustments

- Not all adjustments are hands-on; remember verbal cues
- Announce at the beginning of class if you will be offering hands on assists and always ask permission before hands on assists
- Remember to engage your student during an adjustment so they feel empowered to offer input
- It is ok to let a student know you are not comfortable or have the knowledge to help with an adjustment
- Make sure to continue to teach to the room while assisting

Which poses do you appreciate a hands on adjustment?