

Finding Balance through Ayurveda

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Unprecedented times call for unprecedented ways of managing disruptions to our environment and coping with uncertainty. Here we take a trip East to Ancient India where we explore an alternative medicine philosophy that focuses on balance and holistic well-being.



“Ayurveda” derives from Sanscrit roughly translated as “the science of longevity” or “the sacred knowledge of life” with roots dating back over 5000 years in the Vedic period of ancient India. Ayurveda views “Health” as a “state in which the mind, soul, and senses interact harmoniously to experience a feeling of self, wellness, and even bliss.”

The pathway to good health in Ayurvedic philosophy views the universe as the interaction of “elements” (earth, fire, water, air and space) and opposing/balancing “qualities” (hot, cold, rough, smooth, etc.). *Doshas* are bodily humors that embody a combination of elements and qualities to create a functional entity—an energetic force of nature. There are 3 Doshas: Vata, Kapha and Pitta. All three Doshas are present in everyone, but in different ratios defining one’s *constitution*,

which is present at the time of birth and vary through life and circumstance (To learn about your Dasha balance, take this quiz: <https://www.banyanbotanicals.com/info/dosha-quiz/>)

VATA

The harmonious union of air and space. Just like air and space, vata is light and mobile.



Understanding your constitution and when it is imbalanced lends insight into interventions that will help to move you back in the direction of balance and well-being.

PITTA

The harmonious union of fire and water. Like fire, pitta is hot, sharp, and light. Like water, it is oily and spreading.



Addressing imbalance may be as simple as slowing down and having a cup of warm tea; reading a book; exercising in the morning rather than the evening, or adding new or different foods and spices to your daily menu. Sometimes simple modifications can go a long way to restore balance and well-being.

KAPHA

The harmonious union of water and earth. Like water, kapha is soft and cold. Like Earth, it is heavy and stable.



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Yoga, a practice related to Ayurveda through its roots in Vedic knowledge, is an integrative approach, harmonizing the body, senses, mind, and consciousness. Modern yoga uses physical poses and meditation to achieve balance and well-being and has grown in popularity across genders, age and athletes of all levels.

As the winter approaches and uncertainty about the future remains, staying mentally and physically healthy may require a different approach from what traditional medicine alone can provide. Looking to ancient India to explore alternative medicine philosophies that are still thriving today provides an exciting opportunity to get to know oneself in a completely different way.■

To learn more about Ayurvedic philosophy, check out this link:

<https://www.banyanbotanicals.com/info/ayurvedic-living/learning-ayurveda/intro-to-ayurveda/>

Laursen, Marisa. "Ayurveda: A Brief History of an Ancient Healing Science." California College of Ayurveda. <http://www.ayurvedacollege.com/blog/ayurveda-brief-history-ancient-healing-science>