



Introduction to Ayurvedic Lifestyle

I am grateful to my teachers, Verena Gayatri Primus, Patricia Wickman, the teachers of Sivananda Yoga Ashram in Grass Valley, and the entire lineage of Ayurveda teachers for passing on this ancient, sacred wisdom from India that we continue to benefit immensely from. May this lifestyle guide support our individual and collective well-being.

Ayurveda is the “science of life,” and is often referred to as the sister science of yoga. Ayurveda offers timeless wisdom on how to live a healthy and balanced life.

"Ayurveda recognizes that the human being is a microcosm (small part, reflection) of the macrocosm (the big picture, the universe). The human body is made up of the same energies that the universe is made out of. The world operates in rhythms (cycles of the sun, cycles of the moon, cycles of the season) and so do we. The introduction of artificial light, global food transportation, and a schedule so busy that we don't notice nature's rhythms makes it easy to get out of sync. If a person acts as if he/she is separate from the macrocosm (eating tropical fruit in the winter, staying up all night, breathing in recycled air) the organism gets wacky and falls off of balance. Ayurveda is about bringing the microcosm into balance with the macrocosm to restore balance, health, and vitality to the body, mind, and spirit." -Kate O'Donnell, *Everyday Ayurveda Cookbook*

Everything and everyone are made up of a unique combination of the qualities of the five elements:

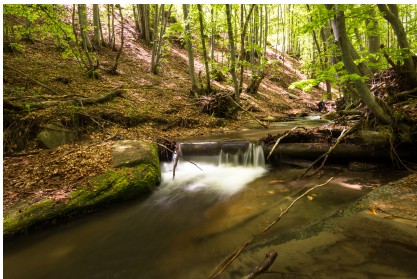
Ether (*Akasha*): light, subtle, clear

Air (*Vayu*): cold, dry, rough, mobile

Fire (*Tejas*): hot, mobile, sharp

Water (*Apas*): wet, smooth, gross

Earth (*Prithvi*): dense, hard, heavy



What elements are predominant in your body and mind when you feel balanced, healthy, and content?

For example, when in balance, an "earthy" person might feel grounded and calm, a "fiery" person motivated and passionate, and an "airy" person creative and active.

When you feel off balance, what elements do you notice are present?

For example, when out of balance, an "earthy" person might feel lethargic or depressed, a "fiery" person angry or irritable, and an "airy" person anxious or scattered.

In order to keep our bodies and minds in balance, we can do things to maintain internal balance of the elements.

When you notice **excess EARTH and WATER** in your system, avoid things that are SWEET, HEAVY, OILY, WATERY, and DENSE (like cold/rainy weather, overeating, eating too many sugary/rich/fatty foods, sedentary lifestyle, oversleeping) and favor things that are STIMULATING, BITTER, DRY, and ASTRINGENT (like break your routine, try new things, eat pungent foods like radish and ginger, wake up with the sun, get cardio exercise).

When you notice **excess FIRE and WATER** in your system, avoid things that are SPICY, SHARP, SOUR, OILY, and ACIDIC (like hot weather, stress, caffeine, spicy food, competitive sports, overworking, working at night) and favor things that are COOLING, SWEET, and DRY (like schedule time for rest and self-care, eat mint, coconut, and cucumber, choose calming exercise like slow flow yoga, tai chi, hiking).

When you notice **excess AIR and ETHER** in your system, avoid things that are COLD, LIGHT, BITTER, RAW, CRUNCHY and DRY (like cold/dry weather, undereating, fasting, eating lots of cold/raw foods, excess cardio, travel, multitasking) and favor things that are WARM, SPICY, HEAVY and OILY (like establish a routine, slow down, eat warm soups and stews with root vegetables, practice a grounding & strengthening yoga practice).

**We are part of nature, and nature is part of us.
The seasons and cycles of nature impact
elemental balance. Balanced and healthy living
requires that we live in alignment with the
seasons.**



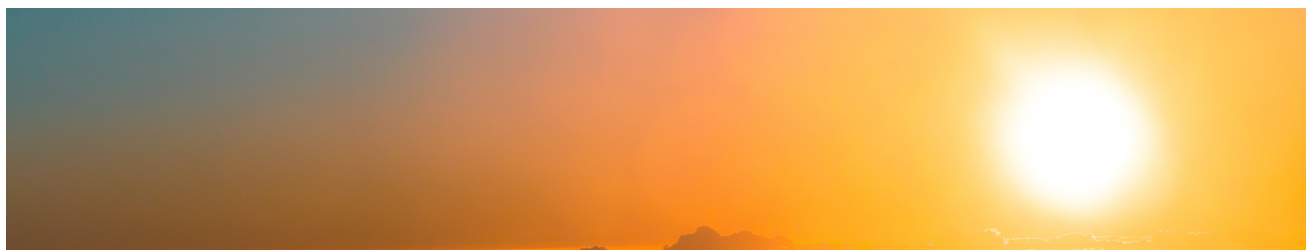
During **late fall - early winter** (windy/dry outside), do things to balance **excess AIR and ETHER.**

During **late winter - early spring** (cold/wet outside), do things to balance **excess EARTH and WATER.**

During **late spring - early fall** (hot outside), do things to balance **excess FIRE and WATER.**

Whenever possible, eat local and seasonal foods!

Our daily rhythm is also influenced by the elements. We can plan our days to work with nature instead of against it for more vibrant health.



6am - 10am: EARTH and WATER time (good time to have a light breakfast and get moving with some light exercise)

10am - 2pm: FIRE and WATER time (good time to strategize, do the bulk of work for the day, and have the biggest meal of the day during this time as digestion is strongest midday)

2pm - 6pm: AIR and ETHER time (good time to rest and tap into creativity)



6pm to 10pm: EARTH and WATER time (good time to have a light dinner, light exercise, spend time with family, wind-down)

10pm - 2am: FIRE and WATER time (good time to get the best quality sleep, resist the urge to continue working or eating during this time)

2am - 6am: AIR and ETHER time (good time for remembering dreams, can be a powerful time for artists, creatives, and spiritual seekers to feel closely connected to inspiration)

In summary, remember that we are part of nature and nature is part of us. Everything and everyone is made up of a unique combination of the elements that are shifting all the time. Listen to and trust the wisdom of your body. Listen to and trust the wisdom of nature.

with love and gratitude, Hana Raftery

