Improve Your Wellbeing with Ayurveda
Welcome to the world of Spa Ayurda, where beauty and wellness meet!

The objective of this book is to introduce the Ayurveda way to those just starting out, explaining how it benefits your overall wellbeing, or as a refresher to those that have been following the lifestyle for sometime.

I have seen many Ayurvedic books online and I feel they are either too technical or too heavy on information. I wanted to create an easy-to-understand practical book that everyone at any level will find useful. I sincerely hope you do.

Rippan Sandhu
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How is Ayurveda different from modern medicine?

In Ayurveda, every individual is unique, like snowflakes or thumb prints. There is no diet or lifestyle routine that works for everyone, it is simply not a one-size-fits-all approach. The difference between modern medicine and Ayurveda is very simple: modern medicine treats symptoms whereas Ayurveda looks at the body as whole (body and mind), it’s a way of living.

Modern medicine has its own place, there is no question about what modern medicine has accomplished and it certainly has helped save millions of lives. It is a disease care system that addresses symptoms.

Ayurveda on the other hand focuses on root cause and person as a whole rather than symptoms. Prevention is key, and as such the focus is on providing specific advice and guidance on how to maintain physical and emotional health. Food and lifestyle routines are considered the most important medicine. If you come to an Ayurvedic doctor with a complaint, you are more likely to leave with a recipe or lifestyle plan than with a prescription for pills.

Ayurveda say’s health is a balance of

[Diagram showing balance between Environment, Mind, Body, and Spirit]
The science of life and longevity

The term Ayurveda is composed of two Sanskrit words – 'Ayu' meaning life and 'Veda' meaning knowledge or science. This 'Science of Life' – also known as 'the art of living wisely' – encompasses the whole of life and relates the individual to the universe. It is a holistic system of healing in the truest sense. In working to create health Ayurveda takes into consideration the constant interaction of body, mind, consciousness and environment.

Ayurveda is timeless – it has existed for over 5000 years and stood the test of time yet it still applies to modern-day life. Today it is recognised by the World Health Organization as a natural health-care system. Ayurveda is based on a philosophy that encourages the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle. As a system of self healing it encompasses diet and nutrition, lifestyle, therapeutic treatments/massage, yoga, meditation and herbal remedies to suit our individual make-up.

An early description given in the Charaka Samhita (the earliest Ayurvedic literature) written circa 150BCE–100BCE says: “It is called ayurveda because it tells us which substances, qualities and actions are life enhancing, and which are not.” The wisdom of Ayurveda encourages us to take responsibility for our own health according to the different stages of our lives, the seasons, and the environment in which we live, work and play. These factors all have a big impact on our health and it makes sense to adapt our lifestyle accordingly so we can continue to live in harmony with our body and stay at optimum health.

Ayurvedic principles state that everything in the universe is made up of five great elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Every substance in our world is made up of these five substances, including our own bodies. Within the physiology, these five elements combine to form three energies called Doshas; these Doshas are Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

Many factors, both internal as well as external, can affect these energies, such as one's emotional state, diet, daily food choices, season and weather, physical trauma, job and family relationships. Once we understand that these factors can cause an imbalance in our constitution we have a choice to take appropriate action to minimise their effects and, further, eliminate the cause.
What is a Dosha?

From the moment of conception, this individual constitution is created by the energies of space, air, fire, water and earth. These five elements combine into the three dynamic energies or Doshas known as Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

According to Ayurveda, every individual is born with a unique combination of these Doshas in their body known as Prakruti – this basic constitution remain fixed throughout our lifetime. The combination of Vata, Pitta and Kapha is present in the sperm and ovum combine at the time of fertilisation to create a unique individual. Each of us then has different combinations of Vata, Pitta and Kapha in our bodies. This is how Ayurveda can explain the subtle differences between individuals and explains why everyone is unique and that two persons can react very differently when exposed to the same environment or stimuli. Your Prakruti is unique to you, just as your fingerprint and DNA are unique.

Vata-Pitta-Kapha are present in every individual, in every cell, tissue and organ. When in balance they create health. When out of balance they create disease. These energies are constantly moving in dynamic balance, maintaining all our bodily systems and ensuring they work together in harmony.

“Health is known as happiness, while disorder is unhappiness.”

Vata

Vata Dosha consists of air and space elements – it is energy of movement. The main function of the Vata in the body is movement. Nothing moves without it. It controls blood flow, elimination of wastes, blinking of eyes, pulsation of heart, movement of impulse to nerve tissues, breathing and the movement of thoughts across the mind. Since Pitta and Kapha cannot move without it, Vata is considered the leader of the three Ayurvedic principles in the body. It's very important to keep Vata in good balance.

When you think of the qualities of air and ether, these are exactly the qualities that this Dosha has.

**Vata is: dry, cold, light, moving, changeable, subtle, rough, quick.**

Qualities of Vata types: people with a dominant Vata Dosha tend to be slim, with small frames and prominent bones. They are fast, changeable and often love any kind of movement, change and travel. They get easily bored when they stay too long at one place, be it a job, apartment, hobby and sometimes even partner.

They often work on multiple projects at once, but often don't finish them, as another, even more interesting, idea inspires them. Their skin and hair tend to be thin and dry. They often feel cold and prefer warmth – warm foods, drinks and climates.

On the other hand, they are quite flexible (physically as well as in their minds), creative (often with amazing artistic talents), and can easily adapt to change. When out of balance, their moods change like the wind, they are unstable, fearful, worried, experience lack of energy, and feel exhausted. They can experience lower back pain, loss of appetite, joint pain or headaches. Gas, bloating, and constipation are also often present.

When Vata is dominant in your constitution or currently have Vata imbalance (too much Vata), you will be experiencing many of these characteristics, but probably not all.
Pitta Dosha consists of fire and water elements – It is energy of transformation. The main function of Pitta in the body is the transformation of energy into matter, it is the principle of digestion or metabolism.

When you think of the qualities of fire and water, these are exactly the qualities, Pitta has.

**Pitta is : hot, sharp, intense, penetrating, light, moist, oily, fluid.**

The Pitta predominance means that these qualities are generously present in your mental, emotional and physical make up ie fiery and intense nature in both body and mind.

The main function of the Pitta Dosha in the body is metabolism. Pitta is responsible for transforming (metabolising) one thing into another. Pitta digests everything that we take in – be it food, emotions, sensory impressions etc.

Qualities of Pitta types: people with a Pitta body type tend to be of medium build with very sharp minds and intellect. They can be incredible leaders, and good decision-makers, teachers and speakers. They have good entrepreneurial skills and are precise, sharp-witted, direct and often outspoken. However, they tend to push themselves too hard and can be over-ambitious. They often feel warm and prefer cool weather. They have excellent digestion, which sometimes leads them to believe they can eat anything. When out of balance, Pittas tend toward extra heat in the mind and body, which might show up as anger, and they can be short-tempered, impatient, demanding, critical and argumentative. They might experience burning sensations, acidity, peptic ulcers, excessive body heat that can lead to skin sensitivity or rashes, heartburn and indigestion, excessive sweating, red rashes, eczema, blisters, hyperacidity, or burning pain anywhere in the body.

When Pitta is dominant in your constitution or currently have a Pitta imbalance (too much Pitta), you will be experiencing many of these characteristics, but probably not all.
**Kapha**

Kapha Dosha consists of water and earth elements. Kapha is the energy of structure and lubrication.

When you think of the qualities of water and earth, these are exactly the qualities that this dosha has.

**Kapha is: heavy, oily, cool, static, soft, stable, slow.**

The main function of the Kapha in the body is stability and structure. Without Kapha (like without glue), things would not hold together, they would fall apart.

Qualities of Kapha body types: Kaphas have bigger builds and bones, and lubricated joints. Their skin is thick and oily with less wrinkles, but sometimes more acne. They often have luxurious, thick hair. They are strong and solid physically and emotionally, with great immunity. It takes a lot of effort to get Kaphas upset.

They tend to move slowly, but are steady and very reliable. They are not easily upset, and can be a point of stability for friends and family. Kaphas are better at finishing things than starting them and are often traditional or conventional in behaviour. When in balance, Kaphas are strong, loyal, patient, steady and supportive.

When out of balance, Kaphas tends towards accumulation (weight, water, possessions, clothes etc), congestion, dampness and lethargy. Kapha people often don't like to throw things away. Anytime you have a hard time of letting go – of emotion, a partner, an old sweater you don't wear etc – you are expressing a Kapha quality. It can lead the skin to get congested and oily with large pores, white heads and acne. The imbalance can cause skin to retain water or become saggy or loose.

If you have lots of Kapha in your constitution, you probably prefer warm, dry weather and not too much movement. When Kapha is dominant in your constitution or currently have Kapha imbalance (too much Kapha), you will be experiencing many of these characteristics, but probably not all.
Time of the day matters

Did you know that the seasons as well as hours of the day are also governed by qualities of Doshas – Vata is dominant dosha for autumn and winter, Summer is ruled by pitta and Kapha is dosha of spring.

Each time period is dominated by one Dosha and each day we cycle through the three Doshas – Vata, Pitta, Kapha – in four-hour increments.

I thought it make sense here to look at how these energies manifest themselves in times of the day. This information has the power to drastically improve everything from your daily productivity to your digestion. It can even help you stick to your goals and get a better night’s sleep.

The first phase starts at sunrise and finishes at sunset. The second phase starts at sunset and finishes at sunrise.

Vata: 2am to 6am and 2pm to 6pm
Kapha: 6am to 10am and 6pm to 10pm
Pitta: 10am to 2pm and 10pm to 2am
Morning Vata: 2am to 6 am
This is when our deep dream sleep occurs and our body's energies and consciousness become visible. There is a wonderful stillness in nature during this time and a high level of prana (vital life energy) in the atmosphere, making it is also the best time for prayer and meditation. The activities of the entire world and especially us human beings are yet to get going so pollution is also at its minimum. Vata is the principle of movement, so waking up during this period means that Vata principle will be fully functioning to help in the elimination of waste from our own bodies.

Morning Kapha: 6am to 10am
Try and wake up at or before sunrise because sleeping in only builds more tiredness and stiffness. This is also the best time to do your breathing or exercise. It could be walking to work or doing some yoga to get the heavy Kapha energy moving. Ensure you eat a light nourishing breakfast, being careful not to overeat at this meal.

Morning Pitta: 10am to 2pm
You are at your most efficient and productive phase during this time. It is called Pitta since the sun has reached the middle of the sky at this time, and the fiery Pitta principle is at its strongest. It is best to eat your biggest meal at this time since the digestive fire is at its best. Studies have shown that when the largest meal of the day is eaten earlier in the day, there is significantly more weight loss compared to eating it in the evening.

Evening Vata: 2pm to 6pm
The last daytime cycle is between 2pm and 6pm. This is the time of day when the Vata principle predominates. During this time the nervous system is its most active. It is when the brain demands fuel from the previously digested large meal of lunch. If the fuel is not there because you missed lunch or only had a light salad, the brain will grab any available glucose or energy it can find and the blood sugar will fall. This is when you hit an afternoon lull, you have cravings, or even moodiness. If you find yourself reaching for something sweet, coffee, carbs or feeling like you need a nap, it may be that the brain is straining to get the fuel it needs to get you through the afternoon.

In the later part of this cycle, between 5pm and 6pm, there is a period of stillness in nature. If you watch a lake at this time of day, it begins to calm down and often becomes very flat. This is the best time again to meditate because it is when nature's cycles become still that we have the opportunity to entrain our rhythms with those of nature, still the mind and de-stress.

Evening Kapha: 6pm to 10pm
The second 12-hour phase starts with a Kapha cycle, which lasts from 6pm to 10pm. This is the time of day when the body's energy hormones, such as cortisol and adrenaline, are decreasing. This is the natural time to start slowing down our metabolism to prepare for sleep.
Evening Pitta: 10pm to 2am

The next cycle is the Pitta time of night, from 10pm to 2am. This is the time when Pitta, which can be very stimulating, can rev the mind into thinking you are a night person. This is the time when the liver, which is the body's major Pitta or fire organ, is actively detoxifying and preparing the body for the next day, so late meals and late nights disturb this cycle and compromise the body's ability to detox efficiently. Of course, this is no big deal when it happens on occasion, but when it happens regularly over the years the liver can become congested and the body can build toxicity levels in the fat cells both in the brain and throughout the body.

To align yourself with the night-time Pitta cycle you must:

- eat early so you are finished digesting by the time this cycle begins;
- exercise early so the body's cortisol and adrenaline levels are not stimulated at this time, which can affect sleep and night-time liver detox;
- consider meditating or reading a relaxing book before bed – good old-fashioned bedtime stories work well;
- get to sleep before 10pm.
The perfect way to start your day

Now that you know that even our clock is governed by Dosha, let’s look at what you can do to add more energy, positivity and productivity to your day. Living in sync with nature’s own cycle is quite powerful and an essential lifestyle tool that will renew your mind and body every day.

Luckily for us, the ancient wellbeing practice of Ayurveda has some tips to help you align with the natural rhythms of nature and establish positive habits. Instead of rushing out every morning in a stressed state, take some time to nourish and energise your mind and body. Allow these rituals to be a part of your life for at least 15 days and see the impact it makes to your life. Even if you can't incorporate all of these, by following even just one or two, you will be surprised at the shift this practice brings.

Daily rituals to nourish, balance and energise your mind:

1. **The day starts the night before:** Loosely plan out your day and get as much ready as you can. Go to bed by 10 pm in Kapha time. Switch off your devices at least 30 minutes prior to sleep. Read a book or take some time for self-reflection: opt for gentle breathing to relax your mind. By giving our bodies this eight-hour rest period we are giving our bodies the best opportunity for daily rejuvenation.

2. **Awake:** Regardless of your Ayurvedic constitution, it is highly recommended to wake up early every day, specifically with the sunrise, so you take the fresh energy of morning into your day. Even if you have a late night out, making yourself rise early always has its benefits, according to Ayurveda.

3. **Gratitude:** Take a moment to bring a sense of awareness to your mind, body and connection to gratitude.

4. **Eliminate:**

   a) Within minutes of waking up spout out the saliva and rinse your mouth: your body worked hard while you were sleeping to cleanse and repair, so you should eliminate toxins that have built up overnight. Next be sure to go to the toilet straight away to empty your bladder (and bowels, if your digestive system is in order).

   b) Blow your nose as this helps to increase the oxygen intake, and cleanse the channels – the gateway to the nadis.

   c) The last elimination step is to brush your teeth and scrape your tongue with a proper Ayurvedic tongue scraper (available at Spa Ayurda). This is my favourite step every morning! It is interesting to observe what – and how much – comes off the tongue each day, as this is a direct reflection of your internal health and diet.
5. **Stimulate:** Give your digestion a kick-start by drinking a warm lemon, ginger and honey drink. To make this simply grate some fresh ginger, place it in your favourite cup and cover with hot water. Squeeze in some fresh lemon. Give it a stir. Allow the tea to sit for a couple of minutes, before adding raw honey (heating honey too high means losing many of its nutrients, hence using raw honey and adding once the tea is warm, and not hot).

6. **Activate:** Having an empty stomach is the perfect time to get moving in the morning. Before you have breakfast, be sure to fit in some gentle stretching or yoga practice. Intuitively guide yourself through a self-practice, or even simply turn your world upside down into downward dog or your favourite inversion for five minutes. Inversions help to flush blood from the feet to the internal organs, while energising your lymphatic system.

   Or try walking bare feet on grass for five minutes: done in the morning it brings several health benefits, from improving eye sight to de-stressing your mind and grounding. Don't try this early morning in winter as you don't want to get cold feet; instead you can try this in evening or afternoon when day is a bit warmer.

7. **Energise, Breathe, Invigorate:** Indulge in self-massage before your shower. Massaging your skin daily nourishes and soothes the nervous system, stimulates lymphatic flow and aids in detoxification. It also improves circulation, boosts your vitality, and makes you feel more balanced emotionally and mentally. You can do this in the evening if it doesn't fit with your morning routine.

8. **Nourish your body:** You shouldn't start your day without fuelling your body. It plays an important role in how good you feel and what you can accomplish. Nourish your body with a healthy medium-sized breakfast (lunch should be your biggest meal). Trust your intuition and listen to what your body wants. I can't tell you how many people skip breakfast and then wonder why they have no energy for their day. Eat a healthy breakfast that is appropriate for your constitution – cooked or stewed fruits, warm porridge or similar – while seated, never rushing or while in the car or standing at the kitchen counter. Eat what's in season and what feels good in the moment.
“Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live in.”

- Jim Rohn.
Why everyone needs a tongue scraper

Clinical studies have shown that tongue scraping significantly reduces and removes bacteria from the crevices of the tongue, because it can get to the places your toothbrush simply can't. Bad breath is not nice for anyone and can have an impact on both your relationships and self-esteem, so scraping your tongue with a purpose-made tongue scraper will ensure that the nasty bacteria that sits at the back of your tongue will get removed.

**Experience the flavours of your food.**
Proper digestion begins with taste and salivation. If you don't take steps to remove toxic mucus from the tongue, your tastebuds can become blocked. This may lead to false cravings or an inability to recognise the taste of food. Removing build-up from the surface of your tongue will open up its pores and better expose your taste buds, allowing for more enjoyment of food flavours.

**Boost your immunity.**
Your tongue is part of the first line of defense in your immune system. Scraping your tongue prevents toxins from being reabsorbed into your body and boosts overall immune function.

**Improve your dental health.**
Scraping your tongue promotes general mouth health and removes bacteria and toxins responsible for dental problems such as plaque build-up, tooth decay, loss of teeth, gum infections and gum recession.

**Improve your digestive health.**
In Ayurveda, proper digestion is the foundation of health. Given that digestion begins with taste, it's important to remove any toxins that may obstruct it functioning properly. Scraping also activates saliva production and promotes agni (the body's digestive fire) to help with digestion throughout the day.
Breakfast ideas

“Let food be thy medicine, thy medicine shall be thy food.”

Nourishing Rice Breakfast

Ayurveda says that warm nourishing breakfast in the morning helps your digestive system get working. This amazing recipe is a great way of using the leftover cooked rice from the day before. Just warm it through, adding some organic milk (or any alternatives like almond milk) until it's mixed well and soft. Add some chopped nuts of your choice and cook for another minute or two. Before serving, sprinkle some cinnamon and add honey to taste. Cinnamon is a wonderful spice, it lowers blood sugar levels and has a powerful anti-diabetic effect.

Date and Fig Shake with Cinnamon

Dates and figs are amazing in shakes, they are high in natural sugars, minerals and soluble fibre. Figs are rich in minerals and are a good source of antioxidant. Take 2-3 dates and 2 figs and 6-10 cashews. Blend with organic milk or almond milk and add a hint of cinnamon and saffron – this shake will make your day! The chewy bits in the shake make it a bit different from your normal shakes.

Amazing Ayurvedic Breakfast Shake

This spiced breakfast shake is super easy to prepare and has great benefits for your body. You just have to soak 1 cardamom and 1 tsp fennel seeds and 2-3 dates, and in a separate bowl soak 5-7 almonds overnight. Peel the almonds to remove the skin, add all the ingredients in a blender with a glass of organic milk, whizz and that's it! Fennel and cardamom is extremely good for digestion.
Conclusion

I hope you have found this eBook useful and easy to understand – that was my plan. Feel free to learn more from our regular blog posts and follow us socially on Facebook, and of course we’d love to see you at Spa Ayurda, New Zealand’s only wellness Ayurvedic day spa situated on Ponsonby Rd, Auckland.

Spa Ayurda — where beauty and wellness meet.

“The great thing about Ayurveda is that its treatments always yield side benefits, not side effects.”

Shubhra Krishan