



Chopra Health

TEACHER'S MANUAL 2022

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PART 1

Introduction to Teaching



Welcome and Introduction

Welcome!

We are delighted and honored that you have joined us on this journey toward becoming a Chopra Certified Instructor, ready to teach and share the wisdom of Ayurveda with others.

This program, led by Dr. Deepak Chopra, Dr. Suhas Kshirsagar, Dr. Sheila Patel, and a faculty of Chopra educators, has taken you on a journey that enhances your own health, well-being, and spiritual life, while also providing you with the foundation and tools to teach the Chopra Health program, leading people through the foundational concepts and hands-on practices of mind-body health and Ayurveda as a Certified Instructor.

The classes in the Chopra Health program include:

- An Introduction to Ayurveda
- Ayurvedic Nutrition
- Emotional Well-being
- Inner Pharmacy
- Ayurvedic Daily Routines
- You'll also teach basic meditation and pranayama practices

Your Chopra Health Certification Program teaching manual, essentially a series of class plans is to help you organize your classes and the curriculum to customize for your students and teaching preferences. Although you will not be required to teach the Ayurvedic cosmology and philosophy content included, however it's still important background information to know and understand. Having a firm grasp of these concepts will strengthen your knowledge of Ayurvedic concepts, and in turn, make you a better resource for your students should they have more advanced questions.

The information presented in this online course is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition and before undertaking any diet, fitness, or other health program.



Set an intention for your journey

What's your intention as a Chopra Health Teacher?

Consciously choosing your intentions is the most powerful way to begin any project, journey, or dream.

By becoming clear about what you desire and setting an intention, you are planting a seed in the field of pure consciousness or pure potentiality, which has infinite organizing power. Write your intention below:

As you deepen your knowledge and continue on your journey, remember to practice an Ayurvedic lifestyle yourself and set intentions for your own health and healing. Bring the practices that you will be teaching to life by integrating them more regularly into your life.

Release attachment to outcome

As you nurture that seed with your awareness while simultaneously releasing any attachment to the outcome, you put the infinite organizing power of the universe to work for you.

You spontaneously take the most evolutionary actions and notice all the people, events, and circumstances that can help you in the fulfillment of your desires.

Pause and ask yourself:

- What drew you to learn about Ayurveda and create an Ayurvedic lifestyle?
- What would you like to earn and experience in this course?
- What are your intentions for using the knowledge and practices you will learn in this course?

The science of conscious living

Ayurveda is one of the oldest medical systems in the world. Ayurveda is part of the Vedic body of knowledge. The Vedas is one of the most ancient bodies of knowledge known to humanity originating approximately 5,000 years ago. It offers a rich perspective and practical tools for leading a long, healthy, and happy life.

About Ayurveda

Ayurveda is experiential, which means that the choices we make about our experiences change our bodies—including our choices about food, personal relationships, sensory experiences, sleep, work, social interactions, and daily routine. As we shift our experiences, our biology shifts because our biology is the metabolism of experience.

Ayurveda is time-tested. The wisdom of Ayurveda was passed on orally from teacher to student for generations, evolving and undergoing refinement before it was recorded in Sanskrit in the ancient Indian Vedas, or books of wisdom, which are some of the oldest existing texts in human history.

There are four Vedas: *Rig Veda*, *Sama Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, and *Atharva Veda*. They contain knowledge about how the universe functions, as well as practical information on how to live our lives. The Atharva Veda is the main source of our information about Ayurveda.

Ayurveda returns us to wholeness. The goal of Ayurveda is to help us return to our natural state of health and to realize that our true self is pure consciousness, which is never born and never dies.

Ayurveda is preventative. Studies have shown that approximately 95% of chronic illness can be reversed and prevented by our daily lifestyle choices. Ayurveda offers tools and guidance to help us do this.

Ayurveda is personalized. Understanding our mind-body type, or dosha, gives us valuable information for nurturing our body's inner intelligence.

Ayurveda inspires. The true purpose of an Ayurvedic teacher is to educate people so that they can make choices that lead to greater health and happiness.



The three dimensions of the body

Ayurveda is a manual for conscious living

It's a true mind-body-spirit medicine that addresses the whole person rather than just physical or mental symptoms. Thousands of years ago, the Ayurvedic sages declared, Ayurveda *amritanam*, which means "Ayurveda is for immortality."

The essence of *amritanam* is twofold:

- Ayurveda helps us to experience health and longevity, and it recognizes that we are already immortal. Our essential nature is pure consciousness, unbounded by space and time. It is never born and never dies.
- However, many aspects of our busy lives prevent us from experiencing who we really are, including the accumulation of stress, limiting beliefs, fatigue, and toxins. These factors also lead to imbalances in our body and can ultimately create illness and disease.

Ayurveda is a manual for conscious living that shows us how to make everyday choices that restore our natural state of balance and health as we awaken to our true, immortal self.

Layers of life

There are three layers or "bodies" of human beings that correspond to the physical body, the mind, and the spirit. (You'll learn a simple way to explain the three layers later in the program.)

1. ***Sthula sharira:***
The outer body, which encompasses the physical structures of the organs, organ systems, bones, muscles, tissues, tendons, and ligaments.
2. ***Sukshma sharira:***
The subtle body that is just below the physical body and includes the mind, emotions, and sensory organs; the subtle body governs the way we assimilate our experiences, and it constantly creates and shifts the way the body functions at a biochemical level.
3. ***Karana sharira:***
The innermost body or the non-changing self, sometimes known as atman. In this layer, the opposing qualities of the mind and body don't disturb us. When we connect with this non-changing self, we transcend the limitations of the physical body and mental/emotional body and tap into the field of pure potentiality from which health can emerge.

The guiding principles of Ayurveda

Ayurveda offers a body of wisdom designed to help people stay vibrant and healthy while realizing their full human potential.

Thousands of years before modern medicine provided scientific evidence for the mind-body connection, the sages of India developed Ayurveda, which continues to be one of the world's most sophisticated and effective mind-body health systems.

Ayurveda teaches us that in order to be truly healthy, we cannot just take care of the physical body—we need to address the health of the mind, body, spirit, and environment so that we can experience a state of wholeness.

The guiding principle of Ayurveda is the interconnection of all things.

We aren't isolated collections of atoms and molecules; we are inseparable parts of the infinite field of intelligence. From this holistic perspective, health isn't merely the absence of illness or symptoms—it is a higher state of consciousness that allows vitality, well-being, creativity, and joy to flow into our experiences.

In contrast, illness is a disruption, a blockage in the flow of energy and information that creates a sense of separation or alienation from the field of intelligence. Ayurveda describes disease as the final expression of toxic accumulations in the mind-body physiology. Symptoms and sickness are the body's signal that we need to restore balance, eliminate whatever is causing the blockages, and reestablish the healthy flow of energy and information.

Ayurveda offers practices that help us to return to balance and experience our natural state of health and well-being.

Ayurveda focuses on the individual, not the disease.

In contrast with conventional medicine, which has devoted a lot of effort to isolating the differences among various diseases, Ayurveda focuses on the unique qualities of individuals, pointing out that diseases differ mainly because people are so different.

This is illustrated through the Four Ps of Ayurveda.

- **Personalized**

Ayurveda teaches that all health-related measures—whether an exercise program, dietary plan, or herbal supplement—must be based on an understanding of an individual's unique mind-body constitution or dosha. By knowing a patient's dosha, an Ayurvedic doctor can tell which diet, physical activities, and medical therapies are most likely to help, and which might do no good or even cause harm.

- **Preventative**

In addition, while conventional medicine has tended to treat the symptoms of disease, Ayurveda seeks to eliminate illness by treating the underlying cause. For example, for a patient suffering from depression, an allopathic physician would likely prescribe a standard course of antidepressants and, perhaps, therapy. An Ayurvedic doctor, on the other hand, would seek to understand the root imbalances contributing to the depression.

The Ayurvedic doctor would look at the patient as a whole, including the individual's mind, body, spirit, and environment. It's important for the doctor to consider the patient's lifestyle, activities, diet, recent stressful events, beliefs, and mind-body constitution, and recommend a treatment plan taking all of these factors into account.

It's important to keep in mind that Ayurveda doesn't reject the use of conventional medicine including antidepressants and other prescription medications.

- **Practical**

Ayurveda's central principle is that we should make use of whatever healing modalities will restore health and balance to the body, including lifestyle practices, behaviors, herbal remedies, dietary changes, pharmaceutical medications, surgery, meditation, exercise, and psychotherapy. First and foremost, Ayurveda offers practical tools that can be integrated into one's lifestyle.

- **Participatory**

Ayurveda teaches that daily habits play a crucial role in living a healthy lifestyle. It's important to make conscious choices to engage in the six pillars of health and actively participate in living a healthy, balanced life.

Ayurveda encompasses a perspective that allows us to integrate the wisdom of the ancient healing traditions with the best in modern medicine so that we can balance the doshas and experience optimal health.

Doshas and Subdoshas

Doshas

Doshas are energies that regulate all physiological and psychological characteristics within a person's body and mind. We've explored the three primary doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Within each of the three doshas, there are five distinct subdoshas.

Subdoshas

These five categories of subdoshas are the second governing energies within the dosha itself and are scattered in different locations and parts in the body and they are responsible for overseeing specific actions, organs, or emotions.

Although all three doshas are located everywhere in the body, the principal location of each dosha is:

- **Vata:** colon
- **Pitta:** small intestine
- **Kapha:** stomach

Every function the body performs, the subdoshas are working to help to carry out those activities.

The three doshas and the fifteen subdoshas work hand in hand.

Subdoshas of Vata

- 01. Prana:** brain, head, and chest; responsible for perception, inspiration, and thought
- 02. Udana:** throat and lungs; responsible for speech
- 03. Samana:** stomach and intestines; responsible for the rhythm of peristalsis
- 04. Apana:** colon and lower abdomen; responsible for elimination of wastes, menstruation, and reproductive function
- 05. Vyana:** throughout the body; responsible for circulation

Subdoshas of Pitta

- 01. Sadhaka:** heart and brain; responsible for mind-heart connection, and processing and comprehending information
- 02. Alochaka:** eyes; responsible for good visual perception
- 03. Pachaka:** stomach and small intestine; responsible for initiating digestion of nutrients
- 04. Ranjaka:** red blood cells, liver, spleen; responsible for balancing blood chemistry and nutrient levels, and producing bile and liver enzymes
- 05. Bhrajaka:** skin ; responsible for healthy complexion

Subdoshas of Kapha

- 01. Tarpaka:** brain, sinuses, spinal fluid; responsible for memory and supporting brain and spinal cord
- 02. Bodhaka:** tongue; responsible for perception of taste
- 03. Kledaka:** stomach; responsible for lubricating the digestive tract
- 04. Avalambaka:** heart, chest, low back; responsible for supporting and protecting the heart, lungs, and lower back
- 05. Sleshaka:** joints; responsible for lubricating the joints

The original lifestyle medicine

Modern science validation

5,000-year-old science of Ayurveda

For many years, scientists believed that our health destiny was written in our genes.

If our parents or grandparents had cancer, heart disease, or dementia, it seemed inevitable that we would develop these diseases, too.

However, we now know that genes are not our destiny.

As genetic researchers have discovered, only five percent of disease-related gene mutations are fully penetrant, which means that having the gene guarantees that we will get the disease.

Through our daily lifestyle choices, we have an incredible ability to influence the expression of the other 95 percent of disease-related gene mutations, including genes for Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, diabetes, and many types of cancer.

Ayurveda has known this for centuries

Long before science made these exciting discoveries, Ayurvedic physicians were teaching their patients the principles for living a lifestyle that cultivates health, happiness, and longevity, in order to prevent diseases that they may be prone to. That is why we call Ayurveda “the original lifestyle medicine.”

Ayurveda shows us how to make conscious, healing choices about our diet, exercise, sleep, emotions, and all other aspects of our lives.

Thousands of years before the development of quantum physics, Ayurveda understood that the body is a field of energy and information, in constant, dynamic exchange with the environment and the universe beyond. Our body is not a frozen sculpture but an activity in consciousness, which is the source of all of our experiences.

Therefore, every choice we make, in actions and thoughts, can change our physical and mental experiences.



The roots of Ayurveda

How did Ayurveda come to be?

Ayurveda's 5,000-year-old roots predate written history

Given the lack of written documents, scholars have been limited in their efforts to trace the development of Ayurveda.

While the precise historical origins of Ayurveda have been lost in the midst of time, one thing can be said with certainty about this comprehensive, philosophical, and eminently practical system of health science: Ayurveda is very old.

What are the Vedas?

India's ancient sages, known as rishis, transmitted their wisdom from generation to generation through an oral tradition. Between approximately 1500 and 1200 BCE, the body of knowledge that had been passed down for thousands of years was finally codified in written form and became known as the Vedas.

Veda: Sanskrit word meaning science, knowledge, or sacred wisdom.

The Vedas are considered to be the knowledge of creation itself. The philosophy and knowledge contained in the Vedas is sometimes referred to as "the Vedic tradition" or "Vedic science."

Four primary Vedic texts

01. Rig Veda

The Rig Veda describes the essential mantras or sacred chants of the ancient seers. It is a collection of more than one thousand poetic hymns that contain many of the central concepts of Ayurveda.

For example, the Rig Veda refers to three Vedic gods who govern the universe: Indra, Agni, and Soma, which correspond to the three doshas of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, respectively.

The Rig Veda is the foundation of the Sanskrit language and is said to be the key to understanding how the unmanifest universe becomes the world of form and phenomena.

02. Sama Veda

The Sama Veda is a collection of chants or melodies used to heal and harmonize the mind, body, and spirit. Also known as “the book of song,” the Sama Veda isn’t meant to be read or recited but sung. It also describes which chants to use for various sacred ceremonies and rituals

03. Yajur Veda

The Yajur Veda, or science of action, develops the insights of the rishis into rituals or transformative actions, such as the practice of yoga. One of the major purposes of these actions is to support health and longevity. The Yajur Veda is the basis of knowingness—our ability to perceive and register form and phenomena.

04. Atharva Veda.

The Atharva Veda includes supplementary mantras for a variety of purposes, including health and psychological well-being.

The Atharva Veda presents mantras for treating diseases, as well as the names of plants used for healing purposes. The Atharva Veda is the primary source of information about the physical body and health. While many traditional Ayurvedic texts refer generally to “the Vedas,” it is usually the Atharva Veda that they are specifically referencing.

Ayurveda is sometimes classified as “fifth” Veda, but most Vedic scholars consider it to be supplementary to the primary four described above.

Other major texts

Two other major Ayurvedic texts are the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita. The original texts were written based on knowledge compiled by the Ayurvedic physicians Charaka and Sushruta and have been revised and added to over the years.

01. Charaka Samhita

The Charaka Samhita covers a range of topics in Ayurvedic internal medicine, including physiology, disease, herbal formulations, detoxification, panchakarma, and rejuvenation therapies.

02. Sushruta Samhita

The Sushruta Samhita focuses on the theory and practice of surgery, including surgical procedures, cleaning and disinfecting surgical instruments, and anesthesia. It also emphasizes that doctors should spend as much effort on preventing diseases as on healing them and recommends physical exercise as one of these preventive measures.

Ayurveda's spiritual underpinnings

Understanding Ayurveda's spiritual underpinnings is extremely helpful on your teaching journey.

Spiritual foundations of Ayurveda

- The fundamental reality is a state of pure consciousness or pure awareness that is beyond word and thought. This is a state of peace, bliss, compassion, and freedom.
- We are caught in suffering or unhappiness because of our attachment to our ego or a limited self-identity.
- To end this suffering, we must realize that our essential nature is not the fear, attachment, anger, and limitation of the ego.
- Who we really are is pure consciousness, which is infinite and beyond space and time?
- The main practices to help us experience a state of pure consciousness are meditation and yoga – the union of mind, body, and spirit.
- A disturbance or imbalance of the doshas in the body contributes to disturbances in the mind.
- Ayurveda is the science of harmonizing the body so that we can experience peace of mind and the state of pure consciousness.

Additional Sanskrit terms to know:

- **Jyotish:** A Sanskrit term that means, “science of life.” Jyotish is a profound and mathematically sophisticated form of astrology originating in the ancient Vedic traditions.
- **Sthapatya Veda:** The Vedic science of designing homes and other buildings in a way that promotes a sense of inner happiness and harmony, also known as **Vastu**.
- **Gandharva Veda:** The Vedic science using sound, music, and melodies to cultivate physical and emotional well-being.
- **Vyakarana:** A Sanskrit term that means, “analysis” or “explanation,” Vyakarana refers to the Vedic field of language and analysis, including grammar and linguistic conventions.
- **Lord Dhanvantari:** In the Vedic tradition, Lord Dhanvantari is considered to be the god or divine founder of Ayurveda.

Ayurveda traditionally embraces eight major divisions, which were codified between 800 and 600 BCE.

The eight branches of Ayurveda

- 01.** Internal Medicine: *Kaya Chikitsa*
- 02.** Eyes, Ears, Nose, Throat: *Shalakya Tantra*
- 03.** Surgery: *Shalya Tantra*
- 04.** Toxicology: *Agada Tantra*
- 05.** Pediatrics: *Kaumara Bhritya*
- 06.** Rejuvenation: *Rasayana*
- 07.** Fertility: *Vajikarana*
- 08.** Psychology: *Bhuta Vidya*

In modern times, Ayurveda's surgical branch has been replaced by conventional surgical technology. Its psychological side has been applied by Ayurvedic doctors practicing in India within its own societal context and is gaining importance in a new context in the West as mind-body medicine.

With this broad background, Ayurveda is an important, if not central, component of the integrative medicine that is developing today.

Sankhya philosophy

Underlying cosmology of Ayurveda

Ayurveda has an underlying cosmology or conception of how the universe began, how it is evolving, the nature of reality, and the purpose of life. This cosmology is based on a Vedic philosophy known as *Sankhya*.

Sankhya: Sanskrit word meaning “number” or “numerical.”

According to Sankhya, there are 24 elemental principles or building blocks of existence. Consciousness is listed as a twenty-fifth principle but actually transcends the 24 principles and is their foundation.

What is consciousness?

- It is the source of the universe and our experiences, thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations, and perceptions.
- It is the field of pure potentiality that gives rise to everything in the manifest world.
- It has no form, and it is beyond space and time.
- It has infinite organizing power, makes quantum leaps of creativity, and is always evolving.

In Sankhya, consciousness is known as *purusha* or *avyakta*.

Understanding Sankhya philosophy will help deepen your understanding of the Ayurvedic cosmology.

The 24 principles of Sankhya

Principle 1: *Prakriti*: Primordial Nature

The first elemental principle of *Sankhya* is *Prakriti* (not to be confused with *prakruti*).

Prakriti is the intrinsic impulse to create or shape the universe. The Sanskrit term *prakriti* is the root of the English word procreation.

Whereas *purusha* has no qualities, *prakriti*, the first elemental principle, is filled with qualities that have a specific structure and function.

Prakriti consists of three qualities: light, energy, and matter.



According to Sankhya, everything in the manifest universe results from the interplay of three *mahagunas*: *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*.

- 01. Sattva:** Quality of light. The principle of generation (balance, purity, clarity, altermes, health).
- 02. Rajas:** Quality of energy. The principle of maintenance (movement, stimulation, agitation).
- 03. Tamas:** Quality of matter. The principle of dissolution (inertia, darkness, dullness, and decay).

Principle 2: *Mahat*: Cosmic Intelligence

Prakriti is the source of mahat which is the second principle in Sankhya. Mahat is the organizing intelligence of the universe.

In human beings, mahat is known as buddhi, which gives us the power to discern between what is true and false, real and unreal, transient and eternal. Buddhi helps us to judge what is good for us and what is not, and to make wise decisions.

Principle 3: Ahankara: Ego

The third principle, *ahankara*, arises out of the cosmic intelligence of mahat. In Sanskrit, ahankara means “I maker” and refers to the ego, individuality, and our awareness of “I” and “mine.”

The sense of a separate self arises as a series of individuated thoughts but is not a real separate entity that exists in and of itself.

Principle 4: Manas: The Sensory Mind

The word *manas* comes from the Sanskrit root man, which means “to form.” The ego looks outward. It projects the sensory mind, or *manas*. This mind then gives rise to the five sense organs and the five motor organs.

Manas connects us to the outer world through the senses. It is also the principle of emotion, sensation, and imagination.

Manas arises from the general *sattvic* and *rajasic* qualities of *ahankara*.

- It possesses *sattva* (the power of illumination), which works through the sense organs.
- It also includes *rajas* (the capacity for action), which works through the motor organs.
- Having more of these two qualities allow *manas* to coordinate both the sense and the motor organs.



Principles 5-9: The Five Tanmatras

The three *mahagunas* are the causal energies of creation behind the mind and consist only of qualities—light (sattva), energy (rajas), and matter (tamas). On a subtle level, they give rise to a new set of forms or impressions. It's important to note that the three mahagunas are not counted as part of the 24 principles of Sankhya, though they play an essential role.

The *mahagunas* give rise to the five tanmatras, which are the root energies of sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell.

Tanmatras means “primal measures,” and are named after their corresponding sensory qualities.

- 01. Shabda Tanmatra:** *Tanmatra* of Sound
- 02. Sparsha Tanmatra:** *Tanmatra* of Touch
- 03. Rupa Tanmatra:** *Tanmatra* of Sight
- 04. Rasa Tanmatra:** *Tanmatra* of Taste
- 05. Gandha Tanmatra:** *Tanmatra* of Smell

The *tanmatras* are more subtle than our ordinary physical sensations, which derive from them.

Principles 10-14: The Five Sense Organs

The sense organs represent the five potentials for experience of the outer world that are latent in all minds. They are not only individual but cosmic and become localized in the sense organs of living beings. They become differentiated and developed through the process of evolution.

The sense organs are the vehicles through which we take in the *tanmatras*, or sensory impressions, on a subtle level.

- 01.** Ears
- 02.** Skin
- 03.** Eyes
- 04.** Tongue
- 05.** Nose

Principles 15-19: The Five Organs of Action

The five organs of action correspond to the five sense organs and five master elements (*pancha mahabhutas*).

The five organs of action allow various bodily activities to occur, such as speaking, moving, and elimination of waste. The mind-body is specifically designed to accomplish these actions and have experiences in the world.

- 01.** Vocal cords (Ears)
- 02.** Hands (Skin)
- 03.** Feet (Eyes)
- 04.** Urogenital system (Tongue)
- 05.** Anus (Nose)

Principles 20-24: Pancha Mahabhutas: The Five Master Elements

In Chopra Health Foundations we introduced the five master elements or the *pancha mahabhutas*: space, air, fire, water, and earth. The five elements correspond to “real” space, air, fire, water, and earth, but they are also abstract.

If asked what the five elements represent, the ancient Ayurvedic sages wouldn’t point to the wind or a burning log or a river; they would say that the *pancha mahabhutas* represent the principles of intelligence that underlie all of creation.

According to Sankhya, the universe was created from the expression of the *pancha mahabhutas*.

SENSE ORGANS	ORGANS OF ACTION	FIVE MASTER ELEMENTS
Ears	Vocal cords	Space
Skin	Hands	Air
Eyes	Feet	Fire
Tongue	Urogenital system	Water
Nose	Anus	Earth

In essence, the five elements are nothing but condensed space.

Modern science has confirmed this ancient insight in its discovery that atoms are composed mainly of empty space and that solid form is really an illusion; in fact, everything that appears to be physical is essentially a field of energy.

In Summary

The essence of Sankhya recognizes that who we really are is pure consciousness.

- Through the logic of the Sankhya system, we see that the entire universe is a manifestation of consciousness that gradually encases itself in matter.
- The universe manifests in the physical plane to explore the different ideas of action and experience inherent within itself.
- While our conditioned limiting beliefs and habits can lead us to feel isolated and create disease in our physical body, our true self is eternal, unbounded, and whole.
- All of the practices of Ayurveda are designed to help us return to the memory of wholeness and awaken to our true self in the field of pure potentiality.



Mahagunas

How the Universe unfolds

Three primary gunas or mahagunas

Everything we perceive through our senses is born, has a life, and eventually dies.

Ayurveda teaches that the entire universe unfolds through the dynamic interaction of the three primary gunas or mahagunas we introduced in the last lesson.

The *mahagunas* act in a dynamic cycle, continuously expressing themselves.

According to Ayurveda, each *mahaguna* predominates in a specific realm of consciousness manifesting into experience:

- **Sattva** predominates in the manas (mind) and five sense organs: hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting, and smelling.
- **Rajas** predominates in the five organs of action: speaking, feeling, moving, procreating, and eliminating.
- **Tamas** predominates in the mahabhutas (five great elements): space, air, fire, water, and earth.

The *mahagunas* and the five elements (*mahabhutas*) are an expression of the doshas on a more subtle level than the physical attributes (*gunas*) of the body.

The mind and the mahagunas

Like everything in the universe, the mind is composed of the *mahagunas*. The quality of *sattva* in our mind is reflected in our clarity of perception.

According to Vedic thought, when pure *sattva* is the predominant quality of our mind, we are able to transcend time and space and experience our essential spiritual nature—the peace and harmony of pure consciousness. Therefore, we want to cultivate *sattva* in our lives as much as possible.

In balance

When the *mahagunas* are in balance in the mind, they give us the perception of the truth.



Out of balance

When out of balance, they create ignorance (*tamas*) and desire or false imagination (*rajas*), which can block or distort our perception.

One of *sattva*'s roles is to balance *rajas* and *tamas*. Therefore, by increasing *sattva* in the mind, we can experience our natural state of balance and harmony.

Restore balance

The mahagunas work together to restore balance

It is the nature of life to progress through stages where one of the three *mahagunas* predominates: *sattva* predominates in childhood, *rajas* during the middle of our lives, and *tamas* predominates as we age.

At any point in time, when *sattva* is overshadowed by *rajas* and *tamas*, the seeds of illness are sown, as imbalances at the subtle level of the mind will reflect as illness in the physical body over time.

Illness

- *Rajas* can lead to dissipation of energy, and *tamas* can bring about decay and death. Both usually work together.
- *Rajas*, as the principle of outward force, causes loss of energy that culminates in *tamas* or decay.
- Excess *rajas* in the mind-body, may cause one to overwork or lead to burnout and exhaustion, states in which the quality of *tamas* predominates.

Yet *rajas* and *tamas* can be useful in the healing process.

Healing

- *Sattva* does not always have the power to destroy either *rajas* or *tamas*. It can be too harmonizing and tends to accept everything.
- *Rajas* (hyperactivity) can be neutralized by an equal amount of *tamas* (hypoactivity).
- *Tamas* (inertia) can be neutralized by an equal amount of *rajas* (activity).

Ayurveda aims at restoring balance. Its approach and methodology is primarily *sattvic*, focusing on creating a daily lifestyle that expands our experience of joy, harmony, peace, laughter, and love.



Working together

The mahagunas and the five elements work together.

The *mahabhutas* (five elements) are predominantly the expression of *tamas*, which is needed to create a physical universe, while *sattva* and *rajas* do have some influence.

The manifestation of consciousness into the material world invokes the principles of generation, maintenance, and dissolution as expressed through the five elements.

- Space comes from *Sattva* (light)
- Air is comprised of *Sattva* (light) and *Rajas* (energy)
- Fire comes from *Rajas* (energy)
- Water is comprised of *Rajas* (energy) and *Tamas* (inertia)
- Earth comes from *Tamas* (inertia)

Ayurveda uses the concepts of the mahagunas and the mahabhutas to support balance and healing.

Opposite qualities

Teaching your students how to introduce opposite qualities will help them restore their natural state of balance.

The proportion of elements changes as we move through life and can change the proportions of the doshas—either increasing or decreasing them. When too much of the same or similar elements come into our mind-body system, the doshas fall out of balance and can lead to illness.

In Chopra Health Foundations we introduced a simple way to correct an imbalance: cultivate the opposite.

In Sanskrit, this basic principle is *samanya vishesha siddhanta*.

- ***Samanya***: similarity
- ***Vishesha***: opposite
- ***Siddhanta***: established view or perspective

As you become more aware of what is going on in your physiology, you can tap into the inner mechanics of your body and introduce opposite qualities to restore balance.

Gunas

20 qualities or gunas

Balancing is done two by two.

In Ayurveda, there are 20 qualities (or *gunas*) in 10 pairs of opposites that are used to balance the doshas.

The 20 *gunas* are physical qualities, often referred to as attributes. They are used to describe the three doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha.

The three *mahagunas* (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) act at a subtle level of our physiology, particularly in the mind. The 20 *gunas*, or qualities, relate more to the qualities in the body.

Gunas of Vata

- Light (*Laghu*)
- Cold (*Sheeta*)
- Dry (*Ruksha*)
- Mobile/Spreading (*Chala/Sara*)
- Hard (*Kathina*)
- Rough (*Khara*)
- Subtle (*Sukshma*)
- Clear (*Vishada*)

Gunas of Pitta

- Light (*Laghu*)
- Hot (*Ushna*)
- Oily (*Snigdha* or *Sneda*)
- Sharp, penetrating (*Tikshna*)
- Mobile/Spreading (*Chala/Sara*)
- Fluid (*Drava*)
- Subtle (*Sukshma*)
- Clear (*Vishada*)



Gunas of Kapha

- Heavy (*Guru*)
- Cool (*Sheeta*)
- Oily (*Snigdha or Sneda*)
- Dull (*Manda*)
- Stable (*Sthira*)
- Soft (*Mridu*)
- Smooth (*Shlakshna*)
- Dense, solid (*Sandra*)
- Gross (*Sthula*)
- Cloudy, sticky (*Picchila*)

How do the gunas affect the doshas?

Guna	Vata	Pitta	Kapha
Heavy	Pacifies	Pacifies	<i>Aggravates</i>
Light	<i>Aggravates</i>	<i>Aggravates</i>	Pacifies
Cold	<i>Aggravates</i>	Pacifies	<i>Aggravates</i>
Hot	Pacifies	<i>Aggravates</i>	Pacifies
Oily	Pacifies	<i>Aggravates</i>	<i>Aggravates</i>
Dry	<i>Aggravates</i>	Pacifies	Pacifies
Dull	Pacifies	Pacifies	<i>Aggravates</i>
Sharp	<i>Aggravates</i>	<i>Aggravates</i>	Pacifies
Stable	Pacifies	Pacifies	<i>Aggravates</i>
Mobile	<i>Aggravates</i>	<i>Aggravates</i>	Pacifies
Soft	Pacifies	<i>Aggravates</i>	<i>Aggravates</i>
Hard	<i>Aggravates</i>	Pacifies	Pacifies
Smooth	Pacifies	Pacifies	<i>Aggravates</i>
Rough	<i>Aggravates</i>	Pacifies	Pacifies
Dense	Pacifies	Pacifies	<i>Aggravates</i>
Fluid	<i>Aggravates</i>	<i>Aggravates</i>	Pacifies
Gross	Pacifies	Pacifies	<i>Aggravates</i>
Subtle	<i>Aggravates</i>	<i>Aggravates</i>	Pacifies
Cloudy	Pacifies	Pacifies	<i>Aggravates</i>
Clear	<i>Aggravates</i>	<i>Aggravates</i>	Pacifies

Making small changes to introduce experiences of opposite qualities through the five senses help to restore balance.

Ayurvedic physiology

Dhatu, malas, and srotas

How do the doshas function within the body?

So far, we've explored the five elements and the way they combine to create the three doshas.

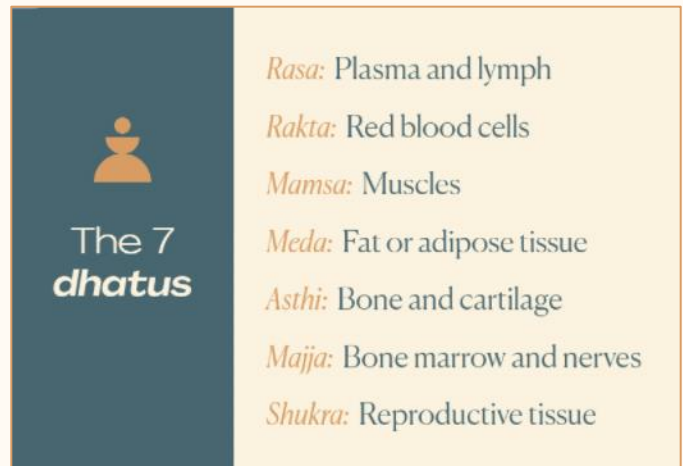
We've also looked at how to correct an imbalance by introducing the opposite qualities, or *gunas*, that characterize each of the doshas, and how they influence our physical and emotional health.

In this lesson, we take a deep dive exploring how the doshas function in the body via tissues (*dhatu*) and channels of circulation (*srotas*), as well as help with elimination of waste products (*malas*).

The seven dhatus

In Ayurveda, the seven *dhatu* are the physical tissues of the body that provide structure and nourishment for the entire body.

When your *agni* is strong, everything that you eat and take into your body will be completely digested, which nourishes the *dhatu* and creates good health. In addition, each tissue layer has its own *agni* to properly digest the nutrients it is receiving.



The 7 dhatus

- Rasa*: Plasma and lymph
- Rakta*: Red blood cells
- Mamsa*: Muscles
- Meda*: Fat or adipose tissue
- Asthi*: Bone and cartilage
- Majja*: Bone marrow and nerves
- Shukra*: Reproductive tissue

Malas

Through the digestive process, the body also needs to release waste products, or *malas*.

Effective elimination of waste is essential for good health. The principal waste products are stool, urine, and sweat, through which we eliminate toxins and maintain balance in the body.



Srotas

From an Ayurvedic perspective, the human body is a network of channels through which intelligence flows. These channels are known as *srotas*.

When these channels are open and healthy, the tissues receive the nourishment they need, and the body is able to eliminate waste. But any kind of obstruction in the *srotas* can lead to various diseases.

For this reason, one of the purposes of an Ayurvedic lifestyle is to keep the *srotas* open and flowing.

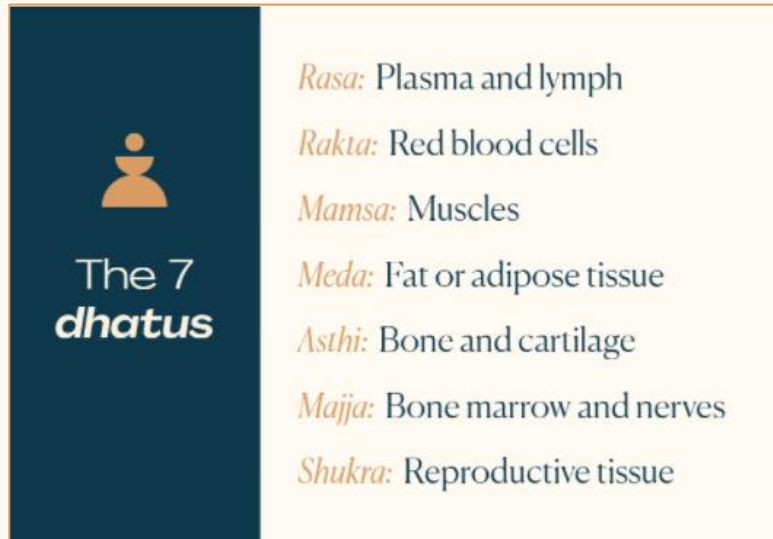
The six pillars of health and other practices such as regular detoxification, saunas, and massage therapy are all part of Ayurveda's toolkit to maintain the flow of intelligence so that we can experience our natural state of health and wholeness.

The dhatus in detail

A vital role

Dhatus, also known as tissue layers, play a vital role in maintaining the body's organs, systems, and structure. The *dhatus* are formed from the nutrients that are absorbed and assimilated through the digestive process.

The *dhatus* work together to create your body, and each one carries out specific functions. The quality and functioning of the body as a whole are governed by the quality and function of each individual tissue.



The 7 dhatus

- Rasa*: Plasma and lymph
- Rakta*: Red blood cells
- Mamsa*: Muscles
- Meda*: Fat or adipose tissue
- Asthi*: Bone and cartilage
- Majja*: Bone marrow and nerves
- Shukra*: Reproductive tissue

The dhatus are one factor that Ayurvedic practitioners consider when diagnosing a patient. As the doshas are balanced, imbalances in the tissues will also rebalance. Because Ayurveda is multifactorial, understanding the dhatus in detail is intended for learning. This content is not intended for diagnosis.

RASA: Plasma and lymph

The role of the *rasa dhatu* is to provide nutrition to all of the body's tissues and organs.

Rasa is responsible for hydrating the tissues and maintaining the electrolyte balance. *Rasa* pervades the entire body, but its main sites are the heart, blood vessels, lymphatic system, skin, and mucous membranes.

Sufficiency

Rasa gives us a zest for life and a sense of beauty and joy. When our *rasa* is sufficient, we feel happy, and our perception is clear. Our skin is radiant, our energy is strong, and we enjoy moving and going about our daily activities.

Deficiency

Deficient *rasa* can lead to dry or cracked skin, dehydration, constipation, anxiety, dizziness, weariness, exhaustion after slight exertions, irregular menstruation or cessation of menstruation, tremors, palpitations, sensitivity or intolerance to sound, and a sense of emptiness in the heart. Nutrition to the body as a whole can be impaired.

Excess

Excess *rasa* can lead to an accumulation of saliva and phlegm, congestion, recurrent colds, water retention, a feeling of heaviness, loss of appetite, and nausea.

<i>Rasa</i>  Plasma & Lymph		Provides nutrition to the body's tissues and organs
SANSKRIT FOR: "Juice" or "sap"		
ELEMENT Water		ASSOCIATED WITH DOSHA Kapha
GUNAS Cold, heavy, oily, soft, mobile, fluid, smooth, cloudy, gross, and dull		BELIEVED TO PROVIDE Nourishment and pleasure (<i>prinana</i>)

RAKTA: Blood

On a physical level, *rakta* refers to the red blood cells that oxygenate the body and keep us alive.

Like *rasa*, *rakta* is a circulating fluid and gives us ease of movement but with an additional degree of passion. Blood gives us both literal and figurative color—the tone of our skin and the tenor of our passions.

Sufficiency

When our *rakta* is sufficient, our life energy abounds. We have a sense of vitality and joy in living (*jivana*).

Deficiency

Deficient *rakta*, on the other hand, can lead to pallor, low blood pressure, breathlessness, cold hands and feet, dry skin, constipation, bloating, gas, malabsorption, mental dullness, difficulty focusing, and a loss of enthusiasm for life.

Excess

Excess *rakta* contributes to joint and skin inflammation, hypertension, loose stools, rashes, heavy menstruation or other bleeding, redness or burning sensations in the eyes, tendonitis, recurrent infections, and enlargement of the liver and spleen.

Rakta  Blood		Refers to the red blood cells that oxygenate the body
SANSKRIT FOR: "That which is red"		
ELEMENTS Fire and water	ASSOCIATED WITH DOSHA Pitta	
GUNAS Hot, dry, light, hard, rough, fluid, mobile, clear, sharp, and subtle	BELIEVED TO PROVIDE Life energy; joy in living (<i>jivana</i>)	

MAMSA: Muscles

Mamsa is the muscle that covers the bones and gives strength to our bodily frame. It also gives us the capacity to move, work, and take action.

Sufficiency

When our *mamsa* is sufficient, we have courage, confidence, and strength, along with the capacity for openness, forgiveness, and happiness.

Deficiency

When our *mamsa* is deficient, we lack cohesion and integration of our structure and can suffer from fatigue, emaciation, weak joints, hypermobility, a lack of coordination, fear, insecurity, and unhappiness.

Excess

Excess *mamsa* contributes to obesity, tight muscles, a stiff body, inflexibility, irritability, aggression, and decreased sexual vitality. In women, fibroid conditions or miscarriage may occur.

Mamsa

Muscles 

Covers our bones and gives strength to our bodily frame

SANSKRIT FOR:
"To hold firmly"

ELEMENTS
Primarily earth, with secondary amounts of water and fire

GUNAS
Hot, dry, sharp, heavy, hard, mobile, dense, gross, and cloudy

ASSOCIATED WITH DOSHA
Kapha and Pitta

BELIEVED TO PROVIDE
Strength, courage, and the capacity to take action (*lepana*)

MEDA: Fat

The function of fat, or adipose tissue, is to lubricate the muscles and tendons, as well as other tissues.

Fat lubricates the abdominal organs so they can shift slightly within our abdomen when we move or change position. *Meda* also contributes at the cellular level to the formation of cell membranes and other cellular structures.

Sufficiency

Having sufficient *meda* gives us a sense of smoothness and ease, and, on a psychological level, the feeling of being cared for. From an Ayurvedic perspective, many people become obese or develop layers of *meda* dhatu to counter a feeling of not being loved.

Deficiency

Deficient *meda* can lead to fatigue, emaciation, cracking joints, dry skin, weariness of the eyes, irregular menstruation or cessation of menstruation, and low back pain, as well as brittle or weak hair, nails, teeth, and bones.

Excess

Excess *meda* contributes to obesity, lethargy, a lack of mobility, asthma, gallstones, decreased sexual vitality, thirst, hypertension, diabetes, slow metabolism, sweating, and sagging of the thighs, breasts, and belly. On an emotional level, excess *meda* is connected to fear and being overly attached or clingy. These are mainly Kapha problems.

		
<p>SANSKRIT FOR: "That which is oily"</p>		
<p>ELEMENTS Primarily water, but it contains earth as well</p>	<p>ASSOCIATED WITH DOSHA Kapha</p>	
<p>GUNAS Cold, heavy, oily, stable, soft, and dense</p>	<p>BELIEVED TO PROVIDE Lubrication, a sense of ease, beauty, and love (<i>snehanam</i>)</p>	

ASTHI: Bone and Cartilage

The function of bone is internal support (*dharana*). It is the densest tissue in the body. The bones support all of the other dhatus and give them firmness and a strong foundation.

Asthi protects our internal organs, including the brain, heart, and reproductive organs. *Asthi* also creates our teeth, nails, and hair.

Sufficiency

Ayurveda teaches that when our bone is sufficient, we have stability, confidence, and good stamina. Our bones, teeth, nails, and hair are strong and healthy.


Deficiency

Deficient *asthi* can lead to fatigue, pain or looseness in the joints, osteoporosis, arthritis, scoliosis, brittle nails, weakening or loss of teeth and hair, and poor bone and teeth formation.

Excess

Excess *asthi* can lead to bone spurs, extra teeth, calcifications, pain in the joints, and arthritis, as well as fear, anxiety, and poor stamina. In extreme cases, bone cancer can occur.

Asthi



Bone & Cartilage

Provides
internal
support and
protects our
organs

SANSKRIT ROOT:
From *stha*: "to stand or endure"

ELEMENTS
Primarily earth, but also space and air

GUNAS
Cold, dense, hard, stable, and rough

ASSOCIATED WITH DOSHA
Vata, Kapha

BELIEVED TO PROVIDE
A container and foundation; confidence, stability, and support (*dharana*)

MAJJA: Bone marrow and nerve tissue

Bone marrow is the tissue that makes up the center of large bones. It produces red blood cells, platelets, and white blood cells.

According to Ayurveda, marrow serves to fill the empty spaces in the body, as in the nerve channels, the bones, and the brain cavity. It provides for the secretion of synovial fluid and aids in the lubrication of the eyes, stool, and skin. Majja dhatu controls the autonomic nervous system via nerve tissue and is closely connected to the subconscious mind and dreams. The main function of majja is communication between all parts of the mind-body system.

Sufficiency

Sufficient *majja* gives us a sense of fullness (*purana*) and contentment (*santosha*) in life. Its lubricating nature promotes feelings of affection, love, and compassion.

Deficiency

Deficient *majja* can lead to osteoporosis, anemia, pain in the small joints, dizziness, insomnia, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis and other neurological disorders, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a loss of sexual vitality, and feelings of emptiness and fear. Vata diseases tend to result in a deficiency of *majja*

Excess

Excess *majja* creates heaviness in the eyes, limbs, and joints; excess sleep; general sluggishness; pineal and pituitary tumors; and disorders in the nerves and nervous system. It can also lead to festering sores, the accumulation of fluid in the ventricles of the brain, visual disturbances, and brain tumors.

 <p>Majja Bone Marrow & Nerve Tissue</p>		<p>Facilitates communication between all parts of the mind-body system.</p>
<p>SANSKRIT ROOT: From <i>maj</i>: "to sink"</p>		<p>ASSOCIATED WITH DOSHA Vata, Kapha</p> <p>BELIEVED TO PROVIDE An anchor; lubrication; fills space (<i>purana</i>)</p>
<p>ELEMENTS Primarily water, but it contains some air as well</p>		
<p>GUNAS Oily, soft</p>		

SHUKRA: Reproductive tissues

The function of reproductive tissue is, not surprisingly, reproduction (*garbha utpadana*).

It allows us to produce another living being and carry on the great stream of human life. *Shukra* refers specifically to the seed (the ovum in women, the semen in men) and to all reproductive fluids in general.

Shukra is said to give light to the eyes and inspiration to the soul.

Sufficiency

In both men and women, *shukra* contains both a reproductive component (semen or ovum) and a pleasure component. While for men, these components function together (ejaculation associated with pleasurable release), for women, the release of the ovum is not associated with pleasure; however, *shukra* stimulates the release of lubricating secretions associated with sexual arousal and pleasure.

Shukra

Reproductive Tissues



Allows us to reproduce and upholds the immune function

SANSKRIT FOR:
"Seed" and "luminous."
It also is the word for the planet Venus.

ELEMENTS
Primarily water, with some attributes of earth

GUNAS
Heavy, oily, fluid, and dense

ASSOCIATED WITH DOSHA
Kapha

BELIEVED TO PROVIDE
Strength, energy, stamina for the entire body, and progeny: emotional release (*prajanana*)

Deficiency

Deficient reproductive tissue creates a lack of vitality and sexual desire, infertility, impotence, dryness of the mouth, lassitude, weariness, and pain during intercourse. On an emotional level, deficiency may manifest as fear, anxiety, or lack of love. In men, it can also cause blood in the semen, low sperm count, and impotence. In women, deficient reproductive tissue can lead to a lack of lubricating fluids during sexual activity, anovulation (absence of ovulation), and sterility.

Excess

Excess reproductive tissue can cause excessive sexual desire, contributing to anger, an excess quantity of reproductive fluid, stones in the semen and swelling of the prostate in men, and ovarian and uterine cysts in women.

How are the dhatus created?

Rasa dhatu

Rasa dhatu is the basic plasma of the body and is the ocean, or vital fluid, in which the other tissues exist.

As food is digested and nutrients are released, the digestive fire within each dhatu processes these nutrients and produces mature tissue and the immature tissue of the next *dhatu*.

Rasa is therefore the source from which all of the tissues are produced, and *shukra* contains the essence of all of the tissues.

Each tissue is produced by the grosser tissue and, in turn, produces a subtler tissue, like cream from milk.

- Plasma when digested becomes blood.
- Blood becomes muscle.
- Muscle becomes fat.
- Fat becomes bone.
- Bone becomes marrow.
- Marrow becomes reproductive fluid.

The relationship between the dhatus

The subtler dhatus serve to support the grosser ones and to store their accumulated energy.

- Blood is concentrated plasma.
- Muscle is concentrated blood.
- Fat is concentrated muscle.
- Bone is concentrated fat.
- Marrow is concentrated bone.
- Reproductive fluid is concentrated marrow.
- The reproductive fluid is the concentrated essence and energy reserve of the entire body.

There is a greater quantity of grosser tissues than subtler ones because of the way in which the *dhatus* are formed. Only a portion of plasma becomes blood, of which only a portion becomes muscle, (and so on) until only a relatively small amount of reproductive fluid is produced. While small in quantity, the subtler tissues are more concentrated and enduring.

The subtler tissues also take longer to develop than the grosser ones. According to Ayurveda, while plasma is developed daily with our food, it takes five days for it to transform into blood. The full digestive cycle, both gross and subtle digestion, takes 36 days. The end product of digestion is *ojas*, which gives us vitality, strength, and health immunity.

Plasma, the first tissue, is connected directly to the last *dhatu*—reproductive tissue.

Plasma can directly nourish reproductive fluid, and the reproductive fluid can nourish or support the plasma. Many substances that increase plasma, such as milk, increase the reproductive fluid.

Similarly, a deficiency of plasma leads to a deficiency of reproductive fluid (and vice versa). In this regard, Ayurveda provides us with a true systems biology paradigm for understanding the interconnectedness of the mind-body system as a whole.



Teaching and Presenting

The art of teaching and presenting

Teaching is an act of transformation

Foundational principles and practices of teaching and presenting.

Invoke your students' inner wisdom.

Our primary job as teachers is to help people connect to their own inner intelligence. When they're in touch with this inner intelligence, it becomes easy and natural to make choices that lead to greater health and happiness.

You want your students to understand that Ayurveda is truly a natural medicine and understands that our bodies are 100% made in and made by nature.

“There is no natural solution to unnatural living”

~ Dr. Suhas Kshirsagar

Teacher's path

The teacher's path is one of discovery and transformation. Part of teaching is learning and growing. The best teachers share knowledge and continue their own education.

Good teaching goes far beyond simply explaining how to do something; it is a process that explores not only the theory behind a subject, but also provides experiences so that understanding is complete and functional. It answers the why's, the how's, the when's and then lets the students gain practical knowledge to make the subject tangible and real.

The student isn't the only one who benefits from this process. In the dedicated teaching of others, teachers are equally changed.

You can grow, expand, and refine your perception in both your communication skills and in the understanding of the information you share. This is especially true for mind-body-spirit healing system of Ayurveda.

The teaching impact

The impact of teaching

Personal transformation

In addition to impacting your student's lives, here are seven ways teaching will personally transform you.

01. Teaching deepens and refines your understanding.

To be a good teacher, you must become a subject matter expert. A casual or shallow understanding of the material will not suffice for you to adequately share your knowledge with others. This commitment to deepened understanding may take the form of ongoing education, continued research, supplementary training, or connecting with your cohorts to help fill any gaps in your understanding. Teaching requires that you know your subject inside and out.

When you're inspired and excited about your subject, the additional learning won't feel like extra work or a chore. It will be a labor of love that takes your understanding to a much higher level. This process becomes a cycle—as you deepen your knowledge, you have more to share with your students.

02. Teaching builds self-confidence.

The more you do something, the better at that activity you become—particularly when you do that thing with attention and the aim to improve. This certainly applies to teaching. The more frequently you teach, the more you build the neuro-nets in your brain that help strengthen your skill set for teaching.

When starting out as a new teacher, it's common to feel unsure of yourself. We encourage you to simply teach what you've learned and in doing so, your confidence in the material and yourself as a teacher will grow. You will become both a better student and a better teacher. Your confidence will grow in direct proportion to the amount of time you spend teaching.

Eventually, teaching with confidence will become a habit and part of who you are.

03. Teaching helps you metabolize information.

As you share your knowledge of Ayurveda with others, you will begin to internalize the teachings and truly “become” them.

Knowledge of any kind becomes metabolized at a deep level, and with regular repetition, it becomes a part of who you are. You are then no longer simply regurgitating the teachings; you are a living example of them. They are expressing themselves through you, and your life becomes an embodiment of the principles, concepts, and ideas you teach.

For example, the mahagunas: sattva, rajas, and tamas may be interpreted as sattva is pure and good, while tamas is less desirable; but the three mahagunas work hand in hand.

Through conscious choice making and an Ayurvedic lifestyle, you begin to internalize these concepts. Yoga, pranayama, meditation, and emotional freedom practices increase sattva in the mind and naturally balance rajas and tamas. You therefore don’t have to intellectualize the teachings, they spontaneously become a part of you.

04. Teaching leads to stronger student-teacher relationships.

At its most fundamental level, teaching is about the relationship between teacher and student. The way in which you relate to your students, and the tools you use to communicate ideas and concepts, are vitally important.

The more you teach, the more you develop your own unique method of expression that will ideally strengthen those relationships.

A good teacher understands different learning styles and knows how to reach his or her students by meeting them at their own level.

Understanding a topic yourself is only the first step. The real challenge is being able to translate the teachings in a way that others can understand.

05. Teaching builds humility.

Truly great teachers are very humble people. They know intuitively that they themselves always have more to learn and are often in awe of the teachings they share.

Dedicated teaching can help you recognize that you don’t own the knowledge you pass along to your students; rather, you are simply the instrument through which knowledge flows. You can’t really ever possess knowledge—it has always existed, and you are just its current steward that passes it along to the next generation of learners.

06. Teaching leads to an expanded sense of service.

Committed and enthusiastic teachers do what they do out of a deep sense of service to the world. They help expand the awareness of others, not necessarily for immediate material reward, but in the knowing that their efforts are helping to make the world a better place.

Teachers living their dharma, or purpose in life, are often doing so out of a deeply rooted need to serve the world with their skills for communication, leadership, and guidance. They have chosen to serve the world by shining the light of awareness into the darkness of ignorance.

Through teaching, this expanded sense of service can eventually become its own unique reward.

07. Teaching helps you live your truth with the highest level of integrity.

In ancient times, teachers were highly revered for their understanding, wisdom, and insight. Although our modern age has yet to reawaken to the vital role teachers play in the welfare of our society, as educators, we are part of a legacy of seekers and transmitters of truth that reaches back through the centuries.

Understanding this, you have a responsibility to the future as a carrier of the light from the past into the future. As such, you will become both inspired and committed to living impeccably for the betterment of the world. This is not something you should take lightly; teachers desire to set the example for their students to follow. This is the true legacy of teaching.

It's helpful to recognize the incredible untapped potential that exists in teaching others. Few experiences are as gratifying and fulfilling as hearing that what you have taught impacted or transformed the life of a student for the better.



Transform from student to teacher

Inspiration

You are an instrument of inspiration.

With that comes feelings of excitement and nervousness—often in equal amounts.

There may come a time in your teaching that you wonder, Am I ready? Do I know enough? Do I have what it takes to be a good teacher? You may compare yourself to other instructors in the course and wonder, Will I be “that good?” These are common concerns.

Role models and archetypes give you something to aspire to and yet, it’s hard not to constantly compare yourself to others. In fact, oftentimes you pin yourself up against limiting beliefs that have no basis in reality. But the greatest disservice you can do to yourself is to juxtapose your status as a new teacher with that of a seasoned educator.

The growth to seasoned educator is a process. The best thing you can do is to honor where you are at in your own journey.

How do you honor yourself?

01. Believe in yourself

The first and most important step in making the leap into the role of a teacher is to believe in yourself completely.

Everybody has to start somewhere. When you believe in yourself, everything else falls into place.

Access your inner courage and give 100%. It will also serve you best to trust that you know more than those who you're teaching.

Confidence in teaching these Ayurvedic practices will grow with experience.



02. Be conversational

One of the most effective ways to get really good at delivering content is to make it conversational.

Start your first meeting or presentation by saying a few words about yourself. You may want to share what initially drew you to Ayurveda, and perhaps share some of the benefits or changes you have experienced using Ayurvedic practices. Start with a short and lighthearted introduction.

During your conversations and presentations, include experiences and stories from your own life to illustrate points so that your personal introduction unfolds as you teach. Intentional use of metaphor and analogies can help make the material more relatable and can bring abstract or esoteric ideas into the real world for better understanding. Always define any Sanskrit words or terms that might be new to the group.

While you are studying to be certified, people around you may begin to ask about what you are studying. Notice the organic, conversational approach you use as you share Ayurvedic wisdom in an informal setting. This is your golden opportunity to tune in to your conversational style. It will also help you embrace your role as a teacher and vocalize what that means to you.

03. Prepare and practice

Your teaching skills will improve with practice. First you will practice on your own during this course. You will have many opportunities to submit videos of yourself teaching and get feedback from other students and educators.

Before recording your first video, practice teach with your cohort group and/or your peers. Engaging with your cohort groups will elevate your teaching skills and confidence.

You might also try standing in front of a mirror to see how you look when teaching the material. Watch and review your video presentations to see where you can make improvements. This can be a humbling process, but an invaluable one. It directly mirrors back the things you say and do that you weren't previously aware of.

The more you practice, the easier it will be to articulate these teachings. And the better you are at speaking fluently, the more confident you will become.

04. Be open to feedback and immune to criticism

Feedback is essential for growth. Without it, you would never know how best to serve the people you are in a position to help.

Everyone learns differently and the ways in which you express yourself or approach a system of teaching will inevitably need some refining here and there. Feedback, when received with an open heart and an open mind, can mean the difference between failure and success.

There will be times when people simply criticize you and project their own holdups onto you. This is, by far, the most challenging part of teaching.

Stay centered with this advice from a wise teacher: Do your best not to get overly inflated by the amazing reviews and pay zero attention to the cruel comments. Look at what is right in the middle and there is where you will find the gold.

05. Jump in!

Many people are afraid to step out for the first time and that's perfectly normal. Just remember that you're never as close to the content as now when you are studying and in a learning environment. The student who is immersed in the conversation is the strongest teacher because they are well versed in the dialogue on a daily basis. The longer you wait to teach after completing your training, the farther away from the material you get and the less confident you become.

When you complete the training, we encourage you to start teaching as soon as possible—even if you only have one or two students. The longer you wait, the harder it becomes to get started. Look for opportunities to teach and take every opportunity that's offered. The more you teach, the more effortless it becomes.

Preparing for a presentation

Center and calm yourself

Take three slow, deep breaths

It is normal to feel nervous, particularly when teaching to your peers. A simple empowerment exercise to do before any presentation, including your presentation evaluation video, is Deepak's "See and Be" technique.

Stand in front of a mirror and look directly into your own eyes. This is the soul reflecting itself. Repeat these three statements to yourself (silently or out loud):

- 01.** I am immune to criticism and flattery.
- 02.** I am above no one and beneath no one.
- 03.** I am fearless in any situation.

Whenever you feel nervous or hesitant to teach, reflect on why you chose to become a teacher.

Meditation

A short, private meditation will help you relax and ground before you teach.

Remember the personal commitment you made to share this profound wisdom with others and help them on their path of self-discovery. And unless Deepak happens to walk into the room, you know more about Ayurveda than anyone in your audience.

Preparing to teach

Use teaching aids

Whether you are teaching online or in-person, the preparation process is the same.

Teaching aids help to keep you on track and ensure that you don't leave out any valuable information. Visual aids also help keep students more involved. When creating your visual aids, think about your audience and if you will be teaching online or in-person.

CREATE VISUALS

- Make a presentation deck (such as PowerPoint or Keynote) and project on a screen for larger groups, or on a laptop for smaller groups and one-to-one instruction.
- Use your presentation deck when teaching virtually. Most video conferencing services have a share screen feature that you can use while presenting.
- Create a flip-chart version of your presentation for small to mid-sized groups.

We encourage you to view video tutorials and articles on creating simple visual teaching aids on YouTube or other educational video sites, using programs such as Canva, Easel.ly, Prezi, or Giphy.

VISUAL BEST PRACTICES

Keep your visual aids simple. The purpose is to enhance the content, rather than rely on a visual to do the teaching for you. Students will come to your classes to learn from you.

- As a general rule, use one idea per slide.
- Avoid including too much text or text that is too small to read.
- Use a graphic or picture to illustrate a point whenever possible.
- Include humor in your slides to help the group to connect.
- Be cautious not to use anything that your students could perceive as offensive.

NO-TECH VISUAL AIDS

Teaching Ayurveda doesn't require the latest technology. It's been done for centuries without a computer. If you're uncomfortable with digital presentations or you don't have the necessary equipment, there are other types of visual aids you can use such as handouts, poster diagrams, flipcharts, or objects.

- Use the handouts provided in the program.
- Read relevant quotes or passages from a book, however, don't read your whole lecture from written copy.
- Refer to notes or cue cards with the points of your presentation.

At the end of each Chopra Health Certification Program session, you will receive a sample presentation deck you can customize for your presentations. Additional resources will also be available in your Teacher's Manual. We encourage you to modify and make them your own to suit your teaching style.

Start the rehearsal process.

Rehearse from start to finish

Some say that you should strive to rehearse your entire presentation ten times. There's no magic number, but you want to spend enough time to get comfortable with the content and make your presentation compelling enough to inspire your students.

PRACTICE IN PHASES

- Read your content out loud to yourself. Adjust your delivery until it sounds natural.
- Practice standing up if you are teaching in-person. Be aware of your body movements. It's okay to practice sitting down if you are teaching virtually.
- Practice again using your visual aids.
- Practice with a trusted friend or family member.
- Have a final dress rehearsal.

PRESENTATION DAY

On the day of your presentation, schedule time earlier to do one last dry run of your presentation.

- Organize your presentation materials and what you plan to say.
- Proofread your visual aids.
- Check all materials and any equipment to make sure you have everything you need.
- Test your technology. Make sure your tools are compatible with anyone else's you will be using. Technology and equipment may include computers, projectors, sound systems, lights, etc.
- Arrive early. Whether you are teaching online or in-person, give yourself enough time to get comfortable and arrive before your students.



Engaging your students

A great way to engage your students is to set aside time for Q & A. In addition to answering your students' questions, it's a great way to get people involved and help you better understand the needs of the people you are teaching.

Decide ahead of time how you will handle questions during your presentations and announce this at the beginning.

It may take practice to find out how you are most comfortable answering questions. Here are a few options to try.

FIND YOUR Q & A STYLE

01. Invite people to ask questions.

If you are comfortable, invite people to ask questions during the presentation. As a teacher, create pauses during your presentation and ask if there are questions along the way. However, as the question may take you away from the topic you were discussing, make sure that you return to it once you've given your answer.

02. Hold questions until the end.

Inform students that you will be pausing periodically for questions and ask them to please hold their questions until then. You can then ask for any questions after you finish each section of the lecture. If a person asks a question relating to material that you intend to cover later, it's fine to let them know that you will be discussing that information and ask them to hold their question and ask it again if they still need to.

03. Take questions before or after the class.

You may choose to arrive early before the lessons in case someone arrives with a question they would like to ask privately before the class. Or invite people to remain after you have finished if they have more questions or something they want to ask in private.

NO QUESTIONS?

Asking your students questions often encourages them to sit up and pay attention but sometimes students are reserved during the first class and may not ask any questions.

If you've paused several times to take questions and received no response, engage your students with questions. You could ask, "If you did have a question, what would it be?"

Another possible solution is to let students know some of the questions that other people have asked.

WHEN ANSWERING QUESTIONS:

- Always listen to a person's full question, rather than thinking you know what they are asking and cutting them off midway through. If you aren't clear about what they are asking, ask them to explain further.
- Provide simple, clear answers rather than long, rambling responses. You can ask the student if you answered their question and, if not, you could go into a fuller explanation. When answering questions, always try to give an answer that is appropriate for the person asking but is also broad enough to engage everyone else in the group.
- On occasion, someone will try to monopolize you with their questions or ask questions of a personal nature. Here you will need to use your judgment to decide when it is appropriate to ask the person to meet with you later to continue the discussion.

With complex topics such as health, and with the depth of teachings of Ayurveda, it is likely that there will be a question that you're not sure how to answer. It is better to tell the student "I am not sure, but I will find the answer for you" than to make something up or answer incorrectly.

By acknowledging you know your limits, you gain the respect of the students. Also, pausing for questions is also a good distraction if you get nervous or lose your place in a presentation.

HANDLING SURPRISES

Welcome the unexpected! Unforeseen events are bound to happen but if you are prepared, you will be able to manage any situation, question, or comment that might arise. Be open to the field of infinite possibilities

How to manage surprises:

- Pause
- Take a deep breath
- Decide on the best course of action

There's no need to panic - everyone makes a mistake once in a while. When they happen, learn from them. If necessary, correct your mistake the next time you meet with your students.

CULTIVATE GRATITUDE

It's a great privilege and honor to be able to share this ancient wisdom with the world. Be grateful:

- To your students for trusting you as their teacher
- To all the great teachers who have gone before us in this magnificent lineage
- To your own soul for guiding your journey to this place in your life

If you are always grateful, you will always be humble, and through humility and simplicity, your life and teachings will always be blessed.



Public Speaking

Develop the skill

Speak confidently

Learn how to put simple public speaking and presentation techniques to work for you.

Public speaking and good communication skills are central to teaching. These skills allow us to exchange knowledge, form connections, inspire decisions, and motivate change. With practice and experience, public speaking is a skill that you can develop and refine.

It's common to feel nervous, especially when starting to teach new information. The guidance and practical tips you will receive in this lesson will help you start to develop skills and boost your confidence in your speaking ability.

Whether you are a confident and seasoned speaker, or just starting out, it is a best practice to periodically assess your presentation style and your visual aids. It will help to keep your content inspiring and relevant for the types of students you are teaching.

Public speaking is a skill you can cultivate—and maybe even learn to love. It takes commitment, preparation, practice, and passion for your subject.

Four keys to speaking success

01. Organize your thoughts.

Be clear and concise so that the audience can easily understand your message.

02. Be real.

Explore the topics about which you are most passionate. This authenticity will increase your effectiveness as a presenter.

03. Impact your audience.

Use your body language, facial expressions, and voice to support your message and inspire others.

04. Assess yourself.

Evaluate your presentations to learn about your content delivery, body language, and vocal quality.

Get organized

Organize your presentation

Organization makes content easier to understand and demonstrates credibility.

While presentations will widely vary according to factors such as the length of time, use of visual aids, the audience, and the physical or virtual setting, the following guidelines will help you to organize and prepare for any presentation.

CHOOSE AN OBJECTIVE

Give your audience a reason to listen. In your introduction, tell your students the class objective and how they will benefit from understanding the content. You will gain students' attention and make them interested in what you have to say.

OUTLINE YOUR PRESENTATION

- 01.** The outline is the blueprint that supports your objective. Include these components in your outline:
- 02.** Introduction: Tell your audience what you are going to tell them.
- 03.** Main message: What do you want them to learn from you?
- 04.** Three key points: Support your message with stories, personal examples, and relevant information.
- 05.** Call to action: What do you want them to do with your message? What are your take-aways? How will you engage your students?
- 06.** Conclusion: Tell them what you told them. Leave time for questions in case you don't cover all of your key points.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Taking an audience-centered approach as you are outlining your presentation will help you adapt the content to your students' interests, level of understanding, attitudes, and beliefs. Take into consideration:

- What are the needs of the audience?
- What is the level of knowledge?

Be mindful of anyone else who will be there. You may also want to take into consideration where you are presenting or if it is a special occasion.

Be authentic

Be genuine

Being real in front of an audience can be intimidating, yet it is an important key to being an effective presenter. If you are able to get up in front of a group of people and share your authentic self, they are more likely to open themselves up to really listen to what you have to say.

People remember less than 10% of what you say, but they remember how you made them feel.

When you show respect for your audience by being genuine, you will be richly rewarded with not only their attention but also their respect.

The keys to being an authentic speaker:

- **Discuss:** Engage your students. Focus on topics you are passionate about.
- **Illustrate:** Tell stories to illustrate points and make difficult concepts relatable.
- **Share:** Demonstrate you care by sharing knowledge.
- **Deliver:** Teach complex ideas in simple terms.
- **Engage:** Interact with students and encourage questions.
- **Admit:** Be willing to admit when you don't know an answer to a question.
- **Relax:** Have fun and enjoy yourself!

Make a positive impact

Grab their attention

Draw your students in by using mental, verbal, visual, and vocal components. Having the right combination will have an influence on how your students respond and feel about your presentation.

These essential qualities of public speakers are important factors to consider when motivating students to listen to your presentation and ultimately helping them transform their lives through an Ayurvedic lifestyle.

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Self-confidence	Good posture
Knowledge	Use of gestures
Enthusiasm	Facial expressions
Friendly disposition	Eye contact
Use of humor	Vocal variety
Natural speech	Tone of voice
Willingness to answer questions	Effective use of pauses



Assess your presentation style

Be open to suggestions

Feedback elevates your presentation skills.

Whether you are new to public speaking or a seasoned pro, every speaker can elevate their teaching abilities.

Feedback inspires growth and makes you a better teacher. When communicated in a conscious way and with the right intentions, feedback is an avenue to teaching greatness.

Tips for receiving feedback:

- Decide on when and how you want to request and receive feedback.
- Take time to reflect on feedback.
- Find value in the opportunity to grow from feedback.
- Decide how to integrate feedback into your future presentations.

Pause and reflect

- What presenters do you find effective? Write down their names. Include public figures, people on tv or social media
- What make other people effective presenters in your eyes?
- What are your own personal strengths?
- What do you want to improve about your presentation skills and why?



Integrate feedback based on your dosha

Elevate your speaking style

There is a strong correlation between your dosha type and your natural presentation style.

Understanding how your dosha influences your public speaking creates the possibility of elevating the quality of how you speak and present.

Vata

Vata types are vibrant, enthusiastic, and talkative.

Presenting ideas can be enjoyable for many Vata types. Their creativity and imagination often captivate students and makes for good storytelling. They are also skilled at finding the right words to explain complex or emotionally difficult ideas with grace.

Vata speaking tendencies:

- Talkative, energetic, and enthusiastic
- Active body language and descriptive gestures
- Captivating, which makes for good storytelling
- Versatile and metaphoric

What are the ways vata types can elevate their speaking?

- Vata tips
- Stay focused and speak with purpose
- Be mindful of overcommunicating
- Reduce unnecessary elaboration or redundancy
- Work on speaking slowly and using pauses

Pitta

Pitta types are naturally good speakers and efficient with their words.

Pitta types have an achievement-oriented nature, and their presentation style reflects this. They generally do not communicate purely for fun. They often want to persuade.

Pitta types are able to express their ideas succinctly, without frivolity. This is a wonderful asset in professional and corporate settings, especially scientific, financial, or academic arenas.

Pitta speaking tendencies:

- Direct and encouraging
- Concise and to the point
- Intellectual and passionate
- Succinct and effective

What are the ways pitta types can elevate their speaking?

- Use a motivational and uplifting tone
- Be mindful of becoming tense or overly direct
- Offer supportive suggestions to inspire students
- Answer questions compassionately



Kapha

The nurturing nature of Kapha reflects their style of communication.

Kaphas tend to be slower-paced, thoughtful communicators. Soothing others and helping solve problems are two of their greatest strengths. Kaphas do this with their words, as well as their energy and presence when speaking.

Kaphas hold space for others and their presentations are often delivered with loving attention. This is a beautiful service that no other dosha can provide to the same degree.

Kapha speaking tendencies:

- Steady and supportive
- Thoughtful and mindful of tone and word choices
- Encouraging and nurturing
- Not overly direct, or too wordy

What are the ways Kapha can elevate their speaking?

- Be bold
- Initiate student engagement
- Share personal stories that relate to the topic
- Use body language and physical gestures

Know your student's dosha type

Incorporate different styles of teaching to appeal to all dosha types in the audience.

Remember, you are made up of all three of the doshas. Tap into the energy of all the doshas within you to appeal your student's different learning styles and hold their attention.

Presenting to the three doshas

- Vata types enjoy metaphors and personal stories to enhance and support the content.
- Pitta types appreciate an organized and structured presentation that include facts, charts, and diagrams.
- Kapha types are attentive listeners. Use supporting examples to make your points but avoid long or meandering stories.



Teaching Ayurvedic Lifestyle

Essential Ayurveda teaching points

Whether you are teaching in private one to one, group, or in a virtual setting, the basic teaching points are the same.

As a certified Chopra Health teacher, you may be teaching Ayurvedic lifestyle practices to a wide variety of students and levels ranging from beginners to advanced.

You may have a unique group in mind that you'd like to teach, such as youth, athletes, people in the workplace, members of the military, trauma sensitive populations, people with specific health conditions, or other groups.

No matter who you are teaching, the timeless wisdom of Ayurveda will help your students create greater health and well-being.

Key Points

Emphasize these key points when teaching Ayurvedic lifestyle practices.

01. Ayurveda is not a substitute for medical advice

Always inform students that the techniques and practices you teach are not a substitute for professional medical **attention**.

02. Do not guarantee ayurvedic practices will cure a condition

Stating that Ayurvedic lifestyle practices “cure” or “heal” specific diseases or conditions focuses more on Ayurvedic medicine versus lifestyle which you will be teaching. While Ayurveda is a powerful approach to health and well-being, as Chopra Health teachers, we can't offer any guarantees that Ayurvedic tools and practices will cure or heal an individual's specific disease or condition.

03. Seek out a qualified health provider

When your students ask you questions about medications (such as how to avoid them or wean off of them), direct them to seek the advice of their physician or other qualified healthcare provider.

04. Talk to a qualified therapist for mental health issues

When teaching about emotions, be aware that the information and practices in this lesson can trigger students who have deep-seated emotional pain or are struggling with mental disorders such as depression or anxiety.

Be prepared to offer support, as well as to recognize that students may need to seek out professional care, such as a qualified therapist or physician.

05. Be sensitive to students' needs and conditions

While these practices can benefit everyone, it's important to tailor your teaching approach when working with different groups, so that your students can gain the greatest benefits from your instruction. For example, the way you teach corporate executives will probably be different from the way you teach a team of athletes. Even though you'll be teaching the same basic content.

Remember to have fun. If you're having fun, usually the group will have fun too!



Teaching large groups

Tips for group settings

Teaching to large groups of people is not without its challenges.

Teaching Ayurveda to a larger class-size or wellness event can involve multiple steps or a host of additional concerns to ensure success.

Six things you can do:

01. Build relationships and partnerships

While it's possible to organize, set up, and facilitate a large event on your own without any outside help or support it is not realistic.

In large events there are lots of moving parts and different individuals and/or teams who are working in concert to make sure everything is successful.

- Arrive early to look at the space in advance.
- Get to know the service manager of the space.
- Work with the audio technician if you AV needs, such as music, presentation decks, or a microphone and speakers.
- Partner with the marketing manager to guarantee the event is properly described and represented.

02. Align with your dharma

In connecting with your dharma, ask yourself the following questions:

- How can I help...what knowledge would I like to give?
- How can I serve...how can I use my natural talents and abilities to serve others?



03. Create a lesson plan

Lesson plans help you select the most important topics and keep the presentation on track.

Most large groups won't have much experience with Ayurvedic concepts so you may want to selectively choose key topics or adapt your class content to be more general and less specific.

Go over your lesson plan several times and note any personal stories from your own life you want to share with the group.

04. Rehearse and practice

Once you have your lesson plan laid out, run through it until you are comfortable with the major points.

This doesn't mean you have to be rigid or restricted, but it will help you stick to your plan and feel more confident.

- Practice your presentation, including any visual aids you will use.
- Time your presentation to confirm you can cover all of your key points in the given time.
- Stick with your lesson plan. This will help with nervousness and keep you organized.

05. Be courageous

The first time you speak in front of a large group, you may feel nervous or intimidated. But if you've followed the steps in this session and you are familiar with your material, you will get more comfortable and feel confident in your ability to present it.

By the time you're ready to teach, you will have studied, connected, and passed all of the tests required to become a Chopra Health Certified teacher

06. Be humble and grateful

Sharing these teachings with a large group is both an honor and a privilege. Treat it as such.

Tapping into your dharma through helping and teaching others is one of the best feelings in the world. Your students have given you the opportunity to do something you love in your own unique way. Take time to appreciate the opportunity.

Honor the law of giving and receiving:

- Recognize all those who helped you.
- Silently wish them happiness, joy, and laughter.
- Make a commitment to keep abundance circulating.



PART 2

Chopra Health Core Classes



Class 1 **Teaching Foundations** **of Ayurveda**

Teaching The Foundations of Ayurveda

Topics and checklist

Class 1 Topics

- An introduction to Ayurveda
- The layers of life
- The five elements (mahabhutas)
- An introduction to doshas
- An exploration of each of the three main doshas and how they manifest when they are in balance and out of balance
- How to interpret the Dosha Quiz
- Using our attention to enliven our health

Checklist: What you'll need to get started

The following guidelines will help you prepare to teach An Introduction to Ayurveda.

- If teaching in-person, choose a space large enough for the group to sit comfortably, theater style.
- Be sure to have an audio system if the group is large (more than ten people).
- If you'd like to sketch out some visuals, have a dry-erase board or a flip chart with pens available.
- If you're using presentation software, you'll need a projector, screen, laptop, necessary cables, and a power source. If you rent a projector, make sure the cords to the laptop and projector are compatible before your scheduled class.
- Classes can also be taught virtually using a video conferencing system. Most services offer interactive features such as chat, polls, and screen sharing to present slides/visuals.

Note: You can use the PowerPoint templates you received to customize for your presentations.

Overview of first class

- 01.** Start by introducing yourself, going over the program overview, inviting you class to set their intentions, and introducing Ayurveda and its benefits.
- 02.** Next, cover the layers of life including the physical (or gross) body, subtle body, and casual body.
- 03.** Wrap up the class by inviting your students to complete the dosha quiz, then help them interpret the results by teaching them about the mahabhutas and the doshas.

Introduction to the Chopra Health classes

Opening statements

When you begin your class, introduce yourself and any other teachers who will be teaching and assisting you.

- Offer information about your background (including any appropriate credentials)
- Say how long you've been associated with Chopra
- Talk about why you became a certified instructor
- Share your own reasons for learning and integrating Ayurveda into your life

Use or modify the script below for your introduction.

SAMPLE SCRIPT

I'm very pleased to welcome you to the Chopra Health program. My name is _____. I became interested in Ayurveda because _____.

The Chopra Health program, developed by Chopra Center co-founders Dr. Deepak Chopra and Dr. David Simon, integrates the principles of modern science with the ancient healing wisdom of Ayurveda.

TIP: This part of the lesson should last no more than 5–7 minutes.

Teacher tips

If the group is small, ask the participants to introduce themselves and invite them to share what brought them to the class, why they would like to learn about Ayurveda and mind-body health, and what they hope to gain from the course. If the group is large, you could ask a few participants to share.

As you prepare to teach the classes, decide how you would like to receive questions from your students. Then at the start of class, tell them how you would like to receive their questions, so they will know the appropriate time to ask. If you're comfortable doing so, invite your students to ask questions as they arise. Otherwise, ask them to save their questions for a natural break in the discussion or for the end of the class. Let them know that nothing is too simple or silly to ask.

You may choose to teach any of the classes as standalone topics or present them as a full program.

Please remember these important administrative points:

- If you are teaching as part of a full program, emphasize to your students the importance of attending all lessons.
- Collect any fees before the course begins so that your focus can remain on teaching.

Class/program overview

Overview of program or class

What to expect

If you will be teaching the program in its entirety, it is important to give your students an overview of what to expect in each class. You may choose to skip the full overview if you are teaching your students standalone classes, however you will still want to let them know what they will learn in the class you are teaching.

What to say

Use or modify the 8 talking points when giving your students an overview; sample scripts provided for each. Feel free to make notes for ways you would like to customize the suggested scripts and topics to reflect your personal style and anecdotes.

01. Give them an idea of what to expect.

Each lesson lasts approximately two hours. We will take a short break halfway through each class.

02. Give them an idea of the time commitment.

Each lesson lasts approximately two hours. We will take a short break halfway through each class.

03. Describe what happens in today's class.

In today's class, we will set our intentions for the course, discuss the principles of Ayurveda, learn about the multidimensional nature of life, explore our mind-body constitutions (known as doshas), and learn how to interpret the Dosha quiz.

04. Explain what's covered in Class Two.

In our next class, we will discuss Ayurvedic nutrition, including the power of digestion, the six tastes, eating to balance each dosha type, phytonutrients, and eating with awareness. You will learn practices for cultivating vibrant health and well-being.

05. Explain what's covered in Class Three.

In our third class together, we will focus on cultivating emotional well-being, which includes these topics: happiness, our core emotional needs, the nature of emotions and how they relate to the doshas, the seven biological responses, conscious communication, and practices and tools for emotional clearing.



06. Explain what's covered in Class Four.

During the fourth class, we will explore how to tap into the healing power of the five senses: sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell. You will learn specific sensory practices to balance each of the doshas. You will also explore the sense of humor—using laughter as medicine.

07. Explain what's covered in the final class (Five).

In our final class together, we will focus on Ayurvedic daily routines. The topics include the rhythms of nature, creating an optimal daily routine, doshas and the seasons, seasonal routines, detoxification, and restful sleep. You will also be guided in the practices of an Ayurvedic lifestyle.

08. Wrap up the overview of classes.

During the Chopra Health classes, you will also learn and experience basic meditation practices and a few simple, yet effective breathing awareness (pranayama) techniques.

Setting intentions

Suggested exercise

As the course begins, it's valuable to lead the participants in an exercise to identify and set their intentions.

What to say

Use or modify the 6-step script below for the Setting Intentions exercise.

01. Introduce the activity.

Since today represents the beginning of a conscious exploration into our full human potential, let's spend a few moments getting clear on our intentions for being here. Remember that all intentions are valid. Therefore, in a moment, when I ask you to reflect on your intentions, simply listen to yourself and honor whatever arises.

02. Invite your students to close their eyes.

Please close your eyes and take a few deep breaths.

03. Begin the mindful activity.

Now place your attention in the area of your heart and listen to your response to these questions:

Why are you here?

04. Ask the next question.

What do you hope to gain from this course?

05. Invite your students to open their eyes.

When you are ready, please open your eyes.

06. If the class is small, ask them to share.

I'd like to go around the room and have each of you share your name, where you live, and your intentions for attending this course.

Introduction to Ayurveda

Introduce Ayurveda

Keep in mind that some of the terms and ideas may be new to students so be prepared for questions.

What to say

Use the following 9 talking points to help guide your discussion. Examples are provided but do your best to make this part your own.

01. Provide some history.

Ayurveda is a 5,000-year-old healing system that originated in ancient India. The word Ayurveda is derived from the Sanskrit word, ayus, meaning “life,” and veda, meaning “wisdom” or “science.” Ayurveda is therefore the science of life, and it offers a rich perspective and practical tools for leading a long, healthy, happy life .

02. Explain the purpose of Ayurveda.

The purpose of Ayurveda is to help us return to our natural state of health, balance, and wholeness.

03. Challenge your students' definition of health.

In Ayurveda, health is not simply the absence of disease, but is a state of expanded consciousness or awareness that opens us to greater well-being, creativity, and joy.

04. Introduce the consciousness-based approach to well-being.

Ayurveda is a consciousness-based approach to health and healing. Consciousness is the ground state of our existence. It is the changeless core of our being. Beyond the constant change in the world around us and the world within us, there is an underlying aspect of our being that remains constant. Consciousness has no beginning nor end, no space nor time. It has infinite organizing power, makes quantum leaps of creativity, and moves naturally in the direction of growth. Your essential nature is pure consciousness. The wisdom traditions of the world have a variety of names for consciousness, including pure awareness, spirit, soul, and being.

It's important to understand that consciousness is not your mind; instead, it is the unmanifest field of possibilities that gives rise to your body-mind and the universe. Consciousness is the source of all your experiences, including your sensations, images, feelings, thoughts, imagination, creativity, perceptions, insight, and intuition. When you consciously connect to the field of infinite possibilities, healing can occur.

05. Tie in the science.

Science is beginning to understand the nature of the world in a way that parallels the ideas of the Ayurvedic physicians and sages of ancient times. Your senses tell you that the physical world is material, non-changing, and solid, but this is an artifact of sensory perception. When viewed through the eyes of a quantum physicist, the essential raw material of the universe is not material. Everything in creation, including your physical body, is made up of subatomic particles moving at lightning speeds through vast, empty spaces. At a deeper level, even these elementary particles are simply fluctuations of energy and information.

06. Make the connection between attention and well-being.

The moment we shift the focus of our attention, new possibilities for health, happiness, and spiritual unfoldment become available to us. In the same way that you probably aren't aware of your wristwatch until you direct your attention to it, the possibilities for health, happiness, and inner peace exist within your own consciousness and are enlivened through your attention and intention.

07. Challenge your students' idea of the physical body.

Your body is dynamic and constantly transforming. You are not a static physical machine that has learned to manufacture thoughts, emotions, and ideas. Rather, you are a network of intelligence in dynamic exchange with everything that surrounds you.

08. Explain the dynamic body mindset.

Ayurveda is experiential, which means that the choices you make about your experiences change your body—including your choices about food, personal relationships, sensory experiences, sleep, work, social interactions, and daily routine. As you shift your experiences, your biology shifts because your biology is the metabolism of experience.

09. Wrap up the intro.

In Ayurveda, there is no "one size fits all" prescription for well-being; instead, every health-related measure is based on an individual's mind-body type, primary dosha, state of balance or imbalance, and the needs that derive from this. You will be learning You will be learning about doshas in this lesson.

The benefits of Ayurveda

Science of Ayurveda

Creating an Ayurvedic lifestyle offers countless benefits, and it's important to describe these benefits to your students so that they not only understand the science of Ayurveda in greater detail, but they also are inspired to integrate this healing wisdom into their lives.

People often appreciate knowing that there is research to support a new practice, and there is certainly ample scientific evidence to support Ayurveda's many benefits.

What to say

Use or modify the 4 talking points below to give your students an idea of the benefits of Ayurveda.

01. Tie in the science.

Current scientific research validates Ayurvedic healing techniques.

While 95 percent of disease-related gene mutations increase your risk factors for disease, they don't predict the disease. In other words, simply because you carry a genetic mutation that predisposes you to heart disease, you are not destined to develop it. Only 5 percent of disease-related gene mutations are fully penetrant, which means that the gene directly causes a disorder.

02. Explain the concept of lifestyle as medicine.

Through your daily lifestyle choices, you can optimize how your genes behave, helping to "turn up" the genes that promote good health and "turn down" the genes that promote illness, including genes for Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, diabetes, and many types of cancer. Ayurveda offers tools and guidance to help you create a lifestyle that prevents these diseases and cultivates health.

03. Introduce the six pillars of health.

As Deepak Chopra teaches, the six most important pillars of health to focus on in our daily lifestyle are nutrition, movement, sleep, meditation, healthy emotions, and self-care.

04. Wrap up Ayurveda's benefits.

There is a great deal of evidence showing that Ayurvedic techniques can change gene expression to promote healing, self-regulation, and homeostasis (balance).

Teaching the layers of life

Introduce the Layers of Life

Although the Layers of Life is considered one of the more complex topics included in the Chopra Health program, it illustrates the relationship between the physical, causal, and subtle bodies according to Vedic philosophy. Because the concepts taught in this part of Class One are more metaphysical than other Ayurvedic topics, your audience may or may not be engaged in this material.

With a solid understanding of your audience, you may choose to describe the Layers of Life in a simpler way, such as, *"True health is more than the absence of disease; it is the integration of your many dimensions—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Ayurveda offers practices to balance every layer of our experience and acknowledges all the healing modalities in the context of what layers they are addressing."*

What to say

Although this is a complex topic, you can help your students understand the key points by focusing on the following 6 key points to help guide your discussion.

01. Reinforce what your students have learned.

The universe is non-material. As we discussed earlier in this class, this course is based upon a paradigm that views the material world as an expression of an underlying field of consciousness.

02. Reinforce the concept of the dynamic body.

The human body is not a frozen sculpture fixed in space and time. The human body is a dynamic river of energy, information, and intelligence that constantly is renewing itself and is in exchange with the larger field of energy, information, and intelligence that we call the universe.

03. Dive deeper.

If you could understand your body as it really is, you would see that the real you cannot step into the same flesh and bones twice because in every second of your existence you're renewing your body, changing it more rapidly, more effortlessly, more spontaneously, and more easily than you can change your clothes.

04. Explain what health means from an Ayurvedic perspective.

True health is more than the absence of disease; it is the integration of your many dimensions—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

05. Dive deeper.

Life is multidimensional. According to Vedic philosophy, life is a multilayered spectrum—from the most abstract to the densest expression.

One of the most influential teachers of the philosophy of yoga and Vedanta was Adi Shankara, a scholar who lived in the eighth century CE. Known as the greatest revivalist of Vedic science, Shankara elegantly elaborated the layers of life that mask the essential spiritual self.

The essence of Shankara’s teaching is that one underlying field of intelligence manifests as the multiplicity of forms and phenomena that we call the physical universe. Shankara called the layers that mask our essential nature koshas, a Sanskrit word that means “coverings.” He categorized the koshas into three primary divisions:

- *a physical, or gross, body*
- *a subtle body*
- *and a causal body*

We could also say body, mind, and soul. Let’s explore each of these primary divisions and their secondary layers.

Note: *Throughout this section, and anywhere else in the course you feel is necessary, you may want to pause and ask the group for examples of ways in which we are in dynamic exchange with our environments.*

Engaging students in the conversation, particularly when the information is complex, not only enables them to absorb the information more readily, but it also helps you, as the instructor, to gauge how well your students are understanding the subject matter.

06. Give a high-level overview of the layers of life.

Note: You may find a graphic helpful to visualize the layers of life. You can reference the one this page or recreate it using a whiteboard.

Physical Body (Sthula Sharira)

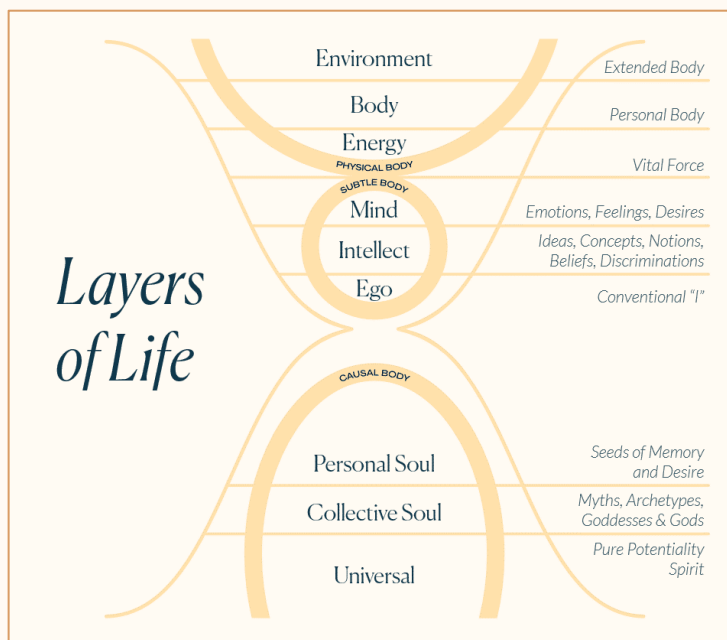
- Environment – extended body (the elements surrounding us)
- Personal body – annamaya kosha (vital force: food)
- Energy body – pranamaya kosha (vital energy)

Subtle Body (Sukshma Sharira)

- Mind – manomaya kosha (our thoughts and emotions)
- Intellect – buddhimaya kosha (our beliefs, judgments, concepts)
- Ego – ahankara (our personality and conventional "I")

Causal Body (Karana Sharira)

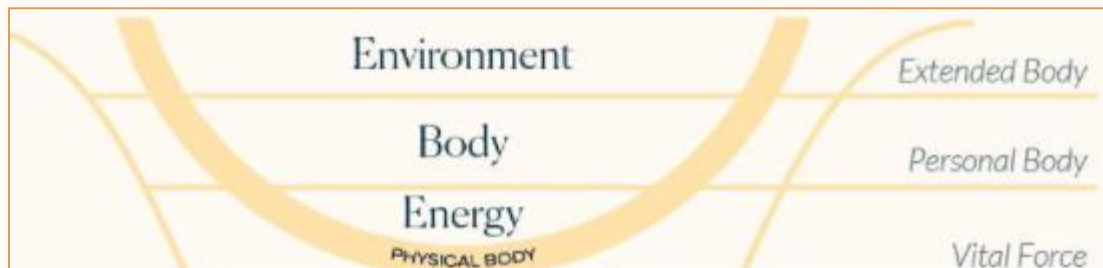
- Personal soul – jiva (personal conditioned soul, individual memories, and desires)
- Collective soul – atman (collective soul, archetypal soul)
- Universal soul – Brahman (pure potential/spirit)



Layer 1: The physical body

Sthula Sharira

You'll now walk through the first layer of life: The Physical Body. This is also known as *Sthula Sharira*, or the field of molecules.



What to say

Use the following 3 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Start with the Environment, or the Extended Body.

Although our senses may tell us otherwise, there is no distinct boundary between our personal and extended bodies, which are in constant and dynamic exchange. We are as much a product of the environment as our environment is a product of us. Each breath that we inhale, and exhale is a reminder of the continuous conversation taking place between the physical body and the environment.

02. Move on to the Personal Body.

*Recognizing that the vast majority of the cells in the body are derived from the food we eat, Shankara named the physical body *annamaya kosha*, which means “the covering made of food.” This idea underscores the need to pay attention to the food we consume to maximize nourishment and minimize toxicity.*

03. Explain the Energy Body, or Vital Force.

*Shankara named the third layer of the physical body *pranamaya kosha*, meaning, “sheath made of vital energy.” We are made up of energy and matter. This vital energy, known as *prana*, breathes life into matter and orchestrates our cells into a vibrant living being. This is our underlying life force.*

Explaining the complicated concept of the Physical Body

As you continue to explain this model, you may want to provide examples and pause for any questions at the end of each section.

One way to illustrate the connection between the environmental and the personal body is to talk about our exchange, as human beings, with trees. We need oxygen, and the carbon dioxide we produce benefits trees and plants. Trees and plants release oxygen through photosynthesis, which benefits human and animal life. Whatever is happening out in the environment is happening in our bodies as well, so chemicals and toxins that are in the environment will affect us too.

The energy body can sometimes be more difficult to grasp for new students. An example (below) that may help you explain this information more clearly is again, that of plant life.

Example:

When a plant is alive and vibrant, it has prana, the vital life energy. However, when that same plant doesn't have enough sunlight and water, it turns brown, and dies. We can easily see that the plant's vital energy is gone.

It is the same for human beings. We can easily see life in living people and recognize when a person has passed. And it is the breath that represents prana in human beings.

More about prana

You can tell your students that later, when you talk more about breathing exercises, or pranayama, they will learn how to cultivate prana in their lives. They will also learn how to expand their prana by eating fresh, organic food and drinking clean water.

Layer 2: The subtle body

Sukshma Sharira

You'll now walk through the second layer of life: The Subtle Body. This is also known as *Sukshma Sharira*, or the mind field.



What to say

Use the following 3 talking points to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Start with the Mind, including emotions, feelings, and desires.

Within this framework, the mind is the repository of sensory impressions (thoughts, feelings, emotions, desires). As the mind cycles through different states of consciousness, the sensory experiences change. Shankara named this level of the subtle body the manomaya kosha.

- 02.** Move on to the Intellect, which encompasses ideas, concepts, notions, beliefs, and discriminations.

This is the aspect of mind that discriminates, makes decisions, and determines whether we perceive something as being good or bad. Shankara called this layer the buddhimaya kosha or Jñanamaya kosha.

- 03.** Explain the Ego, or conventional "I".

According to Shankara, the ego is that aspect of our being that identifies with our roles (mother, father, daughter, son, friend, business executive, etc.), possessions (including our achievements), and personality. It is ultimately our self-image. In the yogic tradition, the ego is known as ahankara, or the "I-former."

Explaining the complicated concept of the Subtle Body

To help your students understand the mind and intellect, you can talk to them about what they perceive immediately through the senses, such as a loud noise.

Example:

When you hear a loud noise, the mind takes in the information. The intellect then weighs the information, deciding whether the noise is pleasant or unpleasant, and makes a decision about what to do next.

Another example you can use is that of someone trying coffee for the first time.

Example:

The mind takes in the sensory experience of drinking coffee, including the smell, taste, sight, and sensations of heat from the hot beverage. Then the intellect evaluates the experience, deciding whether it was positive or negative. The intellect may compare the taste of coffee with past experiences.

When you explain the ego, it is important to let people know that even though people frequently judge the ego as “bad” or something to eliminate, the ego actually performs an essential function: it allows us to experience the world as an individual. It is like the focal point of a lens that brings the scattered light of an image into focus.

Problems with the ego only arise when our self-awareness is not strong enough and we mistake our ego for who we really are, which is pure, unconditioned consciousness. Our sense of “I” starts to be defined by our body, relationships, titles, possessions, accomplishments, fears, and desires. In reality, our true self is unconditioned, pure consciousness, but until we remember that we accept the illusion that we are actually our ego.

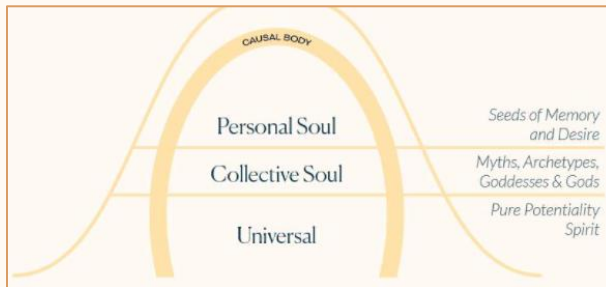
This mistaken identity generates distractions and obstacles to spiritual growth, but the ego in itself is not the villain unless it is associated with that which is impermanent. Once our awareness expands, the ego’s misappropriation of identity dissolves and its simple function of providing individuality to experience will remain, even as we reach higher states of consciousness.



Layer 3: The causal body

Karana Sharira

You'll now walk through the third layer of life: The Casual Body. This is also known as *Karana Sharira*, or the field of pure potentiality.



What to say

Use the following 3 talking points to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Start with the Personal Soul, the seeds of memory and desire.

According to Shankara, every individual has a personal soul with unique memories and desires. These memories and desires guide the course of life to the fulfillment of our soul's highest purpose. This is known as core soul consciousness, or anandamaya kosha.

- 02.** Move on to the Collective Domain, the myths, archetypes, goddesses, and gods.

The second sheath of the causal body is the collective domain. This realm invites us to consider the archetypes with which we resonate. An archetype's purpose is to express its creative power through us. This collective domain consists of concentrated psychic energy that we can tap into to help us realize our highest potential. It is the unconditioned soul that has access to archetypal domain .

- 03.** Explain the Universal Domain.

The deepest aspect of our being is beyond space and time, and yet it gives rise to the manifest universe. This is the universal domain of spirit in which all distinctions merge into unity, or oneness. It is known in Sanskrit as Brahman.

While each of these layers appears to be separate, in fact, they comprise the totality of our being.

Explaining the complicated concept of the Subtle Body

Many people can relate to the idea of having a personal soul. To help your students get a good understanding of this concept, you can talk to them about how their memories and desires are different from those of the other students, and from their neighbors, parents, and friends.

Example:

Some people want to go skydiving and have had that desire since they were little children. Other people may want to spend their adult lives working for charity. Still, others may have had early experiences that compel them to go into the medical field or politics. We are all different, and our personal souls are the containers for our unique qualities.

The collective soul has to do with archetypes. A good way to illustrate this point is to discuss people currently in the public eye or who do jobs that we can all relate to. A firefighter, an airline pilot who heroically lands a plane, a life-saving surgeon are all examples of people who call upon the hero archetype within to fulfill a duty or mission. We all have these abilities within us and when we begin to release our conditioning, we gain access to all archetypal qualities in our own ways.

At this point, you may want your students to assess their own archetypes. You can suggest to them that they take a moment to think about what archetypes they tend to draw on in their daily lives. For instance, one person may have a strong father or mother archetype and be drawn to nurturing others. Someone else may have a thrill-seeking archetype, always looking for that next adventure. Enabling your students to personalize the material will help them gain a greater understanding.

In explaining the universal domain, you may choose to use the analogy of an ocean and waves.

Example:

Waves appear to be individual manifestations, but they are really all part of the ocean. Once a wave hits the shore, it simply returns to the ocean from where it came. The same is true for us. We manifest as individuals with personal souls, but we are really all part of the vast ocean of Brahman, and we will return to Brahman once our journey as “a wave” is complete.



What is Vedanta?

Dive Deeper

Vedanta

Vedanta was developed on the Indian subcontinent during the Vedic period (c. 1500 – c. 500 BCE).

It's based on the knowledge and philosophies described in the ancient texts known as the Vedas. The word Vedanta comes from two Sanskrit terms.

SANSKRIT	DEFINITION
Veda	Knowledge or sacred wisdom
Anta	The end, referring to the final teachings of the Vedas (the Upanishads).

The teachings of Vedanta are often referred to as the “Vedic tradition.” According to Vedanta, consciousness is the underlying reality and the source of all that exists. Everything is an activity in consciousness, including your body, mind, thoughts, perceptions, sensations, experiences, and the universe itself. Your true nature is pure consciousness, and the goal of Vedanta is to realize this truth experientially. Through the practices of meditation, yoga, and Ayurveda, you can experience your essential nature, which is pure, unbounded consciousness.

Vedanta is one of the Shad Dharshan, or Six Schools of Vedic Philosophy.

More on the ego

Dive deeper

Friend or foe?

It's common to hear people on a spiritual path saying that you need to destroy or erase the ego. However, while you have a physical body, it's necessary to have an ego just as much as you have a mind and intellect. Rather than focusing on eliminating the ego, it's better to aim to balance it so it acts in harmony with all your other layers of life.

In terms of evolution, the non-local absolute manifests the jiva or individual soul. The individual soul brings with it the karma for this lifetime and creates the ego to help facilitate this. From the ego emerge the intellect, the mind, and your physical world as projections of your karmic tendencies. The karmic curse is that we have forgotten who we really are and, instead, the ego creates all the stories, labels, roles, and ideas of who we think we are. Thus, the ego knows us intimately and, if left to its own devices, becomes the director of our life story.

In other words, when we identify with ego, it becomes the director of our life story as opposed to spirit being the director.

A closer look at the ego

Up until the age of about two, the ego is fairly dormant. Then, all of a sudden, the word "mine" is discovered. Even though this may be challenging for those around you, you enter the period when the ego plays an important role in your life. As you grow, the ego supports you in your education, career, starting a family, and generally establishing your life. The ego loves to organize things, but unfortunately, it also loves to control not only your life but also the world around you.

The out-of-control ego

If not managed, this negative side of the ego manifests as arrogance, pride, vanity, judgments, and prejudices. In more extreme cases, it emerges as the need to control, the lust for power, fanaticism, or an obsession with materialism. Unfortunately, many people forego a more spiritual approach to life and become stuck with these seductive qualities of the ego. This leads to one definition of ego as an acronym for Edging God Out!

When the ego fights back

Those of us who have begun to realize that there is more to life than materialism will sooner or later embark on a spiritual journey that will eventually take us "home." However, this is a time when the ego can be most troublesome. The ego likes to be in charge and to control, whereas your spiritual practices are there to help you break out of boundaries and live in freedom.

When you first start your sadhana (spiritual practice), the ego doesn't take much notice. It thinks, it was that new diet last month and the exercise program the month before. . . this won't last either. However, as you continue and become regular with your meditation, yoga asana, etc., the ego starts to get nervous.

The driving force within the ego is fear and, if you allow it, the ego will instill fear into all areas of your life. After all, it is ego's job to protect us so it will try do so in many different ways. Sometimes the fear comes from change, even if it is healthy change. Any greed, lust, intolerance, and anger are based in fear, and guess who's behind it all? The ego.

The ego knows all your weaknesses, your repressed desires, and your areas of denial, and it will use them against you, to knock you off your spiritual path.

Most doubt and worries are ego-based.

Here are some signs the ego is speaking:

- Am I doing this correctly?
- Am I on the right path?
- I don't have enough time!
- Does this teacher know what they are talking about?
- When will this mediation be over?

Doubt the doubter

When these types of thoughts or doubts arise, ask yourself, "Is this my higher self or my ego talking"? Maharishi Mahesh Yogi used to say, "When doubts arise, first doubt the doubter." The doubter is usually the ego.

While your techniques themselves are effortless, as you progress on your path, it's important to remain focused, vigilant, and disciplined in your approach to them. As long as you have a physical body, an ego will be with you. When the karma for this lifetime has been exhausted, the body ceases to exist and with it the ego. A new ego will be born with a new incarnation, again as a reflection of the karmic contract for that lifetime.

What if I'm enlightened?

Even after enlightenment, some trace of ego still remains. In the Vedas, this is called Lesha-Vidya, or the "faint remaining seeds of bad habits." Enlightened teachers need to be very aware of this so that they don't fall prey to spiritual pride and arrogance. In the early stages of samadhi, yogis may gain new and exciting qualities and yogic powers.

If these are recognized as merely a part of the journey and treated with humility, they will progress to the higher levels of samadhi. However, if they are used to control and manipulate, the ego takes over, becoming like a "hungry ghost." They may gain temporary power and fame but won't progress spiritually and will ultimately sow the seeds of their own downfall. This is why Vedanta tells us to seek the company of those who seek enlightenment but run from those who claim to have found it.

How to manage the ego

To manage the ego, then, you need to live your life consciously. Be aware of your choices and why you are making them. You also need to identify more and more with spirit as opposed to ego. Is the choice coming from fear (ego) or love (spirit)? Be aware of the effects your choices may have on others. It's also important to be aware of your words. Before you speak, it helps to apply the four gateways of mindful speech.

Consider what you're about to say and ask yourself:

- "Is it true?"
- "Is it kind?"
- "Is it necessary?"
- "Does it improve upon the silence?"

By asking these questions, you are more likely to communicate from your true self rather than from your ego.

You may have heard the expression that someone has a "big ego." Actually, it's the opposite. People who stamp around with their chests puffed out have very small egos that are fighting for their lives, like a cornered wild animal.

Love your ego, play with it, have fun with it, make it your friend, and do not take it seriously. Seriousness is the ego playing the victim. Teach your ego humility through selfless service and compassion. When you love your ego, it will expand and cease to feel threatened. When the fear is removed, the ego will take its rightful place and become your biggest supporter on the path of enlightenment.



Teaching Part 3 of class 1

The Mahabhutas, the doshas, and interpreting the Dosha Quiz

So far in Class One, you have introduced Ayurveda and consciousness and explored the layers of life. The final part of this lesson focuses on the doshas. You will be introducing your students to the mahabhutas (five elements) and the doshas, guiding them to take the Dosha Quiz and identify their mind-body type.

You will also share how each dosha type manifests when it is in balance and out of balance.

Introduction to the dosha quiz

Dosha quiz

You will begin this part of the class by asking your students to complete the Dosha quiz (the Prakruti/Vikruti combined quiz). You'll find the Dosha Quiz in the Session 3 resources.

What to say

Before your students fill out the quiz, explain the intention of each section, including these 3 key points.

01. Explain the prakruti section.

The Prakruti section of the quiz is an inquiry into your basic physical characteristics, as well as your mental and emotional tendencies. When answering the questions, think in terms of which statement or statements have been true for you for most of your life. If you developed an illness in childhood or as an adult, think of how things were for you before that illness.

For objective physical traits, your choice will usually be obvious. Since mental traits and behavior tend to be more subjective, you should answer according to how you have felt and acted most of your life, or at least in the past few years.

02. Explain the vikruti section.

The Vikruti section of the quiz asks about your current state of health. It is most helpful if you answer these questions according to what has been true for you for the past few weeks. You will have three possible answers to choose from: Not at All (1 point), Somewhat/Occasionally (3 points), and Very Often (5 points). When answering questions about medical conditions, if you have never been diagnosed with a medical condition, choose the answer "Not at all." If you have been diagnosed with a medical condition, choose "Very often."

03. Add it up.

When you have completed both sections of the Dosha Quiz, please add up the scores for both sections and write them down. Once you have done that, please set the quiz aside for now as we will be reviewing the quiz and discussing any questions you have after our discussion of the doshas later in the lesson.

The Mahabhutas

Essential to understand the doshas

After your students take the Dosha Quiz, you will introduce the mahabhutas, or five elements, which are essential to understanding the doshas.

What to say

Use the following 7 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Give an overview on the Mahabhutas.

The five elements, known in Sanskrit as mahabhutas, are the building blocks of nature.

Fundamental to the timeless healing system of Ayurveda is the expression, “As is the human body, so is the cosmic body. As is the human mind, so is the cosmic mind.” This phrase embodies the understanding that human intelligence is not separate from nature’s intelligence.

The force that governs the growth of a single cell into the 50 trillion cells that are currently functioning in your mind-body physiology is the same intelligence that orchestrates the changing of the seasons, the migration of animals, and the movement of the stars. Because the same intelligence that flows in nature flows in every cell of our bodies, understanding the fundamental building blocks of nature allows us to better understand ourselves.

02. Introduce the five elements.

The five principles make up everything that we perceive through our senses. These five elements exist both within us and in the world around us. They can be described as space, air, fire, water, and earth.

03. Start with Space.

The space (akasha) element represents the open expanse in which everything is contained. Space is pure potential and infinite possibilities. In the universe, space expresses itself as the vast emptiness that underlies the physical world. Within our bodies, space is the gaps between and within cells through which information flows.



04.Continue with Air.

The air (vayu) element is the animating force of life; it is present in everything that moves. Externally, this force is represented as the wind; internally, it is the movement of breath, circulation, and nerve impulses.

05.Move on to Fire.

The fire (agni or tejas) element is present in everything that generates heat, light, or transformation. Fire expresses itself in the outer world as the sun, and internally as our digestive and cognitive processes.

06.Move on to Water.

The water (jala) element connects and nourishes the physical substance of our bodies. Our bodies are made up of roughly 70 percent water, as is the planet itself. Internally, our organs and systems are nourished by the river of our plasma, our joints are lubricated by synovial fluid, and our central nervous system is protected by cerebrospinal fluid.

07.Wrap up with Earth.

The earth (prithivi) element expresses itself as solidity, mass, and form. It is reflected in nature as planets, mountains, rocks, and all solid structures. Internally, the earth element gives rise to our bones, muscles, tendons, and cartilage.

Note: A visual can help your students understand the key points of the Mahabhutas. Even a simple table like the one below goes a long way. You can find resources like this in your Session 3 resources.

ELEMENT	SANSKRIT TERM	GOVERNS
Space	Akasha	Potential
Air	Vayu	Movement
Fire	Tejas	Transformation
Water	Jala	Cohesiveness
Earth	Prithivi	Form/Protection

The Doshas

Vata, Pitta, and Kapha

In the next part of the class, you'll introduce the three doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha.

What to say

Use the following 4 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Relate the elements to the doshas.

The three doshas are derived from the five elements. The five elements organize themselves into three essential principles of life: movement, metabolism, and structure, known in Sanskrit as Vata, Pitta, and Kapha.

These three principles (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha), which we can think of as air, fire, and earth, are the forces that govern every natural function and regulate every process within our mind and body.

Since each of us is a unique expression of nature, we each have an inherent tendency towards one or more of these principles. This explains why we each respond so differently to the same stimulus. Some of us are naturally earthier, while others are more fiery or airy. As we discuss the functions and characteristics of each of these principles, notice which ones you most identify with.

02. Introduce Vata.

Vata is responsible for all types of movement within the body and mind. Vata is like the wind—dry, light, subtle, irregular, quick, mobile, cold, rough, and changeable.

Those with a predominance of Vata in their mind-body constitution have a tendency towards these attributes. These people are generally thin, light, and active, both physically and mentally. They tend to move quickly and are changeable. They generally welcome new experiences and are talkative. These are the people whose habits, interests, and daily routines change considerably from week to week. Their bodily functions also have an aspect of irregularity about them. Their appetites and moods are often inconsistent.

03. Introduce Pitta.

Pitta is responsible for all types of digestion. Within the body, the fire principle metabolizes our experiences so we can absorb that which is nourishing and eliminate that which is not. The attributes of Pitta are what you might predict—hot, light, intense, penetrating, spicy, sharp, and acidic.

Individuals with a lot of Pitta in their mind-body constitution display these attributes mentally as well as physically. They tend to be intellectually sharp, with discriminating minds that enjoy delving into the underlying causes of things. They are often good leaders, visionaries, and speakers. Physically, they have a hearty appetite and good digestion. They tend to be warm, even in cooler environments. They often have a strong appetite for knowledge, luxury, and worldly recognition.

04. Introduce Kapha.

Kapha is responsible for structure, protection, and lubrication within the body and mind. People with a preponderance of the Kapha are generally sturdy and consistent. The attributes of earth are heavy, cold, solid, stable, wet, smooth, and slow.

These attributes manifest themselves in individuals who have a lot of Kapha in their mind-body constitution. Physically, they tend to be heavysset and stocky with great strength and endurance. They are generally process oriented and are slow to anger or respond to provocation. Their skin is usually moist, youthful, and beautiful. The heaviness of Kapha means that these types have a tendency to retain excess weight.

Dosha imbalances

Vata, Pitta, and Kapha imbalances

Now, you'll help your students understand the concept of dosha imbalances

What to say

Use the following 4 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Introduce the idea of imbalance.

Each of the mind-body principles—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—have a balanced expression and an out-of-balance expression. When these principles are circulating in the mind-body physiology in appropriate proportions, we feel healthy and happy, and all our bodily functions work in harmony with one another. Unhealthy lifestyle choices can imbalance the doshas.

However, when we follow an improper diet and make unhealthy lifestyle choices, these principles may become disturbed and cause distress in mind or body.

02. Explain a Vata imbalance.

Imbalances in Vata often lead to dryness of the skin, hair, fingernails, and large intestine. Symptoms of Vata imbalance include irregular appetite, delicate digestion, constipation, gas, and bloating. Since the Vata principle governs movement in the body, a Vata imbalance can lead to feelings of restlessness and insomnia. People with a Vata imbalance may feel anxious, isolated, or fearful. Symptoms caused by an imbalance of Vata often come and go (a reflection of its irregularity) and may be precipitated by times of change or instability.

03. Explain a Pitta imbalance.

Imbalances in Pitta create an excess of heat and acidity in the body. This may lead to symptoms such as skin rashes and irritations, burning pain in the digestive tract, indigestion, and heartburn. Emotions may become inflamed when Pitta is out of balance, and people with a Pitta imbalance may become angry, intolerant, and hypercritical. Pitta imbalances are more likely to develop when we feel pressured or have too much on our plate.

04. Explain a Kapha imbalance.

Imbalances in Kapha can lead to weight gain, retention of fluids, diabetes, allergies, and sinus congestion, which all reflect an excess of the earth principle. Someone with a Kapha imbalance is likely to feel sluggish, congested, and lazy. Kapha imbalances may also manifest as depression, stubbornness, and an inability to let go. Imbalances of the Kapha principle are often chronic. People with a Kapha imbalance may be slow to react and unmotivated to change.

Note: Learning about the doshas will be new to most of your students, and the concept may take some time for them to grasp.

They will likely see themselves in some of the descriptions, and these realizations can lead to a number of questions. Because of this, after explaining the doshas, you may want to spend a few minutes answering the questions that arise. The doshas are foundational to your students' understanding of Ayurveda, so spending a little extra time on this section will benefit the group.

Although you will go into greater detail on balancing the doshas later in the course, you may also want to take a moment to reassure your students that any feelings of imbalance they may experience as they pertain to the doshas—for instance, anxiety for the Vata dosha, or heartburn for the Pitta dosha—will be addressed.

It can help to remind your students that the goal of Ayurveda is to help them achieve balance, vitality, and an overall sense of well-being through an array of simple tools that you will share with them as they progress through the course.

Interpreting the Dosha Quiz

Understanding their results

Now that you've given an overview of the doshas, your students are ready to interpret their results from the Dosha Quiz they took earlier.

What to say

Use the following 7 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Shift your students' focus back to the Dosha Quiz.

Let's now look at the results of your Dosha Quiz. Our goal is to help you understand your basic constitution, or the proportion of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha inherently present in your mind-body system, and also to get a sense of which of these principles may need balancing at this time. We all have qualities of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, but most of us have higher proportions of one or two of the doshas.

02. Explain the Prakruti section.

The Prakruti section of the quiz is an inquiry into the proportion of each of the three principles—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—within your unique mind-body constitution.

Your score in this section reflects your basic nature. These characteristics tend to change very little over your lifetime. Prakruti is your individual constitution, determined at conception. Your prakruti is made up of all three doshas, but typically one or two predominate.

03. Help your students understand the score.

The principle that received the highest score in the Prakruti section is the most predominant force in your overall mind-body make-up.

The principle that received the next highest score is the secondary force in your constitution.

The lowest scoring principle, while still an active force in your mind-body physiology, is the least dominant in your particular constitution.

04. Explain what a bi-doshic or tri-doshic score means.

If two of the scores on the quiz are very close, usually within two points of one another, then you are considered bi-doshic. You have approximately equal proportions of those two doshas. Very rarely, a person will be tri-doshic. If you are tri-doshic, you have equal proportions of all three doshas.

05. Move on to the Vikruti section.

The Vikruti section of the quiz provides a snapshot of your current mind-body state. This is your vikruti, or current state of balance and imbalance. It is influenced by your experiences and choices.

06. Help your students understand the score.

In the Vikruti section, the mind principle (dosha) with the highest points is the one primarily governing your mind and emotions at this time.

The body principle (dosha) that scored the highest points is the one primarily governing your body at this time. This means that you will want to focus on balancing the dosha that has the highest mind score, as well as the dosha that has the highest body score.

As you will be learning later in the course, we use the sense of sight, sound, and smell to balance the mind. And we use the sense of taste and touch to balance the body. Meditation is also a powerful tool for balancing the mind, no matter which dosha is out of balance

07. Wrap up the Dosha Quiz interpretation and give your students an idea of what to expect.

As we become familiar with the characteristics of the three principles and how they interact within our mind-body constitution, we can recognize and correct existing imbalances in our physiology.

The rest of the course is dedicated to exploring dietary, sensory, emotional, and lifestyle choices that will help you to create optimal health and well-being.

Consider the following

The Dosha Quiz will likely be brand-new to most students. Therefore, reiterate to them that the two different sections help them determine two different things.

- 01.** The first part, the *Prakruti* test, assesses their respective mind-body constitutions at birth.
- 02.** The second part of the quiz, the *Vikruti* section, measures their current states of balance and imbalance.
The Vikruti score can be different as life goes through its ups and downs.

It is important to remind your students that if they take the Dosha Quiz at different times in their lives, they will likely notice that the *Vikruti* score will change depending on what is happening in their lives at the time. It's also important to let your students know that even though they may have one dosha that is predominant, each of us has elements of all the doshas within us. We are made up of all five elements. However, our individual proportion of these elements varies.

While your students are forming an understanding of their respective doshas, reassure them that there is no “good” or “bad” dosha type. Each dosha is important and has a unique qualities to offer. This concept will be explained in greater detail later in this session.

Using attention to enliven your health

Transformation

Now, you'll let your students know that while you hope that this course is entertaining and informational, information alone does not produce transformation.

What to say

Use the following 4 talking points to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Give your students some practical practices they can incorporate right away.

What will change your life and your experiences is putting what you learn into practice. For this reason, here are a few practices to integrate into your daily routine throughout the coming week.

- 02.** Suggest they keep an eye out for the doshas in their everyday lives.

Begin thinking about yourself as a multidimensional being—as a dynamic field of energy and information. Pay attention to Vata, Pitta, and Kapha as the patterns that express your qualities in the world.

- 03.** Encourage your students to meditate.

Practice meditation for 20 minutes, twice daily—in the morning after awakening and in the evening before dinner. Note any questions or insights you have during the practice so we can discuss them next week (or at our next scheduled meeting).

Note: You'll learn how to lead a So Hum meditation in Session 8 of Chopra Health Certification. We encourage you to incorporate these practices into each of your classes.

- 04.** Encourage your students to practice pranayama.

Practice the coherence breathing pranayama technique once a day and pay attention to how it affects your body, mind, and emotions. What happens as you become more conscious of the movement of your breath?

Note: You'll learn how to teach different pranayama techniques in Session 9 of Chopra Health Certification. We encourage you to incorporate these practices into each of your classes.

Celebrate your Dosha type

Dive deeper

We each contain a unique mixture of all three doshas—our own individual blend of space, air, fire, water, and earth. There is no “good” or “bad” dosha type—only balanced and imbalanced doshas. Each dosha has many gifts and powerful qualities. And when we’re in balance, we’re able to experience the full expression of these gifts.

Note: *This content is to give you a deeper understanding of the material and will not need to be part of the Introduction to Ayurveda key points/scripts.*

VIBRANT VATA

If Vata is your predominant dosha, you have many wonderful qualities that flow from the combination of the space and air elements that make up Vata. While Vata types are sometimes teased for being “spacey” or overly sensitive, when they are in balance, Vatas are extraordinarily creative and open to the gifts of nature, intuition, compassion, laughter, and love.

- Vata is the principle behind all movement and the force that generates thought.

With your strong Vata dosha, you are blessed with a quick mind, and you’re bubbling with new ideas and creativity. You learn and grasp new information quickly. You’re able to see connections that others may miss, and your unique perspective allows you to be innovative and imaginative. You have a deep capacity to get completely absorbed in the moment and the expression of your creativity, letting go of the constraints of time.

- Your Vata nature gives you an enthusiasm for life.

This enthusiasm naturally draws others to you. You enjoy laughing freely and are a lively, witty conversationalist. You’re friendly and open to new experiences and different perspectives, easily making friends with people of all ages and backgrounds.



- Vatas tend to be emotionally sensitive and empathic.

You easily pick up on energetic vibes and can feel whether someone’s words are aligned with their true feelings and intentions. This capacity can be extremely valuable in both your work and personal relationships. Your sensitivity may seem challenging at times, yet it is a magnificent gift. You can protect your sensitivity by practicing good self-care and setting clear boundaries around people and situations that drain your energy.

- Vatas may also be sensitive to sound and touch.

Most Vatas enjoy a deep appreciation for music and the sounds of nature. This capacity for sensory pleasure can be a deep source of joy for you.

- Vatas are quick to feel, express, and let go of emotions.

In the face of conflict, you seldom lash out at people or become vindictive; instead, you sincerely seek to find peaceful resolutions.

- Vata’s spontaneity and playful spirit keep life fresh.

You love change, thrive on new experiences, and are willing to leap into the unknown, which is the field of all possibilities.

PASSIONATE PITTA

Pitta represents energy, heat, or fire—and it gives rise to many powerful qualities in your body and mind. Although Pittas are sometimes teased for being “hot-headed” or domineering, when they are in balance, Pittas are compassionate, enterprising souls with the courage to follow through on their dreams.

- Pittas are determined, passionate, and enterprising.

They usually possess strong wills, and they tend to make good leaders. In the face of challenges, Pittas take charge and inspire others with their vision and energy. They perform well under pressure and are bold and decisive. Many successful entrepreneurs, political and organizational leaders, dedicated research scientists, and top athletes have strong, fiery Pitta natures.

- Pittas know how to get things done.

With your Pitta nature, you excel in setting big goals and persevering until you achieve mastery. The fire of Pitta provides the energy to manifest your intentions and desires. You thrive on challenges and can transform even difficult situations into successes. You may be a trailblazer, using your energy and passion to pioneer new fields.

- Pittas have a sharp intellect and strong powers of concentration.

You absorb new concepts quickly and have a good memory. You are likely to be organized, punctual, and precise, and you will thrive in fields that require close attention to detail.

- Pittas are warm and loving friends.

People are drawn to your natural joyful energy and sense of fun and adventure. You have a witty sense of humor and love engaging in passionate conversations and debates.

- Pittas are articulate, bold, and direct.

You're able to set clear boundaries and avoid the pitfalls of people-pleasing and waffling. Pittas are often excellent public speakers and teachers who are able to illuminate ideas for others.

- Pittas have an abundance of energy.

They also enjoy the gift of sleeping soundly. As long as you stay in balance, your digestion will be strong, allowing you to metabolize what you eat and learn.

KIND-HEARTED KAPHAS

As someone with a predominance of the Kapha dosha in your mind-body constitution, you possess many wonderful qualities that arise from the combination of the earth and water elements that comprise Kapha. While sometimes Kapha types are teased for being “too slow” or set in their ways, when they're in balance, Kaphas are extraordinarily kind, accepting, and strong. It's been said that Kaphas are blessed with a slow metabolism and longevity.

- Kaphas possess the stability and nurturing nature of earth and water.

You are patient, calm, and grounded, yet capable of skillful action and response. You have an inherent desire to help others, and people are drawn to your sweet and loving temperament.

- Kaphas are loyal and devoted friends.

As a Kapha, you also tend to be close to your family, loved ones, and community. You bring a stabilizing influence into relationships. You're considerate of other people's feelings and needs and are accepting and non-judgmental. Your motto is “live and let live.” Kaphas easily express their love, appreciation, and affection and are rarely critical or negative.



- Kaphas are detail oriented.

In your work and daily activities, you're steady and methodical without being obsessive. You put careful consideration into everything you do without rushing, getting anxious about the results, or snapping at others when things don't go your way. You take delays and setbacks in stride; if your flight is late, you don't lash out at the ticket agent—you take advantage of the extra time to enjoy a good book. As a result of your natural equanimity, you tend to enjoy excellent health and avoid the common illnesses caused by chronic stress.

- Kapha types have steady minds.

While you may take your time in grasping new information, you have strong and retentive memory. Once you master a concept, you never forget it.

- Kaphas communicate consciously and wisely.

With your Kapha nature, you are less vocal than Vatas and Pittas, speaking only when you have something important to say. When you do speak, people pay attention and value your contribution. You're also a good listener and genuinely care about the feelings and perspectives of others.

- Kaphas have great stamina.

You sleep soundly and enjoy a reservoir of steady energy. You are graceful in your movements and are likely to have beautiful, shining eyes and a lustrous complexion. You also will tend to have a strong immune system, good muscle tone, and consistent good health.

Take a moment to reflect.

As you celebrate your dosha type, keep in mind that an individual will never perfectly match the description of one particular dosha.

For example, you may be a bi-doshic type, with Kapha as your predominant dosha, and strong Vata or Pitta characteristics. As you become aware of your unique tendencies and qualities, you will understand what you need to cultivate balance. This will allow you to experience your full potential for radiant health and happiness.



Class 2 Teaching Ayurvedic Nutrition

Teaching Ayurvedic Nutrition

Learn to teach Ayurvedic Nutrition

Next to breathing, eating is one of our most vital bodily functions. We nourish ourselves by converting the energy and information of our environment into the biological intelligence of our body. To create and maintain a healthy physiology, our food needs to be nourishing, our digestive power strong, and our elimination efficient. In Ayurveda, we cultivate health by eating a variety of fresh, delicious foods and tailoring our diet to balance our dosha type.

The material in this session will help you guide your students in the foundational Ayurvedic principles and practices for optimal eating, as well as deepen your own understanding. You will also receive guidance that will help you become more confident in your teaching skills.

Topics and checklist

Class 2 Topics

- Nurturing Your Agni
- Eating for Balance
- Eating with Awareness

Checklist: What you'll need to get started

The following guidelines will help you prepare to teach Ayurvedic Nutrition.

- Pens for students
- Sample foods for the Six Taste Activity (if in person)
- Piece of food for the Eating Awareness Activity
- Napkins or bowls for individual tasting
- Sanitizer, disinfectant, or hand washing station
- Computer and internet connection (if you are teaching virtually)
- Laptop, screen, projector, small table, and extension cords (optional if you are teaching in-person using a presentation deck, such as Power Point or Keynote)
- Dry erase board or flip chart with pens (optional)

Note: You can use the PowerPoint templates you received to customize for your presentation.

Six taste activity (optional) - Eating for Balance lesson

The Six Taste Activity is an optional activity and can be done in person or virtually. If you decide to lead it in person, you will need to have foods available that represent all six tastes. Please review the Six Taste Food List PDF in your Session 3 and Program Resources. We encourage you to choose foods that are organic, vegan, and gluten-free.

Here are a few suggestions or examples:

- Bananas (sweet)
- Tomatoes (sour)
- Pretzels (salty)
- Fresh ginger (pungent)
- Spinach (bitter)
- Apples (astringent)

Note: If you decide to lead this activity virtually, have your students reference the Six Tastes Food List to come up with their own 6 tastes to sample during the exercise.

Overview of this class

- 01.** You'll start by checking in with your students, discussing the importance of healthy digestion, using herbs to kindle digestion, and the concept of microbiome.
- 02.** Next, you'll teach your students about the six tastes, as well as how to eat for balance.
- 03.** You'll wrap up your class by guiding your students in the benefits and practice of eating with awareness.

Introduction to the Ayurvedic Nutrition class

Opening statements

At the beginning of class, check in with your students and ask if they have any questions from the first class. Then ask, “Have you begun to perceive yourselves and the world around you in terms of the three universal principles—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha?”

What to say

Use or modify the script below for your introduction.

I'm pleased to welcome you back to the Chopra Health program.

Over the next few classes, you will be learning ways of creating a healthy and balanced lifestyle for yourself that doesn't come from a book or a theory but is born directly out of your understanding of yourself.

Note: Remind students that all questions are welcome and how you would like to receive their questions.

If the group is small, ask your students if they would like to share personal examples of how they have begun to perceive themselves in terms of the three doshas.

Ayurvedic Nutrition class overview

Provide a class overview

What to say

Use or modify the 7 talking points in the script below for the Ayurvedic Nutrition class overview.

- 01.** Give your students an overview of the Ayurvedic Nutrition class.

In today's class, we'll be discussing optimal digestion, the six tastes and what they represent, eating to balance the doshas, and mindful eating.

- 02.** Give them an idea of how you'll start the class.

We are going to begin with some basic movement (five minutes, optional) and a mindfulness meditation.

- 03.** Introduce the dosha visualization exercise.

I'll lead you in a five-minute dosha visualization.

- 04.** Tell your students the topics you will cover in today's class.

Then, we'll discuss the vital role digestion plays in our health and well-being, including the concepts of agni, ama, and ojas. You'll learn how to use herbs and spices to kindle digestion and explore the concept of the microbiome.

- 05.** Let your students know that you'll teach them how to eat to balance the doshas.

In the next part of the class, you'll be learning about the six tastes and the seven colors of fresh foods, as well as how to eat to balance each dosha type and prevent chronic inflammation.

- 06.** Also let them know you'll guide them in an Eating with Awareness Activity.

In the final part of the class, you'll learn the benefits and practice of eating with awareness. Then, I'll guide you in an exercise to expand eating awareness.

- 07.** Wrap up the overview.

During the Chopra Health classes, you'll also have opportunities to do practices at home. I'll share a powerful way to tune into the experience of eating by eating one meal in total silence.

Dosha visualization

Meditation

At the start of each class, it's valuable to lead students in a mindfulness meditation.

What to say

Use or modify the 7-step script below for the Dosha Visualization.

01. Introduce the activity.

Let's start today's class with a visualization to experience the energy of the three doshas—Vata, Pitta, Kapha.

02. Invite your students to close their eyes.

Sit comfortably and please close your eyes or relax with your eyes gently open. Become aware of your body.

03. Begin the mindful activity by tuning into the Vata moving energy.

Notice that although you are sitting still, many things are moving within you. Your mind is moving constantly. Your nervous system is carrying impulses from one part of your body to another. As you are sitting, food is moving through your digestive tract. Nutrients are being absorbed through your colon. Your chest rises and falls as you breathe, bringing oxygen to every cell in your body. Feel the beating of your heart, the pumping of your blood, the flowing of your circulation. An underlying intelligence is guiding every movement in your body/mind.

This intelligence is known as Vata. It is like the wind. It carries things from place to place and is never still.

04. Now you'll guide them to tune in to transformative Pitta energy.

Now turn your attention to the fact that even though you appear to remain the same, your body is changing in every moment. Transformations are occurring at every level of your body/mind. Your body is like a melting pot, converting your last meal into fuel for your organs and tissues. Your body is separating the useful from the non-useful. Your internal thermostat is regulating your body temperature. Though your eyes are closed, they are still digesting the sights and images of your life. Your liver is metabolizing toxins, and deep within your mind, a subtle digestion is also taking place. The impressions and experiences you absorbed yesterday are being transformed into meaning and understanding.

The force governing all digestion and metabolism is warm, sharp, intense, and penetrating. This force is known as Pitta.

05. Next, you'll ask them to notice stabilizing Kapha energy.

As your digestive system metabolizes food into nutrients, and as your circulation carries these nutrients throughout your body, your cells and tissues are continuously rebuilding themselves. In the midst of the changes occurring in every moment, there is a biological energy that protects and stabilizes your entire body. Feel how your bones, ligaments, and muscles support your body. With every inhalation and every exhalation, the lubrication lining your air passages moistens and filters the air you breathe. Your heart, brain, and spinal cord are encased in a nourishing fluid that cushions your nervous system and allows it to function.

The biological energy that governs the structure, strength, cohesion, and fluidity of the body is known as Kapha.

06. Invite your students to take a moment of gratitude.

For a moment, feel a sense of gratitude for the three doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—and for everything they do to support your health and happiness.

07. Invite your students to open their eyes.

Now slowly open your eyes.

Wait a few moments, then look around the room to see when most of your students have opened their eyes. If the group is small, invite your students to share their experience during the visualization.

Agni, Ama, and Ojas

Digestion's vital role

At this point in the class, you'll discuss the vital role digestion plays in our health and well-being. Keep in mind that some of the terms and ideas may be new to students. Be prepared for questions.

What to say

Use the following 13 talking points to help guide your discussion. Examples are provided but do your best to make this part your own.

01. Define digestion from an Ayurvedic perspective.

Our health depends on proper digestion. Nutrition is not limited to what goes in our mouths. It involves being conscious of all the steps involved in nourishing ourselves. In the act of eating, we consume not only the calories, proteins, fats, and carbohydrates of the food, but we are also influenced by our emotional state while we eat, the environment in which we eat, and the manner in which the food is prepared.

02. Explain how metabolism works.

The same meal can be metabolized by our body in entirely different ways depending on how it is prepared, our frame of mind when we consume it, and even what time of day we eat. You will learn tips for increasing metabolism.

03. Explain the importance of good digestion.

The strength of our digestion is the most important factor in determining how well the food we eat will be digested, absorbed, and used by our body.

04. Explain the Ayurvedic concept of agni.

In Ayurveda, the metabolic power responsible for extracting nourishment and eliminating toxins is known as agni—a Sanskrit word that means “fire.” Agni is the root of the English words ignition and ignite, and we can think of agni as our digestive fire.

Just like a fire in a fireplace, our digestive fire is capable of consuming even the heaviest fuel when it is burning brightly. When our agni is strong and healthy, we are able to extract the greatest level of nourishment from our diet.

05. Explain ojas.

The byproduct of healthy digestion is known as ojas, a Sanskrit word that means “vigor.”

Ojas is the pure substance that’s extracted from food, emotions, and experiences that have been completely digested. It is the subtlest life essence and exists at the junction of consciousness and matter, giving us strength and vitality.

06. Give some examples of strong ojas.

When ojas is strong:

- *We may feel rested when we wake up.*
- *Our tongue is pink and clear.*
- *Our body feels light, regardless of our weight.*
- *We feel centered throughout the day.*
- *Our digestion is strong, without bloating or constipation.*
- *We feel energized and enthusiastic.*
- *Our mind is clear.*
- *Our body has a pleasant smell.*
- *We rarely get sick.*

07. Define and explain the concept of ama.

On the other hand, when the digestive fire is weak or irregular, we are unable to completely digest our food, emotions, experiences, and information. As a result, our body accumulates what is known as ama, or toxic residue.

Ama blocks the free flow of energy and information throughout our body, weakening our immune system and making us feel lethargic and tired.

08. Describe some of the signs of accumulated ama.

Here are some signs that we have accumulated ama in our body/mind:

- *Bad breath*
- *Coated tongue*
- *Dull appetite*
- *Delicate digestion*
- *Heartburn, bloating, or nausea after eating*
- *Sluggish or irritable elimination*
- *Generalized pain*
- *Fatigue*
- *Mental fog and trouble focusing*
- *Depression*
- *Susceptibility to infections*
- *Difficulty manifesting intentions*

09. Ask students to take the *Ama-Ojas Survey*.

We can assess our levels of essential life energy (ojas) and accumulated toxins (ama) by taking the Ama-Ojas Survey.

Ama-ojas survey

You can find the *Ama-Ojas Survey* PDF in the Session 3 and Program Resources.

Choose if you want to take a short break for students to complete the survey. Or ask your students to take it home and bring back the completed quiz to the next class to discuss their results.

10. Describe how the doshas influence digestion. Start with Vata types.

Our dosha type influences the power of our agni. Vata types tend to be a little more delicate and are prone to irregular or weak digestion. They may easily lose their appetite or suffer from constipation, gas, or bloating. It's particularly important for Vata types to pay attention to what they eat and to have meals at regular times each day.

11. Describe the ups and downs of strong Pitta agni.

Pitta types, on the other hand, are blessed with a naturally robust agni—the strongest of the three doshas. They have a hearty appetite and are said to be like goats, able to eat anything. However, sometimes a Pitta's agni can be too strong, which can lead to health issues such as heartburn, loose stools, and acid reflux.

12. Describe Kapha agni.

Kapha types tend to have a slow, steady agni and a strong appetite. However, their digestion can become sluggish when they are out of balance, and they can easily become lethargic and gain excess weight.

13. Wrap up and tell them what's coming next.

Next, you'll be learning tips to strengthen agni.

Enhancing digestion

Use of herbs and spices

It's time to look at ways to use herbs and spices to improve digestion and overall health.

What to say

Use or modify the 3 talking points below to show your students how to use herbs and spices to enhance digestion.

- 01.** Tell your students how to use ginger to increase agni.

We can use herbs and spices to kindle our digestive fire.

For example, ginger can improve our digestion as well as our overall health. You can enjoy ginger in the form of tea, or you can make a ginger elixir using fresh-pressed ginger juice, a little bit of lemon juice, black pepper, a dash of salt, and some honey for taste.

Drinking ginger elixir as an aperitif before a meal is a powerful way to ignite agni. You can also simply eat a few pieces of freshly sliced ginger sprinkled with lemon juice fifteen minutes before meals.

- 02.** Give examples of cooling herbs to decrease agni.

If our agni is too strong and we're experiencing acid reflux or heartburn, we can alleviate it by cooking with cooling herbs.

In Ayurveda, we typically use cumin, coriander, cilantro, and fennel. You can make a tea from cumin seeds, coriander seeds, and fennel seeds. We call this CCF tea. It's wonderful for digestion. It is also helpful to chew on roasted fennel seeds after a meal.

To alleviate stomach acidity, you may also drink two tablespoons of aloe vera juice, or a cup of licorice tea, half an hour after meals.

03. Explain how to minimize gas and bloating using carminative herbs.

A class of herbs called carminative herbs is helpful for decreasing gas and bloating, which are digestive issues associated with too much air in the system.

The typical carminative herbs used in Ayurvedic cooking are cardamom, cinnamon, and bay leaves. These herbs are often incorporated into bean and lentil dishes.

In addition, CCF tea and chewing on roasted fennel seeds also can help to dispel gas.

Note: You can give students the recipes for CCF tea, ginger tea, and ginger elixir. These recipes are available as PDF handouts in the Session 3 and Program Resources.

The microbiome

Microbiome's relationship to *agni* and health

People often appreciate knowing the research that validates these Ayurvedic concepts. Current research on the gut microbiome validates these dietary principles. The microbiome plays a pivotal role in digestive strength and immunity.

What to say

Use or modify the 5 talking points below to explain the concept of the microbiome.

01. Introduce the concept of the microbiome.

The microbiome is the genetic material contained in the vast colonies of micro-organisms that inhabit our body, including bacteria and other microbes. These microbes live mainly in our digestive tract, but also on our skin, in our mouth, and in other locations. While some of these microbes cause disease, most of them are crucial for our health.

02. Explain the benefits of healthy gut microbiome.

They help us to digest our food, they regulate our hormones and immune system, and they influence our nervous system.

03. Make the connection between the science and the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda.

Scientists are only just beginning to discover the many important roles the microbiome plays in our health and well-being.

The ancient Ayurvedic physicians did not have the current scientific research about the microbiome, but they knew how important our digestive system is to health and well-being.

04. Describe how to cultivate healthy gut microbiome.

Our diet is a crucial part of cultivating our microbiome because not only are we feeding ourselves, but we are also feeding the bacteria in our digestive tract.

This is why it's important to eat fermented foods and foods that contain probiotics to nourish the microbial population, such as sauerkraut, kimchi, yogurt, and kefir.

It's also important to eat a diet that favors a variety of fresh, whole foods that are high in fiber to increase the diversity of the microbes in the digestive tract—while eliminating refined, processed foods that create inflammation in the gut.

05. Wrap up the microbiome

These dietary principles are part of Ayurveda, and now science is providing the evidence for their value.

A healthy gut microbiome

Dive deeper

A healthy gut microbiome

Most of us were taught that to stay healthy, we need to avoid bacteria, viruses, and other microbes. And although there are many microorganisms that can cause disease, we live in a symbiotic, caring relationship with most microbes. They have been a vital part of our evolution and health for millions of years.

Beginning at birth, nature bathes us in microbes. Before we are born, our body has no microbes, and our gastrointestinal (GI) tract is sterile. Then as we move through the vaginal canal, we are coated in our mother's microbiome from that area. Within hours of birth, the GI tract begins to be colonized by microbes. During the first few days of our life, our mother's colostrum (breast milk) helps to colonize our gut with good bacteria while preventing harmful bacteria from growing and causing illness.

Scientists used to think colostrum was low in nutrients and therefore not very valuable. But we now know that colostrum delivers a mega-dose of microbiome-building elements. In short, breastfeeding is part of the process nature carefully designed to build our microbiome.

Interaction between gut microbiome and immune system

Over 80% of your immune system resides in the lining of your gut, and your microbiome is in constant contact with it. A healthy, resilient gut microbiome relies on high richness and biodiversity. When there is high richness and diversity of the microbes in your gut, your immune system is stronger and more stable.

Gut-microbiome richness and diversity are two important concepts to understand:

- Richness is the total number of bacterial species in your gut microbiome.
- Diversity is the number of individual bacteria from each of the bacterial species present in your gut microbiome.

If we were to compare bacterial richness to a group of people categorized by occupation:

- Richness would be all of the occupations present, e.g., doctors, teachers, firefighters, and so on.
- Diversity would be the number of people in each occupational group, e.g., 127 doctors, 81 teachers, and 62 firefighters.

With high richness and diversity, a community is much more resilient and capable. This is easy to see because when you have lots of people with different specialties available to you, you're able to call on just the right person for the job at hand. But what if you're missing firefighters or only have five? Who is going to help when there's a massive fire?

By analogy, having a rich and diverse gut microbiome provides us with the resources our body needs to fight off pathogens and live in a state of homeostasis, or healthy dynamic balance.

Relationship between decreased diversity and disease

Decreased diversity is associated with disease. Having low diversity in the gut microbiome is a problem because it's associated with a number of chronic illnesses, including:

- Obesity
- High cholesterol
- Inflammation
- Type 1 diabetes
- Type 2 diabetes
- Colorectal cancer
- Ulcerative colitis
- Celiac disease
- Allergies
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)

This is not an exhaustive list, but it clearly shows that low microbial diversity plays a major role in many illnesses.

Increase microbiome diversity

Increased diversity is associated with health. The question naturally arises, how do we increase gut microbiome diversity and live healthier lives?

- 01.** Avoid the overuse of disinfectants and sanitizers.
- 02.** Be selective about the use of antibiotics.

While antibiotics, disinfectants, and sanitizers are powerful allies in targeting pathogens and combatting infectious diseases, they can also destroy the beneficial microbes that keep us healthy. Just one round of antibiotics can decrease gut microbiome diversity by at least 30%. And some researchers are finding that this drop in microbiome diversity may actually be much greater.

Although they are sometimes necessary, limiting your use of antibiotics, or restoring the microbiome after a course of antibiotics, is therefore an important step. In addition, there are times when it is necessary to use sanitizers and disinfectants to protect yourself from disease and the benefits of using them outweigh the risks.

Therefore, it is important to support the microbiome on a daily basis to keep a healthy balance, while also staying safe. The most important thing is to be aware of the effect on the microbiome and having daily practices to support our healthy microbes.

Support a healthy microbiome

In your daily life, the choices you make about what you eat can make the greatest difference in cultivating a healthy gut microbiome. The modern Western diet, which is low in fiber but high in sugar, salt, fat, and highly processed food, can also severely degrade the gut microbiome.

When the gut microbiome is damaged or degraded, bacteria begin to release so-called endotoxins—the by-products of microbial action. If these toxins leak through the intestinal wall into the bloodstream, systemic inflammation is triggered and persists until the toxins are no longer present. This chronic low-level inflammation is an underlying cause of many illnesses.

It's important to keep in mind that because of its genetic complexity, a “normal” gut microbiome hasn't been defined yet, and each individual likely has the microbial balance that is right for them. There is still much ongoing research in this field.

Eat these for a healthy microbiome

Eat a wide range of natural foods

Researchers generally believe, however, that a flourishing, healthy gut microbiome is established by eating a wide range of natural foods, with an emphasis on fruits, vegetables, and fiber.

Here are a few guidelines for what to add to your diet and what to minimize or eliminate. If you follow these steps, you will simultaneously help to increase the diversity of your gut microbiome while decreasing inflammation in your body/mind.

Eat anti-inflammatory foods

If you are sensitive or allergic to any of these foods, choose from the vast array of other anti-inflammatory foods.

- Fresh fruit, especially berries and tart cherries
- Fatty cold-water fish (such as salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring)
- Tree nuts (such as walnuts, almonds, etc., but excluding peanuts, a groundnut)
- Seeds & whole grains
- Cruciferous vegetables (cabbage, broccoli, bok choy, cauliflower)
- Dark, leafy greens
- Soy (including soy milk and tofu)
- Mycoprotein (from mushrooms and other fungi)
- Peppers (e.g., bell peppers, various chilies)
- Beets



- Ginger, turmeric, and garlic
- Olive oil and other plant-based oils
- Ghee

Eat probiotic foods

Consume probiotic foods at least once a day to nourish the microbial population in your digestive tract. These are foods that contain living bacteria, such as:

- Active yogurt
- Kefir
- Kombucha
- Pickles
- Sauerkraut
- Kimchi

Eat prebiotic foods

Eat plenty of foods that contain prebiotics, which is fiber that our body can't digest but which provides excellent nutrition for the microbiome and help to prevent inflammation. Good sources of prebiotics include:

- Whole grains
- Vegetables and fruits
- Nuts

Minimize these inflammatory foods

Eliminate or greatly reduce your consumption of foods that contribute to inflammation in the digestive tract as well as other health issues, including:

- Red meat
- Saturated and trans fats (animal fats and the hydrogenated vegetable fats contained in many processed foods)
- White bread and other processed foods made with refined flour
- White rice or any processed rice
- Refined sugar, high fructose corn syrup, and artificial sweeteners
- Sugary sodas
- Alcohol
- Processed, refined, or manufactured foods containing artificial flavorings, colorings, or sweeteners
- Foods containing antibiotics or hormones

In general, if you follow the principle of avoiding refined and processed foods and favoring fresh, real food, you can be assured that you are nurturing your microbiome and body/mind with the highest quality, anti-inflammatory nutrition.

Eat to prevent chronic inflammation

Dive deeper

Evolution didn't equip us to live in a constant state of stress. Chronic, low-grade stress and the inflammation associated with it, are underlying factors in most chronic illnesses.

Chronic inflammation

Chronic inflammation is the root cause of most diseases of aging.

- Coronary artery disease begins as inflammation in the lining of the arteries.
- Cancer is fed by inflammation, which increases cell proliferation and the risk of malignant transformation.
- Alzheimer's disease begins as inflammation in the brain.

The good news is that there is a single strategy for reducing the risk and delaying the onset of all these diseases: eliminating unhealthy inflammation in the body.

One of the most effective ways to reduce inflammation is to eat a diet that favors fresh and healthy foods. By eliminating processed, artificial foods filled with toxic chemicals, and choosing a wide variety of fresh, whole foods, herbs, and spices, you can reduce inflammation and expand your health.

Teaching eating for balance

Learn to teach Eating for Balance

Next to breathing, eating is one of our most vital bodily functions. We nourish ourselves by converting the energy and information of our environment into the biological intelligence of our body. To create and maintain a healthy physiology, our food needs to be nourishing, our digestive power strong, and our elimination efficient. In Ayurveda, we cultivate health by eating a variety of fresh, delicious foods and tailoring our diet to balance our dosha type.

The material in this session will help you guide your students in the foundational Ayurvedic principles and practices for optimal eating, as well as deepen your own understanding. You will also receive guidance that will help you become more confident in your teaching skills.

Cultivating health

What to say

Use the following 13 key points to help guide your discussion.

01. Describe how nature simplifies nutritional information.

Long before the National Academy of Sciences provided us with recommended daily allowances (RDA) for fats, carbohydrates, and proteins, we listened to our taste buds to determine which substances were edible and how much of them to consume.

In her infinite wisdom, Nature has packaged food sources into one or more of six tastes as a way to inform us about the food's influence on our mind-body physiology.

02. Introduce the six tastes.

The six tastes are sweet (madhura), sour (amla), salty (lavana), pungent (katu), bitter (tikta), and astringent (kashya).

03. Explain why the six tastes are important.

Including all six tastes in every meal not only ensures that all major food groups and nutrients are represented, but it also provides us with a feeling of satisfaction. You have probably had the experience of feeling full but not completely satisfied after eating a portion of food. This is usually due to a failure to include all six tastes in your meal.

04. Make the connection between the six tastes and the five elements.

Food is made from the same five elements that make up the doshas: space, air, fire, water, and earth. And each taste has an effect on Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. When our doshas are out of balance, these six tastes can help repair this imbalance.

05. Point out that this may be a new way of categorizing types of foods for your students.

Since this is probably a new way of categorizing types of foods, let's talk a little about each of the tastes, and what effect they have on the body.

06. Explain and describe the taste of sweet.

Sweet (madhura) is the taste of energy and is made up of the elements of water and earth.

For many of us, the sweet taste is the primary taste we include in our diet. It is the main taste in starchy foods like breads, pasta, and rice. Milk, meat, and fats are also sweet, as are sugar, honey, and molasses. Sweet has a nutritive, soothing effect on the physiology. These foods typically have the most calories, therefore give us energy, bring about satisfaction, and build body mass.

While sweet foods are our main form of sustenance, overconsumption of sweet taste can make agni sluggish and dull.

7. Move on to sour.

Sour (amla) is the taste of acid and consists of the earth and fire elements.

The sour taste is found in citrus fruits, yogurt, cheese, tomatoes, pickles, and vinegar. Because it stimulates the production of digestive enzymes, it is stimulating to the appetite and aids in digestion. The sour taste is beneficial for those trying to enhance a sluggish appetite but may be irritating to those suffering from heartburn.

8. Explain the qualities of the salty taste.

Salty (lavana) is the taste of the ocean and is made up of the water and fire elements. It stimulates digestive juices, helps us hold onto water in the body, and enhances the other tastes.

The salty taste is found in sauces, salted meats, fish, and table salt. It enhances appetite, stimulates digestive juices, and makes other tastes more delicious.

9. Explain the qualities of the pungent taste.

Pungent (katu) is the spicy taste found in hot peppers, salsa, ginger, radishes, mustard, cloves, horseradish, and many spices. It is made up of the elements of air and fire.

Pungent foods enhance the appetite and improve digestion. As your experience with eating spicy foods will tell you, the pungent taste also promotes sweating and clears sinus passages. This taste is helpful to those trying to increase the metabolism, but the heat may aggravate an existing Pitta imbalance. Pungent foods enhance the appetite, improve digestion, and encourage detoxification.

10. Describe bitter.

Bitter (tikta) is the taste found in green leafy vegetables, broccoli, kale, sprouts, beets, and celery. It consists of the air and space elements.

Bitter foods are depleting and detoxifying to the system. The bitter taste promotes weight loss, but if eaten in excess may cause lightheadedness, dryness, and low blood sugar.

11. Describe the taste and properties of astringent tastes.

Astringent (kashya) is the taste found in beans, tea, coffee, tart apples, grape skins, cranberries, pomegranates, and cauliflower. This taste is made up of the air and earth elements.

Astringent foods have a drying and compacting effect on our physiology. These tend to be foods that are high in fiber. Although modern science does not classify the astringent property as a taste, the natural chemicals that produce astringency have many health benefits, including the regulation of digestive functioning and enhanced wound healing.

If eaten in excess, astringent taste may cause some gas or indigestion.

12. Explain the importance of eating all six tastes in each meal.

One of the core lessons in Ayurvedic nutrition is to include all six tastes in every meal. By including all six in each meal, the body intuitively sends signals to the brain when you're fulfilled and it's time to stop eating. You'll feel more nourished and satisfied, and less likely to feel hungry later.

If your meal doesn't include all six tastes, try adding an ingredient or two. If that doesn't work, try to sample some foods with the missing tastes during the rest of your day.

13. Wrap up the six tastes.

Each of the six tastes provides important nutritional benefits that your body needs. Eating a six-taste diet replenishes the qualities of all 5 elements in the physiology. Have fun with your meals, and experiment with new and exciting foods and spices to bring in the six tastes.

Note: You can give your students a handout of the six tastes with many examples of foods with each taste. This is available in your Session 3 and Program Resources. Share this handy resource with your students and encourage them to use it when grocery shopping and planning meals.

Six taste activity (optional)

Experiential six taste exercise

As mentioned previously, the Six Taste Activity is an optional activity that can be done in person or virtually.

If you decide to lead it in person, you will need to have foods available that represent all six tastes. Please review the Six Taste Food List PDF in your Session 3 and Program Resources. We encourage you to choose foods that are organic, vegan, and gluten-free.

Here are a few suggestions or examples:

- Bananas (sweet)
- Tomatoes (sour)
- Pretzels (salty)
- Fresh ginger (pungent)
- Spinach (bitter)
- Apples (astringent)

Note: *If you decide to lead this activity virtually, have your students reference the Six Tastes Food List to come up with their own 6 tastes to sample during the exercise.*

What to say

Use the 6-step script below for the Six Taste Exercise.

01. Introduce the activity.

In order to give you a first-hand experience of the six tastes and their effect on your body/mind, I'm going to pass around small containers of foods that are good representatives of each of the six tastes.

02. Pass around samples of foods.

Take one of each food item.

03. Invite your students to close their eyes.

Try closing your eyes.

04. Ask them to mindfully taste each food.

Slowly and mindfully taste each food, noticing its effect on your body. Each taste unlocks the nutritional value of the food.

05. Ask them to notice the qualities of each taste. (Wait a few moments to allow your students to reflect on the qualities of each of the tastes.)

Does the taste increase salivation? Does it dry your mouth? Is it heating? Cooling? Just notice the effects, sensations, and texture of each of these tastes.

06. Invite your students to open their eyes.

Gently open your eyes.

Note: *Time permitting, you may want to ask students to share their experiences during the exercise, "What did you notice as you mindfully ate each food?"*

Eating to balance the doshas

Balance the doshas

Now, you'll teach your students how to eat to balance the doshas.

What to say

Use the following 3 talking points to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Tell students to pay attention to their prakruti when eating to balance their dosha type.

When working to restore balance, pay attention to your most prominent dosha. It's likely the first to become aggravated

- 02.** Reinforce that any of the doshas can go out of balance.

That said, any of your three doshas may go out of balance depending on your present circumstances. Adjusting your diet can be very helpful in balancing your current mind-body physiology.

- 03.** Explain the Ayurvedic concept to restore balance: bring in opposite qualities.

Whenever you are trying to correct an imbalance in one of the three doshas, there are two principles to remember:

- 1. Like increases like. (Samanya)*
- 2. Opposites balance each other. (Vishesha)*

Eating to balance Vata

Vata

You'll now walk through how to use taste to balance Vata.

What to say

The following 3 talking points will help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Tell your students the three tastes to favor to balance Vata.

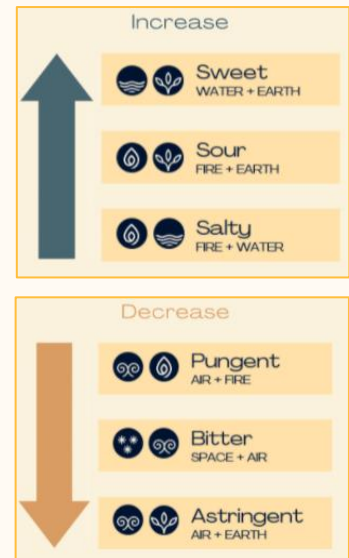
The three tastes to favor to balance Vata are sweet, sour, and salty. Those with a Vata imbalance also need heavy, oily, or warm foods to ground. These foods offer moisture and weight to the otherwise dry Vata.

- 02.** Tell your students which three tastes to minimize to balance Vata.

While it's important to include all of the six tastes at every meal, Vata types will want to eat pungent, bitter, or astringent foods in moderation, as these increase air element, and when eaten be sure to eat warm, cooked, and moist.

- 03.** Give a Vata-balancing cooking tip.

Cooked, soft meals, hearty soups, and healthy fats and oils are important for a Vata-balancing diet. Try stir-frying foods to add oil and heat. Cold or dry foods can aggravate a Vata imbalance.



Discussion with students

Each of the six tastes provides important nutritional benefits that your body needs. You may want to reinforce the idea that Ayurveda recommends all doshas include all six tastes in every meal.

This section also provides a good opportunity for a brief yet engaging question-and-answer session about balancing dosha types. Your students will not only want to ask questions, but they will also want you to answer questions that you pose throughout this section.

Here are a couple questions you can pose to engage students; don't forget to pause to allow one or two students to answer before moving on:

- 01.** *What types of foods should someone with a Vata imbalance avoid?*
- 02.** *What is and isn't balancing for a particular dosha type?*

Note: *If you are using a white board, you can write your students' responses on the board so that they can make their own notes.*

In addition, during the mindful eating section, if you have any concerns about food sensitivities or allergies among your group, you may want to suggest that anyone with such issues avoid touching and/or eating food that could bring about a reaction.

Eating to balance Pitta

Pitta

You'll now walk through how to use taste to balance Pitta

What to say

The following 3 talking points will help guide your discussion.

01. Tell your students the three tastes to favor to balance Pitta.

Pitta types need cooling and grounding foods. The three tastes to favor to balance Pitta are sweet, bitter, and astringent.

Foods with cooler qualities, especially in hot environments, can help to calm the digestive fire.

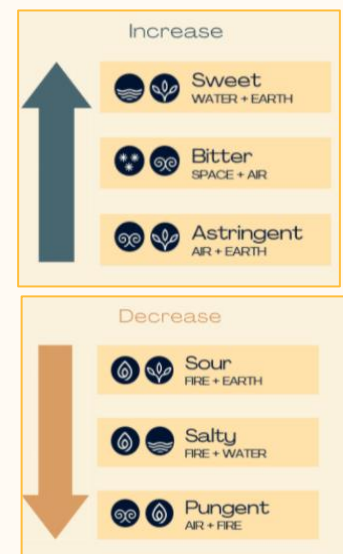
02. Tell your students which three tastes to minimize to balance Pitta.

The pungent, salty, and sour tastes increase Pitta and should be minimized, as they all add more fire element to the physiology.

Spicy foods, salted fish, and sour foods such as alcohol and pickles will all tend to increase heat in the body, which is exactly what someone with a Pitta imbalance does not need.

03. Give your Pitta-type students a cooking tip.

Hot, spicy, and warming foods—while still important to include in moderation—can add fuel to a strong digestive fire. Balance these tastes with cooling herbs and spices, such as mint, cilantro, coriander, or saffron, and avoid adding additional and avoid adding additional table salt if you can.



Discussion with students

Here are a couple questions you can ask students to start a dialog about foods to balance Pitta dosha; remember to pause to allow for answers before moving on:

- 01.** What tastes should people with a predominance of Pitta favor?
- 02.** What types of foods should someone with a Pitta imbalance avoid?



Eating to balance Kapha

Kapha

You'll now walk through how to use taste to balance Kapha

What to say

Use the following 4 talking points to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Tell your students the three tastes to favor to balance Kapha.

Kapha dosha is heavy, cool, damp, and slow/stable. The bitter, pungent, and astringent tastes balance Kapha because they add dryness, warmth, and lightness to the body. They help to increase metabolism and reduce the body's mass. Those with a Kapha imbalance need warming, light, and spicy foods to increase the digestive fire.



- 02.** Tell your students which three tastes to minimize to balance Kapha.

The three tastes to minimize to balance Kapha are sweet, sour, and salty as these will increase earth and water qualities in the physiology. This does not mean that a Kapha type can never eat foods with sweet, sour, or salty tastes. It's important to include all of the six tastes at every meal with the specific amounts adjusted according to one's current state of balance.



- 03.** Give your Kapha-type students a cooking tip.

Choosing lighter or less frequent meals will make digestion easier. Try dry cooking such as grilling or roasting to prepare Kapha balancing meals and be generous with warming spices, such as cayenne, black pepper, ginger, and turmeric.

- 04.** Kapha wrap up.

In order to feel satisfied after a meal, eat all six tastes with the specific amounts adjusted according to one's prakruti (essential nature) and vikruti (current state of balance).

Discussion with students

You may want to engage your students and continue the dialogue to explore foods that balance Kapha; remember to allow time for students to answer

- 01.** *What types of foods should someone with a Kapha imbalance avoid?*
- 02.** *Which tastes and types of foods is most balancing to Kapha types?*

Phytonutrients and the seven colors

Phytonutrients for good health

We need to eat a multicolored diet to ensure we are getting a broad spectrum of nutritional support.

What to say

Use the following 6 key points to help guide your discussion.

01. Start with the science.

Modern nutritional science is providing increasing validation of Ayurveda's principles. We now understand that through the plant kingdom, nature has provided us with an abundance of phytonutrients, which enhance health and boost immunity.

02. Define phytonutrients.

Phytonutrients, also referred to as phytochemicals, are the naturally occurring chemical compounds found in plants. Phyto means "plant" in Greek.

03. Tell your students a few of the benefits of phytonutrients.

The following tables list a few of the health-enhancing phytonutrients; the benefits they offer; and some of the foods, herbs, and spices that contain them.

PHYTONUTRIENT	BENEFITS	COMMON FOOD SOURCES
Flavonoids	Antioxidant, anticarcinogenic, protect against heart disease	Onions, broccoli, red grapes, apples, cherries, citrus fruits, berries, tomatoes, tea, coffee
Phenolic acids	Antioxidant, anticarcinogenic	Nuts, berries, green tea, prunes, plums
Sulfides	Antioxidant, anticarcinogenic, inhibit blood clotting	Garlic, onions, chives
Lycopenes	Antioxidant, anticarcinogenic	Tomatoes, red grapefruit
Isothiocyanates	Anticarcinogenic	Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower
Isoflavones	Block hormonally, stimulated cancers, lower cholesterol levels	soy beans, soy-derived, foods, garbanzo beans, pinto beans, navy beans
Anthocyanins	Antioxidant, lower cholesterol, stimulate immunity, anti-inflammatory	Berries, cherries, grapes, currants, red cabbage, red onions, kidney beans

PHYTONUTRIENT	BENEFITS	COMMON FOOD SOURCES
Beta-carotene	Antioxidant, boost immunity, anticarcinogenic, maintains good vision	Carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, cantaloupe, peaches, mangoes, apricots, pumpkin
Terpenoids	Antioxidant, antibacterial, prevent stomach ulcers	Peppers, cinnamon, horseradish, rosemary, thyme, turmeric
Indoles	Anticarcinogenic	Broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprouts, bok choy, kale, cauliflower
Lignans	Anticarcinogenic, lower cholesterol, and blood pressure	Flaxseed, sesame seeds, wheat bran, olives
Phytosterols	Lower cholesterol, anticarcinogenic	Avocado, nuts, seeds, legumes
Coumestans	Anticarcinogenic	Clover, alfalfa, soybean sprouts, split peas, pinto beans, lima beans
Phthalides	Lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol, anticarcinogenic	Celery, carrots, parsley, parsnips, fennel

04. Explain the benefits of eating a multicolored diet.

The colors of the fresh foods we eat come from the specific health-enhancing phytonutrients they contain. Nature provides us with an easy way to ensure a wide variety of phytonutrients by eating all the colors of the rainbow. Therefore, eating a multicolored diet each day helps ensure that we get a broad spectrum of nutritional support.

05. Give a few examples.

For example, the deep pigments in plant foods—such as carotenoids, anthocyanins, and chlorophyll—are dense in vitamins, minerals, and beneficial phytonutrients. By combining colors, we also improve access to the nutrients in other foods. For example, the Vitamin C found in oranges and lemons help us to absorb the iron in dark greens such as spinach.

06. Wrap up.

The good news is that you don't need to memorize the phytonutrients contained in every plant. By including the rainbow of colors in every meal (or at least once a day), you can ensure that you are taking in a wide variety of vital phytonutrients for your good health.

Phytonutrient chart

You will find the phytonutrient chart in your Session 3 and Program Resources. The charts include a few of the benefits of the phytonutrients, some of the foods, herbs, and spices that contain them.

COLOR	FOOD SOURCES
Red	Good source of lycopene and capsanthin. Food sources include: red tomatoes, red peppers, red/pink grapefruit, watermelon, red grapes, beets, red cabbage, red chard, red apples, strawberries, cherries, raspberries, and cranberries.
Orange/Yellow	Good source of beta-cryptoxanthin, and flavonoids. Food sources include: squash, orange and yellow bell peppers, carrots, corn, sweet potatoes, yams, pumpkin, bananas, cantaloupe, mangoes, oranges, tangerines, papaya, nectarines, apricots, peaches, pineapple, and lemons.
Green	Good source of lutein, chlorophyll, and indoles. Food sources include: kiwis, apples, limes, green grapes, spinach, lettuce, chard, arugula, kale, swiss collards, green cabbage, broccoli, artichokes, asparagus, celery, avocado, zucchini, brussels sprouts, and green peas.
Deep Blue/Purple	Good source of anthocyanins and phenolic acids. Food sources include: plums, blueberries, blue corn, blue potatoes, blue basil, purple cabbage, black raspberries, blackberries, purple grapes, and eggplant (with skin).
White	Good source of alliin and flavonoids. Food sources include: pears, coconuts, onions, garlic, cauliflower, parsnips, and rutabagas.

Eat to Balance your mind-body type

Dive deeper

When we are in balance, we want to eat to keep our primary dosha, or doshas, in balance. However, since any dosha can get out of balance, you may need to eat to balance the dosha that is currently out of balance, or vikruti, until you feel you are back to your baseline. Then you go back to eating for your prakruti.

For example, if you have been eating a lot of sour and spicy food, regardless of your prakruti, you may experience heartburn—a sign of Pitta imbalance in the body. You should then eat a cooling, pitta-balancing diet until the symptoms are gone, along with addressing other causes of the pitta imbalance. Then, once balanced you can resume the diet that is best for your primary dosha.

Ayurveda teaches that all health-related measures—whether an exercise program, dietary plan, or herbal supplement—must be based on an understanding of an individual’s dosha.

As you have explored, your prakruti reflects your innate tendencies, including your temperament, metabolism, energy level, learning style, and many other aspects of your body, mind, and emotions. You can nurture your inherent well-being by making choices to keep your prakruti in balance.

When in balance, the types of foods that are optimal for you depend upon your predominant dosha. The foods that keep one person in balance, energized, and at their ideal weight may not be the right choices for someone with a different dosha.

The doshas explain why some people can eat a hot, spicy meal and feel fine, while others could eat the same meal and experience heartburn or indigestion.

When you’re eating according to your dosha type, it is easier to keep your body in balance and stay healthy.

Eating for the doshas

Vata

Irregularity is the hallmark of Vata dosha type eating behavior, especially when the dosha is out of balance.

Vata types may resolve to follow a structured diet and suddenly become enthusiastic about learning as much as possible about the nutritional benefits of various foods. However, they may just as suddenly feel an extreme craving for something completely different, such as chocolate, cookies, or lasagna. They may also start skipping meals.

This “all-or-nothing” behavior can create a sense that life is out of control.

In balance

When Vata types are in balance, they may establish a scheduled eating routine allowing them to feel centered and experience their natural enthusiasm for life.

Out of balance

When Vata types get out of balance, they may find themselves snacking and popping things into their mouths all day long, which is another manifestation of general anxiety.

Pitta

Pitta types enjoy a strong appetite and ability to digest food, information, and experiences.

As in every other area of their lives, Pitta eating is characterized by a need for predictability and order. Most Pitta types like to eat three meals a day and prefer to have those meals at the same time every day. They may feel ravenously hungry and grouchy if dinner is even half an hour late. When such disruptions occur, the fire that lies just beneath the surface of the Pitta personality is likely to ignite.

In balance

When Pitta types are in balance, they enjoy vibrant energy and creativity. They are able to use their mental clarity and other gifts to create beauty, abundance, and well-being in the world and in their lives.

Out of balance

Many out-of-balance Pittas overeat as an expression of rage; they are literally swallowing their anger. Without being consciously aware of it, they may see habitual overeating as an act of rebellion, or as a reaction to an overheated digestive fire and appetite.

Kapha

Kapha types have an innate sensuality and love of eating. If they ignore or deny other sources of pleasure, they can easily become addicted to food.

In balance

When Kapha types are in balance, they are able to express their naturally loving nature and enjoy the gifts of stamina and grace.

Out of balance

Kapha types have an inherent desire to avoid confrontation, both with other people and with emotional issues within themselves. They may use food to suppress their intense emotions, but since this only masks the feelings at their core, they may suffer from depression. They may then enter the vicious cycle of trying to cope with depression by eating even more.

Eating for balance, joy, and vitality

Dive deeper

In Ayurveda, ahara, the word for “diet” or “nutrition,” refers not only to the food we eat but also to everything we ingest, including our experiences, emotions, sensory impressions, and ideas.

Ideal nutrition results from consuming a variety of fresh foods that are deliciously prepared, served in small portions, and eaten with awareness.

Following are things to keep in mind.

Food is fuel

Food is central to Ayurveda because what we put into our bodies ultimately builds our tissues and provides the fuel for life. For this reason, Ayurveda favors “super foods” that are full of vital life energy, or prana. These foods include vibrant organic fruits and vegetables, high-quality grains and oils, and other whole foods.

The body knows

We need to learn how to pay attention to our body’s signals and notice which foods make us feel healthy and alive, and which foods make us feel unhealthy, tired, or out of sorts.

We are what we digest

As Ayurveda teaches, we are not what we eat—we are what we are able to digest. When our digestive fire is strong, we are able to completely digest everything we ingest, creating physical and emotional health. But when our digestion is weak, the undigested residue (ama) lodges in our cells and tissues, leading to imbalance and illness

The doshic clock

When we eat can be as important as what we eat. We need to eat our biggest meal at noontime when our digestion is strongest. Then in the evening when our body is preparing for rest and rejuvenation, a light meal is best.

Dosha-balancing foods

We need to be aware of our dosha type and eat foods that keep our doshas in balance.

The six tastes

Including the six tastes in our meals helps to balance our doshas and cultivate health.

ORAC values

Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity (ORAC) value is a measure of the antioxidant power of a food.

The six tastes influence emotions

overindulging in the six tastes can affect our emotional state. The following chart is a helpful summary of these effects:

TASTE	EFFECT OF OVERINDULGENCE
Sweet (<i>Madhura</i>)	Overattachment, possessiveness
Sour (<i>Amia</i>)	Envy, jealousy, anger
Salty (<i>Lavana</i>)	Greed, overweening, ambition
Bitter (<i>Tikta</i>)	Resentment, sorrow
Pungent (<i>Katu</i>)	Hostility, violence, hatred
Astringent (<i>Kashya</i>)	Insecurity, fear, cynicism



Teaching eating with awareness

Mindful eating

In the final part of this class, you will be guiding your students in the benefits and practice of eating with awareness. You'll help them understand that how we eat is as important as what we eat.

What to say

Use these 15 key points to help guide your Mindful Eating discussion.

- 01.** Tell your students the benefits of mindful eating.

When we eat with awareness of our food, body, and sensations, we can extract the most nourishment—and enjoyment—from our meal. Eating consciously helps us to optimize our digestion and overall well-being.

- 02.** Introduce the basic principles of mindful eating.

We are going to go over some basic principles for preparing and eating meals with awareness. Here are the principles of mindful eating:

- 03.** Explain the importance of the eating environment.

Eat in a quiet, settled, comfortable environment. Eating food in a distracting environment diminishes your body's ability to digest what you have eaten. It also may lead you to overeat. So, during your meals, turn off the TV, cell phone, and other screens, and put away reading material. Let yourself enjoy your meals and have a full-sensory experience.

- 04.** Challenge your students' understanding of mealtime.

As we were growing up, many of us learned that we should eat our meals at specific times; however, eating when you are not hungry is like trying to fill your car with gas when it is already full.

- 05.** Explain the connection between emotions and digestion.

Food is not the ideal way to calm emotional turbulence. Instead, take a walk or do something else to nourish yourself. Once you are calm again, check in with yourself to see if you are physically hungry before eating.

06. Encourage your students to sit down while they eat.

Always sit down to eat. Eating while you are driving in your car doesn't count. When you sit down to eat, you put your attention on the act of eating rather than dividing it among other activities.

07. Remind your students to practice gratitude.

Take a moment to be grateful for all of the human beings and elements of nature that have contributed to the meal on your plate.

08. Encourage them to slow down.

Take your time. Eat at a pace that allows you to savor your meals and lets your body know when you've eaten enough. Slowing down and chewing your food well allows the first stage of digestion to occur with the teeth and salivary enzymes.

09. Explain the importance of food's temperature.

Avoid ice-cold foods and beverage with meals. Our digestive system evolved over millions of years and is designed to process foods best at body temperature. The taste buds become numb when we drink or eat ice cold food, making us less discriminating about what goes into our mouths. It also dilutes our digestive acids. Try taking small sips of warm water instead of a glass of ice-cold water.

10. Point out the importance of eating freshly prepared foods.

Fresh foods have greater nutritional value and prana than leftovers or foods that have been canned or frozen for long periods of time. So, whenever you can, choose freshly prepared meals made with healthy ingredients.

In addition, be aware of where your food came from and how it was treated before it got to your plate. Minimize food that has been treated with chemicals, hormones, antibiotics, or eating animals that were not ethically treated. This is all part of mindful eating.

11. Remind your students to include all six tastes in every meal.

Prepare meals that contain the sweet, salty, sour, pungent, bitter, and astringent tastes, while favoring those tastes that are balancing to your dosha.

12. Explain the time between meals is just as important as mealtime.

Wait until one meal is fully digested before eating the next. It takes approximately six hours for food to be digested.

13. Introduce the appetite scale.

Think of your appetite as a fuel gauge with a scale of 1–10, where 1 means that you are famished, 2–3 means that you are hungry, 4–6 means that you are satisfied or comfortable, 7–9 means that you are uncomfortably full, and 10 is a totally stuffed state.

Eat only when you reach a level of 2 to 3 on the appetite gauge and stop eating when you reach a level of 6 to 7.

This requires being sensitive to your body. If you have a feeling of lightness and no longer taste or feel the effects of your last meal, the chances are you are genuinely hungry.

14. Tell your students when to stop.

Leave one third of your stomach empty to aid digestion. If you've ever stuffed your washing machine so tightly with clothes that it had trouble doing its job, you know what your stomach feels like when you overeat. The stomach liquefies the food through a churning action that requires space to function.

15. Explain what to do when mealtime is over.

Sit quietly for a few minutes after finishing your meal. Focus your attention on the sensations in your body, and then take a short walk.

Eating with awareness activity (optional)

Experience eating with awareness

This may be a good time to shift gears and guide students in an exercise to experience eating with awareness. As with the six tastes activity, this is optional; if you choose to include it, it can be taught either in person or virtually.

If in person, you may choose to use the same foods you brought in for the six tastes exercise. Give one sample of food to each student.

If virtually, suggest your students have a piece of fruit or another healthy snack ready.

What to say

Use the 9-step script below for the mindful eating exercise. (The script can be used for either in-person or a virtual activity.)

01. Introduce the activity.

For the next few minutes, we are going to do an exercise, which calls for your one-pointed attention on the act of eating.

02. Give students a sample or piece of food.

Please make sure you have a piece of food in front of you.

03. Invite your students to close their eyes.

Please close your eyes.

04. Invite them to find a moment of silence.

Acknowledge in your heart that eating is a sacred act. In order to sustain our lives, we must take something each day from outside ourselves and bring it inside, making it a part of us for a while.

Starting each meal with a moment of silence reminds us of this remarkable alchemical process.

Wait 20-seconds before moving on.

05. Ask them to mindfully open their eyes.

Please open your eyes now and look at your food. Notice its color, its shape, its texture. What do you think the food will taste like? Will it be sour? Sweet? Will it be crunchy or soft?

Let your eyes anticipate the taste of the food and notice how your body responds.

Notice your desire to eat the food. Are you physically hungry? Is your mouth watering? Is your body ready to accept this food?

Wait a few moments to allow your experience the thoughts and sensations that arise.

06. Ask them to use all of their senses before mindfully eating the food.

Bring the food to your lips. Touch your lips with it. Smell the aroma of the food.

Now gently allow your teeth and lips to bite into the food. Delight in its textures as it enters your mouth.

What is the first flavor you can detect? Are there any other flavors hiding underneath that flavor?

Wait a few moments to allow your students to reflect on the experience.

07. Guide your students to expand their awareness of the experience.

Listen to the sound of your chewing. Feel the sensation of your saliva mixing with the food, making it a part of you. Close your eyes and experience the full range of sensory input.

As you swallow the food, try to follow it with your mind as it passes down the back of your throat into your stomach. How far can you follow it down?

08. Invite your students to reflect.

Do you feel full after having swallowed that bite? Is there a desire for another bite?

09. Invite them to take another bite.

Go ahead. We will continue eating in this way for a few minutes.

Wait 2-minutes before continuing.

Note: Ask students to share their experiences during the exercise, "What did you notice during the exercise?"

In our hectic world, mindful eating is sometimes challenging for people who have limited time in their day to sit and focus on their meals. At the workplace, people often have short or working lunches; at home, families can be on the run, going from one activity to the next. Therefore, your students may want to discuss ways that they can bring mindful eating into their busy lives.

They may even grumble a bit about their busy schedules when you encourage them to incorporate mindful eating. If this type of conversation arises, you can open up the discussion to the group, inviting them to imagine and share ways in which they can bring mindful eating into their daily routines and those of their families.

In general, at any time during the course, you can invite your students to offer ideas in answer to questions. Doing so will help your students feel even more engaged, while also enabling them to reinforce the knowledge that they are learning.

Very often, students provide each other with innovative approaches to applying the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda in a modern world.

Suggest to your students that they create one daily or weekly menu at home, based on their respective doshas and incorporating all six tastes. This is another way to reinforce their knowledge and help them actively embark on an Ayurvedic lifestyle.

Eating in silence activity

At-home exercise

Show your students a silent eating activity they can do at home.

What to say

Use the 9-step script below to explain the Eating in Silence Activity.

01. Introduce the activity.

Eating a meal in silence is a powerful way to tune in to the experience of eating and expand your awareness. This week, try eating at least one meal in total silence.

02. Explain what it means to eat in silence.

Eating a meal in silence means that you turn off your cell phone and the TV, putting away reading material and anything else that could distract you. It also means that you won't be engaging in conversations with other people. You really want to focus on the food in front of you and the nourishment that's coming into your body.

03. Tell them to tune in.

Before the meal, place your hand on your belly and gauge your appetite using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means that you are ravenous and 10 is the feeling of being completely stuffed. Also notice how you are feeling physically and emotionally.

04. Remind them to reflect on the food.

As you eat, consider where the food came from—where it was grown, who harvested the ingredients, how it got to your table, and who prepared the meal.

05. Start with the sense of sight.

Look at your plate and observe the colors. Are all the colors of the rainbow represented in your meal? Which colors are missing?

06. Tell them to explore the taste.

Also pay attention to the different tastes in your meal. Can you identify all six tastes of sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent?

07. Remind your students to use all six senses.

Notice what effect the food is having on your body. Also pay attention to your other senses, noticing the aromas and textures of the food.

08. Explain what to do after the meal.

After the meal, tune in to your appetite gauge and emotions once again.

09. Remind them to reflect.

After the meal, tune in to your appetite gauge and emotions once again.

Using attention to enliven your health

Transformation through practice

Now, you'll let your students know that while you hope that this class has been informational, information alone does not produce transformation.

What to say

Use the following 7 talking points to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Give your students some practical practices they can incorporate right away.

What will change your life and your experiences is putting what you learn into practice. Here are a few practices to integrate into your daily routine throughout the coming week.

- 02.** Suggest they eat one meal in silence.

During the following week, eat at least one meal in total silence. Afterwards, write down how you felt, physically and emotionally, during the experience.

- 03.** Encourage your students to practice eating with awareness.

Review the mindful eating practices every day before each meal. Notice which ones you practice spontaneously, and which ones require more attention.

- 04.** Invite your students to tune in before and after meals.

Be aware of your hunger and satiety levels at the beginning and end of each meal, using your internal appetite gauge.

- 05.** Create a six-taste meal.

Include all six tastes in your meals every day.

- 06.** Eat a multicolored diet.

Eat a variety of foods, focusing on including the rainbow of colors in your meals.

- 07.** Encourage your students to meditate.

Continue to meditate on a regular basis.

Our deepest human needs

Learn to teach Emotional Freedom

Ayurveda teaches that emotional well-being is essential to health. As a natural life force, emotions are intended to flow freely through our body/mind, then dissipate once we have fully experienced them and assimilated their valuable message. It sounds simple, yet many people struggle with emotions.

We may get stuck in feelings of sadness, regret, fear, or anger, unable to let go of the past. Or we may push certain emotions far below the surface of our awareness. Emotions that have been repressed don't go away. It takes a great deal of energy to push back feelings whose nature is to be expressed. Over time, this stored emotional pain, or ama, obstructs the flow of energy and information throughout our body/mind, depleting our vitality and creating symptoms of discomfort or dis-ease.

The good news is that no matter how long we have been accumulating emotional pain, our essential nature is balance, wholeness, and pure potential. As we release the toxic residue of past experiences, healing can occur.

The material in this session will help you guide your students to let go of emotional toxins that block the flow of energy and information throughout the body/mind so that they can experience their own infinite potential for health and well-being.

Topics and checklist

Class 3 topics

- Our Deepest Human Needs
- Conscious Communication
- Practices for Emotional Clearing

Checklist: What you'll need to get started

The following guidelines will help you prepare to teach Emotional Freedom.

- Pens for students
- Nonviolent Communication book (optional)
- Student Handouts from the Session 5 or Program Resources
- Computer and internet connection (if you are teaching virtually)
- Laptop, screen, projector, small table, and extension cords (optional if you are teaching in-person using a presentation deck, such as Power Point or Keynote)
- Dry erase board or flip chart with pens (optional)
- Tissues

Note: *You can use the PowerPoint templates you received to customize for your presentations.*

Overview of this class

- 01.** Explain Ayurveda's approach to:
 - Emotional well-being
 - The nature of our emotions
 - Our fundamental human needs
 - Biological responses to this needs
- 02.** Conscious communication for emotional well-being
- 03.** Emotional clearing process



Class 3
Teaching Emotional
Freedom

Introduction to the Emotional Freedom class

Welcome students

What to say

Use or modify the script below for your introduction.

Welcome back to the Chopra Health program.

Before we get started with today's lesson, which focuses on emotional freedom, are there any questions about what we covered last time?

Note: You may also wish to ask your students if they have any questions in general.

This part of the class should last no more than 5–7 minutes.

Sometimes, when a group reconvenes, students are hesitant to open up at the start of class, especially those who may have questions about previous information.

One way to get everyone engaged and break the ice is to ask a few questions that require answers. As an example, when you ask if anyone has questions about the previous class, if you receive no response, you can offer a chance for the students to share ideas and what they know.

Consider asking questions like, “Who tried a technique that we discussed last class, and how did it go?” If you ask open-ended, rather than yes-or-no, questions, then you’re more likely to encourage participation throughout the class.

If time permits, you can also provide a brief review of the last class for those who may have missed it or need a quick refresher.

Emotional Freedom class overview

Provide a class overview

What to say

Use or modify these 2 talking points for the Emotional Freedom class overview.

- 01.** Give your students an idea of what you'll be covering in this class.

In today's class, we'll be discussing emotional freedom, including the Ayurvedic perspective on emotional well-being, happiness, our core emotional needs, the nature of emotions, the seven biological responses, conscious communication, and other practices for emotional clearing.

- 02.** Then tell your students how you're going to start this class.

We are going to begin with some basic movement (five minutes, optional) and a meditation.

Emotional well-being

introduce the concept of emotional well-being

What to say

Use the following 5 talking points to help guide your discussion. Examples are provided, but you can modify the script to make it your own.

01. Introduce emotional well-being as a fundamental pillar of health.

Ayurveda recognizes that emotional well-being is one of the fundamental pillars of health. It's just as important as optimal nutrition, restful sleep, a daily meditation practice, mindful movement, and living in harmony with our biological rhythms.

02. Explain the body/mind connection.

As we have been exploring, Ayurveda offers a valuable approach to emotional and physical health—a holistic perspective that recognizes that the two are, in fact, inseparable.

The Ayurvedic physicians of 5,000 years ago knew something that has now been verified by modern science: the mind, including our thoughts, emotions, and desires, is inextricably connected to our body. At the deepest level, they are one indistinguishable unit—a river of intelligence shaped by our choices, experiences, reactions, and beliefs.

03. Talk about how emotions work.

Our body/mind is deeply affected by our emotions. Chemical messages tell every cell how we feel. In its own way, a cell can be happy or sad, agitated or content, worried or calm.

04. Describe how the body responds to fear.

When you feel fear or anxiety, your body responds with the fight-flight-freeze response, which raises your heart rate and increases the production of cortisol, adrenaline, and other stress hormones.

05. Then describe how the body responds to positive emotions.

On the other hand, when you experience emotions such as joy, gratitude, and compassion, you induce the relaxation response and promote self-healing and balance in your body/mind.

When you begin to talk about emotions and emotional situations, some students may experience uncomfortable feelings. Sometimes, a member of the group may feel compelled to share a painful story. If such a scenario presents itself, do your best to hold space for that individual, keeping in mind that you want to stay on track.

Here's what we suggest to keep the class moving forward:

- 01.** Validate the person's feelings.
- 02.** Thank the individual for sharing.
- 03.** Let the group know that everyone will be learning important strategies to address situations much like that one throughout this lesson.

This lesson and the practices are intended to help anyone understand and release emotions related to our common emotional experiences. There are people who may have had experiences that have left deep emotional trauma and may need additional support or professional care to fully release those emotions and heal.

Note: *If someone in class expresses experiences of trauma be sure to recommend more professional support.*

Happiness

Guide a discussion on happiness

We all share a desire to be happy, but most people believe that the circumstances or the people in their lives have to change before they can finally be happy.

You can ask your students to raise their hands if their efforts to change the people, situations, and events in their lives have led to enduring happiness.

What to say

Use the following 7 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Provide some background.

From the time we are small children, most of us are taught to seek happiness, fulfillment, and approval in external sources. From very early on, we start to identify happiness with our accomplishments, our positions or titles, and our possessions. This is known as "happiness for a reason."

02. Give your students an example.

We say, "I'm happy because I have family and friends. I'm happy because I got a promotion. I'm happy because I'm going on vacation," and so on.

03. Challenge the "happiness for a reason" approach.

There are many problems inherent in this approach.

The first is that no amount of status, power, money, or worldly belongings is capable of satisfying our deepest longing for inner peace.

The second problem is that even if we do derive some temporary pleasure from these external sources, they are sure to fade over time, causing us to experience feelings of sadness and disappointment.

04. Introduce a solution—another kind of happiness.

The second kind of happiness—true joy—is an internal state of awareness that allows us to be happy for no reason at all. It is independent of the circumstances, events, people, and things in our lives.

This happiness comes from the realization that our true self isn't our body, thoughts, emotions, personality, possessions, accomplishments, relationships, or any other time-bound experience.

Our true self is pure, unbounded consciousness, also known as the field of all possibilities. The attributes of this field include happiness, love, timelessness, compassion, creativity, wisdom, silence, and grace.

05. Remind your students that Ayurveda opens the door to lasting happiness.

The practices of Ayurveda, including meditation and yoga, help us to experience this field of consciousness and the happiness that already exists within us.

The reconnection to our source of happiness can help us lighten the load of past traumas and negative emotional experiences. We can bring different perspective to our past experiences that allow us to integrate past experiences, heal, and thrive.

06. Then move on to define object-referral.

Finding our identity—and happiness—in our relationships, work, accomplishments, possessions, personality, and body is known as object referral. This means that we identify with objects outside of ourselves. By their very nature, these objects are always changing, and as long as we tie our identity to them, we will never know our true unlimited self.

We may feel happy when things go our way, but we will always feel an underlying current of instability or insecurity because part of us knows that the source of our good feelings can disappear at any moment.

07. Now describe self-referral.

The opposite of object referral is self-referral, which means that we identify with our inner self, the unchanging essence of our soul. Self-referral is an internal state of well-being that doesn't depend on external circumstances.

The needs of human beings

Basic human needs discussion

What to say

Use the following 8 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Start with Maslow's hierarchy of human needs.

The great American psychologist Abraham Maslow is best known for his theory of the hierarchy of human needs. The first level of needs is for food, water, oxygen, shelter, and the protection we need to survive.

02. Introduce the four As of emotional well-being.

Beyond these essential needs, we have four fundamental emotional needs for:

1. Attention
2. Affection
3. Appreciation
4. Acceptance

03. Explain that all emotions come from these fundamental needs.

All of our emotions derive from our fundamental human needs, including our need for attention (deep listening), affection (deep caring), appreciation (noticing a person's natural gifts), and acceptance (seeing and accepting someone exactly as they are).

04. Now tell your students the two primary emotions.

At the most fundamental level, we have the capacity for only two basic emotional experiences: comfort and discomfort.

Comfort encompasses feelings of contentment, joy, peace, love, and gratitude.

Discomfort includes feelings of frustration, distress, anger, fear, and sadness.

05. Make the connection between emotions and needs.

When we perceive that our physical and psychological needs are met, we feel comfort. When we perceive our needs are not met, we feel discomfort.

06. Explain to your students that repressing feelings of discomfort may have long-term consequences.

When we repress or ignore feelings of discomfort, we may eventually experience anxiety (anticipated pain), hostility (remembered pain), and/or guilt (redirected pain). This accumulated emotional pain can lead to depression and other illnesses.

07. Now teach the two potential responses to unmet needs.

There are two potential responses to unmet needs.

We can either react, which is an instinctual, conditioned, and learned behavior that is inherently limited.

Or we can respond, which implies being aware and having infinite, unlimited choices.

08. Wrap up.

The more skilled we become at meeting our needs, the more likely we are to feel comfortable, happy, and at peace. The practice of conscious communication and the other tools we will explore in this class will help you become skilled at identifying and meeting your needs.

Keep in mind that, as social beings, we do desire to have our emotional needs met within our relationships (object-referral), and we can also evolve to have our emotional needs met from within (self-referral). As our identity becomes more aligned with pure consciousness, as opposed to our ego selves, our perception of our needs being met begins to shift.

Note: *There are some important points in this section that students may need to have reinforced, such as:*

- The four fundamental emotional needs
- Two core emotional experiences

Group participation is one way to help them understand these concepts.

For example, you may want to ask your group to share some examples of how we can meet others and our own fundamental emotional needs. When have they felt acceptance? When have they not? They will begin to grasp the information with the help of one or two brief anecdotes.

When you address the core emotional experiences, participants may ask you why feelings like happiness, anger, and jealousy are not considered core emotional experiences. Explain to them that the two core emotional experiences are like containers for the common feelings they have mentioned.

Ask them to take a moment to feel those emotions in their bodies:

- Do they feel comfortable or uncomfortable when they think about them?
- When have they fully accepted themselves?
- When have they not?

Emotions like anger make us uncomfortable; anger goes into the “**discomfort**” container. Emotions like love and joy make us feel comfortable; love and joy belong in the “**comfort**” container

Another way to say the same thing:

There are only two mantras in life: “yum” and “yuck.”

~Tom Robbins

Yum and yuck clearly correspond to comfort and discomfort. Comfort feels expansive; discomfort feels constricting.

You can ask your students:

- Is anger yum or yuck?
- What about love?
- How do each of these emotional experiences feel in your body?

When the students look at feelings from this perspective, they tend to understand the concept much more readily.

Meet your emotions activity

Mindful awareness exercise

This is a good time to guide students in a mindful awareness exercise.

What to say

Use or modify the 12-step script below for the Meet Your Emotions Activity.

01. Introduce the activity.

Most of us did not receive formal instructions for our emotional lives. We learned by observing our parents, teachers, and other caregivers who may have had a primitive emotional skill set.

Depending on our family and culture, we might have learned that it was bad to feel and express some emotions, such as anger, fear, or even joy. On the other hand, our parents may have been wonderful teachers who encouraged us to express and communicate our feelings.

Whether our emotional inheritance was dysfunctional or nurturing, we can develop a healthy relationship with our emotions and become skilled at expressing our needs and desire. To do this, we need to practice.

02. Invite your students to close their eyes.

Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Become aware of your physical body.

03. Begin the activity by tuning into the body.

Take a moment to tune into your body. What are you feeling right now?

04. Encourage your students to give the feeling a label.

Give it a one-word label. Is it joy, sadness, anxiety, gratitude, or exhaustion?

05. Feel the emotion in the body.

They're called feelings because we feel them in our body.

06. Remind your students that emotions stem from needs.

The next step is to realize that all emotions derive from needs. We feel comfort, happiness, and pleasure when we are getting our needs met. We feel discomfort, distress, and pain when we are not.

07. Encourage curiosity.

If you are feeling a sensation of discomfort right now, ask yourself, “What need do I have right now that is not being met?”

Wait 20 seconds.

08. Listen for an answer.

Be patient with yourself and let the answer come to you.

Again, give your students 20 seconds to let the answers come to them.

09. Invite students to describe the unmet need.

Again, try to describe your unmet need in one or two words. Some of our common human needs include safety, belonging, trust, acceptance, appreciation, attention, affection, creative expression, and a sense of purpose.

Wait 20 seconds.

10. Ask your students to open their eyes.

Please open your eyes.

Wait a few moments, then look around the room (or at your virtual screen) to see when most of your students have opened their eyes.

11. Let your students know it’s okay to ask for help.

When you get clear on what you are feeling and what you need, if anything, you can then take action to get that need met, including asking for help.

This is a powerful step—and much more effective than the common strategy of expecting other people to figure out what we need without our having to ask for it.

12. Reflect and wrap up.

You may also discover that what you need isn’t something from someone else, but something you need to give yourself, such as more sleep, better self-care, an outlet for creative expression, or self-acceptance and self-compassion.

Emotions and the dosha types

Dosha influences on emotions

It's time to teach your students about the doshas and emotions.

What to say

Use the following 5 talking points to help guide your discussion. Bring in your own examples.

01. Explain to your students that the doshas influence emotional reactions.

All of the dosha types can experience every kind of emotion because we all have all three doshas within us. However, each dosha type has a tendency to experience particular emotions when their needs are not met.

02. Describe the emotional tendencies of Vata dosha.

Vata types have a propensity to react to unmet needs with feelings of anxiety, fear, worry, and guilt. They are likely to blame themselves for the situation and wonder what they did wrong.

03. Continue with Pitta.

Pitta types tend to feel angry or hostile when their fundamental needs aren't met. They can easily become sarcastic, aggressive, or threatening. They are prone to blame others for the situation and may want to seek revenge or "get even."

04. Keep going with Kapha.

Kapha types are likely to become sad and discouraged in the face of unmet needs. They may become stubborn, moody, or indifferent. Their tendency is to ignore the situation and withdraw.

05. Wrap up.

We are not destined to react to unmet needs according to our doshic propensities.

As we become more aware and skilled at getting our needs met, and when we keep our doshas in balance, we can learn to respond to challenging situations with greater grace and calm, rather than reacting in counterproductive ways.



Emotions and Ayurveda

Although you've already explained to your group that emotional well-being is a pillar of good health, your students may not immediately understand the specific role emotions play in Ayurveda.

This section, then, is critical to showing how important emotional health is in Ayurveda. One way to make this connection is to emphasize the fact that ama consists of both physical and emotional toxins.

In fact, the inability to digest emotional experiences produces just as much toxic residue in the body as undigested food. When we are burdened with pent-up resentment, hostility, regret, or grievances, our health and vitality are eroded, and can even lead to physical illness.

When you discuss the doshas and emotions, it's important to emphasize that a particular emotion or reaction isn't the exclusive domain of one dosha type.

- Vata types, for instance, can become worried or anxious.
- Pitta types may have moments of hostility.
- Kapha types may seem stubborn.

We want the students to be aware of the emotional tendencies of the dosha types, but we also want to emphasize that these are flexible guidelines.

This is also a good opportunity to remind students that even though we have a predominance of one or two doshas in our mind-body constitution, each of us is a combination of all the doshas and can experience feelings across the entire emotional spectrum.

In Ayurveda, as well as the yoga traditions, there is an emphasis placed on cultivating a balanced mind by having daily practices that increase sattva in the mind. When we have a sattvic lifestyle, the mind becomes light, pure, clear, and there is a balance of rajas (overactivity of the mind) and tamas (inflexibility in our thinking).

In addition, through sattvic practices (practices that increase sattva), we are able to experience the most balanced expression of the doshas in the mind. Practices such as:

- Meditation
- Pranayama
- Eating pure, natural, plant-based foods
- Cultivating positive thoughts and emotions such as gratitude, compassion, and empathy

The seven biological responses

Biology and needs response

Now it's time to make the connection between biology and how we respond to needs. Keep in mind that some of the terms and ideas may be new to students. Be prepared for questions.

What to say

Use or modify the 8 talking points to guide your discussion. Examples are provided but bring in personal stories and examples.

01. Introduce the seven biological responses.

The seven biological responses are a map of our behavior, ranging from the most primitive reaction to the most evolved response. Here is a summary of the responses.

02. Explain the fight-flight-freeze response.

Fight-flight-freeze is a response based on fear and the perception that our environment is threatening. It is an ancient, primitive response, grounded in the survival instinct—serving to keep the body protected.

In the fight-flight-freeze response, our heart beats faster, blood pressure rises, breathing is more rapid, adrenaline increases, and our immune system is suppressed.

03. Continue with the reactive response.

The reactive response is the psychological equivalent of the fight-flight-freeze response.

Emotions are in the domain of the ego, and when ego boundaries are crossed, uncomfortable feelings are generated. As opposed to protecting the body from physical harm, the response attempts to protect the ego identity and results in the same physiological effects.

Criticism and anger are psychological versions of the fight response. Withdrawal and pouting are versions of the flight response. Shutting down and sulking are versions of the freeze response.

The vast majority of human beings use only the first two responses on a daily basis. However, human beings have been given the incredible gift of choice and free will. While our perception of, and responses to, unmet needs can be automatic and based on the instinct to survive, we have the ability to shift our ego-based internal reference point to a soul-based one.

04. Move on to the restful awareness response.

The restful awareness response has been available for thousands of years. It is elicited through the practice of meditation, which provides the technology to expand our internal reference point from ego to soul.

When we begin to witness the activity of the mind, we become capable of conscious choice-making. It is in this response that our biology shifts into the relaxation response and a sense of comfort. Thus, meditation is the doorway to access the more evolved biological responses more and more in our daily lives.

05. Keep going and describe the intuitive response.

Deep within us is a wise, knowing being, which we can access when we go beyond our noisy internal dialogue and live in present moment awareness through meditation and mindful awareness practices. In this awareness, we can more easily observe the emotions arising within us rather than remaining stuck in past-laden assessments and evaluations.

Coming from the intuitive response, we avoid using words that encourage victimization. We notice when we are coming from interpretation and choose to come from conscious observation and authentic expression. We become more self-empowered as we identify with our true nature and take responsibility for our emotional state. This gives us the ability to consciously communicate more easily.

06. Explain the creative response.

Creativity is the process of applying a new context or meaning to a situation or a circumstance, thereby allowing something to manifest that has not been seen before. The solution to a problem is rarely found on the level of the problem. Novel solutions can emerge when you approach a challenge by going beyond the noisy thought loops of your mind and looking within. Expanding your perspective, and your identity, enables you to see the challenge in a new light and come up with creative solutions.

07. Describe the visionary response.

Every one of us is living a mythological life. We have the potential to be gods and goddesses by living from the collective soul level and tuning in to the realm of collective dreams.

The visionary response reflects our connection with this archetypal realm and enables us to more consciously participate in the story of our lives. The great leaders and figures of history have recognized and given their lives to a vision of what is possible. When our identity expands to include all archetypes, we can write the story that we desire. We are less bound by the limits of our ego-identity.

08. Share the sacred response.

When our sense of self expands, we ultimately go beyond constricted ego-based awareness altogether to the recognition of self in the object of our perception. At this level of unity consciousness, compassion is a natural expression. We transcend our unconscious obsession with “what’s in it for me” and dwell in “how can I be of service?” We realize we are all made of the same essence and are points of perspective in universal being. When we identify as One with everything around us, we completely let go of fear and live constantly in a state of calm and peace, in mind and body.

Like waves on the ocean, each of us is an individual expression of the one non-local spirit.

Clarifying the biological responses

The seven biological responses are very important and also somewhat complex. For some students, the responses can seem to overlap, which can be confusing for students who are learning about them for the first time.

To clarify each biological response, it’s helpful to compare them and explain their differences. For example, you can compare fight-flight-freeze and its physical manifestations to the reactive response and its correlating psychological responses.

You can also point out that the sacred response is rooted in an idea of unity and service, but that the reactive response emerges from a sense of separation and the belief that a psychological threat is out there.

It is also useful to have a real-world scenario prepared for each response. With the visionary response, provide modern-day archetypal models to illustrate the concept of “gods and goddesses.” Share your own archetypes and what qualities you want to embody. With the creative response, you can ask the group to share examples of times that they looked at a situation in a new light and found a better, more creative solution.

It is good to reiterate the importance of regular meditation and mindful awareness practices to ‘unlock’ the higher biological responses over time in our daily lives. Also, it is not hierarchical, and most of us will go back and forth between these responses at various times but shifting our identity to witnessing awareness allows us to sustain the more evolved responses, and a healthier biology, over time. We can see what is possible in our lives.

Overall, if you can engage the group in conversation, the students will begin to internalize these concepts much more quickly. As they generate their own ideas and examples of the response, under your guidance, they will see them as experiences they are having in their everyday lives.

Our needs: The heart of emotions

Dive deeper

Conscious communication

Helping your students learn the emotional freedom skills in this lesson allows them to develop their emotional skill set.

Often times, we succumb to unconscious emotional patterns. We demonstrate the primitive love skills we may have learned by observing our parents, siblings, and caregivers, who may or may not have been competent at managing and expressing their emotions. As a result, the same patterns may be repeated generation after generation.

Evolutionary expressions of emotional needs

AS a consequence of our childhood dependency on our parents, we tend to model ourselves after them. If your parents, like so many, had their own emotional traumas, experienced emotional challenges, and were not taught how to deal with emotions in a healthy way, you will likely have challenges meeting your emotional needs as an adult. Although people spend countless hours in therapy and counseling, seeking to figure out why they are who they are, having an intellectual understanding of why you are anxious or unhappy may not translate into feeling better.

By becoming more conscious of the principles and patterns that drive emotional responses, you can learn to recognize and express your feelings in healthier ways, expanding your sense of self and your repertoire of responses. The fruit of this effort is wholeness, freedom, and more nourishing relationships.

Bringing awareness to emotions

Emotions are physical sensations associated with thoughts in your mind. They are an essential body/mind experience. How you identify yourself, what you are thinking, and ultimately how you feel determine the priorities and choices you make from moment to moment. Your choices reinforce your view of yourself and others, while your emotions provide the signals that alert you when your sense of self is being challenged or reinforced.

For some people, their identity and self-image are closely tied to their physical body. Their highest priorities may be working out at the fitness club, having the most fashionable hairstyle, wearing the most stylish clothing, and following what they believe is the best diet. Any perceived threat to their sense of physical identity (someone criticizes the way they look, for example) generates discomfort.

Other people may primarily identify themselves in terms of their job title, position, or career. Their attention is focused on achieving the goals they have set for themselves. If they perceive a threat to their role, such as the potential loss of a job, being passed over for a promotion, or losing a case, their body/mind system produces feelings of distress. For others, their identity is based predominantly on their set of beliefs. They may experience discomfort if their core tenets are challenged (for instance, if someone disparages their religion or political views).

You can and do shift your principal sense of identity in any given moment and throughout your life, mobilizing emotional and physical responses when you perceive the need to protect your sense of self.

What you decide is 'yours' (e.g., your diet, your style, your position, your personal views) determines what you feel you need to defend. Threats that challenge the boundaries of your identity generate sensations that attract your attention. These sensations are your emotions or feelings.

The two primary emotions

Emotions are the messages your body sends to your mind from your boundaries of self-identity. When something or someone makes contact with your skin, which is the boundary of your physical self, nerve fibers send you a message of either comfort (a loving caress) or discomfort (stepping on a tack).

In a similar way, as your emotional boundaries are approached, you receive signals of comfort (someone compliments you) or discomfort (someone criticizes you). A signal of comfort usually encourages you to move towards the source of stimulation, while a signal of discomfort persuades you to move away from it. We can express these poles of emotions in different ways: comfort and discomfort.

COMFORT	DISCOMFORT
Pleasure	Pain
Happiness	Sadness
Love	Fear
Relief	Distress

Whether or not you are consciously aware of it, every decision you make is based upon the expectation that your choice will generate more comfort, or at least less discomfort. And this decision is typically based on past experiences, memories, or beliefs.

This is true whether you are choosing a partner, a job, or a brand of toothpaste. You may be willing to endure short-term discomfort with the expectation that the longer-term payoff will be worth it, as when you step up your fitness routine to lose a few pounds, or cram for an exam because you want to go to graduate school.

In the end, it is the expectation of greater comfort, pleasure, or happiness that drives all of our choices.

The pleasure/pain principle

Although every one of us is driven by the pleasure/pain principle, that which generates comfort or discomfort is different for each person. If you like strawberry shortcake, eating it for dessert will bring you pleasure. On the other hand, if you are allergic to strawberries, the same experience will generate feelings of distress. Some people thrive on the exhilaration of a roller coaster while others wouldn't take a ride even if they were paid.

To begin bringing our unconscious emotional patterns into conscious awareness, we need to ask ourselves a critical question:

What determines whether I interpret an experience as comfortable or uncomfortable?

The inevitable first answer is likely to be "prior experiences." It is, of course, true that past experiences influence our responses. If you were taken care of by a nurturing, Hungarian nanny when you were a child, you learned to associate her accent with kindness. As an adult, when you meet people from Hungary, you are predisposed to anticipate kindness from them. On the other hand, if you had childhood piano lessons with a harsh, demanding, abusive teacher from Hungary, hearing someone speak with that familiar accent might elicit anxiety in you today.

However, while past experiences influence our present perceptions, we do not have to be constricted or confined to conditioning or emotional Pavlovian dogs. We can go beyond our habitual thought patterns and make new life-supporting choices.

The wise use memories but do not allow memories to use them.

~Ancient Vedic expression

All emotions derive from needs

Here is the question again: What determines whether we interpret an experience as comfortable or uncomfortable?

If past experience is not the whole story, we have to look to the present, which means that we have to listen to our body. Remember, emotions are sensations in the body associated with thoughts in the mind. From the perspective of our body, our feelings of comfort or discomfort are primitive.

- When our needs are getting met, we feel comfort, happiness, and pleasure.
- When our needs are not getting met, we feel distress, sadness, and pain.

All emotions derive from needs. All emotions derive from needs. All emotions derive from needs.

Repeat this sentence to yourself like a mantra until you grasp the profound simplicity of this insight. When you do, you will possess a vital healing tool: the ability to nurture your emotional well-being.

Conscious communication

The 5-step process to communicate consciously

In the next part of this class, you will be guiding your students in the practice of conscious communication and a journaling activity.

What to say

Use the following 10 talking points to help guide your discussion. After we discuss the steps, you will be provided specific examples in which you can use these communication steps but do your best to make this part your own.

01. Make the connection between communication and emotions.

A great deal of the emotional pain we experience comes from the way we communicate, both to others and to ourselves.

For example, if we have a tendency to dislike conflict, we may not say anything when someone does something that bothers us. As we push down our true feelings and needs, our resentment grows.

On the other hand, we may be comfortable with conflict and easily express how we feel—yet we let our anger and sarcasm flow so freely that we end up hurting or even destroying our relationships.

The ability to communicate consciously can create more harmonious relationships. This is more easily accomplished when we are not stuck in fight-flight-freeze responses.

02. Explain the health risks of suppressed emotions.

As you have learned, suppressed feelings and emotions are emotional ama, and over time, can lead to depression, insomnia, and other physical and mental disorders.

03. Describe the benefits of expressing feelings.

The more directly and consciously we can communicate, the greater the likelihood that we will get our needs met and enjoy healthy, fulfilling relationships with other people.

Learning to communicate consciously and compassionately also reduces stress and increases our emotional well-being.

04. Introduce the work of Marshall Rosenberg.

Today we are going to learn a powerful practice of conscious communication based on the work of psychologist Marshall Rosenberg, the author of Nonviolent Communication.

05. Provide an overview of the 5-step conscious communication process.

When you've experienced an emotional upset, you can use this process to gain clarity about how you feel, identify what you need, and take responsibility to consciously communicate your needs to another person. It also helps you understand other people's needs. Here's a summary of the 5-step process.

06. Start with Step 1.

What happened? Coming into present moment awareness, describe the situation that has triggered your emotional upset. Avoid evaluating and judging. Simply state the facts of what happened, as though you were an objective reporter. When you regularly meditate and practice mindful awareness, you are cultivating the ability to be an objective witness to your experiences.

07. Move on to Step 2.

What am I feeling? Describe how you feel, choosing words that describe core emotions such as sad, angry, or lonely rather than words that reinforce a sense of victimization, such as rejected, betrayed, or belittled. This 'victimizing' language is how the ego mind would describe how you feel. Non-victimizing language is more empowering as you take responsibility for your own emotions.

This method applies to most of our typical relationships and experiences, however, there are often times when our personal safety and security boundaries have actually been crossed in a traumatic experience, and in these situations, it may feel most appropriate to use these terms. Just try to find the words that truly describe your feelings around an experience.

08. Explain Step 3.

What do I need that I'm not receiving? Identify what you need in this situation with as much clarity as you can. Consider the four fundamental human needs of attention, affection, acceptance, and appreciation.

Also, if you have experienced significant trauma, you may need more in-depth support and tools and some of the practices we discuss may not be the right ones for you.

09. Continue with Step 4.

What am I asking for? Identify the specific behaviors or actions that would fulfill your needs. Then surrender to the wisdom of uncertainty, allow yourself to be vulnerable, and ask for what you need.

Observe the response of the other person from a state of calm witnessing awareness. Remember that a request is not a demand, and you may not receive what you're asking for. However, using this process greatly increases the likelihood that you, and the person you are communicating with, will feel more comfort and less emotional distress.

10. Wrap up with Step 5.

What is the gift or opportunity in this situation? Regardless of the outcome of the situation, it's important to look deeply at the experience and consider what you've learned and gained from engaging in the conscious communication process. This does not mean that all of our requests will be fulfilled, however, we have the best chance to have our needs met without creating more turmoil in the relationship.

Note: *This section may raise a number of questions from the group because, for many of them, this information may be new. This presents another opportunity to provide a real-world scenario that serves as an example. Like David Simon, MD said, "Our language doesn't just describe our reality, it creates our reality."*

Conscious communication activity

Activity scenario

You will offer a scenario to the group and then ask for input on each step.

One student can tell you what happened, another can identify the feelings, and so on throughout the exercise. Sharing an example everyone can relate to and inviting the group to walk through the steps will put the process into action and help reinforce the information.

What to say

Use or modify the 8-step script below for the group participation discussion.

- 01.** Choose a scenario that everyone can relate to.

Let's walk through an example together.

- 02.** Ask your students to bring an example to the forefront of their mind.

Bring to mind a time you wanted more attention from a friend, partner, or family member.

- 03.** Ask your students to describe what happened.

Describe what happened, being as objective as possible. Just outline the facts as if you were an outside observer.

For example, "My partner and I never spend time together," is less useful than saying "My partner agreed to come home for dinner at 7 p.m. and didn't come home from work until 8:30."

Encourage your students to share with the group.

04. Teach your students how to identify and describe their feelings.

When describing your feelings, choose words that express the emotions you are experiencing, such as "I feel sad, lonely, or frustrated." Avoid words that reinforce a sense of victimization: "I feel neglected, betrayed, or rejected."

When you take responsibility for your emotions, you are informing rather than blaming the people in your life. Remember, it is not necessarily 'wrong' to use victimizing language, however it is describing your experience from an ego perspective and requires the other person to change something in order for you to not feel that way (object-referral). When you take responsibility for your internal emotional state, you have the power to change that yourself (self-referral).

Invite your students to share feelings they may have experienced.

05. Ask them to summarize their unmet need into a short sentence.

As infants, we had caregivers trying to figure out what we needed because we could not identify our needs and communicate them ourselves. As adults, we subconsciously expect our loved ones to know what we need and spontaneously provide it. This rarely happens. You are much more likely to prevent the scenario from happening again and to have your needs met when you identify them yourself.

In this scenario, recall the specific need. Then, summarize it into a short sentence, such as, "When you come home at 8:30 instead of 7:00, I feel lonely and sad (or frustrated because I would like to spend more time with you.)"

Give your students an opportunity to share their unmet needs with the group.

06. Invite your students to practice their communication skills.

What specific behaviors or actions would fulfill your needs?

For example, if you want more attention from your partner, do not ask him or her to just spend more time with you; ask to take a walk after dinner, or to go to a movie on Saturday night.

Express your need in the form of a request rather than a demand. We all have an inherent impulse to resist demands, whereas our self-esteem is raised when we are able to fulfill requests.

"When you come home late, I feel lonely and sad because I would like to spend more time with you. Can we find time to walk in the evenings or go to a movie on Saturday night?"

Invite your students to practice making a specific request for what they need.

07. Encourage your students to look for the gift.

No matter how the situation unfolds, it's important to look at the experience and reflect on what you've gained from engaging in the conscious communication process. This does not mean that all of our requests will be fulfilled, however, we have the best chance to have our needs met without creating more turmoil in the relationship.

What was the gift in this scenario? Ex: The gift was empowering yourself to take responsibility for your emotions and identify that you need attention. In addition, regardless of whether the request is met, you can now meet your need in other ways, such as giving yourself more attention through self-care, spending time with people who lift you up, or doing something special for yourself.

Ask your students if they would like to share the gift they received from the experience.

08. Wrap up.

Although using this process doesn't guarantee that you always get your needs met, it will substantially increase the likelihood that you will spend more time feeling comfortable and at ease and less time in emotional distress.

Conscious communication words

In your Session 5 and Program Resources, you will find a Conscious Communication Word Lists document that you can give your students. you will find a Conscious Communication Word Lists document that you can give your students. This document will also help you teach this process. You will find three lists:

- Words that express how we feel when our needs are being met.
- Words that express how we feel when our needs are not being met.
- Words that express feelings of victimization and are best avoided.

These subtle shifts in language can empower you to make choices to change your emotions, rather than focusing on the external circumstances outside of your control.

Healing the source of stress

Dive deeper

Chronic stress is a form of emotional upset that can take a toll on physical and emotional well-being.

As a growing body of research is finding, chronic stress is the underlying cause of many illnesses, including heart disease, depression, anxiety, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and some kinds of cancer. The good news is that stress isn't a force beyond our control. It doesn't exist outside of us in the environment or external situations. Stress is our perception of physical or psychological threats.

The perception of stress

It's not the traffic jam, looming deadline, or disagreement with our spouse that causes stress; it's our thoughts and the story we tell ourselves about these situations that create the emotional upset, racing heart rate, shallow breathing, surging adrenalin, and other symptoms of the stress response.

Consider how two people can perceive the same event, such as riding a roller coaster, in two very different ways.

One person may perceive roller coasters as an exciting adventure, plunging down the tracks in a tiny car suspended hundreds of feet in the air. It's an exhilarating, euphoric experience.

Another person may dislike heights or the feeling of being out of control, riding a roller coaster can be a terrifying event to be avoided at all costs.

Stress doesn't lie in the external event, but in our perception of it.

With our infinitely creative minds, we have the power to shift our interpretation of a situation. We have the power to:

- Find new value and enjoyment in something that previously frightened us
- Choose to let go of situations, habits, and relationships, and anything else that is draining us and preventing us from enjoying our natural state of happiness and well-being

What else can we do?

Meditate daily

A daily practice of meditation is one of the best ways to release accumulated stress and shift our perceptions of our experiences.

In meditation, we experience a state of restful alertness that expands our creativity, intuition, and joy. We cultivate a witnessing awareness that allows us to stand back from a potentially stressful situation and respond with awareness rather than reacting with stress and anxiety.

Journaling activity

Dive deeper

Here's a journaling activity you can share with your students. It can help your students release stress and emotional toxicity after a triggering event.

What to say

Use or modify the 8-step script below for the Journaling Activity.

- 01.** Begin by sharing the benefits of journaling with your students.

One of the best tools to reduce stress and release emotional toxicity is journaling. Studies have found that writing about stressful events improves both physical and psychological health. There are many theories about why journaling helps us reduce stress.

- 02.** Bring in the science.

According to some researchers, when we have an experience, we perceive as stressful, and we then ignore it or “stuff it”—or we obsess and ruminate about it—we activate the stress response in our body and mind. If we write about our experiences instead, we can process what happened, keeping only what serves us and letting go of the rest.

- 03.** Encourage your students to try journaling.

A regular journaling practice doesn't need to take a lot of time. By spending only a few minutes journaling, we can reduce the energy of stress in our body and improve our sleep, which is vital to our health.

- 04.** Give your students a few tips.

I suggest that you start your journaling with a recapitulation of your day—simply write down the events of your day as if you were an objective reporter looking through a video camera.

Don't attach interpretations or judgments to anything that occurred. If you felt a strong emotion related to an experience, it is fine to write that down, but detach from any judgment about the emotions that you felt.

The idea is to let the emotions go by observing and writing about them. This helps reduce any stress you may have experienced as you went about your activities. This should only take a few minutes.

05. Next, you'll ask your students to set an intention.

List three intentions for your life. For example: "I intend to increase my physical activity" or "I intend to love myself more."

06. Invite them to write a gratitude list.

Then, end the journaling session by writing down three things you are grateful for. It can be something very specific, such as "I am grateful for the delicious meal I enjoyed with friends today," or something more global, like "I am grateful for the beauty of nature."

The important thing is to bring that feeling of gratitude into your awareness, which will inherently reduce the feeling of stress. Notice how you feel when you journal on a regular basis.

07. Reinforce the power of journaling.

Although these practices may seem too simple to be the answer to reducing stress, I encourage you to begin adopting them into your daily life and experience the benefits yourself.

08. Wrap up.

The small amount of time invested in these easy practices, some of which take almost no time at all, will begin to transform your mind-body from a state of stress to a state of relaxation. Ultimately, when the mind and body are calm and we can detach from identifying with our ego-based stories, we are able to experience our underlying spiritual nature of happiness, wholeness, and bliss—and open to our full human potential.

For people who want to make sure that their private scribbles (or typing) aren't accidentally found or read by others, a ritual of shredding (or deleting) what was written is an excellent way of giving finality to the release of the stressors of the day.

You can suggest this to your students as a way to detach from what they wrote and begin anew the next day.

Practices for emotional clearing

Let go of emotional pain

In the final part of this class, you will teach your students an emotional clearing process for letting go of accumulated ama.

What to say

Use or modify the following 4 talking points to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Begin by emphasizing the importance of releasing past emotions.

When we are unable to completely digest and release an emotional experience, we store residues of unprocessed feelings within the psychological layer of our being our subtle body, and ultimately in the physical body.

- 02.** Next explain emotional ama.

This creates mental toxicity, or emotional ama—the toxic residue that builds up when something isn't completely metabolized. Eventually the accumulated ama begins to give us symptoms, either emotional or physical.

- 03.** Go over the signs and symptoms of ama.

Here are some of the signs of accumulated emotional toxicity:

- *Fatigue*
- *Lack of enthusiasm*
- *Emotional reactivity*
- *Irritability*
- *Depression*
- *Cynicism*
- *Inflammation*
- *Digestive symptoms*
- *Rashes*
- *Other physical symptoms*

04.Wrap up.

People and situations that trigger our emotional reactions provide an opportunity to identify and clear the residue of unprocessed emotional pain.

OK, so we've reviewed emotions, where they come from, how to gradually shift our perspective from ego to spirit, and how to identify and consciously communicate our emotions. We will still have emotions come up, as well as past emotions, traumas, and stories that we are holding onto, so what do we do? Let's talk about that now.

The seven steps of emotional clearing

Emotional clearing process

The next topic is an emotional clearing process to help release accumulated ama and experience happiness and well-being.

What to say

Use or modify the following 8 talking points to teach the Seven Steps of Emotional Clearing process.

01. Start with Step 1.

Step 1: Take responsibility for your emotions

Take responsibility for what you are feeling. When you find yourself reacting emotionally to other people, it is usually because they are reflecting some quality you have not fully acknowledged within your nature, or an experience that you have not fully digested and released. When you can accept responsibility for the emotions you are feeling and cease to be a bundle of conditioned reflexes, you will no longer be vulnerable to the opinions of every person you encounter. This applies to typical interactions, and may not apply in situations of trauma, but may be useful in those situations as well.

If you start to feel significant discomfort during an emotional release process, feel free to take a break and come back to it later. Sometimes this process can be overwhelming, especially when there has been trauma, and more time and assistance may be needed to fully process an experience.

02. Continue with Step 2.

Step 2: Identify the emotion

Identify what you are feeling. "I feel ____." Be as specific as possible. You may feel angry, sad, hurt, disappointed, empty, ashamed, confused, etc. As clearly as possible, describe what you are feeling.

03. Move on to Step 3.*Step 3: Witness the emotion*

Witness the feeling in your body. Emotions are thoughts in the mind associated with physical sensations. Our thoughts trigger bodily reactions, releasing chemicals that have a life of their own. The physiological expressions of stress cannot be instantaneously shut off. Rather, the energy of the emotion must be dissipated before we can move forward. Just observe the feeling. Allow your attention to embrace the sensation in your body. By simply experiencing the physical sensations, some of the emotional charge will dissipate, and you'll be able to hear the message the emotion is carrying.

04. Next, you'll teach Step 4.*Step 4: Express the emotion*

Express the emotion in private to yourself. You can write about your feelings or speak them out loud. Keep a journal just for this purpose. Allow memories of similar situations to come to the surface and write about them, too. Use language that accurately conveys what you are feeling. Allow yourself to express all you need to about the situation.

05. Give examples of Step 5.*Step 5: Release the emotion*

Release the emotion through some ritual. Physical movement is usually best for this. Go for a walk, bat a pillow, dance freely, do some gentle stretching or yoga, or do rapid breathing— anything that will help you discharge the emotion from your physiology. Allow your body to detoxify. Acknowledge the release of the emotion as you are doing the activity.

06. Make suggestions for Step 6.*Step 6: Share the emotion*

Share the emotion with a good listener. Choose someone who can listen empathetically to you without trying to solve your problem. Conscious listening is a skill that takes practice. If you do not know anyone who is a good listener, use a talking object, such as a stone, a feather, or a stick to remind yourself to speak honestly and openly.

07. Encourage your students to make time for Step 7.

Step 7: Rejuvenate

Do something nice for yourself. Get a massage, listen to music, buy yourself a present, eat a delicious meal—nourish yourself. It takes conscious awareness and a commitment to personal growth to go through the process described above, so reward yourself for your good work.

08. Summarize the importance of clearing emotional ama.

Painful experiences are a part of life. They only become toxic when we try to deny or repress them. Many of us hold on to emotional hurts and disappointments because we have not been taught effective ways to deal with them. As a result of trying to suppress these old wounds, we do not experience the joy or vitality we would like. If at any point in the process you feel overwhelmed, acknowledge it, and do not force yourself to move on. You can do this release in small doses. And consider finding a supportive environment in which to do this, such as counselling or therapy.

Emotional clearing visualization

Visualize the 7-step process

Now it's time to guide your students through a visualization of the 7-step emotional clearing process.

What to say

Use or modify the 19-step script below to guide your students through an emotional clearing visualization.

Note: Although the first step is to 'invite' people to participate, they do not have to if they don't feel comfortable. They can simply sit and focus on their breath with eyes open or closed.

- 01.** Invite your students to make themselves comfortable and close their eyes.

Please sit comfortably and close your eyes.

- 02.** Begin the visualization by asking your students to tune into sensations, thoughts, or emotions.

Allow your awareness to permeate your body, noting any sensations, thoughts, or emotions that are present right now.

Pause.

- 03.** Guide your students to shift their awareness to the belly or heart.

Gently let your attention rest in the area of your abdomen and heart. Take a couple of full, deep breaths into your belly and notice any sensations you feel in this area.

Pause.

- 04.** Ask them to recall a recent event.

Now allow yourself to remember a recent event that was upsetting to you. It could be an argument with your boss, being cut off on the highway, or a rude waitress you had to deal with. Recall some relatively minor upset that happened within the last two weeks, bringing the specific details into your mind.

Please raise your hand if you need more time to remember an incident.

Wait for a few moments.

05. Allow time for them to notice their emotions.

Allow yourself to experience any emotions that arise for you around this incident, and as you do, acknowledge to yourself that these are your feelings.

Pause.

06. Now you'll ask them to make an inner commitment.

Regardless of the circumstances, regardless of anyone else's behavior, these feelings are happening in you, and are therefore your responsibility. Make a commitment now to take responsibility for your own emotional reactions.

Wait a few moments.

07. Tune in.

Now, as clearly as you can, identify what you are feeling, whether it is anger, sadness, irritation, jealousy, or some other emotion.

Please raise your hand once you have identified a feeling.

Pause. (Wait until everyone in the class has raised a hand.)

08. Be aware of the body.

Good. Now take a deep breath and again bring your awareness into your body. Where do you feel the emotion? Your heart? Your stomach? Your neck? Your lower back?

Once you have localized the place in your body where the emotion is lodged, breathe into that area while you witness the sensation.

Pause.

09. Notice any change in emotions.

Notice that the emotional charge begins to dissipate by simply bringing your attention to it, with the intention to release it with each breath.

Pause.

10. Invite your students to open their eyes.

Without talking, please open your eyes and take out a pen and your journal (or a piece of paper).

Wait a few moments.

11. Ask your students to put their thoughts on paper.

Begin expressing in writing how you felt about the incident. This will be kept completely private, so openly express how you feel. Use language that accurately conveys what you are feeling.

Pause.

12. Invite them to write about similar memories.

If memories of similar situations come to mind, write about them, as well.

Wait for 3–5 minutes.

13. Now ask them to stand up.

Now without talking, please stand up. We're going to do an exercise to discharge the emotion from your physiology.

14. Release the emotion.

While taking a deep breath in, raise your arms above your head, and on the exhalation drop them down while making the sound Ha!

15. Acknowledge the release.

Acknowledge the release of the emotion as you perform the movement.

Wait a few moments.

16. Invite your students to fully participate.

Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so and let yourself participate fully.

Wait a few moments.

17. Now it's time to celebrate.

As a result of your courage to uncover and release stored emotional pain, you are spontaneously more capable of giving and receiving love. Envision your heart filling and overflowing with golden, warm, healing love. Imagine this healing energy is flowing out of your heart to all those in this room, to all the friends and loved ones in your life, and to the person with whom you created the situation that you have now released. Allow the love of everyone in this class and in your circle of friends and family to infuse your heart, nourishing and rejuvenating you.

18. Invite your students to slowly open their eyes.

Please open your eyes and slowly bring your awareness back into the room.

19. Wrap up the activity.

You can use this process whenever you notice yourself reacting to anyone in your life—your partner, your boss, your best friend, or a clerk at the grocery store. Although certain actions may “push your buttons,” they didn’t put the buttons there in the first place. When we view our emotional reactions as opportunities to heal unresolved issues from our past, we stop blaming others for our feelings. As a result, we feel more empowered and more alive.

Take action

An important point to emphasize in this section is that much like journaling and Marshall Rosenberg’s 5-step, conscious communication process, the 7 steps of emotional clearing enable us to take action and release emotional pain so that we do not hold on to toxicity, or ama, in our body/mind.

Encourage your students to be patient with themselves and remain unattached to results as they try these steps on their own. You should also encourage people who have significant trauma or relationship issues to seek out professional support as well.

Reassure them that no one is perfect and, like meditation, becoming comfortable with this new practice is a process.

The students may have times when they use this practice perfectly, and they may have times when it doesn’t go well. As long as they are applying the emotional-clearing process regularly and in earnest, over time, your students will find that using these seven steps in their lives will become second nature.

Using attention to enliven your health

Integrate the practices

Now, you will conclude the class by summarizing the points you've covered and giving your students guidance to integrate these practices into their daily routine.

What to say

Use or modify the following 3 talking points to wrap up this class.

01. Review the 5-steps of conscious communication.

Here is a recap of the 5-steps of conscious communication:

1. *What happened?*
2. *What am I feeling?*
3. *What do I need that I'm not receiving?*
4. *What am I asking for?*
5. *What is the gift or opportunity in this situation?*

02. Next recap the 7 steps of emotional clearing.

Here are the 7 steps of the emotional clearing process:

1. *Take responsibility*
2. *Identify the emotion*
3. *Witness the emotion*
4. *Express the emotion*
5. *Release the emotion*
6. *Share the emotion*
7. *Rejuvenate*

Practice these techniques when you have an emotionally upsetting experience. Notice how empowering the process can be when you take responsibility for your feelings.

03. Encourage your students to meditate.

Practice meditation for 20 minutes, twice daily—in the morning after awakening and in the evening before dinner. Note any questions or insights you have during the practice so we can discuss them at our next class.



Class 4 Teaching Inner Pharmacy



Teaching healing through the five senses

Learn to teach Inner Pharmacy

More than 5,000 years ago, the Vedic sages of India understood that we are all part of an infinite field of intelligence that orchestrates all of the activities in the universe. With every breath, we exchange our personal energy with the energy of the universe, and we are constantly taking in impressions via the five sense organs: the ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose.

Everything we hear, touch, see, taste, and smell is metabolized into the chemistry and electricity of our body/mind and can either strengthen our health or deplete it. If we want to create greater physical and emotional well-being, we need to choose nurturing sensory impressions that activate our inner pharmacy, the vast array of healing chemicals/molecules that already exist within us.

The material in this session will help you lead your students in an exploration of the inner pharmacy, including practical tools for tapping into the healing power of the five senses.

Topics and checklist

Class 4 topics

- Healing through the five senses
- Balancing with sound
- Balancing with touch
- Balancing with sight
- Balancing with taste
- Balancing with smell
- Laughter

Checklist

- Pens for students
- A picture of a sri yantra
- Sample aromas
- Samples oils (sesame and/or dosha specific)
- Handouts from S6 Resources or Program Resources (optional)
- Computer and internet connection (if you are teaching virtually)
- Laptop, screen, projector, small table, and extension cords (optional if you are teaching in-person using a presentation deck, such as Power Point or Keynote)
- Dry erase board or flip chart with pens (optional)

Note: A PowerPoint template for Teaching Inner Pharmacy is available under S6 Resources Program Resources. You can customize thi templates for your own presentation.



Introduction to the Inner Pharmacy Class

Follow-up

Start by greeting students and checking in with them to answer any questions from the last class.

What to Say

Use or modify the 2 talking points in the script below for your introduction.

- 01.** Greet and welcome students.

Welcome back to the Chopra Health program!

- 02.** Engage your students.

Would anyone like to share their experience of practicing conscious-communication skills since the last time we met? What did you notice?"

You may want to ask about their experiences using the seven steps to emotional freedom.

At this time, you may also want to ask your group if anyone has practiced tools from previous classes or if they have questions regarding other topics you have covered in the program so far.

As they are integrating these new practices into their daily routines, your students may want to share successes, address challenges, or ask a few questions. (Note: Keep this section brief, as you need to have time to address the Inner Pharmacy class thoroughly.)

Inner Pharmacy Class Overview

Overview of Inner Pharmacy

At the beginning of class, you'll want to provide an overview of what your students will be learning.

What to Say

Use or modify these 2 talking points for the Inner Pharmacy class overview.

- 01.** Give your students an idea of what you'll be covering in today's class.

Today's class is Inner Pharmacy, which is the body/mind's ability to heal and balance itself through the power of the five senses: sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell.

- 02.** Then tell your students how you're going to start.

We are going to begin with some basic movement (five minutes, optional) and a meditation.

Healing through the five senses

Introduce the concept

At this point in the class, you'll introduce the concept of healing through the five senses.

What to say

Use the following 6 talking points to help guide your introduction to the five senses. Examples are provided, but you can modify the script to make it your own.

- 01.** Introduce the five senses—also known as the five gateways.

Our five sense organs—our ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose—are the gateways through which the outer environment enters into our inner environment. Ayurveda also teaches that the senses are the gateways to the mind and therefore can have a significant effect on our emotional state.

- 02.** Explain to your students that everything they take in through the five senses contributes to a state of balance or imbalance

We not only perceive the environment through our senses, but we digest it as well. In the same way that the food we eat can either nourish or weaken our bodily tissues, the impressions we take in through our sense of sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell can have either a nourishing or a harmful effect on our body/mind.

In addition, our daily practices will involve keeping the health of all of our sensory openings healthy so we can more accurately perceive and digest sensory information.

- 03.** Talk about how the brain receives and processes sensory impressions.

The nervous system receives input from the five senses via the body's sensory receptors and these signals are then received by the brain. Our brain processes the sensory impressions we take in through the five senses, and we experience these impressions as qualities of consciousness that affect our physiology, experiences, and well-being.

- 04.** Let your students know they'll be learning practical tools.

In this class, we will explore practices for nourishing ourselves through the five senses so that we can experience greater physical health and emotional well-being.

05. Then give them a quick tip.

Modern science is validating the Ayurvedic knowledge that our senses have effects on both the mind and body. In fact, in the last decade, there have been sensory receptors for all the senses found in organs other than the ones they are associated with.

For example, there have been receptors for taste and smell found in many, if not all, organ systems. Touch receptors on our skin communicate with the nervous system. Light receptors exist not just in the eyes, but on the skin and our entire body feels the vibrations of sound. Our body and mind are constantly taking in and processing sensory information.

Although all the senses influence both body and mind, there is a simple way to remember which senses most directly balance either the body or the mind:

- *To balance the mind: focus on smell, sight, and sound—the three S's.*
- *To balance the body: focus on taste and touch—the two T's.*

References

1. Dalesio, Baretto Ortiz, Plusnick, Berkowitz (2018) <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fphys.2018.01673/full>
2. An, Liggett (2017) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5939926/>

06. Wrap up and make the connection between the five senses and the three doshas.

Each dosha is associated with one or more of the five senses, so certain senses may have more influence on a particular dosha, although we use all five senses to balance all the doshas.

- *Vata – sound and touch (via Space and Air)*
- *Pitta – sight (via Fire)*
- *Kapha – taste and smell (via Water and Earth)*

It is important to let your students know that we use all senses for healing both the body and mind, but some senses affect the mind or body more directly. Another excellent way to help your students remember the distinction between balancing the mind and balancing the body is by telling them that:

- Balancing the mind comprises the sense organs from just beneath the nose to the top of the head, encompassing the nose (smell), ears (sound), and eyes (sight).
- Balancing the body involves the area from beneath the nose down, which includes the mouth (taste) and the hands (touch).

To help your students remember which dosha is associated with which of the five senses, it helps to think about the elements that make up each dosha.

- **Vata is made up of space and air.**
Vata encompasses sound, which travels through air as waves, and touch, like the feeling of air, or wind, against the skin.
- **Pitta is made up of fire and water.**
Fire, or light, is necessary for sight. Therefore, Pitta, the dosha of fire and water, is associated with sight.
- **Kapha is made up of water and earth.**
Earthy and watery Kapha connects with the senses of smell and taste.

The five tanmatras

Dive deeper

The five *tanmatras* are the subtle root energies that feed our five senses. We explored the *tanmatras* in the first session during our discussion of *Sankhya*.

Ayurveda places great importance on our sensory functioning because everything we hear, touch, see, taste, and smell is metabolized into the chemistry and electricity of our body/mind. The quality of our sensory impressions determines the quality of our physical and mental health.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, the overuse, underuse, or misuse of our sensory faculties (referred to in Sanskrit as *asatmyendriyarthasamyoga*) is one of the primary causes of disease. When our sensory function is disturbed, our mind and intellect (*buddhi*) become unstable or imbalanced. Instead of being discerning and making choices that lead to greater health and happiness, our awareness becomes constricted. We may become impatient and undisciplined and even unable to determine what is good for us. This state of instability is known as *pragyaparadha*, which comes from the root terms *aparadha*, which can be translated as offence or mistake; and *pragya*, which means awareness, wisdom, or intellect. Ayurveda considers *pragyaparadha*, or mistaken intellect, another primary cause of disease.

By nourishing ourselves with healing sensory impressions, we can cultivate a quieter, calmer mind, and a stable intellect. This will allow us to make choices that expand our health and well-being.

Balancing with sound

The sense of sound

The first gateway to your students' inner pharmacy is the ears. Let's explore the sense of sound.

What to say

Use the following 8 talking points to help guide your discussion. Examples are provided but do your best to make this part your own.

01. Provide some history.

Sound is a powerful healing modality. Healing traditions around the world have accessed the inner pharmacy through the vehicle of sound.

02. Describe the effect sound has on us.

To appreciate the effect sound has on us, just imagine for a moment the sound of fingernails screeching against a chalkboard, the metal-on-metal sound of a car crash, or the sound of blaring music emanating from the car next to you at a stoplight. For most of us, these sounds send shivers of unpleasant feelings throughout our bodies, affecting our nervous and hormonal systems.

Sound can also be healing and enjoyable. The sound of a loved one whispering sweet words into your ear, an inspiring piece of music, or a soothing lullaby can arouse completely different physiological responses.

03. Introduce your students to primordial sounds.

Primordial sounds are vibrations of nature, which are more subtle than words or language. The breath of the wind, the cadence of rain, and the sound of waves crashing against the shore are examples of primordial sounds.

These sounds of nature remind us of our essential nature. I'm going to play a sampling of different sounds from our environment. Close your eyes while listening and notice the effects these sounds have on your body/mind.

Note: You may want to play samples of primordial sounds for your students at this point. You can find a downloadable audio file titled, *Samples of Primordial Sounds* available under *S6 Resources* or *Program Resources* to play for your students. Ask your students to close their eyes while listening and notice the effects these sounds have on the body/mind.

04. Explain using mantras as a vehicle.

Mantras are primordial sounds that express the fundamental vibrations of nature. When used in silent meditation, mantras serve as vehicles to take the mind beyond noisy thought traffic into the peace and silence of expanded awareness.

When chanted aloud, mantras can direct sound vibrations to areas in the body that need healing. This technique is the basis of chanting, toning, and mantra meditation practices.

There are numerous studies that have documented the benefits of chanting via effects on the Vagus nerve resulting in EEG and changes in brain activity.

References

1. Kalyani, Venkatasubramanian, Arasappa, Rao, Kalmady, Behere, Rao, Vasudev, and Gangadhar (2011) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3099099/>
2. Simpson, Perry, Thompson (2021) <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.647632/full>
3. Gao, Leung, Wu, Skorus, Sik (2019) <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-019-40200-w>

05. Point out that there are mantras for each of the chakras.

There are specific mantras, or primordial sounds, for each of the chakras, which are the energy centers that serve as junction points between our physical body and our spiritual body, consciousness, or higher self.

Each chakra is associated with specific emotional states as well, which can be influenced by specific mantras.

06. Explain what happens when the chakras are in and out of balance.

When energy is flowing freely through our chakras, we feel balanced, vibrant, and awake with possibility.

On the other hand, when our energy is constricted or stuck, we may experience the physical or emotional symptoms of imbalance and dis-ease.

07. Move on to talk about chanting to balance the chakras.

The practice of toning or chanting the mantras for each of the seven main chakras, can help to enliven the flow of energy in the body.

08. Wrap up.

Let's take a moment now to experience the effects of these healing mantras.

Chakra toning activity

Guide your students

At this point in the class, you'll guide your students in a chakra-balancing exercise.

What to say

Use or modify the 17-step script below for the Chakra Toning Activity.

- 01.** Provide an overview of how to work with the chakras.

When we're working with the chakras, it's important to know that each chakra has a color, a mantra or vibration, and a physical location in the body. Each chakra also governs a core human psychological need.

- 02.** Invite your students to become aware of the first chakra located at the base of the spine.

Begin by directing your attention to the base of your spine, which is the location of the muladhara, or root chakra. The root chakra governs your sense of safety and security. It helps you feel grounded. The color for this chakra is red and the mantra is Lam.

Invite your students to close their eyes.

- 03.** Guide your students to chant *Lam*.

Bring your attention to your root chakra at the base of your spine, and imagine a beautiful, deep ruby red. Connect with that swirling red color and imagine it grounding you and connecting you to the earth, helping you feel safe and secure. Now together we will chant the mantra for the root chakra.

We will inhale and then as we exhale, we will chant the vibration Lam.

Pause. Then invite your students to gently open their eyes when it feels comfortable.

- 04.** Explain to your students that you use mantras for their vibration.

Remember that when we chant the mantras, it's not about having the right pitch or being a good singer. It's about feeling the vibration in your body. That is what will bring about healing and activation of the chakras.

05. Move on to the second chakra located between the pubic bone and the navel.

Let's move on to the second chakra, the svadhithana chakra, which is located between the pubic bone and the navel. This is also known as the sacral chakra.

The svadhithana chakra governs your creativity and sexuality. This creativity can be expressed as procreation, but it's also the creative force that helps you to play music, build a business, write a novel, or create a life of love and abundance. The color of the second chakra is orange, and the mantra is Vam.

Invite your students to close their eyes.

06. Guide your students to chant Vam.

Bring your attention to the area of the second chakra, imagining its radiant orange color. Connect to your sense of creativity, your sense of being able to express your unique gifts and talents, being able to express the light that is within you.

Now, we will breathe in together, and on the exhale chant the mantra Vam.

Pause. Then invite your students to gently open their eyes when it feels comfortable.

07. Continue to the third chakra located in the area of the solar plexus.

Now, we'll move to the third chakra, which is located around the navel in the area of the solar plexus and up to the breastbone. This is the manipura chakra, which means "the dwelling place of the shining gem." The manipura chakra is responsible for our personal power, self-confidence, and self-esteem. It governs our ability to manifest our intentions and desires. The color of the manipura chakra is yellow, and the mantra is Ram.

Invite your students to close their eyes.

08. Guide your students to chant Ram.

Bringing your attention to your solar plexus, to your manipura chakra. Connect to the beautiful, bright yellow of this chakra, and feel the essence of warmth, heat, and power that it brings you. Recognize that you are whole and perfect exactly as you are. You have everything within you to manifest your light, to express the essence of who you are, and to live the life you were meant to live.

Now we will breathe in together, and on the exhale chant the mantra Ram.

Pause. Then invite your students to gently open their eyes when it feels comfortable.

09. Continue with the fourth chakra located in the center of the chest.

Now we'll move our attention to the anahata chakra, located in the center of the chest. This is the heart chakra, and it governs love and compassion—beginning with love and compassion for yourself. When you are able to experience your essential nature, which is pure love and pure compassion, then you are able to give freely and love others and all of creation with an open heart. The color of the anahata chakra is green, and the mantra is Yam.

Invite your students to close their eyes.

10. Guide your students to chant Yam.

Bringing your attention to your heart center. Imagine a beautiful emerald green swirling around in your heart center and connect to the feelings of love and compassion.

We will breathe in together, and on the exhale chant the mantra Yam.

Pause. Then invite your students to gently open their eyes when it feels comfortable.

11. Now move up to the fifth chakra located in the throat.

We've now arrived at the fifth chakra, the vishuddha chakra, located in the throat. This is the chakra of communication. It governs your ability to speak your truth and be authentic. It also allows you to maintain your boundaries—your physical, emotional, sexual, and energetic boundaries. It helps you to say yes when you need to say yes, and no when you need to say no. The color of the vishuddha chakra is blue, and the mantra is Ham.

Invite your students to close their eyes.

12. Guide your students to chant Ham.

Bringing your attention to your throat center. Imagine a radiant light blue swirling in your throat. Connect to the ability to speak your truth, expressing what is most important to you. You can communicate consciously, with clarity and compassion.

Let's take a deep inhalation; on the exhalation, chant the mantra Ham.

Pause. Then invite your students to gently open their eyes when it feels comfortable.

13. Next is the sixth chakra located at the brow in the space between the eyes.

Next, we'll move to the sixth chakra, located at the brow in the space between your eyes. This is the ajna chakra, the center of insight and intuition, your 'third eye'. When the ajna chakra is open and flowing, you can easily make choices that are healing and life-affirming. You are in touch with your inner knowing and you understand the deeper significance of all the events in your life. The color of the ajna chakra is indigo, and the mantra is Sham.

Invite your students to close their eyes.

14. Guide your students to chant Sham.

Bring your attention to the area of your brow between your eyes and imagine a deep indigo blue swirling in this chakra. Connect to your sense of knowingness, the wisdom that transcends the mind, intellect, and ego. This is the wisdom and intuition of your true self. It allows you to flow through life making conscious choices that lead to the expansion of happiness and well-being.

Take a deep breath in and, on the exhale, we will chant the mantra Sham.

Pause. Then invite your students to gently open their eyes when it feels comfortable.

15. The final chakra is located at the crown of the head.

The final chakra is the sahasrara chakra, located at the crown of the head. This is the chakra of pure consciousness. It represents the connection to your true self, to every being on the planet, and the unbounded energy that creates everything in the universe.

The color of the crown chakra is white or violet; the mantra for the crown chakra is the universal sound Om.

Invite your students to close their eyes.

16. Guide your students to chant Om.

Put your attention on the sahasrara chakra, imagining a white or violet light flowing through the chakra and expanding outwards in every direction, connecting you to the infinite field of all possibilities. Recognize that your essential nature is pure spirit, pure potentiality, and pure consciousness.

Let's inhale together and, on the exhalation, we will chant the mantra Om.

Pause.

17. Invite your students to gently open their eyes.

When it's comfortable, you can gently open your eyes.

Music to balance the doshas

Vibration of music

Now it's time to teach your students how to tap into the vibration of music for balance.

What to say

Use or modify the 8-step script below to give your students examples of how to balance the doshas using music.

01. Introduce the effect sound has on the body/mind.

Every sound has a physiological effect. When you listen to a beautiful piece of music or ocean waves, a cascade of pleasure-producing chemicals courses through your body, supporting health and wholeness.

In contrast, you can probably recall feeling irritated or tired after being subjected to harsh, abrasive sounds. Research shows that long-term noise pollution contributes to chronic health problems, such as high blood pressure, anxiety, decreased immune function, and fatigue.

02. Bring in the concept that music heals.

Music is a universal healing language that has a profound influence on our body/mind. Uplifting music can help enliven us when we are feeling lethargic or depressed, while gentle melodies soothe us when we are feeling anxious.

03. Explain the Ayurvedic approach to sound therapy.

Ayurveda recognizes that music is a valuable therapeutic tool. The specific sounds that will benefit you most depend a great deal on your dosha type and personal experiences..

04. Emphasize the importance of tuning in.

It is also important to simply tune in to your body and discover which sounds are healing and inspiring for you.

Experiment and pay attention to how you feel when you hear a particular kind of music—then create your own dosha-balancing playlist so that you can take a music break whenever you need to return to balance.

05. Introduce a listening activity.

Now, we're going to listen to a selection of different types of music. Close your eyes and relax as we listen to these healing sounds.

Note: In the following three scripts, direction has been provided as to the best type of music to help balance each dosha. In addition, there are two suggested music tracks recommended for you to play as examples for that dosha.

You can find a downloadable zipped audio file titled, "Music to balance the doshas" under S6 Resources or Program Resources which contains the six tracks of music referenced below.

06. Play grounding music to balance Vata.

If your primary dosha is Vata or you have a Vata imbalance, choose sounds that are warm, relaxing, slow, and grounding, such as cello compositions, Gregorian chants, or traditional Hawaiian songs. Music that incorporates slow drumbeats or a steady low bass can be especially soothing.

- Vata music track suggestion 1: **Bach Prelude in C Major**
- Vata music track suggestion 2: **Crying Cello**

07. Play soothing music to balance Pitta.

If your primary dosha is Pitta or you have a Pitta imbalance, choose cool, sweet, soft sounds, including the soothing sounds of nature—falling rain, ocean waves, and bubbling streams. Jazz, flute music, and devotional chants also cool Pitta's excessive heat. Choose music with a tempo that's slow enough to relax you without causing you to flare into impatience.

- Pitta music track suggestion 1: **Beach Surf**
- Pitta music track suggestion 2: **Native American Flute**

08. Play invigorating music to balance Kapha.

If your primary dosha is Kapha or you have a Kapha imbalance, choose music with a driving beat and melody. Rock and roll, passionate classical pieces, drumming, and spirited world music will all help to invigorate the heavy earth energy of Kapha, which has a tendency to become sluggish or dull.

- Kapha music track suggestion 1: **Urban Samba**
- Kapha music track suggestion 2: **Get the Feeling**

Additional insight

Despite your careful instruction, because this information will be new to them, your students may feel overwhelmed by the options available or feel like they have to practice all modalities all the time to find balance.

To help ease your students into these practices, encourage them to try them one at a time, like a personal experiment, to help integrate the modalities into their routines and also find what resonates with them. For example, one day, your students may want to try chakra toning after their asana practice. Another day, they may want to create a playlist of dosha-balancing music.

Acknowledge that your students have busy schedules and encourage them to be patient and playful as they take their time to test these new practices and ultimately make them their own.

During the activity, ask your students to close their eyes while listening and notice the different effects the music has on the body/mind. Please keep in mind, if there is a particular sound that brings up a troubling past experience, it is OK to choose not to listen to it. Instead, choose the sounds that are pleasing and feel healing.

Also, remember that although specific sounds can be healing, so can silence. Often there is sensory overload/overuse, so encourage students to also try silence and see how that makes them feel at different times of the day. We don't always have to fill the space with noise. :). Silence also helps to purify and cleanse the channels of hearing so we can more accurately perceive the sounds we hear.

Note: *Here is an interesting article on the effects of noise pollution:*

Chepesiuk (2005) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1253729>

The wisdom of the chakras

Dive deeper

Chakras are energy centers of transformation in the subtle body. They govern the transformation of the subtle energy of consciousness into physical energy.

The seven main chakras of the body

Each chakra is associated with a core human need. When a chakra is open and balanced, the energy that flows through it allows you to fulfill its associated need with grace and ease. If a chakra is blocked or imbalanced, the energy becomes stagnant, and it becomes more difficult to fulfill its associated need.

Note that here is not a specific sense associated with the Ajna and Sahasrara chakras because they are beyond the senses.

CHAKRA	LOCATION	ASSOCIATED NEED	SENSE	MANTRA
<i>Muladhara</i>	Base of spine	Survival	Smell	<i>Lam</i>
<i>Svadhithana</i>	Reproductive area	Creativity	Taste	<i>Vam</i>
<i>Manipura</i>	Solar plexus	Personal power	Sight	<i>Ram</i>
<i>Anahata</i>	Heart	Love and compassion	Touch	<i>Yam</i>
<i>Vishuddha</i>	Throat	Communication	Sound	<i>Ham</i>
<i>Ajna</i>	Forehead	Intuition and insight	Beyond*	<i>Sham</i>
<i>Sahasrara</i>	Crown of head	Spiritual awakening	Beyond*	<i>Om</i>

The Lokas

The Lokas are spheres of existence.

Loka is a Sanskrit term that means plane, sphere of existence, or rhythm of creation. Specific lokas are described in various ways, depending on the source.

The seven primary lokas and their qualities

LOKA	REALM	ASSOCIATED ELEMENT	ASSOCIATED SENSE
<i>Bhuh</i>	Earth Sphere	Earth	Smell
<i>Bhuvah</i>	Atmosphere	Water	Taste
<i>Svah</i>	Celestial Sphere	Fire	Form (Sight)
<i>Mahah</i>	Sphere of Saints	Air	Touch
<i>Janah</i>	Sphere of Progenitors (Infinite Source)	Space	Hearing
<i>Tapah</i>	Sphere of the Seven Sages (Founders of Vedic Wisdom)	Intelligence	Cosmic Mind
<i>Satyam</i>	Sphere of Truth	Consciousness	Primordial Energy

How to use sound for healing

Dive deeper

The first impulse to emerge from the silence of the absolute, or the field of pure potentiality, was the sound *Om*, or more correctly *Aum*, according to the Vedas (ancient Hindu scriptures).

Even the Bible and modern science agree that the initial spark of creation came from sound or vibration. The Gospel according to John says, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made flesh.” If you substitute “Word” with “Sound,” it becomes, “In the beginning was the Sound and the Sound was God . . . and the Sound became manifest.”

In modern science, they talk about the Big Bang theory, which again, is sound.

It’s this original, primordial sound that diversified: “The One became many.” Each separate vibration evolved to reflect the whole in infinite disguises, giving rise to the world in which we live. Universes within universes, each vibrating at their own frequency, interacted with every other frequency to produce the variety of life.

*Every organ, tissue, and cell has its own vibration
which, when in harmony, creates the most wonderful
symphony imaginable, the human body.*

If disharmony arises or a break in the unfolding of the vibration occurs, there develops a loss of wholeness, leading to discomfort and disease.

Sound has been used since the beginning of history to create certain moods in the listener. Different sounds affect people in different ways. Fingernails scraping a blackboard elicit a very different reaction from the sounds of a violin. Shamanic drumming can create a trance-like state, marching bands are used to fire up an army or sports team, and a mother’s lullaby soothes a troubled child. The different ragas of Indian classical music are attuned to different times of the day or different seasons to harmonize the listener with the rhythms of nature.

With the right sounds, you can align yourself with the vibrations that foster health, happiness, and unity.

Nada yoga

In the practice of *nada* yoga, sound is used not only to restore physical and mental well-being, but also as a path to spiritual awakening. *Nada* yoga divides sound into external sounds, *ahata*; and internal sounds, *anahata*.

External sounds are perceived through the ears and *nada* yoga can be as simple as listening to non-vocal music while gently focusing on the individual notes. You can listen to the different notes within the music of nature—birds singing, rain falling, or the wind blowing through the trees. Or you can chant sacred mantras such as Om or Ahum (I am), with the focus on each individual letter. The aim is to allow awareness to move inwards.

Internal sounds are perceived through the *anahata* (heart) chakra. Each human body has its own unique sound or vibration, which is sacred to that individual. By regulating the breath, with the attention turned inwards, and closing the ears with the fingers, you can begin to listen in on your own inner sound. Realigning with this sound serves to balance your energetic body and ultimately reconnect you with your divine presence. With practice, you can also learn to hear the vibration of the universe, a soft distant Om, sometimes referred to as the cosmic hum.

Through *nada* yoga it is said that you can remove all impurities in the physiology. It starts with awakening the inner fire through the use of *bhramari pranayama* (humming bee breath).

Humming bee breath instructions

- Sit comfortably with your spine erect and close your eyes.
- Close your ears with either your index or middle fingers.
- Lightly press your lips together and slightly open your teeth.
- Bring the inner gaze into the *ajna* (sixth) chakra. Bring the inner gaze into the *ajna* (sixth) chakra, located between the brows.
- Breathe in through your nose.
- As you exhale, make a smooth, even, humming sound, like the sound of a bumblebee.
- Continue for 3 to 5 minutes, feeling the vibration throughout the body.

Levels of Sound

The Vedas also recognize four stages of the manifestation of sound:

- 01.** The grossest form of sound, *vaikhari*, is ordinary audible sound, including our everyday speech.
- 02.** More subtle is *madhyama*, sound that we hear in our heart and dreams.
- 03.** As our awareness expands, we experience *pashyanti*, or luminous sound. It is sometimes referred to as “perceptive” speech that becomes possible when we become aware of cosmic truths and our intentions are clear.
- 04.** Finally, we reach *para*, or transcendent sound. This is pre-manifest sound in its subtlest state as light or pure silence. This is the root or potential of all sounds, sometimes referred to as the “unstruck sound.”



Chanting

Chanting has been used in cultures throughout the world for thousands of years to uplift the spirit and activate certain archetypal energies within the self.

Choose a simple repetitive chant, one that you can learn easily so you're not always trying to remember it. It can be from any tradition, but it should be one you feel comfortable with.

Chant Om

- 01.** Take a deep breath in.
- 02.** As you exhale, chant the sound Om.
- 03.** When you run out of breath, breathe in, and repeat the chant.
- 04.** Continue at your own pace for 2 to 3 minutes.
- 05.** You can do this silently or out loud or do both.

Chant A-U-M

- 01.** Take a deep breath in.
- 02.** As you exhale, in the same breath, chant Aaa-Uuu-Mmm.
- 03.** Feel the Aaa sound in your belly, Uuu in your chest area, and Mmm in your head.
- 04.** Breathe in again and continue at your own pace for 2 to 3 minutes.
- 05.** You can do this silently or out loud or do both.

When you chant, you raise the vibration of your entire physiology. Whenever you chant, chant fully. Open your heart, open your throat, and chant with your whole body. Lose yourself to the chant.

Ultimately, you are chanting to our own soul—the divinity within you. Rumi said, “I want to sing like the birds, not caring who listens or what they think.” This is how we should chant.



Activate healing through toning

As everything in the universe is sound or vibration, a disharmony in one of those sounds or a break in the unfolding of the sequence of sounds, leads to discomfort, disease, and a loss of wholeness. For example, if one musician in an orchestra is playing off key, there is a loss of harmony in the whole piece of music. You can correct that by having a second musician stand next to the first one and play the correct notes. Just by hearing the correct notes, the first musician will automatically begin playing correctly.

Similarly, if there is a disharmony in your physiology, and you know the correct vibration for that area, you can begin to correct the imbalance by chanting or toning that sound. For example, if you have a problem with your eyes, and you know the sound relating to the eyes, you can activate the healing process for that area by chanting that sound (silently or aloud) and directing the vibration into the area of the eyes.

Toning sounds for the body

AREA OF THE BODY	VIBRATIONAL SOUND
Sinuses	<i>Mmm</i>
Ears	<i>Nnn</i>
Eyes	<i>Eemm</i>
Nose	<i>Lmm</i>
Stomach	<i>Paam</i>
Throat	<i>Kaa Gaa Gha</i>
Jaw	<i>Yaa Yu Yi</i>
Diaphragm	<i>Haa</i>
Reproductive organs	<i>Mam</i>
Heart	<i>Ma</i>
Lungs and large intestines	<i>Sss</i>
Liver and small intestine	<i>Shh</i>
Kidney and bladder	<i>Woo</i>

The vowel sounds Ahaa, Eee, Eye, Ooo, and Uuu are non-local, or non-specific. If you don't know the sound for an area of the body, you can chant any of the vowel sounds and direct its vibration into that area.

Bells, gongs, and bowls

Bells, gongs, or bowls that have a clear ring when struck can be used for balancing and clearing energy. Unless a metal bell, gong, or bowl has been tuned to a specific frequency, they can only be used for general purposes.

Clear the body's energetic field

- 01.** Strike the instrument and circle it clockwise around the body.
- 02.** Move it up and down the limbs.
- 03.** Move up along the front of the spine.

Clear a room or home

- 01.** Play the instrument while standing in the center of the space.
- 02.** Or move around the edges of the space in a clockwise direction, striking/ringing the instrument.

Note: Study on sound bowl healing if you choose to share with your students: Goldsby, Goldsby, McWalters, Mills (2016) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5871151/>

Mantras to activate energy

There are mantras for just about everything. There are mantras to restore health, bring wealth, change the weather, remove problems, cure snake bites, welcome a new baby, and create peaceful coexistence, just to mention a few.

In the Vedic tradition of India, mantras are often associated with a particular deity and by chanting the mantra you activate the archetypal energies associated with that deity. It's important to remember that the deities are really a projection of your true self. By chanting these mantras, you are simply activating the energies already lying dormant within you.

Perhaps the best known of the deity mantras is *Om Namah Shivaya*.

Lord Shiva is considered to be the first yogi and this mantra activates the pure silence, pure awareness, and pure potentiality within you.

There are too many mantras to list them all, but here two important mantras:

1. *Maha mrtyunjaya* mantra

This great Shiva mantra is to prevent untimely death, ill health, fear, sorrow, and depression.

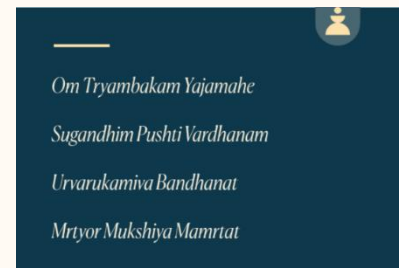
It helps to create universal peace, gives energy and zeal, removes ignorance, and destroys anger, selfishness, and vengeful thoughts:

2. *Gayatri* mantra

It is said that all sickness is really home sickness. For those of you on a spiritual journey, your cure is to return home to your true self. After eons of wandering, you remember that you are, and always have been, an enlightened being. The *Gayatri* mantra is the one for enlightenment:

There are many recordings of these mantras, which can help you learn them.

Play, chant, listen, meditate, be open to the great silence, and enjoy the blessings of the magnificent, eternal symphony that surrounds you.



Balancing with touch

Use touch to expand well-being

In this part of the class, you will focus on teaching your students how to use the sense of touch to expand their physical and emotional well-being.

What to say

Use or modify the following 6 talking points to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Give your students an overview of the sense of touch.

Touch is fundamental to health and well-being. The sense of touch can evoke powerful emotional, psychological, and physiological healing responses.

- 02.** Tie in the science.

The skin is the largest organ in the body and is rich with nerve receptors, neurochemicals, and immune modulators. Peptides closely related to antidepressants can be found in the skin, which may explain why massage often induces an elevated mood. In addition to external massage, you can think of a gentle yoga practice as an 'internal massage', especially when we move the abdomen—this has a similar effect of balancing the nervous system via the nerves in the abdominal organs, as well as release of healthy molecules from the gut. We discuss movement and yoga more in depth in the next session.

Reference

Dr. Sheila Patel (2021) <https://chopra.com/articles/healing-through-the-sense-of-touch>

- 03.** Describe the benefits of therapeutic touch.

Now let's talk about massaging the skin. You can nourish your body daily with self-massage. Therapeutic touch can lead to improved immune function, better sleep, and pain reduction.

- 04.** Make the connection between science and Ayurveda.

Abhyanga soothes the two master systems of the body: the nervous system and the endocrine system.

05. Now give your students an idea of what Ayurveda recommends.

Ayurveda recommends a daily morning massage to help you begin your day feeling relaxed. People who approach the day feeling calm have the best chance of staying balanced and healthy. The entire process only takes 5 to 10 minutes. Alternatively, self-massage can be performed before bed to induce a natural calm for more restorative sleep. You get to decide what works best for you.

06. Teach your students how to perform self-massage.

I'd now like to show you how to perform an Ayurvedic self-massage called abhyanga.

AYURVEDIC MASSAGE

In the medical system of Ayurveda, massage is considered medical treatment, and various massages, strokes, and pressure points can be used for specific health conditions.

More about Ayurvedic massage in this article from Dr. Shella Patel (2021):

<https://chopra.com/articles/your-guide-to-traditional-ayurvedic-massage>

Self-massage instructions

Abhyanga self-massage at home

At this point in the class, you'll teach your students how to perform abhyanga self-massage at home.

What to say

Use or modify the 12 talking points to teach a full body self-massage.

01. Give your students a few benefits of massage and herbalized oils.

All dosha types benefit from self-abhyanga. In addition to the direct benefits of massage, herbalized oils provide healing benefits. According to Ayurveda, these oils help protect tissues from potentially harmful chemicals that can accumulate in the body. The skin absorbs the oils, which have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that can protect and balance tissues. Many of the oils also balance the microbiome on the skin for healthier skin integrity.

02. Explain how to personalize massage to balance the doshas.

Personalize your massage with these recommendations, including frequency and suggested oils for each of the dosha types.

Those with Vata imbalance will benefit from a light touch and heavy, warm oils such as sesame or almond.

Those with an excess of Pitta will benefit from deeper massages and cooling oils such as coconut, sunflower, or olive.

When seeking to pacify the Kapha dosha, perform a stimulating, vigorous massage that employs lighter oils such as safflower or sunflower, or warmer oils like mustard or almond.

03. Tell them it's best to warm the oil.

Warm the oil by placing the oil bottle in a larger vessel of hot water ("bain marie" technique) and letting it soak for 5-10 minutes.

04. Give them clean up tips.

It's best to perform your massage in the bathroom, as no matter how careful you are, some oil may spill. We also suggest that you cover the floor with a large towel.

05. Point out the importance of a loving touch.

While massaging your body, remember to maintain an attitude of love and respect. Your technique is much less important than your energy and state of mind while providing the loving touch.

06. Now begin the self-abhyanga instructions—start with the scalp.

Join me in simulating a self-massage. Begin by pouring a tablespoon of warm oil into your palms, rub hands together, then massage the oil vigorously into the scalp. Cover your entire scalp with small circular strokes, as if you are shampooing your hair.

07. Next apply the oil to face, head, and neck.

With gentle strokes, apply the oil to your forehead, cheeks, and chin. Slowly massage the back of your ears and your temples, which has a soothing effect. Apply a little more oil to your hands and massage the front and back of your neck, using the flat of the palm and your fingers.

08. Teach them to use long strokes on the arms and circular strokes on the joints.

Vigorously massage your arms, using a circular motion at the shoulders and elbows, and long, back-and-forth motions on the upper arms and forearms. Ayurveda recommends to massage toward the direction of your heart. It is okay to perform your massage in the other direction if it feels right for you.

09. Suggest using gentle circular motions on chest and stomach.

Avoid being too vigorous over the trunk. Using large, gentle circular motions, massage your chest, stomach, and lower abdomen. Use a straight up-and-down motion over the breastbone. Feel free to massage in a circular motion over the breasts. After applying a bit of oil to both hands, gently reach around to massage the back and spine as best you can.

10. Explain the technique on the legs is the same as the arms.

Vigorously massage your legs as you did your arms, using circular motions at the ankles and knees, back-and-forth motions on the long parts.

11. Emphasize the feet.

With the remaining bit of oil, vigorously massage your feet. Pay extra attention to your toes. Sit quietly for a few moments to let the oil soak into your body.

12. Wrap up.

In Ayurveda, leaving a thin, almost imperceptible film of oil on the body is considered very beneficial for toning the skin and warming the muscles throughout the day. When you finish your massage, rinse your body with warm water and a mild soap, if needed, that will help you maintain this light film of oil.

If your students don't have time to do a full-body massage, let them know that a short one is still much better than none at all. The head and the feet are the most important parts of the body to cover, and they can massage those in a very short time.

Teach them how to perform a mini massage. It requires only about two tablespoons of oil.

01. Use the first tablespoon on the scalp, head, face, and neck.

Rub one tablespoon of warm oil into your scalp, using the small, circular motions described above. Massage your forehead from side to side using the palm of your hand. Gently massage your temples, using circular motions, then lightly rub your ears. Spend a few moments massaging the back and front of your neck.

02. Use the second tablespoon of oil on the feet.

With a second tablespoon of oil, massage both feet using the flats of your hands. Work the oil around the toes with your fingertips, then vigorously massage the soles of your feet with brisk back-and-forth motions of the palms.

Note: There is a handout in *Session 6 Resources and Program Resources* titled, *How to Perform an Abhyanga Self-Massage with instructions for your students to refer to.*

Balancing with sight

Use sight to balance well-being

The next sense you will explore with your students is the sense of sight, which has a profound effect on our physiology, including our mind and emotions.

What to say

Use or modify the following 5 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Describe the effect images have on us.

The images that enter through our eyes have a profound effect on our body, mind, and emotions. While gazing at a beautiful sunset, we generate soothing, pleasurable chemicals. On the other hand, watching a violent movie triggers the release of stress hormones, which flood our circulation, agitating every cell in our body.

02. Tie in the science.

Studies have shown that people staying in the hospital after surgery recover more rapidly if their room looks out onto a park as opposed to a parking lot.

03. Describe the positive effects of natural images.

Looking at natural beauty—the vastness of the ocean, the clouds drifting by, or the wind blowing through the tops of trees—has a profound healing effect. This is why it's important, at least a few times each month, to find a place where regardless of which direction you gaze, you can only see views of nature. Absorb these healing images and allow them to nourish your body, mind, and soul.

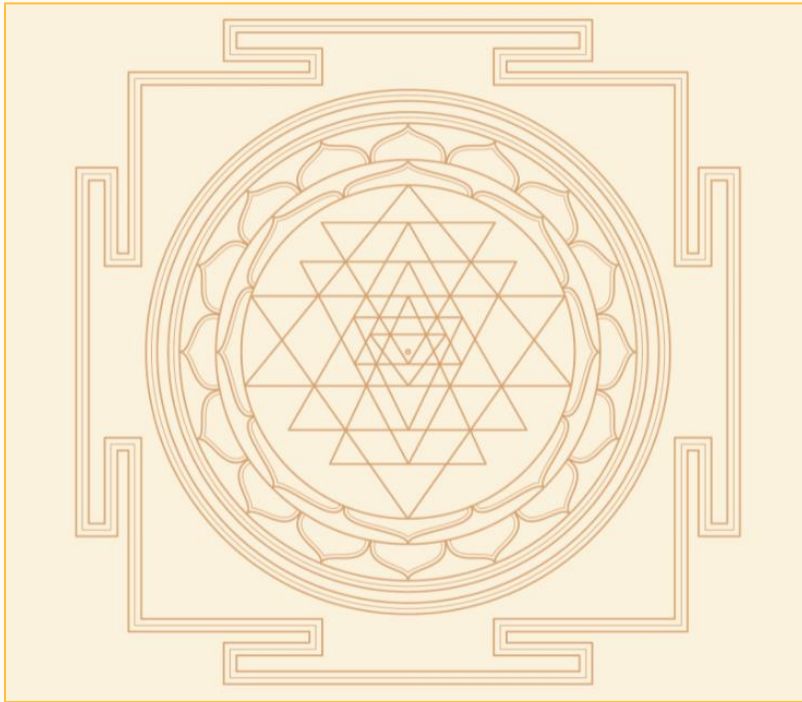
04. Introduce visual meditation.

Another way of balancing our physiology through the medium of sight is visual meditation. The object of attention in a visual meditation is any natural and nourishing sight that captures your attention for a sustained period of time. You can gaze into a candle flame, watch the ripples on the ocean, or look up at the moon and the stars.

05. Explain the sri yantra.

We are going to do a visual meditation together, using as the object of our attention a diagram known as a sri yantra. A Yantra is a visual pattern used to alter your mind state and benefit your consciousness.

This beautiful visual pattern has a balancing and calming influence on the mind and helps to increase coherence in our brain-wave activity.

Sri Yantra Pattern

Note: You will find this image in you in the S6 Resources or Program Resources sections to share with your students.

Color and the doshas

Color and your well-being

It's time to teach your students about the color and the doshas.

What to say

Use the following 6 talking points to help guide your discussion. Bring in your own examples.

- 01.** Start by explaining to your students how color can improve their well-being.

We can improve our well-being and enhance our living and working environments through the creative use of color.

- 02.** Explain that certain colors balance each of the doshas.

Special attention can be placed on colors that bring balance to each dosha using the power of sight.

- 03.** Show your students what colors balance Vata.

Mild pastel shades and earth tones settle the Vata dosha.

- 04.** Proceed to Pitta.

Cool, soft colors—blues, greens, and white—are balancing for the Pitta dosha. Notice that these colors resemble the ocean, which is pacifying for you.

- 05.** Talk about Kapha.

Bright, strong, bold colors with vivid shapes and designs help to enliven Kapha.

- 06.** Wrap up.

There are many different ways you can integrate color to enhance your life and balance your dosha type. Consider the color of clothes you wear, the colors in your home, and colors of food on your plate.

Note: In your S6 Resources or Program Resources, you will find a *Dosha Balancing Colors* handout that you can give your students to remember the colors that balance each of the doshas.

Vata	Pitta	Kapha
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Earth tones• Mild pastels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cool, soft colors• Blues, whites, greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bright, bold colors• Reds, oranges
		

The power of color

Dive deeper

There is no question that as a human, you are a sensual being. You rely on your senses to help you both survive and enjoy the pleasures of life. Ayurveda, the ancient mind-body healing system developed in India, teaches that the body and mind are constantly exchanging energy and information with their environment. As a result, the five senses are considered gateways that can be used to help balance, nourish, and heal yourself.

Given the senses' importance, it's valuable to become conscious of the sensory impressions you are exposed to every day, favoring impulses that promote harmony versus discord. An easy way to begin cultivating well-being through the senses is by starting with the sense of sight and the power of color.

Mere color, unspoiled by meaning, and unallied with definite form, can speak to the soul in a thousand different ways.

~Oscar Wilde

Color preferences

As children one of the big questions was always, "What is your favorite color?" This determined which crayon you would use the most, what shirts you liked, or what hair ties you wore. Something as simple as opening a fresh box of crayons and gazing upon the explosion of hues evoked some emotion—usually pleasure. Color was an important part of the canvas of your early life. If you think about it, it still is.

As you grew older, your color preferences may have shifted to reflect more practical uses or maybe they became an important part of how you express yourself. Either way, color has remained in the background of your consciousness, offering subtle influences. Take a moment to notice the colors that surround you. What feelings, if any, begin to arise? Do you notice a lack of color? Is there a dominant color? This is the first step toward bringing awareness around what kind of information is being gathered and its effect on you through the gateway of sight.



The energy of color

You can get technical and ponder the wavelengths and frequencies of the visible light spectrum (color). Each color produces a specific energy output that influences its surroundings in different ways. Recent research provides more insight into the effects of color, such as one study [1] that showed that red (compared to gray and blue) improved motor function. Similarly, plants are also affected by the energy of various colors. For example, researchers found that red and white mulch (compared to black and blue) improved the yield of cucumbers [2].

Just as plants have an innate response, so do you. You don't grow in the same way, of course, but you respond physically, mentally, and emotionally. Remember, you are in constant dynamic exchange with your environment, and color is no exception.

References

1. Elliot AJ, Aarts, H. (2011) [Perception of the color red enhances the force and velocity of motor output. *Emotion* 11\(2\): 445-9.](#)
2. Torres-Olivar V, Valdez-Aquilar AV, et al. (2016) [Effect of colored plastic mulch on growth, yield and nutrient status in cucumber under shade house and open field conditions. *Journal of Plant Nutrition* v. 39: 2144-2152.](#)

Meanings of colors

Have you ever noticed how people who wear the brightest colors are often colorful themselves in demeanor and personality? This is often a direct inner reflection of who they are; the colors they gravitate towards seem to reflect their personality. Just being near a vibrant person like this and taking in the bright colors can often help boost your mood.

Sometimes, however, bright colors can trigger contrary emotions. Each individual is unique, and you have your own needs and predispositions to honor. Start to take notice of the effect colors have on you, and which colors attract or repel you.

Exploring the world of color means you will soon discover there are associated characteristics. You might be aware of them already—most of this is instinctual. As you read through this list, take note of any colors you have been drawn to in recent times.

- Red: Energy, courage, vitality, self-confidence
- Orange: Joy, wisdom, resourcefulness
- Yellow: Intellect, cheerfulness, clarity, innovation
- Green: Balance, harmony, nature, compassion
- Blue: Knowledge, health, decisiveness, calm, loyalty
- Purple: Serenity, faith, royalty, peace
- White: Purity, innocence, optimism, illumination
- Black: Silence, elegance, power, authority

You may have your own interpretation that is not on this list. Always use what works best for you. A fun exercise is to notice the colors in your daily life and note the impressions they give you. It may change day-to-day because you are an ever-evolving complex being.

Live a life of color

If there is something in your life that you want more of, try incorporating the associated color into your life. For example, if you may want more creativity, orange is the color you would want to work with in whatever way suits you. It can be as small as using an orange cup for coffee, or as large as painting your entire room. If you are unsure of the color you need, pick the first one that attracts you without thinking about it too much. Just having the intention of what you want it to mean will do all the work for you.

You can use the wisdom of Ayurveda and the concept of doshas to help provide some guidance as well. Here are ways to integrate color to begin enhancing your life and well-being:

- Food: Filling your plate with the colors of the rainbow promotes your health and well-being.
- Chakra toning: As you chant the mantras for the chakras, visualize the color of each chakra as vividly as possible.
- Clothing: Choose a color for the day for extra support—such as red for energy or blue for calm.
- Outdoors: Take a walk in nature and notice all the colors from the vast sky down to the tiniest bud.
- Home: Ask yourself what vibes you want to create in each room and decorate using colors that create those vibes.

These are just a few ideas to help you begin tapping into the healing power of your sense of sight. Channel your inner child and be in awe once again of the colorful world you live in.

Ayurvedic eye care

Dive deeper

Our eyes absorb and digest an endless stream of visual impressions every day. We may spend hours staring at computer screens, phone screens, and other electronic stimuli, which can leave our eyes feeling strained and tired. Just as we give our body rest and exercise, it's important to care for our eyes in the same loving way. Ayurveda offers some simple practices to keep our eyes healthy and our vision vibrant.

Palming

Palming helps to relive eye strain and feels wonderfully relaxing.

Try it yourself. Sit comfortably and follow this 4-step process to relieve eye strain.

- 01.** Rub the palms of your hands together rapidly for 10 seconds or until they are warm.
- 02.** Close your eyes and gently cup your palms over your eyes.
- 03.** Be careful not to put any pressure on your eyeballs—simply rest your palms over your eyes.
- 04.** Slowly breathe in and out, letting go of any stress. Repeat this exercise 3 to 5 times.

You can use palming throughout the day. It's especially helpful to take a palming break when you're working at a computer or doing other intense work with your eyes.

Eye rotations

This practice exercises the tiny muscles of the eyes, helping to improve the lymphatic flow that can become stagnant when we stare at computer screen (or anything) for too long.

Try it yourself. Sit in a comfortable, upright position and follow this 5-step process:

- 01.** Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, letting your shoulders and jaw relax.
- 02.** Open your eyes and soften your gaze. Imagine that you are facing a large clock. Without moving your head, slowly raise your eyes to the 12 o'clock position and pause briefly before lowering your eyes to the 6 o'clock position. Repeat this movement five more times, keeping your gaze steady and relaxed.
- 03.** Repeat the exercise but this time move your eyes between the 9 and 3 o'clock positions.
- 04.** Rub your palms together vigorously for a few seconds and gently place your warm palms over your closed eyes until the warmth dissipates.
- 05.** Open your eyes. Keeping your gaze soft and your head still, rotate your eyes in a clockwise direction. Repeat this movement five more times. Then, rotate your eyes in a counterclockwise direction six times.

Triphala Eye Wash to wash and nourish dry eyes

Triphala is an Ayurvedic herbal blend with many rejuvenating and healing properties

Triphala is commonly used as an eyewash to treat dry, irritated eyes.

Make it yourself. Here's how to make triphala eyewash:

- 01.** Boil ½ teaspoon powdered triphala in ½ cup of water for three minutes.
- 02.** Cool and strain with a cheesecloth or paper coffee filter to remove particles.
- 03.** Wash your eyes with the cooled water once or twice daily. You can soak a cotton ball in the liquid and gently squeeze the fluid into the eyes, letting it rinse the eyes—or you can cup some liquid into the palm of your hand, lean your eye into the fluid, and blink several times to wash the preparation over the eye.

If you don't want to do a triphala eye wash, just rinsing eyes with cool water several times a day is very healing and soothing for the eyes and can be done easily every day.

Keep in mind that if your dry eyes are caused by excessive screen time, it's important to take periodic breaks to look away from your computer monitor or other digital devices. Set a timer for 15-minute intervals, and when the alert goes off, look away from your computer screen to a distance about 20 feet away, blinking several times for five seconds. Better yet, stand up at the same time and stretch your entire body.

Healing through taste

Teach balance through taste

The next sense to explore with your students is the sense of taste. Here you will be expanding on the topic you already taught to your students in the Ayurvedic Nutrition class.

What to say

Use or modify the following 6 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Give a quick recap of the six tastes.

Let's begin with a recap of the six tastes, which we learned about in Ayurvedic Nutrition. Ayurveda teaches that all food falls into the category of six tastes: sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent.

By including all six tastes in our meals and favoring those tastes that balance our dosha, we create greater health and well-being.

02. Remind your students which tastes balance each of the doshas.

As a reminder, here are the tastes that are most balancing for each of the dosha types:

- *Vata – favor the sweet, sour, and salty tastes*
- *Pitta – favor the sweet, bitter, and astringent tastes*
- *Kapha – favor the pungent, bitter, and astringent tastes*

03. Offer a reminder that how they eat is as important as what they eat.

Also remember that Ayurveda teaches that how we eat is as important as what we eat. When we eat with awareness of our food, body, and sensations, we can extract the most nourishment—and enjoyment—from our meals.

04. Define the term *rasa*.

*Although we use the sense of taste to directly balance the body, specific tastes can also have influence on the mind. In fact, *Rasa*, the Ayurvedic word for taste, also means emotion or mood.*

05. Make the connection between taste and emotions.

In the same way that our body needs these six tastes to feel fulfilled and balanced, fulfillment in life comes through exploring the full range of our emotional expression.

If one emotion is excessively predominant in us—whether we are too sweet or too bitter, our relationships with others may not be fulfilling.

On the other hand, if we have access to a full range of emotions, we can have more meaningful and enjoyable relationships, both with others and with ourselves.

06. Explain how the six tastes express themselves as emotions—in and out of balance.

The following tables lists the six tastes and how they express themselves when in and out of balance.

THE SIX TASTES	IN BALANCE	OUT OF BALANCE
Sweet	Nurturing	Cloying
Sour	Stimulating	Caustic
Salty	Earthy	Garlic, onions, chives
Pungent	Passionate	Hedonistic
Bitter	Disciplined	Resentful
Astringent	Witty	Cynical

In this section of the class, be sure to remind your students to refer to the Ayurvedic nutrition information that you shared in the previous class. Because you’ve covered taste with your students in that class, this is an excellent time to engage them in a short discussion to help them remember what they’ve learned.

Here are a couple of questions you can pose to engage students:

01. *Does anyone remember which tastes balance Vata? Which tastes balance Pitta? What about Kapha? (You can also ask them give examples of foods that contain each of the six tastes.)*

Pause to allow one or two students to answer before moving on.

02. *Would anyone like to give an example of foods that fall into the sweet category? Think of foods that might not have the sweet or sugary taste that we commonly associate with sweet. What about sour foods? What are a few naturally salty foods? Pungent? Bitter? Astringent?*

Pause to give students time to respond.



Another fun exercise is to have your students imagine, and share with the group, what they think would be a perfect Ayurvedic meal, containing all six tastes.

When talking about the emotions as they relate to the six tastes, you can use examples to illustrate each taste (or emotion) when in and out of balance. For example:

Sweet

- In balance, sweetness can be very nurturing.
- Out of balance, it can become overly sweet, or cloying.

Salty

- In balance, salty can become earthy.
- Out of balance, it can be reverse with garlic, onions, and chives.

Sour

- In balance, sour can become very stimulating.
- Out of balance, it can become caustic.

Pungent

- In balance, pungent is passion.
- Out of balance, passion can move to hostility.

Bitter

- In balance, bitter is disciplined.
- Out of balance, it can be resentful.

Astringent

- In balance, astringent shows itself as great wit.
- Out of balance, that wit can turn to cynicism.

Tongue cleaning instructions

Dive deeper

At this point in the class, you'll teach your students how to perform tongue cleaning.

What to say

Use or modify the following 6 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Provide some history.

Tongue cleaning is a simple way to improve your sense of taste, allowing your tongue to distinguish among the six tastes of sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent. This Ayurvedic practice removes the thin film of bacteria and plaque that builds up on the tongue and dulls the taste buds.

02. Tie in the science.

Even though you brush your teeth and floss every day, if you don't use a tongue cleaner, you may still be hosting a party of bacteria in your mouth, particularly at the very back of your tongue. This area tends to be drier than the rest of your mouth and poorly cleansed, making it a particularly hospitable environment for the bacteria that contribute to tooth decay, bad breath, gum disease, and possibly even heart disease.

In addition, when the coating or plaque on the tongue interferes with the attachment of the molecules from food, the proper signaling to the brain and body can't occur. To optimize the body's communication system, it is important to have a clean tongue.

03. Explain the tongue cleaner.

While a toothbrush is designed to clean the solid, unmoving structure of your teeth, it isn't effective in cleaning your soft tongue. The best tool for this job is the tongue cleaner, a simple metal tool that dates back to ancient India. Ayurveda recommends a daily practice of tongue cleaning for your good health.

04. Discuss when to use a tongue cleaner.

Use your tongue cleaner when you first wake up and before you eat anything.

05. Teach your students how to use a tongue cleaner.

1. *Simply hold the two ends of the tongue cleaner in both hands. Extend the tongue and place the tongue cleaner on the surface of the tongue, as far back as is comfortable. Gently pull the tongue cleaner forward so that it removes the unwanted coating.*
2. *Rinse the tongue cleaner and repeat as necessary, usually several times.*
3. *Using a tongue cleaner gets easier with practice. If you feel an uncomfortable gagging sensation, be sure to relax your tongue and exhale during use. You can also start more forward on the tongue and move backwards as you get used to the sensation.*

06. Describe the benefits.

You'll love the benefits of tongue cleaning, which not only removes toxins and bacteria from the tongue but also makes your breath fresher, enhances your sense of taste, and primes the digestion for the day.

Cultivate the flavors of well-being

Dive deeper

Note: This content is written by Deepak Chopra, M.D., and Rudolph E. Tanzi, Ph.D.

Well-being depends on many things going right in your nervous system. You can't attend to them one by one; infinitely too many processes are happening in the blink of an eye. Despite this complexity, you can begin to pay attention to subtle cues.

Classes of subtle cues

In the Ayurvedic tradition, there are three classes of subtle cues wrapped inside every experience:

- **Tattva:** qualities of experience
- **Rasa:** flavor of experience
- **Bhava:** emotional tone of experience

Tattva, *rasa*, and *bhava* are packaged into every experience.

Imagine that you are on a vacation sitting at the beach.

- The qualities of the experience would be your sense of the warm sun, the sound of the surf, and the swaying palm trees—the composite sensation of being on a beach.
- The flavor of the experience is subtler. In this case, let's say it's a sweet, relaxing experience that makes your body feel as if it is flowing into the whole beach scene.
- Finally, the mood, or emotional tone, of the experience isn't determined by either of the above.

If you are lying on the beach feeling lonely or having a fight with your spouse, your beach experience will be different from that of someone who is on a blissful honeymoon or simply soaking up a lovely tropical day.

Well-being is created at the subtle level. Therefore, as raw data stream into your brain through the five senses, what turns them into something nourishing or something toxic depends on the quality, flavor, and emotional mood that you add.

We aren't discounting the brain, since of course it is part of the mind-body feedback loop. There are neural networks that predispose you to have a positive or negative reaction automatically. But neural networks are secondary. What is primary is the person who is interpreting every experience as it is happening.

The subtle flavors of life

Instead of thinking all the time about how your life should be going, try a different tack. Learn to rely on the most holistic power you have, which is feeling. Feeling comprises the subtle underpinning of everything. Let's take one example from *rasa*, the flavor of life. According to Ayurveda, the six tastes are: sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent.

Rasa translates as taste

Ayurveda takes the concept of *rasa* beyond what the tongue tastes. There is something subtler and more pervasive about the flavor of life. You can see this with the words we use in English. We say bitter greens, but also a bitter dispute, a bitter divorce, a bitter memory, and a bitter relationship. We say sour lemon, but also sour grapes (meaning envy), a sour mood, a sour note in music, and deals gone sour.

Each of the six *rasas* seems to have a root experience—they are like a family of flavors that pervade your life. In Ayurveda, if sweetness goes out of balance, the result can be obesity and putting on fat, but there is also a mental link to lethargy and anxiety. This is too vast a subject to cover in its entirety in one article, but anyone can look at the flavor of their life and assess the difference, for example, between a sweet existence and a sour one.

Tattva translates as qualities

In terms of *tattva*, or qualities, a personal connection goes beyond the five senses.

Red, for instance can be measured as a certain wavelength in the visible spectrum of light, but red can also be hot, angry, passionate, bloody, or alarming.

Green is more than a wavelength along the spectrum from red. Green is cool, soothing, fresh, and reminiscent of spring.

What is crucial to realize is that these human qualities are more basic to existence than the measurable ones that science reduces to data. If you faint at the sight of red or feel buoyant at the first greening of spring, it's not wavelengths of light you are responding to but a complex of qualities, flavors, and emotions that combine to create an experience.

Sattva translates as purity

Now, what is the best approach to this wild complexity, which is far too intricate to handle one bit at a time?

You can feel your way to well-being by increasing the life-enhancing ingredients that in Sanskrit are called *sattva*, usually translated as "purity." A *sattvic* life has a holistic effect as you begin to refine your sensations in all aspects of your life.



Cultivate a Sattvic life

Here are some ways to favor purity and cultivate well-being:

- Add to the sweetness in your life and decrease or eliminate whatever feels bitter or sour.
- In your relationships, focus on respect, harmony, dignity, and conscious communication.
- Be compassionate without forcing yourself into a rigid kind of positivity.
- Be authentic as you act from love.
- Find a sense of reverence for nature.
- Go outside and appreciate nature's beauty and gifts.
- Be calm within yourself; don't add to the agitation around you.
- Respect other people's subtle feelings.
- Be aware that every situation has a feeling and mood that we need to be aware of and respect.
- Practice nonviolence.
- Be of service. Let the world be as close to you as your family.
- Tell the truth without harshness.
- Do what you know to be right.
- Seek the presence of the divine.

What is a sweet life?

This is an outline of a simple, well-regulated life that avoids agitation and chaos. As a framework, it allows for a good deal of personal interpretation. You can decide what makes your life sweet, for example.

In the Ayurvedic tradition, diet is central, and the *rasa*, or taste, of sweetness is preferred. A *sattvic* diet is supposed to give lightness to body and mind. It is primarily vegetarian, focused on fruits, milk, grains, nuts, and other sweet foods. Yet life can't be sweet all the time.

The original intent of the Vedic sages wasn't to call some *rasas* good and others bad. Every *rasa*, including bitter and astringent, has its place in the metabolizing of experience. The sages were intent on giving positive signals to the brain and receiving positive signals back. Since the brain is the creation of consciousness, *sattva* begins in your awareness. If you practice purity because you want to and it feels good, your brain will be able to operate with much higher self-regulation. The best self-regulation is automatic, but you need to instill it first. Then, more and more, you can leave things to your autonomic nervous system, confident that it will support the well-being of your cells, tissues, and organs. The result will be a happier, healthier, and more spiritually enriched life.

Balancing through smell

Teach balance through smell

In this part of class, you will teach students the last and most primitive of the five senses, the sense of smell, which connects us directly with our emotions, memories, and instincts.

What to say

Use or modify the following 9 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Provide an overview of the sense of smell.

Aromas can trigger the healing power within. Our sense of smell connects us powerfully with our emotions, memories, and instincts.

Recall the scent of the earth after the first spring rain, the aroma of a homemade meal at your grandmother's house, or the fragrance of a newborn baby, and notice the feelings and memories that are evoked.

Now, think about the smells associated with a hospital or the odor of something old in your refrigerator, and you may experience a completely different response.

02. Introduce the concept of neuro-associative conditioning.

You can use aromas to invoke states of well-being. The linking of a particular smell to an emotional state is known as neuro-associative conditioning, a technique that can be used to increase our body's healing response and activate our inner pharmacy.

For example, if each time you sit to meditate, you use a sandalwood fragrance, you will soon learn to associate the feeling of relaxation with the aroma. At other times, simply smelling the fragrance will trigger a sense of quiet relaxation.

03. Teach your students how to invoke well-being using aromatherapy.

To benefit from the healing effects of aromatherapy, identify an aroma that you are especially fond of and deeply inhale the essence whenever you are feeling relaxed, at peace or are having a particularly good day. Gradually your body will associate the pleasurable feelings with the use of the aroma. Before long, just the smell of the essence will evoke a heightened state of well-being.

04. Explain that we can use aromas to balance the doshas.

We can use the sense of smell to trigger our inner healing response and balance the mind. For each dosha mind imbalance, we need to use specific kinds of aromas.

05. Tell your students which scents balance Vata.

To correct Vata mind imbalances, we need to use floral, fruity, warm, sweet, and sour smells such as basil, orange, clove, lavender, vanilla, patchouli, and geranium.

06. Soothing scents for Pitta.

Pitta mind imbalances can be soothed with sweet and cooling fragrances like sandalwood, mint, rose, lavender, and jasmine.

07. Stimulating scents for kapha.

To correct Kapha mind imbalances, we need to use spicy, stimulating, and heating smells such as eucalyptus, camphor, juniper, rosemary, marjoram, and clove.

08. Next introduce an activity.

I'm going to pass around a selection of aromas for you to smell. As you sample each one, observe the reaction in your body. If you are drawn to it, it is probably a fragrance that will help to balance your current state of health.

09. Wrap up.

You can use aromatherapy in a variety of ways. Some essences are formulated to be applied directly to the skin, like a perfume, while others are intended to be diffused in the air. Filling your home and office with pleasing smells will help to balance your physiology and may even have a positive influence on your visitors.

If you teach this part of class in person, come prepared with a variety of scents for students to try.

- For Vata, have orange, vanilla, or lavender on hand, as those are likely the most common scents students will have available at home and can experiment with right away.
- Lavender is also a wonderful scent to balance Pitta, so you may want to bring lavender, or perhaps, jasmine or mint, to cool Pitta dosha.
- To balance and invigorate Kapha, bring eucalyptus, rosemary, or clove for your students to try.

Note: Just like with Eating Awareness Activity in the Ayurvedic Nutrition class, when teaching this activity, be sure to ask if anyone has any allergies to particular scents or oils before passing the samples to your students.

You can foster a brief discussion by letting your students experiment with the scents that best balance their doshas. If you've brought oils, for example, let them inhale a bit of their dosha-balancing oil, then ask them to close their eyes to notice how they feel when they experience this scent. After the students open their eyes, ask for volunteers to share what they experienced.

In addition, while essential oils are a staple in many households, some students may be new to them. Let your students know that they can also experience their respective dosha-balancing scents through things like candles, incense, foods, and teas.

How to use aromatherapy for healing

Dive deeper

It's no secret. Scent has a powerful effect on your life. Just a hint of a particular aroma can conjure memories—both good and bad. It can even have a physical effect on you, depending on what you associate with that aroma.

This is why cultures for centuries have used the sense of smell as a pathway to encourage health and healing. They recognized the relationship between the nose and scent as a way to help unify the physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of ourselves.

Aromatherapy is the art of using naturally extracted aromatic oils from plants and is often associated with alternative medicine. While the scientific evidence is lacking regarding the physical healing properties of essential oils, there is increasing evidence of aromatherapy's mood-altering effects. This is due to the olfactory system's primary pathway involving the amygdala, which is part of the limbic system and is linked to emotions and memories. It's no wonder scent can invoke such powerful feelings.

According to Ayurveda and many cultures around the world, the mind and body do not operate independently; they are in constant concert with one another. It would make sense that if one's state of mind is uplifted with the use of aromatherapy, our body would respond likewise by shifting its trajectory towards improved functioning, too.

In fact, modern science has shown that there are olfactory (smell) receptors in several organs in the body thereby giving a mechanism of action by which smells from essential oils may exert effects on the body directly. In fact, small receptors have been found in the lungs, kidneys, blood vessels and many other organs.

Sometimes we need to go back to our roots and rediscover the effects of time-tested techniques such as the use of aroma as a complement for healthy living.

If you're feeling like you could use some extra help to improve overall well-being, the aromatic path might be for you.

Reference

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Aromatherapy tips

Read the label

There is an abundant amount of information—as well as products on the market—relating to aromatherapy. It can be hard to know where to start. You can begin by learning how to choose a high-quality oil. Look for labels that list the following information:

- Common name, Latin name
- Country of origin
- Part of the plant processed
- Type of extraction
- How it was grown (organic, wild-crafted, or unsprayed is ideal)

Companies that truly care about their product will gladly reveal this information. There is little regulation around the creation and usage of aromatherapy products. However, the National Association for Holistic Aromatherapy (NAHA) and the Alliance of International Aromatherapists (AIA) are two organizations that focus on enhancing public awareness and encouraging responsible and safe practices. Educate yourself and know where your products are coming from; there are a lot of synthetic products being sold at cheap prices. The closer to the plant you can get, the better.

Find the right essential oil

The fun part is choosing the appropriate plant or essential oil for you. Remember to listen to your own body's intuition. Nature speaks to us as individuals in different ways. What works for your friend may not work the same for you. Here are a few essential oils with some of the commonly known benefits to get you started:

- Peppermint – improves focus, boosts energy, alleviates muscle pain and headaches
- Rosemary – uplifts, can improve brain function and memory
- Lavender – relieves stress, calms, helps with insomnia
- Eucalyptus – invigorates, improves respiratory issues, enhances concentration
- Sandalwood – grounds, calms, eases tension
- Rose – helps with depression and anxiety, can be an aphrodisiac
- Citrus (grapefruit, lemon, lime, mandarin, orange, tangerine) – uplifts, boosts immunity, cleanses, enhances creativity

Check out your local health food stores, co-ops, and farmers markets for essential oils. There are also some excellent online sources. It's helpful to test various scents by different companies. Trust your nose to tell you when you have found the right one. It also helps to do some research and find out more about the potential benefits of different oils.



When is the best time to use oil?

When it comes down to timing, the great thing about aromatherapy is it can be used anywhere and anytime. For example:

- Using lavender while traveling can help you stay calm and relaxed amidst the rush.
- If you're feeling a little sluggish in the morning, try some eucalyptus; it's like a splash of cool water for your brain.
- If you're feeling overwhelmed and having a hard time thinking clearly, use rosemary as a natural and effective way to gain clarity and clear brain fog.

Whether at the office, in the kitchen, or by the bed, having your oil readily accessible and in view will increase usage, and can be a powerful tool to alleviate some of the daily travails of life.

Essential oils can be used in many ways

Here are a few of our favorite ways to use essential oils but keep in mind, a little goes a long way, and in most cases, 1 to 2 drops will be sufficient.

Topical application

- Place on pulse points such as temples, inner wrists, or elbows, back of the neck, or anywhere where you can enjoy the scent.
- Place a few drops on your palm, rub your hands together, and inhale deeply.

Aromatic diffusion

- Use a diffuser (electric or ultrasonic) to disperse essential oil into the surrounding air.
- Make your own spritzer by adding a few drops of your favorite oil to water in a spray bottle.
- Try steam inhalation. Simply add a couple of drops of essential oil, such as eucalyptus, to a bowl of steaming hot water. Carefully drape a towel over your head, close your eyes, and breathe in the steam, keeping your head at least an arm's length away from the bowl. This technique can be particularly good for respiratory issues and sinus congestion.

Baths and compresses

- A few drops of oil in your bath.
- Steeping a washcloth in water infused with essential oil can do wonders as a compress to soothe and relax your body/mind.

Diluting the essential oil

Keep in mind essential oils are highly concentrated so it's important to do a skin test before using. Place a drop anywhere on the inner part of your arm and wait a few minutes to see if there is any discomfort. If there is any reaction, coat the area with vegetable oil and then wash with warm, soapy water.

In general, when using aromatherapy topically, it's beneficial to have a carrier oil on hand, such as olive oil, coconut oil, or almond oil, to dilute the essential oil and make it gentle on the skin. Dilution increases the surface area of absorption and can prevent skin reactions. This does not reduce the effectiveness of the essential oil. A good ratio to use when making your dilution is 5 drops of oil per ½ teaspoon of carrier oil. Reduce or increase this based on your preference.

Keep in mind that you can benefit from aromatherapy without using essential oils. A good way to enjoy rosemary is to pick it fresh and roll it between your fingertips to release the aroma. The smell of culinary herbs when you're cooking can be beneficial for the senses, making the mouth water in anticipation. The world is alive with fragrance—you just have to take notice.

Important notes re: aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is not meant to cure all ills although it can take the edge off so your body and mind can function in an optimal state. The plant world has offered us numerous medicinal benefits, but improper use can be hazardous. Be sure to read all labels and warnings.

If you have a specific health problem or concern, talk to your primary care physician as well as a practitioner who is knowledgeable about aromatherapy to ensure there are no unexpected side effects.

Keep essential oils away from little children who may be enticed by the smell and want to ingest.

Healing benefits of laughter

The power of laughter!

Wrap up class with a light-hearted discussion on the power and healing benefits of laughter.

What to say

The following 3 talking points will help guide your discussion.

01. Introduce the power of laughing.

Do you remember the last time you laughed so hard that you could barely breathe? Even if you were in the midst of a difficult situation, you may have felt lightened by a feeling of pure joy and ease, letting go of the past and forgetting the future.

02. Tie in the science.

It turns out that laughter is good for our body and soul. Scientific research has found that a good belly laugh enhances immune function for 24 hours.

03. Talk about the benefits.

Laughter also decreases stress levels, relieves pain, eases depression, and can even improve our memory. Best of all, it feels good.

Make this your own

Don't forget to have fun and make this topic your own! To reinforce the concept of laughter's healing powers, use your creativity when teaching your students. And remind them to create lightness in their lives with laughter and have fun with all the information you have shared.

There are countless of light, fun, and short videos you can share with your students, if you have the equipment available to you. Just be sure to keep the content appropriate for all audiences.

Another exercise you can use to highlight this concept is to have students share the silliest joke they know. As you introduce this activity, again, make certain to gently remind the group to keep it light and appropriate.



Class 5 Teaching Ayurvedic Daily Routines



Creating a healthy daily routine

Learn to teach Ayurvedic Daily Routines

Every cell in our body is governed by cycles of rest and activity that developed in synchrony with the rhythms of nature. When our inner biological clocks are out of harmony with the pulses of nature, we experience irritability, fatigue, and an increased likelihood of illness. When our internal rhythms are in tune with those of nature, we experience vitality and joy. Our bodies intrinsically know when it is time to eat, rest, and act in order to experience optimal vitality. We simply need to listen to and honor the messages being transmitted.

The material in this session will help you guide your students to create a daily routine that is aligned with the rhythms of nature, allowing them to experience their full potential for health and well-being.

Topics and checklist

Class 5 topics

- Creating a healthy daily routine
- Mindful movement
- Restful sleep
- Living in harmony with the seasons

It's important to note that we have divided the Ayurvedic Daily Routine content into three separate lessons in this session so that you can gain a solid understanding of how to present. However, when you teach this material to your students, you'll teach this entire session to your students as one class.

Checklist

- Pens for students
- Computer and internet connection (if you are teaching virtually)
- Laptop, screen, projector, small table, and extension cords (optional if you are teaching in-person using a presentation deck, such as Power Point or Keynote)
- Dry erase board or flip chart with pens (optional)
- Handouts from S7 Resources or Program Resources (optional)

Note: A PowerPoint template for Teaching Ayurvedic Daily Routines is available under S7 Resources and Program Resources. You can customize this template for your own presentation.

Introduction to Ayurvedic daily routines class

Checking in

Start by greeting students and checking in with them to answer any questions from the last class: Inner Pharmacy.

At the beginning of the class, check in with your students and ask them about their experiences exploring the inner pharmacy. You can ask them, “What practices did you try and what did you notice?” Also, ask them if they have questions about any other points you have shared with them up until this class.

What to say

Use or modify the script below for your introduction.

I'm pleased to welcome you back to the final class in the Chopra Health program.

Throughout the course, we have been exploring many practices for cultivating health and emotional well-being. Now in the final class, we will be putting it all together, learning how to create an Ayurvedic daily routine that weaves these healing practices into our daily lives.

Ayurvedic daily routines class overview

What's coming up

Now, you'll provide your students with a class overview.

What to say

Use or modify the 3 talking points below for the Ayurvedic Daily Routines class overview.

Keep in mind, what you are teaching your students is not prescriptive. Often, students can feel anxious when learning these practices because they feel they have to do them all to be successful.

- 01.** Give them an overview of the topics you'll be covering.

The topics in this class include the rhythms of nature, the dosha clock and the characteristics of each dosha time period, creating an optimal daily routine, doshas and the seasons, seasonal routines, detoxification, restful sleep, and mindful movement.

- 02.** Explain the Ayurvedic practices you'll be teaching.

You will be guided in how to instruct a variety of Ayurvedic practices, such as using a neti pot, nasya, oil pulling, and Abhyanga self-massage.

- 03.** Tell them how you'll begin the class.

We are going to begin with some basic movement (five minutes, optional) and a mindfulness meditation.

Remember, all of the sample scripts and talking points are included in your S7 Resources or Program for easy reference. As you go through the course, make notes for ways you would like to customize the suggested scripts and topics to reflect your personal style and anecdotes.



Encourage and inspire students

Encourage your students to be kind to themselves and let go of the idea that they need to do everything perfectly or all at once. Remind them that by taking consistent, small steps, they will create an Ayurvedic lifestyle that will expand their health and happiness.

There are some great points we can also make as a teacher.

- It is important to bring these practices into your own life. This will give you insight into the challenges and benefits you experience and give you firsthand experience to share with your students. Make this lesson your own.
- When possible, share your tips and ways you've brought these practices into your life, including modified versions or hacks. For instance, you may do your morning oil pulling while you are in the shower to save time.
- Remember that in the S6 Resources and Program Resources, there are instructions for a mini-self abhyanga, focusing on the head and feet. Students will start to bring the benefits of these practices into their life little by little.

Rhythms of nature

Universal rhythms of nature

Keep in mind that some of the terms and ideas may be new to students. Be prepared for questions.

What to say

Use the following 6 talking points to help guide your discussion. Examples are provided but do your best to make this part your own.

- 01.** Explain to your students that they are one with nature.

We are one with the universal rhythms of nature. Although our senses lead us to perceive that we are separate from the world around us, we are constantly exchanging energy and information with the environment. When our internal rhythms are in synchrony with those of the environment, we experience well-being.

- 02.** Make the connection between our biology and cycles of nature.

Life moves in recurring cycles of rest and activity. Every cell, organ, and system in our body/mind operates according to predictable rhythms, with periods of dynamic activity and times of quietness. These same patterns of rest and activity are found within the cycles of nature. Our cells and biological cycles mirror the cycles of nature, as our cells are constantly sensing, and in communication with, the environment around us.

- 03.** Provide examples.

For example, the sun rises, shines brightly, and sets; the seasons flow one into another; and the tides rise and fall in response to the moon's influence. In the same way, the fires of our digestion rise and fall within our mind-body system; our hormones fluctuate according to a 24-hour rhythm; and our moods, mental agility, and motor skills cycle through relatively predictable highs and lows throughout the day. Even the years of our lifespans move through seasons—the spring reflects our youth, summer our adulthood, and autumn the season of our older years.

- 04.** Challenge your students to tune in to these natural rhythms.

In our modern society, many of us are unaware of the natural rhythms of our body and are guided instead by habit and convenience. We tend to ignore our internal signals and rely on external ones. The result is often compromised health, fatigue, and the accumulation of toxicity in our body/mind.



05. Describe the primary rhythms of nature.

There are primary rhythms that govern distinct patterns within the human body. Throughout today's class, we will be exploring the effects these rhythms have on us and how we can adjust our routines to be in harmony with them:

- Circadian rhythms: 24-hour cycle of night and day
- Seasonal rhythms: 12-month cycle of the Earth around the sun
- Lunar rhythms: monthly cycle of the moon around the Earth
- Tidal rhythms: gravitational influence of the moon on the water
- Celestial rhythms: rhythms of planetary movement

06. Wrap up with the benefits of tuning into nature.

Adopting a regular daily routine helps us to be in synchrony with our environment, creating greater energy, happiness, and well-being. As we discuss suggestions for a balanced lifestyle in tune with the rhythms of nature, identify a few that you would like to begin weaving into your life.

Doshas and the rhythms of nature

How the rhythms are governed

It's time to teach your students how the rhythms of nature are governed by the doshas.

What to say

Use or modify the 4 talking points below to teach your students how to tune into nature using the dosha clock.

- 01.** Teach your students how the day cycles through the doshas twice.

From the Ayurvedic perspective, the daily rhythms of nature are governed by the doshas. Every day, we experience two 12-hour cycles, from sunrise to sunset, and again from sunset to sunrise. Each cycle has a Kapha phase, a Pitta phase, and a Vata phase, and the qualities that are dominant during that time will be the qualities of the respective dosha. This is reflected in both our external and internal environments.

- 02.** Tell them the Kapha, Pitta, and Vata hours.

The approximate times are as follows:

First Cycle

6 a.m. to 10 a.m. – Kapha

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. – Pitta

2 p.m. to 6 p.m. – Vata

Second Cycle

6 p.m. to 10 p.m. – Kapha

10 p.m. to 2 a.m. – Pitta

2 a.m. to 6 a.m. – Vata

- 03.** Make the connection between the dosha clock and daily activities.

We are meant to live in tune with the master cycles of the dosha clock—rather than fighting against them.

For example, Ayurveda recommends that we eat our largest meal of the day at noon, when the Pitta principle is strongest and our digestive fire, or agni, is the most powerful just as the sun is strongest at this time of day. Modern circadian research is validating the importance of aligning with these natural daily rhythms.



04.Wrap up.

Ayurveda provides an optimal daily routine that helps us live in tune with nature so that we can experience our natural state of health and well-being.

You can let your students know that these doshic cycles will become easier to follow as they focus on how they are beneficial for good health. For instance, through your discussion of the optimal daily routine, which is your next topic, your students will see practical ways in which they can connect with these various times of day in ways that will make them feel balanced and happy.

As you segue into your daily routine discussion, encourage your students—if they are not doing so already—to integrate some of the practices you are sharing into their usual routines and journal about how these new, healthy habits make them feel.

Optimal daily routine

Ayurvedic daily routine

In this part of the lesson, you will describe the Ayurvedic routine in four parts—morning, mid-day, evening, and bedtime.

What to say

Use or modify the 12 talking points below to explain the Ayurvedic morning routine.

- 01.** Make students aware that the Optimal Daily Routine does not necessarily need to be in this order.

These are not in a specific order, although it is good to start with meditation. They should be done in the order that seems right. Choose the ones that feel best and most needed for you, and slowly add in other practices over time.

This is a common concern among students.

- 02.** Encourage your students to practice mindful awareness techniques in the morning.

Meditate and practice pranayama techniques that are comfortable for you.

Meditating early in the morning coincides with the body's quieter rhythms. As you develop a morning meditation routine, you will find it gives you the brightness and alertness to enjoy the rest of your day.

The practice of pranayama will activate the body's relaxation response and engage its natural self-repair and healing mechanisms. Coherence breathing and nadi shodhana are recommended.

In Sessions 8 & 9, you'll learn how to teach these mindful awareness practices.

- 03.** Let your students know that an Ayurvedic morning routine starts when the sun comes up.

The ideal waking time is around 6 a.m., or approximately the time of the sunrise. Awaken without an alarm clock, if possible since alarm clocks can be a jarring way to wake up. Try keeping your shades or curtains open and see if the light of the sun naturally awakens you.

Getting up early ensures that you will benefit from the qualities of lightness and activity that are present in the environment in the early morning, at the end of Vata time. When waking up later into Kapha time, you may notice more sluggishness and difficulty getting going.

04. Explain the benefits of drinking warm lemon water.

Empty your bowels and bladder. You may also want to drink a glass of warm water with a slice of lemon as this signals the physiology to eliminate toxins by stimulating the gastro-colic reflex. You may choose to do this before meditation so your body will be relaxed and comfortable for meditation.

05. Introduce oil pulling.

Perform oil pulling, an Ayurvedic practice that removes the unhealthy bacteria and other toxins that accumulate in your mouth, thereby reducing plaque and inflammation. Oil pulling promotes healthy gums and teeth, helps eliminate bad breath, and purifies the taste buds, which enhances your enjoyment of food.

Refer to **S7 Resources** or **Program Resources** for an Oil Pulling student handout.

06. Then brush your teeth and clean your tongue.

Brush and floss your teeth. Then clean your tongue with a tongue cleaner.

Reference:

Dr. Sheila Patel (2020): <https://chopra.com/articles/the-benefits-of-tongue-scraping>

07. Teach your students how to use a neti pot.

Cleanse and nourish your nasal passages using a neti pot and nasya. This assists in removing debris from the nasal passages.

Review the neti pot and nasya instructions and contraindications in **S7 Resources** or **Program Resources**.

08. Then it's time to move.

Enjoy some exercise to get your energy flowing.

09. Continue with self-massage.

Massage your body with oil. The Ayurvedic abhyanga, or oil massage, is an important aspect of the daily routine that provides a stabilizing influence all day long. Massage nourishes the tissues, stimulates the skin's pharmacy, improves circulation, increases alertness, assists in detoxification, and improves immunity. You learned how to perform an abhyanga in the Inner Pharmacy class.

Refer to **S6 Resources** or **Program Resources** for an Abhyanga Self-Massage student handout.

10. Take a shower.

Bathe or take a shower.

**11.** Eat breakfast.

Eat breakfast with awareness, but only if you are hungry. Also, remember to eat according to your hunger level.

12. Move into work and activity

Perform morning work and activity.

Ayurvedic mid-day routine

After teaching the daily routine to your students, it's time to teach the mid-day routine.

What to say

Here are 5 talking points to help guide your explanation of the mid-day routine.

01. Recommend that your students eat lunch between noon and 1 pm when digestion is the strongest.

Try to eat lunch between noon and 1p.m. during the Pitta hours or at least aim for the hours between 10a.m. - 2p.m.

Your noon meal should be the largest of the day, as this is the time of day when your digestive powers are the strongest.

02. Suggest that your students "take five" after lunch.

Sit quietly for five minutes after eating.

03. Then go for a short walk.

Walk for five to fifteen minutes to aid digestion.

04. Get back into activity.

Perform afternoon work and activity.

05. End the workday with a late afternoon meditation.

Meditate and practice pranayama in the late afternoon. It's best to do your second meditation of the day before dinner and not too close to bedtime. Meditating in the late afternoon enhances your body's self-repair mechanisms, releases any stress you have experienced during the day, and helps you enjoy a relaxing evening and a good night's sleep.

Pranayama practices activate the body's parasympathetic nervous system, which governs the rest-and-digest response, also known as the relaxation response. Practice a technique that is best for you at the end of your day, such as nadi shodhana or ujjayi.

In Sessions 8 & 9, you'll learn how to teach these mindful awareness practices.

Ayurvedic evening routine

You've covered the daily and mid-day routine to your students, now it's time to teach the evening routine.

What to say

These 3 talking points will help you teach a simple evening routine.

01. Suggest a lighter meal in the evening.

Eat a light dinner at least two hours before bedtime so that the digestion process doesn't interfere with your sleep. Dinner should be a smaller meal than lunch.

02. Rest after dinner.

Sit quietly for five minutes after eating.

03. Take a stroll.

Take a leisurely stroll for five to fifteen minutes to aid digestion.

Ayurvedic bedtime routine

Now it's time to teach the bedtime routine.

What to say

Use or modify these 4 talking points to wrap up the optimal routine discussion with bedtime tips.

- 01.** Tell your students it's best to avoid intense activity before bed.

Favor light activities in the evening. Avoid intense mental tasks or emotional interactions, such as managing your finances, arguing with someone, or watching the news before you go to bed.

- 02.** Then give them a few tips to relax.

Take a warm bath, if you like, to relax your body/mind and begin to dim the lights. You can also use relaxing aromatherapy.

- 03.** Suggest they enjoy light reading or soft music.

Avoid watching TV, engaging with your phone, and using other electronic devices in bed. Instead, enjoy some light or inspirational reading and listen to soft music.

- 04.** Next give them a bedtime to aim for.

Aim to be in bed with the lights off by 10 p.m.

Let your students know that later in the lesson you will be teaching them restful sleep techniques.

You can help your students understand and remember the doshic cycles by reiterating the real-world examples you have provided. As you noted, according to Ayurveda, lunch should be the largest meal of the day, to be eaten when the sun is highest in the sky—fiery Pitta time—so that our agni, or digestive fire, is strong and powerful. At night, during Pitta time, the body performs important detoxification functions, which is one of the many reasons sleeping at the proper time is so important.

Ask your group how they feel when they sleep until 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning. Do they still feel tired and sluggish despite getting extra hours of sleep? It's likely that more than one student will have had such an experience. You can then explain that they feel heaviness because they've woken up during Kapha time. It is that same feeling that makes them want to wind down and prepare for sleep at day's end, from 6:00 to 10:00 in the evening. Therefore, rising early in the morning will also help them find balance as they start the day.

Vata time can be a very creative time, whether in the morning or afternoon. There is also a feeling of lightness during that time. Many people will wake up during Vata time, 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., feeling refreshed. You can tell your students that Vata time is the ideal time not only to be creative, but also to perform the morning routine to reap the greatest benefits from the prana of a new day.



Challenges to routine

Some students may have questions about the Optimal Daily Routine as it fits into their unique schedules. Here are a couple of questions that might come up:

- "I work nights and my workday ends at 6am. How do I follow an Ayurvedic schedule?"
- "My family responsibilities and/or busy work schedule make this routine impossible. What do I do?"

When these questions come up, remind your students that the Optimal Daily Routine should be used only as a guideline. There is an ebb and flow to the transitions of the dosha hours. What is most important is to add in a few practices gradually. If they can't incorporate the entire schedule, incorporating parts of the daily routine will make a large impact on their lives. In addition, they will understand the concepts and be able to align more with their natural cycles when the time is right.

Oil pulling instructions

Ayurvedic oil pulling

The next topic is teaching your students how to perform an Ayurvedic oil pulling.

What to say

Use or modify the following 7 talking points to explain the Ayurvedic practice of oil pulling.

01. Give your students an overview.

Oil pulling is an Ayurvedic practice that has been used for thousands of years to detoxify the body and promote good health. It is a simple practice that you perform soon after waking, before eating or brushing your teeth.

02. Now tell your students the benefits.

Some of the benefits of oil pulling include:

- *Removes the unhealthy bacteria and other toxins, or ama, that accumulate in your mouth, thereby reducing plaque and inflammation.*
- *Promotes healthy gums and teeth*
- *Helps eliminate bad breath*
- *Purifies the taste buds, which enhances your enjoyment of food*
- *Nourishes the mucus membranes of the mouth.*
- *Exercises the muscles of the face and jaw.*

03. Bring in the science.

Oil pulling is a healthy alternative to using commercial mouthwashes that contain artificial sweeteners, synthetic colorings, and toxic chemicals such as formaldehyde (also known as quaternium-15), saccharine, sodium lauryl sulfate, and methyl salicylate. The benefits of oil pulling may extend beyond good oral hygiene.

In the Ayurvedic tradition, each section the tongue is connected to a different organ location, including the lungs, heart, kidneys, liver, small intestines, colon, stomach, and spine. Thoroughly swishing the mouth with oil stimulates all regions of the tongue and therefore purifies and nourishes the entire mind-body system.

04. Teach your students the process.

Take a tablespoon of high-quality oil and swish it gently in your mouth for twenty minutes, making sure to pull it back and forth through your teeth.

Tell your students if their jaws become sore or tired, they are probably swishing too vigorously. They may want to begin with five minutes and build up to the full twenty minutes.

05. Then give them a practical tip.

When you're done swishing, spit out the oil into a trash can rather than into a sink or toilet as the oil could damage your pipes. Then rinse your mouth well with warm water.

Refer to *S7 Resources* or *Program Resources for Exercise: Oil Pulling student handout*.

06. Recommend oils.

Traditionally, sesame or coconut oil is used for oil pulling. However, any high-quality oil can be used.

07. Wrap up.

Keep in mind that oil pulling is one part of a healthy oral-care regime that includes daily flossing and brushing.

Note: *Some students might ask you for more benefits with oil pulling. Another benefit you can bring up is how it helps with inflammation:*

- Many modern studies have linked gum health with heart health because bacteria in the gums can enter the bloodstream and trigger inflammation in the body.
- Inflammation is one of the major sources of damage to the blood vessels, including those in the heart.
- By reducing unhealthy bacteria in your mouth, you can help decrease inflammation throughout your body.

In your *S7 Resources* and *Program Resources*, you will find a student handout *Exercise: Ayurvedic Oil Pulling* document that you can give your students. This document will also help you teach this process.

Neti pot instructions

Ayurvedic nasal cleaning

The next topic is teaching your students how to perform a traditional Ayurvedic nasal cleansing technique.

What to say

Use or modify the following 8 talking points to explain nasal cleansing using a neti pot.

- 01.** Explain what a neti pot is and why your students may want to use it.

Nasal cleansing using a neti pot is a traditional Ayurvedic practice that purifies and revitalizes the breathing passages. A neti pot is a small container with a spout that can be gently placed into your nostrils, allowing you to administer warm salt water. This process naturally removes excess mucus, pollen, dust, and other environmental irritants from the sinus passages while naturally moisturizing the nasal tissue .

- 02.** Tell your students the benefits.

Using a neti pot can help:

- *Reduce allergies*
- *Relieve sinus and nasal congestion*
- *Ease headaches*
- *Prevent upper respiratory infections and colds*
- *Improve your sense of smell and taste*
- *Decrease snoring*
- *Soothe dry nasal passages*
- *Improve breathing*
- *Reduce the need for medications such as antihistamines and decongestants*

- 03.** Give your students a few pointers.

A typical neti pot holds about 2/3 cup of water, to which you add approximately 1/8 teaspoon of salt. It is particularly important to use clean water and salt in your neti pot. Therefore, we recommend using distilled, sterile, or filtered water, as well as salt that is specifically packaged for neti-pot use.



04. Now show them how to use the neti pot. (Optional)

Note: *It is imperative that you practice this technique before teaching this to students. If you choose not to demonstrate, you can show your students a neti pot and mimic how it works.*

Place the spout of the neti pot in one nostril and gently pour in the warm salt water. Your head should be positioned at about a 45-degree angle, so the water runs out the other nostril. Repeat the process on the other nostril. Be sure to clean your neti pot after each use.

Tell your students that it's a good idea to use a neti pot before taking a plane flight to keep your breathing passages moist.

05. Next teach your students about *nasya*.

After explaining how to use a neti pot, you will teach your students about nasya, an Ayurvedic practice in which you lubricate the nasal membranes with a few drops of oil. It's especially important to use nasya after the neti pot because the oil will nourish the freshly cleared nasal passages and help prevent drying.

Note: *Refer to S7 Resources or Program Resources for a handout with Nasya information including benefits and contraindications.*

06. Help them choose the right *nasya* oil.

Choose an edible grade of sesame, almond, or olive oil. You can also use herbalized aromatic oils that contain small amounts of camphor, eucalyptus, or menthol.

07. Now teach them how to apply the oil.

Place a drop of the oil on your baby finger, or the tip of a cotton swab, and apply it gently inside your nostril. Then gently inhale or massage the outside of the nostrils in circular movements, allowing the oil to penetrate the nasal membranes. Repeat on the other side.

08. Tell your students when and how often to apply *nasya*.

You can apply nasya several times per day. It is particularly recommended when the weather is cold, dry, or windy, as well as when the air is filled with pollen or dust.

Some students will say they have tried using a neti pot and were uncomfortable with the process or that they just don't understand how to use it. Such challenges can be easily addressed.

The uncomfortable feeling often has to do with the position of one's head when using a neti pot. The best way to explain how to fix this issue is to be familiar with the practice. That way, you can demonstrate proper head positioning for your group. Additionally, there are now many different types of neti pots available on the market, ranging from those that resemble teapots to those that look a bit like squirt bottles.



Encouraging your students to find the right style that works for them can make all the difference.

When talking about nasya, you can ask your students if they have ever been on a dry airplane or visited a cold climate in winter that later left their nasal passages feeling dry and sore. As your students recall these experiences, you can emphasize how important nasya is to keep the nasal passages moist.

Perhaps the most important point to emphasize with neti pot and nasya is the need for cleanliness, given the nasal passages' close proximity to the sinuses and brain. The neti pot should be clean, and the water and salt should also be free of contamination. In addition, it should never feel forceful or uncomfortable. If that is the case, reduce the force of the flow until it feels comfortable and gentle. With nasya, the hands should be washed before inserting the oil, and pure, organic oil is best.

Note: In your S7 Resources and Program Resources, you will find a student handout Exercise: Neti Pot Nasal Cleaning and Nasya document that you can give your students. This document will also help you teach this process.



Daily cycles of Ayurveda

Dive deeper

Every day the sun rises, the sun sets, and hundreds of different things happen in between. Nature is so beautifully arranged that no matter how different the things in between are, they fit into one rhythm.

Actually, there are many rhythms nestled one inside another, wheels within wheels. Modern medicine has disclosed many of the more obvious cycles in our bodies—the heart beating every three-quarters of a second, the lungs swelling to inhale air ten to fourteen times a minute. But many of the body’s changes remain mysterious.

Daily waves of change

Every day two waves of change pass through us.

Each wave brings a Kapha cycle, then a Pitta cycle, and finally a Vata cycle. These three phases take place from sunrise to sunset, then again from sunset to sunrise.



One of the basic aspects of living in tune with nature is to respect these master cycles that support our physical existence. We are meant to ride nature’s waves, not to fight against them. In fact, our bodies are already riding them, or doing the best they can in the face of our contrary habits.

Ayurveda provides an ideal schedule called the dinacharya, or daily routine, which shows us how to live in harmony with nature.



First cycle

The day's first cycle from sunrise to sunset.

Kapha 6am - 10am

At dawn, the day begins in a Kapha period. It is easy to see why early morning is considered Kapha—waking up, the body feels slow, heavy, relaxed, and calm, all of which are Kapha qualities.

Pitta 10am - 2pm

Some people feel more productive at mid-day. Pitta is responsible for metabolizing food, for distributing energy, and for more efficient physical functioning in general.

Vata 2pm - 6pm

The first cycle ends with a Vata period beginning at 2 p.m. Vata controls the nervous system, and in fact, researchers have discovered that people do best in mental tests during the afternoon. The times when you can add numbers the fastest (3 p.m.) and exhibit the greatest manual dexterity (4 p.m.) fall into this Vata period.

Second cycle

The day's second cycle is from sunset to sunrise. The day's second cycle repeats the same sequence of Kapha, Pitta, and Vata, but they take on a different complexion.

Kapha 6pm - 10pm

The evening is relaxed and slow, just like the early morning, but sunset brings the body back to a stable resting place. Now Kapha inclines toward inertia.

Pitta 10pm - 2am

Pitta begins intracellular digestion, detoxification, and repair. In addition, since the body is asleep, the heat generated is expended to keep you warm and fuel the rebuilding of tissues, which occurs mostly at night. If you're not asleep, you might be tempted to have midnight snack. . You'll notice that you have cravings at night during Pitta hours.

Vata 2am - 6am

The Vata period in the early-morning hours expresses itself through the nervous system, but instead of thinking quickly as you do in the afternoon, you go into longer periods of active dream sleep (called REM, or “rapid eye movement” sleep), when brain impulses are at their liveliest for the whole night. And thus, the circle of the day is complete.

By learning to ride these waves of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, your body will instinctively tune its sub cycles, its many wheels within wheels, to follow suit.



Your body's internal clock

Dive deeper

Your daily routine influences your current state of balance or imbalance.

Note: *This content excerpted with permission from **Change Your Schedule, Change Your Life**, by Dr. Suhas Kshirsagar.*

Talk about your daily routine and find out how healthy you feel. Talk about when you eat and find out why it may be easy or difficult for you to maintain your weight. Talk about when you exercise, and you'll start to know whether you are building your body's systems or wearing them down. Talk about when you turn off your television or computer at night, and you'll get clues to how sensitive you are to stress. Talk about when you fall asleep, and you may understand why (or why not) you need coffee to power your way through the afternoon—or whether you snap at your loved ones at the end of a long day when you wanted to be patient.

Does this sound like magic? It's not.

Based in science

A growing body of science reveals how closely our bodies are linked to the circadian rhythm of light and darkness, right down to the cellular level.

Don't believe it?

For decades, diabetes researchers have known that a simple way to trigger obesity in laboratory mice is to wake them up and feed them during their sleep cycle. In fact, mice gain weight within a week if researchers just expose them to low-level lights when they should be sleeping.

Reference

Fonken L, et al. (2013) [Dim light at night disrupts molecular circadian rhythms and affects metabolism. *Journal of Biological Rhythms* 28\(4\): 262-271](#)



Still don't believe us?

Think back to the last time you experienced jet lag. How did you feel? Anyone who has experienced jet lag knows the symptoms can go far beyond sleep disruption. Often, you suffer from constipation, upset stomach, cognitive fog, low energy, and an increased sensitivity to stress. A recent study even linked jet lag to weight gain because disrupting your schedule through long-distance travel confuses the microbes in your gut.

Yet these same complaints—weight gain, insomnia, exhaustion, stress, depression—are the very things that bring people to the doctor's office.

Reference

Thaiss C, et al. (2014) [Transkingdom control of microbiota diurnal oscillations promotes metabolic homeostasis. Cell 159, no. 3: 514–529.](#)

Modern life and health

Thanks to the demands of modern jobs and 24/7 connectivity, many of us live in a constant state of self-imposed jet lag, sleeping, eating, and exercising at times that don't coincide with the body's natural rhythms. But there is good news: It's not you; it's your schedule.

There is an easier way to lose weight, get energized, and get to sleep at night.

By working with your body's natural rhythms and not against them, you can create a daily schedule that will transform your health and your life.

Think about your daily rhythms

A circadian rhythm operates on a 24-hour cycle, resetting itself every morning when you first experience daylight.

Physiologists know that the body has a natural daily rhythm—a circadian rhythm. This rhythm directs the body on when to digest food, how to prepare for sleep, and how to regulate everything in your body, including blood pressure, metabolism, hormone production, body temperature, and cellular repair. Your skin cells, too, repair and regenerate on a daily schedule. Even the population of microbes in your intestinal tract changes profoundly throughout the course of a single day. Certain strains of gut bacteria proliferate during the day, while others predominate at night. At every hour of the day, your body is changing its function.

The cells and systems are primed to do different things, depending on the time of day or night. That's how we know that:

- The deepest sleep cycle is at about 2 a.m.
- Body temperature is lowest at about 4 a.m.
- The body's sharpest rise in blood pressure comes at about 6:45 a.m.
- A bowel movement is most likely at 8:30 a.m.
- Digestion is operating most efficiently at noon

- Coordination, reaction time, and cardiovascular strength peak in the afternoon; digestion powers down
- Blood pressure hits its highest daily level after sunset, along with your body's temperature
- The brain starts releasing melatonin, and your digestion slows to half speed at about 9 p.m.
- Bowel movements are suppressed, and digestion is at a crawl by 10:30 p.m.

All of this happens, or should happen, every day.

This is why your body gets so confused when you cross time zones. The light changes and the body loses its compass for controlling these bodily functions.

This is fascinating because we think we are so isolated from nature. We live in climate-controlled homes and work in offices or cubicles. And yet every system in our bodies is changing in a predictable, daily pattern. Your body is always trying to coordinate all of its systems on a central clock using available natural light.

Every organism in nature operates in this cyclical way, and a new field within biology, called chronobiology, studies all the ways in which different organisms operate in accordance with a circadian rhythm.

Researchers are now studying how our daily habits interact with this circadian rhythm and they've discovered that the modern schedule profoundly disrupts it.

Time matters

Time matters when it comes to health and well-being.

Staying up until midnight, working, and snacking at night delay the sleep cycle and disrupt sleep, only to jolt the body awake first thing in the morning when the alarm goes off.

Lack of exercise and natural light further disrupt the circadian rhythm, which in turn disrupts everything from your digestion to your hormone secretion and your nervous system.

Many people keep these nighttime habits, and then wonder why they can't fall asleep until 1:00 a.m. Then they drag themselves out of bed at 6:00 a.m. and wonder why they can't eat or concentrate in the morning.

A couple of hours of deviation from your body's natural rhythm may not seem like much, but to put this in perspective:

If you only sleep between 1:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m., it's as though you flew from California to New York in the evening, only to fly back before work.



No wonder these habits are making people feel sick.

Many common physical complaints are created or exacerbated by a modern schedule at odds with the body's needs. Fortunately, physiologists have generated a lot of new research about the body's clock and how behavior either helps strengthen the clock's signals or gets in its way. The new field of chronobiology offers insights into how you can set a daily schedule that will keep you healthy and energized.

Your body tells time

Do you know what time it is?

It may sound absurd to think that you may not know what time it is. You may be hyperaware of the time at every moment of the day. Based on your lifestyle, you may have to keep track of time because you have:

- A train to catch or kids to drop off at school
- Project deadlines, a meeting in fifteen minutes, or a call in an hour
- Dinner reservations or need to get to the dry cleaner before it closes
- An alarm clock (or two) that wakes you every morning

There is a constant awareness of time. The clock dictates many of our daily activities.

But the clock inside your body—the one that rules all of its cells and systems—is different. To understand how it works, you have to step inside the brain and into the hypothalamus.

The hypothalamus

The hypothalamus sits at the center of the brain and is responsible for regulating all of the body's systems.

Here are a few behind-the-scenes functions of the hypothalamus:

- Activates the fight-flight-freeze response when you feel stress or danger
- Tells you when you are hungry or thirsty
- Tells you that you're starving when you begin a strict diet because you are eating differently (You may know that you aren't starving, but the body is signaling to the brain that it's not getting the same amount of food as before.)
- Signals muscle fatigue and cardiovascular stress to the brain when you start a new exercise routine (It's the hypothalamus that urges you to stop.)
- Tells you that you're sleepy when you stay up late to work on a project

This part of the brain can read the body's signals and try to affect your behavior, trying to keep everything the same as it was yesterday.

The hypothalamus also regulates all kinds of things that you don't consciously control, including: body temperature, hormone balance, and metabolism. All of these changes happen at predictable times of the day.



For example, your body temperature peaks in the evening, then decreases during the night and reaches its lowest point just before dawn. Your blood pressure rises sharply as you wake up each morning, and then increases slowly throughout the day before falling during the night. The sharp rise of blood pressure in the morning comes at a time when blood platelets are stickiest, which explains why many heart attacks happen first thing in the morning. Cortisol levels, too, change at predictable times.

Cortisol is a steroid that the body produces, and it's sometimes called the "stress hormone."

The level of cortisol in your body is lowest when you go to bed and then accumulates during the night. It is partially responsible for your body's inflammatory response, so it's no wonder that those aches and pains are at their worst when you get out of bed, or that you feel most bloated and puffy in the morning. Cortisol levels discharge steadily throughout the day, fluttering briefly upward after every meal.

Colonic motility—which is a fancy term for bowel movements—changes during the day as well. First thing in the morning, the colon wakes and moves at three times its normal level of activity, with predictable results. That's why so many people feel constipated while in the throes of jet lag. A poor eating schedule can also confuse the colon. At night, the colon rests and bowel movements are suppressed. Mood and brain waves alter throughout the day and night as well.

In order to regulate the body's systems, your hypothalamus takes its cues both from the body's tissues and organs and from the environment. When you smell food, you feel hungry; when you see danger, you feel anxious and energized for action. All true. But let's not forget the most pervasive signal the brain takes in all day—the presence of light.

There is a small part of the hypothalamus, called the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN), that is tasked with noticing light. It's about the size of a grain of rice, and it contains approximately twenty thousand neurons. Physiologists have long understood that these neurons respond to light and regulate the body's systems based on light and darkness. When light hits the retina of the eye first thing in the morning, the SCN signals to the body that it's daytime. In the evening, the SCN helps signal the body's natural production of melatonin that tells you when it's time for sleep. But it's only in the past twenty years that researchers have looked at how much power this tiny bundle of neurons exerts over every cell and system in the body.

Clock genes

The cells in the body contain what are known as "clock genes."

The clock genes have specific names, such as per1, per2, per3, which are active at night, or CLOCK and BMAL1 genes, which are active during the day. They operate on a kind of loop. The activity of one of these clock genes inhibits the activity of the other. Your cells are primed to do different things based on the light and dark cycles of the day. And the protein pathways for each of these cells is active or inactive based on the time of day.

Every morning when you open your eyes and see daylight, your SCN is giving the signal to reset the internal clock and sends information to all of the systems of the body and all of the organs and tissues to say that it's daytime again. And this clock sets the automatic physiological changes that must occur on time for the next



twenty-four hours in order for the body to function. In this way, the SCN is the brain's clock. Or perhaps we should say that it is the brain's master conductor, and all of your body's cells are trying to dance to its beat.

While the master clock in your brain is trying to set a total body rhythm, the cells in your body are reacting to your behavior—your sleep schedule, your mealtimes, and your activity—to set their own clock rhythms.

When the brain's clock and these cellular clocks—called “peripheral clocks”—are out of alignment, you can get distorted cell behaviors. Remember those mice who gained weight when they were fed during their sleep cycle? Their bodies were operating outside the master circadian rhythm, taking in nutrients that the cells in their digestive tract couldn't process. And the reduced sleep schedule meant that on a cellular level, whole systems in their bodies stopped functioning the way they were supposed to. This causes disruptions not just in the digestive process, but in hormone production, immune response, and the inflammatory response.

As you can imagine, this puts an entirely new spin on the field of epigenetics and how our behavior alters and affects genetic expression over time. As a field, chronobiology is still new, but clock genes seem to have an effect on aging and tumor suppression, in addition to metabolism.

Eating and sleeping at the wrong times disrupt the circadian rhythm and interferes with a healthy metabolism and a strong immune response. Though scientists are still working out many of the nuances and clinical treatment applications, what we know for certain is that you can use your daily schedule to reinforce the circadian rhythm and achieve better health.

Mindful movement

Be present and aware

In the next part of this class, you will be teaching your students about mindful movement, which is exercise where we are present and aware of the sensations and movement of our body. This will help your students rethink how to move their body for whole health.

What to say

Use the following 10 key points to help guide your Mindful Movement discussion.

01. Provide an overview.

Regular exercise is essential for physical health and psychological well-being. We are seeing a growing epidemic of obesity in the West that is now affecting our children. Humans are more sedentary than at any other time in recorded history. As a result, we suffer increased risks for heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis, cancer, and other diseases.

02. Define mindful movement.

An important part of a healthy daily routine is mindful movement, which is exercise where we are present and aware of the sensations and movements of our bodies.

03. Tell your students the three elements of a complete exercise regime.

A complete practice of mindful movement includes these three elements:

- *Cardiovascular/aerobic activity – detoxifies the body, strengthens the heart, boosts mood, and increases stamina*
- *Strength training – builds muscle mass and protects bone health*
- *Flexibility training – beneficial for joint mobility, calming the nervous system, and integrating the mind/body system*

04. Talk about where yoga fits in.

A yoga practice can easily provide strength training and flexibility training, though of course you can choose other kinds of strength training and flexibility exercises.

05. Next explain cardiovascular exercise.

It's also important to engage in some form of cardiovascular activity at least three times per week for twenty to thirty minutes.

Often abbreviated as "cardio," cardiovascular exercise refers to any vigorous activity that increases the heart rate and respiration rate while using the large muscle groups. You should be working at a level intense enough to generate a thin layer of perspiration and to make normal conversation difficult but not impossible.

06. Tell your students that they'll want to consider their dosha type when choosing mindful movement activities.

When choosing a form of mindful exercise, it's important to consider your primary dosha, as well as any dosha imbalances you are currently experiencing.

07. Give examples of Vata balancing exercises.

To balance Vata, choose exercises that are grounding and slow-moving, such as yoga, tai chi, walking, short hikes, and light bicycling.

08. Move on to Pitta balancing activities.

To balance Pitta, choose medium-paced exercises, including swimming, skiing, biking, brisk walking or jogging, and outdoor activities.

09. Continue with Kapha balancing movement.

To balance Kapha, get your blood flowing and energy moving with exercises such as brisk walking or running, aerobics, dancing, rowing, vigorous yoga, and weight training.

10. Explain that pranayama is a form of mindful movement.

Keep in mind that pranayama is a form of mindful movement because when you're breathing, prana, the vital life force, circulates through the energy channels of the body. You can include regular pranayama practices to enhance the flow of prana and experience other benefits for mind-body health.



You may encounter students who are resistant to mindful movement at first. When they think of practicing yoga, for instance, they see themselves in a stuffy, crowded yoga studio, struggling to get up from the floor, or twisting themselves into poses they had never before envisioned. It is important to reassure your students that they can easily practice yoga in a chair. Or if they choose to practice yoga on a mat, they can do so using the wall for support. They can also practice at home, using videos as their guides. Let your students know that other forms of mindful movement are also beneficial. As long as your students are moving their bodies with awareness, they are practicing mindful movement.

Additionally, some students, particularly those who are heavy, may tell you that they don't like walking because of the stress it puts on their knees and, therefore, a cardiovascular workout is not possible for them. You can help these students find alternatives that would be more in line with how they are feeling. For instance, you can encourage them to try swimming or water aerobics, which takes weight and pressure off the joints yet still provides a cardiovascular workout.

It is also important that your students understand the role doshas play when selecting an exercise. As you've learned, adding to any imbalance will only increase that imbalance. For example:

- If a **Vata** type regularly engages in very brisk exercises, then that exercise will increase the activity within the already active Vata body/mind.
- If a predominantly **Pitta** type engages only in competitive sports, then Pitta's fire will likely increase.
- If a **Kapha** engages only in slow-moving exercises like tai chi, then that activity will make the person feel slower and heavier.

Mindful exercise tips

Dive deeper

Mindful awareness and mindful movement are equally important for whole health.

Note: *This content written by Adam Brady is to give you a deeper understanding.*

Ayurveda teaches that meditation is the foundation for health, happiness, and overall well-being. A regular exercise program is also important for a healthy lifestyle.

Strength training, flexibility, and cardiovascular conditioning make up the backbone of a well-rounded fitness routine that can keep you healthy and strong throughout your life.

While these two activities seem dissimilar—in one you're cultivating physical and mental stillness, and in the other you're in a state of heightened physical and mental activity—it's possible to merge awareness and physical exercise together as one. This allows you to experience the present moment during your physical activity.

Yoga

Yoga is a practice that focuses specifically on mind/body integration and deepens the experience of the spirit through physical activity.

The regular practice of meditation and yoga is the foundation for cultivating and experiencing the restful awareness response, an expanded state in which you are calm and rested yet also mentally alert. It's this state of heightened awareness that allows your focus to be directed internally rather than externally.

While the restful awareness response is most easily elicited through meditation, any mindfulness-based practice in which you pay attention to subtle nuances and are cognizant of sensory perception at every level helps to establish this response. Yoga isn't the only way you can make the mind-body connection through movement.



Here are six tips that will help you integrate mindful awareness into your exercise program—no matter what activity or sport you practice—and ultimately lead you closer to your physical and spiritual goals.

01. Feel your body

This might sound obvious, but many people approach exercise at full force and don't slow down long enough to truly feel what's going on in their bodies. In some cases, people suffer through a workout on pure grit, ignoring aches, pains, and objections from the body. This disconnection from your body sets the stage for distractions and injuries. Exercise should not be an out-of-body experience; it should be an in-body experience.

Before exercise, pause and bring awareness to your physical form. Feel your bones, muscles, organs, tissues, and even skin.

- How does your body feel?
- Do you have pain or discomfort?
- Are you low on energy?

Use this information to make the most nourishing choice for your body.

If you're not mentally and physically prepared to exercise, stop. Only after you have taken an inventory of how you feel and have firmly established awareness in your body should you proceed with your warm-up or workout.

02. Notice your environment

Expand the awareness you brought inward, out to your environment. Allow your awareness to fill up the space that you're going to be moving through. Ideally, your space should be distraction-free so as to help localize your attention on the exercises at hand. If you're running or participating in another outdoor activity, you'll have to deal with distractions, and maintaining situational awareness in such spaces is imperative.

Tune in. No matter what space you're in:

- Notice the temperature, lighting, odors, and any additional sensory perceptions that may influence your experience
- Ensure you have the necessary equipment, water, towels, or tools required for the workout

The point isn't to become compulsive about your space; it's meant to help you finely tune your awareness for the workout you're about to do.

A workout performed in this manner is a moving meditation and, as such, should have a sense of focused reverence around it. Close the door, turn off the TV (with the exception of an exercise video), and choose music that helps you maintain your sense of self-referral. This is your time.



03. Always use correct posture

Posture affects every move you make. Through correct posture, you create the optimal spinal alignment for any physical activity. Without a neutral spinal position, you throw off your body's power chain and interfere with the natural flow of energy and information through your nervous system.

- Correct posture ensures that your energetic body is functioning optimally and thereby provides an adequate supply of energy throughout the movement.
- Improper posture causes a dramatic power falloff and leads to an increased likelihood of serious injury.

If you don't know how to (or can't) perform an exercise with proper posture and form, don't do it.

04. Make your breath the anchor

The key to creating a mindful practice is your breath. The repetitive inflow and outflow of your breath creates a rhythm that can help anchor you into the present moment. This breathing rhythm also serves as a bridge between your mind, body, and soul; the more deeply you breathe, the deeper that connection becomes.

In a very practical sense, steady and even breathing efficiently infuses your body with the oxygen and prana (life force) it needs to function under the strain of physical exertion.

With each exercise, strive to maintain breath awareness. Don't let it overshadow the focus required to perform the exercise itself but make it the background sensation that guides and supports each movement.

Experiment to find a breathing cadence that best aligns with the exercise you're doing. Notice how it may change between strength exercises, aerobic conditioning, and rest periods. Regardless of the breath's variations, continue to come back to it as your anchor to the present moment.

05. Set a clear intention

Before beginning your exercise, pause briefly to form a clear intention for what you are about to do. This doesn't need to be verbalized, but you should make note of what you plan to accomplish—whether it's doing ten push-ups, running three miles, or swinging a kettlebell fifty times.

Intention has organizing power. By clearly creating the intention, you lay the groundwork for its manifestation.

In addition, intention focuses your mind on what you're doing, thereby increasing your chances of success. Remember that where attention goes, energy flows, so plant the seed of intention, and the exercise will perform itself.



06. Stay on target

As you move through your workout, your mind will wander, and your awareness will drift. This is a natural part of training. As in meditation, the mind will get pulled away to other thoughts, sensations, and distractions in the environment. Your job is to come back to the present moment, the breath, and the exercise. It doesn't matter how many times your attention drifts, just keep coming back to the practice of mindful movement.

As you become more adept at this process, you grow less attached to those thoughts and distractions and can begin to simply witness them with compassion.

You can separate yourself from the temptation to indulge in distractions of the ego, especially when the muscles begin to ache, and the sweat starts to drip. You'll start to see those distractions for what they are—scenery that comes and goes in the field of your awareness.

*The real you, the ever-present witness within, remains stable,
steady, and rooted in the eternal present.*

These are the steps to take your exercise routine from the realm of the unconscious to the conscious and into the experience of higher awareness. With them, you can transform your fitness routine into a mindful practice.

Mind/body balance

Enhancing mind/body balance through mindful movement is part of spiritual awakening.

Here are a few activities that are particularly effective when it comes to cultivating mind-body integration.

- Kettlebell training
- Martial arts/shadowboxing
- Walking
- Running
- Jumping rope
- Yoga
- Qi Gong/Tai Chi

Explore and find your own exercise vehicles for awakening your spirit. There are countless paths up the mountain; what's important is that you find the one that works for you.

As a reminder, always consult with your health care provider before embarking on any exercise program. Also remember that the goal of any exercise is to help you feel energized, not depleted.

The right exercise at the right time

Dive deeper

It's no secret that exercise is foundational to whole health.

Note: This content was excerpted with permission from *Change Your Schedule, Change Your Life*, by Dr. Suhas Kshirsagar to provide a deeper understanding.

What you probably don't know is that in Ayurveda, exercise is considered a sacred daily ritual, and one of the most powerful ways to keep your body functioning as it should. The Sanskrit term for this is *vyayama*, meaning "to move" or "to tame the inner breath". *Vyayama* means improving circulation and communication through specific movement.

We all know that exercise improves the circulatory system, getting your heart pumping and your lungs working. Yet these aren't the only systems in the body that need to be active. The Vedas speak about each system in the body as a channel.

- The digestive system is a hollow channel through which nutrients enter and pass through your body.
- The respiratory system is another channel for oxygen and carbon dioxide.
- The lymph system, the nervous system, and the circulatory system are all channels through which the body passes nutrients, fluids, signals, and waste.

Your body has been designed to do all of these amazing things, but it needs a little help.

Over the course of a single day, these channels get sticky, or slimy, or blocked. This blockage is a natural by-product of daily life, but, just as it's important to brush your teeth to prevent tartar buildup, it's important to clear these blockages daily. You do this using *prana*, which means life force, but is sometimes translated as "breath." And for good reason.

Through exercise and movement, you breathe deeply and unblock the body's channels.



Exercise is essential because it causes deep breathing and triggers important chemical and hormonal changes that your body needs to stay healthy. Through exercise, you improve communication between the systems so they can operate in harmony. Exercise also warms the body, creating agni—or “fire”—and therefore stokes your digestive fire. It gives you energy, mental clarity, passion, and a general enthusiasm for life. While it’s tempting to think of exercise as something to cross off of your to-do list, it actually needs to be integrated into your daily schedule. It offers an emotional reset. It improves energy and mood. It cleanses the body.

Exercise becomes even more important in a modern schedule that leaves little time for movement. Commuters sit in their cars or on trains to get to work, and then sit at a desk all day. Then at night, they sit in front of a television or computer screen. It’s hard to get restful sleep if you’ve done nothing to tire the body’s muscles, and it’s impossible for the digestive system to move effectively without physical activity to help it along.

Ayurveda is the art of bringing balance to your body. If you are cold, you must bring in heat to create balance. If you are sitting all day and sleeping all night, you require movement to restore balance. And the best time for this first intense bout of movement is in the morning, after you have been sleeping for seven or eight hours.

Prana for connection

Prana is the life force that connects the heart and the brain.

In Ayurveda, the two most important organs in the body are the heart and the brain. Only prana, the breath, connects them both.

When you breathe deeply, you connect your heart and your brain instantly. You can do this right now:

- 01.** Pause and breathe
- 02.** Take a slow, deep breath
- 03.** Take another one if you’d like
- 04.** Feel the stress melt away

Slow, deep breaths are the cornerstone of meditation and yoga, but they are instantly available through even the most modest level of exercise.

Conscious exercise puts your daily problems on the back burner while it enlivens the heart and mind. Is there anything more immediately healthy than this? By contrast, a sedentary lifestyle causes you to breathe only shallowly, and this strains the heart and starves the brain.

But prana means more than connecting to your breath or taking deep breaths. The Sanskrit word also refers to the vital energy that sustains life. Without daily movement, you are failing to take these deep breaths and you are draining your energy. Because you are disconnected from your body, you don’t even notice it. You think you are fatigued or bored at the end of a day of sitting, but it’s really more than that. Your brain is starved of oxygen, and so are the tissues in your body. They get blocked and unable to function. Low energy causes you to reach for multiple cups of coffee throughout the day to jump-start your brain.



This isn't just an Ayurvedic view of energy. New research shows that even low-intensity exercise can reverse symptoms of general fatigue if you do it every day. [1] Even a short daily morning walk will help:

- Get the breath going and get prana into your body
- Improve sleep at night and help you to sync with your body's daily rhythm
- Enhance digestion
- Improve mental focus

Instead of doing a short burst of daily exercise, many people try to inject two or three intense exercise sessions into their week, when exercise is convenient. Guidelines stress how many minutes per week you should get of exercise. If you make two to three trips to the gym every week, you may wonder why this doesn't change your waistline or daily energy levels. On the contrary, longer sessions of intense exercise can wring you out, making you exhausted. You will be less energized and more likely to skip going to the gym on stressful days when you need it most.

Look at the research

When you are active, the body assumes it's daytime.

This is one reason it's good to get out of bed and do some exercise in the morning before eating—before doing anything else. It gives the body an undeniable signal that the day has started.

Morning exercise also helps people get to sleep at night. In some studies, mice who have the chance to engage in a period of exercise go to sleep earlier and get up earlier than those who don't exercise. Even a single bout of intense exercise can shift a mouse's circadian rhythm. Human studies aren't quite that dramatic, but it's clear that regular exercisers report less trouble getting to sleep.

In one study, people went to live in an isolation facility so that they would have no idea what time of day it was. They lived on a slightly shortened day, so that each night they were told to try to get to sleep about twenty minutes earlier than the previous night. Think of it as experiencing jet lag in short, daily intervals.

Some were told to exercise, and others were not. After about six days, those who were required to exercise were adapting to the changing sleep cycle much faster than those who did not exercise. [2] The change was happening inside their brains with a higher production of melatonin (the brain's natural sleeping pill). Their brains were releasing melatonin earlier, which made them able to sleep earlier.

Here's where it gets really interesting, though: these same subjects were then asked to exercise at different times of the day. Those who exercised in the afternoon or at night did not get the same shift in melatonin production. In fact, intense exercise close to bedtime actually delayed the production of melatonin, making it harder for them to go to sleep when the lights went out. [3] It turns out that exercise at the wrong time of day confuses the body's central regulator of the circadian clock, which in turn confuses the body's cells and systems.



Important takeaway

This is important to know—especially if you like to hit the gym after work.

Many people think of exercise as something to squeeze in at the end of the day. Anyone who has ever fought for a treadmill after work knows that the busiest hours at the gym are between six and eight p.m. For a large chunk of the year, this means you are exercising after dark, at a time when the body is winding down and preparing for sleep. This intense activity may make you too alert and overheated for sleep.

Recently, I met a woman who seemed to be doing everything right. She was in her early thirties, an avid exerciser, and had a diet that anyone would envy. She was a lifelong exerciser, someone who said she needs strenuous workouts to help her deal with stress. Her one problem was that she was not sleeping at night, despite a careful and consistent bedtime routine.

Looking more closely at her schedule, one could see that she was leaving for the gym at 8 p.m., which means that for most of the year, she was exercising during the body's rest phase. By the time she got home, her body was wide awake, still sweaty, and hungry on top of that. She knew she shouldn't eat again after her workout and would try to go directly to bed. Given her body's structure, it was true that she was getting a lot out of her strenuous exercising, yet it was giving her insomnia in the short term and making her foggy and lethargic the next day. The insomnia was new for her, and it's possible that she was able to stick to this exercise routine in her twenties without noticing much difficulty with sleeping, but the body is changing in one's thirties, when it starts to be more sensitive to sleep disturbances. By getting up earlier and doing her intensive exercise first thing, she primed herself to be more awake at work but less awake and less hungry at the end of the day.

*Morning exercise is especially beneficial
to your circadian rhythm as you age.*

In your late forties and early fifties, you will need to give your body strong signals in the morning that the day has started so you can get to sleep at night. This will counteract the hormonal changes in midlife that can cause insomnia.

A recent study looked at the effect of exercise on reducing cancer risk in older women. Fortunately, researchers included questions about how participants slept during the study. That's how we know that postmenopausal women who did morning exercise had fewer complaints about insomnia. These were women between the ages of fifty and seventy-five. Those who did forty-five minutes of moderate exercise in the morning, five days a week, slept better at night. Even those who restricted themselves to light stretching in the morning slept a little better at night. Those who exercised in the evening had more trouble with insomnia. [4] When you get up and get going in the morning, you'll have an easier time winding down at bedtime.



Clock genes

Researchers have found that skeletal muscles contain clock genes.

The most recent research goes inside the cells of skeletal muscles to find out what they're doing during intense exercise. When you are doing low-intensity exercise, such as a leisurely walk around the block, your muscles use oxygen as fuel. If you switch from walking to jogging or sprinting, you will start to gasp for air because your muscles are depleting their oxygen stores. When this happens, your muscles switch to using available sugar as fuel to keep working. Researchers who are looking at these metabolic changes have found that skeletal muscles contain clock genes, just like all of your other cells. Actually, the clock genes are more involved in metabolism than you may think. It's these clock genes that signal to the cell to switch from burning oxygen to burning sugar during exercise. [5]

Remember that your clock genes are signaling the cells to do one thing during daylight hours and something else at night. So, your muscles have a differing ability to adapt to exercise and to use energy throughout a twenty-four-hour day, just like every other system in the body. Muscles are more efficient during daylight hours, which means that they are better able to contract and to make this metabolic shift from oxygen to sugar. That's why intense exercise is more beneficial to your metabolism as a whole when it's done earlier in the day, and it can help control blood sugar levels. In fact, this research suggests why a total lack of exercise has such dire metabolic consequences. Exercise is such a reliable means for controlling blood sugar levels that we may come to realize that a sedentary life is the primary risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes.

But there could be an even greater benefit to exercising first thing in the morning. When you exercise before breakfast, you are exercising while the body is still fasting. So, when you exercise hard enough to trigger your muscles to switch from burning oxygen to burning sugar, your blood has less available sugar to feed them. As a result, the body is forced to tap into fat stores.

The good news is that you don't need to do a lot of intense exercise before breakfast to get this result. Just twenty to twenty-five minutes will do the trick. You could be on a treadmill or outside. If you are relatively new to exercise, you can do interval training. For example:

- Walk as fast as you can for a minute and then walk at more leisurely pace for two minutes
- Alternate jogging and walking
- Work on a rowing machine with greater and lesser intensity



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Restful sleep

Teaching Restful Sleep

In this part of the class, you will be guiding your students in the benefits and practice of restful sleep, which is crucial to health and emotional well-being.

What to say

Use these 18 key points to help guide your Restful Sleep discussion.

01. Provide an overview.

Restful sleep provides the foundation for your mental and physical well-being. After a day of stimulating activity, your body is ready for and needs deep sleep. Just like in nature, our physiology is dependent on cycles of activity and rest.

02. Give your students a sleep goal.

Aim for seven or eight hours of sound slumber without the aid of medication.

03. Tell your students the most rejuvenating sleep hours.

The hours of sleep before midnight are generally the most rejuvenating. Therefore, if you are sleeping eight hours between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., you will feel more rested than if you slept eight hours between midnight and 8 a.m.

This is because our circadian rhythms follow nature's rhythms, and we therefore feel most invigorated by sleeping when it's dark and rising with the sun.

04. Give your students a few sleep tips.

To cultivate restful sleep, aim to be in your bed with the lights out by 10 p.m. If you are not used to getting to bed this early, try adjusting your sleep schedule in 15-minute increments.

For example, if you normally get up at 7 a.m., but want to start waking at 6 a.m., set your alarm and wake up at 6:45 a.m., then 6:30 a.m., and so on. If you need to make more immediate shifts in your sleep schedule, try 30-minute increments.

05. Explain the effects of caffeine and alcohol.

Avoid caffeine late in the afternoon and refrain from drinking alcohol in the evening, as this can easily disrupt your ability to enjoy restful sleep.

06. Explain the benefits of eating a relatively light dinner.

Eat a relatively light dinner no later than 7 p.m. Avoid late-night meals or snacks, and don't go to bed with a full stomach because this interferes with sleep and your body's nocturnal detoxification processes.

07. Offer simple ways to wind down.

Take a leisurely stroll after dinner.

08. Encourage your students to run a warm bath.

About an hour before bedtime, run a warm bath into which you place a few drops of calming essential oils, such as lavender, sandalwood, or vanilla. You can also diffuse this scent in your bedroom.

09. Tell them to try an oil massage.

As your bath is running, perform a slow self-administered oil massage, using an oil that balances your dosha type. Pay special attention to your feet and scalp. After your massage, soak in the warm tub for ten to fifteen minutes

10. Suggest using their senses to find a sense of calm.

Turn down the lights, burn a candle if you like, and listen to soothing music.

11. Give them a few warm drink ideas.

After your bath, drink something warm. It can be a cup of warm milk seasoned with cardamom and honey, chamomile tea, or valerian root tea.

12. Point out the calming benefits of journaling.

If your mind is very active, journal for a few minutes before bed, "downloading" some of your thoughts and concerns so you don't ruminate about them when you shut your eyes.

13. Try a mantra meditation before bed.

Try a mantra meditation before bed or if you wake up in the middle of the night. Silently repeat the sleep mantra Om Agasti Shahina. The vibration is associated with calming down thoughts and helping with sleep. Even if you don't fall asleep right away, the mantra will create relaxation in the body and mind.



14. Remind your students to avoid mental stimulation before bed.

Avoid intense mental activity, emotional interactions, or overly stimulating or distressing reading material. Read inspirational or spiritual literature for a few minutes before bed.

15. Talk about the importance of shutting down electronics.

Do your best not to watch television or do work in bed. Also avoid devices with self-illuminating electronic displays, such as smartphones, tablets, and laptops, at least two hours before bed. The blue light suppresses melatonin and can trick your brain into thinking that it's daytime and that you need to be awake and alert. There are some computer programs and apps that can block the blue light of your screen display based on your location and time.

If you find yourself tempted to stay up late surfing the internet, watching TV, or posting on social media sites, establish a set time (such as 7 p.m.) to disengage from your electronic devices, including your phone, computer, tablets, and TV.

16. Explain the benefits of a dark room.

Sleep in a totally dark room because darkness helps increase melatonin. For especially sensitive individuals, even dim light, such as a glowing clock display, can interfere with your circadian rhythms and melatonin secretion and disturb sleep.

In fact, research has identified 'light-sensing' proteins on our skin called opsins. The role these opsins play in circadian rhythms is currently being studied.

17. Introduce a nighttime relaxation activity.

Once in bed, close your eyes and simply "feel your body." This means focusing on your body and wherever you notice tension, consciously relax that area.

18. Wrap up.

Then, simply put your attention on your breath until you fall asleep.

Sleep will likely be a popular topic among your students. Many of them may report the inability to fall asleep or stay asleep during the night. So, be prepared to thoroughly discuss this topic and answer your students' questions.

You may want to suggest to your students that they make restful sleep a top priority for 21 days, which is the approximate amount of time it takes to begin to establish a habit.



To engage your students in a discussion about sleep, first, ask how many people are currently experiencing sleep issues. Then, ask the group if anyone would like to share what they are experiencing and what remedies have helped or not benefited them. You can next ask the group, based on the information about Ayurveda that they have learned thus far, what kind of plan they can create to achieve restful sleep.

Because meditation is so calming to the body/mind, creating a state of restful alertness, you will want to be sure to emphasize the important role meditation plays in getting proper rest.

Also remember that yoga *nidra* can be recommended as a practice to create more restful sleep. It is a relaxing body awareness and visualization practice that can be done in the late afternoon or early evening to release deep seated emotions and trauma so, over time, they don't interfere with sleep. Yoga *nidra* can be practiced anytime of the day, except immediately after eating. Because it is a release of deep-seated stress and karma, the benefits grow over time. We recommend you explore some and then can recommend to students.

Note: *There are many yoga nidra recordings that can be accessed online. These can be found on the Chopra app in Library>Balanced Body>Meditations for Sleep>Yogic Sleep (Yoga nidra). They can also be found on Roger Gabriel's website: <https://rogergabriel.com/>.*

Additionally, for this conversation, you will want to have a white board or flip chart handy so that you can write down your students' suggestions and they can take notes. Be sure to include as many points from the section on restful sleep as you can, even if your students do not mention them themselves. The goal is for your students to be able to develop healthy and successful sleep routines that they can easily follow.



Deep sleep and restful alertness

Dive deeper

There are two indispensable forms of rest: deep sleep and restful awareness.

Sleep for health

Scientific research is now discovering what Ayurveda has taught for centuries: sleep is as important to good health as the food we eat and the air we breathe. As Deepak discusses in this video, we need to balance activity with rest to stay healthy and live longer. There are two forms of rest:

- 01.** Deep sleep – the phase of sleep beyond dreams, in which our heart rate and breathing become their slowest
- 02.** Restful awareness – the state we experience in meditation, in which our mind is quiet yet alert

We need deep sleep in order to wake feeling refreshed and energized for the day ahead. A lack of deep sleep is the underlying cause of many health issues, including:

- Weakened immunity
- Chronic stress
- Increased inflammation
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Alzheimer's
- Accelerated aging
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Metabolic syndrome

The Ayurvedic practices and information that you are learning in this lesson will help you get the deep sleep you need for vibrant health. We also encourage you to continue (or begin) to meditate regularly, which will help you experience the state of restful alertness that is so healing for your body/mind.



Sleep: The most overlooked key to vibrant health

Dive deeper

Sleep is an active, dynamic state.

Getting abundant, restful sleep is one of the best ways to improve your physical health and emotional well-being.

As you slumber, your body may seem inert, but in fact it's actively engaging in many processes to repair and renew itself, such as:

- Eliminating accumulated stress and physical toxins, including the amyloid that can build up in the brain and lead to Alzheimer's disease
- Repairing and regenerating cells and tissues
- Strengthening immune function
- Balancing your hormones, particularly leptin and ghrelin, which regulate your metabolism and appetite and help you maintain your ideal weight
- Consolidating short-term memories into your long-term memory

If you are perpetually sleep deprived, you are more likely to have a weakened immune system and chronic inflammation, which is associated with many diseases, including Alzheimer's, obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, digestive disorders, and some kinds of cancer. A lack of sleep also contributes to accelerated aging, including premature aging of the skin.

Recent studies of sleep and genes are finding that even just a few days of sleep deprivation can have a profound effect on your genes. For example, one study by U.K. researchers found that after only one week of getting fewer than six hours of sleep a night, study participants experienced changes in the expression of more than 700 genes that affect metabolism and inflammatory, immune, and stress responses.

Sleep deprivation can also impact your mood, causing you to feel irritable and emotionally reactive. In fact, a recent study published in *The Lancet* suggests that inadequate sleep may be an underlying cause of depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders.

How much is enough?

Most adults need between 7 to 9 hours of restful sleep every night.

This means natural sleep that is not induced by over the counter or prescription sleeping medications, alcohol, or other drugs. Sleeping medications do not provide the deep level of rejuvenation that comes with natural sleep, and they come with serious side effects and risks, including addiction.

Steps to take for natural sleep

01. Align with nature's rhythms.

You can get the highest quality sleep by aligning your sleeping times with your circadian rhythms, which are your body's own natural rhythms of physical and mental activity. Governed by your body's internal clock, your circadian rhythms regulate feelings of sleepiness and wakefulness, as well as body temperature and various hormonal changes, over a period of approximately 24 hours.

Our circadian rhythms are aligned with nature's cycle of light and dark, which is why our body is naturally alert and awake when the sun rises. As the day wanes and it becomes dark, our body naturally slows down, increasing its production of natural chemicals such as melatonin in preparation for sleep.

If you're used to staying up through the wee hours, getting to bed by 10 p.m. and waking early may be a challenge, but is one of the most beneficial habits you can adopt.

02. Move your body.

An important part of following nature's rhythms is moving your body and getting physical exercise on a regular basis. Physical activity enhances the flow of energy and information throughout your body and releases the stress that can keep you awake at night.

Your body was designed to move, breathe, and stretch, and when you do so on a regular basis, you'll find it easier to fall—and stay—asleep.

Keep in mind that it might take a few weeks to notice the benefits of exercise on your sleep patterns.

For example, in one study of sleep and exercise, researchers found that when adults with insomnia engage in moderate aerobic exercise for 30 minutes for three or four times per week, after 16 weeks their sleep quality and duration improved significantly, and they experienced a decrease in daytime sleepiness.



03. Meditate to calm your mind and body.

One of the leading causes of disturbed sleep is stress. Even though our body is tired and craves rest, we lie in bed ruminating about something that happened earlier in the day or worrying about something that might happen in the future.

Whenever we perceive physical or psychological threats, we activate our body's stress response. Our blood pressure rises, our heart beats faster, and we release stress hormones such as cortisol. These symptoms of stress can keep us awake.

In meditation, you go beyond the mind's noisy internal dialogue and experience the stillness and silence of expanded awareness.

Your heart rate and breathing slow, and you activate the body's parasympathetic system, releasing accumulated stress. After your meditation session, you carry this sense of greater calm with you into your activities, allowing you to stay more centered in the face of life's inevitable stresses—and helping you to drift peacefully to sleep when it's time for bed.

Keep in mind that you don't need to meditate for hours to benefit from the practice. Even if you meditate for just five to ten minutes each day, you will receive many healing benefits.

Tune into your breath

Observing the breath is a simple meditation technique that cultivates peace, clarity, and present moment awareness.

1. Find a comfortable seated position with your legs uncrossed and your back erect but not rigid.
2. Close your eyes, which helps turn your attention within.
3. Take a few deep breaths and then breathe as you normally do.
4. Now observe your breath. Feel the sensations in your body as you inhale and exhale.
5. This is an effortless process. When you notice that your attention has wandered away from your breath, gently return it to your breath, without trying to concentrate or force it.
6. Do this breathing meditation for two minutes, gradually extending the time as you feel comfortable.

When the time is up, sit with your eyes gently closed, taking a moment to rest in the stillness and silence. When you emerge from your meditation, you will carry a little bit more peace into all of your daily activities.



What about naps?

There is a growing body of research that confirms the benefits, and drawbacks, of naps in the middle of the day. Benefits can include better memory and learning, improved mood, lower inflammation. However, it's not right for everyone. Some people wake up groggy after a nap and may feel sluggish for the rest of the day.

As we know from Ayurveda, there is no one-size-fits-all and that is true for naps as well. Benefits of napping have to do with a person's prakruti as well as vikruti. In addition, napping does not replace good restorative sleep at night, but can complement good sleep to restore in the middle of the day.

General rules on naps:

- People who do benefit from naps should limit them to between 10-30 minutes, the ideal time being 20 minutes so there can be alarms set in the 'napping spaces' to not exceed 30 min. It is easier to wake and feel alert if not in deeper sleep.
- Research suggests the best times to nap are between 2-3:00 pm. This correlates with the transition between Pitta and Vata time.
- Pittas do best with a "power nap". They fall asleep fast and wake up fast and refreshed.
- Vatas benefit from naps at the beginning of Vata time (that 2-3:00 time) to rest and recover energy before going into more active time of day.
- Kaphas do best without napping. They find it harder to wake up without feeling groggy and likely don't get the same benefits. They would do better with a relaxing meditation if needed in the middle of the day, or some movement to restore energy.

Living in harmony with the seasons

Teaching living in harmony with the seasons

In the final part of this class, you will be teaching your students how to adapt their daily routine to stay in harmony with the changing seasons. Syncing up with the cycles of the seasons creates greater physical health and emotional well-being.

What to say

Use the following 7 talking points to help guide your discussion. Examples are provided, but we encourage you to make this part your own.

01. Provide an overview of how the body responds to seasonal changes.

The rhythms of nature include the seasonal cycles that affect every cell in our bodies. These cycles also influence our genes, as well as the genes of the microbes that live within our bodies. All of our senses and receptors within our body are taking in signals from our external environment, whether it's the length of the day, the barometric pressure, or the electromagnetic field, and our self-regulatory systems make adjustments accordingly.

By learning to live in harmony with the cycles of the seasons, we can create greater physical health and emotional well-being.

02. Make the connection between the seasons and the doshas.

One practical way to align ourselves with the seasonal cycles is to recognize which doshas are prominent during different times of year. Each season expresses characteristics of a specific dosha.

- *Vata season: late fall through winter*
- *Pitta season: summer through early fall*
- *Kapha season: late winter through spring*

Although these seasons describe a typical four-season climate, no matter where you are on the planet there are seasonal changes as the Earth rotates around the Sun. Understanding the dominant dosha and qualities during that seasons helps you stay balanced all year.

03. Give an example of the seasons and dosha imbalance.

Thousands of years ago, the ancient Ayurvedic physicians recognized that seasonal rhythms have important influences on our biological cycles. For example, during the cold, dry, windy months of Vata season, we all are particularly vulnerable to developing Vata imbalances, which can manifest in the body/mind as fatigue, constipation, anxiety, and dry skin or hair.

If our primary dosha is Vata, we are even more vulnerable to Vata imbalances during the fall and winter months.

04. Then offer solutions to stay in balance.

Adapting our daily routines, including our diets, activities, and exercise, to stay in harmony with the changing seasons will help to prevent some of the disorders that are common throughout the various seasons of the year—colds and flu during the fall and winter, skin rashes during the summer, and allergies and congestion in the spring.

05. Move on to give grounding tips for windy Vata season.

During the dry, cold, windy months of autumn, choose Vata-pacifying foods that are warm, cooked, and heavy, such as hearty soups, stews, and casseroles. Be sure you get plenty of rest and choose clothing that keeps you warm and comfortable.

06. Share some pointers to stay cool in Pitta season.

During summer, when the fiery Pitta element predominates, choose cooling foods and beverages, such as fresh green salads and smoothies. Avoid getting overheated, instead focusing on activities that keep you calm and cool, such as swimming and taking walks in the early morning before the temperatures soar.

07. Wrap up with tips to counterbalance cold and wet Kapha season.

During the wet, cold spring season, favor lighter, warmer foods and spices that balance the earthy Kapha element. Get outside and move your body, to counter the heavy, sluggish tendency of Kapha. Wear clothing that keeps you warm and dry.

Simplifying your diet and cleansing

Transitioning between seasons

Next, you'll talk about how to transition from one season to the next with ease.

What to say

Use the following 5 talking points to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Provide an overview of seasonal change and they affect the doshas.

When we are transitioning from one season to the next, the doshas are also transitioning. One dosha may be increasing, while another is decreasing. At these times, it's natural for the doshas in your body/mind to become imbalanced.

- 02.** Explain the importance of a seasonal cleanse.

For this reason, the transition between seasons is a good time to slow down and undertake a seasonal detox or cleanse. This will help you restore your balance, align with the rhythms of nature, and eliminate any toxins that have accumulated in the past few months.

- 03.** Then teach your students how to simplify their diet.

During your seasonal detox, eliminate processed, canned, and fried foods from your diet. Instead, favor locally grown fruits and vegetables. Eating homemade soup, broth, or stew can be settling if your digestion is feeling especially sensitive.

A one-day liquid fast is beneficial for cleansing the body of accumulated wastes. For that day, take everything in the form of liquid, including water, juices, and soups. If you feel light-headed or otherwise uncomfortable, eat some solid food. This procedure creates clarity and lightness in your mind-body physiology.



04.Next suggest a few detoxifying tips and herbs.

Some simple and readily available cleansing aids can be taken on a daily basis to improve digestion and increase overall well-being:

- *Sipping warm water throughout the day hydrates and cleanses bodily tissues.*
- *Ginger tea, made by simmering one teaspoon of fresh grated ginger root in a cup of water, promotes detoxification.*
- *One or two tablespoons of aloe vera juice may be taken twice daily to improve digestion and enhance elimination.*
- *Take triphala, a gentle Ayurvedic herb that helps with elimination and digestion.*

05.Wrap up with solutions to stay in balance.

During your seasonal detox, take time to slow down and rest. Focus on the important elements of a daily routine, including meditation, pranayama, and mindful movement.

It's also helpful to spend some time in silence, so if possible, arrange to have at least one day where you can be alone, and let yourself take a break from engaging with your computer, phone, and other electronic devices.

You may also want to spend some time journaling and going outside to connect with nature, enlivening your prana, or vital life force.

Many students are curious about the best way to do a seasonal cleanse. Dr. Suhas's book *The Hot Belly Diet: A 30-Day Ayurvedic Plan to Reset Your Metabolism, Lose Weight, and Restore Your Body's Natural Balance to Heal Itself* is a wonderful resource and guide in this regard. Even if your students are not ready to commit to a 30-day body/mind reset, there are many how-to tips for a seasonal cleanse. Your students may also be interested in incorporating some of the delicious recipes and other effective recommendations the book provides.

It's important to emphasize that gentle cleanses are as beneficial for the mind as they are for the body. Students will gain mental clarity, along with a feeling of vitality and lightness, when they engage in simple cleansing routines. If it seems right for you, taking time off to do a more formal Ayurvedic cleanse may be beneficial. There are Ayurvedic centers and retreats that allow you to more fully unplug and immerse yourself in the process.

As always, the best way to teach a topic is to practice it yourself. To that end, you can expand your personal experience and knowledge that you share with your students by practicing not only a seasonal cleanse, but the many other practices and routines you have taught throughout the Chopra Health classes. In this way, when your students ask you questions about their own experiences, you will have a wealth of experience from which to draw in order to answer them authentically.

Let go and create something new activity

Envision new possibilities

Next, guide your students in an exercise to release what no longer serves them and envision new possibilities.

What to say

Use the 14-step script below for the Letting Go and Creating Something New Activity.

01. Introduce Part 1 of the activity: Releasing.

Tell your students that you are going to guide them in an exercise that will help them to gain clarity about the areas of their lives where they are holding onto things that are not serving them. It's a useful exercise to do during a seasonal detox, which is about releasing and rejuvenating.

02. Invite your students to close their eyes.

Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and call forth an image of your physical surroundings. Imagine your home, your car, your clothes, and your body.

Pause.

03. Invite your students to reflect on what they would like to release.

As you reflect upon these aspects of your life, see if you can identify those things that are not nourishing to you. Are there any habits or substances that you would like to release? Have you accumulated things in your body or your environment that you really don't need?

Pause.

04. Ask them to notice images or sensations that arise.

Just observe any images or sensations that come into your awareness.

Pause.

05. Next you'll ask them to become aware of their emotions.

Now, taking another deep breath, bring your attention to the realm of your emotions. Think about the people in your life—your family, your friends, neighbors, and co-workers. Are you holding on to any feelings that may be restricting your full expression? Are you involved in relationships that you would like to transform? Are there any relationships, behaviors, or tendencies that you would like to release?

Pause.

06. Give them time to reflect.

Now remain seated with your eyes closed for a few moments.

Pause.

07. Invite your students to open their eyes.

Now, slowly open your eyes and, without talking, please take out a piece of paper.

08. Ask them to write about their experience.

At the top of the page, write "I Commit to Releasing." Then, write down whatever insights arose in your awareness during this exercise.

Give students 2–3 minutes to write.

09. Move on to Part 2 of the activity: Creating.

Life is a continual process of creating and releasing. As we release the things in our lives that we no longer need, we open ourselves to new possibilities and experiences, healthier relationships, and greater freedom to express who we are. Having explored the things in our lives that are no longer useful, let's look at what we want to create.

10. Invite your students to close their eyes again.

Please close your eyes and take a deep breath.

11. Guide a visualization.

Imagine now how you would like your life to be.

- *How would you like your body to look and to feel?*
- *What kinds of things would you like to have in your environment?*
- *How would you like to relate to the people in your life?*
- *What activities or practices will help you honor yourself?*

Pause.



- 12.** Invite your students to open their eyes.

Bring any images or insights with you as you slowly open your eyes.

- 13.** Ask them to spend 3 minutes journaling.

Open your workbook and turn to the section called "I Commit to Creating," and spend a few minutes writing about what you would like to create in your life. Please include one or two action steps that will bring you closer to the vision you created.

Give students 2–3 minutes to write.

- 14.** Give your students time to share their insights (optional).

Now please turn to the person next to you and take a few minutes to share what insights emerged as a result of doing these exercises. Each person will have two to three minutes to share. This activity can be optional, depending on how the group has connected over time. Always give students the option to not participate if they are not comfortable doing so.

Give the first person two to three minutes to share, and then remind the class to have the other person share for two to three minutes.

Prana and the five elements

Increase prana and connect

In this part of the lesson, you'll teach your students ways to increase prana and connect with nature.

What to say

Use the following 7 talking points to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Begin with the benefits of spending time in nature.

Remind your students that spending time in nature is deeply nourishing and rejuvenating to body, mind, and soul. It helps increase your prana, or life-force energy.

- 02.** Bring in the five elements.

As part of your daily routine, spend some time each day connecting with the five natural elements in the world—earth, water, fire, air, and space. Here are some practices you can try.

- 03.** Start with the earth element.

Walk barefoot on the earth for at least ten minutes every day. Have your attention on your feet with the intention to absorb nourishment from Mother Earth.

- 04.** Then move on to water.

Walk along natural bodies of water. Allow the cooling, coherent influence of water to infuse your being. If you don't live near a natural body of water, you can close your eyes and listen to the sound of water from a fountain.

- 05.** Next is fire.

Allow the light and warmth of the sun to permeate you. Acknowledge the energy-giving force of the sun, the source of all life on earth.

- 06.** Then air.

Take a walk where there is abundant vegetation and deeply inhale the breath of plants. The ideal time to receive the life force of plants is right before dawn and right after sunset.



07. Finally, space.

Gaze into the heavens at night. Let your awareness touch the stars and the furthest reaches of the cosmos.

Note: *In your S7 Resources and your Program Resources, you will find a document titled Script: Prana Visualization. You can use the script to guide your students in a five elements visualization to open to receiving the prana life force. It only takes about five minutes.*

Prana visualization

Prana and the 5 elements

In this part of the lesson, you'll guide your students in Prana five elements visualization.

What to say

Use the 10-step script below to guide your students through the visualization.

- 01.** Invite your students to close their eyes.

Please sit comfortably with your eyes closed.

- 02.** Begin the guided visualization.

Imagine that you are walking in a lush, green forest on a warm spring afternoon. The trees are tall, thick, and strong, filled with vibrancy and vitality. As you walk you can hear the sounds of the birds and crickets, and off in the distance the sound of water flowing.

Pause.

- 03.** Continue guiding your students to experience earth energy.

You notice a beautiful grassy meadow. As you walk towards the meadow, you see a family of deer grazing and napping on the grass. You find a nice shady spot under a tree where you can sit down, relax, and absorb the sensations around you. You have the desire to take off your shoes and wiggle your toes deep into the earth and the grass. You feel happy as a child as your bare feet touch the soil, and you can feel the healing energy of Mother Earth circulating throughout your entire body. You feel deeply grounded and at peace.

Pause.

- 04.** Move on to the element of water.

Your attention is captivated by the sound of running water coming from the far end of the meadow. Taking your shoes in your hand, you walk across the cool grass to a beautiful waterfall that flows into a pond. You sit down on a rock and let your feet dangle in the cool, flowing water. The sound of the cascading water soothes your mind and emotions. You feel instantly refreshed and nourished.

Pause.

**05.** Next is fire.

Feeling relaxed and comfortable, you stretch out on a nice, flat rock. As the late afternoon sunlight falls on your chest, you feel its golden light filling your body. With your eyes closed, you savor the warmth on your face. The rock beneath you has been heated by the sun and feels wonderful against your back and legs and helps you feel alive and energetic..

Pause.

06. Keep going to air.

As you lie back on the rock, you notice that ferns, flowers, and trees surround you. With every breath, you are absorbing the essence of the rich, green vegetation. You inhale deeply the breath of these plants and, as you do, you feel cleansed, purified, and refreshed.

Pause.

07. Then space.

Here, surrounded by the five elements of nature, you slip into a timeless state of relaxation. When you next open your eyes, you see that the twilight is approaching. You are filled with curiosity and wonder as bright glowing stars slowly begin to twinkle like jewels in the night sky. As you gaze into the vast expanse of the sky, you feel yourself merge with its boundlessness.

Pause.

08. Gently ask them to bring their awareness back to the present.

And now, keeping your eyes closed, slowly begin to bring your attention back into this room, this time, and this place.

09. Wrap up.

Bring with you the understanding that the same energy that surrounds us in our environment lives within us as well. The sun, the moon, the stars, the oceans, the plants, and the earth are all alive with energy. When we are open to receiving that life force, we open ourselves to deep healing and rejuvenation. Make a commitment now to allow the healing energy of nature to fill your body, your mind, and your soul.

10. Invite your students to slowly open their eyes.

Now, take a few moments and then slowly open your eyes.

Using attention to enliven your health

More than information

Now, tie it all together. Let your students know that while you hope the classes have been informative, information alone does not create transformation.

What to say

Use or modify the following 5 talking points to wrap up the class and suggest a few practices your students can make part of their daily routine.

- 01.** Encourage your students to use the dosha clock when creating a new daily routine.

Consider the dosha clock and become aware of how your energy changes as you move through the hours of Kapha, Pitta, and Vata. Begin to make small adjustments to your daily routine to align with the energies of the doshas.

- 02.** Suggest a morning Ayurvedic practice.

Perform a daily oil massage on yourself before you bathe or shower.

- 03.** Recommend an afternoon practice to strengthen agni.

Focus on eating your main meal of the day at noon and having a light dinner.

- 04.** Aim for a 10 p.m. bedtime.

Try going to bed earlier and waking up earlier.

- 05.** Wrap up with a practice your students can do any time of day.

Make it a habit to practice a prana-enhancing activity each day.



Closing ritual

A powerful way to conclude the Chopra Health classes is with a closing ritual that helps people reflect on their experiences and make a commitment to continuing to cultivate a lifestyle that expands their health and happiness. You can guide this ritual by offering these instructions:

I'm going to go around the room and ask each person to share one thing you've learned about yourself during this course, and one practice you are committed to continuing to weave into your life.

It could be the practice of meditating on a regular basis, ideally every day, including all six tastes in your meal, or enjoying an abhyanga self-massage in the mornings.

Remember that this doesn't mean you can't do more than one practice—you just want to make a commitment to one single change until it becomes a habit and natural part of your healthy lifestyle.

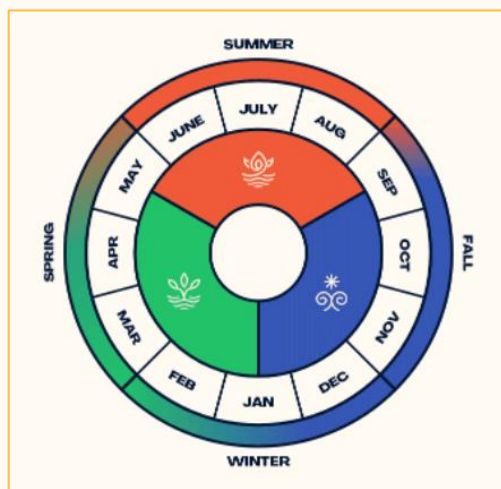
When it's your turn, please share from your heart, recognizing that a commitment is a contract between your individuality and universality, between your ego and your soul.

Note: At the end of the class, let your students know that you are available for general questions.

Seasonal routines and the doshas

Dive deeper

There are master cycles—matched to the doshas—that run throughout the year.



Our bodies automatically flow with the changes of these master cycles, as long as we do not interfere. Ayurveda divides the year into three seasons in place of the usual four.

- **Vata season** bridges late autumn and winter
- **Kapha season** falls in late winter and spring
- **Pitta season** falls in summer and early fall

A complete yearly cycle takes us through Kapha, Pitta, and Vata, in that order.

The calendar season that gets absorbed is autumn, because it is divided between two doshas. Autumn is considered Pitta as long as hot weather prevails and Vata as soon as it turns cold, dry, and windy.

The three Ayurvedic seasons are only approximate and have to be adjusted according to local conditions. In India, for example, there are six seasons, in keeping with the arrival of the monsoon and other climatic changes that are not in the continental United States. On the other hand, many areas of Florida have practically year-round Pitta conditions, giving way to a brief Vata or Kapha winter.

It is not really the calendar but nature itself that tells us when the doshas will be influenced. Any damp, cold, overcast day will cause an increase of Kapha, whether it occurs in fall, winter, or spring.

The doshas are a reflection of changes in climate throughout the year as the Earth revolves around the Sun and wherever people live on the planet, they will experience complete cycles of Vata, Kapha and Pitta during the year, even if more subtle.



Ritucharya

Traditionally, Ayurveda advises that everyone should follow a seasonal routine (*ritucharya*) to stay in balance as the seasons change.

The routine does not involve major alterations in lifestyle, only a shift in emphasis. You should always maintain your Ayurvedic daily routine—that remains of primary importance—and continue to follow the diet that pacifies your predominant dosha, with certain variations to blend into the season.

Kapha season: spring and early summer

- Favor a diet that is lighter, drier, and less oily than during other seasons.
- Reduce heavy dairy products (cheese, yogurt, and ice cream) since they tend to aggravate Kapha.
- Favor warm food and drink.
- Eat more foods with pungent, bitter, and astringent tastes and fewer with sweet, sour, and salty tastes.

Pitta season: midsummer through early autumn

- As agni increases in the summer, this heat can start to spread throughout the body and weaken the central digestive fire. Although it seems counter-intuitive, this can sometimes lead to low agni in the summer with a decrease in appetite. Follow your appetite during the summer, not assuming that you can eat more. Of course, with increased activity, sometimes the appetite can increase as well. Do what feel right and recognize that sometimes overdoing in Pitta season will burn the agni out.
- Favor cool food and drink, but not ice cold. Your body will want more liquids in hot weather, but it is important not to douse the digestive fire by drinking cold liquids after a meal.
- Favor sweet, bitter, and astringent tastes and reduce sour, salty, and pungent ones.

Vata season: late autumn through winter

- Favor warm food and drink, heavier food, and an oilier diet than you do during the rest of the year.
- Make sure your food is well cooked and easy to digest, accompanied by plenty of warm liquids, such as ginger tea.
- Eat more of the sweet, sour, and salty tastes and less of the bitter, astringent, and pungent.
- Avoid dry or uncooked foods (especially salads and raw fruits and vegetables).
- Don't worry if your appetite increases—this is a natural tendency in winter and helps pacify the Vata dosha. However, be sure not to eat more than you can comfortably digest.



Eat seasonally

Keep your dosha in balance by eating seasonally.

- Eat fresh produce throughout the year, choosing fruits and vegetables that are grown locally.
- Avoid foods that are not in season where you live—for example, in winter you may need to eat fewer tomatoes and avoid fruits that are shipped half-ripened from other locales.
- Try to incorporate what previous generations ate during cold months—when there is not a lot of fresh produce. For example, there were traditional ways to can and preserve fruit during fall to eat during the winter months.

The seasonal routine involves mostly the commonsense adjustments in eating habits that we already follow.

But look around a restaurant on a frigid February day and notice how many diners still order chilled salads and ice cream. Not knowing any better, almost everyone will be drinking ice water, beer, or cold white wine—all of which are aggravating to Vata during its most prominent season.

In general, the season to be most vigilant about is the one that matches your mind-body type.

Here's an easy way to remember the seasons for each dosha:

- Winter for vatas
- Spring for kaphas
- Summer for pittas

These are times when you want to be especially attentive to your dosha-balancing regimen. Also, at the turn of every season Vata dosha tends to become more vulnerable, so it is good to be careful about Vata when winter turns to spring, spring to summer, and so on, because this is typically when seasonal colds and flu strike.

Keep in mind that life becomes too complicated if you make an obsession out of changing your diet to suit the weather. The Ayurvedic seasonal routine should be just another way to encourage your body's own natural instincts to emerge.



PART 3

Additional Classes



Teaching Basic Meditation

Introduction and benefits of meditation

Learn how to teach Intro to Basic Meditation

As the ancient Ayurvedic physicians taught, the goal of Ayurveda is to return to our natural state of health and to **experience our true, unbounded self**.

One of the foundational practices of Ayurveda is meditation, which is a journey from activity to silence. It is a technique for going beyond the noisy internal dialogue of the mind into quieter levels of awareness, until we experience the pure silence within. In the process, we detach from the ego mind, which is the mind conditioned by learned limitations and identities—and awaken to who we really are: pure consciousness, beyond space and time.

In meditation, our memory of wholeness is restored, and we gain profound benefits for our physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional health. Meditation is one of the pillars of health and a practice we encourage everyone to include as part of their daily routine for health and balance.

Topics and checklist

Meditation class topics

- Introduction and benefits of meditation
- The practical points of meditation
- How to lead a group meditation

It's important to note that we have divided the Leading a basic meditation content into separate lessons in this session so that you can gain a solid understanding of how to present it. However, when you teach this material to your students, you will do so as one class.

Checklist

- Meditation timer
- Soft bell or chime (optional)
- Computer and internet connection (if you are teaching virtually)
- Laptop, screen, projector, small table, and extension cords (optional if you are teaching in-person using a presentation deck, such as Power Point or Keynote)
- Dry erase board or flip chart with pens (optional)

Note: A PowerPoint template for Teaching Meditation is available under S8 Resources and Program Resources. You can customize this template for your own presentation.

Here's what you'll cover in this class

- You'll start with an overview of meditation, including how mediation works, its purpose, and its benefits.
- Next, you'll teach your students about the practical or the finer points of meditation and common experiences very mediator shares - to know that these experiences are a normal part of meditation.
- You'll wrap up the class by teaching your students about mantras and guide them in a So Hum mantra meditation.



Introduction to the basic meditation class

Where do you start?

You'll start by greeting students and walk through the class introduction. Introduce yourself and share your own reasons for learning to meditate.

What to say

Use or modify the script below for your introduction.

I'm pleased to welcome you to the Group Meditation portion of the Chopra Health program.

Meditation is one of the key pillars of health by improving physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. It is the basis of Chopra teachings. Hundreds of thousands of people have learned to meditate at Chopra events and by Chopra teachers around the world.

If the group is small, ask the participants to introduce themselves and invite them to share what brought them to the class, why they would like to learn to meditate, and what they hope to gain. If the group is large, you could ask a few participants to share.

Basic meditation class overview

What's coming up

Now, you'll provide your students with a class overview and explain what you'll be covering.

What to say

Use or modify the sample script below for the Basic Meditation class overview.

In today's class, we'll explore the ancient practice of meditation, including how meditation works, its purpose, and its benefits. I'll give you some practical tips to feel confident about your meditation technique and you'll learn how to practice mantra meditation and experience and lead a guided meditation.

What is meditation?

The purpose of meditation

At this point in the class, you'll explain the true meaning and purpose of meditation.

What to say

Use the following 4 key points to help guide your discussion.

01. Provide some background.

Meditation is one of the foundational practices of Ayurveda, and one of the Six Pillars of Wellbeing. Most of us live very active lives and navigate the demands of a busy, stimulating world. Even when we're in a quiet setting, our minds are filled with activity, busy with thoughts about the past, plans for the future, and a stream of interpretations, judgments, and stories about the events of our lives.

02. Tell your students the meaning of meditation.

Meditation is a journey from activity to silence. It is a technique that allows you to settle into quieter and quieter levels of awareness until you experience the pure silence within.

03. Now talk about the benefits.

In the process of going within, you start to purify the body, releasing stress, fatigue, toxins, and everything that prevents you from experiencing your essential nature.

You reconnect to who you really are—pure love, pure joy, and pure potential—and then bring this person back into your everyday life.

04. Explain the true purpose.

Meditation restores your memory of wholeness and provides a variety of profound benefits for your mind-body physiology.

The benefits of meditation

Benefits

Next, you'll discuss the benefits of meditation.

What to say

Use the following 8 talking points to help guide your discussion. Examples are provided but do your best to make this part your own.

- 01.** Begin with an overview of the many reasons people are drawn to meditation.

People are initially drawn to meditation for many different reasons.

Some begin meditating because of a doctor's recommendation, seeking the health benefits of lowered blood pressure, stress reduction, and restful sleep. Others come to meditation seeking relief from anxiety or to help with an addiction such as smoking or overeating. Still others are drawn to meditation because they want to experience the expanded states of consciousness described in the world's great wisdom traditions.

- 02.** Explain that everyone receives physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual benefits.

Although the purpose of meditation depends on the meditator, it is also true that anyone who meditates regularly receives profound benefits on all of these levels—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

- 03.** Tie in the science.

There are thousands of scientific studies documenting the benefits of meditation for your body/mind health.

- 04.** Dive into the physical benefits.

The physical benefits of meditation include:

- *The stimulation of the body's self-repair mechanisms and self-regulation*
- *Lowered blood pressure and heart rate*
- *Decreased inflammation*
- *Increased levels of the enzyme telomerase to help slow the aging process*
- *Better sleep*
- *Improved immune function*

- *Downregulation (turning off) of genes that contribute to diseases such as diabetes, Alzheimer's, autoimmune illnesses, and some types of cancer*
- *Upregulation (turning on) of genes that are responsible for good health*
- *Increased production of rejuvenating hormones such as DHEA and growth hormones*
- *Reverses some of the brain changes that are associated with aging*

05. Next talk about the mental and emotional benefits.

The mental and emotional benefits of meditation include:

- *Decreased stress and anxiety and increased feelings of relaxation and peace*
- *Expanded experience of healing emotions such as love, compassion, joy, equanimity, and gratitude*
- *Decreased experience of painful emotions that constrict awareness, including anger, hostility, guilt, fear, anxiety, shame, and depression*
- *The ability to respond consciously rather than reacting in a conditioned, melodramatic way*
- *Increased focus, memory, and ability to learn*
- *Decreased addictive behavior*

06. Now give your students an idea of how long it takes to receive benefits.

The benefits of meditation are both immediate and long-term. You can begin to experience benefits the first time you sit down to meditate and in the first few days of daily practice. The benefits that are noted will become more sustained with a regular practice.

07. Introduce Chopra specific research studies.

For example, a study conducted with Chopra program participants found that after just a few days of meditation, participants experienced profound beneficial effects in their genetic expression, including:

- *A 40 percent increase in telomerase, an enzyme that repairs and protects the telomeres on our chromosomes, creating direct anti-aging effect at the cellular level*
- *A significant increase in genes responsible for self-regulation and homeostasis, which are essential for health and longevity*
- *A decrease in all the genes associated with too much inflammation, which indirectly decreases the risk of inflammatory-related diseases such as Alzheimer's, diabetes, autoimmune disorders, and some types of cancer*

These benefits were more pronounced in people who had a regular meditation practice.

08. Wrap up with the spiritual benefits.

Beyond these extraordinary health benefits, meditation offers a path to discovering who you really are. In meditation, you go beyond the limited identity your mind creates and experience your true self, which is pure, unbounded consciousness.

Meditation and stress management

Reduction of stress

This is a good time to help your students understand how meditation works to reduce and manage stress.

What to say

Use or modify the 6 talking points below to help guide your discussion.

01. Give an overview of stress.

Stress is the perception of physical, emotional, or psychological threat.

02. Challenge your students' perception of stress.

Stress therefore isn't caused by an external situation but is created by the way in which we perceive or interpret that situation and react.

03. Next, talk about how the body responds.

When we perceive a threat, our body activates its fight-flight-freeze stress response. Prolonged or chronic stress leads to increased inflammation and a much higher risk of developing many health problems.

04. Then provide the Ayurvedic point of view.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, stress blocks the body's vital channels. Deep rest is how the body naturally heals itself by throwing off the stress, fatigue, and toxins that prevent a healthy flow of energy/information.

05. Give your students a solution to combat chronic stress.

The good news is that we don't have to live in a state of chronic stress. There are many practices that can neutralize and alleviate stress, including the daily practice of meditation. During meditation, the body experiences a deep state of restful awareness and reverses the fight-flight-freeze response.

06. Give your students more incentive to meditate.

In addition to these profound benefits, the experience of pure awareness we experience in meditation also helps us to experience greater intuition, creativity, and joy.

Note: In *S8 Resources* or *Program Resources*, you will find a guided visualization script called *The Body's Response to Stress and Restful Awareness* to help you teach the fight/flight/freeze and restful awareness response.

The qualities of silence

What's next?

The next topic is about qualities of silence and how they relate to meditation.

What to say

Use or modify the following 6 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Provide an overview of thoughts.

We have thousands of thoughts a day. If you have ever practiced meditation before, you may have had an experience of having too many thoughts.

02. Explain that between each thought there's a space.

However, between any two thoughts you have, there's a space. If there wasn't a space, everything would be happening at the same time. This space has two very important qualities.

03. Describe the two qualities of space.

First, it's silent. If it wasn't, it would be the next thought.

Second, it's not an empty silence, but a silence filled with infinite possibilities. Even though most of the time, your thoughts follow certain predictable patterns, conditioned by your memories and desires, between any two thoughts is the possibility for any other thought.

04. Make the connection between the space and who your students really are.

The space between thoughts is where the one who is thinking the thoughts, the generator of the thoughts, is found.

Therefore, you are not your thoughts; you are the one who is thinking the thoughts so the only place where the thinker of the thoughts can be is also in the spaces between your thoughts. This is your soul, your essence, and who you really are at your most profound level. And, because your essence is in the spaces between your thoughts, who you really are is silence and infinite possibilities.

05. Then talk about what happens during meditation.

During meditation, your awareness settles to finer and finer levels of thought until you slip into the spaces between the thoughts, you dip into the silence, the infinite possibilities, you connect to who you really are.

06. Wrap up.

When you come out of meditation, you bring the qualities of spirit out with you and naturally begin to integrate and enjoy them in your life. You begin to restore the memory of who you really are.

Seven ways meditation can help reduce and manage stress

Dive deeper

Thousands of years ago the Buddha said, “Life contains suffering.”

The source of our suffering can be profound, such as losing a loved one or discovering we have a serious illness. Most often, however, our suffering comes from the daily hassles of life.

We get stuck in a traffic jam or the long line at the grocery store. We have an unexpected car repair or the neighbor’s barking dog is keeping us awake. These are relatively minor hassles, but they can easily trigger our body’s ancient fight-or-flight response, also known as the stress response.

Hormones such as cortisol and adrenalin surge through our body, causing our heart to pump faster. Our blood sugar rises, our immune system is suppressed, our breathing accelerates and becomes shallow, and the blood supply to our digestive organs is reduced.

This emergency response system evolved to allow our ancestors to survive immediate physical threats, such as an attack from a wild animal. It prepared our body either to fight the threat or run away as fast as possible. But today, most of the stress we face is psychological, coming from the demands of modern life.

Daily challenges like a long commute, caring for an elderly parent, or working with a difficult colleague can trigger our stress response.

Because these conditions are ongoing, many of us are living in a state of chronic stress, which takes an enormous toll on our health and happiness.

What are the risks of chronic stress?

The stress hormone cortisol has been linked to an increase in fat around organs, known as visceral fat. The accumulation of visceral fat can be dangerous because these fat cells actively secrete hormones that can disrupt the functioning of the liver, pancreas, and brain, causing problems such as insulin resistance, inflammation, and metabolic syndrome.

Chronic exposure to other stress hormones can also weaken the immune system and even change the structure of chromosomes, promoting the early onset of age-related diseases.

As researchers are now discovering, prolonged stress leads to increased inflammation and a much higher risk of developing many health problems, including:

- High blood pressure and heart disease
- Autoimmune illnesses
- Some kinds of cancer
- Arthritis
- Depression and anxiety
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Memory loss

If this information is increasing your stress levels, take heart. There are many powerful ways to manage stress and experience greater well-being, including exercise, getting enough sleep, social support, and the practice of meditation.

The first step is to recognize that contrary to common misconceptions, stress isn't a force beyond our control.

Stress doesn't exist outside of us in the environment or external situations; instead, stress is an internal response to a perceived threat or unmet need.

It's not the overdue payment, broken dishwasher, or fight with our spouse that causes stress—it's our thoughts and the story we tell ourselves about an event or circumstance that create the emotional upset, racing heart rate, shallow breathing, surging adrenalin, and other symptoms of the stress response.

Surfing is a good analogy: If you are a skillful surfer who loves the water, you will see every wave as an exhilarating adventure or at least an opportunity to learn something new. On the other hand, if you're afraid of being in the ocean and have never learned how to surf, you will see every wave as a terrifying potential disaster. From this example, it's easy to see that stress doesn't lie in the external event but in our perception of it.

Let's look at some of the specific ways in which meditation can help you manage stress and cultivate greater health and well-being.

01. Meditation reverses the effects of the stress response.

In meditation, you journey from activity to silence.

You go beyond the noisy thoughts in the mind, and the stories we are telling ourselves, and enter a state of restful alertness. You're in a state of deep rest, yet your mind is fully alert and awake. In this state of restful alertness, the body experiences many healing effects that are the opposite of the fight-or-flight response, including:

- Decreased heart rate
- Normalization of blood pressure
- Deeper breathing
- Reduced production of stress hormones, including cortisol and adrenaline
- Strengthened immunity
- More efficient oxygen use by the body
- Decreased inflammation in the body

You don't have to be an advanced meditator to benefit from meditation.

One study conducted at a Chopra event found that after a six-day meditation retreat, new meditators experienced significant reductions in stress and depressive symptoms lasting 10 months after the retreat.

When you meditate on a regular basis, you are giving your body all of the benefits of deep rest, which gradually help to heal the accumulated effects of chronic stress and restore your body to its natural state of balance and health.

02. Meditation increases the body's neurotransmitters of well-being.

The state of deep rest produced by meditation triggers the brain to release neurotransmitters that enhance feelings of well-being, focus, and inner calm. Here are a few of the key neurotransmitters released during meditation and the benefits they provide:

- Dopamine plays a key role in the brain's ability to experience pleasure, feel rewarded, and maintain focus. Dopamine also regulates our mood and sleep.
- Serotonin has a calming effect. It eases tension and helps us feel less stressed and more relaxed and focused. Low levels of this neurotransmitter have been linked to migraines, anxiety, bipolar disorder, apathy, feelings of worthlessness, fatigue, and insomnia.

- GABA (gamma aminobutyric acid) sends chemical messages through the brain and nervous system. One of its many roles is to inhibit the activity of nerve cells, helping to control fear and anxiety when neurons become over-activated. When the body is deficient in GABA, the symptoms include nervousness, racing thoughts, and sleeplessness.
- Endorphins are most commonly known as the chemicals that create the exhilaration referred to as “the runner’s high.” These neurotransmitters play many roles related to well-being, including decreasing feelings of pain, and reducing the side effects of stress.

Meditation choreographs the simultaneous release of these neurotransmitters, something that no single drug can do—and all without side effects.

03. Meditation promotes relaxation and restful sleep.

Many of us live in a state of chronic sleep deprivation, which increases our stress levels and irritability.

Scientific studies have found that meditation is an effective therapy for insomnia and can help us get the restful sleep that is vital to physical and emotional health. When we meditate, our brain produces more brainwaves that promote deep relaxation, including alpha and theta brainwaves, which are associated with deep relaxation.

After a meditation practice, we carry this sense of greater calm with us into our activities, allowing us to stay more centered in the face of life’s inevitable upsets. Then when it’s time for bed, instead of ruminating about what happened earlier in the day, we are more likely to drift to sleep—and stay asleep.

04. Meditation improves focus and attention.

Many people feel stressed because they’re trying to do more than one thing at a time. As neuroscientists have discovered, the conscious brain cannot multitask. If we’re speaking with someone and checking emails at the same time, we’re doing neither.

Meditation helps us to train our brain to stay focused on the task at hand rather than letting our attention be pulled away by every passing thought and distraction. This one-pointed attention makes us more effective and less stressed.

For example, a study of meditation and focus led by Dr. David Levy at the University of Washington found that a group of human resources managers who received meditation training were able to stay focused for longer periods, without switching back and forth among tasks. The researchers also found that meditation improved the memory of study participants while reducing their stress.

In another randomized, controlled study, a group of university undergraduates who practiced mindfulness and meditation for only two weeks experienced a significant improvement in their ability to focus on a task without becoming distracted. In addition, the study participants improved the capacity of their working memory.

05. Meditation releases emotional turbulence.

Through the practice of meditation, you develop what is known as witnessing awareness, which allow you to observe your thoughts and feelings and stories with greater objectivity and distance, rather than getting pulled into the melodrama of emotional reactivity. As you begin to witness your mental activity, without attempting to resist or change it, there is a spontaneous calming of the inner commotion.

Over time, you will begin to notice that some space has been created around difficult emotional states. As this sense of spaciousness expands in your daily life, you will start to see that there is more to who you are than your moods or thoughts, and you may also observe that the sensations associated with the negative state dissolve altogether. It will also become easier to let go of old patterns of thinking and feeling that create stress.

It's wonderful to realize that you don't have to repress what you feel in order to experience inner calm. In fact, repressing emotions never leads to emotional well-being but only adds to the accumulation of stress stored in the body. By not repressing or fixating on emotions, they can move through and out of the body, allowing you to experience greater equanimity and well-being.

06. Meditation can change your brain's stress patterns.

Meditation is a powerful tool for awakening new neural connections and even transforming regions of the brain. As researchers have found, meditation can even change the brain's structure in ways that decrease habitual stress patterns and promote calm.

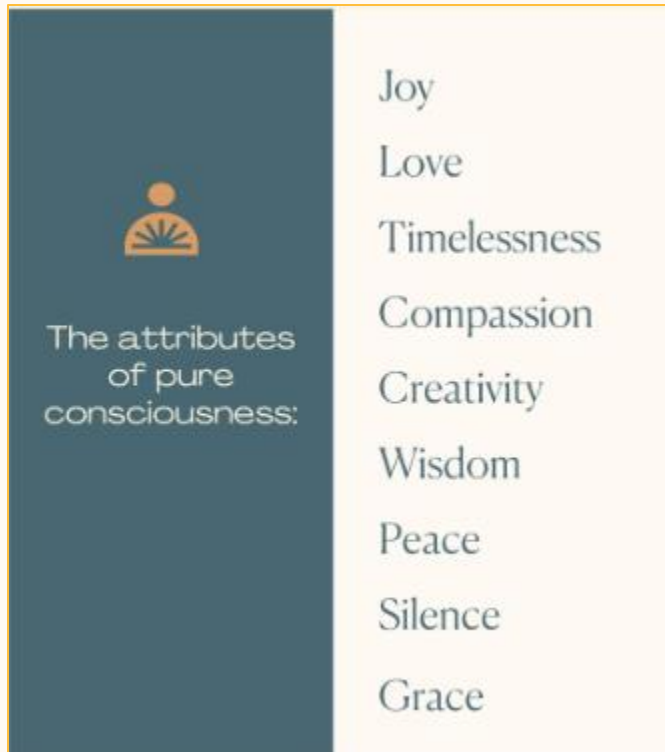
For example, research conducted by Harvard University and Massachusetts General Hospital found that after only eight weeks of meditation, participants experienced beneficial growth in the brain areas associated with memory, learning, empathy, self-awareness, and stress regulation (the insula, hippocampus, and prefrontal cortex). In addition, the meditators reported decreased feelings of anxiety and greater feelings of calm.

07. Meditation connects you to your true self.

From a spiritual perspective, the ultimate purpose of meditation is to awaken to your true self.

Although it's natural to identify yourself with your body, mind, thoughts, emotions, personality, possessions, accomplishments, relationships, and preferences, these time-bound attributes aren't who you really are. Your true self is pure, unbounded consciousness, which transcends space and time.

Pure consciousness is also known as the field of all possibilities.



When you spend time in the inner silence of meditation, you begin to have a spontaneous experience of the attributes of your true self.

Instead of getting stuck in constricted awareness, which limits your possibilities, you experience expanded or pure awareness, which is the field of all possibilities. This awakening to your true self is usually gradual. Little by little, you release the stress and limiting thought patterns that obscure your awareness of your essential nature, which is always there, shining brightly.

Meditation and well-being

Dive deeper

Meditation is a proven antidote to chronic stress.

Perceived threat

Stress is the perception of physical, emotional, or psychological threat.

Stress therefore isn't caused by an external situation but is created by the way in which we perceive or interpret that situation and react.

The natural purpose of the body's stress response is to trigger heightened alertness and energy for a short period, a matter of minutes or at most an hour, when we perceive a threat. Our body activates its fight-flight-freeze stress response, which includes a number of physiological changes, including:

- Increased heart rate
- Increased blood pressure
- Shallow, rapid breathing
- Increased production of stress hormones
- Decreased levels of anti-aging hormones
- Sweating
- Weakened immunity
- Clotting of blood platelets

When stress becomes chronic, a "normal" way of life that people believe they have adapted to, stress hormones become a drip-drip in the background of the physiology, and over time leads to increased inflammation and a much higher risk of developing many health problems, including heart disease, obesity, autoimmune illnesses, strokes, obesity, memory loss, depression, anxiety, and some kinds of cancer.

There are many practices that can neutralize and alleviate stress, including the daily practice of meditation. In the inner silence of meditation, our body experiences a deep state of restful awareness in which:

- Heart rate and blood pressure normalize
- Breathing becomes slower and deeper
- Stress hormones decrease
- Anti-aging hormones increase
- Production of the telomerase enzyme increases
- Inflammation in the body/mind decreases
- Clotting of blood platelets

Meditation also helps us to make more conscious choices about how we respond to the people and events in our lives. Instead of getting caught up in fearful or angry reactions to perceived threats, we are able to step back and respond in more creative, resourceful ways.

Tune into your body's wisdom

Dive deeper

The mind tends to dwell in the past or in the future. The body lives in the moment and finds the greatest joy and satisfaction there.

Like many people, you may have been trained to live “from the neck up,” using your intellect and mind while ignoring, distrusting, or simply being unaware of the signals of your body. This can create a great deal of unnecessary stress.

No matter how long it has been neglected, the body is a faithful servant and will respond when you begin to connect. The following exercise will help you tune into your body, let go of stress, and expand your well-being.

Throughout the day, when you become aware that you are feeling any degree of stress, take a few moments to check in:

- 01.** Close your eyes, place your hand on your heart.
- 02.** Take a few deep breaths; ask yourself, “What am I feeling and what do I need right now?”
- 03.** Wait for the answers to come; with patience, identify your body’s messages.
- 04.** Take an actions step; no matter how small, take concrete step to fulfill what you identified.

As you practice checking in with yourself on a regular basis, you will connect more deeply with your body and may begin to identify greater needs, such as, I need to end this relationship, or I need to cut down on the number of hours I volunteer, or I need to take more time for self-care. As you honor these needs, you will strengthen your relationship with yourself and experience the fullness and joy of present moment awareness. This is the practical value of mindful awareness.

Connecting to the feelings in your body brings you back into present moment awareness and gives you valuable information about what you need to cultivate greater health, balance, and happiness.

The practical points of meditation

Establish a successful meditation practice

In this part of this class, you will explain the practical aspects of meditation.

What to say

Use these 9 key points to help guide your discussion. Bring in your own personal examples to make this part your own.

- 01.** Start by telling your students the two things they need to do to meditate successfully.

To be a successful meditator, you really only need to do two things: find the time to sit down and close your eyes. However, there are some other practical guidelines that will help you in your meditation practice.

- 02.** Next let them know the best way to meditate.

The best way to meditate is whatever works for you.

- 03.** Then tell them why it's preferable to sit up rather than lie down.

If possible, sit in a comfortable, upright position (unless you are unable to sit upright, in which case please meditate in whatever position is comfortable for you). Since your body associates lying down with falling asleep, lying down to meditate is not recommended.

- 04.** Give them permission to move if they need to.

It's okay to move your body during meditation. We start off the meditation by sitting comfortably, but if you get stiff, you can change your position rather than sitting in a rigid, uncomfortable posture.

- 05.** Suggest that they close their eyes.

Close your eyes during meditation if you are comfortable. If you aren't, softly close your eyes and have a soft gaze. When your eyes are open, your attention is drawn outward into activity. The purpose of meditation is the opposite: to move from activity to silence.

06. Talk about minimizing distractions.

Create a special meditation space where you aren't likely to be disturbed by other people, noise, or interruptions such as phone calls, texts, or pets.

07. Say a few words about meditating indoors vs. outdoors.

It's best to meditate inside, where you have more control over your environment. However, if you prefer to meditate outside, do it in the shade rather than in the direct sun.

08. Talk about how long to meditate.

We recommend meditating twice a day for 15 to 30 minutes each time. However, some meditation is better than none at all, so meditate for however long you can.

09. Suggest meditating before meals or vigorous exercise.

It's best not to meditate after you have just eaten or engaged in vigorous exercise, as this can make the mind more active right before meditation.

The experiences in meditation

What to expect

It's time to talk about some of the experiences they will have during meditation.

What to say

Use these 5 key points to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Let your students know there's no such thing as a "bad meditation."

As long as you are easy and effortless, there is no such thing as a bad meditation. Every meditation will give you exactly what you need at that time. And every experience you have in meditation is correct.

As long as you're showing up for your meditation practice and following the basic instructions, you're doing it right.

- 02.** Then explain the three experiences they can have during meditation.

Here are some experiences you can have during meditation:

- You may experience thoughts.
- You may fall asleep.
- You may be repeating your mantra.
- You may slip into the silent space (gap) between thoughts.

- 03.** Next give examples of different types of thoughts.

There are a variety of experiences that show up in the form of thought that can take your attention away from your mantra:

- Everyday thoughts of your life's activities
- Ideas, images, or memories
- Pictures, colors, light, or other visual images
- Physical sensation in your body
- Emotions
- External noise in the environment

04. Then explain what it means if they fall asleep.

Falling asleep once in a while is normal. If you fall asleep during meditation, it only means one thing: you're tired. If you fall asleep during meditation, you're still receiving the benefits.

If you fall asleep every time you meditate, look at your lifestyle and ask why you are so tired?

05. Now describe the silence.

During meditation, awareness moves from the noisy activity in the mind to quieter levels of the thinking process until you eventually reveal the silence between thoughts. As you meditate consistently, you'll have a deeper and deeper experience of your essential nature and the field of infinite possibilities.

Note: *It's common for new meditators to worry that they're not meditating correctly or having the right experiences during meditation.*

One type of question you may be asked often has to do with thoughts. There can be a misconception that for meditation to be done properly, there should be no thoughts. And even though you'll have explained the concept of thoughts in meditation to the group, you'll likely still have students who will be concerned about them. The best approach in answering such a question is to remind your students of the types of experiences they can have in meditation—thoughts, sleep, the mantra, and silence—and that thoughts are a normal part of the process.

Let them know:

- They needn't be discouraged. Everyone has thoughts during meditation. Even the most seasoned of meditators has thoughts during the practice.
- If they continue to practice regularly, they will start to notice the benefits of meditation. Encourage them to try not to evaluate experiences during the time of seated meditation. Instead, suggest that they look for improvements in the quality of everyday life.

If students mention other obstacles they have encountered when trying to establish a regular meditation practice, such as time constraints or lack of a quiet space, try to help them find various times in their day or meditation-friendly places to practice.

Meditation is important to achieving a balanced body/mind. Offering your students creative solutions for achieving their goals won't only help them establish regular meditation practices, which will benefit them, but it'll also let them know that you support them on their path of well-being.

Meditation FAQ

Dive deeper

Here are answers to students most frequently asked meditation questions.

01. What's the best meditation technique?

The best meditation technique is the one that works best for you. Mantra meditation is a technique that can be easily learned and practiced, and which has proven to be effective for thousands of people. If you are already practicing another technique that you enjoy and that you feel is giving you many benefits, then we recommend that you continue with it. Do not feel that it is necessary for you to change and try something else at this time.

02. How is mantra meditation different from other techniques?

If a student asks about another meditation technique that you are experienced in or know about, it's fine to comment on the other technique and how it differs from mantra meditation. If a student asks about a technique that you have very little or no knowledge of, explain that you don't have experience with the other technique and that it would be unfair of you to comment on it now. If you feel you can find out more about the technique your student is asking about, then you can say that you will look into it and get back to them with an answer.

03. What if my mind keeps wandering?

It's normal to be distracted by sensations, images, feelings, thoughts, and noises in the environment. Do your best not to force yourself to think or concentrate on the mantra. Thinking the mantra is subtle, almost like listening to it. Let it come and go just as easily as any other thought. The less we do, the greater the benefits will be.

04. How will meditation affect my health?

Meditation is a natural process for restoring balance and harmony in the physiology by re-enlivening the body's own healing mechanisms. It helps us to restore wholeness within our mind-body system.

Many people have noticed dramatic improvements in their lives and in their health as a result of their meditation practice. However, meditation should not be looked upon as a cure for any particular health problem, and students should not discontinue the advice or medication that they are currently receiving from a health care practitioner.

05. Are meditation and yoga the same?

The word yoga means union with one's true nature. The ancient practice of yoga has always been considered a technology of consciousness primarily involving meditation. In the last few decades, the West has come to associate yoga with the physical postures, or asanas, of the yoga tradition. These asanas are certainly an integral part of yoga knowledge, along with other branches of yoga, including breathing exercises and moral behavior. And each of the eight limbs of yoga are important in attaining spiritual union.

06. Is meditation a religion?

Meditation is not a religion. It is a spiritual practice that takes our level of awareness to the level of our spirit, which is the same spirit that connects everything in creation. In fact, many people of different religions now practice meditation without any conflict with their religious views or practices. In fact, they have found that meditation enhances their religious beliefs and practices.

07. How is meditation different from prayer?

Prayer keeps us at the level of the mind because our attention is on asking for something. It has been said that when we pray, we talk to God. When we meditate, God talks to us. In prayer, our mind remains active, whereas meditation takes us beyond the mind's activity to the level of spirit, where we have direct contact with who we really are.

08. How is meditation different from visualization?

Visualization (guided or self-induced) and self-hypnosis function at the level of the mind. The mind is actively participating in these particular techniques or processes. In contrast, in mantra meditation, our awareness reaches beyond the mind; it slips beyond thought and experiences a level of pure silence and pure awareness.

09. What if I see a visual image of the mantra?

Some people are visual and tend to see their thoughts. Any visual experience, whether it is your mantra, colors, or other images, are just different types of thoughts. If you become aware that you are observing something in your meditation, treat that like any other thought and bring your attention back to the sound of your mantra. Favor listening to the mantra rather than watching or observing it.

10. Why can't I clear my mind of thoughts?

It is perfectly okay to have thoughts during meditation. In fact, thoughts are a natural and inevitable part of the process. The mantra itself is just another thought, even though it has no meaning. During mantra meditation, we think the mantra and when we become aware that we have drifted off to thoughts, we gently bring our attention back to the mantra without judgment.

We do not struggle against thoughts. We do not try to shut them out. They are part of the process. We just flow back and forth from the mantra to thoughts, to the mantra, and back to thoughts. Eventually, we get to very refined levels of thought, and we slip beyond the mantra, beyond thoughts, into the gap, to the level of the soul and spirit.

11. How long before I notice the benefits?

The benefits will start to accumulate from the first time you start meditating. If you continue to meditate on a regular basis, the benefits will come at whatever speed and at whatever rate is easiest for your body to assimilate them.

We all grow and evolve at whatever rate is most appropriate for us. If you ask how long it will take to get to the top of the Empire State building, the answer will depend on what floor you get onto the elevator. Some people get on at the 10th floor and some get on at the 25th floor. So it is with meditation.

Sometimes we notice the benefits immediately. Sometimes it is weeks or months before we really notice the changes. Sometimes it is other people who notice the changes in us before we notice them.

As long as you are meditating regularly, the benefits will continue to accrue. We recommend that you keep a journal or use a meditation app to track the benefits you have experienced or that someone else has observed.

12. What benefits have you experienced?

When answering this question, speak from your own experience. Share from your heart the experiences and changes you have noted in your life. Also be sure to share why you are practicing and teaching meditation and Ayurveda now.

13. What experiences should I be having?

Remember that there is no particular experience that you should have when you meditate. When you meditate, the experiences that you have are the experiences that are the best for your physiology at that time.

14. How long will it be before I slip into the silence?

You have probably already slipped into the silence many times. Most people do it without realizing it.

Do not spend your meditation wondering if you have slipped into the space between thoughts or whether you are about to access silence. Simply practice meditation and know that whatever experience comes is the perfect experience for you at that time.

15. Will I have profound insights during meditation?

The thoughts you have in meditation are generally associated with the release of stress. If you do have thoughts in meditation that you think are profound or insightful, we don't recommend that you stop your meditation to act on them. After finishing your practice, if something still feels profound and insightful, you can decide what you would like to do with such thoughts.

16. Do I need to change my lifestyle?

No. There are no lifestyle changes required to practice meditation. The only adjustment you will need to make is to allow the time to meditate regularly, twice each day. Other than that, any changes in your life will come automatically and spontaneously. Some of the less healthy habits you have may start to drop off while other, better habits will start to come into your life.

17. Is it okay to meditate with other people?

Yes. In fact, when we meditate, we create a certain coherence, or a certain amount of positive energy around us. When we meditate with other people, we share in everyone's coherence and positive energy. It has been reported that the effect of meditating with other people—the amount of coherence that is generated when we meditate in a group—is greater than the sum of the individual parts. If you enjoy meditating with other people, by all means we recommend doing it on a regular basis.

18. What if I keep falling asleep during meditation?

Go ahead and let yourself sleep if you feel a strong urge to nod off during meditation. It's not a good idea to force yourself to stay alert. Even if you don't have a sleep deficit from the night, sometimes you can go through a period of meditation where your body requires an experience of sleep in order to release a particular quality of conditioning. Don't worry about it; just let the body shift into the state it needs, and when that conditioning or stress has been cleared, you will find yourself staying awake during meditation.

19. Will I need less sleep?

Not necessarily. Some people find that they need less sleep when they meditate regularly, while others don't experience any changes in their sleep patterns. Sleep gives us a level of rest that dissolves the fatigue accumulated throughout the day, whereas meditation goes to a much deeper level. Although sleep and meditation each provide us with rest, the levels of rest are different. Therefore, we need both regular sleep and a regular meditation practice to live a happier, healthier, more balanced life.

20. Is meditation like being asleep or in a trance?

Not at all. Being asleep and being in a trance are both usually a state of restful dullness. There is very little awareness. When we meditate, on the other hand, we experience a heightened state of awareness known as restful alertness or restful awareness.

21. What if my body twitches, rocks, or sways?

Stress and tension have physical correlates. When stress and tension are released, it sometimes causes the body to move or twitch a little. Sometimes the body will naturally want to move of its own accord just to help facilitate that release of stress. As long as it is not uncomfortable, let this process take place and return to the repetition of your mantra. If, at any time, the physical sensations become too strong or uncomfortable, you can stop thinking the mantra, sit quietly for a minute or so until the sensations diminish, and then return to your meditation practice.

22. What does it mean if I'm having strong emotions?

Emotions during meditation are the release of stress or tension. Anytime emotions well up in your body during meditation, allow them to flow through your body and come out. This is known as emotional release. If it is not too uncomfortable, continue with your meditation as you experience this release. If the feelings become too strong and you are unable to continue, stop thinking your mantra and just sit easily for a few minutes until the emotion settles down, and then resume your meditation.

23. What if I get a slight headache?

This may be an indication that you are forcing the mantra by concentrating too hard. This can also be the result of mobilizing some emotional toxicity as part of the mechanics of stress release. If the headache becomes too much, stop repeating your mantra and sit quietly for a minute or so. Then, very gently, resume your meditation and think the mantra easily, without effort.

24. What if my eyes twitch or water?

This is probably just the release of stress or tension. Most of us tend to overtire our eyes from reading, sitting in front of a computer, looking at our phone, watching television, or just from the amount of stimulation that we take in through the sense of sight. A lot of stress and fatigue is accumulated in the eyes, and when we start to meditate, that stress is looking for a way out.

25. What if I hear ringing or whistling in my ears?

This is an indication that some stress is being released. Some changes are happening in the area of your ears, and this is causing the sound or whistle. It usually won't last very long as the stress is released.

26. What if I feel a rush of energy or tingling?

According to Ayurveda, we have approximately 72,000 channels of energy throughout our body. Most of them are subtle and are used to transfer energy and information to different areas of the body. Many of these channels get blocked with stress and toxins, and this causes our whole system to break down. This shows up as illness, discomfort, a sense of feeling unhappy, and an inability to live a fulfilling, contented lifestyle. When we meditate, these stresses and tensions start to dissolve. We begin to reopen these channels, and as this happens there is a surge of energy through the channels. Sometimes we experience this in our meditation as a tingling or surging of energy throughout the body. This is the experience of our physiology starting to wake up again.

27. What should I do if I feel restless or can't sit still?

Restlessness and frustration are indications that a lot of stress is being released, and this is one reason we are practicing meditation. When you have this experience, be gentle with yourself. Continue with your practice, and if it becomes too much, stop, and just allow any frustration or restlessness to surge through and then leave your body. When this dissipates, resume your meditation. This is not the time to quit your meditation practice. This is the time to continue with the meditation so that you can get rid of those stresses.

28. Why do I have less energy and feel more tired?

Sometimes meditation can stir up stress and fatigue. That stress and fatigue comes out whenever it is ready to emerge. If this is your experience, try to get some extra rest during this time. Maybe go to bed earlier or work a lighter schedule during this time. However, if it becomes a problem and affects your activity or lifestyle in some way, perhaps reduce the duration of your meditation to slow down this release of stress.

29. Why do I feel sudden excess of energy?

Increased energy is one of the benefits we expect from meditation. However, be careful not to overdo things in the early stages. Do not rush out and take on so many new responsibilities that you end up expending more energy than you are gaining. Be regular with your meditation and move ahead gradually. Remember that balance is the key to success in life.

30. How can my meditation help people around me?

Everything we do affects everything else in creation, even if on some very subtle level. By practicing meditation and increasing the coherence in our own life, we affect the coherence of everything else in the world on some level. As our own lives become more balanced and harmonious, we become happier and healthier, and then we radiate the effects of that to everyone around us.

31. How important is consistency?

Consistency is one of the most important aspects of meditation. Having the experience of accessing silence twice a day on a regular basis is the way we can bring those benefits of silence and pure potentiality out into our lives and integrate them into every cell of our body.

32. Can I meditate more than twice a day?

If you are ill or under a lot of stress, then, if it is comfortable, it is okay to meditate maybe a third time during the day. Under normal circumstances, twice a day is recommended. We need to get the deep rest of meditation, but we also need to have our regular activity in which to integrate those benefits into our lives. If you meditate less than twice a day, then you only get part of the benefits. If you meditate more than twice a day, then you may feel a little disconnected and not able to complete your activities.

33. If I work different shifts, when should I meditate?

It is always best to meditate when you first wake up, whatever time of the day that might be. This is usually when we are the freshest and, therefore, the meditation will be the most rewarding for us. Depending on your schedule, you will need to do your best to work your second meditation in at some point. It is best to allow seven or eight hours between your meditations. You can decide what works best for you.

34. Is it okay to meditate in the bath or hot tub?

This is not recommended because the movement of water and the change of temperature of the water against your skin will keep your attention on the surface of awareness. This will draw your attention outward rather than encouraging it to move inward.

35. Is it possible to open up to negative energies?

Not at all. In fact, when you are meditating you are in the safest place because when you meditate you get in touch with yourself. You are spending time getting to know who you really are. It is like coming home to the safest place you could ever be.

There are countless questions and variations of those questions that can arise before, during, and after someone attends a meditation class. While some people can memorize and repeat material, a good teacher has the ability to listen to and understand a person's question, and then answer it in a way that makes the student feel comfortable, satisfied, and even uplifted.

No question is too simple to be asked or answered. If you don't know how to answer a question, be honest and say so. Assure your student that this is a great question and that you will get back to them with an answer as soon as possible. Then be sure you follow up with that person.

It also helps to consider the questions you had when you learned to meditate and while establishing a meditation practice.

How to lead a basic mantra meditation

Mantra technique

Next you'll learn how to lead guide your students through a group meditation using So Hum mantra meditation. This can be used to access a deeper state of inner silence.

What to say

Use these 6 key points to help guide your discussion.

01. Introduce mantra meditation.

Mantra meditation is the favored Chopra meditation technique. You'll learn a powerful technique that uses the breath and the repetition of a mantra to quiet the mind and relax the body. This meditation will help you move beyond your mind's busy chatter to the peace of present moment awareness.

02. Define mantra.

A mantra is an instrument of the mind—a sound or vibration—that you can use to go beyond the level of activity to quieter levels of awareness. In the Vedic tradition there are mantras for all purposes many of which have meanings or intentions. The ones we use for silent meditation have no particular meaning.

03. Then explain the purpose of mantras.

When you introduce a mantra in meditation, it acts as a thought without meaning. With nothing to keep you at the active level of the mind, your awareness turns within. The mantra acts as an anchor to stabilize the mind and allows us to move away from thought to the mantra.

04. Now introduce the mantra So Hum.

So Hum has no particular meaning, but it is associated with the breath. The sound and vibration of So Hum allows you to identify yourself with who you truly are rather than believing you are the everyday activity of your body/mind.

05. Explain what happens when your students repeat the mantra.

When So Hum is repeated silently, and in conjunction with the breath, the mantra relaxes the body and quiets the mind. Awareness moves from activity to the inner realm of silence and infinite possibilities.

06. Tell your students that repetition of the mantra is gentle and effortless.

Explain to your students that repetition of the mantra is gentle and effortless. It requires no straining, no concentration, and is not goal oriented. Any forcing or concentrating would keep the awareness at the active level of the mind. The less you do, the greater the rewards. It is natural for the mind to drift off into thoughts, sensations, or noises in the environment. When you notice the mind has drifted, you simply bring attention gently back to the mantra.

You can expand on this discussion and give your students an example of the difference between a mantra and a thought, example below:

Most thoughts that we think have a sound and a meaning keeping us at the surface level of the mind. For example, if I ask you to think the word apple, there's a sound and there's also a meaning. As you think the word apple, you may think of meanings or memories that are associated with the word. Words with meaning lead the mind from one thought to another.

A mantra takes the mind from the active thinking level to quieter levels of silence within.

Group meditation overview

Expectations

It's time to let your students know what they can expect during the group meditation.

What to say

Use these 7 key points to provide an overview of how you'll be guiding the group meditation.

01. Introduce the group meditation.

For this meditation, I'm going to give you a few instructions. If you have learned a meditation technique previously, you may use any technique you're comfortable with during the meditation.

Tell your students the amount of time that they will be meditating.

02. Let them know they'll begin by observing the breath.

I'm going to start by asking you to effortlessly observe your breathing. Our thoughts usually take us into the future or the past. Our breath can only be in the present moment. The breath can never be in the future or the past. So, when we use our breath, it allows us to settle down and connect within ourselves.

03. Then tell them you'll give them a mantra.

Then, I'll ask you to silently introduce the mantra So Hum. This mantra is a sound vibration with no particular meaning. The mantra helps us to turn our awareness within and settle down to quieter levels of the thinking process until we slip into that space between the thoughts.

04. Now explain how you'll guide them in and out of the meditation.

I'll also be giving you some additional instructions at the beginning and at the end of the meditation. Follow along with the instructions and allow whatever experiences to arise without attachment. At the end of the meditation, I'll explain what the instructions mean and why they're a valuable part of any meditation.

05. Next ask them to switch off their phones.

Please switch off your phone.

06. Give them a moment to get comfortable.

Meditation should always be comfortable. Please find a comfortable seated position. It's preferable to sit up when we meditate, but if you can't for some reason, then you get into whatever position is comfortable for you.

If you need some pillows or blankets, this is the time to get what you need to be warm and comfortable.

07. Invite them to close their eyes.

The other thing we need to do to meditate is to close our eyes, so our attention is not drawn outward by our sense of sight. If you are comfortable, please close your eyes. If you aren't, just softly close your eyes and have a soft gaze in front of you.

So Hum group meditation

Guide your students

Now it's time to guide your students in the group meditation.

Note: When you are leading a group meditation using the So Hum mantra, you can choose whether or not to include all of these steps including the four soul questions, the "I am" sequence, and the four intentions.

What to say

Use or modify the 30-step script below for the group meditation using the mantra So Hum.

01. Introduce the meditation.

We will begin this meditation with a reflective self-inquiry that will help you connect to yourself at a deeper level. We will start by settling into silence and becoming present—and then I will guide you in four soul questions. When you ask yourself these questions before meditating on a regular basis, you will gain clarity and insight into who you really are, what you really want, what you are here to do, and what you are grateful for.

02. Invite your students to close their eyes.

Sit comfortably and close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so. If you aren't comfortable closing your eyes, try a soft gaze.

03. Begin by taking a few deep breaths.

Let's take a few deep breaths. Simply follow the inflow and outflow of your breath, coming into the present moment. With each inhalation and exhalation, allow yourself to become more relaxed, more comfortable, and more at peace.

04. Let your students know how to introduce the four questions.

We are going to ask ourselves a few questions. Gently repeat each one silently and then just listen to whatever answers come, without judgment or evaluation.

05. Invite your students to bring their awareness into their heart.

Please bring your awareness into your heart center, the area of your chest.



06. Now tell your students the first question: Who am I?

Now ask yourself the first question, Who am I? . . . Who am I?

Silently ask yourself this question and notice the responses that come to you, without forcing anything. You may experience thoughts, feelings, images, or sensations . . . or nothing at all. Whatever happens is perfect. Simply ask the question and rest in being. Just be.

Who am I?

Wait 20 seconds.

07. Then give your students the second question: What do I want?

Now, ask yourself, What do I want? . . . What do I want?

Ask the question and allow the responses to come to you. They may be in the form of thoughts, feelings, images, or sensations. Notice whatever comes to you without forcing anything or judging. Simply ask the question and pay attention.

What do I want?

Wait 20 seconds.

08. Move on to the third question: What is my purpose?

The next question is What is my purpose? . . . What is my purpose?

Ask the question and allow any thoughts, feelings, images, or sensations to come, without forcing anything. Just be open.

What is my purpose?

Wait 20 seconds.

09. Now the last question: What am I grateful for?

Now ask yourself the final soul question, What am I grateful for? . . . What am I grateful for?

Ask yourself the question and allow the responses to come to you.

What am I grateful for?

Wait 20 seconds.

- 10.** Ask your students to let go of the questions.

Please let go of all the questions and answers.

- 11.** Introduce the I am sequence.

Next, we'll begin the practice of "I am."

Now silently begin saying I AM followed by your first name and last name. [wait 15 seconds]

Now drop your last name and just repeat I AM and your first name. [15 seconds]

Now drop your first name and just repeat I AM, I AM, I AM.

- 12.** Invite your students to bring their awareness back to the breath.

Bring your awareness to your breath, simply observing the inflow and outflow without trying to control it in any way.

Let's just continue easily observing our breath. If you notice your attention drifting away to thoughts or noises, gently come back to observing your breath.

Wait 20 seconds.

- 13.** Ask your students to introduce the mantra, "So Hum."

Now silently begin repeating the sound So Hum . . . So Hum . . . So Hum.

Silently repeat the word So as you breathe in, and Hum as you breathe out. So with the inhalation, and Hum on the exhalation.

There's no need to focus or concentrate—just have simple awareness of the sound So as you inhale, and Hum as you exhale.

Wait 20 seconds.

- 14.** Encourage them observe the breath and the mantra.

Your breath may get faster or slower, deeper, or shallower. However it changes, just observe it innocently, silently repeating So Hum.

Wait 20 seconds.

- 15.** Then explain what to do when their attention drifts.

Whenever your attention drifts to thoughts in your mind, sounds in your environment, or sensations in your body, gently return to your breath, silently repeating So . . . Hum.

Wait 20 seconds.

- 16.** Remind them to let go of expectations.

Don't look for any experience or wait for something to happen. Simply, innocently, go with the flow.

Wait 20 seconds.

- 17.** Now let them know you'll tell them when to stop repeating the mantra.

I'll watch the time and will tell you when it's time to stop.

Wait 10-20 minutes.

- 18.** Ring a soft chime or softly chant "Om" once.

Please keep your eyes closed. Stop repeating the mantra, stop observing your breath, and just continue resting comfortably.

Wait 2-3 minutes.

- 19.** Then introduce the four intentions.

Let's close the meditation by setting intentions for our body, heart, mind, and soul.

- 20.** Ask your students to introduce the intention for the body.

Beginning with the body, please silently think the intention: Joyful, energetic body

Say the intention twice. Wait 20-seconds.

- 21.** Move onto the heart.

Now silently repeat, think the intention: Loving, compassionate heart

Say the intention twice. Wait 20-seconds.

- 22.** Next set an intention for the mind.

Reflective, alert mind

Say the intention twice. Wait 20-seconds.

23. Close with a soul intention.

Lightness of being

Say the intention twice. Wait 20-seconds.

24. Invite your students to take a few deeper breaths.

You can begin to take a few deeper breaths and stretch and move gently if you wish.

25. Then invite them to open their eyes.

When you are ready, please slowly open your eyes.

26. Ask your students if the meditation was comfortable.

Was the meditation comfortable?

Give your students time to respond.

27. Wrap up.

Any questions?

Pause to give your students time to ask questions.

Note: *Your students will look to you as an example of how to meditate.*

When leading a group meditation, it is best to sit in a chair with your feet on the floor and your hands on your legs or in your lap. Even if you usually meditate sitting cross-legged on the floor at home, other participants who choose to sit in a chair will feel more comfortable seeing you do the same. You can suggest that anyone in the group who would prefer to sit on the floor can do so.

Here are a few additional guidelines for leading a group meditation:

- When you lead the meditation, aim to use a clear, even, soothing voice, and speak loudly enough that everyone can hear you. When you bring people out of meditation, speak loudly enough that they can hear you, yet without being jarring to those who are settled.
- During the meditation, it is good to glance around the group once or twice to make sure everyone is alright. If you find anyone with their eyes open, just smile and silently indicate for them to close their eyes. Then be sure to keep your eyes closed for the rest of the time so if anyone decides to see what you are doing, you won't be caught staring out of the window or reading your notes.

- On occasion, someone may experience discomfort, either physical or emotional, and is often related to past trauma. If you see someone who appears distressed, you may allow them to let go of the meditation and remain seated with their eyes open. You may also preface the meditation by saying "If you experience any intense discomfort during the meditation, please release the repetition of the mantra and remain seated with your eyes open."
- Remember that you are keeping the time for the whole group, so take care not to get lost in your own meditation or fall asleep. Allow time for at least 15 minutes of group meditation and, if time permits, meditate for a full 30 minutes.
- At the end of the meditation, it is nice to use a soft chime to bring participants out of their meditation. When you ask people to stop silently repeating the So Hum mantra and sit easily with their eyes closed, set the example by keeping your eyes closed until you tell them to open theirs. People will frequently become restless during these few minutes and peek to see what you are doing. If your eyes aren't closed, people won't feel it is necessary for them to keep their eyes closed either.
- You may end the meditation by having participants bring their hands together at heart center and chanting the sound Om together. If this doesn't feel comfortable for you or you don't feel it is appropriate for the group you are instructing, you may skip this. Another option is to close the meditation by reading an inspiring quote or the law of the day from Deepak Chopra's book *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*. You can also simply close by saying namaste (pronounced "nah mah stay"). The word namaste is derived from the Sanskrit language and literally means "I bow to you." It's more commonly translated as "the divine light in me honors the divine light in you" or "the God within me greets the God within you." Namaste is the recognition that we are all equal and share a common divinity.

Note: *In your S8 Resources and Program Resources, we've provided a document with the Script: So Hum Meditation to use as a guide.*

Explaining the group meditation

Going into detail

After the meditation, you'll want to explain the various parts of the group meditation, including four soul questions, the I am sequence, the mantra practice, resting in being, and four intentions.

What to say

Use or modify the 12-step script below to explain the various parts of the group meditation.

01. Introduce the four soul questions starting with: Who am I?

When we first ask this question, sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts may arise, and we may attach an experience to our response. However, the question "Who am I?" is not an experience, and as our questioning becomes more refined, the experiences fade, and we rest in being. We ask the question and then simply rest in being, without being attached to any answers that may come .

02. Then explain the second question: What do I want?

Once again, when we ask this question, we allow any sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts to arise. These are all experiences in consciousness, and they will arise and then subside. Simply notice what comes, without forcing anything.

As our consciousness evolves—which is the whole intention of this practice—what we want will also change and evolve. For now, we simply ask the question and pay attention.

03. Move on to the third: What is my purpose?

We ask the question and allow any sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts to arise, without forcing anything. This question and the responses we receive are in the realm of experience, which is ever changing.

Again, as our consciousness evolves, our purpose will also evolve.

04.Next the fourth: What am I grateful for?

We ask the question and allow any sensations, images, feelings, and thoughts to arise. By asking these soul questions and listening to the answers without judgment or evaluation, we begin to explore the deeper levels of our being.

Over time, the process becomes more refined, taking us beyond the superficial aspects of our life and opening us to the most fundamental levels of our soul. We begin to rediscover who we really are.

05.Continue with the “I am” sequence.

We start by repeating the words I am, followed by our first and last name.

With this practice, we slowly begin to realize that what we are referring to as I is an experience in time. The entity that we call our self is not a fixed entity; it's constantly changing, evolving, and moving into higher states of consciousness.

Again, we don't do anything except repeat the words. We repeat our full name, which is our assumed identity. Then we leave off our last name and just repeat I am and our first name. This is also an assumed identity, but the first name is a more innocent, less conditioned, assumed identity. This is the name we were given when we were born.

06.Explain the term neti neti.

This process is called neti, neti in Sanskrit. We are slowly discarding every assumed identity, which is the conditioning of our consciousness, not who we are. It's all the things we attach ourselves to and identify as our self.

07.Dive deeper into “I am.”

Then we leave off our first name and what we are left with is I am.

I am is not in time. We cannot have an experience without I am. No matter what experience we have, I am gets attached to that experience.

I am the light of awareness because that light of awareness attaches itself to an idea and then becomes that idea.

08.Give your students the Sanskrit word for “I am.”

Then we drop the I am and repeat only the sound vibration of I am, which is ahum. This is also the sound behind Om, the primordial, universal sound.

09. Move on to describe mantra meditation.

Next we begin meditating using the So Hum mantra as our anchor or object of attention.

In the Vedic wisdom tradition, a meditation mantra is a sound vibration without a meaning. It is a pure vibration that allows our mind to settle into quieter levels of awareness. When we silently repeat a mantra in meditation, we go beyond the mind's thought stream and dip into the gap, the space of pure consciousness.

10. Talk about the importance of resting after meditation.

At the end of the silent meditation with the mantra, we let go of the mantra and rest in existence, awareness, and stillness. We are simply being.

11. Move on to the four intentions.

Then we finish the group meditation by setting intentions for our body, heart, mind, and soul.

- *Body – Joyful, energetic body*
- *Heart – Loving, compassionate heart*
- *Mind – Reflective, alert mind*
- *Soul – Lightness of being*

12. Wrap up.

The intention of the entire meditation process is to take us back to I, and from there, to manifest into the world. As it says in the Bhagavad Gita, “Be established in Being and then experience the world. Established in Being, perform action. Established in Being, think, feel, do, and speak.”

Note: *There is a script available, titled, “Introducing the Group Meditation” in your S8 Resources and Program Resources to that you can use to guide your students through all the steps.*

When you are leading a group meditation, you can choose whether or not to include these parts.

You may want to explain the relevance of each part before beginning the meditation or, if you prefer, you can ask the students to follow your instructions without judgment or evaluation—and then explain the parts at the end.

Note: *You can find a downloadable audio file, “Group Meditation with Deepak – Prasama Hum” available under S8 Resources or Program Resources to play for your students.*

In this meditation, Deepak instructs you to use the Sanskrit mantra *Prasama Hum*, which means “My essential nature is calmness, ease, and tranquility.” This can help you move beyond conditioned patterns of stress and anxiety and to access a state of peace and infinite possibilities.

Elements in the body meditation

Bonus meditation

If you like, you may now guide your students in a group meditation by connecting with the five elements.

What to say

Use or modify the 17-step script below for the Elements in the Body Meditation.

01. Introduce the meditation.

This meditation is to connect with the five elements present throughout the Universe and also in our own body.

02. Invite your students to position comfortably and close their eyes.

Please sit comfortably or lie on your back and close your eyes. If you aren't comfortable with closing your eyes, you can softly close your eyes and have a soft gaze. Breathe easily and be aware of your breathing.

Pause.

03. Begin explaining the earth element.

Let's begin with the earth element. The earth element brings stability and structure. Its influence in our bodies is in the area from the feet to the knees.

Try to sit or lie very still, remaining motionless except for the natural movements of the body.

Pause.

04. Invite your students to imagine planet earth.

Gradually begin to see or imagine the entire planet earth as part of your body.

Begin to identify the various features of the planet earth within the various parts of your body.

See the rivers and streams as your veins and arteries. The trees and forests as your hairs. The rocks and stones as your nails and teeth. The soft earth as your skin. Recognize the mountains and valleys, the vast oceans, the gentle meadows, all as parts of your body.

Pause.

05. Tell them to become one with planet earth.

Allow your body to become one with planet earth. The earth element gives structure and protection. It's in the bones and muscle. It influences the area between the feet and knees. Feel the strength of earth supporting you.

Feel yourself grounded, safe, secure.

Tell your students to be aware of their breathing again.

06. Invite your students to be aware of the water element.

Water represents everything that flows. Everything that is capable of change or flow has the spirit of the water element within it. Water influences the area of your body between the knees and the navel

Be aware of the flow of water.

Gently be aware of everything that flows within your body. Your blood, your breath, the flow of thoughts. Be aware of rhythms of everything flowing outside and around your body.

Allow the boundaries of your mind and body to soften. Let them become liquid. Begin to merge with the rhythms and flow of the Universe.

Wait a few moments.

07. Invite your students to bring their awareness back to the breath.

Come back to awareness of your breathing.

Pause.

08. Tell your students to become aware of the fire element.

The fire element influences the area from the navel to the heart. The heat and activity of fire balances the cooling nature of water.

Become aware of a warmth rising from your navel to your heart. Notice your mind and body becoming warmer, your temperature rising slightly. Feel the warmth throughout your entire body as the fire element purifies and transforms whatever is no longer necessary.

Pause.

09. Ask your students to allow the fire element in.

Allow the fire to awaken your energy, your vitality.

Allowing the fire to cool as you become aware of the breath once again.

Pause.

10. Next, tell your students about the air element.

The air element governs the body from the heart to the area between the eyebrows. Air is formless, more subtle than the previous elements. The air element brings us closer to our spiritual truth of formless reality.

Be aware of the cool, refreshing air moving over and through your body. Feel its calming influence and its vital energy.

Allow your body to gradually lose its gross solid form. Imagine your mind becoming very subtle and quiet.

Wait a few moments.

11. Tell them to become light as air.

Become as light as air. Feel as if you could float away like a cloud drifting on the breeze.

No cares or concerns. Just floating, light as a feather.

Wait 20 seconds.

12. Invite them to welcome the element of space.

Still in this subtle awareness, now welcome the element of space. Space rules the area above the eyebrows, up beyond the physical limits of the human body. It's beyond shape and color. Every cell of your body is proportionately as empty as intergalactic space.

Be aware of the space within your body, the space between thoughts, the space between breaths.

Space is the threshold where the manifest meets the un-manifest. Where the seen meets the unseen. Limitations meet the unlimited. Duality meets Oneness.



13. Tell your students to allow themselves to dissolve into space.

Be aware or imagine yourself as unbounded space. Allow yourself to dissolve into space. You are part of everything. Vast, beyond any limits.

Your mind and body are no longer as they were before. Time no longer exists for you. Allow yourself to become one with the whole of creation. You are the creation. The whole Universe is within you. You are the Universe. You are Oneness.

Short pause.

14. Ask your students to return.

Gradually bring your awareness back to your breathing. Back to where you are sitting or lying.

As you begin to return to activity, remember your oneness with the elements of creation.

15. Bring up the universe.

Any time during your day, allow your awareness to dance and play with the rhythms and forces of the Universe. Allow the full potential power of the Cosmos to gladly unfold itself at your feet.

Enjoy it.

Wait a few moments.

16. Take a deeper breath.

Take a deeper breath. Become aware of your breathing.

Give your students time to take a few more deep breaths.

17. Wrap up the activity.

Gently move your body. When you're ready, please open your eyes slowly.

Enjoy the world, as the world. Namaste.

Note: In your S8 Resources and Program Resources, you can find the Elements in the Body Guided Meditation script.



Teaching Pranayama

Introduction and benefits of pranayama

Begin to learn how to teach Pranayama Techniques

Breath is essential to life. It is the first thing we do when we are born and the last thing we do when we leave. In between that time, we take about half a billion breaths. What we may not realize is that the mind, body, and breath are intimately connected and can influence each other.

Our breathing is influenced by our thoughts, and our thoughts and physiology can be influenced by our breath. Learning to breathe consciously and with awareness can be a valuable tool in helping to restore balance in the mind and body.

Topics and checklist

Pranayama class topics

- Introduction and benefits of pranayama
- Pranayama practices

It's important to note that we have divided the Pranayama Instruction content into separate lessons in this session so that you can gain a solid understanding of how to present it. However, when you teach this material to your students, you will do so as one class..

Checklist

- Computer and internet connection (if you are teaching virtually)
- Laptop, screen, projector, small table, and extension cords (optional if you are teaching in-person using a presentation deck, such as Power Point or Keynote)
- Dry erase board or flip chart with pens (optional)

Note: A PowerPoint template for Teaching Pranayama is available under S9 Resources and Program Resources. You can customize this template for your own presentation.

Here's what you'll cover in this class

- You'll start with an overview of pranayama, including its purpose, benefits, and how it works as a tool to counter stress.
- Then you'll teach your students three pranayama techniques: Coherence Breathing, Nadi Shodhana, and Ujjayi.
- You'll wrap up the class by encouraging your students to create a daily practice of breathing fully.

Introduction to the pranayama instruction class

Where to begin

Start by greeting students and introduce Pranayama instruction.

What to say

Use or modify the script below for your introduction.

I'm pleased to welcome you to instruction in pranayama, the ancient practice of conscious breathing.

Pranayama is foundational to an Ayurvedic lifestyle and an important part of the six pillars of health.

If the group is small, ask the participants to introduce themselves and invite them to share what brought them to the class, why they would like to learn conscious breathing techniques, and what they hope to gain. If the group is large, you could ask a few participants to share.

You can also let your students know that the term "breathwork" is now being used to describe the breathing exercises, or pranayama techniques, that your students will be learning today.

Pranayama instruction class overview

What students can expect

In this part of the class, you'll provide an overview.

What to say

Use or modify the sample script below to tell your students what you'll be covering in this class.

In this class, you'll learn about the practice of pranayama, including what it is, the scientific benefits, how it reverses the stress response, and three different breathing practices you can incorporate into your daily life.

What is pranayama?

Meaning and purpose

At this point in the class, you'll explain the meaning and purpose of *pranayama*.

What to say

Use the following 5 key points to help guide your discussion.

01. Start with a simple definition of *pranayama*.

Pranayama is the practice of consciously using the breath to enhance our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. It is also an important support to the six pillars such as the meditation pillar, mindful movement pillar etc.

02. Give your students the Sanskrit breakdown.

The word pranayama comes from two Sanskrit terms: prana and ayama.

Prana is the vital life force that flows through our body and animates all living beings. It is the cosmic intelligence within every cell, tissue, and organ.

The word ayama means “to extend” or “draw out.” In pranayama, we use our breath to extend or expand our life-force energy and improve the communication between all parts of our mind/body system.

03. Go back in history.

As the Vedic sages discovered thousands of years ago, the mind, body, and breath are inextricably connected. Our breathing is affected by our thoughts, and our thoughts and physiology are influenced by our breath.

04. Provide a current day example.

For example, when our mind is caught up in fearful thoughts, our sympathetic nervous system triggers our fight-flight-freeze response. Our breathing speeds up and become shallow, and our body creates a surge of “stress” hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline, which increase our blood pressure and heart rate.

On the other hand, when our mind is calm, our breathing is deep and rhythmic, and our body engages its natural self-repair and self-healing mechanisms. In this state, our parasympathetic nervous system, or “rest and digest” system, is dominant.

05. Wrap up.

While it may be difficult to control our thoughts, we can control our breath. By consciously taking slower, deeper breaths, we can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which reverses the stress response, allowing the body to relax and restore its memory of wholeness.

You can let your students know that there are a variety of pranayama or conscious breathing techniques that have specific effects on the body/mind physiology. There are many different types of pranayama that have different effects on our physiology. Some techniques are more advanced and may have more medical considerations.

Sample script:

Some pranayama practices are relaxing and calming, while others are invigorating and cleansing. In this class, you will be learning a few different pranayama techniques that have a relaxing effect on the body/mind. You will be learning coherence breathing, nadi shodhana, and ujjayi.

You can feel comfortable teaching these techniques without any medical concerns. We've selected techniques you can lead safely with your students and are beneficial for all doshas. Some of the more advanced techniques come with contraindications.

Our focus isn't to teach you all that's out there. We encourage you to practice the many different pranayama techniques available on your own. Do your due diligence on any techniques that you choose to teach and understand the precautions to tell people.

You may also want to discuss the value of combining pranayama and meditation.

Sample script:

When you use these pranayama techniques before you meditate, they will help you have a deeper experience. You can also use them any time you want to invite in a sense of peace and relaxation.

Some invigorating techniques are intentionally activating to the sympathetic nervous system, and then are balanced with calming techniques to create overall balance of both branches of the nervous system, keeping you energized and good for our overall balance.

The benefits of pranayama

What pranayama provides

Next, you'll discuss the benefits of pranayama.

What to say

Use the following 4 talking points to help guide your discussion.

01. Start with the science.

Researchers have documented the benefits of a regular practice of slow, rhythmic breathing which include the following:

- *Improved cognitive functions*
- *Increased mindful awareness*
- *Reduced anxiety and depression*
- *Lower/stabilized blood pressure*
- *Increased energy levels*
- *Muscle relaxation*
- *Decreased feelings of stress and overwhelm*

02. Explain the physical benefits.

In the medical community, there is a growing appreciation for the positive impact that breathing fully can have on the physiology, both in the mind and the body. According to the research, many of these deep-breathing benefits can be attributed to reducing the stress response in the body and activating the parasympathetic (or relaxation) response.

03. Move on to the mental and emotional benefits.

In addition, breathing fully can also help calm and slow down the emotional turbulence in your mind. In fact, there are studies that show breathwork can help treat depression, anxiety, and PTSD by reducing activity in stress parts of the brain and increasing activity in parts of the brain that regulate emotions.

04. Wrap up.

If you practice every day for just a few minutes, you will reprogram your nervous system and experience both immediate and long-term benefits. Studies show that you should practice for a minimum of 10 minutes a day.

Pranayama and stress management

Pranayama and stress

This is a good time to help your students understand how *pranayama* works as a tool to reverse the stress response.

What to say

Use or modify the 6 talking points below to help guide your discussion.

- 01.** Use or modify the 6 talking points below to help guide your discussion.

When you experience stressful thoughts, your body triggers the fight-flight-freeze response, giving you a burst of energy to respond to the perceived danger.

- 02.** Explain the sympathetic nervous system.

The sympathetic branch of the nervous system is what moves the body towards activity and activates the fight-flight-freeze response.

Your breathing becomes shallow and rapid, and you primarily breathe from the chest and not the lower lungs. This can make you feel short of breath, which is a common symptom when you feel anxious or frustrated. At the same time, your body produces a surge of hormones such as cortisol and epinephrine (also known as adrenaline), which increase your blood pressure and pulse rate and put you in a revved-up state of high alert. This can be helpful during times of actual threat but may be harmful if left chronically in this state.

- 03.** Then, describe the parasympathetic nervous system.

Pranayama is a practice that activates the parasympathetic nervous system. When you breathe deeply and slowly, it enables you to downshift from the dominant sympathetic system to the parasympathetic system, which is the body's rest and digest system. The parasympathetic branch helps you feel calm, centered, and grounded. It reverses the stress response.

- 04.** Touch on pranayama and digestion.

Pranayama also helps to strengthen our digestive power, which is known in Sanskrit as agni. It does this through activation of the parasympathetic nervous system which optimizes the digestive process. A strong agni allows us to assimilate the value from our food and experiences, while eliminating that which doesn't serve us.

05. Make the connection between deep breathing and emotional reactivity.

As well as reversing the physical stress response in the body, deep breathing can have an immediate effect on diffusing emotional energy so there is less reactivity to our emotions.

06. Let your students know about an alternative practice with health conditions.

There are a few health conditions of the heart, aorta, and lungs where hyper- expansion of the chest is NOT recommended. If you have a condition like this, you can perform these exercises gently without over expanding the lungs, but just using a natural, normal breath.

For example, you can still do coherent breath, nadi shodhana, and ujjayi without over expanding the lungs.

Note: In *S9 Resources and Program Resources*, you will find a visual *Parasympathetic and Sympathetic Nervous Systems (PSNS and SNS)* visual to help you teach this lesson.

Let your students know that these techniques are not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Suggest that they always seek the advice of a physician or other qualified health provider with any questions regarding their medical condition.

Healing power of the vagus nerve

Dive deeper

Pranayama stimulates the single most important healing nerve in the body—the vagus nerve.

The vagus nerve is the main nerve of the parasympathetic nervous system, our internal mechanism for inducing the healing response. It is also the longest cranial nerve, communicating messages along a pathway that originates in the mid-brain, extends through the brainstem, facial muscles, and throat; reaches down to the heart, lungs, stomach, and intestines; and branches off to other major organs and bodily systems.

The vagus nerve is bi-directional, which means that it carries information from the brain to the body, and from the body to the brain. Actually, there is more information going from the body back to the brain than from the brain to the body.

Here are just a few of the crucial functions and bodily systems governed by the vagus nerve:

- Heart rate variability, heart rate, and blood pressure
- Breathing
- Digestion
- Mood
- Relaxation response
- Immune response
- Cognitive function
- Vocal tone
- Facial expression

When we stimulate the vagus nerve, it activates the body's parasympathetic nervous system, which governs the rest-and-digest response, also known as the relaxation response. When this response is activated, we feel more relaxed and calmer, and our body engages in self-regulation and healing.

The field of bioelectric medicine has developed electromagnetic devices to stimulate the vagus nerve, resulting in benefits that include decreased inflammation and improvements in asthma, epilepsy, rheumatoid arthritis, and depression. However, we don't require medical equipment to stimulate the vagus nerve—we can use the power of our own breath to stimulate this nerve and shift from a state of fight-flight-freeze to rest and relaxation.

Pranayama practices that include slow, rhythmic breathing can stimulate the vagus nerve, helping to improve our physical and mental health by inducing the natural healing response in the body.

Pranayama practices

Three pranayama techniques – start with Coherence

In this part of class, you will be learning to teach Coherence Breathing, Ujjayi, and Nadi Shodhana.

What to say

Use these 8 key points to help guide your discussion.

01. Introduce Coherence Breathing.

Coherence Breathing is a very simple breathing technique in which the length of your inhalations and exhalations will follow a set ratio.

02. Talk about the benefits.

This pranayama technique has been shown to offer a variety of healing benefits, including:

- *Reduced inflammation*
- *Strengthened immune system*
- *Decreased anxiety and depression*
- *Improved sleep*
- *Increased resilience*

03. Recommend the practice for all doshas.

Coherence breathing is recommended for all dosha types.

04. Prepare your students for instruction.

For this effective yet simple pranayama practice, you can take a seated position or lie down on your back. The important thing is to be comfortable.

05. Invite your students to close their eyes.

When you've found a comfortable position, relax your eyes downward with a soft gaze and find your natural breath. Allow your body to relax and feel safe.

06. Ask them to place their hands on their belly.

Place your hands on your belly. When you begin the breathing exercise, your belly rises with the inhale and falls on the exhale.

07. Start the exercise.

When you are ready, inhale through the nose to a count of four, then exhale for a count of five. Repeat for 8-10 rounds.

08. Wrap up.

Once you practice coherence breathing on a regular basis, you will find that simply taking a few coherence breaths will help you immediately calm your nervous system whenever you find yourself feeling stressed or anxious.

Please note: we recommend sitting for 2-3 minutes after the practice before resuming activity.

Note: If you have only one breathing technique you teach, choose coherence breathing.

For example, if you are teaching pranayama techniques as part of Ayurveda classes—of the three techniques you'll be learning, coherence breathing is a simple technique to teach and beneficial for all of the dosha types.

You may also want to explain diaphragmatic breathing and the purpose of placing the hands on the belly.

Example:

When you focus your awareness on the rise and fall of the belly, you encourage diaphragmatic breathing. Diaphragmatic breathing allows the lungs to expand deeply by contracting the diaphragm. The belly will rise and fall. Ideally, the chest should hardly move.

Diaphragmatic movement provides healthy movement to the abdominal organs and pelvic floor.

Nadi shodhana

Teaching Nadi Shodhana

Following a script will guide you on how best to teach nadi shodhana to your class.

What to say

Use these 12 key points to help guide your discussion.

01. Introduce Nadi Shodhana.

Relaxing breath, known as nadi shodhana in Sanskrit, is an alternate nostril breathing technique that helps balance both sides of the brain and body, and removes emotional blockages in the body, which in return, creates a calm and peaceful mind.

02. Break down the Sanskrit terms.

Nadi means "channel of circulation" and shodhana means "cleansing". It is a technique to purify the channels through which energy and information flow, ensuring the free circulation of prana throughout the body.

03. Talk about the benefits.

Some of the benefits of nadi shodhana include:

- *Clears emotional blockages and toxins*
- *Reduces stress and anxiety*
- *Reduces risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease*
- *Infuses the mind-body system with steady energy and oxygen*
- *Calms the nervous system and fosters a restful, alert mind, making it a very beneficial technique to use before meditation*
- *Helps to harmonize the left and right hemispheres of the brain*
- *Promotes overall well-being*

04. Recommend this technique for all doshas and highlight to balance Vata and Kapha.

Nadi shodhana benefits all doshas and is particularly good for Vata and Kapha dosha types.

- *For Vata: It keeps them grounded with their airy Vata energy.*
- *For Pitta: It calms the thinking mind.*
- *For Kapha: It creates movement through any clogged energy channels in the body.*

05. Invite your students to find an upright, seated position.

Begin by sitting comfortably with your spine erect and your shoulders relaxed.

Explain the position of the hands.

The hand position is unique for nadi shodhana. Let your left hand rest comfortably in your lap. With your right hand, rest the tip of your index finger and middle finger in between your eyebrows. If this isn't comfortable, you may relax the fingers towards the palm, gently tucking them in. Or allow these fingers to simply float or hang in front of your forehead.

06. Then, ask them to close the right nostril with their thumb and gently inhale through the left nostril.

Begin by fully exhaling, then close off your right nostril with your thumb. Inhale slowly through your left nostril all the way to the top of your breath.

07. Next close the left nostril with the ring finger and exhale through the right nostril.

Then use your ring finger, or both ring and little fingers, to close off your left nostril. Release your thumb and slowly exhale through your right nostril all the way to the bottom of your breath.

08. Inhale through the right.

Then inhale through your right nostril all the way to the top of your breath.

09. Exhale through the left.

Now place your thumb back over your right nostril and release your ring and pinky fingers to exhale through your left nostril all the way to the bottom of your breath.

10. Tell your students they have completed one round of breath.

You have completed one round of breath. Repeat this pattern for a few rounds.

11. Wrap up.

Remember that nadi shodhana is an effortless, continuous flow of the breath with no controlled pauses. To receive the full benefits of nadi shodhana, practice for five to ten full rounds each day, consciously and mindfully, before each meditation—and whenever you want to cultivate a sense of calm and balance.

There are several variations on how to do nadi shodhana. If you have learned another way of doing it, it's okay to do what's comfortable for you.

Ujjayi

Teaching Ujjayi

Learn how to teach ujjayi pranayama.

What to say

Use these 7 key points to help guide your discussion.

01. Introduce Ujjayi.

Ujjayi means “to be victorious” or “to gain mastery.” This gentle, rhythmic breath produces a pleasant, soothing sound—similar to the sound of the ocean waves rolling in and out. It is a breathing technique that can both focus and soothe the mind and energize the body and nervous system.

02. Talk about the benefits.

The benefits of ujjayi include:

- *Calms and relaxes the mind*
- *Heats the core of the body*
- *Helps release feelings of irritation or frustration*
- *Stabilizes the cardiorespiratory system*
- *Balances the nervous system by toning the vagus nerve*
- *Helps coordinate breath with movement during asana practice*

03. Let your students know it's recommended for all doshas—particularly Pitta.

Ujjayi benefits all doshas, and because of its soothing effect on the mind, it is especially beneficial for Pitta dosha type.

For Vata it creates a relaxing effect on the mind and body and for Kapha it has a heating effect on the body and can strengthen digestion..

04. Invite your students to sit comfortably.

Begin by sitting comfortably with your spine erect and your shoulders relaxed, and let your hands rest comfortably in your lap.

05. Start with an inhale.

Now gently constrict the muscles at the back of your throat, slightly tuck in your chin and exhale through your nose. This should produce a sound similar to the waves of the ocean.

06. Invite them to continue to breathe through the nose.

Keeping your throat muscles constricted, inhale again through your nose and out through your nose. Repeat this pattern several times.

07. Wrap up.

To receive the full benefits of ujjayi pranayama, practice for five to ten full rounds each day, consciously and mindfully, before each meditation—and any time you want soothe your body and mind. This can also be practiced during light to moderate exercises.

Be sure to rest a few minutes before resuming activity.

Note: Keep in mind that this breathing technique may be new to some students.

Students who practice yoga may be familiar with this technique because it is often used to enhance their yoga flow and practice. The sound that ujjayi provides helps synchronize breath with movements, making the practice more rhythmic.

For students that are not familiar with the practice, here's a tip you can give them to master this type of breath:

Another way to get the hang of this practice is to try exhaling the sound “haaaa” with your mouth open.

Next, close your mouth and attempt a similar sound, feeling the outflow of air through your nasal passages.

Once you have mastered this on the outflow, use the same method for the in-flow breath, gently constricting the back of your throat as you inhale. If you're doing this correctly, you should sound like waves in the ocean.

Some people compare ujjayi breathing to Darth Vader from Star Wars.

Using attention to enliven your health

Tie it all together

Let your students know that while you hope they've learned a lot, they must practice the techniques to receive the benefits.

What to say

Use or modify the following 3 talking points to wrap up the class and help your students make conscious breathing a part of their daily routine.

- 01.** Encourage your students to use coherence breathing when they get stressed out.

When you experience stressful thoughts, use coherence breathing to reverse the fight-flight-freeze stress response. You will calm the mind and body immediately and also receive long-term benefits.

- 02.** Suggest *ujjayi* when they're feeling frustrated.

*When you feel angry, irritated, or frustrated, try *ujjayi*. This will immediately soothe and settle your mind.*

- 03.** Recommend *nadi shodhana* for anxiety.

*When you are feeling anxious or ungrounded, practice *nadi shodhana*. This will immediately help you feel calmer.*



PART 4

Wrap-up



Tools, Resources, and Best Practices

Teaching groups

Discover the teacher within

Learn how to use your inner voice to guide your calling—and teach the students you were meant to serve.

The path of becoming a Chopra Health teacher is a rewarding journey of self-discovery.

Now is the time to make sure your foundation is rock solid.

How is your spiritual practice?

Your personal practice and self-study will encourage a solid foundation from which to build your teaching practice. As your connection to self deepens, so does your ability to connect and share with others. You gain clarity surrounding your situation and create space for the teacher within to be reclaimed and emerge anew.

Where should I start?

01. Ask the four soul questions.

1. Who am I?
2. What do I want?
3. What is my purpose?
4. What am I grateful for?

Ask yourself the soul questions prior to every meditation as a way of tuning in to the core of who you are. Ask each question and let it go, whether or not there is an answer.

Each meditation you will be planting seeds that will help align you, and your business, with your true self.

**02.** Determine what motivates you.

- What are your values?
- What are you really good at?
- What are you not good at?
- What tasks do you enjoy?
- What tasks do you tend to avoid?
- What is your end goal?

The answers to these questions may—or may not—be clear to you. The purpose of these questions is to find out what motivates you.

As you begin to recognize areas of business that you enjoy and others that you tend to avoid, you're gathering great insight. It's not a bad thing to avoid certain tasks. Everyone has different skills, and this information allows you to lean into your strengths.

Keep in mind that there are an infinite number of ways to grow a business. Once you start to get clear on strategies that are best suited to your skills and personal preferences, you'll become more successful at executing your business plan.

We'll help you create your business plan toward the end of this session.

You may also want to start looking at creative ways to modify or outsource certain tasks. This will allow you to shift your time from activities that don't excite you or weigh you down towards tasks that allow you to be more productive and successful at what you're good at.

03. Visualize what you want.

Spend time visualizing what your ideal day would look like—specifically, as a businessperson.

Start by imagining yourself doing the tasks you enjoy, getting results, and feeling accomplished and happy.

Make a list of your intentions and plant them in the field of all possibilities (through meditation and by reviewing the list before going to bed).

Let go and trust the universe to sort out the details.

**04.** Stay true to you.

It's easy to compare yourself to other teachers who seem to have an aptitude for teaching or are more seasoned and obviously have found their flow. While the saying "practice makes perfect" holds some truth, what helps initially is the awareness that the classes or the material you will teach have never been taught by you, thus making it new and fresh for your students.

There will always be room for you and what you have to offer and how you deliver it despite how many health and wellness teachers there are in the world or Ayurveda teachers in your community.

Stay true to you and the right students will find you and benefit from your special brand of teaching.

05. Lead by example.

Teachers who have an obvious "presence" are like magnets and generally exude humility, integrity, wisdom, light-heartedness, and strength, among other qualities.

Students learn by observing their teachers.

Teaching by example is as powerful as the content itself.

06. Always keep learning.

Feed your curiosity and dive deeper into these teachings and your continued spiritual growth. By putting your teaching into practice, you become a beacon of light by simply being.

Your ongoing commitment to learning means that you will always have new things to share with your students, while keeping yourself stimulated and motivated. As with any type of work, you can become complacent about your daily activities, which can lead to resignation, boredom, and even cynicism. Pledge to yourself that you will keep growing spiritually and become a source of inspiration and information for your students.

Be open to what it looks like to be of service to others, and the opportunities to serve will present themselves. Each day, ask yourself, "Did I do my best today to serve my clients and myself?"

Always do your best, and you will live with integrity and be successful.

Each day is an opportunity to try again—to trust the universe to bring you opportunities that will stretch you and help you to grow. As you learn to trust yourself, the universe brings you even more opportunities.

Let go of fear by shifting into excitement for what's to come, even though you may not know what that will look like. As a teacher, who you are will have a bigger effect on people than what you do or say. Your job is to inspire others by how you are being. Stay true to yourself and you will soon find the best, most authentic way to teach what you love, and the opportunities will unfold.



Who can I teach?

The sky's the limit when it comes to who you can teach.

There are endless opportunities to customize your teaching and to work with different groups of people.

As you've explored these Ayurvedic teachings, you may have one or more unique groups in mind that you'd like to teach.

Here is a variety of the types of groups and specific needs other Chopra Health teachers teach:

- Chronic stress and anxiety
- Chronic medical diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease, and autoimmune disorders
- Digestive disorders
- Nutritional health counseling and weight issues
- Food sensitivities and allergies
- Sleep disorders
- Schools, youth, and children

In your S10 Resources and Program Resources, we've provided articles and resources for many different groups and student needs.

The content in this session provides general guidelines and helpful tips for a variety of groups. It is not part of the Chopra Health curriculum.

Who do you want to teach?

Know your audience.

As a teacher, knowing your audience is extremely important when working with any student, organization, or group—even with family members. You will want to adapt the material to who you are teaching.

There are some special considerations to keep in mind when teaching certain groups. Specifically, you may need to limit the amount of information you share at any given time, adjust your rate of speech, provide specific verbal directions, and be sure to repeat the information as many times as needed. You may also need to adjust the recommendations for daily routine.

Ask and answer

Be sure to ask and answer the following questions before teaching any student, group, or business organization. These questions apply to an individual or group.

- Is the person under the care of a physician? Get contact information and written permission from the current treating physician before teaching.
- Does the person require additional explanation of what they can expect to experience when integrating an Ayurvedic routine? Emphasize how the practices remove physical and emotional toxicity.
- Does the person require that the content be taught at a slower or different pace? Pace the content to be certain the material is understood, and students feel comfortable.
- Will the person benefit from modifications to the practice recommendations? For example, instead of asking a student to begin meditating twice a day for 20 minutes, it may be beneficial to suggest 5 to 10 minutes, once a day. Then you can support the student in small incremental increases.
- Will the length of the classes need to be shortened due to specific conditions, time constraints, or energy levels?
- Does the person require additional staff or supervision to be present?
- Does the person have social, financial, situational, or environmental considerations? Modify the content as necessary to be accessible and relatable.
- Are there trauma sensitivities?

Language and needs

Familiarize yourself with the language and needs of each group.

You will find that each group has its own unique qualities, culture, language, and sometimes hierarchy, such as in corporations and the military. It is important to know the individual student as well as the type of group you will be teaching so that you can use appropriate references and relevant examples.

Feel free to bring in current topics and trends. For example, if you have a group that wants to explore a variety of nutritional concepts, consider talking about topics as they relate to Ayurveda.

- Keto—how to get healthy fats and possible need to modify
- Paleo—if eating meat, consciously choose products
- Gluten-free—different forms of wheat; may be genetic differences
- Food sensitivities—low agni and high ama
- Microbiome—how it relates to agni/digestion ability

Measure the impact of the teachings

Think ahead about the effectiveness of your teaching.

Different groups will have different needs. It's valuable to do a needs assessment or anticipate what information will be most useful to your students while preparing your classes.

Here are a few different ways you can do this:

- Conduct research. Identify the existing needs of similar people or groups.
- Use surveys or assessments. Ask students to reflect on their current state of health, life, or performance.
- Give your students a practice log or journal to document habits or experiences.

Determining which measures you want to use before you teach any class will help you capture a "before and after" snapshot of how the material is benefiting your students. You'll also be able to use this data in your marketing efforts. You'll learn effective marketing strategies later in this session.

Measuring the effectiveness of teachings is especially important when teaching in a corporate or large organization because they will want to see the return on their investment.

Another way to demonstrate the effectiveness of Ayurveda is to get comfortable talking about the scientific benefits. You'll learn simple ways to talk about the research studies we've provided.

Above all

When thinking about the students you are going to teach, ask yourself, "How can I help?", "How can I serve"?

Pause and set an intention then ask yourself:

- What will the class accomplish?
- Does this serve the greater good of the students?
- What is the end result?
- How will I know if I've been successful?

Teaching the science

Scientific research

Talk to your students about the research.

Several research studies exist that support the benefits of Ayurveda. Talking about the science anchors your students in some of the benefits of Ayurveda and also gives you credibility as a teacher.

If you are hesitant to talk about the research, that's normal. Research studies are full of statistics and data that can be challenging to explain. We've provided short sound bites in the section below to help increase your confidence and comfort level. Teach what you are comfortable with—and only when you're ready.

Your students may ask questions that you're not sure how to answer. Don't let this deter you. You're not expected to be an expert when it comes to the scientific research. Always point your students back to the original research study and encourage them to explore the publication for greater understanding.

Don't know the answer? Here's what you can say, "Although there is a lot of science validating these principles, I am not an expert."

Confidently teach the science

Here's how to talk about the research:

- You'll start by giving your students an overview of the study, including their name, who published it, and how many participants were in it.
- Then, you'll give them a few of the key findings.
- Next, give them an insightful point that will stick with them.
- Wrap up by telling your students where they can read the study.

As a teacher, you are not expected to explain the studies in detail. The aim is to summarize studies in a few short sentences to help your students understand the benefits.

Use the following examples to help guide your discussion.

NOTE: *These are high-level summaries of studies that were done by Chopra at different events. You can find them in full on the Chopra website under Self-Care > Explore the Science:* <https://chopra.com/explore-the-science>.

01. The Self-Directed Biological Transformation Initiative (SBTI) and Well-Being

Study Summary: Participation in the Chopra Health: Ayurvedic Lifestyle program can lead to reduced anxiety as well as significant and sustained benefits to physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

One-liner: *Following an Ayurvedic lifestyle can lead to reduced anxiety and sustained benefits to overall well-being.*

02. Identification of Altered Metabolomic Profiles Following a Panchakarma-Based Ayurvedic Intervention in Healthy Subjects: The Self-Directed Biological Transformation Initiative (SBTI)

Study Summary: Participants in the Chopra Health six-day Perfect Health program experienced changes in multiple blood chemicals, including a decrease in chemicals that can increase the risk of heart disease.

One-liner: *Following an Ayurvedic lifestyle and diet appears to alter metabolism via changes in the gut environment and microbiome.*

03. Meditation and Vacation Effects Have an Impact on Disease-Associated Molecular Phenotypes

Study Summary: This systems biology research study of the Chopra Center's Seduction of Spirit meditation retreat made the following findings:

- Meditation at Seduction of Spirit provides a clear and quantifiable change in how the human body functions, including improvements in immune function, and suppression of stress-related responses such as inflammation.
- New meditators have significant reductions in depressive symptoms and stress after the Seduction of Spirit meditation retreat, lasting 10 months post-retreat, which is better than simply being on vacation.
- There is a signature pattern of gene expression, or "meditation effect," noted in regular meditators that reflects healthy aging.

One-liner: *Within 5 days, immersion into mantra meditation can lead to improvements in immune function, mood, and expression of genes related to health and the benefits can be sustained over time.*



04. Psychosocial Effects of a Holistic Ayurvedic Approach to Well-being in Health and Wellness Courses

Study Summary: This study done at several Chopra retreats shows that teaching a consciousness-based approach to healing that addresses physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing, resulted in psychospiritual benefits that lasted even after the courses. These benefits include anxiety, depression, psychological flexibility, and spiritual well-being, which persisted one month after course attendance.

One-liner: *Learning about health and wellbeing from an Ayurvedic perspective that includes body, mind, and spirit results in improved emotional and spiritual wellbeing.*

Documenting the benefits of programs such as these provides information that helps individuals and organizations make informed choices about participation in retreats and simulates what happens when you immerse yourself in daily Ayurvedic practices.

We encourage you to visit the Chopra Foundation website for additional information on studies and research initiatives.

There are many articles published on Ayurveda and mind-body health in integrative and Ayurvedic health journals. You can search in the following science-related databases and peer reviewed journals:

- PubMed
- Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine
- Ayurveda Journal of Health (published in partnership with the National Ayurvedic Medical Association or NAMA)
- Journal of Research in Ayurvedic Sciences
- International Journal of Ayurvedic Medicine

Ayurvedic Diagnostic Predictability

There are many articles being published on both the foundational principles of Ayurveda, as well as several of the individual practices in Ayurveda. The field of Ayurgenomics is validating the concept of individual tendencies in physical and mental health, similar to how Ayurveda explains doshas.

Another Ayurvedic principle that has a lot of science behind it is the concept of aligning with circadian rhythms.

- Doing certain activities at certain times of the day keep us in optimal health
- Chronodysruption (disruption of circadian rhythms) is associated with PTSD

There are studies that confirm the scientific benefits of Ayurvedic practices, such as: Oil pulling, tongue cleaning, neti, and aromatherapy



Keep in mind, that there are an infinite number of individual differences, and no study will confirm what happens in each individual's experience. In addition, often studies are designed to look at only one intervention, when in Ayurveda, the benefits come from putting many practices together. There is a new field in research emerging in called Whole Systems research that is looking to create new paradigms to study traditional systems of 'wholistic' medicine, as well as looking at individuals rather than large 'average' populations. After all, there is no 'average' person—we are all unique and individual.

Explore the following studies that correlate Ayurvedic diagnoses with western definitions of disease and genomics (“Ayurgenomics”).

Resources

Relationships Among Classifications of Ayurvedic Medicine Diagnostics for Imbalances (Vikruti) and Western measures of Psychological States: An Exploratory Study. Mills, P, et al. (2018) *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine*

Ancient Wisdom: Can Ayurvedic Prakruti Provide Invaluable Insights into Integrative Medicine? Bell, C, et al. (2017) *Ayurveda Journal of Health*

Whole Genome Expression and biochemical correlates of extreme constitutional types defined in Ayurveda. Prashar, B, et al. (2008) *Journal of Translational Medicine*

Traumatic stress and the circadian system: neurobiology, timing, and treatment of posttraumatic chronodisruption. Agorastos and Olf (2020) *National Library of Medicine*

An integration of Ayurveda with genomics holds promise for future personalized, predictive, and precision medicine.

Teaching for stress and anxiety

The epidemic of stress

Stress has been called the "health epidemic of the 21st century" by the World Health Organization.

An epidemic is often defined as a disease that affects whole populations without having a medical cure.

Stress itself is not a disease, but it instead leads to a breakdown in the body's internal balance, or homeostasis, and from that point onward, if the stress isn't relieved, damage occurs from within.

You will likely encounter many people who are experiencing stress, so this conversation will appeal to a large audience of people in need of stress reduction.

Ayurveda is the antidote to stress.

All of the Ayurvedic practices you will be teaching, including meditation, pranayama and the other pillars of health are the antidotes to the stress response.

Teaching about chronic stress

Here are a few teaching tips for chronic stress. These tips are widely applicable to students who suffer from chronic stress or find themselves in the face of everyday stress triggers.

- Detach from the stressor. Find a place to be alone or engage in an activity such as walking, movement, or reading a book.
- Become centered. If possible, close the eyes and take ten deep breaths.
- Seek positive outlets. This might mean helping another or doing something creative.
- Rely on emotional support. Call a friend, family member, or someone meaningful in your life.
- Get regular sleep. Meditation and relaxation exercises can support quality sleep habits.
- Acknowledge the stressor. If it's practical, stop the stressful activity and start again when the stress response subsides.
- Focus on daily self-care practices. Choose a few practices from the six pillars of health, such as the six tastes, aromatherapy, self-massage, and journaling to balance stress in both body and mind.

Anxiety

Anxiety is the ultimate stress response to our modern lifestyles. Anxiety is a result of an overactive nervous system and an overactive mind. It expresses itself as fight-flight-freeze physiology and its resultant physical and emotional symptoms.

"Anxiety is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but it doesn't get you very far." Jodie Picoult

As with chronic stress—by using Ayurvedic practices—meditation, pranayama, and paying attention to all the pillars of health, people can calm the mind-body system which results in less anxiety for the vast majority of people.

Things to remember to help students manage anxiety:

- Anxiety is part of normal life. All of us have to deal with a certain amount of anxiety on a regular basis. Tell a trusted someone that it is happening.
- Seek out a friend or family member who has gone through anxiety and dealt with it successfully. Make this person your confidant and source of empathy.
- Get regular sleep. If your student is having sleep difficulties, suggest meditation and relaxation exercises.
- Retreat to find quiet. Try to find a few minutes a day to be alone and quiet, to meditate, and to walk outside in nature.

Note: If someone is experiencing significant anxiety symptoms or life disruption, it may be necessary to recommend they see a mental health professional.

Teaching improved physical health

Ayurveda lifestyle components

The lifestyle components of Ayurveda improve physical health.

Some may have chronic medical diseases, such as diabetes, obesity, heart disease, or autoimmune disorders and are looking to integrate natural healing into their lives. Others may have symptoms that have no answers in Western medicine. Yet others are looking to stay healthy. You can use all of the Ayurvedic teachings to help these groups.

Here's how you can support students with special physical conditions:

- Demonstrate that all of these lifestyle practices can easily integrate into any current treatment and daily routine.
- Recommend that students with health conditions continue their regular care and medications.
- Teach those with special dietary prescriptions how to easily create a six-taste meal.
- Reinforce the importance of the dosha clock as a guide when to eat.
- Modify mindful movement practices and teach pranayama to people who don't think they can move or exercise.
- Emphasize restful, natural sleep for all health conditions.

Your knowledge of Ayurvedic lifestyle will help improve anyone's physical health.

In the beginning, it may seem difficult for some students to integrate new practices.

Let your students know these are called practices because it becomes more natural over time. Encourage students to start with doable micro steps. When they become comfortable, they can build on the practices.

Ayurvedic practices and the six pillars of health contribute to establishing a healthy mind and body, which is the foundation of physical well-being and vitality.

Be sure not to guarantee a cure for any medical condition, as each person is individual and may need more than simply these Ayurvedic lifestyle practices. You can let students know that Ayurveda helps with the root cause of many chronic illnesses, so it can help with many conditions. However, you must refrain from over-promising results with complex medical conditions.

Teaching corporations

Sharing Ayurveda in the workplace

Over the past few decades, mind-body wellness has had a noticeable impact on the corporate landscape.

More and more businesses, both large and small, have been integrating a holistic, consciousness-based approach to wellness and productivity for their employees and business models.

The benefits of the six pillars of health and other mind-body modalities have been embraced by some of the most successful companies in the world, such as Apple, Google, Target, Time Warner, Yahoo, and Nike.

The growing receptivity of the business world to these timeless teachings presents a great opportunity for transforming workplace culture.

How do you take Ayurveda into the business world?

- Get to know the company culture
- Write a business proposal
- Identify a leader who aligns with mind-body wellness
- Be ready when opportunities arise
- Deliver exceptional quality and exceed expectations

Dive deeper

01. Know the company culture

Understand the business you are trying to influence.

The culture in the corporate, healthcare, or education fields is far removed from the environment of wellness conferences or a yoga retreat.

Ayurvedic teachings may seem foreign or otherworldly to those in the business world. It is important that you understand, appreciate, and recognize the business' mission, values, and specific needs before trying to teach body/mind techniques. Here are a few tips:

- Connect with the company and determine what the business struggles with and what it needs, in regard to employees' wellness.
- Do your best to speak their language.
- Introduce the teachings in a clear and concise way that works best for the company culture.
- Continue to deepen your understanding and work to fill the needs of the company.

02. Write a business proposal

Explain your intention and how it will benefit the company.

Once you have a good understanding of the company you will be working with, draft a business proposal. Include the following points and modify to customize for the company you will be teaching for:

- Identify the needs and demands that your classes or program will help to address.
- Include the benefits of the teachings that will be shared with the employees (e.g., research showing the ways Ayurvedic lifestyle practices can improve physical and emotional health, productivity, etc.)
- Outline or summarize the proposed class schedule, program, and/or teachings.

The proposal should also include an executive summary that as concisely as possible explains to the executive leadership exactly how your program will improve the company's business, employee well-being, happiness, engagement, or longevity with the company.

If you owned the company you'd want to know:

What is this program going to do for the business and employees?

Think like an executive. Specifically ask, "What does this program do for the business, in terms of improved employee performance or retention, lower insurance premiums, increased employee happiness, or any calculable financial impact."

03. Identify an executive champion

Find an executive leader in the company who will align themselves with your intention and overall mission

While not always possible, finding a high-level leader in the organization who is inspired and supportive of your proposal will help to help move your intention forward.

If a leader has personally experienced the benefits of what you wish to teach or share with their employees, they can often champion the program from a high level, essentially being your internal marketer.

If you are a teacher and have personally taught a leader or executive in the company, reach out to them to see if they will be willing to rally others to your mission.



04. Stay the course

Businesses may not immediately jump to embrace mind-body teachings.

It may take time for the business climate to shift or for the company to adopt an updated wellness model that values a more holistic approach. Stay the course and know that your intention will blossom when the season is right.

Be subtle in your persistence, however. You want to be ready when the opportunity arises, but not pushy.

- Practice detachment.
- Let go of how you think things should turn out.

Your intention may end up being fulfilled in a form that you hadn't expected, so don't stubbornly cling to a "my way or the highway" mentality. Let go and be vigilant. This is the perfect opportunity to walk your talk and live with the integrity that comes from a consciousness-based way of life.

05. Exceed expectations

Set a high bar for yourself.

When the exciting time comes that your proposal is accepted and things are moving forward, be sure to exceed the expectations of the company by over-delivering a program of exceptional quality.

Show up to teach as the professional subject matter expert you are in this field. Do whatever you need to present the very best and be 100 percent prepared, including:

- Create visual aids, slideshows, or handouts. Use Canva or free online business design templates to get started.
- Dress for the organization's culture.
- Provide post-program follow-up.

Whether you are teaching individuals or corporations, students will look to you as a guide. They will have questions after the class and may want to stay connected with you after the program. Be sure to plan accordingly. Speak with your contact within the organization to help you plan your follow-up. Schedule an activity approximately 3-4 weeks after class.



Here are some suggestions:

- Group meditation (phone or video conference)
- Q & A webinar
- Email message
- Blog article or resource information
- Follow-up journal prompts

You may also want to create ongoing or advanced classes to help employees learn more and continue next steps.

06. Measure the benefits

Look for ways to measure the impact of the teachings on the employees.

If possible, once the program is complete, measure the effectiveness.

- Consider having employees complete a survey of the program and how they feel the teachings may have impacted their lives or performance.
- Ask if the company keeps records of attendance, performance reviews, job satisfaction, and other measurable markers of a healthy and happy workforce. Use these to assess before and after.
- Ask leadership to poll the participating employees on the quality of the teaching to sample employee benefits and improve future programs.

As a side note, strive to maintain a good relationship with your business partners within the company. This will foster the relationships that can help your reputation as an agent of change and transformation in the corporate world grow and thrive.

Teacher resources

Teacher toolkit

Look inside your Chopra Health toolkit.

All you need, you already have.

Now that you've completed the teaching Ayurvedic Lifestyle sessions including meditation and pranayama, you've gained all of the knowledge you need to teach your first Chopra Health class.

Let's take a look at the tools you've gathered so far and organize your resources so you can begin to customize and build your teaching business.

What's in my teacher toolkit?

- Chopra online: Online content in Chopra Health Foundations, Enrichment, and Certification programs.
- Downloadables: Chopra Health program pdfs and one-pagers.
- Online content in Chopra Health Foundations, Enrichment, and Certification programs.
- Program Resources: Comprehensive scripts, handouts, articles, FAQ, and additional resources
- Templates: Customizable PowerPoint templates to use or modify.
- Cohort Groups: Personal and meaningful relationships with your cohorts.

How and when to use my tools

Let's look at how and when to use the tools in your toolkit.

CHOPRA HEALTH ONLINE

It would be nearly impossible to master the material and catch every distinction of how to teach the Chopra Health classes the first time around. We encourage you to go back to the start of Chopra Foundations and take each of the three programs again, at your own pace.

- Chopra Health Foundations
- Chopra Health Enrichment
- Chopra Health Certification

Take your time and dive deeper into the written content, reflection questions, pdf one-pagers, quizzes, and additional resources. Don't forget the program also includes daily practices with guided meditations, yoga instruction, and pranayama practices.

Note: You can find a downloadable audio file, "Deepak breath meditation with four soul questions" available under *S10 Resources* or *Program Resources* for you and/or your students.

DOWNLOADABLES

As you review Chopra Health Foundations and Chopra Health Enrichment, read the one-pagers that synthesize that lesson's key points. Take note of when in the program students take the dosha quizzes and assessments. Think about your own insights the first time you learned the material. Write down questions that you may have had and how you would explain the concepts to your students.

PDFs are available to help you both learn and to teach your students; they are located under individual Session Resources in addition to Program Resources. Examples:

- Lesson one-pagers
- Dosha quizzes
- Assessments
- Intake forms

TEACHER'S MANUAL

We hope you've been using the Teacher's Manual that is provided in each weekly session and your Program Resources session. Please download the manuals in each session or the combined Teachers Manual as this is your go-to hands-on manual to both teach and deepen your practice.

It is organized in a structured series of lesson plans to help you organize your classes and teach Ayurvedic Lifestyle classes, including meditation and pranayama instruction. We encourage you to read and reread the manual that includes:

- Program content
- Instructional tips
- Comprehensive scripts to customize
- FAQ

You may choose to teach the classes sequentially or you can pull out specific pages to teach topics of interest to your students. You'll learn more about how to do this in the coming lessons.



POWERPOINT TEMPLATES

After each teaching session, you received a **PowerPoint Template** to help guide your evaluation presentations and ultimately your classes. Take time to download each presentation template in **Sessions 3 through 9** or in your **Program Resources**.

Customize these slides to create your own teaching aid to help keep you on track and ensure that you don't leave out any valuable information.

Visual aids also help keep students more involved. When creating visual aids or customizing your presentation slides think about your students.

In this final session of the course, you'll learn more about marketing and how to find your ideal students.

COHORT GROUPS

Continue to engage with your program and cohort peers. These bonds and relationships will support you as a new teacher and strengthen your spiritual journey.

Take time now to connect with your peers and cohorts to exchange contact information. The Community Forums will officially close at the conclusion of the Certification Program date. After this date, chats are read-only.

Chopra resources

Discover a wealth of online resources.

Look inside the Teacher Resources portal.

After you have completed and passed the requirements for certification, you will gain access to a robust offering of information and materials in the Chopra Teachers Resources portal.

- Bulletin board
- Articles
- Teaching materials
- Marketing templates
- Referral program
- All-instructor webinars
- Research and studies
- Teacher pricing
- Chants
- Social media
- Scheduling resource
- Best practices

We encourage you to visit the Chopra Teachers site as you plan your courses and events and build your business—and return often as we frequently post fresh content and features.

Using the teacher directory

Access a directory that connects you with students worldwide.

Once you complete the certification requirements, you'll be recommended as a Chopra certified teacher on the online Teacher Directory. This is where potential students can view your public profile and contact you to learn more about your business and classes. There are two categories of the directory to choose from:



The screenshot shows the 'Teacher Directory' interface with two columns: 'Featured Teacher' and 'Certified Teacher'. The 'Featured Teacher' column lists 14 features, each with a checkmark and a grey background. The 'Certified Teacher' column lists 4 features with checkmarks and orange backgrounds. A dark blue box with white text 'This service is free.' is positioned between the two columns. At the bottom left, a dark blue box with white text reads 'There is a membership fee for this service.'

Featured Teacher	Certified Teacher
✓ Name	✓ Name
✓ Chopra teacher email address	✓ Email address
✓ Phone	✓ Phone
✓ Location (s)	✓ Location (s)
✓ Certification (s)	✓ Certification (s)
✓ Main photo or graphic	
✓ Website link	
✓ Chopra events attended	
✓ Photo gallery	
✓ Bio	
✓ Map option	
✓ Calendar	
✓ Testimonials from students	

The Featured Teacher service is a high visibility option that also offers these useful features:

- Custom choprateachers.com email account. Example: instructor@choprateachers.com. You have the optional capability to have your teacher emails forwarded to another email account.
- Custom URL to make it easy for your clients to find you or to use if you do not have a website. You can use your Teacher Directory URL as your web address on social media and brochures and other marketing materials as it will give you a unique address that uses your name.
- Calendar to list classes and specialty workshops. You can upload PDFs, documents, graphics, photos, and links to this section.

FREE TRIAL PERIOD

Upon graduation, those who would like to be listed as a Featured Teacher in the directory will receive a free, two-month trial period. Please note, the Chopra teacher email address is only available with a paid membership. We'll provide more details on the Teacher Directory upon completion of all certification requirements.



Best practices

Teaching formats

Get practical information and guidance for setting up different teaching formats.

Get ready to teach.

Whether you are teaching in private one to one, group, or in a virtual setting, the fundamentals are the same.

The Chopra Health Ayurvedic Lifestyle course offers a step-by-step exploration of mind body medicine and Ayurveda. The curriculum is designed for the general public who have a basic or no previous understanding of these concepts. Each of the classes, including meditation and pranayama, include instruction in the practical tools and techniques of mind-body practices that anyone can immediately begin using in their daily life.

Before we explore the practical points and guidelines that will help you customize and deliver your content, let's first take a look at a few of the different ways you might set up and teach your classes.

What are my teaching options?

- Group setting, in-person or virtual
- One-to-one individual sessions, in-person or virtual
- One or more of the individual classes from the Chopra Health curriculum
- Specific topics or workshops within the Chopra Health material
- Ayurvedic workshops and retreats
- Introductory classes to an Ayurvedic lifestyle
- Public speaking or conferences
- Guest speaker at trainings or outside vents
- Continuing education classes and opportunities
- Content delivery online, in blog posts, or social media presence
- Ask yourself, "How else can I teach?"

The basic approach to teaching Chopra Health is the same for all teachers—teach each of the classes in the same order you learned them in the Chopra Health Certification online program. Start with Introduction to Ayurveda, including basic meditation and pranayama.

Class structure

It is optimal to teach one class, once a week for five consecutive weeks or over five consecutive days,

However, we encourage you to schedule the classes however best fits your business model, students, and schedules. Classes can be taught in a group setting or 1:1.

CLASS 1: Introduction to Ayurveda

Students will learn the foundational principles of Ayurveda, meditation, and pranayama.

You will begin class in an intention-setting exercise. Then, teach the basics of Ayurveda, meditation, the five elements, and the three mind-body doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha.

Suggested 2.5 hours.

CLASS 2: Ayurvedic Nutrition

Students will learn how to optimize digestion and select the most nourishing foods for their dosha type.

Guide students in Ayurvedic nutritional practices that will help them maintain vibrant health and consume a variety of nutritious foods with awareness.

Suggested: 2 hours.

CLASS 3: Emotional Freedom

Students will learn why understanding and regulating emotions is the key to our physical, mental, and emotional health.

You will teach in-depth practices and techniques of conscious communication, explain the biological responses and steps of emotional release to help your students transform their relationships and experience more joy in their lives.

Suggested: 2 hours

CLASS 4: Inner Pharmacy

Students will learn why understanding and regulating emotions is the key to our physical, mental, and emotional health.

You will teach how to strengthen the body's inner pharmacy using sensory practices to balance each of the doshas.

Suggested: 2 hours



CLASS 5: Ayurvedic Daily Routines

The final class will focus on an optimal Ayurvedic daily routine. Inspire students to integrate the practices you've taught.

Teach your students the rhythms of nature, optimal daily routine, doshas and the seasons, seasonal routines, detoxification, and restful sleep. You will also want to wrap up, answer students' questions, and provide ongoing support.

Suggested: 2 hours

Meditation and Pranayama

During the Chopra Health program, you will also teach basic meditation practices and a few simple breathing awareness techniques.

It is important to note that we separated the Meditation and Pranayama content into separate sessions so you could gain an understanding of how to present these as individual classes. However, when you teach the Chopra Health program, you may want to combine the meditation or pranayama key topics within your classes or teach them as stand-alone classes.

We recommend that teachers lead 15–30-minute group meditations during each class.

You can schedule meditation before or after your presentations. You will need to factor in meditation times into your class schedules.

Note: Meditation scripts are provided in your S8 Resources and Program Resource.

Teach in three days

Here's how the five classes can be taught in three days.

DAY 1

Teach an introduction to Ayurveda, Meditation, and Pranayama.

Begin the class with an Introduction to Ayurveda. Include basic meditation and pranayama instruction. End the class with a guided group meditation.

Suggested: 4.5 hours.

DAY 2

Teach Ayurvedic Nutrition and Emotional Freedom.

Teach your students the importance of healthy digestion, eating for balance, the concept of emotional toxicity, practices for emotional clearing, and a guided meditation.

Suggested 4 hours.

DAY 3

Teach Inner Pharmacy and Ayurvedic Daily Routines.

Teach your students sensory practices to balance the doshas, optimal daily and seasonal routine, and a guided meditation.

Suggested 4.5 hours.

Individual classes

You can teach individual classes, too.

There's a lot of freedom in how you choose to format your classes. The classes can also be taught as stand-alone classes or workshops.

For example, you could just teach the Emotional Freedom class or just the Ayurvedic Nutrition class. When referencing the doshas in these classes, you would need to explain what they are since students did not receive that information prior or keep descriptions of mind-body types very general.

Classes can also be included as part of retreats, speaking events, or conferences. The types of classes and students may also impact how you arrange the classroom.

TEACHING 1:1

Guide your students on an individualized journey. Your classes don't have to follow a "one size fits all" approach. When you begin to teach, it's often easier to follow a step-by-step process, but keep in mind that there are times when you'll want to lead students through one or more key topics.

It's important to assess each student and situation. Student conditions vary. At times, it may be best to teach students in a 1:1, as opposed to a group setting. For example, teaching people with mental health disorders is often better in an individualized setting to help them receive the instruction and support they need.



TOPIC-SPECIFIC TEACHING

Conference topics on health and well-being is constantly growing and evolving. You may want to give a talk on specific content or key points within a lesson.

Plan to focus on just one or two aspects of Ayurveda that will engage the group. One class or workshop can sometimes serve as a showcase for you to return and offer all of the classes. For example, having everyone in the group take and discuss the dosha quiz is often a good approach for an introductory session. Or you could focus on a discussion of the six tastes and ways for people to incorporate them into busy schedules when time is limited.

Here are some of the more popular Chopra Health key topics:

- Doshas and the dosha quiz
- Conscious communication
- Meditation
- Basic breathing techniques
- Mindful eating
- Restful sleep
- Healing through sound
- Chakras
- Six tastes
- Six pillars of health
- Seven steps to emotional clearing
- Healing through smell with aromatherapy

LIVE SPEAKING

Ayurveda is globally resurging and emerging and as a Chopra Health teacher, you offer a more unique, creative, and holistic way to share insights into Ayurveda and well-being. Individuals, groups, companies, and organizations want to gain knowledge, learn new practices for health and well-being, stay current in their respective fields, develop themselves personally and professionally, and offer a body of wisdom designed to help people stay vital while realizing their full human potential.

The goal is to educate, inform, and help others lead happier, healthier, and more productive lives. You may choose to pull from any of the key topics you've learned.

TEACHING VIRTUALLY

The global environment has opened up a window of opportunity for businesses to go online. Online teaching offers certain advantages, such as flexible scheduling and greater reach. The overhead is fairly low, and the growth potential is high, but there are some basic tools and technology you'll need to familiarize yourself with.

You can choose from several different remote conferencing services, such as Zoom, GoToMeeting, WebEx, Skype, etc. Some are free and some have fees depending on the number of users and features preferred.

You will learn more tools and tech resources to help you get started.

When teaching virtually, teach the five classes in the same sequence through a video conferencing system.

From one of our teachers: *"I am teaching an 8-week program for the local community. The classes are "bite-sized" and allows students to take away the information and practice for a week, before returning the following week to share experiences and interact with others in class." Sourin Chakravorty Melbourne, Australia*



Pricing and payments

Best practices

Consider these best practices to help you create and manage your pricing strategy.

As an independent business, you're able to set your pricing and payment policies.

Your pricing strategy will vary based on the offering, delivery method, audience, geographic area, business costs and other factors. The best strategy is based on value, rather than competitive pricing. However, conduct preliminary research on comparable offerings, programs, and teachers serving a similar audience. Popular pricing suggestions, include:

- Hourly rate, session rate, monthly rate
- Package rate, membership, different levels of service, bundled offerings
- Discounted or promotional pricing strategies

Discounted pricing

Potential students may inquire about discounted pricing. Standard discounts to various groups may include seniors, military, and students.

It is your decision as to what discounts you would like to provide.

Payment policies

It's important to establish a payment and cancellation policy. We recommend that you receive payment in full at least two weeks before your scheduled class or consultation. If someone who paid in full cannot attend, it is recommended that you register them to attend your next scheduled class or consultation.

Accepting payment

You'll need a way to accept payment. Here are some popular options:

- Personal check or cash
- Google Pay
- Apple Pay
- Venmo
- PayPal
- Square
- Zelle

Students appreciate a variety of payment methods to choose from. You may want to set up your preferred payment method(s) on your website, social media, or Shopify. You'll learn some helpful tips to build your website.

Business note

We recommend getting basic liability insurance.

As a teacher, you are teaching educational, wellness, and Ayurvedic classes. Each country, state/province, and city have their own specific laws and regulations. It's important to research and know the laws and regulations in your country, state/province, and city.

Business building

Marketing

Get a step-by-step plan to build your Chopra Health business.

It's all about you and what you offer

Marketing is a broad term used when talking about business building, but essentially it is how you tell people about your business. It can be any task that helps you spread the word about you and what you offer.

Marketing may include creating a business brand, making offers, writing copy, sending emails, developing a newsletter, creating podcasts, posting on social media, blogging, designing materials, measuring marketing efforts and outcomes, surveys, tracking customer satisfaction, making calls to a person or business who may have interest in learning Ayurvedic Lifestyle, or chatting with a friend about what you love.

The purpose of marketing is to encourage others to try a business or service.

That's what this session is about: helping you find methods—that feel comfortable and natural—to market and sell your classes.

You're already off to a great start. The Chopra Health curriculum is content that you believe in. When you believe in your product or service, it becomes easy to share what you are offering.

"Marketing is really just about sharing your passion." Michael Hyatt

Small Business Marketing – 9 steps

Whether you want to launch a global business or start small with a few students, the foundation is the same to build a profitable and sustainable business.

Following are the steps that will help you get clear on what you want, the students you are meant to serve, the best offerings for your strengths, and an execution strategy that will give you the greatest chance of making a positive impact and a profit.

9-steps to build a profitable and sustainable business:

- Define your business goals.
- Make a time commitment.
- Identify your offering.
- Identify your ideal clients.
- Create a communication plan.
- Validate your idea.
- Set up technology.
- Attract paying clients.
- Enjoy the journey.

Breakdown of steps 1–9

STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR BUSINESS GOALS.

Be specific about what you want to achieve.

Fuzzy goals are impossible to achieve. To succeed, you must set realistic goals that align with your skills, passion, available time, and resources.

Laser focus your attention on specific outcomes. Staying focused is key to maximizing your time, managing the ups and downs of a growing business, as well as overcoming potential obstacles, fears, frustrations, and distractions. Once you know your goals and outcomes, set a timeline.

What are your business goals?

- How much income do you want to earn?
- How often do you want to teach?
- What is important for you to achieve?
- What will you see, hear, and feel when you reach your business goal?
- What are the specific measurable outcomes of your goals?
- What actions can you take to consistently review your goals, daily activities,, and progress?

“A goal without a timeline is just a dream.” Robert Herjavec



STEP 2: MAKE A TIME COMMITMENT.

Evaluate how much time and energy you want to put into building your business.

Your goals will drive the amount of time and resources required and vice versa. Balance time spent working on your business with outside responsibilities, family, self-care, or other jobs. Factor in the time required to research your offering, practice teach, do your marketing, class set up, and ongoing client experience.

How many hours a week do you have and want to commit to build your business?

- How much time is required to meet your personal goals?
- Do you want or need to spend additional time to up-level your skills?
- How will you organize time to fit in your current schedule?
- Is this time commitment realistic for the long-term?

STEP 3: IDENTIFY YOUR PRIMARY AND PROFITABLE BUSINESS OFFERING.

Classes, products, and programs can be structured in many different ways.

Some teachers prefer to teach a few private clients via video conferencing, while others may teach larger groups in live or online classrooms. Evaluate your strengths, your skills, how you currently provide value to others, what you love, and the formats you are most comfortable teaching in.

Understanding these will help you establish the right offering for you and your students. Explore:

- Class or program name
- Description
- Length of classes, sessions, or program
- Number of people
- Delivery method (in-person or virtual)
- Frequency, dates, and times
- User experience (if virtual)

How do you know it's the right offering for your business? Write or reflect:

- Do I have the time and energy to deliver this offering?
- Can I create process to turn prospects into clients?
- Is the offering scalable?

STEP 4: IDENTIFY YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS.

Create a detailed personality profile for your ideal client.

At the beginning of this session, you started thinking about the types of groups and individuals you may want to serve. Now, you'll want to get specific. Include demographic and psychographic traits. Reflect on the following:

- Who are the people and clients you work best with?
- What do you love about them?
- Who is currently advocating for your success?
- What do these people have in common?
- What problems do they want to solve?
- What interests, hopes, desires, dreams, and aspirations do they have?

Knowing your ideal clients will help you grow your business more quickly and enjoy quality conversations with people on a personal level.

STEP 5: CREATE AND SET UP AN ONGOING COMMUNICATION PLAN. .

Find and engage with your ideal clients to attract new clients and build a loyal following.

Writing a blog or newsletter is a great first step to collect email addresses and build a potential student database. Email communication doesn't require additional technology skills and it's very effective to create an ongoing communication plan. You'll want to start thinking about the following:

- Where do you currently spend your time online connecting with people?
- Where are your ideal clients spending their time?
- Where do you want to share your message?
- What is your message?
- What ongoing conversations do you want to have?
- What contact information will you need?
- How will you organize the contact information?
- How often will you communicate with them?
- What is your commitment to consistency?

Let your personal communication style drive your plan so you can communicate regularly and maintain consistency.



STEP 6: VALIDATE YOUR IDEA.

Before you launch your business, consider if it meets your ideal clients' needs.

Building your business takes a personal investment of time, money, and energy. Before you launch your offering on a larger scale, be sure it meets the wants and needs of your ideal clients—on a smaller scale. Here are some things you can do:

- Practice teach.
- Test the technology.
- Conduct surveys and ask for feedback.
- Evaluate the pricing strategy.
- Run the numbers to ensure revenue covers costs and generates a profit.
- Gauge interest on social media.
- Talk to 10 people that match your ideal client profile.
- Ask 2-3 people to start working with you.
- Create a system of ongoing feedback from a few hand-selected people.

How do you know your program has been successful?

- Are the length of classes and schedule attracting students?
- Are enough students buying your offerings at the suggested price?
- Are students responding positively to the delivery format, method, and technology platform?

The time you take in advance to evaluate your offering will pay off in the long run.

STEP 7: SET UP TECHNOLOGY.

Online business does not require a lot of technology or resources, but we've identified the most common online requirements to get you started. These are just a few of many ideas or tools you may want to use:

- Buy a domain name for your website.
- Build a website based on your goals and offering using a website builder such as WordPress, Wix, Weebly, Squarespace, GoDaddy, or Shopify. (You'll learn more about building your website.)
- Sign up for hosting with a company such as Wix, HostGator, GoDaddy, WP Engine, Bluehost.
- Create text and graphic content using tools such as Canva, Easel.ly, Prezi, or Giphy.
- Set up email marketing and delivery with a service provider such as MailChimp, Constant Contact, Squarespace, or Infusionsoft.
- Choose a remote conferencing service such as RingCentral, Zoom, Skype, GoToMeeting, Google, Cisco Webex, Hangout, Microsoft Teams, UberConference, or Facebook, if you are teaching virtually.



- Set up business social media profiles such Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. (You'll learn more about these four popular social media channels.)
- Set up a payment system with a method such as Google Pay, Apple Pay, Venmo, PayPal, or Square.
- Set up an accounting system early on with a software such as QuickBooks, FreshBooks, or Wave.
- Set up appointment scheduling system. (optional)
- Set up audio and video equipment. (optional)

Unless you have unlimited funds to start a business, it is always a good idea to minimize upfront business expenses until after you have validated your idea. Look carefully at your income, expenses, and initial investments.

A good question to ask yourself is: Does this expense meaningfully contribute to my success and profitability? This will help you determine if the expense is a want or a need. As income increases, invest in your business wants.

STEP 8: ATTRACT PAYING CLIENTS.

Plan an ongoing strategy to build trust, gain fans, and get ongoing referrals. Make it easy for people to get to know you and your work. Provide value to show clients the benefits of your offering.

This may include creating a free or low-cost offering, in exchange for email or contact information. Examples of free offers may include:

- Educational articles
- PDF downloads
- Infographics
- eBook
- Presentation slide deck
- Daily inspirations
- Frequently asked questions
- Video
- Webinar

People who have received value from you are more likely to purchase your services and offerings, but you may need to give them a nudge to commit to the purchase. It's likely that a person may be very interested in your offering, but never take action.



It's human nature to need encouragement to do something we've never done before. If you feel uncomfortable asking a person to pay for your services, this is a good area for reflection and personal growth.

You know the transformative power of these teachings. Help people receive the benefits sooner rather than later.

Stay connected with your cohorts and use one another for support.

You may also enjoy networking with other teachers or people doing similar work.

Collaborating with other teachers is a great way to teach larger groups without having to do all of the work yourself. This allows you to pool resources and build an audience. You may experience having more energy, greater creativity, and have more fun as you collaborate with others.

Make an effort to expose yourself to a variety of successful people and business strategies and allow for infinite possibilities.

STEP 9: ENJOY THE JOURNEY

Do what you love and share it with others.

Always remember how unique and special you are. You have a gift to share. The way you teach this wonderful body of wisdom is unlike any other teacher.

Let the journey be a delicate balance of staying organized to accomplish your goals, while trusting the universe to guide and support you.

How can I stay open to infinite possibilities?

- Continually reconnect to your true nature, which is perfection.
- Be bold in asking the universe and the community to support you.
- Look for synchronicities guiding you on your path.
- Celebrate your successes
- Practice gratitude

Everyone and everything, even the challenges along the way, have led you to this moment. The world is ready and waiting for the uniqueness you bring to these teachings.

You are essential to global transformation. You and your teaching is a light in this world.



Creating a website

Online presence

Successful teachers have an online presence; a well-designed website is essential for most businesses.

Look at it this way: your website is your online business card. If you don't have a website, you may be missing out on students who are looking for you and your offering.

You do not have to spend thousands of dollars to create an online presence. Even a simple, tasteful one-page website can accomplish this goal. If you have the resources and the need for a more robust website as your business grows, you can expand. However, a simple one-page website that includes the key components of your business should suffice.

Before you begin

Before you start building, get clear on how you want your website to look and function.

There are a few important elements that will make your website compelling and easy to use. It is helpful to research elements and gather ideas about what you want and need in the early stage of developing your website.

Look at a variety of websites and notice what features you like, including the navigation, call to action, content, and design. Keep these elements and features in mind:

- **Good design** is simple and includes appealing colors, layout, branding, logo, fonts, graphics, and spacing.
- **Easy navigation** makes it easy for website users to find information about you, your services, products, and any relevant newsletters or subscriptions lists. Include easy-to-find information about how to contact you, get their questions answered, and/or buy your services or products.
- **Clear and compelling content** includes relevant articles, videos, and other content to keep website users engaged.
- **Call to action** is what you want your visitors to do when they land on your website. Do you want them to sign up for your newsletter, read your blog, purchase a service/product, attend a group meditation, or register for a workshop or class? Just to name a few.
- **Mobile friendly** means that your website is easy to view and navigate on mobile devices. Most website builders can do this for you.
- **Sign-up form** is a feature that will help you collect the names of potential clients that you will use in your marketing efforts.



Marketing with social media

Facebook / Twitter / LinkedIn / Instagram

Social media is an effective way to drive traffic and keep in touch.

You can direct potential students looking for more information to a website and/or blog, as well as inform others about events, courses, and new products you might be offering. In comparison with traditional advertising mediums, such as print, radio, and television, spreading the word using social media and creative marketing costs very little. However, it does require time, energy, inspiration, creativity, consistency, and commitment to engage your audience.

The current major players for businesses in social media include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Of course, there are numerous sites and apps in addition to these; we recommend that you choose the social media platforms that best reflect your business model and the groups you are teaching or would like to be teaching.

Before diving into your social media efforts, make sure you have time available to invest in consistent social media engagement.

It's best to avoid irregular or infrequent posting. A Twitter account with no activity, or a LinkedIn profile that doesn't engage your peers and potential students or clients will not help your marketing efforts. Reflect back on the time you have available to know if social media is one of the right marketing strategies for you.

Is social meeting marketing right for me? Ask yourself:

- What social media sites do I currently use and why?
- What featured do I like about those sites?
- Who do I follow on social media and why?
- What is my purpose in using and participating on social media sites?



Make the most of your social

Here are some general tips to keep in mind when posting on any social media platform:

- Develop a clear message you want to share.
- Develop clarity about what you want to share and why—rather than randomly posting on social media,
- Create business pages and accounts. Keep your business and personal/family pages separate so that you can focus your business pages on your teaching and related services. Spend time on your bio.
- Consistently offer great content that it is enticing to your audience. When you offer value, people come back for more.
- Be yourself and be human. The success of your campaign is based on your ability to connect one-to-one to your audience. Therefore, be authentic. Sharing your story and providing a little window into your life humanizes your social media presence.
- Get creative. There is so much going on in social media that sometimes it can be hard to stand out or have your voice heard. Finding new ways to engage your audience is the key to keeping your brand fresh and alive.
- Repost. It is great to network by occasionally reposting other people's content. However, keep that to a minimum as your followers want to follow you specifically, and original content is best. Create compelling content so that others will want to share your posts.
- Stay updated. Social media platforms are constantly updating features. Keep informed and learn the new features to keep your pages fresh and updated.

One misconception is that a person or business has to be active in all the social media channels to market effectively. If you have limited time, it is better to be consistently active on one social media platform than to spread yourself too thin. Plan to be active on your social media page every day.

If you have time to have a full presence in more than one social media channel, research which platforms will best suit your personality, target audience, and brand and go for it. There are apps that will schedule your posts ahead of time if you choose to use one or more social media channels.

Here is some information on each of the main social media channels so you can choose which one is right for you. Once you decide which platform to use, you can find countless articles and videos on the internet to help you get started on creating your profile and interacting with others.



More about the platforms

FACEBOOK

Facebook offers new ways to build community and connect with businesses.

On Facebook, you can create a personal profile and/or a business page. A personal profile is usually for you to interact with your friends and family. In addition, you have to accept a person's friend request before they can start engaging with you. Most people post family pictures and life updates as well as inspiring information on their personal page. You can also post updates about your business activities, but do not overdo it or your family and friends may feel like you are marketing to them instead of keeping them informed.

A business page is best suited for your business activities so you can promote your website, events, classes, books, and/or products. Note that you must have a personal profile before you can create a business page. Besides posting your business activities, make sure to also provide content targeted to your audience so your page has a sense of community instead of being an advertising platform.

Create engagement on your Facebook business page:

- Create original posts
- Post a minimum of one to three times a week
- Use images, videos (live and/or recorded), and quotes
- Share, comment, and like other people's posts

INSTAGRAM

Instagram is visual, simple and it's attracting younger generations.

As with Facebook, you can create a personal profile and/or a business page on Instagram. A personal profile is usually where you interact with your friends and family, and the business page is for your marketing efforts.

You can create a private or public profile to encourage others to engage with you. With a private profile, you can choose who follows you. In contrast, with a public profile, others can follow you without needing permission (this is in your profiles settings). Besides posting your business activities, make sure to also provide content targeted to your audience so your page has a sense of community instead of being an advertising platform.

Instagram posts include #hashtags and geotags. You can create hashtags, or you can add your posts to existing hashtag pages. Geotags can show locations if desired. You can link your posts from Instagram to your other social media sites. There are also social media apps you can use with your social media accounts. When preparing to offer or teach any class in-person or online, get in sync with your purpose as a teacher and why you choose to do this.



Create engagement on your Instagram business page:

- Create original posts and avoid stock footage or photography
- Post daily
- Use multiple images, videos (live and/or recorded), and quotes
- Create live and recorded Instagram Stories
- Comment and like other people's content

TWITTER

Each twitter post, or tweet, has a maximum of 280 characters. You can also include images and videos in these tiny messages. You can create a personal profile or a business profile. We recommend that you create a business profile and make sure all your posts are congruent with your business mission statement, message, and brand.

There is a lot of noise on Twitter, so to get noticed and heard you must post frequently throughout the day. You can share your business activities, personal information, thoughts, quotes, feelings, and anything else that is relevant and compelling. Most important, since Twitter is a conversation, you must engage with others. Instead of just posting information, reply to others on a constant basis to get the conversation started.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is a professional network where you can network and interact with others in your field.

Like the above platforms, you can create both a personal profile and a company page. Your personal profile is especially important on LinkedIn because that is what you will use to connect with people in your network and how others will find you on LinkedIn. It should contain information about your skills and experience to help increase your visibility and connections. The more complete your LinkedIn profile, the more likely you will be found and get leads for your services.

Your company page is where others can learn about your business. You can tell your company's story, showcase your products and services, provide updates about your business activities, engage your audience, and share career opportunities. **MOVE TO BEGIINING?**

Accepting the call to teach

Not every teacher will teach to make a living.

But every teacher accepts the responsibility to share deeper knowledge.

Whether your intention is to grow a successful teaching business that supports you financially or to simply be of greater service to family, friends, and community, the following tips provide a foundation for success and enjoyment as you start to teach this ancient wisdom.

- Establish your personal daily practice. Your own experiences will become great teaching tools. Additionally, you gain the added credibility and confidence of living what you teach.
- Share your personal journey. Talk about the benefits of meditation with anyone who will listen. Spark curiosity in others. Share how your life has transformed as a result of meditation. These conversations naturally give rise to more teaching opportunities.
- Get experience teaching. Teach other topics related to your training, such as stress management, the benefits of spirituality, relaxation techniques, etc. Offer free talks to the public, community, youth, businesses, fitness clubs, or yoga studios. Get feedback from people you trust to enhance your natural talent.
- Build a community. Stay connected with students to provide needed support when questions or doubts or arise. Collect phone or email contact information to keep in touch. Consider organizing gatherings or group meditations (local or online). Social media is a quick and easy way to record short video messages, upload guided meditations, send inspirational messages or share daily quotes. Whatever you choose, be certain you enjoy doing it to maintain consistency.
- Deepen your knowledge and spiritual practice. Continue your journey of self-discovery by reading sacred texts, attending workshops, satsangs, retreats, or classes of interest. Listen to recordings of teachings or take an online program.
- Start from your heart. Teach because you love it, not because the meditation industry is growing. There are many different ways to earn a living.
- Always stay open and flexible. Become friendly with the whole of life, especially the natural unfolding of your teacher path. Have patience as your teaching grows. Let go of expectations. Look for unexpected opportunities.

Congratulations!

Thank you.

You've completed Chopra Health Certification.

We are honored that you have chosen to study with us.

As a teacher, you will go forward and carry the gifts of Ayurveda to students across the world.

Your dedication speaks volumes to who you are.

Throughout the course, you have dedicated yourself to acquiring this knowledge and embodying it. And now, as you share the benefits of Ayurveda with those in your community and beyond, you are becoming an agent of change and transformation. You are continuing the ancient lineage of the Vedic wisdom tradition, helping to bring healing and the light of awareness to a world where so many people are suffering from stress, inflammation, and constricted awareness.

Through your dedication and commitment, you are helping to create a vibrantly healthy world that is more peaceful, just, sustainable, and joyful. You have many gifts to share, and the world needs them.

We celebrate and honor your accomplishment.

Namaste.