

## Introduction to Ayurveda Class

Here is an outline to assist you in creating and teaching this class:

1. These are the materials you'll want to have available:
  - Sign-in sheet for names and email addresses
  - Brochures or flyers for your *Perfect Health: Ayurvedic Lifestyle* classes
  - Business cards and/or information on how to contact you or access your website
  - Chairs
  - Prakruti dosha quizzes [This quiz can be downloaded from the Teacher Resources page.]
  - Tables as needed
  - Pens and/or pencils
  - Whiteboard with dry-erase pens and erasers, or flip chart with pens
  - If using presentation software, equipment for projecting slides
  - Audio equipment if needed
  - Water station
2. In about 10 minutes or less, tell guests about yourself and your background:
  - What brought you to the Chopra Center
  - Why you wanted to become a teacher
  - How Ayurveda has benefited you
  - What you will be teaching and sharing with them during this class
  - [Please note: Remember that you're not teaching the entire *Perfect Health: Ayurvedic Lifestyle* course in this session. So, you will only want to give basic information regarding each point below. The goal is to provide the group with enough information so that they will want to learn more and take the entire course.]
3. Ask if anyone has heard about Ayurveda before or why they would like to learn about it:
  - Go around the room and ask each student if the group is small. If the group is large, ask just a few people to share.
  - Make sure to address and briefly discuss what people have shared throughout the class.
  - Also, ask if anyone is currently incorporating any Ayurvedic practices on a regular basis and what those practices are. This will help you get an idea of how experienced your group is.
4. Even if students have some knowledge of Ayurveda, provide foundational points so that the entire group is on the same page.
5. Begin by telling the group that Ayurveda is a 5,000-year-old, consciousness-based system of healing that originated in India and is still relevant today:
  - The term *Ayurveda*, is derived from two Sanskrit words: *ayus*, which means "life," and *veda*, which means "science."

- Tell them that our material world comprises five elements—space, air, fire, water, and earth—and explain to them how those elements manifest in the world.
- Let the group know that Ayurveda is a holistic practice that incorporates mind, body, and spirit:
  - 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.
  - Approximately 95% of all chronic illness can be reversed and prevented by our daily lifestyle choices. Ayurveda offers tools and guidance to help us do this.
- Explain to them that individuals are born with certain mind-body types, known as doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—which are specific combinations of these five elements.
- Here you can point to some scientific research that supports Ayurveda’s effectiveness:
  - “Lifestyle Medicine: A Brief Review of Its Dramatic Impact on Health and Survival,” available in Session 13’s resources in the Enrichment program
  - “The Self-Directed Biological Transformation Initiative and Well-Being,” available in the resources for Session 2 in the Certification program
  - “Psychosocial Effects of a Holistic Ayurvedic Approach to Well-being in Health and Wellness Courses,” also in the Certification program’s Session 2 resources
- Hand out the **Prakruti dosha quiz** and walk them through it. Allow ample time for this process. If you would like to have your participants engage with one another, ask them to form small groups of two or three. [Please note: It’s better to hand out the quiz after you have given some preliminary information about Ayurveda. In that way, your group won’t be reading/taking the quiz while you’re talking. We recommend using just the Prakruti quiz during this Introduction to Ayurveda class in order to give the group a snapshot of Ayurveda’s important concepts.]
- If the group is comfortable with sharing, ask for a show of hands regarding the quiz results.
- Share basic information about each dosha, including the elements that compose it and its qualities, how one can be one dosha type in the body and another in the mind, and what it is like for each dosha to be in and out of balance.
- Let your students know that it is easy for us to experience imbalances. Even things like being hungry and thirsty are ways we are out of balance during a typical day.
- As you share this information, be sure to ask your group if there are questions. Doing so will keep your students engaged and informed.

6. Introduce your group to the Six Pillars of Health:
  - Sleep
  - Meditation
  - Mindful movement
  - Healthy emotions
  - Grounding
  - Optimal nutrition
    - Ayurveda nutrition looks at specific foods to balance each dosha.
    - We recommend a variety of fresh, organic foods that encompasses all the colors of the rainbow in order to get proper nutrition.
7. Share that Ayurveda also includes practices to balance the mind. For instance, we can balance the mind through our environments and relationships, which include sight, sound, smell, and healthy emotions and communication.
8. Let your students know that there is an optimal daily routine that aligns with the circadian rhythm and connects the body-mind to nature. If you're comfortable sharing aspects of your own daily routine, you can do so at this point.
9. Ask the group if anyone has a meditation practice:
  - Briefly explain what meditation is.
  - Tell the group why it is so important. [Please note: In this section, you can limit your discussion of meditation to its stress-reduction benefits.]
  - If you'd like, you can lead a brief meditation experience using the *So Hum* mantra or following the breath for five minutes.
10. Discuss any other pieces of Ayurvedic wisdom that you would like to share.
11. Explain that they can learn much more about an Ayurvedic lifestyle from you:
  - Let them know that you offer *Perfect Health: Ayurvedic Lifestyle* classes.
  - Briefly explain the five sessions taught in the *Perfect Health: Ayurvedic Lifestyle* course.
12. Answer questions and review:
  - Quickly summarize the information you discussed.
  - Answer any questions guests may have.
  - Let the group know about your next scheduled *Perfect Health: Ayurvedic Lifestyle* course.
  - Let them know how they can contact you; provide your website, email address, social media pages, and any other contact information on a flyer or business card.
  - Be available after class for any additional questions.

13. Thank your guests for coming.
14. Encourage them to follow you on your social media sites, visit your website, and take a flyer or brochure if they are interested in learning more.
15. You may also want to include the following recommendations in your introductory class:
  - Websites, organizations, and books that you have found powerful on your own journey and that you recommend to others.
  - Resources available through the Chopra Center and Chopra.com:
    - Chopra Center articles, which has additional information on Ayurvedic lifestyle practices
    - Jiyo and Ananda apps
    - *21-Day Meditation Experience*
    - Chopra Center Online Courses
  - Additional helpful Ayurvedic resources:
    - Ayurvedic Healing, <https://www.ayurvedichealing.net>
    - The Ayurveda Institute, <https://www.ayurveda.com>
    - The American Institute of Vedic Studies, <https://www.vedanet.com>
    - The California College of Ayurveda, <https://www.ayurvedacollege.com>
    - Banyan Botanicals, <https://www.banyanbotanicals.com>