

A Stitch in Time -

Ayurveda's guide to Wellness, and Preventing Illness according to your unique body type.

By Nigel Hubbers BA (Hons) Ayu

How many people have tried out every new diet and slimming supplement and although they might have lost a few pounds - as soon as the diet was over the pounds came back? How many of us feel too tired to do all we want having a lack of energy. How many of us get ill every year and revert to antibiotics which we know have a deteriorating effect on the flora of the gut. And how many people are suffering from stress or stress related diseases and have no other solution than to take anti depressants. Ayurveda's understanding of health takes the uniqueness of the person with all the main and associated symptoms and creates a special plan which is both educational and empowering and can change your life for ever improving your physical, mental and emotional being.

Ayurveda 'Science of Life' is an ancient Indian medical tradition that has been used continuously for well over 2000 years. It is concerned with the maintenance and promotion of good health, the protection from disease and the treatment of diseases and for each person there is a different formula that works.

First of all you have to know what balance you are. Ayurveda divides us into three dominant types: airy, fiery and watery. The types are appreciated by their qualities eg airy people are dry, light, fast, cold, moving and are creative, artistic and good communicators. Fiery people are slightly fluid, light, hot, moving, penetrating, and are energetic, intelligent, analytical, leaders and can get heated quickly. Watery people are heavy, slow, oily, cold, solid, sleepy and are loving, reliable and pure, motherly and attentive. They gain weight easily, take a while for the penny to drop and like their bed and sweet tastes.

So which category do you belong to?

People are usually a combination of the three with dominant, sub dominant and sub sub dominant characteristics but the dominant one is usually the one which we concentrate on.

So once you know what type you are, you can then design a diet and lifestyle accordingly. The way in which Ayurveda understands what needs to be done is by enhancing deficiencies and reducing excesses so if a person has too much fat on their body we design a regime for them to lose weight and this is done by prescribing the right food, exercise and lifestyle for them. Light, non-fatty foods which are warm and easy to digest. Plenty of exercise and not too much sleep. The process would usually start with some detox program, then we would gently reintroduce normal foods into the diet and at the same time carry out some massage and give some herbal preparations. Yoga, breathing exercises and meditation are also introduced and lifestyle is reviewed so that the person knows what time to get up and go to bed, what time to eat and how to fit in all of the other things that fill the day.

Similarly programs are designed for airy and fiery people which may also include the type of environment, clothing, colours and company that would best suit them.

Tips for Airy people. Keep warm, create regularity in your life. Eat warm, slightly heavy and substantial foods and avoid any light dehydrated or dry foods. Sweet, salty and sour foods are most beneficial. Avoid stimulants such as tea or coffee, chocolates or alcohol since these create an imbalance in the body and mind. Avoid over-exercising, and working too late and slimming programs. Find time to connect with the earth by lying on the ground, closing the eyes and feeling the ground supporting you. Keep the attention on passive listening. (10 minutes am and pm). Yoga

should be stretching and restful and not fast and exhausting since this leads to depletion of body tissues. Meditation helps to still the mind as does breathing exercises which should be done slowly and with attention to listening to the inward and outward breath. Massage the body with soothing aromatic oils before bathing and bed. A full 8 hours is recommended going to bed as close to 10 pm as possible. Do not stimulate the mind after dinner since you are likely to sleep badly. This is the time for relaxation. A gentle stroll can help to settle you. Summer can be beneficial to warm the person but if too much sun is taken or if the environment is too dry there will be a negative effect.

Tips for Fiery people. Stay cool both in how you dress, what you eat, the people you mix with and the room temperature in which you live and work. Avoid coffee, tea, alcohol, salty, sour or spicy foods since they all are heating and can lead to digestive, and circulatory problems and may affect your personality adversely. Exercise should be a mixture of energetic and restful programs but care should be taken not to overheat or exhaust yourself. Ayurveda says that you should only use up half of your energy doing work or exercise. Digestion is usually good, but can be upset by not leaving sufficient time between eating and going to bed which should be at least two hours. Avoid hot baths or showers, saunas, hot sun and sleeping under too many blankets. Anger and irritation are signs of overheating as are headaches and migraine. These are early symptoms of what may develop into full blown diseases if steps are not taken to neutralise them. Since external temperature varies on a daily basis one should become sensitive to the ambient conditions. Summer is usually a difficult time for fiery people.

Tips for Watery people. You should avoid any heavy, sweet, sour or salty foods concentrating more on bitter, spicy and astringent foods. Sleeping during the daytime is a definite no no! Exercise should be taken regularly (Daily) and should be strenuous but not obsessive. Physical work should be undertaken such as gardening, and housework. Eat smaller portions and be aware of the fat content of what you eat which should be kept to a minimum. Get up early in the morning (6am) and go to bed at about midnight. Stay active during the day both in a physical and mental way. Winter is usually a difficult time for watery people.

=====

There are many books written about Ayurveda which are available. We would recommend consulting an Ayurvedic practitioner for further advice and in particular if there are early signs of symptoms recurring with increasing frequency or chronic conditions. People who have seen doctors should let the practitioner know and submit any test results that they may have been given. We do not recommend self medication or visiting Ayurvedic therapists without having prior consultations.

Practitioners that have completed a BAMS degree in India or Sri Lanka, BA and BSc degree courses in the UK and have undertaken all postgraduate studies and are members of one of the representative bodies are recommended. For more information please contact info@apa.uk.com

=====

Nigel Hubbers BA (Hons) Ayu practices in Mill Hill, Muswell Hill and Crouch End and can be contacted by emailing info@ayurvediclifestyle.co.uk or phoning 0789 990 3234.