

AYURVEDA: THE DAILY ROUTINE

A daily routine is absolutely necessary to bring radical change in body, mind, and consciousness. Routine helps to establish balance in one's constitution. It also regularizes a person's biological clock, aids digestion, absorption and assimilation, and generates self-esteem, discipline, peace, happiness, and longevity.

1. Wake Up Early in the Morning

It is good to wake up before the sun rises, when there are loving (sattvic) qualities in nature that bring peace of mind and freshness to the senses. Sunrise varies according to the seasons, but on average vata people should get up about 6 a.m., pitta people by 5:30 a.m., and kapha by 4:30 a.m. Right after waking, look at your hands for a few moments, then gently move them over your face and chest down to the waist. This cleans the aura.

2. Say a Prayer before Leaving the Bed

"Dear God, you are inside of me, within my very breath, within each bird, each mighty mountain. Your sweet touch reaches everything and I am well protected.

Thank you God for this beautiful day before me.

May joy, love, peace and compassion be part of my life and all those around me on this day.

I am healing and I am healed."

After this prayer touch the ground with your right hand, then the same hand to the forehead, with great love and respect to Mother Earth.

3. Clean the Face, Mouth, and Eyes

Splash your face with cold water and rinse out your mouth. Wash your eyes with cool water (or one of the eye washes mentioned below) and massage the eyelids by gently rubbing them. Blink your eyes 7 times and rotate your eyes in all directions. Dry your face with a clean towel.

Tridoshic eyewash: try triphala eyewash -¼ tsp. in 1 cup water, boil for 10 minutes, cool and strain.

Pitta eyewash: use cool water or rose water from organic rose petals - most commercial rose water has chemicals in it that will sting the eyes.

Kapha eyewash: try diluted cranberry juice, 3-5 drops in a teaspoon of distilled water.

4. Drink Water in the Morning

Then drink a glass of room temperature water, preferably from a pure copper cup filled the night before. This washes the GI track, flushes the kidneys, and stimulates peristalsis. It is not a good idea to start the day with tea or coffee, as this drains kidney energy, stresses the adrenals, causes constipation, and is habit-forming.

5. Evacuation

Sit, or better squat, on the toilet and have a bowel movement. Improper digestion of the previous night's meal or lack of sound sleep can prevent this. However the water, followed by sitting on the toilet at a set time each day, helps to regulate bowel movements. Alternate nostril breathing may also help. After evacuation wash the anal orifice with warm water, then the hands with soap.

6. Scrape your Tongue

Gently scrape the tongue from the back forward, until you have scraped the whole surface for 7-14 strokes. This stimulates the internal organs, helps digestion, and removes dead bacteria. Ideally, vata can use a gold scraper, pitta a silver one, and kapha copper. Stainless steel can be used by all people.

7. Clean your Teeth

Always use a soft toothbrush and an astringent, pungent, and bitter toothpaste or powder. The traditional Indian toothbrush is a neem stick, which dislodges fine food particles from between teeth and makes strong, healthy gums. Licorice root sticks are also used. Roasted almond shell powder can be used for vata and kapha, and ground neem for pitta.

8. Gargling

To strengthen teeth, gums, and jaw, improve the voice and remove wrinkles from cheeks, gargle twice a day with warm sesame oil. Hold the oil in your mouth, swish it around vigorously, then spit it out and gently massage the gums with a finger.

9. Chewing

Chewing a handful of sesame seeds helps receding gums and strengthens teeth. Alternatively, chew 3-5 dried dates and an inch of dried coconut meat. Chewing in the morning stimulates the liver and the stomach and improves digestive fire. After chewing, brush the teeth again without using toothpaste or powder.

10. Nasal Drops (Nasya)

Putting 3 to 5 drops of warm ghee or oil into each nostril in the morning helps to lubricate the nose, clean the sinuses, and improve voice, vision, and mental clarity. Our nose is the door to the brain, so nose drops nourish prana and bring intelligence.

For **vata**: sesame oil, ghee, or vacha (calamus) oil.

For **pitta**: brahmi ghee, sunflower or coconut oil.

For **kapha**: vacha (calamus root) oil.

11. Oil Drops in the Ears (Karana purana)

Conditions such as ringing in the ears, excess ear wax, poor hearing, lockjaw, and TMJ, are all due to vata in the ears. Putting 5 drops of warm sesame oil in each ear can help these disorders.

12. Apply Oil to the Head & Body (Abhyanga)

Rub warm oil over the head and body. Gentle, daily oil massage of the scalp can bring happiness, as well as prevent headache, baldness, graying, and receding hairline. Oiling your body before bedtime will help induce sound sleep and keep the skin soft.

For **vata** use warm sesame oil.

For **pitta** use warm sunflower or coconut oil.

For **kapha** use warm sunflower or mustard oil.

13. Bathing

Bathing is cleansing and refreshing. It removes sweat, dirt, and fatigue, brings energy to the body, clarity to the mind, and holiness to your life.

14. Dressing

Wearing clean clothes brings beauty and virtue.

15. Use of Perfumes

Using natural scents, essential oils, or perfumes brings freshness, charm, and joy. It gives vitality to the body and improves self-esteem.

For **vata** the best scent to use is hina or amber.

For **pitta** try using khus, sandalwood, or jasmine.

For **kapha** use either amber or musk.

16. Exercise

Regular exercise, especially yoga, improves circulation, strength, and endurance. It helps one relax and have sound sleep, and improves digestion and elimination. Exercise daily to half of your capacity, which is until sweat forms on the forehead, armpits, and spine.

Vata: Sun salutation x 12, done slowly; Leg lifting; Camel; Cobra; Cat; Cow. Slow, gentle exercise.

Pitta: Moon salutation x 16, moderately fast; Fish; Boat; Bow. Calming exercise.

Kapha: Sun salutation x 12, done rapidly; Bridge; Peacock; Palm tree; Lion. Vigorous exercise.

17. Pranayama

After exercise, sit quietly and do some deep breathing exercises as follows:

12 alternate nostril breaths for **vata**;

16 cooling shitali breaths (curling up your tongue lengthwise and breathing through it) for **pitta**;

100 bhasrika (short, fast breaths) for **kapha**.

18. Meditation

It is important to meditate morning and evening for at least 15 minutes. Meditate in the way you are accustomed, or try the "Empty Bowl Meditation". Meditation brings balance and peace into your life.

19. Now it is time for your breakfast!

Your meal should be light in the hot months or if your agni is low, and more substantial in the cold. Enjoy your day!

Credit:

by Vasant Lad, B.A.M.&S., M.A.Sc., Ayurvedic Physician

For more information on Ayurvedic Supplements to incorporate into your Daily Regimen that can Transform Your Health visit: www.FusionaryFormulas.com

For more info on living the Modern Ayurveda lifestyle visit: www.ShivaniGupta.com