

AYURVEDA IN DAILY LIFE.

Ayurveda is an Indian system of medicine which goes back some 4,500yrs, translated it means the 'science of life' which literally covers every aspect of daily existence. Their written sources are the Vedas which are ancient writings covering subjects as diverse as philosophy, agriculture, politics and engineering.

These source materials come from the Indus Valley civilizations where there was a great flowering of culture and peace, unusually very few weapons have been found here. It also appears that the society was ruled by consensus as all the buildings were the same size and the towns contained between 30,000 to 40,000 inhabitants.

Vedic knowledge propounds the principle of natural order within the body and harmony with the environment. Individuals are not perceived as separate from the natural world thus respect for both is seen as a vital component of health.

Modern life appears to violate this simple principle, and all our senses are under stress which Ayurveda says is one of the main causes of disease. We work in offices with artificial lighting and air conditioning, whilst eating processed food, and listening to distorted sounds, in a hurry whilst we rush to the next task. Consequently, we suffer from fatigue, weight issues, skin problems, inability to sleep, indigestion, colon problems and infertility to name but a few effects of our systems.

Ayurveda offers the instruction manual for natural living which is called Dinacarya or [daily routine], as well as, advice on Obstetrics/Gynaecology, Dietetics, General Medicine, Ophthalmology, Rheumatology and spiritual counselling which includes meditation Ayurveda traces the human anatomy in a logical and comprehensive manner.

It perceives everything to be composed of five basic elements: ether, air, fire, water and earth. Physiologic processes are categorised by the characteristics of the individual's constitution as Vata, Pitta, or Kapha. Similarly, the mental or psychological characteristics are described as satva, rajas and tamas. Ayurveda emphasizes that each individual is a unique entity resulting from the distinct combination of a persons physical and mental attributes.

Practically speaking, at this time of the year there is an increase of heavy, cold slimy and dry qualities in the northern hemisphere which can give strength and endurance can also result in joint pain, colds, sinusitis, cracked skin and weight gain.

This can be dealt with by getting plenty of physical activity each day preferably in natural light. Avoiding dairy products, fried foods and high fats in the diet. Choosing light and dry foods such as steamed vegetables and a little fish or chicken. Vegetable soups with ginger, buckwheat noodles with green beans and ginger. Avoiding large quantities of fluids limiting it to about 4 cups of fluid a day if you are not exercising, more than this will put out the delicate digestive fire.

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Fluid which is taken should be served warm and include hot water with lemon, ginger tea or honey water. All iced drinks and cold foods should be discouraged. Ideally, at this time of the year warm soups and cooked foods like baked potatoes are far more nourishing than raw salad.



The diet in general should consist of approximately 30% grains, 10% high quality protein and 60% fresh vegetables. Light warming spices should be introduced into the diet, such as ginger, cardamom, clove and cinnamon this will encourage much needed digestive juices into the stomach. An emphasis on pungent, bitter and astringent tastes in the diet will also enhance the digestive function.

Ayurveda considers that all organisms contain all the elements present within the whole of the cosmos and that all of these elements operate according to common rules and principles regardless of their whereabouts. All events, all perceivable phenomena, are subsystems of the One. The strength of the system lies in establishing an individual's elemental balance which is known as the doshas.

These are Vata [wind], Pitta[sun] and lastly Kapha[moon]. Once the correlation is made with the great elements of the universe there is no separation from the environment and we can observe the forces of the elements, both inside and outside of us. Just as our genetic disposition is with us for life our constitution remains with us. There are four rare classic types, three dual constitutions, which are by far the most common and three additional mixed types. This is ascertained by in depth questioning and pulse diagnosis, which in turn allows prescription of herbs, diet and lifestyle specific to that constitution.

Often body work is also prescribed using different oils for different situations, it behooves all of us to apply oil on our bodies especially during the spring, autumn and winter when the skin can become very dry. Massage even once a week, prevents skin disorders, energizes, muscles, and nerves simultaneously. Body heat and vitality increase as the heart and circulatory systems open up to provide fresh oxygen and vital energy to all parts of the system while simultaneously flushing out the toxins.

Meditation should also become an integral part of our busy lifestyle it allows us to switch-off and rest the senses in a way which even sleep cannot achieve. This practise is often easier to put into the daily schedule during the winter months as nature is in repose and there is less to distract us.

Ayurveda can greatly contribute to western medicine, and many of its components including herbs can easily be incorporated into modern medical treatment as well as standing alone as a complete medical paradigm.

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Angela has a wealth of experience gleaned from over 30yrs in practice, after 7yrs as a podiatrist in the NHS. Completing her degree in Nutrition and Health Counselling she became supervisor of the nutrition modality at The Pain and Stress Relief Clinic in the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital Boston U.S.A.

Ayurvedic Studies began at this time with Dr Vasant Lad and Dr Robert Svoboda and the Ayurvedic Wellness Centre. Returning to England in 1998 she began practicing at The Hale Clinic where she has been for 20yrs. A Bsc in Osteopathy is combined with the ayurvedic marma massage to give a unique approach to body work. Angela has completed her studies both in hospitals and clinics in Pune and Hassan India, as well as Middlesex university where she is currently engaged on an Msc in Ayurvedic Medicine. She has been a student of Vedanta for 26yrs.

This year I have given a workshop at the Sivananda Centre in London and has spoken throughout Europe and in the U.S.A at the National Ayurvedic Medical conference. In May Angela will conduct a 2 day workshop at Hourne Farm holistic centre on Nutrition and Ayurveda.

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