

# Yoga to Balance the Doshas



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Five elements make up the universe - they are space, air, fire, water and earth these elements also make up our body/mind complex. Ayurveda, the ancient Indian Science of Life, describes three characteristics of our constitution called doshas:

- Vata (combination of space and air elements)
- Pitta (combination of fire and water elements)
- Kapha (combination of earth and water)

The combination of the three doshas that you are born with is your constitution known as your Prakriti. The Prakriti is usually a combination of the three doshas with one or two doshas more predominant. In rare cases all three doshas are balanced. The Prakriti we are born with can be altered during our lifetime according to lifestyle, sleep, work, diet, exercise, season, environment and time. In a yoga class all elements are balanced. In your private yoga practice you can focus on what brings your unique Prakriti into balance.

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## Yoga for Vata

Someone with a predominance of Vata generally moves swiftly and is quick thinking; they can be changeable, artistic, creative and intelligent. If ungrounded they can be spaced out, find difficulty settling down, become aggravated easily and have irregular digestion. To balance Vata dosha a grounding practice is needed to come back to earth and slow down as well as fluid movements to bring flexibility into the joints and increase the water and fire elements.

- Practice Standing Postures which are grounding, strengthening and heating
- Draw the mind into the present moment with Balancing Postures
- Full Yogic Breath Exercises, Nadi Shodhana Pranayama, Relaxation, Tratak and Self Enquiry Meditation practices to promote concentration, a sense of peace and tranquility.

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## Yoga for Pitta

Someone with a predominance of Pitta will be looking to find the balance between the mind and the heart. Their yoga practice is a letting go of striving and ambition. Pitta people will benefit by going deeper into postures through the breath (the air element) and developing patience to discover a stronger connection to themselves through both the space around them and the inner space. Pitta Dosha finds balance in a calming, cooling and grounding practice.

- Paschimottanasana
- Yoga Mudra
- Shashankasana
- Khatu Pranam performed slowly and consciously while connecting to the breath
- Balancing Postures to become grounded
- Full Yogic Breath, Nadi Shodhana Pranayama and Shitali Pranayama (which is cooling)
- Yoga Nidra
- Self Enquiry Meditation

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## Yoga for Kapha Dosha

Someone with a predominance of Kapha moves slowly, gains weight easily and will need a more dynamic practice to increase the fire and air elements. They benefit from working to their limits using their strong, solid bodies to open deeper into the postures and stimulate their metabolism. This will bring the feeling of lightness associated with the space element. Some ways to heat and invigorate the Kapha person include.

- Standing postures such as trikonasana extend and stimulate the flow prana through the body.
- Backbends postures are beneficial as they are energizing.
- Inverted postures are beneficial as they are warming and stimulating for the circulation.
- Agnisara Kriya stimulates the metabolism and washes away impurities, increasing the digestive fire.
- Ujjayi, Kapalhati, Bastrika Pranayama and Nadi Shodhana are breathing practices that energise, cleanse and balance.
- Self Enquiry Meditation.

The practice which will balance you is usually the one that you will find most challenging. It is not in the Kapha's nature to move energetically but if they can be motivated to do so will feel light and energised. It is not Vata's nature to move slowly but the grounding practice will bring them back to earth. It is not in the Pitta's nature to be calm and inwardly focused but cooling and calming practice will restore a sense of equanimity. Meditation is recommended for all Doshas – Meditation happens if practiced daily and is the ultimate source of insight and balance in life.