

Sister Science - Beyond Asana
Module 2 : Lesson 3
Ayurveda and the practice of Meditation

Hi There, Andy here. Co-founder of Yoga Veda Institute.

I am blessed to be able to teach Yoga Philosophy & Meditation inside all of Yoga Veda Institutes training courses and programs.

Today, we are going to begin to introduce the practice of meditation from an Ayurvedic perspective.

So let's go ahead and get started!

According to Swami Vishnu Devananda, meditation is "...a continuous flow of perception or thought, just like the flow of water in a river."

Meditation is a practice whereby constant observation of the mind, it brings awareness, harmony and natural order into our lives. It helps us dig deep into our inner self to discover the wisdom and tranquility that lies within.

Meditation isn't about forcing your mind to be quiet, but instead about experiencing the quiet that is already there.

So, you may be asking yourself, Why is it important for me to meditate?

We all can have different reasons as to why we meditate, but in the end, it will always be beneficial no matter what your reason is.

Some people meditate to reach self realization or enlightenment, some people do it just to calm their mind, or to be more focused, or less anxious.

The benefits of meditation have been recorded and gathered for centuries, so no doubt this practice will bring benefits to your life.



In ayurveda the purpose of using meditation is to bring the mind to a pure and Sattvic state of mind. Simply to bring the mind to a peaceful balanced state.

Keep in mind that even though everyone can meditate and gain benefits from it, the more out of balance one is, the more challenging it might be to enter into a state of meditation or to notice the benefits of it.

We must realize that reaching a meditative state is a process, and not because we might not be feeling strong or obvious effects of the practice doesn't mean is not working. We must be constant and disciplined if we expect to achieve anything out of meditation.

On the other hand is also important to remember that there are two key element that will help meditation to be achieved much easier and those are control of the senses and concentration. Without those two, especially without concentration, it is very improbable that a meditative space will be reached.

Now let's take look at some basic points to be kept in mind in when practicing meditation:

Have a special place and specific time for meditation. Try to practice meditation daily.

Choose a time when your mind is not clouded with worries like early in the morning before sunrise.

Sit up straight with your back, neck and head aligned, facing either north or east.

Condition your mind to remain calm and quiet for the duration of your meditation session.

Regulate your breathing. Start with 5 minutes of deep breathing, then gradually slow it down.

Follow a rhythmic breathing pattern – deeply inhale and exhale.

Let your mind wander in the beginning because it grows more restless if you force it to concentrate.



Then slowly bring it to rest on the focal point of your choice.

Hold your object of concentration at this focal point throughout your session.

Meditation happens when you reach a state of pure thought, even while retaining an awareness of dual self.

Followed diligently, you will soon be able to attain a super-conscious state.

Now let's dive into the doshas and which specific meditation practices may be most beneficial to each one of them.

Those persons with predominantly Air & Space elements, or Vata types, should practice meditation in order to calm their restless minds and nerves and to relieve their inherent tendency of fear and anxiety.

Meditation can take them very far in overcoming their main problems in life – a hypersensitive and hyperactive mind and vital force. Meditation helps them sleep, alleviates their nervous digestion, and strengthens their immune system, which are their main areas of weakness for those of a Vata type constitution or imbalance.

However, Vatas must be careful because meditation done inappropriately can be ungrounding and quickly spaces them out. They can get lost in their thoughts or their prana can become disturbed.

For this reason, Vatas should first learn the art of concentration so that their minds do not wander. It is better for them to do mantra or visualization rather than try to empty their minds, which may already have too much of the ether element within them.

They should practice meditations that help keep them grounded, enhance stability, and help them release stress and stay focused. All meditations help Vata in some beneficial way however guided meditations, such as Yoga Nidra, can be very useful for balancing Vata.

Meditating in nature and near or around it can be beneficial for vata since it can help to ground them.



A Vata with Rajasic mind tends to be hyperactive and nervous so a sitting meditation might not be a good choice for them.

Walking meditation can be a good start, slow walk, mindful walk, paying attention to everything that's present, from the sensations in the body, to the sounds around, and the activity of the mind.

After saying this, it is important to remember that calm and steady meditation is recommended for Vata, but when in a Realistic state it might be too challenging for that person to sit still, so by slowly and progressively bringing the mind out of the rajasic state with the more active meditations eventually it will become easier for the person to sit still and achieve meditation.

For those individuals with Fire Element predominant, or Pitta Dosha, they will need to meditate in order to release their anger and aggression and let go of their generally willful and controlling approach to life.

Pittas usually have good concentration and can meditate more easily than other types. Mantras and meditation can be a good way for them to focus their strong mental energy in a positive manner directing their attention toward an inner goal. Pittas should be careful to meditate peacefully and not try to turn meditation into another form of achievement or conquest.

For them meditation can become too focused and even narrow-minded, an attempt to control rather than a release of tension. They must learn to expand their mind and heart in meditation, using their inherent light to reveal the truth. Meditation should leave them feeling cool and calm in mind and heart, like gentle waves moving across a lake in the moonlight.

The practice of mind calming pranayama are recommended for Pittas before meditation.

Kaphas types, or those of Water & Earth elements, require meditation in order to let go of emotional attachment and to counter mental stagnation and lethargy. Meditation helps them release possessiveness and heaviness into the space of consciousness in which alone is true happiness and abundance. Kaphas may require encouragement,



stimulation or motivation to get them into meditation and often do better meditating in a group. For them a more disciplined approach to meditation is required even if it does not seem immediately to be having much result. Kaphas are likely to fall asleep during meditation. For this reason they should do more active forms of meditation, including mantra and pranayama, or combine meditation with activity. They are also prone to fall into their imagination or day-dream. They need to cultivate a wakeful attention to counter the inherent lassitude of their minds

For a Kapha in a Tamasic state it is recommended to practice active meditations, like walking meditation, or a meditations that requires the use of different mantras, mudras and even pranayamas before their meditation.

Are you beginning to see the connections within each and every practice to that of the Universal elements, the doshas and the qualities of Nature, or Sattva, Rajas & Tamas.

When we are deciding on a meditation to practice according to our current state of imbalances, we need to take a few factors into account. What do we want to cultivate with our meditation? Non-attachment? Groundedness? A peaceful state of mind? Not each meditation is ideal for each individual person.

By taking into account our elemental composition, what we are looking to balance as well as our current state of mind we can begin to recognize the doshas and the universal qualities that will be affected by our meditation practice.

By choosing a meditation practice that takes into account your current state, you can more easily achieve all of the wonderful benefits that meditation has to offer. Again, just like everything else in Ayurveda - meditation is not a one size fits all approach. There are so many meditation practices to choose from, but by understanding the Ayurvedic approach to mediation, you are well on your way to experiencing those benefits as they are meant for you.

One last thing to keep in mind - once you have chosen a mediation that suits your current state best - stick with it.

Just as you would not dig a well by trying a hundred shallow holes hoping to hit water - as is meditation. You must stick with one place - one hole - and go deep - and only then will you hopefully (maybe) hit water.



So choose one form of meditation that is best suited to your dosha and your current mental state - then dig your well deep.

Inside this lesson you will find a worksheet in which you can design your perfect for you meditation practice.

Once you have chosen a practice that you think you can stick with. Share your insights inside our Sister Science Facebook Community where I will be to answer any questions that you have.

Thank you for listening! And happy Meditating!

