

Sister Science - Beyond Asana Course
Ayurvedic Cleansing Practices
Module 1: Lesson 5

Hi There, Jacky Rae here.

Co – founder of Yoga Veda Institute and creator of Sister Science. An online course in Yogic healing that I created for yoga teachers who want to begin to bring Ayurveda into their practice and into their lives.

Today I am going to be introducing one of my favorite practices of all. One of the most powerful practices in healing that Ayurveda has to offer. That practice is Ayurvedic detoxification.

Maybe you have heard of the term, Panchakarma, or the Ayurvedic form of detoxification of the physical, mental and emotional bodies. Most people are at least a little bit familiar with the term Panchakarma but have little understanding of the actual methods of practice.

The term Panchakarma simply means the five cleansing actions. Pancha means five and karma means actions. So Panchakarma is simply the five actions of cleansing.

These five actions are simply designed to remove excess elements or doshas from the physical body. These practices are so powerful that they should only ever be prescribed by a qualified Ayurvedic Practitioner or Ayurvedic Yoga Therapist.

However the healing diet traditionally accompanies these panchakarma therapies is safe for everyone regardless of age, physical makeup or current state of health.

Today we are going to be talking about the traditional Panchakarma kitchari diet and cleansing practices, how to design a cleansing program that is perfect for you as well as the best cleansing practices that are safe, effective and how they work.

First of all let me start out by saying that this kind of Ayurvedic cleanse is not a detox in the way that we may understand the word.



Our culture has become obsessed with cleansing, detoxifying, and fasting to the point that we no longer use these practices for what they were originally intended.

With diets such as the Master Cleanse, juice fasting, water fasting and all the forms of fasting that are out there today, we have become a culture obsessed with these practices.

Ayurveda however has a different view of these practices altogether. While fasting has always had a place in most cultures, as well as in Ayurveda. However, fasting has never been intended as a cleansing or detoxifying practice – rather as a spiritual practice.

You see – fasting, in nearly every culture and religion offers a method by which to reach new heights of spirituality but has never been and was never intended as a practice to cleanse or detoxify the body.

Because we are miseducated in the practice of fasting and what changes it exactly provokes in our bodies we believe that fasting is a healing practice when in fact for most people and please note that I say for most people, it is not.

When we fast – and my fast I mean completely remove solid foods from our diet, this practice tends to send our body into a state of what is called Ketosis. What this means, is that our body begins to believe that we are in a state of starvation, and begins to consume itself. This is why when we fast we begin to lose weight so dramatically, we are in essence starving ourselves.

So what happens when we begin to introduce foods into our diet once again? Well, our bodies, in their wisdom will usually decide that because of these dire circumstances it may or may not get more food, so it will begin to essentially turn to hoarding the foods that it does receive and put weight on once again very quickly.

Hence the yo-yo diet results of dropping weight very quickly then gaining it all back again.



Ayurvedic cleansing on the other hand takes quite the opposite approach. The key to the Ayurvedic cleansing diet is not to restrict nutrition, rather to use foods that are prized for their nutritional value to help the body to begin to heal itself.

So while modern detox methods tend to send the body into a state of crisis, Ayurvedic cleansing methods use foods to heal the body, which in turn allows the body to heal itself. This is the main difference between the modern view of detox and the Ayurvedic view of healing.

Our body does not need an outside source to detox. Our bodies already have the perfect detoxification hardware, already downloaded in their system. All we need to do is follow the Universe's perfect signs and we can give our bodies the time and the space that it needs to be able to heal all on its own.

Now, some of you may be thinking that you have done a juice fast, or a water fast and it was absolutely amazing and that very well may be. But remember, as with everything in Ayurveda, nothing is a one size fits all. While a juice fast may feel great to a person of a Pitta (or fire) dominant constitution that same juice fast can make a Kapha individual feel out of balance, bloated and just plain sick.

While a water fast may feel good for some, it will seriously aggravate those of predominantly Vata dosha sending their digestive system into a state of distress and will be very hard to come back to a state of health for that person after an extended fast of that nature – fasting is rarely recommended for those Vata individuals.

But remember this – fasting was never intended as a practice for detoxification rather as a practice of spiritual growth.

When we can tune into the elements in our constitution we can begin to design an Ayurvedic cleansing practice that is unique and healing to each one of us. And each one of us is really really different.

The diet that is recommended in Ayurveda as one of cleansing & rejuvenation is a diet of a common Ayurvedic dish that is called Kitchari. A very simple meal of basmati rice and split yellow mung beans, this beautiful combination makes for an easily digestible complete protein to nourish all of our bodies tissues creating a space of healing.



Rather than fasting which is a diet of restriction we commit to a daily diet of only eating a simple healing diet of kitchari twice, or even three times a day.

Kitchari by nature is tridoshic, meaning is good for all three doshas, and most importantly is really, really easy for our body to digest.

When our body can focus not on digestion but on cleansing itself and rejuvenation our body is given the space to heal itself. With an Ayurvedic cleansing diet of kitchari we are simply allowing our body the space and the time that it needs to heal itself.

A kitchari cleanse is something that Ayurveda recommends for everyone to practice with the change of the seasons. But one of my favorite Ayurvedic doctors always says that the perfect time to do an Ayurvedic cleanse is when you have the time to do it. That's all.

A kitchari cleanse allows your body the time to reset and recharge for the new season. Again the recommended time to do this kind of cleanse is with the change of the seasons, but is most effective when moving from Summer to Fall and from Winter to Spring with the change of diet & seasonal foods, allowing your digestive system to reset and prepare for the new dietary changes that come with summer and winter. In today's worksheets you will begin to design your perfect for you kitchari cleansing diet.

One thing that I want you to keep in mind is that, like everything else in Ayurveda, this is never a one size fits all. Each one of you will come up with a cleansing program that is perfect for you, and that program may not look like anyone else's. The important thing to remember is your intention is to heal. To allow your body the time it needs to reset and to give it that time.

I am not going to tell you what you need to do – intuitively you already know. Tune into the elements that you need to balance when you are creating your kitchari cleanse recipe.

For those who want to balance air and space elements, or Vata Dosha, you will want to add spices and veggies to your kitchari recipe that are most balancing for you, making your kitchari quite soupy, with lots of earth and water elements.



For those who want to balance fire elements, adding cilantro, and other pitta balancing veggies and herbs, adding spices for healing and detoxification purposes, but in moderation to not aggravate the fire element too much.

For those who want to balance Kapha or earth and water elements, adding more bitter and astringent veggies and herbs as well as heating spices, less water element and no heavy earthy veggies will be best.

Play with it. Make it yours. Experiment. This is where the fun begins.

The most important thing to remember is not to take it too seriously, this is a simple prescription of a healing diet. Because you are continuing to eat 3 wholesome healing meals a day, it's a practice that is safe & effective and can be enjoyed by everyone regardless of dosha or state of healing.

When you are ready to begin, commit to eating a simple healing kitchari diet for a few days, maybe 3 days, maybe 5 days, and for those who are feeling like they really want to dive in, maybe even for 7 days, but I am going to recommend that you do no more than 7 days without the supervision of a qualified practitioner.

So are you ready to get started?

For those of you who are ready to dive in and experience this amazing cleansing tradition, I have included one of my favorite Ayurvedic Practitioners recommendation for you. Dr. John Douillard has guided thousands of these programs in his online Colorado Cleanse and you can find the full program right under today's lesson worksheet.

Within the program you will find all kinds of amazing practice recommendations, recipes, cleansing tea recipes and much more.

I invite you however to design your own very personal cleansing program – this is how we learn and grow. Ayurveda is never an exact science – rather a very personal one. I invite you to create your own perfect for you Kitchari recipe and as a bonus – create your own perfect for you cleansing spice tea recipe as well.



I can't wait to see all of your recipe creations. Feel free to share them inside the facebook group where I will be to answer all of your questions!

Until next time, see you in the next lesson.

