

# Ayurveda Fundamentals

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Presented by  
Alex Baker  
[alexxyogaarts.com](http://alexxyogaarts.com)

# Namaste

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My intention with offering you these reference guides is twofold. First, I wanted to provide you with a quick “go to” reference that you can access to learn more about the fundamentals of Ayurveda, the “Sister Science” of Yoga. This includes more information about *The Five Great Elements* and how they directly correlate to our bodies and minds. In addition, you will also learn more about *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* known as the *The Tri Doshas*. Discover how the *Doshas* are connected to each individual season and their unique characteristics. In addition, learn more about when a *Dosha* is balanced verses out of balance.

Secondly, I wanted to share Ayurvedic practices with you that are seasonally inspired, simple, accessible and designed to help you maintain balance and vitality in body, mind, and spirit throughout the year. I will also provide you with a list of additional resources in the event that you feel as inspired as I do and want to dive deeper into your studies and practice.

Over the past twenty years I have come to truly love the simplicity and effectiveness of these ancient practices, I think Ayurveda and Yoga are an ideal antidote for our modern times. The combination of The Two Sister Sciences has helped me gain a much deeper appreciation and understanding for the interwoven relationship between our human evolution and Mother Nature. Enjoy your journey and I hope you find my resources helpful.

With gratitude,

Alex

# Ayurveda 101

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## Learn More About:

- History & Philosophy of Ayurveda
- Ayurveda's connection to the Mantra AUM (OM)
  - The Five Great Elements
  - The Five Elements in relationship to our body
- The Five Elements in relationship to our five senses
  - The Tri Doshas

# History & Philosophy of Ayurveda

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Ayurveda is an ancient healing science originating in India more than 5,000 years ago. Ayurveda translated means, “Science of Life” One of the main themes with Ayurveda is to look closer at the root cause of any imbalances and heal with a holistic approach that acknowledges the body, mind, spirit connection. Ayurveda is the Science of striking balance in our daily lives, nature, and the cosmos. The numerous methods that are applied with various healing practices derive from the natural world such as; herbs, food, connection with nature, lifestyle, yoga, and meditation. The Science of Life originated and evolved from the **Rishis** (The Ancient Seers) Their practical philosophical and spiritual illuminations were rooted in their understanding of creation and they recognized the intricately woven webbed relationship between human beings, nature, and the universe. The healing system is centered upon creating harmony between our bodies, minds, and spirits as an equilateral relationship with the natural world.

A good place to begin when studying/practicing Ayurveda is with further examination of **The Five Great Elements**, Ether, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. Learning more about the qualities within each element and how each element correlates with and effects our physical body, mind, senses, and subtle/energetic body, allows us to align our human rhythms deeper with Mother Natures rhythms. From The Five Great Elements arises the **TriDoshas** (*energetic principles*) known as **Vata**, **Pitta**, and **Kapha**. Learning more about the **TriDoshas** expands our relationship/connection with the seasonal cycles and highlights a variety of practical and specific practices that are designed to balance our daily routines. The corner stone of Ayurveda is balance, creating and maintaining balance within ourselves and nature. Ayurveda acknowledges that when one is balanced, one awakens to the unified and loving connection that exists within everyone and everything that is everywhere.

# AUM (OM) & The Five Elements

The foundation of Ayurveda is rooted in the *Five Elements*. From a state of unified consciousness, the subtle vibrations of the cosmic soundless sound AUM (OM) manifested. The *Vedas* (ancient Ayurveda & Yoga texts) highlight that from the initial vibration/awareness of the mantra AUM (OM) the *Ether Element* appeared. This ethereal element then began to move, its subtle movement created the *Air Element*, which is ether in action. The movement of Ether created friction, and through the friction heat was generated. Particles of heat/energy combined to form intense light and from the light the *Fire Element* manifested. Through the heat of the fire various ethereal elements dissolved and liquified, manifesting the *Water Element*. The water in turn solidified to form the molecules of the *Earth Element*.

From Earth, all organic living bodies, including those in the vegetable kingdom such as herbs and grains, and those in the animal kingdom (including humans) are created. Earth also contains the inorganic substances that comprise the mineral kingdom. Thus, out of the womb of the Five Great Elements all matter is born into creation.



# The Five Elements & The Human Body

Ayurveda believes that humans are a microcosm of the macrocosm/universe, the body is a reflection of this material universe and as a result the Five Elements take up residence in our physical body as well

- **Space /Ether:** spaces in the mouth, nose , gastrointestinal tract, respiratory tract, abdomen, thorax, capillaries, tissues, and cells
- **Air:** Movement, breath, muscle movement, pulsations of the heart, expansion and contraction of the lungs, movement of the stomach and intestines, movement within the nervous system
- **Fire:** digestion/stimulation of digestive enzymes, metabolism, body temperature, intelligence, fire activates the retina which perceives sight
- **Water:** secretions of the digestive juices and salivary glands, mucus membranes, plasma, essential for the functioning of the tissues and organs
- **Earth:** solid structure; the bones, cartilage, nails, muscles, tendons, skin and hair – life is possible because Earth holds all living and non-living substances to its solid surface

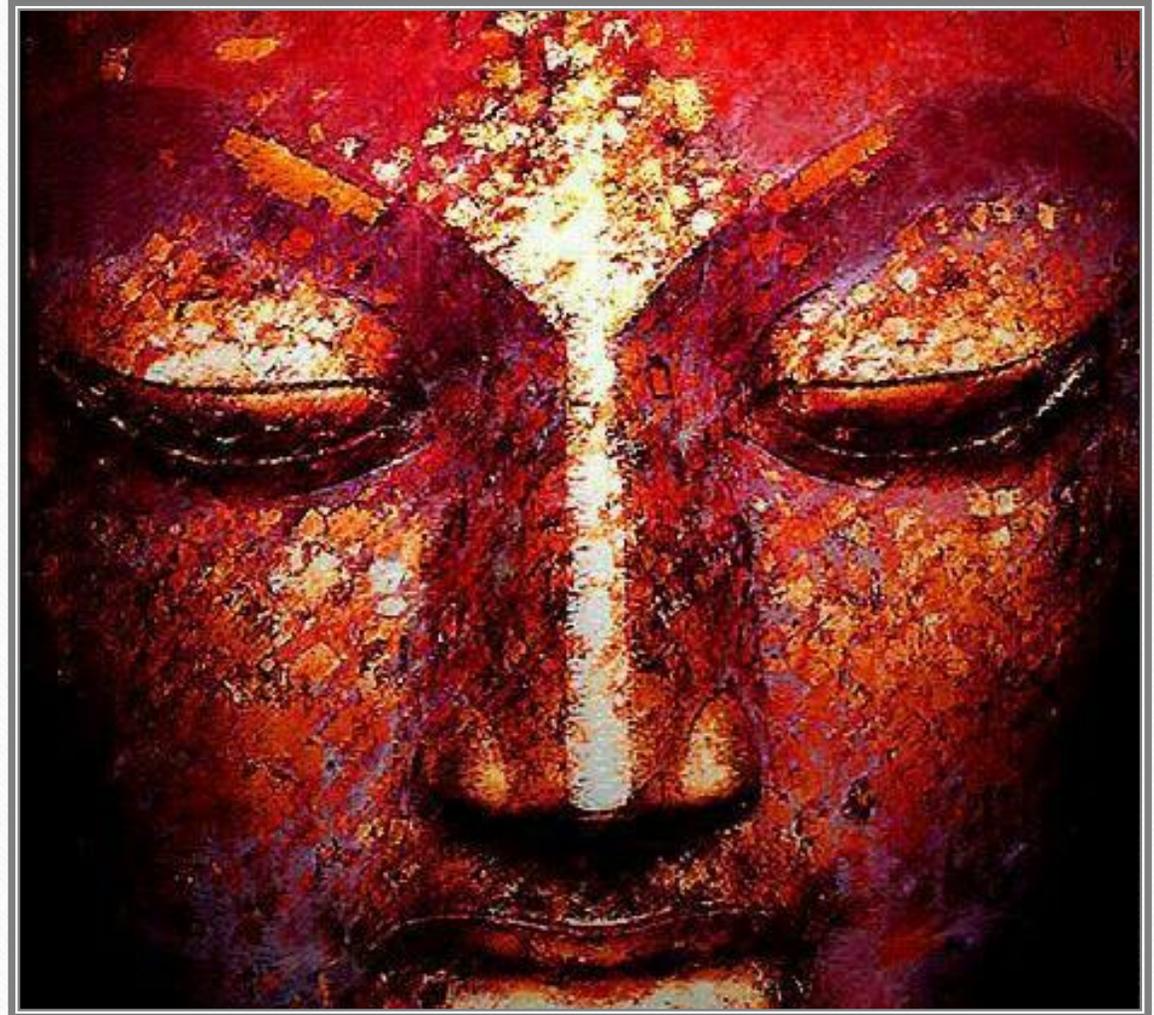


# The Five Elements & The Five Senses

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Ayurveda regards the human body and our sensory experiences as manifestations of cosmic energy expressed in the Five Elements

- **Ether:** Hearing / Ears
- **Air:** Touch / Skin
- **Fire:** Seeing / Eyes
- **Water:** Taste / Tongue
- **Earth:** Smell / Nose



# The Tri Doshas

The Five Elements form the foundation of Ayurveda out of which the *Tri Doshas* (energetic principles) arise. Ayurveda identifies three basic types of energy/principles that are present in everyone and everything. These principles have specific qualities and attributes and are; **Vata**, **Pitta**, and **Kapha**. Each individual Dosh is composed of all Five Elements, however only two elements are more predominant in each.

A balance among the Tri Doshas is necessary for overall health. For example, the air element kindles the fire element, but the water element is necessary to control the fire element, otherwise the bodily fire would burn the tissues. Each element and corresponding attribute lends itself to certain physical and mental manifestations within the body.



# Vata Dosha

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- Associated with Air & Ether
- Associated with Autumn
- Movement
- Governs breathing
- Blinking
- Muscle & Tissue Movement
- Motor Functions
- Sensory Functions



# Pitta Dosha

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- Associated with Fire & Water
- Associated with Summer
- Body heat/temperature
- Digestion
- Absorption
- Assimilation
- Metabolism
- Nutrition / hunger & thirst



# Kapha Dosha

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- Associated with Water & Earth
- Associated with Winter/Early Spring
- Creates structure and form
- Supplies water for all bodily parts & systems
- Lubricates the joints
- Moisturizes the skin
- Maintains immunity



# Fundamental Principle of Healing

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Throughout our life there is a continual interaction between our internal and external environment. The external environment comprises the cosmic forces (macrocosm) while the internal forces (microcosm) are governed by the principles of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. A basic principle of healing in Ayurveda holds that one may create balance in the internal forces by altering the external; diet and lifestyle to counteract changes in her/his environment. According to Ayurveda, 95% of the time we bring balance to what is out of balance by applying and introducing the opposite quality present, following the basic guideline of *like increases like and opposite heals*. Rather than treating symptoms with drugs and ignoring the underlying problems, Ayurvedic medicine aims to look at the root of disease and how it's related to a person's thoughts, beliefs and lifestyle.

Ayurveda is practical, accessible, and oftentimes the remedy is found in the form of implementing (or eliminating) simple daily routines and in turn that can create significant and positive results in one's overall wellbeing. It is a medical-metaphysical healing life science, designed to promote health, happiness, and creative growth. Ayurveda invites us to awaken to our innate connection to Mother Earth and cosmic consciousness in our efforts to heal.