

FALL ROUTINES AND RITUALS

With Katie Silcox (M.A. Philosophy and Ayurvedic Science)



Vata Dosha – What is it and its connection to the Fall season

- The Vata element is associated with Air and Ether
- Functions as movement and energy, and seasonally it is the time of year when the atmosphere is dry, cool, and rough (windy)
- The cool air begins to dry the leaves making them brittle and rough and eventually they fall. These qualities translate to our own inner climate as well. Often with the rise of Vata our skin can become more dry and rough, our hair and nails more brittle, and it is not uncommon that our digestion and immunity may suffer. The sometimes erratic nature of the Vata element can also make our minds feel more scattered, disrupt our sleep, and even contribute to unwanted mood swings.

Lifestyle Practices to Balance Vata

- Wake up and go to bed at the same time every day (vata craves routine for balance)
- Try not to overdo it with too many social obligations
- Take more time to pause throughout the day and observe your breath
- Meditation in morning and evening sun
- Journal to help ease any extra stress (it could be helpful to use writing prompts such as *I let go of* or *I release.*)

Diet for Fall Support

- Focus on grounding and nourishing foods. Think of foods that help to counteract gas and bloating and eat foods that nourish and strengthen the liver
- Favor more warm or cooked foods
- Add more healthy fats like ghee, avocado oil, olive oil, and coconut oil to your dishes
- Incorporate more warming spices
- Eat more tubers! Pumpkin, beets, Sweet potatoes, and all types of other hardy winter squash
- Drink more warming teas in between meals
- Add soups or stews into your weekly meal routine

Food for Fall Support

- Stewed mung beans
- Roasted winter squash
- Cooked dandelion greens with ginger and fresh turmeric
- Apples cooked with a small amount of ghee and spices
- Oats
- Basmati rice
- Kefir
- Cottage cheese
- Raw, uncooked honey
- Sweet potatoes
- Carrots
- Avocados
- Blackberries





Herbal Support for Fighting the Fall Blahs

- Spice things up with more warming spices: black pepper, cumin, ginger, mustard seed, cayenne, and cinnamon
- Try adding some reishi, chaga, or lion's mane to your morning or evening beverage
- Tulsi, ashwagandha, licorice, and gotu-kola are also some of our favorite ayurvedic herbs for fall
- Tulsi and licorice make a delicious tea to sip on throughout the day

Fall Exercise

- Focus on exercise that incorporates more fluid movements like walking, gentle yoga, and body weight mobility circuits
- It's super important to walk more and run less, favor resistance training over cardio loading, and practice gentle yoga and meditation



#1 Tool for Balancing Vata this Fall – Oiling!

Why do it? How about:

- A boost in your skin's ability to breathe
- Baby smooth skin
- Less cellulite
- A deep feeling of self-love - touch is ten times stronger than verbal or emotional contact
- A release of a feel-good hormone cocktail
- Boosts vitality by preventing dehydration and providing deep nourishment
- Stimulates the immune system
- Cleanses the lymph

How to Oil Up – Ayurveda Style

1. Choose an oil. If you tend to run hot, coconut oil is cooling. If you run cold, sesame oil is warming. Sunflower oil is a good oil to blend with either of these two as it lessens their smell and heaviness (if you find them too intense). If you run really oily already, you may try dry brushing your skin instead of using oil.



How to Oil Up – Ayurveda Style

2. Start by warming up your oil. When you warm the oil it “cures” it, allowing your skin to better absorb it. You can heat your oil in a small sauce pan on the stove. I usually just put some boiling water in a glass measuring cup. Then, I put the smaller glass bottle of oil into the measuring cup and let the oil heat for about 15 minutes before applying it. You can also just simply place the glass bottle directly in your bathroom sink. Close the drain and fill with the hottest water possible. Allow to sit for at least 15 minutes before applying to the body. Truth be told, sometimes I don’t have time for curing it, so I just rub it strong in my palms to “heat it” before applying.

How to Oil Up – Ayurveda Style

3. Get naked.

4. For the full bliss treatment, you can **start at the top of the head** and pour the oil directly onto the crown. If you are doing this before work and do not want an oily head for the rest of the day, you can skip this part and save it for a day when you do not need to be “presentable.” That said, Ayurvedic tradition placed heavy emphasis on massage the head and neck. Of the 107 energetic points of the body (called *marmas*), 37 are located on the head and neck.

How to Oil Up – Ayurveda Style


5. Continue onto the face (gently) and the rest of the body. On the long arms and legs, use back-and-forth strokes. On the joints, use circular strokes. If you are looking down at your belly, do circular strokes in a clock-wise motion, as this is direction in which our long intestine moves, and will stimulate proper digestion.

6. How long should you spend massaging the body? Ideally, 15-20 minutes. If time is an issue, spend at least five minutes in total communion with your body vehicle. And by the way, notice the spots of the body you avoid. The thighs? The feet? Spend the most time there, as these are the bits that need the most love.

How to Oil Up – Ayurveda Style

7. Sit for some time. I recommend 20 minutes. Why not use this time to do some meditation?

8. Rub off any excess oil with a towel and then take a shower. It may be a good idea to have a few towels designating for oiling, as they will not be of much use for drying the body after a few weeks. Showering causes the pores to open, allowing the herbal oil to penetrate even deeper into the skin. You do not need to soap-off the oil. The body will, most likely absorb it all, especially if you are quite dry.



How to Oil Up – Ayurveda Style

9. Make sure not to leave the oil on for more than 45 minutes as this can actually clog the channels we are trying to cleanse. Also, make sure to use chemical-free, organic, cold-pressed oils.

10. Leave the house covered in a layer of L.O.V.E. (well-oiled).

Ojas – Immunity, Vitality, and LOVE

Ojas is the juicy quality that makes life feel abundant, insulates us from the cold, and acts as a pathway for pleasure.

How to build Ojas:

1. Focus on the sweet (a tender hug from a loved one, giving yourself a massage, listening to inspiring music)
2. Get deeply hydrated (drink plenty of water, add sea salt or trace minerals to your water, eat healthy fats, keep your skin barrier happy with oil and moisturizer)
3. Add omega-3 fatty acids to your diet (walnuts, edamame, beans, chia seeds, hemp seeds, flax seeds, seaweed, salmon, anchovies, MCT oil)



Ojas – Immunity, Vitality, and LOVE

General depletion of Ojas: When you are overstimulated, for example, if you spend hours on the internet, drinking coffee, and texting friends, you lose energy through the five senses in ways you aren't even aware of.

The practice of pratyahara (controlling our senses by moderating our speech and sexual energy and getting proper rest, relaxation, and sleep), helps us preserve our vital energy.

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A banner for the Ayurveda School Coaching Team. The top half has a dark blue background with the text "AYURVEDA SCHOOL" in white serif font, a small winged logo, and "COACHING TEAM" in white serif font. Below this is a button that says "BOOK A FREE CLARITY CALL NOW". The bottom half features a row of seven portrait photos of diverse women, presumably the coaching team members.

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