



Glenda Bell, ASM Yoga Therapist  
Real People - Real Bodies - Real Yoga

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## Vata presented: 2/16/12



Ayurveda is a complete science of living that embraces all aspects of our day-to-day life. It teaches us how each individual can create and maintain a unique and harmonious lifestyle. The first step in doing this is understanding the play of the elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth) and doshas (vata, pitta and kapha) within our bodies and the environment.

During the Fall season, vata dosha is most predominant. Made up of the ether and air elements, vata is the mobile force of the universe which inspires all activity and movement inside and outside of the

body. Prana, the vital life force, is the pure essence of vata. Vata governs physical movement, circulation, communication, mental activity, sensory perception, motor function, respiration, heart function and all nervous system impulses. Enthusiasm, joy, clarity and creativity are a few of the psychological roles vata plays.

The key qualities of vata and fall alike are dry, light, cold, rough, subtle, mobile and clear. When these qualities are in a balanced state, the vata person experiences excellent health, stability, creativity and freedom. Ruled by the subtle body, the vata person has the greatest potential for attaining a spiritual life and experiencing love and sensuality on a spiritual plane. Full of imagination, these individuals tend to possess an alert, excited and impulsive disposition. Vata is derived from the root word "to move", and this is what vata individuals do very well! They enjoy exercise, adventure, travel and continual stimulation. They favor professions involving travel, change and flexibility. They tend to make money quickly but spend it quickly.

Vata people are blessed with the gift of gab. The vata type is naturally light and delicate with dry eyes and skin. With irregular appetites and thirst, vatas often experience digestive and absorption problems.

During the fall season, due to the higher level of air and ether elements in the environment, vata people become more susceptible to air related ailments. When the vata qualities accumulate within the body and mind due to wrong diet, lifestyle and season, vata accumulates and begins to manifest various imbalances. Vata imbalances may manifest within the body as constipation, flatulence, dry skin, insomnia, arthritis or sciatica. When out of balance emotionally, the light



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quality of vata provokes fear, anxiety, loneliness and insecurity. Special care must be taken in order for them to remain grounded, warm and confident. In general, to balance vata, we learn to apply its opposite qualities to any given imbalance. For example, if a vata person is experiencing increased dry quality in their body, we will encourage them to utilize moistening, warming and nourishing foods, remedies and practices.

Harmonizing vata during the cool, dry fall season requires observing life from a grounded and compassionate approach. Here are some practical suggestions for balancing the vata person during the seasonal changes that occur in fall and early winter:

- Upon awakening, do some gentle yoga asanas, including the Sun Salutation, Tree, Cat-Cow, Thunderbolt, Cobra, Rabbit and Yoga Mudra. The emphasis throughout your practice can be on softening your lower abdominal cavity, grounding your feet into the earth, building strength and stability and allowing yourself sufficient rest after your practice.
- Observe deep breathing throughout your yoga practice. Continuous use of Ujjayi Pranayama as well as Full Yogic Breath will enhance focus and ground you into the poses. Alternate Nostril breathing can also be practiced.
- Follow your breathing exercises with some peaceful meditation. A regular meditation practice assists in quieting, centering and grounding the active vata mind. So-Hum meditation is favorable for the vata individual.
- Give yourself a slow and loving full body massage before taking a shower or bath. As a base, use sesame oil, which is warming and deeply nourishing. Essential oils of jatamansi, ginger, lavender or rosewood can be added to further enhance healing benefits.
- Drink a warm tea of fresh ginger, cardamom and cinnamon to warm the body and enhance circulation and digestion.
- Wear clothing that is soft in texture and warm in color. Excellent choices would be cotton, linen and wool of red, orange and yellow shades. Blues, greens and blacks can further increase the vata that is present.
- Eat foods that are warming, grounding, predominately cooked, sweet, salty and sour and in season. Avocados, bananas, mangoes, peaches, lemons, asparagus, carrots, beets, pumpkins, quinoa, mung beans, almonds, sesame seeds and ghee are a few excellent food choices for a vata person. Sipping warm water and herbal teas throughout the day enhances warmth and hydration. Vatas love to graze throughout the day. Due to their variable appetite, it is favorable for them to create a routine around eating.
- Enjoy regular, relaxing and peaceful walks in Nature to calm the mobile body and active mind so familiar to vatas. Other great activities for vata people include gardening, creating art and music and journaling. Be sure to follow all activities with a sufficient rest period.



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