



BONUS SECTION

I've included this bonus section because I know that a healthy mind and body does not just stem from doing breath work, mindfulness, yoga, affirmations and visualization techniques. More and more western medicine/science is discovering what ancient societies knew: our minds and bodies are integrated systems and we can't ignore one aspect without there being consequences to our overall health.

Generally, when we are younger, our bodies will not reflect the abuse we often unknowingly inflict upon them. However, as we move on up in our chronological age, the body will begin to show wear and tear by developing different diseases or physiological issues. In Ayurveda (Science of Life) it is thought that depending on your body constitution and your areas of weakness (maybe genetically predetermined), you will present with different diseases if the body is not kept in balance.

Keeping the mind and body in balance and understanding your particular body's needs, will according to Ayurveda, make an enormous difference to your longevity and ultimately the health of your mind and body.

One of the most important principals in Ayurveda is: in everything take the middle path! So, moderation is the key in this ancient scientific philosophy

These techniques are not substitutes for medical advice as given by a medical physician and it is recommended that a practitioner informs his/her doctor that these techniques are being practiced.



Lifestyle Routines for Early Childhood

As the body is our vehicle used for all our actions, it is important to maintain its most healthy state of being.

Lifestyle Routines are part of Ayurvedic (Science of Life) principles that enhance the health and wellbeing of an individual. If started early in life these will become habit and will impact both present and future health and wellbeing.

The following lesson plans are not actions as much as points put forward to further understanding of the Lifestyle Routines in Ayurveda.

Some of these basic principles are now being scientifically proven to enhance health and wellbeing. Ayurveda suggests looking at one's diet, one's actions and the quality of one's sleep as some of the important pillars to a healthy life.

Lifestyle Routines for Early Childhood

Daily Routines: Food

Direct Aim: To achieve, maintain, and preserve health and prevent disease in both mind and body.

Indirect Aim: Create and maintain strength, stamina and harmony in both mind and body; to create and maintain right, regular and truthful actions of both mind and body.

Procedure I: Crucial to the optimal metabolic process of the body is the timing of meals. These timings correlate to the elemental values given to different parts of the day.

Kapha times of day: 6-10 in the morning and evening

Pitta times of day: 10-2 in the morning and evening

Vata times of day: 2-6 in the morning and evening

1. Breakfast: eaten within one hour of rising and no later than 8:00am.
2. Lunch – the largest meal of the day: eaten between noon and 1:00pm. As this time of day is connected to Pitta this is the most transformational time of day and as such will aid in optimum assimilation of nutrients.
3. Dinner – the smallest meal of the day: eaten between 6-7pm and always within 3 hours of bedtime.

Procedure II: The following suggestions are basic food ideas that are optimum for health within an Ayurvedic perspective. A light food diet is recommended at all times and processed foods are not recommended.

1. Breakfast: any choice of warm foods, including cooked fruits, is suggested for all body constitutions; a warm food such as a bowl of oatmeal is an example.
2. Lunch: this meal should be warm and the largest amount of food eaten in the day. A selection of vegetables, nourishing grains and a protein of choice is recommended. Specific choices should be considered with consideration for keeping body constitutions balanced.
3. Dinner: this meal should be light and cooked. A choice of steamed vegetables, or light soup is suggested. Specific choices should be considered with consideration for keeping body constitutions balanced.

4. Snacks: Generally Ayurveda suggests that snacking is best eliminated because the three main meals should be sufficient to prevent hunger between meals. However, if you feel hungry between meals keep snacking to natural healthy choices and avoid anything cold.
5. Cold foods: these foods are not recommended for optimum health and wellbeing. It is suggested that any ice drinks are eliminated and cold foods are kept to a minimum.

Notes:

Ayurveda recognizes the correlation of universal energy and energetic rhythms and cycles and their connection and effect on the human system; Ayurveda says that humans are as much a part of the environment as all other matter.

It is within the context of this wisdom that Ayurveda discusses the importance of daily and seasonal routines. These daily and seasonable routines include suggestions for when and what to eat, suggestions as regards rising and bedtime routines and the importance of seasons within daily routines.

All these suggestions include the concept of body constitutions. In Ayurveda there are three different types of body constitutions which mirror the elements found in the universe. Ayurveda says that humans are made up of all these elements, but that we all have propensity towards certain elements over others. This is what makes up the three basic constitutions known as Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

A Vata constitution will include more of the nature elements of air and ether. Vata's main function is related to the nervous system and all movement within the body.

A Pitta constitution will include more of the nature elements of fire and some water. Pitta's main function in the body is related to transformation of both thoughts in the mind and physical digestion down to a cellular level. Pitta's main function is related to the enzymatic and endocrine systems.

A Kapha constitution will include more of the nature elements of earth and water. Kapha's main function is to provide stability and connections within the body. Kapha's function is related to the tissues and wastes of the body.

The functions of Vata, Pitta and Kapha are not tangible concepts but rather relate to the 'force' that each of the elements associated with the concepts provides to the functions of the body.

The six tastes:

These techniques are not substitutes for medical advice as given by a medical physician and it is recommended that a practitioner informs his/her doctor that these techniques are being practiced.

The six tastes are related to the elements of the universe and as such have specific effects on the body; depending on a person's body constitution the six tastes will increase or decrease a specific constitution. Foods with different tastes therefore can help balance a person's body constitution, which is the goal – to balance the elements in the body to allow for balance within all systems.

Sweet: composed mainly of the elements of earth and water, foods with a predominately sweet taste will increase the Kapha qualities in the body and reduce the Pitta and Vata qualities in the body.

Sour: composed mainly of the elements of earth and fire, foods with a predominately sour taste will increase the Kapha and Pitta elements in the body, but reduce the Vata qualities in the body.

Salty: composed mainly of the elements of water and fire, foods with a predominately salty taste will increase the Kapha and Pitta elements in the body, but reduce the Vata qualities in the body.

Pungent: composed mainly of the elements of fire and air, foods with a predominately pungent taste will increase Pitta and Vata elements in the body, but reduce the Kapha qualities in the body.

Bitter: composed mainly of the elements of air and space, foods with a predominately bitter taste will increase Vata elements in the body, but reduces the Pitta and Kapha qualities in the body.

Astringent: composed mainly of the elements of air and earth, foods with a predominately astringent taste will increase Vata, but reduces the Pitta and Kapha qualities in the body.

Ayurveda suggests including all six tastes at every meal, and if there are specific body constitution imbalances, food may be used to assist with balancing the constitutional elements within the body.

Early Childhood Students:

Give students food options, which work for their specific Doshas, and if snack is part of your day, ask them to create a snack that would be beneficial for them. To determine the dosha of an Early Childhood student, you may want to look at the basic elements of each dosha and make an educated guess. You could also ask the child to take the Dosha Quiz as an at home experience with a parent who could share their findings with you. (A body constitution questionnaire can be found on the Chopra website at: <http://www.chopra.com> - click on the Learn tab and find the Dosha Quiz tab.)

Lifestyle Routines for Early Childhood

Seasonal Cycles: Food

Direct Aim: To achieve, maintain, and preserve health and prevent disease in both mind and body.

Indirect Aim: Create and maintain strength, stamina and harmony in both mind and body; to create and maintain right, regular and truthful actions of both mind and body.

Pre-Procedure:

1. Understanding of Ayurvedic suggestions for daily meal routines.
2. Understanding of the six tastes and their impact on the different body constitutions,

Procedure:

1. Fall and Winter – Vata season: foods that are warm, moist and heavier should be included in the diet so that the Vata elemental qualities are lessened in the body.
2. Spring – Kapha season: foods that are light, dry and hot should be included in the diet so that the Kapha elemental qualities are lessened in the body.
3. Summer – Pitta season: foods that are cooling, less spicy and more bland and slightly heavier should be included in the diet so that the Pitta elemental qualities are lessened in the body.

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It is within the context of this wisdom that Ayurveda discusses the importance of daily and seasonal routines. These daily and seasonable routines include suggestions for when and what to eat, suggestions as regards rising and bedtime routines and the importance of seasons within daily routines.

All these suggestions include the concept of body constitutions. In Ayurveda there are three different types of body constitutions which mirror the elements found in the universe. Ayurveda says that humans are made up of all these elements, but that we all have propensity towards certain elements over others. This is what makes up the three basic constitutions known as Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

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Extensions:

Older Early Childhood Students can create food lists for the different seasons that will help balance out the elemental qualities of each season.

Lifestyle Routines for Early Childhood

Daily Routines: Personal Care

Direct Aim: To achieve, maintain, and preserve health and prevent disease in both mind and body.

Indirect Aim: Create and maintain strength, stamina and harmony in both mind and body; to create and maintain right, regular and truthful actions of both mind and body.

Procedure: Ayurveda is very specific about personal care – the following are some of the key principles

1. Cleansing of teeth – Ayurveda recommends tongue scraping as well as brushing teeth.
 - a. Tongue scraping cleanses the tongue by removing bacteria and accumulated toxins and is also thought to enhance digestion.
2. Washing of face and body – Ayurveda recommends bathing at least one time per day and has specific recommendations for water temperatures. Vata body constitutions would preferably use warm water; Pitta body constitutions cooler water and Kapha body constitutions warm water.
 - a. Head showers need not be done daily and it is recommended that if suffering from allergies or cold symptoms the head is not wet.
 - b. Along with cleansing the skin from sweat and impurities, washing the whole body also reduces fatigue and enhances alertness.
3. Physical exercise – the specific exercises recommended would be dependent on the body constitution, however, yoga is recommended for all body constitutions. Walking is another exercise recommended for all body constitutions and is also recommended for after meals.
 - a. It aids in reducing fatigue, strengthens the body and improves digestion.
4. Massage – Ayurveda is often known for its special massage techniques and daily massage is recommended. Gently massaging the head and feet on a daily basis is recommended if a whole body massage is not possible. However, a whole body massage is recommended for at least one day per week. Vata and Kapha body constitutions best use sesame oil, and Pitta body constitutions best use coconut oil.

- a. Massage improves overall circulation in the body, helps prevent cellular aging, and because it reduces the Vata body constitution helps to calm the mind.

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Extensions:

Teacher can work with Early Childhood Students to research what physical activities suit the specific body constitutions and make recommendations for each body constitution type.

Lifestyle Routines for Early Childhood

Seasonal Cycles: Personal Care

Direct Aim: To achieve, maintain, and preserve health and prevent disease in both mind and body.

Indirect Aim: Create and maintain strength, stamina and harmony in both mind and body; to create and maintain right, regular and truthful actions of both mind and body.

Pre-Procedure:

1. Understand the Ayurvedic principles of daily routines.
2. Understand the differences in the daily routines according to the specific body constitutions of Vata, Pitta and Kapha.
3. Understand the different seasonal associations with the Ayurvedic elemental principles.

Procedure:

1. Physical exercise – chose an exercise that does not allow you to create an imbalance in your constitution. For example if you are a Pitta body constitution choosing to run during the middle of the day during Summer season will help to create an imbalance in the Pitta body constitution so swimming would be a better alternative in this case.
2. Massage – chose a massage oil that has properties, which aid in balancing the specific body constitutions according to the season's elemental qualities. Heating oils such as sesame and mustard oils would be great for a Vata body constitution particularly in the fall and winter seasons. Kapha body constitutions should be careful with the use of oils and should use oils sparingly particularly in the Spring or Kapha season – dry massage is recommend here.
3. Dress – Ayurveda prefers natural fibers like cotton, wool and silk. Ayurveda recommends certain colors for each season. In the Fall/Winter season darker colors are recommended; in the Spring light or pastel colors are recommended, and in the Summer season very light colors and white are recommended.

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Extensions:

Teacher can work with Early Childhood Students to create seasonal wardrobe ideas relating to the Ayurvedic principles of seasonal colors and types of materials.

Lifestyle Routines for Early Childhood

Nightly Routines

Direct Aim: To achieve, maintain, and preserve health and prevent disease in both mind and body.

Indirect Aim: Create and maintain strength, stamina and harmony in both mind and body; to create and maintain right, regular and truthful actions of both mind and body.

Procedure:

1. The Kapha time in the latter part of the day is from 6-10pm. It is natural for the body to slow down at this time of the day.
2. The ideal time for sleep is between 9-10pm depending on what time you rise in the morning.
3. Going to bed at or before 10pm allows the body's rhythms to slow down naturally, which provides a better quality of sleep.
 - a. New tissue is regenerated at night, subtle digestion takes place during the Pitta time between 10pm and 2am and we process the information that we have assimilated during the day thereby formulating meaning.
 - b. Sleep rests the senses, the mind and the body.
 - c. Getting a full, good night's sleep has been scientifically correlated with longevity.
 - d. "To achieve a day in perfect rhythm, you need a night of perfect sleep." (p. 256. Perfect Health)
4. To assist with a good night's sleep Ayurveda suggests breathing techniques, oil massage on the soles of the feet, some warm milk and meditation.

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Extensions:

Ask Early Childhood Students' parents to keep a journal of when they go to bed during weeknights. If students go to bed after 10pm ask them to attempt to go to bed at earlier for one week.