

Vata Tip Sheet

THE ELEMENTS THAT MAKE UP VATA

air + ether

BECAUSE OF THE ETHER + AIR ELEMENTS, VATA'S QUALITIES ARE:

cold, dry, light, mobile, variable

... like the autumn wind that dries out and blows the leaves off the trees, wreaking a bit of havoc

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING CAUSES VATA TO BECOME UNBALANCED:

excessive travel, lack of routine, fear, anxiety, too much change

... too much movement, variety, cold, and/or dryness **increase** Vata, tipping the apple cart over

WHEN THERE IS TOO MUCH VATA, IT LOOKS LIKE THIS:

worry, anxiety, overwhelm, constipation, confusion

... thinking too much, obsessing about stuff, "monkey mind," being indecisive, having one or more days where you don't go poop

TO RESTORE BALANCE TO VATA, EMPHASIZE:

regular routines, slowing down, moisture, heaviness, warmth and heat

... slow way down, stick to a routine, and eat a nice warm oily soup to stop the madness

SO, WHAT IS VATA GOOD FOR?

... finding inspiration in the most unlikely places; inspiring others; channelling tremendous creativity; having *great* enthusiasm

WHAT IS VATA?

Vata is a combination of the air and ether elements. It is a windy type of energetic: cold, dry, light, mobile, and variable. Vata rules all movements in the body: the conduction of nerve impulses, the pulse of blood in your veins and arteries, and the peristalsis that aids digestion.

Vata is spontaneous, creative, inspired and inspiring, evocative, and artistic. Vata has real flair. Vata relates to autumn and winter, old age, afternoon and very early morning: times of restlessness and change.

People who are predominately Vata types tend towards a long slim body type, bony joints, dark wild hair, quick darting eyes, dry skin, and charisma.

Vatas love to eat salads, the bigger the better! Lighter and raw foods are what they gravitate to, enjoying the infusion of more pranic life-force energy.

EXCESSIVE VATA

When they are out of balance (ie: have too much Vata/cold), Vata types run too cold. They become worried, fearful, and anxious. Vata types tend towards constipation, confusion, and indecision.

Vata is what shrivels us in old age, lending dry wrinkled skin and thin brittle bones. Vata feels—and often is—thin and insubstantial, needing to be shorn up.

REDUCING VATA

To restore balance to Vata, we apply the opposite qualities of cold, dry, light and mobile. We heat Vata up, we moisten Vata, and we soothe Vata's nervous system!

How do we do that? We slow things down, we add weight and stability, and we eat warm oily delicious soups. We structure our time with regular routines that give us a solid foundation and framework for living a robust life.



WHAT BRINGS BALANCE TO VATA?

In a nutshell: warming up, calming down, and slowing down. Check out these strategies for dumping excess cold, dry, light and mobile from your body and mind. Your loved ones will thank you for it!

DAILY LIFESTYLE ROUTINES

- You are so marvelously creative and artistic! How do you do it? So many wonderful ideas and projects going on in your mind and in your studio all of the time. We are all inspired by you and delight in your creations. Maybe you could finish one or two of them?
- Slow down a little bit. You will still get everything done, and you will feel less frantic.
- Let go of overthinking. Allow your brain some much-needed down-time. Wrap yourself in something cozy and read a delightful short story or two.
- Keep it well insulated and warm. Wear natural fiber clothing such as wool, silk, hemp, and linen. Favor the warming tones of reds, oranges, browns, and yellows.
- Hydrate. Drink half your body weight in ounces every day. Filtered water, decaffeinated chai, and herbal teas are best.
- Find something to be grateful for every day.
- Soak up the warmth of the sun—and its vitamin D.
- Take a pleasant walk in a beautiful neighborhood. Really take in all of the sights and sounds that are around you. The life-force energy is so nurturing for you.
- Fragrant flowers give the flighty Vata mind something delightful and soothing to light upon. Cultivate a simple garden or treat yourself with weekly fresh-cut bouquets.
- Do an Abhyanga everyday. This ancient practice of self-massage with oil is deeply detoxifying and supportive of the skin. Abhyanga lubricates the skin, cleanses the sweat glands, calms the nervous system, hydrates the tissues, and promotes healthy circulation. For Vata, the best oil to use is sesame. Choose organic whenever possible.

FOOD CHOICES

- Make lunch your largest meal of the day, and make sure you have some healthy snacks around in case you forget to eat. Include some protein and fat to carry you easily through the afternoon doldrums.
- Eat organic whenever possible. Avoid processed, canned, and pre-packaged foods. Your digestive system will appreciate the more easily digestible nutrition.
- Yogurt, tempeh, cheese and other dairy, whole grains, oils, nuts and seeds, meat, fish, shellfish, aloe vera, and root vegetables are good food choices for you.
- Herbs and spices such as anise, basil, bay leaf, cardamom, cinnamon, clove, cumin, dill, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, ginger (fresh), mustard, nutmeg, oregano, pepper, rosemary, sage, thyme, turmeric are your great friends. Consume them. Cook with them. Garnish with them.
- Ghee and sesame oil will keep you well lubricated *and* will warm you up.
- Maple syrup, raw honey, molasses, rice syrup, and sucanat keep Vata warmly sweet.
- Avoid drying and cooling foods. You know them; they are the things you love to consume the most: salad, and raw foods. I apologize. You will learn in time that a good chai and a nourishing soup is a fabulous thing.
- Keep the colon and digestive system healthy. It can keep your Vata from becoming excessive. Eating the last meal of the day by 6:30pm and going to bed by 9:30pm will do wonders in ensuring a good night's sleep.

