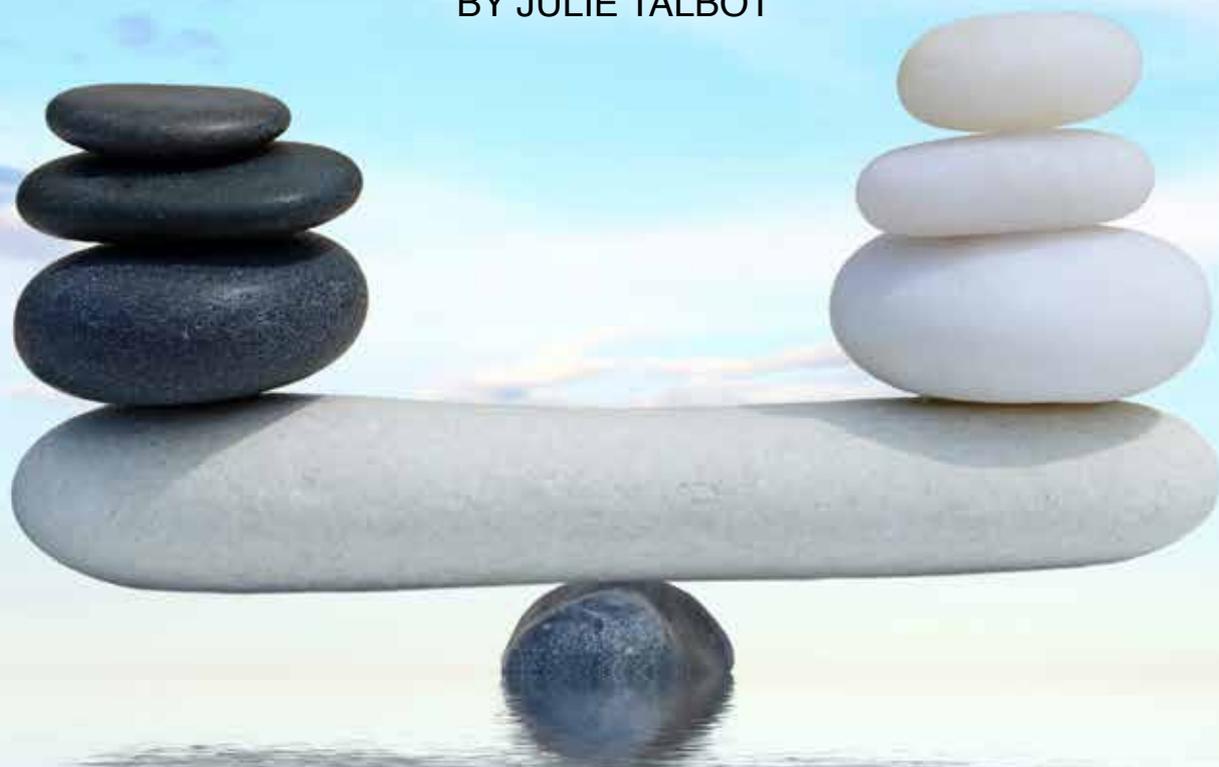


Spring renewal

AYURVEDA, A SISTER TO YOGA, HELPS PROVIDE BALANCE

BY JULIE TALBOT



When the Spring Equinox occurs on March 21, the sun moves north across the celestial equator and the world begins to awaken from its deep winter slumber. Snow begins to melt as the sun heats up the earth, inspiring the blooming and budding of trees, bushes, flowers, and all other miraculous forms of life on this beautiful planet. Life begins again in the cycle of the seasons.

Spring is typically associated with growth and new beginnings – fertility and birth. Perhaps this is the season to consider what seeds of intention you are planting in your life, and how you will nurture this growth throughout the year. If you need a spring ‘tune-up’ to shake off the dust from winter hibernation, here are some Ayurvedic

tips to encourage health and vitality in this awe-inspiring season of growth and abundance.

What is Ayurveda?

Ayurveda is a sister of yoga and a holistic approach to health, with a focus on maintaining physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual balance. Ayurveda began between 5,000 and 6,000 years ago when Indian monks were looking for better ways to create optimal health and well-being. Monks revered their bodies as temples, and they believed that by preserving their health they would be able to deepen their meditation practice, thus allowing them to expand their spiritual lives. After thousands of years of observation, they gathered all their conclusions

with corresponding treatments and preserved these for future generations. This body of knowledge came to be known as the ‘science or knowledge of life,’ or Ayurveda.

Each person is considered unique, and there is no cookie-cutter model that works for everyone. The focus of Ayurveda is prevention, and specific advice and guidance is given to create balance in the mind/body and maintain physical and emotional health. An Ayurvedic doctor provides you with food and lifestyle routines not with a prescription for pills. Please note that Ayurveda is not a replacement for modern medicine, however it can aid and increase healing.

Types of doshas

Doshas are considered to be biological energies found throughout the human body and mind. They regulate all physical and mental processes and provide every living being with an individual blueprint for holistic health. Every human being is comprised of all three doshas, and we have one or two dominate dosha types. The three types of doshas are Vatta, Pitta, and Kapha. Once we become aware of our composition then we can manage our health and well-being based on this knowledge. Doshas are comprised of the ‘Five Elements’ and their related properties – fire, water, Earth, air, and space.

Vata Dosha is energy that controls bodily functions associated with motion, including blood circulation, breathing, blinking, and your heartbeat. When in balance, there is creativity and vitality. When out of balance, there can be fear and anxiety.

Pitta Dosha is energy that controls the body’s metabolic systems, including digestion, absorption, nutrition, and

your body’s temperature. When in balance, it leads to contentment and intelligence. When out of balance, it can cause ulcers and anger.

Kapha Dosha is energy that controls growth in the body. It supplies water to all body parts, moisturizes the skin, and maintains the immune system. When in balance, it is expressed as love and forgiveness. When out of balance, it can lead to insecurity and envy.

Spring is ‘Kapha Season’

Gentle rains creating mud, and spring breezes radiating the smells of the Earth are reminiscent of the Kapha season of spring. Kapha is made up of the elements of water and Earth. Spring is symbolized by warmth, moisture, and softness. In Sanskrit, the word Kapha means ‘that which flourishes in water.’ Ayurveda teaches us that ‘like’ increases ‘like.’ So, by its very nature, springtime tends to increase these elements within our bodies and minds. Thus, tips for health require increasing the other doshas (Vatta and Pitta) to balance out the elements of Kapha. A seasonal routine is one of our best tools for minimizing spring’s Kapha-aggravating potential, while supporting the elimination of any accumulated excess (mind and body). With a seasonal diet and lifestyle that invites a little extra lightness, sharpness, dryness, and heat into our lives, we can support our physiology in its natural process of springtime renewal and revitalization.

Tips to inspire vitality

Eat for the season if you can. This is natural to the body, allowing it to digest more easily. By eating for the season, we are trusting in the innate wisdom of our bodies and the interconnectedness of nature and human beings. A great way to do so is to visit your farmers’ markets and

LIVE ON STAGE IN GRAND BEND
2019 SEASON

HURON COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE
Thoroughly Modern Millie | June 5 to June 22
GLORY | June 12 to June 22
Disney's Newsies | June 27 to July 13
You'll Get Used To It! The War Show | June 27 to July 13
Rocky: The Musical | July 18 to Aug 3
Twelve Angry Men | July 18 to Aug 3
Grease | Aug 8 to Aug 31
Jack and the Beanstalk: The Panto | Aug 8 to Aug 31

drayton
entertainment

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!
PROFESSIONAL LIVE THEATRE IN GRAND BEND!

1-855-372-9866 | huroncountryplayhouse.com

access the freshest food available. To reduce mucus and toxins that have built up in the body, avoid foods that are heavy, oily or fried, and heavy or sour fruits like oranges, bananas, pineapples, figs, dates, coconuts, and melons are also best reduced. Do your best to minimize your intake of dairy products as they can be quite congesting. Rice milk and almond milk are good substitutes. Similarly, you may feel lighter and more invigorated if you eat less meat. Other foods that are best avoided during the spring include fast foods, sweets, soy products, nuts, excessive amounts of bread, and chilled or refrigerated foods – especially when eaten cold.

Favourable spring foods include apples, blueberries, cherries, cranberries, dried fruit, strawberries, raspberries, pears, peaches, asparagus, beets, broccoli, celery, garlic, kale, mushrooms, sprouts, onions, barley, oats, quinoa, rye, black beans, kidney beans, lima beans, navy beans, white beans, cottage cheese, yogurt, eggs, poultry, venison, shrimp, freshwater fish, corn, flaxseed and sunflower oils, honey, maple syrup, and molasses.

Shake up your routine

Spring is a great time to have fun and spend time with friends and family! You could try waking up earlier in the morning and add yoga, meditation or quiet time to sip your coffee or tea, to your daily routine.

Some Ayurvedic health tips include brushing your teeth, scraping your tongue, applying a few drops of oil to your nasal passages, and drinking warm water first thing in the morning. You can also massage your skin with warm coconut oil after a hot shower, and/or consider an invigorating dry rub before you bathe.

Celebrate spring by exercising outdoors and wear bright spring colours. Spring is a great time to increase your aerobic activity. Physical activity gets the heart rate up, improves circulation and increases heat – it's a great way to remove stress from the body and mind by powering up and heating up the body. Consider biking, jogging, hiking or swimming, and try to exercise in the morning, between 6 and 10 a.m. If your schedule won't accommodate a morning workout, evenings are a good time to exercise as well (again, ideally between 6 and 10 p.m.). Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

Spring yoga

Enjoy a faster-paced, more stimulating yoga that uses muscular effort and cleanses the lungs and warms the kidneys, including asanas such as sun salutation, Warrior I, Warrior II, reverse warrior, forward bends, chest openers, and backward bends, as well as poses that stretch, compress, stimulate, and cleanse the solar plexus like cobra, bow, side plank, spinal rolls, leg lifts, and twists. Spring is also a wonderful time to reap the benefits of 'pranayama' (breath work), which can rid the body of impurities.

Herbs for spring

Enjoy spicy herbal teas throughout the day and experiment with supportive spring combinations like lemon/ginger, coriander/cumin/fennel, or ginger/black pepper. After meals, a tea of ginger, black pepper, and cinnamon bolsters digestive strength.

These are some lovely tips for you to experiment with. Feel free to explore the world of Ayurveda and do your own research. Do what feels right for you by tuning into the wisdom of your body. We are all unique yet connected, as we are all made up of the same elements.

“Spring is when life’s alive in everything.” – Christina Rossetti

Sources

<https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-1117/Ayurveda-Dosha-Types-for-Beginners.html>

<https://www.banyanbotanicals.com/info/ayurvedic-living/living-ayurveda/seasonal-guides/spring-guide/> ■

Julie Talbot, MSW, RSW, has worked in primary health as a clinical social worker for 11 years. She also has extensive training in addictions, trauma, cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness meditation, relaxation training and cross-disciplinary yoga. Julie is passionate about her community and in holistic health, which has sparked her most recent venture in writing.