



Ayurvedic Health Center

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Guided Transformation in Health and Wellness

Tip Sheet for Easeful Travels

Travel is a Vata event

Vata dosha is predominant during travel. Schedules and routines get thrown out the window. Movement becomes erratic: we rush to get to the airport but then slow to a crawl as we zig-zag our way through the lines at TSA. We also move at speeds not attainable in the natural world. Cars travelling along highways and airplanes hurtling along at high altitudes get us where we want to go, quickly, but at a cost of our physical and energetic bodies losing connection with one another until they are able to sync back up. (We call this “jet lag.”) Eating and nutrition take a hit as we favor convenience foods over nourishing meals. Mealtimes become inconsistent and unpredictable. Sleep and rest(oration) are sacrificed in the pursuit of having a lasting and memorable experience. Skin becomes dry. Eyes become irritated. We wish we had worn a warmer jacket and brought a hat along.

These are hallmarks of Vata dosha: cold, dry, light, mobile, variable. Increasing *any* of the qualities of Vata aggravates Vata dosha, and we can’t help but feel the effects: worry, anxiety, cold hands and feet, difficulty digesting food, and constipation.

Striking Balance—Self-Care Routines

- **Get moving:** Take a pleasant walk in a beautiful neighborhood. Really take in and savor all of the sights and sounds that are around you. Your body’s metabolism will thank you with increased energy and vitality.
- **Calm down:** Allow your brain some much-needed down-time and leave the overthinking behind. Go with the flow and enjoy a bit of spontaneity. Meditate or do pranayama.
- **Warm up:** Wear warm and insulating natural fiber clothing such as wool, hemp, silk, cotton, and linen.
- **Hydrate:** Drink half your body weight in ounces every day. Filtered water, decaffeinated chai, and herbal teas are best.
- **Regulate.** Consistent daily mealtimes, routines, and self-care practices will make things reliable. This will keep you adaptable to life’s stresses.
- **Get oily.** Eat foods that are fatty/oily. Apply sesame oil to your feet, if not your entire body.

Striking Balance—Food Choices

- **Make lunch your largest meal** of the day. Include some protein and fat to carry you easily through the afternoon doldrums.
- **Good food choices** include: warm, soft, moist, cooked anything. A good chai and nourishing soups or stews are a fabulous thing.
- **Herbs and spices** are your great friends. They will stoke your agni (digestive fire) and help keep your metabolism running. Consume them. Cook with them. Garnish with them.
- **Add sesame oil and ghee** to your cooking. It will keep your skin supple and will warm you up.
- **Avoid drying and cooling foods** such as salads, raw foods, crackers, chips, pretzels, rice cakes, coffee, and alcohol. Also avoid foods with refined sugars, which will give you a burst of energy but will then fizzle out, leaving you feeling drained.
- **Keep your digestive system healthy** by eating the last meal of the day by 6:30pm and go to bed by 9:30pm.
- **Choose organic** whenever possible.

VATA’S QUALITIES ARE:
<i>cold, dry, light, mobile, variable</i> ... like an autumn wind that dries out and sweeps the leaves off the trees, wreaking a bit of havoc as it blows things around your yard and off your porch
EXTRA VATA DOES THIS TO US:
<i>cold and more cold, fear, anxiety, overthinking, worry, overwhelm</i> ... the paralyzing action of fear along with the contracting action of cold cause us to freeze or become reactive: flying off the handle at the slightest provocation; we become prone to indecision and even stop having bowel movements
TO RESTORE BALANCE, EMPHASIZE:
<i>regular routines, warmth, slowing down</i> ... find ways to keep yourself warm and well hydrated; eat foods with lots of fats and oils (meat, avocados); have consistent daily routines; slow down or even stop for a bit; get under a heavy wool blanket

