

# A Year of Living the Ayurvedic Way

☒ Happy 2014! What do you say? Are you ready to give Ayurveda a try in 2014 after reading all the articles I wrote last year? It really did revolutionize my life, so I thought I would throw the idea out there to all of you.

Many healthy tips we hear nowadays have their roots in Ayurveda, dating back thousands of years. So while you might think that scraping the tongue, detoxifying the body or practicing mind/body medicine are newfangled ideas, they are not. They have withstood the test of time. Handed down for ages by word of mouth, the wisdom of Ayurveda was eventually written down in the ancient Hindu texts known as the Vedas. Even Chinese Medicine originated from Ayurveda.

I have compiled ten of Ayurveda's best principles/practices. Some are simple, some a little more complex. Pick one. Or two. Or as many as you want. The point is, focusing on even one of these valuable gems might be a game changer and put you on a path to a better quality of life. To happiness—as the sidewalk above recently pointed me towards. Remember that Ayurveda is about striving for balance, not perfection. Try not to think of these as New Year's resolutions that can set you up for failure. That will take all the fun out of it! Just about every day I fall short of living the Ayurvedic life I strive for. But it's always in my consciousness and I know that I feel so much better when I do practice these principles.

1. **Good digestion is key to a healthy mind and body.** *Our gut is often referred to as our second brain and it is where roughly 95% of our serotonin (the happy hormone!) is produced. Most Ayurvedic practitioners look to digestion first when treating any condition as they believe that poor digestion is the root cause of every illness/disease. Start paying*

attention to how you feel after you eat. You don't need to obsess—just be aware. Gas, bloating, burping, acid reflux, foul breath, etc. are all red flags that you are not properly digesting the food you are eating. It could be the type of food, how it was prepared, or the manner in which you are eating (stressed, rushing, etc.) that causes the distress.

2. **Keep a regular routine**, as much as possible. The body loves routine, especially when it comes to eating and sleeping. It's the mind that craves excitement and variety—especially for Vata types. Strive for getting out of bed before 7:00 a.m. and in bed between 9:30-10:00 p.m. Eat a light breakfast by 8:00 a.m., lunch around 12:30 p.m. (biggest meal) and a light dinner between 5:30-6:30 p.m. This seems to be one of the biggest challenges for many of us in our busy modern world and yet mastering it can have profound healing effects. I work hard on this every single day. Remember, baby steps are better than no steps at all!

3. **Meditate** to nurture the mind/body/spirit connection. The best times of day for meditation are during the Vata times of day which are 2:00-6:00 a.m. and 2:00-6:00 p.m. If you find yourself waking in the wee hours of the morning and can't get back to sleep, try meditating. You will likely fall back into a delicious deep sleep after just twenty minutes of meditation. Click [HERE](#).

4. **Scrape your tongue** gently from back to front about 10 times after brushing your teeth to remove excess ama (toxins) so that it doesn't get reabsorbed into the body. I like this simple [tongue scraper](#).

5. **Drink a big glass of warm lemon or lime water** after brushing your teeth each morning. You can add a little bit of raw honey if you can't bear the tartness. This will help activate peristalsis in the gastrointestinal tract to get things moving, and will also aid in removing ama from the digestive tract. If you haven't eaten since dinner at 6:00

p.m. the night before, your body will thank you for an easy twelve hour detox/cleanse!

6. **Eat seasonal foods** that help balance your particular prakruti (constitution) and cook accordingly to pacify the doshas. Not sure of your constitution? Click [HERE](#). Become familiar with the [gunas](#) and how these properties in nature such as dry, cold, heavy, hot, oily, pungent, liquid, etc. influence our digestion—both in mind and body. Learn which foods are [easy to digest](#) and those that are [difficult to digest](#).

7. **Exercise according to your constitution.** Exercise is not one-size-fits-all. You might just as well be exercising too much as well as too little, especially if you have a lot of Vata in your constitution. [All Exercise is Not Created Equal](#).

8. **Experiment with spices and herbs**—they can be a great aid for digestion, calming the nervous system, stimulating metabolism, and helping with numerous health problems. Remember that everyone's body is unique with different levels of tolerance. Many Vata types are particularly sensitive and should not overload themselves (which we habitually tend to do), especially with herbs. Start out slowly. Generally speaking, I don't take an herb for more than three months at a time. You should know by then whether or not it's working for you. My favorite source for quality organic Ayurvedic herbs is [Banyan Botanicals](#).

9. **Begin the practice of daily warm oil self-massage.** Called abhyanga in Ayurveda, this simple practice of applying warmed dosha-specific oils on a daily basis can have a profound healing effect on the mind and the body. Two good sources for massage oils are [Banyan Botanicals](#) and [Pratima Spa](#). I have yet to find a Vata body oil that smells as divine as Pratima's! You can also use plain sesame, almond, coconut, olive or sunflower oil. Just be sure that it's organic and preferably unrefined. Here's a [video](#) to inspire you.

10. **Incorporate daily sadhanas** (spiritual practices) through the use of [food, breath and sound](#). They will bring you back to your center, connect you to your Source and bring great calm and clarity into your life.

That's it! I'd love to hear from those of you who decide to take the plunge. Need a little support? I am always available to guide you. If you live in NYC, come visit me at my new location in the offices of the [Herban Alchemist](#), 137 Grand Street, #2 in Soho. Or we can connect by phone or Skype. Call 212-962-4738 to set up an appointment or contact me through my [website](#).

Wishing you all the best in 2014, from my heart to yours!

Much love,  
Barbara

*Barbara Sinclair is a visual artist, AADP certified Holistic Health Counselor and Energy Healing Practitioner with a passion for Ayurveda (the Science of Life). After suffering with the debilitating effects of fibromyalgia for seven years, Barbara was able to heal herself by learning and implementing ancient holistic practices, including Ayurveda. She is now pain-free and eager to share these methods with her readers and clients. You can contact her for an Ayurvedic consultation or energy healing session, or to read more articles on her blog, at [barbarasinclair.com](http://barbarasinclair.com).*