

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Yoga and Ayurveda

A Beginner's Guide to Doshas

What Ayurveda and the doshas are, how they link with yoga, and an honest note on evidence

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General education only. Not medical advice. Speak with your doctor before starting any new practice.

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1. What Ayurveda is

Ayurveda is a traditional system of health from India. It describes three doshas, vata, pitta and kapha, as patterns of qualities in the body and mind, and suggests food, routine and lifestyle based on them.

Yoga and Ayurveda are often described as sister traditions. Many teachers draw on both. Dosha types are a traditional framework. Modern science has not validated them as a way to diagnose or treat disease.

The short answer

Doshas are a traditional way to describe tendencies, not a medical diagnosis. You can explore the ideas for reflection, but do not use them in place of medical care, and check with your doctor before changing diet or taking herbs.

2. Before you begin: safety first

General education only. Check with your doctor first if you are pregnant, have high blood pressure, a heart, lung, joint or spine condition, osteoporosis, an eye condition such as glaucoma, or have had recent surgery or injury.

Stop and rest if you feel:

- sharp, pinching or burning pain (a mild stretch is fine, pain is a stop sign);
- dizziness, nausea or breathlessness;
- numbness or tingling, or pressure in the head or neck.

Doctor first

Ayurvedic herbs and remedies can interact with medicines and may not be safe in pregnancy or with some conditions. Talk to your doctor before taking any. Do not stop medicines or delay care because of a dosha reading.

Stop and get medical advice if you notice:

- side effects after taking a herbal product;
- symptoms that persist or worsen;
- advice to stop medicines or skip treatment.

3. The three doshas, in traditional terms

Dosha	Traditional qualities	Yoga idea in tradition
Vata	Light, dry, moving.	Grounding, warm, steady practice.
Pitta	Hot, sharp, intense.	Cooling, calm, non-competitive practice.
Kapha	Heavy, slow, steady.	Energising, varied movement.

4. Using the ideas wisely

Idea	Note
Keep a regular routine	Helpful for most people anyway.
Notice how you feel	Self-awareness is useful.
Use dosha types as reflection	Not as diagnosis.
Check herbs with a doctor	Safety first.

Online dosha quizzes vary and are not clinical tools.

5. A 12-minute balanced routine

Time	Practice	Notes
3 min	Slow breathing	Calm.
3 min	Cat and cow, gentle standing poses	Steady.
3 min	Easy twist and forward fold	Mild.
3 min	Rest	Relax.

6. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Read about the three doshas	15 min	Which sounds familiar?
2	Keep a regular daily routine	Daily	How do you feel?
3	Try a gentle yoga routine	12 min	What suits you?
4	Review with a qualified teacher	Visit	Ask about evidence.

7. Choosing a class or teacher

Look for teachers with recognised training in Ayurveda or yoga, and who are open about evidence and limits. Avoid anyone who diagnoses diseases from a dosha quiz.

- Tell the teacher about your condition, medicines, injuries and pregnancy before class.
- Ask about their training for your situation.
- Avoid anyone who says yoga can replace your treatment.

8. Practising at home

At home, keep routines regular: meals, sleep and movement at similar times. These are good habits whatever your type.

9. Honest expectations

Ayurveda has a long history, but many of its specific claims are not supported by modern trials. Treat it as a tradition and a lifestyle framework, and see a doctor for medical problems.

10. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Diagnosing yourself from a quiz	Not clinical.
Taking herbs without advice	Ask your doctor.
Dropping medicines	Never without a doctor.
Treating doshas as fixed	They are loose tendencies.
Believing cure claims	Be sceptical.

11. Questions people ask

What are the doshas?

Vata, pitta and kapha: traditional descriptions of body and mind tendencies.

Are doshas scientific?

They are a traditional framework, not validated medical categories.

Is Ayurveda safe?

Some remedies carry risks. Ask your doctor first.

How does it relate to yoga?

They are linked traditions, and many teachers combine them.

12. A pre-session checklist

- Have I eaten lightly, at least two hours ago, and had some water?
- Is my space clear, warm and free from interruptions?
- Do I know what I will practise, and how long I have?
- Is there anything in my body today (pain, tiredness, illness) that means I should do less?
- Do I know my stop signs: sharp pain, dizziness, breathlessness?

Running through these five questions takes less than a minute and prevents most beginner problems.

13. Your first week, day by day

Day	Suggestion
1	Read this guide. Try just the warm-up and the final rest.
2	Rest, or a five-minute walk.
3	Repeat day 1 and add one new pose or step.
4	Rest.
5	Practise a short version. Notice how you feel afterwards.
6	Write a few lines in the practice log.
7	Rest. Plan next week from what you noticed.

Three short sessions a week are a good start. Regular, gentle practice builds confidence, and rest days let the body adapt.

14. Glossary

Term	Plain meaning
Dosha	A traditional pattern of qualities.
Vata	Air and space qualities.
Pitta	Fire and water qualities.
Kapha	Earth and water qualities.

Reminder

This guide is general education and not medical advice. It does not diagnose, treat or cure any condition. If you have a health concern, speak with your doctor before starting a new practice.

Practice log

Print this page and keep a short record. Notes help you see patterns over time.

Day	Minutes	Reflections	How it felt	Notes
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				