

In Ayurveda, this daily ritual of self-care is called *Dinacharya*. In Sanskrit, *Dina* means day, sun or flow, and *Charya* means practice or conduct. These daily rituals were developed to keep the body in tune with the natural earth cycles and rhythms of the day. *Dinacharya* practices particularly emphasize the mornings as your most sacred time, as these hours create the foundation for the rest of your day.

Wake Up

If you can get to sleep before 10pm, it's recommended to wake before the sun rises. A consistent bedtime and wake up time are encouraged. According to Ayurveda, there are specific times that are best to wake for each different body type, your *dosha*.

Vata types: 6am

Pitta types: 5:30am

Kapha types: 4:30am

Daily Intention

Before you race out of bed, take a few moments to set an intention for your day, a focus or theme you hope to carry forward with you once you get out from under the covers.

Tongue Scraping

Using a stainless steel or copper tongue scraper, scrape the tongue 7-14 times to remove the built up plaque and bacteria from the tongue before brushing the teeth or oil pulling. Do not use a toothbrush. It just pushes the plaque and bacteria back into the tongue.

Wash the Face

Splash the face with cold water to stimulate circulation to the skin. Dry your face gently with a clean towel. Spritz with rosewater afterwards.

Sip Warm Water

Heat up some water on your kettle and sip a glass of warm water with a squeeze of lime juice with ¼ cup of aloe vera juice, if your bowels are slow to move. Lime juice and aloe work to alkalize your system and stimulate your digestion. A squeeze of lemon juice can be used as well in winter for warming.

Elimination

Elimination is the key to optimal health. Before you race off to your coffee and emails, make sure you create time and a quiet space to release everything from your previous day – or even week sometimes. The body loves routine, give it that in the mornings. Self massage on the abdomen and deep slowing breathing is a wonderful way to gently stimulate elimination.

Oil Pulling

This is a powerful practice of gargling/swishing oil around the mouth to remove bacteria from the teeth and improve gum health. You can use coconut oil or untoasted sesame oil. Coconut oil is an antifungal, and is usually recommended for this practice. It's also

lighter and easier to swish around in the mouth. Take 1-2 tablespoons, and without swallowing, circulate around the mouth for 5-20 minutes. The full practice is 20 minutes, but it takes a few weeks to build up to this. Brush your teeth well after spitting the oil out. Don't spit the oil out into your sink or toilet. It can build up over time and cause plumbing issues!

Neti

Neti kriya, or jala neti, is the practice of rinsing purified water through the nasal passages to clean the sinus cavity and improve respiratory health. You can purchase a net pot at Wegmans or at most health food stores. Add a pinch of non-iodized salt to the slightly warm water and pour salt water from one nostril to the other. Repeat again from opposite side.

Nasya

After performing neti, use your pinky finger or a cue tip to gently apply sesame oil to the inside of the nostrils. Special herbal oils, called nasya oil, can be used in place of the regular sesame oil.

Garshana

Garshana, or dry skin brushing, is the practice of brushing your skin with raw silk or a natural vegetable bristle brush to remove dead skin and stimulate lymph drainage in the body. Start at your feet and work your way towards the heart with a gentle pressure.

Oleation (Abhyanga)

After scrubbing the dry body for 5-10 minutes, apply a very liberal amount of natural, edible oils like sesame (vata types), coconut (pitta types), or almond (kapha types). Leave oil on for as long as you have time for. 5 - 15 minutes is helpful range. The longer the oil stays on the body the more it penetrates the layers of the body. Then shower or take a bath. Oiling the skin before you shower also protects your bodies natural oils. Abhyanga is good for increasing circulation, stimulating digestion, nourishing tissues, lubricating joints, supports the nervous system and can improve sleep.

Bath

Our daily showers or baths is an act of cleansing, we remove past impurities we no longer want to hold on to. In this act, what else can you release emotionally, mentally or spiritually during this practice?

Meditate

Take 5 minutes to be still. Sit with yourself and just observe. If you prefer a moving meditation (yoga, tai chi, running), go for this but try to approach it with a still and clear mind.

Breakfast

Take some hot herbal tea to stimulate the digestion and enjoy a breakfast of your choice. Whatever it is, try to keep this same mindfulness as you chew each bite.