

# Asana guidelines of practice for dosha's

## Vata Asana Practice Guidelines

For Vata dosha, stillness is the primary aim of practice but it must be approached slowly and gently. Vata must be gradually released and relaxed into stillness. An enforced stillness will suppress Vata and it will come out in a disturbed form at a deeper level. Vata must be warmed, nurtured and energized into a positive state of stillness. This requires release of fear, anxiety, trauma and other deep seated Vata emotions.

In this regard Vata has two main disturbances. The first is 'excess movement of body and mind', such as tremors or nervousness. This requires the application of Asanas to slow down hyperactive Vata. The second is 'rigidity of body and mind'. This requires the application of Asanas to slowly get Vata moving again. Many Vata people shift between these two extremes of hyperactivity and rigidity or paralysis.

## Kapha Asana Practice Guidelines

For Kapha dosha, there is often a state of lethargy in the body that can be confused for stillness. This must be countered. Kapha must be stimulated and energized into a positive or dynamic state of stillness. This initially requires effort, movement or Pranayama to create such internal energy to remove any excess Kapha dosha from the body. But such strong movements will gradually be left behind as the Prana begins to move within.

## Pitta Asana Practice Guidelines

For Pitta dosha, which has a martial nature, there can be an enforced or artificial stillness, including what appears outwardly to be a correctly performed Asana. Such forced stillness is not transformational but becomes a kind of stress that can overheat the nervous system.

Pittas need to diffuse and cool down their impetuous energy into stillness. Towards this end they should move or flow into stillness within and not try to form or frame the posture through external effort. They must be willing to let go of effort, assertion and achievement in Asana practice. In this regard Asana for them should be more like swimming, a flow rather than a series of steps, not ending in a specific held result but in a state of release.

This Asana practice of stillness or nirodha is used mainly for therapeutic and spiritual purposes. It works very well as part of rejuvenation (Rasayana) therapies and also aids in Tonification (Brimhana) therapies. It is more suitable to the elderly, those with injuries or impaired movement, or those in convalescence from disease, as well as for Vata dosha. It is the best Asana approach that leads to meditation and is very helpful for Yoga psychology.

It is usually done on an individual basis but can to some degree be introduced into Yoga classes. It is most similar to and more easily integrated into restorative Yoga approaches, which are the closest thing to it. As Yoga classes are usually used as movement based exercise, such a Yoga of stillness comes more at the end or as a separate approach. For those who are interested in therapeutic Yoga, this Ayurvedic Yoga of stillness and Sattva guna is a good place to start.

- *Kapha types* need adequate exercise to prevent Kapha from accumulating as mucus, fat, excess water or excess tissues in general. They need to exercise to improve their digestion, circulation, acuity of perception and ease of movement. They generally do best with more movement, more physical activity and a higher degree of exertion to counter their doshic sedentary habits and bodily inertia.
- *Pitta types* require sufficient exercise to prevent Pitta from accumulating as heat, toxic blood, and bile or as inflammation in general. They need exercise to balance their digestion and circulation, to reduce heat and relax their energy. They need exercise to let off steam as it were, to release the heat and tension that easily develops from their doshic type.
- *Vata types* require the appropriate exercise to prevent Vata from accumulating as gas, dryness, deficiency, nervousness or stress. They need exercise to calm their digestion, strengthen their circulation, and to maintain harmony and adaptability of their bodily systems. Temperamentally, Vatas like to move and need movement to keep Vata in its proper flow.