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Fundamentals of the Subtle Doshas

- Each *dosha* has a subtle essence. The subtle essence of:
 - *vata* is *prana*
 - *pitta* is *tejas*
 - *kapha* is *ojas*
- Unlike *dosha*, these subtle forms of the *dosha* are not inherently pathological, in other words, they are not causes of disease. They are inherently positive.
- The fundamental strategy, as it relates to the subtle essences, is to build them, while ensuring that no one of the three dominates the other two.
- Each one of the essences plays a vital role, providing unique characteristics toward achieving total wellbeing (physical, mental/emotional as well as spiritual).

Prana: The Subtle Essence of Prana

- *Prana* defined: “the master force or guiding intelligence.”
- *Prana* is the intelligence/energy that sparks and coordinates all movement, including the movement of your:
 - breath
 - senses
 - mind
 - nerve impulses
 - limbs and organs
 - flow of energy through the *nadis*



- *Prana* also harmonizes the *pancha kosha* (five layers of the self: physical body, energy body, mental, body of pure intelligence and subtle body or psyche).
- On the mental level, *prana* expresses itself as enthusiasm, creativity and, most vitally, adaptability.
- The critical role of adaptability...
 - you live in and are an expression of *prakriti*—your body and mind and the world in which you live are constantly changing.
 - the capacity to adapt to constant change is key to ensuring your survival as well as to responding easily and healthfully in order to thrive.
 - you are only as fluid, creative, enthusiastic and motivated as your level of *prana*.
 - if your *prana* is low you'll lack motivation in general; you will also lack the inspiration to practice, evolve and create.
- *Prana* is responsible for the unfolding of higher intelligence.
- Thus, at a deeper level, *Yoga* practice becomes a method to gather, collect and harmonize *prana*.
- Use *prana* to focus the mind/senses for the purpose of self-development.
 - By controlling and increasing your access to *prana*, you can overcome the inherent obstacles on the path to self-awakening.



Tejas

- *Tejas* defined: “subtle energy of fire”
- *Tejas* governs:
 - metabolism
 - digestion
 - determination
 - perception
- *Tejas* is the positive, refined aspect of the fire essence, fueling your assimilative capacity, ability to perceive yourself and your life circumstances with the greatest level of clarity and insight.
 - *tejas* is the vital force that allows you to digest: food, air, sensory input, emotion and thought.
 - all higher perception is lit by the force of *tejas*.
 - mindfully performed actions related to discipline, self-study, *tapas* and spiritual practice build transformational fire or *tejas*.
- *Tejas* allows you to digest self-limiting beliefs and experiences; it is the light of discernment guiding you toward ever-more auspiciousness, success and happiness.
- *Tejas*: the energy of will and vigor...
 - increased *tejas*: builds courage, fearlessness, the power of insight, willpower and right choices.
 - *tejas* also has a magnetic, charismatic quality.
 - right *tapas* (purification, austerity, the building of character) becomes *tejas*:



- “the radiant splendor of personality that expresses itself as creativity, courage and compassion and a melting tenderness that draws all hearts.”

Ojas

- Ojas defined: “prime vigor,” “vital reserve,” the necessary fuel for all mental and physical actions.
- Ojas is the vital essence derived from digested food, water, air, perceptions and thoughts.
- This is the subtle energy of water, the vital source for all activity.
- Ojas is the basis for the vital essence necessary for reproduction and vitality, dominating in the testes, ovaries, adrenals, cerebrospinal fluid, the fluids responsible for the nourishment of life and energy.
- Provides endurance, stamina and stability through the nervous system.
- Ojas is necessary for peace, confidence, patience, steadiness and calm.
 - lubricates myelin sheath, the covering for the nerves—like conduit on a wire.
 - responsible for nourishing and grounding.
 - provides the energy to protect ourselves from external pathogens.
- Ojas is the basis of stamina, endurance, peace, confidence and patience.
 - ojas is the fuel for physical and psychological immunity.
 - when your immunity is compromised, you become vulnerable to physical pathogens as well as psychological pathogens—“melodrama.”

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- The love and nurturance developed through the higher practices of yoga develop *ojas*.
- *Ojas* is the fuel by which *tejas* can burn brightly.
 - if yoga is to become a spiritual practice, one in which you are going to brighten your light of knowledge or fire, you will need something safe for the light/fire to burn—*ojas*.
- *Brahmacharya* is the skill of directing energy to the highest goals in your life. Conserve your *ojas*—your vital energy for the higher aims of life.
- Your energy should be directed towards reaching *brahma*; avoid dispersing the energy that you will require to attain the highest goal.
- Ideally, first build *ojas*, then *tejas* and finally *prana*.
- Make sure you remain attentive to your *doshas*, because they impact your ability to affect and build your subtle *dosha*.
 - *vata* dries out *ojas*
 - *pitta* burns up *ojas*
- Thus, continuing to balance *dosha* is the foundation for working with your subtle essences.

Cultivate Your Subtle Doshas

- The yogic and lifestyle modalities to build *prana*: *pranayama*, *asana*, chanting, time in nature, meditation on space and/or sound
 - *pranayama* and to a lesser extent *asana*—breath retention is the fastest way to increase *prana*.



- in *asana*, you increase *prana* through application of the breath and by the process that requires you to “adapt” to any given pose.
- chanting, a form of *pranayama*, is also rich in *prana* and vibration.
- time in nature—provides a vibrant and material interface with the master guiding force.
- meditation on space and sound.
- *Prana* is the easiest to build and is the most responsive of the subtle essences to lifestyle and yogic changes.
- The yogic and lifestyle modalities to build *tejas*: silence/control of speech, *jnana yoga*, *dharana*, *mantra*, *raja yoga*.
 - silence/control of speech—leads you to be able to objectify your thoughts, allowing you to become more insightful about your thoughts and speech.
 - before speaking, ask yourself four questions: is what I wish to say 1. true, 2. kind 3. necessary and 4. timely (these are the Four Gates of Speech).
 - *jyana yoga* (self-inquiry, self study) “the razor’s edge.” Learn to see the part of you that is enduring and the part of you that is not. Reflect on both the finite and infinite, positive and negative, light and dark.
 - *dharana* (concentration techniques)—hold your attention on a meditative object e.g. *nishta dharana*. The goal is not *samadhi*, or bliss; the goal is sustained one-pointed attention.
 - *mantra* (silent repetition—*japa*) practice lights the inner essence, the inner flame of the mind with the essence of *mantra*, which is essentially light, or *tejas*.



- *Raja yoga*—the yoga of the mind/will (*ashtanga yoga*).
Progress through the eight limbs, until your will is strong as steel and your mind as clear as pure water.
- The yogic and lifestyle modalities to build *ojas*: diet, herbs, control sensory input, conserve sexual/reproductive fluids, *yoga nidra* and *bhakti*.
 - diet—eat foods that are pure, simple and easy to digest, while providing the most energy.
 - herbs. Do not self-prescribe. Turmeric, ginger, saffron, cumin, cardamom—these are foods that we can use as part of a regular diet that can replenish *ojas*.
 - sensory impression and control. Turn off your smart phone and computer. Pursue high quality sleep. Master your senses; do not let them control you.
 - sexual/reproductive fluid. Abstinence is not necessary; be mindful/moderate in regard to depleting your sexual energy.
 - *bhakti*—bring love into your life through devotion, through relationships. Keep good company and exercise the muscle of kindness.
 - *yoga nidra*.
- If you have naturally high *vata*, you will predisposed to having more *prana*.
- If you have naturally high *pitta*, you will predisposed to having more *tejas*.
- If you have naturally high *kapha*, you will predisposed to having more *ojas*.



- To maintain the balance of the subtle *dosha*, move in the same direction as described on the ayurvedic clock.
- Use this knowledge to chart a course for your practice and life.

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The Pranayamas

- *Ujjayi*—emphasis on inhale (*brahmana*), exhale (*langhana*) or balanced (*samana*)
- 4-Part Supine Complete Breath
- Inhale—*Nadi Shodhana* (Alternate Nostril breathing), Exhale — *Ujjayi*
- *Nadi Shodhana* (Inhale Alternate Nostril Breathing)
- *Viloma* (3-part breath with brief pauses, on either exhale or inhale or both)
- *Bhramari* ("bumble bee breath")
- *Maha Mudra*

The Meditations

- Meditation on the Breath ("So," on inhale, "Hum," on exhale)
- 3rd Eye Kriya
- *Nishta Dharana*
- Light in the Heart, Clear Blue Sky
- *Pran Vayu Kriya*
- 5 Steps to *Mantra*
- 3-Part OM Kriya
- Heart Kriya



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Complete Review of The Pranayamas and Meditations of Vinyasa Krama

Pranayamas:

- **Ujjayi**—(victory breath) strong physiological change, primarily effects the nervous system and mind.
- **Nadi Shodhana** (literally means: “purification of energy channels”). In addition to impacting the nervous system and mind, alternate nostril breathing affects the subtle/energy body, more so than *ujjayi*.
 - when combining *nadi shodhana* with *ujjayi*, the distinct effect is determined by which of the two breaths you emphasize (i.e length of *nadi shodhana* versus length of *ujjayi*) and whether you use *nadi shodhana* or *ujjayi* on inhale or exhale.
 - the smaller opening for the flow of the breath during *nadi shodhana* will increase its effect; e.g. *nadi shodhana* on exhale increases the effects we attribute to exhale.
- **Supine 4-part breathing**—a master technique to balance the nervous system. No need to introduce breath retention, just be mindful of resolving any irregularities, involuntary pauses or unevenness in the flow of inhale and exhale.
- **Pure Breathing**—resolving imbalances between inhale and exhale (precursor to the five steps of mantra practice; used in 4-part supine practice).
- **Viloma**—pausing the breath in three stages, which can be done on inhale, exhale, or both.
- **Brahmari**—“bumble bee” breath. Humming on either inhale or more commonly, exhale. When done on exhale, calming and internalizing, leads one into a meditative state.

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Meditations:

- **So-Hum**—("I am"). The inner/silent sound of the breath. The merging of being and becoming, finite and infinite, individual and universal self. Eventually, as mind becomes quiet, the *mantra* "So Hum" is heard independently of the breath.
- **Restful awareness.** "Be the one that rests in the city of the body—*purusha*." This restful awareness aligns you with the innate expression of who you are and settles you into your essential nature. Because of its spacious qualities, this is not necessarily an ideal technique for excessive *vata*.
- **Third Eye Kriya**—over time, this leads to an all-encompassing bliss. Meditation at the 3rd eye/brain center helps you develop greater sensitivity to *prana*, however meditation in this center can leave you less than fully embodied, grounded and empowered. This is also less than ideal for *vata* types.
- **Nishta Dharana** (integration meditation)—concentration at the navel, helpful for anyone needing to cultivate a sense of grounding, stability and positivity.
- **The Infinite Space of the Heart** (Blue Sky Meditation)—Clear space of pure being, the light of the Self.
- **Heart Kriya**—the expansion of the light in the heart. Heals emotions, leads to complete contentment, the authentic self, the light of the inner teacher.
- **Three-Part OM Kriya**—in three stages, this *kriya* progressively leads you to the source of all sound, the source of life, pure Being.



- 1. audible chanting 9x, channeling A-U-M through the spine, from base of the spine to crown.
- 2. mentally hear A-U on inhale rising from the base of the spine to the throat; hear “MMM...” on exhale filling the brain—18x.
- 3. meditate on OM unfolding in the brain center, rest in total oneness.
- **Mantra** (silent)—use the five step systematic approach. Remember: all the *mantras* are already present. Be effortless. Still your mind so that you can perceive your *mantra* unfolding silently.
- Use one of the five open *mantras*:
 - Om (transcendence, peace)
 - So Ham (merging individual and universal)
 - Rama (positivity, aligning with *Dharma*, the light of virtue)
 - Gayatri Mantra (the light of intelligence)
 - Maha Mrityunjaya (overcoming fear, building nurturance, awakening ultimate healing power)



The Vinyasa Krama Self-Assessment Assignment

- The *Vinyasa Krama* Self Assessment Exercise is an opportunity to apply your understanding of the material presented throughout the course.
- The benefits of completing this exercise will help ensure your integration of *Vinyasa Krama* long into the future.
- Applying *Vinyasa Krama* for the purpose of designing a practice for yourself, group classes or individual yoga therapy can be summed up in the following three-step protocol: Collect Data (Symptomology), Identify the Goal, Design the Practice.
- **1. Collect Data (Symptomology).** In this stage you gather information, deciphering your or your students' needs and how best to address those needs.
 - You will need to become increasingly skilled at being able to "read" your students' needs, collect symptoms and create a data set. This is true for any teaching setting: group class, individual yoga therapy or for your personal practice.
 - Deciphering the needs of the "student" is based on the teachings of *guna*, *dosha*, *vayu*, etc...
 - Data collection must also include your students' receptivity, ability, level of experience, condition, as well as their goals, intention and drive.
- **2. Identify the Goal.** Based on the unique spectrum of symptoms of the person (or people) you are working with, determine a specific goal/intention for the session, class or their regular personal practice.
- **3. Design the Practice.** This is the creation phase of the practice you will lead in the context of a group class or recommend when designing their personal routine.

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Designing A Personal Practice: The Vinyasa Krama Self Assessment



Based on your understanding of the teachings on the *doshas*, *vayus*, subtle essences/*doshas* and your current condition and symptoms, fill in your answers to the questions below.

Part I.

1. I would benefit the most by increasing the following subtle *dosha*:

2. Briefly explain; list your symptoms in order of significance that led you to your conclusion.

3. I would benefit the most by pacifying the following *dosha*:

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4. Briefly explain; list your symptoms in order of significance that led you to your conclusion.

5. I would benefit the most by strengthening the following vayu:

6. Briefly explain; list your symptoms in order of significance that led you to your conclusion.

Designing A Personal Practice: The Vinyasa Krama Self Assessment



Part II:

7. I will employ the following two methods and/or lifestyle changes to increase the subtle essence/subtle *dosha* specified above.

8. The category of pose I will emphasize to treat my *dosha* and *vayu* is:

- 8b. The Apex pose I will emphasize to treat my *dosha* and *vayu* imbalance is:

9. The *pranayama* technique I will regularly practice is:

10. The meditation (if you have chosen to do a *mantra* practice, please specify which one) I will practice for a minimum of 40 days is:

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Don't Postpone Your Happiness

- The questions you should ask yourself are: what is my current level of teaching? What do I aspire to become as a teacher? Will you become a teacher, one who can and does truly make a difference?
- Ultimately, to be a successful and fulfilled teacher you will need to become exceptional.
 - more than just another yoga instructor.
 - excel in your study and in your practice.
 - create a reason for people to study with you.
 - provide your students with the kinds of experiences that elevate them and their life. Become increasingly skilled in the science and art of teaching.
- Become an excellent representative of yoga,
- Combine your unique experiences, both in and out of yoga and aspire to be the best; you will become a great practitioner and a teacher capable of uplifting others and the world you live in.