



# Ayurvedic rituals

Simple rituals rooted in Ayurveda to elevate your existence. *By Mira Manek*

According to Ayurveda, we come from nature and should thus live our life more attuned to it. Why do we crave warming hearty foods in winter and lighter foods in the summer months? Furthermore, waking up with the sun, or having a rhythm that is more in tune with nature, allows us to live in harmony with nature.

Digestion, the Agni or digestive fire, as Ayurveda calls it, is at the centre of Ayurveda. It was when I lost my own rituals of eating well that my own digestion suffered. This led me back to the key principles of eating that I grew up with, something that was ingrained and a part of my daily life. Ayurveda goes

hand in hand with yoga and yoga has also been an integral part of my life for almost a decade now.

## The rituals

So here are a few key points to attune yourself to life, to nature and to yourself more, in alignment with Ayurvedic principles, inviting a little more happiness into your life:

Eating as much nutritious, wholesome, cooked foods as possible, and adapting our diet according to the season: so warming soups and stews in winter and lighter foods in the hotter months.

Cooking with spices every day, as often as possible, whether it's stir-frying vegetables with cumin seeds and turmeric,

or adding extra ginger to your soup.

Drinking the spices is another ritual I love: ¼ teaspoon of ginger in hot water or even hot milk if you like! Add a pinch of turmeric powder to this and maybe even cinnamon. Mix it up and see what helps and what works. It not only provides extra warmth but reduces inflammation in the body and aids digestion.

Not eating too late and ensuring you leave a few hours gap in-between meals, which allows the digestive fire or Agni to stay ignited and ready to digest the next meal.

Waking up and smiling, even if it feels a little forced at first, can be quite the gamechanger, something I speak about in the morning section of my book *Prajna*.

It gives that extra oomph of energy on the better days and provides a sense of upliftment on more difficult days, like a breath of positivity before even starting the day.

Do one thing every day that makes you happy and perhaps connects you to nature: a walk through the park, a yoga class, spinning class, quick 15-minute meditation while sitting in the park or in the garden, drawing, walking the dog. This short passage of me-time will create a greater state of daily happiness.

A few times a week, sit alone and listen to your thoughts. Become an observer of your thoughts rather than the person thinking them. The mind is fascinating, so be fascinated by it. This is the seed of meditation: observing, then stilling by choosing and allowing thoughts to float away effortlessly, rather than trying to focus on being still.

Incorporate some sort of breathwork into your daily routine. It can be as simple as slowing the breath down and taking

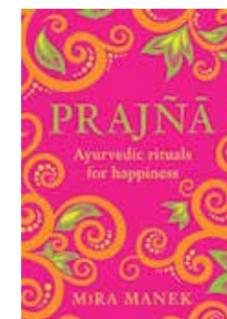
very deep breaths. I explain the basic breathing exercises of pranayama in *Prajna*, the Ujjayi breath, anulom vilom or alternate nostril breathing and kapal bhati or breath of fire; calming, balancing and energising as well as great for digestion.

There's something ritualistic, inspired and therapeutic about writing a journal. In a sense, it elevates yet softens the emotion, but it is also incredibly healing. You don't need to write daily, and it can be thoughts that appear rather than writing what happened; it can really be anything!

Surprise yourself: do something, maybe every week (or every day if you can), that takes you by surprise, that is out of your comfort zone. This can provide a new, different, or a fresh perspective, but also allow you to reach beyond the boundaries you may have created for yourself.

So many rituals can come together to form a kind of daily or weekly toolbox of happiness that can sustain and nurture you on a longer-term basis. Yoga, or some

kind of movement, a little breathwork, walking outdoors, evening stretches, and at the same time, eating delicious homemade food and sitting sipping a cup of chai. These small practices become rituals that gently elevate the soul and also start to chisel a more positive sense of self. ☯



The new book, *Prajna: Ayurvedic Rituals for Happiness*, by Mira Manek, is out now ([miramanek.com](http://miramanek.com))

