

Lisa Souba

Several polls published online indicate that weight loss, self-care, and more exercise are in the top five of new year's resolutions for 2019. These resolutions seem to trend year after year—all leading to limited success, with weight loss being toward the top. What if we look at our bodies from an Ayurvedic approach?

AYURVEDA, an ancient healing modality of India, embraces that we are all uniquely made, that we have been given these wonderful bodies that come in all shapes and sizes, and that in order to maintain balance, we need to understand our body's uniqueness and what it feels like to live in balance and harmony with our body type and image.

How about approaching the new year by embracing the body you've been given and learning more about where it's out of balance? This will: provide you with the proper weight for your frame, improve your self-care, suggest appropriate exercises for your body type, indicate what foods will nourish you instead of deplete you!

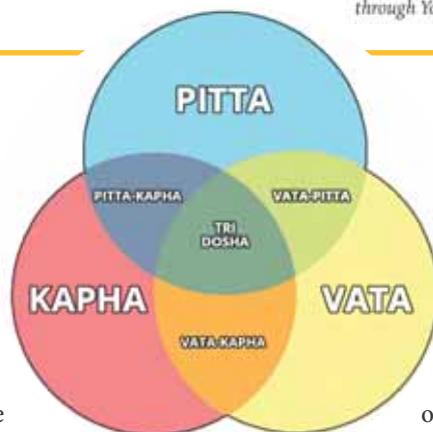
Ayurveda maintains that the physical world, and therefore the human body, is derived from a combination of five elements, which combine to form three doshas: Vata (ether/air), Pitta (fire/water) and Kapha (water/earth). Doshas are the energetic principles that govern the entire human mind/body system. Your unique psycho-physiology is determined by the interaction of these three doshas. Your body type is largely determined by which dosha (or doshas) are predominant:

- **VATA** individuals tend to be short or very tall, often with a thin, wiry frame. They tend to have a low appetite and sometimes have difficulty gaining or maintaining their weight, which can lead to a weaker constitution, making them more

susceptible to imbalance. These individuals can be very creative, but often scattered, constantly jumping from one thing to the next.

- **PITTA** individuals tend to be medium-framed with good muscle tone, average body weight and height, and a rosy complexion. Pitta is the principle of fire in the body, which is responsible for the body's digestion and metabolism. For this reason, Pitta people tend to have strong appetites and become irritable if they do not eat on time. They are often driven people who love to learn. They have sharp intellects and are high achievers, but can often become tense and irritable under stress.
- **KAPHA** individuals tend to be physically strong and sturdy, with excellent muscle tone and big bones, and strong constitutions. For this reason, they can often push themselves physically and mentally without exhaustion. Many of them find stress invigorating. In balance, they tend to be compassionate and peaceful, getting along well in many situations. However, they can also tend toward complacency, disliking exercise but loving sweets, and thus can gain weight easily.

These three doshas govern your mind/body and all of its processes. If you are naturally a Kapha person, it is going to be extremely



destructive and untenable to make yourself look like a Vata person. Meanwhile, it would also be destructive for a Vata person to exercise as vigorously as a Kapha person. We have *all three* doshas in our bodies; what causes our uniqueness is the specific

concentration and combination of each. Most people have two dominant doshas, such as Pitta/Vata, Vata/Pitta, Vata/Kapha, etc. Some people have only one dominant dosha, while others have an equal combination of all three and are considered *tri-doshic*.

An *Ayurvedic analysis* can help you determine what your unique mind/body type is. Once you know this, you can begin to live in harmony with your unique psych-physiology—instead of fighting against it in a vain attempt to be something that you are not. People of all different body types and images are equally beautiful. They all have different strengths. The key is to know what your unique physiology is so that you can honor it and use it to make the appropriate and healthiest lifestyle choices! ■

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