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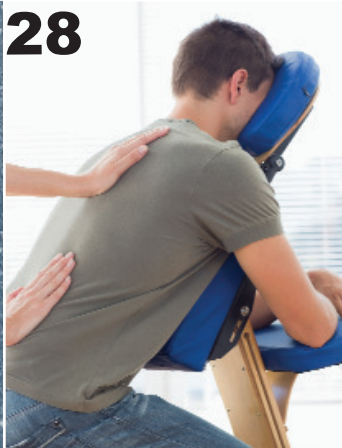
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# Choice

## Health & Wellbeing

The Leading Publication for Complementary Health, Education and Wellbeing

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# Transform

your life through changing  
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# Choice

## Health & Wellbeing

Issue 27 Summer 2014

### Aromatherapy

- 4 Back pain and aromatherapy
- 6 Aromatherapy for menopause
- 8 Yuzu oil
- 9 Rose and cassis hydrolats
- 10 Intention to heal
- 12 Eat, pray and learn part 4

### Ayurveda & Yoga

- 14 The importance of breath
- 16 Can you eat what you like and still be slim?
- 18 Ayurveda for the summer

### Business Support

- 22 Marketing with mindfulness part 2
- 24 How to solve your selling problem fast and forever
- 26 How to unlock the hidden income within your business
- 28 Working on behalf of another massage company



### Complementary Therapies

- 30 Reflexology and working with clients who have been diagnosed with cancer
- 32 The Bowen Technique - added extras
- 33 Bach Flower Essences for therapists
- 34 The therapeutic riches of stone
- 36 The Dorn Method
- 38 What your palm says about your health

### Health & Nutrition

- 40 The nutritional approach to amenorrhoea
- 42 Therapist - what does healthy look like?
- 44 Revolutionary new formula helps ward off wrinkles and benefits your joints and arteries
- 46 Breathe easy with healing salt
- 46 Cooking oils

### Integrated Healthcare

- 48 Craniosacral therapy and intuition
- 50 What is your voice telling you?
- 54 Oxytocin
- 56 Antibodies - what are they?



Hello and welcome to the latest issue of Choice Health and Wellbeing.

Training the mind is training the body. Your brain cannot differentiate well between real action

and mental action. There has been research done showing that thinking about an action — even while your body is at rest — will fire the neural pathways in your brain just as if you were actually doing it.

To see this for yourself: hold a piece of string and let it dangle. Then, keeping your hand as still as you can, imagine twirling the string around. Most likely, the string will begin to move, ever so slightly.

And that's the good news: mental training can improve almost all our skills and fast-track us towards our goals.

For instance, many psychologists and life

coaches recommend mental rehearsal for all sorts of things. Usually it is social or work-related: to enhance assertiveness, smooth out an interview or a meeting, or even to enhance a date. Athletes at the highest level are also encouraged to use visualisation to improve their technique, motivation and drive. Why not give it a go!

Happy reading,

*Angela*

Angela Mahandru **Editor, Publisher**

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### Natural Beauty

- 58 Gifts with purchase
- 60 Effective solutions and advice for summer skin
- 64 The beneficial properties of horse chestnut
- 65 Licence-free music

### Personal Development

- 66 Communication is free
- 68 Transform your life through changing your self-image
- 69 Have you discovered the three essentials to encourage the flow of money?
- 70 Are you happy with who you are?

### Training & Education

- 72 Kinesiology taping
- 74 Orthopaedic assessment of strains and sprains
- 76 Stretching the truth, what the new evidence tells us about stretching
- 83 Diary Dates

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### The six tastes are:

- ☉ **Salt**, e.g., pickles, meat, soy sauce
- ☉ **Effect on the body:** calming and enhances digestion
- ☉ **Sweet**, e.g., sugar, honey, certain grains (wheat, rice, barley, cornmeal, millet, rye, quinoa), milk, sweet fruits (apples, berries, pears, grapes, sweet melons), sweet vegetables (corn, carrots, onions, sweet potatoes)
- ☉ **Effect on the body:** calming and soothing to the system
- ☉ **Sour**, e.g., Tomato sauce, yogurt, lemon, tomatoes, vinegar, some fruits are sweet and sour (strawberries, grapes, oranges, pineapple, papaya, rhubarb)
- ☉ **Effect on the body:** stimulates digestion.
- ☉ **Bitter**, e.g., salad, celery, olives, spinach, turmeric, lettuce
- ☉ **Effect on the body:** creates lightness and clarity
  
- ☉ **Pungent**, e.g., cayenne pepper, garlic, onions, ginger, carrots
- ☉ **Effect on the body:** decongests the system increasing digestion
- ☉ **Astringent**, e.g., beans, lentils, chickpeas, cabbage, potatoes, lettuce, carrots, corn, soy

beans, celery, spinach

☉ **Effect on the body:** creates lightness. Each food produces its own energy. How much of each dosha or energy our body produces depends greatly on how much of each taste we have eaten. Once ingested, tastes work on even after digestion has occurred. They continue to influence our physical and emotional balance. Spices can be safely added to anyone's daily diet to bring about these changes too.

There are spice mixes available that give all the six tastes when added to meals. The Coolerbals Kapha Spice Mix is one. It consists of specially blended spices all working synergistically to promote more efficient digestion and fulfil the six tastes when they are not fulfilled

by our food. By satisfying the six tastes, cravings and overeating is curtailed. Once the target goal has been achieved, continue to eat foods from the six tastes every day.

To reduce kapha you want to increase foods that are bitter, pungent and astringent. All foods have their own qualities. Warm, dry, lighter foods reduce kapha by stimulating and increasing warmth to help a sluggish digestive system. Eating more of the bitter foods such as green leafy salads and pungent foods such as hot peppers, black pepper, onions, garlic and ginger and astringent foods such as lentils, chickpeas, beans, yellow split peas, okra and turmeric will help. **CHW**

Extracted from *Slimmer in 1 Hour...Slimmer Forever* by Ravi Bhanot and Sushma Bhanot. For further information, contact Sushma Bhanot at [sushma@coolerbals.com](mailto:sushma@coolerbals.com) or by call 0208 579039.

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# Ayurveda for the summer



The long-awaited Great British summer is finally here! I am sure the summer activities are well and truly in full swing from picnics, BBQs, and day trips in the country to water-based sports etc. as we transition from the Vasant ritu (spring) to the heat of Grishma ritu (summer).

**J**ust as the seasons change so does our body's internal environment. Ritu in Sanskrit means season. As mentioned in Ayurvedic classical texts, ritu charya is the study and observance of a seasonal regimen in order to maintain health and prevent disease. The Ayurvedic seer, Charaka mentioned that strength and lustre is enhanced in an individual if he/she understands the suitable diet and regimen for every season and practises accordingly.

### Beat the heat this summer with an Ayurvedic regimen!

The summer season known as Grishma ritu falls in the 'adana kala' when the fire element is dominant and the human strength is relatively lower than in the autumn and winter months. When this season is combined with late winter and spring, it forms uttarayana (the northern solstice), a period when the sun and wind are stronger.

During the summer months the sun rays dry out the moisture in the environment and the body also becomes drier, thus creating more space (ether element), and the ground for vata and pitta dosha to rise.

The body is comprised of three doshas, vata (ether and air), pitta (fire and water), kapha (water and earth). During the summer months the pitta in the body naturally increases due to the environment reflecting similar qualities. Our dosha balance is inherently influenced by seasonal variations as much as our diet and lifestyles. For those of us with a pitta-dominant constitution the summer can aggravate the pitta in the body leaving one feeling very out of balance.

However, over the summer months, most of us need some balance to our pitta dosha. As our



In the summer months	
Avoid in the summer	Favour in the summer
Spicy, pungent and salty foods Excessive or strenuous exercise Alcohol Environments that produce excessive heat and sweating	Cool and sweet foods Opt for cooling drinks such as fruit juices, buttermilk, coconut water Take cool showers/baths Take an afternoon nap

digestive fire reduces due to the heat, we will experience a decrease in our appetite. Since this is a natural response by the body we should honour this change by eating in moderation. To help balance this pitta and to some extent vata we can consume foods of a kapha nature. By kapha nature we mean foods that are madhura (sweet), drava (liquid), shita (cooling), and snigdha (unctuous) – those that are opposite in quality to pitta – therefore we prevent and counterbalance exhaustion and depletion of the body. Since our digestion fire is low it is also important to consume foods that are 'light' in nature and easy to digest.

## The pitta dosha regulates the process of digestion, metabolism and chemical transition

This also includes the function of body temperature, complexion, vision, appetite, and intelligence. Pitta has hot, oily, sharp, light, sour, fluid, and pungent qualities. When these qualities are increased in the body we can suffer from an imbalance, resulting in a burning sensation in the body, excessive thirst or hunger, skin conditions, restless sleep, inflammation, odorous sweating, loose bowel motions and a temperament that is easily angered or overly critical. These are the first signs of pitta increasing. We can keep balanced by following a pitta-pacifying regimen.

## Diet over the summer

Food options in the summer are best when they have a bitter, sweet or astringent taste. Portion sizes can be moderated. Reduce intake of foods that aggravate pitta, such as fried, processed, pungent (spicy), sour, salty, and heavy meats. Moreover, the heat of the summer leads to food turning rancid quickly, therefore avoid stale foods

that may contain harmful bacteria and opt for freshly cooked foods. Raw foods can be eaten but if you have a disturbed digestion or colonic issues, it is best to lightly cook your food to aid the digestive process and prevent vata from being aggravated.

Drink plenty of water throughout the day to keep the body hydrated and help flush toxins out of the system. Since our bodies are made up of 70% water element it is important to keep hydrated. Our bodies will naturally require more liquids in the heat and although cool drinks are favourable, be careful not to douse the 'agni' by excessive cold drinks and ice during or after meals when strength is needed for meal digestion.

During the summer months it is best to cut down on the tea, coffee and carbonated drinks as these contribute to dehydration. Alcohol consumption is much the same but can also lead to weight loss, a fragile body, fainting and acidity. Mint tea, however, is a perfect alternative! We can also opt for room temperature or cool drinks, such as lassi/chaas, fruit juices and coconut water.

## Summertime lifestyle choices

Opt for breathable fibres such as cottons and linens, which keep the body cool, in soft and light cooling colours, keep the head covered from direct sunlight to stop the sun's intense rays overheating the scalp. Avoid over-exertion and physically challenging exercise, instead opt for gentle walks in the breeze before and after the intense heat of the day, preferably near a beach or river, or opt for swimming. Practise gentle cooling yoga with slow movement. Postures such as seated spinal twists, standing poses such as mountain, warrior and forward bends are all favourable. Practise in a cool room or outdoors

Food choices that balance pitta	
Grains	Wheat, rice, sweetcorn, oats
Vegetables	Sweet potato, celery, asparagus, cabbage, leafy greens, aloe, cucumber, courgettes, lettuce, cauliflower, summer squash, carrots, okra
Fruits	Apples, grapes, watermelon, plums, pears, avocado, mangoes, pears, summer berries, lime, pomegranate, dates, coconut, nectarines, cantaloupe/honeydew melons
Dairy	Milk, ghee, buttermilk/lassi, buffalo milk
Legumes	Mung (yellow and green)
Spices and herbs	Coriander/cilantro, fennel, fenugreek, mint, cumin, cardamom, turmeric, rock salt Fresh ginger can aid digestion Brahmi, bringaraj, guduchi, neem
Meats	Clear meat soups
Other	Rose tea, rose petal jam (gulkhand)

on the patio.

Stay indoors during intense periods of sunlight. Reduce sexual activity during the summer months and favour short naps when possible in the afternoons since this is a season when our energy is low. Start your day by massaging the body with warm coconut oil; this is cooling in nature and soothing for the skin. Opt for warm or cool baths/showers. If there is an option to sleep or walk in the open air or under the moonlight this can balance pitta at an emotional level. Conduct your daily self-practices with a calm, relaxed and compassionate mind.

## Herbs and treatments

The herbs of choice for the summer months should be cooling by nature such as mint, aloe vera, and coriander etc. Externally use perfume of rose, sandalwood, and lotus, as these are also cooling in nature. If you feel the sun is affecting mood and increasing heat in the body, apply a paste of sandalwood mixed with milk to the entire forehead for immediate relief.

## Stay cool with pranayama and meditation

The wise yogi knows that breath work can help us stay cool! Pranayama techniques such as Shitali, Sitkari, Nadi Shodhana and Ujjaya have a profound effect of cooling and calming the body and the mind. Shitali pranayama is performed by rolling the tongue into a tube and holding it between the lips, then taking a slow inhalation through the mouth and then a normal exhalation through the nose – just try, and see how cooling it feels! Keep the mind calm by using meditation as a follow-on from breathing exercises. Meditation can help balance anger, frustrations and deep emotions. Focus on 'letting go' and your calm mind will stay cool and focused throughout the day.

## Berry & mint summer cooler

Ingredients

Sparkling mineral water or soda water  
Elderflower cordial  
Handful of fresh mint  
Cucumber sliced or curls  
Mixed berries (blueberries/strawberries)  
Crushed ice

## Method

Mix the cordial and sparkling water in a pitcher and muddle all the other ingredients through. Simple and refreshing. **CHW**

© Geeta Vara is a fully qualified Ayurvedic practitioner and member of the APA, working in Central SW London providing personalised consultations, health coaching, bespoke treatments and corporate and small group workshops. For more information about Ayurvedic seasonal regimes, detox processes or other health concerns, please visit: [www.geetavara.co.uk](http://www.geetavara.co.uk)