



# Seven Maharishi AyurVeda tips to boost your mental potential

*Do you have times when you feel foggy and can't think clearly, or feel distracted and lacking in focus? Perhaps you forget the name of someone you know well, or forget an important appointment. We depend so much on having a clear mind and good recall that even a temporary loss of this faculty can be upsetting.*

We humans may lack the physical strength of most other creatures our size, but we make up for this lack by our superior mental abilities. In fact, how well our mind works is the key to our success in any enterprise.

Ayurveda breaks down all mental performance into three components:

**Dhi:** learning and comprehension, governed by *Prana Vata* (sub-dosha of *Vata*).

**Dhriti:** processing and retention of knowledge, the realm of *Sadhaka Pitta* (sub-dosha of *Pitta*).

**Smriti:** memory or recall, controlled by *Tarpaka Kapha* (sub-dosha of *Kapha*).

For your mind to always be in peak condition, and to help unfold the full potential of your mind, Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti each need to be brought to their optimal levels.

Ayurveda adds another important ingredient to the mix called *Ojas*, which helps coordinate the three mental factors. *Ojas* is said to be the finest product of digestion and is manufactured by our body when we have a nourishing diet and our *Agni*, or digestive fire, is well balanced.

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## 1. Eat 'intelligent' foods

Ayurvedic *Vaidyas*, or practitioners, are fond of saying that our food should be as close to nature as possible, but sadly, the great majority of foods we find in our supermarkets are

highly processed and have lost many of their original nutrients and virtually all of their vitality or *Prana*.

Over millions of years of evolution, we have supplied our cells and tissues with natural, unprocessed foods. Our body's innate intelligence recognises and gains maximum nutrition from foods that are fresh and lively in their own intelligence. Foods that are refined, processed or genetically altered have much of this natural intelligence stripped away.

Processed foods not only supply low quality nutrition to our body, they disturb our

intellect and the coordination between the three aspects of mental prowess. To keep your mind at its peak, wherever possible, eat unprocessed organic foods and avoid foods that are bottled or canned, or preserved with artificial additives and preservatives.

While out shopping, look at the labels and see how many non-food ingredients there are in that food. It used to be easy to identify components like artificial colouring and flavouring, but these days, with the sleight-of-hand called 'clean labelling', manufacturers hide many unnatural ingredients with natural sounding names.

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As much as possible, buy raw, whole ingredients and prepare your meals from scratch. It can take a bit more time and effort to cook with fresh, organic ingredients, but your brain and your whole body will thank you and will repay the effort with improved performance.

## 2. Feed your brain with balanced nutrition

You don't have to be a vegetarian to be healthy, and an Ayurvedic diet is by no means an exclusively vegetable-based diet, but "going vegetarian" for a certain period of time, or eating some vegetarian meals during the week, can provide you with a real health boost.

### Grains, beans, lentils and nuts

Grains, beans, lentils and nuts are rich in protein and provide many brain nutrients. Almonds and walnuts are thought to be excellent brain foods.

### Vegetables

Include plenty of cooked leafy green, as well as root vegetable, such as carrots, beetroot, parsnips, turnips and sweet potatoes, in your diet.

### Fruits

Sweet juicy fruits are excellent cleansers and help flush toxins from your body. Drinking freshly squeezed fruit juice is a quick way of delivering nutrients to your brain and the rest of your body.

### Fats

Even though the brain accounts for a small portion of your bodyweight, it uses 20% of the body's metabolic energy. Since your body burns fats for its energy supply, it is no surprising that the brain is composed of 60% fat.

For your brain to work properly, you need a regular supply of different types of fats in your diet.



**Saturated fat** is one of the main components of brain cells, and necessary for the healthy function of your brain. Meat, dairy and coconut oil are excellent sources of saturated fats.

**Polyunsaturated fats** contain omega-3 and omega-6 (essential fatty acids). These fats can only be obtained through diet, yet they are essential for brain functioning.

For a good supply of omega-3 in your diet, ensure that any meat and dairy you eat, comes from organically reared, grass-fed animals.

Vegetable sources of this fatty acid generally provide the ALA (alpha-linoleic acid) form of omega-3. Walnuts, flaxseeds, hemp seeds, chia, and some unprocessed vegetable oils contain good amount of ALA.

Animal sources of omega-3 come in the form of EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid). Fish, fish oil and krill oil are especially high in EPA and DHA.

**Monounsaturated fats** (MUFAs) are simple fat molecules. A diet high in these fats can increase the production of acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter, which plays an important role in memory and learning. Olive oil, sesame oil, avocados and nuts are good sources of MUFAs.

### Ghee

Maharishi AyurVeda praises ghee (butter oil) as the most prized source of dietary fat. It also values ghee for its ability to transport the benefits of herbs, spices, and even food nutrients, to all parts of the body, including the brain. Ghee is a good source of vitamins A, E and K2, as well as CLA (Conjugated Linoleic Acid). Ghee is an excellent cooking oil, as it does not oxidise at high temperatures and create free-radicals, as most vegetable oils tend to do.





Butter and ghee from grass-fed cows, supply the right balance for brain development and functioning of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids.

### Dairy

As long as you are not lactose-intolerant, Ayurveda sees unprocessed dairy products, such as whole organic milk and fresh yoghurt, as an essential part of a balanced nutritious diet. Milk, and most milk other dairy products, are said by Ayurveda to be Sattvic in nature. In other words, they help create harmony in the mind.

### Sweets

Like fats, sugars supply energy to our body and brain and we tend to crave sweet things when we are low in energy. When you need that sweet taste, sweet fruits, raisins, dates and prunes are a much better option than sugary drinks and foods.

### Spices and herbs

Spices and herbs are a must in a brain-enhancing diet. Spices that are pungent, bitter and astringent enhance digestion and help detox your body. In doing so, they open the body channels, or *Shrotas*, including those that serve the brain. This facilitates the flow of nutrients to your brain cells.

**Trikatu with Clove** from Maharishi AyurVeda, a combination of ginger, black pepper, Indian long pepper and cloves, is a powerful digestive stimulate that helps cleanse and open the Shrota channels.



### 3. Use herbs and aromas to nourish your brain

Ayurveda uses the term *Medhya* for herbs that are especially nourishing for the brain. Medhya herbs enhance Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti (learning, retention and recall) and also promote Ojas, which coordinates these three functions.

*Gota Kola* (Indian Pennywort) *Shankhapushpi* (Aloeweed), *Jal-Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*) are three well-known Ayurvedic herbs known to support the functioning and health of the brain. Shankhapushpi enhances memory and

problem-solving abilities, even when your job or life is stressful. Gota Cola is a memory-enhancer and is said to have age-inhibiting qualities. *Ashwagandha* (Winter Cherry) is often added to Medhya formulations, as it supports resistance to stress.

In Ayurvedic preparations, Medhya herbs are usually combined with other herbs

on the principle that you should create balance in the whole physiology while treating the part. Such combinations are also carefully designed to gain maximum synergy between the different herbs, so that the effect of each herb is enhanced.

Following are Medhya formulas provided by Maharishi AyurVeda:

**Study Power Syrup** is particularly useful when you need to learn new information.

**Study Support tablets** support the absorption, retention and utilisation of knowledge (Dhi, Dhriti and Smriti). Brahmi is included to nourish and co-ordinate these activities. Cardamom is there to help clear away any dullness.

Whatever age you happen to be, **Youthful Mind** tablets help support mental clarity and memory. In Ayurvedic terms, the herbs it contains help balance: *Prana* (creativity, perception, consciousness, and self-actualisation); *Tarpaka* (stable personality); *Sadhaka* (feelings of deep satisfaction); and Ojas (the biological equivalent of consciousness).

**Keen Mind aroma oil** is composed of essential oils that help enliven and focus the mind.

#### 4. Manage your stress

Stress and anxiety can have a huge impact on how well your mind functions. Impossibly tight deadlines, difficult work relationships, or worrying about losing a job, can each create incoherence in your brain and agitation and lack of focus in your mind. A coherent brain and a calm, serene mind, is one that can focus well, can sustain its attention on the task in hand, can retain information and is good at solving problems.



The following strategies can help reduce your stress load:

- At the beginning of each week, and each day, take a few minutes to plan your weekly and daily tasks.
- Take short breaks during periods of intense mental activity, and maintain a healthy balance between work and leisure times.
- Transcendental Meditation, practiced twice a day for 20 minutes, has been shown to be extremely effective for managing and reducing stress.
- Listen to relaxing music such as the classical Ragas from ancient India, which brings the influence of harmony, peace, mental ease and calmness.
- Relax with the beautiful aroma of Peace of Mind Aroma oil and use Emotional Strength Aroma oil to balance your mind and emotions.
- A daily morning Abhyanga (Ayurvedic massage) is an excellent way to cleanse, tone, revitalise both mind and body. To 'charge up' for the day ahead, massage using sesame oil or coconut oil. Or try herbalised Vata, Pitta or Kapha Massage Oils for extra benefit.

#### 5. Get a good amount of quality sleep

Often associated with stress levels, another plague of modern living is lack of deep, restful sleep. Along with diet and lifestyle, sleep is a central pillar of Ayurveda.

- Getting a full eight hours of sleep is less important than the quality of sleep you obtain, which, according to Ayurveda, occurs when your mind is totally disconnected from your senses. Good quality sleep rejuvenates your brain, and improves both short-term and long-term memory.
- Give yourself warm oil, full-body massage each morning for increased stamina during the day, and to promote good quality sleep at night.
- Reduce or avoid stimulants such as caffeine, alcohol and nicotine; never take work-related materials to your bedroom; in the evening, enjoy calming activities that help you wind down. Drinking **Good Night (Peace at Night) Tea** before bed will help this settling process.
- Aromatherapy oils will also help – use **Peace at Night Aroma oil** or **Sweet Sleep (Nidra) Aroma oil**.
- Food supplements to support sleep are **Blissful Sleep Basic** taken together with **Blissful Sleep Vata** to help go to sleep, or **Blissful Sleep Pitta** to support uninterrupted sleep, or **Blissful Sleep Kapha**, to help wake up feeling fresh in the morning.

#### 6. Use it or lose it!

No matter what your age or occupation, to be at its peak your brain needs constant challenge. Learn new skills; keep





your mind busy and alternate this 'busyness' with the serenity of 20 minutes **Transcendental Meditation** twice a day.

Transcendental Meditation offers very deep rest to your body, it brings coherence to your brain and it provides unbounded and dynamic silence for your mind. Alternating this transcendental experience with daily activity will naturally help your mind develop its full potential.

## 7. Balancing the imbalances

Ayurveda sees balance as the key to life, and balancing three principles of Vata (movement), Pitta (transformation) and Kapha (structure) is fundamental for maintaining mental and physical health.

### Balancing Vata

Do you sometimes feel anxious, or find yourself losing mental focus? If so, Vata Dosha is out of balance.

Follow a Vata balancing diet and daily routine. Favour foods that are sweet, sour and salty in taste (*Rasa*) and warm, heavy and oily in quality (*Guna*). Get more regularity into your routine, go to bed early and keep warm, especially when the weather becomes windy and cold.

To help balance Vata use **Vata Tea, Vata Aromatic Seasoning** and **Vata Balance Aroma Oil**.

### Balancing Pitta

Do you even become over-heated, over-intense, easily irritated or angry? Following a Pitta balancing routine and diet will help. Favour foods that are sweet, bitter and astringent in taste, and cool, heavy and dry in quality. Allow time for leisure activities, don't skip meals, and stay cool, especially during hot weather.

To help balance Pitta use **Pitta Tea, Pitta Mild Seasoning** and **Pitta Balance Aroma Oil**.

### Balancing Kapha

If your mind is foggy and you feel lethargic, follow a Kapha balancing routine and favour stimulating foods that have the pungent, bitter, astringent tastes, and that have warm, light and dry qualities. Introduce more variety and new things into your life, don't overeat, get plenty of regular exercise, and stay warm, especially during cold and damp weather.

To help balance Kapha use **Kapha Tea, Kapha Spicy Seasoning mix** and **Kapha Balance Aroma Oil**.



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or contact 01695 51015, [info@maharishi.co.uk](mailto:info@maharishi.co.uk).

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