

Your Elemental Nature

Pitta Dosha

The main *gunas*
or qualities of
Pitta are:

- Hot
- Sharp
- Light (also
illuminated)
- Liquid
- Mobile
(spreading)
- Oily

Pitta dosha is made up of all 5 elements, mostly fire and a little water. As Vata is synonymous with wind (vayu), Pitta is synonymous with fire (agni).

In balance, pitta expresses as: a medium body-type with good muscle tone. fair skin, piercing eyes, blue or hazel, red hair, receding hairline. bright and brilliant mind, penetrating insight, fair, sensitive skin, early grey, a receding hairline, red tint to the complexion, or tendency to blush, sharp features (pointed nose, chiseled cheek bones, heart-sharped face) strong digestion, balanced body temperature, courage, ambition, leadership.





Out of balance, pitta expresses as: overly intense personality, competitive, outbreaks of inflammation of all kinds, acidity, nausea, loose stools, bad temper, acid indigestion, “type A” behavior.

Pitta people tend to drag their bodies around by the power of their minds. They are out of touch with their body’s limits, and often have to completely burn out before they’ll stop and rest.

Are any of these qualities and characteristics
describing you?



Pitta Governs

- All metabolic activity
- Hormones
- Intelligence and intellect
- Emotional digestion
- Temperature regulation
- Color
- Vision



Pitta represents all transformation and metabolism in the body, therefore, physical and mental digestion are Pitta activities. We support our mental digestion by taking time to meditate, chant, sing, play music or walk or otherwise be in Nature—these activities uplift our hearts and inspire our minds with truth, love, and beauty.

Pitta is present throughout the body and primarily in the heart, in the digestive enzymes, in hormones, in the blood, liver, and spleen, in the grey matter of the brain, in neurotransmitters and neuropeptides, in the melanin in the skin, in the sweat glands and sweat, and in the color and function of the eyes. The seat of Pitta is the small intestines. Disease in any of those areas points to an imbalance of pitta dosha.



When Pitta increases you may experience

Inflammation of all kind

Fevers

Emotional irritation

Ulcers and acid reflux

Skin eruptions/rashes

Nausea, diarrhea, or loose stools

Vision problems

Liver/spleen imbalance

Blood disorders

High blood pressure

Pounding headaches

Sharp appetite and an inability to miss a meal



Balancing Pitta

To balance pitta, add opposite qualities: cool, slow, heavy, and dry.

Pitta Qualities

Hot
Sharp
Light (also illumined)
Liquid
Mobile (spreading)
Oily

Balancing Qualities

Cold
Slow/dull
Heavy
Dense
Steady/Stable
Dry

Keys to balancing pitta are “cooling down,” moderation, and surrender—
To regain balance, pittas can,

- Cool a tendency towards excess intensity and heat.
- Surrender their need to be in control all the time
- Spend time in Nature
- Alternate rest with activity and schedule regular downtime
- Exercise regularly and moderately
- Avoid spicy food
- Enjoy more sweet, bitter, and astringent foods.



The opposite is also true, you will increase pitta dosha if you

- Focus intensely all the time
- See life as a competition that you need to win
- Become a workaholic
- Spend too much time in the direct sun or other hot environments
- Practice hot or vinyasa yoga exclusively
- Judge and criticize yourself and others
- Routinely neglect to schedule downtime and fun.
- Eat too much hot spicy or fried food or alcohol, caffeine, and ferments





Yoga to Cool Pitta

- All forward bends (cooling/calming)
- Prone backbends (pressure on small intestine, the seat of pitta)
- Twists (stimulates SI)
- Flow at a moderate pace (challenge w/o over doing)
- Relaxed eyes (opening peripheral vision, broadening focus)
- Savasana for 5 - 15 minutes (cooling/calming)



Pranayama to Balance Pitta

- Shitali, cooling pranayama, (inhale through puckered lips or curled tongue; hold, focus on area you'd like to cool, exhale through nostrils, 3 - 5 times. Repeat as often as necessary)
- Alternate nostril breathing (in left, out right, in right, out left—even rhythm, 5 rounds ending with exhale on left.

Excess pitta is eliminated through a virechana, an ayurvedic purge, which strongly and thoroughly moves waste down and out of the body.

Pitta time of day is 10 am - 2pm. During the day, when the sun is at its peak, mental focus is strong and sharp and appetite builds to its height. This is the best time for focused work requiring a lot of brain power, and for our largest meal of the day.

Pitta time of night is 10pm - 2am. This is the hour when “night owls” get a second wind and appetite. Ayurveda suggests training yourself to get to sleep by 10 pm. You'll fall asleep easier and sleep more deeply if you do. If you have digested most of your dinner by that time (meaning you enjoyed an earlier, lighter dinner) that pitta fire energy will do inner cleansing especially of the liver, ridding the body of old cells. You'll wake up more easily and feel lighter in the morning.

Pitta time of year is late spring and summer when the sun is hottest. This is the time to shift into a pitta balancing routine since the external heat will increase our internal fire.

Make these Changes to Your Daily Practices and Diet for Summer

- Use coconut oil on your skin before or after showering and while in the sun.
- Focus on quantity of food eaten, and eat until satisfied not full. This is good practice any time, but especially in the summer when agni is a little weaker.
- Eat more sweet, bitter, and astringent foods and minimize pungent, salty, and sour tastes.
- Reduce caffeine, alcohol consumption and limit ferments.
- Drink dandelion root, green tea, or pomegranate juice.
- Use rose water on your skin
- Rinse your eyes with cool water or use a natural eye drop in the morning

Pitta time of life is adulthood when our minds are sharp and we are “making our way in the world.”

Pitta, like all the doshas, is divided into 5 sub-doshas. The sub-doshas help us talk about different functions of pitta in particular sections of the body.

- **Sadhaka**, in the grey matter of the brain and the heart, governs mental metabolism, thinking, emotional processing, and comprehension
- **Bhrajaka**, in the skin: governs color and temperature and absorption through the skin(oiling our skin)
- **Alochaka**, in the eyes, governs iris color and visual perception/acuity
- **Pachaka**, in the stomach, governs the HCL acid production and all digestion, absorption, and assimilation
- **Ranjaka**, in the liver, governs the liver enzymes, bile, and color of blood.





Self-Inquiry

1. Do you recognize pitta qualities in your nature? If so, are those qualities in or out of balance? If out of balance, for how long?
2. If you recognize an imbalance, are there any activities, substances, or attitudes that may be contributing to it?
3. Add one pitta balancing action to your daily rituals this week. Pick something that you want to do, and is easy to do.
Example: I will set a timer when I work and get up every 25 minutes for a 5 min break to step away from my work.
4. If you don't have a pitta imbalance at this time, pick another Vata balancing activity to add to your daily ritual this week.