

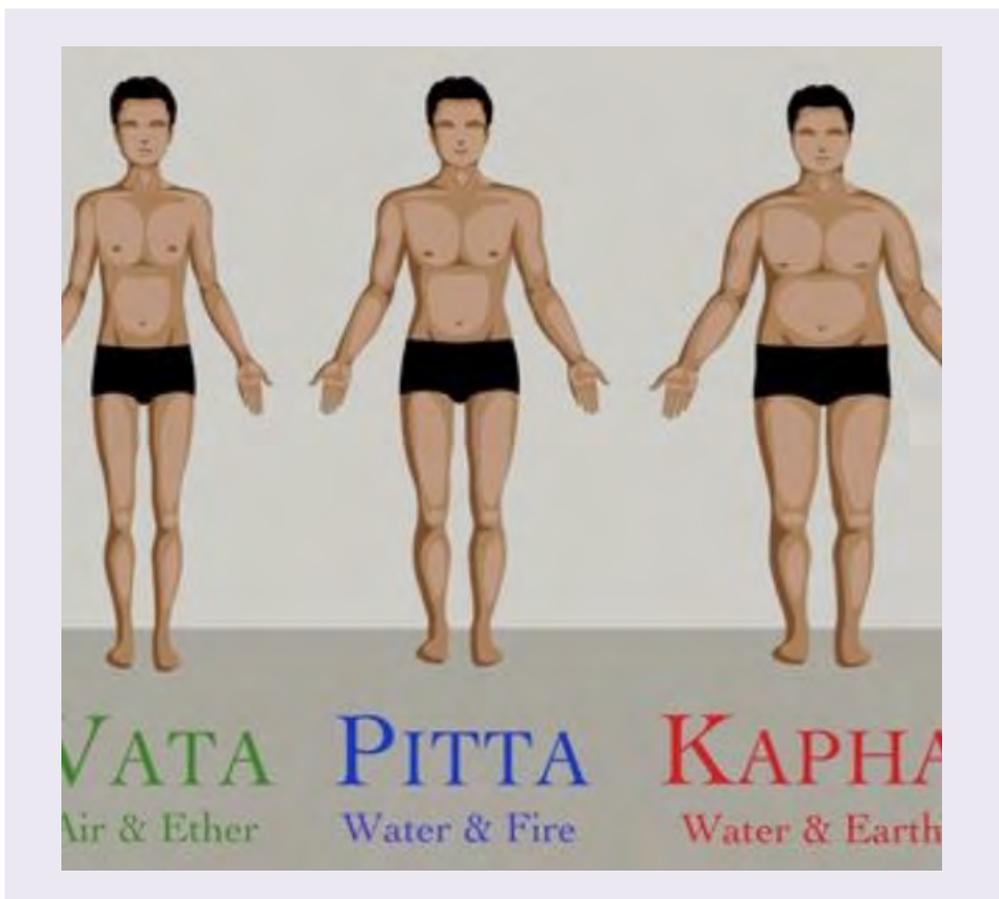
# Your Elemental Nature



## Prakriti

**Prakriti** is a Sanskrit word which refers to both the total creative energy in the manifest universe and to your particular nature—the specific ratio of doshas present in your constitution at conception.

In this lesson, we'll focus on prakriti as it relates to your constitutional type. (BTW: the word is transliterated from Sanskrit into English as “prakrti.” Westerners add the “i” in prakriti or “u” in prakruti to help with pronunciation. You'll likely see both, so just know that they all refer to the same word).





The 7 body-types are as follows:

- Vata
- Pitta
- Kapha
- Vata-Pitta (or Pitta-Vata)
- Vata-Kapha (or Kapha-Vata)
- Pitta-Kapha (or Kapha-Pitta)
- Vata-Pitta-Kapha

Ayurveda recognizes 7 distinct body types based on the percentages of doshas present at the moment of conception. One can be comprised mainly of one dosha, or a combination of two, or a combination all three in equal measure.

Remember, everything in the manifest universe is made of all 5 elements, so we all have all 3 doshas within us—it's just a matter of degree.

It's most common to have a dual-doshic type: one dominant dosha and a second significant enough to be a kind of co-pilot, and only a little bit of the third. Sometimes people have two secondary doshas: one dominant, and both of the other two as co-pilots. Occasionally, one is tri-doshic: all three doshas about evenly represented.





# Self-Assessment

To determine your prakriti you can take this [self-assessment](#),

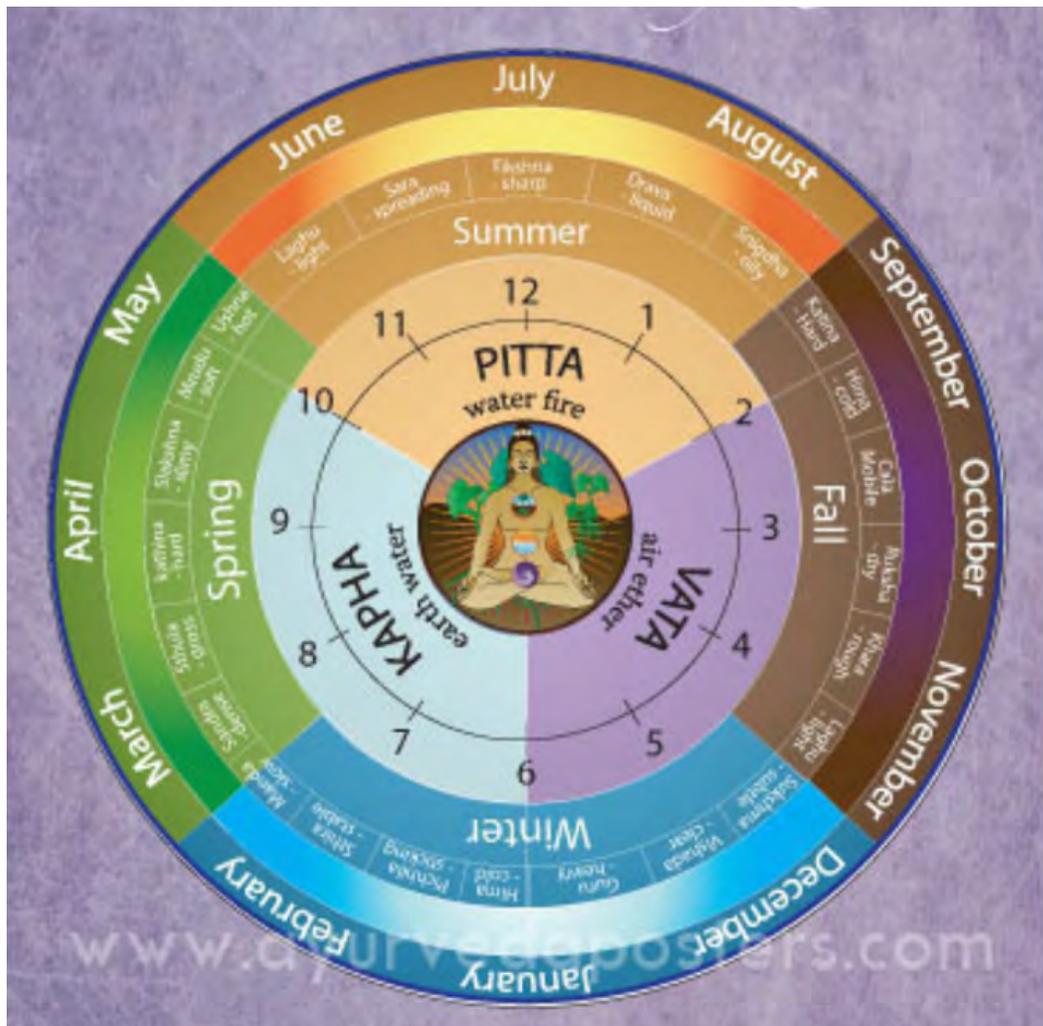
Take the self-assessment twice. Once for what was true most of your life, and a second time for what is true now. If more than one answer applies, mark both.

Once complete, tally your scores and express each as a ratio of doshas like this: VPK. Then, put a number from 1 - 3 indicating which is dominant (3), which is secondary, (2), and which is less dominant (1). V2P3K1 is how I represent my prakriti: pitta dominant with vata secondary and just a little bit of kapha.

When you are not in balance, that imbalance is reflected as “vikriti” which is Sanskrit for “against nature.” The qualities that are causing your problems (too hot, too cold; too dry, too oily; too light, too heavy, etc) represent your vikriti (BTW: like prakriti, you’ll see this word vikriti transliterated as vikriti and vikruti from the original vikrti. All refer to the same thing).

When you’re determining prakriti, it takes time to discriminate prakriti, your true nature, from vikriti, an imbalance of that nature. Especially if you’ve been living with an imbalance for a long time, the imbalance can feel “normal” or like prakriti. Within a season or two and within a full year, as you get more in touch with your body’s signs and symptoms, and come more into balance, you will start to feel the difference between your prakriti and any vikriti that is present





The doshic clock image places the doshas in relation to the cycles of day and night, of the seasons, and of the lifespan. “Like increases like,” so vata will naturally increase in vata times of day, in vata season and in vata time of life. It's the same for the other doshas. Understanding this principle, we work with “opposites balance” to keep our elemental nature functioning optimally.

- Usually, the doshas accumulate in their season of prominence.
- Usually, your dominant dosha will give you the most symptoms.
- Vata goes out of balance the easiest and can push the other doshas out of balance too. So calming vata is important in keeping your whole system in balance.



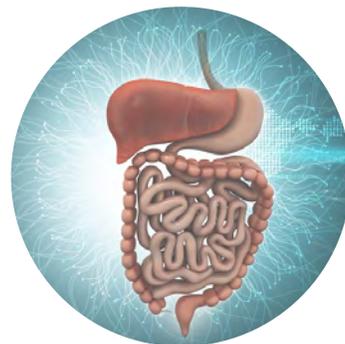
If you're healthy, without digestive imbalance, these are the guidelines to follow to keep the doshas balanced:

- Keep vata in balance at all the times by attending to a regular dinacharya. (dina = daily and charya = wheel/cycle—dinacharya = daily routine) In this way, we keep vata calm and it doesn't push the other doshas out of balance. The routine itself is what calms vata.
- In Vata season, fall, practice a vata balancing lifestyle, and favor vata pacifying foods.
- In Pitta season, late spring and summer, practice a pitta balancing lifestyle, and favor pitta pacifying foods
- In Kapha season, winter, and early spring, practice a kapha balancing lifestyle and favor kapha balancing foods.

If you are having digestive issues, those need to be treated first—and so you will eat a diet that will balance your particular digestive issues (see a practitioner for guidance here).

### Generally Speaking

- Gas, bloating, and constipation point to a vata imbalance.
- Acidity, GERD, and diarrhea or loose stools point to a pitta imbalance.
- Slow, sluggish digestion, mucous and copious elimination point to a kapha imbalance.



With a dual doshic type, you take care of the dosha whose season it is, adjusting only if you notice imbalance in the secondary dosha.

For example, if your constitution is V2P3K1 (pitta dominant with vata secondary and not much kapha), you focus on vata balancing in fall and winter and pitta balancing in spring and summer. If you start to have some excess heat in vata season, you would also check to see which pitta aggravating substances or actions you are taking regularly, and look to remove or lessen them.



*Ayurveda is about expanding awareness.* Through this study, we learn the language of our bodies. As our inner and outer environments change, we learn to keep ourselves in balance through adjusting our diet and lifestyle to account for these changes. We learn to ride the waves and make subtle adjustments as we go. When diet and lifestyle are not enough, we add constitutionally appropriate herbs to help reduce, balance or build our tissues as needed. This is the art of Ayurveda!

### In Summary

- Know thyself by understanding your prakriti.
- Learn to recognize imbalance in yourself (vikriti).
- Balance vikriti.
- When no vikriti, follow a good dinacharya for your type and vary your diet with the season.



## Growth Work

1. Write out your prakriti below based on your self-assessment. Write out any questions you have after taking the test. How will your routine change season to season based on your prakriti?
2. Write out your vikruti below, that is, which qualities are showing up out of balance (too much cold? could be v or k; too much sluggishness = K; too much heat or inflammation = P...do your best to put the qualities into categories: V, P, K as you've learned.
3. Based on your answers to #1 and #2, what changes to your daily routine would be most balancing for you now? Pick one to add this week.
4. [Schedule a time](#) to check in with Shannon to get support in understanding your prakriti and vikriti and how to balance going forward.