

From the Owner of Rhythm of Healing - Creator of the Summer Home Cleanse

# 5 Easy Ways to Thrive This Summer

Simple and Effective Ayurvedic Strategies for Optimal Summer Health



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## **5 Quick and Easy Ways to Survive and Thrive This Summer**

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School is out and the summer sun shines late into the evening. We open doors and windows to allow summer breezes, carrying the divine fragrances of our blooming gardens, to flow through our houses. What are your favorite summer activities? Are you the type of person who can't get enough sun or the type who hides inside for fear of overheating? Each one of us responds a little differently to summer's light, hot, and active qualities. These qualities that many of us love about summer can also be detrimental to our mood, hair, eyes and skin.

Let's learn Ayurveda's art of making the most out of summer! This survival guide will give you the essential tools for staying healthy and weathering the summer season with grace. Each season has a distinct personality. When a season's personality is understood the season can be embraced in a sustainable and healthy way. The beauty of Ayurveda is that small, simple changes to our lifestyle and habits can have profound changes.

### **Your Environment Influences Your Body and Mind.**

As my teacher has said, "If you stay in a barbershop long enough, you are going to get your haircut." We are tied to and influenced by our environment, and we face similar challenges to those who are also in our environment. However, we are all unique individuals and are influenced

differently by summer's qualities.

Summer is known for its heat, long days, bright sun and sometimes its humidity, but these characteristics vary depending on location.

Generally, the heat of summer will dry you out; the bright sun will create intensity and sharpness; and the long days will inspire you to be productive. While small doses of each one of these may be exactly what you need, most of us find summer to be too much of a good thing.

In Ayurveda the senses are considered to be gateways between the external and internal environment. Through our senses the external environment can get through the protective covering of our body and enter our internal environment. By taking measure to support the skin, eyes, ears, nose, mouth and digestive system we minimize the detrimental effects of the environment and optimize our internal landscape.

## Ayurveda is a Personalized Medicine

Personalized medicine looks at how the external environment responds to an individual's unique bio-identity. By recognizing the qualities within a person as well as the qualities of summer we can determine an individual's needs. For example, the summer heat might increase your tendency towards anger. Therefore, you might need a cooling herb like Gotu Kola. This principle is based on allopathic medicine which states that *like increases like and that opposites balance*.

If you know your body/mind blueprint or have a lot of self-awareness, you will know which of the following tips are priorities for you. By meeting with an Ayurvedic practitioner you can determine your body mind blueprint and improve yourself awareness. Following these tips will harmonize your internal landscape as the nature of the season

changes.

## Tip #1 Follow a Seasonal Eating Guide

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### Simple Summertime Foods for Serenity

To find a summer stabilizing diet let's look to common, traditional dietary patterns in places along the equator. Hot climates tend to grow foods such as coconut, papaya, cilantro and melons. These foods are cooling in nature and we naturally crave them on a hot summer day. Melons are light and easy to digest since most of their density comes from water.

In the summer we naturally transition towards these light, fresh fruits and vegetables and away from rich foods that contain heavy cream, meat or starches. This means that eating Ayurvedically is intuitive! All it takes is tuning in to our bodies. Keep in mind that the voice of our body is almost like a whisper, and is not the loud voice telling us to eat whatever we want. Below are some simple suggestions for your summer diet.

*Note for pittas: If you have determined your body mind constitution and it includes a large helping of pitta then creating a long term dietary strategy including cooling fruits and vegetables will help to protect you from burnout, dry skin, red eyes, a sore throat and heartburn*

### Soothing Summer Meal Plan

Ayurveda believes that 2-3 meals a day are the perfect amount for most people. In the summer we may tend towards more frequent smaller meals as our body has down regulated our digestive fire to minimize internal heat production and cool the body off. It is just like not using the

oven in the summer because it heats up the house too much.

## Breakfast

In the summer we can get by with a protein packed green smoothie for breakfast. Try this recipe:

- 1/2 cup homemade [kefir](#)
- 1/2 cup almond or sunflower milk
- 1 Tablespoon Chia
- 1 Tablespoon hemp seeds
- A handful of greens such as kale, spinach or chard
- A small piece peeled fresh ginger
- 1 handful fresh or frozen berries like blueberries.

*Note: I like to keep my morning smoothie low glycemic by only using berries as my fruit, but if you need something sweeter try adding a banana. Some other additions to try; apple or apple juice, avocado, ground flax seed, protein powder or vitamin powder. Another breakfast idea is [chia pudding](#).*



## Lunch

It is best to eat lunch when the sun is highest in the sky, but before it gets too hot. A great lunch is a large salad with lots of toppings. Try using the following suggestions as a base for your salad, and get creative with what else you'd like to add.

- 1 cup salad greens
- 1/2 cup cucumber
- 1/2 cup olives
- 1 hardboiled egg
- 1/2 cup sprouted mung beans
- Handful of fresh basil
- Squeeze of lemon

*Dressing Suggestion: Make a dressing with cold pressed organic olive oil and vinegar as many commercial dressings have lots of unnecessary preservatives.*

If a salad doesn't tide you over until dinner consider making a cold salad with grains or beans such as a quinoa salad or a bean salad.

## Dinner

Dinner ingredients can be similar items those for lunch, but make sure dinner is the lightest meal of the day. Also consider having warm food such as steamed veggies or warm quinoa with olive oil.

Grilling dinner is the summertime favorite for cooking food. Although this makes for a yummy meal, grills generate a number of carcinogens. Therefore, grilled food is best eaten in moderation—no more than once a week.

## Summer Shopping List

The foods below have a cooling nature and are usually found growing in hot tropical climates since they tolerate heat and bright sun well. In general  $\frac{3}{4}$  of every meal in an ideal summer diet is vegetables and fruits. Dietary changes in the spice, meat and oil categories are priority as these will produce the most noticeable effect. All the foods below are best when organic and local.

### *Spices*

- Basil
- Cardamom
- Cilantro
- Coriander
- Dill
- Fennel
- Lime
- Mint
- Parsley

### *Meats*

- Fish (freshwater)
- Poultry (white)
- Shrimp

### *Oils*

- Coconut Oil
- Olive Oil
- Sunflower Oil

### *Fruits*

- Apples
- Avocados
- Berries
- Cherries
- Coconut
- Cranberries
- Grapes
- Limes
- Mangoes
- Melons
- Pears
- Pineapples
- Plums
- Pomegranates
- Prunes

### *Vegetables*

- Artichokes
- Asparagus
- Beet Greens
- Broccoli
- 1. Cauliflower
- 2. Celery
- 3. Chard
- 4. Collard Greens
- Kale
- Lettuce
- Okra
- Potatoes

- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage
- 5. Cucumbers
- 6. Green Beans
- Watercress
- Zucchini

## **Foods to skip this Summer**

Sometimes it is taught that hot spices cool you off because they make you sweat, but this approach is counterintuitive. It is more effective to avoid hot, acidic foods like hot chilies, sour citrus fruits (besides lemon or lime), alcohol and foods containing vinegar. You might notice that mildly heating fruits such as bananas, cranberries, grapefruit, lemon, or pineapple can lead to a sour taste in your mouth or a sore tongue.

Though it is less noticeable, vegetables such as corn, eggplant, olives, radishes, tomatoes, and spinach are also warming. If you eat a lot of these heating foods over the summer the effects accumulate and you may experience acidity, diarrhea, a rash, or a sour taste in your mouth.

*Remember, you are unique. While these suggestions are true for many of us, there is an exception to every rule. Eating Ayurvedically means paying attention to subtle signs of increased heat in your body and taking steps to maintain balance.*

## **Tip #2 Follow Simple Home Remedies for Summer Serenity**

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### **Take a Nap**

If you have ever visited a tropical or semi-tropical climate you likely found that the locals make relaxation an important part of their day. From a Spanish siesta to the relaxing beaches of the Caribbean, people who live in warm climates know how to take it easy. Resting can be essential to keeping bodies and minds cool in a hot environment.

Take time in the hottest part of the day for a power nap, mediation, or a dip in the nearest water source. This protects your body from adrenal fatigue and your head from getting too hot (which leads to criticism, judgment and frustration.) In general, cultivate a sense of playfulness and relaxation to soften your sharp edges.

## Stay Cool

Opening windows at night or when the temperature outside is below 77 degrees, and then closing everything (including the blinds) in the morning or when the temperature rises, will help to keep your house cool. White blinds tend to be the most effective for deflecting heat and it can reduce the amount of heat that penetrates into your home by up to 45%. If you are using fans, face them outside to blow hot air out in order to get the maximum amount of cool air inside.

## Avoiding Air Conditioning

Because of mycotoxins (mold and yeasts) and other possible contaminants that can be distributed throughout an environment, it is best not to use an air conditioner if you have the choice (Anderson, 1985). A swamp cooler is a slight improvement as long as it is regularly cleaned and the filter is changed regularly to prevent the growth of mold. Consider placing an essential oil in the water to kill mycotoxins. Some effective oils are clove, cinnamon or doTERRA's On Guard formula. Similar formulas and essential oils have been used for decades by lumberyards in order to stop mold from growing on the wood. Instead you might also try hanging a damp sheet in an open window. This works like a swamp cooler, but a sheet is much easier to clean.

## Spritz or Hydrosol Mood Mists

In the heat of the day a light mist of sweet and subtle fragrance can be just what you need. Many hydrosols of rose and lavender can be found

at your local health food store. While rose is preferable, both will work marvelously. Other cooling scents for summer are jasmine, peppermint, chamomile, and sweet orange.

### **A hydrosol is easy to make**

Many recipes for rose, peppermint, or lavender hydrosols can be found online. For summer heat you might also consider using lemon balm, cilantro or cucumber for your hydrosol.

Here is a simple and effective way to make a basic hydrosol.

1. Using one cup of distilled water add 10 drops of your desired essential oil or a blend of oils. Pour this mixture into a glass spray bottle and allow the flavors to meld for a 24 hours.
2. Shake the bottle before each use and spritz in a room or on the body. Keep the eyes closed if you spray it on the face.

For other ways to make Rose Water check out [WikiHow](#) For more info on hydrosols or to purchase them online visit [Mountain Rose Herbs](#).

### **Hydration**

There is more to hydrating than just drinking water. Hydrating involves avoiding dehydrating foods like alcohol, caffeine and refined sugar as well as getting adequate electrolytes by eating lots of fruits and vegetables that are high in the trace minerals and vitamins.

One simple way to improve hydration is by drinking *sole*. a saturated mixture of water and salt. To make sole use a high quality salt like celtic sea salt or real salt, and place an inch in a deep glass container, such as a canning jar. Submerge the salt in 3 inches of clean water and dissolve

for 24 hours. If the salt dissolves completely add more until some crystals remain after 24 hours. Add 1 teaspoon to your drinking water daily, and cover the jar with the remaining sole for future use.

For more info on using salt for hydration [see Dr. Sircus](#)

Other beverages that can help you stay hydrated and beat the heat are cool or room temperature herbal teas. Choose teas like peppermint, fennel or rose because they are cooling. Adding lime, cucumber, mint or lemon balm to your water can also be a nice touch to keep you cool. Iced drinks are not recommended as the body temperature must rise to digest them, leading to undigested chemicals that may create toxins in the body.



## Tip # 3 Protect Your Hair

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The summer sun and wind can easily dry out the hair and lead to a dry scalp. You may want to consider changing your shampoo or conditioner in the summer to a kind that is more moisturizing and has fewer detergents. In fact, shampoo may be best avoided during all seasons as it disrupts the natural ecology of the scalp and can lead to dandruff. [Todd Caldecott](#) has written an informative article regarding shampoo.

Traditionally, hair was washed with herbal or floral teas in India. As that is an extremely hot climate I think we could learn a lot from them. There are two ways to support the hair: one is preventative when you are going out in the sun and the other is to restore sun-damaged hair.

### Herbal Hair Damage Prevention

Before going outdoors for the day, massage coconut oil into your hair with the tips of your fingers. Then, comb the oil through the hair to distribute it over the shaft. Other oils like jojoba or sunflower oil can also be helpful. For a stronger effect try [Neem oil](#), [Bhringarag oil](#) or [Brahmi oil](#). Once the oil has been applied wrap your hair in a tight bun or wear an old sunhat (as it might get slightly oily.)

Upon returning from the beach or a long hike most of the oil will have absorbed into the hair. Wash your hair by applying shampoo to your oily hair before getting the hair wet. Applying shampoo to dry hair will ensure that the oil is removed by allowing the shampoo to break down the oil instead of just sliding off slick hair. Make sure you are not using a hair damaging shampoo by visiting [Skin Deep's Cosmetic Database](#).

### Herbal Hair Restoration Rinse

Some of the best herbs for creating an herbal hair rinse are rosemary, oregano, thyme, nettle and hibiscus flowers. They all have medicinal

compounds that are good for the hair and mild detergents for keeping the hair clean.

In order to make a herbal hair rinse

1. Bring four cups of water to a boil
2. Add 4 Tablespoons dried or fresh herb or 10-15 drops of an essential oil to the boiled water.
3. Cover the pot and allow the herbal tea to steep for 30 minutes or longer.
4. Once it has cooled strain into a vessel of your choice.
5. Pour about 2 cups on your head and allow it to saturate your hair. You may use more or less depending on your hair length. Let it sit on your hair for about 3 minutes.
6. You can leave it on your hair or rinse it off with cool water.

### **Probiotic Hair Treatment**

If the herbal hair rinse isn't enough to protect your hair from looking flat and your scalp from dryness then consider a probiotic hair treatment.

You can use yogurt or unpasteurized apple cider vinegar for this treatment.

1. Place 4-5 tablespoons of yogurt into a small bowl and rub it into the hair roots and follow it to the ends. Do this until your hair is covered in yogurt.
2. Let it stand on the hair form 20-30 minutes. You may want to wear a shower cap
3. Rinse the yogurt from your hair with cool or lukewarm water.

If using apple cider vinegar follow the instructions above for the herbal hair rinse. Yogurt is recommended as it does not give the hair a sour smell.

## Additional Hair Support with Botanicals

For the best results with the above treatments you can also incorporate herbs into your healthy hair regime. Herbs like [Amalaki](#), [Brahmi](#), and [Bhringaraj](#) can help bring vital nutrients to the hair and nails. Banyan Botanicals has a blend called [Healthy Hair](#) that contains many of those ingredients.

## Tip # 4 Enhance Your Eyes

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If you forgot your sunglasses or you have been staying up late to enjoy the long days of summer, you may find your eyes feeling dry, red or puffy. If this is the case a few simple remedies can be used to bring the eyes back to health.

### Tranquil Eye Tea Treatment

For the redness and puffiness that may appear around the eyes many high quality organic teas can be used. I like to use [Yogi Teas Green Tea Super Antioxidant](#) as it contains other high quality ingredients beneficial for the eyes. Chamomile tea and Black tea can also be used; the tannins in each help to firm up swollen tissue and the caffeine reduces swelling.

1. Steep two bags of your chosen tea in boiled water for 3-5 minutes.
2. Remove the tea bags and cool them off by placing them in the refrigerator or on ice.
3. Then place each bag over each eye for 15 minutes. For the best results do this daily for 1 week and then 2-3 times a week for the rest of the summer.



### **Cold Milk Soothing Eye Treatment**

The key to using cold milk is to keep it cold. The eyes are composed of many fatty acids and milk fat constricts blood vessels and reduces swelling by soothing dry, irritated skin.

Although simple milk is sufficient for this treatment, consider medicating the milk with triphala, chrysanthemum flower or saffron by gently boiling 1 Tablespoon of the desired herb in 1 cup of milk. Then, strain the milk through a coffee filter to remove the herbs and refrigerate the medicated milk. When it is completely cooled, soak two cotton balls in it. Squeeze out the excess milk from the cotton balls and place them over the eyes for 15 minutes. You may have to re-soak the cotton balls multiple times as they may warm up while resting on the eyes.

### **Netra Basti**

A specialized Ayurvedic treatment for eye health is called Netra basti. This is done by making dough with black chickpea and whole-wheat flour. Then a ring of this dough is built around the eye and the trough is filled with warm clarified butter. This nourishes the connective tissue of the eyes and can improve vision and eliminate eyestrain. As netra basti is sometimes contraindicated for conjunctivitis, corneal ulcer, and glaucoma. The treatment is best received from a trained professional.

## **Tip # 5 Use These Suggestions for Smooth Summer Skin**

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Skin is the largest organ in the body and it has a delicate and refined way in which it protects the body while simultaneously breathing and absorbing vital nutrition, like light and oils.. The main concern when it comes to healthy skin is skin cancer.

Sunscreen and many other lotions have only been around for the last 100 years to protect our skin from the sun. It seems that the plethora of skin soft products and sunscreens came about because of the threat of skin cancer and the effect of UVB radiation. Does UVB radiation really damage the skin and cause cancer?

UVB radiation acts as an enzyme on the skin to convert 7-dehydrocholesterol into D3, which is then converted into calcitrol. Calcitrol is a hormone associated with bone health, but it also plays a vital role in immunity, and cardiovascular and metabolic function (Holick, 2002) all of which affect the skin. For the last 5-10 years there has been an epidemic of chronic vitamin D deficiency in the northern hemisphere. This is because most of us are not getting small doses of UVB radiation from the sun, which would restore our vitamin D levels.

In the Northern Hemisphere we can only make vitamin D from sunlight in the summer and spring. During those seasons, getting 20 minutes of sun if you have light colored skin, and 60 minutes if you have dark colored skin, will be enough to keep your D3 levels at optimum ranges.

### **Types of Skin Cancer**

There are three primary types of cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and melanoma. The first of these, basal cell carcinoma, has been linked to sun exposure; however, it appears that sun may trigger a genetic predisposition towards this type of cancer. This type of

skin cancer is not considered fatal and it does not spread to other areas of the body (Sobjaneck, 2014).

The second type, squamous cell carcinoma has been found in sun-exposed places of the body, but it is more commonly found on the head, esophagus, lungs, prostate and cervix so it may not be sun related.

This third type of skin cancer, malignant melanoma, is the most dangerous. There is not adequate research on how sun affects this type, but one study has shown that the incidence of melanoma decreases with sun exposure (Berwick et al, 2005). This seems to be verified by the reduced occurrence of melanoma in outdoor workers.

Unfortunately, data showing the relationship between UVB any type of cancer is inconclusive. It is conclusive, however, that Vitamin D is vital to our health. Therefore, avoiding the sun may do more harm than good.

## Sunscreen

Your skin absorbs whatever you put on your body just as if it were being eaten; so, if you wouldn't spread it on your toast--don't put it on your skin. If you still think that some white goop might be yummy, keep the following principles in mind.

Many sunscreens include the ingredient oxybenzone , which has been shown to **cause cancer**. Natural sunscreens that include the active ingredients Titanium dioxide or Zinc oxide are safer than oxybenzone, but would you spread that on your toast? There is not sufficient research to know what kind of impact the nanoparticles of Zinc and Titanium have when absorbed through your skin so it is best to avoid them.

*Note: sunscreen doesn't only affect your body when you swim it can **kill coral** by making it more susceptible to viruses.*

## **Diet for Healthy Skin**

When it comes to healthy skin, Vitamin D is the key ingredient. These days, enriched and fortified food is common on the shelves of your local grocery store. For example, in the US milk is required to be fortified. Unfortunately it is fortified with D2, which has much less biological activity than D3.

Fatty animals synthesize D3 just like humans, so it is no surprise that the recent Vitamin D deficiency correlates with the low fat marketing campaigns of the last five decades. Foods like herring, smelt, sardines, butter, eggs, organ meats and blood are good sources of D3. If you don't eat meat (or these kinds of meat) you can take a D3 supplement. In addition to this consume at least four servings of colorful fruits and vegetables such as rainbow chard, beets, tomatoes, blueberries and raspberries. All brightly colored vegetables contain biophenols which feed the probiotics necessary to break down vitamin D.

## **Natural sunscreens**

So, if we don't use sunscreens created by chemical companies how do we avoid not get burnt? If you need to be outside, get out early in the morning or later in the day in order to limit your chance of getting sunburned. For maximum Vitamin D absorption and to be sure that you acclimate to sun exposure it is best to get small amounts of exposure daily

The skin will dry out with frequent or prolonged sun exposure so it can also be helpful to moisturize throughout the day with coconut oil, avocado oil, sunflower oil, shea butter or aloe vera leaf. In addition to these, essential oils of helichrysum, sandalwood, lavender and carrot seed oil protect the skin.

If you are out in the sun for long periods it is also important to dress

accordingly. Wear a large sunhat and light organic cotton without synthetic dyes.

## **Homemade Coconut Oil Sunscreen Recipe**

### **Ingredients**

- 1/4 cup coconut oil
- 1/4 cup shea butter
- 1/8 cup sesame or jojoba oil
- 2 tbsp. beeswax granules
- 20-30 drops carrot seed essential oil
- Essential oils of your choice (lavender, helichrysum, sandalwood are nice)

### **Instructions**

- Over very low heat melt coconut oil and beeswax. Then add shea butter and sesame or jojoba oil.
- Remove from heat and let cool by placing it in on the counter or in the fridge for about 20 minutes or until it is the thickness of whipped cream.
- Use a mixer to whip it while adding the essential oils. Whip until it is light and fluffy.
- Store in a glass container in the refrigerator.

## Conclusion

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Summer can be the best time of the year if we take a little time each day to follow these Ayurvedic recommendations. By protecting our skin, hair and eyes from the heat, light and activity of summer's long days we can minimize their impact on our life. Thus, we minimize the inflammation due to heat, the inability to focus and concentrate due to lightness, and the perpetual productivity due to activity.

As each environment has its own qualities, these suggestions are relevant for the hottest part of the summer and may change based on where you live. For example, if you live in Southern California where sun and heat are likely no matter the seasons, then these suggestions may need to be followed for most of the year. On the other hand if you live in a cloud forest of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington, then the cumulative effects of summer will not be as strong.

I hope you have found this information useful and inspiring. The world needs your gifts, so I encourage you keep your body and mind healthy and to share what you have learned with others.



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