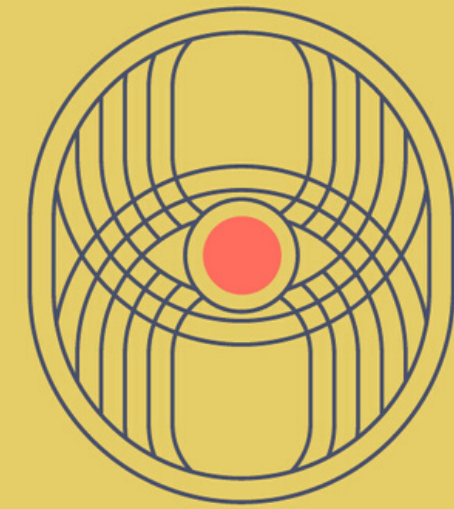


Lifestyle Balance + Healthy Hormones

Ayurvedic Healing for Women
of All Ages



COURTNEY
LACAVA

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Hi! I'm Courtney

As an Ayurvedic Practitioner and Health Coach, I'm so passionate about guiding people to heal and evolve with the essential habits of Ayurveda and Yoga.

I discovered Ayurveda through my own health crisis with chronic fatigue in 2005. It led me to Ayurveda. It revolutionized my life and I now dedicate my work to empowering people to heal.

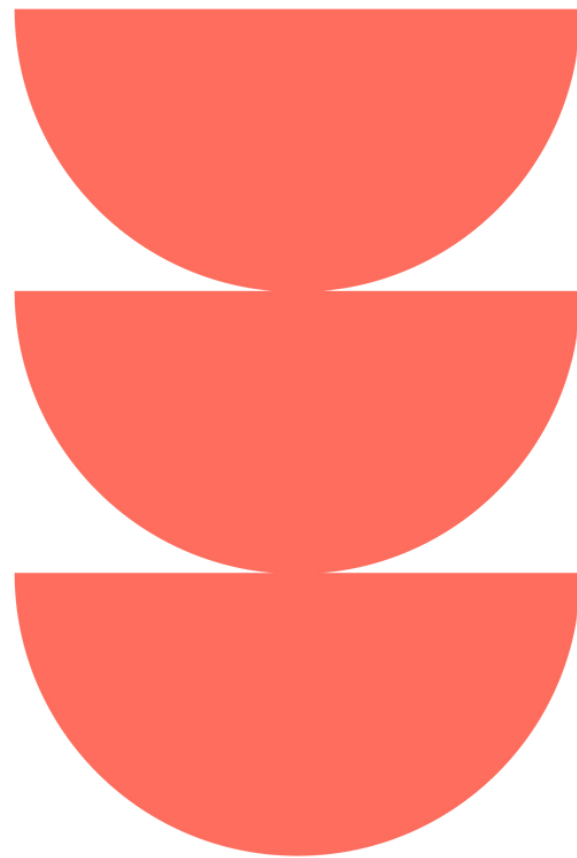


Ready to get started?

Click below to watch the live workshop
and follow along with the slides

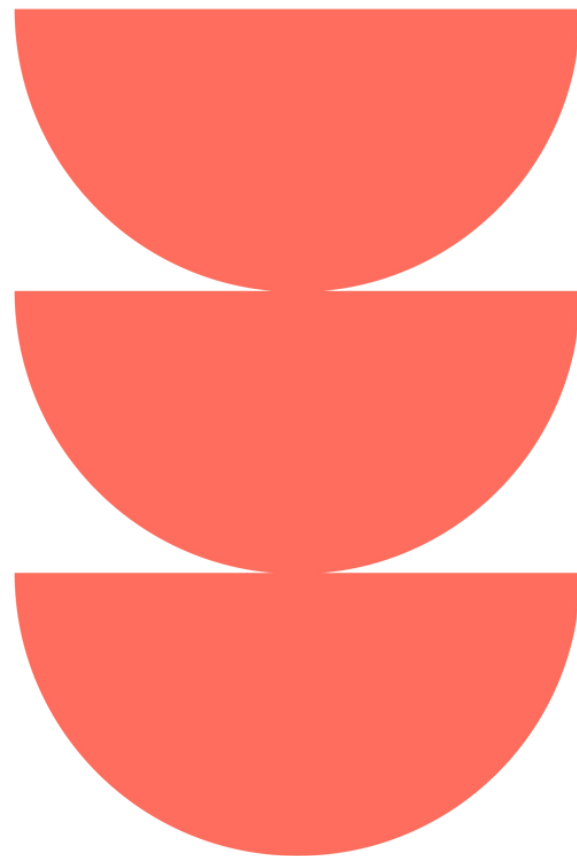
[Access the
workshop](#)

What is Ayurveda?



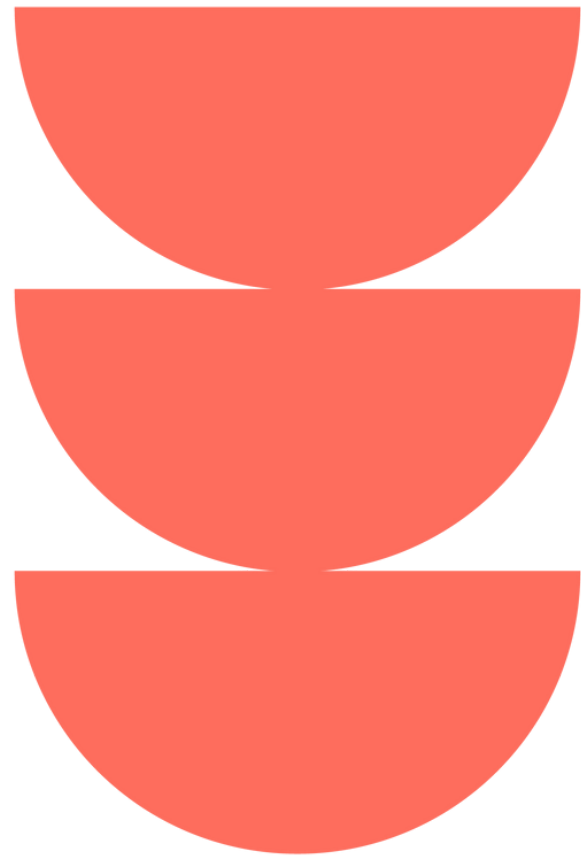
- ☐ Sister science of yoga
- ☐ 4000+ years old
- ☐ Your body has an innate healing intelligence
- ☐ Your body is a reflection of the rhythms of nature
- ☐ Empowered to understand the language your body's speaking and learn the tools to respond
- ☐ "The knowledge of life" = being more ALIVE

The Theory of Opposites



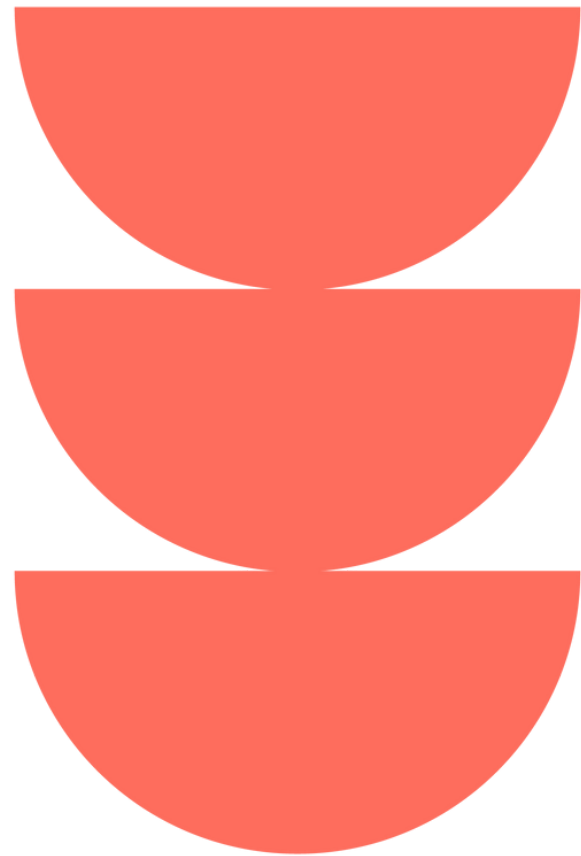
- Everything in the universe, including our physiology has certain qualities
- These qualities (*gunas*) are described in pairs of opposites
- Basic Principle of Healing: "Like increases like, opposites balance."
- We take in these qualities through all 5 senses and create balance or imbalance.

The Five Senses



□ The five senses of sight, sound, taste, touch, smell is how we take these qualities and input into our body and mind.

The Nervous System

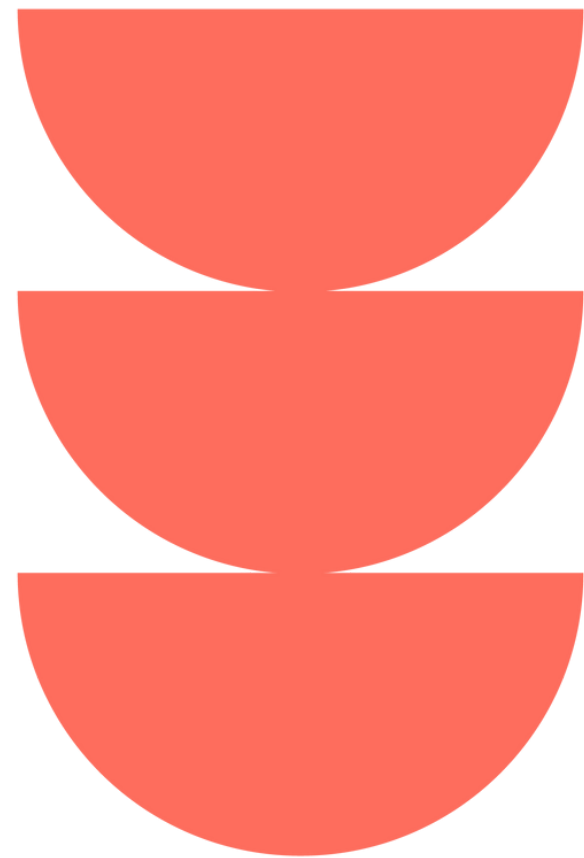


- The master "digestor"
- When we take things into our senses, our nervous system determines: safety or threat?
- "Trauma" (Somatic Experiencing" or "Ama" (Ayurveda) = anything we can't fully process and digest - physically, mentally or emotionally.
- Nervous system dysregulation

Yin/Yang

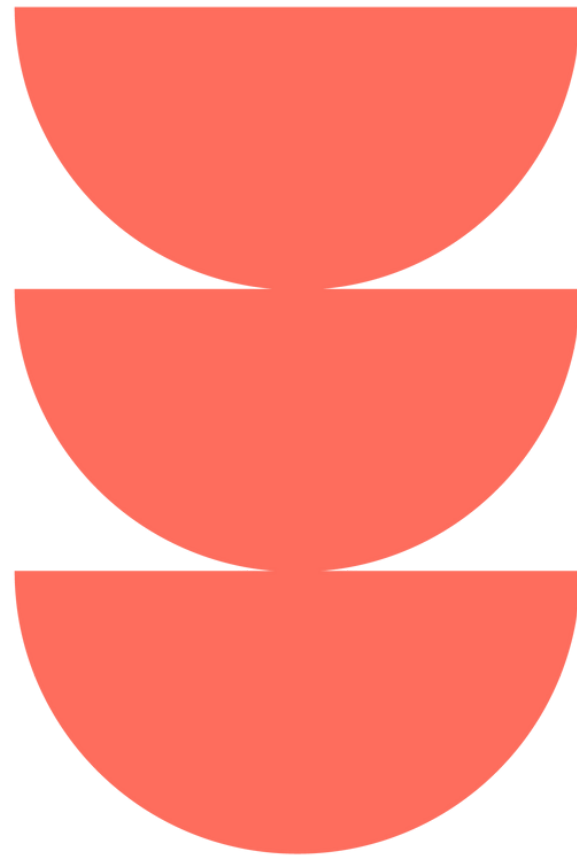
"Like increases like,
opposites balance."





Sex + Stress Hormones

Stress + Sex Hormones in Women



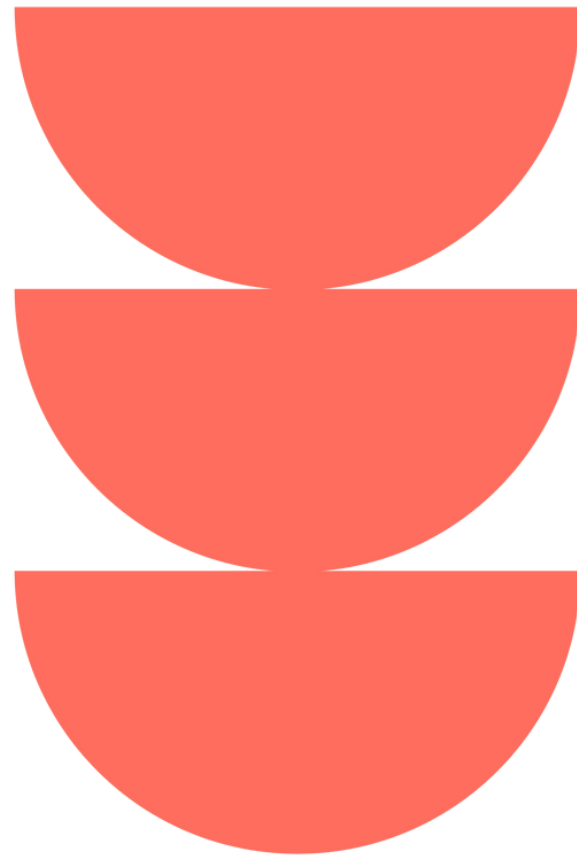
Stress Hormones:

- Yang
- Sympathetic Nervous System
- Adrenaline + Cortisol
- Energizing, activating, mobilizing, reducing
- Example activities: driving your car, making deals, playing sports, multitasking, drinking coffee, eating spicy food

Sex Hormones:

- Yin
- Parasympathetic Nervous System
- Progesterone + Estrogen
- Nourishing principle of life
- Example activities: Sleeping, meditating, getting massage, eating oatmeal, resting

Stress + Sex Hormones in Women (cont.)



Stress Hormones:

- Role of Adrenaline: Provides a short-term stress response and then ebbs
- Role of Cortisol: Increases when adrenaline does but stays active longer. Controls metabolism of carbs, fats and proteins. Plays important role in infection-fighting, blood sugar balance, immune response, thinking and other health functions. In excess becomes very problematic because of its depleting effects on the body. The most yang hormone – extremely depleting.

Sex Hormones:

- Role of Progesterone: Prevents estrogen from creating too much mass in the body. Holds uterine lining in place. Balancing force - supports production of estrogen if there isn't enough and prevents the production of too much estrogen.
- Super yin, “juicy” hormone. Responsible for development of female sexual characteristic. Stimulates growth of uterine lining. Estrogen's effect not confined to reproductive system and breasts => every tissue in the body needs lubrication and nourishment.

Opposing Qualities (Gunas)

YANG: STRESS HORMONES

Reducing, Lightening , Catabolic
Vata + Pitta

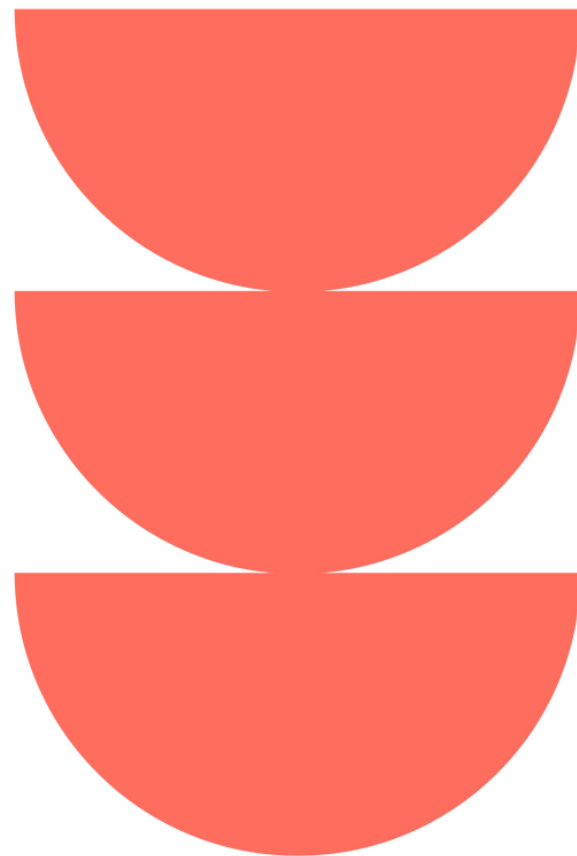
YIN: SEX HORMONES

Building, Nourishing, Anabolic
Kapha

DRY
HOT
MOBILE
LIGHT
SHARP
ROUGH
HARD
SUBTLE
CLEAR

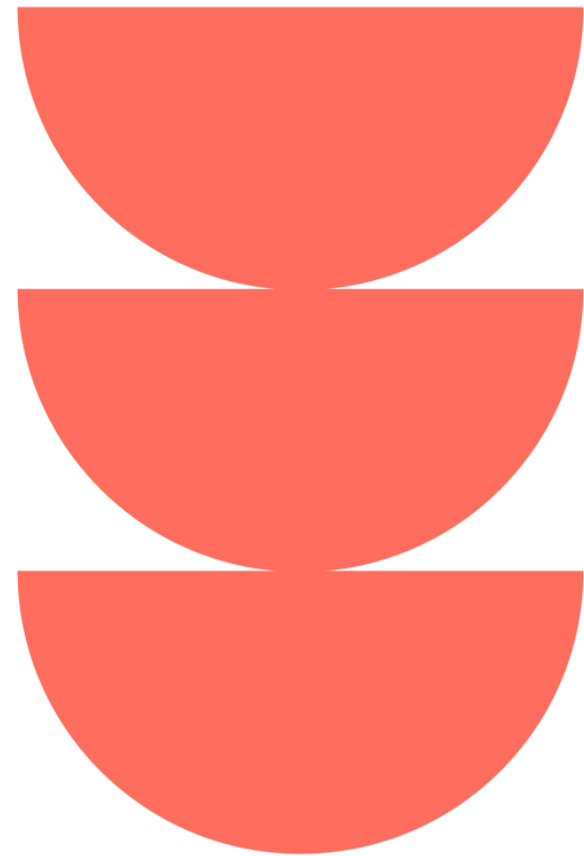
MOIST
COLD
STABLE
HEAVY
DULL
SMOOTH
SOFT
GROSS
CLOUDY

How Hormonal Imbalance Happens



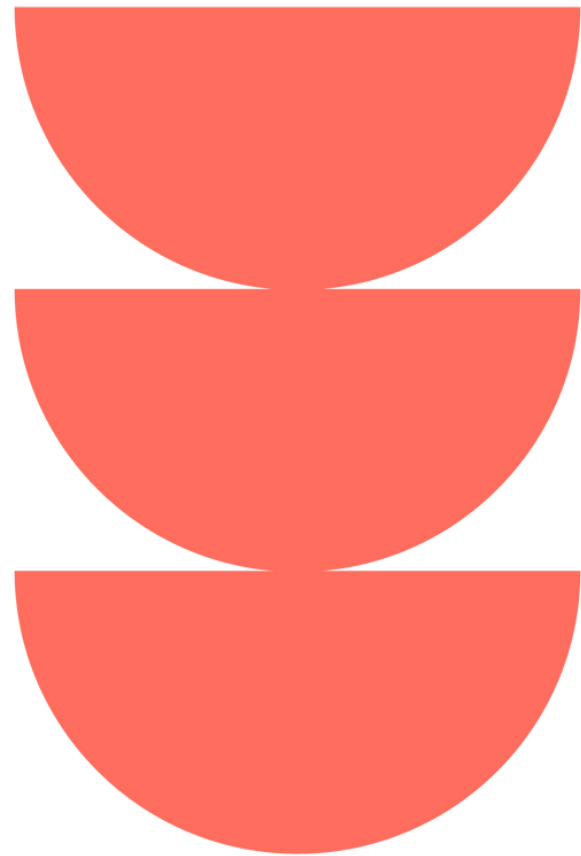
- ❑ Wherever our "vortex of trauma" is, we tend to be deficient in the opposite hormones
- ❑ Most hormone imbalance caused by stress/sympathetic response
- ❑ Progesterone sacrificed
 - Progesterone made in same pathway as stress hormones.
 - Body always chooses survival over reproduction
 - Body pulls from the production of progesterone to produce more stress hormones => Hormone imbalance
- ❑ Cortisol => hypervigilance => more and more stress hormone being released

Effects of Cortisol



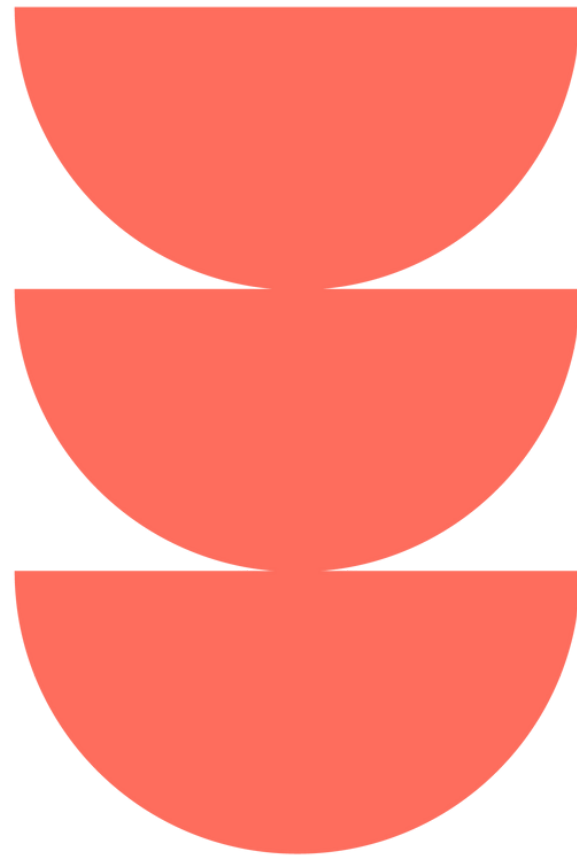
- Cortisol creates
 - Inflammation
 - Depletion
- Endocrine cascade
 - Adrenals
 - Insulin producing portion of pancreas
 - Thyroid
 - Ovaries

Early Warning Symptoms



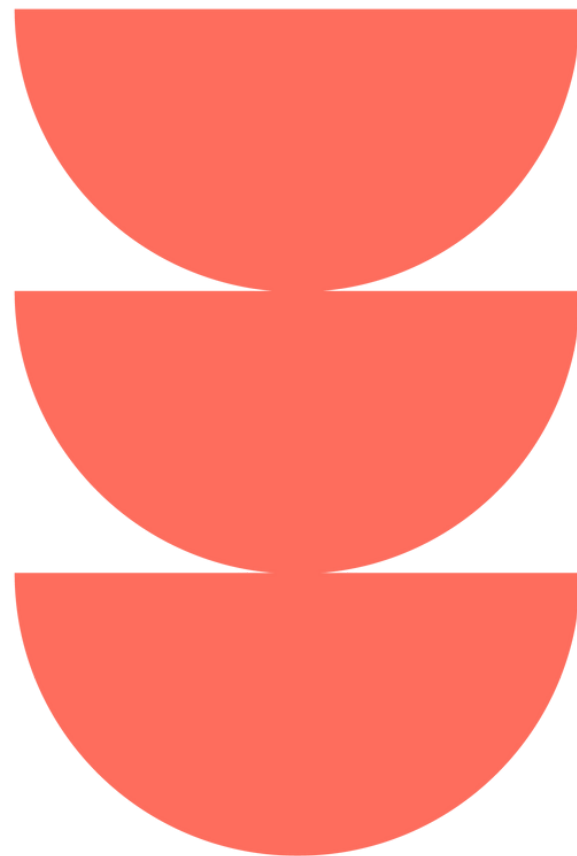
- ☐ Confused or foggy thinking
- ☐ Little aches and pains
- ☐ Stress, irritability or depression
- ☐ Poorer short-term memory than usual
- ☐ Heavier or lighter periods than usual
- ☐ Fatigue or lethargy
- ☐ Hot flashes
- ☐ Insomnia
- ☐ Mild headaches
- ☐ Minor digestive complaints, like gas, bloating, heartburn, constipation, or loose stool
- ☐ Lack of appetite

Long-Term Impact of Excess Stress Hormone



- Multitude of health issues
- Poor lifestyle/food choices ensue, such as:
 - Eating on the run/while working
 - Skipping meals/irregular mealtimes
 - Multitasking
 - Poor food choices, such as dry, cold, processed foods
 - Poor sleep habits, such as late bedtime, too little sleep, etc.
 - Too much “screen time”
 - Over-exercise
 - Overuse of stimulants, such as coffee
 - Overuse of alcohol or drugs

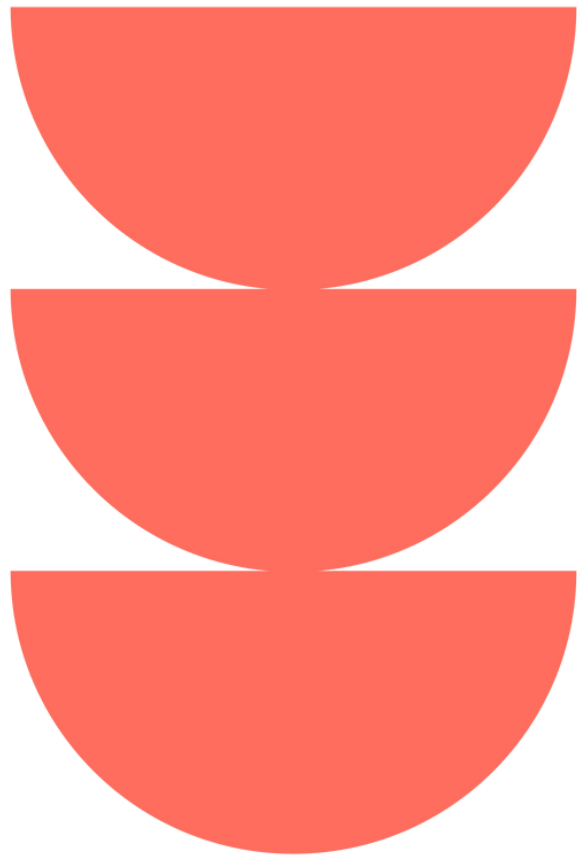
Progressed Symptoms



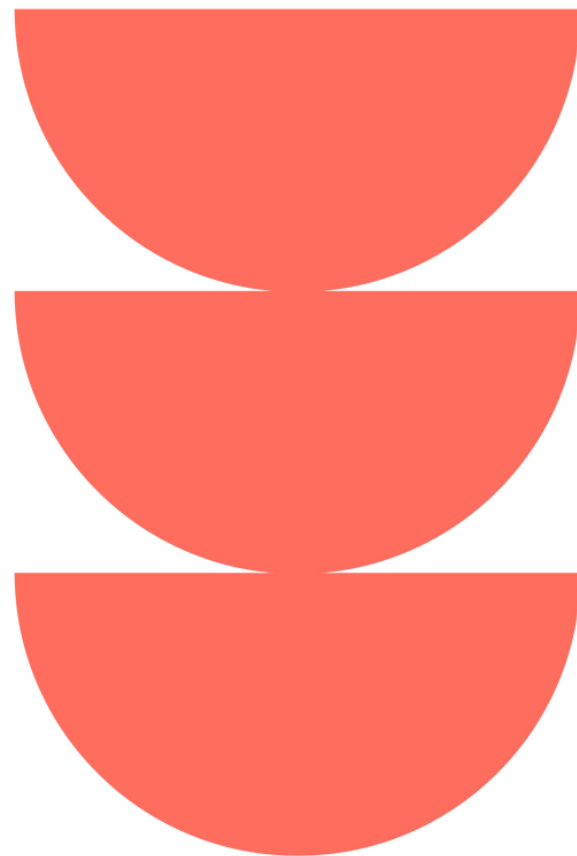
- ☐ Hyper- or hypothyroid
- ☐ Adrenal/chronic fatigue
- ☐ Weight gain (especially around the middle)
- ☐ PMS
- ☐ Low libido
- ☐ Fertility issues
- ☐ Menopause symptoms: “The Great Unveiler”
- ☐ Autoimmune disorders
- ☐ Anxiety, depression
- ☐ Fibroids, cysts, endometriosis
- ☐ Breast lumps, cysts, inflammation
- ☐ Chronic insomnia
- ☐ Vaginal and/or systemic dryness
- ☐ Osteoporosis
- ☐ Heart disease
- ☐ Cognitive disorders
- ☐ Insulin resistance

Menopause

☐ The Great Unveiler

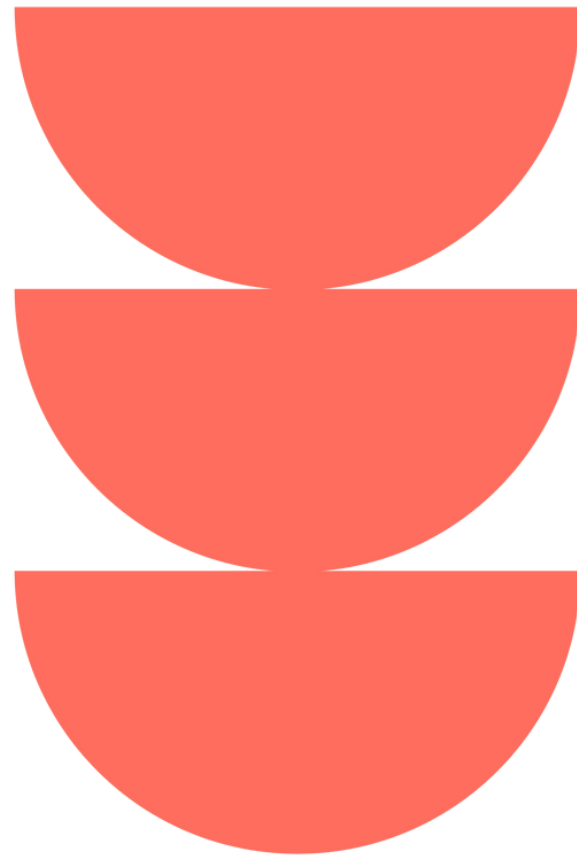


The Stress Epidemic



- ❑ Our cultures is in love with yang qualities and lifestyle and devalues yin.
- ❑ Physical, spiritual nourishment, emotional wellbeing sacrificed for financial, professional or social ambition.
- ❑ Mistake being stressed for having energy .
- ❑ We are under constant states of stress (real or perceived)
 - Body constantly flooded with depleting hormones
 - Body sends out signal to release excess stress hormones until the “danger” resolves itself, throwing off hormone balance
 - When our whole lives our stressful, this pattern of imbalance becomes chronic.

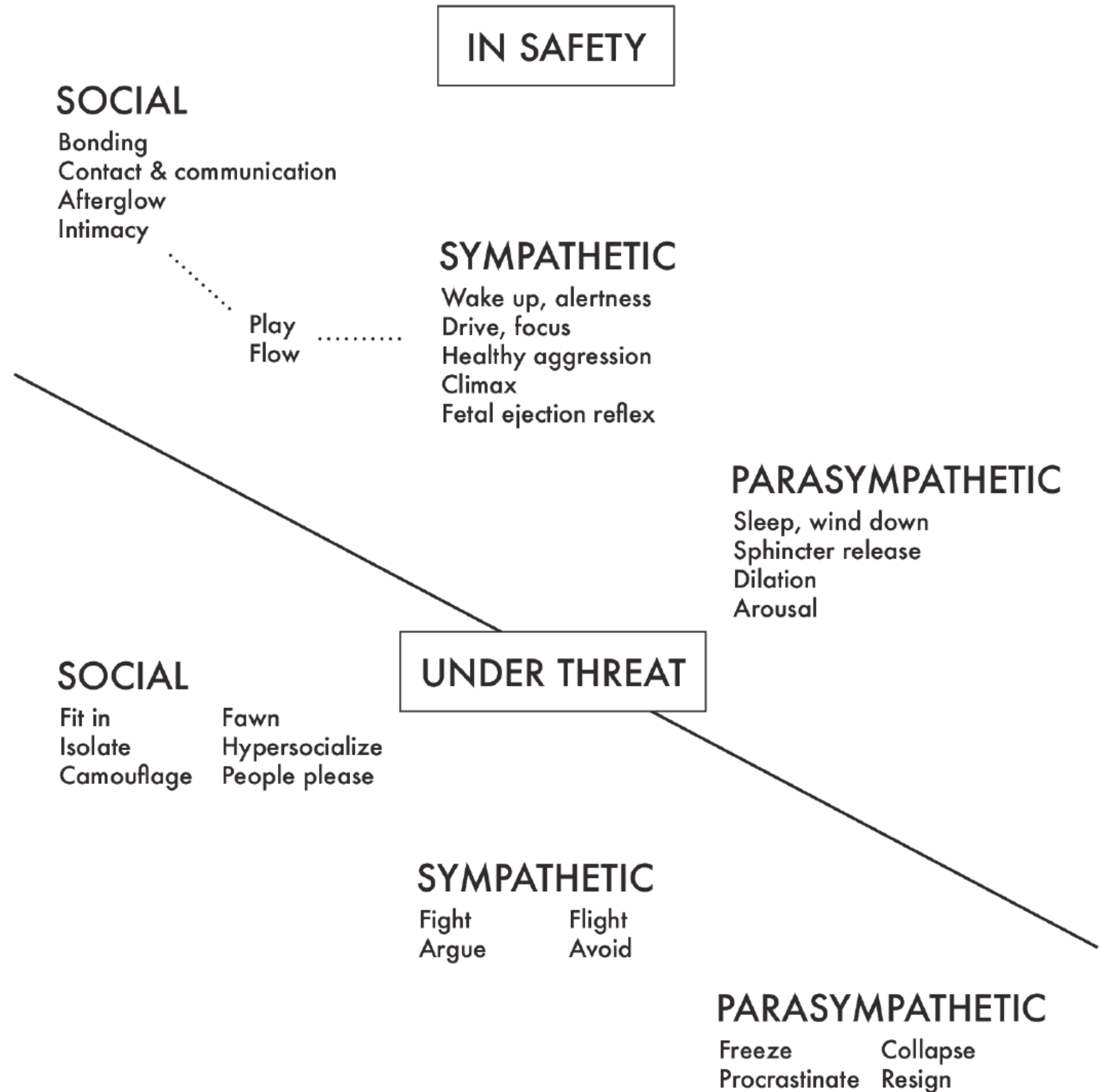
How We Get Out of Balance



- ☐ **Your Habits** - moving out of rhythm with the cycles of nature
- ☐ **Your Senses** - Like increases like, opposites balance. What you take in through your senses - what you eat, when you eat, the qualities of your habits and schedule, etc. can all increase or decrease the doshas
- ☐ **Overriding Body's Wisdom** - Not listening to and responding to our body's needs when it sends us signals.
- ☐ **Trauma:** Too much. Too fast. Too soon => Nervous system dysregulation.

The Nervous System: Polyvagal Theory

Image credit:
Kimberly Ann Johnson



Nervous System Emotional Sign Posts

Image credit:
Kimberly Ann Johnson

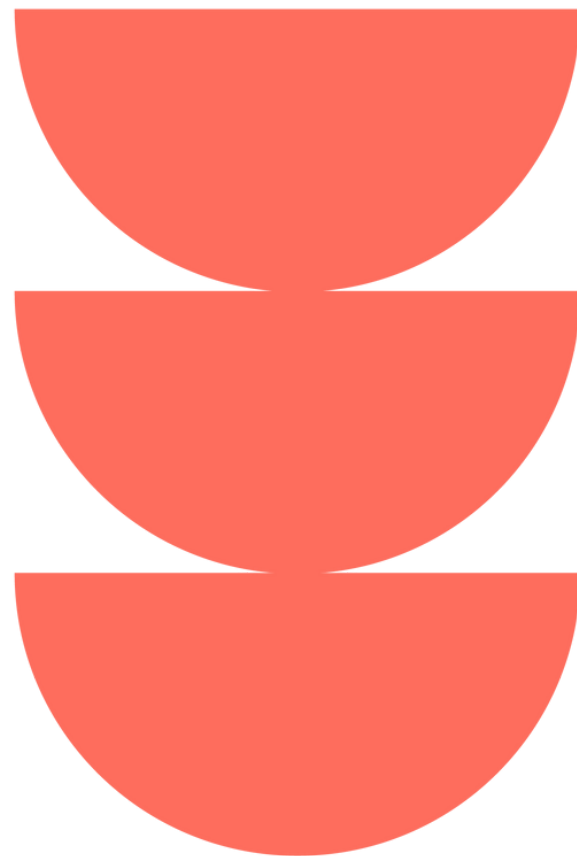


The Problem

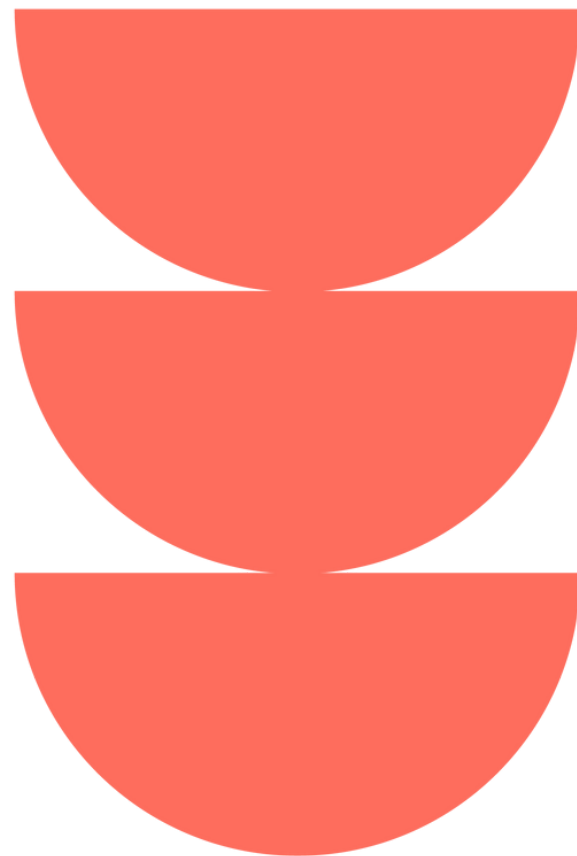
□ “It is far easier to retain our health, than to regain it.” - Dr. Claudia Welch, Balance Your Hormones, Balance Your Life

□ Problem:

- Too much doing, not enough physical and emotional nourishment, rest, contemplation
- Lack of embodiment
- Nature has rhythms. Our culture => countless opportunities to override rhythm:
 - Can buy seasonal food anytime of the year
 - Artificial light
 - Blue light from screens
 - Birth control pills
 - Hormone replacement therapy

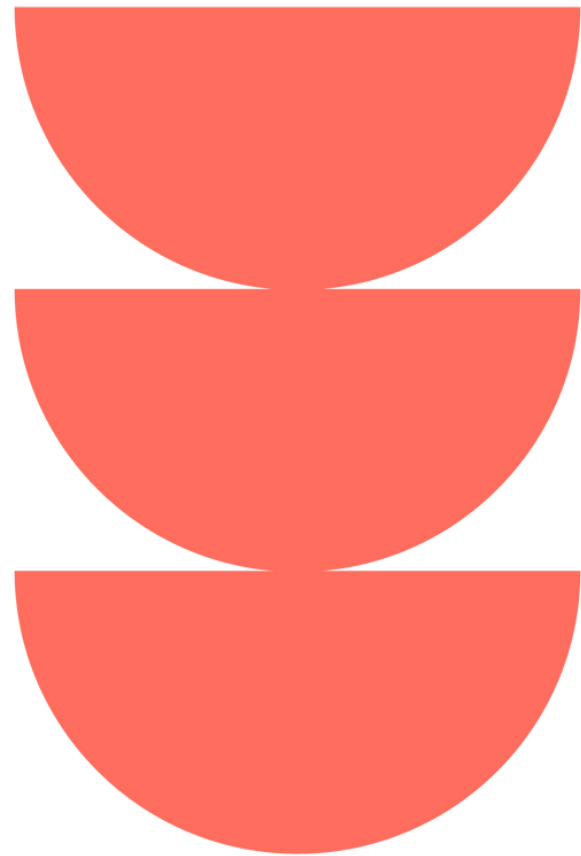


The Solution



- Solution: **Creating an optimal environment for the hormones to balance themselves
- Remember: “Like increases like, opposites balance”
 - Increase Yin = nourishment and nurturing
 - Decrease Yang = Lead less stressful lives

Healing Hormone Imbalance: 3 Tiers



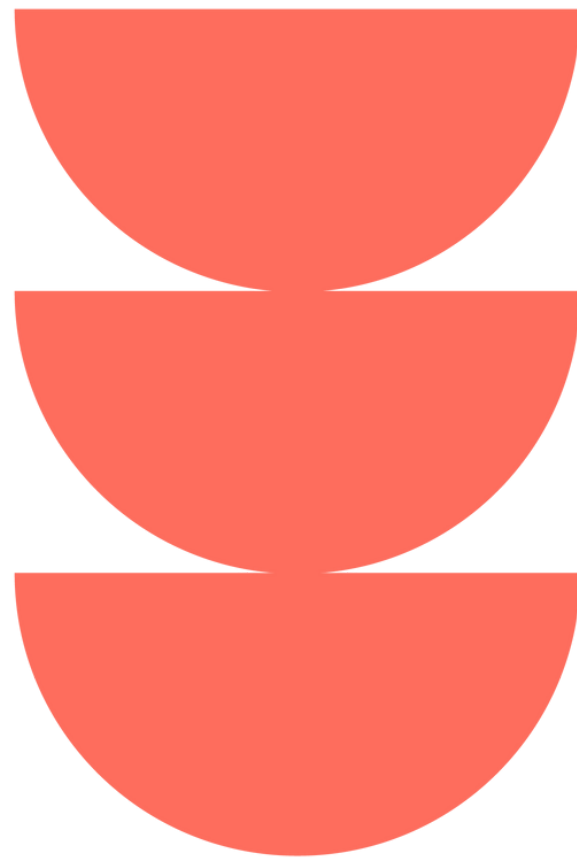
☐ Step 1:

- Embodiment practices - track your nervous system
- Make diet, lifestyle and stress-reduction changes first.
Daily habits GREATEST impact on your health.

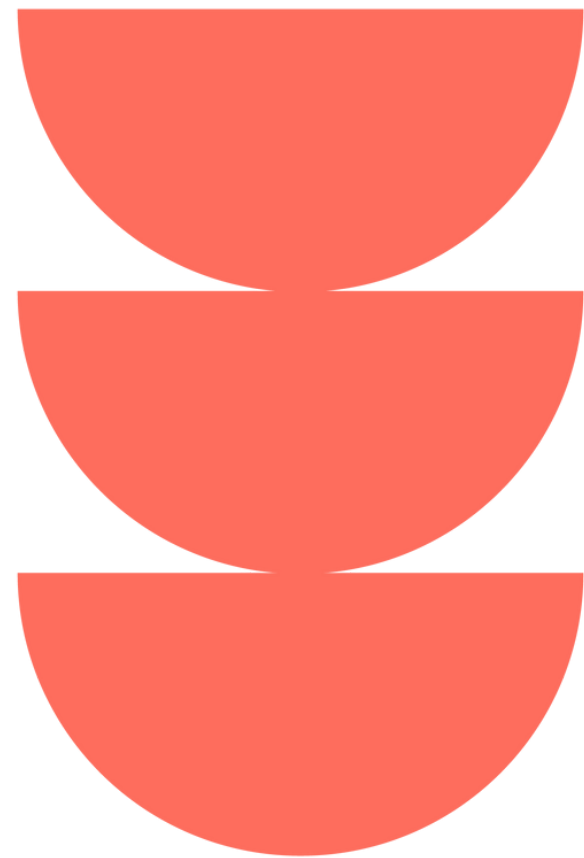
☐ **Step 2:** Use natural herbs and remedies when extra support is needed.

☐ **Step 3:** Use surgery, pharmaceutical or bioidentical hormones temporarily when physical, mental and emotional symptoms are unbearable or if they're needed to stabilize or manage symptoms when imbalance has progressed so far that Step 1 and Step 2 strategies aren't enough.

Step 1: Embodiment

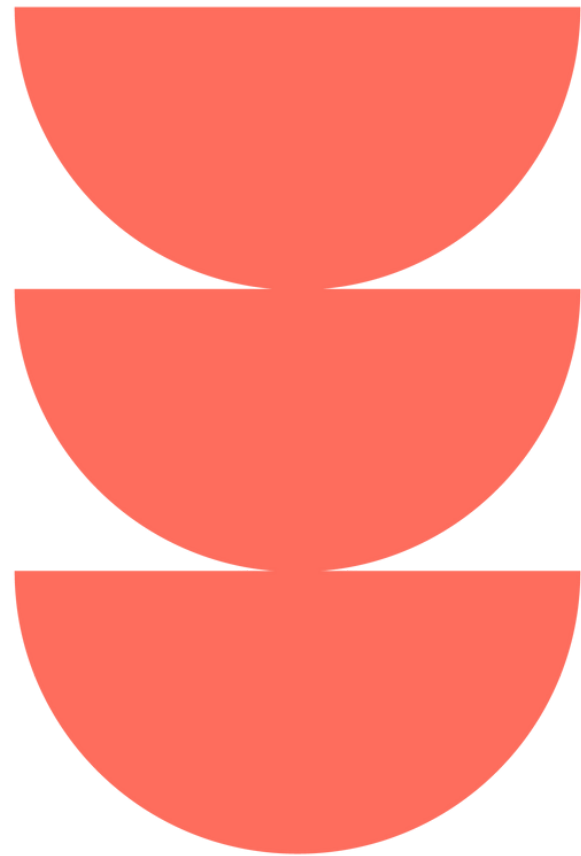


- Your body is constantly giving you information about what nourishes you and what doesn't. Healing requires:
 - “Embodiment describes the experience and process of fully inhabiting your skin in such a way that your thoughts, actions, feelings and intentions find a cohesive expression through the body.” Somatic Experiencing Workbook, pg. 16
 - Antidote to dissociation - vacating one's body as a result of overwhelm stress and trauma.
 - Learning how to listen to the signals your body sends you
 - Learning the language to interpret those signals
 - Learning the tools to respond to those signals so that you can nourish yourself.



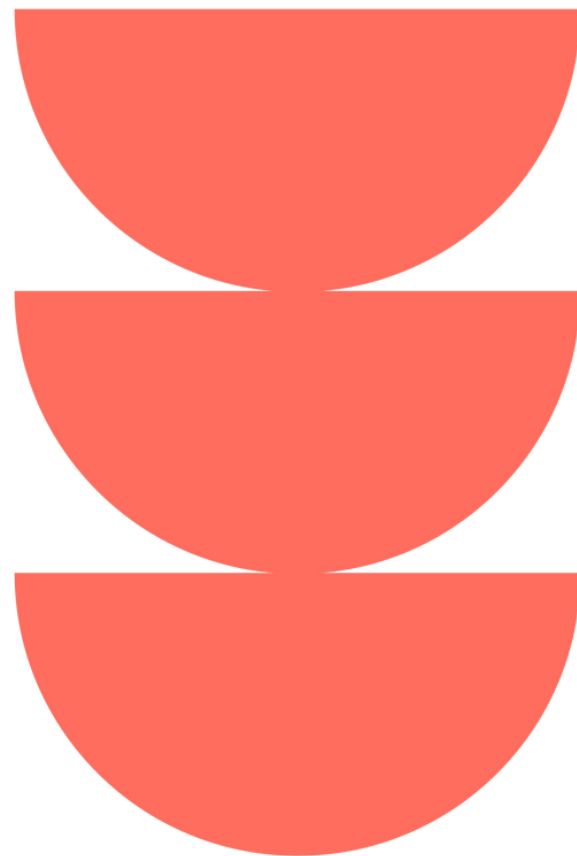
Writing Exercise

TIMES Practice



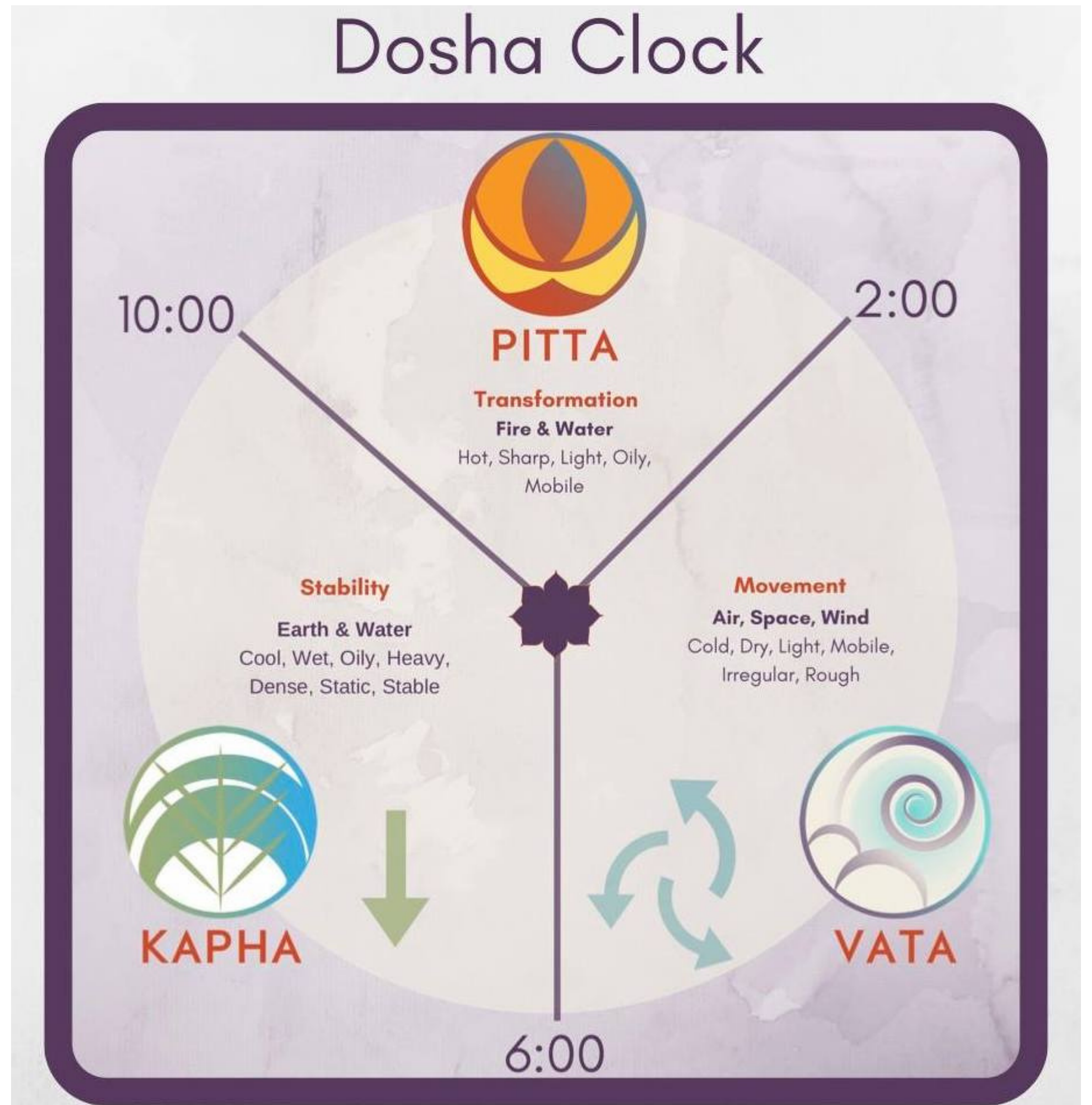
- ☐ Thought
- ☐ Image
- ☐ Movement
- ☐ Emotion
- ☐ Sensation

Step 1: Habits, Diet + Stress Reduction

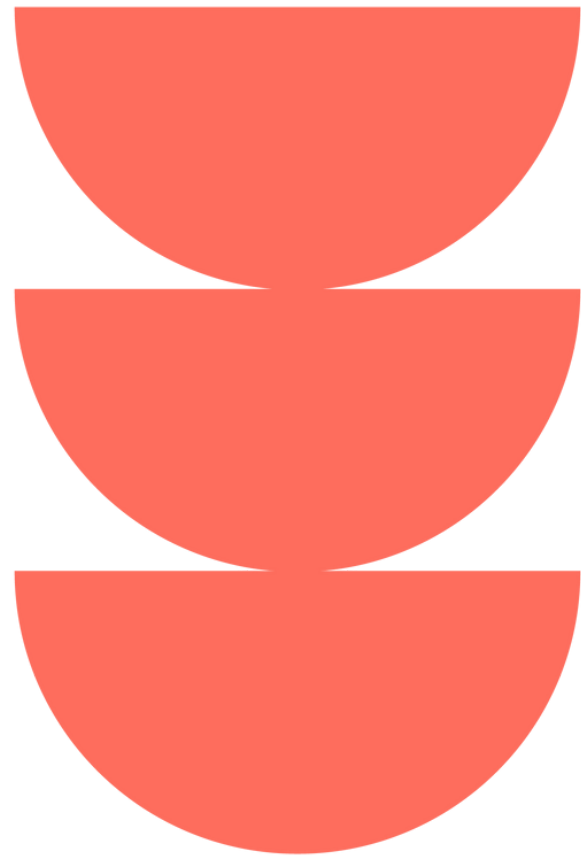


- ☐ You are part of nature. Your physiology is designed to move with the rhythms of nature (Circadian Science).
- ☐ How/when you eat, sleep, wake, hydrate, eliminate, move, rest, create space for mental, emotional processing, care for your senses, etc. - create balance or obstacles to healing.
- ☐ **It's not just one habit. It's all the habits within the 24-hr cycle of the day that restore rhythm**
- ☐ Reducing yang activities: Excess drive, movement, irregularity (mealtimes, schedule, travel), too much mental work, too much screen time.

The Dosha Clock

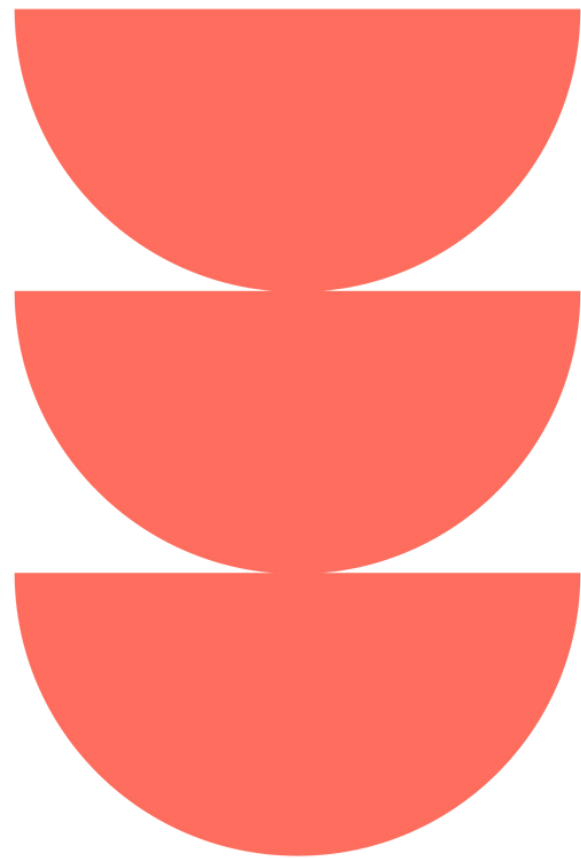


Earlier, Lighter Dinner



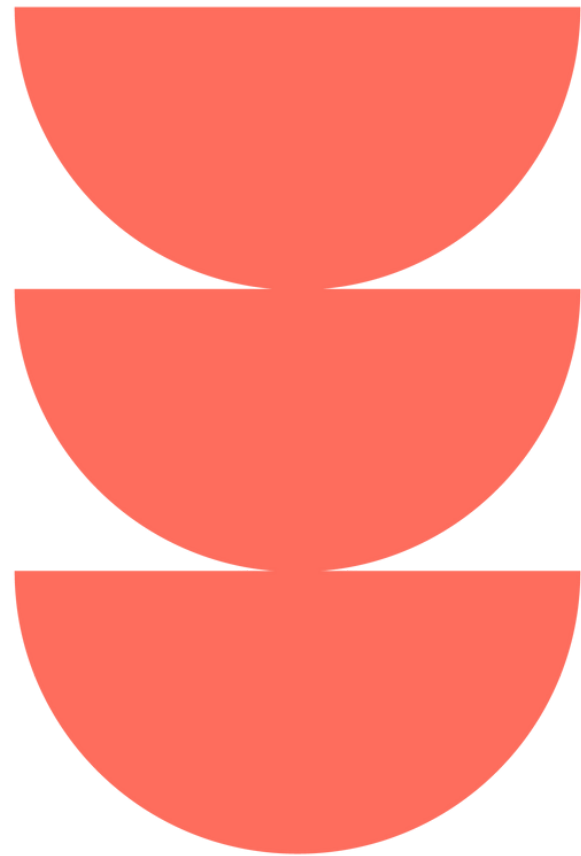
- What: Eat a light, plant-based meal by 6:30 pm.
- Why: When you eat dinner early, you digest your food before bed. You burn fat instead of waking up with a food hangover. You sleep more soundly and eliminate properly.

Bed By 10pm



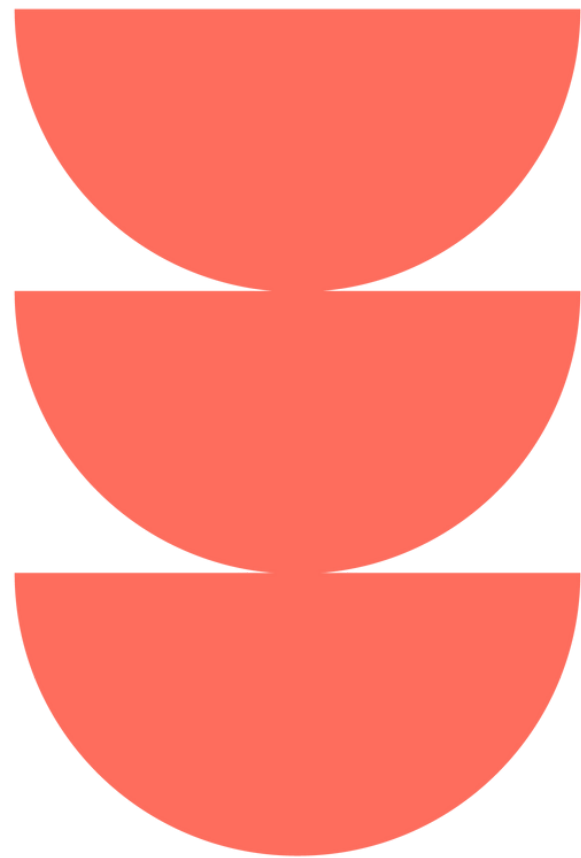
- What: Lights out by 10pm.
- Why: Going to bed after 10pm will set you up for lighter, less restful sleep and will disrupt your body's natural detoxification process. Going to bed after 10pm means you enter the next day already sleep-deprived.
- If you have fatigue, immune, disease or your nervous system is fried, aim for 9pm
- Kaizen - slowly move bedtime back by 15 mins every week

Abhyanga: Self-Massage with Oil



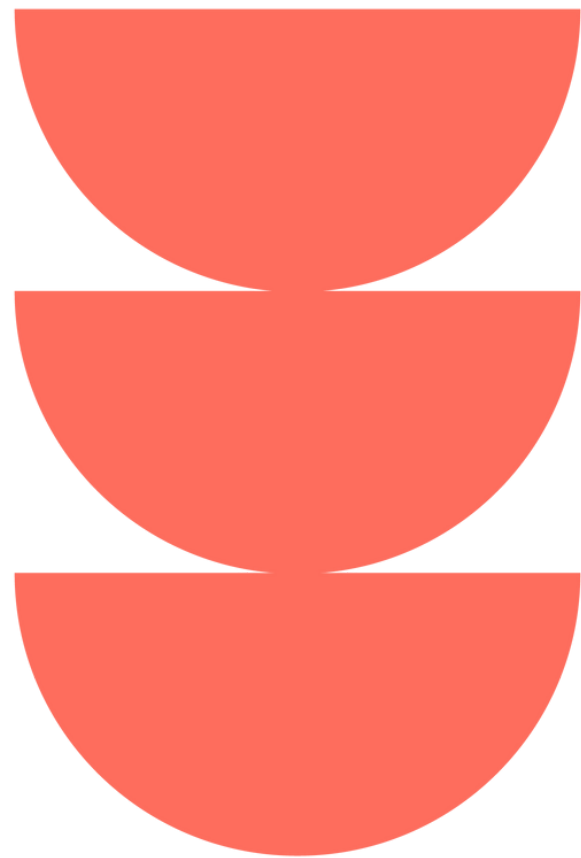
- This practice deeply calms the mind and nervous system, builds the tissues of the body and the immune system, protects the senses, and so much more.

More Yin Nourishing Practices



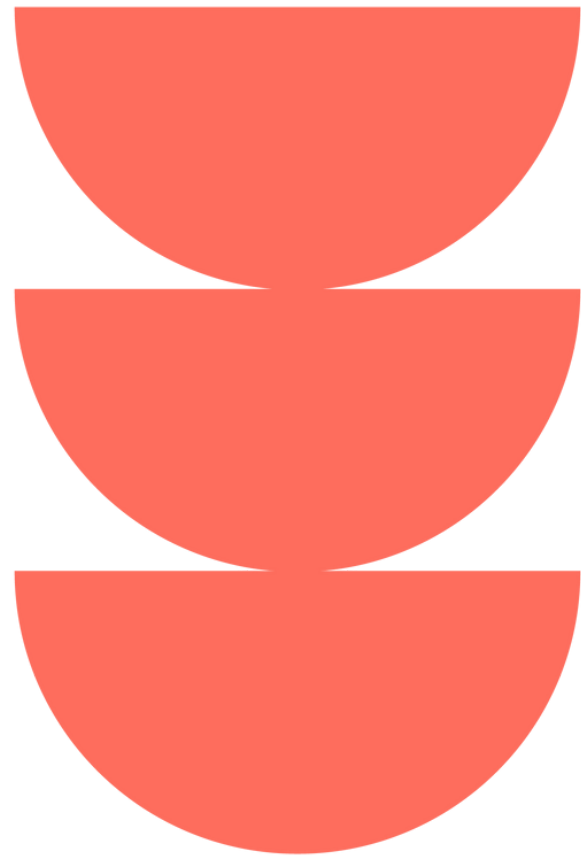
- ☐ Keywords: Routine, Warmth, Serenity, Nourishment
- ☐ The Habits: create a "container" to ground Vata
- ☐ Favor:
 - Foods that are naturally sweet in taste. Sour and salty in smaller amounts.
 - Warm foods, both energetically and in temperature.
 - Whole, freshly cooked foods.
 - A limited selection of legumes, including mung dahl, tofu, or tempeh that is well-cooked and warm soy milk spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg.
 - Warming spices like ginger, black pepper, cinnamon, and cumin, but not extremely hot spices like cayenne pepper.

More Yin Nourishing Practices (cont).



- Plenty of room temperature or warm drinks.
- Dairy, as long as it is not very cold. Avoid drinking milk with your meals. It is best to have it warm and spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg, at least an hour before or after other food.
- A generous amount of high-quality oils or ghee in your daily diet.
- Routine times for your meals.
- Taking a deep breath after swallowing your last bite and heading off for your next activity.
- Eating your meal in a peaceful environment.

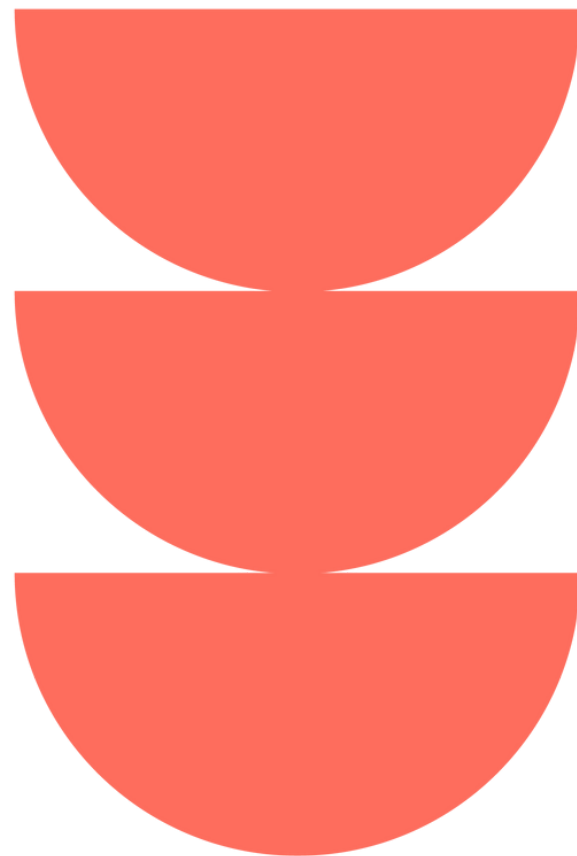
The 60% Rule



- As you're rebuilding the "container" (ojas) and start having more energy, it can be easy to use it all up.
- "The 60% Rule" is the practice of checking in with your energy each day, and moving at only 60% capacity. This will prevent further burnout and rebuild physical and mental ojas.

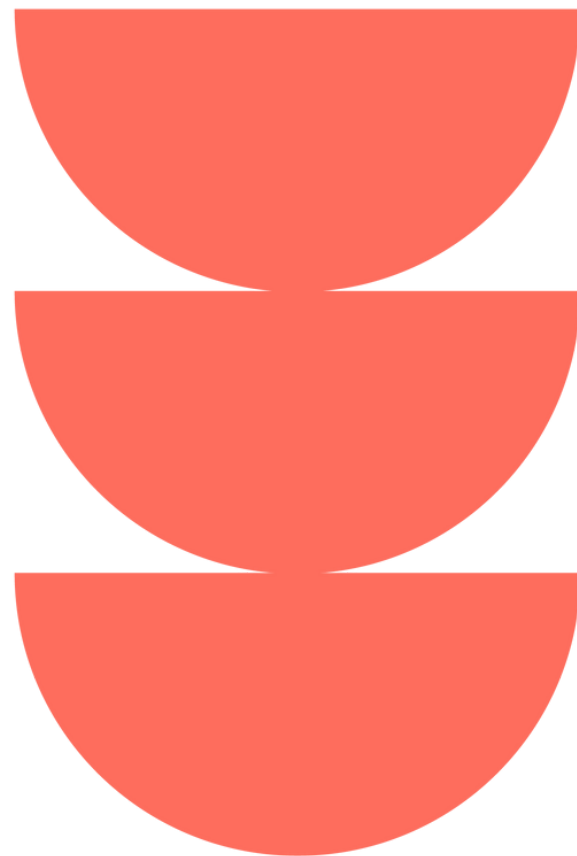
Herbal Support Approach

Disclaimer: herbs should be used under the guidance of an experience herbalist or practitioner.



- ☐ In Ayurveda, formulas are typically used rather than individual herbs. Herbs have a symbiotic and more powerful effect. Formulas also mitigate potential side effects of individual herbs.
- ☐ **Digestive** herbs should be used to support digestive strength. Digestion is usually compromised.
- ☐ **Elimination** is often compromised. Healthy elimination is at least 1 bowel complete bowel movement upon 1 hour of waking in the morning. If less or loose, elimination herbs should be considered.

Herbal Support Approach

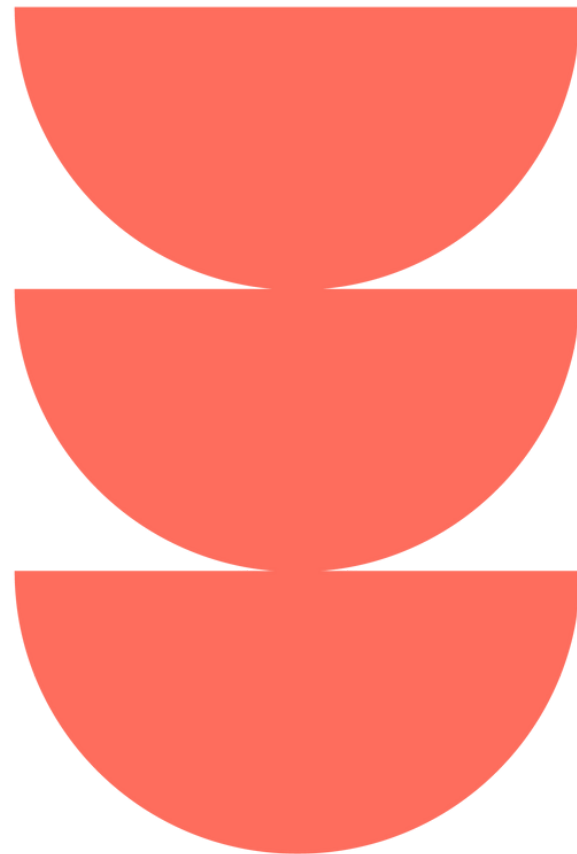


Disclaimer: herbs should be used under the guidance of an experience herbalist or practitioner.

- ☐ **Mind/Nervous system** herbs to support mental/emotional balance and calm stress response in nervous system
- ☐ **Rejuvenative** herbs (Rasayanas) are used to rebuild and restore vitality to a depleted body
- ☐ **Herbs with Prabhav** (special action) for hormone balance can be used to support the body to naturally produce its own hormones.

Specific Herbs

Disclaimer: These herbal recommendations are for education. Please consult a qualified herbalist or Ayurvedic Practitioner before taking herbs.



☐ Digestive:

- Cumin
- Fennel
- Coriander
- Cardamom

☐ Elimination:

- Triphala (Haritaki, Amalaki, Bibhitaki)

☐ Mind/Nervous System:

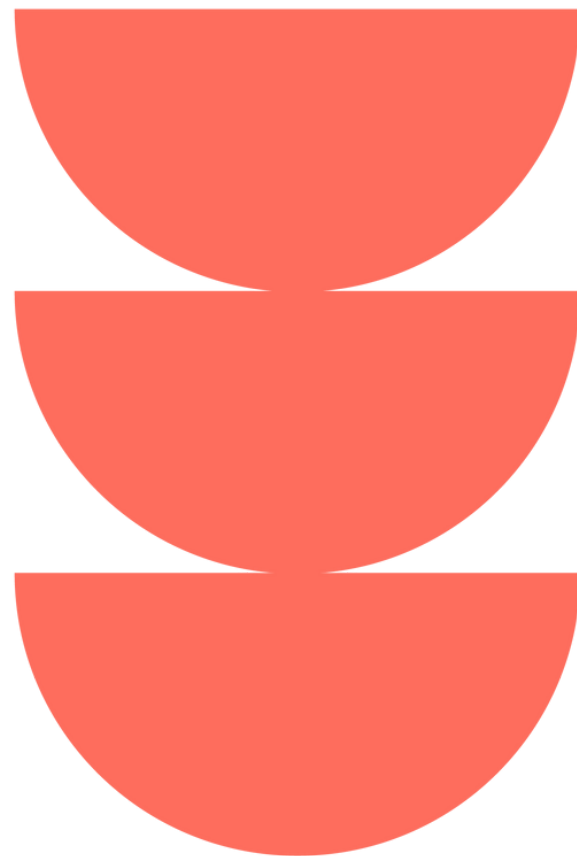
- Shankapushpi
- Jatamansi
- Brahmi
- Kappikachu

☐ Hormone/Reproductive Support:

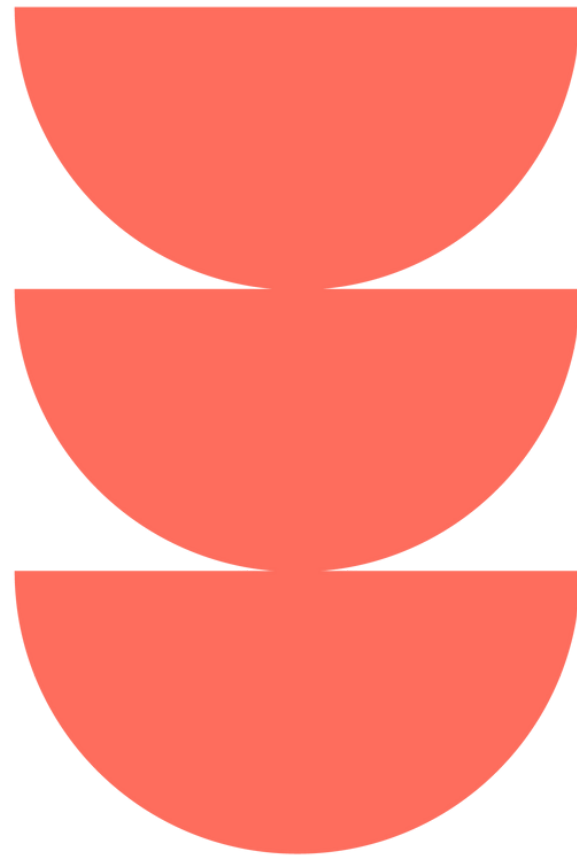
- Shatavari (supports estrogen production)
- Vidari (supports progesterone production)
- Wild Yam (supports progesterone production)
- Vitex (supports progesterone production)
- Rose
- Aloe Vera

TRIZ

- 3 columns
 - 1st: Make a list of all you can do to make sure that you achieve the worst result imaginable with respect to sleep and energy.
 - 2nd: Go down this list item by item and ask yourselves, 'Is there anything that I'm currently doing that in any way, shape, or form resembles this item?' Be brutally honest to make a second list of all your counterproductive.
 - 3rd: Go through the items on your second list and decide what first steps will help you stop what you know creates undesirable results.



"What drives you?"



- ☐ What definition of "success" possesses you?
- ☐ What drives you to override the wisdom of your body?

Interested in working together?

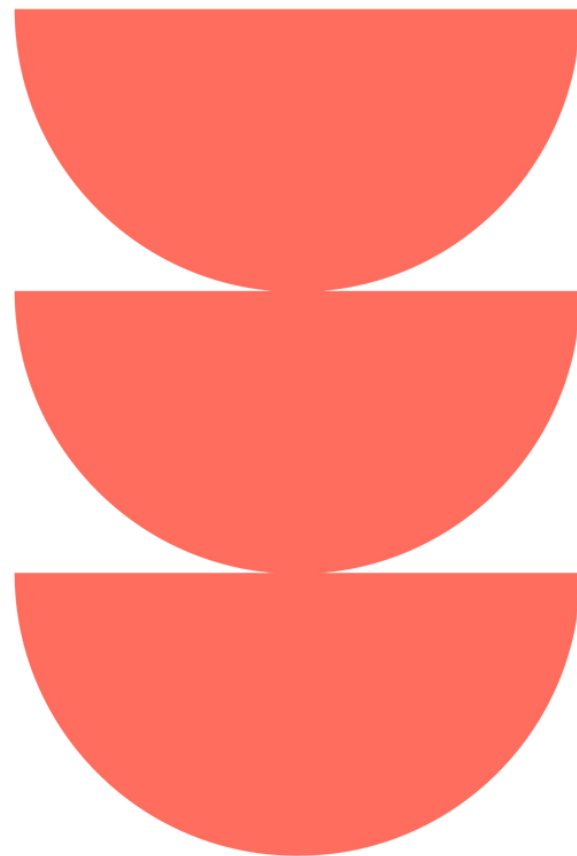
☐ Discovery Process:

The Discovery Sessions are an opportunity for you to get clear on what you desire most for your health, habits, life purpose, relationships and more. The Discovery Process typically requires between 1-3 Discovery Session Zoom calls (30-45 mins each). All are free of charge.

<https://calendly.com/courtneylacava/introdiscoverysession>

☐ Essential Living Coaching Group - enrolls each quarter Step 1 for creating a life of balance. Tap into greater vitality, stronger immunity, clarity and ease through the essential habits of Ayurveda.

www.courtneylacava.com/essential-living-course



Sources

Banyan Botanicals:

"Introduction to Ayurveda"

"Understanding Vata, Pitta, Kapha"

"Balancing Vata"

"Balancing Pitta"

"Balancing Kapha"

Balance Your Hormones, Balance Your Life

Dr. Claudia Welch

Call of the Wild: How We Heal Trauma, Awaken Our Own Power, and Use It For Good

Kimberly Ann Johnson

Body Thrive

Cate Stillman