



Ayurveda UK

The Ayurvedic Retreat

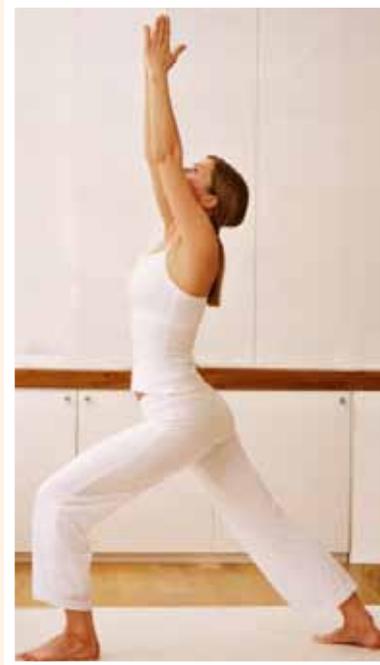
Revealing the secrets of inner health and harmony



Scientifically verified detox therapies for revitalisation and rejuvenation



Blissful purification programs



for balancing mind, body & soul



Your invitation to perfect health

Thank you for your interest in Ayurveda and the services we offer at our Ayurvedic Retreat in Tutbury, Staffordshire.

Ayurveda UK was founded by Danny Cavanagh and Carol Willis and provides high quality, complementary healthcare from the Ayurvedic tradition of India.

Ayurveda, the original court medicine of India, is the oldest and most powerful purification technique known to man. For thousands of years kings and princes of India have valued its powers of rejuvenation and revitalisation, but its advanced purification procedures are so intricate and involve such a high level of knowledge and skill, that its transition to western culture has been achieved by few.

Having applied Ayurvedic principles to our own lives over the past 18 years, and having witnessed extraordinary improvements in the lives of many of our guests, we have gained a deep and profound understanding of this powerful healthcare system. Our unique two-technician massage therapies, one-to-one life-coaching, stress management and counselling sessions have attracted an interesting and diverse portfolio of regular clients.

With our special combination of personal care, technical skill and profound practical advice we will help you improve your health and well-being - whether it's by losing weight, improving digestion or simply reducing stress. Our relaxing Ayurvedic massage therapies form the focus of your stay but you'll also discover a wealth of knowledge from the Ayurvedic tradition. You'll gain an understanding of your Ayurvedic body-type and have the opportunity to learn how to meditate, how to practice yoga and even how to prepare a nutritious and tasty dhal soup.

We warmly invite you to take advantage of this scientifically validated healthcare tradition and encourage you to take the first positive steps for reducing stress and achieving a healthier, happier lifestyle by participating in one of our Ayurvedic purification and stress management courses. If, after reading this brochure, you have any further questions or queries or have been inspired to reserve a place on one of our courses please ring either Danny Cavanagh or Carol Willis today on 0870 744 1508 - it may change your life forever.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danny Cavanagh".

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Willis".



Ayurveda – the holistic path to health

The founders of Ayurveda UK

Danny Cavanagh and Carol Willis began their study of Ayurveda in the late 1980s and trained as Ayurvedic Panchakarma Technicians at the Maharishi University of Valkenburg in Holland in 1993. Since that time they have also studied with the renowned Dr Vacant Lad at the Ayurvedic Institute in New Mexico and Dr David Frawley and Atreya Smith at the European Institute of Ayurveda. The subjects they have studied include pulse reading, Ayurvedic herbology, Ayurvedic diet and nutrition and Marma therapy. They gave up their careers as Nature Reserve Warden and Photographer respectively and decided to dedicate their lives to passing on this ancient knowledge of rejuvenation and revitalisation to others. Since that time they have run many centres across the UK and have treated thousands of clients, including high-flying professionals, captains of industry and even royalty. In their role as both massage therapists and personal development/stress management counsellors they regularly see extraordinary, if not miraculous, changes to the well-being and outlook of their guests due to the power of the programs they administer.

Massage therapies

Ayurveda employs a wide range of powerful massage techniques to help rectify imbalances within the physiology, many involving two technicians working in harmony on either side of the body. Most Ayurvedic massages are luxuriously relaxing, to soothe the body and calm the mind, while others are more stimulating, to energise the body and mobilise impurities. Treatment plans are individually tailored, so whether you need to relax the mind or purify and revitalise the whole body, a suitable treatment package will be prescribed to help bring you back into balance.

Purification procedures

Bastis are gentle, non-invasive herbal enemas that vastly improve the effectiveness of the detox therapies. These are optional treatments but are said to increase the elimination of impurities by up to sixty percent. They help reduce weight, improve complexion and remove aches and pains from the muscles and joints. The results speak for themselves - a flatter belly, a healthy glow and vibrant health. The side effects - reduced weight, stronger digestion, increased muscle tone and a peaceful mind.

Yoga, pranayama & meditation

You'll be introduced to the gentle art of stretching (yoga), balanced breathing (pranayama) and settling the mind (meditation) as these are powerful ways to experience profound levels of inner peace and harmony. These techniques are now widely accepted as scientifically valid ways to improve health and reduce stress. Many large corporations are currently training their key staff in these skills to help them cope with the ever-increasing pressures of the modern-day work environment.

Life-coaching, personal development and stress management

During your visit you'll be given ample opportunity to discuss and identify areas or issues in your life that are of concern and the tools and long-term solutions to help deal with them.

Diet & nutrition

Good digestion and a healthy colon is the key to physical health, mental well-being, spiritual harmony and the absence of dis-ease. During the course you'll receive a wealth of valuable information regarding the Ayurvedic principles of diet and nutrition and how to effortlessly incorporate them into your life.



The benefits of an Ayurvedic detox

Ayurveda (the science of life) is a holistic healthcare system whose timeless wisdom was first recorded by the Vedic scholars of India over 5000 years ago. It is presently witnessing an unprecedented revival in the west.



An Ayurveda detox & stress management course includes:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Ayurvedic massage | Meditation/Yoga |
| Steam therapy | Deep relaxation |
| Marma therapy | Life coaching |
| Sound therapy | Stress management |
| Purification therapy | Personal development |
| Elimination therapy | Nutritional advice |
| Energy balancing | Lifestyle advice |

Some of the benefits of an Ayurvedic detox include:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Vibrant health | A healthier complexion |
| Increased energy | Improved circulation |
| Reduced stress | Improved digestion |
| Weight loss | Increased self-confidence |
| Better sleep | Increased self-motivation |
| Emotional stability | Better time management |
| Greater vitality | Better relationships |

Ayurveda's powerful but relaxing therapies will help relieve:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Arthritis/Rheumatism | Excess weight |
| Back problems | Constipation |
| Joint stiffness | Insomnia |
| Neuralgia | Stress and fatigue |
| Sinus congestion | Anger and irritability |
| High blood pressure | Fear and anxiety |
| Skin disorders | Emotional blockages |
| Cellulite | Phobias and fears |



What to expect on a retreat

On an Ayurvedic Retreat you'll receive the very best in the field of complementary healthcare. Not only do we provide scientifically validated purification therapies but we also offer effective health education, life-coaching and stress-management programs. Our therapies are profound and powerful, our life coaching comprehensive and our personal service second to none. Once you've experienced the therapies we offer, we trust you'll agree that they're the most natural and effective path to health and happiness in the world today. An Ayurvedic retreat is your chance to unwind and relax in a caring, supportive environment.



Therapies

- A personally-tailored treatment plan
- Luxurious massages to soothe and calm the mind
- Powerful detoxification procedures for balancing and purifying the body
- Two technicians working in perfect harmony on either side of your body
- Smoothly flowing massage strokes with warm, aromatic oils
- Pure silence during massage treatments to enhance their effectiveness
- Simple techniques for relieving fears, phobias and general anxiety
- Healing sounds to relax and energise the mind and body

Life Coaching

- Discover your Ayurvedic body type and the secrets to keeping it balanced
- Learn how to effortlessly introduce this ancient wisdom into your daily life
- Find out how to stay healthy and live a happy, stress-free life
- Explore gentle Ayurvedic exercises to maintain peak health and fitness
- Practice simple Yoga postures to improve muscle tone and joint flexibility
- Learn a powerful meditation technique to release stress and relax the mind
- Learn an effective breathing technique for instant relaxation and mental balance
- Discover how to improve digestion, regulate appetite and reduce cravings
- Find out how to administer your own Ayurvedic body massage

Service

- Highly experienced Ayurvedic technicians/consultants
- Profound Ayurvedic treatments and personal health coaching
- Your own personal technicians to care for you during your detox
- A peaceful atmosphere of trust, honesty and openness
- Guaranteed rest, revitalisation and rejuvenation
- Light and wholesome vegetarian fare prepared according to Ayurvedic principles



Ayurvedic therapies

Abhyanga

This wonderful Ayurvedic therapy consists of a full head and body massage administered by one or two technicians working in synchrony on either side of your body. Aromatic herbal oils are lovingly applied in a continuous flowing sequence. The depth, speed and type of herbal oil varies according to your Ayurvedic body type.

Vishesh

A deep, invigorating massage with firm, kneading actions to help promote the release of deep-seated imbalances, toxins and impurities. It is especially helpful for soothing sore, tired or aching muscles.

Pizzichilli

A unique relaxation experience - two therapists gently massage and bathe your body with gallons of warm aromatic oil. Aches and pains, cares and worries effortlessly subside in a continuous flow of liquid golden nectar.

Udvaartana

A coarse herbal paste is applied to the body by your two technicians. It enlivens and energises the body helping promote better digestion, healthier skin and firmer muscle tone. It also increases circulation, helping break down fatty deposits and cellulite and is therefore recommended for those wishing to lose weight.

Garshan

Raw silk gloves are used to rapidly massage the body. The friction and static electricity created refreshes and stimulates the skin, promoting better circulation and the breakdown of cellulite.

Shirodhara

This amazingly relaxing therapy gently releases stress and tension from the mind and body; it usually accompanies Abhyanga or Vishesh. A steady stream of warm, aromatic oil flows rhythmically across the forehead calming the mind and soothing the nervous system. It induces deep relaxation and feelings of profound happiness and well-being.

Svedana

A herbal steam treatment allowing the body to perspire and release impurities from the skin. It is excellent for helping soothe painful, sore or aching muscles and joints and for improving the complexion.

Marma

This blissful healing session helps balance the body's energy points by stimulating powerful junction points or 'Marmas'. It can also help resolve emotional imbalances, increase mental clarity and induce calmness, confidence and feelings of self-worth.





A typical day at The Ayurvedic Retreat

The venue for our courses is a small but cosy terraced town house in the quiet, historic village of Tutbury in Staffordshire. The venue is exclusively yours for the duration of your stay, apart from scheduled visits by ourselves for treatments, health counselling and the cooking and serving of simple but delicious vegetarian meals. You'll also have a little time to explore the pretty village of Tutbury on the banks of the River Dove and the famous Tutbury castle. As we only have one guest staying at any one time you'll receive our undivided attention at all times.



- 7am We recommend that you start your day with an hour of yoga, pranayama and meditation – instruction can be given to those who are not familiar with any of these practices or who would like extra tuition.
- 8am Breakfast of freshly-squeezed organic vegetable juice.
- 9am The main therapy session of the day – a blissful Abhyanga massage with one or two Ayurvedic therapists massaging your body with warm herbal oils in total synchrony. This is followed by either Svedana; a herbal steam treatment or Shirodhara; warm herbal oil poured rhythmically over the forehead.
- 11am Rest and relaxation with gentle Indian flute music and a cup of ginger or herb tea.
- 12am A light lunch of rice or buckwheat, vegetables and lentil dhal.
- 1pm A chance to explore the craft and antique shops in the local village, relax in the garden or walk in the countryside.
- 3pm Ayurvedic education, life-coaching or counselling – topics include diet, lifestyle and exercise. The luxury of having additional Ayurvedic therapy sessions at this time is also an option – see 'Ultimate Panchakarma Detox' option on the course and tariff page.
- 5pm We recommend that you end your day with an hour of gentle yoga, pranayama and meditation.
- 6pm Light supper of rice, lentil and vegetable soup.
- 7pm A chance to relax, read, watch DVD's or listen to self-improvement tapes.
- 10pm The ideal time to retire to bed for a blissful night's sleep.



Comments from our guests

“ My first Abhyanga was sheer ecstasy...four hands, synchronised to perfection, kneading my skin with specially blended oils. I have never had such a complete relaxation experience. And just when I thought it couldn't get any better, I was given Shirodhara, which, trust me, will get you as near to nirvana as you will ever manage while still breathing. Aah! The simplest of pleasures after the greatest indulgence. So what I would say to you all is this: if ever there is a time to get away, go. Educate your mind, revive your body and renew your spirit. Ayurveda UK isn't a fancy, plush spa - it's the real deal, a life-changing experience. ”

Normandie Keith, YOU magazine (Sunday Mail)

“ I can't tell where the four hands are on my body, or even where I end and they begin, as tense muscles turn to fluid as the oil is poured over them. By the end of my stay, my skin and eyes were clear and my mind was rested. I felt wonderful almost immediately; quite calm and relaxed in spite of being straight into work overload and family drama. ”

Anna Selby, London Evening Standard

“ Once again thanks to you and your charming colleagues. I feel like a saner, lighter and more relaxed person after a few days of your treatments...I have had many massages in my time, all around the world, but yours hit the spot that others just don't reach. ”

Catherine Fairweather, Harpers and Queen

“ The two-hour treatments were unlike anything I have ever experienced at any health farm. All my disillusionment and stress was massaged away in a stream of sesame oil. Imagine gallons of warm oil pouring all over you while two therapists massage in the oil in complete synchronisation, from top to toe. As a sensory experience it was unique...especially as I discovered on my return home that I had lost half a stone”.

Ceril Campbell, Health and Fitness magazine

“ If you really want to give your health and beauty a kick start, treat yourself to an Ayurveda course... I woke up and the world seemed a different place, my body clean and healthy, like a well-oiled machine... I felt like a whole new woman.”

Jane Alexander, Daily Mail

“ I have had many different types of massages before but have never experienced anything like it. It was blissfully relaxing; I got to the stage when I felt my body was no longer part of me, that I was floating on a bed of clouds. It's only a month since my treatments and people are still telling me how well I look and asking what I've done to myself. ”

Wendy Haring, British Wheel of Yoga.



Course & tariff guide

Rejuvenation Retreat

This five-day retreat is ideal if you desire a short break to recharge the batteries, relax the mind and gently purify the body. You'll receive a two-hour Abhyanga massage and Shirodhara therapy each morning and practice gentle yoga exercises and meditation each afternoon.

Price: £ 2,400 (5 days)

Ayurveda Detox Retreat

On this seven-day detox program you'll receive a two-hour Ayurvedic massage and shirodhara or svedana therapy each day. This course is an ideal introduction and preparation for the more intensive Panchakarma course but is also well suited to those that simply wish to rest, relax and de-stress. This course also includes personal lifestyle and health coaching.

Price: £ 3,400 (7 days)

Panchakarma Detox Retreat

This ten to fourteen-day detox course is slightly more intensive than the Ayurveda Detox Retreat. There is a specialised Ayurvedic diet and gentle purification treatments called bastis. Scientific studies have shown that this program can reduce biological ageing by up to five years, in as little as one week. This course is recommended for those who are serious about losing weight - if you need to lose it you will, and if you don't, you won't lose too much.

Price: £ 4,800 (10 days)

The Ultimate Panchakarma Detox Retreat

This course is similar to the Panchakarma Detox course but has the added luxury and indulgence of two therapy sessions each day.

Price: £ 6,800 (10 days)

Ayurveda Home Detox Course

An exclusive personal detox-coaching service for clients who prefer to receive our detox programs within the privacy of their own homes. This service is available throughout Europe and America. Please contact us for further information.

Apart from the 'Home Detox' course, all our programs are carried out in the residential setting of our Vedic Retreat in Staffordshire. As you'll be our only guest you're guaranteed our individual care and attention at all times. Your treatment plan and diet is personally-tailored to your unique Ayurvedic body-type or imbalance and treatments will vary each day depending on progress. Your diet will be based on vegetarian soups and juices and will be light on the digestion. You'll receive daily life-coaching and health education consultations to help you stay relaxed, calm and healthy on an ongoing basis. We will cover topics such as diet, nutrition, exercise, yoga, meditation, relaxation, balanced breathing, oil massage, phobias, anxiety and stress management. You will gain a deep understanding of your individual body-type and learn an ideal daily routine for maintaining health, beauty and vitality.

All courses include:

Understanding you unique Ayurvedic body-type

Stress management & relaxation techniques

Meditation, pranayama & yoga



Miscellaneous Information

The Ayurvedic Retreat in Tutbury (Staffordshire)

- Arrival time is between 10am and 11am and departure time is between 2pm and 3pm.
- All courses are tailored to your individual body-type and specific imbalance.
- Seven to twenty-eight day programs are available.
- All meals are light and vegetarian - breakfast is usually freshly-squeezed carrot, ginger and apple juice, and lunch and evening meals are delicious soups based on rice, lentils and vegetables.
- There is a well-stocked library of spiritual novels and health-related books and magazines.
- There is no television but we have a large selection of DVD's and video tapes (we have tried to choose movies that are educational, light and humorous or inspirational in nature).
- There is a good selection of self-development tape sets (Deepak Chopra, Anthony Robbins, Brian Tracy, Nightingale Conant, Stephan Covey etc).
- There is a small selection of relaxing music, including Indian ragas, classical music and sacred chants.
- As this is a retreat for your mind, as well as a detox for your body, we do ask that you refrain from bringing your laptop computer and any other work related material or daily newspapers.
- We also request that mobile phones are not used at the Vedic Retreat - there is a small shelter in the garden if you desperately feel the need to keep in contact with the outside world at any time.
- Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the premises.
- There are many interesting craft shops in the village of Tutbury and plenty of short country walks to explore in the immediate vicinity. The beautiful River Dove is within walking distance as is the famous 11th century Tutbury castle and Norman church.

Reservations

- Places on our courses are limited to 25 clients per year and, whilst there are occasionally last minute spaces available, we usually have a long waiting list. We therefore advise that you reserve your stay at least 12 months in advance to avoid disappointment.
- Full payment is required to secure your reservation. Payment can be by cheque, bankers draft or bank transfer. Refunds cannot normally be given if cancellation is within six weeks of your reserved dates. However, if we are able to re-book your place, a refund will be given minus a £120 administration fee.
- We advise that you arrange holiday insurance to secure against the unfortunate event of having to cancel or postpone your course due to unforeseen circumstances.

We trust you've been inspired by the services we offer and invite you to begin the process of gently purifying and energizing your mind and body through the infinite wisdom of Ayurveda. Please call us today to book your course. Our telephone number at the Vedic Retreat is 0870 744 1508 - we look forward to receiving your call and giving you the opportunity to achieve your dream of a long and fulfilling life.

My Ayurvedic trip to Nirvana

Normandie Keith ditched her mobile phone and Pepsi Max to embark on a detox programme that transformed more than just her body



ILLUSTRATION: BEE MURPHY

Having just turned 29, I've been looking back and realised I've spent a lot of time taking care of my outside and not much looking after my insides. So, as a birthday treat, I decided to purify my body and explore a new way of life. Ayurveda - which literally means the science of life - is a form of holistic health and beauty care that originated in India 5,000 years ago. My favourite things - increased energy, reduced stress, proper digestion, weight loss, improved skin and better sleep - are just some of the benefits. Need I say more?

I signed up for the detoxification programme called panchakarma, which means 'five actions' - referring to the five different therapies that are used to remove impurities from the body. This programme usually takes ten days and is done in residence.

DAY ONE Woke up at 7am to take 15ml of warm ghee. The reason I am awake at this ungodly hour is so that the ghee is passed through my system, collecting toxins from fat cells on its way and centralising them in the gut. If taken after 8 am the ghee itself is digested, and uses up the digestive energy that I am trying to conserve. By limiting my number of calories and having no fats, dairy products, sugar, alcohol, coffee, tea, tinned or microwaved food (my staple diet!) I will supposedly give my system a break.

By midday I have a hideous headache and have had to remove my belly chain for fear of breakage - it's amazing how fast those toxins rush down to the tummy. My diet today consists of plain rice and cooked vegetables. I have traded in my beloved Pepsi Max for herbal tea and taken two naps, during which I dreamed of McDonald's, French fries and swimming in a pool of chocolate pudding.

DAY TWO Another 7am start and 25ml of ghee butter. This isn't good - my tummy has swollen so that I look like a pregnant Teletubby and there are still jackhammers going off in my head. But I am staying positive and out of sight, reading and meditating - my stomach has now begun to chant with me and twice sent Suge, my Chihuahua, scurrying out of the room in fear. He's seen the movie Alien.

DAY THREE Today was a shock. Having never taken castor oil before, I didn't know what to expect. Now that I do, all I can say is, how can this stuff be legal? Three hours after my prescribed dose of 30mls found myself promise to give up any beauty/gossip column secrets in exchange for the ordeal to end. Looking like a power walker, I charged between bed and loo all day. After which I had a startling realisation - this was only the pre-treatment.

DAY FOUR Bucking up my courage, I set off for the Peak District with Suge. On the drive up it seemed everywhere I looked sweets and fizzy drinks were calling out: 'This is your last chance, stop the car, no one will know.' But with every last ounce of willpower, I forged on. It was foggy when we got up to Ashbourne, a little bit Blair Witch Project, so I turned on my mobile for some urban security. What, no signal? No food, no Pepsi Max and now no signal; I'm going to die up here. I grabbed hold of my unravelling nerve long enough to turn into the drive to Rose Cottage, my residence for the next five days. Upon arrival my anxiety dissipated as my three lovely Ayurvedic technicians, Carol, Danny and Mary, greeted me warmly at the door. They were also pleased to see Suge. I was starving after the sensory overload of passing so many Little Chefs, so I sat down to a lunch of rice, dhal, asparagus, mixed vegetables and a delicious fennel tea. Surprisingly, I loved it all and felt very satisfied afterwards. Danny explained that each meal should contain six tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent and astringent. This satisfies the palate and leaves the body feeling balanced. Let the treatments begin.

My first, Abhyanga, was sheer ecstasy. Carol and Mary massaged me in tandem. Four hands, synchronised to perfection, kneaded my skin with specially blended oils for my body type (vata/pitta). I have never had such a complete relaxation experience. And just when I thought it couldn't get any better, I was given Shirodhara, which, trust me, will get you as near to nirvana as you will ever manage while still breathing. Warm aromatic oil flowed rhythmically back and forth across my forehead, calming and soothing me. When I drifted back to my room, I slipped under the sheets to find a toasty hot-water bottle waiting for me. Aah! The simplest of pleasures after the greatest indulgence.

DAY FIVE Began at 9 am with red grape and ginger juice, then it was off to the bathroom to clean my teeth and scrape my tongue (my favourite new beauty tip). Ama, or toxins, can be seen on the tongue in the morning. If you have eaten late at night or your digestion is generally poor – it's that four-ply cashmere feeling your tongue sometimes gets. So you literally slosh off the gunge with a stainless steel scraper, revealing a fresh pink tongue and fresh breath.

I then went downstairs and did an hour of yoga and an hour of meditation with Danny. My body felt very free and was itching to stretch like a cat - I actually felt like purring! - as each yoga pose hit the spot. The meditation was deep and I kept nodding off, which Danny said was normal, since meditation gives the body what it needs. So in my case? Rest.

After the meditation, my Ayurveda lessons began. Danny explained that body types fit into three categories; vata, pitta and kapha. Vatas tend to be vibrant, emotional, adaptable and enthusiastic; pittas are perfectionists, impatient, strong-minded and courageous; kaphas are calm, deep sleepers, complacent, compassionate. Most of us are a mix of two types, but Ayurvedics believe that knowing our body types means we can live harmoniously with the cycles of day and nature, as the days and the seasons are also linked to these categories. It is important to follow a diet that is tailored to your type. I am a vata/pitta type so need food that is warming, such as stew and hot drinks, not dry things, as my skin, nails and hair are quite dry.



That afternoon I had Netra Tarpana - my eyes were bathed in ghee. This is done in order to improve any eye disorders (you look as though you have trendy yellow-tinted glasses on, except they are wet). Then it was time for another glorious Abhyanga massage, followed by Swedana for which my body was enclosed in a cedar cabinet filled with herbalised steam. My head was the only thing exposed and Mary kept it cooled with compresses. The vapours softened

and dilated the channels of my body, allowing the impurities to be moved out

I wrapped up warm in my fluffy robe and cushy slippers and moseyed back to my room, where I was given a Matra Basti, which is warm sesame oil inserted enema-style, to nourish the system and gather toxins for further elimination the next day.

DAY SIX The big one. Toxins and impurities were supposed to race out of my body, Carl Lewis style, and I would be pure (hallelujah). To start the day I had Pizzichilli, where gallons of warm oil flowed from hoses that were guided along my body as I was simultaneously massaged. The heat of the oil was gradually increased and the toxins flowed freely from my pores. After this treatment I was given a Shodhana Basti enema to complete the cleansing process. Today's diet was light, only peya - a soup of white basmati rice and mung beans. But by the day's end I felt brighter, lighter, flatter (belly chain on and dangling!) and had a profound sense of happiness and wellbeing.

DAY SEVEN Each treatment began with a delicious foot-bath, and face and head massage, which proved to be a fantastic treatment for the hair. Coconut oil was used and my head wrapped in a chic turban towel (which is easy to do at home). I wanted to whack on some false eyelashes and swan around like Joan Crawford, but this was not the place. Instead we started the day off with Marma. This gentle massage balances the body's subtle energy points and left me in a Zen-like state. My afternoon delight was Garshan, which saw me massaged with raw silk gloves for a brisk exfoliation, refreshing the skin and reducing cellulite (there is a God!).

DAY EIGHT One final exquisite massage and then back to the real world. I couldn't believe how great I felt. Being without TV, my phone, even a newspaper left me with my own thoughts, and the vast space and new education of Ayurveda deeply affected me. I loved the quiet, peace and steadiness I felt - that is, until I went to gather up Suge for our journey home and couldn't find him anywhere. I located him with Carol, who was lovingly massaging him with lavender oil to settle him. The total goodness of my new friends reminded me how generous people can be. So what I would say to you all is this: if there is ever a time when you can get away, go. Educate your mind, revive your body and renew your spirit. Ayurveda UK isn't a fancy, plush spa - it's the real deal, a life-changing experience. And I didn't even stop at McDonald's on the way home.

Normandie Keith is YOU's beauty editor at large Inside Story YOU magazine (Sunday Mail)

Lentil Soup for the Soul

Britain's most in demand Ayurvedic advisers will change your life, one spoon of castor oil at a time



PHOTO BY SARAH WEAL

Their clients range from bus ticket collectors to British royals, and their philosophy falls somewhere between Deepak Chopra and an Indian grandma. Carol and Danny, who run Ayurveda UK, are in the business of balancing body and mind - with regular doses of castor oil and lentil soup. "We believe that if you quiet and tidy up the mind, then the body can do what it needs to do," says Carol. The two, who are partners in business and in life, adopt a yin and yang approach to work "I'm the emotional counsellor, he's the Ayurvedic scientist," Carol explains.

The couple are relaxing on a leather sofa in the lobby of London's Excel conference center, where they have spent the past few days walking over hot coals - part of a mind-over-matter exercise - at a lecture given by self help guru Anthony Robbins. Carol, a former photographer, and Danny, a former nature reserve warden, discovered Ayurveda - the ancient Indian life science that encompasses diet, healing and spirituality, via transcendental meditation and yoga - 20 years ago. After studying the practice at Maharishi University of Valkenburg in Holland, the two worked regularly with Ayurvedic doctors, simultaneously becoming experts in everything from therapeutic massage techniques to Eastern philosophy. They established Ayurveda UK in 2001.

While past clients have included the late George Harrison and socialite Jemma Kidd (the couple won't reveal current clients' names, although two members of England's royal family are devotees, as are a sprinkling of European aristos), there is nothing glamorous about their methods, which are - literally rather homely.

The two either move directly into the client's house to deliver a 10-day detox treatment, or practice out of a small red-brick cottage in the Staffordshire countryside. Ideally, a client will stay for a 10-day period, twice a year. Prices per person range from approximately £4,200 for the 10-day stay in Staffordshire and £12,500 for the private program at the clients home. The couple currently have 42 clients, with a waiting list of 50.

"People come to us for weight loss - but that's often just a side effect of the treatment. I try to help them figure out what's attached to that weight," says Carol, whose methods range from basic one-on-one counselling, life coaching and stress management to Thought Field Therapy, intended to clear emotional baggage like phobias or addictions by gently tapping pressure points on the body. Danny meanwhile develops a specific program of massage, warm oil treatments, yoga, meditation and a daily eating and sleeping routine aimed at helping the body discharge toxins. One of the couple's main aims is to improve digestion so yes, sometimes enemas are involved.

Carol and Danny's clients - ranging in age from 18 to 79 - experience a variety of problems, from chronic illnesses to chronic irritations like headaches, bloating and indigestion. "Many simply come to us because they want to lead a healthier life," says Danny.

Carol greets clients with a cup of hot water infused with ginger or fennel - to get those digestive enzymes flowing - followed by a lunch of a small salad and ground seeds with flaxseed oil dressing. Dinner is often rice and steamed vegetables with lentil sauce or carrot and red lentil soup. The recommended first drink of the morning is ghee - clarified butter, meant to gather all the body's oil-based toxins, which are later flushed out by a dose of castor oil.

Reassuringly, life isn't all homegrown and healthy chez Carol and Danny, and the last thing they want to project is a holier-than-thou image "You have to live a little - if you can't resist the pizza, have it, but at lunch time rather than in the evening so it's digested more easily," advises Carol. Danny adds, "We're human, and I think that's why our clients like us. We travel often, and when we eat out, we'll have a meal that may not always be vegetarian. And we might even have a beer!"

Samantha Conti (W magazine)
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