

# I Asked Kourtney Kardashian's Ayurveda Guru How To Update Our Routines for Better Health

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Whether or not you consider yourself a Kardashian stan, it's no secret that the eldest of the siblings (Kourtney, of course) has carved her own domain as the health and wellness buff of the high-profile family. While Kourtney Kardashian is a wellness authority in her own right, she has a team of experts around her to optimize her well-being. Enter Martha Soffer, Kourt's personal go-to and also one of the most sought-after Ayurvedic experts in Los Angeles. ICYWW, Ayurveda, which translates to "the science of life," is an ancient natural system of medicine (dating back more than 5,000 years) that creates a balance of body, mind, and consciousness (consider it the OG of wellness practices).

An internationally-acclaimed Ayurvedic doctor, chef, herbalist, and Founder of Surya Spa in Southern California, Soffer knows a thing or two about achieving optimal health. I may have first heard about her through a reality TV show, but Soffer's work (and Ayurveda as a whole) is so much deeper and more important than trending headlines or celebrity faces. Known as the western leader of modern Ayurveda, Soffer aims to translate 10,000-year-old ancient practices of Ayurveda into a modern language, making it accessible and adaptable to every routine. She shared with me a few key pieces of advice for improving your wellness and optimizing your wellbeing for a more balanced life.



Meet the expert  
Martha Soffer  
Ayurvedic Guru and Founder of Surya Spa

Martha, considered a preeminent leader of modern Ayurveda, remains ardently focused on bringing Ayurveda to the center of modern wellness. With her beloved line of premiere, natural skincare and wellness products, Martha, Surya, and her all-female team are putting the goodness, simplicity, and practicality of Ayurveda in everyone’s hands.

## Minimize processed foods

To Soffer, wellness is being able to wake up in the morning and know that even on days with a packed schedule, she feels good and clear. Her #1 non-negotiable wellness habit? Maintaining a healthy, wholesome diet. “I want to emphasize the value of eating well, which means minimizing processed foods,” Soffer expressed. “Even though I said never eat junk food, it doesn’t mean if you eat a Twinkie, your life is over—Ayurveda is about favoring what’s good and, you know, avoiding the rest. Lean into what’s good.”

In Ayurveda, each person has their own particular pattern and balance of the three principal energies of the body, known as doshas: *vata* (air), *pitta* (fire), and *kapha* (earth). And if one element is out of balance, they all have the potential to be affected, and symptoms manifest in our minds and bodies (read: sicknesses and diseases). The good news is whether you feel stressed or drained, you can calm and energize yourself through what you eat. For example, if you’re feeling worked up, skip the spicy foods and, instead, reach for cooling foods like cucumber, zucchini, greens, berries, coconut, and watermelon. Take one quick peruse of Surya’s Ayurvedic recipes and you’ll see that organic fruits and vegetables, mung beans, basmati rice, ghee, and cilantro are recurring themes. In other words, add those to your grocery list stat!



What is this?



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## Carefully choose your beauty products

PSA: Not compromising your health goes beyond what you put on your plate. It also means being mindful of the skincare products you use. “What you put *on* your body is as important as what you put *in* your body,” Soffer echoed. “We absorb it all.” Translation: Replace products that contain ingredients linked to hormone disruption and skin irritation. While Ayurveda’s MO is “beauty comes from within,” the Ayurvedic tradition is also abundant with beauty and self-care rituals (more to come on that) that pull double duty, focusing on both the exterior of the body and improving overall wellness.

Case in point: Soffer's skincare routine. She starts with Surya's Balancing Face Oil, which she massages into her face and neck, followed by stimulating marma points, AKA anatomical locations in your body where a concentration of life energy exists. According to Surya's Instagram, "Proper activation opens the body's energy channels and produces benefits unique to each marma, including deep relaxation, hormonal balance, and expanded consciousness."

Then, Soffer applies their Balancing Collagen Cream that she combined Ayurvedic wisdom with a generations-old family recipe to create. Spoiler: It's said to lock in moisture, increase elasticity, and stimulate collagen production (hello, supple skin!). Lastly, she rounds out her beauty regimen by applying whichever Surya Abhyanga Oil—Calming, Cooling, or Energizing—is appropriate for the day, depending on what she feels she needs. Bottom line: Taking care of your skin is a form of self-care, so stick with non-toxic skincare products made with all-natural ingredients to give your body the TLC it deserves.

## Meditate every day

Soffer typically wakes up "feel[ing] happy that I can give love to my family, to our guests at Surya, and that I can conquer the world," she shared with me (now if that doesn't convince you to heed Soffer's wellness advice, I don't know what will). But before she gets busy devoting her time to her family and clients, she starts her day with meditation. More specifically, she practices 20 minutes of Transcendental Meditation® (TM), which she's been doing twice a day, every day for 34 years (#goals).

What exactly is Transcendental Meditation®? "TM® technique allows your active mind to easily settle inward, through quieter levels of thought, until you experience the most silent and peaceful level of your own awareness; pure consciousness," says the organization's website. In another interview, Soffer shared why she's drawn to the method: "It's completely effortless, and always works," she affirmed. "It also speaks to the core of Ayurveda, in that this easy practice brings us effortlessly to a state of balance where our three *doshas* return to exactly where they should be: at peace with ourselves." If you're not sure which type of meditation style is right for you, start by trying different ones: mindfulness, movement, mantra, etc. to see which clicks with you.

## Prioritize a thorough morning routine

Along with her daily meditation practice, Soffer can't live without her basic Ayurvedic routine known in Ayurveda as *Dinacharya*: tongue scraping, dry brushing, oil pulling, and *Abhyanga* or self-massage. "All of us already have things we do each morning: brush your hair, brush your teeth, wash your face, etc.," she said. "But if we can just add a few more simple things, we'll get so much more benefit. Maybe we go to bed a little earlier to get up a little earlier, get a little

meditation in, do a little *abhyanga* (or scrape your tongue). Once it's a habit, the idea of not scraping your tongue will seem as gross as not brushing your teeth! And the health benefits will make themselves apparent when you just start to feel better. That's what really counts."

Scraping your tongue helps rid bad bacteria, toxins, food debris, and dead cells that accumulate on the surface overnight. Try a copper tongue scraper, as it has antibacterial and antimicrobial properties. As for dry brushing, the practice not only exfoliates the skin, but also increases circulation and assists with the body's natural detoxification process (see: lymphatic drainage). Oil pulling is another ancient Ayurvedic practice that involves swishing a tablespoon of oil, such as coconut or sesame, around your mouth for 20 minutes each day, which helps to draw out toxins and bacteria that cause discoloration. Bonus: the natural remedy is said to whiten teeth.

Lastly, implementing self-massage can help to increase circulation, reduce inflammation, clear any bodily obstructions, including stagnation, heaviness, and blockages, not to mention decrease stress levels and improve quality of sleep. "It's easy to think that because it's so simple it doesn't make much difference but it really does," Soffer voiced. "I've stopped doing *Abhyanga* to see what happens, and I absolutely feel the difference in my body and my mental state. The *Abhyanga* oils move the toxins out and calm the nervous system." To get a better idea of Soffer's full *Dinacharya*, she gave us a glimpse in this Reel.

## Try a *Panchakarma* treatment

*Panchakarma* is a bespoke program for the body, mind, and spirit that cleanses and rejuvenates. "This is the most important thing we do at Surya," Soffer conveyed. "It's so simple—just diet, massage, oils, and herbal blends—yet so powerful. It removes the toxins that build up, and it puts your body back in balance with itself so you can feel your best."

*Panchakarma* typically involves a five-step process overseen by a trained Ayurvedic practitioner and can last anywhere from 3-28 days. During that time, a series of individually-customized treatments are carried out to address core imbalances, eliminate toxins, and promote balance.

Don't have access to (or \$\$\$ for) an Ayurvedic practitioner? You can recreate *Panchakarma* at home by adopting simple self-care practices and herbal remedies based on what feels best for you. Start by becoming more intentional about your morning routine and pick up the essential habits: oil pulling, tongue scraping, dry brushing, self-massage, a shower, and warm lemon water, and fit in meditation, gentle yoga, and walking throughout the day. As far as what to eat during the program, it's recommended to follow a three-day menu consisting of predominantly kitchari (a dish made of rice and lentils that is said to strengthen your *Agni* (AKA digestive fire) and nourish your body without weighing down your digestive system), cooked vegetables, soups, and teas.

But first, take this quick questionnaire to determine your individual *Vikruti*, or current state, and breakdown of doshas (FYI, most people will have one dominant dosha). For example, if your *Vikruti* shows you're *Vata*-dominant, you'll want to try taking a *Vata*-balancing approach to your self-care, eating, and fitness that will counterbalance *Vata*'s cold and dry energy. Prioritize more grounding and warming activities like self-massage, meditation, and getting plenty of quality sleep, foods like cooked vegetables and soups made with ghee, and activities like yoga, Pilates, or brisk walking. The main takeaway? Practice self-care, eat, and exercise based on what is best for *your* body and dosha.



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