



Autumn

Description

General Qualities of Autumn



- Autumn brings decreasing light and temperatures, and deciduous trees and plants shed leaves.
- Animals begin to prepare for winter by storing food and/or fattening.
- The fall season often brings changes in weather and schedule as well as increased mental stimulation.
- Cyndi Lee highlights [here](#) that Autumn often brings opportunities for sharing and heart-opening with Thanksgiving, homecoming parties, back to school, and work with colleagues.

Readings & Inspiration



A TIME FOR DELIBERATE, NATURAL UNWINDING

As you come off the hotter, fiery months of summer, days become shorter and winds become crisper. The leaves start to turn, and the dead ones fall away. Rather than fighting to hold on to them, the trees let them go, with faith that after a period of rest, new growth will appear. So too should you embrace the cycle of letting go, rest, and rejuvenation as the year churns onward. Rather than expecting life to move at the speed of summer all year round, autumn is the time for a deliberate, yet natural unwinding. In anticipation for the socially held time of new beginnings at the New Year, autumn is the time when you begin to take stock of your life, determining what is serving you well (like a yoga regimen, dedicated meditation time, or evenings spent with friends), and what is not serving your highest good (drinking every night, going to bed too late, or succumbing to anxious thoughts). â?? Karson McGinley



CHALLENGING TRANSITION

Evolution and [transition](#) is a natural affair, if you let it be! Aim to evolve into this next phase with grace, ease, and naturalness. Students and teachers of yoga may already have experienced making this transition with tools in hand. Others have not. Offer kindness and patience. Feeling the sensitivity required to move through change, perhaps you can put some things in place so you're less ungrounded as changing schedules, weather, eating patterns, and [sleep](#) patterns begin. This transition can be one of the most challenging of the seasonal year. The point isn't to make everything perfect as you transition, but natural. Where are you being called to expand now? What a great time to start contemplating your evolution. — Julie Dohrman

TRANSITION IS A FORM OF TRANSFORMATION

Fall is the season of [transition](#). Of the three phases in the cycle of being, transition is typically the most difficult. The excitement of a new beginning or the comfort that comes from sustaining a process don't seem to cause the same amount of stress that transition does. Maybe we can seek comfort by remembering that transition is a form of transformation, which ultimately brings us to the next beginning. — Coral Brown

MOVING BACK INTO THE CENTER

In the Native American medicine wheel, the season of Fall sits in the West — the place of the setting sun. As the wheel turns, the energy moves from the periphery to the core — life force energy drawing back into the roots. Although one might feel resistance during this transition from light to dark, it is a beautiful time to let go of what's been and reconnect to Source — so that we may rise again more fully aligned with Spirit, and our soul's unique expression. As we attune to nature's rhythms, Fall is a wonderful time for personal retreat, sacred ceremony, and renewed commitment to meditation practice and spiritual rituals. It is an opportunity to move back into the center — into the stillness — so that we may receive deep nourishment and hear, with clarity, what speaks to our heart. — Tai Hubbert

CREATING A SLOWER INTERNAL RHYTHM

When fall unfolds, nature begins to pull its energy inward. The earth cools, the air becomes dry, and the wind kicks up, often leading to chapped lips, constipation, anxiety, or even insomnia. For this reason, Ayurvedic educator and yoga teacher Scott Blossom views fall as a transitional time between summer and winter that should be approached delicately. — Creating a slower internal rhythm for fall is essential for staying healthy and balanced during the colder months of the year, — he says. — Andrea Ferretti

THE YEAR'S LAST LOVELIEST SMILE

Autumn — the year's last loveliest smile. — William Cullen Bryant

DELICIOUS AUTUMN!



Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird, I would fly about the earth seeking the successive autumns. ~ George Eliot

AUTUMN IS A SECOND SPRING

Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower. ~ Albert Camus

THERE IS A HARMONY IN AUTUMN

There is a harmony in autumn, and a luster in its sky, which through the summer is not heard or seen, as if it could not be, as if it had not been! ~ Percy Bysshe Shelley

THE BIG DROP

I call the shift from Summer to Fall the Big Drop. It can feel that way moving from the height of Summer which is so powered by the Sun, dropping to Fall which is down to the Earth. Summer to Fall. Sun to Earth. These are extremes. For us on the East coast it can feel abrupt, sudden, and difficult to manage. 5 tips for anchoring into Fall:

1. Slow down. This could include eating slower, not eating on-the-go, walking slower, taking some extra time to think on an answer before typing it quickly and hitting send. The point is to allow yourself to stay present, move mindfully and more consciously. Slowing down will also include allowing longer savasana's.
2. Establish a morning routine that grounds you. Or, revive one! For me, its reading and meditation. Anywhere from 5-15 minutes of eyes closed personal silence can be part of a precious ritual that marks your own importance, your own value. If you are busy getting kids ready for school, or wake up late, then be sure to do this next one:
3. Add depth to the mundane. One thing I've come to do is chant mantra while I bathe, brush my teeth, and prepare food. What better time to deepen into yourself than during the most perceived trivial parts of your average day. To render your body-mind most sattvic (as my teacher Paul would say), every chance you get. Any mantra or affirmation can work, and most important ~ increase your ability to create soft focus to shift into the demands of the day.
4. Start to change your diet. Add more warm, wet and oily foods. Ayurveda prescribes this shift for everyone regardless of your primary dosha during the change to Autumn. Oils create lubrication for what will be a drying season to come, and warm and cooked foods that are in season prepare your body for the cold.
5. Keep contact with your peeps. We come off summer with its beach parties, BBQ's, gatherings of all sorts and its easy to lose touch with all the friends and community you were so present with just one month ago. Stay in touch with people, and try not to isolate.

May you feel the earth beneath your feet.

~ Julie Dohrman

Theme Ideas



- [Grounding](#)
- Calming
- [Shedding / Letting Go](#)
- [Transition](#)
- Transformation
- Harvest
- Abundance
- [Gratitude](#)
- Celebration of Achievements
- Decreasing Light

Teaching Approach



- Ayurveda teaches that Autumn is a time to balance excess [vata](#), focusing on [grounding](#) and calming.
- It's generally advised to focus on stabilizing, containment, warmth and routine.
- Seasonal yoga expert Melina Meza notes that students without a routine in this transition season may feel restless, anxious, ungrounded or agitated and suggests that a routine *asana* practice at a consistent time of day can help.

GROUNDING IN VATA SEASON

When we are grounded, we are experiencing our mind, breath, and our body in the same place at the same time — we are embodied. This allows us to be relaxed and present in a way that nothing else



doesâ! In this season we require even more attention to practices of grounding, insulating, and calming. For the odds are high that we may not only be blown away by autumnâs awe-striking beauty, but also by her âwindyâ qualities. Even the most stable of us may feel a little less rooted throughout this transitional season.

In Ayurveda, the fall is known as *Vata* season. *Vata* is the âairâ element characterized by wind and movement as well as coolness, lightness, and dryness. It is this energy that brings us through the elimination process and aging process overall. In autumn and early winter, it is the dominant energy both around and within us. Therefore, this time of year can cause us to have a harder time feeling grounded and calm; we may agitate, anger, or stress more easily, become more anxious, scattered, or âspacey,â experience less rejuvenating [sleep](#), or deplete faster than normal. â Jillian Pransky

Asana & Sequences



Asana: Grounding

- To inspire a sense of grounding, consider [Standing Poses](#).
- Another consideration is [Prone Backbends](#) and other poses where you can focus on connection with the earth such as [Balasana \(Child's Pose\)](#) or [Viparita Karani \(Legs Up Wall\)](#).
- For more considerations, see [Muladhara Chakra](#).
- Perhaps more than which poses are chosen, inspiring a sense of grounding may come from the way in which poses are taught and practiced. You may wish to use longer holds, repetition, grounding-oriented alignment cues, and inspirational, nature-based imagery. Another tool is to create variations that allow the feet to make contact with something, such as pressing one foot into the wall in Supta [Padangusthasana \(Reclined Hand to Foot Pose\)](#).



- In the Yoganonymous article, [Staying Grounded: 15 Ways to Balance the Vata Dosha this Autumn](#), author Kim Smith recommends slowing *vinyasa* down as well as skipping *vinyasa* between poses. She also suggests practicing poses one at a time without linking them (practicing Warrior I on first side and then second side, etc).
- In the Chopra Center article, [Let Your Leaves Fall: 5 Yoga Poses to Release the Old and Pep for the New](#), Karson McGinley recommends 1) Downward Facing Dog because of the heating quality and the grounding effect of the hands and feet connecting to the earth, 2) Warrior II as a pose of stillness, focus and strength so â??you can refocus on your priorities with the gaze of the warrior,â?• 3) Tree Pose as the â??ultimate symbol for the season,â?• 4) Seated Forward Bend to honor the inner wisdom and calm the nervous system, and 5) *Savasana*, â??a chance to practice the cycle of birth, life, death and renewal over and over again.â?•

Asana: More Considerations



- Slow, warming and rhythmic movement such as mindful [Sun Salutations](#) can be effective.
- Seasonal yoga expert Melina Meza recommends seated poses, [Yin Yoga](#), concentration and meditation practices, and long [Savasanas](#).
- Expert teacher Cyndi Lee notes that the â??temperature is mild and the air crisp, which encourages big, energizing movements such as [Urdhva Dhanurasana \(Upward Bow\)](#).
- See Also: [Asana for Vata](#)

Sequences

- [Sequence Library: Seasonal Themed Classes](#).

Pranayama



- As in other seasons, [Kapalabhati \(Skull Shining Breath\)](#) is useful.
- In addition, Meza points out the settling effects of [Ujjayi \(Victorious Breath\)](#).
- Meza also recommends Sama Vrtti (Equal Breathing).
- The ever-useful [Nadi Shodhana \(Alternate Nostril Breathing\)](#) is also a consideration.
- Kim Smith recommends [Brahmari \(Bumble Bee Breath\)](#).

A Meditation



In The Chopra Center article, 3 Fall Meditations to Relax, Release, and Settle into the Season, Michelle Fondin offers a lovely “Fall Leaves” meditation. You may wish to suggest that students, when possible, meditate outside near a tree with falling leaves. Consider sitting with your back against the tree trunk.

Here are some of Michelle’s beautiful visualizations:

- *The tree knows when it’s time to shed its leaves in preparation for winter. In the same way, as you meditate, prepare to shed away anything you no longer need.*
- [When outside:] *As you breathe in the fresh fall air, feel it infiltrate your body and cleansing throughout.*
- *Imagine the wisdom of the season whispering into your ears and telling you the things you need to let go. You might need to shed old grievances, clutter from your home, a job you no longer love, or a toxic relationship.*
- *As the falling leaves float to the ground drying up with the knowledge that they’re no longer needed, imagine all of the things you no longer need drying up and falling away too. Just as the tree doesn’t mourn its fallen leaves, be joyful that after the dormant phase of winter, new life will crop up for you in the spring.*

More Resources



- Chakra Teachings: [Muladhara Chakra](#)
- Kim Smith recommends these *mantras*: [So Ham Mantra](#) and [Bija Mantra: Lam](#)

Theme Readings: [Embodiment & Grounding](#)

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