

Ep #69: Fall Digestive Reset



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susi Hately

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Male Announcer: You're listening to *From Pain to Possibility* with Susi Hately. You will hear Susi's best ideas on how to reduce or even eradicate your pain and learn how to listen to your body when it whispers so you don't have to hear it scream. And now here's your host, Susi Hately.

Welcome, I am delighted that we get to dig into some more Ayurveda. With this episode of *From Pain to Possibility* I have Mona Warner back and we have done a previous podcast on spring digestive reset. And this time we are going to be talking about the fall reset. So we're going to be digging in Ayurvedically to these concepts. So welcome, Mona.

Mona: Thanks for having me back. Hi everyone.

Susi: I love talking about this because, on one level I've benefited so much from resets. And so what I'd like to do is let's start as a refresher from the previous spring reset, which you guys can find in the show notes. But let's get right into it of like what makes the reset different than a cleanse. Let's start there.

Mona: Yeah, so Ayurveda does both resetting and cleansing, however cleansing is considered to be a forceful expulsion of excess from the body. So we call it in Sanskrit Shodhana, which means purification. So we're really trying to move ama and any excess dosha out.

And typically the forceful expulsion of anything from the body is more intense and it's harder on the body. So we can actually end up using up ojas or using up our strength, our resilience, our reserve in order to forcefully expel anything from the body.

And the digestive reset falls under the category of shamana which means balancing or pacification. And so we're still trying to create the opportunity for the excess to move out, but we're not forcing a thing. We're not forcing a thing, we're inviting stimulus to be applied or to shift our context to allow our body to go back to the balance it naturally knows how to be in.

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And in doing a reset versus a cleanse we're more likely to maintain the ojas, or the resilience and strength that we have and build on that because we're not forcing anything anywhere. So they are different and there are different times to use the two techniques.

So there are definitely times when the cleansing, or in Ayurveda land we call it panchakarma, there are times when panchakarma is required. There are times when the imbalances are so extreme that we really have to move things and we have to move them out more quickly.

However, we typically do try to do more of a reset based approach first because if that works why would we use a forceful measure when a more peaceful, harmonious measure might work. So typically people are invited to try this idea of reset.

And what I love about the resets is there are times when we do bigger ones, like our podcast when we talked about in the spring. The spring reset is a longer reset because we know with winter and hibernation season there ends up being more build up in the system. We're also more resilient in the spring. And so based on the qualities, the Gunas that are present in the spring season the body is hardier, it's stronger, it's more cohesive. It has more of the elements that are like ojas in the spring.

Whereas when we do resets at different times of year if the Gunas, the qualities are not like the qualities of ojas then we want to be really, really mindful about how long am I going to do this for? Because if we do anything for too long or nay approach, we take somehow becomes forceful now all of the sudden we're at risk of losing our ojas to do the thing instead of building ojas by doing the thing.

So I'm excited we're going to talk about digestive reset from a different capacity because as we transition into the fall and winter there's some really beautiful opportunities to use digestive resetting super skillfully so that we maintain more stability, equilibrium, balance, harmony, wellbeing,

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and health through the whole of fall and winter, which can be really challenging seasons for folks.

Susi: Let's dig in that much more about fall. What makes fall more challenging for many folks that you know?

Mona: Yeah, so we've got a couple of things that happen. First, we've got a season change and so season change tends to always increase the qualities of the Gunas related with the air element or vata dosha. And the challenge with vata dosha is that the qualities of vata are basically the opposite of the qualities of ojas.

So where ojas has a heavy, unctuous juiciness, vata is light, dry, and all over the place. So we get more mobility, which some people love that flow and that movement. And where there's more mobility than we have to notice what's happening to our stability. And when it comes to health stability and balance are really important.

So with the fall we end up with this increase, not only due to the season change, but due to the season change we're switching into. So it's almost like vata plus vata in the fall transition. Because every season change increases the vata, increases the vata Gunas, light, dry, cold, subtle, mobile, clear, those go up with every season change.

But then when you're changing into the season of cold, light, dry, subtle, mobile, clear it's like a double whammy of those qualities. Which if you embody naturally opposite qualities to that, so if you're more of a water type, you might love the fall. But if you're more of an air type you might be like, "Woo, I have no clue what's going on right now."

And with each season change, as the seasons progress, and it doesn't matter which season it is, we have this very natural subtle increase in whatever qualities of that season. And then that increase can turn into an excess buildup or aggravation.

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And hopefully with the season change if we're being mindful and if we're doing our resets, we're able to eliminate the excess that built up, we're able to eliminate whatever is causing aggravation before the next season.

However, if we don't know about that then we could be going into the fall season with a buildup of the qualities from the summer season. And so in the summer the qualities that build up tend to lightness, heat, so we can end up with a lot of excess heat in the summer. Some people might end up more oily, so if it's a really humid environment or if they tend to be more oily. And then interestingly some people might also build up more dryness.

So depending on what's happening in your body the extra heat might make everything spark and sizzle, like as if you were deep frying something. But for some of us it might also dry everything out because the heat can be drying as well. And so if you have all this excess heat moving into a colder season and everything in your body constricts when it gets cold, then you lock that excess heat in if you haven't moved it out.

So the fall transition is a really big one because we're moving from spring, which is warm, to summer, which is hot, into fall, which is cold. So that's a big change for biology to go from hot to cold. But then if we have locked any of that heat in that's going to cause stuff. And if we have this double hit of vata happening at the exact same time, season change in fall season, that's actually a lot going on.

Susi: So when heat gets locked in what might that be felt as? Whether it's on Gunas level or a condition level, or how can you describe that more of what does that actually mean?

Mona: Yeah, so we can experience hot quality, we can experience heat, we can experience fire, that kind of fire. So disruptive fire in a couple of different ways. It can be everything from fiery tummy, so where we feel maybe some acidity, some reflux. We might also notice our digestion is not quite what it was. I hear that so much, like I used to be able to digest this and now I can't digest that anymore.

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So there's this extra fire, but it's not a fire that supports digestion, it's a fire that disrupts digestion. We might notice heat permeating through the system. So as heat moves up, we might notice palpitations, a disruption in breathing. We might notice redness or yellowness in the eyes, dry eyes, burning eyes. We might notice disruption of heat in the mind. So we could be getting heat based headaches, people who are sensitive to headaches might notice an increase.

And we might notice the fire of the mind is spreading and has an idea of its own. So we might have racing thoughts or a harder time being able to focus and direct our mind. Focusing is healthy fire, not able to focus it's like what happened to the fire, right?

We might notice the more fiery emotions. Anything from anger, frustration, resentment, irritation, jealousy, envy, all of those sort of fiery outward. And literally for some people it's like breathing fire. And so everything that comes out is heated. Everything that comes out is aggravated. Everything that comes out feels like acid. You might even have that acidic taste on the tongue or in the back of the throat.

And we might notice aggravation of the skin. So there's a huge connection of the skin to the fire element. So it could be a resurgence of an existing skin condition. Maybe you have had psoriasis, or eczema, or rosacea and it's back. It could be as simple as those little heat bumps, so those little red bumps on your skin, you might notice your skin is more sensitive to heat and touch.

You might notice your inner skin, your guts, are more sensitive to what you put in. And so if you consume a hot spicy thing or if you consume a really cold thing, an excessively cold thing like an ice cream, you might notice that your body is like, "Oh, that was shocking. That was too extreme, that was too much." And so we become even a little bit more temperature sensitive. So we can be affected by this buildup of heat on so many levels. And you'll tend to notice hot, fiery, runny poops. If I didn't mention poop, it wouldn't really be an Ayurveda talk.

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So when the body is trying to move heat out, ideally it tries to move it down and out and so we might notice more liquidy bowel movement and you might even notice the heat as they move out. Those are wonderful indications, such great things to notice, and we tend to feel uncomfortable with them.

Susi: And so out of knowing that, would that then be an indication for the reset?

Mona: It could be. It could mean that something else is needed, but I think a reset is a really good first place to start. Because if we're noticing any of those yellow lights, for some people those are going to be red lights, for some people those are going to be yellow lights. It kind of depends on where you are in your lighting structure.

And so depending on where you are in that, if for you that would be a yellow light then it would be the perfect time for a reset to see if you can help move some of that excess heat out. Again, to support the body in doing what it knows how to do, that innate wisdom that exists in all of us. And the innate wisdom wants to move that heat down and out, the thing is when heat builds up it always moves upwards.

So the digestive reset, if that was a yellow light for somebody might be great. If it's a red light for somebody we might need to do something else.

Susi: So someone is now interested in pursuing the fall reset as a way of either working with the yellow lights of the heat or they simply know that this is a time for them to explore a reset. So someone like myself, for example, I started doing the digestive resets, my goodness, I don't know how long now. It seems like a long time now, ever since I have really known you and you've been a part of our program. And so now they just kind of happen in a rhythm.

It happens in the spring, it happens in the fall, it happens in the spring, it happens in the fall. There might be these little mini ones that happen at

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different times of the year, depending on what's been going on within life and environment and all of that. So for me, it's just sort of this natural process that happens, I don't really make a decision anymore. The decision has been made that this happens.

But I'm imagining someone who's listening to this. And they're thinking, "Huh, you know what? There's some interesting things here, I think I want to try this out." And then there might also be someone who's listening to this saying, "Yeah, I've done a spring reset, I know about the spring reset. So now I want to go into this fall reset."

How would someone now go about doing the fall reset that makes the practicality of it or the mechanics of it more different or distinctive? Just like just the how-to, that's a bit of a loaded question. But let's start to kind of tease this apart of a how-to and the mechanics of it.

Mona: Yeah, that's such a great question because I think with any practice it's always important that there's a sense that it fits into the context of your life. There's all these practices that exist, and there's some of them that even I read about, or I look into, or I learn about and I'm like, "Oh, except for I have no clue how I could put that in my world without blowing something up somewhere."

And the fall reset in particular, we're not looking to blow anything up. We're really looking to create a space where we can have a context for a little more calm, and a little more re-balancing of the system. A harmonizing would be a really great way to think about it. It's very Venusian, so it has a very Venus harmony pleasure, like to feel good kind of vibe to it.

So with that, the fall digestive reset can be as short as a half day And could even go up to about three days. And so this is one of our big distinctions between the fall reset and the spring reset, where spring reset you might be on a mono diet for two weeks with a week beforehand and a week afterwards to get everything in place. So a whole month worth of time.

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A fall reset is significantly shorter, whole kit and caboodle would be done within 72 hours, if you even went for the whole 72 hours. So it's a much shorter time frame because with the qualities that increase in the fall the body naturally becomes a little bit more challenged from an ojas perspective. So because the Vata Gunas are opposite the ojas Gunas, we have a little less so just in the fall. Our body has to work a little bit harder to maintain its resilience so we want to keep things simple.

And, again, you might choose to do a half day. So if you're able to grab a half a day at any point where you could add extra rest, make some khichri, eat some warm, nourishing food made with love. And you might not be a khichri person, you might be a chicken soup person, or you might be more of a rice and veggies person. Whichever paradigm of mono diet, nourishing mono diet that works for you, you could do that.

And so you might do that for a half day, spend some time doing yoga nidra. Go for a walk outside. Do some journaling to help your body mind digest any events or thoughts or any of the stuff going on in your life. You could do a little half day mini retreat.

You can also do it for three days where you might choose a Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Or if that's your busy time you might choose a Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Have your mono diet, so prepare your food in the morning. Take time for rest, don't schedule yourself to the max on those days, keep it light. If you can fit some time off in there, extra time for rest, extra time for meditation, extra time for gentle asana, extra time for being outside.

So it's really important, I feel, that the fall reset has a real sweet, gentle feeling to it because a big part of what we're trying to do is not just release any excess that has built up, whether it's some of the excess air element that built up as part of the fall transition, any excess heat from the summer that didn't quite get out for the fall set in. Whatever it is we're trying to move out we're trying to move it out. And we're also trying to build our ojas in preparation for the fall, in preparation for the winter.

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It's no surprise that fall season is when most people catch all the little colds. You know all the stuff, we tend to see that increase in people needing time to recover from different ailments at that season. That's because naturally, the ojas, if we're not careful, goes down.

So the digestive reset has one of the primary goals of rebuilding the ojas, all while helping to move anything excessive out in a really gentle, calm way so that we can reestablish ourselves in our center, we can find more harmony and balance.

Susi: So let's say that somebody was curious about this, and then they end up getting sick. And our systems have a beautiful way of slowing us down that way. And so now they're sick and they've had some time to rest. So then would that be a scenario, or while they're in a healing state would that be a scenario that is a good idea or not a good idea for something like this at that time?

Mona: It is the perfect time to do something like a really simple reset. I know when I was a kid and people got sick, everybody right away gave them chicken soup. And so very nourishing, very simple and easy to digest. And something that's warming for the system.

And a digestive reset is in a way kind of being done when we're laid up or when the body decides it's slowing us down, it's tapping us out. We're doing all that slowing down that extra resting. And so if anybody does happen to catch cold or anything like that, it's a great time to simplify and to get in that extra rest.

And one of the things that I noticed about myself, and Susi, we've talked about this before, I know you've had similar experience. When I do my resets in a timely fashion, so when I really follow that flow and feel of my own self as I move through the seasons, then I get less of that.

So it's like by being a little bit more proactive, and it's hard to do that when you don't know about it, which is why we're doing these things. We're trying

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to educate and support people in trying out these tools. The more that I do that sort of proactive health maintenance, the less sick days I need because my ojas stays strong and my nervous system stays stable, and my resilience is there.

Susi: And I think that's a really good point you made because some of the elements that might be expressed when heat rises, or gets trapped, or the transitions of fall and what that is expressed as. For me, I mean, I've shared the story many times on the podcast and with people, it's like I used to believe that fall was just a rough season for me.

In school my grades were lower, I always put on weight, that was just the way it was. So then as I got into my 20s, I was like, "Well, you know what? I'm just going to be really good to myself. I'm going to go buy a sweater, and a new hat, and some gloves, and fill my freezer. And just kind of get myself ready for winter." And it was just sort of that's what I did, I just thought that's just the way it was.

And I think there are a lot of people who just make this assumption, "Well, you know, that's just the way it is. I'm getting older, that's just the way it is. This is what happens in my body, my bones, my blood, my knees, my this, my that." And there's just this assumption that that's just the way it is.

And it's so hysterical because now I love fall. I just find that the funniest thing ever, something so simple as a season. But now it's something that I look forward to and I'm more curious about how fall will be, as opposed to kind of, not that the other was bad, it's just I have a new expression of myself.

And so it becomes interesting because when I started to understand transition of seasons, then it's like, "Oh, so that's why I feel the way that I feel, that's why I behave the way I behave." When there's this unawareness, there's just this go-to thing of like, "Well, that's just who I am," or "That's just the way life is. That's just me getting older." That's just like, you know, fill in the blank.

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Now that I've got kids I can say, "Well, now it's the start of school." And we just kind of keep sort of loading into this is why things are chaotic. And not to say that that's not why things are chaotic. Understanding some of the expression of the qualities or the Gunas and the way the seasons impact us is really ancient, old wisdom that we can really use in our favor.

Mona: Absolutely. It's about paying attention, right? And so it's about awareness. It's about that idea of sattva, right? Where the Sanskrit word sattva refers to the state of mind that is clear, that is light, that is peaceful, and that is attentive. And yet it's not a crazy focused attention, it's a relaxed awareness attention.

And as we attend to ourselves, our environment, the shifts and the changes, noticing how we're responding, how our bodies are responding to things, we get more information. There's more data for the data set and we can start to notice patterns. And the whole thing with the ancient Ayurvedic teachings around seasons is it's all these very well observed patterns for thousands of years.

And what's been neat is as Ayurveda has moved to the west, we've had to take the logic and the idea but look at our own patterns. You know, India has six seasons, we have about four. And it's really more like three and a half because some winters are a little bit more water element dominant and some winters are a little bit more air element dominant. So I would even argue that that fourth season is kind of like a half a season because it really adopts from one of the other two.

And so we've had to take the logic, the idea, but really apply it to our own environment. And I love America so whether we look at Canada or whether we look at the United States, because even within those countries look at the change. Look at how vastly different the qualities are.

I was talking to somebody last week about Arizona. I love Arizona and part of why I love it is because those Gunas make it really easy for me in this embodiment to find balance and harmony without having to do a lot of extra

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work or efforting on my part in terms of self-care and all that kind of stuff. Because it's literally the opposite qualities of my innate biology.

So when I go to Arizona, I get comfortable really quick, I can relax a little bit more, I have a little bit more time. Usually also if I'm in Arizona, I'm probably on vacation so that's a whole other ojas building factor. But for some people it'll be northern Quebec is the sweet spot for them. And other people it might be Florida. And other people it'll be Vancouver.

And as we travel and explore our countries, we realize that the climates, the environments are different. And different people, their innate nature responds well to some places and not others.

I have one client, because we were talking about overheating, who is from Canada in an area where there's typically a really good cold winter, and she's very fiery. And then she moved to southern US for over a decade and a half, and the heat just keeps building and building and building.

And by the time we met, it had been building for over 15 years. So we had 15 years' worth of heat build up to try to move out. But she was still in the environment that created that heat buildup, it never got cold.

And so we had this whole conversation around that climate, that environment. Can you travel back home, so that you can have some winter? So you can be in a nice, cold environment for your body to be like, "Oh, yeah, that's right, I remember this." And so it's so fascinating how, even though you can't change the environment, it has really strong impact on our experience of ourselves.

Susi: And then, I mean, a note that I just made while you were talking about that, it's like we get to shift out of being resigned to what our scenario is, or trying to dominate or control what our scenario is and just come into a really nice tempoed knowing of what it is that we need because we can tune into our own world, and then the external world, and then respond to that.

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Now, having said that, I also want, particularly for people who are new-ish to hearing this conversation is that it's steps. So sometimes people are like, "That is way too much to even think about, the environment, my internal, my attention is everywhere all the time then."

And I want to emphasize that I started these resets with you. I mean, like I said, I don't even know how long ago it's been now, but it's been some time. And then when I kind of clued into spring reset impacts my fall, which even when I had that insight I was like, "That's mind boggling. That's baffling to me that what I do in the spring has an impact on the fall." It was an aha that I had that I'm like, "I'm curious enough about it that I want to see what starts to happen." And then lo and behold, I saw a pattern.

So then the next year it just got me more curious and then more curious, and then more curious. And so then that got me more curious about all of the seasons and then how I was operating within them. So I think that this is a key, key, key piece is that it might seem really big. And so simply to start where you're at.

And so maybe it simply is coming into the fall and playing around with some of these concepts and taking some time. And if you do get sick, then to recognize that it's an opportunity for you to slow down, nourish, rest, and then see what happens. See how you feel in the act of being in fall.

Mona: Even people who take great steps and great measures towards being healthy, get sick. It absolutely happens. And it's funny because I feel like sometimes we engage in these practices thinking that we will then be immune, we will become immune to illness, or immune to disease, or immune to grief, or immune to suffering. And the idea is to reduce the unnecessary suffering.

This is what the Patanjali teaches us in the Yoga Sutras. He talks about how there will be suffering, there will be some discomfort and the intention is to reduce the amount of it that's not necessary. And we grow into that over time.

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Ayurveda was never meant to be this one-time thing where you just learned it all in one shot and that was it. It's meant to be practiced for the lifetime. And so they are practices that we work with over not even just days or weeks or months, but like years and decades we work with these practices. And we nuance our understanding over time. And so it's this refined awareness that happens.

So the first time you do a reset it might just be like, "Damn, khichri, I always need to pull the recipe out. I wish I just knew." But then you do your whole first spring reset and after two weeks of making khichri every day you never have to look at a khichri recipe again for the rest of your life. Now you just have this skill.

Where when all of a sudden, you're like, "Oh, I really need food. I need something really nourishing. What am I going to make? I know how to make khichri." and it just comes out. And so then that awareness, that insight just starts to come forward.

And then we notice when I eat this way, what happens? When I eat that way, what happens? When I rest more in this season, what happens? When I'm busier, what happens? And we can use our yoga hats and approach all of it with this compassionate nonjudgment, where we're simply increasing our awareness one day at a time, one moment at a time, one bit at a time.

And, again, yoga and Ayurveda are long haul practices. It's not meant to be done for a finite period. "Oh, look, I won yoga. Check, next." It's not like that. If you're in it you're in it for the lifetime. And so you have a whole lifetime to work with it, to practice it, to do it, to forget it, to remember it, to go back to it, to ditch it. To just do all of the movement that needs to happen within it. That's part of it, that's why these are lifetime practices.

So there will be things that you'll be like, "I'm so into scripting my tongue, I would never miss a day." And then a month goes by and you're like, "What happened to my tongue scraper? Where did that- Oh, tongue scraping, I

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forgot about tongue scraping.” It's like, okay, so now in this moment that you've remembered, do you want to do it again? And if so, do it, see what happens. And if not, that's okay, you'll remember again later.

It's a lifetime practice. And so we don't have to be full on and we don't have to be all of it 100% of the time. If that's meant to be for you, it will unfold that way.

Susi: Lovely. Love it. So we are going to be doing the fall digestive reset inside of Healing and Revealing Human Potential. So if that's something that you want to explore with us and get more of Mona and some support in a very powerful, nuanced experience of the digestive reset and in a smaller scale, then you'll want to come and join us at the Healing and Revealing Human Potential.

All you need to do is email us and Kiya or Caitlin will be able to take care of you at health@functionalsynergy.com. And we'll be happy to show you the ins and outs of the digestive reset, the fall edition. So thank you again, Mona. Always fun.

Mona: Thank you, thank you. Thanks for listening everyone.

Susi: Take care. Happy exploring everyone.