



Herbal Restorations

Soothing the Effects of
Stress with Home Remedies

Written by Steven M. Hall, MD and Patti Pitcher

Design by Grace Porter and Patti Pitcher

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Soothing the Effects of Stress with Home Remedies

Before we talk about some ways you can reduce the effects of stress on your body, let's talk about why you should even care about stress and how it can make you sick. By now, you have likely watched the video about what stress does to your body, but, just in case you haven't, here is a little recap.

Evolutionarily, your body is well designed to handle life-threatening situations. Your sympathetic nervous system knows exactly what to do if you run across a bear in the woods. Your mind might not, but your body does. Your body automatically responds with a complex series of chemical reactions that allow you to survive the danger in front of you ... in this case, a bear.



Fortunately, most of us don't encounter wild animals on a regular basis. But unfortunately, our body continues to respond to modern-day stressors with the same intense physiological response that helped our ancestors survive for hundreds of thousands of years. Some days you may feel that your boss is a bear, but, what your body doesn't know is that your boss, while stress-inducing, does not pose the same physical danger to you that a real bear does.

Modern life imposes stressors that tend to be much more chronic. We spend our time fighting traffic, meeting deadlines, and surviving overly-scheduled days. If our body responds as if we are in mortal danger to these normal life events, we tax our adrenal system because our adrenal system is really designed to respond to sudden life-threatening situations, not common everyday events. Until we teach our bodies to handle these common stressors in a new way, we continually activate our stress response and eventually make ourselves sick.



Learning these new ways of responding appropriately to the actual types of stress you are experiencing takes skill and practice. That's why we teach a class called "Taming the Bear: Taking the Bite Out of Stress" so you can have the support you need to really



integrate these new ways and forever change your relationship with stress. But until you can sign up for the class, it's helpful to know some simple everyday things you can do to support your body and maybe even heal from some of the impacts of past stress.

As a family physician, Dr. Hall sees how stress affects people's health every single day in the office. Studies have shown that at least 70 percent of doctor visits are stress related. 70 percent. That's an incredible number. It explains why he is so concerned about preventing stress. Just look at what stress can do to your health.

Too Much Stress Can:

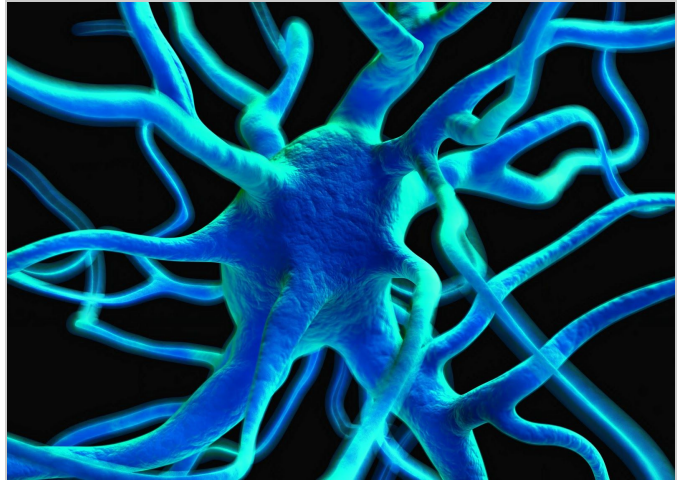
- Steal your vitality
- Disrupt your sleep and make you tired, moody, irritable, depressed, and/or anxious
- Increase your susceptibility to yeast infections
- Disturb your ability to focus and concentrate—giving you the sensation of brain fog and a poor memory
- Chronically tighten your muscles leading to headaches, backaches, and jaw pain
- Irritate your digestion which can cause, among other things, heartburn, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, and colitis
- Stifle proper thyroid function



- Rob calcium out of your bones
- Reduce your sex drive
- Cause hair loss
- Reduce your fertility
- Raise your blood pressure and cholesterol
- Increase insulin resistance and blood sugar
- Depress your immune system, making you susceptible to frequent, more severe colds; sinus problems; and allergies
- Create a hormonal pattern that causes metabolic obesity—weight gain around the middle, the kind of weight you feel you don't deserve
- Start self-perpetuating physiological loops that can keep you feeling poorly long after the initial period of stress is over
- Compromise tissue healing, which can lead to joint problems and chronic pain
- Reduce your skin's ability to regenerate, thereby reducing your skin's overall health—which, since skin is one of your major organs of elimination, can have huge long term effects on your health and give you wrinkles
- And more



Research has shown that most of the beliefs and perceptions that control our often counter-effective responses when we are exposed to stress-inducing situations formed during childhood. These early, long-standing thought patterns literally wear grooves in our brains and our neurology responds, making these response patterns harder and harder to avoid. We can change these patterns, but that takes commitment, time, and consistency. We need to practice new patterns to wear new, healthier grooves in our biology.



Books, afternoon seminars, and weekend workshops on stress can give you lots of cognitive information about the mechanisms of stress and your body's response to stress and maybe a few quick relaxation exercises, but they do nothing for the grooves in your brain. Researchers generally recommend six months of education and practice to significantly alter these early-acquired beliefs. Dr. Hall has learned from working with thousands of patients that if you change your deeply-held beliefs, then voila! you change your experience of and response to stressful situations, even on a physical level. This may sound like magic, but it is true. Every year as we make advances in neurobiology, we learn that what the yogis have been telling us for 5,000 years is true: change your beliefs, change your life.



That's why we need skills to deal with stress. We need useful, concrete tools that help us change our response to our environment so we can handle challenging situations like just that—as challenges instead of threats. This is what The Seven Tools of Healing do for people. But until you can sign up for a class, it's important to know how stress can affect

you and some simple everyday things you can do to support your body. And that is the purpose of this small booklet: to help you learn easy little things you can do every day to help your body handle stress. These ideas will not stop you from initiating the stress response and causing the cascade of physical effects stress can precipitate, but until you learn how to do that, these ideas can help your body find its equanimity again. And that is important too.

Compassionate Self-Care



For most people, the longer they live under stress, the more their body complains. Headaches, stomach troubles, insomnia, weight gain, high blood pressure... the list goes on and on. It's easy to feel like our bodies are failing us. We can even hate our hard working bodies when they develop physical or emotional symptoms of stress. It's easy to miss that our bodies are really just trying to talk to us; to teach us new, kinder ways of being with the stressors in our lives. When we can react with love towards our body, with a genuinely compassionate response to our exhaustion, pain, and sufferings,

then we can begin a new relationship with stress and our bodies. This relationship begins with compassionate self-care. It can be as simple as drinking an herbal tea, or sitting quietly for 20 minutes while our body re-equilibrates. It can be as simple as returning to your breath and taking a few minutes to just be with what is. Sometimes putting your hands over your heart (or anywhere else on your body that is asking for compassionate touch) and breathing can be restorative. Our culture likes to make things complex, but really good self-care is simple.



Learning to practice compassionate self-care can be a first step in repairing what stress has done to your body. Resting when you are tired, taking time for yourself (even if it is for only 15 minutes and feels impossible), taking a warm bath before bed, listening to restorative meditations, using restorative herbal preparations, and hydrating well: all these actions are a way to begin a new life where you have a different relationship with stress. But before you do any of these things, take a moment and just acknowledge your body. Think about all the things it does for you all day. Thank it. Even if you are sick and tired of feeling sick and tired, take a small moment and find something in there you can love. It doesn't have to be a big thing. Even if it is just the shape of your fingernails or the color of your eyes. Start with something and be grateful towards your body. Thank it for allowing you to function in this world. Express your love and then listen. See what your body is trying to say to you. This may be hard at first. That's ok. Just do it for a couple of minutes every day. Put whatever you are experiencing right now aside for a moment, turn inside, open your heart and feel



gratitude, compassion and love. And then, from that perspective, turn and look at whatever you are experiencing. Just be. It's amazing what this simple practice can do.

Below are some ideas and easy recipes for you to make at home to help your body and mind recuperate from the effects of stress. Most of the ingredients for these remedies should be easy to find in your local natural grocery store or herb store. If you cannot find them, or prefer to just have them delivered to your doorstep, you can always order them online from such places as Mountain Rose Herbs (www.mountainroseherbs.com) or Dandelion Botanical Company (www.dandelionbotanical.com). Be sure to purchase high quality ingredients. If you find yourself enjoying these remedies, many of the ingredients can be added to your garden or landscaping for easy foraging!x



Sleep Issues

People who are chronically stressed often have trouble sleeping at night. Either they are too wound up to fall asleep or they don't stay asleep long enough because their nervous system is overactive. Another common problem is waking up tired, even after a full night's sleep. If any of these problems sound familiar to you, please find an integrative or functional medicine practitioner and have your adrenals checked out. There is much that can be done medically about these problems if you go to the right practitioner. But there is also much that can be done at home to reset your body and find a new path.



One of the easiest and most restorative things you can do is simply take a bath about an hour before bed. Not only does the hot water relax your muscles and release tension, but coming out of the hot water and subsequently cooling off a bit reminds the body it is time for sleep. Take a bath and then do the rest of your nighttime routine and slip into bed without any last minute screen time. Here are a few recipes

that are easy to make at home to make your bath more enjoyable. If you don't have time to make these salts, buy a box of epsom salts and add a cup to your bath. This alone helps you detox your day and the magnesium in the salts will help you relax and sleep. If you don't have a bathtub, try doing a hot foot soak instead. You can use one-two tablespoons bath salts or ¼ cup Epsom salts per gallon of water in the foot bath.





Tension Tamer Bath Salts

These salts help your body release the effects of stored tension. They work well for headaches, exhaustion, and simply feeling overwhelmed. They stimulate and restore your immune system and help you experience a deeply relaxed state of both body and mind. Use high quality essential oils for best effects.

3 cups sea salt

1 ½ cup Epsom salts

1 cup baking soda

25 drops lavender essential oil

20 drops frankincense essential oil

20 drops bergamot essential oil

10 sandalwood or rose essential oil (optional, these are expensive)

Place the salts in a jar. Close the lid and shake them together. Add essential oils, shake again. Store in an airtight jar. Shake jar before using. Add ½ cup of this mixture to hot bath water. Stir well. Relax 20-30 minutes.

Cures What Ails You Bath Salts

These salts help reduce inflammation in the body, relieving aches and pains. They also stimulate your body's natural healing response for simple colds and viruses. Use high quality essential oils for best results.

3 cup sea salt
1 ½ cup Epsom salt
1 cup baking soda
20 drops eucalyptus essential oil
25 drops frankincense essential oil
10 drops rosemary essential oil
20 drops lemon essential oil
20 drops lavender essential oil

Place the salts and baking soda in a jar. Close the lid and shake them together. Add essential oils, shake again. Store in an airtight jar. Shake jar before using. Add ½ cup of this mixture to hot bath water. Stir well. Relax 20-30 minutes.



Over-Stressed Skin

When our body is stressed, fewer resources can go to keeping our skin looking young and vibrant. We can see an increase in acne and other skin disturbances, or our skin can get overly dry and flaky, even crepe-like. If stress is affecting our digestion, we may see a rise in conditions like eczema that usually result from food allergies. Stress also affects our body's ability to detox life's impurities. Since our skin is a major detox organ, this too can affect the vibrancy and health of our skin. There are many natural and herbal remedies that help return our skin to its natural vibrant state.



The first thing to try is dry brushing your skin. Before you shower, take a skin brush and gently (but firmly) rub your skin. Brush towards your heart. If you do this everyday for a few minutes before you shower, your skin should see some return to vibrancy. Another easy and inexpensive trick is to oil



your skin after you dry brush. Take sesame or olive oil and rub it all over your skin—arms, legs, stomach and back if you can reach it. Let the oil stay on your skin for 20-30 minutes before you jump in the shower. Shower with warm, not hot, water and pat your skin dry. This is an old Ayurvedic trick. By letting the oil soak into your skin before you take the shower, the oil and the water combine leaving your skin softer and smoother than before. It's a great remedy for overly-dry skin.



Rejuvenating Face Oil

Face oils come in many forms. Some with lots of ingredients and some with just a few. Some with lots of chemicals, some with none. This one is simple to make and very effective. Simply mix these ingredients in a small bottle and apply to your skin a few drops at a time. A little bit goes a long way.

2 tablespoons apricot or olive oil (use apricot if your skin is oily, either if not)

1 teaspoon carrot seed oil (optional)

1 tablespoon jojoba oil (optional)

15 drops frankincense essential oil

15 drops lavender essential oil

10 drops niaouli essential oil

10 drops geranium essential oil

Skin Rejoice Anti-Aging Shower Scrub

Many stressed people find their skin aging faster than they would like. Dry, flaky, itchy skin; early wrinkles; or, in extreme cases, crepey skin like that of the elderly, are all signs that your skin is being affected by stress. This scrub offers help and is easy to make at home. Make sure to use high quality essential oils for best effect.

1 cup sea salt

¼ cup baking soda

20 drops lavender essential oil

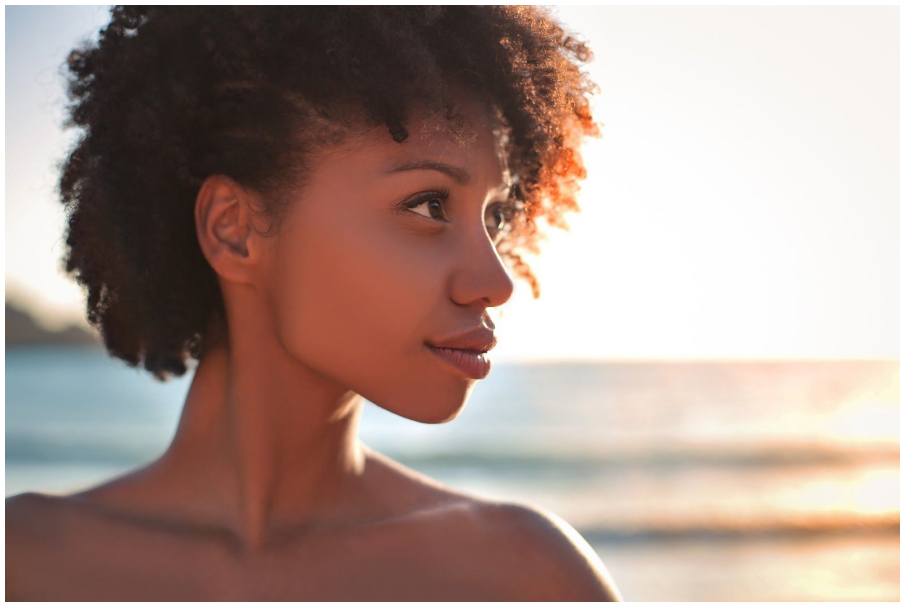
25 drops frankincense essential oil

20 drops vetiver essential oil

20 rose geranium essential oil (optional, add if your hormone balance is being affected by stress, too)

Olive oil

Place all ingredients except the olive oil in a small jar. Mix well to distribute the essential oils. Cover the mixture with olive oil. To use, grab a small amount in a bath mitt or with your hand and scrub your skin near the end of your shower. Scrub well for a few minutes. Rinse. Be careful not to use too much or your shower can become dangerously slippery.



Herbal Infusions

Herbal infusions (basically a way of making tea have more medicinal effect) can add deep nourishment to your daily routine and, if you choose the herbs wisely, can effectively counteract many of the physical effects of stress. Infusions are usually made with the tender parts of the plant like the leaves and the flowers. Infusions act as a tonic to help the body rebuild and reclaim health for those faced with some chronic health problems. Infusions are not a quick fix. They require a



long-term commitment (aka drinking a quart or so every day) but are well worth the effort. As an antidote to our busy, want-a-quick-fix culture, infusions beg us to slow down, to sip slowly and deeply of that which is most nourishing. Infusions are simple and easy to make, requiring little time and yielding big rewards. They are quite cost effective too. All and all, a great tool to have in your pocket when life is stressful.

There are many methods of making an infusion, but we are going to discuss just one way that is good for both cold and hot infusions. Simply place 2-3 tablespoons of dried herbs or 6-8 tablespoons of fresh herbs in a quart jar and cover with water. Let sit for 8-24 hours, strain out the herbs and drink this instead of water or tea. Generally, boiling water is used, but some herbs need to be infused in cold water rather than hot water. Marshmallow root is a prime example of an herb best infused in cold water. It's fantastic for many stomach complaints common to the over-stressed. Most other herbs can be infused in hot or cold water, though hot tends to allow more of the beneficial constituents of the plant matter to yield into the water.

Infusions can be made as simples (one herb at a time) or mixtures. When making a mixture that contains both roots and tender plant parts, either make separately and combine or make the root portion first and let sit for a few hours and then add the leaves or flowers to the pot and let sit again.

Many herbs make wonderful tonics and often can be found by wandering around outside. Nettles, raspberry leaf, and oat straw combined in equal parts make a wonderful general tonic for modern life. Nettles strengthen and help purify the body, raspberry leaf builds the immune system and balances the subtle systems of the body, while oat straw soothes the nervous system and helps to destress the body. If foraging for plants in the wild, be sure you know how to identify each plant before you consume it.



Infusion Mix Ideas

Here are ideas for making your own infusion mixes. They are listed in the order where you would mix the most to the least. For example, in the cold buster you might use a tablespoon of raspberry leaf and a teaspoon of lemon balm and nettle and then a $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ t. of lavender. There's no hard and fast rules about the amounts though. So, feel free to experiment.

Cold Buster—raspberry leaf, lemon balm, nettle and lavender flowers.

Pick Me Up—peppermint, linden, blackberry leaf and lemon balm.

Good Morning—nettle, oatstraw, raspberry leaf and rose petals

Good Night—spearmint, chamomile, hops, passion flower, oatstraw, rose petals, lavender flowers and honey (if you are really having trouble sleeping add valerian or skullcap or more hops)

De-stressor—Linden, lemon balm and hawthorn berries.



Mix and Match Ideas for Infusions

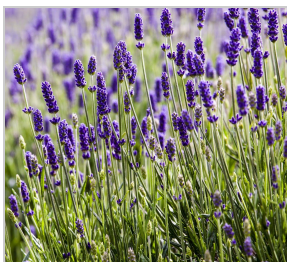
For general health and well being, a daily quart of any of the following herbs would be a healthy choice as a simple (a one herb mix). Mix up your choices day to day or stick to the first three for long-term daily consumption. All have multiple beneficial characteristics that make them good choices for a simple. If you don't like the taste, try adding raw honey. Use 2-3 tablespoons of dried herb per quart of water.

Nettles (whole body tonic; useful for pain relief as it relaxes muscle spasms and reduces inflammation; high in nutrients that build healthy hair, teeth, bones and blood; decreases seasonal allergies, especially if taken long term; supports prostate health; helps improve fasting blood sugar levels; helps tonify the body's detoxing systems)



Oatstraw (tonic for the nervous system; high in nutrients that increase the vitality of your nails and hair; restores balance to stressed individuals; calming and supportive; helps reduce insomnia—not as a sleep aid but rather as a nervous system tonic; uplifting to the spirits)

Raspberry leaf (nourishing tonic herb as it contains many vitamins and minerals, especially when prepared as an infusion as opposed to a tea; helpful with women's hormonal issues; antiviral; helps build healthy connective tissue and modulate muscle cramping; increased energy when taken daily)



Lavender (tonic for the nervous system; has been found to have anti-inflammatory, antifungal, antidepressant, antiseptic, and antibacterial properties; also has antispasmodic, analgesic, detoxifying, hypotensive and sedative effects.)

Dandelion (helps poor digestion; high in inulin which encourages healthy gut flora; clears skin eruptions; deeply nourishing; helps body detox and supports healthy liver function; diuretic; hormone balancing)



Burdock (works deeply and slowly to clear skin issues; improve liver function; help detoxify; strengthen the lymphatic system, which is an integral part of the immune system; reduce inflammation; balance hormones; lower blood pressure; improve digestion; and help balance blood sugar)

Chickweed (cools inflammation; highly nutritious; soothes inflamed skin conditions including eczema and rashes; curbs appetite; diuretic; soothes irritated lungs; supports those suffering from chronic exhaustion; helps in developing boundaries)



Violet (for dreaming (but don't take it too often); soothes inflammation; calms nerves; reduces feelings of stress; supports immune and lymphatic systems; highly nutritious)

Specific Recipes for Infusions



Immune Booster

If you feel like you are coming down with something, or want a general boost to your immune system, here's my favorite immune boost infusion made in a quart jar:

- 2 tablespoons raspberry leaf
- 2 tablespoons nettles
- 1 tablespoon oatstraw
- 1 teaspoon lavender flowers
- ½ teaspoon dried rose petals
- 1 tablespoon peppermint leaves
- 1 tablespoon honey (optional, add after the herbs have infused)



Relax and Renew

If you are stressed out and would like to relax, try this infused in a quart jar:

- 2 tablespoons oatstraw
- 2 tablespoons nettles
- 1 teaspoon lavender
- 1 tablespoon chamomile

Sweet Dreams

For sleep, one half hour before you want to sleep, drink one cup of hot tea made with:

1 tablespoon dried hop flowers

1 teaspoon chamomile

¼ teaspoon lavender flowers

Add honey to taste after it is brewed



Happy Heart Infusion

To raise your spirits, infuse this mix in a quart jar:

2 tablespoons lemon balm leaf

2 tablespoons peppermint leaf

2 tablespoons oatstraw

1 tablespoon hawthorn leaf
(optional)

Brain Power

If afternoon brain fog troubles you, try this infusion. Besides helping you think more clearly in the moment, it is deeply nourishing to your nervous, adrenal, and detoxifying systems if you drink it every day.

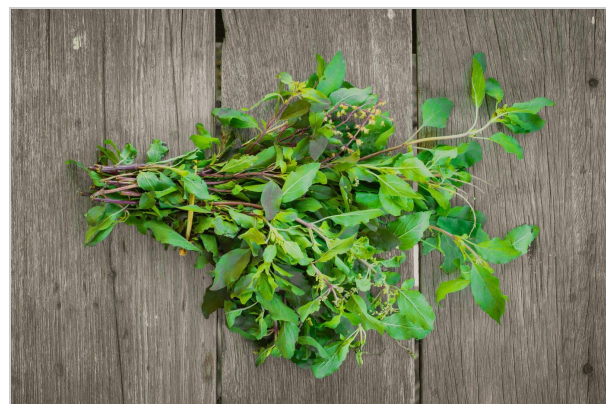
2 tablespoons oatstraw

2 tablespoon nettle

1 tablespoon peppermint

1 teaspoon tulsi

1 teaspoon rosemary



Aromatherapy for Stress



Diffusing essential oils into your environment is another easy, effective way to bring natural healing into your life. A couple of drops of an essential oil can lift your spirits, calm your nerves, energize, or relax you, depending on what you need. You can place two-three drops of essential oil in a diffuser and feel the effects for hours as the oil is dispersed into the air.

Essential oils are made through a distillation process using copious amounts of plant matter. It takes 250

pounds of lavender to make 16 ounces of lavender essential oil.

Lemon balm takes 4,000 pounds to make the same amount.

That's why, even

though it may not seem possible, just two drops of an essential oil can have a powerful medicinal effect on you, and why sometimes they are incredibly expensive!



Depending on your situation, using an aromatherapy diffuser to disperse oils isn't practical. Sometimes you work in a public environment, or an office space with many co-workers. Don't dismay, there are other ways to benefit from the amazing healing powers of essential oils. One of the easiest ways is to fill a small bottle (preferably a roller bottle) with a carrier oil such as almond, apricot, or fractionated coconut oil, and then put 10 drops of essential oil for every tablespoon of carrier oil. Then you can dab the mixture directly on your skin whenever you feel then need. You can rub the roller bottle on your neck or forehead and feel the relaxation permeate your muscles.

When you are applying the oil, take a minute and feel your breath. See if you can breathe slowly, from your diaphragm. Let the oils and your breath calm you down. Once you feel your sense of balance return, take another moment to really feel what that feels like in your body. Try to anchor that feeling so you can find it again if you find yourself being stressed. In that way you can use the essential oils as a teacher rather than a crutch.





These essential oils work well on stress-related conditions:

- **Frankincense** (balances mood; relaxes the body; reduces anxiety and depression; supports the immune system)
- **Ylang ylang** (brings a sense of peace and calm; soothes fearfulness; uplifts the spirits; reduces anxiety and depressions; helps with insomnia)
- **Jasmine** (antidepressant; increases libido; induces long, restful sleep; helps with stress related skin conditions; relaxes body)
- **Bergamot** (uplifting for the spirit; reduces stress and anxiety; helps stress related skin conditions; reduces agitation; helps with insomnia)
- **Sweet Orange** (uplifting; reduces anxiety and depression)
- **Vetiver** (grounding; calms the mind; reduces anxiety; nervous system tonic; helps bring calm and self-awareness after a shock)
- **Sandalwood** (grounding; uplifts the mind; reduces anxiety)
- **Rose** (reduces anxiety and depression; calms the heart during emotional upset; useful during panic attacks)
- **Lavender** (relaxes; helps sleep; supports the immune system; reduces stress, depression, and anxiety; relieves restlessness; uplifts the mood)
- **Rosemary** (improves mental clarity; helps with digestive issues; strengthens immune system; helps people stay connected to their bodies; energizing)
- **Peppermint** (energizes; improves mental clarity; good for digestive issues)
- **Chamomile** (reduces worry and anxiety; helps bring calm to the spirit; reduces 'over-thinking'; helps with insomnia)
- **Lemon Balm** (reduces anxiety and symptoms of stress; boost immune system; calming)

Herbal Tinctures



Easy to take and incredibly cost effective, herbal tinctures are another way to easily incorporate the goodness of herbs into our lives. Just place a few drops in your mouth, or, if you prefer, dilute them in some juice or water, and let the herb work its magic. Tinctures are made by soaking the raw or dry herbs in a menstruum (aka alcohol, glycerin, or vinegar) for a month or longer. As the herbs sit in the menstruum, the vital qualities of the plant move from the plant matter into the menstruum. If you choose a tincture made of

alcohol, it will stay good for years waiting for you to partake of its goodness. If for some reason you prefer not to take herbs in tincture form, many of the herbs helpful in remediating the physical effects of stress are available in capsule form. Generally, but not always, it is more expensive to take high quality herbs this way.

Many herbs are particularly helpful to the body in times of stress. There is a whole category of herbs that you may have heard of called adaptogens. These are specifically beneficial during stress, and they can literally reverse many of the harmful effects that stress causes to the body. Adaptogens strengthen your adrenal system and enhance the body's ability to cope with anxiety, fatigue, and the disrupted hormonal responses that come from too much stress. They lower cortisol levels and help protect your body from the physical effects of stress. Adaptogens deeply nourish and build our bodies up from the inside out. They work slowly over time, building and strengthening the body without jarring it. No quick fixes here. They quite literally help your body 'adapt' to the natural stressors of life. When you find yourself



reaching for an extra cup of coffee everyday, you might want to rethink that decision and instead reach for an adaptogen.

If you are wondering what tinctures to try to help you cope with stress, here's a list of adaptogen herbs and what they do. Many have similar effects but each has their own unique way of helping. The three items at the end of the list are not herbs per se, but each offers a significant benefit for those suffering from the effects of stress.

Ginseng (Panax) was the first adaptogen to receive wide acclaim for its healing powers. Grown in shady environments in the forests of Appalachia, it was quickly overharvested so now it is difficult to buy ethically harvested wild ginseng. Most of the



available ginseng comes from cultivated roots from Canada and China. Since wild ginseng has become almost endangered in many of its natural habitats, do show care in where you source your ginseng. For a long time, ginseng was touted as a cure for the common cold. This isn't true. But it helps your body handle stress better, so, in that way, it may reduce the number of colds you contract. What Ginseng

does do is sharpen your mind, lower your blood pressure, and help balance blood sugar levels. It's considered a powerful anti-aging herb in Asia. It can improve erectile dysfunction and balance your mood too. With all these incredible benefits, you can see why it was considered a 'miracle' herb.

Schisandra this Chinese herb is considered a master balancing herb. High in antioxidants, it combats inflammation and damage from free-radicals, and supports your body's ability to repair itself. Schisandra supports adrenal function, reduces brain fog, and restores flagging energy levels. It helps stressed skin renew



itself and balances important hormonal functions that get disrupted in extended times of stress. It's good for the cardiovascular system and in helping the liver detox environmental toxins out of the body. It increases enzyme activity and helps the digestive system return to balance. Schizandra improves fertility by restoring hormonal balance and renews sexual energy. With all these benefits, you can see why Chinese practitioners hold it in such high regard.

Eleuthero (aka Siberian Ginseng) is a powerful immune booster. Not a true ginseng, the roots of this shrub help boost energy and increase stamina. It's known for its ability to help people stay calm under pressure. It reduces many of the risk factors for heart disease. Eleuthero also acts as a strong anti-viral. It strengthens your memory and helps you withstand stress. Known for its anti-aging qualities, eleuthero can be taken on a daily basis for years to come. Chinese medicine practitioners have called this plant "the king of adaptogens". It's been studied extensively in Russia, where the plant grows naturally. The Russians were so impressed with this plant, they used it to build the health of their soldiers, their workers, and their astronauts! Building health is exactly what Eleuthero is best at. It's contraindicated when pregnant, nursing, or with high blood pressure, or if you have a fever.



Tulsi (aka Holy Basil) is a sacred Indian herb whose name means 'beyond compare' or 'the incomparable one'. Its peppery taste is a delicious addition to many dishes. High in antioxidants, it helps the body heal and reduce the effects of stress. Tulsi lowers stress hormones, especially cortisol. It's anti-bacterial, antiviral, and antifungal. It's helpful in maintaining cardiovascular health. Certain kinds of headaches improve by taking tulsi. Ayurvedic practitioners use it as an anti-aging tonic. A cup of tulsi tea is a potent relaxant. It promotes respiratory health both during acute illness but also chronic conditions like asthma. It helps resolve acne, and soothe inflamed skin.



as



Ashwagandha, native to India, is highly prized in the Ayurvedic tradition. It's known as the "Indian Ginseng" as it has many of the positive benefits of Panax Ginseng. Well known for helping your body adapt to the physical effects of stress, Ashwagandha reduces cortisol and C-reactive protein levels, regulates the immune

system, improves memory and memory formation, and reduces anxiety. It's high in healthful antioxidants. People take it to help normalize blood sugar levels. Be sure to take Ashwagandha in recommended levels as it can cause stomach distress if too much is consumed. Not recommended for pregnant or nursing mothers.



Rhodiola is the herb to try if you suffer from brain fog or a poor memory caused by stress. This herb, common to Europe, gets its name from the scent of the root when



cut—rose root. Rhodiola combats many of the symptoms of adrenal fatigue. It increases stamina, vitality, reduces the release of stress hormones and increases hormones that lift the mood. Rhodiola is a strong tonic herb for both the cardiovascular system and the liver. It's full of antioxidants. It's been shown to lower C-reactive protein levels, high levels of which are correlated with high levels of inflammation.

Like many adaptogens, it helps improve sexual function. Not the best choice in cases where anxiety is a problem though, as it acts as a stimulant and can increase feelings of anxiety. Also, be careful to read the ingredients of commercial preparations of rhodiola, as many also contain caffeine.

Licorice is most known in the United States for the black chewy candy made out of its roots. But what most Americans don't know is the medicinal power pack that is hidden in these adaptogenic roots. Licorice helps heal the digestive issues caused by stress. It



helps heal leaky gut, adrenal fatigue, PMS, and indigestion. It's a classic remedy for heartburn, nausea, and stomach pain. Licorice helps ulcers. It regulates cortisol levels. It helps the liver function better and soothes common stress-induced skin irritations. It is anti-inflammatory and increases immunity to viruses. Its demulcent properties help relieve the pain of sore throats. Straight

licorice extract can increase blood pressure and cause edema, so it is better to buy a deglycyrrhized licorice (or DGL). This type of licorice preparation causes fewer side effects and may be taken by people with high blood pressure. Licorice should not be taken for more than a few weeks at a time without taking a break from it.

Bacopa is a lesser known Ayurvedic herb that has potent abilities to combat the effects of stress. It helps reduce brain fog, increases focus and memory. It is sometimes used in the treatment of Alzheimer's.

Some studies (in animals) show it supports the regeneration of aging brains. Bacopa has been shown to reduce redness, swelling, and other signs of inflammation. It supports liver health and helps your body regain its ability to maintain a normal blood pressure. High in antioxidants, Bacopa protects against oxidative stress. Some people find it reduces ADHD symptoms, depression, and anxiety by increasing the effects of certain neurotransmitters, including serotonin and acetylcholine. It has potent pain relieving qualities without the risk of



addiction. It decreases sexual dysfunction in both men and women. Bacopa takes time to work. Evaluate its effectiveness after 8-12 weeks. Do not take with allergy medicine.

Astragalus is an herb to choose if you suffer from frequent colds. It helps prevent colds, not cure them. Chinese medicine considers it an herb that builds your body's



protective chi, which acts as a shield against pathogens. Western herbalists call it an immunomodulator, or an herb that balances the immune system. Studies have shown it to increase white blood cells, and to stimulate the production of T killer cells. It also

decreases a virus's ability to replicate itself when it is in your body. It helps restore energy levels for people suffering from adrenal fatigue and it strengthens ailing hearts, kidneys, and livers. It's a deeply nourishing tonic. People on immunosuppressant drugs should consider taking another herb, as astragalus often works against this class of drugs' mechanism of action.



Reishi Mushroom, while not an herb per se, is a powerful agent against stress. It's known as the 'immortality mushroom' and, before cultivation techniques were developed,



grew only on the bark of plum trees so its use was reserved for Royals. The late Dr. Mengke Kou (a lineage Classical Chinese medicine doctor who was brought from China to help start the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine) once told me he believed every woman over the age of 50 could benefit from taking the Reishi mushroom on a daily basis. That's quite a statement.

Reishi is known for its ability to bring back people's feeling of innate well-being. It has an astonishingly long list of conditions it helps. It lowers blood pressure, is an immune modulator, has anti-tumor qualities, inhibits the release of histamines, alleviates common allergies, improves liver function and helps oxygen utilization. Reishi is anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and antiviral. It improves cardiovascular health and reduces cortisol levels. In Chinese medicine, Reishi is classified as a



'superior' herb, which means it has no side-effects and can be taken safely for long periods of time. A small number of highly sensitive people experience slight skin irritation or digestive upset when they begin Reishi and it starts its work helping the body detox. These symptoms are rare and go away quickly. People on immunosuppressants should consult their doctor before taking Reishi. Taking Vitamin C with Reishi can help with absorption. Be sure to buy a high quality supplement as inferior Reishi products produce inferior results.



Cordyceps Mushroom has been named a 'precious longevity promoting' herb. Until cultivation techniques were developed, this parasitic fungus was exceptionally rare as it grew only on the backs of caterpillars at high elevations in the Himalayas. Like Reishi, this fungus has an impressive list of credentials. It's used by athletes to improve performance as it increases the body's ability to create ATP, thereby increasing stamina and

lessening muscle weakness during high performance. People with chronic fatigue often

find it helpful in raising energy levels and preventing excessive fatigue. It is known to enhance libido and sexual function. It supports immune system, cardiovascular, and lung function; increases oxygen absorption; and has anti-tumor properties. It helps rejuvenates skin. Cordyceps improve kidney function and help detoxify the body. Diabetics and people on blood thinners need to be aware of their lab levels when starting this supplement. It's ok to take, but you may need to adjust your medications in response. You can purchase the fungus at Asian markets and add directly to food as is done in Asia.

Maca, a Peruvian root grown at high altitudes, can be made into a powder and added to smoothies, or it can be taken in capsule form. Deemed a 'superfood', maca is high in Vitamins B, C, and E, and contains an impressive list of minerals, too. It has more calcium than milk! This adaptogen balances



hormones, increases libido, and improves fertility. It often helps women with hormonal-related anxiety or depression. Maca boosts energy levels, stamina, and overall vitality. Athletes take it for improving their performance. Maca increases focus and memory, and reduces brain fog. It has antioxidant qualities and increases the creation of glutathione in the body, both of which are considered anti-aging properties. Maca should be avoided by people with high blood pressure and on hormone altering medications, like those used in treating breast cancer. Also, people with certain thyroid conditions should consult with their doctor before starting maca.

Final Thoughts

All the natural remedies we have talked about in this booklet are for the purpose of remediating the physical and emotional effects of stress that are already happening in your body. When you are stressed, it is very important to support your body as it tries to maintain its equilibrium. It's also important to learn how to deal with the stressors in your life in a more healthy way. Every time you activate your body's stress response, it takes three hours to calm down and it depletes important nutrients out of your system. If you are activating it on and off throughout the day, every day or even nearly every day, your body never has a chance to recuperate.

There are many ways to learn how to modulate your stress response—daily practice of Tai Chi, Qigong, meditation, martial arts, yoga, and yoga nidra meditation are just a few. But, as any student of these practices knows, it takes commitment and years of study before you master

them enough to avoid activating your stress response on a regular basis. Our class, *Taming the Bear: Taking the Bite Out of Stress*, is another way to learn how to respond appropriately to stressors. We teach you the skills you need to respond in new, kinder ways to



the actual type of stress you are experiencing in your daily life. Our twelve-week class gives you the time and support you need to practice these new skills so you can change your relationship with stress. But, until you can sign up for a class, it's helpful to know these simple everyday things you can do to support your body.

Disclaimer: The information in this booklet is intended for your educational use only; it is, in no way, a substitute for professional medical or mental health advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical or mental health condition and before undertaking any diet, herb, supplement, fitness, or other health program.



Steven M. Hall, MD practices a dynamic form of medicine that combines traditional and alternative modalities. His goal is to encourage each patient to find wholeness in his or her life on all levels—physical, emotional, social, and spiritual. Residency-trained in family practice, Dr. Hall's consuming curiosity propelled him out of the traditional medical box as he sought answers to his patients' seemingly unsolvable medical problems. He lives on a small farm with his wife, Patti Pitcher, where they grow and preserve as much of their family's food as they can. On their farm there are orchards, berries, herbs, vegetable

gardens, bees, cows, goats, chickens, pigs, and sometimes lambs and turkeys. In his spare time Dr. Hall enjoys pressing apple cider and splitting wood. He loves hiking with his children in the nearby Cascade mountains.



Patti Pitcher has been actively studying and practicing traditional home arts and herbalism since she was a teenager. Her home is filled with various pots brewing and projects needing finishing. Always interested in trying something new, she loves learning, experimenting, and concocting with plants and food, and she loves sharing what she knows. She's the co-founder of the Farm Wife Mystery School, where she teaches preserving, fermenting and herbalism. In addition, she co-authored *Under The Chinaberry Tree: Books and Inspirations for Mindful Parenting*, Random House 2003.