HERBAL SUPERSTARS

Adaptogenic herbs are prized in other countries for their harmonizing effect on the body—now it's your turn to experience their true medicinal magic.

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ARE YOU MAKING IT THROUGH EACH DAY FEELING BALANCED, ALERT, AND ENERGIZED, WITH NO ANXIETY, FATIGUE, OR COLD AND FLU SYMPTOMS?

A pretty tall order, sure, but certain herbal supplements can introduce you to that life of balance and serenity you may be missing. Adaptogens are stars of the botanical world—plants and herbs that build lifelong stamina and strong immunity. They could be the single biggest difference between how we Americans handle our lifetime health plan and how people on nearly every other continent handle theirs. They use 'em, and we don't.

"I consider adaptogens to be among the most important class of herbs for general health purposes," says Roy Upton, executive director of the American Herbal Pharmacopoeia. "In the West, we tend to wait until we are sick to take something, whereas in the East, they have learned that it is more important to utilize herbs to stay healthy and promote longevity." Here's an introduction to some of the most popular adaptogenic herbs.

**ASHWAGANDHA**

HELPs WITH WEAKNESS, LIBIDO, AND OVERALL HEALTH

"Ashwagandha is regarded by Ayurvedic doctors as the single most important and valuable herb for both men and women in the *Materia Medica* of thousands of herbs," says Michael Tierra, founder of the American Herbalists Guild. He recommends it for all weakness and deficiency conditions, as well as for boosting libido. "By building health overall, it builds sexual energy and this is noticeable usually after three or four days of regular usage," he says. "In my practice, I find it gives people a healthy separation from their daily dramas," adds Rob Talbert, an instructor at the California College of Ayurveda in Long Beach, Calif.

**DOSAGE:** Take 2 grams per day.

**ASTRAGALUS**

HELPs WITH IMMUNITY, DIGESTION, FATIGUE, COLDS, AND FLU

Astragalus is used in traditional Chinese medicine for fatigue, poor appetite, and diarrhea. "It moves the vital energy upward, and strengthens the lungs and digestive system," says Alan Tillotson, PhD, LAc, RH, author of the *One Earth Herbal Sourcebook.

"I use astragalus as a tonic to strengthen the immune system to resist infection," says Steven Horne, RH. Tierra agrees. For cold and flu prevention, he recommends Planetary Herbs Astragalus Jade Screen formula. "During this past year's cold-and-flu season, my students, patients, and friends were taking it daily, and not a one contracted a cold or flu," he says.

**DOSAGE:** Take 9 to 30 grams daily.
**Chinese Schisandra Berry**

*Helps with stress and overall health, including immunity and energy*

Chinese schisandra berry contains all five “flavors” of herbal pharmacy, meaning it has wide-ranging benefits. “Most herbs have one taste, a few have two, and rare is a three-taste herb, explains Prashanti de Jager, a California herbalist and founder of Organic India. “Schisandra is one of a handful of five-taste herbs.”

Considered one of the most important of the adaptogenic tonics of Chinese medicine, schisandra has a specific and powerful ability to support the adrenals, lessening the negative effects that stress can have on the body. It also benefits the liver.

**DOSAGE:** The TCM dose is 10 grams per day.

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**Cordyceps**

*Helps with cough and wheezing, impotence, and chronic respiratory weakness*

Cordyceps is a strikingly unusual substance. It’s actually a fungus that grows on moth larvae, but most modern cordyceps is from mycelium grown in a controlled environment on a vegetable base, making the medicine much more accessible and economical. It is often used for chronic cough, and wheezing, and impotence from coldness and low metabolism. “Because it tonifies yin and yang, it is very safe, and can be taken over a long period of time,” says Horne. “I use it with clients who have any kind of chronic respiratory condition—COPD, asthma, and catching colds easily.”

**DOSAGE:** Take 4 to 12 grams per day.

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**Ginseng**

*Helps with energy, weakness, and malaise*

Ginseng, also commonly known as *Panax ginseng*, is the best-known and most widely used adaptogen in the world. “Ginseng is used for weakness and malaise, especially with cold limbs and poor appetite,” says Tillotson. “Ginseng is the most experiential herb for increasing energy and vitality,” adds Tierra. “However, one must have good-quality ginseng, and it needs to be taken in a sufficient dose.”

**DOSAGE:** Tierra recommends 6 to 9 grams of ginseng in one or two doses per day to increase energy. Red ginseng is a prepared form of regular or white ginseng. It is more warming and stimulating than white ginseng.

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**Holy Basil**

*Helps with colds and flu, fever, and asthma*

Holy basil is one of the most revered plants in India. “It can be used to prevent and treat colds and flu, and is strong enough to be used for fevers,” says Tillotson. He also recommends holy basil for asthma.

**TO USE:** Traditionally, people take holy basil as a tea, in a dose of 3 teaspoons of dry herb, brewed into water, per day.
**REISHI**
**HELPS WITH NERVOUSNESS, SPASMS, IMMUNITY, HEART, AND LIVER HEALTH**

Reishi mushroom is thought to nurture the heart and pacify the spirit. Its benefits are impressive. "It relaxes spasms, and is useful for nervous debility and imbalance," says Tillotson. "It strengthens immunity, and is used for cancer, longevity, and as a brain tonic."

"Reishi mushroom is my all-time favorite of the tonics and adaptogens," adds Upton, "Of all the botanicals I have used and researched, reishi has the broadest array of actions positively affecting the broadest array of systems: immune, cardiovascular, nervous, and liver."

**DOSAGE:** Take 6 grams per day.

**RHODIOLA**
**HELPS WITH DEPRESSION, ANEMIA, ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION, AND HORMONAL IMBALANCES**

For centuries, Siberian natives have been using rhodiola root to help them thrive in their cold climate. "Rhodiola is great for exhaustion from overwork, and for nervous debility and depression," says Tillotson. "It is traditionally used for fatigue, anemia, depression, impotence, and nervous system disorders."

Tierra recommends rhodiola for women's hormonal irregularities and hormonal deficiencies associated with menopause.

**DOSAGE:** Take 100 to 300 milligrams one to three times per day. Preparations are often standardized to 1 percent salidroside and/or 40 to 50 percent phenylpropanoids.

**SHOP FOR THESE PRODUCTS**

**STRESSCARE**
Give your body a break from the negative effects of stress with Himalaya Herbal Healthcare StressCare. This vegetarian formula, featuring ashwagandha and other Indian herbs, is designed to help build energy and promote adrenal health.

**IMMUNE CHEWABLES**
Whether you're traveling or fighting off a summer cold, Source Naturals Wellness Immune Chewables harness the power of adaptogenic herbs, such as astragalus and mushrooms, for stronger immunity. The tasty chewables also contain zinc and other herbs.

**TULSI TEAS**
Can sipping holy basil tea calm your nerves, energize, and boost your mood? Tulsi Teas from Organic India help do all this and come in a variety of delicious flavors, including Original, Pomegranate Green, Peppermint, Sweet Rose, and Honey Chamomile.

**IMPERIAL ADAPTOGEN**
For an all-in-one herbal adaptogen formula, Paradise Herbs Imperial Adaptogen is hard to beat. Herbs included in the formula are Siberian and American ginsengs, rhodiola, ashwagandha, astragalus, schisandra berry, and cordyceps.