
American Botanical Council

HerbClip

FILE: Stress Reduction

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To: General Distribution

Re: **Herbs for Stress Management**

Flynn, Jamie. 1996. The herbal management of stress. *Australian Journal of Medical Herbalism*, 8(1), pp. 15-18.

Stress-related conditions are commonplace in today's fast-paced societies. When the body cannot recover from the stress any longer, exhaustion will result. Patterns of tiredness, recurring illness, and allergic reactions ensue. Physiologically, the adrenal glands are the seat of the body's response to stress. With chronic stress, the hormones produced by the adrenals will inhibit white blood cells and suppress immune function. Acute anxiety and fear and depression can also result from stress.

To support the adrenal glands, adaptogens are the herbs of choice. Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) provides excellent adrenal support, and can even help in cases of complete adrenal exhaustion (Addison's disease). It is also immunostatic and anti-allergic. Ginseng (*Panax ginseng*) acts as either a stimulant or a sedative, depending on what the body needs. It is useful for short term stress conditions, such as a stressful work period or jet lag. Both *Panax* and Siberian ginseng (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*) can counter the stress of chronic disease and surgery. *Eleutherococcus* also enhances the immune system.

Trophorestoratives such as oatstraw (*Avena sativa*) and chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*) nourish and support the nervous system. Oatstraw helps with nervous debility, fatigue, and depression. Chamomile is useful for convulsions, nervous tension, and insomnia, as well as for nervous excitability in children. It is also helpful in stress conditions where digestion is a problem.

For cardiovascular problems related to stress, the author recommends *Tilia europa* (linden), *Leonurus cardiaca* (motherwort), *Achillea millefolium* (yarrow), and *Apium graveolens* (dill). For respiratory problems, *Inula helenium* (elecampane) or *Prunus serotina* are suggested. For skin

problems, licorice may be of help, as may oatstraw and chamomile. For a good night's sleep, hypnotics such as *Valeriana officinalis* (valerian), *Passiflora incarnata* (passion flower), and *Piscidia erythraea* are useful.

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