

Heal Adrenal Fatigue NATURALLY

Practical Ways to Regain Vitality

by Linda Sechrist



FATIGUE DUE TO PHYSICAL OR MENTAL exertion is common in those beleaguered by stress, poor eating habits and insomnia, struggling to balance the needs of family and career and too often using caffeine

and other stimulants to artificially rebound energy. James L. Wilson, Ph.D., a doctor of chiropractic and naturopathy, educates medical professionals about an even more serious health issue he identifies as “adrenal fatigue”; it’s

characterized by below-optimal adrenal function induced by an overload of such stressors. Our two walnut-sized adrenal glands, one atop each kidney, produce vital hormones that help control heart rate, blood pressure, digestion and many other functions, including how the body deals with stress.

Identifying the Core Issue

In his book, *Adrenal Fatigue: The 21st Century Stress Syndrome*, Wilson sheds light on the scope of the problem. “The fact that adrenal fatigue is unrecognized by conventional medicine has left millions of people suffering from an untreated problem that interferes with their ability to function normally and capacity to enjoy life. For those whose adrenal glands are ‘running on empty’, even something as basic as happiness seems almost out of reach,” comments Wilson, who resides in Tucson, Arizona.

Individuals suffering from adrenal fatigue are most concerned about their low moods, energy, mental acuity and libido, for which conventional medicine typically prescribes antidepressant and anti-anxiety drugs. These medications do nothing to revive adrenal functioning.

This faulty condition also affects weight gain and a propensity toward the development of some diseases, including fibromyalgia. “Your resiliency, energy, endurance and very life depend on the proper functioning of the adrenals,” Wilson says.

We’ve inherited our sympathetic nervous system and its stress response of fight-or-flight from our prehistoric ancestors. It hasn’t evolved to differentiate between an acute threat to survival and the chronic threats from looming deadlines, financial pressures and other modern-day worries.

“The adrenal stress response to physical danger or any perceived psychological threat is identical—the release of norepinephrine and epinephrine responsible for cascading physiological reactions,” explains Dr. Vijay Jain, who treats fatigue from an integrative perspective at his Mind Body Wellness Center, in Palm Coast, Florida.

Suggested Treatments

Adrenal fatigue is mainly a self-induced health problem that doesn't just appear. It results from an accumulation of ongoing choices that we can change.

Jain applies ayurvedic principles to reestablish balance in the body's three prominent mind-body types that influence personal well-being. These are known as vata, pitta and kapha. For people primarily characterized by vata and pitta typology, fatigue is the result of being overactive and burning the candle at both ends. For those with kapha constitutions, fatigue is the outcome of a sedentary lifestyle with insufficient movement and eating the wrong foods for them.

He further recommends getting more sleep with regular bedtimes, practices such as yoga nidra meditation, *pranayama* (yogic breathing) and a slower-paced yoga practice with longer-held meditative poses, as well as massage and a diet designed to restore our biological energies, or *doshas*, to a balanced state. "Depending on a patient's constitution I advise some to slow down and burn 50 percent less of their candle, while I tell others to increase their physical activity and improve their diet."

Jain also recommends a type of ayurvedic purification and detoxification treatment that involves a series of five therapies including massage and herbal treatments. Performed in sequence, these allow the body and mind to drop into a state of peacefulness. Acupuncture treatments are also helpful, along with a regimen of adaptogenic herbs such as ginseng, schisandra and ashwagandha, according to Jain.

In *Happy Healthy Thyroid: The Essential Steps to Healing Naturally*, author Andrea Beaman writes about how she recovered naturally from adrenal fatigue. To restore energy and vitality to the body, she further recommends the healing practices of hatha yoga, qigong and tai chi. "These modalities build energy, whereas power yoga, and cardiovascular exercises drain energy in fatigued individuals," advises Beaman. She notes that it can take six months to two years to restore desired energy levels.

Beaman counsels individuals with behavioral characteristics that make it more challenging to burn less of their candle. She grabs their attention with the critical nature of their situation. "You are in and out of life in a blink. If you're exhausted at age 48, how

are you going to live a vibrant, happy and exuberant life right up to the finish line?' That generally works," she says.

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MORE TIPS TO BEAT FATIGUE

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The earliest signs of adrenal fatigue are low energy and the need for several strong shots of caffeine to kick-start the morning or get through an afternoon slump. If these symptoms arise, take steps to begin nourishing, restoring and de-stressing the adrenal glands.

Eliminate stressors. Reevaluate daily schedules to make room for a regular session of yoga, meditation, tai chi or qigong.

Establish a regular sleeping schedule aligned with the body's natural cycle. Slipping between the sheets no later than 10 p.m. can mean better and deeper rest.

Make dietary changes, starting with 40 grams of protein each morning. Limit the intake of stimulants, including caffeine. Eliminate sugar and processed grains. Add adaptogenic herbs and organic coconut and olive oils to dishes and food preparation.

Eat nutritious foods such as greens and brightly colored vegetables. As a result, blood sugar and insulin levels will take fewer rollercoaster rides, easing the work of the adrenals.

Refrain from over-exercising. Excessive cardio or endurance training is hard on the adrenals, so substitute more relaxing forms of exercise.

Practice calming mindfulness and deep, controlled, diaphragmatic breathing.