

# BOTTOM LINE PERSONAL

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Donald R. Yance, CN ■ Mederi Foundation's Centre for Natural Healing

## 6 HERBS THAT SLOW AGING

**Y**ou can't escape aging. But many Americans are aging *prematurely*.

**Surprising fact:** The US ranks 42nd out of 191 countries in life expectancy, according to the Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics.

The leading cause of this rapid, premature aging is *chronic stress*. Stress is any factor, positive or negative, that requires the body to make a response or change to *adapt*. It can be psychological stress, including the modern addiction to nonstop stimulation and speed. Or it can be physiological stress—such as eating a highly processed diet...sitting for hours every day...absorbing toxins from food, water and air...and spending time in artificial light.

Chronic stress overwhelms the body's *homeostasis*, its inborn ability to adapt to stress and stay balanced, strong and healthy. The result?

Your hormonal and immune systems are weakened. Inflammation flares up, damaging cells. Daily energy decreases, fatigue increases and you can't manage life as effectively. You suffer from one or more illnesses, take several medications and find yourself in a downward spiral of worsening health. Even though you might live to be 75 or older, you're *surviving*, not *thriving*.

We can reduce stress by making lifestyle changes such as eating better and exercising. You also can help beat stress and slow aging with *adaptogens*. These powerful herbs

balance and strengthen the hormonal and immune systems...give you more energy...and repair cellular damage—thereby boosting your body's ability to adapt to chronic stress.

**Important:** Adaptogens are generally safe, but always talk with your doctor before taking any supplement.

Here are six of the most powerful adaptogens...

### ASHWAGANDHA

This adaptogen from Ayurveda (the ancient system of natural healing from India) can help with a wide range of conditions.

**Main actions:** It is energizing and improves sleep, and it can help with arthritis, anxiety, depression, dementia and respiratory disorders, such as asthma, bronchitis and emphysema.

**Important benefit:** It is uniquely useful for cancer—it can help kill cancer cells...reduce the toxicity of chemotherapy (and prevent resistance to chemotherapeutic drugs)...relieve cancer-caused fatigue...and prevent recurrence.

### ELEUTHERO

This is the most well-researched adaptogen (with more than 3,000 published studies). It often is called the “king” of adaptogens. (It was introduced in the US as “Siberian ginseng,” but it is not a ginseng.)

**Main actions:** Along with providing energy and vitality, eleuthero protects the body against the ill effects of any kind of stress, such as extremes of

heat or cold, excessive exercise and radiation. More than any other adaptogen, it helps normalize any type of physiological abnormality—including high or low blood pressure...and high or low blood sugar.

**Important benefit:** Eleuthero is a superb “ergogenic” (performance-enhancing) aid that can help anyone involved in sports improve strength and endurance and recover from injury.

### GINSENG

Used as a traditional medicine in Asia for more than 5,000 years and the subject of more than 500 scientific papers, ginseng has two primary species—*Panax ginseng* (Korean or Asian ginseng) and *Panax quinquefolius* (American ginseng).

**Main actions:** Ginseng is antifatigue and antiaging. It increases muscle strength and endurance and improves reaction times. It also strengthens the immune system and the heart and helps regulate blood sugar.

**Important benefits:** American ginseng can be beneficial for recovering from the common cold, pneumonia or bronchitis (particularly with a dry cough)...and chronic stress accompanied by depression or anxiety.

Korean or Asian ginseng is helpful for increasing physical performance, especially endurance and energy. It is effective for restoring adrenal function

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and neurological health such as learning and memory.

#### **RHAPONTICUM**

This herb contains more anabolic (strengthening and muscle-building) compounds than any other plant. It is my number-one favorite herb for increasing stamina and strength.

**Main actions:** It normalizes the central nervous and cardiovascular systems...improves sleep, appetite and mood...and increases the ability to work and function under stressful conditions.

**Important benefit:** This herb is wonderful for anyone recovering from injury, trauma or surgery.

#### **RHODIOLA**

Rhodiola has gained popularity over the past few years as studies show that it rivals eleuthero and ginseng as an adaptogen. It is widely used by Russian athletes to increase energy.

**Main actions:** Rhodiola increases blood supply to the muscles and the brain, enhancing physical and mental performance, including memory. It normalizes the cardiovascular

system and protects the heart from stress. It also strengthens immunity.

**Red flag:** Don't use rhodiola alone—it is extremely astringent and drying. It is best used along with other adaptogens in a formula.

#### **SCHISANDRA**

This herb has a long history of use as an adaptogen in China, Russia, Japan, Korea and Tibet. The fruit is commonly used, but the seed is more powerful.

**Main actions:** Schisandra can treat stress-induced fatigue...protect and detoxify the liver...treat insomnia, depression and vision problems...and enhance athletic performance.

**Important benefit:** This adaptogen may help night vision—one study showed it improved adaptation to darkness by 90%.

#### **COMBINATIONS ARE BEST**

Any one herb has limitations in its healing power. But a combination or formula of adaptogenic herbs overcomes those limitations—because the adaptogens act in concert, making them more powerful.

This concept of *synergy*—multiple herbs acting together are more effective than one herb acting alone—is key to the effectiveness of the herbal formulas of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and Ayurveda. Both these ancient forms of medicine often employ a dozen or more herbs in their formulas.

But it's not only the *combination* of herbs that makes them effective—it's also the *quality* of the herbs. There are many more poor-quality adaptogens on the market than high-quality (or even mediocre-quality).

**My advice:** Look for an herbalist or herbal company that knows all about the source and content of the herbs it uses. *Example:* Herbalist & Alchemist, a company that grows most of the herbs used in its products.

Or find a product sold to health practitioners, who then sell it to their patients—this type of product is more likely to be high-quality. *Example:* MediHerb, from Standard Process.

Herbal formulas from my company, Natura Health Products, also meet these criteria for high quality. ■ ■