



Doing Double-Duty Can Spell S-T-R-E-S-S

•••> Traditional anti-stress herbs promote energy.

by **Dr. Pamela Maloney, PhD, LAc, DHM**

Jammed between a rock and a hard place, many Americans in their 40s, 50s and 60s find themselves doing double—or even triple—duty,



Dr. Pamela Maloney, PhD, LAc, DHM, has been practicing for 20 years in Santa Monica, California, with a specialization in Homeopathic Medicine, Naturopathic Medicine, Acupuncture & Chinese Herbology. She is a member of the American Naturopathic Medical Association, the California Homeopathic Medical Society and the California Acupuncture Association, among others. Her A-List clients include some of the top members of the film, sports, theater, dance, business and financial industries.

raising children and acting as caregivers for elderly parents while working full-time. This jam-packed, on-the-go lifestyle means double trouble in the form of chronic stress.

Multi-tasking can cause a plethora of health problems such as depression, heart disease and a myriad of other stress-induced illnesses. “Some people,” according to Dr. Cecil Wilson, a board member of the American Medical Association, “can even feel physical pain, including problems with indigestion, heartburn or headaches” (Mundell, 2005).

Stress Degenerates

The stress response begins when a perceived threat occurs or a stressful event takes shape, causing over-stimulation of a “fight or flight” response that leads to stress-related illnesses. Chronic stress increases adrenaline and cortisol (the chief stress-hormones) increasing your heart rate, constricting blood vessels and causing digestive immobilization. For many, simply walking away is not a viable option.

Stress relief

Even with improvements in health care, many Boomers are finding themselves overwhelmed with the stresses of modern life. Luckily, there are natural ways to relieve stress, including daily exercise, meditation, deep-breathing techniques and the use of time-honored herbal supplements.

Herbs Regenerate

For centuries, indigenous people have turned to natural options to calm their stressed lives. For example, Panax Ginseng has demonstrated abilities to ease swelling, protect the body against free-radical oxidative damage and more, according to clinical research studies done at the University of Arizona. Panax Ginseng is known as an “adaptogen” because it may increase resistance to physical, chemical and biological stress and build vitality. Reports from the Department of Pharmacology at Iwate Medical University in Japan indicate that Ginseng positively affects the adrenal medulla, the most important organ relating to stress (Tachikawa & Kudo, 2004).

Rest, Recuperate and Recover

Other powerful adaptogens can fortify the blood, maintain a healthy digestive system and alleviate stress. For example, a specific fungus (similar to a mushroom) called *Cordyceps Sinensis* has traditionally been used by Tibetans as a tonic. Living in extremely high altitudes, the rural people of Tibet struggle with many upper-respiratory and joint-health challenges (“Healing,” 2005). Tonics such as *Cordyceps* provide basic vitality to the immune system, which increases energy and decreases the effects of these daily stressors.

According to a study on animals by the Obesity Research Center in Korea, a key chemical component of *Cordyceps Sinensis* helped ease many stress indicators, including changes in the adrenal glands, spleen, thymus and thyroid (Koh et al, 2003).

Calms and Energizes

Preliminary current research on another adaptogen, *Rhodiola Rosea*, suggests that it may reduce the symptoms of stress-related fatigue

and improve short-term memory (Spasov et al, 2000; Brown, Gerbarg & Ramazanov, 2005). A double-blind study of 56 healthy physicians on night duty found that—after using *Rhodiola Rosea* daily—these subjects all displayed improved speed of audiovisual perception, calculation and concentration (Darbinyan et al, 2000; Kelly, 2001).

In another study, cited by Drs. Richard P. Brown and Patricia L. Gerbarg, 128 patients who exhibited signs of asthenia (fatigue, decline in work capability, irritability, distractibility, headache, weakness and poor sleep patterns) had symptoms reduced in 64% of the cases by regular *Rhodiola Rosea* use (Brown & Gerbarg, 2004).

Ultimately, a combination of Panax Ginseng, *Cordyceps Sinensis* and *Rhodiola Rosea* can produce excellent results in fighting off the effects of daily stress. A select combination of key traditional anti-stress herbs may help settle down your world and step up your energy levels to dynamic new heights. ■

References

- Brown, R.P., Gerbarg, P.L. & Ramazanov, Z. (2002). *Rhodiola rosea*: A phytomedicinal overview. American Botanical Council, HerbalGram. Retrieved online January 25, 2006 from <http://www.herbalgram.org/herbalgram/articleview.asp?a=2333>.
- Brown, R.P. & Gerbarg, P.L. (2004). *The rhodiola revolution: Transform your health with the herbal breakthrough of the 21st Century*. Emmaus, PA: Rodale, Inc.
- Darbinyan, V. et al. (2000). *Rhodiola rosea* in stress induced fatigue—A double blind cross-over study of a standardized extract SHR-5 with a repeated low-dose regimen on the mental performance of healthy physicians during night duty. *Phytomedicine*, 7(5), 365–371.
- Healing at the top of the world. (2005, Fall). *Bastyr Magazine*, (3)1, 9–13, 21.
- Kelly, G.S. (2001). *Rhodiola rosea*: A possible plant adaptogen. *Alternative Medicine Review*, 6(3), 293–302.
- Koh, J.H. et al. (2003). Antifatigue and antistress effect of the hot-water fraction from mycelia of *Cordyceps sinensis*. *Biological Pharmacological Bulletin*, 26(5), 691–694.
- Mundell, E.J. (2005). Healthy aging: The 40s—middle-aged, mega-stressed. HealthDay on Yahoo! News. December 28. Retrieved online January 25, 2006 from http://news.yahoo.com/s/hsn/20051229/hl_hsn/healthyagingthe40smiddleagedmegastressed.html.
- Shoba, G. et al. (1998). Influence of piperine on the pharmacokinetics of curcumin in animals and human volunteers. *Planta Medica*, 64(4), 353–356.
- Spasov, A.A. et al. (2000). A double-blind, placebo-controlled pilot study of the stimulating and adaptogenic effect of *Rhodiola rosea* SHR-5 extract on the fatigue of students caused by stress during an examination period with a repeated low-dose regimen. *Phytomedicine*, 7(2), 85–89.
- Tachikawa, E. & Kudo, K. (2004). Proof of the mysterious efficacy of ginseng—basic and clinical trials: Suppression of adrenal medullary function in vitro by ginseng. *Journal of Pharmacological Science*, 95(2), 140–144.