

How to Re-Energize Your Tired Body

We've all heard about the number of people suffering from hot flashes, night sweats, loss of libido, PMS, sleepless nights and fatigue, which occurs when our hormones and chemical brain messengers get out of balance. But did you ever realize stress is what keeps throwing our hormones and brain out of balance?

When we are stressed—in that “fight or flight” mode—our adrenal glands produce our primary stress hormones, cortisol and adrenaline. These are two primary hormones that are needed for survival; we can't live without them. Unfortunately, many of us are staying in that stressed state for too long.

When this happens, we call it adrenal fatigue. Our adrenals aren't able to make enough cortisol and adrenaline to deal with all the stress, nor are they able to produce enough of the other hormones that regulate our metabolism, mood swings, blood sugar, reproductive cycle, energy levels and fat-burning ability.

It's a Matter of Priority

When we think of hormones, we often think of progesterone, estrogen and testosterone. But we need to understand that these hormones are really secondary hormones. The primary hormones, which are the ones we can't live without, are cortisol, adrenaline and insulin. These three hormones are responsible for so many functions. When they get out of balance, they can affect our health in so many different ways.

The adrenal glands are responsible for making many other hormones in addition to cortisol and adrenaline. All of the hormones made by the adrenal glands can be compromised due to the large demand we put on our adrenals to make more cortisol and adrenaline. Many of the hormones produced by the adrenal

glands regulate our blood sugar, activate our immune system, stimulate our heart and blood pressure, balance our fluids, and help make our reproductive hormones. (See illustration below.)



This is why stress can affect our health in so many different ways. It has a domino effect. We know stress is what triggers it—we just don't know in what area our health will be affected.

Our bodies were not designed to handle continual, long-term stress. They were designed to handle short-term stress. So when we stay in a stressful mode for too long, we begin to overproduce cortisol and adrenaline while underproducing others. This is what is known as chemical or hormonal imbalance.

Constant stress triggers an increased production of cortisol and adrenaline. Unfortunately, to make cortisol, our adrenal glands will steal progesterone. This causes a drop in the amount of progesterone that is needed to regulate your menstrual and reproductive cycles, because the progesterone is being used to deal with stress as opposed to regulating your reproductive cycle. It throws your ratio of estrogen to progesterone and testosterone out of balance, which causes all types of problems: loss of libido, infertility, depression, PMS, hot flashes, night sweats, etc.

Additionally, the excess amount of cortisol and adrenaline triggers the body to burn calories from carbohydrates and protein (lean muscle tissue) instead of stored body fat. When this happens, people tend to have a hard time losing weight and keeping it off. Unfortunately, infomercials want us to think cortisol is the problem. The real problem is our adrenals are exhausted. There is more detail about this in *To Burn or Not to Burn, Fat is the Question*.

Adrenal fatigue is a major underlying problem to many of our health issues simply because stress has become constant, and the adrenal glands are not able to make enough cortisol and adrenaline. Some of the common symptoms for adrenal fatigue are weight gain, fatigue, cravings, indigestion, allergies, depression, high blood pressure, hot flashes, insomnia and loss of libido.

Restoring Hormonal Balance

Again, our bodies are designed to handle short-term stress, not continual, prolonged stress. Our adrenal glands can make all the necessary hormones if we rest and nourish them properly. Unfortunately, most people don't get the proper amount of rest and nourishment in their day. This, combined with extended periods of stress, results in the inability of your adrenals to produce enough of the necessary hormones you need each day.

Simple Steps to Overcoming Adrenal Exhaustion:

1. Make sure you get at least 7-9 hours of sleep a night.
2. Get at least 20-30 minutes of sunshine a day.
3. Keep your blood sugar stable. You cannot skip meals or eat refined, processed junk food. It further depletes your adrenal glands. You will never restore your adrenal glands if you don't keep your blood sugar stable.
4. Use digestive enzymes if you struggle with bloating, gas, indigestion, heartburn or irritable bowel problems. An irritated, inflamed intestinal tract causes an increased production of cortisol and further depletes the adrenal glands. Hidden food allergies are common. Avoid (for at least two weeks) all dairy, wheat, corn, soy, caffeine, MSG and artificial sweeteners.
5. Nourish your body with a good adrenal support formula such as ashwagandha, rhodiola, cordyceps, ginseng, vitamin C, vitamin B and zinc. I recommend Adrenal Fuel.
6. Add a good, high potency fish oil. Eat fish, raw nuts

and seeds. Cook with olive oil. Avoid trans fatty acids. The omega-3 fatty acids (EPA/DHA) are critical in the production of our hormones and are deficient in many diets.

7. Begin or continue an easy aerobic exercise routine. Refrain from intense anaerobic exercise for at least 2-4 weeks. Easy aerobic exercise is stress-reducing while weight training, spinning and other types of intense exercise are stress-producing. Yes, intense exercise may seem like it is stress-reducing, but biochemically, it is an additional stress, which is taxing your adrenals.

Remember: You will never be able to restore your hormones (progesterone, estrogen, testosterone) if your adrenals are exhausted!

Recovering from any health ailment is more than swallowing a handful of supplements. We need to properly nourish our bodies with good supplementation, as well as stop doing the things that are making us worse. If you continually skip meals, struggle with digestive problems and don't get a good night's sleep, you are always going to struggle with adrenal exhaustion.

The whole process outlined above will help you restore normal function to your adrenal glands. Adrenal fatigue is a multi-layered problem. It creates a vicious cycle with our hormones, metabolism, blood sugar and digestive system. This is why our "IRS Steps" protocol addresses these issues first. Give these simple steps a try. You will be amazed at the difference you will feel within 30 days.

Dr. Len Lopez is a nutrition and fitness expert and creator of the *Work Horse Trainer*. He speaks extensively on diet, exercise and how stress can affect your overall health and wellness.

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