

Ten-point tune-up, step 3: optimizing your adrenal gland

This article originally appeared on Dr. Teitelbaum's website, Vitality 101.

Famous for producing adrenaline—the hormone that triggers the fight-or-flight response—the two adrenal glands sit atop your kidneys. The outer section (the adrenal cortex) produces glucocorticoids (e.g., cortisol—as in the medication Cortef), hormones that help regulate your blood sugar, your immune system, your sex organs, and your response to stress. It also makes mineral corticoids, which help maintain blood pressure and volume. The inner section (the adrenal medulla) kicks out adrenaline, which readies you for sudden stress.

Symptoms of “adrenal exhaustion” include:



- **Fatigue** during the day.
- **Intense irritability when you're hungry** (“Feed me now or I'll kill you!” is a thought you might have at those times).
- **Frequent and lengthy infections** (like sore throats and colds).
- **Feeling dizzy** sometimes when you stand up.
- **Racing mind at bedtime.** This can be accompanied by waking up at 2-4 am from a drop in blood sugar.

Ready to optimize your adrenal function?

Strategies to Optimize Balance of Adrenal Hormones

1. **Swear off excess sweets.** The highs and lows from eating too much sugar (especially sodas and fruit juices) exhaust your glucose-controlling adrenal glands.
2. **Cut excess caffeine.** Caffeine amplifies symptoms of low blood sugar.
3. **Eat more protein.** Protein-rich foods include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, beans and nuts—all of which help stabilize blood sugar levels. Try a 1 oz. protein (NOT carbs) snack at bedtime, such as a hard boiled egg or some meat, fish or cheese, to see if this helps you sleep through the night.
4. **Eat a little, and often.** Five (or even six) smaller, high-protein, low-sugar meals a day are best.
5. **Drink more water, eat more salt.** They help your adrenal glands regulate blood volume and blood pressure. Increase your intake to a level that feels good. If you're thirsty, drink. If you crave salt, add more of it to your foods. I prefer a good sea salt (e.g., Celtic Sea Salts).
6. **Take adrenal-supporting supplements daily.** Good choices include adrenal extracts (200 to 500 mg), licorice (200 to 400 mg), chromium (200 mcg), vitamin C (300 to 1,000 mg), pantothenic acid, or vitamin B5 (100 to 300 mg), and tyrosine (500 to 1,000 mg). An awesome combo for adrenal support? Take Adrenal Stress End 1-2 each morning along with the Energy Revitalization System multivitamin/mineral powder. These contain all of the above. You'll be

thrilled in a week or 2 as your energy improves and your moods stabilize (and it's a LOT cheaper than marriage counseling or a divorce lawyer!;-)

7. **Mind wide awake at bedtime?** Take Sleep Tonight. This mix of ashwagandha and phosphatidyl serine will balance your adrenals at nighttime so you can sleep. It can be taken with any sleep medications, as well as the Revitalizing Sleep Formula (an awesome herbal sleep mix).
8. **Consider taking bioidentical adrenal hormones.** I'm a great believer in correcting hormonal imbalances with bioidentical hormones—natural and exact replicas of the chemical structure of your own hormones. If diet and supplements don't clear up adrenal exhaustion, sit down with a holistic-minded doctor and discuss taking bioidentical adrenal hormones (cortisol and DHEA).
9. **Ask yourself, "Am I in imminent danger?"** Viewing life as a constant crisis, and you as its victim, is a perfect way to wear out your stress-fighting adrenal glands. But asking yourself this one question when you are stressed can help you turn off your adrenal glands' fight-or-flight reflex, because the answer will almost always be *No*. You can relax.

Meanwhile, most of what you see on the "News" networks is really a mix of fictions and dramatizations meant to scare you into watching (good for selling advertising). If you doubt this, watch coverage of the same events (e.g., political) on the 5 major news networks, and you'll often think they are reporting from 5 different planets. So at least 4 of them are wrong (hint: they all are). So when the "news" starts to be uncomfortable, simply turn it off. Your adrenals will thank you!

In my next "Ten-Point Tune-Up" installment, I'll talk about optimizing testosterone, and optimizing and balancing estrogen/progesterone.