

## Restore Your Adrenals

We've regularly featured a month-long series on our social media sites, highlighting the pillars of restoring the adrenals – those tiny yet mighty glands that produce the stress hormones (cortisol and adrenaline) that have a wide-reaching impact on our whole hormonal system.

Cortisol and adrenaline are life-saving hormones, but they become problematic when we're producing them in excess.

All roads lead back to the adrenals. And our goal is to educate our readers about:

- What causes the adrenals to be hypervigilant – and often depleted
- Simple lifestyle, nutritional, and supplemental recommendations for nourishing the adrenals
- Mindset shifts that can have a significant impact on your adrenal health

Here is our compiled list, our Restore Your Adrenals “chapbook” – 28 considerations, including suggestions for helping you feel more calm, grounded, and in control of your life:

1. You don't have to be – or pretend to be – superwoman to yourself and others. Adrenal restoration isn't attainable if you run yourself ragged, attempting to be everything to everyone. It's okay – and important – to learn the value in saying, “no.”
2. Healing your adrenals will likely mean [moving at a slower pace](#) than you're accustomed to. This slower pace may feel uncomfortable at first. When you encounter feelings of unease and discomfort, lean into them with curiosity and compassion, reminding yourself that you're learning a new way of being in the world.
3. Participate in restorative exercise like yoga or walking. Understand that [rigorous exercise can be stressful for the body](#), resulting in the overproduction of cortisol, “the belly fat hormone.” This “two steps forward, two steps back” scenario is not helpful.
4. Recognize that the health of your digestive system and the health of your adrenal glands go hand in hand. Understand that in order to heal your adrenal dysregulation, you will also need to address any underlying digestive concerns.

5. Understand that excess cortisol has been shown to negatively impact the intestinal lining. Given that 70-80% of our immune system is in the digestive tract, adrenal dysfunction can have big implications for [autoimmune conditions](#).
6. Set aside a minimum of 15 minutes per day dedicated to doing something that brings you joy, even if it means sitting alone in the quiet peace of your bedroom. Teach your family, including your children, to respect this boundary and not bother you during this time.
7. [Practice meditation](#), even if it means beginning with only one minute in silence daily. The constant noise of our busy world does not support adrenal health.
8. Recognize the importance of [keeping your blood sugar stable](#) throughout the day. The body perceives unstable blood sugar (dysglycemia) as another one of life's emergencies, resulting in more cortisol and adrenaline production. You're worthy of taking time to prepare and nourish yourself with adrenal-supportive foods that keep your insulin as stable as possible.
9. Understand that the thyroid and adrenals are two interdependent systems; you can't address [hypothyroidism](#) without also addressing adrenal dysfunction.
10. Recognize that, as with most conditions, there is a mind-body connection with adrenal dysfunction. [Negative self-talk, thoughts, feelings, and emotions](#) can affect your health and how your adrenals – and thyroid and immune system – work.
11. Make the focus of your meals and snacks protein and fat, with a lesser focus on carbohydrates. But don't eliminate or greatly reduce carbohydrates, as they are an important macronutrient needed for energy, brain function, and thermo-regulation.
12. Have patience and compassion for yourself as you learn new diet and lifestyle practices. Understand that you may be unraveling patterns that are several decades old, and it will take some time to learn new habits.
13. Allow yourself [8-9 hours of sleep each night](#) – and sometimes 10. Understand that your body interprets lack of sleep as another one of life's emergencies. Sleep deprivation can cause your body to react exactly as if you were fighting or fleeing an enemy: pumping adrenaline, preserving body fat (energy), and directing energy and circulation away from your digestive system.

14. Take the necessary time to [sleuth out foods that your body doesn't like](#) and eliminate these foods from your diet long-term. Food sensitivities are a powerful – and often unknown – stressor.
15. Stop crashing and burning with caffeine, sugar, and refined carbs, including alcohol, which is another form of sugar. Just say “no” to the energy bungee cord.
16. Invite more creativity into your life, whatever that means for you. Play an instrument, dance, paint, write, crochet, cook, sing – creativity is FOOD for the adrenals.
17. Let go of relationships that no longer serve your wellbeing. Instead, engage with the people you enjoy most and who bring out the best in you.
18. Commit to buying and consuming organic, high-quality foods, as often as possible. The chemical pesticides, fertilizers, hormones, and antibiotics used in conventional food production can create a [significant burden on your body](#).
19. Let go of any “low-fat” habits you may have adopted along your quest for health. We cannot produce needed hormones without adequate fat, and maintaining balanced blood sugar becomes more difficult if you deprive yourself of [this important macronutrient](#).
20. Work through any unresolved trauma or “historic” stress that you’ve been carrying around with you. Find a skilled therapist, hypnotherapist, or other healer who can help you break free from unresolved patterns that keep your adrenals on high alert. Practice tapping, aka [Emotional Freedom Technique](#).
21. Replace deficient nutrients, such as essential fatty acids, B vitamins (the “feel good, anti-stress” vitamins), Vitamin C, and magnesium through whole foods or supplementation.
22. Understand that an Adrenal Stress Index saliva test has historically been called “the gold standard” for assessing adrenal output. (Some doctors now prefer dried urine.) Nonetheless, adrenal labs are a snapshot in time. While they reveal important information, hormones are ever-changing. The real litmus test of how you’re progressing and improving is how you feel.

23. Experiment with adaptogenic herbs like ashwaganda, holy basil, or rhodiola, which have a bi-directional ability to adapt to what your adrenals need, can help the body move from the sympathetic (fight or flight) response to the parasympathetic (rest and digest) response.
24. Understand that the conventional medicine community often doesn't understand or recognize adrenal dysfunction. Just because you don't have Addison's disease or Cushing's Syndrome doesn't mean that your adrenals aren't in need of healing and support.
25. Recognize that over-the-counter adrenal glandulars (porcine, bovine) may make your situation worse. While they may make you feel better in the short-term, they will likely over-stimulate your adrenals, making you produce even more adrenaline and cortisol.
26. Understand that your body is resilient and wants to return to optimal health. Healing your adrenals will involve turning inward, paying attention, and listening to what your body is telling you you need to heal.
27. Recognize that adrenal dysfunction can make you anovulatory – you may not be ovulating each month. This can hinder your plans for achieving pregnancy.
28. Wholeheartedly believe that taking time for yourself isn't selfish. In fact, there's more of you to share with others when you've taken the time you need to replenish yourself.