

Restore Your Adrenals

28 powerful ways to feel more
calm, grounded, and
in control of your life

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About Me



I've been interested in the healing power of whole foods for nearly half my life. While fumbling and stumbling through a short-lived career in architecture, I read nutrition books like they were mystery novels.

Friends and family started to see me change and began asking for nutrition advice. To fast forward through a few more years and a few other jobs, including owning a design and manufacturing business, I chose to make nutrition education my career.

I'm a 2006 graduate of the Institute for Integrative Nutrition (IIN). In 2008, I completed Dr. Janet Lang's Restorative Endocrinology course for healthcare practitioners and in the fall of 2013, participated in Dr. Sara Gottfried's year-long Professional Hormone Mastermind Group for healthcare practitioners. In early 2018, I graduated from the Functional Medicine Coaching Academy, in partnership with the prestigious Institute for Functional Medicine.

I've suffered from alopecia (autoimmune hair loss), off and on, since I was 13 and in 2008, was diagnosed with adrenal dysfunction and hypothyroidism/Hashimoto's thyroiditis. After refusing the recommended thyroid drugs, my then-doctor condescendingly stated with shock and raised eyebrows, "Well, you can do whatever your little heart desires."

And I did. My head and heart knew that being on thyroid drugs for the rest of my life was not the answer for my body and I immersed myself in learning the whys and wherefores of autoimmune conditions, hypothyroidism, and adrenal dysfunction and how to manage these conditions with whole foods nutrition, botanicals, and other natural therapies.

My Hashimoto's has been in unmedicated management since late 2008 and unlike many with alopecia, my now-infrequent bald spots always grow back. I'm thrilled to share what I've learned with my clients. As they say, "We teach what we most need to learn."

I founded Healthful Elements, where my team and I have specialized knowledge in whole foods nutrition for hormone and immune balancing, including Hashimoto's and other autoimmune conditions (especially alopecia and Graves'), adrenal dysfunction, perimenopause/menopause, digestive health, pre-diabetes/diabetes, and chronic illness. We teach women how to support and nourish their bodies with whole foods nutrition, lifestyle choices that promote balance, and other natural remedies and botanicals so they too can emerge from the fog while still enjoying the foods they love.

I'm the #1 best-selling author of *[The Essential Thyroid Cookbook](#)* and have written for various publications, blogs, and online magazines including Huffington Post, MindBodyGreen, Experience Life magazine, Dr. Frank Lipman's blog, and Dr. Susan Blum's blog. I've also been featured in Oprah's O Magazine and have contributed to articles in Self and Shape magazines.

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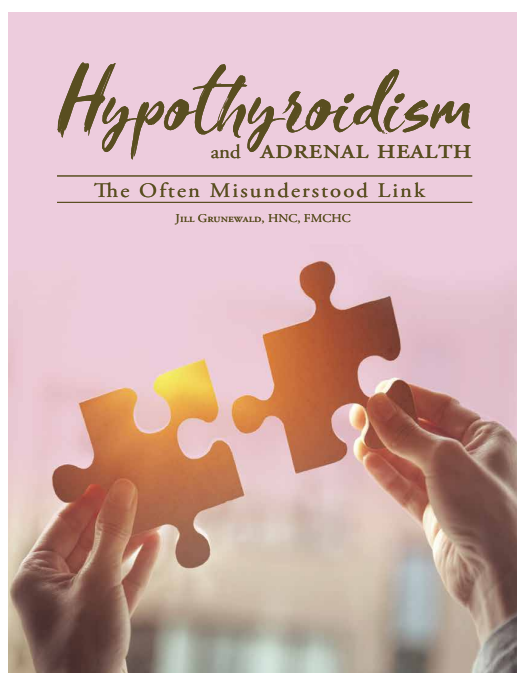
What you'll read in this free guide **mimics** a portion of my full ebook, [*Hypothyroidism and Adrenal Health: The Often Misunderstood Link*](#).

The thyroid and adrenals work together to balance metabolism and energy. If prolonged or intense stress comes about, the flood of stress hormones can tip the scales and cause thyroid hormone imbalances. Hypothyroid symptoms often arise during times of hormonal flux and a state of adrenal dysfunction is no exception.

As many functional and integrative physicians say, addressing the adrenals is paramount in managing hypothyroidism (and autoimmunity), as you can't simply isolate the thyroid. This is due, in part, to the fact that hypothyroidism is often secondary to adrenal dysfunction.

In short, if your adrenals are working overtime, your thyroid will suffer. If your thyroid isn't working up to par, your adrenals can take a further hit. This negative feedback loop is a true vicious cycle.

If you'd like a more in-depth understanding of the relationship between the thyroid and adrenals (it's a big deal!), go here to purchase this full ebook.



All roads lead back to the adrenals.

Our adrenals are tiny but mighty—they help to balance more than 50 hormones and have a wide-reaching impact on our health. Their primary role is to activate the life-critical “fight or flight” response by producing stress hormones—cortisol and adrenaline—in a calculated and temporary way so that we can fight or flee. And then rest.

The problem is, today, we’re fighting and fleeing differently than our ancestors. Ideally, like them, we’d experience a surge in adrenaline and cortisol, then it would pass. For many in the modern world, it never passes. We’re not running from bears, but many are experiencing periods of near-constant stress and our adrenal glands are either on overdrive (to help us cope) or depleted (worn out), both of which can wreak havoc on our health and wellbeing.

It matters not if your stress is from being chased by a mountain lion or a deadline at work. In today’s culture that prizes doing over relaxing, we’re subjected to ‘round-the-clock stressors, unlike our ancestors, who had periods of stress from hunting and foraging, followed by long and welcome periods of respite.

Today, many don’t even know how to take a vacation. A true vacation. When did the term “working vacation” become part of our vocabulary? I guess it’s better than nothing, but being “wired” with a phone and computer is not my idea of relaxation. Ask yourself: if you’re recharging your phone and computer, are you also recharging *yourself*?

(Vacationing doesn’t mean you have to spend a lot of money on an extravagant trip—[staycations](#) are gaining in popularity and are really fun.)

Stage one of adrenal dysfunction (sometimes called non-Addison’s hypoadrenia) incites feelings of being “tired and wired” due to the overproduction of adrenaline and cortisol.

If the adrenals are overtaxed for too long and start to wear down, there's no “tired and wired”—you’re simply exhausted. It can be difficult to cope with the simplest of life’s demands. This is stage two of adrenal dysfunction.

According to Dr. Christiane Northrup, “Think of these [stress hormone] surges as withdrawals from a bank, to help you get through life’s rough spots. If you’ve gotten into the habit of withdrawing from your account too often, you’ll eventually be overdrawn and your adrenal glands will be overwhelmed. Then, you’ll have too little [stress hormones] when you really need [them].”

Unlike hypothyroidism, adrenal dysfunction isn't often acknowledged by the conventional medical community because they can't write a prescription for it. They tend to look at Addison's Disease or Cushing's Syndrome—two extreme ends of the adrenal health spectrum. Often times, anything else isn't worthy of consideration.

Although it's the most common hormonal imbalance, especially for women, adrenal dysfunction is the most straightforward to fix. It may take time, but some simple dietary, lifestyle, and supplemental/herbal remedies—along with assessing other hormonal systems—can provide the adrenals the support and nourishment they need.

The trap that many fall into is that the overproduction of stress hormones often makes us push ourselves harder, even when we're tired. *This is completely counterproductive to healing.*

Adrenaline over-adrenalizes the brain and causes hypervigilance, perfectionist tendencies, monkey mind, and makes us “should” on ourselves. One of the first things people notice on an adrenal-nourishing program is how much calmer and more grounded they feel and how they're not as hard on themselves. They can let some things go.

Additionally, it's important to know that the adrenals synthesize androgens (our “male” hormones) as well as progesterone and estrogen. This is why it's critical to support and nourish our adrenals as we approach [perimenopause/menopause](#). The health of our adrenals and thyroid has *everything* to do with how a woman moves through this time of life.

My goal with this guide is to educate you 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

I'm going to share with you some *super effective* ways to support your adrenals, but lest we get too stressed out from reading about stress, please know that not all stress isn't bad.

Eustress is “good stress.” A good example is having a deadline for a project you love working on.

Prior to writing this ebook, I wrote another about [hair loss](#) that had a hard deadline because it was associated with an interview. And I was *behind*. I hammered on that thing for hours on end, but *loved it*. I spent many long days on it, wrapped it up at midnight the night before, and felt invigorated and alive.

Yes, it was stressful, but it was the feel-good, life-giving kind.

Distress is another animal. I've had my share of that too—and it's what plagues too many people in our modern world.

Please take a look at the list of adrenal dysfunction symptoms below and see if any of this resonates. If so, I highly recommend that you heed the recommendations I share later in this guide.

Many of them overlap with symptoms of hypothyroidism. This is not an exhaustive list.

Adrenal dysfunction symptoms:

- Difficulty falling asleep at night
- Waking during the night (often at the same times) and trouble going back to sleep
- A hard time “coming to” in the morning/feeling unrefreshed upon waking
- Getting an afternoon slump, only to perk up with a second wind in the evening
- Lacking in energy overall/fatigue
- Gaining weight around the middle (the spare tire)
- Feeling tired yet wired
- Being bothered by bright lights
- Startling easily
- Anxiety/worry
- Scattered and splattered thoughts/monkey mind
- When standing from sitting or from lying down, feeling lightheaded or dizzy
- Taking things too seriously or being easily defensive
- Feeling like you don't cope well with certain people or events in your life
- Moodiness or excessive emotions
- Being prone to yelling or screaming
- Being irritable and accusatory
- Being prone to sharp verbal responses
- Excessive sensitivity to others' suffering
- Sighing frequently or “air hunger”
- Craving fat and salt
- Difficulty [balancing blood sugar](#)
- Becoming more sensitive to [caffeine](#)
- Becoming more sensitive to alcohol
- Difficulty recovering from [exercise](#)
- Difficulty handling foods high in potassium or carbohydrates unless they're combined with fats and protein

- Having an autoimmune condition, especially [Hashimoto's](#) (autoimmune hypothyroidism)
- Becoming more [reclusive](#)

Restore Your Adrenals

Below are 28 proven ways to help 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.

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