

Stress-Busting Rituals and Remedies

Natural ways to help you calm down

By **Kristin Vukovic**

Stress is a part of life for all of us, but when it becomes toxic, it can be dangerous. Many of us live with a stress response that never “turns off” unless we practice doing it intentionally. “The main thing we can do is find that place in ourselves, our own inner sweet spot, and have a touch point for what relaxation feels like when we’re not in that space,” says Aviva Romm, MD, author of *The Adrenal Thyroid Revolution* (Harper Collins, 2017).

Taking supplements can help. A report published by the World Health Organization estimated that three-quarters of Americans do not meet the recommended daily intake of magnesium. “Magnesium is often overlooked, but it’s so critical,” says Dr. Romm. “It’s involved in hundreds of enzymatic and biochemical reactions in our body.” She explains that magnesium is a part of healthy nerve functioning, and when we’re not having good nerve conduction, we’re much more apt to be stressed and anxious.

“Adaptogens help us adapt to stress,” Dr. Romm says. These herbs safely, gently and effectively regulate the body’s stress response via their actions on the adrenal glands. Examples include ashwagandha, rhodiola, eleutherococcus, reishi mushroom, ginseng and schisandra. Ashwagandha, which has been used since ancient times in Ayurvedic medicine, is one of Dr. Romm’s favorite stress busters.



"This frantic lifestyle we're living is not normal, it's not healthy and it's not serving us," Dr. Romm says. "Yet it's not going away. So how do we find our own sanity within the craziness? How do we maintain our health?"

Take a replenish bath. "Lavender has been used for thousands of years as a calming and relaxing herb for the nervous system," Dr. Romm says. She recommends adding 1 to 2 cups of Epsom salt and 7 to 10 drops of lavender essential oil to bathwater. If you don't have a bathtub or don't like baths, sprinkle drops of lavender oil on a washcloth and run hot water on it to create an aromatherapy shower.

Do "The Quickie." Set an alarm clock to remind yourself to check in with your body for a few minutes every day. "So often we forget to breathe," says Dr. Romm, who says "The Quickie" is the best meditation she's ever learned.

Close your eyes and take a few normal breaths in through your nose, and out through your mouth. On your next inhale, breathe in through your nose for a count of four while saying to yourself "I am..." Exhale deeply through your mouth for a count of four while saying to yourself, "at peace." Repeat four times and then open your eyes.

Create a bedtime routine. Dr. Romm says everyone needs at least seven hours of sleep a night. "Not getting enough sleep affects our cortisol rhythm, which increases our stress level and likelihood of being overweight, affects our immune system and our cognitive function, and can cause us to have cravings for sugar and carbs," she says. Dr. Romm recommends shutting off your electronics an hour or at least 30 minutes before bed, and reading something nourishing or inspiring before turning out the light.

Try This

Here are a few recommended stress-busting products to try

Adrena by Herb Pharm



Aviva Romm, MD, designed Adrena, her new line of adaptogenic herbal supplements, with women in mind—although men can use them as well. Nourish, Soothe and Uplift blends allow you to identify your phase of stress. "For women who are already so depleted or exhausted, or already in burnout, it's actually better to nourish and calm their systems," Dr. Romm says. "They need to be restored before they can be energized. Once they're above the empty line, you can add in things that are a little more stimulating or strengthening." avivaromm.com

Garden of Life Relax & Restore Whole Food Magnesium

This non-GMO Project Verified, Certified Vegan and gluten-free powdered magnesium supplement has been formulated by David Perlmutter, MD, board-certified neurologist and #1 *NY Times* best-selling author of *The Grain Brain* and more. Also features organic pea protein magnesium chelate as well as live probiotics to support healthy digestion. gardenoflife.com



Aromatherapy Associates De-Stress Mind Bath & Shower Oil



Wild chamomile, petitgrain, frankincense and rosemary essential oils soothe your mind and relax your senses. You can use this blend in a blissful bath or in the shower: Massage a capful over your torso, then cup your hands and bring them to your face, inhaling deeply three times for a few moments of meditation before a refreshing aromatherapy steam. aromatherapyassociates.com/usa/

Natural Vitality Natural Calm

For good health, magnesium and calcium need to be in balance: calcium excites nerves and magnesium calms them down. Known as the "anti-stress drink," this award-winning organic magnesium supplement easily mixes into water. We love the raspberry-lemon flavor, which tastes like an invitation to summer. naturalvitality.com

