

# Topic of the Week

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WE CARE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

## Energy Boosting Herbs for the Busy Holiday Season

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December can be both a wonderful time and a stressful time. As we arrive into the holiday season, we juggle regular daily commitments of job and family and then add duties like shopping, decorating, baking, cooking, travelling and entertaining. All of it can zap our energy. But instead of reaching for caffeine loaded beverages, look at some herbs that can deliver a burst of energy. Not only are they rejuvenating, many of these herbs bring other health benefits as well.

### Ginseng

Ginseng is one of the most popular medicinal herbs in the world. In Asia, medical practitioners used it to treat numerous health ailments for over 2,000 years. In fact, the Greek name for this herb translates as “cure-all” or “all healing.”

Ginseng is considered an adaptogen - an herb that assists the body in dealing with stress. It stimulates both mental and physical function, and it speeds the body's metabolism. Some athletes even claim ginseng improves their athletic performance.

The ginseng root is the part that's cultivated for medicinal purposes, as it contains ginsenosides – chemicals that contains medicinal properties. When it has grown for five or six years, the ginseng plant is harvested. This maturity ensures the root contains enough ginsenosides to release the healing effects. The root is commercially available and often found in Asian food markets. But ginseng is usually consumed here in tablet, tea or cream form.

American ginseng, grown in northern areas of the U.S., is also harvested for medicinal use. The ginsenosides in this type of ginseng are slightly different than its Asian cousin. However, it still has energy boosting components.

As well as giving the body extra zip, ginseng is also being studied as a therapeutic agent for treating cancer, heart disease and depression.



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### Exercise of the Week

**Abdominal Crunches on Exercise Ball – Reach for Ceiling.**

**Difficulty:** Easy to Moderate

*(Consult your chiropractor before engaging in this or any other exercise.)*

**Start:** Lie on back over exercise ball so lower portion of ribcage is positioned over center of ball. Let head rest on ball, and relax hips. Keep knees wide apart, and position arms stretched out overhead.

**Exercise:** Engage inner abdominals first by bringing belly button inwards. Then, curl body forward on ball. As you curl forward, reach hands for ceiling. Return to starting position. Repeat 5-15 times.



## Maca

Although it has been cultivated for nearly 2,000 years, maca has only recently made a name for itself in North America.

The maca plant grows high in the Andes Mountains of Peru and Bolivia. Not surprisingly, it's one of the world's most frost-resistant plants. Rich in nutrients, maca's heartiness made it a dependable food and medicine source for inhabitants in the high alpine areas of these countries. The indigenous people used it to relieve fatigue. They also believed maca helped alleviate infertility, anemia and tuberculosis and even acted as an aphrodisiac. Research shows it may provide relief from depression.

## Rhodiola

Like Maca, the rhodiola herb grows in cold regions - parts of Siberia and Alaska. It has a long history of medicinal use in Russia. In fact, it's a registered medical product in that country. The root is frequently ground to make a refreshing tea; Russians have enjoyed it that way for generations.

Along with many other energy supporting herbs, rhodiola appears to help the body fight both physical and mental stress. Low doses of this herb point to a positive effect on depression because it stimulates dopamine, norepinephrine and serotonin. Researchers have discovered it may lessen high altitude sickness and sexual dysfunction.

Clinical trials on rhodiola confirm its energy enhancing effects. In a randomized, double-blind study on a group of highly stressed military cadets, those who received doses of rhodiola showed significant relief from fatigue as compared to the placebo group.<sup>1</sup>

Another placebo controlled study revealed that engineers and students who took rhodiola achieved consistently sharper mental function and less fatigue while working continuously for 24 hours.<sup>2</sup>

As well as creating energy, rhodiola may help prevent cancerous tumors, according to human and animal studies.

## Other Energy Nutrients

In addition to herbs, certain vitamins and minerals enhance energy. Vitamin B-12 assists in the production of red blood cells and creates energy from protein, carbohydrates and fats. The mineral magnesium keeps stress hormones under control so you're not worn out by tension. And coenzyme Q-10 is a nutrient that aids your cells in producing energy.

You should not combine stimulating herbs with other stimulants, such as caffeine. Consult your chiropractor before using herbs and dietary supplements.

Don't forget that regular chiropractic adjustments maintain energy balance. Stress leads to an increased sympathetic tone in the nervous system. This causes muscles and joints to tighten. Adjustments restore proper alignment and reduce subluxations, thereby conserving energy.<sup>3</sup>



## Quote of the Week

"Good health and good sense are two of life's greatest blessings."

- Publilius Syrus



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## Topic of the Week

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