

Adrenal Fatigue

Description:

Similar to Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Adrenal Fatigue (AF) may have several of the physical symptoms listed below, but is not an accepted medical diagnosis in allopathic medicine (Nippoldt, 2017). However, most alternative medicine or CAM's practitioners acknowledge AF as a real malady. It is believed to be caused by chronic stress causing the sympathetic nervous system (fight or flight) to go into overdrive without any periods of down time. It can also be caused by the aftermath of illness such as a cold, bronchitis or pneumonia. Both causes of stress (physical and emotional) over stimulate the adrenals releasing a constant flow of cortisol hormone without adequate periods of rest in between (Cole, 2016). Many people today in modern society are on the go constantly not allowing for time to "re-charge their batteries". We need to take the example God gave us when creating the world to take a Sabbath rest. When Jesus walked the earth, he took time to get away for prayer and meditation. Who are we to think we do not need to do the same?

Symptoms:

- Fatigue and lack of energy that does not improve with adequate sleep.
- Afternoon fatigue, followed by getting a second wind in the evening.
- Run down, prone to colds, bronchitis, flu and pneumonia.
- Light headedness, loss of body hair.
- Low Libido.
- Craving salty snacks.
- Nervousness, body aches, sleep disturbances.

Benefits of Yoga	Precautions
According to Ayurvedic medicine, a person needs organize their schedule with the natural daily circadian rhythms: (1) Get to bed NO LATER than 10:30 pm. (2) Rise and shine around 6:30 am, and exercise before breakfast. (3) Eat a moderate breakfast, good-sized lunch, and light dinner. (4) Try to finish dinner before 6:30 pm. Getting plenty of good food, exercising at the proper times of day and enough sleep at the right time will help reduce stress (Chopra, 2002).	Be aware that power yoga or other physically challenging exercise might add to stress. For someone dealing with AF, it's better to scale back and ENJOY an easier practice or exercise, making sure to link the breath with movement to calm the nervous system.*

Pranayama/breathing exercise will help reduce stress, which in turn reduces cortisol.	Taking on too much – over scheduling.
Gentle vinyasa yoga tuning into breath becomes a relaxing meditative flow helping to reduce stress.	Not giving yourself enough me-time to relax and PLAY. According to Occupational Therapy studies, PLAY is essential for a person’s health and emotional well-being (NCTC, 2000).
Learn to say “NO” so as not to become overwhelmed with an overloaded schedule. Prioritize tasks, and ask how important each one is. If overwhelmed by your “To Do” list, delegate some of you duties to others. It is okay to ask for help!	Not allowing for time to unwind before bed.
Avoid late evening “blue” light from screens – computers, TV’s and phones.	Shallow breathing or holding one’s breath.
Meditate 10-15 minutes twice per day.	Consuming too much caffeine.

* I personally experienced the difference in scaling back my practice while recovering from a cold. I tried to do my usual power flow feeling frazzled after only 20-30 minutes. However, when I scaled back to a gentler flow during recovery, I was able to complete a 60-minute practice feeling much more relaxed and rejuvenated afterward.

Mini Flow: This is a modified moon salutation flow I love doing when I need a gentle flow to de-stress. Visit <https://photos.app.goo.gl/59891Cw99upKR2D57> for a guided video of this flow (right side only).

- Inhale - Mountain
- Exhale Side stretch right, inhale center, exhale side stretch left, inhale center
- Exhale Full forward fold, Inhale half lift
- Exhale Step right foot back, Inhale low lunge allowing knee to touch
- Exhale cactus arms, inhale clasp hands behind back shining heart
- Exhale bring right foot back to meet left coming into modified child’s pose (toes still tucked under for a nice arch stretch).
- Inhale slither forward into cobra pose
- Exhale downdog, inhale right leg high, (optional: exhale bend right knee opening up to side, inhale flip dog) exhale bring right leg forward into lunge
- Inhale right arm up into lunge twist, exhale right hand to mat moving into pyramid pose
- Inhale lunge, exhale half split or splits
- Inhale bring left foot up to meet right, half lift
- Exhale fold, inhale mountain, exhale side stretch on left, inhale center, exhale side stretch right, inhale center, exhale step left foot back.....repeating above for the left side.

References:

Nippoldt, MD, April 12, 2017, *Adrenal fatigue: What causes it?* Retrieved from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/addisons-disease/expert-answers/adrenal-fatigue/faq-20057906>

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NCTC, 2000, *Occupational Therapy Program*, North Central Texas College, Gainesville, TX.