

Too Tired

A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT FATIGUE IN WOMEN
- AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

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Too Tired

A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT FATIGUE IN
WOMEN - AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Anne Elliott

Foundations Press, Inc.

Please Note:

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Too Tired:

A Comprehensive Look at Fatigue in Women -- and What to Do About It
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PART 1

Why Am I So Tired?

CHAPTER 1

When the Tiredness Started

Have you ever wondered how you got so tired?

You remember back to high school, when you felt alive and energetic. You remember being filled with passion and drive. You had plans for the future, and you felt like you could conquer the world.

Later you married and started having children. While you love being a wife and mom, somewhere you started feeling so tired. You just couldn't handle everything anymore. Even worse, some days you just didn't care.

As a mom, you're especially vulnerable to fatigue. Getting weary is very common in mothers, especially in moms who have several children.

Several years ago, I was diagnosed with a disease called Addison's Disease. It is characterized by extreme exhaustion because my adrenal glands stopped producing some of the hormones that help me function in everyday life. While you probably won't be diagnosed with such a serious disease, your body could simply be worn out.

You have two adrenal glands, located in the back of your body, just below your rib cage and directly above your kidneys, one on each side.

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Each adrenal gland is about the size of a lima bean. For being so small, they are designed to handle an awful lot!

Each adrenal gland is actually made of two separate glands, the medulla and the cortex. The medulla makes hormones that you probably recognize, such as adrenaline, noradrenaline, and dopamine. These hormones react very quickly in times of stress, helping your body systems (like your heart) work properly.

The adrenal cortex wraps all around the medulla. It produces hormones such as cortisol, aldosterone, and DHEA. These hormones react more slowly to stress but help normalize the body after something exciting has happened.

If your body has been exposed to repeated and frequent stress (or even just one very severe stress), your adrenal glands can become overworked. At first, they pump out too many hormones, but soon they become so fatigued that they just don't work properly and consistently any more.

Now that they are fatigued, you can't handle stress like you used to. You wear out quickly, need more naps, and feel foggy in your thinking. Over time, this feeling of fatigue and fogginess can get worse, until you can't even remember what it feels like not to be tired.

Many types of stress can cause fatigue, but the following are the most common in moms:

❑ **A Lack of Sleep**

When you habitually get too little sleep, your circadian rhythms get messed up. Suddenly, you can't sleep at night, and you can't stay awake in the daytime. Maybe you started getting too little sleep in high school or college, with too many late nights with friends or homework. Maybe as a newlywed, you stayed up too late too often watching TV. As a new mom, your little baby kept you up at night for months on end. Even though your body was designed to sleep in the dark and be awake in the light, your normal rhythms have been messed up.

Circadian Rhythm: *Your internal "clock" that regulates all the processes of your body over a 24-hour period. It affects your sleep-wake cycles, your body temperature, and all your hormone production.*

Too Much Exercise

Some women exercise very little, but others exercise too much. This often starts in the late teen years or early 20s, as women feel pressure to have supermodel figures like the ones they see on TV. They may have the impression that exercise is healthy, but they don't realize that it can be overdone. Exercise releases adrenaline, which temporarily gives an energy boost. Adrenaline can become addictive, and the adrenal glands can get worn out.

Poor Nutrition

It is difficult to know what good nutrition really is, since so many sources contradict each other. Since the 1950s, with the increase of processed foods, our diet has included fewer nutrients than ever before. We have an abundance of food but a deficit of nutrition. Our glands and organs aren't being fed properly, so they wear out sooner.

Repeated Pregnancies

Pregnancy is one of the most difficult things your body can do. Not only must you take care of yourself; you must also nourish a growing baby. Traditionally, couples prepared for parenthood by eating special diets before, during, and after a pregnancy, spacing their children out several years between. However, if you have had several pregnancies close together while running the modern "rat race," your body is probably feeling quite fatigued.

Anger and Worry

Peaks of emotions can cause a large burst of hormones from the adrenal glands. If you struggle with outbursts of anger, feelings of panic, or you worry repeatedly, many times in each week, your body starts to feel the effects.

Driven and Busy

Most women who have fatigue have Type-A personalities. We watch clocks, try to multi-task too many things at once, drive ourselves with deadlines, and expect to accomplish an extraordinary number of things in one short lifetime. (Other women might comment that we look like "superwomen," but we know deep down that we're not.) Why do we do this? We are passionate people! We want to make a difference in this

world, but in our attempt to accomplish great things, we wear ourselves out.

❑ **Marriage and Parenting**

You're a wife and mom, and you're passionate about both roles; however, you've discovered that marriage and motherhood aren't as easy as they look. Because you're a perfectionist, you're frequently upset because your husband and kids aren't perfect. You don't blame them. You blame yourself. Meanwhile, your poor little adrenal glands are taking a beating.

❑ **Disorganization**

Because you do so much (and have even more on your "to do" list), you don't have time to keep up with your surroundings. Laundry, meals, and cleaning chores are done sporadically, because there's always something more important on your list. When you finally realize that you're out of clean underwear, everyday tasks have now become an emergency. Because you're putting out little housekeeping fires every day, you're constantly running on adrenaline... and getting more and more tired.

❑ **Money Problems**

Similar to the organizational problems above, moms with adrenal fatigue often have a lack of money. Sometimes we moms just don't have much income because we've chosen to be stay-at-home moms rather than career women. Sometimes we have to work a second job or work from home in an attempt to make ends meet, adding to our fatigue. Often, we don't know remember to balance the checkbook, we lose receipts, and we forget to mail bills that are due, resulting in more stress and more fatigue.

❑ **Inherited weaknesses**

Some people are simply born with adrenal glands that aren't as anatomically developed as others. No one knows for sure why this happens, but most likely, it's a result of several generations of poor nutrition, toxic chemicals in the environment, and stresses on the body. These weaknesses can be passed down from mother to child, grandmother to grandchild. Even if you do everything right, you will never have the boundless energy of someone who possesses a normal set of adrenal glands.

Surgery, chronic infections, allergies, trauma (such as car accidents, severe burns, or violence against you), genetic disorders, and other extreme stresses can also cause adrenal fatigue. However, for most of us moms, adrenal fatigue develops slowly. We look just fine to others, and because we're hard-working and creative, others won't notice that anything is wrong.

Inside our hearts, though, we know something is terribly wrong. We feel a sense of panic. We wonder how to get off the merry-go-round of life. We feel trapped and scared. We feel like escaping. We wish we could cry.

By the time we reach our mid-30s, we moms are at high risk for developing what some doctors are calling "adrenal fatigue." At the time in our lives when we should feel the best, we feel as if we were eighty years old. We lose our love of life. We lose our drive. We lose our dreams. We wish we could just sleep life away.

Next, we'll examine some of the body organs that are affected by adrenal fatigue, discover what symptoms we'll most likely experience, and understand why we feel the way we do.

Action Steps:

As you progress through this book, I'll give you "Action Steps" to work on, so that you can immediately apply what you're learning. By the end of this book, you will have a history of your health, as well as a customized plan for overcoming fatigue.

What stressors have you encountered in your life?

Go through each of the possible causes for fatigue in this chapter.

- **Circle** any that seem as if they could have contributed to your current fatigue.
- Using a colored highlighter, **mark with great emphasis** any that you are still facing.

When did you start feeling so tired?

It would be wise to begin compiling a "life history" for all your medical conditions, including your fatigue. Do you remember previous times in your life during which you felt similar fatigue to now? See if you can discover any common causes or patterns.

Complete a "Health History" for your records.

Fill out the following "Health History" so that you will start to see patterns in your health over your lifetime.

Health History

Name _____

Date _____

Age _____ Date of Birth _____ Sex: M F

Have you been diagnosed with any health condition(s)?

List any accidents or falls and dates:

List any broken bones (fractures) or dislocations:

Do you smoke? _____ How many packs per day? _____

Do you drink alcohol? _____ How often? _____

Do you drink coffee? _____ How many cups per day? _____

Do you drink soda? _____ What kinds? _____

How often? _____

Do you drink store-bought juice? _____

Do you drink store-bought milk? _____

Do you have any food cravings?

Are you following any particular diet? If so, please describe:

Are you using any medications? _____

List type, amount, and frequency:

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Are you using any nutritional supplements? _____

Please list type, amount, and frequency:

Family History

	Diabetes?	Heart Disease?	Kidney Disease?	Cancer?	Other?
Mother					
Father					
Siblings					
Maternal grandparents					
Paternal grandparents					

Have you ever had any surgeries?

Have you ever been hospitalized?

Have you ever had any of the following diseases?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appendicitis | <input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pneumonia | <input type="checkbox"/> Epilepsy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rheumatic fever | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental disorder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Polio | <input type="checkbox"/> Lumbago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tuberculosis | <input type="checkbox"/> Eczema |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whooping Cough | <input type="checkbox"/> AIDS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken Pox | <input type="checkbox"/> Measles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mumps | <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer | <input type="checkbox"/> Venereal Infection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heart disease | <input type="checkbox"/> Alcoholism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goiter | <input type="checkbox"/> Pleurisy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Influenza | <input type="checkbox"/> Anemia |

Symptoms

Please enter "2" for Previously, "3" for Presently, for each of the following signs and symptoms. Leave blank if it does not apply.

General Symptoms

- Headache
- Fever
- Chills
- Night sweats
- Fainting
- Dizziness
- Convulsions
- Loss of sleep
- Fatigue
- Nervousness
- Loss of weight
- Allergy
- Wheezing
- Neuralgia
- Numbness or pain in arms,
legs, hands

Muscles & Joints

- Weakness
- Twitching
- Stiff neck
- Backache
- Swollen joints
- Tremors
- Foot trouble
- Painful tail bone
- Pain between shoulders
- Hernia
- Spinal curvature

Respiratory

- Chronic cough
- Spitting blood
- Spitting phlegm
- Chest Pain
- Difficulty breathing

Gastro-Intestinal

- Poor appetite
- Poor digestion
- Excessive hunger
- Belching or gas
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Vomiting blood
- Pain over stomach
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Colon trouble
- Hemorrhoids
- Liver trouble
- Jaundice
- Gall bladder trouble

Cardio-Vascular

- Rapid heart
- Slow heart
- High blood pressure
- Low blood pressure
 - *normal is 120/80
- Pain over heart
- Previous heart trouble
- Swelling ankles
- Poor circulation
- Varicose veins
- Strokes

Genito-Urinary

- Frequent urination
- Painful urination
- Blood in urine
- Kidney infection
- Bed wetting
- Inability to control urine
- Prostrate trouble

Eye/Ear/Nose/Throat

- Poor vision
- Crossed eyes
- Pain in eyes
- Deafness
- Earache
- Ear noises
- Ear discharges
- Nasal obstruction
- Nose bleeds
- Sore throats
- Hoarseness
- Hay fever
- Asthma
- Frequent colds
- Enlarged thyroid
- Tonsillitis
- Sinus trouble
- Trouble swallowing

Skin or Allergies

- Skin eruptions
- Itching
- Bruising easily
- Dryness
- Boils
- Sensitive skin
- Hives or allergy
- Eczema

Women Only

- Painful periods
- Excessive flow
- Irregular cycles
- Hot flashes
- Cramps or backache
- Miscarriage
- Vaginal discharge
- Pregnant at this time

Date of last period

Date of period before that

Diet Journal

Please try to list everything (food, drink, medication, supplements, etc.) that went into your mouth yesterday, including the times ingested:

Before 8 a.m.:

Between 8 a.m. and noon:

Between noon and 4 p.m.:

Between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.:

Between 8 p.m. and bedtime:

Was this a normal day of eating for you? _____ If not, what does a normal day look like?

Sleep Journal

What time do you usually go to bed at night? _____

What time do you usually wake up in the morning? _____

Do you sleep soundly? _____

Do you have difficulty falling asleep? _____

Do you have difficulty staying asleep all night? _____

At what times of the day do you feel most energetic?

At what times of the day do you feel most tired?

Do you generally observe a day of rest each week? _____

CHAPTER 2

How Your Body Reacts When You're Tired

One theory for why so many women are exhausted is that their adrenal glands have been overworked. The adrenal glands affect every other organ and function of your body. The hormones produced by your adrenal glands are essential for life. If you didn't produce them, you would simply die.

The most important adrenal hormone is called cortisol. Cortisol is present in almost every cell of your body, and one of its jobs is to restore your equilibrium after you've secreted adrenaline. Cortisol is also needed by each cell in your body, helping all other hormones and processes in your body to function properly. Cortisol is produced by your body in amounts that follow a daily pattern, depending on the amount of light your eyes take in and the amount of activity you do.

Normally, your adrenals make the most cortisol around 8:00 in the morning, with less cortisol being produced as the day goes on, until around midnight, when your adrenals manufacture almost none at all. In a normal, relaxing day, your adrenals might manufacture around 40 mg of cortisol total.

However, when you are under stress, such as the kinds mentioned in the last chapter, your adrenal glands might manufacture up to 200 mg of cortisol in a day. This extra cortisol is designed to counteract the effects of adrenaline, such as jittery hands or a racing heart. The cortisol increases your blood pressure, helps keep your blood sugar up to give you energy, and helps your brain think more clearly.

Since your body is not designed to live on large amounts of cortisol long-term, your adrenal glands can only keep up this pace for a time. Eventually, if the stress continues, you won't be able to make enough cortisol to keep pace with demand, and you'll start to feel the effects.

The adrenal glands control four major parts of your body, and these in turn affect everything else.

Your Liver

One of the liver's functions is to be sure that your blood has enough sugar in it. Your brain requires an exact amount of sugar (known as glucose). If you have too much sugar in the blood, your pancreas releases a hormone known as insulin that removes the excess sugar and stores it. A few hours later, when your blood sugar levels have begun to drop, the liver will release some of the stored sugar so that the brain is continuously fed. Cortisol is the hormone that signals the liver to make this release.

If you're not making enough cortisol, your liver cannot replace blood sugar. Instead, your hormones will release adrenaline, in an effort to wake up your brain.

Symptoms of low blood sugar:

- Headache
- Slow, sluggish, lethargic movement
- Mental confusion, fogginess
- Sweating
- Inability to regulate temperature
- Nightmares
- Insomnia
- Weight gain around your mid-section

Hypoglycemia: *Low blood sugar. Hypo is a prefix that means low. Glycemia is a root word that comes from the word glucose, a type of sugar.*

Most women notice the symptoms of hypoglycemia when they're hungry in the late afternoon, but when the adrenal glands are more severely exhausted, women can also experience these symptoms in the middle of the night, as a burst of adrenaline wakes them from a sound sleep or scares them with a nightmare. Because their blood sugar is low, they can't fall back to sleep easily.

The Stomach

Just as the liver needs cortisol to maintain a proper amount of glucose in the blood, so also the stomach needs cortisol for proper digestion of your food.

It's difficult for us to understand how a bite of food on our fork turns into carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, not to mention how minerals and vitamins nourish our body. We have a difficult time understanding that food is made of molecules that are built up into that bite of mashed potatoes that is heading into our mouth.

The mashed potatoes must be broken down into molecules that the body can recognize and use. Enzymes are the critters that break down the molecules.

Enzymes are manufactured mostly by the pancreas, and they begin working their magic in the stomach. However, if your stomach contains no enzymes, then your food just sits there, unable to be broken down into useable molecules. As the food moves into the small intestine, it cannot be absorbed. Your large intestine then has a lot more work to do to eliminate it from your body. In effect, your food becomes a poison in your blood while you're beginning to starve from a lack of nutrients.

Cortisol is the hormone that controls the production of enzymes in the pancreas. An excess of cortisol can cause too much stomach acid and other problems such as irritable bowel syndrome. Too little cortisol causes a reduction in the production of digestive enzymes, causing incomplete digestion and malnourishment.

Symptoms of not making enough digestive enzymes:

- Nausea, diarrhea, vomiting
- Constipation
- Abdominal and flank pain
- Joint pain
- Weight gain or loss
- Appetite loss or food cravings

When I first learned about the role of digestive enzymes, I finally realized why I had suffered through so many painful and bloated nights after a stressful week or an argument with someone. Why was I any different than a starving and bloated Ethiopian child?

The Kidneys

Cortisol is not the only hormone produced in the adrenal glands. Aldosterone is another essential hormone (among many others).

Aldosterone controls the levels of sodium and potassium in the bloodstream. If the level of sodium in the blood falls too low, our kidneys cannot maintain the fluids in our body and our blood pressure will fall.

Symptoms of dysfunctional kidneys:

- Dehydration
- Frequent urinary tract infections
- Low blood pressure (defined as lower than 120/80)
- Profound weakness and fatigue

Low blood pressure causes a host of other symptoms, such as “seeing stars” when you stand up too quickly or reach for something in the shower. Low blood pressure also contributes to the famous sense of fatigue that accompanies tired adrenal glands. Fainting is another indicator of adrenal fatigue because of low blood volume.

The Heart

Too much aldosterone has been shown to increase the risk of stroke and heart failure, but too little aldosterone is also bad for the heart. The heart needs aldosterone for a regular heartbeat and for the output of blood to be regular and firm. When aldosterone decreases, the heart struggles to regulate itself.

Symptoms:

- Rapid heart rate
- Rapid respiratory rate
- Shortness of breath

I've noticed that when my adrenal glands cannot produce enough aldosterone, I struggle to have enough energy to carry a basket of laundry. My heart will race, followed by sleepiness. I avoid flights of stairs. I begin to wonder how small children have the energy to run and tumble. I'd rather just take a nap.

Related Diseases

You should be aware that adrenal fatigue is implicated in several other diseases, such as

- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Ovarian dysfunction and infertility
- Allergies
- Asthma
- Autoimmune disorders
- Irritable bowel syndrome and colitis
- Epstein Barr Syndrome
- Mononucleosis
- Frequent colds, viruses, and other infections
- Skin rashes
- Polymyalgia rheumatica
- Lupus
- Many kidney diseases

If you suffer from any of these conditions, you should certainly suspect adrenal fatigue.

Exhausted adrenal glands aren't the only cause of fatigue, however. Many other parts of your body are involved.

The Master Glands

Several glands in the brain control the adrenal glands. These “Master Glands” include the pineal, the hypothalamus and the pituitary.

Deep inside your brain is a gland called the pineal gland. This tiny gland, about the size of a pea, is responsible for producing a hormone called melatonin. Darkness stimulates the production of melatonin, and light tells it to stop. Melatonin is a powerful hormone that directs our circadian rhythms and even orchestrates our sexual development.

The retina of the eye receives light and transmits the signals from that light to the pineal gland. The patterns of daylight and darkness received by the pineal gland orchestrate the production of proper amounts of melatonin.

One of the purposes of melatonin is to regulate our days and nights. Halfway through the night, melatonin production peaks, gradually falling toward dawn. Depending on how close to the North Pole you live, you can experience up to 18 hours of darkness in the winter months. Now that we've become “civilized” with the invention of bright, artificial lights, we may only have eight or fewer hours of darkness a night.

Bedroom “night lights,” bright alarm clocks, and yard lights have all been shown to diminish the production of melatonin in our brains at night.

Exposure to bright light at night, enjoyed by those in careers where they work the night shift, has been implicated in disorders such as cancer.

Sitting in front of flashing television or computer screens, turning on bright lights to use the bathroom at 2 a.m., sleeping with other lights on in the home – all of these things upset the production of melatonin in our pineal glands.

Melatonin has many uses, beginning with the oversight of our metabolism. Young children produce more melatonin than adults, making scientists think that it plays a role in postponing sexual development.

Melatonin...

- Is a powerful anti-oxidant.
- Has been shown helpful in reducing the damage caused by some types of Parkinson's disease.
- Strengthens the immune system.
- Prevents migraine headaches.
- Helps the heart beat properly.
- Has even been shown to help mice live longer!
- Helps us dream properly, which has been shown to keep us from going insane.

The production of melatonin in the pineal gland goes on to affect the production of almost every other hormone in the human body.

Melatonin travels to the hypothalamus, where numerous hormones are produced. The hypothalamus then controls the pituitary gland, and a chain-reaction of hormones and responses goes off in your body.

The pituitary produces stimulating hormones that travel through your body to various glands. For instance, the pituitary makes a hormone called ACTH that travels to the adrenal glands to make cortisol and some other hormones. ACTH is often made in response to stress. When the pituitary is notified that the stress is over, it sends less ACTH to the adrenals so that less cortisol will be made. On the other hand, when more stress is present, more ACTH is sent to the adrenal glands and more cortisol is produced.

The same process holds true for other glands in your body as well, such as the thyroid gland and your ovaries. Your body is an amazing creation of God, able to analyze your situation in a moment and respond accordingly.

The Nutritional System

Hormones are messengers, sent out from the “Master Glands” to various other parts of the body, with specific instructions that need to be carried out. However, **hormones cannot be manufactured unless specific nutrients are present in your body.**

Hormones are like the delivery drivers of your body. Imagine that they are carrying important boxes and parcels to cities (glands) far and wide. The delivery drivers need to be fed! If they never ate, they would never have the energy to carry their boxes.

What you eat, when you eat, and how well your body digests it are all critically important if your hormones are to work properly. Food has to be broken down into its most basic parts before it can be built back up again into hormones, tissues, and bones. Pieces of food that aren't digested properly become toxins (poisons) in your blood stream, damaging parts of your body and preventing hormones from being delivered properly.

So as you can see, you could be feeling tired for a multitude of reasons. When you feel great fatigue, the reason could come from a problem anywhere in your body.

- Maybe too much light is coming into your eyes at night, shutting off the production of melatonin in your brain.
- Maybe the pituitary isn't responding correctly to the amount of hormones circulating in your blood.
- Maybe you have nutritional deficiencies and don't have the proper materials needed to feed your cells.
- Maybe your glands have been overworked and just don't have the energy to function any more.

No matter what the cause of your fatigue, the process of recovery is the same. However, before we learn how to conquer fatigue, we'll talk about how to monitor our health, so that we can discover the cause of our fatigue.

Action Steps:

Go back through the previous chapter and mark any symptoms you are currently experiencing.

Which body systems seem to be most affected in you?

- Liver
- Stomach
- Kidneys
- Heart

Do you suffer from any of the diseases mentioned in this section? List them here:

The “Hypoglycemia Association” lists the following as typical complaints for those suffering from fatigue. Which ones have you experienced?

- The light hurts my eyes.
- My mouth is so dry I feel as if I could spit cotton.
- I feel drowsy after a sweet/starchy meal.
- The pain in my neck is murder.
- I feel best after the evening meal.
- I frequently have nightmares.
- I wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep.
- My hands perspire when I have to make a speech in public, or take a test.
- Preparing for a trip is terribly exhausting, leaving me sick and distressed and sometimes I cry.
- I have to drink coffee or caffeinated soft drinks to keep going.
- I have frequent abdominal pain or gas.
- When I introduce people, I panic and forget their names.
- I was considered a good student, but I almost failed several subjects. Studying was a tremendous effort.
- I avoid social engagement with all sorts of excuses.
- Sometimes I wake up in a sweat at night.
- I think I am especially sensitive to color, sound, and odor.
- I insult people without meaning to. I regret it afterward, but it happens again and again.
- This itching and crawling of the skin is nerve racking.

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- I just can't get organized.
- I either feel guilty or I blame others.
- I can't handle stress.
- I cry easily.
- I get angry easily, which may result in my yelling at the person. It takes a long time to recover.
- When I get up quickly from a reclining position, I get dizzy. Sometimes I black out or everything becomes dim.
- I sleep so hard, as if drugged, with a feeling of sinking, sinking; I try to wake myself up but can't.
- I have a history of constipation problems.
- I often feel tired or blue, but after eating ice cream or candy I feel well and happy for a short time.
- I have always had trouble with motion sickness.
- Often when I go to get something, I forget what I went for.
- I know I'm a doormat. I don't know how to stand up for myself.
- I can't get to the bottom of my breath.
- I get frequent colds.
- My insides feel weak and trembly.
- It was six months before I felt happy and really able to take care of my new baby.
- I have difficulty keeping a job. I get irritated with people I work with.
- My heart beats too fast sometimes.
- My heart beats too slow sometimes.
- The day I go shopping I just have no strength left for anything else.¹

Are you exposed to too much light at night when you should be sleeping?

- List the sources of night-time light in your home.
- What steps could you take to reduce this light?

¹ From <http://www.fred.net/slowup/habu144.html>

CHAPTER 3

Monitoring Your Fatigue by Stage

Just how tired are you, anyway? Did you know that your body goes through stages of fatigue?

In a body that is functioning correctly, scientists have observed that your cortisol levels are highest in the morning and lowest at midnight. Another hormone, DHEA, must also be maintained at a sufficient level, since hormones such as cortisol are made from DHEA.

In the 1950s, a physician named Hans Selye identified seven stages of reaction to stress. Doctors still refer to his classic book, *The Stress of Life*, when evaluating lab work and making recommendations for their patients.

The Alarm Stage – Stage One

When your body reacts to stress, it does so by increasing your cortisol levels. You can handle this increase in cortisol production only as long as you have enough DHEA to support it. This is known as **Stage One** of fatigue, the alarm stage.

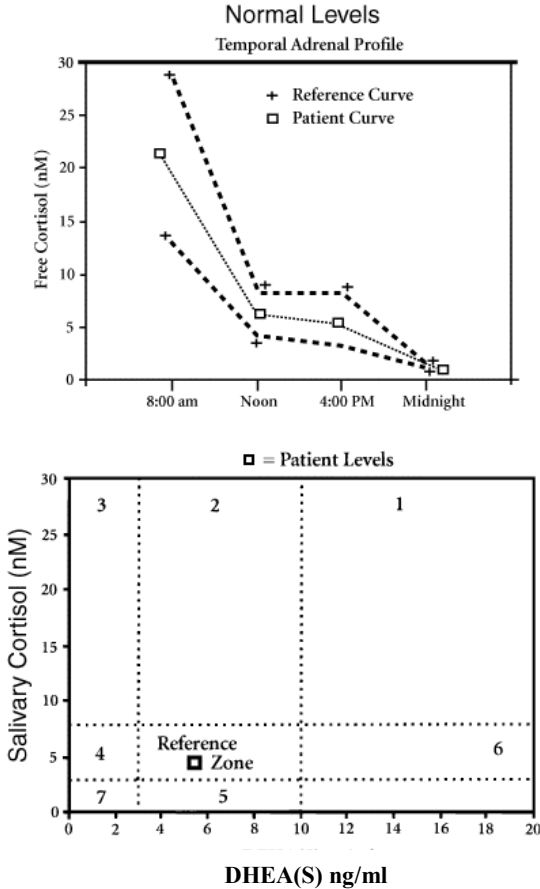


Image Source: <http://www.chronicfatigue.org/AS1%20Normal.html>

The Resistance Stage – Stages Two through Four

These high levels of cortisol will tend to make you gain weight. To conserve energy, your body will also begin to down-regulate your metabolism and body temperature. Your DHEA levels will also quietly begin to go down. This is **Stage Two** of fatigue, the resistance stage. Your body's mechanisms are designed to protect you. If you were to

rest at this stage, your body would be able to heal. But if not, your body will have to resist the effects of high cortisol.

As stress continues, with high levels of cortisol but without DHEA from which to manufacture it, you'll begin to feel increased anxiety and panic, combined with exhaustion. This is **Stage Three** of fatigue.

Soon, your body realizes it cannot continue the high levels of cortisol. Your morning cortisol levels will fall. You'll notice that you have a very hard time waking up in the morning. By late afternoon and evening, though, you may feel a burst of adrenaline that makes it very difficult to fall asleep. You might dismiss this by saying, "I'm just not a morning person," but in reality, your hormone levels are mixed up. What's worse, the higher levels of cortisol in the evening will tend to either make it difficult for you to fall asleep at bedtime or will wake you up between 3 and 5 a.m. This is **Stage Four** of fatigue.

The Exhaustion Stage – Stages Five through Seven

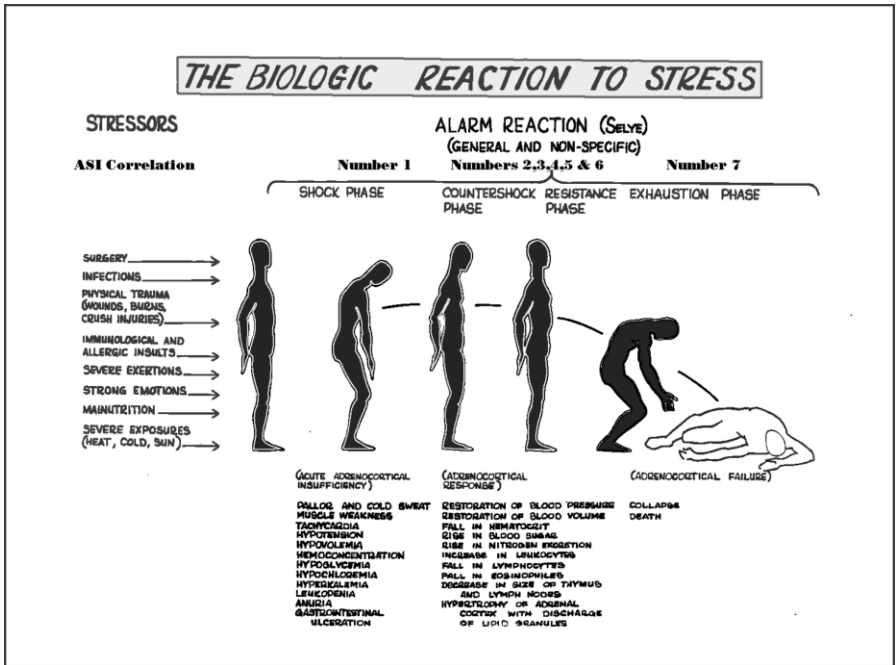
If you have no reserves of DHEA yet continuously ask your body for cortisol that it cannot make, you'll eventually hit a stage of exhaustion at all hours of the day and night. Women at this stage of fatigue are often bedridden. This is **Stage Five** of fatigue.

There are two more stages of fatigue, often known to medical doctors as Addison's disease, a life-threatening condition that is often discovered when sufferers simply collapse in an emergency room or even die.

You can see an example of these stages of fatigue if you think about your metabolism. When your body puts up a resistance to stress, it will do so by slowing down the various parts of your body, in an attempt to conserve energy. To conserve energy, your body will cool down your body temperature, store fat for a future emergency, slow down your fertility, and send resources away from "unnecessary" things such as hair and skin (resulting in dry hair and skin). You'll feel tired and will require caffeine or other stimulants to keep going. You'll have food cravings, as your body tries to build up its resources.

If you enter the exhaustion stage, your body will not be able to even keep your vital organs running. You might lose weight because of an inability to digest food, a loss of appetite, or diarrhea. Your kidneys can lose function, and your blood pressure will drop. Your emotional state will weaken, and you'll panic in a crowd or if you hear a loud noise. You

may start crying for no apparent reason, and you might not be able to stop. You'll probably feel depressed.



Source: <http://www.chronicfatigue.org/Selye%20large.html>

Monitoring Your Level of Fatigue

By taking note of specific symptoms you're experiencing, you can often determine which level of fatigue you're in. In addition, if you choose to seek help from a healthcare provider, having a record of your symptoms will certainly aid him or her in making a diagnosis.

However, the best reason for figuring out your level of fatigue is so that you'll know if you're improving. Most of us expect to make small changes (maybe in lifestyle, medications or supplements) and to immediately see large improvement. If we don't see something dramatic happen right away, we decide that our efforts were of no use – and we quit!

Dr. Selye found that we often have to go back through the levels of fatigue in the process of healing. For instance, a woman in stage 5 of fatigue will "heal" by spending time in stage 4, then stage 3, etc. – all before reaching the point where her body can respond to stress in a healthy way. Each stage has its own symptoms and frustrations, and if

this woman quits too soon, she'll relapse. However, if she realistically understands that healing is a process (and that her symptoms are normal), she'll persevere.

Some women heal faster than others! Don't compare yourself to others; rather, let me show you how to compare yourself to how you felt last week, last month, and last year.

What are some symptoms you might experience as a normal part of healing?

- Gaining weight
- Feeling cold
- Sleeping more
- Foggy thinking
- Getting headaches
- Enduring painful joints
- Crying more easily

I'm going to show you how to be objective rather than emotional about your healing – at a time in your life when your emotions are very powerful.

To monitor your levels of fatigue, you'll be setting up a notebook that will act as your scientific workshop. This is your "control central," a place to test ideas, perform experiments, and make discoveries that will help you customize your own healing process.

You won't need any fancy equipment. In fact, almost everything you'll need to monitor your fatigue can be found around your home or at your local pharmacy.

Monitoring your health is much like performing a science experiment. Previously, you made some observations about your health as you wrote down symptoms you're currently experiencing and as you thought through your health history.

Now you'll add some measurements, such as body temperature and blood pressure. I'll show you some standard measurements that are true for all women, then you can experiment with variables, the things that might be different in your unique situation yet are affecting how you heal.

Along the way, week by week, you'll change one variable at a time. Maybe you'll change one thing in your diet, or maybe you'll change

something about your sleeping patterns, or maybe you'll add a supplement to your diet.

As you observe, measure, and record changes and symptoms, you'll see a definite picture emerging. You'll be able to see objectively that you're getting better, even when an occasional bad day would otherwise convince you that you're a complete failure.

Scientists always conduct "fair tests." This means that they change only one thing at a time when they conduct an experiment. This is how they can tell if changes helped or made things worse. It's never wise to make many changes at once.

It takes time to heal! Healing always begins at the cellular level, where you can't see it. Cells have to change, regrow, and eventually build new tissues and structures. Inner cells heal first, and only later will changes be reflected in your skin, hair, moods, etc. For this reason, I'll be showing you how to observe how you're doing at a cellular level, not just at the outward, symptomatic level.

*"Thomas Edison performed fifty thousand experiments before he discovered the right elements that enabled him to develop a new storage battery. When asked if he was frustrated that so little had resulted from so much work, the inventor replied, 'Results? Why, I have gotten a lot of results. I know fifty thousand things that won't work.'"*²

I would like you to begin monitoring both cellular changes (that will show in your body temperature, blood pressure, pupil dilation, and medical testing) and your outward symptoms. You may even have some rare symptom that I've never heard of. That's okay! Just begin to write it all down.

I should note that those who only make a half-hearted effort to monitor their fatigue, choosing to simply read about it rather than do it, won't get better. It takes a lot of work on your part to overcome fatigue! I'll certainly provide all the help I can, but it is up to you to make changes. The first and most important change you'll need to make is learning to observe, record, and monitor your health.

Your doctor won't – and can't – do this for you! Your spouse probably can't do this for you. Your brain won't remember all the details of changes you've made. You need to learn to monitor your own health, writing things down, so that you can make important decisions, feel a

² *No Little Places*, by Ron Klassen and John Koessler (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), p. 95.

sense of control over your health, and be encouraged as you really do see improvement. If you don't monitor your health, you're likely to end up disappointed, disgruntled – and too tired!

So let's look at some simple things you can begin monitoring this week:

Body Temperature

Body temperature is an accurate reflection of metabolic activity in your body. The more your metabolism is functioning, the higher your temperature will be. Best of all, body temperature can give you a snapshot of what is happening **today** at your body's cellular level!

It took me a long time to realize that **98.6 degrees Fahrenheit is the optimal body temperature**. At this exact temperature, the enzymes in your body are able to function at their optimal ability, meaning that you will metabolize your food most efficiently. If your temperature is higher or lower than this, your body must work harder to metabolize food, to build new cells, and to repair damage.

Optimal is not the same thing as normal. Normal is simply the average of several people's body temperatures. If some of the people in a sample group tend to have low body temperature, "normal" will be lower than "optimal." This is why it seems "normal" for you and your friends to all have typical body temperatures in the 96s or 97s. Normal or not, your bodies cannot function optimally at these low temperatures.

You should also realize that body temperatures normally fluctuate throughout a day. Body temperature is lowest first thing in the morning, after you've been quietly sleeping for at least four hours, and body temperature is highest in the late afternoon, after you've been active, after you've eaten warm food, or if you're fighting an infection. This makes sense, doesn't it? Therefore, we want to know what your average body temperature is over the course of an entire day.

To track body temperature, purchase an inexpensive digital thermometer, preferably one with a memory. These usually cost around \$5 at a pharmacy.

Place the thermometer next to your bed. If you've been sleeping for four hours or more before waking in the morning, then before you sit up or stand up, place the thermometer in your mouth. If your temperature is below 97.5 degrees, this is a sign that your metabolism

is being turned down. You are at least in the resistance stage (#2) of fatigue.

If so, you should then track your daytime temperatures for at least three days. You will take your temperature at 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. for three days. Average the three daily temperatures. Are they steady and low? If so, your metabolism has started to go down, but your adrenal glands are able to handle the stress (stage #2). You should be able to heal quickly.

Do your temperatures jump all over? If they are varying more than 2/10s of a degree throughout the day, your adrenal glands show signs of damage. You will need to be very consistent in your efforts to heal, and you will also need to be realistic in how long it will take you to heal (stages #3-7).

Taking your temperature will continue to be a reliable way to see if the methods you use to heal are actually helping you. For this reason, I want to encourage you to start the habit of taking your temperature and recording it. I keep thermometers handy throughout my home (in the bathroom, in the kitchen, in my purse, and even in my apron pocket), so that I will more easily remember to take my temperature three times a day. Ideally, you will want to record the average of these temperatures on a graph in your notebook at least weekly.

Blood Pressure

Your blood pressure is another clue as to how well your body is handling stress. In the alarm and beginning resistance stages, your blood pressure often increases. However, as your adrenal glands become more damaged, your body struggles to maintain proper fluid balance in your cells, resulting in low blood pressure. Many women have low blood pressure, yet they've been told that it's normal and even good.

This simply isn't true. The optimal blood pressure is 120/80. If your blood pressure is normally lower than this, such as 95/65, your adrenal glands are fatigued.

A sign of entering the exhaustion stage (#5-7) is that your blood pressure drops when you stand up. Low blood pressure often causes symptoms such as feeling light-headed or dizzy when you stand up quickly. Normally, your adrenal glands are instrumental in helping your blood pump efficiently, especially when you change positions quickly. However, if your adrenal glands are tired, your heart simply can't pump blood to your brain quickly enough, leaving you seeing stars.

You can purchase your own blood pressure cuff at a pharmacy. I prefer a wrist cuff, because it's easy to use. Mine has a memory in case I don't have time to write down the measurements immediately. Ideally, you will want to record your blood pressure in your notebook at least weekly.

Pupil Dilation

Another hormone that your adrenal glands manufacture is called aldosterone. In a healthy person, aldosterone helps your body maintain proper levels of sodium and potassium. If those levels become unbalanced, the muscles in your eyes cannot properly dilate your pupils.

To test your eye muscles, go into a darkened room at home and ask a friend to shine a flashlight toward your pupils and hold it for a minute or so. Have your friend watch your pupils. The pupils should constrict and stay small as the light is shined from the side of your face. However, if your adrenal glands are exhausted, the pupils will get small at first but soon get larger again or flutter back and forth as the muscles fail in their attempt to hold the pupils steady.

- ❑ You can see a video of what this looks like at <https://youtu.be/OAkftY6BZS0>.

As your levels of fatigue improve, you'll be able to see a much more consistent pupil response. Write down your observations weekly in your notebook.

Testing Your Hormone Levels

If you suspect an adrenal problem, you would be very wise to have your hormone levels tested. Knowing exactly what is happening in your body is essential! Especially if you suspect your levels of fatigue are more severe, I strongly advise against “guessing;” rather, bite the bullet and pay some money to get your hormone levels tested.

Many women are fearful of spending \$150 or so to get testing done. They guess what stage of fatigue they're in, based on symptoms alone, and start making changes to their lifestyle. Often these changes include herbal supplements or hormones. Sadly, they often make their problems worse because they're supplementing with the wrong things. By this time, they decide maybe they should get their hormone levels tested, but it's too late. The supplements they're taking are in their bloodstream, confusing the test results.

Don't let this happen to you! Get your hormone levels tested now, before you begin making any changes.

I recommend saliva testing, having used it myself and having studied about the accuracy of various types of hormone testing (blood, urine, and saliva).

- ❑ Read more about the accuracy of saliva testing at <http://www.diagnostechs.com/Pages/WhySaliva.aspx>

The “gold standard” in adrenal saliva testing is offered by Diagno-Techs Laboratory and is called the “Adrenal Stress Index” (ASI). It measures cortisol levels at four different times during the day, as well as progesterone, DHEA, insulin, secretory IgA, and certain antibodies. These test results will give you a very good idea of your stage of adrenal fatigue.

- ❑ Search for a healthcare provider who can administer this saliva test by going to Diagnos-Tech's website at <http://www.diagnostechs.com>.
- ❑ One source of saliva testing is available online, at <http://www.canaryclub.org>, if you have difficulty finding a doctor to order the testing for you. Be sure to choose a test that is comparable to the ASI test described above.
- ❑ You may also want to get a complete physical from a medical doctor or from a local laboratory such as <http://privatemdlabs.com>.

Tests to ask for include:

- Thyroid function tests, such as TSH, free-T3, free-T4, reverse T3, thyroid antibodies (anti-TPO and TgAb), and ferritin.
- Vitamin D (25-hydroxyvitamin D) levels. Vitamin D testing can be obtained from <http://www.virginiahopkinstestkits.com/vitamindtest.html>.
- Complete blood count.

When you receive your test results, compare your levels to these “optimal” ranges:

Test	Optimal Range	Your Results
Free cortisol (7- 8 am)	13-24 nM	
Free cortisol (11 am – noon)	5-10 nM	
Free cortisol (4-5 pm)	3-8 nM	
Free cortisol (11 pm – midnight)	1-4 nM	
DHEA	3-10	
Total Salivary SigA	25-60 mg/dl	
Gliadin Ab, SigA	13-15 U/ml	
Blood Glucose	80-100 mg/dl (85 mg/dl is best)	
Insulin (fasting)	<5	
TSH	0.5-2 uU/ml	
Free T3	230-619 pg/d	
Free T4	0.7-1.9 ng/dl	
Reverse T3		
Anti-TPO	Varies with method	
TgAb	Varies with method	
Vitamin D (25-hydroxyvitamin D)	50-80 ng/ml	

Soon we'll begin discussing some steps you can take to begin healing and to beat that fatigue!

Action Steps:

If you haven't done so already, **add all your observations on symptoms (see chapters 1-2) to your notebook**. Be sure to also include a detailed health history. Finally, be sure your notebook has a good supply of lined paper or graph paper, on which you record your observations and measurements each week. Include a "diary section," where you can journal any feelings, emotions, or noted responses to stress. Be sure to write the date and time next to everything!

Simply based on what you've read so far, **which stage of fatigue** most fits your symptoms?

As soon as possible, measure and record your **body temperature**. Which stage of fatigue most fits your body temperature?

As soon as possible, observe the **reaction of your pupils to light**. Which stage of fatigue most fits your pupils' reaction?

If you can, measure and record your **blood pressure**. Which stage of fatigue most fits your blood pressure?

If possible, order appropriate **saliva and blood tests** right away, to get an accurate diagnosis of your stage of adrenal fatigue.

Do you need to **schedule a visit with your healthcare provider**, to discuss your observations, measurements, and recordings?

Choose a day and time each week when you can measure and record both symptoms and changes at the cellular level, such as body temperature, blood pressure, and pupil reaction. How will you be **reminded** to do this each week?

- You can download a form for recording your symptoms at <http://www.drginahoneyman.com/forms/SymptomsSeverityScales.pdf>
- You can download graphs for recording your body temperature at <http://www.drrind.com/therapies/metabolic-temperature-graph>

CHAPTER 4

Steps to Beat Fatigue

In conclusion, I'm first going to give you an overview of the recovery process, so that you can then decide which areas you might need to study more about, to fine-tune your own recovery plan.

If you can remember one thing, you'll do just fine:

Spend less energy than you make.

That's it! Simply spend less energy each day than you recuperate in each night's sleep.

Easy, huh?

No. If it were easy, you could close this book now and feel better. Unfortunately, there are as many variations of drains on your energy as there are variations of women reading this book.

My job is to help you understand how to use energy efficiently, with a little left over each day to aid the healing process, so that you really will be able to close this book and feel confident about getting better. Just remember that you're a unique person, so your unique process of healing may look different than mine did.

One of my own frustrations has been watching other women who are able to do so much more than I can, without any fatigue or exhaustion. For instance, the summer I was diagnosed with Addison's Disease, I went with my family to the Pittsburgh Zoo. Yes, Pittsburgh is full of hills. Yes, we did a lot of walking. Yes, I carried my two-year-old daughter for much of the day. Yes, it was a hot summer day. However, it was frustrating to me that my small children, my husband, their grandparents, and a host of other mothers and families that day could do what I did without feeling tired. (I, on the other hand, completely crashed that evening and suffered diarrhea, pain, and brain-numbing exhaustion for days after.)

One doctor explained to me that one woman might have a salary of \$100 in her energy bank account. Another woman, for no fault of her own, only have a weekly energy salary of \$75. As long as each doesn't overspend, she will be fine. Our frustration comes because our "salaries" aren't as high as others.

So how much is in your energy checking account? The results of your saliva testing will give you a good idea where your account stands. Even more importantly, you must determine how you're spending your energy. Most assuredly, if you're suffering from chronic fatigue, you are overspending.

Another doctor explains it this way:

Normally the adrenal glands regenerate during a night's sleep the vitality they expended during the previous day. They are then ready the following morning to go through another day of equal rigor. In hypoadrenalism, the glands are exhausted. They have expended more vitality than they can make up for in a single night's sleep. Thus, if they are going to return to normal, they must regenerate more than the body expends. If the glands can't do this, they won't recover. They may not get worse, but they won't get better. For this extra regeneration, rest is required-- much more than the usual eight hours a night.

The example I usually give my patients compares them to their bank accounts. The reserve of the adrenal glands is like money in a bank account held for emergencies. Let's say you have a thousand dollars in the bank, and every night you deposit a

hundred dollars. If during that day, you spend a hundred dollars, the reserve fund is still intact.

In the same way, the adrenal glands have a considerable reserve held for emergencies, and they are able to regenerate (deposit money) at night while they rest. During the day, if we expend no more energy (money) than the adrenals are able to build up at night, we still have our adrenal reserve (the thousand dollars). If an emergency arises and we must use some of the thousand dollars, we must do one of two things. We must either make more money or spend less so we can deposit more into the bank account to build it up to its reserve level. This same philosophy works with the adrenal glands.

When the adrenals are exhausted, to produce regeneration it is necessary to expend less energy during the day than the adrenals build up during rest. In this way, some of the energy the adrenals build during this rest can go toward building their reserve.³

There are many variations of this important point, but the key is that ***you'll never feel better if you don't STOP doing the things that got you exhausted in the first place.***

I can easily get frustrated with myself, wishing I were stronger, had more endurance, or as much energy as So-And-So has. But this is the grace God has given me at this point in my life (2 Corinthians 12:7-10). I have to accept my limitations.

"To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with Yehovah to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'

"Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."⁴

Let's talk about some kinds of stress that draw from our adrenal bank accounts. To simplify things, I like to think of three kinds of stress:

³ <http://chronicfatigue.org/Life%20Mastery.html>

⁴ 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, NIV.

physical, mental, and emotional. I assign **one point** to each physical stress, **two points** to each mental stress, and **three points** to each emotional stress.

When I sleep each night, my body deposits “points” back into my adrenal bank account. At first, my body deposits very few points because so much energy is needed to heal. After a while, I find that more points are deposited, and I can “spend” more points the next day. But in my opinion, I’ll probably have to be aware of “points” and how much I’m “spending” for the rest of my life, if I wish to maintain my health.

Let’s talk about some common causes of stress and some ways to overcome them.

Physical Stress

1. Diet

Eating food that must be digested = 1 point

Eating food is probably the largest strain on your body. One of your body’s main jobs is to digest your food! You can’t obviously just stop eating (although lack of appetite is common with fatigue).

However, your body uses enzymes to both digest your food and to heal. Therefore, your body can manufacture two types of enzymes: digestive and metabolic.

1. Digestive enzymes: digest your food
2. Metabolic enzymes: repair your body

Unfortunately for you, adrenal hormones are necessary for the manufacture of **both** types of enzymes. This is why you would immediately die if you didn’t produce any adrenal hormones! This is also the largest reason you feel so terrible right now.

You can supplement with adrenal hormones, or any other hormones you might be lacking (so we’ll discuss this further in Part 4), but if you use up all of the supplemented hormones to simply digest your food, you will have nothing left with which to heal your body.

A better plan is to eat food that already contains some digestive enzymes, so that your food is simple for your body to digest and requires fewer resources. Now you’ll have more energy left to heal!

In addition, the food you eat must be very high in nutritional content so that it supplies the building blocks needed for your body to repair itself. If you don't have much of an appetite, then you cannot waste a single bite. Each bite has to count! Each bite has to supply what you need to fill your energy bank account back up, especially if you might not have the energy to come back to the kitchen for a few hours.

There are also some foods to avoid, because they are such a drain on your body, as well as foods that you should seek out, because they will help rebuild your body and give you energy.

We'll go into much greater detail about food in Part 2.

2. Rest

Not getting enough rest = 1 point

Your hormones affect your circadian rhythms, or the rhythms of sleep and wakefulness that you go through each day. For this reason, it's often hard for people with fatigue to sleep. Others have trouble waking up!

Circadian rhythms are controlled by the amount of light received by your eyes, which in turn regulates the production of the hormone called melatonin. As we've already learned, this hormone goes on to affect all glands of your body, including your adrenal and thyroid glands. In a nutshell, you should...

- ❑ **Sleep in as close to complete darkness as possible.** If you must get up in the night (to use the restroom, etc.), try to stay in the dark.
- ❑ **Get as much sleep as you can.** Go to bed early. Sleep late. Take naps.
- ❑ As you start to recover, **rise in the morning with the sun.** This will help you reset your circadian rhythms.
- ❑ **When you're tired, rest.** Learn to pay attention to how you feel and rest *before* you crash. Your emotions are good indicators of how much rest you need. If you feel angry, anxious, or ready to cry, you have probably overdone it and should try to take a nap.
- ❑ **Take one day out of every seven to completely rest.** I personally rest from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. By rest, I mean that I do no cooking, cleaning, laundry, gardening, heavy thinking, shopping, or any other work. Instead, I read fun things, put my feet up, play games

with my children, nap, laugh, and enjoy my family. I cook ahead for that day so that I have an entire 24 hours off from my responsibilities.

I will discuss further the rationale behind these recommendations, as well as share ways to make this practical, in Part 3.

3. Replace lacking hormones

Requiring my fatigued glands to produce hormones = 1 point

In addition to sleep, you need other ways to rest your body. In Part 4, I'll discuss supplements, adrenal extracts, and common prescriptions that are available to help your body rest, as well as specific ways to use them.

4. Exercise

Too much physical exertion = 1 point

You just aren't going to be able to exercise much at this point in your life. You probably already know this!

However, fatigue adversely affects your circulation, so you need to move at least a little bit. (Contraction of the muscles in your legs, by exercise, for instance, helps your blood circulate through your veins.) A *short, slow* walk is best. Don't walk on hot or very cold days. Don't overdo it! Don't walk too far before realizing that you have to walk the same distance back! It's best to walk with someone else at first, in case you get too tired.

Remember that laundry, cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, farm chores, gardening, shopping, and going to church are also forms of exercise. Pay attention to how you feel and *stop* before you get too tired. Learn to delegate household chores to others so that you can get well.

I'll discuss exercise more in Part 8.

5. Scheduling

Over committing = 1 point

Most people who have adrenal fatigue often have "driven" personalities. I've noticed that we tend to be passionate people who

want to make a difference in the world. We tend to be perfectionists, at least with ourselves. We love to be busy, and we thrive on helping others. These are great characteristics, but it's difficult to heal when we *over* commit.

Quite simply, are you doing too much?

Sometimes it's hard to adjust to the fact that adrenal fatigue affects every area of my life. However, I have learned that as soon as I overdo it, I fall right back into feeling sick.

In Part 5, I'll discuss ways we can manage our times, our homes, and our goals, so that we can feel productive while also giving our bodies a needed break.

6. Injuries, Sickness, Travel, etc.

All forms of physical stress = 1 point

Your adrenal hormones handle *all* types of physical stress. If you are not manufacturing enough hormones (because your glands are too fatigued), then you will simply not handle stress well.

Here are some examples of physical stress:

- A sore throat, runny nose, or achiness – you're getting a cold or the flu! Be especially careful! Dehydration is your biggest enemy here.
- A cut, burn, or other injury
- Other sickness
- Traveling
- Holidays
- Pregnancy, Childbirth, Breastfeeding

In Part 6, I'll talk about what to do when your body comes under special physical stress.

Mental and Emotional Stress

All forms of mental stress = 2 points

All forms of emotional stress = 3 points

Sometimes I have trouble deciding if something is a mental or emotional stress.

Mental stress would include making shopping lists, planning menus, trying to remember things, doing a lot of reading, balancing a checkbook, writing a letter, or talking on the phone. These are each 2 points.

If my emotions are included in these things, I must count them as emotional stresses instead. For instance, if money is tight and I'm worried about finances as I balance my checkbook, it's 3 points. If I'm talking on the phone with someone and our relationship is strained, it's 3 points.

Other types of emotional stress include being in crowds of people, fear, worry, fighting with people, anger, etc. Simply worrying about being sick or dying is an incredible emotional strain.

While I might *know* in my mind that things are outside of my control and that therefore I shouldn't worry about them, when my adrenal glands are fatigued, anxiety is very difficult to control. This is because the adrenal hormones regulate my feelings to some extent. It can be a vicious cycle. I *feel* depressed or anxious or angry, then I react poorly, then I'm more depressed or anxious or angry, straining my adrenal glands and making me feel even worse. The guilt over my emotions can further add to the problem.

Learning to handle relationships is a major part of our emotional stress. We'll discuss relationships more in Part 6. We'll also discuss money and its effect on fatigue in Part 7.

Can you see how everything in your life contributes either to greater fatigue or to improved health?

Some things are in your control, and those are the things for which we'll develop a plan for success.

Some things are not in your control, but you can control **you** – your reactions.

Dr. Gerald Poesnecker, an acclaimed physician who successfully treated chronic fatigue for 45 years until his death in 2003, wisely wrote,

“The nature of the serious CFS patient is such that anything that requires an adaptation by the body may initiate a stress on the adrenal glands and make the patient worse.”⁵

In other words, anything that requires you to react – in any way – equals a stress to your body.

This fact is what makes treating fatigue so difficult. Every person is different, and each woman has unique circumstances. However, if you can remember that you must simply **spend less energy than you make**, then you have the basic information you need to start getting well.

⁵ *Mastering Your Life*, Dr. Gerald E. Poesnecker (Quakertown, PA: Clymer Healing Research Center), p. 3.

Action Steps

Previously, you made a list of stressors you felt have contributed to your current level of fatigue.

- If you were to assign point values to those stressors, would you say that most of them are physical, mental, or emotional?

I have personally found that it takes from 2 days to a week for my body to respond to the current stress I'm facing. For instance, if I spend an entire day shopping on Monday, I might not feel the full effects of it until Wednesday or Thursday.

- What stressors have you faced during the last week? Can you assign point values to them?

Physical stress – 1 point each
Mental stress – 3 points each
Emotional stress – 2 points each

Now let's compare our stressors with our body temperature, as we learned previously.

- Use the chart on the following page to begin monitoring the correlation between your unique stressors, symptoms, and physical reactions. Be sure to keep copies of these in your notebook.

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Blood Pressure:

	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
Before rising in a.m.							
Immediately after standing							
4 p.m.							
Bedtime							
After symptoms:							

Weight this week: _____

Stressors experienced that affected symptoms and/or body temperature:

Other Notes:

CHAPTER 5

Lifelong Healing

In conclusion, I'd like to address the question I've received most from readers.

How long will it take to get better? Is it even possible to "get better" from adrenal fatigue?

In fact, one reader asked me a question that had been rumbling around in my own brain for quite some time, yet I'd been too afraid to speak it out loud:

Is it true that once the adrenals are "used up" that they are gone and your body can't replenish?

She put her finger exactly on my greatest fear, which was that I would have to take hormone replacements and supplements for the rest of my life. I would always have to meticulously watch my diet. I would never be able to stay up all night again. I would always struggle with pregnancy and mothering. I would always be just one stressful crisis away from bone-chilling fatigue.

Can I Get Better?

I've got to be honest with you. A good diet has been helpful to me, but it hasn't completely healed me. In fact, I began making excellent changes to my diet at least six years before I finally spiraled into such a severe stage of fatigue that I was diagnosed with Addison's disease.

So why didn't my "good diet" prevent such a disease?

Because the key to recovery, as you know very well by now, is that **I must spend less energy than I make**. For me, my diet was good, but I was still spending massive amounts of energy with repeated pregnancies, too little sleep, and a schedule that was too full. In addition, my body was already severely fatigued before I changed my diet, since I was battling autoimmune thyroid issues and a systemic, chronic virus.

The very definition of Addison's disease is that at least 90% of adrenal function is gone. Most medical professionals would state that it is impossible to recover adrenal function, although a full and happy life can supposedly be lived through prescription hormone replacement.

Meanwhile, other doctors have helped their patients recover by teaching them the principles you have learned in this book. As long as these women continue to **spend less energy than they make**, they continue to feel better.

But all would admit that if patients stop doing the things that helped them feel better – stop eating right, stop getting proper rest, stop handling stress properly, or stop hormone replacement – their symptoms quickly return, often worse than they were the first time.

Is This "Healing"? Is This "Getting Better"?

Deep down, I wish that I could just live a "normal" life, without having to worry about all my actions and their consequences. At the grocery store, I look enviously at other women's carts and wish I could eat the food they do without feeling so sick. I long for a day that I wouldn't have to take pills every few hours or have to carry an emergency shot in my purse at all times. I wish that I could occasionally overdo without the days or weeks of sickness that follow my indiscretions.

Sometimes I cannot avoid the stresses in my life that make me feel sick. The late Dr. Gerald Poesnecker, a doctor who specialized in the treatment of chronic fatigue, wrote:

One of our [chronic fatigue syndrome] patients is a Mennonite mother with two mentally challenged children. Since this couple does not have the funds to hire full-time outside help, the mother of these children must care for them even when the only thing she feels like doing is sleeping. This is another example of a stress that cannot be easily set aside. However, I am pleased to report that even though this mother was nearly in Stage Seven when she first came to us, she is now much improved with our remedies and passive therapies. While there was nothing we could do to relieve the stress of her children, we were able to put this and her other stresses into proper perspective so that she was able to conquer those stresses which were reducible and learn to adapt to those that were not.⁶

So in my opinion, yes, I can overcome fatigue and regain my energy and health. Yes, I can learn to “conquer” some of the stresses in my life. No, I will probably never have a day when my body is so much better that I can stop acting responsibly.

How Long Will It Take?

Dr. Poesnecker also writes that the timeframe of each person’s healing depends completely upon their own “adrenal adaptive ability.” In other words, one woman could be at a severe stage of fatigue, but her adrenal glands adapt to her treatment plan quickly and she recovers fully in a short time. Another woman might have only minor fatigue, but it seems that no matter what she does, she neither improves nor worsens. These women each have unique “adrenal adaptive ability.” Their bodies are different from anyone else’s, so the length of time it takes them to heal is different as well.⁷

It is extremely important that you learn not to compare yourself to any else. Some women heal faster than others! Don’t compare yourself to others. Rather, compare yourself to how you felt last week, last month, and last year, by referring to your journal.

⁶ Gerald E. Poesnecker, *Mastering Your Life* (Quakertown, PA: Clymer Healing Research Center), p. 34.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

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It takes time to heal! Healing always begins at the cellular level, where you can't see it. Cells have to change, regrow, and eventually build new tissues and structures. Inner cells heal first, and only later will changes be reflected in your skin, hair, moods, etc. This is why you have been learning how to observe how you're doing at a cellular level, by tracking your body temperature.

Ramiel Nagel, author of *Cure Tooth Decay: Heal and Prevent Cavities with Nutrition*, estimates that it takes about 6 weeks of excellent nutrition to begin to see healing of cavities.

I have heard that you can figure that it will take 2 months for every year you have been sick, so if you've been fighting extreme fatigue for 6 years, you should expect it to take about 12 months before you have fully recovered your energy.

Sometimes it is difficult to maintain your motivation for that long. Set up systems to remind yourself of what you need to do to heal and why. Continue to read books that will support your motivation, and interact with others in person and online.

Continue to monitor your symptoms on a regular basis so you'll know if you're improving. Most of us expect to make small changes (maybe in lifestyle, medications or supplements) and to immediately see large improvement. If we don't see something dramatic happen right away, we decide that our efforts were of no use – and we quit!

As we learned earlier, we often have to go back through the levels of fatigue in the process of healing. For instance, a woman in stage 5 of fatigue will “heal” by spending time in stage 4, then stage 3, etc. – all before reaching the point where her body can respond to stress in a healthy way. Each stage has its own symptoms and frustrations, and if this woman quits too soon, she'll relapse. However, if she realistically understands that healing is a process (and that her symptoms are normal), she'll persevere. Remind yourself of the characteristics of each stage so that you'll know what to realistically expect.

Be meticulous with your diet until you have regained your strength and energy. At that point, you might be able to slowly stop using some of your nutritional supplements, providing your diet continues to be adequate. You can begin to experiment and discover how much energy is in your “energy bank account” on a more permanent basis, so you'll know how much you can spend and exactly what it takes to replenish.

So, to summarize how long it will take for you to heal, it depends upon:

- How long you have been sick
- Your body's unique ability to adapt and heal
- The stage of fatigue you're in
- The stressors you face
- Your diet
- How much sleep and rest you get
- How you manage your time
- Your financial situation
- How you handle relationships with others
- Your levels of fear or anger
- Other health problems you have

What If I Never Get Better?

Like the Mennonite mother whose life is filled with stress she can't avoid, you might not be able to do anything about some of the things that cause you fatigue. You might have to learn how to cope and live with fatigue, rather than completely eliminate it from your life.

It has helped me to think about my purpose for living, so that I can think long-term. If I only think about today or this week, I can get discouraged. However, if I realize that my life can still be productive and useful, even if I don't have the energy others have, my outlook is a lot brighter.

The Bible says that, even with my best efforts at diet and stress management, I will still die someday. The causes of death are both genetic and environmental. We each receive our genetic predisposition to death from our parents, who received it from their parents, all the way back to Adam.⁸

"For the wages of sin is death..."⁹

Yet before we blame our parents, our distant ancestors, or even Adam for our health problems, we need to remember that some of our problems we've brought on ourselves. Each time we do something wrong, we bring death to our cells. Each angry word, each anxious thought, causes havoc within our body systems, slowly killing us from the inside out.

⁸ Genesis 3, Romans 5:14, 1 Corinthians 15:22

⁹ Romans 6:23

*"...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*¹⁰

The death rate is currently 100%. No matter what we do, we can only postpone death, not escape it. I often like to joke with my husband that I need to trade in my body for the new model.

Death really is the enemy that we've been discussing in this book. Dr. Edward Howell, in his landmark book *Enzyme Nutrition*, states that life ends when enzyme action is depleted beyond a certain point.¹¹ We can make "deposits," but we will eventually run out of energy.

The Bible says that the process of death is at work in all of us because each of us has sinned. In the Bible, God told Adam that if he ate of the fruit God told him not to eat, he would surely die. The Hebrew says that, "dying, he would surely die."¹² The moment he ate that fruit, the cells of his body began to die, finally culminating in the death of his entire body.

When my daughters see a new rose on my rose bush, they love to pick it and put it in a vase on the dining room table. We certainly enjoy its beauty and lovely fragrance. However, as pretty as it looks, is the rose alive? No, it has been disconnected from its source of energy, and it is dead. Dying, it will continue to die until it is wilted and brown and ugly.

When we choose to rebel against God, even in such "small" sins as anger or worry, our bodies are disconnected from God, our true energy source. We may still look alive and healthy, but "dying, we will surely die." Just as I can extend the beauty of a rose by placing it in fresh water in a vase, I can extend my days by eating right, getting proper rest, and changing my lifestyle. However, I will still die.

Since death is inevitable for each of us, we need a solution! The miracle of Yeshua's life is not that He was just a good person, or that He healed the sick and was a wise teacher. The real miracle is that He conquered death by coming to life again after being dead for three days and three nights. When He appeared to hundreds of people after His resurrection, it dramatically changed their lives. Why? Because they realized what Yeshua had been trying to tell them:

¹⁰ Romans 3:23

¹¹ Edward Howell, *Enzyme Nutrition* (New York: Avery, 1985), p. 26.

¹² Genesis 2:17

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"¹³

Just like Yeshua came back to life, in a physical body that was now "imperishable,"¹⁴ He offers to resurrect our physical bodies, and to give us new life. Instead of being weak and fatigued, we will have health, power, and eternal life.

"Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."¹⁵

The Bible says that all will be resurrected, some to life and some to eternal death because of their refusal to put their trust and faith in Yeshua. For those of us that have "called upon the name of Yehovah,"¹⁶ we will be saved from the death penalty under which we live.

"When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory.'

*'Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?'*

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Master Yeshua the Messiah."¹⁷

At this point, death no longer becomes something to fear. We realize that our physical bodies are deteriorating, but we have confidence that we'll get "the new model" someday, a body that will never get weak and sick.

Because we take eternity literally, we see others around us and wish to share our hope with them and to rescue them from certain death. The

¹³ John 11:25-26, NIV

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, NIV

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, NIV

¹⁶ Romans 10:9-13

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:54-57, NIV

Bible says that we have been given unique gifts and abilities that we can use to serve others.¹⁸ In fact, our daily suffering and battles with poor health can be used to minister to the needs of others around us.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Master Yeshua the Messiah, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God... If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort.”¹⁹

If I had never gotten sick with Addison’s disease, I would never have been motivated to research and write this book. If you had never struggled with chronic fatigue, you also would never have learned and studied.

Who Else Can You Help?

You are alive because God has a plan for your life, ways in which you can serve others that are unique to only you. As you realize the grace and mercy that He has extended to you, even so far as to give you a resurrected body and eternal life, you can extend that same grace and mercy to others. Anger and bitterness will flee. Worry and fear of tomorrow will be gone. In their place, you’ll have new love, joy, and peace.

And you’ll use up less of your “energy bank account” in the process, which is like having fresh water each day in a rose vase, extending your beauty and usefulness into old age, if God should so will.

So what is your purpose in living? Having a reason to live gives you renewed energy and strength. Having hope of eternity helps you see life in an entirely new way. There may be days when fatigue gets the best of you, and on those days, you’ll just need to rest. However, in the long run, we can be “more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”²⁰

“Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of Yehovah, because you know that your labor in Yehovah is not in vain.”²¹

¹⁸ Ephesians 4:11-13

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 1:3-6, NIV

²⁰ Romans 8:37, NIV

²¹ 1 Corinthians 15:58, NIV

PART 2

What to Eat to Beat Fatigue

Why Digestion Matters

Key Point: Stop using excessive energy to simply digest your food.

The largest drain on your energy is the digestion of your food. Isn't that amazing? The conversion of bites of food into molecules that your body can use for fuel, to rebuild cells, and to support life requires a myriad of enzymes, nutrients, hormones, and other catalysts. Digestion equals hard work for poor little you! For that reason, you simply must take steps to reduce any unnecessary drain.

How Food Affects Adrenal Glands

Low cortisol directly affects the digestion of food in two dramatic ways. First, cortisol is used in the production of enzymes.

***Enzyme:** a protein that acts as a catalyst, helping to change food from the way we recognize it to the way your body can use it.*

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Without enzymes, food would just sit like a lump in your stomach, unable to be broken down into its various components and used by your body.

Enzymes require a very specific temperature in order to work properly.

- ❑ If the temperature is too cool, it's as if enzymes go to sleep, waiting for warmth in order to be woken up. This is why freezing food is an effective means of preserving it.
- ❑ If the temperature is too hot (above 118 degrees Fahrenheit), enzymes are destroyed. This is why cooking or pasteurizing food is an effective means of preserving it.
- ❑ The range where enzymes can work best is very narrow. (Hint: A body temperature of 98.6 is an excellent temperature for most enzymes in your body.)

Enzymes also require the correct pH or acidity in order to function correctly. In our stomachs, hydrochloric acid is secreted to bring the acidity of the environment to the perfect level for proper food digestion.

Author Sally Fallon explains,

The mucous membrane of the stomach is densely packed with glands that secrete hydrochloric acid and pepsin, a protein-digesting enzyme. The role of hydrochloric acid is to create a sufficiently acid environment for pepsin to be activated. If we do not produce enough hydrochloric acid, then we cannot fully digest protein.²²

The names of many enzymes end with an *-ase*. For instance, lactose (milk sugar) needs lactase (a milk enzyme) in order to be digested. Someone with “lactose intolerance” is lacking enough lactase to digest milk.

Saliva contains an enzyme, ptyalin, which begins breaking down starches into simple sugars. **Chewing our food helps the process along, since enzymes can only work on the surface area of food.** The more we chew, the more surface area is available for enzymes to work.

²² <https://www.westonaprice.org/health-topics/modern-diseases/the-long-hollow-tube-a-primer-on-the-digestive-system>

When we swallow our food, the stomach stores it for a short time until it can pass into the small intestine. The stomach starts churning the food, mixing it effectively with more digestive enzymes and turning it into a thick mixture called chyme.

Chyme enters the small intestine, where this thick mass of partially digested food is spread all over a wall of villi, which are tiny little finger-like projections of the small intestine. If the body recognizes chyme's tiny food molecules as something useable, they are absorbed through the wall of the intestine into the blood stream. Otherwise, they are sent to the large intestine to be disposed of.

Enzymes are produced by your body in various glands in your stomach, small intestine and pancreas. **However, the adrenal hormone cortisol is absolutely necessary to the process.**

This is why digesting your food counts as a “stress” to your system. Anything that requires cortisol is a “stress,” even if it doesn't feel stressful.²³

God wisely placed enzymes in all living things, and when we're careful to eat plenty of foods containing enzymes, these enzymes will work to digest our food for us, saving our bodies a lot of hassle and hard work.

The Digestion of Carbohydrates

The digestion of sugars and starches begins in your mouth with the secretion of saliva. In the upper part of your stomach, which acts somewhat like a temporary holding tank, enzymes continue turning carbohydrates into a syrupy goo. About 80 percent of carbohydrates eventually turn into glucose.

Do you see the *-ose* ending on glucose? Yes, it means sugar. Most of the starchy food you eat ends up as a form of sugar.

If you don't have the adrenal energy to properly digest carbohydrates, because of a lack of enzymes, you will not make enough glucose from your food. Your body (especially your brain) desperately needs adequate glucose in the blood stream in order to function.

²³ Just one example of this can be seen in a study done in 1974. See [doi:10.1016/0304-4165\(75\)90010-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-4165(75)90010-0) *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta (BBA) - General Subjects*, Volume 392, Issue 2, 12 June 1975, Pages 288-298.

If you're not getting glucose from your food, your body will try to convert liver stores into glucose. Can you guess what hormone is needed for this conversion? Yes, cortisol!

Do you see what a vicious cycle can begin? This is a primary reason why women with fatigue suffer from hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and "brain fog."

On the other hand, eating too many foods containing sugars and starch can cause the opposite problem, a too-high level of glucose in the blood stream. When this happens, your body interprets it as an emergency, releasing adrenaline and cortisol and quickly storing as much of the glucose as possible. This causes the level of blood sugar to drop too low, causing a second emergency. Now your body again needs to convert liver stores into glucose, using even more cortisol. You probably head for the kitchen, ravenous for anything to bring you out of your sugar slump, which then causes your blood sugar to skyrocket again. Yet another vicious cycle has begun.

Carbohydrates come from plants. At the creation of the world, God said,

"I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food."²⁴

God's original design was for us to eat plenty of seed-bearing plants – fruit with seeds and "every green plant." These foods contain enzymes that can assist our body in digesting food.

Remember, though, that enzymes are destroyed when these foods are heated above 118 degrees Fahrenheit. **For this reason, it's important to eat at least some of your carbohydrates in a raw, uncooked form.**

Dr. Edward Howell, an expert in enzymes, wrote,

All enzymes are deactivated at a wet-heat temperature of 118 degrees Fahrenheit and a dry-heat temperature of about 150 degrees. It is one of those happy designs of nature that foods and liquids at 117 degrees can be touched without pain, but liquids over 118 degrees will burn. Thus, we have a built-in mechanism

²⁴ Genesis 1:29-30, NIV

for determining whether or not the food we are eating still contains its enzyme content.²⁵

Did you catch that? If a food is hot enough to destroy enzymes, it's hot enough to burn your finger or tongue.

In addition, **carbohydrates require special preparation**, especially for those of us with fatigue. For centuries, women seemed to just know how to prepare foods nutritiously, but with the advent of commercial, processed foods, much of this knowledge has been lost.

Sally Fallon writes,

*Grains, nuts, legumes and seeds are rich in enzymes, as well as other nutrients, but **they also contain enzyme inhibitors**. Unless deactivated, these enzyme inhibitors can put an even greater strain on the digestive system than cooked foods. Sprouting, soaking in warm acidic water, sour leavening, culturing and fermenting – all processes used in traditional societies – deactivate enzyme inhibitors, thus making nutrients in grains, nuts and seeds more readily available.²⁶*

So did you catch that? Many “health foods” (whole grains, for instance) contain substances that work against enzymes.

In other words, some “health foods” are not healthy for a woman with adrenal fatigue. These include any foods that are seeds (oatmeal, soy, rice, wheat, and nuts, for instance), if they have not been properly prepared to deactivate the enzyme inhibitors. This is a very important point to keep in mind!

There are also ways of *increasing* the number of enzymes in our plant-based foods. One traditional method was to “lacto-ferment” fruits and vegetables. In fact, this was the primary means of preserving food in all societies before the invention of refrigeration. Foods that have been lacto-fermented contain many more enzymes than ordinary food, and I highly recommend that you consume some every day. (Don't worry; I'll show you how!)

Finally, **carbohydrates contain fiber**. You've probably heard that you should consume plenty of fiber for good digestion.

²⁵ <https://www.westonaprice.org/health-topics/nutrition-greats/edward-howell-md/>

²⁶ *ibid*, emphasis added.

However, did you know this about fiber?

Fiber is a catchall term defined as that portion of the diet that is not enzymatically digested by our digestive enzymes and thus does not directly serve as a source of nourishment...

Until fairly recently, the medical profession warned against over consumption of fiber, especially for those suffering from digestive problems...

Humans... commonly eat lots of pectin from fresh fruit and cellulose in whole grains. [Medical studies have raised] a red flag, especially for those with digestive difficulties. Common whole grain foods and even fresh fruit may have a real downside. [Studies] point to the wisdom of traditional food preparation methods. Throughout the world, indigenous groups took great care with the preparation of grains, by soaking or sour leavening them for a long period of time. In Africa, grains are made into a sour porridge or a fermented beverage called sorghum beer, processes that take several days and in which cellulose is partially broken down. They also prepare tubers like casava by throwing them in a hole to ferment.

As for fresh fruit, perhaps we should take a cue from Asian cultures who typically cook high-pectin fruits like apples, pears, peaches and plums. Stewed fruit is an old-fashioned dish--who makes stewed fruit anymore? Here is another traditional foodway that should be resurrected.²⁷

Very interesting, isn't it? Too much fiber causes *more* of a strain on your system, adding to your fatigue.

While consuming lots of fiber might be good for most of the world, you are not "most of the world." What is good advice for others can be terrible advice for you. This is especially true in the case of fiber.

I have found, from my own experience, that when it comes to carbohydrates, adrenal fatigue changes many things.

²⁷ <https://www.westonaprice.org/health-topics/modern-diseases/the-long-hollow-tube-a-primer-on-the-digestive-system/>

Let's review:

- ❑ **I need to chew raw food** to a juice-like consistency, so that fewer enzymes are needed to break it down.
- ❑ **I need the extra enzymes** present in lacto-fermented foods and should consume some every day, even every meal if possible.
- ❑ I consume less energy if I cook and stew high-fiber foods before eating them.
- ❑ **I must consume enzymes as a dietary supplement**, especially when my meal contains a lot of cooked food in which enzymes were destroyed.
- ❑ **I need to properly prepare all seeds, nuts, and grains** before eating them, so that I deactivate the enzyme inhibitors naturally present in them.

The Digestion of Proteins

While some green plants contain protein, most of our supply comes from the consumption of animal flesh.

God provided for the protein we need when He told Noah,

"The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything."²⁸

Protein eaten in combination with the nutrients supplied in healthy plant foods, is essential for your healing. I don't understand why God changed His dietary laws after the Flood by including the consumption of animal protein in human diets. My opinion is that the post-Flood world was a much more stressful and dangerous environment for mankind to live in. Maybe God provided protein because it helps the body repair and heal when exposed to excessive stress.

Think about beef, for instance. If a cow is fed her traditional diet of green grass, which she thoroughly chews and slowly digests through four stomachs, allowing enzymes to fully participate in the process and all the nutrients in the grass to be properly digested – if all that happens when a cow eats, and all that nutrition is deposited into her

²⁸ Genesis 9:23, NIV

muscles (meat) – you can see how beneficial that beef can be to a woman with fatigue! It's a pre-digested, highly-concentrated form of delicious nutrition!

It is my firm opinion that you need to eat a *lot* of animal protein if you want to heal your body and feel less tired!

According to author Adelle Davis,

During severe stress (illness) as much as 135 grams of body protein – the amount in seven steaks or 4 quarts of milk – may be destroyed in a single day; and the body cannot synthesize the 'non-essential' amino acids rapidly enough to meet the demand; hence persons hoping for a speedy recovery would do well to count protein grams. Literally hundreds of persons who have an egg at breakfast and meat at dinner have assured me that they eat a 'high-protein diet,' when they actually obtained approximately 25 grams daily. During mild illnesses, 80 to 120 grams daily is sufficient, but more is often advantageous.²⁹

Sadly, as you've probably discovered, it can be difficult for someone with adrenal fatigue to digest protein.

Unless your food contains enzymes before you eat it, the digestion of protein begins in the highly acidic lower stomach. The stomach needs to have plenty of hydrochloric acid to activate pepsin, one of the enzymes that breaks down protein into amino-acid strands. In the small intestine, numerous enzymes are necessary to break these strands down further into single amino acids.

Your pancreas can normally produce all of these specific enzymes, but **cortisol is needed for the process.**

If you're short on cortisol, you are completely dependent upon eating food that contains any enzymes you need. (This is rare in our society. How often do you eat raw meat?)

If there is a deficiency of enzymes to digest protein, undigested proteins will pass into your large intestine, causing distress such as loose stools or chronic diarrhea.

You also need protein for proper immune system functioning, so poor digestion of protein can leave you open to numerous colds and infections.

²⁹ Adelle Davis, *Let's Get Well* (1965: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.), p. 388.

Finally, an improper breakdown of protein amino acids can cause a shortage of histamines, which causes more pronounced allergic reactions.

In addition to enzymes, many vitamins and minerals are needed for the proper digestion of protein. Remember the plants that God gave His creation to eat? These foods can provide much of what you need, and we'll discuss ways to supplement these soon.

(Hint: White sugar, soda pop, and doughnuts don't count as "green plants.")

So here are some points to keep in mind for the best digestion of protein:

- ❑ **Eat some of your proteins in their raw form**, such as in raw milk and cheese, sushi, and eggs prepared "sunny-side up," to help supplement the enzymes your body is required to make.
- ❑ You will probably need to supplement with an enzyme preparation that contains hydrochloric acid.
- ❑ Remember to chew your protein foods well.
- ❑ **Only eat heavy protein meals when you've had adequate rest and low levels of stress.** For instance, eating lots of protein when you're angry or upset is a recipe for indigestion and fatigue! If you're too tired to eat large amounts of protein and digest them well, include enzyme supplements, make a smoothie, or sip some comforting bone broth.
- ❑ **Make it your goal to consume 80-100 grams of protein per day (or more!),** as often as possible, to provide your body with the nutrients necessary to heal from your fatigue.

The Digestion of Fats

You've probably heard that too much saturated fat is bad for you. Would you be surprised if I told you that you absolutely *need* saturated fat and even cholesterol to produce the hormones you need to function each day?

Fats, especially saturated fats, provide key nutrients that you need to heal and maintain your health. In fact, most of the other foods you eat simply cannot be absorbed without fat.

For example, vitamins such as D and A are dependent on fat for absorption (which makes skim milk a very pointless thing to consume).

Not only do you need fat to absorb nutrients; you also need fat to build and repair your body.

- ❑ **Your brain needs fat.** Sixty percent of your brain is made of fat, and half of those fats are saturated. Every time you eat saturated fat, you are nourishing your brain and providing yourself with the nutrition you need to think clearly.
- ❑ **Your cells need fat.** Every healthy cell membrane in your body is made up of at least 50 percent saturated fat. Why? Because saturated fats provide stiffness to the cell walls, keeping them from becoming “floppy,” according to biochemist Mary Enig. Cells receive and send out hormones, so if the cell walls don't have structural integrity from enough saturated fat, those hormones simply won't communicate with each other correctly.
- ❑ **Your bones need fat.** You can take calcium supplements, but studies have shown that unless at least 50 percent of your dietary fats are saturated, the calcium in your diet can't be incorporated into your bones.
- ❑ **Your liver needs fat.** A healthy liver is essential to maintaining clean blood, keeping hormone levels right, and adjusting blood sugar levels. Saturated fats work to protect the liver from toxins that can clog your liver and keep it from doing its job.
- ❑ **Your heart needs fat.** Yes, you read that right! In fact, studies have shown that saturated fats are the heart's preferred food. Saturated foods protect against inflammation, keeping the tissues surrounding the heart healthy.

- ❑ **Your lungs need fat.** Your lungs have fluid in them that is normally 100 percent saturated, so if your diet doesn't contain enough saturated fat, you can begin to have breathing difficulties, such as asthma.
- ❑ **Your kidneys need fat.** When you suffer from fatigue, it often shows in poor kidney function (and high or low blood pressure). Omega-3 fatty acids, saturated fats, and cholesterol all work together to maintain normal kidney function.
- ❑ **Your hormones need fat.** Many hormones are produced from cholesterol. You can even see the root word sterol, which is also in steroid. Steroid hormones like cortisol, produced by healthy adrenal glands, are dependent on adequate amounts of saturated fat and cholesterol in your diet.³⁰

Did you catch that cholesterol is needed, too?

The hormones that the adrenal cortex makes are all derived from our best friend--cholesterol. Yes, cholesterol is the precursor to all the valuable adrenal hormones that help us deal with stress, inflammation and trauma, and that help our body to heal.

Therefore adrenal insufficiency (lack of adrenal cortical hormones) is a fat deficiency.

So the first step is simple and logical: eat more fat, especially cholesterol-rich animal fat. One of these fats should be cod liver oil to supply vitamin A. The adrenal cortex cannot make adrenal hormones out of cholesterol without vitamin A.³¹

The digestion of fats gets complicated, but it's easy to remember that **good fats come from real food**, whereas bad fats come from fake, manufactured, and man-made foods.

For instance,

- ❑ **Real butter** contains healthy fats, but margarine contains bad fats. Never eat the stuff (or foods containing margarine, such as commercial French fries, doughnuts, or most baked goods).

³⁰ Dr. Mary Enig and Sally Fallon, *Eat Fat, Lose Fat* (New York: Hudson Street Press, 2005), pp. 44-47.

³¹ <https://www.westonaprice.org/health-topics/ask-the-doctor/steroid-drugs>

- ❑ **Whole cream, sour cream, and cottage cheese** come from real milk. Read the labels carefully to be sure man-made foods such as carrageenan aren't snuck in when you're not looking. (I recommend Daisy® brand if you can't make these from scratch at home, using fresh farm milk.) Never eat low-fat dairy products.
- ❑ **Coconut** products contain excellent fats for healing from fatigue. Again, check the labels carefully, and choose those products that contain real coconut – and no other additives.
- ❑ **Meat from animals fed on green grass**, without being confined in barns and fed grains, contains an excellent ratio of fats that you need to heal. Although more expensive, do your best to obtain organic, grass-fed, free-range meat rather than commercial meat.
- ❑ **Vegetable oils** are fine in moderation, as long as they are not heated. This means that they shouldn't be heated before you purchase them either.

Stop buying “junk” oils that are inexpensive to manufacture but will rob you of your good health, such as canola oil, soybean oil, corn oil, safflower oil, Crisco, peanut oil, or any standard “vegetable” oils on your grocery store shelves.

Look instead for cold-pressed oils, such as extra virgin olive oil. Shop from reputable manufacturers. This is one area in which it pays to spend a little more money. Note that some oils need to be purchased in small quantities and stored in a cool, dark place, possibly even refrigerated, so that they don't become rancid.

- ❑ **Eggs** are very nutritious, preferably from free-range chickens that are fed a natural, organic diet. You need the fat, cholesterol, protein, and numerous nutrients that eggs provide.

Add good fats to your diet in great amounts! While it takes getting used to if you've been living in our politically-correct, low-fat culture, good fats add delicious flavor and satisfaction to your meals.

- ❑ Cook with plenty of butter. Smother your vegetables with butter, for instance. Seasonings stick better, too!
- ❑ Add cream, butter, and coconut oil to your breakfast.

- ❑ Thickly spread butter on your bread before adding raw honey. (Have you ever wondered why small toddlers sneak their fingers into the butter dish and eat large amounts when you're not looking? Maybe you should start sneaking it again, too!)
- ❑ Eat slices of raw, whole cheeses with your meals.

Becoming a food gourmet has never been more fun – or healthful!

CHAPTER 7

What Not to Eat

There are four kinds of food that you need to avoid at all costs, because they are a huge drain on your adrenal glands

1. Avoid processed food!

Processed food is convenient. It was prepared in a factory, by “loving hands” that want to save you time and energy in the kitchen. (Of course, you’re *loving* them back as you put dollars in their pockets for their services.)

Processed food is easy to spot:

- It’s in a container – a box, a can, or a bag.
- Your grandma used to make it from scratch, but now you can just pick it up at the store.

- ❑ It often tastes better than anything you know how to make at home. (This explains why your grandma doesn't make it from scratch anymore!)

Processed food has been stripped of most of its nutrients and all of its enzymes. Often, harmful chemicals have been added to make it taste delicious (and difficult for you to duplicate at home).

However, processed food won't help you heal. Don't forget: Any food that has been heated above 118 degrees will not contain any enzymes. In addition, the factory process strips food of vital nutrients.

Fresh vegetables and fruits from your garden are excellent because they contain enzymes. Unpasteurized milk from grass-fed cows is very healing. Eggs and meat and other "whole" foods still contain all their nutrients.

On the other hand, boxed and canned foods from the store are not healthy for you. If they had not been heated, they wouldn't survive the long times that they need to sit on a grocery-store shelf.

(Obviously, you'll have to eat some cooked food, but these should be "homemade," cooked foods, and you need to add enzymes to your diet whenever you do.)

Read labels. If the list of ingredients contains anything that isn't a real, whole food, then put it back on the shelf. Go home and make it yourself instead.

2. Avoid Trans Fats!

What is a trans fat? Author Mary Enig explains that they are

...produced artificially by bombarding polyunsaturated oils with hydrogen, a process called partial hydrogenation.

This process makes the normally twisty polyunsaturated fatty acids straighten out and behave like saturated fats in foods. As a result, trans fats have a longer shelf life. They pack together easily so they are unnaturally solid at room temperature and can be used as spreads and shortenings.

Because they can be made so cheaply and because their inclusion helps packaged foods to last nearly forever, the food industry prefers to use trans fats made from cheap soy, canola, corn, or

*cottonseed oil rather than more expensive animal fats or tropical oils.*³²

Trans fats deceive your eyes and taste buds into thinking you're consuming healthy fat, but the cells of your body aren't deceived. Because it's a twisted-up molecule, your body just can't use a trans fat correctly. It harms almost every bodily function, including the manufacture of hormones (critical to healing from fatigue), immune function, insulin metabolism, and tissue repair.

In short, if you're consuming trans fats, you cannot heal – and you'll continue to feel tired.

Food labeling laws begun in 2006 make it difficult at times to tell if packaged foods contain trans fats or not. It used to be easy: Just look for the words “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” in the ingredients. Not so anymore!

You can certainly still read labels (and you always should!), but your best protection is to avoid processed foods completely and to make your own food at home with healthy fats like **butter, coconut oil, and cold-pressed, unrefined oils.**

3. Avoid Neurotoxins!

If you thought it was difficult to tell if processed food contained trans fats, it's nothing compared to trying to find neurotoxins in your food. They're in everything, it seems!

However, it's essential that you avoid anything that can cause the neurons in your brain to misfire. When your brain cannot function, the glands in your brain will certainly not be able to manufacture the hormones needed to heal from fatigue.

Many food additives cause your brain to become overly excited, making neurons fire so quickly that they eventually die, never to be recovered.

In other words, food additives can cause permanent brain damage.

Why do manufacturers add these additives, and why is it legal? Chemists have discovered that many foods naturally contain small

³² Dr. Mary Enig and Sally Fallon, *Eat Fat, Lose Fat* (New York: Hudson Street Press, 2005), p. 10.

amounts of glutamic acid, a substance that your body recognizes as tasting really good. When eaten in small amounts in a whole food, with all the accompanying nutrients placed there by God, these taste enhancers will not harm you.

However, when isolated by a chemist in a lab and then inserted into other foods, simply to make a food taste good (and subsequently causing your brain to get overly excited and to misfire its neurons), these molecules become deadly.

These neurotoxins are also known to be highly addictive, as if your brain can't get enough of the "rush" provided when you eat them.

The Food and Drug Administration allows these additives because they are "natural," found in nature. However, they really aren't too natural, are they, when they were created in laboratories, with top-secret recipes, and added in unnatural quantities to foods, simply to make you want to eat and buy more of them?

Here are some of the ingredients to watch for:

These Ingredients Always Contain Neurotoxins:

Autolyzed yeast	Natrium glutamate (<i>natrium</i> is Latin/German for sodium)
Calcium caseinate	Sodium caseinate
Gelatin ³³	Textured protein
Glutamate	Yeast extract
Glutamic acid	Yeast food
Hydrolyzed corn gluten	Yeast nutrient
Hydrolyzed protein (any protein that says "hydrolyzed")	
Monopotassium glutamate	
Monosodium glutamate	

³³ This is referring to manufactured gelatin, not to homemade gelatin from the bones of pasture-fed animals.

These Ingredients Often Contain Neurotoxins or Create Neurotoxins
During Processing:

Barley malt
Bouillon and broth
Carrageenan
Citric acid
³⁴Enzymes
Enzyme modified
Fermented³⁵
Flavor(s) and flavoring(s)
Malt extract
Malt flavoring
Maltodextrin
Natural flavor(s) and flavoring(s)
Natural beef flavoring
Natural chicken flavoring
Natural pork flavoring
Pectin
Protein fortified
Protease
Protease enzymes
“Seasonings”
Soy Protein
Soy protein concentrate
Soy protein isolate
Soy sauce
Soy sauce extract
Stock
Ultra-pasteurized
Whey protein
Whey protein concentrate
Whey protein isolate³⁶

³⁴ These are not the same as the enzymes that occur naturally in food created by God.

³⁵ These are not the same as food that have been naturally fermented at home.

³⁶ This list has been compiled from various sources, but especially from the Weston A. Price Foundation and from <http://www.truthinlabeling.org/hiddenources.html>.

In short, these hidden ingredients are just one more reason why you should avoid processed foods altogether and make your own real food at home, in your own kitchen.

4. Avoid Improperly Prepared Grains!

One of the most difficult things for me to change in my own diet is the bread and other grain-based foods I love. I'm sure you realize that bread made with white flour has been stripped of many of its nutrients, can upset your blood sugar levels, and will leave you craving yet more bread.

Whole wheat bread, and baked goods and pasta made with whole wheat, have been reported to be good for you. Indeed, you desperately need the B and E vitamins contained in whole-grain foods in order to heal! Even God calls bread a good thing.

However, did you realize that the whole-wheat foods we consume today don't really resemble the ancient breads consumed during Bible times? In fact, for those of us who fight against fatigue, **whole-wheat products can actually make us feel worse than white-flour products.**

This is because whole wheat is a seed. Other common seeds are soy, oats, spelt, barley, rice, all nuts, etc. Seeds contain enzyme inhibitors, placed there by God to prevent them from sprouting before they are in their proper places in the soil.

Enzyme inhibitors can cause havoc in a body that is fatigued. Remember, you need cortisol to produce enzymes, and when you eat foods with enzyme *inhibitors*, you'll need even *more* cortisol.

These grains also contain phytic acid, mostly in the bran or outer hull of the seed. Untreated phytic acid combines with minerals that you need for healing and blocks their absorption, leaving your body deprived of nutrients.

Author Sally Fallon explains it well:

Most of these antinutrients are part of the seed's system of preservation—they prevent sprouting until the conditions are right.

Plants need moisture, warmth, time and slight acidity in order to sprout. Proper preparation of grains is a kind and gentle process that imitates the process that occurs in nature. It involves soaking for a period in warm, acidulated water in the

preparation of porridge, or long, slow sour dough fermentation in the making of bread.

Such processes neutralize phytic acid and enzyme inhibitors. Vitamin content increases, particularly B vitamins. Tannins, complex sugars, gluten and other difficult-to-digest substances are partially broken down into simpler components that are more readily available for absorption.

Animals that nourish themselves primarily on grain and other plant matter have as many as four stomachs. Their intestines are longer, as is the entire digestion transit time.

Man, on the other hand, has but one stomach and a much shorter intestine compared to herbivorous animals. These features of his anatomy allow him to pass animal products before they putrefy in the gut but make him less well adapted to a diet high in grains—unless, of course, he prepares them properly.

When grains are properly prepared through soaking, sprouting or sour leavening, the friendly bacteria of the microscopic world do some of our digesting for us in a container, just as these same lactobacilli do their work in the first and second stomachs of the herbivores.

So the well-meaning advice of many nutritionists, to consume whole grains as our ancestors did and not refined flours and polished rice, can be misleading and harmful in its consequences; for while our ancestors ate whole grains, they did not consume them as presented in our modern cookbooks in the form of quick-rise breads, granolas, bran preparations and other hastily prepared casseroles and concoctions. Our ancestors, and virtually all pre-industrialized peoples, soaked or fermented their grains before making them into porridge, breads, cakes and casseroles.

A quick review of grain recipes from around the world will prove our point: In India, rice and lentils are fermented for at least two days before they are prepared as idli and dosas; in Africa the natives soak coarsely ground corn overnight before adding it to soups and stews and they ferment corn or millet for several days to produce a sour porridge called ogi; a similar dish made from oats was traditional among the Welsh; in some Oriental and Latin American countries rice receives a long fermentation before it is prepared; Ethiopians make their distinctive injera

bread by fermenting a grain called teff for several days; Mexican corn cakes, called pozol, are fermented for several days and for as long as two weeks in banana leaves; before the introduction of commercial brewers yeast, Europeans made slow-rise breads from fermented starters; in America the pioneers were famous for their sourdough breads, pancakes and biscuits; and throughout Europe grains were soaked overnight, and for as long as several days, in water or soured milk before they were cooked and served as porridge or gruel. (Many of our senior citizens may remember that in earlier times the instructions on the oatmeal box called for an overnight soaking.)³⁷

Again, you'll want to avoid processed foods for sure, including "healthy" ones such as store-bought, whole-grain breads, pastas, and baked goods. Just because a product says "made with whole grains" doesn't mean it is good for you! In fact, if you're fatigued, it has become very, very bad for you!

In addition, homemade whole-grain foods aren't necessarily good for you either. You will need to learn how to properly prepare your grains. I'll show you how very soon.

What About Caffeine?

The common advice for those of us with adrenal fatigue is to avoid caffeine.

For instance,

...Cut back on caffeine and caffeine-related substances (such as the bromine in tea) as much as possible. Caffeine works by stimulating the adrenal medulla to produce adrenaline. Then the adrenal cortex must work doubly hard to produce the "chill out" cortisoid hormones.³⁸

Is this true?

³⁷ <https://www.westonaprice.org/health-topics/food-features/be-kind-to-your-grains-and-your-grains-will-be-kind-to-you/>

³⁸ <https://www.westonaprice.org/health-topics/ask-the-doctor/steroid-drugs/>

Dr. Lowe, an expert on thyroid disease, adrenal fatigue, and fibromyalgia, wrote,

We've searched but never found a shred of evidence that caffeine 'burns out the adrenal glands' or 'eats the fatty lining off nerves.'

Because it is the most commonly used drug today, caffeine has been subjected to extensive clinical and experimental study. Caffeine reduces, and in rare cases appears to temporarily relieve, some fibromyalgia patients' pain, fatigue, weakness, cognitive dysfunction, and depression. Caffeine increases the resting metabolic rate, internal and skin temperatures, and mitochondrial oxygen consumption. It produces physiological arousal, can improve mood and perception of problems, and mitigates pain.³⁹

I think that caffeine, in careful moderation, can be helpful. Here are some tips:

- ❑ **Always include fat with your coffee** (especially if you add a teaspoon of raw sugar). If you don't like cream in your coffee, eat something when you drink it.
- ❑ **Consume caffeine in the morning**, many hours from when you need to sleep.
- ❑ If you feel that caffeine is causing your body to release adrenaline or is causing other bad reactions, **reduce the amount you consume** or eat food when you consume it.
- ❑ **Never stop drinking caffeine "cold turkey."** It is far better to slowly reduce the amount you drink over a week or two.
- ❑ **When drinking coffee or tea, it's important to drink organic.** Pesticides used when growing these plants leave toxic residues in your drink, and these pesticides can cause more damage than the caffeine ever could.

In short, you need to eat **real food**, created by God and prepared by you at home.

³⁹ <http://www.drloewe.com/QandA/askdrloewe/caffeine.htm>

CHAPTER 8

Miracle Foods

Now that I've told you what foods to avoid, I'm happy to include a list of foods you should always keep on hand. These foods have repeatedly helped me when my body is exhausted, my mind is numb, and I feel like collapsing. They truly are God's miracle foods for tired women!

1. Salt (and Other Minerals)

When you are severely fatigued, you are often losing sodium in your urine and retaining potassium. Therefore, you need plenty of salt (preferably Celtic Sea Salt®) in your diet. Sea salt differs substantially from the refined, white stuff you probably have in your cupboard because it still contains other important nutrients, such as iodine and magnesium.



*Note the color of unrefined salt compared to the salt we're used to.
(Image courtesy of <http://www.celticseasalt.com>)*

How do you know when you need the minerals in sea salt? You'll crave salty foods.

Often we fill these cravings with potent neurotoxins, such as described previously. These foods will do nothing to fill the needs of your body, and they'll only leave you feeling worse and still craving.

If you are craving salt, lick a small amount of sea salt straight from your hand, followed by some water or milk.

Another sign that you need salt is constipation or diarrhea, both common in women with fatigue. Authors Sally Fallon and Mary Enig write,

*In a fascinating book called *Salt Deficiency: The Cause of All Serious Diseases*, author Martin J. Lara describes the importance of unrefined salt in providing all the trace minerals the body needs.*

Lara contends that the result of trace mineral deficiencies is constipation because the body holds the fiber-rich waste in the colon so that it can ferment, a process that releases trace minerals the body needs. While fermentation is taking place, the body continues to remove water from the feces, resulting in hard and impacted stools. Most textbooks now recognize that some fiber is broken down by fermentation in the colon.

Lara explains that when a person is deficient in minerals, particularly trace minerals, he does not retain enough of the liquids he drinks--instead of hydrating the body, water is quickly eliminated via the kidneys. This is another reason the body retains feces in the bowel, in order to extract as much water as possible.

Lara describes a condition he calls partial constipation, which is often unrecognized because an individual with this condition may still have regular bowel movements. However, waste material can remain in the colon several days before it is eliminated, undergoing fermentation and compaction due to the removal of water. One sign of partial constipation is strong smelling urine, especially in the morning. Colonic irrigations can provide temporary relief from this condition, but they do not solve the problem.

A strong sphincter muscle (called the inner sphincter) separates the lower part of the colon (called the sigmoid colon) from the rectum. Under normal conditions, feces pass through the rectum only during bowel movements. When the sigmoid colon enlarges after years of carrying large amounts of feces undergoing fermentation, the inner sphincter becomes weak due to the pressure and the feces normally stored in the colon descend into the rectum, a condition that leads to autointoxication. The colon absorbs only water and small compounds like mineral ions, but the rectum is very absorptive, which is why medicines work when given as suppositories. Furthermore, the blood that absorbs nutrients from the small and large intestines goes into the liver where toxins can be neutralized. However, since the rectum is not designed to store waste, the blood that leaves this organ does not go into the liver; thus toxins enter the blood stream and are carried to other organs, including the head, heart and lungs.

Lara's solution: Always use unrefined sea salt on your food plus take 2 grams [approximately ¼ teaspoon] of sea salt in a mug of warm water every morning for complete and easy elimination.⁴⁰

If sea salt in water sounds and tastes disgusting to you, you probably don't need it. Try it, though; if it tastes good, you'll know you're right on track.

Fish sauce is another food that provides salt and minerals you need, while flavoring your food nicely. I use it in place of Worcestershire sauce in recipes, plus I add it liberally to soups and sauces. (I prefer Thai Kitchen® Premium Fish Sauce.)

Finally, many vegetables and fruits contain needed minerals. If you find yourself craving something at 11:00 p.m., try eating cooked spinach,

⁴⁰ <https://www.westonaprice.org/modern-diseases/29/589.html>, emphasis mine.

zucchini, or a banana. Listen to your cravings, as long as they are for *real food*.

2. Milk

Milk, as God intended it, is truly a miracle food when you're tired. Think about it: Milk is made by a cow who eats nutrient-rich green grass, properly digests it with enzymes in her many stomachs, combines it with nutrients to help her baby calf grow, then gives it to her baby at exactly the right temperature, raw and with all the enzymes needed to digest it.

I realize that you are not a baby cow. However, when you're tired, your ability to produce your own digestive and metabolic enzymes has been reduced back to the levels you had when you were a baby – which is almost nothing! Without cortisol, you simply cannot make the enzymes you need to digest food. For babies – and for tired mothers – God has provided milk.

If you can find a source of certified raw milk, leave no stone unturned to get some for yourself! You're looking for:

- ❑ Milk that has not been pasteurized – which destroys enzymes.
- ❑ **Milk that has not been homogenized** – which changes the shape of the milk molecules and makes it difficult to digest.
- ❑ **Milk that is from grass-fed cows** (preferably Guernsey or Jersey).

Over the years, numerous individuals with Addison's Disease (a severe form of adrenal fatigue) kept themselves alive by a raw milk diet. The most famous study was conducted at the Mayo Foundation, forerunner of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, by its founding doctors in the early 1900s.⁴¹

When I'm feeling miserable, I also have been helped by raw milk. I will stop eating other food and just drink quarts and quarts of raw milk, a sip here and there all day long. Within a day or two, my regular appetite returns, and I am feeling myself again.

Please note that this miracle food only applies to *raw* milk, not store-bought milk that has been pasteurized or homogenized. If you don't have access to fresh, raw milk from a good farm, you can try drinking

⁴¹ <http://www.realmilk.com/health/milk-cure/>

only fresh, raw fruit and vegetable juices. Because these don't contain enough protein, be sure to add raw cheeses to your diet, or try adding yogurt and raw egg yolks (from organic, pastured hens only) to your juice "smoothies."

3. Good Oils (Cod Liver Oil, Butter Oil, Coconut Oil)

Cod liver oil contains high levels of vitamins A and D, vitamins that can only be obtained from animal foods (or sunshine, in the case of vitamin D).

We need vitamin A, combined with cholesterol, in order to make adrenal hormones (such as cortisol), as well as a multitude of other hormones. Researchers have found that this vitamin is essential to recovery from fatigue.

We often hear that vegetables such as carrots contain vitamin A (retinol), but in reality, they only contain beta-carotene. Beta-carotene must be converted to vitamin A (retinol) in your body – and you guessed it: When you're fatigued, you will have great difficulty making that conversion.

In addition, **vitamin D** can go a long way to improving your mood. It's often called the "sunshine vitamin" for good reason. However, we're often told to avoid the sun, especially toward noon. We wear lots of clothing and slather sunscreen on ourselves, all of which makes it almost impossible for those of us who live in the northern parts of the world to obtain enough vitamin D. In fact, chronic fatigue is more common among women of northern European descent, even though we're the very ones who seem to need more vitamin D than others.

For women just like us, God has provided an excellent source of these two vitamins in the form of **cod liver oil**. Cod liver oil is almost entirely imported from Norway, and the oil from the livers of fatty fish like cod contains a vast amount of nutrients that fair-skinned women in northern climates need.

It might sound repulsive to take cod liver oil. Actually, many of us who need it will find that we enjoy it. But if cod liver oil makes you burp, or you can't stand the taste, try adding a few drops of lemon essential oil or by purchasing flavored oil. You can also purchase it in capsules.

When you're *really* exhausted, you'll receive even greater benefit by boosting your fat consumption with **butter oil**, made from grass-fed

cows. The famous Dr. Weston Price, who researched the benefits of both cod liver oil and butter oil, found that these two oils taken together had an almost miraculous effect on his patients. **I recommend taking a minimum of one teaspoon per day of each.**

Finally, **coconut oil** contains so many benefits that entire books have been written about it. Coconut contains an almost perfect fat, easy to digest. It has high amounts of lauric acid, such as is present in breast milk, which defends against infections and strengthens your immune system.

You'll find that coconut oil calms down your digestive track, especially if you have trouble with colitis, Crohn's disease, or simple gas and bloating. It will also help your skin, nourish your thyroid and other glands, and fight disease organisms.

I recommend adding coconut to your diet any way you can, but at a minimum, you should strive for 2 tablespoons of unrefined, extra virgin coconut oil per day.

I enjoy adding coconut milk to soups, sauces, smoothies. Coconut oil can be added to sautéed meats and vegetables, scrambled eggs, salad dressing, toast, hot tea, and baked goods. If I haven't had enough in a day, I'll slather a tablespoon or so all over my skin before bed so that it can be absorbed that way.

4. Bone Broths

Bone broth, properly prepared in your own kitchen rather than purchased in a carton or can, is an extremely nutritious food. Not only does it add rich flavor to your food, but it also adds rich minerals to your diet, pulled from the bones, cartilage, marrow, and vegetables in your stock pot. It contains gelatin that helps you utilize protein effectively and can treat intestinal discomfort. The Jews made chicken soup famous for the flu, and it can help you treat colds and asthma, too. When stock is made from fish or contains fish sauce, it contains iodine and nourishes your thyroid gland. From ancient times, simple soup has been known to help people feel younger, get more energy, and restore mental abilities.

Of course, soups and sauces made from bone broth taste wonderful. They make your house smell good, and they feel good when you're cold (as you probably often are when tired). When rich cream, butter and coconut milk are added, as well as nourishing vegetables, handfuls of sea salt, and ample cuts of meat, you can see why this is such a miracle food.

Make a large stock pot of bone broth as often as you can, freezing it in pint or quart-size containers so that it's always available. Whether for lunch, dinner, bedtime snack or even breakfast, this is one food you should always have on hand.

- ❑ You can find a recipe and helpful video for making bone broth at <http://www.thehealthyhomeeconomist.com/video-traditional-stocks-and-soups/>.

Supplements for Energy

In the Bible, God told Adam, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.”⁴² Later, God provided the meat of clean animals for mankind to use as food.⁴³ The purpose of food, God says, is the following:

*“He makes grass grow for the cattle,
and plants for man to cultivate—
bringing forth food from the earth:
wine that gladdens the heart of man,
oil to make his face shine,
and bread that sustains his heart.”⁴⁴*

Food that was created by God is nourishing to our bodies and healing to our cells. It ideally contains all the nutrients needed to digest it properly.

So why recommend supplements at all? Do you remember your energy bank account? You have been running with a negative balance in your bank account, and now you need to make extra-large deposits of nutrients in order to get your account balance back in the black.

Author Adelle Davis explains it well when she writes,

Ideally, every nutrient should be furnished by foods alone, and when no food is refined and all are grown on excellent soils, supplements are not needed. The Hunzas, who have been

⁴² Genesis 1:39, NIV

⁴³ Clean animals are defined in Leviticus 11. We do not recommend consuming unclean meats such as pork and shellfish.

⁴⁴ Psalm 104:14-15, NIV

repeatedly investigated over the past 40 years, have lived on such a diet and remained free from all disease.

Nutritional supplements are expensive, yet they pay for themselves by reducing medical, dental, drug, and hospital bills. Although they are nothing more than nutrients that would normally be furnished in every mouthful of food were it of excellent quality, I never cease to be amazed at the number of persons afraid to use them during illnesses. This fear results from supplements being identified with dangerous drugs, largely because both are made up in capsule and tablet form. It is as logical to say that a cube of sugar becomes a drug when extracted from its natural source and pressed into a form as to hold that vitamin E, for example, is a drug after being distilled from oil and encapsulated.

Identifying supplements with drugs often causes laymen and even physicians to feel that taking them during an illness is "treating a disease." If a nutrient has been undersupplied, it should be generously added to a diet irrespective of the degree of health. To obtain that nutrient is no more "treating a disease" than is the taking of supplements by an Olympic athlete to meet his increased requirements.⁴⁵

With supplements, we are consuming something that has been removed from its original source (food or herb), so we run the risk of not consuming the co-factors that might be needed for them to be absorbed properly. For instance, vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin, so if you're not consuming fat along with it, your body cannot utilize it.

For this reason, we need to be careful to choose a supplement that is as close to how God created it as possible. The more mankind has tampered with it, the more expensive it tends to be – and the less good it tends to do for your body.

For women who are tired, I have found the following supplements to be crucial every day:

- ❑ **Enzymes** — These are given to us by God in the foods He created, but heat destroys them. Our body can manufacture them IF it is not too tired! So for someone who is fighting fatigue, I highly recommend taking an enzyme supplement with every meal. Choose an enzyme supplement that can help you digest carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, as well as one that contains betaine hydrochloride (HCl).

⁴⁵ Adelle Davis, *Let's Get Well* (1965, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.), pp. 407-408.

- ❑ **Cod Liver Oil** — This provides vitamins A and D, which are essential to recovery from fatigue. Be sure to purchase only the highest quality, from a reputable source, or you'll simply waste your money. You may want to flavor plain cod liver oil with essential lemon oil.
- ❑ **Butter Oil** – Although expensive, this is excellent to have in your house for times of extreme fatigue or severe stress. Take it in combination with cod liver oil.
- ❑ **Coconut Oil** – Important to use daily for its healing abilities.
- ❑ **Probiotics** — Since digestion is often a problem for someone with fatigue, I recommend a high-quality probiotic daily.
- ❑ **A Daily Multivitamin** – I prefer a “multivitamin” that is composed of whole foods rather than individual vitamins and minerals.

Other Vitamins and Minerals:

- ❑ **Vitamin C** – Vitamin C is needed in great quantities by the adrenal glands. You can certainly take more than 1,000 mg per day, but this is a minimum. If you experience loose bowels, simply reduce your intake of vitamin C.
- ❑ **Vitamin D3** – This vitamin is essential for bone function, dealing with stress, and the production of all hormones, even though it's a rare American woman who gets enough from either sunshine or diet. Make sure that you're using vitamin D3, and not vitamin D2. I recommend 2000 IU per day.
- ❑ **B Vitamins** – A variety of B vitamins are needed when you're under stress, and like vitamins C and D, they are necessary for healing. Whole grains and animal foods are among the best sources, but as we learned above, these are both difficult to obtain in a way that our bodies can digest properly. (For instance, whole grains are easy to obtain, but have they been properly prepared, to neutralize the enzyme inhibitors?)
- ❑ **Extra Vitamin B5 (pantothenic acid)** – A deficiency of vitamin B5 exhausts the adrenal glands quickly, mimicking the dire symptoms of Addison's disease. This shows the importance of vitamin B5! Be sure to supplement it consistently.

- ❑ **Extra Vitamin B6** – Like vitamin B5, a deficiency in this vitamin results in so many symptoms that sometimes we're not sure if a tired woman is dealing with a true illness or simple malnutrition.
- ❑ **Extra Vitamin B12** – This vitamin is necessary for the production of red blood cells and for healthy nerve function, which explains why fatigue is one of the main symptoms of a deficiency. However, it is only available from animal foods, such as liver, muscle meats, milk, eggs, cheese, and fish, so vegetarians are often short of necessary B12! Other vitamins are needed to absorb B12, and B12 is needed to absorb other vitamins, so be sure to take all these recommended supplements, not just one. Finally, "intrinsic factor," an enzyme needed for the absorption of B12, is often missing in women who are fatigued. For this reason, I recommend taking it in a supplement that is absorbed under your tongue, straight into your bloodstream, rather than through your stomach where enzymes can be lacking.
- ❑ **Vitamin E** – When this vitamin is deficient, the cells in your body will lack the oxygen they need to survive, causing damage throughout your entire body. In fact, this vitamin may play a larger role in your body's functions than almost other nutrient. Vitamin E is naturally present in oils and whole-grain foods, but it is easily destroyed by modern processing methods, explaining why so many of us are deficient. I recommend 300-600 mg per day.
- ❑ **Magnesium** – Food processing and soil depletion have ensured that almost everyone is deficient in magnesium, a mineral upon which depend the function of the nerves, bones, and muscles. In addition, enzymes in the body cannot function without magnesium. Personally, I will not purchase this from companies that add natural flavorings to their magnesium supplements.

During Times of Infection or Sickness:

At the first sign of illness, immediately begin using one or even all of these supplements simultaneously. No healthy home should be without these stand-bys.

- ❑ **Colloidal Silver** – Colloidal silver is a clear, tasteless liquid that works extremely well as an antibiotic in your system, without the adverse side effects. It's also gentle enough to be applied to your skin, eyes, and mucous membranes.

- ❑ **Herbal Tinctures for Various Symptoms** – For respiratory problems that come from allergies, colds, and flu, I have found much relief from using herbal tinctures.
- ❑ **Extra Vitamin C** – Increase your daily intake to 500 mg every 2-3 hours during sickness.
- ❑ **Garlic** – You might smell like a pizza shop, but garlic is excellent for quickly killing infections in your body.
- ❑ **Colostrum** – An excellent product for many different symptoms.

Action Guide

Below, you'll find a handy "**Diet Diary.**" We'll discuss its use more later, but for now, I wanted to point out some of its features. On the top half, keep track of the food you eat this week. Keep it simple, but try to write down:

- What you eat
- What time you eat
- How many grams of protein you eat

You can find out how many grams of protein are in your food by reading labels, or by using an online protein counter, such as the one found at <http://dietgrail.com/protein>. There are also many apps available for mobile devices.

The bottom half of the "Diet Diary" contains a checklist of foods you should eat each day (as well as a few that you should not eat). This list keeps me very accountable because sometimes I can't see gaps in my own nutritional intake, even when I write it all down. This checklist becomes my personal "dietary assistant," helping me improve my nutrition each day.

Diet Diary

Name _____

Week of _____ to _____

(Write down foods, time, and grams of protein consumed.)

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Breakfast							
Morning Snack							
Lunch							
Afternoon Snack							
Supper							
Bedtime Snack							

Did you eat the following today?

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Coconut Oil							
Butter							
Olive Oil							
Whole Milk ⁴⁶ (1 quart minimum)							
Eggs (2-4 min.)							
Meat (Red 5x/week)							
Cheeses							
Leafy, Green Vegetables (2 min.)							
Other Colorful Vegetables (2 min.)							
Energy Smoothie							
Unrefined Sea Salt							
Fermented Foods							
Soaked Grains ⁴⁷							
Bone Broths							
Processed Food							
Trans Fats							
Neurotoxins							

⁴⁶ Not pasteurized!

⁴⁷ Other acceptable grains include sourdough and sprouted wheat.

CHAPTER 9

How to Survive in a Tired Woman's Kitchen

Now I'm going to make the nutrition information you learned in the last chapter practical. It's fine to know what to eat and what not to eat. However, when you're tired, it's vital that you also have a workable plan for making all this information doable.

I can't tell you how many books I've read and afterward made impressive plans for implementing a new diet – but my plans would fizzle after only a few days. It's especially difficult to change when I'm exhausted to begin with. Sadly, simply *reading* about what to eat won't make me feel better. I really do need to *change* – and that change needs to last for several months, several years, or even a lifetime.

Permanent change is especially vital for women with chronic fatigue. Dr. Ron Schmid, M.D. writes in his "Diet and Recovery from Chronic Disease,"

*It's important to realize that we're considering here the optimal diet for people with very serious medical problems. What may work well for the vast majority of basically healthy people is very different from **the far more stringent routine that seriously ill people may require.***

...While most patients feel better and make at least a partial recovery from medical problems by adopting a diet that includes more of the foods... critical to good health, at the same time many limit the extent of their recovery by their inability to go further in eliminating the refined foods that cause problems, while failing to include adequate amounts of superior foods.

*With this background, here are what I believe to be the **two most common mistaken thoughts** my patients have in attempting to recover from serious medical problems:*

- 1. A little bit of refined foods won't hurt.*
- 2. A modest amount of high-quality animal foods is enough.*

*I mentioned above the fact that chronic diseases often linger and recur. What appears to happen is that we go far enough with our diets to alleviate symptoms, but not far enough for long enough to completely change the body in a way that eliminates all traces of the disease... And the kicker is that **even small amounts of poorly chosen or even less-than-optimal foods appear to slow down or derail the healing process.**⁴⁸*

This is a key to healing that can really get me discouraged! How can I prepare and eat healthy and nourishing food when I'm already exhausted?

It's really, really difficult to eat right when you're tired. Honestly, it can become a vicious cycle. You're too tired to prepare and eat good food, so you eat junk food (at home or out in a restaurant). The bad food makes you feel worse, which makes you even more tired. You're too tired to prepare and eat good food, so you eat yet more junk food. And so it goes!

Sometimes junk food gives you a momentary boost. Even though you know that you'll pay for it later, the boost in energy is worth enough to you to entice you to eat it.

⁴⁸ <https://www.westonaprice.org/health-topics/modern-diseases/diet-and-recovery-from-chronic-disease/>

Sometimes healthy food takes too much physical effort, in the form of planning, shopping, and working in the kitchen, which can drain your reserves of energy and make you feel worse. In addition, some healthy foods have a temporary cleansing effect on your body, causing headaches, achy glands, or a lack of energy.

Having said that, it is impossible to recover without proper fuel for your body. It is also impossible to recover when toxins and other “junk” are continually draining your body's resources. So let's evaluate the ideas I've already given you about food, as well as make a realistic plan for having the time and energy for eating right.

New Habits

You are a creature of habit. Your body is run according to a daily circadian rhythm, an internal “clock” that regulates all the processes of your body over a 24-hour period. Your circadian rhythm affects your sleep-wake cycles, your body temperature, and all your hormone production.

Your adrenal glands secrete an essential-to-life hormone called cortisol. Cortisol is produced by your body in amounts that follow a daily pattern, depending on the amount of light your eyes take in and the amount of activity you do.

Normally, your adrenals make the most cortisol around 8:00 in the morning, with less cortisol being produced as the day goes on, until around midnight, when your adrenals should manufacture almost none. In a normal, relaxing day, your adrenals should manufacture around 40 mg of cortisol total.

Cortisol is essential for the production of all enzymes in your body, whether used to digest your food or to heal and build tissues. What you eat, when you eat, and how well your body digests it are all critically important if your body is to work properly again.

Doing the same thing every day, every week, every month, and every year helps to stabilize circadian rhythms. You know these things! These are called habits!

Brushing your teeth is a habit. Using the restroom is a habit. Because you don't use up any mental or emotional thought for habits, you also don't use up much cortisol.

The more habits you've incorporated into your day, the fewer number of "points" will need to be deducted from your energy "bank account."

My hope is to show you how food preparation and survival in a kitchen can be made easier if you depend on habits, rather than on "weird," strange, or unfamiliar techniques and foods.

A tired working person is often able to do things that are routine and habitual. No thinking is required; minimal inertia must be overcome.⁴⁹

Sadly, food is a touchy topic. Thinking about what to eat each day can raise some strong emotions inside you, can't it?

- Such strange ideas!
- Who eats this stuff?
- How in the world will I ever get all this done?
- Will it even taste good?
- Will I have to make entirely different foods just for myself, since I can't imagine my husband or children would ever be willing to give up their favorite foods?

If great amounts of *mental* exertion are needed for planning, you'll spend two "points" each time. If your daily food intake becomes an *emotional* stress, you'll be using up to three energy "points" each time you eat! I can guarantee that you don't have enough energy for all these new-fangled changes – so I can also guarantee that you won't change how you eat.

And if you don't change how you eat, you won't get better.

So let's learn ***how to change your habits***, rather than expending great amounts of physical, mental, and emotional energy three times a day.

Simply reading this chapter will again require some mental effort, so take it easy. Use this chapter as a reference over the coming weeks and months. ***Don't try to change overnight; rather, take the time to develop new habits.***

Take it as slowly as your health will allow, until you find that new habits have replaced old ones. I'll be giving you lots of charts and reference materials to help you along the way.

⁴⁹ Cheryl Mendelson, *Home Comforts: The Art and Science of Keeping House* (New York: Scribner, 1999), p. 20.

A Plan for Change

Let's start by giving you a broad plan for change. Do not try to change your diet without a plan. It won't happen! Making a plan that helps you feel comfortable is the building block of a new habit.

A plan consists of having a weekly menu, an easy-to-use shopping list, simple recipes at my fingertips, and reminder lists everywhere.

A Menu

My menu forms the foundation of an easy plan. Here is why a menu is so important:

M – Make it ahead

If I wander into the kitchen, searching for food after I'm already quite hungry and tired, it's highly unlikely that I'll choose nutrient-dense foods.

If I try to decide what I'm going to make for supper only minutes before I am planning to eat, it's unlikely I'll have the energy to make my food from scratch.

E – Eat simple foods

My goal is to choose foods that can be prepared and into a cooking dish in 10-20 minutes. Just before eating, I'll spend a final 10 minutes or so in the kitchen.

I can't always accomplish this goal, but for the sake of my energy levels, I keep things as simple as possible.

This also means that I try to use sauces for several meals each week and to incorporate leftovers into future meals. When I'm tired, boring is just fine; complicated is what I try to avoid. Making food taste good can be easy, even when my menu is simple.

N – Nothing wasted

In the previous chapter, I showed you how food needs to be very rich in nutrients so that my body has the building blocks it needs for repair, both today and long into the future.

In addition, many tired women lack much of an appetite, except for junk food like sweet or salty snacks. Therefore, my food plan needs to make every bite count. If I put something into my mouth, it must serve a purpose – or else I shouldn't eat it.

U – Use it again

At the end of the week, I put my “Menu” back into my “Kitchen Binder,” so I can use it for ideas in the future. My “Kitchen Binder” now holds several years' worth of menus, with ideas of foods I can enjoy by season, holiday, and even times of budgetary highs-and-lows.

This is the habit I use to plan my menu:

1. **Every few months, I print blank menu sheets.** (I've included mine at the end of this chapter.) I punch holes in them and store them in my “Kitchen Binder,” a thick, 3-ring binder that permanently sits on top of my refrigerator.
2. **On Monday morning, I plan what we'll eat that week.** I make my plan on an empty menu sheet from my “Kitchen Binder.”
3. **To get ideas, I look at previous menus,** choose a cookbook to use that week, or search for recipes online that sound good to me (emailing myself a copy of each recipe or saving to an app such as Pinterest or Evernote).
4. I repeat broad categories on certain days of the week. This is one less thing I have to think about.

Sunday – Beef Pot Roast

Monday – Beef

Tuesday – Chicken

Wednesday – Mexican

Thursday – Something New

Friday – Pizza

Saturday – Crockpot

Breakfast, lunch, and snacks stay fairly constant in my home. I just don't have the energy to re-invent the wheel each week!

5. If I see that I'll have to prepare foods ahead of time, I write a reminder note on my menu as well.
6. **I quickly make a shopping list from my menu.** My shopping list is included at the end of this chapter.

During the week, my menu hangs on the side of my refrigerator, where I can easily see it. At the end of the week, it goes back into my “Kitchen Binder,” ready to be used for ideas again someday.

Menu Ideas

Coming up with things to eat uses energy points. My goal is to make as much of my food from scratch as possible, without buying processed foods filled with toxic ingredients.

Menu Ideas:

- Upon Awakening** – fruit or eggs
- Breakfast** – eggs/meat/cheese with raw, cooked, or fermented veggies
- Lunch** – soup, eggs/meat/cheese, salad with cold-pressed oils or enzyme-rich dressing, cooked veggies with butter and seasonings
- Dinner** – same as lunch
- Bedtime** – protein/cheese, leftovers, smoothie, soup
- Snacks** – smoothie, cheeses, ¼ cup fruit with heavy cream, eggs, half a slice of bread with butter

Protein Goal: 80-100 grams per day

I try to rely on dinner ideas that will only take 10-20 minutes to prepare before popping them in the oven, turning on the crockpot, or letting them simmer on the stove. In fact, my oven has a 10-minute preheating feature that beeps when it's ready – so I'll race it! I try to get in and out of the kitchen as fast as possible.

- Meat** forms the basis of my menu.
- Once I've chosen a meat, I then choose **vegetables** that are easy and high in nutrients.
- Finally, I try to include a **sauce** that is nutrient-dense: a gravy made from homemade bone broth, an enzyme-rich salsa, or plenty of butter with a few shakes of seasoning blend from the cupboard.

In the cold months, I use my oven and crockpot frequently. In the summer I often sauté meat in a cast-iron skillet on the stove top or gently cook it outside, in a covered dish on the grill. Stovetop meals work well all through the year. I've learned to choose slow, long-simmering recipes over foods cooked at high heat. Not only are they easier; they're much healthier as well.

Shortly before my main dish is ready to eat, I get out condiments that are homemade and nutrient-rich, such as homemade salad dressings,

pickles, relishes, salsas, or mayonnaise. Even ketchup and mustard can be made at home. All of these are well-stocked in my refrigerator because they are super-easy to prepare and digest!

Breakfast Ideas

In our family, we eat a big breakfast to get our metabolisms going and to give us plenty of energy. We eat soaked oatmeal and scrambled eggs most mornings, but sometimes we'll eat soaked cream of wheat, sprouted cream of spelt, an egg and potato casserole, or pancakes, waffles, or crepes that have been made from unbleached, non-GMO flour.

When eating breakfast grains, be sure they are prepared properly. Oats are very high in phytates, and for best thyroid function, these need to be neutralized by soaking the oats in an acidic solution overnight.

Overnight Soaked Oatmeal

Serves 7

3 ½ cups oatmeal

7 cups filtered water, divided

2 tablespoons yogurt, whey, or crème fraiche

2 teaspoons sea salt

Optional toppings: butter, sucanat or raw sugar, maple syrup, honey, raisins, homemade ice cream (yum!), etc.

In the evening, place oatmeal in a bowl with 3 ½ cups water and cover with a dish towel. In the morning, bring another 3 ½ cups water and sea salt to a boil. Stir in the soaked oatmeal mixture and simmer 2-3 minutes, until the texture is just how you like it. Serve with butter and toppings.

Secondly, I serve my grains with plenty of fat, such as butter or coconut oil. The fat helps me absorb the nutrients in the grains.

Third, I am sure to stay away from commercial cereals. These are very bad for us! We also avoid store-bought pastries and donuts, since these are invariably high in trans fats.

Since eggs are so high in nutrition (especially the yolks), I serve plenty of eggs in our home.

We avoid fruit juices (except for freshly squeezed juices). They have no enzymes because pasteurization has destroyed them all.

We do enjoy hot tea and coffee, served with fresh cream and a healthy teaspoon of raw sugar or honey.

In other cultures, people eat soup, leftovers, or rice for breakfast. I have friends who enjoy a smoothie every morning, made with good-quality yogurt, fresh fruits, and liquid stevia as a sweetener. Be creative as you start your day with excellent nutrition.

Lunch Ideas

- Gelatin-rich bone broths, made into nourishing soups
- Salads with homemade, enzyme-rich dressings and a serving of meat
- A slice of homemade bread, made from properly prepared grains and smothered with healthful butter and honey.

These foods form the backbone of a healthy noon meal. We also enjoy raw cheeses, vegetables and fruits from the garden, and homemade cookies for the kids. Glasses of cold, frothy raw milk taste wonderful, as do cold cups of kombucha or beet kvass. A smoothie made with coconut milk, berries, yogurt, and even raw eggs tastes great on a hot summer day. All of these foods are simple to prepare and provide innumerable benefits to our bodies.

Supper Ideas

Supper is a comforting meal when we can enjoy each other as a family and tell about our days.

- Soup always makes a good starting course, and when served with a dollop of enzyme-rich crème fraiche or Daisy® sour cream, it helps to get our digestive tracks moving.
- Meats that have slowly been simmering all day, served with rich sauces (homemade, of course) invite our taste buds to relax.
- Vegetables are steamed or simmered with complementary herbs, and then served with plenty of butter for the best assimilation of vitamins.
- Lacto-fermented vegetables and relishes add a kick to dinner, waking up our taste buds and our digestive systems.

- Salads are always accompanied by enzyme-rich salad dressing prepared with love in only 3 minutes.
- Fresh rolls and butter are a delight.
- To aid with digestion, drinks are the lacto-fermented variety, such as ginger ale, root beer, berry kefirs, or kombucha.
- Desserts are low in added sugar, plentiful in natural fruits, and high in healthy fats such as coconut oil or fresh whipped cream.

Planning for Food Preparation

My “Menu” sheet has space for me to list foods that need to be prepared ahead. If I’m tired, I just don’t have much energy for this category. Most of my advanced food preparation is limited to:

- Grains that need special preparation** (such as rice or bread, by soaking, sprouting, or sourdoughing). can also be purchased at health-food stores and larger grocery stores, usually in the freezer section.
- Condiments, salad dressings, and sauces** made from “fermented,” enzyme-rich foods. These stay good for several weeks in my refrigerator, often improving with age, yet they only take minutes to mix up.
- Broth and stock made from bones.** This is very easy to make, since it just simmers on the stove. I’ve found that stock is a very forgiving food and can simmer on the stove or in a crockpot for a couple hours – or for a couple days, if I suddenly lose the energy to finish the job. The hardest part of making stock is the end, but because it has become a habit, I can fill 6 quart jars and clean up my mess in about 10 minutes. (If my arms lack the strength for the job, my husband is a wonderful helper.)
- Meat** can be cooked ahead of time and stored in small portions, in case I get hungry for an omelet or a hearty snack later. My personal favorite is to put chicken in a covered dish for an hour or so, then shred it with a fork. Roast beef cooks easily in my slow cooker, and it’s simple to brown turkey sausage in a skillet.

There are many other foods you could make at home, but when you’re tired, these are some simple ones that you wouldn’t be able to easily buy without added, toxic ingredients. Be sure to write reminders on your menu, so you don’t forget to make these foods ahead.

Systems

It does no good to have a plan if I don't also have a system for carrying out my plan. Even though I've been preparing better food for several years, I've found that my brain just doesn't remember things as well as it should. Rather than trying to memorize all my systems, I have turned my kitchen into "Command Central," filled with lists and gadgets that prompt me and nag me.

My Refrigerator

(What would I do without it?)



"Command Central"

I'm rather embarrassed to let you see my kitchen. It isn't very pretty. It doesn't have stainless-steel appliances or the latest in modern décor. I try to keep it clean, but I have seven children and a big dog, so even that is a challenge most days. It's quite small, which can drive me crazy at times.

I try to make my kitchen clean and pretty, a pleasant place to be, but it's a much higher priority for it to be my "brain." For that reason, I have turned the sides of my refrigerator and the insides of cupboard doors into what I call "Command Central." Using plenty of magnets and Scotch® tape, here are some lists I've hung up.

On the Refrigerator:

- Emergency Medical Information** – Because I have Addison’s disease, I have an informational sheet for paramedics, my Medic-Alert® information, and essential phone numbers hanging in a prominent place. (I’ll share more about this in chapter 13.)
- Menu** – My menu for the week.
- Shopping Lists** – I have both a printed shopping list that is pre-filled with items I almost always buy, plus a pad of paper on which I can jot things I know we’re running low on.
- Daily Schedule** – I’ll explain this further in chapter 16.
- Chore Charts and Lists for Helpers** – My children use their chore charts daily, which is excellent training for the inevitable times when I will sincerely need their help. I also keep lists for adult helpers who occasionally come to lend a hand. (More on this below.)
- Reminder Lists** – I have several lists that remind me to do things, such as “After Lunch,” “Before Bed,” “Before Going Out the Door,” and “Preparing for the Sabbath” (my weekly “day off” that helps me rest).

As a general rule, after breakfast, I start supper. After lunch, I start breakfast. After supper, I plan tomorrow’s lunch (usually leftovers). A simple sticky note on the side of my refrigerator reminds me of this plan.

- Recipes** – Most of my recipes are in my “Kitchen Binder” on top of the refrigerator, but a few recipes that I use almost every day are taped to the side of the refrigerator, mostly scribbled out on sticky notes. One of these is a smoothie recipe, so simple to make that my children can prepare it.

Inside a Cupboard Door:

Inside one cupboard, I have a “health department.” I use a cupboard near my food-preparation area, since this is the part of my kitchen where I spend the most time. It includes a plastic basket with all my supplement bottles, a pencil, a tiny carb-counting reference book, and even a dedicated teaspoon for taking cod liver oil. I keep a small container with Celtic Sea Salt® handy on a turntable here, as well as a

small jar of coconut oil and other “whole foods” that I need to remember to eat frequently (such as enzyme pills).

Inside that cupboard door, I have taped the following lists:

- Supplements List** – I take a lot of supplements, throughout the day, so without a list, I'd never remember them all. When I'm really tired, I'll require myself to check off with my pencil what I've taken, since I won't remember later.
- This Week's Diet Diary** – This is where my pencil comes in handy most days, since I can quickly jot down what I've eaten.
- Symptom-Monitoring Chart** – I write down my daily symptoms (body temperature, symptoms, blood pressure, and more, as explained in chapter 4).
- Motivational Quotations and Bible Verses** – These help me remember why I'm trying to get feeling better.

In my kitchen, my “Health Department” cupboard also contains all my spices and seasonings, alphabetized and ready to use, so that I'll be reminded to make my food healthy and tasty! Because I keep a large variety of spices and herbs to flavor my cooking (more on this below), I've taped a list of all of them inside the cupboard door.

The top shelf of this cupboard keeps a supply of teas and other healthy foods, such as boxed cultures for sourdough, kefir, yogurt, and fermented vegetables. Can you see why I call this my “Health Department”?

Below this cupboard, sitting on the countertop, is a pretty cup that belongs to me, ready to be used for swallowing supplement pills throughout the day. My children know that it's “off limits,” except for when I occasionally wash it.

On Top of the Refrigerator:

This doesn't always look too neat, but I use the space on top of my refrigerator to hold essential items, such as:

- Timers** – Tired women forget to do things, so I have several timers to remind me to remove food from the oven, change the laundry, or take my supplements. Sometimes I even put a

sticky note on the timer, to remind me what the timer is being used for!

- A cup for pens and pencils
- Scrap paper and sticky notes
- A calculator
- A small digital scale
- Cookbooks** – My own “Kitchen Binder” is here, plus several cookbooks that are staples in my kitchen. (The remainder of my cookbooks are in another room.) I’ve included a list of my refrigerator cookbooks at the end of this chapter.

Kitchen Organization:

If I’m going to prepare my food from scratch, my kitchen needs to be organized and set up for tired, sore arms and hands to use. If I’m too tired to use my own kitchen, I know for sure I won’t eat good food!

***Mise en place** (pronounced [miz ā plas] literally “putting in place”): a French phrase defined by the Culinary Institute of America as “everything in place,” as in set up. It is used in professional kitchens to refer to organizing and arranging the ingredients (e.g., cuts of meat, relishes, sauces, par-cooked items, spices, freshly chopped vegetables, and other components) that a cook will require for the menu items that he or she expects to prepare during his/her shift.*

Recipes are reviewed to check for necessary ingredients and equipment. Ingredients are measured out, washed, chopped, and placed in individual bowls. Equipment, such as spatulas and blenders, are prepared for use, and ovens are preheated. Preparing the mise en place ahead of time allows the chef to cook without having to stop and assemble items, which is desirable in recipes with time constraints.

It also refers to the preparation and layouts that are set

*up and used by line cooks at their stations in a commercial or restaurant kitchen.*⁵⁰

Everything in my kitchen is stored at its point of use. I'm too tired to walk back and forth across the kitchen, so I have almost everything I need right at my fingertips, in the cupboard right next to my "health department."

If I might need a piece of equipment or some food on two sides of my kitchen, I feel it makes good sense to have duplicates (scissors, salt, mixing bowls, measuring cups and spoons, cutting boards, etc.). This is not a waste of money! This is energy savings! Duplicates are so inexpensive, especially if found at garage sales, dollar stores, thrift stores, that I can't afford not to have them.

In addition, as I use something in my kitchen, I have made this my habit: "**Don't put it down; put it away.**" Why touch a container of baking powder twice, when I could easily reach up and put it away as soon as I've used it?

I've tried to make my kitchen "tired-woman friendly" by packaging food items in small containers that aren't too heavy, are easy to open, and don't require too much lifting or climbing to use.

Good cleaning habits might sound like more work at first, but they truly save me time in the long run. By doing the dishes promptly and keeping the kitchen clean, I don't have to dread my kitchen. I try to neaten while I go, soaking pots, using a bowl for scraps, and cleaning up spills. I have my children put all food away right after eating, and we work together to wash, dry, and put away all dishes immediately. We do a general wipe-down of the kitchen, take out the trash, wipe out the sink, lay out fresh towels, and sweep the floor. Throughout our entire time, I update my shopping list with foods or supplies that are low. If I think of something I need to remember later, I jot a quick note to myself.

On the edge of my kitchen, I have a small table with chairs, so my children can do homework nearby, or I can lay my kitchen binder out on that work surface. Under the table, I have a step stool, so I can safely reach top cupboards on a "dizzy" day, or so my small children can "help" in the kitchen.

⁵⁰ From Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mise_en_place

Finally, I have a hook on the wall that holds an apron with ample pockets. I love my apron pockets! Inside, you would find some Burt's Bees® lip balm, several pens and pencils, more sticky notes, a thermometer for recording my body temperature throughout the day, my cell phone, and earphones. (I'll tell you more about these in a later chapter.) Of course, with small children in my home, my apron pockets also get filled with small toys and hair accessories.

These are some of the systems that exist in my "Command Central." All my habits depend on things being where they belong. Will my habits look the same as yours? No. Will your "Command Central" look the same as mine? No, and that's just fine.

Begin thinking about the habits you already have in place in your life, and see if the tools and systems you need match your current habits. Make this *easy* for your brain to keep up.

Some women use a clipboard, instead of sticking so many pieces of paper here and there. Other women have gone completely digital, using apps on their phone to remind them of things. These options are all just fine.

What fits *your* style, *your* habits? What would be the least stressful system for *you* to maintain, especially on your most exhausting day? Whatever your answer is tells you which system you should use.

Getting Help from Others

Are you too proud to accept help? I often am! I know I need help. I even want help (or at least some sympathy). I'll even go so far as to get grumpy with my family for not offering help, even if they don't realize how tired I am. (Isn't it amazing how you might not look a bit sick, yet you feel as if a truck ran you over?) I can be throwing a first-class pity party in my head, all without anyone else's knowing about it.

So I totally understand if you don't want to accept help. But let's be honest for a second. Even if you're feeling fairly well today, won't you inevitably have a "down" day? How can you prepare ahead so that helpers will feel comfortable in *your* kitchen, using *your* systems, and helping you get better by supplying your body with nutritious food?

Helpers often struggle because they love you and they want to help you, but they know you're a tad grumpy. They just don't know *how* to help. While you have the energy, you can solve many of these problems by setting up systems for your helpers in advance.

Helpers in my kitchen fall into two categories:

1. People
2. Robots

Okay, I'm somewhat teasing, but my "**robots**" are **appliances and equipment** that make my life easier. Let's talk about some of these first, since they don't have feelings and I can boss them around if needed.

I'm sure you already love your unique kitchen equipment. Which things in your kitchen are your "can't do without" pieces? Do you need to make more space for the essentials by clearing out the gadgets that you rarely use?

Here are my personal favorite "**robots**":

- Crockpots** – I have several crockpots, in different sizes, because they are wonderful when I'm tired. I can even prepare breakfast in my crockpot!
- Lamp timer** – I use a lamp timer to turn my crockpot on, so I don't have to remember.
- Stock pots** – Like my crockpots, I have several sizes available and frequently use them to make stocks, soups, and sauces (like spaghetti sauce).
- Can and jar openers** – When I'm tired, my hands can't open things because I'm too weak. A jar opener that works really well is a JarKey.®
- Blender** – Both counter-top and hand-held blenders are useful for making smoothies and soups. My counter-top blender stays permanently on my counter, because we make smoothies several times a day in our home. I use my hand-held blender right in a pot of soup, to puree it to the perfect texture.
- Bread machine or heavy-duty stand mixer** – A good bread machine, such as a Zojirushi®, can be a life-saver for making excellent bread at home. Our large family has "outgrown" what a bread machine can produce, so I have a heavy-duty Bosch® stand mixer. I also have a KitchenAid® stand mixer. Can you tell that mixers are a huge help in my kitchen?

- ❑ **Hand-held mixer** – I have a small hand-held KitchenAid® mixer that I use for many small jobs, because sometimes it's easier to get out and clean up than my big stand mixer.
- ❑ **Food processor** – I don't like how heavy my food processor is, nor do I like cleaning it, so I often use a small Salad Shooter® instead. To be honest, a sharp knife and cutting board is often just as easy, but if I'm really tired or have a lot of chopping to do, a food processor is nice to have.
- ❑ **Knives, scissors, cutting boards** – Scissors are especially helpful when my hands are tired. My husband is kind enough to keep my knives sharp for me.
- ❑ **Grain mill** – I live far enough from shopping centers, plus I have a large family to feed, that it has been worthwhile for me to purchase my own grain mill. However, many large grocery stores and health-food stores will freshly mill grains for you, which is handy when you're tired. Ideally, I use ground flour within 24 hours, but if I'm very exhausted, I will freeze a small amount for up to a week.
- ❑ **Juicer** – I don't own a juicer, but I've been considering it. Fresh juices made with raw, enzyme-rich vegetables are very healing to the adrenal glands.
- ❑ **Quart-size jars, storage containers** – I use these for a variety of things in my kitchen, such as storing homemade stock in my freezer. When freezing glass jars, be sure not to overfill them since they can break.
- ❑ **Dishwasher** – I don't have a dishwasher, so my children help me with almost all dishwashing duties. If I didn't have their help, I know I'd certainly want a dishwasher. The only caution I can give you is to use non-toxic soaps in your dishwasher. The fumes from caustic cleaners are very hard on your adrenal glands. The same applies to soaps used in hand-washing dishes, too.
- ❑ **Paper plates** – I know these aren't environmentally friendly, but I still use them often. I try to use paper rather than foam, but these "helpers" have been a blessing on many occasions.
- ❑ **Extra storage space**, such as pantry shelves, a freezer, and even an extra refrigerator – Shopping can be exhausting! I try to keep my pantry, freezer, and refrigerator well stocked, to prevent having to shop as often.

What **people** can help you out when you're especially tired, sore, or sick? What are some jobs they could do?

- Help with breakfast**, which is a tough time of day for many tired mothers.
- Help with lunches** and getting small children down for afternoon naps.
- Making meals ahead** for the freezer. You may need to give them a recipe, since most people will use store-bought, prepared soups and sauces in their sauces.
- Shop for you.** Can you be ready with a master shopping list that could be handed to someone, plus an envelope filled with cash for the purchase? Some grocery-store chains also offer delivery to your home when you purchase your groceries from their website.
- Chores around the kitchen**, such as cleaning the oven or wiping refrigerator shelves, wiping under appliances, etc.
- Making stock and condiments**, so they are ready to be used later.
- Making homemade bread and baked goods**, again, with a recipe and ingredients supplied ahead by you.

Do you see a common theme here? You need to **plan ahead** with ways others can help.

Make a list of everything you do on a "normal" day, then figure out who could help on a "down" day. While you're feeling well enough to think this out (because it will certainly drain some energy from you), plan ahead.

Finally, place those plans in an easy-to-find location. If someone arrives at your home and asks how she can help you, you can simply point to your list of ideas on the side of the refrigerator.

If God has blessed you with children, by all means start preparing them ahead of time. Make simple chore charts, then **practice** with them on days when you have energy. It's like a "fire drill" for when Mom will be tired! If you don't practice, I doubt you'll get much benefit from their "help."

Preparing Ingredients

When you have little energy, you need to have nutrient-dense, easy-to-digest foods on hand.

How? *By cultivating the “habit”* of always having the ingredients in the house and readily available.

You’re ready for this, because you made a plan that included a weekly menu of what to eat, plus you have shopping lists ready so you or a helper can get good food in the house on a consistent basis. You prepared your “Command Central” with to-do lists and reminders so that you won’t forget what you need to do. You’re taking your supplements consistently, to help fill up your nutritional “bank account.” You’re remembering to monitor your symptoms, and you’re writing down each bite you eat, to hold yourself accountable to change.

1. **Plan ahead** (menu)
2. **Shop ahead** (shopping lists, online sources, and helpers)
3. **Make ahead** (to-do lists)

All that remains is to learn to prepare your food from scratch, with love in your own kitchen. Boxes and jars of toxic ingredients need to be removed from your kitchen, and homemade jars of nutrient-filled, enzyme-rich foods need to be added.

The following is a chart of foods that you should emphasize. “Good” on this list means that it’s fine for most people, even helping improve the health of many. For instance, whole grains are “good,” yet because they contain enzyme inhibitors, your fatigued body will struggle with digesting them properly.

Remember, as Dr. Schmid told us earlier, if you have a chronic health condition, “good” is not good enough. You need “better” and even “best.” You need to do more than maintain; you need enough excellent nutrition to heal and repair.

Every bite you eat needs to count!

For this reason (and because I’m often too tired to care otherwise), *boring is just fine*. Emphasize quality, not variety. Emphasize consistent habits, not amazing kitchen skills. “Best” ingredients will help you when you don’t have the energy for exotic menus.

So as often as possible, skip the “Good” column and aim for the “Best” column. The “Better” column can fill in occasionally.

Good	Better	Best
Unrefined Oils	Extra Virgin Olive Oil	Extra Virgin Coconut Oil
Butter	Organic Butter	Grassfed, Cultured Butter
Whole Milk	Organic Whole Milk	Raw Milk from Grassfed Cows
Whole Eggs	Organic Eggs	Eggs from Free-Range Chickens (fed no soy products)
Plenty of Meat from Clean Animals ⁵¹	Meat from Clean Animals Fed Organically	Meat from Grassfed, Clean Animals
Cheeses	Organic Cheeses	Raw, Naturally-Aged Cheeses from Grassfed Animals
Vegetables	Organically-Grown Vegetables	Vegetables Cooked and Served with Plenty of Fats, or Served Raw with Enzyme-Rich Dressings
Organic Salad Dressings and Condiments	Store-Bought, Naturally Fermented Condiments, Made with Cold-Pressed Oils and Other Good Ingredients	Homemade, Naturally Fermented Condiments and Salad Dressings, Made with Excellent Ingredients
Whole-Grain Baked Goods and Breads	Store-Bought, Properly Prepared Baked Goods and Breads, such as sourdough, Alvarado Street Bakery goods, or Ezekiel® bread.	Homemade baked goods and breads, made by first soaking, sprouting, or sourdoughing the whole grains.
Purified Water	Herbal Teas, Freshly Prepared Juices, Fermented Drinks (Non-Alcoholic)	Raw Milk from Grassfed Cows

⁵¹ A definition of “clean” animals can be found in the Bible, in [Leviticus 11](#).

As you can see from the chart, finding sources of good food is really the hardest part. Once you know where to buy all these ingredients, you have solved much of your problem.

I try to keep an up-to-date list of reputable sources on my website, at:

- <http://anneshealthplace.com/blog/resources/products>
- <http://anneshealthplace.com/blog/beginners-guide/step-6-find-local-sources-of-nutritious-food>

By the way, some of the foods in the “Better” and “Best” categories can include items like:

- Frozen, chopped veggies
- Shredded cheese
- Bagged salads
- Meats cooked ahead of time and frozen

Your helpers (both people and “robots”) can help you with this! Don’t feel you have to do it all yourself. Many of these things can be purchased at local stores.

When to Eat

When to eat is just as important as *what* to eat, because each time you eat, your body releases hormones. When you eat at the same times each day, your body can begin to correct its internal clock and the rate at which it releases hormones. Rather than having each day’s release of hormones be sporadic and unpredictable, your body can get into a rhythm. This then requires less energy from you, allowing you more energy with which to heal.

So it’s important to develop the habit of eating on a schedule. That means your goal is to eat breakfast, lunch, supper, and snacks each day – and at the same times each day.

In addition, it is very likely that you’ll find the amount of good foods listed here are *too much* for you to fit into your stomach. When I’m too tired, my appetite disappears. (Well, sometimes my appetite for junk food remains, but all other appetite disappears.) That’s why it helps to plan out when you’re actually going to consume all this excellent nutrition.

Most busy women protest having to eat on a schedule. (I feel like protesting, too!) We are often too busy to think about food all day long, and our lives are often too full to keep an eye on the clock.

However, a life that's too crazy to eat on a schedule is too crazy. Remember that this is a big reason you're tired now. **Cultivating an eating schedule should be one of the first habits you work on!**

As you learn to discipline yourself and to rearrange your schedule so that mealtimes become more consistent and predictable, you'll find your stress levels will fall in other areas. It might sound too simple, but controlling your meal schedule is often the first step to long-term healing.

Here is a good meal schedule, as well as approximately how many grams of protein you'll want to consume at each. Hang this in your "Command Central," where you can see it!

Meal	When to Eat	Time of Day	Protein
Fruit (1/2 cup) or an Egg	Immediately upon waking	7:30 a.m.	12 grams
Breakfast	Within 30 minutes of waking	8:00 a.m.	12-24 grams
Morning Snack	2-3 hours later	10:00 a.m.	12 grams
Lunch	Middle of the day	Noon	24 grams
Afternoon Snack	2-3 hours later	3:00 p.m.	12 grams
Supper	2-3 hours later	6:00 p.m.	12-24 grams
Bedtime Snack	Shortly before bed	9:00 p.m.	12-24 grams

Notes:

1. Some women will fuss about the times I've listed. These are *ideal* times, which complement a healthy circadian rhythm. If your schedule simply won't permit these times, do your best to at least create a *consistent* daily schedule.
2. Don't forget to take enzyme supplements with each meal or snack! Other supplements are usually best taken with food as well. Develop the habit of checking in at your "health department" cupboard each time you fill a plate with food.
3. If you are depressed and you find yourself getting more depressed, if you're losing weight too quickly, if you're feeling

sluggish, or if you're suffering from insomnia, increase your carbohydrate consumption by 6 grams carbohydrate per meal or snack, until you find the amount that makes you feel well. On the flip side, if you're gaining too much weight, try reducing (but not eliminating) your carbohydrate intake. Be meticulous about writing down your dietary intake and symptoms!

When You're Ill or Extremely Exhausted:

- Be careful to take all your supplements consistently.
- Every 2-3 hours (with every meal and snack), drink a "Pep-Up Smoothie" (recipe at the end of this chapter), plus take the supplements listed previously.

Notes About Meal-Time Atmosphere:

- Don't forget to chew your food well.
- Don't eat much when you're angry or upset. Rest instead. We'll talk more about resting in chapter 17.
- When possible, it can be relaxing to listen to beautiful music when you eat, to eat quietly with the family, and to have the children set the table with pretty place settings.

My house has hardwood floors, but I have a goal of placing an area rug under my table soon, so that dropped spoons (loud!) won't cause me to jump out of my skin. A table pad under a tablecloth or placemats will minimize the banging of toddlers, and comfortable chairs can help when my muscles ache. What changes can you make to your eating area, to reduce noises and make mealtime a more pleasant experience?

Conclusion

I used the word “habit” over thirty times in this chapter so far! The key to a tired woman's survival in the kitchen is to develop new habits, ways of making healthier eating comforting and doable.

Remember that your food should be:

- M- Made ahead
- E- Eaten simply
- N- Nothing wasted
- U- Used again (ideas)

Be sure that you have all systems in place, and that the absolutely best quality food you can afford is stocked in your kitchen. Be prepared for inevitable hard days by planning out how people and “robots” can help. Be accountable for every bite in your journals and diaries.

- Have good ingredients IN the house.
- Have bad ingredients OUT of the house.
- Have a plan (also known as a menu).
- Have systems for planning, prep work, and cleaning.
- Have helpers (also known as people and “robots”).
- Have a schedule for your mealtimes.

If you do these things consistently, no matter how difficult it is at first, you will certainly feel better soon and achieve good health again in the future!

“Does It Ever Get Easier?” by Bonita Lillie

(The following article was written for writers, but I thought it applied to us “tired women,” too! ~Anne)

The trainer said it would happen. That first day I walked into the gym he promised that if I would faithfully work out, one day it would get easier. My husband, Mr. Fitness himself, said the same thing. “Keep at it, babe. It will get easier.” I didn’t believe them.

Every day I dragged my tired, weary body into that gym and every day it was just as hard, sometimes ever harder, than the day before. Day after day, week after week, no change.

Then week #10 rolled around and a funny thing happened. I started my workout and it was easy, too easy in fact. Up went the weights, the speeds, the inclines. I was so excited I had to call Mr. Fitness at work to tell him. He and the trainer were right. I was finally getting in shape.

Allow me to step into the role of personal writing trainer for a minute and give you a piece of advice: If you will faithfully practice writing, it will get easier and your skills will get better. It’s true. I’ve seen it play out time and again in my own life.

When I first started teaching writing, it took forever and a year to write a lesson plan. I kept at it and seven years later I can do it in five minutes or less. Magazine articles used to take weeks to accomplish, but now I can whip one out the day before the deadline (or sometimes the day after). I used to plan sessions to sit down and write several of these emails at a time. I rarely do that anymore. Instead I write them in tiny snatches of time here and there. I’m writing this one in the few minutes between my workout at the gym and hopping in the shower to get ready for church.

Just like we work our physical muscles to get them in shape, we must do the same with our writing muscle. The trouble comes when we allow big gaps of time to elapse between writing. Each time we sit down to write it’s like starting all over again. It’s no different than I feel when I allow too many days between workouts at the gym. It’s much harder to do the exercises and get the momentum going. It’s back to square one all over again.

Maybe you’re working at a particular type of writing and you feel you’ll never master it. Keep at it. Sometimes it takes time, faithful practice and plain old blood, sweat, and tears, but you can do it. The more you practice, the easier it will get. I promise.

Action Guide

In this action guide, your main goal is to create a “Kitchen Binder,” as well as to set up your “Command Central.”

Your purchase of this book gives you access to free “swipe files” online, where you download all the forms in this book and even customize some to fit your habits.



Download your free forms at

<http://anneshealthplace.com/blog/action-guides>

- Create a “Kitchen Binder” and add the following forms:
 - Menu
 - Shopping List

- Create a “Recipes” section to add to your “Kitchen Binder.” You can begin finding helpful recipes at my website, <http://anneshealthplace.com/blog/recipes>.

- Choose a place in your kitchen to set up your “Command Central,” with the following forms:
 - Menu Ideas
 - Chore charts for children
 - Ways helpers can assist you
 - Daily Prep Jobs
 - “Sabbath” Preparation Jobs
 - “Pep-Up” Smoothie
 - Meal Schedule

- Set up your “Health Department” with the following forms:
 - Supplements
 - Diet Diary
 - Symptom Monitoring Chart

- Explore the sources of good ingredients listed at my website.
 - <http://anneshealthplace.com/blog/resources/products>
 - <http://anneshealthplace.com/blog/beginners-guide/step-6-find-local-sources-of-nutritious-food>

- Consider purchasing excellent cookbooks for the top of your refrigerator, such as these:
 - *Nourishing Traditions*, by Sally Fallon
 - *Eat Fat Lose Fat*, by Sally Fallon
 - *The Schwarzbein Principle*, by Diana Schwarzbein and Nancy Deville
 - *Dr. Bernstein's Diabetes Solution*, by Richard K. Bernstein
 - *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*

Pep-Up Smoothie

This smoothie was developed by our family, based on a classic recipe for “Pep Up,” written by nutritionist Adelle Davis, in her book *Let's Be Well*. It's easy to make, tastes great, and really does help you get well.

2 eggs, from best-quality hens
¼ cup whole-milk yogurt
¼ cup coconut milk
½ cup fruit or freshly squeezed fruit juice
Flavorings, such as nutmeg or vanilla
Raw milk

Add eggs, yogurt, coconut milk, fruit, and flavorings to a blender. Briefly blend, then add enough raw milk to equal 1 quart of smoothie. Sip ½ to 1 cup each hour.

PART 3

How to Get a Good Night's Sleep

CHAPTER 10

The Rhythms of Sleep

If there is one thing every fatigued woman longs for, it is sleep. We ache to climb into bed or stretch out on the couch.

Often, however, as soon as we're finally able to get away long enough to sleep, our bodies start to fight us. We lie there in the dark, unable to fall asleep; or we fall asleep almost too easily, into a dark and heavy sleep, only to be awakened with nightmares and cold sweats in the early morning hours.

Even in ancient times, the Biblical character Job writes of the misery he felt at night.

*“Like a slave longing for the evening shadows,
or a hired man waiting eagerly for his wages,
so I have been allotted months of futility,
and nights of misery have been assigned to me.
When I lie down I think, ‘How long before I get up?’
The night drags on, and I toss till dawn...
When I think my bed will comfort me
and my couch will ease my complaint,
even then you frighten me with dreams
and terrify me with visions,*

*so that I prefer strangling and death,
rather than this body of mine.”⁵²*

In this section, we’re going to talk about the importance of getting good sleep, as well as some practical solutions for you if you have trouble falling or staying asleep.

Just as with the digestion of food, a good night’s sleep is completely dependent upon the cyclical, daily release of hormones. **This daily rhythm is called the circadian rhythm.**

Your circadian rhythm is your internal “clock” that regulates all the processes of your body over a 24-hour period. It controls the release, first and foremost, of cortisol, the king of your hormones. Your circadian rhythm also affects the release of thyroid hormones, serotonin and melatonin, neurepinephrine and epinephrine, glycogen and insulin – and hundreds of other hormones and bodily processes.

The amazing thing is that these hormones are secreted into your body at certain times each day. It happens without your knowledge or permission, throughout every second of your life, automatically.

Researchers have found that all your body’s rhythms happen regardless of your social habits, your culture, or your location. Numerous experiments have been performed on people – closing them up in dark rooms, around the clock for a hundred days, for instance, with no contact with calendars, clocks, or people – and their bodily rhythms remained and functioned (although not without some harm).

Your daily, almost-24-hour circadian rhythm controls each day, but it certainly isn’t the only rhythm controlling the release of hormones in your body. Other rhythms that scientists have studied are seen in this chart.

Rhythm:	Approximate Duration:
Ultradian Rhythms	90 minutes (16 per 24-hour day)
Daily (Light-Based) Rhythms	60 minutes, during daylight
Nightly (Dark-Based) Rhythms	3 hours, during nighttime
Circadian Rhythms	24-25 hours
Circasemiseptan Rhythms	3.5 days
Circaseptan Rhythms	7 days
Infradian Rhythms	28-30 days
Circannual Rhythms	365 days
Seven-Year Rhythms	7 years

⁵² Job 7:2-4, 13-15

I am a creationist, not an evolutionist, so I take quite literally the account of creation by God in the Bible.

*“The moon marks off the seasons,
and the sun knows when to go down.
You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.
The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.
The sun rises, and they steal away;
they return and lie down in their dens.
Then man goes out to his work,
to his labor until evening.”⁵³*

Each of the rhythms in the preceding chart matches with the pull of the sun, moon, and stars on our planet. Scientists can’t understand it or explain it, yet these rhythms affect both mankind and animals, as well as plants, weather, and a multitude of enzymatic processes in the water, atmosphere, and even the dirt. Nothing is untouched!

Your ability to digest food, as you’ve already read, is affected by the release of cortisol, which is why I urged you to **make a daily food schedule the first habit you worked on.**

In addition, each of these other rhythms is also affected by the release of cortisol. Surges of cortisol can be observed in your body at specific hours of each day and night, days of the week, days of your menstrual cycle, and even certain years of your life.

Whenever too much or too little cortisol is secreted at one of these times, you will experience the unpleasant symptoms of extreme fatigue.

Hormone Rhythms

Just as your circadian rhythm is approximately 24 hours long, each hormone involved is controlled by the sun’s setting each evening and rising each morning.

When God created the world, we see that He first divided each “day” into two sections, governed by darkness and light.

⁵³ Psalm 104:19-23

And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.⁵⁴

Notice that each 24-hour day begins in the “evening,” not at midnight as we normally think. Nor did each day begin at sunrise, as it often feels. Rather, as soon as darkness fell, a new “day” had begun.

And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.⁵⁵

Scientists have discovered that nighttime is divided into four sections, each approximately 3 hours long. In the Bible, these are called “watches” of the night.

Watch:	Approximate Time:
“Evening” ⁵⁶	6 p.m. (sunset) to 9 p.m.
“Beginning” ⁵⁷	9 p.m. to midnight
“Middle” ⁵⁸	Midnight to 3 a.m.
“Morning” (or “Cock-Crowing”) ⁵⁹	3 a.m. to 6 a.m. (sunrise)

And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Genesis 1:3-5

⁵⁵ Genesis 1:5

⁵⁶ Genesis 28:11

⁵⁷ Lamentations 2:19

⁵⁸ Judges 7:19

⁵⁹ Exodus 14:24, Matthew 26:34

⁶⁰ Genesis 1:14-19

Melatonin

Deep inside my brain, God created a tiny gland called the pineal gland. This tiny gland, about the size of a pea, is responsible for producing a hormone called melatonin. Darkness stimulates the production of melatonin, and light tells it to stop. Therefore, the release of melatonin marks the beginning of a new “day” for your body.

Halfway through the night, melatonin production peaks, gradually falling toward dawn. Until very recently, in most parts of the world we would have experienced at least 12 hours of darkness each night. Now that we’ve become “civilized” with the invention of bright, artificial lights, we may only have eight or fewer hours of darkness a night.

Melatonin is a powerful hormone that directs our circadian rhythms and even orchestrates our sexual development. Night lights, bright alarm clocks, and yard lights have all been shown to diminish the production of melatonin in our brains at night. Exposure to bright light at night, “enjoyed” by those in careers where they work the night shift, has been implicated in disorders such as cancer. Sitting in front of flashing television and computer screens, turning on bright lights to use the bathroom at 2 a.m. – all of these things upset the production of melatonin in our pineal glands.

Melatonin has many uses, beginning with the oversight of our metabolism. Young children produce more melatonin than adults, making scientists think that it plays a role in postponing sexual development. Melatonin is a powerful anti-oxidant, and it has been shown helpful in reducing the damage caused by some types of Parkinson’s disease, in strengthening the immune system, in preventing migraine headaches, and in helping the heart beat properly. It has even been shown to help mice live longer! Melatonin helps us dream properly, which has been shown to keep us from going insane.

The production of melatonin in the pineal gland goes on to affect the production of almost every hormone in the human body. If you struggle with hormone problems affecting your thyroid gland, your adrenal glands (cortisol, DHEA, adrenaline, and others), your pancreas (insulin and enzyme production), or your sexual glands (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and others), you should certainly take into consideration the production of melatonin in your body first.

*When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,*

*the son of man that you care for him?
You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.
You made him ruler over the works of your hands;
you put everything under his feet.⁶¹*

In Genesis, I read that the sun and moon “govern” or rule each day. However, the Bible says that God made man the “ruler” over all the works of creation, including the “moon and the stars, which you have set in place.”

This tells me that my actions can have a direct impact on my circadian rhythms, and thus my ability to sleep. In this section, I’m going to show you some simple ways you can “rule” over your days and nights, helping your body adjust back to its proper secretion of daily hormones – so you can sleep, get good rest, and overcome fatigue!

Serotonin

The creation of the sun on the fourth day marked daily ultradian and circadian rhythms, which are based upon the movement of the sun across the sky each morning.

The first thing the rising sun does for your body in the morning is to shut off the production of melatonin. The retina of the eye receives light and transmits the signals from that light to the pineal gland. The patterns of daylight received by the pineal gland orchestrate the production of a second hormone, serotonin, the “feel-good” hormone.

*The moon marks off the seasons,
and the sun knows when to go down.
You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.
The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.
The sun rises, and they steal away;
they return and lie down in their dens.
Then man goes out to his work,
to his labor until evening.⁶²*

Serotonin and melatonin “oppose” each other, which means they have opposite effects on your body. For instance, they have opposing effects on your muscles. Serotonin (released in the daytime) causes your

⁶¹ Psalm 8:3-6

⁶² Psalm 104:19-23

muscles to contract, which helps you work hard. Melatonin (released in the nighttime) causes your muscles to relax, which helps you sleep.⁶³

If you're suffering from insomnia, it often begins because you are overworking during the daytime, with no resolution to the work you're doing. Day after day, things just don't get finished. Problems don't get solved. Relationships don't get mended.

Your body senses that work isn't done, so serotonin continues to be pumped out, even after the sun has set and a new "day" has begun. Eventually, all your stores of serotonin are depleted, and you "feel good" no more. Melatonin production is slowed, which prevents your muscles from resting. Tensions set in, quite literally!

*Be ye angry, and sin not:
let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*⁶⁴

Dr. Hans Selye, a famous researcher on stress, writes,

The stress of a day of hard work can make you sleep like a log or it can keep you awake all night. This sounds contradictory, but if you come to analyze the work that helps you to sleep and the work that keeps you awake, there is a difference.

Muscular activity or mental work which leads to a definite solution prepares you for rest and sleep; but intellectual efforts which set up self-maintaining tensions keep you awake.

The fatigue of work well accomplished gets you ready for sleep but, during the night, you must protect yourself against being awakened by stress. Everybody knows the value of protections against noise, light, variations in temperature, or the difficulties of digesting a heavy meal taken before retiring. We need not speak about such protective measures here. But what can you do to regulate psychological stress so it will not keep you awake?

If you suffer from insomnia, there is no point in telling yourself, 'Forget everything and relax; sleep will come by itself.' It does not.

⁶³ Marc Weissbluth, M.D., *Healthy Sleep Habits, Happy Child* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), p. 140.

⁶⁴ Ephesians 4:26, KJV. For other interesting verses on this topic, see Leviticus 19:13, Deuteronomy 21:23, Psalm 6:6, and John 9:4.

*Sheep-counting, warm milk, hot baths, and so forth are also of little value, since they only help those who have faith in them. The fact is that by the time you retire it is too late for anything except the sleeping pill. **It is during the whole day that you must prepare your dreams;** for, whatever you do during the day, your next night's sleep depends largely on how you have spent your previous day.*⁶⁵

Work → Solution = Rest
Effort → Tension = Awake

⁶⁵ Hans Selye, M.D., *The Stress of Life* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984), pp. 422-423, emphasis in the original.

How the Stages of Fatigue Affect Your Sleep

I like to call cortisol the “King of Hormones.” **Every other hormone in your body affects or is affected by cortisol!** Cortisol is present in almost every cell of your body, and its job is to restore your equilibrium after you’ve secreted adrenaline. Cortisol is produced by your body in amounts that follow a daily pattern, depending on the amount of light your eyes take in and the amount of activity you do.

Normally, your adrenal glands make the most cortisol around 8:00 in the morning, with less cortisol being produced as the day goes on, until around midnight, when your adrenal glands manufacture almost none at all. In a normal, relaxing day, your adrenals might manufacture around 40 mg of cortisol total.

However, when you are under stress, your adrenal glands might manufacture up to 200 mg of cortisol in a day. This extra cortisol is designed to counteract the effects of adrenaline, such as jittery hands or a racing heart. The cortisol increases your blood pressure, helps keep your blood sugar up to give you energy, and helps your brain think more clearly.

Since your body is not designed to live on large amounts of cortisol long-term, your adrenal glands can only keep up this pace for a time. Eventually, if the stress continues, you won't be able to make enough cortisol to keep pace with demand, and you'll start to feel the effects.

The Stages of Fatigue

The following diagram shows the ideal release of cortisol in a day. You can easily see that, in a body that is functioning correctly, cortisol levels are highest in the morning and lowest at midnight. Through the night, as you're sleeping, cortisol levels begin to rise again.

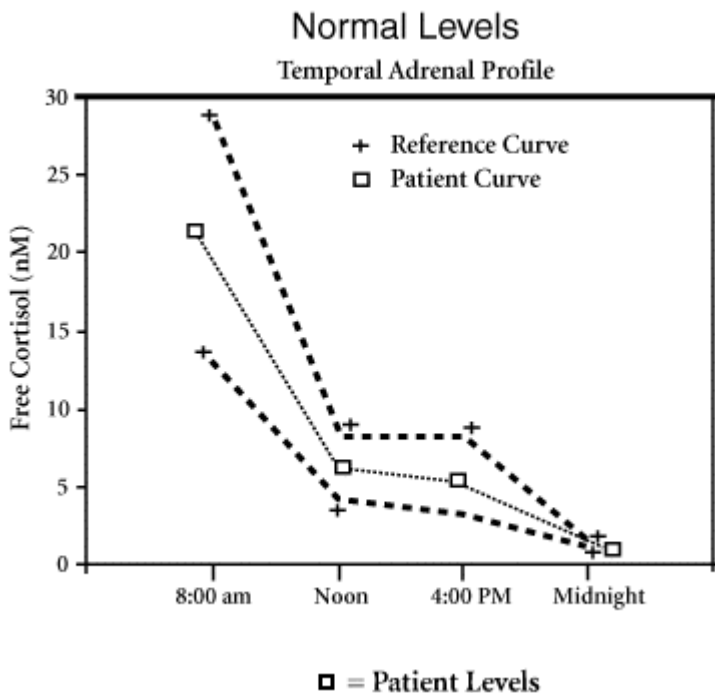
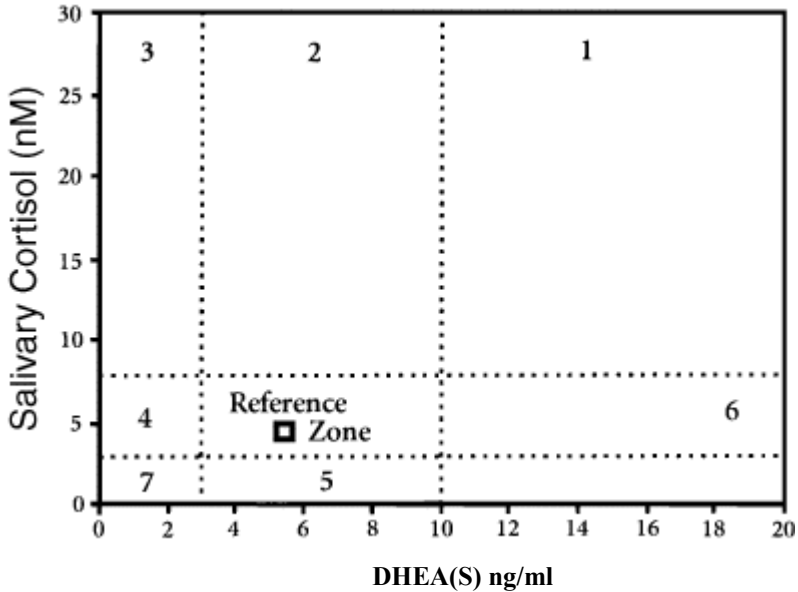


Image Sources: <http://www.chronicfatigue.org/ASI%20Normal.html>

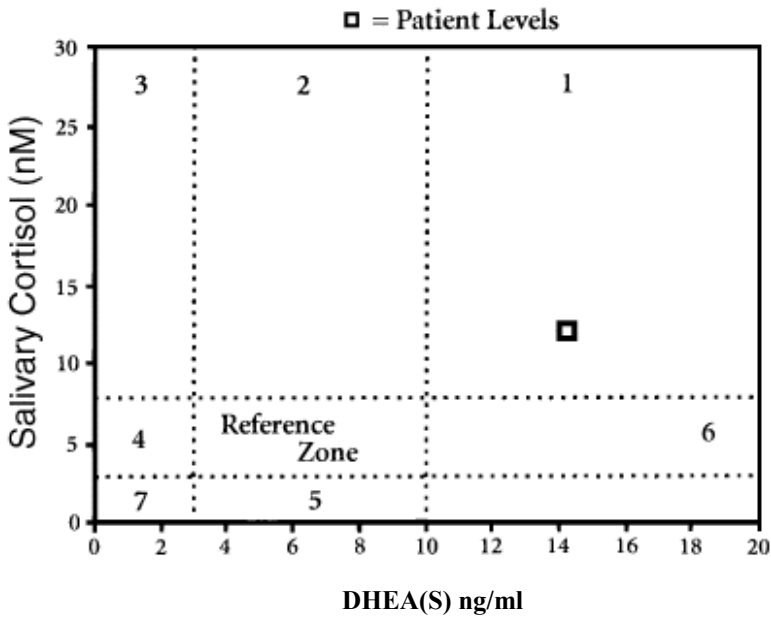
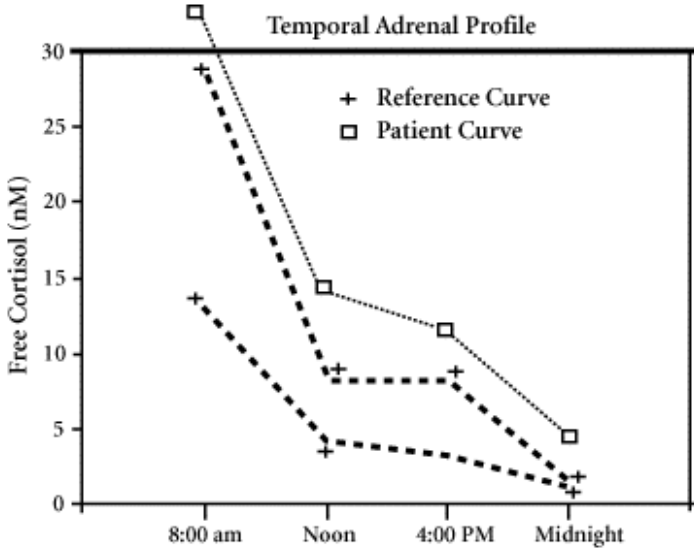
The body uses the hormone DHEA, also produced in the adrenal glands, in the manufacture of cortisol. The following chart shows the “reference zone” (or ideal) levels of DHEA compared to cortisol. The numbers show how DHEA and cortisol compare to each other at various stages of fatigue.



In **Stage One** of fatigue (the “alarm” stage), both cortisol and DHEA levels increase, as a result of increased levels of serotonin (and many other hormones, such as adrenaline) in your blood. Your body is trying to help you deal with stress, so that you can rest! It’s trying to help you get a solution to your day’s problems, so that a new day can start with the sleep you need to restore your body.

The increased serotonin levels, for instance, can give you no desire to do anything but sit on the couch and rest. If you were to rest at this point, you would actually experience less anxiety and insomnia. One researcher called this the “lag period,” and he compared it to allowing your adrenals to go “off-line,” much like we let our computers rest or farmers would have allowed their work horses to rest in past centuries.

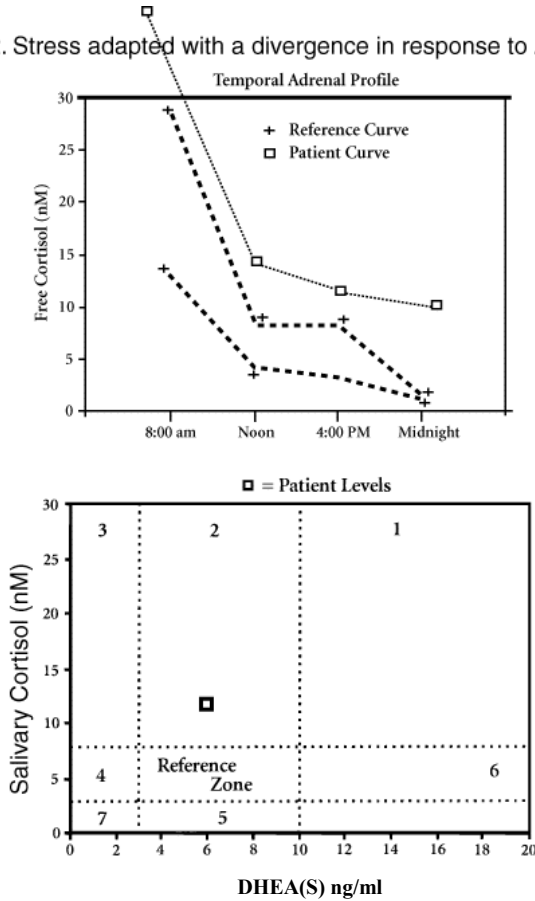
1. Stress adapted “hyper” response-minimal changes



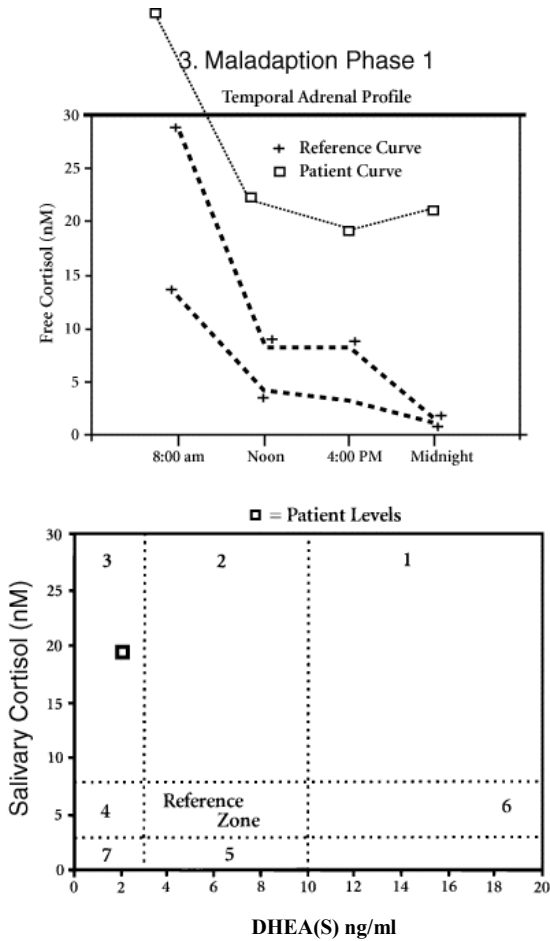
“Lag periods” are very helpful. When you experience a short-term stress, schedule times for “lag periods” into your life for the days right after.

Unfortunately, high levels of cortisol in the evening and night make it hard to fall asleep and rest. This is where the vicious cycle of insomnia and fatigue starts.

2. Stress adapted with a divergence in response to ACTH



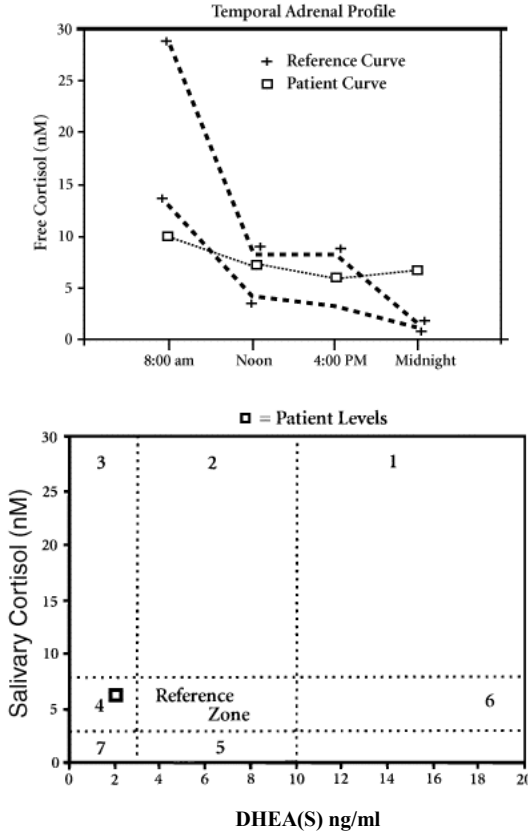
In **Stages Two and Three** of fatigue (the “resistance” stage), your body will begin to down-regulate your metabolism and body temperature to conserve energy. Your DHEA levels will also quietly begin to go down. Your body’s mechanisms are designed to protect you. If you were able to rest in Stage Two, your body would be able to heal. But if not, your body has to resist the effects of high cortisol.



Do you see how high cortisol can be at night? Is it any wonder you can't sleep? In addition, adrenaline surges wake you in the middle of the night, attempting to increase cortisol production for morning. Blood sugar levels plummet. You are feeling really keyed up!

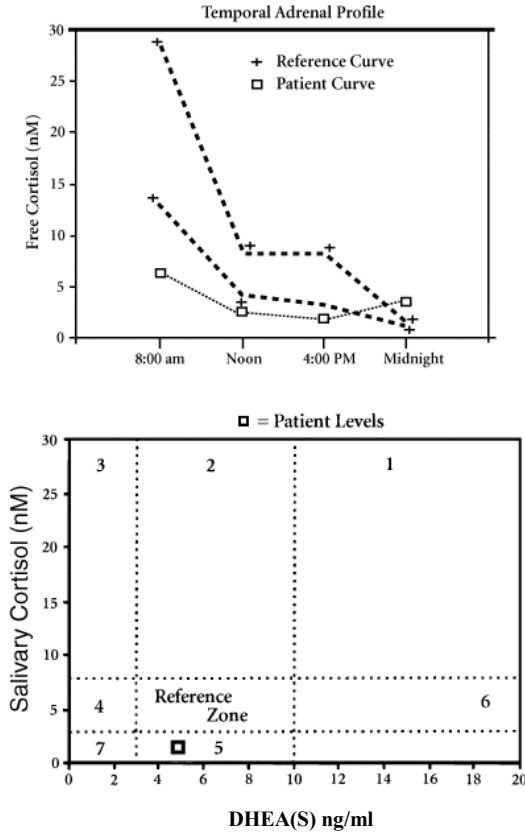
As stress continues, with high levels of cortisol but without DHEA from which to manufacture it, you'll feel increased anxiety and panic, combined with nightmares and exhaustion. This is **Stage Three** of fatigue.

4. Maladaptation Phase 2



Soon, your body realizes it cannot continue the high levels of cortisol. This is **Stage Four** of fatigue, and it's the most common stage. Your morning cortisol levels will fall. You'll notice that you have a very hard time waking up in the morning. By late afternoon and evening, though, you may feel a burst of adrenaline that makes it very difficult to fall asleep. You might dismiss this by saying, "I'm just not a morning person," but in reality, your hormone levels are mixed up. What's worse, the higher levels of cortisol in the evening will tend to either make it difficult for you to fall asleep at bedtime or will wake you up between 3 and 6 a.m.

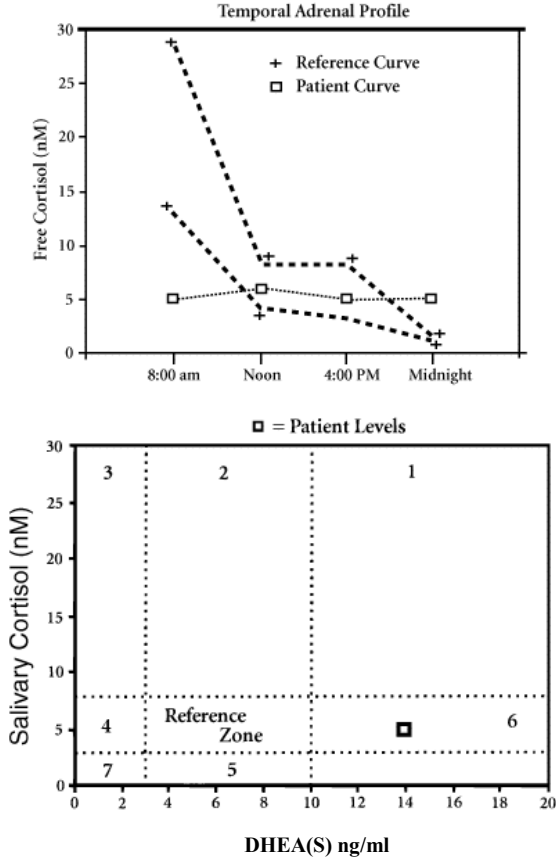
5. Adrenal Fatigue - non-adapted



Sadly, **Stages Five through Seven** are known as the “exhaustion stages” of fatigue, and I hope you don’t have to experience them. This is a kind of exhaustion that continues at all hours of the day and night. Women at this stage of fatigue are often bedridden. By the end, blood tests will finally show enough damage for you to receive a diagnosis from medical doctors, often discovered because you simply collapse in an emergency room or even fall into a coma with severe signs of shock.

If you enter the exhaustion stage, your body will not be able to keep even your vital organs running. You might lose weight because of an inability to digest food, a loss of appetite, or diarrhea. Your kidneys can lose function, and your blood pressure will drop to dangerously low levels. Your emotional state will weaken, and you’ll panic in a crowd or if you hear a loud noise. You may start crying for no apparent reason, and you might not be able to stop. You’ll probably feel depressed or even suicidal.

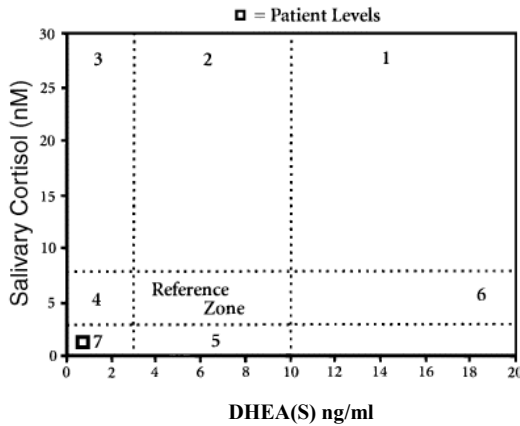
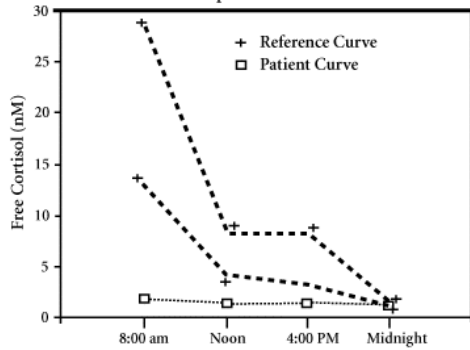
6. Inappropriate DHEAS with non-ACTH dependent stimulation



As you can see, these are the only stages of fatigue that would show a low level of cortisol on an 8:00 a.m. blood test, the one typically used by medical doctors. Sadly, you have to be close to death to be able to “catch” this severe of a problem.

7. Adrenal Failure

Temporal Adrenal Profile



The largest difference between these three levels is the amount of DHEA circulating in your body. However, a knowledgeable healthcare provider will also be able to diagnose your stage of fatigue based on many other tests, which is why you need to get help if your fatigue is this extreme.

So what is the common thread through the most common stages of fatigue? High levels of cortisol at night, when there should be almost none!

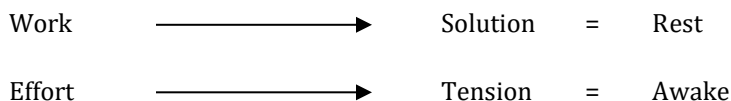
Stage of Fatigue:	Amount of Cortisol at Midnight:
One	5 mg
Two	12 mg
Three	22 mg
Four	7 mg
Five	0-4 mg
Six	5 mg
Seven	Almost none

Why is it difficult for a tired woman to wake up in the morning? Note the levels of cortisol in the morning, after the sun has risen and proper levels are around 20 mg:

Stage of Fatigue:	Amount of Cortisol at 8 a.m.:
One	35 mg
Two	40 mg
Three	40 mg
Four	10 mg
Five	7 mg
Six	5 mg
Seven	Almost none

In Stages One to Three, cortisol is more than double what it should be, causing a woman to operate in “super woman” mode. Of course, as we all know, this is just going to make her more tired in the long run.

Remember our diagram earlier?



Stage Four is the most common stage in women who seek help. Note that now cortisol has dramatically fallen. She is used to running on ridiculous amounts of adrenaline and cortisol, yet now she has only half the cortisol that is optimal. When the sunlight hits her eyes, she rolls over and puts a pillow over her head. “I’m just not a morning person,” she groans. She’s right!

In the latter stages, she doesn’t make enough cortisol to properly survive at any time of day or night. Of course, every system of her body will now show it.

Fixing Insomnia

I'm hoping, as I've been explaining why you have trouble sleeping, that you're already starting to see some of the obvious solutions. Let's quickly review some key principles:

1. The sun and moon rule time. We need their light.
2. Mankind should rule the day, by working and eating during these hours.
3. Work should occur during daylight hours; rest should occur during nighttime hours.
4. Try to have work finished and problems resolved before the sun sets.
5. Cortisol should be highest in the morning and lowest at midnight.
6. Your eyes need bright light in the daytime and darkness at night.

7. Melatonin should be high at night; serotonin should be high in the day.
8. Your metabolism should be faster in the morning and slower at night.
9. When suffering from stress, allow yourself time to rest!

Let me give you some specific ideas. Place a checkmark next to those that you feel would be most helpful for you in your situation, based upon your unique test results.

Eat at the same times each day.

The first habit you should work on is following a predictable meal schedule. Each time you eat, hormones are released which will affect your circadian rhythm for the rest of that day.

Eat nutritious foods.

Your body needs building blocks in order to manufacture hormones. Many sleep problems can be avoided simply by supplying your cells with adequate nutrition. For instance, Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) is often caused by a lack of magnesium or iron. Leg cramps are often caused by too little potassium. Both of these problems are evidenced by low levels of DHEA, so they are more often seen in Stages Three and Four.

L-tryptophan and L-tyrosine are amino acids that are commonly prescribed to women with insomnia, because they help in the body's production of serotonin and melatonin. However, you can supply your body with all the amino acids it needs by eating plenty of animal meat, eggs, and milk. Turkey, tuna, milk, and yogurt contain the highest amounts.

Indigestion often plagues those with insomnia, yet you can avoid this problem by consuming plenty of enzymes. Don't forget to take enzyme supplements (which include betaine hydrochloride, or HCl) with every meal. Consistently eating "fermented" foods and taking probiotics which include acidophilus will help immensely. If you suffer from heartburn at night, try lying on your left side so that your bedtime snack can sit properly in your stomach and have time to adequately break down.

“Phosphatidylserine” is an expensive and exotic supplement often given to those with insomnia, yet it exists naturally in foods such as egg yolks and liver. Eat these foods in great supply, especially from sunrise until noon.

In other words, if you follow the nutrition and supplement advice given in Part 2 (“What to Eat to Beat Fatigue”), you can easily avoid these common problems – and many others!

Work and move during daylight hours.

Exercise has been proven to gently raise cortisol levels, as well as burn off excess adrenaline, so when morning comes, slowly get moving. I am referring to short bursts of muscle work, followed by rest periods. ***Be gentle!***

Consume caffeine early in the day, since it takes about 5 hours to get out of your system. As long as caffeine is used properly, to work most during morning hours when cortisol levels are supposed to be highest, coffee and tea can be extremely helpful tools.

Finish your work by sunset.

Obviously, this won't always be possible, but try to adjust your thinking. Your “day” should end at sunset, not at bedtime or midnight. Do your hardest work in the morning, then begin slowing your pace as the day goes on, resolving as many tasks and issues as possible before the sun sets.

Dr. Hans Selye writes,

Do not let yourself get carried away and keyed up more than is necessary to acquire the momentum for the best performance of what you want to do in the interest of self-expression. If you get keyed up too much, especially during the later hours of the day, your stress reaction may carry over into the night.

Keep in mind that the hormones produced during acute stress are meant to alarm you and key you up for peak accomplishments. They tend to combat sleep and to promote alertness during short periods of exertion; they are not meant to be used all day long.

If too much of these hormones is circulating in your blood, they will keep you awake, just as a tablet of amphetamine would. (Incidentally, amphetamine is chemically related to adrenaline.) Your insomnia has a chemical basis, which cannot easily be talked away after it has developed; and at night in bed it is too late to prevent it from progressing.

Try not to overwork any one part of your body or mind disproportionately by repeating the same actions to exhaustion. Be especially careful to avoid the senseless repetition of the same mental task when you are already exhausted. A moment of objective self-analysis will suffice to convince you that this work could be done much more easily after a good night's sleep, or even after only a few hours of doing something else (deviation). If you get yourself deep in a rut, you may not be able to stop, and mentally you will keep repeating your routine throughout the night.⁶⁶

As you work, avoid sitting or standing in one position for too long. Resting is fine. It helps, in fact, to lie down two or three times each day.

Fibromyalgia researchers, Doctors Gina Honeyman and John C. Lowe, add:

When we're standing, we're resisting gravity. To effectively resist it and not crumple to the ground, some of our muscles must stay contracted and others must contract over-and-over again. The muscles, working in synchrony with our tendons and ligaments, act like guy wires to keep us erect.

Similar muscle contractions occur when we sit without a backrest, especially if we lean slightly forward, as over a computer keyboard. Back muscles work vigorously to hold us in this upright posture. When we're upright, we're usually using our hands, arms, and legs to carry out the activities of living.

The muscle contractions cause nerve impulses to bombard our spinal cord and brain. The nerve impulses come up through the brain stem. There, some of the impulses pass to a structure called the reticular activating system. As its name implies, when stimulated, it activates the rest of the brain. The activating effect can make it impossible to go to sleep... [Until these patients are effectively treated,] they may fail to get restorative sleep. From their poor sleep, they may develop fibromyalgia-like symptoms.

⁶⁶ Selye, pp. 423-424.

From the brain stem, the nerve impulses reach a structure called the thalamus. The thalamus sorts and transmits the impulses to all parts of the brain. One part is the cerebral cortex. This is the place where we experience awareness and formulate thoughts. Another part is the limbic system that sits lower in the brain. This area gives rise to emotion and motivation.

Heavy and prolonged bombardment of these parts of the brain by nerve impulses can be harmful. Aside from disrupting our sleep, the bombardment can cause highly unpleasant thoughts and feelings. When we lie down long enough, however, the impulses reaching the brain settle down. If they settle down enough, the brain stem activating system, the cortex, and the limbic system all calm down. This partly explains why most people gradually become sleepy when they lie in bed for a time, as when they read for a while. The effects on our thoughts and feelings can be soothing and pleasant...

We recommend that you adopt the practice of lying down one or two times throughout the day. When you lie down, mentally scan your body looking for tense muscles. When you find them – and you definitely will – relax them. This will increase your chances of fully benefitting from lying down.⁶⁷

Rest after dark.

It is no coincidence that it feels good to most women to lay their heavy work aside as twilight falls. You'll find most of us in the kitchen, preparing dinner. Try to work slowly and cheerfully... "putzing around," as I like to call it. It's pleasant to work quietly, chopping vegetables or stirring sauces while little ones play nearby on the floor and quiet music is heard in the background. I enjoy lighting a small candle as the sun sets. I have a routine of closing up the curtains, turning on lamps, and placing a few drops of a calming essential oil (such as lavender) in a warmer.

During the first "watch" of the night (early evening, before 9 p.m.), spend time laughing and renewing your friendships within the home, with your husband and children. This is the time for hugs, back rubs, quiet games, books read aloud, discussions with children, funny television shows, and tickling. Children and adults both love warm baths, bites of chocolate (not excess!), herbal teas, and bedtime snacks.

⁶⁷ Gina Honeyman-Lowe and John C. Lowe, *Your Guide to Metabolic Health* (Boulder, CO: McDowell Health-Science Books, 2003), pp. 246-247.

Learn to make your home and life cozy, as you prepare your body for sleep.

Most people have “photosensitivity” (sensitivity to light), which can occur from too much exposure to the flashing light from television or computer screens. Try to wrap up your exposure to bright lights by 9 p.m. Even noise levels should start to come down. Otherwise, this artificial light will prevent your melatonin levels from rising as they should.

You want melatonin to begin rising, because it helps tense muscles relax, as well as lowering blood pressure and body temperature, slowing heart rate and breathing, and lowering your entire metabolism so you can rest and heal.

As I will discuss in Part 5, ultradian rhythms (each about 90 minutes long) are also working both day and night, so as you enter the second “watch” of the night (9 p.m. to midnight), it’s time to begin actually moving into bed and a horizontal position.

Finally, try hard to be in bed by 10:30 p.m., before a second wind of adrenaline hits at 11:00 p.m. – or you’ll be up until 1-2 a.m., well into the third and middle “watch” of the night (midnight to 3:00 a.m.), when the majority of healing of your cells takes place.

During this watch, do everything in your power to avoid light! Any exposure to light at this time will completely shut down all melatonin production for the rest of the night – in other words, this night has been wasted! Use room-darkening shades, remove clocks with lights, avoid night lights, and even use an eye mask if needed. If you find yourself awake or needing to use the bathroom, try to keep the lights off. Bring your nursing infant into your very dark bed with you at this time of night, or if you must bottle feed, be prepared the night before and keep the house as dark as possible. Train older babies to sleep through this watch of the night, especially since they need the sleep at this time, too.

Avoid deep discussions or scary movies. Don’t let yourself get keyed up! Rather, choose intimacy, massages, and forgiveness. If your brain gets going, write your thoughts briefly on a notecard, and then look for a quiet book or music that will give your brain a diversion. Meditating on Scripture verses is excellent.

The fourth “watch” of the night (3:00 to 6:00 a.m.) is called the “morning” or “cock-crowing” watch because the world is starting to stir. Even though it’s still dark outside, birds and small animals are busy looking for food. In a healthy woman, cortisol rates are starting to

rise naturally, releasing small amounts of glycogen from the liver and increasing blood sugar at a time when you haven't eaten for hours.

However, if you aren't producing enough cortisol (especially those in more advanced stages of fatigue), your brain will scream for the fuel (glucose) it needs, releasing adrenaline into your system. You'll wake up suddenly, often with panic attacks, violent or frightening nightmares, or pain. Your brain will wake you up with worries and anxiety. No matter what you do, this adrenaline is now in your system and you probably will have great difficulty falling back asleep.

What your body needs is some fuel, so if this commonly happens to you:

- Be sure to eat your bedtime snack. It should include a balanced amount of protein (for the tryptophan it contains), fat (for the slow digestion it provides), and carbohydrates.
- Increase your daytime carbohydrate consumption by 6-12 grams of carbohydrate per meal or snack, until you find the amount that makes you feel well.
- Keep a few bites of protein and carbohydrates next to your bed, such as nuts or multi-grain crackers. A glass of raw milk is an excellent snack, as always.

Since you aren't really in danger, even though your brain thinks it is, try diverting your brain by deep breathing, alternately tensing then relaxing muscle groups, and listening to very quiet and peaceful music. However, be realistic about the fact that this adrenaline is already in your system and will take some time to wear off.

For many women, the only thing that helps with this phenomenon on a more permanent basis is supplementation with cortisol, a topic I will discuss further in Part 4.

Snoring can tell you how fatigued you are.

Snoring and sleep apnea are increasing in our society, and it's no wonder. Cortisol is the hormone that is needed to keep breathing passages open as you sleep. Cortisol levels are supposed to begin rising slowly after midnight and into the morning watch, causing serotonin levels to gently rise and melatonin levels to gently fall.

However, anything that depletes cortisol from your system while you are asleep (such as allergies to dust or pets, or the release of adrenaline we mentioned above because of low blood sugar) can cause your air passages to close.

In previous decades, doctors would have simply removed your tonsils and adenoids. Thankfully, they're not as quick to do this surgery, even though it really did provide relief for many snorers and their spouses.

A CPAP machine is helpful, and cortisol supplementation is another option. As you heal your body in other ways, you should see snoring begin to subside. Asking your spouse what time of night it is when you usually snore will let you know that your cortisol levels are low then, so write this symptom down in a symptom diary, as this will help you determine your stage of fatigue.

Rest more or wake with the sun.

This next piece of advice depends on your knowing what stage of fatigue you're in, but by now you should have a pretty good idea.

This is important, because many women feel terribly guilty that they can't wake up well in the morning. They read verses like this in the Bible, and the guilt only increases:

*"Who can find a virtuous woman?
for her price is far above rubies...
She riseth also while it is yet night,
and giveth meat to her household,
and a portion to her maidens."⁶⁸*

So morning after morning, women in Stages Four through Seven are setting their alarms and dragging themselves out of bed each morning. They're surviving on tiny amounts of cortisol, so they can't wake up as they should. They load themselves up with sugar and caffeine for breakfast, to get a very essential rush of adrenaline simply to survive. Sadly, very soon they will erupt in tears or anger with their families, or drop in utter exhaustion. And the guilt continues...

Dear mothers (and others), you officially have my permission to sleep in! You need it! It might not be grammatically correct to use so many exclamation marks, but let me restate this: ***You need to rest!!!!!!!!!!***

⁶⁸ Proverbs 31:10, 15 (KJV)

A good rule of thumb is to sleep until you are naturally wakened. Researchers have found that this often happens between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m. (It would be an excellent idea to keep track of what time you naturally wake up each day.)

Dr. Wilson, author of *Adrenal Fatigue: The 21st Century Stress Syndrome*, believes that this sleep is actually the most restorative of all for women with adrenal fatigue.⁶⁹

I realize that most of us just can't sleep in, even if we wanted to. Our schedules won't permit it. But for now, you should do everything possible to keep your mornings organized, structured, and *quiet*, to minimize the depletion of the little bit of cortisol you do make. Concentrate on excellent nutrition in the morning, never forgetting supplementation with enzymes and other nutrients. In other words, use up as few "energy points" in the morning as humanly possible!

As you begin to heal and move into Stages One to Three of fatigue, you'll want to begin waking with the sun and allowing those early-morning sunbeams to shine their light directly into your eyes. I dearly love peeking at the sunrise each morning. It feels so refreshing to open the curtains in my home and to let the light hit my optic nerves, especially since I know that it is helping my body produce serotonin, the "feel-good" hormone. This is an excellent way to reset your circadian rhythms permanently.

Consider hormone supplementation.

Hormone supplementation is a difficult decision, so I will dedicate Part 4 solely to this topic, where I give reasons both for and against hormone supplementation.

But I'm sure you can see by this time that some women simply aren't making enough of essential hormones, such as melatonin, serotonin, cortisol, or DHEA. Some women's lifestyles can't be changed, so hormone supplementation can make a dramatic difference.

Before you get to that point, I urge you to consider first the lifestyle changes we've discussed in this book. Are there simple changes that you can make this week? Be sure to write down the changes you're making, as well as your symptoms, so you'll know which changes are helping and which ones are not.

⁶⁹ James L. Wilson, *Adrenal Fatigue: The 21st Century Stress Syndrome* (Petaluma, CA: Smart Publications, 2001), pp. 124-125.

Action Guide

- If you suffer from insomnia, at which “watch” of the night does it usually occur? _____

At what hours of the day are you most fatigued?

- What Stage of Fatigue do you think you’re in?

Why? _____

- If you aren’t sure which stage of fatigue you’re in, order some lab work. Blood tests of cortisol, usually taken at 8:00 a.m., are fine, but they will not show you the daily release of cortisol that affects your circadian rhythms and ultimately your sleep. It is important to see at least four different readings of cortisol over 24 hours, on a typical, non-stressful day. It is even valuable to get tested several times to compare one day with other days. It is very unlikely that you’ll find a medical doctor willing to check your blood levels of cortisol that frequently.

I recommend saliva testing, having used it myself and having compared the accuracy of various types of hormone testing (blood, urine, and saliva).

- Read more about saliva testing in Chapter 3.

- Record the times you eat each day in a notebook. Be sure you are feeding your body with proper nutrients each day.

180 • Too Tired

- If your fatigue is causing other symptoms besides lack of sleep, track your symptoms in a notebook. Be sure to record “times of day” next to your symptoms. (Now you know why this is so important!) Consider how your sleep might be causing your symptoms.

- Begin thinking about stressors that might be affecting sleep (anger, fear, ways you need to change your use of time in the day). Keep a journal! (We will discuss this further in Part 6.)

- Consider the use of some of the supplements listed on the next page.

Supplements to Consider with Insomnia

- The amino acid **L-tryptophan**, naturally present in animal foods, is very helpful in the production of serotonin. It's not legally available in the United States, but you can purchase 5-hydroxytryptophan, which is a precursor to tryptophan. You can find this supplement in health food stores as 5-HTP. Take it before bed with your bedtime snack.

Several different herbs contain ingredients that can help you sleep. I like using herbs, because they are “whole foods” derived from green plants, containing all the enzymes, vitamins, minerals, and other co-factors needed to absorb their nutrition without undesirable side effects. In other words, they are effective!

The following blend of herbs, or any used individually, can be effective:

- Skullcap** – This herb relieves pain and is anti-spasmodic and anti-epileptic.
- Valerian** – This herb relieves tachycardia (rapid heart rate), hysteria and headaches.
- Hops** – This herb has a sedative effect, inducing sleep.
- Passion Flower** – This herb produces easier breathing.
- Ginger Root** – This herb “antagonizes adrenergic stimulation.”

Verses to Ponder

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone, O Yehovah, make me dwell in safety. (Psalm 4:8)

He will not let your foot slip — He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. (Psalm 121:3-4)

In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat — for He grants sleep to those he loves. (Psalm 127:2)

When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. (Proverbs 3:24)

The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep. (Ecclesiastes 5:12)

PART 4

Help for Your Hormones

CHAPTER 13

Supporting Cortisol

Throughout this book, I've been teaching you about the causes of fatigue, and my goal is to help you make simple lifestyle changes to overcome your fatigue.

I'm hoping that you've already implemented so many of the ideas in my books that you're already experiencing substantial relief from your fatigue!

Rather than just lifestyle changes, however, this section is going to emphasize the replacement of hormones.

Even if you don't think you'd ever want to use medication or alternative medicine to treat your fatigue, I hope that you'll read this section. Understanding its principles will help you make sense of the practical suggestions you'll read elsewhere.

One of the most frequent questions I've been asked, by email and through comment forms on my websites and blogs, is,

"Why you think cortisol (hydrocortisone, Cortef®, adrenal supplements, etc.) is so essential, and is there proof that it doesn't harm us or become addictive?"

As you've heard me say before, cortisol is "the king of hormones" in your body. However, the amount of cortisol secreted in your body changes dramatically over the course of every 24-hour day. In addition, your body is capable of manufacturing dramatically larger or smaller amounts of cortisol on non-normal days, days when you're extra tired, fighting an infection, or facing an enormous stress. For some women, they are in a stage of fatigue where they are making too much cortisol on a chronic basis, causing some pretty bad symptoms in their bodies.

The constantly changing nature of cortisol and its responsiveness to your levels of stress can create a problem if you'd like to carefully supplement with this natural hormone. It might be a "natural" hormone, but its secretion in your body is ***complicated!***

Regardless, doctors have been using cortisol safely, to treat not only fatigue but countless other diseases, for close to 80 years – quietly, carefully, and without harmful side effects. Numerous studies and reports have been released on its safety – as well as its catastrophic side effects, when used inappropriately.

The questions we're going to ask – and to attempt to answer – in this section are,

1. Is it safe to supplement with cortisol?
2. Is it absolutely essential to supplement cortisol in order to overcome fatigue?
3. Since my body will become somewhat dependent upon any hormone supplementation I take, is it worth it?
4. How can I use medications and "natural" supplements safely and wisely?
5. What must I do to overcome fatigue if I want to avoid using any medications or supplements?

A Review of Fatigue

First, let me ask you a review question. Why are you feeling so tired? As we learned in Part 3, the reason you feel so bone-tired each morning, dragging yourself out of bed, is that your body is asking you to rest.

Symptoms are frustrating things. They keep us from functioning at our best, and they annoy us with their persistence through our days.

Yet symptoms are not a disease in and of themselves. Symptoms are simply the megaphones screaming at you, trying to get your attention, to tell you that something is not working correctly in your body.

Symptoms are like a warning light on the dashboard of our cars. We see it, but we don't understand why it's flashing. If we took our car to a mechanic, however, we would expect him to fix the problem that caused the light to go off. We'd be disappointed if he simply reached up under the dashboard and unplugged the light.

Yes, the symptom of the warning light would go away. No, the car wouldn't be fixed. Soon we'd have a much bigger problem on our hands.

This is exactly how many of us act, though, with our bodies. Rather than trying to find out the cause of our fatigue, we go to great lengths to get rid of the fatigue. Because we never change anything in our lifestyles but prop ourselves up with stimulants so we can continue on "as is," our body then sends new and more "exciting" symptoms.

Your body is trying to tell you something when you feel bone tired and ache all over.

So let me ask you the review question in a new way. Why are you feeling so tired? What steps have you taken to address the root of the problem, not simply the symptoms?

The answer to this question, as we have learned, is easy.

Spend less energy than you make.

One way to *spend* less energy is by eating and properly digesting top-quality, nutritious food. One way to *make* more energy is by getting a good night's sleep.

I'm sure you realize how difficult both of those things can be. Now that you understand your "energy bank account," you can also imagine how long it might take to get your "bank account balance" out of the red and back into the "black," where you can function well every day.

Finally, you can quickly overcome fatigue by eating well and getting good sleep, but only if you're in the beginning stages of adrenal fatigue. It's going to be a much longer road to recovery if you're in a more advanced stage of adrenal fatigue.

Why is that? As famous stress researcher and writer, Dr. Hans Selye, described in his books, women in the most advanced stages of adrenal fatigue (Stages 4-7) are deficient not only in cortisol but in other

hormones such as DHEA. These lesser-well-known hormones make up what is known as your “adrenal reserves.” In other words, these women have not only drained their energy “checking accounts;” they’ve also drained every penny of their energy “savings accounts.” For many, they are in permanent “overdraft status,” and some are penniless and homeless (on bed rest or in emergency crisis).

For women in the early stages of fatigue (Stages 1-3), they are simply facing problems getting from month to month, so to speak, with their energy “paychecks.” To change to my new metaphor, their car warning lights are going off, but they’re still able to drive their cars.

For “normal” women, they see a flashing light on their dashboard (they feel tired after an especially tiring day), and they do something about it. They eat a little nutritious food, they go to bed a little early that night, and they wake up refreshed. They get an energy “oil change,” and they proceed on their merry way. In the bank account metaphor, they trim their energy budget for a week or two, being careful in their spending, then continue on with financial health.

So at which stage are you? If you really want to overcome fatigue, it is essential that you know! **The only way to know for sure is to monitor your health!**

Monitoring your health involves setting up new habits, ways of living that help your body run more efficiently. Some of these habits include keeping a journal, following a schedule, and faithfully taking supplements.

My Story

Of course, I have to be honest with you. The only person I know who has good habits is my mother – and she doesn’t have chronic fatigue or battle adrenal insufficiency! Rather, she has taken care of others (including me, at times) for so many years that she has developed consistent habits in her own life. Yes, sometimes she gets tired – because she’s constantly doing things for others – but she takes care of herself and has self-discipline.

Then there is me. She has been telling me to be disciplined for years.

When I am, I feel better! When I’m not...

Yet I’m the one who has Addison’s Disease, which was equivalent to the very ending stages of fatigue when I was first diagnosed and had an adrenal “crisis” which brought me close to death. I’m doing so much

better now, but I will deal with the effects of fatigue for the rest of my life.

Because my body makes almost no cortisol whatsoever, I have learned first-hand how important cortisol is. Because my adrenal glands cannot make cortisol, I am required to “supplement” with this hormone in order to stay alive. In fact, my doctor has warned me that I have about 20 minutes to replenish cortisol if I have a life-threatening shock, such as a car accident.

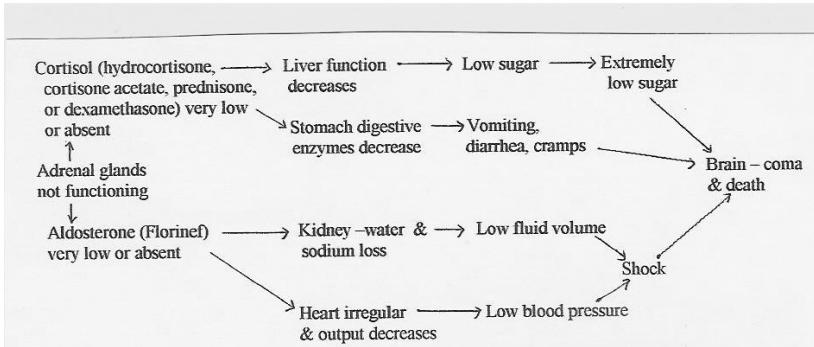


Image Source: *Addison News*, June 2002

Cortisol is truly the “king of hormones”! It is essential to life!

I supplement with prescription cortisol four times each day. I carefully follow a pattern of supplementation that is similar to how a healthy body produces it. Because of this, my circadian rhythms have normalized, and I am able to function in a relatively normal way, so much so that many people have wondered if there is anything wrong with me at all.

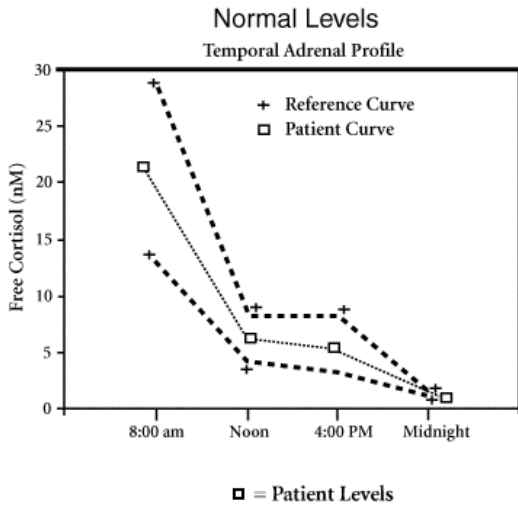


Image Source: <http://www.chronicfatigue.org/ASI%20Normal.html>

By replacing cortisol throughout my day, I am able to mimic what a normal body does. For this reason, taking cortisol as a supplement is not only perfectly safe; it is essential to my survival.

Yet I've also learned first-hand that if I don't get enough sleep, argue with my husband, or cause other stress to myself, my body shoots out enormous levels of adrenaline.

(Adrenaline is made in the adrenal medulla, not the adrenal cortex. These are actually two separate glands of the body, and only my cortex is damaged. My medulla produces adrenaline just fine, much to my chagrin at times!)

Shortly after my body produces adrenaline, it calls for the production of cortisol to bring me back from this "crisis" of too much sugar. If I have plenty of supplemented cortisol in my system, I'll be just fine. But if it's been stressful in additional ways (maybe a holiday, or I've been speaking at a women's conference, or a child was up all night with the stomach flu, or I went shopping for several hours with friends), I've "used up" the cortisol that I supplemented by mouth. All of a sudden, I start to ache all over. As indicated in the chart on the previous page, my blood sugar starts to plummet. I get shaky. I head to the bathroom with a sudden case of stomach cramps and diarrhea. I can't remember any of my children's names, so I just stare blankly at them. The room starts to spin, and in a severe case, I can pass out.

"Normal" people can handle extra stress. Because I don't make cortisol on my own, I very quickly feel the effects of stress on my body.

I have about 20 minutes to take more cortisol by mouth. I carry it with me everywhere. It's in my purse, in my diaper bag, in the glove compartments of my vehicles, in my husband's computer bag, in his office, and in my suitcase when I travel. I also carry Solu-Cortef®, which is a liquid version of cortisol that can be injected into my muscles with a syringe if I am not able to take it by mouth. My husband, children, and close friends are all trained in how to use this shot, and they all know when to give me more pills, too! I will wear a Medic-Alert® bracelet for the rest of my life, and I have printed instructions on the use of cortisol to give to all medical personnel, since Addison's Disease is still rare enough that I can't be sure a paramedic would know how to treat me in an emergency.

I must supplement with cortisol in order to stay alive. My goal is to always do it as much like how a "normal" body does it as possible. **Then I have to spend less energy than I supplement.** Because so many variables are involved, and because cortisol is "the king of hormones" and is essential to so many processes in my body, this is really, really difficult.

Too Much Cortisol

Some days I take too much cortisol. I simply "guess" wrong!

The harmful effects of too much cortisol are well documented. In women, they include:

- Upper body obesity
- A rounded face
- Increased fat around the neck
- Edema (swelling)
- Skin: fragile and thin, bruises easily, heals poorly
- Purple or pink stretch marks may appear on the abdomen, thighs, buttocks, arms, and breasts
- Bones are weakened, leading to backaches and rib or spinal column fractures
- Excess hair growth on face, neck, chest, abdomen, and thighs
- Menstrual periods that become irregular or stop
- Severe fatigue (!)
- Weak muscles
- High blood pressure

- High blood glucose
- Increased thirst and urination
- Irritability, anxiety, or depression

When I take extra cortisol because I truly need it, there are no problems. My body uses what it needs, so there is no extra in my system. But when I don't need it, I experience side effects. Quite frankly, it's very difficult to know sometimes.



Anne – (left) April 1996, (right) December 2010

But my body is really no different from yours. If you eat a lot of sugar, your body also releases a large amount of adrenaline. You must then release a corresponding amount of cortisol to bring things back into control. You just don't feel it as quickly or dramatically as I do.

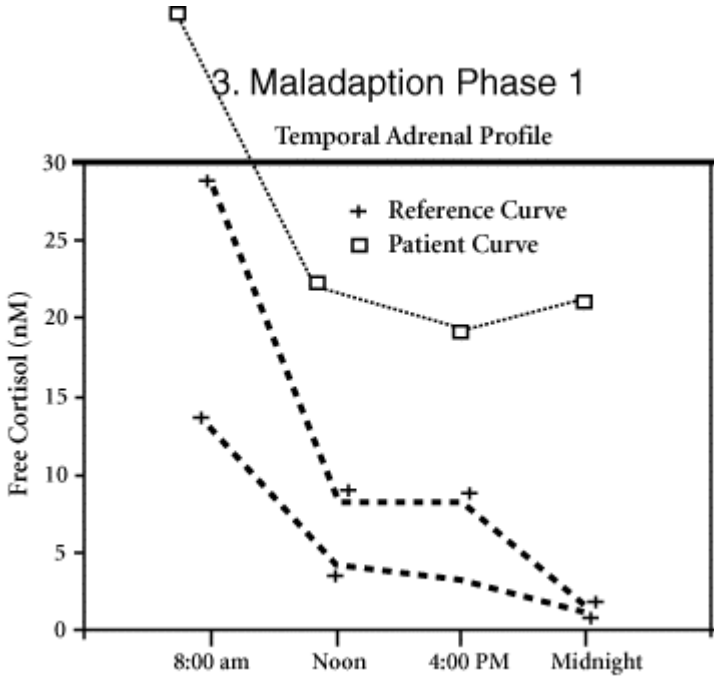
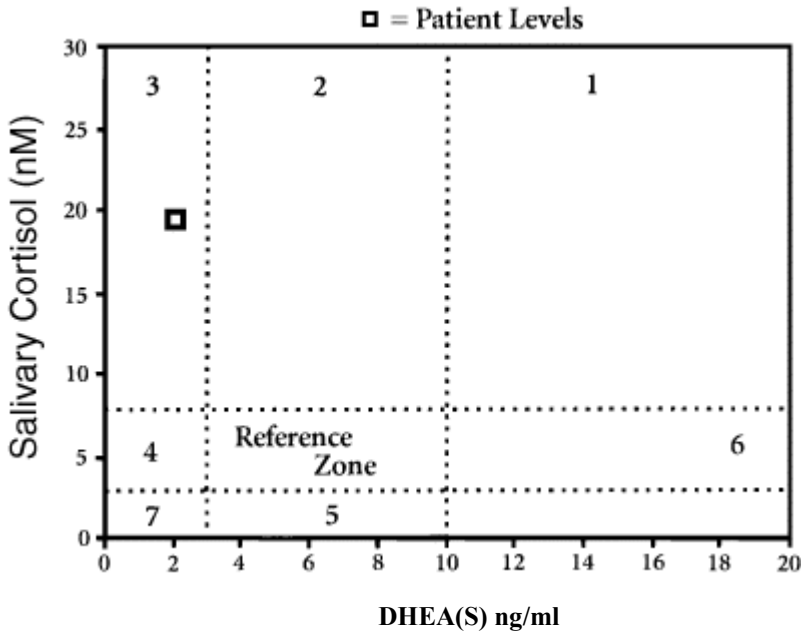


Image Source: <http://www.chronicfatigue.org/AS1%203.html>

The patient represented in this chart is in Stage Three of adrenal fatigue. She is running on too much cortisol all throughout her day, and I'm quite sure she is experiencing the same effects of too much cortisol that I would be if I supplemented with too much.

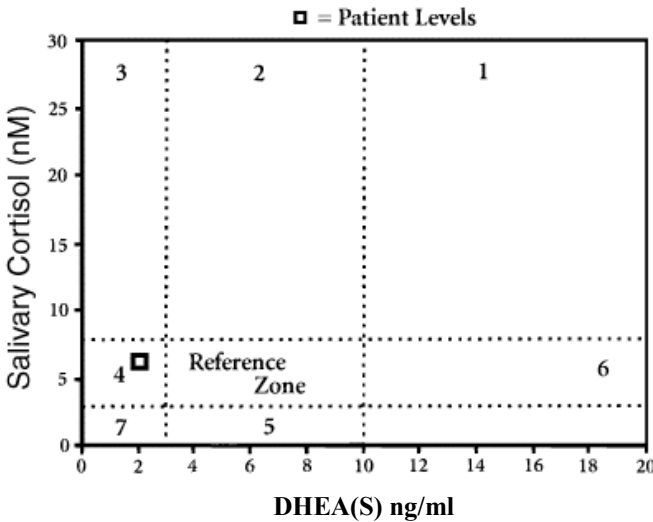
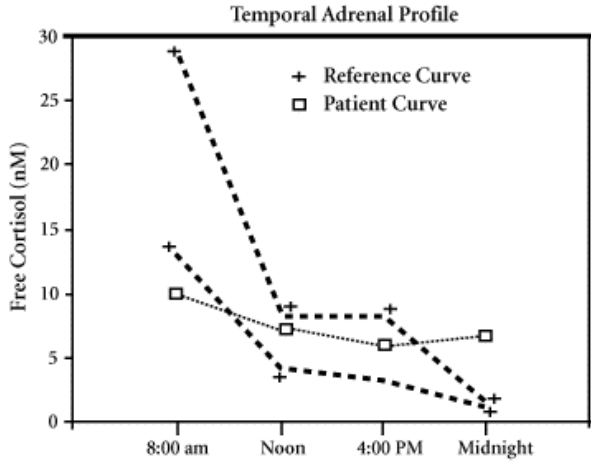
Sadly, she doesn't feel the effects immediately like I do. However, her "car warning lights" are flashing! Her "energy bank" is sending notices in the mail. Is she paying attention?

Let's talk about her "adrenal reserves" for a moment.



As you can see, her cortisol levels are high, but her DHEA is low, at approximately 2 ng/ml. She has very few reserves in her energy “bank account.” Therefore, even though she has plenty of cortisol in her body at Stage Three, if she doesn’t pay attention to her symptoms and change something soon, she’ll soon be a Stage Four patient.

4. Maladaptation Phase 2



The Stage Four woman in this profile has a serious problem, doesn't she? She needs to eat extremely nutritious foods, including adequate fruits and vegetables and what our culture considers enormous amounts of animal protein and fat. She needs to avoid all toxins and stimulants in her food. She also needs to get plenty of sleep, even though you can see from her cortisol profiles that she's probably suffering from insomnia and simply can't sleep.

Now she needs to make a decision. Would she find it helpful to supplement with cortisol and other hormones, mimicking the way her body should be making it, in order to rest her adrenal glands and build up her reserves of DHEA?

To Supplement or Not – That Is the Question!

As you have learned, cortisol is a very natural hormone, produced “naturally” in all human beings. Doctors have been supplementing with cortisol for decades, very safely, as long as they use it in *small* amounts, copying how a healthy body produces it – not in *large* amounts that can produce the harmful side effects of too much cortisol listed previously.

But most doctors – and patients – are very afraid to give women a boost to their energy bank accounts by supplementing with cortisol. For good reason! The first doctors began administering “Compound E,” known to us now as the drug “cortisone,” after it was isolated in the laboratories of the Mayo Foundation in 1930.⁷⁰ It was injected into the pilots of the German Luftwaffe during World War 2, to help them fly with ease at altitudes of 40,000 feet or more.⁷¹ After the war, doctors at the Mayo Clinic experimented with the use of cortisone in the treatment of three patients with Addison’s disease, with amazingly beneficial results. Next, a woman with severe rheumatoid arthritis was almost miraculously cured in only seven days with the use of cortisone. Over the next six months, fourteen patients with severe rheumatoid arthritis experienced the same amazing help, all without harmful side effects.

Then problems were encountered. Because of difficulties compounding the new medication, large doses were given to patients. Patients experienced flare-ups of their arthritic conditions, and severe side effects of too much cortisol began to multiply. Patients’ faces got a characteristic “moon” or rounded shape, purple marks and bruises appeared on their skin, osteoporosis appeared, bones fractured, diabetes developed, and patients swelled up with edema. Even more alarming, some showed a decreased resistance to infections, and if they underwent even minor surgical procedures, they collapsed and even died under the anesthetic.

⁷⁰ William McK. Jefferies, M.D., F.A.C.P., *Safe Uses of Cortisol, Third Edition* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 2004), p. 4.

⁷¹ Kendall EC: Some observations on the hormone of the adrenal cortex designated Compound E. *Proc Staff Meet Mayo Clin* 24: 298-301, 1949.

As you can image, the medical community and general public were alarmed. A miracle cure had been discovered, but now they wondered if it were a “treacherous poison.”⁷²

Dr. William McK. Jefferies, leading researcher in the safe uses of cortisol, writes:

*Not every patient treated with [cortisone] developed such alarming complications, but some did, and practically every practitioner encountered one or more serious complications of this type. It is not surprising that the attitude of physicians toward [cortisone] therapy reversed from enthusiasm to alarm and that reports advocating reservation of the therapeutic use of these agents for serious, life-threatening diseases for which no other therapy was effective replaced the wise-spread enthusiastic use for many diseases that had previously been prevalent. Medical literature was swamped with reports of grim complications of [cortisone] therapy, optimism gave way to pessimism, and a situation gradually developed in which perspective was lost.*⁷³

Sadly, as Dr. Jefferies points out, the studies that “swamped medical literature” did not state the dosages given to these patients, nor did they tell how long cortisone was administered. It was implied that any usage of cortisone drugs would bring about the side effects mentioned.

Yet through this time period, patients with Addison’s disease were continuously given “**physiologic**” **dosages of cortisone, without any harmful side effects**, allowing them to live normal lives, where they would have died of this disease without the cortisone.⁷⁴

What is a “physiologic” dose? It’s a dose that mimics as exactly as possible the normal secretion of cortisol in a healthy person.

As with any normal hormone, cortisol can be given in three dosage sizes:

⁷² Jefferies, pp. 4-8.

⁷³ Jefferies, p. 9.

⁷⁴ For more of the fascinating history of prescription cortisol, I recommend the book *The Quest for Cortisone*, by Thom Rooke (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 2012).

1. Replacement dosage

This is a dosage that would be necessary to completely replace everything the adrenal glands produce in a day. If someone had a surgery to remove her adrenal glands, this is the dosage that she would need in order to stay alive.

This dosage would also be necessary for someone in the most advanced and severe stages of fatigue, if her adrenal glands have been destroyed to such an extent that she cannot produce any cortisol on her own. (Other hormones are also given to patients with these conditions, such as sodium-retaining and androgenic steroids.)

A replacement dose is approximately 35-40 mg of hydrocortisone per day, dependent upon the patient's weight.⁷⁵

If replacement dosages were given to patients who still have some adrenal function of their own, their adrenal glands would stop producing cortisol. Now these women would not be able to respond adequately stress and could experience all the dangerous symptoms of Addison's Disease ("adrenal crisis") if they were ever to stop taking cortisol. You can imagine how dangerous this could be!

2. Supra-replacement dosages

Supra is a prefix meaning "above," so these dosages are above what is needed to replace what the adrenal glands normally replace in a day. **This would be a dosage in excess of 40 mg per day.** These are the dosages implied in most medical literature, and they produce all the side effects of too much cortisol.

Cortisol is available in many forms, such as "hydrocortisone" and Cortef®, as well as popular derivatives such as prednisone, prednisolone, methyl prednisolone, triamcinolone, and dexamethasone. **These derivatives are at least four times as strong as cortisol,** so using them can quickly produce the side effects of too much cortisol.

How do all these drugs compare with each other? For the purpose of comparison, the following is the equivalent milligram dosage of the various corticosteroids:

⁷⁵ The formula used to figure this is weight [in kg] divided by 2.

Cortisone, 25	Triamcinolone, 4
Hydrocortisone, 20	Paramethasone, 2
Prednisolone, 5	Betamethasone, 0.75
Prednisone, 5	Dexamethasone, 0.75
Methylprednisolone, 4	

In other words, Prednisone is 4 times stronger than hydrocortisone (Cortef®).

3. Sub-replacement dosages

Studies have shown that when someone with intact adrenal glands receives a *sub*, or “below,” replacement dose of cortisol, her own adrenal glands are only partly suppressed.

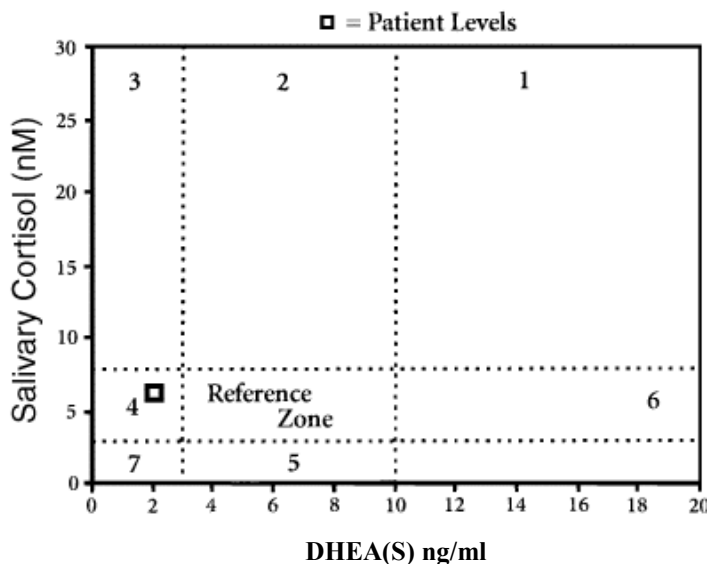
In other words, they are partially rested by the cortisol supplementation, but they are also able to make up the difference, bringing the patient to a normal production of cortisol.

These levels have been shown to normalize a patient’s cortisol secretion and circadian rhythms.

A sub-replacement dosage would be approximately 20 mg per day, divided into four dosages of 5 mg each.

The only caution for patients using sub-replacement dosages is that, as we’ve seen, most of these women do not have adequate “adrenal reserve.” This means that they don’t have much reserve for dealing with stress, such as huge emotional strains, times of surgery, or severe illnesses. These patients would need to “stress dose” with larger amounts of cortisol during stressful times, just like I do with my Addison’s Disease.

How would you know if you have adequate “adrenal reserve” or not? By looking at your lab work, at your level of DHEA compared to your levels of cortisol.



In this illustration of a woman with Stage Four fatigue, you can see that her level of DHEA is only 2 ng/ml. The “reference zone” or optimal amount is 3-10 ng/ml. Therefore, this patient has low “adrenal reserve.”

Cortisol Replacement

With all dosages, it’s important to realize that the amounts of cortisol given are **daily totals**, but that doesn’t mean the patient receives the total amount all at one time. Cortisol lasts for about eight hours in your body, so if you received it all in one or two dosages, you’d have spikes of cortisol sometimes – with hardly anything left for other times of the day. This would not mimic how a healthy body produces cortisol, so you’d have too much cortisol in your system for several hours at a time – and you could develop side effects!

Doctors disagree on how to make up for this problem. Some doctors, such as Dr. Jefferies, recommend taking approximately the same amount throughout the day:

- At breakfast – 5 mg
- At lunch – 5 mg
- At supper – 5 mg
- At bedtime – 5 mg⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Jefferies, pp. 14-17, 39-42.

Dr. Jefferies has vast amounts of experience with thousands of patients, so I personally recommend his treatment schedule.

Other very knowledgeable doctors, such as the famous Dr. Barry Peatfield in England and fibromyalgia expert Dr. John C. Lowe, recommend following a schedule similar to this:

At breakfast – 10 mg
At lunch – 5 mg
At supper – 2.5 mg
At bedtime – 2.5 mg

There are pros and cons to each schedule, which brings up the important point that each person must not only take personal responsibility for her choice, but should also ***be under the care of a competent healthcare professional who is knowledgeable in the “physiologic” usages of cortisol.***

I’ll be honest here. It’s difficult to find such a “healthcare professional.” Why is this?

1. **Patents on cortisone and cortisol have long-ago expired.** As Dr. Jefferies explains, “Drug regulations require that when a new use is found for an old drug, even at a lower dosage, it must be treated as if it were a new drug and meet all the investigational requirements of a new drug before the use can be included in the package insert or advertised.”⁷⁷ Obviously, this would be very expensive for drug companies, so there isn’t much incentive to use cortisol for problems like chronic fatigue.
2. **Package inserts don’t mention that the side effects listed are only possible on “supra-replacement” dosages.** Patients can now go online and read package inserts for themselves (for which I’m very grateful), but they can become quite frightened when reading the package insert for cortisol supplements! Very few doctors will be able to convince their patients that using cortisol can indeed be safe.
3. **Many doctors confuse cortisone and cortisol with their more powerful derivatives, such as prednisone or dexamethasone.** As we’ve learned, a sub-replacement dosage of 5 mg four times per day of cortisone (20 mg total cortisol) is

⁷⁷ Jefferies, p. 18.

a lot different than 5 mg four times per day of prednisone (80 mg total cortisol). These huge dosages of cortisol would certainly produce dangerous side effects! Doctors are right to be cautious, and you can see how confusing this can get.

So don't be too hard on your doctor! Rather, search for a doctor who is willing to *communicate* with you. Understanding and cooperation are absolutely essential for this type of therapy!

Prescription or Natural Supplement?

So is it necessary to go through a doctor and obtain a prescription for hydrocortisone?

Cortef® is the brand-name drug of choice for most endocrinologists, but many patients now go online and hear of alternatives such as adrenal cortex extracts and supplements.

How effective are these alternatives? Are they safe?

Every endocrinologist I've spoken with is rightfully skeptical of alternatives found online. Why? Because they are not "standardized." They may certainly be effective, as many customers will testify. That's because the extracts are taken from the adrenal glands of animals, usually cows or sheep. These extracts contain cortisol, so the patients receive the rest to their own adrenal glands that they so desperately need. In addition, the extracts contain other hormones naturally present in the adrenal glands, which helps build up "adrenal reserve."

Other supplements contain cortisol derived from plants, yet because the products are not regulated by the FDA, it is difficult to obtain information on the exact amount of cortisol they contain.

Because the industry is not standardized, **you cannot be sure how much cortisol you're consuming.** By now, you know that this can indeed be dangerous. It wouldn't take long to overdose on cortisol, which would give you an entirely new set of problems.

Can you see why endocrinologists are concerned? At least when you're taking a prescription-based cortisol, the doctor can easily monitor how much you're taking. Doctors also have access to frequent lab work, ensuring the safety of your treatment. As you know, you can do this from home, but will you? Can you afford to?

If you "stress dose" with adrenal extracts made from animals, you'll be doubling up on not only cortisol but all the other hormones contained

inside them. For instance, these extracts could possibly contain hormones such as aldosterone, which controls your body's sodium-potassium balance and regulates your electrolytes. You'll be receiving extra androgens such as DHEA and androstenedione, which promote growth and repair of protein tissues and muscles, as well as help your tissues heal from injury or infection. You'll be receiving extra estrogens, which will affect your monthly cycles. Other lesser known hormones affect how you retain sodium retention and could cause you to swell or could bring on hypertension.

In addition, all of these additional hormones are normally secreted on their own daily patterns, but these patterns are different from cortisol's pattern.

Because these extracts are not standardized, you cannot be sure how much of each hormone is in the extract you're using, so if you double the dosage in times of stress (which is absolutely necessary for cortisol), you have no way of knowing how much of the other hormones you're receiving.

As the Bible says, we are certainly "fearfully and wonderfully made" by our Creator!⁷⁸ I praise God for that – but I have a long way to go before I'm as smart as my Creator.

So let's review some of the reasons you might want to consider cortisol supplementation.

- ❑ **A woman with mild adrenal fatigue or low "adrenal reserve"** (low DHEA) may be able to live rather normally, as long as her days are predictable, routine, and rather quiet. However, she tends to tire easily, and if she exercises strenuously or is late getting a meal, her blood sugar drops. If she catches a cold or a mild infection, she tends to be much sicker and hang on to her infection longer than other women might. Research has repeatedly shown that these problems can be prevented by safe, sub-replacement dosages of cortisol.⁷⁹
- ❑ **Women with frequent infections** respond well to sub-replacement dosages of cortisol. Numerous studies have shown that either too little or too much cortisol in a person's body can reduce resistance to infections. The great news is that

⁷⁸ Psalm 139:15, KJV

⁷⁹ Jefferies. p. 29.

when cortisol levels are “optimum,” cortisol enhances resistance to infections.⁸⁰

- ❑ **Women experiencing ovarian dysfunction**, which shows up in symptoms like weight gain, irregular periods, excess facial hair, acne, and higher blood sugar, have responded well to sub-replacement dosages of cortisol. However, women who started cortisol supplementation and later stopped had a return of all their former symptoms.⁸¹ Other problems that have been helped include infertility⁸² and repeated miscarriages.⁸³
- ❑ **Women with seasonal allergies** have benefited from the use of sub-replacement dosages of cortisol.⁸⁴
- ❑ **Women with normal test results of thyroid function but with symptoms of low thyroid function** (hypothyroidism) have benefited from sub-replacement dosages of cortisol. The reason for this is that cortisol helps thyroid hormone that is circulating in the bloodstream to actually be able to cross over into the cells of the body. This is known as “resistance to thyroid hormone.”⁸⁵
- ❑ **Women with autoimmune disorders** of all types respond especially well to sub-replacement dosages of cortisol. Researchers think that autoimmune disorders might develop when the hypothalamus and pituitary glands do not respond properly to stressors. Cortisol seems to help regulate the response of the brain.⁸⁶ Specific autoimmune disorders that have been helped include rheumatoid arthritis, hyperthyroidism and goiter, thyroiditis, diabetes mellitus, colitis, and multiple sclerosis.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 30.

⁸² Ibid, pp. 65-82.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 82-86.

⁸⁴ Ibid, pp. 34, 103-110.

⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 34-35.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 35.

⁸⁷ Ibid, pp. 35, 89-125.

Frequently Asked Questions about Cortisol

Is cortisol supplementation safe?

Yes, but only if it mimics the body's natural production of cortisol. The "Action Guide" at the end of this chapter contains a summary to help you, if you feel you're a good candidate for supplementation yet you want to do it safely.

Is it essential to supplement with cortisol?

Another way of phrasing this question would be, can you get better *without* cortisol supplementation?

I'm going to let you answer this question, since by this point, you should be able to do easily.

Q: How can you overcome fatigue?

A: By spending less energy than you make.

As you can see, the answer to the question, "Is it essential?" is obviously "No."

No, you do not *need* to supplement with cortisol in order to get better. You can change your diet, your sleep habits, your use of time, and your levels of stress so that you spend less energy than you make each day.

In fact, as you have seen, if you supplement with cortisol (or other hormones) and do it incorrectly, you will simply add to your current problems.

Supplementing with cortisol (or other hormones) can mask the real issues in your life, causing you to ignore stress and never change your lifestyle. Unfortunately, ***if you don't get to the root of the problem***, cortisol will make you feel better for a time, but then your body will simply turn on a new light on your dashboard, sending you off to the mechanic with a new set of symptoms.

In short, for many people, supplementing with cortisol (or other hormones) lets them avoid taking personal responsibility.

Is it worth it?

What if you decided to take personal responsibility, to get to the root of the problem?

What if you decided to take this book seriously by carefully monitoring your symptoms, changing your diet as you are able, getting adequate sleep, and changing your lifestyle?

Supplementing with cortisol (or other hormones) could give you the extra “deposit” in your energy bank account that you need. It could free you from pain so that you were able to function better. It could help you fall asleep at night, so that you awoke refreshed for the first time in months or years. It could help your body heal from infections. It could relieve allergies and asthma. It could calm your immune system from any autoimmune disorders that are raging, long enough to help you get over the hump!

For women in the more serious stages of fatigue, it often means the difference between a life in bed and finally overcoming fatigue. For some women like me, it saved my life!

So you decide. Is cortisol supplementation essential? Is it worth it? It depends on the person, doesn't it? What kind of person are you? (You need to be honest here.)

One of my endocrinologists solemnly told me, “Cortisol could raise Lazarus from the dead.” It certainly seems to be a magic pill, doesn't it? As such, it is tempting to use more than we should. Yet any medicine that is approached as a “magic pill” can easily become our poison.

On the other hand, cortisol is the “king of the hormones.” It is absolutely essential to every process of the human body. As such, it can help many women overcome a deficit in their adrenal reserve.

There are several indicators that tell me a woman is a good candidate for hormone supplementation. See how you are doing on this list:

- She has read many books on her condition, so she is well educated.
- She has reduced the amount of light in her bedroom at night, even if it initially makes her feel uncomfortable.
- She has been tracking her body temperature.

- She has ordered appropriate blood and/or saliva tests.
- She has organized her medical records and knows where they are.
- She has searched for a healthcare provider with whom she can discuss her health problems.
- She has been keeping a diet diary.
- She has eliminated dangerous, toxic foods from her kitchen.
- She is already remembering to faithfully use vitamins and other supplements that she has purchased. (This one is important.)
- She makes a weekly menu.
- She eats and sleeps according to a basic schedule.

If this woman, who is already used to watching a clock and being dependable and responsible, begins to supplement with cortisol, she'll be helped.

If she cannot watch a clock, she will forget to take the cortisol four times per day. Her body will then swing into new (and incorrect) circadian rhythms, making her sicker than ever.

If she forgets to take the pills with her wherever she goes, she could experience symptoms of shock and end up in the emergency room.

On the other hand, if she doesn't learn to take personal responsibility for her health, is she likely to get well without the use of cortisol? Not likely.

Hmmm....

Which type of woman are you? Can you see how important it is to be honest?

A Wise Approach to All Medications and Supplements

You are learning some important principles in this book. These principles apply to your life, no matter whether you ever decide to supplement with hormones or not.

To help you overcome fatigue (or any other health problem), you must work through several steps, known to even school children as the “scientific method.”

1. **Identify the problem.** This is the step where we record symptoms, not because symptoms are the enemy but because they help us identify what *could* be at the root of the problem.
2. **Analyze the problem.** We gather all the information, and we research to see what is already known by others about these problems.
3. **Form a hypothesis.** This is where we make an “educated guess.” Notice that the guess is *educated*. Research and reading are essential. If you are willing to read package inserts, borrow books from the library, search the Internet, and discuss your individual situation with your healthcare professional, you are probably going to make a very educated guess. However, notice also that this is an educated *guess*. Even with the best research, you might guess wrong.
4. **Test the hypothesis.** Your body is different from anyone else’s, and even in the ways you’re the same, your stress levels are different. Your life is different. Each of these *variables* must be taken into account. As you make changes to your life, try to only change one thing at a time, so that you’re sure you’re really testing your guess, and that something else isn’t helping or hurting.
5. **Record observations, interpret them, and form conclusions.** It is absolutely essential that you *write things down*, so that you can see objectively and not emotionally. I am always amazed at what I can see on paper, even when a problem stumps me in my head.
6. **Revise the hypothesis.** Go back to step one and start again. This might happen many times, but as you change one thing at a time and use care, you will most likely arrive at the root problem and a solution that works for you.

Many times we shortchange this process, wanting so badly to get rid of our symptoms that we never try to find out *why* the symptoms are occurring.

We identify the symptom, then we take a medication (or supplement, or whatever) that is designed to *eliminate the symptom*.

Because the body was using the symptom as a signal to warn us of an internal problem, the body now has to come up with a new way to warn us. In addition, the body also has to figure out why its warning system was circumvented.

Finally, the new “variable” that the medicine introduced has to be eliminated out of the body, usually through the liver, kidneys, and colon. The new list of symptoms that is now created is what you’ll read about on the package insert of the medication you’re using.

Meanwhile, the original problem still exists.

As an entire society loses objectivity, desiring to eliminate symptoms rather than change their behavior, a new problem emerges.

Woman A has a thyroid disorder, for instance. She goes to the hospital laboratory in her town and is tested for low thyroid function with a common TSH test. Her doctor compares her test results to 100 other women that were tested in the last year.

If the majority of the women who used that hospital’s laboratory also have a thyroid disorder, then the average test results for that particular lab will show that she is “normal.” Does that mean that she doesn’t have a thyroid disorder? Not necessarily. It just means that she is mathematically “average” when compared to all the other women who have used that laboratory.

It is much more important that this woman and her doctor find out what is “optimal.” What is the range of thyroid that is needed for a healthy woman to feel at her best? This number is relatively stable for all women, no matter where they live or how other women in their communities are feeling. This number is determined as scientists use the “scientific method” and the process of experimentation and clinical studies to make hypotheses.

There is yet another problem that emerges in science and medicine. Symptoms are relative. For instance, just because your child has a fever of 99 degrees doesn’t mean that she feels any better than a child with a

fever of 102 degrees. In fact, sometimes a child with a lesser fever could feel worse!

Why? Because the rate at which a fever is going up or down is what makes a child feel sick. When her little body is working hard to raise her temperature higher, to kill the invading germs with heat, she will feel cold and achy all over. However, once her temperature has stabilized at the new level, she'll feel a bit better. Later, when her body doesn't need to keep her temperature quite so high so it starts to fall, she'll sweat all over and possibly ache again.

The *rate of change* determines the degree of her symptoms.

It's the same way with cortisol. If a woman has chronically high levels of cortisol, day after day, she will feel relatively normal. However, if she experiences dramatic highs and lows over the course of a day, she will feel quite exhausted, as if she were literally riding a roller coaster.

This is why I feel it is better to get tested for cortisol levels several times over a day, such as at 8 am, noon, 4 pm, and midnight. With repeated tests, women can see the degree of change.

This is a good reason for tests to be repeated on separate days, too. It's also a good reason to get tested again in the future, so you can compare your results with your first test.

You need to see the *rate of change* in your symptoms.

You also need to be able to compare the tests of your hormone levels against your own "normal," not against the "normal" of people who just happen to live in your town.

So if you've been tested by a doctor and were told that your levels are "normal," does this mean that you don't have adrenal fatigue?

Maybe. Maybe not.

Whose responsibility is it to find out for sure? Your doctor's responsibility?

No, it is your responsibility.

What happens when a woman won't accept personal responsibility? What happens when she expects her busy doctor to solve all her problems, even though he must see more patients in a day that he probably has time for, must explain all his decisions to a far-away

insurance company, and has no way to feel the symptoms in her body or see all the variables in her life?

She'll probably stay sick.

She'll probably say it's all his fault.

What would happen if we acted this way in politics? We would lose our freedoms. Others would be honestly concerned about us, would assume that we weren't capable of making decisions competently, and would therefore step in and take away all our choices. This is called socialism.

We would fuss and holler about it!

But we would have brought it upon ourselves.

With great freedom comes great responsibility. How much personal responsibility for your health are you willing to take?

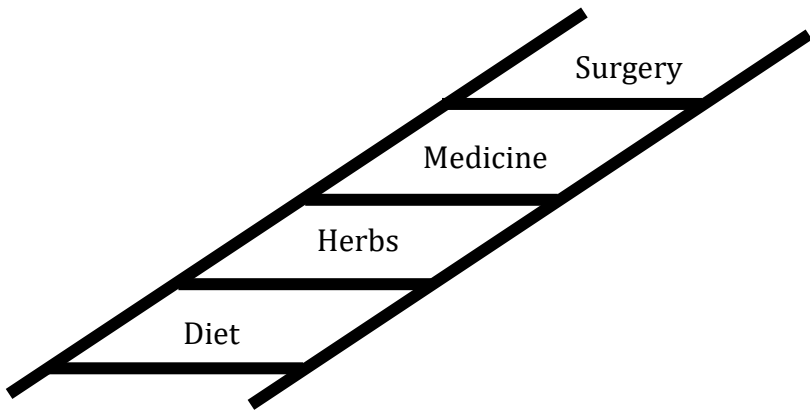
If You Prefer to Avoid Medications

Some women have decided to avoid the problem of doctors, lab tests, hospitals, and medicine altogether, choosing instead to use “natural” or “alternative” methods.

Are these women “off the hook” with personal responsibility?

Nope!

The Ladder of Intervention



Courtesy of Shonda Parker, author of [Mommy Diagnostics](#)

Author Shonda Parker has a wonderful “Ladder of Intervention” that has served as a good reminder to me over the years.

If you had an ingrown toenail, you could immediately go to the doctor and have him amputate your toe. That would certainly take care of that pesky toenail!

But who would be that silly?

Don’t be too quick to judge. Many women suffer from fatigue, and they immediately undergo radical surgeries, such as hysterectomies, hoping to straighten out their hormones.

Does the hysterectomy (and the lifelong commitment to hormone replacement that accompanies it) help these women? Often it does!

Were there other options? Probably. An addition of foods that help the production of hormones could help. The elimination of toxins could help hormones get into the cells properly, helping this woman feel better.

If the “Diet” step at the bottom of the ladder didn’t help, she could begin the “scientific method” and make a hypothesis of what could be wrong. She could read and research on “whole foods” (also known as herbs) that have healing properties, taking them in greater quantity than normally available in food (also known as tablets, tinctures and teas) to receive more of their benefit. Of course, because she has moved up the “ladder of intervention,” she has also researched the possible side effects of using such large quantities of herbs and is prepared to take personal responsibility for any incorrect “educated guesses” she might make.

Only if these steps didn’t help would she call her doctor. She would come to her doctor’s appointment well prepared, not hiding any of her “supplementation” from him but being honest about the steps she has already taken. They would communicate kindly and freely with each other, and she would be willing to let him guide her and to follow his advice, always aware that the possibility for side effects is much higher now that she is further up on the “ladder of intervention.”

Sometimes we have no choice to move up the ladder quickly. Sometimes surgery is necessary to save our lives, and we don’t have time to try all the other steps slowly. Praise God that you live in modern times and that your life has been spared!

Now try moving *down* the ladder slowly. Are you having to take eight different medications each day because of your current health problems? Begin reading, researching, and communicating with your doctor to discover the *root cause* of your problems. Keep careful track of your symptoms, and make educated guesses about which symptoms are side effects of your medications and which symptoms existed before you were taking the medications. Slowly wean off each prescription, possibly replacing some with “whole foods” such as found in herbs and supplements. Finally, you’ll get to the place where you can control your health with diet and lifestyle changes alone.

It’s all about personal responsibility. How responsible are you?

Action Guide

- Read the “Statement of Personal Responsibility” listed on the next page. Feel free to cross things out, add things to it, and personalize it. Where do you agree with this statement? Where do you disagree? Can you make it your own?
- It is possible to supplement with other hormones besides cortisol, such as melatonin, DHEA, aldosterone (Florinef®), various thyroid hormones (Synthroid®, Cytotec®, or Armour®), and reproductive hormones (estrogens and progesterone). We will cover some of these in the next chapter, but you can see that the same principles apply to their supplementation as cortisol’s. Based upon your own particular labwork, are you considering using any of these other hormones? What research do you need to do?
- If you decide to use cortisol supplementation, print out the usage directions below.
- I highly recommend that you read the book, *The Safe Uses of Cortisol*, by William McK. Jefferies. This is an expensive book, but you can often obtain it through your library’s interlibrary loan. If you have unexplained chronic fatigue, I especially recommend reading pages 165-168 of Dr. Jefferies’ book.
- Other excellent reading and research online includes:
 - <https://westonaprice.org/notes-from-yesteryear/187-cortico-adrenal-extract-by-mouth.html>
 - <http://anneshealthplace.com/blog/2010/11/is-adrenal-fatigue-real>
 - [http://www.drlam.com/articles/Adrenal Fatigue Glandular and Herbal Therapy.asp](http://www.drlam.com/articles/Adrenal%20Fatigue%20Glandular%20and%20Herbal%20Therapy.asp)
 - <http://www.teachersdomain.org/resource/drey07.sci.phys.matter.cortisone> (video)

My Statement of Personal Responsibility

I believe that all individuals have the right and responsibility to make their own healthcare decisions, based upon their own research. That research can include, but is not limited to:

- Reading books, medical journals, and online articles.
- Talking to others who have had similar experiences.
- Consulting medical practitioners or practitioners of other health professions.
- Most importantly, asking God for wisdom and guidance.

I believe that the information contained in this book is only one source of information that can be used to make healthcare decisions.

I also believe that people are competent to make their own healthcare decisions and should be encouraged to do so. Whereas mainstream culture encourages us to make no decisions about our health without first consulting a medical doctor, I believe that each person has the right to make informed decisions about his or her health without necessarily first engaging in such a consultation. Not only is all the information available to physicians in the form of textbooks, medical journals, etc. available to the average person if they choose to avail themselves of such information, but each person's common sense provides him or her with an important and sound basis for making decisions. I believe that people should learn to educate themselves, to care for themselves, and to ask God for wisdom, rather than feeling as if they must only rely upon an "expert."

I have chosen today to take full responsibility for my own health and the choices that I make. I have chosen to take the information provided by my healthcare providers and this book, and do further research. I will then consult my family and God (in prayer) before I make a final choice, which I realize is my own responsibility.

Signature _____

Date _____

Instructions for Patients Taking Cortisol

Please read carefully and keep in a place that can be referred to frequently, such as a bulletin board or refrigerator door.

The medication that has been prescribed for you is a normal adrenal hormone. In the dosage that has been prescribed, it will not cause any of the harmful side-effects that can result from an excessive dosage, but these instructions must be followed carefully. For this reason, the medication should be kept out of the reach of children or others who might take it by mistake. You will notice that that tablets taste somewhat bitter; so, like aspirin, if they are taken on an empty stomach they may cause gastric discomfort and indigestion. It is helpful, therefore, to take them just before meals or with milk or an antacid. If you have ever had a peptic ulcer (of the stomach or duodenum), you should always take an antacid with each dose.

The medication is more effective if you spread out the days' dosage, so you should take ___ mg with each meal and at bedtime (or ___ mg with breakfast, ___ mg with lunch, ___ mg with supper, and ___ mg at bedtime), totaling ___ mg daily. It may be taken before, during, or after meals, but most patients prefer to take it just before meals. If a meal will be delayed over 2 hours or missed, try to take the medication at the usual mealtime. If you forget to take a dose for example at lunchtime, and remember it in the afternoon, take it when you think of it. If you do not remember it until the next dose is due, take both doses at the same time in order to have the correct total dosage for the day. It will not be harmful to double upon doses, but the medication will be more effective if you take each dose at the proper time. It is helpful to have a small pillbox in which each day's dosage is placed each morning and which is carried with you in your pocket or handbag at all times. This not only reminds you to take the medication, but also enables you to determine whether you have taken a dose. Sometimes it is difficult to remember whether you have taken a dose.

If you go on a vacation or trip, take at least two complete supplies of medication packed separately. Carry one with you and pack the other in your luggage. Then if one is lost, the other supply can replace it, because it might be difficult or expensive to replace medication when you are away from home. If you have mild or more severe adrenal deficiency, you should wear a Medic-Alert bracelet at all times in case you are in an accident and knocked unconscious, because doctors treating you need to know this in order to provide optimum treatment. If you do not have one, ask your doctor how to order one.

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Because this is a normal hormone, it will not interfere with your taking any other medication. If you should develop symptoms of an incipient respiratory infection, such as a sore throat or nasal congestion, take a double dose of cortisol immediately and continue the double dosage until you have felt completely well for at least 24 hours, then return to your basic dosage. If symptoms last longer than a week, phone your doctor. If you should develop symptoms of incipient influenza (chills, fever, malaise, aching), take 20 mg immediately and continue 20 mg four times daily until you contact your doctor by phone. You should also take any other medication prescribed by your doctor. If you develop “intestinal flu” (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea), take a double dosage of cortisol as soon as you can hold it down and phone your doctor.

When these instructions are followed, infections usually clear more quickly, provided you do not smoke. If you smoke, you should stop smoking during any illness, as smoking will tend to delay your recovery and possibly cause complications. If any other questions arise, phone your doctor.

Doctor's Name _____

Office Address _____

Office Phone _____

*adapted from William McK. Jefferies, M.D., F.A.C.P., *Safe Uses of Cortisol, Third Edition* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 2004), p. 20.

CHAPTER 14

Supporting Other Hormones

My emphasis throughout this book so far has been on the hormones secreted by the adrenal glands, especially cortisol. A deficiency of cortisol is commonly referred to as “adrenal fatigue,” even though medical science is slow to recognize this deficiency as a real problem.⁸⁸ It is my firm belief that adrenal fatigue is a root cause behind why women are “too tired.”

Many women have written to me and asked me to address other hormone issues, such as thyroid problems, infertility, or fibromyalgia. This chapter will address how hormones interact with each other, what causes dysfunction in the endocrine system, and how to fix these problems.

Prevalence of Thyroid and Fertility Problems

In our country, hormone imbalance is a problem that is on the rise. Many factors contribute to these problems, and we can't cover them all

⁸⁸ See <http://anneshealthplace.com/blog/2010/11/is-adrenal-fatigue-real> for an article I wrote on this topic.

in this book, but I would like to share with you about the part that hormones play in women's health.

Hormones control countless activities in our bodies, especially when and if a woman ovulates and whether her body will be a hospitable place for any baby that is possibly conceived. Current statistics show that 25% of all menstruating women are not ovulating each month, so obviously, from just that cause alone, infertility is at a staggering high.

Thyroid problems constitute the largest percentage of hormonal imbalances that affect infertility, mostly because a low-functioning thyroid gland causes problems for the manufacture of all other female sexual hormones. While medical sources estimate that only 2% of women show evidence of "clinical" hypothyroidism, in reality up to 90% of all women experience "functional" hypothyroidism during their lifetimes.

What is the difference between "clinical" and "functional" hypothyroidism? Clinical hypothyroidism can be seen with standard blood tests. Functional hypothyroidism is often felt merely as a symptom or a feeling that something is off-balance in a woman's body.

Because it can take months and even years for hormone levels to become so unbalanced that they show up as a "clinical" problem, many women never receive help for the symptoms that they feel. They are told that the problems are in their heads or that they are simply getting older. However, sexual reproduction is one of the first systems in the body to be turned off if there is any disease or dysfunction whatsoever, since an unhealthy body is never a good place to harbor a growing human being. Therefore, many cases of infertility go undiagnosed each year, simply because a woman's symptoms are not yet severe enough to show up on standard blood tests.

When a woman's hormones are disrupted, the first sign is often a lack of ovulation. Not only does a lack of ovulation cause infertility; it also places a woman at a greater risk for PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome), diabetes and uterine cancer. While infertility is often felt with a sense of deep loss by a woman, she needs to be aware of the greater risks that it signals.

Why are hormone imbalances and infertility rates rising? Many factors are involved, such as these:

- ❑ A problem that affects almost all women in our country is the rising level of environmental toxins that we face. Many toxins in our food and water supply compete for the same receptor sites as the hormones that control fertility.

- ❑ In addition, many food additives affect the glands in our brains that control the manufacture of hormones.
- ❑ The widespread use of birth control pills and hormone replacement therapy affects fertility because the synthetic hormones used, while *similar* to the ones our bodies produce, are not *identical* and therefore can have numerous effects on other hormones in our bodies.
- ❑ High levels of stress in our lives also affect hormones, including a lack of healthy sleep patterns and unresolved emotions such as anger and fear.
- ❑ Finally, poor nutrition is a major cause of infertility because hormones cannot be manufactured without the proper building blocks being available in our food.

We will discuss causes for these factors and some possible solutions below.

What Is the Root Cause?

Knowing the root cause of a hormonal problem is essential to healing.

Imagine that an invisible little man with an invisible little hammer was beating on your toe. Suppose you went to your doctor and complained about how badly your toe was hurting. Your doctor, rather than finding out why your toe was hurting, might prescribe a large amount of bubble wrap for you to wrap around your toe. This “prescription” would help relieve the pain for a short time, until the invisible little man’s hammer wore through the bubble wrap. Now your doctor would need to prescribe a better cushion, or maybe he would prescribe an anesthetic so that you wouldn’t feel the pain anymore. As comforting as these measures would be, until someone discovers and removes the “root cause” of your toe problem, you will never receive healing in your toe.

In the same way, medications and even more natural alternatives such as herbs can often relieve the symptoms of a hormonal imbalance temporarily. However, until the root cause is discovered and removed, true and lasting healing simply cannot be found.

Hormone Pathways

The most important fact to keep in mind as we begin our discussion of hormones is that when we influence one hormone, all other hormones in the body are affected as well. Let's take a few moments for a tour of the pathway a hormone must follow from its production to its end results.

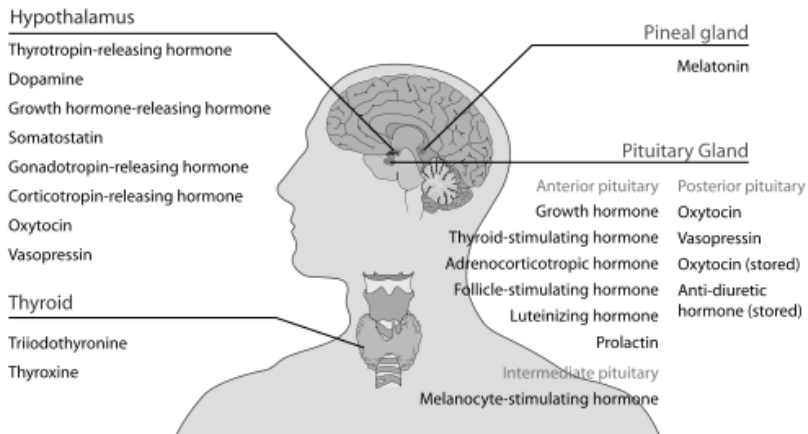


Image courtesy of http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endocrine_system

The first gland responsible for hormone production is the **pineal gland**. The pineal gland is seated deep within our brains, and it manufactures melatonin. Melatonin plays a key role in sexual development, metabolism, and circadian rhythms.

From the pineal gland, melatonin travels to the **hypothalamus**, a gland that is rich in melatonin receptors. The hypothalamus is often called the “master gland” of the body because it makes five major classes of hormones that each in turn regulate all other hormone secretions in the body. These five classes of hormones control the further release of growth hormones, LH and FSH (hormones necessary for ovulation), TSH (necessary for proper thyroid function), CRH (necessary for proper adrenal function), and dopamine (which inhibits the release of prolactin and affects breast-milk production).

These five groups of hormones then travel to the **pituitary**, where further hormones are then produced. The posterior pituitary makes oxytocin and anti-diuretic hormone. The anterior pituitary makes numerous other hormones as controlled by the hypothalamus, as well as endorphins.

The release of the hormones manufactured in the pituitary is completely controlled by the levels of hormones in the target glands. For instance, as the thyroid gland later makes its respective hormones and the levels of these hormones in the blood are increased, the pituitary senses that it can slow down its production.

This amazing relationship between the pituitary and all other glands ensures that the proper hormones are always in correct balance. You can imagine how molecules that have similar structures to our natural hormones and bind to the same receptor sites can cause the pituitary gland to slow down production of the true hormones we need. Environment toxins and synthetic hormones can be especially confusing to the pituitary.

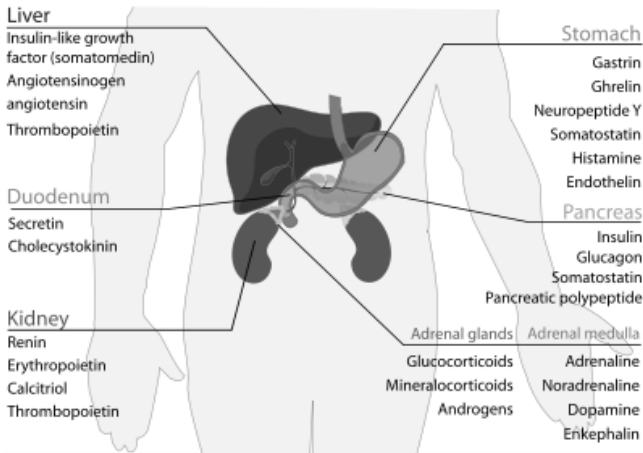


Image Courtesy of http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endocrine_system

In women, the pituitary affects the function of the adrenal, thyroid and ovarian glands, among others. In addition, how well one of these glands is performing affects the performance of the other glands.

The **adrenal gland** makes numerous hormones that affect nearly every process in the human body. The adrenal cortex makes aldosterone (which controls fluid balance and blood pressure) and cortisol (which controls metabolism and countless other processes). The adrenal medulla makes sexual hormones such as estrogen and DHEA. The adrenal gland also makes adrenaline (which controls heart & metabolic activities) and noradrenaline (which controls peripheral vasoconstriction).

The **thyroid gland** produces thyroxine (commonly known as T4) and triiodothyronine (T3), as well as a lesser known hormone called calcitonin. Up to 80% of T4 is converted to T3 by the liver, spleen, and kidneys, so the healthy functioning of the thyroid gland is also dependent on the health of those organs. These hormones are responsible for countless metabolic tasks in the body, as well as the proper functioning of the adrenal glands, ovaries, and even the pancreas.

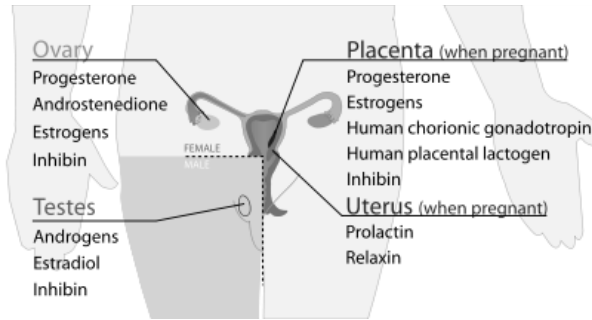


Image Courtesy of http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endocrine_system

The two **ovaries** produce steroid and peptide hormones, the most important classes of which are estrogens and progesterone. These hormones all control numerous operations in the body, but the most famous tasks they control involve the delicate events leading up to ovulation, menstruation, and the sustenance of a healthy pregnancy.

The most amazing thing about hormones is how much they depend upon each other.

For instance, the pineal gland produces melatonin, but the hypothalamus depends upon that melatonin for all of its tasks. In addition, other glands such as the ovaries also contain melatonin receptors. Therefore, if anything hinders the production of melatonin, all other glands, organs, cells, and functions of the body are affected.

Our hormones are like dominoes. If one domino is tipped over, all the other dominoes down the line will also fall.

Phases of Ovulation and Hormones Involved

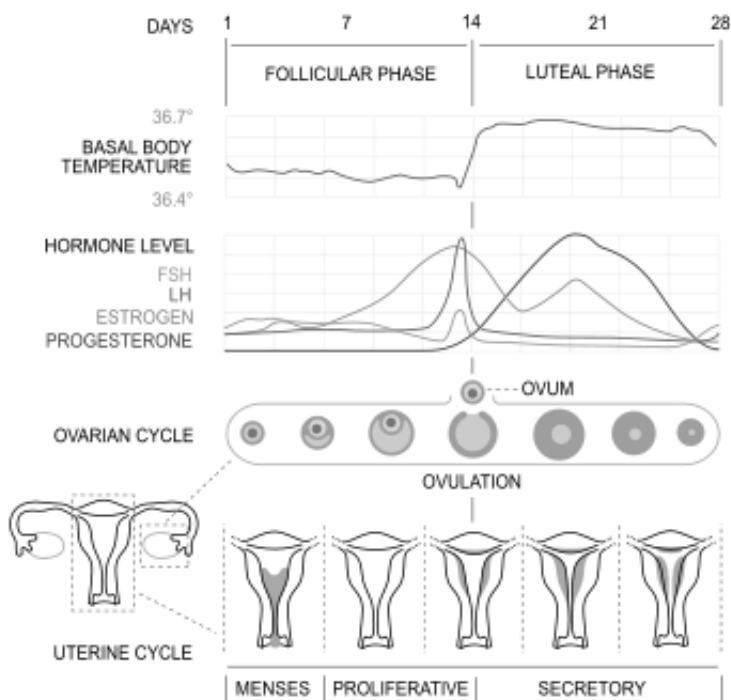


Image Courtesy of http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menstrual_cycle

On this chart, you can see the interplay between hormones over the course of a woman's normal 28-day cycle. There are more than twelve hormones that have been identified as playing a role in the ovulatory cycle, but four hormones especially play a key role:

- FSH (Follicle Stimulating Hormone)
- LH (Luteinizing Hormone)
- Estrogen (B-estradiol)
- Progesterone (the "pro-gestational" hormone)

This chart also shows relative values of each of these hormones during the course of a normal cycle.⁸⁹ For our purposes, it is important to note that estrogen is highest during the Follicular Phase of the cycle, when a

⁸⁹ The book *Taking Charge of Your Fertility*, by Toni Weschler, contains a thorough description of the role of each of these hormones in Appendix E.

follicle in the ovary prepares to release an egg.⁹⁰ It is useful for the build-up of healthy cervical mucus, without which it is difficult for sperm to reach the egg.

Progesterone is highest during the Luteal Phase, when the lining of the uterus thickens and prepares to receive a fertilized egg.⁹¹ The fertilization of an egg must occur during a tiny window of only a few hours after ovulation, near the middle of the cycle.

Note also the relationship between body temperature, estrogen, and progesterone. When the estrogens are at their highest level, body temperature is normally lower than when progesterone is at its highest. Body temperature normally increases by at least four tenths of a degree if ovulation has occurred.

Hormones as Messengers

In chapter 2 of the book *What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Premenopause*, Doctors John R. Lee and Jesse Hanley explain just a few reasons why the endocrine system can break down:

1. **The messenger may not reach the queen.** In other words, hormones (the messengers) must not only be present in our bloodstream; they must pass into our cells in order to work.
2. **The queen may not be in the castle.** For hormones to work, they must pass into the cells and attach to specific receptors inside the cells. For many, genetic glitches have influenced how their receptors are formed. There may be too many, too few, or no appropriate receptors available, so therefore, the hormones cannot do their jobs.
3. **The queen is unavailable or occupied with other messages.** Hormones that have different messages to deliver may occupy the same receptor sites. For instance, the adrenal hormone cortisol competes for the same receptor sites as the ovarian hormone progesterone. Synthetic hormones also compete for these same receptor sites. Unless the needed hormone can find an available receptor site, no hormone message can be relayed.
4. **The message may be miscommunicated to the queen.** Once a hormone arrives at a receptor site, it is transported deep within the cell to the nucleus. If a genetic glitch within the

⁹⁰ I remember that the “Follicular” phase is “First” because both words start with *F*.

⁹¹ I remember that the “Luteal” phase is “Last” because both words start with *L*.

nucleus causes the message to be miscommunicated, the action that the hormone was supposed to produce will not happen.

5. **The messenger may be delayed or blocked.** The actions of cells need the help of enzymes, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients to work. If the hormone tells a cell to begin a certain action but there is no nutritional support, that action will fail.
6. **The message is captured by the rival queen.** Substances within the body can interfere with the actions that a hormone produced. Some examples of these substances could be excess iron, goitrogens or phytoestrogens found in nutritious foods but eaten in excess, fluoride, chloride, and numerous other toxins.
7. **The volume of the message has been turned up or down.** If there is too much or too little of the hormone in the system, the message will not have the desired effect.

Symptoms of Hormone Problems

Throughout this book, we've been discussing common symptoms that are indicators of hormone problems in general:

General:

- Low body temperature
- Low body temperature
- Low Energy or Fatigue
- Weight problems (can't lose or gain it)
- Slow healing

Brain:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Poor memory, focus, or concentration
- Sleep disorders

Immune System:

- Under-Reactive or Over-Reactive: Frequent infections (skin, sinus, bladder, bowel, yeast problems, etc.)
- Allergies
- Auto-immune disease

Musculoskeletal:

- Fatigue
- Fibromyalgia (muscle or joint pains)
- Generalized aches/pains
- Repetitive use injury and carpal tunnel syndrome
- Weak connective tissues (ligaments, bones, etc)
- Headaches

Sexual:

- Loss of Libido and function
- Menstrual disorders
- Infertility
- Repetitive use injury and carpal tunnel syndrome
- Weak connective tissues (ligaments, bones, etc.)
- Headaches

Vascular:

- Low blood pressure
- High blood pressure
- Raynaud's disease

Bowels:

- Constipation
- Gas or bloating
- Digestive disorders
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
- Nervous System:
 - Numbness of hands and/or feet (usually symmetrical)
 - Dulling or loss of senses such as vision, taste or smell.

Skin:

- Dry
- Acne
- Pallor in light skin, darkening or dark patches in dark skin

Hair:

- Hair loss
- Brittle, coarse, dry or oily hair⁹²

Since as we've seen, if one hormone level is out of balance or unable to perform its duty, all other hormone levels in the body are affected, figuring out which hormone to fix first can be a daunting task.

Let's look at some of the common hormone problems that women often deal with.

Thyroid Problems

Clinical hypothyroidism is usually indicated by a blood test that measures the level of TSH produced by the pituitary gland.

If a TSH level is higher than 4.0, most doctors are willing to make a diagnosis of hypothyroidism. However, some doctors require the TSH level to be as high as 7.0 or more before they will make the diagnosis.

At these high levels, women can experience a variety of symptoms such as fatigue, weight gain, depression, muscle aches, joint pain (fibromyalgia), loss of mental clarity and function, dry skin, brittle hair, hair loss, breast-milk formation, constipation, a constant feeling of being cold, occasional goiter, and an inability to hold chiropractic adjustments.

Subclinical hypothyroidism is often present when the TSH is between 2.0 and 4.0. A woman may have mild symptoms of hypothyroidism, or she may simply have fatigue, depression, or just a vague feeling that something is out of sorts. However, since thyroid hormones are necessary for ovulation and for the manufacture of progesterone, infertility can be the first clue that something is wrong with the production of thyroid hormones.

⁹² <http://www.drrind.com/therapies/metabolic-therapy>

When checking levels of hormones, be sure to check hormones made by other glands as well. For instance, estrogen dominance can be a symptom of hypothyroidism. Estrogen dominance can cause a woman to not ovulate. It is caused by fatigued adrenals, which in turn communicate with the pituitary to reduce production of thyroid hormones.

Hypothyroidism can also cause higher cholesterol levels (especially LDL) and a heightened risk of heart disease. Mild hypothyroidism is enough to cause ovarian failure, which is often evidenced by elevated prolactin levels.

Finally, neuropathy such as found in insulin resistance and diabetes often accompanies hypothyroidism, so glucose levels should be checked.

As you can see, if hypothyroidism is suspected, it is simply not appropriate to check only TSH levels. A proper evaluation will include a complete blood count as well as tests to evaluate hormone levels throughout the entire body.

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)

PCOS is blamed for a large number of infertility cases, but as the name implies, it is simply a “syndrome” or a collection of symptoms, which tells us nothing of its cause.

Women diagnosed with PCOS are often overweight and have signs of excessive androgens (testosterone). Androgens are typically thought of as male hormones, but they are necessary to a small degree in females as well. Androgens are produced in the adrenal glands as well as the ovaries. An excess of androgens will cause symptoms such as male pattern baldness, facial hair, acne, abnormal menses, heightened libido, and sometimes abdominal distress or bloating.

PCOS is thought to be caused by a miscommunication between the hypothalamus and ovaries or adrenal glands. This miscommunication can sometimes be caused by eating food that contains MSG or aspartame. These substances disrupt the function of the hypothalamus, the only gland that has no blood-brain barrier to protect it from these toxins.

This miscommunication can also be caused by a lack of vitamin A in the diet or by excess trans-fatty acids (also known as hydrogenated or partially-hydrogenated fats on food labels).

PCOS is also thought to be related to diabetes and/or insulin resistance. See the book *Dr. Bernstein's Diabetes Solution*, by Richard K. Bernstein, for a comprehensive look at this topic.

Progesterone Problems

Occasionally a woman can have **high progesterone levels** during the luteal phase (last half) of her cycle. High progesterone results in higher cortisol levels (made in the adrenal glands), which can in turn cause increased water retention, breast swelling, increased appetite, and weight gain. Note that these symptoms are similar to what a pregnant woman would experience, since progesterone levels during pregnancy increase up to 15 times greater than during a normal menstrual cycle.

More common, however, is a woman who experiences infertility because of **low progesterone levels**. Even if a woman conceives at ovulation, without proper progesterone levels to sustain the uterine lining, she will miscarry, often without her knowledge. Recording daily basal body temperatures (as described below) can tell you much about a woman's progesterone levels.

If you decide to treat low levels of progesterone with progesterone cream, use caution not to exceed the levels of progesterone that your body would normally make.

Greater than normal doses of progesterone for more than 6 months will be evidenced by mental lethargy, depression, abdominal bloating and discomfort. Since high progesterone levels can also result in higher cortisol levels, some women will then experience adrenal fatigue. If your adrenal glands are already fatigued for other reasons, your body will stop production of a myriad of other hormones, including thyroid hormones, and you could even experience an adrenal crisis.

Again, this is evidence of why it is urgently important to use labwork to check the levels of your hormones before beginning to treat symptoms.

Testing Body Temperature

Long before our modern, sensitive blood and saliva tests were available, doctors relied upon checking body temperature to figure out what was happening in a person's hormonal system. Still today, body temperature can be a first indicator of metabolism problems.

The thyroid gland is principally responsible for maintaining metabolism, but the adrenal glands and ovaries also have an effect on metabolism. Therefore, the function of each of these glands must be considered when looking at body temperature.

Basal body temperature (BBT): *the first-morning temperature, taken before you move around, eat, or even sit up. It is usually the lowest body temperature of the day. It is most accurate if you have been lying down, asleep, for at least four hours. The oral BBT should generally be higher than 97.5 degrees Fahrenheit.*

A BBT lower than 97.5 indicates hypothyroidism, and if found, daytime average temperatures should be checked as described below.

Keep in mind that the lowest BBTs will be found during the follicular phase (first half) of a woman's menstrual cycle. After ovulation, when progesterone is released in greater amounts, the BBT rises at least four tenths of a degree and remains higher for 12 to 16 days, until menstruation (when progesterone levels fall).

- If a BBT stays elevated for at least 18 days**, it indicates that you conceived and are pregnant. (Many early miscarriages can be diagnosed by BBT.)
- If your BBT does not remain high for at least 10 days after ovulation, your progesterone levels should be checked.
- If your BBT never rises at all**, ovulation did not occur, and estrogen dominance/hypothyroidism should be considered.

If the BBT indicates a problem, the next step should be to evaluate your body temperature every three hours during the daytime.

Normal body temperatures rise and fall with circadian rhythms, so monitoring these temperatures tells us much about how your hormones are functioning.

It is generally easiest to record at least three temperatures each day and then to average these temperatures together. Over a period of at least five days, these temperature averages can tell us which gland is malfunctioning. The highest body temperature is usually measured in the late afternoon. The average of each day's temperatures is ideally as close as possible to 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit.

- ❑ **If your temperatures are consistently too low**, you are most likely experiencing simple hypothyroidism. Remember, temperatures can indicate a thyroid problem weeks before a blood test will show it.
- ❑ **If your average temperatures fluctuate**, some high, some low, you are most likely experiencing adrenal fatigue, as well as possible thyroid problems. It is critical that your adrenal problems be addressed before attempting to correct your thyroid problems, or your symptoms will simply grow worse.

Standard Thyroid Lab Tests

- ❑ If checking TSH levels, aim for a TSH of <2.0 *and* a woman who is symptom-free.
- ❑ If thyroid function tests are normal, check progesterone levels.
- ❑ Inadequate T4 production can be caused by adrenal stress, poor nutrition, and autoimmune thyroid disease. It is usually indicated by an elevated TSH level.
- ❑ Inadequate conversion of T4 to T3 is caused by poor nutrition and poor liver function. It is not always indicated by the TSH level and often goes undiagnosed.
- ❑ Be sure to also check adrenal function. Also check for insulin resistance with a fasting glucose test and a 2-hour postprandrial glucose test.
- ❑ Finally, it is also wise to see a complete blood panel.

Nutrition

Hormones simply cannot work properly in the absence of proper nutrition. The problem comes in figuring out what proper nutrition is! A multitude of nutritional myths abound, making it very difficult for the average woman to make choices that will improve her hormone function.

Some poor choices that are made by many women include:

- Eating a vegan diet.
- Eating soy.
- Maintaining a high-stress life (which interrupts hormone manufacture as well as sleep cycles and the ability to prepare healthier foods).
- Eating foods such as neurotoxins, improperly prepared grains, and hydrogenated and trans fats.

Strict vegetarianism suppresses thyroid function and minimizes the intake of essential vitamins (Vitamins A and B12, for example). Many vegetarians consume large amounts of soy products. The phytoestrogens in soy are endocrine disrupters and depress thyroid function. Use fermented soy products only (such as miso, natto, tempeh). Unfortunately, soy is a main ingredient in almost all processed foods, so all women, whether vegetarian or not, need to be careful to read labels. Many women on weight-loss diets consume soy protein powders, which are high in thyroid-depressing phytoestrogens.

Vegetarians often lack Vitamin A in their diets. While it is true that Vitamin A can be converted in the body from beta-carotene (derived from plant sources), many people with poor thyroid function cannot make that conversion. Without Vitamin A, many other hormones cannot be properly manufactured. ***True Vitamin A is only available from animal sources.***

Women with thyroid problems would do best to avoid eating raw broccoli and raw cabbage too often, because they are goitrogenic (cause the formation of goiters). For women with such severe thyroid problems that they develop goiters, iodized salt is often recommended. However, iodized salt only shrinks goiters; it does not prevent sexual problems resulting from hypothyroidism, such as infertility.

The best form of iodine for all women to consume is from unprocessed, unrefined sea salt, which has a gray color that indicates its high mineral content. Other rich sources of iodine include fish broth, fish eggs (especially recommended for those with under-active thyroid, with infertility, and pregnant and nursing moms), and fish sauce (added to soups instead of salt). Note that most of these foods are severely lacking in a typical, modern diet.

Many women also make mistakes when choosing which fats to include in their diets. Popular thought says that we should restrict saturated fats and consume large amounts of vegetable oils. However, those with under-active thyroid often do best on a diet restricted in unsaturated fats.

The cholesterol present in saturated fats is absolutely essential for the manufacture of estrogen and progesterone, as well as numerous other hormones from the thyroid, adrenal and ovarian glands. Cholesterol-starved ovaries will tend to become cystic. This is the perfect example of a time when one diet does not fit all!

The best diet for couples trying to conceive includes ample amounts of cholesterol, such as fish eggs and seafood, cod liver oil (1 teaspoon per day), liver and organ meats (weekly), eggs (2 per day), best-quality butter, cream (not ultra-pasteurized), and fermented milk products. Many women with thyroid problems avoid these foods because their blood panels indicate that they have high cholesterol levels. In reality, the liver will continue to over-manufacture cholesterol (indicated by elevated blood levels) until enough cholesterol is supplied in the diet for the production of hormones.

Medications and Alternatives

Treat Low Cortisol First!

Reminder: As we've been learning throughout this book, if the adrenal glands are out of balance, they must be treated first! Cortisol is essential to almost every other hormone in the body.

Treating Low Progesterone

Treatment goals:

Follicular phase – 0.3-0.9 ng/ml

Luteal phase – 15-30 ng/ml

Pregnancy – up to 15x higher than luteal phase

While transdermal creams are a convenient way to deliver progesterone, be sure to note how much progesterone is delivered by the product you use. For instance, the brand “Progestecreme” delivers 38 mg per ¼ teaspoon. It is very easy to overdose on progesterone.

When figuring a proper dosage, remember that transdermal creams are effective for about 8 hours, so 2 small doses are best, providing a total of 15-20 mg of progesterone each day.

If a woman conceives, she should continue to use transdermal progesterone during pregnancy until the third trimester, when the placenta is making so much that it won't notice a drop of 15-30 mg/day.

For infertility, Dr. John R. Lee suggests the use of transdermal progesterone for 2-4 months on days 5-26 of your menstrual cycle (suppressing ovulation), then stop progesterone altogether. He also recommends the herb *Vitex* (including during menses) for 3 months (stop if pregnancy is achieved).

Treating Ovarian Cysts (PCOS)

- ❑ Use liver-supporting and detoxifying herbs: *Bupleurum*, milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*), barberry or goldenseal, burdock root, yellow dock, dandelion root.
- ❑ Use ovary-healing herbs: burdock root, cramp bark (*Viburnum opulus*), licorice root, dandelion root, *Vitex*, red raspberry.
- ❑ Check insulin levels, as PCOS can be related to insulin resistance or diabetes.

Regulating Hormones by Night-Lighting

As we discussed earlier, the pineal gland controls the function of all other glands throughout the body. Its production of melatonin is absolutely essential to the health of the entire body.

It is interesting to note that exposure to light at night can inhibit the pineal gland's production of melatonin. The hypothalamus is richly supplied with melatonin receptors, which in turn stimulates the anterior pituitary gland to secrete its hormones, and these, in turn, stimulate the thyroid, adrenals and ovaries. The ovaries are also rich in melatonin receptors.

If the hypothalamus does not receive sufficient melatonin, its ability to regulate the hormonal system will be impaired. The ideal way to ensure sufficient melatonin production is to go to sleep when the sun goes down and to rise when the sun rises. However, very few American women can match this ideal, whether because of work schedules or choice. In addition, exposure to light in the evening from television,

computers, or artificial lighting (including night lights) further complicates the production of melatonin.

Studies have shown that going to bed by 10:00 p.m. and sleeping in total darkness except for three nights before ovulation (usually days 14-17, mimicking the light of a full moon) triggers ovulation simply by helping to correct proper melatonin levels, which in turn affect the production of thyroid, adrenal and ovarian hormones.

Benefits include ovulation, discernible and healthy cervical mucus build-up, regular cycle length (27-31 days, mimicking the moon's cycles), healthy FSH levels, reduced spotting during cycles, strengthened progesterone levels, fewer miscarriages, and reduced intensity of perimenopausal symptoms (hot flashes, sleeplessness, mood changes).

Many women are encouraged by these studies and feel that this is an area they can actually control.

Treating an Underactive Thyroid (Hypothyroidism)

- Treating T4 only – prescription medications include Synthroid, Levoxyl, Levothyroid.
- Treating T3 only – prescription medications include Cytomel, both once daily or time-released methods.
- T4/T3 combinations (which include other lesser-known thyroid hormones) – prescription glandular medications include Armour and Naturethroid,⁹³ and over-the-counter supplements such as Thyrovanz.⁹⁴

Treating Fibromyalgia

I firmly believe that fibromyalgia is related to chronic fatigue, and now scientists have proof. Fibromyalgia is pain ("algia") in the muscles ("myo") and tissues ("fibro"). This chronic pain is often accompanied by horrible fatigue, "brain fog," and difficulty sleeping, as well as a host of other symptoms. Doctors usually require pain in 18 different spots on the body before officially diagnosing fibromyalgia.

⁹³ Please note that as of the time of this writing, these medications are produced from pork and therefore do not conform to a biblical diet as found in Leviticus 11.

⁹⁴ Thyrovanz is made from grass-fed beef and is available at <https://thyrovanz.com>.

The Fibromyalgia Research Foundation is a non-profit organization that has been doing studies on fibromyalgia since 1995, and they report that they have achieved recovery for 75-85% of their patients. That's fabulous news!

According to their research, fibromyalgia is actually a disease producing low levels of thyroid, adrenal and other hormones (such as DHEA). Often fibromyalgia sufferers have "normal" test results for thyroid, which led these researchers to try to figure out what could be causing the problem.

As we learned above, your thyroid gland can produce thyroid, but other hormones are needed to get the thyroid hormones from your bloodstream into your cells. In other words, your test results may be "normal," but are your cells actually receiving any of this thyroid?

You should not be surprised to learn that the adrenal hormone cortisol is one of the hormones you need to get thyroid into your cells. Another necessary hormone is DHEA.

- If you suffer from fibromyalgia, I recommend reading the book *The Metabolic Treatment of Fibromyalgia*, by Dr. John C. Lowe. You can also visit Dr. Lowe's informative website at <http://drlowe.com>.
- Another helpful doctor is Dr. Gina Honeyman, at <http://www.drginahoneyman.com>.
- You can learn more about fibromyalgia at <https://stopthethyroidmadness.com/fibromyalgia>.

Is This Even Possible?

While many people have found relief with non-prescription alternatives, be aware that their success is certainly dependent upon several factors.

First of all, ***how early we intervene*** often determines our success. If too much damage has been done to a gland so that it is unable to be repaired, alternatives may do nothing to help.

We should also check whether any antibodies are present. Antibodies are indicators of poor nutrition, stress, and possibly unresolved emotions. Unless these root causes are addressed, non-prescription alternatives are unlikely to be of much help.

Finally, for the treatment of hypothyroidism, many people feel that there is simply no herbal substitute that can match the effectiveness of a combination T4/T3 prescription medication, such as Armour or Thyrovanz.

Many women wish they could heal their hormones without having to use any medications or hormone replacements. My opinion is that this will only work for women whose problems are not severe. In other words, if your results come back within normal ranges but you have symptoms of low thyroid function, you might be a candidate for trying “natural,” alternative methods.

Ideally, before starting, one would have lab results showing the following:

- TSH
- Free T3
- Free T4
- Reverse T3
- Ferritin levels
- Thyroid antibodies
- Complete blood count
- Saliva testing for adrenal function

Be sure to compare your lab-test results to the optimal ranges given on page 49.

You also have to be a patient, meticulous person who is willing to be consistent in your habits and allow plenty of time for healing to take place.

Figure out how many years you have had symptoms and **allow 2 months of healing per year, plus an extra 2 months**. Do not give up on treatment until allowing at least that much time!

This time-factor will probably cause the most trouble with your plan, since it's so much easier to medicate than to wait for healing, especially when you're desperate to start feeling better.

My research has shown that the treatment ideas in this book, combined with the specific herbs and supplements I've given you, can correct a woman's hormone levels. However, how many women are actually helped? Realistically, we know that it's extremely difficult to make these changes!

It would be ideal to follow people who try these treatments and to document each thing they try, so that we could publish success stories and help others more objectively. If we don't document what we do, we will never be able to prove that our methods are effective.

I think that recording daily body temperature, blood pressure and pulse is probably the most accurate way to document improvement, although I doubt it will be effective for every person, since there are a limited number of other things that can cause body temperature, blood pressure, and pulse to have variations. However, for the majority of people, monitoring these three things would be very helpful.

Finally, tracking weight weekly would be helpful, since being over or underweight is a common symptom of thyroid and other hormonal imbalances.

Action Guide

At this point of the book, it is essential that you begin to tailor my general recommendations to your specific situation.

Mark the things you are willing and able to do:

Monitor Your Symptoms:

- Body temperature:** You need to record basal body temperature (taken before getting out of bed in the morning, after having been in bed for at least 4 hours), then body temperature every three hours after. Also, body temperature needs to be checked at any time you feel symptoms (with the specific symptom noted) and probably a few times when you feel really well. A daytime average of 98.6 is the healthiest for proper thyroid function.
- Pulse:** Ideal is between 70 and 80 (resting heart rate). Lower indicates slower metabolism (lowered hormone function). Higher than 100 (sustained rate) indicates hyperthyroidism.
- Blood pressure:** Should rise when standing. 120/80 is ideal for average blood pressure.

Lifestyle changes:

- Rest:** It is extremely important to be in bed no later than 10 p.m. each night, sleeping in as close to complete darkness as possible, and to sleep until naturally awakened in the morning. It is also extremely important to have one day of complete rest out of each seven.
- Eat meals on a schedule:** This is important so that the body can correct its internal clock and the rate at which it releases hormones. Eat within half-an-hour of waking and to wait at least 4 hours before eating again (proven to normalize insulin levels).
- Avoid fluoride and chlorine** in your water.

Food:

- Absolutely necessary fats:** coconut oil (minimum of 2 tablespoons daily), high-vitamin cod liver oil, butter (ideally from grass-fed cows), extra-virgin olive oil, and plenty of saturated fats in whole milk and eggs.
- Lacto-fermented foods**, because of high vitamin C content, which is healing to adrenal and thyroid glands.

- Fish sauce**, which nourishes the thyroid with iodine and flavors foods nicely (example: Thai Kitchen Premium Fish Sauce).
- Celtic Sea Salt**, which nourishes the thyroid with iodine and trace minerals, supports adrenal function.
- Easy-to-digest foods:** lacto-fermented foods, properly-prepared grains (by soaking, sprouting, or sourdoughing), raw milk, gelatin-rich broths, and the use of supplemental enzymes with each meal.

Avoid:

- No soy!**
- No trans fats or hydrogenated oils**, which interfere with enzymes that help hormone production.
- No processed foods**, pasteurized milk products, preservatives, unclean meats,⁹⁵ artificial or natural flavorings, or chemicals which act as neurotoxins.
- Eat only in moderation:** broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage (unfermented or raw), kale, mustard greens, peaches, pears, radishes, spinach, and turnips. (These interfere with thyroid production if eaten in excess.)

Supplements:

- L-Tyrosine** – 500 mg twice daily, on empty stomach (do not take with milk). Take with 50 mg vitamin B6 and 100 mg vitamin C for better absorption.
- Vitamin B complex** (3 times daily with meals), plus extra **vitamin B2** (50 mg twice daily) and **vitamin B12** (1000-2000 mcg, 3 times daily, on empty stomach).
- Vitamin C** – 8000 mg daily or more (to bowel tolerance).
- Vitamin D3** – 2000 mg daily.
- Magnesium** – to bowel tolerance.
- Selenium** – aids in the conversion of T4 to T3. Brazil nuts (2-3 per day) are very high in selenium. (If pregnant, do not exceed 40 mcg daily.)
- Enzymes** with meals.
- Herbs:** *Vitex*, dong quai, nettle, and any herbs that cleanse the liver and kidneys (a good choice is Master Gland, by Nature's Sunshine).
- Symplex F**, by Standard Process – a mixture of glandular extracts from four organs that make up the pituitary axis

⁹⁵ Unclean meats are defined by God in Leviticus 11.

(pituitary, thyroid, adrenal, ovaries) – 1-2 tablets/day for one year.

Recommended Reading

- What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Premenopause*, by Dr. John R. Lee, M.D. and Jesse Hanley, M.D.
- Taking Charge of Your Fertility*, by Toni Weschler
- Solved: The Riddle of Illness*, by Steven E. Langer, M.D.
- Nourishing Traditions*, by Sally Fallon and Mary G. Enig. Use the excellent “Subject Index” in the back of the book to look up information on specific concerns.
- Your Guide to Metabolic Health*, by Dr. Lowe and Dr. Gina Honeyman-Lowe
- Food Is Your Best Medicine*, by Henry Bieler, M.D.
- What the Bible Says About Healthy Living*, by Rex Russell, M.D.
- The Safe Uses of Cortisol*, by William Jefferies, M.D.
- Dr. Bernstein’s Diabetes Solution*, by Richard K. Bernstein, M.D.
- Your Thyroid and How to Keep It Healthy*, by Barry Durant-Peatfield

PART 5

Time Management for Tired Women

CHAPTER 15

So Much to Do... So Little Energy

What are the most outstanding personality traits of women with fatigue? I've talked with a lot of tired women, and I'd personally wager big money that you're very **passionate, driven, and ambitious**.

Okay, maybe I'm the only one who lies in bed in the morning and plans a monstrous to-do list... but I'm too tired to get out of bed to actually start it.

Maybe I'm the only one who can get on a huge soapbox in the shower... but I'm too tired to lift my arms up to shampoo my hair.

Maybe I'm the only one who has planned out life goals, yearly goals, monthly goals, weekly goals, and even daily goals... but I'm too tired to get out of the chair and take hamburger out of the freezer for supper.

Maybe I'm the only one who burst into tears the day I turned 35, because I realized I was more than halfway to 70 but not halfway through all the things I wanted to do in my life.

I know, I'm being silly. Even I realize how ridiculous all this sounds. But when I'm most tired, thoughts of how I'm going to get everything done can quickly turn mere fatigue into full-blown frustration – or worse!

- I'm **passionate** about a lot of things, but I often lack the energy to complete things that I start.
- I'm **driven** to succeed, but I often allow circumstances or other people to determine how I spend my time. (This often comes because of guilt, so that's probably why this is referred to as being "driven" rather than "driving.")
- I'm **ambitious**, but I often forget to ask God what His ambitions for my life are. I want to do things my own way... and my health can suffer because of it.

On the other hand, do you know what the difference is between fatigue and clinical depression? After all, the symptoms are quite similar! Doctors will often treat fatigued women with antidepressants, even though many of these women are loudly proclaiming, "I'm not depressed!"

The difference is simple. A medically "depressed" woman **lacks a desire** to do anything with her time. A fatigued woman **lacks the energy** to do all she wants to with her time.

Wanting to do something *and* having the energy to do it? That's priceless!

Self-Control

My own mother has been my biggest teacher on how to control my time, rather than allowing it to control me. I've always been passionate, driven, and ambitious. My mother has been patient, teaching me some self-control.

For instance, here is a Bible verse she required me to memorize:

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.⁹⁶

She's right. When I don't rule over my own spirit, my own home, and my own time, the walls of my life break down. When we're thinking

⁹⁶ Proverbs 25:28, KJV

about my health, the enemy (in the form of various infections and diseases) comes rushing in, stomping all over me.

I usually say that I feel like a truck ran me over!

Well, who let that truck get so close? I did! I wasn't ruling over my own spirit.

My mom isn't a nagger. (Maybe she should be...) She quietly and gently reminds me. She just asks simple questions. *Did I go to bed? Have I been doing too much? Maybe I should say "no" to a request...*

I often disagree with her. However, she's usually right.

I'm going to share some of the simple ideas she has taught me. (There are wild and crazy ideas in this chapter, too. I'm sure you'll recognize those as purely mine!)

Get Up and Try

The story of an evangelist named F.F. Bosworth impacted my life back several years ago, when I was lying in bed and feeling at my worst. I'll share it hear with you:

T.B., "galloping" consumption – the prognosis was a death warrant. The future was bleak. In those days, there was no cure for this killer disease in its later stages.

Fred Bosworth was on his way to Fitzgerald, Georgia, to say goodbye to his parents. The doctors had warned that he would probably not live long enough to make the trip, but God had His hand on this young man. He arrived in a dying condition, but still alive.

Bosworth met a Methodist woman, a "Bible woman," who used to walk the hills of Georgia and the Carolinas selling Bibles and preaching the Gospel. Mattie Perry looked intently at him and said, "Fred Bosworth, you are young. You are a Christian, and if you died today, you would go straight to Heaven. But I am here to tell you that if you die today, it will be the most selfish act you have ever committed. God's plan is that we should live to be at least three score and ten (Ps. 90:10). What about all the people that God has ordained for you to reach?"

Young F.F. Bosworth said, "Miss Perry, would you pray for me?" She said, "I wouldn't waste my prayers on someone who is just going to lay there and die." Fred thought, "If I lie here, I am going to die. If I get up, I can't do any worse than that."⁹⁷

Fred Bosworth went on to live 81 years, preaching the gospel in countries all over the world.

"If I lie here, I am going to die. If I get up, I can't do any worse than that."

I love those words. Some days, we really do need to rest. Rest is good, and it helps us fill up our energy bank accounts. But life is also precious. Time is precious. Some days, the best thing we can do is to get up and at least try to live.

In this section, I hope to give you some strategies for wisely knowing when to do each.

⁹⁷ F.F. Bosworth, *Christ the Healer, 9th Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2004), pp. 243-244.

CHAPTER 16

Rhythms, Routines, and Schedules

Let's review for a moment what we learned in Chapter 10, on the rhythms of sleep.

The digestion of food, the ability to get a good night's sleep, and countless involuntary bodily processes – all are completely dependent upon the cyclical, daily release of hormones. This daily rhythm is called the circadian rhythm.

Your circadian rhythm is your internal “clock” that regulates all the processes of your body over a 24-hour period. It controls the release, first and foremost, of cortisol, the “king of the hormones.” Your circadian rhythm also affects the release of thyroid hormones, serotonin and melatonin, neurepinephrine and epinephrine, glycogen and insulin – and hundreds of other hormones and bodily processes.

The amazing thing is that these hormones are secreted into your body at certain *times* each day. It happens without your knowledge or permission, throughout every second of your life, automatically.

Researchers have found that all your body's rhythms happen regardless of your social habits, your culture, or your location. Numerous experiments have been performed on people – closing them up in dark rooms, around the clock for a hundred days, for instance, with no contact with calendars, clocks, or people – and their bodily rhythms remained and functioned (although not without some harm).

Your daily, 24-hour circadian rhythm controls each day, but it certainly isn't the only rhythm controlling the release of hormones in your body. Other rhythms that scientists have studied are seen in this chart:

Rhythm:	Approximate Duration:
Ultradian Rhythms	90 minutes (16 per 24-hour day)
Daily (Light-Based) Rhythms	60 minutes, during daylight
Nightly (Dark-Based) Rhythms	3 hours, during nighttime
Circadian Rhythms	24-25 hours
Circasemiseptan Rhythms	3.5 days
Circaseptan Rhythms	7 days
Infradian Rhythms	28-30 days
Circannual Rhythms	365 days
Seven-Year Rhythms	7 years

As I told you before, I am a creationist, not an evolutionist, so I take quite literally the account of creation by God in the Bible. On the fourth day of creation, God tells us the reason He made the sun, moon, and stars:

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.' And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.⁹⁸

You can see from this passage of Scripture that the “greater light,” the sun, governed the day, and the “lesser light,” the moon, governed the night. All the stars gave light, governed day and night, and helped separate light from darkness.

We are also reminded again that a day began in the evening, not at midnight or sunrise.

⁹⁸ Genesis 1:14-19, NIV

Calendars are built in every society around the constellations and the orbits of the sun and moon. The sun, moon, and stars mark time, but scientists have discovered that their light influences our hormone production. (Or is it something else? Gravitational pull? No one knows for sure.)

God tells us a little more about one of the natural rhythms built into His creation.

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.⁹⁹

Each day is divided into ultradian rhythms. I don't find these rhythms specifically mentioned in Scripture, but they remind me of the "hours" of the day that Yeshua referred to in some of His parables, such as the one about workers who were hired to work a 12-hour day in a vineyard.¹⁰⁰

In another place Yeshua said, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight?"¹⁰¹ He's asking a rhetorical question because all the people living in that part of the world would have been used to their typical 12 hours of daylight. In my neck of the woods (central Michigan), we can have 18 hours of daylight in the summer, and sadly, much fewer than 12 hours of daylight in the dark of winter.

Why is an hour so special? Our bodies follow a 3-hour "ultradian" rhythm throughout the day and night. In the 1960s, sleep researcher Dr. Nathaniel Kleitman discovered that we go through cycles of rapid eye movement (REM) when we sleep. These periods of REM happen about every 90 minutes. He found that even during the daylight hours, these 90-minute cycles continue, two every 3 hours.

Other sleep researchers have postulated that we can work efficiently for 45-51 minutes, then we need approximately 8.5-10 minutes of rest, which adds up to about an hour. In other words, we can work for 6/7ths of an hour, then we need 1/7th of an hour for rest.

Isn't that interesting?

⁹⁹ Genesis 2:2-3, NIV

¹⁰⁰ See Matthew 20.

¹⁰¹ John 11:9

In addition, we can work for about 6 hours from the time we awaken each morning, then we tend to need nourishment (lunch) and a siesta (nap), usually lasting about an hour.

Another rhythm that seems to divide time into sevenths is the circaseptan rhythm, which basically means that we can work for six days before we need one day of rest. Cortisol, for instance, follows not only a circadian (24-hour) rhythm but also a circaseptan (7-day) rhythm. For instance, every seven days, your cortisol levels will be higher in the morning, even more so when under severe stress. This rhythm was discovered because the recipients of kidney transplants were suffering from transplant rejection only on days 7, 14, 21, and 28 after surgery.¹⁰²

Circaseptan rhythms seem to affect organs of the body that have to cooperate to perform a specific task that is body-wide. For instance, an immune response affects many organs and glands of the body at once, so autoimmune reactions tend to be worse one day out of every seven and often flare on a weekly schedule. (It would be interesting to track this in a symptom diary, wouldn't it?)

Just a sampling of the bodily processes that show circaseptan responses include:

- Blood pressure
- Acid content in the blood
- Red blood cell production
- Heartbeat
- Oral body temperature
- Urine chemistry and volume
- The ratio between the neurotransmitters, norepinephrine and epinephrine
- DNA labeling and mitotic activity
- Glutathione content (a co-enzyme process that reduces free radicals in the body)
- The production of 17-ketosteroids (substances formed when male adrenal hormones are released)
- Menstruation and the entire female reproductive cycle
- The birth of babies at full term

There are even circa-semi-septan rhythms (and I added those hyphens, just to wrap my mind around such a large word!). These rhythms appear every 3 ½ days, and they occur in greater force when an organism is under extreme attack or has been critically injured.

¹⁰² <http://ezinearticles.com/?A-Critical-Analysis-of-Aging&id=1486034>

Large amounts of cortisol are secreted during these times (i.e. during an attack of cancer), and researchers assume that the cortisol helps the system “reshuffle.”¹⁰³

Okay, you get the point. (You can tell these are my crazy thoughts, not my mother’s...) I could go on and on.

There are infradian rhythms that follow the 28-30 cycle of the moon (think of your monthly period here).

There are circannual rhythms that follow the cycle of the earth’s orbit around the sun, and even **seven-year rhythms** that remind me of God’s command to let the land rest from agricultural production every seven years.¹⁰⁴ If you enjoy this stuff, study it further and see if it might help your health!

For the practical-minded woman reading this, though, start to think how cortisol levels rise and fall throughout your hours, days, weeks, months and years. I think you’ll notice times in which you feel energetic – and other times when you feel like “a truck ran you over.”

Keeping a diary would be a great place to start!

Routines and Schedules

If God’s created world runs on such an orderly “routine,” then it stands to reason that we’ll feel better when we try to follow His schedule.

A good routine should include the following:

- Sleep** that matches our circadian rhythms.
- Meals** that follow a predictable routine, since cortisol is released in the digestion of food.
- Work** interspersed with periods of **rest** throughout the day.

The problem comes when we “passionate, driven, and ambitious” women try to accomplish more in a day than can possibly fit into these “rhythms.”

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ See Leviticus 25.

In other words, one of the reasons we're too tired is that we're too busy.

To make a schedule that is effective and can help us recover, we first need to write down what we want to accomplish in each day. This is important because we need to visually see that, if we try to write each of our intended activities down, with how much time we think each activity will take, there is no way any human being could possibly accomplish all these things!

Yet we often feel "driven." We feel like we **must** get it all done. We don't feel we have a choice in many of these activities.

- If we have small children, we feel overwhelmed at the care involved in mothering.
- Whether we're sick and tired or not, meals still have to be prepared, errands still have to be run, and laundry still has to be washed.
- We can't just stop working, because bills still need to be paid.

It's fine to occasionally ask others to help, but we know deep down that some things are still our responsibility. So we struggle on, doing too many things in our days.

Not only are we using up "physical" energy points by trying to rush around and get things done, but we're also using up "mental" and "emotional" energy points by trying to figure out *how* we're going to actually accomplish it.

I highly recommend that you make a daily and weekly routine for yourself.

I'm going to give you tips on how to do that, but they're just that: "tips." Only you can choose the ideas that will fit your life and help you still live with fatigue and recover.

But the bottom line is that you need to take personal responsibility, not just for your food intake, sleep, and hormone supplementation, but also for how you spend your time. You need to "rule over your own spirit," or your "city" will soon break down and be "without walls."

Later I'll help you make a schedule that you can live with most of the time. But just as the sun, moon, and stars "govern" our days and nights, keep the following things in mind as you "govern" your daily routine:

- Choose restful, relaxing activities after dark.
- Choose a bedtime that allows you to be asleep no later than 10:30 p.m.
- Choose a wake-up time that is realistic for your stage of fatigue.
- Choose mealtimes that will take advantage of your daily cortisol production.
- Choose to eat snacks, even if you have to stop what you're doing to take care of your body. Don't forget your bedtime snack!
- Choose a variety of activities, so that you can alternate between periods of work and rest, physical and mental work, etc. (More on this in the next chapter.)
- Choose to rest for one full day out of each seven, keeping in mind your natural circaseptan (7-day) rhythms. Specific activities you should choose to avoid on your "sabbath" include cooking, hard labor, shopping, and creative pursuits that use a lot of your "energy points." Spending time with and for others, especially in volunteer and caring roles, is especially refreshing after six days of concentrating on your own pursuits and agenda.
- Choose to consider your monthly, yearly, and even 7-year rhythms as you make plans and goals for your future.
 - Can you rest more during your period and during monthly ovulation?
 - Can you choose quieter activities during times of extremely hot or cold weather?
 - Can you take rhythms into account when making travel, vacation, and holiday plans?

Rest

A healthy, non-fatigued woman cycles through hourly and ultradian rhythms, as well as circadian and nightly rhythms. Her body quietly follows 7-day and monthly rhythms. Because she releases cortisol in a normal and healthy way, she is able to work effectively, digest her food properly, and sleep restfully.

But if your cortisol production isn't working correctly, you will struggle with all these rhythms, just as you probably have trouble with your sleep cycles.

- You probably have trouble getting physically *started* on tasks, even when you are inwardly motivated.
- You probably have trouble *stopping* tasks, even when you're exhausted.
- You probably have trouble *thinking clearly* when trying to plan.
- You probably have trouble *expressing* your thoughts to others, even when you can hear them clearly in your own mind.

- You probably also have trouble digesting your food, controlling your emotions, maintaining a consistent body temperature or blood pressure, resisting infections, responding to highly stressful circumstances, and many more things that are dependent upon the proper release and timing of hormones in your body (especially cortisol).

Do you remember our key principle? **Spend less energy than you make.**

If you were healthy, your body would release small spikes of cortisol and other hormones throughout the day to help you accomplish each task.

If you release too much or (more commonly) too little cortisol, you will find yourself struggling at predictable times of the day and night.

- Keep track of these times in your journal. When you write down a symptom or monitor things like your body temperature, always record the time next to it.
- Depending on your stage of fatigue, allow yourself extra rest in your days during times that cortisol would normally be produced.
- Do not let yourself get carried away or “keyed up” more than is necessary to perform what you need to accomplish.
- Try not to overwork any one part of your body or mind by repeating the same actions until you’re exhausted.
- Be careful not to slip into senseless repetition of mental tasks when you are already exhausted.
- If you get yourself into a “rut,” you might not be able to stop. Learn to recognize your body’s own unique cries for rest.
- Remember that God’s creation is full of variety; your days should be filled with creative variety, too!

How will you feel if you’re too tired? It will depend on your unique body, so certainly start paying attention and **writing down your symptoms** (and times).

For me, I often start to ache in my back (around where my adrenal glands are located), my lymph glands will swell, or I'll get a headache. I might feel a little dizzy or get a slight sore throat.

My mental state shows changes, too. I won't be able to remember someone's name, or I'll go to the kitchen only to forget why I went. I'll feel as if words are on the tip of my tongue, but I just can't get them out. I'll say a wrong but similar word, yet not know I'm doing it. I can't remember details from the past. When I'm feeling especially bad, I'll be able to hear myself say something in my mind, yet I am unable to physically talk.

Emotions are the best (and most frustrating) indicators for me, though. Noise is unbearable. Temperature extremes, crowds, or fast-paced music can make me physically sick, even to the point of vomiting or diarrhea. If a baby or small child starts to cry, I will usually want to cry, too. In fact, crying and anger are common responses, even when I can't think why I am crying or angry. Usually I can't stop crying, either, until I have gone away from all the stimuli and rested.

Rest.

It's the only thing that can bring me out. (Well, for me, a small dose of extra cortisol also brings improvement in about 20 minutes, but only when combined with rest.)

What is rest?

Rest is coming away from the crowds, the noise, the music, the stresses and worries, and even the work I've been doing as part of a normal day. I come away from it all, I lie down flat, I close my eyes, and I work to slow down my breathing. I pray or recite a Bible verse from memory.

I have to mentally remind myself that I'm not being chased by a bear so there is no reason for my body to use its "fight or flight" responses.

Simply put, rest is a change in my activity that reduces the number of processes my body has to handle.

Lying down reduces gravity, so my muscles and skeletal system can rest.

A dark, quiet room reduces the stimuli being received by my eyes and ears.

Rest gets me away from strong smells. Rest gives me bland food (like raw milk) that doesn't require much digestion or use of taste buds.

Rest allows my system to "reshuffle."

Rest is most effective when it happens before I get to a point of crisis.

Regular, daily naps are more effective than occasional ones, for instance, because my body learns to depend on having to produce less cortisol at those times. Doing mundane tasks (dishes, laundry, shopping) at the same times each day allows my body to avoid bursts of adrenaline and depend rather on the rhythmical releases of small amounts of cortisol.

- Routine helps me rest just a little more than what I need.
- Routine helps me remember what I'm supposed to do, so my brain doesn't have to use cortisol to think.
- Routine helps me be realistic, always spending less than what I'm making in energy.

Rhythms help me understand how my body works, so that I can plan my time better. When my time is planned better, I will start making regular, "automatic" deposits into my energy bank account.

Rest, routine, and rhythms. These three words help me manage my time effectively.

I'll start to get better. I'll start to overcome the fatigue that has been ruling my life. I'll be the governor of my time, rather than allowing my life to break down and being "driven" to the point of uselessness to myself, others, or God.

That's what I was so passionate about accomplishing in the first place, right?

Putting a Schedule Together

The following is a collection of handy tips for time management when you're tired.

- How valuable is your time? What is your personal reason for wanting to control it?
- If others can't find you, they can't steal your time and energy. It's okay to hide when you need to rest!
- You don't have to answer the phone or text messages at this moment. If it's an emergency, they'll be able to reach you in other ways.
- Otherwise, limit phone calls to less than 5 minutes when you're tired – or don't answer it at all.
- Turn off your cell phone. You're not breaking any Law of the Universe. People survived for thousands of years without cell phones.

- Only check your e-mail at planned times. Same thing goes for Facebook, Twitter, instant messaging, you-name-it. Rule over these things; don't let them rule you.
- When you communicate with others, tell them up front how long you can talk before you'll be too tired. You could say, "I'm sorry, but I have something scheduled in 15 minutes and had a few things I needed to finish before then, so I can only speak for 5 minutes at this time." (You're not lying, because you scheduled a short rest time for each hour.)
- Use a timer. Timers are the best invention ever, even beyond wheels and electric lights. Absolutely! In fact, use several timers!
- Pay attention to time. Be on time. Realize the value of time in your efforts to overcome fatigue.
- Learn to enjoy staying home. Don't just run out somewhere because you can. Be intentional about where you go and why. See if you can leave home less often.
- Make and use lists. Why use up cortisol remembering details, when you could have carried a small notebook around with you and written things down?
- Only use your time for things that really matter (see #1 above). Your family, by the way, "really matters" most of the time. So does your health.
- Set up reminder systems. Use the principles learned in the section on food preparation (setting up a "Command Central") to set up all your routine household tasks. Do the same household tasks at the same times each day, each week, each month, etc.
- Be efficient. Are you walking up a flight of stairs? Take things with you, to avoid another trip. Are you opening the mail? Do it by the garbage can, so you never touch unwanted paper twice.
- Learn to read quickly, with a highlighter and notecards handy, so that you only need to read things once.
- Only do what you're best at; delegate as many other things as possible. Where can you replace yourself completely?

- Don't procrastinate. Your brain will only wake you up with worry in the middle of the night. If you can't do it now, put it on the calendar for a specific time.
- Who you hang out with matters. Your best friends should be of high character.
- Helping others in need almost always makes you feel refreshed. It's okay to rest your body afterwards, though.
- Evaluate if your tasks are being done because they are necessary and good, or because you feel "driven" to do them by guilt or compulsion.
- Learn to say "no."

9 Steps to Creating an Efficient Schedule

1. Wake up consistently in the morning.

The first step in setting up and sticking to a schedule is trying to get up at the same time each morning. According to your stage of fatigue, it can be fine to sleep in for extra rest, but as a general rule, you'll feel much better if you get up.

Note: I never said you had to wake up *early!* If you need to sleep later than other women you know, that's okay. The key is to try to wake up at the same time each morning.

Take a quick shower, brush your teeth, and grab a cup of coffee, then slip away to plan your day on paper.

I like to start my day in a quiet spot with my Bible. I want to get directions from God on how He wants me to use my time. I bring my worries and concerns to Him in prayer. I bring my "to do" list to Him, too! He directs me, and I feel better knowing I'm doing exactly what He wants me to with my time.

2. Eat regular meals.

Mealtime is fairly non-negotiable in our home. For our health and for more even-keeled emotions, our bodies need to have regular rhythms.

- Nothing helps set up a steady circadian rhythm better than regular mealtimes and regular bedtimes.
- Regular mealtimes also help us do our chores (dishes especially) regularly.
- Finally, regular mealtimes ensure that I set my own interests aside for a few minutes each day and enjoy my companions and show interest in them during mealtime.

3. Follow a plan.

Make an “Everything I Do” list. On one sheet of paper, list every single thing you normally do in a week. (It may take several days before you remember all these things, so take your time!)

If you are married, get your husband’s input. Ask him if your “Everything I Do” list is missing anything. Ask him if he wishes you’d take something off your list. (Hey, what a great excuse for a date!)

Prioritize your list so that you know what things you **MUST** do each day, what things you would **LIKE** to do, and what things you **DON’T** have to do.

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what Yehovah’s will is.¹⁰⁵

In the front of my planning notebook, I have a “Daily To Do” list which tells me what I must do each day so I can reach my goals. Each morning, I can glance at this list and work through it, one step at a time.

¹⁰⁵ Ephesians 5:15-17

1. Have I read my Bible?
2. Have I had a shower (and prayer time)?
3. Am I dressed for the day?
4. Are the kids dressed?
5. Are the beds made?
6. Is the house neat?
7. Have we had a nutritious breakfast?
8. Is the kitchen clean?
9. Have I done my daily cleaning chores?
10. Have I planned the day's meals?
11. Etc.

Make a weekly cycle for cleaning, budgeting jobs, shopping, laundry, music lessons, sports activities, church and community commitments, dates with your husband and children, and rest times.

4. Be a manager of your home.

(Note: This section is for mothers.)

Face it. You're the mom. You're not your children's buddy or playmate. You're their mom. It's your job to love them, but it's also your job to teach them. Not only should you set up a schedule; you also need to enforce the schedule in your home.

"Don't expect what you won't inspect!"

If you have a difficult time getting your children to do a GOOD job on their kitchen chores (rather than rushing through them so they can get back to their fun), try this:

Post a list of what you expect during kitchen clean-up. You could tape the list to the inside of a cabinet door. Detail every job that needs to be done before the kids may leave the kitchen. For instance,

- Clear your own spot.
- Help clear the rest of table.
- Wipe the table.
- Put on the tablecloth and centerpiece.
- Vacuum under the table.
- Push the chairs in.
- Sweep the kitchen floor.
- Wipe off counters.
- Wash dishes.

- Dry dishes.
- Put away dishes.
- Wipe off stove.
- Shine sink.

Maybe your kids aren't lazy after all. Maybe they just don't know what's expected of them! (By the way, this idea works for any cleaning job.)

Laminate your schedule and hang it on the refrigerator. Each day, use a dry erase marker and check off each activity as you complete it. At the end of the day, you can easily see what has or hasn't been completed. Wipe it off with a paper towel to use the next day. You'll enjoy not having to remember everything in your head anymore, and your children will enjoy knowing "what's next."

I keep a dry-erase calendar on my refrigerator also. All our appointments and responsibilities get written on this family calendar. We all know where to look when we want to know what's happening.

Place an alarm clock in the kitchen, and set it for a specific time each day. When the alarm goes off, Mom does a "house inspection." Be sure your children know exactly what your standards are, then force yourself to actually check their work at this daily time. Be consistent with rewards or consequences. I like to have "house inspection" time in the late afternoon, before Dad gets home, so that the house looks nice for his return.

5. Change activities before you get tired.

Studies have shown that your brain will recover quicker from the intensity of your days if you'll take frequent breaks. Have you been reading aloud to toddlers for a while? Stop and take a quick walk outside. Have you been online too long? Get up and do the dishes. Have you been on your feet awhile? Take ten minutes to lie down and listen to music.

Often, we forget about taking care of ourselves. If you must, set a timer to remind yourself to take a break at least once each hour. You'll be amazed how much more energetic you feel!

6. Set up your space.

My house isn't big enough to actually have one room that's exclusively devoted each activity (although that would be wonderful someday). However, we still have specific spaces for each thing we do.

- Is your kitchen set up for efficiency? You might want a food-prep station, a cooking station, a cleaning station, and a storage station.
- Is your bathroom set up for efficient grooming each day?
- Is your home office set up to pay bills quickly and easily?
- Is your entryway set up so that you can find your keys, your purse, all the school bags, the cell phones, the boots and mittens, and the soccer equipment?

When there's a "place for everything and everything in its place," you'll be relieved of a lot of the pressure of a busy home.

7. Be consistent with your children.

Kids crave order. One of the best ways you can do that is to remind yourself to be consistent.

- Did you make a rule? Are you enforcing it consistently?
- Did you set a certain bedtime? Is it the same almost every night?
- Did you make a promise? Did you keep it?

Consistency brings stability. Consistent mealtimes, bedtime routines, and after-school schedules help your children stop thinking about their day and start relaxing enough to learn and think.

Consistency helps mom, too. Have you ever had jet lag? Didn't you feel exhausted? Jet lag at home is no fun, either. Try to establish consistent habits that will allow your brain to go on "auto-pilot" as much as possible.

8. Take domestic shortcuts.

Why not relax some of your housekeeping standards during this season of your life? I'm not saying that you should never do laundry or clean the dog hair off the floor.

However, do you really need to dust seven days a week? Do you need to iron your pajamas?

Experiment with your cleaning routines until you find a happy “middle ground” that is acceptable to you and your husband. Then delegate at least half of those jobs to your children or others!

Don't try to be a superwoman.

9. Rest.

Finally, remember that we're only human, and we need to rest. I know I keep saying this, but it really is the key to recovery!

Be sure you're going to bed on time. Be careful to take frequent breaks during the day. Take a nap when you're especially tired.

Also, be sure to take one day each week to completely rest. For 24 hours, remind yourself that it's your day off. How can you plan ahead for this day, so you don't need to cook, clean, weed, or run the family around to a million events? Tell all your family and friends that this day is off limits – then stick to it!

PART 6

When You're Sick and Tired

Recognizing Danger Signs

Women with severe fatigue often find that life spirals out of control for them. Their fatigue disrupts everything, and everything worsens their fatigue!

This section is set up to help you stop the downward spiral that comes with fatigue. This first chapter will help you recognize the physical, mental, and emotional symptoms that accompany fatigue – and will give you strategies to cope, before it gets worse.

Then we'll talk about ways you can prepare for the inevitable day that you get sick anyway. It will help you be prepared for any circumstance, as well as give you strategies for specific illnesses.

You might be tired – but you don't have to let fatigue control your life!

First Signs of Danger

In 1980, the first blood glucose meters were sold to the general public, so that diabetes patients could monitor their blood sugar levels at home. These first machines had a 4-inch galvanometer with a jeweled bearing, weighed 3 pounds, and cost \$650. Now these tiny machines

can fit into the size of a watch, weigh only ounces, and cost less than \$20. In fact, many manufacturers give them away.

Glucose meters revolutionized the face of diabetes. With the proper use of a blood glucose meter, people with diabetes can monitor their blood sugar and, by changing their diet and medication, fine-tune their care regimen so that their blood glucose stays within a very narrow range. All side effects from diabetes can disappear, extending their life by decades.¹⁰⁶

Growing up, I watched my grandparents faithfully check their blood sugars, first thing every morning and before every meal. They wrote down all the numbers meticulously, and several times, knowing the level of glucose in their blood saved their lives!

How often I've wished that those of us with adrenal fatigue had a way to check our cortisol levels! Couldn't a simple machine be invented that helped us the way the glucometer helps millions of diabetics?

One day I realized that a fatigued woman's "cortisol meter" is the simple thermometer!

Since I have Addison's disease and get almost all of my cortisol from a pill (hydrocortisone), and since it lasts only a few short hours in my system, my body temperature is a reliable indicator of how much cortisol is in my blood stream. Why?

Cortisol is "the King of hormones." Cortisol is present in almost every cell of your body, and its job is to restore your equilibrium after you've secreted adrenaline. Cortisol is produced by your body in amounts that follow a daily pattern, depending on the amount of light your eyes take in and the amount of activity you do.

Cortisol is necessary in order for thyroid hormone to get from the blood stream to your cells and raise your body temperature. If you don't have enough cortisol, then thyroid can't get into your cells. You'll be cold.

You can monitor the levels of cortisol in your blood stream by taking your body temperature first thing every morning and also at 10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 4 p.m., as well as at any other time you're experiencing symptoms of fatigue.

¹⁰⁶ Richard K. Bernstein, *Dr. Bernstein's Diabetes Solution: Revised and Updated* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 2003).

To track body temperature, purchase an inexpensive digital thermometer, preferably one with a memory. These usually cost around \$5 at a pharmacy.

Place the thermometer next to your bed. If you've been sleeping for four hours or more before waking in the morning, then before you sit up or stand up, place the thermometer in your mouth. If your temperature is below 97.5 degrees, this is a sign that your metabolism is being turned down .

This method was popularized by Doctors Broda Barnes, Stephen Langer, and most recently, Bruce Rind. Dr. Rind has specifically developed the method to work with adrenal fatigue patients, and his extensive research into temperature patterns of women with fatigue shows us that we follow a specific pattern as we start to heal.

He asks a woman with adrenal fatigue to track her temperatures at least 3 times a day. She then averages those temperatures and marks each day's average on a chart.

At first, a woman in more advanced stages of fatigue will see her body temperatures jump all over the chart. One day the temperatures will be quite low. Then next they'll be quite high! Up and down, like a roller coaster, shooting all over the map, go her temps!

Amazingly, her moods go along with her temperatures. Up one minute, down the next. Laughing... crying... zooming through the house, then crashing in bed... Like a roller coaster, shooting all over the map, go her emotions.

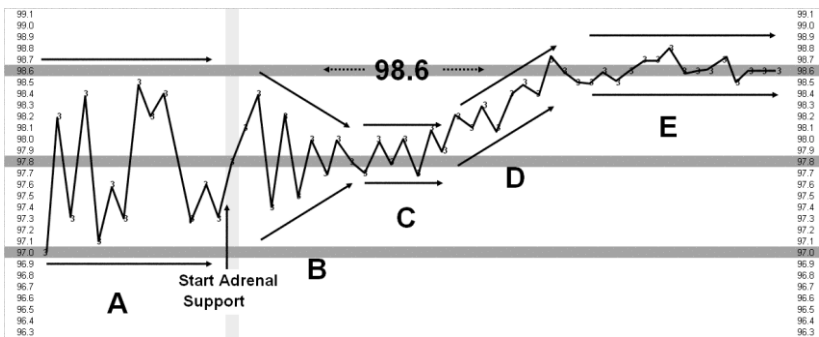


Image Source: <http://www.drrind.com/therapies/metabolic-temperature-graph>

In this book, we've been talking about a woman's state of mind and emotions when she's trying to overcome fatigue. She's not always easy to live with – and she knows it. The guilt and frustration over her reactions often add to her fatigue.

Happily, as a woman begins to recover from fatigue, both her temperatures and her moods will begin to stabilize. She'll still experience ups and downs, but they won't be quite as extreme.

Your thinking ability, and especially your mental state, is a powerful indicator of how your body is functioning.

Let's talk about how to turn you from the woman everyone runs from to someone who is calm, stable, and peaceful.

Mental and Emotional Symptoms of Fatigue

Every gland and system of the body responds to the secretion of hormones from the adrenal glands, but four glands respond first.

1. **The liver must have adequate cortisol** in order to release stored sugar into the blood stream to help the brain function properly.
2. **The stomach must have adequate cortisol** for the production of digestive enzymes.
3. **The kidneys must have adequate aldosterone** (an adrenal hormone) to maintain proper levels of sodium and potassium in the bloodstream, to maintain correct fluid levels and blood pressure.
4. **The heart must have adequate aldosterone** for a regular heartbeat and for the output of blood to be regular and firm. When aldosterone decreases, the heart struggles to regulate itself.

Here are some of the **physical symptoms of fatigue** you'll experience when these glands don't receive proper adrenal hormones:

- Headache
- Slow, sluggish, lethargic movements
- Sweating or shaking with cold (inability to regulate temperature)
- Swelling in fingers, arms, or legs; water retention; sudden weight gain

- Aching in lymph glands (in neck, under arms, sore legs, etc.)
- Aching in middle back (near adrenal glands)
- An internal trembling or quivering; shaky hands; poor handwriting
- Neuropathies, poor circulation, swollen varicose veins or hemorrhoids
- Nervous ticks, twitching eyes
- Nausea, diarrhea, vomiting
- Constipation, gas, and bloating
- Abdominal and flank pain
- Joint pain
- Yeast infections
- Skin rashes, allergic reactions
- Sore throat, as if catching a cold
- Appetite loss or food cravings
- Thirst
- Strong-smelling urine
- Bladder infections
- High or low blood pressure (optimal average is 120/80)
- Weakness, loss of muscle strength
- Sensitivity to bright lights
- "Seeing stars," bright lights in vision, tunnel vision, or fainting
- Sensitivity to loud sounds
- Pounding heart
- Shortness of breath
- Heaviness in chest
- Rapid breathing, inability to "catch your breath"
- Profound sleepiness, fitful sleep

Which physical symptoms show up first for you? For me, an aching back is one of my first signs of trouble. If I place my fingers at the very bottom of my rib cage on my back and move them away from my spine toward my sides, I will feel a bruised, achy spot on each side. This soreness is not relieved by a back rub from my husband. It's too deep for that! It's just a dull *ouch* that tells me I'm too tired.

I'm referring to acute symptoms here, not chronic (long-term) symptoms. I'm referring to an intense craving for chocolate near midnight, rather than a lifetime love of cinnamon rolls. Pay attention to strong symptoms that only show up for relatively brief times, after periods of stress or extra exertion.

It seems, in my body at least, that the physical symptoms show up first.

If I don't pay attention and rest, however, I will show the following **mental symptoms of fatigue**:

- "Foggy" thinking, mental confusion
- Prone to accidents, dropping things
- Stuttering
- Inability to plan (menus, grocery lists, "to-do" lists)
- Inability to remember phone numbers, people's names, etc.
- Inability to give clear directions to others
- Difficulty expressing your thoughts to others, even when you can hear them clearly in your own mind
- Inability to speak

You can see that these symptoms are all evidences of a *brain* that is not receiving nourishment, so it cannot function correctly. A variety of diseases and disorders can bring about these identical symptoms, but they all boil down to your liver, stomach, kidneys and heart not doing their jobs – which means you can't think clearly.

If I still don't heed my body's warning to rest, then I will show the following **emotional symptoms of fatigue**:

- High-pitched, nervous laughter
- Desire to control others ("micro-manage"), even if unable to think clearly
- Anger at others
- Anger at self
- Impulsiveness
- Outbursts of anger at others, extreme frustration
- Crying and unable to stop
- Fear, panic, anxiety (not always sure what we're afraid of)
- Want to run away or hide
- Wanting to be alone in my fatigue
- Trouble starting tasks
- Inability to stop what you're doing ("obsessive-compulsive")
- Depression and thoughts of self-pity, worthlessness, or suicide
- Feelings of unreality
- Sinking into a feeling of "I just don't care..."

These emotional symptoms start with extreme agitation, as if my body is trying to stir me up with a huge burst of energy, but they end by my sinking into a feeling of apathy and sleepiness.

I feel like Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz*, who experienced an extremely stressful tornado, started down the yellow-brick road, only to end in a field of poppies. She started feeling sleepy... sleepy... very sleepy....

When Symptoms Show Up

I've painted an ugly picture here. Maybe your fatigue isn't this severe, or maybe you're reading this chapter as a caregiver of someone who struggles with fatigue. Please notice that all these symptoms are on a continuum. They start with simple fatigue and just a few physical symptoms, then the body tries to rouse itself, then finally they end with a steep, downward spiral.

Sometimes symptoms manifest in just one "local" spot in the body. For instance, if you burn your finger, you'll experience some of these symptoms as your body deals with the shock of getting burned. However, many stressors affect the entire body, so the symptoms come on more gradually, as your body tries to deal with many areas of shock throughout all its symptoms. It seems that all the systems of the body try to spread the shock out as much as possible, to save resources.

Let's say you're in a car accident, then you experience the death of a loved one a few weeks later, followed by a bout with the stomach flu later in the month. You might not relate these stressors to the shakiness and mental fatigue you "suddenly" wake up with one day.

How long does it for symptoms to show up? It depends on how many "reserves" you have. It can be very helpful for you to figure out your own unique pattern, though.

Are you "hard to live with"? If so, knowing if your body will react after 1 hour, after 2 days, or after 1 week, will help you plan a "down day," away from excessive noise, exertion, and people. If you have "overspent," you can help others out by planning for a day of rest, so that you won't "fly off the handle" by continuing to push when you should be "depositing into your energy bank account."

If you're supplementing with cortisol and feel that your situation is severe enough to warrant a "stress dose," pay attention to how long it takes for you to feel the help from the extra cortisol.¹⁰⁷ In my body, I feel better in 20 minutes. Knowing this helps, because if I didn't feel better in 20 minutes, I'd know something else was wrong and would probably call my doctor or head to the emergency room.

¹⁰⁷ Be sure to review "Instructions for Patients Taking Cortisol" at the end of Chapter 13.

*Tip: If you're the caregiver of a woman with fatigue, **write everything down!** Why? Because she won't remember things well later. Remember, her brain isn't working right! She needs you to remember for her. Email works great, because it contains a date and time stamp. Send her an email "summary" of what happened, how you cared for her, and how she reacted.*

Just like our temperature chart at the beginning of this chapter, a woman with severe fatigue will experience wide ranges of symptoms, with large highs and lows. A woman with mild fatigue will only experience small ups and downs. Our goal in this book is to help you move from unstable to stable, from a huge roller-coaster lifestyle to "smooth sailing" with only minor waves.

*Tip: Have thermometers readily available in your home! **Take your temperature when you experience any of these symptoms, and write it down.** (Note the time.) When you're feeling better, average all daily temperatures and add them to a graph. I have a thermometer in a cup on top of my refrigerator, in my purse, in my apron pocket, in the bathroom, and next to my bed. If it's handy, you'll remember better!*

How to Stop the Downward Spiral

If you'll study the progression from bad to worse of the symptoms listed previously, you'll notice that there comes a point where no one will want to live with you, be near you, or come within a day's drive of you.

But some of the symptoms at the top of each section are mild. If your back aches, no one else knows. If you wake up one morning and drop everything you touch, you're probably the only one who notices. If you giggle uncontrollably, others might laugh, but only *you* are aware that you might start crying in a moment.

What can you do to stop the downward spiral before it gets any worse? What can you do to help your mind and emotions cope, before you take it out on others and become "hard to live with"?

Woman who are tired are woman who feel dreadfully guilty. They don't want to let down their loved ones and family members. They don't want to be boring, sleepy all the time, and otherwise "checked out" of life. They want to be a loving and contributing member of the family,

with close friends. Often, however, they are lonely, frustrated, and guilty. Very guilty.

Even if you pay attention to your symptoms, carefully writing them down so you recognize what's happening before it gets worse, how can you learn to control your body's reactions? Is it even possible?

Yes, but it takes time and practice. That's why the roller coaster is so crazy at first. Eventually the hills will get smaller. You can learn to take control, even of your mind and emotions.

Note: I cannot do any of this without God's help! I realize that maybe you don't have a personal relationship with God, or maybe you're reading this and don't even believe in God.

I could pretend that I am able to change my responses all on my own, just so that I don't offend you with my personal beliefs.

But I'd be lying. I just can't do it on my own!

Sometimes I can change without other people's help. Sometimes I can learn behavioral responses that give temporary relief. But without God's help in my life, I cannot succeed. I fall flat on my face, again and again and again. "The joy of Yehovah is my strength."¹⁰⁸

Therefore, I'll be talking a lot about how God has helped me. I truly believe you'll never experience true healing without God's help, either.

I used to be a piano teacher. My students would have recitals every few months. As we would prepare for recitals, I would note that some students could handle the stress of public performance just fine, with "nerves of steel" and flawless performances. Other students could play their songs perfectly at their piano lesson, but they'd fall to pieces in front of an audience. Why?

As I watched my students over the years, I noted that some could handle the bursts of adrenaline that come with performing, while others couldn't. Adrenaline is sometimes called the "flight or fight" hormone. I used to tell my students that playing at a recital feels the same to their bodies as being found by a bear in the woods.

¹⁰⁸ Nehemiah 8:10

If you come across a bear in the woods, your body will either want to **fight** the bear or **run away**. Adrenaline helps you do either. After all, if you're going to punch a bear, you'll need a massive burst of power in your arms and legs. If you decide to run down the mountainside, you'll need energy in your arms and legs then, too.

Of course, you're not really fighting a bear at the piano recital! *Your body only thinks it is*. The large muscles needed for fighting or running aren't terribly needed to play scales and beautiful melodies on the piano. All that excess energy will make your fingers shake and palms sweat, and that makes it even harder to play the piano. Poor circulation makes it likely you could trip as you walk to the stage in front of that huge audience. The imbalance of sodium and potassium that makes you need to go to the bathroom is highly inconvenient when you're the next person to play on the program, too!

All my students felt the adrenaline. It's normal, and in addition, it's an *involuntary response to stress*. You cannot control it. It's released, whether you want it or not.

However, some students had prepared for its effects. Some students had "systems" in place in their lives that allowed pre-programmed responses to take over, so that they didn't have to rely on brain power alone.

In other words, they practiced daily. They practiced carefully. They played their scales. They performed often so that they could practice dealing with the effects of adrenaline.

When you were a toddler, your body learned how to hold a spoon correctly and get food from the plate to your mouth. You, however, no longer have to think about how to do this. You have "practiced" eating with a spoon for so many years that your muscles simply act without any thought required.

When you learned to type, your body learned how to place your fingers on the correct keys so that you no longer have to think about e-v-e-r-y s-i-n-g-l-e l-e-t-t-e-r when you type.

When you learned to read, your body learned how to sound out words so quickly that you no longer have to think about each word. Reading is effortless to you, requiring almost no brain power at all.

When you practice a song for a piano recital, if your body has learned the song so well that it has become second nature, you will require very little brain power to play it, even under severe performance stress.

And when you practice certain mental and emotional patterns, day after day, when you're feeling well, you will require very little brain power to react in "nice" ways, even under severe fatigue and stress.

Practice makes perfect!

Before I show you how to "practice," please note that this is a process that takes time. Just as you need to learn new habits of eating, sleeping, and time management, you'll also need to learn new habits of thinking. This is not easy! It takes time.

Don't add to the guilt and thus add more stress and fatigue to your life by beating yourself up the next time you do it wrong. *You're going to do it wrong!* Just expect it. Tell all your loved ones how you're trying to improve, ask them to forgive you, and try again. It will get better, I promise!

The Bible says that every single human being is born wanting to live by the "lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind."¹⁰⁹ What does this mean?

It means that our physical bodies have some "lusts" or cravings. A lust isn't just a sexual desire; it's a desire for anything at all that the body needs. In fact, a lust of the "flesh" isn't even necessarily wrong. It can be a real need.

Our physical bodies have legitimate cravings for:

- Food
- Oxygen
- Glucose for the brain
- Love and Affection
- and so on...

These fleshly, bodily "lusts" or desires are experienced by all. The problem comes when the needs of our bodies take over and drive all our choices and decisions.

That certainly happens in fatigue, doesn't it? Even if I wouldn't normally react in anger around loud noises, if a spoon is dropped on

¹⁰⁹ Ephesians 2:3, KJV

the floor and the sound makes me hit the ceiling because my body doesn't have enough cortisol, I am living by the "lusts of the flesh" for cortisol.

In that moment, two different desires need to be met:

1. **Desires of the flesh** – These are the physical responses I was born with.
2. **Desires of the mind** – These are the mental/emotional responses I have learned by my thinking patterns over my lifetime. They are practiced responses, thought patterns of the mind.

When a spoon is dropped on the floor and startles me, I jump. That's a desire of the flesh. I was born with this reflex, and there isn't much I can do about it.

However, if all my life I have learned to react to startling events with a soft, quiet answer, I am likely to respond with this practiced response to the dropped spoon. However, if all my life I have allowed myself to react in relatively unstressful times with impatience and frustration, my practiced response to the spoon will be much more extreme.

Why are some elderly people mean and grumpy, while others (who may be suffering similar or even worse symptoms of old age) are sweet and kind?

Both have desires of the flesh, such as achy joints and diseases of old age. However, both have "practiced" mental responses over seventy or eighty years. The practiced response is what shows up in the nursing home.

The Bible lists many "practiced responses" that will make you easy to live with.

Love
Joy
Peace
Patience
Kindness
Goodness
Faithfulness
Gentleness
Self-Control¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Galatians 5:22-23, NIV

In fact, the Bible goes so far as to say that doing what God says will bring health to your body!

*“My son, do not forget my teaching,
but keep my commands in your heart,
for they will prolong your life many years
and bring you prosperity.”¹¹¹*

*“Listen, my son, accept what I say,
and the years of your life will be many.”¹¹²*

*“My son, pay attention to what I say;
listen closely to my words.
Do not let them out of your sight,
keep them within your heart;
for they are life to those who find them
and health to a man’s whole body.”¹¹³*

*“Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear Yehovah and shun evil.
This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones.”¹¹⁴*

*“A heart at peace gives life to the body,
but envy rots the bones.”¹¹⁵*

*“A cheerful look brings joy to the heart,
and good news gives health to the bones.”¹¹⁶*

*“A cheerful heart is good medicine,
but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.”¹¹⁷*

Don’t be alarmed, though, when you discover that a “cheerful heart” and other proper responses don’t come naturally to you. Doing right has to be practiced and learned. In fact, the Bible says you’ll need a new nature from God to succeed!

¹¹¹ Proverbs 3:1-2, NIV

¹¹² Proverbs 4:10, NIV

¹¹³ Proverbs 4:20-22, NIV

¹¹⁴ Proverbs 3:7-8, NIV

¹¹⁵ Proverbs 14:30, NIV

¹¹⁶ Proverbs 15:30, NIV

¹¹⁷ Proverbs 17:22, NIV

You're born with the "desires of the mind" to think in one of two ways:

1. Fear
2. Anger

The Bible clearly lists SEVEN ways to think to replace the old patterns:

"Whatever is...

1. True
2. Noble
3. Right
4. Pure
5. Lovely
6. Admirable
7. If anything is excellent or praiseworthy

...think about such things."

In your journal, you need to **identify the times** that you respond to stressful situations with anger or fear.

You then need to **have "systems" in place** that will remind you of proper ways to respond instead.

Finally, you will need to **practice these responses in non-stressful times**, over and over again, so that they require little brain energy during times of extreme fatigue.

Dr. Hans Selye, a famed researcher on stress, writes,

"Not only our mental, but even our bodily defense reactions may become stereotyped if we are faced with the same kind of problem again and again.

A man can hurt himself by reacting to every proposition according to a set pattern: say, by habitually ridiculing, complaining, agreeing, or disagreeing. Prejudice is the most common basis for such "pre-judged," stereotyped mental response patterns.

Everybody is aware of this, but it less well-known that our bodily defense reactions can also fall into a groove, for instance, by

always responding with the same exaggerated hormonal response, whether it is appropriate to the situation or not.

A child or a hysterical person can snap out of a tantrum if you splash cold water in his face. The body of a patient can also be shaken out of habitually responding in the same senseless manner if you expose it to the stress of some intense shock therapy, such as electroshock..."¹¹⁸

In the next chapter, I'll show you how to form new reaction patterns.

¹¹⁸ Hans Selye, *The Stress of Life* (New York: McGraw-Hill: 1984), pp. 402-403.

CHAPTER 21

Forming New Reaction Patterns

Our reactions tend to fall into a groove. We need to make new grooves, which takes time and practice.

If you carry a heavy suitcase with your right arm, after a while your muscles will start to hurt on that side of your body. You know you need to set the suitcase down, but sometimes it's difficult to even bend over. It just hurts too much to do anything different, so you continue to struggle along with the heavy suitcase on your right arm.

But if you divert the energy to your left arm, switching the weight to another group of muscles, your right arm starts to feel better.

Just the same way, when we realize we're in a bad mental or emotional groove, we need to divert thoughts to a new groove by replacing old thoughts with new ones.

The Bible mentions five specific ways to divert thoughts from old grooves to new ones:

1. Prayer

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Messiah Yeshua.¹¹⁹

Prayer contains three parts:

- ❑ **Perspective** – This is learning to see things from God’s perspective rather than my own, then agreeing with Him.
- ❑ **Petition** – This is learning to see my need for God’s help, then asking for it.
- ❑ **Praise** – This is learning to see that God can bring good out of any situation, then thanking Him for it.

Can you see how this is a “system” that you can begin implementing today in your home, but that it will take “practice” over time to continue?

2. Memorizing and Reciting Scripture

Since anger and fear are the primary responses to stressful situations, it is very helpful to begin replacing these thought patterns with Bible verses.

Before you react in anger, you could practice reciting this verse each day:

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.¹²⁰

Before you react in fear, you could practice reciting this verse each day:

An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Philippians 4:6-7, NIV

¹²⁰ Proverbs 15:1, NIV

¹²¹ Proverbs 12:25, NIV

Memorizing and reciting these verses not only gives you the “correct answer” of how to respond to fear or anger, but if you recite them often enough, you’ll even be able to remember them when you experience the mind-numbing fog of adrenaline and stress.

You’ll remember to give a gentle answer rather than “flying off the handle.”

You’ll remember to be cheerful even when fearful.

There are many, many more verses about fear and anxiety in the Bible. Can you see how you might need a “system” to find verses to memorize, and that it will take “practice” over time to continue?

3. Music

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to Jehovah, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Master Yeshua the Messiah.¹²²

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.¹²³

Music has been traditionally used to calm fatigue and stress for centuries, in every culture around the world.

These Bible verses specifically mention music that is directed toward God, music that is filled with “the Word of Christ” (quotations from the Bible), music that teaches us about God, and music that is filled with thanksgiving toward God. The music should be performed “in your heart” as well as with others.

A “system” I’ve used is to have an mp3 player and a pair of earphones in my apron pocket, in my purse, and next to my bed. I have music set up on my computer and CD’s ready in my living room. There is virtually no place I can go in my house that doesn’t have the capability for music.

¹²² Ephesians 5:19-20, NIV

¹²³ Colossians 3:15-16, NIV

I prepare ahead of time with playlists and CD collections, then when I feel the physical, mental, and emotional symptoms of fatigue hitting, I can get the music started immediately.

4. Actions before Feelings

When we react, we are responding to physical, mental, and emotional *feelings*. However, we can often reverse those feelings by choosing a different physical *action*. When our bodies sense a physical movement, they react with a different hormonal secretion.

So we can trick our feelings by changing our actions, regardless of how we feel.

Dr. Selye writes,

I was first introduced to these truths at the age of six by my grandmother, when she found me desperately crying, I no longer recall about what. She looked at me with that particularly benevolent and protective look that I still remember and said, "Anytime you feel that low, just try to smile with your face, and you'll see... soon your whole being will be smiling." I tried it. It works.¹²⁴

Smiling and laughter are extremely effective tools against the ravages of fatigue. In fact, heading to a private place with a mirror (such as a bathroom) and smiling at yourself in the mirror can break up an episode of crying or a panic attack. It might feel fake, but forcing yourself to give a good belly laugh when with someone else, even if you feel irritated or annoyed inside, can help you snap out of that bad feeling.

Can you control the muscles of your face that make it look like you are smiling? Yes, even your eyes! Practice smiling at odd times until your muscles feel comfortable with it again.

Practice "ha, ha, ha" and "ho, ho, ho." Do you know someone with a contagious laugh? Try making yours sound like hers. Belly laughing is what you're going for, by the way.

Action before feeling. Schedule it into your day. Practice, practice, practice...

¹²⁴ Selye, p. 409.

5. Total Rest

When all else fails, get total rest. This is most needful when the stressors are hitting your entire body at once. Local stressors, such as small injuries, probably won't need this drastic of a response, unless your reserves are almost completely exhausted. However, large stressors to your body, mind, or emotions might require a little "down time."

- Hide and get horizontal.
- Lie flat.
- Minimize stimulus from light and sound.
- Get prolonged sleep.
- Get help from others.

If your mind is in such a rut that you can't sleep or rest, even though your body is crying for it, bring paper and pen into bed with you. Write down every thought that is causing you stress, so you won't forget it and can deal with it later. Sometimes your mind is struggling so hard to remember new facts, new plans, and new ideas, that it can't think of anything else. You can get all new thoughts out of the way and onto paper, notifying your brain that it can rest now.

Learn to depend on others. My children know that if I start to cry and cannot stop, they are to call a family friend to our home right away, in addition to asking me to "stress dose" with cortisol immediately. We keep this friend's phone number on our refrigerator where anyone can find it. I have also learned that if my husband or children tell me to go to bed, I should not take it personally. I must tell myself that they are only concerned about me, love me, and want me to feel better. I must not feel guilty or lonely or neglected. I must simply take a nap and trust that everything will be better in a few hours.

When you need to ask for help from others, practice saying "thank you" and meaning it. You won't want help. You'll feel guilty. You'll be sure you're imposing.

You're not, but you've been caring for others so long that you have made this way of thinking a rut.

So practice saying "thank you." Let someone else tuck the covers in around you, paste on a little smile, say "thanks," close your eyes, and take a deep breath. It's okay. You'll be easier to care for, even when you

don't really feel that way on the inside. When you wake up, you'll be much easier to live with.

How Others Can Help You

You can *help* others help *you* by having some “systems” in place and by “practicing” through contingency plans before you'll need them. (Are you tired of reading this yet? ☺)

- When you're tired, you need good nourishment.** On a day that you're feeling okay, can you prepare some simple foods ahead for the freezer? Can you refer helpers to a simple grocery list?
- When you're tired, you need extra rest.** Who can provide childcare or take over some of your duties so that you can sleep?
- When you're tired, you need someone who is cheerful.** When you make a list of family and friends to call for help, choose someone with a personality that will calm you. Don't just react by calling the first person you think of. Plan ahead and choose wisely!
- When you're tired, you need someone who will know how to help you.** Choose not only a cheerful person; choose someone who can speak competently to medical personnel, who can think and make good decisions, who is a good listener for you but will also tell you bluntly what you need, and who isn't easily offended on the days that you're not easy to get along with.

Be sure to label things in your medicine cabinet, your kitchen, your bathroom, your purse, and your bedroom clearly. For instance,

- You know where your medication is. Would someone else be able to find it?
- You know how much vitamin C you take each day. Would someone else be able to bring you the correct amount?
- You know how to take your blood pressure. Have you trained family members how to use all your “equipment”?

As you can see, a journal filled with diaries, symptom lists, medical records, menu plans, and phone numbers, can help others help you

effectively. The side of your refrigerator and your “Command Central” all become terribly important in giving you proper care.

Finally, have a “practice day” where you train your helpers, whether they are your spouse, your children, or your adult family and friends. Have some fun with this, but please don’t neglect it. Others dislike feeling helpless as they watch you getting sick; give them courage by letting them care for you in a way that will put you all at ease. Think of this day as “Red Cross Training” for the care of you! Each helper will appreciate it!

The Path to Recovery

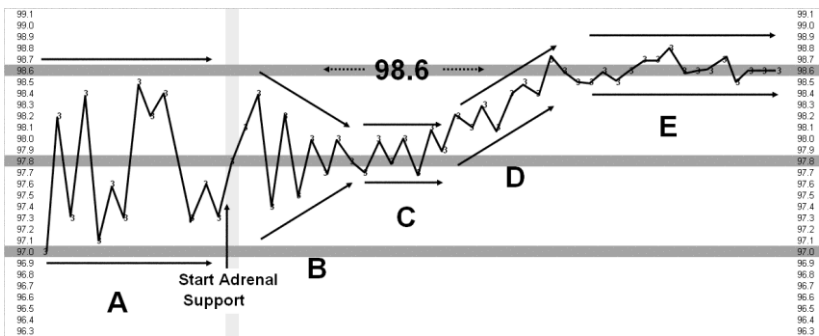


Image Source: <http://www.drrind.com/therapies/metabolic-temperature-graph>

Take a look at Dr. Rind’s chart again. Section A of the chart shows a fatigued woman before she received any help. The line separating A and B shows her first consultation with her healthcare provider. Over the weeks, this woman received “adrenal support,” which consisted of good nutrition, plenty of sleep, realistic routines, possibly hormone supplements, and positive thought patterns.

In Section B of the chart, I’m sure she wouldn’t have been able to tell by her emotions alone that she was improving. However, as her temperatures improved, she also found herself reacting just a tiny bit less dramatically to every stressor.

She had times of plateau, followed by slight improvements. Over a few months, as she moved toward Section E, she realized that life really was better. She was starting to overcome fatigue!

And so can you.

Action Guide

- ❑ **Take your body temperature** each morning and three times each day, in addition to any times you experience symptoms of fatigue.

Dr. Bruce Rind's method of tracking and charting body temperature is excellent. I recommend reading his methods and charts, available here:

<http://www.drrind.com/therapies/metabolic-temperature-graph>.

- ❑ **Review the list of symptoms in this section.** Plan ahead for ways you can respond to your unique symptoms *before* they get worse or spiral into an emergency. If possible, make these plans in writing, adding it to a notebook.
- ❑ **Review the five ways to improve thought patterns,** and make "systems" for implementing them in your life.
 - How do you currently respond in anger and fear to stressful situations?
 - How can you respond with the seven thought patterns listed on p. 281?
 - How can you add prayer, Bible memory, music, actions rather than feelings, and total rest to your daily life?
- ❑ If you like to read, I highly recommend the following books:
 - *Future Grace*, by John Piper
 - *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*, by Edward T. Welch
 - *God's Key to Health and Happiness*, by Elmer A. Josephson
 - *Changed into His Image*, by Jim Berg
 - *How to Win over Worry: Positive Steps to Anxiety-Free Living*, by John Edmund Haggai

- ❑ In addition, the following links online are very helpful:
 - <http://www.westonaprice.org/digestive-disorders/primer-digestive-system> (See especially the section on “Anger and the Stomach”)
 - Many Christians struggle with guilt because they don’t “mount up on wings as eagles” as Isaiah 40:31 says to do. An excellent article on what “waiting on Yehovah” means is available here:
<http://www.spwickstrom.com/wait>.

When You Get Sick Anyway

Getting sick is just a normal part of life. No matter how good my diet, how ample my sleep, or how careful my habits, I'm going to catch the occasional cold or flu. Things come up in my life that I can't prevent, wearing down my resistance.

I can beat myself up over things like this. I might think that I should be invincible, or that I must be doing everything wrong, just because I've got a sore throat or catch a stomach bug.

When I'm a busy wife and mom, it's exhausting to get sick. I don't have time to get sick! Maybe I've got small children to care for, or work duties keep calling, whether I feel good or not.

In this chapter, let's look at some strategies for what to do when the inevitable strikes. Rather than feeling discouraged when you occasionally get sick, let's look at some strategies for shortening the time that you're "down and out."

Don't ever forget the most basic principle of what to do when you're too tired:

Spend less energy than you make.

But getting sick can catch us off guard. We didn't realize we were using energy! Unlike a real checking account, our bodies don't come with a checkbook register that shows us our balance. We don't get e-mail alerts telling us to be careful because we're below our spending limit.

- Maybe we get just a little busier than normal.
- Maybe we get just a little less sleep than usual.
- Maybe we eat just a little more store-bought food than typical.

Suddenly, we wake up with a sore throat... and soon we're feeling awful!

Common Causes of Illness

The immune system is extremely complicated. Scientists are working hard to understand it, and its complexity certainly overwhelms my mind. I'm guessing that you'll reference this chapter when you don't feel well, so I'm going to try to keep things very simple.

Don't be deceived, though, into thinking that this topic is simplistic! Even though we don't understand everything about the immune system, we can easily learn some basic things about how it works.

There is only one reason why I get sick: **my blood is toxic**. When my blood is filled with toxins, my body has to eliminate them – and quickly! The symptoms that surface during this process are what make me feel sick.

Some toxins come from *outside* my body, such as from the food I eat, poisons in my environment, or exposure to germs. When I'm healthy, my body should have no trouble isolating these poisons and eliminating them.

Some toxins come from *inside* my body, from either normal metabolic processes or from harmful emotions (such as fear and anger).

Again, however, a healthy body should have no trouble eliminating toxins from my body.

How does a body eliminate toxins?

The small and large intestines are the first organs that eliminate toxins from your body. The small intestine's job is to break each food

molecule down into a form that your body can use. Usable molecules are then absorbed into your bloodstream. Molecules that aren't usable are sent to the large intestine to be gotten rid of.

If the intestines become overwhelmed with toxins (or if they don't have the nutrients and enzymes needed to digest food properly), then poisonous toxins escape and are absorbed into the bloodstream.

The liver's job is to clean the blood, so that the toxins don't travel throughout the body.

If the liver becomes overwhelmed with toxins, **the kidneys** are next in line to clean the blood. However, since their primary job is to maintain a proper balance of electrolytes and fluid balance, rather than cleaning out toxins, they can slowly become damaged from poisons in the blood.

The heart has to work harder to pump blood through the kidneys, and you'll see an abnormally high or low blood pressure.

When the kidneys cannot eliminate all the toxins from your body, toxins start to deposit all throughout the body. Where they end up will vary depending on the person, but common "dumping grounds" for toxins include **the lungs, the skin, and the endocrine glands**. The body often mistakes its own cells for toxins, causing various autoimmune disorders.

Again, this is a very simplistic explanation of an extremely complicated process, but it allows you to see some ways to recover.

- ❑ **Diet.** Even if you've been trying to follow a healthful diet, briefly check that some of the more common toxins in our modern foods haven't snuck back in, making you feel sick. You'll also want to have an abundance of foods that are high in nutritional value, so you have the necessary building blocks to heal.
- ❑ **Trans fats.** These are liquid oils that have been infused with hydrogen atoms during processing so that they will stay solid at room temperature. They are in many processed foods because they are cheaper for food manufacturers to use than traditional fats, such as butter, animal fats, palm oil, or coconut oil. (Look for the words "hydrogenated" or "partially hydrogenated" on food labels, as well as avoiding soy, canola, and other vegetable oils.) However, just because they look like food doesn't mean that your body can use them like food. They

contain twisted molecules that are simply toxic to your system, causing damage to your endocrine glands and immune system.

- ❑ **Neurotoxins.** These toxins have the ability to travel very quickly to your brain, causing neurons to fire so rapidly that they burn themselves out. Your brain feeds off this excitability, craving more, which is why food manufacturers appreciate these substances. However, these extremely dangerous toxins cause irreparable brain damage!
- ❑ **Improper digestion.** Digestive and metabolic enzymes are both manufactured by the body, but our glands can easily become overwhelmed with all that we ask them to do. Proper elimination of toxins from our body requires a healthy gut, filled with beneficial bacteria that can break down the contents of our intestines, as well as enzymes that can convert real food into a form usable by our bodies. When we are sick, the body uses more enzymes for repair than for digestion, so it is essential that we assist the body by consuming food that still has enzymes in it, as well as healthy bacteria (“pro-biotics”).
- ❑ **Rest.** An extremely common reason for catching whatever is going around is that we’re just worn out. I’m sure this is why so many of us get sick after vacations, holidays, or the completion of big projects. Thinking back over the past few weeks, ask yourself if you might have just done too much. Have you been staying up late to finish jobs? Have you been sleeping with the lights on? Have you been able to nap after particularly stressful days? Are you taking a day off each week for complete rest from your work?
- ❑ **Over-exertion.** Sometimes we ask too much of our large muscles or we experience pain or trauma. As we age, it simply takes longer to bounce back from a day of exertion that is more than we’re used to. Spending a day at the zoo or shopping with friends, while fun, can also cause a drain to our systems. Similarly, burning ourselves, falling on the ice, tripping up the stairs, and other “clumsy” things cause more stress to our bodies than we often realize. Sometimes these “simple” things are just enough to tip us over the edge, causing our immune systems to weaken long enough for us to get sick. Even extremes in temperature, such as cold, winter days or hot and humid summer, especially when combined with exertion such as putting up food from a garden or spending a day at the beach, can make us get sick.

- ❑ **Scheduling.** Ask yourself if you're living on adrenaline to get through your daily "to do" list. Are you requiring more and more caffeine to survive? Are you pushing yourself to keep going, even though you know that you're tired? If you must do the things on your list, are you careful to schedule time for extra rest later to make up for these busy times? If not, it will surely be no time at all before sickness sets in.
- ❑ **Mental and emotional stress.** Again, anger and fear are the most common emotional reasons for a lowered immune system. Scientists have repeatedly shown anger and fear affect us, even down into the marrow of our bones where our immune cells are manufactured. Ask yourself if you've had more than the normal amount of fighting or worrying in your life lately. If so, you've certainly found out your cause for getting sick.

Any combination of the above factors increases your likelihood of getting sick – and the more that are happening, the lower your immune system will be.

Again, sometimes circumstances come up that are beyond your control. Don't beat yourself up over getting sick. Simply evaluate what you could do differently next time, then work to get yourself feeling better.

Basic Things to Do First

- ❑ **Cancel everything on your calendar.** Just like school teachers have a plan for when a substitute teacher must be called, it's wise for you to have a back-up plan for all things to which you're committed, before you get sick. Even if you have no plan, though, it's better to cancel now, so that you can recover quickly.
- ❑ **Get help with small children.** Your commitments as a mother keep going, even when you're sick. Who can you call for help?
- ❑ **Have special toys for the kids.** If you have chronic fatigue, you probably get sick often. Be prepared by filling a plastic container with "sick day" toys that will occupy your children, even when you're feeling awful. You could even include some movies that can only be viewed on these "special" days. Some picture books, a new box of crayons and a unique coloring book, some stringing beads, and a few plastic "people" are fun

to include. Silly putty or modeling clay can be a good option for older children.

- ❑ **Go to bed. I know it's tough!** The laundry doesn't go away, but if you get some rest now, you're likely to be out of commission for less time. Even if you have kids in the bedroom with you, lying down horizontally takes a large amount of stress from your body and will help you recover more quickly.
- ❑ **Use herbs, vitamins, and essential oils.** Below you'll find recommendations for specific types of illness. Also check the lists of supplements I've given you. It's important to have these in your house, stocked up and ready before you need them.
- ❑ **Make "Get Well Soup."** This soup is easy to make, but it also contains nutrients that support your liver, kidneys, and adrenal glands.

Get Well Soup

*4 medium zucchini, washed, ends removed and sliced
1 pound green beans, fresh or frozen
2 stalks celery, chopped
2 bunches parsley, stems removed
Fresh herbs, such as thyme or tarragon
1 quart homemade chicken stock
Sea salt or fish sauce to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste*

Place everything in a pot. Bring to a boil, skim if necessary, lower heat and simmer, covered, for about 30 minutes. Vegetables may be eaten whole or blended into a thick soup with a handheld blender. Other vegetables, such as onions, carrots or potatoes, are also tasty in this recipe.

I like to prepare ahead for times when I need this soup by freezing prepared vegetables and stock and labeling them for this soup. Simply defrost in a pan of water for 30-60 minutes, then prepare as directed. Easy!

Prepare other foods ahead of time and store in your freezer or have the ingredients on hand. Mini muffins can be defrosted and served with good butter and some eggs. Smoothies are easy to prepare, even when sick. Bags of frozen vegetables are handy and can easily be combined with leftover slices of

meatloaf or cooked chicken. A small amount of raw honey can be stirred into plain yogurt.

- ❑ **Meditate on Scripture and uplifting music.** When I'm sick, my emotions are especially raw. Discouragement can set in quickly. The Bible says, "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."¹²⁵ Again, be prepared ahead of time with music that encourages you, and keep your Bible close by your bed. Psalm 91 has been one of my own favorites to read when I'm sick.
- ❑ **Check your hydrocortisone levels.** If you're supplementing with hydrocortisone, be sure to "stress dose" as needed. Cortisol is especially needed during sickness, so don't be afraid to use it. You should stress dose at the first sign of illness (often, aching glands or a sore throat), by taking double the amount of hydrocortisone as normal. If you experience vomiting, call your doctor immediately for instructions. If you must stress dose for more than three days, you'll want to taper back down to your normal dose slowly. Again, contact your doctor for specific instructions.

Don't be afraid of cortisol, though. It will help your immune system do its job as it should! Used effectively, you'll find that you get sick less often and for shorter durations than you used to.

- ❑ **Monitor your symptoms.** Each time you get sick, you can use it as a learning experience to help prevent it from happening like this again. Be sure to track your body temperature and blood pressure. Be especially vigilant to write down your symptoms. Keep copies of any lab work or notes from any doctor visits. Journal about what you think might have caused you to get sick. Keep records of everything so that when you're feeling better, you can objectively make a plan for next time.
- ❑ **Watch for dehydration.** Dehydration is especially common with runny noses and viral infections, as well as during the stomach flu. It's also common during especially hot weather! Increase your intake of salt, if needed, and be sure to drink plenty of fluids. Soup and hot tea are especially comforting. Raw milk is truly a "super food" at these times.

¹²⁵ Philippians 4:8, NIV

- ❑ **As much as possible, avoid medications that simply mask symptoms.** Symptoms, while making us feel awful, can help us know what is happening in our bodies. Allow symptoms to run their course.

Remember, also, that many symptoms are simply the result of toxins trying to leave our bodies (such as a sore throat, runny nose, fever, vomiting and diarrhea, and skin rashes). When we stop these kinds of symptoms with medications, the toxins must find another way to get out. We're just postponing more sickness!

Other symptoms, such as headaches and achiness, are ways that your body is telling you to rest and supply it with good nutrition.

Finally, some medications (such as NSAIDS like Advil) further increase the toxic load in our bodies, making our liver and kidneys work even harder and delaying healing to our cells. (If a drug's packaging warns against those with liver or kidney problems from using the drug, think twice before you use it, too!)

Medications have their purpose and place; just be sure that they are really helping and not just hiding problems, delaying problems, or causing more problems.

What is the theme of this chapter? ***Be prepared!***

Getting sick happens to all of us. Be prepared ahead of time!

When traveling or when hosting company, be prepared! Wash hands frequently if you're in contact with other sick people, avoid soft drinks and too many desserts, and pack foods that are healthy.

During times of the year when many people are getting sick, be prepared! Stock up your medicine cabinet with herbs and healing supplements. Get a little extra rest.

Specific Types of Illness

Viruses (Colds and flu, shingles, and other viruses)

- ❑ Herbs are especially useful for viruses, taking some every 2-3 hours, beginning at the first sign of illness.
 - I especially like “ViraMune” and “Scout Out” (by Tri-Light Herbs).
 - Other powerful choices are pycnogenol (NOW Foods), juniper (by Herb Pharm), or *bidens pilosa* (by Montana Pharmacy).
 - I also increase my vitamin C intake to 2,000-4,000 mg, every 2-4 hours.
 - Finally, I use colostrum, royal jelly, and garlic with every meal and before bed.
- ❑ Be sure to stress dose if you use supplemental hydrocortisone.
- ❑ A virus makes you feel worse as the day goes on, so sometimes you wake up in the morning feeling a little better – then you overdo it! Be careful to get your rest.

Stomach Flu

- ❑ Vomiting and diarrhea can be especially devastating to those with adrenal fatigue.
 - If you just have diarrhea, then use “Di-Gize” essential oil blend by Young Living or “Anti-Diarrhea” by Mountain Meadow Herbs.
 - If you are also vomiting, the best advice is to stop eating and drinking until four hours have passed from the last time you vomited. Especially avoid sugar-containing fluids such as soda or sports drinks. If you must drink to avoid dehydration, take extremely small sips. Homemade chicken broth is especially helpful.
- ❑ As mentioned earlier, if you are supplementing with hydrocortisone, contact your doctor immediately if you vomit more than twice or have diarrhea lasting longer than 12 hours or have any sign of dehydration.
- ❑ Stomach bugs are very contagious, so wash hands carefully and consider wearing gloves to clean up any messes.
 - I wash with “Thieves” hand soap from Young Living because it is very effective against the pathogens that spread stomach flu.
 - Keep away from others until everyone in your home has been symptom free for at least 48 hours.

- ❑ When you're able to eat again, emphasize easy-to-digest proteins such as "easy-over" eggs or homemade bone broth, so that you can regain your strength. Keep meals very small and frequent.

Bacterial Infections (such as Urinary Tract Infections)

- ❑ The frequent use of antibiotics can wreak havoc on your intestines, further increasing your chronic fatigue. Because of this, I try to avoid antibiotics except during the worst of infections. When a bacterial infection strikes, there are several "natural" alternatives that have all been proven to be just as effective as antibiotics, without any of the harmful side effects.
 - Garlic, colloidal silver, coconut oil, and essential oil blends (such as "Thieves" from Young Living) are all excellent choices.
 - I also like "Scout Out" (by Tri-Light herbs).
 - Other powerful choices are pycnogenol (NOW Foods), juniper (by Herb Pharm), or *bidens pilosa* (by Montana Farmacy).
 - I also increase my vitamin C intake to 2,000-4,000 mg, every 2-4 hours.
- ❑ The trick is to use herbal supplements often (every 2-3 hours) and at the first sign of symptoms.
- ❑ Just as you would continue using an antibiotic for 7-10 days, even after symptoms disappear, you should continue using natural treatments for long enough to support your immune system's normal functioning.
- ❑ The old saying is that you can use antibiotics and get better in only 7 days, or you can use natural alternatives and have to wait an entire week. Be patient and allow healing to take place, if you wish to avoid antibiotics.
- ❑ Be sure to stress dose if you use supplemental hydrocortisone.

Yeast Infections

- ❑ If you are suffering from a yeast infection, the first rule of thumb is to check your diet carefully for processed foods. It would also be wise to eliminate all sugar (even "natural" sugars, such as fruit and honey) until the infection has cleared up.
- ❑ Add plenty of garlic, both in your food and by capsule. (When you feel and smell like a walking "pizza shop," you're taking enough.)
- ❑ An excellent herbal tincture is "Yeast X" from Mountain Meadow Herbs.

- ❑ It helps to continue using the garlic or other herbs for several weeks, even after symptoms start to subside.
- ❑ Finally, be sure to replenish natural, “good” bacteria in your gut by consuming plenty of fermented foods and by supplementing with a good probiotic. Again, persistence over many weeks is required to conquer a yeast infection. During this time, be especially vigilant to continue avoiding sugar and most grains (unless “properly prepared”).
 - An excellent probiotic is Ultimate Flora Probiotic “Extra Care”, by Renew Life, which contains 150 billion live cultures.

Sunburn

Maybe you don’t normally think of sunburn as an “illness,” but I’ve found that a sunburn can make me seriously sick. Prevention is the best policy. I don’t use sunscreens, because they contain many toxic ingredients that are easily absorbed through my skin into my bloodstream. In addition, I want to be able to absorb vitamin D naturally from the sun. Coconut oil makes a good sunscreen, but the wisest course of action is to stay covered up and only remain in direct sun for a reasonable time.

However, sunburn is dangerous and can put me out of commission for days. I try to do everything in my power to avoid sunburn, but if I get it, my body will perceive it as no different than any other second- or third-degree burn.

- ❑ I immediately head to bed.
- ❑ I also boost my system with plenty of colostrum and royal jelly.
- ❑ I consume plenty of protein in small meals every 2-3 hours.
- ❑ I stress dose with hydrocortisone.
- ❑ I use calming essential oils such as lavender on my skin.
- ❑ I also use “Anti-Inflammatory” herbal tincture from Mountain Meadow Herbs.

Cuts and Injuries

Falls, cuts, burns, and other injuries can cause great trauma to your system. While other people can often take minor injuries in stride, these can really set you back if you have chronic fatigue.

- ❑ If you supplement with hydrocortisone and an injury is enough to make you cry, be sure to stress dose immediately.

- ❑ Keep warm! If you start to shake, cover up with a warm quilt, warm socks, and possibly a heating pad. (This is in addition to stress dosing.)
- ❑ Essential oils such as lavender or frankincense are especially good.
- ❑ Hydrocortisone cream can also be rubbed directly on the spot of an injury, as well as a teaspoon or so rubbed on your abdomen.

Headaches

- ❑ Try an herbal choice for your headache:
 - “Contract Ease” herbal tincture (from Tri-Light Herbs)
 - “Anti-Inflammatory” herbal tincture (from Mountain Meadow Herbs)
 - White willow bark
- ❑ Check that you’re not hungry.
- ❑ Get some rest in a dark room.
- ❑ If light is starting to bother your eyes, it’s a good sign that you’re getting too tired and might get a headache soon.
- ❑ Take your temperature and be sure it’s not low. If it is and you supplement with hydrocortisone, be sure to stress dose.
- ❑ Sometimes frequent headaches can be a sign of dehydration.

Seasonal Allergies, Skin Rashes

- ❑ Be prepared for known allergies by being especially careful with your diet before you are exposed to allergens. Rest is also vital.
- ❑ When allergies strike, such as hay fever or a reaction to cat dander, take extra colostrum and royal jelly every 2-3 hours.
- ❑ Be sure to stress dose if you use supplemental hydrocortisone.
- ❑ For skin rashes related to allergies, try rubbing hydrocortisone cream directly on the skin rather than using Benadryl.
- ❑ Essential oils such as lavender are also very healing to the skin.

Action Guide

Good reference books:

- Herbal Antibiotics: 2nd Edition: Natural Alternatives for Treating Drug-Resistant Bacteria*, by Stephen Harrod Buhner
- What to Do When Antibiotics Don't Work*, by Dirk Van Gils
- Beyond Antibiotics*, by Michael A. Schmidt
- Mommy Diagnostics*, by Shonda Parker
- Prescription for Nutritional Healing*, by James F. Balch
- Essential Oils Desk Reference*
- How to Have a Healthy Child... In Spite of Your Doctor*, by Robert S. Mendelsohn (contains an excellent reference page at the end of each chapter)

Be prepared ahead of time by:

- Having a plan for what you'll do when you get sick.
- Having a plan for how you'll care for small children, including special toys.
- Having food in your freezer and pantry, including chicken stock and vegetables for soup.
- Having Bible verses and uplifting music ready.
- Knowing how to "stress dose" with hydrocortisone, if you use it, and knowing how to contact your doctor in an emergency.
- Having herbs and other natural supplements in the house and ready.
- Writing down symptoms so that you'll be prepared for the next time you're sick.

PART 7

Financial Fatigue

The Cost of Getting Well

In the previous sections, I've sought to help you understand why you're so tired, as well as give you the basic building blocks needed to help you overcome your fatigue.

The key point: Spend less energy than you make.

I've tried to help you pinpoint the areas where you're "overspending" energy. In addition, I've shown you how to discover the most efficient ways to build up your "energy bank account," so that you can recover.

- Changing your diet to nutrient-rich foods.
- Getting more sleep.
- Possibly supplementing with hormones.
- Managing your time wisely.
- Learning to handle mental and emotional stress.

It all looks easy on paper, but these are actually drastic changes that sometimes add a whole new list of stressors to our lives, sometimes even causing us to stay sick and tired!

Changes like these require major planning, such as:

- New habits
- New schedules
- New systems
- New thought patterns

One of the most difficult stressors is that changes like these often require more money in the budget!

- It costs money to eat nutrient-dense foods.**
- It costs money to sleep more**, because that sleep cuts into time that we might otherwise be working (especially if we're "work-aholics" or trying to juggle several jobs for financial reasons).
- It costs money to supplement** with vitamins, herbs, hormones, and even prescription medications that aren't always covered by insurance.
- It even costs money to set up new systems** in our homes or to buy new equipment to make our lives a little easier.

Anxiety over financial problems is a common denominator in the majority of cases of women who have debilitating fatigue. Sometimes this happens because, if we have a problem "over-spending" in one area of our life, we'll probably see that problem in other areas, too.

If money is tight for you and causing stress, then I hope to offer some solutions for you in this book. If money is no problem, I hope you'll keep reading anyway. This section is going to be a "case study," where we try out some of the solutions given in the previous sections, to apply some of the principles we've already learned.

In other words, let's take some of the theories we've already covered – and let's show how they work in real-life situations.

Initial Expenses

In our family, we have found that most of the expense of changing to a healthier lifestyle comes at the beginning. Once I've got all the "new" equipment, visited my doctor for various lab tests, and filled my pantry with new foods, the costs of maintaining a healthier lifestyle stay about the same.

One reason for this is that changing my habits helps me gain energy and save money in other areas. Really, all that happens is that my budget is rearranged. I will just spend money in a different way than I used to. I might spend more money on grass-fed beef, for instance, yet I'll spend less money on doctor visits in the long run.

So the hardest part of changing my lifestyle is simply beginning.

Here are some typical one-time expenses I might face right away:

Notebook and "Command Central"	\$3-30
Basal Body Thermometer	\$5-10
Blood Pressure Cuff	\$50
Saliva Testing	\$150-300
Other Lab Testing	\$100-900
Doctor Visits	\$400-800
Light-Blocking Curtains for the bedroom	\$40-80
Kitchen Equipment	varies

You can see that this initial expense will vary a lot from person to person. Later expenses seem to revolve around food, supplements, and occasional doctor visits.

Making a Budget

You're going to need some sort of **system** to help you budget money for a new and different lifestyle. Unless you have substantial savings, you'll probably have to plan and save up for things. If you just go out and spend, you'll create a financial problem that will only cause more anxiety and stress for you later – making you tired all over again!

Remember, you can eat the best food in the world, but if you're *worried* about how to pay for it, you're spending more in emotional energy than you're saving in physical energy!

So our old rule still applies:

Spend less energy – *and* money – than you make!

The first step is to plan for how you'll spend your money (otherwise known as a "budget").

In our home, I do all the figuring and planning, then my husband and I have a meeting. We compare notes, he adds his opinions and thoughts,

then we make changes. I then take care of making sure it all happens according to our plan. We meet again every 1-2 months, making minor changes to our plan as circumstances change.

If you're the one having to make the budget in your home, don't try to do it alone. It's exhausting! It's fine if you're the one that manages all the payments and bills behind the scenes, but if you must make all the *decisions*, too, you'll find that the mental (and emotional) energy in budgeting can suck a lot out of you, leaving you feeling exhausted for days. Even if you call in a friend or relative to sit with you, you'll do a lot better not trying to figure it all out by yourself.

I can't possibly teach you everything there is to know about budgeting and finances in this book. If you're really struggling, I highly recommend books and courses by Dave Ramsey.

However, I thought I would list some tips that I follow when handling money, since I've simplified a few things because of my health. This is how I make a budget, although I'm sure there are as many methods as there are individuals.

- ❑ I make a list of all expenses we incur in a month. I use my bank statements to do this, since we use very little cash.

I completely understand using cash only, but when my body is tired, I try to automate as much of my life as possible. This means I use automated payments and do almost all my banking online. Even though it's automated, however, I must still be careful that I know what we're spending.

- ❑ I list our expenses in a spreadsheet on my computer. Adding and subtracting take a lot of mental energy, so I let my computer add up things for me.
- ❑ I add our income to the spreadsheet, and the spreadsheet tells me if I have enough money for the month. Since some of our income is steady and some of it fluctuates from month to month, I use our steady income for steady expenses and our "unsteady" income for more variable expenses.
- ❑ Some expenses are weekly and monthly, such as utility bills, insurance, and giving. As much as possible, I have set these up to be paid automatically from our bank account.

A dear lady in our church is over 90 years old, but she confided in me that even she, who doesn't own a computer nor know how to use one, has all her bills set to be paid automatically. It's just one less thing for a tired woman to have to think about!

- ❑ Some expenses come less frequently, so I transfer money to a savings account for these.

*A friend suggested **360 Savings by Capital One**, an online system that allows you to set up a numerous savings accounts for free.*

I have set up accounts for each of our non-monthly expenses, then I simply transfer money from my bank to my 360 account after each paycheck – automatically, of course.

Since the money isn't in my main bank account, I can't accidentally spend it, yet it's ready for me when I need it so that I don't need to worry about money for birthdays, clothing, or car maintenance. We have an emergency savings account here, as well as a small account set aside to give to those in need.

<https://www.capitalone.com/savings-accounts/online-savings-account>

- ❑ I also set aside money for our larger health expenses. I have an account for supplements, an account for purchasing grass-fed beef for the freezer a few times each year, and even an account for occasional lab work.

This works just like the old envelope system, yet it's automated for tired women like me.

For my grocery budget, I also budget for the following categories. This might look different for your family, but this is how ours works:

- ❑ **Eggs** – These are such a cheap source of excellent protein and nutrition, especially for the amount spent, that these are at the top of my list.

Since I buy my eggs from local farmers whenever possible, this is also the only part of my budget where I use cash. Each month, I withdraw money from my bank for “egg money” and place it in an envelope. I have several sources of eggs, some more expensive than others, but all are just small farmers, so their chickens aren’t always laying. My favorite source charges only \$1 per dozen, and the most expensive source charges \$3 per dozen. Either way, I figure this is an excellent source of nutrition for our family, for a relatively small price – so I pay it.

- ❑ **Milk** – It costs a lot of time and money for our family to get raw (unpasteurized, unhomogenized) milk from a local farm. Because we live in Michigan, sometimes the winter weather prevents me from driving to pick it up, too. Finally, if I’m struggling with a health issue or an extremely busy schedule for a few weeks, we might postpone getting milk.

However, whether we can get milk or not, I insert money into the savings account each week that covers both milk and the gas for driving to get it. I don’t want money to be the reason that I can’t get this healing “super food.”

- ❑ **Meat** – Meat from grass-fed, clean animals is such a nutrient-dense food and is so essential to healing that I do my best to obtain ours from good sources. However, the price varies widely, depending on whether I need to buy it online or from a local health-food store (most expensive) or whether I can buy a half a cow from a local farmer (least expensive). Again, setting up a small, weekly withdrawal into a savings account helps me have the money for these purchases when I need them.
- ❑ **Supplements and Online Purchases** – Another of my savings accounts was set up so that I could buy the supplements we need to help us recover. Digestive enzymes are at the top of my list, but I try to keep well-stocked on all the supplements I need.
- ❑ **Buying Clubs and Co-ops** – We buy quite a bit of our food from local buying clubs, such as Frontier, Country Life, and Azure Standard. Since these are large purchases of bulk items made every few months, I again needed to have a savings account set up for these. Prices vary with the economy, so I have to discipline myself not to spend more than I have. It’s really nice, though, to be able to “shop” from my own pantry and cupboards, rather than having to shop for as much food each week from local stores. Not only does this help my budget

by making organic foods closer in price to store-bought equivalents, but it helps my energy levels by giving me less to do each week.

The only part of my entire budget that isn't automated is the remaining part of my grocery budget – shopping at local stores for any remaining food, toiletries, and household items, plus any fresh produce that I need.

Because our income fluctuates somewhat, this is the part of my budget that also fluctuates. If money is tighter one week, I can put together good meals from my own freezer and pantry. If money is looser, I can buy extra items at the store. If money is *really* tight, I might not be able to get all organic produce this week.

I am completely aware that your budget and “system” will probably look very different from mine. If you're buying organic and healthy foods for the first time, I recommend taking a look at some of the books recommended in the “Action Guide” at the end of this chapter, since they will include many more suggestions than I can give you here.

Motivation

If you're just starting out, you probably won't be able to immediately redirect your current food budget from the way you now shop to the various budget categories I've listed. It may take you several months to finally get your budget to look the way you want, to convert your current eating habits over to new ones, and to be able to finally afford a new way of eating.

In the meantime, I've found that *staying motivated* is the difficult. For me, I placed a list of the foods I wanted to change on the front of my fridge, in the order I wanted to change them. This became a prayer list, as I asked God to help me find a way to afford them (and sometimes, even to locate a source for them). One by one, I was able to cross them off.

I also find that I lose my motivation to eat well when I compare the prices of individual items with each other, rather than looking at the big picture. I might realize that, for our family, our grocery budget hasn't changed much because we've changed our habits. However, if I just compare store-bought, factory-raised ground beef with grass-fed, farm-raised ground beef, I will get worried about the price!

To help me stay motivated, I tend to visit healthy blogs and websites, read books such as *Fast Food Nation* and *Nourishing Traditions*, or watch movies such as *Food Inc.* on the night before making my weekly grocery list. I need to keep reminding myself why we're making these changes.

More Food Tips

Some other tips I've used to help me afford good food when I'm really tired or out of money:

- ❑ Prepare my own food, rather than purchase prepared or processed foods. Keep it simple when you're tired! Simple food, prepared with simple methods in your own kitchen, getting you in and back out of the kitchen again, is far superior nutritionally to anything you can buy in a box at the store or prepared from a deli or from a fast-food restaurant. When you're really tired, how about a quick omelette? You can't get any faster, easier, or cheaper than that!
- ❑ If you must stop at the store for some quick food, purchase food from the outside edges of the store. Pick up fresh produce, quality cheeses (usually imported are better than domestic here in the United States), Daisy-brand sour cream or organic, whole-milk yogurt, some wild-caught fish that can be cooked very quickly, some sourdough bread from the bakery, or bags of frozen vegetables and fruit. Go home, make a quick smoothie, have some bread and cheese, or quickly sauté the fish you bought. These foods might not be the absolute ideal, but again, you certainly won't spend more than you would have if you'd gone through a drive-through or visited a pizza joint.

Note: I just heard recently, from author Michael Pollen, that stores are getting smart to the "purchase food from the outside edges of the store" strategy. Be on the lookout for processed foods that are targeted to health-conscience but tired women like you!

- ❑ Have an emergency plan ready! Keep what you need for soup, omelettes, breakfasts, smoothies, and even an occasional homemade pizza ready and always stocked. These foods are all very easy, very nutritious, and very inexpensive, especially compared to their store-bought versions.

- ❑ Be honest about the costs of healthy food compared to unhealthy food. We'll balk at buying organic produce, yet we'll stop for a soda at a convenience store. We won't get meat because it's too expensive, yet we'll purchase store-bought salad dressing that is laden with MSG and costs many times the equivalent of a simple, homemade version.

Sometimes the only way to afford good food is to truly be ruthless about eliminating bad food from our lives! If you take to heart my advice to eliminate all processed food, trans fats, neurotoxins, and improperly prepared grains from your diet, you'll certainly have some money left over to buy butter and other good fats, good eggs, and organic meat and produce. You'll have very few foods remaining for some compromise.

In addition, you'll start feeling better, and the renewed productivity will help you financially, even if it's only by giving you more energy to make food from scratch.

- ❑ Can you save money on non-food purchases, such as paper towels and cleaning supplies, by using rags at home or a simple vinegar-and-water solution to clean your home? (Add a few drops of essential oil to make your homemade cleaners smell good.)
- ❑ What about supplements? Again, enzyme pills and cod liver oil are very high on my list of priorities (for reasons explained in Part 2). Let's take a look at some food sources of the other supplements as well, although you'll need to keep in mind that these will require more time and energy from you in preparation. You'll need to weigh what works for you, your family, and your budget.

Supplements You Can Buy	Cheaper Food Alternatives
Probiotics	Eat plenty of “fermented” foods, preferably with each meal. Inexpensive options include yogurt, kefir, homemade salsa, pickles, and sauerkraut, as well as condiments such as salad dressings, ketchup, mayonnaise, and mustard. Use raw milk, cultured butter, and drinks such as kombucha.
Daily Multi-Vitamin	Eat eggs, raw milk, and grass-fed butter! From healthy animals, these are every bit as good as a multi-vitamin pill.
Vitamin C	This is one of the more inexpensive supplements, but it’s also available in fruits and vegetables, as well as organ meats. Add berries to smoothies and organ meats to soup.
Vitamin D	<p>Besides your cod liver oil, you can obtain some vitamin D from raw milk, eggs, grass-fed butter, and organ meats such as liver. These must be from a grass-fed source to have adequate vitamin D, since this vitamin is obtained from the sunshine.</p> <p>In addition, increase the amount of time you yourself spend in the sunshine, without a hat or sunscreen, preferably toward high noon. Spreading a blanket on the lawn and eating your lunch outside when weather permits is good for the budget <i>and</i> your stress levels.</p>

B Vitamins	Whole grains (properly prepared) are an excellent source of the B vitamins, as well as organ meats, egg yolks, and raw milk. Can you see why these foods are so high on my list of priorities when making my food budget? By the way, stress quickly depletes these vitamins.
Vitamin E	You'll find this essential vitamin in unrefined olive and coconut oils, butter, organ meats, and dark green leafy vegetables, as well as properly prepared grains and seeds. Unhealthy oils and fats deplete the body of vitamin E.
Magnesium and Other Minerals	One of the best sources of magnesium and other needed minerals is stock and soup made from animal bones. You also need plenty of Celtic Sea Salt and a diet high in organically-grown vegetables.

Basically, the more “perfect” your diet, the less you need supplements. Take a look at your budget and be realistic. Be sure you’re spending enough on your health, not cutting back so far on groceries that you can’t heal. Can you cut from other categories, such as cell phone usage, television, or entertainment?

What about Gardening?

Gardening is tough for me, since the summer heat can make me really sick. A sunburn is also dangerous for me. I can easily over-do when pulling weeds or lugging dirt and compost.

However, gardening can be a big boost for the pocketbook.

If you choose to have a garden, don’t let your eyes be bigger than your energy. Be realistic when planting in the spring. If you accidentally plant more than you can put up with your energy levels in August or September, give it to others without feeling guilty – then resolve to be more realistic next year.

Container gardening can be a good choice for those of us with fatigue. Containers allow us to start small, then we can always plant more next year. We can also grow herbs and spices in containers, which can add nutritional value and flavor to our food without adding too much work to our days.

When you put up your harvest, think in terms of nutritional value rather than quantity. Try traditional methods of food preservation, such as lacto-fermentation. Not only are they higher in nutritional value than canning and freezing; they are also a lot easier for tired women like us! It is so much easier to chop vegetables and preserve them in a jar with a starter culture (like whey from yogurt or raw milk) than it is to spend a day canning. The taste is wonderful, too. These vegetables seem to satisfy many of the food cravings I experience with my fatigue.

So in my opinion, have a small garden, be especially careful of heat and sunburns, and don't plant more than what you can reasonably put up in the fall.

Action Guide

Money Management

- ❑ Dave Ramsey – <http://www.daveramsey.com>
- ❑ 360 Savings – <https://www.capitalone.com/savings-accounts/online-savings-account>
- ❑ Mvelopes – <http://www.mvelopes.com>
- ❑ YNAB - <https://www.youneedabudget.com>

Food Preparation

- ❑ Real Food on a Real Budget, by Stephanie Langford – <http://www.keeperofthehome.org/my-books/real-food-on-a-real-budget-book>
- ❑ *Wild Fermentation*, by Sandor Ellix Katz – <http://www.wildfermentation.com/wild-fermentation>
- ❑ *Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day*, by Jeff Hertzberg – <https://artisanbreadinfive.com>
- ❑ Cultures for Health – <http://www.culturesforhealth.com>
- ❑ Frontier Natural Products Co-Op – <https://wholesale.frontiercoop.com>
- ❑ Country Life Natural Foods Co-Op – <https://www.clnf.org>
- ❑ Co-Ops in your area – <http://www.coopdirectory.org>
- ❑ Farmer's Markets, Buying Clubs, and more – <https://www.localharvest.org>
- ❑ The Healthy Home Economist - <http://www.thehealthyhomeeconomist.com>

Handling the Emotional Stress of Money

When money is tight or lacking, we quickly spend our “energy points.” In Part 1, I said you should count 3 points for each emotional stress, compared to only 2 points for mental stressors or 1 point for each physical stressor.

Worrying about money at 3 a.m. will quickly cause your body to fall apart in fatigue. So what can you do to stop this emotional stress, especially if you can’t really fix a financial problem immediately?

Previously, when we encountered a problem in our lives, we would have reacted like this:

- ❑ We would have felt fear immediately. (Remember, fear and anger are the top two emotions that contribute to severe adrenal fatigue.)
- ❑ We would have reacted to our fear from our emotions, according to the ruts of thinking patterns that we have been using all our lives.

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- We wouldn't have had a system in place for dealing with the problem.
- We would never have practiced how we would deal with the problem.
- Because our bodies weren't accustomed to this problem, we would have released a large amount of adrenaline, the "flight or fight" hormone.
- We would have used up all our cortisol, and some of our reserve hormones, too.

These reactions cause a problem to become an "emotional stress," sucking *three times as much energy* from our bodies as eating a doughnut or French fries, as bad as those are.

So let's practice handling our emotions correctly by looking at the area of finances specifically.

- We might not be able to help the feeling of fear that hits immediately.
- Rather than allowing fear to reign, we should react with trust in God rather than with fear.
- We have a system in place for dealing with money.
- We have practiced how we should react when frightened.
- We have reserves in place by slowly saving money for larger expenses.

For some women, the loss of a job, enormous medical bills, car repairs and more can deplete financial resources. These things are out of your control. However, you can control your reactions. You must learn to take seriously God's promise to provide for all your needs (Philippians 4:19).

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Messiah Yeshua.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Philippians 4:6-7

Here are some things to remember:

1. God always provides.

God has promised to supply our every need, and certainly one of the ways He does this is by creating good food for us to enjoy.¹²⁷ He asks us to follow His principles for sound financial management, however.

First, are you giving back the first fruits of all that you have to Him? Scripture supports giving the first 10% to God, and then giving further offerings of all that we have. We are to be hospitable and to help the poor, the widows, and the orphans. Not only does putting God first help our finances; God promises that it helps our health, too!¹²⁸

Secondly, do you spend your money on your “lusts”? James 4 says that we can ask the Father for anything we need, but it warns us not to ask “amiss,” that we may “consume it on our lusts.” If you sincerely ask God to give you wisdom in your spending, being willing to confess any areas of sin that He reveals to you, He will surely answer.

Finally, determine what your grocery budget is and decide that you’ll stick to it. This is just another area where we can learn to take personal responsibility. The self-control needed to stay on a budget will overflow into other areas of our lives, helping us overcome fatigue, too.

2. Satan steals, kills, and destroys.

Yeshua says, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”¹²⁹ Satan truly desires to steal from you, to kill you, and to destroy your health and all other good things that are yours.

This simple principle has been helpful to me as I shop. When I see a processed food that might be cheaper than an organic alternative, I ask myself this question: “Would this rob me of my health?” If so, I know it is of the enemy and that God wants to protect me from this.

On the other hand, maybe I’m deciding between two good choices, one of which claims to be better but is out of my budget. Again, the enemy

¹²⁷ Genesis 1:29-31

¹²⁸ See Deuteronomy 28, Malachi 3:8-12, and Isaiah 58.

¹²⁹ John 10:10, KJV

wants to steal. Can I be content with the less expensive, yet healthful, choice?

3. Don't buy what you can make.

Hard work is good for us! It might not seem like it, but God gave Adam the job of tending the garden before the fall and before the curse. Yes, the curse has made work much harder and more difficult. But work is still good, and our attitudes can make all the difference.

Remember, it's often my reaction to things that makes the difference between how much energy I use. If I have a positive attitude toward working in my kitchen, my body will not determine that I'm under stress and will not consume as much energy.

It also helps to think of the fun side-effects of working in the kitchen. If you have children, it is fun to put an apron on both of you, pull up a stool so they can see what you're doing, and even whistle while you work. You will be training them in good character and righteousness, and they will be thrilled to eat what they have had a part in making.

I should note, however, that when I'm especially tired, sometimes I need time alone in the kitchen. That's okay, too. I need to be realistic about this, rather than feeling like a "bad mother" if I can't handle too much noise or busyness today. It's perfectly fine to let my kids occasionally watch television or play a game while I spend 20 minutes in the kitchen – alone.

So don't buy what you can make. Set up your kitchen efficiently and learn to work quickly. Put on praise music, and have a great time. Reducing my purchases in this one area has saved me more than any other thing! Don't be fooled. A corporation can never exceed the quality of the food in your own kitchen.

Make a list of all the processed and convenience foods that you enjoy. Purchase some of the books listed at the end of this chapter, and learn to make food from scratch. It's not as hard as you'd think — I promise! As you make more and more foods at home, you'll see your budget begin to go down.

4. Learn to be content with simple things.

This step has saved me much time and energy. Don't think that you must eat fancy food. Don't feel you must follow the prescribed menus listed in health books. Don't constantly compare yourself with other families. Eat simple food, prepared with love in your own kitchen, and be content.

When you ask God to bless the food before you pray, do you really mean it? Are you truly thankful? If you had been in the crowd of 5,000 who came to listen to Yeshua, would you have been content with fish and bread?

For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.¹³⁰

I should also remind you that you should never compare your spending ability with those you see around you. Satan would love to plant seeds of discontent in your mind. Rather than worrying or grumbling, resolve to let thankfulness rule in your kitchen and your heart. (It helps to place verses about thankfulness and praise in your kitchen.) Require thankfulness from your children as well.

5. Good, better, best.

As you're just beginning to eat right, you may be tempted to spend more than you have. Don't be fooled! Don't allow Satan to steal from you! Never use credit cards to buy food. Rather, be patient as you build your savings accounts, your skills, your pantry, and your equipment.

6. Ask God for help and wisdom.

The Bible tells us that we can ask God for anything, especially for wisdom.¹³¹ Do you take this promise seriously?

However, the Bible also tells us that we are not to be "double-minded."¹³² In other words, do we ask God for wisdom then balk when He supplies it? Often He has already supplied the methods and means

¹³⁰ 1 Timothy 4:4-5

¹³¹ James 1:5

¹³² Ibid.

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we need to recover from fatigue, but since it sounds impossible, we rush away from His answers and return to our old ways.

Whenever you find that your peace is robbed and you find something is impossible – and now you can feel the stress mounting and your body faltering – remember to ask God for wisdom.

Prayer means changing our perspective to match God's as revealed in His Word, bringing our petitions to God when we don't have answers, and praising Him rather than worrying. When we do these things, not even the worst of financial times can make our fatigue worse.

PART 8

**To Exercise or Not:
That Is the Question**

Risks and Rewards of Exercise

Exercise is a topic that causes most tired woman to groan. Fitness is a hot topic, and many of our friends have memberships at the gym, workout equipment in their basements, and plans to run in marathons.

We should probably be exercising, too! We know it's good for us.

We also know that a simple half-hour walk has the potential to knock us into a three-day tailspin of fatigue and pain.

We've been told to exercise for so long that we feel terribly guilty if we're not exercising now. In fact, inside our minds, we're wondering if maybe the reason we feel so tired is because we don't exercise enough!

Exercise *is* important! Strong muscles, good circulatory systems, and stamina are some of the benefits of consistent, moderate exercise. In this book, we'll look at some of the major reasons why we do, in fact, need to be moving our bodies and using our muscles.

However, if you've been monitoring your health and have determined that your adrenal glands are fatigued, you are probably also beginning to understand that there are seasons of life to exercise – and times to abstain.

In other words, exercise should be **one of the last steps** in your plan for recovery, not the first step. Exercise can help you, but it also uses up energy. Do you remember our rule?

Spend less energy than you make.

However, once your body is starting to recover, light to moderate exercise really can make a big difference in how you feel. Hopefully by this point, you will have learned to listen carefully to what your body is telling you and to respond appropriately.

Dangers of Exercise

Most authors will start with the benefits of exercise, hoping to convince you to get going on this healthy habit right away. I have a strong suspicion that you've heard all these benefits for most of your life, so I won't need to go into too much detail there.

Instead, I would like to warn you of the dangers of exercising too much, since I'd like to see you recover from fatigue!

I'm not saying you shouldn't exercise. You should. I'm just guessing that your personality lends itself to "overdoing," and I'd bet money that you're likely to throw caution to the wind when you work out.

We women have the tendency to overdo in many areas. After feeling tired for so long, when we finally start to get a little energy back, we tackle our to-do lists with gusto.

"I felt so good, I did my Wii Fitness workout, cleaned out the basement and three closets, and washed the walls – all in one day. Unfortunately, around 5 p.m., I started to shake. By the time my husband came home from work, I was crying inconsolably and couldn't speak coherently."

This is exactly how it works at my house, too. Energy is such a pleasant sensation that I tend to use it all up again very quickly.

I always hate myself for doing it, promising to be much wiser next time – but I keep doing it.

I personally don't think physical exercise uses up as much energy as mental or emotional stressors, like doing taxes or fighting with a friend.

However, many tired women are living from “paycheck to paycheck” in their energy levels. They are functioning, but just barely. They are juggling things, but only by a hair. Only one “expense” is needed to push them over the edge – and physical, muscular exertion is often what does it.

We’ll look in the mirror and see that we aren’t in as good shape as we used to be. We’ll see a television commercial for a new piece of fitness equipment and wonder if we shouldn’t buy it. We’ll collect new exercise DVDs and fret because we aren’t using them.

So on a sunny morning, with an extra cup of coffee in our bloodstream, we’ll feel more energetic than usual. We’ll pop in a rather rigorous DVD. We might only make it 20 minutes before collapsing on the couch (with yet more guilt for not finishing the routine), but we feel utterly exhausted. Three hours later – we’re still exhausted. By supper time – still exhausted. Two days later – still exhausted.

Why can exercise leave us so exhausted? When exercising, your body uses stored sugar (glycogen) as fuel. However, cortisol is needed to access this glycogen from your liver. If you have low adrenal reserves, you will use up all the cortisol in your system, having nothing left for other activities.

“Official” forms of exercise, such as walking, jogging, aerobics, Pilates, and weight-lifting, are not the only types of physical exertion that we should be cautious about. A day at a museum, a trip to the zoo on a hot day, an afternoon swimming and playing at the lake, hiking at a nature reserve, and even shopping, all count as “exercise.” Certainly house cleaning, baking, caring for toddlers, shoveling snow, and gardening count, too. Volunteering and working with children, such as at church, 4H, or homeschooling co-ops, can involve a lot of physical exertion and should count as exercise.

So before you begin any exercise program, you need to be sure to do the following:

- You should certainly consult with your healthcare provider.
- You should be monitoring your health and know your current stage of adrenal fatigue.

- You should be eating nutritious food and taking supplements, every day, consistently.
- You should be getting plenty of sleep.
- You should be careful with your time so that you aren't spending too much energy just living your life.

If you've done all these things and are truly starting to recover, then it's time to add in some exercise. However, if you haven't been willing or able to make changes in these primary areas, I strongly caution you to wait before starting to exercise.

Benefits of Exercise

Exercise has numerous benefits, more than I can possibly even begin to list.

- Increases the supply of nutrition to your brain.
- Strengthens your bones and prevents osteoporosis.
- Boosts your immune system.
- Stabilizes your blood pressure.
- Normalizes your hormone levels.
- Reduces your recovery time after surgery or injuries.
- Raises your metabolism.
- Reduces your risk for some types of cancer.
- Lowers your risk of stroke.
- Reduces the formation of gallstones.
- Helps your body respond to dietary changes.
- Helps you sleep more soundly.
- Lifts your spirits and reduces depression and anxiety.
- Increases the strength of your heart, which increases blood flow to every organ.

As I've been studying about it, I noted a possible reason why exercise has so many benefits.

Exercise increases the amount of oxygen received by the brain.

As one writer explains it,

Walking is especially good for your brain, because it increases blood circulation and the oxygen and glucose that reach your brain. Walking is not strenuous, so your leg muscles don't take up extra oxygen and glucose like they do during other forms of

exercise. As you walk, you effectively oxygenate your brain. Maybe this is why walking can "clear your head" and help you to think better.

Movement and exercise increase breathing and heart rate so that more blood flows to the brain, enhancing energy production and waste removal. Studies show that in response to exercise, cerebral blood vessels can grow, even in middle-aged sedentary animals.¹³³

Stressors to our body cause the formation of free radicals. We need oxygen in our blood to combine with these free radicals and get them out of our systems. We need more blood vessels in our bodies, so that we can increase the amount of oxygen flowing. Exercise increases the number of blood vessels, plus it gets the heart pumping more, delivering oxygen all throughout our bodies.

You need oxygen just as much as you need good food, good sleep, and a good system to manage stress. Once you understand this principle, you'll see lots of simple ways that you can increase the amount of oxygen in your bloodstream, even when you're tired and suffering from adrenal fatigue.

Exercise also releases chemicals that relax your muscles. Tightness in your muscles can cause pain, a common complaint of women with fatigue. Studies have shown that exercise more efficiently relaxes your muscles than tranquilizers.¹³⁴

¹³³ <http://www.fi.edu/learn/brain/exercise.html>

¹³⁴ Gina Honeyman-Lowe and John C. Lowe, *Your Guide to Metabolic Health* (Boulder, CO: McDowell Health-Science Books, 2003), p. 204.

Practical Ways to Exercise

First, let's talk about *when to start exercising*. Let me give you some important "rules of thumb":

- ❑ **No exercise until you've had one month of good food and sleep!** Without proper building blocks (nutrition) and ample reserves (sleep), you will certainly crash into exhaustion again. You're keeping track of what you eat and how much you sleep, right? Mark a target date on your calendar as "The Day I Can Start Exercising Again," as a way to celebrate your new habits of taking care of yourself by eating and sleeping properly.
- ❑ **Begin with five minutes of exercise each day.** You will start by stretching, then add in walking, then add more flexibility exercises, then finally resistance training – until you have finally reached about an hour a day of exercise. (More details below.)
- ❑ **Rest one day each week!** A Sabbath rest is absolutely critical if you want to heal from chronic fatigue.

- ❑ **Your adrenal glands are healed when you feel *better*, not worse, after exercising.** In other words, you no longer “crash” immediately or even the next day. Exercise should always help you, not make you feel worse.

What should your “exercise routine” include?

- ❑ Start by stretching like a cat while lying in bed in the morning.
- ❑ Include 5 minutes of stretching in the morning and 5 minutes of stretching before bed.
- ❑ Add in 5 minutes of walking each day.
- ❑ Gradually work up to 30 minutes of walking and 15 minutes of stretching exercises each day.
- ❑ Begin to add strength-training exercises, slowly working up to 20 minutes total, every other day.

What? Only 5 minutes of walking a day? Yes! Start slowly!

Remember that 5 minutes means you only walk 2.5 minutes away from home before turning around and slowly walking back home.

- ❑ When you can do gentle stretching exercises for 5 minutes and then take a short walk, all without feeling tired either immediately or the next day, then you’re ready to increase your walking time.
- ❑ “Strength-training” doesn’t have to be fancy. Simply squeezing a rubber ball with your hands is a great way to start. Climbing stairs, doing “arm curls” with cans of food, or using simple resistance bands for a few minutes – these are all gentle ways to start increasing your muscle strength.

I advise you to make a list of the physical activities you want to do. Be objective and wise about this.

- Plan out your exercise “routine” so it gradually increases in intensity over time.
- Stick to your plan, and monitor all your symptoms as you’ve learned already.
- Don’t rely on your emotions to tell you to exercise.
- Make this a healthy habit by planning and writing things down.

I’ve included some options for exercise in the “Action Guide” at the end of this book, but Drs. Honeyman and Lowe, thyroid and fibromyalgia researchers in Colorado, advise that you **choose the same types of exercise you would have liked to do when you were ten years old**. Did you like to climb trees, ride your bike, or swim? Did you like to play basketball or run races at recess? Do you enjoy gymnastics or karate? Think back to a time when it felt good to move, and try those same activities now.

Finally, try to exercise at a time of day when you know your cortisol levels are highest. You will produce cortisol differently as you move through the various stages of fatigue, so pay attention to how you feel.

Remember that your body needs cortisol to retrieve glycogen from your liver during exercise, so the best time to exercise is when you have plenty of cortisol in your system, whether that’s early in the morning or before bed at night.

Types of Exercise

There are three main types of exercise to consider as you heal from fatigue:

1. Flexibility
2. Aerobic
3. Strength Training

Flexibility

As you begin to recover, you can start a simple exercise routine by increasing your flexibility. Simply start stretching!

We as women, especially mothers, start to slouch as we get older, as we carry heavy babies and packages, and as our fatigue increases. As our posture gets worse and we're too tired to exercise, our nerves cannot communicate as well.

I have a theory about chiropractors, in fact. I wonder if one of the reasons why chiropractic is so effective is because, as our spines are manipulated and straightened, our posture improves, allowing oxygen and nerve communication to our vital organs to increase.

I have personally found that daily stretching exercises, from my head to my toe, improve my posture and allow me to breathe easier. As I stretch, I gently strengthen the muscles that hold my body up. Deep breaths supply oxygen to my body as I stretch.

It feels oooohhh... soooooo... good!

Stretching and flexibility-building exercises should be done when you wake up and before you go to sleep. You should also stretch your muscles before, during, and after other forms of exercise. Finally, after you have been immobile for a period of time, you should gently stretch. (For instance, after working for some time to write this chapter, I sure could use a good stretch!)

Aerobic

Aerobic exercise is defined as any exercise that increases the body's demand for oxygen. It increases your respiration and heart rate temporarily. One of the best benefits of aerobic exercise is that it has been shown to help your brain grow new brain cells (neurons)!¹³⁵

I think you should be very careful about overdoing aerobic exercise, however, especially at first. You need an ample supply of oxygen in your brain to recover from stress.

My advice is to keep your heart rate **under 100 beats per minute** until your endurance has improved to the point that exercise does not cause you greater fatigue. (We'll discuss how to know when this is in just a moment.) Later you can increase this to between **100-125 beats per minute**.

A gentler form of aerobic exercise is walking. Walking increases the flow of blood to your brain yet doesn't draw excessively from your reserves. The extra sunshine, fresh air, and quiet don't hurt either!

¹³⁵ <http://www.fi.edu/learn/brain/exercise.html>

Strength Training

One of the best forms of exercise is simply mimicking hard work, which our bodies were created by God to do.

Strength Training: *short bursts of exercise that cause your muscles to contract against resistance.*

To contract a muscle is to shorten it. As we stretch and increase flexibility, we lengthen our muscles. On the other hand, when strength training, we shorten our muscles as we lift weights against gravity, use resistance bands against our own body weight, or do sit ups.

As muscles are used, they have more ability to supply oxygen and nutrients to your body, which is why you need to use your muscles if you want to overcome fatigue.

*Short bursts of exercise have been proven to be most effective. **Ten to 15 seconds of “hard work”** at the peak of your ability is plenty, followed by a period of rest. As you gain strength, you can repeat these short bursts over 10 minutes – but only as you gain strength. Eventually, you’ll achieve 30 seconds of intense exercise, followed by rests, repeated over 20 minutes.*

Again, don’t let your “type A” personality use up all your energy the first day! Allow your muscles to gradually build up.

Other Forms of Exercise You Shouldn’t Neglect

I thought I would conclude this book with some types of exercise that will help you overcome fatigue, even though none of these are traditionally thought of as “exercise.” You have my permission to start any of these right away!

- ❑ **Practice good posture.** Holding your head and body upright with good posture tells your body that you’re okay! It communicates to your brain that you’re feeling better today, so that’s why you’re not slumped over. Even if you only have the strength to stand or sit up tall for short periods of time, you’ll notice a general improvement in your attitude and outlook as you use good posture.

- ❑ **Take the stairs rather than the elevator.** Okay, I don't go too many places that have elevators, but the general principle is the same. On days when you're able, park a few spots further from the store, climb stairs a little more quickly than usual, and hang up your clothes with a little more gusto. Do just a little bit more, always being careful not to overdo.
- ❑ **Get outside.** Sunshine, fresh air, and green grass under foot are very good "exercise." Yard work and gardening might be too much for you right now, but can you grow some herbs in a pot outside your door? Can you sit in the sunshine on the front step at noon? Always be careful to avoid dehydration, extreme temperatures, or sunburn, but don't totally shut yourself indoors either.
- ❑ **Smile, even when you don't want to.** It really is true that it takes more muscles to frown than it does to smile. However, I've found that my frowning muscles are some of the strongest and best conditioned in my body. When I'm tired, my smiling muscles feel too tired to work properly. Practice smiling in the mirror, smiling at your children, and smiling at your spouse. Even if you're exhausted, a smile really will help you feel better.
- ❑ **Use good handwriting.** I have found that my handwriting gets much worse the more tired I am, especially when my hands get shaky. Slow down, and consciously require your hands to obey your commands. Small efforts like these actually increase the neuron pathways in your brain, which stimulates your thinking skills and helps reduce "brain fog."

Other similar activities that can help include trying to eat with your left hand (or right, if you're left-handed), or trying to shampoo your hair with your eyes closed. Anything that requires work of your brain that is a little out-of-the-normal will help you gain strength neurologically. Literally, use your imagination!

- ❑ **Enjoy a sauna.** A short session in a sauna has been proven to be more helpful than cardiovascular exercise. It's especially helpful when you use a sauna in the afternoon, to mimic your body's natural temperature cycle. As with any other form of exercise, start with short times (5 minutes) and gradually increase the amount of time over many weeks, only as you've demonstrated that it is helpful to you.
- ❑ **Memorize something.** Learn a poem, recite your times tables, or (my favorite) memorize Bible verses. Choose a short passage and read it aloud 10 times. Then try to say it from

memory. Then next day, review it by saying it 9 times, adding in a new (short) passage that you read 10 times. The third day, review the first passage 8 times, the second passage 9 times, and read a new passage 10 times. Keep going like this each day, always reviewing what you've previously learned. Writing each passage on an index card can help you stay organized in your review.

- ❑ **Rest in a horizontal position.** Yes, after a day of activity and stress, it can feel like hard work to lie down flat for a few minutes. Your body feels like it's still moving. Sometimes it even feels like you are spinning. However, as you take the pressures of gravity off your body, your muscles, tendons, and nerves can start to repair. In fact, one of the secret benefits to visiting a chiropractor or massage therapist is that it might be the only chance you've had to rest in a long time! Save yourself some money, and learn to lie flat at home. (Maybe your husband will give you a nice massage!)

Action Guide

Supplements for Exercise:

- ❑ **Vitamin E** – 400-800 mg per day, to properly use oxygen in your bloodstream.
- ❑ **“Brain Power,”** by Young Living Essential Oils, <http://youngliving.com> – This oil blend really helps increase the levels of oxygen in my blood stream. I dab it on my body daily or when my brain is foggy. It can also be diffused in a room.

Good Websites:

- ❑ <http://www.draxe.com/burst-training> - I do not recommend doing 30-second bursts of exercise for as long as Dr. Axe suggests until your health has significantly improved; however, I highly recommend watching his videos for creative ideas you can use in designing your exercise routines. Try 10 seconds, not 30 seconds. Repeat only once or twice.
- ❑ Want to stretch with your children? You are invited to download my simple (and fun) “stretch and flex” routine. Your kids will love stretching and giggling with you. I also have a P.E. curriculum for homeschoolers that is good for any mother, too.
 - http://anneshealthplace.com/downloads/tootired_swipe/stretch_and_flex.pdf
 - <http://foundationspress.com/our-homeschool-curriculum/homeschooling-p-e>

Book Recommendations:

- ❑ *Gotta Minute? The Ultimate Guide of One-Minute Workouts for Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime!* by Bonnie Nygard and Bonnie Hopper
- ❑ *Rebounding Aerobics*, by Morton Walker and Frank Angelo
- ❑ *Lose Your Mummy Tummy*, by Julie Tupler and Jodie Gould

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