

Shield Stress with Rhodiola rosea

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Chronic stress can take a major toll on the body. Occasional stress can be beneficial, but too much can leave you exhausted or ill. If you deal with stress on a daily basis, you may find yourself reaching for caffeine or high-carbohydrate foods to cope.

Enter Rhodiola rosea, an herb that helps the body adapt to stress. Taken daily, this herb can help you stay calm instead of getting frazzled—eliminating the need for that extra cup of coffee.

Understanding stress

The occasional stressful episode provides motivation—you see the stressor as a challenge to be conquered. But when stress continues and becomes daily pressure, you may notice muscle tension, fatigue, food cravings, or mental fogging. These are the immediate red flags.

In the long run, however, stress can have serious health implications. Adrenal burnout and autoimmune disease are just a few possibilities. By taking proactive steps to support your health, you can loosen stress' grip on your body.

Rhodiola: an adaptogen

Rhodiola is classified as an adaptogenic herb, meaning it increases the body's resistance to stress, anxiety, trauma and fatigue. Adaptogenic herbs contain strong antioxidants that help fend off damaging free radicals. Other adaptogenic herbs include ginseng, eleuthero and ashwaganda.

When a stressful situation hits, it can be almost impossible to find a moment to step away. It can be even more difficult to find a moment to take a supplement. But if you take your Rhodiola supplement every morning, you won't need to find an excuse to slip away during the day. Your body will already be conditioned to deal with the stress—much like changing an old tire instead of patching its holes.

Benefits of Rhodiola

Rhodiola does not trigger the same rush and crash as caffeine or energy drinks. Instead, it boosts and levels out mood to leave you feeling calm and mentally clear.

Scandinavia and Russia have used Rhodiola for centuries to support mood. In numerous recent medical studies, people taking Rhodiola supplements reported (1):

- decreased irritability
- decreased anxiety
- improved sleep
- improved mental efficiency

Choosing a supplement

Fortunately, studies have found very few side effects with Rhodiola use, and the herb can be safely combined with other adaptogens. Look for a supplement containing rosavin, the Rhodiola plant's active

compound. One 100 mg capsule taken daily is adequate for most people to start noticing a calmer mental state. Be aware that some people report more energy with Rhodiola, so the supplement is best taken in the morning.

Sources:

(1) Michelle Morgan and Kerry Bone. "Rhodiola rosea—Rhodiola." *Mediherb* No. 47, Feb. 2005. 20 Feb. 2013 <<http://www.mediherb.com.au/pdf/6047.pdf>>.