

W O R K B O O K 7

Stress

Tension & Anxiety



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V E R S I O N 1

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The information provided in this workbook is intended for the purpose of education. It does not replace or act as a substitute for information or advice obtained from medical and other healthcare professionals.

We have, as far as is possible, taken care that the text is accurate. However, knowledge is constantly changing and readers are advised, especially when there is any uncertainty or doubt, to confirm that the information is up-to-date and consistent with current thinking.

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Section 1

WHAT IS STRESS?

Everyone seems to be talking about stress nowadays. It would appear that if we do not suffer from some of the symptoms of stress, we are in the minority.

Anything that causes change in your life will cause stress in your body - stress is the result of your body **adapting** to new or challenging circumstances. You can also get stress in the body from change that you imagine or anticipate (for example, money worries).

Factors that might trigger stress reactions include the family, illness, finances, jobs, the environment, exercise, insufficient sleep, relationships, irregular hours or shift work, deadlines, moving house, exams and studying, and artificial stimulants (such as caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, or recreational drugs). There are few of us who don't run into some of these during our lifetime.

It is important to remember that stress is not always **bad** - it is appropriate to be upset and unable to function normally after the death of a loved one. In addition, there is **good** stress, such as a promotion at work.

As life would be pretty mundane without any challenges or changes, we are not seeking to avoid stress altogether; what is important is how we **manage** stress within our body.

1.1 How do I know if my body is stressed?

- Do you wake up early every morning thinking about all the chores of the day instead of drifting back to sleep?
- Do you jerk awake during the night or just as you are falling asleep, with your heart pounding and your nerves on edge?
- Do you have stomach pains or cramps when faced with a difficult situation?
- Do you drink coffee to try to keep awake and to keep to your schedule?
- Do you snap at everyone without meaning to?
- Do you cry easily and unexpectedly?
- Do you see the future as a list of tasks and pressure?

1.2 What happens to my body?

Our bodies still possess the 'fight or flight' mechanism that used to get us out of trouble when we had a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. When a perceived danger looms (be it something physical such as a car about to crash into us, or something more emotionally agitating such as a pending meeting with The Boss), adrenalin is released into our system with the following results:

- The heart beats faster to pump more blood around the body
- Blood is diverted away from the digestive tract, to the brain, heart, lungs and muscles
- Breathing speeds up to get oxygen to the muscles as quickly as possible
- Sweat levels increase to get rid of toxins and stop the body from overheating
- Blood sugar levels rise sharply to feed the brain and muscles with glucose
- Blood vessels constrict, increasing blood pressure and sending more blood to the organs

Whilst all of this is useful in enabling us to cope with the crisis at hand, having stress 'alarms' on a regular basis gives rise to adrenalin levels that are often high. This can contribute to poor digestion (as the digestive system is shut down regularly), high blood pressure, wobbly blood sugar levels (giving rise to a craving for sugar or other stimulants such as coffee and cigarettes), palpitations and muscle fatigue.

Some of the physical symptoms of an overload of stress are:

- Fatigue
- Aches and pains
- Digestive problems (irritable bowel, ulcers)
- High blood pressure
- Heart problems
- Stroke
- Skin problems (rashes or allergies)
- Decreased immune system function
- Sleep disturbances
- Low libido
- Jaw clenching
- Grinding teeth
- Muscle tension
- Headaches
- Anxiety
- Breathlessness

“Every system within the body can be adversely affected by stress overload.”

It is important that if stress is severe and ongoing that it is managed and treated properly by a professional health care practitioner.

Many people are now experiencing panic attacks because their adrenal glands are so ‘on edge’ that they trigger an adrenalin response to the smallest problem.

Stress can deplete energy levels so it is important that we are able to manage both good and bad stress appropriately in order to maintain the right levels of energy in our bodies. The following illustrates how stress can affect your energy levels.

The body is suffering from ongoing stress and one resultant symptom is digestive weakness as blood is constantly being diverted away from the digestive tract. This means that not all the necessary nutrients are absorbed absorbing from the food we eat. Our energy levels become depleted as a result of this lack of nutrients. We become tired and lethargic and even more stressed – a vicious circle indeed!

For some people, the problem becomes more intense as their adrenal glands become exhausted with the constant alarms, and stop producing adrenalin on demand. These people then find it impossible to summon the energy to do anything and may end up with a syndrome some call TATT (Tired All The Time) or, in the worst cases, CFS (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome). It takes a long time to pull back from CFS, so it is worth learning how to avert such a health crisis.

REMEMBER that the symptoms you experience may **NOT** be due to stress. It is important that your symptoms are checked by a professional health care practitioner.

In order to support your nervous system and avoid straining your adrenal strength, there are various nutrients you can ensure you are getting and certain lifestyle changes you can implement.

1.3 Nutrients

Magnesium is a vitally important mineral that helps the nervous system carry messages around the body correctly and allows muscles to relax. People who suffer from tense, knotted muscles and cramps often benefit from this mineral. Magnesium is not present in junk foods, so those with a poor diet may lack sufficient supplies.

Vitamin B is the vitamin that helps the body deal with physical and mental stress. It is water-soluble, so cannot be stored by the body and is easily lost in cooking and storing of food. We need to take foods containing vitamin B regularly and this often doesn't happen when people are rushed, stressed or unhappy.

Iron is often mildly deficient especially in women with heavy periods giving rise to tiredness, breathlessness and dizzy, giddy feelings. Suggest that people try a natural iron supplement such as Floradix before they reach for caffeine or 'pep-up' type products, especially as these can themselves block the absorption of iron.

CoQ10 is useful when energy levels have sunk, and also in old age when CoQ10 can become deficient.

Many people under pressure eat 'junk' or sugary foods, reach for alcohol or nicotine - all of which rob the body of useful nutrients. Those who are trying to eat well may be hindered by the presence of adrenalin shutting down the digestive system.

1.4 Lifestyle

- Eat regularly to avoid blood sugar dips that trigger adrenalin release.
- Chew your food thoroughly and make time to eat peacefully to promote good digestion.
- Avoid artificial stimulants such as caffeine, alcohol and nicotine which trigger adrenalin release and use up stress nutrients.
- Avoid refined sugar which causes a blood sugar high and then a dip, and also uses up magnesium.
- Get enough sleep. If sleeping is a problem take natural sleeping remedies, practise meditation and use relaxation techniques to help calm you down before bed.
- Moderate exercise will improve oxygenation of tissues and release endorphins, 'happy' chemicals that improve mood. Gentle walking, for example, also releases muscle tension and clears the mind (unless done in a busy town centre or on a dual carriageway...).
- Talking to friends should help to put things into perspective. Many people come to talk to their friendly health store staff for just this reason!

CHECKPOINT 1

1) Is all stress bad?

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2) Can tiredness be a symptom of stress?

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3) Why can stress cause high blood pressure?

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Section 2

REMEDIES FOR THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

2.1 Herbal Remedies



Avena Sativa

This herb is useful for mild or ongoing stress such as studying for exams or dealing with an exhausting relative. Its effects are cumulative and the herb is very easy to recommend as it has no side effects or contraindications.

- Gentle but effective
- Relaxes the mind and muscles
- Suitable for long-term use

*“Gentle but effective
remedy for stress”*

Avena sativa has the ability to relax both the mind and the muscles. In the gut, this is particularly useful for bowel symptoms caused by stress. It is an important ingredient in Tormentil Complex, a remedy that Alfred Vogel formulated for IBS with loose motions.

Like many ‘stress’ herbs, Avena is non-addictive and can be taken for as long as is needed. It is suitable for children over the age of two and can help with hyperactivity. As it does not cause drowsiness, it can be used by students, drivers and those who work machinery.



Passiflora Complex

In this remedy, Avena sativa is combined with Passiflora, a herb well known for its positive effects on the nervous system. This remedy is stronger than Avena sativa on its own, but has all the same advantages.

- Relaxes muscles
- Relaxes the mind
- Mild antidepressant
- Sleeping problems
- Menopausal problems

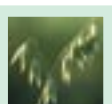
*“Good alternative to
Hypericum”*

Passiflora Complex is excellent at relaxing tense, knotted muscles. It also relaxes the mind, relieving anxiety. With its ability to help in mild depression, it is a good alternative to Hypericum if one is not able to use the herb because of medication from the doctor.

The menopause is often accompanied by nervous system symptoms such as anxiety, nervous irritation and fatigue. Passiflora is an excellent choice to accompany a herb such as Black Cohosh.

On top of all its other benefits, this herb also has a positive effect on the heart as it improves the blood supply to this organ. This is useful because people who are tense or stressed often have higher blood pressure than is ideal.

Passiflora Complex is non-addictive, can be taken long term and by children, and has no side effects or contraindications. Again, easy to recommend.



Ginsavena

This remedy contains no gin. It is a combination of Avena sativa and Siberian Ginseng (Eleutherococcus). Siberian Ginseng is one of the herbs classed as an adaptogen – it helps the body ‘adapt’ to the stress resulting from changes in the environment.

Ginsavena that has a positive effect on energy, lifting fatigue, but also allows the body to adapt effectively to challenging circumstances.

- Adaptogen
- Boosts energy levels
- Relieves nervous and mental strain
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- Excellent for menopausal imbalance and fatigue

“An adaptogen”

Ginsavena helps the body adapt to stressful situations. It boosts energy levels whilst relieving the symptoms of stress on the nervous system. This combination of herbs is excellent for helping with the symptoms of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome as well as fatigue during the menopause.

Don’t use Ginsavena for more than 3 months and don’t use it to cover up the symptoms of deficiencies e.g. anaemia. Remember that it is good for both fatigue and nervous tension – it calms you down whilst bringing your energy levels up.

Ginsavena is a lovely balancing remedy, suitable for short term support when things are getting on top of people, or when a sustained burst of calm, focused energy is needed - moving house, a bereavement or Christmas.

*This is a very effective remedy but don’t use it lightly or let people stay on it long term. It is **not** suitable for children.*



Eleutherococcus

The remedy Eleutherococcus is Siberian Ginseng on its own. It is used as an adaptogen, helping the body deal with stressful circumstances, whether physical, mental or emotional.

It does not have the same calming qualities as Ginsavena (as it does not have Avena sativa), but does have the same contraindications. It is not suitable for children or use over 3 months.



Valerian

This herb works faster than the previous ones mentioned. The effects are fairly immediate and are seen with both mind and muscles. You can use Valerian during the day for the relief of stress, or at night to promote better sleep.

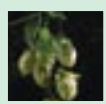
- Relaxes tense muscles
- Relaxes a tense mind

“Relaxes tension in muscles and mind”

This is a ‘grown up’ remedy – don’t give it to children except as Valerian-Hops Complex (see below). It is non-addictive, but a minority of people find that Valerian doesn’t suit them, making them more rather than less tense.

Valerian has no side effects and can be taken with other medication. However, it is logical not to use it alongside other tranquillisers as there will be duplication of effect.

If people want to take herbs that do the same thing as their medication, it is valid to question whether their medication is working for them, or whether they would be better discussing with their doctor coming off it or taking something else.



Valerian-Hops Complex

Adding Hops to Valerian creates an extremely effective ‘knock-out’ remedy for sleeping – more effective than using Valerian alone. This remedy balances effectiveness with safety, so it can be given to children over the age of 2.

- Promotes better sleep

“An effective remedy for sleeping”

The joy of a sleeping remedy in a tincture form is that it works within 30 minutes and doesn't need to be taken with food. You can take it as you go to bed and half an hour later you'll be asleep. If, as some people do, you wake up in the night and can't go back to sleep, you can take it again and be certain it will work fast but not leave you feeling hung-over or drowsy in the morning.

This remedy is non-addictive and has no side effects, making it an appealing alternative to conventional sleeping medication.



Hypericum Complex

Hypericum is probably the best-known natural remedy for mild depression. Here, it is combined with lemon balm and hops to support the nervous system.

- For depression with anxiety and nervous tension
- Calms you down and lifts your spirits at the same time
- Strengthens the nervous system
- Reduces nerve pain
- Menopausal stress

“For depression with anxiety”

Hypericum Complex strengthens the nervous system. It is excellent for stressed, unhappy, tense menopausal women. Its ability to reduce nerve pain makes it great for shingles and sciatic pain.

It takes between one to three weeks for the full effects of this remedy to be felt. It is not addictive and has none of the side effects associated with conventional antidepressant or tranquillising medication. It should not, however, be used alongside conventional medication - Passiflora Complex is a good alternative for those on prescribed medication.

Don't take it for more than 4 months because if depressive symptoms last for that long, they should be presented to a healthcare professional to deal with. Don't give it to children, as a doctor should treat children suffering from depression.

As depression and nervous tension can drain the body of energy, this remedy often has a good effect on tiredness and lethargy, as well as mood. It is frequently found to improve sleep quality.

Taken on its own, Hypericum is for depressive symptoms only, rather than depression and nervous irritation.



Ginkgo Biloba

Fatigue is often caused or exacerbated by lack of oxygen in the tissues and organs. Dizziness, giddiness and breathlessness can all be caused by a lack of oxygen circulating around the body. Improving circulatory function, as Ginkgo does, can therefore ease fatigue.

Ginkgo also improves the blood supply to the brain, allowing clearer thought and sharper recall. Many people feel that they are losing their memory, with their focus and concentration are not as good as they were. This may make them feel extremely panicky. Feeling that their memory is reasserting itself can therefore have a positive effect on stress levels.

- Boosts arterial circulation
- Improves blood supply to brain, aiding memory and concentration
- For poor circulation alongside fatigue and faintness

“Improves blood supply to the brain, allowing for clearer thought”

Remember the important contraindication with Ginkgo: it cannot be taken with anticoagulant medication such as Aspirin or Warfarin. However, those on anticoagulants can use Vinca minor instead.

CHECKPOINT 2

1) What is the difference between the 3 stress remedies that contain Avena sativa?

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2) Which of the herbal stress remedies aren't suitable for children?

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3) Why might Ginkgo help tiredness?

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2.2 Flower Essences

It is important to look at the physical aspects of stress and ensure lifestyle and dietary changes that support the body physically as this will then have a positive impact on mental and emotional symptoms. It is, however, often useful to support the emotions directly and benefit from the positive impact this can have on the physical symptoms. For example, if the mind stops churning over the latest run-in with the in-laws or The Boss, it is easier to get to sleep and fatigue will be less of a problem.

Flower Essences are extremely easy to use because they have no side effects and no contraindications. They are suitable for children and people on medication. You can use them on their own or as part of a supplement programme, e.g. Ginkgo, an iron supplement and Concentration Essence for someone with cold extremities, fatigue and poor memory.



Emergency Essence

The most immediately useful remedy for stress and crises, it can be taken whenever there is a challenge to emotional stability.

- Exams
- Driving tests
- Arguments
- Accidents

“Taken whenever there is a challenge to emotional stability”

Emergency Essence can be taken prior to an event that is causing concern (a looming exam, an impending visit by difficult relatives or a long drawn-out court-case), or it can be taken after an unexpected crisis or shock, such as a car crash or bad (or good) news. It is fine for both long and short-term use.



Relaxation Essence

The most appropriate remedy for a stressed-out personality or a prolonged period of pressure where the person finds it difficult to relax and can't recover sufficiently from the demands of the day.

- Difficulty in 'switching off'
- Constantly 'on edge'
- Constantly worried and anxious as to the future

“For a stressed-out personality”



Night Essence

Use alongside other sleeping remedies such as Valerian-Hops Complex to deal with emotional trauma that prevents sleep, or use on its own for sleeplessness caused entirely by emotional or mental factors.

- Children who won't sleep because of monsters under the bed
- Sleeplessness after a break-up or bereavement
- Constantly revisiting an argument or worry in your head instead of going to sleep

“To deal with emotional trauma that prevents sleep”

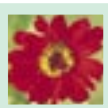
Night Essence is particularly good for children as they respond particularly well to this type of remedy. It has given very good results alongside Valerian-Hops Complex or Avena sativa for children who drive their parents into despair by refusing to sleep.



Child Essence

Still on the theme of youngsters, this remedy is great for hyperactive children especially when taken alongside Avena sativa. It can also be used when the child is insecure due to moving house or school, bullying, divorce or a new family member.

“Great for hyperactivity”



Mood Essence

A flower remedy for mild depression, suitable if Hypericum is not permitted or if there is a well-known emotional cause.

- Mild depression
- Moodiness following life changes
- Teenagers’ moods

“For mild depression”



Vitality Essence

Excellent as a quick ‘pick-me-up’ of energy. It works very fast and can be used in one-off situations such as the morning-after-the-night-before, or whilst waiting for nutritional supplementation to take effect.

- Hangovers
- Motorway driving
- Busy periods at work or long, boring meetings!
- Sports events

“A quick ‘pick-me-up’ of energy”



Concentration Essence

A quick blast of focus and mind sharpening when it's most needed. Can be taken alongside Ginkgo biloba and / or phosphatidyl serine.

- Exams
- Tricky navigating eg. round London if you're not familiar with it
- Important meetings
- The mental fog associated with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

“Sharpens the mind”

CHECKPOINT 3

1) Why are Flower Essences so easy to recommend?

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2) Do Flower Essences work on physical symptoms?

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3) Why may someone need a Flower Essence as well as a herbal remedy?

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Section 3

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Always remember to check if medication is being taken. Refer to a healthcare professional whenever there is doubt.

Example 1

A student drinking quite heavily and on a constant diet of convenience foods complains of tiredness. Exams are just round the corner but she is finding it hard to get out of bed and is feeling stressed and panicky about revising. She had glandular fever as a teenager.

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Section 4

ANSWERS TO CHECKPOINTS & 'TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE'

The answers in this section represent some of the possible solutions. They are presented here for the purpose of illustrating the way herbs may be used.

Checkpoint 1 - Answer

1. No, stress is the result of the body responding to challenges and changes in the environment. Stress can result from both good and bad events or changes around us and hence, not all stress is bad.
2. Yes, ongoing tension can prevent adequate and restful sleep and give rise to fatigue.
3. Adrenalin causes blood vessels to constrict pushing up blood pressure. This is useful in the short term to speed up the delivery of blood to the organs. However, it is damaging to the circulatory system if it goes on long term.

Checkpoint 2 - Answer

1. Avena sativa on its own is a mild calming remedy. When added to Passiflora it has a stronger and faster in action, with more applications as it also helps the heart and nerve pain. Avena sativa added to Siberian Ginseng is usefully powerful remedy for conditions such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and the fatigue experienced during the menopause. However it has contraindications that are not present with Avena sativa or Passiflora Complex.

Children should not, in normal circumstances, use 2. Ginsavena, Valerian, Hypericum and Hypericum Complex.

3. A lack of oxygen may be responsible for reducing energy levels. Ginkgo increases the circulatory flow in the arterial system and the delivery of oxygen to organs around the body.

Checkpoint 3 - Answer

1. Flower Essences have no side effects or contraindications – they can safely be given to anyone.

2. This class of remedies can improve physical symptoms that are caused by emotional problems. In our modern world, many physical problems have their roots in emotional imbalances.

3. Many ailments have an emotional as well as a physical basis. For example, someone who has suffered from stress or depression previously may worry about the condition returning. This puts additional strain on their system and may precipitate further problems. Taking Relaxation Essence may help them to release the emotional fear, whilst Passiflora Complex or Hypericum Complex strengthens them physically.

Test Your Knowledge Example 1 – Answer

People who have had glandular fever are often more vulnerable to developing Chronic Fatigue Syndrome especially when under stress. She needs to tidy up her lifestyle. Hard drinking and poor quality food will drain her of the nutrients her body and brain need to cope with studying.

A vitamin B complex and magnesium are indicated, as both are killed off by alcohol and are needed for a calm nervous system. Echinaforce would be a good idea to strengthen her immune system, to prevent an infection that might trigger CFS.

She would benefit from Floradix with Vitality Essence for the immediate tiredness and line up Passiflora Complex and Concentration Essence for when she starts to recover and returns to studying.

Test Your Knowledge Example 2 – Answer

Find out if she's on the Pill, which she may well be after 3 children! If she's not then give her Ginsavena for a maximum of 3 months, together with Floradix and a multivitamin / mineral preparation. (Don't forget that Siberian Ginseng and the Pill are incompatible.)

This should replace some of the nutrients she's lost and boost her energy fast, whilst giving her body the ability to cope with the demands being made on her physically and mentally.

If she is on the Pill, give her Floradix and a multi (making sure it contains plenty of vitamin B to counteract that lost by the Pill). Complement this with Passiflora Complex with Vitality Essence.

Test Your Knowledge Example 3 – Answer

Make sure he is eating regularly and not relying on coffee and sugar to keep him going as this will put strain on his adrenal glands.

Give him vitamin B and magnesium to feed his nervous system. Use Hypericum Complex to calm and cheer him and steady his nerves for a maximum of 4 months, then swap to Passiflora Complex for maintenance.

He should use Emergency Essence daily or whenever he feels panicky. Make sure he is drinking plenty of water, as dehydration can trigger a panic attack.

Section 5

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

(Stress Tension & Anxiety Workbook – Question Set 7.1)

AVI Membership No:

Name:

Address:

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Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:

Please indicate whether you believe the following statements to be 'True' or 'False' by ticking the appropriate box. Please remove this page, complete your details, and return to the A. Vogel Institute.

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Stress can affect your digestion. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Jaw clenching can be a sign of stress. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Energy levels may improve if stress is dealt with. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Dehydration may contribute to panicky feelings or panic attacks. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Avena sativa is not suitable for children. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Ginsavena has no contraindications. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Passiflora Complex relaxes muscles. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Continued on next page...

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 8. Passiflora Complex can be useful in the menopause. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Ginsavena is an adaptogen. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Valerian tincture is Bioforce's strongest sleeping remedy. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Valerian Hops Complex can be given to children. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Sleeping remedies work faster as tinctures than in tablet form. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Hypericum Complex calms you down as well as lifting your spirits. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Ginkgo biloba has no contraindications. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Flower Essences are able to address physical only. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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