



DIY Herbal Fellowship

Adaptogens
Herbs that Heal and Restore

04

Adaptogens

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The Dark Side of Adaptogens

LESSON 04

In This Lesson, You Will Learn

- Some serious problems with long term use of adaptogens
- How to use adaptogen and tonic herbs safely and effectively.
- Which lifestyle changes are mandatory to help the body deal with chronic stressors

There is a dark side to adaptogens
that is little talked about.



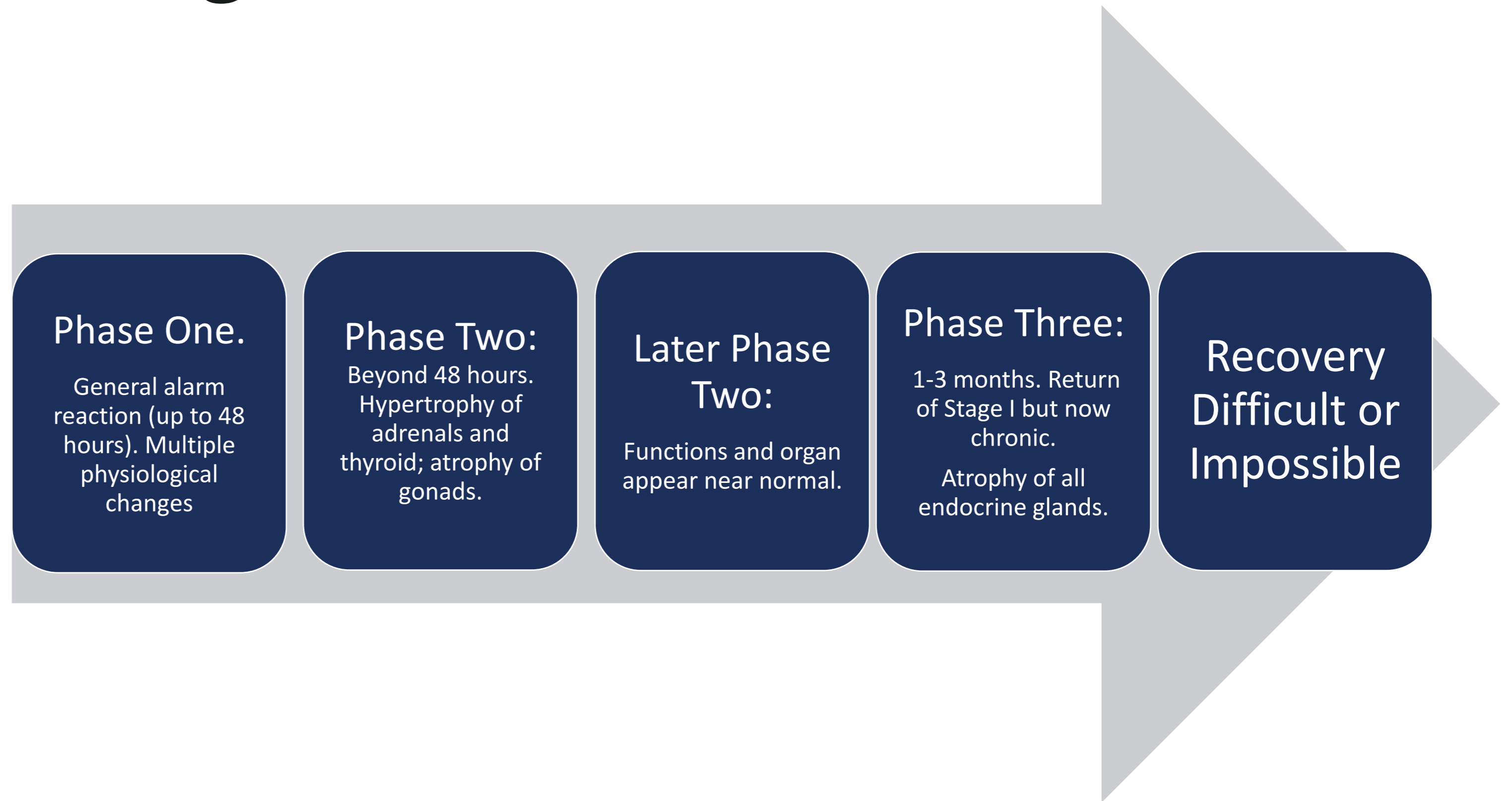


About the emperor who took herbs to give him stamina with his harem.



Stages of Burnout

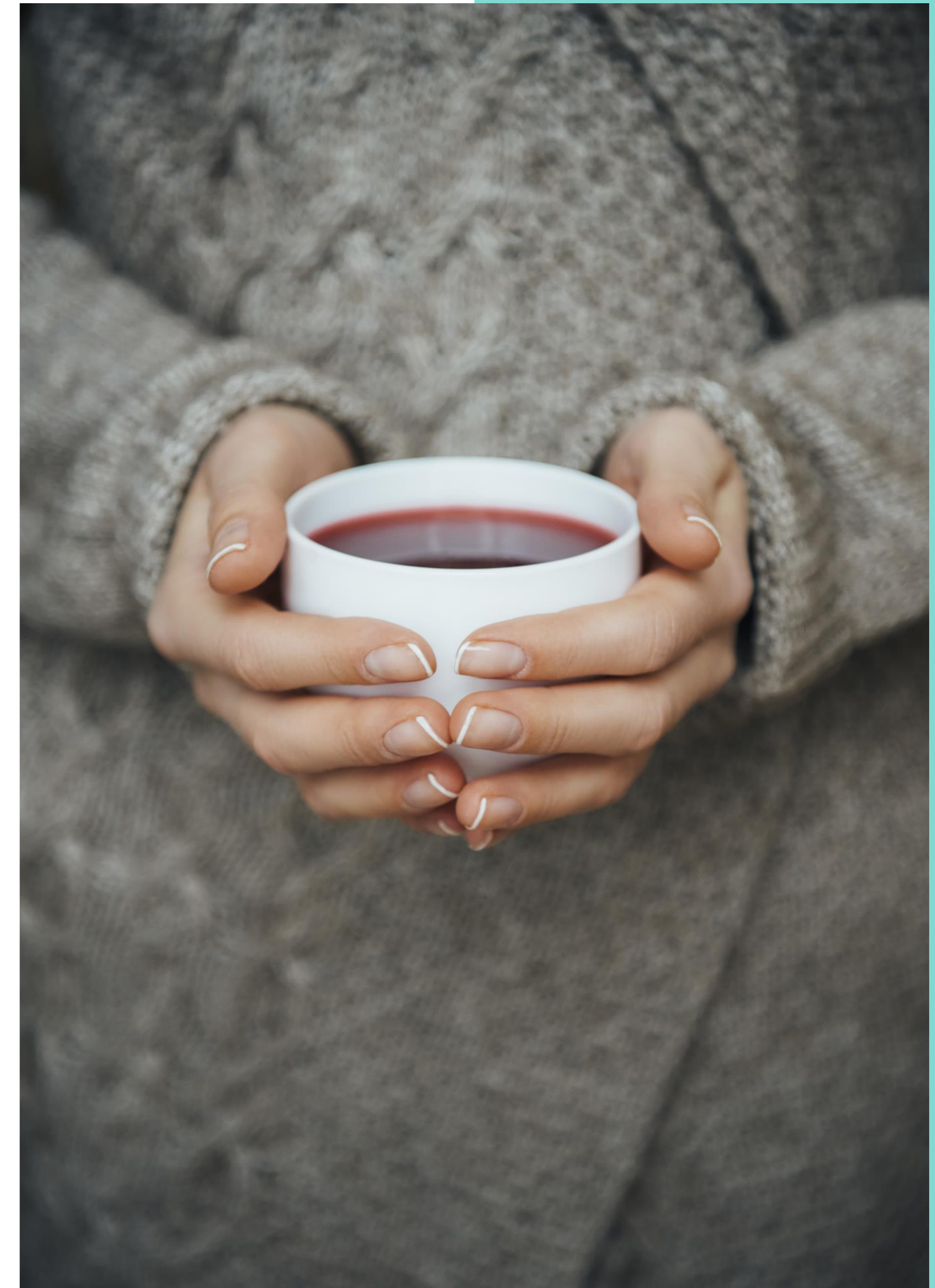
(adapted from Selye's model)



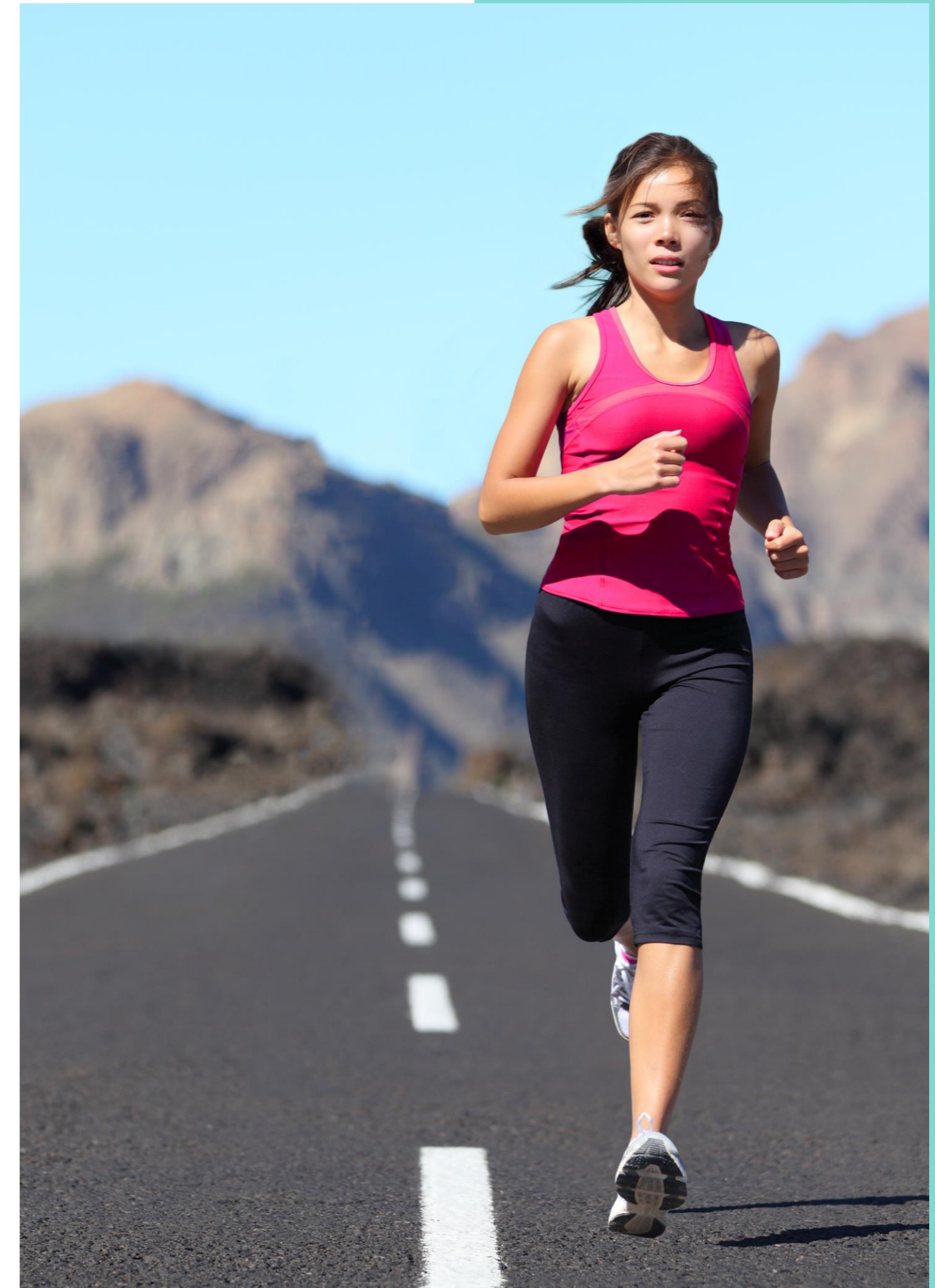
**When cortisol
increases
testosterone
decreases.**



**Adaptogens are not a
substitute for rest and
good nutrition.**



Science has not tested the long term effects of adaptogens on humans.



Traditional Tonic Herbs

- Stinging Nettle
- Schizandra Berry
- Holy Basil
- Hawthorn Berry
- Burdock
- Dandelion
- Medicinal Mushrooms

Ways adaptogens may cause harm

- › Masking the fatigue of a serious illness
- › Masking the effects of a nutrient deficiency
- › Enabling burnout through overexertion: occupational, athletic
- › Enabling burnout through relative over-exertion in a severely debilitated patient
- › Aggravating heat effects (rapid heart rate, warmth, high blood pressure)
- › Masking the ill effects of sleep debt.
- › Facilitates the progression of adrenal dysfunction, insulin resistance, and immunodeficiency

The right use of tonic herbs

- › With attention to traditional indications and contraindications
- › To support normal activity, not to drive to unnatural levels of performance.
- › To support recovery rather than performance.
- › After assessing the possible causes of the deficiency, and in the context of correction of the root causes
- › Use in a small to moderate dose with attention to any developing overstimulation

- › As a short term intervention, with frequent re-evaluation, or regular breaks.
- › To break a vicious cycle of poor appetite in a deficient patient.
- › To break a vicious cycle of low energy/will in a deficient patient
- › As an adjunct to other herbal treatments in the deficient patient, in small doses.
- › To motivate and assist in the fatigue that may accompany positive lifestyle changes such as caffeine withdrawal or the induction phase of a ketogenic diet.
- › In the fatigue of serious chronic disease, such as cancer.

**Use adaptogens in low doses
to support lifestyle changes**

Short term = 7 to 10 days



Use under appropriate supervision



- Adaptogens can enhance athletic performance short term but do not prevent burn out.
- Adequate sleep and nutrition must be used to prevent stress rebound.
- For serious debility nutritive tonics and digestive herbs are more appropriate.

“There is a tendency to suggest to debilitated patients that taking tonics is all that is needed for recovery. This is not true: physical and breathing exercises and diet are also important.”

Bensky and Gamble Chinese Materia Medica

Best Adaptogen: REST

- **Supports adrenals, no withdrawal**
- **No side effects**
- **Normalizes the system**
- **Improves immunity**
- **Improves general resistance to stress**
- **Helps with weight loss**

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- ✓ How to use adaptogen and tonic herbs safely and effectively.
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Take Action Now

- **Assess your current level of fatigue/energy on a scale of 1 to 10.**
- **Do you need more rest? Better nutrition? Digestive herbs?**
- **Decide on a course of action NOW that will improve your energy and enjoyment of life in the long term.**
- **Burnout is difficult to recover from. Prevent burnout through lifestyle changes – rest, nutrition, vacation, walks in nature, friendships.**
- **Herbs cannot raise the dead.**