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Siberian Ginseng

The Herb for Energy and Stress

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We would all like to have more energy. And who doesn't want to find ways to reduce stress? Since there are so many natural remedies available to you, I certainly want to make sure you have included the herb *Eleutherococcus senticosus* in your program.

The more familiar name for this botanical remedy is Siberian Ginseng, and its benefits for stress and energy are renowned. Results from extensive research by Russian scientists show it to be a powerful "adaptogenic" herb used to help the body's reaction to stress. This category of herbs assists in the body's "nonspecific resistance" to stress, fatigue, and disease. It is used in Russia and other former Soviet republics by athletes, industrial workers, and laypersons alike. The Chinese have long believed that regular use of *Eleuthero Ginseng* increases longevity and improves general health, appetite, and memory. It is now commonly used in the United States and Europe by athletes and those with active lifestyles as an herbal supplement to enhance energy.

Siberian Ginseng is part of the *Aralia* family, as is the more commonly known Chinese Ginseng. Found in Siberia, northern China, and parts of Japan, this shrub can reach up to six feet tall at maturity. It is sometimes called "spiny" Ginseng, referring to its botanical name of *Acanthopanax* ("acantho" means spiny). Now correctly called *Eleutherococcus*, Siberian Ginseng grows abundantly in the wild, and like the other Ginsengs, has a relatively large root system. The roots are the coveted part of the plant, as they contain the active compounds, called eleutherosides. These eleutherosides include long chain sugars, known as glycosides, which have tonic properties to the metabolic system.

A close look at some of the research and studies on Siberian Ginseng shows exactly why it should be included in your program to enhance your health and overall energy. In the mid-1980's, an interesting study was completed by Japanese medical researchers showing that extract of *Eleuthero Ginseng* increases total work output on a stationary bike by 23.3% compared to a 7.5% rise in the case of the placebo. A Soviet study, conducted in the 1960's and repeated again in the 1980's, shows that Siberian Ginseng increases mental performance. In a telegraph control center, operators relayed a text continuously for five minutes, and then repeated the task one hour after ingesting 2 ml of *Eleuthero* extract in water. After the second five minute work period, those taking the herbal extract performed with significantly fewer errors than those in the control group. Other studies show that *Eleuthero Ginseng* increases overall health and reduces incidence of minor ailments like colds and influenza.

So how do you begin taking Siberian Ginseng? Since most of the successful studies that were done in the USSR involved an alcohol extract, this may be a good place to begin. However, you may also consider a tablet, capsule, or tea form. Siberian Ginseng may be taken alone, as a single remedy, or in combination with other synergistic herbs (herbs that work well together). Begin by using the recommended dosage two or three times daily. It is important to be consistent, using it daily for up to one month. Remember,

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Siberian Ginseng does not directly stimulate the central nervous system, so don't expect immediate changes in overall energy. All tonic herbs need time to support the complex metabolism of the body, including glucose-glycogen storage, the adrenals, and the cardio-vascular system. With consistent supplementation, you will usually get results. Be patient, since you are in it for the long-term health benefits anyway.

After one month of use, you may not need to take Eleuthero supplements every day. Many individuals find that using Siberian Ginseng every other week is sufficient. During the "off" weeks, other herbal remedies may be considered. The following herbal rotational program is effective for individuals who want to enhance overall health, energy, and vitality. It alternates the adaptogenic and toning properties of Siberian Ginseng with the immune system support of the American herbs, Echinacea and Goldenseal.

• Week 1

Adaptogenic herbs for toning
Siberian Ginseng, alone or in a combination
Dosage: 3 times daily

• Week 2

Immune-stimulating and cleansing herbs
Echinacea and Goldenseal, alone or in a combination
Dosage: 3 times daily

• Week 3

Adaptogenic herbs for toning
Siberian Ginseng, alone or in a combination
Dosage: 3 times daily

• Week 4

Immune-stimulating and cleansing herbs
Echinacea and Goldenseal, alone or in a combination
Dosage: 3 times daily

As an added note, many energy supplements on the market combine Ginseng with the Chinese herb Ephedra (Ma huang). Ephedra is a central nervous system stimulant (similar to coffee), and therefore should not be used on a long-term basis. It stimulates energy, but does not support the body's ongoing energy and recovery needs. Because Ephedra is a stimulant, it does not tone the body, and its long term use is not advised.

Good luck using Siberian Ginseng, and enjoy staying healthy!

Janet Zand, OMD, L. Ac., is a respected naturopathic physician who lives and practices in the Los Angeles area. She has developed a unique and effective method of combining herbal medicine with nutrition, homeopathy and acupuncture. Her credentials include a Doctor of Naturopathy, Doctor of Oriental Medicine, and Certified Acupuncturist. Dr. Zand has over fifteen years of clinical experience treating with natural medicine, as well as having formulated her own line of herbal supplements.

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