



Ref. #147

AN AMAZING AYURVEDIC ADAPTOGEN DUO

Terry's Bottom Line

Adaptogens are special. They can help reduce stress, boost immune defenses, and promote fast recovery from exercise, to just touch on a few of their benefits.

Two of the world's most effective adaptogens are andrographis and ashwagandha. Both have centuries of traditional use, and have more recently been the subject of intensive clinical study. As strong as each one is on its own, as a combination these adaptogens are incredibly valuable:

- Strengthen Immune & Respiratory Defenses
- Reduce Reactivity to Stress
- Promote Daily Energy
- Bolster Stamina & Endurance
- Speed Recovery from Exercise
- Sharpen Focus & Concentration

Ayurvedic medicine is one of the oldest healing systems in the world, practiced in India for over 5,000 years. Practitioners of Ayurveda incorporate diet, meditation, breathing, yoga, purification (detox), massage, and herbal extracts in their treatment plans to restore patients to a state of balance and good health.

Recommending botanical adaptogens – especially andrographis and ashwagandha – are very much a part of that practice. These plant medicines are also well researched, with clinical studies proving their value for a multitude of health concerns. I'd like to outline just a few of them to give you a better idea of the incredible attributes of these herbs.



Ashwagandha: “Strength of a Horse”

The name “ashwagandha” comes from a Sanskrit word used to describe the essence of a horse, referring to the scent of the plant’s roots after harvesting, but also to the feeling of strength and vitality that all those using the herb experienced as well.

Ashwagandha – also known by its official name, *Withania somnifera* – contains potent natural compounds, withanolides, a major source of the Ayurvedic adaptogen’s power.



ASHWAGANDHA

Strengthen Your Immune System

Andrographis strengthens your immune system and helps you recover quickly from upper respiratory illnesses, while **ashwagandha** has potent antiviral action.

In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study, andrographis relieved the intensity of key symptoms in just two days, including fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, and sleeplessness. By the fourth day, it significantly reduced all symptoms, which also included headache, earache, phlegm production, and the frequency and intensity of coughing spells.



ANDROGRAPHIS

Another clinical study of individuals with upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) showed similar results. By the third day, there was a dramatic improvement in coughs, headaches, sore throats, and disturbed sleep.

If you've ever had cold sores – and they tend to catch you during times of stress – you are familiar with herpes simplex virus 1 (HSV-1). Researchers found that one of the compounds in andrographis related to andrographolide inhibited the virus even after twelve hours following infection.

Other leading edge work has found that compounds from andrographis inhibit the immune weakening actions of HIV and boost antigen-fighting lymphocyte activity, helping rebuild an essential part of the immune system.

Ashwagandha, the other half of this adaptogen duo, has been shown to boost levels of specific T-cells that kill infected viral host cells and come to our defense when we're under attack by an illness.

For Colds, Flu, and Serious Virus Protection

Numerous studies and reviews have come to the same conclusion: andrographis is indispensable for fighting colds and flu. It reduces symptom severity across the board, including coughs, runny nose, sneezing, and aches and pains. It is highly recommended for anyone dealing with an upper respiratory tract infection, whatever the cause.

Other clinical research has found that andrographis helps relieve headache, nasal and throat symptoms, and contributes to an overall feeling of wellness by reducing the sense of sluggishness and irritation that comes from being ill.

Andrographis has such a strong antibacterial effect that researchers are considering it to be one of the most promising botanicals in the world for developing new treatments that will be safe for children and older people alike.

And as far as flu viruses are concerned, there is strong evidence that ashwagandha can stop them from invading host cells and replicating. Far beyond our common seasonal flu, ashwagandha could become a treatment for H1N1, and leading research is investigating the herb's ability to block even more serious viruses, like Covid-19, as well.

ANDROGRAPHOLIDE: THE POWER BEHIND ANDROGRAPHIS

As the use of traditional medicines grows, we discover more and more about the mechanics of how herbs work. Generally speaking, the aerial parts – primarily leaves – of andrographis are used the most in Ayurvedic practice.

It turns out that the leaves are excellent sources of a variety of compounds, including one of the most valuable and best researched: andrographolide.

Andrographolide is a type of compound called a labdane diterpene, and is partly responsible for the bitter taste in andrographis leaves and stems that has made it known as the "king of bitters".

While this one compound on its own isn't responsible for every benefit of andrographis – it contains a spectrum of valuable components – it certainly is the power behind many of them.

Andrographolide has been shown to be anti-inflammatory for people with rheumatoid arthritis, antitumor against a variety of cancers, antiviral against herpes simplex virus 1, and antibacterial against drug resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. Andrographolide is so well-regarded, in fact, that pharmaceutical companies are even experimenting with synthetic versions of it.

With this in mind, my advice is to make sure that the andrographis is standardized for andrographolide, so you get a concentrated level of this incredibly powerful compound.

Reduce Your Reactivity To Stress

As a botanical for reducing your reactivity to daily stress, ashwagandha is one of the best. A double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical study found ashwagandha significantly reduced serious stress in men and women, according to a common anxiety measurement scale.

MORE THAN A STRESS RELIEVER

Stress causes a lot of problems. Ashwagandha has been shown in clinical work to address them very effectively, reducing and relieving:

- Somatic symptoms like tight muscles and increased heart rate
- Feelings of social anxiety
- Stress-related insomnia
- Severe depression symptoms



Other clinical work found ashwagandha reduced symptoms in individuals with generalized anxiety disorder. The study researchers noted it was a safe and effective botanical with potential to be used with conventional medications, too.



The Researchers Noted It Reduced Stress In Four Different Ways:

- 01 THROUGH THE HPA AXIS:**

Ashwagandha may regulate how much cortisol and DHEA we generate in response to stressors. People taking ashwagandha have lower levels of these compounds in the morning, which suggests that it may be working to lower stress levels, and by extension, how much of these natural chemicals the body produces.
- 02 BY STOPPING OXIDATIVE DAMAGE:**

Ashwagandha is a powerful antioxidant. The damage that free-radicals inflict on the body and mind can't be overstated. This herb puts a stop to that cycle.
- 03 BY REDUCING INFLAMMATION:**

Ashwagandha is also a powerful anti-inflammatory. Inflammation and oxidation are two major factors in stress and depression.
- 04 BY WORKING DIRECTLY WITH BRAIN CHEMISTRY:**

Ashwagandha influences GABA and serotonin activity.

Feel More Daily Energy – Thyroid Support

Feeling energetic in body and mind is the key to vitality. As adaptogens, both andrographis and ashwagandha help you reach a state of balance – not jittery, not tired – but alert and able to tackle whatever the day brings.

Ashwagandha works wonders for energy by reversing cases of subclinical thyroid that manifest as feeling dragged down and lethargic. Considering its history as a rasayana – a rejuvenator – in Ayurvedic practice, it isn't surprising that a clinical study found it restored thyroid activity, and boosted levels of triiodothyronine (T3), thyroxine (T4), and normalized thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) levels in just 8 weeks.

Bolster Your Stamina & Endurance

Keeping fit means being able to get the most from your workouts. An ashwagandha study focused on the performance of 40 elite cyclists, divided evenly between men and women. The 8-week study was broken into placebo and treatment groups. At the beginning of the clinical trial, these elite athletes were examined via treadmill test for their maximal aerobic capacity (the rate of oxygen uptake by the body that fuels red blood cells), and the respiratory exchange ratio (how much oxygen is inhaled versus how much carbon dioxide is exhaled). The researchers also measured the total time until the athletes reached a point of exhaustion.

In every parameter, the ashwagandha group improved. The botanical boosted their endurance, increased the lungs' ability to bring in oxygen to fuel red blood cells, and the heart's ability to pump those red blood cells to the muscles in the body. The placebo group showed no change at all.

Another clinical trial of 50 male and female athletes found similar results for cardiovascular performance and saw significant increases in self-assessed quality-of-life scores that measure physical, psychological, social relationships, and overall life satisfaction.

Recover Faster & Better from Exercise

Whether you have your own training program, participate in sports, or have a physically demanding job, andrographis and ashwagandha can help you tone and strengthen your muscles, improve your body mass, and shorten your recovery time.

Andrographis, for example, fights inflammation along a number of pathways, including those that cause joint damage and pain. Scientific research has shown that andrographis protects the components of joint-cushioning cartilage, including hyaluronic acid and collagen.

Plus, the key compound from andrographis, andrographolide, also reduces cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2) enzyme activity, directly relieving pain and inflammation – but without damaging the stomach or liver like prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

And other clinical work shows that ashwagandha improved strength training and recovery times over the course of a 12-week weight training and supplementation regimen. That's why having both in your corner is excellent for bouncing back from physical stresses.

Protect Your Mind, Sharpen Your Focus & Concentration

Adaptogens, by their nature, are known for their ability to not just reduce stress and help us feel more energized, but also to help us feel more mentally focused, even as we age.

Scientific studies have found that ashwagandha protects brain cells from injury, preserves coordination and the brain's processing ability – even when sleep deprived – and increases levels of glutathione, an important natural antioxidant.

Clinical research shows that ashwagandha may also slow the decline of memory and mental functions as people get older. In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study, adults in the ashwagandha group showed enhanced memory, better focus, and improved mental speed after just eight weeks.

Ashwagandha can also improve working memory and reaction time, including in individuals who are struggling with bipolar disorder, which can take a toll on the ability to focus and concentrate.

Andrographis has the potential to address serious cognitive issues, like the mental foggiess – often called "chemobrain" – that occurs with cancer treatment. It protects neural cells that would otherwise be damaged by cancer fighting drugs like 5-

fluorouracil, epirubicin, and cyclophosphamide.

Both herbs were tested in combination to alleviate stress and help foster better focus and concentration. For the participants in this clinical study – all older individuals with some mild cognitive impairment – the herbal combination worked well. Brain scans showed increased wave activity, focus and attention improved, and sleep patterns were more stable.

An Unbeatable Adaptogen Duo

Andrographis and ashwagandha are two of the world's most important herbs. Each one functions as an incredibly effective adaptogen, helping us remain focused, physically and mentally energized, and able to live life to its fullest. But the combination of the two is unbeatable. That's why I think that incorporating the two into your regimen is one of the best steps to a path of overall health for a lifetime.

For immune and stress support, I recommend taking an andrographis (*Andrographis paniculata*) leaf extract standardized to \geq 20% total andrographolides and an ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) leaf and root extract standardized to \geq 35% total withanolides.