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Are You Tired and Wired?

Written by Marcelle Pick

Published by Hay House

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ARE YOU TIRED AND WIRED?

*Your Proven 30-Day Programme
for Overcoming ADRENAL FATIGUE
and Feeling Fantastic Again*

REGAIN YOUR ENERGY AND YOUR LIFE

MARCELLE PICK



HAY HOUSE

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*I'm dedicating this book to my children,
who have been the ones to teach me the
importance of balance and who have called me
to task when I was out of balance. Without
their support and inspiration, this book
would never have been written.*

*I also dedicate this book to my patients,
in the hopes that every woman will have a
life that works for her, because we're all
always trying to do so much, so well.*

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INTRODUCTION:

A New Diagnosis

- Do you feel exhausted, overwhelmed, and stressed all the time?
- Do you need five cups of coffee or a constant infusion of soda just to make it through the day?
- Do you have trouble waking up, falling asleep, or staying asleep, no matter which herbal supplements you try?
- Do you find yourself feeling constantly irritable or on edge?
- Do you feel that you need to exercise to stay in shape even though you're exhausted when you do?
- Do you feel as though everything you eat turns to fat?
- Are you always hungry, frequently craving sweets, or tempted by "carbo-binges"?
- Are you plagued by irregular or painful periods or PMS?
- Are you struggling with perimenopause or menopause: lowered sex drive, vaginal dryness, mood swings, and hot flashes?
- Do you find yourself feeling forgetful, "foggy," or unable to concentrate?
- Do you find that you do better when you're always on the go?
- Do you find that you actually enjoy adrenaline rushes and feel a little bored without a crisis to handle?
- Are you struggling with anxiety, depression, or despair?

Sound familiar? If I've painted a picture you recognize—in yourself, in your family, among your friends and colleagues—you've just gotten a good look at *adrenal dysfunction*, a distressingly common problem in which overworked adrenal glands combined with lifelong emotional patterns add up to a painful set of physical, mental, and emotional symptoms. In the early stages of adrenal dysfunction, you might feel “tired and wired”: keyed up, anxious, fatigued, and depressed. In the later stages, you might simply feel exhausted. Either way, you know something's wrong—even if your health-care provider has assured you that you're fine or hasn't included adrenal dysfunction in his or her diagnosis.

You may not think much about your adrenals, but they are crucial to your health, mood, and well-being. These little triangular-shaped glands sit on top of the kidneys, responsible for giving us those extra surges of vitality that we need to cope with unusual challenges, new demands, and heightened levels of stress. That vitality is commonly known as the fight-or-flight reaction. When a major challenge threatens, our adrenal glands kick up the stress hormones, enabling us to cope with whatever challenge or emergency befalls. Then, when the crisis is over, the stress hormones subside and we relax once more.

But our adrenals don't just operate during emergencies; they're on duty all day long. Under ordinary circumstances, our adrenals are designed to give us relatively small blasts of strength, from the little burst of energy that wakes us up in the morning to the stimulating hormones that keep us awake, alert, and focused throughout the day. Ideally, as evening comes, our adrenal production is supposed to steadily decline, allowing us to relax into a restful sleep.

That's how our adrenals were meant to work. But when we're chronically under stress, our adrenals are forced to behave very differently. Instead of just enough stress hormones to keep us alert and awake, with occasional extras for a fight-or-flight emergency, our adrenals are being asked to provide stress hormones for a continual barrage of challenges as they help us cope with the latest crisis from the kids or meeting that new deadline at work—and then drag ourselves out of bed a few hours later to start all over again.

Our stress may come from life events: challenges at home or at work. Or perhaps our stress comes from environmental toxins that place an undue burden on our bodies; or from noisy, unpleasant surroundings; or from chronic infection, asthma, allergies, or pain. We may be acting out the effects of *historical stress*: reactions to present-day events that are made more difficult or intense because of our past experiences, especially those involving our parents. Maybe we're facing a difficult combination of life events, health



problems, *and* environmental stressors. However it happens, too many of us are living in a condition of near-constant stress, with no true downtime for our bodies, minds, and spirits. Adrenal dysfunction is the result.

Unfortunately, your health-care practitioner is likely to ignore or dismiss adrenals as the source of your problem unless you are suffering from either Addison's disease, in which your adrenals severely underproduce, or Cushing's syndrome, in which they severely overproduce. These two conditions are well understood by conventional medicine—thank heavens! But if your adrenal imbalance is less extreme—as is true for hundreds of thousands of U.S. women—your practitioner is unlikely to recognize your condition. That's because, despite the enormous body of science relating adrenal problems to a wide variety of symptoms, adrenal dysfunction is not a commonly accepted diagnosis.

The good news is that once you *have* identified adrenal dysfunction as your condition, you can address all your symptoms and heal the underlying problem that is causing them. You can change your diet, adjust your lifestyle, and reprogram the emotional patterns that are stressing you out—and you can do it in 30 days. Within a month, you'll see a significant difference. Within two months, you'll find that many of your symptoms have disappeared. And within three months or more, you'll have made a great beginning toward restoring your adrenal balance, restarting your metabolism, and regaining your natural energy.

That's what happened with my patient Tanya. An attractive woman in her late 30s with a sweet, friendly smile, Tanya seemed energized and “up” as she introduced herself to me and thanked me for seeing her. But as soon as she had made that initial effort, I could tell that she was completely exhausted.

“I don't know what's wrong with me,” she confessed. “I just don't feel at all like myself. I used to be able to finish a day at work and then go out to a movie or a club. But now I'm so wiped out I can barely drag myself home. I fall into bed exhausted—but then I wake up in the middle of the night and can't get back to sleep. My periods are really irregular and I'm having lots of cramps, which is just not me. And even though I'm really, *really* good about sticking to my diet, somehow I've put on ten pounds in the last three months, and no matter what I do, I just can't seem to shake it.”

Tanya looked at me, her large hazel eyes suddenly brimming with tears. “I've been to two different doctors,” she continued. “One said there's nothing really wrong with me and I should just decrease my stress, get some more sleep on the weekends, and maybe do some yoga. But I've tried all that, and it doesn't make any difference. He wanted to put me on antidepressants—but is that really what I need? The other guy said

I should cut back on high-fat foods and be more disciplined about exercising, but I'm down to 1,200 calories a day as it is, and sometimes I'm just too tired to exercise, I really am. I'm at the end of my rope."

I looked at Tanya, still trying valiantly to control her tears, and I thought about the thousands of other patients who had sat in that chair, telling me similar stories. Once it was LeAnn, a 35-year-old marketing executive and mother of two, who had mysteriously gained 20 pounds over the past year and whose once-abundant black hair had started to thin. Another time it was Emily, a 52-year-old professor of art history with a high school-age son and a daughter in college, who had become so exhausted that she needed a morning nap and an afternoon nap just to make it through the day. Then there was Christa, the perky 28-year-old film editor who had come to me because of her out-of-control PMS symptoms and the constant infusion of soy lattes and diet sodas that she needed to get her through the day.

On the surface, these women seemed very different. But all of them were suffering from adrenal dysfunction—and no wonder. They had each been driving themselves to the point where their bodies just couldn't take it anymore. Their adrenal systems had been asked to respond once too often to a last-minute deadline; a weekly round of chauffeuring the kids; or nonstop months of work, social, and personal obligations; and they didn't understand how important it was to take some downtime every day. Now either their adrenals were flooding their systems with excessive levels of stress hormones, causing them to feel both tired and wired, or else their adrenal reserves were dwindling, creating a virtually constant state of exhaustion.

I tested Tanya, as I test all of my patients, to rule out other potential causes for her condition, such as Addison's disease and Cushing's syndrome. I also gave her the tests that I and other functional-medicine practitioners use to determine more subtle forms of adrenal dysfunction. (Functional medicine is a science-based approach to healing that adopts an individualized approach to each patient, with a focus on prevention and on addressing a condition's underlying causes.) For Tanya, LeAnn, Emily, and Christa, their test results and their symptoms were all saying the same thing: their adrenals were seriously out of balance.

How Your Biography Becomes Your Biology

I've borrowed this phrase from healer and best-selling author Caroline Myss because I think it sums up so beautifully the other key factor behind adrenal dysfunction. No matter how disciplined we are about cleaning up our diet, taking our nutritional



supplements, and getting regular exercise, if we don't attend to the emotional piece of the puzzle, our adrenal symptoms won't go away.

Here are some of the questions I ask my patients as we work through their biography-biology connection:

- Do you worry about not being good enough, not doing enough, never really finishing anything, not accomplishing all you set out to do, not working at the level you expect from yourself?
- Do you push yourself constantly, no matter what?
- Do you find yourself frequently worried about what people think about you and spend a lot of emotional energy on getting them to see you in a good light?
- Do you spend more time thinking about other people's needs than your own?
- Do you find yourself saying at the end of each day that you forgot to exercise because you were so busy taking care of everybody else?
- Do you frequently work that extra hour (or four!) to get everything "just right" and then arrive home exhausted because every day gets longer?
- Do you often berate yourself about what you have done and how you have done it, especially if you made mistakes?
- Do you feel you must do everything perfectly?
- Do you believe you must keep all your emotions buried deep inside?
- Do you believe that you can never be vulnerable and show your true frailty?
- Do you tell yourself on a regular basis how fat or stupid you are?
- Do you find yourself experiencing the same frustrating or disappointing situations over and over again?

You've just gotten a look at the emotional component of being tired and wired, the compulsion that so many of us feel to meet other people's needs, expectations, or demands at our own expense. This emotional component doesn't just remain "in

your mind” or “in your feelings.” Feeling stressed triggers an actual physical response, a complex cascade of hormones and neurotransmitters whose side effects include weight gain, blood-sugar dysregulation, menstrual problems, thyroid abnormalities, digestive problems, hormone imbalances, immune and autoimmune conditions, cardiovascular issues, and exhaustion. Those hormones also affect your brain, creating memory problems, the inability to concentrate, irritability, anxiety, and depression.

Why do we feel stressed in the first place? We might be responding to a real-life situation, our boss yelling at us, for example, or our partner showing up three hours late for dinner. But we might also be responding to *historical stress*: the emotional echoes from our past. Whenever our boss speaks sharply to us, it might trigger the childhood panic we felt whenever our father began to yell. If our partner shows up late for a meal, it might evoke our childhood sorrow that our mother was often absent. Our adrenals are working overtime not only because of present stress (our boss’s tone and our partner’s lateness may not be such a big deal), but also because of stress from the past (our father’s anger and our mother’s absence were very painful and upsetting). Driven by our biographies as well as by our current circumstances, our bodies go into stress mode far more often—and more intensely—than they need to. Adrenal dysfunction is the result.

Adrenal Dysfunction: Diagnosis of the Future?

In my opinion, adrenal dysfunction will be a completely accepted diagnosis within about 25 years or so, and it will then be “standard of care” for physicians and practitioners of all types to properly test for it and treat it. The science to support this notion—in such prestigious publications as *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *Psychoneuroimmunology*, and *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*—has been well documented. But as we’ve seen with many other conditions, standard medical practice often takes time to catch up with cutting-edge research. (If you’re interested in knowing more about the scientific work on which I relied to write this book, check out the Further Reading references in the endnotes of this book or take a look at the bibliographic section of my website, www.MarcellePick.com.)

Intellectually, I understand how busy practitioners are and how overwhelmed they can become at the prospect of keeping up with the plethora of new scientific studies that seem to get more numerous every year. But emotionally, I find it frustrating that so many of my colleagues still argue with me—not over how to treat adrenal dysfunction, but over whether the condition even exists. Those of us who work in functional medicine know of tests that can capture adrenal dysfunction and of treatments that



can heal it. There's simply no good reason for this condition not to be recognized and treated.

Studies have shown, though, that it takes standard medical practice at least 50 years to catch up with research—and we've had the data on adrenal dysfunction for just about 25 years. Here's hoping that 25 years from now, this book will be completely irrelevant—because you've learned everything in these pages from your own medical practitioner!

Take Action to Feel Better

This book is your resource. I'll help you identify some of the emotional stressors that have been contributing to lifelong patterns of behavior—patterns that continue to create tremendous emotional and physical stress. I'll also identify an adrenal-friendly program of diet, nutritional supplements, and lifestyle changes individually tailored to your adrenal type. And I'll help you reprogram both your emotions and your body so that you can stop being tired and wired and start feeling like yourself again. To me, this is truly empowering, because knowing our biography often means that we can change our biology.

As you read this book, look to Part I for a complete explanation of what's going on with your body—and for all the emotional components that so frequently accompany this debilitating condition. Then turn to Part II for a step-by-step guide to feeling terrific sooner than you'd think possible—and how to create a life that will continue to support your health.

I've seen thousands of patients get better with this approach, and you can, too. So let's get started. All the help you need is right here.