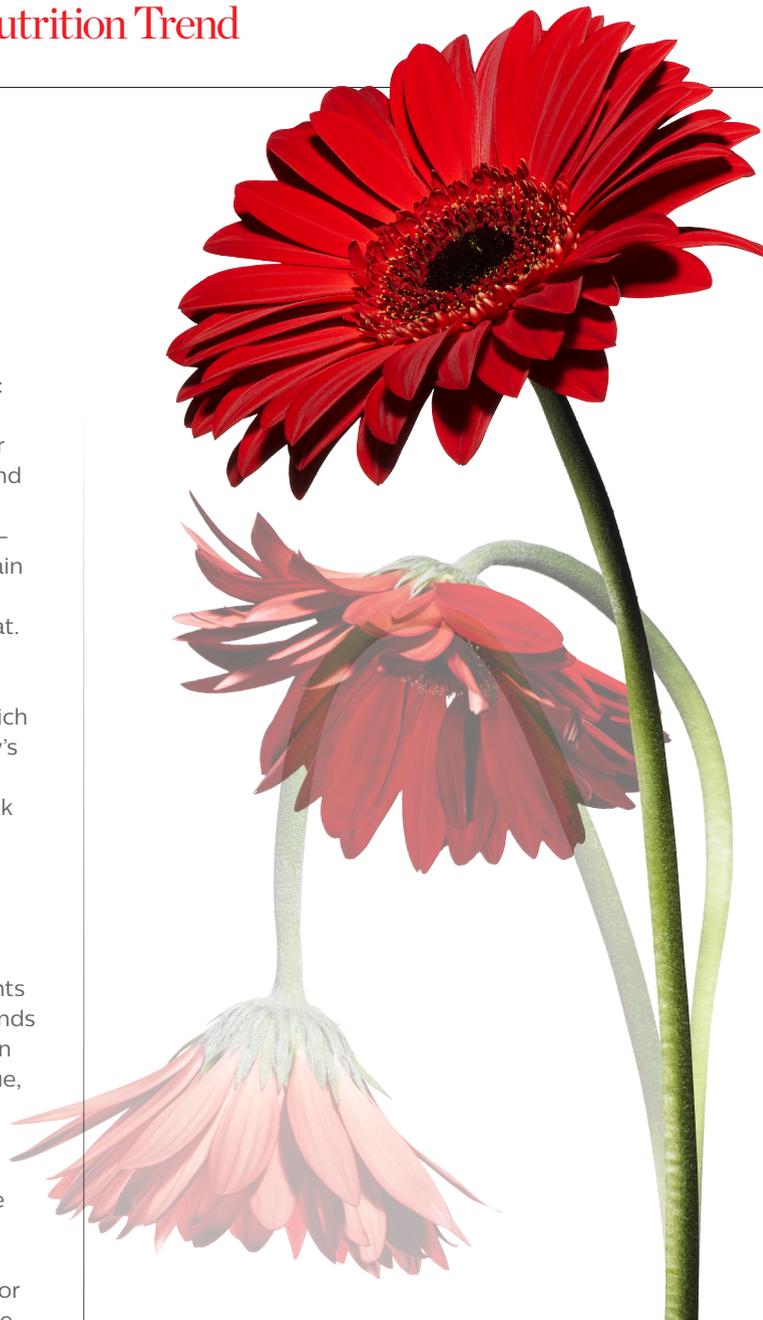


**I**t sounds like magic: Natural substances figure out what your body needs most and then presto, deliver it. But adaptogens—compounds in certain plants—have been shown to do just that. “More specifically, they regulate your adrenal system, which manages your body’s hormonal response to stress,” says Frank Lipman, M.D., the founder of Eleven Eleven Wellness Center in New York City. Incorporating foods or supplements with these compounds into your routine can help you fight fatigue, improve your focus, and reduce anxiety, adds Christopher D’Adamo, Ph.D., the director of research at the University of Maryland’s Center for Integrative Medicine. And if you’re looking to loosen up, they can be calming, but when you require an extra push, they can be energizing.

So for health’s sake, why haven’t you heard of these botanical superheroes?! While herbalists have used adaptogens for thousands of years, research is just now proving their potency. To try them for yourself, look for these four science-backed stars.



## Super natural

Mysterious and mighty plant compounds will give you energy, help you find Zen, and even fast-track your slim-down. Astounding, but true. Experience the power.

By SARA ANGLE

### Cordyceps

A type of mushroom, cordyceps is a favorite with athletes. It can help you use oxygen more efficiently, which means that your muscles are able to work harder for longer. When people consumed four grams of a cordyceps blend every day for three weeks, it helped them increase the duration of their exercise session and improved their peak power—a combination of strength and speed—according to a recent study in the *Journal of Dietary Supplements*. **FIND IT IN** health powders, coffees, and supplements.

### Ashwagandha

Taking 300 milligrams of this super-root twice a day for two months significantly lowered levels of the stress hormone cortisol, a study in the *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine* found. Research shows it helps people shed pounds, which is likely because elevated levels of cortisol have been linked to belly fat. **FIND IT IN** health powders, juices, supplements, and smoothies. →

## Rhodiola

This compound can help you stay strong. When marathoners took 300 milligrams of rhodiola twice daily before race day, it helped their bodies mount a defense against viruses, new research in *Frontiers in Nutrition* revealed. (That's important for endurance athletes, who are more susceptible to getting sick.) And thanks to its anti-inflammatory effects, it can help you recover faster after a tough workout, says study author Maryam Ahmed, Ph.D.

**FIND IT IN** health powders and supplements.

For the full benefits, take an adaptogen daily and switch types every one to three months. This way your body won't get used to any one, which can reduce their effectiveness, Christopher D'Adamo says.



## Schisandra

This berry is a powerhouse—research shows that it can do everything from increase exercise endurance to improve concentration.

Women with chronic stress performed better and faster on mental tests when they took a combo that included schisandra and rhodiola than those who didn't consume it, a study in the journal *Phytomedicine* found. That could translate to acing your next big project at work, says lead researcher Alexander Panossian, Ph.D.

**FIND IT IN** health powders and supplements. ★

## How to get your fix

*You can buy adaptogen supplements or try one of these new teas, juices, or coffees sold online or in natural food markets.*

**Sun Potion powders**  
Contain ashwagandha, rhodiola, cordyceps



**Four Sigmatic**  
coffee, elixir,  
and hot cacao  
Contain  
cordyceps

**Moon Juice dusts and powders**  
Contain schisandra, ashwagandha, cordyceps, rhodiola



**RebbL**  
blended drinks  
Contain  
ashwagandha