



All About Nootropics For Back To School

Message from Milly

Greetings to all,

School is back in session here in Georgia, and I hope everyone is finding some rhythm and enrichment in this new year.

In the spirit of back-to-school, I want to concentrate on nootropics, a category of herbs for cognitive support, brain health, and focus.

After decades of helping adults and children nurture their cognitive function and development, I've developed a deep love and respect for these plants, which I believe can benefit almost anyone.

Here, I'll share three of my favorites, including a look at the research behind their benefits and how to use them to support yourself or your kiddos, along with some additional cognitive health tips.

Blessings to all,

-Milly



What Are Nootropics?

Nootropics are a category of herbs and other substances, like Adderall and caffeine, used to promote



cognitive function, including focus, attention, stress response, sleep, emotional well-being, and overall brain health.

Nootropic supplements are typically blends of specific herbs and/or nutrients with historical use and/or research backing their brain, mood, and attention-supportive properties.

Examples of popular nootropics include:

- Bacopa
- Lemon balm
- Lion's Mane Mushroom
- Kanna
- Omega-3 fatty acids
- L-theanine
- Ginkgo biloba
- Panax Ginseng
- Saffron
- Tulsi (Holy Basil)

Since herbs are considered foods, nootropics are generally very safe for adults, teens, and older children (such as those in middle childhood).

However, dosage should be adjusted for age and weight, so be sure to speak with me or your healthcare practitioner before giving these to children.

I especially love recommending nootropics for clients who have trouble focusing, experience occasional memory lapses (hello senior moments!), have trouble sleeping, experience occasional anxiousness, may have learning difficulties, or are in need of a general brain boost.

Like all herbs, their effects may be immediate or more obvious over time.

As always, I recommend buying the highest quality organic herbal supplements possible, preferably from a professional remedy line like those we carry here.

The main reason is that we have vetted these companies to ensure they follow cGMP (current good manufacturing practices) as dictated by the FDA and, therefore, test their raw materials and end-products for contaminants, identity, and potency.

This is especially important for children as their bodies are more susceptible to the effects of possible contaminants in supplements, like heavy metals or mold.

Next, I'll share three of my favorite herbal nootropics.

3 Of My Favorite Nootropics + How to Take Them

With so many incredible nootropics, it was hard to choose just three!

However, the following are my top picks for adults, teens, and older children because:

- They're excellent for attention and focus
- They're fantastic for supporting cognitive function and protecting the brain
- They are well-studied and have a long history of traditional use
- They offer multiple health benefits beyond cognition



1: Lemon Balm

This may be one of the world's most underestimated herbs for cognitive function, stress, immunity, and more.

Its use as a nootropic, mild sedative, and digestive aid dates back to the ancient Romans and Greeks.

In modern times, it's been studied for its effects on stress response, mood, focus, attention, sleep, immune function

(excellent for herpetetic patterns), anxiety, and various aspects of cognitive function.[1]

It also tastes yummy, is easy to grow, and children generally like it.

Lemon Balm can be found as a tincture, supplement, in Nootropic formulas, or as a tea.

Its grassy, lemony flavor pairs nicely with green tea or other floral herbs, such as chamomile, Tulsi, lavender, fennel, or thyme.

2: Lion's Mane

The power of medicinal mushrooms, also known as functional mushrooms, should not be underestimated.

Lion's Mane is one of my favorites for older adults, as studies have shown it supports various aspects of cognitive function, protection, and repair including nerve growth factor (the growth of brain cells),[2] memory and hippocampus function,[3] overall cognitive function,[4] cell protection via its antioxidant properties,[5] and nerve repair following injury.[6]

Animal studies have also shown Lion's Mane can help with blood sugar balance.[5]

This is significant given the new evidence surrounding the effects of blood sugar on brain function.

Lion's Mane also has immune, digestive, and cardiovascular support properties, making it an all-around awesome mushroom for older adults or anyone in need of brain support.[5]

Most people take Lion's Mane as a capsule, but if you're lucky, you can also find it for sale at your local grocers.

It has a lobster-like flavor that's delicious sauteed with some grass-fed butter and garlic.

3: Bacopa

I was torn between featuring Bacopa or Ginkgo, both of which are amazing nootropics.

I decided on Bacopa for this newsletter because it's lesser known, although very well studied.

This ancient herb is known in Ayurveda (the traditional medicine of India) as a "Medhya Rasayana," a type of herb that benefits the mind.

Studies have confirmed Bacopa has multiple brain benefits, including promoting concentration, memory, brain cell and neuron health, mood, and overall cognitive function.[7][8]

And Bacopa's benefits aren't just for adults.

A 2016 review found Bacopa supported memory and attention in children and adolescents.[9]

It's also an adaptogen, a type of herb or substance that helps the body remain resilient in the face of stress.

Learn more about adaptogens in our previous newsletter: [How To Use Adaptogens For Sleep, Stress, Hormones, and More.](#)

Bacopa is widely available as a tincture or capsule.

Again, please check with me or your integrative healthcare practitioner about appropriate doses and herbs for children, especially if they are taking medications or have pre-existing health issues.

Herbs like these have a solid safety record with older children and teens, especially when taken as a tea, but it's always best to double-check.

Generally, with tinctures, just 5-15 drops is sufficient.

Need supplements, to schedule an appointment or other support? Email Holly at: info@quintessentialhealth.net.

References:

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Other Ways To Promote Cognitive Function and Focus

Nootropics are incredible tools for protecting the brain and supporting memory, learning, and other aspects of cognitive function.

However, supplements are never meant to be a substitute for a healthy lifestyle, which is critical in protecting and promoting brain health in people young and old.

Some of the best ways to nurture your brain include:

- **Get enough sleep.** Research has shown present and future brain function is directly connected to our sleep patterns. [1] A lack of sleep can also cause dysregulation in blood sugar. So take sleep seriously and aim for 7.5-9 hours a night for adults and up to 12 hours a night (or more) for children and teens.
 - Gain helpful sleep tips and insights in: [Solutions for Better Sleep \(beyond sleep hygiene\)](#)
- **Be mindful of heavy metals.** We are inundated with heavy metals in this world. They're in the water, fish, foods (many pesticides are heavy-metal

based), packaging, makeup, certain medicines, building materials, and so much more. And they're neurotoxic,[2] meaning they are poison to the brain, *especially to the developing brain*.^[3] The good news is that there are things we can do to detoxify our bodies, in addition to preventing exposure as much as possible.

- Learn more in our 2020 newsletter: [How To Protect Yourself From Heavy Metals](#)
- **Spend much less time on your phones and other devices.** This isn't a popular piece of advice, but the research is crystal clear: screens, social media, and other digital activities are rewiring our children's brains (and our own) for the worse.^[4]
 - I highly recommend reading "[The Anxious Generation: How The Great Rewiring Of Childhood Is Causing An Epidemic of Mental Illness](#)" for a lot more on this serious issue.
 - You can also check out [TechWellness](#) for loads of helpful solutions for practicing safer tech.
- **Spend time outdoors.** Studies have shown spending time in greenspace can increase attention, focus, memory, and learning capacity as well as reduce stress, improve sleep, boost mood, and potentially help prevent cognitive dysfunction.^[5]^[6]
- **Eat a healthy, whole-food diet that's low in sugar and inflammatory fats.** Excess sugar consumption in adults (including pregnant mothers) is now associated with cognitive decline.^[7]^[8] Inflammatory fats, particularly refined seed oils, should also be avoided, given

the inflammation-cognition connection. Instead, fill your plate with brain-friendly foods like colorful antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables, gluten-free grains, healthy fats (olive oil, avocado oil, rice bran oil, coconut oil, organic pastured butter, ghee, nuts and seeds, walnut oil), fiber-rich beans and pulses, low-mercury fish (sardines, mackerel, anchovies, wild-caught salmon, and herring) and organic proteins.

- **Watch your blood sugar.** High blood sugar is now believed to contribute to cognitive decline and Alzheimer's, with many experts labeling dementia "type 3 diabetes".[9] Getting enough sleep, exercising, limiting refined sugar, and eating some protein at each meal are excellent ways to keep things in check.
- **Exercise.** Movement is incredible for the brain. It increases circulation, encourages sweating which detoxes all kinds of poisons, lifts the mood, and helps support overall brain function. Try to get 30 minutes of movement a day, and factor in some strength training by lifting weights or doing Yoga or body weight exercises.
- **Mind your B12 levels.** B12 deficiency or insufficiency can mimic symptoms of mild or severe cognitive decline. And it's not just a problem for vegetarians or vegans anymore.
 - Learn all about it in: [What's The Deal With B12 Deficiency?](#)

Want more helpful health tips, fascinating research, and wisdom from Milly?

You can download past issues of dozens of newsletters like this on our website at:

quintessentialhealth.net/newsletters.

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Need supplements, to schedule an appointment, or other support? [Email Holly at: info@quintessentialhealth.net](mailto:info@quintessentialhealth.net).

Quintessential Health Care | 5904 Grizzard Ct. | Peachtree Corners, GA 30092 US

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