

yoga

JOURNAL

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get smart

Intense focus may come easily on the yoga mat—but what about on the job?

Jay Lombard, chief of neurology at Bronx Lebanon Hospital and author of *The Brain Wellness Plan: Breakthrough Medical, Nutritional, and Immune-Boosting Therapies*, says mental focus (and a good memory) requires healthy neurotransmitters and a calm emotional state.

Here are some herbs that may help keep you at your mental peak:

GOTU KOLA Known as *brahmi* in Ayurvedic medicine, gotu kola regulates dopamine in the brain, boosting pleasurable feelings and improving focus and memory. Drink two cups of tea daily (one tablespoon of gotu kola in each), recommends Robin DiPasquale, chair of botanical medicine at Bastyr University in Seattle.

CHINESE CLUB MOSS The National Institutes of Health are funding a study on how this herb's active ingredient, huperzine, may affect the brain by protecting neurotransmitters. Lombard warns, however, that Chinese club moss is potent. Take no more than 100 micrograms a day.

ROSEMARY (pictured)

This herb belongs to a category of botanicals called adaptogens, which help your brain adapt to stress and function better. Mark Hyman, integrative medicine physician and author of *Ultraprevention* and *Ultra-metabolism*, says that smelling the essential oils of adaptogens regulates the stress hormone cortisol, helping you stay alert but free of anxiety. DiPasquale says that sniffing rosemary oil can be particularly helpful when prepping for a presentation. It will calm your nerves and trigger memory, just when you need it most.

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