

can drink by itself, combine with other foods to make soups, or use for cooking grains. For weakness, use once a day. For health maintenance, use once a week.

**GANODERMA**  
*lucidum*

Origin: Found in many parts of the world. The most famous of medicinal mushrooms, it elevated mood, strengthens the heart, protects the liver, improves the body's use of oxygen, and enhances muscle strength, efficiency, and endurance.

**In China, the Cordyceps tonic is given to people of all ages, genders, and states of health. It is often cooked in soups or stews or prepared with such meats as duck or chicken.**

Preparation: Ganoderma can be taken daily as an immune tonic. But because of its strong taste, it is frequently taken in powder, pills, or in a variety of liquid extracts that include water and alcohol.

**SCHIZANDRA**  
*chinensis*

Origin: Japan, Korea, and Northern China. A berry that is used to prevent and treat hepatitis, and to protect and help people recover from chemical poisoning. It seems to increase mental acuity and improve pulmonary capacity, memory, alertness, and muscular reflexes.

Preparation: Schizandra can be taken daily. It is not generally used with food because of its resinous, sour taste, but is combined with other herbs and made into a tea, or powdered and taken in capsules, tablets, or liquid or solid extracts.

**TIEN QI GINSENG**  
*panax pseudo-ginseng*

Origin: Some of the best variety are found in the southwestern part of China. A root that increases cardiovascular circulation, prevents hemorrhage, reduces elevated blood pressure and

cholesterol, and counters inflammation in the stomach and intestines. This herb

**Each of the Chinese tonic herbs has yin and yang properties, which are thought to influence certain organs and functions in the body.**

**Yin tonics replenish the body's resources-blood and essence; yang tonics build the body's capacity to use its resources and convert them into energy-qi and warmth.**

is also effective for treating liver disease and improving liver function. It is especially good for treatment of stomach ulcers, and for people who feel anemic, who bruise easily, or whose cuts don't heal well.

Preparation: Much like ginseng, though with a more bitter flavor, pseudo-ginseng is traditionally cooked with food, in stuffing, for instance. In China, it is also taken in powdered form, in one or two teaspoons daily with hot water. •  
-Harriet Beinfield and Efreem Komgold

"anti-disease" model. Cordyceps, for example, can be used medicinally, but is just as often offered as a tonic to help people who are not ill but want to feel their best. "Tonics are geared toward supporting the whole body, whereas medicinal herbs are used specifically to deal with certain types of symptoms," says Peterson. But the line between the two uses often blurs, says Subhuti Dharmananda, director of the Institute for Traditional Medicine in Portland, Oregon. Tonic herbs that include ginseng and astragalus are also used to

**The Chinese athletes' dramatic performances have inspired new inquiries into traditional Chinese medicine, revealing a growing body of evidence that Chinese herbs may benefit both professional and casual athletes. The success of Kory Tarpenning is part of that testimony.**

treat diseases such as AIDS and cancer. Others are effective in treating the effects of menopause. In the 1950's some tonic herbs were used to mitigate the harmful effects of radiation and chemotherapy. The Chinese call this Fu Zheng Gu Ben Therapy, meaning therapy that "fortifies the constitution and strengthens the root" This approach enables the body to generate the energy essential for ongoing health while increasing the body's capacity for storing reserves of its essential resources-to be used in periods of stress, such as sickness, hard work, difficult transitions, or, of course, strenuous athletic performance.

There are three stages in athletic training: preparation (nourishing yin), action (activating yang), and recovery (replenishing both yin and yang). In general, the herbs used to enhance athletic performance also benefit people who are under mental or physical stress brought on by circumstances other than athletics, though for these people a

lesser dose is usually required.

Peterson, who has treated many world-class runners, including champion marathoner Alberto Salazar, believes that Chinese herbs offer a great deal to both serious and casual athletes. For example, Chinese Ginseng (panax ginseng)-probably the most widely used herb in athletic formulations-is considered to be an overall body tonic that boosts energy and general vitality. A study at Upsala University in Sweden indicated that people taking ginseng showed improved motor function and concentration. At the Institute of Biologically Active Substances, a research institute in Vladivostok, Russia, it was shown that runners given ginseng significantly improved their speed.

Such findings have implications for the rest of us, emphasized Harriet Beinfield. "What's common between high-performance athletes and the rest of us is that we all consume energy and we all need to replenish it. The same herbs that enhance athletic performance are also considered anti-aging herbs and immune tonics."

**A NON-ATHLETE'S EXPERIENCE WITH CHINESE HERBS**

JULIA MORIN, a makeup artist who lives in San Francisco, is an exercise enthusiast who switched to herbal treatment after trying the cortisone, muscle relaxers, and anti-inflammatories that has been prescribed by an internist for her tendinitis. "My health and energy dissipated when I started the anti-inflammatories," says Morin, who has responded to herbs "like water to plants". She takes herbs three to four times a day, feels healthy, and experiences no side effects. A 56-year-old mother of a ten-year old, she believes the herbs she regularly takes carry her into the evenings with a quiet kind of energy-without nervousness, perspiration, or addictiveness."

Although there is substantial evidence that certain Chinese herbs are effective, we are a long way off from understanding their mechanisms. "I have no idea why most Chinese herbs work," says Patrice Peterson, who has ten years of experience in the field. "The Chinese have been using medicinal herbs over a period of centuries, and there have been many studies that show they are of benefit." she says. "However, its easier to show that something works than to determine why. Then again, we also don't know how many Western drugs work."

For many people, part of the attraction of Chinese herbs could be the lure of the

exotic: If something comes from far away, it must be good. That principle applies elsewhere: last October, Ma Junren held another press conference, this one after his runners had won the top four places in the World Marathon Cup. He chided the sports press for its continuing cynicism about Chinese herbs.

This time, though, Junren had a new secret to share: *American* ginseng. "It's very good," he said. "It comes from San Francisco, and it prevents nosebleeds. Chinese ginseng won't do that." •

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