

## CHILL-OUT PRESCRIPTION

These supplements are recommended to support people coming off tranquillisers, sedatives or sleeping pills or still suffering from abstinence symptoms having quit.

| Supplement  | Daily Amount                  | Taken as                                  | With/without   | Notes   |
|---|-------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Tryptophan<br><i>or</i><br>5-HTP                          | 2,000mg<br><br>200mg          | 1,000mg × 2<br><br>100mg × 2              | Away from main meal<br>(30 minutes before; 2 hours after)<br><br>with some carbohydrate<br>such as fruit or an oatcake |   |
| <i>or</i><br>Melatonin                                    | 3mg                           | 3mg × 1                                   | Taken under the tongue in the evening  |   |
| GABA  | 1,000mg                       | 500mg × 2                                 | With or without food   | A high dose can cause tingling in fingers or face and make you nauseous |
| Glutamine<br>with Taurine<br><i>or</i><br>Glutamine alone | 500mg<br>500mg<br><br>8,000mg | 250mg × 2<br>250mg × 2<br><br>4,000mg × 2 | With water. Empty stomach<br><br><br>With water, not a hot drink,<br>on an empty stomach                               | Hot water (heat) destroys glutamine                                     |

| Supplement                              | Daily Amount | Taken as  | With/without   | Notes   |
|---|--------------|-----------|--|---|
| Niacinamide/<br>inositol hexanicotinate | 1,000mg      | 500mg × 2 | With food  |   |
| Magnesium                               | 300mg        | 150mg × 2 | Morning and evening, can help sleep in the evening. With or without food | Assumes an extra 150mg in Basic Supplement Pack. Best forms are taurates, glycinate or ascorbates |
| Vitamin B <sub>6</sub>                  | 50mg         | 25mg × 2  | With food  | Ideally, half as pyridoxal-5-phosphate (P5P) (see notes, page 423)                                |
| Valerian                                | 600mg        | 300mg × 2 | Empty stomach  | Take in the evening or one hour before bed  |

### Chill-out prescription: Notes

**5-HTP** is about ten times more potent than tryptophan. So 100mg of 5-HTP is equivalent to 1,000mg of tryptophan. Tryptophan is only available in supplements, up to 220mg. Therefore, if you take four you will be getting 880mg, close to 1g. Tryptophan is also available on prescription as Optimax in 1,000mg capsules. Some people respond better to tryptophan, others to 5-HTP. The ideal is probably to take some of both. There are no dangers associated with either tryptophan or 5-HTP at these

levels provided you are not on antidepressant medication. Many antidepressants stop the body being able to break down serotonin. Therefore, giving large amounts of either tryptophan or 5-HTP is not recommended until you are off antidepressants. A doctor may prescribe both, but you should be under the auspices of a health practitioner to do this.

**Melatonin** is made from serotonin, which is made from tryptophan so, ideally, it's better to have tryptophan or 5-HTP because

it helps you make both serotonin and melatonin. Melatonin is specifically required for sleeping. So, if you are really finding it hard to unwind and go to sleep since quitting your addictive drug, ask your doctor for a prescription of melatonin. In some countries it is available over the counter. Melatonin's side effects include nausea, dizziness and loss of libido and its long-term safety has not been determined. Headache and transient depression have been reported. In people who are depressed, melatonin may worsen symptoms. Melatonin is best taken under medical supervision and is available only by prescription in the UK.

**GABA** is both an amino acid and a neurotransmitter. It helps you relax. If you take too much it can cause tingling in your fingers or face. So, it is best to increase gradually, starting with 500mg, and not take more than 2,000mg a day. GABA is classified as a medicine in the UK. It is available from the US for your own personal use. GABA is made from glutamine and works similarly to taurine as a relaxing, calming neurotransmitter. Therefore, the next best thing is to either supplement glutamine on its own, or glutamine plus taurine. Some supplement formulas contain this combination. If you choose to take glutamine on its own it is most economical to take glutamine powder; 1 rounded teaspoon is about 4g. It dissolves in water and tastes fine. Heat

destroys glutamine, so don't put it in a hot drink. (Glutamine powder should not be taken if there is liver damage.) Some people respond better to taurine, others to glutamine. GABA is superior to both.

**Niacinamide** and **inositol hexanicotinate** are non-blushing forms of niacin (vitamin B<sub>3</sub>). You can triple the given amount if you need to. There's nothing wrong with niacin, which is cheaper, but it will make you blush, go red, hot and itchy for up to 30 minutes. If you choose to take niacin, take it with meals and make sure you can relax, or lie down, when the flush starts. The more often you take it – for example, twice a day for a week – the less you flush. The flush can leave you feeling deeply relaxed. Some people love it. Others don't.

**Magnesium** is vital for nerve function and, if you are feeling strung out or on edge, having enough can really help. Pumpkin seeds are one of the best food sources, so snack on these. Ideally, you want to supplement up to 500mg a day. If there's 150mg in your basic multivitamin–mineral supplement, then you are looking to add another 200–400mg. If you have magnesium in the form of magnesium taurate (bound to taurine), ascorbate (bound to vitamin C) or magnesium glycinate (bound to glycine), you get more of these other important nutrients.

**Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> (pyridoxine)**, together with magnesium, helps to convert tryptophan into serotonin and melatonin, tyrosine to dopamine and noradrenalin and glutamine to GABA. There is another form of B<sub>6</sub> called pyridoxal-5-phosphate (P5P) which is especially bio-active. This is possibly twice as effective, so think of 50mg of P5P as equivalent to 100mg of B<sub>6</sub>. Ideally you want to achieve a total intake of B<sub>6</sub> between 50mg and 100mg a day. A good multivitamin will provide between 20mg and 50mg. If you are taking a homocysteine-modulating formula, this will probably provide you with enough, together with a multi-vitamin. Otherwise you may need a little more. Ideally, pick a formula that contains some P5P. Some also provide magnesium.

**Standardised valerian** is one of the most effective and studied herbs for the treatment of anxiety and insomnia, sometimes being referred to as 'nature's Valium'. It has been used as a folk remedy for thousands of years. As a natural relaxant, it is useful for several disorders seen in recovery from addictions, including restlessness, nervousness, insomnia (especially problems with falling asleep), menstrual problems and 'nervous' stomach. It has

also been used in conjunction with St John's wort in treating anxiety. A word of caution: valerian can interact with some drugs, including alcohol, certain antihistamines, muscle relaxants, psychotropic drugs and narcotics. At high doses (above 1,600mg a day) over a long period of time, it has been linked to 'hangover' symptoms, and in rare cases withdrawal-like symptoms. It is therefore best to use valerian only under the supervision of a health-care practitioner unless you have come off all drugs. Make sure that the valerian is standardised. This means you have a guaranteed quality of active herb. Hops and passionflower also have sedative effects.

### **Making it easy**

Some supplements designed to support normal relaxation contain combinations of nutrients (taurine, glutamine, magnesium and 5-HTP), which help you to sleep or chill out. We will call this kind of combination a 'combination chill/sleep formula'. Some non-blushing niacin formulations also contain magnesium. Your supplement planner will then be:

**EASY PLANNER: CHILL-OUT PRESCRIPTION**

| Supplement                        | Morning          | Afternoon       | Evening                                 |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---|
| * Combination chill/sleep formula | 1 mid morning    | 1 mid afternoon | 2 in the evening or one hour before bed |
| Niacin 500g*/magnesium            | 1 with breakfast | 1 with lunch    |   |
| + B <sub>6</sub> 25mg             | 1 with breakfast | 1 with lunch    |   |
| Valerian 500–800mg                |                  |                 | 2 in the evening or one hour before bed |

Plus the Basic Supplement Pack (page 388)

- \* If you are already taking these because you have sleeping problems there is no need to double up.
- + If you are already taking extra in your methylation formula because you have a high homocysteine level, there is no need to double up.