

Ashwagandha Dosage & Timing Guide

How much, which extract, and when to take it — based on the doses actually used in randomized controlled trials.

Covers KSM-66 and Shoden extract dosing, cortisol and sleep protocols, cycling guidance, and interaction cautions.

Know Your Extract First

Dosage only makes sense once you know which extract you're taking. Most published research uses one of two standardized root extracts, not raw ashwagandha powder. Withanolide percentage and extraction method both affect how much of the standardized dose is actually active.

KSM-66

Full-spectrum root extract, 5% withanolides. The most-studied form — used in the majority of RCTs on cortisol, stress, and anxiety, typically at 300mg twice daily or 600mg once daily.

Shoden

Root extract standardized to 35% withanolides — a much higher concentration per milligram. Trials use lower absolute doses (around 120-225mg/day) to reach comparable effect.

Raw / unstandardized powder

Traditional Ayurvedic powder with no fixed withanolide percentage. Effective doses in classical use range 3-6g/day, but potency varies significantly between batches.

Dosing By Goal

Stress & cortisol reduction

KSM-66 300mg twice daily (600mg total), or Shoden 240mg once daily. Effects typically measured over 60 days in trials; expect gradual, not immediate, change.

Sleep quality

KSM-66 600mg once daily, taken in the evening 1-2 hours before bed. A 2021 RCT (Langade et al., Cureus) used this protocol over 8 weeks with meaningful sleep-quality improvements.

General anxiety support

KSM-66 300mg twice daily with food. Most RCTs run 8-12 weeks minimum before assessing outcome — this is not a same-day-effect supplement.

Athletic recovery / strength

KSM-66 500-600mg daily alongside resistance training; studies on muscle strength and recovery used comparable dosing to the stress protocols.

Timing, Cycling & Cautions

When to take it

Split doses (morning + evening) reduce mild GI upset compared to one large dose. If using primarily for sleep, take the full daily dose in the evening rather than splitting it.

With or without food

Take with food. Ashwagandha is fat-soluble to a degree, and food reduces the mild nausea some users report on an empty stomach.

Cycling

Most trials run continuous 8-12 week protocols without a break, and safety data extends to 12 months of continuous use in some studies. If cycling, a common approach is 8-12 weeks on, 2-4 weeks off.

Who should avoid it

Pregnant or breastfeeding individuals, those with autoimmune conditions (ashwagandha can stimulate immune activity), thyroid disorders (it can increase thyroid hormone levels), or anyone on sedatives, thyroid medication, or immunosuppressants — consult a physician first.

Onset expectations

Most RCTs measure outcomes at 4, 8, and 12 weeks. Don't judge effectiveness before at least 3-4 weeks of consistent daily use.