



# SIMPLY PERIOD.

A hand book by Simply Sport Foundation India  
Supported by the Badminton World Federation

Edited by Mirant Tiwari | Illustrated by Mounica Tata

# Note to Readers

This book is a carefully designed educational resource, created for individuals aged 12 years and above. It is tailored for students, young athletes, health professionals, and educators, aiming to foster a better understanding of topics related to menstrual health, anatomy, and well-being.

**Important Usage Guidelines:**

- The illustrations are designed to provide clear, factual, and contextually relevant visual support for understanding health and anatomy.
- These visuals are strictly for educational purposes. Any misuse of these illustrations, including for pornographic or sexual purposes, is strictly prohibited and may result in legal consequences.
- Parental or educator guidance is recommended for younger readers (12–16 years old) to ensure a supportive and informed learning experience.

**Who This Book Is For:**

**Students (12 years and older):** Learning about anatomy, menstrual health, and nutrition.

**Coaches, trainers, and educators:** Supporting young athletes with informed health and performance strategies.

**Healthcare professionals:** Seeking patient education materials or resources for professional development.

This book is a learning tool, and we encourage responsible usage. For any specific medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment, please consult a qualified healthcare professional

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# BWF President's Message

To our wider sporting community,

The BWF is extremely proud to affirm that badminton is a gender-balanced sport, with men and women competing side by side, under the same rules, with the same equipment, and for the same prize money. Our sport reflects the values of fairness and equality, with equal events for both women and men including singles, doubles, and mixed doubles.



Women are an integral part of our sport, and the BWF fully supports efforts to ensure that our female athletes from around the world are able to train and compete in optimal conditions.

It is important that the sports community, including athletes and coaches, are aware of female health initiatives to provide safe and enjoyable environments for participation, whether at the elite or grassroots level.

This is a key focus area for BWF as we look to strengthen our inclusion and safeguarding policies within the sport, which aid our vision of giving every child a chance to play badminton for life.

In Simply Sport, we have an ideal partner to help us in this journey and co-create the necessary support structures to extend the reach of this message across our communities. We particularly applaud this latest initiative from Simply Sport, the '*Simply Period.*' handbook, to increase awareness regarding female menstrual health.

Female athletes experience unique needs and challenges, and it is crucial that athletes, coaches, and entourage are equipped with the knowledge to understand and manage these situations.

We are proud of the work that Simply Sport has done to provide straightforward information with a no-nonsense approach to explaining the basics of female health.

Only by breaking the taboos around this important issue can we promote the welfare of our female athletes during their training and in competition. We invite all those who value athlete wellbeing to use this resource and to be a part of the change.

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Patama' followed by a checkmark-like flourish.

**Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul**  
BWF President



# Busting Myths at Full Sprint

## Periods Are a Part of Sports, Not Apart from It!

Hi there! I'm Ashwini Ponappa, a three-time Olympian, and I'm thrilled to introduce the "Simply Periods" handbook. When I was first asked to contribute, my answer was a spirited "Heck, yes!"

"Simply Periods" is more than a campaign; it's a movement to tackle period poverty in sports. It's been transformative for over 4500 athletes and coaches through its impactful workshops.

I started experiencing periods quite late (I was more relieved than fearful), and while mine were more of an inconvenience than an impediment, I was baffled by the horror stories from my peers. Heavy flows, crippling cramps—silent battles fought every month due to the stigma surrounding this natural process. I admit, I was one of those who initially thought calling out periods as a hindrance was a sign of weakness. Boy, was I wrong!

My understanding changed dramatically as I grew older. I was playing doubles at the Syed Modi International in Lucknow—right in the throes of a volcanic PMS episode. Picture this: one moment I'm a fireball of fury, the next I'm a sobbing mess because... feelings. Thankfully, our team physio, a wonder woman in disguise, became my confidante.

Thanks to advocacy by female athletes, new research, and initiatives like this, understanding female athletes' physiology is crucial. We need to discuss, research, and strategize to support both athletes and coaches. This handbook is a tool for that, offering engaging content and practical resources like a menstrual cycle tracker and real-life case studies.

If I had this resource earlier, my journey would have been easier. Today's athletes and coaches now have this valuable guide. Understanding your menstrual cycle is a superpower that can enhance performance.

Happy reading and here's to embracing period power!

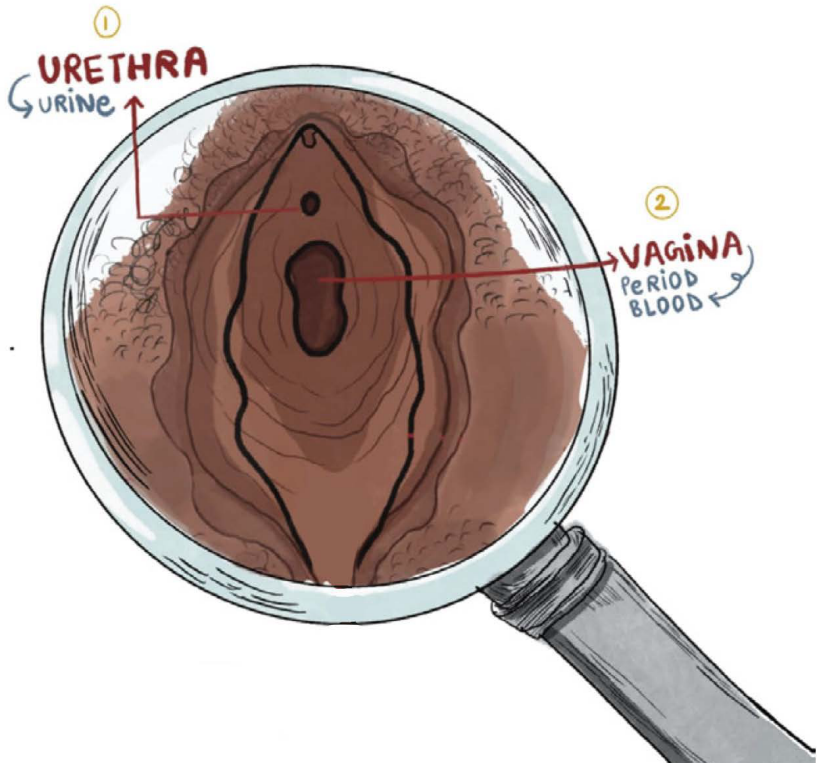
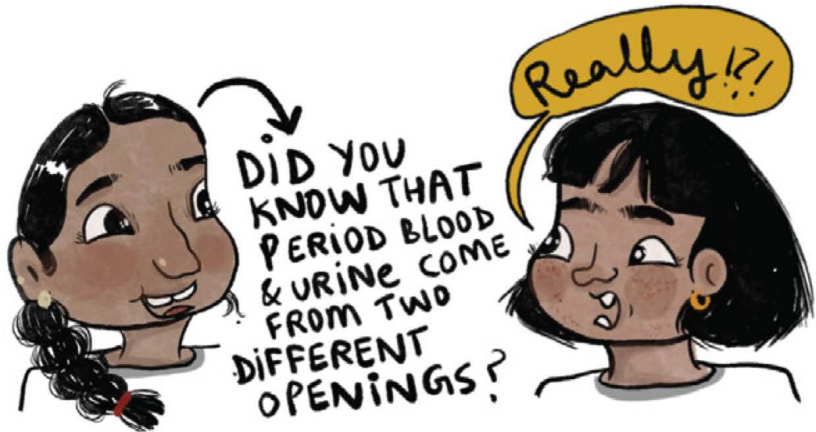
Cheers!

*Ashwini Ponappa*

Three-time Olympian, Women's Doubles Badminton

# Anatomy

Let us know our bodies better

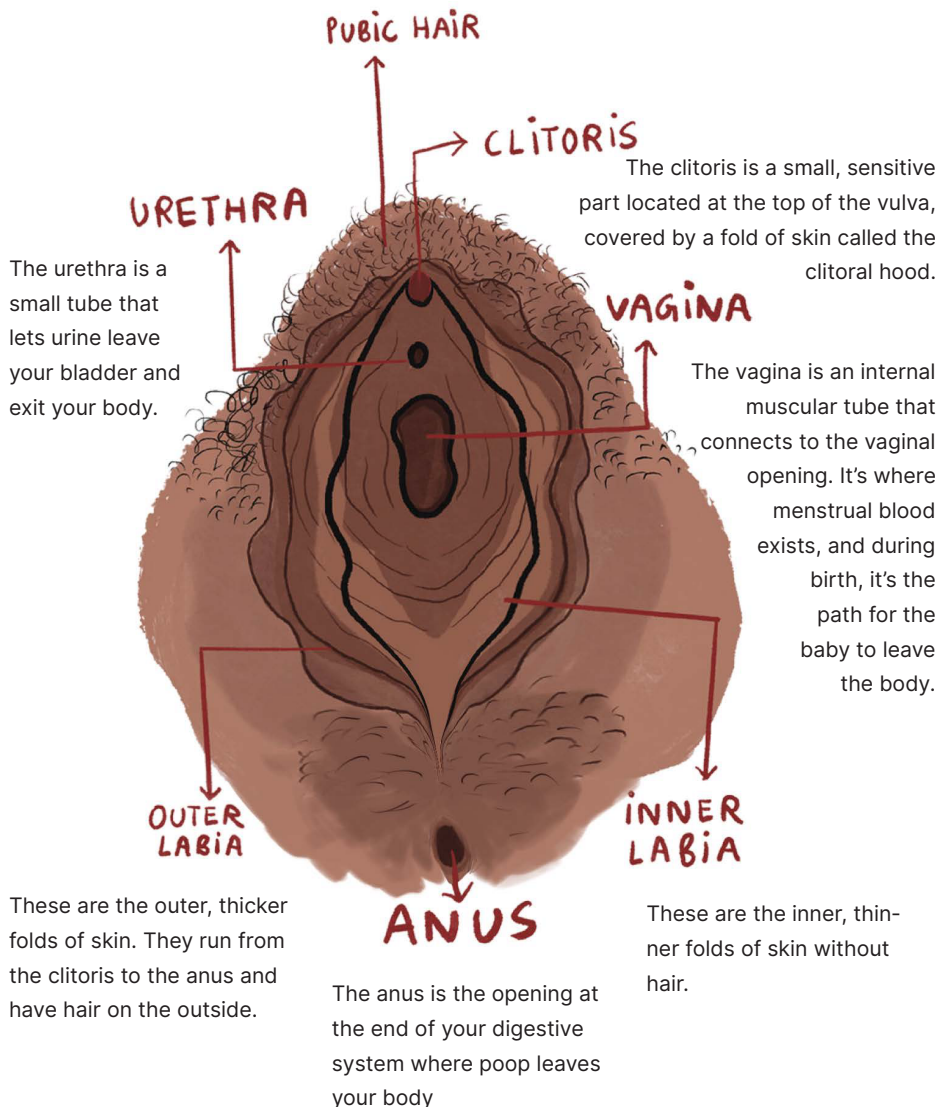


# SAY hello TO YOUR VULVA

## Vulva

The vulva is the name for the external female genital organs. It includes:

- Inner and Outer Lips: These are called the labia.
- Clitoris: A sensitive part that feels good when touched.
- Vaginal Opening: The entrance to the vagina.
- Urethral Opening: Where urine leaves your body.



# Puberty

## a new beginning

Puberty is your body's dramatic metamorphosis from childhood to adulthood. Imagine hormones as tiny directors orchestrating this transformation. Boys get testosterone and sperm production, while girls start producing estrogen & progesterone hormones which give them periods.

Expect hair in new places: underarms and, well, down there. Boys grow taller, their voices deepen, and their shoulders broaden. Girls' hips widen, breasts develop, and they start menstruating.

Puberty also stirs up emotions. Everyone's journey is unique, so if you feel like an alien in your own body, relax – it's all part of the adventure!

### Puberty for Girls

#### Physical Changes:

- You'll shoot up in height and your hips will be wider, giving you an adult shape.
- Breasts start as small bumps and gradually grow.
- Hair sprouts under your arms and in the pubic area.
- Skin might get oilier, inviting pimples.
- Weight gain, especially around thighs and hips, is normal.
- Menstruation begins, prepping your body for potential motherhood.

#### Emotional Changes:

- Expect a rollercoaster of emotions from excitement to overwhelm.
- You might feel self-conscious about your changing body.
- Mood swings are the new norm – up one minute, down the next.
- Energy levels fluctuate, possibly altering sleep patterns.
- Frustration, anger, or self-consciousness are all part of the deal.
- You'll start pondering your identity and beliefs.

Puberty is your personal growth saga, unique to you. Support and understanding from others make this journey smoother.

## CHANGES TO BE EXPECTED DURING PUBERTY



## HOW TO DEAL WITH EXPECTED CHANGES AT PUBERTY



## GOOD DIET & PROPER REST



I FEEL SO TIRED & IRRITABLE THESE DAYS

THAT'S NORMAL & COMMON DURING PUBERTY

COMMUNICATE: WITH FRIENDS & PEERS



# How Does Puberty Impact Performance?

## Physical Changes:

- Rapid growth and changes like wider hips and breast development can affect your speed and coordination.

## Hormonal Changes:

- Hormones can affect energy levels and muscle strength.
- Estrogen and testosterone play roles in muscle growth and endurance.

## Risk of Injuries:

- Puberty might make some girls more prone to injuries due to changes in their bodies like knee ligament tears, which can hinder sports performance.

## Psychological Impact:

- Confidence and motivation in sports might wobble.
- Mood swings and body image concerns can affect how you perform.

In essence, puberty reshapes your sports performance. Understanding these changes helps you stay on top of your game.

# What to Do When You Reach Puberty?

## Embrace Puberty:

- View it as a natural process that makes you stronger.
- Recognize your body is changing and needs time to grow.

## Stay Healthy:

- Focus on overall health for long-term sports success.

## Don't Overdo It:

- Avoid excessive training or skipping meals. Proper nutrition is crucial for growth and health.

## Get Support:

- Seek advice from parents, coaches, and other healthcare/sports-related professionals.

## Listen to Your Body:

- Pay attention to its signals. You'll need more rest, nutritious food, and self-care.
- Adjust your training and diet to stay healthy and perform well.
- On days when you feel the effects of puberty more so than other days, you need to give yourself a break and not ask too much of your body when in training.

By embracing puberty, maintaining health, avoiding overexertion, seeking support, and listening to your body, you'll navigate these changes and keep excelling in sports.

Now let's look at what happens once you hit puberty!



WHY DO MY CLOTHES NOT FIT LIKE THEY USED TO... MY BODY FEELS SO DIFFERENT!



Ragini, a rising track star from her school, notices changes in her body.

HEY! DO YOU ALSO FEEL LIKE RAGINI HAS PUT ON WEIGHT...?

OH, MM... YEAH! SHE ALSO SEEMS TO HAVE SLOWED DOWN EH!...



At practice, Ragini overhears some classmates whispering and giggling behind her back

CHLOE, I HAVE BEEN FEELING WEIRD ABOUT MY BODY. I FEEL LIKE EVERYONE IS MAKING JOKES & COMMENTS ABOUT IT...

YOU ARE GOING THROUGH PUBERTY. IT'S NORMAL AND NOT WEIRD. READ UP ABOUT IT & DO TALK TO COACH AND RELAX!



Ragini confides in her friend, a senior on the track team, about the changes

After talking with her senior, Ragini decides to reach out to her parents for more support.

OH! WE ARE SO HAPPY YOU TOLD US. LET'S TALK TO YOUR COACH & GET YOU ALL THE HELP & SUPPORT YOU'LL NEED!

YES! I ALSO WANT TO KNOW HOW I CAN MAKE HER DIET HEALTHY & NUTRITIOUS.



Ragini feels very positive after talking to her parents.

GOOD YOU CAME TO ME. LET'S ADJUST YOUR TRAINING & LET'S GO SEE THE NUTRITIONIST ALSO SO YOU'RE EATING WELL!

I'LL PACK YOU YUMMY & HEALTHY LUNCHES.



Ragini takes her mum to speak with her coach.

GO RAGINI GO!

YES!



PUBERTY IS NORMAL. DON'T FEAR IT, EMBRACE IT. GET THE SUPPORT YOU NEED & LET NOTHING SLOW YOU DOWN ♥



# Sexual Development

## Maturing from within

During puberty, sex hormones go to work, sculpting the visible differences between males and females, both inside and out.

### Secondary Sexual Characteristics:

Boys: Testosterone brings facial hair, a deeper voice, and muscle growth.

Girls: Estrogen and progesterone develop breasts, widen hips, and redistribute body fat.

### Egg and Sperm Production:

Girls: Born with all their eggs, which decline over time.

Boys: Produce sperm continuously post-puberty, thanks to the pituitary gland.

### Hormonal Impact on Bone Health:

Hormones play a big role in bone strength. Estrogen is crucial for girls, and its decline during menopause can lead to weaker bones and a higher osteoporosis risk.

### Anatomical Differences

Boys: Often have larger hearts, lungs, and more red blood cells, boosting aerobic capacity. Their longer bones provide better muscle leverage.

Girls: A wider pelvis and lower centre of gravity enhance balance and flexibility.

### Body Composition

Boys: Generally have more muscle mass and less body fat, impacting strength and agility.

Girls: Typically have higher body fat, essential for reproductive health.

### Physiological Variation

Boys: Higher haemoglobin levels enhance oxygen transport, and a better muscle-to-body weight ratio boosts speed and power.

Girls: Excel in glycogen-to-energy conversion, great for endurance sports.

### Hormonal Influence

Boys: Higher testosterone levels foster continuous muscle growth and strength.

Girls: Experience fluctuating estrogen and progesterone levels, affecting energy metabolism and bone health.

### Strength and Performance

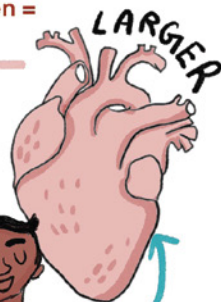
Boys: Typically excel in speed and power sports like sprinting due to their higher muscle mass and testosterone, which support explosive movements.

Girls: Often excel in endurance and flexibility sports, such as gymnastics, due to efficient oxygen usage and higher slow-twitch muscle fiber composition.

Understanding and embracing the natural differences in muscles, bones, and hormones is key to sports excellence. By tailoring training to leverage these unique traits, both boys and girls can optimise their performance and excel in their chosen fields.

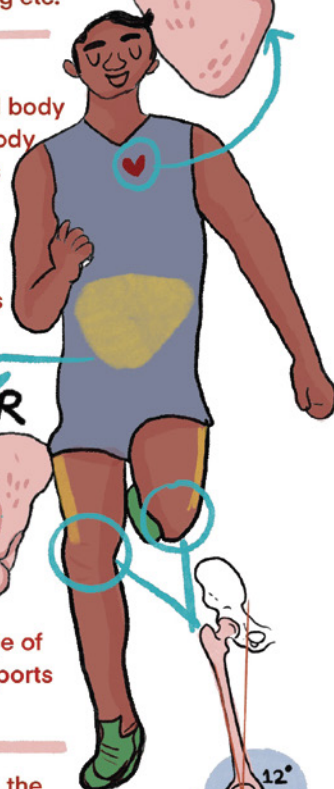
# FEMALE VS. MALE BODIES

**HEART** : A man's heart is larger than that of a woman's hence it pumps more blood and carries more oxygen = greater performance.



**MUSCLE** : Testosterone and other hormones give men a greater percentage of lean muscle (especially in upper body) hence they are better at sports like jumping, sprinting, weightlifting etc.

**FAT** : Generally an elite female athlete's total body fat is roughly around 16-20% of their total body fat (varies from individual to individual). This fat is essential to keep all bodily functions running smoothly. Hormones like estrogen also increase body fat in women. Whilst elite male athletes have half of this % of body fat.



**SHALLOW**

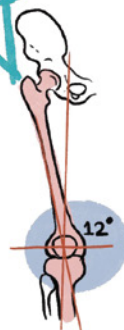


**DEEPER**



**FLEXIBILITY** : Females have a greater range of motion hence making them better at sports like gymnastics, figure skating, etc.

**KNEES** : Because of the wider pelvis, the femur meets tibias at a greater angle, putting more stress on the knees. Hence female athletes are more prone to knee injuries and strength training is crucial for them.



**AREAS MOST PRONE TO FAT ACCUMULATION IN FEMALES VS. MALES**

# Menstrual Cycle

## The New Normal

During Puberty, Girls experience another addition to their lives called the menstrual cycle.

### What is a Menstrual Cycle?

The menstrual cycle is a monthly marvel in a woman's body, kicking off with puberty. It's nature's way of preparing for potential pregnancy by releasing an egg from the ovaries (ovulation) and thickening the uterine lining. If the egg isn't fertilised, the body sheds this lining, resulting in menstruation – also known as your period.

Hormones like estrogen and progesterone are the cycle's conductors, orchestrating the entire process. A full cycle typically spans 21 to 35 days, with the period (bleeding phase) lasting about 3 to 7 days. The cycle begins on the first day of menstruation.

This cycle is crucial for reproductive health and can influence mood, energy levels, and overall well-being.

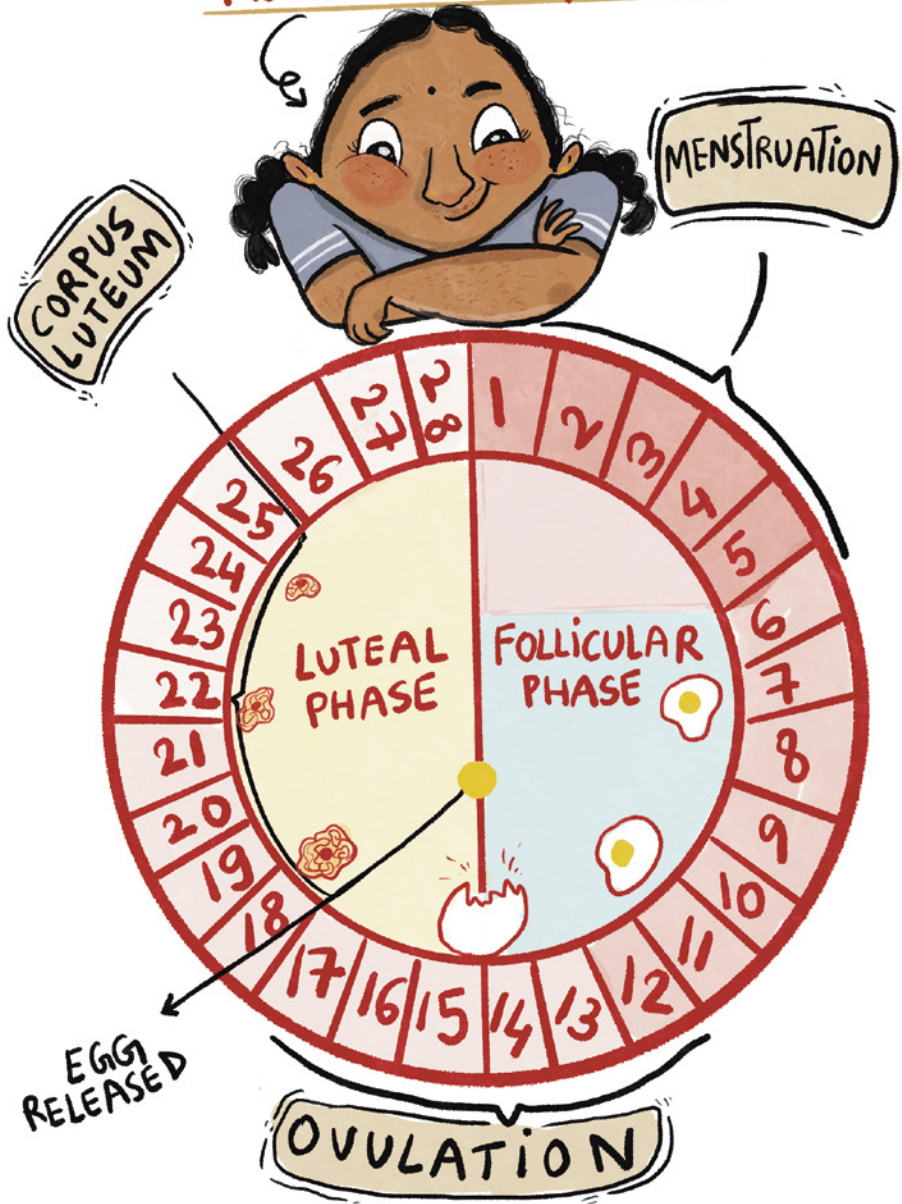
### Phases of a Menstrual Cycle

The menstrual cycle is a symphony in four movements over 21-35 days:

- 1 Menstrual Phase**  
This is when the period occurs. The uterus sheds its lining, exiting as menstrual fluid through the vagina. This phase lasts 3-7 days, commonly known as the bleeding phase.
- 2 Follicular Phase**  
Starting with menstruation, the brain prompts the ovaries to produce follicles, each holding an egg. The healthiest egg matures, while the rest are absorbed. Estrogen thickens the uterine lining in preparation.
- 3 Ovulation Phase**  
Rising estrogen triggers the release of luteinizing hormone (LH), causing the ovary to release the mature egg. The egg then travels to the uterus via the fallopian tube, usually occurring mid-cycle.
- 4 Luteal Phase**  
The follicle transforms into the corpus luteum, releasing progesterone to maintain the uterine lining for a potential pregnancy. If fertilisation doesn't occur, hormone levels drop, and the cycle starts anew.

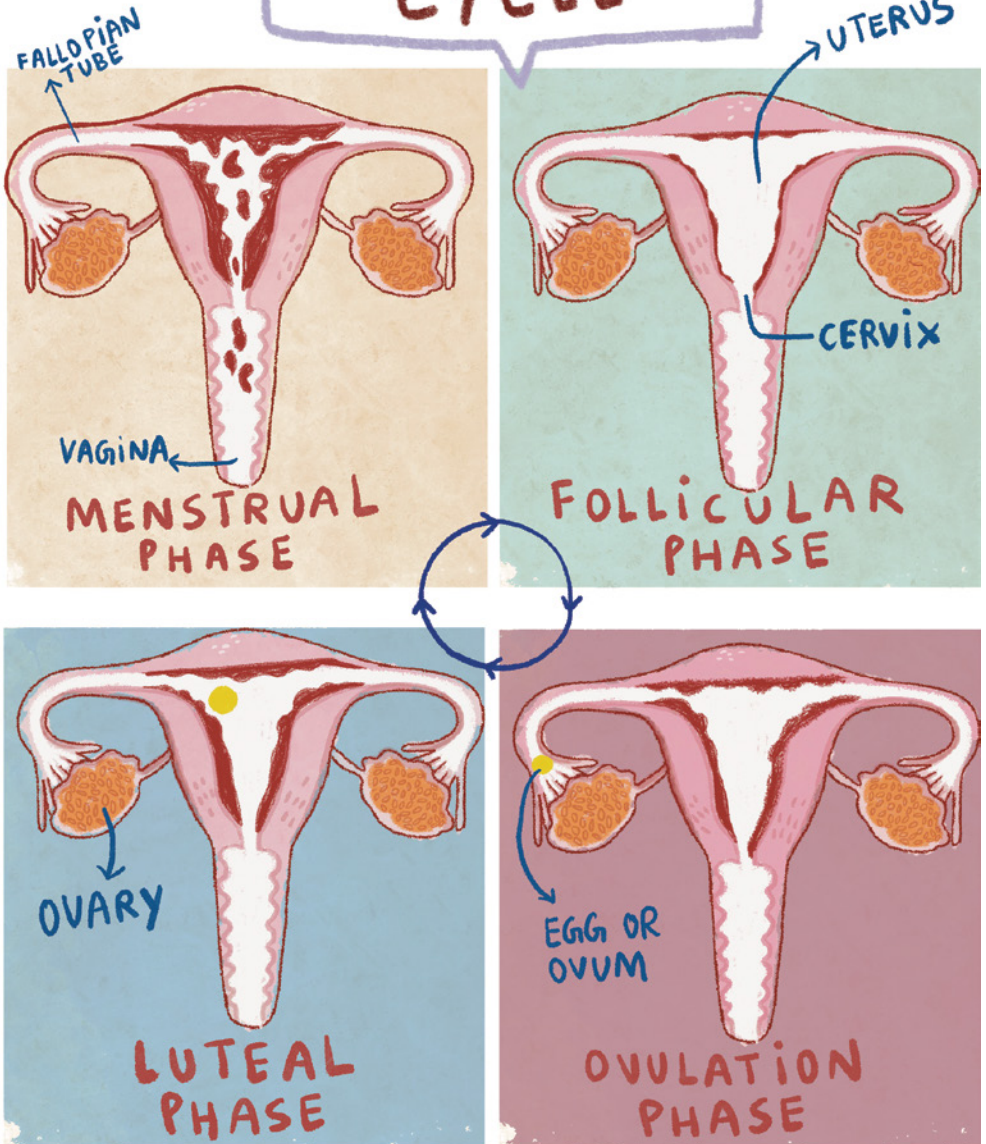
These phases are driven by hormonal changes, each preparing the body for potential pregnancy.

# SO THIS IS OUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE





# THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE



## What to Expect During Menstruation

When a young woman has her period, her body undergoes natural changes affecting various aspects of life:

### 1. Physical Changes:

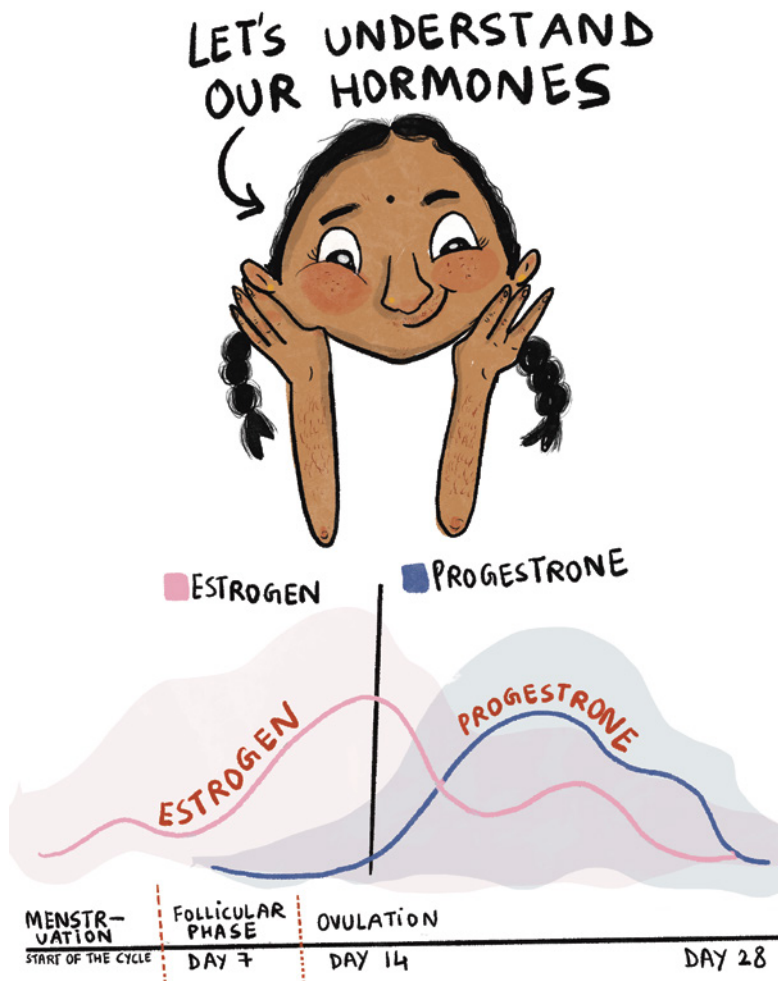
Hormonal shifts can cause cramps, bloating, breast tenderness, and fatigue. These symptoms vary in intensity.

### 2. Emotional Changes:

Mood swings, irritability, and fluctuating energy levels are common due to hormonal changes. These emotional shifts differ for everyone.

### 3. Menstrual Bleeding:

The most noticeable part is the menstrual bleeding, this phase lasts 3-7 days, commonly known as the bleeding phase. The flow's heaviness varies from person to person and within a woman many times from cycle to cycle.



## What to Do During Periods

Female athletes can tackle menstrual challenges and perform their best by following these tips:

### 1. Know Your Cycle:

Understand your body's changes throughout the cycle to prepare for symptoms.

### 2. Talk to Your Support Team:

Discuss any menstrual issues with your doctor and coach. They can adjust training and diet as needed.

### 3. Watch Your Iron Levels:

Estrogen impacts iron levels, so consume iron-rich foods or consider supplements to maintain energy and health.

### 4. Adjust Your Training:

If symptoms are severe, lighten your training load.

### 5. Eat well and Hydrate:

Stay hydrated and eat a balanced diet rich in fruits, veggies, carbohydrates and lean proteins. Limit caffeine and sugar to manage symptoms.

### 6. Ease Pain with Heat and Meds:

Use a heating pad on your stomach or back. You can also take over-the-counter pain relievers for cramps if needed and as prescribed by your doctor.

### 7. Rest Up:

Ensure you get enough sleep and take breaks to manage fatigue and perform at your best.

By understanding and managing your menstrual cycle, you can navigate its challenges and continue to excel in sports and daily activities.



## Understanding the Menstrual Cycle and Its Impact on Training

The menstrual cycle is like a hormonal rhythm, sometimes making you feel strong and full of energy, and at other times, a little more tired or less motivated. **There is no one-size-fits-all approach, so it's important to listen to your body and adapt your training and nutrition accordingly.**

### Menstrual Cycle Phases

#### 1. Menstrual Phase:

- **Training:** With estrogen and progesterone at their lowest, you may feel more fatigued or uncomfortable. It's okay to reduce training intensity if needed. Gentle activities like yoga, stretching, or light cardio can help you stay active and aid recovery.
- **Nutrition:** Focus on carb-rich meals to maintain energy and manage fatigue. Maintain hydration to counteract fluid loss.

#### 2. Follicular Phase:

- **Training:** Rising estrogen levels often bring increased energy, a better mood, and improved muscle function. Workouts may feel particularly good during this time—take advantage of it with strength training or interval workouts if it feels right for you.
- **Nutrition:** Include quality carbs, lean protein, and healthy fats to fuel these higher-energy sessions.

#### 3. Ovulation Phase:

- **Training:** Estrogen peaks here, which may boost performance and endurance. If you feel strong, use it to your advantage with moderate-to-high intensity sessions.
- **Nutrition:** Stick to nutrient-dense foods that support muscle repair. Hydration remains key for performance.

#### 4. Luteal Phase:

- **Training:** With progesterone on the rise, some may feel more bloated, tired, or less motivated. It's fine to scale back intensity—lighter activities like swimming, walking, or yoga can help maintain movement without added strain.
- **Nutrition:** Emphasize carb-rich meals for steady energy, along with foods that help ease PMS symptoms. Continue focusing on hydration.

### Evidence Base

- **Hormonal Influence:** Fluctuations in estrogen and progesterone can affect energy, mood, muscle recovery, and performance.
- **Nutrition Strategies:** Tailor your nutrition based on individual feedback and symptoms. Eat what feels best for you, as each athlete responds differently.
- **Case-to-Case Basis:** There is no universal formula. Personalized approaches to training and nutrition are essential, as every athlete's body is unique.

### **Additional Tips**

- **Listen to Your Body:** Adjust your training based on how you feel.
- **Track Your Cycle:** Keeping tabs on your symptoms and performance helps in planning.
- **Consultation:** Get advice from sports nutritionists or healthcare pros to create personalised strategies.

### **Conclusion**

As science evolves, the key is individualization. By customising training and nutrition to navigate their own hormonal shifts, athletes can perform their best.

# PMS (Premenstrual Syndrome)

## A minor challenge

PMS is when some women experience physical, emotional, and internal changes before their period. Here's the lowdown:

1. Common Experience: Most women go through this during their reproductive years.
2. Hormonal Roller Coaster: Fluctuations in estrogen and progesterone affect neurotransmitters like serotonin, which can lead to mood swings, irritability, and anxiety.
3. Symptoms: These include mood swings, bloating, tender breasts, and fatigue.
4. Varied Impact: PMS symptoms vary for everyone and can sometimes interfere with daily activities.
5. Seek Help: Intense symptoms like heavy bleeding might need medical attention.
6. Management: Exercise, stress relief, healthy eating, and sometimes medication can help manage PMS.

### Managing PMS

#### LIFESTYLE CHANGES

1. Eat Healthy: Opt for fruits, veggies, lean meats, and whole grains. Limit junk food and sweets.
2. Stay Active: Engage in walking, yoga, or swimming for at least 30 minutes daily.
3. Drink Water: Stay hydrated and cut back on caffeine and alcohol, especially before your period.
4. Relax: Try meditation, deep breathing, or yoga to reduce stress.
5. Sleep Well: Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night to help your body handle hormonal changes.

#### MEDICATIONS

(Consult a healthcare professional and follow the recommended dosage of the prescribed medicines.)

1. Hormone Help: Birth control pills or other hormone treatments can balance things out.
2. Medications for Mental Health: Certain antidepressants can help with mood swings but only if your doctor prescribes it.
3. Supplements: Vitamins like B6, magnesium, and calcium might ease symptoms.

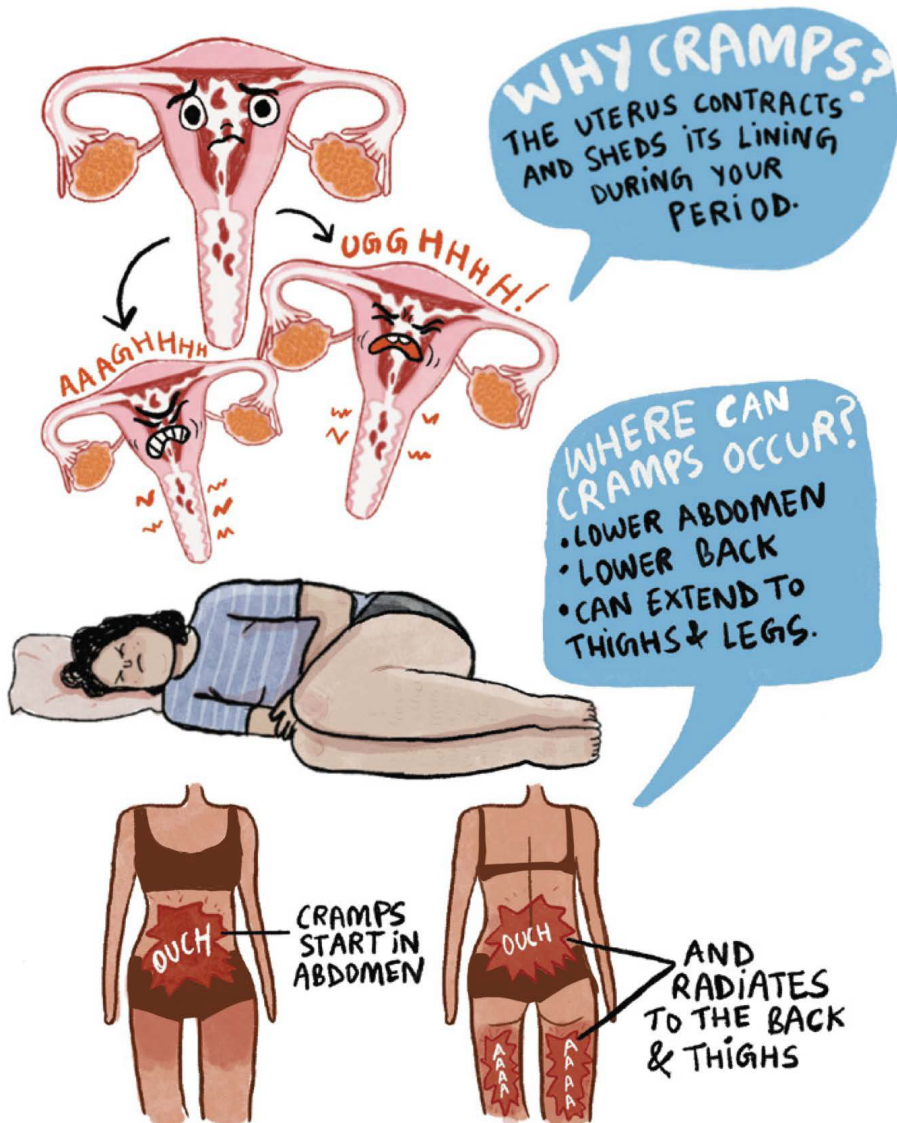
Always check with your doctor first!

### Other Treatments

1. Talk It Out: Therapy can help manage your moods and feelings.
2. Needles and Pins: Massage, Acupuncture, and Dry needling can help to relieve pain.
3. Rub Away Stress: Regular massages can relax you and improve your well-being.

# Period Cramps

## Another minor challenge



If period cramps are too severe and unbearable, consult a gynaecologist for it could be endometriosis or fibroids.

## What are Period Cramps?

Period pain, also known as dysmenorrhea, is when women feel discomfort during their menstrual cycle, especially at the beginning of their period.

Here's what you should know:

1. It's very common, affecting more than half of women during their periods.
2. The pain usually occurs in the lower belly, back, and thighs.
3. It can be mild or intense, sometimes making it hard to do normal activities.
4. It happens because the uterus contracts and sheds its lining during your period.
5. Stress and hormonal changes can sometimes make the pain worse.
6. It's usually normal but could also be a sign of other issues like endometriosis or fibroids.
7. The good news is that there are ways to manage it, such as taking pain meds, using heat, exercising, and relaxing.

So, period pain refers to the cramps and aches that many women deal with during their periods. It varies for everyone, but there are ways to make it easier to handle.



# Menstrual Products

## Tools of the trade

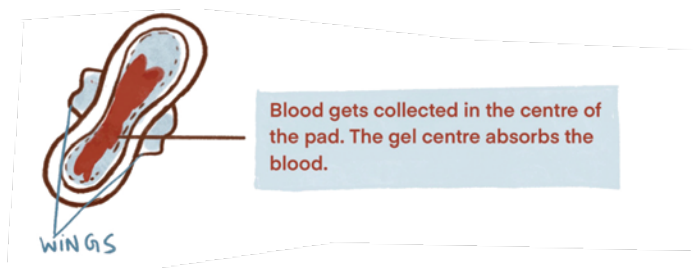
### EXTERNAL

#### Sanitary Pads (Menstrual Pads):

These absorbent pads are worn inside your underwear to absorb blood. They come in different sizes for light or heavy flows and should be changed every 3-4 hours.

**Pros:** Simple and safe, available in all sizes for all flows.

**Cons:** Can move around, limited to certain underwear types, and can be visible outside.



#### Period Underwear:

Special undies that soak up blood, eliminating the need for pads or tampons. They can be used for 4-6 hours on heavy flow days and up to 12 hours on lighter days.

**Pros:** Reusable, no stains, can be worn alone or with backups.

**Cons:** Might need a change on long days or heavy flows, tricky for long trips without proper toilets or restrooms.





## INTERNAL (ESPECIALLY USEFUL FOR SWIMMERS)

**Tampons:**

Soft, cottony sticks you insert to soak up blood. They come with an applicator and can be used for 4-8 hours, but never more than 8 hours to avoid Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS).

**Pros:** Discreet and easy to carry, keeps you active without worries.

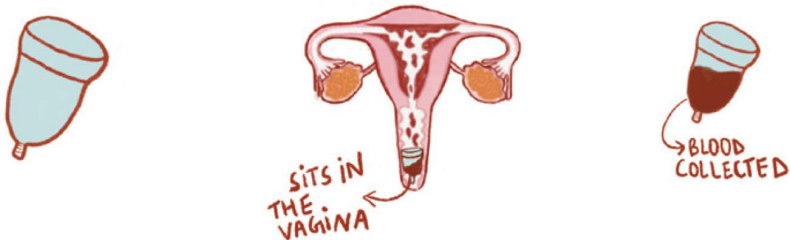
**Cons:** Risk of TSS, might not be comfortable for very light or heavy periods.

**Menstrual Cups:**

Reusable cups you insert to collect blood, which are also available in various sizes. Can be worn for up to 6-8 hours on heavy flow days and up to 12 hours on lighter days.

**Pros:** Eco-friendly, long-lasting, lower TSS risk.

**Cons:** Can be messy to change, especially initially, and tricky to clean in public restrooms.



Each type has its ups and downs. What works best depends on your comfort, flow, and lifestyle. Many people mix and match products during their period.

## Best Menstrual Hygiene Practices for Female Athletes

Maintaining proper menstrual hygiene is crucial for the well-being and comfort of female athletes. Here are some essential practices to follow:

### 1. Choose the Right Products:

- Select menstrual products that suit your lifestyle and activities, like tampons, pads, or period underwear.
- Consider the intensity of your workouts and the duration of your period when choosing products.

### 2. Change Regularly:

- Change your menstrual products every 4 to 6 hours (depending upon the product) to prevent odor and discomfort.
- Carry extra products, especially during travel, long training sessions, or competitions.

### 3. Practise Good Hygiene:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after handling menstrual products.
- When cleaning your genital area, always wipe from front to back to prevent the spread of bacteria in and around your vagina.

### 4. Stay Hydrated:

- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated, which can help alleviate menstrual cramps and maintain overall health.

### 5. Manage Disposal Properly:

- Dispose of used menstrual products in designated bins or sanitary disposal units.
- Avoid flushing products down the toilet to prevent plumbing issues and environmental damage.

### 6. Be Prepared:

- Carry a small pouch or discreet bag to store your menstrual products while on the go.
- Pack pain relief medications if you experience menstrual cramps or discomfort during training or competitions.

### 7. Stay Informed:

- Seek guidance from healthcare professionals or experienced athletes if you have any questions or concerns.

### 8. Listen to Your Body:

- Pay attention to how your body responds to different menstrual products and adjust accordingly.
- Take rest days or modify your training routine if you experience significant discomfort or fatigue during your period.

By following these tips, you'll stay comfortable and confident, no matter where your period finds you!

Tania misses three days of swimming practice



Tania goes to speak with a gynaecologist

THERE ARE OPTIONS FOR PERIOD PRODUCTS AND I RECOMMEND MENSTRUAL CUP OR TAMPONS FOR SWIMMERS.

B... BUT... BUT I'VE ONLY EVER USED PADS...

SEE, PADS AREN'T SUITABLE FOR SWIMMING AS THEY GET SOAKED IN WATER. WHEREAS A CUP COLLECTS & A TAMPON ABSORBS.

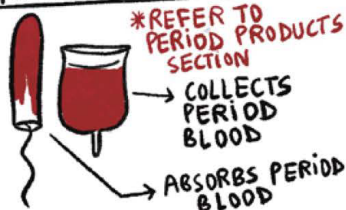
WON'T THEY HURT OR... OR FALL OFF!?!



LET'S  
ADDRESS  
TANIA'S  
FEARS &  
QUESTIONS

ALL YOU NEED  
TO KNOW ABOUT  
TAMPONS & CUPS

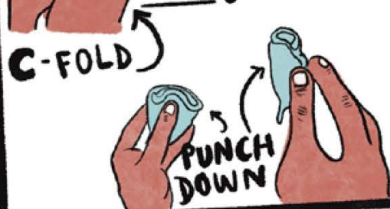
### THESE ARE INTERNAL PERIOD PRODUCTS



**SQUAT**  
OR ANY  
VARIATION  
OF A SQUAT  
FOR EASY INSERTION

RELAX YOUR  
MUSCLES &  
AFTER A FEW  
TRIES, IT GETS  
EASIER TO  
INSERT.

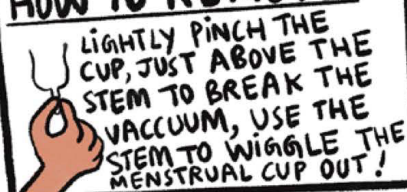
### HOW TO FOLD MENSTRUAL CUP?



THE STEM  
OR RING  
ON CUPS  
& THREAD  
ON TAMPONS  
ARE FOR EASY  
REMOVAL TO HOLD  
& PULL OUT

WHEN INSERTED  
CORRECTLY, A  
CUP WON'T  
LEAK, MOVE,  
FALL OFF.

### HOW TO REMOVE?



### HOW TO WASH?



Empty the cup  
contents, rinse with  
water and re-insert.  
Sanitise with hot  
water after every  
cycle.



NOW YOU DON'T HAVE  
TO MISS PRACTICE  
& YOU CAN SWIM  
STRESS FREE!



# Menstrual Health Issues

## The Bigger Challenges

### Heavy Periods: What You Need to Know

Experiencing heavy periods, known as menorrhagia, can throw a spanner in the works. Here's what it might entail:

- 1. Soaking Through Pads:** Changing pads or tampons every 2 to 3 hours is a must.
- 2. Extra Protection:** Using more than one pad or tampon to keep things under control.
- 3. Nighttime Changes:** Getting up during the night to switch pads or tampons.
- 4. Longer Periods:** Bleeding for more than a week.
- 5. Big Clots:** Passing clots bigger than a quarter.
- 6. Holding Back:** Feeling like you can't do all your usual stuff due to heavy bleeding.
- 7. Feeling Drained:** Tired, weak, or breathless because of blood loss.

Heavy periods can lead to low iron levels, causing headaches and tiredness, and sometimes severe cramps.

### Why Do They Happen?

There are several reasons why your periods might be heavy:

- 1. Hormones Out of Whack:** Fluctuations in estrogen and progesterone can mess up your cycle, causing heavy bleeding.
- 2. Uterus Issues:** Problems like fibroids, polyps, or adenomyosis can make periods heavier.
- 3. Medications:** Certain medicines may have heavy bleeding as a side effect.
- 4. Pregnancy Complications:** Miscarriages or ectopic pregnancies can lead to heavy bleeding.
- 5. Infections:** Even Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) can cause heavy bleeding.
- 6. Other Factors:** Things like certain Intrauterine Devices ( IUDs), reproductive system cancers, or endometriosis can also make periods heavier.

If your periods are unusually heavy, it's wise to consult a doctor. They can diagnose the cause and recommend appropriate treatment.

## Fatigue & Recovery

Fatigue from heavy menstrual bleeding is common, often due to low estrogen levels during your period. This can leave you feeling weak and tired. If severe, it might signal anaemia or thyroid issues. Don't dismiss extreme menstrual fatigue—seek medical advice if it persists beyond a few days.

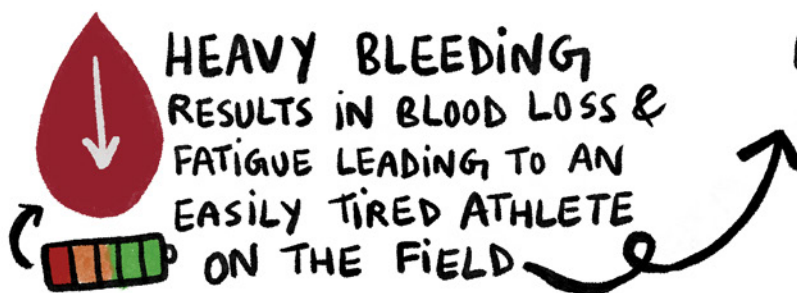
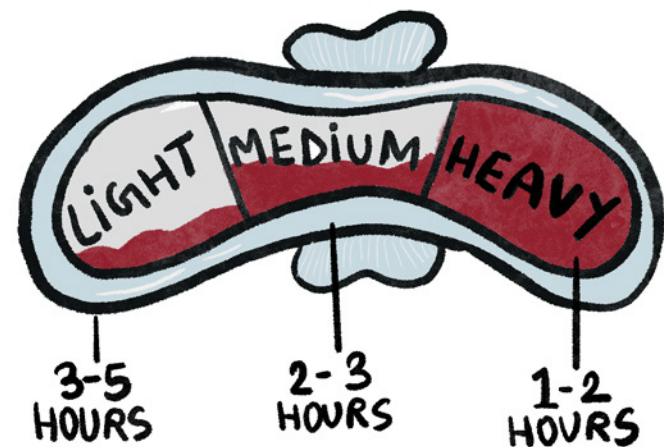
Recovering from fatigue due to heavy periods involves addressing the underlying causes, which may include iron deficiency, hormonal imbalances, or gynaecological conditions. Treatment options range from iron supplements and hormonal therapy to lifestyle adjustments or surgical interventions. Work closely with healthcare providers to find the best approach for managing fatigue from heavy menstrual bleeding.

## Feeling Tired from Heavy Periods? Here's What You Can Do:

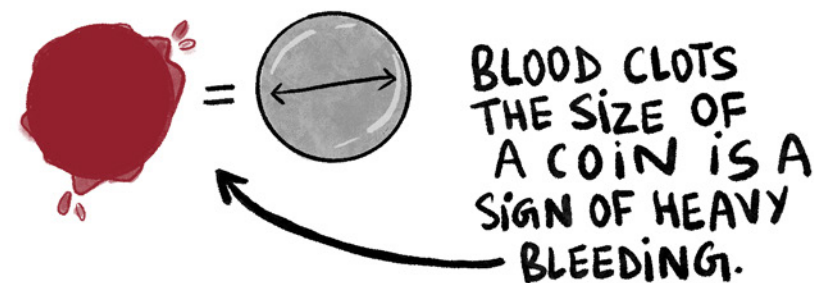
- 1. Get Help:** Consult a doctor for tailored treatments like hormonal medications, iron supplements, dietary adjustments, or surgical options, depending on severity.
- 2. Boost Your Iron:** Maintain adequate iron intake suitable for your needs and consider consulting a registered dietitian or sports nutritionist for guidance.
- 3. Stay Hydrated:** Drink plenty of water, especially during your period when blood loss is significant.
- 4. Rest Up:** Ensure sufficient sleep and try relaxing activities like yoga or meditation to manage stress.
- 5. Take It Easy:** Avoid strenuous activities when feeling tired. Save intense workouts for when bleeding reduces.
- 6. Ease the Pain:** Use over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen if cramps are troublesome.

By addressing the root cause of heavy bleeding, boosting your iron levels, and taking care of yourself, you can manage fatigue and regain energy during your period.

**Q:** How often should i change my sanitary products?



**Q:** How to identify heavy bleeding?





## Additional Common Issues

Maintaining top-notch menstrual health is key for female athletes. Here's a rundown of common issues and how to handle them:

### 1. Anaemia:

- Spot It: Feeling tired, weak, dizzy, or breathless during workouts.
- Get Help: See a doctor for a blood test to check iron levels.
- Take Care: Eat iron-rich foods like spinach and lentils, and consider iron supplements if needed.

### 2. Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS):

- Spot It: Irregular periods, weight gain, or unusual facial hair growth.
- Get Help: Consult a doctor for diagnosis and management.
- Take Care: Maintain a healthy diet and stay active; medications may be prescribed.

### 3. Low Energy Availability (LEA):

- Spot It: Feeling tired, getting sick often, or having irregular periods.
- Get Help: Talk to a sports-specialised doctor or dietitian to assess your diet and energy needs.
- Take Care: Fuel up with plenty of carbs and protein, and avoid overtraining.

### 4. Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S) / Female Athlete Triad (FAT):

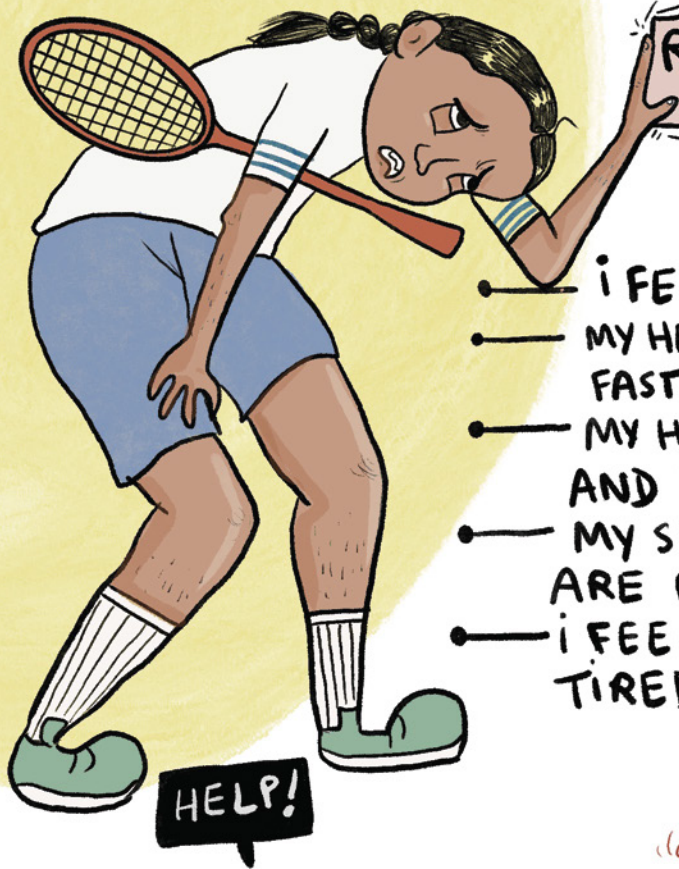
- Spot It: Concerns about weight, low energy, irregular periods, feeling weak, or frequent bone injuries.
- Get Help: See a sports medicine doctor or specialist familiar with athletes to review bone health, diet, and overall well-being.
- Take Care: Eat balanced meals, get sufficient rest, and avoid pushing too hard.
- Take Care: Eat balanced meals, ensure enough calories to meet your body's needs, get sufficient rest, and avoid pushing too hard.

### 5. Secondary Dysmenorrhea:

- Spot It: Excruciating periods, especially if symptoms worsen.
- Get Help: Consult a doctor to investigate underlying causes.
- Take Care: Follow medical advice, which may include medications or pain management techniques like heat therapy.

## Conclusion:

Your body is your powerhouse, especially in sports. If something seems amiss, don't hesitate to seek help. You deserve to feel great and perform at your best!



## RECOGNISING ANEMIA

- I FEEL OUT OF BREATH
- MY HEART IS BEATING TOO FAST AND LOUDLY
- MY HEAD FEELS LIGHT AND IT'S SPINNING
- MY SKIN AND GUMS ARE PALE
- I FEEL WEAK AND TIRED



GET REGULAR BLOOD TESTS

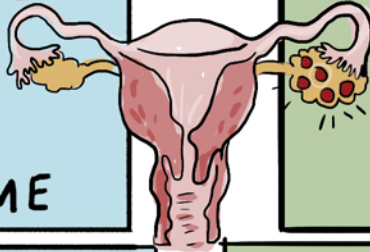


EAT IRON RICH FOODS LIKE SPINACH, LENTILS, AND RED MEAT



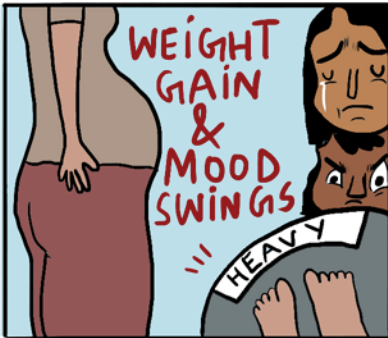
# RECOGNISING PCOS

POLY  
CYSTIC  
OVARY  
SYNDROME



# MANAGING PCOS

PCOS cannot be cured but can be managed with the right kind of support, guidance, and lifestyle changes.



## Strength Training Benefits for PCOS:

### Strength Training for PCOS Management:

**Improves Insulin Sensitivity:** Strength training helps the body use glucose better, reducing insulin resistance, which is common in PCOS. This stabilizes blood sugar levels and helps athletes maintain energy during training (Hoeger et al., 2008; Sprung et al., 2013).

**Reduces Inflammation:** PCOS can cause inflammation, which affects recovery and performance. Strength training lowers inflammation, helping athletes recover faster and train without excess fatigue (Stovall et al., 2011; Hoeger et al., 2008).

**Supports Muscle and Metabolism:** Building muscle increases metabolism, which is important for managing energy and weight in PCOS. It helps athletes stay energized and perform better (Stovall et al., 2011; Sprung et al., 2013).

**Overall PCOS Management:** Strength training, along with a healthy diet, stress management, and sleep, works together to control PCOS symptoms and improve athletic performance.

# Contraception

## An option in your arsenal

### What is Contraception?

Contraception, or birth control, stops pregnancy by blocking conception. These methods prevent ovulation, thicken cervical mucus, alter the uterine lining, and block sperm. When used correctly, they're very effective.

### Contraception and Performance

Originally for pregnancy prevention, contraception helps athletes control their menstrual cycles, manage period pain, and treat conditions like endometriosis, which can affect performance.

#### Types of Contraception

#### Hormonal Contraceptives:

- Combined Oral Contraceptive Pills (OCPs): Regulate periods and ease menstrual symptoms.
- Progestin-Only Pills: Fewer side effects on performance.
- Emergency Contraceptive Pills: Use after unprotected sex, not regularly.
- Hormonal IUDs: Reduce or stop periods.
- Depo-Provera Shot: Effective for 12 weeks, may cause irregular bleeding.
- Contraceptive Patch: Releases hormones to prevent pregnancy

.

#### Non-Hormonal Contraceptives:

- Copper IUD: Prevents pregnancy without affecting periods.
- Condoms: Barrier against pregnancy and STIs.
- Fertility Awareness: Tracks cycles to avoid fertile days.

### Contraceptive Methods by Duration

Short-Acting: Daily usage needed like the Hormonal Pill (OCP).

Long-Acting: Last months to years like IUDs.

Reversible: Fertility returns after stopping.

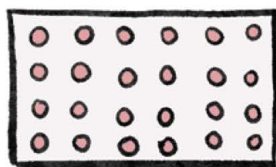
Permanent: Non-reversible methods like sterilisation.



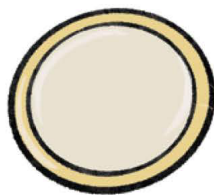
# GUIDE TO DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONTRACEPTION

KEEP READING  
TO KNOW HOW  
HORMONAL PILLS  
AFFECT & ALTER  
YOUR HORMONES

## HORMONAL



① PILLS  
COMBINED OR  
PROGESTOGEN  
ONLY

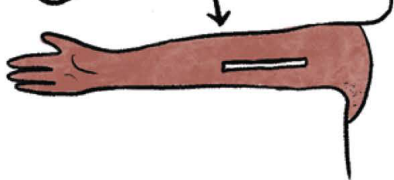


② RING

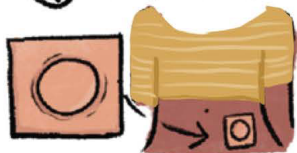


⑤ INJECTION/  
SHOTS

③ IMPLANT



④ PATCH

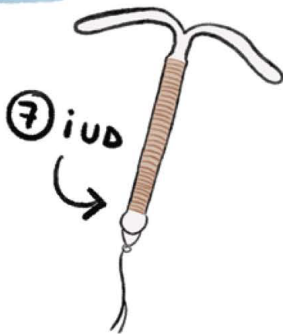


## NON-HORMONAL



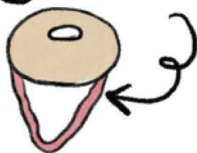
⑥ FEMALE  
CONDOM

⑨ DIAPHRAGM



⑦ IUD

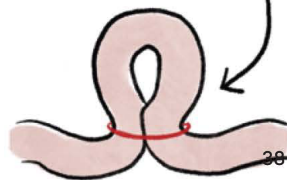
⑧ SPONGE



⑩ MALE  
CONDOM



⑪ TUBECTOMY

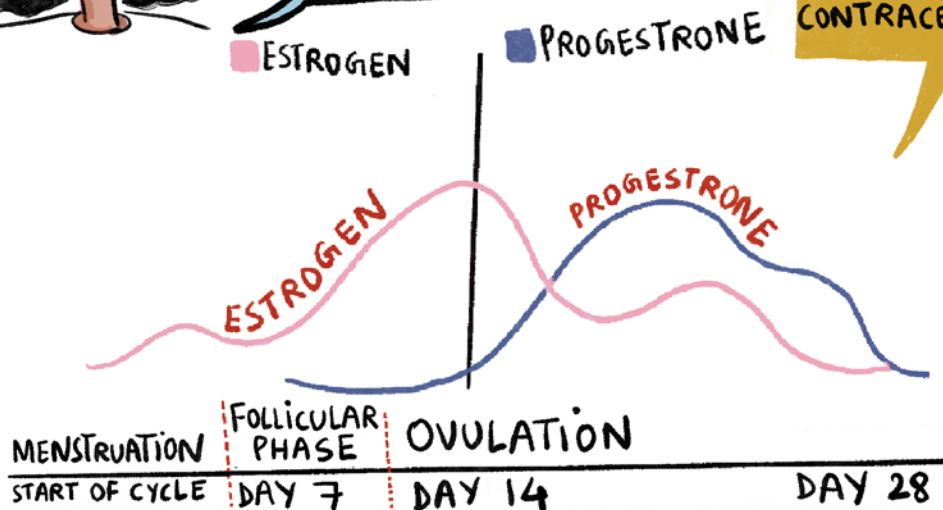






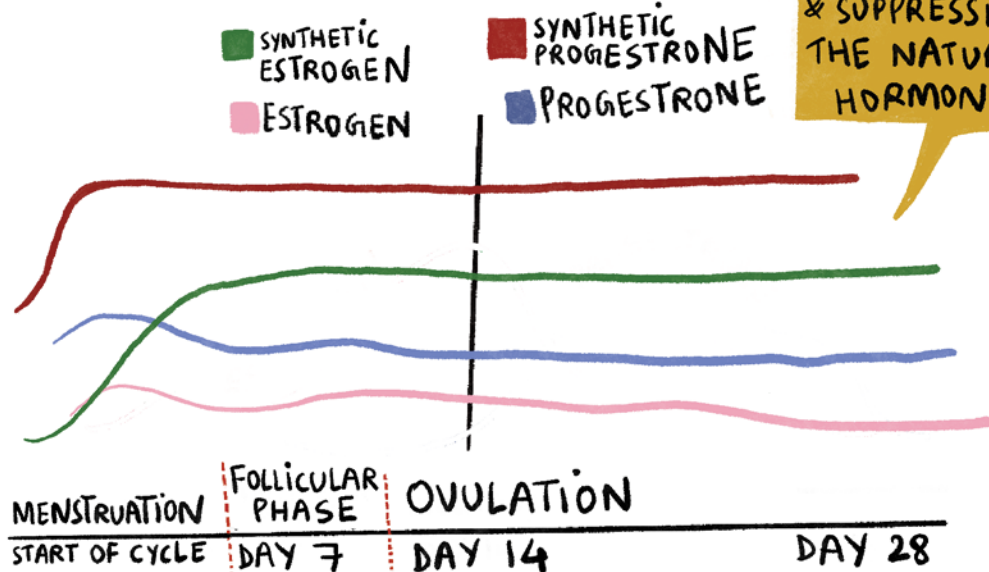
# HOW DO HORMONAL PILLS WORK?

THE REGULAR HORMONAL DANCE WITHOUT THE HORMONAL CONTRACEPTION



VS.

PILLS WORKING THEIR MAGIC & SUPPRESSING THE NATURAL HORMONES



## Recognizing Low Energy Availability (LEA) and FHA in Athletes Using Contraception

### Understanding LEA and FHA:

- Low Energy Availability (LEA): Not enough energy intake for daily needs after exercise.
- Functional Hypothalamic Amenorrhea (FHA): Periods stop due to energy deficiency, stress, or exercise.

### Impact of Contraception:

- Hormonal Contraception: Masks LEA and FHA symptoms with artificial cycles. Monitor fatigue, performance dips, and bone health.

### FAQs on the Pill

- Mandatory for Athletes? No, many athletes manage naturally.
- How Combined Pill Works: Regulates periods but not FHA.
- Impact on Performance: Side effects vary; consult healthcare providers.
- Managing Side Effects: Monitor and seek medical advice.
- Weight Gain: Minimal change; temporary effects possible.

### Conclusion

Choosing contraception involves personal needs and impacts on performance. Athletes should consult healthcare providers for tailored advice.



# HOW DOES THE PILL AFFECT THE FUNCTIONING OF MY UTERUS?

VS.

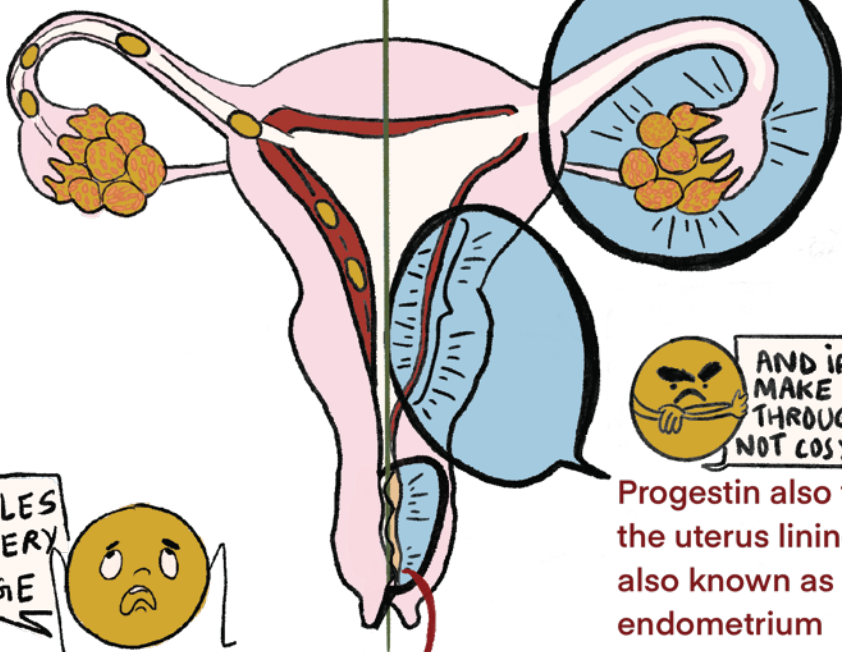
YOUR UTERUS WITHOUT THE PILL

YOUR UTERUS ON THE PILL

WON'T LET US THROUGH



Progestin prevents eggs being released from the ovaries



HURDLES AT EVERY STAGE



Progestin also thickens the mucus in the cervix, preventing the sperm from reaching the egg

AND IF WE MAKE IT THROUGH, IT'S NOT COSY!



Progestin also thins the uterus lining also known as endometrium

# Nutrition

## Fueling your strength



### Why Female Nutrition Differs:

Women athletes need tailored nutrition due to hormonal changes and differences in body composition, including muscle mass, fat mass, and body weight compared to men. Key life stages—such as the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and menopause—affect nutrient requirements, making specific dietary plans essential for optimal health and performance. Hormonal shifts might impact energy needs, recovery, and nutrient absorption, all of which are central to female athletes' dietary planning.

### Eating for Training Intensity: Athlete's Plate

- **Easy Training Days:** Balanced meals with complex carbs (rice, whole grains), lean proteins (lentils, cottage cheese), healthy fats (walnuts, seeds), and fruits/vegetables.
- **Moderate Training Days:** Increase carbs with grains, legumes, and veggies; add proteins (chicken, fish, tofu); stay hydrated (8-10 glasses/day).
- **Hard Training Days:** Prioritise pre/post workout carbs, ample proteins for muscle repair, and hydrate with water and electrolytes.

### Sources of Iron and Protein in the Diet:

#### Iron-Rich Foods:

- Vegetarian: Spinach, kale, lentils, beans, tofu, fortified cereals, nuts, seeds.
- Non-Vegetarian: Lean red meat, chicken, turkey, fish (salmon, tuna, sardines), shellfish (clams, mussels).

#### Protein Sources:

- Vegetarian: Lentils, beans, chickpeas, tofu, tempeh, cottage cheese, yogurt, nuts, soy products.
- Non-Vegetarian: Eggs, poultry, fish, lean meats, dairy (milk, yogurt, cheese).

### Dishes Combining Iron and Protein:

- Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals can provide the right balance when paired well.
- Options include lentil soup with tomatoes, chickpea curry with lemon, tofu stir-fry with broccoli and peppers, grilled chicken with citrus marinade, fish curry in tomato sauce, or egg scramble with spinach and salsa.
- Pairing these dishes with vitamin C-rich foods like citrus fruits, tomatoes, or bell peppers boosts iron absorption.
- Since calcium-rich foods (milk, yogurt, cheese, paneer) can reduce iron absorption when eaten together with the iron-rich food, it's best to enjoy them at a different time of day to support bone health.
- Include protein in every meal and snack for muscle growth and repair. Aim for 20-30 grams per meal based on energy needs and training.

### Hydration Essentials:

- Stay hydrated before, during, and after exercise, especially in hot climates.
- Monitor hydration by aiming for a pale yellow urine colour.

By nailing your nutrition, you'll boost performance and feel stronger, whether on easy days or pushing hard. Keep it balanced, stay hydrated, and enjoy those gains!





Aliyah, a star wrestler is determined to lose weight to qualify for the upcoming tournament. So she starts to skip meals and train excessively in order to drop the extra kilos.



But soon she starts to experience fatigue, exhaustion, and dizziness.

Worried about her poor performance, she approaches her S&C coach for help.



ALIYAH, ARE YOU EATING AND RESTING WELL? LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE **LEA** [LOW ENERGY AVAILABILITY] THIS HAPPENS WHEN YOUR ENERGY INTAKE IS TOO LOW TO SUPPORT YOUR TRAINING & DAILY ACTIVITIES. LET'S TALK TO A **NUTRITIONIST** ALSO.

Along with her coach, they approach a nutritionist to get Aliyah's diet plan fixed.

With right help and guidance, Aliyah becomes stronger, healthier, and happier.



# KNOW YOUR PLATE!

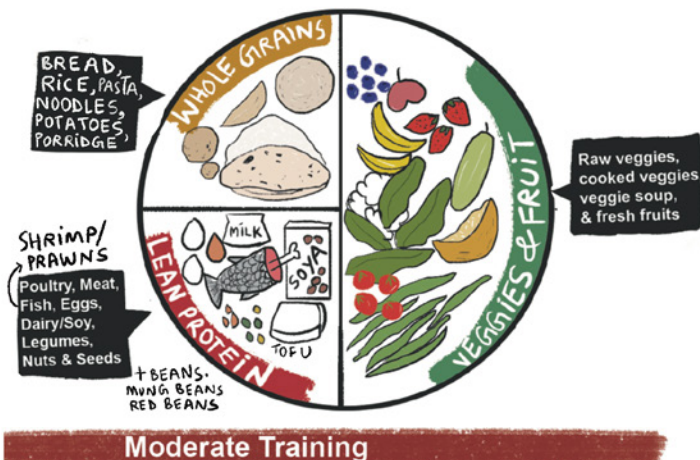


**The Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale** helps athletes gauge training intensity:

**Easy Training (RPE 1-4)** involves light activities with balanced plates,

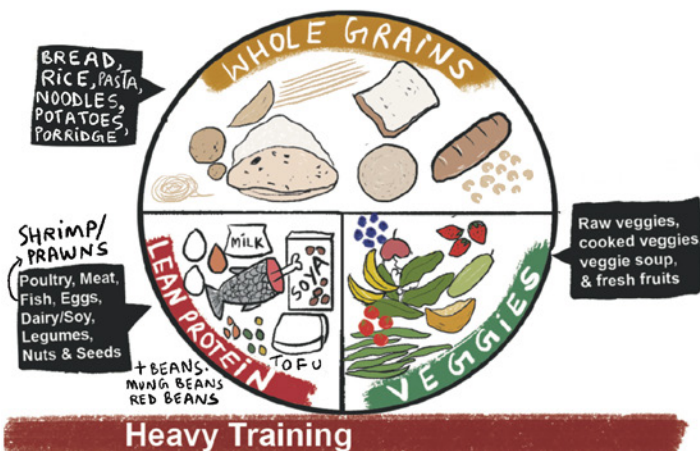
**Moderate Training (RPE 5-7)** involves moderate effort with higher carbs, and

**Hard Training (RPE 8-10)** involves intense activities requiring high carbs and proteins for recovery.



Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE Scale)

10	Maximal
9	Really, Really, Hard
8	Really Hard
7	
6	Hard
5	Challenging
4	Moderate
3	Easy
2	Really Easy
1	Rest



**AVOCADO OIL, SESAME OIL, PEANUT SAUCE**

**Fats** : 1-3 teaspoons oils, seeds, butter, cheese.

**Seasoning** : salt, pepper, chilli, ketchup.

**Hydration** : Water, buttermilk, tender coconut water.





## The Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale

The RPE Scale helps athletes gauge their level of fatigue and effort during training. This is particularly useful for female athletes to monitor energy and performance around their menstrual cycle.

**Understanding Effort:** The RPE scale (usually from 1 to 10) allows athletes to rate how hard they feel they are working, where higher numbers indicate more intense effort. Tracking RPE can show how training feels on different days of the menstrual cycle.

**Managing PMS Symptoms:** PMS can influence perceived effort, often making exercises feel harder or more tiring. Tracking RPE along with menstrual symptoms can help athletes adjust training intensity to avoid overexertion when symptoms are high.

**Hydration Awareness:** Fluid needs can vary during the cycle. Noting RPE with hydration can highlight how staying well-hydrated impacts training, especially when energy levels fluctuate across the cycle.

**Coaches can use the Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale** practically to monitor and adjust training for athletes, especially with their menstrual cycle. Here's how they can apply it:

**Daily Check-Ins:** At the beginning and end of each session, coaches can ask athletes to rate their perceived exertion on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is minimal effort, and 10 is maximal. This provides a quick insight into how hard athletes feel they're working and how fatigued they are on any given day.

**Cycle-Based Adjustments:** By tracking RPE alongside the athlete's menstrual cycle, coaches can identify patterns. For instance, athletes may report higher RPE during the luteal phase or around PMS. Coaches can reduce training intensity or volume during these times and increase it when RPE is lower and energy levels are naturally higher, often around the follicular phase.

**Individualized Training Loads:** Since each athlete's response to their menstrual cycle can differ, RPE offers a way to tailor training loads individually. If an athlete consistently reports a high RPE despite moderate training, it may signal the need for more recovery, hydration, or nutritional adjustments. This approach encourages personalized training plans that support long-term performance and prevent overtraining.

**Using RPE helps coaches balance effort with recovery and empower athletes to better understand their physical and mental readiness, which can be especially beneficial for female athletes managing cycle-related fluctuations.**

# Period Tracking

## A Playbook for better performance

### Why Track Your Period?

- Understand Your Body: Gain insights into how your cycle impacts training and performance.
- Manage Symptoms: Effectively handle fatigue, pain, or mood swings.
- Optimise Training: Adjust strategies for better performance across menstrual phases.
- Prevent Injuries: Spot patterns that might increase injury risks and take preventive action.
- Healthcare Guidance: Provide precise data for improved diagnosis and treatment.

### How to Track Your Period?

- Use a Period Tracker: Log period days, PMS symptoms, hydration levels, and flow intensity.
- Daily Entries: Keep consistent daily entries for accurate cycle monitoring.
- Record Symptoms: Note premenstrual signs like cramps, bloating, and breast tenderness.
- Track Hydration: Monitor water intake to ensure proper hydration.
- Monitor Injuries: Note any injuries and their correlation with menstrual cycle phases.

### When to Track Your Period?

- Consistently: Track daily for at least 3 months to gather comprehensive data.
- Daily Updates: Update your tracker daily for precise monitoring.
- Before & After Workouts: Monitor how your cycle affects performance, recovery and symptoms.

### Making Sense of Tracker Data

- Identify Patterns: Spot trends in symptoms, flow intensity, and hydration.
- Symptom Correlation: Understand how symptoms align with menstrual phases and training.

### Referring Athletes to Healthcare Professionals

- Bloating and Fatigue: Consult a nutritionist for dietary advice.
- Heavy Bleeding, Irregularity: Seek evaluation from a gynaecologist.
- Mood Changes: Refer to a psychologist or gynaecologist for support.
- Muscular Pain: Consult a physiotherapist for soreness management.

### Planning Around Symptoms

- Individualised Training: Adjust intensity and type based on menstrual cycle and symptoms.
- Flexible Scheduling: Accommodate needs with adaptable training schedules.
- Symptom Management: Incorporate exercises, relaxation techniques and medication as needed.

### Personalised Period Management

- Tailored Strategies: Develop custom plans for each athlete's menstrual health.
- Monitor & Adjust: Continuously adapt plans based on athlete feedback and performance.
- Education & Support: Educate athletes on menstrual health and provide ongoing support.

Tracking periods and understanding the data empower athletes and coaches to optimize training, manage symptoms, and enhance performance effectively. With consistent tracking and personalised strategies, mastering period management in sports becomes a game-changer.

PERIOD, PMS & HYDRATION TRACKER

month:

1 = 2 LITRES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	+	○	CIRCLE PMS DAYS						
		✓	TICK YOUR PERIOD DAYS						

1 FLOW : COLOUR IN THE DROPS

- HEAVY - ○○○
- MEDIUM - ○○
- LIGHT - ○

4 POOP & PEE

- LOOSE
- NORMAL
- CONSTIPATED



2 MOOD : TICK THE BOXES

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
NORMAL	HAPPY	SAD	ANGRY	TIRED

5 INJURY :

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3 PAINS & ACHES :

- HEADACHES ☐
- BACK PAIN ☐
- ABDOMEN CRAMPS ☐
- BREAST TENDERNESS ☐

6 SLEEP :

- 5-6 HOURS ☐
- 6-8 HOURS ☐
- 8-10 HOURS ☐

BAD TOLERABLE LIGHT

NOTES:

# Seeking Guidance

## Strength through support



### When to Find Help

**Doctor's Visit:** If periods haven't started by age 15, irregular cycles, heavy bleeding, severe PMS, or ongoing irregularities.

**Nutritionist Needed:** Feeling low on energy, need proper fueling advice, managing weight, or suspecting nutrient deficiencies.

**Physiotherapist Required:** Persistent pain, injury management, rehabilitation needs, or mobility and strength issues.

**Psychologist Required:** Issues with eating, severe PMS effects, or mental health support impacting training.

**Sports Psychologist Needed:** Performance anxiety, mental blocks, motivation issues, team dynamics, goal setting, or coping strategies.

### Why Seek Help?

- Optimal Health: Address issues promptly for peak performance and well-being.
- Professional Support: Tailored guidance from doctors, nutritionists and psychologists for specific needs.
- Performance Enhancement: Ensure mental and physical readiness through targeted interventions.

### Summary

Knowing when to seek professional help ensures athletes maintain their health and perform at their best. Whether it's medical, nutritional, psychological, or sports-focused support, timely intervention can make all the difference in achieving athletic goals.

# Communication

## Clarity leads to cohesion



### Tips for Female Athletes

1. Speak Clearly: Communicate respectfully and directly about menstrual health.
2. Educate Your Coach: Explain common issues and provide resources for understanding.
3. Share Personal Experiences: Discuss how your cycle affects training and well-being.
4. Adjust Training: Propose changes when needed and seek professional advice.
5. Be Open: Foster trust by discussing openly.
6. Encourage Education: Suggest learning more about menstrual health.
7. Normalise Discussion: Highlight its importance for performance.
8. Seek Support: Consult experts if needed and advocate for your health.
9. Stand Up: Assert your right to discuss health for better performance.

### Tips for Coaches

1. Initiate Conversation: Start with general health topics and gradually discuss menstrual health.
2. Respectful Communication: Use clear, empathetic language without euphemisms.
3. Stay Informed: Educate yourself continuously on menstrual health.
4. Respect Privacy: Keep discussions confidential unless permitted otherwise.
5. Encourage Feedback: Create a safe space for athletes to share concerns.
6. Lead by Example: Discuss menstrual health openly and inclusively.
7. Utilise Resources: Use technology and educational tools.
8. Focus on Performance: Adapt training based on menstrual cycle phases.
9. Comfortable Environment: Create an approachable atmosphere.
10. Educate Athletes: Provide workshops and resources to demystify menstrual health.

By following these tips, athletes, and coaches can foster supportive environments that enhance understanding and performance in sports.





# Coaches Corner

## Creating Champions through Consideration



### Dear Coach,

Here are some essential insights and considerations to optimise your athletes' performance:

#### Anatomy

- Education: Understand female athletes' unique physiological and hormonal profiles.
- Training Design: Tailor programs to optimise strength and minimise injury risks.
- Open Discussion: Destigmatize menstrual cycles through open conversations.

#### Puberty

- Patience: Support athletes navigating the challenges of puberty.
- Dropout Risks: Address myths and body image issues to reduce dropout rates.
- Performance Impact: Recognize changes in performance due to growth and menstrual onset.
- Communication: Create an approachable environment for athletes to seek help.
- Support: Provide education on the benefits of well-fitted sports bras.

#### Menstrual Cycle

- Symptom Management: Offer sessions on managing cramps and mood swings.
- Healthcare Guidance: Encourage consulting professionals for tailored pain relief.
- Training Adjustments: Adapt schedules to accommodate severe symptoms.
- Stress Management: Integrate yoga and meditation into routines.
- Normalise Discussion: Promote open conversations about menstrual health.

#### Menstrual Products

- Product Knowledge: Educate on pads, tampons, and cups.
- Product Choice: Help athletes select appropriate products.
- Readiness: Ensure menstrual products are readily available.
- Facility Preparedness: Maintain clean toilets with ample supplies.

#### Menstrual Health Issues

- Diet: Promote iron-rich diets to combat anemia.
- Pain Management: Introduce heat therapy and medical consultations.
- Education: Inform about conditions like PCOS and their impact.
- Training Adaptation: Adjust training based on menstrual cycles.
- Open Communication: Create a comfortable space for discussing health.

## Contraception

- Workshops: Arrange educational sessions with healthcare professionals.
- Resources: Share credible materials on contraception.
- Personalized Advice: Encourage seeking tailored advice.
- Team Discussions: Facilitate supportive conversations.
- Privacy: Maintain confidentiality in handling concerns.

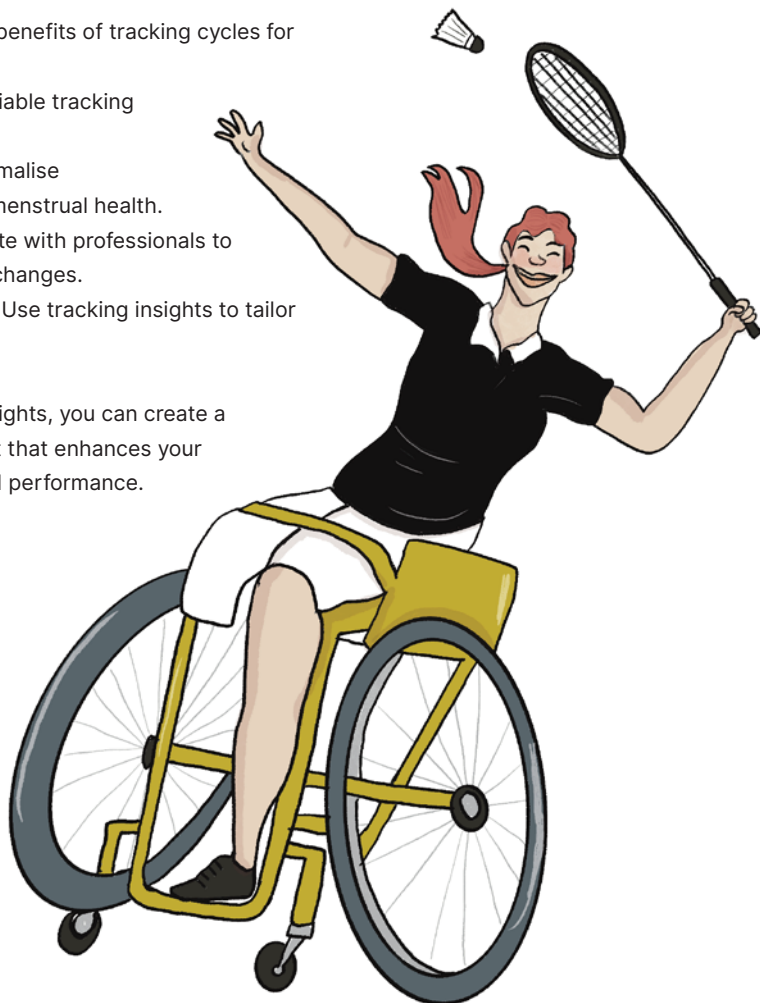
## Nutrition

- Workshops: Organise sessions on balanced diets with key nutrients.
- Resources: Provide meal plans and snack options.
- Tracking Apps: Recommend apps for monitoring dietary intake.
- Community: Encourage sharing healthy recipes.

## Period Tracking

- Education: Teach the benefits of tracking cycles for training insights.
- Apps: Recommend reliable tracking apps.
- Open Discussion: Normalise conversations about menstrual health.
- Workshops: Collaborate with professionals to explain physiological changes.
- Training Adjustments: Use tracking insights to tailor training intensity.

By embracing these insights, you can create a supportive environment that enhances your athletes' well-being and performance.



# Definitions

## Corpus Luteum

Think of the corpus luteum as the body's "hopeful home decorator." After an egg is released from the ovary during ovulation, the corpus luteum forms. Its main job? To get the uterus all cozy and ready, just in case that egg decides to stick around and turn into a baby. If that egg gets fertilized, the corpus luteum keeps producing hormones to support the early stages of pregnancy. But if not, it starts to fade away, like a decorator packing up after a job well done!

## Estrogen

Imagine estrogen as the body's superstar hormone. It's like the director of growth and beauty in a woman's body. Here's what it does:

**Body Changes** - Estrogen is the hormone that helps shape a woman's body. It's responsible for those feminine curves, like growing breasts and widening hips during puberty.

**Skin and Hair** - Ever notice how skin can be glowing and hair looks shiny during certain times? Thank estrogen for that! It helps keep skin soft, hair luscious, and even promotes a healthy scalp.

**Bone Health** - Estrogen plays a role in keeping bones strong and healthy. It helps with bone density, which is super important as we grow older to prevent things like osteoporosis.

## Progesterone

Now, meet progesterone, the calming counterpart to estrogen. It's like the body's peacekeeper and nurturer. Here's what it does:

**Uterus Prep** - Progesterone gets the uterus all ready for a possible baby each month. It makes the lining of the uterus thick and cosy, just in case an egg gets fertilised.

**Mood and Sleep** - This hormone can make you feel relaxed and calm. Sometimes, it might even make you a bit sleepy, especially as it increases at specific times during the menstrual cycle.

Together, estrogen and progesterone make a dynamic duo, shaping the body, keeping it healthy, and preparing it for whatever life's adventures might be!

## Fallopian Tubes

Ah, the fallopian tubes! These are the "tiny tunnels" where the magic happens. They're like the VIP lanes for eggs, guiding them from the ovaries to the uterus. It's where eggs might meet some sperm, leading to possible baby-making!

## Vulva vs Vagina

### Vulva

Meet the vulva, the body's "front porch." It's the whole area on the outside, with parts like the clitoris, labia, and urethra. Think of it as the gateway to the magical world inside.

### Vagina

Now, the vagina is more like the "inner hallway." It's the muscular tube inside that connects the vulva to the uterus. It's where the action happens, especially during baby-making time or when things need to exit the building!

## Menstruation vs Menstrual Cycle

### Menstrual Cycle

Think of the menstrual cycle as Mother Nature's monthly planner. It's the whole process that takes about a month, getting the body ready for a possible pregnancy. From releasing an egg to preparing the uterus, it's like a behind-the-scenes tour of the female body's monthly activities.

### Menstruation

Ah, menstruation! This is the "cleanup crew" part of the menstrual cycle. If no egg meets a sperm and the uterus isn't needed for a baby, it sheds its lining. That's what we lovingly call a period or menstruation. It's like the monthly reset button for the uterus!

## Ovary, Ovum, Egg

### Ovary

Meet the ovary, the body's "egg factory!" It's like a little storage room where eggs hang out and wait for their big moment.

### Ovum

Now, an ovum is like the "star candidate" in the ovary's lineup. It's a single, mature egg that's ready for the spotlight and potential baby-making.

### Egg

Last but not least, the egg! Whether you call it an ovum or just an egg, it's that special cell that, with a little help from a sperm, could turn into a brand-new human. It's the main ingredient for making babies!

### Uterus

Think of the uterus as a cosy room in a woman's body where a tiny baby starts to grow during pregnancy.

**Urethra:**

The urethra is like a tiny tube that acts as a pathway for pee to leave the bladder and go outside of the body.

**Labia Minora (Inner Labia):**

These are like two delicate curtains that hug the entrance of a special place called the vagina. They start near a button called the clitoris and end near the door of the vagina.

**Labia Majora (Outer Labia):**

Imagine these as two protective blankets that wrap around the labia minora and other private parts. They also have tiny sweat and oil factories!

**Clitoris:**

The clitoris is like a tiny button that is suspended from the pubic bone and it sits on top of the vulva with very sensitive nerve endings.

**Anus:**

The anus is the exit door at the end of your tummy tube where poop says goodbye to your body.

**Rectum:**

Picture the rectum as a storage room at the end of the poop pipeline where poop waits before it's time to leave through the exit door, the anus.

**Pelvic Floor:**

Think of the pelvic floor as a strong hammock that holds up important organs in your tummy, like a safety net for your bladder, poop room, and baby room. It helps you control your pee and poop, and even helps when you want to jump around or have a baby one day!

**Endometriosis:**

Endometriosis is when uterine-like tissue grows outside the uterus, affecting areas like the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and pelvic cavity. This can cause inflammation, scarring, painful cysts, severe cramps, heavy bleeding, and pain during sex.

**Fibroids:**

Fibroids are noncancerous growths in or on the uterus, composed of smooth muscle cells and fibrous tissue.

**Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS):**

Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) is a serious condition that can happen when using tampons and menstrual cups. It's caused by a toxin from the bacterium *Staphylococcus aureus*, which can grow in the vagina. The risk of TSS increases with prolonged or frequent use of these products.



# Resources

## Global Resources for Menstrual Health in Sports

### 1. Australia

Australian Institute of Sport: Female Performance & Health Initiative

### 2. Austria

Female Athlete AT

### 3. Ireland

SHE Research Group: Menstrual Health Education

Sport Ireland: Go with the Flow – Menstrual Cycle and the Female Athlete (Webinar)

### 4. New Zealand

Sport New Zealand: Itsmymove

High-Performance Sport New Zealand: WHISPA (Healthy Women in Sport: A Performance Advantage)

### 5. Norway

Sunn Idrett: Den Kvinnelige Utøvertriaden

### 6. Sweden

Safe Parasport: The Female Para Athlete

### 7. Switzerland

Swiss Olympic: Female Athlete Resources

### 8. United Kingdom

Sport Scotland: Working with Female Athletes

EIS: Supporting the Developing Female Athlete

UK Coaching: Menstrual Cycle Series

### 9. United States

Female Athlete Science and Translational Research: Female Athlete Education

### 10. India

**Simply Periods Initiative by Simply Sports Foundation**

- Focused workshops and educational materials for young female athletes.

**Government of India's National Adolescent Health Program (Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram)**

- Aims to educate adolescents about menstrual health and hygiene.

# Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) in reviewing this handbook.

Their expertise and guidance have been instrumental in ensuring the factual accuracy and scientific integrity of the content presented here.

This collaboration reflects our shared commitment to advancing women's health in sport through evidence-based, accessible knowledge.



EMBRACE YOUR CYCLE  
AND UP YOUR  
GAME!

