

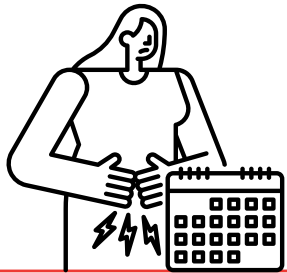
# **Coaching** **female athletes:**

***Understanding periods and performance***

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# Hey Coach!

Let's talk about something that can really impact your athletes: **periods**. Menstruation can affect training, performance, and even confidence on the field. Here's what you need to know and how you can help your athletes perform their best—even when they're not feeling their best.



## Menstruation

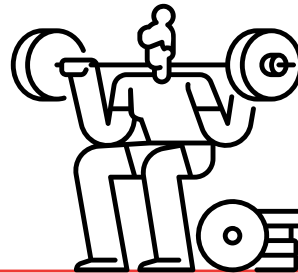
*Duration: 3-7 days*

### WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The body sheds the uterine lining, and hormone levels (oestrogen and progesterone) are at their lowest.

### IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

Athletes may feel more fatigued and experience cramps, headaches, or general discomfort. This is a good time to focus on lighter, low intensity workouts or active recovery.



## Follicular Phase

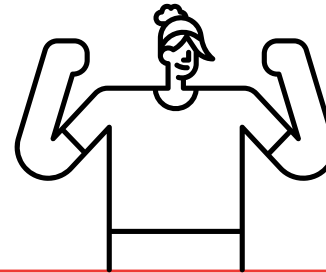
*Menstruation till ovulation*

### WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Oestrogen levels start to rise as the body prepares for ovulation, leading to an increase in energy and mood.

### IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

This is when athletes often feel their strongest. Energy levels are high, and the body is primed for endurance and strength training.



## Ovulation

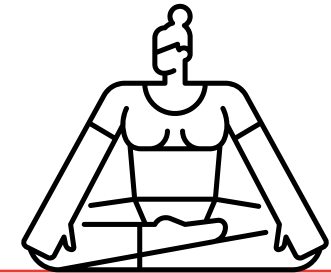
*Around day 14*

### WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Oestrogen peaks just before ovulation, and testosterone levels also increase slightly, boosting muscle-building potential.

### IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

Energy levels are still high, and athletes may feel powerful and competitive.



## Luteal Phase

*Ovulation till menstruation*

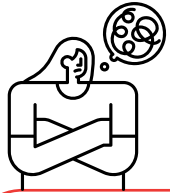
### WHAT'S HAPPENING?

After ovulation, progesterone rises and oestrogen declines. Athletes may experience a drop in energy and an increase in symptoms like bloating, irritability, or fatigue.

### IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

The second half of this phase can feel more challenging. Athletes may struggle with endurance, focus, and motivation as the body shifts toward recovery mode.

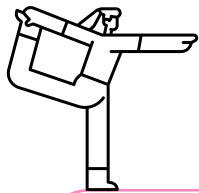
**Understanding the *Menstrual Cycle* and Its Impact on Performance**



## **Menstruation**

### **COACHING TIP:**

Be flexible with training intensity. Encourage rest and allow for modifications to workouts.



## **Luteal Phase**

### **COACHING TIP:**

Focus on steady, moderate training. This is a good time for flexibility, mindfulness exercises, and ensuring athletes are staying hydrated and well-nourished.



## **Follicular Phase**

### **COACHING TIP:**

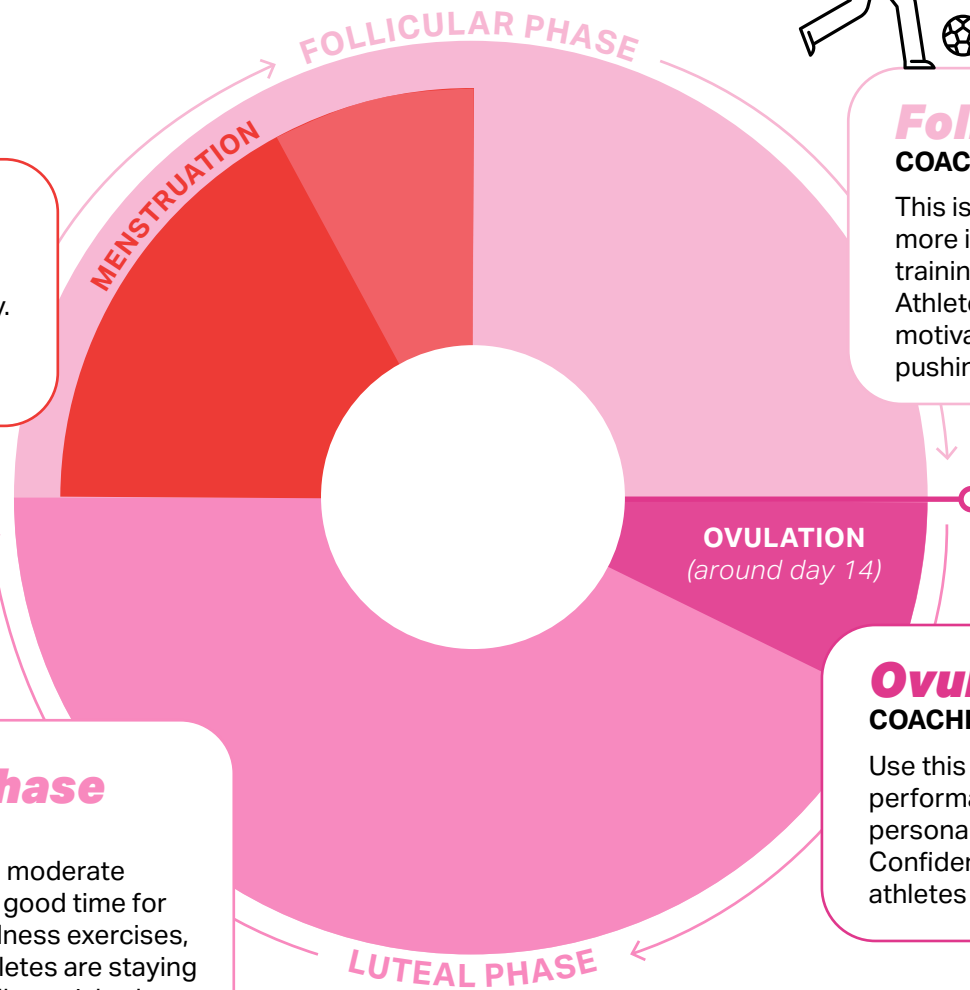
This is a great time to schedule more intense workouts, strength training, and competitions. Athletes are likely to feel more motivated and capable of pushing themselves.



## **Ovulation**

### **COACHING TIP:**

Use this time for peak performance activities, such as personal bests or heavy lifting. Confidence is usually high, and athletes may feel more assertive.



## **How periods can affect performance**

### **ENERGY UPS AND DOWNS**

Hormonal changes throughout the cycle can cause fluctuations in energy. Some days, athletes will be full of energy, while other days, fatigue might hit harder.

### **CRAMPS AND DISCOMFORT**

Many athletes experience cramps, back pain, or headaches during their period, making intense training more difficult.

### **MENTAL FOCUS**

Mood swings or feelings of anxiety can make it tough to concentrate during practice or competition.

### **HYDRATION AND RECOVERY**

Hormonal shifts can also affect hydration and muscle recovery, which means your athletes may need extra care during this time.

### **CRAVINGS AND NUTRITION**

Don't be surprised if they're craving sweets or salty snacks—this is common during their cycle.

## **Periods can be *unpredictable***

### **SURPRISE STARTS**

Sometimes periods arrive out of nowhere, which can catch your athletes off guard during training or a game.

### **LEAK WORRIES**

Leaks are a real concern for many athletes and can cause a lot of embarrassment. Having extra uniforms or shorts on hand and being discreet in these situations can make a huge difference.

### **SANITARY PRODUCTS**

Not everyone carries supplies all the time. Having extra pads or tampons in the locker room or coach's bag can be a lifesaver.

## **How you can *help***

### **KEEP THE CONVERSATION OPEN**

Encourage your athletes to share how they're feeling. A simple "How's everyone doing today?" can open the door for them to let you know if they need to take it easier.

### **BE FLEXIBLE WITH TRAINING**

Some days, athletes might need to dial it back or adjust their workout if they're in pain or feeling low on energy. It's okay to switch things up based on their needs.

### **BE PREPARED**

Keep a stash of sanitary products available, just in case. Athletes will appreciate having them on hand for emergencies.

### **HANDLE LEAKS WITH CARE**

If an athlete has a leak, offer them a solution—like a spare uniform—quickly and discreetly to avoid any embarrassment.

### **SUPPORT HYDRATION AND NUTRITION**

Make sure your athletes are staying hydrated and eating well, especially during their period when they may feel off balance.



## **Creating a** **supportive space**

### **NORMALISE THE CONVERSATION**

Periods are a natural part of life, so by treating them as such, you help reduce any stigma or discomfort athletes may feel.

### **ENCOURAGE HEALTHY CHOICES**

Yes, cravings happen, but remind your athletes to balance their diet to maintain their energy and performance.

### **PROMOTE REST AND RECOVERY**

Don't push athletes to perform through discomfort. Show understanding and flexibility when they need to rest.

### **REMEMBER**

Empathy and understanding go a long way. By being aware of how the menstrual cycle affects your athletes, you're not only supporting their performance—you're creating a positive, respectful environment that helps them thrive.