

BLOODY GOOD SPORT

sharethedignity

ATHLETE'S GUIDE *TO PERIODS*

Understanding periods
and performance



PERIODS+PERFORMANCE

Menstruation can affect training, performance, and even confidence on the field, but the menstrual cycle also offers plenty of opportunities for strength, power, and nourishment.

Let's take a look:

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MENSTRUAL CYCLE AND ITS IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE



MENSTRUATION

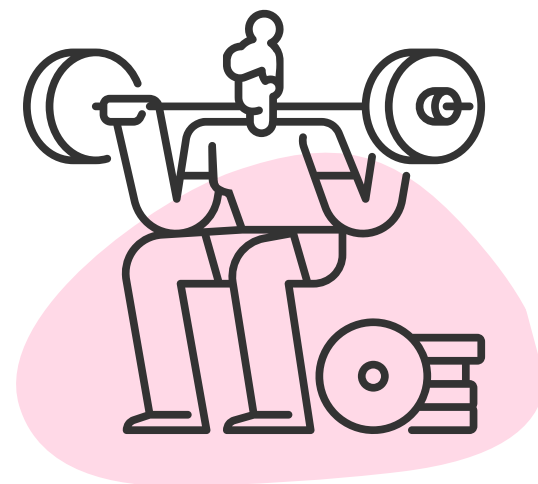
DURATION: 3 – 7 DAYS

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

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

IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE

You 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

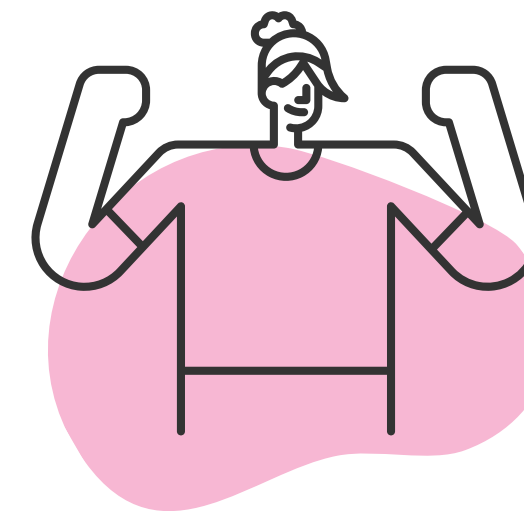
MENSTRUATION TILL OVULATION

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 you will often feel your strongest. Energy levels are high, and the body is primed for endurance and strength training.



OVULATION

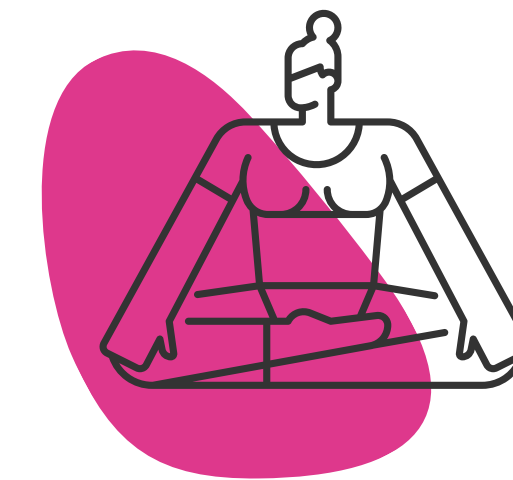
AROUND DAY 14

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 you may feel powerful and competitive.



LUTEAL PHASE

OVULATION TILL MENSTRUATION

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

After ovulation, progesterone rises and oestrogen declines. You 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. You may struggle with endurance, focus, and motivation as the body shifts toward recovery mode.

TRAINING TIPS

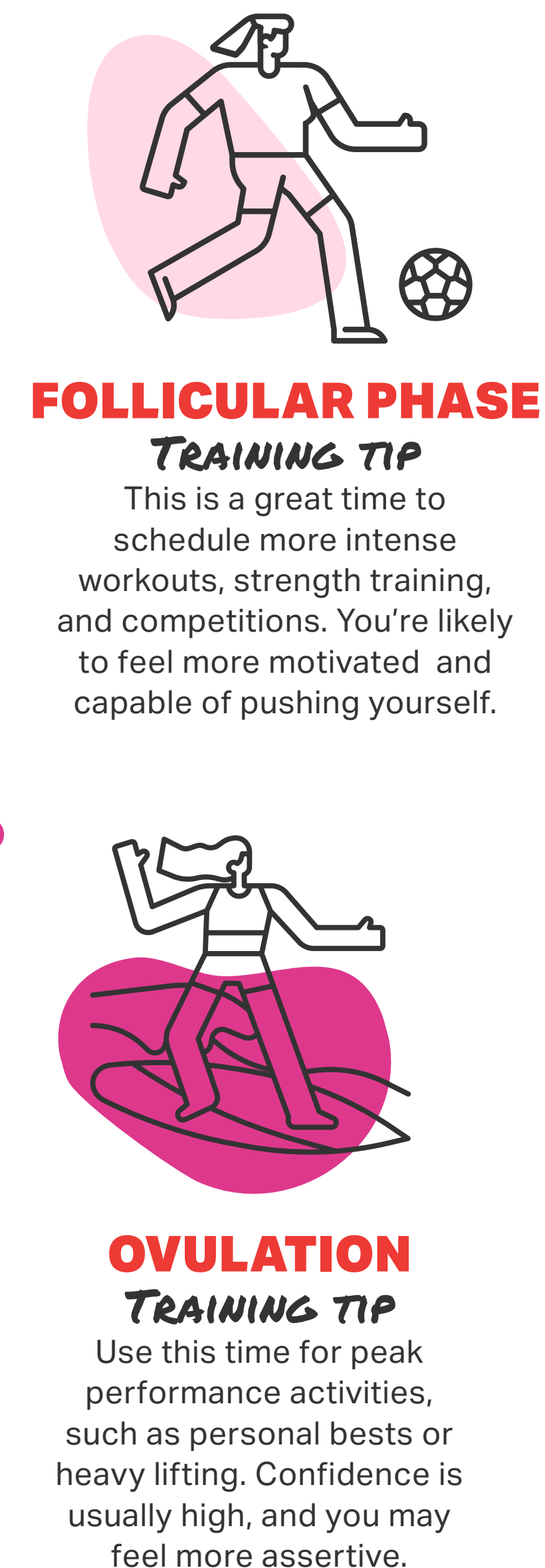
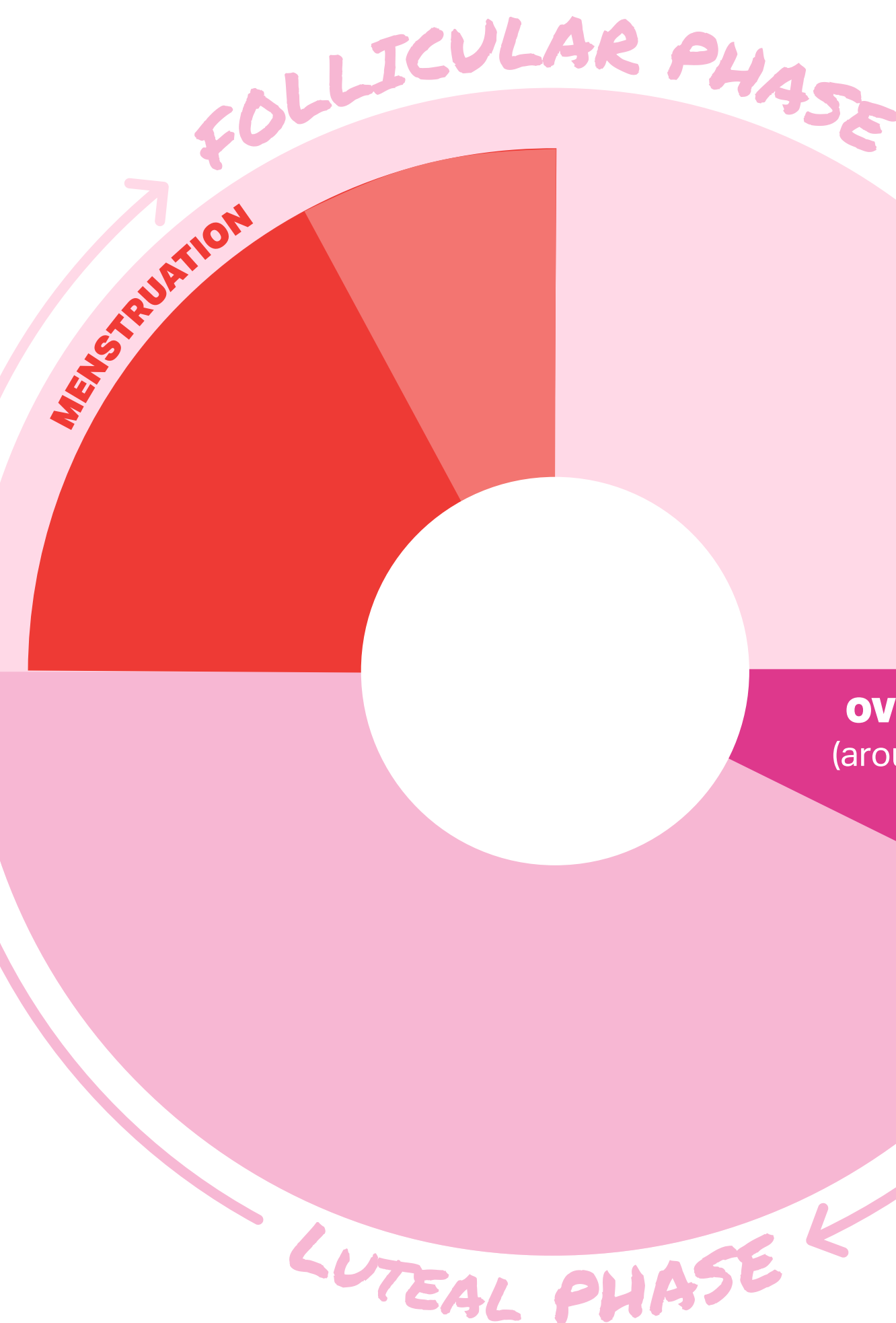
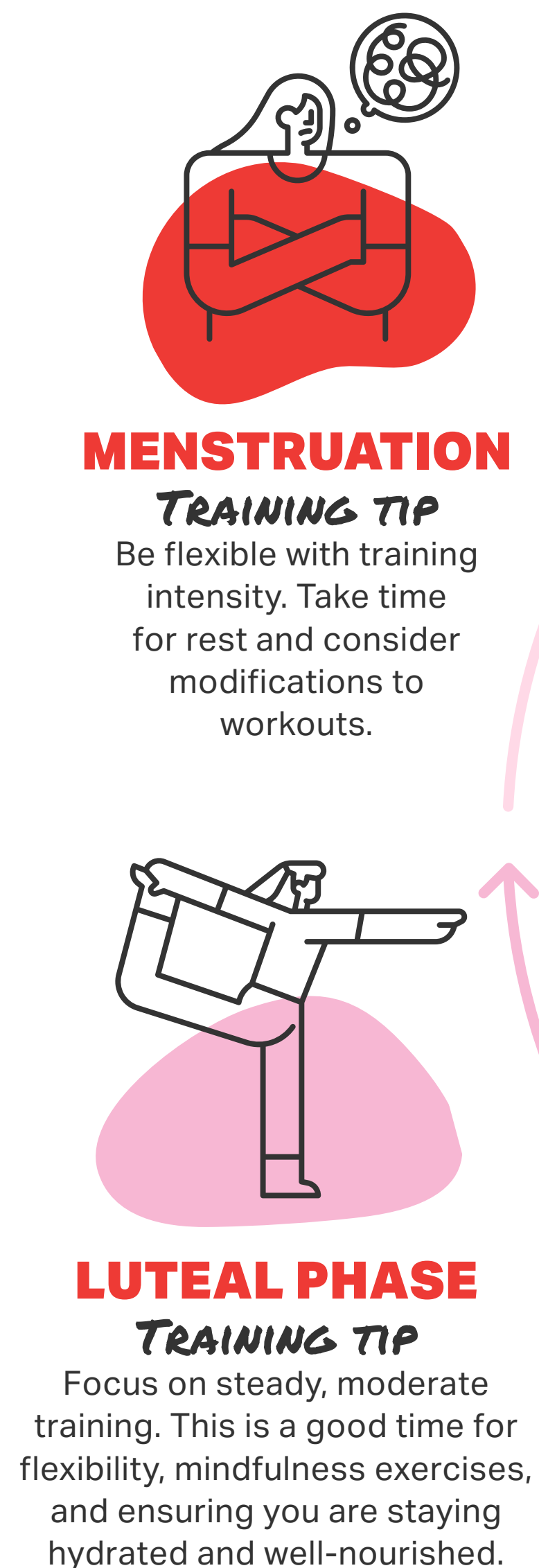
Your body changes across the menstrual cycle, and that can affect how you feel and perform.

These training tips help you understand those changes and train with confidence at each stage.

HOW PERIODS CAN AFFECT PERFORMANCE

Hormonal fluctuations throughout the menstrual cycle can cause notable variations in your energy levels, resulting in days of vigor followed by periods of fatigue. Many athletes encounter cramps, back pain, or headaches during their cycle, which can make intense training challenging.

Mood swings and anxiety may also disrupt mental focus during practices or competitions. Furthermore, these hormonal shifts can affect hydration and muscle recovery, highlighting the need for additional care during this time.



HOW TO MANAGE YOUR CYCLE SYMPTOMS

Pre-menstrual and period symptoms occur due to the fluctuations in hormones throughout the menstrual cycle. It's natural during the pre-menstrual time for you feel a little low in energy and a little more sensitive than usual. It's also normal to feel some mild fatigue, mild pelvic discomfort and a bit sensitive during your period. Below we have the most common pre-menstrual and period symptoms and suggestions on how to help relieve them.

COMMON PRE-MENSTRUAL AND PERIOD SYMPTOMS (AND HOW TO MANAGE THEM)

MOOD SWINGS

- ▶ Minimum 8 hours sleep a night
- ▶ Healthy fats: nuts, seeds, avocado, fish
- ▶ Leafy Greens: kale, spinach, broccoli
- ▶ Magnesium, B-complex vitamins*

BLOATING

- ▶ Herbal teas: peppermint, chamomile, ginger
- ▶ 1.5-2L water daily
- ▶ Fibre: oats, quinoa, legumes, pear, carrot, beetroot, chia seeds

FATIGUE

- ▶ Minimum 8 hours sleep a night
- ▶ Moderate-intensity exercise outdoors
- ▶ 1.5-2L water daily
- ▶ B-complex vitamins *

PAIN

- ▶ Heat packs
- ▶ Healthy fats: nuts, seeds, avocado, fish
- ▶ Leafy greens: kale, spinach, broccoli
- ▶ Ginger & turmeric tea
- ▶ Magnesium, B6, zinc, omega-3 fatty acids *

ACNE

- ▶ Healthy fats: nuts, seeds, avocado, fish
- ▶ 1.5-2L water daily
- ▶ Cut down sweets, junk food and refined foods like pastries
- ▶ Zinc, vitamin C *

**Consult with a health practitioner before starting new supplements.*



CHOOSING THE RIGHT PRODUCT *FOR YOU!*

When it comes to managing your period in sport, there's no one "right" product – it's about what makes you feel comfortable, confident, and ready to play. Every body is different, and what works for a teammate might not work for you.

WHICH PRODUCT IS *BEST FOR SPORT?*

There's no single "best" product. Some athletes love tampons or menstrual cups for swimming or high-movement sports. Others feel most secure in period underwear or pads. You might even use different products at different times, depending on your flow or the type of sport you're playing.

The key is to explore these choices and find what works best for you. It's your period, and you have the freedom to choose what suits your body.

PADS

Cotton-filled pads come in various sizes for different flows. They are adhesive, attach to your underwear, and come either with or without wings for additional security. Pads should usually be changed every 4 hours, or as soon as they feel too wet. Opt for unscented ones for comfort.

LINERS

Similar to pads, these are thin and great for light flows or vaginal discharge.

REUSABLE CLOTH PADS

Eco-friendly and cost-effective; these washable cloth pads are made from natural, unbleached cotton. They do not have a sticky side but usually have wings that snap into place. Reusable pads come in different sizes and can last for up to 2-3 years.

TAMPONS

Tampons are absorbent cylinders inserted internally, available with or without applicators. They're made of soft cotton and come with a handy string for easy removal. Tampons are perfect for active days and activities like swimming and should be changed every 4-6 hours.

MENSTRUAL CUPS

Made of silicone or rubber, these small, flexible, bell-shaped cups fit inside your vagina to collect menstrual flow. They can stay in for up to 8 hours and are perfect for sports, including swimming. Some are reusable if you take good care of them.

MENSTRUAL DISCS

A menstrual disc is a flexible, flat, reusable (or disposable) period product that sits inside the vaginal fornix, just below the cervix, collecting menstrual blood for up to 12 hours. They rely on gravity, not suction, to stay in place.

PERIOD UNDIES

These genius undies have a built-in liner that absorbs blood, meaning there's usually no need for additional products! They can be made from a variety of fibers, including cotton, bamboo, or synthetics. Period undies come in various sizes and absorbency options, and it is recommended you change into a new pair every 12 hours.



MORE RESOURCES

You can find more information and education resources from Bloody Good Sport: sharethedignity.org.au/end-period-poverty/advocacy/bloody-good-sport

More information about periods and period care, can be found in the Period Education Hub: [Period Education Hub](#)

For more information tailored to Female performance and Health, the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) has a suite of free education modules: [Education modules | Australian Sports Commission](#)

GAME ON PERIOD.

