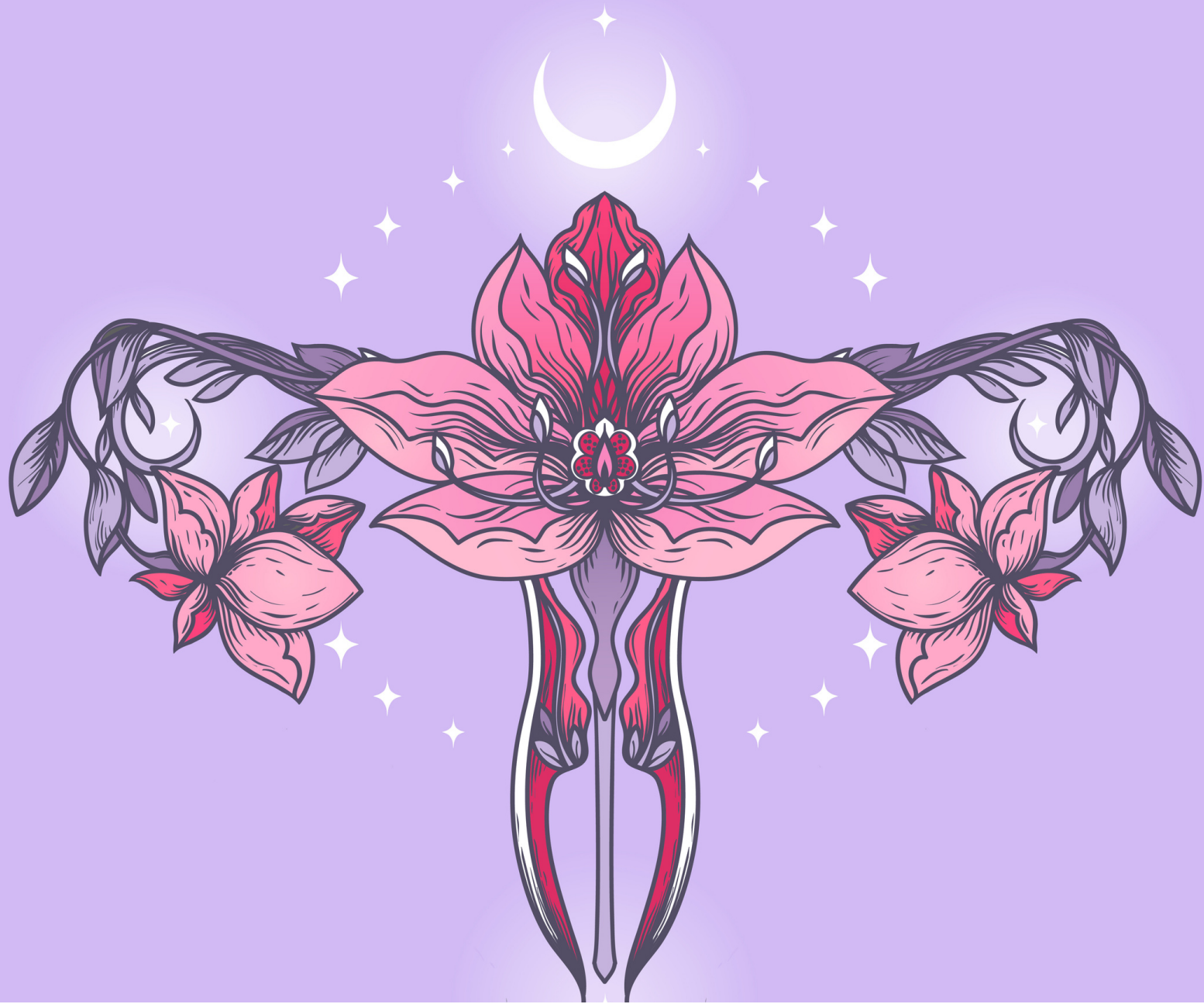




A phase-by-phase guide

KEEPING YOUR CYCLE ON TRACK

By Laura van der Velden, Intuitive Healer & Natural Health Consultant

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This guide is not intended as medical or health advice. If in any doubt, or if requiring medical advice, please contact the appropriate health professional. We recommend consulting with a qualified health professional before making major diet and lifestyle changes.

Holistic Approach 2 Health

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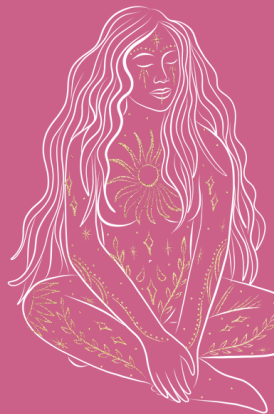
A LITTLE ABOUT ME



Hi, I'm Laura, an Intuitive Healer & Natural Health Consultant specialising in Naturopathic Nutrition and Insulin Resistance.

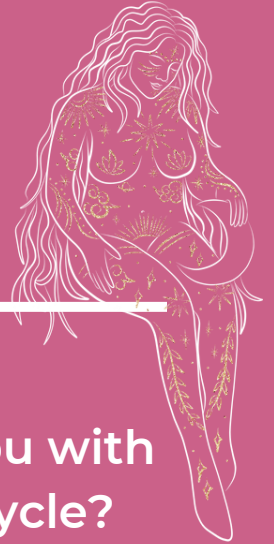
For a long time, I have been surrounded by family, friends and colleagues whose lives came to a complete standstill as soon as their periods were on their way. I've seen them deal with crippling pain, mood swings and lengthy and heavy bleeds that made them housebound.

I realised I was very lucky as my periods were easier compared to theirs. Ever since being a Natural Health Consultant I wanted to help other women have Happy Periods again as I've done so for myself.





TRACKING YOUR CYCLE: THE BASICS



how familiar are you with
your menstrual cycle?

No doubt you are familiar with your monthly period if you are a female of reproductive age. But how well do you know your menstrual cycle?

Women's bodies are always changing, and each day we are at a different point in our cycle. Where we are in our cycle can affect everything from our mood and energy levels to how we look and feel.

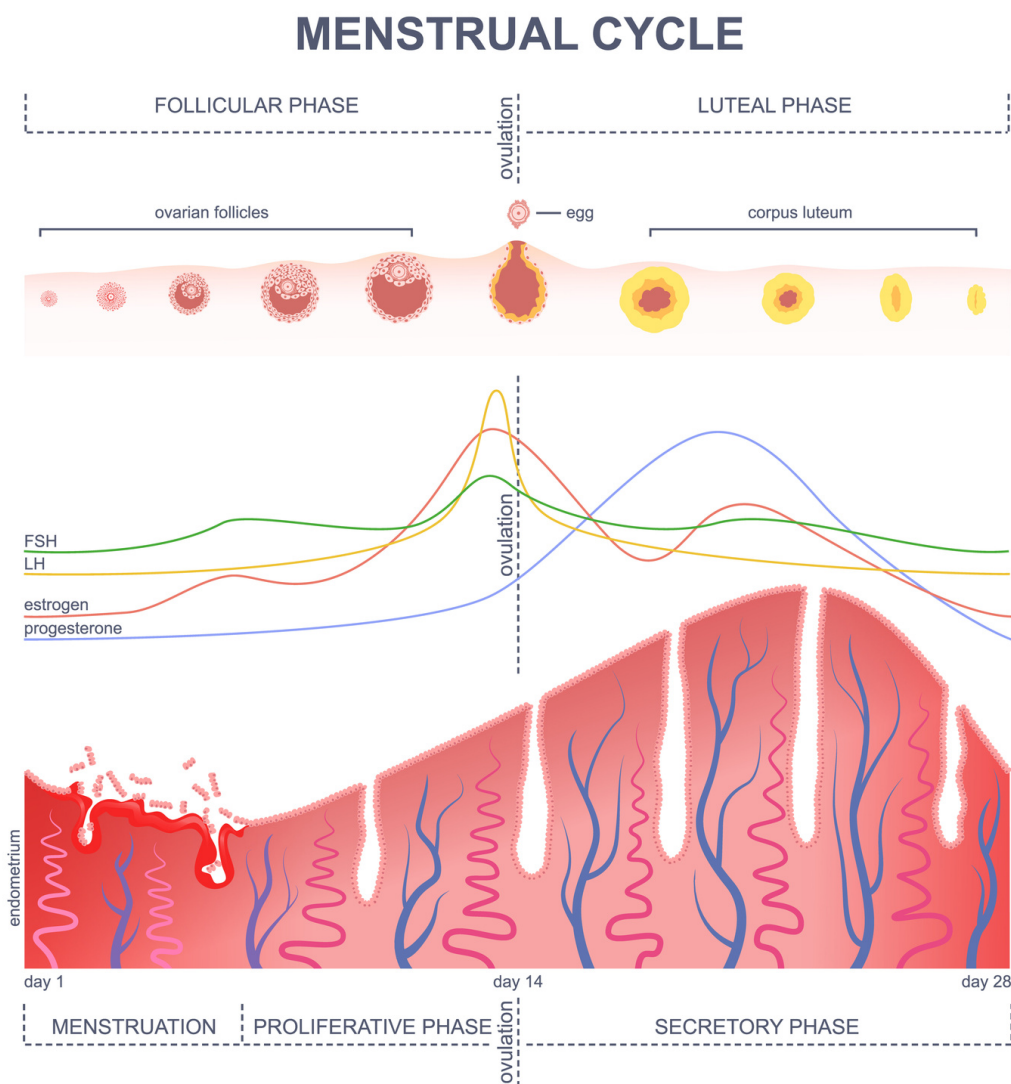
Understanding what is happening in our bodies each month enables us to be more in tune with how we best nourish and support ourselves physically, mentally, and emotionally.

The average menstrual cycle is 28 days, with the length of a healthy cycle ranging anywhere between 21 and 35 days.

Keeping Your Cycle on Track - A Phase-by-Phase Guide

There are three phases of the menstrual cycle and each phase comes with its own unique set of benefits and challenges.

The three phases are the follicular phase (which includes menstruation), ovulation, and the luteal phase.



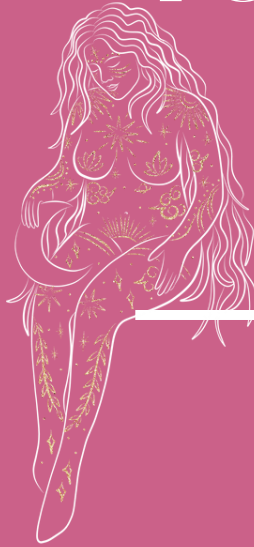
Each phase can be thought of in relation to the timing of the egg release.

The follicular phase is before the egg is released, ovulation is when the egg is released, and the luteal phase is after the egg is released.

Each cycle works to prepare your body for pregnancy, and if an egg does not become fertilized, then a new cycle begins.



FOLLICULAR PHASE



The follicular phase is the first part of the menstrual cycle. It begins with menstruation and ends with ovulation. At the beginning of the follicular phase, oestrogen and progesterone levels are at their lowest point, resulting in menstruation. The top layers of the endometrium (uterine lining) are broken down, shed, and eliminated through the vagina.

Menstruation marks the beginning of the menstrual cycle and typically lasts between 2 and 7 days. Bleeding is usually heaviest on the first two days and then tapers off until it stops altogether.

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It is important to know that women experience their periods very differently and what is normal for one person may not be normal for another.

When a woman is menstruating, her energy levels are usually lower and rest should be made a priority, if possible.

Menstruation is a form of cleansing. When we cleanse our bodies, rest and lighter forms of exercise like gentle stretching and walking are generally prescribed along with the cleanse.



During menstruation, follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) elevates slightly, which starts the development of follicles in the ovaries. Every follicle encapsulates an egg. Later in the follicular phase, FSH decreases, causing only one follicle to continue to develop.

Keeping Your Cycle on Track - A Phase-by-Phase Guide

The follicle begins to produce oestrogen, which begins to thicken the uterine lining to prepare for egg implantation. Oestrogen levels spike just before ovulation.

The average length of the follicular phase is 14 days (in a 28-day cycle), however, the length of this phase can range from 10 to 40+ days due to factors including stress levels or illness.



A woman's menstrual cycle color

Depending on the colour of your period, you can learn quite a bit about what's going on inside of your body.

Having brown-coloured blood at the beginning of your period can suggest your previous period wasn't shed efficiently.

Lack of circulation is usually to blame and can be easily corrected by drinking more water, exercising, stretching & practising womb massage.

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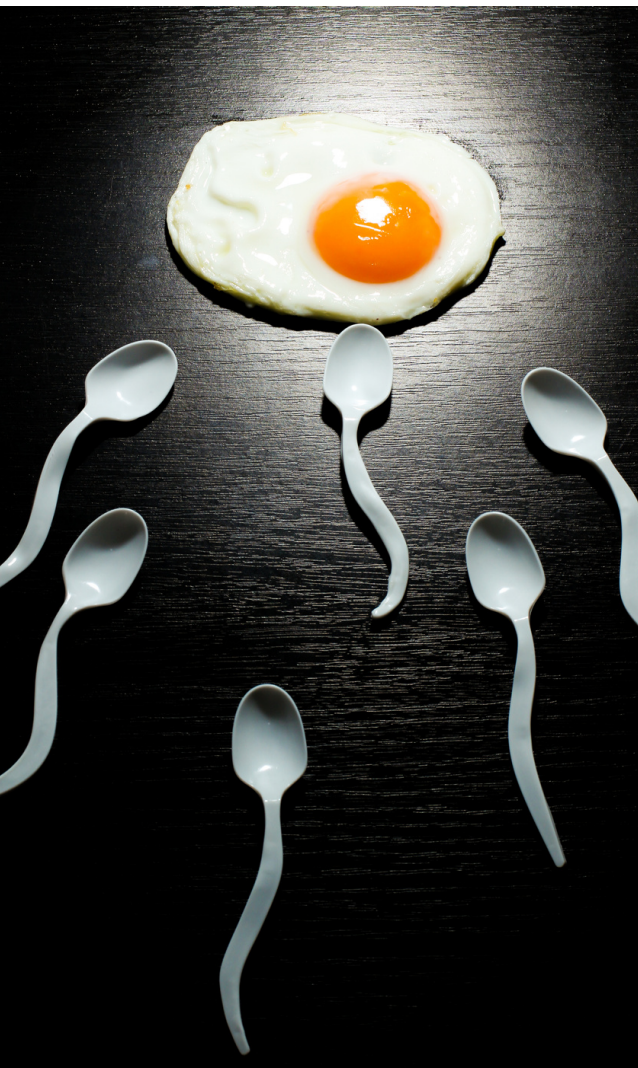
Fertility relies heavily on circulation and the full clearance of each menstrual cycle. Fertilized eggs cannot be implanted if there is a buildup of past menstrual periods, tissues, cysts, etc. In order to prepare the womb for conception, regular movement, blood flow, and circulation are powerful tools.



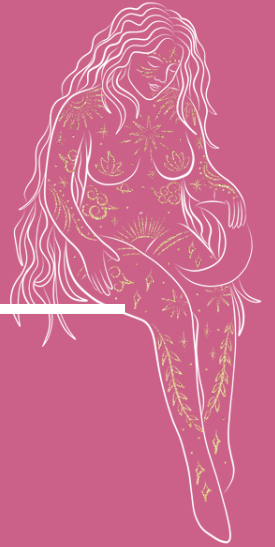
A healthy period is generally 3-4 days of bright red blood.

Having brown blood can also indicate low progesterone, which can contribute to PMS & infertility. Support your adrenals for better stress management and balanced progesterone levels.

The lack of blood is usually a sign of too little estrogen or a lack of essential vitamins and minerals. This can be caused by extreme diets, fasting, high levels of stress or adrenal exhaustion. You can rebalance your hormones and regain normal menstrual flow by consuming enough nutrients from whole foods and reducing stress.



OVULATION



Oestrogen levels rise rapidly just before ovulation, and eventually, the body will reach an oestrogen threshold. There will be an abrupt surge of luteinizing hormone (LH) triggered by high levels of oestrogen.

The sudden, large increase of LH signals the ovary to release the egg into the fallopian tube, where it can be met by a sperm and fertilized. In the standard 28-day cycle, ovulation occurs on day 14.

However, ovulation can occur anywhere from day 8 to day 21 (or later) depending on numerous factors including stress levels (excessive stress can cause a delayed ovulation time) or illness.

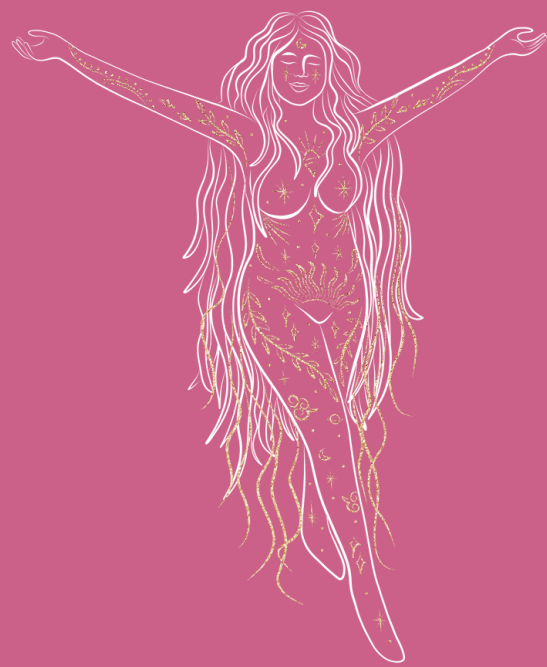
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This time of the month is when women generally have the most energy and will want to spend more time socializing and going out.



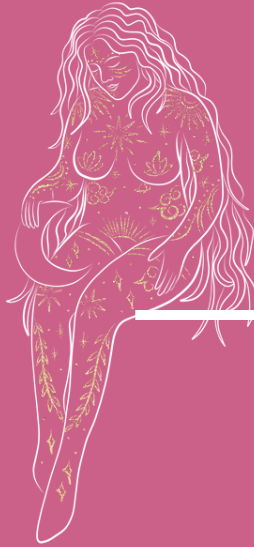
Ovulation is also the time when women tend to feel the most sexual, sensual, and aroused.

This makes sense when thinking of evolution because we want to have more energy around the time that we are fertile so we have the energy to socialize, choose a mate, and conceive, and nature puts us in the mood to do so.





LUTEAL PHASE



The luteal phase occurs after ovulation. After the egg is released from the ovary, the follicle that encapsulates the egg collapses and becomes the corpus luteum (literally, “yellow body”), which remains on the ovarian wall. The corpus luteum starts to release progesterone.

Progesterone causes four actions in the body:

1. It stops the release of all other eggs for the remainder of the cycle
2. It causes thickening and the sustaining of the uterine lining
3. It increases appetite
4. It causes a change in the three primary fertility signs (cervical fluid, waking temperature, and cervical position)

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PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME



The corpus luteum has a lifespan of about 12 to 16 days, after which it disintegrates if the egg is not fertilized.

When the corpus luteum breaks down, progesterone levels drop, ending the luteal phase and triggering the beginning of a new cycle starting with menstruation (the shedding of the endometrium lining) in the follicular phase.

During the luteal phase, you may experience PMS symptoms including constipation, bloating, increased appetite (especially for carbohydrates and sweets), mood swings, fatigue, and sore breasts.

Ensuring that you are getting adequate rest and sleep and consuming a nutritionally-dense, well-balanced diet can help in reducing these symptoms.





MENSTRUAL CYCLE TRACKING & FERTILITY SIGNS



Your cycle can aid you in understanding your body, your overall reproductive health, and how you are affected by your hormones in daily life, including sleep, energy, mood, appetite, and libido.

You can track your cycle in a variety of ways, depending on what feels right to you. You can use a physical calendar, journal or notebook. You can also use a cycle tracking app. Record the first and last days of your period, and record any symptoms you notice throughout the month. You may start to see patterns occurring within your cycle.

You can use the fertility awareness method (FAM) to determine your fertile and infertile periods. This involves tracking your body's three primary fertility signs: cervical fluid, waking temperature, and cervical position. These three signs can also tell you which phase of your menstrual cycle you are in.

Cervical fluid

Cervical fluid production is increased in the second half of the follicular phase as a result of high oestrogen levels.

An increase in cervical fluid raises the pH level for an optimal environment for the sperm and to help the sperm make its journey up the fallopian tubes in search of the egg.



Directly after menstruation, you will have a fairly dry vagina. Then, cervical fluid will become sticky, then creamy, then egg-white consistency.

There are so many personal variations of cervical fluid, however, the general pattern after menstruation goes from dry to sticky to wetter and more slippery as you near ovulation.

When your cervical fluid is closer to an egg-white consistency, you are most fertile. When your cervical fluid is dry, you are not fertile. After ovulation, oestrogen plummets, which causes the cervical fluid to become dry.



Waking (basal body) temperature

Your temperature during the follicular phase will typically range from 36.1 to 36.5 degrees Celsius, which is lower than post-ovulatory temperatures.

A day or so after ovulation, your temperature will rise to 36.6 degrees Celsius or higher due to an increase in the hormone progesterone, which is heat-inducing (for the purpose of “pro-gestation” to ensure the body is warm enough to nurture an egg that may have been fertilized).



You can track your temperature using a chart and by measuring with a thermometer under the tongue each morning.

Cervical position

Have you ever felt how intercourse is uncomfortable one week and blissful the next?



This is due to the changes that your cervix (the lowest part of the uterus that extends into the vagina) goes through in a menstrual cycle. Similar to cervical fluid, the position of your cervix changes during your cycle for optimal fertility.

The cervix is firm, low, closed, and dry during menstruation in the follicular phase, and after ovulation in the luteal phase. Around ovulation, the cervix becomes soft, high, open, and wet. It rises and opens due to the higher levels of oestrogen right before ovulation.

The oestrogen causes the ligaments that hold the uterus in place to rise. These changes in the cervix create a perfect passageway for the sperm to swim through the cervix into the fallopian tubes around ovulation for optimal conception.

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In summary, you will know you are fertile when you notice these things: creamy, egg white consistency, wet cervical fluid and a cervix that is high, soft, wet, and open. In addition, you can chart your temperature each morning and you will notice a rise in temperature a day or so after you ovulate.



While it may seem mysterious and a bit overwhelming to understand, tracking your cycle can be a great step toward gaining a deeper understanding of your own body and its cycles.

By knowing your own cycle, you can better predict your energy levels and plan your activities accordingly.

When your energy is lower you can enjoy rest, restorative yoga, and Netflix, and when your energy is higher you can enjoy going out with friends, going to that intense cardio/weightlifting class, or going on a date.

If you dance with your own unique ebbs and flows rather than against them, you will be empowered by your cycles.



WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE?

01

Write down any of the steps that you can start to implement within this week.

02

Write down any of the steps that you can start to implement within the next 2 weeks.

03

Write down any of the steps that you can start to implement within the next month

Check online for all of the available
Services, Programs & Wellness Products



Get in touch

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Remote sessions via video chat/Telehealth are also available.