

Cycle syncing is a method that can help individuals who menstruate align their lifestyle habits, diet, and workouts with the four phases of their menstrual cycle to support each hormone fluctuation's unique needs. By doing so, it may help to balance hormones and reduce symptoms such as painful periods, PMS, acne, and fertility challenges. Moreover, this approach can help enhance fat burning, promote lean muscle growth, increase metabolism, reduce recovery time, enhance endurance, and maintain stable blood sugar and energy levels. Understanding the different phases of the menstrual cycle, including the menstrual phase, follicular phase, ovulatory phase, and luteal phase, is crucial in determining the benefits of cycle-syncing workouts. During each phase, the body reacts differently to workouts. Hence, matching the type and intensity of workouts with each menstrual phase can help individuals maximize the benefits.

The menstrual phase

Is also known as the winter phase and occurs from the first day of your period until it ends (typically 3-7 days). During this time, a drop in estrogen and progesterone triggers the shedding of the uterine lining, causing your period to begin. This can result in feelings of fatigue and discomfort, and your immune system may not be as strong as usual. It's important to listen to your body during this time and rest when needed. Your body is working extra hard and losing nutrients with the loss of blood, so it's essential to replenish them by eating a healthy, balanced diet with plenty of iron-rich foods like leafy greens and lean proteins. You may also find it helpful to take a daily multivitamin. The best types of workouts for the menstrual phase include gentle, restorative movements such as walking, yin yoga, and foam rolling.

FOLLICULAR PHASE AKA SPRING

The follicular phase, also known as the spring phase, starts the day after your period ends and lasts for around 7 to 10 days. During this phase, you may experience a boost in energy, mood, confidence, and cognitive skills. As resting cortisol levels decrease and energy levels rise, your body becomes more efficient at handling higher-intensity workouts. This can help boost your metabolism, increase fat burning, and build lean muscle. Some of the best types of workouts during this phase include running, biking or spinning, dancing or cardio, swimming, power vinyasa, metabolic conditioning, and hiking.

OVULATORY PHASE AKA SUMMER

The ovulatory phase, also known as the summer phase, typically occurs between days 12-17 of your cycle and lasts for only two to three days. During this phase, estrogen and testosterone levels peak, helping you feel magnetic, energetic, outgoing, and confident while optimizing your creativity and communication skills. With plenty of energy and stamina, you can power through intense workouts such as HIIT, boot camp, boxing, CrossFit, any form of cardio, and cycling.

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LUTEAL PHASE AKA FALL

The luteal phase, also known as the fall phase, occurs immediately after ovulation and lasts for around 12-16 days. During the first half of the luteal phase, you may still be riding high off of the effects of the ovulatory phase. However, as progesterone production increases, you may find your energy begins to wane and turn inward. Additionally, your stress response heightens and metabolic needs increase, making it a crucial time to eat more and work out less to avoid increased cortisol levels.

During the first five days of the luteal phase, estrogen and testosterone remain elevated while calming and relaxing progesterone enters the picture. This makes it an ideal time to focus on strength training to maximize lean muscle gain. After day six of the luteal phase, your reproductive hormones and energy levels decrease, which means it's time to scale back the length and intensity of your workouts and focus on flexibility. Some of the best types of workouts during this phase include strength training, yoga, Pilates, barre, and low-incline walking.

CYCLE SYNCING WORKOUT FAQs

Can you cycle-sync your workouts on birth control?

No. Birth control lowers your natural production of reproductive hormones to prevent ovulation, which interferes with your menstrual cycle. Since you're no longer having a monthly cycle, the cycle syncing practices don't apply. However, you may still find it helpful to switch up your workouts or establish a monthly rhythm.

How long should your cycle syncing workouts be?

The length of your workouts may vary depending on where you're at in your menstrual cycle. Your endurance is higher during your follicular and ovulatory phases, compared to your luteal and menstrual phases. Listen to your body, but aim for around 30 minutes of exercise. This helps your body burn glucose for energy while preventing excess cortisol production and adrenal fatigue, especially if you're dealing with hormonal imbalances.

When should your cycle syncing workouts take place? The timing of your workouts is up to you and your schedule. However, it may be beneficial to work out in the morning during your follicular and ovulatory phases when energy is higher, and in the afternoon during your luteal and menstrual phases when sleep and rest become more important.

Is cycle-syncing your workouts right for you?

Only you know the answer to this question. The benefits and results of cycle-syncing workouts have been positive for many individuals, but it's important to check in with yourself and start with small and simple shifts. The most significant benefit of cycle-syncing workouts is tuning into your body and honouring it instead of punishing it with gruelling workouts or something that doesn't feel natural to you.

Please note that this information is for educational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Always consult with your doctor before making significant lifestyle changes, especially if you have pre-existing medical conditions.