

WIFT

By Leanne



Female Nutrition 101
with The Fit Clinic

Hi Ladies!

I'm so excited to be collaborating with the fabulous **LIFT By Leanne** team to be bringing you tried, tested and trusted female focused nutrition advice!

Here at The Fit Clinic we have worked with thousands of women in helping them hack their hormones to have them feel their absolute best!

This e-Book will give you some great info about how you can empower yourself with the tools and knowledge so that you can get more in tune with your hormones and have you working with them, instead of against them.

Whether you're looking to lose weight, support your workouts, struggling with your menstrual cycle, or post-pill acne - Nutrition, supplementation and lifestyle changes can be incredibly powerful in bringing your hormones into harmony, and having you feeling your best.

If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to drop us a message over Instagram!

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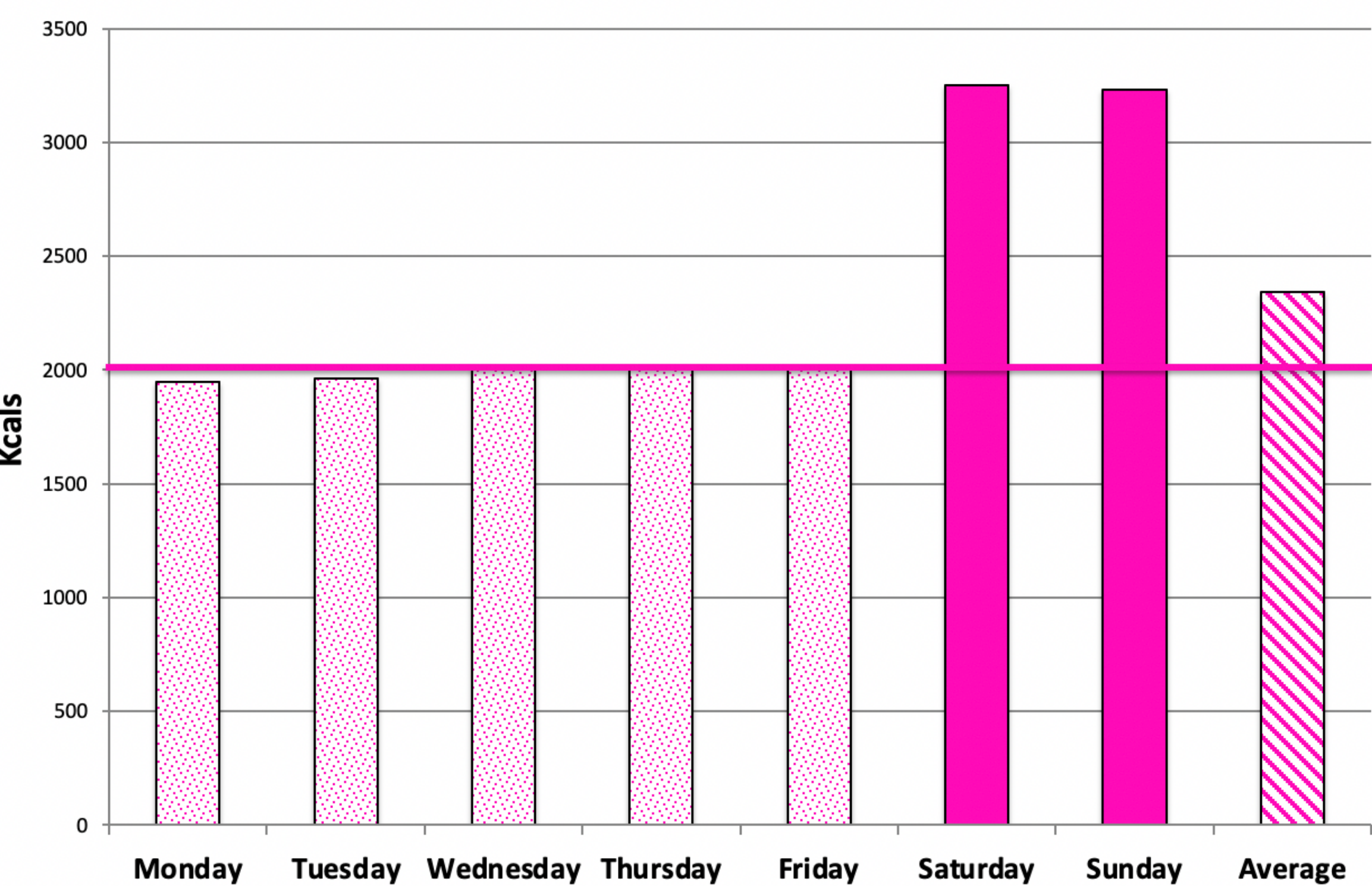
Female Fat Loss

Calories

When it comes to fat loss - It is a simple case of expending more calories than you consume. **But simple is not the same as easy!**

Consistency is the key to success - You are better to be consistent with an imperfect diet than to be inconsistent with a 'perfect' diet.

What we see most often with our clients is being a "Work Week Dieter" like below - Trying to be too "perfect" and over-restricting during the week, leading to a binge on the weekends.

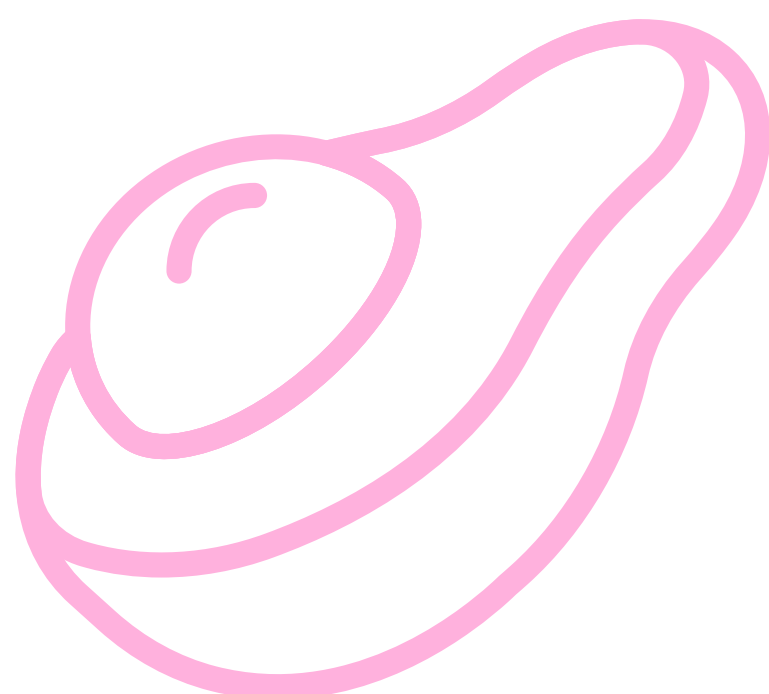


Setting up your own individualised macronutrient targets is a great way to ensure you are on track to attaining your body composition goals and also providing adequate fuel to compliment your training. We recommend tracking your macronutrient intake using apps like My Fitness Pal.

If you have never tracked your macros before, we recommend trying it out even just for at least 2 weeks. It will be a fantastic educational tool for you - To get accustomed to portion sizes, get calorie-wise and to see what quantity of macronutrients are in certain foods. If you try it out and decide that it's not for you, that's okay - Lots of our client do not track their macronutrient intake and get the same great results. You will most certainly have learned something from the entire process, that you will be able to apply to your untracked nutrition.

As a starting point, take your body weight in lbs x12 to determine your estimated calorie goal for fat loss.

As mentioned this is to determine your estimated calorie requirements. But, this is a mathematical algorithm, and after all, the physiology of the human body doesn't always work like this! Hence, it is vital to use a minimum of a 7 day trial period to determine if you have set your calorie requirement too high, too low or just right. If you aim for this calorie target for 7 days, and your body weight respond in the right way, then you know it is correct for you.

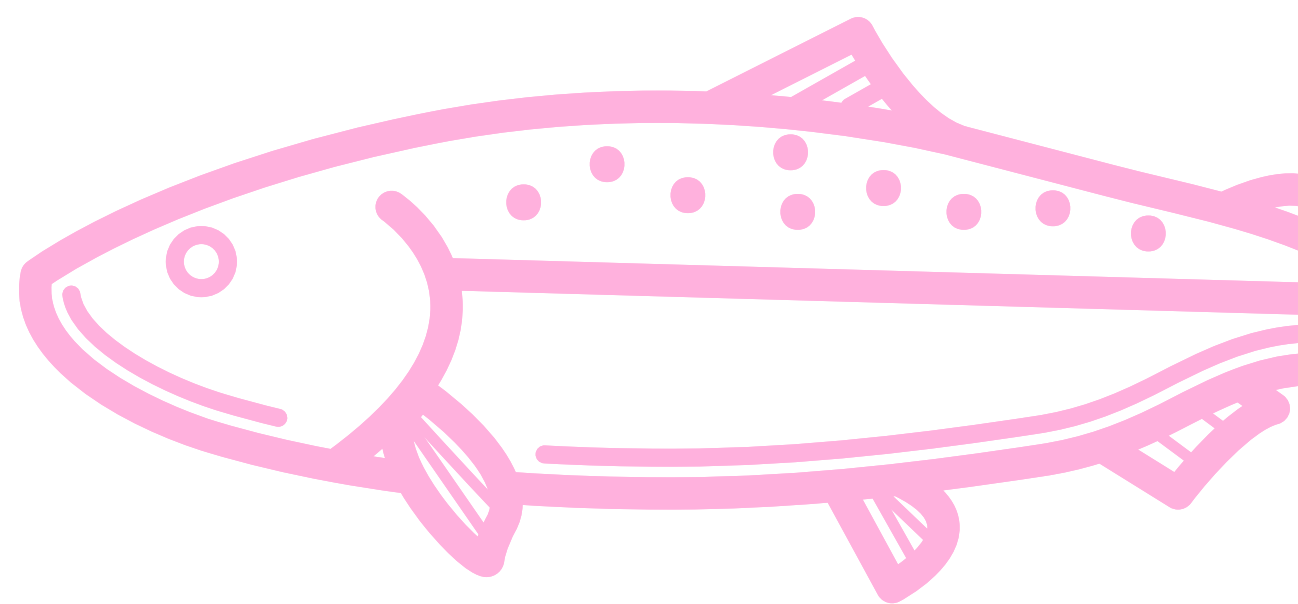


Protein

Out of all 3 macronutrients, protein is the most important for toning up and dropping bodyfat. The more lean mass we have, the higher our metabolism is, so we will burn more fat. Protein also increases satiety and it has a thermogenic effect – We actually burn more calories in the process of digesting protein, compared to fat or carbohydrates!

Aim to consume **1.6-2g of protein for every kg** of bodyweight per day. So if you're 60kg, set your protein target no higher than 120g per day.

Opt for lean meat, fish, whole eggs, yoghurt, beans and lentils to meet your protein needs



Fats

Every cell in our body is predominantly made of fats, and our female hormones are made of fat too!

Set your daily fat target as 25-30% of total calories.

In recent years we've made a shift away from thinking fat is bad for us, which is great to see! However, with this, has come a simultaneous shift towards thinking that copious amounts of saturated fat like bacon and butter is really great for us! With fats, it's important to strike a balance - Yes, these sources are fine in moderations, but make sure you are hitting your polyunsaturated (especially Omega 3s) and monounsaturated fat intake - This means also opting for oily fish, nuts, seeds, olive oil, avocados too, as well as the tastier ones!

Carbohydrates

If we consider the body like a car, carbohydrates is the fuel we need to drive!

We have a reserve within our muscles and liver that is capable of storing carbohydrates, in the form of glycogen, to fuel high intensity training. Therefore, it is vital that we take advantage of this storage space to enable you to fuel those high intensity bouts, last longer in a workouts and really get the most out of each training session. Without adequate carbohydrates, your training sessions will suffer.

On My Fitness Pal, once you work out your protein and fat intake, then the rest of your calories should be made up of carbohydrates.

In general, training days should be “higher-carb” and higher calorie days than rest days, to facilitate recovery. As mentioned, on training days vs rest days, you should be eating an extra 100-200 kcals, depending on the intensity of that session. All of these extra calories should be made up of carbohydrates.

Carbohydrate timing is most important after training. A tough training session can leave us nearly glycogen-depleted in some instances. Therefore, it is vital that we replenish these stores to allow adequate recovery and to be in a glycogen-full state for our next training session. Carbs are vital post-training - More on this later.

The Dangers of Dieting for Women

At the Fit Clinic we refer to an individual's stress tolerance as their 'stress bucket', where it may not be one factor alone that is overly stressful for your body.

Psychological stress, calorie deficits, fasting, under-eating certain food groups (fats and carbs), over-exercising, in particular, HIIT, under-sleeping – These are all stressors that we don't realise are placing stress on our bodies.

Our female hormones are extremely sensitive to stress. Being under too much stress can worsen PMS, result in irregular cycles, or cause us to lose our cycles altogether.



Having a good think about all your life's stressors, and where you might be able to make improvements is so important to reducing your **cumulative stress load**.

Menstrual Cycle 101

Temperature, pulse, respiration rate and blood pressure - These are referred to as our four vital signs which are routinely monitored by doctors and other health professionals. **But the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists refers to the menstrual cycle as a fifth vital sign for women's health.**

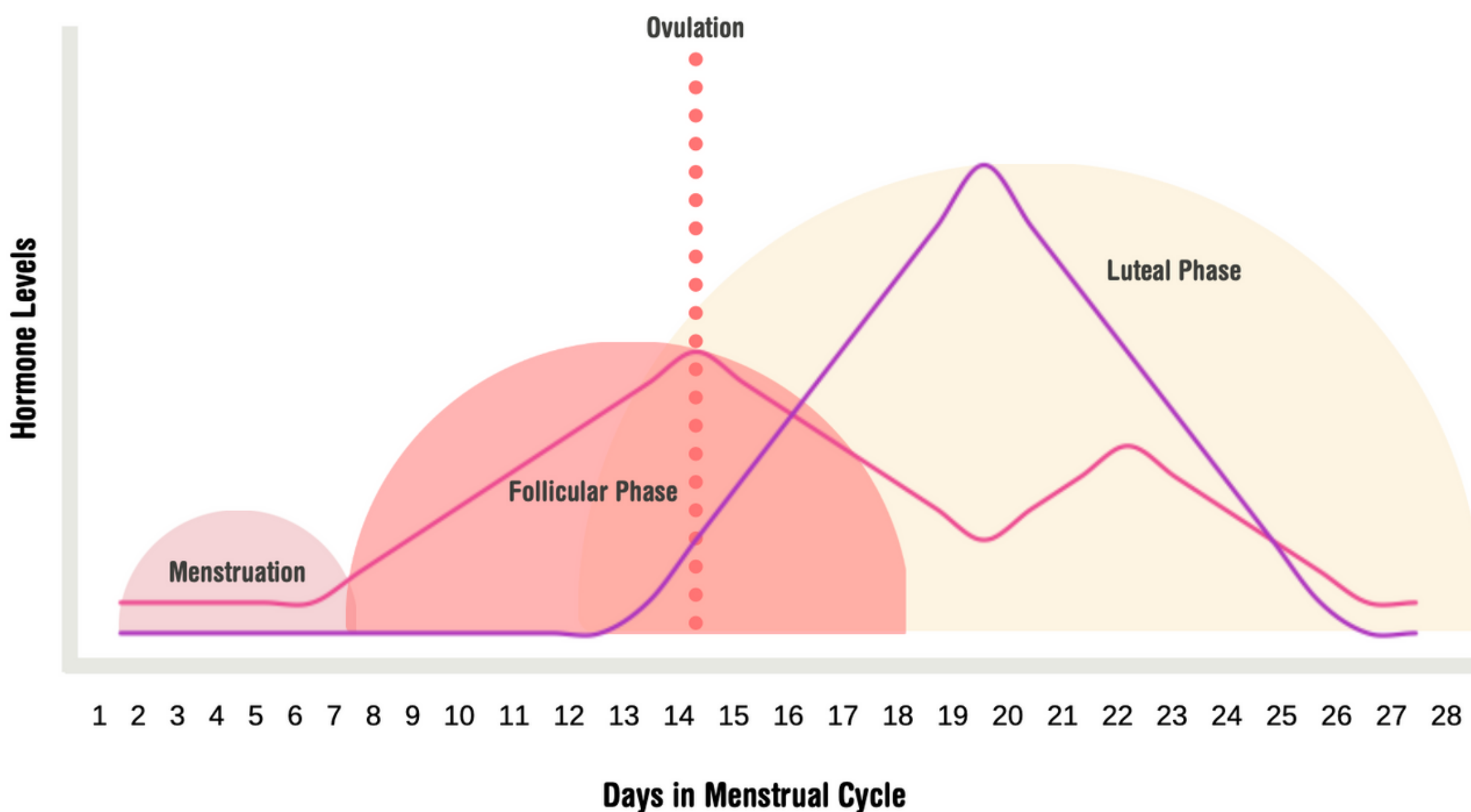
This is because your cycle, or lack of, can tell you a lot about your body. A healthy, regular cycle lets you know that your body is healthy and well.

But if you're stressed or sick, you might lose your cycle, which signals something is wrong. Similarly, debilitating symptoms such as extreme cramps, very heavy bleeding or bad mood swings can also signal that something is not quite right.

The typical female menstrual cycle is on average 28 days. In this instance, most women will ovulate (release an egg on day 14). This egg will survive for 12-24 hours and waits to be fertilised.

This is the only time you can actually get pregnant. However, sperm will survive for up to 5 days inside the female body. So your fertile window is actually about 5-6 days long.

Phases of the Menstrual Cycle



Follicular Phase

Your cycle begins with the first day of your period - Day 1 (if you commonly experience spotting in the days leading up to your period, you count day 1 on the day of your first full bleed)

Day 1 to approximately day 14 is known as the follicular phase

Progesterone is low, while oestrogen increases throughout this phase, reaching its peak at ovulation

Ovulation occurs right in the middle, around day 14

Ovulation is typically when women feel their best, have the best energy levels and the highest libido!

Luteal Phase

Days 15 to 28 are known as the luteal phase.

Progesterone is at its highest at the start of the luteal phase, but then as progesterone starts to decline, PMS usually makes an appearance in the late luteal phase i.e. Right before your next period.

Symptoms vary, but a major symptom is increased appetite and cravings. You may also experience lower mood, crying spells, disrupted sleep and bloating.

Understanding Your Phases

So as you can see, your cycle has a lot of different effects on your body. It can affect appetite, mood, digestion, and even body image - **It's been shown that women typically have higher levels of body satisfaction in the follicular phase, and have lower levels of body confidence in the luteal phase!**

So for these reasons, it's important to understand your cycle, and to work with it, not against it.



What is PMS?

There is an intricate balance between estrogen and progesterone. If one is too low or too high we feel the effects.

Estrogen brings us the highs, and when it falls off after ovulation, we can feel the effects of lower mood and energy levels. If we make enough progesterone, it can counteract this drop off in estrogen and shelter us from the ups and downs of estrogen. **However if we don't make enough progesterone (Due to too much stress), this can lead to low mood, anxiety and poor sleep.**

While PMS is normal, persistent and debilitating PMS symptoms are not normal. Symptoms can occur up to 10 days before your period. Some of them include:

- Anxiety/Depression
- Irritability
- Poor Sleep
- Abdominal Bloating
- Fluid Retention
- Palpitations
- Cravings
- Breast Pain
- Headaches
- Brain Fog
- Skin Breakouts

Nutrition can be so powerful in helping us support our hormones and relieve PMS!

Nutrition In These Phases

Honour Your Appetite

As we saw, the luteal phase brings with it some symptoms such as increased appetite. This isn't random though - This is due to an increase in body temperature and a subsequent increase in energy expenditure of anywhere in the region of 100-300 calories a day. In other words, it's our body telling us that it needs some more fuel in the tank. So, what should you do in this phase when cravings and hunger are high?

This 7 day stretch leading up to your period is a great time to take advantage of increased expenditure and increase calories by a small amount (~200 or return to maintenance) and incorporate foods that you're craving in moderation. By eating a little more and managing hunger, this will keep you satisfied and not restricted while staying on track, resulting in a decreased likelihood of overeating or bingeing which could derail your progress.

It has also been shown that **including ~200kcal of chocolate during the luteal phase results in better long term adherence to dieting**, as well as better body composition changes over time - Win win! Research has also linked women's increased chocolate cravings during the luteal phase to the body's increased need for magnesium – Dark chocolate is a rich source of magnesium (so, it's not all in your head!) It's also a great time to make use of high volume foods such as veggies and fruit to bulk up your meals to increase satiety. Honour your hunger in this phase - Eating a little more might actually be beneficial!

Anti-Inflammatory Foods

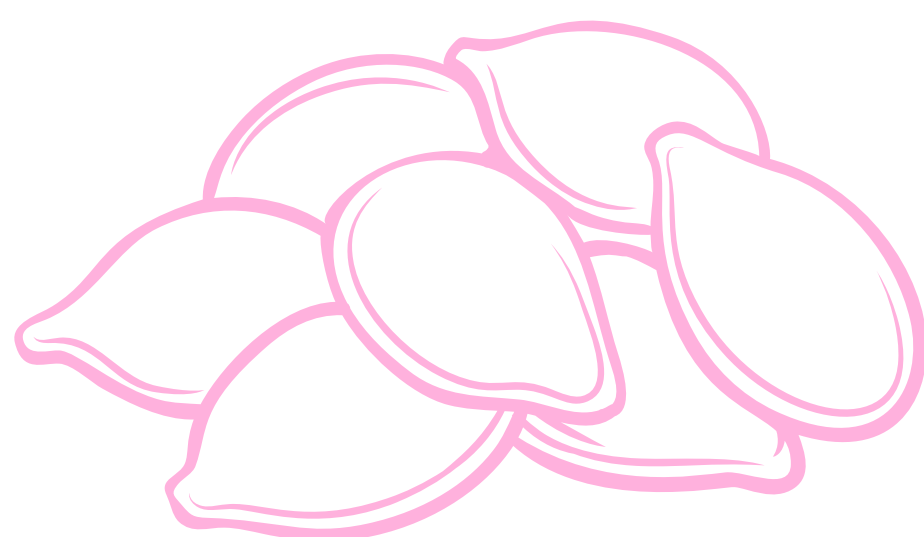
Prostaglandins can promote inflammation which in turn results in pain. Including mono- and polyunsaturated fat sources in your diet can have anti-inflammatory effects.

Include foods such as extra virgin olive oil, oily fish such as salmon, mackerel and trout, walnuts, flaxseeds and chia seeds to ensure you're getting plenty of those all important omega 3s.

Limit Omega 6s

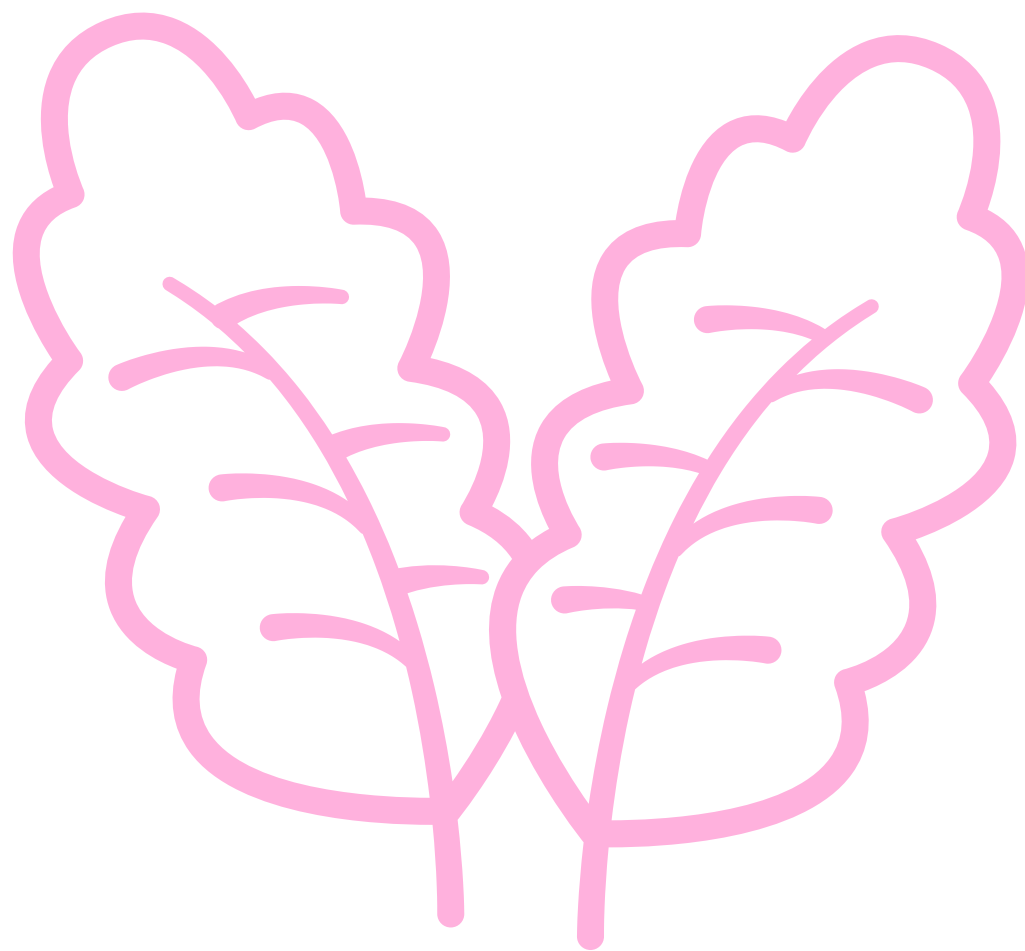
Omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids compete for enzymes in the body. High intakes of omega-6 fats coupled with low intakes of omega-3 fats can lead to an imbalance of fatty acids within the body, promoting inflammation. This imbalance has also been reported to be associated with increased period pain.

Limiting consumption of omega-6 fats along with increasing intake of omega-3 fats (such as the examples above) is recommended.



Eat Your Greens

Especially the cruciferous ones – This means broccoli, kale, brussel sprouts and cabbage. These particular greens contain a compound known as Diindolylmethane or DIM. DIM is a metabolite of the phytonutrient found in these greens - indole-3-carbinol. DIM helps to maintain healthy oestrogen levels in the body. It assists with the clearance of excess oestrogen by converting oestrogen into more favourable metabolites for excretion.



Fill Up on Fiber!

A high fibre diet is really important for supporting hormonal health as it aids with the excretion of excess oestrogen metabolites. Oestrogen is removed from the bloodstream by the liver, which sends it through the bile duct and into the intestinal tract. Fibre then acts like a sponge and removes the oestrogen from the body via bowel movements. Including foods such as vegetables, fruit, beans, lentils, wholegrains, oats, nuts and seeds is a great way of upping your fibre intake.

Raspberry Leaf Tea

Raspberry leaf tea has been used for many years to relieve period cramps. This is because it contains a substance known as fragarine, which is known to help tone and tighten muscles in the pelvic region. This can thereby help with the cramps caused by spasms of these pelvic muscles.

Supplement with Magnesium

Magnesium biglysinate or citrate may also help ease menstrual cramps. Magnesium is known to help with cramping and to act as a muscle relaxant. Magnesium is one mineral which can be depleted by the contraceptive pill, so supplementation may be of particular importance if you are on the pill. Magnesium rich foods include leafy greens, black beans, chickpeas, bananas and almonds.



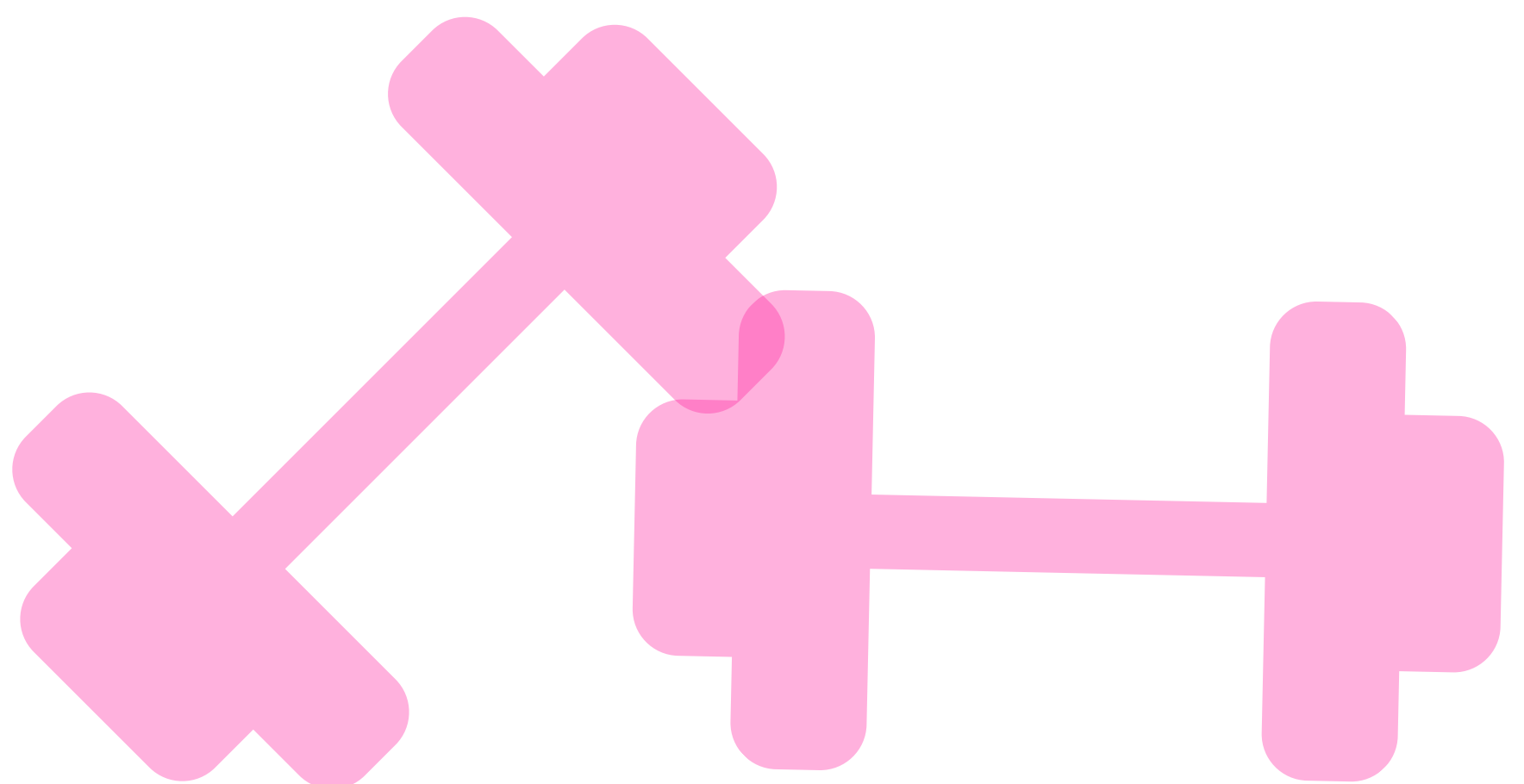
Training Considerations

Research has shown that our cycle plays a huge role in variations in strength and recovery..

Strength is highest in the follicular phase (Days 1-14). These two weeks are the best time to include the heaviest, strength-based training into your routine.

Research has shown that prioritising the most volume during the follicular phase resulting in greater strength and muscle gain.

As our cycle progresses into the luteal phase (The two weeks leading up to our period), women are likely to feel more fatigued and not recover as well. Understanding this is important, as we don't want to get disheartened with our training efforts. If you're not feeling up to your usual training, it's okay to take it easy in your training sessions or do some light yoga or walking instead.



Foods To Be Eating Around Training

Pre and Post Training Nutrition

Getting pre- and post- training nutrition right is imperative to ensuring you get the most out of your training session and recover optimally from that training session.

- For your pre-training meal, we need to ensure you have adequate energy to perform that training session.
- While for your post-training meal, we need to ensure that we refill emptied fuel stores and also get repairing muscle which has been broken down in the process of training.

Recovery can also be affected in the luteal phase. You might notice that you have more muscle tenderness or soreness after sessions, for example. During this phase of your cycle, your window of recovery after exercise is also reduced, meaning that this is one of the scenarios where meal timing may become even more important.

With pre and post-training meal, it is about ensuring they are spaced **no longer than 4 hours apart**. Therefore, if you eat a late pre-training meal, you can eat a later post-training meal. Or, alternatively, if you eat an early pre-training, you should eat an early post-training. (With the exception of fasted training, in which you need to have your post-training meal within 30 mins of finishing that session).

What Foods To Choose

Choose a source of protein and a source of carbohydrates for your pre- and post- training meal. Below we have outlined good source to choose from that will ensure you’re adequately fuelled for your session and also recovery optimal!

<div>Protein</div> <div>(Easy digestible)</div> <div>Pre/Post Training</div>	<div>Carbohydrates</div> <div>(Slow Releasing)</div> <div>Pre/Post Training</div>	<div>Carbohydrates</div> <div>(Fast Releasing)</div> <div>Post Training</div>
<div><div><div>• Lean beef</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• Fruit</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• Rice/Oat cereal</div></div></div>
<div><div><div>• Chicken</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• Oats</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• Honey/Maple Syrup</div></div></div>
<div><div><div>• Turkey</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• White rice</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• Fruit and Dried Fruit</div></div></div>
<div><div><div>• Fish</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• Brown rice</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• Fruit juice</div></div></div>
<div><div><div>• Egg whites</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• Buckwheat</div></div></div>	
<div><div><div>• Whey protein</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• Quinoa</div></div></div>	
<div><div><div>• Low fat yoghurt</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• Spelt bread</div></div></div>	
<div><div><div>• Low fat cheese</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• Rye Bread</div></div></div>	
<div><div><div>• Lean beef</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>• White potato</div></div></div>	
	<div><div><div>• Sweet potato</div></div></div>	

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