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Periods for most are a burden, an inconvenience that people often wish they didn't have to deal with. But, having a regular period is a really important health indicator that might allow you to really know what's going on with your body and mind. Our women's health nutritionist, Shannon, will lead you through some 3 starter tips to taking care of yourself during your period.

These 3 tips act as a starting point for getting the basics of caring for yourself when you're on your period. It's really important to have a solid foundation like these 3 before you dive into really specific strategies you might read online. There is a lot of information online about specific foods to eat when you're on your period, or lists of 10 top tips to do every month.



In reality, most people benefit from stripping things back to the basics and checking in with the stuff that's often labeled boring. When you're ready to take on more personalised and specific things, do book in for an initial consultation with Shannon so she can provide holistic, bespoke support.

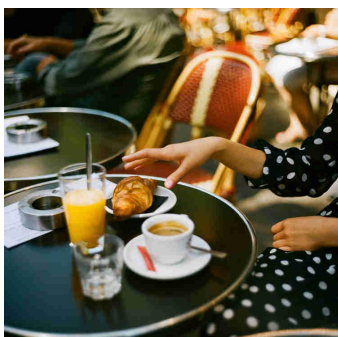
Top 3 tips for caring for yourself on your period

1. Eat enough

The first tip is to make sure you're fueling your body with enough food. This might sound pretty obvious, and you might be thinking "I already do this!" But my question to you is: Are you sure?

If you're like most people, you're probably bombarded every day with messages to eat less, reduce your portion sizes, and try to not snack. But a lot of people are simply not eating enough, or they might be saving calories for nighttime or for "treat meals." This can impact your mood and energy during your period.

In fact, most people need on average 500 calories more just before their period - so it's totally normal to feel extra hungry if your period is due (1). For most people, they feel best eating 3 meals a day plus 2-3 snacks. As for extra-hunger around your period, that might mean adding extra pasta or rice to your lunch, having a slice of cake after dinner, or eating a bowl of cereal closer to bedtime than usual... Be kind to yourself and remind yourself this is completely normal.



2. What can you do to add in self-care?

If every month you're finding you are exhausted, dreading your packed schedule, and find it hard to socialise with people around your period, then perhaps some of these suggestions might be helpful to carve out some time for yourself:

- Try time-blocking or arranging your schedule so you can reduce overbooking yourself. The blocked time might be times of the day where you can go for a gentle walk, do some yin yoga, or sit down with a cup of tea and a hot water bottle.
- Taking a warm bath with candles. Really take the time to enjoy and feel your muscles relax. A magnesium salt bath may help reduce period cramps and pain, like back pain (2).
- Include fun foods!
- Spend time in calming environments, which might be making sure your home is tidy and clean or spending time in nature
- Focus on sleep hygiene - aim for 8-9 hours of sleep every night. Try establishing a night-time routine so you're putting your laptop away with plenty of time before winding down. If you're working from home, think about how you could establish work from home time. Perhaps you can go for a quick walk around the block, or take a shower and put on fresh clothes, as an end to your workday?

Checking in with your self-care schedule on the lead-up to your period is a great way to offer yourself kindness. Remember self-care is not just baths and candles, although when you're on your period, these things can make you feel extra cared for. Basic self-care includes eating regular meals and snacks, moving your body in a gentle way, drinking enough water, and sleeping enough.



3. Get to know your cycle

This one is important if you're looking to take care of yourself when you're on your period. It makes sense: If you know when your period is due, you can better plan your schedule, chores, social life, food shopping, and self-care logistics (i.e. making sure you have a bath bomb or two!)

You can do this by tracking your cycle with a free app, such as Clue or Flo. Tracking your cycle is important to detect when any changes. This way you can be more aware of when something is going on with your body.

Looking for more personalised one-to-one support?

If you're suffering from heavy periods, intense period pain, or any other women's health conditions, book an appointment with Shannon who can offer compassionate, personalised support.

Shannon is experienced in helping people with endometriosis, PCOS, infertility, and period pain building a happy relationship to food and their bodies, improving their quality of life, advocating for them in healthcare, and becoming pregnant if that's what they want.

[Book an appointment](#) with Shannon using this calendar (scroll to the bottom of the nutritionist list).

References

1. Benton, M., et al. Effect of menstrual cycle on resting metabolism: A systematic review and meta-analysis. (2020) *PLoS One*, 15(7).
2. Fathizadeh, N., et al. Evaluating the effect of magnesium and magnesium plus vitamin B6 supplement on the severity of PMS. (2010) *J Nurs Midwifery Res.* 15(1): 401-405.