

THE SECRET SUPERPOWER. PERIOD.



IN COLLABORATION WITH

THE
FEMALE
ATHLETE
NETWORK
GEE LONG



WHY SHOULD YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT YOUR PERIOD?

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN USE YOUR PERIOD AS A MONTHLY REPORT CARD FOR YOUR BODY?

It tells you so much about how your overall health is tracking. It is easily disrupted by stress, poor sleep, poor nutrition, alcohol intake and environmental factors. Equally, it can help you keep track of physiological changes such as your resting heart and respiration rates, sleep, and fatigue. All these factors influence your athletic performance, giving you important information to help you to perform at your best.

WHAT DOES A HEALTHY MENSTRUAL CYCLE LOOK LIKE?^{1,2}



OCCURS EVERY ~28 DAYS
(ACCEPTED VARIABILITY IS 21-35 DAYS)



CLEAN START,
CLEAN FINISH



LOSS OF
30-80ML BLOOD



BLEED ON AVERAGE
IS 4-7 DAYS IN LENGTH



MILD CRAMPING ON DAYS 1 & 2
(IRRITATING BUT NEVER UNBEARABLE)



SLIGHTLY HEAVIER
DAYS 2&3



NO CLOTS



GOOD BLOOD (ARTERIAL)
RED COLOUR



NO PAIN. NONE.
NOT EVEN AT OVULATION

*THESE HEALTHY INDICATORS ARE WHEN NO HORMONAL CONTRACEPTION IS BEING USED.

HOW CAN A HEALTHY CYCLE BE GOOD FOR YOUR FOOTBALL PERFORMANCE?

Have you ever thought about tracking your period? This allows the high performance and medical teams to assist you even further by maximising your performance according to your cycle.

An unhealthy cycle may impact more than your reproductive system which can have follow on effects to physical and mental health including low mood, general anxiety, anger outbursts and performance anxiety, and gastrointestinal health.

A healthy cycle with hormones in balance allows you to train and perform with your physiology rather than against it.

Hormones are amazing! When working in harmony they enable you to be strong, fast, switched on and the opportunity to be your best.

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WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR PERIOD IS UNHEALTHY?

Start the conversation with your medical staff or wellbeing coordinator - while they may not have the direct answers, they will know who they can refer you to within your local networks.

Talk to a credible health care professional that you trust, such as club doctor or a GP or pharmacist. Sometimes this may result in a referral to a gynaecologist, endocrinologist and/or Women's Health specialist physiotherapist, or Accredited Sports Dietitian.

WHO COULD YOU TALK TO?

TIPS FOR STARTING A CONVERSATION ABOUT YOUR CYCLE AND FOOTBALL PERFORMANCE

Pick your moment carefully to start the conversation, as training might not be the right environment - quite often there is a lot going on. Book a time so no one is rushed.

Remember: Be honest - it's ok to call out that this may be awkward! and use the correct language (for example Period, PMS). Avoid using slang, as normalising the conversation starts with you.

If going directly to a health care professional, it is useful to have tracking data/diary with symptoms recorded and available at the consultation.



HOW CAN YOU CAPITALISE ON YOUR SUPERPOWER?

HERE ARE SOME CYCLE TRACKING APPS TO EXPLORE



Got a smart watch? In App options such as Fitbit, Garmin or Oura ring can be useful also.

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

Check out the links below for further information:

jeanhailes.org.au

ais.gov.au/fphi



Female athletes, contraception and bone health, Dr. Emily Kraus, Clinical Assistant Professor, Stanford Children's Orthopedic and Sports Medicine.



Menstrual cycle and sporting performance: experiences from the field Br J Sports Med April 2020.

SUPER POWER