



A WELLNESS RESOURCE

Premenstrual Toolkit

*An exploration of self-care and support
through the luteal phase*

AT THE HEART

community · compassion · connection



A GENTLE WELCOME

Premenstrual Toolkit

The days before a period can bring a shift in how we feel, in body and in mind. For some this is gentle, for others it can feel heavy and hard to name. Wherever you find yourself, you are not too much, and you are not alone.

This workbook is an invitation to notice your own patterns with curiosity and compassion, and to gather small, kind ways of supporting yourself. Move through it at your own pace. Skip what does not fit.

A gentle note: this workbook is for reflection and self-care, not medical advice. If your symptoms feel severe or are affecting your daily life, for example signs of premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD), please reach out to your GP.

Understanding your cycle

Your menstrual cycle moves through phases, and your energy, mood, and needs can shift along with them. The premenstrual (luteal) phase, in the days before your period, is often when changes feel most noticeable.

Phase	Days	What you may notice
Menstrual	Days 1 to 5	Your period. A time to rest and be gentle with yourself.
Follicular	Days 6 to 14	Energy often begins to return and rise.
Ovulatory	Days 14 to 16	Energy and confidence often feel at their fullest.
Luteal (premenstrual)	Days 16 to 28	Energy often dips, and body and emotions may ask for more care and rest.

These day ranges are a rough guide based on a 28-day cycle. Everyone is different, and your own cycle length and timings may vary. There is no right way to feel. Tracking gently, over time, can help you learn your own rhythm and meet it with kindness.



My Premenstrual Self-Care Toolkit

In the luteal phase oestrogen and progesterone drop sharply. These hormones influence brain chemicals that help regulate mood, stress response, and clear thinking. When they fall, it can feel like the ground shifts a little, emotions run closer to the surface, thoughts can turn more critical or catastrophic, and your usual coping capacity may feel smaller. This is a real physiological shift, not a character flaw or an overreaction. This toolkit helps you notice it early and reach for support with understanding and compassion before things feel unmanageable.

I. Early Signs Your Hormones May Be Dropping

Tick any shifts that sound familiar to you:

Physical signs

Breast tenderness or swelling

Fatigue or low energy

Sleep disturbance

Joint or muscle aches

Digestive changes

Bloating or water retention

Headaches or migraines

Changes in appetite or cravings

Skin breakouts

Clumsiness or slower reaction time

Emotional and cognitive signs

Irritability or a shorter fuse than usual

Anxiety or a sense of dread

Brain fog or trouble concentrating

Increased self-criticism

Wanting to withdraw or isolate from others

Tearfulness or feeling more emotional

Low mood, sadness, or hopelessness

A sense of overwhelm

Feeling more sensitive to rejection or conflict

Difficulty regulating

Other early signs I notice



2. Working With Challenging Thoughts

Hormonal dips can make thoughts feel louder, more urgent, and more “true” than they are. A thought that shows up in the luteal phase may not reflect reality, it may reflect your current brain chemistry. You don't have to believe every thought you have, especially this week. This does not mean your feelings are not valid.

A REFRAME TO TRY

“Is this a fact, or is this my hormones talking?” Try pausing before you act on a distressing thought and asking this question. If the thought is sharper, harsher, or more absolute than how you'd normally see the situation, that's a clue.

Thought check-in *(use this as a template as often as you like)*

A difficult thought I had:

Evidence this is really true, right now:

A kinder or more balanced way to see it:

MY AFFIRMATION, A REMINDER FOR WHEN I FEEL WOBBLY



3. How Your Nervous System Responds

Oestrogen and progesterone do not just affect mood. They also influence how safe your nervous system feels from moment to moment. When these hormones drop in the luteal phase, your nervous system can tip into a protective state more easily, even when there is no real danger present. Noticing which state you are in is often the first step back towards feeling steady.

Safety and connection

Calm, curious, able to think clearly and connect with others. Your nervous system reads the world as safe enough to rest, relate, and plan ahead.

Fight

Irritability, anger, or the urge to snap, push back, or control. Your body has read something as a threat and is mobilising to meet it head-on.

Flight

Anxiety, restlessness, racing thoughts, or the urge to escape, avoid, or overdo. Your body is mobilising to get away from perceived danger.

Freeze

Numbness, fog, shutdown, or disconnection. Your body has decided that neither fighting nor fleeing will help, so it conserves energy instead.

None of these states are wrong. They are your nervous system trying to keep you safe with the resources it has in that moment. Moving from fight or flight back to safety requires resources that help you feel calm. Moving from freeze back to safety requires resources that help you feel alive.

My calming tools

Tools that help me feel alive



4. Self Care

Fill this in when you're feeling steady, so it's ready to use when you're not. Be specific: a name, an object, an activity, a place, rather than a general idea.

Physical comfort

Things that soothe my body: rest, warmth, movement, food, touch.

Emotional regulation

Ways I calm and steady an activated nervous system: breathing, grounding, crying it out, music.

Mental and cognitive reset

What helps me get distance from harsh or spiralling thoughts: journaling, talking it through, a trusted reframe.

Social support and boundaries

Who I can reach out to, and what I need to say no to or postpone this week.

Rest and environment

What makes my space and schedule feel gentler: lower commitments, softer lighting, extra sleep.



5. When To Reach Out For Extra Support

For some, premenstrual symptoms go beyond typical dysregulation into Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD), a neurological condition where severe physical and cognitive symptoms significantly disrupt daily life, relationships, or work in the time before a period.

If you experience:

- Thoughts or plans of self-harm or suicide, even briefly
- Symptoms that consistently disrupt work, relationships, or daily functioning
- Rage, panic, or despair that feels disproportionate or frightening to you
- A sense that this toolkit alone isn't enough some months

Consider reaching out to a crisis intervention or mental health professional. You're not alone.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE

Your thoughts and feelings are often trying to tell you something. When they feel loud or heavy, it can be a sign that a need isn't being met, not a sign that something is wrong with you. It is okay to ask for help getting your needs met, whether that means rest, support, understanding, or professional care.