

## FitNature Cycle Series – Bloating & Hormones: Cycle Cheatsheet

*Empower yourself with a quick overview of how hormonal changes across your menstrual cycle can influence bloating. This one-page cheatsheet outlines each phase with key symptoms and simple tips on food, movement, and self-care for relief.*

Phase	Days	Symptoms	Food Focus	Movement/Self-Care	Quick SOS Protocol
<b>Menstrual</b> (Period)	~1–7	Cramps; low energy; <b>possible bloating</b> ; mood dips	Warm, nourishing foods (soups, stews). <b>Iron-rich</b> choices (leafy greens, beans, lean red meat) with vitamin C (citrus) to replenish. <b>Omega-3s</b> (salmon, flaxseed) to ease inflammation <sup>1</sup> . Stay hydrated.	<b>Rest</b> when needed. Gentle yoga stretches or short walks. Use a heating pad for comfort. Embrace quiet time, journal feelings.	<b>Heat pad</b> on abdomen; sip <b>ginger or chamomile tea</b> to soothe cramps and bloating; gentle belly <b>massage</b> for relief.
<b>Follicular</b> (Post-period)	~8–13	Rising energy & mood; <b>minimal bloating</b> ; motivated feeling	Lean protein & <b>complex carbs</b> (e.g. quinoa, brown rice) to fuel energy. Support rising oestrogen with <b>cruciferous veg</b> (broccoli, kale) and <b>fermented foods</b> (yogurt, sauerkraut) <sup>2</sup> . Plenty of greens and healthy fats (avocado, seeds).	<b>Increase activity:</b> try light cardio (jog, swim) as strength returns <sup>3</sup> . Be social – energy is up. Self-care: start new projects or meal prep healthy snacks.	If bloating or sluggish: drink <b>peppermint tea</b> for digestion; take a brisk <b>walk</b> to boost energy. Keep up <b>water</b> intake.

Phase	Days	Symptoms	Food Focus	Movement/Self-Care	Quick SOS Protocol
<b>Ovulatory</b> (Mid-cycle)	~14–15	<b>Peak energy</b> and mood; possible ovulation twinges; social vibe	Continue estrogen-balancing foods (leafy greens, <b>high-fibre</b> veggies) to help your liver metabolise hormones <sup>4</sup> . Light, fresh meals as appetite may dip. Protein for sustained energy. Antioxidant-rich fruits for overall health.	<b>High-intensity workouts</b> (if it feels good): e.g. HIIT, spin class <sup>5</sup> . Enjoy <b>outings</b> and communication – confidence is high. Self-care: have fun, but get proper sleep.	If you feel <b>bloating or ovulation cramps</b> : gentle yoga twists, an extra glass of <b>water</b> , and a short rest can help. Continue healthy snacks (nuts, fruit) to stabilize blood sugar.
<b>Luteal</b> (Pre-period)	~16–28	PMS symptoms: <b>bloating</b> , breast tenderness, cravings, mood swings, lower energy (especially late luteal) <sup>6</sup> .	<b>Complex carbs</b> (sweet potato, whole grains) and <b>high-fibre</b> foods (broccoli, greens) to ease cravings <sup>7</sup> . Magnesium-rich foods (nuts, seeds, dark chocolate) help reduce fluid retention and bloating <sup>8</sup> . Limit excess <b>salt</b> and <b>caffeine</b> to minimize puffiness <sup>9</sup> . Stay hydrated – <b>water</b> reduces bloating and brain fog <sup>10</sup> .	<b>Moderate exercise</b> (walking, yoga, light strength) – stay active but <b>slow down</b> as period nears <sup>11</sup> . Prioritise <b>sleep</b> and stress reduction (meditation, deep breathing) during PMS week. Self-care: plan gentle activities and comfort.	For PMS bloating or stress: try a <b>magnesium</b> supplement or an Epsom salt bath; sip <b>peppermint or fennel tea</b> to relieve bloating; practice deep <b>breathing</b> or gentle yoga to calm tension.

Get the full 6-page Cycle Tracking Mini Workbook: <https://yourfitnature.com/workbook>

*Disclaimer:* This guide is for educational purposes and **not** medical advice. Listen to your body and consult a healthcare provider for any health concerns.

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Contact: [support@yourfitnature.com](mailto:support@yourfitnature.com)

## Alt Text List (Cheatsheet)

- **FitNature logo:** “YourFitnature brand logo.” (Appears in header; decorative, conveys brand)
- (No other images on cheatsheet; content presented in text and table form.)

## Export/Compliance Checklist (Cheatsheet)

- **Format & Tags:** Export to PDF/A-1b, **fully tagged** for accessibility. Title set as “Bloating & Hormones Cycle Cheatsheet”. Heading structure used (title as <H1>, table marked up with column headers). **Language** set to en-GB (UK English).
- **Layout:** US Letter, one-page, portrait. High-contrast **black text on white** background for easy reading (WCAG AA compliant). All tables have clear black borders and sufficient cell padding for print clarity. **Minimum font size 12pt** body text (larger for headings) to ensure readability.
- **Fonts:** All fonts embedded (use a legible, common font such as Arial or Open Sans for body). Text is selectable (no text as images).
- **Images:** Ensure any visual elements (e.g. logo) are **sRGB** color profile and ~150 DPI for print quality with small size. Total file size  $\leq$  **1.5 MB**.
- **Accessibility:** Alt text added for logo. Reading order is logical (title, intro, table, footer). Table structure: use scope/headers for columns (Phase, Days, etc.) so screen readers announce them with cell values. Decorative elements (if any) marked as artifacts. Verified with Acrobat accessibility checker for **WCAG 2.1 AA** compliance.
- **Metadata:** Set **Author** as “YourFitnature”, **Subject** as “Cycle Support Tools”, and **Keywords** as “cycle, hormones, bloating, tracking, gut health, FitNature”. Include version ID (CCS-v1.0.0) in document metadata/comments.
- **Testing:** Tested print on multiple printers for clear text/table lines. PDF opens without issues in Adobe Reader and Mac Preview. **QR code**/short URL was manually tested (if printed or clicked) to confirm it leads to the workbook page. All alt text was reviewed with a screen reader. File size and PDF/A compliance verified.

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# FitNature Cycle Series – Bloating & Hormones: Mini Workbook

## Page 1: Cover

### Bloating & Hormones – Cycle Tracking Mini Workbook

*Track your monthly cycle, monitor bloating, and discover patterns to feel your best.*

- **Name:** .....
- **Cycle Start Date:** .... / .... / .....
- **Cycle End Date:** .... / .... / .....

*(Fill in your details. This workbook guides you through one menstrual cycle of self-tracking and reflection.)*

## Page 2: How to Use This Workbook

**Welcome!** This mini workbook is a practical tool to help you tune into your body's signals each day of your cycle. Follow these steps to get the most out of it:

1. **Daily Tracking:** Each day, record your well-being in the daily log. Note your **bloating level** (1 = no bloating, 5 = severe), when it happens (morning/afternoon/evening), plus key factors like energy, stress, sleep, hydration, meals, movement and any supplements. Tracking these helps you spot patterns (for example, higher stress or less sleep might coincide with more bloating).
2. **Quick Relief Check-ins:** When you feel bloated or uncomfortable, try a **Quick SOS Protocol** tip. This could be sipping herbal tea, doing a gentle stretch, or using a warm pack – simple actions that can ease discomfort. In the daily log, tick off if you **tried a relief strategy** and whether it **helped**. (These quick tips are suggested in the phase overview and cheatsheet – e.g. peppermint tea for indigestion or a short walk to beat sluggishness.)
3. **Weekly Reflection:** At the end of each week, fill in the **Weekly Summary** section. Calculate your “success rate” – for instance, the percentage of days you felt you managed bloating well or met your wellness goals. Also find averages of key metrics (like your average bloat intensity, hours of sleep, etc.). Then, answer the **reflection prompt** to note any insights or patterns for that week. This mindful review helps deepen your understanding of how you're feeling and why.
4. **Cycle Overview for Reference:** On the next page is a quick Cycle Overview of the four phases (Menstrual, Follicular, Ovulatory, Luteal). Refer to it to understand what hormonal shifts *might* be influencing your body and mood. Everyone is unique, so not all suggestions will fit every person or every cycle – that's okay! Use it as a guide, not a rulebook.
5. **Be Consistent, Be Kind:** Try to fill in the tracker every day (it only takes a few minutes). Consistency will give you the clearest picture. And remember – this is a **judgement-free** zone. The goal is to observe and learn, not to be “perfect.” If you miss a day or have an off week, just pick back up. Your journey is about feeling better, one day at a time.
6. **Quick Protocols Reference:** For easy access, keep the **Cycle Cheatsheet** nearby or refer to the phase-specific tips in this workbook. They'll remind you of foods, self-care, and quick fixes tailored to each phase. For example, if you're close to your period and feeling puffy, you might recall to cut back on salty snacks and try magnesium-rich foods (as noted in the luteal phase tips).
7. **Stay Safe & Supported:** This workbook is an educational tool. It's not meant to replace medical advice. If you ever experience symptoms that feel unusual or overwhelming, reach out to a healthcare professional. And celebrate your wins – even small improvements in understanding your body are a step forward!

*By using this tracker daily and reflecting weekly, you'll gradually discover how your hormones and habits dance together. Let's get started on understanding your unique cycle!*

## Page 3: Cycle Overview

Your menstrual cycle is typically around 28 days (though it varies person to person). It's divided into four phases, each with distinct hormonal shifts. Here's a brief overview of what happens in each phase and how

it might affect **bloating** and your well-being. (Refer back to these descriptions throughout the month. A cycle wheel diagram on this page illustrates the phases in order.)

- **Menstrual Phase** (approximately Day 1–7): This phase begins on Day 1 with your period. During menstruation, your body sheds the uterine lining. Hormone levels (especially oestrogen and progesterone) are at their lowest <sup>12</sup>, which often means low energy and a need for rest. You might experience menstrual cramps, fatigue, and a heavier feeling. Some women feel relief from pre-period bloating once bleeding starts <sup>13</sup>, but others may still have some bloating or digestive upsets in the first few days. **Self-care:** Embrace gentle comfort – warm teas, heating pads, and extra sleep – to help your body through this phase.
- **Follicular Phase** (Day 8–13): After your period, the follicular phase takes over. Oestrogen steadily rises, signaling your body to prepare an egg for ovulation <sup>14</sup>. You'll likely notice improving mood and increasing energy day by day. This hormone boost can make you feel more outgoing and upbeat. Bloating tends to be **minimal** in this phase; digestion might feel more efficient and body tension is lower. **Self-care:** It's a great time to start heavier workouts or new projects. Enjoy nutrient-dense foods (your body is primed to use nutrients well now) and continue to stay hydrated.
- **Ovulation Phase** (around Day 14): Mid-cycle, one of your ovaries releases an egg – this is ovulation. Oestrogen (and a bit of testosterone) peak around now <sup>15</sup>, often making you feel **energised, confident, and social**. Many women feel their best around ovulation. You might notice a slight increase in body temperature and possibly a mild abdominal twinge when the egg is released (totally normal). Bloating is usually not as pronounced as in pre-period days, though a few people experience a day of slight bloating or breast tenderness due to the hormone surge. **Self-care:** Make the most of this high-energy day or two – pursue activities that require charisma or intensity. Keep up those good habits (healthy eating, exercise) to support your body while it's working hard. And don't forget to drink water; staying hydrated helps your body balance the hormone high.
- **Luteal Phase** (Day 15–28): After ovulation, the luteal phase begins. The ovary's empty follicle now produces **progesterone**, a hormone that dominates this phase. Progesterone brings a calming effect but also can slow down digestion, which means you might start to feel **bloated or constipated** as the days progress. Many experience **PMS (premenstrual syndrome)** symptoms in the late luteal phase (the week before the next period) <sup>6</sup> – common signs include bloating (your pants might feel tighter as your body holds a bit more water), swollen or tender breasts, increased appetite or cravings, irritability or mood swings, and lower energy. It's normal for your weight to fluctuate slightly in this phase due to water retention. **Self-care:** Focus on moderation and comfort. Eating balanced meals with enough fiber can help combat bloating and keep digestion moving. Magnesium and B-vitamins from foods or supplements may ease symptoms (for example, magnesium can help reduce fluid retention and relax muscles). As your energy wanes, scale back intense activities and favour gentle exercise. Prioritise sleep and stress relief (like meditating or taking a warm bath). Remind yourself that this phase is temporary – be kind to yourself until a new cycle begins.

(Illustration: \*Grayscale wheel diagram of the 4-cycle phases, labeled in sequence: Menstrual, Follicular, Ovulatory, Luteal.)

## Page 4: Week 1 Tracking (Days 1–7)

### Daily Log – Week 1 (Menstrual → Early Follicular):

Fill in each day's details. Track how you feel and any actions you take. *Example:* On Day 1 you might rate

bloating 3/5 (moderate) in the evening, energy 2/5, etc. Don't worry about perfection – just note what you observe.

Day	Bloat (1–5)	Time (AM/ PM)	Energy (1–5)	Hydration (cups)	Stress (1–5)	Sleep (hrs)	Meals on time? (Y/N)	Movement (mins)	Supplements? (Y/N)	Relief tried? (Y/N)	Relief helped (Y/N)
Day 1											
Day 2											
Day 3											
Day 4											
Day 5											
Day 6											
Day 7											

- **Weekly Summary (Week 1):** How did this week go? Calculate and jot down:
- **Success Rate:** \_% (e.g. % of days you felt you managed bloating or followed your healthy habits successfully).
- **Avg Bloat Intensity:** \_/5    **Avg Energy:** \_/5
- **Avg Sleep:** \_ hours    **Avg Hydration:** \_ cups/day
- (Any other metrics?)
- **Reflection Prompt (Week 1):** “What was your biggest win this week, and what pattern (if any) did you notice at the start of your cycle?”  
(Write a few lines: e.g. “Despite cramps on Day 1, I did gentle stretches and felt better. My win was eating healthy even when I craved junk. I noticed that on days I slept more, I had more energy and less bloating.”)

## Page 5: Week 2 Tracking (Days 8–14)

### Daily Log – Week 2 (Mid Follicular → Ovulation):

As your energy rises, see how your habits and symptoms change. Continue filling in each day.

Day	Bloat (1-5)	Time (AM/ PM)	Energy (1-5)	Hydration (cups)	Stress (1-5)	Sleep (hrs)	Meals on time? (Y/N)	Movement (mins)	Supplements? (Y/N)	Relief tried? (Y/N)	Relief helped (Y/N)
Day 8											
Day 9											
Day 10											
Day 11											
Day 12											
Day 13											
Day 14											

• **Weekly Summary (Week 2):**

• **Success Rate:** \_%

• **Avg Bloat:** \_/5    **Avg Energy:** \_/5

• **Avg Sleep:** \_ hrs    **Avg Hydration:** \_ cups

• **Reflection Prompt (Week 2):** "Mid-cycle check-in: How did your energy and mood change this week? Which foods or habits made you feel best?"

(Ex: "This week I felt a big energy boost around ovulation (Day 14). I noticed I hardly bloated at all, except when I ate a very salty meal. My best habit was drinking water – on days I hit my hydration goal, I felt great!")

## Page 6: Week 3 Tracking (Days 15–21)

### Daily Log – Week 3 (Early Luteal Phase):

Hormones are shifting after ovulation. Keep tracking diligently to catch any early PMS signs.

Day	Bloat (1-5)	Time (AM/ PM)	Energy (1-5)	Hydration (cups)	Stress (1-5)	Sleep (hrs)	Meals on time? (Y/N)	Movement (mins)	Supplements? (Y/N)	Relief tried? (Y/N)	Relief helped (Y/N)
Day 15											

Day	Bloat (1–5)	Time (AM/ PM)	Energy (1–5)	Hydration (cups)	Stress (1–5)	Sleep (hrs)	Meals on time? (Y/N)	Movement (mins)	Supplements? (Y/N)	Relief tried? (Y/N)	Relief helped (Y/N)
Day 16											
Day 17											
Day 18											
Day 19											
Day 20											
Day 21											

• **Weekly Summary (Week 3):**

• **Success Rate:** \_ %

• **Avg Bloat:** \_/5   **Avg Energy:** \_/5

• **Avg Sleep:** \_ hrs   **Avg Hydration:** \_ cups

• **Reflection Prompt (Week 3):** “What strategies have been working for you so far? What will you continue or adjust as you head into the final week of this cycle?”

(Ex: “This week I started feeling a bit more bloated around Day 19, but doing yoga in the evenings really helped (glad I tried that!). I also noticed I’ve been more tired, so I’ll aim to get an extra half hour of sleep next week. I plan to continue eating a high-fibre breakfast since that’s helped my digestion.”)

## Page 7: Week 4 Tracking (Days 22–28)

**Daily Log – Week 4 (Late Luteal Phase – PMS Week):**

This is often when PMS peaks. Track these final days of the cycle—your next Day 1 (new period) will restart the log.

Day	Bloat (1–5)	Time (AM/ PM)	Energy (1–5)	Hydration (cups)	Stress (1–5)	Sleep (hrs)	Meals on time? (Y/N)	Movement (mins)	Supplements? (Y/N)	Relief tried? (Y/N)	Relief helped (Y/N)
Day 22											
Day 23											



Day	Bloat (1-5)	Time (AM/ PM)	Energy (1-5)	Hydration (cups)	Stress (1-5)	Sleep (hrs)	Meals on time? (Y/N)	Movement (mins)	Supplements? (Y/N)	Relief tried? (Y/N)	Relief helped (Y/N)
Day 24											
Day 25											
Day 26											
Day 27											
Day 28											

• **Weekly Summary (Week 4):**

• **Success Rate:** \_ %

• **Avg Bloat:** \_/5   **Avg Energy:** \_/5

• **Avg Sleep:** \_ hrs   **Avg Hydration:** \_ cups

• **Reflection Prompt (Week 4):** *"Reflect on your pre-period week: What symptoms stood out, and which coping strategies worked best? What will you try next cycle to improve your experience?"*  
*(Ex: "This week my bloating was at its worst on Day 26, but drinking peppermint tea and avoiding salty foods helped a lot. My mood was up and down – talking with a friend really cheered me up on the tough day. Next cycle, I'll plan ahead to have healthy snacks ready during PMS and maybe schedule light activities to keep my mood up.")*

## Page 8: Resources & Further Support

Great job completing your cycle tracking for this month! Remember, understanding your body is a journey. Every cycle can teach you something new about your health. Here are some resources and next steps to support you:

• **Your FitNature Community:** Visit [yourfitnature.com](https://yourfitnature.com) for more guides on gut health, hormones, and wellness tips. Check out our blog for recipes and articles on managing bloating and hormonal balance. *(You are not alone – join others in learning about gut-friendly living!)*

• **Further Reading:**

• *Cleveland Clinic* – "Nutrition and Exercise Throughout Your Menstrual Cycle," 2023\*: Insight into eating and working out in each phase <sup>16</sup> <sup>10</sup> .

• *Healthline* – "5 Tips for Managing Period Bloating," 2020: Simple lifestyle changes to reduce PMS bloating <sup>17</sup> <sup>9</sup> .

(These evidence-based articles reinforce many tips in this workbook – like staying hydrated, which can really help with bloating, and adjusting exercise intensity according to your cycle.)\*

• **Next Steps:** Consider printing a fresh copy of this workbook for your next cycle, or use a journal app to continue tracking. Over time, compare your weekly summaries to see progress. Celebrate

improvements, no matter how small. If something isn't improving (for example, bloating remains severe), you might share this record with a healthcare provider to discuss other solutions.

- **Stay Connected:** If you have questions or want to learn more, reach out to us at **support@yourfitnature.com**. We're here to support your journey to better gut health and hormonal balance.

*(Remember: every body is different – your patterns might not look like someone else's, and that's okay! By paying attention to your own cycle, you're empowering yourself with knowledge and compassion.)*

**Disclaimer:** This workbook is an educational tool and **not** a substitute for professional medical advice. Always consult with a qualified health provider regarding any concerns or before making significant lifestyle changes. Use this information to complement, not replace, guidance from your doctor.

**MWB-v1.0.0 | Date: DD/MM/YYYY | © YourFitnature | Educational Use Only**

## Alt Text List (Workbook)

- **FitNature logo:** "YourFitnature logo." (On cover page. *Alt:* Brand identification.)
- **Cycle Phases Wheel Diagram:** "Grayscale wheel illustrating the four menstrual cycle phases (Menstrual, Follicular, Ovulatory, Luteal) in sequence." (On Cycle Overview page as a visual summary of the cycle.)
- **QR code:** "QR code linking to the FitNature Cycle Series workbook webpage (yourfitnature.com/workbook)." (On final page for quick digital access. Scanning it takes the user to the online resource page.)
- *(All other content is text or tables. Any decorative lines or icons are tagged as artifacts with no reading order impact.)*

## Export/Compliance Checklist (Workbook)

- **Format & Accessibility:** Export as **PDF/A-1b** compliant file, **8 pages** (including cover). Fully tagged PDF for accessibility: headings for each page/section (Cover as H1 title, section titles as H2, etc.), table structures for logs (with proper `<th>` for header row and scope for column headers; "Day" column marked as header for rows to aid screen reader navigation). **Document language** set to en-GB.
- **Design & Layout:** US Letter size pages, portrait orientation. Consistent **high-contrast (black on white)** design for all text and tables to meet WCAG 2.1 AA contrast standards. Used a clean, easy-to-read font (e.g. Calibri, Arial, or similar) – minimum **12 pt** for body text, slightly larger (14–16 pt) for headings. Tables have clearly defined cell borders and are limited to grayscale shading or lines (no colour reliance) for printer-friendliness. Checkbox squares in the log can be simple boxes or symbols (✓/✗) – ensure they are high contrast and have adjacent text labels or column headers for clarity.
- **Images & Media:** All images (logo, cycle wheel, QR code) are in **sRGB color profile** and optimized (~150 dpi for print; minimal colour since mostly B/W). The cycle wheel graphic is kept simple (grayscale) to convey info without colour dependence – distinctions are via labels/text. **Alt text** for each image is embedded as per the list above. Decorative graphics (if any) are marked as artifacts so they are skipped by assistive tech.
- **File Size:** Optimised PDF with embedded fonts and compressed images. Final file size **≤ 5 MB** (target ~1–3 MB given mostly text content).

- **Metadata:** Set PDF metadata fields – **Title:** “Bloating & Hormones Cycle Mini Workbook (v1.0.0)”, **Author:** “YourFitnature”, **Subject:** “Cycle Support Tools”, **Keywords:** “cycle, hormones, bloating, tracking, gut health, FitNature”. Include version number (MWB-v1.0.0) in metadata or document properties.
- **Reading Order:** Manually verify logical reading order of tags from page 1 through 8 (cover to end) – ensures screen readers read content in intended sequence (e.g. cover title, then intro; on log pages, day rows read left-to-right, top-to-bottom). Check that the table reading order makes sense (headers announced, then cell values for each row).
- **Interactive Elements:** This PDF is designed for print use primarily, so form fields are not included. If distributing digitally, ensure the short URL and email are clickable links. The QR code is provided for mobile convenience – verify it scans correctly (tested on at least one smartphone) and leads to the intended webpage.
- **Compliance Testing:** Run an accessibility full check (using Adobe Acrobat or PAC) – confirm no errors for tags, alt text, or contrast. Verify that **all fonts are embedded** and the PDF passes PDF/A-1b validation (for long-term archiving standards). Confirm the PDF opens cleanly in common PDF readers (Adobe Reader, Chrome PDF viewer, Mac Preview) with no compatibility issues.
- **Print Testing:** Print test pages on 3 different printers or print settings (if available) to ensure layout stability (no text getting cut off at margins, tables spanning pages correctly, etc.) and that grayscale graphics render clearly. All text remains legible when printed in black and white. The design avoids any elements that could drop out if printed in draft mode.
- **Final Review:** Double-check that the footer on each page (if added) correctly shows the version and date. Ensure the contact info and links are up-to-date. All alt texts were reviewed with a screen reader to confirm they convey the intended information (e.g. the cycle wheel alt text fully describes the image’s purpose). Once all checks are passed, the Mini Workbook PDF is ready for sharing!

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 10 11 12 14 15 16 Cycle Syncing Nutrition and Exercise

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/nutrition-and-exercise-throughout-your-menstrual-cycle>

9 13 17 Period Bloating: 5 Ways to Manage Bloating

<https://www.healthline.com/health/womens-health/period-bloating>