

Helpful Tips to help Balance Hormones

Hormone balancing doesn't have to be as complicated as it may sound. We don't need to achieve microscopic perfection at a cellular level, our bodies will do that for us naturally if we provide it with the right tools to work it's magic.

So when you are feeling tired more often than not, stressed, overwhelmed, notice you are gaining or even losing weight, or maybe your sex drive is gone & your monthly cycle is off schedule (men you have one too, you just may not notice it as much), the first place to focus on is hormone function.

We have 4 primary ones that can affect how we think & feel as well as play essential roles in weight management so we'll take a quick look at those first.

Insulin - Made in the pancreas & released into the bloodstream in response to rising blood glucose levels. When we have excess glucose in our blood from eating carbohydrates, insulin instructs the body to store it away for later. Insulin basically tells the body to stop burning fat as fuel & burn the circulating glucose instead, in an effort to keep it from being stored as fat. Unfortunately many of our diets & lifestyles encourage too many carbohydrates too often & without realizing it this turns into weight gain & potentially even type 2 diabetes.

Cortisol - Also plays a significant role in weight loss & control, in much the same way as insulin does. It is our stress response hormone, & it's job is to help the body respond to stressful situations to keep us alive. Think of it as our fight or flight hormone response. [Cortisol](#) stimulates fat & carbohydrate metabolism for fast energy, which stimulates insulin release for regulating blood sugar levels. This can result in an increased appetite & potential for cravings towards foods that are sweet, salty or high in fat. When cortisol levels are running high for longer periods of time (high stress), our bodies can become resistant to the insulin response it triggers. Without insulin to regulate the glucose in our bodies it gets stored as fat, which can lead to weight gain & even type 2 diabetes as it disrupts insulin function.

Estrogen - Contributes to bone health, cardiovascular health & cognitive health so it is important to make sure we have the right balance. High estrogen levels can slow natural fat loss by disrupting fat regulating hormones that make us hold onto fat especially around the middle, butt & thighs. Estrogen requires a specific enzyme called aromatase in order to be synthesised. Aromatase is present in high amounts in the ovaries as well as in fatty tissue. More fat = more aromatase, leading to more estrogen which you guessed it = more fat.

Thyroid - This powerful little gland controls the rate of every chemical reaction in the body from how quickly we turn food into energy & whether or not you gain or lose weight easily, to how quickly we repair & regenerate cells. Keeping our thyroid healthy is an essential component of overall health. This can be done with the basics like; ensuring we get enough iodine in our diet, cook your brassica veg slightly to reduce goitrogens, eat nuts & seeds daily, include anti-inflammatory foods like avocados, walnuts, fatty fish or omega-3 supplements. Eat the rainbow & include quality carbohydrates like brown rice, quinoa, & sweet potato.

Easy ways to keep your hormones in check:

1. Eat more protein, .8g for every kg of body weight is recommended but depending on your activity levels & underlying conditions you may want to aim for between 70-80g daily. Protein is the building for all cells, hormones, & functions in our bodies so ensuring adequate amounts is essential.
- Protein helps your liver detoxify excess estrogen & helps to maintain proper thyroid function. Thyroid helps to control metabolism so this can be key in helping us to keep a healthy weight.

- **Sources include:** Eggs, dairy, seafood, shellfish, meat, liver, tofu, soya, nuts & seeds, tempeh, non-dairy yogurts, beans & legumes
2. Eat the right types of digestible, slow release carbohydrates. These slow release carbs will have more fibre to slow the release of insulin & help us feel fuller longer. Plus they often have more nutrients like vitamins & minerals than quick burning carbohydrates like white bread, pastas, cakes, or energy drinks.
 - Our liver also requires glycogen to detox properly & this also includes the breakdown of estrogen, which is then excreted via the urine & feces. So having good digestive health really helps here.
 - **Sources include:** Fruits like apples, pears, berries, grapes, oranges & kiwi, root veg like sweet potato, carrots, turnips, & ginger. Natural sweeteners like honey & maple syrup, as well as brown rice & high quality sourdough breads (homemade).
 3. Eat regularly 3-4 hours & by doing so we can help to keep stress hormone levels in check & stabilize blood sugars which helps with better insulin control, better balance for hormones like progesterone & estrogen, plus you'll stay properly nourished providing you are choosing whole foods to eat.
 - Eating breakfast, a small snack, lunch, a small snack & dinner at 2-4 hour intervals can help to prevent the crash we get as glucose levels get too low or the spikes when choosing the lesser quality foods because we are hungry & not making rash decisions.
 - **Sources include:** Have snacks handy like raw nuts, seeds & raisins, veggies & hummus, a piece of fruit with nut butter, rice cakes with cheese & salsa, or yogurt with some chia & pumpkin seeds.
 4. Eat more estrogen lowering foods - Cruciferous veg like broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, & kale (cooked can be beneficial here to keep thyroid happy) are beneficial. Raw carrots are especially beneficial as they have a unique fibre that binds with endotoxins, like excess estrogen or bad gut bacteria. This helps to clear out the intestines of these, which is needed to maintain the balance between "good" & "bad" gut bacteria.
 5. Try to keep insulin levels steady or low to promote more stabilized energy & fat burning. Insulin is our 'fat storage hormone' because it tells the body to stop burning fat & use the glucose circulating in our blood instead.
 - To keep insulin steady we want to eat more fibre, fat, & protein, with slow release complex carbs that come from root veg like sweet potatoes, carrots, turnips, & dark leafy greens among other veg like spinach, broccoli, kale, swiss chard, & squash. Fibre especially helps slow the absorption of glucose & therefore slows insulin release. It will also help us feel fuller longer so it's a win win.



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