

Moontime

30-minute playsheet

Welcome to your Moontime - a practice in slowing down and listening! Whether you're still bleeding or have gone through menopause, let this sequence be your go-to as your monthly reboot and recharge. As women, we all require down-time to go inside and truly *be* with ourselves, and that is exactly what our menstruation time is for. To slow down, to curl up with a big pillow and connect with our True Self.

If you're someone who buckles over in pain during your period, or even experiences some discomfort while you're bleeding, this playsheet will introduce you to a new way of travelling through that time of month - what I call the Moontime - so you're able to tap into its power, as opposed to dread the arrival of Aunt Flo each month. So stop cursing your cycle, and lets get *aligned* with it...

YOUR MOONTIME

Aunt Flo and her gorgeous sister Ovulation are your friends. They are a sign that your reproductive system is working the way it should be. If you're not getting a period (and you haven't yet gone through menopause), simply engaging in the practices in this series will help balance your reproductive organs so they can function as they were designed. Rest in that knowing, that you are healing yourself by indulging in a regular practice.

So what happens when you bleed? Your body is shedding the lining of the uterus (your womb) along with the unfertilised egg, to prepare your body for a possible conception the following month. This is a physical mirror of what is going on for us mentally and emotionally. During our menses we are being given an opportunity to shed old beliefs and behaviours that no longer serve us, to prepare us for the conception of new projects, ideas and ways of being.

To help with this process, grab a pen and paper and do some journalling before you read the rest of this playsheet as this will help you gain a greater understanding of what's really going on for you and your relationship to yourself, as *awareness* really is the first step in healing. As you journal, contemplate these questions...

- ♥ How connected do I feel to my cycle?
- ♥ How do I feel about your menstruation (or lack thereof)?
- ♥ What do I feel in my body at this time?
- ♥ How do I feel about being a woman?

Our ovaries are the seed of creative energy in our body. Intention is everything. If you have really tough menstrual cycles, if you constantly focus on hating your period, you'll continue to create that reality. What we think and how we feel about what we think, is what we create. Our body hears what we're telling it. On the flip-side, the more love we send our body, especially during menstruation, the more our organs will respond.

Something I quickly want to mention before we move on, is that it doesn't matter if your menstrual cycle lines up with the New Moon, the Full Moon or anywhere in between. As long as you have a healthy relationship with yourself and your cycle, then ultimately that's all that matters, and if your body chooses to sync up with the moon, that's ok too!

WHY THEN DO WOMEN SUFFER DURING THEIR MOONTIME?

Most of us ladies are at least a little familiar with PMS (Pre-Menstrual Syndrome). If you suffer from really bad cramps or heavy menstrual cycles, severe crankiness, or downright bitchiness; having a regular *Yoga for the Vagina* practice will help alleviate these symptoms, as will learning more about the purpose of your Moontime and what's required to travel through it unscathed.

In the Western world the menstrual cycle is pretty much ignored, thus women continue their busy lifestyles despite the fact that their body is telling them it's time to slow down and reflect. Bleeding uses a lot of the body's energy, so it requires slowing down to allow for this process to take place. The body knows how to support us during this phase, it's us ladies who get in the body's way, by continuing to run around like Superwomen.

Many women try to fight off the need to sleep and rest when they begin bleeding, with caffeine and willpower - both of which only create anxiety and irritability in the body - further zapping their energy and fuel, sending them down the road of emotional outbursts and physical symptoms. By continuing to run at the same speed you have all month, you deplete yourself significantly.

When we push ahead, instead of taking this necessary *self*-time, we deny our mind and body the time and space it needs to renew. Not only do we lose out on our monthly opportunity to restore ourselves and reboot our system, we miss this gorgeous and insightful time where we have access to the deeper wisdom and inspiration, that is available to help guide us through life.

Putting expectations on yourself, working to deadlines, networking or being social, working long hours, starting new projects, logical structure-filled activities, lack of sleep and physically demanding exercise are all things that don't work so well during our Moontime. These things go against our innate needs and natural way of *being* during this womanly time of month.

Too much exercise, especially lifting weights at the gym, boxing and high energy cardio, drain the body heavily at a time when the body needs all its resources available to do the internal detox that is currently happening. This is why I have designed the **Moontime sequence**. It is your 'go-to' during your heaviest days of bleeding, that works to gently relax and centre the body while creating the space for you to be more in touch with your True Self.

You have the power to transcend pre-menstrual suffering by accepting your cycle as a tool for spiritual growth.

So instead of fighting this experience, I invite you to surrender into this time of deep nurture. Ignore this vital time each month and soon you'll be in the doctors office being delivered some horrible news about the state of your body, *if* of course, you don't have a nervous breakdown before that happens. Unfortunately this is the reality of the situation. When we don't give our body what it needs, it breaks down, just like a car.

MOONTIME: WHAT IT'S REALLY FOR...

Bleeding time is a time for slowing down and getting in touch with our inner world. It's a time to retreat so you can enjoy inner reflection and contemplation. A woman is most plugged into her inner voice when she's menstruating. She is highly intuitive, and according to Native American tradition, is considered to be at her most powerful physically and spiritually.

For this reason, your menses is a time to be celebrated, nurtured and treated with much respect. Our Moontime really is a profound catalytic tool for self-development and goal achievement, by getting clear on what we want and re-evaluating if we're really doing the right things to make those things we desire happen. Questions to ask yourself during this time are:

- ♥ Where is my life not flowing right now?
- ♥ What do I feel I need to do differently?
- ♥ How can I make these changes? And *commit* to them?
- ♥ What do I *really* want in life?

This is our rest and reset time. A time to regroup. Most things will probably feel like too much effort, making it the ideal time to enjoy taking time out to go inward and take stock of where you're at, how you got here, and what needs to change in order of you to commit to moving forward. To reconnect and tune into your True Self to gain the guidance you need to realign ourselves with what is most important in your life.

Yes, tapping into that internal guidance is much easier at this time of month, you'll feel much more in the flow and find you're able to let things from the past go far more easily. If there was one time in your cycle that was more powerful in developing your relationship with yourself, and thus fostering self-love and self-acceptance, Moontime is it! But being able to really use this time to your advantage, you need to slow right down. Then slow down some *more*!

That means creating the space for you to simply sit in your own silence, be with yourself in solitude, meditate regularly and tune into your True Self. Be kind and gentle to yourself, self-nurture, go for walks in nature, read inspirational books, sip cups of herbal tea mindfully, and indulge in a few days of pure self-love. It means relishing in the simple pleasure of *being*.

You want this phase of your cycle to feel much like that of a living meditation. Sounds nice doesn't it? Now when I say this, I mean moving through life slowly enough, *mindfully* enough, to be able to listen and hear your inner voice of wisdom, (as opposed to surrounding yourself with candles and not leaving your meditation pillow for 3 days, as lovely as that sounds)!

You simply need to create stillness within and around you and focus on inner knowing and inner feeling. A time to leave responsibilities and demands until later, so you can take your awareness inward and connect more deeply. Our intuitive thoughts and feelings are heightened and our connection with our subconscious is the strongest at this time. This is why we can create real and lasting transformation during this time, *if* we honour our body's need to slow down.

This is the time to dream up your ideal life, and spend time visualising and imagining what that would be like. It's a time of creating vision boards and writing positive affirmations and taking time to really 'feel' into the life you wish to create. To set intentions for how you'd like to be. Because our subconscious is so open at this time, we're able to let go of old beliefs and install new programming much more easily, so that our dreams actually have the foundation to fruit.

You may like to imagine this time in your cycle as the winter, you've lost all your leaves, so you can see what's really beneath the surface, and then as you come out of this phase, you move into the Spring-time of your cycle where you're able to fully blossom as you've planted the seeds required to have a full and colourful flowerbed of beauty and natural radiance.

As we come out of out of this time, we are then refreshed and inspired to start taking action on all the reflections and insights and plans we made during this deep time of insight and transformation. The

best time to put something into action is right after your menstrual cycle ends until you ovulate. When we use this time as our body would have us use it, life becomes a colourful playground where we're free to create and frolic and experience joy in our life, something that is severely lacking in women who do not take this time out to get in touch with themselves.

On a purely physical level, when we pay attention to our hormonal rhythms and honour menstruation with appropriate actions, our cycles, our fertility and our future pregnancies are strengthened and supported. Even menopause is much smoother if we self-nurture ourselves during our bleeding times throughout womanhood.

TIPS FOR A DIVINE MOONTIME

For me personally, I mark my periods in my diary in advance and I ensure I have no social engagements during that time, so I have the space to slow down and go inside and be with my own energies, so that this time can be a healing part of my month, and set me up for the month to come. When a woman does not do this, her month will be built upon shaky foundations.

So I strongly suggest popping your next period in your diary and finding ways to be more self-nurturing during this time. How can you create space so you can spend at least a few hours each day tucked up with a blanket on your couch, doing some gentle yoga, and of course, feeding yourself nourishing foods? Here is a list of the 'dos' and 'dont's' during your Moontime so you can have a smoother ride with Aunt Flo.

DO...

- ♥ Your Moontime yoga sequence.
- ♥ The Moontime Mini sequence.
- ♥ Some gentle hip swivels if you're feeling blocked up and achy. They're super soothing at this time of month, helping relieve feelings of tension in the pelvis. They also increase circulation and alleviate feelings of stress.
- ♥ Walk daily.
- ♥ Draw awareness to your feet and feel yourself grounding down into the earth as you walk. This will increase your energy and lessen menstrual symptoms.
- ♥ Meditate. LOTS! Or simply rest quietly in nature.
- ♥ Change your routine so you have the freedom to rest more.
- ♥ Delegate, delegate and delegate some more.
- ♥ Take naps through the day.
- ♥ Spend time alone.
- ♥ Blow raspberries through your lips during menstrual cramps; it can be surprisingly helpful in alleviating pain due to the the Sphincter Law (we explore in the **Luscious Lady Parts sequence**).
- ♥ Drink ginger tea.
- ♥ Eat mango and eggplant, two of the most potent foods for supporting a healthy menstrual flow.
- ♥ Eat lightly. No heavy greasy foods during this time.
- ♥ Take time to reflect or journal on things that upset you.
- ♥ Let go of any guilt around not working so hard
- ♥ Spend time alone, especially during your heavier days.
- ♥ And most of all, enjoy this time with YOU!

DON'T...

- ♥ Ayurveda advises against full body massage at this time, as it interferes with menstruation's natural balancing mechanism.
- ♥ Don't wear anything tight around your abdominal area during your period. Comfortable loose pants with an elastic waist or dresses feel much better, especially if you're cramping. Light colours can help you feel more energetic and more in tune, while natural fabrics support your body when your energy body is so sensitive.
- ♥ Avoid hot baths when you're on your heaviest days. Opt for warm showers instead so your body experiences the least amount of intrusion.
- ♥ Don't do **Breath Of Fire** or the **Fertility Massage**, or poses where your body and legs are higher than your pelvis, ie. **Shoulder Stand**.
- ♥ Leave the gym and other physically demanding activities or exercise until after your heaviest days of bleeding.
- ♥ Don't make any major decisions during this time. Being too tired to care may allow others to take advantage of you.
- ♥ Don't schedule meetings or social engagements on these days and leave the chores to another day.

Our natural state as women is *round*, to reflect the moon. Our weight fluctuates, just as the moon's size changes. Honour your own shape because you have been given it. Stop trying to make yourself outwardly beautiful and work on connecting with your *inner* beauty. For it's that connection with your inner beauty that will be radiated outward into your physical beauty. Above all else, trust your fluctuating energy.

Work on **LOVING** being a woman. Many women experience sexual health issues because they're leading a very masculine life. In order to heal these areas a woman needs to connect with her feminine energy. Not move out of her masculine, but have an equal balance of both. Accept this phase in your cycle and welcome it. Plan for it. Slow right down, and enjoy this time to simply 'be'.

HAVE A CUPPA

Ginger tea is an excellent tonic for women, as is ginger in general, which is why I encourage you to use it generously in your cooking at all times of month! Taken during your menstrual period, ginger can help keep you energised and sooth your digestion. Having a ginger tea can also help relieve the aches and discomfort of fever and help sooth the nervous system. To make a ginger tea simply boil 4-5 slices of fresh ginger in 3 cups of water. Add honey and milk if desired. Yum!

MOON TIME SEQUENCE

While we don't want to be doing any physical activity that further depletes us during our Moontime, there are poses and stretches you can do that actually regenerate and restore your energy. This is what makes up the **Moontime sequences**. These sequences are full of restorative postures that help support you during this time both physically, and emotionally, creating lots of space for you to connect in with your inner voice.

The combination of reclining poses and forward bends create a synergistic effect that fortifies the nervous system, restores depleted energy, and allows the mind to experience a quiet inner release. It's important with each pose, that while you maintain a stretch, you take a much softer focus at this time of month. Let your body tell you how much of a stretch you need in that moment. Your primary intention should be to relax into each pose, as opposed to stimulating or stressing the body.

We spend lot of juicy time in **Child's Pose** and **Extended Child's Pose** in these sequences because

- 1) It's super restorative, and
- 2) It stimulates the third eye point.

The third eye point lies midway between your eyebrows approximately three inches inside your skull. This centre produces hormones that govern a wide range of bodily functions. The Taoists believe that this centre is the home of the spirit. When closed we are likely to feel a lack of aim, of decisiveness, the mind will wander easily and we're unable to make decisions. When open we feel a real sense of purpose, as well as a sense of direct knowing and connection to our intuition.

The **Moontime sequence** really is a 'wise-time' sequence, as you have an opportunity to connect far more deeply with your True Self than at other times of month, gaining direct access to your subconscious. Any symptoms that present themselves during this time, are simply your unresolved 'stuff' coming up for healing. We are far more sensitive to our own energy body at this time of month, hence why we are able to feel more of our hurts and past conditioning.

While this may feel confronting, it's super empowering, because when you have this awareness you can use your Moontime to create massive healing, that will leave you feeling freer in life. This is what *Yoga for the Vagina* was designed for. To create a nurturing space for you to listen to your wise inner lady, connect in with the ebb and flow of your hormonal rhythms while helping ease any discomfort and lethargy you may be feeling.

Honestly, PMS can be diminished or eliminated by having the willingness to examine yourself more deeply and to take ownership of your choices so you can shape your life into one that is supportive of your natural, rhythmic, womanly cycle. And having a regular practice such as *Yoga for the Vagina* facilitates this process both on and off the mat.

HOW TO USE THIS SEQUENCE

I originally created this sequence for women to do when they were bleeding. After I started playing with it, I realised it was the perfect sequence to use when you feel like you need a more restorative practice, if you're feeling low on energy, or if for whatever reason you don't feel like using your Jade Egg. Sometimes you won't want to and that's totally ok! This is your go-to sequence in those times.

Full of simple restorative poses that ease tension and quell PMS, this is a comforting supportive sequence you can do fully clothed. In fact, if you're menstruating then I encourage you to do this sequence fully clothed, or at the very least cover up your belly. You want to keep that area warm when you're bleeding. Wear something that you can move easily in and that feels nice. This isn't your typical yoga practise that requires stretchy lycra. Put on a beautiful dress or some playful leggings, something you can move easily in, but something that makes you feel delicious!

Give yourself permission to be supported by any props you feel you need in your practice. You don't need anything fancy - if you have a blanket and some cushions or pillows off your bed, feel free to use them to support you in this practice. You might like to have some folded blankets down on your mat to create a softer foundation for your body to melt into, and use cushions where you feel drawn. You want this practice to feel lush and yummy.

Be gentle as you move throughout the poses, exploring your body as if for the first time. Listen to your body above all else, and if you're not sure how far to stretch, go into each pose softly and gently. Listen to the feedback your body will give you. Be open to your body feeling different on any given day -

some days you might just want to take it easy, other days you might be full of energy and wanting to really feel powerful in each pose.

Go with where you are at, without comparing yourself to how you were yesterday or last week. Today is today – let it be what it needs to be. A woman fluctuates like the moon. That is the magnitude of our power. Own it. Accept it. *Be* with it. Enter each practice without any pre-conceived ideas on how far you can stretch. Use your options, your ‘Other Ways’ when needed. Listen to your body in that moment.

When we begin to live more in harmony with our own cycles, practising self-love daily, we return to our optimum state of vibrant womanly health. Let this sequence be your yellow brick road back to yourself. Let the Jade Egg be your travelling companion and enjoy exploring the terrain of your beautiful mind, body and soul as you journey between the darkness and the light that is life.

MOONTIME 30-MIN SEQUENCE RUNDOWN

POSES	TIMES
Love Wrap	4-min
Light Massage	2-min
Intention	1-min
Goddess Pose	3-min
Rock’n Roll	30-sec
Alternate Nostril Breathing	3-min
Half Moon Neck Rolls	2-min
Rest	30-sec
Pussy Cat	3-min
Extended Child’s Pose	1-min
Legs-Up-A-Wall	3-min
Relaxation	3-min
Stretches	1-min
Rock’n Roll	30-sec
Self-Love Blessing	2-min

Please note: The **Moontime sequence** is specifically designed for you during your Moontime and when you feel like you need a more restorative practice. If you’re attending other forms of yoga when you’re bleeding, be sure to let your teacher know, and do **NOT** practice any of the inverted poses, as it’s damaging to do anything that prevents the downward flow of blood. Just try one, it won’t feel good! It’s also advised to avoid standing poses, active back bends, and the strong twisting poses as this disturbs the vital energy in the lower abdomen that supports elimination.