



THE BOOK OF HORMONES: WEIGHT LOSS ESSENTIALS GUIDE

The Three Essential Chapters To Help You
Achieve Successful Weight Loss-Fast!

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Part 1 : Hormonal Weight Loss For (Peri)Menopause

Weight gain during perimenopause and menopause is a common concern, and for good reason. Hormonal shifts, including declining estrogen, fluctuating progesterone, and reduced testosterone, contribute to changes in body composition, metabolism, and where fat is stored.

If it feels like your body is working against you, you're not imagining it. These changes can make losing weight feel like an uphill battle.

The good news? Understanding how your diet affects your hormones can help you take control. Ironically, not only do we tend to dismiss the importance of what we put into our mouths, but worse, we have most of it emanating from the '80s ("food pyramid," "balanced diet," "fat-free," "low carb").

This chapter focuses on rebooting your diet to balance hormones, preserve muscle mass, regulate blood sugar, and support sustainable weight loss—without resorting to crash diets or constant frustration. But before diving into macronutrients and micronutrients, let's explore the fundamentals of body composition and how to track the metrics that matter most.

Understanding Body Composition

Weight alone doesn't tell the whole story. Two people can weigh the same but have vastly different body compositions. If you recall the sample scenario from Chapter 6, the two women had identical weights but drastically different body fat percentages.

Weight itself is a number we crucify ourselves with—I do it, too. Trust me, I've got my own self-critical mean girl on loop. But weight is really just a measure of **gravity**. Want to lose weight fast? Try weighing yourself on the moon—or in a pool, for a slightly easier commute. #nerdgasm.

What truly matters is how much of your body is made up of fat, how much of that fat surrounds your organs (visceral fat), how much of your body is made up of muscle, and how these metrics affect your metabolic health.

Sounds straightforward, right?

No wonder we stick to the easy three digits.

Tracking the Metrics That Matter

So, if weight alone isn't the full picture, how do you get the clarity you need?

Start with a measuring tape and a scale that goes beyond the basic three digits.

Be better than the three digits.

The scale I most often recommend to Gaya Wellness members enrolled in our Doctor-led weight management program with GLP-1s is the **@Renpho Scale**. It's affordable, measures everything you need, and effortlessly syncs with an app on your phone.

The app gives you easy-to-read charts and graphs, making tracking your progress over time simple. It's like having a personal health assistant right in your pocket.

They even have a blue-tooth enabled measuring tape!

Here are the metrics I like to focus on the most with my program members:

- **Body Fat Percentage**

Tracks the fat to total body weight ratio, helping you see whether weight changes come from fat loss or something else (like muscle).

- **Visceral Fat**

Visceral fat is the fat wrapped around your organs, and as a surgeon, I've seen firsthand how deceiving it can be. You might appear to be at a normal weight on the outside, but it's a different story on the inside—a slimy, inflammation-prone, fat-blanketed mess.

This is the type of fat you want to target because it's directly linked to metabolic risks like insulin resistance, heart disease, and inflammation. Unfortunately, losing visceral fat doesn't always come with visible external rewards, like a slimmer waistline or tighter jeans.

That's why having this metric is priceless. It keeps you focused and motivated during those times when external progress seems slow, reminding you that the most important changes are happening where it counts—on the inside.

• Muscle Mass and Percentage

This metric tells you how much of your body is composed of muscle in actual weight—an essential number for determining your protein needs. Knowing your muscle mass helps you calculate how much protein you need to sustain and build muscle, which is critical for achieving your weight loss goals.

Without sufficient protein intake to meet your body's muscle-sustaining needs, fat loss becomes significantly harder. Instead of burning fat, your body may break down muscle, slowing your metabolism and making progress feel impossible.

Don't worry—we'll dive deeper into the specifics of protein intake later in this chapter. Stay tuned!

• Metabolic Age

Forget skincare—this is my new anti-aging obsession.

Just kidding about forgetting skincare; let's not get crazy.

But seriously, this metric feels like a metabolic credit score!

Seeing a number lower than your actual age is like a personal gold star for your health habits. It's a boost that losing 5 pounds could never give me—proof that my efforts are making me biologically younger. And really, isn't that the ultimate flex?

Why It Matters:

Without a tool like this, it's easy to misinterpret progress. Or worse, misinterpret the lack of progress. Losing weight might feel like a win, but if that weight is coming from muscle rather than fat, it's a sign to adjust your strategy.

Conversely, even if the scale doesn't budge, muscle mass improvements or visceral fat reductions are huge wins for your health.

How to Use It:

- **Measure Consistently:** Use the scale at the same time of day, ideally first thing in the morning.
- **Track Trends, Not Just Numbers:** The Renpho app lets you visualize changes over time, helping you spot patterns and stay motivated.
- **Pair It With Other Metrics:** Combine these insights with your waist circumference, photos, or how your clothes fit for a well-rounded picture of progress.

From Metrics to Macros: Starting With Protein

Now that we've covered the metrics that matter let's dive into how to fuel your body for success—starting with protein. Protein isn't just for bodybuilders—it's the key to maintaining muscle mass, especially when cutting calories or on medications like GLP-1s. Hitting your protein macros is critical to preserve muscle while losing fat.

Positive Protein Balance

Being in a positive protein balance means consuming enough protein to support your body's repair, growth, and maintenance needs. This balance is critical because protein is the building block for your body's muscles, enzymes, hormones, and other essential tissues.

When you're in a negative protein balance (not eating enough protein), your body starts breaking down muscles to meet its needs.

The Three Types of Muscle

1. **Skeletal Muscle:** Most people think of this when they hear “muscle.” It’s responsible for movement and maintaining posture. It’s also the primary muscle affected by your protein intake and physical activity.
2. **Cardiac Muscle:** This muscle is found only in the heart and is vital for pumping blood. While your protein intake does not directly influence it in the same way as skeletal muscle, general protein deficiency can affect overall heart health.
3. **Smooth Muscle:** Found in organs like your intestines and blood vessels, smooth muscle handles involuntary movements, such as digestion and regulating blood flow. Adequate protein ensures these tissues stay healthy, too.

Why Maintaining Muscle Mass Matters

- **Metabolic Health:** Muscle mass influences your basal metabolic rate (BMR) or how many calories you burn at rest. More muscle means a faster metabolism..
- **Glucose Regulation:** Muscles are crucial in managing blood sugar levels, as they are a major site for glucose storage and use.
- **Physical Function:** Muscle strength is essential for day-to-day tasks, from climbing stairs to lifting groceries.

Plus, muscles sure do make you look good.
#Glenpowell

Calculating Your Protein Needs:

To determine how much protein you need, base it on your **lean body mass (LBM)**, which includes all non-fat components of your body, such as muscles, bones, and organs. Your scale or body composition analysis tool will provide you with this number.

- **Recommended Intake:** Aim to consume **0.7–1 gram of protein per pound of lean body mass** daily for optimal health. This range ensures you're supporting both skeletal and non-skeletal muscle needs while fueling your body's metabolic processes.

Why Adequate Protein Intake Matters:

During a caloric deficit, such as from dieting for weight loss, your body will resort to breaking down muscle to meet its need for essential amino acids if your protein intake is insufficient. Muscles weigh more than fat, so yes, the number on the scale might drop, but you're losing muscle—not fat. And that's a problem because muscle mass keeps your basal metabolic rate (BMR) high. Less muscle means a slower metabolism, which sets you up for future weight gain when you inevitably stop dieting.

The Prius vs. Ford F150 Analogy

Think of your metabolism like a car. Muscle is the engine. The bigger the engine (i.e., more muscle), the more fuel (calories) you burn, even when

you're just sitting around. Losing muscle is like switching from a Ford F150 to a Prius—your body becomes more efficient, but in this case, that's not a good thing because it burns fewer calories at rest.

Practical Steps:

- 1. Track Your Protein Intake:** Use apps or tools to ensure you're hitting your daily protein target.
- 2. Prioritize Protein-Rich Foods:** Incorporate lean meats, fish, eggs, dairy, legumes, and plant-based protein sources into your meals.
- 3. Stay Consistent:** Make protein intake a non-negotiable part of your daily diet, as consistency is key to seeing results.

By focusing on protein, you're not just supporting your weight loss goals—you're investing in your overall metabolic health. Refer to the Bonus chapter at the end of the book for an easy to follow breakdown on how to incorporate protein into your diet and practical tips to meet your daily needs.

Carbohydrates: Balancing Energy And Insulin

Carbs—another misunderstood nutrient. For years, they've been labeled benign (think: low-fat/no-fat trends that are still going) and the villain (think: every low-carb diet ever). But the truth is, it's all about the type of carbs you're eating and when you are eating them.

The Glycemic Index

Just like handling ten tasks, it is more manageable when your boss doesn't come at you with them all at once— timing matters with sugar, too. The glycemic index (GI) measures how quickly a carbohydrate raises blood sugar levels. High-GI foods (like white bread, sugary snacks, and potatoes) cause your blood sugar to spike much faster than the same amount of low GI Food. This leads to insulin surges, which then leads to fat storage. Low-GI foods (like whole grains, vegetables, and legumes) release glucose slowly, keeping insulin levels steady and triggering the fat storage sequence less.

We have many misgivings about what constitutes “ healthy” carbs—often thinking natural sources automatically mean healthy. I have included a glycemic index table at the end of the book to help alleviate the denial we like to engage in. Take fruit, for example. Mangoes are healthy in terms of vitamins and fiber, but if fat loss is the goal, there are better “natural fruit” options.

The Myth: A “healthy” diet means eating lots of fruit and veggies.

The Reality: Some fruits (like oranges, mangoes, and bananas) can still cause blood sugar spikes. Refer to our GI table at the end of the book to find low-GI fruit options. Trust me, there are plenty of great ones.

Fiber: Your Secret Weapon for Weight Loss

Now that we've cleared up the confusion about carbs, it's time to talk about fiber, which often gets overlooked in the conversation about weight loss and health. Fiber is a carbohydrate that your body can't digest, but don't let it fool you—it has vast benefits. Unlike sugars or starches, fiber doesn't raise your blood sugar, and it plays a crucial role in maintaining digestive health, regulating blood sugar, and even supporting fat loss.

- **Soluble Fiber:** Dissolves in water, forming a gel-like substance in your digestive tract. It helps lower cholesterol and regulate blood sugar levels. You'll find it in foods like oats, apples, and legumes.
- **Insoluble Fiber:** Does not dissolve in water. It adds bulk to stool, helping food pass more efficiently through the digestive system and preventing constipation. It's found in whole grains, vegetables, and nuts.

Why Fiber is Important

- **Regulates Blood Sugar:** Fiber slows the absorption of sugar, preventing the blood sugar spikes that lead to fat storage. A diet high in fiber helps to maintain steady insulin levels, keeping your body in fat-burning mode.
- **Promotes Fullness:** Fiber adds bulk to your meals without adding extra calories, making you feel fuller for longer. This means you're less likely to overeat, which is crucial for weight loss.
- **Supports Gut Health:** Fiber is the food source for the good bacteria in your gut (more on this in the next section). A diet high in fiber helps maintain a healthy microbiome, improving digestion and overall health.
- **Lowers Cholesterol:** Soluble fiber binds to cholesterol in the digestive system, helping to lower LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels.

Prebiotics and Probiotics: The Gut Health Dream Team

You've probably heard a lot about probiotics—those friendly bacteria that support a healthy gut. But to fully understand their benefits, you must also know about **prebiotics**. Both prebiotics and probiotics play a key role in maintaining gut health, but they do it in different ways.

What's the Difference?

Probiotics: These are live bacteria in certain foods or supplements. They add to the population of good bacteria in your gut, which is essential for a healthy microbiome. Probiotics are often found in fermented foods like yogurt, sauerkraut, kimchi, and kefir, as well as in supplement form.

Prebiotics: These are non-digestible fibers that serve as food for your gut bacteria. Prebiotics feed the probiotics (the good bacteria), helping them thrive and do their job effectively. Prebiotics are found in garlic, onions, leeks, asparagus, bananas, and whole grains.

Why Prebiotics and Probiotics Matter

- **Improves Digestion:** A healthy balance of gut bacteria helps break down food and absorb nutrients more efficiently. Probiotics aid digestion and prevent bloating, gas, and constipation, while prebiotics fuel those bacteria to thrive.
- **Boosts Immunity:** About 70% of your immune system resides in your gut. Prebiotics and probiotics can help you maintain a healthy balance of bacteria and better fight infections and inflammation.
- **Supports Weight Loss:** Research shows that a healthy gut microbiome can influence weight management. Certain bacteria in your gut are associated with lower body weight, while others are linked to obesity. By feeding your body prebiotics and probiotics, you promote the growth of good bacteria that help regulate metabolism and fat storage.
- **Mental Health Connection:** There's growing evidence that the gut-brain axis plays a role in mood and mental health. A balanced gut microbiome, supported by prebiotics and probiotics, can positively impact mood, anxiety, and cognitive function.

How to Incorporate Prebiotics and Probiotics into Your Diet

Probiotics: Include fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, miso, and kombucha in your diet regularly. If you're not a fan of these foods, probiotic supplements are a convenient alternative—just make sure they contain strains like **Lactobacillus** and **Bifidobacterium**.

Prebiotics: Add high-fiber, prebiotic-rich foods like garlic, onions, leeks, asparagus, bananas, and whole grains to your meals. You can also find prebiotic supplements, but natural sources are typically more effective.

Fat: The Real Story Behind Fat Storage and Burning

Let's clear up the fat myth once and for all. Eating fat does not make you fat. Excess calories (especially from sugar) lead to weight gain, not dietary fat. Healthy fats can help you lose weight. But to understand how this works, we must look at how fat is stored and burned by the body.

How Fat is Stored and Burned

When you eat more calories than your body needs, insulin helps store the excess energy as triglycerides in fat cells (adipose tissue). Fat is like your body's emergency energy reserve. But here's the kicker: when insulin levels are low (like during fasting or between meals), your body breaks down these fat stores and uses them for energy. This process is called lipolysis.

Once the fat is mobilized from your adipose tissue, it's transported to the liver, converted into ketones (a fuel source), or directly into energy through fatty acid oxidation. So, low insulin levels promote fat burning, while high insulin levels (from eating too many refined carbs or sugars) promote fat storage.

Good Fats vs. Bad Fats

Not all fats are created equal. Here's a breakdown of the types of fats:

- **Monounsaturated fats** (found in olive oil, avocados, and nuts) are heart-healthy and help raise HDL (good cholesterol) while lowering LDL (bad cholesterol).
- **Polyunsaturated fats** (like omega-3s found in fish) are essential for brain function and reducing inflammation.
- **Saturated fats** (found in red meat and dairy) are okay in moderation but can raise LDL if consumed in excess.
- **Trans fats** (found in processed foods) are the real villains. They raise LDL, lower HDL, and increase the risk of heart disease.

Essential Fatty Acids: They are essential for a reason

While fats often get a bad rap, within the category of polyunsaturated fats, there's a superstar duo you need to know about—essential fatty acids (EFAs). These are the fats your body can't produce on its own, meaning you have to get them from food. EFAs, such as omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, play crucial roles in metabolism, hormone production, and overall cellular health.

Why EFAs Matter for Weight Loss and Hormonal Health:

1. **Support Fat Burning:** EFAs are essential for maintaining cell membrane integrity and allowing fats to be efficiently transported and metabolized for energy.
2. **Regulate Inflammation:** Omega-3s have anti-inflammatory properties that can counteract the low-grade inflammation often associated with weight gain and insulin resistance.
3. **Balance Hormones:** EFAs are building blocks for hormones like prostaglandins, which regulate processes like fat metabolism, blood sugar control, and even mood.
4. **Promote Satiety:** Fats slow gastric emptying, helping you feel fuller longer, which can aid in weight management.

Sources of EFAs:

- **Omega-3 Fatty Acids:**

- Fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines)
- Flaxseeds and chia seeds
- Walnuts
- Algal oil (a great plant-based source)

- **Omega-6 Fatty Acids:**

- Sunflower, safflower, and soybean oils
- Pumpkin seeds
- Nuts like almonds and cashews

Finding the Right Balance:

While both omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are essential, modern diets often skew heavily toward omega-6s, creating an imbalance that can promote inflammation. If you're not careful, you could inadvertently contribute to the inflammatory "noise" that makes your cells go tone-deaf to insulin, paving the way for insulin resistance.

I know—"Eat essential fatty acids," they said. "It's good for you," they said. #FML.

To avoid this trap, aim for a ratio closer to 1:1 or 1:4 (omega-3 to omega-6) by increasing omega-3 intake from fatty fish, flaxseeds, or supplements while being mindful of processed oils lurking in many packaged foods.

How Much Do You Need?

- **Omega-3s:** Aim for at least 250–500 mg of EPA and DHA (the active forms of omega-3s) daily, which you can achieve through fish or supplements.
- **Omega-6s:** These are abundant in most diets, so focus on **reducing processed food** sources while getting them from whole foods like nuts and seeds.

Takeaway:

Essential fatty acids aren't just a nice-to-have—they're a must-have for weight loss, hormone balance, and overall metabolic health. Incorporating EFAs into your diet helps ensure your body has the tools it needs to burn fat, balance inflammation, and keep your cells running at their best.

The bottom line? Healthy fats should be a staple in your diet. Fat doesn't get stored because it's "bad." It gets stored because the body prefers to burn glucose (sugar) first since it's a quicker and easier energy source. When sugar is available, fat gets stashed away for a rainy day. Overeating sugar is a fast track to weight gain—not fat.

Hydrogenated Oils: The Silent Saboteurs

Hydrogenated oils are a type of fat created through a chemical process that adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils, turning them solid at room temperature. This process extends shelf life and improves texture, making these oils a favorite in processed and packaged foods. But what's convenient for manufacturers isn't great for your health.

Why Hydrogenated Oils Are Harmful:

1. Trans Fat Formation:

Partially hydrogenated oils are the primary source of artificial trans fats, which are notorious for raising LDL (bad cholesterol) and lowering HDL (good cholesterol). This deadly combo increases your risk of heart disease and stroke.

2. Inflammation:

Trans fats trigger inflammation, contributing to a host of chronic conditions, from insulin resistance to joint pain and metabolic syndrome.

3. Impact on Cell Membranes:

These fats disrupt cell membrane fluidity, impairing cellular

communication and potentially interfering with processes like fat metabolism and insulin signaling.

Where They Lurk:

Hydrogenated oils are commonly found in:

- Packaged baked goods like cookies, cakes, and pastries.
- Fried foods, especially fast food.
- Margarines and shortenings.
- Processed snacks like chips and crackers.

What to Look For:

When reading labels, keep an eye out for “partially hydrogenated oils.” Even if a product claims “0g trans fat,” it can still contain up to 0.5g per serving—a sneaky loophole in labeling laws.

Takeaway:

Hydrogenated oils are a dietary landmine. Avoiding them altogether is one of the simplest and most impactful steps you can take for your metabolic and overall health. Instead, in moderation, opt for healthier fats like olive oil, avocado oil, or even grass-fed butter. Your heart, hormones, and waistline will thank you.

Now that we’ve tackled hydrogenated oils let’s shift gears to another fat that’s gotten a bad reputation: cholesterol. Unlike the dietary villains we just discussed, cholesterol is more complex—and arguably more misunderstood. Spoiler alert: it’s not the bad guy you think it is.

Cholesterol: The Misunderstood Player

For years, we’ve been told that cholesterol is the devil, clogging our arteries and leading us to heart disease. But here’s the real deal: cholesterol is **essential**. Your body uses cholesterol to build cell membranes, produce hormones (like estrogen and testosterone), and synthesize vitamin D. So, demonizing it completely? Not smart.

HDL (the “good” cholesterol)

HDL is the cholesterol “DD,” making sure everyone makes it safely back home (the liver) instead of throwing up in someone’s front yard (the arteries

of your heart). Thanks to this reverse carpool system, there is less atherosclerotic plaque buildup, making it cardioprotective. We want more of the HDL.

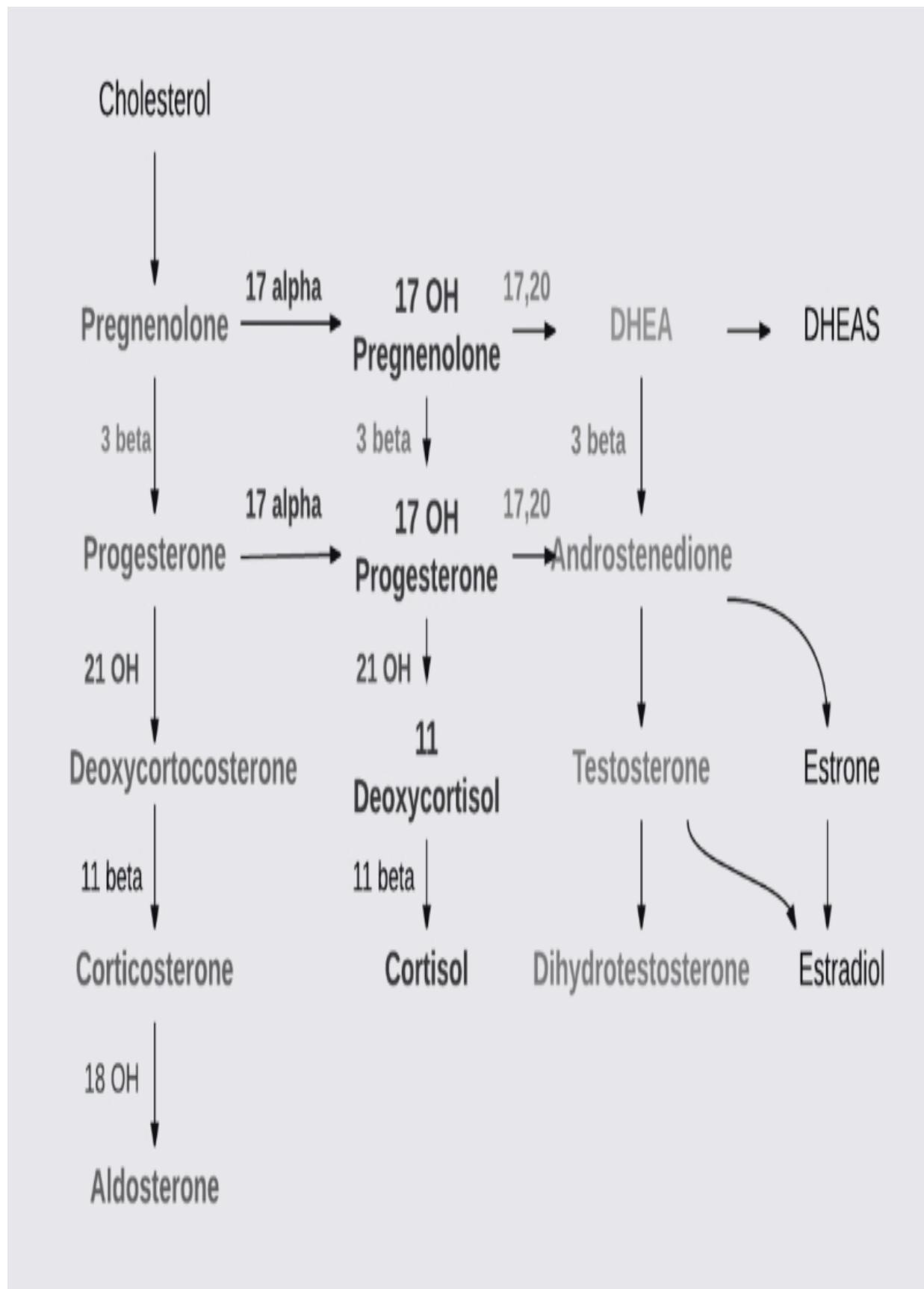
LDL (the “ not-so-good” cholesterol).

If HDL is the designated driver (DD), LDL would be the type to roll up with empty beer cans in the cab, slurring and swerving into the parked cars on your street. That was my way of describing plaque deposition into the walls of the arteries that perfuse your heart.

Cholesterol itself is not the problem. We need it. It is essential. It is an excess of LDL compared to HDL, resulting in the narrowing of critical blood vessels; that is the problem.

The Myth: Eating cholesterol-rich foods raises your blood cholesterol.

The Reality: The cholesterol in food has minimal impact on the cholesterol levels in your blood. Your liver produces most of your body's cholesterol and will make more or less depending on how much you eat. What is the real culprit behind those cholesterol spikes? Sugary, processed foods, and inflammation. Yep, it's not the eggs and butter—that highly processed junk in your pantry.



Cholesterol Synthesis Pathway

This pathway shows why cholesterol is far from an enemy. It's a key player in producing hormones that regulate metabolism, immune function, water balance, and even reproductive health.

Micronutrients: The Vital Missing Links

Lastly, we can't forget micronutrients—the vitamins and minerals that power your body's processes. While macros like carbs, fats, and protein get all the attention, micronutrients are essential for everything from bone health to energy production.

Fat-Soluble Vitamins

- Vitamin A is essential for vision, immune function, and skin health.
- Vitamin D is essential for calcium absorption and bone health.
- Vitamin E is an antioxidant that protects cells from damage.
- Vitamin K is necessary for blood clotting and bone metabolism.

Water-Soluble Vitamins

- B Vitamins (B1, B2, B6, B12): Crucial for energy production and brain function.
- Vitamin C: Supports immune health, skin, and wound healing.

Minerals

- Calcium: Vital for strong bones and teeth. A deficiency can lead to osteopenia or osteoporosis.
- Iron: Necessary for red blood cell production. Low iron leads to anemia, causing fatigue and weakness.
- Magnesium: Supports muscle and nerve function and helps regulate blood pressure.

The Myth: You can get all your vitamins and minerals from food.

The Reality: While a balanced diet is important, many people are deficient in key nutrients (especially Vitamin D and magnesium), and supplementation might be necessary.

Water: The Unsung Hero of Fat Loss

We know water is important for overall health, but its role in fat loss often flies under the radar. Hydration doesn't just keep your skin glowing and energy levels high—it's crucial for burning fat and eliminating fat byproducts from your system, as well as involved in the blasphemous term *adipogenesis*¹¹.

The Role of Water in Fat Metabolism And Regulation

Fat Breakdown (Lipolysis)

When your body breaks down stored fat, it goes through a process called lipolysis. During this process, triglycerides (stored fat) are broken down into glycerol and fatty acids, which are then used for energy. Water is vital here because it helps mobilize these fats and flush out the byproducts.

After breaking down fat, leftover waste products—such as carbon dioxide—must be eliminated. Water plays a crucial role in transporting these byproducts through your bloodstream and out of your body via urine, sweat, and even breathing. Dehydration slows this entire process, making fat metabolism less efficient.

Fat Cell Formation (Adipogenesis)

Interestingly, water also has a hand in fat cell regulation, specifically in adipogenesis—the creation of new fat cells. Hydration levels can influence

how efficiently this happens when your body stores excess calories as fat. Proper hydration supports metabolic processes that prioritize fat breakdown over fat storage. On the flip side, dehydration can disrupt these pathways, indirectly encouraging fat storage by impairing the body's ability to metabolize energy effectively.

Why It Matters

Staying hydrated ensures your body can efficiently break down and eliminate fat while keeping fat storage mechanisms in check. Beyond weight management, proper hydration also supports overall metabolic health, making it easier to maintain energy levels and balance hormones.

Other Benefits of Water for Weight Loss

- **Appetite Control:** Drinking water before meals can help you feel fuller, preventing overeating.
- **Increased Calorie Burning:** Staying hydrated can boost your metabolism. Studies show that drinking cold water can increase calorie burning because your body has to work harder to heat the water to your body temperature.
- **Improved Digestion:** Water helps your digestive system function smoothly, supporting nutrient absorption and waste elimination.

How Much Water Do You Need?

The general recommendation is around eight glasses of water daily, but this can vary depending on your activity level, climate, and individual needs. How do I know if I am drinking enough water? The good old military standard is to look at your pee. If you can see the color, you need to drink more. Remember, there is already some water in the bowl, so if there is more than a faint hint of gold, you can drink more.

If you're looking to increase your water intake without breaking the bank—or the environment with piles of single-use plastic bottles—consider investing in a reverse osmosis water filter. It's an affordable, eco-friendly solution that ensures you're drinking clean, high-quality water.

I've included a link to the one I use—it was a steal and works wonderfully!

The blueva countertop UV+ reverse osmosis water filter system.

https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0CZ475FBC?ref=ppx_pop_dt_b_product_details&th=1#:~:text=https%3A//amzn.to/4a6XIYp

Alcohol: The Saboteur of Blood Sugar, Fat, and Liver Health

Let's talk alcohol. You may have heard conflicting information about whether alcohol is good or bad for you, and the truth is, it's a mixed bag. While moderate consumption of certain alcohols (like red wine) may have some health benefits, alcohol is generally not your friend when it comes to fat loss, blood sugar, and liver health.

How Alcohol Affects Blood Sugar and Insulin

Blood Sugar Spikes: Alcohol causes blood sugar to fluctuate. Drinks high in sugar (like cocktails, sugary mixers, or beer) can spike blood sugar, leading to an insulin response. Over time, frequent blood sugar spikes and crashes can contribute to insulin resistance, which makes it harder for the body to manage glucose and can lead to fat storage.

Insulin Sensitivity: Heavy alcohol consumption can negatively impact insulin sensitivity. Your body has a more challenging time processing glucose, which means more of it gets stored as fat. Even in moderation, alcohol can disrupt blood sugar regulation.

Alcohol's Impact on the Liver

Your liver is responsible for metabolizing alcohol. When alcohol is present in your system, the liver prioritizes breaking it down over other metabolic processes, including fat burning. This means that while your body processes alcohol, fat metabolism slows down.

- **Fat Storage:** Since your liver is busy processing alcohol, any food you consume alongside alcohol is more likely to be stored as fat rather than burned for energy.
- **Cholesterol:** Regular alcohol consumption can also increase triglyceride levels and lead to fatty liver disease, which contributes to increased cholesterol levels and a higher risk of heart disease.

What About the "Good" Alcohol?

Not all alcohols are created equal. Here's a breakdown of your better options if you do decide to drink:

- **Red Wine:** Moderate consumption of red wine (about one glass a day) has been linked to heart health due to its resveratrol content, an antioxidant that may support cardiovascular health. Keep in mind moderation is key—more isn't better.

- **Vodka, Tequila, Gin:** If you're going to have a drink, liquors like vodka, tequila, or gin mixed with soda water or a low-sugar mixer are your best bets. They are lower in sugar and won't cause the same blood sugar spikes as sugary cocktails or beer.
- **Dry Wines and Champagne:** Dry red or white wines and brut champagne tend to have lower sugar content than sweet or sparkling wines, making them a slightly better option.

Alcohol's Effect on Fat and Weight Loss

Here's the bottom line: alcohol provides empty calories with no nutritional benefit, and because it's metabolized first, it slows down the burning of other energy sources like fat. The key is moderation, whether it's wine, beer, or spirits. Frequent drinking can contribute to fat gain, increased cholesterol, and blood sugar problems.

If fat loss is your goal, limit alcohol intake to occasional use and choose options that are low in sugar and carbs.

Conclusion

At the end of the day, hormonal weight loss during perimenopause and menopause isn't about starving yourself or following trendy diets. It is about understanding how your body works and changing how you approach food. Fats don't make you fat. Carbs aren't the enemy. Protein is essential for preserving muscle mass, and micronutrients are the unsung heroes of your diet.

- Prioritize **protein** to maintain muscle and boost metabolism.
- Choose **low-GI carbs** to regulate blood sugar.
- Add **fiber** for fullness and gut health.
- Include **healthy fats** to support hormone production.
- Stay **hydrated** and limit alcohol to keep fat-burning on track.

By focusing on whole, nutrient-dense foods and balancing your macros, you can take control of your weight and feel your best—even when hormones seem to have other plans.

In part 2, we'll explore how exercise complements your diet for maximum fat-burning and muscle retention. But first, let's take a gander at what everyone seems to be talking about these days...GLP-1 Medication and weight loss.

Part 2: The Skinny On The Skinny Shot-Glp-1 And Weight Management

GLP-1 medications like Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro, or Zepbound are sometimes considered "cheating" when they are used to assist in achieving weight loss.

Let's nip that nonsense in the bud. They are not giving you an edge; they are more like leveling the playing field.

Our bodies are incredible, but as we age, they produce less of what we need to stay on track—like GLP-1, a hormone that helps regulate our appetite and energy use.

You wouldn't call someone using a Peloton or pre-workout mix a cheater, so why should this be any different?

However, as with any tool, GLP-1s work best when used alongside the proper habits and behaviors. That means digging deeper into your relationship with food, your health, and (brace yourself) yourself.

Ready? Let's dive into how these wonder meds work, how they help, and why they're not a magic pill—but an awesome tool you can work with.

GLP-1: Your Body's Secret Weapon Here's the scoop: GLP-1 (Glucagon-Like Peptide-1) is a hormone your intestines produce when you eat. Its main job? To help your body balance blood sugar and tell your brain, "Hey, we're full down here!" It does this by: •

Slowing down gastric emptying- so you feel full longer, • Your blood sugar is stabilized by boosting insulin response and inhibiting glucagon release.

How The Medications Work GLP-1 meds mimic your body's natural GLP-1 hormone, thus replenishing a function that has started to decline as we age. They help curb appetite, stabilize blood sugar, and promote fat utilization even with a lower calorie intake.

It's like giving your metabolism a much-needed pep talk.

What They're Not

They aren't magic, a shortcut, or "cheating." They simply restore what your body's been slacking on, especially as you age.

Hint hint- this is why weight loss starts to feel unachievable despite doing the same things that used to work before (aging, pregnancy, peri/menopause).

It's science, not scandal.

They aren't a quick fix. Sure, you'll see results—but lasting weight loss requires commitment. It's about making fundamental lifestyle changes, which include revisiting your relationship with food and getting to the root of why you eat what you eat.

Let's bust a few myths, shall we?

Myth: GLP-1 causes facial sagging or "Ozempic face"

Truth: Nope. Any weight loss, whether from meds or lifestyle changes, can lead to a loss of facial fullness. It's not the medication; it's the fat loss.

Pro-tip? Keep your skin hydrated, and look into skincare routines that support skin elasticity.

Myth: You'll lose muscle if you're on GLP-1s.

Truth: GLP-1 medications do not cause muscle wasting. Nor is the caloric deficit the problem. You cannot lose weight without a caloric deficit- you must burn more than you consume to mobilize stored fuel.

The nitrogen deficit is the problem. Or protein.

It's like sacrificing your kitchen cabinets to throw into the fireplace so your house isn't freezing cold. When you add the effect of chronically elevated

stress hormone cortisol, it's like throwing a blizzard in the mix with an already poorly insulated home.

Your body prioritizes existing before having kitchen cabinets—I mean losing weight. *Silly body.*

GLP-1 medications aren't to blame for muscle loss. Poor nutritional guidance while on GLP-1 medications, is.

Side Effects: Not Always a Walk in the Park GLP-1 medications are incredibly effective, but they don't come without their hiccups. Common side effects like nausea, diarrhea, and constipation can occur, especially during the initial weeks. The good news? These symptoms often improve as your body adjusts. The key is to listen to your body and work closely with your healthcare provider—small adjustments to dosage or timing can make a big difference.

That said, GLP-1s aren't suitable for everyone. Individuals with a history of **medullary thyroid carcinoma (MTC)** or **multiple endocrine neoplasia syndrome type 2 (MEN2)** are advised to avoid these medications due to a potential association with thyroid C-cell tumors observed in animal studies. While this risk hasn't been conclusively shown in humans, caution is warranted.

This is why consultations with your provider are so important—they can assess your medical history, evaluate potential risks, and guide you toward the best treatment options tailored to your needs.

Behavioral Transformation: Beyond the Scale The Gaya Wellness Doctor-Led GLP-1 Weight Loss Program isn't just about numbers on a scale—it's about creating a profound shift in how you think, feel, and act around food. Our approach goes beyond the surface to address the deeper behaviors and emotions tied to eating, helping members reconnect with their sense of control and balance.

Quieting the Food Noise: One of the most transformative aspects of this program is the way GLP-1 medications quiet the “food noise”—that constant mental chatter about cravings, guilt, or the next meal. This

unique effect allows members to finally focus on changing their habits without the overwhelming struggle of dieting or constant hunger.

Building Habits That Last: With the weight loss part of the journey supported by GLP-1s, members can shift their energy toward developing habits that they can sustain long after transitioning off the medication. Through intentional conversations and reflections, we guide members in assessing how their past behaviors compare to their current ones, creating a foundation for lasting change.

Scenarios We Explore Together: • **Work:** How has stress eating changed? Are you navigating long days with healthier choices and better planning?

- **Travel and Vacations:** Instead of seeing travel as a free-for-all, are you now able to enjoy meals while staying mindful of your goals?
- **Eating Out:** Do you approach restaurants with confidence, choosing meals that nourish without overindulging?
- **Family Dynamics:** Have emotional triggers around family meals been replaced with a sense of calm and control?
- **Stress:** Is food no longer the default coping mechanism, allowing you to manage stress in healthier ways?

Reclaiming Trust in Yourself:

Through these reflections, members often describe feeling empowered, as if they're regaining a part of themselves they thought was lost. Once a source of emotional turmoil, food becomes what it was always meant to be—a fuel source. With this clarity, members build confidence in their ability to navigate life's challenges without reverting to old habits.

The Role of GLP-1s:

It's the impact of GLP-1s that creates the space for this transformation. By reducing hunger and improving satiety, these medications take the struggle out of dieting and weight loss. This allows members to focus fully on the behavioral and emotional aspects of change, equipping them with sustainable habits they can carry forward after transitioning off the medication.

The Result:

It's more than weight loss; it's a lifestyle transformation. Members leave the program feeling connected to their goals, supported by their progress, and confident in their ability to make choices that align with their values and well-being.

Up next, we will discuss the impact exercise has on our hormones!

Part 3: Weight Lifting=Weight Dropping

Exercise is more than just a way to get fit; it's a hormone-balancing powerhouse. Whether hitting the gym, walking the dog, or bending into a yoga pose, the right exercises can keep those all-important hormones in check, boosting your mood, metabolism, and overall well-being. In this chapter, we'll examine how different exercises influence hormones, why your cardio routine might sabotage your weight-loss goals, and how to work out for that hormonal harmony.

The Relationship Between Exercise And Hormones Exercise Is Like A Switchboard For Your Hormones, Regulating Everything From Your Energy Levels To Your Mood. Here's How Different Types Of Movement Keep Things In Balance: Stress Hormones (Cortisol And Epinephrine) While A Good Workout Can Temporarily Boost Cortisol (Helpful In Short Bursts), Regular Exercise Helps Lower Overall Cortisol Levels, Making You Less Stressed In The Long Run. It's A Bit Of A "Fight Fire With Fire" Situation.

Insulin Sensitivity

The more you move, the more efficiently your cells use insulin, lowering the risk of insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. This means less fat storage and more energy from your food—a win-win.

Endorphins and Mood

Ever heard of that "runner's high"? Exercise releases endorphins, those feel-good chemicals that lift your spirits and make you feel unstoppable.

Growth Hormone

Strength training, in particular, triggers the release of growth hormone, which is key for muscle repair, growth, and overall metabolism.

Cardio vs. Weight Training: The Great Debate Let's clear something up right now: *Cardio is for Cardiac Health. Weight Training is for your Weight. That treadmill might make you sweat, but overdoing it could mess with your fat loss goals.*

Here's the deal: your body doesn't know the difference between running on a treadmill and running from a mountain lion—it just assumes you're in survival mode. Enter cortisol. Your body releases sugar into your bloodstream (because clearly, you need it to escape), and boom—fat-burning gets put on the back burner.

This is why some people can slog through hours of cardio and still not see the scale budge. It's not that cardio is terrible; it's essential for heart health and endurance. But the caloric effect is equal opportunity—you burn the same calories whether you walk 5 miles over a day or run them in one hour.

However, what is the impact on your blood sugar and cortisol levels? Very different. Take a cue from Europeans who stroll throughout the day and maintain trim waistlines—just saying.

Meanwhile, strength training turns your body into an F150—strong, powerful, and able to burn more calories even at rest. More muscle means a higher basal metabolic rate (BMR), which is a fancy way of saying you're torching calories while doing nothing. Compare that to a Prius (aka a body with less muscle), and it's clear: one burns through fuel much faster. Over 24 hours, having more muscle mass adds up to way more than an hour of running. Keep lifting, ladies!

Types Of Exercise And Their Hormonal Effects

Cardiovascular Exercise

Hormonal Impact: Cardio, like running, cycling, and swimming, increases endorphins (hello, runner's high) and boosts insulin sensitivity, improving how your body handles sugar.

Benefits: It supports heart health and endurance and helps regulate appetite. But remember, too much can chronically raise your cortisol, so balance is key.

Strength Training

Hormonal Impact: Weight lifting stimulates growth hormone and testosterone (yes, you need this too!)—the dynamic duo for muscle growth, fat loss, and stronger bones.

Benefits: More muscle = higher metabolism = burning more calories even when binge-watching Netflix. Weight training helps keep your body composition in check by shedding fat and building lean muscle.

High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) Hormonal Impact: HIIT kicks your adrenaline into gear, turning your body into a fat-burning machine. It's short, intense, and effective at boosting metabolism long after your workout is done.

Benefits: Max calorie burn in minimal time? Sign us up. HIIT is great for burning fat, improving cardiovascular fitness, and releasing feel-good endorphins.

Here is an easy to follow example for a HIIT program:

Sample HIIT Workout for Home

Exercise	Duration	Intensity	Notes
Jumping Jacks		High	Warm-up, get the heart rate up.

30 seconds

Bodyweight
Squats

High

Keep your chest up and
knees aligned.

30 seconds

Rest

Low

Catch your breath.

15 seconds

Push-ups

Moderate to High Modify to knees if needed.

30 seconds

High Knees

High

Drive your knees as high as possible.

30 seconds

Rest

Low

Breathe deeply.

15 seconds

Plank

Moderate

Keep your core tight and
back straight.

30 seconds

Burpees

High

Skip the jump for a low-
impact option.

30 seconds

Rest

Low

Focus on recovery.

15 seconds

Side Lunges

Moderate

Alternate sides, keep movement controlled.

30 **seconds**

Mountain
Climbers

High

Keep your core engaged and
back straight.

30 seconds

Rest

Low

Recover for the next round.

15 seconds

How to Structure Your Workout:

- Warm-Up: Spend 3–5 minutes warming up with light cardio (e.g., marching in place, arm circles).
- Workout: Complete the circuit above 2–3 times, depending on your fitness level. Rest for 1–2 minutes between rounds.
- Cool-Down: Spend 3–5 minutes stretching to bring your heart rate back down. Focus on your quads, hamstrings, and shoulders.

This workout takes less than 20 minutes, boosts your heart rate, and maximizes calorie burn while building strength and endurance.

Yoga and Mindfulness Exercises

Hormonal Impact: These practices work wonders for reducing cortisol and increasing serotonin, the hormone that helps regulate mood and promotes feelings of well-being.

Benefits: Flexibility, strength, and calm all rolled into one. Yoga can help you stay chill while keeping your hormones happy.

How to Incorporate Exercise for Hormonal Health

- **Set Realistic Goals:** Start with where you are. If 10 minutes of exercise is all you can handle today, great. The key is consistency over time.
- **Mix It Up:** Don't stick to one thing. Combine strength training, cardio, and stretching for the best results. This variety keeps you motivated and hits all your hormonal checkpoints.
- **Focus on Progress, Not Perfection:** Muscle builds slowly but surely. Don't obsess over results. Instead, focus on how exercise makes you feel and how your body responds over time.
- **Rest and Recover:** Your muscles and hormones need time to recover. Incorporating rest days into your routine is just as important as your

workouts. Over-exercising can have the opposite effect on hormone health.

- **Find What You Love:** Whether dancing, lifting, swimming, or hiking in the park—do what brings you joy. You’re more likely to stick with it, and your hormones will thank you for the consistency.

Conclusion: Move for Your Hormones

Exercise isn’t just about burning calories; it’s about creating a healthy, hormone-happy body. Whether lifting weights to rev up your metabolism or taking a calming yoga class to de-stress, finding the right balance of exercise types will make you feel more energized, less stressed, and ready to take on anything. So get out there and act like the Europeans.

Conclusion

Join the Conversation Hit me up on social media and keep the conversation going. I'd love to hear if there were times when the book truly resonated (or did not) with you. Who knows? Your stories, wins, and struggles could be precisely what someone else is going through or needs to hear. Here are the links for your convenience: The Book Of Her: Series On Women's Health Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/share/1DQPgAP3CB/?mibextid=LQQJ4d>

The Gaya Wellness Forum Facebook Group
<https://www.facebook.com/share/15Z2pWjuaL/?mibextid=K35XfP>

Leave a Review Seriously, your feedback means everything. No, really—in the sea of books, blogs, podcasts, and Twitter debates, finding authentic, well-researched, and specifically relatable content hits differently. Your review will help others find this book and start their journey. So, if you have a moment to spare and find the content relatable, informative, or even fun(ny), I would love to hear from you. Here's the link.

“The Book Of Hormones”

The Ultimate Playbook For Women's Health And Hormonal Balance Through Every Stage Of Life
<https://a.co/d/iDJqdTI>

If you have questions or feedback you would rather send me personally, please email me at shweta@gayawellness.org. That's directly on my phone's screen, so you will get a response as soon as possible.

If you would like to connect by appointment, you can find more information about our services and programs at Gaya Wellness <https://gayawellness.org>

A Heartfelt Thank You From the bottom of my heart, thank you for spending time with this book and taking charge of your hormonal health. You've shown incredible commitment to learning, growing, and leveling up, and I'm honored to be part of your journey. Your support doesn't just mean the world—it's what keeps this mission going. Every reader who picks up this book becomes part of a more significant movement toward empowered health.

Final Thoughts As you turn the final page, know that your health journey is as unique as you are. Trust yourself, listen to your body, and continue making choices that align with your well-being. You've got the knowledge, the tools, and the support to own your health and live your life confidently. Thank you once again for being a part of this journey. Here's to your continued health, happiness, and hormonal harmony!

With gratitude and best wishes, Shweta Patel A.K.A Dr.P

Bonus Content

Meal Plans and Recipes: Download them On Our Homepage!

[High-Protein Breakfast Options Table](#)

Food Item	Calories	Protein (g)	Sugar (g)	Sodium (mg)	Details
Frozen/Ready-to-Go Breakfast Options					
Kodiak Cakes Power Waffles (Buttermilk & Vanilla)	240	12	7	310	High-protein waffles; pair with Greek yogurt or nut butter.
Jimmy Dean Delights Turkey Sausage Bowl	240	20	2	650	Turkey sausage, scrambled eggs, potatoes, and cheese.
Evolve Plant-Based Egg Bites (Spinach & Bell Pepper)	170	15	1	430	Plant-based egg bites with veggies; quick microwave option.

Recipes

Food Item	Calories	Protein (g)	Sugar (g)	Sodium (mg)	Details
Turkey and Egg Breakfast Wraps	180	20	1	360	Scrambled eggs, turkey slices, and spinach wrapped in a low-carb tortilla.
Cottage Cheese and Veggie Scramble	150	18	2	320	Cottage cheese folded into scrambled eggs with diced veggies.
High-Protein Smoothie Bowl	220	25	6	180	Greek yogurt, whey protein, berries, almond butter, and chia seeds.

High-Protein Lunch Options Table

Food Item	Calories	Protein (g)	Sugar (g)	Sodium (mg)	Details
Frozen/Ready-to-Go Lunch Options					
Amy's Light & Lean Quinoa & Black Bean Bowl	240	15	2	540	A plant-based bowl with quinoa, black beans, and veggies.

Healthy Choice Grilled Chicken & Broccoli Alfredo	280	22	3	540	Grilled chicken, broccoli, and creamy alfredo sauce.
Real Good Foods Grain-Free Enchiladas (Chicken)	190	20	1	550	Grain-free enchiladas filled with chicken and topped with sauce.

Recipes

Turkey and Avocado Wrap	280	25	2	420	Turkey breast, avocado slices, and greens in a whole-wheat tortilla.
Mediterranean Salmon Salad	300	30	4	460	Grilled salmon over mixed greens, cherry tomatoes, olives, and feta.
Chicken Zucchini Noodle Bowl	250	28	2	380	Shredded chicken served over spiralized zucchini with marinara sauce.

Food Item	Calories	Protein	Sugar	Sodium	Details
	(g)	(g)		(mg)	

Frozen/Ready-to-Go Lunch Options

Lean Cuisine High Protein Grilled Chicken & Vegetables	300	28	6	580	Grilled chicken with a medley of veggies and a portion of rice.
Healthy Choice Simply Steamers (Chicken & Broccoli Alfredo)	320	28	3	630	Chicken breast in a creamy Alfredo sauce with broccoli and pasta.
Evol Foods Sweet & Sour Chicken	270	23	11	670	Sweet & sour chicken with brown rice and vegetables.

Recipes

Grilled Chicken Salad with Avocado	300	33	3	500	Grilled chicken breast on a bed of mixed greens with avocado and vinaigrette.
Tuna Avocado Bowl	290	25	0	380	Tuna with avocado, cucumber, and a light vinaigrette dressing.
Turkey & Veggie Lettuce Wraps	220	30	2	420	Sliced turkey with avocado, lettuce, and veggies,

wrapped in lettuce leaves.

High-Protein Dinner Options Table

Food Item	Calories	Protein (g)	Sugar (g)	Sodium (mg)	Details
Frozen/Ready-to-Go Dinner Options					
Stouffer's Fit Kitchen Steak Fajita Bowl	370	26	5	740	Steak with peppers, onions, and black beans in a fajita sauce.
Birds Eye Protein Blends (Southwest Style)	230	14	3	470	A mix of black beans, lentils, and veggies in a southwest seasoning.
Real Good Foods Bacon Wrapped Stuffed Chicken Breast	310	37	1	750	Chicken breast stuffed with cheese and wrapped in bacon.
Recipes					
Lemon Herb Grilled Chicken with	290	35	1	360	Marinated grilled chicken breast

Asparagus served with roasted asparagus.

Shrimp and Cauliflower Stir-Fry 260 28 2 420 Shrimp stir-fried with cauliflower rice, soy sauce, and ginger.

Baked Cod with Garlic and Spinach 240 32 1 390 Oven-baked cod with a side of sautéed spinach and garlic.

Food Item	Calories	Protein (g)	Sugar (g)	Sodium (mg)	Details
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Frozen/Ready-to-Go Dinner Options

Healthy Choice Simply Steamers (Beef Merlot) 350 25 5 660 Beef with a red wine sauce, mashed potatoes, and veggies.

Amy's Kitchen Black Bean & Vegetable Enchiladas 350 17 4 680 Black beans and veggies wrapped in corn tortillas with enchilada sauce.

Real Good Foods Chicken Enchiladas 240 33 2 440 Chicken enchiladas in a

low-carb, high-protein shell.

Recipes

Grilled Salmon with Asparagus	380	35	0	95	Grilled salmon served with steamed asparagus and a side of quinoa.
Garlic Butter Shrimp & Veggie Stir Fry	400	30	6	850	Shrimp stir-fried with bell peppers, zucchini, and garlic butter.
Chicken & Vegetable Stir Fry	330	35	7	510	Chicken with mixed vegetables and a savory stir fry sauce.

Food Item	Calories	Protein	Sugar	Sodium	Details
	(g)	(g)		(mg)	

Frozen/Ready-to-Eat Options

Lean Cuisine High Protein Meatloaf & Mashed Potatoes	280	20	4	680	Classic meatloaf with mashed potatoes; balanced meal.
	260	20	3	520	Chicken with marinara sauce, veggies, and

Healthy Choice Power Bowls (Chicken Marinara)

quinoa.

Real Good Foods	200	34	1	390	Low-carb, protein-packed chicken breast stuffed with spinach and cheese.
Stuffed Chicken Breast (Spinach & Artichoke)					

Recipes

Grilled Chicken Caesar Wraps	300	32	3	450	Grilled chicken breast with romaine and Caesar dressing in a low-carb wrap.
Tuna Salad Lettuce Cups	210	28	0	380	Tuna mixed with Greek yogurt and spices, served in lettuce leaves.
Greek Yogurt Chicken Salad	230	25	2	440	Shredded chicken mixed with Greek yogurt, celery, and seasonings.

Glycemic Index And Protein Index (GI/PI) Table for Foods

Low GI Foods (55 or less)

Category	Food	GI	PI (%)
Dairy	Greek Yogurt (unsweetened)	12	40

Dairy	Milk (skim)	37	40
Vegetables	Spinach	15	50
Vegetables	Broccoli	10	35
Dairy	Cheese	< 15	25–30
Grains and Legumes	Lentils	30	28
Grains and Legumes	Kidney Beans	24	26
Grains and Legumes	Black Beans	30	26
Grains and Legumes	Chickpeas	33	20
Dairy	Milk (whole)	31	21
Grains and Legumes	Barley	28	10
Grains and Legumes	Oats (steel-cut)	42	15
Grains and Legumes	Quinoa	53	15
Vegetables	Carrots (raw)	16	6
Fruits	Apples	38	0
Fruits	Pears	38	0

Fruits	Cherries	22	0
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Medium GI Foods (56–69)

Category	Food	GI	PI (%)
Bread & Pasta	Whole Wheat Pasta	48	14
Bread & Pasta	Spaghetti (al dente)	42	14
Grains and Legumes	Couscous	65	10
Bread & Pasta	Rye Bread	68	9
Fruits	Kiwi	58	0
Fruits	Pineapple	59	0
Fruits	Mango	60	0

High GI Foods (70 or above)

Category	Food	GI	PI (%)
Snacks and Sweets	Popcorn	72	9
Snacks and Sweets	Pretzels	83	8
Grains and Cereals	Cornflakes	81	6

Vegetables	White Potatoes (boiled)	78	5
Snacks and Sweets	Donuts	76	4
Fruits	Watermelon	76	0
Grains and Cereals	White Bread	75	0
Snacks and Sweets	Jelly Beans	80	0
Snacks and Sweets	Soft Drinks	68–75	0

5 Day Work Out Plan

Day	Workout Focus	Exercise	Sets	Reps	Notes
1	Upper Body (Push)	Warm-up	-	5-10	Light cardio minutes (e.g., treadmill, cycling)
		Flat Bench Press	4	8-10	Focus on chest strength
		Incline Dumbbell Press	3	10	Target upper chest
			4	8-10	

	Overhead Shoulder Press (Barbell/Dumbbell)		Shoulder strength
	Dumbbell Lateral Raises	3	12-15 Side delts
	Triceps Dips	4	10 Use dip bars or a bench
	Cable Triceps Pushdown	3	12 Focus on triceps isolation
	Plank (optional)	3	30-60 Core seconds stability
Day 2 Lower Body (Quads/Glutes)	Warm-up	-	5-10 Light cardio minutes
	Squats (Barbell)	4	8-10 Compound strength
	Deadlifts	4	6-8 Total body engagement
	Lunges (Walking/Stationary)	3	Quad and glute focus

**10
per
leg**

Leg Press Machine	3	10-12	Controlled movements
Hamstring Curls (Machine/Stability Ball)	4	12	Focus on hamstrings
Glute Bridges (Weighted/Bodyweight)	4	15	Glute activation
Russian Twists (optional)	3		Core rotation

**20
per
side**

Day 3	Upper Body (Pull)	Warm-up	-	5-10 minutes	Light cardio
	Pull-Ups (Assisted/Bodyweight)		4	6-8	Focus on lats and upper back
	Barbell Rows		4	8-10	Back and biceps
	Lat Pulldown Machine	3	10-12	Isolation for lats	
	Dumbbell Rows		4		Unilateral strength

10
per
arm

Day 4	Lower Body (Glutes/Hamstrings)	EZ Bar Bicep Curls	3	10-12	Focus on biceps
		Hammer Curls	3	12	Biceps and forearms
		Bicycle Crunches (optional)	3	20	Core engagement
		Warm-up	-	5-10 minutes	Light cardio
		Romanian Deadlifts	4	8-10	Hamstring and glute focus
		Bulgarian Split Squats	3	8-10 per leg	Single-leg strength
		Hip Thrusts (Barbell/Machine)	4	12-15	Glute activation
		Cable Kickbacks (Glutes)	3		Isolated glute work

**12
per
leg**

Day	Full 5 Body/Functional	Sumo Squats	4	10-12	Inner thighs and glutes
		Seated Hamstring Curls	3	10-12	Hamstring isolation
		Hanging Leg Raises (optional)	3	10-15	Core strength
		Warm-up	-	5-10 minutes	Light cardio
		Deadlifts	4	6-8	Full-body strength
		Overhead Press (Barbell)	3	8-10	Shoulder and core
		Pull-Ups (Assisted/Bodyweight)	3	6-8	Back and arm engagement
		Dumbbell Thrusters	3	10	Full-body power
		Kettlebell Swings	3	15	Cardio and posterior

chain

Renegade Rows
(Dumbbells)

3

Core and
upper back

**10
per
side**

Mountain Climbers 3 20-30 Core and seconds cardio

Tips for Success: • **Rest:** Remember that thing called sleep? Well, in addition to ample sleep, you also need days off from pumping iron itself to ensure that your muscles properly repair themselves. Without it, you will not only not build/maintain muscle but will be at risk for *rhabdomyolysis*. Imagine Coke Colored Pee. No Bueno.

- **Adjust the Weight:** Focus on the feeling. If your body is not feeling soar, your muscles are not achieving the point where growth can happen. Doing the same weight and routine will get you to a plateau, as our bodies are experts in achieving homeostasis. If you have the option, lift heavier weights when things start to wear off sooner. If you don't have the option to increase weights, increase the repetitions you do with the weights you have. Ask any pilates girl- a 3lb dumbbell is not one to be taken...well, lightly. It will leave you unable to dress and undress yourself the next day when done in sufficient repetition.
- **Focus on Form:** Proper form is crucial for maximizing results and preventing injury. Consider using mirrors or working with a trainer to perfect your technique.
- **Fuel:** You MUST eat your daily ideal protein requirement on days you are lifting weights. In fact, if you are not achieving your intake on a certain day, DO NOT LIFT. You will actually be working against your body. Refer to the analogy about burning your kitchen cabinets to keep your house warm in the chapter on exercise. You MUST also drink AMPLE water to ensure you flush out the lactic

acid from your system. Without it, you can actually hinder muscle repair, as well as your ability to move will be compromised due to lactic acid buildup.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To my patients—you've been my greatest teachers, my inspiration, and my cheerleaders. This book exists because of you. Your resilience, curiosity, and trust have fueled not just this series but also Gaya Wellness. You've taught me that women's health is more than medicine—it's a movement.

To my family—your strength and sacrifices have been the foundation of everything I've built. Thank you for unconditionally having my back.

To everyone reading this—thank you for letting me be part of your journey. I hope this book feels like the conversation you didn't know you needed, delivered with a hug, a laugh, and maybe a slightly inappropriate joke. Cheers to staying juicy, glowy, and unapologetically you.

¹¹ Adipogenesis: Generating new adipocytes or fat cells.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shweta Patel



"Empowering Women to Own Their Health"

Dr. Shweta Patel is a highly regarded OB/GYN, a passionate advocate for women's health, and now an author who's breaking down the complexities of hormones with a dose of humor and straight talk.

With over a decade of experience in medicine, Dr. Patel brings both knowledge and empathy to her approach, blending medical expertise with an understanding of the real-life struggles women face.

As a first-generation immigrant and former Navy physician, Dr. Patel's journey to becoming a leading women's health expert is as inspiring as it is unconventional. She's worked across diverse medical settings, always with the mission to make healthcare more accessible, relatable, and empowering for women everywhere.

From navigating the ins and outs of conception and contraception to managing menopause and hormonal health at every stage, Dr. Patel's work is grounded in her commitment to educating women about their bodies and encouraging them to take charge of their wellness.

In her debut book, *The Book of Hormones: The Ultimate Playbook for Women's Health and Hormonal Balance Through Every Stage of Life*, Dr. Patel shares invaluable insights in a style that is equal parts *"The Mindy Project"* and *"Sex And The City."*

She's here to help women not just understand their cycles but to thrive—whether that means finally making sense of PCOS, conquering those menopause symptoms, or decoding the mysteries of hormonal weight gain.

When she's not busy writing or treating patients, you might find Dr. Patel is refining her next project at her startup, Gaya Wellness, or enjoying downtime with her two beloved dogs, Dash & Mimi.

She's excited to welcome you into her community of readers and help you take charge of your health—one laugh and insight at a time.

BOOKS BY THIS AUTHOR

[*The Book Of Hormones: The Ultimate Playbook For Women's Health And Hormonal Balance Through Every Stage Of Life*](#)

If you're tired of feeling like your hormones are running the show or being told to "just deal with it," you're not alone!

It's time to flip the script with The Book of Hormones—a no-nonsense, high-value guide you didn't know you needed... until now.

Written by Dr. Shweta Patel, MD, a renowned OB/GYN passionate about transforming women's healthcare, this book is as unapologetically real as it is compassionate.

With a writing style that's "Mindy Kaling meets Carrie Bradshaw," Dr. Patel will have you nodding, laughing, and maybe even feeling a little called out (in the best way).

You'll finally understand why you feel the way you do—and more importantly, what you can do about it.

Whether you're trying to get pregnant, struggling with weight gain, navigating the contraception maze, or just over being told, "That's normal," this book will empower you to take charge of your health.

Here's what you'll get:

A crash course on hormones: What they are, and why they control everything from your mood swings to your metabolism.

Unfiltered insights: Hormonal weight gain, PCOS, fertility, contraception, and more—explained in an easily digestible way.

The lowdown on menopause and hormonal imbalances: Do's and don'ts for treatment options that actually work.

Tools to identify hormonal imbalances: Actionable steps to fix them—no more feeling like a deer in the headlights at the doctor's office or being told it's something you "just have to live with."

Bonus content: Help you own your health, advocate for your needs, and stop settling for feeling "just okay."

Packed with value, LOLs, and real-life experiences, this book feels like advice from your wise (and hilarious) best friend—who also happens to be your GYNO.

By the end, you'll wonder why no one handed you this playbook sooner.

Ready to take control of your health and enter your "Thriving in All Ways Possible" era?

The Book of Hormones is exactly what you need. Get it now!

[*The Book Of Pregnancy: The Ultimate Playbook To An Empowered Pregnancy, Birth And Postpartum On Your Terms*](#)

Whether you're trying to conceive, waddling through the second trimester, or wondering what happens after the baby arrives, The Book of Pregnancy is your go-to guide for cutting through the noise.

It's not just another pregnancy manual; it's the ultimate playbook that'll have you breezing through conception, pregnancy, labor, and postpartum like an

absolute pro.

Written with the wit and wisdom you've come to love, Dr. Shweta Patel, a highly regarded OB/GYN, brings you real, unfiltered advice wrapped in humor, compassion, and an unapologetic approach to getting women the answers they deserve.

You'll laugh, you'll learn, and you'll feel ready to tackle whatever pregnancy throws your way.

It's for the woman who wants to understand the why behind every pregnancy recommendation, who's tired of feeling like she doesn't have all the options, and who's determined to be in control of her body and her choices.

Inside, you'll get:

- A survival guide to conception—because it can be tricky, and we're talking about real strategies that go beyond “just relax.”
- Straight-up explanations on the science behind pregnancy—so you're never left wondering why your body feels like it's from another planet.
- A play-by-play of labor, from what no one tells you about your options (yes, you have more than you think) to preparing for unexpected twists.
- The postpartum roadmap—no sugarcoating, just real advice on how to heal your body, manage postpartum hormones and regain your sanity.

This book doesn't just give you the what, it gives you the why, so you can make decisions that work for you.

Ready to feel empowered, informed, and in charge of your pregnancy? Grab this book right now!

[*The Book Of Down Under: The Ultimate Playbook On Maintaining A Healthy Vulvironment Between Your Lips*](#)

Embark on an enlightening journey with "The Book of Down Under," your comprehensive guide to understanding and nurturing vulvar health.

This playbook demystifies the often-overlooked aspects of female anatomy, providing you with the knowledge and tools to maintain a healthy and comfortable "vulvironment."

Key Features:

In-Depth Anatomy Lessons: Gain a clear understanding of vulvar anatomy, empowering you to recognize what's normal and when to seek medical advice.

Common Conditions Explained: Learn about various vulvar conditions, their symptoms, and effective management strategies to maintain optimal health.

Practical Care Tips: Discover daily care routines, hygiene practices, and lifestyle adjustments that promote vulvar well-being.

Sex Drive and Libido: Explore factors influencing libido and receive guidance on enhancing sexual health and satisfaction.

Product Recommendations: Access curated suggestions for products that support vulvar health, from hygiene essentials to intimate care items.

Expert Advice: Benefit from the insights of a seasoned OB-GYN who combines medical expertise with a holistic approach to women's health.

Engaging and Fun Tone: Written with a lively and relatable style, blending the wit of "The Mindy Project" with the candidness of "Sex and the City," making it an enjoyable and informative read.

With a blend of humor and sensitivity, "The Book of Down Under" encourages open conversations about intimate health, breaking taboos and empowering you to take charge of your well-being.

Whether you're seeking answers to specific concerns or aiming to enhance

your overall health, this playbook serves as your trusted companion on the path to a healthier, happier you.

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