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and Lose Weight Naturally



Reset Your
Hormones in
14 DAYS

THE
ESSENTIAL
OILS

Hormone
SOLUTION

DR. MARIZA SNYDER

Additional Praise for

The Essential Oils Hormone Solution

“Dr. Mariza is smart, honest, and committed to creating powerful, natural solutions for women who don’t want to take synthetic hormones. She pairs the power of plant-based therapy with effective lifestyle habits to move the needle in women’s hormone health.”

—Kellyann Petrucci, MS, ND, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Dr. Kellyann’s Bone Broth Diet* and *The 10-Day Belly Slimdown*

“Essential oils have a meaningful impact on your biology. Dr. Mariza Snyder elegantly distills the latest science into an easy-to-read, actionable plan, showing women how to use them in effective ways to take control of everyday hormone issues. Dr. Mariza’s protocols are the key to lasting energy and focus.”

—Dave Asprey, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Bulletproof Diet* and *Head Strong*

“In *The Essential Oils Hormone Solution*, Dr. Mariza Snyder takes the benefits of essential oils to another level by harnessing their plant-based power to achieve balanced hormones without the need for conventional hormone therapy. This is a game changer in women’s health and something that anyone dealing with fatigue, weight-loss resistance, stress, or other hormone-related problems needs to read immediately to start feeling the way you are designed to feel—vibrant and thriving.”

—Dr. Will Cole, bestselling author of *Ketotarian*

“This book should be on every woman’s book shelf. An in-depth exploration of the science of oils in supporting women’s health in the most sacred, nurturing, and safe ways.”

—Magdalena Wszelaki, bestselling author of *Cooking for Hormone Balance*

“Dr. Mariza has been there herself—she has experienced hormonal turmoil and discovered the power of essential oils to bring her hormones back into balance and

reclaim her body. In her book *The Essential Oils Hormone Solution*, she has shortened the learning curve for women who also struggle with hormonal balance and are seeking a natural alternative to heal. The wisdom and knowledge, as well as practical tips, essential oil blend recipes, and a step-by-step program, that she shares in her book is invaluable, especially for those of us who have polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).”

—Amy Medling, author of *Healing PCOS* and founder of PCOS Diva

The Essential Oils Hormone Solution

Reclaim Your
Energy and Focus and
Lose Weight Naturally

Dr. Mariza Snyder

 **RODALE**
New York

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I dedicate this book to my mom for inspiring me to follow my heart and passion and for being with me on our hormone journey.

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Introduction

I have a confession to make. Not long ago, I was a health-care practitioner leading a double life. By day, I greeted patients, listened to their concerns, and did my best to find the missing link. But in the midst of it all, I found myself struggling with the same symptoms they suffered from, and I did my best to hide that from the world. I put on my happy mask and pushed forward, ignoring the signs that something was seriously off-balance.

The questions I asked my patients to get to the bottom of their deep-rooted problems were precisely the same questions I should have been asking myself:

Are you gaining weight and don't know why?

Is your energy drained?

Do you have trouble falling asleep and then have to drag yourself out of bed in the morning?

My own answer to every question was “Yes.”

Are you craving ice cream or potato chips in the middle of the day and/or late at night?

Do you find your keys in the freezer and your glasses on top of the toilet?

Have you sent the same text to your friend for the third time after forgetting about the previous two?

Sadly, I was preaching to the choir. Every symptom they described, I, too, was experiencing.

Are you so moody that your husband approaches with caution when he sees your face?

Do you often feel like you're just losing your mind?

My patients were continually astounded at my mind-reading superpowers while I fought to swallow that gut feeling that kept creeping back up. Of course, deep down I knew. Looking at their faces was like looking in a mirror. And the culprit?

Hormonal imbalance.

The first step to figuring out answers is realizing that what you are experiencing *isn't normal*. But even though my symptoms paralleled those of my patients, I refused to take my own advice. After all, it's so much easier to ignore what you

know you need to do. Chronically fatigued and burnt out, I ran myself into the ground until the stress spun me into a downward spiral of illness. My immune system needed some love, but instead I just ignored my body and my intuition, and I pushed on forward.

I felt like a failure. What kind of doctor can't even heal herself? Outwardly successful but completely lost as to why I was suffering, I continued to allow my double life to grind me down for years. As women, we pride ourselves and develop a sense of self based on how well we can take care of our families, take care of ourselves, and take care of the world, but when you feel like you're failing yourself, how can you begin to empower anyone else?

The tricky thing about hormonal imbalance is that it often sneaks around in the background, wreaking havoc on your health before you even know it's there. As a result, doctors may dismiss your symptoms or attribute them to something else entirely, as mine did, leaving you wondering what is really going on in your body and if you will ever feel great again.

Add to that the environmental factors that played a role in the imbalance; air pollutants, chemicals in food, synthetic estrogens in beauty products, and the constant stress driving our emotional lives are the iceberg lurking beneath the surface. The only thing that doctors see is our list of symptoms and they assume that fluctuating hormones in early life and declining hormonal levels as we age are the culprit of our problems. But they affect women of all ages, even young girls beginning their cycles. Sleep, mood, weight, energy, libido, cravings, and basic functioning—all are at the mercy of our hormones.

What finally pulled me out was discovering the power of high-quality essential oils paired with lifestyle changes. They transformed my life and allowed me to recalibrate my hormonal levels. And they can do the same for you!

I discovered a new sense of empowerment after solving my own hormonal health crisis, and have made it my personal mission to share this with women everywhere. I've spent the last five years devoted to incorporating essential oils into individualized health-care plans for both my patients and my readers with incredible success, particularly because my focus has been on women's hormone health. Many of these women had given up, assuming that what they were

experiencing was their new normal. They resigned themselves to living with suboptimal health, struggling with bodies they no longer recognized.

These women were no different from you and me—they simply wanted effective solutions to their hormonal issues. When I shared with them the power behind essential oils and how they could help to bridge the gap between lifestyle changes and hormonal imbalance, they were thrilled. Regaining vitality, while knowing that they would have an empowering ally in their fight against hormonal chaos, gave them the strength to try one more potential solution to their own hormonal imbalance.

If you've never experienced aromatherapy or the power that a single drop of high-quality essential oil holds, then you may be skeptical. Here's the truth: essential oils are natural aromatic compounds found in the roots, seeds, stems, bark, leaves, and flowers of various plants. They are super-charged, fifty to seventy times more potent than their dried-herbal counterparts. They're simply the best plant-based remedy that exists, and they have been successfully used for thousands of years.

With instantaneous results and the ability to use them as needed, there is virtually no downside to using essential oils when you use them safely. Within minutes you will experience results. Essential oils are a game-changer. Once you begin to experience their power, they will become an important part of your daily routine, empower you to make foundational changes in your health-care regimen, and leave you with increased vitality and a balanced mind and body.

How This Book Came to Be

When I was a child, a serious car accident left me with a concussion and whiplash that led to chronic headaches and migraines. My immune system was so stressed I was constantly ill—colds, the flu, strep throat, sinus infections. Despite these circumstances, I persevered, graduated from college with plans to become a doctor, and began working as a biochemist at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory to save up for medical school. Over the years, I continued to suffer

from the same symptoms and enlisted the help of countless experts. When nothing they prescribed worked, I tried to accept the fact that living with chronic pain and succumbing to frequent illness just might be my normal. I was even told that my chronic migraine pain was something I was going to deal with for the rest of my life.

Luckily, a co-worker saw through the façade and suggested that I visit a functional medicine practice with a team of functional chiropractors and nutritionists. At this point, I had nothing to lose, so I went—and thank God I did. After only two months of treatment, my migraines slowly dissipated before vanishing entirely. I was in shock!

My entire paradigm shifted. I chucked my medical school plans and went to chiropractic school instead. Empowered to help others the way I had been helped, I devoted my life to a functional, individualistic health-care practice, highly specialized in neurologically driven, upper-cervical-specific, and systemic issues. Many of my patients were women over the age of forty who came in for treatment of migraines, diabetes, insomnia, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, insomnia, and what they called “female problems.” Mid-thirties to forties is typically when female hormones naturally start to slowly shift and decline, but it is also the age when any bad habits start to catch up with you. Now, add in the unrelenting stress from family commitments, work, finances, and everything else that life throws at you, and you have a whole host of problems on your hands. My patients didn’t just have chronic pain and migraines; they also had too much on their plates, which in turn led to zapped energy, sleeplessness, moodiness, headaches, bloating, and weight gain.

Sadly, because their doctors only saw the symptoms and not the whole patient, they were quick to downplay their needs and ignore the root problem. More often than not, the doctors prescribed antidepressants simply because their patients’ symptoms pointed to depression and anxiety, but it didn’t make these women feel better. This chronic misdiagnosis made me more determined than ever to help them, so I became an expert in nutrition and shifted the focus of my practice.

But, as we often do, I became so driven to help women like myself that I lost sight of my own needs. During my late twenties, when I was getting my doctorate

as a practitioner, I overloaded myself and didn't listen to the warning signs. I spiraled downward into a deep illness. I could barely drag myself out of bed in the morning, and fell asleep during classes and when working in the lab. I suffered from what I now know to be hormone-related weight resistance. I became extremely irritable and anxious, and dealt with horrendous monthly periods and mood swings. By my early thirties, not much had changed. I was still moody, irritable, and exhausted owing to the trifecta of adrenal fatigue, estrogen overload, and my family history of hormonal imbalance.

I now recognize that I come from a line of women who've struggled with their hormones, starting with my maternal grandmother. Owing to toxic exposure at her job, my grandma experienced what we now know as estrogen dominance from a bombardment of xenoestrogens, or chemicals that mimic estrogenic effects. My mom, my sister, and I always had problems with our hormones, especially around our menstrual cycle, pointing to estrogen dominance just like my grandmother's. Growing up, I didn't understand why my mom always had unexplained weight gain, cravings, severe mood swings, and, most important, a consistent lack of energy. When puberty rocked my world and I began to experience similar symptoms, we didn't talk about it. As time passed, I didn't deal with it well—I ate the wrong things, drank too much coffee, and never slowed down enough to admit that my overachieving go-go-go lifestyle was making things worse.

The other factor playing a role in my health crisis was my belief in prioritizing my health and self care. Growing up, I believed that my worth as a woman was measured by how much I was able to do for other people. I was determined to prove my worth through hard work, serving others and adding more to my plate. At some point my plate became a massive, unmanageable platter and yet I still found myself stressing about not doing enough, especially for other people. I was convinced that self care was selfish and self-indulgent. I remember calling my workouts at the gym my selfish hour. That was how powerful my disempowering mindset was for most of my life.

During this time, I was not myself anymore; I felt like a robot simply going through

the motions—until I took a deep look at the decisions I made about my health, lifestyle, and happiness. I was unhappy and unhealthy. I experienced a lot of shame because I had no energy reserves to show up and serve my patients. Women, like myself, often feel the need to get permission to love ourselves and treat ourselves with respect, but whose permission are we waiting for?

The biggest way we limit ourselves is in how we take care of everyone else first and put ourselves last. And the only way to shift the priority is to shift our belief in how we feel about ourselves. Often our belief is that our worth and value are based on what we do for others. Shifting that belief mindset means we make ourselves the priority, that we are worthy and deserving of self care and that our needs are equally important.

One of my favorite quotes is from Maya Angelou: “If I am not good to myself, how can I expect anyone else to be good to me?” If we want to be treated differently, we must treat ourselves with grace and love first. And that’s where self care comes into the conversation. Self care is vital for boosting self-confidence, maintaining good health, increasing your productivity and focus, and lowering your stress levels. When we take care of ourselves, we are at our best to take care of others, whether that is being a parent, interacting with co-workers, or running our own businesses.

Just when I needed it the most, another good friend introduced me to essential oils and the power of self care. I started using an immune-protective blend on the bottoms of my feet, and I added it to my diffuser. I used this blend faithfully every day, and after only a few weeks, I suddenly realized that I felt better. Not just better—*really* better. I was sleeping deeply. I had more energy. I wasn’t moody. I felt like my old self again. I was *stunned*. Especially since it was wintertime, when germs abound, and it was the first time in twenty years that I didn’t get sick. (And I didn’t get sick for over three years!)

That was my first experience with essential oils, beyond getting an occasional massage, and I was like, “Holy moly, this stuff really works!” I even became a bit disappointed that no one had ever taken the time to really look for the root cause of my problem or suggest that I try essential oils. But I had to be sure that they were a legitimate answer to my prayers, while the science nerd in me needed to know the

“why” behind this miracle cure. I used my biochemistry training to research the science and the chemical properties of the plants from which the oils were made. I studied dozens of books on essential oils and pored over hundreds of peer-reviewed articles. Since this particular oil blend had helped to boost my immune system, what else were these oils capable of? Could they help with sleep? With tension in the head and neck? To detox us from some of the chemicals we use in our homes?

A resounding YES! This became the answer to all my questions and more. And this is because essential oils are adaptogenic. *Adaptogens* are plant substances that help us adapt to the internal and external environmental factors that cause stress. They support our body’s systems, including hormonal balance, moods, the immune system, and overall homeostasis. They can be calming or energizing, grounding or uplifting, while affecting our body on a cellular level. They work quickly and effectively. Inhaling an essential oil allows it to penetrate the bloodstream through the respiratory system while triggering a response in the brain.

In addition to research on essential oils, I spent time learning the dirty secrets behind toxins lurking in our daily lives. Everything from the food we eat to the air we breathe, from the beauty products we apply to the medicines we take, could be harming our cellular and hormone function. I did a major life purge. I dumped anything I suspected was negatively affecting my hormones, especially the beauty products and cleansers that disrupted my hormone levels, cognitive function, and weight. I began to make my own natural solutions using essential oils and natural ingredients. My husband and I started using oils for almost everything in our household—either applying them topically or breathing them in. Oils became one of the first things I reached for in the morning and one of the last things I diffused before going to bed. Essential oils quickly became a foundational component of my productive and rewarding life.

For my patients, I started making my own synergistic essential oil blends. These patients showed immediate improvement. Inexpensive, easily portable, and intoxicatingly aromatic, essential oils enabled my patients to take charge of their own health care and begin to heal themselves. Whether for sleep or mood, libido or hormones, there seemed to be an essential oil for everything! While there wasn’t

an immediate solution to specifically boost estrogen or progesterone levels, I discovered that the oils helped create a balance in the body that would allow hormonal levels to reset. My patients were creating habits that they could rely on, that they could trust, and that gave them confidence in their bodies again.

Part of my teaching process was about the importance of rituals that reinforced all the new positive habits these women were bringing into their lives. These rituals help us to care for ourselves and spend time refocusing while enjoying the process. I taught them about mindfulness as well, because at the foundation of everything I've learned and incorporated into my protocol is that if we can't recognize our patterns and don't have self-empowering habits in place, we aren't going to feel better. Instead, we end up right back where we started—overwhelmed, stressed, and with our hormones out of whack.

I was not only empowering these women; I was also doing it myself. These lifestyle changes and rituals became an enormous part of my own learning process: I finally figured out that loving myself was the key to being able to give my best to my patients, my family, and my *everything*.

Essential oils enabled me to manage my stress load, be mindful of what I eat, carefully select appropriate supplements for my needs, and choose appropriate exercise for my body. Breathing techniques and daily rituals provided me with a solution for finding the calm amid a busy and stressful world. The oils support my lifestyle choices and sustain my well-being.

And now it's your turn to use this book as a tool to balance your life, with easy and practical solutions that you can implement for immediate results!

How to Use This Book

The best way to naturally create hormonal balance is by resetting your body's major systems through focused and deliberate changes in your daily habits, aided every step of the way by high-quality essential oils. Getting to the root cause of hormonal imbalance takes some time and introspection, but this book will give you

a step-by-step system to balance your hormones and leave you feeling energized, joyful, and revitalized.

In Part I, “A Hormone and Essential Oil Primer,” you will learn what hormones are, what their roles are in our body, and how they become unbalanced. Then we will explore the scientific basis of how essential oils work from a physiological aspect to reset and improve hormonal levels, and why they can mitigate the toxic load that we’re carrying—and likely don’t even know exists. The specific therapeutic properties of the oils most commonly used to solve hormonal symptoms will be introduced, and you will learn how to best use different essential oils for each; and in one of my favorite chapters, you’ll find out how to create everyday rituals with essential oils to enhance your health and well-being.

Part II, “Using Essential Oils to Address Your Hormonal Symptoms,” will present practical applications for immediate use in your life. The ten chapters are organized by topic, so you can quickly turn to them to address any of your issues. The solutions you’ll find in these chapters are designed to work with your unique biochemistry, and are adaptive to your specific needs.

With over 100 recipes for essential oil blends created for this book, you will be able to easily locate and implement specific solutions for your individualized needs. Plus, they are so incredibly easy to concoct and use, your friends may start begging you for advice!

Part III, “The 14-Day Rescue Plan to Jump-Start Your Hormonal Health,” is the ultimate guide to resetting your hormones and drastically improving your health. I’ll get you ready with daily solutions and amazing rituals *before* you start, so you’ll be able to focus during the step-by-step program with meal plans, exercise recommendations, rituals, and supportive essential oils for the following two weeks. You will be astonished by how much weight you may lose, how much better you will feel, and how easy it is to incorporate smart choices into your life for a powerful transformation with lasting results.

For example, when my energy is about to crash, I used to panic and think, *How do I fix this? What do I have? What can I eat?*

Now, my brain has reprogrammed me to say, *Okay, where are my oils?* I’ve learned to keep them by my side at all times. When I’m working on a big project at

the computer for hours and my brain is about to shut down in a zombie-like state, I stand up, inhale an energy-booster blend made from a combination of Wild Orange and Peppermint for thirty seconds, apply a dab of Peppermint oil to my wrists, and do a short burst of exercise like jumping jacks or marching in place for a minute or two. Then, I add my Wake Up and Focus Diffuser Blend ([this page](#)) to my diffuser, and I am totally myself again. Even *better*, I'd say. I am refreshed, energized, empowered, and ready to get back to work.

My mission is to impact the lives of all women who struggle with hormonal issues. I hope this book will do for you what essential oils have done for me. It's incredibly empowering when we take ownership of our own health.

Only *you* have the power to change your future, to take the reins of your own health and wellness and give your mind and body the attention and care that they deserve. Don't live another day suffering from your current "normal"—use this book to banish your hormone woes for good and transform your life.

PART I

A Hormone and Essential Oil Primer

CHAPTER 1

How to Balance Your Hormones Without Adding Hormones

How did I get here?

Many women find themselves in a hormonal crisis at some point in their lives, and they seek advice from medical professionals who, more likely than not, downplay common symptoms like depression, anxiety, weight gain, and brain fog in their failure to see the woman as a whole. Our unique history, genetic makeup, personality, emotional health, lifestyle, habits, and many more factors play into who we are, of course. We need to see beyond the surface—*who we are* is just as important as *what we present as*. We are not merely our symptoms. This is why I believe we must treat the *whole* person.

Society pressures women to be all things, all the time. It's not just about looking good, though we must do that, too. With a smile on our faces, looking our best, and with a pleasant and nurturing attitude, we navigate life not only for ourselves but also for our families, our friends, our co-workers, for those around us. We spend our lives taking care of our families and are often ostracized for it. When we go back to work after having children, there is even less time to focus on and take care of ourselves. We neglect. We ignore. We push onward. And eventually our health takes a big toll.

Sadly, the timing often corresponds to when our hormonal levels begin to naturally decline and our bodies change as a result. An easy solution is to blame how badly we're feeling on our hormones. Sure, hormones are at play here, but you *can't* fix hormones with hormones. In fact, pumping in additional hormones may do more damage than good.

A holistic approach to identifying and understanding *who* you are as a woman, and then taking a hard look at the routines and lifestyle that landed you in your current predicament, must be done. Resetting your lifestyle with self-care routines and rituals supported by essential oils will help you to heal yourself. *You* know who *you* are better than anyone else, but learning how you got where you are, what you can do to reverse the problem, and identifying triggers that bring out symptoms will all be a part of your game plan.

So, if you are asked the question, “Are you hormonal?” you don’t have to be offended. The answer is *yes*. We are *always* hormonal! Hormones keep our bodies functioning the way that they’re designed to.

What we need to focus on is the ever-fluctuating balance of hormones in our own, unique system. No one solution will work for everyone, but a foundation of daily self-care rituals coupled with essential oils will help you discover the solutions you need. You just have to be willing to put in a little bit of work. Time to roll up your sleeves and get your body back.

Hormonal Basics

Hormones are not just about periods and hot flashes. Hormones are chemical messengers constantly at play in our bodies. They affect nearly all functions— influencing, triggering, and regulating everything from temperature to heartbeat, from blood sugar to fertility, from mood to sleep rhythms. The interconnectedness of all our body’s systems makes it nearly impossible to isolate one hormone or one symptom and blame it for all our problems, since the body functions as a complex entity. What I have found in my years of practice is that women usually need to pay attention to several hormones. You need to assess your unique situation to create a personalized plan to reverse imbalances and reset your body.

What many of us don’t realize, though, is that hormones work hard to keep our body in homeostasis, relaying important information as they convey messages from your brain to different organs. Basically, everything that we do causes hormonal fluctuations.

Where Do Hormones Come From?

The endocrine system, composed of a variety of specialized glands, is responsible for synthesizing and secreting hormones. Other organs contain endocrinocytes that also produce hormones, though that's not their main function. So while most people know that the reproductive system produces hormones, we sometimes ignore the important function of our adrenal glands, thyroid, and pancreas. In addition, organs involved in hormone production include the heart, kidneys, stomach and intestines, liver, and skin. Interestingly, even our adipose tissue, or fat, plays a role in the secretion and release of certain hormones.

In this book, I will primarily be focusing on hormones associated with metabolism, reproduction, the thyroid, and the HPA axis (hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis), as they are the ones that tend to become imbalanced over time. Rebooting these hormones seems to clear out the body to heal itself with support from high-quality essential oils and key lifestyle changes.

The Reproductive System Hormones

Our reproductive years are the post-puberty years of menstruation and fertility, followed by the gradually decreasing hormonal levels of the perimenopausal phase, before arriving at menopause, clinically defined as the period following one full year of no menstruation. Your reproductive system is still functioning pre-puberty and post-menopause, but in a different way. Perhaps it was named the “reproductive” system since its primary and most incredible job is creating more humans. This is how a healthy reproductive system should function if all conditions are optimal:

ESTROGEN

Produced primarily by the ovaries, *estrogen* is the term used to refer to any compounds producing estrus: estrone, estradiol, and estriol. These three hormones directly affect a woman's growth and development, as well as regulate her reproductive system—namely, her menstrual cycle. Estrogen is also produced by the feto-placental unit during pregnancy, and in smaller amounts by the adrenal cortex and in the male testes.

PROGESTERONE

Progesterone production takes place in three main arenas: the ovaries during menstruation, the placenta during pregnancy, and the adrenal glands. Primarily responsible for preparing the uterus for conception and implantation, it aids in the regulation of the menstrual cycle and also helps to maintain viable pregnancies. When a new egg is produced each month and begins to develop in the follicle, estrogen and progesterone are both produced.

TESTOSTERONE

Though considered to be mainly a male hormone, testosterone is also produced in the female ovaries and adrenal glands. It influences bone strength and muscle mass and is essential to a woman's libido.

What Reproductive Hormones Do During Fertility

Estrogen and progesterone are the hormones responsible for creating optimal conditions for reproduction. *Estrogen* allows for a soft and thick uterine lining in days one to fourteen of a monthly cycle, before the egg is released for potential conception. It also tells our bodies to keep some extra fat around in case conception takes place so that we can protect the growing fetus. *Progesterone* is produced after ovulation by the corpus luteum (the sac that the egg comes from) and dominates the second half of the cycle (luteal phase). Its main job is to keep that comfy uterine lining in place for implantation of a fertilized egg. If this happens, levels continue to rise to ensure the uterine lining remains intact until the placenta is fully developed

enough to take over, around twelve weeks into the pregnancy.

Each of us is born with a finite number of eggs. They are released monthly for potential fertilization and implantation. If conception does not take place, progesterone levels will decline, causing the uterine lining to shed—and our menstrual period to begin.

Sadly, many women experience debilitating premenstrual syndrome (PMS), or horrible periods, and symptoms that they attribute to normal hormone function. This is inaccurate. Your body is not supposed to suffer through its normal processes, but if hormone levels are out of whack (and not just the reproductive hormones), the results can trigger these painful conditions.

What Reproductive Hormones Do During Perimenopause

Usually around age forty, although sometimes as early as thirty-five, most women begin experiencing changes in their bodies associated with perimenopause, the period when childbearing comes to an end. Estrogen production specifically for the reproductive system gradually slows; eggs aren't always released every month and menstrual periods may become irregular. Our bodies slowly adapt over a period from four to ten years as we settle into the normal aging process. The last two years before menopause are when most women notice the biggest change, as hormone levels drop more steadily than before in preparation for cessation of the cycle entirely.

During this time, several changes happen owing to the decline in estrogen production. As estrogen influences bone density, attention to bone health becomes paramount. In addition, we use energy differently, and caloric needs shift so we can properly fuel our bodies and prevent weight gain and excess fat storage.

What Reproductive Hormones Do During Menopause

After your period has ceased for one year, you are officially in menopause, the

culmination of perimenopausal changes. Ovarian production of hormones ceases entirely, but the adrenal glands continue to produce them for the body's needs. Any perimenopausal symptoms usually decline and disappear at this stage. Women become more at risk for chronic conditions such as heart disease and osteoporosis/osteopenia during post-menopause.

Thyroid Hormones

Known as the “butterfly gland” because of its unique shape, the thyroid sits at the front of the neck, where it regulates hundreds of functions, particularly our metabolic function, growth, and easing the body into maturity. The thyroid depends on iodine, a trace element not produced naturally in the body, and good diet to properly function. Iodine from food consumption is converted to produce the protein thyroglobulin, which is then converted into T4 (thyroxine) and other hormones.

TSH (Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone). Produced by the pituitary gland, TSH stimulates the production of T4 (thyroxine) and T3 (triiodothyronine).

T3 (Triiodothyronine). Converted from T4 via the liver and other tissues, T3 is the active form of thyroid hormone that affects metabolic processes, weight, energy, memory, cholesterol, muscle strength, heart rate, menstrual cycle, and more.

T4 (Thyroxine). Secreted by the thyroid gland directly into the bloodstream, T4 is an inactive thyroid hormone that functions as a storage component for T3. Levels of T4 in the body trigger the production or cessation of TSH.

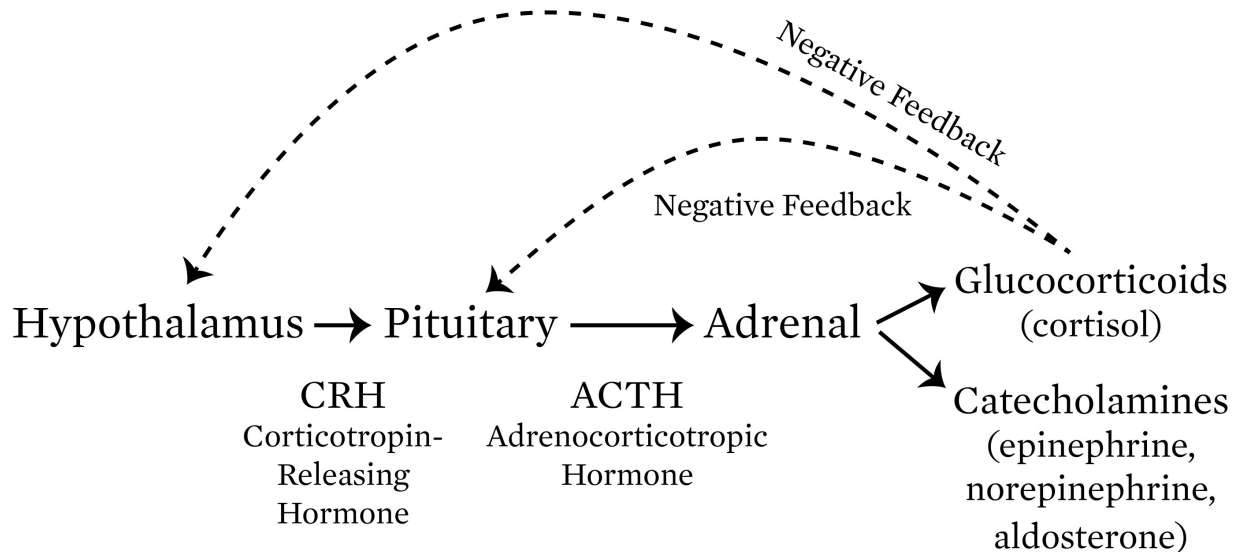
Reverse T3 (RT3). An inactive form of T3 is produced when the body saves energy in the T4–T3 conversion process. Low levels can lead to hypothyroidism, while too much results in the blockage of T3 from its receptors.

What Thyroid Hormones Do

Optimal levels of T₃ and T₄ increase our basal metabolic rate (BMR), causing our bodies to kick into action. Body temperature rises while the heart rate quickens, and our body uses up energy a lot faster. The thyroid taps into the liver and muscles for stored energy in order to support functions like growth and development.

Often described as a “thermostat system,” the hypothalamus functions as the adjuster of the thermostat, the pituitary gland. When the temperature—T₃ and T₄ levels—drops too low in the body, the hypothalamus releases TSH-Releasing Hormone (TRH), which tells the pituitary gland that it had better heat things up. As a result, the pituitary produces TSH, which triggers production of T₄ and ups the temperature. Sensing the shift, the pituitary lowers production of TSH and the system maintains balance.

The HPA Axis Hormones



HYPOTHALAMUS

The hypothalamus regulates the autonomic nervous system, sending messages directly from the brain to various areas of the body, including the thyroid, pituitary, and adrenal glands, as well as other organs. It maintains our sleep cycles and appropriate energy levels, regulates body temperature, and influences our appetite,

thirst, weight, moods (such as anger and fear), blood pressure, and libido.

PITUITARY GLAND

The pituitary gland sits at the base of the brain, physically connected to the hypothalamus. Considered the master control gland in the body, it produces a wide variety of hormones, directly triggers the thyroid and adrenal cortex, and influences the reproductive system and kidney function.

ADRENAL GLANDS

The pair of adrenal glands sit atop the kidneys, where they produce hormones to help regulate blood sugar, energy storage, the immune system, and metabolism. From steroids to stress to sex, the adrenals keep our bodies safe and primed for whatever scenario might ensue.

What HPA Axis Hormones Do

The complexity of the body's systems never ceases to amaze me, and the HPA axis really gets the science nerd in me excited! The interconnectedness and interplay among such tiny molecules of our body demonstrates the sheer power of big things in small packages. But it doesn't take much to push these delicate balances into overload or completely throw them off-balance.

Responsible for a variety of bodily processes, the HPA axis directly influences digestion, the immune system, energy storage and expenditure, and mood and emotional responses. The claim to fame for the adrenals, however, is their ability to respond to stress.

The primary function of the HPA axis is to keep the body on an even keel, so it activates when exposed to a potential stressor—a short-term stress response. It all begins in the hypothalamus, which perceives the stressor and begins to produce CRH (corticotropin-releasing hormone) to tell the pituitary gland that something is posing a potential threat. The pituitary responds with production of ACTH (adrenocorticotrophic hormone), kicking the adrenal glands into action. They then respond to the stressor by having the body produce several different hormones for

responds to the stressor by having the body produce several different hormones for our own protection.

The catecholamine *epinephrine* (aka adrenaline) raises heart rate and increases blood pressure, getting us ready for a potential fight-or-flight scenario: we either fight off the tiger or run for our lives. It also dilates our respiratory passages, allowing for greater airflow to oxygenate our bodies for the battle. The adrenals also produce the glucocorticoid *cortisol*, which raises our blood sugar levels in order to fuel this ensuing battle, with the help of adrenaline that aids the liver in the conversion of glycogen (think stored energy) into glucose (fuel for the body). It also redirects the body's attention away from unnecessary systems at the time in favor of survival, so digestion and reproduction take a back seat in favor of saving our own lives.

When we perceive the stressor to be eliminated, the body triggers a negative feedback from the adrenals to the pituitary and hypothalamus so that they slow their production of ACTH and CRH. This returns the body to a normal balance and life goes on.

How Hormonal Imbalance Happens and Its Resulting Symptoms

Though our bodies are constantly bombarded from every angle externally, the way it responds *internally* often creates our hormonal imbalances. In my years of practice, I have found stress to be the single biggest cause for hormonal imbalance among women, owing to the interconnectedness of all our systems. What was meant to be a complex mechanism for keeping our bodies in top condition can easily tip into an out-of-whack, imbalanced mess, triggering multiple symptoms and leaving us asking that fateful question: *How did I get here?*

That is the exact question thirty-eight-year-old Rita, a single mother, asked me within minutes of walking into my office. Suffering from chronic fatigue, she looked panicked and exhausted, and struggled to get out of bed each morning. She barely had enough energy in the morning to make her daughter's lunch and get to

her demanding job on time—a job that left her feeling overworked and underappreciated. She had substituted self care and healthy food choices with long nights at the office and trips to Starbucks. Once we figured out the core issue, we worked together to get her body and energy back on track.

If we look at the short-term stress functioning of the HPA axis and apply chronic, unrelenting stress to it, our bodies take on an entirely new landscape. Instead of managing the stress and slowing the hormonal response through the negative feedback loop, our hypothalamus becomes overwhelmed with perceived stress. In our modern world, stress could be anything from driving in heavy traffic each day, to taxing job responsibilities, to advertisements reminding us we haven't planned for retirement yet. Or, it can be a comment a co-worker says to us, sending us into a whirlwind of worry or frustration.

Chronic Stress = Adrenal Stress

Unrelenting stress from every angle continuously triggers the HPA axis until it is overworked and under cared for. Swamped with excess levels of cortisol, the body senses it's in a "My Body at War" state, with danger lurking around every corner. As a result, temporary shutdowns of unnecessary systems become more permanent situations, causing an onslaught of symptoms:

- Decreased metabolic function triggers starvation mode to save energy for the upcoming battles. We need fewer calories when this happens, but we often continue to eat whatever is available, making it much harder to lose weight.
- There is weight gain in the "inner tube" pattern around the middle, as well as around vital organs and in adipose tissue to store energy. This increases belly fat.
- Muscle mass declines as the body attacks them to get glucose for energy to battle the threat.
- Binge eating becomes commonplace because we are feeding an unmet need, in the form of stress or emotional distress. Add that to our habit of scarfing

food as quickly as possible to move to the next task, and eating becomes a survival mechanism.

- Pseudo-famine situations trigger midnight binges and comfort-food cravings, because carbs and sugar are what we really need as fuel when our lives are being threatened.
- Increased sugar consumption overloads the body and creates unnatural highs and crashes, much like a drug addiction.
- Reproduction is put on hold in favor of survival, because the body wouldn't allow a baby to come into the world where there is no food and perpetual danger lurking around every corner. Bring on infertility, irregular periods, PMS symptoms, and more.
- Exhaustion and brain fog from chronic stress and lack of sleep become the new normal.

And the stressors keep on coming. These symptoms are just the beginning of hormonal imbalance, and can eventually lead to scarier conditions, like Type 2 diabetes, autoimmune conditions, and heart disease.

Now, let's address what I'll discuss in the Five Pillars of a Foundational Lifestyle section in Part III.

First off are nutritional deficiencies. If you haven't been fueling your body properly, it can't possibly get the nutrients it needs to function optimally. Add in lack of exercise to keep your muscles primed, your heart rate normalized, and your body in top condition (especially to combat the excess amounts of stress), and you have a real problem.

And that's not all, because there are factors out of your control that affect your body, such as environmental toxins lurking in the air, water, the food you eat, the containers you store food in and cook it in, the products that you apply to your skin, and the medicines that you are prescribed or buy at the drugstore.

Where does that leave you? In a danger state, for sure—but don't lose hope! There is a way to reverse the damage, rebalance your body, and recharge your life to increase your vitality and renew your sense of self.

Do I Need a Reboot?

Chances are, if you picked up this book and are still reading, you need a reboot. Or you know something is off and you're desperate to figure out a solution.

I know. I was there, too.

Here's the good news: you CAN do this! Are there specific signs and signals letting you know that your body is hormonally imbalanced? Yes!

I created a quiz that I give to all my patients to see just how *off* their bodies may be owing to hormonal or other issues. They are almost always surprised by the results. I can't tell you how many times patients have told me they are healthy, yet they check off nearly all (if not all!) the boxes.

Given how polluted our environment is, how overloaded with chemicals our food is, and how unhealthy our diets can be, it's almost impossible to live without any health issues at all. There are just too many external factors working against us. Instead, what you want to strive for is the best possible health you can have, given all the mitigating factors you face. Being mindful of how well you take care of yourself on a day-to-day basis is a start. And supporting your changes with the power and potency of essential oils will keep you empowered to succeed.

The Comprehensive Hormone Quiz

The Comprehensive Hormone Quiz was designed to provide you with a snapshot of your hormonal imbalances so you can begin implementing essential oils, self-care rituals, and better lifestyle habits to get your body back on track. Before heading into Part II, go to www.drmariza.com/hormonequiz to take the quiz and figure out the root cause of your hormonal imbalance.

The Role of Your Trusted Health-Care Provider

It's very important that your personal health-care provider understands and supports your hormonal issues without denigrating or dismissing them. If you aren't getting the support you need, ask friends or colleagues for recommendations. Remember, *you* need to advocate for your own wellness. You have the right to demand proper testing and evaluation. It can be daunting for many of us to advocate for ourselves, as we aren't used to taking health-care matters into our own hands—but it's time to begin!

So, while some doctors combine traditional medicine with a holistic approach seamlessly, you may need to turn elsewhere for support in areas like nutrition, essential oils, supplementation, and natural hormone balance. Be proactive in seeking out a support team with whom you feel comfortable. A team can be very effective as long as there is clear communication about your protocols and recommendations. Look for functional practitioners, naturopaths, chiropractors, and other holistic health-care providers. Most of them should be able to order and competently address any testing results and recommendations. I have provided some trusted sources to help you find an integrative or functional practitioner in the Resources section of this book.

I recommend these tests for everyone dealing with a potential hormone imbalance. Do your research and read about each one if it makes you feel more comfortable. You need to be on board with this plan before we can begin our journey to success and balance.

The Testing You Need

The secret sauce to testing is to measure hormonal levels and expect improvements over time. Ask your integrative or functional doctor to order the following:

- A complete blood panel
- Thyroid tests: TSH, Free T3, Free T4, Reverse T3 (RT3), TPOAb, AntiTgAntibody
- Adrenal tests: Measure serum cortisol first thing in the morning, before 9 a.m., four diurnal cortisol (tested four times during the day via saliva), free and total testosterone, and dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)
- Progesterone on day 21–23 (if you're cycling)

- Fasting insulin and glucose, HDL, and hemoglobin A1C
- IGF-1 (growth hormone)
- 25-hydroxy-vitamin D, vitamin B₁₂, folate

For a complete list of lab tests, test descriptions and optimal ranges for each test, head over to www.drmariza.com/labtests.

If your doctor won't order these blood tests, order them yourself. Find a source for trusted laboratories in the Resources ([this page](#)).

When you assess the test results, pay attention to the "normal ranges." Discuss them with your trusted health-care provider, and bear in mind that just because your number falls into the "normal" range, that doesn't mean that it's normal for *you*. Any number at the higher or lower end should be questioned.

What Essential Oils Can and Can't Do

In my time as a health-care practitioner, I have researched, studied, and recommended a variety of protocols to my patients, none of which revolutionized their success like essential oils. The immediate support that they offer is unparalleled, which is why they've been used for hundreds of years for their potency and power. I'll never forget my first whiff of Wild Orange essential oil and the immediate uplift I felt.

But before we get into what essential oils *can* do, let me take a minute to explain what they *can't* do.

Even though essential oils exhibit specialized properties and are composed of hundreds of potent constituents, they are *not* hormones! Essential oils can't become hormones. They can't produce hormones. They can't replace hormones. Nature just doesn't work that way.

But—nature gave us these amazing gifts that *can* support our bodies in healing themselves and that affect our bodies in miraculous ways. In other words, you can *treat* hormones without hormones. Essential oils are your support. Use them as tools to get you to the endgame: healthy hormonal levels. But they won't get you there alone if you neglect lifestyle choices that establish the foundation for your

good health.

How Essential Oils Support Hormones Without Adding Hormones

The amazing power of essential oils can support your body to get its hormone-balancing systems back into a stable balance. Scientific studies continue to support essential-oil science in making new breakthroughs and in discovering the power of how their constituents influence the body. Sometimes I think we are a bit late in the game, since these gifts of nature have been used for thousands of years, especially in Eastern medicine—but better late than never!

Bridging the Gap—The Five Pillars of a Foundational Lifestyle

I am always astounded by our body's ability to function and heal, even under stressful circumstances. Think about the last time you worried about a cut on your finger closing up and healing—probably never. Your cells collaborate to heal your cut without your even asking.

As you can imagine, the interconnectedness of the human body elements is remarkably complex. Add that to the intricacies of our hormonal makeup, and you've got a real miracle!

But your cells need your help. The very best and the most consistent daily habits can make all the difference in how you feel—and especially how your body functions. It's the difference between your feeling wired and tired throughout the day or experiencing boundless energy.

As you know, I learned the hard way that poor daily habits can create significant cellular imbalance if you let yourself slip too far. I have a feeling that's why you are reading this book right now!

reading this book right now:

The Five Pillars outlined here and described in more detail in Chapter 15 support our very being, hold us up when times get rough, and keep us balanced and strong. But if we neglect them over time, they will begin to erode, crumble, and even work against us, causing internal problems that often don't break the surface until it's too late for a simple solution. The longer you ignore the destruction, pushing past the symptoms or naively accepting them as your "normal," the more difficult your reboot and recovery will be.

When our bodies are imbalanced and underserved, it is almost as if they begin to resist the changes we try to institute. This is why there is no overnight solution to this problem. While you can get instantaneous relief from using essential oils, using them in isolation while you continue to allow the icebergs to exist is pointless. They will not help you to bridge the gaps; they will simply provide a light bandage for your problems, fulfilling an immediate need to ease the symptoms much the way many over-the-counter drugs simply mask symptoms.

The combination of essential-oil support and lifestyle changes is what will get you back on track—but *only if you are willing to make the changes and allow them time to work*. Acknowledging that these Five Pillars need some rebuilding is the first step in your rebooting process to the best possible you. After all, your body can only do so much with so little.

Pillar #1—Nutrition

THE PROBLEM

By failing to properly fuel our bodies and falling into patterns of poor, imbalanced nutrition, we unknowingly create a downward spiral of hormonal imbalance from which it is hard to recover.

Addressing nutritional imbalances and deficiencies with a whole-food diet and supplementation will ensure that your body gets back into balance. Nothing is going to help you unless you realize that *what* you eat matters just as much as *how much* you eat. Think of food as information for your body—you want to convey the right information to your cells and organs.

THE ESSENTIAL-OILS SOLUTION

Essential oils can help you to resist the cravings that have you conditioned to eat unhealthy choices, can support your body in losing excess weight, and can enhance your overall vitality. Thus, Chapter 8 focuses on weight gain caused by hormonal imbalance; Chapter 13 discusses digestive issues that may be plaguing you on a daily basis. And the 14-Day Rescue Plan, in Part III, is the final fix that will enable you to rework your nutritional choices so that food works *for* you, fueling your needs in the way your body appreciates.

Pillar #2—Exercise

THE PROBLEM

When your hormones are out of whack, your normal exercise routine may not help you recover, and in some cases, may even make you feel worse.

THE ESSENTIAL-OILS SOLUTION

Essential oils not only help your body to recover from the symptoms of hormonal issues but can also enable your body to re-center itself over time. In addition, they can greatly support your body during pre-and post-exercise routines, as well as speed up your recovery time after exercise.

Chapter 5 covers the far-reaching damage that sustained cortisol levels from stress can do on your body; energy and fatigue are addressed in Chapter 6; Chapter 8 dives into weight gain and the cravings that often fuel it. The role of female hormones is covered in Chapter 9. And you'll see how to do the best exercises to tackle hormonal chaos in the 14-Day Rescue Plan, which is in Part III.

Pillar #3—Stress Management

THE PROBLEM

Chronic, elevated levels of cortisol and other hormones can chip away at your body's systems, causing them to weaken one by one until you can have major

health issues.

THE ESSENTIAL-OILS SOLUTION

Studies have shown that, when cortisol levels are high, inhaling essential oils can calm the mind and relax the body.

In Chapter 5, you'll read about the damage stress can do; Chapter 11 focuses on the fluctuation of emotions in a woman's life and how they can lead you into a downward spiral of hormonal disaster; and Chapter 12 examines cognition, and how brain fog and an inability to concentrate affect your life.

Pillar #4—Reducing the Toxic Burden

THE PROBLEM

Many people are shocked when they learn about how a toxic load can affect their cellular function, especially when it's the result of decades of chemicals and toxins stressing the body.

Strong scientific evidence links dangerous toxins and synthetics in personal-care products to chronic diseases, reproductive toxicity, autoimmunity, allergies, and cancer.

THE ESSENTIAL-OILS SOLUTION

Nutritional changes will help rid your body of toxins from food, but ridding your environment of as many other toxins as possible, including those you put on your body, must become a top priority. Learning to make your own products that are free of harmful toxins, diffusing essential oils to cleanse the air, and unleashing the power of essential oils are all paramount in reversing as many of these effects as possible. Chapter 8 explains how even your weight can be influenced by toxins in the food you eat; Chapter 14 discusses the effects of toxicity and focuses on showing how you can make your own all-natural beauty and cleaning products.

Pillar #5—Self-Care Rituals

THE PROBLEM

In a world where women are expected to do it all, often at the expense of their own health, they are quick to put themselves last. If you aren't the best possible version of yourself, then you are potentially neglecting everything you are trying to balance.

THE ESSENTIAL-OILS SOLUTION

Imagine the impact you could have on all your desires if you truly felt good from the inside out. Spending time caring for yourself allows you to support everyone and everything else in your life. Essential oils can help you find that balance.

In Chapter 7, you will learn how to improve your sleep; Chapter 10 focuses on libido and recharging the energy in the bedroom. Chapter 11 addresses emotional health, keeping you empowered and positive, especially if your symptoms were misdiagnosed as mental health issues when they actually were caused by hormonal imbalances. And Chapter 15 will give you even more details about self-care rituals.

Essential Oils Transformed My Life

Throughout this book, I share my own struggles with hormonal imbalance and describe the crumbling foundation that was my life. I want you to know that you're not alone, that you are not the only one silently suffering. But you can no longer gloss over the increasing symptoms and ignore the new ones as they surface. The help you seek is in these pages. I honestly cannot imagine my life without my daily use of essential oils. I quickly fell in love with their amazing power, and their immediate effect on my body at a cellular level. For you as well, they can provide the same relief as I desired for so long, while supporting your body's ability to heal itself.

Unlike many over-the-counter and prescribed remedies, essential oils not only affect the body systemically but also can be used quite frequently. This means not needing to wait thirty minutes for a medication to circulate through your system. It also means not masking a symptom. Rather, it means supporting your body in

healing from the inside out. It also means, however, that for them to work, you need a major reboot, identifying those foundational issues and symptoms that have plagued you the most. You start by putting yourself first and shifting your belief to self care.

Empowering women to love and honor their bodies has become my mission. Supported by the amazing power of essential oils, I have helped thousands of women find personal successes. No matter what point you're at in your life, you need support to heal yourself and time devoted to self care. Only then will you be truly able to give your all to others and to what you enjoy doing. Let's rebuild our foundation, kick the symptoms to the curb, bridge the gaps, and discover how amazing we feel when we rebalance, recharge, and revitalize our lives!

CHAPTER 2

The Guide to Using Essential Oils

Starting out in the world of essential oils can be overwhelming, and there is definitely a learning curve involved—which will be a lot easier when you know the specifics before you oil up for the first time.

When I first came in contact with essential oils, I adored the uplifting and perky scent of Wild Orange essential oil. Phototoxicity, dilution, and ingestion were topics that never crossed my mind; it was truly love at first scent. Now I know to always do my homework before using any essential oil.

Guided selection, proper usage technique, and safety precautions must be considered prior to launching your essential-oil journey. Let me be your guide as we take a walk through the basics.

How to Choose an Essential Oil

Essential oils seem to be popping up everywhere, with varying brands, different claims, and every bottle labeled that its oil is “pure.” I can assure you that it just isn’t the case. For starters, there aren’t strict regulations governing the packaging of essential oils in this country, leading to a lot of companies selling highly adulterated oils that will not yield your desired results and could potentially harm your body with whatever solvents or chemicals lurk inside the bottle. They may be cheaper, but the cheap oils do not meet the quality standards I require of my essential oils.

Please also know that the blends, protocols, and advice I give in this book concern *only* high-quality essential oils from respected, trusted companies that adhere to certain quality standards. (Using my suggestions with lesser-quality oils

just won't be as effective, so you'll be wasting your time and money. But don't just take my word for it. Do your own research to learn the basics and to find a company that practices the safety and quality standards you can trust.)

Why are these lesser-quality oils significantly less effective? Because they aren't meant for therapeutic benefits and they don't meet high-quality, scientific testing standards. There are different grades of oils, and 98 percent of the essential oils currently produced fall into one of two categories: food grade or perfume grade. In addition to being heavily adulterated with additives and solvents, their main purpose is to provide a standard scent for their particular purpose. So, lavender soap always smells the same from Company A, while lemon cleaner always smells the same from Company B. Consumers know what to expect when they repurchase their favorite products—and that's a consistency in fragrance. Also, all-natural essential oils cannot be patented, but mainstream companies would rather use a synthetic version for medicines, perfumes, personal-care products, and foods.

In the United States, most perfume-grade oils sold as "pure" are simply fragrance-grade and diluted. But not just diluted with alcohol, water, or other oils. They also have been created with the use of synthetic chemicals—colorless, odorless solvents that will remain in your bottle of oil. You may find that your body immediately responds to these adulterated oils, or you develop symptoms over time. If you're only looking for the perfume results of these oils as fragrances for laundry, air fresheners, or cleaners, then adulteration may not be a problem. But I prefer not to have any sort of chemicals freely roaming in my environment and I would NEVER put them on my skin.

So, how do you know what you have? Start with the *Paper Test*: Put one drop of the questionable oil on a piece of paper. Let it sit and evaporate for an hour. If there is any ring or residue left behind, you have an adulterated oil. This test works for most essential oils such as Peppermint, Lemon, and Lavender. Note that this test won't work for Myrrh, Patchouli, and the rare absolutes like Jasmine, Rose, and Vanilla, which must be processed with solvents owing to their more delicate nature.

The companies I respect most and whose products I feel comfortable using pay close attention to where the oil-producing plants are grown, their harvest time, and

the proper distillation, with care to temperature and length of time. It does concern me that there aren't more regulations, which is why the companies I trust set their own quality standards. For the highest-quality essential oils, the answer should be yes to the majority of the following questions you should ask of the producers:

- Does the company disclose where the oil is sourced?
- Do they take care to harvest at peak times to ensure the highest quality product?
- Do they use testing procedures to ensure potency and purity?
- Have they created partnerships with local growers and harvesters for a mutually beneficial relationship?
- Do they use sound business practices and are their leaders trustworthy?
- Are both gas chromatography and mass spectrometry tests done to ensure quality? (Both of these tests must be used to verify the presence of the correct compounds and to ensure that no impurities are present in the final product.)
- Is testing done for microbial properties?

There are steps you can take to ensure that what you already have on hand are high-quality essential oils, as well as to assess the oils you are considering purchasing.

Ten Assurances for High-Quality Essential Oils

- 1. Names.** The common and scientific (Latin) names of the source plant should be clearly displayed on the label. If the oil is diluted, that should be labeled and the carrier oil should be listed. If it is a blend, every essential oil contained therein used should be listed, with its common and scientific names, as well as any carrier oils.
- 2. ATI.** Each bottle should be labeled with the recommended usage guidelines for that particular oil: aromatic (A), topical (T), or internal (I). Sometimes directions may be written on the bottle, but most times the directions are simply labeled with these letters.

- 3. Therapeutic Grade.** The grade should be clearly listed and/or advertised. This references the presence of each oil's primary constituents in proper form, as well as its health benefits. Companies producing high-quality essential oils usually have their own internal quality standards that indicate their process for ensuring their essential oils are pure, potent, and effective.
- 4. Bottled and Capped.** The bottle should be dark glass (amber or cobalt) to protect from sun exposure, tightly capped, stored or presented upright, and fitted with an orifice reducer (a plastic insert that seals the top of the bottle and protects it from oxidation from air exposure). Dropper tops should only be added after you purchase the oil.
- 5. Size.** Sizes for high-quality essential oils are usually 5-, 10-, or 15 mL, dispensed for use with an orifice reducer that produces drops. A 15-mL bottle of essential oil contains about 250 drops. It may not seem like a lot, but because you will only use one to two drops per recipe, the bottle usually lasts quite a while, making it more cost-effective than its medicinal counterparts. When you consider cost per drop, essential oils are not expensive.
- 6. Price.** Oils that are all priced the same are a giant red flag. Each oil requires a unique process of growing, harvesting, and extracting, as well as a different amount of plant material, so prices should always vary. For example, it takes approximately 105 pounds of rose petals to produce a 5-mL bottle of Rose essential oil—and we all know roses aren't cheap!
- 7. Expiration Date.** Most high-quality essential oils offer an expiration date for shelf life, but this is because most have also been approved as food-grade and are stamped with the acronym GRAS (generally recognized as safe) in the United States for use in cooking. This doesn't mean that they are safe for internal usage as a supplement, however. At minimum, the expiration date gives you an indication of how long a bottle has been sitting on a shelf.
- 8. Company.** Do you recognize the company name? Have you researched it and feel comfortable with what you found? Does it pass the suggested questions on [this page](#)?
- 9. Senses.** Smell the oil for a crisp, clean, and balanced scent. Feel the oil to

see if it leaves a residue. Watch it on your skin for quick absorption into your skin with only a clean scent remaining. If the scent adversely affects you or the oils don't absorb, then proceed with caution.

10. Potency. How much do you have to use to achieve your desired results? If it's more than one or two diluted drops, you have a lesser-quality oil. If you use a lot and experience no results or have adverse effects such as skin irritations or other symptoms, you probably have a lesser-quality oil.

For websites that recommend where to buy high-quality, therapeutic-grade essential oils, see Resources.

How to Use Essential Oils

As mentioned, essential oils can be used in three different ways: aromatically, topically, or internally. Not all these methods are recommended for each oil, so be sure that you check the bottle for the recommended usage or follow my guidelines to ensure you are using them properly. All the recipes in this book should be used in one of these three ways. Remember that each person is different, and the essential oils may cause different responses. It probably will take some trials to find your preferred methods for using each oil or blend, but don't let this discourage you!

There are three main groups by which we classify essential oils based on their effects: calming/soothing, uplifting/energizing, and grounding/balancing. These should be guidelines for the effects you can expect when using a particular essential oil, and you will see me use these terms to describe the effects of oils I recommend in this book.

As always, discuss your implementation of essential oils in your routine with a trusted integrative health-care provider, or essential oil expert, especially if you have any preexisting conditions. That said, trust your gut and stand up for yourself if your practitioners roll their eyes at you. You may want to seek out a more

if your practitioners roll their eyes at you. You may want to seek out a more holistic health-care practitioner who is accepting of alternative and Eastern forms of care, if your current provider isn't willing to work with your requests. You are the CEO of your own health care!

Using Essential Oil Blends

While harnessing the potency and power of a single essential oil is extremely beneficial, even more profound effects can be achieved by using more than one. After spending years researching the most effective combinations, I've created and tested protocols that have worked for my patients with great success, and they will definitely support you as well. You will see many recipes for essential oil blends in this book; each oil was selected for a specific reason, including consideration of its constituents and blending properties with the other suggested essential oils.

Whether you choose to inhale, diffuse, apply, layer, or ingest these essential oils, remember that you want to give them an honest try. Don't give up after one application or trial, as your body needs different things at different times, or it may need the oils to be applied in a certain location or layered in a particular order. Work with them and give each a chance to help you when you need it most.

Aromatic Uses

The easiest way to use essential oils is aromatically. Owing to their volatile nature, essential oils quickly evaporate and pervade an area, directly entering the lungs and the brain's olfactory system, where they stimulate olfactory receptors. Mitral cells then carry the output signals from the olfactory bulb to the limbic brain, which influences emotions, memory, sleep, and hormonal balance, as well as to other areas of the brain.

Even more amazingly, from a simple whiff, the oils absorb into your bloodstream, where they travel throughout your body, affecting the areas that need them most. The longer you expose the oils directly to air, the more intense effect and aroma you will experience. Eventually, they are excreted through the kidneys,

lungs, and pores, after their amazing influence on your entire body. Most important, they can directly affect the endocrine system, responsible for much of our hormone production and the HPA axis to help you find and keep the balance that you need.

Under the “aromatic umbrella,” there are several ways to use the essential oils: direct inhalation, indirect inhalation, steamers, and diffusion. Used topically, however, you will also experience aromatic benefits. I recommend giving each a try to see which method you prefer; you may find that you like certain blends to be diffused while for others you may want to crack the top of the bottle and take in a deep whiff. It’s all about what works for you!

DIRECT INHALATION

Opening a bottle and inhaling easily introduces these powerful aromas into your body, affecting your emotions, mood, and other systems. Be careful not to put the bottle too close to your nose or eyes, though, as the vapors can be intense. As a general rule of thumb, hold the bottle an arm’s length away and slowly bring it in, breathing deeply and pausing to assess the effects. Until you know how an oil affects you, take care not to overload your sense too quickly. Direct inhalation should always be the first way to use a new oil.

If all goes well with your initial test, you can move on to patch-testing the oil (see [this page](#)). If you have no reactions, then you can use the palm inhalation method for direct inhalation. To do this, put a drop or two in your palms, rub them gently together, and then cup them over your nose and mouth before deeply breathing.

INDIRECT INHALATION

For this method, add one or two drops of essential oil to an object that will then allow a slower, sustained release of its aroma. A cotton ball or tissue strategically placed allows you to do so in specific locations. For example, try attaching a cotton ball or wooden clothespin to a fan or air vent, put a few drops directly on the filters of your air conditioner, or hide felt squares with oils in your car, drawers, gym bag, or purse. One of my favorite tricks is to put a drop or two on the scarf I’m wearing

that day for a sustained effect. Everyone always comments on how good I smell and I reap the benefits of the aromatherapy—and so do those around me.

There are also many options for diffuser jewelry, from lava beads to diffuser lockets, chic leather bracelets to clay pendants. Why not accessorize with a boost of essential oils that are more potent and beneficial than any perfume you've ever tried? They also make amazing gifts, especially for those people in your life who may need an essential oil boost as well.

DIFFUSION

Diffusion or nebulizing diffusion generally refers to small devices that take the power of essential oils and create a fine airborne mist that fills a larger area. Though many people prefer sustained diffusion, I recommend only diffusing an hour at a time and then taking a break to give your systems a reset. Be sure to use care if you have a preexisting respiratory condition and discuss the use of a diffuser with your trusted health-care professional. Many people with respiratory difficulties have found great success with diffusers, but you always want to err on the side of caution, especially if you are using other medications to control your condition.

My favorite is an ultrasonic cool-air diffuser that uses ultrasonic vibrations to turn a water vapor/essential oil mixture into a fine airborne mist. The oils can then remain suspending in the air for several hours for sustained breathable benefits. You only need to add four to six drops of high-quality essential oil to about a cup of water and push the button.

Be sure to follow the manufacturer's suggestions on your diffuser for use and care. The diffuser recipes in this book were all created for an ultrasonic cool-air diffuser.

Other diffusers blow air through an oil-soaked pad, but this just doesn't do the job like an ultrasonic cool-air diffuser. Also, definitely avoid using a diffuser that has a heating element that comes into contact with any oil, which can break down the chemical constituents, thereby reducing the effectiveness of the oils. Avoid using humidifiers or vaporizers, since their components are not manufactured for use with essential oils; essential oils can break down the plastics and cause toxins to leach out into the air, eventually ruining the machine's parts.

Using Steam in Your Home

Steam can be a natural diffuser for essential oils when used in the right way. Adding a few drops of essential oil to a steamy mug of water and then inhaling deeply can also give you the therapeutic benefits of a diffuser without a machine. Or try a steamy shower. A spritz will open your airways, awaken your senses, and bring you to balance—you just need to add water and essential oils to a two-ounce spray bottle and keep it in the shower. For a recipe, see Chapter 6.

Topical Uses

Topical application of essential oils to the skin allows the chemical constituents to combine with the natural sebum of your skin for absorption into the body. From the lymphatic system to soft tissue, the oils penetrate deep into the body. Muscles, surrounding tissue, and all other surrounding areas receive the benefits as the essential oils make their way into the bloodstream and travel through the organs before being excreted. Also, by applying the oils to your skin, you get the aromatherapeutic bonus effect of breathing in their scent, too.

NEAT VS. DILUTED

Remember that the potency of pure, high-quality therapeutic essential oils requires only a drop (or less) to be used for maximum benefit. As a result, we generally talk with two terms when referring to topical application: neat and diluted.

Neat means applying the drop of oil directly to the skin from the bottle. While there are several essential oils I feel comfortable using neat, such as Lavender and Frankincense, I always recommend diluting essential oils to know how your body will react to them. If you happen to apply an oil neat, you can always dilute it quickly afterward or if a reaction develops with one of the preferred carrier oils mentioned on [this page](#).

Dilution happens when you mix the essential oil with a high-quality carrier

oil to keep it from evaporating too fast and to cover a larger area of the skin. The carrier oil also helps to prevent the potential of an adverse dermal reaction. While oils repel water, they are lipophilic with other natural oils and fatty substances, combining and blending well for topical application.

My favorite carrier oils include raw organic cold-pressed unrefined coconut oil (solid form), fractionated coconut oil (liquid form), jojoba, grapeseed, or sweet almond oil. Jojoba works the best for any application on your face, since it is the closest to your natural sebum. I use coconut oil and sweet almond oil more than any of the others owing to their light scent and additional benefits to the body. See more on carrier oils on [this page](#).

WHERE TO APPLY ESSENTIAL OILS

The recipes this book provides recommend application locations and directions on how to apply. Though these are suggested locations that you should try first, you should also trust your gut and experiment to find the place or places that work best for you. Knowing your body is key to making essential oils work for you. In general, however, I always tell my patients the following:

Where Needed. The general rule for essential oils is to apply them directly or close to where the oil is needed. For example, if you are dealing with tension in your back, you could massage diluted Peppermint oil directly to the sore spot. However, if you are looking to alleviate a tension headache behind your eyes, you would never apply the oils directly to your eyes. Instead, opt for locations close to the eyes, such as on your forehead or your temples, since the oils will go where they are needed once absorbed.

Pulse Points. Behind the ears, on the neck, temples, wrists, ankles, and over your heart—these are all known as pulse points, or places where you can feel your heartbeat the strongest. They allow the essential oils to be quickly absorbed into the bloodstream, but are also ideal locations for aromatherapeutic benefits. You don't have to apply essential oils to all of them at the same time, though some women find that this works the best for them. Experiment with oils individually and in combinations to see what garners maximum results. For me, a magic spot is right behind my ears—I get the benefit of aromatherapy all day long while my body

reaps the benefits. Other friends swear by the ankle application, especially for oils used to promote a restful night's sleep. Be sure to keep track of your applications so you can find the best solutions for your individual needs.

FEW Spots. FEW spots enable quick absorption through the largest pores on the body—feet, ears, and wrists. Known in Eastern medicine as the pipeline to the body, the soles of the feet have been used for centuries with reflexology to directly affect certain areas of the body. A reflexology chart will show you the corresponding areas of the body, and you can gently massage the oils where indicated for maximum benefit.

APPLICATION TECHNIQUES

Layering. Applying one oil at a time directly on top of another in a specific order is known as “layering.” Apply one oil first, rub it in, wait a few seconds, and then apply the next. Repeat this process until all oils have been applied.

I don't necessarily recommend trying this without recommendation and guidance, but using several oils for the same issue can be extremely beneficial when layered. A trick for layering is to use what is called a “driver” oil last, such as Peppermint, since it will help the absorption of other oils.

Massage. Everyone can use a relaxing massage to de-stress or release tension, especially women after a long day. It is also a great way to boost the libido, as the sense of touch releases the feel-good hormone oxytocin. For therapeutic massage, I recommend using a 25 percent dilution, or one drop of oil for every three drops of carrier oil, or 25 drops in a teaspoon of carrier oil. Unless you are a certified massage therapist, I recommend starting with slow, gentle strokes and light pressure when using essential oils.

Compresses. Compresses allow the repulsion of oil and water to work to your benefit. After applying essential oils topically, add a wet, warm washcloth on top, allowing the water to push the oils in deeper. This will enhance the aromatherapeutic benefit of the oils. Cool-water compresses can help soothe away hot flashes, or ease the discomfort of muscle aches, swelling, sprains, or bruising.

Tee Shirt Tent. For aromatherapeutic benefit coupled with deep breathing,

I recommend the “tee shirt tent.” Place the essential oils down your décolletage, tuck your nose under your tee shirt, and practice your deep-breathing techniques. I recommend a few deep breaths in the tent, and then a few outside the tent, alternating until you feel relief. The oils will affect your bodily systems through direct absorption while allowing you to breathe in their benefits.

Baths. Bring on the nighttime self-care recipe and the soothing Epsom salt bath. Add ¼ cup of Epsom salts to warm bathwater first, swirling to dissolve, and then add three to six drops of essential oils. Without the salts, the essential oils will simply float on the surface of your bath. (And it doesn’t hurt that Epsom salts are made from magnesium, which helps you go to sleep.) Do not soak for more than twenty minutes before rinsing off. Always hydrate well before and especially after your bath.

Internal Uses of Essential Oils

There is an ongoing debate in the aromatherapy community about ingesting essential oils, and I would only ever consider ingestion of pure high-quality therapeutic essential oils recommended for internal usage. Some oils are far more potent than others, and this is a decision you should make only after consulting a trusted health-care provider experienced in their use. Not all oils are recommended for internal consumption as a supplement, so do your homework. You will see that I do give guidelines for specific internal uses for oils throughout Part II, but those refer only to high-quality oils.

Personally, I love to add a drop of essential oils to my water infusions or green smoothies for enhanced flavor, but also because they support my immune system and hormonal balance. I often use herbal oils in my cooking as well, after checking that they are food-grade essential oils stamped with GRAS to ensure their certification.

It is not recommended to take essential oils internally when pregnant or breastfeeding unless you have been given the go-ahead by an aromatherapy expert or health-care practitioner.

Basic Essential Oil Supplies

Basic terminology in the essential-oil world can be confusing if you don't know the lingo. There are also certain supplies you will want to have on hand before beginning your journey. Following is a list of my must-have supplies, especially for the recipes in this book. The Resources (see [this page](#)) will provide you with a link to my Getting Started with Essential Oils Checklist.

Carrier Oils

A carrier oil is an indispensable part of your essential-oil arsenal. It can be any kind of neutral vegetable, nut, or seed oil that blends well with essential oils to dilute them. Look for cold-pressed or expeller-pressed oils instead of solvent-extracted brands so you can avoid any added chemicals during the refining process. These are my favorite choices.

- **Organic Cold-Pressed Unrefined Coconut Oil.** At room temperature, coconut oil will be opaque white and semi-solid (like vegetable shortening), but becomes a clear liquid when slightly warmed. Unrefined oil retains the beachy smell that many of us love, but keep in mind that this scent will combine with whatever essential oil you use it with.
- **Organic Cold-Pressed Refined Coconut Oil.** The unscented version of the coconut oil described above. It works best to not compromise the aroma of the oils.
- **Fractionated Coconut Oil (FCO).** Always liquid at room temperature, FCO is my oil of choice for basic dilution and making rollerball bottles. I buy mine in a pump bottle for easy filling.
- **Jobba Oil.** As it is closest to the natural sebum of our skin, I prefer jojoba oil when I'm making products that are applied to the face. Naturally greaseless and easily absorbable, jojoba oil has a long shelf life and is easily adaptable to a variety of skin-care products.

- **Sweet Almond Oil.** Another favorite for rollerball recipes, sweet almond oil is rich in vitamins B and E, but has a shorter shelf life than others. It should be avoided if you have any allergies to tree nuts.
- **Grapeseed Oil.** Slightly greenish, nutty-scented, and very light, grapeseed oil works well for massage oil blends.

Containers

While your essential oils should come in a tightly capped dark glass bottle fitted with an orifice reducer to control the flow of the oil and ensure it only comes out in drops, you might want a different-size container for your blends. These should also be dark glass with either an orifice reducer or a dropper top for ease of use.

Drams

Drams are tiny bottles used for sample sizes or on-the-go oils, and are usually 1-and 2-mL sizes. Most come with their own tiny orifice reducers that allow for smaller-sized drops. The reducers are easy to pop in but difficult to remove, so most people forgo refilling drams and just fill a new one. Some pipettes fit into the small holes for easy refilling. I tote around a collection of drams in my essential-oil keychain for all my on-the-go needs and especially when I'm traveling.

Dropper Tops

Dropper tops can easily replace the orifice reducer and cap on your essential-oil bottles and provide an easy way to measure out recipes. Be sure that you purchase dropper tops with glass tubes in the size meant to fit your size of bottles. Only one dropper top should be used per bottle, and you shouldn't switch them from one bottle to another. This is a personal preference, but I definitely think they come in handy for mixing rollerballs or filling drams.

Personal Inhalers

These little devices are small torpedo-shaped plastic containers meant to fit in the nostril. They diffuse your own personal blend of oils for easy inhalation. To use, simply uncap the lid, hold the tip up to a nostril, pinch the opposite one closed, and inhale. They are a discreet way to enhance your deep inhalation techniques.

To Make Your Own Personal Inhaler

- Personal inhaler
- Cotton wicks
- Glass dish or bowl
- Tweezers
- Essential oils of choice

Remove the cotton wick from the plug of the inhaler and lay it on a glass plate with a rim or in a bowl. Choose an essential oil or blend and have the bottles ready to go. The overall number of drops should be about 15, and simply add them directly on the wick. Tweezers can be used to move the wick around so that all essential oils are absorbed. Using your tweezers, pick up the wick and replace it into the plug and screw the cap back into the inhaler tube. Replace the cap tightly and you're ready to go.

Pipettes

Disposable plastic bulbs used for quick distribution of essential oils into other containers are known as pipettes. They are great if you don't want to spring for the more expensive dropper tops, as they are inexpensive. Be sure to use one pipette for each oil and do not mix them.

Rollerball Bottles

Usually found in 5 or 10 mL versions, rollerball bottles are glass cylinders fitted

with a small plastic cap with a ball in it. These are my favorite containers to take my blends with me for easy application.

To apply the oils, you tip the bottle to moisten the ball, and then roll it directly on your skin. Many rollerball bottles are clear glass because they aren't expected to be stored for long, though dark glass versions are also an option. Keep an eye out for the oil in the bottle to become cloudy, however, which happens from frequent use due to dead skin cells that have rolled back into the bottle. When this happens, it's time to replace the oil.

To Make Your Own Rollerball Bottles

- Rollerball bottle
- Essential oils of choice
- Carrier oil of choice

Unscrew the cap and remove the rollerball top by popping it off with your thumb and forefinger. Set the glass bottle on a level surface and carefully fill with your rollerball blend recipe. Top off the rollerball with a carrier oil. When finished, replace the rollerball top by gently pushing it back into the glass bottle and tightly screwing the cap back on. Shake to combine the oils and apply.

Essential Oil Safety Tips

Honesty with Your Health-Care Provider

Honesty and openness with your trusted integrative health-care provider is the best policy. Since your provider will have your medical history, he or she may be able to properly advise you on using essential oils, especially if you have preexisting conditions or are already taking prescription medications. That said, many mainstream health-care professionals are not knowledgeable about essential oils and may discourage their use. A licensed naturopath, acupuncturist, herbalist, or aromatherapist will be able to give you expert advice.

Dilution

Dilution with a carrier oil not only increases the area of direct application but also helps to protect your skin from potential sensitivity. For adults, high-quality essential oils should always be diluted at least 25 percent, or 25 drops in a teaspoon of carrier oil. Some of the more skin-sensitive oils or phototoxic oils should be even further diluted (see [this page](#) and [this page](#) for details).

Oil Repels Water

The elementary school lesson that oil and water don't mix applies here as well. They naturally repel one another, which becomes an issue when you try to wash off an essential oil—it will only drive the oil deeper, intensifying your problem. Instead, you should always dilute with a carrier oil to prevent further irritation or cross contamination. Continue to dilute with a carrier oil every fifteen minutes until the irritation ceases.

These properties come in handy, however, when you want deeper penetration of an oil. Then you can opt for a wet compress as described on [this page](#).

Patch-Testing

With any new essential oil, it is best to test for potential irritations first before using it as planned in a recipe. Add one drop to one teaspoon of a carrier oil and rub onto the bottom of your feet. Wait twenty-four hours to see if there is any reaction, and, if not, then move on to another area and test again. Remember, if you *do* have a reaction, always dilute it with a carrier oil rather than try to wash it off.

Phototoxicity/Photosensitivity

Phototoxic oils are those whose primary constituents react with the sun by causing hyperpigmentation, blisters, or burns that can potentially scar your body. An

example of phototoxicity is using lemon juice to lighten your hair in the summertime as an all-natural alternative to expensive and toxic chemicals, but this same technique can be detrimental to the skin. I recommend not using these particular oils on any exposed skin or when you will be in direct exposure to sunlight or UV rays, especially in the summer or in hot climates. Citrus oils are notoriously phototoxic, so use care when exposing your skin to the application sites for at least 12 to 72 hours post-application. Be extra careful when using some of the most phototoxic: Bergamot (the worst offender), Lemon, Lime, Grapefruit, Wild Orange, or any cold-pressed citrus oil. Follow the guidelines in this book when using these oils individually or with blends, but generally use at least 1:4 dilution ratio, or 25 percent dilution, when applying topically.

Potentially Phototoxic Essential Oils

Angelica

Anise

Bergamot

Bitter Orange

Celery / Celery Leaf / Seed

Coriander

Cumin

Dill

Fig Leaf Absolute

Ginger

Grapefruit

Lemon

Lemon verbena

Lime

Mandarin Orange

Orange

--

Lagetes

Tangerine

Wild Orange

Yuzu

Reactions

If you do have a reaction or a sensitivity to a particular essential oil, it is almost always because the oil has not been diluted enough. Sometimes there is an initial reaction only because the essential oil was too strong, so a higher level of dilution will still allow you to use it. For a reaction to occur, however, a plant protein must be present in the oil, though most proteins are removed during the distillation process.

If you know that you are allergic to a certain plant, flower, or spice, be extremely cautious when working with its essential oil, as you may have a reaction to its scent even if you don't touch the oil.

If there is any reaction, remember to *not* wash it off with water; dilute the area with more carrier oil over the next few hours until any irritation is gone. Always contact your health-care provider if you have any questions.

Skin-Sensitive Oils

Certain essential oils are skin-sensitive for everyone, even those without any allergies, and will *always* need to be diluted. They fall into two categories: hot or cool. Hot oils create a warming sensation that can easily cross into burning if they aren't diluted properly. Cooling oils create a cold, tingling sensation that can be very soothing, but can also become very uncomfortable to the skin.

Never apply hot or cool essential oils neat. Always follow the guidelines for dilution listed with each oil, and be careful not to cross-contaminate from one body part to another when using them. For example, don't touch any mucous membranes after applying these oils, especially your eyes or the inside of your

mouth or nose.

As a general rule, I recommend at least a 10 percent dilution for each of the following oils, which means drops in a teaspoon of carrier oil.

Hot Oils

Cassia

Cinnamon

Cinnamon Bark

Clove

Hyssop

Oregano

Cool Oils

Camphor

Eucalyptus

Lemongrass

Ocotea

Peppermint

Spearmint

Thyme

Wintergreen

CHAPTER 3

The Top 15 Essential Oils for Hormones and the Value of Daily Usage

Essential oils can easily become a seamless part of your everyday routine once you give them a chance to work for you. Being consistent and persistent with daily usage is the key to rebalancing your body and creating the results that you desire.

Just be aware that the oils do not work the same way for each person, so trying different application methods and locations, the times of day you use them, and different combinations will serve you best in discovering your individual preferences.

Essential oils truly are gifts from nature for us to utilize to our benefit. Use these tips to make your essential oil journey an even more beneficial one: The Top 15 Essential Oils for Hormone Balance For specific hormone benefits and other uses, see each chapter in Part II. Safety precautions are listed where applicable.

1. BASIL (*Ocimum basilicum*) Primary Chemical Constituents: Linalool

Properties: Calming/Soothing

Safety Precautions

- Avoid if you are epileptic, pregnant, or breastfeeding.
- May affect blood clotting, so avoid if being treated for this disorder

2. BERGAMOT (*Citrus bergamia*) Primary Chemical Constituents: Limonene, linalyl acetate Properties: Uplifting/Energizing Safety Precautions

Safety Precautions

- Extremely phototoxic—Avoid sunlight or UV rays for at least 72 hours after topical application.
- Avoid using if taking medication that increases sensitivity to sunlight.
- May lower blood sugar levels, so use caution if diabetic

3. CEDARWOOD (*Juniperus virginiana*) Primary Chemical Constituents: α -cedrene, cedrol, thujopsene Properties: Grounding/Balancing

Safety Precautions

- Avoid using during pregnancy.

4. CLARY SAGE (*Salvia sclarea*) Primary Chemical Constituents: Linalyl acetate, linalool Properties: Calming/Soothing

Safety Precautions

- Causes uterine contractions; avoid during pregnancy, but safe to use while in labor

5. GERANIUM (*Pelargonium graveolens*) Primary Chemical Constituents: Citronellol, citronellyl formate, geraniol Properties: Calming/Soothing

6. JASMINE ABSOLUTE (*Jasminum grandiflorum*) Primary Chemical Constituents: Benzyl acetate, benzyl benzoate Properties: Calming/Soothing

Safety Precautions

- May cause mild allergic reactions owing to the benzyl acetate content

7. LAVENDER (*Lavandula angustifolia*) Primary Chemical Constituents: Linalool, linalyl acetate Properties: Calming/Soothing

8. LEMON (*Citrus limon*) Primary Chemical Constituents: Limonene, β -Pinene, γ -terpinene Properties: Uplifting/Energizing

Safety Precautions

- Phototoxic—dilute before topical application and avoid sunlight or UV rays for up to 12 hours after applying.

9. NEROLI (*Citrus x aurantium*) Primary Chemical Constituents: Linalool, linalyl acetate, nerolidol Properties: Calming/Soothing

Safety Precautions

- Avoid if you are taking a MAOI medication for depression or another issue.

10. PEPPERMINT (*Mentha piperita*) Primary Chemical Constituents: Menthol, menthone, 1,8-cineole Properties: Uplifting/Energizing

Safety Precautions

- Use caution if being treated for high blood pressure.
- Use caution if taking another medication for digestive health.
- Do not use within a 3-hour period of taking an iron supplement.
- Use caution if pregnant or breastfeeding, as it may reduce milk supply.
- Avoid using around children under 6 years of age due to high menthol content, which can slow breathing.

11. ROMAN CHAMOMILE (*Anthemis nobilis*) Primary Chemical Constituents: 4-methylamyl angelate, isobutyl angelate, isoamyl tiglate Properties: Calming/Soothing

Safety Precautions

- Avoid using if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

12. ROSEMARY (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) Primary Chemical Constituents: 1,8-Cineole, α -Pinene, camphor Properties: Renewing and Grounding/Balancing

Safety Precautions

- Avoid while pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Use caution if being treated for epilepsy, high blood pressure, or a bleeding disorder.

13. SANDALWOOD (HAWAIIAN) (*Santalum paniculatum*) **Primary Chemical Constituents: α -santalol, β -santalol, lanceol**
Properties: Grounding/Balancing

14. THYME (*Thymus vulgaris*) **Primary Chemical Constituents: Thymol, para-cymene, γ -terpinene**
Properties: Grounding/Balancing

Safety Precautions

- Dilute with a carrier oil owing to high thymol content prior to topical application.
- Avoid using if you have or are being treated for a blood-clotting disorder, as it may increase the risk of bleeding.

15. YLANG YLANG (*Cananga odorata*) **Primary Chemical Constituents: Germacrene, caryophyllene**
Properties: Calming/Soothing

The Top Five Must-Have Hormone Support Essential Oils for Women of Childbearing Age

Clary Sage
Lavender
Thyme
Ylang Ylang

What's in My Essential-Oil Kit I never forget my essential-oil cases whenever I go out—they're basically an extension of who I am! Essential-oil cases are not only adorable but also practical; they're basically makeup bags with elasticized holders inside to keep

the oils in place. (For where to get your own, see [this page](#).) I use these oils all day long. They all smell wonderful and they're not just refreshing and delightful, but also targeted to all my needs. I'll always have different blends to ease tension, boost energy, manage cravings, and relax sore muscles. My Top Five single oils are always Wild Orange, Peppermint, Lavender, Clary Sage, and Neroli.

One of my favorite essential-oil blends is the Get It Done Rollerball Blend ([this page](#)). It's a fantastic blend of Peppermint, Rosemary, Wild Orange, Basil, and Frankincense, the last probably one of the most powerful oils out there. Peppermint not only literally opens up the respiratory system but also increases energy and focus. It's like energy in a bottle and really gets me motivated. It's one of my secret weapons when I'm having one of those days, and even a go-go-go-getter like me can be dragging or procrastinating. One whiff and I'm right back on track.

The Top 5 Must-Have Hormone Support Essential Oils for Perimenopausal/Menopausal Women Clary Sage

Geranium
Lavender
Peppermint
Rosemary

CHAPTER 4

The Importance of Creating Your Own Essential-Oil Rituals

In our modern world, we women frequently feel pressured to carry the weight of the world on our shoulders and strive to be all-things to everyone in that world. Love, compassion, understanding—these are the qualities expected of us as we bend over backward to care for and support our families, our friends, our co-workers, and just about everyone who crosses our path.

Except for one person—ourselves.

Whose permission are we waiting for to be compassionate to ourselves? It's time to shift our beliefs to include caring for ourselves along with everyone else.

Spending time focusing on yourself each day may seem like a selfish pursuit, but I can assure you it is precisely the opposite. We can't help others find success if we aren't in top condition ourselves. And when we constantly put others' needs above our own, when we cannot find it in ourselves to say no, when we tell ourselves we can be fueled by stress, we neglect to nurture our own needs.

We are the ones who suffer the consequences.

Health issues, hormonal imbalance, mood swings, sleep issues, unhealthy weight gain, and many more symptoms crop up, one by one. But we even tend to ignore *those* symptoms in favor of pushing forward and maintaining our outward appearance of being in complete control.

Don't let yourself get to that breaking point. Don't let your foundations crumble until you become unrecognizable even to yourself.

You matter. Your life matters. Your emotional health matters. Your hormonal balance matters. Your *everything* matters.

You deserve to treat yourself with the same love and compassion that you dole

out to the world. Self-care rituals with essential oils enable you to find yourself amid the chaos of everyday life, and truly love yourself in the skin you're in. Rebalancing, refocusing, and reflecting each day will help you to stay in tune with your body, mind, and soul.

What Are Self-Care Rituals?

Every aspect of life is punctuated by ritual, from the way you get out of bed to the way you do the dishes, from seasonal events to holiday traditions, from the method you use to eat your food to the way you navigate the grocery store. Whether you realize it or not, your daily routine is full of ritualistic behavior unique to you.

The rituals featured in this book are all about creating a routine that will boost and balance your body and mind to bring balance and joy to your life. Each of us will have to determine the rituals that work best for us, and none of us will go about them quite the same way. The support of essential oils is the one consistent factor. All the chapters in Part II contain self-care rituals that you can immediately use to boost your energy and enhance your world.

You Deserve It!

The reason behind the rituals is simple: *You deserve them.*

The feeling that we are not deserving of self-care, of the best of what life has to offer, is a major issue that plagues us as women in our society now. I know exactly what they're saying, because I didn't grow up with my own worth being affirmed to me. I adapted to this lapse of support by throwing myself headfirst into life, thinking that if I wasn't doing the work—*more* work, in fact, than anyone had the right to ask of me—then I was a failure.

I didn't just wake up one day and not be able to lift my head up off the pillow—it took *years* to get to that point, along with lots of signs and symptoms I ignored.

But the essential-oil component is what truly turned my world around.

Once I discovered the power of essential oils, I realized that they didn't have to be used only in times of great need. Over a decade ago, I created several rituals, easy to implement every day, that now serve as a foundational part of my life. I encourage you to examine these rituals closely and work to incorporate them into your life, too. I don't want to fall back into the danger zone of my old bad habits, and my rituals keep me proactively in charge. Though I had to start purposefully incorporating them into my daily routine, they are now deeply ingrained habits.

The Love & Joy List

One of the things I ask women to do all the time is to create a twenty-item Love & Joy List on a piece of lined paper. Each item you add to that list is something that brings you love and joy. The paper is divided into two groups; on the left side, you write down ten things that cost money, and on the right, ten things that are free. For example, my list would include flowers, essential oils, and massages on the left, and quality time with my hubby, reading a good novel, walking on the beach, and hiking on the right.

Some women find this activity a little uncomfortable at first because they've never been asked what they love or what brings them joy. When they finally finish their lists, their faces beam; they realize they can still find love and joy in their lives. It's a great double-dose of self care and acknowledgment of self-worth.

Identifying your twenty items and writing them down reinforces the notion of *your* doing things for *you*. Then, you can take a good, hard look at the list and figure out how to create self-care rituals unique to your needs and desires to ensure that love and joy become a daily part of your life. I encourage you to create your own list and use it to tweak the rituals in this book to be perfect for you!

Before You Start Your Rituals

Start Slow. Jumping right in by trying to incorporate every ritual that you love will only create more stress than the calm and self-love you are seeking. Baby

steps will prevent you from slipping into ritual overwhelm.

Choose One Ritual. Start with the one ritual that appeals to you the most. Many women gravitate toward an evening ritual, as this enables them to unwind at the end of the day and de-stress from life's chaotic pace. Work that ritual into your day, and when you can't imagine *not* doing it, move on to the next one.

Prep in Advance. Be sure to have your essential oils, recipes, and directions at hand so you don't become overwhelmed by the routine. Get everything that you need ready to go and then let yourself fall into the ritual. Eventually, it will become second-nature to you, but give yourself an advantage by having your materials ready so you don't have to break the routine to get up and find something.

Essential Oils to Go. Always have your essential oils with you. When I'm at work, my little stash is near me on my desk, always within reach. I have an essential-oils keychain in my purse for on-the-go needs, and you know my rollerball clutch travels with me in my purse. Find a way to take your oils with you so that rituals can be adaptable when you need them the most.

Joy! Whatever you choose as your personal rituals, they should all leave you resonating with joy. This should not be a stressful or uncomfortable experience for you. If you don't find joy in it, then don't do it.

A Glimpse into My World—My Daily Rituals

Because I want you to feel supported and know that you are not alone, I want to share the rituals that work best for me. Remember that the suggestions I give as self-care rituals are just that—it's up to you to work your own positivity into them to make them your own. Creating your own routine should bring you the joy, love, and peace that mine bring me!

The Morning Ritual: Starting Your Day Right and Scheduling Your Wellness

One of my favorite quotes is from Louise Hay: “How you start your day is how you live your day. How you live your day is how you live your life.”

Starting your morning with positive self-care rituals can powerfully influence your entire day. You will establish and gain clarity and purpose, and set your intentions and tone so that you accomplish your goals. Morning rituals can be anything you desire—just be sure that you take some quality time for yourself and don’t allow the ritual to be interspersed between your other tasks, such as getting the kids ready for school. You are giving yourself the time to center yourself and focus on *you*, which will make everyone’s morning go more smoothly.

Women who struggle with their intentions often tell me that they *can’t* do this or that, but usually these are red flags signaling that they are avoiding something, or associated with fear. Self-care rituals may help you to discover your inner demons and learn to love yourself for who you truly are. Use your morning ritual to help you to prioritize your intentions for the day and support those beliefs with essential oils to help you take on the tasks ahead.

These are the self-care rituals I use to start my day each morning. They only take me twenty to thirty minutes and are absolutely worth it.

Shower Ritual: I include my Invigorating Morning Bliss Shower Spray ([this page](#)) to get myself in the game for the rest of the day.

Essential Oil Ritual: Diffusing Peppermint and Wild Orange in the morning is my go-to for an instant energy boost while I prep my green smoothie. Depending on my mood, I might grab my Superwoman Rollerball Blend ([this page](#)) and apply it to my wrists and other pulse points to hone my femininity and prepare for my upcoming tasks.

Playlist Ritual: Though music plays a huge role in my everyday life, I always put on one of my playlists as soon as I’m out of the shower and getting ready. I love soul music, especially Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, and Earth Wind and Fire, and hearing any of their songs always puts me in a really great place.

Journal Ritual: My all-time-favorite journal is called *Speed Dial the Universe*, a fantastic tool laid out with different sections. All I have to do is fill in the blanks. Writing everything down helps me to set my intentions for the day, and it’s

probably one of the most game-changing things that I do for myself. Because I'm driven by what I'm writing, I find these moments help me find extreme clarity in tough situations or just approaching my tasks. It gives me a path to follow, because I can always go back to any given day in my journal to discover where I was and what I was thinking. My journal allows me to focus on what I'm doing for *me*. Believe it or not, I've been faithfully writing in my journals for ten years, and it's my must-do.

To-Do Sanity List Ritual: I love lists! They really help me give structure to and sort out my tasks for the day, and it is deeply satisfying to cross each item off the list once I get it done. When I know I have a lot to do, I write down my big-action to-do's early in the morning in my journal. Once I write them down, they're inked in my memory and become must-do's for the day. For reinforcement, I use my Get It Done Rollerball Blend ([this page](#))—the oils that I know will fire me up.

Schedule Your Success Ritual: I make purposeful time in my day by scheduling time for myself. This helps me include the rituals, meals, and so on. I schedule everything! I know lots of women like me who admit, if it's not on the calendar, it won't get done or is forgotten.

Inspiration Ritual: One of my favorite rituals is inhaling Frankincense essential oil for inspiration, focus, and concentration, then spending a few minutes writing in my gratitude journal.

Strengthening Daytime Rituals for Sustained Energy

Although your daytime rituals can be as varied as your schedule, there are some that I do no matter what time of day it is or where I am.

Breathe-on-the-Hour Ritual: So simple, yet so effective, especially at keeping those cortisol levels on an even keel and de-stressing your life. Set your cellphone's alarm to ring every hour of the day. When the phone sounds, take a minute or two to inhale whatever essential oil you need, practicing deep-breathing techniques, and using that moment to pause.

Nature Nurtures Ritual: Being out in nature truly brings me joy, and I

can't imagine my life without those long walks and hikes. Not only is walking an ideal way for you to get your body moving but also breathing in the fresh air and being outside can bring a new sense of joy to your day.

The Evening Ritual to End Your Day Right

Your evening ritual is just as important as your morning ritual. I hope you will do this one, as it is one of the most empowering rituals you can add to your life.

Mirror Ritual: Look in the mirror and say some of your positive affirmations. You know you are a strong, capable, and sexy woman. Tell yourself this until you believe it. *Champion your successes* by affirming your accomplishments or whatever means the most in your world. *Acknowledge your strengths*; I often say, "I'm an incredible healer. I serve thousands of people with grace and energy. I forgive myself. I'm an amazing wife." (I have to say that a lot!) *Show Yourself Some Love*. Finish your mirror ritual by saying "I love you!" I often forget that one because I'm so hard on myself (I'm sure you know the feeling!). It might feel silly at first, but supporting yourself with an "I Love You" really does boost your sense of self-worth. Trust me—this is going to make you feel amazing! It's the perfect way to end your day on a high note.

Incorporating the power of essential oils was game-changing for my rituals. Their immediate effect afforded me long-lasting resolution of many issues I had been facing. From something as simple as energizing my mind in the morning to the more complicated nuances of hormonal balance, essential oils have been the bridge that kept me from toppling headfirst into the gap. You'll see that transforming your life with these rituals will give you not only power but also balance and comfort—they're an entirely new way to super-charge and enhance your day.

PART II

Using Essential Oils to Address Your Hormonal Symptoms

CHAPTER 9

Female Hormones: Fertility, Perimenopause, and Menopause

During their fertile years, women are celebrated for their ability to conceive and bear children, while infertility and loss are taboo or misunderstood topics. But they are not celebrated for their menstrual cycles—which are often the butt of jokes instead. Our society often forgets to honor women for the amazing creatures they are and the miracles their bodies can create.

In our Western culture, most of us are “taught” by the media to dread the onset of perimenopause, expecting to be burdened with hot flashes, irritability, mood swings, anxiety, depression, weight gain, insomnia, and more. Interestingly enough, other cultures in the world don’t even have a word to describe menopause. They simply see it as a natural part of a woman’s life transition, rather than a life-diminishing experience dominated by physical and mental symptoms. Actually, the symptoms that have become so negatively associated with menopause in our culture also don’t exist in other places in the world. So I propose that we shift our perspective and celebrate this transitional time in our lives—a period from childbearing years to wisdom-bearing years. We should admire our elders for their life experiences and learn from their struggles and successes. Getting to a place where this can happen is one of my hopes for our future as a society.

Changing your lifestyle to incorporate healthier habits of nutrition, exercise, stress management, and self-care rituals will serve to reset your body and mind and give you vivacity that you never knew was possible. Essential oils are key to this transformation. Proof of this came from a friend who had extremely bad PMS symptoms every month. I gently suggested that essential oils might help, but she

just rolled her eyes. Finally, a month later, she called me in desperation and I whipped up the Monthly Massage Rollerball Blend ([this page](#)) for her.

Soon, the phone rang, and she jumped right in with, “I really owe you an apology! I don’t know what you put in that roller bottle, but it was like magic. I’m kicking myself for being so stubborn! I know that you said so, but why didn’t you *tell me* that these oils worked so fast, and would make me feel so much better?”

I share stories like this because I know how difficult it can be to try something new, not knowing how it’s going to work. Sometimes it can take years before we find the solution to a problem that truly transforms our health and well-being. This was also the case for my mom, one of my first success stories. She was already using essential oils, but not specifically for hormone support. Her hormone levels had been imbalanced all her adult life, but when she hit perimenopause, she was not only physically miserable but also her sugar cravings became completely unmanageable. Every time I’d go over to her house, I’d find new hiding places where she’d stashed her favorite chocolate candy!

Her gynecologist prescribed bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT), which didn’t relieve her symptoms; she found herself feeling sadder and more tired throughout the day. Although I know that BHRT can work for some women, it was not the answer for my mother. She weaned herself off BHRT in favor of a lifestyle adjustment, and I put her on the 14-Day Rescue Plan, reworked her idea of exercise, ensured that her self-care rituals would calm her stress levels and support a restful night’s sleep, and incorporated daily essential-oil support. In the course of only three months she lost thirty-five pounds, her hot flashes diminished and then vanished, the depression significantly improved, and her energy bounced back. Even more exciting for her, she was sleeping all the way through the night, a feat she hadn’t accomplished in years. Her transformation was unique to her individual situation, just as yours will be.

The Why Behind Female Hormones

As discussed in Chapter 1, there are three stages for all women, each defined by a

certain level of female hormones. During a woman's fertile years, from puberty until, usually, her late thirties or early forties, estrogen and progesterone are responsible for monthly menstruation or pregnancy. During perimenopause, which often takes a decade or more, female hormone levels begin a gradual decline. Estrogen levels fluctuate as the ovaries slack off production, and the menstrual cycle becomes erratic. Menopause arrives when a woman's period has completely ceased for a year.

The Most Common Symptoms of Perimenopause Brain fog

Breast tenderness
Chest pain/palpitations
Fatigue/lethargy
Hair thinning, loss, and dryness
Headaches/migraines
Hot flashes/night sweats
Libido (reduced)
Osteopenia (low bone density)
PMS/irregular periods/heavy flow/cramps
Skin issues: loss of elasticity, pigmentation, acne, dryness
Sleeplessness/other sleep problems
Urinary incontinence
Vaginal dryness/thinning (painful sex)
Weight gain, belly fat

Your Hormones for Reproduction

Debilitating PMS symptoms should not be a part of any woman's normal cycle. Instead, they're a sign that your reproductive hormones are out of balance. In addition, as estrogen levels naturally drop during perimenopause, the symptoms of perimenopause can eventually become crippling. Even though ovarian production

perimenopause can eventually become clipping. Even though ovarian production of hormones slowly ceases, the adrenal glands continue to produce them, so any imbalance or stressor that affects the adrenals can throw hormones out of whack.

Estrogen

Produced primarily in the ovaries, “estrogen” is a general term used to describe any of the compounds producing estrus, such as estrone, estradiol, and estriol. They rule our reproductive systems by regulating menstrual cycles during our fertile years as well as directly affecting our growth and development.

Progesterone

Produced in the ovaries during menstruation, the placenta during pregnancy, and the adrenal glands, progesterone’s role is to prepare the uterus for a viable pregnancy. If implantation doesn’t occur during any given month, progesterone levels drop, causing a monthly period. If it does, the egg implants into the thickened lining of the uterus and progesterone production continues until the placenta takes over at around twelve weeks.

Testosterone

Not present only in a male’s body, testosterone is also produced in the ovaries and adrenals of women in order to influence bone strength, muscle mass, and support a healthy libido.

Cortisol

As detailed in Chapter 5 and in nearly every other chapter, stress continues to be the biggest offender and catalyst for hormonal imbalance. Unfortunately, chronic stress directly influences the reproductive hormones. Symptoms begin to crop up:

inner-tube weight gain, decreased muscle mass, binge-eating and cravings for sugar and unhealthy comfort food, irregular menstrual periods in fertile years, PMS, exhaustion, brain fog—basically everything that feeds into the stereotype of the “hysterical” woman on her monthly period.

Estrogen Dominance (Dysestrogenism)

The condition in which the body has too much estrogen and not enough progesterone to balance it out, estrogen dominance in my practice seems to be a full-blown epidemic. Many symptoms are attributed to it, but they’re often the same ones that occur with other so-called women’s issues such as PMS, perimenopause, and depression or anxiety disorders. Estrogen dominance can cause decreased libido, fatigue, bloating, and weight gain; prolonged high levels can cause more serious concerns such as fibroids in the breasts, ovarian cysts, endometriosis, infertility, and even some cancers, among others.

Cortisol can influence estrogen levels as well if too much of it leads to the shutdown of the reproductive system. Even more dangerous is when women are treated with HRT that contains both estrogen and progesterone, which has been shown to cause cortisol levels to rise at night. Add in xenoestrogens from toxins and the products we use, and we have more estrogen than the liver can properly metabolize. A low-fiber diet exacerbates this as your digestive system has trouble filtering out excess estrogen through regular bowel movements. Plus, if you’ve taken birth control pills, you may have created a dam full of synthetic estrogen just waiting to spill over, too.

In our modern environment, we all may be suffering from a bit of estrogen dominance. Other symptoms that we commonly attribute to normal living— allergies and asthma, sinus issues, headaches, arthritis, and even cancer development—might be attributed to it. The reality is that we need some major changes and overall awareness before we will see any real change in our health and wellness.

Understanding Birth Control and Hormone Replacement Therapy

In our fertile years, irregular periods or mood issues are often attributed to imbalanced hormones, and birth control pills full of synthetic hormones are prescribed. Many women then experience a regular period for the first time in their lives, and they think, “I’m cured! What a relief to have a regular period without intense bleeding or cramps! What a convenience to predict my cycle each month!” This is further from the truth. They don’t realize the harm these synthetic hormones can do to their reproductive system and body in the process. Birth control is a *contraceptive*, not a hormone solution.

Anything synthetic that we add to our bodies raises a huge red flag for me, and it does for most functional practitioners and those following functional medicine practices. But in the Western world, we seem to be fine with recommending more synthetic hormones and not getting to the root cause of the problem.

Even more controversial is the trend to request bio-identical hormones rather than their synthetic counterparts, assuming that “bio-identical” means “natural” when it does not. BHRT has not been properly researched, so women wishing to start HRT and BHRT should always discuss the benefits and risks of treatment with their functional practitioner, taking into account their age, medical history, risk factors, and personal preferences.

Emotional Triggers

Hormonal imbalances can most definitely cause emotional upset and mood swings, but those aren’t the emotional triggers I want to mention here. I’m more concerned with the damage that we do to ourselves when we pretend to be “normal” and power through our symptoms instead of dealing with root causes. We condition ourselves to think that what we are experiencing is normal for everyone, and we choose not to discuss our issues, even with our health-care

providers.

Only we know our own truths and our own emotional triggers. I recommend keeping a journal where you can log your emotional timeline throughout the month. Do this for three months so you can begin to see patterns based on events in your life and the time of the month when they occur. Correlating recurring symptoms with a specific time frame while noting if there were any emotional triggers can help you to discover where you need some extra support.

How to Support Female Hormones with Essential Oils No essential oil can stop the natural decline in hormonal levels that comes with age, as this is an unavoidable physiological process. As you know, essential oils are not hormones and cannot be used as hormones, but they can ease the way. Many symptoms during this transitional period can be alleviated with the potency and power of essential oils.

Most important, reducing chronic stress, revamping your diet and exercise routine, and ridding your environment of toxic chemicals and xenoestrogens will normalize your body as much as possible. This will help you to achieve this seemingly elusive hormonal balance, which actually looks more like an ebb and flow of fluctuating hormones that regulate themselves.

Preferred Essential Oils

CLARY SAGE (*Salvia sclarea*)

- Eases menstrual cramps and tension by relaxing smooth muscles
- Decreases the body's cortisol levels naturally
- Relaxes, soothes, and balances the mind and body

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops at night.
- Diffuse 2 drops with 2 drops Lavender.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into abdomen during your menstrual cycle.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and rub into your soles and pulse points.

LAVENDER (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

- Calms the mind and body to support a restful night's sleep
- Eases and calms feelings of anxiety, stress, and tension while rebalancing emotions
- Relieves discomfort associated with menstrual cycles

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Add 1–2 drops to pillows and bedclothes before bedtime.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into the temples and the back of the neck.
- Add 3–4 drops to ½ cup Epsom salts and dissolve into a warm bath.

YLANG YLANG (*Cananga odorata*)

- Calming and uplifting scent that can boost your mood and relieve tension
- Reduces blood pressure and provides a total-body relaxation
- Offers daily support for hormonal balance, including boosting libido

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and rub into wrists and the back of the

neck.

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into tense muscles.
- Add 3–4 drops to ½ cup Epsom salts and dissolve into a warm bath.

BERGAMOT (*Citrus bergamia*)

- Calms and soothes the mind and body while uplifting the mood during times of stress and tension
- Reduces heart rate and blood pressure to calm the body's stress responses
- Alleviates stress and anxiety to uplift your overall vitality and mood

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into abdomen during moments of stress or during your menstrual period.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and apply to your soles.

THYME (*Thymus vulgaris*)

- Reduces high stress levels to promote and support a healthy immune system
- Supports the body during the hormonal transition into perimenopause
- Provides powerful antioxidants to the body to support a healthy immune system

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into ankles and soles.

GERANIUM (*Pelargonium graveolens*)

- Supports emotional balance with its calming and grounding aroma
- Alleviates pent-up stress and soothes frazzled nerves
- Rejuvenates and revitalizes skin, complexion, and hair

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Inhale directly from the bottle.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into the body where needed.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and apply to skin post-shower.

Christine's Story Christine was fifty-one years old, a registered nurse, and an avid gardener on the weekends, who came to me with severe hot flashes, exhaustion in the morning due to lack of sleep, and stubborn weight that she couldn't seem to lose, no matter how much she dieted. She was also getting headaches several times a week.

Christine was experiencing low levels of estrogen due to menopausal changes. My recommendations were as follows:

- An essential oil spray of Peppermint, Clary Sage, and Lavender anytime she felt a hot flash coming on.
- Peppermint, Lavender, and Frankincense essential oils for head and neck tension.
- Lavender and Vetiver in a spray for sleep, and Clary Sage and Cedarwood to the bottom of her feet and in her diffuser before going to bed.
- To reduce cravings, increased hydration with water with Lemon essential oil in the afternoon.
- Supplements: multivitamin, 300 mg magnesium glycinate, 40 mg black cohosh, 1000 mg maca in green smoothies, and a phytoestrogen complex.
- The 14-Day Rescue Plan to help reset her blood sugar levels and boost her metabolism.

Within three weeks, Christine experienced significantly fewer hot flashes and she was sleeping a solid seven hours each night. She lost seven pounds on the eating plan and she no longer needed to rely on sugar to get through her twelve-hour nursing shifts.

After two months, Christine told me she'd had only three hot flashes and had lost seven more pounds. "I love that I am sleeping throughout the night and that I feel like I have more control over my metabolism and hormones," she said. "I can't believe how helpful essential oils were for my 4 p.m. cravings and for shutting off my brain."

Essential Oil Blends

Aromatic Diffuser Blends

Hormonal Support Diffuser Blend

- 2 drops Clary Sage essential oil
- 1 drop Geranium essential oil
- 1 drop Ylang Ylang essential oil

Emotional Unwind Diffuser Blend

- 2 drops Geranium essential oil
- 2 drops Lemongrass essential oil
- 2 drops Ylang Ylang essential oil

Uplift and Balance Diffuser Blend

- 2 drops Clary Sage essential oil
- 2 drops Grapefruit essential oil
- 4 drops Neroli essential oil

Aromatic Body Spray

Cool-It Body Spray

- 8 drops Clary Sage essential oil
- 6 drops Geranium essential oil
- 6 drops Peppermint essential oil
- ¼ cup witch hazel

In a 2-ounce glass spray bottle, add the essential oils and fill the rest of the way with witch hazel. Replace the spray top, shake to combine, and spritz onto neck, décolletage, and any area that heats up with hormonal stress.

Topical Rollerball Blends

Hormone Synergy Rollerball Blend

10 drops Clary Sage essential oil

7 drops Lavender essential oil

5 drops Geranium essential oil

4 drops Bergamot essential oil

4 drops Ylang Ylang essential oil

Carrier oil of choice

Add essential oils to a 10 mL glass rollerball bottle and fill the rest with the carrier oil.

Replace the rollerball top and cap, then shake gently to blend. To use, roll on abdomen over ovaries and on your pulse points (behind ears, on wrists and ankles, and over heart) two or three times per day.

Monthly Massage Rollerball Blend

10 drops Lavender essential oil

8 drops Clary Sage essential oil

4 drops Roman Chamomile essential oil

4 drops Ylang Ylang essential oil

Carrier oil of choice

Add the essential oils to a 10 mL glass rollerball bottle and fill the rest with the carrier oil.

Replace the rollerball top and cap, and then shake gently to blend. To use, roll over abdomen as needed.

Stress-Free Massage Rollerball Blend 10 drops Lavender essential oil

10 drops Clary Sage essential oil

5 drops Peppermint essential oil

Carrier oil of choice

Add the essential oils to a 10 mL glass rollerball bottle and fill the rest of the way with the carrier oil. Replace the rollerball top and cap, and shake gently to combine. To use, roll on your shoulders, temples, the back of your neck, and on your wrists and ankles and massage in slowly. Then cup your hands over your nose and breathe deeply.

Topical Bath Blends

Basic Bath Soak

8–10 drops essential oils of choice, or one of the blends below (suggested: Clary Sage, Frankincense, Lavender, Roman Chamomile, or Ylang Ylang) 1 cup sea salt
1 cup Epsom salts or magnesium flakes
½ cup high-quality baking soda

Add the essential oils to the dry ingredients and swirl into a warm bath to dissolve.

Relax and De-stress Bath Blend

3 drops Lavender essential oil
3 drops Cedarwood essential oil
2 drops Clary Sage essential oil

PMS Relief Bath Blend

2 drops Clary Sage essential oil
1 drop Roman Chamomile essential oil
1 drop Geranium essential oil
1 drop Lavender essential oil

*Supplements to Support Female Hormones
Supplementation can be particularly helpful in support of female hormone levels, especially if you*

are taking the right ones, so be sure to discuss them with your trusted health-care provider. While you may not need to take these supplements indefinitely, I recommend trying the ones you need for at least three months to see how your body improves, and then discuss continued usage with your health-care provider. For a complete list of hormone supplements and how to make over your hormone medicine cabinet, go to www.drmariza.com/supplements.

Ashwagandha + Rhodiola Rosea. The combination of these two herbs has been proven to help boost energy while strongly supporting adrenal function and combating fatigue. As adaptogenic herbs, they can help your body to fight stressors naturally while their rejuvenating properties can revitalize your body and mind. They have numerous other benefits to your overall wellness, including immune support, fat-burning power, and hormonal and overall balance.

B-Complex Vitamins (B₁, B₂, B₃, B₆, B₁₂). These are essential for all vital functions, for the health of our sexual organs, and as essential players in libido levels, especially postmenopausal. By supporting the adrenal production of sex hormones and keeping a healthy hormonal production, B-complex vitamins reduce symptoms associated with hormonal flux, including headaches, fatigue, PMS, and vaginal dryness.

Black Cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*). This is a member of the buttercup family used by Native Americans to aid in childbirth and support symptoms related to the female reproductive system. Research has shown it to influence the serotonin receptors, effectively alleviating hot flashes and balancing mood. Though

classified as a phytoestrogen, its estrogenic effects on the body are nil, making black cohosh one of the most popular supplements related to PMS and menopause owing to its safety and efficacy. It may also help to prevent a range of women's cancers. It has been used in Germany since the 1940s under the name Remifemin. Research now suggests that it is most effective when used only for a prescribed six-month time period rather than long term to avoid potential side effects.

Chasteberry (*Vitex agnus-castus*). This plant grows in the Mediterranean and has been used for centuries to promote fertility and libido by increasing progesterone levels. It is believed to affect the pituitary gland's release of luteinizing hormone (LH), lowers prolactin that affects menstrual cycles, and affects several different neurotransmitters. Although we don't know precisely *how* it works, we know that it *does* work and is prescribed in more nontraditional medical practice for fertility issues related to low progesterone; it's also widely used in Germany for PMS and menstrual issues. It works well with black cohosh in improving emotional issues and hot flashes for both perimenopausal and postmenopausal women.

Magnesium glycinate. A crucial component in our bodies, it's a building block for DNA and is essential for proper functioning of the nervous, muscular, reproductive, and cardiovascular systems. It also supports the HPA axis by maintaining healthy cortisol levels and protecting your body from toxins and free radicals. In turn, this helps to amp up your libido and promote fertility for a healthy reproductive system. Magnesium greatly helps to alleviate symptoms from reproductive imbalances, such as PMS. The recommended dosage is 310–400 mg.

DIM (Diindolemethane). This is a phytochemical found in cruciferous vegetables that has been proven to reduce risk for breast, cervical, and other cancers influenced by estrogen. By increasing production of healthy estrogen and decreasing the bad, it can also alleviate symptoms of PMS, perimenopause, and menopause. It supports a healthy metabolism and aids the body in using female hormones as well as supporting healthy adrenal function.

Hops (*Humulus lupulus L.*). The female flowers of the hops plant, used to make beer, are also beneficial for female hormones—but you need to take this in a capsule, not as the alcoholic beverage! Hops contain 8-prenylnaringenin, a super-potent phytoestrogen. I don't recommend hops for everyone, especially since

estrogen dominance is so common, but during perimenopause and menopause, when estrogen levels drop, it can be helpful when regulated by your health-care provider. It has been shown to reduce the vasomotor symptoms of menopause, such as hot flashes, insomnia, and fatigue. By simulating estrogen, hops help to stimulate progesterone production as well. It has also been shown to assist nursing mothers in the production of prolactin, which helps stimulate milk production.

Maca (*Lepidium meyenii*). Though referred to as an herb, maca is actually a root common to the Peruvian Andes and is eaten there. Taken as a supplement, it has been found to greatly support the symptoms of PMS, balance hormones, and support healthy reproductive function, as well as being a well-known aphrodisiac.

Self-Care Rituals for Female Hormones

Here are some easy ways to balance your hormones, whether your period has arrived or if you're going through perimenopause.

Monthly Clean-Out Ritual

Owing to the overwhelming impact of xenoestrogens and toxins in our environment, I recommend doing a monthly clean-out of your kitchen, cleaning cabinet, and personal-care and beauty products. I always clean one cabinet or drawer the last day of the month so that when the next month starts, I can start fresh with new hope. Chapter 14 has many more details about what to do.

De-Stress Ritual

Try to do a couple of the rituals suggested in Chapter 5 if you haven't already begun to incorporate them into your repertoire. I highly recommend finding a spiritual practice that speaks to you as well, as the benefits greatly differentiate an

empowered woman from an overwhelmed woman.

Stop and Breathe Ritual

Try to start and end each day with a deep-breathing ritual. As soon as you wake up, do ten deep-belly breaths. Close your eyes and focus on something that makes you truly happy. This sends the message to your body that you are in control and stress is managed. Add this ritual to mid-morning, lunchtime, mid-afternoon, and dinnertime, and before long, it will be second nature. Or, set your alarm for every three hours as a reminder, or add it before you eat. This is a great ritual allowing you to work the stress out whenever you need to in the future.

Nurture Your Skin Ritual

As the largest organ of your body, your skin needs some extra love on a daily basis, especially from massages, bath soaks, deep moisture treatments, essential-oil shower treatments, and essential-oil steam facials. One of my favorites is dry brushing, which improves circulation, stimulates the lymphatic system, helps get rid of toxins (like those pesky xenoestrogens), and gets the skin glowing again.

Deep Essential Oil Ritual

If you're having cramps, harboring tension, feeling muscle aches, or experiencing any other sort of internal discomfort, an amazing way to get the essential oils and blends deep into your system while supporting relaxation is to use a warm-water compress. A warm, wet washcloth placed on top of wherever you massaged in essential oils will push them deeper into your body and simultaneously create an aromatherapeutic experience for your environment.

CHAPTER 11

Emotions: Balancing Anxiety, Depression, and Mood Swings

Women are twice as likely as men to be diagnosed with a mood disorder. Although it's not fully clear why, I have a theory, based on the patients I've treated over the years. When women take on the weight of the world and try to be everything for everyone, we set ourselves up for disaster. Chronic stress leads to imbalanced hormones, which is coupled with lifestyle choices and neglect, and this becomes the foundation on which we attempt to thrive. It just isn't working.

Self-care *must* be a priority in our lives. If we don't take care of ourselves, how can we give the best of ourselves to everyone who depends on us? Being diagnosed with a mood disorder and being prescribed antidepressants may not help you rebuild the foundation you need to thrive in this modern world.

One of the most researched areas of aromatherapy is the effect essential oils have on emotions and mood, so we know that they can provide the support we need to achieve emotional success. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that being able to manage your feelings is key to having a happy and successful life. There is no magic bullet to heal emotional distress, as we all know. But there's also no reason for medical professionals to dispense antidepressants and other mood-altering medications *before* assessing whether or not their patients actually need them.

So many women have come to me precisely because they don't want to take antidepressants; they're frustrated and fed up with the side effects. They want a natural solution instead. They ask me if essential oils can cure a mood disorder, and I tell them that, no, they can't—but they certainly can help the journey to healing.

A lot. Especially if what we are dealing with isn't actually a mood disorder but, rather, an imbalance of hormones caused by a combination of factors such as long-term stress, perimenopause, gut health, and lifestyle choices. If your hormones are out of whack and have contributed to feelings of depression and anxiety, balancing your hormones can also alleviate the feeling of being overwhelmed that is associated with emotional distress.

The Why Behind Emotions

In my practice, I have found three main causes for emotional distress: stress, lack of sleep, and hormonal imbalance. The most important thing to remember is that maintaining a healthy balance between neurotransmitters and hormones keeps our emotions and mood balanced as well. This is achieved with a foundation of diet and nutrition, exercise, and stress management, as well as healthy sleep routines and reduced toxic load. Essential oils help balance the emotions and mood, as well as other systems.

In particular, *chronic stress* causes cortisol levels to rise. When left unchecked, it creates feelings of being overwhelmed and worries can surface, impacting how we respond to our environment. Chronic stress also shuts down the digestive system, and since most of our serotonin is produced in the gut, the body's second brain, any disruption will undoubtedly play a role in our emotional well-being.

Your Hormones for Emotions

You already know that certain kinds of moods or emotions can be hormonally driven, especially during specific times of your menstrual cycle, or when your female hormones are in decline during perimenopause and menopause. Remember that we all have different genetic makeups, past experiences, personalities, and lifestyles; our moods are directly related to these factors, as well as psychosocial

factors, environmental effects, and physiological makeup. There is no one fix for all of us, but learning to understand your body's signals will help you shift to a lifestyle that supports your hormones, especially when you use essential oils.

These hormones play a key role in your moods:

Estrogen. Because estrogen fluctuates with the menstrual cycle, it also influences mood, depending on where you are in your cycle. It also can increase serotonin levels while balancing it and other neurotransmitters.

Progesterone. As long as progesterone levels are in balance with estrogen levels, your mood shouldn't suffer. Progesterone has a calming effect that can ease anxiety or depression.

The Three Ps: PMS, PMDD, and Perimenopause

While PMS is often described as a mood-altering period during your monthly cycle, its symptoms can vary from slight to intense depending on the overall state of your body. Anything that happens right before your period can be considered part of typical PMS. Most women assume that some symptoms—cramps, headaches, tender breasts—are just normal to their cycle, and they focus on the mood issues as the major factor. Mood swings can vary from mild irritability and anxiety to full-blown depression, panic attacks, and severe rage. Snarky comments about PMS may compound the situation with a heavy dose of guilt and self-loathing. You need to rebalance your body as soon as possible or you may find that your perimenopausal years will be even more difficult.

PMDD, or premenstrual dysphoric disorder, leaves women in a state of debilitating depression and causes mood issues on a monthly basis. Severe sensations of hopelessness and of feeling overwhelmed, wild mood swings, uncontrollable irritability and even rage, and extreme anxiety and tension that disrupt women's normal activities are all characteristics of PMDD. As with the other hormonal issues, I have found that my patients benefit from a lifestyle reset when suffering these debilitating symptoms. Proper diet, nutrition, exercise, stress management, and sleep can do wonders for your overall system and help the body to heal itself. Essential oils can be the key to making this transformational change.

During perimenopause, your estrogen and progesterone levels decline, causing a hormonal imbalance that can trigger panic attacks, mood swings, feelings of worry, and depression. Ignoring these symptoms may cause them to linger when you enter menopause. Instead, connect with your health-care provider, and explore natural options to boost your emotional well-being. A lifestyle reset, some self-care, and essential oils are foundational components for supporting your emotional well-being!

Cortisol. You already know what too much cortisol does to the body. Chronic worry, stress, and anxiety can chisel away at us until we become a fraction of what we could be. Factor in traumatic events, or emotionally taxing illnesses, and it's no wonder we find ourselves feeling overwhelmed.

The Science Behind the Scents There are three main ways essential oils can affect your emotions, depending on their primary constituents: uplifting/energizing, calming/soothing, and grounding/balancing. To appease my inner science nerd, let me speak a bit about the chemical composition that makes these essential oils the amazing tools they are for influencing mood.

Monoterpenes such as limonene, alpha-pinene, terpinene, and cymene powerfully affect mood by cleansing and stimulating emotion. Under the monoterpene umbrella of limonene are soothing essential oils like Black Pepper, Spearmint, and Dill, as well as uplifting citrus oils such as Bergamot, Wild Orange, Tangerine, Grapefruit, Lemon, and Lime. Alpha-pinenes are known for their restorative powers, including Frankincense, Juniper Berry, Helichrysum, Cypress, and Rosemary.

Sesquiterpenes such as caryophyllene, zingiberene, and alpha-cedrene do wonders for soothing the emotions, as they promote balance and mental clarity. The caryophyllene found in Vetiver, Copaiba, Melissa, and Ylang Ylang soothes frazzled emotions, as do the zingiberene found in Ginger and the alpha-cedrene in Cedarwood.

Alcohols such as santalol, linalool, geraniol, and menthol fall into the categories of clarifying, calming, energizing, and stabilizing, as they stabilize mood and emotions. Menthol energizes emotions, so this is where Peppermint shines. The geraniol found in

Geranium and Rose has clarifying properties for the emotions, while linalool both clarifies and calms, found in Coriander, Cilantro, Basil, Lavender, Petitgrain, Clary Sage, and Bergamot. More mood-stabilizing essential oils are those with santalol (Sandalwood), cedrol (Cedarwood), and patchoulol (Patchouli).

Aldehydes such as cinnamaldehyde, geranial, and neral calm the emotions and settle the mood while protecting the mind and body. Protective essential oils like Cinnamon and Cassia boast cinnamaldehyde, while soothing Melissa and Lemongrass primarily contain geranial and neral.

Ketones such as carvone, camphor, and menthone calm moods and promote mental concentration. Peppermint also has menthone in it, which energizes moods, while Dill and Spearmint have carvone, which also invigorates and energizes emotions.

Esters such as methyl salicylate, linalyl acetate, and neryl acetate aid in calming moods and restoring emotions while supporting hormones at the same time. Restoring essential oils like Wintergreen and Birch have methyl salicylate, while Helichrysum is composed primarily of neryl acetate. Lavender, Petitgrain, Clary Sage, and Bergamot calm the emotions with their primary constituent of linalyl acetate.

Emotional Triggers

Because our emotions are embedded in our physiological makeup, it makes sense that certain sights, smells, and experiences can trigger emotional releases. All these pent-up emotions can clog your emotional pathways, preventing you from feeling truly free. Essential oils allow your body and mind to release these pent-up emotions by stimulating your emotional brain via the limbic system. That is, you can *feel* the result of their aromas before you can mentally understand *why* you feel the way you do.

Every emotion, from anger to fear, anxiety to failure, grief to worthlessness, can be released by using the corresponding essential oil. A positive affirmation paired with an essential oil can be a powerful combination in releasing these pent-up emotions. Some of the favorite affirmations I use in my self-care rituals include:

- I am worthy.
- I am strong.

- I am confident.
- I love myself.
- I am beautiful.
- I am enough.

Whatever affirmation makes you feel more confident and powerful will help you reclaim control of your emotions and stabilize your mood. Try a combination of them, and record your results in your journal along with your emotional triggers.

How to Support Your Emotional Well-Being with Essential Oils

Because essential oils are so potent and powerful, inhaling them directly affects our limbic brain, which regulates emotional reactions. No wonder the aromas influence our emotions in such a profound way! Because the constituents of essential oils vary so widely, each oil is able to work in a unique way.

We often associate certain aromas with particular emotions, coloring our memories that get triggered only when the scent wafts our way again. Say, the aroma of cinnamon rolls baking in your grandmother's kitchen elicits feelings of warmth and comfort; the scent of wood smoke can cause fear and anxiety if you've been caught in a house fire. It is truly amazing how scents can transport us.

As mentioned, the three categories of essential oils that help stabilize mood are calming/soothing, energizing/uplifting, and grounding/balancing. Used individually, each is helpful in establishing a baseline for emotional balance, but used in combination, as recommended in the suggestions that follow or in the recipes, they bring the most success. Often, also, using the oils internally as well as aromatically provides the best support against emotional imbalance. Be persistent and consistent with their use, and experiment to find out which work for you in different situations.

Preferred Essential Oils

CALMING/SOOTHING

GERANIUM (*Pelargonium graveolens*)

- Calms the nerves and soothes the mind and body from excess stress
- Grounds emotions from worry, frustration, and stress

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Add 1 drop to your palms, rub together, cup over nose, and inhale deeply.
Rub the rest on your neck and shoulders or on face.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into the body.
- Apply after a shower.

YLANG YLANG (*Cananga odorata*)

- Calms the mind and body while uplifting your mood
- Boosts your mood to create a positive outlook on life
- Lessens feelings of tension and stress to allow for emotional balance

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and apply to pulse points.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into tense areas of the body.
- Add 3–4 drops to ¼ cup Epsom salts and dissolve into a warm bath.

ROMAN CHAMOMILE (*Anthemis nobilis*)

- Enhances overall feelings of calm and relaxation for the mind and body
- Soothes the entire body while inspiring courage and self-esteem
- Comforts the mind and body when overwhelm begins to threaten imbalance

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Inhale or diffuse while practicing deep-breathing techniques to reduce stress.

Topical Use

- Add 1–2 drops to your favorite moisturizer.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and apply to your soles at bedtime.

Internal Use

- Add 1–2 drops to your favorite herbal tea.

LAVENDER (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

- Eases feelings of anxiety, tension, and stress by instilling an overall sense of calm
- Promotes total body relaxation and supports a restful night's sleep
- Allows your body to find peace amid the stress in your day

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Add 1–2 drops to pillows and bedclothes before bedtime.
- Inhale directly from the bottle and practice deep breathing.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into any tense areas of the body.
- Add 3–4 drops to ½ cup Epsom salts and dissolve into a warm bath.

CLARY SAGE (*Salvia sclarea*)

- Relaxes and soothes the mind and body while calming emotions
- Reduces nervous tension and anxiety from emotional and hormonal imbalance
- Balances the body and mind to allow for relaxation

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 2 drops with 2 drops of your favorite citrus oil.
- Diffuse 3–4 drops before bedtime.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into your abdomen.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into pulse points.
- Combine 2 drops Clary Sage, 2 drops Roman Chamomile, and 2 drops Lavender with ½ cup Epsom salts and dissolve into a warm bath.

MELISSA (*Melissa officinalis*)

- Alleviates anxiety, nervousness, and tension
- Uplifts and restores positive moods
- Calms and relaxes the mind and body

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops at nighttime.
- Add 1 drop to your palms, rub together, cup over your nose, and inhale deeply.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into shoulders and neck.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into the temples and over pulse points.

COPAIBA (*Copaifera reticulata*, *C. officinalis*, *C. coriacea*, and *C. langsdorffii*)

- Soothes and calms anxiety and nervous tension
- Calms, soothes, and supports the nervous system while aiding in emotional balance
- Supports a variety of bodily systems to help your body to maintain balance

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Inhale directly from the bottle.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into tense areas of the body.

JASMINE ABSOLUTE (*Jasminum grandiflorum*)

- Uplifts the emotions
- Enhances feelings of joy and peace while instilling self-confidence
- Promotes a positive outlook on life

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and apply to pulse points.

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into your soles in the morning.

BASIL (*Ocimum basilicum*)

- Alleviates nervous tension and anxiety in the mind and body
- Enhances mental focus and alertness while rejuvenating the mind and body
- Reduces muscle tension

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Inhale directly from the bottle.

Topical Use

- Apply 1 diluted drop to fingertips and massage into temples.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into tense muscles. Add 1 drop of Wintergreen for a cooling and relaxing sensation.

ENERGIZING/UPLIFTING

BERGAMOT (*Citrus bergamia*)

- Calms and uplifts the mind and body while alleviating fatigue, tension, and anxiety
- Is perfect for massage blends and diffusing as well as internal calm when added to herbal tea

WILD ORANGE (*Citrus sinensis*)

- Energizing aroma that uplifts the mind and body while purifying the air
- Perfect addition to smoothies and water for internal support and detox

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 2 drops Wild Orange with Peppermint and Frankincense, or other complementary essential oils.
- Breathe directly from the bottle.

Topical Use

- Add to massage blends or rollerball blends.

WARNING: Remember that citrus oils are phototoxic, so avoid direct sunlight for at least 12 hours with most citrus oils but up to 72 hours with Bergamot

for at least 12 hours with most citrus oils but up to 72 hours with Bergamot.

PEPPERMINT (*Mentha piperita*)

- Promotes energetic feelings by enlivening the senses
- Encourages healthy respiratory function to enhance your exercise routines
- Cools and invigorates skin that helps improve focus and alertness

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Diffuse with Wild Orange for an energy boost.

Topical Use

- Add 1 drop each Peppermint, Wild Orange, and Frankincense to your palms, rub together, and inhale deeply.
- Dilute with a carrier oil and massage onto neck and shoulders.
- Dilute with a carrier oil and massage into fatigued and tense areas of the body.

GROUNDING/BALANCING

CEDARWOOD (*Juniperus virginiana*)

- Soothes and relaxes the mind and body to stabilize mood
- Instills confidence and promotes self-esteem
- Enhances feelings of overall wellness and vitality

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Inhale directly from the bottle.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into chest.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into any tense areas of the body.

FRANKINCENSE (*Boswellia carterii*, *B. frereana*, and *B. sacra*)

- Supports overall peace and wellness for emotional balance
- Opens the mind and body for overall relaxation and grounding balance
- Aids in dissipating negativity and reducing stress while soothing and relaxing

your emotions

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Inhale directly from the bottle.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and apply to your soles before bedtime.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into tense areas.

PATCHOULI (*Pogostemon cablin*)

- Stabilizes mood by grounding and balancing emotions
- Relieves feelings of tension and pent-up anger

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Inhale directly from the bottle with deep breaths.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil, combine with Peppermint, and massage into the temples, behind the ears, and down the back of your neck.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil, combine with Vetiver, and massage into your soles before bedtime.

INDIAN SANDALWOOD (*Santalum album*)

- Enhances the mood by settling and stabilizing emotions
- Promotes grounding and uplifting, especially when used with meditation and prayer

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 3–4 drops.
- Add 1 drop to the shower floor.

Topical Use

- Add 3–4 drops to ½ cup Epsom salts and dissolve into a warm bath.
- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into the back of your neck and your soles before bedtime.

VETIVER (*Vetiveria zizanioides*)

- Calms and grounds the mind and body to support emotional balance
- Zaps anxiety, nervousness, and intense moments of stress
- Promotes deep relaxation that calms emotions for a restful night's sleep

Aromatic Use

- Diffuse 2 drops Vetiver and 2 drops Lavender.
- Add 1 drop to palms, rub together, cup over nose, and inhale deeply. Massage the remainder into your neck and shoulder.

Topical Use

- Dilute 1–2 drops with a carrier oil and massage into your soles before bedtime.
- Add 3 drops to ¼ cup Epsom salts and dissolve in a warm bath.

Joanne's Story

Joanne, a forty-seven-year-old administrator for a nonprofit organization and volunteer for her local food bank, came to me with concerns about occasional sadness and anxiousness. She was recently divorced after being married for twenty-two years, and although she kept herself busy, she was struggling to adjust to her new life. She felt isolated and sad most nights, was experiencing random panic attacks on her way home from work, had a hard time getting out of bed on the weekends, and began noticing hormonal changes. She wanted to address her low energy and fatigue.

Joanne was experiencing perimenopause and mild depression and anxiousness. **My recommendations were as follows:**

- Abundance and Gratitude Diffuser Blend ([this page](#)) and gratitude journaling five days a week to provide a feeling of gratitude and happiness each morning.
- Schedule dates with friends, or attend social events throughout the weekend and in the evenings.
- Use essential oils throughout the day for support. Keep the Happy Bliss Inhaler Blend ([this page](#)) or the Self-Love, Self-Care Diffuser Blend ([this page](#)) out and schedule times to use them.
- Creating a morning ritual with essential oils. Start the day with the the Energize Your Mood Inhaler Blend ([this page](#)) for energy and mood uplifting and continue to use it in the afternoon.
- Substitute coffee with matcha green tea. L-theanine reduces stress and feelings of anxiousness.

- Support gut health by incorporating whole foods for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
- Exercise for 30 minutes three to four times a week to boost happy neurotransmitters and increase energy.
- Supplements: multivitamin, 2000 mg omega-3 fatty acids, 450 mg St. John's wort, 300 mg magnesium glycinate to support mood, hormone levels, and increase energy.
- Self-care rituals: Incorporate the Intense Deep-Breathing Ritual ([this page](#)) during moments when anxious feelings arise.

Within six weeks, Joanne experienced less anxiety, fewer mood swings, and diminished depressed feelings, and she felt more balanced in her body. She also felt more content with her life and enjoyed spending time with her friends. She knew she was still adjusting to being single, but she really enjoyed her work and serving her community. The morning ritual and gratitude journaling were the perfect routine she had been missing, and the essential-oil blends helped her throughout the day and during times of need, particularly Lavender and Frankincense with sadness and emotional blends for energy and mood. "I had no idea that essential oils could help with my emotional moments, but they did! And they are so easy to use. I keep my favorite blends in my purse and pull them out at least four to five times a day. I love starting my morning with wild orange and bergamot. They really help me to get out of bed."

Essential Oil Blends

Aromatic Diffuser Blends

Positive Affirmation Diffuser Blend

- 3 drops Bergamot essential oil
- 2 drops Clary Sage essential oil
- 1 drop Wild Orange essential oil

Nix Anxious Feelings Diffuser Blend

- 2 drops Patchouli essential oil
- 2 drops Wild Orange essential oil
- 1 drop Ylang Ylang essential oil

1 drop Lavender essential oil

Abundance and Gratitude Diffuser Blend

2 drops Frankincense essential oil

2 drops Wild Orange essential oil

2 drops Peppermint essential oil

Emotional Release Diffuser Blend

2 drops Geranium essential oil

2 drops Bergamot essential oil

1 drop Lemongrass essential oil 1 drop Ylang Ylang essential oil

Self-Love, Self-Care Diffuser Blend

3 drops Bergamot essential oil

2 drops Cedarwood essential oil

1 drop Lavender essential oil

Aromatic Personal Inhaler Blends

Happy Bliss Inhaler Blend

7 drops Wild Orange essential oil

4 drops Grapefruit essential oil

4 drops Ylang Ylang essential oil

Energize Your Mood Inhaler Blend

5 drops Rosemary essential oil

5 drops Peppermint essential oil

5 drops Grapefruit essential oil

Calm and Ground Inhaler Blend

4 drops Lavender essential oil

4 drops Lavender essential oil
4 drops Yarrow essential oil
4 drops Frankincense essential oil
3 drops Cedarwood essential oil

Topical Rollerball Blends

Overwhelm Reset Rollerball Blend

8 drops Geranium essential oil
8 drops Clary Sage essential oil
6 drops Cypress essential oil
3 drops Patchouli essential oil
3 drops Ylang Ylang essential oil
Carrier oil of choice

Add the essential oils to a 10 mL glass rollerball bottle and fill the rest with a carrier oil. Replace the rollerball top and cap, and then shake gently to blend. To use, apply to the back of the neck, temples, behind the ears, and on the wrists.

Emotional Balance Rollerball Blend

10 drops Geranium essential oil
5 drops Neroli essential oil
5 drops Jasmine essential oil
5 drops Ylang Ylang essential oil
Carrier oil of choice

Add essential oils to a 10 mL glass rollerball bottle and fill the rest with a carrier oil. Replace rollerball top and cap, and shake gently to blend. To use, apply to pulse points and inhale deeply.

Panic-Buster Rollerball Blend

8 drops Clary Sage essential oil

8 drops Clary Sage essential oil
7 drops Lavender essential oil
5 drops Vetiver essential oil
5 drops Roman Chamomile essential oil
Carrier oil of choice

Add essential oils to a 10 mL glass rollerball bottle and fill the rest with a carrier oil. Replace rollerball top and cap, and shake gently to blend. To use, apply to pulse points and inhale deeply.

Self-Care Rituals for Emotional Balance “Is This Serving Me?” Ritual

One of my all-time favorite questions is: “Is this serving me right now?” I love the concept of using a question to create a positive affirmation because it causes me to pause and examine the situation at hand. Sometimes, I find myself searching for a justification to keep doing what I’m doing, but more often than not, I am able to come to a screeching halt and dismiss something that isn’t serving me. I give myself permission to just say no to whatever is causing me more harm than joy.

You can apply this question to just about every situation and even to concrete objects. If I put on a dress that for some reason I don’t feel comfortable in, I ask, “Is this serving me?” Nope, it’s not, because I’m going to spend all day with anxiety about how I feel and look in the outfit. If I don’t love it and it doesn’t make me feel confident, then it’s time to purge!

What about that glass of wine after a rough day? Is it serving me? When I consider that I haven’t eaten dinner, have spent the day surviving on sugar-laden snacks, and have reached levels of stress that I’ve dealt with for hours, no...this glass of wine will do nothing when I could have a calming mug of herbal tea and healthy dinner instead. Trigger avoided.

Once you see this question as a ritual, it will become second nature to ask it whenever the need arises. I’ve found it to be an incredibly useful tool for decision-making.

Intense Deep-Breathing Ritual

You have already learned my favorite deep-breathing technique (see Chapter 5). I turn to it whenever I feel a bad mood or any feeling of being overwhelmed. In fact, I recommend making this a daily ritual, multiple times a day, and as much as you need during times of intense stress. Let the rhythm of your breaths complement the rush of air being sucked in through your nostrils, billowing into the deep recesses of your lungs, and being slowly let out through your mouth. Hang in the pauses between the inhales and the exhales, and try to work up to counting to ten in those moments of calm.

As you get even better at this ritual, you can use those pauses to meditate and focus on positive affirmations or to offer a quick prayer of thanks and gratitude. Adding high-quality essential oils to your breathing will give you a combination that rejuvenates both mind and body while supporting a positive mood and a restored confidence.

Banish Feeling Overwhelmed Ritual

Not long ago, I had a five-minute meltdown when I found myself smacked in the face with feelings of being utterly overwhelmed. Luckily, I reached for my essential-oil kit to pull out my Overwhelm Reset Rollerball Blend ([this page](#)). With shaking hands, I uncapped the bottle and deeply inhaled while closing my eyes and practicing the Intense Deep-Breathing Ritual. I rolled some into the palms of my hand, cupped it over my nose, and began to calm myself enough to hang in the pauses. I focused on gratitude and my blessings as my emotions began to stabilize. When I opened my eyes, I rolled more onto my pulse points and took a moment to continue breathing and being in the moment. That panic attack had really scared me. But thankfully I had the tools to find my center again.

I encourage you to prepare yourself for moments like this. Find the essential oils that support you best and have them ready and in an essential-oil kit for on-the-

go needs.

Preserving-the-Peace Partner Ritual

Even though I teach a life-transforming plan, life still gets the best of me every now and then. It's then that I have a moment, or make an adjustment, or just need some time to stop and breathe. Luckily, I'm blessed to have a husband who sees my triggers, recognizes my body's cries for help sometimes before I do, and knows when to support me. He hands me my favorite rollerball blend and tells me everything is going to be okay. He diffuses the anxiety for me, he massages me to eliminate the kinks, and he keeps me balanced when I ignore my triggers. And I do the same for him. It's an "oily" partnership in peace, so we can continue to carry on the life we love and keep each other healthy in the process.

Find your someone and make him or her a partner in preserving the peace. It can be a friend, a spiritual leader, a partner, a spouse—anyone who can check in with you, recognize your needs, and know the questions to ask or essential oils to hand you when anxiety threatens to spin you into a whirlwind. You can do the same for him or her. Set a regular time to check in with one another and talk about how you are doing—and what oils you are using!

PART III

The 14-Day Rescue Plan to Jump-Start Your Hormonal Health If you had asked me ten years ago what I did to keep myself healthy and my hormones functioning at optimal levels, I would have said, “I go to the gym for one hour four or five times a week. Sure, I try to eat well (but have to admit I indulge my cravings for York Peppermint Patties at 4 p.m. every day). I drink two to three cups of coffee every day because I love it and can’t live without it. I buy lots of vitamins, but maybe once in a while I forget to take them—my bad! I use whatever shampoo is on sale in the drugstore. Oh, and I work as hard as I possibly can until I collapse into bed (and then have a hard time going to sleep).”

Now, my schedule is *completely* different. A savory green smoothie and the supplements I need for breakfast every day? Check. Gratitude journaling and mindful breathing? You bet. A hike outside or high-intensity interval training at least five times a week? Wouldn't miss it. Fresh, simple, delicious meals, low in sugar and high in flavor? Of course. Nontoxic skin-care products that I love to make myself, that have given me the best skin and hair of my life? What a treat! Essential oils by my side all day long? Well, what do you think?!

All these activities have become second nature to me. I *never* thought they would—but they keep me healthy, vibrant, energized when I need to be, and relaxed when it's time to wind down, so I can't ever imagine going back to my former bad habits. My hormone chaos has been completely tamed by simple, effective home remedies, real food, and real exercise.

Here's the thing: I am *not* a different person. In terms of personality, I am the same woman I was a decade ago—but what did change was my determination to do the work I knew I needed to do to finally take care of myself the way I deserved to be taken care of.

I created the 14-Day Rescue Plan to give your body the jolt it needs to balance your hormones quickly and effectively, and show you how incorporating all the good habits you've read about in this book, especially in the previous chapter, will drastically improve your health. The plan consists of incorporating self-care techniques, rituals, and essential oils to help you reset your hormones. This is where the work comes in, because you have to listen to your body in order to know what it needs the most. By identifying the areas where your body needs work, you can begin to select the routines and rituals that make the most sense for you from Part II. I recommend marking them with a sticky-note flag so that you can easily reference them. Then, you can begin to work them into your daily routine—your morning and evening routines, as well as pitstops throughout the day for balance. If something doesn't work for you, stop and swap it for something else.

Before beginning your 14-Day Rescue Plan, we need to firm up your foundation as well. Let's take a good, hard look at nutrition first, then exercise, and revisit stress management, eliminating the toxins and adding self-care routines. Success

will come from using the Five Pillars for a Foundational Lifestyle presented in Chapter 15 as a guide to incorporating the self-care rituals that will help you create your individualized plan. These rituals will eventually become the habits that support you in your 14-Day Rescue Plan and beyond!

The next step is the addition of the 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan, which supports the other changes you have made. When you begin the meal plan, you will have already laid a firm foundation and have begun implementing the self-care routines and rituals for your hormonal rescue. You will not believe how well your body will respond when you tie everything together. Sure, there will be bumps along the way, but you can do it. Your body needs you to go all in and find yourself again. I'm right here with you to support you all the way.

The 8 Steps of the 14-Day Rescue Plan

- 1.** Mark your routines and rituals with sticky-note flags. Rank them in order of importance based on your individual needs. Create a checklist for each of the following: morning routine, evening routine, stress management, and daily habits. Feel free to add more rituals per pillar or section as needed.
- 2.** Create your essential-oils diary and your food journal to track how each oil, blend, and meal treats your body.
- 3.** Read Chapter 15, making notes on the Five Pillars for how to firm up your foundation.
- 4.** Begin incorporating the foundation-firming routines and the morning and evening rituals to discover what works best for you for one week.
- 5.** Prepare for the 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan by shopping ahead and ensuring that you have all ingredients needed.
- 6.** Clear your calendar. Be sure that you have two free weeks without added stress or travel, and get ready to start!
- 7.** For 14 days, follow the 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan with your daily rituals and self-care routines. Note your successes and pitfalls in your food journal, your mood and bodily responses in your essential-oils diary, and your praises in

your gratitude journal.

8. Review your journals and diary and see how you feel. Tweak according to your individual needs, then take a look at Chapter 18 for the Refresh and Replenish.

Let's get started!

**Overwhelmed by the Steps? No Problem! Check Out
Our Beginner's Guide Until You Figure Out What
Works the Best for You!**

Self-Care Rituals for Beginners MORNING

Apply Superwoman Rollerball Blend Shower Ritual with Awaken or Abundance Spritz

Drink 16 ounces of water with lemon Green Smoothie and supplements

Gratitude journal (diffuse Frankincense or Wild Orange) 5 minutes of Move Your

Body Ritual **PLAN THE DAY**

Drink 6–8 cups water

Breathe-on-the-Hour Ritual

30 minutes of Move Your Body Ritual Healthy Food Plan

EVENING

Prepare Your Sleep Environment

Mirror and Positive Affirmations Rituals Wind Down to Sleep Ritual

CHAPTER 15

The Five Pillars of a Foundational Lifestyle

Before you dive into the 14-Day Rescue Plan, make sure you have the foundation to support these changes. As discussed in Part I, your body cannot do what it needs to do with so little to build upon. If your foundation is shaky, then the 14-Day Rescue Plan will not have the phenomenal effect on your overall health that it can have. The plan has the potential to help you reset your hormonal health, but you have to do some work ahead of time.

That's where the Five Pillars can be your guide. Each represents a core component that will help you strengthen your body's foundation so that your efforts to balance your hormones with essential oils can truly take hold and build you back up again. In this chapter, you will learn the steps to take to set that foundation so you will find success as a result of the 14-Day Rescue Plan. Do you have to do everything I have suggested? No, you don't have to, but you should examine the suggestions and see what works best for your needs. No one person's plan will look like anyone else's because this is all about you. Your heritage and your body make you a unique individual, so you need to feed your individual needs by setting your foundation and building upon it to reset your hormonal needs.

I recommend reading about the Five Pillars first, then going back to see which habits you need to incorporate initially. Chapter 16 is then a suggestion guide for getting the most from your Five Pillars, but again, feel free to adjust it according to your own needs. The same goes for the 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan—if there is a recipe you don't like, feel free to substitute any of the other recipes or substitute an ingredient with another healthy option. It's all about what works for you within the guidelines I've detailed. Everything here has a reason and a purpose, but the bigger

overall purpose is for you to learn what works for you and to make the changes that fit your lifestyle so that you experience success!

Pillar #1—Nutrition

The Break-Ups

For the 14-Day Rescue Plan to be successful, it's time to get real about ending any relationships that have been abusing your body. Sugar, gluten, processed foods, and caffeine are the biggest offenders in our modern diet, and you've got to eliminate them beforehand. Once you begin the 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan, you will also eliminate dairy and red meat. Why? Because these foods cause inflammation and may be driving some of your symptoms. And, as you know, sugar also causes insulin spikes that lead to excess fat storage. It also affects your cortisol levels, which in turn affect your estrogen and progesterone levels. Gluten creates an inflammatory response in your thyroid. Coffee revs up those adrenal hormones. Red meat is loaded with female hormones that you definitely do not need to be ingesting, which can create estrogen dominance.

If you don't start now, your body will face too drastic a shock when you begin the 14-Day Rescue Plan and will leave you crumpled in the wake. I want you to succeed in this process, and I know that going cold turkey on these items will make you feel horrible at first. It will cause withdrawal, cravings, and digestive distress like you've never before experienced. And you will give up. I don't want that for you. Remember that when the fourteen days are over, you can begin reintroducing these foods one at a time, which will allow you to identify potential triggers and food items that harm your health.

So, let's discuss the *why* for the break-ups and *how* you can gradually cut these things out in preparation for your rescue.

THE WHY

I must confess, my family has a chocolate addiction and my mother takes the cake.

Even though her hormones are now regulated, she still has cravings for it every day, keeping secret stashes of her favorite peanut M&M's and See's Candy all over the house. Even though she knows she shouldn't, it's hard to break up with sugar.

Sometimes we all can be our own worst enemy, and it's the fault of the real-life addiction that sugar has created in our bodies. A big reason for my mom's sugar cravings is her crazy, busy schedule. Although she knows which healthy foods to take to work, she still craves that energy boost to get her to the next activity quickly, whether it's her job or a tennis match.

Sugar causes the brain to release dopamine, the same neurotransmitter that spikes when someone does cocaine! Common symptoms of sugar addiction include brain fog, mental chatter, insomnia, increased appetite, depression, anxiety, cravings, and the inability to feel full. Sound familiar?

Recent studies recommend that women consume only 20 to 25 grams of sugar per day, yet the average American consumes about four times that amount! To put grams into perspective, just divide by 4 and you have the number of teaspoons—so we're looking at only 4 or 5 teaspoons of sugar per day as the recommended maximum. Just for comparison, an average 12-ounce can of soda contains around 39 grams of sugar. And this is total sugar consumption we're talking about, not just added sugars. Remember that your daily serving of fruits contains sugar (or fructose), too, so keep track of those numbers in your food journal.

Even though both glucose and fructose are sugars, they have entirely different effects on the body. Glucose can be metabolized in our cells, but fructose must be filtered through the liver. This is why it is so important to avoid that extra fructose, even if much of it is found in healthier options like fruits and vegetables. Eating an entire bag of grapes does give you some vital nutrients, and it is definitely better than a candy bar, but be aware of how much fructose is in those two choices.

Cutting back on sugar can be difficult, as one of the most common ways to "feed" stress is with sugar—so of course we crave sugar in just about every situation. Excess sugar stresses your body by causing major inflammation, taxing your liver, and damaging your arteries. It wreaks havoc on your immune system, creates fatigue, causes bloating, and is the number-one food choice of cancer. It can lead to diseases like metabolic syndrome, fatty liver syndrome, diabetes, heart disease, and Alzheimer's. And it is so very addictive, which food companies take

disease, and Alzheimer's. And it is so very addictive, which food companies take advantage of.

Breaking up with sugar will help your body to reset its insulin and estrogen levels. Even if it's only for five days, your body will begin to slowly get used to life without the sugar highs it's accustomed to. Eventually your taste buds will reset and foods will begin to taste overly sweet to you, which makes resisting cravings a lot easier. The weight will most likely begin to drop off if you have been consuming large amounts of added sugar in your diet, unknowingly or not. Suddenly, a piece of fruit will become incredibly appealing because it has just the right amount of sugar along with fiber, enzymes, and critical antioxidants that your body needs.

THE HOW

Breakfast Makeover

Eating a sugary breakfast is pretty much guaranteed to set you up for cravings later that day. Since a typical American breakfast consists of juice, a sweet cereal, or white toast/bagel with jelly, plus a hot coffee or tea with added sugar, we set ourselves up for a huge insulin spike to manage all that sugar, followed by a plummeting crash leaving us craving more. Even worse, as soon as our brain realizes that it hasn't received the nutrients that it needs, it sends signals to our body to eat again, which is why we crave that mid-morning sugary fix.

This used to be me. My go-to breakfast was a KIND bar that just happened to pair perfectly with my enormous iced coffee. It also set the tone for the day, which made it so much easier for me to continue to reach for sugar. When I finally realized what was happening, I switched to real food and pumped up the protein in my breakfast. Protein added to every meal will help you curb those cravings, sustain your satiety, and keep you from grabbing that sweet snack before lunch. Assess your current breakfast plan and replace it with whole-food options packed with protein. Take a look at the following options for amazing suggestions. And do a pantry clean-out to get rid of those sugary breakfast options to resist temptation.

Eat a Savory Breakfast

I'm a big fan of savory breakfasts. You'll get the proteins and veggies you need without causing insulin spikes. Green smoothies are my go-to for when I'm on the run, but they are also satisfying when you're at home, since you can sip them and be mindful of how delicious each mouthful is. If I'm still hungry after my green smoothie, I'll scramble two eggs with spinach and add a couple slices of avocado. This protein-packed punch always keeps me going till lunch, with no need for a snack.

Prep ahead of time and have healthy options available for yourself so that breakfast doesn't become a chore. Make this a healthy part of your morning routine so that you can keep the sugar demons at bay. There's no rule that says you have to eat "breakfast foods" for breakfast. If you feel like having a salad or some meat for breakfast, have it!

Drink Green Smoothies My smoothies only contain unsweetened almond milk, avocado, and fruit and vegetable juices, so they have no added sugar. I use a protein powder made from a vegetable source to avoid the more commonly used whey powder, which may cause gastrointestinal issues. The smoothies take only 5 to 10 minutes to make and can easily become a to-go option for your busy lifestyle. You can even pre-portion your frozen add-ins for a quick "dump, blend, and go" morning option. We have a smoothie station set up at my house with our high-powered blender, protein and matcha green tea powder, essential oils, and other add-ins so we don't have to go searching for what we need each morning. Work smarter and your mornings will be a breeze! Green smoothies also make a great afternoon snack when those cravings start.

Swap Your Snacks

Do you remember the time when you proudly said “No way” to your mom’s amazing cheesecake—only to devour it during a late-night raid after everyone was asleep? I do!

Rather than telling yourself no, opt for healthier substitutions from the following chart that will satisfy your cravings. The same CDC study that showed how few Americans eat veggies every day also had bad news about fruit—only 12 percent of people in this country eat the minimum daily fruit recommendation of 1½ to 2 cups every day. That’s really just a small apple and a banana! Think about this when you’re having a sweet craving. I can’t imagine not eating a bowlful of gorgeous raspberries or blueberries when I’m in the mood and only something sweet will do. Get into the fruit habit—it’s one you won’t want to break.

Get creative with these swaps! If you tend to crave sweets, for example, choose naturally sweet foods like apples, beets, berries, carrots, citrus fruits, figs, squash, and yams, and spices such as cinnamon, cloves, coriander, and nutmeg. A little dark chocolate with almond butter will knock out the dessert craving while providing you with antioxidants and protein.

FOOD SUBSTITUTIONS

FOOD TO AVOID

REPLACE WITH

ALCOHOL	
Beer, wine, spirits	Herbal tea (chamomile, peppermint, rooibos) Spritzer with a dash of Angostura bitters Sparkling water with a couple of raspberries Water infusions with lemon, orange, or cucumber

BAKED GOODS	
Cakes, cookies, pastries, pie	Honey or peanut butter on a banana, baked apples, baked peaches, pineapple, steel-cut oats

CANDY

Chewy candy	Raisins, figs, dates
Candy pieces (M&M's, etc.)	Frozen grapes, cherries, dried cranberries, berries, pomegranate seeds

CEREAL

Sweetened cereal	Unsweetened, whole-grain cereal; oatmeal with berries, fruit, or nuts; fruit and nut trail mix
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CHEESE

Dairy cheeses	Avocado, cashews, Brazil nuts, and roasted vegetables Butternut squash puree, sweet potatoes
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CHOCOLATE

Milk chocolate	Dark chocolate, individual squares
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COFFEE

Caffeinated hot coffee	Decaf coffee with cinnamon, decaf teas, matcha latte
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Caffeinated iced coffee drinks	Decaf iced tea, black coffee with unsweetened almond milk
CRUNCHY/SALTY	
Chips, crackers, popcorn, pretzels	Crunchy, cut-up vegetables, air-popped popcorn

Roasted nuts	Raw nuts (almonds, hazelnuts)
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Roasted pumpkin seeds

FRIED FOODS	
French fries, fried foods, roasted nuts	Roasted sweet potato fries, roasted or steamed foods, raw nuts, chopped veggies (celery, carrots, bell pepper)
ICE CREAM/CREAMY DESSERTS	
Dairy ice cream, pudding	Sorbet, ices, fruit smoothies, Greek yogurt, chia pudding, applesauce, avocado pudding, whole fruit smoothie
POWER/PROTEIN BARS	
Packaged power/protein bars	Nuts, raisins, almond or cashew butter

SUGARY DRINKS	
Juice, soda, and vitamin waters	WATER!

Don't Succumb to Pressure

I have given up sugar on multiple occasions, sometimes around the holiday season. One year, I was at my mom's house while nearing the end of one of my ninety-day sugar fasts, determined to get to the finish line without cheating. My mom specially made my favorite peanut butter cookies—my ultimate dessert. I know she was a little heartbroken when I told her that the peanut butter cookies were not going into my mouth. I reminded her that I appreciate her amazing love and efforts, but that I just could not give in.

That particular holiday was harder than others, as I also got a lot of pressure from the family to join in on the See's Candy guessing games and to try fun holiday drinks. Even my husband, who was also on the sugar break, cheated a little in the end. Despite all the temptation and peer pressure, however, I made it through the holiday gathering without caving in and I am very proud of myself for it.

In these moments, where you are feeling peer-pressured by family and friends, explain that you really appreciate and love them, but you are being as true as possible to your self-care needs. Hopefully, they will understand and support you.

Get a Cravings Buddy

Sometimes just talking about your cravings with someone in the same situation is all you need to do to stay on track. (This is especially helpful if you have people in your life that try to sabotage your food choices.) If you know that someone is holding you accountable and cheering you on, it's much easier to stick to your goals and be successful, especially when you support her right back. The very first time I broke up with sugar for sixty days, it was with a good friend and fellow author, Dr. Lauren Clum. I don't think we would have made it through without the daily support and text messages for accountability.

Institute a House Ban on Particular Items

What I learned from my mother's sugar addiction is how important it is to not bring your trigger foods into the house. If you know your downfall is potato chips or candy corn, don't buy them! Or, buy that one little bag so you don't end up eating a lot when you just crave a little. Is it okay to have some sugar? Yes! Of course. Especially when nothing else will satisfy your craving. But it is the quantity and quality of the sugar that matters. Don't set yourself up to binge by buying the jumbo pack and thinking that you will eat only some of it.

My husband gave in to a craving the other day. He wanted an ice cream sandwich and nothing else would do. Unfortunately, the store he was in only had boxes of four. He knows one of our rules is to not bring food like that into the house, so guess who ate all four on the ride home? My sweet husband sheepishly copped to it. "But, hey," he added. "At least I didn't bring them home!" I had to laugh.

Sneaky Names for Sugar Food manufacturers use all sorts of devious ways to disguise the fact that so much sugar is in their products. Almost 75 percent of packaged foods contain added sweeteners. Turn yourself into a "label looker" and learn to recognize

the signs of hidden sugar:

- Be sure to look for grams of sugar *per serving*. Remember, you only need 4 grams per day.
- Know the difference between natural sugars and added sugars (such as fruit sugars vs. added sweeteners) and recognize that there may be no distinction between the two.
- Check the list of ingredients. Just because “sugar” isn’t listed, that doesn’t mean it isn’t there, lurking under another name. Obviously, avoid anything with “sugar” tagged on, such as castor sugar, brown sugar, coconut sugar, invert sugar, or turbinado sugar, among many others.
- You need to be a savvy shopper to recognize that every one of these is still sugar:

Agave

Agave nectar

Anhydrous dextrose

Barley malt

Barley malt syrup

Blackstrap molasses

Brown rice syrup

Buttered syrup

Cane juice

Cane juice crystals

Cane syrup

Caramel

Carob syrup

Corn syrup

Corn syrup solids

Corn sweetener

Crystalline fructose
D-ribose

Dehydrated cane juice

Dextrin

Dextrose

Diastatic malt

Ethyl maltol

Evaporated cane juice

Florida crystals

Fructose

Fruit juice

Fruit juice concentrate

Galactose

Glucose

Glucose solids

Golden syrup

High-fructose corn syrup (HFCS)

Honey

Lactose

Malt syrup

Maltodextrin

Maltol

Maltose

Mannose

Maple syrup

Molasses

Muscovado

Panocha
Refiner's syrup

Rice syrup

Saccharose

Sorghum syrup

Sucanat

Sucrose

Sweet sorghum

Syrup

Treacle

Gluten and Processed Foods

THE WHY

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye that functions like a “glue,” making dough stretchy, and breads and baked goods springy to the touch. Despite its deliciousness, it is indigestible by the human body, causing many people to build up an intolerance or sensitivity to it. Your digestive system can’t process it properly, so it can cause inflammation if it gets stuck in your gut. Common symptoms of gluten sensitivity or intolerance include frequent bloating, constipation or diarrhea, headaches, joint and muscle pain, fatigue, skin rashes or acne, and autoimmune disorders that affect the thyroid and adrenal glands (that means your hormones!).

Because the molecular structures of the gluten protein, gliadin, are remarkably similar to that of the thyroid gland, the body may mistake one for the other. If your immune system attacks the gluten that leaks through the gut into the bloodstream, it also attacks the thyroid tissue whenever gluten is present. For those already dealing with hypothyroidism and other issues, this causes major problems. It can take up to six months for the body to restore itself from an inflammatory response to gluten, so the sooner you can eliminate it from your diet, the better off you will be.

Bear in mind that gluten sensitivity is not the same as gluten intolerance or allergy, which in the form of celiac disease is an incurable condition that can adversely affect growth and digestion, as the inability to process gluten blocks the body’s ability to absorb nutrients from other foods, leading to painful intestinal issues and malnutrition. When people think of gluten intolerance, they typically think of celiac, but this is just one of its manifestations. An official celiac diagnosis is quite difficult, as symptoms vary and blood tests aren’t always accurate. Most people who have celiac disease have a shortening of the villi in their small intestine, which hampers food absorption, and this can only be found after a biopsy. Many people with autoimmune thyroid disorders also have celiac disease, as there may be a genetic predisposition. A proper diagnosis from a specialist is a must.

Even if you aren’t sure if gluten is an issue, it can’t hurt to eliminate it from

your diet for at least four weeks and see if you notice any changes. Then, you can gradually start to reintroduce gluten, food by food, and see if your symptoms return. I've been gluten free for two years, and I have noticed that a lot of my earlier sluggishness and digestive issues went away once I stopped eating gluten. It's worth going gluten free to see how your body functions, and then slowly reintroducing it one item at a time to see if there is a reaction, such as the kind of sluggishness I had, bloating, and/or fatigue.

Processed foods are important to eliminate from your diet, since you often don't know what's lurking in them. Even if you become the best "label looker" ever, you can't be that vigilant every time you go to the store. The easiest step to take is to just eliminate these foods and give yourself peace of mind. Think about all the artificial ingredients and chemicals that you will easily nix from your diet just by eliminating processed foods. Now, there are products on the shelf that can still be used in your diet, but stick to the Pronounceable Five-or-Less Rule that follows so that you know what you're putting into your body. Especially if you tend to be sensitive to different foods, it's always safer to know exactly what you've eaten recently so that you can eliminate the issue rather than sending yourself on a wild-goose ingredient chase.

THE HOW

Choose a Whole-Food, Plant-Focused, Clean Diet

If you eat a typical American diet with a lot of grains, especially processed or packaged foods, breaking up with gluten can seem next to impossible—but it's actually quite simple. If you stick to a whole-food, plant-focused diet with clean protein, fiber, and healthy fats you will be on the right track in no time. Shopping the perimeter of the grocery store can be the easiest change to make, since that's where produce, meat, and fresh ingredients are sold. Frozen fruits and vegetables are the only exception, as freezing them keeps in their nutrients, making them a healthy option when keeping super-fresh ingredients isn't an option.

Cook Seasonally

Another great tip is to make use of your local farmers' markets to ensure you are getting the freshest and most organic options possible. Select fresh produce available from your local organic farms and incorporate those into your meal plans. There are often great recipes available from those sellers if you just ask. But, when in doubt, sauté some veggies with a grass-fed, clean protein, and voila! Instant deliciousness.

Be Label Savvy

When you begin to eliminate processed foods, you will want to examine the labels of your products to ensure you are nixing the harmful elements from your diet. You need to be vigilant at first to watch for foods made with barley, wheat, or rye, most often in processed foods like beer, candy, gravies and sauces, spice packets or seasoning mixes, soups, processed lunch meats, salad dressings, and even french fries. Just like when you're watching out for sugar, use your "label looker" training to sleuth out the details; avoiding processed foods as a rule of thumb is the easiest solution.

Follow the Pronounceable Five-or-Less Rule

If you (or a third-grader) can't pronounce the ingredients on the box or bag, put it back on the shelf. Try to stick with foods that have only five ingredients or less; or, better yet, replace them with fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains like quinoa, brown rice, and oats to balance your vitamins and minerals.

Caffeine

THE WHY

I love coffee. No, I mean I really, really *love* coffee! But the caffeine in it is still chemically addictive. I relied on coffee to wake me up, to sustain me through the morning, and to be a sweet treat in the afternoon—which totally aided the demise of my hormonal balance. Despite its antioxidant and nutritional content, or how many studies say that caffeine may not be as bad as we think, we still need to watch out for other effects taking hold. Though you may think you don't have a problem either, try going a few days (or a few hours) without a sip and see how your body responds.

If you are questioning coffee's effect on your system, you may be experiencing one or more of these symptoms: feeling wired and tired, sluggish in the afternoon, insomnia, brain fog, or nervous tension. Caffeine often mimics stress in our bodies, adding to the very problem we are trying to decrease. It can also can wreak havoc on your HPA axis, triggering cortisol levels to rise and stay up for far too long. All the de-stressing you may be focusing on with a self-care routine may be counteracted by your daily dose of coffee. And, if you are already overly stressed with chronically high levels of cortisol pulsing through your veins, caffeine from coffee will only compound the effect and leave you even worse off than you already are.

But, *coffee!* It's like being told that you have to break up with the rebel boyfriend whom your parents all of a sudden found out about. You try so hard because you know it's a bad influence in your life, but you just can't help yourself. To be honest, I was so used to that little pick-me-up in the morning that I had a much easier time breaking up with sugar.

When I did manage to conquer caffeine, I realized that I don't *need* it like I thought I did. If you drink a lot of coffee and find yourself wired and tired, or you feel yourself getting anxious after drinking just a small cup, it may be time to find a new boyfriend. I recommend breaking up with it for at least thirty days and see

how your body responds.

One word of warning: cold-turkeying your daily coffee habit is not a good idea, as it can leave you with headaches and feeling pretty crummy. Follow my suggestions to wean yourself off your regular coffee and switch either to decaf coffee, decaf teas, or my personal favorite, matcha green tea, which contains healthier levels of caffeine.

THE *HOW*

Take Decaf Baby Steps

If you love coffee as much as I do, don't stop drinking it all at once, as you already know this can give you bad headaches and other symptoms. It shouldn't take more than a week or two to switch from your regular coffee with decaf, until finally it's all decaf. I did this by swapping one-fourth of my regular coffee blend with decaf, and I gradually kept substituting decaf for regular until it was all decaf.

Drink Matcha Green Tea

Yes, matcha is my personal fave for coffee-swapping! It's packed with antioxidants—and when I say “packed,” I mean super-charged! It is ten times more powerful than regular green tea, and sixty times more potent than spinach and other superfoods that also help to fuel your body's needs. It boosts your metabolism and burns calories naturally, helping your body to detox while lowering cholesterol and blood sugar levels. It also enhances mood and supports concentration while calming the mind and body (the opposite effect of coffee). In fact, matcha sustains my energy throughout the day because it is rich with catechins, the most potent and beneficial antioxidants you can consume. Epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG) composes more than half of the catechins in matcha, and it works in sync with caffeine to provide health benefits, such as boosting your metabolism and immune system. In addition, the amino acid L-theanine in conjunction with caffeine sustains energy and boosts brain power without side effects. Ujido is my brand of choice, and I use it on a daily basis as part of my morning ritual.

Make New Relationships

Rather than replacing or tweaking your current routine, let's talk about some new relationships that I know you're going to love. They have done wonders for my nutritional foundation, and I urge you to incorporate them into your routine.

HYDRATE!

Thirst often mimics hunger in our bodies, and we assume that we need a snack when all we need is to hydrate. To avoid this snack-craving, drink water all day long. Never leave home without a water bottle and drink a glass before each meal. Aim for 8×8 —those eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day—or drink at least half your body weight in ounces of water every day, and more if it's very hot out or if you're sweating a lot due to exercise. Drinking this much water throughout the day helps flush out toxins, which is essential for weight loss and healthy metabolism. I keep my water bottle right by me at work so I never forget to sip all day long.

DRINK WATER INFUSIONS

If you're just not into water, it's time to introduce you to water infusions. They're like super-charged water full of flavor and zest! I love to infuse my water with fruits, herbs, vegetables, and essential oils such as Lemon, Peppermint, Lime, and Grapefruit. I usually prepare my water infusions several days in advance, so they're ready to put into a water jug or a glass water bottle to take with me on the road. These are some of my favorites: Super Berry Antioxidant Boost Water Infusion

½ cup blueberries

½ cup blackberries

½ cup raspberries

½ cup cherries, halved and pitted

1 quart plus 2 cups distilled water

Combine the blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, cherries, and 2 cups of the water in a blender and blend until smooth, approximately 1 minute. Pour through a fine-mesh sieve into a 2-quart pitcher. Add the remaining water. Refrigerate the infusion for at least 30 minutes before serving chilled or over ice. (Note: You can also insert the ingredients without blending into an infusion pitcher, though you won't get the added nutritional benefits.)

Weight-Control Power Water Infusion

½ ruby red grapefruit, juiced

1 orange, juiced

2 Meyer lemons, 1 juiced and 1 sliced into wheels

1½ quarts distilled water

2 drops Lemon essential oil

1 drop Grapefruit essential oil

Add the juices of the grapefruit, orange, and lemons to a small bowl, then pour the juice through a fine-mesh sieve into a 2-quart pitcher. Add the sliced lemon, cover with the water, and then add the essential oils. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, but preferably 2 to 3 hours, before serving.

EAT SMALLER PORTIONS OF REAL FOOD

Junk food is called junk for a reason. It's full of salt, bad fats, sugar, processed flour, and chemical additives, and it has little nutritional value. You can eat a whole lot of it and not feel full, as junk food rarely has the nutrients and fiber that fill you up.

Real food, on the other hand—such as protein, healthy fats, and fiber-rich veggies—is not only more satisfying but also makes you feel like you don't *need* something sweet. If I am craving a sweet after finishing a meal, I wait for five minutes and see if I truly need to eat any more. If I do, I go back and have a small helping of the meal I made. Usually, it's a small portion, but I figure feeding my body something nutritious is better than giving it something sweet. Physically I feel full and mentally I know I don't need any more calories. Knowing what portion size fulfills your needs is key to thriving on the 14-Day Rescue Plan. Start small now so that you can gauge your meal size and really make the recipes work for you.

YOU CAN'T EAT TOO MANY VEGETABLES!

According to a study published by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in November 2017, only 9 percent of Americans eat the minimum daily vegetable recommendation of two to three cups every day. They don't know what they're missing!

Veggies are loaded with the enzymes, fiber, minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants that support cellular vitality; antioxidants prevent cellular damage and reverse aging. They're low in calories and high in water content, which is good for your hydration needs. Fiber fills you up, so it suppresses appetite, reduces weight, improves blood sugar and cholesterol profiles, decreases inflammation, and slows down aging.

If you're not a veggie fan, jump onto the green smoothie train. As I've said, it's the fastest and best food you can make that delivers the most nutrient-dense meal in one serving. A quart of green smoothie has between ten and fifteen servings of fruits and vegetables, and fiber, and also includes herbs, essential oils, sprouted flax seed, and a good vegan-based protein to boost your protein intake and keep you feeling full throughout the day.

Getting into the veggie habit now or discovering which veggies are your

favorites will help you to select and enjoy your meals during the 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan.

EAT HEALTHY FATS

Countless clinical studies have shown that good fats like olive oil, coconut oil, avocados, nuts and seeds, and eggs reduce your risk of heart disease without causing weight gain. They are especially critical for brain function (your neurons are covered in myelin sheaths, which is fat!) and cellular function (every one of the up to 100 *trillion* cells in your body has a fat lipid membrane to protect it and your neurons). In fact, fats are the building blocks of many critical substances in the body, and they are used to manufacture your hormones. The 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan will supply these on a daily basis, but become familiar with them and start to incorporate them into your cooking now so that you know how to use them once you start the meal plan.

TAKE SUPPLEMENTS FOR AN EXTRA BOOST

Even a super-healthy, plant-based, fiber-based, organic diet isn't enough nowadays, as it is extremely difficult for any of us to eat food containing the nutrients we're looking for, particularly magnesium, vitamin D, B vitamins, co-factors, essential fatty acids, and antioxidants. I have been consistently taking supplements for over five years and have experienced more sustainable energy, improved digestion, and happy hormones as a result. When I'm not following my routine, especially when I travel, I am not as energetic and my digestion doesn't function as well. Many of the chapters in Part II list supplements that can benefit you, but discussing your needs with a trusted health-care provider will help you to select those that your body most needs.

If you consider adding one supplement, make it magnesium, since most of us are dramatically lacking in this vital nutrient. Magnesium plays a crucial role in many chemical processes in our bodies and is a vital co-factor for the enzymes responsible for glucose metabolism. A magnesium deficiency negatively affects our ability to accept insulin. Stress, certain medications, and caffeine intake are just a few of the things that can contribute to lowered magnesium levels. While you may benefit from a supplement, consuming foods rich in magnesium, such as nuts, seeds, legumes, leafy greens, and whole grains, will also help to increase your

nutritional game against hormonal imbalance. Green smoothies are also a great way to increase the magnesium content of your morning.

Rituals/Self-Care Routines to Support Nutrition

BE MINDFUL OF HOW YOU EAT

Chew your food. I mean, *really* chew your food! Slow down and enjoy the flavors, the textures, the subtle deliciousness. Let your body and mind know that there is no famine and food is not scarce. This will help reset your cortisol levels so that your body properly distributes the nutrients and allows its systems to function properly. Be mindful of how you eat and discover what a difference it can make.

Also, slow down while you eat. Since we already know that our bodies are more likely to feel hungry, less likely to feel full, and always leave us craving something due to decreased estradiol, chewing slowly and savoring your food will allow time for the ghrelin to decrease and give the leptin time to send those “I’m full” messages. This will also help to lower your stress levels. When you come away from a meal or a snack feeling satisfied and full, you are less likely to have to deal with cortisol spikes later in the day—which, as you know, cause you to reach for those sugary, carb-rich comfort foods.

Begin applying this mindfulness meditation to your routine as soon as possible. This will make the delicious meals in the 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan that much more satisfying!

BREATHE THROUGH YOUR STRESS CRAVINGS

I cannot stress enough the importance of deep breathing! You may need to retrain your body to breathe deeply from the diaphragm so that your belly goes out when you exhale and sucks in when you inhale. Your body calms itself when you breathe deeply, slowing your heart rate and telling your brain that you are in control—even if you aren't.

Anytime you feel stress creeping in and the urge to snack becomes overwhelming, try taking ten deep breaths, resting in the pauses at the peak and pit of the cycle. Inhale, pause, exhale, pause, repeat.

Pillar #2—Exercise

If you don't currently have an exercise routine or ritual in place, it's time to make the change. Our bodies were not meant to be sedentary, and our early ancestors moved for survival. In today's world, we spend far too much time doing other things and neglect our bodies. Be sure that what you choose to do makes your body and soul feel happy. If you hate running, don't run. If you find yoga boring, then seek a team sport. But don't ignore the need for movement. If you have been sedentary for a while and are starting from scratch, then this is a great place to begin your journey.

Just recognize that if your definition of working out is pushing yourself as hard as you can for an hour, five or six or seven days a week, and you find that you're still tired and not seeing results, you may be overtraining and stressing your body out. It's time to reset your workout routine.

Before any new exercise regimen, it is important that you check with your health-care provider to ensure your safe participation. If you have a history of heart disease, diabetes, or any other serious health condition, or if you have been sedentary for a year or more, a sudden increase in exercise intensity may put you at a greater risk for complications, so you may need to begin at a much lower

intensity and work your way up slowly.

The following suggestions will help you build an exercise routine that works for you so that you can get the most out of the 14-Day Rescue Plan. Begin by finding the activities that make you smile, because exercise doesn't have to be in a gym and it doesn't have to make you cringe when you think about it. I recommend exercising at least four days per week—two days of cardio for at least thirty to sixty minutes to get your heart rate up and two days of strength or resistance training. Then add some yoga or stretching to encourage mindfulness and meditation while you're limbering up your body. Familiarize yourself with the routines, the reps, the poses, and the positions so that you will be able to seamlessly incorporate them during your 14-Day Rescue Plan.

Cardiovascular Exercise

Do activities such as walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics—basically any activity that you enjoy that gets your heart rate up. Try a dance party, go hiking, walk your dog, go to a spin class, ride your bike, follow along with exercise or dance videos on YouTube, park at the back of the lot and take the stairs—anything is better than nothing! Here's the kicker: during the 14-Day Rescue Plan, you *limit* this type of activity to twice a week, for no more than thirty minutes per session, performed at a moderate intensity.

How do you gauge intensity? A personal trainer can help, or if you do it on your own, there are two methods. The first is to use a rating of perceived exertion (RPE) scale. On a range of 1 to 10 (1 being “not working hard at all” and 10 being “I’m pushing myself to my limit”), you should aim for an intensity of 5 to 7. If you feel exhausted and out of breath after the first ten minutes, then you may be pushing yourself too hard. The second is by checking your heart rate and using this formula: 220 minus your age. (For example, if you’re forty-five, subtract that from 220 and end up with 175. This is your predicted maximum heart rate. When you exercise, you should aim to get your heart rate up to 65 to 75 percent of your predicted maximum. For a forty-five-year-old, this would be 114 to 131 beats per minute.) That sounds doable, right? Keep in mind, though, that how you feel is a better gauge of how hard you’re working. Those numbers are merely a guideline.

Strength Training

Many people focus solely on cardiovascular training because they think that the more they get their heart rate up, the more calories they burn. While this is true to an extent, adding strength or resistance training to your routine has multiple benefits. Strength training uses modalities such as weights, resistance bands, and/or body weight to place a load on the muscles. Regularly doing these types of activities helps increase muscle tone, strength, and mass, which in turn helps to improve metabolism, insulin sensitivity, and bone health. I recommend two strength-training sessions per week, doing two different exercises that work all the major muscle groups. Again, a fitness professional, such as a personal trainer, can help you figure out the best exercises for you, but there are also online videos and apps. Once you have selected your exercises, do a circuit whereby you start with exercise number 1 and do 10 to 12 repetitions of that exercise. Move on to exercise 2, and so on. Completing all eight exercises equals one set. Do this circuit two or three times per session, completing two or three sets of each exercise.

Yoga and Stretching

Last, but certainly not least, incorporate yoga and stretching into your weekly routine. These activities do not raise your heart rate like cardiovascular exercise, but they help strengthen, relax, and add flexibility to your muscles, improve mental focus, and are just enough movement to stimulate blood flow, reduce stress hormones, and make you feel relaxed. Sign up for a yoga class, or start with some Sun Salutations, a series of flexion and extension postures coordinated with your inhalation and exhalation. It's not as complicated as it sounds, and you will feel so relaxed when you are done. If you don't know where to start, try an Internet search that will show you a series of poses, or download one of the many free or inexpensive yoga apps, like Yogaia or Yoga Studio, which will guide you through a series of poses and stretches. The possibilities are endless! Your yoga routines can be performed in two longer sessions per week (a thirty-minute class, for example) or break them up into smaller sections. A ten-minute yoga routine done every morning or evening is an amazing way to help manage stress.

Use an App to Help with Your Training

There are many amazing and free apps that will create interval timers for you. These are great tools that make working out foolproof, and help rid you of any excuses not to do them! My husband and I love the Tabata app, which allows us to create our favorite workout routines while we're out of town or on vacation somewhere that doesn't have a gym. We each come up with two exercises and then create a circuit of four exercises to do along with the interval timer, and we then do a total of about four or five circuits. We easily burn between 200 and 400 calories in a short period of time—and, most important, we set up our metabolisms for continued calorie burning.

Essential Oils for Exercise Support

As always, essential oils can help you during the 14-Day Rescue Plan. Finding the essential oils that work for you is part of developing your individual routine. The following is one of my favorites that has proven successful for many women who have successfully rebuilt their foundation and balanced their hormones.

Energy & Vitality Blend Boost your body pre-exercise to open up the respiratory system and motivate the mind. This combination can be used as a personal inhaler blend, a diffuser blend, or as a rollerball blend. Citrus and Peppermint always motivate me to work a bit harder while the Frankincense urges me toward self-confidence that I can succeed in my goals and feel good about myself in the process.

For Personal Inhaler

4 drops Wild Orange essential oil

4 drops Bergamot essential oil

3 drops Peppermint essential oil

2 drops Frankincense essential oil

Add the essential oils to a personal inhaler and use prior to exercise.

For Diffuser Blend

2 drops Wild Orange essential oil

2 drops Bergamot essential oil

1 drop Peppermint essential oil

1 drop Frankincense essential oil

Add the drops to an ultrasonic diffuser and use before or during exercise.

For Rollerball Blend

8 drops Wild Orange essential oil

8 drops Bergamot essential oil

6 drops Peppermint essential oil

4 drops Frankincense essential oil

Carrier oil of choice

Add the essential oils to a 10 mL glass rollerball bottle and top off with your preferred carrier oil. Replace the rollerball top and cap, and shake gently to blend. Apply to pulse points before exercise.

Pillar #3—Stress Management Getting your stress under control is paramount in this battle—so if you skipped Chapter 5, read it now. Take notes. Figure out a plan to help yourself thrive. If you do anything in the time leading up to your 14-Day Rescue Plan, incorporate some of these stress-busting rituals and routines into your day. It's the first step toward reclaiming your vitality and balancing those hormones. The tips in Chapter 5 can easily be incorporated into a morning or evening ritual, or anytime a need arises. Find the ones that work for you and build your own routines.

The following suggestions are recommended for everyone, so try to work these in to your preparations for the 14-Day Rescue Plan.

Morning Routine to Start Your Day

ADORN YOURSELF IN THE MORNING

How you look affects how you feel. We all know the feeling of finding that perfect dress or those jeans that just put everything into top gear. In the morning, make it a point to adorn yourself until you feel comfortable. I'm not just talking about yoga pants and a tee shirt, though that may be the comfiest outfit for you, but what makes you feel like yourself in your own skin. Apply the Superwoman Rollerball Blend, and then dress from head to toe, and smile with confidence at yourself in the mirror.

Superwoman Rollerball Blend

This is one of the most effective blends ever.

12 drops Clary Sage essential oil

10 drops Lavender essential oil

5 drops Cedarwood essential oil

5 drops Geranium essential oil

4 drops Ylang Ylang essential oil

Carrier oil of choice

Place the oils in a 10 mL rollerball and then fill to the top with the carrier oil. Replace the rollerball top and cap, and shake gently to mix. Roll the blend over your pulse points: behind the ears, ankles, wrists, and over the heart.

Take a breath, stand up, and get into the Superwoman Power stance: stand with your hips apart and hands on your waist, like Wonder Woman. Own the moment, breathe the blend in deeply. Yes, you are Superwoman!

Evening Routine to Boost Your Sleep

Even though we may argue that our bodies don't need as much sleep as they actually do, it is imperative that we allow ourselves that downtime to recharge and reset. The standard recommendation for sleep is still seven to eight hours per night for most adults, but I don't know many women who actually allow themselves that much rest time.

Good sleep will also naturally boost serotonin levels, and when your body has enough time to recharge, your cravings will not be as intense. Refer to Chapter 7 to see how essential oils and rituals can support your sleep routine. A great beginning to an evening routine can include the following suggestions.

HERBAL TEA TIME

Heat up water for your favorite herbal tea (without the added sugar!). My personal favorite is a chocolate rooibos tea.

HEALTHY SNACK PRESENTATION

Thinly slice an apple and fan out the pieces on your favorite plate. Pay attention to presentation to make this ritual a special occasion—you eat with your eyes first, and you deserve a little something special in the evening! Next, sprinkle the apples with cinnamon or your favorite spice. (Saigon cinnamon is perfectly sweet and pairs well with apples.) You can also soak the apples in a bowl with water and a few drops of Cinnamon Bark or Cassia essential oil for a juicy, spicy alternative.

MINDFULNESS RITUAL

It's very hard to go to sleep when your mind is racing. Chapter 7 mentioned banishing your electronics before bedtime. Reading, praying, or meditating when you get into bed are all useful ways to signal your brain that it needs to move into sleep zone. Even five minutes of mindful meditation or prayer coupled with deep breathing will calm your body into a restful relaxation to allow for sleep.

Calming Nighttime Meditation/Prayer Rollerball Blend

Essential oils have traditionally been used to support healthy meditation and prayer for centuries. The Calming Nighttime Blend (see [this page](#)) is meant to provide calm and peace to promote a restful night's sleep. The Frankincense helps you to connect spiritually and feel loved, while Clary Sage balances your inner turmoil. Used for sacred devotion, Sandalwood is often chosen for its ability to prepare the mind for connection, while Lavender provides a natural calm and quiets the mind. Finally, Wild Orange will uplift your emotions while allowing your mind and body to relax.

Pillar #4—Reducing The Toxic Burden

As discussed in Chapter 14, toxins in the beauty products you use, as well as those in our environment, can wreak havoc on your hormones. During these two preparatory weeks, try your best to be as green as possible. You can never have too much Lemon essential oil and distilled white vinegar in the house to keep it clean and smelling fresh and wonderful! Eventually, you will be able to make over your entire home, but start small and work your way there. While this doesn't have to be accomplished before the 14-Day Rescue Plan, try to implement some of the strategies in Chapter 14 to eliminate toxins from your home, especially in your beauty and personal-care products.

Pillar #5—Self-Care Rituals

In addition to the self-care suggestions in Part II, here's one more that has helped me and thousands of other women to reclaim their bodies, minds, and sense of self. Shifting your entire paradigm of food and body image can be difficult, which is why I recommend taking baby steps at first. If you aren't sure where to start, begin by incorporating the following ritual into your day, until you make it a habit for life. As you begin to notice the results, go back and start adding other rituals, and you will begin to feel your mind and body becoming sustained and supported. You will notice that the more you do for yourself, the better you will feel and the more people will respond to your positive energy. Not only will your health and wellness improve but also your overall vitality and sense of self will exponentially increase until you feel and look like a new woman.

Living with hormonal imbalance doesn't have to be your normal. Choose to change your lifestyle so that *you* become just as important as everything else you have been prioritizing.

Self-Care Is Health Care

Whether you use these tips in the morning to guide your mind and body for the day or you relax and focus at the end of the day, mindfulness rituals can become the pause in your busy schedule devoted solely to you. Take time throughout your day and focus on your health-care needs.

Begin by incorporating *gratitude journaling*. While society influences us to focus on the negative and to rant and rave about the horrors, our sense of self needs us to be able to recognize the positives in our lives. Adding five to ten minutes of *meditation* or *prayer* about what has positively influenced your life will completely change your outlook. Gain more power by writing down what you are grateful for so that you can come back and review your journaling when you are feeling less than gracious.

Gracious Blend

While doing both these activities, use the Gracious Blend in a diffuser or rollerball jar. Help yourself find the focus and pause that you need by applying the blend to pulse points and inhaling deeply at the beginning of your routine, or diffusing it.

For Diffuser

2 drops Frankincense essential oil

2 drops Tangerine essential oil

1 drop Ylang Ylang essential oil

1 drop Rosemary essential oil

For Rollerball

10 drops Frankincense essential oil

10 drops Tangerine essential oil

5 drops Ylang Ylang essential oil

5 drops Rosemary essential oil

Carrier oil of choice

Add the essential oils to a 10 mL glass rollerball bottle and top off with a carrier oil of your choice. Replace the rollerball top and cap, and shake gently to combine. Apply to pulse points at the beginning of your mindfulness ritual.

Foundational Success with Essential Oils I was a nutrition expert well before I discovered the power of essential oils. I learned something that floored me when I was working with my patients: I can get people to use an essential oil before I can get them to really change their diet. In other words, essential oils will always work right away. You'll feel the results. You'll know!

It is my hope that this will open the door for you to believe in holistic medicine and wellness. But if you really are serious about making changes in your life to balance your hormones and improve your health, there is no magic bullet. It's not just about the oils but also about how you approach food, hydration, exercise, and stress relief. If you're only using the oils and not making any other changes in your life, you can't possibly reap all the benefits the oils are giving you! You might not even know how potent they are if you're still making all the mistakes I once did.

Be good to yourself. You deserve to reclaim your body and your health. If nothing else, the 14-Day Rescue Plan will help you develop healthy, daily practices, teach you to make smarter choices about your body, and give you a framework to support your long-term health goals.

CHAPTER 16

The 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan Basics Before You Start

The road to success starts with preparation. Follow these guidelines so you have everything you need prior to your initial two weeks on the plan:

- 1.** Do a pantry clean-out. Be ruthless! Get rid of anything in the house that is off the plan. Either give it to friends or donate it to your local food bank.
- 2.** Go through the recipe list and see which of the basics, staples, and spices you have already and which ones you'll need to buy so you don't have to think about ingredients when you're getting ready to make your meals.
- 3.** Make a detailed shopping list and buy or order what you need. For a basics shopping list, see the next section.
- 4.** Don't go shopping when you're hungry! It's too easy to give in to snack or junk foods when your stomach is rumbling. If there are trigger foods that you know you can't stop eating once you start, don't buy them.
- 5.** Don't go shopping when you're pressed for time. If you're buying any packaged foods, read labels carefully. You are going to become a world-class "label looker"!
- 6.** Purchase or create a food journal (it can simply be sheets of paper stapled together) as you'll want to start tracking how you feel after every meal. You can even start your food journal before beginning the 14-Day Rescue Plan to get an idea of which foods make you feel good, which make you bloated, and so on.
- 7.** Have all the essential oils and essential oil supplies you are using at hand.

8. Go through the recipes in this book and make up any new blends you want to use during the 14-Day Rescue Plan.
9. If you need extra motivation, find a workout or walking partner and schedule your exercise sessions together, now. You're much less likely to cancel when you don't want to let your friend down!
10. Create a 14-day calendar and tape it to your refrigerator or somewhere visible. Cross off every day as it goes by. I know you can stick to the plan!

Basics Shopping List

Vegetables

Arugula

Bell peppers

Broccoli

Butter lettuce

Carrots

Cauliflower

Celery

Cucumber

Dandelion greens

Eggplant

Fennel

Fermented vegetables

Garlic cloves

Jalapeño

Kale

Mushrooms, portobello or crimini Onions, red, yellow, or green Salad greens

Shallot

Spinach

Squash, butternut or delicata

Sweet potatoes

Zucchini

Fruit Apples, Granny Smith

Avocados

Berries (blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries) Cherry tomatoes

Grapefruit

Heirloom tomatoes, red, yellow, or green Lemons

Limes

Olives

Pomegranate seeds

Fats and Oils

Coconut oil, cold-pressed Olive oil, extra-virgin

Protein

Beans

Chicken, whole

Chicken thighs, boneless and skinless Chicken breasts, boneless and skinless

Chicken, ground

Dulse flakes

Eggs, pastured, organic

Fish (cod, halibut, mahi mahi) Lentils

Nutritional yeast

Protein powder (nondairy) Quinoa

Salmon, skin-on fillets

Tofu

Nuts and Seeds

Cashews

Tahini

Nut or coconut-based kefir Pumpkin seeds

Walnuts

Herbs

Fresh

Basil, Italian or Thai

Cilantro

Dill

Ginger, fresh

Lemongrass

Mint

Oregano

Parsley

Thyme

Dried

Bay leaves

Oregano

Parsley

Rosemary

Spices Black peppercorns

Chili powder

Chili powder 1/2 cup 1/2 cup 1/2 cup 1/2 cup 1/2 cup

Chinese five-spice powder
Cinnamon, ground
Cumin, ground
Ginger, ground
Nutmeg, ground
Onion powder
Paprika, ground
Red pepper flakes
Turmeric, ground

Pantry Items

Black beans, low-sodium, canned
Coconut aminos
Coconut milk, canned
Diced tomatoes, low-sodium, canned
Sriracha hot sauce
Tomato sauce, low-sodium, canned
Vegetable broth

Vinegar, apple cider and red wine

The 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan Nutrition Basics
My 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan is designed to create lasting success. Unlike other meal plans, this program isn't going to teach you how to "diet." Instead, you focus on nutrient-dense foods that work to balance your hormones, including fresh veggies, fruit, gluten-free whole grains, lean protein sources, and healthy fats in proper proportion to promote sustainable energy throughout the day, without the risk of overeating.

There is so much to gain by following this plan. Weight loss, energy gain, insulin resetting, hormone synergy, and greater resistance to hormonal imbalances—simply by eating delicious whole foods. It's not just about following a plan, although that will certainly help in the beginning, but about learning how to make healthy choices that support your hormones. This will create the framework for understanding the principles of healthy cooking and eating so that eating habits actually change over time. The recipes in the next chapter are designed to make cooking healthy food delicious and simple, without sacrificing favorite foods and flavors.

You will also be eliminating some foods that hijack your hormones and

contribute to weight gain and low energy. These hijackers are:

- Gluten
- Dairy
- Processed sugars and sugar substitutes
- Red meat
- Caffeine

If you love the results that you get from the 14-Day Rescue Plan, go ahead and follow the recipes and meal plan for another 7 days. I have personally followed this plan for 28 days and as a result have experienced more energy, focus, and improved digestion.

Track Your Food

Calculating your basal metabolic rate (BMR) will help you to determine your daily caloric needs. In addition, tracking your consumption in your food journal will help you to assess if you are really getting the nourishment you need, and will enable you to identify when those cravings pop up during the day or when you get out of control with your habits.

When hormonal surges or imbalances cause us to crave certain foods at specific times, we need to be aware. For example, do you crave a certain snack when you're about to get your period? Before I was able to break up with my cravings, I had an insatiable desire for mid-afternoon Salted Caramel & Dark Chocolate Nut KIND bars when my monthly menstrual cycle started.

From there, you begin to develop what I like to call “caloric awareness”—how many calories you need, what is in excess, and your daily nutritional patterns. Remember that all calories are not the same; one doughnut calorie does not equal one carrot calorie in terms of nutrition. Choosing healthy foods rich in fiber and nutrients will fill you up and support your body's metabolism.

Be especially careful about what you drink. My patients often tell me things

like, “Well, I’m just not hungry for breakfast,” but then I see in their food journals that they downed a Venti Java Chip Frappuccino, with over 800 calories of sugar and fat, nearly every day. A large order of french fries has fewer calories!

While it may seem like a chore at first, tracking your food intake can empower you to know exactly how you are fueling your body. After only a week or two, you will be able to start discerning your cravings patterns and have more caloric awareness. Then, when those snacky times come around, you can be proactive by reaching for your Grapefruit or Peppermint essential oil and inhaling to refocus and curb those cravings.

Keep a Food Journal

Your food journal will be a huge help for you to track how you feel after every meal. It’s very important to do this during your 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan, and for the remainder of the month as you begin to reintroduce foods into your diet.

You’ll want to specifically pay attention to your digestion, energy, mood and any inflammation/allergen reaction to what you are eating. Focus on reintroducing one food category at a time, or even a single food. Pay close attention to how you feel a couple hours after you finish your meal. Examples of foods to reintroduce are dairy, grains, corn. You may find that certain foods cause digestive discomfort, low energy, brain fog, joint pain, sleep disruption, and mood changes.

The 14-Day Hormone Rescue Meal Plan Tips and Rules

- Eat protein at each meal. Aim for a total of 50–60 grams of protein each day (16–20 g at each of three meals). Choose your proteins from beans, lentils, quinoa, fish, free-range pastured chicken and turkey. Be sure to eat enough protein to keep you feeling full between meals.
- Eat 1 pound of vegetables each day. Aim to consume 7 servings of raw and

cooked vegetables every day. The meal plan is designed to cover your vegetable recommendations.

- Eliminate sugar and sugar substitutes. Avoid these sugars: white table sugar, honey, agave, Splenda, brown sugar, molasses, and maple syrup. The only sweetener approved is stevia.
- Eat low-glycemic-index fruits (GI index of 50 or less). The fruit list includes berries, avocado, olives, apples, grapefruit, pears, lemon, kiwis. Avoid bananas, mangoes, grapes, melons, figs.
- Eat every four to six hours. The goal is to reset your insulin levels and burn fat. Avoid snacks, as they can affect your hormones and weight loss. No snacking after dinner. Late-night snacking can lead to unwanted calories and a surge in insulin. Stick to the meal plan designed to set you up for success to stave off late-night cravings.
- To satiate hunger, drink a 16-ounce glass of water with 1 tablespoon chia seeds.

CHAPTER 17

The 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan and Recipes

The 14-Day Rescue Meal Plan provides easy-to-prepare meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The recipes were created and tested by my good friend and therapeutic chef Anna V. Bohbot. She is also the coauthor of *The Dash Diet Cookbook*, *The Matcha Miracle*, and *The Low G.I. Slow Cooker*. The recipes have also been tested by me and many women who have successfully completed the 14-Day Rescue Plan. These recipes really work and will give you a framework for cooking healthy whole foods without complicated ingredients or cooking techniques. Creating a cooking-at-home lifestyle is key to a sustainable hormonal balance.

The recipes are arranged as two types: smoothies and shakes, and lunch and dinner entrees. You'll find the meal plans provide a framework with variety. The menus are designed to serve one person, so the quantities, unless otherwise noted, are *one serving*. Suggested recipes can be substituted for vegetarians, and if you have leftovers, feel free to use them for lunch or dinner the next day. Plan on having a smoothie or shake in the morning, and an entree for lunch or dinner. You can also substitute a smoothie or shake for an on-the-go complete lunch.

Day 1

Breakfast

1 cup Tulsi or green tea

Dr. Mariza's Green Energy Smoothie ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean vanilla protein powder (see Resources) Lunch

Arugula and Fennel Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette ([this page](#)) 4 ounces chicken breast, fish, or tofu, cooked as desired
1 cup mixed berries
1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Dinner

Roasted Italian-Style Vegetables on Sweet Potato Mash ([this page](#)) 5 ounces cod or salmon fillet, cooked as desired

Day 2

Breakfast

1 cup green or Tulsi tea
Blueberry Shake ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean vanilla protein powder (see Resources) Lunch
Serving of Tomato and Cucumber Salad with Tahini Dressing ([this page](#)) 4 ounces chopped cooked chicken, ground turkey, or tofu, prepared as desired
1 medium apple, or ½ cup mixed berries

Dinner Salmon Fillets with Lemon Roasted Broccoli ([this page](#)) 1 cup baked sweet potato, drizzled with coconut oil

1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Day 3

Breakfast

1 cup green tea, or hot water with lemon
Berry Green Smoothie ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean vanilla protein powder (see Resources) Lunch
Chicken Cobb Salad with Homemade Ranch Dressing ([this page](#)) ½ cup mixed berries
1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Dinner

Broccoli and Greens Soup ([this page](#)) 5 ounces ground turkey or baked tofu, cooked as desired
½ cup baked sweet potato, drizzled with coconut oil

Day 4

Breakfast

Golden Milk ([this page](#)) Matcha Latte with Almond Milk ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean vanilla protein powder (see Resources) Lunch
Veggie Frittata ([this page](#)) 2 cups green salad with Basic Vinaigrette ([this page](#)) 1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Dinner Zesty Walnut Pesto Zoodles ([this page](#)) Salmon Fillets with Lemon Roasted Broccoli ([this page](#)) Day 5

Breakfast

Detoxifying Bone Broth ([this page](#)) Green Avocado Smoothie ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean vanilla protein powder (see Resources) Lunch
Ground Chicken Thai Lettuce Wraps ([this page](#)) 2 cups green salad, or Arugula and Fennel Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette ([this page](#)) 1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Dinner

Asian-Style Veggie Bowl ([this page](#)) 5 ounces boneless and skinless chicken breast, or tofu, cooked as desired Day 6

Breakfast

Matcha Latte with Almond Milk ([this page](#)) or Golden Milk ([this page](#)) Veggie Frittata ([this page](#)) Lunch
Chocolate Mint Chip Shake ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean chocolate protein powder (see Resources) Detoxifying Bone Broth ([this page](#)) Dinner
Creamy Butternut Squash Soup ([this page](#)) 2 cups green salad with Lemon Vinaigrette ([this page](#)) 4 ounces chopped skinless and boneless chicken, cooked as desired ½ cup sliced strawberries

1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Day 7

Breakfast

Golden Milk ([this page](#)) Berry Green Smoothie ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean chocolate protein powder (see Resources) Lunch

Warm Kale and Delicata Squash Salad ([this page](#)) 5 ounces salmon fillet, cooked as desired

1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Dinner

Zesty Walnut Pesto Zoodles ([this page](#)) Creamy Butternut Squash Soup ([this page](#)) Day 8

Breakfast

1 cup Tulsi or green tea

Blueberry Shake ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean vanilla protein powder (see Resources) Lunch

Arugula and Fennel Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette ([this page](#)) 4 ounces chicken breast, cooked as desired, or 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped 1 cup mixed berries 1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Dinner

Stuffed Portobello Mushroom Caps ([this page](#)) 2 cups green salad, or Arugula and Fennel Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette ([this page](#)) Day 9

Breakfast

Detoxifying Bone Broth ([this page](#)) Green Avocado Smoothie ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean vanilla protein powder (see Resources) Lunch

Double serving of Tomato and Cucumber Salad with Tahini Dressing ([this page](#)) 4 ounces ground turkey, cooked as desired, or baked tofu

1 medium apple, or ½ cup mixed berries

Dinner

Salmon Fillets with Lemon Roasted Broccoli ([this page](#)) 1 cup baked sweet potato, drizzled with coconut oil
1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Day 10

Breakfast

1 cup Tulsi tea, or hot water with lemon
Dr. Mariza's Green Energy Smoothie ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean vanilla protein powder (see Resources) Lunch Southwest Chicken Bowl ([this page](#)) ½ cup mixed berries
1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Dinner

Roasted Italian-Style Vegetables on Sweet Potato Mash ([this page](#)) 2 cups green salad, or Arugula and Fennel Salad with Basic Vinaigrette ([this page](#)) 10 raw almonds or cashews

Day 11

Breakfast

Golden Milk ([this page](#)) Chocolate Mint Chip Shake ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean chocolate protein powder (see Resources) Lunch Ground Chicken Thai Lettuce Wraps ([this page](#)) 2 cups green salad with Basic Vinaigrette ([this page](#)) 1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Dinner

Broccoli and Greens Soup ([this page](#)) 5 ounces salmon fillet, cooked as desired, or baked tofu
½ cup baked sweet potato

Day 12

Breakfast

Matcha Latte with Almond Milk ([this page](#)) Blueberry Shake ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean vanilla protein powder (see Resources) Lunch Detoxifying Bone Broth ([this page](#)) Green Avocado Smoothie ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean vanilla protein powder (see Resources) Dinner Warm Kale and Delicata Squash Salad ([this page](#)) 5 ounces ground turkey, cooked as desired
1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Day 13

Breakfast

Golden Milk ([this page](#)) Veggie Frittata ([this page](#)) Lunch Chocolate Mint Chip Shake ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean chocolate protein powder (see Resources) Detoxifying Bone Broth ([this page](#)) Dinner Creamy Butternut Squash Soup ([this page](#)) Tomato and Cucumber Salad with Tahini Dressing ([this page](#)) 1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Day 14

Breakfast

1 cup green tea or Tulsi tea with lemon
Dr. Mariza's Green Energy Smoothie ([this page](#)), with 1–2 scoops of clean vanilla protein powder (see Resources) Lunch Veggie Frittata ([this page](#)) 2 cups green salad, or Arugula and Fennel Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette ([this page](#)) Dinner Salmon Fillets with Lemon Roasted Broccoli ([this page](#)) 1 cup baked sweet potato, drizzled with coconut oil
1 tablespoon fermented veggie (optional, if tolerated)

Recipes

SMOOTHIES AND SHAKES

Green Avocado Smoothie MAKES 1 SERVING

- 2 cups chopped kale or mixed greens (romaine, Swiss chard, spinach) 1 cup water
- ½ green apple, cored and chopped
- ½ medium avocado, chopped
- 1 scoop clean protein powder (see Resources)
- 1 cup ice cubes

Place the kale and water in a high-powered blender and blend on low speed. As the kale begins to break down, increase to medium speed until completely broken down and smooth. Add the remaining ingredients, and blend on medium to high speed until you achieve your desired consistency, normally about 1 minute. Serve immediately.

Berry Green Smoothie

MAKES 1 SERVING

- 2 cups chopped spinach or mixed greens (kale, romaine, Swiss chard) 1–2 cups filtered water
- ½ cup frozen raspberries
- ½ cup frozen blueberries
- ½ small avocado, chopped
- 1 scoop clean protein powder (see Resources)
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened almond butter

Place the spinach and water in a high-powered blender and blend on low until the spinach begins to break down. Increase to medium speed until completely broken down and smooth. Add the berries, avocado, protein powder, and almond butter, and blend on medium to high speed until you reach your desired consistency, usually about 1 minute. Serve immediately.

Dr. Mariza's Green Energy Smoothie MAKES 1 SERVING

2 cups filtered water
2 cups chopped organic kale or mixed greens (romaine, Swiss chard, spinach) ½ medium avocado
½ cup frozen pineapple cubes
Juice of 1 lemon
1 scoop clean protein powder (see Resources)
1½ teaspoons organic matcha green tea powder
2 tablespoons collagen powder (see Resources)
½ cup ice cubes

Combine 1 cup of the water and the greens in a high-powered blender and blend on high speed until smooth. Add the remaining water and other ingredients. Blend until smooth, about 1 minute. (This can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.) Blueberry Shake MAKES 2 SERVINGS

2 cups chopped mixed greens (kale, romaine, Swiss chard, spinach) 1 to 1½ cups water
⅓ cup chopped carrot
½ cup frozen blueberries
1 cup cucumbers
½ tablespoon coconut oil
½ cup unsweetened almond milk
1 scoop vanilla clean protein powder (see Resources)
1–2 ice cubes

Add the greens and water to a high-powered blender. Start blending on low and as greens start to break down, increase to medium speed until greens are completely broken down and smooth. Add the carrot, blueberries, cucumbers, coconut oil, almond milk, protein powder, and ice cubes, and blend well on medium to high speed until desired consistency is achieved, about 1 minute. Serve immediately.

Chocolate Mint Chip Shake

MAKES 1 SERVING

2 cups chopped spinach or mixed greens (kale, romaine, Swiss chard) 1 to 1½ cups water

1½ cups unsweetened almond milk or coconut milk
½ cup fresh mint leaves, or 1 drop mint extract
½ tablespoon maca powder (optional)
1 tablespoon cacao nibs
½ medium avocado, chopped
1 scoop chocolate protein (see Resources)
½ cup ice cubes

Add the greens and water to a high-powered blender. Start blending on low and as greens start to break down, increase to medium speed until greens are completely broken down and smooth. Add the almond milk, mint, maca, cacao nibs, avocado, protein powder, and ice cubes, and blend well on medium to high speed until desired consistency is achieved, about 1 minute. Serve immediately.

Matcha Latte with Almond Milk MAKES 2 SERVINGS

½ cup filtered water
1 teaspoon matcha green tea powder
1½ cups unsweetened almond milk, heated

Heat the water in a small pot over medium heat to just before boiling. Place ½ teaspoon matcha into each of two mugs. Add half the hot water to each cup and whisk until frothy. Then pour half the almond milk into each mug. If you're using a milk frother, place on the latte and turn on, allowing to froth and foam until desired texture. (Or, reserve some of the hot almond milk and separately froth in a cup, then gently pour into each mug.) Enjoy immediately.

Tip: Add 2–3 drops pure liquid stevia to sweeten, if desired.

Refreshing Tulsi Iced Tea Tulsi, or holy basil tea, helps you relax and reduces stress. It's perfect for

an afternoon or evening beverage. The Tulsi and green tea combination promotes longevity, owing to its high antioxidant content.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

5 cups filtered water
6 tablespoons organic Tulsi tea
3 tablespoons organic decaffeinated green tea
4 cups cold water
2 cups ice cubes

Bring the filtered water to a boil and steep the Tulsi and green tea for 6 to 10 minutes. Strain the tea and add the cold water. Once the tea cools down, add the ice cubes, and serve.

Tip: Enjoy this tea warm by leaving out the ice. Tulsi tea is traditionally served warm, or at room temperature. Add 2–3 drops pure liquid stevia to sweeten the iced tea.

Golden Milk (Turmeric Tea)

For a change, use bone broth (see [this page](#)) with these ingredients for a savory tea.

MAKES 2 SERVINGS

2 cups nondairy milk (unsweetened almond or coconut milk)
1 cup filtered water
1 teaspoon ground turmeric or minced fresh turmeric
¼ teaspoon ground ginger or minced fresh ginger
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon coconut oil
⅛ teaspoon black peppercorns
⅛ teaspoon ground cardamom (optional)
3–5 drops pure liquid stevia (optional)

Place the milk, water, turmeric, ginger, cinnamon, coconut oil, peppercorns, and

cardamom in a small saucepan and whisk to combine. Bring to a low boil over medium heat. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes, or until flavors have combined. Strain through a fine-mesh strainer, and pour into mugs.

Tip: Golden milk can be made up to 5 days ahead. Store in an airtight glass jar in the refrigerator, then warm to desired temperature and serve.

LUNCH AND DINNER ENTREES

Veggie Frittata MAKES 4 SERVINGS

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1½ cups cubed zucchini
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ cup broccoli florets
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley, or 1 teaspoon dried
- ¼ teaspoon salt and pepper, plus more as needed
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 8 large eggs
- ½ cup unsweetened almond milk

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Coat a 9-inch baking dish with nonstick spray.

Heat a skillet over medium heat and add the olive oil. Add the onion and zucchini and cook for about 1 minute. Add the garlic and sauté a few more minutes, then add the broccoli, oregano, and parsley. After another minute, add the salt and pepper. Mix well, then turn off the heat and add the spinach.

In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, almond milk, and additional salt and pepper.

Spread the the sautéed ingredients in the baking dish and then pour in the egg

mixture. Place dish in the oven and bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until a knife inserted in the middle comes out clean.

Arugula and Fennel Salad with Lemon Vinaigrette **This salad is lovely with the lemon vinaigrette, but an alternative is the basic vinaigrette that follows.**

SERVES 4

5 cups arugula
1 large avocado, chopped
½ cup thinly sliced fennel bulb
1 cup cherry tomatoes, cut into halves
¼ cup pine nuts (optional)
Lemon Vinaigrette (recipe follows)

In a large salad bowl, combine all the ingredients except the vinaigrette. Toss well, then pour half the vinaigrette over the salad and toss again gently to combine.

Lemon Vinaigrette MAKES 1 CUP; SERVING SIZE IS ½ TABLESPOON

¼ cup fresh lemon juice
½ cup red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
⅛ teaspoon sea salt
⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Whisk together the lemon juice, vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper in a small bowl. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil and continue whisking until the mixture is smooth. (Store remainder in an airtight container for future use.) Basic Vinaigrette

MAKES ¾ CUP; SERVING SIZE IS ½ TABLESPOON

¼ cup red wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar

¼ cup red wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
⅛ teaspoon sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Combine all the ingredients in a glass bowl or jar and whisk together until smooth. (Store remainder in an airtight container for future use.) Creamy Butternut Squash

Soup MAKES 4 SERVINGS

1 large butternut squash (2½–3 pounds)
2 tablespoons coconut oil
1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored, and chopped
1 medium yellow onion, chopped (about ¾ cup)
2 large garlic cloves
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
3 quarts vegetable broth
1 teaspoon sea salt, plus more as needed
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more as needed
1 (12-ounce) can coconut milk
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment.

Halve the squash and use a spoon to remove the seeds and strings. Place face down on the baking sheet and roast about 1 hour, or until the skin leaves an imprint when you push down on it.

Add the coconut oil to a large pot over medium heat. Add the apple and onion, and sauté for 4 to 5 minutes, or until the apple softens and the onion is slightly browned. Add the garlic and spices and sauté for an additional minute, or until fragrant.

Using a large spoon, scoop the squash pulp out of its skin and add to the pot. Add the vegetable broth and salt and pepper, and cover. Simmer over low heat for 4 to 5 minutes, until squash is warmed through. Pour in the coconut milk and then use an

immersion/stick blender to puree until smooth. (Alternatively, transfer to a high-powered blender and puree, working in batches if necessary.) Season with additional salt and pepper, and pour back into pot, heat until warm, and add the red pepper flakes, if using.

Broccoli and Greens Soup MAKES 4 SERVINGS

- 2 large broccoli crowns (about 2 pounds)
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ large yellow onion, chopped (about ½ cup)
- 2 large garlic cloves
- 3 quarts vegetable broth
- 1 bunch dandelion greens, trimmed and cut into 1-inch lengths 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more as needed
- 1 cup pumpkin seeds

Cut the broccoli crowns into small florets, and thinly slice the stalks into rounds. Place a large pot over medium heat. Add the olive oil, then the broccoli stalks and the onion. Sauté for 4 to 5 minutes, or until the onion is browned and the broccoli is tender. Add the garlic and sauté an additional minute, or until garlic is fragrant. Add the broccoli florets and the broth. Cover and lower the heat, and simmer for about 15 minutes or until the florets are tender.

Add the dandelion greens to the pot along with the lemon juice. Simmer an additional 3 to 4 minutes, then turn the heat off. Use an immersion/stick blender to puree the soup. (Alternatively, transfer the soup to a high-powered blender and puree, working in batches if necessary.) Season the soup with salt and pepper and transfer back to the pot to keep warm.

Heat a small sauté pan over medium heat. Rough chop the pumpkin seeds and add to the pan, shaking often until the seeds are fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes.

Ladle the soup into bowls and top with some toasted pumpkin seeds, as well as additional black pepper, if desired.

Tomato and Cucumber Salad with Tahini Dressing

The salad is meant to be chunky and light on the arugula. You are welcome to add more arugula if you like. This salad can also be enjoyed the next day, so save those leftovers!

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

½ medium red onion
1½ pounds yellow heirloom tomatoes
1½ pounds red heirloom tomatoes
1½ pounds green heirloom tomatoes
1½ pounds purple heirloom tomatoes
1 English cucumber
1 large avocado
1 bunch arugula
½ bunch fresh basil, leaves torn into small pieces
½ bunch fresh mint, leaves roughly chopped
¼ bunch fresh parsley, roughly chopped
Tahini Dressing (recipe follows)
Toasted pumpkin seeds, chopped

Use a small mandoline or chef's knife to very thinly slice the onion half into half circles. Place in a small bowl and cover with water.

Cut the heirloom tomatoes into ¼-inch-thick slices and then into quarters. Place in a large salad bowl. Cut the cucumber in half and cut the halves in half again to create quarters. Cut into ¼-inch-thick pieces and toss into the bowl with the tomatoes. Cut the avocado in half, twist to open, and remove the pit. Cut into the flesh with the tip of your knife to create squares and use a large spoon to scoop out the meat. Mix into the tomato and cucumber mixture. Toss in the arugula and herbs, and mix well. Drizzle with the tahini dressing and sprinkle with the pumpkin

seeds.

Tahini Dressing

MAKES $\frac{3}{4}$ CUP; SERVING SIZE IS $\frac{1}{2}$ TABLESPOON

2 tablespoons tahini
1 garlic clove
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sea salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

In a small food processor, combine all the ingredients except the water, and blend until smooth. Slowly drizzle in the water until a smooth consistency is achieved. If the consistency is too thick for your liking, feel free to whisk or blend in more water.

Warm Kale and Delicata Squash Salad MAKES 4 SERVINGS

2 pounds delicata squash (about 3 medium)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground turmeric
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 pounds dinosaur/lacinato kale
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped shallots
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pomegranate seeds

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment.

Cut the ends off the squash, then cut in half lengthwise. Use a small spoon to scoop out the seeds and stringy flesh. Use a sharp chef knife to cut each half into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-

thick half-moons. Add to a large mixing bowl, then drizzle half of the olive oil, turmeric, cinnamon, salt, and pepper and spread in a thin layer on the baking sheet. Place in the oven and roast for 12 to 15 minutes, or until browned.

Meanwhile, remove the kale stems and cut the leaves into ¼-inch-thick strips. Place in a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together the shallot, vinegar, and the rest of the olive oil and then drizzle over the kale. Use your hands to massage the dressing into the kale and break down the toughness of the greens.

Toss the squash into the kale, then top the salad with the pomegranate seeds and additional peppercorns. Serve warm.

**Zesty Walnut Pesto Zoodles Missing the protein?
Any type of protein would pair well with this dish.
The nutritional yeast is also a great-tasting vegan
substitute for protein that is packed with B
vitamins and minerals.**

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

4 large zucchini (about 2½ pounds), ends cut off
2 tablespoons olive oil
Walnut Pesto (recipe follows)
2 tablespoons nutritional yeast

Use a spiralizer to create zucchini noodles, also known as “zoodles.”

Heat a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the oil and then the zoodles. Cook, stirring often for about 2 to 3 minutes, then add at least 1 cup of the pesto, more or less to your liking, and toss well to heat through, 2 to 3 additional minutes. Sprinkle each portion with nutritional yeast right before serving.

Walnut Pesto

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

- 1½ cups chopped walnuts
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- ½ bunch fresh parsley (about ½ cup packed)
- 1 bunch fresh Italian basil, stemmed
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼–½ cup filtered water

In a small sauté pan over medium heat, toast the walnuts, shaking the pan often until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Combine the toasted nuts, nutritional yeast, herbs, lemon juice, lemon zest, olive oil, and salt and pepper in a food processor. Slowly drizzle in the water while processing until you get a slightly runny consistency.

Detoxifying Bone Broth MAKES 6 QUARTS; SERVING SIZE IS 1 CUP

- 1 carcass from 4–6-pound chicken
- ½ pound carrots (4–5 large), roughly chopped
- ½ bunch celery (4–5 stalks), roughly chopped
- 1 large yellow onion, quartered
- 3 bay leaves
- ½ bunch fresh thyme
- ½ bunch fresh parsley
- 4 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- 2-inch piece fresh ginger, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Himalayan pink salt or color-rich salt (optional) About 2 gallons filtered water
- 2 teaspoons ground turmeric

Heat a large stockpot over high heat. Add a little oil and add the carcass, breast side

up, and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until lightly browned, then add the remaining ingredients except the turmeric and pour in enough water to cover the ingredients. Bring to a rolling boil, cover, and lower the heat to a simmer. Cook for 24 hours, adding the turmeric in the last hour of cooking. Strain out and discard the bones and vegetables, then pour the broth into several glass jars for storage. Sip on the broth in between meals or use in place of water for cooking quinoa.

Roasted Italian-Style Vegetables on Sweet Potato Mash MAKES 4 SERVINGS

ROASTED VEGGIES

¼ teaspoon dried oregano
¼ teaspoon dried rosemary
½ teaspoon dried parsley
1 large (1 pound) Italian eggplant
Salt
2 large fennel bulbs
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
Freshly ground black pepper
1½ pounds zucchini (4–5 medium)

MASHED POTATOES

2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled (2–3 medium)
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup chopped shallots
2 garlic cloves, minced
½ teaspoon sea salt, plus more as needed
Freshly ground black pepper

Mix the dried herbs in a small bowl.

Cut the eggplant into 1-inch-thick slices, then into batons, then into squares so you have 1-by-1-inch cubes. Line a large mixing bowl with paper towels, add the eggplant to the bowl, and sprinkle with salt. Toss well and let sit for about 10 minutes. This will pull water out of the eggplant so when you roast it, it will get

nice color.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment.

Cut the green tops off the fennel, then cut the bulbs in half. Cut out the root end and core of each by cutting into the shape of a triangle. Use your fingers to pop out the core and discard. Use a mandoline or chef knife to slice the fennel into ¼-inch-thick slices. Toss the shaved fennel with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, the red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper, and spread in a thin layer on the baking sheet. Place in the oven and roast for 10 to 12 minutes, or until slightly browned. Remove from oven and transfer to a bowl.

Cut the ends off the zucchini, cut in half, then cut into ½-inch-thick half-moons. Place the zucchini in a bowl and season with half the dried herb mixture. Drizzle in 2 tablespoons of oil, some salt and pepper, and then spread in a thin layer on the baking sheet.

Use a clean kitchen towel to wipe the salt off the eggplant and discard the paper towels from the bowl. Drizzle the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil over the eggplant and the remaining dried herb mixture, then toss well. Spread in a thin layer on the other baking sheet.

Place the zucchini and eggplant in the oven and roast until each is lightly browned; the eggplant will take 15 to 18 minutes and the zucchini will take 12 to 14 minutes.

While the veggies are roasting, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cut the sweet potatoes into 1-inch cubes and boil until you can easily insert a knife into the potatoes, about 20 minutes. Drain the potatoes. Return the pot to the heat and add the olive oil, shallots, and garlic. Sauté until tender, 2 to 3 minutes, then add the sweet potatoes, salt, and pepper. Using a potato masher, mash the potatoes to the consistency you like.

Serve the roasted vegetables on a bed of the mashed sweet potatoes.

Ground Chicken Thai Lettuce Wraps If there's leftover chicken mixture, serve it atop a salad or quinoa for a quick meal on the go. And you can make this dish vegan by substituting crimini mushrooms for the ground chicken.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

2 tablespoons cold-pressed organic coconut oil
1 medium carrot, diced (¼-inch cubes)
1 lemongrass stalk, peeled and minced
1 (1-inch) piece fresh ginger, minced
1 large shallot, minced
2 large garlic cloves, minced
1½ pounds ground chicken
1 large zucchini, diced (¼-inch cubes)
3 tablespoons coconut aminos
2 tablespoons lime juice
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
½ cup julienned Thai basil
1 large head butter lettuce
1 jalapeño, ½ seeded and chopped, ½ sliced
2 limes, cut into wedges

Preheat a large sauté pan over medium to high heat. Add the coconut oil and then the carrot, and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes, until translucent. Add the lemongrass, ginger, and shallot, and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the shallot is browned and the lemongrass is fragrant. Add the garlic and sauté an additional minute, or until fragrant. Add the chicken and sauté for 6 to 7 minutes, or until browned. Add the zucchini and sauté until browned, 2 to 3 minutes more. Stir in the coconut aminos, lime juice, half the chopped cilantro, and half the basil.

Remove the core from the lettuce by using a knife to cut the bottom at the center

to separate the leaves. Wash and pat the leaves dry, and place on a platter lined with paper towels. Place the chicken mixture in a serving bowl and set out smaller bowls of the garnishes: the remaining cilantro and basil, jalapeño slices, and lime wedges. Serve family style, with everyone scooping up the chicken and veggie mixture into a lettuce cup and adding their own individual garnishes as desired.

Asian-Style Veggie Bowl MAKES 4 SERVINGS

- 1 pound crimini mushrooms, quartered
- 1 broccoli crown, cut into small florets
- 1 large zucchini, cut into ¼-inch-thick half-moons
- 3 tablespoons coconut oil, melted
- ¼ teaspoon Chinese five-spice powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and spiralized
- 2 tablespoons dulse flakes
- ¼ cup chopped green onions
- Coconut aminos (optional)

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment.

In a large bowl, combine the mushrooms, broccoli florets, and zucchini and then drizzle with 2 tablespoons of the coconut oil and sprinkle on the five-spice powder and ginger. Toss well using your hands. Spread the vegetables in a thin, even layer on the baking sheet and roast for 12 to 14 minutes, or until lightly browned.

Heat a large sauté pan over medium to high heat. Add the remaining tablespoon coconut oil and add the sweet potato “noodles.” Stir often and cook for about 7 minutes, or until desired consistency.

To assemble the dish, place the warm noodles in a bowl, then top with the roasted vegetables and sprinkle with the dulse flakes. Garnish with the green onions and add a dash of coconut aminos, if using. This dish can be enjoyed at room temperature or hot.

Southwest Chicken Bowl You can make this dish vegetarian by substituting a hearty vegetable or starch such as sweet potato for the chicken.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

2 tablespoons coconut oil
1½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs
1 teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 bell peppers, cored, seeded, and cut into strips
1 medium yellow onion, ½ cut into strips, ½ diced
1 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
Cilantro-Lime Dressing (recipe follows)
2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro

Preheat a large grill pan over medium to high heat. Spread 1 tablespoon of the coconut oil on a paper towel and wipe the grill pan to grease.

Season the chicken in a large bowl with the paprika, cumin, ½ teaspoon salt, and some pepper. When the grill pan is hot, add the chicken and cook up to 10 minutes, turning once. Transfer to a plate.

Add the bell pepper and onion strips to the grill pan and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, turning every 2 to 3 minutes until lightly charred.

Place the remaining tablespoon coconut oil in a large skillet over medium to high heat and add the chopped onion. Cook, stirring often, until browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the black beans, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Stir until heated through, 4 to 5 minutes.

Slice the chicken into strips. Place the bean mixture in serving bowls, top with the grilled vegetables and chicken, then drizzle with the dressing. Garnish with the cilantro.

Cilantro-Lime Dressing

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP; SERVING SIZE IS ½ TABLESPOON

¾ cup coconut or nut kefir
½ cup fresh cilantro
1 garlic clove
Zest and juice of 1½ limes
¼ teaspoon sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 to 4 tablespoons filtered water (optional)

Place all the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth, adding a little water to reach desired consistency.

Stuffed Portobello Mushroom Caps MAKES 4 SERVINGS

4 large portobello mushroom caps (stems removed)
2 tablespoons coconut oil
½ cup chopped yellow onion
1 large zucchini, cut into ¼-inch cubes
4 cups fresh spinach
2 garlic cloves, minced
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon chili powder
1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes
1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 cup cooked quinoa

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

Use a metal spoon to scoop out the gills of the mushrooms, taking care to not break the caps.

Preheat a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the coconut oil, then the onion and zucchini. Sauté for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the onion is tender and the zucchini has taken on some color. Add the spinach, garlic, cumin, and chili powder, stirring often so the spices don't burn, about 1 minute. Add the tomatoes and tomato sauce, then season with salt. Stir in the quinoa. Cover the pan and simmer for 4 to 5 minutes, until quinoa has plumped.

Scoop about ½ cup of the vegetable mixture into each mushroom cap. Place the stuffed caps in a casserole dish, then add about ½ cup water to the bottom, around the caps, and cover with foil. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, or until caps are tender. Enjoy with a side salad or on a bed of roasted vegetables.

Chicken Cobb Salad with Homemade Ranch Dressing Do you have leftover roasted veggies from another meal? Throw them into this salad as an additional ingredient or to replace the chicken.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

1 teaspoon coconut oil
1 skinless chicken breast
1 avocado, sliced
1 cup cherry tomatoes, cut into halves
2 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and sliced
½ cup thinly sliced cucumber
½ cup thinly sliced zucchini
¼ cup chopped walnuts
5 cups mixed greens
Ranch Dressing (recipe follows)

Heat a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat, then add the coconut oil and then the chicken. Cook 5 to 7 minutes per side, or until the internal temperature reaches 165°F. Remove from the heat and let cool, then slice into strips.

Place the avocado, cherry tomatoes, eggs, cucumber, zucchini, and walnuts in a large salad bowl. Add the greens, toss well, and then drizzle on the dressing.

Ranch Dressing

MAKES 1 CUP; SERVING SIZE IS ½ TABLESPOON

- ½ cup raw cashews
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (from ½ lemon)
- 1 large garlic clove
- ⅛ teaspoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon roughly chopped fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon roughly chopped fresh parsley
- ½ tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or to taste

Soak the cashews in filtered water overnight. The next morning, drain the cashews, reserving the water, and add to a high-powered blender. Puree, slowly pouring in the soaking water until the cashews are a paste. Transfer to a glass container and stir in the lemon juice, garlic, onion powder, herbs, salt, and pepper. Cover and shake to combine. (This can be made in advance and lasts up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator.) **Salmon Fillets with Lemon Roasted Broccoli MAKES 4 SERVINGS**

- 2 broccoli crowns, cut into florets
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Zest and juice of 2 large lemons
- 1 teaspoon sea salt, plus more as needed
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 12 ounces salmon fillet

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment.

In a large bowl, toss the broccoli with the olive oil, lemon zest, lemon juice, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and the pepper. Spread in a thin layer on the baking sheet and roast for about 10 minutes, or until starting to soften.

Season the salmon with salt and pepper on both sides. Remove the baking sheet from the oven and open up a space in the middle to fit the salmon. Add the fish to the sheet, rearrange the broccoli florets around it, then place back in the oven to roast an additional 10 to 12 minutes, until the salmon is cooked through and the broccoli is lightly browned.

Appendix A Resources

For more inspiration, visit www.drmariza.com/hormonesolution, where I've provided additional resources to support your hormone and essential oil journey, and join our amazing sisterhood of courageous women, the Hormone and Essential Oil Revolution Community.

I have also listed key resources to support your journey toward hormone balance and becoming the CEO of your health with self-care rituals and essential oils.

Additional Hormone Resources

www.drmariza.com/hormonesolution (access your full library of book bonuses here!) Dr. Mariza Snyder

Online

www.facebook.com/drmarizasnyder

[@drmariza](#)

www.youtube.com/dr.mariza

Comprehensive Hormone Quiz
www.drmariza.com/hormonequiz

Getting Started with Essential Oils Checklist
www.drmariza.com/checklist

Recommended High-Quality Essential Oils
www.drmariza.com/essentialoils

Custom Hormone Supplements www.drmariza.com/supplements

Hormone Testing and Trusted Laboratories

www.drmariza.com/hormonetesting

www.dutchtest.com/

Integrative and Functional Practitioners

<https://www.ifm.org/find-a-practitioner/>

Understand Essential Oil Basics with Dr. Mariza's 101 Essential Oil Transformation Course

www.drmariza.com/101course

Essential Oil Accessories (Diffusers, Cases, Containers, Carrier Oils) www.oillife.com

www.aromatools.com

Personal Care and Skin Care

Environmental Working Group
<http://www.ewg.org/skindeep>

Campaign for Safe Cosmetics
www.safecosmetics.org

Annmarie Gianni Skincare
<https://shop.annmariegianni.com>

The Spa Doctor Skincare
<https://store.thespadr.com>

Healthy Green Cleaning

Green Cleaning Checklist

<http://www.drmariza.com/greencleaning>

Environmental Working Group
www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners

Healthy Food Options for Cooking at Home

Thrive Market
www.thrivemarket.com

Vital Choice Seafood
www.vitalchoice.com

Dr. Mariza's Go-To Experts You can find many of these experts on the "Essentially You" podcast on iTunes.

Hormone Support

Jolene Brighten, ND (<https://drbrighten.com/>) Nicole Jardim (<https://nicolejardim.com/>) Bridgit Danner, LAC (<http://www.bridgitdanner.com/>) Sara Gottfried, MD (<http://www.saragottfriedmd.com/>) Alan Christianson, NMD (<https://drchristianson.com/>) Nat Kringoudis, DAOM (<http://www.natkringoudis.com>) Amy Medling (<http://www.pcosdiva.com>) Thyroid Support

Izabella Wentz, PharmD, FASCP (www.thyroidpharmacist.com) Magdalena Wszelaki, CNS (www.hormonesbalance.com) Autoimmune Support

Amy Myers, MD (<https://www.amymyersmd.com>) Tom O'Bryan, DC, CCN, DACBN (<http://thedr.com/>) Terry Wahls, MD (<https://terrywahls.com/>) Gut Support

Vincent Pedre, MD (<http://pedremd.com/>) Summer Bock, CNS (<https://summerbock.com/>) David Perlmutter, MD, FACN, ABIHM (<https://drperlmutter.com>) Nutrition Support

J. J. Virgin, CNS, CHFS (<https://jjvirgin.com/>) Kellyann Petrucci, MS, ND (<https://www.drkellyann.com/>) Melissa Kathryn, CHN (<http://melissakathryn.com/>) Mark Hyman, MD (<http://drhyman.com/>) Dave Asprey (<https://www.bulletproof.com>) Robyn Openshaw (<https://greensmoothiegirl.com/>) Emotional Support

Trudy Scott, CN (<http://www.anti-anxiety-foods-solution.com/>) Kelly Brogan, MD (<http://kellybroganmd.com/>) Emily Fletcher (<https://zivameditation.com/>)

Appendix B

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