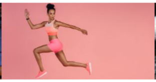
1 Zoë Chao Kicks Off Her Day With A Dance Party

2 Wait, Is Mango Skin Safe To Eat?

3 Yes, Kaley Cuoco Loves Her Husband



4 The Cardio Workout You Can Do At Home

5 The 15 Best Christmas Movies On Netflix

Take care down there SHOP NOW RepHresh

8 Athletes Share The Biggest Struggles Of Competing On Their Periods

Anything a man can do, a woman can do bleeding.

By Charlotte Hilton Andersen Nov 29, 2017

GETTY IMAGES

Working out during your period isn't anyone's idea of a good time. After all, when you're craving a heating pad and long nap, protein powder and leg day sound less than awesome.

Still, working out when Flo's in town isn't just a good idea, it's a great one. Exercise is one of the best scientifically-backed ways to alleviate period-related woes, and can perk up your mood while soothing cramps, bloating, and even fatigue. And get this: According to some experts, you may actually be your *strongest* during shark week. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger, right?

But knowing something is good for you and actually doing it? Well, they are two different things, and motivating yourself to get your aching, bloated butt to the gym can be hard. The struggle is just as real for professional female athletes as it is for you. But, somehow, they do it. They've got to if they want to crush their goals.

We talked to eight female athletes about the challenges that they have had to overcome in the face of their periods, and all of the frustrations, worries, and even happiness, that comes along with it. Learn how they banish PMS, avoid leaks, push through the pain, exercise during periods, and, most importantly, feel confident in their bodies no matter what time of month it is. Get ready to revel in the awesomeness of women getting shit done. (And, if you decide to try out their tactics, just make sure to talk to

Take care down there SHOP NOW CLINICALLY TESTED PROBIOTIC RepHresh PRO-B™ Feminine Probiotic Supplement Balances Yeast & Bacteria to Maintain Feminine Health* 30 CAPSULES

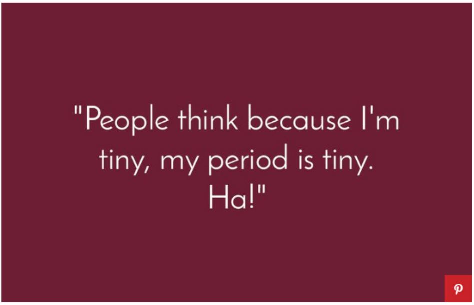
MORE FROM
Workout Advice

The Best Winter Workouts

The Best Underwear for Every Workout

26 Ways To Make Your Workouts Feel Way More Fun

your doc before turning to prescription or OTC meds.)

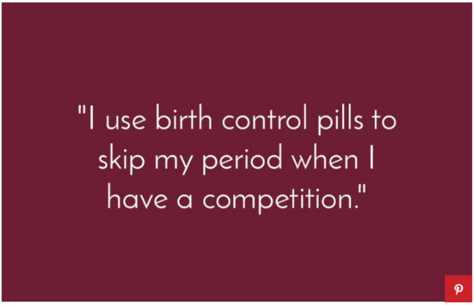


"People think because I'm tiny, my period is tiny. Ha!"

CHRISTINE FRAPECH

"People think that, because I am a dancer who is in shape, my periods are light and easy to tolerate. Not true at all! To be honest, dancing with my period is never fun. As a dancer, you need your core for everything, so feeling bloated while dancing is not ideal. I also suffer from very intense cramps for the first two or three days of my period. As a dancer, I have to use and stretch my body for hours at a time, and that combined with my period gives me pain in my abs, lower back, and headaches. Honestly, dancing is the best distraction from my pain, but I've also learned some tricks to deal with the cramps over the years. I love the ThermaCare heating pads and I'll wear one under my leotard throughout the day—it lasts about eight hours and the warmth really helps. I also take ibuprofen if I have a full day of rehearsals. Afterward, I'll drink a lot of ginger tea and take a hot bath in Epsom salts, both of which help alleviate cramps." —*Paige Fraser, professional dancer*

(Dance your way fit with *High-Intensity Dance Cardio*, the first-ever socanomics DVD!)



"I use birth control pills to skip my period when I have a competition."

CHRISTINE FRAPECH

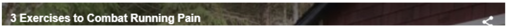
"I've heard that during your period, athletes can be more prone to injury, so just to be safe I sometimes skip the sugar pills in my birth control pack to avoid having my period when I am coming up on a competition. Plus, not having a period during competition makes my life a little bit easier so I can focus on my training and preparing for competition. I do know that I tend to be more hungry and feel a bit more sluggish when I have my period. One thing I've found that always helps alleviate my period symptoms? Working out. Exercise always makes me feel better even if I'm not feeling it at first. I have also found that taking extra magnesium and calcium during that time of the month (I use USANA's MagneCal) really helps. The combination helps me sleep better and kicks my period cramps." —*Devin Logan, team USA freeskier and Olympic*

silver medalist

ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

Most feminine deodorants & wipes only mask odor and discomfort?
RepHresh

Combat running pain and prevent injury with these exercises:



Most feminine deodorants & wipes

"I've heard that during your period, athletes can be more prone to injury, so just to be safe I sometimes skip the sugar pills in my birth control pack to avoid having my period when I am coming up on a competition. Plus, not having a period during competition makes my life a little bit easier so I can focus on my training and preparing for competition. I do know that I tend to be more hungry and feel a bit more sluggish when I have my period. One thing I've found that always helps alleviate my period symptoms? Working out. Exercise always makes me feel better even if I'm not feeling it at first. I have also found that taking extra magnesium and calcium during that time of the month (I use USANA's MagneCal) really helps. The combination helps me sleep better and kicks my period cramps." —*Devin Logan, team USA freeskier and Olympic silver medalist*

ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

Most feminine deodorants & wipes only mask odor and discomfort?
RepHresh

Combat running pain and prevent injury with these exercises:

3 Exercises to Combat Running Pain

Most feminine deodorants & wipes

routine two days before my competition, thanks to my period."

CHRISTINE FRAPECH

"Competitive pole dancing is probably one of the worst things to do while on your period. I feel crappy, irritable, and bloated, but instead of being able to chill with a tub of Neopolitan ice cream and a binge session of Grey's Anatomy, I have to put on a tiny costume (that no longer fits right, thanks to bloating) and get up on a stage. Even worse, I get super paranoid of thrusting my legs open too wide during my performance and accidentally revealing my bits—not to mention raging hormones make my palms all sweaty, making it hard just to grip the pole.

"So when my period came two days before my performance at the International Pole Convention, I was a wreck. I went through several costumes, re-worked my entire routine so as not to include any audience-facing leg spreads, doubled up on pole grip, and started doing two-a-day practices. The day of my performance, I changed my tampon when the performer two spaces ahead of me went on and I practiced breathing deeply to calm my nerves. Knowing that I'd done everything I could to prepare helped a lot. By the time it was my turn to go, my adrenaline was pumping. I was still bloated and miserable, but when the music started playing I pushed past all of that. Despite feeling totally un-sexy five minutes earlier, Beyoncé's 'Partition' came on and I was able to let my inner diva out." —*Jada Hudson, competitive pole dancer and founder of Curvy Girls Pole*

RELATED: 6 PUBIC HAIR MYTHS IT'S TIME YOU STOPPED BELIEVING

> "The PMS is the worst part. Getting my period is a relief."

CHRISTINE FRAPECH

"Running during my period isn't exactly fun, but I just put a tampon in and stick to my training schedule. I'm very 'type A' when it comes to my running, and I'm not going to let this get in my way. It's the three to five days *before* my period when things get really bad. I get PMS cramps, bloating, and mood issues—getting my period is a relief! Even when my PMS is bad, I still push myself to exercise anyhow, though. I know that when I feel bad, whether due to my period or any other reason, I always feel better after a workout. I've made the decision to never let my period or PMS interrupt my training or racing." —*Pam Moore, competitive marathoner, two-time Ironman, and running coach*

> "String bikinis don't hide much, including tampon strings."

CHRISTINE FRAPECH

ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

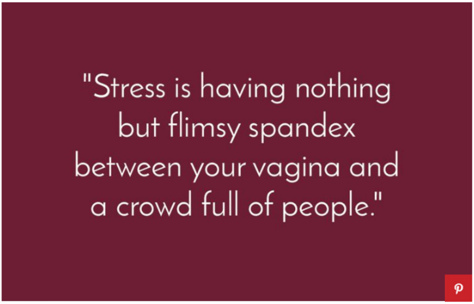
Most feminine deodorants & wipes
only mask odor and discomfort?
RepHresh

"I am a WNBF Pro Bikini athlete, meaning that I participate in bodybuilding competitions. Competing during my period in this sport is scary for many obvious reasons. First of all, you can't hide much in our tiny competition bikinis! But I've learned that I can't let being on my period affect my confidence. Instead of worrying about it, I choose to stay focused on what I'm there to accomplish on stage. If it does happen, I manage it just like any other day during the month because, athlete or not, as a woman, it's just going to happen sometimes.

"The upside is that I'm super regular so at least I know when it is coming so I can be prepared even if I can't change it. In fact, I got my period on the day of a show twice this year. The first time was when I was competing to get my pro card. This was a really important competition for me, so I just gritted my teeth, tucked that tampon string up, and put on my suit. My confidence paid off and I ended up winning my WNBF pro card. The second time it happened was at my very first WNBF pro show. At first, I was freaked out but I realized that this was something that could either defeat me or make me stronger. As a woman, I knew exactly what I needed to do to keep things in line. I kept my cool and aced my first pro show." *—Amber Beaver, pro bikini athlete, owner and CEO of Empower You Fitness*

Most feminine deodorants & wipes only mask odor and discomfort?
RepHresh
Odor

RELATED: WHAT'S THAT ON YOUR HOO-HA? 5 VAGINAL CONDITIONS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT



"Stress is having nothing but flimsy spandex between your vagina and a crowd full of people."

CHRISTINE FRAPECH

"I was a competitive soccer player for Fordham University and also ran track and field. While soccer shorts aren't too bad, track and field bloomers look and fit like underwear. Stepping up to the line on a track with your butt in the air and nothing but a flimsy pair of spandex bloomers separating a crowd of people from your crimson wave—that's stress with a capital 'S'! So whenever me or one of my teammates was on our period we were like, 'Can you walk behind me and check to make sure nothing's leaking or showing... and also in front, to the side, under, over, from 10 feet away. Okay, now with your eyes squinted, and maybe behind me again just one more time to be sure?' This period anxiety definitely affected my pre-race routine, which basically consisted of me not trying to puke, pee, or poop all over myself before I had to hit the starting line. My period just made my body and mind feel out of whack, which really sucks when your job is to be physically controlled and mentally centered. Periods can make getting into the game-day zone that much harder." *—Maeve Roughton, head of content for THINX, former collegiate soccer player, and nationally-ranked high-school runner*

"I had to learn to use a tampon during a national competition."

CHRISTINE FRAPECH

"I started my period in fifth grade and by high school my period was really heavy with debilitating cramps, which had a serious effect on my ability to compete. My mom had to teach me how to use a tampon at the Junior Nationals competition so I wouldn't bleed out in front of everyone. I ran as fast as I could, not only to win but to get to the finish line so I could change back into a pad! I finally decided to go on birth control, which has really helped control my period symptoms. So, now, as a college athlete, I'm much more confident. But I do feel as though being on my period does affect my performance to some degree. When I first start my period, I feel more sluggish and less confident about my abilities and my looks. Yes, even athletes have 'fat days'! I also still get paranoid about leaks. Thankfully by the latter half of my period, all of that has resolved and I feel like I'm back to my old self again with more energy and confidence, and I'm able to really focus on my performance." —*Dior Hall, University of Southern California track member*

ADVERTISEMENT - CONTINUE READING BELOW

Clinically shown to maintain healthy vaginal pH
RepHresh

RELATED: 11 NIPPLE FACTS YOU NEED IN YOUR LIFE

"I actually perform better on my period."

CHRISTINE FRAPECH

"I'm not going to sugarcoat it: As a professional and competitive dancer, my period can be very challenging for me on many levels. I have to consider costuming and keeping things clean and aesthetically acceptable. Swelling, bloating, and cramps are the biggest challenge as pain can take the joy out of competing and performing. If I'm working with my dance partner, I have to let him know as we have to make adjustments with the catches, throws, and lifts because if he places his hands too close to my ovaries or in certain sensitive places on my abdomen, I can become seriously injured. In spite of all that, I find that I generally perform *better* on my period and I push myself harder to compensate for it. During that week I take extra-special care of myself. I avoid really strenuous workouts and instead do a lot of yoga with asanas specifically designed to relieve cramping and regulate my flow. I also avoid taking aspirin to deal with my cramps as I learned the hard way (during a competition!) that it makes bleeding so much heavier." —*Noelle Rose Andressen, professional dancer-choreographer for Rubans Rouges Dance and producer of Awakenings & Beginnings Dance Festival*

Read Next

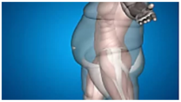
ADVERTISING

THIS IS JENNA JAMESON'S BIGGEST KETO MILESTONE

SPONSORED STORIES

Recommended by Outbrain

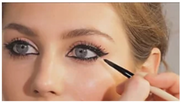
Common Signs of Bladder Cancer
Bladder Cancer Awareness | Sponsored Listings



Wipe Out Deep Fat By Doing This Every Morning
SmartConsumerToday

[Pics] Cow Asks Man To Rescue Her Newborn Calf Stuck Under Electric Wire Fence. Her Reaction Is Priceless
Science Glory

You Can Wear This $150 Heel All Day, With Any Outfit
InStyle



10 Makeup Tips All Older Women Should Know [Photos]
Parents Tribune

If You Can Qualify for Any Credit Card, These Are the Top 6
NerdWallet

Enter A Name, Wait 13 Seconds, Brace Yourself
www.peoplewhiz.com

TV Star: "Eating This Every Morning Changed My Life"
energeticallday.com

MORE FROM

Workout Advice

The Best Winter Workouts

The Best Underwear for Every Workout

26 Ways To Make Your Workouts Feel Way More Fun

Hip Flexor Pain Is The Worst—But You CAN Fix It

Are Two-A-Day Workouts a Good Idea?

Read This Before Buying Your Own Cycling Shoes

The Best Time Of Day To Work Out

10 Reasons To Try High-Intensity Interval Training

24 Satisfying Lunches That Promote Weight Loss

'How I Got Six-Pack Abs'
Presented by Cotton

A probiotic that helps take control of your vaginal health?
RepHresh

WORKOUT ADVICE
STOMACH PAINS
VAGINA UNIVERSITY
HEALTH
8 EXTREME ATHLETES SHARE HOW THEY EXERCISE OUTSIDE EVEN WHEN IT'S SWELTERING
5 WOMEN SHARE THEIR MOST EMBARRASSING PERIOD STORIES
8 TOTALLY NOT-DUMB PERIOD QUESTIONS YOU'VE BEEN TOO EMBARRASSED TO ASK
YOGA FOR ATHLETES
10 FEMALE ATHLETES ON LOVING THEIR BODIES
WOMEN'S ATHLETIC SHORTS
STOMACH PAINS
WORKOUT ADVICE
VAGINAS

Women's Health participates in various affiliate marketing programs, which means we may get paid commissions on editorially chosen products purchased through our links to retailer sites.

©2018 Hearst Communications, Inc. All Rights Reserved.