

A GIRL'S GUIDE TO PMS

PMS

ON

LOCKDOWN

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EAT + PRACTICE

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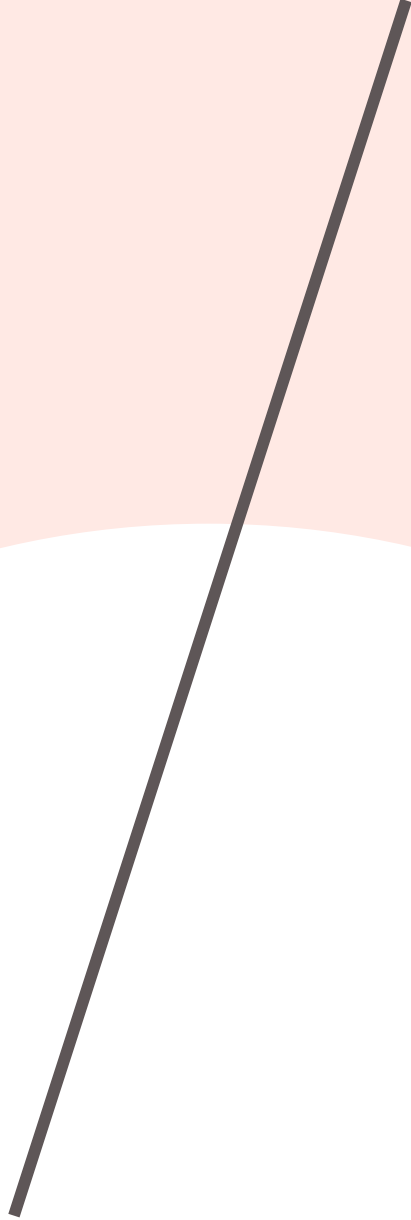
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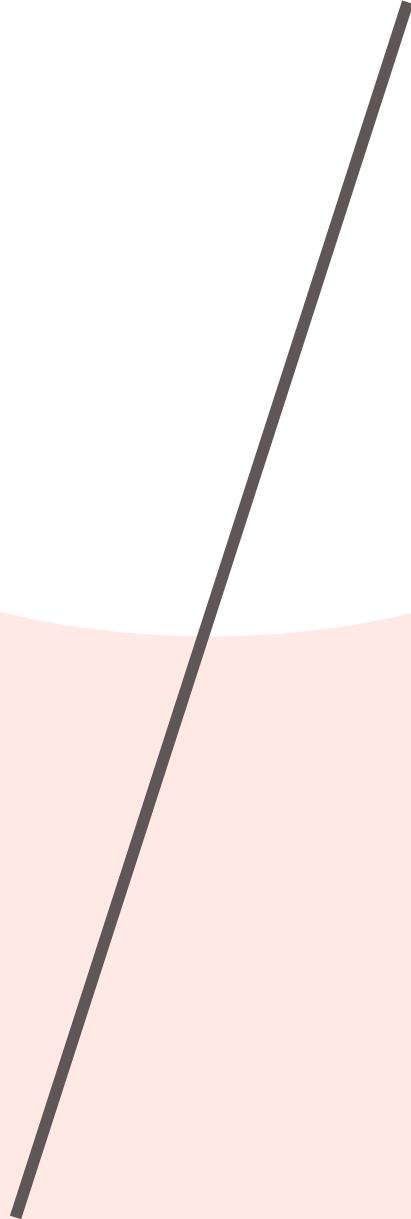
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01



M I N D +
B O D Y



01

So what do you do when you're PMSing badly but can't get your hands on some chocolate? You cry and pray that aliens annihilate earth. TOTALLY JOKING. But it does feel horrible, doesn't it? In any other setting it would be unbearable at best but in quarantine, it can get quite horrible. You're craving for an entire birthday cake in the middle of a pandemic, and living in close quarters with people who may or may not understand what you're dealing with.

In this book, you'll learn how to focus your efforts on destroying your cravings with practical tricks to address your agony. Let's start off by acknowledging that PMS is anchored on physiological as well as psychological reasons.

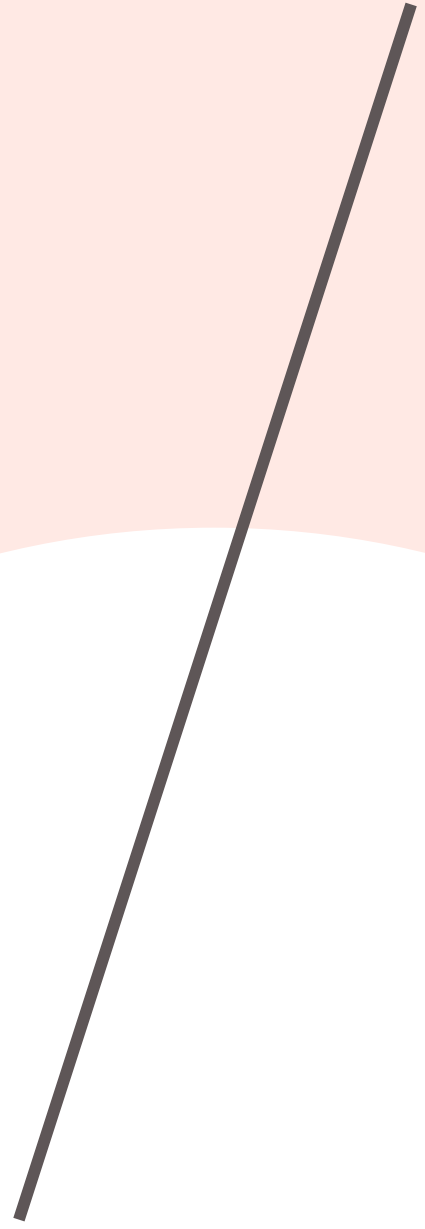
During this phase in the menstrual cycle, neurotransmitters like serotonin plunge, making you feel down in the dumps, causing you to want to self-soothe with carbs. This is because when you finish off a bowl of ice cream, it allows for tryptophan, serotonin's precursor, to be left in the blood. It will be the first to be taken up by the brain to be metabolized into serotonin - thus giving you an instant but temporary boost of happiness!

The interplay between hormones and neurotransmitters is actually cool when you think about it. Just very tricky to deal with, since it's sensitive to what we eat and do. But once we understand how it works, we'll be able to single out factors that are under our control, to alleviate symptoms.

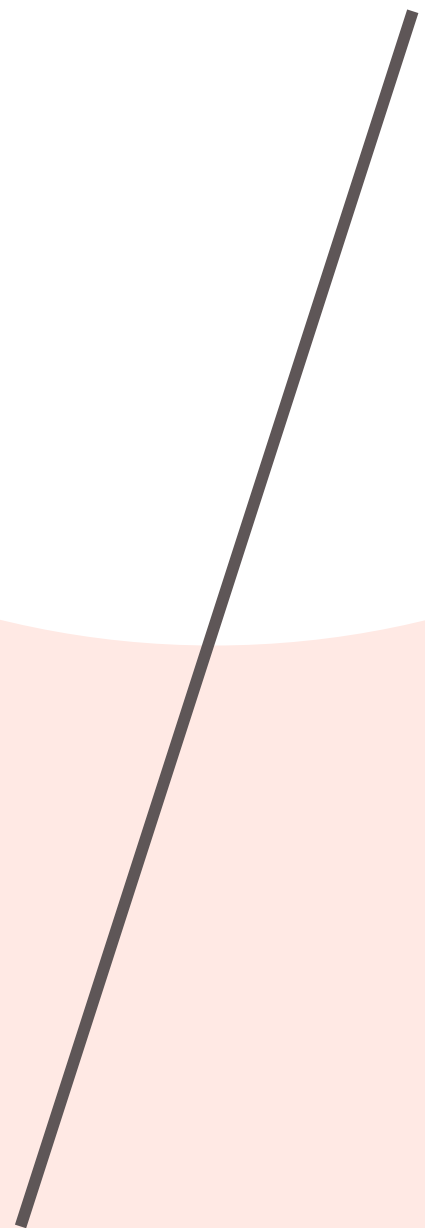
Water and electrolyte balance in the body is also altered by hormonal shifts, leading to those I-just-finished-an-entire-bag-of-Doritos-and-regret-nothing-while-laughing-maniacally moments.

Now that we've established that these are caused by natural occurrences in the body (and that it's not just an otherworldly force), let's move on to how you're going to tackle this issue while you're in quarantine. Because while we recognize that PMS is real, we don't want you running off risking exposure to COVID-19 for the sake of some snacks. And even if you do have snacks, you don't want to finish your entire supply in just a couple of days, right? Here we go:

02



S T A R T
S M A L L



02

Let's talk about your caffeine habit. If, before quarantine, the highlight of your morning was to pick up a cup of sweet coffee at your local cafe, this tip hopes to remind you of that giddiness you felt, walking to your desk with your favorite coffee in hand. Just a couple of differences: You're gonna have it black - and iced! Ditching sugar in your morning coffee, no matter how little a difference it is, will set the stage for your victory against cravings. This is because sugar perpetuates a cycle where the more you have it, the more you'll crave for it. So swapping the sugar in your usual cup for lucuma, stevia, or any other healthier alternative will help your cause.

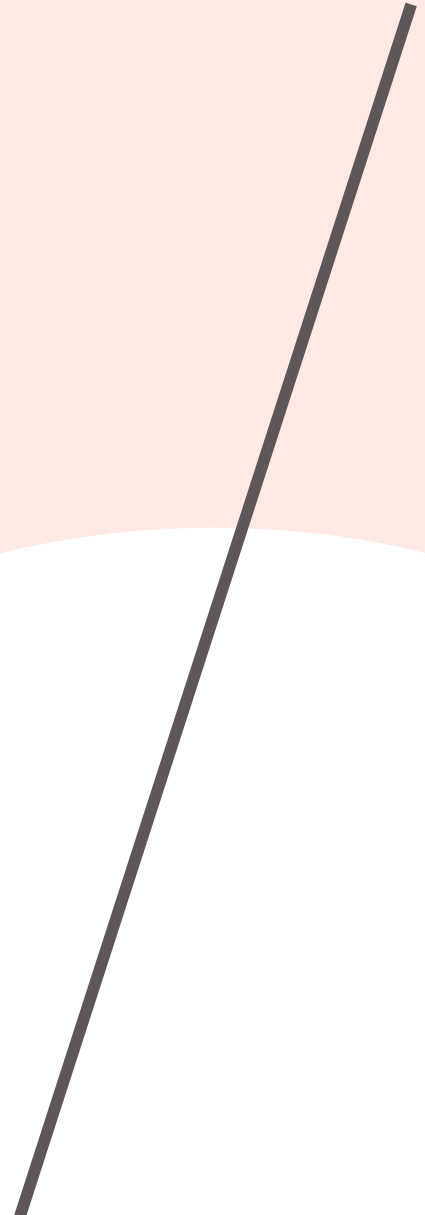
Now's also the perfect time to explore all the different updates you can do with the

humble americano. Add vanilla, infuse it with mint, sprinkle some cinnamon and cardamom, or splash it with lemonade! The possibilities are quite endless with this one.

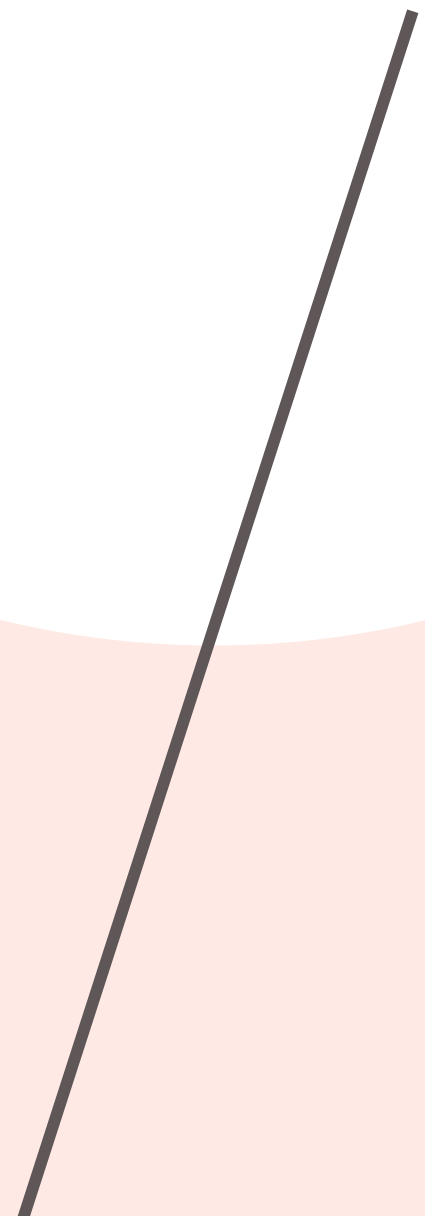
If you absolutely cannot have your coffee black, try warming milk first to bring out its sweetness! Increasing the temperature of lactose or milk-sugar, also increases its solubility and thus its perceived sweetness.

Don't forget to ice your coffee! It'll not only help cool down higher than normal body temperature during this phase in the menstrual cycle, but also make it look and feel more like a treat. Add a straw if you're feeling fancy!

03



S U G A R +
T H E G U T



03

If you must have chocolate, reach for at least 70% cacao. Dark chocolate is amazing in that it satisfies sugar cravings by giving you just enough sweetness to keep it at bay, while also being a prebiotic. *Prebiotics* provide good bacteria in the gut, called *probiotics*, food to thrive. Now, why do we need to make sure that these little buggers thrive? Studies have shown that the types of bacteria we cultivate in our gut greatly influence cravings. An imbalance in gut flora leads to intense sugar cravings that we don't want. Regularly snacking on probiotic-rich food will provide the gut with good bacteria to regulate cravings over time, even outside of PMS.

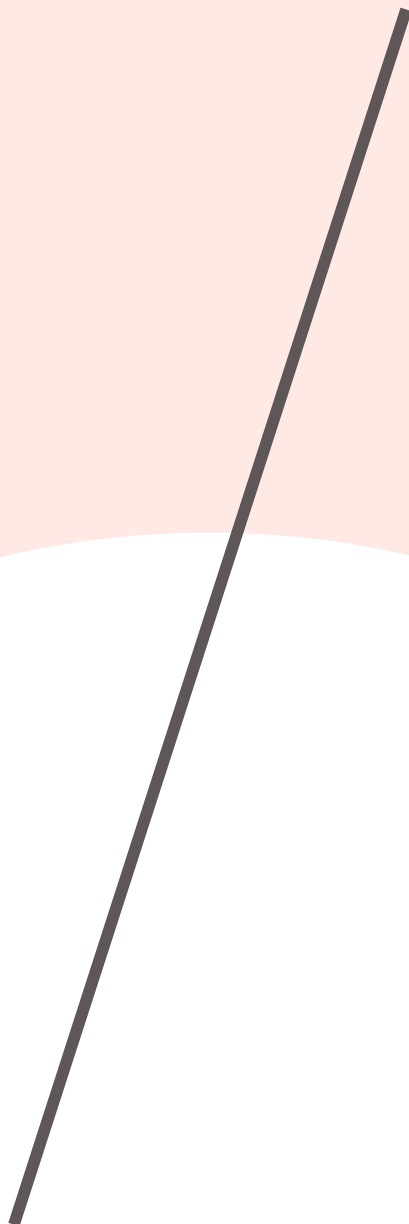
Neurotransmitters that affect mood like serotonin and dopamine are made in the

gut. During this time when neurotransmitters are experiencing critical shifts, it doesn't hurt to make sure that the gut is functioning as it should.

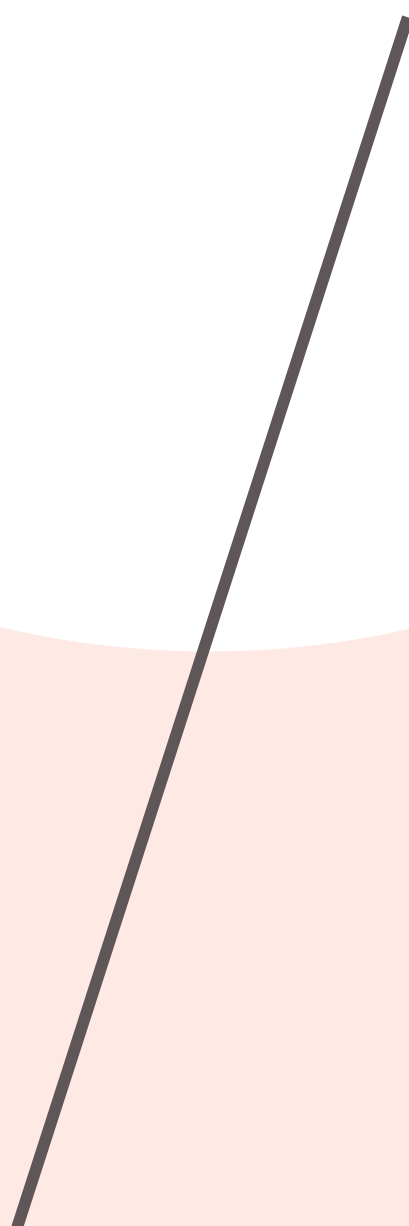
The gut is also responsible for nutrient digestion and assimilation. Wouldn't it be very disappointing to find out that after eating well, you didn't really absorb the crucial substances your body needs from the food?

That will end up an even bigger mess, dragging your weight and your skin into the cat fight. No Bueno.

04



W A T E R



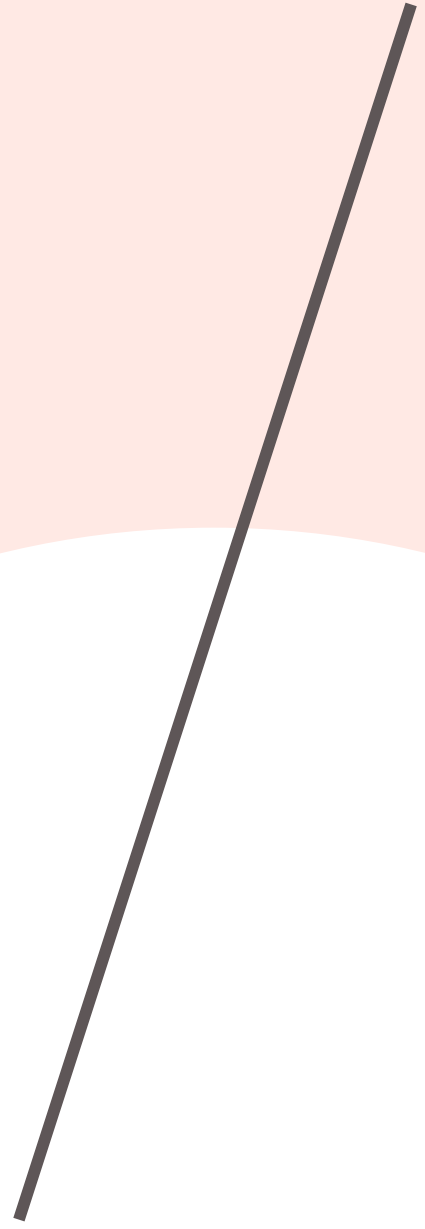
04

Hydrate! Not only because thirst sometimes manifests as hunger, but it is also of paramount importance to make sure you stay hydrated before your period because body temperature is elevated at this time. Progesterone levels increase while your estrogen levels drop, affecting your hypothalamus, the part of the brain that controls body temperature. When body temperature is high, more water escapes from the body in the form of vapor or sweat, so you'll need to keep taking sips of water throughout the day. The cells of the body can only hold so much water at a time, so finishing a significant amount of water in one go will lead to the liquid simply passing through the body and not held and absorbed by the cells.

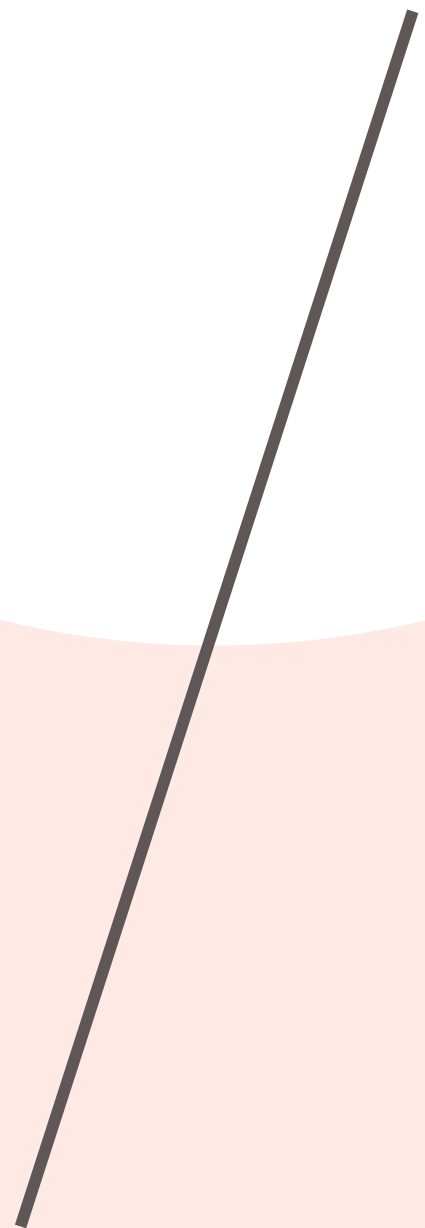
A handy trick to allowing cells to keep water within them is to add a pinch of organic sea salt into your water bottle, plus a squeeze of lemon. These two add electrolytes into your water for an instant rehydrating cocktail!

At a time when dozens of hormonal changes are happening in the body, the cells need to be able to communicate with one another. Proper cellular communication is helped along by maintaining good moisture levels in the extracellular matrix. This allows not only for the passing of solutes and other proteins in and out of cells, but also makes it easy for electrical charges to be conducted throughout the body.

05



S E L F - C A R E



05

Have a self-care sanctuary. And we don't mean a bead curtain leading up to a shrine of crystals smudged in thick sage smoke (though that would work too, if you have the space for it). But during the quarantine period, when you may be sharing a small space with family and friends, a tiny corner would do - even your desk is fine for this purpose! You only need a small space you can sit quietly in, while waiting for the waves of stress or irritability pass. Living in close quarters with people for extended periods of time can leave us feeling exhausted and dried out.

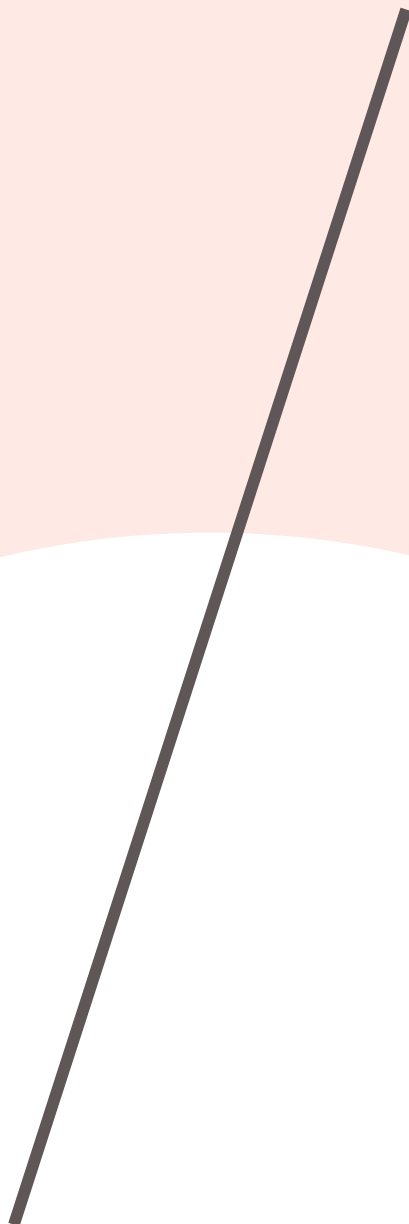
Having a space filled with mind-focusing things such as a notebook and a pen for your thoughts, a book on a topic you really like, or even just photos of your favorite

moments can make you feel like you're reinfusing yourself with more of You!

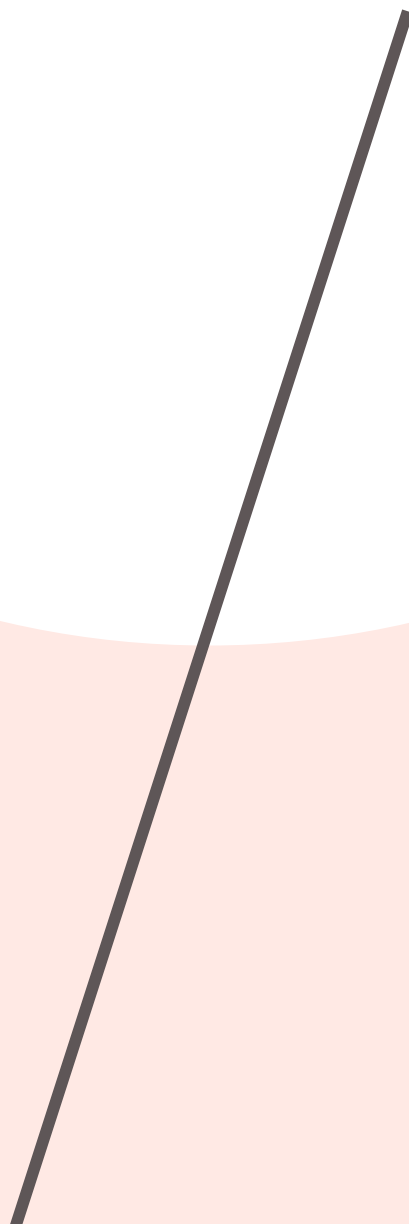
This is usually the part where I ask you to give meditation a try, even for just 5 minutes, with a guided app to get you started. But in the height of PMS where anything and everything can feel irritating, simple doodling, stretching, or timed breathing can significantly lower stress levels.

You see, during this phase, in most PMS sufferers, the HPA axis or the Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, is dysregulated. This is our stress-response system and during PMS, it goes out of whack. The good news is that the simple act of doing breathing exercises for one minute can already help regulate the HPA axis.

06



K E E P B U S Y

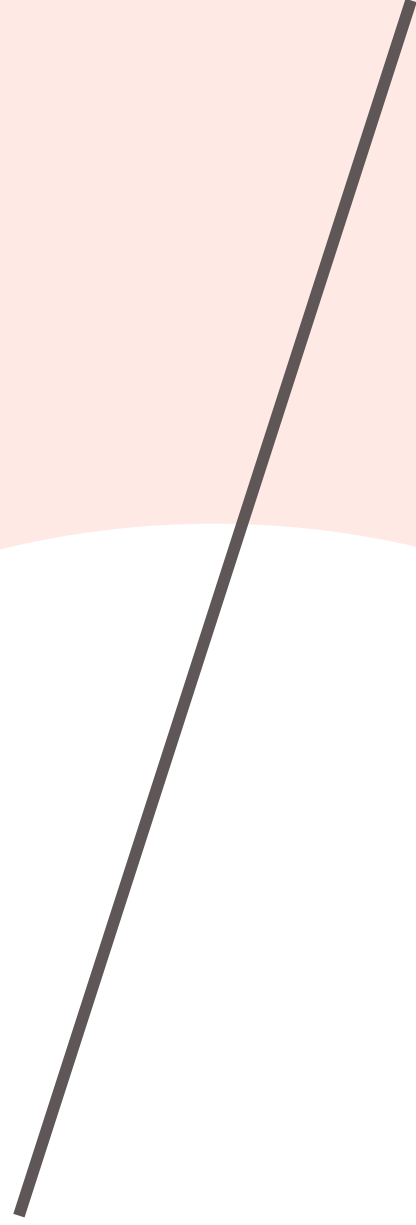


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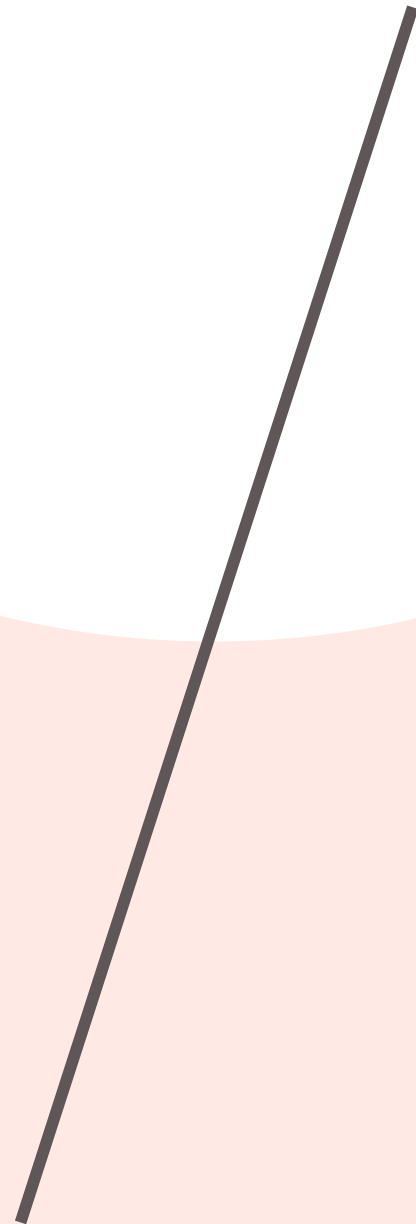
Rearrange your kitchen, your closet, any area you've been putting off organizing! I'd tell you to work out because it helps regulate the body but at this point, I'm guessing you'd rather get hit by a truck than squeeze into a sports bra. And for that reason, I'm disguising working out in the form of space organization, to get you moving - with the added bonus of giving you a sense of control over your life. Pretty nifty, huh?

Keeping busy and focusing on the mechanical aspects of the task allows for the mind to take a short break from thinking - and we all know that this quarantine has got us drowning in a lot of introspection lately.

07



B A L A N C E

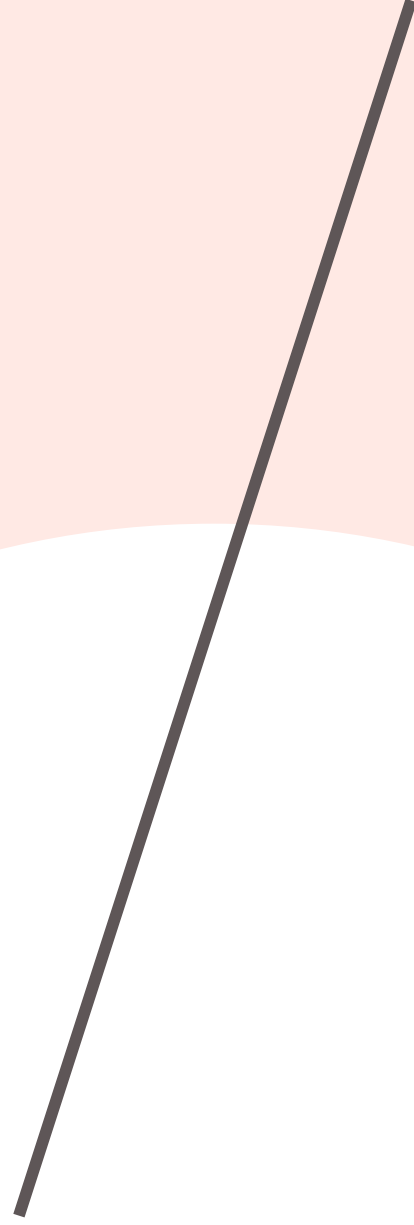


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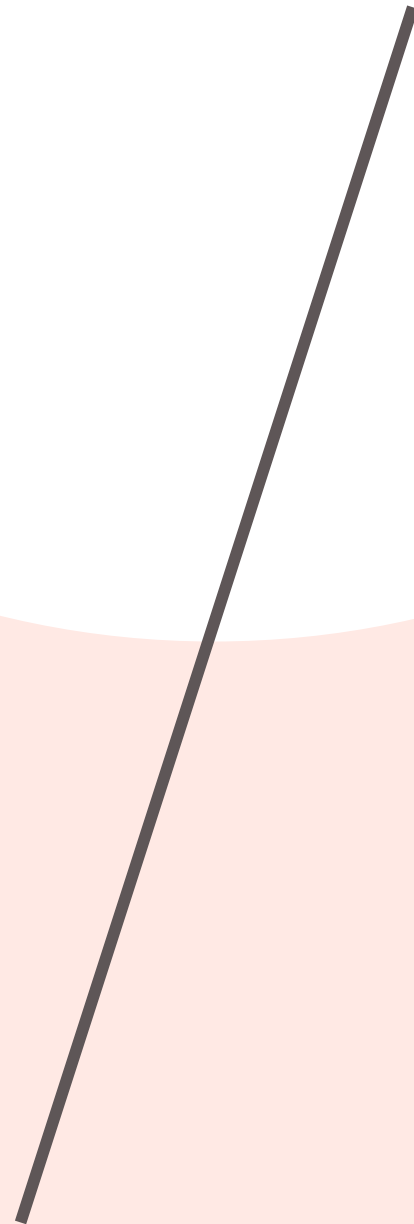
A really good trick to controlling cravings is to stretch the feeling of satiety after meals, leaving you full for a longer period, with little space to crave for snacks. When you have a good amount of complex carbs, protein, fats, and fiber on your plate, not only do you keep hunger at bay, but also minimize the spikes in your blood sugar that are notorious for causing those out of place cravings throughout the day.

While you're at it, try as much as you can still maintain a regular eating habit even during quarantine, when days just bleed into nights and 2 am becomes the new 8 pm. Practicing a little bit of discipline to still eat at the table without any distractions will allow you to stay in control of your eating behavior.

08



A N X I E T Y



08

In these times of uncertainty and isolation, every PMS-sufferer agrees that anxiety is the last thing you'd want to deal with on top of feelings of irritability, cravings, and sometimes crippling dysmenorrhea. Clinging onto a routine to have a sense of stability and normalcy is a good way to keep calm while we do our part in fighting this pandemic.

Sometimes, however, anxiety gets the best of us and we succumb to feelings of dread and helplessness. When this happens, remember that it's perfectly fine to allow ourselves to feel these things. What we do need to keep in mind is that to process these feelings healthily without spiralling out of control, we should reach out to someone we trust, to keep grounded and be assured that we are not alone.

W W W . S A K R O . S P A C E