

SCOTTISH WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORT WEEK 2023

Scottish Rowing Period Pack



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE	2
THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE CONSISTS OF FOUR PHASES:	3
PERIODS IN SPORT	4
SO, HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR FEMALE ATHLETES?	5
HOW TO BECOME A PERIOD POSITIVE SPORTS CLUB	6
WHAT SHOULD BE IN YOUR PERIOD PACKS?	7
SCOTTISH ROWING X FAB LITTLE BAG	8
RESOURCE LIST	9

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation (periods) will play an important role in many athletes lives. Whether you row competitively or just for fun, if you menstruate you are likely to experience symptoms at some point. It is important to understand your monthly cycle and how it may affect your training.

As a coach or club volunteer, understanding how symptoms may affect training capacity and the psychological approach to training is essential to supporting your athletes.

Hormonal changes can lead to low mood and energy - but can also see changes in strength, cognitive ability and endurance. These changes do not all have a negative impact on training!

The Well HQ have some excellent free resources to help with athlete and coach education.

Head to their website for more information and to get started: <https://www.thewell-hq.com/>

THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE

The average menstrual cycle is 28 days in length, but it's common for periods to be more or less frequent than this, ranging from every 23 days to every 35 days. A period can last between 2 and 7 days, and the bleeding tends to be heaviest in the first 2 days.



Periods can start as young as age 8, but more frequently start around the age of 12. Women will continue to experience periods until the time of their menopause - the average age of menopause in the UK is 51.

During the time of bleeding, people who menstruate may feel self-conscious, uncomfortable and quite sluggish. Addressing and understanding these barriers can help women continue to enjoy sport every day!

THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE CONSISTS OF FOUR PHASES:

Menstruation:

Menstruation is the shedding of the uterus lining. You may feel extra fatigued during this time, and may experience some pain or cramping. Exercise can help relieve these symptoms, although sometimes symptoms may be so severe exercise is not really on the cards.

The Follicular Phase:

During this phase, your hormone levels start to rise as your body prepares to ovulate. It is not uncommon to feel more energetic, and a bit more social than normal.

Ovulation:

Ovulation is when an egg is released from the ovaries. It will travel down the fallopian tubes towards the uterus. Your body temperature will rise very slightly and remain raised until your period begins.

The Luteal Phase:

This phase is the 14 days (approx.) leading up to your period. This is when your body is preparing for your period. During this time, common symptoms are; mood swings, irritability, fatigue, bloating, headaches, tender breasts, breakouts/spots, increased hunger, changes in sex drive. You may also find cognitive tasks more challenging than normal in your Luteal Phase.

PERIODS IN SPORT

As an athlete, you may experience a variety of these symptoms throughout your cycle - not just when you are on your period! Getting to know your cyclical changes and understanding what they may mean for your training and mindset is vital in managing your training and your expectations surrounding performance.



PHOTO CREDIT: REBECCA COBB

As a coach, your aim should be to create an environment where athletes can engage in open communication on topics including periods and the menstrual cycle. You should also look to educate yourself on some of the more common symptoms that come along with a menstrual cycle - and how this may have an impact on training and performance.

SO, HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR FEMALE ATHLETES?

1. Create a safe space, and encourage open discussions around women's health
2. Provide a range of free period products in bathrooms
3. Be proactive in educating yourself about periods and women's health*

*remember - even if you are a woman, that does NOT mean you will understand all of the symptoms others may experience!

HOW TO BECOME A PERIOD POSITIVE SPORTS CLUB

Provide useful products so your athletes know whether they start their period unexpectedly - or simply forget to pack their own products - they can still complete their training session as planned.

You can have these packs set up as a “pay it forward” initiative where you ask club members to donate to your stock of products, or you can access free products via the Scottish Government - click [here](#) and enter your postcode to find a collection spot!



Accessible products may sound like a small thing, but its often the small things that make a big difference while on your period! A small amount of organisation will allow many of your club members to continue to take part in the sport they love during their period.

WHAT SHOULD BE IN YOUR PERIOD PACKS?

Sanitary products do NOT have to be branded, there are many cheaper alternatives. However, it is advisable to have a range of different products available.

We recommend having the option of sanitary towels and tampons (both with and without applicators) available in all bathrooms. Leave at least one instruction pamphlet in your pack too. If you can have a pack available in each cubicle that is ideal!



Products are labelled according to “flow”. Different flows will be useful for different people at different stages of their period - so again we recommend having a variety of flow options for each type of product you provide.

Light 🩸🩸
Regular 🩸🩸🩸
Heavy 🩸🩸🩸🩸

Providing panty liners can also be useful.

Remember - the Scottish Government provides access to free products, the link for this can be found in the *resources* section.

SCOTTISH ROWING X FAB LITTLE BAG

Scottish Rowing has partnered with Fab Little Bag to provide all of it's coaches with ECO Coaches Bags.

These distinctive bags come filled with everything needed to support participants throughout their cycle. Additionally, the distinctive bag is instantly recognisable and sends the message that the coach carrying it is period positive and has made the effort to support menstruating participants.

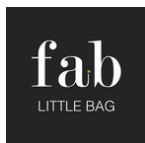


[ECO Coach Bag \(£25\)](#)

[Essentials Coach Bag \(£15\)](#)

Through this partnership there is a discount for all Scottish Rowing member clubs (just sign up to a free account). If you buy an ECO Coaches bag through Scottish Rowing's sports club page you can get a large discount off each purchase of these bags - we would highly encourage clubs to get behind this concept.

Sports clubs who purchase Fab Little Bag Coaches Bags are also able to use their 'Period Positive Sports Club' masthead. Further demonstrating their committment to this cause.



**PERIOD
POSITIVE
SPORTS
CLUB.**
FABLITTLEBAG.COM

RESOURCE LIST



Coach Education: The Well HQ

<https://www.thewell-hq.com/>

Free Period Products: Scottish Government

<https://www.mygov.scot/free-period-products>

Scottish Rowing Period Tracker:

Download [here](#)

Fab Little Bag:

[ECO Coach Bag](#)

[Essentials Coach Bag](#)

