

The Back-to-Balance Workbook

A step-by-step guide to using the psyche & soma
method to get your body back in balance after
using hormonal birth control

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Quick reminders...

This is an educational resource, not a substitute for working with a practitioner.

The information gathered here is for educational purposes. It does not constitute medical advice. The Back to Balance Workbook is not a replacement for medical care and is not intended to diagnose, treat, or prevent disease.

Please respect my copyright & your beloveds' health by sharing this document in its entirety.

My goal in creating this workbook is to help as many women as possible. Please feel free to share it with your friends, clients, and patients. When you share it, please make sure to share the entire workbook so that the reader gets all of the information she needs.

~Melanie

About the Psyche & Soma method

The Psyche & Soma method is the approach that I've created after years of supporting women to heal their bodies naturally. It's rooted in the wisdom of healing traditions from around the world, but with a twist. While herbal medicine and healing foods are important parts of the process, the Psyche & Soma method emphasizes YOU as the healer of your own life, and your body's deep power to help you learn the lessons that you're seeking to learn.

A key principle in the Psyche & Soma method is that we start with the gentlest, safest interventions. This guide will teach you the basic things that are safe and relatively easy for you to do on your own. For most women, the information in this guide will be all that's needed.

As you work through the process of returning to balance after using hormonal birth control remember these keystones from the psyche & soma approach.

* Your body is naturally self-healing & self-correcting. It's ok to turn over most of the healing process to your body's

wisdom. Everything listed in this guide is design to support your body's process, not to force change.

* The symptoms and signs your body shows you are her way of communicating. Your body doesn't speak in words. She speaks through sensations and symptoms. Learning to feel what you feel and notice your body's signs is a vital part of the healing process.

* Your body and mind are not separate. If you run into roadblocks with a biologically-based approach, take a look at what's happening with your emotional life.

* The basics covered in this guide will be enough to help most women. Advanced techniques may be needed if you try these techniques and still have problems. If you need any support beyond what this guide can offer, you can email me at anytime at melanie@psycheandsoma.com .

Let's get started!

Before you Quit the Pill...

If you're reading this guide before you actually stop using your hormonal birth control method, start here. These steps will help to make the process of transitioning as easy as possible. Working through these steps will make sure that your body has all of the resources she needs to have the easiest transition when you actually stop the hormones.

If you've already stopped your birth control method and are just now reading this guide---don't worry. You can skip right to the next section and still get great results.

Your Pre-Quitting Checklist:

- Make sure you're comfortable with your new contraceptive plan (if you're not hoping to get pregnant.) If you're worried about an unplanned pregnancy, your body won't be able to relax enough to return to normal.

- If you're stopping birth control because you're ready to get pregnant, give yourself permission to take a few months to get used to your body's cycle again before you focus on trying for a pregnancy. Take the pressure off.

● Read through the food checklist (Page 9) and start incorporating those foods into your diet. Learn some new recipes and get comfy with adding more veggies, whole grains, and nutritional yeast into your routine. The more familiar you are with these foods, the easier it'll be to eat them when you discontinue the Pill. Now is the time to start leaning into these changes so they won't feel sudden or shocking.

● Choose a menstrual tracker that you like. You can use a digital tracker for your smartphone like Kindara (free) or Selene (paid) or use the paper charting method. To learn more about menstrual/fertility tracking, read "Taking Charge of Your Fertility" by Toni Weschler.

● Tell someone in your life that you're getting ready to make this change. Ask if they'll be willing to give you support and feedback if you find yourself struggling.

After you Quit the Pill...

Once you stop your hormonal birth control method, start using these strategies to help get your body back in balance.

The nutritional checklist will help you to replenish the nutrients that may be affected by long-term use of hormonal contraceptives, while also helping your liver and large intestine to work at peak efficiency so that they can do their job of eliminating excess hormones from your bloodstream. You don't need to do any 'cleansing' as long as you're eating these nourishing foods that will help your body complete her own natural detoxification process.

The lifestyle methods will help your higher hormonal regulatory centers in your brain to get synced up again. In addition to helping to rebalance your hormones, these methods will help with your sleep, energy levels, and stress response.

This guide does not include herbal medicine options to regulate your cycles. If you're not already familiar with herbs, you really need to work with an experienced practitioner who can make sure that you're choosing the herbs that are right for your body and your situation. Please do not use herbal medicines without proper guidance. (They probably won't hurt you, but they probably won't work either unless you have help to identify the right plants, the right dose, and the right delivery methods.)

Most women will find that their cycles are back in balance within 3-6 months of using these strategies. However, sometimes hormonal birth con-

control methods mask deeper problems (or are used as treatments for conditions like PCOS, absent periods, painful periods, etc.) In those cases, you may find that discontinuing your birth control brings back old symptoms, or comes long with new problems that you don't want to face on your own.

If you have any alarming or unusual symptoms, check with your doctor to rule out any serious issues. If you need more support and want to learn more about working with the Psyche & Soma method one-on-one with me, my door is always open.

Your Post-Quitting Checklist:

- Print out the healing foods checklist (in the next section of this guide.) Aim to complete the checklist every day to ensure you're getting all of the beneficial compounds and fiber that your body needs to get back to balance.

- Watch the sun rise at least 5 days per week. You may shudder to think of getting up this early, but watching the sun rise is powerful medicine for your pituitary gland and your higher regulatory centers. It will help to re-set your circadian rhythm and get all of the hormones that are "up-

stream" from your ovaries in sync. Try it 2-3 times and you'll be convinced.

- Feel your lower belly. If it's cold to the touch (colder than your belly button area), massage it with coconut or sesame oil that has a few drops of ginger essential oil mixed in. Do this daily to restore circulation to your pelvic organs. Belly dancing, deep breathing, and yoga's "Four Purifications" are also helpful. Find free videos on YouTube if you'd like to give them a try.

- Track your menstrual cycle. Ideally, track not just your menses (bleeding) but also your cervical fluid, basal body temperature, and any symptoms. To learn more, read "Taking Charge of Your Fertility" or work with a practitioner who teaches the Fertility Awareness Method.

- If possible, do some sweaty exercise in a group of other women on a regular basis. Not only will the exercise be beneficial for your own mood and health, but the sweat of other women contains pheromones that may help your body to start menstruating regularly again.

Healing Foods Checklist

Print this checklist out and post it on your fridge or near your kitchen table. Check off each serving of the healing foods listed and you'll be getting everything you need to ensure that your liver and large intestine are getting the fiber and nutrients they need----AND you'll be replenishing the nutrients that may be depleted in women who use hormonal birth control in the long-term.

This is NOT a diet or a cleanse. Our goal is to deeply nourish you, not to restrict your diet. These are not meant to be the ONLY foods you eat, so continue to eat a healthy, whole foods diet the rest of the time.

You can enjoy these foods cooked, raw, seasoned, plain----any way you like them. Do your best to include foods from all of the categories every day, but know that nutrition is a cumulative process. You don't need to be "perfect" to get results. Consistency over time is much more important than "perfection".

For best results, please let go of any foods that might be sabotaging your hormones. Commercially raised meat & dairy products, artificial sweeteners, excessive coffee consumption, artificial flavors & colors, and any foods wrapped in soft plastics (including plastic water bottles) can cause problems. Let these go as much as possible.

Healing Foods I Ate Today:

- 1+ serving of cruciferous veggies (broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprouts, etc)
- 1+ serving of sulfur-rich veggies (garlic, onion, shallots)
- 1+ serving of leafy green veggies
- 1+ serving of orange, purple, or yellow veggies (carrots, beets, butternut squash, etc)
- 1-2 servings of nutritional yeast (1-2 TBSP)
- 1+ serving of beans (pinto, black beans, mung beans, chickpeas, etc)
- 1+ servings of cashews, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, or fresh ground flax
- 1+ serving of whole grain (brown rice, millet, quinoa, buckwheat, etc.)

Final Words

I'm so glad that you're taking the time to learn about how you can support your body in getting back to a state of balance. I promise---your body was BORN to regulate herself. You can relax and trust that the simple practices I've listed here will go a long way to getting you back on track.

Give yourself time to play with these strategies. It's completely normal for women to have 3-6 months of unusual cycles before things get into a good rhythm again. Don't rush yourself.

At the same time, listen to your intuition. If you feel that your symptoms are unusual, or if they're interfering significantly with your ability to work, play, love, and be the woman you want to be---it's time to get help. You deserve to feel good and you deserve to have expert help if you need it.

Thank you so much for reading this guide and for being part of my practice. After a lifetime of struggling with my own health, it's a deep honor for me to be able to guide you on your own journey. If you have any questions or want more resources, you can always write to me at melanie@psycheandsoma.com