

What women told us about their menstrual cycles.

Over three months, 153 women and people who menstruate told us how their cycle really shows up in their lives - mood, pain, planning, workarounds, and the times they weren't believed.

How to read this research

WHO TOOK PART

153 women and people who menstruate (from 155 responses, two under 18 excluded), reached mainly through our own network.

WHEN

December 2024 – March 2025.

WHERE THEY WERE

Skewed heavily to Scotland and London, with a scattering from the rest of the UK and abroad. Not a picture of "UK women".

UNDER-REPRESENTED

Ages 25–44 dominate; under-25s and peri/post-menopause voices are few.

A listening exercise, not a representative study. Numbers describe only respondents - read them as direction, not prevalence. We didn't ask about work; wherever women mention their jobs, they raised it themselves, unprompted.

69%

track their cycle (105/153)

65%

sought information (99/153)

64%

say it affects daily life (98/153)

18%

feel "very informed" (28/153)

People who track and seek information are almost certainly over-represented here — read these as the shape of the group, not a population figure. Of those who'd raised their cycle with a doctor, more found the support unhelpful than helpful.

THE MENTAL LOAD — THE PART NO ONE SEES

"I find it really difficult to know if how I am feeling during that time is real or proportionate. Meaning I don't trust myself, my feelings or decision making."

25-34 · LONDON

"Is my life really a terrible shambles, or is it my luteal phase?"

25-34 · UK

PAIN THAT STOPS THE DAY

"The pain can be absolutely debilitating and take me out for a day or two. I have to cancel plans and work... I often have flare-ups throughout my cycle."

25-34 · SCOTLAND · ENDOMETRIOSIS

A note: some responses described severe pain, real effects on mental health, and distressing experiences with care. If any of this is familiar, it's worth speaking to a GP or trusted health professional - you don't have to manage it alone.

MENSTRUAL CYCLES & WORK — RAISED UNPROMPTED

"In the past year I've taken 19 days off work due to my period - not counting the days I sat on the sofa with my laptop open, pretending to be online."

25-34 · LONDON

"Women are expected to work through any period pain and continue as normal, or come into the office as planned. Just suck it up, because we should be used to it by now."

25-34 · SCOTLAND

"My employer has been incredible... time off when needed, no questions asked, for physical or mental symptoms. It's such a supportive environment that I feel I'll never find this anywhere else, so I can't possibly leave."

25-34 · LONDON — ON WHAT GOOD SUPPORT DOES

TRACKING AS A WAY TO TAKE BACK CONTROL

"To align everyday activities with where I am with my cycle - operate at my best by being aware when there are times I need to keep the diary clear."

35-44 · SCOTLAND

"If I'm feeling really low, I can look at my app and know whether it's (cycle-related) or not."

25-34 · UK

SEEKING HELP — AND OFTEN NOT FINDING IT

"I kept going to the doctor and got told over and over that I had a general anxiety disorder, and only got diagnosed with PMDD after I started tracking my symptoms and went to the doctor with my findings."

25-34 · LONDON

"Told by doctors for the last 15 years that this is normal... the largest effect on my life is the mental damage of being (gaslit) by doctors for years and having my symptoms ignored."

25-34 · SCOTLAND · STAGE 4 ENDOMETRIOSIS

ALREADY PAYING TO COPE, AND ASKING FOR MORE EDUCATION

"Have looked into various supplements tailored towards menstrual health... loosely tried seed cycling... Everything is very expensive."

25-34 · SCOTLAND

"We need more education on the different phases and how it impacts us! Culturally, so many women grow up with 'mind over matter' and push through."

25-34 · LONDON

About this research. Nadi listening survey, fielded online 19 December 2024 – 7 March 2025. 155 people responded; two respondents under 18 are excluded, leaving 153 in this analysis, of whom 131 said they currently have a cycle. Recruitment was through the founder's own network and social channels, so the sample is self-selected and skews strongly toward Scotland and London and toward ages 25–44. It is not nationally representative and cannot be read as a picture of all women. Percentages describe respondents only, against the base shown. Quotes are lightly condensed and copy-edited for spelling, punctuation and abbreviations; no words have been substituted and the meanings unchanged, with trims marked by an ellipsis (...). The survey did not ask about the workplace; workplace comments were volunteered.