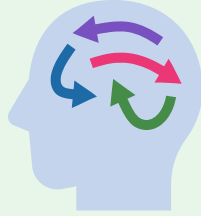


# Wonder + Women: ADHD in Female Athletes

## ADHD

ADHD is a full body and brain experience that impacts **executive functioning**

- Flexible thinking
- Working memory
- Following directions
- Planning & organizing



- Emotional Regulation
- Rejection Sensitivity
- Sleep, energy and motivation

## The Nervous System

### People with ADHD

Interest-based: Interest, competition, novelty and urgency enhance motivation

### Neurotypical People

Importance-based: Attention is driven by outcomes, rewards and consequences

## Sex Differences and Hormonal Impacts

**Puberty:** Estrogen and progesterone increase (fatigue, mood swings, risk taking)

**Pregnancy & Childbirth:** Estrogen increases (may decrease ADHD symptoms)

↳ Drop in hormones following birth can lead to depression and cause increase in symptoms

**Perimenopause/Menopause:** Estrogen and progesterone drop by 65% (moodiness, sadness, fatigue, difficulty with memory)

## Types of ADHD and Diagnosis

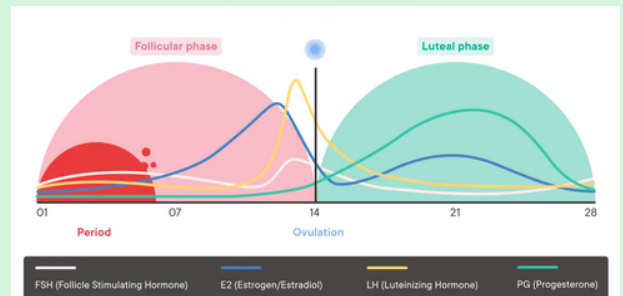
Criteria does not always capture the full picture and experience

- 1 Inattentive:** Difficulty organizing work, planning, or focusing on specific details
- 2 Hyperactive:** Impulsive, impatient and interrupt others  
↳ Difficulty sitting still, relaxing, and focusing
- 3 Combined:** Mixture of listed symptoms

## ADHD in Females

- 1 female to every 3-16 males are diagnosed with ADHD
- 50% of all women are misdiagnosed
- Females present with more comorbidities
- Up to 8% of elite athletes have condition compared to 2-7% of the general population
- Sports often diminish symptoms in girls, perhaps masking ADHD in athletes

## Ovarian Cycle



Fluctuation of estrogen during menstrual cycle impacts ADHD symptoms

# Wonder + Women: ADHD in Female Athletes

## EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS AND TIPS

### Effective Interventions for ADHD Management

#### Medication, nutrition, sunlight and sleep

- Work with medical provider to optimize medication and minimize side effects
- 10 minutes of morning sunlight
- Good sleep hygiene

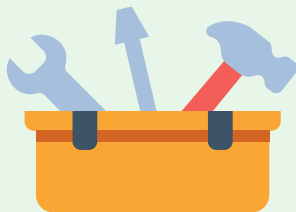


#### Monitor your moods and cycle

- Use mood tracker and cycle tracker to keep you mindful of where you are at in each phase
- Discuss mood regulation with medical provider

#### Therapeutic services

- Work with mental health provider who specializes in ADHD: Help develop a mental skills toolbox to manage emotions, mood and motivation



#### Executive Functioning Coaching

- Work with ADHD Specialist to enhance daily routines and to create time management strategies

### Tips for Female Athletes

#### Executive Function Support

- Simplify tasks
  - Create task lists
  - Time blocking methods
- “Dopamine” Menu: Create list of things that you are motivated by/boost you (i.e., listening to music while completing a task)



#### Self-Compassion

- Increase self compassion
- Practice mindfulness
- Seek support through executive function coaching and therapy

#### Demands

- Reduce demands during different phases of your menstrual cycle to reduce burnout

### Tips for Coaches

- Allow for flexibility in training regiments and work with medical providers
- Be supportive and encourage athletes to seek therapy and engage in self-care practices such as mindfulness
- Consider the weight and exhaustion that can come from ADHD fatigue and burnout
- Watch for symptoms of depression and anxiety

