

Cheat Sheet: Build Your Perfect Hormone Friendly Workout Week

The big idea

Your body adds up all stress. Workouts, poor sleep, under eating, caffeine, life stress, pain, low recovery.

When the stress bucket overflows, your body gets protective: cravings go up, sleep gets lighter, inflammation and water retention rise, progress can stall.

If your stress bucket feels 7 out of 10 or higher, you need a smarter week, not a harder week.

Progress markers that matter (not just the scale)

Use these as your weekly wins:

- Better sleep
- Calmer cravings
- More stable energy
- Better digestion
- Strength improving
- Less pain and stiffness
- Better mood and patience

Circle one to track this week:

Sleep / Cravings / Energy / Digestion / Strength / Mood

The 4 workout buckets

Most people overuse one bucket and underuse the one their hormones need most.

1) Strength Training

What it does: stabilizes blood sugar, improves insulin sensitivity, protects muscle and bone.

How it should feel: challenging but not draining. You leave feeling accomplished.

Simple rules:

- 2 days per week is the minimum for most women
- 3 days can work if sleep and recovery are solid
- Effort feels like a 7 to 8 out of 10
- Stop with 1 to 3 reps left in the tank most of the time

A simple strength session hits:

- Squat (chair squat, goblet squat)
- Hinge (dumbbell deadlift, hip hinge)
- Push (incline push up, chest press)
- Pull (row, band pull-aparts)
- Core or carry (dead bug, bird dog, farmer carry)

Common mistake: stacking hard strength plus hard cardio too often.

2) Zone 2 Cardio

What it does: stress friendly cardio, supports recovery, appetite regulation, and endurance.

How it should feel: you can talk in full sentences but you would rather not.

Simple rules:

- 2 to 4 sessions per week

- 20 to 45 minutes
- Walking, incline walk, bike, pool, easy rowing, steady dance

Best use: if you feel puffy, craving, anxious, stressed, or not sleeping well.

3) Intervals and HIIT

What it does: conditioning and performance tool. Optional for fat loss.

Key point: HIIT is still a stressor. Overuse can increase hunger and disrupt sleep.

Simple rules:

- 0 to 2 sessions per week
- Never on back to back days
- Keep it short: 8 to 15 minutes of actual intervals

Signs HIIT is costing you:

- Wired later
 - Poor sleep
 - Extra snacky at night
 - Soreness lingers
 - Motivation crashes
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4) Mobility and Core

What it does: helps the nervous system downshift, supports recovery, pain reduction, posture, pelvic floor and digestion support.

How it should feel: not sweaty. More like joint care and reset.

Simple rules:

- 10 minutes daily, or 20 to 30 minutes one to two times per week
- Best after strength or before bed

Simple structure:

- Breathing with longer exhales
 - Hips and upper back mobility
 - Gentle core stability (dead bug, bird dog, side plank from knees)
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Cardio that works with your hormones

- Zone 2 is your base most weeks.
 - HIIT fits best when sleep is solid and stress is manageable.
 - Walking supports fat loss and gut motility.
 - Even 10 minutes after one meal helps blood sugar and digestion.
 - Low impact options count: pool, bike, incline walk, chair based cardio.
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Symptom based guide (use this when choosing your week)

If fatigue is high: minimum effective dose week

- Two strength days, two to three Zone 2 days, one mobility day

If sleep is poor:

- Keep HIIT minimal
- Keep sessions shorter

- Put harder workouts earlier in the day

If cravings and belly fat are loud:

- Strength plus Zone 2 base
- Limit HIIT because it can increase hunger

If anxiety and high stress:

- More Zone 2 and mobility
- Fewer hard days

If gut issues are active:

- Walk after meals
- Avoid stacking hard sessions

Guardrails that keep you progressing

- Two hard days per week rule
- No consecutive high intensity days
- Adjust without quitting: swap, scale, simplify

Recovery signs to watch:

Sleep worse, soreness lasts too long, appetite spikes, irritability rises, motivation drops.

Fill in your perfect workout week

Goal I want most right now: _____

Progress marker I will track this week: _____

Non negotiables (pick 2):

1. _____
2. _____

My next 7 days plan:

- Strength days: _____ and _____
- Zone 2 days: _____
- Mobility day: _____
- Optional HIIT day (only if sleep and stress allow): _____
- Daily movement goal (steps or walk): _____

My backups (so I stay consistent):

- If I can't do my planned workout, I will do this instead:
