

The symptoms of hormone imbalance are fairly everyday. Which makes diagnosis tricky. Exhaustion – do I blame hormones or anxiety? Anxiety – do I blame hormones or life? Brain fog – do I blame hormones or the tequila? Squidgy round the middle? Do I blame hormones or Deliveroo? Hormones can't claim sole ownership for everything that's not right, but a blood test to check your levels is the only way to know for sure.

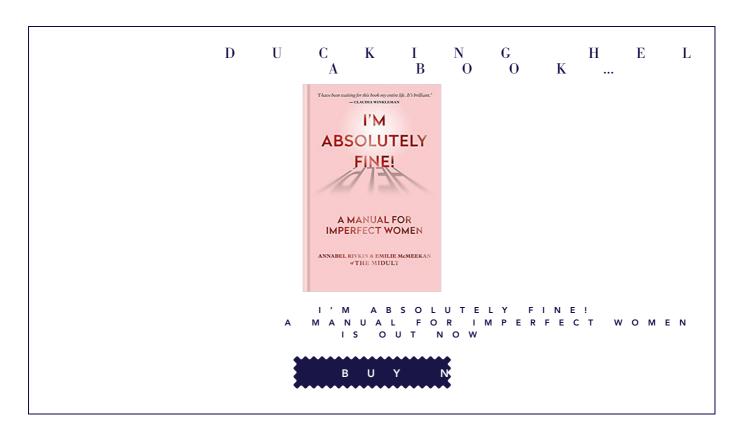
- 1. If you were really on it *hollow laugh* you'd get your hormones checked in your 20s. In the second week of your cycle when things are balanced. Then when you approach peri-menopause in your 40s, oestrogen withdrawals and all, you have a road map for the 'good ole day' levels and you'll know your baseline and what your system can tolerate.
- 2. If you feel OK in the first two weeks of your cycle and <u>debilitated in the second two</u> THAT IS NOT OK.
- 3. Specifically: If you're under 35 with severe PMS; or 35-45 and experiencing <u>changes to your emotional wellbeing</u> or libido; or 50ish and have <u>fluctuating or problem periods</u>, you'd do well to get them checked as all of these can possibly be caused by ratios in hormones.
- 4. More generally, it's worth having a closer look if you suffer from any of these symptoms:
 - Severe PMS
 - Fatigue over and above the usual isn't-life-busy stuff
 - Poor sleep
 - Mood swings and irritability
 - Skin change
 - Hot flashes and night sweats
 - Anxiety
 - Loss of memory
 - Low libido
- 5. Keep an eye on your mental state. If you <u>are panicky</u> or cast very low, the answer isn't always <u>anti-depressants and anti-anxiety drugs</u> useful though they are.

Any change in the day to day that sticks around is a signpost. Your doctor will probably check your blood pressure, your iron and possibly your thyroid function but, these days, we should make it our business to <u>request a full hormonal profile</u> if and when things seem... odd. Or just to know where you stand. <u>Knowledge is power</u>.

With thanks to the amazing Dr Martin Galy at 23MD 23md.co.uk/dr-martin-galy/

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