

simple guide to
**Balancing
Blood Sugar**



A MIRBEAU BALANCED GUIDE



the delicate BALANCE

Keeping blood sugar in target range is one of the best things for cardiovascular health, better energy, improved mood, mental clarity, and more. This guide will help you understand the benefits along with the basics on how to begin balancing blood sugar so you can start feeling your absolute best - from what's on your plate to ways to reduce stress.



The basics

BLOOD SUGAR 101

What is Blood Sugar?

Blood sugar levels rise after consuming meals with carbohydrates, especially those full of simple sugars, which are digested and absorbed quickly. Blood sugar levels also rise during times of stress or illness; they dip during times of rest, following exercise, and when meals are skipped.

When blood sugar levels spike too high (known as hyperglycemia) insulin is secreted by the pancreas to help clear sugar from the blood and move it to cells where it can be stored. When blood sugar levels dip too low (known as hypoglycemia) glucagon is secreted to break down stored sugar and elevate blood sugar levels. Continuously elevated blood sugar levels lead to insulin resistance which can contribute to weight gain, metabolic syndrome, and type 2 diabetes. It can also damage a variety of body organs and systems.

Fluctuations in blood sugar levels are completely normal, but what matters most is how extreme the spikes and dips are, as more severe fluctuations could lead to issues down the road.

Signs of Imbalance

Low blood sugar can feel like fatigue, weakness, shakiness, hunger, headaches, irritability, and other symptoms.

Alternatively, a blood sugar spike can feel like an energy high followed by a crash. Chronically elevated blood sugar can lead to weight gain and fatigue. More severe signs of high blood sugar include increased thirst, compromised vision, and other symptoms. We recommend consulting with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns about symptoms or signs you may be experiencing.

There are many options available for blood glucose monitoring, which helps to identify patterns in the fluctuations that occur in response to diet, exercise, medications, and more – in real time. This is helpful for individuals monitoring health conditions or simply those that are interesting in learning what patterns influence their own blood sugar levels.



The many BENEFITS *of balancing* BLOOD SUGAR

1 Improved Energy Levels
When your blood sugar is balanced, your body can efficiently convert glucose to energy. This means you will be provided with a steady and constant energy supply throughout your day!

2 Weight Management
With balanced blood sugar, you're less likely to experience intense hunger or cravings that can lead to overeating or making less nutritious food choices.

3 Better Focus & Clarity
Blood sugar imbalances can affect cognitive function, leading to difficulties in concentration and focus. Stable blood sugar will not only help brain function and mental clarity but also may help prevent cognitive diseases like dementia.

4 Improved Mood
Fluctuating blood sugar levels can lead to mood swings, irritability, and even anxiety. So by maintaining stable blood sugar you will promote better emotional balance and overall mental well-being.

5 Heart Health
High blood sugar levels can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke due to its damage to blood vessels. Therefore stable blood sugar helps maintain a healthy cardiovascular system.

6 Overall Wellness
Stable blood sugar also improves our body's ability to fight off infections and illnesses more effectively, and studies have shown it can improve sleep quality.

7 Reduced Risk of Disease
Balanced blood sugar reduces the risk of diabetes-related disease. Consistently high blood sugar levels are associated with long-term damage to various organs including the eyes, kidneys, heart, and nerves.

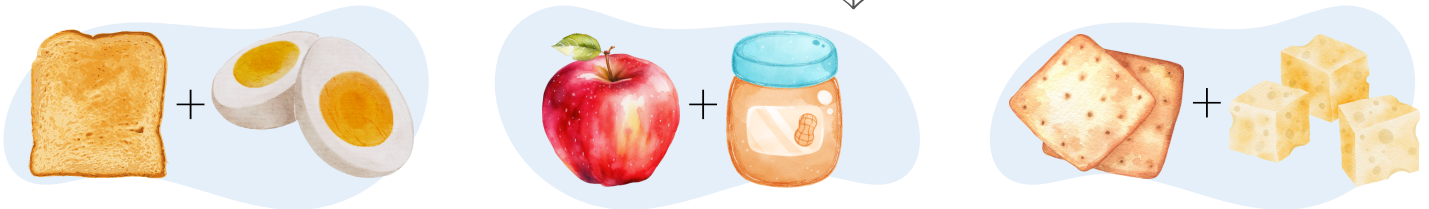
8 Balanced Hormones
By keeping your blood glucose stable, you can support the health of your hormones and, as a result, your major bodily systems.

balancing blood sugar

EAT SMART

Balanced Meals & Snacks

A great rule of thumb for blood sugar balance is to aim for each meal and snack to contain protein, healthy fat, and fiber. This trio naturally supports blood sugar balance by slowing digestion and absorption, which in turn helps regulate hunger, cravings, and metabolism. At the least, try to avoid “naked carbs” which means carbs without fiber or accompanying protein or fat. Some examples of balanced pairings are an apple with nut butter, sourdough toast with eggs, or whole grain crackers with cheese. Each of these contain carbs, protein and fat.



Eat your Protein First

Studies have shown that eating protein at the start of a meal (before carbohydrates) helps moderate the pace in which food moves through the digestive system, putting the brakes on absorption, and reducing post-meal blood sugar levels.

Choose Carbohydrates Wisely

After eating carbs, your body breaks it down into glucose which can cause a spike in blood sugar. Even so, carbs are essential fuel for our bodies, so it's important to include them in our diet. More importantly, the type of carb consumed makes a big difference. Opt for whole food carbohydrates such as whole grains (brown rice, oats, quinoa, etc.), legumes, fruit, and vegetables which will help to stabilize blood sugar levels since they are high in fiber and nutrient dense. Your body digests high-fiber foods more slowly, which means a more moderate rise in blood sugar. On the other hand, refined carbs like white bread, white pasta, candy, packaged baked goods, and sugary drinks can cause sharp spikes in blood sugar and may lead to insulin resistance if consumed in excess over time. The key with carbs is quality and quantity. The amount of carbs each person requires is highly individual and depends on factors like age, weight, and activity level.

Slow Down

Studies have shown that when people speed through a meal, they have higher levels of blood sugar and insulin than when the same foods are eaten at a leisurely pace. Slowing down and chewing enough also ensures optimal digestion!

Don't forget to Hydrate

Proper hydration helps flush glucose out of the body. Plain water is best, but feel free to jazz it up with a squeeze of lemon, lime or fresh cucumber and mint (*hello spa!*) for a refreshing twist that will not negatively impact your blood sugar levels and, at the same time, will add a boost of electrolytes.



balancing blood sugar MOVE YOUR BODY

We all know exercise has so many benefits. It helps reduce stress and inflammation, boosts mood, keeps your heart strong, supports managing a healthy weight, and so much more. It is also a powerful tool for balancing blood sugar in the way that it increases the body's sensitivity to insulin. This is a good thing since high insulin sensitivity allows the cells of the body to use blood glucose more effectively, in turn reducing blood sugar.



Type & Intensity Matter

A combination of cardio and strength training show the most benefits for balancing blood sugar. Aerobic activities can lower blood sugar levels both during and after exercise, while strength training exercises increase muscle mass, further enhancing glucose uptake and metabolism. The ADA recommends doing cardio at moderate intensity for 30 minutes a day, working up to five times a week, to significantly benefit insulin regulation and blood sugar levels. Brisk walking, running, biking, strength training and swimming are good choices — and even dancing, gardening, or playing your favorite sport.

Move after Meals

Movement after eating can help lower blood sugar levels and improve health outcomes over time. Even just a 5 to 10 minute walk after a meal can positively influence blood glucose.

Move throughout the Day

Studies suggest that moving our bodies more often throughout the day may be even more beneficial for regulating blood sugar levels than one workout followed by sitting the rest of the day. Try setting reminders on your phone to get up and move, stretch, or go for a quick walk every hour or two.

balancing blood sugar REDUCE STRESS

Chronic stress can lead to elevated blood sugar. When you're stressed, the body releases higher levels of cortisol, the stress hormone that can increase your blood sugar and when elevated over time, can contribute to inflammation, weight gain, and related metabolic illnesses. While experiencing stress is part of life, it's important to take stock of how often you are living in a stressed-out state and try to incorporate stress-relieving techniques that work for you.

Get plenty of Sleep

Lack of or poor sleep can cause your cells to be less sensitive to insulin, so getting adequate sleep is important when it comes to balanced blood sugar. Try developing a calming wind-down routine before bedtime such as taking a bath, reading, drinking chamomile tea, or reducing screen time at least an hour before you get into bed (blue light can disrupt your body's circadian rhythm).

Exercise & Yoga

Yoga is known to regulate the nervous system and our response to stress, and it's also a great tool for practicing mindfulness and utilizing breath to tap into our inner zen. Yoga and exercise alike may help reduce inflammation, improve insulin sensitivity, release feel-good endorphins, and help you let go of daily stressors. There are so many types of exercise - find what feels good for you!

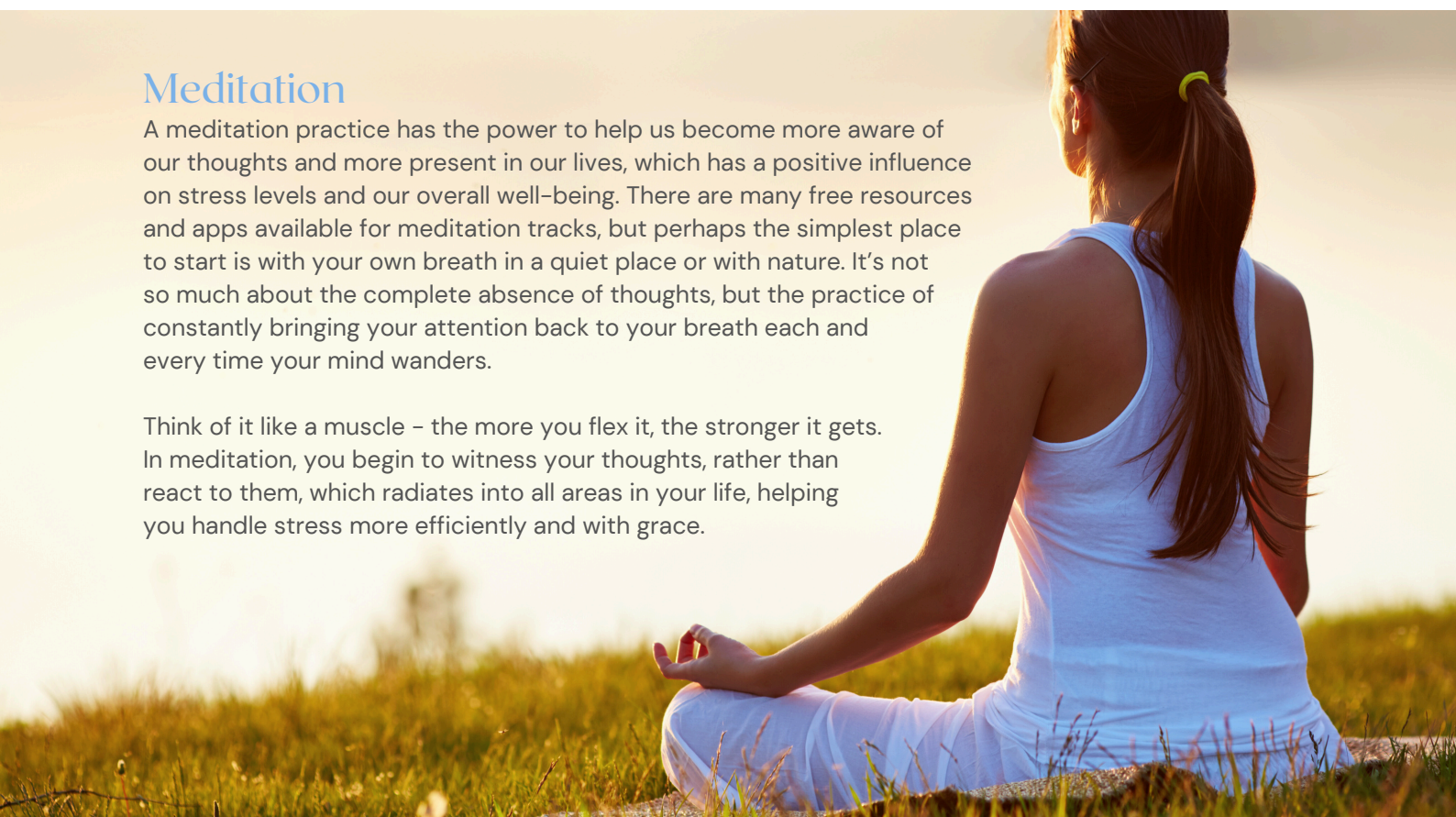
Prioritize Filling your Cup

In times of high stress, it's even more important to look after yourself, as the saying goes "you can't pour from an empty cup" - finding even the tiniest moments to fill your own cup will help you better show up for yourself, your family, your career, and truly all areas of life.

Meditation

A meditation practice has the power to help us become more aware of our thoughts and more present in our lives, which has a positive influence on stress levels and our overall well-being. There are many free resources and apps available for meditation tracks, but perhaps the simplest place to start is with your own breath in a quiet place or with nature. It's not so much about the complete absence of thoughts, but the practice of constantly bringing your attention back to your breath each and every time your mind wanders.

Think of it like a muscle - the more you flex it, the stronger it gets. In meditation, you begin to witness your thoughts, rather than react to them, which radiates into all areas in your life, helping you handle stress more efficiently and with grace.



CITATIONS



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