

16th Feb, 2024

Hey my friends,

I have had a few people message me and comment on what has changed for me in regards to exercising and feeling my best at 41 years old. I thought it would be a good opportunity to open up and let you in on what I've been navigating over the past few years. This is long so I appreciate you taking the time to read. I hope it helps you and I hope it gives you hope - if you can relate which I know many of you who will. Remember, this is just my journey. It's me sharing some of my secrets - and I am being vulnerable in doing so.

For those of you who are new to following me and Move it Mama - I am Lisa and I am the founder and owner of the business. I have four children. All boys and they are delicious and no they don't pee all over the toilet seat! They are 7,9,11 and 13. I had all four pregnancies and births and new babies all quite soon after each other. I had 4 kids 5 and under. I was a stay at home mother (used to be primary school teacher). I started writing my own workouts after the third son was born. I realised being quite time poor (and breastfeeding and a husband working long hours) that to make time for the gym proved to be more stressful and expensive and I didn't need extra stress BUT I really needed to exercise. I knew exercise gave me POWER!

After the fourth baby, I gave myself the time off I needed but then quickly went back to doing my exercise at home with the kids around. I would get some snacks ready for them, drink bottles, toys etc and just tell them I was going to be busy for 20 minutes and this would make me an even better Mum after. I role modelled in front of them and yep, they climbed over me and annoyed me but quickly got the message cos I persevered and kept doing it.

At the time, quick sweat sessions were tickling my fancy. I loved a burpee and a squat jump. I would later learn this was HIIT! And HIIT was all the rage. HIIT (high intensity interval training) would give me endorphins. It would make me puff and pant and sweat and feel so good. And it was fast. And effective. It would reset me and often change my mindset and my mood. Above all, it gave me confidence and HELPED me mother! I started sharing this stuff with my community around me because they expressed interest.

I became pretty busy. I was already drowning a little with the whole four babes thing but this other side hustle (trying to encourage my pals to move with me) was just such a joy albeit taking up more of my time. I was living and breathing trying to keep my family alive and happy but also trying to make the other friends and people around me happier in their own skin too. It was a lot. I actually to be honest GLORIFIED myself being busy. (Not anymore)!

I kept exercising (a lot), kept mumming, kept drowning but not also coming up for breaths, kept motivating, kept encouraging, kept building my brand, kept putting millions of pressure on myself, kept thinking, never resting, never stopping...

Kept trying. Trying to be the best. Trying to just give everyone everything.

Lots of people would express their worry to me about how important taking time to just chill was but I didn't know how and to be honest, I didn't want to know! I had JOBS to do! My brain felt wired and constantly 'on' and now I look back and I think 'my poor husband.'

On one hand I was so proud of myself. My kids. My family. My exercise regime. The brand I was building. The community. But on the other hand, I knew if I kept going, it was going to get a whole lot harder.

I used wine as a clutch to take the edge off. I thought it was the only real thing that would relax me. I'd drink a glass too many on the weekend but no worries, I would do a really hard workout the next day to RESET me and clear my head and get rid of the toxins. And I also thought I was showing my community I was COOL and balanced and like yeah I exercise a lot, yeah I am fit but don't worry I DRINK wine too....you know? Like maybe people would think I was boring if I didn't drink. Or 'yeah she's so healthy, like she doesn't even drink.' #dontask #sobad #whyohwhy I didn't want people to think I was so healthy, I wanted to be HASHTAG 'balanced.'

Three years after my fourth baby, I started to suffer with really bad PMS. It slowly became a total MIND F. I had never really had PMS before. I'd be fine as soon as I got my period and for the first 14 days of my cycle but then the next half, I was quickly becoming a mess. It got to the point that I started to dread my life after ovulation. Like feel so sorry for my family and my husband but also so sorry for me. I went to countless Women's health doctors and normal doctors and often walked away in tears. I got told to get the mirena, go on the pill or take anti-depressants during the second half of my cycle. I knew I could 'suck it up' and potentially 'deal with it' but I didn't want to settle for that.

It was so debilitating. It was so heartbreaking. I was worried for my family! I also was so sad for me. I felt isolated and alone. I diagnosed myself with PMDD which made me feel better cos everything I was reading I related to - it felt good to 'label' it. Down the track though I realised all of my symptoms were quite similar to peri-menopause.

I remember one morning in the kitchen I totally smashed a bowl on purpose. The boys were all at the island bench eating their breakfast. They weren't even arguing or causing too much angst but the noise and mess and to do list just got too much for me. I threw the bowl into the sink deliberately. (Can't believe I am telling you that)! SMASH. Afterwards I was like WTF. I felt like it wasn't even me. Like who was that woman? I likened it to an outer body experience and I was having a few of them! I apologised to the boys and of course, as my boys do told me not to worry and it was ok and 'you're still the best Mum.' But I went away that day thinking what is becoming of me? I felt like a fraud too like 'I'm Move it Mama, what would your people think of you?!

I needed to fix myself. I couldn't keep living like this. I thought about what I could do to change a few things.

My friend and now dear Yoga Move it Mama teacher Ainslie enlightened me to working out to my cycle. Maybe my super 'healthy' regime of doing HIIT 5 times a week wasn't too good for me. NOOOO but if I stop, how will I feel good? Will I still be strong? I educated myself on exercising to my cycle and started to implement choosing workouts around where I was at. A week out of my period - don't do HIIT! Chill out. Do some Yoga instead. Take the HIIT class but don't go hard core and don't jump. Let go of my EGO - no you won't be seen as a 'machine' anymore but that is ok! Don't stress my body out more than it could cope with - when our hormones are low leading up to our bleeds exercising hard out isn't always good for us. It raises our cortisol and our hormones can't cope (which in time can be super detrimental). It was a huge learning curve me. Super interesting too. It was then where I started to not dread my workouts - because I knew I didn't need to smash myself all the time anymore and boy that felt good. How revolutionary! I had been starting to dread my HIIT sessions around the second half of my cycle, often they'd leave me feeling depleted so this was all making so much sense.

After about 6 months of implementing this new exercise regime, I definitely felt better about things BUT I was still a mess.

My symptoms were:

1. Extremely sore boobs.
 2. Acne (went on roaccutane even as it was so bad).
 3. Rage.
 4. Depressed and sad a lot.
 5. Low self esteem and confidence
 6. Overwhelm.
 7. SORE ovulation pains.
 8. Bad cramps and super heavy periods.
 9. Intolerance.
 10. I was rude and horrible to my husband.
 11. Bloating and feeling 'fat'.
- (Gutted to do 11 points not 10 or 20 or 15)!

I was working out to my cycle now but what else could I do? I knew I needed to look at my wine intake. But I shunned that anytime it came into my mind. There was no way. I mean life is meant to be for living...BUT I knew deep down it was hurting me and not helping me. For years, I thought wine was my BFF. I thought it was the only thing that'd chill me out (in hindsight it was adding stress). Maybe my liver was overloaded though and wasn't working properly? I legit remember buying a Dr Libby book but skipped the whole chapter on alcohol cos there was no way I would or could give that up. I remember just sneakily listening to Dr Libby but never listening to that part of her. You know?

But after a while, I was desperate. So I gave it up. It was INCREDIBLY hard. But I did it (14 months sober right now guys, how amazing)!

Six months into my sobriety and working out to my cycle and I still wasn't completely balanced. My hormones were still out of whack. I decided to go back to the doc. She was a mother of three and told me to get the mirena as it could change my life. I left crying cos deep down I just didn't want a band aid. I wanted to FIX myself from the inside out. BUT I was desperate. So I decided to try it.

A few months later we moved to Aussie. I thought maybe this could help! Being warm etc, living a laidback lifestyle but 9 months after I had the mirena inserted I got it taken out. I hated not knowing where I was in my cycle. Yes I didn't bleed anymore but I also hated that too. I was just confused and still felt flat and sad and grumpy and sore and just all the things.

Back to the drawing board but I was determined to sort this properly. I'll just quickly mention that over the last few years I'd bought all the potions and supplements - wasted so much money oh my life. At this point I am still without alcohol and even though I was still feeling my symptoms I knew I was way more in control without the booze. My life was opening up in so many new ways. I was a million times better without alcohol. There is so much to giving up alcohol - yep I could have just one glass but the real power was saying no to any occasion, and to sit with that and learn from that. Not just the one glass. Nothing. Bare. Always.

I was now definitely feeling better - there wasn't the overwhelm and there wasn't the 'exercising to get rid of the wine.' My self esteem was definitely improving and I felt like I could conquer the world WAY BETTER and way more steady. AND I was still fun! My husband even thought it was ok - I'm not gonna lie, he was a bit apprehensive of me not drinking ever again cos we had fun together! I am sure he loves me even more now! And I love him more too. 😊😊😊

BUT my boobs were still sore. So sore! I was still a raging wilderbeast before my periods. My skin was still not the best. There was still room for improvement.

About 6 months ago I got sent a podcast by a Move it Mama member - I have forgotten who sent this to me so if it was you and you're reading this can you get in touch). I have always been pretty open when it came to my PMS hormonal journey. The podcast was all about fasting to your cycle to heal your gut and reset and balance your hormones. This member knew I was battling so obviously figured she should share it with me. I will be eternally grateful that she thought to do this.

My initial reaction to 'fasting' wasn't a positive one. I knew it wasn't good to always be in a fasted state for women. I was pretty confused. I thought fasting for women was detrimental and made women gain weight and raise stress levels therefore adding to PMS. Here is the thing - it does and it will if you don't do it properly. PLEASE educate yourself before fasting. It is paramount.

FAST LIKE A GIRL is a book written by Dr Mindy Pelz and the podcast I listened to that very day about 6 months ago was with Dr Rangan Chatterjee (one of my faves) and Mindy. I listened. I watched. I researched and I was determined. This could be the ticket I needed to get my life back wholeheartedly on track every single day of my month. I will try it. It was making so much sense to me.

Six months down the track and without a doubt in my brain, my hormones have been repaired. My boobs aren't even sore anymore before my periods, I do not have the rage I used to get, I don't get bloated, my periods are a breeze, my skin is so much better, my libido is better, my marriage is better, my tolerance with my noisy boys is so much better and my whole brain is so much clearer. I definitely never ever dread weeks 3 and 4 of my cycle now! It almost excites me cos I know what I need to do. I know where I need to push. I know what I need to eat. I know when dark choccy is paramount!!!! I know when I should let my gut heal and repair. I know when I need to chill. I know how important all of this 'knowing' is. I just know SO MUCH MORE.

This has been hard work. A lot of self discovering and trial and error. So much discipline. In a nut shell I have found these things to be GAME CHANGING for my healing.

1. Saying goodbye to alcohol.
 2. Exercising to my cycle (pull back entirely a week before my period). Adopt an 80/20 method to my training - 80% of the time I exercise slowly and do a lot of strength training. The 20% will be puffing and panting - think HIIT.
 3. Eating to my cycle - eating the right foods at the right times to help build up my progesterone and estrogen.
 4. Fasting to my cycle - knowing when I can fast and how long to fast to HEAL my gut and reset and renew the cells.
 5. Breathing and meditating every week (I need to get better at doing this daily but I am way better now).
 6. Relaxing. Proper relaxing. Rest days and actually knowing the huge benefit it'll give me.
 7. Speaking to an empowerment coach and focusing on 'it's not my stuff.'
- * Please if you have a history of eating disorders I do not recommend fasting.
* I am also nervous to post this as I don't want any judgemental comments but am willing to risk it incase this could help someone.

* Also, this might not work for everyone as everyone is different but I am posting this because I KNOW SO MANY PEOPLE are battling like I was and so many people ask me for my thoughts and advice.

Love you guys. Here for you. Here for it. Dabbling in this peri-menopausal, menopausal, hormone imbalance, PMS, PMDD extremely confusing part of life together every step of the way! Like everything I share, I do so with a warm heart in hope that it could help one of you. Please remember I am not a doctor. I am simply a wife, a mother of four, a friend, a daughter, a sissy, a business owner and really just a gal wanting to feel her best.

Lisa (aka Leece). X PS this has taken me two hours to write. I hope you appreciate it and support me opening up. Thanks. X