

Part 8

How to Stay on Course

Dr. Sara: Hurray! Hurray! You've made it. By now my hope is that you have self-assessed, met with your clinician or made an appointment, have identified the places where you're out of whack and you've begun putting the Gottfried Protocol to work. Now it's time to make sure that you stay on the path.

That's why I want to share with you my 3 tips for hormonal success. There are three essential features of implementing and maintaining your hormone cure. They are goal setting, mindset, and self-tracking and I'm going to share a bit about each.

So as we figure out the dashboard for you - what are the key hormones that you want to track, the key foods that you need to include in your food plan, and the ones you need to stay away from, and the key exercises that you need, and the most important supplements to keep taking.

When it comes to goal setting I want you to take a big goal and break it down to a smaller goal.

If you have 25 pounds to lose, I want you to break this down into modules like any good bioengineer, and focus on the first 5 pounds first, and then the second 5 pounds next. Each part is different. If you found out by going to mercout.com that you have high mercury - get started with step 1. You start the chelation. You will not be mercury free in 10 days, but you get going, you reduce your exposure; you break the work down into modules.

The second part is developing a growth mindset, not a fixed mindset. I wrote about this quite a bit in the last chapter of my book, which is chapter 11. Let me add a new concept here that I thought about in conversation with Gabby Bernstein - she wrote in her new book, *May Cause Miracles*, about becoming a miracle worker, and I think about this as developing a miracle mindset. A big component here is to look at your fears. I think that a big component of getting into hormone balance is looking at your fears. You may even want to get Gabby's book and do some of this work. She's got a beautiful 40-day guidebook where she walks you through getting over your fears. I want to share a few of those with you. Gabby writes that giving up fear is like giving up sugar- they are both sneaky ingredients that hide out in almost everything. And when you think you've got your sugar cravings or your addiction to fear under control, or you feel like you're doing a great job with not numbing out your fear of stepping into your power with a glass or wine, what inevitably happens is you start to backslide. What I think about here I think that that means we've got to stay on the path with a tenacious and growth mindset. We also need

Fast Track Your Hormone Cure

© 2019 Dr. Sara Gottfried, M.D.

to be honest about the fact the way people change it to take two steps forward and one step back, two steps forward, one step back, and when you take the long view, you're making significant progress over time. We don't want to get caught up in that one step back and hijack our progress. Don't let that happen! It's the simple consistent changes that add up to the biggest shift in mindset and hormones.

Number three is what I call tracking. This might surprise you a little bit. If you are wondering the best way to to make progress on your hormones and maintain it, or even bigger, your neuro-hormonal dashboard, consider tracking. This is not just for biohackers in Silicon Valley or members of the Quantified Self movement. You can do this yourself! In fact, you can do it for free. It doesn't have to be expensive. If you, for instance in our 10 days together started to track your sugar cravings, if you resolved your low sex drive or figured out your PMS, but still feel like there's some residual stuff, then an example here is to create some external accountability with self tracking.

If you resolved your low sex drive or PMS but still feel like a stress case, get "Inner Balance" and a new round of supplements from our store at thehormonecurebook.com. Inner balance has a sensor and can help you amplify positive emotions - I love the tracking ability it gives you. Do some baseline testing, and then try some herbal therapies, and see if they make a difference.

If you've fixed your cortisol and you still have a muffin top, then start tracking your sleep with a Zeo or a Lark or Fitbit. Get serious about your sleep, so you can see if Valerian or Hops makes a difference.

Another way to keep tracking that's free is to take my hormone quiz quarterly: that is, check your list of symptoms quarterly - you can go to thehormonecurebook.com/quiz and find the symptoms that you still have that are unresolved. This is totally free and so easy. And I recommend that you do it quarterly. Go through your symptoms really fast. You can even do this after 10 days! You'll also get to keep listening to these audios to get another layer of how to work with your hormones. It tends to be that when you have one hormone imbalance, it will come up at your times of vulnerability. It's rare that you're able to fix a hormone problem and never see that problem again. That's why external accountability and continuous tracking are so important.

Change can feel difficult when it requires us to break patterns we've been playing out for years, maybe even decades. But let's face it, moving more, eating better, and truly taking care of ourselves is not difficult. After taking that one step towards better health, you'll find that the rest of it falls into place. These things create a positive synergy for you, and we want to leverage that. Going through chemotherapy is hard. Watching a child who is sick is hard. Losing our parents and friends is hard. Making simple lifestyle changes to balance our hormones is not. Fixing your hormones now will help you roll with the

punches for the rest of your life. We just have to be committed to changing our hormones and our neurohormonal dashboard.

As a final note, I'd like to share with you the 4 phases to perpetual hormonal health. Total hormonal balance does not happen overnight but if you make small changes now, it will happen more quickly than you could imagine.

Phase 1. Identify Your Optimal Self, Your Strengths, and Your Weaknesses.

Learn which hormones you need to balance and how you do that best. Take a clear-eyed look at this.

- Know your baseline. The initial questionnaires established which hormones you needed to balance. Keep a record of all of your “yes” responses. To stay on track, take the questionnaires again from time to time, even when you’re feeling fine. Have any of the answers changed? What’s your percentage of improvement over time? I keep track of my questionnaire results in a spreadsheet (a Google document), which serves as a free health dashboard.
- Learn your strengths. Whether you’re maintaining your hormone balance or getting back on track, you want to leverage your strengths rather than emphasize your weaknesses. We want to amplify the innate intelligence of the body. Which assets most help your progress? What has been working and what hasn’t? Accentuating the positive works better than dwelling on the negative. Write down your strengths and keep a note tucked into your journal or on your smartphone to remind you during those down days. You can also look at authentichappiness.com for more information on figuring out your signature strengths.
- Explore your liabilities. What are the things that have dragged or may be dragging you down? What are the behaviors or relationships that may present obstacles to your health improvement? Keep a list of your challenges and liabilities—a health balance sheet—so that you can recognize them when they pop up. The more you understand your social and psychological downfalls, the more strategically you can prevent them from pulling you off the path. We know that just as certain friends may augment your positive behaviors, such as my girlfriend with whom I run every Sunday, there are also relationships that are toxic. And you may eventually come to realize that these obstacles aren’t in your path, but that while figuring out a way around them, that they are the path.
- Celebrate your success. Even when you’re doing everything right, beautifully maintaining that all-important hormonal rhythm, make sure to stop and give yourself a pat on the back. Share it with your friends who are cheering you on—friends can be the most important advocate for change. Take yourself out for a kombucha, splurge on that necklace in the window, or just revel in the knowledge that you are doing it, Girlfriend!

Phase 2: Keep on Tracking. Take care not to backslide all the way back to square one. Keep the assessment and refinement going. Select what might work best to help you stay on target. Try to make balanced health a priority.

- Take hormonal inventory. Depending on how many hormonal imbalances you have and how serious they are, take a monthly or quarterly inventory by revisiting the questionnaires (thehormonecurebook.com/quiz)
- Create accountability.
 - Get a buddy to implement and track The Hormone Cure with you. Compare notes each time you take the questionnaires. Share your successes, as well as the things you've tried that miss the mark.
 - Choose The Hormone Cure as a book-club project and download my guide at <http://thehormonecurebook.com/bookclub>.
 - Go public about your progress. There's evidence that connecting online via social media raises oxytocin, the hormone of love and bonding. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/GottfriedCenter> and "like" my page where I post daily about new hormone data, women's health, and life as a woman in perimenopause.
 - Use a tool like FitBit, Zeo, or Lark to manage your progress.
- Make exercise nonnegotiable. Create an exercise routine so that it becomes a habit, like brushing your teeth. Just do it, and track your progress.
- Be mindful of your meditation. If you have incorporated a contemplative practice in your life, notice its effect on your hormones and your day. Remember that effect when you're tempted to let those few minutes a day slide for more pressing duties.
- Discover what inspires you. Keep track of what keeps one foot in front of the other for you. Then do it!

Phase 3: Address Behaviors. Research shows that we rarely proceed in a linear fashion from one stage to the next. An integrative approach has room for human foibles—the more realistic view that with change, most of us take two steps forward and one step back. When you're motivated, you rarely relapse to your starting point. If it occurs, a relapse provides an excellent opportunity to learn what didn't work for you and make adjustments for the next round of change.

- Forgive yourself. Most of us would never talk to a friend the way we talk to ourselves. We are overly self-critical. Accept the fact that no one is perfect, including you, and try to remember this.
- Plan ahead. I'm a big fan of this. Sometimes it seems that just when we get into a smooth routine, we're foiled again! Traveling, illness, work demands, the kids, and so much more can get in the way—in fact, you can plan on it. So prepare for disruptions: Pack some extra supplements of fish oil or Chasteberry (depending on your particular hormonal issue), in your glove compartment or that massive purse of yours. Carve out time to hit the treadmill when you're at that jam-packed conference. You send your body a powerful message when you take the time to care for yourself.
- Be flexible. This might sound as if it contradicts the last tip, but it's about an attitude. When unanticipated obstacles arise, do your best to apply a calm mind and steady heart. Become skillful at up- and down-leveling your nervous system. Might I even suggest laughing about it? And have confidence that you will get back on track.

Phase 4: Lay the Groundwork for Ongoing Support. Make sure others help you keep the momentum going.

- Get your doctor on board. Schedule a follow-up with your personal doctor and keep him or her informed about what you are doing, changing, and implementing. Your health information will be up to date and available if needed, and who knows, dare I say that your doctor might even learn a thing or two? If he or she hems and haws about doing the kind of testing you want, offer a copy of this book. If that doesn't work, see the Appendix for how to find a physician who's more in tune with an integrative or functional medicine approach.
- Educate your besties. Let your spouse, your kids, and your closest friends know what you're doing and why. Instead of interrupting when you're meditating, or complaining that your supplements don't leave room for their gummy vitamins, your kids can become your allies in health. Stranger things have happened. As for your spouse or partner, I know from experience that he or she will be joyful that you have more energy, feel fewer crazy moods, and want more sex.
- Stay in touch. You can keep in touch with me virtually on my website, via my newsletters, frequent webinars, and online courses. We are in this together, not just for the duration of this book, but for the long haul. My job is to sit on your shoulder and convey the opportunities for improvement, to help you serve your body even better than you do now.

Here are my goals for you.

- To find a healthcare provider who is responsive to and respectful of your preferences, needs, and values.
- To have your symptoms and concerns taken seriously, whatever they are.
- To find the root causes of your conditions instead of just putting a Band-Aid on the problem.
- To know that you can exercise, eat healthy foods, manage your stress, and balance your hormones naturally.
- To become as fierce, and smart, and beautiful as Charlie's Angels (you choose which one), never stopping until the last piece of the puzzle is in place.

My vision for you is to feel—from the inside out—sparkly, fulfilled, and content. I want you to feel blessed by a hormonally balanced life, full of spunk, engagement, and buoyancy that are your birthright. Your new life of balance begins with a simple mantra: Set goals, track progress, get feedback. Lather, rinse, repeat.

Now, a favor.

If you have benefited from this course, please share it with your friends. Like I said before, I want to help one million women balance their hormones this year and I can't do it without you. So,

Fast Track Your Hormone Cure
© 2019 Dr. Sara Gottfried, M.D.

share your successes with others. If you want, you could even become an affiliate of mine and then share your unique affiliate link on Facebook or Twitter or on your blog and if someone buys this program because of your recommendation, then you'll get a nice check in the mail. If you'd rather just tell them to go buy the book, you can do that too. The truth is it does take a village to get your book in the right hands and I know I need your help to make that happen.

Lastly, if you want more support, you can go to <http://www.saragottfriedmd.com/innercircle/> and learn all about my monthly support program called *Get Vital Stay Vital*. Each month you get teachings by me, Q&A calls, a hoppin' Facebook community and the support you need to stay on track.

I am so happy that you decided to Fast Track Your Hormone Cure and I look forward to crossing paths again in the future.

This is Dr. Sara, signing off.