

The Resilient Body

Resources & Further Information

Hey lovelies,

This guide is designed to complement and expand on the methods explored in The Resilient Body Workshop. I have designed it to offer a deeper understanding, empowering insights, fun facts, and science-backed research centering around living in a body with PCOS, endocrine conditions, or chronic health challenges.

All of the information shared here is grounded in care, thorough cross-referencing and ongoing lived experience. A full bibliography and reference list is included at the end, both to support further exploration and to acknowledge the work that has shaped this resource.

To keep things accessible and easy to absorb, everything is broken down into clear, simple bullet points.

Thank you so much for being here.
You are infinitely incredible.

In love and power,
Jess

P.S : You can use the workout 3x per week (skip the 5 minute intro of me waffling) You can also split the workout in half (30 mins) each.

1. First half- Upper Body and core
2. Second half- Lower Body and dynamic movement

How Slow Resistance Training (with Rest Breaks) Supports Bodies with PCOS

Metabolic Support

Slow resistance training plays a powerful role in improving **insulin sensitivity**, which is one of the core physiological challenges in PCOS.

When insulin resistance is present, the body struggles to move glucose into cells efficiently. This can lead to:

- Fatigue and energy crashes
- Increased visceral fat storage (especially around the tummy)
- Elevated androgen levels (which can worsen PCOS symptoms)

By engaging in slow, controlled strength training:

- **Muscle contractions act like a “glucose sponge”**, pulling glucose out of the bloodstream without needing as much insulin
 - Increased muscle mass raises your **resting metabolic rate**, meaning your body uses energy more efficiently even at rest
 - It helps reduce long-term metabolic strain, rather than creating short bursts of stress
 - Unlike high-intensity workouts, this approach supports metabolism **without overwhelming the body**, making it more sustainable long-term.
 - **Better glucose use** - working muscles pull glucose from the bloodstream more efficiently.
 - **More lean muscle** - supports insulin sensitivity and metabolic flexibility.
 - **Less excessive stress** - rest breaks can help you train hard without tipping into “wired and tired.”
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Nervous System Regulation

Many people with PCOS live in a state of **chronic low-grade stress**, even if it's not always obvious.

Fast-paced, high-intensity workouts can:

- Spike cortisol (stress hormone)
- Push the body into a “fight or flight” state
- Contribute to burnout and hormonal disruption when overdone

Slow resistance training, especially with rest breaks:

- Encourages the body to stay in a more **parasympathetic (rest-and-repair)** state
- Allows the nervous system to **recover between efforts**, rather than staying activated
- Builds resilience by gently exposing the body to stress *in manageable doses*

Over time, this helps the body feel **safer**, which is a key (and often overlooked) part of hormonal healing.

Hormonal Harmony

Hormones don't operate in isolation—they respond to stress, sleep, movement and energy availability.

With PCOS, there is often:

- Elevated androgens (like testosterone)
- Dysregulated insulin
- Disrupted cortisol rhythms

Slow resistance training supports hormonal balance by:

- **Improving insulin sensitivity**, which directly impacts androgen production
- Avoiding excessive cortisol spikes that can worsen symptoms
- Supporting more stable energy patterns throughout the day

It creates an environment where the body is **supported rather than pushed**, which is essential for endocrine health.

- **Cortisol patterns** - training that respects recovery can support steadier stress signalling.
 - **Insulin regulation** - strength work improves insulin sensitivity and glucose handling.
 - **Avoiding overtraining** - more isn't always better; consistency beats intensity spikes.
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The Somatic Connection

For many people with chronic conditions, the relationship with the body can become:

- Frustrated
- Disconnected
- Performance-focused
- Exhausting

Slow, intentional movement can shift this.

By moving with awareness:

- You begin to **notice subtle signals** (fatigue, tension, capacity)
- You rebuild **trust in your body's cues**
- Movement becomes something you *listen through*, not just push through

This is what some call the **somatic connection**-a deeper, felt sense of being in your body.

And this matters, because long-term wellbeing isn't just physical-it's relational. It's all connected.

- **More body trust** -you learn your edges without pushing past them.
- **Better form** - controlled tempo improves technique and joint/body confidence.
- **Less dissociation** - training becomes a practice of presence, not punishment.

Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing

PCOS can come with grief, frustration, body image stress and the exhaustion of trying to “fix” yourself. A slower strength approach can shift the relationship from control to collaboration- where progress is measured by capacity, steadiness and self-celebration. Its definitely a process.

PCOS is often linked with:

- Anxiety and depression
- Mood fluctuations
- Reduced self-esteem or body confidence

Slow resistance training supports mental health in a more regulated way:

- Releases **endorphins and mood-stabilising neurotransmitters** without overstimulation
- Builds a sense of **strength, capability and agency**
- Provides structure and routine, which can feel grounding

It also shifts the narrative from:

“I need to fix my body”

to

“I’m learning how to support my body”

And that shift can be very powerful.

- **Confidence** - strength gains are tangible and motivating.
- **Agency** - you learn what supports you, not what drains you or what you ‘should’ do.
- **Consistency** - a plan you can repeat easily is more protective than a plan you dread.

Additional Techniques & Supportive Practices for PCOS (Non-Food Related)

1) Sleep as a Foundation

Sleep is one of the most powerful hormone supports available. It influences insulin sensitivity, appetite signalling, stress tolerance and recovery from training. If sleep is inconsistent, your body may interpret hard training as another stressor rather than a helpful stimulus.

- Anchor wake time - keep it steady most days.
 - Light + wind-down - morning light, evening dimness.
 - Recovery check - if training disrupts sleep, reduce volume or intensity.
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2) Stress Management & Down-Regulation

You don't need to eliminate stress- that's impossible 😊 We can however get enough down-regulation to balance it. Think of this as training your recovery system the same way you train strength.

- Breath practice - 3-5 minutes of slow exhales after training.
 - Low-stimulation breaks - short walks without a podcast can be surprisingly regulating.
 - Boundaries - protect recovery time like it's part of the program.
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3) Cycle Awareness

Even with irregular cycles, tracking patterns can help you train with more compassion. Energy, appetite, sleep, and mood shifts are data, they can really help you be more in tune with your body and whats going on.

- Track signals — sleep, cravings, soreness, mood and training.
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4) Pacing & Energy Management

If you tend to push hard on “good days” and crash afterward, pacing is the skill that changes everything. I’m still learning to honour pacing within everyday life, despite the ‘hustle culture’ we live in.

- Leave 1-2 reps in reserve - especially on lower-energy days.
 - Longer rests - 90/180 seconds can be supportive and beneficial not lazy!
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5) Strength Without Burnout

Consistency matters more than intensity.

Instead of “all or nothing”:

- Aim for **2-4 strength sessions per week**
- Keep effort at a level where you feel challenged but not depleted
- Leave sessions feeling **energised, not exhausted**

This is a major reframe-and imo a necessary one.

6) Gentle Consistent Movement

Strength training is the anchor, but gentle movement is the glue. It supports circulation, mood, digestion, and stress regulation-without demanding a bigger recovery cost.

- Walks - short, frequent walks can be more supportive than occasional long ones.

- Mobility - 5-10 minutes daily keeps joints happy and reduces tension.
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7) Support Systems & Community

PCOS can be isolating-especially when advice online is loud, contradictory, and often shaming (or they want you to buy their product!). Support helps you stay grounded in what's real and sustainable.

- Professional support - consider a clinician who understands PCOS and strength training.
- Training community - a calm, consistent environment in your area.
- Free resources such as books from librarys, podcasts and online support groups

Important Note: This resource is educational and not a substitute for medical care. PCOS is diverse, and symptoms can overlap with other conditions. If you're experiencing severe fatigue, rapid changes in weight, dizziness, missed periods, or worsening mental health, consider working with a qualified clinician to rule out other causes.

References & Further Reading

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