

The Cycle of the Moon

Would you like to pay more attention to the moon as it goes through the month? The moon's rhythm is comforting, mysterious and beautiful. It can also be a useful model for the phases of a woman's cycle.



Many women want to keep track of the moon's cycle, especially when they realize how much the moon can help them understand their own menstrual rhythm!

But it can be tricky to watch the moon, since it's visible at a slightly different time each day. It is up at night during part of the month, and during the day at other times!

If you learn where to look for the moon when it is most visible, and also be sure to have a calendar that shows the full and new moon, you'll have a better chance of keeping track of the moon all month long.

Here are Some Tips on the Moon's Cycle

Approximately every 29 days, the moon goes around the earth. It rises slightly later each day, coming back to the beginning point once a month.

At the beginning of the month, New Moon, the moon is very close to the sun. We see New Moon in the evening sky to the west, after the sun has set. The moon is setting too, and will soon follow the sun over the horizon.

The moon gets a little farther from the sun each day, for the first two weeks of the cycle. Finally, at Full Moon, the moon is opposite the sun. The Full Moon always rises around sunset. The moon is rising in the east as the sun is setting in the west.

If you want to watch the moon, begin with the two weeks between the New and Full Moon, since it will be visible around or after sunset during these two weeks.

After Full Moon the moon continues to rise later and later each night. It ends up rising very late at night, and being visible mainly during the day.



The Moon's Phases

The moonlight grows (waxes) for two weeks, from New to Full, and then declines (wanes) for two weeks, until it is Dark.

Waxing and waning are the two main directions of the flow of light, and this is divided into four quarters: New Moon, First Quarter, Full Moon and Last Quarter.

Dark Moon

I also like to note the Dark Moon which is the darkest moment during Last Quarter Moon, before New Moon begins. This is a potent time for introspection, release, and doing nothing! It is an optimal time to retreat to your own space for awhile.

Dark Moon helps you access the deeper parts of yourself, giving loving attention to difficult, subtle, or illogical feelings. This is valuable in a culture that is distrustful of inner work and quiet time!

Dark Moon and New Moon are right next to each other - the ending and the beginning.

Qualities of the Main Phases of Moonlight

Here are some qualities that are associated with the different phases of the moon, making it easier to appreciate and take advantage of this continual rhythmic flow of energy and light.

New Moon: Imagination, Planning

Waxing Moon: Growth, Creating

Full Moon: Radiant, Outward, Expansive, Active, Social,
Playful

Waning Moon: Completing, Harvesting, Evaluating, Reviewing,
Releasing

Dark Moon, (which is the last few days of Waning Moon):
Contained, Inward, Internal, Still, Dreaming

Do you notice yourself feeling differently according to the phase of the moon? You may find that you are feeling depressed, discouraged, or less social during the darkest time of the moon, for example - and once you realize where the moon is, you can breathe a sigh of relief! It is a phase, and it will be different in a few days, once the New Moon arrives.

You may then find yourself full of new ideas as the moonlight grows from New to Full. This is a time when many people write their wishes and feel the energy for new beginnings and projects.

This model of the moon also aligns with other cycles: the seasons (Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter) the phases of life (Child, Youth/Young Adult, Mature Adult, Elder)...

Any cycle can fit onto this model. The rhythms of nature are everywhere, within us and around us!

The Way this Relates to our Menstrual Cycle

Energetically, our menstrual rhythm has phases similar to the moon.

Our menstrual time is like the final waning days of Dark Moon...an introspective time for release and rest.

After our period our new energy grows and new projects begin. Our energy is growing and expanding until ovulation, which is similar to the Full Moon phase. We will most likely feel social, busy and productive around ovulation!

After ovulation our energy enters the waning phases, as we drawn more inward and tend toward completion, review, and perhaps needing some “alone time.”

Anticipating your month in this way, instead of expecting yourself to be *the same, week-in and week-out*, can make a huge difference in your self-care and self-esteem!

I wish you well as you learn to keep track of the moon, and your own phases as well. Make a project of keeping track of the different stages of the month, and how you feel. You'll notice patterns emerging as the months go by - a beautiful rhythm of your own design.

With love,
Barbara Hanneloré

Barbara Hanneloré is founder of *Women's Way Moon Cycles* and author of *The Moon and You*. She hosts monthly mini-retreats, online courses and private mentorship on these topics, for women who want to develop radical new habits of self-care and self-love!

Many years ago she realized that we were entirely missing the gifts that our cycles have for us, and she invites you to join her for a creative re-discovery of this inner wisdom! **Please visit www.womenswaymooncycles.com to learn more.**