

The MENOPAUSE *Club*

10 THINGS I CAN DO TODAY TO IMPROVE MY MENOPAUSE



WORKBOOK

Introduction

So lovely lady, let's try and start making you feel better. I am not promising a miracle cure but the 10 areas we focus on in this workbook are things that should start making you feel better straight away.

As you may have already read in ["What Every Woman Should Know About The Menopause"](#) each woman's experience of the menopause is individual varied and unpredictable. You may want to read this workbook and pick on a couple of issues that you know will have the biggest effect on you. You may feel you need a complete overhaul in all areas to feel healthier, fitter and happier. There is no right or wrong answer. Take time to work through the different areas and decide on your priorities and the actions you want to take. At the end, there is a chart to fill in with your actions.

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- 1) **Listen to Your Body**
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1) Listen to your body

It's very easy as you're struggling with menopausal symptoms to describe how you're feeling as "Blurgh"! A general feeling of not feeling good, feeling tired, emotional, unable to sleep etc. But what are your specifics? Are you feeling the same all the time or do you have good and bad days? What drives these? How do different foods affect you? What's your digestive system like? What's happening to your monthly cycle?

Taking time to listen to what your body is trying to tell you can be powerful in adapting your behaviour to improve your menopausal symptoms. Recording what your body is telling you can help you spot patterns, triggers and provide you with a huge amount of information to help you make good decisions to look after and help your body through this transition.

This can also be helpful if you want to talk with your GP about options for treatments or concerns you have about your health.

You can simply use a notebook and each day write down:

- How do I feel today? What was my mood like?
- What are my symptoms?
- What have I eaten/drunk?
- What exercise have I done?
- What have I spent my day doing today?

Or you can download our workbook ["What's My Body Trying to Tell Me?"](#) or the daily record sheet to record how you're feeling.

ACTIONS:

- For 30 days keep a record of your symptoms, mood, activities and spot any patterns. From this decide what you need going to tackle.
- Download ["What's My Body Trying to Tell Me?"](#)



2) Sleep Better

Disrupted sleep is one of the most debilitating issues facing women as they approach the menopause.

“If I could just get a decent night’s sleep, I feel I could actually cope with life.”

Here are some ways in which a good night's sleep can boost your health:

- Sleep boosts immunity
- Sleep can help maintain a healthy weight
- Sleep boosts mental wellbeing
- Sleep prevents diabetes
- Sleep wards off heart disease

Sleep is the best thing you can do for your body. This should be your number one priority if you want to feel strong and healthy.

So, we now know how important sleep is but how do we actually get some sleep? Below are some key tips and you can also try our free [30-day sleep challenge](#) to really focus on your improving your sleep habits.

- 1) Establish why are you struggling to sleep?
- 2) Ensure your bedroom is dark and cool and invest in earplugs if noise is an issue
- 3) Reduce/restrict caffeine
- 4) Avoid alcohol
- 5) Ensure you’re well hydrated but stop drinking large amounts of liquid 2 hours before bed
- 6) Set a relaxing bedtime routine
- 7) Keep a notebook by your bed if you have a lot on your mind – let it out and get some sleep
- 8) Avoid blue rays from technology in the 2 hours before bed
- 9) Take a magnesium supplement
- 10) Take a vitamin D3 supplement
- 11) Eat carbs with your evening meal
- 12) Exercise every day (this could include something as easy as going for a walk)

ACTIONS:

- Choose at least 3 things above you could implement (more is better)
- Review how you feel after 30 days

3) Reduce Stress

We don't always understand how much every day events can build up and cause significant damage to our bodies and minds.

Stress is not entirely bad, it is a normal part of life and we're built to handle it. In fact, a reasonable level of stress can be good for us. Too much, over a long period can cause harm to our physical and mental health.

At this time in our lives we have a lot to deal with – work, kids, relationships, kids leaving home, ageing parents, teenagers, social media, email, internet, hot flashes, fatigue, our changing bodies etc. It's no wonder we're so exhausted.

So, what can we do about it:

- 1) Establish our list of stressors – how do we tackle, remove or accept these?
- 2) Brainstorm solutions, evaluate and decide on the best options
- 3) Reduce alcohol and caffeine
- 4) Add gentle exercise every day
- 5) Practice yoga, meditation or breathing exercises daily – find what works for you
- 6) Take a vitamin B complex supplement
- 7) Set up a quiet uncluttered space for you to relax
- 8) Take up daily journaling – let everything out onto paper
- 9) Ask for help
- 10) Take a break from social media



Now these are just a few ideas of immediate actions you can take. You can read more about this in our article on Stress or take part in our 30-Day Stress-Buster Challenge.

Some of these are small things you can do to tackle stress in the short-term, however you need to take some time to evaluate your life, what you can and can't change and how you equip yourself to move forward, feeling stronger, happier and healthier.

There is a great article by Brianna West, that I highly recommend. [“This is what self-care really means, because it’s not all salt baths and chocolate cake.”](#)

ACTIONS:

- Choose at least 3 of the above that you could implement (more is better)

- Review how you feel after 30 days

4) Tackle Hot flashes

The reason I've included hot flashes is because, along with lack of sleep, this is still the number one issue that women really struggle with.

You may have personal preferences on treatment options available to help with the physical symptoms of the menopause such as hot flashes. You may want to go natural all the way and the suggestions listed below will help. Or you may want to take anything that will help. This may change over time and dependent of the severity of your symptoms and that's ok. We believe every woman deserves the right to make an informed decision on what is right for her.

What should I be focusing on if hot flashes are an issue:

- 1) Identify any hot flush triggers – using the What's My Body Trying to Tell Me? Daily tracker can really help
- 2) Moderate alcohol intake – I know this keeps coming up but alcohol is not a good friend if you're struggling with the menopause
- 3) Restrict caffeine – again this can make a huge difference to how you are feeling
- 4) Spicy food has been evidenced as a trigger for hot flashes – use your tracker and consider the impact this has
- 5) Maintaining a healthy weight can have a positive impact. We have huge amounts of advice and information in *Eating Your Way Through the Menopause* and *Moving Your Way Through the Menopause* if you're struggling with your weight.
- 6) Get moving – regular exercise will help
- 7) Stop smoking
- 8) Control the room temperature – talk to colleagues at work and your family and manage the temperature to help you
- 9) Consider clothing – think about wearing layers so you can easily remove when needed. There are some great wicking material nightwear and underwear if you're really struggling
- 10) Don't be embarrassed – I know this is hard but people do understand and those that don't aren't worth worrying about.

ACTIONS:

- Identify if you have any specific hot flash triggers
- Choose and implement at least 3 things for the list above that you think will have the biggest impact for you.

5) Think Positive

One of the key things most women I have spoken to have said is that they wish someone had told them about the emotional impact the menopause would have on them. Menopause can really affect how you think and how you feel.

- When symptoms start you suddenly realise this is real – you're not young and invincible any more
- It's easy to feel like the best part of your life is over
- You can feel like life has passed you by
- You may feel lonely as kids grow up and move on
- It's easy to feel little self-worth, low self-esteem, no confidence or motivation to get out and do things

We don't want you to feel like this. We want you to make the most of this time in life. So here are a few things to consider:

- 1) Become more aware of your negative thought patterns – how can you make these into positives?
- 2) Make time for things you enjoy
- 3) Positive Me – What are you grateful for? What are you proud of? What do you love about yourself? – download Positive Me worksheets [here](#)
- 4) Reconnect with nature – spend time outside
- 5) Assert yourself – now is the time to take control
- 6) Use your brain
“It's never too late to be what you might have been” George Elliott
- 7) Try positive visualisations and affirmations – we have some free to download
- 8) Come to terms with your changing body – we always focus on our imperfections. What do you love about your body?

ACTIONS

- Write down your negative self-talk and turn it into a positive – we can help you with this by using our 30-day Positivity Challenge
- Try visualisations and see how they work for you – free downloads [here](#)



6) Optimum Nutrition

How we feed our bodies is essential at this time in our lives. Here are 12 areas to focus on to ensure you are nourishing your body to feel stronger, fitter and healthier ever day:

- 1) Hydration – I cannot stress enough how important drinking enough water is for your health – at least 4 pints a day
- 2) Adequate protein – you should have a good quality protein source with every meal
- 3) Beware of sugar – we have no nutritional need for processed sugar – it does us no favours
- 4) Healthy fats – think oily fish, nuts, healthy oils, avocado
- 5) Make vegetables the star of the show – every meal, all the time
- 6) Eat REAL food ... most days, most of the time
- 7) Nutrient dense – get all you need from the food you eat – you shouldn't be hungry
- 8) Anti-oxidants – a natural source of anti-ageing - They are abundant in fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as in other natural *un-processed* foods including nuts, grains and some meats, poultry and fish. The list below describes food sources of common antioxidants -
- 9) Detoxification – look at what you are exposed to – does your liver have a chance to do its job properly – eat real food, stop smoking, exercise regularly, manage your weight
- 10) Look at your relationship with food – why do you eat what you do? – download our free food diary template to monitor and review
- 11) Take an honest look at what you're eating – use our food diary template to record what you are eating
- 12) It is so important to enjoy your food, think of it as nourishing your body – eat beautiful food, food that brings you joy and moves you towards wellness

ACTIONS:

- Pick one of these habits per week to focus on



7) Reduce Alcohol

We know alcohol isn't good for us but I know it is also a scary thing to tackle. However, it can make a huge difference you how you're feeling. You don't need to go cold turkey if you can't face it. Look at what you're consuming and decide on how you can reduce each week.

We've already talked about how important getting enough sleep is and I know it's tempting when you're struggling to wind down but alcohol to get to the sleep is not a long-term answer. Yes, it can make you feel sleepy initially but it prevents you from reaching REM, that mental restorative part of sleep. Alcohol dehydrates you and suppresses the production of serotonin (our sleep inducing hormone). It also often wakes us up in the middle of the night. We then rely on coffee to get us going again in the morning and so the cycle continues.

ACTIONS:

- Log how much alcohol you consume
- Implement weekly reductions until you feel your alcohol consumption is in control or eliminated.

8) Reduce Caffeine

We know too much caffeine isn't good for us but I know it is also a scary thing to tackle. However, it can make a huge difference you how you're feeling. You don't need to go cold turkey if you can't face it. For example with coffee:

- Firstly, consume as normal and log the amount and times of day
- After a week, start to reduce the amount by 1/2 – 1 cup per day and reduce from your evening consumption first
- 1 week later, reduce by another 1/2 – 1 cup per day for a week
- Monitor the affects – you should be consuming no more than 2-3 cups per day but it's about what feels good for you

ACTIONS:

- Log how much caffeine you consume
- Implement weekly reductions until you feel your caffeine consumption is in control or eliminated.

9) Reduce Processed Sugar

Although this was mentioned in the nutrition section it is so crucial I wanted to touch on it a bit further. You'd be amazed at how much sugar is lurking in our food, even food that doesn't taste sweet. It can do more harm than most people realise. The average person in Britain consumes about 700g of sugar a week – that's 140 teaspoons

It overloads and can damage the liver. In a similar same vein as alcohol, sugar gets shuttled to your liver for transport leading to an excessive workload and the possibility of liver damage. It messes up your body's your appetite control signals. Your body fails to interpret hormonal signals as fructose does not stimulate insulin in the way that glucose does. This can lead to overeating which can cause you to develop insulin resistance Research has also shown that excess processed sugar can put you at risk of many serious illnesses.

Tips

- Reduce sugar intake by skipping any product that contains sugar (or one of the aliases) in the first three ingredients and make sure you avoid if sugar is mentioned more than once in the ingredients list.
- If a product claims to be "reduced sugar" read the label carefully, if the sugar level was high to start with, even if it's reduced it could still be very high.
- Take a look at what you have in your kitchen and either remove or put temptation out of sight.
- Let people around you know you're trying to reduce your sugar intake so they can support you.
- Try to stop snacking on sugary snacks as this is often where we take in the most of our sugar.
- Don't skip breakfast – this is the worst way to set yourself up for sugary snacking as your blood sugar levels will plummet and cravings will soar.
- Keep your sugar-reduce life in moderation. There will be times to enjoy party foods and desserts. Look forward to occasions when you can indulge a little – moderation is the key.

ACTIONS:

- Take an honest look at how much sugar you consume
- Pick 1 thing per week to eliminate until you feel your processed sugar consumption is in control or eliminated

10) Take Regular Exercise

Exercise is beneficial in so many areas. We've already talked about how exercise can help you lower stress, encourage a more restful sleep, increase your energy levels, and release endorphins that boost your mood and reduce the incidence of depression.

Certain types of exercise will also help to strengthen your bones – something that's very important as we age and bone loss becomes a problem.

And, obviously, it can play a big part in fat loss and weight management too.

“Weight bearing activities” involve doing exercise on your feet with your bones supporting your weight. And this is the type of exercise that will help to strengthen your bones. Examples include walking, running, tennis, dancing, stair climbing, and elliptical training. These activities are excellent for your cardiovascular health, and will make your heart stronger.

Cycling and swimming are great for your heart and your overall health too, but they aren't considered weight bearing. That makes them great options if you're working around an injury.

Strength or resistance training helps strengthen bones and improve posture too, and also increases your muscle mass. There are several reasons why this is both important and desirable.

Strength and muscle mass decline naturally from the age of 30 and if we don't do anything about it our bodies will naturally get fatter, Strength training is the best anti-ageing exercise you can do.

Tips

- Walk/run/swim/cycle every day
- Introduce strength/resistance training 2-3 times per week
- Find exercise that you love – exercise should never be a punishment
- Try restorative exercise such as yoga, Pilates or body balance 2-3 times per week
- If you haven't been doing any exercise at all, then I'd recommend you start by just getting outside and walking. Begin with 20 minutes a day.
- gradually start adding in resistance circuits – there are some examples in “Moving Your Way Through The Menopause”
- Find friends to exercise with
- Involve your family – make a family walk or cycle part of your weekend routine

ACTIONS:

- Assess your current level of activity and plan how to increase
- Implement your first change this week and review how you feel in 2-3 weeks' time

Action Sheet – I commit to ...

Area of Focus:	Actions:	Outcomes:
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Listen to Your Body		
Better Sleep		
Reduce Stress		
Tackle Hot Flashes		
Think Positive		
Optimum Nutrition		
Reduce Alcohol		
Reduce Caffeine		
Reduce Processed Sugar		
Take Regular Exercise		

Conclusion

Let us know how you're getting on through our [Facebook page](#) and remember you're not on your own. We have lots of additional free information on our website: www.themenopauseclub.com

"When you can feel good about yourself, it carries over into everyday life. If you can look in the mirror and like yourself, that's the greatest feeling in the world."

Dick Bryant



Welcome to the
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