



PHYSICALLY ACTIVE THROUGH THE MENOPAUSE

Every woman experiences the menopause differently. For some, the symptoms are mild and pass quickly. For others, it's an explosion of hot flashes and mood swings.

The good news is you can adopt lifestyle changes to help cope with the changes occurring in your body.

WHY EXERCISE IS IMPORTANT

Though frequent workouts haven't been proven as a means of reducing menopausal symptoms, they can ease the transition by helping to relieve stress and enhance your overall quality of life.

Regular exercise is also an excellent way to stave off weight gain and loss of muscle mass, which are two frequent symptoms of menopause.

Most healthy women should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity, or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, according to the Centre's for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Exercise can help you through this phase of life and leave you feeling better than ever. So, whether you're an aspiring runner or salsa dancer (or anything in between), here are some reasons why menopause is the best time for you to get moving like you've never moved before.

CARDIO

Aerobic activity that makes use of your large muscle groups while keeping up your heart rate is a good thing. Your options for cardio are limitless. Almost any activity counts, for example:

- Walking.
- Jogging.
- Biking.
- Swimming.

The CDC recommends that beginners start with 10 minutes of light activity, slowly boosting exercise intensity as it becomes easier.

STRENGTH TRAINING

The risk of osteoporosis skyrockets following menopause (oestrogen is needed to help lay down bone), strength training is especially vital. Strength training exercises will help to build bone and muscle strength, burn body fat, and rev up your metabolism.

At home, opt for dumbbells and resistance bands. In the gym, choose from weight machines or free weights. Select a level that is heavy enough to tax your muscles and progress from there.

YOGA AND MEDITATION

As no two women experience the menopause in the same way, your unique symptoms will tailor your approach to relief. Practice a relaxation technique that works for you — whether it's deep breathing, yoga, or meditation.

Supported and restorative yoga poses may offer some relief. These poses may help calm your

nerves by centring your mind. They can also help alleviate symptoms such as:

- Hot flashes.
- Irritability.
- Fatigue.

DANCING

Exercise shouldn't be entirely hard work. Packing a calorie-burning cardio session into your routine can be fun and good for your body.

If running on a treadmill isn't your thing, consider a dance class. Dance can help to build muscle and keep you flexible. Look for a style that suits you:

- Jazz.
- Ballet.
- Ballroom.
- Salsa.

CROSS TRAINER OR STAIR MASTER

Don't forget machines such as the Cross Trainer or the Stair Master count as cardio workouts. If you don't want to hit the pavement,

Studies show that as you enter the menopause, your risks for cardiovascular disease (CVD) significantly increase.

Oestrogen levels, which are thought to protect your heart, drop during menopause.

Knowing the risk factors and embracing a healthy lifestyle can keep your heart healthy.



ZUMBA

Do you prefer to be around people when you work out? Join a group class at the gym.

Zumba is a popular dance program that has swept up nearly 12 million devoted fans in the past decade.

Incorporating salsa, merengue, and other Latin-inspired music, Zumba works for people of all ages. Burn calories and work your muscles, all while moving to uplifting Latin beats.

VIGOROUS HOUSE OR GARDENING

Half-hearted dusting doesn't exactly count, but vigorous house work or gardening that elevates your heart rate does. This work also utilizes your larger muscle groups, such as:

- Quads.
- Glutes.
- Core.

This form of aerobic activity will serve you well. If you're a beginner, start with 10 minutes of light activity, slowly boosting physical intensity as it becomes easier.

BE REALISTIC

Set goals to avoid frustration. Make sure your goals are:

- Realistic.
- Attainable.
- Specific.

Don't simply declare, "I'm going to exercise more."

Tell yourself, for example:

- "I'll walk for 30 minutes at lunch three days a week."
- "I'll take a group cycling class."
- "I'll play tennis with a friend once a week."

Recruit a friend or spouse as a workout buddy to help keep you motivated and accountable.

GET CREATIVE

Sure, physical activity is essential, but don't forget to exercise your creativity! Now is an optimal time to indulge in an artistic outlet.

Take a painting class or join a knitting group to engage in a creative new activity that will give you a sense of achievement and satisfaction.

A creative outlet will also help take your mind off annoying symptoms.

STAY MOTIVATED

A woman's risk for numerous medical conditions, including breast cancer, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease rises during and after menopause. Working out regularly and maintaining a healthy weight can help offset these risks.

Physically, there are steps that you can take to manage certain menopausal symptoms:

- Turn down your thermostat.
- Wear light layers of clothing.
- Have a fan handy to mitigate hot flashes and night sweats.

You've probably heard this more than once: Working out will make you feel good. Besides the physical and psychological benefits of exercise, the rush of feel-good chemicals you'll get are an added bonus. This can be especially important for women going through the menopause. Their bodies are experiencing a number of changes that may be uncomfortable and even painful.



5 MAJOR PERKS OF EXERCISE FOR MENOPAUSAL WOMEN

1. WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

You might have realized around your late 20s that your rapid-speed metabolism was slowing down, and you had to cut back on ordering chips with every meal.

Hormonal changes during the menopause can sometimes mean it's easier to gain weight. Exercise will not only help stave off weight gain, but will also help you make up for the loss of muscle mass that's common in women experiencing menopause. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity per week for healthy women to help maintain a healthy weight.

If you want to lose weight, aim for at least 20 minutes of exercise per day.

2. BONE HEALTH

Although both men and women should be concerned about maintaining strong bones as they age, women are at higher risk for osteoporosis. The good news is that working out can help build and maintain bone density. The National Osteoporosis Foundation recommends weight-bearing and muscle-strengthening exercises for those at risk for or diagnosed with osteoporosis.

3. HEART HEALTH

A dip in oestrogen levels is common at the onset of menopause. This can increase bad cholesterol and decrease good cholesterol levels. It can also put women at increased risk for cardiac health issues. Keeping in mind that heart disease is one of the leading causes of death for women in the United Kingdom every year. This means the menopause could arguably be one of the most important periods to stay in shape.

4. SYMPTOM RELIEF

It turns out exercise can actually provide relief from hot flashes. One study showed that women who lived sedentary lives had more severe menopause symptoms than active women. Another study found that regular exercise could prevent postmenopausal symptoms significantly. So maybe you can even replace your hormone replacement therapy medications with a more natural alternative.

5. SELF-ESTEEM BOOST

Every woman experience's the menopause differently, and not every woman feels her best during this time. And that's OK. But if you're feeling blue, you'll be happy to know that exercise can be the pick-me-up you need to help you feel good about yourself. One study found that over time, physical activity was associated with higher levels of self-

