

Exercise & the Menopause

Exercise may help control several physical and psychological changes associated with the menopause, including depression, weight gain, loss of muscle mass, hot flashes, sleep disturbances and bone density.

It is important to understand however that exercise IS NOT a proven way to reduce menopausal symptoms however frequent workouts can help to relieve stress, maintain a healthy weight, increase muscle mass, and enhance your overall quality of life.

Hormonal changes during menopause can sometimes mean it's easier to gain weight. Exercise will not only help keep the weight off but it will also help you reduce the loss of muscle mass that's common in women experiencing menopause.

The best activities to do during menopause ultimately are the ones that keep you motivated! Do whatever works for you, remember that moving can contribute to both your physical and mental health.

I would recommend trying:

Yoga and meditation.

Hiking.

Swimming.

Eliptical / cardio training.

House or garden work.

Strength/weight training.

Yoga and meditation can be beneficial as no two women experience menopause in the same way, your unique symptoms will tailor your approach to relief, so it is important to practise 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 may also help alleviate symptoms such as hot flashes, irritability and fatigue.

Strength and weight training can also be of huge benefit. A recent study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, found that menopausal and post-menopausal women can reduce their body fat, increase muscle mass, build up their bones, and improve their balance by lifting moderately heavy weights regularly.

During and post-menopause, the risk of osteoporosis significantly increases this is due to Oestrogen being needed to help bone strength. Strength training exercises will help to build bone and muscle strength, burn body fat, and increase your metabolism. Train to a level that is heavy enough to push you and progress from there.

There is a risk of numerous medical conditions, including breast cancer, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease rise during and after menopause. Working out regularly and maintaining a healthy weight can help offset these risks.

Be realistic and set goals to avoid frustration and overwhelm. Make sure your goals are attainable and specific, for example: "I will walk for 30 minutes three days a week." or "I will play tennis with a friend once a week."

Menopause is a challenging time learning to adjust to your body's changes. At times, it may feel like your body is working against you, but you can take back control.

You will have heard this time and time again however it is something I stand by and want to reinforce: working out will make you feel good!! Besides the physical and psychological benefits of exercise, the endorphins you'll get are an added bonus. This can be especially important for women going through menopause.