

World Menopause Day is on 18th October, raising awareness about all aspects of the menopause. To celebrate this I have decided to focus on 5 simple tips to help you manage your menopause.

The menopause is a completely natural transition in a woman's life, however some women will breeze through it and others will really struggle. Hot flushes are the most common symptom affecting up to 80% of women but anxiety, low mood, brain fog, poor memory, sleep problems, weight gain, aching joints and fatigue are all common too. Here are my five top tips to help you manage your menopause in the best possible way.

Let's manage your menopause!



1. Eat the Mediterranean Way

The Mediterranean diet has research to support it can reduce hot flushes, balance blood sugar, improve mood, improve brain health and reduce cardiovascular disease in menopausal women. Eating the Mediterranean way involves eating a whole food, predominantly plant based diet and it also highlights the importance of social connection.

- Eat a rainbow of colours of vegetables, herbs,

spices and some fruit.

- Eat fish, especially oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, anchovies, sardines, herring and trout.
- Enjoy nuts, seeds and wholegrains such as wholegrain or wild rice, spelt, buckwheat, oats, rye and quinoa.
- Enjoy a variety of legumes, including chickpeas, peas, lentils and an assortment of beans.
- Eat a low amount of added sugars and sugary foods. Sweet foods should be seen as a treat which you enjoy occasionally.
- Aim for no more than 3 portions of meat a week.
- Enjoy plenty of extra-virgin olive oil. Preferably organic, unfiltered and from one country of origin.
- Traditional Mediterranean cultures are also physically active and value and enjoy social connection and eating with others, so don't forget that aspect.

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2. Balance Your Blood Sugar

As oestrogen levels drop during the peri-menopause,

blood sugar balance is affected and can lead to energy dips, changes in mood and weight gain, especially around the belly. These tips can help regulate blood sugar.

- Try to avoid sugary foods, drinks and refined carbohydrates such as supermarket bread, white pasta, white rice, cereals cakes and biscuits.
- Try to avoid processed foods as there are lots of hidden sugars in them.
- Choose higher fibre or wholegrain foods, such as wholegrain or wild rice, quinoa, oats, rye, nuts, seeds, vegetables, beans, lentils and pulses.
- Try to have a good quality source of protein at every meal (a palmful is a portion). These include poultry, red meat (preferably no more than 2 portions a week), fish, lentils, pulses, beans, quinoa, hummus, falafel, eggs, nuts and seeds. Protein helps slow down the release of sugars and keeps you feeling fuller for longer.
- Eat vegetables in abundance and choose lower sugar fruits such as berries, apples, pears, plums, peaches, citrus fruits or cherries. This will help slow down the release of sugars in food and fibre rich food provides bulk, making you feel

fuller for longer.

Find out how to keep the sugar cravings at bay while you manage your menopause with [WeightMatters](#)



3. Optimise your sleep

Sleep is commonly disrupted during the menopause transition. Trying to optimise sleep can be advantageous in managing your menopause symptoms.

- Try to have a regular sleep routine, getting up and going to bed at roughly the same time each

day, even at weekends (sorry!).

- Expose yourself to daylight as soon as you can on waking. A walk or having your morning drink in the garden can be a good way to implement this. Whatever you do try to get some natural daylight first thing in the morning to set your body clock. In the winter, when daylight is limited in the UK, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) lamps can be really beneficial when used on waking.
- Avoid evening alcohol, as this can disrupt sleep and change the quality of it.
- Avoid caffeine after lunch, as caffeine can stay in the system for a long time and can disrupt sleep. Try herbal teas, water or go for decaffeinated options after lunch.
- Turn off all screens at least an hour before bed. I know this can be difficult but it is so beneficial for sleep. If you can't do this then use night time mode on your device or download [f.lux](#).
- Having a warm bath in the evening lowers the core temperature of the body and can be really beneficial for sleep and for reducing hot flushes and night sweats. I love a bath so this is my favourite sleep tip!

4. Eat Magnesium Rich Foods

Magnesium is nature's relaxant and is often deficient in people's diets. It can help support bone health, relax muscles, aid sleep and relieve anxiety in the menopause. Try to eat some magnesium rich foods every day. Magnesium rich foods include:

- Dark green leafy vegetable.
- Beans and pulses.
- Avocado.
- Salmon.
- Halibut.
- Pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds and flax seeds.

Find out more about the right foods to nourish your body while you manage your menopause with [WeightMatters](#)



5. Manage Your Menopause Stress

Stress can worsen menopausal symptoms including hot flushes, sleep problems and mood symptoms. So finding a way to reduce stress that works for you is important. It could be mindfulness, meditation, yoga, reading a book, gardening, dancing, singing (belting out a song is actually a wonderful stress reliever!), Emotional Freedom Technique, massage or reflexology. Whatever relieves your stress, try to prioritise time for it every day as it can reduce many symptoms of the menopause transition. [WeightMatters](#) provides free online yoga classes for its members as

stress is so prevalent in today's society.

Courtesy of Claire Roberts, Women's Health Nutrition

www.clairerobertsnutrition.co.uk