

Five steps to thrive

DURING MENOPAUSE



Your FREE kickstart
guide to thriving during
menopause

BY JO HARTLEY
ENERGISED LADIES
HEALTH & FITNESS





Hi there

I'm Jo the founder of Energised Ladies Fitness.

I'm a Nurse, Ladies specialist Personal Trainer, and a mum to three girls!

Welcome to Energised Ladies!

As you read through this information it is best if you really take some time to think about these steps and customise them to suit yourself, I can help you dive deeper if you require, get in touch for a free consultation to discuss this further.

You must remember every women is different, has a different menopause experience and that's why these steps can be customised to suit you.

As I have worked with ladies over the last few years, diving into everything from aches and pain, to pelvic floor concerns, age related illness and disease, I have now made it my mission to help educate and support ladies to live a healthy and active lifestyle to support living a longer, stronger, healthier and more functional life!





Step one

Define your menopause vision statement

Get really clear on what you want out of your menopause journey to help you set your foundations of nutrition, exercise, lifestyle and mindset.

Discover what are your 'big rocks' (the things that you must have in your life) and prioritise these then when you follow through with prioritising these and slotting in the smaller 'pebbles and sand' around these 'big rocks'.

So, what do you really value in regards to who you are and/or want to be and what's most important to you during this phase of your life?

What do you value in relation to your body, exercise and wellness?



Step two

Nutrition



The number one complaint or question health and exercise professionals get from women during menopause is about their weight gain, so it's worth a mention in these five steps, actually this is not just a mention, it's a big topic but worth it! Weight gain and weight loss resistance are very common as we age, however research has shown that hormone replacement therapy (HRT) doesn't make a difference in weight gain/loss. In other words: the hormonal changes that happen during menopause are not the primary driver of weight gain. Hormones however, can play a part in how fat storage is distributed with it moving to being stored more as visceral and abdominal fat ie. Belly fat as well as an increase in water/fluid retention.

The research points more towards the reduction in our movement and exercise as we age as the primary reason for weight gain, even if our nutritional intake stays the same. So on that note, I suggest that the things you can do to reduce this happening is optimize your nutritional intake and keep up or increase your activity level. (Step three) For your nutritional goals, you need not go on a dramatic diet of any sort, just a few simple, achievable and maintainable adjustments should help and not only improve any concerns regarding your weight but also:

- leave you with more energy,
- help you gain or retain your strength as you age
- improve your sleep quality
- help you feel more satisfied with your meals

Eating in a way that supports your goals will help you thrive and achieve your goals and visions during this stage of your life.



Focus on these four key practises:



- Eating plenty of vegetables and fruits; your best source of micronutrients, vitamins, minerals, and all the healthy stuff. These are fantastic during menopause to promote water and fibre intake for regular bowel habits and reduce bloating, add volume to help you feel fuller and more satisfied for longer therefore reducing mindless snack grabbing! Experiment and find fruits and veges you enjoy eating, aiming for about 1-2 handful servings/meal.

- Getting plenty of protein; our aging bodies really need protein as our ability to effectively utilise this protein declines as we age and we also tend to lose muscle so eating protein helps maintain and even build muscle in conjunction with exercise. Protein will keep you fuller for longer, burn calories as it is harder to digest so will burn calories as it is digesting and help with tissue repair throughout your body. A palm size serving of quality protein is recommended at each meal and some protein rich snack once or twice throughout the day for best results.
- Assessing your beverage intake, let's start with the obvious: prioritise water, set a reminder on your phone, and create a habit of having a glass of water with something you do regularly throughout your day. Now onto other drinks: Alcohol, this may exacerbate your menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, sleep quality and recovery from exercise, tune into your body and see if this might be happening for you? Caffeine, same again it may increase certain symptoms such as breast tenderness, anxiety and sleep quality, you don't necessarily have to give it up, a couple of cups might be ok for you, pay attention to your symptoms. And lastly sugar laden fancy drinks, sodas, juices...try to reduce these, they will be contributing to blood sugar swings, energy level crashes, weight gain and cravings for more creating one big spiral rollercoaster! These types of drinks really should be once in a while type drinks only, are these symptoms happening for you??
- Eating slowly and mindfully...I know we all live a busy life these days, but hear me out! One of the best things you can really do for your health and wellness is slow down. It can have some fantastic positive effects. So eating slowly can help you enjoy each and every bite = a more satisfying meal, stay present and therefore notice when you've had enough to eat, reducing the chances of overeating, and allows you to chew your food more thoroughly which helps your digestion and reduces bloating. Try putting your cutlery down between mouthfuls or take a break during your meal

These points mostly focus on adding and prioritising foods rather than being restrictive and in doing so will keep you fuller for longer, more satisfied with your meals and reduce cravings.



Step three

Exercise

During menopause your body changes in many ways, and your tried and true methods may no longer be successful in achieving your goals, so modifications might be needed...

You muscles need longer to recover, your hormones are different...what else is different for you, remember everyone's experience is different.

There are a couple of components that will help in general, however they will need to be modified to suit you, please ask me for help with this, it's my speciality if you can't figure it out, in saying that it will be very much trial and error too.

Prioritise strength training

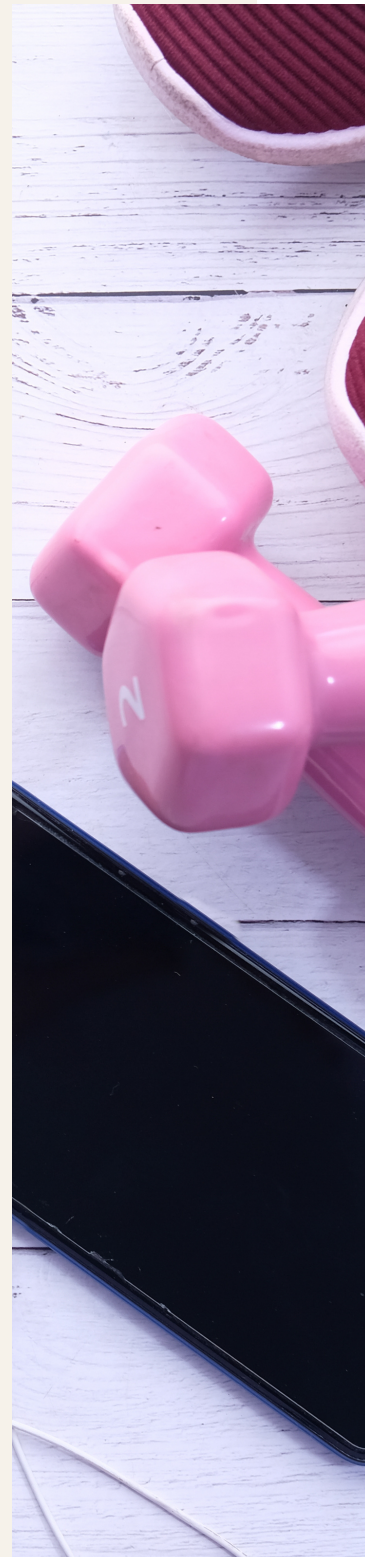
I highly recommend strength training for women because there are two common age-related conditions, sarcopenia and osteopenia, that affect women and that can accelerate around menopause, and they can have a huge negative impact on health and vitality. But both of them can be mitigated or even improved with strength training.

Sarcopenia is age-associated muscle loss. After age 30, women who are sedentary start losing approximately 3-8% of their muscle mass every year. That range is an average – the younger the woman, the slower the rate (in general); the older the woman, the faster the rate (in general). The rate of muscle loss also increases once menopause hits due to a decline in estrogen. Loss of muscle mass affects simple functions like walking, standing up off the toilet, carrying something from one room to another, and getting up after you fall.

So as you can imagine, a customised strength training plan is really going to make a difference here, you can even improve your muscle tone and growth not just maintain it!

Osteopenia, is age-associated bone loss that can eventually progress into osteoporosis, a condition that causes brittle bones that fracture more easily. From birth to around their mid to late 20s, women's bone mineral density increases, typically peaking at 25-30 years old. Most women's bone density then plateaus for many years. Starting at about age 44, women start losing (on average) 0.4% of their bone mineral density each year. However, between the ages of 50 and 54 years old – around menopause – women experience a sharper rate of decline, losing 4.4% of their bone density per year making us more susceptible to osteoporosis and increase risk of broken bones.

With strength training it is possible to improve your bone density, can't think of a better reason than these to get into strength training!! This doesn't have to be heavy weight lifting, simply doing some body weight movements will be great start and adding in some simple house hold items as weights to increase your challenge over time will be beneficial.



In addition to strength training or as an alternative
“ to start with try this next component.

Simply increase your movement by adding some low-moderate intensity exercise to each day for 30 minutes. It will improve your cardiovascular health, improve your recovery from more intense exercise, reduce stress, and improve how you feel physically and emotionally.

Have a go at some of these examples: walking with a friend, a bike ride, swimming, a hike or tramp, test out your dancing moves... try something new, get creative!



Link your exercise back to your values and goals during this phase of your life to make it achievable and realistic for you.



Step four

Lifestyle: Sleep, Stress management & emotional health

Let's break these down a little further, small meaningful changes you can make in each of these areas to help you reap the benefits, reduce your menopause symptoms and feel more comfortable in your own skin.



Sleep

Sleep impacts everything from mood, hormones, energy levels, nutritional choices and craving control and even pain responses, therefore when your sleep quality is poor your symptoms may be exacerbated. You might have noticed that when you are tired you often are more susceptible to poor food choices as a quick way to boost your energy levels.

Think about ways you can improve you sleep, whether it be being prepared for hot flashes or night sweats by having a spare pair of sheets or PJs at the ready so you can get sorted and get back to sleep or if you struggle to get to sleep or back to sleep, try some focused breathing, breathing in for 4 seconds and a long slow breath out for 8 seconds. You can also think about what is keeping you up later at night than should be, and can this be changed or reduced,screen time, too much caffeine in the afternoon, a busy mind...?



Stress

Life these days for most people is stressful, add the symptoms of menopause you might be getting and maybe your stress is right up there, fantastic if its not though...take some time to evaluate this. Stress can exacerbate symptoms like anxiety, depression, hot flashes, brain fog, and more, all of which will not help you work on you improving your habits to improve your symptoms, what a spiral!

So try some of these stress busters:

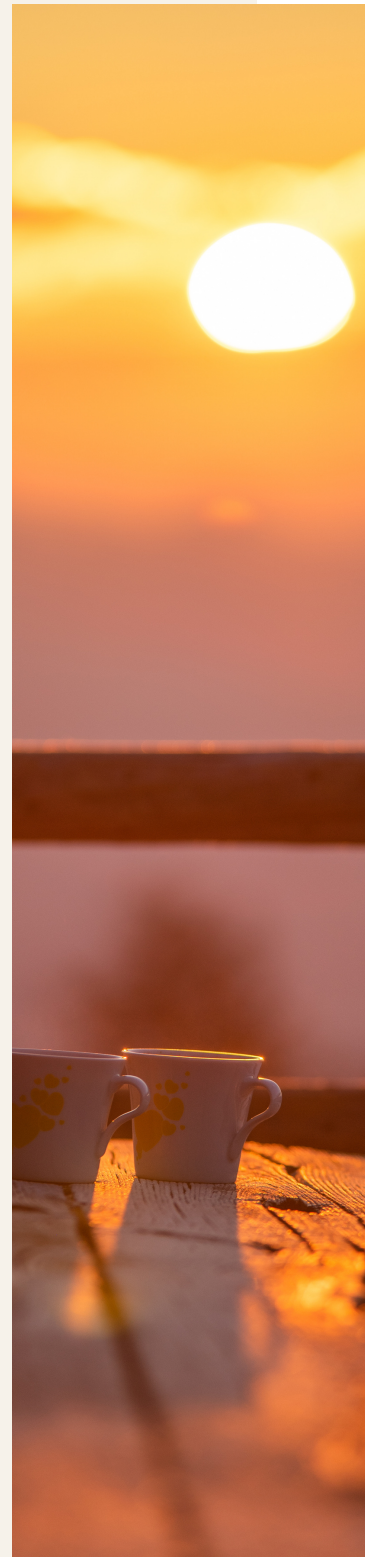
- Deep breathing, clenched jaw, chest tightness, shoulders tense and rising? Take five slow and long deep core breathes, get that breath out of your jaw and shoulders and breathe out your tension.
- Do some self-care daily, even just something small but make it a priority to take a few minutes of relaxing time just for you! Coffee in the sun, journaling, a walk mindfully taking in your surroundings, what is it that you really value for a little bit of down time, something small and simple to bring you into the calming present.
- Figure out your stressor and change it, set a boundary, a change in job...

Prioritize your mental and emotional well-being

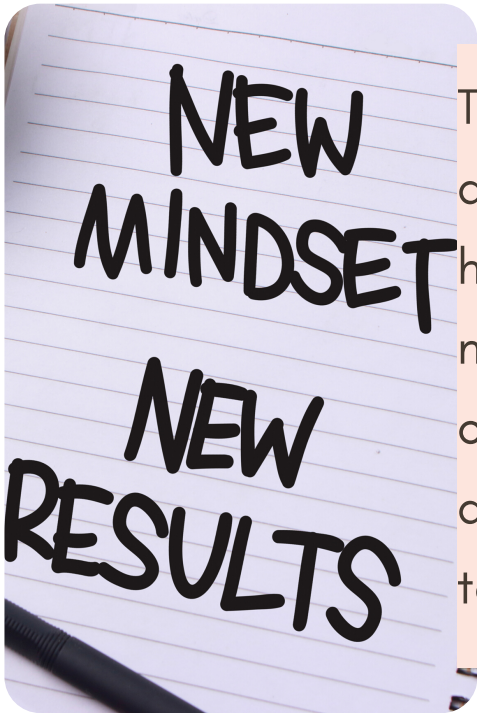
If you are struggling with your mental or emotional health, figuring out how to make all these changes for your nutrition or exercise might be overwhelming. Seeking help might be the best thing you can do, from enlisting a friend or family member for listening, support or motivation to a professional counsellor.

Seek out new hobbies or revisiting previously loved ones.

Taking part in activities you enjoy can bring a sense of accomplishment and positivity to your life outside of work and family obligations.



Step four *Mindset*



Thriving during menopause isn't just about what you do, it's also about how you think. You will find exercise, nutrition and lifestyle changes will come easier if your mindset is in tune and your psychological wellbeing is taken care of first.

So, how are your thoughts about menopause? Our thoughts are powerful drivers of our emotions and experiences, being aware of this and how we can shift these thoughts is a valuable skill to learn.

Common thought patterns during menopause fall under these three categories:

- Comparing themselves to other women
- Negative self-talk about how your body is looking or functioning
- A fixed mindset around their bodies and lives, thinking there is nothing you can do to improve your situation

So, the solutions to these common patterns:

- Notice and name, recognise when you are having a negative thought pattern and acknowledge it.
- Retrain your brain, ask yourself is your thought aligning well with my values and menopause vision? If not replace your thought with a more positive thought that better aligns with your values, it will get easier overtime with plenty of practise.
- Assess your environment, are your actions aligned with supporting a positive mindset, are you surrounding yourself with things that will help you feel positive about your life, values and healthy aging. This could include things like emails, social media and TV, even the in person social or work activities.
- Fill your space and life with things that inspire you to feel self-acceptance, support you to live in according to your values and vision statement.



Conclusion and Summary

Well done on coming this far and taking the time to ponder some aspects of your life that could be adapted to help improve your lifestyle, health and wellness during Menopause.

If you would like more help to dive deeper into these aspects or guidance on how to get the most out of your exercise so you can live the life you would like to, then please reach out, I would love to help you reach your goals.



Thank you!

I hope you have found this information useful. Feel free to share with your friends or reach out for support.



Jo.hartley@energisedpt.co.nz

www.energisedpt.co.nz

