



EMPOWERED

WITH DIANA

# The Menopause Playbook: Winning Strategies for Symptom Relief

During Perimenopause, your hormone levels are fluctuating, causing hormonal imbalances that can make you feel like you are on whirlwind roller coaster. These fluctuations can result in a myriad of menopause symptoms. The three dominating hormones in your body include **Estrogen, Progesterone, and Testosterone**. With the decline in hormone levels, you may start to experience symptoms that can affect your quality of life. Not every woman is the same though and each woman experiences the transition differently. Fortunately, there are things we can do to help mitigate some of the symptoms so that you can thrive through the the Menopause Transition.



## 1. Eat Enough Protein at Each Meal

For perimenopausal, menopausal, and postmenopausal women who want to stay active, healthy, and strong — research recommends eating 0.54–0.9 grams per pound of bodyweight a day. (That’s 1.2–2 grams of protein per kilogram of bodyweight).

A standard serving of 20–30 grams would be about the size and thickness of your palm. Most women need three to six palm-sized servings of protein per day, so aim to eat at least one palm of protein at most meals and snacks. Protein sources include things like meat, fish, shellfish, eggs, Greek yogurt, tofu, and tempeh



## 2. Take Care of your Gut Health

Menopause and age-related changes can occur throughout the system, as sex hormones regulate many aspects of GI function. Many women notice the digestive changes at midlife, including abdominal pain and discomfort, heartburn, intestinal gas, bloating and disrupted bowel function.



A balanced gut, full of beneficial bacteria (usually the result of eating clean whole foods), promotes wellness and a better peri-and post menopause experience. To maintain a balanced microbiome, focus on eating a wide range of **nutrient-dense, vitamin, mineral and fibre rich foods** such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains, as well as incorporating omega-3 fatty acids and probiotics.





### 3. Engage in Regular Exercise

There are many ways you can move your body, and even small movement come with positive benefits. Regular physical activity and movement have an astonishing range of benefits for physical, mental, emotional and social health. When it comes to the menopause transition, exercise is particularly important for maintaining or increasing bone mineral density, maintaining or gaining muscle mass, reducing risk of osteoporosis or osteopenia, reducing hot flushes and night sweats, improving quality of sleep, improving mental health and well-being, maintaining or gaining strength and function, and so much more.

### So how much movement is ideal?

For starters, whatever you enjoy and are able to do consistently.

That said, it's important to know what the guidelines say as a starting point.

- At least **150 minutes** of **moderate-intensity** physical activity (brisk walking, moderate cycling, swimming), and
- At least **2 strength training sessions** (ideally spread over three or more days)

Ultimately, you should be doing something that feels a bit strenuous most days of the week and engaging in consistent, progressive strength training.



#### 4. Lower your Sugar Intake

Optimizing metabolic health through blood sugar control provides women some control over managing menopausal symptoms. Excessive sugar consumption and experiencing blood sugar spikes and falls is linked to insulin resistance. Some women may also notice that when they consume more sugar than usual, they experience hot flashes and night sweats. The idea is to minimize refined sugars and opt for natural sweeteners or whole foods instead.



#### 5. Consume Healthy Fats

Particularly **omega-3's**, **nuts**, **seeds**, **olives** and **olive oil**. Omega 3 fatty acids in particular have anti-inflammatory, cardioprotective, and insulin-sensitizing effects. Some ways to do this would be to add nuts and seeds to salads, yogurt, smoothies, etc. Keep a variety of nuts and seeds available for snacking. Use olive oil for cooking or for salads.

## 6. Avoid Alcohol

Despite the fact that age decreases our ability to tolerate alcohol, midlife and older women are drinking much more on average than previous generations — and having more health problems as a result. Recent research now confirms that alcohol consumption poses more risks than benefits, even at low doses - and this is especially true for women at midlife and beyond. Higher alcohol intake is associated with many chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, various types of cancer and low bone density.

Here are a few other reasons you might want to consider drinking less:

- Alcohol intake may worsen some menopause symptoms, for example it may affect the vasomotor regulation that leads to hot flashes.
- It may interfere with sleep quality
- It affects fluid balance in the body by acting on the hormones that regulate sodium and water balance. You may notice bloating, water retention and “puffiness” after drinking

## 7. Try Stress Reduction Techniques

In addition to hormonal fluctuations, juggling kids, work, parents, household chores and finances, all contribute to stress. Let's face it, life is stressful. The problem is, high levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, can disrupt blood sugar, increase cravings and disrupt estrogen and progesterone. When you are chronically stressed, that fight or flight reaction stays turned on all the time instead of short bursts that your body can respond to.

### What can you do to lower stress?

**Mini Meditation sessions:** Research shows that short meditation sessions are effective in relieving stress and anxiety.

**Deep Breathing:** This can also be beneficial in dealing with hot flashes.

**Walking or any form of exercise** is very good at providing stress relief.

**Connection with Friends or relatives:** Having connection and contact can instantly wash your stress away.





## 8. Eat less processed foods

A diet rich in minimally processed foods will help you decrease your risk of many chronic health problems that often appear in midlife, including cancer, osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, and constipation, to name a few.

Minimally processed foods — or “whole foods” — include those that are either almost completely unchanged from their origins (e.g., fresh-caught fish, a piece of fresh fruit) or modified only slightly (e.g., pasteurized milk, dried herbs).

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### They're also chock full of nutrients that can help you:

- **Get better sleep.** Minimally processed foods tend to be rich in the mineral magnesium, which may help to calm menopause-related sleep problems that can intensify hunger and appetite.
- **Manage menopause symptoms.** Like hot flashes, insomnia, and irritability (again, thanks to those powerful nutrients, like omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids).
- **Feel less hungry.** Thanks to their rich fiber and water content.
- **Feel more engaged with life.** Minimally processed foods are rich in iron and zinc, which may support cognitive health.









# A LITTLE ABOUT ME

*A message from Diana*

I started Be Empowered with Diana to provide a place where women in midlife can turn to for information, motivation, and validation in their experiences.

When I entered perimenopause, I didn't even realize I had entered that stage of life. The only thing I knew about Menopause was the reference to hot flashes and irregular periods. There was no mention of any other physical, mental, and emotional changes that happen during this time, so I didn't start connecting the dots until much later.

I don't ever remember my mom talking about anything other than hot flashes and it's just something you go through, and there really isn't much you can do about it.

I really wish I knew that my low moods, lack of motivation, my depressive symptoms, brain fog, my sudden aches and pains, that it was all part of Perimenopause, and that in fact I was not losing my mind. It wasn't until I started having conversations with my friends who also shared feeling this way, that I didn't feel so alone anymore.

All of this led me to where I am now. I wanted to learn as much as I can, and share what I've learned with other women who are also in this stage of life so they don't feel alone or feel like they are losing their sense of self and don't know what to do to feel better.

We are not meant to "just go through it". There are things we can do to feel better, physically, mentally and emotionally. We don't need to suffer or feel alone or confused by all the information (or lack of) out there.

My goal is to provide you with evidence based information so that you feel EMPOWERED to make informed decisions that make this stage of life feel more manageable. There is a wide range of options out there and I am here to help you learn a little bit more, help you navigate through peri/menopause, and to share in this experience together.

Follow me on Instagram or Facebook @beeempowered\_withdiana for more tips along the way. Reach out anytime you need support at [beempoweredyoga@gmail.com](mailto:beempoweredyoga@gmail.com)

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