

THE PAUSE COLLECTIVE



The Menopause Guide

BY LINDSEY BROWN



Welcome to The Pause Collective...

... here to disrupt the often unhelpful narrative around menopause and offer you 'The 5 Pause Pillars' of guidance that can support you through menopause and beyond.

If you find it challenging to talk freely about menopause and your personal experience, you are certainly not alone. Approx one third of women are currently going through some stage of menopause worldwide. And that is a lot of women and a lot of individual experiences; each one to be nurtured and honoured. It is an essential phase of a woman's life which lasts, for some women, over 4 decades. Just let that sink in...

Please take onboard how important this time of life is and how it is possible to step into your amazing wisdom and power, and thrive. This is a time to shine, not decline.

Lindsey

In this together

It is estimated that in 2025, 1 billion women will experience menopause worldwide. Around 80% of those women will experience symptoms, with around 30% experiencing severe symptoms that may disrupt their daily lives. Despite all of this, there is limited knowledge of what therapeutic options are available.



As a somatic therapist, naturally I am talking about mind and body based practices but for some women, being offered HRT can be a postcode lottery. Both aspects however can improve quality of life and reduce the risk of chronic illnesses which are associated with postmenopause. I cannot advise on HRT, although I do work closely with a specialist if you require further advice, but what I can advise on is a smorgasbord of holistic practices that can support you with or without pharmaceutical intervention. Bodily autonomy is key.

The phases of menopause

Perimenopause

A result of oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone levels changing. Progesterone declines first around age 35 and comes with a caveat; you are not necessarily entering perimenopause, it may simply be low progesterone levels which can present with similar symptoms such as heavier periods, increased anxiety and poor sleep; testosterone is a slow, gradual decline and oestrogen has a tendency to fluctuate. This stage is referred to by Dr Mary Claire Haver, author of 'The New Menopause' as the 'zone of chaos' and can last 2-10 years.

Menopause

Is just one day, the day that your periods have stopped for 12 consecutive months, from this day onwards you are in postmenopause.

Postmenopause

In Traditional Chinese Medicine postmenopause is referred to as 'Second Spring' and represents a time of transformation and of awakening new potential. For many women it can feel like 'the cloud has lifted' and life continues more on your terms, more boundaries are set and you begin to say 'no'. However, around 10% of women continue to experience symptoms such as mood swings, hot flushes, poor sleep and genitourinary issues. This is known as 'Postmenopausal Syndrome'.

Unhelpful narrative...

'Menopause is a decline rather than a natural stage of a woman's life.'

I mean, really? Society is already unkind enough by stigmatising women for simply ageing instead of celebrating the wisdom and knowledge that has been gained over decades of experience. For some women it can feel like wearing an invisibility cloak and recognition becomes obsolete because of reaching midlife.

The answer? Let us celebrate the rich lives that have been led by us and our female collective and use that wisdom to thrive in midlife.

'Menopause as a reason for career change/loss/setbacks.'

It is not uncommon for women to feel unsupported at work, to feel like they are no longer able to conduct their job efficiently due to lack of understanding, and perhaps encouraged/nudged to step down and let someone younger step up.

The answer? For organisations to challenge archaic ideas, ageist attitudes and negative stereotypes and recognise menopause is an inevitable phase of life. By offering menopause support and recognising the valuable contributions made during menopausal years they both attract and retain outstanding staff and also absorb years of wisdom, insight and invaluable work and life experiences.

'Menopause is a negative experience.'

- **Symptoms.** To be clear, I am not negating how challenging and stress-inducing menopause symptoms can be, but with the right support, connection with others and individualised therapeutic options it can be managed from a more positive, grounded and regulated place vs one that is fearful, misinformed and isolated.
- **Negative stereotypes.** 'You're just being (add adjective)... hysterical, moody, irritable, angry, cold, overemotional.' Or, menopause means loss of (add adjective)... attractiveness, worthiness, ability to think clearly, libido.

The answer? More recognition, support and education for ALL to destigmatise and lay stronger foundations for empathy within the workplace, familial relationships and friendships. This would help to alleviate shame and support open, honest discussions.

'Menopause is to blame for all health issues.'

This is an important trap to not fall into as it may cloud judgement and lead to other valid reasons for a decline in mental and/or physical health to be overlooked.

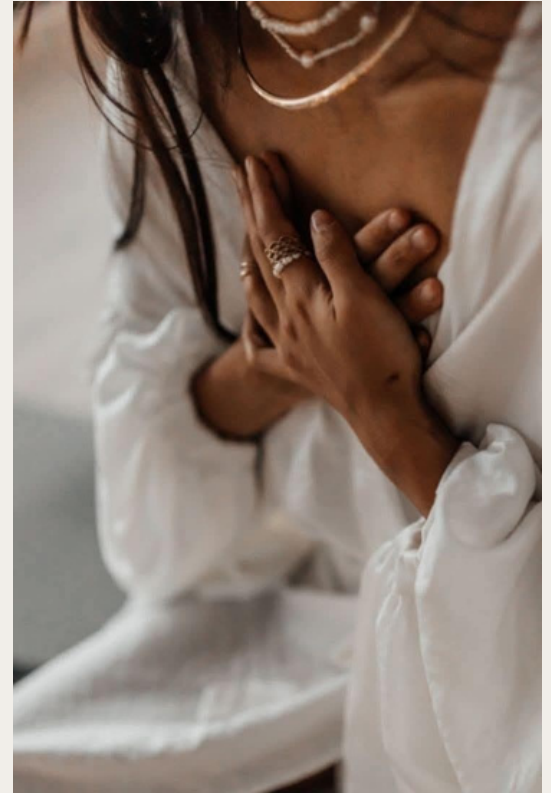
The answer? Consider what else you have going on such as stress, societal and midlife pressures, and that any medical conditions you may have may not be menopause related. Always seek a second opinion. Trust in your innate wisdom and knowledge of your body.

The 5 Pause Pillars

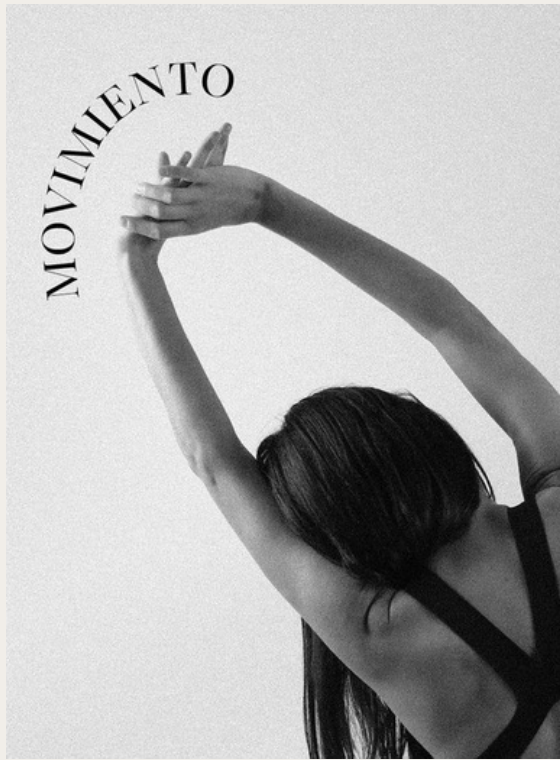
Functional Breathing

This is No.1 for me. Dysfunctional breathing, which may present as short, shallow, chesty and fast, can:

1. Weaken your deep core muscles (diaphragm, transverse abdominis and pelvic floor) which affects internal stability and therefore your posture which impacts your sense of self. Being strong from the inside out can improve your confidence and how you show up in the world.
2. Cause tension and muscle tightness in the neck, shoulders and upper chest. Muscular tension can create mental tension (and vice versa), plus it can foster poor posture and therefore low mood as it creates a sense of drawing inwards and shutting off from the world.
3. Increase cortisol levels. Breathing in this way can elevate your stress response and keep you in sympathetic drive. Feeling even slightly but chronically stressed can become the norm and, as such, your body adapts to this. Having elevated cortisol levels and being in a state of fight or flight can exacerbate menopausal symptoms, can put your body in a state of chronic inflammation which is risky for ALL health issues and impact your cardiovascular health.



The 5 Pause Pillars



Movement & Fitness

1. Stretch your muscles and mobilise your joints regularly. Your body loves to move, honour it. Mindful of overstretching and causing an injury, our connective tissues lose hydration and elasticity due to reduced oestrogen thus can become stiffer, dehydrated and less malleable.

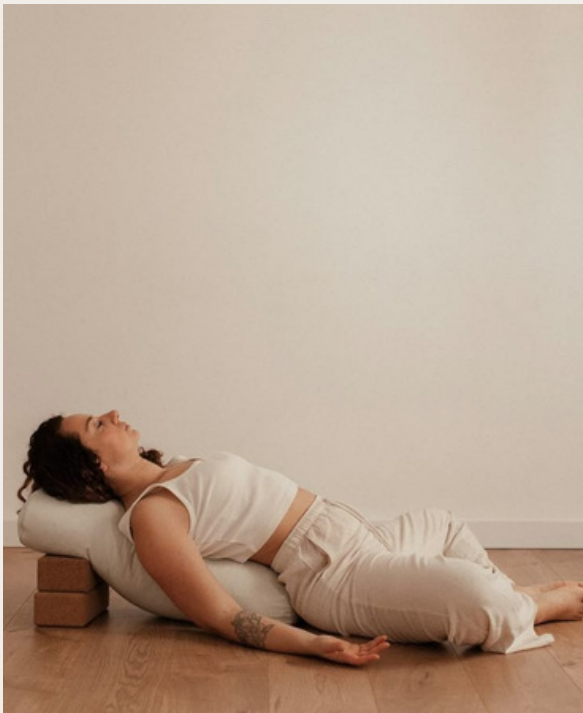
2. Balance challenges - be a flamingo! Poor health can correlate with poor balance. Balance maintenance is important and can benefit your health from a strength, longevity and confidence perspective (1).

3. Resistance training (mix it up with weights and bands) and be sure to progressively load, ideally three days a week.

4. Cardiovascular (CV) training: the recommendation is 150 minutes per week in CV zone 2: [Zone 2 training_guide: What is it, benefits + examples](#). Caveat! Be mindful of setting the bar too high because when it is not reached it can lead to frustration and feelings of 'not good enough'.

5. Set realistic goals. Be consistent. Something is better than nothing.

The 5 Pause Pillars



Stress Reduction

1. Connection! Spend time with those who lift you up; support your rest and digest response with yoga, meditation and breathwork; try journalling; ask for support; spend time in nature; and most importantly, set boundaries by asking, 'Are my needs being met'?
2. Get in the sun when it's out! Not only does reducing stress maintain healthy serotonin levels but sunlight helps to regulate serotonin production. Serotonin is a natural mood booster, plus it helps to regulate sleep which can be problematic during menopause.
3. Life can be challenging enough, develop self-compassion. **Thoughts are not facts.** Give yourself a break. Hold yourself gently and offer kind words to yourself. You are amazing. Breathe it, feel it, know it.
4. Exercise can free tension from your body. When stressed, physical tension can become chronic and will exacerbate any pain or aches in muscles or joints. See Pillar 1 for the relationship between how you breathe and chronic tension patterns. Everything is connected.
5. Reducing stress means more positive lifestyle choices: better sleep hygiene and food choices, commitment to exercise, breathing and mindfulness practices and spending more time with loved ones.

The 5 Pause Pillars



Nutrition

There are many highly respected menopause nutritionists out there, so please seek expert advice. However, here are some options to inspire further research.

1. Try intermittent fasting for anti-inflammatory benefits. The following focus on nutrition for women and hormones: The Galveston Diet and The Gottfried Protocol.

a. Please do your own research and ensure this is right for you and note that most research on intermittent fasting has been done on men which will be no surprise. Seek professional advice prior to embarking on any diets. Food choices need to be sustainable and not encourage 'yo-yo' dieting.

b. For many women, following a diet does not work and is not sustainable, some may prefer the 'everything in moderation' approach. Reduce the obvious: refined sugars, ultra processed foods (UPF), simple and refined carbs, and trans fats. This points to the importance of an individualised approach.

2. Move away from the cookie jar... Reduce added sugars to less than 25 grams per day (about 6 tsp).

3. Add fibre! Gut health and your microbiome can be affected during menopause. Ensure your daily fibre intake is greater than 25 grams.

The 5 Pause Pillars

Nutrition cont'd

4. Consume adequate protein. The daily recommendation is 1.3-1.6 grams of protein per kg of ideal body weight (i.e. a weight that is appropriate for a person's height). 100g of protein daily is a good start. Avoid processed protein which often has added sugars, fats and fillers and lacks nutrients; choose whole protein sources. Use protein powder? Go organic, no additives, such as [theorganicproteincompany](#).



5. Increase calcium intake through cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, kale and collard greens), eggs, greens (spinach) and sesame seeds. According to a 2020 study, dairy products do not prevent age-related (over 40) bone loss or fractures (2).

6. Consider supplementation for what you can't get from food, i.e. omega 3. Top ones are often vitamin D and vitamin K for bone health, magnesium (our magnesium stores deplete very quickly when stressed) and it also helps the body utilise vitamin D more effectively, and zinc to support hormone regulation. As always, research further to understand the benefits of each and check you are taking any supplements in a way that ensures your body absorbs them effectively and you're taking what you need.

The 5 Pause Pillars

Sleep Optimisation

1. Consider wearing a sleep-tracking device which can highlight any habits impacting your sleep. Also consider if tracking your sleep will help or hinder. Not everybody needs 8+ hours. You know your body.



2. Practice good sleep hygiene!

- a. Switch off devices an hour before bed (30 mins minimum).
- b. Consider no screens in the bedroom, keep it for sleep and sex only.
- c. Find a routine that works: dimmed lights, gentle movement and breathing practices to wind down, reading, a warm bath, essential oils - you get the idea.
- d. Avoid strong cardio based activities in the evening which can elevate your stress response and leave you more switched on than switched off.
- e. Ideally eat 3+ hours before bedtime.
- f. Depending on your sensitivity to caffeine (and other stimulants), perhaps avoid coffee after 2pm.
- g. Remember alcohol can impact sleep, even 'just the one' to take the edge off.

My Mission

To educate, empower and nurture women through perimenopause and into their wise woman, postmenopause years using the T.L.C method.

THRIVE - To help you thrive during the menopause transition and beyond. To empower you through holistic practices which support your physical, mental and spiritual well being. To help you tap into and trust in your innate wisdom enabling you to shine, not decline.

LEARN - Menopause awareness is growing which is amazing, but it can be hard to know where to start and dig out what is useful which can feel overwhelming. This is where I come in - to do the research and direct to further resources if required. Understanding menopause gives you the knowledge and choices to live your best life. Let the 'Pause Pillars' lay the groundwork for your personal 'Pause Toolbox' of best practices. You are the best advocate for your health. Honour YOUR body.

CONNECT - Many women feel disconnected during menopause. For time immemorial, it has been cloaked in shame and stigma leaving women to suffer in silence and often anxiety around ageing and how it may look for them. By using the 'Pause Pillars' to create your 'Pause Toolbox', you will learn how to reconnect to yourself and others. Respecting and nurturing yourself and your personal journey helps to raise oxytocin levels (bonding) and reduce cortisol levels (stress). Oxytocin helps you feel supportive and supported. Developing self-compassion and listening to your needs is a crucial step in moving through menopause with grace and ease. Being part of a female collective can also facilitate connection. Whether in a class, women's circles or spending time with friends, feeling heard, understood and validated can be hugely uplifting and restorative.

Need more insight & support?

Local to me? I hold a weekly Yoga Therapy for Menopause class on Thursdays during term time, 7.45-8.45pm in Walton on Thames, Surrey

Join this small group of friendly, inclusive women who like to laugh and not take themselves too seriously. Alongside the physical and emotional rollercoaster of menopause, we often have other midlife challenges such as ageing parents, children leaving the nest (or not), and both needing greater emotional and financial support. We have a lot going on! It is important to find time to switch off and gather some headspace in a environment that encourages us to 'stop doing and start being'.

Are you a HRT specialist, talking therapist, fitness/yoga professional keen to understand menopause either for yourself or for your clients?

I am running a 1-day CPD on Yoga Therapy for Menopause for The Mindful Institute on Saturday 14th June 2025. You can learn more here: [Online-cpd-yoga-therapy-for-menopause/](https://www.themindfulinstitute.com/cpd/yoga-therapy-for-menopause/)

Private Somatic Therapy

Private therapeutic sessions can be a wonderful way to utilise your time in a focused and creative space, encompassing all that has been described in this guide. I will help you discover and respond to what your needs are and how you can move through menopause and beyond in an intuitive and courageous way. Online or at home.

Watch this space...

... for the launch of an online course for women experiencing perimenopause and postmenopause.

Using the T.L.C method and encompassing 'The Five Pause Pillars' you will be guided through a variety of practices utilising breathwork, movement, meditation and mindfulness to create your own 'Pause Toolbox'. Learning embodiment practices will allow you to dive into your psyche and heal from the inside out, to help you remove blocks and layers of unhelpful conditioning built up over years of skewed perceptions and limiting self-beliefs.

I will support you in reframing unhelpful narratives, to embrace and believe in your worth, to step into your power and encourage you to wholeheartedly grasp midlife with both hands.

This will be not only a personal journey but also one with your female collective. Let's raise those oxytocin levels!

'Menopause is a time to shine,
not decline.'

For any information on the courses, to join the group class or to book a session with me, you can contact me here: lindseyliveyoga@gmail.com

1. Successful 10-second one-legged stance performance predicts survival in middle-aged and older individuals
2. Dairy intake is not associated with improvements in bone mineral density or risk of fractures across the menopause transition