



6 secrets to a  
Happy, Healthy  
Menopause

# Hi there, I'm Lucy

First of all, thank for downloading my "6 secrets to a Happy, Healthy Menopause" guide. Its great to meet you (electronically for now!), and I really hope that this guide offers some practical and useful steps for you to start taking back the reins on your hormones, and your happiness.

I wrote this guide with two main objectives, and two distinct groups of women, in mind:

This guide is aimed at supporting women at all stages of life, but particularly:

- For women for whom the start of perimenopause isn't far off, and who want to get on the front foot now to set themselves up for a seamless transition, by understanding the diet and lifestyle factors that can significantly impact how your body manages the transition into menopause
- For women who are already in the throes of perimenopause - the hot sweats, mood swings, inexplicable weight gain and erratic cycles, its all happening! Rest assured, this guide will give you **immediate solutions** to help you to you feel calm and in control.

Perimenopause can present many challenges, but it doesn't have to. You can manage, and even enjoy, this phase of life, and be excited for what lies ahead. Right now though, you may be battling with a number of physical and emotional changes, and feel increasingly disconnected with yourself.....

Who **is** that person?  
Why does my hair look like straw?  
Why do I suddenly want to hide away?  
Why do social invitations fill me with fear?  
Why is my wardrobe full of baggy jumpers and leggings?  
**What on earth happened to the old "me"?!**



# I hear you.....

## **You are not alone.**

Until recently, when celebrities like Davina McCall started speaking out about their experiences, menopause was the silent shame. Yet experts estimate that 80% of women experience the symptoms of menopause to the extent it has a significant impact on their lives - their personal relationships, their ability to work, their mental health - you name it.

It might be that you are really suffering or perhaps you've just started noticing some changes. The experience is different for every woman but often means being hot, cold, moody, tired, sleep-deprived, nervy, irritable or sad. It can mean hot flushes, memory loss, battles with your weight (despite often eating a very good diet I might add), all leading to increased frustrations and stress.

Your fluctuating hormones are the cause of all of this, but you **do not** have to accept these symptoms as the way things need to be. Your hormones are not there to be dampened, controlled, or viewed as an invisible adversary preventing you from living the life you want. You can nurture them, understand them, and learn to eat and live in a way that supports this perfectly natural, beautiful and exciting time of life.

Learning to rebalance your hormones naturally will help you take back control of your life. Given life expectancy increases every year, women can expect to spend at least a third of their life in menopause, so it really is worth getting the help you need now.

Despite what you might have feared, or the narrative you have grown up with around menopause, it is not the death of your youth or vitality, but the start of some of the best and most powerful years of your life.

The contents of this ebook are for information only and are intended to assist readers in identifying symptoms they may be experiencing. It is not intended to be a substitute for taking proper medical advice and should not be relied upon in this way. Always consult a qualified doctor or health practitioner if you are concerned about any symptoms you are experiencing.

## Before we get started...

Let's make sure we are all on the same page when we talk about perimenopause and menopause, as sometimes it isn't clear where one ends and the other begins.

**Perimenopause:** This is the beginning of hormonal changes, namely the reduction in oestrogen and progesterone, that mark the beginning of the process towards menopause.

It is the perimenopausal phase that women struggle with most, characterized by hot flashes, weight gain, poor sleep, erratic moods, vaginal dryness, irregular periods and anxiety (to name but a few!)

**Perimenopause can last anywhere from a few months to 10 years, the average time being around 4 years.** Hence it is SO important that we understand and manage this phase, to ensure we aren't miserable, struggling and fed up as our bodies transition into menopause.

**Most women start their perimenopausal transition between the age of 40-44, but more and more women are starting to experience the tell-tale signs of perimenopause in their thirties.**

Our diets, lifestyle and environment are significant factors when it comes to how easily you navigate through perimenopause. I am a huge advocate of putting in place the right habits and strategies as early as possible to help you ease into menopause smoothly,

**Menopause: You are in menopause when you haven't had a menstrual period for 12 months.** So the menopausal phase itself is relatively short, and after not having a period for 12 months, you become post-menopausal.

**The average age of menopause is 51.** The age your mother was when she reached menopause can indicate when you might do so too.

### PLEASE NOTE:

It is important to note that until you are in menopause (ie. you have not had a period for 12 months), **you could still fall pregnant.** So it is important to use appropriate contraception during perimenopause if you do not wish to conceive.

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*By acting now, you will set yourself up for a happy, healthy transition where you can look forward to the next stage of your life with excitement and purpose*

You are probably already keenly aware that you can't get away with the same diet and lifestyle you had in your twenties. As we age, our bodies need a little more care, attention and love to keep them ticking along healthily and allowing us to do all of the things in life that we love.

We owe our bodies this extra attention, so that as we approach this miraculous change that marks the end of our reproductive years and the start of a new chapter, we do everything we can to nurture and cherish our amazing bodies to help them navigate through perimenopause as easily as possible.

I truly hope you enjoy reading this guide, and that it offers you some immediate strategies that you can implement into your life with ease, to help set you on the path for a smooth and problem-free perimenopause transition.

*Lucy x*

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So, what symptoms might you expect to experience?

Well, there are quite a few...

Night sweats  
Erratic menstrual cycle  
Stubborn weight gain  
Insomnia  
Bloating  
Cravings  
Headaches/ Migraines  
Overwhelm  
Irritability  
Mood swings  
Anxiety/ Depression  
Brain fog  
Poor memory  
Loss of sex drive  
Vaginal dryness  
Aging skin (and hair)  
Joint pains  
Fatigue



## So, what's actually going on with your hormones?

You may not have given your hormones a second's thought before but, given the rollercoaster you are on right now, it's worth having some understanding of what's going on chemically inside you and the impact it's having.

- Progesterone levels fall rapidly as you stop ovulating as regularly.
- Although oestrogen is likely decreasing, too, it's falling at a slower rate, meaning you can end up being oestrogen dominant (this is where there is a ratio of too much oestrogen to progesterone).
- This is usually what's behind many of the typical symptoms experienced during the transition to menopause.
- The stress hormone cortisol can also increase (particularly if you're used to spinning too many plates!), making sleep more difficult and leading to easy weight gain.
- The thyroid comes under increased pressure, and low levels of thyroid hormones can bring mood changes, weight increases, constipation and feelings of fatigue and low energy.
- Your hormones work together synergistically. When one or more is out of kilter, there is an effect on the others, too.

# Perimenopause and You

Now that you understand the basics of perimenopause, and what is going on with your hormones, lets take a moment to reflect on how menopause symptoms might be affecting your life and what you would like to change about your current situation.

**How many of the different perimenopause symptoms affect you? List the symptoms you think you may be currently experience.**

**Do any of these symptoms stop you doing things that you used to do, or would like to start doing? Describe how your symptoms limit you.**

**If I could wave a magic wand, I would like to feel ... (write as if you have already achieved your most desired health goals)**

**I would look...**

**I would feel...**

# Perimenopause and You

**The things other people say to me...**

**What I enjoy doing that I couldn't do before...**

**What I think when I look in the mirror...**

**How my health has improved and what this feels like...**

**In what other ways will your life improve by making these positive changes? (Try and list at least 5)**



## 1. Eat for Happy Hormones

Nourishing your body with the right foods is one of the first areas to tackle when it comes to setting yourself up for a smooth perimenopause. The key here is to ensure you are eating a wide diversity of colourful fruit and vegetables, plenty of good protein sources, and, most importantly, not relying too heavily on processed and refined carbohydrates, which is very common amongst women who are stressed and trying to juggle too many things in their life.

- The drop in oestrogen levels that occurs during menopause has an unfortunate side effect of redistributing body fat, and excess weight starts to settle around the waist. In addition, the change that happens in relation to oestrogen and progesterone at this stage of life is also likely to make your body less sensitive to insulin, the fat storage hormone. This is produced in response to consumption of carbohydrates.
- When the body's cells are less sensitive to insulin, more insulin is needed to do the same job, and more insulin produced means more fat stored. There are also lifestyle factors to consider here too; muscle mass diminishes with age while fat increases.
- This means it is more important than ever to start to adjust your diet to include less refined carbohydrate (pasta, bread, pastries, cereals) and include low GL (glycaemic load) foods that will help balance your blood sugar levels.
- A blood sugar balancing diet like this focuses on REAL food: meat, fish, eggs, tofu, lentils, beans and chickpeas, lots of vegetables, some fruit, nuts, seeds and wholegrains. No restriction, no hunger, just real, wholefoods that will help you feel great and full of energy..



## 2. Manage your Stress Levels

Managing your stress levels can be much easier said than done, especially in the culture we live in which constantly pushes us to do more, be continually productive and tells us that 'rest is for the wicked'. But now is the time when you really do need to start taking steps to manage your stress levels, as the impact of stress on your body as you move into perimenopause can be significant.

Cortisol is one of the main stress hormones, and is released in response to both real and perceived threat. Back when humans were regularly under genuine threat (ie. from predators and opposing tribes), the stress response was hugely beneficial. It allowed us to flee, or to fight, pushing energy to our extremities, helping us to physically react to the threat.

Today, we are (thankfully) very rarely in any physical danger, but perceived threats from our immediate environment have never been higher. Social media, smart phones, pressure to compete and show up perfectly in every aspect of our lives, to look great, to have a thriving career, perfect children, and obsessing over comparing ourselves to everyone else's seemingly perfect lives.

Women have never had it harder! And I would like you to take just a moment to reflect on all of the amazing things you are currently doing, and to remind you that you are incredible.

## The Vicious Cycle of Stress and Hormones

Prolonged, chronic stress leads to poor sleep; sleep deprivation leads to cravings for carbohydrates; cravings lead to slow weight gain; and weight gain makes us stressed. See the pattern?

Women have never been under more pressure and stress, and entering perimenopause in a state of high stress can significantly increase the severity of the symptoms you will encounter. Weight gain will be more pronounced, and harder to shift. Anxiety brought on as a result of reducing oestrogen will feel more acute. Sleep disturbances brought on by hot flashes will have a greater knock on impact on your energy levels.

In addition, oestrogen and cortisol hormones are both made from the same basic 'ingredients'. Your body is continually sharing out its resources to ensure that all of your hormones are produced at the right levels, at the right time.

When you are stressed, cortisol production will be favoured over oestrogen production. After all, when your body is under threat, what matters more, being able to react and run away, or to produce oestrogen to support our reproductive cycle? So when we are under persistent stress, your body will already be producing less oestrogen than it should. Add perimenopause on top of this, and you end up with a double hit of oestrogen reduction, which will exacerbate your symptoms further and likely result in a troublesome and challenging transition.

**This is why stress management is an absolute must.** Self care in your 30s, 40s and 50s is no longer something to squeeze in after the to do list is done and you are up to date on everything else. It is essential for managing symptoms of the transition to menopause and also (she says dramatically!) staying alive. If you have not been good (and many women aren't) at putting your needs first and doing nice things for yourself, start now!

### Start Now

Write down 3 activities you really enjoy doing – even if it's been a while since you did any of them. What brings you genuine joy? What gets you excited? Examples might include painting your nails, doing a jigsaw, taking a bath surrounded by candles, a trip to the pictures, dancing. Whatever it may be, jot them down, and choose just one to add to your schedule next week.

### 3. Move your body regularly & gently

Weight gain is a common symptom of peri-menopause. As oestrogen levels reduce, we become pre-disposed to putting on excess fat around our middle.

Coupled with changing eating habits and stress (see above!), weight can slowly but surely creep on, and be very challenging to shift.

When this happens, it is very common for women to start getting into the types of exercise that are very punishing on the body, like running and high intensity interval training.

What do I mean by punishing?

These very intense forms of exercise stress the body and, if your body is already stressed, it's just too much. Intense exercise results in more cortisol production, leaving your body resistant to losing fat as it attempts to hang on to every ounce of available energy.

**Alternatives:** Focus on movement - any activity that gets your entire body moving in a gentle way. Yoga, Pilates, Zumba and other dance-based classes are great, as is simply getting out and walking regularly (ideally 30-60 minutes a day).

Resistance/strength exercises (weights) are also good to help with the loss of muscle that happens as we enter peri-menopause. Strength training also helps you maintain your bone mass, maintain balance, and avoid injury—important for protecting your skeleton both now and as you get older.

## 4. Reduce your toxic load

Chemicals in your body care products – anything from shampoo and conditioner to body wash, body lotion and other moisturisers – contain chemicals like parabens, phthalates, sodium lauryl/laureth sulphate and ureas.

These are synthetic forms of oestrogen that are known as Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals. These chemicals block the oestrogen receptors in our body, making it harder for oestrogen to exert its effect.

These chemicals are molecularly similar to oestrogen and your body finds it hard to distinguish between the 'fake' oestrogen and the real oestrogen.

At this time in your life, you want to try and avoid overloading your body with excess chemicals and toxins. These toxins place an additional stress on the body, can damage the cells in your body that produce insulin, disrupting its action, can impair thyroid hormones and place extra burden on the detoxification system.

**Check your cupboards:** Carry out an audit on your beauty products and cleaning products. Check the labels; it might be worth investing in some alternative, cleaner brands.



## 5. Prioritise sleep every, single day

Sleep is the single most important lifestyle factor to get right when it comes to balancing your hormones. It is often neglected, with getting plenty of sleep being seen as indulgent or lazy. We have been programmed to be constantly 'doing', and sleep has slid down the priority list for many of us.

I'm here to give you lots of amazing reasons to ensure you are getting at least 7 hours of cosy, restful sleep each and every night, and how this will ultimately make you a happier, more productive person! Your sleep impacts so much more than your energy; it influences your eating habits, your mood, your immunity, your digestion - there is very little that it doesn't influence.

Working on establishing a consistent sleep routine is an area I would suggest you work on first. I work on good sleep hygiene with every single client, without exception! Below you can find the most powerful and easy to implement strategies that will help you to establish an amazing sleep routine that will nurture and support your hormones.

### Top tips for incredible sleep

- Try to go to bed at the same time every day. Your body thrives on routine.
- Keep the temperature of your bedroom comfortable; not too hot, not too cold. Aim for 16-18 degrees Celsius.
- Use your bed only for sleep and sex. This will help you to really switch off and associate your bedroom with calm.
- Keep your bedroom completely dark, so you're not disturbed by light, which your brain detects even when your eyes are closed. Use an eye mask if your bedroom isn't fully dark at night.
- Try and take some gentle exercise every day. There is evidence that regular exercise improves restful sleep. This includes stretching and aerobic exercise. A brisk walk ticks both boxes.
- Make an effort to relax for at least 45 minutes before going to bed - a warm bath, a short meditation, or a good book.
- Invest in a traditional alarm clock so your smart phone can stay out of the bedroom. Better still, work out how much sleep you need by going to bed 15 minutes earlier until you find that you wake up naturally before your alarm. That's your personal sleep requirement.

It can be really easy to fall into habits that disrupt your sleep; we have all been there! Below are the most common sleep-disrupting habits people fall into; if any of these tick a box with you, it might be time to start trying to eliminate these from your routine.

- Engaging in stimulating activities just before bed-time – like playing a competitive game, watching an edge-of-the seat film, or having an important/stressful conversation with a loved one.
- Being on your smartphone right up until bedtime (and certainly not on social media - its a surefire way to ramp up pre-bedtime anxiety!)
- Eating a heavy meal within two of going to bed.
- Drinking caffeine after lunch – avoid coffee, 'normal' tea, and caffeinated fizzy drinks if you can.
- Using alcohol to help you sleep. Alcohol is a sedative; it doesn't help you sleep better, but disrupts the normal cycling of sleep, leaving you feeling unrested and cranky the next day.
- Napping during the day; it can take the edge off your sleep signals and make it harder to fall asleep at night.
- Lying in bed for more than 45 minutes if you can't sleep. Get up, and repeat your usual wind down routine, such as reading or listening to some music. Try not to get frustrated if you can't sleep.





## 6. Get help from an expert, you don't need to do this alone

It might feel as though this period of your life is a little scary and daunting. It doesn't need to be. I want you to believe that there is so much you can do to help to support your body through perimenopause and out the other side feeling energised, happy and full of purpose.

I really hope you feel more informed and confident about what to expect, and how to effectively manage, your transition through perimenopause after reading this guide. If you feel as though you need support and guidance with implementing these changes into your life consistently and effectively, do get in touch with me. I would love to support you personally, and have a number of services to help based on what level of support you need.

You can get in touch with me through any of the channels below. I look forward to connecting with you further in the future.

*Lucy x*

# Let's Connect



Questions? Let's start talking! I'd love to start getting to know you better, and love starting conversations with women who are starting out on their perimenopause journey. You can get in touch with me on any of the below.



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If you feel ready to take the next step and book a clarity call so we can talk more about you, and what you really want to achieve with your health, you can book in for free using the below link.



<https://calendly.com/lucypatelnutrition/health-transformation-call-30-mins>