

# Menopause matters™

Winter 2023 £5.99

## Checking the noise around HRT

Are women getting the right message?

**NOW A 116 PAGE ISSUE!**

MENOPAUSE AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

EXERCISES FOR YOUR HEART

FEELING BONE TIRED?

Building bone strength tips

FINDING YOUR COMMUNITY

Are you coping and confident?

Hands up how many of us are struggling with our confidence right now? Well, you're not alone

ACCEPTANCE  
COMPASSION  
CREATIVITY

Some quiet antidotes in a noisy world

PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

A NEW NEUROSCIENCE SERIES

YOUR VAGINA AND BLADDER HEALTH

# Heart health

why it's a top priority for women in midlife

**+ PLUS...**

Winding Down for Winter  
Dr Currie's Casebook  
Café Culture  
and much more...



# Embracing the *yogic lifestyle*



Photo credit: Mark Takamura.

**Yoga teacher and wellness specialist, Desi Bartlett talks about how yoga can help with alleviating menopausal symptoms with movement and mindfulness.**



Photo credit: Natiya Guin.

**Y**oga originated thousands of years ago in ancient India and continues to help people all over the world with physical, mental, and emotional wellness. In our modern culture, there are many different styles of yoga available and whether it is an invigorating flow for strength and power, or a restorative practice to soothe a frazzled nervous system, it has been clinically proven to help mitigate menopausal symptoms.

Studies have concluded that yoga can help decrease vasomotor symptoms (VMS), sleep disturbances, and mood swings. However, it can be confusing to understand which techniques can help with these symptoms, as well as when and how. This is where the idea of lifestyle comes into play.

The yogic lifestyle can help provide a gentle structure for each day, as a method of finding centre and living in a balanced way. The following are some of the techniques that can help with the transition of menopause:

**• Morning Meditation**

Each morning, when you awaken, before you open your eyes, take a moment to set a clear intention for the day. When we set an intention, this helps to guide the tone of the day, so that rather than getting swept up by the outside world and the cacophony of news, emails, and advertisements, we can hear our own inner voice, and let our inner vision guide the day.

**• Morning Practice**

Many women have more energy for exercise in the morning. If this is you, then schedule a morning yoga practice at least three days a week. You can eventually add in more days if you wish. The morning practice can be anywhere from 20-60 minutes depending on your schedule. Morning practice begins by warming up the muscles of the core and transitioning into invigorating sun salutations. The core warmup will allow you to connect to the corset-like muscles that assist with posture throughout your day, and sun salutations will help to strengthen the larger muscle groups, as well as providing an opportunity to greet the new day with gratitude.

**The yogic lifestyle can help provide a gentle structure for each day, as a method of finding centre and living in a balanced way.**



**• We may not all be able to practice yoga on a beach but we can greet and close each day with gratitude.**







Photo credit: Luke D'Agostino.



• **Mindful Eating**

When choosing nourishing foods, take the time to ensure that this includes healthy carbohydrates like fruits and vegetables, healthy fats like avocados and almonds, as well as protein. It can be so easy to grab a coffee and pastry, but the combination of sugar and caffeine will give you an instant boost, followed by a large crash. By balancing each nutrient group in every meal, there will be a feeling of satiety throughout the day, which can help regulate blood sugar levels, and keep the mid-afternoon munchies at bay.

• **Deep Breathing**

*Pranayama* is an ancient practice in which the breath is controlled and guided. There are many different forms of *pranayama* that can be practiced anywhere, including on your way to work. *Ujjayi pranayama* translates to 'victorious breath,' and is a deep diaphragmatic breathing style in which the inhalation and exhalation are equal in length. Every time that you inhale, fill the belly and the chest with a renewed sense of your life force energy. Every time that you exhale, imagine releasing what no longer serves. The balanced rhythm can soothe a stressed-out nervous system.

• **Speaking Your Truth with Kindness**

Once we become women of a 'certain age,' there can be days when we feel cross for no reason



• Taking a full minute to breathe and reset your nervous system allows time to act instead of react to any strains in your day.

(hello shifting hormones!), and other days when we feel like we choke back words for fear of offending another. There is a middle ground. Notice the days when you feel particularly triggered and be mindful of your communication. Taking one full minute to breathe deeply can reset the nervous system and allow time to act instead of react. On the days when you feel like you are holding back, ask yourself what you gain, if anything, from holding back. If the situation is delicate, then set a time and space for honest communication.







### • Journaling

Some of us love to write down our thoughts and feelings at length, others not so much. Whether it is a smiley face emoji in your phone's daily planner, or a proper journal entry, take at least a few moments each day to check in with yourself. Notice the feelings that come up when you truly ask yourself, "how do I feel today?" Keeping a record of this can also help provide valuable data the next time that you meet with your health care provider. Noting rhythms and patterns of energy and mood fluctuations gives you the opportunity to notice correlations to sleep, food, and hormonal shifts.

### • Connecting with Nature

Mother nature reminds us that life is cyclical, while sharing the beauty of endings and beginnings. Celebrate this new chapter of your life as you connect to the wisdom and strength of your life experiences. For example, gazing upon the strong foundation and majesty of a mature oak tree can inspire your own regal posture as you stand in your power as part of nature.

### • Yin Yoga

Before you go to bed, enjoy a few restorative yoga poses, like a supported forward fold or hip opener, to help you settle into the comfort of your body. Forward folds carry the focus and attention inward, and it can feel like coming home to your heart before you drift off into sweet dreams.

Menopause doesn't have to be a time of suffering and discomfort. Integrating the yogic lifestyle and mindfulness practices has the potential to mitigate the symptoms that often accompany this transition. By embracing these practices, we have the opportunity to help improve physical health, emotional well-being, and overall quality of life during this transformative stage.

Remember that we are all individuals with unique experiences, so it's important to tailor these changes

**“Catching my perimenopause early was key for me. Yoga has set a strong foundation to help manage my mood swings and sleep disturbances from menopausal symptoms. It also helps me with my pelvic area, energy and increases circulation to keep me strong.”**

**A quote from C.R.B. - a beneficiary of one of Desi's teachings.**

to your individual needs and preferences. With dedication and the support of these healthy habits, the menopausal journey can be a smoother and more positive one.

**Desi Bartlett** MS CPT E-RYT, has been teaching health and wellness for over 25 years. She is a dynamic motivator and widely sought-after international presenter and spokesperson. She says her approach to teaching is to tap into one's inner joy and let movement be an outer expression of that state. Originally from Chicago, she has a degree in Kinesiology, a minor in dance, a Master's degree in Corporate Fitness, and is currently pursuing her doctoral degree. She holds advanced certifications in Yoga, Personal Training, Pre & Post Natal Fitness, and Group Fitness. She is also a continuing education provider in the USA through Yoga Alliance, the National Academy of Sports Medicine and the National Council for Personal Trainers.



**• We are all individuals with different experiences but with the support of healthy habits and a little dedication our menopause can be made a smoother and more positive ride.**