

DO YOU FEEL AS THOUGH YOU ARE HAVING A MIDLIFE CRISIS? YOU ARE NOT ALONE



Do you feel like you're not yourself lately? More anxious, everything is irritating you and you're always overwhelmed? You're not alone! And yes - this is normal! It's time for a midlife reset.



MIDLIFE

- The anxiety that appears out of nowhere.
- The irritability.
- The brain fog.
- The exhaustion.
- And the question many women ask themselves:
• "What is happening to me?"

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME?!

If you've been feeling unlike yourself - more anxious, more overwhelmed, less patient than you used to be:

It does not mean you are failing.

More often, it means you're moving through a biological and psychological transition.



PERIMENOPAUSE It can start years before menopause itself!

During perimenopause, hormones like oestrogen and progesterone fluctuate - and those hormones influence far more than reproduction. They affect:



Mood regulation



Sleep



Memory



Stress tolerance



MIDLIFE IS NOT SOMETHING YOU SIMPLY PUSH THROUGH.

When hormone levels start shifting, women often notice anxiety increasing, patience shrinking, sleep becoming disrupted. And once sleep is disrupted... everything becomes so much harder! At the same time, midlife is often when the mental load peaks. Careers, teenagers or young adult children, ageing parents, relationships, financial pressure.

Biologically and socially, midlife can become something of a perfect storm.

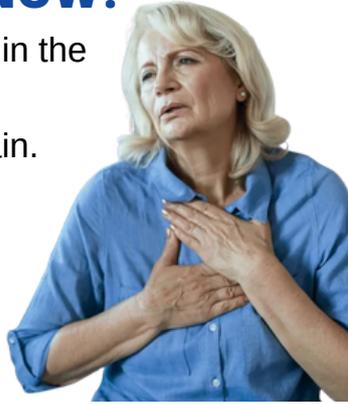


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I'VE NEVER BEEN AN ANXIOUS PERSON BEFORE. WHY NOW?

The answer often lies in the interaction between hormones and the brain. Oestrogen influences neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine - the chemicals that help regulate mood. When oestrogen fluctuates, the nervous system can become more sensitive to stress, triggering anxiety to appear for the first time, causing racing thoughts, physical tension, sometimes even panic, which can be frightening if you've never experienced it before.



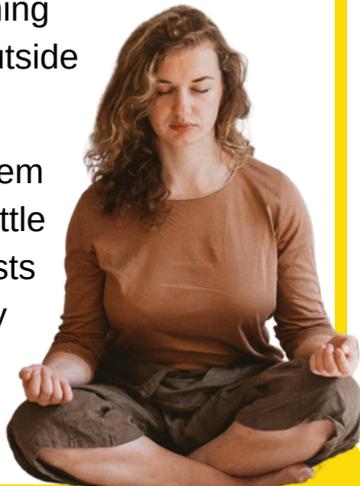
REMEMBER THESE 2 THINGS

1 Name what might be happening. Sometimes, saying to yourself, "This could be a hormonal spike," can reduce the fear around it.

2 Regulate the body first:

- Slow breathing
- Stepping outside
- Cold water

When the nervous system settles, the thoughts settle as well. If anxiety persists or starts impacting daily life, that's the point to seek support.



HOW DO I KNOW IF IT'S DEPRESSION, BURNOUT, OR HORMONES?

The honest answer is: sometimes it's a combination.

Depression in midlife doesn't always look like sadness. It can look like irritability, numbness or exhaustion.

Burnout often feels like depletion - a sense that you have nothing left to give.

Hormonal changes can create mood shifts that feel sudden or cyclical.



But there are signs that tell us it's time to seek support - persistent low mood, loss of interest in things you usually enjoy, hopelessness, major changes in sleep or appetite, or thoughts of harming yourself. **Those signals matter.**

But, for many women, what's happening is simpler - and more common.

The stress load has exceeded the coping resources available.

That's not weakness. That's nervous system overload.



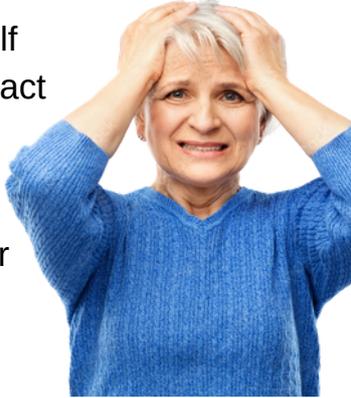
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WHY DO SMALL THINGS SUDDENLY FEEL ENORMOUS?

You might find yourself thinking: 'Why did I react like that?'

What's often happening is that your stress threshold has narrowed:



- Sleep disruption
- Hormonal changes
- Chronic mental load

All of these reduce emotional bandwidth. So when someone says "I just exploded," what's usually happened is the accumulation of many small stresses.

One tool that can help is something called the 90-second pause. When you feel an emotional surge:



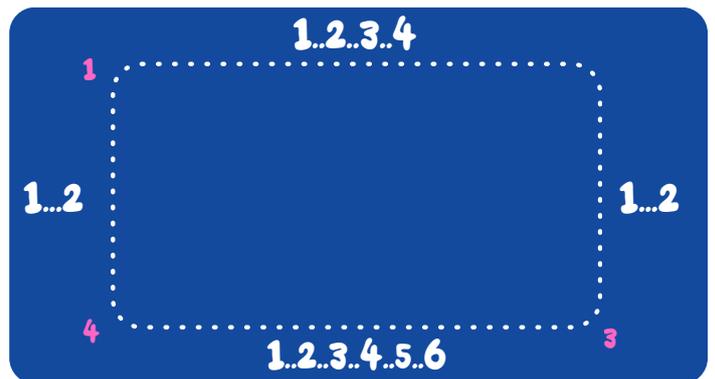
- Pause
- Slow your breathing
- Name the emotion
- Delay responding

MIDLIFE ISN'T ABOUT SUPPRESSING EMOTIONS

Physiologically, emotions tend to peak and fall within about 90 seconds unless we keep fuelling them with thoughts.

Midlife isn't about suppressing emotions. It's about **regulating** them. And regulation is a skill. So, let's practise it briefly:

- 1 Place both feet on the floor and take a slow breath in through your nose for four seconds.
- 2 Hold it for two. Then exhale slowly for six. Longer exhales activate the calming part of the nervous system.



What we've just done is regulation. We didn't suppress the emotion. We didn't judge it.

We stabilised the nervous system.

And when the body feels safer, the mind becomes more flexible.

WHY DOES EVERYTHING SEEM TO FALL ON ME?

Because it does!

For many women, invisible labour peaks during this stage of life. You may be managing children, supporting parents,



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coordinating schedules, holding relationships together - often while working. And when that load builds up, resentment can appear.



Resentment is often a signal that someone has been over-functioning for too long. A helpful question to ask yourself is: 'What am I doing that someone else could learn to do?'

The difficult part is tolerating the discomfort of letting go. This is where boundaries come in. Boundaries are not selfish; they're protective.



BOUNDARIES ARE NOT SELFISH, THEY'RE PROTECTIVE

They protect your time, your energy, your mental health, and your physical health. Making time for strength training, going for a walk, doing mobility work, or protecting your sleep is a boundary.

Movement during midlife supports muscle mass, bone density, mood regulation and cognitive clarity. So, prioritising exercise isn't indulgent; it's preventative care.



DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU DON'T RECOGNISE YOURSELF ANYMORE?



This is a period of identity recalibration. Roles that defined you for decades may start shifting - parenting roles, career ambitions, fertility identity.

Instead of asking "What's wrong with me?" it can sometimes help to ask: 'What might be emerging?' Midlife can feel narrowing, but very often, it becomes clarifying.



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PHYSICAL HEALTH

Physical health also becomes increasingly important during this stage.

Hormonal changes affect bone density and muscle mass. From our 40s onward, women naturally lose muscle unless we actively maintain it.

Muscle supports metabolic health, blood sugar regulation, bone protection and confidence.

Strength training two or three times a week can significantly reduce the risk of osteoporosis and help maintain independence later in life.

Weight-bearing exercise supports bone density. Mobility and flexibility protect joints. And psychologically, movement reduces anxiety, improves sleep and supports cognitive clarity.



EXERCISES TO HELP YOU FEEL MORE CONFIDENT

Aerobic Exercises

Great for cardiovascular, metabolic, hormonal changes, weight management. Exercises such as walking, swimming, bike riding, dancing or social sport.



Resistance Training

For improvements in insulin sensitivity, bone density as a result of hormonal changes. Exercises such as weighted squats or weighted lunges.



Pelvic Floor Exercises

Pelvic floor exercises for incontinence and organ prolapse: Exercises such as bridges and pelvic floor squeezes.



Exercise isn't about punishing your body; it's about protecting it.

Other considerations: Balance exercise for Osteoporosis related falls risk. Exercises such as single leg balance or tandem walking.



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NUTRITION MATTERS

As muscle mass declines, protein becomes more important. Protein helps maintain muscle, stabilise energy levels, regulate blood sugar and improve satiety. Many midlife women are actually under-consuming protein, particularly at breakfast.

Hydration also plays a role. Even mild dehydration can contribute to brain fog, fatigue, headaches and irritability.

Some simple reset principles include:

- Include protein in each meal.
- Prioritise whole foods where possible.
- Increase water intake.

Nutrition during this stage isn't about restriction. It's about fuelling resilience.



EXHAUSTION

So many women reach this stage feeling completely depleted. The first step is removing the shame around that exhaustion.

If you're depleted, your nervous system doesn't need more discipline. It needs restoration:

- Protect sleep where you can.
- Reduce stimulation in the evenings.
- Build small moments of rest into your day.
- Say no to at least one unnecessary commitment this week.

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS



Exercise is important



Nutrition & hydration matters



Energy management is important



Midlife is not something you simply push through



Boundaries are not selfish, they're important

You are not losing your capacity. You are navigating a transition. Midlife is not something that needs to be endured quietly.

With understanding - biological, psychological and practical - you can regulate your nervous system, strengthen your body, clarify your values, set healthier boundaries and design the next stage of your life intentionally.

For many women, midlife is not the beginning of decline. It becomes the beginning of alignment.



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