

# SELF-CARE DURING MENOPAUSE

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Menopause, a process spanning a number of years, is different for every woman. You may have few or very mild discomforts. It's also possible you have been experiencing symptoms like irregular periods, night sweats, headaches, or insomnia. You may also experience achy joints, irritability, and fatigue. Heavy bleeding during periods, bloating, and difficulty concentrating are also commonly reported.

While menopause is natural and normal, some symptoms, especially in combination, can be frustrating and stressful. Here are some tips for coping with them.

1. Acupuncture and naturopathy can help greatly with hormone imbalances and their effects. Ask for referrals.
2. Meditation is a gentle way to slow down, tune into your body and emotions, and increase your ability to focus. Practice focusing on your natural breath as it flows in and out, or on a word with no special meaning for you, for example the word "one." If you are interested, ask your massage therapist, family, and friends for referrals to meditation classes in the community.
3. Regular exercise offers some of the same benefits as massage. It improves circulation which can help you feel better both mentally and physically. It also stimulates the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain-reliever and mood booster.
4. Take regular time away to be alone or with someone you enjoy. Make special dates for being in nature, engaging in a creative activity like art, making music, writing, or practicing some other activity that renews your spirit.
5. Hydrotherapy such as hot baths, saunas, hot tubs, or footbaths can offer soothing relaxation. Add essential oils such as lavender, ylang-ylang, rose, or rosemary to a tub or footbath for an enhanced sense of well-being.
6. Regular massage can offer you time out to relax and let go of anxiety and irritability. It improves mobility in the muscles and joints, can ease headaches and muscle tension, and can increase your energy and ability to concentrate.

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