



8 Energy Boosters to Beat Menopause Fatigue

Drink lots of water, learn to say no, and pamper yourself now and again — these are just a few simple ways you can fight menopause energy drain and regain your oomph.

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If you're like many women, you'll probably experience bothersome symptoms during menopause — one of which may be fatigue. Fatigue is a common menopause complaint, especially in the early stages of menopause, as your body adjusts to its new chemistry.

But low energy can be also caused by number of other medical conditions, including anemia, coronary artery disease, diabetes, heart failure, hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, and kidney or liver disease. If you are fatigued, "you should talk to your doctor just to be sure it's a menopause symptom," says Wendy Klein, MD, director of education at the Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Women's Health and an associate professor emeritus of internal medicine, obstetrics, and gynecology at VCU School of Medicine.

"Most women don't need treatment for their menopause symptoms," Klein says. "The majority of women will have symptoms that are transient. They last two or three years and abate by themselves."

If you're dealing with fatigue as you go through menopause, try these eight simple tricks to boost low energy:

1. **Exercise daily.** You should aim for at least 30 — and preferably 60 — minutes of exercise most days of the week. It may seem incongruous to suggest exercise when you're feeling weak, but exercise actually boosts your energy, says Stanes Jonekos, who co-authored *The Menopause Makeover* with Dr. Klein. "Exercise is your fountain of youth," Jonekos says. "It produces those feel-good hormones and gives you the energy you're looking for when you're not feeling good." Some people find it helps to exercise earlier in the day rather than close to bedtime.
2. **Cap caffeine and alcohol consumption.** Caffeine and alcohol can both affect energy levels and interfere with getting a good night's sleep if you indulge in the evening. They may give you an immediate rush, but when they wear off, they can leave you feeling more drained than before. Nicotine can also have this effect, so if you smoke, quit. You'll find

you have more energy without artificial stimulants.

3. **Limit food portions.** Being overweight during menopause can cause you to feel sluggish. The best diet is one that is rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and that includes lean sources of protein (poultry, lean meats, and fish) and low- or no-fat dairy products. Limit the amount of fats and sweets you eat. Eating smaller meals more frequently can provide energy throughout the day, Jonekos says. But if you eat more often, be sure you're not overeating — watch your total calories.
4. **Embrace relaxation.** How do you unwind? Whether you like to read, take long walks, or meditate, take the time to indulge in your favorite activities. "You're entitled to pamper yourself and take time for yourself," Jonekos says. "As a result, you will be more energetic." Stress and anxiety could be causing your fatigue, and relaxation techniques can be very helpful in learning to overcome them.
5. **Get your Zzz's.** Another menopause symptom is hot flashes or night sweats, which can keep you up at night. Restful sleep is important during menopause so you're not overly tired during the day. This may require keeping your bedroom cooler than you usually do. Use a ceiling fan and wear lighter bed clothes. Make sure the room is dark and set your body clock by going to bed and waking up around the same time every day — even on weekends.
6. **Stay hydrated.** "You need to nourish your body with healthy food and water," Jonekos says. Thirst is your body's way of telling you that you need more fluid. When you're dehydrated, your body has to work harder to perform. Dehydration also can cause nausea and difficulty concentrating. Keep a water bottle handy so you can drink when you're thirsty. Choose water or caffeine-free tea or coffee — not calorie-laden drinks, as weight gain can make you sluggish.
7. **Don't overbook.** You may be fatigued because you're trying to do too much. Learn to say no. Know your limits and what you can and can't accomplish in a day. Also, if you set reasonable limits, you'll be less stressed, Jonekos says.
8. **Try herbal remedies.** Two herbal remedies that have been shown to reduce menopause symptoms that may cause fatigue and anxiety are black cohosh and valerian. Talk to your doctor before taking herbs as teas or supplements as they can interfere with some medications.

"No one recipe fits everyone," Jonekos says. "But if you're suffering from fatigue during menopause, you need to take control, and you can by adopting a healthy lifestyle." Eat right, exercise, get adequate sleep, and learn to relax — you will find you have more energy to enjoy your life.



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