

---

# MY LIFE IN HEALTH

# ‘I WANT WOMEN TO EMBRACE THEIR SECOND SPRING’

---

Author, presenter and model Lisa Snowdon, 53, talks to Joanna Ebsworth about why it's so important to keep talking about perimenopause, the power of rest, and why she's just getting started in life.

**I've had my fair share of feeling a bit crap about myself over the years.** I never had that androgynous figure that was so popular during the waif movement in the early 90s, so I had many moments modelling in Paris and Milan where I'd run to my rail at catwalk shows, see this whisper of material, and think, "how am I going to fit into that?" People would often book me on the strength of my portfolio but then see me in the flesh and tell me I looked a little bigger than expected, so I got sent home quite a bit, and that chipped away at my confidence. But I also was quite adamant that doing designer shows wasn't the right territory for me. Once I decided to return to the UK, I did the Special K advert and found my niche, which led to loads of magazine shoots and my presenting job with MTV, so it was all meant to be, and I've had some incredible experiences over the years.

**‘I felt at my lowest when I couldn't work out what was happening to me... that's why I'm so vocal about perimenopause now’**

**Hormones have also played a big part in how I've felt about my body.** Obviously, as a woman, you get those times throughout your monthly cycle where you feel like you just want to crawl out of your body sometimes, almost like body dysmorphia, and I think we can all relate to that feeling of feeling bloated and puffy, with sore boobs and a sore tummy, just wanting to eat all the chocolate and not go out. I've written a lot about hormones in my book, *Just Getting Started: Lessons In Life, Love And Menopause* (£10.99, HarperCollins), and how they're like little terrorists that just invade your body monthly. Of course, once I reached my early 40s and perimenopause hit, that brought a whole other set of confidence issues.

**It didn't help me that the word perimenopause wasn't on my radar.** This was a good 10 or 11 years ago, so no one was talking about it, and I've spoken about the



WORDS: JOANNA EBSWORTH. IMAGES: MATTHEW EADES.

Stripe T-shirt, £18.

fact that you get taught a bit about puberty, periods, and pregnancy in school, but then that's it. You're left to your own devices, so I still thought menopause was something that would happen to me much further off in the future when I was older. I wasn't sleeping and had a lot of anxiety, but my symptoms also changed and morphed into different ones over the period of around six years while I was trying to navigate what was happening to me. I gained a lot of weight and felt like I was losing myself for a while.

**My confidence took a massive dive, and it wasn't just about how I looked.** It was about having faith in my brain to be able to do my job properly, function in the world around me and leave my front door. I'd look out the window and not want to go outside, so I ended up feeling very lost, very confused, very angry, and very alone. I felt at my lowest when I couldn't work out what was happening to me, and that's why I'm so vocal about perimenopause now, because it's really scary when you don't know what's happening. Sometimes, it feels like it's swung the other way a bit and younger women are getting a bit nervous about perimenopause because there's so much more information. But I always say, 'be prepared, don't be scared', so you can make the necessary lifestyle changes to improve the way you feel.

**I took a 360° approach to my health once I realised I was perimenopausal.**

If women want to go onto HRT, I'm all for it, but some women don't, and some women can't. Either way, there are many changes you can make that are about being kinder and more patient with yourself, such as better sleep hygiene, better nutrition, meditation, breathwork, mindfulness, and all the other little lifestyle hacks I know now that can help to lower the cortisol in your body, calm down the inflammation, and minimise that stress response – rather than looking for quick fixes.

**Keeping a food diary can be very useful.** That's because your gut changes in menopause, so certain foods will irritate you more or you might have more bouts of irritable bowel. I realised wine would make me bats\*\*t crazy, and it can even make some women come out in hives because the body sees it as an aggressive toxin, so it

**'I want other women to embrace their second spring, because it should be an exciting time for us to reconnect with ourselves and ask "what's next?"'**





Button Through Dress, £20 (left);  
Embroidered Sleeve Blouse, £18 (top  
right); Lurex Blouse (centre); Chambray  
Utility Jacket, £30 (bottom right).

rejects it and causes a histamine reaction. I've also learnt that while I love coffee, coffee doesn't love me. It makes me jittery and gives me palpitations, and it creates a stress response that's only going to increase inflammation. So, it's just about learning all these things and how to manage them, because everybody's different and I think you need to find out what works for you.

#### **I've always been interested in nutrition.**

I think it comes from my days of modelling and just knowing that I feel and look better when I eat well and hydrate with water. My boyfriend George and I cook everything from scratch, and we often batch cook because we're really organised. Don't get me wrong, I can be organised now because my head's clear these days, but when I was in the depths of perimenopause and not sleeping, I was reaching for two or three coffees and eating a packet of biscuits in the afternoon, followed by pizza and wine in the evening. But you can't make better decisions unless you're sleeping better, and you can't beat yourself up on days when you feel like absolute crap because you haven't slept.

#### **Working out has been a big game changer for me.**

I've really upped the ante by taking up strength training, and I took it up for my mental health so I could get out of my head for an hour. That said, I'm also very conscious about the fact that our bone density gets weaker as we get older because my mum's got osteoporosis, but strength training is something we can all do to help us build stronger bones and muscle while burning fat. Ultimately, movement is a massive medicine, however that looks for you, and it doesn't have to cost a fortune, whether you're walking in nature to get in your 10,000 steps or following a Pilates session on YouTube.

**"Just getting started" became my mantra after I turned 50.** When I was approached to do *MasterChef*, I was a bit like, 'Do I want to slow down, or do I want to be less fearful?'. But I turned to George one day and said, 'You know what? I'm just getting started', and he was like, "Yes!". After I won *MasterChef* in 2022 and got my book deal, I knew "Just getting started" had to be the title because I felt so empowered. Now I've got a handle on my hormones, I think bring it on! My first 50 years have gone by quickly,





Abstract Face T-Shirt, £14, and Wide Leg Cropped Trousers, £18 (main); Stripe Jersey Top, £16, and Side Stripe Wide Leg Trousers, £22 (top left); Shirred Bodice Dress, £24 (centre); Watercolour Floral Sweatshirt, £20 (left).

and I'm scared the next 50 are going to fly by so I want to grab life by the balls and jump in. I also want my message to come across in the most powerful way so other women embrace their second spring, because it should be an exciting time for us to reconnect with ourselves, listen to what we really want and need out of life, and ask, 'What's next?', whether it's a new relationship or job or whatever.

**Becoming an ambassador for Bonmarché felt like the perfect fit for me.**

I was introduced to the brand while working on *This Morning*, so I've been familiar with them for a while, and I particularly love the fresh vibe of their new Dash collection. There are a lot of stripes, which always feel so cool and chic, and they're the sort of pieces you can dress up or down, mix and match, and style different ways, which is important because we need things in our wardrobes that work hard. The main collection is also very versatile, featuring lots of pretty dresses, jumpsuits and embroidered tops in lovely fabrics with cute finishing details. Bonmarché is great with their sizing and leg lengths, so there really is something for everyone, which is very important.

**I think fashion should be fun but, first and foremost, you've got to feel comfortable.** My top tip for dressing for summer is to try things on in different sizes, because sometimes just going up a size makes something look so much cooler and more relaxed. And if the size really bothers you, cut out the label! Also, never underestimate the power of a striped t-shirt. It's so easy to wear alone but it can look effortlessly chic and Parisian when worn with a relaxed blazer, especially when you push the sleeves up. I also like the side stripe pants because they give a luxe athleisure vibe that always looks cool, comfortable and relaxed but put together. Just throw them on and you're ready to go all day!

**I'm on the go a lot, so I do take supplements to support my wellbeing.** I take a live active bacteria supplement called Symprove every day for my gut health, and I take Correxiko Collagen in hot water with lemon, which makes a massive difference to how I feel. I also take nutritionist Pippa Cambell's Calm supplement mid-morning

or mid-afternoon, as well as before bed, and it's perfect for me, especially if I've got a very stressful day. All the above are non-negotiables, and I literally don't go anywhere without any of those things. If I'm travelling, they're in my suitcase.

**I went on a retreat last year after realising I was suffering from burnout.**

2024 was a really s\*\*t year for me with family stuff, bereavement and stress – add work into the mix, and it just all got on top of me. We all have a lot of stuff going on, but it's about how we process it, and I don't think I was processing anything because I felt completely snowed under. So, I had a 10-day digital detox with some therapy and a bit of space away from everything – not being on your phone is honestly a game changer! I always try to be authentic and honest with my community about how I'm doing because we've shared a lot together and I feel like they've got me through some of my darkest, hardest times. So yeah, I was a bit frazzled last year, but the retreat was a good reset. It's so important to recognise when we need a bit of help because self-care is never selfish.



Patchwork Cotton Top, £16, and White Jeans, £22.

Lisa Snowden is British high street fashion brand Bonmarché's new brand ambassador. There are 230+ stores nationwide – visit [bonmarche.co.uk](https://www.bonmarche.co.uk).