

**content written for a women's digital health platform to go live in winter '22*

Menopausal Mood Changes: What Can I Do?

Women may begin to experience mood changes and mood swings— namely, anxiety, depression, irritability, and panic attacks¹ - as they enter perimenopause and through their menopausal years.² In addition to the hormonal fluctuations that can trigger this,³ other major transitions are also common during this stage in a woman's life, so it's understandable!

There are things you can do that may help; but first and foremost, always consult a licensed healthcare practitioner to evaluate mood concerns and rule out underlying medical causes.

Make nutritional shifts

- Eliminate processed foods and eat whole foods (organic, when possible)⁴
- Limit red meat consumption⁵
- Increase intake of Omega-3 fatty acids,⁶ including fatty fish, nuts,⁷ avocados and seeds^{8,9}
- Add prebiotics (fiber) and probiotics to your diet, which can be found in fermented foods such as yogurt, kimchi, and sauerkraut.^{10,11} These are also available as supplements, but check with a healthcare provider before taking any, as not all are created equal.
- Eliminate or greatly limit alcohol and sugar¹²

Practice mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of bringing all our awareness to the current moment, rather than worrying and ruminating over the past or present. Mindfulness, such as yoga and meditation have proven positive effects on the brain.^{13,14,15}

- **Meditate**
Even if it's just for five minutes, taking the time out to meditate or do some yoga stretches can help shift or calm your mood.¹⁶ For guidance, there are plenty of in-person, online, and app options available that offer all different levels and durations; find works best for you.
- **Breathe^{17,18}**
Sometimes, it helps to simply stop for a moment and focus on your breath. Ground your feet, close your eyes, put one hand on your belly and one on your heart. Put your attention on the hand on your belly as it rises and falls with each breath. Do a few breaths like this.

There are also many types of breathwork; [4-7-8 breathing](#), as shown in the diagram is one such technique that is used to help reduce anxiety and promote relaxation.

Establish a consistent sleep routine

Even partial sleep deprivation has a significant effect on mood.¹⁹ Lack of sleep can cause irritability and make people more vulnerable to feelings of stress, anger, and sadness.² Getting enough – and quality – sleep is therefore crucial. We know how hard that can be for some, so we devoted a whole article to it! [Click here for Sleep tips.](#)

Get moving

Exercise gets the endorphins going²⁰ for a pick-me-up when you're down. While consistent exercise has longer-term benefits,²¹ even if you get moving for just a few minutes, it can help shift the mood!²⁰ Aerobic exercise can help burn off anxiety and stress,²² while non-aerobic exercise such as yoga can promote relaxation. It doesn't need to be a big deal, just get moving!

Journal

Journaling has shown to result in less depressive symptoms and anxiety,²³ as well as longer term improved effect on mood and overall feeling of wellbeing.²⁴ A good way to start is writing down every thought that is swirling in your mind, unfiltered – just let it all flow out! Another journaling exercise is one of gratitude, where you write down things in your life you are grateful for.

Go outdoors²⁵

Being out in nature has shown to lower the stress hormone cortisol²⁶ and increase mood.²⁷ So, step outside for a few moments (or longer), and while you're there, do some mindful breathing and perhaps even take a walk and get some exercise (three-in-one!)

If you have thoughts of harming yourself or others, please immediately call the national suicide prevention hotline, or your healthcare provider.

The contents of this article are for informational purposes only and not intended to provide medical advice, treat, diagnose, or replace the advice of a licensed medical professional. Please consult with your healthcare provider before making any treatment, dietary, exercise, or lifestyle changes to ensure that these changes are appropriate for you.

Sources

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