

Acupuncture Helped Alleviate My Perimenopause Symptoms

The traditional Chinese medicine practice eased my sleep disturbances, weight gain and anxiety

By [Saba Khonsari](#) | June 27, 2025 | [Health](#)

My list of symptoms were mild — nothing overtly concerning. About five pounds that refused to fluctuate back down post ovulation, like they usually did. A bit of sleep disturbance, which manifested as waking up about an hour or two before my body, or my alarm, was ready. A gastrointestinal tract that was working a little less efficiently for my comfort. Unexplained, elevated anxiety and irritability, and a slump in energy levels. I thought maybe my [thyroid was to blame](#).



"There's not just a formula like, OK this is the one for hot flashes, or this is for perimenopause," says Sadhna Singh. "It's a lifestyle change." | Credit: Molly Cat

After reading a comment on a lifestyle blogger's Instagram, I learned early wakings might be a symptom of [perimenopause](#). The commenter suggested magnesium, so I did a quick internet search and added magnesium citrate to my daily vitamin regimen. When I asked my gynecologist about whether I was in perimenopause, I received little guidance. My cycles were still regular, and there was nothing tangible she could offer.

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strategically placed throughout my torso, ankles, arms and head, I felt like a snowglobe, with its shaken contents slowly settling down.

Increasingly frustrated by the accumulated symptoms and the lack of intervention, I decided to book an appointment with an acupuncturist. I saw an acupuncturist while seeking fertility treatments, and although there is no way to know how much the sessions and herbs impacted my conception, I did experience a marked difference in my anxiety levels and regularity of my cycles.

At my first appointment back, I went through my list of concerns and recent medical history. Laying down in the darkened room, filiform needles

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Help with Symptoms

My blanket complaint was, "I just don't feel like myself." I was surprised to find I was not alone. According to a [March 2024 article](#), which analyzed the [2020 Women Living Better survey](#), "The phrase 'not feeling like myself' from a midlife woman was associated with anxiety/vigilance, fatigue/pain, brain fog, sexual symptoms and volatile mood symptoms." The article concluded, "Because these symptoms are not expected in perimenopause, women lack an explanatory model for why they are arising."

Research and information continues to emerge about menopause, but the transition period beforehand, known as [perimenopause](#), is less certain in its timing, scope and impact. An [overview from the Cleveland Clinic](#) shared the onset of perimenopause varies widely, impacting some women as early as their mid-30s and others as late as their mid-50s. The same overview states most women experience perimenopause for four years, but for others it can last as long as eight to 10 years. The breadth and experience of symptoms is equally varied.

I reached out to [Sadhna Singh](#), my original acupuncturist, to better understand how acupuncture can help manage perimenopause and menopause symptoms.

When I asked what new patients should bring or expect on their first visit, Singh shares they will ask for a detailed medical history, and to bring any recent blood work or hormone checks. She emphasizes, "Nothing is insignificant or small. Everything helps us come up with a better treatment plan." Acupuncture considers not just the current symptoms but the underlying causes. As Singh explains, "The transition phase of menopause symptoms that show up could be a reflection of a previous imbalance."

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Personalized Treatment

Singh notes that not every person will have the same underlying imbalances. For example, a hot flash could be a yin, or a fluid deficiency, or a yang excess. An acupuncturist will be able to modify based on your underlying pattern and address accordingly. Generalized applications of herbs, such as [black cohosh](#) or [St. John's wort](#) might not be effective in treating the same symptoms, depending on the corresponding deficiency that is the source of the symptoms. A trained acupuncturist will give herbs based on the patient's needs.

"There's not just a formula like, OK this is the one for hot flashes, or this is for perimenopause." In addition, Singh adds, "it's a lifestyle change," which includes considering individual triggers, such as managing stress.

Although acupuncture treatments are highly individualized, Singh says patients can expect to receive weekly treatments for four to six weeks before they see a change. Others might need to be treated twice a week during the initial, acute phase. Treatments are personalized based on a person's body and how they react to the acupuncture treatments. Although acupuncture draws from age-old formulas from thousands of years, depending on underlying issues, patients might need different modifications.

'Second Spring'

Both during my fertility treatments and currently in addressing my perimenopause symptoms, my treatments utilized a combination of acupuncture and herbs. Unlike treating acute symptoms such as a headache or fever, I did not go from having a symptom to relief after 30 minutes. Rather, I experienced a decline, until the symptoms bothering me — sleep disturbances, weight gain, anxiety — ceased to be an issue.

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Western science is showing the efficacy of this ancient practice. A [2016 randomized controlled trial found](#), "that a course of acupuncture treatments was associated with significant reduction in VMS (vasomotor symptoms), and several quality-of-life measures, compared with no acupuncture, and that clinical benefit persisted for at least six months beyond the end of treatment." A [2023 randomized controlled trial](#) showed, "Acupuncture is safe and can contribute to clinically relevant improvements in comorbid PMD [comorbid perimenopausal depression] and PMI [insomnia], with satisfactory short- and medium-term effects."

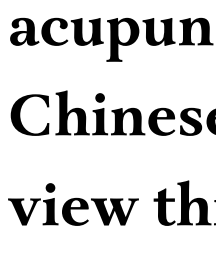
Providing the context of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine, Singh explains that prior to menopause, the focus and energy of the body is downward, with menstruation and pregnancy. However, during perimenopause and menopause, the energy starts to rise up, which disturbs the heart and creates sleep disruptions and increased anxiety and irritability. Acupuncture helps to support the systems during this phase of life. Or, to Singh's point, "You're not saying this is not going to happen. It's going to happen. How can we make it easier on your system?"

Prospective patients should look for a licensed practitioner in their state. For example, in Texas, the Texas Board of Acupuncture is under the state medical board. [NCCAOM](#) is a national certification commission for acupuncture, though some practitioners might just be state certified.

As for the needles, patients can sometimes expect a small pinch as the needle is inserted, but unlike a vaccine or blood draw, the needles are thin. Oftentimes I won't feel the needle being inserted, except for an occasional spot or two that is particularly tender.

As a patient, I appreciate the individualized attention and the interest and willingness to listen to every concern and take it into consideration. I also appreciate the way acupuncture and Chinese

medicine view this season of life, which is seen as a transition, not a medical condition. "They call it a second spring because it's about getting wiser as a woman," Singh says.



Saba Khonsari is a freelance writer based in Houston, Texas. Her work has been featured in online publications, including Texas Monthly, Texas Highways and Business Insider. [Read More](#)

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