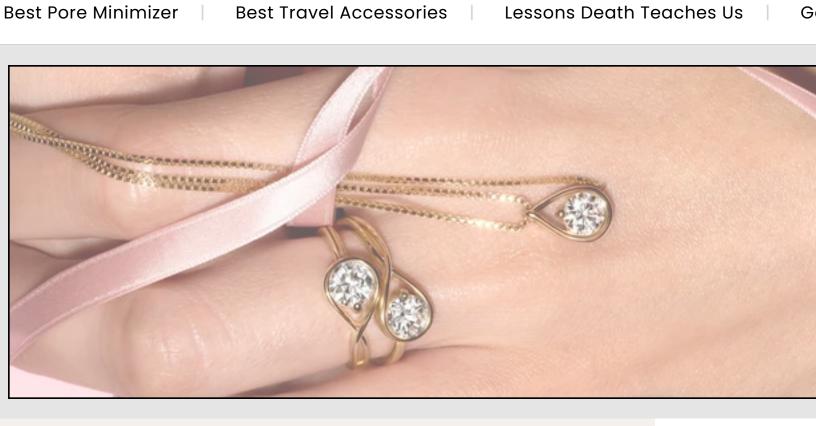
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Extreme Body Odor What's that awful smell? Oh, it's me. Here's how to deal with yet another

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By Lisa Arbetter Published: May 15, 2025 10:32 AM EDT

menopausal indignity nobody told you about.

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some of the funkiest health woes people can encounter in midlife to see which can be chalked up to the Change, and which are... well, just a you thing. You think menopause stinks? For some women, it literally does. "Body odor is not one of the more frequent complaints we hear in the clinic," says Pelin Batur, MD, medical director at Cleveland Clinic

ure, we know that menopause is behind night sweats and hot

flashes, but is it to blame for everything that goes awry when

you're over a certain age? In this new series, we're unpacking

Women's Comprehensive Health and Research Center. "But for the women who experience it, it can be really bothersome."

Why do I smell so bad?! Sweat itself doesn't smell. Odor is produced once

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During perimenopause and menopause, declining estrogen levels disrupt both parts of that equation:

your sweat links up with the bacteria on your skin.

Your sweat's chemistry changes, as does your skin's

bacterial mix. Even if your hygiene habits remain

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work with.

the same, your scent might become something wholly unrecognizable. (Holy rotten onions, Batman!) Add to that hot flashes and night sweats, which can increase sweating, and you're giving odor-causing bacteria even more to But here's the really fun part. Estrogen doesn't just affect how much you sweat or how you smell; it also impacts the **parts of your brain that**

What might make it worse? Some variables that can make you sweat more have *nothing* to do with menopause, like caffeine, alcohol, stress, and a higher body mass index

(BMI). Other factors can change how your sweat smells. Certain foods,

especially those high in choline (like liver and eggs) or sulfur (such as

onions and garlic), have been shown to affect body odor, particularly

prescribe just for odor changes," says Dr. Batur. "But if someone is

when consumed in concentrated forms like garlic powder.

process scent. So it's entirely possible you don't actually smell different—

If your newfound funk is attributable to menopause, hormone therapy might offer relief, but it's not a sure thing. "It's not something we

Passing the sniff test

you just *think* you do. Talk about a mindfuck.

already considering hormone therapy for other symptoms, it might offer some benefit." Still, there are ways to manage that gnarly stank, regardless of the cause: • **Use antibacterial soap and body wash.** Fewer bacteria = less odor. • Try a stronger antiperspirant. Look for one with aluminum chloride.

around.

• Wear breathable fabrics. Cotton or bamboo keeps sweat from sticking

- Change after a hot flash. A fresh outfit can make a big difference. • Track your triggers. Identify any patterns by taking note of what you
- eat, drink, and wear, and how stressed you are when odor hits. Eventually, you'll be able to quit sniffing your armpits in paranoia and get

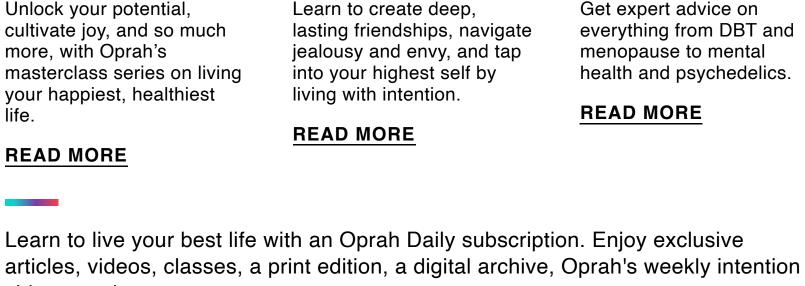
on with your life. "People adjust to it or it fades," says Dr. Batur. In the

meantime, a little knowledge—and maybe stashing body wipes in your

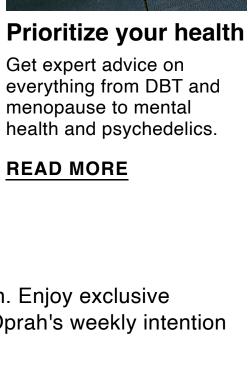
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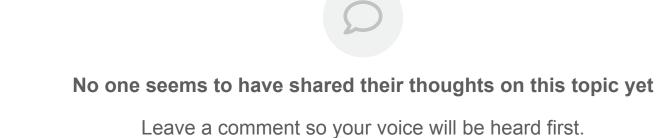


bag—can go a long way.



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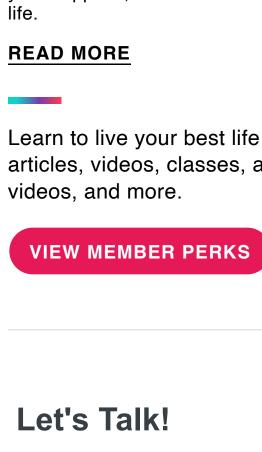
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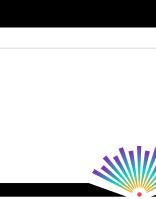
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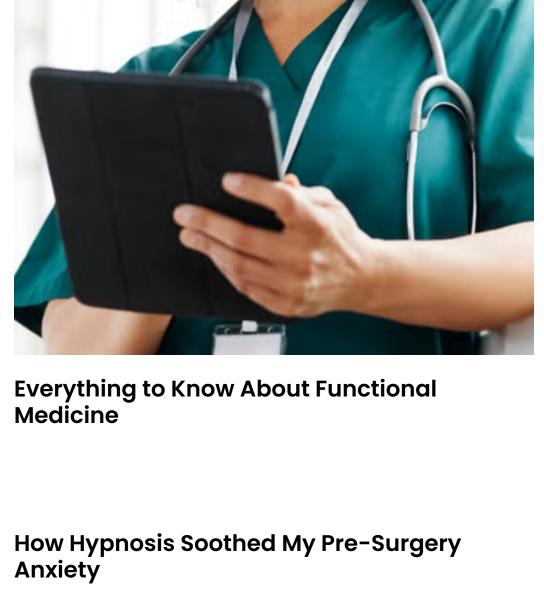
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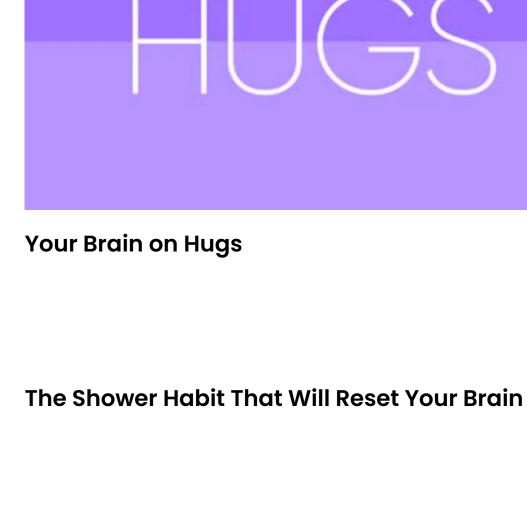


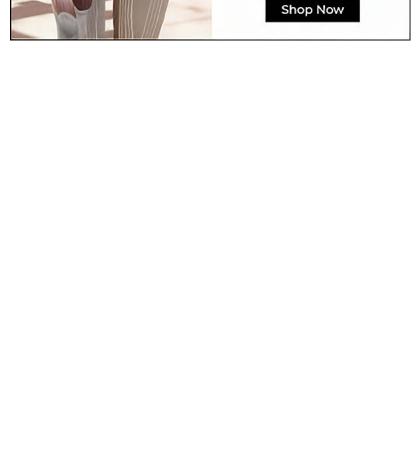


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