

A photograph of four diverse women of various ethnicities hugging and smiling together. They are wearing casual clothing like sweaters and jeans, and are barefoot. The image has a soft, warm tone.

Perimenopause Essentials

Guide

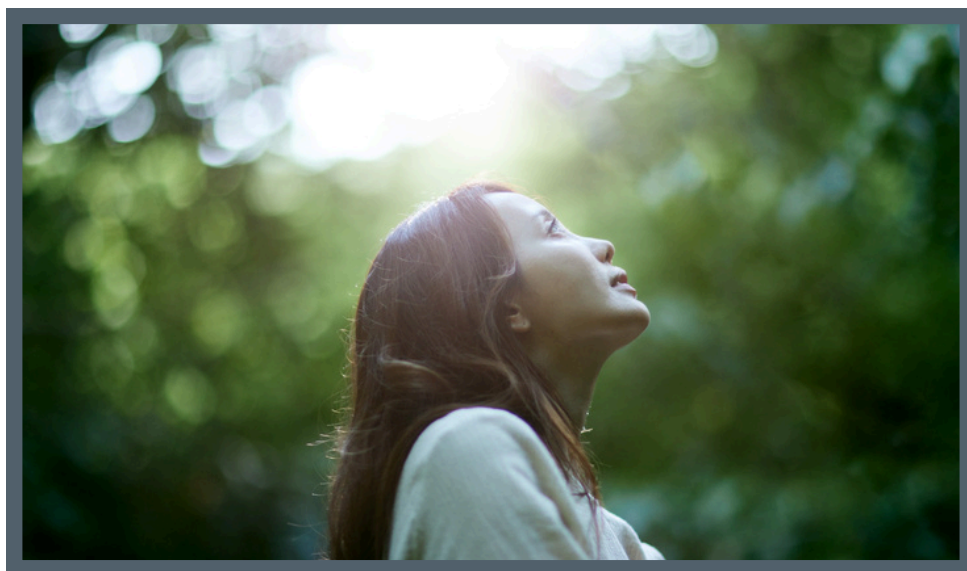
YOUR GUIDE TO
THRIVING IN
PERIMENOPAUSE

PERIMENOPAUSE

What is it?

Perimenopause is the transitional phase leading up to menopause, when your hormones (especially estrogen and progesterone) start to shift. It typically begins in your 40s, though for some women, it can start as early as their late 30s. This phase can last several years (between 4 -12 years) and often brings changes to your menstrual cycle, mood, energy, sleep, and more.

Perimenopause doesn't have a clear "start" or "end" date. Experts state that it unfolds gradually and affects each person differently. You may feel totally fine one month, and then suddenly notice heavier periods, poor sleep, or changes in how you handle stress. These are all normal signs that your hormones are adjusting.



Why This Guide Matters

Many women enter perimenopause feeling caught off guard, unsure if what they're experiencing is "normal," or even dismissed when they bring up symptoms. But you're not alone and you're not imagining things.

This guide was created to help you understand what's happening inside your body and to give you supportive, natural strategies to help you feel your best through this important stage of life. From nutrition and lifestyle tips to supplements and self-care strategies, you'll find tools that support your hormones and overall well-being.

A NATURAL TRANSITION

Hormonal Shifts Over Time

Every person's journey through perimenopause is different. If something feels new or unusual, it's good to explore it - this guide will help you connect the dots. Next, let's cover common signs of perimenopause.

Common Signs of Perimenopause

You may experience *one or more* of the following as your hormones begin to shift:

- Irregular or heavier periods
- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Fatigue or lower energy
- Mood swings, anxiety, or irritability
- Hot flashes or night sweats
- Brain fog or difficulty concentrating
- Breast tenderness
- Changes in libido
- Bloating or digestive shifts
- Weight fluctuations (especially around the midsection)
- Feeling "off" but not sure why
- Joint pain
- Heart palpitations



The Natural Transition

20s-30s
Hormones Peak

Late 30s-40s
Perimenopause Begins

Early-Mid 50s
Menopause Begins



THE REPRODUCTIVE YEARS

The Menstrual Cycle

The reproductive years last from the time of your first menstrual cycle (average age of 12 years old) through to perimenopause when your hormones begin to decline in your late 30's to early 40's. The average menstrual cycle is 28 days (though this can vary) and has two phases lasting roughly 14 days each with ovulation occurring in the middle.

Follicular Phase: Days 1-14

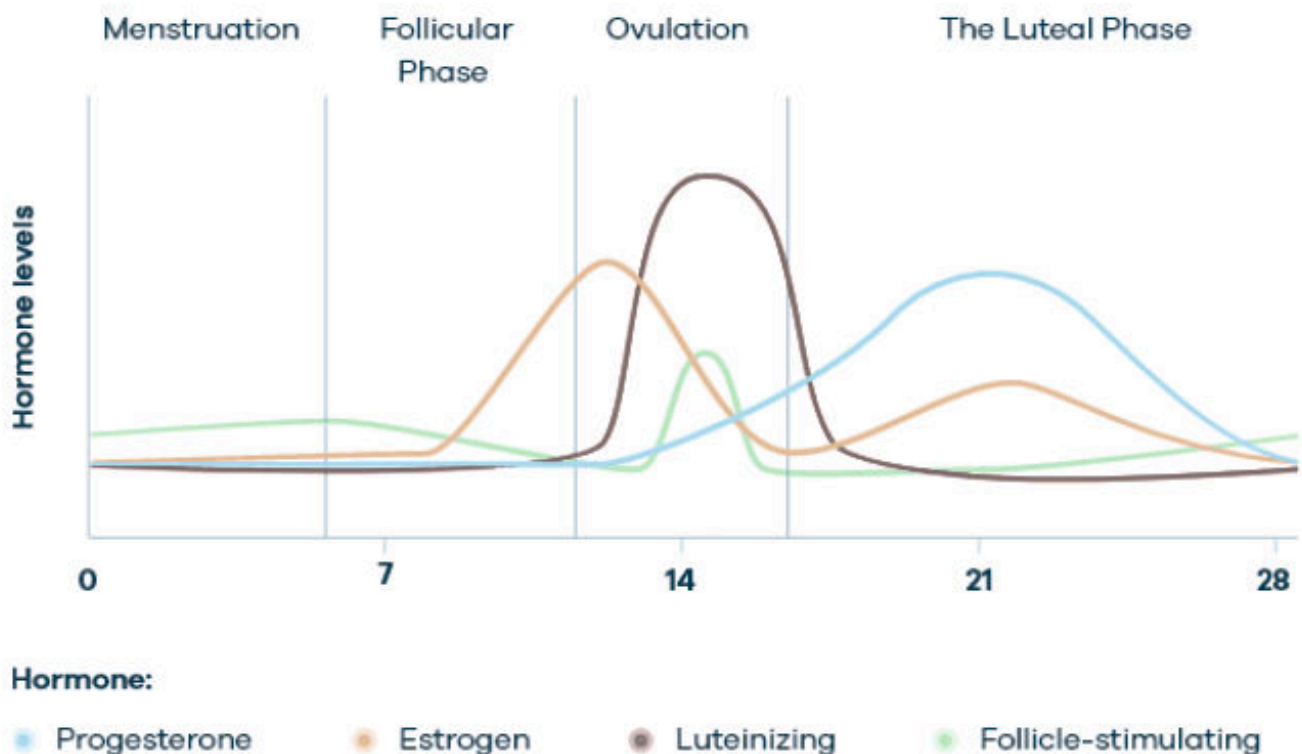
Day 1 is the day your period starts. It can last anywhere between 6-8 days. After your period ends, estrogen levels begin to increase and your brain messages for ovulation to begin which releases a mature egg.

Ovulation: Days 14-16

An increase in luteinizing hormone triggers the release of the egg. *Testosterone levels increase around ovulation as well contributing to increased libido and mood changes.

Luteal Phase: Days 15-28

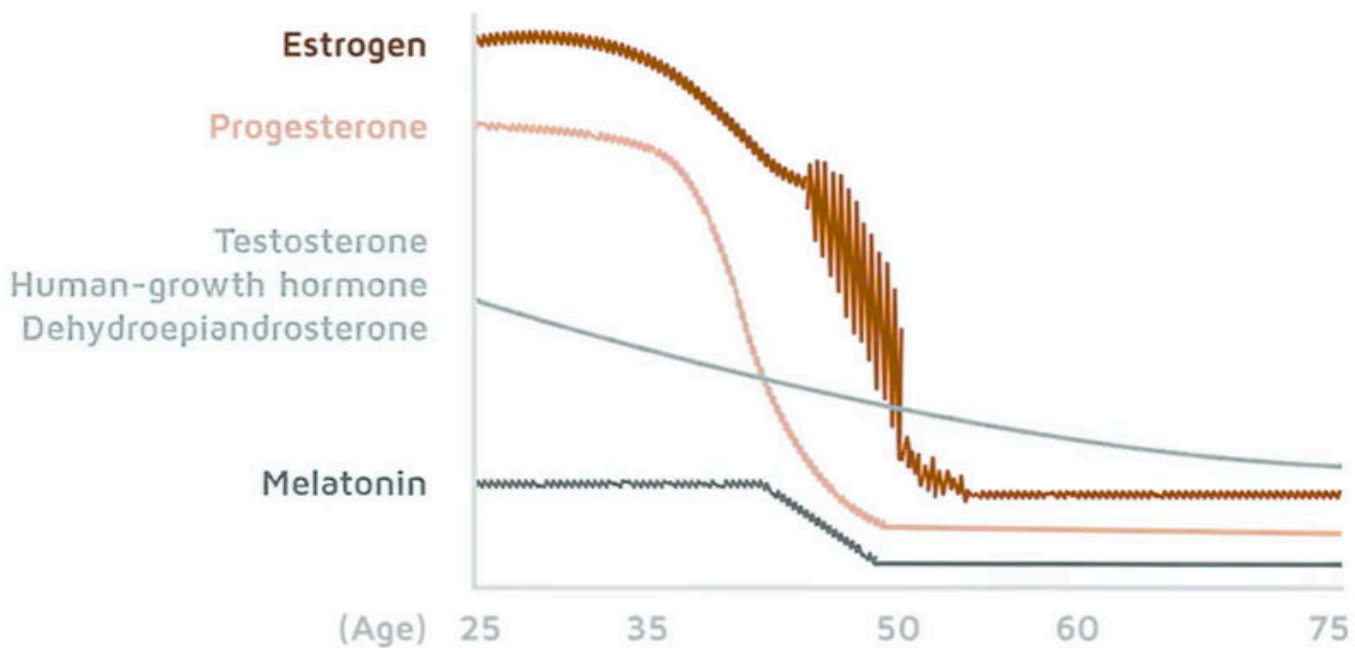
By this time, estrogen and luteinizing hormone have dropped and progesterone begins to increase in order to support a potential pregnancy. If no pregnancy occurs then both estrogen and progesterone drop. The shedding of the lining begins, thus bleeding starts again on day 1.



HORMONE FLUCTUATIONS

During Perimenopause

THE AGE-RELATED DECLINE OF HORMONES



Perimenopause

“Peri” means “around” or “about” and refers to the years surrounding the transition to menopause, also known as “the menopausal transition”. It can start as early as your mid to late thirties and last anywhere from four to twelve years. You may not notice you are in this phase as symptoms may be mild, however, in most women, the symptoms intensify as you get closer to menopause, usually the last 4-5 years of perimenopause. During perimenopause, you still have periods even if they are irregular, so you can still get pregnant.

Menopause

Once you’ve gone twelve consecutive months without a period, you are officially in menopause, everything after that is considered “post-menopause”. The average age of natural menopause is fifty-one, but there is a lot of individual variation as many factors contribute to the age a woman experiences menopause.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

During Perimenopause

As you move through perimenopause, your body begins to shift from a fertile, reproductive state into a new hormonal rhythm. These changes are completely natural, but they can cause noticeable effects - physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Hormone Fluctuations:

Your hormones - especially estrogen and progesterone - don't simply decline steadily. Instead, they can rise and fall unpredictably during this transition.

- **Estrogen:** May spike higher than usual, then suddenly drop
 - → This can trigger mood swings, heavy periods, and breast tenderness
- **Progesterone:** Often declines first (especially when you skip ovulation)
 - → This can lead to anxiety, poor sleep, and shorter cycles

Think of perimenopause as a hormonal rollercoaster > not a gentle slope.

How These Changes Affect You:

These shifting hormone levels influence many systems in your body. You may notice changes like:

- *Brain + Mood:* Brain fog, irritability, memory lapses, or feeling “off”
- *Sleep Patterns:* Trouble falling or staying asleep, night waking
- *Metabolism:* Weight gain around the belly, blood sugar swings
- *Muscles + Bones:* Changes in strength, more aches or stiffness
- *Libido + Skin:* Vaginal dryness, changes in sex drive, drier skin
- *Cycle Changes:* Shorter, longer, or missed periods; heavier or lighter flow

These aren't random symptoms, they're signals from your body.

Why It's Not Just About Your Period: A Systemic Impact

Even if your period still seems “normal,” you may already be in perimenopause. Hormonal shifts during this phase affect far more than just your menstrual cycle. These changes can influence everything from your stress response to how your body functions on a deeper level. Estrogen and other key hormones play a protective role in major systems—including cardiovascular, neurological, and skeletal health—helping to regulate blood flow, support brain function, and maintain bone density. Read more at [The Pause Life](https://www.balancedwell-being.com).



NATURAL SUPPORT

How to Support Your Body Naturally

Your body is incredibly wise. And during perimenopause, it's working hard to adapt to new hormonal rhythms. You can support this transition with simple, sustainable habits that reduce stress on your system and help you feel more balanced day to day.

#1 - Focus on Blood Sugar Balance

Hormonal shifts can make your blood sugar more sensitive, leading to crashes that affect your mood, sleep, and cravings.

What to do:

- Eat protein + healthy fats with every meal (including snacks)
- Don't skip meals > especially breakfast
- Avoid sugary "pick-me-ups" (opt for protein-rich snacks instead)
- Add fiber-rich veggies to help slow sugar absorption

➡ Balanced blood sugar = more steady energy, fewer mood swings, and better hormone communication.

#2 - Prioritize Nutrient-Dense, Anti-Inflammatory Foods

Your body needs extra nourishment to manage inflammation and rebuild hormone pathways.

Supportive foods include:

- Leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables (like broccoli, kale)
- Colorful berries and antioxidant-rich produce
- Wild-caught fish, pasture-raised meats, eggs
- Olive oil, flax, chia seeds, avocado
- Bone broth, fermented foods (unless sensitive to histamines)

➡ Think: whole foods, lots of color, healthy fats, and clean protein.



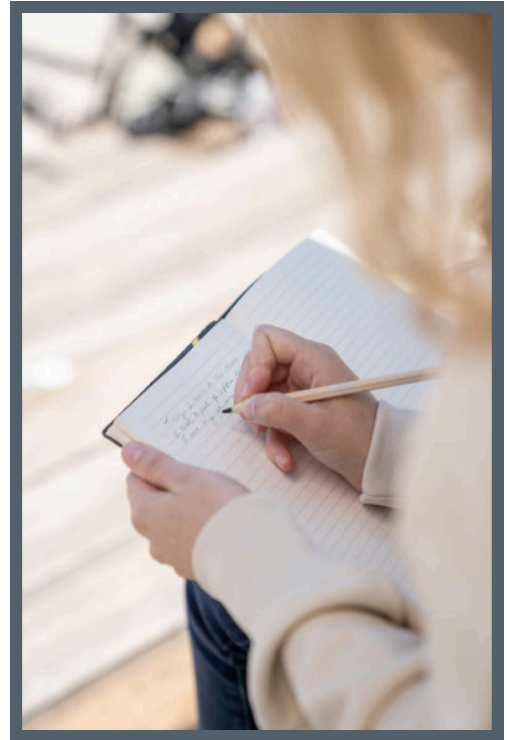
#3 - Lower Your Daily Stress Load

During perimenopause, your stress response becomes more sensitive, and your adrenal glands (which produce backup hormones) may need more support.

Ways to help:

- Get 7-9 hours of quality sleep
- Take regular breaks (even 5 minutes counts)
- Try gentle movement like walking, stretching, yoga
- Practice breathwork, journaling, or simply doing less
- Limit caffeine, especially on an empty stomach

➡ Reducing stress is one of the most powerful things you can do for your hormones.



#4 - Hydrate & Support Detox Pathways

Hormone balance is linked to how well your body eliminates waste - including excess hormones.

Tips:

- Drink half your body weight in ounces of water per day
- Support your liver with cruciferous vegetables, dandelion tea, and lemon water
- Aim for daily bowel movements - fiber and hydration help!

SUPPORTIVE SUPPLEMENTS

While no supplement can “fix” perimenopause, the right ones can help you feel more supported, nourished, and in tune with your body during this phase. These options are widely used to promote balance, improve energy, and ease some of the more frustrating symptoms of hormone shifts. Prioritize getting these nutrients through whole foods first and then use supplements to fill the gaps.

➡ **Always consult your healthcare provider before starting a new supplement, especially if you take medication or have a known medical condition.**

Magnesium

Why it may help: Supports mood, sleep, muscle relaxation, and blood sugar regulation.

- Common forms: Magnesium glycinate (for relaxation), citrate (for digestion), or threonate (for brain support)
- Dosage: ~200–400 mg/day, ideally in the evening

✓ Great for calming the nervous system and improving sleep quality.

B Vitamins

Why they may help: B vitamins are essential for energy production, brain function, mood regulation, and hormone metabolism.

- Look for a B-complex or individual support based on needs
- Prefer methylated forms (like methyl-B12 or methyl-folate) for better absorption

✓ Helpful for fatigue, irritability, and brain fog.

Adaptogens

Why they may help: Adaptogens are herbs that support the body's stress response and adrenal function. Speak with your practitioner to find the right option for you.

- *Ashwagandha*: calming, good for anxiety/sleep
- *L-theanine*: calming, good for anxiety/sleep
- *Rhodiola*: energizing, good for fatigue
- *Maca*: may help with mood, libido, and energy



Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Why they may help: Anti-inflammatory, supports brain health, mood, skin, and hormone production.

- Aim for 1,000–2,000 mg EPA + DHA daily
 - Choose high-quality, purified sources
- ✓ Helpful for mood swings, joint pain, and mental clarity.

DHEA

Why it's included: DHEA is a hormone that naturally declines with age. Low levels can contribute to fatigue, mood swings, and lower libido.

- Low-dose DHEA (typically 5–15 mg daily) is sometimes used to support adrenal function and hormonal balance
- Important: This should only be used under practitioner supervision, with lab testing if possible

⚠ DHEA is a hormone and should not be self-prescribed. Work with a trusted provider to test & assess if it's right for you.

Vitamin D₃ + K₂

Why it may help: Your body makes vitamin D₃ naturally from sunlight, especially afternoon sun exposure on bare skin (without sunscreen, for ~10–20 minutes depending on skin tone and location)

- However, many women still don't get enough sunlight, especially in cooler seasons or if mostly indoors
- A low-dose supplement (1,000–2,000 IU daily) of vitamin D₃ with K₂ can help support healthy levels and improve calcium absorption

✓ Prioritize a little afternoon sunlight when possible, then use supplements to fill the gap if needed.

➡ **Note:** Supplements can offer meaningful support, but they aren't a one-size-fits-all solution. It's important to choose high-quality products, listen to your body, and work with a trusted practitioner for personalized guidance. Some supplements may interact with medications or underlying health conditions. Always verify brands with a third party testing organization for safety and purity.



MOVEMENT, MINDSET & SLEEP

Creating a Lifestyle That Supports Hormonal Harmony

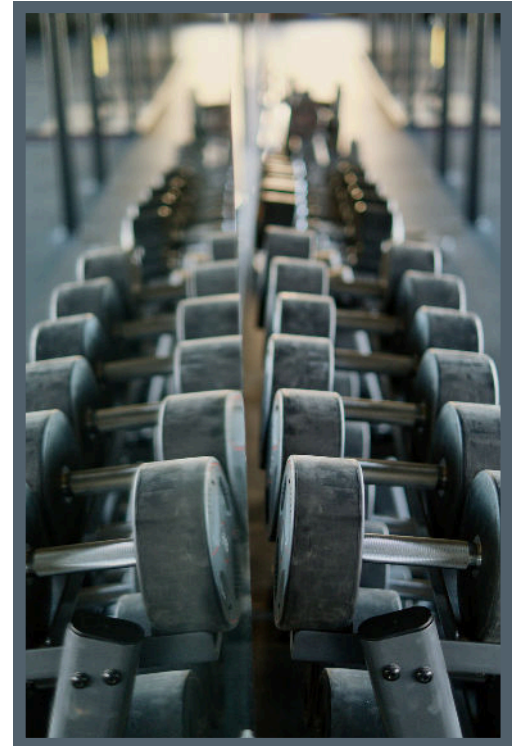
Hormonal shifts during perimenopause don't just affect your physical body - they impact your mood, motivation, sleep, and energy. *The good news?* Your daily habits can make a powerful difference. Movement, mindset, and rest are non-negotiable pillars that help your body adapt more smoothly to these changes.

Move with Intention

You don't have to push harder, you just need to move smarter.

- Strength training (2–4x/week) helps preserve muscle mass, protect bones, and support metabolic health.
- Gentle movement like yoga, walking, or mobility work helps regulate cortisol and calm the nervous system.
- Mix it up. The goal is to feel energized, not drained. Variety is your best friend in this phase.

✓ *Tip:* If you're feeling wired or depleted after a workout, try lowering the intensity and prioritizing recovery.



Mindset & Emotional Wellness

Perimenopause often brings emotional shifts: mood swings, irritability, and overwhelm. These are signals from your body and it's helpful to be aware of them so you can better deal with them.

- *Self-compassion is a must.* This is a season for deep self-awareness and grace.
- Try *journaling or mindfulness* to track patterns, vent emotions, and reconnect with yourself.
- *Reduce overstimulation* (screens, caffeine, packed schedules) to give your brain breathing room.
- You're not "*losing it*" - you're recalibrating. You deserve tools and support that help you thrive. Surround yourself with a community of trusted women or seek counseling when needed.



Sleep Is a Superpower

Sleep disruptions are one of the most common perimenopause complaints - and one of the most crucial things to address. Even sleep experts recognize the sleep changes that occur during perimenopause.

- *Create a wind-down routine:* dim lights, avoid screens, and keep the bedroom cool and dark
- *Get morning and afternoon sunlight* to support circadian rhythm
- Consider *natural sleep aids* (like magnesium, calming teas, or adaptogens) if needed
- *Aim for 7-9 hours of restful sleep.* Prioritizing sleep is not lazy - it's foundational to your health.

Habit Stacking Ideas for Real Life

Small steps, layered consistently, lead to big results. Here are a few simple ways to weave perimenopause-supportive habits into your daily life:

Trigger Habit:		Stack with:		Why It Helps:
Morning coffee/tea	_____	Step outside for 5-10 mins for sunlight	_____	Boosts mood and supports natural melatonin production later
Brush teeth at night	_____	Once finished, do 5 deep belly breaths or a short gratitude list	_____	Calms nervous system and improves sleep onset
Lunch Break	_____	Take a 10-minute walk outside	_____	Supports insulin sensitivity and mood
Logging off work	_____	Do 15 minutes of light strength training or stretching	_____	Builds muscle and eases stress hormones
Watching TV	_____	Sit on the floor and stretch	_____	Increases mobility and signals your body it's safe to relax



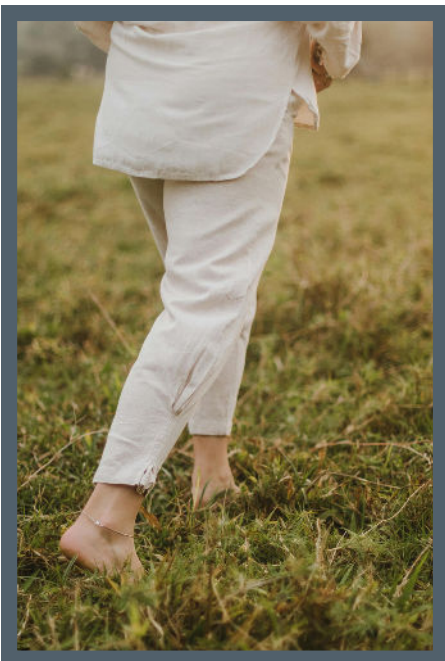
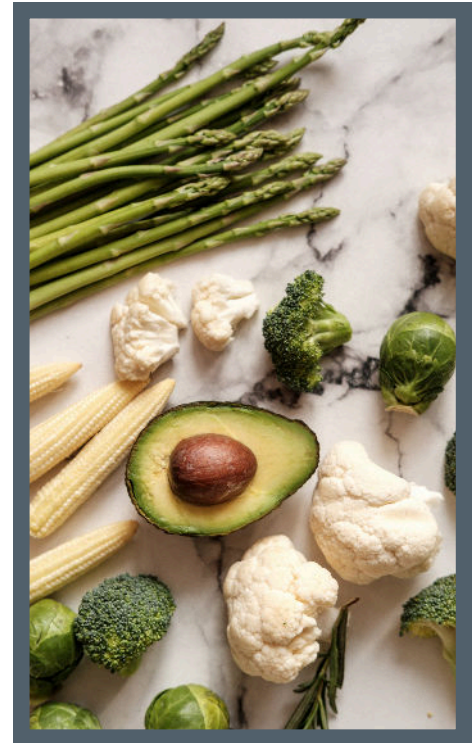
PERIMENOPAUSE

Action Plan

You don't need to do it all at once. Start with a few of these steps that feel doable, and build from there. Small, consistent habits create lasting change. *TIP:* Circle 2–3 items below that you feel confident starting with. Add more as you feel ready!

#1: Nutrition

- ☐ Eat a protein-rich breakfast (25–35g protein)
- ☐ Balance each meal with protein, healthy fats, and fiber
- ☐ Add 1–2 servings of colorful vegetables to every meal
- ☐ Reduce refined sugar and processed foods
- ☐ Stay hydrated with water, herbal teas, or broth

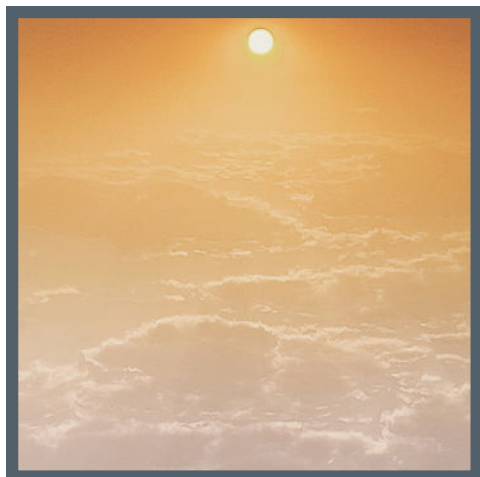


#2: Movement

- ☐ Move your body daily (even gentle walks count!)
- ☐ Incorporate strength training 2–3x per week
- ☐ Add stretching or mobility work to your evening routine

#3: Mindset & Stress

- Practice 5 minutes of daily mindfulness, gratitude, or deep breathing
- Set boundaries to protect your energy
- Create moments of joy or stillness throughout your day
- Create or join a sisterhood of like-minded women to share support and empowerment during this phase



#4: Sleep & Rhythm

- Get morning sunlight within an hour of waking
- Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep nightly
- Reduce screen time at night and wind down mindfully

#5: Supplements (as appropriate)

- Talk to your practitioner about magnesium, vitamin D3 + K2, omega-3s, or and/or adaptogens
- Track how you feel and adjust as needed

