

Exercise Away Menopause Changes

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This article describes how many of the disturbing changes brought about by menopause can be relieved and sometimes even prevented by exercise.

Here are the changes and conditions that exercise can treat...

* **Hot flashes.** By improving circulation, exercise can make your body more tolerant of temperature extremes that hot flashes bring on.

* **Mood changes.** Exercise increases your sense of well-being. It can make you feel stronger, more self-assured, and even make you look better. Exercise also promotes deep, restful sleep and can counteract sleeping problems that you may have. Just don't exercise strenuously right before you go to bed. Instead, gentle stretches, Yoga or a stroll outside can be beneficial to bring on sleep.

* **Heart disease.** Your risk for developing heart disease increases after menopause, but exercise can lower blood pressure and raise the level of good cholesterol, protecting you and your heart. It can also help you lose weight, taking some stress off your heart, joints and all other body systems.

* **Osteoporosis.** Weight-bearing exercise such as walking, dancing, weight-lifting, step aerobics, biking, even kick boxing can keep your muscles and bones healthy. This kind of movement prevents bone loss and can strengthen your back and hips, helping you maintain flexibility so you feel and look younger. To protect your joints, do low impact exercises (no running or jogging or bouncing up and down).

Exercise does other good things for you after menopause. It can strengthen your endocrine system so that your adrenal glands and ovaries function more efficiently. It may also increase the amount of estrogen and other hormones in your blood. It can help you lose weight and tone up if you're overweight.

Be sure to build exercise into your daily activities. You only need to exercise 20-30 minutes to reap all these benefits. Make a resolution to exercise daily. Start slow and consult with your health care professional if you haven't exercised before.

Treat yourself to exercise. You're worth it!