



week

Seven

Reframing Your Thinking

Aims

- To start to overcome unhelpful thinking
- To find strategies to change habits

Be Constructive

Unhelpful thought	Bridge	Constructive thought
I can't cope, it's all falling apart	hold on	I choose to focus on what's within my control
I'm not good enough	that's not true	I am enough
I'm useless and a waste of space	stop	I am valuable and worthy

Habits and Weight Gain

- We form habits and behaviours which affect how we feel emotionally.
- Increased convenience has led to habits where we are eating more and moving less – meaning weight gain is so much easier than ever before.

Write Your Goals and Reasons Down

Why do you want to lose weight? What are the benefits? Write your reasons down. Make sure you review your goals and reasons regularly.



Are You Eating Mindfully?

- Chew your food more.
- Put your knife and fork down between bites.
- Remove distractions - TV, phone or work!
- Eat with your family or friends.
- Think about the taste, smell and look of your food - savour the moment.

Mindful eating slows down the speed you eat at, allowing your body time to signal whether it's full or not.

Why Do We Eat Too Much or Too Quickly?

- Humans used to be hunter-gatherers.
- Nature never intended for you to live beyond 40.
- We're programmed to survive by gathering lots of food to eat. We haven't quite evolved enough yet to suit our greater food availability.

It's okay Not to Finish A Meal

- Halfway through your meal, you might realise you're not be hungry anymore – stop!
- Take a moment and ask yourself 'Am I hungry?'
- You can always save the food for later when you're hungry again.

Identify Your Triggers

- What's happened in the day to cause you to want to eat?
- Is it a sudden or slow burning trigger?
- Is it a situation or a person?
- How can you change how you react?
Create an action plan response on page 44.



Change Your View

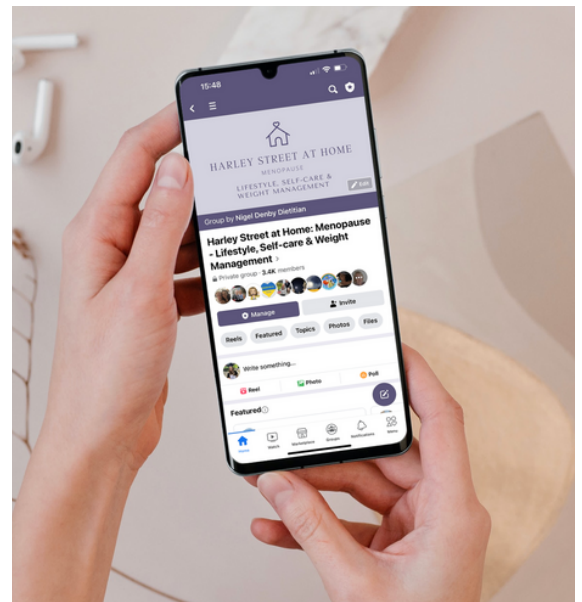
- People don't notice the 'imperfections' you're focused on. Distance yourself from negative assumptions. Are you basing this idea on how you're feeling today?
- Other people don't take joy from talking negatively about you.
- Worst case scenario – someone notices an 'imperfection'. So what? How is this going to impact you in a week's time?

Think Long Term

- Perhaps eating a certain food makes you feel good in the short term, but how will you feel in the long term?
- Is it an emotional hunger? Address this to help prevent overeating and entering a cycle of guilt.
- How else can you feel better?

Find Support

- Find support for any challenges and successes.
- Share your thoughts on the Facebook group.
- Helping others can help yourself.
- Build an 'emotional first aid kit' using our emotional wellbeing resources.



Write Down Your Thoughts From This Session



Using
Exercise To

Regulate
Your Mood

Using Exercise To Regulate Your Mood

If you're in perimenopause, chances are you may be experiencing hot flashes, weight gain, mood swings, sleep disturbances and other symptoms. And while exercise may be the last thing you want to do, there are lots of reasons why it really should be your first line of defence.

Everyone knows exercise is good for the body, but it also has huge benefits for your mental health, too. Menopausal symptoms can often be distressing. The combination of physical and mental symptoms due to changing hormone levels can negatively impact our quality of life. This can lead lots of women to withdraw due to depression, embarrassment over bodily changes like weight gain or incontinence, or low energy. But exercise can be a great way to reduce this stress and help women to cope with their changing bodies, thereby improving their quality of life.



Exercise promotes endorphins, the feel-good hormones which help boost your mood and are great at helping to combat the mild-to-moderate depression that hits many of us during perimenopause and menopause. Also, exercise and endorphins suppress cortisol, the stress hormone that can keep us in an elevated state of fight-or-flight during the menopause transition. High, long-term stress and anxiety have all sorts of down-stream effects on our bodies and minds and can worsen many menopause symptoms, but just 20 minutes of aerobic exercise can help pull cortisol back to manageable levels.

So, whether you choose to walk it off, run it off, swim it off, or stretch it out, there's enormous healing power in movement.



Other Benefits

Regular exercise can also help you sleep better and aid in weight management, both of which can make you feel healthier and happier. Exercise can be a really social activity, too, and being with other people is really good for our brains and our spirits. A small study of 23 healthy post-menopausal women showed a clinically significant improvement in anxiety, depression, health worries, and quality of life with exercise. The women, who were not active prior to the study, took on a six-week walking program, completing roughly 15 hours of exercise over the course of the study.

And while exercise can wear us out and help us to sleep better, it also strengthens our energy reserves. Start slowly, if exercise isn't part of your daily routine now, but over time, your body will adjust to the higher energy demand by producing more and working more efficiently. And having the energy to do what we love is key to emotional wellness.



Exercise For The Person You Are Now

However, a common mistake that women make when they hit their 40s is to continue to employ the same workout strategies that they used in the 20s and 30s. However we need to get more intelligent and efficient with our exercise and fitness routines as we get older, and definitely NOT give up!

If you don't do so already, it's worth adding some restorative exercise to your week. As the symptoms of menopause can make you feel stressed and tense it is nice to incorporate some more relaxing exercises into your routine. Supportive and restorative yoga poses can offer your mind and body relief from tensions and help to calm your nervous system by centring your mind, helping you to switch off and relax (which can be a lifesaver if you aren't sleeping properly). Yoga and meditation can also help reduce menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, irritability, and fatigue.

Similarly, stretching is often overlooked as part of a fitness routine but it's vitally important as you get older. In one study, stretching for 10 minutes before bedtime helped menopausal women to reduce symptoms, compared to women who did no stretching at all before going to bed. Participants self-reported that their psychological symptoms such as anxiety, mood swings and sleep problems improved.

The Bottom Line

Regular, moderate exercise improves mood. But you must stick with it, so find an exercise that you enjoy and that you can do regularly and ease into it. Doing too much too soon will soon have you finding excuses to miss sessions. Start from where you are; do more today than you did yesterday. Adding just 20-30 minutes a day can be enough to see benefits, but if 5 minutes is what you've got in you today, that's 5 minutes your body and mind will appreciate.

And remember the end goal: to support your emotional well-being through a trying time. How you do that is up to you.

- How do you find exercise affects your mood?
- Do you feel better after moving?
- Which movement makes you feel calmer? More energetic?

Don't forget to let us know how you're getting on!

Answer The Above Questions Here

How do you find exercise affects your mood?

Do you feel better after moving?

Which movement makes you feel calmer? More energetic?