

# Stronger in Midlife: Menopause-Aware Coaching for Personal Trainers

You train real people, not just muscles. Many of the women you work with are somewhere between their late 30s and mid-50s. For a lot of them, that's the window where perimenopause and menopause show up in the background – through sleep issues, energy crashes, mood changes, weight shifts, joint pain and recovery problems.

You are not expected to be a doctor. You are in a powerful position to notice patterns early, normalise what they're experiencing, adjust training so they feel safe, strong and successful, and encourage medical support when needed.



# Why Are We Talking About Menopause in a Gym Workbook?

For many women, the journey through perimenopause and menopause can significantly impact their physical and mental well-being, often coinciding with the prime years of their professional and personal lives. While medical professionals are crucial for diagnosis and treatment, personal trainers are uniquely positioned to observe subtle shifts and provide crucial support in a gym environment, which can be a safe and empowering space for clients.



## Notice Patterns Early

You spend more consistent, focused time with your clients than almost any other professional in their life. This allows you to recognise subtle yet significant changes in sleep quality, energy levels (e.g., afternoon crashes), mood fluctuations (e.g., increased anxiety or irritability), prolonged recovery times, and shifts in physical performance (e.g., unexplained strength plateaus, difficulty with endurance, persistent joint pain). These early observations can prevent symptoms from becoming overwhelming challenges, as many women might initially dismiss them as general aging or stress.



## Normalise Experiences

Many women navigating perimenopause and menopause feel isolated or believe their symptoms are unique or a sign of personal failing. They might attribute weight gain, mood swings, or fatigue to a lack of discipline. As a trainer, you have the power to help clients understand that what they're experiencing is common, valid, and a natural biological transition that affects approximately 80% of women. By normalising these experiences, you create a safe space for open discussion, reducing stigma and empowering them to seek appropriate support without shame or self-blame. This psychological support is invaluable for their overall well-being.



## Adjust Training

Menopause causes significant hormonal shifts that affect metabolism, bone density, muscle mass, and body composition. Generic training programs may not only be ineffective but potentially harmful. Your role involves modifying exercise programs to align with their changing physiology. This could mean incorporating more strength training to combat sarcopenia and maintain bone density, adjusting intensity to manage fatigue and recovery, reducing high-impact activities if joint pain is an issue, or integrating stress-reducing exercises. By adapting training, clients feel safe, strong, and successful, ensuring continued progress and adherence to their fitness goals throughout their menopause journey, rather than feeling defeated.



## Encourage Support

While you are not a medical doctor, you are a vital bridge to healthcare. Many women receive insufficient information or support from their general practitioners regarding menopause. If you notice persistent or severe symptoms that fall outside your scope, such as severe hot flashes, debilitating fatigue, or significant mental health changes, you can confidently and responsibly guide clients toward appropriate medical professionals. This includes suggesting consultations with menopause specialists, endocrinologists, or pelvic floor physical therapists. Your encouragement can be the catalyst for clients to receive the clinical attention and potential hormonal or non-hormonal therapies they need, ultimately leading to a more holistic and effective approach to managing their symptoms.



## Reflection Questions

**When I hear the word menopause, I think/feel...**

**Right now, my confidence in training women 40+ is:** (Rate yourself 0-10, where 0 = not confident, 10 = very confident)

**One female client I'm thinking of as I read this is:** (Name/initials only)

# Perimenopause & Menopause: Trainer Cheat Sheet

## Perimenopause

The transition phase before menopause where hormones (especially oestrogen and progesterone) fluctuate significantly. Can last several years, often starting in the 40s and sometimes late 30s.

### Common symptoms include:

- Hot flushes that come and go
- Sleep disruptions and changes
- Mood shifts and emotional changes
- Irregular or heavy periods
- Energy fluctuations

Your client might not use the word "menopause" – she'll just say things like "I'm exhausted," "my body's changed," or "nothing works anymore."

## Menopause

Defined as 12 consecutive months without a period. The average age is around 51-52 in many countries, including Australia. After this point, a woman is considered post-menopausal.

### Impact on training:

- Affects energy and motivation
- Changes recovery patterns
- Influences joint health
- Impacts strength and mood

## Research Sources & References

- **Jean Hailes for Women's Health (Australia):** Confirms average menopause age and related health information.
- **Australasian Menopause Society:** Provides comprehensive menopause statistics and symptom guidance.
- **BMC Women's Health (2024):** Features research on the benefits of exercise for managing menopause symptoms.
- **PMC/NIH Research:** Offers extensive studies on perimenopause symptoms and effective exercise interventions.
- **University of Rochester Medical Center:** Details the various benefits of exercise during the menopause transition.

## Exercise: Write down two things you will remember from this page

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

# Your 3 Roles: Notice • Normalise • Navigate

You are not here to fix everything. You are here to partner with your client through this transition with awareness, empathy, and evidence-based adjustments.

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## NOTICE – What's Changing?

Look for patterns in sleep quality (waking at 2-3am, not feeling refreshed), energy levels (more fatigue, especially after sessions), mood changes (more anxious, flat, or teary), recovery time (DOMS hanging around longer, "I feel wrecked"), weight distribution (especially around the middle), and joint pain or new niggles.

02

## NORMALISE – There's a Reason You Feel This Way

**Example scripts:** "Given what you've shared, it makes sense that you feel this way." Or "A lot of women in their 40s and 50s notice similar changes – you're not alone and we can work with this." These simple statements can be incredibly powerful.

03

## NAVIGATE – Adjust and Support

Adjust training load, volume, intensity or exercise selection based on how she's feeling. Encourage consultation with a GP or women's health professional when symptoms warrant medical attention. Keep communication open so she feels safe to share what's really happening.



### Exercise

**Write three signs you've noticed recently in a client that might fit this stage:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Rewrite this sentence in your own words:** "Given what you're going through, it makes sense that you feel this way."

My version: \_\_\_\_\_

# How to Start the Conversation (Without Being Awkward)

Use KAV language – kinaesthetic (feel), auditory (hear), visual (see) – to open up space gently. You're not interrogating, you're inviting honest communication in a safe environment.

## Kinaesthetic Approach

"If your body could talk to you today, what would it say?"

## Auditory Approach

"When you really *listen* to your energy right now, what do you *hear* it saying?"

## Visual Approach

"If your energy after training was a picture today, what would it look like?"

## Supportive Approach

"This is your space. If your body or energy feels different, If anything starts to feel uncomfortable or 'not you', tell me and we'll shape the session around that."



## Exercise: Write Your Own 3 Conversation Starters

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Pick one you will try with a client this week and underline it.

# Know Your Boundaries: When to Refer

You are not a doctor. You can gently suggest a medical check-in when something sounds concerning. Knowing when to refer is just as important as knowing how to train.

## Bleeding Concerns

Very heavy or very irregular bleeding that's significantly different from her normal pattern.

## Cardiovascular Symptoms

New or worsening chest pain, shortness of breath, or heart palpitations during or after exercise.

## Mental Health Changes

Sudden or severe mood changes, feeling hopeless, or any thoughts of self-harm.

## Physical Warning Signs

Dizziness, fainting, pain that doesn't settle, or rapid unexplained weight loss.

**Suggested script:** "Based on what you've shared, it could be really helpful to chat with your GP and mention perimenopause or menopause. You deserve to feel supported and to know what's going on."

## References & Resources for Referral Guidelines

These guidelines are supported by professional and medical research, emphasizing the importance of a holistic approach to client well-being during menopause:

- **Red Flag Symptoms:** The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) provides comprehensive lists of symptoms that warrant medical evaluation, including significant changes in bleeding patterns or severe onset of new symptoms.
- **Scope of Practice:** Guidelines from organizations like the American Council on Exercise (ACE) and the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) delineate the scope of practice for fitness professionals, highlighting the necessity of medical referral for conditions outside this scope.
- **Menopause Symptom Management:** World Health Organization (WHO) and National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines offer evidence-based recommendations for the management and assessment of menopausal symptoms by healthcare professionals.
- **Cardiovascular Risks:** Research published in journals such as "Circulation" and "Menopause" underscores the increased cardiovascular risks post-menopause and the importance of early medical assessment for related symptoms.
- **Mental Health Considerations:** Studies in "Psychological Medicine" and "Journal of Affective Disorders" detail the prevalence of mood changes, anxiety, and depression during perimenopause and menopause, advocating for timely psychological and medical support.

Always encourage clients to consult with their primary healthcare provider for diagnosis and medical advice.

## Exercise: Write your own version of a GP suggestion line that feels natural to you

If you've been noticing some changes in how you're feeling, it might be helpful to have a chat with your GP. They can help you work out if it's related to hormones and what support is available. How do you feel?

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# Simple Training Adjustments (Within Your Scope)

When sleep, energy or symptoms are rough, pushing to the max every session can backfire. Evidence-based guidelines still support regular strength training and cardio in menopause for muscle, bone and heart health, but it needs to be adapted to the person in front of you.



## Exhausted / Not Sleeping

- Slightly reduce load or volume
- Add more rest between sets
- Focus on technique, tempo, and quality of movement
- Shorten the session and finish with a win



## Sore / Joint Niggles

- Lower impact options (e.g. step-ups instead of jumps)
- Longer warm-up and mobility work
- Check technique and range of motion
- Encourage a physio/GP review if pain persists



## On a Heavy Period Week

- Avoid max-effort or high-impact drills
- Focus on walking, core, gentle strength and mobility
- Ask: "What would help you walk out feeling strong today?"

**Power line you can use:** "Let's honour where your body is today and train smart, not just hard."

### Exercise: Fill in the table

If my client is...	I could adjust her session by...
Not sleeping well	_____
Feeling more anxious than usual	_____
Complaining of new knee/hip pain	_____

### Disclaimer

This content is for educational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Always encourage clients to consult with their healthcare provider for personalized medical guidance.

# Case Reflection: "Linda, 49"

## The Scenario

Linda is 49 and has been training with you for 18 months. She used to love heavy leg days; now she seems flat and often cancels last minute.

She says, "I'm doing everything right but my weight isn't moving. I'm so tired."

You notice she's more emotional than usual and sometimes laughs it off with, "I'm just being crazy."

## Reflection Questions

**1. As a trainer, what do you notice here?**

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**2. How could you normalise her experience in one or two sentences?**

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 **3. What is one tweak you could make to her program this week?**

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**4. Would any part of this need a GP referral suggestion? What might you say?**

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# Turn This Into Action

To make this real, choose one small step in each area. You don't have to do everything to make a difference – you just have to start.

## One Question I Will Ask

One question I will ask a client this week is:

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## One Pattern I Will Notice

One pattern I will pay attention to is:

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## One Training Tweak

One training tweak I will try is:


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**Universal truth to keep in mind:** You don't have to do everything to make a difference – you just have to start.

 **Sign:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Notes, Insights & Next Steps

Use this page to jot down anything that stood out or any questions you want to ask your manager or Rachna. Reflection is a powerful tool for integrating new knowledge into your practice.

## Key Insights

What stood out most to me:

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Questions I have:

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## Action Items

Changes I want to make:

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Who I need to talk to:

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## Want More Support?

If you can feel that your clients deserve more than we've had time for in one session, talk to your manager about joining a **Menopause-Aware Coaching Workshop** where we go deeper into programming, scripts and real case studies.

Your commitment to learning this material shows you're the kind of trainer who truly cares about making a difference in your clients' lives.

# Dear Gym Trainers,

## Work With Me!

Rachna is a highly qualified coach, extensively trained as an Emotional Integration Practitioner, in Attachment Theory, MD™ Interventions, and Quantum Healing from ICI, bringing a wealth of expertise to guide your transformation.



[Book your free clarity call for your life or self-love journey!](#)

You play an incredibly important role in supporting midlife women through their transitions. Your guidance and expertise are invaluable as they navigate significant changes in their bodies and lives.

**It's Your Calling:** Just as you empower others, it's vital to nurture yourselves. If you find yourself in need of coaching for your own life transition or self-love journey, reach out to me. I'm here to help you navigate your unique challenges, reclaim your calm, and rise into the woman you were always meant to be, so you can continue to lead and inspire.

[Book your free clarity call for your life or self-love journey!](#)

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to your clients and for considering your own well-being on this transformative path.

With understanding and positivity,

Passionately yours, Rachna

Founder, TransformWithRachna



Disclaimer: This content is for educational purposes only and is not intended as the only recommended approach.