Menopause Resolutions to Get You Through the Year

by AFRA WILLMORE

New Year’s Resolutions for Every Menopausal Woman

I was chatting with a friend the other day, comparing our menopause experiences, and we both agreed that sometimes it feels like we have been lost control of our own bodies and minds.

We decided we should do our best to elbow the menopausal madwoman out of the way and take back the steering wheel to save our sanity and restore a more harmonious lifestyle this year.

Yes, yes I know, everyone always plans to change their life in the New Year but hopefully you will agree that these suggested New Year’s resolutions are both quite easy to keep and totally worth the effort!

Keep Calm

If you are occasionally possessed by the menopausal rage that leaves you moody, unpredictable, and frankly at times quite scary, resolve to recognize and deal with meltdown situations better.

My friend and I both agreed we can usually hear ourselves being screechy and unreasonable and recognize our anger is motivated less by our partner or children’s minor infractions and more by fluctuating hormone levels.

Yes, he forgot to put the garbage out, or she left her shoes by the door again, but do they really deserve the type of dressing down usually reserved for offences punishable by life imprisonment?

As soon as you realize you are being unreasonable, stop, apologize and explain. It may be embarrassing but the people who love you would rather you did that then rant on just to save face.

Stopping sooner might prevent hurtful things being said in the heat of the moment which can be hard for your loved ones (or work colleagues!) to forget.

Work out ways to minimize the chance of a meltdown by tackling trigger points. Maybe keep a snack in your bag if low blood sugar makes you moody.

Get More Sleep

Maybe it’s sleep deprivation opening the door to release your inner demon? There are lots of resolutions you can make to help improve the length and quality of sleep.

The simplest solution to try is just to make sure you get to bed at a reasonable time, and avoid stimulants like caffeine and too much screen time.

If your mattress is years old, consider getting a new one, and remember to change pillows frequently before they

become more mite than filling!

Use sheets made from natural or breathable fabrics and if you wear pajamas, natural fabrics like cotton is best for these too, especially if you suffer from night sweats.

Exercise

It's a New Year tradition for people to take up exercise and adopt a healthy eating plan. Along with helping to tone up and stay trim, these two changes can actually help your sleep.

Regular weight bearing exercise can also help maintain muscle mass, which often deteriorates during menopause.

Next page: learning to relax and eat well this year as a part of your menopause resolutions.

Exercise

Weight-bearing training is also excellent for maintaining bone strength, which is vital as the risk of osteoporosis increases dramatically as estrogen levels fall.

Don't worry — I'm not talking about building mega-muscles with heavy weight lifting, just incorporate exercises using small dumbbells, free weights or resistance bands into your workout at home or in the gym.

Eat Well

Hormones are renowned for affecting women's eating habits. I don't care what the studies say, most women I know admit that hormone fluctuations make them crave carbs, chocolate and other comfort foods, even after the end of regular menstruation.

When you are feeling well, stock your cupboards with healthy snacks and limit the amount of junk food you buy. Don't use your children or partner as an excuse for having them in the house — you will all feel healthier (and your dentist will be poorer) if you limit carbonated drinks, cookies and candy.

Don't go grocery shopping when you are tired or hungry — you will end up throwing convenience food and junk in your cart. Consider online shopping for food to prevent impulse buys and take away the stress of the parking lot and checkout.

Relax

Give yourself official permission to relax. Mood-swings, exhaustion, depression and sleep issues can all be exacerbated by a failure to take time for yourself.

You may still be very busy with children, elderly parents or work, and think you have no time for yourself. It might seem selfish to take time out for yourself but your family and colleagues will benefit if you are calmer and happier.

If necessary schedule in "me time" or sign up for a yoga, meditation, Pilates or tai chi class, which can equip you with vital tools for staying relaxed no matter how hectic or stressful life gets.

You could combine your relaxation time with making it date night, or family time as long as you do something that is not too taxing for you, or creates more stress organizing than it's worth.

Hang up Your Superwoman Cape

What I mean by this is learn to be more realistic about what you can achieve given the time and energy you have.

On one hand it’s important to be getting more exercise, eating healthier food, and keeping calm even when stress levels are high, but on the other hand it’s important to stay realistic about what you can achieve.

If your New Year’s resolutions are to last past January, you should maybe take it slowly and change one thing at a time.

Accept failure as a challenge not as a reason to berate yourself and give up. So you lost your temper, missed a yoga class and ate an entire pack of chocolate chip cookies. That’s fine — just renew your resolve and treat each day as a new opportunity to be a happier, healthier version of yourself.