

www.stylinglifeot.com

Occupational Therapy, Image and (Me)nopause

Jo Gaffney



Overview

Occupational Therapy, Image and (Me)nopause

Part One

- Introduction to me
- Introduction to menopause

Part Two

- Managing your own menopause experience

Part Three

- Supporting menopause management

Part Four

- Resources
- References



Who am I?

Occupational Therapist
Practice Educator
Image Consultant
Business Owner
An interest in menopause
And personally.....

The NHS logo is displayed in white, bold, italicized capital letters on a dark blue rectangular background. The letters are closely spaced and have a slight shadow effect.

"Your career is like a garden. It can hold an assortment of life's energy that yields a bounty for you. You do not need to grow just one thing in your garden. You do not need to do just one thing in your career."—Jennifer Ritchie Payette

Peri- menopausal career change



Peri- menopausal career change

“Research shows that 10 per cent of women leave their jobs, and many more are reducing their hours or passing up promotions, because of their menopausal symptoms.”

NHS Employers (2024)

What is Image Consultancy?



Colour Analysis

Colour Science

Skin tone

Psychology

Confidence

Why blend in when you were born to stand out?



What is Image Consultancy?

Personal Styling

Personality

Lifestyle

Body shape

Holistic

Empowering

Person-centred

Look good, feel good, do good!

“Since I hit menopause.....”

My belly is huge

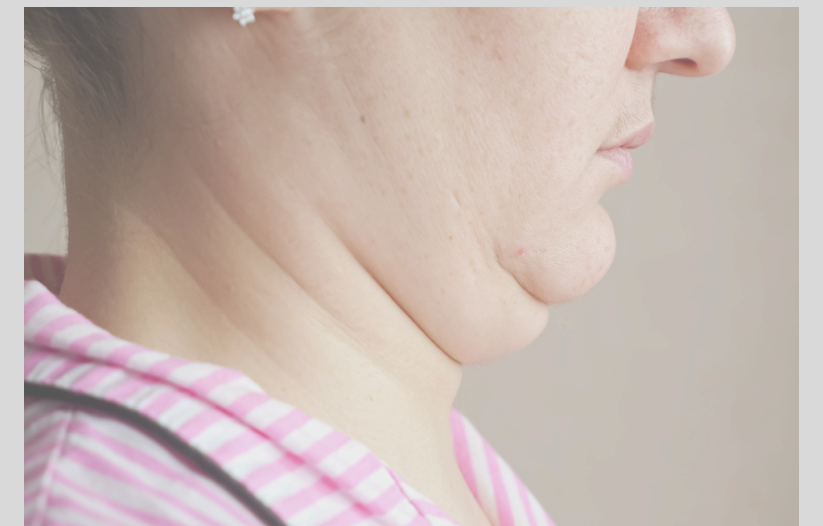
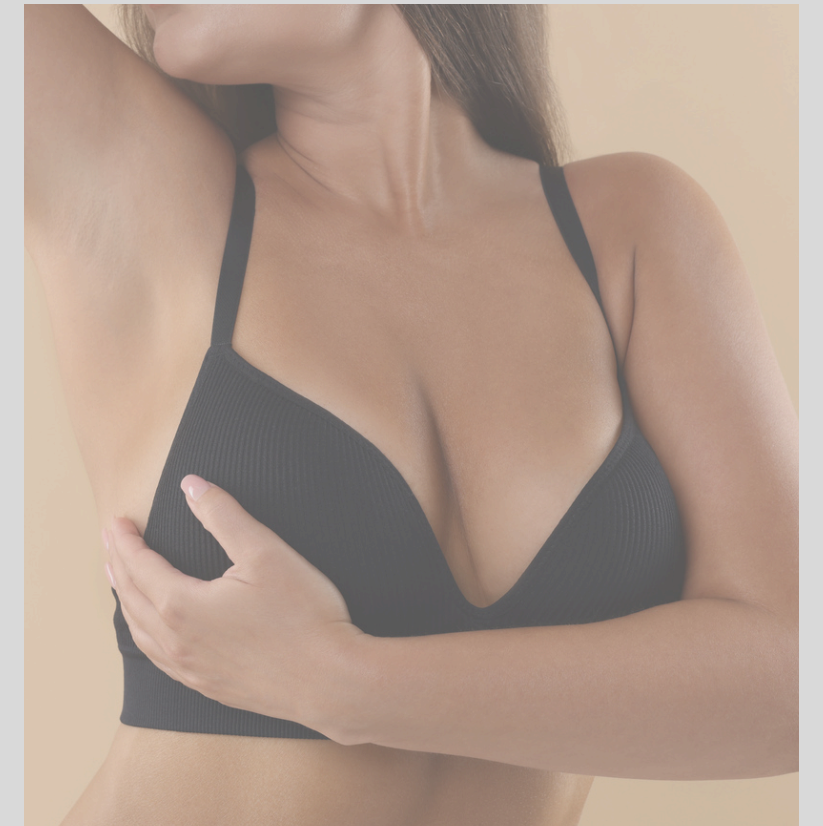
My boobs have spread

I've grown an extra chin

I feel invisible

I don't know who I am anymore

Won't I look like mutton dressed as lamb?



Identity and menopause

“Negative body image is common amongst menopausal women and has been found to have adverse effects.....(focusing on body image) is especially important for women's emotional well-being and is likely influenced by societal norms and beliefs regarding body shape and size.”

Vincent et al (2023)

Introduction to menopause



Introduction to menopause

4 stages

Pre-menopause

Peri-menopause

Menopause

Post menopause

What is menopause?

- Natural biological process (hormone deficiency)
- Hormone levels deplete gradually over time
- Average age 45 - 55
- Can start from 35
- Youngest known case - 11
- Oldest known cases - early 60s
- It's inevitable!

What is
menopause?

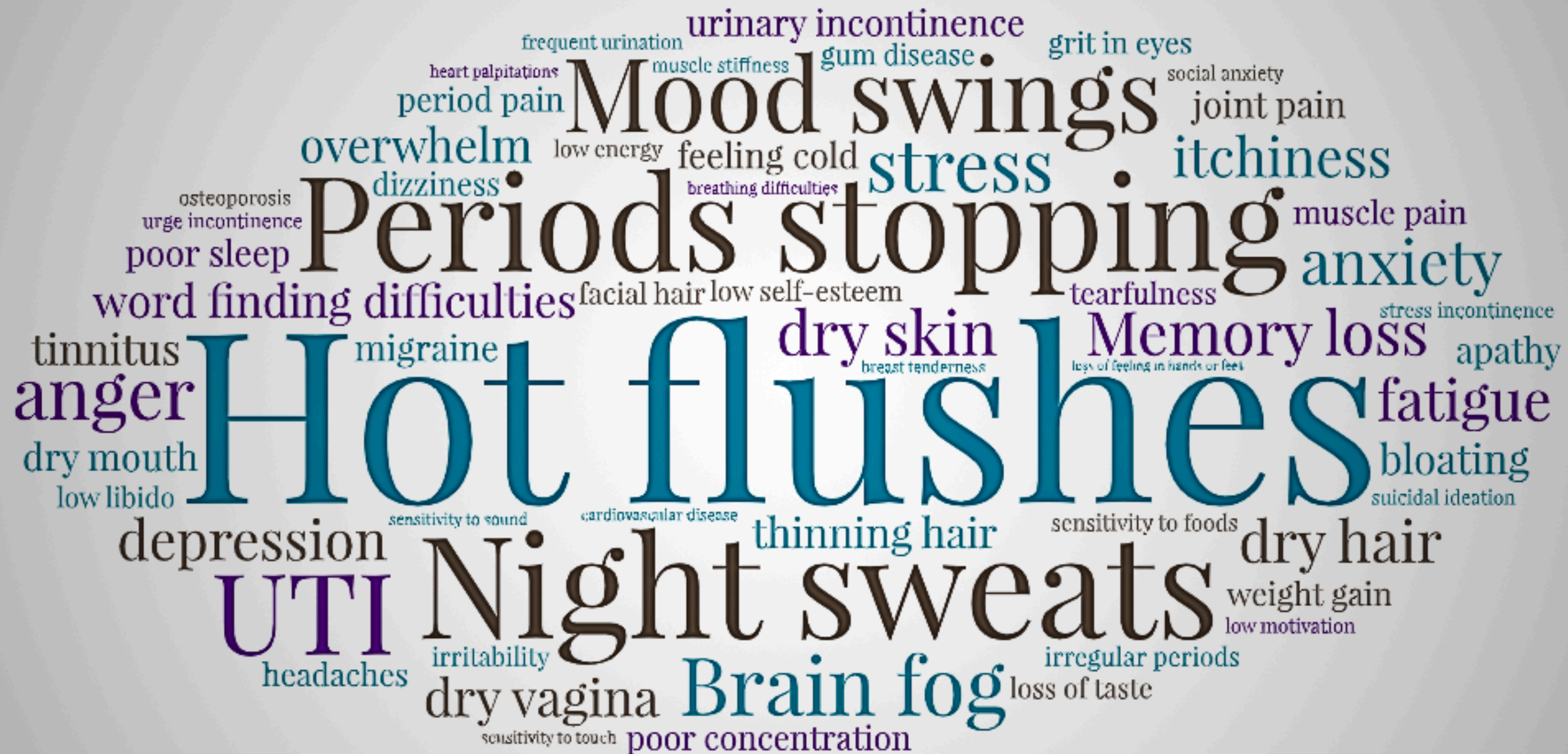
How many symptoms do you
think there are?

What is menopause?

How many symptoms do you
think there are?

0

Signs and Symptoms



Let's talk about hormones

Oestrogen
Progesterone
Testosterone

The influence of oestrogen

Brain

- Anti-inflammatory
- Improves blood flow in brain
- Improves mood and reduces anxiety
- Helps with learning
- Body temperature control
- Improves memory and concentration
- Increases levels of other neurotransmitters including dopamine, serotonin, acetylcholine, noradrenaline, melatonin
- Improves sleep
- Increases connections between brain cells
- Improves energy

Heart

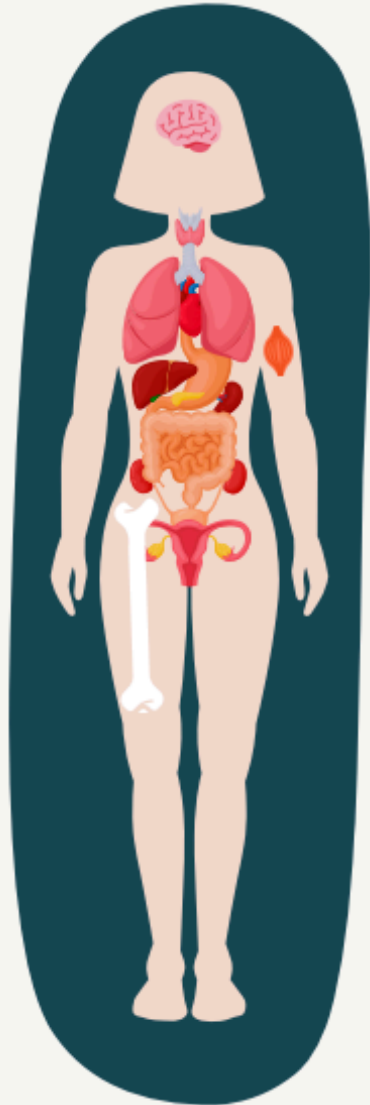
- Controls heart rate
- Keeps endothelium (cells lining interior surface of blood vessels) healthy
- Lowers blood pressure

Liver

- Improves cholesterol regulation
- Improves glucose metabolism
- Increases breakdown of fat
- Improves liver function

Skin

- Increases collagen production
- Reduces moisture loss
- Improves elasticity
- Increases blood supply to skin



balance
by Newson Health

Bones

- Increases bone mineral density
- Reduces inflammation in joints
- Increases muscle strength
- Improves flexibility
- Lubricates joints

Joints and muscles

- Anti-inflammatory
- Muscle strength and flexibility
- Joint lubrication

Bowel

- Maintains function
- Maintains balance of friendly bacteria
- Reduces heartburn

Nerves

- Improves nerve transmission

Bladder

- Reduces risk of infection
- Improves bladder function

Vagina/vulva

- Increases lubrication
- Maintains balance of friendly bacteria in vagina
- Keeps tissues healthy

The influence of testosterone

Eye health

- Improves meibomian gland function and lubrication
- Reduces dry eyes

Cardiovascular health

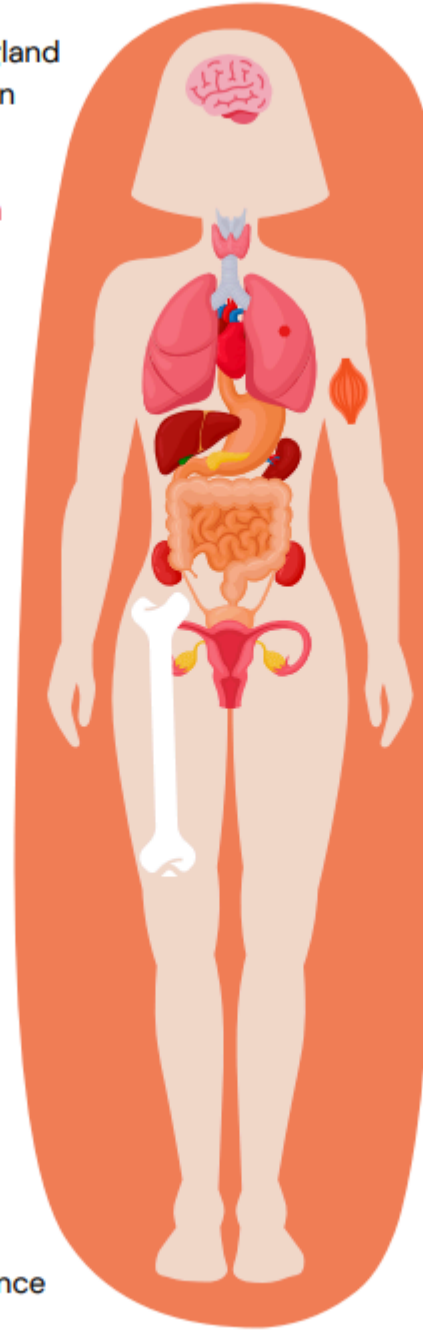
- Lowers triglyceride and cholesterol
- Improves cardiac capacity and output - makes your heart stronger and more efficient
- Improves endothelial function - helps the lining of your blood vessels work better, increasing blood flow

Circulation

- Red blood cell production

Reproductive and sexual function

- Libido, arousal and orgasm
- Urogenital health
- Improves urinary symptoms including urgency and incontinence
- Reduces symptoms related to vaginal dryness and soreness



balance
by Newson Health

Brain function

- Improves concentration
- Improves memory, verbal learning and spatial abilities
- Sleep quality improves

Mood

- Psychological wellbeing
- Improves energy

Muscle

- Improves muscle mass and strength

Metabolism

- Maintains normal metabolic function (blood pressure, lipids, glucose metabolism)

Bone health

- Increased bone mineral density

Bladder

- Reduces risk of infection
- Improves bladder function

Vagina/vulva

- Increases lubrication
- Keeps tissues healthy

The Influence of progesterone

Brain

- Helps brain cells to communicate better, which helps improve mood, memory and brain health
- Helps nerve functioning

Breasts

- Tempers the effect of oestrogen and reduces breast cysts

Immune system

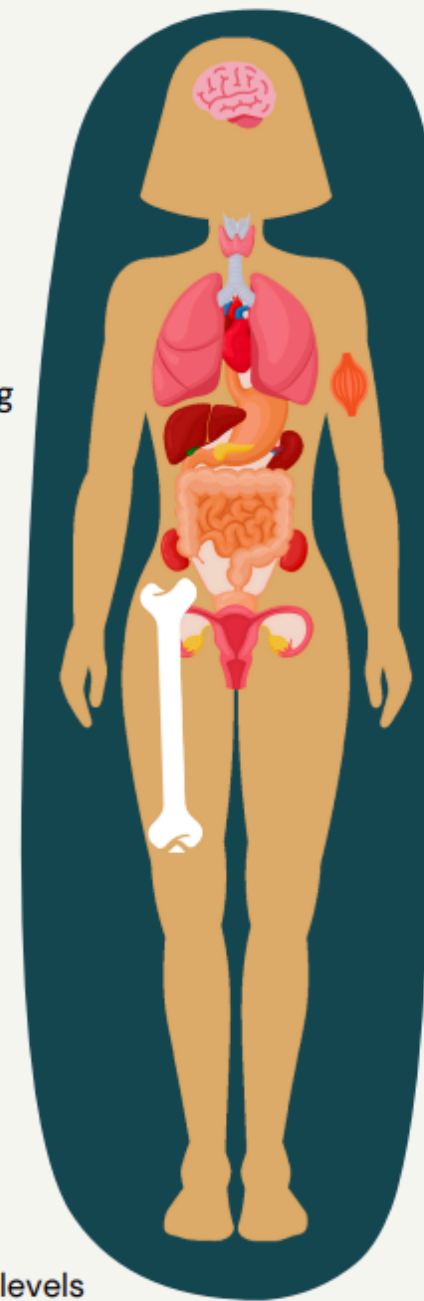
- Reduces inflammation
- Lowers risk of autoimmune disease

Bones

- Builds bone

Metabolism

- Regulates blood sugar levels



balance
by Newson Health

Psychological wellbeing

- Promotes sleep
- Relieves anxiety
- Helps use fat for energy

Muscles

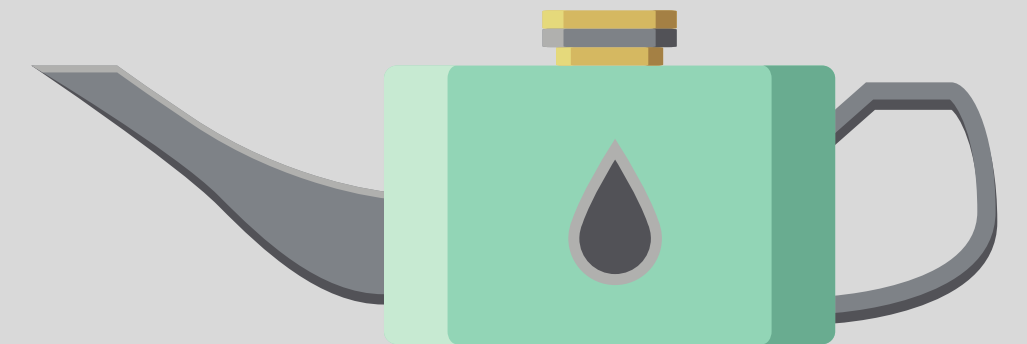
- Stimulates growth of new muscle
- Reduces muscle spasm

Reproductive/sexual function

- Regulates menstruation
- Supports pregnancy
- Reduces bleeding

Let's talk about oestrogen

- Oestrogen!
- Receptors all over your body
- Bone health
- Energy
- Cardiovascular health
- Metabolic health
- Brain health



So it's no
wonder.....

Women going through menopause are being wrongly prescribed antidepressants which are making their symptoms worse and destroying their confidence. Over a third of women going to their GP with symptoms of the menopause are being offered antidepressants.

The Independent, 2019

Impact of menopause

Physical

Hot flushes

Night sweats

Itchiness

Vaginal dryness

Fatigue

Aches and pains

Weight gain

Dry skin/hair

Mental

Brain fog

Low mood

Mood swings

Low self-esteem

Overwhelm

Difficulty adjusting

Grief reaction

Societal

Work/life balance

Career progression

Empty nest

Sandwich generation

Perceptions

Work inequalities

Social media

CRASH!

Oophorectomy
Hysterectomy
Chemotherapy
Premature Ovarian Insufficiency (POI)

Equity, diversity and belonging

- Equity is about everyone having what they need to make the most of the opportunities available to them in life
- Diversity recognises that each one of us is unique
- Inclusion is a behaviour and belonging is a feeling or outcome of that behaviour; you cannot have belonging without inclusion

Equity and menopause

Equity is about everyone having what they need to make the most of the opportunities available to them in life.

Menopause is not a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010 (the Act), but sex, age and disability are all characteristics which provide protection against unfair treatment of employees going through the menopause.

(DWP 2022)

Diversity and menopause

Diversity recognises that each one of us is unique

There is a significant gap in research, resource allocation and support, particularly for our transgender and non-binary colleagues, as well as there being a substantial imbalance in menopause support and awareness in relation to a person's ethnicity.

Steph Taylor, Joined Up Care Derbyshire (NHS England 2023)

Belonging and menopause

Inclusion is a behaviour and belonging is a feeling or outcome of that behaviour; you cannot have belonging without inclusion

For menopausal women specifically research finds that women who have a social network tend to be more positive about menopause and are less likely to be depressed. Those who participate in formal social groups are also more likely to be physically active and have less severe menopausal and depressive symptoms.

www.feistymenopause.com

Managing your own experience

Get clued up

Read, watch, listen, ask!!!!

Knowledge is power and power is empowering

Talk to your family, your healthcare professional, your local expert, your friends!

OT yourself

Start NOW!!!!

Have a plan

If you know your diet is not great, fix it now!

If you know you don't exercise enough, start now!

It is much easier to continue good habits than to start new ones.

Managing your own experience

Review your lifestyle

Make it an annual requirement

How is your Occupational Balance? When did you last check?

What do you need to start doing?

What can you stop doing NOW?

What physical, mental, social changes have you spotted?

Invest in you

Time, energy, money

When did you last carve out time for yourself?

Try something new - meditation, yoga, art

Make appointments with yourself and stick to them!

Managing your own experience

Share

Knowledge, support, understanding

Talk to your partners

We have an obligation to enhance their understanding too
In turn they may be better equipped to support us back

Give yourself a break

Be kind to yourself

Cut yourself some slack

It's ok to have an off day

It's ok to not be firing on all cylinders all of the time

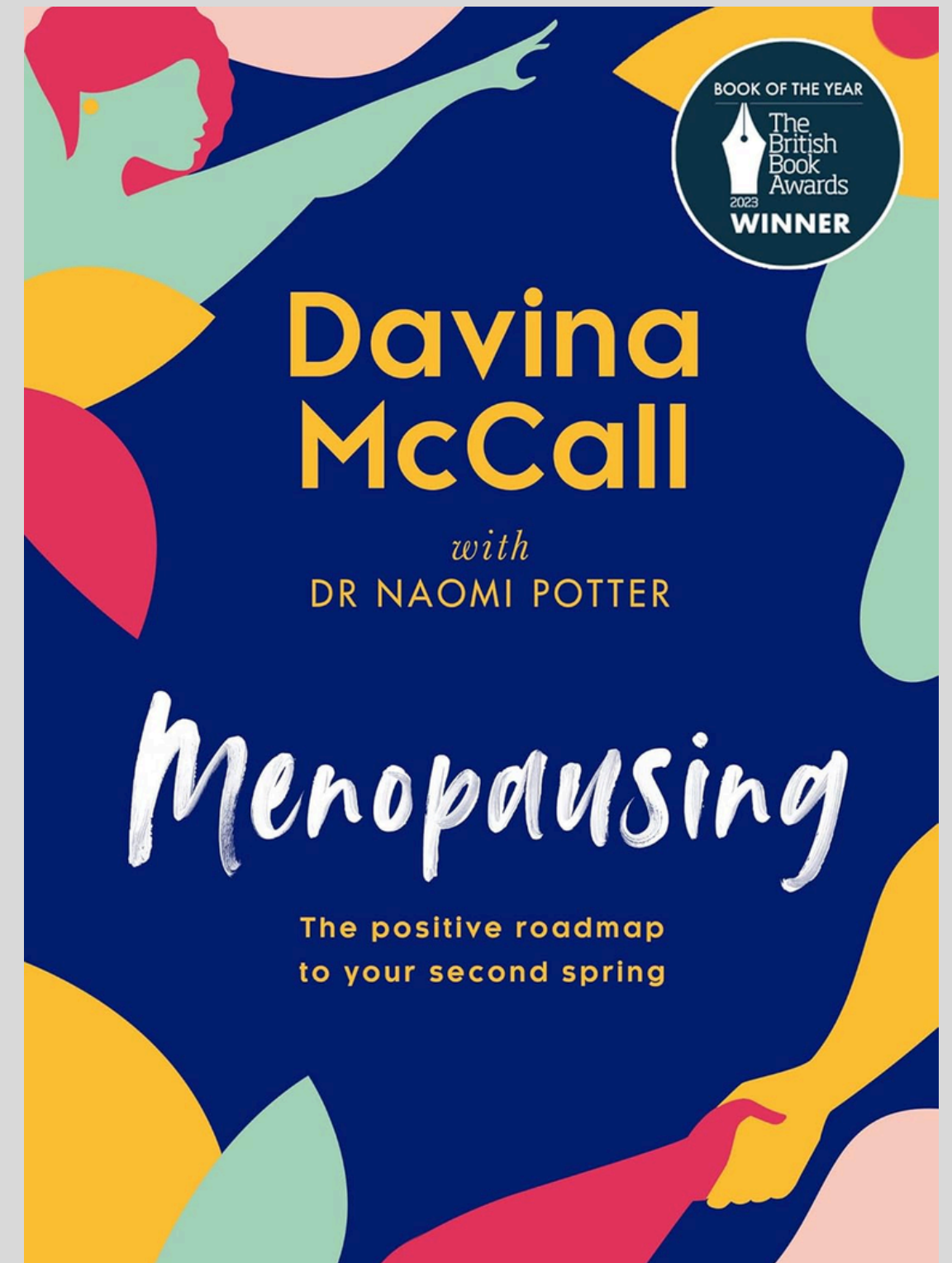
Resources

People

Friends and family
Menopause Nurse Specialist
Other Healthcare Professionals
Business Networks
Groups
PT, NT, Coach

Information

Books
Social Media (with caution)
Research
TED Talks
Podcasts
Apps



Supporting Menopause Management – The MDT



Diane Porterfield- Bourne
Advanced Nurse Practitioner
specialising in Menopause
and HRT

www.bourne2care.co.uk



Sara O Regan
Expert Bra Fitter

www.brasense.co.uk



Kate French
Nutritionist

www.nutritionallykate.co.uk



Rachel Nicholls
Personal Trainer

www.rjfitnessandcoaching.co.uk



Styling Life OT Team

Student Occupational Therapists on practice placement

www.stylinglifeot.com

Supporting Menopause Management - OT

The OT Process

1 - Assessment



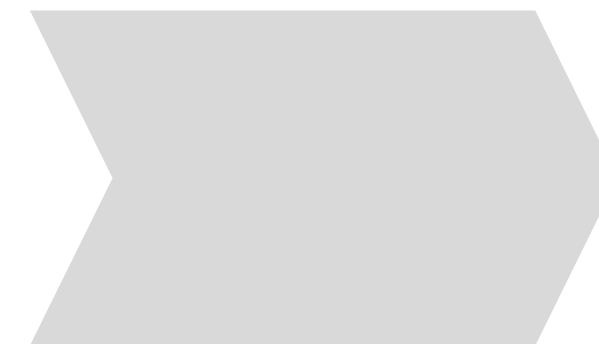
Questionnaire
Initial interview
Talking
Observing
Narrative reasoning

2 - Intervention



Visualising
Challenging and reframing thoughts
Creating plans
Setting objectives
Committing to short-term tasks
Contingency planning
What to stop or start

3 - Evaluation



Review of the week
Quantify progress
Set short term tasks for next week
Repeat 2 and 3 til end

Supporting Menopause Management - OT

- Occupational domains
- Occupational balance
- Roles and routines
- Habituation



Supporting Menopause Management - OT

- Occupational domains
- Occupational balance
- Roles and routines
- Habituation



How I practice

121 consultations

Image consultation

Coaching

Styling

Presentations

Menopause Symposium

Podcast guesting

Workplace Wellness for Menopause

Social Media

Styling My Menopause

Styling Life OT

Self-referral

Sometimes in pairs

One off appointments

Coaching programmes



121
(pairs)

Menopause Awareness sessions

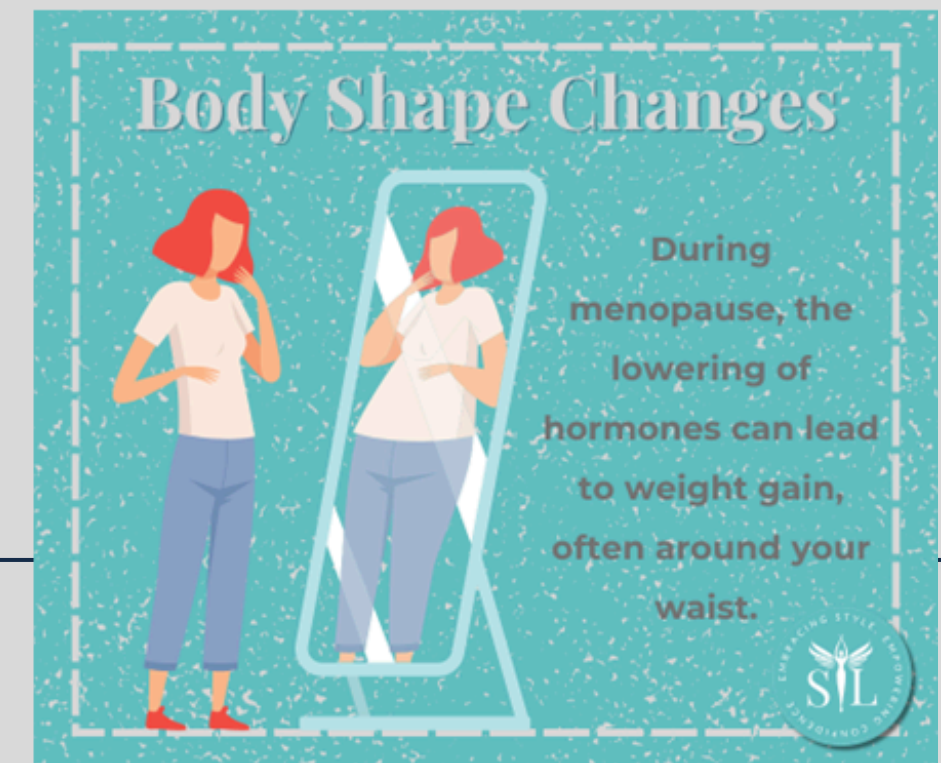
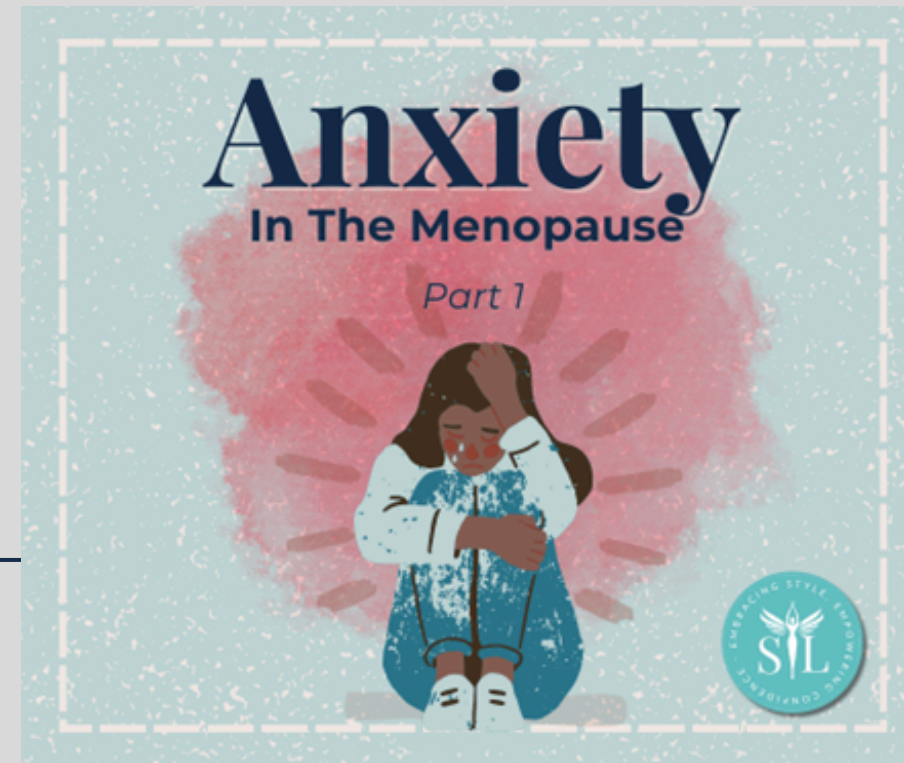
Menopause Workshops

Social media - Styling My Menopause (student led)



Groups

Styling my Menopause



Questionnaires

Awareness workshops

Appreciative Inquiry

Recommendations



Larger
groups

Educate ourselves

Educate our clients

Educate our communities

Let's get together!

As a profession we're only just scratching the surface.. This event is a great start!

Promote World Menopause Day

Get involved!

What next?

Recommendations



www.stylinglifeot.com
FREE mailing list



www.balance-menopause.com/menopause-library

The Balance App



www.totalsomatics.com

The Menopause Summit LIVE 2025
Saturday 15th February 2025 at 8pm

FREE to join
<http://totalsomatics.com/Menopause/>



www.rcot.co.uk/news/mission-menopause

Make the rest of your life the best of your life



References

BBC News, Going through the menopause aged 11, www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-43705088 (Accessed 17 September 2024)

British Menopause Society (2017) www.thebms.org.uk/?s=menopause%2Breport (Accessed 24 January 2024)

Department for Work and Pensions (2023) No time to step back; The government's Menopause Employment Champion www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-time-to-step-back-the-governments-menopause-employment-champion (Accessed 24 January 2024)

Department for Work and Pensions (2022) Menopause and the workplace; how to enable fulfilling working lives www.gov.uk/government/publications/menopause-and-the-workplace-how-to-enable-fulfilling-working-lives-government (accessed 17 September 2024)

Feisty Menopause, The Power of finding your people during menopause (2023) www.feistymenopause.com/blog/finding-your-people-during-menopause (Accessed 3 October 24)

Newson L (2021) Preparing for the Perimenopause and Menopause, Penguin Life Experts, Penguin Random House UK

NHS Employers (2024) Menopause and Workplace www.nhsemployers.org/articles/menopause-and-workplace (Accessed 14th September 2024.)

Office for National Statistics (2016) Labour Force Survey, Q3 2015–2016. London: www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/february2016 (Accessed 24 January 2024)

Royal College of Occupational Therapists (2024) EDB Strategy Action Plan www.rcot.co.uk/equity-diversity-and-belonging (Accessed 13 October 2024)

Taylor S, Tackling the inequalities in menopause care and support (2023) NHS England www.england.nhs.uk/blog/tackling-the-inequalities-in-menopause-care-and-support/ (Accessed 13 October 2024)

The Scottish Trade Union Congress Womens' Committee. (2018). Menopause and the Workplace. www.stuc.org.uk/files/Policy/Research-papers/Menopausereport.pdf (Accessed 24 January 2024)

Vincent, C., Bodnaruc, A. M., Prud'homme, D., Olson, V., & Giroux, I. (2023). Associations between menopause and body image: A systematic review. *Women's Health*, 19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17455057231209536>





Want to get in touch?

jolizgaffney@gmail.com

07835 770397

www.stylinglifeot.com



@jogaffneystylinglife



Jo Gaffney Styling Life



Jo Gaffney