

Living well through menopause

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What if it was possible to not suffer (too much) from symptoms related to hormonal changes during menopause? The practice of yoga helps to live this period of life with ease.

You are in your fifties and sometimes you feel overwhelmed by your emotions, all of a sudden you start crying, you can no longer contain yourself and you get angry, or you have night-time awakenings with hot flashes that afterwards leave you feeling drained? These may be menopause-related disorders. These unpleasant manifestations occur in more than 80% of women in our latitudes. In the East, on the other hand, 80% of women do not have any unpleasant signs related to the cessation of ovarian function: this indicates that it is possible not to suffer from this drying-up of oestrogen and progesterone secretion.

Yoga, because of its philosophy and the lifestyle it advocates, is precisely one of the best tools to avoid these inconveniences, when combined with a diet containing a lot of fruit and vegetables, rich in omega 3 and with little salt. This “way of life” allows you to put all the chances on your side to live this period of normal and natural life in all fullness and serenity.

The word “menopause” means the end of menstruation. It generally begins around the age of 52 but is preceded by pre-menopause, which corresponds to the drying up of progesterone secretion while estrogen is still being secreted and is often characterized by sometimes painful swelling (of the breasts and stomach) and disturbances in the rhythm of menstruation. Stopping the secretion of estrogen at menopause can also have a long-term negative effect, as this hormone participates in the renewal of all tissues, be it bone, skin or muscle. Its deficiency can lead to a lower trophicity (construction and maintenance) of tissues if nothing is done. The risks are osteoporosis, with bone fractures, thinning skin and mucous membranes, a decrease in muscle mass and an increase in cardiovascular risks. Not to mention a possible weight gain in the stomach and middle body...

Fortunately, this “picture” is not inevitable! Yoga postures, breathing, relaxation and meditation exercises help to combat sedentary lifestyles, eating disorders, emotional disorders and finally to regain one's body and good self-esteem. There is nothing more detrimental at this time than to go to war with oneself and to feel the body slipping away from oneself. Yoga is truly a way to reconquer and reconcile with oneself and one's body in order to live it well. For that, in each posture, you will look for the most pleasant sensation possible to feel good. The state of mind in the practice is decisive.

The practice

With postures like malasana (garland pose), you will develop flexibility in all the lower limbs, hips and pelvis. You will be able to practice it with the full-breath sequence or transition movement of energy yoga. This sequence allows you to mobilize all the joints of the body, including those of the spine, but also the three levels of breathing by improving the regulation of the physiology.

To strengthen the quality and tone of muscles and bones, practice warrior pose, angle pose, cobra pose, bow pose. This stimulation also strengthens the production of all the collagen fibres that make up the mucous membranes and skin. This helps to reduce wrinkles and improve the quality of the mucous membranes (including the vagina) to combat dryness. The skin is more supple, as are all the vessels and arteries. And finally, it acts on your mood, which will be more positive.

All of these exercises allow your body to compensate for the cessation of ovarian function by promoting better use of the estrogen produced by the adrenals and fatty tissue. These exercises improve your cells' sensitivity to this hormone. Even if you have less estrogen, you use it better, and this allows you to keep all your tissues well maintained.



1. Full-breath sequence or transition movement

Stand with your feet apart. Exhale, joining the backs of your hands (photo 1). Inhale by spreading your arms horizontally and raising them up in a V shape (photos 2 and 3). Breathe out by bringing your arms together and squatting in Malasana (photo 4).

Breathe in as you stand up, elbows against the belly (photo 5). Then repeat the whole sequence 4 times. Finally, stay for 10 deep and ample breaths in malasana (photo 4).



2. Virabhadrasana - Warrior pose

Spread your feet wide apart so that you have a solid foundation. Bring your hands together at the chest, then breathe in with your arms horizontal. Exhale by bending the right knee. Turn your head towards your right hand. Look straight ahead. Remain in the posture (photo 6), making sure that the knee does not go beyond the ankle. First do the exercise on each side with a single breath, then repeat the exercise with 6 breaths and breathe as slowly and deeply as possible.



3. Trikosana - Triangle pose

With feet apart, inhale with arms in a cross and exhale in a twist, with one hand grasping the opposite foot. Inhale as you stand up. Exhale on the other side. Repeat the exercise while remaining in the same posture (photo 7) and take 6 deep and wide breaths.



4. Dhanurasana - Bow pose

On your stomach, bend your legs and grasp your ankles. Stay for a few moments to get used to the posture. Then breathe in while raising your knees, arms outstretched. The feet pull the arms which pull the shoulders. Repeat the exercise and stay in the Dhanurasana posture for 6 deep breaths, massaging the belly which finds itself leaning on the ground.



5. Bhujangasana - Cobra pose

On your stomach, place your hands on each side of the chest. Bring the heels closer together. Inhale by raising your hands and then your chest. Look straight ahead horizontally. Breathe out as you lay your forehead to the ground. Repeat for 6 breaths while staying in the posture. Go as high as possible with each breath.



6. Navasana - Boat pose

Balance yourself on your buttocks, with your back flat and your arms straight. Breathe calmly 6 times, slowly. You are strengthening all your front muscles.



7. Sitkari

Sitting comfortably, open your mouth and turn your tongue over. Inhale by raising your head, air enters through the sides of the tongue and refreshes the entire body. Hold your breath. Close your mouth. Bring the tip of your tongue as far back as possible (kechari mudra). Still holding your breath, bring your chin in jalandhara bandha. Combine all the bandhas. Remain with your lungs full as long as possible and

as long as it is comfortable. When you feel like exhaling, release the triple contraction gently and then exhale slowly. Repeat the exercise 5 times.



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