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Exercise Physiology

## What Adjustments Should Women Make to Exercise During Perimenopause and Menopause?

If exercise suddenly feels harder, more tiring, or less rewarding than it used to, you're not imagining it – and you're not doing anything wrong. During perimenopause and menopause, hormonal changes can affect how your body responds to exercise. The goal isn't to stop moving, but to adjust how you move so it better supports your changing body.

### Why Exercise Can Feel Different

Hormonal changes can influence muscle recovery, joint comfort, sleep quality, energy levels, and balance. This can make previously energising workouts feel exhausting or uncomfortable.

### Signs Your Routine May Need Adjusting

Lingering soreness, frequent aches, poor sleep after exercise, ongoing fatigue, or loss of enjoyment are all common signs that your body may need different support.

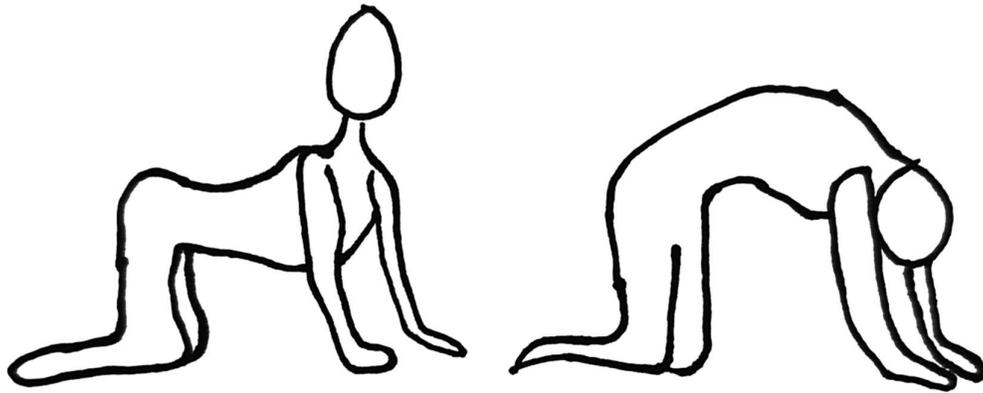
### Helpful Exercise Adjustments

- Prioritise strength over high-intensity cardio
- Reduce high-stress workouts
- Allow more recovery time
- Include regular mobility work

## Mobility Exercises

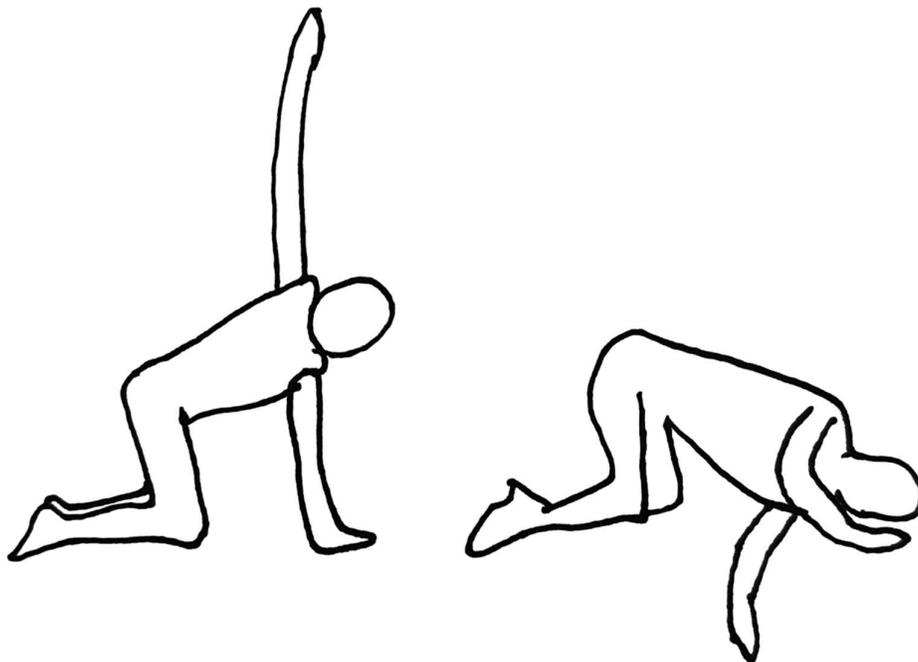
### Cat-Cow

Position yourself on all fours; hands under shoulders, knees under hips. Inhale for **Cow**, dropping belly, lifting chest and tailbone. Exhale for **Cat**, rounding spine to ceiling, tucking chin. Repeat 5-8 times.



### Thread the needle

Position yourself on all fours. Inhale and lift arm around towards the ceiling, exhale and rotated through your midback threading your hand under the underarm of the opposite side. You can hold in this position and take an Inhalation and Exhalation to ease further into the stretch. Unthread and repeat. Perform on opposite side.



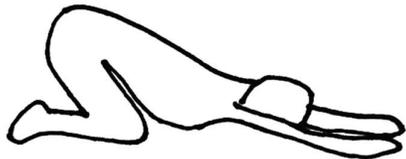
### **Chest stretch on door frame**

To perform a chest stretch on a door frame, stand in a doorway with elbows bent at 90 degrees at elbow and forearms resting on the frame at shoulder height. Step one foot forward, gently pushing your chest through the door until a stretch is felt in the chest and shoulders. Hold for 15-30 seconds, maintaining a neutral spine, and repeat 2-3 times. Perform on other side. You can alternate between sides.



### **Child pose stretch**

Start on all fours with knees apart, reach arms forward and stretch your bottom down towards your heels. Allow your tummy to soften to the floor. Breath into the stretch for 5-8 deep slow breaths, repeat up to 3 times.



## **Why Balance Training Matters More Than Ever**

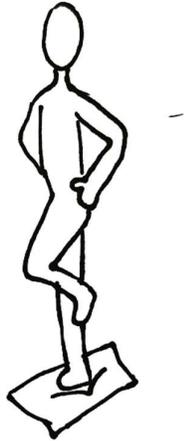
Balance can subtly decline during midlife due to changes in muscle strength, coordination, and confidence.

Practising balance regularly can reduce fall risk as you age, improve confidence with movement, and support everyday activities such as walking on uneven ground or using stairs.

## Balance Exercises

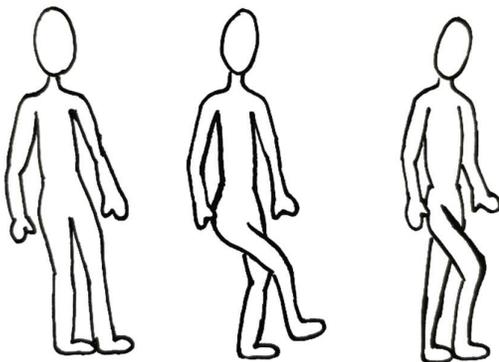
### Single leg standing on cushion

Standing on a cushion near a wall or the back of a chair (just in case support is needed), lift one foot off the cushion so that you are balancing on a single leg, build up the time you can spend balanced. Perform on other leg. Repeat, you can alternate between sides.



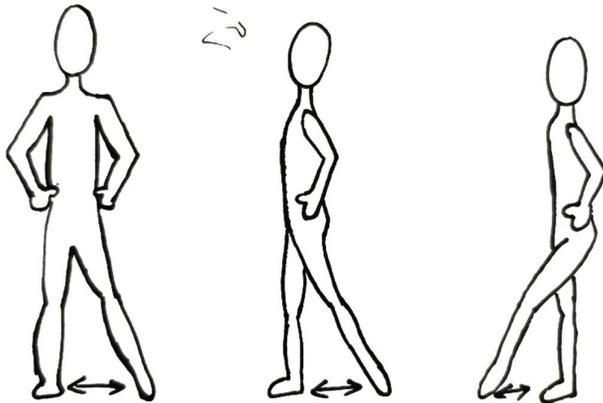
### Heel-to-toe walk

Walk in a straight line positioning your back foot's heel directly in front of the front foot's toes and repeat, alternating feet. If you feel quite stable like this, you can increase difficulty by making sudden arm movements out to the side unilaterally (e.g. punch out with the right arm while the left arm stays by your side).



## Star reach

Standing on the spot on a single leg, reach the opposite leg out towards the positions where the points of a star would be. The slower you do this the more difficult you will find it.



## What to Keep Doing

Keep movement you enjoy, walking, strength training, variety, and a compassionate mindset. Consistency matters more than intensity.

## What to Avoid

Try to avoid pushing through pain or exhaustion, comparing yourself to your younger self, rigid exercise programs that don't allow flexibility, and punishment-based movement.

## How an Exercise Physiologist Can Help

An Exercise Physiologist can help adjust exercise safely during hormonal change, manage pain and fatigue, improve balance and mobility, and create a personalised, realistic plan.

## Help Your Body Adjust During These Changes

Book a personalised Exercise Physiology session with Kita to support your body during this time of change and keep doing what you love.

**Visit:** [www.kitasuggphysiology.com.au](http://www.kitasuggphysiology.com.au)