



THRIVE THROUGH MENOPAUSE: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO FEELING YOUR BEST

NOURISH WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

- ✚ Focus on vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and olive oil
- ✚ Eat fish 2–3 times per week, and moderate amounts of dairy (especially fermented)
- ✚ Add antioxidant-rich herbs like parsley, rosemary, oregano, and thyme
- ✚ Minimise processed foods, added sugars, and refined carbs.
- ✚ Support gut health and reduce inflammation—a key player in menopausal symptoms.

Vegetables and Legumes – Half Your Plate

- ✚ **Serving Size:**
 - Cooked vegetables: ½ cup
 - Raw leafy greens: 1 cup
 - Cooked legumes (lentils, chickpeas, beans): ½ cup
- ✚ **Aim for:** 5–7 servings per day

Tip: Fill at least half your plate with a mix of colourful veg and 2–3 servings of legumes weekly for fibre, phytonutrients, and hormone clearance.

Extra Virgin Olive Oil – Daily Essential

- ✚ **Serving Size:**
 - 1 tablespoon (15 mL) per meal
- ✚ **Aim for:** 2–4 tablespoons daily

Tip: Use it as your primary fat for cooking and dressings. Rich in monounsaturated fats and antioxidants that support heart, brain, and hormone health.

Fatty Fish – 2–3 Times Per Week

- ✚ **Serving Size:**
 - 100–150g cooked fish (e.g. salmon, sardines, mackerel, trout)
- ✚ **Aim for:** 2–3 servings per week

Tip: Choose wild-caught or sustainable sources. Omega-3s in fish reduce inflammation and support mood and cognitive clarity during menopause.

Nuts and Seeds – Daily Boosters

- ✚ **Serving Size:**
 - 1 small handful (about 30g or ¼ cup)
- ✚ **Aim for:** 1–2 servings daily

Tip: Include almonds, walnuts, chia, flaxseed, or sunflower seeds. They provide healthy fats, fibre, and phytoestrogens.

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Wholegrains – Energy Sustainers

✚ Serving Size:

- Cooked brown rice, quinoa, barley: ½ cup
- Rolled oats: ½ cup dry

✚ Aim for: 2–3 servings daily

Tip: Swap white breads and pastas for wholegrain alternatives to stabilise blood sugar and reduce cravings.

Herbs and Spices – Natural Flavour Enhancers

✚ Serving Size:

- As desired (no upper limit)

Tip: Use fresh or dried herbs like oregano, rosemary, turmeric, basil, cinnamon, and garlic. These replace salt and add antioxidant, anti-inflammatory support.

Moderate Dairy – Gut and Bone Support

✚ Serving Size:

- Natural yoghurt: ¾ cup
- Feta or hard cheese: 30–40g

✚ Aim for: 1–2 servings per day

Tip: Choose full-fat, unsweetened, and fermented types for gut health and calcium. Sheep or goat's milk options are often easier to digest.

Minimal Sugar, Processed Foods, and Red Meats

✚ Red Meat:

- Serving Size: 90–100g cooked
- Limit to 1–2 servings per week

✚ Added Sugar:

- < 6 teaspoons (25g) per day

Tip: Replace processed snacks with whole foods, use fruit or dark chocolate (85%+) for sweet cravings.

Practical Tips

- ✚ Start with one swap (e.g. olive oil for butter) and build with new ideas each week
- ✚ Cook in batches with soups, stews, and grain bowls
- ✚ Try a 'rainbow plate' challenge weekly

What Is It?







The **“Rainbow Plate” Challenge** is a simple and engaging weekly nutrition habit that encourages you (or your clients) to eat a wider variety of colourful plant foods, which are rich in antioxidants, phytonutrients, and fibre. It's especially helpful during menopause when inflammation, oxidative stress, and hormonal shifts can impact overall wellbeing.

Each week, aim to fill your plate (or meals throughout the day) with all the colours of the rainbow using vegetables, fruits, herbs, and spices.



How to Do the Challenge:

Try to include at least one food from each of these colour groups each day or across the week:



-  ● **Red:** Tomatoes, red capsicum, strawberries, watermelon, raspberries
-  ● **Orange:** Carrots, pumpkin, sweet potato, oranges, turmeric
-  ● **Yellow:** Corn, yellow capsicum, pineapple, lemons
-  ● **Green:** Leafy greens, broccoli, cucumber, zucchini, kiwi, herbs
-  ● **Blue/Purple:** Blueberries, eggplant, purple cabbage, grapes, plums
-  ○ **White/Brown:** Garlic, onion, cauliflower, mushrooms, oats, legumes

Why It's Beneficial:

-  Eating a rainbow ensures you're getting a broad spectrum of:
 - **Antioxidants** (e.g., lycopene, anthocyanins)
 - **Fibre** for gut health
 - **Anti-inflammatory compounds**
 - **Phytonutrients** that support immune, cardiovascular, and hormonal health
-  It also adds variety and joy to meals, keeping things nutritionally diverse and visually appealing—which can help with motivation for dietary changes.

Tip: Create a weekly checklist to tick off each colour and see how many you can get. Make it fun—kids, partners, and friends can join in too!

Chickpea & Roasted Veggie Bowl with Tahini & Basil Dressing

This is a protein-rich, fibre-filled, and gut-friendly recipe that supports hormonal balance and energy levels.

Ingredients (Serves 4): 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed / 1 cup chopped sweet potato / 1 zucchini, sliced / 1 red capsicum, sliced / 1 tbsp olive oil / 1 tsp ground cumin / Salt & pepper to taste / 2 cups baby spinach or rocket / Fresh herbs (parsley or coriander)

Tahini & Basil Dressing: ¼ cup tahini (sesame seed paste) / 2–3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (adjust to taste) / ½ cup fresh basil leaves (packed) / 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil / 1 small garlic clove, minced (or ½ tsp garlic powder) / 1–2 teaspoons maple syrup or honey (optional, for balance) / 2–4 tablespoons water (to thin) / Sea salt to taste / Pinch of ground cumin or paprika (optional for extra flavour)

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C. Toss sweet potato, zucchini, and capsicum with olive oil, cumin, salt, and pepper. Roast for 25–30 mins.
2. Meanwhile, mix tahini dressing ingredients in a small bowl (see below).
3. Assemble bowls: layer greens, roasted veggies, chickpeas, and drizzle with tahini dressing. Top with fresh herbs.
4. Optional: Add soft-boiled eggs or grilled chicken for extra protein.

Dressing Instructions: Blend tahini, lemon juice, garlic, basil, olive oil, maple syrup/honey, and salt in a food processor or high-speed blender until smooth. Add water gradually, one tablespoon at a time, until the dressing reaches a pourable consistency. Taste and adjust salt, lemon, or sweetener if needed. Store in an airtight jar in the fridge for up to 5 days.

Tip: Also use as a dip for veggie sticks or falafel or toss through a warm potato or lentil salad.

Per Serving: Protein: 2.8 g / Carbohydrates: 6.0 g / Fat: 11.4 g / Fibre: 1.45 g / Calcium: 34 mg / Calories: 129 kcal / Kilojoules: 541 kJ



Tip: Also use as a dip for veggie sticks or falafel or toss through a warm potato or lentil salad.

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STRESS LESS: BREATHWORK & MEDITATION

Ideas to try include:

- ✚ Practice diaphragmatic breathing (4–7–8 technique or box breathing) daily
- ✚ Use guided meditation apps like Insight Timer <https://insighttimer.com/> or Calm <https://www.calm.com/>
- ✚ Start with just 5–10 minutes per day and build consistency
- ✚ Helps reduce cortisol, improve sleep, and balance mood.

Box Breathing

Also known as **square breathing**, this technique regulates the breath and engages the parasympathetic nervous system, helping to reduce anxiety and stress.

How to do it:

1. **Inhale** slowly through your nose for a count of 4.
2. **Hold** your breath for a count of 4.
3. **Exhale** slowly through your mouth for a count of 4.
4. **Hold** at the bottom of the breath for another count of 4.
5. Repeat this cycle for 3 to 5 minutes.

Why it works:

Box breathing is used by Navy SEALs, clinicians, and mindfulness practitioners alike. It helps:

- ✚ Lower cortisol levels
- ✚ Reduce racing thoughts
- ✚ Improve mental clarity
- ✚ Rebalance the breath after stress or overwhelm

Tip: You can visualise a square while breathing—one side per phase—or count using your fingers for gentle anchoring.

5-Minute Body Scan Meditation

This practice builds **body awareness**, helps release tension, and encourages connection with your physical self—especially beneficial when you feel disconnected or overstimulated.

How to do it:

1. Lie down or sit comfortably in a quiet space.
2. Close your eyes and take a few slow breaths.
3. Start by bringing your attention to your head and face. Notice any sensations, tension, or warmth.

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4. Gradually move your awareness down through your neck, shoulders, arms, chest, back, abdomen, hips, and all the way to your feet.
5. Simply observe each area. Don't try to change anything—just notice.
6. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the body part you were focused on.

Why it works:

The body scan:

- ✚ Encourages relaxation and emotional regulation
- ✚ Enhances sleep quality
- ✚ Deepens your mind-body connection
- ✚ Teaches you to tune in to subtle cues like pain, hunger, or fatigue

Tip: Do it first thing in the morning or before bed for a grounding ritual.

Morning Gratitude Journal (3 Things You're Thankful For)

This practice helps **shift focus** away from what's lacking or stressful and reorient your mindset toward what's going well.

How to do it:

1. Keep a journal by your bedside.
2. Each morning, write down **3 things you're grateful for**. They can be small or significant.
 - E.g. "The way the morning sun feels", "My body for carrying me", "The cup of tea I enjoyed yesterday".
3. Don't overthink—write freely and honestly.

Why it works:

Practising gratitude daily:

- ✚ Increases resilience and optimism
- ✚ Lowers symptoms of depression and anxiety
- ✚ Builds motivation for health changes
- ✚ Enhances your sense of purpose and joy

Tip: Try pairing this with your morning tea or a few deep breaths. Over time, you'll find your mindset shifting more positively throughout the day.

MOVE TO STRENGTHEN

Benefits Include

- ✚ Weight-bearing exercises like walking, resistance bands, yoga, or strength training.
- ✚ Aim for 3–4 sessions per week. You may need to consult a physio or exercise physiologist for guidance and a correct approach to exercise and always consult your GP if concerned prior to starting an exercise program.
- ✚ Supports bone density, cardiovascular health, and lean muscle mass.

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- ✚ Improves insulin sensitivity and supports weight management.

Tips for Staying Consistent:

- ✚ Buddy up for accountability
- ✚ Do 10 minutes a day (consistency beats intensity)
- ✚ Track how you *feel* after—not just the workout

FIND MOTIVATION THAT LASTS

Why Change Feels Hard

Brain fog, low energy, and feeling overwhelmed can make it hard to follow through on goals—even when you *want* to feel better.

- ✚ Set SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
- ✚ Track progress with a wellness journal
- ✚ Celebrate small wins (consistency beats perfection)
- ✚ Connect your goals to a “why” that’s meaningful to you—energy, confidence, freedom, etc.

Supportive Strategies

- ✚ Break goals into micro-habits (e.g. one more veggie at dinner)
- ✚ Anchor new habits to existing ones (e.g. stretch while kettle boils)
- ✚ Celebrate progress, not perfection
- ✚ Keep a wins journal weekly

Supportive Strategies for Lasting Lifestyle Change

Many women entering midlife feel overwhelmed by the need to overhaul their habits. The key? Keep it simple, consistent, and kind. These strategies support gradual, sustainable transformation—emotionally and physically.

Break Goals into Micro-Habits

Big goals can feel daunting. Micro-habits are small, achievable actions that build momentum.

Examples:

- ✚ **Big goal:** Eat more vegetables →
Micro-habit: Add spinach to your morning eggs or smoothie.
- ✚ **Big goal:** Improve hydration →
Micro-habit: Drink one glass of water upon waking.
- ✚ **Big goal:** Improve sleep →
Micro-habit: Dim the lights 30 minutes before bed.

Tip: Ask yourself, “What’s the next smallest step I can take today?”

Anchor New Habits to Existing Ones

Habit-stacking makes change easier by linking a new habit to one already ingrained.

Examples:

- ✚ While waiting for the kettle to boil → do 3 slow shoulder rolls or pelvic tilts.
- ✚ After brushing teeth → write one line in your gratitude journal.
- ✚ Before lunch → take 5 slow breaths using the box breathing technique.

Tip: Your brain loves patterns—stacking habits uses this to your advantage.



Celebrate Progress, Not Perfection

Progress is empowering. Perfection is paralysing.

Examples:

- ✚ “I drank more water today than yesterday” is worth celebrating.
- ✚ “I made a nourishing lunch instead of skipping it” is a win.
- ✚ “I paused to breathe before reacting” is a milestone in emotional recalibration.

Tip : Progress can be invisible to others—make sure it’s visible to you.

Keep a Weekly Wins Journal

Acknowledging your successes, no matter how small, boosts motivation and self-belief.

How to start:

- ✚ Use a simple notebook or phone app.
- ✚ At the end of each week, write 3 wins (physical, emotional, spiritual, or practical).

Examples:

- ✚ “Walked three times this week.”
- ✚ “Said no without guilt.”
- ✚ “Cooked one new Mediterranean-style recipe.”

Tip: Read back through your journal monthly to remind yourself how far you’ve come.

Make Sure You Reframe Any Setbacks

Not failure—just feedback. Ask: What helped me last time I felt good?

RECLIBRATE: EMOTIONAL, MENTAL & SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Areas to include:

- ✚ Emotional: Honour your feelings, practice self-compassion, journal your thoughts.
- ✚ Mental: Set boundaries, challenge unhelpful beliefs, stay curious and learning.
- ✚ Spiritual: Engage in meaningful rituals—walks in nature, mindfulness, or creative expression.
- ✚ This is a time to reconnect with what truly matters.

Embracing the Emotional & Spiritual Shift

Menopause as a Rite of Passage

This isn’t a time of “winding down”—it’s an awakening. Yes, there may be loss (of fertility, roles, or identity), but also *space*. Space to rediscover who you are beneath the busyness.

- ✚ **Emotional volatility** can be an opportunity to tune into unmet needs, suppressed emotions, or boundaries that need reinforcing. Consider support through grounding rituals: nature walks, lighting a candle, herbal teas
- ✚ **Emerging wisdom** often comes through quiet moments of stillness or reflection. Give yourself permission to listen. Look for meaningful connections: trusted friends, support groups, or therapy
- ✚ **Identity shifts** are natural. Journaling and therapeutic support can help you understand what you’re letting go of—and what’s calling you forward.

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Self-compassion: Speak to yourself like you would to a beloved friend. This helps reduce shame and builds resilience.

Journaling: A safe space to express and explore what you're feeling. Try prompts like:

- What am I ready to release?
- What would I say to myself at 25 from where I am now?
- What does emotional freedom look like for me?

Menopause can unearth old wounds, bring up unexpected grief, or stir a powerful sense of *what now?* It's okay to feel the full spectrum.

✚ **Safe support:** If needed consider counselling, women's circles, or simply sharing with trusted friends.

✚ **Joy and laughter:** Seek out what lights you up—a hobby, funny podcast, or time with playful people.

Micro-action: Keep a "wins + joys" journal on your nightstand and write one line each day.

Mental: Shift the Narrative

Hormonal changes can influence cognition and emotional regulation—but mindset plays a powerful role too.

✚ **Set boundaries:** Protect your energy by saying no when needed, without guilt. Practice: *"That doesn't work for me right now."*

✚ **Challenge old beliefs:** Let go of the idea that you must push through everything or that menopause equals decline.

✚ **Stay curious:** Take a short course, read a book that excites you, or learn a new skill. It keeps your brain engaged and boosts confidence.

Micro-action: Each week, unsubscribe from one obligation that drains you, and replace it with something uplifting.

Spiritual: Reconnect with Meaning

Spiritual recalibration can be subtle but profound. It might be reconnecting with your inner wisdom, nature, or a creative force beyond yourself.

✚ **Rituals:** Light a candle before journaling, drink a cup of tea mindfully, or end your day with a 2-minute breath practice.

✚ **Nature:** Walks in nature help reset your nervous system and remind you of life's cycles.

✚ **Creative expression:** Whether it's painting, singing, gardening, or dancing—making something reconnects us with soul-level energy.

Micro-action: Start or end your day with one grounding ritual—like standing barefoot on grass or 3 deep breaths with hand on heart.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: YOUR MENOPAUSE RESET

You don't have to overhaul your life—just start *somewhere*.

Practical Supportive Strategies

✚ **Break goals into micro-habits:** Instead of "eat better," try - add 1 cup of vegetables at lunch Or Mediterranean lunch 3 - 4 days a week.

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- ✚ **Anchor new habits:** Pair stretching with boiling the kettle, or meditation with brushing teeth or consider breathwork or gratitude journaling before bed
- ✚ **Celebrate small wins:** Keep a list on your fridge, journal, or phone of things that went *right* each week.

Build momentum gently: You don't need to change everything at once. What's one tiny thing you could try tomorrow? Tip: Add one act of joy each day

FINAL THOUGHTS

Menopause isn't the end—it's a powerful, natural transition. With the right tools, support, and nourishment, you can thrive in this phase and rediscover your vibrant, wise, and resilient self.

Menopause invites you to *reclaim* yourself. To strip away the non-essential, honour your evolving needs, and walk forward with new clarity. Recalibrating isn't about perfection—it's about presence.

If you're feeling drawn to reclaim your health, energy, and confidence—**you don't have to do it alone.**

Here's how you can take the next step:

- ✚ **Book a Free 15-Minute Clarity Call with Sue**
Let's have a relaxed chat to explore your current challenges and whether one of the programs is the right fit for you. No pressure—just connection.
- ✚ **Visit the Program Page**
Head to handcraftedhealth.com.au to explore more about the “Radiant Reset” or “Whole Woman Reset” programs, and see which one feels most aligned with your needs.
- ✚ **Ask Questions**
Not sure where to begin? Email me directly at sue@handcraftedhealth.com.au and I'll help guide you to the next step that makes the most sense for you.

Wherever you're at on your journey, remember—you're not behind, you're right on time. And I'm here to walk beside you.

Healthy Regards,

Sue Stevens

Naturopath, Clinical Nutritionist, Counsellor

Handcrafted Health - Restoring Balance, Naturally.

MHsc (Human Nut), MCounselling, GradCert Learning & Teaching, Grad Cert Com Med, BMedMgmt Prof
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