

Topic: 5 Tips to Sleep Better During Menopause

OR: How to Sleep Better During Menopause

OR: 5 Solutions for Better Sleep During Menopause

Keywords: menopause, insomnia, sleep disorders, menopause affects sleep, disturbed sleep, solutions for better sleep, why women can't sleep during menopause

Number of words: 1063

Menopause is such a dreaded word in a woman's world ! It brings along so many life altering changes. While "hot flashes" are the most common symptoms associated with **menopause**, many women find that they often experience **disturbed sleep** during this phase. [Research shows](#) that **sleep disorders** affect 39-47% of perimenopausal women and 35-60% of post-menopausal women.

During **menopause**, women tend to [experience insomnia](#), as they tend to take 30 minutes or longer to fall asleep, get fewer than 6 hours of sleep 3 or more nights in the week or wake up too early. This makes them feel tired and lethargic during the day, leading to irritability, anxiety, stress, memory loss and they find it difficult to concentrate. Physiologically, the lack of sleep may manifest as frequent headaches or acidity.

The most common reasons why **menopause affects sleep**, are:

1. Hot Flashes

Menopause causes a surge of adrenaline hormone, that manifests as a sudden increase in body temperature, commonly known as [hot flashes](#). Adrenaline is also the hormone responsible for the body's reaction to stress, which in turn induces the ["fight or flight" response](#). This leads to redness or flushing of the skin, rapid heart rates and drenching sweats. Hot flashes can occur at any time of the day, but when it happens during the night, it tends to wake women up and makes it hard for them to fall asleep again, due to the sudden surge in energy.

2. Sleep apnea

A common sleep disorder, [obstructive sleep apnea](#) is characterized by intermittent episodes of breathing difficulty (also called hypopnea) or in severe cases a complete blockage of the airway, called apnea. These episodes occur when the person is asleep and the lack of air and feeling of suffocation, wakes them up. Studies have shown that 20% of women experiencing menopause, and 47-67% of post-menopausal women develop sleep apnea, causing **disturbed sleeping patterns**. This has even led to more harmful effects like high blood pressure and increased risk of heart disease, in women.

3. Mood Swings

According to [Charlotte Bronte](#), "A ruffled mind, makes a restless pillow." Mood swings, depression and anxiety go hand in hand with menopause, due to the fluctuating levels of oestrogen and progesterone hormones. According to the North American Menopause Society (NAMS), close to [23 percent of women](#) mood swings before, during, or after menopause, and may be responsible for irregular and poor quality sleep, during this phase.

When we understand **why women can't sleep well during menopause**, we can then look for ways to deal with the issue of **insomnia**, in these cases.

Here are 5 **Solutions for Better Sleep** when going through menopause.

1. Set a Sleeping Schedule ... and Stick to It!

Defining a regular sleep cycle has been known to work wonders in relieving stress. A [bedtime routine](#) that involves some form of self-care, like meditation, listening to soothing music, taking a bath or reading, have also helped menopausal women to improve their quality of sleep.

An effective sleeping schedule also involves setting regular eating times, avoiding heavy and spicy meals in the latter half of the day, to keep physical symptoms like acidity at bay.

Keeping the bedroom light, airy and breezy makes it a comfortable environment to fall asleep in. Light, breathable fabrics like cotton and linen, when used for bedding and pyjamas, also keeps body temperatures low, and helps to avoid triggering hot flashes.

2. Get the Heart Pumping ... at the right time!

Just 30 minutes of exercise, especially aerobic activities like walking, cycling or running, have proven to be effective methods to fall asleep and stay asleep. Studies have shown that exercise increases the [slow wave deep sleep](#), which gives the brain and the body a chance to recoup and recover. It is suggested to finish exercising at least 1-2 hours before sleeping, in order to get the endorphins out of the system and give the brain a chance to wind down. In addition to muscle fatigue, exercise also helps to keep anxious or negative thoughts at bay, which in turn leads to better quality sleep.

3. Cut down the Caffeine!

Avoiding caffeine in tea, coffee or energy drinks especially in the late afternoons or evenings, will help to gradually decrease energy levels, making it easier to fall asleep. Studies conducted by the Women's Health Clinic at the [Mayo Clinic Minnesota](#), have revealed that "limiting caffeine intake may be useful for those postmenopausal women who have bothersome hot flashes and night sweats."

4. Stay away from Screens!

The blue light emitted from the screens of smart devices like phones, tablets or computers have been known to decrease melatonin hormone levels in the body, which in turn disturbs our [circadian rhythm](#) or the natural sleep and awake cycle. Cutting back on screen time, 2-3 hours before going to bed, allows us to fall asleep faster, and is beneficial for menopausal women struggling with disturbed sleeping patterns.

5. Treat the Root Cause

Treatment, whether medicinal or natural, may help to keep frequent awakenings from developing into a bad habit that continues long after the acute symptoms of menopause, like hot flashes, subside.

There are several foods that help to naturally increase female hormones in the body, known as [phytoestrogens or dietary oestrogens](#), like soya bean, flax seeds, dried fruits and sesame seeds.

The [most common medications](#) given for menopause are oestrogen and progesterone hormone replacement therapies, along with low dose antidepressants, in order to relieve symptoms like hot flashes, anxiety and mood swings. Melatonin is also given to encourage adequate sleep.

The after effects of a restless night with lack of good sleep, is never fun. Strangely, women tend to accept night time insomnia and day time tiredness, as a part of their lives, chalking it up to "just menopause." While these symptoms may not disappear, even in the post-menopausal stage, small changes in lifestyle, diet and schedules, along with appropriate medication, may help to give women some relief from insomnia. After all, as the old proverb says, "A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctor's book."