

Embrace the Menopause

- Sweating
- Aching Joints
- Lack of Sleep
- Mood Swings
- Erratic Periods

On first glance these menopausal symptoms all look pretty negative, but we know as women the menopause is something we have to go through, and as a menopausal woman myself I am currently experiencing all of the above. We are constantly told to do the usual things like cut down on caffeine and alcohol, eat healthily and exercise. But as well as doing all of that, my approach is as much about our state of mind and how we think, together with the language we use when we talk about it. I remember asking my Mum about her

bit of a guessing game – would I have one?, how heavy would it be?, how long would it last? I started to get stiff and achey joints – my ankles and feet and my elbows... yes, elbows! And my mood changes became a bit wilder – ask my partner and my son – I was either high as a kite or down in the dumps. So I began thinking I can't be the only one experiencing these and probably other symptoms – and I have read articles and advice about diet and HRT – so apart from following this how else can I help myself to get through this episode in my life. I decided I was going to embrace it and learn to love it so that I could make it a positive rather than negative experience. So here are some of my thoughts:

1 Firstly, the sweats I have started to wear thin layers of clothes rather than one big thick jumper, so that I can peel off or put back on as necessary, depending on how my body is reacting to the environment. On a positive note I haven't had to wear a big coat yet this winter even when we had the snow on the ground – and once the sweats stop I am shopping for a new one.

2 Aching joints Exercise, exercise, exercise! Keep everything moving. My stiff ankles and feet are helped by some self massage (thank you Rachel Holmes) with a tennis ball on the sole of my foot. My elbows love tricep dips and, looking ahead, because of this I am going to have the sexiest of upper arms when the summer arrives. Look out Madonna!!

by Jane Thomas

3 Lack of sleep I could say *I'm feeling tired all the time!* And I have heard myself saying this, but I am taking a leaf out of Michael Heppell's book *Flip It* and I am starting to say *where can I get more energy from* instead. And when I can't sleep I am going to use the time to write and tweet and plan. Think of all that extra time.

4 Mood Swings These seem to be the most challenging things for me (and those around me) to deal with, however what I find is the most positive way is that when I am on a high I share it with the people I love and I really appreciate it. When I am on a low, I share it with the people I love and who love me and I know that on the other side I have another high to look forward to and enjoy.

5 Erratic periods If they get really unbearable then you may have to seek medical advice. However, we know that they are going to end eventually so try and look forward to that time. Eat healthily, lots of almonds, walnuts, green vegetables ie, foods that will boost your energy levels and try what I do – PAINT YOUR NAILS! I find a manicure really cheers me up and bizarrely I have always felt sexy whilst I am having my period. So think sexy and you will feel sexy!

So join me and think positively about your menopause. Embrace it, learn to love it while it lasts because it won't last forever – and then it's over!

Life is for living...

experience of the menopause, along with my two older sisters, and all three of them said that as they hit their late 40s and early 50s their periods just stopped and they had virtually no other symptoms, so I was quite confident and hopeful...

How foolish was I, because as I hit 50 the sweats began, I started waking in the night – 2.30am, 4.00am and so on and so on. My periods became a

