



My top tips for lifting your mood

The days are becoming longer and there is a feeling of spring in the air. But one of the main symptoms of menopause can be low mood. Even when everything around you is telling you that Spring is on its way, you may feel low.

It helps to accept that feeling low some of the time is normal and affects most of us regardless of our hormones.

Medication, such as anti depressants, is not recommended by NICE for low mood unless you have a clear, previous diagnosis of depression. You may wish to use HRT, but whether you do or not, what else can you do to feel better?

I'm going to look at ways to **energise, relax** and **inspire**.

Some of these are free – like walking- others are more of a treat, like going to a spa. Choose something with your budget. What will make you feel great is if you can push yourself out of your comfort zone and try something new. Almost everyone feels a bit anxious about doing anything

new but it's the only way to increase your confidence and wellbeing.

- Could you choose one activity from each group?
- Could you commit to your own wellbeing by trying something new

Focus on carving out some time for yourself every day, doing something you enjoy like reading or exercise, and maybe a once a month 'treat' where you have a mini-indulgence. Ask who or what in your life is sapping your energy. Midlife is a time to clear the dead wood, so you may decide to let some things go - people, work, voluntary commitments – where the balance of give and take isn't right.

Energising

The charity MIND recommends exercise for mental wellbeing and mild to moderate depression. Walking is free, you can do it anywhere, whether you live in a busy city or the countryside



Menopause matters™



– all you need is a pair of comfy shoes.

MIND's website lists the benefits of exercise:

- **Reduced anxiety and happier moods**
- **Reduced feelings of stress**
- **Clearer thinking**
- **A greater sense of calm**
- **Increased self-esteem**
- **Reduced risk of depression** If you're more active there's good evidence to suggest that at most ages, for both men and women, there's a trend towards lower rates of depression. In fact one study has found that by increasing your activity levels from doing nothing to exercising at least three times a week, you can reduce your risk of depression by almost 20%.

If you have never exercised regularly, set yourself a small goal, such as walking. Think about how you can fit 30-minutes walking into your day. If you can't manage 30 minutes, do two brisk 15-minute walks over the day.

MIND suggests that taking exercise in a green space has an additional calming and uplifting effect and research also shows that by buddying-up you increase your chance of maintaining your exercise.

Walking with other women

Melissa Talago from York established Glamoraks, an online group for women who want to walk with other women. She says: "I've battled with low level depression and self esteem issues for a long time. I manage it by walking. If I feel down, I get my boots on and head out somewhere with stunning views. The combination of the pace, rhythm, fresh air, exercise and incredible scenery seems to snap me out of how I'm feeling. If I walk on my own, I still get the benefits, but when I walk with others – particularly other women – I find we talk about things at a much deeper level than we do in normal everyday life, where chat seems to be superficial. This combination of walking and talking resets my mood.



It's one of the reasons I set up Glamoraks, a free online group for women around the world to get out walking." www.glamoraks.com

If you already walk, or want to do something different, how about swimming, dancing, gym, singing?

Relaxing

Switching off and having some 'You' time is another way to recharge. This can be literally- give yourself a social media-free day! Yes, turn off the phone, Facebook or whatever else you might use. Dedicate an hour to yourself when you put work, family and chores to one side. How about yoga (at home with a DVD if you don't want a class), read, listen to music, cook, and create (art, crafts, writing, sewing), a massage, a beauty treatment, a day at a spa, a retreat.

Inspiring

Inspiration comes from seeing and hearing what others have done; it can give us ideas about what we'd like to achieve and put our problems into perspective. Listen to the radio – programmes such as the Listening Project on Radio 4 are thought-provoking. Or maybe visit somewhere new- a place, a museum, an exhibition. If you can find some time, why not volunteer? Organisations such as <https://do-it.org/> list vacancies in your area through a post code search. Many volunteer roles offer a trial visit so you don't need to commit straight away – it's a good way to meet people and even find paid work perhaps eventually if that is another goal.

Have these ideas got you started? Obviously you may have your own.

Can you commit to trying one new thing this month? If you lack confidence, look at last month's blog from me which was all about how to feel more confident.

© Glynis Kozma 2018

See more tips on my blog on my website www.glyniskozmacoaching.com