



KATIE BRINDLE

Menopause Guide

Treatment techniques based in Chinese medicine



What is Menopause?

The menopause is when a woman stops having periods and is no longer able to get pregnant naturally. Periods usually start to become less frequent over a few months or years before they stop altogether. Sometimes they can stop suddenly.

The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman's oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51. But around 1 in 100 women experience the menopause before 40 years of age. This is known as premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency.

Most women will experience menopausal symptoms. Some of these can be quite severe and have a significant impact on your everyday activities.

Common symptoms include:

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Vaginal dryness and discomfort during sex
- Difficulty sleeping
- Low mood or anxiety
- Reduced sex drive (libido)
- Problems with memory and concentration

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



Menopausal symptoms can begin months or even years before your periods stop and last around 4 years after your last period, although some women experience them for much longer.

Source: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/>

Historically, women experienced few or no symptoms beyond the cessation of their menstrual flow. Menopause was traditionally celebrated as an important and positive time of a woman's life. Indeed, far from being a negative experience, Chinese wisdom sees menopause as a deep energy shift - a time to heal, balance your energies and undergo transformation. It's a new beginning, a time to focus on life's lessons and enjoy at a leisurely pace all that the world has to offer.

And yet, this isn't the case. Almost every single person I see in clinic is suffering from horrendous symptoms.

The Yang Sheng perspective

Yang Sheng means nurture life. It is the self-care part of Chinese medicine, the part you can do for yourself, as a complement to any other treatment you may be undertaking.

So, why are we experiencing all these symptoms now, when we never used to? There are two parts to the answer.

Firstly, it's an issue of our yin/yang balance. Modern living is liberating and wonderful for women, but it has a knock-on effect on us physically, so we have to pay attention to balancing ourselves. Yin/yang is the fundamental balance of the body, maintaining health and wellbeing. Yin is female energy and yang is male. Menopause symptoms are essentially a severe imbalance of our internal yin/yang circuit.

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



In my opinion, we are the first generation of women to really begin levelling the playing field having inherited a man's world. This isn't about man-bashing, it's just historically where we are. Despite our technically equal status, the male system we've inherited is very yang in nature. This disrupts our yin/yang balance, because to flourish in a man's world, we have to behave like men and still be women. This forces our bodies to be very yang in nature. Whilst that might be fine from a social point of view, biologically our bodies are not designed to behave like that.

As women then, we drain our reserves of yin with this modern yang lifestyle. Too much yang energy creates heat in the female body and that's why menopause symptoms are largely heat-related.

Menopause occurs at the end of the menstrual cycle. Our menstrual flow is an opportunity each month for the body to clear this excess heat. This is one of the reasons many women suffer period pain and heavy periods. When menopause approaches and the flow stops, we are still being too yang and the body has to find other ways to clear that heat.

Heat, or inflammation, is really dangerous for our organs - and our organs are clearly important. So your body wants to eliminate heat in any way it can. Given that the menstrual cycle is no longer an option, it often moves to the skin; our largest excretory organ and a great method of clearing heat, which is why you sweat. And you sweat at night because this is the yin time of day. Hot flushes, thinning hair, vaginal dryness and Osteoporosis are all signs of too much dry heat.

In addition, when you approach menopause, the body starts reducing our hormone levels to conserve energy and prepare us for old age. In Chinese medicine, Oestrogen is yin and Progesterone is yang. So once your Oestrogen levels fall, the yin yang balance is massively amplified. Your yin reserves are no longer capable of supporting the yang in your body, which creates yet more heat.

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



Secondly, modern living puts excess strain on our kidneys and disrupts our natural cycle of female life and fertility. Why are the kidneys so important? In Chinese medicine, our Kidneys are responsible for the ageing process, fertility, controlling the cooling element of the body, your energy reserves and your yin/yang balance - and so it's vital to look after them in order to progress through menopause as smoothly as possible.

Modern living means we often take contraceptives to block our cycle, we put pregnancy off for the sake of our careers, we may have to resort to IVF drugs to help us conceive. Then, when we give birth, we no longer have time to recover before being hurled back into everyday life, which exhausts our energy reserves further. Then, we take HRT to help us through the menopause. Whilst HRT is clearly a lifesaver for many – and I will never go against Western medicine, it mimics sex hormones. So, whilst that might address your symptoms in the short term, it doesn't actually solve the problem, because HRT is tricking your body into thinking you are still be in the fertile phase. HRT has many known side-effects, plus, tricking your body into thinking its 20 instead of 50 is not great for your long-term health.

Living like this is a choice. It is amazing, it gives us freedom; but it's not how the body is designed to be. Sooner or later we have to reconcile the balance.

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



Steps you can take to help

The three most important steps you can take to help reduce menopause symptoms are to nourish your yin energy, clear the heat and rebalance your body. Luckily, Chinese medicine is full of fantastic ways to achieve this. I'd recommend you start by practising the simple techniques below in order to restore balance in the body. Then, take extra steps to support your kidneys. Menopause is essentially viewed in Chinese medicine as kidney yin deficiency. It can also exhibit as a deficiency of kidney yang energy. In either case, both yin and yang energy need balancing and nourishing.

[View the Kidney Guide](#)

General advice

Chinese breathing and bodywork techniques have both been scientifically proven to be effective in reducing stress and supporting the body. They:

- Engage your parasympathetic nervous system
- Regulate blood flow
- Reduce heat in the body
- Calm the nervous system
- Strengthen the organs

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



Breath & Menopause

The single most effective way to reduce your stress levels is to take conscious, deep, abdominal breaths. By moving your awareness out of your head and into your breath, your heart rate slows, your mind is calmed, and your blood oxygenated.

[View the Breath Guide](#)

Qigong & Menopause

Qigong is a fundamental pillar of Chinese medicine. It is classed as a form of internal exercise. Internal exercise is any combination of slow, considered movements with breath and mental engagement, it's often referred to as 'Chinese yoga'. Qigong is, quite simply, the ultimate selfhealing technique. Whatever your issue, qigong will help to rebalance the body. By learning to manipulate qi around the body, you rejuvenate and energise, lower the heart rate and blood pressure and support the immune system.

[View the Qigong Guide](#)

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



Tapping & Menopause

Tapping with bamboo is an ancient Chinese therapy that works wonders for your general wellbeing. It's a simple, pleasurable, yet hugely effective way to support and maintain your health, no matter what your age or physical state.

Tapping the skin on a daily basis enables the free flow of this all-important circulation. In as little as one-minute a day, an all over body tap can clear areas of stagnation, support lymphatic drainage and encourage a smooth flow of blood and qi around the body. Think of it as a natural battery charger for the body.

[View the Tapping Guide](#)

Gua sha & Menopause

Gua sha is a therapeutic healing technique, that has been widely practised in China for thousands of years. It involves using a round-edged tool, traditionally made from materials such as jade or metal, to pressstroke the skin until redness appears. You can even use a jam jar lid!

Gua Sha has been used to treat a whole range of conditions from fever to chronic cough and migraines. It has been shown in studies to increase micro-circulation by 400%, clear inflammation.

[View the Gua sha Guide](#)

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



Meditation & Menopause

Meditation is a fundamental pillar of Chinese medicine - and studies have confirmed a host of health benefits. If you struggle with traditional forms of meditation, there are simple Chinese techniques that offer impressive results.

[View the Meditation Guide](#)

Specific advice

Any symptoms of ill health will always relate to one of the 5 key organs we consider when we are treating in Chinese medicine. These are Heart, Lung, Liver, Stomach/Spleen and Kidney.

Depending on what your symptoms are, it will usually indicate an imbalance in a specific organ. For example, palpitations are concerned with the heart.

An energetic imbalance does not mean you have a dramatic health issue. This aspect of Chinese medicine is about prevention, not cure. That means reading the subtle signs and symptoms of the body daily.

Imbalance starts at an energetic level and you rectify it at an energetic level.

The more serious the symptoms, the deeper the imbalance. If the symptom is mild – e.g. low-level anxiety before a meeting or mild rosacea after a glass of red wine, the imbalance will be easier to rectify.

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



It is important to know that when I refer to organ imbalance, I mean energetic and not physical. So, for example, heart imbalance does not mean heart disease. It is a subtle signal that your body is not in balance and the strain of that is impacting your heart energy, which may eventually lead to an issue over time. In the first instance, it could be felt as low level anxiety, occasional palpitations or a lack of desire to socialise. We look for the low level signs to stop things getting a foothold in the body and causing a greater problem further down the line.

Use low levels symptoms as a barometer of your wellness. Address them to keep the body healthy and they are much less likely to become a deeper issue. This is the principle behind yang sheng and self-care.

[View the Kidney Guide](#)

@katie_brindle

katiebrindle.com

info@katiebrindle.com



Want to know more?

We will be delighted to support you as you continue along your Yang Sheng journey. The following will get you started:

'Yang Sheng: The Art of Chinese Self-Healing' available on Amazon, Waterstone and www.hayoumethod.com

Buy Yang Sheng Book

Qigong Healing classes (3 x each week) for a more in-depth and healing practice – full details on www.hayoufit.com

Free Masterclass "[Master Your Health](#)" – understand the 3- step plan for preventative health. Find more Qigong Masterclasses [here](#).

[KBL Cellulite and Stubborn Fat Masterclass](#)

Free self-care weekly content [@katiebrindle](#) on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube.

Free regular gua sha demonstrations on [@thehayoumethod](#) Instagram & the opportunity to purchase the accompanying tools from www.hayoumethod.com

DISCLAIMER:

Please note that any of these Yang Sheng techniques are designed to support your overall self-care and wellbeing and should not be used as a substitute for any Western medical advice or treatment that you may be receiving. You should not use the information in this Guide or on our website for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease and must always consult your doctor if you have any health concerns. Additionally, please note that there are a few contraindications to Yang Sheng techniques, so please visit www.hayoumethod.com to view our comprehensive FAQs.

[@katie_brindle](#)
katiebrindle.com
info@katiebrindle.com