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Media Release - Menopause – There is help at hand through exercise!

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



Menopause – There is help at hand through exercise!

For most women menopause occurs between their early 40's and late 50's.

It's not a time that is looked forward to, with negative associations of ageing, and fear of some of the symptoms that go along with menopause.

While symptoms vary from woman to woman, the most common and often embarrassing symptom is hot flushes which are a sudden and intense feeling of warmth and heat. Most flushes last less than 5 minutes, and occur in up to 65% of menopausal women, especially in the later part of the menopause.

For most women the symptoms of menopause, including hot flushes can be managed through being well informed, practicing self care, and a balanced diet and regular exercise. Hormone replacement therapy is also an option for those with less manageable symptoms.

After menopause the risk of developing coronary heart disease (and high blood pressure), and stroke increases as does the risk of osteoporosis.

While these factors are a concern, lifestyle still contributes to these diseases, so the increased risk can be managed through eating a healthy and balanced diet, getting regular exercise, avoiding smoking and a keeping to a moderate alcohol intake.

Menopause and Weight Gain

Many women are concerned with the possible weight gain associated with being post menopausal. The specific hormonal changes of menopause can make you more likely to gain weight around your abdomen, than around your hips and thighs. But overall weight gain is likely to be a by product of ageing, lifestyle changes and genetics, rather than the menopausal hormones alone. This is great news that middle aged spread is not an inevitable part of being an older woman.

Diet and Exercise

One of the risks for post menopausal women is osteoporosis, and a higher intake of vitamin D and calcium can help reduce this risk. Vitamin D is produced by your body when exposed to sunlight and many readily available food sources such as dairy, dark green veggies and boned fish provide us with calcium.

Weight bearing exercise including walking, group exercise classes and resistance training will help strengthen bones, thus preventing the onset and development of osteoporosis. If you have been a regular exerciser in the years leading up to menopause, you have a head start on your health as your bones will be stronger due to the regular weight bearing exercise, and while breast cancer is more prevalent after menopause, regular exercise can reduce the risk for this as well

Many women find they experience mood changes and symptoms of depression through the time of menopause. The mood elevating benefits of regular exercise can elevate these symptoms.

Doing specific pelvic floor exercises can help to reduce incontinence, no matter what any advertisement on television says, there is no need to 'put up' with bladder weakness at this age.

And when not exercising, making sure that you get enough sleep, and your stress levels are managed, as fatigue and stress can worsen symptoms.

Getting started into regular exercise is something where a little help may be needed to get started. The good news in New Zealand is that there is a nationwide network of REPs Registered Exercise Professionals and facilities (NZ Register of Exercise Professionals) who are qualified and experienced to help with women experiencing menopause. Fortunately many REPs Registered Professionals are comfortable and confident helping women to manage their menopause symptoms as you exercise, so can provide an appropriate level of exercise guidance and support. They also have access to an informative Tell Me More brochure explaining about pelvic floor issues.

To find a Repts Registered Exercise Professional or facility in your area, please go on line to www.reps.org.nz.

References:

ACE <http://www.acefitness.org/acefit/fitness-fact-article/2596/exercise-and-menopause/>

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Who is the NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs)?

REPs is an independent non profit organisation administrating the New Zealand exercise professionals register to ensure that the public receive safe and effective exercise advice.

Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the “Warrant of Fitness Check” that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

