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Media Release – Keeping Moving for Women’s Health and Wellness

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



Keeping Moving for Women’s Health and Wellness

Keeping active throughout life is an important part of staying healthy. However, as we age and at different stages of life, the type of exercise we engage in will need to change to suit us.

For midlife women, this is especially true. With this age group experiencing the onset of perimenopause and then menopause, there are some significant changes that can impact on health, energy levels, sleep and your response to exercise. Midlife and menopause often get a bad reputation, with information focusing on hormones wreaking havoc with women’s bodies and emotions. However, midlife is a time of positive change for most women. Those who have raised families start seeing children growing up and needing less support, and careers tend to become more settled and flexible.

The World Health Organisation measures midlife as beginning at 43 years for New Zealand women. However, there is no hard and fast ‘start’ date, with age related changes being very individualised. The age of menopause averages at around 51 years, with variation common as low as early forties, and for some it does not occur until in their sixties.

Regular exercise is important for overall health and disease prevention, regardless of age and life stage with at least 30 minutes of exercise, 5 days a week still being the gold standard. For midlife women experiencing symptoms of perimenopause and menopause, this exercise message does not change. However, variables around exercise intensity and duration may need to be altered to suit hormonal changes. This is not age-related slowing down, in fact, by changing up the type of exercise undertaken to accommodate changes, many women find their exercise has better results.

Some of the exercise types to be considered as part of a healthy lifestyle include:

Strength Training - Some of the benefits of strength training (using weights equipment) are increased muscle mass and bone density, both areas that are at risk of decreasing as women age. Using heavy weights is not necessarily required to get these results, and in fact often less can be better.

Cardiovascular Training - Getting the heart rate up improves health and fitness levels, and encourages the release of feel good hormones, countering low or variable moods which are often reported amongst menopause symptoms.

Flexibility Training - Taking time out is as important as working out. Doing flexibility training such as yoga and Pilates classes offers the best of both worlds and can be helpful for those wanting to reduce the intensity of their exercise, but still maintain a regular exercise habit.

If you are experiencing symptoms in mid-life, or changes in your exercise response but are keen to keep active, it's important to make sure you have the right information about what exercise suits you. Menopause and its symptoms do not have to lead to reduced activity, as long as the exercise is tailored to your individual needs.

For exercise advice, it's important to always use a registered exercise professional. They are qualified and experienced and work within a scope of practice. This means that if they can't help you with a specific condition or injury, they will make sure you get the advice you need from an appropriate allied health professional.

Contact details for further information about the exercise industry:

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NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. 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 safe 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

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Exercise Association of New Zealand - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.

