

WORK
PERFORMANCE
TIPS
FOR
PERIMENOPAUSAL
WOMEN

Sherly Raymond, LMFT

Perimenopause is a time of transition for women, marked by changes in hormone levels. This transition usually begins in the early 40s and can last for several years. Navigating perimenopause while maintaining your professional responsibilities can feel like a juggling act. You may read some of these and think they can apply to anyone at any given time, but the difference is during the perimenopause stage, most women are unaware of what is taking place in their body and mind. As hormone levels fluctuate, so do energy levels, moods, and even cognitive abilities. However, with the right strategies, you can manage these symptoms effectively in the workplace.

Taking Care of Yourself First and Foremost

It is important for women going through perimenopause to take care of themselves first and foremost. With the right steps and resources, managing the symptoms in the workplace can become much easier. Here are some tips for taking care of yourself while managing perimenopause in the workplace:

- **Get more sleep:** Try to get a full 8 hours of sleep each night, as sleep deprivation can worsen perimenopause symptoms.
- **Exercise more often:** Regular exercise not only can help relieve stress, but it can also help regulate hormones and improve mood.
- **Find ways to reduce stress:** Stress can worsen perimenopause symptoms and can even lead to the exacerbation of existing medical conditions. Take the time to relax, meditate, or enjoy hobbies or activities that can help keep your stress levels manageable.
- **Eat a healthy diet:** Make sure to eat a balanced diet of healthy foods, as well as getting enough water to stay hydrated. When you follow a healthy diet and stay hydrated, your body will be better equipped to handle the symptoms of perimenopause.
- **Consider hormone therapy:** Hormone therapy can help treat the symptoms of perimenopause. Talk with your doctor to see if this is an option for you.
- **Taking care of your body first and foremost is essential to managing perimenopause symptoms in the workplace.** With the right steps, you can feel more empowered to tackle your professional responsibilities effectively.

Create a Comfortable Work Environment

Adjust your workspace to better suit your needs during perimenopause. This might involve small changes that can make a big difference in your comfort and productivity.

Temperature control: If hot flashes are a problem, try to sit near a window or have a fan at your desk. Layer your clothing so you can adjust to your comfort level throughout the day.

Lighting: If you experience migraines or light sensitivity, adjust the lighting in your workspace. Use desk lamps with softer light rather than harsh overhead lighting.

Ergonomics: Ensure your chair and desk setup support good posture and reduce strain. Comfort can help alleviate some physical symptoms like joint pain or headaches.

Plan and Prioritize Tasks

- **Planning and prioritizing tasks** can help you manage your workload more effectively, especially on days when symptoms are more challenging.
- **Use a planner or digital calendar:** Track your tasks and deadlines. Break large projects into smaller, manageable tasks and prioritize them based on urgency and importance.
- **Schedule breaks:** Regular breaks can help manage stress and fatigue. Use this time to stretch, walk, or simply rest.
- **Communicate:** Let your team know if there are days when you might need more flexibility. Clear communication can lead to better understanding and support from colleagues.

Seek Support and Resources

- Don't hesitate to seek support from various resources available to you. Connecting with others who understand what you're going through can make a significant difference.
- Support groups: Join support groups, either in-person or online, where you can share experiences and advice with other women going through perimenopause.
- Professional help: Consider speaking with a healthcare provider or counselor who can offer strategies for managing symptoms and emotional well-being.
- Educational resources: Educate yourself about perimenopause and its effects. The more you know, the better you can manage your symptoms.

Discussing Your Symptoms with Your Boss or Human Resources

- Knowing the symptoms of perimenopause and discussing them with your employer is key to managing your symptoms in the workplace. This can be a difficult conversation to have, especially when talking about hot flashes and night sweats. But, it is important to be honest and open about your symptoms and how they can impact your work.
- If you are uncomfortable discussing the specifics of your symptoms, try to explain the general concept of perimenopause, the changes in hormone levels that can occur, and the potential effects on your work.
- It is a good idea to have a doctor's note describing your perimenopause symptoms, as this may make it easier to discuss your needs at work. If your employer is unhelpful, you may want to consult with a lawyer to discuss your legal rights.
- If you feel comfortable discussing the specifics, let your employer or human resources department know what type of symptoms you are experiencing and what you expect in terms of accommodations or help. Some employers may be understanding and willing to provide accommodations such as flexible work hours or a cooler workspace.
- By implementing these strategies, you can better manage your perimenopause symptoms in the workplace and maintain your professional and personal well-being. Remember, self-care and open communication are key to navigating this transition successfully. With the right support and adjustments, you can continue to thrive in your career during perimenopause.