



9 Fitness Tips for Women Over 40

Being active becomes more important than ever as you approach your 40s and beyond. This is especially true for women, who face fluctuating hormone levels, menopause, and lifestyle changes related to empty-nesting and career transitions. These factors make it tougher than ever to nail down a fitness routine that gets results.

Mid-life is when mood swings and hot flashes become a thing. You may have trouble sleeping and notice that it's harder to maintain muscle tone. Your doctor starts talking about bone density and numbers on the scale may start creeping up. Instead of showing up on the hips and thighs, those extra pounds shift to your core. The good news is there are plenty of ways to fight back. Incorporate these fitness tips into your workouts to take your mid-life fitness to a whole new level.

1. Strength Training is Key



As you get older, strength training becomes more important than ever. Maria Fernanda Gonzalez Weight training becomes more important than ever after 40. “The body’s change in hormones can result in a loss of bone density,” says certified personal trainer and Fit2Go Fitness Director Dani Singer. “Strength training, whether with weights, bands, or body weight, is the best way to protect your bone health through menopause.” On top of bone density benefits, you’ll build lean muscle mass, which can boost your metabolism and increase calorie burn.

2. Use Proper Form

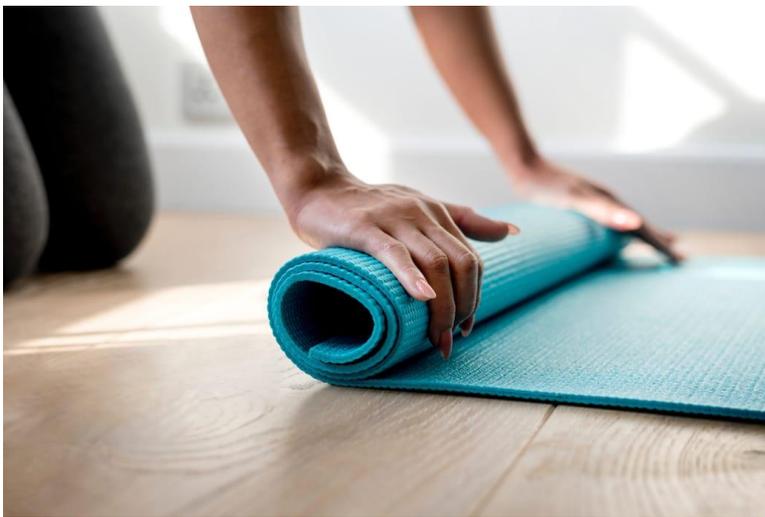
Don’t be afraid to increase weight on your dumbbells and kettlebells—you won’t bulk up. You will, however, be able to reduce the number of reps for more efficient workout sessions. But you need to use proper form: Make sure you can perform reps in a slow and controlled movement, completing eight to 15 reps in a set to the point of muscle fatigue. If you’re straining to maintain proper form, lighten the load. Mix it up with high-rep classes

like Barre or Pilates to challenge muscles and keep things interesting. If you're unsure about form, consult with a personal trainer to get you started on the right track.

3. Get Your Heart Pumping

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [recommends](#) 2.5-5 hours of physical activity a week, more if you're able. Walking, running, swimming, and biking are just a few options to benefit your heart and lungs. Cardio workouts also reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, stroke, and some types of cancer. You'll sleep better, and the endorphins released during exercise will help with mood swings as well.

4. Low Impact Works, Too



Low-impact exercise like yoga can make a big difference for those fighting injuries. rawpixel In your 40s and up you may have chronic injuries from youth sports or from wear and tear over time. Pace yourself, ease into new workout routines with a progression of easy to more-challenging intensity, and use low-impact options. For instance, take a brisk walk, find a trail to hike, or take a spin class. Aim for low impact sports you enjoy and it'll keep you moving.

5. Build in Recovery Time

Your body doesn't heal as quickly at 40 as it does at 20. Embrace this fact by building recovery time into your workout routine. If you exercise daily, mix up what you do each week by alternating cardio days with strength training. Add one or two active recovery days by foam rolling, stretching, or taking a yoga class. You'll still get the mental benefits of exercising but give your body a much-needed break.

6. Move It or Lose It

As you age, ligaments and tendons become less elastic, making your joints more vulnerable to soreness and injury. While stiff joints may make you want to move less, being active will help solve the problem. Build functional training into your routine with exercises like squats, lunges, and hip openers that mimic everyday movements. Concentrate on completing sets with a full range of motion for maximum benefit.

7. Treat Mind and Body

Mental health is every bit as important as your muscles and bones, so treat the whole package with yoga and meditation. In addition to improving flexibility, you're likely to reduce stress, lower cortisol levels, and improve your mood. For women in the midst of menopause, less stress means fewer hot flashes and a better night's sleep.

8. Set the Mood

Find activities that you love and you're more likely to stick to your exercise plan. Greg Rakozy Ask yourself what you need to get the most out of your workouts. Is it music? A favorite group exercise class or instructor? Maybe you'd rather lift weights at home or hit the treadmill tuned in to a new movie or podcast. Pack your gym bag the night before and download your playlists at the beginning of the week. Don't let hunger derail your efforts. Prep nutritious snacks and pack a water bottle in your bag.

9. Make it Fun

Adherence is the bottom line with any fitness program at any age. If you don't look forward to it, you won't keep it up. So choose activities you enjoy and put them on your calendar the same way you'd block out time for a business meeting or a family get together. Motivate yourself by meeting a workout buddy at the gym or setting a training goal like a 5K or walk for charity to keep you on track.

Written by Ann Gibson for RootsRated Media in partnership with Everly.