



**TAKE BACK
CONTROL!**

Simple Ways To
Help You Thrive
in Midlife ... and
Beyond

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Hello!

I'm Jo Blackwell, Founder of The Midlife Movement - an online community of women who are determined to stay visible and create great lives for ourselves during this time of huge change.

I'm so glad you have downloaded this booklet. Why? Because I know how valuable it can be to realise that you are not alone. Especially when experiencing big life changes like those that often happen in our middle years.

It's a time of life when we start wondering "*who am I now?*" When our roles - as mothers, employees, daughters, wives and partners can all begin to change. Throw a tsunami of hormonal upheaval into the mix and it's no wonder that sometimes it can all get a bit too much!



Navigating through those midlife changes can be pretty daunting, but don't worry - we've got your back!

I asked some of our expert contributors for their top tips to not just survive, but thrive in midlife and beyond.

Obviously, it would be crazy to try to implement all these ideas at once! But small changes can make a big difference to the way you feel, so as you read through these tips, make a note of the ones that appeal to you and pick just 1 to try out this week.

Look out for my monthly email to connect you to our community. And join us in the [free Facebook Group](#) where you will be made very welcome.

With love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name "Jo".



"Practice self compassion"

Most people wouldn't treat a friend, loved one or even a stranger with the overly harsh words we use on ourselves. When our minds run seemingly out of control with negative thoughts, it is helpful to have good techniques in place to allow us to be more compassionate and understanding with ourselves.

To ground, or "soothe" ourselves we need an anchor. The anchor can be one of our senses. Here a few examples:

Smells: candles, incense, flowers, baking, cut grass

Vision: beautiful scenery, pictures of people you love, flowers

Hearing: music, sounds of the wind, rain or birds or the sea

Taste: food or drinks you enjoy such as hot chocolate

Touch: cushion, pet, a warm bath, a hot water bottle.

These self-soothing techniques, or coping mechanisms, are often automatic for children. Did you ever as a child just sit and watch the clouds pass by or watch droplets of water on the window when it was raining? These are all grounding techniques. Did you have a favourite teddy or blanket or toy? These are all things that would have grounded you.

As adults we still need to ground ourselves, so find that cushion, those nice smells, those clouds, those flowers, those sounds that help you feel calm, or even that teddy bear. They are brilliant for you!



"I plan a self care session in my diary each week"

Midlife is a time when it's often really difficult for women to find time for themselves. Life can seem overwhelming - work, home, caring for children or elderly parents. Good intentions to set aside time for yourself are often quickly lost.

The only thing I have found works for me is to actually plan into my diary a self care session each week. What I do in that time can vary enormously - from meeting friends to reading a book to having a massage. The important thing is that it is time to put me first and time to recharge batteries.



3 tips to Boost your Health

Our bodies were meant to thrive, to be healthy and live vibrant lives. Optimal health is not difficult! But in getting started on our journey to better health we get bogged down in the details, start procrastinating and then give up. It's all too hard or too complicated. This is why I've condensed the journey into 3 points so you can thrive!

- 1 Maximise the raw materials that your body needs
 - Whole unprocessed food containing a correct balance of nutrients
 - Fresh air
 - Good water
 - Finding your unique way of eating
- 2 Minimise what is harmful for you
 - Reduce processed food
 - Reduce toxins in food and environment
 - Deal with our limiting beliefs about who we are and what we can achieve.
- 3 Prioritise and take responsibility for our own health
 - Create our own unique healing environment
 - Prioritise our sleep, fun, stress reduction, and exercise
 - Develop and maintain meaningful relationships
 - Prioritise and build a visualisation of that future



"You can use acupressure to ease hot flushes and increase energy"

In the small hollow below the collarbone on either side of the breastbone is a little dip or a groove. This is called K27 and is one of the most effective acupressure points in the body.

Place your fingertips below your collarbone and rub on both sides with firm pressure, feeling for that indentation. It may feel sore so ensure you take some long deep breaths as you do this and wait for the soreness to reduce.

The second way to use this is to cross your hands over and tap on these two points until you feel more energised and calm. Remember to take some long breaths as you do this.

What you will experience with regular use (I would recommend to do so several times a day especially if feeling stressed or low in energy) is a feeling of calm, of being able to cope with your day and a general feeling of wellbeing.



"You are not too old and it's not too late!"

How many times have you read that a woman of a certain age “shouldn’t” wear a particular hem length or heel height? Or maybe it’s been advice you should go for a not so funky hair cut or that particular stores are for younger women?

Has it confused you because it’s been related to something you love to do or wear but, oh dear, you are of ‘that age’ so maybe you’ve been getting it wrong?

Well ladies, I say to heck with all that media advice - you are an individual and one to be celebrated for being YOU.

So, you’re not too old for that leather jacket or mini skirt or even the funky hair style you fancy.

Follow your heart.
And own it!



"Remind yourself of everything you have achieved"

Sometimes, with everything going on in our lives - not to mention imposter syndrome and other gremlins – it can be hard to remember how great we really are.

We sometimes forget that our experience adds up to something amazing (not just how old we are!)

One exercise that I use regularly is to take a fresh piece of paper and to list everything that I've achieved. From swimming certificates and brownie badges to some of my most recent achievements. I target between 50 and 100 of these each time. Often the same ones but sometimes some new ones make an appearance.

Individually these don't have to be big achievements, but they add up to the sum of the whole that is Me. And it's a great reminder that I am indeed awesome. And so are You!



"Don't Ignore The Pelvic Floor!"

As women move into perimenopause, the lining of the vaginal wall can become fragile through hormonal changes. This can cause all kinds of problems, including bladder weakness. Does a little wee escape when you laugh, sneeze, cough, jump, or run? You're not alone - 1 in 3 women are affected by pelvic floor disorders. Even if you're not currently suffering like this, it's really important not to ignore your pelvic floor. You can guard against problems developing in the future.

We don't have to "put up with" it. For most women, Kegel exercises will solve the problem. Start small, with manual kegel exercises. Your pelvic floor is like any other muscle, it needs exercising, but take your time - don't try to go from 0-60 in one go!

Consider moving onto using weights (like my Secret Whispers Kegel Weights Kit) to really build up a strength that will have you feeling secure and confident. There are other advantages of using weights too - weights teach you where your correct pelvic floor muscles are, plus you also strengthen that vaginal wall, keeping it toned and healthy.

Use the Coupon Code **MIDLIFEMOVEMENT** to get 10% off the Secret Whispers Kegel Weights Kit

www.secretwhispers.co.uk



"Take time to play"

My tip for thriving is to take time to play. Make space to laugh and have fun! When I make time to do this people are drawn to my energy and I feel revived and ready to continue to thrive.

All too often we forget how to be playful as we get older. Maybe day to day life has run away with us, or we're just used to putting other people first.

This is a good time to rediscover that "inner child" in all of us and give ourselves time to do the things we love doing just for the sake of it - drawing, painting, dancing, singing, swimming, walking, exploring ... anything that makes your heart feel lighter!



"S Club 7 - Essential Ingredients for a Fitter, Happier You!"

- ① **Smile** - It's important to find exercise that you enjoy
- ② **Sweat** - You need to break a sweat 2-3 times per week
- ③ **Specific** - Your exercise regime needs to be specific to you. Midlife women have different needs to 35 year olds. We need to protect our joints, so be sure to include resistance (such as dynobands) in your routine. Avoid exercises like jumping jacks that put stress on the pelvic floor. And work on your balance.
- ④ **Short** - eg: 40 mins. Short sharp burst of exercise are better than long, endurance sessions
- ⑤ **Slow** - Slow, restorative exercise such as Yoga, pilates, swimming, leisurely cycling is very important to reduce stress
- ⑥ **Strong** - Keep moving! Run up and down the stairs, carry heavy shopping bags, put your suitcase in the overhead locker yourself. Use it or lose it - you need to lift weights to stimulate bone growth and strengthen muscles.
- ⑦ **Sociable** - We are sociable beings and exercising with a buddy or a group has huge psychological benefits



"I plan to go on learning until the day I die"

When I reached midlife and all that goes with it, I saw the future as very bleak. So I looked around to see who was still living a full life beyond their midlife and I found that it was mainly women in the arts - actors, writers, painters. The key was that they were still doing what they loved, still mentally active and still learning. So I vowed to do the same and plan to go on learning until the day I die!

When we reach midlife, we start to evaluate our lives and can easily focus on what we have lost and not what we can gain. For many it can be an exciting opportunity, a chance to decide how we want to spend the next 30 years, possibly a third of our life!

So what are you passionate about, what do you love to do? What steps do you need to take to create the life you choose? What new things are you going to learn just for the joy of learning new things?

For me it's running my therapy business. For my role models it was continuing to act or paint or write. And for you, it can be whatever you want!



"5 Simple Steps to a Healthy Pelvis"

- ① **Wear Flat, Flexible Footwear**
Wearing flat footwear is an essential first step to optimal pelvic health.
- ② **Sit on the Floor and Squat More Often**
Most of the furniture we sit on throughout the day also prevents us from maintaining a neutral pelvic position, or from activating our core throughout the day.
- ③ **Check-in with Your Pelvis and Ribcage**
Check-in with your ribcage by placing a hand on your lower ribs on the front of your body. If you feel them pushing forward let them drop down toward your pelvis until you no longer feel them pushing forward.
- ④ **Stretch the Backs of Your Legs**
If the backs of your legs are tight, the muscles will pull your pelvis into a tucked position. So make this part of your daily routine.
- ⑤ **Walk Often**
Walking is one of the best activities you can do to promote a strong pelvic floor, especially walking in flat shoes. Aim for 3 to 5 miles per day, and try to space that distance throughout the day.

You can read more about how you can strengthen your pelvis in [Brittany's blog post](#)



"What you focus on grows"

What you focus on grows, make sure you are thinking about what you do want (not what you don't).

Sounds great eh! How does it work in reality? Let's use a common example of hot flushes, or feeling too hot in general. As soon as you feel hot, that's all you can focus on. You feel every change within your body, acutely concentrating on how it's progressing! All this does is deepen the symptoms you are focusing on.

Suggestion: Remember how it feels to be cold. Remember how it feels to feel 'normal' without the flush. Remember as quickly as possible the feeling of relief when it's over. As you think about what you do want you are programming your brain that you want your body to feel differently.

Now, to be clear, I'm not saying this will immediately remove or stop your symptoms. But it will lessen them during and if you talk to your unconscious mind regularly about how you would prefer to feel at all times, notice the small and steady changes. This can be said for any physical feeling.



"You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs!"

If there's one thought that I would want to leave you with it is this: you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs!

Having survived an extremely rocky path through my own perimenopause, during which I was driven to the limits of my physical, mental and emotional endurance, I can attest to the fact that it *does* get better! My fifties have been my best decade yet and I am no longer fearful of growing older.

I have never had more energy, more clarity of purpose or a greater sense of calm. These are my top tips for thriving through your middle years and beyond:

- ① Stay curious - about other people, new ideas and the wider world
- ② Push yourself outside your comfort zone regularly - that's where life happens
- ③ Nurture your body by fuelling it well and moving it in all directions every day
- ④ Be more self-ish. You can still love your family and friends and be there for them, but this is the time to put yourself and your needs first. You deserve a starring role in your own life. For if not now, when?

NEXT STEPS...



I hope that you have enjoyed this little booklet and have found some inspiration in its pages!

If you are struggling with your midlife transition, I want you to know that you don't have to travel this path alone. I want to support you on your midlife journey - I know I can help you feel good about life again!

You can now book a “Rediscovery” call with me, personally.

It's a gift from me to you. I want to be there for you, like others were there for me. I don't believe any woman should have to go through this transition alone, wondering if she's going crazy!

During this 30 minute session you'll:

- uncover what's stopping you from being happy and free
- start rebuilding your confidence so you begin the process of believing in yourself once more
- begin to get clarity on who you are now, and how you want to spend the next years of your life
- re-ignite that bubble of excitement for the journey ahead
- regain confidence and optimism

You'll walk away feeling hopeful, inspired and empowered. Is that a gift worth giving yourself?

Book your call here: https://calendly.com/jobblackwell/rediscovery_call



www.themidlifemovement.com

THE
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Bloom!

