

ROOTED FITNESS

— est. with grit & grace —

The Menopause Decoder Protocol

*What's Really Happening in Your Body
(And What to Do About It)*

*Discover your menopause type in 7 minutes — and get the exact strength, nutrition, and mindset
protocol your body needs in this season.*

Created by Louise Bagnaschi, CPT
Founder, Rooted Fitness
rootedfitnesslife.com

Have faith and keep training.

SECTION 1

Why Your Body Changed

The Truth No One Is Telling You

If you've been told that fatigue, belly fat, mood swings, and lost strength are just “*part of the change*” — I'm here to tell you something different.

Your body isn't broken. It's asking for a different kind of training, a different kind of fuel, and a different kind of grace.

And the reason nothing has been working isn't because you're lazy, broken, or “too old.” It's because the advice you've been following wasn't built for *this* body, in *this* season.

Let me explain what's really happening.

The 4 Hormones That Changed Everything

There are four hormones that drive almost everything you're experiencing right now — the belly fat, the broken sleep, the energy crashes, the mood swings, the muscle loss, the hot flashes.

These four hormones are: **estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and cortisol.**

Estrogen

Estrogen gives you energy, supple skin, muscle, mood regulation, and a humming metabolism. When it drops in perimenopause and menopause, everything changes.

- **Insulin resistance increases.** Carbs and sugar spike blood sugar higher and stay elevated longer — one major reason belly fat shows up out of nowhere.
- **Muscle becomes harder to build and easier to lose.** Estrogen supports muscle protein synthesis.
- **Bone density decreases,** raising osteoporosis risk.
- **Mood shifts.** Estrogen affects serotonin and dopamine — anxiety and brain fog can show up.

Progesterone

Your calming hormone — helps you sleep and balances estrogen. It usually drops first in perimenopause.

- **Sleep breaks down** — you're waking up at 2 AM and can't fall back asleep.
- **Anxiety increases.** You feel “wired but tired.”

Testosterone

Yes, women have it too. It drives muscle, energy, and libido.

- **Muscle gets harder to build** — strength training stops giving the same results.
- **Energy drops** in a way sleep doesn't fix.
- **Libido can decrease.**

Cortisol

Cortisol isn't bad — you need it to wake up, respond, and train. But when it stays elevated from chronic stress, poor sleep, or over-training, it backfires.

- **Belly fat storage increases** — cortisol specifically targets abdominal fat.
- **Sleep breaks down further.**
- **Muscle breakdown increases** — cortisol is catabolic.
- **Inflammation rises** — joint pain, brain fog, fatigue.

The Critical Shift

As estrogen and progesterone drop, your body becomes more sensitive to cortisol. The same workout that used to feel fine now spikes it. The same stress that used to roll off your back now keeps you up at night. This is why “just push through” doesn't work anymore.

Why “Eat Less, Move More” Is Making It Worse

For most of your life, that advice might have worked. In this season, it backfires.

Why Eating Less Makes It Worse

- **Loses muscle instead of fat.** Without enough protein or calories, your body breaks down muscle for energy — slowing metabolism further.
- **Slows your metabolism.** Chronic under-eating triggers “starvation mode.”
- **Spikes cortisol.** Undereating is a stressor — and cortisol stores belly fat.

Why More Cardio Makes It Worse

- **Spikes cortisol** on an already-stressed body.
- **Breaks down muscle** — less muscle, slower metabolism.
- **Worsens recovery** — more inflammation, more fatigue, more belly fat.

My Story: The Twin Sister Experiment

I was 35 when I had my first hot flash. Sitting in the living room while my kids played, out of nowhere — I got hot. Not from the weather. From inside my body. I took my shirt off and apologized to my kids.

For the next 10 years I dealt with night sweats, irregular periods, and symptoms I didn't understand. I thought my exercise was mitigating them. I thought I was doing everything right.

Then at 45, my period stopped completely. Full menopause. Hot flashes off the charts. Soaking sheets. Insomnia. Harder to maintain muscle. Body softer. Weight gain — without changing my workout or diet.

Even as a CPT, I knew how to eat and train. And it was still getting harder.

Then I noticed something I couldn't ignore. I have an identical twin sister. Same DNA. Same diet. She doesn't work out. I do. Her symptoms were way worse than mine.

Identical genetics, identical diet — completely different symptom severity.

That was the moment I knew: **exercise affects the severity of menopause symptoms.**

So I spent the next 16 years studying, experimenting, and coaching hundreds of women through this exact season. I built a method — **The Rooted Method** — that works *with* this body, in this season, not against it. And now I'm teaching it to you.

SECTION 2

The 6 Menopause Types

Not all menopause is the same. The symptoms you're experiencing point to a specific “type” — and each type requires a different approach.

There are 6 types, and most women are a blend of 2–3. Understanding your type is the first step to fixing what's broken.

TYPE 1

Stress Dominant

Primary hormone: Cortisol

What it feels like

- You feel “wired but tired”
- Exhausted but can't sleep
- Symptoms worsen during stressful weeks
- You crash hard after intense workouts
- Tension in shoulders, neck, and jaw
- Belly fat concentrated in lower abdomen

What's happening

Your body is stuck in fight-or-flight. Cortisol stays elevated all day — breaking down sleep, increasing belly fat, leaving you exhausted but wired.

What you need

- Lower-intensity training (walking, gentle strength)
- Stress management (breathwork, prayer, meditation)
- Sleep optimization (no screens before bed, cool room, magnesium)
- Reduce caffeine, especially after noon

TYPE 2

Insulin Resistant

Primary hormone: Insulin (affected by estrogen decline)

What it feels like

- Hungry all day, especially for sugar and carbs
- Crash 2–3 hours after meals
- Easy weight gain, especially around the midsection
- Tired and foggy after eating
- Intense cravings, especially in the afternoon
- Losing weight feels impossible no matter what you do

What's happening

As estrogen drops, your body becomes more insulin resistant. The same carbs spike blood sugar higher and longer — leading to fat storage, energy crashes, and constant hunger.

What you need

- Protein at every meal (25–40g)
- Carb rotation (match carbs to training days)
- Reduce refined carbs and sugar
- Strength training to improve insulin sensitivity
- Walk after meals to lower blood sugar

TYPE 3

Sleep Deprived

Primary hormone: Progesterone (and melatonin)

What it feels like

- Wake at 2–4 AM and can't fall back asleep
- Exhausted no matter how many hours you sleep
- Need caffeine to function
- Symptoms worse on days after bad sleep
- Foggy and unfocused during the day
- Recovery from workouts feels slow

What's happening

Progesterone drops first in perimenopause and breaks down sleep. Poor sleep spikes cortisol, which further disrupts sleep — a vicious cycle.

What you need

- Consistent sleep schedule (same bed/wake time)
 - Morning sunlight (10–15 minutes)
 - Cool bedroom (60–67°F)
 - No screens 1 hour before bed
 - Magnesium before bed (200–400mg)
 - Eliminate or reduce alcohol
-

TYPE 4

Estrogen Declining

Primary hormone: Estrogen

What it feels like

- Hot flashes and night sweats (multiple per day)
- Vaginal dryness or discomfort
- Brain fog and memory issues
- Mood swings, anxiety, or depression
- Joint pain and stiffness
- Skin changes (dryness, loss of elasticity)

What's happening

Estrogen is dropping faster than your body can adapt — affecting temperature regulation, mood, cognition, joints, and skin.

What you need

- Phytoestrogen-rich foods (flax seeds, soy, legumes)
 - Strength training to support bone density
 - Omega-3 fatty acids (fatty fish, walnuts, flax)
 - Stress management (estrogen drops are amplified by stress)
 - Talk to your doctor about HRT if symptoms are severe
-

TYPE 5

Muscle Loss Risk

Primary hormone: Testosterone (and estrogen)

What it feels like

- Body feels “softer” than it used to
- Losing muscle even though you're strength training
- Metabolism feels slower
- Weaker in everyday activities (groceries, jars)
- Clothes fit differently even when the scale hasn't moved
- Slow recovery from workouts

What's happening

As estrogen and testosterone drop, you lose muscle faster — sarcopenia accelerates after 40. The scale won't budge even when you're doing everything “right.”

What you need

- Protein at every meal (0.8–1.0g per pound of body weight)
- Progressive overload (gradually heavier weights)
- Compound lifts (squats, deadlifts, presses, rows)
- 3 days of strength training per week (minimum)
- Adequate recovery (rest, sleep, stress management)

TYPE 6

Inflammation Dominant

Primary hormone: Cortisol (chronic) + inflammatory markers

What it feels like

- Joint pain and stiffness, especially in the morning
- Bloating and digestive issues
- Brain fog and fatigue
- Skin issues (acne, rashes, eczema)
- Allergies feel worse
- Puffy and swollen
- Symptoms flare unpredictably

What's happening

Chronic stress, poor sleep, and hormonal changes create chronic inflammation that touches joints, gut, brain, and skin.

What you need

- Anti-inflammatory foods (fatty fish, leafy greens, berries, turmeric)
 - Reduce inflammatory foods (sugar, processed foods, excess alcohol)
 - Omega-3 fatty acids (2–3g per day)
 - Gentle movement (walking, yoga, swimming)
 - Stress management (huge for inflammation)
 - Sleep optimization
-

SECTION 3

What's YOUR Menopause Type?

Take this 8-question assessment to find out which type (or combination) describes what you're experiencing right now.

Answer each question with the option (A, B, C, D, or E) that best describes you **right now** — not how you were 5 years ago.

Question 1: Where are you in the menopause journey?

- A) Still getting periods, but they're irregular (Perimenopause)
- B) Periods stopped 1–2 years ago (Early Menopause)
- C) Periods stopped 3+ years ago (Post-Menopause)

Question 2: What's your biggest symptom right now?

- A) Hot flashes and night sweats
- B) Belly fat and weight gain
- C) Sleep disruption / insomnia
- D) Brain fog and mood swings
- E) Low energy and fatigue

Question 3: How is your sleep?

- A) Mostly fine, occasional disruption
- B) Trouble falling asleep
- C) Wake up at 2–4 AM and can't fall back asleep
- D) Wake up hot/sweaty multiple times
- E) Wake up exhausted no matter what

Question 4: How is your energy in the afternoon?

- A) Stable all day
- B) Crash around 2–3 PM
- C) Crash hard after workouts
- D) Steady but low
- E) High morning, gone by lunch

Question 5: How is your hunger?

- A) Normal, predictable
- B) Constant cravings, especially sugar
- C) Don't feel hungry but tired
- D) Hungry right after meals
- E) Hungry all day, never satisfied

Question 6: How does your body respond to cardio?

- A) Fine, I recover well
- B) Exhausted after, hard to recover
- C) Lose weight at first, then plateau
- D) Makes my hot flashes worse
- E) Makes me hungrier, not less

Question 7: How is your stress level?

- A) Manageable
- B) High but I handle it
- C) High and it's affecting my sleep
- D) Low but I have no energy
- E) Constant, I feel “wired but tired”

Question 8: What's your #1 goal right now?

- A) Lose belly fat
- B) Sleep through the night
- C) Build muscle and feel strong
- D) Have more energy
- E) Balance my hormones naturally

SECTION 4

Scoring Your Results

Count how many of each letter you chose:

A's = Estrogen Declining

If you have 3 or more A's, you're primarily an **Estrogen Declining** type. The rapid drop in estrogen is causing hot flashes, night sweats, brain fog, and joint pain. Support your body with phytoestrogen-rich foods, strength training for bone density, and stress management.

B's = Insulin Resistant

If you have 3 or more B's, you're primarily an **Insulin Resistant** type. Your body has become more insulin resistant as estrogen dropped — causing belly fat, energy crashes, hunger, and weight gain. Fix protein intake, rotate carbs, and add strength training to improve insulin sensitivity.

C's = Sleep Deprived

If you have 3 or more C's, you're primarily a **Sleep Deprived** type. Broken sleep is usually caused by progesterone dropping first. Poor sleep spikes cortisol, creating a vicious cycle. Optimize your sleep environment, establish a consistent schedule, add magnesium and morning sunlight.

D's = Muscle Loss Risk

If you have 3 or more D's, you're primarily a **Muscle Loss Risk** type. You're losing muscle faster than you used to — slowing metabolism and weakening you. Hit your protein target every day, add progressive overload, and prioritize recovery.

E's = Stress Dominant

If you have 3 or more E's, you're primarily a **Stress Dominant** type. Chronic stress and elevated cortisol are breaking down sleep, storing belly fat, and leaving you exhausted but wired. Reduce training intensity, add stress management, prioritize recovery.

Most Women Are a Blend

If your answers split across multiple types (common), you're a blend of 2–3 types. Focus on the type with the most answers first, then address the second once you've made progress.

Example: 3 B's + 2 E's = primarily Insulin Resistant with some Stress Dominant. Start with the Insulin Resistant plan, then layer in Stress Dominant strategies once blood sugar is stable.

SECTION 5

Your Custom Action Plans

Based on your results, here's exactly what to do this week for your specific type.

If You're Estrogen Declining

This Week's Action Plan

Nutrition

- Add 1–2 tbsp ground flax seeds to breakfast daily (phytoestrogens)
- Fatty fish 2–3 times this week (salmon, sardines, mackerel)
- Include soy if tolerated (tofu, tempeh, edamame)
- Reduce caffeine to 1 cup per day, before noon

Training

- 3 strength sessions this week (30–45 min)
- Compound lifts (squats, deadlifts, presses, rows)
- 2 walks (20–30 min, outside if possible)

Recovery

- 10–15 min morning sunlight daily
- 5 min deep breathing before bed
- Magnesium glycinate before bed (200–400mg)
- Talk to your doctor about HRT if hot flashes are severe

Mindset

Before bed, place one hand on your heart and say: *“This body is doing the work.”*

Journal Prompt

“What does it mean to me to age with strength, not just survive menopause?”

If You're Insulin Resistant

This Week's Action Plan

Nutrition

- Hit your protein target daily (0.8–1.0g per lb of body weight)
- 25–40g of protein at every meal
- Reduce refined carbs and sugar
- Walk 10–15 min after every meal (lowers blood sugar)

Training

- 3 strength sessions this week (30–45 min)
- Strength improves insulin sensitivity more than cardio
- 2 walks (20–30 min)
- Avoid long, intense cardio

Recovery

- Consistent sleep schedule (7–8 hours)
- No eating 2–3 hours before bed
- Magnesium before bed

Mindset

Before meals, pause: *“Am I hungry, or am I stressed?”*

Journal Prompt

“What's one food I crave that I know makes me feel worse afterward?”

If You're Sleep Deprived

This Week's Action Plan

Nutrition

- Cut caffeine after 2 PM (non-negotiable)
- No alcohol this week (it fragments sleep)
- Magnesium glycinate before bed (200–400mg)
- Last meal 2–3 hours before bed

Training

- 3 strength sessions (30–40 min, not too intense)
- 2 walks (20–45 min outside if possible)
- No intense workouts within 3 hours of bedtime

Recovery

- 10–15 min morning sunlight
- Consistent sleep schedule — even on weekends
- Cool bedroom (60–67°F)
- No screens 1 hour before bed
- 4-7-8 breath in bed (inhale 4, hold 7, exhale 8 × 4 rounds)

Mindset

Before bed, say a prayer of thanks for the day.

Journal Prompt

“What does my body need tonight that it didn't get last night?”

If You're Muscle Loss Risk

This Week's Action Plan

Nutrition

- Hit your protein target daily (0.8–1.0g per lb)
- 25–40g protein at every meal (critical)
- Spread protein across 3–4 meals
- Don't cut calories — eat to support muscle growth

Training

- 3 strength sessions (30–45 min)
- Progressive overload — heavier weights or more reps over time
- Compound lifts (squats, deadlifts, presses, rows)
- 2 walks (20–45 min)

Recovery

- 2 full rest days per week
- 7–8 hours of sleep
- Magnesium before bed (supports muscle recovery)

Mindset

Before workouts whisper: *“I am building the body I'll have at 70.”*

Journal Prompt

“What is one physical thing I want to still be doing 20 years from now?”

If You're Stress Dominant

This Week's Action Plan

Nutrition

- Cut caffeine after noon
- Eat regular meals — don't skip
- Anti-inflammatory foods (fatty fish, leafy greens, berries, turmeric)
- Reduce sugar and processed foods

Training

- 2–3 moderate strength sessions (30–40 min)
- 2–3 walks (20–45 min outside)
- Avoid intense cardio (spikes cortisol)
- Yoga or gentle stretching 1–2× per week

Recovery

- 5 min box breathing daily (4 in · 4 hold · 4 out · 4 hold)
- 10 min prayer or meditation
- 10–15 min morning sunlight
- Consistent sleep schedule (non-negotiable for stress types)

Mindset

Before bed, hand on heart: *“I am safe. I am held. I can rest.”*

Journal Prompt

“Where am I holding tension I haven't acknowledged?”

SECTION 6

What Now?

You've identified your menopause type. You have a custom action plan. You know exactly what to do this week.

But here's the truth: a week is just the beginning.

The women who actually transform their bodies, energy, and confidence in perimenopause and menopause don't do it with a one-week protocol. They do it by stacking weeks like this one — with support, structure, and a coach in their corner.

If something shifted in you while reading this — even a little — **that's the signal. Don't let it fade.**

Next Step — The Stronger After 40 Starter Challenge

A 4-week live group experience built on The Rooted Method. You'll get the exact protocol I use with my 1-on-1 clients — strength training, protein-first nutrition, and weekly coaching — designed specifically for women in perimenopause, menopause, and beyond.

Each Bloom is capped at **25 women** so I can actually coach you.

Inside the challenge, you'll get:

- The Rooted Method Starter Plan (\$297 value)
- Custom Meal Plan Templates (\$197 value)
- 4 Weekly Group Coaching Calls with Louise (\$397 value)
- Private Community Access (\$197 value)
- Beginner Strength Workout Library (\$97 value)
- The Perimenopause Strength Quick-Start Guide (\$47 value)
- Stronger For Life Welcome Kit (\$97 value)

Total value: \$1,329 · **Your investment:** \$197

Learn more: rootedfitnesslife.com/stronger-after-40

Have faith and keep training,

Louise Bagnaschi, CPT

Founder, Rooted Fitness