THE FIVE FOUNDATIONS

The Midlife Foundations Guide

Five foundations for perimenopause and menopause, and where to start.

START HERE

Hi, I'm Ashley. If you picked up this guide, something has probably shifted. Maybe it's your sleep, the hot flashes, your mood, or your jeans. You're not imagining it, and you're not doing anything wrong.

I teach foundations first: blood sugar balance, sleep, stress, digestion, and a nutrient-dense diet. You don't have to work on all five at once.

Pick one or two ideas. Small and steady beats a dramatic Monday overhaul.

What's shifting in midlife

Hormones	Estrogen and progesterone change during perimenopause. Hot flashes, night sweats, and changes in sleep or mood can show up.
Timing	For people who menstruate, menopause is reached after 12 straight months without a period, when there's no other cause.
Daily life	Work and family don't slow down just because your body is changing. Start with what feels manageable.

Begin with three daily habits

01 Blood sugar balance

If you notice energy dips or cravings, look at what and when you're eating before changing everything at once.

- **Include protein at breakfast.** Try eggs and Greek yogurt, tofu scramble, or last night's leftovers.
- **Pair carbs with protein, fat, or fiber.** Try fruit with yogurt or toast with nut butter.
- **Walk for 10 minutes after a meal** if that's comfortable for you.

02 Sleep

Hot flashes and night sweats can interrupt sleep. A few changes to your routine and room can make nights more comfortable.

- **Choose a steady wake-up time.** Keep it on weekends if you can.
- **Keep the room cool and dark.** Use layers you can kick off at 2 a.m.
- **Try moving your last coffee earlier** and notice if an evening glass of wine affects your sleep.

03 Stress

Midlife can stack a lot at once: kids, aging parents, work, and a changing body. Start with a pause you can actually fit in.

- **Take five slow breaths** before your first bite.
- **Get outside in daylight** for 10 minutes, ideally in the morning.
- **Make time for strength work** twice a week if you can. Start at your level and build from there.

Make the plate work for you

04 Digestion

If you’re noticing new bloating or constipation, pay attention to what’s changed. You don’t have to overhaul your diet to start.

- **Sit down to eat** and chew until the food is soft.
- **Focus on comfortable, regular bowel movements.** If you’re constipated, increase fiber gradually and drink water throughout the day.
- **Add one fiber-rich plant food.** Try ground flax, berries, or cooked greens.

05 Nutrient-dense diet

Protein foods, plants, and sources of healthy fat give you plenty of ways to build a meal you’ll want to eat.

- **Start with a protein food** and add vegetables or fruit and a source of fat you enjoy.
- **Include magnesium-rich foods** such as pumpkin seeds, leafy greens, or beans. Yes, dark chocolate counts too.
- **Vary your omega-3 sources.** Try salmon or sardines, or walnuts for a plant source.

When to get medical help

Contact your healthcare provider about any bleeding after menopause, very heavy or unusually frequent periods, persistent low mood or anxiety, or a new symptom that’s severe or worsening. **Call 911 for suspected heart attack symptoms such as new chest pain or sudden shortness of breath, or if you’re in immediate danger.** If you’re considering hormone therapy, discuss the risks and benefits with your clinician.

Further reading

Office on Women’s Health · Menopause · AHA · Emergency warning signs

Your seven-day starter plan

Try one small change a day. Tick what you try and keep the one or two changes you want to do again.

☐	DAY 1	Add a protein food to breakfast.
☐	DAY 2	Take a 10-minute walk after dinner if you feel up to it.
☐	DAY 3	Pick one wake-up time and stick with it this week.
☐	DAY 4	At one meal, sit down, take a few breaths, and chew slowly.
☐	DAY 5	Try adding a tablespoon of ground flax to something you already eat, if you tolerate it.
☐	DAY 6	Move your last coffee earlier and see whether it changes your sleep.
☐	DAY 7	Look back. Which one or two habits felt worth keeping?

WHAT I'LL KEEP

Want help putting this together?

Every woman's midlife looks different. If you'd like a plan built around your body and your actual week, let's talk.

Book a free 30-minute discovery call

Ashley Crawford, NTP
Nourish Wise

This information is educational and not a substitute for medical advice. Always consult your healthcare provider before making changes to your medication.