

Participant Information Sheet

Understanding How Menopausal Women Perceive the Influence of Exercise on Their Physical, Psychological and Social Wellbeing

Invitation to research

Menopause is a period of life in which reproductive hormones deplete, and periods eventually stop (NHS, 2022). According to the NHS (and many other sources), exercise is a key management technique for menopausal symptoms. However, there are many barriers within menopausal symptoms themselves, and wider factors relating to this stage, that may hinder engagement with exercise. Similarly, there may be factors that increase likelihood of engaging in exercise while menopausal. It is therefore key to gather the thoughts and experiences of women who have experienced exercise during menopause, so as to understand what helps and hinders engagement. My name is Kathryn Hayward, and I am an MSc Health Psychology student at Manchester Metropolitan University. The current study intends to explore women's experiences of exercise during menopause, so as to explore subjective experiences and delve deeper into the reasons why people do or do not exercise.

Why have I been invited?

Women who are experiencing the menopausal transition are invited to take part in this study. You are eligible to take part if you are:

- 45 years old or above
- experiencing menopausal transition (perimenopausal or postmenopausal)
- have attempted regular engagement with exercise during this time.

A minimum of 12 participants are going to be involved in this study.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide. This information sheet describes the study and you will be able to ask us any questions before taking part. We will then ask you to indicate your consent on a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any moment with no consequences. After participation, you then have a further 7 days to withdraw, which can be done by contacting the Principal Investigator and citing your identifier, which will be given to you in the focus group. After 7 days, the data will no longer be identifiable so by then withdrawal is not possible.

What will I be asked to do?

If you choose to participate, you will be invited to partake in an online focus group, via Microsoft Teams. These focus groups will run for approximately one hour, in which the group will be asked questions by the investigator and given space to discuss anything they believe relevant to the study. All discussion will be audio recorded for later transcription. Prior to the focus groups you will receive a Participant Information Sheet, a copy of the Eligibility Criteria, and a Consent Form (we will also ask for verbal consent during the recording) via a Qualtrics form, which you will read through and confirm your interest.

Are there any risks if I participate?

It is not anticipated that there will be any risk to participants during this study, but it is possible that, due to the subject matter, participants may feel some distress when discussing their experiences. Such risk will be managed by avoiding any questions containing insensitive or inappropriate wording. If a question causes distress, it is not necessary for you to answer it, nor give justification for not doing so. Should you demonstrate signs of distress during the focus group, the discussion will be halted, support will be immediately offered, and you may decide whether you wish to continue or not, without any kind of penalty. If you do not feel comfortable continuing, you will be removed from the focus group and

provided suggested support networks to contact and, should you consent, a follow up email will be sent to check that you are no longer distressed after the focus group finishes.

Are there any advantages if I participate?

Your contributions to discussion will be extremely useful in exploring the subject of exercise during menopause, through voicing and understanding the subjective experiences of women who have experienced this.

Informed consent

If you choose to participate, we will ask for your consent prior to focus group attendance. This will involve confirming your consent via an online form, as well as providing audio-recorded at the start of focus groups. Recordings and forms will be saved in an MMU OneDrive.

What information about me will you collect and why?

The information we will collect includes your gender assigned at birth, age range, your menopause status, and information about your physical activity during menopause, as these pieces of information are all relevant to the data we are collecting about exercise during menopause. Ethnicity information will also be collected, in case it is contextually relevant to an experience described during a focus group discussion. This information will be collected via an online form before focus group attendance.

How will my information be stored and how will you look after it?

Personal data and audio will be securely stored in an MMU OneDrive. Transcripts from focus groups will be anonymised and kept in a separate folder from the personal data information. Audio recordings will be destroyed after project completion.

How will you use my information?

Audio recordings will be used to create anonymised transcripts of the focus groups to then be analysed as part of the researcher's final project. Therefore, in the final project and any time after anonymisation, information is not identifiable.

Will my data be sent anywhere else, or shared with other people or organisations?

Your personal data will not be sent anywhere else or used in any other way beyond that described above. The anonymised research data is intended to be deposited in an Open Access repository should you consent to this.

When will you destroy my information?

Personal data will be deleted within 3 months of completing the project. Anonymised research data (transcripts) will be stored until project completion and submission of the project and transferred to the supervisor for long-term storage. Audio recordings will be deleted immediately after project completion.

Data Protection Law

Data protection legislation requires that we state the 'legal basis' for processing information about you. In the case of research, this is 'a task in the public interest.' If we use more sensitive information about you, such as information about your health, religion, or ethnicity (called 'special category' information), our basis lies in research in the public interest. Manchester Metropolitan is the Controller for this information and is responsible for looking after your data and using it in line with the requirements of the data protection legislation applicable in the UK.

You have the right to make choices about your information under the data protection legislation, such as the right of access and the right to object, although in some circumstances these rights are not absolute. If you have any questions, or would like to exercise these rights, please contact the researcher or the University Data Protection Officer using the details below.

You can stop being a part of the study at any time, without giving a reason. You can ask us to delete your data at any time, but it might not always be possible. If you ask us to delete information within 7 days of partaking in a focus group, we will make sure this is done. If you ask us to delete data after this point, we might not be able to. If your data is anonymised, we will not be able to withdraw it, because we will not know which data is yours.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research study will be submitted as the Principal Investigator's dissertation project to Manchester Metropolitan University. There is potential for the final report to be submitted to journals and presented at conferences in the future.

Who has reviewed this research project?

This project has been reviewed and approved by Manchester Metropolitan University's Research Ethics Committee.

Who do I contact if I have concerns about this study or I wish to complain?

If you have any concerns regarding this study, you can contact the project lead, Kathryn Hayward at Kathryn.hayward2@stu.mmu.ac.uk, or their academic supervisor, Chanais Matthias at C.Matthias@mmu.ac.uk, or in writing to: The Department of Psychology, Manchester Metropolitan University, 53 Bonsall Street, Manchester, M15 6GX.

You can also contact the Faculty of Health and Education Ethics Committee at Manchester Metropolitan University, at FOHE-Ethics@mmu.ac.uk, or in writing to: The Department of Psychology, Manchester Metropolitan University, 53 Bonsall Street, Manchester, M15 6GX.

Manchester Metropolitan Data Protection Officer dataprotection@mmu.ac.uk

Tel: 0161 247 3331 Legal Services, All Saints Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, M15 6BH

UK Information Commissioner's Office

You have the right to complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office if you would like to complain about how we process your personal data:

<https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT