SESSION TRANSCRIPT · THE MISSING PIECES OF PERIMENOPAUSE

Why You're So Tired: How the Invisible Load Affects Your Body in Perimenopause

with Jami Chance · Day 1, Monday, October 26 · The Invisible Load

Have you ever reached the end of the day and thought, why am I this tired? I didn't even do that much today. Except you really did. Maybe not all of it was visible. But you remembered the appointment. You figured out what was for dinner. You worried about your teenager. You checked on your mom or dad. You handled the problems at work. You noticed that groceries were running low. You answered the texts. You remembered what needs to happen tomorrow. And somewhere in there, you tried to take care of yourself too.

And then perimenopause enters the picture. Maybe your sleep isn't what it used to be. Your energy feels different. Maybe your body feels less predictable. And the things that used to work for you don't always seem to work the same way anymore. And suddenly you're wondering why you can't seem to keep up the way that you once did.

So today I want to talk about something that might be missing from the conversation about how we feel during perimenopause. What if your exhaustion isn't only about what you're doing? What if it's also about everything that you're carrying?

I'm Jami Chance. I'm a health coach, a functional nutrition counselor, and a longtime belly dance instructor. I help women, especially those over 40, better understand their changing bodies and find realistic ways to support their energy, manage their stress, and feel better in their bodies. And one of the things I want women to understand is that your body is not separate from the life that you're living. So let's talk about that.

You may have heard the phrase "the invisible load." When we talk about the invisible load, we're not simply talking about having a long to-do list. It's the mental and emotional work happening behind all of those many things that you do. Things like the planning, the remembering, anticipating everybody's needs, the worrying, the deciding, the managing, the caring and the caretaking.

Let's take something as ordinary as getting dinner on the table. Cooking dinner is the visible task. But behind that task, somebody may have had to remember that groceries were needed, had to decide what everyone would eat, had to know who would be home for dinner, and had to remember that somebody has an appointment. You had to figure out when there would be time

to get to the grocery store. And then you realize that nobody remembered to thaw the chicken. So that's the invisible part.

And it doesn't necessarily stop when you sit down. You can be physically sitting on the couch doing very little while your brain is still running through tomorrow's schedule, something that happened at work, whether your child is okay, what your aging parent is doing, what you forgot at the grocery store, and whether you stopped to reply to that important email before you left the office. So even when you're sitting still, your mind may not be.

And all of that is happening while you're trying to navigate your own life and your changing body. Because perimenopause doesn't arrive in an otherwise empty life. For many women, it arrives during years when life is already incredibly full and hectic. You may be managing a career or a business. You may have children or teenagers who still need you, just in different ways. You may have parents who need more help than they used to. There may be changes in relationships or finances, work, family roles, or your sense of who you are and what you want this next part of your life to look like.

And at the same time, your own body may feel far less predictable. Your sleep may change. Your energy levels may change. The way that you recover may feel different. Your relationship with food or movement may feel different. You may find yourself thinking, why can't I do what I need to do?

But here's the part that I'd like for you to consider. Your changing body is experiencing your already full life. Those things are not happening in separate compartments. This is really the central idea I want you to take away from today: your body isn't separate from the life that you're living.

Sleep can influence how you feel. Nourishment can influence how you feel. Movement can influence how you feel. Breath and recovery can influence how you feel. Hormonal changes may be a part of the picture. And the mental and emotional demands of your life may be a big part of that picture as well.

But I want to be really clear here. I'm not suggesting that every symptom you experience is caused by stress, or by having too much on your plate. Fatigue and other changes can have many causes, and persistent, worsening, or really concerning symptoms deserve appropriate medical attention. What I am saying is that we can't fully understand how we feel by looking at our bodies completely separately from the lives those bodies are living. Sometimes we get so focused on finding the one thing that's wrong that we stop looking at the bigger picture. And sometimes that bigger picture contains very useful information.

So what might that bigger picture look like? When you're running on empty, you might notice low energy. Maybe you're not sleeping well. Maybe cravings feel stronger. Maybe you have less patience. Maybe it's harder to motivate yourself to do things you know would probably help you feel better. Maybe you make plans to exercise and then can't imagine doing it when the time comes. Or maybe you intend to cook dinner and end up grabbing whatever is easiest. Maybe you tell yourself you're going to bed early tonight, but then you stay up later than you intended, because it's the first time all day that nobody needed something from you.

And then it's very easy to interpret those things as simply a discipline problem. You say, why can't I stick with anything? Why can't I get myself together? Man, I know what I should be doing. Why am I not doing it? But sometimes what we're interpreting as a motivation problem may actually be a capacity problem. And that's a very different way of looking at it. Because if the problem is simply that you're lazy or undisciplined, the obvious answer is to push yourself harder. But what happens when you're already depleted?

When we don't feel good, we often respond by giving ourselves another job. We tell ourselves to eat better, to exercise more, to get organized, to create a morning routine, to track everything, to be more disciplined, to try harder. So we find a new eating plan. We download another app. We decide we're going to exercise five days a week, and we create a beautiful new routine. And sometimes those things can be useful. But if the plan requires more capacity than we currently have, it can quickly become one more responsibility that we're trying to carry.

And then when we can't maintain it, what do we do? We blame ourselves. We decide that we aren't disciplined enough. We start over again every Monday, and sometimes we make the next plan even stricter, because obviously we just didn't try hard enough the first time.

But I want you to consider something else. Sometimes the plan fails because it asks for more capacity than you currently have. That doesn't mean that you can't make changes. What it means is we may need to start somewhere other than, how can I make myself try harder?

We can start with curiosity, not criticism. So instead of beginning with, what's wrong with me, try asking, what happened? What might be connected? What do I need?

Let's say that you notice you crash every afternoon around 3:00. Instead of immediately deciding that you need more discipline or another cup of coffee, get curious. Ask, how did I sleep last night? What have I eaten today? How long has it been since I've eaten? What has today required from me? Has today been unusually stressful? Have I had an opportunity to pause or recover? Did I start the day already tired? What else am I carrying today?

You're not trying to diagnose yourself. You're simply gathering information. And sometimes simply changing the question from "what's wrong with me" to "what's happening" can change the way that you respond to yourself.

So I'd like to give you three very simple things that you can practice this week. Not ten, and certainly not a complete lifestyle overhaul. Just three.

The first thing is to notice. Notice when your energy tends to dip. You don't have to track every hour of every day. Just start paying attention. When do you tend to feel the most depleted?

The second thing is to connect. Ask yourself what tends to happen around this moment. What happened beforehand? What seems to make those days harder? And don't only study the hard days. Notice the days when you feel more like yourself as well. What's different? Again, you're looking for patterns, not trying to prove that one thing caused another.

The third thing is support. Choose one small thing that might help. Maybe you notice that your afternoon crash tends to happen on the days when lunch gets pushed aside. Your support might be making lunch easier. Maybe you notice that evenings feel especially difficult after days when you've gone nonstop from one responsibility to another. Your support might be giving yourself a few quiet minutes before immediately moving into the next thing. Maybe you realize that you're trying to maintain an exercise routine that simply doesn't fit your life anymore. Your support might mean making movement smaller and more realistic for now.

Just one observation, one connection, and one supportive response. You don't have to do everything this week.

This way of thinking is at the heart of the framework that I use in my work, which I call the WISE Body Method. WISE stands for witness, interpret, support, and embody. We witness what's happening instead of immediately judging it. We interpret by getting curious about patterns and possible connections. We support ourselves based on what we're learning, instead of automatically pushing ourselves harder. And then we embody what we've learned by making realistic choices that fit our actual lives.

You don't need to completely reinvent your life every time something stops working. You can pause, notice your experience, adjust your support, and try the next choice.

So if you've been frustrated because your body doesn't respond the way it once did, or because you're struggling to maintain a habit you think you should be able to maintain, or because you keep telling yourself that you should be handling all of this better, I would like for you to consider another possibility. You may not need more discipline. You may need more information about what your body and your life are asking of you.

Maybe the fact that something isn't working isn't evidence that you've become lazy or undisciplined. Maybe it's information. Maybe something has changed. Maybe your needs have changed. Maybe your capacity has changed. And maybe the plan needs to change. And information gives us somewhere to begin.

So if you're sitting there thinking, okay, Jami, but how do I actually start figuring this out for myself? I've created something to help you do exactly that. It's called The Midlife Energy Reset: 5 Small Shifts to Feel Less Drained and More Like Yourself. It's a short, practical guide that will help you notice what may be draining your energy, begin looking for your own patterns, and choose a simple way to support yourself without trying to overhaul your entire life.

You'll look at things like your physical energy and recovery, your mental and emotional load, your daily body support, and the way you're relating to your changing body. Then you'll begin connecting some of those dots and choose one realistic place to start. You can work through the whole thing in about 10 to 15 minutes. You'll find the information for getting your copy right here with my summit session. Use the summit code provided with the resource, and you'll be able to access it.

My hope is that it helps you take what we've talked about today and make it personal, because your patterns matter, your circumstances matter, and what supports you matters.

If there's one thing I hope you remember after today, it's this: your body is not separate from the life you're living. Midlife may change some of the ways your body communicates with you. Your energy may change. Your capacity may change. And the things that supported you at one point in your life may need to change as well. Instead of immediately fighting those changes, judging yourself, or assuming that the answer is just to push yourself harder, start listening. Notice. Get curious. Offer support.

And remember, your body is not something that you need to conquer. It's something that you can learn to understand.

Thank you so much for spending this time with me.