



# Why you cannot shift the *weight* around your middle.

A short read for the woman whose bloods come back fine, whose habits have not changed, and who is being told this is what happens in your forties, when she knows in her body that something else is going on.

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THE HOLLAND CLINIC · MELBOURNE



## *When the bloods come back fine but the weight will not shift.*

You have not changed what you eat or how you train.

Your bloods come back fine.

You are told this is what happens in your forties.

You know in your body that something else is going on, beautiful, and you are right.

## *What is actually happening.*

In early perimenopause, progesterone is usually the first hormone to decline, because ovulation becomes less reliable. At the same time, oestradiol does not simply fall away. It fluctuates, sometimes surging higher than your previous normal, sometimes dropping sharply.

Your testosterone, by contrast, stays comparatively stable across this transition. Because oestradiol eventually falls while testosterone holds steady, the ratio between them shifts. Researchers call this *relative androgen excess*.

It does not mean your testosterone is too high. It means androgens have become comparatively more influential, because the oestrogen that once balanced them has decreased.

*Tide, weather, and the ratio that quietly changes.*

- Progesterone, the slow, steady tide. First to decline as ovulation becomes less reliable.
- Oestradiol, the weather. Surges and crashes, eventually falling away.
- Testosterone, comparatively stable. Suddenly more influential.
- Insulin resistance worsens through disrupted sleep, rising cortisol, age-related muscle loss, and the declining protective effect of oestradiol.
- Higher insulin tells the ovaries to produce more androgens; higher androgens worsen insulin resistance. A reinforcing cycle.

*This is why eat-less, move-more so often fails in this season. It is not a personal failure.*

*Think of progesterone as the slow, steady tide of your cycle. Oestrogen is the weather; changeable, dramatic, occasionally stormy.*

As ovulation becomes unreliable, the tide weakens and the weather creates larger waves than your body has felt before.

iii. — FIVE STEPS

*Five things you can begin this week.*

None of these will, on their own, undo a metabolic shift. Together, practised gently and consistently, they begin to soften the loop.

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01

*Nourishment: build each meal around protein, good fats, and fibre.*

The more accurate goal in this season is sufficient nourishment, not caloric restriction. Refined carbohydrates worsen the picture by feeding insulin resistance, and chronic under-eating raises cortisol, which feeds the same pattern.

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02

*The morning: begin your day with the Power Cuppa.*

Nourishment before stimulants. The Power Cuppa replaces empty-stomach caffeine with something that goes in as actual food first thing.

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03

*Movement: trade endless cardio for muscle-preserving strength work.*

Strength work protects the muscle that keeps your metabolism flexible. Loss of muscle is one of the reasons insulin resistance worsens in this season. Long, high-intensity cardio raises cortisol, which worsens insulin resistance further and amplifies the very pattern you are trying to shift.

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04

*Sleep: treat your sleep as clinical, not optional.*

Disrupted sleep raises cortisol and worsens insulin sensitivity. Both of those drive central fat storage. Treating your sleep as a clinical priority rather than something to push through is one of the most useful interventions in this season.

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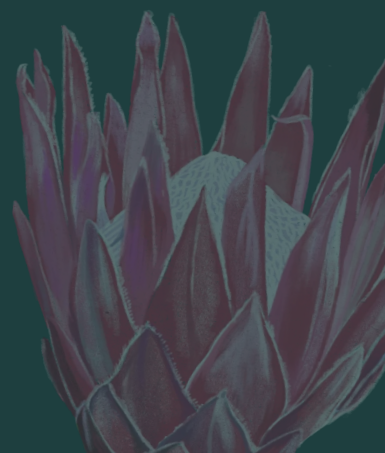
05

*The cortisol cost: take your stress seriously as a metabolic factor.*

Chronic stress raises cortisol; cortisol worsens insulin resistance; the insulin and androgen cycle then reinforces itself in a way lifestyle alone often cannot break. Pushing harder, sleeping less, and adding more high-intensity training carries a cortisol cost the body cannot afford in this season. Look at where your stress load is heaviest, and find one thing you can genuinely reduce.

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*The weight around your middle is not a personal failure. It is a metabolic shift in your **biochemistry**, and it responds when someone actually looks at the loop that is driving it.*



# *Inside the Vitality Clinic, this is where we begin.*

Precision is not a luxury; it is the thing that makes the difference between feeling dismissed and actually getting better.

This is how we work the Reclaim phase, seven quiet pieces of the same picture, brought together so we can see what your biochemistry is asking for.

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## 01 · EAT

*The food protocols.*

The Power Cuppa, protein-first meals, and the food protocols customised to your unique biochemistry.

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## 02 · SLEEP

*The clinical priority most overlooked.*

Sleep as a metabolic intervention, treated with the seriousness it deserves.

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## 03 · MOVE

*Strength before cardio.*

Muscle-preserving movement that protects insulin sensitivity rather than spiking cortisol.

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## 04 · THINK

*Stress as a metabolic factor.*

Stress load named and addressed. Cortisol is not separate from the weight pattern; it is part of it. We work out where your stress sits and find what can genuinely come down.

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## 05 · CONNECT

*Not navigating this alone.*

The clinical relationship itself, and the company of other women learning to read this season, is part of how the stress load comes down.

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## 06 · TEST

*The full picture.*

Foundational blood panel including insulin, HbA1c, full hormone mapping on the right days of your cycle, and the DUTCH test where relevant.

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07 · PRESCRIBE

*Where the loop needs more than lifestyle.*

Botanical, nutraceutical, and where indicated, cyclic micronised progesterone. Discussed in the Substack article in detail.



*For more resources like this*

I write about what women in my Vitality Clinic ask for, and what supports informed consent.

SCAN, OR VISIT

[resources.thehollandclinic.com/more](https://resources.thehollandclinic.com/more)

· — NEXT

FREE · 5 MINUTES

*Take the Perimenopause Self-Assessment.*

→ Take the assessment

<https://thehollandclinic.practicebetter.io/#/63c7488563368bc8b9d43ea8/forms?f=6674c4138c19cadff5e16ff9>

NOT SURE YET

*Book a discovery call.*

→ Book a discovery call

<https://thehollandclinic.practicebetter.io/#/63c7488563368bc8b9d43ea8/bookings?s=63d345323e7af09d7e73bff4>

FOR DEEPER CARE

*Explore the Vitality Clinic.*

→ Explore the Vitality Clinic

<https://workwith.thehollandclinic.com/the-vitality-clinic/>

# *Dr Kirstey Holland, OMD*

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This resource is for educational purposes and is not a substitute for personalised clinical advice. Every woman's biochemistry is unique. If you would like individualised support, you are warmly welcome inside the Vitality Clinic.

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