



WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE

Embrace Menopause

Thoughts on Sensation Tracking: Discomfort and Heat

The practice of feeling and noticing sensation can feel very subtle but have powerful effects. Oftentimes, when we are experiencing discomfort in the body (including a hot flash), we will resist the discomfort and work to avoid experiencing those uncomfortable sensations in our bodies. Your body experiences sensation and we are feeling all day long. We may not notice it until we begin to feel discomfort.

Hot flashes can be very loud, in terms of sensation. Your body begins to experience a sensation quickly and intensely, it is impossible to ignore. When discomfort like this arises, we may do everything in our power to avoid, distract or just cope, until the hot flash passes. Not only are we experiencing physical discomfort, but there is often emotional distress that can come up during a hot flash. If we are in public or at work, we may feel embarrassed. We may feel annoyance and anger. We may feel we caused the hot flash, through diet choices or an activity, and feel frustrated with ourselves.

What if we gave the hot flash, and everything that came with it, some space? What if we allowed ourselves to feel for a few moments. We can always go back to the distraction and coping mechanism if we need to.

What if, you could offer some curiosity to the sensation that you are experiencing and the emotions that are tied to that sensation. A hot flash is impossible to ignore, but do we give in to it or do we resist it?

It may prove too challenging to learn how to feel the sensation of a hot flash *during* an actual hot flash. We can start by practicing sensation during more neutral times. Below I have outlined a step-by-step guide to tracking sensation, locating discomfort and exploring the sensation and emotions surrounding the discomfort. I recommend practicing this on a regular basis, allowing the idea of tuning into sensation to become a regular habit. Then, you can begin to explore deeper into the sensation and emotion of a hot flash.

There is no right or wrong way to experience sensation. Practicing sensation can allow us to experience more joy and peace. Consider that a hot flash is information that your body is communicating to you. It is loud, it is important. What is it telling you? What is it offering? How can you listen with curiosity and not with judgment?

Above all, you are powerful, strong, and beautiful!

Have questions? Reach out to us! We would love to chat with you! contact@womens-collective.com

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Follow this easy step guideline to offer yourself some curiosity into what you are feeling in the moment:

- ★ Take in a breath, notice your breathing
- ★ Notice your body
 - Sitting, standing, lying down.
 - Where are your feet?
 - What parts of your body feel supported? (notice the weight of your body on the ground, chair, couch, etc.)
- ★ Begin to check in with each body part and notice what sensation is present there
 - You can start from your feet and work your way up, or start with your head and work your way down.
 - Take a moment with each area. What do you notice?
 - There are no right or wrong sensations. How can you be curious about what your body is physically experiencing?
- ★ Offer curiosity and neutrality
 - No matter what you notice, see if you can remain curious. As long as there is no direct threat to your safety or emergency present, it is okay for you to remain still and explore.
- ★ Locate: Where is your body feeling discomfort?
 - Can you sit with discomfort and be curious?
 - Notice all the physical qualities of this sensation and where it lives in your body
 - What is the emotion(s) or thought associated with this discomfort?
- ★ Locate: Where is your body feeling ease or comfort?
 - Where does your body feel supported, relaxed, easy and calm?
 - Even if the discomfort feels bigger/louder than the comfort, notice how both can exist at the same time
- ★ Practice: Shift your focus back and forth
 - Comfort to discomfort
 - Can you give in to both sensations fully?
 - Can you allow the comfort to expand?
- ★ If things feel overwhelming remember:
 - Your body is the vessel that is holding this sensation and emotion. Emotions and sensations are not bigger or more powerful than you
- ★ If you need to shift out of the discomfort, try this:
 - Feel the weight of your body. Ground your feet on the earth and feel the connection.
 - Try the three things technique: notice three colors you see, three sounds you hear, move three different body parts (wiggle a finger, stick out your tongue, etc.)
- ★ Allow yourself to come back to center. What understanding have you gained?
 - Be open to what your body is communicating, even if it is unclear.
 - What does your body, mind, spirit need right now?

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Lymphatic System Support

Our lymphatic system is akin to a trash compactor for the body. This system can help us move heat-producing toxins out of the body. Not only does this help us stay cool but it also keeps the body ready for a dump of stress toxins. The lymphatic system does not move well without support. Without daily physical activity, adequate hydration, and regular massage, our lymphatic powerhouse can become sluggish causing the toxins in our body to become backed up. If you feel fatigued, have brain fog, get regular headaches, have itchy skin, or are constantly sick, you might have a sluggish or toxified lymphatic system.

During the menopausal transition, our body goes through stress brought on by hormonal changes. This stress can help create excess inflammation within our body, damaging healthy cells and leaving a mess for the lymphatic system to clean out. Cellular damage from inflammation may lead to symptoms like circulatory issues, pain, heat expression, and mood swings. We do ourselves a great service by keeping the lymphatic system healthy and flowing so it can keep us cool and ready to deal with the inevitable stress of menopause.

Tips to support the lymphatic system:

- ★ Lower Stress – Stress chemistry contributes to inflammation, causing cellular damage and clogs up your system.
- ★ Diet – Chemical additives in food, food allergies, sensitivities, and processed like fried foods all contribute to inflammation and irritation of the intestines, which leads to congestion within the digestive tract that the lymphatic system cleans. Limiting these foods and incorporating more whole foods and foods we have found are best for our body helps limit the amount of cleanup needed.
- ★ Move Daily – The lymphatic system relies on oxygen. Movement helps us breathe deep and take in oxygen for our muscles, cardiovascular, and lymphatic systems. Consistent movement for an extended period, like 20-30 minutes is preferred. I like swimming, walking, rebounding, yoga, jumping jacks, and dancing.
- ★ Drink Water on the Hour – We should get several 8 oz glasses of water daily, up to 8 glasses.
- ★ Dry Brushing before showers – Helps stimulate the lymphatic system. It is best to start on the right side of the body, down at the toes, and always brush toward the heart. When brushing the tummy, brush in a circle around the bellybutton, toward the left to encourage the digestive tract.
- ★ Take hot/cold showers – This stimulates the circulatory, lymphatic, and nervous system and can boost your metabolism. Stand in hot water for 5 minutes then switch to full cold water for 5 minutes. Alternate between the two temperatures a few times, ending with cold water before stepping out.
- ★ Treat Yourself to a Sauna – Saunas have been used all over the world for their health benefits. The heat and the infrared waves can help increase heart rate, encourage deep breathing and boost drainage.
- ★ Herbs – Ashwagandha, echinacea root, turmeric, cleavers, and turkey rhubarb can help cleanse the lymph system. Be mindful before doing any cleansing and speak with your practitioner or doctor first.
- ★ Check Your Environment Toxins – Do you love using candles and lovely-smelling scents in your body care? No judgment here, I love smelling yummy too. Check to make sure all those scents are coming from a clean source like pure essential oils and not “fragrance oils”, “natural oils”, “aromatic oils”, or other synthetic scents. Our body has to process those scents and if they are chemical-laden, then that is just more cleaning up we are tasking our body with later.

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Facial Lymphatic Massage Guide

Facial Lymphatic Massage helps move fluid that might be stuck in the upper respiratory system and sinus cavity, also fluid buildup in facial tissue. I enjoy using a cold-roller over my face after doing this 20-minute lymph massage, especially in the morning.

**If you like to make your massage aromatic, use a carrier oil such as jojoba oil and add a few drops of cypress, fennel, ginger, or rosemary.*

**It is important not to push on any lymph nodes directly with pressure.*

1. Start on the right side of the body. Using a massage oil like jojoba, gently knead the depressed area behind your collarbone for a count of 30. This action wakes up the bundle of lymph nodes sitting with the clavicle fascia in preparation for drainage. Picture the water in a spray bottle, this is like a pump of the nozzle, a little pressure gets the fluid moving.
2. Now that your lymphatic system is alerted, gently massage 3-5 times in one fluid line from behind your right ear, under your jaw, and towards your chin.
3. Now stroke down from the front side of your neck to the base of your collarbone 3-5 times.
4. And then “pump” again behind the right collarbone.
5. Gently stroke 3-5 times in one fluid line from the inner corner of your right eye, under your eye, and to the same spot behind your right ear. Then massage toward your chin, down the front of your neck, and back to the right collarbone.
6. “Pump” again behind the right collarbone for a count of 30.
7. Now apply 3-5 gentle strokes from the center of your forehead, above the eyebrows, and toward the temples. Repeat step 5, moving the fluid from the top of your face to the collarbone.
8. “Pump” one last time behind the right collarbone before moving to the left side.
9. Start back with step 1 moving from the bottom to the top of the face and massaging behind the collar bones to stimulate lymphatic movement.
10. Repeat both sides a couple of times and enjoy the process.

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