

# SELF-CARE CORNER

## 10 ways to get the most out of midlife

Are your best years ahead? A national survey of women between the ages of 35 and 49, sponsored in partnership with the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health and Teva Women's Health shows that more than three-quarters of women in midlife say the best years are ahead, not behind. Yet midlife is notoriously known as a time of crisis. Women's health expert, Dr. Judith Reichman, tells how women are seizing the midlife moment and making new choices related to their health.



### IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY JOINED THE RANKS OF WOMEN ENJOYING MIDLIFE, HERE ARE 10 WAYS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THESE YEARS:

1. Don't obsess about those 8 glasses of water each day. Drink when you are thirsty and when you are exercising briskly. Too much water reduces the impact of electrolytes and strains the bladder.



2. Focus on family bonding. Often midlife crises for women are not an age phenomenon but rather due to the very significant changes that occur in the lives of our growing-up children and our maturing (we hope) partners.
3. Spend more time with your partner. Don't wait until the nest is already empty. This is the time to rediscover why you fell in love in the first place.
4. Rev up the love life. You are free to go on dates with your partner—real dates!
5. Periodically reevaluate your choice of birth control. The

second-highest rates of unplanned pregnancies occur in midlife.

6. Worry more about you. PMS gets worse with age, and work and family responsibilities continue to rise, so it is important to establish de-stressing routines, including setting aside time to exercise and visit with friends.

7. Cut down on salt, reduce your caloric intake by 100–200 calories per day and boost your calcium and vitamin D intake. By midlife, most women are at high risk for high blood pressure and heart disease. Cutting salt can save your life and set up your family for healthy habits as they get older.



8. Embrace your desire to sleep. Now is the time to develop good

sleep habits to prepare you for the next stage of life as hormonal changes during menopause increase sleep troubles.



9. Do something you thought you would never have time for. Take up a new hobby or go back to an activity you love—knitting, dancing, learning, or volunteering. Do something that makes you feel good about yourself.
10. See your doctor. You have always made sure everyone else in the family gets a yearly check-up, but what about you? Schedule those yearly health screenings and don't neglect your own health.

*Judith Reichman, MD, is an attending physician in gynecology at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and author of Slow Your Clock Down: The Complete Guide to a Healthy, Younger You.*