THE OVER-40

Health Reset

4 Things That Actually Work After 40

Sleep better. Move without pain. Feel energised. Think clearly. Starting today.

A free guide from
Over40Wellness.com

WELCOME

This guide is for you if…

You're over 40 and you've noticed things are just a bit… different. You wake up tired even after a full night's sleep. Your energy dips in the afternoon — sometimes the morning. Your joints ache in ways they never used to. And you can't quite put your finger on why your brain feels foggier than it once did.

I started Over40Wellness because I lived all of this. I'm a consumer of health and wellness products — not because I'm obsessed with supplements, but because I got to a point where I genuinely wanted to feel better in my day-to-day life. I started researching, testing, reading the science, and cutting through the noise.

What I found surprised me: most of what's marketed to people over 40 is either overpriced, overhyped, or both. But there are some things — simple habits, smarter product choices, a few lifestyle shifts — that genuinely make a difference. This guide is the distilled version of that research.

What's inside:

- **Chapter 1: Sleep & Recovery** — why your sleep has changed and what actually fixes it
- **Chapter 2: Energy & Metabolism** — the real reasons your energy is lower and how to get it back
- **Chapter 3: Joints & Movement** — the inflammation connection and what helps
- **Chapter 4: Brain & Mental Clarity** — why brain fog happens and evidence-backed ways to clear it
- **Quick-Start Checklist** — one action from each chapter you can start today

■ A note on product mentions

This guide occasionally mentions specific products I've reviewed on the site. Some links are affiliate links — if you purchase through them I may earn a small commission at no extra cost to you. I only recommend things I genuinely believe in. The advice in this guide stands entirely on its own merits regardless.

CHAPTER 1

Sleep & Recovery

Of all the changes people notice after 40, disrupted sleep is the most universal. You may find it harder to fall asleep, you wake in the night more often, or you simply don't feel rested even after seven or eight hours. This isn't in your head — it's biology. Understanding why it happens is the first step to fixing it.

Why sleep changes after 40

Three things happen simultaneously as we age. First, **melatonin production drops** — the hormone that signals to your brain it's time to sleep becomes less abundant and less reliable. Second, your **sleep architecture shifts**: you spend less time in deep, restorative slow-wave sleep and more time in lighter stages where you're easily woken. Third, **cortisol patterns change** — stress hormones that should be low at night can remain elevated, keeping your nervous system too activated to sleep deeply.

In women, perimenopause and menopause add hot flushes and hormonal fluctuations that directly interrupt sleep architecture. In men, declining testosterone can cause similar disruptions. The result: the same eight hours you slept at 30 simply doesn't feel the same at 45.

The 3 biggest sleep mistakes over-40s make

- **Sleeping in at weekends.** It feels like recovery but it actually disrupts your circadian rhythm further, making Monday mornings even harder.
- **Drinking alcohol to wind down.** Alcohol suppresses REM sleep — the mentally restorative stage — meaning you wake feeling unrested even if you slept through the night.
- **Ignoring your sleep environment.** Core body temperature needs to drop 1–2°C for deep sleep to occur. A room that's too warm is one of the single biggest saboteurs of sleep quality after 40.

What actually helps

The good news is that targeted changes to your sleep environment and routine produce measurable improvements relatively quickly. Here's what the evidence consistently supports:

- **Cool your bedroom to 16–19°C (61–67°F).** This is the optimal temperature range for deep sleep. If you share a bed and can't agree on temperature, consider a fan or cooling mattress topper.
- **Dim lights 90 minutes before bed.** Blue light from screens suppresses melatonin. Either use blue-light glasses, night mode on devices, or better yet — switch to dim warm lighting after 9pm.
- **Fix your wake time, not your bedtime.** Setting a consistent wake time (even at weekends) is the fastest way to reset your circadian rhythm.
- **Address neck and shoulder support.** This is often overlooked but significant — poor spinal alignment through the night causes micro-waking and leaves you with pain that interrupts the sleep

cycle. An ergonomic pillow designed for your sleeping position makes a tangible difference.

> **■ Tip: The pillow problem**
> Most people use a pillow that's either too flat, too thick, or the wrong firmness for their sleep position. Side sleepers need more height; back sleepers need medium support with cervical contouring. I tested the Derila Ergo memory foam pillow for 30 days — full review at over40wellness.com/reviews/derila-ergo

Supplements worth considering

Before reaching for supplements, prioritise the environmental and behavioural changes above — they have stronger evidence. That said, a few supplements have solid research behind them for sleep in the over-40s:

- **Magnesium glycinate (200–400mg):** Deficiency is common and linked to poor sleep quality. Glycinate form is well-absorbed and gentle on digestion.
- **Low-dose melatonin (0.5–1mg):** Effective for resetting sleep timing, especially if your schedule has shifted. Higher doses (5–10mg) are often counterproductive.
- **L-theanine (100–200mg):** An amino acid found in green tea that promotes relaxed alertness and can improve sleep onset without grogginess.

CHAPTER 2

Energy & Metabolism

The afternoon energy crash. The morning sluggishness that takes two coffees to clear. The feeling that you used to be able to power through a full day and now you're running on fumes by 3pm. This is one of the most common complaints I hear from people over 40, and the reasons are more specific — and more fixable — than most people realise.

Why energy drops after 40

Energy production happens inside your cells' mitochondria. After 40, **mitochondrial function naturally declines** — your cells produce less ATP (cellular energy) and produce more oxidative stress as a byproduct. At the same time, **insulin sensitivity decreases**, meaning your body handles blood sugar less efficiently — producing the rollercoaster of spikes and crashes that most people experience as the afternoon slump.

Thyroid function also warrants attention. A sluggish thyroid is more common after 40 — particularly in women — and causes persistent fatigue, weight gain, and brain fog. If you've made lifestyle changes and still feel exhausted, ask your GP for a thyroid panel (TSH, T3, T4).

What silently drains your energy

- **Poor sleep** (see Chapter 1) — no supplement overcomes chronic sleep debt
- **Skipping breakfast or eating high-carb breakfasts** — triggers a blood sugar spike then crash by mid-morning
- **Dehydration** — even mild dehydration (1–2%) measurably reduces cognitive performance and perceived energy
- **Sedentary periods** — sitting for 4+ hours continuously suppresses circulation and reduces cellular energy demand, paradoxically making you more tired
- **Caffeine after 2pm** — caffeine has a 5–6 hour half-life; an afternoon coffee is still partly active at midnight

Morning habits that genuinely move the needle

These aren't hacks — they're consistent practices that compound over weeks:

- **Get outside within 30 minutes of waking.** Natural light exposure early in the day sets your cortisol rhythm correctly, providing a natural energy peak in the morning and an easier wind-down at night.
- **Eat protein at breakfast.** 25–30g of protein at your first meal stabilises blood sugar for 3–4 hours and prevents the mid-morning crash. Eggs, Greek yoghurt, smoked salmon — all work.

- **Move before your biggest energy demand.** Even a 10-minute walk before a demanding period of work measurably improves alertness and mood for up to 2 hours.
- **Delay your first coffee by 90 minutes.** Cortisol naturally peaks in the first 90 minutes after waking — caffeine on top of this peak blunts its effect and causes tolerance to build faster. Wait until the peak passes and coffee works better.

■ Energy audit: the simple 3-day test

For three days, note your energy on a scale of 1-10 at 9am, 12pm, 3pm and 6pm. Most people find clear patterns — specific times when they crash consistently. Those patterns reveal your biggest levers. If you always crash at 3pm, look at what you're eating at lunch. If mornings are worst, sleep quality is the likely culprit.

Supplements with solid evidence

- **CoQ10 (100–200mg):** A coenzyme essential for mitochondrial energy production. Levels decline with age and are further depleted by statin medications. Ubiquinol form is better absorbed in the over-40s.
- **Vitamin D3 + K2:** Deficiency is endemic and directly linked to fatigue. Get your levels tested — most over-40s need supplementation, especially in the UK/northern climates.
- **B-vitamin complex:** B12, B6, and folate are central to energy metabolism. B12 absorption decreases with age and is often low in those who eat less meat.
- **Ashwagandha (300–600mg KSM-66 extract):** An adaptogen with good evidence for reducing cortisol and fatigue, particularly in people under chronic stress.

CHAPTER 3

Joints & Movement

The morning stiffness. The knee that's never quite right after a run. The lower back that complains after sitting too long. Joint discomfort is so common after 40 that many people assume it's simply inevitable. It isn't — but it does require understanding what's actually causing it.

The inflammation connection

Most joint pain and stiffness after 40 is driven by low-grade, chronic inflammation — often called **inflammaging**. Unlike acute inflammation (which is your body's healthy healing response), inflammaging is a persistent background hum of inflammatory signalling that damages cartilage, stiffens connective tissue, and sensitises pain receptors over time.

The causes are largely dietary and lifestyle: high intake of refined carbohydrates, seed oils and ultra-processed foods; excess visceral fat (which secretes inflammatory cytokines); poor sleep (which fails to clear inflammatory metabolites); and, ironically, too little movement. Cartilage has no direct blood supply — it depends on the compression and release of movement to receive nutrients. A sedentary lifestyle literally starves your joints.

Foods that worsen inflammation

- **Refined sugar and high-fructose corn syrup** — trigger inflammatory cascades via AGE (advanced glycation end-product) formation
- **Refined vegetable oils** (sunflower, corn, soybean) — high in omega-6 fatty acids, which are pro-inflammatory in excess
- **Ultra-processed foods** — typically combine all of the above with additives that further disrupt gut microbiome balance
- **Alcohol in excess** — increases intestinal permeability ("leaky gut"), which drives systemic inflammation

Movement strategies that protect joints

- **Walk more than you think you need to.** Low-impact, rhythmic movement lubricates joints, drives nutrient delivery to cartilage, and reduces morning stiffness significantly. Aim for 8,000–10,000 steps daily.
- **Strength train 2x per week.** Muscle surrounding a joint acts as a shock absorber and reduces load on cartilage. You don't need to lift heavy — bodyweight exercises done consistently are highly effective.
- **Stretch what you sit on.** Hip flexors, hamstrings, and thoracic spine are consistently tight in people who sit for work — and tightness in these areas directly loads the lower back and knees.

- **Don't stop moving through discomfort.** Rest is rarely the answer for chronic joint pain — graded movement under guidance usually is. The exception is acute injury; see a physiotherapist.

■ The sleep-joint connection

If you wake with joint stiffness, your sleeping position or support may be contributing. Side sleepers who sleep without a pillow between their knees create lateral stress on the hip and knee. Back sleepers without cervical support strain the neck and upper back. Small adjustments to sleep posture often produce surprising improvements in morning stiffness.

Supplements with good evidence

- **Omega-3 fish oil (2–3g EPA/DHA daily):** The most evidence-backed anti-inflammatory supplement. Reduces joint pain markers in multiple studies. Quality matters — look for IFOS-certified products.
- **Collagen peptides (10–15g daily):** Provides the amino acid building blocks for cartilage repair. Works best taken with vitamin C to support collagen synthesis.
- **Turmeric/curcumin (500–1000mg standardised to 95% curcuminoids):** Good evidence for reducing inflammatory markers. Poor bioavailability unless combined with black pepper extract (piperine).
- **Glucosamine + Chondroitin:** Mixed evidence but some studies show benefit for knee osteoarthritis specifically. Effects take 8–12 weeks to appear.

CHAPTER 4

Brain & Mental Clarity

You walk into a room and forget why. You lose your train of thought mid-sentence. You find yourself re-reading the same paragraph twice. Brain fog after 40 is real, it's measurable, and — crucially — it's not a fixed feature of getting older. Understanding what drives it opens the door to addressing it specifically.

Why brain fog happens after 40

Cognitive function depends on several interconnected systems, all of which change with age. **Cerebral blood flow decreases** — the brain receives less oxygen and fewer nutrients. **Neuroinflammation increases** — the same inflammaging that affects joints affects the brain. **Neurotransmitter balance shifts** — dopamine, serotonin, and acetylcholine levels and receptor sensitivity change, affecting mood, motivation, and memory.

Hormonal changes amplify this. Oestrogen is neuroprotective — its decline in perimenopause directly affects memory and cognitive speed. Testosterone decline in men has similar effects on spatial reasoning and mental stamina. Poor sleep (see Chapter 1) is perhaps the biggest driver of all: during deep sleep, the brain's glymphatic system clears amyloid and tau proteins — the waste products of neural activity. Chronic poor sleep literally fails to take the bins out.

The gut-brain axis

One of the most significant advances in neuroscience over the past decade is our understanding of the gut-brain connection. Approximately 90% of serotonin — a neurotransmitter central to mood and cognition — is produced in the gut, not the brain. The composition of your gut microbiome directly influences cognitive function, mood, and stress resilience.

The practical implication: dietary diversity matters for brain health. Eating a wide range of plant foods (aim for 30+ different plants per week), fermented foods (yoghurt, kefir, sauerkraut), and reducing ultra-processed food intake improves gut microbiome diversity — and this translates to measurable improvements in cognitive performance and mood within weeks.

Lifestyle factors that protect cognition

- **Aerobic exercise is the most powerful tool available.** Even three 30-minute sessions per week measurably increases BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor) — a protein that stimulates the growth of new neural connections. It's the closest thing to a cognitive enhancer we have.
- **Social connection is protective.** Isolation is a significant risk factor for cognitive decline. Regular, meaningful social interaction maintains neural complexity.

- **Learn something new.** Neuroplasticity — the brain's ability to form new connections — remains active throughout life but requires stimulation. Languages, instruments, new skills: anything that challenges you cognitively.
- **Manage chronic stress.** Cortisol in sustained excess is literally neurotoxic — it damages the hippocampus, the brain region central to memory formation. Stress management isn't optional for brain health.

■ The 90-minute focus block

Your brain naturally cycles through peaks and troughs of alertness roughly every 90 minutes (ultradian rhythms). Working with these cycles — 90 minutes of focused work followed by a genuine 10-15 minute break — dramatically improves cognitive output and reduces the mental fatigue that accumulates through the day.

Evidence-backed supplements for cognition

- **Lion's Mane mushroom (500–1000mg daily):** Stimulates nerve growth factor (NGF) production. Emerging but promising evidence for supporting cognitive function and memory. Look for products standardised to beta-glucan content.
- **Bacopa Monnieri (300mg standardised extract):** Ayurvedic herb with good clinical evidence for improving memory formation and reducing cognitive decline. Effects take 8–12 weeks.
- **Phosphatidylserine (100–300mg daily):** A phospholipid that makes up 15% of brain fat. Shown to improve memory and cognitive speed, particularly in age-related decline.
- **Omega-3 (especially DHA):** DHA makes up a significant portion of brain grey matter. Deficiency is linked to cognitive decline. The same fish oil supplement from Chapter 3 covers this.
- **B12:** Deficiency — common in over-40s — is directly linked to brain fog and nerve function. Methylcobalamin form is best absorbed.

YOUR ACTION PLAN

Quick-Start Checklist

You don't need to change everything at once. Pick the one action from each chapter that feels most relevant to you right now and focus on making it a habit before adding more. Small, consistent changes outperform dramatic short-term efforts every time.

■ SLEEP & RECOVERY

- ■ Set a consistent wake time — same time every day including weekends
- ■ Cool your bedroom to 16–19°C tonight
- ■ Switch to dim, warm light 90 minutes before bed
- ■ Check your pillow — is it aligned for your sleeping position?
- ■ No alcohol within 3 hours of sleep

■ ENERGY & METABOLISM

- ■ Get outside within 30 minutes of waking tomorrow
- ■ Eat 25–30g of protein at breakfast
- ■ Push your first coffee to 90 minutes after waking
- ■ No caffeine after 2pm
- ■ Set a timer to stand and move every 60 minutes during the day

■ JOINTS & MOVEMENT

- ■ Cut refined sugar and seed oils from your main meals this week
- ■ Start a 20-minute daily walk — flat, comfortable pace
- ■ Do one lower-body stretch routine (hip flexors, hamstrings) every morning
- ■ Check your sleeping position — add a pillow between knees if you side-sleep
- ■ Start omega-3 fish oil — 2g EPA/DHA daily

■ BRAIN & MENTAL CLARITY

- ■ Eat 5+ different vegetables today (variety matters as much as quantity)
- ■ Add one fermented food to your daily routine (yoghurt, kefir, kimchi)
- ■ Schedule 3 × 30-minute aerobic exercise sessions this week
- ■ Try one 90-minute focused work block without phone or notifications
- ■ Call or meet a friend — social connection is protective

Visit Over40Wellness.com for in-depth product reviews, weekly articles, and honest advice — all tested by someone who's living this alongside you.