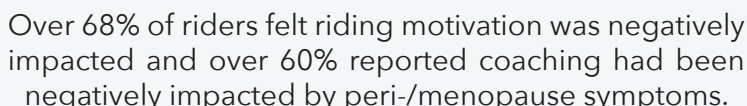


The perimenopause can start as early as 35+ with symptoms that can impact rider participation and performance. This is a summary of results from research recently undertaken of 1629 female equestrian respondents; 71% of these rode/ride currently at least twice a week and more than 90% have ridden for over 20 years.

Do you sometimes lose confidence in the saddle? You are not alone. This bar chart shows the various responses when asked about the impact on riding confidence since entering peri-/menopause.



**"Riding** is what **kept me sane** during this period of my life."

"Fear. **Absolute fear.** Like being a novice again."

"I continued riding but felt **frustrated** at the lack of progress."

"I **stopped eventing** because anxiety made it impossible yet I had always been very confident ... I **thought I was being pathetic!!**"

“... significant **anxiety** about ‘what ifs’ hacking.”

"It is quite **embarrassing.**"



Word cloud of the most impactful symptoms affecting riding participation and performance.

"... the idea of **competing** is **overwhelming and stressful**. I also still find it **harder to remember** dressage tests."

"Rode a bit less then **got**  
**HRT** and **now better than**  
**ever.**"

"I was riding three horses every day for 5 days a week previously. **I feel lost.**"

"I have had to **cut down** on lessons and competitions due to **urinary leakage**. **Very embarrassing**"

"I just **don't have the energy or strength** that I had for riding before the menopause."

"Learnt to **be kind to myself** when **tired** or not feeling it."

## What are the key themes from shared personal experiences?

## Physical and emotional symptoms

1

Physical, emotional and cognitive changes eg. 5 x joint pain, sudden fear, tiredness, weight gain, and anxiety.

## Silence and stigma

2

Silence and stigma around peri-/menopause - feeling alone, embarrassed and ashamed.

## Changes in riding activities

3

50% of riders stopped eventing or show jumping due to symptoms. Some stopped riding completely.

## Coping strategies

4

GP advice and specialist clinics to support those entering peri-/menopause. Reading books and articles.

## Support

5

The importance of the Equestrian Community in supporting riders through this life stage - friends and Facebook support groups.

## Key takeaways for female equestrians?

This stage of life affects many female equestrians but not all. Each person experiences the symptoms differently so be aware, kind, patient and understanding to yourself and others.

Be sensitive and discrete, but not afraid to talk - find an equestrian support team.

Be open to explore different equestrian activities

Be aware of the symptoms and range of coping strategies to aid seeking support earlier

Many female riders are affected. Building a mutual support network through coaches, livery yards, friends etc. can help. Horses themselves offer significant therapeutic benefits!

## LET'S KEEP WOMEN IN THE SADDLE!