

PERIMENOPAUSE, TRANSLATED

I'm fine.

(Translation: I've been awake since 3:07.)

*An illustrated phrasebook
for the hormonal years*



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How to Use This Phrasebook

Every phrasebook promises that you'll be understood abroad. This one covers a country you didn't plan to visit, where the climate changes hourly and the locals speak in short, calm sentences that mean something else entirely.

Phrases are grouped by situation: at night, in the heat, at work, at home, at the doctor's. Each one comes with a translation and, underneath, a line marked **Actually**. That's the real thing behind the joke, with a source you can look up.

Read it front to back, or open it anywhere. Hand it to someone and point at a page. That counts as a conversation.

Funny because it's true. True because we checked.



CHAPTER 1

At Night

The 3:07 Club

Most phrases in this chapter are spoken between 2 and 5 a.m.
Speak softly. Someone in this bed is asleep, and it isn't you.

“

SHE SAYS

“I’m fine.”

IT MEANS

I’ve been awake since 3:07.

ACTUALLY In a trial of women with hot flashes and insomnia, 84% were in the no-insomnia range 24 weeks after CBT for insomnia, against 43% after menopause education. – PMID 27213646

SHE SAYS

“I slept okay.”

IT MEANS

I slept from eleven to three. Then I attended a four-hour meeting with my own thoughts.



ACTUALLY In SWAN, which followed 3,045 women aged 42 to 52, trouble falling asleep and staying asleep became more likely as women moved through the transition. – PMID 18652093

“

SHE SAYS

“I’m just going
to read for a bit.”

IT MEANS

*I’m going to read the same paragraph
nine times and then look at
the ceiling.*

ACTUALLY Trouble sleeping for three months or more counts as long-term insomnia. That’s the point to ask a doctor about CBT for insomnia. – NHS, *Insomnia*

SHE SAYS

“Could you open a window.”

IT MEANS

All the windows. The door. Possibly a hole in the roof.



ACTUALLY Between 50% and 75% of women get hot flashes, night sweats or both during the menopause transition. – PMID 36749328

SHE SAYS

“I changed the sheets.”

IT MEANS

At two. Then my T-shirt. Then the pillowcase, which had also been through something.



ACTUALLY A night sweat soaks nightclothes and bedding. As the sweat dries you get cold and shivery, which keeps you awake even longer.— NHS, *Night sweats*



CHAPTER 5

New Features

Updates you didn't install

Your body has received several updates. There were no release notes.

SHE SAYS

“My knees make noises now.”

IT MEANS

My knees announce me before I enter a room.



ACTUALLY Across 16 studies, 71% of perimenopausal women reported muscle or joint pain. – PMID 33299396

“

SHE SAYS

“I slept on it wrong.”

IT MEANS

*I slept on it perfectly. My
shoulder disagrees.*

ACTUALLY Frozen shoulder typically affects women between 40 and 60, right on top of the transition. – PMID 41614260

Perimenopause Bingo

Mark every square you've had this month. Three in a row is a bingo. All nine is a full house. Pass the book to a friend and compare.

 Hot flash	 3 a.m. wake-up	 The word that vanished
 Racing heart	 Rage over nothing	 Aching joints
 Itchy skin	 Keys somewhere they should never be	 A period with its own schedule

3 in a row: bingo · all 9: full house · 0: please write to us and explain how