

The Peri HQ Workplace Conversation Guide

Table of Contents

1. Before you speak	2
Self-assessment checklist	2
Company research template	3
Timing Strategy	3
2. Conversation frameworks	4
Solution-first approach	4
Script 1: Initial disclosure to line manager	4
Script 2: HR discussion about adjustments	4
Script 3: Team conversation (optional)	4
Script 4: Follow-up meeting	5
3. Specific request templates	6
Flexible working arrangements	6
Environmental adjustments	6
Schedule modifications	6
Performance review considerations	6
4. Handling responses	7
If your Manager is supportive	7
Dealing with dismissive responses	7
Escalation pathways	7
When to seek external advice	7
5. Follow-up tools	8
Meeting summary template	8
Progress tracking sheet	8
Review Schedule	9
6. Know your rights	10
Understanding your workplace protections	10
Red flags: what constitutes discrimination	10
Final Tips for Success	11

© The Peri HQ 2025. All rights reserved.

This guide is for informational purposes and doesn't constitute legal advice.
For specific legal guidance, consult employment law professionals in your jurisdiction.

1. Before you speak

Self-assessment checklist

Before initiating any workplace conversation, identify your specific needs:

Physical environment:

- ☐ Temperature control (fan, seating away from heating)
- ☐ Quiet space for breaks or calls
- ☐ Access to facilities (more frequent toilet breaks)
- ☐ Comfortable seating options
- ☐ Cold water
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Schedule flexibility:

- ☐ Adjusted start/finish times
- ☐ Flexible meeting scheduling
- ☐ Work-from-home options
- ☐ Modified travel requirements
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Workload management:

- ☐ Deadline adjustments during difficult periods
- ☐ Task prioritisation support
- ☐ Additional project planning time
- ☐ Backup support for key responsibilities
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Company research template

Before your conversation, research:

1. **Employee handbook:** Does your company have menopause/wellness policies?
2. **HR resources:** What support services are available?
3. **Flexible working policies:** What arrangements already exist?
4. **Occupational health:** Is there a service you can access?
5. **Previous precedents:** Have colleagues received similar accommodations?

Timing Strategy

Best times to have these conversations:

- During regular one-to-ones with your manager
- After a positive project outcome or performance review
- During annual goal-setting or development discussions
- NOT during crisis periods or major deadlines

Best locations:

- Private meeting room or office
- Video call if working remotely
- Quiet café or neutral space if office lacks privacy

2. Conversation frameworks

Solution-first approach

Instead of: "I'm struggling with menopause symptoms..."

Try: "I'd like to discuss some adjustments that would help me maintain my performance..."

Script 1: Initial disclosure to line manager

Opening: "I wanted to have a conversation about some health changes I'm experiencing that might benefit from workplace adjustments. I'm going through perimenopause, which can affect energy levels and concentration, but I'm committed to maintaining my performance and would like to discuss some practical solutions."

Specific requests: "The adjustments I'm thinking about include [specific examples from your self-assessment]. These would help me continue delivering the results you expect while managing some temporary health considerations."

Closing: "I'd appreciate your support in exploring these options. Would you like me to put together a written summary of what we've discussed, or shall we schedule a follow-up to discuss next steps?"

Script 2: HR discussion about adjustments

Opening: "I'm reaching out to discuss reasonable adjustments that would support my wellbeing and performance. I'm experiencing perimenopause symptoms that occasionally impact my work, and I'd like to explore what accommodations might be available."

Key points to cover:

- Reference company wellness policies
- Mention any legal protections (e.g., Equality Act 2010 in UK)
- Emphasise your commitment to your role
- Request information about the formal process

Sample language: "I understand the company supports employee wellbeing through reasonable adjustments. Could you walk me through the process and what documentation might be helpful?"

Script 3: Team conversation (optional)

If you choose to share with your team: "I wanted to let you know that I'm managing some health changes that might occasionally affect my availability or energy levels. I'm working with [manager/HR] on some adjustments, and I'll communicate any impacts on our projects well in advance. I appreciate your understanding and support."

Script 4: Follow-up meeting

Opening: "Thank you for our previous conversation about workplace adjustments. I'd like to update you on how things are progressing and discuss any refinements we might need."

Structure:

- What's working well
- What needs adjustment
- Any new requirements
- Appreciation for support received

3. Specific request templates

Flexible working arrangements

Sample requests:

- "Could I start 30 minutes later on days when sleep has been disrupted?"
- "Would it be possible to work from home X days per week to better manage symptoms?"
- "Can we avoid scheduling important meetings before 10am when my concentration is typically lower?"

Environmental adjustments

Sample requests:

- "Could I be seated away from the main heating source or have access to a desk fan?"
- "Would it be possible to have a quiet space available for short breaks when needed?"
- "Can we ensure meeting rooms have good ventilation for temperature control?"

Schedule modifications

Sample requests:

- "Could we build in buffer time for project deadlines during particularly challenging weeks?"
- "Would it be possible to avoid back-to-back meetings to allow for short breaks?"
- "Can important presentations be scheduled earlier in the day when my energy is typically higher?"

Performance review considerations

Sample language: "I'd like to discuss how we can ensure my performance reviews accurately reflect my contributions while accounting for the health transition I'm managing. Could we focus on output quality rather than traditional productivity metrics during this period?"

4. Handling responses

If your Manager is supportive

Next steps:

1. Thank them for their understanding
2. Agree on a trial period for adjustments
3. Set up regular check-ins to review progress
4. Document agreements in writing
5. Keep HR informed if appropriate

Dealing with dismissive responses

If you hear: "Everyone gets tired" or "That's just part of getting older"

Respond with: "I understand this might be unfamiliar territory. Perimenopause is a recognised medical condition that can significantly impact work performance. I'm asking for the same consideration given to other health conditions."

Escalation pathways

If initial conversations don't work:

1. Request a meeting with HR
2. Reference company policies on workplace adjustments
3. Seek support from employee resource groups
4. Consider involving occupational health services
5. Consult external advocacy organisations if needed

When to seek external advice

Red flags that warrant external support:

- Outright refusal to consider any adjustments
- Discriminatory comments about age or gender
- Threats to job security
- Hostile work environment following disclosure

5. Follow-up tools

Meeting summary template

Email subject: Follow-up: workplace adjustments discussion

Body: "Thank you for taking the time to discuss workplace adjustments with me today. I wanted to summarise what we agreed:

Adjustments to trial:

- [List specific accommodations]

Timeline:

- [When adjustments start]
- [Review date]

Next steps: [Who does what by when]

I appreciate your support in making these adjustments work for both my wellbeing and team productivity. Please let me know if you need any additional information.

Best regards, [Your name]"

Progress tracking sheet

Week of: -----

Adjustments being used:

- ☐ Flexible timing
- ☐ Environmental changes
- ☐ Schedule modifications
- ☐ Other: -----

How effective were they? (1-5 scale)

- Flexible timing: ---
- Environmental changes: ---
- Schedule modifications: ---

What worked well:

What needs refinement:

Additional needs identified:

Review Schedule

Recommended check-in frequency:

- Week 1: Daily self-check
- Week 2-4: Weekly review with manager
- Month 2-3: Fortnightly check-ins
- Ongoing: Monthly reviews

6. Know your rights

Understanding your workplace protections

Workplace rights related to perimenopause can vary by country, but in many regions, existing laws already offer protection under broader health, equality, or disability frameworks. This section offers general guidance to help you understand what to look for and how to advocate for yourself.

Note: This is a general overview. For specific legal advice, refer to your country's employment laws or consult a qualified professional.

What protections might apply

Even if perimenopause isn't named specifically in law, symptoms may fall under:

- **Health & safety obligations** - Employers have a duty to provide a safe and supportive working environment.
- **Anti-discrimination laws** - You may be protected from unfair treatment linked to age, sex, or health.
- **Reasonable adjustment policies** - Employers may be required to make changes to your role or environment to support your wellbeing.
- **Flexible working rights** - Some countries give employees the right to request modified hours or working conditions.

Red flags: what constitutes discrimination

Seek external advice if you experience:

- Refusal to consider reasonable adjustments
- Comments linking perimenopause to incompetence
- Exclusion from opportunities post-disclosure
- Hostile treatment after requesting support
- Threats to job security or career progression

Final Tips for Success

Do:

- ✓ Prepare specific examples of adjustments you need
- ✓ Focus on solutions, not just problems
- ✓ Document all conversations and agreements
- ✓ Express appreciation for support received
- ✓ Give adjustments time to work before requesting changes

Don't:

- ✗ Apologise excessively for having perimenopause
- ✗ Share more personal details than necessary
- ✗ Accept discrimination or dismissive attitudes
- ✗ Assume your manager knows about perimenopause
- ✗ Give up if the first conversation doesn't go perfectly

Remember:

You have the right to work in an environment that supports your health and wellbeing. Perimenopause is a natural life stage, not a career limitation. Your experience, skills, and professional value remain unchanged.