



FIT FOR LIFE

# Full flush

**Carol Westmorland explains why there are many upsides to the menopause**

It can't often be said that there is a positive to getting older, only that you are getting older in the first place. I regularly bat off any suggestion that age slows us down and now, it would seem, I have proof and in a surprising form.

I am going to bravely trail blaze and use a word that has possibly never been used in Carlisle Living to date. This is to celebrate my 101st column (and possibly after this my last). Ladies, I am discussing the menopause and I know from those closest to me that it can be a time of dread. A re-education is about to unfurl. Stop spluttering at the back.

Copenhagen holds a place close to my heart from having spent many happy days there. I am now even fonder of the Great Danes, for they have made a discovery that is not necessarily going to make you want to speed up the ageing process, but it will make you feel a little less wobbly about its inevitability.

We have The University of Copenhagen to thank for this news: being menopausal makes you physically stronger. You may want to read that twice.

The Danes love their cycling so it would seem appropriate that they conducted their research by putting their volunteer group through a 12-week, high-intensity, cycling regime.

At the end of the 12 weeks they analysed tissue samples, taken from the thigh, and found that the menopausal ladies blood vessels were



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supplying more oxygen than the ladies taking part in the regime who were not yet menopausal.

Naturally, I declare an interest. As a competitive cyclist who is not yet but, if spared, will eventually reach this milestone, this piece of science is very good news. As I write, my thighs ache from battling storm Doris earlier today. When my turn comes will they ache less? My blood vessels will happily continue to adapt to training and, wonder of wonders, at an increased rate. I am giddy.

Bluntly, ladies, rather than feel written off, you can feel written in.



Carol Westmorland lives in the Eden Valley. She is a Cycling Time Trials national champion, clocking up 445 miles in 24 hours. She also teaches pilates. [www.pilates-cumbria.uk](http://www.pilates-cumbria.uk)