

# Balance365 Episode 113 Transcript

ANNIE BREES

Welcome to Balance365 Life Radio, a podcast that delivers honest conversations about food, fitness, weight and wellness. I'm your host Annie Brees along with co founder Jennifer Campbell. Together we have a team of personal trainers and nutritionists who coach thousands of women daily and are on a mission to help women feel happy, healthy and confident in their bodies on their own terms. Join us here every week as we discuss hot topics pertaining to our physical, mental and emotional well being with amazing guests. Enjoy.

ANNIE

Hello my friends. Thanks so much for joining us for another episode. We are back today talking about exercise with Balance365 coach Michelle, specifically, what personal trainers might not be telling you about exercise. If you've been around a while, you know, on social media, there is no shortage of popular mantras like "Sore today, sorry tomorrow. No pain, no gain. Sweat is fat crying." And spoiler alert, we don't really love any of them. So we're going to spend some time talking today about three things that your personal trainer probably isn't telling you. We're going to tell you, give you our thoughts on a more compassionate approach to exercise. I'm so excited. She's always a joy to have on. Enjoy.

ANNIE

Hi, Michelle. How are you?

MICHELLE PHILLIPS

I'm good, Annie, how are you today?

ANNIE

I'm doing pretty well. The weather is starting to warm up here a little bit. There's no sun. I could use some sun. But how are things with you?

MICHELLE

Pretty good. We actually had a lot of sun yesterday and one of my kids got sunburned. So.  
[Laughs]

ANNIE

No way.

MICHELLE

Yeah. [Laughs]

ANNIE

Was it like 50 out? Is that what it was?

MICHELLE

It was like 46.

ANNIE

Oh man.

MICHELLE

We're getting pretty warm in Wisconsin. And they were outside almost all afternoon and they have my husband's very Swedish complexion. And...One of them does and they got a little burned.

ANNIE

Oh, it's a heatwave.

MICHELLE

Yes. [Laughs] All of our snow is gone. That's good.

ANNIE

Well, yeah, that is good. That's awesome. Okay, so I wanted to invite you back on to the podcast because this quarantine life has a lot of people talking about home workouts. People do home workouts in general, sometimes by choice sometimes by lack of choices. Right? And so I wanted to specifically talk about home workouts. We have three tips, I think. I'm sure more will emerge as we discuss. Three tips essentially, that your trainer isn't going to tell you about home workouts.

MICHELLE

Yes.

ANNIE

And I think they're pretty good. 'Cuz we're in the industry. We love trainers, but in my experience, some of them are not always the most forthcoming, as a means to keep you reliant on their products or their services. Sometimes they just don't know. You know, it might be lack of experience, or lack of confidence on their end, but we're gonna dispel some myths, I suppose. Okay, so the first one we wanted to get into is, you don't have to be sore for workouts to be effective. And this is a big one because we've heard that common phrase like "No pain, no gain, go big or go home."

MICHELLE

No excuses.

ANNIE

Yeah, "Sweat is fat crying." Should we continue on all the BS memes and mantras there are around the exercise, in the exercise world. So you don't have to be sore for workouts to be effective. And let's just talk a little bit about what sort of soreness is essentially when you're exercising and when you're strength training, you're breaking down the tissue of your muscles and it causes these little micro tears and it causes some temporary inflammation, I guess you could say. And as they rebuild, they regrow. You can have this experience of like tenderness which is sometimes called DOMS or delayed onset muscle soreness. You might have seen that acronym thrown around here and there, and what causes soreness can be new movements. If you're learning if you're doing a new movement that you haven't done ever, or maybe in a while, it could be that you did a slightly different variation. Maybe you used some heavier weights, or you did more reps. You can be genetically predisposed to experience more muscle soreness than say, maybe I am, more than Michelle, who knows, right? And then there are some movements that are more likely to cause soreness than others and it's generally like eccentric loading, right? Which is like the downward phase. So think, if you're an exercise enthusiast, think like RDLs, walking downhill, that sort of walking down, hiking always gets my calves.

MICHELLE

Yes.

ANNIE

Sore calves after that. But soreness doesn't necessarily indicate a good thing, right? It's not an impact. Sometimes it could be like, "Oh, maybe I overdid it," right. Do you get sore often from workouts?

MICHELLE

I do a little bit and I think for me, because I'm, for the most part, I stay active consistently. I don't get sore as often. And I push myself pretty hard, but because there's consistency with like, the variety that I have and just showing up five days a week, it's not as bad, it's not as noticeable for me. And it doesn't affect my life in a way where I can't reach up to grab coffee mug in the morning, because we all know that's important. Or I can't sit down to go to the bathroom. So the soreness I have is very minimal and livable.

ANNIE

I had one of my, like, second personal training client ever absolutely loathes feeling sore. She just could not, and I know she's not the only one. I've heard that from other women. And she's like, "I need to be able to comfortably live my life following exercise." And part of me wrestled with that because if you're new to exercise or new to a movement, you might experience some soreness. But I would advise and I think Michelle would agree that there should be a sweet spot between "I'm a little sore" and "I'm like so sore I cannot comfortably sit down on my toilet seat." And sometimes that happens on accident.

MICHELLE

Yeah. And I've had clients who think that they're not getting a good workout because they're not sore at all. And in the meantime, they're absolutely making gains with strength, like, their dumbbell weights going up, but they don't see it as a success because they're like, "Well, I'm not sore," and I try to explain them, you're still making progress. You don't have to be...I would like to say it's just because it's easy, or because you're not in pain and you're not miserable. That doesn't mean it's not effective. It shaped your body, which is different.

ANNIE

It is, and I think that that's, I see that also, when people start exercise, they view that soreness is a good thing. They're like, "Oh, yeah, I got a really great workout." And then eventually your body adapts to the stress, the demands that you're putting on it through exercise, which is a good thing. That's the adaptation that you want, and then the soreness starts to decline. They're not feeling as sore as often and they're like, "Oh, I got up the intensity, I got to maintain that level of soreness." And I would offer that there's other ways to note an effective workout besides how sore you are, or side note, how sweaty you are. I would also throw that in the list, which we've covered on podcasts in the past, that how much you sweat is also not an indicator of an effective workout. But it could also be that you're learning a new skill. And that can be a really, really great effective way to monitor an effective workout. In fact, that's one of the focuses of mine often, is "Am I actually getting better at something? Am I improving at something? Am I developing a skill? Am I making," as you said, Michelle, "Am I getting actually getting stronger? So I'm not just sore?" I'm getting stronger, which can or may not increase the likelihood of your soreness. Are you having more mobility, better mobility, or better range of motion throughout a movement? Are you having fun? These are all ways to that you could argue are signs of an effective workout. Not just how sore you are. Right?

MICHELLE

Exactly. Mm hmm.

ANNIE

Okay, so just quick recap. For all those reasons, soreness is not necessarily an indicator of an effective workout. Some people may be more predisposed to soreness, it could be because of the type of movement, how frequently you're doing that movement, how intensely you're doing that movement. We would encourage you to focus on skill development, strength gains, range of motion, enjoyment, all of those are also indicators of an effective workout. Second tip is we struggle, too.

MICHELLE

Oh, yes.

ANNIE

Spoiler alert. Personal trainers struggle with motivation. They struggle with getting inconsistent workouts, they struggle with staying motivated and all that stuff, and we aren't perfect. Are you perfect, Michelle?

MICHELLE

Oh my gosh, no, I swear I still have those days though, where I think I should be perfect. And I'm "shoulding" all over myself and mad at myself because I'm not perfect. I have those days, where I'm just over here having a pity party. [Laughs]

ANNIE

I can identify with that too. I think in the age of social media, it's easy to come to fitness accounts. And it looks as though they're exercising all the time. And I used to do this, and I've posted about it before, I would spend a day you know, or a few hours filming content. And then I would kind of drip that out over the course of a couple weeks. And I'm like, "It looks like I'm exercising every day." I'm not exercising every day. I'm exercising maybe three to four, maybe five times a week, but definitely not every day. And I also think, too, that while we aren't always motivated, we have developed a bag of tricks, so to speak, to help us when we're in a rut, that we try to teach our members in Balance365 to rely more on habits and motivation. So it's very likely that Michelle and I have curated an environment and a support system that make exercise the quote unquote easiest choice in our day, you know, it's like it's become a no brainer, so we can rely less on motivation, because people aren't always motivated. And that's just a sign of your humaneness. It's not a sign of your lack of discipline or willpower or dedication. Right? What do you do when you're not motivated, Michelle?

MICHELLE

I like to listen to music. I have like, I have a specific playlist that I love to dance to. And like so right now, like everyone else we are we are stuck at home. So before, like, I had a really great habit loop. And that was my kids would get on the bus for school and then I'd go workout. And now it's harder. I have a specific playlist and I've actually kept my workout time the same as I would normally head out to a class. But I listen to this playlist while I'm out on a walk, because that's what I've accepted as my minimum right now is that I'm riding the struggle bus a little bit, but I decided I'm going to go for a walk. And that has helped me so much the last couple of days to say, "This is how I'm going to move my body today and it's okay." So that playlist helps having a time that I still designate for is really helping me just stay in that habit.

ANNIE

I really like that, I kind of use something similar. Actually, I've done it twice now, I have made two different decisions. I told myself to just go out and get warmed up. I have this, I have like a three movement warm up that's kind of like in my back pocket if I'm not warming up for anything. Specifically, I don't have any mobility or any concerns that I'm addressing at that time that I will just go do these two sets of these three movements. And at the end of the warm up, if I don't want to continue with my workout, I can check out, I can say peace out, like it's just not there today. I've done that twice. The first time, I literally warmed up and then walked back into the house. I was out in the garage, and I was like, "No, I just don't want to."

MICHELLE

"I'm over it."

ANNIE

I was. I mean, this might be TMI, but I started my period. And I was just kind of like, "Nop"e. I just don't want to, like, I really, I really don't." And honestly, we've talked about this concept before, but really compassionate care for myself. I was like, "You know what, you might just need to just chill out and not work out. And that's okay, that might be that's actually the thing you need in this moment." And then the next day, I was like, "Just go warm up" and I ended up doing a little bit more.

MICHELLE

Yeah.

ANNIE

And it was great. Both great choices, both great answers in that situation. Sometimes it results in more movement. Sometimes it doesn't.

MICHELLE

So it sounds like both of us really seem to have this way to just get started. Like to not put the pressure on ourselves to complete a full workout. To get stuck in our heads, we just have this way to just take a little step forward. And hopefully our listeners can hear that, too, that it doesn't need to be this crazy, wild charade that you can just do something to put you in the right direction that you want to go in and go for it.

ANNIE

Right. I mean, think about, if I said go run a marathon, you'd be like, "I can't, I can't. I'm not even gonna try. I cannot do that."

MICHELLE

Annie, I have the plantar fasciitis. [Laughs]

ANNIE

Yes. Or if I said, "Go run a 10k," I'd still probably be like, "I could probably like muster my way through that. I'd have to walk a lot and it would be slow. It would take me a long time. I could, like, if my life depended on it, I could get it done." But on the other hand, if I said, "Go take a walk around the block," like, "Okay, I can do that." And that's something we also talk about in our Balance365 members' group, that your goals need to be manageable and attainable, right? They shouldn't be reach for the stars, so out there that you just don't even feel inspired or confident in actually reaching them. Right? And so when you're not feeling motivated, a great way to still take action is just commit to something really, really small that you cannot say no to, which for me is a warm up, for you, it's walking.

MICHELLE

Yeah, exactly.

ANNIE

And then again, if you get started and you want to do more, great, if not, that's okay, too. The third tip that I don't think...It unsettles people, this last tip, is whatever you can manage, it's good enough. I think as women a lot of us are so driven to just always be striving for more, for perfection. To go above and beyond, like, we have these really high expectations for ourselves. And if we don't do it perfectly, then it's just, it doesn't count. It's not good enough. We're a failure. We're wrong. We're bad. And we are constantly preaching this about food, but it applies to workouts too - it's good enough. Whatever you can manage is good enough. Do you struggle with this?

MICHELLE

Yeah. Because going, like, how we were talking about at the beginning of the call, the perfectionist mindset, where it's like, "I want to do better. I think I should have higher...I should know better." I've said that to myself so many times, "I should know better as someone who works in the fitness industry, I should know." But it's a struggle sometimes and done is better than perfect. Like just getting started. Can I share a little something with you?

ANNIE

Of course.

MICHELLE

Oh, I love to share. [Laughs] So we're reading the "Atomic Habits" book with our coaches this week. One of the chapters was talking about action versus motion and I think sometimes we get stuck in this motion part where we're all trying to research the perfect workout, or what is the best to get stronger? We're always in search, which is this motion part of it. Okay, you're doing something that feels productive. You're like, "Okay, I'm getting ready to start." And we never get around to that part of the action, because we're too busy in motion trying to find the best way to seek our goals, or to reach our goals. And instead, if we were to take that tiny bit of action, even though it's imperfect, even though it's messy, even though it is in our heads, there's this liar, saying, "It's not good enough." It's something. It's action. You're getting a little closer to where you'd like to be.

ANNIE

Yeah, I love that. Michelle, that's such such a good way to distinguish between the two, motion and action. And in fact, again, we've talked about this before, that it's very rarely an issue of lack of knowledge. When it comes to the women we coach, they know that they need a good amount of fruits and vegetables, some movement in their day, more sleep, manage their stress. They know all these things. It's the actual like taking action. That's where they get stuck. And, you know, I think I wrote a blog post for Balance365 years and years and years ago. But I made this analogy about how when you show up for day one of a new job, you don't have all the answers. You know the really important stuff, like where the bathroom is, how to get paid, when you're gonna get paid, maybe where your desk is, but all the ins and outs of like, who's responsible for what work due dates? How do I deliver this content? How am I supposed to do this? What about this skill? I don't know how to do this, where do I find this? All that stuff you acquire kind of as you need it, right? But you know enough to show up for day one. And when it comes to exercise

that might mean, you know, enough, you know how to walk, I'm hoping, you know, or if you're struggling with some disabilities, I hope you have some tools in the toolbox to get some sort of movement. And even if it's not super intense, even if it's not like this heavy hardcore lifting, you have a way to move your body that you enjoy and feel confident in, right? And then as you progress and gain confidence and build that habit of movement, like then you can level up you can, or you know, or scale your habits or change your habits or shift your habits to whatever supports your goal. But you certainly don't have to have all these skills and equipment and knowledge to get started. Right? But we do spend so much time like figuring out, "Okay, this is what day one's going to look like, and if I do this, and I can do this, then I'll do this for this many reps in this way." But then we get tripped up on the, "Well, I don't know what that is exercise is." In fact, this happened to me today, I pulled an old workout out from a strength coach mentor that I've worked with from years ago. And I didn't know 2 of the exercises. And I had this hiccup, and I was like, "I should just find a different workout." And then I was like, "Wait a minute, I could just sub in something I know. And that's good enough, right?" But we do get tripped up on the details. So I like that idea of just taking action, versus spending your time in motion.

MICHELLE

And the motion feels so productive. I think that's a great thing to say is that when you're in that motion process, it's so easy to get stuck there and avoid the part of taking action. When just take that little step. Find a replacement exercise.

ANNIE

Yeah, and don't be afraid to break the rules. The rules quote unquote, because as it pertains to home workouts, you know, there's a lot of information out there, there's a lot of resources that are sharing home workouts. For example, I came across one that was like a 20 minute, he set the timer for 20 minutes and you just move through the exercises as many times as you can until 20 minutes is up. I wanted to do it for 15. So I did it for 15. And I just thought, you know, we use the term "grown ass woman." I am 36 years old, it's my workout. I can do whatever I want with it. Even though the guideline or the suggestion was 20 minutes. It's just a suggestion. It's not a hard and fast rule. I can make it 10 minutes, I could make it 25 minutes if I wanted to. I could make it 40 minutes, I could make it five minutes, whatever. It's like I get to choose, right? But we do get caught up in doing it right or wrong, which goes back to that perfectionist, like, "I can't do all 20 minutes, or really, I don't want to do all 20 minutes, so I'm just not going to do it at all." But whatever you choose it's good enough and especially when it comes to movement, right, and I want to go back to your walking habit because in terms of walking, I think walking gets poo pooed a lot for not being enough, like, "I just went for a walk" or "walking doesn't count" is absolutely something we hear frequently.

MICHELLE

Oh and you know, I used to be one of the people poo pooing walks, too. I used to not think it counted as movement because I was so wrapped up in that all or nothing mindset where, to me a real workout was an hour of this perfection, like this little bit of cardio, a little bit of weights, a little bit of abs, back to back to back circuit style. And when I had two C-sections, every time I get knocked on my butt, I get knocked back down to reality, that it doesn't need to be perfect

and that walking is actually really fun and relaxing for me. It gets me out of the house. So I know there are other people out there who don't think that a walk is good enough. They feel like, "Well, when I get back, I should probably do some weights," and go for it if you really want to! But don't think that walking isn't good enough. It's a great way to move and get out in the sunshine and experience nature, if you have the accessibility to something a little bit more in the country. And you can, you know, wave 10 feet away from your neighbors as you're crossing paths. Walking is such a great start. And such a great way to just move.

ANNIE

Yeah, it absolutely is. And I say this to myself often, but if I wait until the perfect time to do a perfect workout, per your comment, you know, that 60 minute workout, do it perfectly top to bottom start to finish, if I wait for the perfect time to do the perfect workout, I'm going to be waiting a while. And instead, what does this choice look like? So, maybe if I do that, if I take that approach, maybe I'm getting one to two workouts a week in considering, you know, the context of my life with kids and work and schedules and all that stuff, versus what does that look like if I did 20 to 30 minutes of imperfect action, maybe a little less intensity, maybe not quite as perfect. But I'm consistently taking that action over the course of a week. I'm way more likely to get in more workouts, which increases consistency, which increases results, which increases the habit building process. And then before you know it, it's like, this is just a thing I do now.

MICHELLE

Exactly. And I think about our first talking point here with the no excuses mentality as well. So many people, when they first start exercising, they think they have to go all in and exercise and maybe they have been inactive for a while or they have pre existing conditions or injuries or a lack of confidence to go do those things. Walking has a really low barrier for most people, like, it's a really nice gentle way to introduce yourself to movement again if it's been a while, if you're not quite comfortable with the gym setting, don't poo poo it, it's good enough. I could go on all day about walking.

ANNIE

I - [laughs] So go take a walk. [Laughs]

MICHELLE

I am, [laughs], I will later.

ANNIE

[Laughs] The summary of this podcast is, go take a walk. So, in all honesty, though, just to recap real quick. You don't have to be sore for workouts to be effective. The no pain no gain is a bunch of BS and quite honestly, there's a difference between pain...We should have addressed this, too. There's a difference between pain and mild discomfort. Exercises is not always comfortable. That's for certain. Sometimes it's actually quite uncomfortable. You feel like you're suffering. You're like, "Oh, this is hard." But there's a difference between that and like, this is painful. This hurts. And we don't want you to be in pain. That's a lot of times how injuries come about. Sometimes, I mean, usually injuries are very unintentional, no one sets out, at least

I don't know, to set out into a workout that's like, "Yes, I'm hoping I get hurt in this." But by pushing, pushing, pushing and ignoring those signs of discomfort, and pain and suffering, you could increase your likelihood of injury. And so I guess that's just something to be really mindful of, that exercise isn't always rainbows and unicorns, it's not always comfortable. Sometimes it burns. Sometimes it's like, "Oh, this is hard," but there's a difference between that and pain. You don't have to be sore for workouts to be effective. You can focus on skill development, strength gains, mobility, enjoyment. Our second point was that we struggle, too, Michelle and I struggle with motivation. We're not always super keen to exercise, but we have some tricks in our back pocket to help us get going even when we aren't feeling motivated, which for both of us sounds like just getting started. And finally, whatever you can manage, it's good enough.

MICHELLE

Yep.

ANNIE

Whether that's a really intense long workout, or it's a short walk down to the end of the block and back. It's all good enough, it all counts. It all adds up. And yeah, anything to add?

MICHELLE

No, that's pretty much everything.

ANNIE

Okay.

MICHELLE

So go for a walk. [Laughs]

ANNIE

So go [laughs]. So go for a walk. And I hope this finds you, we started the podcast by talking about things that home trainers aren't going to tell you about home workouts. I hope that you have trainers in your life that are giving you good information and are being honest about soreness with workouts and their motivation and they're encouraging of, accepting whatever you can manage versus shaming you but we're here for you if you don't have those people in your life. [Laughs] So. Thank you so much for Michelle, for joining me. This was a quick and easy podcast. I love talking about exercise with you.

MICHELLE

Agreed.

ANNIE

Okay, well -

MICHELLE

It's fun.

ANNIE

It is fun. You go enjoy your walk, okay?

MICHELLE

[Laughs] Thanks, I'll see you later, Annie.

ANNIE

Okay. Bye bye.

ANNIE

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