Balance365 Episode 19 Transcript

Balance365 is a habit based behavior change program that's made up of fifteen separate habits. Jen, Lauren and Annie discuss which three habits in Balance365 were game changers for them, why and how they all work together. They share all of their juicy habit secrets, and give advice on how you can learn to implement them for yourself and find your own game changers.

- The value of the Balance365 community and accountability in progressive habit change
- Hunger as a signal and how it compares to other signals our bodies give us
- Why you don't need to count calories, points or macros to eat according to your goals
- Separating the feeling of actual hunger from feelings *about* hunger
- Sneaky! How your body gets around dieting efforts to ensure it's fed
- How many meals per day? What science says (and what the caveats are.)
- Layering habits and how they all work together
- Rules vs. guidelines and moderation, a Balance365 perspective on nutrition
- What Goldilocks has to do with intuitive eating
- How a scarcity mindset about food impacts how much we eat
- Taking your eating off of autopilot: mindfulness as a tool for eating to satiety
- How you should feel leaving the table, according to Lauren
- The value of weight maintenance
- How do you know if you're eating to your energy needs?
- Reasons we overeat and why that is common (and isn't the end of the world sometimes!)
- Food as more than fuel

Resources:

- Episode 15: Habits 101 – Hack Your Habits, Change Your Life
- Balance365 program

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Transcript:

Annie: We have got a juicy topic for you today, don't we ladies? Lauren, how are you?

Lauren: Yes, I'm good, how are you?

Annie: Are you ready for the juicy topic today? We are going to give away some secrets.

Lauren: I'm ready.

Annie: Okay. Jen, you ready?

Jen: I'm ready.

Annie: What are you doing over there, Jen in Canada?

Jen: I just took a boomerang of us and I'm posting it to Instagram.

Annie: I appreciate the honesty.

Jen: Yes.

Annie: Lauren, are you also on Instagram? Or do I have your full attention?

Lauren: You have my attention. I just ate lunch so I'm ready to go.

Annie: Nap time, is it sleepy time?

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: we are going to share, we each have three habits that really were game changers for us in our nutrition journey and we want to share them with you today and I'm sure listeners are like "What are they doing? They're going to give away their secrets."

But really, in our experience, we've found in working with women that it's not the what, it's not the education that they're missing, it's the support and the implementation of the habits. So we're going to share with you some of the habits that have changed our lives or have been what we call in Balance365, "game changers." And if you want support and more guidance on how to implement those habits into your life, join our program. Join our Balance 365 community because it's a pretty rad place so are we ready? Who wants to go first? Lauren or Jen?

Jen: Lauren, you go.

Lauren: Okay.

Annie: Okay, Lauren, what's your habit game changer?

Lauren: My habit game changer is Mastering Your Hunger. And so this one is kind of, it's my game changer but you can't do it first, because I feel like some of the other habits that come before are really instrumental in getting you ready and setting up for this habit. Things like balancing your meals and the habit that you're going to mention that I'll save for-

Annie: How many habits are there, Lauren?

Lauren: 15 total habits.

Annie: 15 total habits in our Balance 365 program.

Lauren: Yeah, and then we also have different guides like we have a troubleshooting guide, we have a Feeding Your Family guide, and a men's section that is new. We have eating out, treats, alcohol, we go through all of that kind of stuff.

Annie: Awesome. Okay, continue on.

Lauren: Okay, so Mastering Your Hunger was my game changer and as I said, I did it after I balanced my meals but I think the reason that hunger was so instrumental for me is because it really taught me how to start listening to my body again as dieters we often push those feelings aside because we try and subsist on as little food as possible, right? So we're always trying to ignore those signals so I kind of just pushed them away and it took me some time to learn how to listen to those again and learn that my body had a system in place where I didn't have to rely on counting calories or points or even really macros, I could literally listen to my body and trust that it had that system in place and it would do better than any other external system would for me.

Annie: And you have an analogy about hunger that I really like that you said a long time ago. It's hunger is just a signal to your body that it's time to eat and for so many women, myself included, when I feel hunger, initially when I was practicing this habit, I was like, "Oh my gosh! I've got to eat right now! and I've got to eat all the things." Like it was a very, almost an alarming sensation to feel. But you've compared it to like, just, when you're tired, you don't go to sleep immediately, you can have some awareness about it, like, "Ha, I'm feeling tired or I'm feeling thirsty," like, "Maybe I should take some water soon, or take a nap shortly."

Lauren: We have all these complicated emotions around hunger but if you can let those things go, it really just is like a mild sensation in your stomach. All the building up is what hard for people. It's not actually the sensation, it's the emotions that they have around it, maybe from either their past experiences or their childhood or it's different for different people but if you can get to the point where you're just feeling the actual feeling, it's just a mild sensation.

Annie: And it's no reason to freak out-

Lauren: Right.

Annie: Or eat all the foods.

Jen: Do you remember, Lauren, when you and I first started working together on my habits and I was so afraid of hunger and I just-

Lauren: Yeah.

Jen: I refused to do it. And I was like, "I cannot experience hunger." But basically, it was emotional. It was totally emotional. I had to work through that. But basically, the way that I had treated my body for the decade prior was to ignore my hunger cues and anytime I felt hunger, you know, even when I was working with Lauren, it felt like, I felt fear, and I think my body was just afraid I was taking food away from it again. And so when I felt that fear I immediately felt like I needed to be comforted with food. Right now. So it was actually the last habit that I ever did and Lauren was amazing at walking me through that and now-

Lauren: We had lots of talks-

Jen: We had lots of talks. But yeah.

Lauren: I think I-

Annie: Go ahead, Lauren.

Lauren: Sorry. I was going to say, I think another big issue that people have with hunger is they don't listen to those early signals so they wait until they are starving and literally cannot handle it anymore to say, "Oh, I'm hungry." And then, you're obviously way past hungry at that point. So we're not talking about getting to that point, we're talking about starting to listen to those first little signals where you're body's trying to tell you, like, "Hey, I'm going to want to eat soon." Not, "Oh my god, feed me now, go eat 10 donuts!"

Jen: Right, so when I was going through that with you, Lauren, I felt like I couldn't feel those early signals and I went from zero to hangry.

Lauren: Yeah. And that's really common, it happened to me too when I first started trying to implement this.

Jen: So what would be some of those first ones.

Lauren: Everyone experiences a little bit differently, I think, but it's like a sort of a hollowing of your stomach is what I would describe it as and It's definitely stomach centred. So, some people think they experience hunger as a feeling in their throat or wanting to eat something crunchy or getting a headache and those aren't actually the actual sensations of hunger, it's centered in your stomach and it's just sort of a slow emptying feeling. Is that how you guys experience it to.

Jen: Yeah, and I just sort of check in to myself and go, "Yeah, that's hunger. Like, I could eat," rather than, "No, I'm not hungry," kind of thing. It's kind of an intuitive-

Lauren: I felt like a lot of people-

Jen: thing for me now.

Lauren: Yeah, what we recommend for people who have dieted for a long time who are out of tune with their hunger is to actually set a timer, like set a timer for an hour or two after you eat and just use that timer to check in and then do it half an hour later, check in again and just see how the feeling changes each time you check in. And it takes some time, so in our program we have a whole hunger journal all about figuring out what those feelings are like for you.

Annie: I think this is definitely one of those habits that takes trial and error and it's a process and it's something that most women don't nail on the first try or even the first couple of tries. Like it takes a lot of practice to master this habit. And we talked about on our Habit 101 podcast, Lauren, how sometimes making these habits second nature is just a matter of getting reps in. And you just sometimes need some practice experiencing hunger and when to eat and how to respond and how that looks for you and feels for you and then moving on from there.

Lauren: For sure, yeah.

Annie: Awesome. Okay, so, my habit, I'm going to jump in and go next. My habit is 3-4 meals which you kind of touched on earlier, Lauren, in our habits, this was a game changer for me because I, you know those jokes, like I'm on the seafood diet, like I see food and I eat it? That was me.

And this kind of worked hand in hand with hunger but I was just eating all day long and as a mom who was serving snacks and kids' lunch, kids' breakfast and kid's dinner and I would eat my lunch and dinner at various times kind of around the same time, I just felt I was just constantly grazing and one thing I noticed this habit really kind of was an eye opener was I noticed that I would lose weight on vacation, which to a lot of people sounds kind of counterintuitive, like, you go on vacation, and maybe you're not exercising and you're having more caloric drinks or alcoholic drinks or you can't control your food environment quite as much as

you can at home, like how does that happen and the one thing I attributed it to was I wasn't grazing in between. And I wasn't snacking all the time.

I had breakfast, lunch, dinner, maybe sometimes a dessert or a snack in between here and there but for the most part we are having 3-4 meals and staying active. If we were out at a tourist location we were moving and I was like, "Maybe that's like the key." So for me it wasn't necessarily what I was putting on my plate, which felt really kind of freeing to me that I could still enjoy the foods that I like like pizza and pastas and sushi and burritos and chips and salsa and all that stuff.

Lauren: She lists like fifty.

Annie: I could keep going. Clearly, I like to eat. But yeah, for me the game changer wasn't so much about the foods that I was being "good foods" or "bad foods" it was more a way to portion control or designate those foods during meal times and that kind of just self-regulated itself with the habit of 3-4 meals, which I know, Jen, that was a big habit for you, it wasn't maybe your number one game changer but it was a big habit for you.

Jen: It was a big game changer for me in 2 ways. The first one because it brought awareness to how much I was putting food in my mouth all day long and one thing that Lauren taught me is that if you starve yourself or try to go without in a dieting mindset, your body will find ways of getting food. It's like our brains are really smart and it will get that food.

So there were times when I was dieting when I would be on like a "clean eating" run or I would be on whatever diet and I wouldn't be losing weight and I just couldn't figure it out so then I would like think "Oh, my metabolism is crashing" or whatever and the awareness that that habit brought to me and what Lauren has taught me is that there's just things I started doing unconsciously because my body is really freaking smart and it will get food in me because I need it and so what I realized through 3-4 meals is how much I as putting handfuls of food in my mouth all day long. And after a 16 hour day that adds up.

So, I would grab a handful of almonds every time I passed the pantry or pick off my kid's plates, like just eat the crusts of their bread after they were done eating etc and so when I did 3-4 meals I was like, I am actually eating all day long. In addition to having my meals and really the way around that is, Balance365 isn't a

diet, it is about feeding yourself but part of being able to stop shoving food in my mouth all day long was not dieting anymore and actually having the meals I need to fed myself. Thanks, Lauren.

Lauren: You're welcome! So this is-

Annie: Go ahead, Lauren.

Lauren: This was the first one I implemented too and it was one of my top ones too but I think `that a lot of people are really surprised that this is one of our habits when they first read it because so much of the advice out there is to eat mini meals, right to eat 6-8 meals a day to keep your metabolism high or whatever, or you'll eat less. First of all, that's not true and studies actually show that you need to eat a substantial amount of food to turn off your hunger signals. And so, studies show that if you eat the same amount of food in smaller portions all day long, you do not get the same amount of fullness as if you eat it in 3 meals.

Annie: Which totally makes-

Jen: Right-

Annie: Go ahead.

Jen: I was just going to say that, it all kind of works together, right? So, Lauren's talking about her hunger habit being really important and getting in control of your hunger again and the other thing is when I was putting food in my face all day long, I was never really, really getting hungry and never really, really feeling satisfied after I ate. But basically I would just, I mean, I don't know if all dieters do this but this is what I did. I would just I went hungry a lot but it was just sort of as long as you could white knuckle it.

Lauren: Yeah.

Jen: And then you eat a whole bunch and then your day is ruined and then you... yeah.

Annie: And then you start over Monday.

Jen: Downhill from there.

Annie: Why do all diets start on Monday?

Jen: I don't know.

Annie: Like, something special about it. Yeah, I think 3-4 meals also, like Jen said, these are kind of habits that really layer brick by brick well onto each other. So eventually, when you pan out over the course of a year or two years or three years of practicing this habits, you've got some really great foundations of the eating where food doesn't control your life, you're not consumed with how to build a meal and what to buy and what to eat and what to order when you're out to eat and what to eat when you're on vacation because these things have just become second nature so you can spend your time and your energy and your focus on things other than food.

These habits aren't meant to consume you, they're meant to complement your life and so when we talk about habit game changers these are literally habits that we practiced one at a time and then layered habit on habit on habit on habit. So eventually, what it looks like is we've got a balanced plate, we're arriving to a meal where we're feeling hungry, we're eating until we are full or satisfied or almost satisfied, depending on your goals and we're eating foods that we love and that also nourish us that taste good so it's really, we're breaking it down habit by habit but they're really meant to work together.

Lauren: So before we move on I also wanted to mention with the 3-4 meals habits that there are caveats to this habit that we mention in the program. So our prescription is not everyone always eat 3 or 4 meals and that's it. If you're pregnant, if you're breastfeeding, if you have hypoglycemia symptoms, like there's all these different caveats and we go through that in our program so I just wanted to put that out there, just a little asterix that this is not like a diet thing, that you have to only eat 3 or 4 times a day and that's the end of the story so keep that in mind too.

Jen: Yeah I mean, nutrition is about guidelines, not rules. Diets are about rules. And the reality of life is that there are certain guidelines out there for nutrition and driving and you like there's guidelines out there for a reason and it's because the science of nutrition tells us, you know, approximately-ish what will support our health and wellness. So, a lot of people think because we are so much about moderation a lot of people that are a little more extreme in their thinking are like, they think Balance365 is a free for all of sugar and whatever, but no, Balance365

has very sensible nutrition guidelines and then shows how to implement those in a non-restrictive way.

Annie: Right on. Jen, you want to talk about your habit game changer.

Jen: Yes, so this was a game changer for me and I find amongst our Balance365ers it's a game changer for a lot of women, and we call it Goldilocks and that is eating until you're satisfied. So it's Goldilocks because it's not too much, not too little, just right and again, you know, with my background of very disordered eating behaviours, whether I was grazing or dieting or starving myself or binge eating, again, all the habits kind of work together and I stacked them, and once I hit Goldilocks and I was eating just enough it showed me how much and how frequently I would overeat.

And so because I had this constant fear of, so after I stopped dieting and started working with Lauren, I then had this fear of going hungry and not having enough food and that is a whole other ballgame of issues that we could have a whole podcast on, but for me to not overeat was a big deal because it meant I was trusting my body to eat just enough at that meal and get me to my next meal. And able to experience hunger at my next meal and then eat just enough and then you start seeing how that chugs along, right?

Hungry, eat until you're satisfied, go about your day, start feeling hungry again, eat until you're satisfied, go about your day and it's so simple but it's actually so freeing. But yeah, I guess it's also where a lot of women start experiencing fat loss in our program because they start stacking their habits, they start feeding themselves really well and then they stop overeating at each meal and then they start experiencing fat loss.

The other thing that I had to deal with with Goldilocks and when I was really able to master Goldilocks was dealing with my scarcity issues around food so I used to go to Dairy Queen and order a large blizzard which is enormous and I used to eat the whole thing and I used to think that people ate less ice cream than me were like liars. Like nobody is satisfied by a little bit of ice cream.

And it's funny because just last night I went to Dairy Queen, I got a small blizzard and I ate about a quarter of it and I just felt satisfied, I just thought, "That's enough." It was really sweet and I was kind of done with that sweetness. I didn't want any more sweetness anymore, so I ate it and then I put in the freezer and I

can have it another time. But, I couldn't do that before because ice cream was so forbidden to me that it was just when I had it, I needed to have as much as I could and it was like I was never satisfied, unless I had a lot. Go ahead, Lauren.

Lauren: Can I tell a quick story, side note on Dairy Queen?

Annie: Yes.

Lauren: Do you guys know when I was in college I had a roommate and she worked at Dairy Queen and that she used to get to take all the mess-ups home for Dairy Queen and that's when I was hardcore dieting and one night, she used to bring them home, our freezer was always stacked with Dairy Queen and one night there was like two left and she wasn't home and I ate it all. And then she got home and she was like, "Did you eat the ice cream?" and I was like, "No."

Jen: Someone must have come in here.

Lauren: I don't know what happened, like, and then I was like, "Oh you know what happened, I grabbed one and ate it and the other one fell on the floor."

Jen: Is she listening right now? Like, "I knew it!"

Lauren: I don't know, she might be listening, if you are, I'm really sorry, I totally lied to you.

Annie: Because the frozen blizzard that falls on the floor is totally going to spill everywhere and not be useful. Like it's-

Lauren: Like, I had to throw it away.

Jen: Yeah, I really think, I don't think people realize how important dealing with your emotions and your scarcity issue around food is, like. I now know that I can have ice cream any time. Like, there's a Dairy Queen five minutes from my house. If I really want one, I can go get one. I ate a quarter of it and it wasn't about the calories or anything, it was about my body being like, "You know what? I had enough." And, the big difference between, I think, a dieter might do the same behaviour, do you know what I mean, like, someone might look at me and if they're a dieter, they would look at my behaviour and be like, "She must be dieting."

But the difference between Balance365 and the things that we teach and what diets are doing is diets are constantly trying to take away from you and we're trying to teach you all to give to yourselves. And that might look like not finishing your ice cream because you want to feel good, you don't want to be like lethargic and full and feel kind of ugh because you just had way too much ice cream.

Annie: I think Goldilocks would have probably been my second pick for habit game changers and one of the things that really taught me was to eat with intention and be really mindful versus just on autopilot because I would go to restaurants and of course, I mean the food's good, you know, when you go out to eat, as you know I don't cook so I like to eat out and it tastes really good and I would want to eat it all but if I'm really in tune with my body and if I'm eating mindfully I know that, "Okay, I'm past full now, or I'm at least not hungry anymore and I can take this food home with me and I can enjoy it another time if I want or I can send it with my husband or I can just leave it at the restaurant, whatever I want, but it really took me off of autopilot.

I wasn't just eating food to clean my plate or eating food because it was there, I was paying attention more to, "Am I hungry? Am I full? Does this food still taste good? Is this food that I'm enjoying?" And then I can make a decision based on those questions.

Jen: And I feel, you know, like, I want to feel good, so it's like, you know that's kind of in my mind and it's barely intentional for me anymore for me to almost, it's just intuitive. Like, you know, I want to feel good and I feel so much better if I can leave a table not stuffed to the brim and Lauren she has a really good kind of rule of thumb, I remember her telling me that, "When you leave the table you should still feel like you could go for a walk." And like, I used to leave the table like, "I need to curl up on the couch for a little while."

Annie: Unbutton my pants. Can you roll me outta here please?

Jen: Yeah. And so that's been a really freeing, like a really freeing habit for me and the other thing I wanted to mention to everybody is that, you know we talk about fat loss quite a bit because a lot of women come to us with an extensive dieting history and lots of those diets have pushed their way up and up and up and they want to know how they can reclaim their bodies, lose weight, look for their healthy weight without dieting.

But one thing that's a big deal is weight maintenance, like when your weight goes unchanged, right, because a lot of people's weights are fluctuating up and down constantly and Lauren also mentioned that we can regulate our calories, like *we* are the best calorie counter out there and I have not counted calories or macros I used to do like hardcore macro counting, I haven't done that in four years and my weight has been the exact same thing for the last four years.

So, I had my last baby and I lost, you know, lost my postpartum weight and this is the first time in my life that my weight has, in my adult life, since I started dieting, that my weight has just effortlessly stayed the exact same. And how do you know if you're eating to your energy needs? It's that your weight stays the same, right?

So, yeah, I'm just like, I'm thrilled about it and I don't think enough people get, acknowledge what a big deal weight maintenance is. It's like, I am intuitively eating to my energy needs, you know, every day, every week, every month, kind of thing.

Annie: If, for whatever reason, you wanted to adjust your weight up or down to support your goals or your lifestyle or whatever it is, you have the tools to do that.

Jen: Totally.

Annie: In a manner that suits your lifestyle that is sustainable to you.

Jen: Yeah, totally. I will never go back to dieting. Ever. Yeah. So Lauren's been like revolutionary in my journey and we just love her, don't we, Annie?

Annie: We do. She-

Jen: She is a smart, smart woman.

Annie: She is.

Lauren: Aww. I'm just going to play this over and over.

Jen: When we're making fun of you.

Lauren: I'm going to play this to you.

Jen: You'll be like listening to it.

Lauren: Do you remember when you said how smart I was?

Annie: Just about habits.

Jen: I also have to say that-

Annie: I'm kidding.

Jen: I want to like fine print Goldilocks, like sometimes I still overeat. Like that is a normal human behaviour to be like sometimes you under eat and you get hungrier earlier for your next meal and sometimes you overeat. But we are a reflection of what we do most of the time, not all of the time. And sometimes I overeat by accident and I'm like, "Oh, that doesn't feel good" and then I just move on, what did I learn from this? What would I do differently next time? And I move on. And sometimes I overeat and I kind of know I'm going to overeat, like when I'm going to eat pierogies, I don't know if you guys know what that is, it's Ukrainian, Eastern European dish.

Lauren: We know.

Jen: Okay. I don't know. And it's like, I love them so much and it's not like I'm intentionally bingeing or anything but I know I'll probably eat past satisfied. Like, I'll probably just have two extra pierogies.

Annie: And that's-

Jen: I'm cool with that.

Annie: And that's because food isn't just about nourishment or just about fuel, sometimes it's about food tastes good, or we're with really great company or we're celebrating. There's a variety or reasons to eat. So yeah, sometimes, I would say the same is true for 3-4 meals and I'm sure, Lauren, you would say the same thing about hunger, sometimes you eat when you're not hungry, sometimes I graze all day, like when we were in San Francisco and we had all those chocolate covered almonds and chips and salsa and I just-

Jen: Yeah.

Annie: I just kept eating. Like, I was like, "This is good." And it's temporary. It was a couple days out of 365 days a year, not gonna makes or break me, I'm going to enjoy it in the moment and then move on.

Jen: Yeah, I mean, anytime you're trying to like white knuckle onto rules that you've made for yourself, you know you're getting into like dangerous territory with a dieting mindset.

Annie: Absolutely. Anything else to add?

Jen: I don't think so, those are like three game changers, I feel like we've been giving away a lot of game changers on our podcast. So hopefully everybody's listening.

Annie: I know. But, like I said at the beginning of the podcast, if you want more of our habits, if you want to know what the rest of our habits are, and/or you want support implementing these habits because we can tell you what they are, but really it's how to make it work for your life that's really, really what matters, join our program, Balance365, we've got an awesome private Facebook community. We've also got a free Facebook community, Healthy Habits Happy Moms with almost 40,000 women across the globe, a variety of ages and moms, even non-moms, I feel like our non-mom community is really growing.

Jen: It is.

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: Which is fun.

Jen: Yeah. Joining us.

Annie: Awesome. Well, okay, thanks, ladies. Thanks for sharing your juicy habit game changers.

Lauren: Thanks.

Jen: Right.

Lauren: I feel like we always end this so awkwardly.

Annie: Kay, bye!

Lauren: Kay, bye!