

Balance365 Episode 231 Transcript

ANNIE BREES (INTRO)

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 1000s 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

Hey everyone, welcome back to Balance365 Life Radio. In our three-part series on exercise, last week we covered in part one, exercise 101. We got into helping you understand the foundations of exercise and this week in part two, we are going over exercise myths and truth because a lot of what you think is true about exercise isn't actually true at all. Let us help free you from diet culture lies, my friends. And next week we are covering part three: How to Build Muscle and Get Stronger, one of my favorite topics. We hope you enjoy today's show. And as always, if you have any comments or questions you can drop us a line in our DMs on Instagram or Facebook. We'd love to hear from you. Also, if you aren't already signed up to receive our newsletter you are missing out. Every two weeks Jen and I send out a deeply personal email chock full of wisdom, insight, and our own personal reflections. If you like our podcast, you will love this newsletter. You cannot find this anywhere else. Don't miss out my friend. The link to sign up is in the show notes or you can go to balance365.com/email Enjoy.

ANNIE

Friends, we're back with some myths.

JEN CAMPBELL

We are.

ANNIE

And truths. We won't just drop myths in your lap without any truth. [Laughs]

JEN

[Laughs] Hi, Holea.

HOLEA CHARLES

Hi.

ANNIE

Okay. Hi. We're gonna go right to Holea.

HOLEA

[Laughs]

ANNIE

This is an awkward intro. I love it. Right up Holea's alley. [Laughs] Holea, how are you feeling today? Back for episode number two. Are you as nervous as you were on the first one?

HOLEA

No, I'm feeling quite at home since it's a little more awkward to start. So it's good.

ANNIE

Oh, good, happy to accommodate. [Laughs]

JEN

Annie's on holiday. So she's coming to us from a, is that like an Air BnB? Hotel room?

ANNIE

This is a family member's, I think office?

JEN

Oh, fun.

ANNIE

I'm not really - a little den maybe? I don't know. But I apologize if my audio isn't as clear as it normally is. That remote work life.

JEN

Yes. [Laughs]

ANNIE

You know, it's rough. It's rough living, or working, from a tropical location.

JEN

[Laughs] Stop it.

ANNIE

Feel bad for me. Feel bad for me, please. Okay, let's get into these myths and truths, because there's a lot of them. I think we have, what, six today? We probably could have had a lot more. But we're gonna hold it to these main ones.

JEN

These seven.

ANNIE

Yes, seven. Okay. Are we ready to get into it?

JEN

Yeah.

HOLEA

Mm-hm.

ANNIE

Okay, so myth number one: building strength and building muscle are the same. Holea, what's the truth?

HOLEA

The truth is, no. The truth is that muscle strength and muscle size are two different things. So like when it comes to strength, strength is, think about like how much you can lift, how much you can pick up, you can move. The size has to do with how big your muscles are, the muscle tissue size. And to achieve each of those results requires different types of training. So if you want size, that means that you need more volume, maybe you're doing more reps in your training, more repetitions. Whereas if you want strength, if you want to be like, "I want to be able to pick up that super heavy thing," that's going to require less reps, but you practicing with heavier weights. So we'll get more into like kind of the details of what this actually looks like. Because there's just different layers to it. But to start off, just knowing in general there they are two different things. And you know, using different types of training modalities, for example, size is going to be like more bodybuilding, you know, you may see like spending more time at the gym, that type of thing. An example of strength would be like powerlifting or you know, on the extreme sides as an example. But yeah, so when it comes to that, for people who are just beginning training, however, it's totally possible that you are going to see both of those results at the same time, simply because of beginner gains, which are pretty awesome. If you haven't experienced them. Jen, your thoughts?

JEN

Oh, just I was telling them before we started recording that I'm in a comeback phase of my strength training. And I had said, "Oh, I love those beginner gains, it's the best." And then I said, that I'm going to [laughs] then I'm going to quit. And then I'm going to [laughs] go back for the beginner gains again. Because once you get to, you know, intermediate area of lifting, the gains are harder to come by. But there's always that like quick return on investment in the beginning, and then progress slows down. And it's just kind of sucky.

ANNIE

And you can be the lucky recipient of those beginner gains, even if you've had stints of consistent strength training in the past, like if you've maybe had four or five years of lifting, and then maybe, like Jen, you've taken four or five years -

JEN

Shut up. Two years. Okay?

ANNIE

- off, or less consistent. [Laughs]

JEN

Shut up.

ANNIE

Okay, okay.

JEN

I broke my wrist. Okay? [Laughs]

HOLEA

[Laughs]

ANNIE

I'm so sorry. Wait, you broke your wrist?

ALL

[Laugh]

ANNIE

Surprise, I'll have to hear that story sometime. If you're new here, Jen broke her wrist and for a while, that's all she talks about.

JEN

[Laughs]

ANNIE

So it's now been a running joke.

JEN

A lot of my life centers around that now.

ANNIE

We all know.

JEN

There was pre, my life pre-wrist break. And now forever, I will refer to this phase of my life as "post-wrist break."

ANNIE

Mm-hm. So if you're like Jen, and for whatever reason had to step away from strength training for an extended period of time, when you return, you might be the beneficiary of those big quote-unquote, beginner gains.

JEN

Yeah. And I think, I love that, just sharing about that. Actually, that could be a whole myth in itself, right? I used to think something was wrong with me when my gains would slow down, that I was doing something wrong. I didn't realize that it was physiological. So yes, the returns. What did you call it, Holea, the law of diminishing returns?

HOLEA

Mm-hmm, yeah. As you progress further into your training age, like how long you've been strength training, it's going to be more difficult to like progress into those higher weights or kind of go past those thresholds of kind of like your max end strength or maybe your muscle tissue size, right? Like, even if you look at some of the more, you know -

JEN

Like your butt just doesn't keep growing at the same pace - [Laughs]

HOLEA

Right. [Laughs]

JEN

- as it did in the first three months.

HOLEA

Yes. Fact.

JEN

I just add two inches to my butt forever. [Laughs]

ANNIE

I wish. I wish it worked like that.

JEN

And yeah, the other thing, too, is again, once you get past that beginner phase is I think, you know, just, you see somebody on the street like a bodybuilder and you see like big biceps. And your assumption is he must be the strongest, so strong. But the truth is, you could see somebody who has been training for strength and not size who doesn't have the size of that bodybuilder but could actually curl more.

HOLEA

Yeah.

ANNIE

We are going to get way more into this in part three. So let's, I'm going to cut you all off here. And we're gonna move on to myth two: you can spot reduce fat.

JEN

The truth is no. You cannot spot reduce fat and if you've logged into Pinterest lately, do people still use Pinterest? Or is this just the TikTok world now? Okay, if -

HOLEA

I use Pinterest.

JEN

Oh, you do. Okay, good. We are of a certain age here though. So. Anyway. [Laughs] If you've logged into Pinterest lately, you'll see hundreds of images showing, you know, do X exercise and lose the muffin top, the love handles, thin your thighs, flatten your stomach. But that's just not how it works. Annie, do you have any experience with that?

ANNIE

I don't know why you would ask me that question.

JEN

[Laughs] Annie's origin story.

ANNIE

[Laughs] Yes. Yes. I have a lot of experience with that. I've told this story a million times. But the first diet/fitness book I bought was called Thin Thighs. And I bought it to get some advice. I was just telling Holea about this a week or two ago. I took that book and followed Matthew's recommendations. I'm not holding a grudge anymore. I've let it go. Matthew, I'm coming for you. I'm just kidding. I don't even know if he's still around, but I followed his recommendations, which was essentially, multiple days a week of training your legs. It was squats, it was lunges, it was more squats, and then some more lunges, all the variations you could imagine. And I bought it again with the intention that if I just did these things, I would get thin thighs. What I ended up getting was really strong thighs and actually probably some very overdeveloped muscles in certain aspects because I just completely ignored other aspects of my body. So hindsight, it doesn't work like that. If it did work like that, I would have the longest, leanest legs. You know, pilates, I think is another perfect example of using exercise to change your like genetic makeup, like changing the length of your limbs in the same way that people do crunches to get six packs abs or lunges to get thin thighs. It doesn't work like that. I don't want anyone to waste their time like I did. So let me save you some years hiding in your parents' basement. And tell you that it doesn't. That's not exactly how it works.

ANNIE

No. I think even going back to myth number one, training a particular area on your body actually will increase the muscle tissue size, therefore perpetuating this problem of why you even bought the thing, and maybe even discourage you from continuing on this strength training journey anyways, because it's all confusing. It's a mixed message that you're getting.

JEN

So Annie probably got thick thighs.

HOLEA

Yeah.

JEN

Not thin thighs. [Laughs] She's like, "What is this crap?"

ANNIE

Have you seen me? I mean, I'm not saying that, genetically, I'm certain that I am predisposed to just putting on muscle relatively easily and carrying my weight in my hips and thighs. But I'm certain this perpetual lunge squat rotation for years plus, didn't help.

JEN

Yeah, so when people are drawn to those images, we know that they are looking to reduce, you know, the size of a certain area. And so I guess what I'll just say here is that they're being advertised exercise, when actually what they want is fat loss. And exercise or strength training will grow your muscle, but really, fat loss is going to come down to, you know, primarily nutrition change through a calorie deficit. But even that said, where fat is stored, and where we lose it from is a little more complicated. And we can't just, you know, target, we can't just willpower ourselves to just lose fat from the hips. That's going to be, it's more complicated, it's largely genetically determined, and also can shift over time as our hormones shift. So you know, women who are in the menopausal stage, it's like, fat redistribution is a thing. And as we get older, women will tend to carry or store more fat around their middle. And that's just something that we all are going to have to accept. So we just have a little less control of our bodies than most women were led to believe.

ANNIE

Shocker. Okay, moving on to myth number three: there is a best way to exercise for weight loss. Holea, is there a best way?

HOLEA

No, I'm sorry, but there isn't. The benefits of exercise come from doing it consistently. And, you know, even talking about from last week, we were talking about finding ways that you enjoy or you can tolerate for the benefits, but that you are able to do consistently. So there's numerous health benefits that we've already covered. You can lose weight without exercising at all, as long as you're in a calorie deficit. So you know, just like what Jen was talking about, that really kind of comes down to the nutrition side of things, of creating that caloric deficit. Exercise, like, you

know, with all that being said, exercise, especially strength training in combination with protein consumption helps preserve muscle while in a caloric deficit. So when we are in a caloric deficit, our body isn't just like, "See you later, fat."

JEN

[Laughs]

HOLEA

It is weight loss, okay? Like we're talking muscle tissue, we're talking fat, we're talking water, body fluids, all of that. It's not just fat, and so having an increased protein consumption, and strength training, while in a caloric deficit, is going to help you to preserve that muscle tissue and actually support the fat loss results that you're looking for. So it's not just the one all, be-all, it's like a combination of these things working together, that is going to help to produce the result that you actually are looking for.

ANNIE

I just want to interject here real quick, because I think where I'm sitting, weight and body composition wise is a really good example of that. My weight is actually on the lower end of what it's been of my like, healthy adult weight range that we talk about, you know, I've got a range, I'm on the lower end. When I look in the mirror, when I look at photos, I can tell visibly that I don't have the muscle mass that I did even at heavier weights, and therefore I don't look, you know, quite as strong or quite as lean -

JEN

As jacked? [Laughs]

ANNIE

- as I used to be.

JEN

Is what you mean.

ANNIE

As jacked as I used to be. And so just to your point, Holea, like, sure, the scale is down, my weight is down. And that might be a goal that our members or many women desire. But ultimately, what I want is to have the body composition and the strength that I desire, that I prefer for my body. And that's not always reflective of just the scale being lower and lower and lower.

HOLEA

Yeah, absolutely. I think that that's like a big confusion point I feel, of when people are looking at other bodies, and they're like, "Oh, wow, I would love my body to look like that," thinking that they need to be at a certain weight on the scale, when really, it's not about the weight on the scale, per se, for that, you know, composition and such. It's kind of what they're doing, you

know, in their exercise routine, how they're feeding their body, etc. that is producing that result. And if you - I mean, genetics, right? Like we can't all look the same. Even if we're all eating the same, we're exercising the same, we're not going to look the same.

JEN

Yeah, so, but the other thing I want to mention is, again, we obviously love exercise around here, because we're doing a three-part series on it. So just because there's no best exercise for weight loss, doesn't mean we think you shouldn't do it. There are, as Holea said, numerous health benefits. I would say it is like the habit that can change a person's health trajectory, regardless of a change in weight. And I just got off a coaching call, actually, of a woman who just had bloodwork done, and she has increased her movement big time, but she actually hasn't lost any weight. And her, all of her health markers have improved, and she was so pumped about it, and she couldn't believe it. So it actually smashed a self-limiting belief that she had that she would need to lose weight in order to improve her health. So just increasing your exercise has, you know, can change your trajectory. But there are studies that show, like longer term studies that show, I just want us to be mindful of this, that individuals who do lose weight and keep it off, have often also established an exercise habit. And James Fell, who we've had on the podcast before, he wrote a book called "The Holy Sh!t Moment: How Lasting Change Can Happen in an Instant." And he talks about this and talks about how people who have lost weight and keep it off, who have kind of that big transformation that people want, they find a way to move their bodies that they love. And then they just go for it and they're off to the races. And what we think is that exercise can be a powerful tool in a weight loss journey, even though it doesn't have like a direct you know, impact necessarily on the energy balance equation. It has - yes, we've said, huge benefits to your health, but also to your mindset, your confidence in yourself, and just your connection with your body. It seems to create - people who establish an exercise habit, they seem to kind of naturally stoke a desire to treat their bodies better all around.

ANNIE

I also just want to interject more of my personal experience. [Laughs] Is this what you feel like all the time, Jen, when you [laughs] talk about your broken wrist?

JEN

[Laughs] Also, I'd just like to mention -

ANNIE

I'm teasing, I'm teasing.

ALL

[Laugh]

ANNIE

I have this past personal story that I'm going to bring up again for the millionth time. I think another good example of this is how I used to run because I thought thin people ran and running

was what's needed for weight loss. And now I know that that was a pretty short-sighted perspective because I didn't actually enjoy running. And the reason I was running was because I looked at the caloric burn of running compared to say yoga or strength training or even walking, and thought, like, I gotta get the most bang for my buck calorie burn wise, I want to expend the most energy in the shortest amount of time. So it's going to be running. But as we just said, consistency is like one of the number one factors, and the results and the benefits you get from exercise. And if you hate what you're doing, you are going to be fighting an uphill battle. And so I eventually let go of running, turned to strength training, which I do enjoy, and felt like I was working more with my body than against it, and have seen numerous benefits.

HOLEA

Yeah.

JEN

Yeah, I think that's a really good, like, nuanced point to make. It's like, well, look, there is the best exercise for weight loss. Short term, it's the one that burns the most calories, but we know that that's just not like a sustainable plan. And so what's best for long-term weight loss, like for the individuals who are looking to lose weight and keep it off? Is the exercise that they will do consistently. And Annie is a wonderful example of that, how she, you lost weight when you quit running. [Laughs] When you quit running.

ANNIE

Yeah. But also like what you can do consistently, not just what you enjoy or what you -

JEN

Wish?

ANNIE

Like I'm thinking, yeah, I'm thinking, as you noted earlier, Jen, we are getting of a certain age, when I go for a run, and I'm working on this, when I go for a run, my body feels just kind of crummy afterward. And I'm not saying that every woman approaching 40 or older can't run or shouldn't run, but that's just what I've noticed as I get older. Recovery from various forms of exercise just takes a little bit longer, takes more of a toll on my body, than, say again, the Peloton. Which seems to be a little bit more gentle way of -

JEN

Like a lower impact. Yeah.

ANNIE

- cardiovascular... Okay. Anything to add before we move on to myth number four?

JEN

I don't think so.

ANNIE

All right, let's do it. I love myth number four: sweating and being sore are necessary for health benefits and strength gains. Jen.

JEN

Well, this isn't true, but I have to say that I, even though I know it's not true cognitively, I like secretly like it and feel like I'm doing more. This is why a lot of people just believe it. Right? So when I'm sore after a workout the next day, you know, I don't love it. I'm like, "Ouch." But I'm also like, "Yeah, I feel the gains coming." And also when I'm really sweaty, I'm like, "Wow, look at you." But it is a myth. But I do still have those thoughts.

ANNIE

Yeah. Holea, do you want to give a little bit more of a like, the technical aspect of what's happening in each of those?

HOLEA

Sure. So when you're sweating, like that is your body trying to regulate its temperature. So if you are doing more vigorous activity, and your internal temperature is getting up, you are going to sweat more. Or if it's really hot outside, you know, you're going to start sweating more. I went for a walk today, my usual walk, I was sweating like a pig. But like, actually, pigs don't sweat.

JEN

[Laughs]

HOLEA

So, fun fact. I was just sweating a lot. It's also very humid. But it is just, my body doing its job to regulate my temperature. So it wasn't more intense. It was just the environment that I was in. But anyway, so sweating, that's what that is okay? I also get this, you know, same sensation that you're talking about, Jen, where sometimes it just feels really good to get a good sweat. You know, like, sometimes it just feels good. And that's okay. But it doesn't have to be the goal, or the criteria that says that was a good workout. That was the one that moved me forward. It's like well, actually no, like each one moves you forward. And then soreness. So, soreness means that you moved in a way that demanded more from your body. So that could be you moved in a different range of motion. Maybe you sat further down in your squat and had to get back up and your glutes were like, "Oh, hello, like, I did a little bit more today because I had to lengthen a bit." Or maybe you used some heavier weights. So it just required more muscle tissue to be recruited to actually move the thing. Or maybe even, looking at like volume, let's say so for example, I like to strength training, typically my rep range is 10 or less because anything above that feels like cardio to me. If I go to a fitness class to go bond with a friend who likes to go to fitness classes and we're doing like 20 reps, I am incredibly sore, because the volume is far greater than what I would usually do. So the demands on my body was just more, so therefore, I'm sore. But it doesn't mean that it was a more effective workout. It was just different. It required more of my body. So neither are an indicator of a good workout. They are simply just information. Information for you to be like, "Okay, I must have lifted, I mean, I lifted a heavier

weight today," or, "I moved in a different range of motion," or, "Man, it's hot out. I'm sweating more on this usual walk." Like it's all information, it's not criteria to things being better than others.

ANNIE

I think this can get a little bit of a slippery slope, especially when you start comparing your soreness or sweatiness to others', or people in groups, because a lot of this can be, it's so multifactorial, why you're sweating, or how much you're sweating. Why you're sore and how sore you are. Jen and I could do a very similar exercise and for a variety of reasons I could be sore and Jen not, or vice versa and it doesn't, as Holea said, mean that I got more and Jen got less from the workout, or is more effective or efficient for her and not me. It's just, it's very, it can vary individually.

JEN

It's also, correct me if I'm wrong but I believe it's, some of it is genetic, right? How sore you are from strength training, even from doing, like some people are just more sore and some people's soreness comes on earlier, later. Like there's a ton of person-specific stuff here around soreness and sweating actually.

ANNIE

And sweating. Some of us have very sweaty hands and feet. Me. It's me.

ALL

[Laugh]

ANNIE

But, if I could go - I could go to an intense workout and not be dripping from my forehead. And I think Holea, that might be you. You might - you get pretty steamy during workouts.

HOLEA

Going from a live workout to a coaching call, I was like "Annie, that works for you and your beautiful curly hair but my fine hair, I get all sorts of sweaty," like that's not happening. [Laughs]

ANNIE

Yeah, on the other hand, my hands and feet are sweating the entire time. So you know. [Laughs] You're getting all the personal information on this episode, apparently. Okay, so to wrap up myth number four, sweating and soreness are not an indicator of an effective or good workout. It's just information.

JEN

Yeah. And you know, of course, what I want to mention is some people pursue soreness and sweatiness, right? As a good workout. But also, there's a lot of people out there avoiding it, but then avoiding working out altogether because they think you have to be sore or sweat in order to have a good workout. We have a ton of members who say they, you know, one of their

barriers to exercise is they hate sweating, they hate it. And so I guess this is on the flip side, for those individuals to say, you don't have to be all super sweaty, in order for it to be a good workout.

ANNIE

Although, I will say, and feel free to disagree with me, you two. If you are picking up exercise for the first time ever, or the first time in a long time, you might have to manage some mild soreness, you don't have to have this, "I can't sit down to put my pants on, I'm so sore," experience, but it's pretty common and normal to expect some muscle soreness.

HOLEA

But like to that point, though, I think that this is a very important thing of meeting yourself where you're at, and not just hopping into any old program that was designed for someone else, or like going to the most intense exercise class, like, you know, maybe instead of HIT, maybe you go to, like you start with a yoga where it's more like you're holding poses instead of like, you know, going through these intense things. Like I think that there's a narrative around exercise that it has to be super intense, otherwise, like it didn't count or work or whatever, which is not true at all. There's so much benefit in lower impact or just like I mean, even lesser volume, you know, like if you are just starting out, it's okay to do a set of squats, a set of rows, a set of push-ups and call it a day. Maybe go for a walk, because that little bit of movement, like easing in instead of just jumping all in. Like jumping all in, absolutely, you're going to be sore, and it's going to feel maybe discouraging or really uncomfortable. Where, you know, easing in, is going to really, really help you know with that soreness,

JEN

And when Holea says push-ups she means like against a wall if you're just coming back.
[Laughs]

HOLEA

Yeah. Against the counter, that's what I do.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

I think that's a good segue into myth number five: more exercise is always better. Holea.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

What do you think?

JEN

And then I have a story to share.

ANNIE

About how you did too much exercise?

JEN

And broke my wrist.

ALL

[Laugh]

JEN

No. It's someone I just coached but go ahead. [Laughs] See, this is what happens when I exercise too much.

HOLEA

Okay, so more exercise is always better, that is a myth. The truth is that it's all about finding the sweet spot. And I think we touched on this already, but it's looking at what you can be consistent with. So a really often overlooked aspect of exercise is the recovery piece of it. Meaning, yes, you do work when you're working out, but your muscles and your body are building and repairing while you're not working out. And if you are not allowing for that time to happen, your body is not going to be able to recover how it's supposed to, you're going to be chronically potentially fatigued, sore. Leads to you know, overuse injuries, any of that type of stuff. Where you know, resting is a huge part of it. And keep in mind that resting doesn't necessarily mean that you're just like chilling on the couch watching some Modern Family. But it is recovery, as in like you're going for walks, like low-level activity, maybe this is your NEAT, that type of stuff that is going to be super productive towards your overall goals with exercise. So you know, with that being said, more isn't always better, more is just more. More often can lead to more problems. And it's really about finding a balance. And you may even have seasons where you have more exercise, for example, like this summer already. Once it started getting nicer out, I started going for more walks, longer walks, and I was like, "Oh, wow, I'm actually having like a harder time recovering." Meaning like my muscles feel tired in my strength training workouts because my activity increased. And I wasn't allowing for enough time for my body to be like, you know, repairing, resting a bit. So more is not always better.

JEN

Yeah, and I'm sure we have people listening who might be like, have sleep issues for various reasons. New baby, like Holea, or you know perimenopause, right? Where it's hard to get out of this more and more and more mindset. I understand. But then you hit a season of life or sleep issues, you can't even recover from the exercise you're doing. So more is just going to drive you into the ground. Can I tell the story now?

ANNIE

Oh, yes, please.

JEN

Okay. I was recently coaching somebody, she is a physician, she has a very high-stress job right now. I think physicians probably, I guess, depending where you're at in that field. But hers is very high stress, and lots of overtime. And you know, just a lot of other life stressors, single mom, et cetera. And so I think why I want to share this is because I think this is a cycle so many of us can get into. So, because she has a very high-stress life, she is finding herself emotionally eating quite a bit. And because she's emotionally eating quite a bit, she feels like she has to do more and more and more exercise to sort of negate the emotional eating she's doing. But then all of that increase in exercise that she cannot recover from because of her very stressful life. She is only just adding to the stress on her body, which is increasing the intensity craving urge to emotionally eat, right? So it's just this vicious cycle. And it can, if you're in that phase of life, like I've been in phases like that, you know, new babies, you know, all kinds of different things that people go through. It can be really hard to accept that slowing down the movement is actually what's healthiest for you overall. And what I ended up discussing with this member is like, probably she doesn't have to give up movement, not at all, that probably reducing the intensity and duration will probably reduce her urges to eat. And it's hard once you're in that cycle of like, more, more, more, more and more. It can feel really scary to think about scaling back, but I've been there as well. And I remember when I decided to scale back my exercise, and all of a sudden felt so much better, like felt better. And we say this, sometimes we've talked about this in this podcast, like healthy feels good. You know what I mean? It doesn't feel like, "I had all these babies, I was trying to keep up like strength training three times a week, running twice a week, I was up in the night nursing a baby from like midnight till 9am every night," and it's like, I felt awful. I was counting all my macros, I was doing all the things that you know, the fitness industry has said is what you do to be healthy. And I felt bottom of the barrel miserable, the worst I've ever felt in my life. Stopped counting macros, scaled back on my exercise, felt good. And it's like, healthy feels good. Like trust your body.

ANNIE

And the process of getting healthy, quote-unquote, or improving your health shouldn't result in more stress. [Laughs]

JEN

Yeah, I mean, it can be challenging, right? I don't want to say that change is easy, like change is challenging. So working towards health can feel challenging, behavior change is challenging. But you'd hope, and I would say, you know, there's going to be a lot of mental/mindset hurdles that many people have to go through in that process, but it shouldn't feel - I don't think it should feel depleting. That is my personal opinion. It shouldn't feel depleting.

HOLEA

Especially in your physical body.

JEN

Yeah. Physically depleting.

HOLEA

Like if you're physically feeling -

JEN

Yes, and with the macro counting what I want to say there is, also probably a stage of my life that being in a calorie deficit, and being like hyper-focused on losing weight probably wasn't what was healthiest for me at all. And I don't want to say, you know, there's was anything specifically wrong with macro counting, it was in that season of my life, it was a tediousness that was just mentally grueling for me, that it wasn't of all the priorities on my list at that time. That one was, yes, an additional stressor.

ANNIE

I also just want to add that, again, from my personal standpoint, my personal experience, right now I'm working through some injuries. And the better, or the best option when it comes to exercise for me is to actually pull back. And I think there's, you know, a lot of people in that boat that are navigating, you know, recovering from sickness or injuries or surgery and moving through physical therapy for whatever reasons, and in my case, more would be the worst thing I could do for recovery.

JEN

Yeah, and I would also add to that, since we're on that topic, I'm taking a little side here. When you are working through your relationship with food, the things that you do to improve that relationship may - it may feel like backpedaling, but I would compare it to what Annie is going through with a physical injury. If you have an emotional injury from your past dieting history, what's healthy for you may feel like walking it back, like even, you know, walking your nutrition habits back. Walking, you know, a lot of things back before you can move forward.

HOLEA

Like for personally myself, I have a very distinct memory of literally being in the kitchen, hand deep in a ball of cheese puffs. Normally, my MO would be to close the lid, put on my running shoes and go run miles and miles to take off, right? The damage that I had done.

JEN

Yes.

HOLEA

But the piece that was the most pivotal for me with that, using exercise to cancel that out was, "Okay, Holea, no more. We're going to, like I'm not going to let you do that anymore." Because it was like this damaging like you know, the physical, you know, what you were talking about with your depletion, right? In your body. Right? It's like, kind of coming to that place of like, "Okay, my body literally cannot do this anymore. Like something has to change and it's not adding more exercise it is actually addressing like the root of this, the heart of this. I don't know what it is yet and it's gonna stink, but like you know, it's moving in that opposite direction." Just on, like, in the

inner world versus just only focusing on the exterior, which is what diet culture has told us, like you're going to fix from the outside in, when that's not the case.

ANNIE

Yeah, well said you two. Okay. So short answer. No more exercise is not always better. Myth number six. If women lift weights, they could get bulky. Who wants to take this one?

HOLEA

Annie, I think you should take this one.

JEN

You two are just chomping at the bit here. [Laughs]

HOLEA

[Laughs]

ANNIE

Yeah, I wish I like, looked at a weight and got bulky. [Laughs] No, just -

HOLEA

[Laughs]

ANNIE

- genetic or hormonally speaking, women don't have the testosterone that men do to gain the size, the bulk, quote-unquote, that men do, or even at the rate that men do. And women's fitness, you often hear terms like toning or lean muscle. I'm sure those are terms that I have used in the past. But we think these terms are used to make women more comfortable with strength training since so many are afraid to start lifting weights because they'll get bulky. But you know, using those terms actually perpetuates that there is something to be afraid of, when the truth is, the process of getting bulky, or as we were talking about in myth number one, gaining muscle size, that's a very intentional, methodical long term process. This does not happen within one workout or even a few months of workouts. So -

JEN

Well, you can accelerate the process with supplementation of testosterone [laughs] of course.

ANNIE

Yes.

JEN

And so, you know, if you were to walk into a commercial gym like it might be happening more than people realize. I don't have any stats on this, but you hear things through the grapevine. And, you know, whether that's legally or illegally, I don't know. But it's, I think, and women do it, too. You know, it's, you know, when you see women in bodybuilding competitions, they may be

supplementing with testosterone. I think why this matters for me to even bring this up is because I think that what is portrayed to us as the look of fitness, whether it's in magazines by certain people, the whole truth isn't there. And I think that the general population would be shocked to know the extremes that are taken in kind of the aesthetic arena of fitness. This is what fitness looks like. And if you actually knew the extremes that are taken, because often it's just like, "Hey, do these three exercises, and you, too, can look like me. But I'm not going to tell you how often I'm at the gym, how much I think about nutrition and how much testosterone I'm taking actually on the side." And so that's why I just wanted to bring that up that using testosterone is a thing in the fitness arena.

HOLEA

And even like when it comes to the whole bulkiness conversation, there is like the amount of hours you would need to spend in the gym to become bulky, is like you, it would be laughable, right? If we're talking about like, if you are in a place where you're like, "Okay, I'm just starting working out and I don't want to get bulky, so I'm not even going to try." Like, you know, there's a huge gap in between those two areas, like a huge gap.

JEN

"If I lift up a weight, am I going to wake up tomorrow with a gigantic arm?" [Laughs]

ANNIE

And it's often, again, that bulk look, or a very muscular defined, developed a look on a female, or a woman is often paired with very, again, intentional nutritional decisions. So it's not just something that happens from lifting alone. And I know I've heard that analogy before. And I don't know who originally said it. But this would be like saying, "I'm not going to touch a basketball because I don't want to be Michael Jordan." Like this doesn't happen the way you think.

JEN

But also, what's wrong with bulky, hey? [Laughs]

HOLEA

I was just going to say, with all of this being said, like, if you have - if you have a desire, like I love a good, you know, like a hamstring bump here or, you know, a nice bicep thing there. Right? But I mean, it kind of comes down to your own personal preferences and what it is that is important to you, and what you're willing to do within your workout routine for the result that you're looking for, like, we talked about at the very beginning, like you can, there's different ways to train your muscles, and it kind of comes down to what you really want. And also the know-how of what it takes to be that.

ANNIE

Yeah, I've shared this before. And I understand that not everyone has the same preference for muscles or visible muscles that maybe I do or Holea does. And I'm happy to respect that. But when people answer this question, in a way that's like, "Oh, no, no, no, don't worry, you won't get bulky." It again perpetuates the fear that you should be fearful of getting bulky versus like we

answered it, like that's not likely to happen. And also it's not anything to fear if it If you like it, and if you don't like it, that's cool, too.

HOLEA

Yeah.

ANNIE

Okay, seventh - seventh myth, and our last myth is: all people respond to exercise the same way. Jen.

JEN

Well, I love how...so the answer is no. And that all people respond to exercise differently. Two women could do the exact same exercise program and get very different results. But I think I actually, as you were reading this, I was thinking about the last myth and how I could work out all day long and probably not have Annie's arms. And that there are, there's an aspect to body composition that is genetic, that is just a lot...The way your body looks, is a lot more due to your genetics than you have been led to believe by diet culture, or fitness culture. And Annie says she wishes she could look at a weight and grow biceps, but I swear to God, my little sister can look at a weight and grow a bicep. [Laughs] And like I even see the difference between me and my sister of body compositions and response to exercise. And so that's something we all just need to accept. And you may and you may get bulky, little bit bulkier, like Annie, and I would say if you love exercise, and that's what fires you up, gets you out of bed in the morning to go lift some weights, and you get a little more aesthetically bulkier than you prefer. Like, let's unpack that. Like maybe keep the bulk. Don't ditch the lifting, maybe keep the lifting and ditch the mindset towards having bulky arms. But also, if you love lifting and you don't get bulky arms. That's okay, too.

ANNIE

Yeah, I also want to say I believed in this method, I still see it when we're sharing like celebrity workouts.

JEN

Like not we. Not Balance365 we.

ANNIE

No, no, no. We as a culture, like yes. You know, do Jennifer Aniston's workout, or I recently I think her salad. Did you see this? You know, she apparently ate a salad, the same salad on the set of "Friends" every day, and people are recreating the salad. And then, you know, eating it every day as well. And the, if you're reading between the lines there, it's like if you do the things that Jennifer Aniston does, then you look like Jennifer Aniston. If you want to look like Jennifer Aniston, you're gonna have to have Jennifer Aniston's parents and Jennifer Aniston's environment, like and even then, well, if you have the parents who might have a good shot, but even then you could look at the two sisters podcast, as Jen was talking, and look at the differences between her and her sister. So, you know, I feel that way when people talk about my

arms or my big strong legs or whatnot. And it's like, you're gonna have my parents and also I've got 20 years of lifting pretty dang consistently under my belt. Like, this isn't gonna happen in one workout. I could give you a great upper body workout. But that's not ultimately why I look the way I look. You know, or Holea's. I hope this doesn't offend you or embarrass you, Holea. But Holea's got some nicely developed, very strong -

HOLEA

Gluteals? [Laughs]

JEN

A fine-looking rump. [Laughs]

ANNIE

Strong and functional glutes.

ALL

[Laugh]

HOLEA

I'm blushing.

ANNIE

All those kettlebell swings.

HOLEA

Yeah. Yeah. Like with all of that being said, you know, I think that what you're talking about Jen of unpacking, kind of like the thought process behind it of like, you know, wanting to look like a certain body type or, you know, it's like, not just what - okay, yes, there's the exterior, but what do you think that that body is going to allow you to do, allow you to feel like? What do you think it's going to unlock if you were to look like that? And what makes you believe that you couldn't feel that now or embody aspects of that now? Like, it's not the body? Right? There's so much more to it. It's just that I think that our culture fixates on what we can see. And just assume that, wow, life must be great. You know, which is really, really unfortunate. It's sad.

JEN

Yeah. And I think, too, we talked about this with weight loss and it works really well here too. It's just you know, body composition changes, building muscle, whatever it is, that so many people who come to us and have a desire to change their bodies. Now, I'm not saying that's right or wrong, right? I have had, I had a goal to change my body from a very unhealthy place. And I've had a goal to change my body from what I felt was a very healthy place. But what I would say is more on the unhealthier side is when you think your goal is to change your body, but what you're actually trying to do is move towards a feeling that you are in pain. And you think changing your body is going to get you out of pain as far as, well, you know, you think your life starts then. You think you will feel loved and you think people will admire you then. You think you

will get the love and feel that admiration. And that is all you want in life. And that's what you're moving towards. So maybe you're scrolling social media, you see a woman with a certain type of body, you see she has 1100 comments how gorgeous she is, you feel this deep, like, "Gosh, I just want that so much." So you buy her workout program, and it just doesn't work like that. And that's the part I want to talk about. That little inside part of you that wants that. And yes, I think that's so important.

ANNIE

I mean, that's so much of the heart of what we do with our members is, and I mean this with nothing but love, and all three of us have been there, but as Jen said, they're not, or you know, to quote Michael Singer, they're not okay on the inside. And they're trying to change or control the outside to feel okay on the inside. And unfortunately, what people end up finding is that changing the outside just creates problem after problem after problem and it doesn't actually address the heart of the issue, which is going inside.

JEN

I used to be obsessed with having like a toned six-pack stomach and my pursuit of that just about destroyed me. But I was never happy with my body. Never ever, ever, ever. My leanest weight ever is 20 pounds less than I am now. And I still didn't have a six-pack. There's - the fitness industry says abs are made in the kitchen and I would say well they may be made in the womb more like. This is more of a genetic thing. My husband can be at relatively higher levels of body fat and you can still see [laughing] this six-pack on him. It is bizarre. And I can be you know my leanest liveable weight and you still can't see it. And so there's more there to unpack. But anyways, that's the gist of it. And I am now you know 20 pounds heavier than my leanest weight. And I feel more contentedness and wholeness than I ever have in my life. And so that was an inside job that needed doing back then. I thought it was an outside job, but it was definitely an inside job.

HOLEA

With all that being said, like, I feel like it takes years of growth and awareness to get to that place. And if you're not there, that's okay. And using some of these external things as a way to like, "Okay, I'm recognizing that I would love to feel X. Okay." And okay, you can still exercise to better your health, but just recognize, "Yeah, but I do, like this is ultimately what it is that I want." But just exploring that there are other ways beyond just manipulating your physical world. Because like, your crap goes with you everywhere. I've moved around the country, and it has followed me everywhere.

JEN

You just pack it up. [Laughs]

HOLEA

It just comes with you, so...

JEN

There it is, again. What's that saying? Every time I turn around there I am. [Laughs]

HOLEA

Yes. [Laughs]

ANNIE

I think this is another way to say what you were just saying, though, Holea, is I want to be very clear that like a desire to look a different way is exactly what started me on this journey. So from point A, if that's point A to point B, where I'm in now, that's what like set this chain of events in motion for me. So I would never crap on anyone's goal to change the way they look to lose weight, to change their body composition, because I was absolutely there not so long ago. And as I've said again, before, if someone had day one met me in the gym and said, "Oh, I'm so sorry. Like this isn't going to solve your problems. You should probably look elsewhere," I would have -

JEN

That happens all the time, too. Yeah.

ANNIE

Yeah, I would have probably walked out of that gym and not returned, and then who knows how different the outcome would have been. But instead, people are like, welcome me, and encouraged me, which allowed for a lot of opportunities down the road. So.

JEN

Yeah, and also, you know, there's such a gray area here, too. So I could look at Annie's arms and say, "Gosh, I'm so inspired and I want arms like Annie," and then, but just know like, but I don't have her genetics. But chances are if I do some push-ups and some pull-ups, my arms will take a shape of their own, that is bigger muscles and the aesthetic I'm looking for. Not exactly like Annie's, maybe not as bulky as Annie's, maybe not as big as Annie's, but my own version of bigger biceps. And I think that's kind of the gray area where people can land, like -

ANNIE

You can work with what you've got.

JEN

Yeah, work with what you've got. I can't control this fully. I do have some control over here, but my genetics are going to be along for the ride. There they are, we pack them everywhere. [Laughs]

HOLEA

Well, what you just did there was you took like, okay, like, for example, the last episode, we talked a lot about, like the logic, right? Like, you know, these are the guidelines to exercise, here's what you can do. And you know, a lot of these myths that we're talking about are speaking to the emotions to why people choose to exercise. And when you bring those two kind

of like circles together, and you look at where they meet in the middle, it's incorporating logic and emotion, to find the thing that's going to work best for you. Not just going with all one way, I'm going all by emotion. And that's where, you know, in my history, it led to way over-exercising, like just a really toxic icky thing there, where, you know, logic, etc. So coming to the middle, finding what works best for you, is going to ultimately going to be the best thing and just having you feel what you actually want to feel in your body.

JEN

Yes, mic drop Holea.

ANNIE

She did [laughing] the mic drop motion. Since you all can't see her.

HOLEA

[Laughs]

ANNIE

Okay, those were the seven myths. There was more, I'm thinking of so many more as we're talking.

JEN

There's so many. We could do a whole season on myths. But do you want to recap them really quickly, Annie?

ANNIE

What would you do if I said no?

JEN

I would do it myself because I am an independent woman. And I will not wait around. [Laughs]

ANNIE

[Laughs] We always have these like same kind of podcast habits, like let's do, you want to do a recap? Like I'm just gonna say yes, and sometimes I just want to throw you a curveball. I will indulge you this time because it's a topic I love so much. Myth number one: building strength and muscle are the same. The short answer is no, they are different. You might have areas or seasons in life where you get both. We'll dive deeper into that in the next episode. Myth number two: you can spot reduce fat. No, you cannot. Myth number three: there is a best way to exercise for weight loss. Also, no, you cannot. The benefits from exercise come from doing it consistently. Myth number four: sweating and being sore are a necessity for health benefits or strength gains. The truth is also no, sweating is simply regulating your body temperature. Soreness means you moved in a different way. Neither are an indicator of an effective workout. They're just information. Myth number five: more exercise is always better. The truth is you're better off finding the sweet spot. Myth number six: if women lift weights they can get, they will get bulky. The truth is no, we just don't have the hormonal makeup that men do to make that

happen. And myth number seven: all people respond to exercise the same way. The truth is no, people respond to exercise differently.

JEN

Awesome. Thanks, everyone.

ANNIE

I can't wait to see you for part three. Thanks, friends.

JEN

Bye.

HOLEA

Bye.

ANNIE (OUTRO)

Hey everyone, if your mind has been blown while listening to this podcast, just wait until you work with us. Let us help you level up your health and wellness habits and your life inside Balance365 coaching. Head on over to balance365.co to join coaching.