

Balance365 Episode 275 Transcript

ANNIE BREES (INTRO)

Welcome to Balance 365 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 everyone. Today we are kicking off a how-to series. Last week we discussed quite a few evidence-based nutrition recommendations for women, specifically menopausal women. But if there's anything we've learned as nutrition coaches for the last eight years, discussing *what* to eat for health and weight loss is one thing, *doing* it is another. What can be even more valuable is learning how you can incorporate these nutritional guidelines into your life in a way that's sustainable, aka, a way that doesn't stress you out. And that's what we're gonna be talking about today and the rest of the month.

Here are the episodes we have coming:

- Five tips for increasing fruits and vegetables,
- Five tips for increasing your protein intake,
- Five tips for reducing emotional eating, and
- Five tips for reducing your alcohol consumption.

We are gonna be sharing what's worked for both Jen and I, as well as contributions from our members. Now, before we start, if you haven't yet watched our most popular free workshop, *Cut the Crap: How to Simplify Weight Loss and Get Out of Your Own Way*, you need to go register right now. This workshop has changed how thousands of women around the world approach health, wellness, and weight loss. We have linked it into our show notes, or you can register at balance365.com/freeworkshop. We can't wait to see you there. Enjoy.

ANNIE

Jen, before we talk about how to increase fruit, can we talk about how our team has decided to put video of our podcasts on social media that I did not know were going to be used, and I can't help but look at my face and think I look bored. And I'm not bored, but it's just my resting face. Thanks for the heads up (*laughs*).

JEN CAMPBELL

Well, listen. Yeah, it's funny. When we record podcasts, what I didn't realize is that automatically the video has been recorded as well, for years. Now I look back in our content and I realize we have years of video content.

ANNIE

Specifically years of video content with my face looking disengaged, uninterested, and bored. Yeah. Okay. I love it.

JEN

Yes, mine as well, I'll add.

ANNIE

So thrilled.

JEN

And some days, some days me, straight outta bed, because you know, I think we're better at at it now, but a few years ago, the only times that you and I could find to record a podcast in the day, we would start at like 5:00 AM, and I would roll outta bed, get a coffee, and sit down and record. Now there's video evidence of all, all of that, I've just realized. So actually, don't hate the player, hate the game, because also in the last few years, social media has really shifted to becoming a video-based platform. So we are using some of the material from our podcast now and putting it out as video, as people may have noticed on our social media. But it does mean we need to up our resting face games.

ANNIE

Yes, I'm just gonna have a premise smile on every time I'm on a Zoom meeting. It's just...

JEN

Yes. But I want to put something in perspective for everybody listening. You know, we have ears on us, eyes on us, people reading what we write. And ultimately, we get feedback about that, from time to time.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm.

JEN

Or often. And so you read that feedback and you think, "Okay, do I change something? What do I do here?" A couple years ago, I specifically got feedback from someone in our audience, that I have, like, just a really negative-looking face when we just... *(both laugh)* uh, the term would be, "resting bitch face." So I made an actual concentrated effort to have a more positive-looking face. Then we got an email. This wasn't even that long ago. It was somebody who had taken our emotional eating course and do you remember that email?

ANNIE

Yes. Yes, I do.

JEN

She said, the look on my face is, I mean, you might remember the words, but it was like -

ANNIE

We had a secret.

JEN

Yeah. She said, my face, she also didn't like my face.

ANNIE

(Laughs) I don't, I don't know that that's what she said. That might have been what you interpreted.

JEN

It was like, I look like I'm smiling through the whole thing.

ANNIE

Yes. She had the impression based off of our expressions that we had an inside joke or that we were on the verge of giggling. And listen, some of these, I know, I know, we make this all look like seamless and effortless, but some of our (I hope we do at least), some of our, like our emotional eating mini-course are our Cut the Crap workshop, which I hope you've all seen by the way, some of those take a couple of trial runs. Some editing, we need to say lines over and over, and then we get the giggles, like we're like grade school girls. And then you know, Jen says a word wrong, and then I can't not hear it without laughing again. And so it takes a lot of effort to get this final production, and you know, we still get feedback, but you can't win 'em all, right?

JEN

Yeah. So I'm at the point where I'm like, just do what you want with your face. Somebody will have feedback about it, so I'm just gonna do what I want with my face.

ANNIE

Okay.

JEN

Okay.

ANNIE

Well, let's, let's do what we want with our faces.

JEN

Yes.

ANNIE

And talk about how to increase fruits and vegetables.

JEN

Yeah, let's do that.

ANNIE

Okay. Before we even get into the *how* though, let's talk about like why it's important, and how much you need. And what are the benefits?

JEN

Yeah, so one thing I want to mention is that I hope all of our listeners are coming to know us as

not just a fat-loss program, but also a health program. And there are certain behaviors that have big benefits to your health, but also happen to have an impact on your ability to lose weight. What I love about talking about, say, fruits and vegetables, or talking about protein, which we'll do next week, we can remind people that there are big benefits to eating more fruits and vegetables. One of them may be that it improves your satiety, it reduces the energy density of your overall diet, which could lead to weight loss, but that's not the only reason we do it.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm.

JEN

So I do like bringing a health-centric focus onto food.

ANNIE

Yeah. We are not interested in promoting skills and habits that are only for the sake of fat loss. Like to expand the picture

JEN

Right, yes. We are here to help you be healthy here. If fat loss happens to be within your framework of health, we're here for that too.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

But we are here for health.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

Yeah. So I don't think it's going to come as a surprise to anyone listening that fruits and vegetables are part of a healthy, balanced diet and help you stay healthy. Fruit and vegetables have vitamins and minerals. They are an excellent source of fiber, which helps maintain a healthy gut and protects against digestive problems.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Lots of benefits.

JEN

Tons of benefits to fruits and vegetables.

ANNIE

Yep.

JEN

So evidence-based guidelines recommend about five servings of fruit and or vegetables each day, and that looks like roughly around five to six cups of fruits and vegetables a day. And the CDC specifically mentions one to two cups of fruit and two to four cups of vegetables, or that might look like 400 grams of fruits and vegetables a day.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm. We often lump them together, even though the CDC does kind of have separate guidelines, because in general the more the better.

JEN

The more, the better, yeah. And you know, we've dealt with people who have, like, they just don't like vegetables. And we want them to know you're not failing, if fruit is what you can do.

ANNIE

Yeah. Members often call them freggies, which I love.

JEN

Yes, freggies, I love that term as well.

ANNIE

Yes. Yeah.

JEN

Also totally made up by our community. We didn't even influence that.

ANNIE

No, but who doesn't want to eat a freggie? That sounds fine.

JEN

Yes, let's have freggies, yes (*both laugh*). And just on a personal note, I don't get that detailed with my nutrition. So I am, you know, aiming for one to two servings per meal, but I'm not specifically going, "Oh no, I've had, you know, too much fruit and not enough vegetables today." I personally am also just, I'm okay with fruits and vegetables.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm.

JEN

And whatever that shakes out to be.

ANNIE

Yeah. I'm in the same boat. If you've talked to me in the last few months, you know that I'm on a fruit kick bender. Trying to get three a day. And I'll get into it a little bit more. But I've picked specifically fruit because I tend to get veggies in other areas of my meals. My fruit commitment

is not to say that vegetables don't matter or I'm not interested in eating vegetables. It's just fruit is a little bit more difficult for me than vegetables.

JEN
Right.

ANNIE
And, some people might have inverted, right. It might be easy and they might need a little bit more effort or focus on vegetables.

JEN
Right, yes. So consuming fruits and vegetables in these volumes have significant protective health benefits. That includes lowering your risk of heart disease, strokes, diabetes, and hypertension, lowering your risk for some types of cancers, such as oral and throat cancers, lung, stomach, pancreas, prostate, colon, and rectum cancers.

ANNIE
Mm-hmm.

JEN
And consuming fruits and vegetables can also help reach and maintain a healthy body weight. Fruits and vegetables are satiating, they are nutrient-dense, and they are also low in energy, aka calories, and that means they can add a significant amount of volume to your diet without excess calories.

ANNIE
Mm-hmm. Yeah, this is probably not news to our listeners, like most people know, like fruit and vegetables, I need more of, right?

JEN
Yes.

ANNIE
That's most of Americans.

JEN
Yes, absolutely.

ANNIE
Or worldwide, really.

JEN
Yes.

ANNIE
Yeah.

JEN

So we've got five tips today for how to do this, and this comes from personal experience as well as tips from our members that we've seen work for them over the last years too.

ANNIE

Yeah, and can I just say that before we get into that, something that I've noticed as it relates specifically to fruits and vegetables is there might be some resistance or shame about needing to improve your consumption or increase your consumption because it feels a little like elementary or simplistic or foundational and it's like, "Yeah, I should be doing this, so let me just skip over this, even though I'm not actually doing it, because I feel like I should be more evolved than focusing on fruits or vegetables." And it's like, if you are not doing this, let's stay here for a minute and work on it.

JEN

Yeah. We had such a cool experience with a new member several months ago who did the Awareness Journal, and I even loved how she worded this. She said she did the Awareness Journal and she is someone who has identified as being a fruit and vegetable eater her whole life. And she realized through the awareness journal that she is barely eating fruits and vegetables. So that's just a nod to, you know, whether how we identify or what we think we eat is sometimes different than what is actually happening.

ANNIE

Yeah. Or what we think we know, are we actually putting that into practice?

JEN

Yeah, exactly.

ANNIE

So that's why a podcast, as simple as it sounds, about like how to increase fruits and vegetables, again, most people know it's the *how*. Like how do I actually do this, make this a consistent practice in my day-to-day, so I'm actually actioning on the information I know.

JEN

Right, absolutely.

ANNIE

Okay, now we can get into it (*laughs*).

JEN

Yeah. So tip number one is get fruits and vegetables into your environment because you can't eat what you don't have available. And I know this might seem simple, but I think it is actually foundational. If you don't have fruits and vegetables in your house, you are not going to be eating them.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm.

JEN

So get them on your shopping list.

ANNIE

Yes.

JEN

And then secondary to that is to then get them into your house and then make them visible in your house. For example, I have a fruit basket on my countertop. I don't keep the fruit, you know, stored away, stuffed in a drawer deep in my fridge. The fruit can stay out, it sits in a basket on the counter in my house. It is right there. It is visible, it's within arm's reach. And if you do have stuff that you are storing in the fridge, get it at eye level because you are more likely to eat something that is right there that you can see when you open the fridge.

ANNIE

Yes, I do this too. I have apples and bananas on my countertop at any given moment. I am way more likely to reach for those than something else when it's front and center right in front of me. And my kids are too.

JEN

Yes.

ANNIE

This is really why this works, is just because of how powerful those visual cues are.

JEN

Yeah, absolutely.

ANNIE

And when you can't see it, 'cause it's tucked in your drawer, it's in the pantry or it's behind a cabinet, it's kinda outta sight, outta mind.

JEN

Outta sight, outta mind, absolutely.

ANNIE

Yep.

JEN

Tip number two, buy what you actually like. So again, I know this might seem like a simple tip to some, but for others it could be revolutionary. If you find yourself trying to choke down fruits and vegetables that you don't enjoy, what are the chances that you are actually going to develop a desire to keep eating them? My mom used to buy these apples when I was little. I don't know what brand or strain... What do we call apples?

ANNIE

Variation, variety.

JEN

Variation, yes, but they just tasted like mush, like nothing. And guess what? They would go bad all the time. And my mom would be like, "Why aren't you guys eating these apples?" Now I can look back and go, because they were gross. We didn't like them. That's why we weren't eating them.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

And so I buy apple varieties that we actually enjoy and will eat.

ANNIE

Like Honey Crisp.

JEN

Like Honey Crisp, Ambrosia. I like a good ambrosia apple.

ANNIE

That's a beautiful name. I don't know that I've had an ambrosia apple.

JEN

Yeah. And then another thing might be like when you buy out-of-season fruits and vegetables, they might not taste as good as in-season, et cetera.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm.

JEN

Buy things that you actually enjoy and/or prepare them in a way that will make them taste better. So you know, it's okay to use butter when you cook your vegetables, it's okay to use olive oil. It's okay to use seasonings or dressings or throw them into sauces. Yeah, or I often make vegetable soups, you know, full of vegetables and beans in a soup. And that's a way that my kids will eat those vegetables that they wouldn't eat if I had just, you know, steamed them or whatever. They'll eat them from a soup.

ANNIE

Yes. But we've talked about this before many times. What's really common is people have this belief that if I put something on the vegetable, or if I put the fruit in something that's maybe more calorically dense or something that they have historically labeled as 'bad' or, you know, not a healthy choice like butters and oils and dressings, that it somehow negates the value of eating fruit and vegetables, and we would say, no, that's just not true.

JEN

Yes, a piece of celery is still a piece of celery when you dip it in some ranch before you eat it.

ANNIE

Or put peanut butter on it.

JEN

Yes. Or cheese whizz (*laughs*).

ANNIE

Cheez Whiz on celery?

JEN

Yeah! You've never done that? You've never had that?

ANNIE

No.

JEN

Oh, okay. Cheez Whiz on celery is delicious.

ANNIE

Who knew? Who knew!

JEN

Who knew! One of the reasons of it's important to mention this is again, that we often have an audience following us who are previous restrictive dieters, and they have a lot of rules around how they can consume vegetables, whether it's conscious or unconscious. So I remember when I started bringing ranch dressing back into my diet, you know, actually, dipping my vegetables in something that wasn't hummus, which I had labeled a health food, and I had labeled ranch a bad food, actually dipping it into ranch and eating it. I remember that feeling revolutionary for me. So I shout out to ranch dressing.

ANNIE

Yeah. I also wanna add to this tip of buying what you actually like. Like maybe be open to exploring some new fruits and vegetables and learning like some new varieties, as you said, of apples or different fruits and vegetables that you can throw into the like - these are all the things I like, and I'm so sorry to all the Canadians, but Trader Joe's is my place to go for this because they always seem to have, specifically with fruit, a larger variety or more kind of exotic fruit. Last week I tried a mango for the first time, like I've had mango in, I've had mango in like salads, but I've never had a mango in my house. Like, I've never brought a mango home.

JEN

Oh my gosh, I'm just amazed by that. Mangoes are my absolute favorite fruit. I can't believe you are just getting into them.

ANNIE

Well, I have had like mango slices where you put the tajin on it and it's, those are nice. I didn't like it for whatever reason when I brought it home, but I also had a papaya recently. I've had a pomelo - who knew that I love pomelos? I think that's really a fun way to explore, 'cause one of my values is adventure. It feels like a mini-adventure to go to the store, buy a piece of fruit. That's new to me, and be like, let's test it out. Are we gonna like this? Are we not gonna like this? And then my kids are really enjoying it too. They're like, "What is this? I've never seen this before. Oh, I do like this," you know, or "I don't like that."

JEN

Yeah. And I, so I wanna shout out canned and frozen fruits and vegetables right now as well, because I also want to mention, since we're on this topic, that fruits and vegetables are getting expensive.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm.

JEN

I don't know what's happening in the US, but in Canada it's just like food in general is getting quite expensive. So sometimes when you are buying, if you wanna try exotic fruits in your home country, that is not exotic, they might be pretty pricey. And so I think quite often, canned and frozen fruits and vegetables, they retain the taste, the flavor, because say they're flash frozen when they're ripe at whatever the source is. And they can be more cost-effective as well. So we have in the wintertime, say in Canada, it's pretty slim pickings around here, oranges, apples, and bananas for winter. So we'll have like a bag of frozen blueberries from Costco in the freezer.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. And that might be another one of those beliefs that trip people up as, "Oh, it needs to be fresh." And if it's frozen or if it's from a can, it's like somehow not as good.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

And what can happen, especially if you throw in some perfectionist tendencies, is if it's not the best choice, if it's not the optimal choice, then I'm just not gonna choose it at all.

JEN

Right, exactly.

ANNIE

And so then, instead of having some frozen vegetables, we're just not eating any vegetables.

JEN

Right, yep totally.

ANNIE

Yep. Okay. Number three. What do you got?

JEN

Tip number three is to make them convenient. So you've bought them. Okay, and are they gonna sit in your fridge and go bad? That's the question. So this is a habit hack. If you want to create a new habit and you wanna have it stick, it's to look at the barriers between you and that habit and start removing those barriers. So start minimizing the steps needed to get that fruit and vegetable from the fridge or from the pantry into your stomach. So that looks like prepping and preparing. I could also look like batch-cooking. I often batch-cook trays of roasted vegetables in the winter, and then we just have this tray in the fridge that we pull from. Or to buy things that don't need to be prepped or prepared or cooked in advance. So again, like, fruit baskets with apples, bananas, baby carrots in the fridge. I buy actually pre-sliced mushrooms even. I won't even slice a mushroom. Precut fruits and vegetables, you can buy fruit and vegetable trays. Another thing that I have really gotten into—actually this was thanks to our members—is precut vegetables from the freezer aisle. I'll just throw them in a bowl and microwave them when I need some vegetables.

ANNIE

Yeah. I have noticed that this convenience is huge in my fruit and that I, there might be some fruits I love like watermelon or pineapple, but because they simply take an extra 10 minutes of me to chop them up, get out a cutting board, and then store them appropriately in the fridge, that is enough of a deterrent for me to not eat them. Not eat them. Not eat them.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

And then before you know it, it's like, "Oh no, my pineapple's mushy (*laughs*).

JEN

Right. Like I'll have a head of lettuce go bad in the fridge if I just leave it there. But if I, you know, wash it, cut it up, spin it dry, get it into a container, I'll eat lettuce all week.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

So convenience is one of the biggest factors that go into humans' decisions about what they're going to eat. Let's not fight with that. Let's not tell ourselves that we should be preparing everything you know, from some scratch state every time we sit down to eat.

ANNIE

Yes, agree.

JEN

Meet yourself where you're at and make the thing you want to eat more of convenient. I know

I've even dealt with, and this is sort of more of a mindset issue, but I've dealt with, you know, different members over the years who, they want this, but they also dread this commitment of spending time doing any kind of preparation work. And I understand that. Totally understand that. I think what happened for me at one point in my life where it's like, look, you can choose to put some work in upfront to make these fruits and vegetables more convenient. Or you can choose to be eating goldfish crackers, you know, from the bag at three o'clock every afternoon, because that's what's most convenient. So that's kind of been something that I've settled into that decision and I've accepted that I do have to do some prep work with fruits and vegetables to make them convenient.

ANNIE

Or, if you're like me, you might want to pay for that convenience.

JEN

Yes, I do not, but Annie does.

ANNIE

But I will. Well, because here's the truth. What I was noticing, as I told you, I would buy pineapple and I would spend, I don't even know what a pineapple costs right now, but I would spend the money on the pineapple, but then, because it wasn't convenient for me to eat like in the moment that I wanted to eat, I would just let it go bad. And then I'm out that money of the pineapple or that, you know, that head of lettuce, that bag of salad.

JEN

Yeah

ANNIE

So it was like, why don't you just pay an extra buck or two to get the pre-chopped or whatever, you know, within reason.

JEN

Yeah. I, I don't know. In Canada, I would say that the cost is almost double, to be honest.

ANNIE

Oh really?

JEN

Yeah. Like I, I personally find it significantly more expensive to, and you know, there's an all-or-something solution here. It might be, you're buying apples and bananas and paying some convenience for your pineapple, but -

ANNIE

Yeah. And that, that's certainly like a privileged position that not everyone has available to them. But if you do have it in the budget and you'd rather, you know, spend a few extra dollars per fruit or per whatever ingredient, instead of having continuously buy it and then go bad.

JEN

Yeah, I think that's a really good point, that if you're throwing food out because it's going bad, then you're,

BOTH

You're wasting money anyways.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

Yeah. I have, of all the diets I've done, there was a time when I thought prepping food for the week meant cooking absolutely everything, getting these little meal things out, and having all my meals ready. And I think if you come from that background, or if you've engaged in that in the past, the phrase "meal prep" might fill you with dread because you immediately go to this all-or-nothing place. I have found a very all-or-something compromise with meal prep. So I know that protein, which we're talking about next week, protein and fiber, fruits and vegetables, they're two important staples in my diet. And they're also, you know, of building out a balanced plate, those are the two areas that are least likely to be convenient to me.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm.

JEN

So I know if I put a little prep work into fruits, vegetables, and protein, that goes a long way during the week.

ANNIE

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. That's probably a good segue into tip number four as far as meals.

JEN

Yeah. So tip number four is, to get more fruits and vegetables in, to have a superfruit and vegetable meal a day. Or two.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm.

JEN

So what I mean by this is, so say five servings a day is kind of the general recommendation. That means getting one to two servings per meal, but it might be that you have one meal a day that's three servings. Like one meal a day might be a big salad that has three servings of vegetables in it. It might be a smoothie that you have in the morning that has three, you know, sometimes four servings of fruits and vegetables. Soup is another one that I have, that's one of my super-vegetable meals. I'll make big batches of vegetable soup usually in the winter. And it's just, it's a lot in a little amount of food.

ANNIE

Yeah, yes.

JEN

Yeah. How about you, Annie?

ANNIE

Yeah, I absolutely love this idea. There's something about meals that have an abundance of fruits and vegetables that just, I feel good eating it.

JEN

Yeah, they're very satisfying.

ANNIE

Yeah. I feel like I am doing something really, really kind for my body right now.

JEN

(Laughs) yeah.

ANNIE

Especially if it's following, you know, like a vacation where maybe fruit and vegetables has been a little bit lower, and my body is like, "Thank you."

JEN

Yeah, "Finally."

ANNIE

But this is honestly why, and tying it back into tip number three about making it convenient, why I love the Power Bowl challenge. Because it's like my fridge when we do the Power Bowl, or anytime I'm incorporating Power Bowls, it's like I have a fridge full prepped of ingredients, which is a lot of fruits and vegetables, and I'm just literally taking handfuls. Like some of this, some of this, some of this, some of this.

JEN

Yeah. And it's very quick, very easy.

ANNIE

Yeah. And mixing it together, throwing some fats on there, some protein on there. And we're good to go.

JEN

Yeah, yeah! I was actually sharing this with Annie before we started recording, but I might have like a fruit and Greek yogurt-type of breakfast, and I'm getting like two or three servings of fruit in that breakfast.

ANNIE
Mm-hmm.

JEN
And then for lunch, if I have, maybe I'll make like a veggie omelet and I'll have like two or three servings of vegetables. Then by lunchtime, I've met my quota, and that feels so good for me, especially in these warmer months. I've got three kids, they're on the go with sports, then we might be on the go for the evening and we might be, you know, having sandwiches for dinner or something.

ANNIE
Mm-hmm.

JEN
But I've gotten my fruits and vegetables in, in those like the superfruit and veggie meals.

ANNIE
Yeah. So you can, you have a little bit more flexibility if needed.

JEN
Yeah, so I guess for those out there who, if you think it's gonna be a stretch for you to get fruits and vegetables in at every meal of the day, then try to just have a little extra at one or even two meals of the day.

ANNIE
Yeah. Embrace that all-or-something.

JEN
Embrace the all-or-something.

ANNIE
Yeah. Okay. Fifth tip.

JEN
Look for recipes that have vegetables as part of the main dish, or, just add them yourself. So an example would be, you know when I'm making spaghetti sauce, I'm just adding in like extra vegetables. And then you just don't have to think about making that side.

ANNIE
Yes. Yeah. I love this one because I think it's really applicable to people that like to eat out, like myself. Because even though it might not be always on the menu, oftentimes I've found that restaurants are willing and able to add either an extra serving of vegetables to whatever, like if you're ordering a curry or a sandwich or a salad, you can ask for like extra tomatoes and carrots or, you know, whatever it is.

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE
You can either swap in or add an extra serving. Or pizza would be another one.

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE
And while the vegetables that I get from two or three slices of pizza may not equate a serving of vegetables, over the course of my lifetime, all of that adds up.

JEN
Totally.

ANNIE
It all counts.

JEN
Yeah. I think this is really looking about what you're already doing.

ANNIE
Mm-hmm.

JEN
So often, getting healthy can feel overwhelming because it feels like when we read all these nutritional guidelines that we have to overhaul our lives. Instead, you could look at what you're currently doing, you don't have to change anything about that, and just start adding some extra vegetables to what you're already eating. So if you, again, if you make spaghetti sauce like me once a week, then just making sure to get some vegetables in there. If you are, you know, a stir fry, casserole, stews, if you eat stew, but like Annie said, I loved when you said this, even sandwiches, right? Us if, again, like in sports season for us, we might be running through a Subway kind of thing, and it's just getting all the veggies onto the sub-type thing. So just look for opportunities to bring them in to what you're already doing.

ANNIE
Yeah, I had broccoli on pizza for the first time in the last couple weeks.

JEN
Oh, I love broccoli on pizza.

ANNIE
It was so good. And I'm not just saying this because of this podcast. I was floored. I got a veggie pizza and I was like, "This is really good!" I don't think I had ever had broccoli on pizza.

JEN

What I love about this whole episode, everybody, and next week we're doing protein, so you know, Annie and I have known each other for eight, almost nine years, and I've always been the fruit and vegetable person. And Annie was always kind of like, meh. But Annie's always been the protein person.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm.

JEN

I really struggle with protein. So if you couldn't tell by us talking, fruits and vegetables do come pretty easily to me. That's something I've worked on for a very, very long time. I have so many great hacks for making fruits and vegetables convenient, and it's something new that Annie's coming around to.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

So she's, you're excited about it, and I can tell.

ANNIE

I am, well, I've shared this in our coaching group a while ago, but I did have this, in turning 40 recently, I have this realization. It took me a little bit longer than some, that no one else is gonna take care of me.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

There is no mom and dad that's making sure that my physical is booked, that I'm eating my fruits and vegetables, that I'm flossing my teeth. I have to do that for myself.

JEN

Yes.

ANNIE

And one of the areas that I was falling off was fruits and vegetables, and so it was like, "No one's gonna come feed you fruits and vegetables. You have to do this yourself."

JEN

You have to do it, yes.

ANNIE

So that, that is part of what's been motivating my drive to increase my fruits. But Jen, before we wrap up here, did you even mention the veggie tray?

JEN

No, I didn't. So this is so funny. This is years ago, I shared one of my veggie hacks is that I keep like an old Tupperware container full of vegetables in my fridge almost every week. Some weeks I do something different. It's not all we eat for vegetables, but it's the thing that's there.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm.

JEN

And we pull it out, and I'll pull it out during meals. If I haven't made a veggie side, I'll pull that out. Or after school, I might pull it out for my kids to snack on when they get home. And of course I'll sometimes have hummus, I'll sometimes have ranch. I'll sometimes have, you know, some other dip. And it's just exponentially increased how easy it is for me to get in vegetables. So I'm eating so many more and so many people in our community have adopted it. But I also, in the winter, I like warm food, so in the winter I do something similar. I'll roast a big tray of vegetables and I'll keep that in the fridge, so we're just scooping them up. Also in the winter, I make huge, in my slow cooker, huge batches of vegetable soup, and so sometimes our side is vegetable soup. Sometimes that's the whole meal is the vegetable soup. Another thing, I actually just did this a few weeks ago and it was a lot of fun, instead of a veggie tray, I did a salad tray. So in one container I had like washed, dried lettuce ready to go, and then in my veggie tray, I put all types of different salad toppings. So it was like, throw it together. It was fun.

ANNIE

That is fun.

JEN

It worked really well. And then I'm not just eating those vegetables alone. If I have a veggie tray ready to go, it's just quick to chop up, just a couple steps to chop up that celery or cherry tomato or whatever, and throw it into like an egg, if I'm cooking an omelet. Or you might throw it into a smoothie. I don't know if people do vegetables in smoothies here, but I'll throw in something like cucumber that doesn't have a strong flavor.

ANNIE

Spinach is great in smoothies.

JEN

Spinach in smoothies, yeah. Again, I said this earlier, I've been embracing microwaving vegetables, and I know it doesn't sound good and it's not that good (*both laugh*). It's not that good if you just microwave a bag of vegetables and then try and eat them, but I'll throw some salad dressing on top of them.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm, yeah. Well, and that's like part of a different conversation for another day, but can we do some things every now and then that maybe aren't this Michelin dining experience, they're not this like flavorful, "Oh my gosh, this is the best thing I've ever eaten in my life," but as part of my adult responsibilities and taking care of myself, I need to just check the box from time to time.

JEN

Yes, absolutely. I don't think every meal should be tasteless at all, but there's, once in a while we're gonna be having meals that are just checking boxes.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

And we eat it 'cause it's good for us.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

Another tack I have for everybody, I don't know if this will be helpful to everybody, but I buy, like for years now, I almost always have a bag of coleslaw in my fridge. So it's essentially like shredded cabbage, and you're supposed to put coleslaw dressing on it and have some coleslaw. But I actually use it to cook with. So I'm throwing shredded coleslaw, or shredded cabbage I should say, again into my eggs, into my soups. Into almost many different things. And the other thing that I love about cabbage is it lasts weeks.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm.

JEN

Like it's just one of those vegetables that doesn't go bad very fast.

ANNIE

And that's a great way to get a lot of volume in your meals.

JEN

Mm-hmm.

ANNIE

So I think I have a pretty hefty appetite and I like to have a feeling that I am eating a large quantity of food at times. And that cabbage can really, it's got this like beefy meal.

JEN

Yeah. It can really bulk up a meal.

ANNIE

Yeah. One thing that I've done with my fruit, and this is so stinkin' simple, but I literally put out the fruits that I'm going to eat for the day on my counter. And I just know like, okay, I've got my banana. Next one up is the apple. Next one up is the Cuties. I'm done. And it's really satisfying to watch those just disappear.

JEN

Yes. Especially if you take fun photos of that happening and put it on Instagram (*laughs*).

ANNIE

Yes! You know what? Honestly, in this whole fruit thing, I've gotten a handful of comments online and in real life about people eating more fruit. And I think the thing is, whether it's fruit or veggies, most, I, I don't wanna say everyone, but a lot of people really do like the taste of fruit or like the taste of some vegetables. It is a matter of convenience, having it available, having it ready to eat, you know, giving it some intention ahead of time to be mindful of how much you're eating. There certainly are people that don't like fruit and that don't like vegetables. They are out there for sure.

JEN

Yeah

ANNIE

But it's usually more about just like making it accessible and available and the easy choice.

JEN

Yeah, totally. Yeah.

ANNIE

Okay. Anything else to add?

JEN

No, that's all I've got for today.

ANNIE

Okay. Well, hopefully we smiled the whole podcast.

JEN

Yes (*both laugh*).

ANNIE

All right, thanks, everyone. We'll talk soon.

JEN

Bye, everyone.

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 <https://www.balance365.com/> to join coaching.