Balance365 Episode 292 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
Hello everyone. Continuing our theme from last week: making nutritious eating easier. Today Jen and I are going to share how we marry convenience foods with more nutritious eating. One of the mindsets we addressed last week was releasing your diet culture death grip on that perfectionist "everything must be cooked from scratch to be healthy" belief. It doesn't. And regardless if you're like me, who feels relieved to hear that because you hate cooking, or you're like Jen, who actually enjoys cooking, the bottom line is, love it or hate it, we don't always have time to cook everything from scratch. On today's episode, we talk about how to make nutritious foods more convenient, so you can eat well without investing a ton of time. And on that note, enrollment to Balance365 is only a few weeks away. If you are looking for evidence-based health and wellness support that integrates both nutrition and behavior change principles, look no further. When you join our waitlist, you're gonna get access to spots 24 hours before the general public and we will waive the $199 join fee. Visit balance365.com/waitlist to sign up. Enjoy.

ANNIE
One of my favorite topics. Convenience foods, and how to marry convenience foods with more nutritious eating.

JEN CAMPBELL
Yes.

ANNIE
We're kind of continuing the discussion from last week.

JEN
I would like to add something here before we get started. And it's that I do like cooking. So I get a lot of joy and fulfillment out of cooking meals from scratch. I grew up with a mom, a grandma, that did that. I have memories of contributing to the meals, them teaching me things. When I put together a turkey dinner for Thanksgiving, I'm just flooded with memories of my grandma, like so the last two podcasts we've talked about this need for convenience. And I want to add here that

it's okay if you do like cooking things from scratch. There's a, there's this issue here that happens in our culture, especially within diet culture, that we push cooking from scratch. So every single woman ends up feeling that she has to cook things from scratch all the time in order to be healthy. I cook from scratch when I have the time, energy, and resources. And I love it and feel fulfilled by it. I rely on convenience foods when I don't have the resources for it. So it's become a both situation for me. Now, Annie, even when she does have a little extra time, may choose not to, just because she doesn't get the same fulfillment out of it as I do. And that's okay.

ANNIE
It's not even may choose not to, I am not choosing.

JEN
You are not choosing to.

ANNIE
I am not choosing - I'm not opting into cooking. Unless I absolutely have to. I mean, that's not true. I will prepare foods, which we're going to talk about. I don't like to cook meals from scratch.

JEN
Yes.

ANNIE
That is not joyful; that is not creating the same experience Jen just described in me.

JEN
But what, the great thing about the society we live in is that I suppose, especially if you live in a more urban area, which I mean most people do in the world, there are a lot of convenient options that can meet your nutritious eating needs available, which is what this podcast is all about. And I definitely use them.

ANNIE
Yeah. Okay, so let's get into it.

JEN
Yeah. So, quick reminder, if you haven't listened to last week, the mindset shifts needed to make nutritious eating easier, we did a quick overview of what nutritious eating is and I'm not going to do that here. But you know, the TLDR is protein, fiber, fat, and carbs. That is what makes up a balanced meal. So we primarily are going to be talking today about how to get protein, fiber, fat, and carbs in your diet in a more convenient way. But the truth is, most people aren't struggling with fat and carbs. Right? In fact, most people do; they have an overabundance of fat and carbs in their diet. What they're actually struggling with is getting lean protein and fibrous fruits and vegetables into their diet. And with the carbs and fat situation, it's often, you know, to break that down a bit further, it's that people have an overabundance of refined carbs in their diet. And I was gonna say saturated fat. But as I was writing this outline, I was like, "Nope, tell the truth."

It's like overall fat. Right? So I have a vegan friend who is, doesn't have any saturated fat in her diet at all. But she still struggles with her fat intake. Or she's, you know, as her and I've had conversations over the years, it's like, "Yeah, this is also an issue for me, there is a lot of fat in my diet," due to, for her, a lot of the higher fat convenience foods that she relies on as a vegan. So you can even struggle with the overall calorie density of your food, even if you're, it's not saturated fats coming in. And actually, I was just thinking about a member I was coaching a few weeks ago, who was getting a little more granular about her nutrition, looking to tell herself the truth a deeper way than she had been able to before. And she realized that half of her energy intake in a day was coming from fat. And like nutritional guidelines, evidence-based nutritional guidelines, point to it being beneficial to have fat being less than 30% of your intake. So it was just a lot higher than what she realized. So I think that's, that is a struggle for many of us.

ANNIE
Yeah. And that's really, as you said, Jen, a reflection of how abundant and convenient fats and carbs are. It's not that there's anything wrong with them, and that we like, should cut them out completely. It's just we're getting a lot of them because there's, they're readily available.

JEN
They're readily available, they're shelf stable, easy, etc. So just like, so it's not about, you know, all or nothing, cutting things out. It's about just shifting the balance of our dietary patterns. Let's look at getting more lean protein and more fiber in our diets. And for many people, probably a little less carbs, a little less fat.

ANNIE
Yep. Yep. So in last week's episode, as you mentioned, we talked about the mindsets that make eating nutritiously easier. And we talked about how, as we've been talking about already, one of the most influential aspects to eating more nutritiously is convenience. And I think it's so important that Jen… you've noted that you don't always cook from scratch even though you love it, even though you want to. The truth is regardless of what your preferences, your life demands might just require you to lean on convenience foods more often.

JEN
Yeah, exactly.

ANNIE
And so we're going to talk about how to marry convenience and nutritious eating.

JEN
Yeah, absolutely.

ANNIE
Okay. First, we're going to talk about like foods versus meals though, right?

JEN

Yes. So foods, we're going to break down convenient ways to get more protein, more fiber, maybe more unsaturated fats and more complex carbs. Then we are going to talk about whole meals that Annie and I use in our day, busy day to day lives that are more balanced.

ANNIE
Yeah, I think, I really like the way you have broken down this outline, Jen, because when we are working with members, and they are trying to shift the balance of their plate, there is a wide spectrum of what that could look like. They could tackle everything from, they are focused on one aspect of a balanced plate at one meal. On the other side of the spectrum, they might be focusing on all aspects protein, carbs, fiber, fat at all meals, right? And there's a. and there's a lot of in between. And so if focusing on even just the whole meal, or all aspects or all these components of balanced eating, feel too much, you can break it down into like a smaller segment with just honing in on like making a few of these categories more abundant or less abundant.

JEN
Yeah. So let's just start with protein. This is a pretty well, I was gonna say it's a pretty important part of your diet, but they all are. They're all important. They all have a place. What I should say is this: protein is something that most women we work with just aren't getting enough of, and the reality is, it can just be more inconvenient to choose a protein-based food. So here are some proteins that I have in my diet that are extremely convenient, right? They are the easy choice. So shout out to Costco. Thank you for making my life so much easier and providing me with all those lean proteins that you have in your refrigerator section that I buy regularly. Precooked chicken breast. So I pick up a package of precooked chicken breast at Costco, and it's even not just precooked, it's prechopped, and it is delicious. I don't know if there's any spices or anything on it. I think it's more on the bland side so that you can kind of add it to anything. So I buy that at Costco. I also buy these little trays of shrimp at Costco, and it is again another lean protein. Seafood is also, seafood and fish is also something that I personally could use more of in my diet but even though I like cooking from scratch, I find cooking seafood and shrimp a little bit intimidating. I definitely did not grow up with that.

ANNIE
Do you remember when we had a whole text thread one time? I was like, "Jen, how do I know if the salmon's done?" [Laughs] Remember? You were coaching me, and I was like, "I don't know."

BOTH
[Laugh]

ANNIE
But I was, you have shared that before at least with me, that you do make an intentional effort to try to incorporate more efficient seafood.

JEN

Yeah, and when we're on the low side of that, I've tried to be intentional about like taking omega-three supplements. That's something I am just mindful of. And so I buy these, like you know, it's a little tray of shrimp. Some people might find a shrimp ring in the freezer of their grocery store but, and it comes with a, even some cocktail sauce and like I love it, and my kids love it. And that is something that you can often find in my fridge. Extra lean ground beef. So I've never found this cooked but I'll often buy extra lean ground beef, and I'll cook up a larger portion, and then put it in a Ziploc and have it in my freezer.

ANNIE
Yeah, I do the same with ground turkey.

JEN
Perfect. I always have cans of beans in my house. So if I need a quick boost of protein on a salad, I put lentils in spaghetti sauce often. I can just grab a can of beans. I almost always have Greek yogurt in my house. Costco has like no fat 0% plain Greek yogurt, and I add Greek yogurt to a lot of things. You can make dips with Greek yogurt. You can use in place of sour creams in some meals if you so choose. So we always have that. I also always have, almost always have, a bag of frozen shelled edamame beans in my freezer, and you can add that to a lot of things too. And protein shakes as people probably hear about me talking all the time, posting on Instagram about it, my Fair Life protein shakes were a game changer. Now protein shakes are something I've always had in my life on a pretty consistent basis. But, or I would say maybe on an inconsistent basis, because the day I started drinking pre-mixed, like switched from buying protein powder to buying pre-mixed protein drinks, is the day I started drinking them regularly.

ANNIE
Because...?

JEN
Because as I, because it was more convenient.

BOTH
[Laugh]

JEN
So I'm, I'm like a protein shake a day person because on the topic of the efficiency food thing and when I'm not getting it in a week, I'll make sure I'm having omega threes. I see protein drinks as just a supplement to my diet. I personally don't naturally gravitate towards protein as something I like love eating. And so there are days when my protein intake is low, and I see that as a, as a, taking a supplement and drinking the drink is like having a supplement like any other supplement I take that fills in, you know, deficiencies in my diet. Yeah, do you have anything to add on the protein front?

ANNIE

Um, the only two that I use pretty frequently that are staples in my fridge or pantry I guess, three that you didn't list were eggs. We eat a lot of eggs in our house, and we do a lot of breakfast for dinner. Actually. [Laughs]

JEN
Oh, that's a really good idea. Yeah.

ANNIE
Because I can cook eggs, that was one of the few that I feel like, "Okay, I can do this, and I'm not gonna burn it." And then my kids like it and when we talked about balanced meals, I feel like eggs are a foundation for an easy balanced meal for me. Cottage cheese is another one. I have eaten up plain, I have mixed in like cucumbers, onions, tomatoes, black olives with some Italian seasoning to give it a more savory kind of hearty element to it. But I've also included like sugar-free puddings and bananas and like honey to make it like a sweet treat.

JEN
Yeah, that sounds like totally disgusting. But you do you. [Laughs]

ANNIE
Well, listen, we, I don't -

JEN
And that's the point!

ANNIE
- want to put cabbage in my egg white omelet. Okay? Um, but the other thing is, you know, there's a lot of higher protein like pancake waffle mixes, muffin mixes. And it is super easy for me to take out some, you know, I think Kodiak cake is probably the most popular one that I've used. Take out a scoop of that and even add some protein powder to it, and make a pancake real fast.

JEN
On the topic of eggs, I buy cartons of egg whites. That's another thing you'll always find in in my fridge. Yeah. I do find one of the more popular questions that we get around nutrition, specifically protein in Balance365 is people looking for ideas for more lean protein sources. And shout out to last week's podcast around mindsets. Mindsets needed to eat more nutritiously. And the reality is that there's probably not as much variety as you would like. Right? So, and maybe as you would like, or like that you do like. And so I do find that week to week my proteins are pretty consistent with what I'm buying. There's not an enormous amount of variety in my proteins. However, the way I cook them might be the variety factor that I'm looking for. The other thing not mentioned here, sorry, was canned tuna. You can buy canned tuna and I'll mix it with a bit of Miracle Whip and dill pickles actually, but also you can buy these little flavored tuna cups and I'll buy those to have with crackers or whatever.

ANNIE
Yeah, we, I used to do those, I just kind of go in spurts, you know, I'll find something and then I'm like, "Oh yeah, I love this," and then I'll eat the same thing every day for three months and then not touch it again for another six and then I'll circle back to it but we have flavored tuna packets here as well. And those are, like you said, really easy to just add some sort of Miracle Whip, some onions, some lettuce, whatever and throw it on a cracker or a wrap -

JEN
What's a tuna packet, versus a can of tuna? What is what's the difference?

ANNIE
I think it might just be the packaging.

JEN
Like tuna in a bag, like, what is this packet?

ANNIE
It looks like a seasoning packet.

JEN
I have never seen that in Canada. Never. Wow.

ANNIE
I'll take a picture.

JEN
I'll have to try it next time I'm down there.

ANNIE
Don't you want to eat tuna out of a packet? [Laughs]

JEN
I can't wait to eat tuna out of a bag.

ANNIE
You bring the ketchup chips. I'll bring the tuna packets.

JEN
Sounds good.

ANNIE
Okay, let's talk about fiber.

JEN

Yes, so again, as Annie mentioned earlier, the reason that we tend to see ourselves with higher amounts of carbs and fat than fiber and protein is because carbs and fat tend to be more convenient and shelf stable. So fruits and vegetables are falling into this category and having shelf stable fruit - now no fruit is actually shelf stable I just, well, I mean unless it's in a can. But I digress. So having like a bowl of, I would just call it more shelf-stable fruit readily available. So apples, oranges, bananas. What's in my fruit basket right now? Kiwi is in my fruit basket right now. They don't need to be refrigerated right? Like berries need to be refrigerated. So yes, make sure you have more shelf-stable fruits in your environment. Bagged salads. I buy a lot of bagged salads at Costco. This has totally changed my life. This has saved many heads of lettuce from going bad in the bottom of my fridge. While I do often have a veggie tray that I've created in my fridge, if I'm in a crunch for time, I will buy a veggie tray. You can buy them again at Costco, they should sponsor this episode. Or -

ANNIE
Yes, yes they should. [Laughs]

JEN
Yes, they should.

ANNIE
And they should give us stuff. [Laughs]

JEN
Yes, please. [Laughs] Or a fruit tray that has everything all pre-cut and done that I can throw in my fridge. Canned veggies, shout out to canned vegetables, and a big shout out for our family to frozen vegetables. So you can you know, like, what do I have in my fridge right now? A bag of frozen broccoli florets, that to me, it's easier for me to - now speaking of what can be boring, you should see what I had for dinner last night, a bowl of microwaved broccoli florets that I just threw in a bowl, microwaved them and put some sauce on top for my veggie. And for me, that's easier to get that broccoli into me than it would be to you know, pick up ahead of broccoli, chop it up, cook it, steam it, whatever. So big shout out to frozen vegetables in our family. We use them all the time.

ANNIE
Yeah.

JEN
What about you?

ANNIE
Yeah, same, frozen vegetables are, there's bags of those, like, I think they're Bird's Eye steamers or whatever, you can just literally throw them right into the microwave. They're done in just a few seconds. And you can, we just put a little salt and pepper on, we can sprinkle some cheese, whatever it is. Sometimes. Trader Joe's also has a ton of frozen vegetables that have

various sauces that you can add or not add depending on what you're dealing with. But I just love that all you have to do is put them in the microwave because again, I can handle that. But we're, we are really either fresh or frozen, like it's, we're eating them raw or I'm cooking them in the microwave. Sometimes I pull up the airfryer and do some air frying for fresh vegetables. But that's like, that is some fancy effort on my behalf. I do want to note too that because we've mentioned this a couple of times, and I know we have said this on the podcast, I have at least, this especially when it comes to proteins and fiber, I want to acknowledge that you will have to pay a little bit more to get things pre-chopped and prepared. I have found time and time again that that is worth the extra few dollars. Because I'm more likely to use it. I had noticed a pattern in me that I would buy all this like a head of lettuce. I wouldn't chop it up. If I had $1 for every pineapple that is rotten on my shelf, like just buy the chopped pineapple for heaven's sakes, like I am throwing money down the drain because of my tendencies. And so it just, kind of being honest with myself about like, what are you really going to use?

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE
Or, you know, even the fresh pineapple, yeah, it's cheaper, but you're still wasting money if you just let it rot on your countertop. So.

JEN
I threw out some fruit and vegetables yesterday. And it was painful for me.

ANNIE
Mm-hm.

JEN
Yeah. So I threw out a watermelon. That was way past -

ANNIE
Ugh.

JEN
- date. Yeah. And I threw out a bunch of vegetables from my crisper, some peppers, and lettuce. And I was like, damn.

ANNIE
Yeah, I had this moment, just actually just a few days ago, where I was like, I'm that age, I'm sure other people were at this age sooner than I was. But I'm like, I'm at that age where I'm like, "You got to eat it, it's gonna go bad." [Laughs]

JEN

Yeah, and like things are just getting more expensive. They really are. So I, you know, the reason I was throwing out fruits and vegetables yesterday is because I had bought things without thinking through when we would be eating them. And it's like, my kids were away to their grandparents for a few days. You know, we just, we had some things going on. And it was like, yeah, you bought these without thinking through if you would then take the time to, to prepare them, you know, get the veggie tray together or the container of watermelon. And it's like, no, you didn't, and you just didn't think ahead. So yes, those all went into the garbage to your note of, "Well, I may as well spend that money on making it more convenient."

ANNIE
Right. And I also want to say too, that we're going to talk about eating out in just a little bit as well. But I also knew that my tendency was if I don't buy foods for meals at home, I'm probably going to eat out, and if I order out, that is -

JEN
Nothing is more expensive than that. [Laughs]

ANNIE
For sure more expensive than buying some pre-prepared foods. So, back to fiber. One of the things that our grocery store offers that I just love is diced peppers and diced red onions. And I can buy them in these little plastic Tupperware containers that I can throw those on salads, I can throw them an omelet, I can throw them in my cottage cheese, I can throw them on just about anything. And it's like, takes 15 seconds. If that.

JEN
I have, and I've had members share with me that they will dice up onions, celery that are commonly used in a lot of different dishes, you know, spaghetti sauces, soups, whatever. They'll dice them up at home and store them in the freezer, so they're ready to go when they need them.

ANNIE
Yeah.

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE
Okay, fats.

JEN
Fat. Okay, so, the only thing I'm going to say here, is because the volume of fat you're getting might be the issue, not necessarily having healthier fats. But it can be helpful to take a step back and look at swapping some of your saturated fat for no fat, less fat or unsaturated fats, because independent of calorie load, unsaturated fats have their own health benefits, right? So

saturated fat is primarily found in animal products, soy, meat and dairy. And if I had $1 for every woman, you know, who's getting nutrition coaching from me and has the belief that she's checking that protein box every single night, but she's actually eating a very high fat protein, and it's actually far more fat than it is protein. So an example is we had ourselves a little Ukrainian dinner the other night, and I got myself some Mennonite sausage, which I bet you don't, have no idea what that is.

ANNIE
No, yes, I do.

JEN
Oh, you do?

ANNIE
I do. I do. Yes.

JEN
And just a quick glance at the nutritional information, and they're, per sausage, there was 24 grams of fat and 12 grams of protein. Right? So that I'm not suggesting that you fall down a macro counting rabbit hole by any means. But it's just, just, just have a look right? Like -

ANNIE
Some awareness.

JEN
Some awareness. So that's not an everyday thing for us. But for some people, it may be just because they're not aware, right? They just need a little more nutritional information. So don't be afraid of checking the label and seeing, is this a protein? Or is this actually a fat, right? There's a lot, there's a lot more high fat meat out there than there is lean meat. And same with dairy. Dairy is another one that would be could be a source of saturated fat for people.

ANNIE
Yeah, taking it back to your point about your vegan friend. My boyfriend is vegetarian and I know that that is, it is difficult to get adequate protein without also increasing your fat intake in those situations. So again, just like staying mindful of your fat, just having some awareness yeah can be really important.

JEN
This is honestly out of all the nutritional changes that our members are making, this is like, can be a bigger rock, is increasing your protein without increasing your fat or just decreasing your overall fat altogether. We have this tendency to demonize carbs. And a lot of women around our age aren't, were raised during a time when we did demonize carbs. And my personal experience with that is because I was a carb demonizer and on all these low-carb or no-carb diets like keto, my intake of fat just went up and up and up. And over time, I had no idea or

perspective of what a serving of fat was because my diet had become so high in fat. So some mindfulness there can be really helpful and again, just convenience sake, quick swaps, what you're already eating for a leaner source. If you're already eating Greek yogurt, try low-fat or no-fat Greek yogurt, etc. And just go through the things you commonly eat.

ANNIE
Yeah, or even just using less.

JEN
Using less, yeah.

ANNIE
Of your fat, your primary fat source. So if you're putting dressing on a salad, can you use a little bit less? Can you use a little bit less oil or butter?

JEN
Yeah, and that's also a good point because a, say, you know, salads, very healthy, very nutritious, lots of fiber. But you, the amount of dressing that you put on that can quickly turn, you know, a very nutritious choice into a very energy-dense meal.

ANNIE
Yeah, yeah. I was just talking about this with someone else. We were talking about, do you remember taco salads being like all the rage?

JEN
Yes.

ANNIE
I do, too. I remember my mom being really keen about taco salads. And I have a hunch that she probably felt really good about eating a taco salad, and taco salads are amazing.

JEN
Delicious.

ANNIE
They're delicious. But I think she felt really good about that, because I think she felt like it was a really nutritious choice. And knowing what I know now about how calorie-dense salads can quickly become. I'm like, "Oh, I would love to have like, have a conversation with my mom about that." Because we've got, you know, it's not just the dressings that are going on salads. It's like you got the, you got the seeds, or the nuts, the croutons, the tortilla chips, the cheese, the like [laughs].

JEN

Yeah, and if you're, listen, if your relationship with food is your primary concern right now, this conversation is not going to feel helpful, but it is just factual, from a very neutral perspective. What Annie and I presenting here is that salads are you know, this allowed food when we're dieting almost, and almost any diet is like salad, salad, salad, more salad. And, but it is, you're right, it's kind of the, it's the calorie-dense, often fat-based additives that we put on salad that can be like, holy cow, this is more than half of my daily caloric intake right here in one meal.

ANNIE
Yeah, well, and even just how we perceive certain foods to be healthy, quote, unquote, Tracy Mann talks about this in her book "Secrets From the Eating Lab," the healthy halo effect, that when we even perceive a food to be healthy, quote, unquote, that we are more likely to overeat it and like, our like, our behaviors around that food also shift. So again, just you know, some awareness is all that's needed.

JEN
Yup. Totally. And then carbs, it can be helpful to swap in refined carbs for more whole grain type carbs. So less processed carbohydrates. And that might be you know, a very simple one is switching from white bread to whole grain bread. Now, I'm not saying any of these swaps are gonna make or break your nutrition. It's just maybe some little swaps here and there just lead to an improvement in your overall nutrition intake. And then shout out to, under the umbrella of making it more convenient, is beans. Cans of beans, my frozen edamame beans.

ANNIE
That's it.

JEN
That's it.

ANNIE
That's the, that's the tip.

JEN
[Laughs[

ANNIE
That's the tip. Beans. [Laughs]

JEN
What are yours for carbs?

ANNIE
I have been on a big bread kick lately. I don't, I don't really know why. But I realized somewhere in the last year that I just never had bread in the house. We didn't eat a lot of bread. I just wasn't buying it. I wasn't opposed to bread. And I like bread, I enjoy bread, my kids enjoy bread. But I

started buying bread again. And I do a like, a whole grain bread. And I eat a fair amount. Like I have a piece of toast with peanut butter and banana with my protein shake every morning. Or I'm having sandwiches, which we're going to talk about in a bit.

JEN
Do you ever slice up the banana and put it on your bread?

ANNIE
That's exactly what I do.

JEN
Good. That's my absolute favorite meal, peanut butter and banana toast with a coffee.

ANNIE
Oh, so good.

JEN
Yeah, it's my favorite thing ever.

ANNIE
I had to laugh at myself though, because this is just, shows how we believe our thoughts are facts. And they're not facts. I was making my peanut butter toast with my banana. And I had this thought like, this really is, I'm kind of bummed, I can't even barely get a whole banana or half a banana on my toast. And so it was just slicing up like a quarter of it or a third of it, putting it on my toast and then just eating the other half. But I'd really prefer to eat most of the banana on my toast. And I was like well, I guess this is just the way it is, just how I have to eat my banana, peanut butter, and toast. And then I realized, like, oh, you could just cut those slices thicker.

JEN
Peanut butter toast with these tall...[Laughs] Big, tall banana chunks on the top. [Laughs]

ANNIE
It's like, it's like a Big Mac version of peanut butter toast.

JEN
Oh, that's hilarious.

ANNIE
So I do that now and I get more of my banana on my toast but yes, that's exactly how I eat it.

JEN
Let me blow your mind on peanut butter and banana toast. I slice my banana vertically so that I don't have chunks of banana falling off while I'm eating it.

ANNIE
That's genius.

JEN
Thank you.

ANNIE
That's gonna be the next veggie tray. Welcome to the revolution of peanut butter, banana toast. [Laughs]

JEN
Yes. Thank you very much.

ANNIE
So we've covered the aspects of meals. Should we -

JEN
Protein, fat, and carbs.

ANNIE
- or, uh, foods.

JEN
Yes. Let's talk about the balanced meals that Annie and I are actually eating week to week. Number one, I know we both love these.

ANNIE
Sandwiches.

JEN
Sandwiches. The anti-carb movement robbed me, robbed me of years of sandwiches, and I love them so much. They are the perfect meal.

ANNIE
They really are. There, there's, there are so many different ways to prepare a sandwich that are enjoyable, flavorful, and balanced.

JEN
Yes, you've got your two pieces of bread, you've got your carbs, and quite honestly protein in your whole grain bread. Have a look, there is a good little boost of protein there. And -

ANNIE
Can I say something real quick about that? In the last couple of months, I made this reel about sandwiches. And you know, of all the thoughtful content I make, that we make online, my

sandwich reel goes viral. And it has been seen like 200,000 times or whatever, which is wonderful. I love it. I'm here for it. Everyone should eat a sandwich. But with that brought in a lot of comments about, how are you getting five grams of protein in your bread? And people are just baffled that you can get adequate protein in your sandwich and that you, that your bread has protein. I have looked as a result, I have started to pay close attention to not just the bread I'm choosing but other breads. And I would say it's pretty common to get at least three grams of protein per slice of whole-grain bread.

JEN
Yeah, I also know one of our members buys like high protein bread. And it's not you know, it's not that high protein, but it's like five grams of protein per slice of bread. So just getting 10 grams of protein just for bread and her sandwich.

ANNIE
Yeah, that's what I use. And I just had a sense that these people were really stressed out about five, you know, 3, 4, 5 grams of protein -

JEN
Ugh. Makes me twitchy. [Laughs]

ANNIE
I know. It's like, that's not the point. The point of the sandwich was really to show you how five grams of protein here, 10 grams of protein here, six grams of protein in my slice of pepper jack cheese, like all of that adds up to an adequate serving of protein. It's not about nailing each aspect of the sandwich perfectly. It's like what this creates as a whole.

JEN
Yeah, and between those two slices of bread, you can put meat with more protein, you could put a slice of cheese with that, has a little bit more protein, but you can also fit a whole bunch of delicious veggies. You can have lettuce, you can tomato and dill pickle, that would be my personal favorite.

ANNIE
Yes, spinach, cucumbers, avocado, Jen's tip of putting Italian seasoning on top of the sandwich just, perfection.

JEN
Changed your life. Didn't it? [Laughs]

ANNIE
Perfection. You can make these in five minutes, I even chop my onions and my tomatoes and I put them in a little container so they are ready to go. And all I'm doing is like just grabbing and pulling.

JEN
Like a little -

ANNIE
It is so simple.

JEN
- sandwich bar in your fridge.

ANNIE
That's exactly what it is. And when I get bored of that particular flavor, I can switch it up with something else. There's so many options. I do want to note though I have been toasting my bread.

JEN
Yes, I do that as well.

ANNIE
Which is really enjoyable. I think I'm getting mouth sores, though. From the toast. [Laughs]

JEN
It's scratchy? Like sandpaper in your mouth?

ANNIE
Yeah, because I just told you, I mean my peanut butter toast in the morning and then I'm having my sandwich in the afternoon. I think it's just the uptick in toasted bread is a little too rough for my delicate mouth, apparently.

JEN
Toughen up.

BOTH
[Laugh]

ANNIE
Yeah. Yeah.

JEN
That's funny. Yeah, so sandwiches, shout out to sandwiches as a convenient balanced meal. Not only will I have sandwiches at home, but when we're out and about I will grab a sandwich as well, whether we're going somewhere like Subway or there's lots of delicious sandwiches in my local grocery store's deli section.

ANNIE

Yeah. Good one. Okay.

JEN
Two is power bowls. So Balance365 is known for its power bowl challenges. But this, power bowls, you can make it home, and whenever we do run a power bowl challenge, we often, we, not often, we do include the template for, here's how to make a power bowl and it's kind of like making a sandwich except you're throwing everything in a bowl instead of between two pieces of bread. So it's finding a lean protein, grabbing your fiber. You probably don't need to find any fat because it will find you. [Laughs] I mean fat in your food. And putting in some carbs, into a bowl and then adding your dressing or whatever you want on top.

ANNIE
Yeah, we do power bowls a lot here too. And I think something that maybe can contribute to a lack of variety is we get kind of tunnel vision of like, oh, it's a salad. Well, no, it's not, and like these are the things that you put on a salad, like it's not necessarily a salad, like I just made a like a deconstructed taco into a power bowl and I put cottage cheese on it. I would have never put cottage cheese on a salad necessarily, or a taco, but for some reason, it works in this setting, or like some sort of grain. Rice. Quinoa.

JEN
Can of beans. [Laughs]

ANNIE
A can of...Oh god. [Laughs]

JEN
I do like my beans.

ANNIE
Edamame. [Laughs] Yeah, or looking at like your yogurts or whatnot as your base. So I would encourage people to kind of think outside the box with their power bowls.

JEN
Absolutely. The other place you can think outside of the box is at the grocery store when you go into the freezer section. So the freezer section is not just for ice cream and fish and chips. Okay? So a lot of our members find frozen meals in the freezer section that check all the boxes that they need for balance. And I think sometimes what I've noticed in these pre-done convenience meals that you are buying, sometimes they're lower on vegetables than I would personally like. But like all or something right? If you need something in a pinch, choosing that might be better than what you were doing. So I recently had one of our members transition from you know, running next door while she's at work to grab a burger and fries to picking up these like frozen meals at the grocery store over the weekend and putting them in her work freezer. And it may not have, you know, maybe the fiber that she ultimately would like to get to. But it is,

it's a big step up from what she was doing. And again, all or something, like fantastic. And she's, it's just been like amazing for her to make this change.

ANNIE
Yeah, I do the same thing, but I often add protein, not veggies. I will take like a rotisserie chicken or some sort of protein that I've prepared or cooked and just add -

JEN
Add it on top.

ANNIE
- it to the freezer. Yeah.

JEN
Yeah, totally. Yeah. Number three, snack plates. This is my favorite thing to do. And I have snack plates for lunch all the time. And actually, I haven't done this in a while. But there was a time where once a week my, it was a family meal was like a snack plate. It was like a snack charcuterie board I would do.

ANNIE
Like an adult, an adult Lunchable.

JEN
Yes. And it was like, it just it works, right? It works very well and reduces the burden or load of having to think of meals all the time. So I'll do crackers and cheese. I'll do raw vegetables with ranch dip. And then I'll grab one of those tuna cups we were talking about earlier to get my, or deli meat or something like that. To get my protein in there. So satisfying. There's just, there's something about crackers and cheese.

ANNIE
Absolutely.

JEN
Just love them. Yes.

ANNIE
No beans, though.

JEN
[Laughs] You could do bean sometimes. I do Heinz brown beans with my snack plates. Do you like Heinz brown beans?

ANNIE
Is that like baked beans?

JEN
Yeah, in like -

ANNIE
Yeah.

JEN
- sauce.

ANNIE
Yeah, I do.

JEN
Yeah, I always have those in my pantry as well.

ANNIE
Yeah, my mom used to make something called Calico beans.

JEN
I don't know what that is.

ANNIE
I'm not sure what the name is about. But it was really just this like big pot of a variety of beans with some bacon and some onions, it was, and we put it on baked potatoes. So good.

JEN
I will be Googling that recipe after this call. My kids often have beans and toast for breakfast. We just open a can of beans. Put some toast in. Delicious.

ANNIE
Yeah.

JEN
See how normal we are everybody?

BOTH
[Laugh]

JEN
Everyone's like, "This is underwhelming." [Laughs]

ANNIE
"I listened to this podcast for an hour, they told me to eat beans and toast." [Laughs]

JEN
Yes. Number four, convenient balanced meals. This is a little tip if I'm having a meal that's not so balanced. That's okay. And if I want to make it more balanced, I will just add a protein shake to the side of anything. So sometimes -

ANNIE
Same.

JEN
Yeah, so even if I was having my snack plate and I didn't have a convenient protein available If I might just have a protein shake on the side.

ANNIE
Yeah, there are, there are, there have been times when I want like a peanut butter jelly sandwich -

JEN
With a protein shake.

ANNIE
But that peanut butter jelly sandwich doesn't give me adequate protein by itself. So okay, we're not skipping the peanut butter jelly sandwich. We're just going to add the protein shake to it.

JEN
Yes, totally. And now let's talk a little bit about eating out. I know you have a lot of tips for people, obviously eating out can be the convenient choice that people are making. And you're the queen of eating out. Do you want to share your tips?

ANNIE
Yeah, I do. And I think it's, I wanted to bring this into this podcast, because one of the beliefs I had about losing weight was that I couldn't, I couldn't also eat out while losing weight. And that's just not true. What I needed to do was change how I was eating when I was eating out.

JEN
Yeah, I was gonna challenge you there for a second because I do want to say that that's not like an all-or-nothing statement. You may have to be more mindful of your eating out experience. But yes, you can eat out. Let's just bring some intention into that eating out.

ANNIE
Yes, yes, absolutely. And I do want to note that I have a lot of experience eating out, I've coached a lot of women who, through their eating out habits...And I'm not saying that it is easy, because I do think foods that are prepared at restaurants just as we're going to, as you're going to share in your own experience, tend to be more calorically dense, just even like same thing if

you cook it at home, just less right? But one of the best things I think people could do to eat more nutritiously when you want to eat out is, first of all, just accept that, like, I'm likely to eat out, or we like to go out to eat every Wednesday night or every Friday night or my girlfriend's at work my coworkers, we go out to lunch every Thursday or whatever, just accept it, and then plan for it. And one of the things I do, have done, and do do, is I give the menu of some consideration before I go. So I think oftentimes, we have a handful of restaurants that we circle from like, most people listening are probably, what if you eat out, you probably have like five that you rotate through, right? Just take 30 minutes, look at the menu. See, you know, pull from the protein, carbs, fiber, fats, and see what options are available to you. And then put that menu in your back pocket for when you order. So I've kind of got like -

JEN
Like, not literally. Don't actually fold up the menu - [Laughs]

ANNIE
No.

JEN
- and put it in your back pocket. Pull it out when you get there.

ANNIE
No, yeah, figuratively. So I know, okay, when I'm eating at a Chipotle or a Pancheros, or Qdoba, this is my order when I'm eating at Panera, this is my order. When I go to a sub shop, this is my order. And it works, I do a fair amount of traveling, I do a fair amount of eating out, and it works well for me to give some just some consideration to what is available.

JEN
Yeah. Our family, when it comes to eating out, does way less like fine dining eating out, like who is taking their kids and spending that kind of money on them? I don't know. Not us. And just, I suppose like date nights with me and my husband are less frequent in this season of our life than they may be in the future. But we, for us eating out is fast food, like that's what our eating out experience is most often. But I do find that it is easier to find options that work for my goals and preferences in fast food than it is in like fine, excuse me, fine dining experiences, to be totally honest. And so, you know, we have a handful of fast food places that work really well for us and like that looks like Subway, like you know back to sandwiches, full of, you can fill them full of veggies, you can find the lean protein there, you can maybe be a little more mindful of the calories that are in the sauces that you're choosing. We go to, like there's a salad place we go to, there is a pizza place that we go to. And it's kind of you know, similar. At each one there, we have options of protein, fiber, fat, and carbs when we go there. And also I do find, and this is important to some people and not to others, okay, but I do find it helpful, fast food places are more likely to have nutritional information available so that I can be more mindful of the energy density that I'm choosing. So at our pizza place, we have this incredible pizza place in my city. I have to take you next time you're here.

ANNIE
I think I've been.

JEN
No, it's new in the last year. It's like, it's like, when we were heavy into soccer season, we were going there like three times a week. Anyways. But I noticed the nutritional information one day, and I noticed that the pita that I had been ordering was like 850 calories. Now listen, that's a lot. That's a high-energy meal for me, for my body. And so I was like, "Whoa, like pump the brakes a little bit. And I need to be more mindful of the condiments I'm putting on here." And so that was really helpful for me. Some people are not in a place where that information is helpful. I want to acknowledge that relationship with food issues, and disordered eating issues. So I totally understand that. But for me, it's become a helpful tool to make more mindful decisions.

ANNIE
Yeah, yeah. I have two other suggestions when it comes to eating out and the other one is to customize. If it's not on the menu, ask. Ask if you can, can I add protein to the salad? Can I add additional veggies to my pizza? Can I, like what is available to you? The worst that's gonna happen is they're gonna be like, "Sorry, we can't accommodate that." And you're gonna go, "Okay, I'll find something else," right? But just because it's on, not on the menu, don't assume that it's not available to you. I go to a breakfast shop, a little grocery breakfast store, at least a couple times a month, and I get a garden skillet. But then I asked them to remove the potatoes. Use egg whites, use turkey sausage instead of sausage. I add spinach and onion, like -

JEN
You are a treat. You are a flipping treat as someone who worked in the service industry and got herself -

ANNIE
Hey, listen.

JEN
- through school. [Laughs]

ANNIE
I did too. I did too. And I tip well.

JEN
I hated you.

BOTH
[Laugh]

ANNIE

This is me every time, "I am so sorry -" actually I go there often enough that they're like, "Same thing?" I'm like, "Yes."

JEN
Annie Special. Yeah.

ANNIE
Yes. But if it is something, I'm like, "I'm sorry. I'm gonna customize the crap out of this, like be patient with me." And I do tip well, but all that to say is, don't hesitate to ask for what you need. Again, the worst thing they're gonna say is, "No, we don't have it." And then the other thing is, don't forget about grocery stores and gas stations. I don't know what it's like in your town. But the gas stations here are really like leveling up what is available as far as protein shakes, protein bars, fresh fruit, hard-boiled eggs, subs, like there are quite a few options, so if you don't have food available to you, don't have anything at home and you need to run out and grab something, don't forget that those are also options to eat at.

JEN
Yeah, we just did a road trip, a big road trip that's like nine hours long and when we stopped for our big lunch, we went to a grocery store and got in the deli section the sandwiches and things that we wanted and everybody was happy

ANNIE
Yeah, there's again, that might be location dependent but where I live in the Midwest, it is really quite - like I'm impressed truly by the by the products that are coming out seems like monthly, like, "Oh my god, this is...What?"

JEN
Yeah, they're getting it. They're hearing us. We need more convenient options. Yes, they're hearing us for sure. The other thing I want to mention here is when we do fast food and what we've decided to do is like the burger, fries, ice cream thing, we're not going for the you know more fiber, protein, fast food places. Our family loves Dairy Queen and going there that experience, it's different for me today than where I have been as a dieter when I was going to Dairy Queen, I was going all out. I was getting the triple burger, the milkshake, the Blizzard for dessert, the large fries, you know ,it was my splurge. It was that cheat meal mentality. Now that I'm a Balance365er I go and I get what I really want and don't get what I don't really want. So I focus more on volume than I do nutrition in that situation. So for me, I love a cheeseburger from Dairy Queen, and then I'll get a Blizzard, and that is what is satisfying for me. And I won't, I won't worry about the fries. I won't worry about the milkshake. I'll get the two things that I really want from that menu.

ANNIE
I do the same. I often get salads and a side of fries.

JEN

A salad and a side of fries?

ANNIE
Yes.

JEN
Yes. Okay. [Laughs]

ANNIE
Like, I mean not from Dairy Queen, but...

JEN
You could at Dairy Queen.

ANNIE
Yes, I could. I could, but to me, that is physiologically satisfying and psychologically satisfying.

JEN
Like that's what you wanted in that experience.

ANNIE
Yes.

JEN
Yeah, no judgment here. No judgment. Yeah.

ANNIE
Yeah, I enjoy the salad. I enjoy the nutrition. I enjoy the protein. I enjoy the warm aspect of some like savory, friendly potato fries, with some chipotle ranch.

JEN
Yeah. The other thing I want to mention about eating out is how much you are mindful of what you're eating might come down to the frequency that you do it. So some people don't eat out that often. Some people you know, like Annie, very often, and they do have to bring some more intention to the experience, the fine dining experience, because it's so infrequent for me and my husband. I'm not going there and using it as a cheat meal, but I'm less concerned about the calories of the meal. It's just it's so infrequent for me I, yeah, it's not really a, not really a consideration.

ANNIE
Yeah, I do think this is slightly off-topic as it relates to nutritious food and more behaviors. But I do think I personally noticed a little bit of a shift in behaviors when I am eating at a fine dining establishment, like I might be more likely to order an alcoholic drink or cocktail.

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE
Eat an appetizer, have the bread or whatever is on the table. Maybe order a dessert because it feels like a little bit of a special treat. I wouldn't do that at Subway, or Taco Bell. [Laughs]

JEN
Yeah, yeah.

ANNIE
Again, that's, it's not a problem because I'm not going to those establishments often enough to really make a difference one way or the other. But if you were, that might be something to pay attention to.

JEN
Yeah, totally. Okay, that's all we got, my friends.

ANNIE
Okay. Beautiful, great discussion. Thanks so much, Jen.

JEN
Thanks, everybody.

ANNIE
Bye bye.

JEN
Bye.

ANNIE (OUTRO)
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