

A sunburst graphic with numerous thin, light gray lines radiating from a central point behind the main title text.

Healthy Moms Podcast

BY **Wellness Mama**[®]
simple answers for healthier families

Episode 93: How to Avoid the Most Common Fitness Mistakes Women Make

Child: Welcome to my Momm's podcast.

Katie: Do you love the taste and the benefits of bone broth but don't love how time consuming it is to make? With the time you spend sourcing the best ingredients and then simmering it for hours on end on the stove. Kettle and Fire solves that problem with their bone broth. So they use only bones from 100% grass-fed pasture raised cattle that are never given hormones and antibiotics. It's also unique because they focus on bones that are especially high in collagen, which is one of the healthiest things you can put in your body. Another great thing about them is that they use really eco-friendly minimal packaging and their bone broth is non-perishable. So unlike many bone broths on the market, it ships without the need for refrigeration, which is also much more eco-friendly. It is available in many stores, so definitely check your local area. But if it's not, like it isn't for me, you can order it online and have it shipped to your door, which is what I do. So to check it out and to find out more about why their bone broth is so wonderful, go to kettleandfire.com/wellnessmama

This episode is sponsored by Plant Therapy. There are so many options out there when it comes to essential oils and I've used a lot of them over the years. Now I most often turn to Plant Therapy because they have a large assortment of organic oils and a whole lot of kid-safe blends and they also have really good prices. The cool thing is their oils have no additives or synthetic ingredients like a lot of oils do. And they publish their testing results for all of their oils so you can verify the quality. I've talked a lot about the safe use of essential oils and their kid-safe blends are formulated by Robert Tisserand, who is largely considered one of the foremost experts in essential oil safety, so I feel I can trust him. If you want to check them out, especially right now they're running some big sales that are changing daily. Go to wellnessmama.com/go/oils to get all the current discounts.

Katie: Hello and welcome to The Healthy Moms Podcast. I'm Katie from wellnessmama.com, and I'm here today with Meredith Vieceli, who is an athlete, a coach, a foodie, and a mom of two. Her website is her name, and that link will be in a show notes. But she comes highly recommended as a podcast guest, especially in the areas of helping women start or maintain fitness routines, the main mistakes that people make when they jump into fitness, and her answers may surprise you. I'm really excited to chat with her, and I think she's gonna provide a lot of really important wisdom for a lot of women, especially those looking to add to their fitness routine. So Meredith, welcome. Thanks for being here.

Meredith: Thank you so much, Katie. I'm so excited to be here with you.

Katie: Oh, me too. As I said, you come highly recommended as a podcast guest, and I think you have a lot of knowledge on a lot of different topics related to fitness and health. So I want to jump right in and start with talking about the common mistakes that people make when it comes to fitness. I think there is like a kind of a big spectrum of those who really have no kind of fitness and know they should, to the marathon moms who have a whole lot of fitness. And I know that you, from what you've written and what I've heard from the people who recommend you, there can be mistakes made on both ends of that spectrum and even in the middle. So what are some of the common mistakes that you're seeing?

Meredith: I would say one of the first mistakes I see for people that are just kind of just getting started, you know we call them like, just getting off the couch, that couch to 5k, couch potato types that know they wanna get moving but they have no idea where to start. I think the biggest problem I see there is jumping into too much too soon, you know jumping in, and you know taking on too much, just going to be instead of listening to their body. And maybe starting with walking before getting into running, before getting into a half marathon,

and a marathon, but just kind of getting swept up in the excitement of racing, and then you know maybe their body isn't exactly in the right spot for it, you know just at that moment. So I think really learning to tune in and assess where they're at right now, and then just build gradually. My approach is always just very small steps, one thing at a time so that it can become very sustainable and just feel like a way of life, and so it doesn't feel like a chore and like one more thing on the list to do for women that are already, you know very busy.

And then, you know on the other end of the spectrum, I work with a lot of very passionate, very Type A athletes who want to do more and more. And for them, it's you know more like reining them in a little bit, listening into their body again, and finding balance in their work out so that they're not pushing themselves too hard and creating extra stress in their body which leads to some really chronic injuries and can lead to some nutritional deficiencies. So again, I guess in both ends its finding that balance and learning how to make your workouts work for you so that if you feel like it's enhancing your life rather than just adding another thing to do on your, on your very long list of to dos.

Katie: Absolutely. And you obviously have a very strong background in this. I just touched on your background a little bit in the bio, but you're both the coach and an athlete. So take us through your background and how you came to understand all this and have such a very detailed and close understanding of it.

Meredith: Sure. Well, so a little bit about me. I am a wife and a mom of two little boys, holistic health coach and nutritionist, and runner, and retired triathlete. I did the triathlon thing for years but no longer do it. About 12 years ago, I left what I call a very responsible and very stable corporate job and decided to pursue what is my, you know real true passion, and that's that was to begin a career in health and wellness. Growing up, I've always been really active kid. I grew up on a farm, so we were always outside just running around doing things. And that was a huge part of my life growing up and led me to become more than a runner and athlete as I grew up, part of my upbringing.

And you know, fast forward to 2005, I had lost my corporate job and I was in the midst of what I would say was like the peak of my athletic career. I had all hype for the Boston Marathon, and I was training for an Ironman, Ironman Wisconsin. I was working as a triathlon and a run coach and helping other people achieve their goals. And everything looks pretty good from the outside. Things were, you know turning along, but things started to break down. And in the next couple years after that, life got really crazy, very busy, out of balance. You'll hear me say balance a lot because I really think that that is the underlying key to success in a lot of areas. But I was doing an excessive amount of training, too much work, too little sleep, too much sugar, very high stress, and just feeling burnt out. And it was... when I look back that was really a low point of my life, but also a turning point.

I went through a separation and a divorce at that time. I was 33 and then, you know my body started to break down from all of the stress and the training. I actually had a condition called petechiae where the capillaries just sort of burst, and so I was no longer allowed to run at that point. I, you know mentally was going through a lot of challenges, and struggled with depression at that point, and was put on an antidepressant, and just did not feel like myself. I was feeling numb, and tired, and sort of emotionless. You know the dark time but that was also like a turning point time. So it was through that, darkness that I did a lot of searching, and I sought out like a better way. I knew that there had to be a better way to live, and to train, and to eat, and to put it all together.

And it was through that that I found the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, and I became a... studied to become a certified health coach. And it was through that process that I healed myself, and then was able to apply those things from nutrition, to lifestyle, to fitness, and training to self care and be able to help others with you know that we're going through similar struggles. So it was during on it that I went on to do the work that I love. But so for the last eight years, I've been an integrative nutrition health coach and went on to work at Lifetime Fitness and was the head of nutrition and endurance coaching there before I started my own business where I do personal on online group coaching for women who wanna take the next step in improving their own health and fitness. So I've made all the mistakes and I've seen all the mistakes. And really, at my core, my mission is to

help women reclaim their health and happiness and to do it in a way that's sustainable, just one small step at a time. So that's a little bit about my journey.

Katie: I think that's so powerful and so helpful to anyone listening to understand that you have had your own struggle and your own journey on this. I think it's hard sometimes to feel like you can learn from someone who has never been through that. I always, like laugh at that, like not laugh but I think it's funny when you know there's trainers that are just genetically, like that's they genetically are and it wouldn't matter if they worked out or not. But to credit like, their physique to all these things they do when realistically that they kind of won the gene lottery in that sense and it's great for them and I'm grateful for that they did, but at the same time I love that you have been through it in that, and you've had your own struggles with it because I think that makes your teaching even more powerful. And I think a lot of women kind of turn to fitness mainly for weight loss, and I know that there is a lot of other benefits, and I would say that are much more important than weight loss when it comes to any kind of fitness. But that's definitely a focus for a lot of people and at least the spectrum I see because I just go to the gym and I take all my calls walking on treadmill when I do weights and that kind of stuff. But the cycle I see is, like people come in all gung-ho, ready to go, they workout like crazy for two weeks, and then I never see them again. And I think it's because they're, just using it to lose weight. And I know that you have talked about this a lot. So what do you see is the biggest mistakes people make when they kind of jump into this to try to lose weight?

Meredith: Well I think they're looking for the results and instead of the actual journey. And so when your motivation is weight loss, it feels like a place of being not enough. It's like a very negative approach to your health. And so with any of it, the women that I work with or come into contact with, any type of nutrition or health coaching begins with, how do I wanna feel? You know, what do I want my life to look like? How do I wanna show up every day? What kind of energy do I wanna have? How is my mood gonna be? You know and it... when you start to look at it from that way rather than just specifically a number on the scale, or you know, an arbitrary jean size that you're trying to get to, there is just a different mindset. It's one of abundance. It's like I get to exercise and move my body in the way that I want to. I get to add in these wonderful nourishing foods that are gonna make my body feel better and give me the energy that I'm looking for. So you know, it's a mindset of allowing yourself more and reclaiming what really is yours. I think that our essence you know, we all wanna be happy, and healthy, and we deserve that and we can be that. Now our bodies are incredibly resilient when we create the environment that allows it to flourish rather than taking away. And I think when you start any gym routine, or diet routine, and we talk about diet as we go through the diet mentality, but is so pervasive. But when you start from a place of wanting less of yourself and just making yourself smaller, it doesn't feel good because that's not really who we are. We just wanna be our best selves. Whatever that you know, however, that number may fall on the scale, but we wanna feel good and so we start to make choices thinking about what do we get to do in order to feel this way versus what I can't have and what I'm restricted from and what I have to do on the treadmill in order to see a number shrink. It's just a really, you know it's a more positive way of looking at things versus pretty negative and very unsustainable, as you said. You know, that you can go at it for a week or two, and then you don't see the results that you want you're looking for this external arbitrary number to change, and it's not happening quickly enough, and then you fall back into old habits. So, that is something that I see quite a lot of.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. And I see it from the nutrition side too. It's like people using food or using fitness to punish themselves, and like giving themselves only a tiny bit of food, which is your fuel, and then wondering why their thyroid freaks out or their adrenals freak out. And I know the extreme fitness too, probably people who kind of take it to the other extreme when they jump in and hoping to have these amazing results to that working up to it. Like, again, and I say like, extreme fitness is harmful. It's just you have to get there the right way. And so they jump in and do all this really extreme fitness and really extreme calorie restriction, and then their body revolts. I mean, do you see that in what you do as well?

Meredith: I do, a lot. And I would say that's probably one of the biggest problems that I see amongst women when they start out trying to lose weight. I mean, that's what when I begin working with them, it's always I'm trying to lose weight. It's not usually saying I'm trying to get healthier or I wanna feel X but they're looking for a

weight loss. And so, they begin with the mindset of being overly restrictive, having sort of a diet mentality. I think for too long, paying attention to external noise, paying attention to someone saying, “try this or do this, this is better for you”, or “this is your magic bullet”. And not, again, not listening to their own body, not trusting themselves and their own intuition, which really does guide us than into, you know what's the right foods for us and how much is enough. And I always come back to the sort of prescriptive 1,200 calorie diet. A prescription that a lot of people have and a lot of women, I don't know what it's from, you know years or flipping through fitness magazines or listening to different diet gurus or commercials where it's like, they have in this mind that 1,200 calories is like about the right amount to eat if they're trying to lose weight. And if they go anywhere above that, then they begin to feel guilt and shame. And for any woman who is an active woman, you know a mom who is like chasing after toddlers or if you're someone who you know, it's just going at the gym a couple days a week or just walking around your block, I mean you're an active woman. 1,200 calories is, I'm just gonna put it out there, it's not enough for you. And for most women, that is below their Resting Metabolic Rate. And our Resting Metabolic Rate or RMR is the minimum number of calories that our bodies need just to function, just to like, lay in bed and do nothing all day but stare up at the ceiling and you know, for our body to do respiration and digestion, we need X amount of calories. And for most women, it's above 1,200 calories.

So if they're following a prescriptive diet thing, 1,200 calories to lose weight, there is three negative effects that happen to our body. And I see this happening way, way too often, even with younger women starting at you know, younger girls starting to diet earlier. But what happens is, first our... as you mentioned thyroid, our thyroid output decreases. So it's almost like our body adjusts to the lack of nutrition, and nutrients, and calories, and turns that thermostat down. Secondly, and we start to cannibalize and lose lean muscle tissue, which is so critical for our overall metabolism. And then thirdly, our overall metabolic rate starts to slow down and tick down. And so, when you end that 1,200 calorie diet that is not sustainable, now you just lowered your metabolic rate a bit. And so when you go back to eating your old way, the weight hangs on, like for dear life because it doesn't... it's not getting a steady stream of nutrition and nutrients and so it's wants to keep everything and like, make it very sticky. And then when you do, then go try it at the next diet that you are you know, friend at the gym tells you to do. Now your metabolism is lower, and it makes it that much harder to who lose any weight. So you see that very typical pattern of yo-yo dieting that's so frustrating for women and puts them into a lot of you know, pretty negative health situations and body image issues as well.

Katie: For sure. That's probably also why you always see that statistic that the biggest correlator of if you're gonna gain weight over the long term is if you're on a diet, like it actually...

Meredith: Yeah.

Katie: It damages your metabolism because the body is smart.

Meredith: Right.

Katie: And if you are depriving it, that it says, okay cool. This is the new normal. I have to learn how to live in this window. And it does.

Meredith: Absolutely. Yeah, our body is always, you know it's always trying to find balance. It's trying to make, like it's trying to make things easier for us so if it's seeing like a lack of nutrition, not enough fuel coming in every day consistently, it's gonna lower everything. It's gonna, you know try to survive and try to get by with what we're giving it. And you know, there just a lot of negative consequences that come with that. And you know, that what I see a lot too is like a pendulum swinging pattern of the more...And then that's actually a great quote from this author Geneen Roth and she said, "For every diet, there is an equal and opposite binge." And so, if you're hanging out in the diet area for too long, there's going to be a swing to the, to the overeating and the thinner your side of things. And that's just the body seeking balance. It's lacking balance and so it's looking for it on the other end of the spectrum. So, you know just really trying to shift the mindset away from dieting, away from restriction and into a more on abundant trusting of our body mindset where we're adding in whole foods, real foods, things that our bodies recognize and that set off the right pattern of hormones and balance in

our body is a really good place to start.

Katie: I agree. And it makes me crazy when I hear people talk about just like calories and calories out and it's all math because it's not, because it's not...

Meredith: It's not.

Katie: ...it ignores hormones. And I feel like on a low-calorie diet, when you think of just calories as a number instead of the type of few with is, people tend to actually consume about it either sugar or sugar alternative because they're low-calorie. And they have no fat and like all these things that make them actually diet wise look great if that's your focus with the calories. But then, we're seeing all these huge problems related to excess sugar consumption. So I wanna hear your take because I know, I'll admit that I take an extreme position for me, not necessarily for my children, but for me personally I don't eat sugar in any form right now. I don't eat maple syrup, I don't eat honey, and I don't eat stevia which is just my personal choice because I feel best that way.

Meredith: Yeah.

Katie: Definitely in an extreme opinion, but where do you go on the sugar spectrum, and what are you seeing with women?

Meredith: So, I'm with you, I am not sure. And I applaud you for like coming out strong on no sugar because I think that, right now, that that's like a brave thing to say because most people say, oh everything has to be in moderation, everything in moderation. And how can you not have honey or cannot have you not that maple syrup or stevia? And so, for me personally, well I applaud that you know for your own body that it doesn't make you feel good. And that's why you abstain. And it's totally healthy and acceptable to be an abstainer of something that doesn't, that, you know it doesn't make you feel good. I think we live in a culture where everything is supposed to be in moderation. A lot of dietary guidelines are even that, everything in moderation. And I disagree with that wholeheartedly. I think there are definitely foods that, that people cannot moderate well, and that if they, if they get into a little bit, then it turns into too much. So I think what you have to do is really know yourself, know if you are better off as an abstainer versus a moderator around sugar. I mean, sugar is such a huge problem. I mean, it is, we are at epidemic rates of type 2 diabetes, and even getting younger and younger for children too. So a big stand has to be taken against sugar if we're ever going to, like turn this around.

But when I work with women, I try to let them lead a little bit, like see where they're at, where their benchmark is. Like if there's someone that drinks soda every day and has you know, sugary cereal for breakfast. For them, to go to no sugar at all is going to be a really big leap, it's gonna take a lot of work. And so, I find that they, they tend to get the best results when we go gradually. We start to take out the biggest offenders first. We get rid of the sodas and the sports drinks, like really sugary beverages I think, that's a great place to start cutting right there. But then I give them a guideline. And I tell them, you know for a woman, we really, our pancreas just cannot process much more than 24 grams of added sugar a day. And that's six teaspoons of sugar, which is not a lot really, especially, I'll have them, like keep track for a day, what their total added sugar intake was. And they're unusually lowered by how much is sneaking in and all these hidden forms in their salad dressing, their fat-free salad dressings that they thought was, you know a healthy choice. And then, you know their afternoon coffee, their vanilla latte that has 35 grams of added sugar right there, and so it puts them over the top for the day. Energy bars which a lot of women just kind of keep in their purse and, and use for fuel running from one place to the next, but looking at the added sugars in there, yogurts, fruit yogurts, which have anywhere from 20 to sometimes 30 grams of added sugar there.

So we take a snapshot, and see where they're at, and then we start peeling away, and start looking for lateral shifts that we can make that's gonna pull out that excess sugar and provide them with more nutrition. Because like you said, you know whether it's artificial sugar or sugar, there's no nutrients in it. They're getting like,

nothing from it and just getting a quick surge of energy and then a real drop right after that. So it's replacing those, sort of just dead foods and replacing them with foods that are high in nutrients that are gonna give them the energy that they need to get through their busy days.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. And there are so many problems that come with the sugar consumption, which is why I take it a really extremes stance. And I will say like my kids do eat maple syrup and honey, and the kids naturally have a higher carbohydrate need than adults do because of their high ATP, and like they've got so many processes happening in their body that we don't, but at the same time, like people, its funny people get really concerned when they hear me say that, like I'm horribly unbalanced for my children. I'm like, no, sugar, nutritionally pretty much every food is better than sugar. Like you have no nutritional need for refined sugar and whatsoever. And I would even go so far as to say that, I mean if you look at the health effects, I would say sugar is worse than smoking in a lot of ways, especially the amount that a lot of people consume.

Because it having an immediate negative impact on your body. But on the other of the spectrum, you also have women who in the name of cutting out the sugars also cut out like all carbs completely. And I think there's a kind of extremes on the spectrum, but right now with the rise of the popularity of ketosis and having like a zero carb diet, at least from my side, I can see the potential for problems there with the thyroid and the adrenals especially in women because of our hormone needs. But, what are you finding with women when it comes to carbs?

Meredith: I'm finding that they are very confused, that they, in a sense, you know, are hearing from a lot of different sources that they need to remove carbs, low carb, no carb. And now, you know the much more extreme ketogenic diet as you mentioned, which I keep seeing people pointing it is like the new paleo, and it's this new trendy thing that, you know we're just gonna go super high fat and very low protein and minimal, minimal carb. And I think there is an application for it in very specific medical conditions, for epileptic seizures and first cancer patients who are trying to shrink certain types of brain tumors. There is really good research on that, that's showing the positive effects on that. But I do not think that it's something that can be, sort of prescribed or recommended across the board for everyone, in particular women as you mentioned. Not great for women. I get people asking me about it almost every day. Hey, what do you think about the new ketogenic diet, and what do you think about like 80% fat and cutting out all carbs? I think it's really asking for problems in the long run. I think if we are leading with sustainable health for the long term, it's not the path to go down for a few reasons.

I mean, for women, women especially, we need a certain amount of carbohydrate to feel good, for our hormonal balance, for our brain health. We know women that, that tend to go too overly restrictive on their carbs, again the body responds, the body balances itself out by...It sees that as a perceived stressor. Not enough carbs or no carbs is a stressor on the female body. And so, the body is gonna be responding with putting out more cortisol. It feels the stress so it responds with the stress hormone of cortisol, and then it also will dump excess blood sugar into the bloodstream to try to find it, you know what's missing. So you'll, sometimes even see an uptake in blood glucose numbers when you're going very low carb, which is the exact opposite intention of what people are trying to do when they go low carb. A lot of times there's some be disrupted sleep, and then you know just a kind of unsustainable and low adherence to this, this type of diet.

And what I see from a practical standpoint is, you know a woman will say, "Oh, I'm gonna go low carbon shun all fruit, you know won't need any berries or apples or brown rice at all with any dinners", but then, you know later in the day or the next day, she finds herself binging on ice cream or pizza or chips, and it's just like, again, at that looking for balance because it's not getting it nutritionally from an unsustainable diet. So, I think you know a lot of misunderstanding, a lot of confusion, and in all or nothing mentality around carbohydrates. A lot of times people will say, you know when they're cutting out carbs they think they're just cutting out bread, and pasta, and muffins, and bagels, and that's you know refined and so they don't need that, which is right. But actually carbohydrates comes from vegetable often and fruits and whole intact grains. And you know, if you have a gluten sensitivity or if you are celiac, you absolutely don't want gluten in your grains, but there are

gluten-free, whole intact, unrefined grains that can be a really nice part of someone's diet in the right amount. So I think, you know really a learning to distinguish between the refined, highly processed sugary carbs that we don't need, the cold cereals, the enriched breads, and chips, and granola bars, and things like that. But then not just making a blanket, you know no with to all of the types of whole carbohydrates that come in vegetables, fruits, and those whole intact grains that are a really nice part of a balanced diet, especially for women.

Katie: Yeah, absolutely. And shifting to start thinking like, instead of food as fuel instead of just a number of calorie or especially something to be demonized, or even with the superfood, something to be exalted like that I think we, really that would heal a lot of the problems we see in society with food. If we shifted to thinking of it as fuel, and how can we properly fuel our bodies, not like what can we not eat because it's bad. And I think that, especially with working out, that's a really important distinction. And I'd love to hear you talk about the ways that you recommend people fueling their bodies for different types of workouts. And obviously, one of the common is protein powder. So there is a lot of misinformation and a lot of really bad ingredients in protein powder. So what do you recommend on those?

Meredith: Yeah, they're, oh goodness. You can be a really good food detective in the protein powder aisle at grocery stores because it's overwhelming. There is so many of them. And yeah, when people start working out, they usually opt to have a protein powder as, just a convenient and quick source of protein to support their diet. First thing, I usually say is you don't, you absolutely don't need protein powder. It's not a necessity. If you're getting sufficient protein from whole foods, there is absolutely no need for it. And most people are getting sufficient protein even though they think that they're not. I think that's another area of confusion where we're constantly being bombarded thinking more protein, more protein. We're usually doing okay with protein but we've really need is more vegetables. But that very, that's effective. So I always say real food first, that protein powders are a supplement. They're not a primary food.

But then, if you do know that you want something to have as that convenient option, quick and convenient. Look at the three different sources of protein powder. So there, you can basically put them into three buckets. There is like, plant-based proteins, there is dairy based proteins, and then the newer addition to the protein powders are the bone broth proteins, which are pretty interesting. So the plant-based ones are gonna be usually some type of combination of chick peas, or lentils, or brown rice, or a grain that's been refined and sprouted in some of the best ones. And then, they'll add like between among any of the protein powders, they'll add in the good ones I called, like the high quality ones will have extra ingredients like dehydrated veggies in there. Like the Vega protein powder has six servings of veggies in there. Garden of Life is another brand that has good greens thrown in there. Probiotics, Omega-3 fatty acids, things like that. If you go to a dairy-base protein, which is probably you know, one of the most popular ones. A lot of people like wheat protein because it's very absorbable, very quickly but what I would recommend in that area is to go with the grass fed organic if possible just so that you're not getting all the extra pesticides, chemicals that you don't want in your protein powder.

And then the third one is the bone broth protein, which is a nice addition with some really great benefits. There are collagen and good source protein as well. So the things that you wanna look out for and avoid if you're scanning the ingredient labels of your protein powders and just nix them right away because they're gonna be a marker or red flag for a low quality protein powder overall. So anything that has artificial sweeteners like splenda, sucralose, erythritol is another one that is a really common ingredient and a lot of protein powders as well as energy bars, which has been shown to cause gastric distress which you definitely don't want especially if you're in the middle of training or in the middle of racing. Anything with artificial flavors, artificial colors, preservatives, or inflammatory fats, in particular, vegetable oils that are added in there that are proinflammatory.

And then stevia, that's a tricky one. It's like, if you don't there, like I will use a protein powder, a plant-based protein powder that has stevia. And I'm not crazy about stevia. I don't recommend it like it's a healthy, healthy food at all. I mean it's very, very sweet. It's not natural to be having that much sweetness every day. But if you use protein powder on occasion, I think stevia is okay, if it's from a good source, and you know, but it doesn't

cause you to have a lot of sugar cravings. Some people do notice that when they have stevia regularly, they do then crave sugar later on. So if that's you, then you wanna avoid it. But overall, I think that's, if you need a protein powder that doesn't have sugar in it, I think stevia is probably the way to go with that.

Katie: Agreed. And I would also mention on the, like with the notion of the bone broth protein to be really careful about sourcing. Like I think it's a great option, but there are some people out there on the market that are selling like a non-organic, non-pastured, non-grass-fed bone broth protein and marketing it as natural but that doesn't mean organic, and a lot of those are coming from factory farm chickens and cows. You got to be really careful of that, make sure it says organic and grass-fed because I think you're right, it's a great option. Just make sure you're sourcing is really good. Just like anything, make sure the sourcing is really good.

Meredith: Absolutely. Yeah, great point. And natural, natural means nothing, unfortunately, you know on label. So you're absolutely right. A 100% grass-fed and organic would be the keywords to look for with that.

Katie: Yeah, it's that I think almost in some ways, if you just see the word natural and nothing else on a product, if anything like research it more because that typically has used a lot to kind of make products that aren't as quality sourced look like they are. So you have to watch for that.

Katie: Do you love the taste and the benefits of bone broth but don't love how time consuming it is to make? With the time you spend sourcing the best ingredients and then simmering it for hours on end on the stove. Kettle and Fire solves that problem with their bone broth. So they use only bones from 100% grass-fed pasture raised cattle that are never given hormones and antibiotics. It's also unique because they focus on bones that are especially high in collagen, which is one of the healthiest things you can put in your body. Another great thing about them is that they use really eco-friendly minimal packaging and their bone broth is non-perishable. So unlike many bone broths on the market, it ships without the need for refrigeration, which is also much more eco-friendly. It is available in many stores, so definitely check your local area. But if it's not, like it isn't for me, you can order it online and have it shipped to your door, which is what I do. So to check it out and to find out more about why their bone broth is so wonderful, go to kettleandfire.com/wellnessmama

This episode is sponsored by Plant Therapy. There are so many options out there when it comes to essential oils and I've used a lot of them over the years. Now I most often turn to Plant Therapy because they have a large assortment of organic oils and a whole lot of kid-safe blends and they also have really good prices. The cool thing is their oils have no additives or synthetic ingredients like a lot of oils do. And they publish their testing results for all of their oils so you can verify the quality. I've talked a lot about the safe use of essential oils and their kid-safe blends are formulated by Robert Tisserand, who is largely considered one of the foremost experts in essential oil safety, so I feel I can trust him. If you want to check them out, especially right now they're running some big sales that are changing daily. Go to wellnessmama.com/go/oils to get all the current discounts.

Katie: So from a fitness perspective, there is always all this debate of what is the most effective workout and what is best for the female body? And obviously, I think there's a huge amount of personalization there. But let's talk about cardio versus like for instance lifting heavy weights and there is obviously different benefits to both with cardiovascular versus, like the muscle and joint benefits of, and bone building benefits of weights. But what do you find most women do the best with?

Meredith: I think most women do best with...Well, first of all I think finding something that they, they enjoy doing. Think beyond, like the health benefits. Just something that they don't drag doing and that they will do on a regular basis is probably the best place to start because it'll be sustainable and they're like doing it and they'll get joy from there, the way that they're moving their body. But from a physiological standpoint, if I'm designing

a training plan for someone, I'm gonna do a lot of strength, like functional strength and core strength. I think for too many women, that becomes sort of a side note. Like they'll, they love to get their run in, or they love to ride their bikes or whatever, which is great too, but then their overall functional strength becomes like the last 15 minutes of their workout. And I don't think that's enough. So I think having, you know specific days where you're doing full body strength, not just sitting on a machine and doing like a bicep curl or you're really isolating just one movement, but you know involving the whole body and using body weight, doing squats, and lunges, and planks, and push-ups, and burpees. You know, just like the kind of basic things that work our whole body, that gets our glutes involved, get the prime movers, get our hips involved, and make us feel just functionally stronger, better posture, you know, just showing up, like with a body that feels more functional every day. So I think strength is a huge component.

And then cardiovascular is very important too on that, I'm triathlon and run coach, so I can't not talk about cardiovascular, but I do think that a lot of women do too much cardiovascular exercise and in the wrong training zone. Meaning they don't, they're kind of in no-man land where they're going at a heart rate that's hard for them, it feels hard, like they are, their mouth is dropping open and they have to breathe heavily when they're running, but it's like that steady state that is not really burning that much fat, and it is not really getting them up into a high enough heart rate training zone where they're changing their hormones, and increasing human growth hormone, and increasing the calorie burn later in the day. So instead, it's like too much of this kind of hard but not super hard.

So what I do for women like that, is I try to encourage them to do a good chunk of time at a easy pace where it feels like you could go all day. And this could be an easy jog. It could be just a walk like so, for a woman who is under a lot of stress and wants to lose weight, and wants to lose belly fat specifically. I would not advise her to run. I would advise like...let's say if any and she doesn't have much time either. So she's at her son's little league game and she's got an hour to kill. Instead of sitting and watching the game or jogging around the park, I would just have her walk. Just a brisk walk where she's really, she's completely aerobic, she's not burning any sugar during the workout, she's burning all fat, and she's, more importantly, she's decreasing her cortisol level that is probably too high if she's under a lot of stress. So doing that, and then maybe at each of the four corners of the park she stops and does, like a minute of a plank, and at the next corner she does like, you know 30 seconds of squats, then at the next corner she does 30 seconds of push-ups. Like that is the type of workout that's gonna lower her stress, lower her body fat, make her feel good when she's done, that makes her feel sore, and that makes her feel like she was craving sugar as soon as she's done, and then getting the whole body involved with some, some you know functional strength in, just in little bursts.

I think that too often, as women, we are looking for, like we think we need like a window of time. We're looking for that perfect opportunity to work out that, you know we need an hour or an hour and a half, and you have to get to the gym, and realistically, that just doesn't happen for a lot of us with kids, and jobs, and all sorts of responsibilities. So if we can just start to sneak in, you know little bursts here and there, that all, it really does add up. And we just wanna move a whole lot during the day and then exercise just enough, you know not, not making it excessive, not making it feel like you're stressing your body more by fitting in that long hard cardio workout, but just making it work for you. And then not being afraid to do, like you know little short bursts of high-intensity interval training are a great, great way to maximize your time and maximize your fitness. So, if you're like a mom with a little kid who is still in a jogging stroller, I used to do this workout with my little one who is about two, and we would sprint, like while I do like a 10 minute easy jog to warm up and then we would sprint as fast as I could go for 20 seconds. And the key is like you have to go as fast as we can go like, someone is chasing you, and you get that heart rate way, way up to that almost, you know high zone for almost zone five where your jaw is dropping open. And that's where you're making some, some big changes in terms of human growth hormone, and balancing blood sugar, and increasing the calorie burn later in the day. So I would do a 20 second sprint, and then like a minute just walk, walk let the heart rate come down. And then do it again, and I would do six repeats of those in my little guy, Wyatt, would just figured it was the greatest. Go faster and go faster. And so, it doesn't take that long, you know it's not an hour workout, but it's just the short and purposeful, you get that heart rate off, and then you let it recover. That's a really great way to efficiently use your time and move your body in a way that feels good to you and that's doing something good for you in

the long term.

Katie: For sure. And there's some really cool research out there about how those really short but super high-intensity workouts can actually outperform, like just slower, like lower cardio over the long term, or at the very least, you should have both. And how it like for most people a marathon is not the optimal workout. In fact, there's a lot of oxidative stress that comes with working out too much. And I love what you said, we should just move, like maybe exercise less and move more. I had a podcast guest in the past, Katy Bowman who is a Biomechanist. And she said, like most people, even athletes these days are actually very sedentary because they work out maybe one, or two, or three hours a day, but on paper scientifically, their sedentary because sitting the rest of the day. So we should be doing things like moving and squatting and, like basically just watch your two-year-old and do what they do and you'll get it figured out, you know.

Meredith: Yes, absolutely. They never stop. I just with the nutrition conference, and one of the lectures was, it was "sitting is killing you". I mean, that was the title of the lecture. And as the speaker was giving his lecture, everybody like slowly stood up in their table and everyone was standing at the back of the room by the end of it because it is. I mean, we are not just...we are not just, we as humans, we are designed to be moving constantly. And the fittest athletes that I see sometimes are just working really hard in a window of one, to two, to three depending on their level, you know four hours a day, and then the rest, they're sedentary. They're recovering, and that might be good for them, you know the specific needs that specificity of their sport. But I don't know that it's good for our overall health, and our overall long-term wellness. So marathon training, I've done many marathons. I'm not sure that I'll do another marathon in the future because of the strain on my body and the oxidative stress that you mentioned. I just think that there is, there is, there's a lot of other options, and sometimes when you're starting a fitness routine, you see that as like, the goal, the ultimate goal.

I hear a lot of women who don't recognize that they are runners unless they run a marathon, like they will be training for a half marathon and someone will say, oh, just a half? You're just doing a half marathon? So then they may think they have to do a whole marathon. And for a lot of women, you know...and I'm not and like running is a huge part of my life. I absolutely love it. It's a great stress reliever. It's just a wonderful thing in a lot of ways, but there's downsides to it too. And I think we have to be really realistic with the type of stress that it's putting on our body, and we have to support our body in a way to maintain that, and also take it be really honest with, if it's the right time in our life to be taking on that additional toll and that additional stressor. It's just you know, sometimes it's not the right time.

Katie: That's a good point, like you know, if you're newly pregnant and you've never run before, like don't, that's not when you should start trying to run a marathon.

Meredith: Right. Exactly, exactly.

Katie: But I love that you said that about some of the best athletes that you've seen that they work out and have their specific program, but they also just are always moving because a friend of mine comes to mind, Ben Greenfield, who if you're listening, he also has a great podcast you should listen too. But every time I see him at a health conference, I like have to joke him and laugh because he's always in the back of the room, and he's not even just standing, he takes it to the next level. He's like squatting, and lunging and, like, doing all his crazy stretches. He literally never stops moving. But he's also considered like one of the, like, best athletes out there. So I think that's a point like, don't make it a lifestyle just like a diet, don't make it a one thing you do, make it part of who you are. I think that makes it so much easier. But let's talk a little bit more about the oxidative stress in the nutritional standpoint because obviously, some exercise is good, but even any exercise, that you're gonna have a little bit of that, and that's not a bad thing, but there are things we can do to kind of mitigate that. So what do you recommend for people, especially those who really do like you, love the cardio and love the running, what can they do to make sure they're protecting their body while they do it?

Meredith: Yeah, so if you are a cardio junkie runner triathlete endurance person, listen up. This is for you. So we want to flood the body with antioxidant rich foods after a long hard workout. When we do any type of

steady-state long cardio exercise, we're creating that oxidative stress, we're creating free radicals in our body which are unstable and unpredictable, and when they clump together and we have too many of them, they can become very problematic. So I think the first place to start is to shift the mindset from, I did X like I did, and I see this all the time in triathletes. I did a three hour bike ride and a one hour run, so I deserve to run through the Burger King drive-thru and get the... you know cheeseburger, fries, and a milkshake. Like I earned it, I'm looking at my garmen and I see I burnt 2,000 calories so I need to replace that. And I think that if we start there and start shifting our thinking from I did X, I deserve Y, and the Y is usually a crappy processed meal. If instead, if we say, I did X, I just did this huge workout and my body just put out a huge amount of work and exertion, and so I choose to refuel this body with X, Y, and Z because it makes me feel a certain way.

And so, I have like a recovery, a blueberry spicy antioxidant recovery smoothie that is like my go-to at any time I do, anything over an hour workout, I know that I've created oxidative stress, it can be, a variety of berries, blueberries, cherries, tart cherries are really great for anti-inflammation after a hard workout. I'll throw out half a frozen banana in there, coconut milk, and two big handfuls of whatever leafy green I have in the fridge. A tablespoon of raw cacao nibs for the magnesium, and then I'll throw in some anti inflammatory spices which I think are underutilized and we don't really yet appreciate how beneficial they can be for healing the body. So cinnamon, and ginger, turmeric, and a little bit of black pepper to make that turmeric more bioavailable, and then I'll do a scoop of a high-quality, I use the, like a plant-based protein powder, and blend it all up, and drink that down, and try to get it in within that 45 minute window that I can help the body start to repair. Changing that mindset from I'm helping my body repair versus I did this big workout so I get to like refuel and indulge and all these things. You kind of wanna thank your body for it just did, and the best way to do that is to reach for the antioxidant-rich whole foods that are gonna help mitigate some of the oxidative stress that you just put your body through.

Katie: Yeah, such important information. And I think also like, of course with that like getting lots of rest and letting your body already have recovery time is huge. But I wanna make sure that we don't run out of time before, I let you talk about where people can find you online. Because I know that a lot of people may have follow up questions, and I know that you also work directly with people. So where can people find you on the internet?

Meredith: So you can find me on Facebook at Meredith Vieceli, on Instagram at Meredith Vieceli, and then on my website which is just meredithvieceli.com. And yeah, I got some new programs that I'm excited to release, and do some group coaching, and so if anyone, yeah, wants to reach out or has follow up questions, feel free to ping me.

Katie: Awesome. Well Meredith, thanks so much with the time. I think that this interview has been really helpful for a lot of people, especially those who are trying they're like really get into the fitness but wanna do it the right way. And you have some great resources as well. So all those, on your website, your Facebook and will be link to the show notes for anyone who wants to find those as well. But thank you so much.

Meredith: Thank you, Katie. My pleasure. It's great talking with you.

Katie: And thanks to all of you for listening. And I'll see you next time on The Healthy Moms podcast.

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