

MERYL: Hey everyone. Welcome back to the rebel nutritionist podcast. Today. We are talking about a topic near and dear to my heart. I am a self-professed gym rat.

So today our conversation is going to be about women lifting weights, why you need to do it, the myths surrounding it. And I have like the perfect person here with me. Our newest team member, **Jessie Ben Dayan** is with us. And Jessie has just returned from a seven year stint in Israel. She is a **certified personal trainer** and one of the baddest asses, I know, and I don't use that term lightly because I don't call many people a bad ass, but she is definitely one of the most most bad-ass women that I know, not just because of how fit she is. But she's just a go getter. She, she sets her sight on what she wants. She goes for it and nothing stops her.

So we are thrilled to have you, I'm doing a high five with her because she has really in the short time that she's been here is just a wowed us all. So without further ado, Jessie.

JESSIE: Welcome. Thank you for having me.

MERYL: So Jessie and I have had, I think this conversation many times already and we fight and we finally decide to hit record because I'm like, we gotta do this as a podcast.

And of course, it's

JESSIE: up to often this topic. It happens every day, every woman that walks into here, we hear some sort of related story of I'm afraid of weightlifting. So.

MERYL: Yeah, absolutely. So, so let's talk about that because you have a great term. I'm going to let you say, what do you call women who are out there doing the cardio?

JESSIE: Normally I have women walk into my workout classes and if there's a bunch of weightlifting stations in the workout, they're like, no, no, we don't want this. We want, we want cardio, give us a bunch of cardio. And what they want to become is what like, and call them as cardio bunnies. Because they think they gotta run as many miles as they can on the treadmill.

Do as many jumping jacks, as many jump ropes, whatever it is, just keep that heart rate going and burn as many calories to get skinny. Right. So what happens is they become those cardio bunnies and they just start to burn a lot of fat and they become addicted to cardio. And then also what happens is that cardio very straining and is very hard to do for a long period of time. So at some point they give up on that cardio bunny lifestyle

and then **they shoot back up on the scale because all they did was burn a bunch of fat and didn't build any muscle** while they were with it. So,

MERYL: yes. And, and look, we see this all, I see this every day, I'm at the gym, the women who are on the treadmill endlessly, just trying to burn away the calories.

Right. We're not saying cardio doesn't have its place. Obviously it does, but cardio is not the be all end, all that we think it is or have thought it was. We know that using resistance training. So **I call it resistance training because I think women are afraid of that weightlifting term. And it really isn't about lifting weights.**

We don't, we're not talking about creating bulk. There's a difference between creating bulk and a lean. Amount of, of muscle mass.

JESSIE: Let me ask you this question. If guys, if I tell you the words, okay. Weightlifting, what's the first thing that comes into your mind? You think of a big clean up first. So that's why it's automatically been associated with things like protein and big bulky guys and, and women who are lifting PRs and throwing up 200 pounds up in the air, smashing them down.

And that's not what I, when I tell a woman that I want to start lift training, she comes to me as a personal client. She automatically, automatically takes three steps back. Skinny. I want to get toned. I want, so she doesn't understand that weightlifting can be part of that process to getting to her goal.

So yeah.

MERYL: And so I'm going to take a step back there and say for so many years, I always say for the first 25 years of my life, I spent. I spent my time trying to fix the outside. So the inside would it be better? Right? The last twenty-five years has been working on me inside to make the outside better.

And part of that is I was that cardio bunny. I did cardio forever and ever really didn't touch that much, that many weights, of course I was doing it in the time when it was all about the fat free fat free, right. So we were eating stuff that had the sugar or stuff that had the carbs. And that was probably right, because it said fat free.

We were all afraid of fat. And that was probably mid to later twenties. The time that I was the heaviest, because yes, I was out there working out and I'm working out, I'm

working out and I wasn't losing weight because I was eating wrong. So the other part of this equation is that.

The food piece of the exercise is, is I always say about the exercise piece is probably 30, 40, 50%, but the food piece is 60, 70, 80%.

JESSIE: And I agree with you as a trainer I'll even tell you that, that that's not it really is the smallest portion in the equation because you can work out all day every single day from the morning until night I saw my girls have two.

You know, glued to me, spend the entire day with me train a hundred girls, and then it worked out with me. But if we leave the gym and we go home and we put whatever we want into our bodies, we might as well have not woken up that day and gone to the gym. Might as well stayed in bed what exactly comes hand in hand it's they work together?

MERYL: Yes, no, they really do so part of what I want to address. You know, **understanding how we need to exercise for our own body type is also important.** And what I mean by that is. There, **there should be a nice combination between understanding how much resistance training you need to do, what type and how do you, how do you modify that with the cardio in between?**

So clarify that a little bit from the context of. How do you recommend, so, okay. I'm a woman coming to you and I'm open to doing the resistance training, right.

Getting into the weights. **You've got an hour, let's say in the gym, how do you kind of build your programs? What do you suggest?**

JESSIE: I like anything, especially for the women that are skeptical about weightlifting. I like to really kind of give you an easy introduction first of all, with anyone who's weightlifting, whether they are just beginning or they've wait-lifted in the past or whatever it be. **You want to start small so that it can also see where the client stands form wise because form is hands down the most important thing,** because we can lift 200 pounds and we can lift two pounds. But if we're lifting the two pounds incorrectly, then we're going to break our backs and we're going to walk out with injuries and we might as well not weight lift.

So the weight is not what's important to me in the beginning. What's most important to me is that we're lifting properly. And then we're progressively overloading. Progressive overloading means that we're going to add our weights.

Incremental.

Yes. So we're incrementally adding our weights and we're not just starting off from 50 pounds and then tomorrow we're gonna get a hundred and that note, so we want to move up slowly.

We want to listen to our bodies, which is one of the most important things to that. I always tell my clients that your body is speaking to you. If something is hurting you, if something doesn't feel right, if something just is a little bit off, you need to communicate that with me. So I, as your trainer fix the little things that need to be tweaked, but the form is most important of all

right.

MERYL: Okay. So agree. So again, you have a woman coming, coming in. She's skeptical because she says, and how often do we hear this? Oh, no, I want to lose weight. Cause I want to be skinny.

I don't want to have any of that. Let's call it bulk. Right. And so just, I'm going to answer my own question for just one second, because what I want to say is. **Physiologically and biologically women cannot be bulky because we don't make enough testosterone.** And so we can't, and then there's some women who say, well, I pick up a weight and I start to build muscle.

And that's usually a genetic thing. And I'm going to talk about genetics in a second because yes, the propensity to build muscle is somewhat genetically oriented. But there's, you can only build so much. Women will never, unless they're on steroids.

So I lift a lot of weight now, but not heavy, heavy, heavy, I just lift. I do. And I alternate and I do want you to talk about this, right? I alternate doing weights someday. And then I alternate doing body resistance, like a TRX or even my own body weight, because that also helps moderate how much muscle, you know, that look, right. It is important for women to know that they still could have that lean look without the bulk. So how do you address that?

JESSIE: Well, I mean, I think it's when women walk in just I tell them about. **You're not going to lose weight from two workouts, just like you're not going to gain weight from two cupcakes.**

Okay. So people put in years worth of work to get big and bulky, and you can see those guys compete in all those weightlifting shows and whatever they put so much time and dedication and effort to get that big and bulky that I promise you that you won't accidentally. It just doesn't work like that.

I wish we could, because if we could do it, I'll walk around with a bunch of abs and strong muscles and would look great. But it's not that easy. So you have to not be so afraid of that process. It's not just going to happen that quickly, just like you're not going to that quickly lose all that weight.

So it takes a lot more time and a lot more dedication and the proper protein intake and properly again, progressive overload, lifting, heavy, heavy weights.

MERYL: But let's talk about again, creating a look. So women say, well, I want that long lean look right, but. But there is a little bit of muscle, like yeah. Well for a woman who says, well, I don't want to have any muscle.

I'm like, okay, **if you're not going to have any muscle, then you run the risk of having osteoporosis.** Right. **You run the risk of injury because you cannot support your body against, against a fall.** Right. The other thing is, is muscle mass is the only. I'm going to repeat this **muscle mass is the only thing in our body that is metabolically active, meaning muscle burns calories.**

So **muscle is the engine of your system.**

JESSIE: So that's, what's going to keep our body burning those calories. So if those cardio bunnies that are just burning and burning and burning, but not building any muscle. Their body. Isn't going to have that ability to do like someone who does build muscle and is able to still metabolically burn that fat.

Right. So that means you're, you're using that muscle to burn the fat through the day. Right. So, because **muscle will continue to help your body burn the fat and use the calories during the day** because it needs it.

JESSIE: When people also come to me, like I have girls that come and do like.

And I could tell you what I eat. That's great, but my name is Jessie. And what Jessie needs to eat isn't necessarily what whoever is asking you needs to eat. Because also because I had that muscle because I built that muscle, my body is able to burn more. So I'm also able to maybe eat a little bit more of what I want because I built that muscle.

So my diet is not gonna be. What someone else needs to eat, everyone's height, weight goals, whatever it be is different. So their diet needs are going to be different to.

MERYL: Absolutely. Absolutely. And that goes back to, so I, I did say that I wanted to kind of circle back around to the whole genetics piece, because the other thing that I did learn as a result of doing my genetics and that **my clients learn as a result of doing their genetics is really understanding how to best workout.**

Right. Are we doing. More focused on cardio with the resistance in there. Do we need to do a circuit training? Do we need to do a hiit kind of training? Right. And, **and when we do our genetic. That really allows me as a practitioner to hone into you and say, oh, okay, well, this is how you really should be working out to optimize, to get to where your goal is.**

Right. Same thing from the food part. I can see metabolically from your genetics. What your propensity is for for weight loss. So for example, **there's a section on our report that shows how genetically metabolically active your body** is right? And so some people are really low on the spectrum. Some people are high.

So someone who is low on the spectrum would be that person who kind of looks at a cupcake and just gains weight, right? Someone who is high. And so we always say has a wooden leg. You can eat me meat and burn the calories, but. Is that the best way to do it in terms of right for long-term long-term results.

And so we really have the advantage of looking at that the same thing that we can look at the way they, they need to be exercising. And I know that also made a huge difference for me in terms of. Balancing out the eating, but then also balancing out how I do my workouts. **When I switched to more of an interval training type of workout for my body, I started to really see a difference.**

So I think that's also important.

JESSIE: Well, I, I mean, I see this with regards to weight training or whether it's cardio or whatever. I always tell my clients too, that you need to do what you love. I don't want you to be working out and hating your workout. And I personally think that when you change things up to throughout the week you don't do the same exact workout.

You don't walk the same exact path every single week. **You do something different than you're also introducing a new exercises to your muscles. It's just called muscle shock.**

Which is great because you can do a squat every single day, but there's so many other quad exercises work in the same way, just better.

And I think that **if you integrate. Hiit workouts and pilates and yoga and whatever it is that you like, you're going to get the benefits from everything.** So while you're building muscle, you're also employees toning your court. And while you're lifting weights, you're also doing hit classes and you're also burning calories.

So you're getting a little bit of each world and I think that's the best combination. Better off

MERYL: for you. Yeah, absolutely. Well, I think, and, and I, for sure, I think produces better results because like you said, you're not than dealing with burnout. How often do you change? Someone's workout if you're working on.

JESSIE: Well, I mean, if it's a personal client that I'm weight training, for example, what I normally like to do is focus on the weight training with me, and then I know what else they're doing throughout the week. So if they're working out with me Monday, Wednesday, Friday I want to know what they're doing on Tuesday and Thursday.

And I kind of give them the floor I let them choose. But it usually, **if they're weight training with me on those three days, then I want those other two days to be either something that's going to be an aerobic exercise or even something like Pilates or yoga** or something that's maybe more meditation based so that they can just kind of connect with themselves because not every workout too is.

How much you sweat and killing yourself and walking out with your tone halfway, **you don't have to destroy your body to have a good workout.**

Right. You know, I think that's so important.

It really is because I have people I've had girls train with me are like, oh my God, we barely.

You know, and then like, well, my, my, this workout, it was Pilates on a map. It wasn't the point. It wasn't for you to walk out here, dripping, sweat. It was for you to get a good workout, to feel your body. I asked him to get to the class though. Did you feel your muscles? She's like my body's shaking, right? Like, okay.

So it **just because you didn't sweat, it doesn't mean you didn't do a good workout**, you know? Also a big thing. Cause I don't want my clients to come in and think, oh, well I trained so hard with Jessie Monday, Wednesday, Friday. That means I have to train really hard on Tuesday. No, because if you're training really hard with me and you're not giving your body any time to recover, then what's the point it's like working and not getting paid.

I don't need my paycheck. It's okay. I do.

MERYL: And nobody says that. Exactly. So let's talk about that because I think also **women think I gotta be in the gym six days a week. To get results. And I often say to them, if you're doing that and you were pushing your body that hard every day, and there is no recovery, then your body is so stressed out.**

It almost is like going backwards. Sometimes your body actually would put on excess body fat because you're creating so much inflammation.

So let's talk about that.

JESSIE: So I have a lot of girls that tell me, like, well, you probably work out every single day, every single day. I'm like, yeah, you know what? I work on every single day, two times a day.

No, I don't actually, because if I did that, I would just, like you said, burn my body out. Yeah. If I'm going to work and I'm working in order to get paid to make a paycheck or whatever, then it's the same concept where working out, putting time into my body, I want to see results. So in order to see those results, I need to give time to recover.

Now a lot of our recovery happens when we're sleeping. Okay. What happens when you're working out and you're lifting weights is you're literally tearing your muscles apart. You're literally tearing fibers. So **your recovery time is time for your body to build those new fibers back together, make new layers of muscle.**

So if you're not giving your body that time, it's never gonna be able to do that. So you're not really gonna see results. And I can tell you that I made the mistake years ago, when it, before you can become a personal trainer, when I was obsessed with just fitness and. I was always working out and I wasn't really seeing results.

At some point I kinda got like stuck. I was just staying at the same place for it. Wasn't really seeing any muscle gain. I wasn't really losing weight. I wasn't really gaining weight. I was just stuck and I didn't really understand why. And then I remember I took

like a good couple of months off. And then when I slowly started to get back into it, I said, I'm not going to train every single day.

I'm going to take some time to train Monday,, train Wednesday. All of a sudden, **I started seeing more results than I did when I was training every single day, because I was now working hard and then allowing my body to recover**, to give me the results that I worked so hard for. And then again, train, recover, train, recover.

You know, it's you, you, you can build your own schedule. I'm not saying every single day you have to train, recover, train, recover, you will learn how your body works. And with time you can work out more and recover a little bit less, but you still always, always need. Recovery day

or recovery and recovery doesn't mean sit in bed and don't do anything.

MERYL: Right. So exactly. So I will like, for example, I will like yesterday, today's Wednesday, for example, yesterday I was in the gym lifting. So today I did an active recovery. I did like a walk run outside because the days that I'm in the gym I want to be in, and then the days, the other days I want to be outside in nature

JESSIE: that's another thing

too, that I always tell my clients is that **if you work out with me in the gym five days a week, I want at least one of your workouts outdoors.**

I think, I mean, it's just, for me, it's not like a, a requirement, but I just really do recommend it. I think getting a workout in outdoors, vitamin D you know, just some outdoors and the fresh air. Exactly. It feels good for your body

MERYL: . It totally does it. Totally. So, yeah. So that's what I mean by saying it's an active recovery.

It's not, you're not, I'm not out there running a six minute mile I'm I'm walking.

JESSIE: I think of active recovery is more like a day for your psych. It's a workout for you. It's not a workout for your body. We're not working out for any goals in terms of weight loss or, or cardio or burning, or you're working out.

Just because you want to, and it's something that you enjoy. So whether it's yoga or a walk or, or even grabbing your partner and say, let's go do something outdoors. Let's go

on a nice trail. Let's go get away. **That's active rest. Cause you're not destroying your body, but you're still getting out there and do something that you enjoy.**

MERYL: So, so I'm going to bring up something. I actually didn't warn you about this, but I was thinking about it as we were talking about. So there's all these trends on TikTok. There was that treadmill trend where you walk up hill for like a bazillion hours. It was, I found the numbers. It was ridiculous.

Right. So there were people and I think more people hurt their knees from doing that than anything else. So there was that now every thing's been 75 hard. That's been around for a while. And then have whatever, I don't even know what else is out there. Yeah, exactly. What are, what's your feeling about those..

JESSIE: Well, I mean, I think a trend is a trend because it's just something that everyone started doing. And I think everyone just follows it because everyone is doing it. So I don't think it's really something that someone they found this trend. They're like, oh my God, let me look into this. Let me see why everyone's doing it.

Let me figure out what's good about it. What's bad. They just say, oh my God, everyone's doing this. I need to do it too. That's the first thing that comes to mind. So I'm not always the biggest fan of trends, just because it's a trend. I want to know what, what, why is it trending? What are we doing in this 75 day hard?

You know? And after the 75 hard came out, they made a 75 easy . It was like, it was like the 75 hard, but like, there was like a few accommodations where like, I didn't have to work out twice a day. You just had to work out. You know, you didn't have to read in the morning, you could just have whatever it was, but they accommodated it.

And those things are great. And you know what? I'm not going to tell someone don't do that because it's too much on your body. If that's what gets you to stick to something that's great. My, my, **my biggest goal is to personally connect with my clients and to have them enjoy what they're doing.** I don't want you to wake up in the morning, be like, I'll have a workout with Jessie.

Right. You know, I want you to love what you're doing. So if you're finding a trend in your life, That's great. But like you said, for example, that treadmill, I'm positive that people walked out with knee pain I don't think they know that you should be walking on a treadmill with incline or how long you should be walking on a treadmill.

Do it in all reality. If you're going to do a walking trip, go outside. If there's already a trend like that, and I'm all for walking,. Go outside. You don't need to walk on treadmills, but I think today **social media is a blessing and a curse because it's great to learn so many new things and see so many people training in so many different ways, but at the same time, things like trends fitness trends and whatnot.**

They can also be harmful and dangerous because people don't always know things about form. There was also not too long ago. Some sort of like. Glute workout trend. It was like this like hip thrust challenge. Yeah. And I hit, those are one of my favorite drills, but the biggest issue is exactly is the form because if girls are not, are not girls, but if people in general, aren't not lifting the weights properly.

That's going back to where weightlifting is getting a bad rep because you know, your friend, they walked into the gym, they worked out and they lifted weights and they hurt their back. So then that friend's going to go to you and they're like, oh, don't weight lift. I, it destroys your body. It killed my back.

I can't do anything. And so you're gonna be like, oh my God, that's, that's what weight lifting consists of. I don't want that. And it's all because we're not doing it properly. We're following these trends. So I really do always recommend going to a professional who knows what they're talking about, whether it's weight, whether it's lifting words, anything like that, any of it.

MERYL: And the trend is just that, right? It's it's it. Here's the thing. If it is not realistic and. Forget about even realistic. If **it's not sustainable, then it's not going to work.** And so no matter what it is. And so you can say, all right, well I've done this and maybe it's great for people who just need a jumpstart, but if you're not doing it the right way, if you can't incorporate it into your life and have it be something that is a sustainable activity.

Then it's just not worth doing

JESSIE: anything with fitness and nutrition has to be sustainable. Same thing with diet culture a long time ago today still I was in Publix the other day and I was standing. And I remember when I was little, all the magazines used to always say like 21 day detox, diet this, that diet diet that I thought I come back after seven years of not being in America and I would see a little bit of.

Something different from the word diet, because **diet is so temporary because no one lives on a diet.** I don't know anyone that has been on a diet for more than 10 minutes.

Diets are meant to be temporary. They're not really useful in general, but we don't want anything that's temporary. Right?

Anything with fitness or nutrition, if you're not sticking to it and sticking to it for the long haul, it's not going to stick to you.