COACH ESSIE

FREE GUIDE

STRONG AFTER 35

5 Things Every Woman Should Know About Fitness, Fat Loss & Aging Well

A practical, science-informed guide for women 35+



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A LITTLE INTRODUCTION

Getting older doesn't mean getting weaker. And turning 35 certainly doesn't mean you need to start slowing down.

Yet somewhere along the way, women are often told that their metabolism is slowing, their hormones are taking over, and losing weight or building muscle is only going to get harder.

SOUND FAMILIAR?

Here's the thing: our bodies do change as we age. Hormones fluctuate, recovery needs may shift, and maintaining muscle becomes increasingly important. But none of this means we're powerless over how strong, fit, and capable we can become.

> **FITNESS SHOULD ADD TO YOUR LIFE, NOT TAKE OVER IT.**

You don't need to train like a professional athlete, follow every new fitness trend, or spend hours in the gym to make meaningful progress. And you certainly don't need to give up the foods you love.

What you do need is a better understanding of how your body works and which strategies are actually supported by science.

That's why I created *Strong After 35*: to help women cut through the fitness noise and make informed decisions about their health and fitness.

In the following pages, we'll explore five essential topics: training for longevity, fueling your body properly, understanding fat loss, making recovery a priority, and building habits that last.

No miracle solutions. No unnecessary restrictions. Just practical, evidence-based information you can apply to your everyday life.

BECAUSE GETTING OLDER IS INEVITABLE. GETTING STRONGER IS SOMETHING YOU CAN WORK TOWARD.

Let's get into it!

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CHAPTER 1

TRAIN FOR THE LIFE YOU WANT TO LIVE

Strength, Mobility, Balance & Longevity

Are you training with a purpose, or just trying to burn calories?

There's nothing wrong with wanting to lose body fat, build your glutes, or look great in your favorite jeans. But if your entire fitness routine revolves around burning calories, you're missing out on some of the biggest benefits exercise has to offer.

Your body is capable of adapting, getting stronger, and learning new skills throughout adulthood. The key is giving it the right challenges.

And that means looking beyond how many calories your smartwatch says you've burned.

START WITH STRENGTH

Strength training should be one of the foundations of your weekly routine.

Why? Because muscle does much more than change how your body looks. It plays an important role in regulating blood glucose, supporting your joints, maintaining metabolic health, and improving physical performance.

The benefits also extend beyond your muscles. Research shows that regular exercise, including resistance training, can improve mood and reduce symptoms of depression. Physical activity is also associated with better cognitive health as we age.

And here's some encouraging research: **your ability to build strength doesn't suddenly disappear with age or menopause.** A 2026 systematic review and meta-analysis of 126 studies involving more than 4,000 women found that both premenopausal and postmenopausal women made substantial strength gains through resistance training, with no statistically significant difference between the groups.

> **In other words, getting older doesn't mean you've missed your chance to become stronger.**

While strength training remains effective throughout adulthood, our bodies do change. During perimenopause and after menopause, hormonal changes can influence muscle maintenance, bone density, and body-fat distribution. This makes resistance training particularly valuable during midlife, helping women maintain strength and support long-term health.

For most beginners, two full-body strength sessions per week are a realistic starting point. A balanced program should include fundamental movements such as squatting, hinging, pushing, pulling, and exercises that challenge your core stability.

But knowing which movements to train is only the beginning. How you perform them, how much resistance you use and how you progress all matter.

MAKE YOUR TRAINING PROGRESSIVELY CHALLENGING

Here's something that often gets overlooked: repeating the same workout with the same weights and repetitions indefinitely isn't the most effective way to continue building strength.

Your body adapts to the demands you place on it. As an exercise becomes easier, you need to gradually increase the challenge.

That's called **progressive overload**, one of the fundamental principles of strength training.

It might mean lifting a slightly heavier dumbbell, completing another repetition, increasing your range of motion, or progressing to a more challenging exercise variation.

You don't need to push yourself to exhaustion every session. But if your goal is to get stronger, your muscles need a reason to keep adapting.

DON'T FORGET YOUR HEART, MOBILITY & BALANCE

Strength training is important, but it's not the whole picture.

Cardiovascular exercise improves endurance and supports heart health. Walking, cycling, swimming, dancing, or playing sports are all great ways to stay active.

Higher-intensity exercise can also be valuable for improving cardiovascular fitness. Depending on your current fitness level, experience, and health, gradually incorporating more challenging intervals may be beneficial.

Mobility and balance deserve attention too. Moving through comfortable ranges of motion, incorporating single-leg exercises, and challenging your coordination can improve how confidently and efficiently you move.

Another important quality is muscle power: your ability to produce force quickly. Think about catching yourself when you stumble or reacting quickly during sports. Power becomes increasingly valuable as we age, and appropriately chosen exercises can help maintain it alongside strength training.

> **The goal isn't to squeeze every possible fitness method into one week. It's to build a balanced routine that works for your body and your life.**

COACH ESSIE'S TIP 💪

Start with a plan, not just a collection of random workouts.

Two strength sessions per week can be a great starting point, combined with cardiovascular activities you enjoy. As your fitness improves, gradually increase the challenge.

A well-designed training program should reflect your goals, current abilities, lifestyle, and any physical limitations.

Especially if you're new to strength training, working with a qualified fitness professional can help you learn proper technique, understand your movement patterns, and progress with confidence. Individual feedback and supervision can also help you avoid common mistakes and make your training more effective.

After all, there's no single workout routine that works equally well for everyone.

TRAIN FOR THE BODY YOU WANT, BUT ALSO FOR EVERYTHING YOU WANT THAT BODY TO DO.

CHAPTER 2

EAT TO BUILD, NOT JUST TO SHRINK

Fuel Your Body, Support Your Muscles & Rethink Diet Culture

What if eating less isn't always the answer to getting the results you want?

For years, women have been encouraged to eat smaller portions, count calories, cut carbohydrates, and choose the lowest-calorie option on the menu.

And when progress slows? The advice is often to eat even less.

But there's something important missing from that conversation: **your body needs energy to build strength, maintain muscle, recover from exercise, and function properly.**

Whether your goal is fat loss, muscle definition, athletic performance, or simply feeling more energetic, what you eat matters just as much as how you train.

FOOD IS FUEL, NOT JUST CALORIES

Let's clear something up: calories matter. To lose body fat, you generally need to consume less energy than your body uses over time.

But the size of that deficit, the quality of your diet, and how you fuel your workouts also matter.

A particularly aggressive calorie deficit may help you lose weight quickly, but it can also make training harder, compromise recovery, and increase the risk of losing muscle alongside fat.

And here's another problem with crash diets: they're often difficult to maintain. Once people return to their previous eating habits, weight regain is common. That's not because their body has somehow stopped responding to calories, but because short-term restrictions rarely create sustainable habits.

Scientists use the term **energy availability** to describe how much dietary energy remains for your body's physiological functions after accounting for exercise.

A 2024 study involving 41 female athletes found that women reporting patterns of low energy availability also reported poorer recovery. Those combining low energy availability with low carbohydrate intake reported worse energy and sleep.

The study was small and observational, but it highlights an important concern: consistently underfueling demanding exercise can affect more than the number on the scale.

Think of your body as something you're building, brick by brick. Strength, muscle, fitness, and lasting changes in body composition develop over time. A two-week crash diet might change the number on the scale, but it won't build the foundation you need for long-term results.

The goal isn't simply to eat as little as possible. It's to give your body the nutrition it needs to support the results you're working toward, not just for the next two weeks, but for years to come.

PROTEIN: GIVE YOUR MUSCLES SOMETHING TO WORK WITH

Every time you challenge your muscles through resistance training, you create a stimulus for them to adapt. Protein supplies the amino acids needed to repair and build muscle tissue.

This becomes especially important when you're trying to lose body fat while maintaining strength and muscle.

The standard recommended dietary allowance for protein is **0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight per day** for generally healthy adults. But that's a baseline intended to meet basic nutritional needs, not necessarily the ideal amount for building muscle or supporting regular exercise.

Sports-nutrition research commonly recommends approximately **1.4–2.0 grams per kilogram of body weight daily** for exercising individuals, depending on their goals and training demands.

Some researchers, including Dr. Stacy Sims, advocate higher protein targets for active women, often around 1.8–2.2 g/kg, particularly during midlife.

For example, a woman weighing 70 kg would consume approximately 98–140 grams of protein per day using the general sports-nutrition range.

Does that mean every woman over 35 needs to eat 140 grams of protein? Absolutely not. Your individual requirements depend on your activity level, training goals, overall diet, and health.

Protein also deserves particular attention during perimenopause and after menopause. Hormonal changes can influence muscle maintenance and body composition, making the combination of resistance training and sufficient dietary protein especially valuable. However, menopause doesn't automatically mean every woman needs the same high-protein diet.

And you don't need to survive on chicken breast and protein shakes. Eggs, fish, dairy products, tofu, beans, lentils, and many other foods can contribute to your daily intake.

Rather than squeezing all your protein into one meal, try including a meaningful source throughout the day.

CARBOHYDRATES: FRIEND, FOE, OR SIMPLY A CHOICE?

Somewhere along the way, carbohydrates became the villain of countless diets. But do you actually need to cut them out to lose body fat?

THE SHORT ANSWER IS NO.

You can lose body fat while eating carbohydrates, and you can lose body fat while following a low-carbohydrate or ketogenic diet. What matters most for fat loss is maintaining an appropriate calorie deficit over time.

Carbohydrates are one of the body's important energy sources, particularly during demanding exercise. They help fuel activities that rely heavily on stored muscle glycogen.

But not everyone trains the same way.

If you're strength training twice a week and enjoying regular walks, your carbohydrate requirements will differ from those of someone doing intense training five or six days a week.

Some people feel great eating more carbohydrates. Others prefer a lower-carbohydrate approach. Neither is automatically superior for fat loss.

The important thing is to consume enough energy and protein, meet your nutritional needs, and choose an eating pattern you can comfortably maintain.

> **You don't need to fear carbs. And you don't need to force yourself to eat more of them than your lifestyle requires.**

WHAT ABOUT CREATINE?

While food should be the foundation of your nutrition, there's one supplement worth knowing about: **creatine monohydrate**.

Creatine helps your muscles regenerate energy during short, demanding efforts, such as lifting weights. It's one of the most extensively researched sports supplements, with good evidence that it can support strength and muscle gains when combined with resistance training.

A commonly studied daily dose is **3–5 grams**. Research is also exploring potential benefits for cognitive health, including in women during midlife, although that evidence is less established.

Does every woman over 35 need creatine? No.

It's an option that may support your training, not a substitute for exercise, sufficient protein, or a balanced diet. If you have kidney disease or another relevant medical condition, discuss supplementation with your healthcare professional first.

WHAT ABOUT FAT LOSS?

You can absolutely work toward fat loss while eating enough to support training.

The key is finding an appropriate calorie deficit, consuming sufficient protein, and continuing to challenge your muscles through resistance training.

Remember that losing weight and improving body composition aren't necessarily the same thing.

The number on the scale doesn't tell you how much of your body is muscle, fat, or water. Two women at the same weight can have very different body compositions.

And while a calorie deficit helps drive fat loss, resistance training and adequate protein can help preserve muscle during that process.

Rather than chasing the lowest possible number on the scale, think about the changes you actually want: feeling stronger, building muscle, improving fitness, or reducing body fat.

COACH ESSIE'S TIP 💪

Before you start cutting more calories, take a look at how you're fueling your body.

Are you getting enough protein? Eating regular, balanced meals? Do you have sufficient energy for your workouts? Are you recovering well?

There's no single meal plan that works for every woman. Your nutritional needs depend on your activity level, goals, preferences, and health.

Start with meals that include protein, carbohydrate-rich foods, healthy fats, and fruit or vegetables. Adjust portions to your needs rather than eliminating entire food groups without a good reason.

If you're pursuing a particular body-composition goal, a qualified registered dietitian can help you develop an individualized nutrition strategy.

EAT TO SUPPORT THE BODY YOU'RE BUILDING, NOT JUST TO MAKE IT SMALLER.

CHAPTER 3

FAT LOSS MYTHS: WHAT'S ACTUALLY TRUE?

3

Calorie Deficits, Fat-Burning Zones & Fitness Trends

If losing body fat were as simple as following the latest Instagram workout, wouldn't we all have figured it out by now?

One week, we're told to walk on a treadmill at a specific incline to burn stubborn fat. The next, it's fasted cardio, intermittent fasting, or a workout that promises to melt belly fat in just 10 minutes.

The fitness industry is full of bold promises. And while some popular methods can be useful, the explanations behind them aren't always scientifically accurate.

Let's separate what actually works from what's simply good marketing.

MYTH 1

THE MORE CALORIES YOU BURN DURING EXERCISE, THE MORE FAT YOU'LL LOSE

NOT NECESSARILY.

Your body uses energy throughout the entire day, not just during workouts. Exercise contributes to your daily energy expenditure, but it doesn't automatically guarantee fat loss.

To reduce body fat over time, you generally need to maintain a calorie deficit, meaning your body uses more energy than you consume.

But there's a difference between *burning fat as fuel* and *losing stored body fat over time*.

Take the viral **12-3-30 treadmill workout**: walking at a 12% incline, at 3 mph, for 30 minutes.

A 2025 study compared this workout with self-paced treadmill running. Researchers found that incline walking used a higher percentage of fat as fuel, while running expended energy faster.

Does that mean incline walking automatically produces greater body-fat loss?

> **No. The study measured what happened during exercise, not how much body fat participants lost over several weeks or months.**

Incline walking is an excellent option if you enjoy it. But there's no magical treadmill setting that specifically targets stubborn fat.

MYTH 2

YOU CAN CHOOSE WHERE YOUR BODY LOSES FAT

Unfortunately, doing 100 crunches won't guarantee a flatter stomach.

This idea is called *spot reduction*: the belief that exercising a particular body part will specifically burn the fat covering it.

Your muscles and body fat are different tissues. Training your abdominal muscles can make them stronger, but it doesn't allow you to instruct your body to remove fat specifically from your waist.

Where you store and lose fat is influenced by factors including genetics, hormones, sex, and individual body-fat distribution.

During perimenopause and after menopause, hormonal changes can also affect where body fat is stored, with many women experiencing a shift toward more abdominal fat. This doesn't mean fat loss becomes impossible or that your previous efforts suddenly stop working. It simply means that body composition can change during midlife, and your approach may need to account for those changes.

That doesn't make targeted strength exercises pointless!

Training your glutes, arms, or core can build muscle and change how those areas look. But building muscle in a particular area and losing fat from that same area are two different processes.

> **You can choose which muscles to strengthen. You can't precisely choose where your body loses fat.**

MYTH 3

CARDIO IS BETTER THAN STRENGTH TRAINING FOR FAT LOSS

This one needs a little nuance.

Cardio can be very effective for increasing energy expenditure, while strength training helps develop and preserve muscle.

A 2025 systematic review and meta-analysis examined 36 studies comparing aerobic exercise, resistance training, and a combination of both.

In studies lasting at least 10 weeks, aerobic exercise generally produced greater reductions in absolute fat mass than resistance training alone. However, resistance training was better for preserving fat-free mass.

So what does that mean for you?

If your goal is to improve body composition, both forms of exercise have something valuable to offer.

Cardio can support fat loss and cardiovascular health. Strength training helps you maintain or build muscle, improve strength, and **shape your physique by developing muscles in areas such as your glutes, shoulders, arms, and legs.**

And no, you don't need to do exhausting HIIT sessions five times a week.

Regular walking, cycling, swimming, or another activity you enjoy can complement a realistic strength-training routine.

> **The best approach isn't necessarily the one that burns the most calories during a single workout. It's the one that supports your goals and that you can maintain.**

MYTH 4

EATING LESS AND LESS IS THE SECRET TO CONTINUED FAT LOSS

We've already established that calorie deficits matter. But does that mean making your deficit increasingly aggressive will always produce better results?

Not quite.

As you lose weight, your body generally requires less energy to maintain its new size. In addition, your body may adapt to prolonged energy restriction through changes in appetite, spontaneous movement, and energy expenditure.

This is often discussed under the term *metabolic adaptation*.

It doesn't mean your metabolism is broken or that your body can somehow create fat from nothing.

But it does help explain why maintaining weight loss can become more challenging over time.

> **But there is another way to think about long-term results: build a body that can do more.**

Muscle is metabolically active tissue. Building and maintaining it contributes to your resting energy expenditure, while regular training and everyday movement increase the total amount of energy your body uses.

And that difference can become meaningful.

A woman who builds muscle, walks regularly, trains consistently, and leads an active lifestyle may have substantially higher daily energy requirements than she did when she was sedentary.

This can also create more flexibility with food. When your body uses more energy, you may be able to eat more while maintaining your weight.

> **The goal isn't to spend the rest of your life counting calories. It's to build a stronger, more metabolically active body and develop habits that help you maintain your results.**

That doesn't mean you can eat unlimited amounts without gaining weight. But it does mean that long-term weight management doesn't have to revolve around constantly reducing your portions.

Aggressive dieting, on the other hand, can increase hunger, reduce training performance, and make it harder to maintain muscle.

And if your diet is so restrictive that you can't imagine following it for more than a few weeks, how likely is it to produce results you can comfortably maintain?

> **INSTEAD OF CONSTANTLY EATING LESS, FOCUS ON BUILDING A BODY THAT CAN DO MORE.**

MYTH 5

INTERMITTENT FASTING IS THE SECRET TO BURNING MORE FAT

Intermittent fasting, including time-restricted eating, has become extremely popular.

But does eating only during a specific window automatically make fat loss easier?

A 2024 systematic review and meta-analysis of 19 randomized trials involving 568 adults found that combining time-restricted eating with exercise produced modest additional reductions in body weight and fat mass compared with control diets combined with exercise.

So yes, fasting can work.

But those results don't prove that fasting has a unique fat-burning advantage independent of calorie intake. Restricting eating hours may simply help some people consume fewer calories.

Others find fasting uncomfortable, difficult to maintain, or incompatible with their training schedules.

> **You don't have to fast to lose fat. And if you enjoy fasting, you don't automatically have to stop.**

The important questions are whether your eating pattern supports your nutritional needs, physical activity, health, and lifestyle.

COACH ESSIE'S TIP 💪

Stop searching for the perfect fat-burning trick. Start looking at the bigger picture.

If improving your body composition is your goal, focus on an eating pattern you can sustain, an appropriate calorie deficit if fat loss is desired, adequate protein, and regular physical activity.

Strength training helps you build and maintain muscle, shape your body, and become stronger. Cardio supports your cardiovascular fitness and contributes to your overall energy expenditure. Neither requires an extreme training schedule.

And don't let the scale be your only measure of success. Improvements in strength, how your clothes fit, your energy levels, and your physical performance can all provide useful information about your progress.

Most importantly, remember that bodies respond differently. Age, hormonal changes, medication, health conditions, and lifestyle can all influence the process.

YOU DON'T NEED ANOTHER MIRACLE FAT-LOSS METHOD. YOU NEED AN APPROACH THAT MAKES SENSE FOR YOUR BODY AND YOUR LIFE.

CHAPTER 4

RECOVERY IS PART OF YOUR TRAINING

4

Sleep, Rest & Why More Exercise Isn't Always Better

You've finished your workout. Your muscles are tired, you're sweaty, and you're feeling accomplished. But here's something worth remembering: your workout is only part of the process.

Exercise challenges your body. Recovery gives it the opportunity to adapt.

Whether your goal is building muscle, improving your fitness, losing body fat, or simply feeling stronger, how you recover can influence the results you get.

And no, recovery doesn't mean you need expensive supplements, ice baths, or an elaborate wellness routine.

Sometimes, it's as simple as getting enough sleep, eating properly, and giving your muscles time to recover before challenging them again.

YOUR MUSCLES NEED MORE THAN A WORKOUT

When you lift weights, your muscles experience mechanical tension. That tension triggers processes that help them adapt, becoming stronger and potentially growing over time.

But those adaptations don't happen entirely during your workout.

Afterward, your body continues repairing and remodeling muscle tissue, replenishing energy stores, and responding to the training stimulus.

This is why doing more isn't automatically better.

If you're new to strength training, **two full-body sessions per week can be an excellent starting point.**

You don't need to train the same muscles intensely every single day. Allowing roughly 48 hours between challenging sessions for the same muscle groups is a useful starting guideline, although recovery needs vary depending on training intensity and experience.

And remember: your muscles don't know whether you're following a trendy six-day workout split. They respond to the training stimulus you give them and your ability to recover from it.

> TRAIN TO MAKE PROGRESS, NOT SIMPLY TO FEEL EXHAUSTED.

SLEEP: THE RECOVERY TOOL YOU ALREADY HAVE

Sleep isn't simply a break from your day. It's an active biological process that supports your brain, muscles, hormones, and overall health.

During sleep, several important processes take place:

> **Muscle repair and adaptation:**
> Your body continues repairing and remodeling tissues after exercise. Sleep supports the hormonal and cellular processes involved in recovery.

> **Growth hormone release:**
> A substantial portion of daily growth hormone secretion occurs during deep sleep. Growth hormone contributes to tissue maintenance and repair, although muscle growth depends on much more than this hormone alone.

> **Memory and learning:**
> Your brain consolidates memories and motor skills, including movements you're learning during strength training.

> **Appetite regulation:**
> Insufficient sleep can affect hormones and brain pathways involved in hunger and fullness, potentially making appetite harder to manage.

> **Energy and performance:**
> Poor sleep can affect concentration, coordination, motivation, and how demanding your next workout feels.

For most adults, **7–9 hours of sleep per night** is a useful general target.

During perimenopause and menopause, symptoms such as night sweats, hot flashes, and sleep disturbances can make good-quality sleep more difficult. If your sleep is regularly disrupted, it may affect how energetic and recovered you feel during training.

This doesn't mean you need to stop exercising. It simply means you may benefit from adjusting your training on particularly difficult days and seeking medical advice if menopausal symptoms are interfering with your sleep or daily life.

And don't worry if you occasionally have a terrible night. One night of poor sleep doesn't erase your progress.

If you're particularly tired, you can adjust your training intensity or choose a lighter activity.

> **Think of sleep as part of your training program, not something you squeeze in after everything else.**

REST DAYS DON'T HAVE TO MEAN DOING NOTHING

Some people love a complete rest day. Others feel better when they move.

Both are fine.

Recovery doesn't always mean lying on the couch.

Gentle movement such as walking, easy swimming, cycling, mobility exercises, or yoga can be a pleasant way to stay active between harder sessions.

You might have heard the term *active recovery*. It simply means performing light activity rather than remaining completely inactive.

However, there's no need to turn every rest day into another workout.

If your legs are sore from squats, you don't need to punish them with an intense cycling class because you feel guilty about taking a break.

And if you're feeling energetic and want to go for a walk? Enjoy it.

> **The goal is to balance activity and recovery, not to eliminate movement whenever you're not training.**

YOU CAN'T RECOVER PROPERLY IF YOU'RE CONSTANTLY UNDERFUELING

Remember Chapter 2?

Food isn't just about managing body weight. It also supplies the energy and nutrients your body needs to recover from exercise.

Protein supports muscle repair and growth. Carbohydrates can help replenish muscle glycogen, particularly after demanding exercise. Dietary fats also contribute to normal physiological function.

But that doesn't mean every woman needs a precisely timed protein shake or a special post-workout meal.

For someone strength training twice a week, eating regular, balanced meals and consuming adequate protein throughout the day can be a practical starting point.

Research involving female athletes has found associations between low energy availability and poorer self-reported recovery. While that doesn't mean the same outcomes apply to every recreational exerciser, it's a useful reminder that consistently eating too little can make training harder.

And if you're trying to lose body fat, remember that a calorie deficit doesn't have to be extreme to be effective.

> **You can work toward fat loss while still giving your body the nutrients it needs to train, recover, and maintain muscle.**

LEARN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHALLENGING YOURSELF AND OVERDOING IT

Not every workout needs to leave you completely exhausted.

You can make meaningful progress without pushing yourself to your absolute limit every time.

There will be days when you feel strong and energetic. Other days, you might be dealing with poor sleep, work stress, menstrual symptoms, or simply a busy schedule.

During perimenopause and menopause, hormonal changes and symptoms may add another layer to those challenges. And when work, family responsibilities, and poor sleep are already demanding a lot from you, it makes sense to consider that bigger picture when planning your training.

That doesn't mean you should automatically skip training whenever you feel less than perfect.

But it does mean your training can be adjusted.

For example:

Feeling good?
Follow your planned workout and challenge yourself appropriately.

Feeling unusually tired?
Reduce the weights, repetitions, or total number of sets.

Feeling sore?
Train a different muscle group, take an easy walk, or allow yourself additional recovery.

Experiencing sharp pain, dizziness, or symptoms that feel unusual?
Stop and assess what's happening rather than pushing through.

A good training program has room for these adjustments.

You don't have to prove how disciplined you are by ignoring every signal your body sends.

COACH ESSIE'S TIP 💪

Recovery isn't a reward you earn after working hard enough. It's part of the work.

If you're starting with two strength sessions per week, you already have plenty of opportunities to recover between workouts.

Pay attention to the basics:

- Get sufficient sleep whenever possible.
- Eat enough to support your activity and goals.
- Allow time between demanding sessions for the same muscles.
- Stay active in ways you enjoy without feeling pressured to exercise intensely every day.
- Adjust your training when life gets particularly demanding.

And please don't feel that you need to optimize every hour of your day.

You have a job, responsibilities, relationships, and an entire life outside the gym.

Your fitness routine should fit into that life, not compete with it.

GETTING STRONGER ISN'T ABOUT HOW MUCH PUNISHMENT YOUR BODY CAN TOLERATE. IT'S ABOUT GIVING IT ENOUGH CHALLENGE TO IMPROVE AND ENOUGH RECOVERY TO MAKE THOSE IMPROVEMENTS POSSIBLE.

CHAPTER 5

CONSISTENCY BEATS PERFECTION. EVERY TIME.

5

Make Fitness Part of Your Life

The best training program isn't necessarily the most impressive one. It's the one you can consistently follow.

You can have the perfect workout plan, but if it doesn't fit your schedule, preferences, or lifestyle, it probably won't last.

And fitness shouldn't require you to reorganize your entire life.

HOW MUCH EXERCISE DO YOU ACTUALLY NEED?

General physical activity guidelines recommend:

STRENGTH TRAINING AT LEAST TWICE PER WEEK,

working all major muscle groups.

150–300 MINUTES OF MODERATE AEROBIC ACTIVITY PER WEEK,

or 75–150 minutes of vigorous activity.

That could mean two strength workouts alongside activities you enjoy, such as swimming, cycling, dancing, hiking, or playing sports.

You can divide your activity throughout the week. There's no requirement to exercise every day or spend hours at the gym.

And if you're just getting started, doing less than the recommended amount is still beneficial. You can gradually build toward it.

MAKE IT WORK FOR YOUR LIFE

Maybe you're a busy mother with young children. Maybe you travel frequently for work, have an unpredictable schedule, or simply enjoy spending your free time doing things other than exercising.

That's okay.

Some women love hour-long gym sessions. Others prefer shorter workouts at home, perhaps even 15 minutes before the kids wake up.

The important thing is finding a realistic approach that allows you to train consistently and progressively.

> **AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM SHOULD ADAPT TO YOUR LIFE, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.**

That's also where individualized coaching can help. Your training can be structured around your goals, abilities, available time, and preferences, rather than forcing you into a generic schedule.

MOTIVATION COMES AND GOES. HABITS LAST.

Motivation is great, but it isn't always reliable.

Some days you'll be excited to train. Other days, you'll have a thousand reasons not to.

That's why building a routine matters.

The famous 21-day rule for building habits? It's a myth. Research shows that habit formation can take weeks or months, depending on the person and behavior.

The secret isn't finding endless motivation. It's making exercise a regular, manageable part of your week.

Choose a schedule you can realistically maintain. Track your progress. And give yourself enough time to develop a routine.

Training with a friend, joining a class you enjoy, or working with a coach can also help. Having someone to share the experience with can make exercise more enjoyable and provide encouragement when motivation is running low.

PROGRESS ISN'T ALWAYS A STRAIGHT LINE

Some weeks you'll feel stronger and more energetic. Other weeks, progress might feel slower.

That's normal.

Progress can mean lifting heavier weights, doing more repetitions, improving your balance, building muscle, or simply noticing that everyday activities feel easier.

And if you miss a workout, take a vacation, or have a particularly stressful month, you haven't failed.

You can adjust your training, take a break when needed, and return to your routine.

> **Consistency doesn't mean doing everything perfectly. It means continuing over time.**

COACH ESSIE'S TIP 💪

Don't build your fitness routine around the person you wish you had time to be. Build it around the life you actually have.

Choose activities you enjoy, challenge yourself appropriately, and make room for recovery.

Your goals and circumstances will change, and your training can change with them.

FITNESS ISN'T A TEMPORARY PROJECT. IT'S SOMETHING YOU CAN CARRY WITH YOU THROUGH EVERY STAGE OF LIFE.

YOUR COACH

MEET COACH ESSIE 💪🏾

Stronger Bodies. More Confidence. Fitness for Life.



HI, I'M ESSIE!

I'm a NASM-certified personal trainer, former German National Team basketball player, and lifelong hybrid athlete.

Sport has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. From competitive basketball to strength training, running, swimming, and freediving, I've experienced firsthand how rewarding it is to build a strong, capable body.

Today, I help women over 35 build strength, improve their fitness, and feel confident in their bodies.

My approach combines science-based strength training with realistic, personalized coaching. Whether your goal is to build muscle, lose body fat, shape your physique, return to training after an injury, or stay strong and active as you age, your training should reflect **your body, your goals, and your life.**

I also emphasize proper movement technique, gradual progression, and injury prevention, helping you build confidence in your body while training safely and effectively.

I don't believe in one-size-fits-all programs, quick fixes, or making fitness unnecessarily complicated.

> **I believe in training with purpose, progressing at your own pace, and building results that last.**

WORK WITH ME

READY TO GET STRONGER?

You don't need to figure everything out on your own.

Whether you're completely new to strength training, returning after a break or injury, or looking for a more structured approach, I'd love to help you get started.

YOUR FIRST ASSESSMENT & TRAINING SESSION

$50

We'll discuss your goals, explore your current fitness and movement abilities, and get you started with a personalized training session.

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SOURCES

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Educational information only. Individual needs and medical circumstances vary; consult an appropriate healthcare professional for personalized medical or nutrition advice.

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