



# WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, hey there, my friend, how are you today? So glad that you're here and if you are new, welcome to the podcast. I've got some great, great help for you today. I'm recording this podcast at 9:00 PM. I'm usually in my jammies starting to crawl into bed by this point with a good book or maybe with something on Netflix in mind to watch. But instead I am here and I am recording a podcast for you. It's been one of those weeks and I know you know exactly what I'm talking about, where it's just things get away from you and then things happen and you're not able to do what you need to do. And so you get it done because I'm not missing an episode for you. No way. No how. So here we are today.

So we are going to talk about some exercise and weight loss issues that kind of go hand in hand. This is something that comes up a lot. Now I have talked about this before in the podcast, but not a ton. So in case you've missed it, what I usually recommend for exercise and weight loss together is that if you are exercising and you absolutely love it, and it's like your favorite thing and it makes you feel so good and you're totally not doing it for weight loss, you're just doing it because it improves your mood or you sleep better or your body just feels better or you don't have the regular aches and pains if you do it. Like whatever it is, if it's a social thing for you, I am all in like, absolutely let's do it.

But if you are exercising because you're trying to lose weight, then I ask that you take a break from doing at least that form of exercise. This doesn't mean you have to become sedentary. This doesn't mean that you aren't allowed to move your body. What it means is that you take a break from that and find something else that you like to do that isn't how the purpose of trying to lose weight. So that could be something like walking. It might be checking out yoga, getting into that, maybe Pilates, maybe a bar class, like whatever the thing is that feels good to your body and is something that you do because you like it. Now, if there is nothing that you are aware of, that you like that isn't something that you're trying to use for weight loss, then we totally can take a break from it completely. It's totally okay.

And I also say, if you haven't been exercising, please don't start. And the reason for this is it is incredibly ingrained in our minds when we are exercising for weight loss to basically game the system. We really deeply believe even if cognitively we know that this isn't the case, deep down subconsciously, we really believe that if we exercise more, we get to eat more. That we can exercise off some extra food that we ate. We really, really want to believe that exercise is the solution to our weight issue.

And while research shows us that exercise is amazing for so many reasons for you, it does not help you lose weight. It just doesn't. It does actually make you hungrier. And so it can be harder to lose weight because you probably will want to eat a little bit more so that's what my party line is on this.

I will also say though, that I have occasionally worked with some people who are really big into like hardcore exercise. So maybe they're running marathons, like really long distance running. Some people are doing like hardcore weightlifting, some things like that. And when we're doing really intense exercise like that, I have found that it's often difficult for people to lose weight simultaneously, like concurrently. So what I often suggest is that they take a break from whatever the intense exercise is for the short term while they lose some weight. Again, I'm not saying you can't exercise, but just not in that intense way. Get the weight off and then go back to that exercise. It's always interesting to me when people have this big fear about doing that, like they're so afraid to back down on that yet they really want to lose weight. So that's something to explore with your journaling and figuring out what's going on in your brain.

Like, why are you so reluctant to take a break from running these long distances or whatever it may be that you're doing, and find out why you're not willing to maybe, like I said, take a break from that or slow things down a little bit so that you can achieve another goal that really is in the short term. And then exercise. I'm like all in for exercise, like totally do it. It's amazing. So I told you a couple of weeks ago about how I got a Peloton and how I love it. And I'm telling you, I'm not sure I've ever gotten more comments on a podcast. You guys and pelotons, love them so much. I got texts and emails from people I've haven't heard from in a really long time. And they're all like, oh my gosh, the Peloton. I'm so glad you're on it.

It was very surprising to me. I was certainly missing out and I still think, I don't really understand a lot of parts of it. People have been trying to explain it to me. But social stuff, I'm still like, okay, but wait, what? But in response to that episode a couple of weeks ago, I got this lovely email from someone that I realize I do not have the name of. And now that makes me sad because I would love to say her name out loud on the podcast, but you're going to know who you are. So thank you for sending it in. She writes, "Thank you so much for your amazing podcasts. I'm a part of a group of female doctors in the UK who all follow a fasting lifestyle and your name gets mentioned a lot. You've helped so many of us." Thank you.

"My question today for your podcast is about the Peloton. It seems from the group that many of us are having the same issue. We are all fasting converts, but now also are Peloton addicts. The problem for me is that the Peloton makes me so hungry. Prior to getting it, I was really comfortable on two meals a day with no sugar, no flour. I wasn't hungry and felt in control while slowly losing. Since getting my bike, I'm so hungry and feel I have less control over my appetite and have stopped losing weight. Do you have any advice please?"

Okay. I definitely do. So the first thing to look at is how much are you exercising? If you are exercising so much that you're so hungry, there's two things at play. It could be that maybe your exercising so much that your body is just like, Whoa, no, we got to hang on to these fat stores. Like it's a little much/you could just really be eating more food than you need. Like more food than whatever deficit the exercise creates for you.

Okay. So that's something to just get really honest with yourself over. Like I said, it is so easy for us to just very sneakily convince ourselves that we can have a little more of this or a little extra that. I just did this hard workout, so I totally can have whatever the thing is or eat more. And then we just won't get the results.

So the way you know what you can do, like, is it okay to do what you're doing? Like your body will tell you. So your body is telling you that what you're doing right now will not result in weight loss. That's really good information. Great to know. Totally good. So what we then and have to do is we have to look at your thoughts and then we also have to consider just other options. So what you're telling me, you said, you think you're just telling me, like, since getting bike, I'm so hungry and I feel I have less control over my appetite. And I know you think you're just telling me, you're like no, but this is just my experience. But when you believe that you have less control over your appetite, you will create the result of you having less control over your appetite. And it may sound like I'm splitting hairs here and making a big deal out of something that isn't a big deal, but it is. This is the important stuff here. The way you're even telling yourself the story about what's happening right now is more defeatist.

The problem for me is the Peloton makes me so hungry. Well, I mean, maybe it's the Peloton, or maybe it's the way you're thinking about the Peloton that makes you so hungry, because for sure, emotional hunger is a real thing. And the way we think about what we've just done and our exercise and our body signals, we can have a lot of emotional hunger just from the way that we're thinking about it. So I want to mention that to you so you can start being on the lookout for it.

The reason why I suspect that there's definitely an element of this going on for you is because it sounded like you were totally doing great doing two meals a day, no sugar, no flour. I just want to mention, my program isn't like, it's not required for you to fast. It's just that a lot of people do end up really loving that, especially doctors, because it gives you so much freedom and so much flexibility during the day when you're busy and there's emergencies and all this other stuff. So this person writing it, just happens to be someone who is loving the intermittent fasting. I just want to let you know that if you're new and you're like, what? This is a fasting podcast. I think fasting is a really great tool, but it's totally not required. And it's not like every client I have does it. So just FYI.

But because you could eat two meals a day and you were fasting from I'm assuming dinner until lunch every day, you're what we call fat adapted. You're not eating sugar, flour on a regular basis. So your body knows how to access your fat stores for energy. So I don't know when you are exercising, like at what point in the day you're exercising, with actually the next email, I'll probably dig into that a little bit further, the next person's question that I'll answer after this one. But that might factor into it too.

There's really no reason why you shouldn't be able to eat the way you're eating. In fact, there's actually a lot of research that shows that when you exercise and you're really fat adapted, and your insulin levels are low, like your body should have no problem. So what I was going to say, though, is if your body is having a problem, we need to listen to it. If it's like, holy moly, you've changed all the rules here. Like this isn't working for me. Then we just have to experiment. And that's the next thing that we have to try.

What I find is that so many of us and like me included as I'm talking about this, like I'm raising my own hand too, because I have the same tendency. I get super excited about something. I totally get into something. And before I know it, I'm doing a lot of it and I'm loving it. And that's great, except that I maybe ramped it up a little too quickly and my body hasn't had a chance to catch up.

So what I would suggest is say you're doing, I'm just going to pull this out of thin air. You're doing like 30 minute classes and you're finding that you're so hungry and you're not losing weight. And you're feeling like it's harder for you to manage your mind around food and all of that. Then maybe it's a little too much. Maybe we should back it down. Maybe we shouldn't do such intense workouts. Maybe you should definitely bring in a more low intensity ride. Or if there's somebody who's doing a higher intensity ride that you love doing their classes, you can actually make them not as intense. This is something I work on all of the time. I'm such a good rule follower and such a good student that the instructor's just like, okay, turn the knob, your resistance up, whatever, however many points. And I'm like, okay instead of actually listening to my body.

What feels good? How am I feeling right now? What was my whole intention of doing this workout in the first place? Sometimes I'm like, I just want to break a sweat and feel like I move my body and stretch out a little bit and just feel kind of alive in my body. That doesn't mean that I need to be like pouring down in sweat, like totally having this super intense ride. So I would just suggest that you maybe dial down the intensity, get to a place where however much you're biking does work with your two meals a day and no sugar, no flour. And that you're feeling really good. And then maybe a little more gradually, increase things. Or maybe not biking every single day, maybe doing a ride like three times a week and then putting some of the other exercises in there or looking at the yoga stuff and maybe doing something, just like mixing it up so it's not always the same intense cardio load.

So experimentation is a huge part of this process. And what I want to let you know is that it's easy to be just like, well, you're just going to have to experiment. Like, sorry, you're just going to figure it out. Nobody's going to know about you. And that is true, but I just want you to understand that when you know how to figure it out for yourself, it literally, like whatever the next thing is after Peloton, that everybody has to have that's so amazing, it literally won't matter because you will know exactly how to figure out how to support your body and yourself in adjusting to that kind of exercise. Like it's so funny. Oh my God. Years ago, I did tae bo. Do you remember tae bo? Billy Blanks? And I had like all these VHS tapes, I think I got like a set of 20 of them or something and I loved it.

Like I was, my Weight Watchers days, I was like a tae bo fan. I was totally into it. I used to do it in my room, in my med school apartment that I rented with my friends and I was like super into it and loved it. And I remember thinking like, I'm going to do this for the rest of my life. Like, this is so great. Do you think I still do tae bo? Of course I don't still do tae bo because there's just new things that come up. We just get tired of it or whatever. We just don't use VHS tapes anymore. That could be part of it. Although I have recently seen Billy Blanks on a commercial, so it could be that you still can totally do tae bo. I'm sure all the tae bo fans are going to let me know. They're like, it's on demand somewhere. I'm sure it is.

Anyway, the point is that there's going to be ebbs and flows. Things are going to change or like, God forbid, like you have like an injury or you get sick or whatever happens, and you're not making as much. When you know how to listen to your body and really understand what it's needing for the day and offer it that, then it doesn't really matter. You're totally able to understand like, okay, I'm super hungry today. I know that this is real physical hunger because it feels this way, this way and this way. And I know because I'm so in touch with my body, that emotional hunger feels totally different. And so today, my body's letting me know it needs more food and therefore I'm going to give it more food, but the more food I'm going to give it is not chips or sugary coffee drinks, or desserts or ice cream or things like that. Like maybe I'm going to have an extra piece of fruit and some nut butter or a handful of nuts, or like something that actually is nourishing for my body.

Like, that's what I'm going to do because it's letting me know that it needs more food. Or I could just be like, you know what? I'm actually feeling kind of tired and sluggish today. I am going to move my body because I know it helps me in all of these ways, but I'm not going to do it as intense. Like I'm actually going to practice dialing it all back because that's what my body needs today. So it's a cooperative relationship that you create with your body that it's so important. And you will be able to figure this out when you work together with your body, connect with it, understand it, listen to it and go from there. So this goes against a little bit, what I've taught before, which is like plan your food and eat only that. If you have a really hard time following a plan, like meaning you don't honor your relationship with yourself. And so when you say you're going to do something, you don't do it then yeah, I would suggest that you really dial back the exercise and plan your food and make that a habit.

So you can build that relationship with yourself so that you know, that when you say you're going to do something, it's as good as done, you're for sure going to do it. It's happening. That's the kind of relationship you have with yourself. We need that as like the keystone, like this has got to be our foundation that we are building on. So that we know, you're going to do what you say you're going to do. And then you get the opportunities to just start going you know what? Usually I eat two meals a day, and even what I'd planned for was two meals a day. But I did that workout and it ended up being more intense than I thought. And I've really checked in and I know I'm hydrated and like, I need some food. My body's making it very clear. I need some food. So I'm going to eat some food. And then I'm going to adapt and adjust and modify the rest of my plan for the day accordingly. And that feels super good to me, super loving, super supportive of myself.

There's no drama involved. There's no giving yourself like the free pass to go eat all the things. But I just want to be clear that we delve into this, once we have that strong relationship with ourselves where we know we're going to do what we say we're going to do. Amazing. Thank you so much, doctor from the UK. I wish I knew your name for sending that in. That's so fun and I'm sure so many other people have that same issue. And then this person too, I also don't have her name. So I'm so sorry that I don't have your name.

But she writes in, "I have a long established fitness habit in which I work out early in the morning. I'm now sticking to your recommendation of three meals per day with no snacks. In the past, I ate a snack prior to my workout and then breakfast afterward. I don't have time to eat and digest my full breakfast before my workout, but I found that I don't have the strength and endurance to get in a good workout in a fasting state.

I've tried drinking branched chain amino acids before the workout, which are calorie free and then eating breakfast after the workout. But I feel like I can barely get through it. I love the effects that my workouts have on my mental well-being and my strength, balance and flexibility. Do you have any experience with early morning workouts and keeping with a three meal per day eating plan?"

So here's what I want to talk about with this. So for sure, honestly, I mean, I'm having a hard time coming up with an example of something that could be an early morning workout, meaning like you could get it in probably in an hour and then shower up and get to work. I'm assuming you're not doing like a three hour run or something really intense like that. Like your body is perfectly capable of you not eating beforehand. And so I don't know what kind of exercise you do. The thoughts that I would suggest that you really look into around this are, if you are working out with a trainer, if this is like, pretty heavy lifting, HIIT, like that kind of stuff. HIIT is high intensity interval training in case you're not someone listening who isn't aware of what that is. HIIT.

If that's what you're doing, the trainers will totally be telling you like, oh my gosh, you have to eat, or you're going to feel terrible. You can't get the results you want. And maybe that's the case for a lot of people. It depends what your goals are. It depends what you're trying to get out of it. But I promise you, it is possible to get your body to adapt to this, like for sure. So you can get up, workout on a fasted stomach. There's actually some, I mean, tons actually of very high end athletes who do this all the time and they love it and think it's amazing. And they think it's one of the great secrets to getting the amazing results that they have.

So the first thing we have to do is we have to look at what our beliefs are and we have to start questioning them. And if the people that you're working out with are constantly feeding you, like you have to eat beforehand, or they're having their like pre-workout drink or all those things. And they're telling you, you're not going to feel good if you don't have this, it's so much more likely that you're not going to feel good.

Also if you're working out really intensely and you're going from like eating food to not eating food, like your body may have a harder time responding to that. Meaning it's just too big of a jump. And so I think there's lots of options. One thing would be to maybe take a couple of weeks to maybe tame down the workouts so that you are feeling okay, and then ramping them up slowly so your body gets used to it. Another option is to wean down off of your stack before your workout. So you don't write what you eat, but you could have a little less and a little less and a little less, and just gradually wean your body off of it so that you don't need it. What we have to do first is we have to believe that it's possible that you can have these early morning workouts, not eat beforehand and totally feel great, eat your breakfast afterward and totally feel good.

So, so much of this is belief work and what your thoughts are about it. And then a little sliver portion is figuring out what to do with your actual food. And so the same person actually emailed again and asked just some questions about some of her thoughts that she was working on. And I just think that, I just want to touch on these because it's good. She identified that when her thought was, "I wasn't able to get in a very good/effective workout because I didn't have enough fuel on my new eating plan." And so she thinks that this is like more factual. Like didn't have enough fuel. And like, I would just argue, it's just not true because you have it on your body.

Like for sure there are people who would work very, very hard, especially, well, even now in the world, but especially in the past who were not well fed, who were doing very intense physical labor and using their bodies intensely and they totally were able to do it.

So I like to think about it, like, is it possible for a human being to do this? Like leaving myself out of it when my brain is just like, well, not you, it's not possible for you. Great. Is it possible for like any human being? Yes, I think so. Is it possible for someone that I've heard of or know about, or maybe know personally, like just start bringing in in as much as I can and then just start going it's probably possible for me, it could be that I haven't created yet because I just don't know how. I just haven't figured it out yet. And it could be the volume of what I'm eating, it could be that maybe what my dinner is, like when I make sure I eat enough of certain food groups, then the next morning I feel better. Like, it's a toll opportunity for experimentation to figure it out. But it requires the belief that there is a solution. You have to believe there is a solution and that you can figure this out.

And when you're like, I'm going to figure this out because I want to figure this out. You're okay when you have some days where you feel like crap. Often for most of us, we're like, a couple of times we tried to work out, we felt like crap. And we're like, it's not going to work. I'll be honest with you, the first time ... So I had been doing some heavy weightlifting at a gym when I first started doing this. And I really thought I was quite fat adapted to be honest. And I went in there, fasted and I felt so lightheaded, I literally, like I had to sit down. So I know what you all are saying about this. I understand what you're talking about when you're like, no, I literally like ... Of course the trainer's like, oh my gosh, you need to drink. So like, what did you do? Oh, you didn't eat anything. And they're like freaking out on you.

And it did not take long at all before I never had anything and I was completely fine and I had amazing workouts and I still totally gained muscle mass and all this stuff. And I just didn't tell the trainers what I was doing. I just kept my lips zipped. I just didn't talk about it because they have their own paradigm and that's amazing. And you're totally welcome to do that paradigm if you want to. I'm just talking about something that's different that allows your body to actually help you. Like you don't have to be relying on exogenous fuel all of the time in order for you to feel good. That's just not a requirement, which is great news.

And there may be days where you're like, you know what? I barely ate anything for dinner, or I ended up skipping dinner for whatever reason. I'm not going to work out faster today. I'm going to eat a little something. Great, no problem. But you could for sure get your body into that place. So the new thought that this person who wrote in said was like, what she offered was the amount I am eating on my new plan provides plenty of fuel for me to get the workout that I need. And I think that that is great as long as, the feeling that she said that it created is relief. And as long as it really does create relief and you really do believe it, then that is awesome. I mean, what I like to think about it is like the plan provides some fuel, but your body is providing the rest of the fuel.

So even if for whatever reason, you didn't get enough fuel from your new plan, your body should, especially if you have weight to lose, your body should be able to make up for the deficit. Your body should be able to go like, oh, that's cool. You didn't have that food? That's all right because I've got it stored on me. It's no problem at all. So this is like layers and layers of belief work.

What's really possible for your body and really looking at what your beliefs are that limit you, that make you think that certain things aren't possible. And often we believe certain things aren't possible just simply because someone told us that it wasn't, or that that's not a good way of doing it. And so then we believe that and we have to question those beliefs again. We just have to look at it like, there's for sure way that I can figure out how to do this.

And what I love too is when I get to that place where I'm like, for sure, there's a way. I have no idea what it is, but yeah, I am open to looking at this in a new way. I'm open to letting opportunities and possibilities come my way. It's like all of a sudden here they come, all of a sudden I hear about something or someone suggests some book or I end up seeing some like random articles somewhere that ends up talking about something that totally was the help that I needed. But when your brain is like, nope, there's no solution. Like it won't even register that that's available to you. And then it will just reconfirm what you already believe, which is that it's not possible. So opening up to possibility is one of the absolute first steps for you to create anything in your life. You have to think that it's a possibility for you to create it, to have any hope of creating it. So, so good.

So thank you to both of these listeners who sent these in. I do do a Q&A podcast every now and then. I hadn't done one in a long time. And I was like, ooh, this is a good one. Sometimes it's just so much easier to answer your questions than for me to come up with a whole organized kind of a thing. So if you have questions, you are always welcome to send them to me and maybe I'll answer them on my next Q&A episode whenever that comes about. Actually the best way to ask a question is just to leave a comment on this episode, which you can find that [katrinaubellmd.com/215](http://katrinaubellmd.com/215), and you can leave a comment there and we will compile it all.

Okay my friend, and listen, if you just listen to this and you're like, now I'm stressed out because I haven't been exercising. And now she's all into the Peloton. I guess I got to go buy a Peloton. You do not. I promise you if you have not been exercising or like a real sporadically, not consistently, nothing is wrong. It's totally fine. In a lot of ways, I think it's easier when you just are able to just not even worry about exercise. We totally can bring in exercise later. Let's just get you controlling your over eating, get your body losing weight and releasing it. And in a way that makes you feel really good. And then we can start to consider what a loving form of movement might be for your body. So no worries. All spectrums from totally sedentary for decades, all the way to active every single day. I've got something for you. I got you covered. You're okay.

I will talk to you next week. Have a lovely rest of your week. Take care. Bye bye.