

Done with Dieting Podcast #63: Listener Questions



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With your Host
Elizabeth Sherman

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On today's podcast, I am answering your listener questions. Tune in.

You are listening to the done with dieting podcast. The podcast for women in midlife, who are done with dieting, but still want to lose weight and feel good in your clothes. You know that diets don't work long term. But you feel like there's this secret that everyone else knows that you just haven't figured it out yet.

I am your host, Elizabeth Sherman. And I've helped hundreds of women get off the diet roller coaster change their relationship with food, exercise, and their bodies. Through this podcast, my goal is to help you too.

Welcome. Let's get started.

Hello everyone and welcome to today's podcast episode number 63. Now, I have a special treat for you today. Today, we are answering a bunch of listener questions. So, some of you wrote in a few months ago, I asked a question on Instagram asking what questions do you have? And y'all did not disappoint, I swear.

So, I have a couple of questions here that I wanted to answer in today's episode. And yeah, so we are just going to go ahead and get into it. So, the first one is does coffee count towards my water consumption? And I love this question because the answer is do you want it to count towards your water consumption?

And I think that this is such an interesting question because I think that the person who's asking this, wants the answer to be yes, right? When we ask a question like, so can I use coffee towards my water consumption? We want the answer to be yes. Because we love

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our coffee, and we don't really like drinking water. I hesitate to answer this question as yes.

Now, in some respects, coffee can be counted towards our water consumption. But here's the thing, I don't want to say yes. And here's, why? Because I know that there are very few of you out there who are going to do this, but I know that some of you are. If I say yes, then you are going to drink coffee all day and say, I drank my water. And that's not the point.

What we really want to do is maybe I don't want to create any rules for you. However, maybe what we do is we suggest that one cup of coffee could potentially be counted towards your water consumption. The idea here is that we really want to be drinking mostly water.

And when we talk about water, we can talk about flat water. So, natural water, tap water, or we can talk about spring water, sparkling water, mineral water, whatever you want to call it. Water with bubbles. And both of those are equally fine. Some people get caught up on the fact that when there's carbonation in the water, then that increases the sodium content. I'm not personally worried about that.

Again, what we're striving for here when we're talking about health is we're striving for better than we are right now. We're always trying to move the needle one notch better in the direction of where we want to go.

So, therefore, I'm really reluctant to put any rules around; you shouldn't be drinking sparkling water because the sodium is too high. Well, If you're starting with soda right now and coffee. Let me also put a caveat in there that when we're talking about coffee, we're talking about black coffee. Black coffee is fine for your water consumption. When we start talking about coffee with cream in it, with sugar in it definitely does not count towards your water consumption.

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So, when we're talking about coffee, coffee has some chemicals in it too that's what makes it taste, right? And it has caffeine. And not that those things are bad, but we're trying to move the dial in the better place. So, wherever you are right now, what I'm going to recommend is that you increase your water by just maybe one glass a day.

Go ahead and drink whatever it is that you're drinking, whether it's soda, whether it's coffee, whether it's tea, those things are all fine. And just also one other thing to be aware of is that when we are talking about water consumption, the old rule of eight glasses of eight ounces each is I don't know where that number came from. But it doesn't make sense that two people, someone who has maybe a hundred pounds and someone who's maybe 200 pounds should be drinking the same amount of water.

So, therefore, what we want to do instead is take your body weight, divide it in half, and that's the ultimate number of ounces of water you should be aiming for to drink within a day. If you are half of that right now, just add a little bit more, add a few more ounces. We really want to look at the color of your urine to determine whether you're getting enough water into your diet as a whole. So, if at the end of your day, your urine is clear or very light yellow, you're doing great.

Number two. Will my taste for sweet ever go away? There's more to that question, however that's the ultimate question that the listener is asking. Will my taste for sweet ever go away? And what we're talking about here is in terms of cravings.

What I want to share with you is that when we're talking about cravings, when we're talking about eating sweets after dinner. When we stop eating sweets after dinner or after meals, your craving for sweets, the less you do it will become less of an urge. It will become less of a craving. Will it ever go away entirely? Probably not.

However, it will be less intense as we go through the process. And here's what I want to offer you, when we're talking about cravings and urges is that the more that we talk to

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ourselves and we understand that just because our brain offers us a suggestion of; it's after dinner and I would like something sweet, we don't have to answer it.

Our brain offers us suggestions all day long that we don't do, right? We think, oh, I should book a vacation to Fiji, that would be amazing. And we don't do it. Maybe some of us do. We decide that I should buy that amazing purse. And then, we don't.

Our brain is constantly suggesting things to us. And what makes us do them or not is our ability to first of all, understand the suggestions that our brain is making to us. But then, the second piece to that is being able to talk to ourselves logically as opposed to really listening to the emotional piece about that. That the sweets after dinner are necessary. That I have to have something sweet or it's just not, I won't feel satisfied.

And so, be aware in this context of does taste for sweet ever go away. If you are expecting it to go away, then when it does pop up, you will immediately decide; oh, well, I must just be the type of person who needs to eat sweets.

I really want to share with you right here in this context, be aware that if you are trying to get rid of your taste for sweets, it will always be there. And for you to expect it and the more you can just understand that; oh, this is always going to be there, I just don't have to pay attention to it anymore. Then, you will set yourself up for success.

Now, the next question is all around workout nutrition. So, the question is what should I eat and when before I work out? Now, this is a really good question. And it's something that I get asked a lot. However, be aware that there are a lot of different layers in this question.

The first thing is the time of day that we're working out. The second thing that we want to address is what workout are you going to be doing? And then, the third question that I have is what is your goal?

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This podcast is the done with dieting podcast. So, generally speaking, I'm going to assume that this person is looking to lose weight. When we're looking to lose weight, what I want to offer is that there is an ideal when it comes to eating.

Now, I prefer that my clients workout on a fasted stomach first thing in the morning. There's a huge caveat to that. And that is that every single person is completely different in terms of what their body can and cannot tolerate. And so, therefore, what I want to tell you is that if first of all, you can't work out first thing in the morning on a fasted stomach, it's totally okay. That does not mean that you can't lose weight.

But the second piece to that is that your body might be different. So, your schedule might be different. And the way that your body processes energy may be different as well. What we want to do though, if you are exercising first thing in the morning and your goal is weight loss. What we want to do is we want to have you eat as little as possible before that workout.

And the reason why is because when you work out, if you are doing a cardio workout, or if you're doing a strength workout, what we want to do is we want your body to use the fat that's on your body as fuel versus the food that's in your stomach as fuel.

Now, the other piece to that is when we're talking about workouts, I use air quotes there, and this is a generalization. But women, my age, over 45 to 60, we tend to like Moderate workouts. And we tend to like working out for about an hour. If this is the case, not eating can cause more stress.

So, when I say that I want my clients to work out on a fasted stomach, I think that it's also really important to point out that I want that workout to be a high intensity interval training workout. Something that you can only do for 20 to 30 minutes and then you're done. And the reason for that is cortisol.

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Women over the age of 45, when we are in our perimenopause and menopause years, what tends to happen is that our bodies become more stress reactive. When we do moderate intensity workouts for long duration and 45 minutes to an hour every day is long duration. What that can do is it can increase our cortisol.

And so, it's really important that when you are exercising, and cortisol is also higher in the morning. It's also really important that what we do is we do a high intensity workout that's short and then we walk afterwards. Again, this is an ideal situation.

Now, if you cannot exercise first thing in the morning, or if it makes you nauseous to exercise first thing in the morning without eating, then what I want to offer you is that if you're doing cardio, I'm going to suggest that you have something that's small and protein related. Or if you're doing a strength workout, I would suggest that you do a little bit of carbohydrate with protein. Just enough so that when you're exercising, you don't feel gross because that's the worst thing to do is to overeat and then to go exercise.

Timing is going to be highly individual. It might be 90 minutes before your workout. It might be immediately before your workout. You can also use sports drinks when you're working out if that's something that works for you as well. That's my long answer to the question of what should I eat and when before I work out.

Our next question is "I'm stuck in a plateau; how do I start losing again?" This is actually a really tricky question and it's something that I work with my clients on a lot. Let me back up for just a little bit, which is answering the question of when we start out, when we start out towards a weight loss journey, I think that it's really super important that we lean into weight loss, and we do only the minimum required in order to get results.

What that means is oftentimes, when I start working with clients, I do not have them drastically cut calories. And I don't have them start exercising right from the start either.

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And here's why is because if we do too much too quickly, our body will revolt. Our body will plateau.

And when our body plateaus, it's really important that we have some cards to play, so to speak. If we've reduced our calories to 1200 calories and we start exercising, what happens when I plateau? I don't have anything to do. I'm like, well, I can't cut calories anymore because I'm already low, and I'm already exercising, I can't exercise any more.

What happens then is we just cut more calories and it just creates this endless loop of being stuck. If that is your case, if you are eating the minimum number of calories and you are exercising the maximum number of hours in a day that you have to your schedule.

Then, what I might recommend is that you just stop trying to lose weight. And maybe you look at the quality of your food. Maybe you start to look at stress reduction. Maybe you change your workouts a little bit. And depending on if you're doing, like I talked about in the previous question about medium intensity workouts, maybe do some high intensity workouts or maybe do some strength training.

I don't know what exactly you're doing, but I think that it's really important when we do start out on a weight loss journey that we hold back a little bit because of this situation. We can't go all in because then what happens is we need to be able to have a few tricks up our sleeve, so to speak, that when we plateau, we can start making changes again.

So, let's move on. The next question is "how many calories should I be eating?" There are algorithms out there. And when we talk about maintenance calories and weight loss calories, what I generally recommend to my clients and this number may be a little high for women above the age of 45.

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However, when we're talking about maintenance calories, the number of calories that I need to maintain my weight, what we're generally talking about is take your weight and multiply that by 15, that should give you a good estimate.

So, going back to the previous question of I'm stuck in a plateau, how do I start losing again? One of the things that you may want to do is you may want to slowly increase your calories. Slowly, meaning one to 200 calories per day for a week. And then, keep going until you get to 15 calories per pound of body weight.

And that's a way of backing yourself out of it's called, reverse dieting. And it's a way of backing yourself out of such calorie restriction. So, how many calorie should I be eating to be in a calorie deficit? The number that we want to aim for generally is our weight times 10. So, that's a really easy number. Just take your weight and add a zero to it and that's the number of calories that we generally want to eat.

I don't love using calories as a form of measure. However, what I do prefer to use is the tool called the hunger scale. And I've talked about the hunger scale before on the podcast and I'll put a link to it in the show notes for the episode on it.

But I really like using the idea that we only eat when we're hungry. And when I say hungry, what I mean by is on a scale of negative 10 being really super famished, zero being neutral, and then positive 10 being so incredibly full. We want to be on a scale of negative 4 to a positive 2. That's really where we want to live our lives in terms of the hunger scale.

And so, when we see the first signs of hunger, so many of us feel like hunger is an emergency and we need to eat right away. But what I want to suggest is that we can actually put it off a little bit. And what that'll tend to do is it will, again, get our body used to using the fat that's on our body as fuel versus the food that's in our stomach. Because

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if every time we get hungry, we eat we're training our body that it needs to use the fat in our stomach as energy when we have a ton of energy on our body for fuel as well.

So, again, the answer to how many calories should I be eating? If you are in a calorie deficit, if you want to lose weight, I suggest 10 times your body weight. So, take your body weight at a zero to it. You can reduce that just a little bit because women over the age of 45 tend to be a little bit more sedentary, so just be careful with that. However, I do not suggest that you cut your calories down to 1200.

Now, the last question that I have right now is "what do I need to do in order to start exercising?" And my answer to that is first thing I want you to do is I want you to track how often you are being active right now. For example, if you don't know how many steps you're taking, maybe carry your phone around with you or get a step tracker to see how many steps you're taking.

And then, what we want to do is we want to increase that step count by 10% per week for three weeks and then stay the same for the fourth. And then, increase week five and six and seven stay the same the eighth. What that might look like is week one, if I'm just paying attention to how many steps I'm taking, and let's say that I'm taking 5,000 steps, it's a round number.

And so, the next week, I would aim for 5,500 steps. The following week, I would aim for 6,000 steps. Week three, I would aim for 6,500 steps. And then, week four, I would aim for 6,500 steps as well. And then, we would increase again and again and again. So, that's what I'm going to recommend as far as exercising goes.

When I'm talking about exercising there, I'm really talking about movement. Now, what do I need to do to start exercising? When we think about exercising, we can think of exercising in two different categories. We can think about exercising as far as

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cardiovascular exercising goes and then we can also think about it as far as strength training goes.

And so, what I'm going to suggest is if you want to start exercising, the most important thing that you can do when starting an exercise routine is started to build self-trust. What I mean by that is do not commit to anything that you are not ready to do.

Oftentimes, we'll say, well, I should be exercising 30 minutes a day, five days a week. So, that's what my goal is going to be. Even though, we haven't exercise since the past three or four years. What happens then is we get fatigued, and we get injured, and then we don't feel like exercising anymore.

And so, here's what I want to suggest is that if you want to do a strength training routine, just put five minutes on the clock. And do 30 seconds of squats and then 30 seconds of abs. And do that 10 times for a five minute workout. Build self-trust. If you can do that for the first week, then add another day.

So, the first week maybe do it twice, the second week maybe do it three times. You could also add time to it, instead of doing it for five minutes, you do it for seven minutes, or add another exercise in there. Maybe you do squats, maybe you do bent over rows, if you have some dumbbells. And then, the third exercise might be crunches or you could do jumping jacks. Just add another exercise in there and do more of a circuit based workout. So, that's for strength training.

Now, when we're talking about cardio, if you are currently walking, what I might suggest is that once every two minutes, you put in 30 second jog. And then eventually, what you're going to do is you're going to slowly increase those jog intervals and then slowly start to decrease your walking intervals.

So, those are just a couple of different ways of how you can start exercising. Again, I can't emphasize this enough, that the biggest skill that you can build when it comes to

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exercising is building the skill of self-trust. And what I mean by that again is that when you say that you are going to do something, that you actually follow up and you do it.

When we talk about this, what we're talking about is that you get out your calendar and you actually put it on your calendar and say, I'm going to exercise on Monday and Wednesday at 7:00 AM. And be aware that when it comes to Monday and Wednesday at 7:00 AM, you are not going to want to exercise, expect it.

And when you feel that way, you are going to tell yourself, I'm going to do this anyway. And then, after you do it, after you're completed doing it, what I want you to do is I want you to do what's called a body scan. I want you to acknowledge how you feel. Other than being tired, I want you to notice how proud you feel about yourself for actually following through.

And then, the next time, what's going to happen is you're not going to want to do it, but you're going to want to feel proud of yourself. You're going to want to feel good on the other side of doing it. And so, when you know that on the other side of exercise, that there is going to be some positive payoff, you can talk yourself through it.

All right. So, those are all of the questions I received. I would love to hear more questions from you. So, if you have more, just send them my way, you can send them to hello@elizabethsherman.com. And I can't wait to put another one of these podcast episodes together for you.

Have an amazing week, everyone. And I will talk to you next time. Bye-bye.

Hey, thanks for listening.

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If you're done with dieting and would like to work with me as your coach, I'd like to invite you to reach out to myself and my team to ask about programs and pricing. Go to elizabethsherman.com/contact to get started today. I can't wait to hear from you.

See you next week.