

June 8 Coaching Call

- Purpose of the session: Debra answers a curated set of listener questions on exercise, recovery, hormones, and motivation for women over 50.
- Cardio vs. strength priority: never skip strength training; if time is limited, do intervals before defaulting to walking, but choose walking over intervals when already fatigued or cortisol is high.
- Walking recommended daily as a low-risk activity that lowers cortisol and improves blood sugar control, especially for those who are tired or weight-loss resistant.
- Sleep is the top priority for body composition: improving sleep duration toward the 7–9 hour range can optimize results without changing anything else.
- Hormonal shifts in women in their 40s and 50s signal the need to change exercise habits; declining hormones also increase susceptibility to stress-related setbacks.
- Stress management tools highlighted include laughing, music, meditation, and box breathing (equal-count inhale, hold, exhale, hold) to calm the nervous system.
- Soreness is a sign of insufficient recovery, not a badge of effort; omega-3s, Epsom salt baths, adequate carbohydrates, and hydration can help reduce it.
- Musculoskeletal syndrome of menopause can cause new or unusual soreness in perimenopause, distinct from typical exercise-related soreness.
- Returning after illness, injury, or a break: start at half the previous volume, prioritize joint and ligament readiness, and add load only after completing a few comfortable sessions.
- On lifting heavy: Debra pushes back on blanket "lift heavy" advice, emphasizing that effort and reaching muscular fatigue matter more than load, regardless of rep range.
- All rep ranges (light, moderate, heavy) build muscle and support bone density; pure strength work (5–7 reps) is only appropriate once a solid foundation is established and injury risk is low.
- If more than 28–30 reps are needed to reach fatigue, the weight is too light; body composition and bone density goals can be met without loads that create injury risk.
- Consistency and motivation: pairing workouts with enjoyable rewards (favorite media, new gear, music) tied to the act of exercising—not the outcome—helps sustain the habit.
- Debra notes she exercises primarily for mood, creativity, and brain benefits, and that strength training enhances enjoyment of walking—illustrating how modalities reinforce each other.
- Verbalizing reasons for exercising to a partner, friend, or family member can reinforce motivation and serves as a legacy-building behavior.