

Ep #281: Endurance Fueling with Bethany Shields



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Welcome to *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. If you've never felt athletic but you still dream about becoming a runner, you are in the right place. I'm Jill Angie, your fat running coach. I help fat women over 40 to start running, feel confident, and change their lives. I have worked with thousands of women to help them achieve their running goals and now I want to help you.

Jill: Hey runners, so I have a super special guest for you today. I'm so, so excited to bring you this amazing conversation with Bethany Shields. And you may remember Bethany has been on the podcast before talking about her running experience. But she is also a certified nutrition coach who specializes in behavior change, psychology and nutrition for athletes.

And Bethany helps women who move. Women who move, that's you guys, right? Helps them ditch diets and get strong as fuck instead. And she teaches women how to nourish and fuel their bodies for life and for activity so you can feel your best, grow your confidence, heal your relationship with food, amen please to that, and slay your fucking goals.

So please welcome back to the show the one and only, Bethany Shields.

Bethany: Hey Jill, thanks so much for having me. It's so good to be back, I always love a little Jill convo, it's so great. And this podcast is awesome, so it's always fun to come and talk to all the not your average runners.

So yeah, Jill gave a little bit about my story, I've been on the podcast a few times talking about my running journey and how I started running in 2016, so a few years ago. And in 2020 I got certified as a nutrition coach and I also have a certification in sleep, stress and recovery. And currently I'm working on a master coach certification. So pretty soon I'll be board certified, so I'm very excited about that.

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Jill: Oh my gosh, congratulations. That's amazing.

Bethany: Thanks. But as Jill said, I do help women athletes ditch diets and get strong AF. So in addition to that I'm also, as Jill said, a runner, I lift weights, I love hiking, and recently got hard core into indoor cycling and I'm training for a century ride. So every month I've been adding on a little bit more mileage, which has been really fun.

Jill: I love that. I absolutely love that. And I think that when we think about a century ride, it's 100 miles for those of you who don't know what a century ride is. And doing that indoors brings its own kind of special challenges. And maybe we'll talk a little bit about that from a fueling perspective later one.

But that's kind of badass because you're spending a lot of time in the saddle and there's no coasting. I think that's the big difference between outdoor cycling and indoor cycling, there's no coasting. There's no downhill when you're on a Peloton.

Bethany: I mean I can get it done faster because it's faster, but there is no coasting and the seat is spicy.

Jill: Spicy, that's a great way to put it. I love that.

Bethany: Spicy seat, yeah.

Jill: So we're here to talk about the concept of fueling. And I think before we even dive into all things fueling, can you explain what exactly does that even mean? Because when I think of fueling I'm like, oh, I'm just going to put a nozzle in my car and give it fuel.

Bethany: because our bodies are gas tanks.

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Jill: Exactly, right? We're just a gas tank and there's a readout somewhere. Like can you explain what you mean when you say fueling?

Bethany: Yeah, so fueling is basically that we're just replenishing energy that we're using up during exercise so that our bodies can continue going. And I'll get into all of the little science-y piece behind that. Yeah, so basically you're just eating while you're running essentially, during any sort of endurance activity that takes over an hour.

Jill: okay, so fueling is like, in your terminology, is specific to the intake that happens during that actual activity?

Bethany: Yes.

Jill: I love this. Okay.

Bethany: I mean, we can also talk about fueling in terms of like a general nutrition that is part of how you fuel your body in general. But tonight we're going to talk specifically endurance related.

Jill: Well because I think it's important, I think a lot of folks don't necessarily understand or realize that if you're going to be out there for two hours, three hours, like if you're going to be out there for several hours and you're depleting your body, you got to have a way to put stuff back in.

Bethany: Right. And if you don't, there's repercussions for that.

Jill: Yes.

Bethany: And I'm going to talk a little bit also about under fueling, which is something that I see a lot. Well, I hear a lot about it in the community, but also a lot of my clients have struggled with under fueling as well. So that's

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something that's super common, especially for new runners that don't, you know, haven't experienced trying fuel yet.

Jill: Yeah. So I'm sort of like getting way ahead of where we're supposed to be.

Bethany: That's okay.

Jill: Let's sort of back it up and explain why we should be fueling and then what happens when you don't do it properly.

Bethany: Yeah. So I just want to talk about some kind of general guidelines and suggestions for fueling. But with all things health and nutrition, like clothing, one size fits all, that approach doesn't work for everybody, right? It could look terrible, but with your health there could be serious consequences. So if you're listening, and you have specific health concerns with your endurance training, please talk to your medical team about any additional things that you're adding into your nutrition.

So why do we need to fuel? So exercise is a form of stress, and when we're moving in any sort of, anything that takes effort, our digestion shuts down when we're engaging in stressful things. So it's important to gradually train your body so you learn to digest while you're exercising.

And when we're running, we use a mix of energy pathways, but the majority of the energy that we use comes from glucose, which is stored in our muscle fibers and liver. And that gets broken down and released as glycogen through a process called glycolysis.

And our muscles can only contain so much glucose, so it needs to be replaced as we continue to run so that we can do it effectively without bonking or hitting the wall. Which if you've done a long run and you've not

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fueled, you know what that is. But if you haven't, it's basically like your body is just shutting down one system at a time. So that's basically why we should fuel, so that we can keep going.

Jill: So when you say bonking, like if you've ever watched somebody running a marathon, like if you ever watched the New York City Marathon and you see those people and they're so close to the finish line and all of a sudden they just fall down, it's like that's it. It's like their body does not care that they need to go another 100 feet, the body is like, "Yeah, that's it, we're done. We're out." Like when your car runs out of gas.

Bethany: Yeah, the muscles just shut down. Your systems shut down and you sometimes can fall over, get injured, a lot of really terrible things can happen. So like if you can avoid that, that would be ideal, right? Nobody wants to bang their head on the curb.

Jill: True, very true.

Bethany: So because you're burning through all of those glycogen stores at a quick rate when you're running, we've got to replenish those while we're moving during endurance. And for our purposes we'll kind of describe that as like anything over an hour that's a cardio effort. You do need fuel for other types of exercise as well, but we'll mainly concentrate on running.

And our energy stores need to be replaced about after an hour of effort. And how do we do this, right? So this is where we fuel and give our body these digestible simple carbs. And this is where I lose everyone. Everyone's like, "Oh my God, not a carb. I'm cutting out carbs, I can't do the carbs." So the deal is you need the carbs to do the thing. So you have to have those carbs, it's all about the carbs.

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Jill: Right, because it takes a while to metabolize fat and turn it into carbohydrate. And like if you're out of fuel, it's like your body's like, "Hello, I don't have time to go back to the refinery and like burn all of the like crude oil and turn it into gas. I just need the gas now."

Bethany: Yeah, it's a quick process and we need those sugars to kind of just turn over quickly so we can use it. So in my experience, like from working with clients and seeing other runners, there is a lot of under fueling going on just with general nutrition and also with fueling during endurance.

So how can you know if you're under fueling? So, here's a quick questionnaire for you guys you can kind of like check off. If you say yes to like two, three of these, you're probably under fueling. So are you hungry all the time? Are you exhausted and walking around like The Walking Dead zombie style after your workouts or in life? If you're irritable as fuck, that's a sign. If you have GI distress, if you have muscle pains, or cramping.

So if you said yes to any of those things, you're going to want to make sure that you are fueling both in your daily nutrition, which means that you're getting enough food from balanced sources, and also in your endurance fueling.

So I've got a couple of strategies to kind of ensure that you are fueling for optimal performance. So the first piece that I want to look at is daily nutrition. And one of the first things that I always have people look at is like are you eating consistent meals through the day? Because that is really, if you're not eating breakfast and skipping lunch, then obviously, you're hungry as hell by the time you get to dinner. So by spacing out those intervals, and eating consistent meals throughout the day, that's step one.

It looks different for every person. Some people might have like six small meals a day, other people might eat more like three. So like whatever normal looks like for you as long as it's consistent and timed out.

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And the second part of that is making sure that those meals are balanced. And with that, all I mean is that you want to include all of your nutrients in each meal. So you want to have some protein in there, because that's like our muscle MVP. You want to have some veggies for your vitamin and fiber, carbohydrate and healthy fats. So just like a mix of that at each meal.

And obviously, like most people don't have perfect, whatever that is, nutrition, right? So this is what you're striving to have. Every meal is not going to be awesome. Even for me every meal is not always beautiful. So those are the first two parts.

And as you're working towards those things in your daily nutrition, you want to move towards progress and not perfection because you're slowly and sustainably adding these things into your life. Because if you do it all at once, like if you're eating like one protein a day now and you're like, "Oh shit, I'm not getting in enough protein, I'm going to eat like eight proteins a day. Like my trainer said I need 200 grams of protein."

If you add seven more proteins into your life throughout the day, you're going to jack up your training because your body is like, what is going on? Now there's all this extra stuff I've got to digest and I'm not used to it. So it's just remembering that you're slowly adding this stuff in over time. It's not going to be a one day event and then you're going to have the best run of your life.

Jill: Yeah. And does the same go for like if you're saying you're trying to balance things out and so say right now your daily intake is like a loaf of bread. And you're like, okay, maybe I want to cut it back to a half a loaf of bread so that I have room in my belly for some protein. Is the, like if you're trying to reduce things, is it the same thing? Just like do it slowly so you get used to it?

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Bethany: My approach is always an adding approach rather than a subtracting approach because I feel like a lot of us get really stuck in diet culture and restriction and all these like, oh, I've got to cut out sugar, I need to cut out white bread, I need to cut out all of these things. And then there's a laundry list of stuff you've got to get rid of and you feel like there's no joy left in your life at all.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: So like in the case of protein, if you know, oh, I'm eating a loaf of bread every day but I'm not really getting in any sort of protein, whether that's animal protein or vegetable protein or whatever that looks like for you. The place to start is just add one protein into your life. Maybe you're not going to have room for the whole loaf of bread anymore because something else is taking up space that's a little bit denser.

So you will naturally, if you add more fiber, more protein and other things into your diet, the things that you might want to “reduce” or restrict or get rid of, those will naturally fall out just because your stomach only has so much space available.

And as you start eating over time things that are on a spectrum, you know, from processed to less processed. As you start eating things that have more nutrient dense component, you're going to find that you might not have as many cravings for things that are processed over time anyway.

Jill: I love that. I think that's a real takeaway for anybody listening to this, is the concept of like we just work on addition and we sort of let the rest of it take care of itself. Because that's a way of thinking that most people can get on board with. It's like, oh, this is a new thing I'm going to add, versus oh, I can't do this anymore, right? That does kind of like trigger a lot of restriction. So thank you very much for clarifying that.

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Bethany: Yeah. And I do really feel that your daily nutrition is like the secret sauce for your efficient fueling and better recovery. Because once that piece is in play, the actual fueling that happens during endurance, it's much more efficient than it can be if things are kind of ad hoc in there.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: I'm not judging foods, but like if you're eating a diet of purely processed food and then fueling on your runs, versus having a more balanced plate a few times a day at timed intervals, your ability to fuel and the performance that you're going to get is going to be more efficient.

Jill: I love that.

Bethany: So that's your daily nutrition. So during your endurance runs, like we were talking about before, it's all about those carbs, right? Because we've got to replenish the glycogen stores. And the way that we do that is through easily digestible carbs.

And when we're talking about easily digestible carbs, what does that look like, right? So it's basically sugar, like brass tacks, right? So if you are using anything that's packaged, anything that has O-S-E, like fructose, sucrose, all of those things, that's some form of sugar. Any like pureed fruit or starches that you're eating, those quantify as an easily digestible carb.

So you can find that in all kinds of places. So running gels, your carbohydrate drinks, shot blocks, gummies, there's like a ton of options. Like Honey Stinger waffles, all the things. And a lot of people have very interesting things that they like to do to fuel if you're someone that doesn't use like packaged fuel for running.

Jill: Yeah, I like my baby potatoes, you know I do.

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Bethany: Yeah, those are really good. And a lot of people will like puree, some people that make their own fuel will like puree vegetables. I had a client that pureed beets and had that, like I think it depends on how you prepare the beets.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: Jill's face was awesome.

Jill: I'm making a face, I'm like that's a hard no for me.

Bethany: That's a hard no. But you could do it with like sweet potato, butternut squash, something like that if you enjoy that kind of like not having to chew situation while you're moving. One of my clients is like sourdough bread, like all different, all different kinds of options.

Jill: Well can I ask you like what makes something easily digestible? How would you explain that? And like why is that important? Can you explain a little bit about the process and all that?

Bethany: Yeah, so since your body is under stress already, the ability to digest is limited, right? So that's why you want to have something that is easily digestible, which just means that you can either suck on it, swallow it, or if you chew it, that you can like masticate it to a point where it is like really like in a pureed form. And then it's just so that those sugars will release into your bloodstream more quickly.

But it's really just also to kind of conserve your energy. Like if you could imagine eating a steak while you're running, first of all it's like super dense, right? And there's so much chewing that's involved that that takes a lot of energy. And then for your body to digest that chunk of meat is a lot of work.

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Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: So with the carbs it's very, you know, it smashes down and then it can just kind of like pass through your GI tract so the sugars release into your blood stream.

Jill: And I would also think that things that kind of are like pureed or that you can suck on or chew very, very minimally are better because, you know, like a piece of steak is a freakin choking hazard.

Like here you are running, right, and not even steak, but like anything that you have to chew hard, you're running, you're breathing heavily, right? Like you're breathing in and out a lot and I think it'd be very easy to like suck, this is why I tell people don't chew gum while you run because you could accidentally. Or people who are like, oh, I just stuck on a lifesaver. I'm like, no, no, you could choke on that.

Bethany: Yeah, not a solid plan, right?

Jill: No, it's a terrible plan.

Bethany: Yeah, we like to avoid choking. And also, like some people eat like those mini pretzels with the peanut butter in them.

Jill: I have done that, yeah.

Bethany: And like if you're a person that can get it moist enough, I'm sorry I used the word moist, moist enough so that it can like mash down, then it's okay. But honestly, I think for myself, eating pretzels, I would feel like I would like inhale a piece of salt, start coughing uncontrollably, and just like be dead on the concrete.

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Jill: You definitely need to drink some water with them, that's for sure.

Bethany: Yeah, like I personally avoid that kind of like salty snack. But I know when you do increase distance, you do need a variety of types of fuels. So it's definitely an option. But you want something that smashes down easily so it can move on through.

Jill: Right. And are you thinking like low fiber foods are probably what you want to be fueling with, right?

Bethany: Yeah.

Jill: Okay.

Bethany: Yeah. Because, again, same thing with the steak, if you ate a piece of broccoli, I mean, you can just imagine where this is going.

Jill: We're going right there.

Bethany: A lot of people have like issues with cruciferous vegetables because they create gas and bloating. So you can just imagine, like if you're running, the feeling of being bloated is probably not on your list of exciting things.

Jill: Especially in compression tights.

Bethany: Right. Yeah, it's a lot of fiber while you're moving. And again, that's a big ask on our digestion to deal with all that.

Jill: Oh, I love that.

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Bethany: Yeah, so like with all of those different options and possibilities, like the science of fueling is super individualized, and it does require a lot of trial and error. So even when you find your sweet spot, you still have to finesse and adapt and figure things out because no effort that you do ever looks exactly the same.

Conditions change, your body changes, like you're always kind of like navigating it and figuring it out. So there's no just like one prescription and you can just do this much and it's going to work every single time and it's going to be perfect. It's not how it works.

Jill: Yeah, well I mean especially as we age, also I feel like what worked for me 10 years ago is not the same stuff that works for me now.

Bethany: Yeah.

Jill: And if you gain weight or you lose weight, like as your body changes, or if you gain muscle or lose muscle, right? Like the makeup of your body, the size of your body, the age of your body, and your fitness level too. I feel like if you've been training for years, right, you may have already trained your body to digest and you maybe can be a little more loosey goosey. Whereas if you're brand new, you want to be real careful.

Bethany: Yeah, you want to be careful and you want to take the time to figure it out so that you don't go out on a big race and you're trying all these new things.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: Because the end result of that, it could be messy.

Jill: Yeah, a little visit to the Porta Potty unexpectedly.

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Bethany: Yeah, and hopefully you'll make it in time, right?

Jill: Yeah. Oh my gosh. So can I ask you, let's like trade like what our favorite fuels are. So what are yours?

Bethany: Yeah. So my favorite fuel for running and cycling, I like it too, is Tailwind because it's a liquid carb.

Jill: Okay.

Bethany: So if you're a person that doesn't like feeling like you're eating all the time or feeling the volume of a lot of food, or if your stomach doesn't have the capacity for a lot of volume, that's kind of a work around that you can do.

But I also really like Spring Energy, which is basically like a gel but it's made out of pureed fruit and brown rice and oats. It's got like a combination of more like whole foods kind of items, even though it is still like packaged and portable. So those are like my two faves.

I also like Honey Stinger waffles for running sometimes to break it up just because it's like, you get a little treat while you're hustling.

Jill: Yeah, I mean who doesn't love a Honey Stinger waffle, right?

Bethany: Yeah, they're delicious.

Jill: Because they're basically like stroopwafels just with some electrolytes thrown in. Yeah, I love that. I love the Honey Stingers. I haven't tried the new, because they have like a cookies and cream flavor out now, don't they?

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Bethany: Oh, I haven't tried that one.

Jill: I've heard that they have one and I haven't tried it either. I love little tiny roasted baby potatoes with some olive oil and salt, chunky kosher salt. Like if it's a long, long run, if it's like 10 mile, you know, like eight to 10 miles or more I like one packet of birthday cake flavored GU. But no more than one packet because then I want to throw up. So it's like I have a low tolerance for that.

I like Clif Shot Bloks. But then I'm like you, I want something to chew on too. So I'll bring like those pretzels that are, I like the pretzels that are stuffed with brownie batter, they're just a delight.

Bethany: Oh I remember, did you get them from Wegmans?

Jill: I did.

Bethany: I remember you talking about it. Yeah, I have not tried them because I feel like they came in a big container.

Jill: They did. They did, yeah. For some reason I have no problem just like leaving them in the cabinet and not going crazy. I don't know why because other stuff like that I'm like, oh my God, they're talking to me. But those I'm like, I'll eat a few and I'm like, oh, that was fun and I'm done.

Yeah, that big container, that is a big ass container.

Bethany: Yeah, I know if I brought that home I would be like, that would not just be for running. It would be for snacking.

Jill: Yeah. So one thing that I think might be helpful for us to talk about is, because we've kind of hinted around about the concept of electrolytes in

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running fuel. But that is one thing that commercial running fuel actually does a great job of supplying, is electrolytes.

So can you talk about the role of electrolytes in refueling? And if you're not going to have commercial running fuel, like is that something that you need to figure out on your own?

Bethany: Yeah, I definitely recommend electrolytes in addition to fuel, period. Even if your fuel has electrolytes in them. And the electrolytes basically just replenish all of the things that we need. So like you've got sodium in there, magnesium, there's like a bunch of these things that we all need to have in our body because we sweat it out. So that's what the electrolytes do.

And most of those formats are drinkable, but you can also do it in the tablet, the salt stick, I think, yeah. And especially when it's hot, humid, you definitely want to make sure you're getting extra electrolytes in. So I always recommend to have the electrolyte drink, plus your water, plus your fuel, even if your fuel, like most like GUs and things like that are going to have some of the electrolyte in there already.

Jill: Yeah, it helps with muscle cramping, it helps with energy. Like electrolytes just like keep your muscles working.

Bethany: Yeah.

Jill: And yeah, without them, because I think you could be properly fueled from a glucose perspective and if you're not taking in electrolytes you could still bonk because your body's like, hey, no, also need that. I need more than just sugar.

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Bethany: Yeah, and that actually helps move your hydration throughout your body too. So it like carries the hydration around, but also it does help with any sort of cramping. And also nauseousness too, so if you're someone who gets nauseous when you're running and feeling like you're going to throw up a lot.

But a lot of times people will be like, why am I cramping all the time? Why am I getting headaches? Well, are you taking electrolytes? Because that's going to help with that.

Jill: Yeah, for sure. For sure.

Bethany: Yeah.

Jill: So we've been, I mean, we've just kind of been talking about this in general terms, but I think a lot of the folks that listen to this podcast, they're like back of the packers, right? And so they're going to be out on the course longer than other folks, right? Like when I think of myself finishing a half marathon, I'm not a two hour half marathoner, right? I'm like three and a half to four hours.

And so what are some considerations if you're going to be doing an endurance event where you know you're going to be taking longer than other people to finish?

Bethany: So I'm going to give some like general guidelines for optimal performance, which this is aimed at back of the pack but also really anybody even if you're not a back of the packer.

I will say though, if you are a person who is a back of the packer, or if you're running in a larger body, you might need more fuel more frequently than your average bear. Just because your body needs more, you're out

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there longer, you're doing hard shit. So just know that it's different for everybody and it's okay.

But the first tip that I would say is to, this is whether you're back of the pack or not, anybody, base your fueling on time, not on your mileage. Because your mileage can be variable, especially during endurance you can slow down over time, your pace will slow. So if you keep yourself on a steady clock and you're taking it in as you need it, you're in a much better place.

The other piece of that is to start fueling earlier rather than later. And this is super true for people who are slower runners, back of the pack runners, this is myself included. I'm not out there winning any first place awards. But also if you're a newer endurance athletes, I would recommend starting like maybe a half hour into your effort just to start acclimating and training your body and adjust from there as needed.

So if you're someone who does like an hour 5k, you can start practicing fueling for that. You might not need, you probably don't need to fuel for a 5k, but if you plan to build mileage you can start to train yourself.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: Your body will only appreciate it as you increase. And then you're not out on like a 10k course and you're like, oh my God, I didn't know that I needed to eat something. I've been there and done that. Yeah, so that way you can kind of adjust from there.

And you might be able to start later than a half hour, but really this interval works really well for most athletes that I've worked with in all different kinds of bodies. So one of my clients, she started training for her 10k and she's done some experimenting with the half hour fueling interval. And another

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one who, she just did a half Ironman, half an hour, fueled every half hour. And she does it for all of her endurance training, like that's her strategy.

And other of my clients have used it to complete a 100k. So it doesn't matter where you're at, that strategy, especially if you're new it's a great place to start. 30 minutes, just start taking a little bit of fuel in. And as far as like the math of it is concerned, because this is where like all the questions come rolling in. Like how much am I supposed to take? How many carbs am I supposed to take? How many calories?

So if you go Googling around, you're going to find some information. This information may not be made for you, especially if you're listening to this podcast.

Jill: Right, because it will be based on like a 130 pound woman.

Bethany: Or a man.

Jill: Or a man, right. Yeah, actually it's probably based on a man, yeah.

Bethany: Yeah, most of them are based on men, the calculations. So it's like, well that shit is not working for us.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: So my middle math for people who are in larger bodies, or newer runners, is about like 30 grams of carbs every 30 minutes. Easy, right? Easy to remember, 30/30. And of course that depends on your individual body and how efficiently you fuel, you might need more, you might need less.

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And the other fun factors to consider always include like your effort level, how hard, like if you're sprinting for a long period, which why would you be sprinting for a long period of time? You know, if you're a magical unicorn out there doing like super-fast sprints for multiple hours, good for you, first of all, but you might need more fuel. And also like the climate, your altitude, things like that are important to consider.

Jill: Like anything that's putting extra stress on your body.

Bethany: Right.

Jill: If it's like hot and humid, or if it's really cold too. Like our bodies have such a tiny little like setpoint range of happiness when it comes to, right? I'm kind of like 55 to 57 degrees and I could run forever. And if it's hotter than that or colder than that I'm like, ah.

Bethany: Exactly.

Jill: There's all kinds of complaining going on.

Bethany: Yeah. And I think the other thing to consider with that, I just like had a flash of something that I was going to say. Don't wait until you're hungry.

Jill: I was going to ask that. Yes.

Bethany: Don't wait until you're hungry because your body, your digestive system is suppressed, right? The stress of running is taking all of your energy, so your body is suppressing digestion. It's not going to tell you it's time to eat, that's why you have a little alarm on your watch. Or you can just look down at those 30 minutes. I mean, if you're out there for a long

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time, it gives you something to do, look at your watch and be like, oh, it's time to eat a little something. So don't wait.

And another piece is be a recovery rockstar here, after you're done with your effort, try to get in something with a little carb and protein within about, again, 30 minutes.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: Easy to remember. And if you're not doing this and you feel like ass after your runs, if you make that little adjustment you're probably going to notice a difference. Because honestly, the bit of protein and carb after your run really makes a huge difference with your recovery, your muscle soreness, and your ability to snap back into your training and just not feel like hot garbage.

Jill: Yeah. Right. And it doesn't need to be like a chicken breast or something.

Bethany: No, like I consider it like a mini, for me it's like a mini meal. Kind of like a larger snack.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: But like you could do like a smoothie, a protein shake, some people will do like a drink with BCAAs in it. So if you are so suppressed from working out with your digestion that you can't eat, that's an easy way to get it in. But like I will like to do like a little taco situation with a soft taco with some chicken and a little vegetable. And then I'm usually good to go.

Jill: I love that. Oh that sounds like a great idea. It never occurred to me, but that's something you can easily keep all the supplies for your fridge.

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Bethany: Yeah, like if it's like you're training and you're close to home, obviously, like if you're traveling you want to probably have something portable.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: But yeah, if you're within a half hour of getting home, just have a leftover taco.

Jill: Yeah, I love that, it's so fun. So this is really good. I think that there's a lot of nuances that are different from person to person. And it's really a matter of taking the general guidelines and then practice, practice, practice.

Bethany: Yes.

Jill: Do you recommend that people keep like a training journal where they're like, okay, on this run this is how I fueled and this is how I felt? For me, I'm like, oh yeah, I'd want to do that. But then I'm kind of like, oh, but then it's a fucking food journal. And then I get all triggered by that.

Bethany: I don't tell people to do that.

Jill: Okay.

Bethany: But if you're someone who likes to record all of the data from your run, like that's a data point, right? Because it is going to help you clue into like if a fuel worked for you or if it didn't work. But also, if you don't need to write that down, you'll generally know like I had a shot blok today and I haven't had that before and my stomach is feeling ultra sketchy. So next time I think I'll skip over that.

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But the way your body responds is not always necessarily related to the fuel, you may have to try a couple times. But for some people, if they have a bad experience with one, we're done and moving on.

Jill: Yeah, yeah. Before we close this up, like what are some things that could affect your reaction to a particular fuel that have nothing to do with the fuel?

Bethany: Okay, so sleep, hydration, I think like water and sleep are your MVPs for life, so if anything's off there. Your stress level. Those three things are going to, you know, set anything off with your stomach that may not be related to what you're taking in.

Also, like the weather. If it's super hot, humid, that can create some kind of adverse reaction. Lack of electrolyte, that's probably your fourth one.

Jill: Okay. So like you could have a fuel that works great for you on hot days and not so great on other days and vice versa?

Bethany: yeah.

Jill: Also, if you're coming down with something, I feel like, right?

Bethany: Yes.

Jill: Especially now when you could have been infected with COVID and then you don't start showing symptoms for several days, that too. So yeah, I think that's like, that's really helpful information. Thank you so much for sharing all this because, again, I think it's for new runners especially it's sort of like what the fuck am I supposed to do?

Bethany: Right.

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Jill: Like there's so much. Especially if you go to a running store and there's like a whole wall of all the different fuels. And you're like, I don't know what I'm supposed to do. And I guess, you know, hey, try them all, see what happens.

Bethany: Right, it's intimidating and it's like when you go shopping for your first pair of running shoes and you feel awkward and you may be uncomfortable asking the staff for assistance, it's the same thing with fuel. And then it's funny because I just went to the running store over the weekend and picked up some fuel and I feel like the guy was like, oh, you're requiring fuel, awesome. You know, he's like a young dude, but like it wasn't necessarily in a sketchy way.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: I think he was just like genuinely surprised. I'm like, yeah, yeah, I do, thanks.

Jill: This is why more fat women need to go to running stores, because we need to normalize all sizes go to these places. I was at a running store as well over the weekend and I walked in and, not a new running store to me but I've only been there like once before. And I walked in and like I could see them looking at me.

And I'm like walking around and they're like, can we help you? And I'm just like, are you fucking kidding me? I'm literally wearing running shoes, like I had just finished a workout and I went in the store. I'm like, I just finished running. I was actually like not there to buy running shoes, I just was like, oh, you know, what do they have or whatever.

Bethany: Looking around, yeah.

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Jill: It blew my mind because I it's been a while, it's been a minute since I've gone into a running store and felt like, and nobody was rude or anything, but they were very clearly confused. And I wanted to educate them and I was like, no, it's not worth it.

Bethany: Yeah, for me I think the guy was very helpful and like treated me like an athlete, but I think he was just a little bit surprised.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: Because I know, like I don't think in my hood anyway, I don't feel like there's a lot of people looking like me rolling in for fuel. But you know, that's fine. Someone's out here needing it, so hey.

Jill: Yeah, exactly. I love it. And like when we show up, we educate the world just by our very presence. I love that.

Bethany: Exactly.

Jill: Okay, so how can people find you? How can they work with you? Let's tell everybody all the things, all things Bethany.

Bethany: Okay. Before I let everyone know how to get me, can I give you a back of the pack tip?

Jill: Oh my gosh, yes, of course, please.

Bethany: So I have a quick back of the pack tip. And it's just that your weight or your body size doesn't exempt you from fueling. Whatever diet culture may have you believing, your physiology, you need to have the carbs so you can replenish them and move, period, end of sentence, period.

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But you need the frequent and consistent fueling. And if you're in a bigger body, you're going to need more fuel than the sports nutritionist on Google is going to tell you, because that's for men who are an eight minute mile. I mean, maybe a lot of people listening are an eight minute mile, awesome. Goals for me.

Jill: Yeah.

Bethany: Although I don't know that that's my personal goal. My personal goal is to finish. But it's sort of like, do you remember that show What Not To Wear with Clinton and Stacy? And they would always like offer fashion advice and they wanted their clients to dress the body they were in now, right? Rather than the body that they were striving to have.

Fuel is the same way. So you just want to fuel your current body in the activity level that you're at now. So that's my back of the pack tip.

Jill: Thank you for sharing that too, because I do think a lot of people are like, oh, I should eat for the body I want to have.

Bethany: No.

Jill: And I'm like, you do not have that body now. You do not have that body now, do not under fuel.

Bethany: Right, you've got to move this body. Yeah, exactly.

Jill: Treat this body with respect, do not starve it. Especially when you're fucking running, because not only will it not result in weight loss, or healthy weight loss, if that's what you're going for. It's going to impact your running, you're going to make your running harder, you could get injured, you know, like just don't. Don't do that.

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Bethany: Totally. Yeah.

Jill: Don't do that to us. I love that. I'm so glad you said that. Okay, so where can people find you?

Bethany: Yeah, so you can find me on Instagram and Facebook, I'm at Be Better With Bethany. And my website is bebetterwithbethany.com. And I'm currently working on a new training for you guys to help new runners with fueling. And that should be ready to roll in a couple of weeks. So that will be on, I will have Jill link it in the show notes because I think the address is kind of long to spit it all out.

Jill: Okay.

Bethany: But it will be called Start Strong, so you can find that on my menu.

Jill: And your website is B-E, like it's not the letter B.

Bethany: Yeah, it's not just the letter B, B-E better, yeah.

Jill: It's like B-E better with Bethany. I love it.

Bethany: B-E better.

Jill: Okay, and we will be linking all of that in the show notes.

Bethany: Awesome.

Jill: And I hope everybody goes to find you immediately because Bethany knows her shit. Thank you so much.

Bethany: I'm always learning.

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Jill: Yes. Well, I mean, that's the thing, right? We're always learning. But you also know your shit. And I know that a lot of our Run Your Best Life members have worked with you and it has really helped their fueling and helped their race performance and everything.

Bethany: They are kicking ass.

Jill: Yeah, they really are.

Bethany: So many of them have done such epic shit, like it has been amazing to watch. I'm just over here like, holy crap. Amazing.

Jill: I know.

Bethany: Yeah.

Jill: I know, so good. So good. All right my friend, thank you so much for joining me on the show and talk soon.

Bethany: Thanks for having me.

Real quick before you go, if you enjoyed this episode you have got to check out Run Your Best Life. It's my monthly coaching program where you will learn exactly how to start running, stick with it, and become the runner you have always wanted to be. Head on over to runyourbestlife.com to join. I would love to be a part of your journey.