

**EPISODE 45**

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**AS:** You need to decide what metrics matter to you and not what’s going to make you say, “Oh, I’m good,” or, “Oh man, you’re skipping and shame you.” But what are the actual metrics that inspire you?”

## [INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:42.8] AS:** You know battling food and your body doesn’t work. You want to love and accept yourself. And because you’re insatiable, you want results too. And wouldn’t you know, you bring the same intensity to your life, wanting to maximize your time, potential, and experiences you have here on this beautiful and wondrous planet Earth.

Fair warning, it will be a rollercoaster. But for those insatiable, that’s your prime time to thrive. We’re here to say “YES!” to the hunger of wanting it all. I’m your co-host, Ali Shapiro, a health coach who helps people end the losing battle of dieting and find a truce with food.

**[0:01:23.0] JB:** And I’m Juliet Burgh, nutritionist, fitness expert, and a co-owner of Unite Fitness Studio Franchise.

## [EPISODE]

**[0:01:33.4] JB:** Welcome to episode 45, *Is your fitness tracker lying to you?* Everywhere you look this days, wearable devices are being marketed and sold as a way to hack your fitness and nutrition. However, how can we actually trust that the metrics they’re aiming for are accurate and will work in our favor? Does tracking your steps, heart rate and calories support more weight loss or does it backfire? A new study that came out of the university of Pittsburg claims that activity trackers are ineffective for sustaining weight loss. So in this episode, Ali and I are going to delve into the world of wearable trackers.

**[0:02:05.6] AS:** So Juliet, I am so excited to get your perspective on this new study that just came out from the University of Pittsburgh, here in my home town and where I'm living, on activity trackers and the headlines is *Activity Trackers Are Ineffective At Sustaining Weight Loss*. Now, I'm so curious, I'm going to explain this study outline to you on our listeners, then I think we need to better sift the conclusions of this study.

So I'm curious, and for everyone listening, we're talking about Fitbits, that's what was mainly in the study, but Juliet, we're also going to talk about the workout trends of things like Orange Theory Fitnesses they call them, that claim they're tracking certain things and if that's effective or not. Because you know all about that. You're going to be on the stage, the sage on the stage today, okay?

**[0:02:56.9] JB:** I'm excited, I'm ready.

**[0:02:58.9] AS:** So what I loved about this study was they tracked people over two years. So it was actually 24 month trial study and they followed 470 people. Now only 75% of the people completed the study. But you know, you got a good number of people and the people who are from ages of 18 to 35 and their body mass index was 25 to 39 at the start of the trial. About 77% of the participants were women and 29% were from minority communities. What they did is they had them participate in weekly health counseling sessions and I don't know what were in those health counseling sessions but I think it was around behavior and nutrition, I'm assuming. Everyone defines health counseling very different.

So for the first six months, that's all they did was give them weekly health coaching sessions and then the last 18 months, less frequent sessions. But at the first sixth month mark, what they did is they divided the participants into two different groups. One that continued the health counseling sessions on a monthly basis and another one that got the health counseling sessions and they gave them a wearable device to monitor their diet and physical activity. Control group is the health counseling only, the group studying the fitness trackers gets these tracking things to track them.

So over the next 18 months, both groups showed improvements and body composition, which we know fat loss is important more than weight loss. So body composition change, their fitness improved, their physical activity improved and diet improved well and there was no significant difference between the groups. However, those who received health counseling throughout the study, only lost nearly twice as much weight as those who use wearable devices for three quarters of it.

**[0:04:44.9] JB:** So the people who didn't wear wearables lost more weight?

**[0:04:48.9] AS:** Yes, almost double the amount. The average weight loss for people wearing the devices was 7.7 pounds. So that still tells me they're effective, right?

**[0:04:58.3] JB:** 7.7 pounds in how long?

**[0:04:59.7] AS:** Over...

**[0:05:01.9] JB:** It was the course of two years?

**[0:05:02.5] AS:** Yeah, that's true, yeah.

**[0:05:04.4] JB:** Okay.

**[0:05:04.8] AS:** It's not nothing though.

**[0:05:05.2] JB:** No, it's not nothing.

**[0:05:06.6] AS:** Yeah. But those who partook only in the health counseling lost on average 13 pounds.

**[0:05:13.6] JB:** Which is a significant amount more.

**[0:05:14.1] AS:** Yeah, exactly. So the study is saying that, the conclusion that they made was that wearing a tracker does not mean that you're going to engage with physical activity. That's kind of what the researchers are concluding. They said...

**[0:05:34.7] JB:** Which is a waste of your money because it's called a "fitness tracker". Wouldn't you be buying, well, were this people given this for free? I guess as part of the study?

**[0:05:42.9] AS:** Yeah, probably.

**[0:05:43.8] JB:** I think it's going to be a little bit different if you're actually somebody going out there buying a fitness tracker and wearing it because you're using it for fitness. If you're participating in a study and they just give it to you, you might just wear it around, you might not actually be using it. Although they're not that pretty looking so I wouldn't want to just wear that for nothing.

**[0:06:02.3] AS:** Yeah. No, that's a great point. I think, because what you bring up like I'm always looking at like what's really going on and if someone may not want to wear that or that may not be what motivates them then it's not about the tracker, it's about the fact that they just weren't just motivated.

**[0:06:19.8] JB:** Yeah, I mean there are so many reasons for why people are wearing this devices. Also weight, totally different demographic. So it's interesting that the demographics that they had has 18 to 35. So those are younger generation that they're trying to get to wear it because I know, for example, my partner's father, he's 71, 72? He recently in the last year got like a Fitbit for his birthday and he is obsessed with it. He walks up and down the stairs of his house just to get more steps. He can hit a certain step count for the day.

**[0:06:58.7] AS:** Interesting, that's what my father in law does too. Carlos set him up with a walker and his health has improved dramatically. It's like all about the steps, like he feels like he has to hit that number.

**[0:07:06.4] JB:** Yes, so people who use them for various different things. What I find very common with people who are coming to my studio is they're using them to see how many

calories they're burning in a workout or what their energy expenditure throughout the day is. So their steps and calculating their heart rate so they could see what their caloric burn is so that they can then know what kind of deficit they're in calorically so they can decide what they're going to eat, how they're going to eat and that is where I think it back fires big time.

**[0:07:41.6] AS:** You mean, basically when you're using it as a piggy bank to see how much you can eat? Yes.

**[0:07:45.2] JB:** Yes and even, not just those wearable devices but things like food trackers, just apps on your phone like for example My Fitness Pal, which I find is very helpful and I'll have clients use it just so that they can actually see on paper what it is they're eating in an entire day or two or three or over a course of a week, just to kind of gauge like, "Wow, I didn't realize how much sugar I get." Or, "I didn't realize how many calories I'm actually eating." But when you end up putting in your fitness in those apps, like, "I took a spin class for 75 minutes," for example. It will then add calories on for you that you can consume that day because you burned a certain amount, now they're adding them back.

**[0:08:27.5] AS:** Interesting.

**[0:08:28.9] JB:** Which, from when I do it like a calculation standpoint if I am going by someone's like basal metabolic rate and how many calories they technically should be eating to lose weight, often times those apps will put them way over the amounts that their bodies actually need. Again, it's giving them this false reason to eat when they don't need to be eating that much.

**[0:08:51.7] AS:** Yeah, there was a study done several years ago that showed part of why exercise doesn't help as much for weight loss and it was like, people basically use it as punishment to — when people are using exercise to make up for what they eat, they underestimate how much they're actually eating and they over estimate how much they're burning.

**[0:09:10.2] JB:** 100%. I see this as like an epidemic in the fitness world, I really do. Where people are over exercising in order to erase or kind of be proactive about what they're going to

be eating that evening or be able to give themselves an excuse of like, “Oh, I worked out this much. So now, I have permission that I can go out to that big dinner or I can eat that extra dessert because I did such a hard workout.” And maybe your workout did feel really hard and you feel like, you better get a prize, right? For working out that hard. However, the actual energy expenditure in your body isn’t that much. It’s not really worth it.

**[0:09:53.5] AS:** Do you think that fitness trackers, do you think they — because one of the things I think is challenging and I remember last year, there was an innovation conference here and I went. Because I try to put myself in like different areas to just get my creativity going and they had the guy who was ahead of Jawbone there and he was talking about like, everyone was talking about these fitness tracker things and I raised my hand and I’m like, “I’m really curious what you’re tracking because I found that different measurements motivate differently or that something like blood sugar,” which they were talking about, I was like, “I found that it really depends on the person.”

And he was like, “Exactly.” He’s like, “We have hundreds of thousands of points of data and like we know for some,” they were looking at diabetics, like type II diabetics, “some people their blood sugar drops and they don’t get enough sleep. Some people, it’s too much cardio, some people it’s certain foods,” and so, I find that even the people in the tracking business realize that there’s not a concrete standard formula of what to track.

**[0:10:48.7] JB:** Yeah, no, for sure, and I’ll use myself as an example of this and my studio. So we decided that we were going to roll out this past year, a tracking device for our clients so that they could see the different zones that they’re in and they would get points when they work out and we even did some challenges with them, like if you get this many points, then you’re rewarded with challenges. Sort of like gaming, because that is really becoming popular in the fitness industry where there are some component of tracking, I’ll take Flywheel for example.

You know, I do love at Flywheel that you have this point system there. So you get to a certain amount of points and it makes you feel really accomplished. But for me it depends on the day. Sometimes those points are really demeaning to me and they make me feel like I did a shitty job and sometimes when you get great points, you’re like, “I feel amazing!” So it’s sort of like an emotional roller coaster.

**[0:11:45.9] AS:** Well it's two parts of the same side of the coin, right? If you're going to use them to motivate you on a good way, it's also going to shame you.

**[0:11:51.6] JB:** Exactly. So you have to take it with a grain of salt, you have to just figure out what your relationship's going to be with that. But going back to Unite, we decided that we were going to roll out this program and so we put it out and believe it or not, it didn't take. Our clients, I would say about 25% of them were super into it and about 75% of them were like anti.

They were like, "I don't want to know, I don't want it to affect the fun that I'm having just being my body, getting a good workout. Now I'm going to be staring at this numbers and trying to hit targets and it's going to detract from my experience." So we ended up actually discontinuing the program because it was something we tried and we were like, "Let's see what happens, let's see if we have success with it," and we didn't and just for other type of workout that we're doing, people didn't want it.

**[0:12:42.1] AS:** Well, I think what you're describing too is they trust that they're going to get a good workout with you guys, right? They're with you guys. Unite is tough, it's not for — I mean, I think it's tough. But it's a challenging workout. They've put their trust in, "Hey, I'm getting a good workout and I'm going to be pushed," and that's what they want to track, right? I think what you're describing too when you say "sometimes this can be useful" is it's all about awareness, right?

**[0:13:07.3] JB:** Yes, if you don't have any body awareness really, there are some personal training clients that I actually have stuck the wearable trackers on because they don't have an awareness to know when they are really pushing out of their comfort zone or they have a little bit of fear about getting there. We can only get them so far until I put a wearable tracker on them and say look, "Look at where you are, you're really only 50% of where your max heart rate can go. Let's just see what 60 feels like, let's see what 70 feels like? Let's use this as a tool to allow you to get yourself out of your comfort zone and feel what it is to really work hard."

**[0:13:48.9] AS:** Yeah, and so I think that they're helpful if you're at that awareness stage. Or maybe even working out for a year and you want to go back and recalibrate and fine tune. But

what you're describing with the Unite clients is they're like, "Okay, no, I know I'm confident that I'm pushing myself because I have that internal calibration and my new metric is am I having fun here?"

**[0:14:07.6] JB:** Well that's the thing, what are you using workouts for? Right? Some people are working out with these specific heart rate zones for a certain goal. You know, for example when you're doing a lot of — when you're doing marathon training or iron man training, sometimes they'll use that as a tool to help them. Like on certain days you should only be training aerobically so you should be within a certain heart rate zone and other days you want to do HIIT training so you want to make sure you're getting into those heart rate zones. That's to give you a specific result so that you can do well in your race.

At least for myself, going back to my own experience, I can't stand wearing trackers for myself because it makes me overly obsessive and aware of how well or "not well" I'm doing according to what this device is saying, where I should be at. So I end up pushing myself too hard to the point where it's just awful and I want to throw up and I don't feel good or it just doesn't motivate me, it's the other side of the coin for me. It becomes like a really negative experience.

**[0:15:14.5] AS:** Yeah, you know, I was talking with another client, we had work4ed together last year and she's having a ton of success, she listens to the podcast, she'll know who I'm talking about. She's lost about 10 pounds and she's really keeping a health condition dormant with diet and exercise and she has become a morning workout person and when we first started working together, we were just getting her to the gym in general. That was kind of where we were and she was saying to me like, "I can't believe I'm a morning workout person now and I'm at the point where I just don't feel as well if I don't do it."

And I'm like, that's such an amazing turning point because it seems like you can just do that on a dime but you have to connect it to feeling better internally versus relying on the good-bad-shame rollercoaster that I don't even want people to have to relate to. I think that's what I really want people to take away from this episode is like you need to decide what metrics matter to you and not what's going to make you say, "Oh, I'm good," or, "Oh man, you're skipping and shame you." But what are the actual metrics that inspire you?

**[0:16:17.5] JB:** And there are different cultures that come with different workouts that are utilizing these tracking devices, you know, spin places that have like a point system where you're like, there's a certain number that people strive to get to, right? And if you don't get to that number then you're not quite there yet, you haven't made it yet to being as fit as you could be, right?

I'll be honest with you, there a ton of people who will never get to that number that they're saying is the number to get to. Because they are fit for their body type where they are like, how tall you are matters with those things, you know what I mean? Your body shape, the power you have, your muscle definition. So, you know, it's a hard thing to say like, "You have to strive to get to that." Someone just made that up by the way guys. It's a total made up number. It's a generic number.

**[0:17:12.6] AS:** I feel like those metrics are like going to Walmart. It's like, "Okay, this is like the generic version of things," right? Or, you know, sometimes you just need that kind of base level. But if you want a more boutique and customize for your own body, you really need to start to figure out what metrics matter for you. Again, in the beginning, those metrics like I love that you can show people what it feels like to push themselves versus, "Oh no, I think I'm at my max."

We do need to get that calibrated. But once we do that, it's really I think tracking, am I sleeping better? Things that make you feel better instantly and not because you think you're good or bad but you feel, this is just making my life easier and I feel like I say that all the time.

**[0:17:58.7] JB:** Yeah, there are lot of new workouts that are coming out there that you had mentioned orange theory, it's like the fastest growing franchise...

**[0:18:04.3] AS:** Is it? I have a couple of clients who go there.

**[0:18:08.4] JB:** ...country, they're going international. It's taken over. It's like there's so many of them and they base their whole training off of EPOC effect which is excess post oxygen consumption, which basically means that you get an after burn, after your workout. Your body continues to burn more calories because of that workout at rest than it would have from doing another workout or not working out and they base this off of certain heart rate zones that you're

supposed to be in throughout the workout. That's the whole "orange theory", they want you in the orange zone for an X amount of time and if you can get within that X amount of time then that sort of guaranteeing you that excess post oxygen consumption that after burn post workout.

The thing with that is like, pretty much every strength training workout and high intensity workout gives you and after burn. There's not secret. Like it's not a special timeframe that you need to get in per se. You will get more, if you feel, put your hand on your heart after you work out, it's beating harder, it's beating faster, you're there. You're burning more calories because your body's revved up. Now going on just a really light, easy walk, no, that's not going to get your heart rate to the point where it's working harder and you're burning more calories at rest.

But any kind of high intensity workout, especially with some strength training in it, is going to give you EPOC. The thing with EPOC is, your body adapts over time. So after a while, your body isn't going to get that same after burn that it did in the beginning of your workout. Most people don't realize that your body is always looking to adapt and unfortunately, your body doesn't like to burn a ton of calories all the time because it's trying to keep you safe and healthy and, you know, maintaining a certain level of body fat and weight.

So that's sort of like, I don't want to say it's gimmicky because I don't want to put anything down. But I think that people need to just sort of sift through all of the jargon and like all of the language that's out there that's very exciting and, you know, like when you're looking at a food label right, something says, you know, "heart healthy" or "all natural". It's the same thing with a lot of this workouts and the wearable devices and what they're saying they're going to provide you.

**[0:20:29.4] AS:** Well, you just said so much. Yeah, I mean the irony is like the medium's the message. Real food doesn't have a PR department, right? It's like, the more something as an advertise and claims, the less likely it's healthy. I mean, it's a matrix out there. But I think what you're hitting on is there's another point that's really important because I hear with people when it comes to tracking, "Well when I wear my Fitbit it works, or when I track my points, it works and like, but then I stop wearing my Fitbit or I stop tracking."

And where I think the information is is, “What happened? What change that you stopped tracking? It’s not the tracking itself that you’re doing and are not. There’s an emotion underneath there that’s happening. But in terms of something like Orange Theory Fitness or something else, I think people often think like, “Well, it was working for me for a while and then I stopped going,” and so then they feel like a failure with the workout itself and what you’re saying is, “Look, first of all, maybe your body’s adapting,” right?

I know with one thing that I really uncover with clients is this sense of possibility. I think weight loss gives us this, every time we diet, we’re like, “Oh, there’s this possibility out there now. When I’m thin and I’m going to do this or that.” Possibility comes from doing things, new things. So if you’re someone who often times will stop doing the workout because all of a sudden you’re like, “I’m bored, but I’m worried, now I’m not going to get my EPOC in or I’m not going to train my core, I’m not going to do strength training.” What you’re saying is, no, most workouts are doing the same things, it’s just kind of the — I think for a lot of this boutique fitnesses was actually working is the community.

**[0:22:13.5] JB:** Totally, it’s a tribe. That’s what people are missing. That’s why going to a big box gym by yourself isn’t exciting. It’s like, “Oh god, I have to be alone with my own thoughts and I have to then figure out what to do,” right?

**[0:22:27.3] AS:** “No, so me. Even though I can do a pull-up.”

**[0:22:32.6] JB:** Versus going to a class and you have a motivating instructor, who cares about your form and what you’re doing and then you have all of these other people like you’re on a team and they’re all supporting each other and it’s just much more motivating. You see Sally in the corner doing five pull-ups and you’re like, “Okay, I want to do five too. I want to try,” you know what I mean? It should feel like that ultimately if you’re in a community like that. It should never feel like you’re the black sheep of something like that.

**[0:22:59.9] AS:** Yeah, and I think that’s so important for people to realize, like what was working the community and the relationships there and so, something like, you know, people start tracking using a Fitbit or even tracking food. I know we’re talking about tracking fitness trackers but this is the same pattern. Often times people start doing it because it’s new and they stop

doing it because the novelty has worn off and they haven't really gotten results. So I think that's important thing, are you going to get this fitness tracker and just because it's new and different or is it really going to give you a new level of awareness that you don't have already?

**[0:23:34.6] JB:** Yeah, and how is it making you feel? Are you feeling like angry and defeated from it or are you feeling like motivated and excited from it? So like Ali was saying, there's so many different demographics of people that this works for, or doesn't work for. It's your own personal experience with it. But overall, just going back to that study, because I do think it's really interesting about how people who weren't wearing them lost more weight. Did they come to a conclusion of exactly why that is?

**[0:24:05.2] AS:** No. I mean, that was the weird thing about — I tried to get like the entire study and I couldn't because I don't have like a gem registration but I read through it like pretty considerably and I was like, "Well wait, is this more about the value of health counseling? Is this more about, it's too hard to focus on too many new things at once?" You're like, "Okay, I'm doing this health counseling thing," which is probably mostly nutrition and then I wondered, was it like, it sounds like they weren't engaging as much with the fitness trackers and it didn't leave to more fitness.

So I have all this questions like, "Well it's hard when you're starting something new," right? To all of a sudden be tracking your food and learning new healthy behaviors and then I have to track my working out. Because I think one of the things that I had seen with my clients is like, if you try to track too much, you build it up, you're already building up the food. Then you're building up the exercise, because most of my clients tend to be perfectionist and we're in this round of Truce With Food and I was commiserating or we're kind of laughing with one of my clients because she was like, "I didn't think I was a perfectionist and now I'm seeing all this patterns of how I am."

And I was like, "Yeah, I never thought I was a perfectionist either." I was like, "I'm an over achiever but, you know, I'm not a perfectionist." But part of the perfectionist or all or nothing, good/bad, mindset is you build everything up. That's part of just how your mind distorts things and so I think people, I wonder if it was this thing it was like, "Oh my god, I'm in this study and there's people watching me," right? There's this thing called the Hawthorn Effect of like just you

changing your behavior when you know people are watching you. “Okay, there is this pressure, people are watching me and I’m getting health counseling,” and I bet, because the health counseling was you know, they got text messages, they were in a group, again, that community.

I think people who probably just were focusing on that and I’m totally projecting, this was not written. But one possible explanation aside from the fitness tracker themselves is, “Wow, this is really working and I’m going to really focus on this.” We all know for weight loss, nutrition is 70% of it.

**[0:26:05.7] JB:** Yeah, I was going to say, my inclination of it, this is me projecting from my world, my space, what I see is that people who use those fitness trackers were overestimating their burn and underestimating how much they’re eating. I think that’s just what I see more than anything else with trackers is that they will tell you that you’re burning a thousand calories in a workout and a thousand calories, that’s a lot, right? That to someone is permission that they can then eat more food than they really need, versus focusing on the nutrition piece of it.

**[0:26:42.6] AS:** Well and in this study, they put people on a low calorie diet, which I shiver and shudder at, right? Because I wonder if the engagement with the fitness trackers was like, “Well I’m already tired from barely eating anything,” and I don’t know how they’re defining low calorie.

**[0:26:55.4] JB:** Yeah, usually 1,200, right? Is that the magic number?

**[0:27:00.5] AS:** Yeah, or well, in some of those studies it was like 800 and was like [inaudible] calories, which means probably not a lot of fat. But I wonder if it was like, “Well, I’m exhausted and so then, I’m exhausted from engaging with it first and now I’m just going to eat because I’m tired.” Many people eat when they’re tired, they don’t realize they’re tired because they don’t check in. So yeah, there could be a lot of interpretation in this study and I don’t even like the conclusion they make because I still think they could be effective, people still lost weight. But they found that something about the tracker actually decreased results by 50%.

**[0:27:34.0] JB:** If you were using the tracker to help you with movement, just pure movement, getting steps in I think is really important, right? Just going for walks, moving your body more, then I think that’s great. But if you’re using the tracker to measure your calorie burn, that’s where

I think it's completely false, that's where your fitness tracker is lying to you. Because there's really no exact way, just based on heart rate alone, of these trackers being able to estimate what your caloric burn is. It's a certain average, it's like when you get on the treadmill and you put your weight in and the treadmill will tell you how many calories you burned. But that's not really based on your body, your muscle mass, your expenditure of energy when you were on that treadmill, what your heart rate was.

There's multiple things to measure to actually figure out what someone is burning. That's something that should not be looked at on those trackers as far as a way to then decide, "Okay, how much can I eat?" Or, you know, "How much should I not eat?" That's where I think it doesn't work.

**[0:28:37.7] AS:** Okay, that's a really important take away for people. So if they kind of still like their tracker, measure it for like overall movement in a day but maybe not necessarily how many calories you're burning.

**[0:28:48.9] JB:** Yeah, movement in a day, also heart rate zones are good to measure if you're training for something, to see, "Am I actually working at my 85% max percentage?" Or, "Oh wow, I'm not even working that hard," you know? But even that, when I was using the tracker myself and it's different depending on your fitness level. It was extremely, I'll tell an experience I had at a studio once that measures this. So they wanted you to get in certain zones and I could not get into the zone that they were asking for. But I'm working my fucking ass off. You know what I mean?

I'm running faster than all the people in there, I'm breathing heavy, I'm grunting, I'm a curser when I work out so I probably like going, "Fuck!" You know? At the end of the workout, the trainer comes up to me and says, "You know I think it would be very helpful for you if you did a little bit more cardio. It would help you," and I said, "Lady, I teach like 10 spin classes a week, I do more cardio than I should, it's not that I'm not fit, I'm actually too fit for what you're tracking. My heart rate can't get there because it's so strong at this point."

When you're doing a stress test, if you're someone, anyone out there who is really fit and you're taking a stress test, it takes you a long time on that treadmill before they are like, "All right, we're

at that percentage.” My one girl friend just did one recently, she’s a fitness instructor and she was like, “Juliet, I was like, is this over yet? Because my legs were tired but my heart rate just couldn’t get there,” because her heart is extremely strong.

**[0:30:27.1] AS:** that’s so interesting. As you were saying that I’m like, “Wow, maybe it’ll help. I think it might be interesting to help me push myself a little more.”

**[0:40:34.2] JB:** Yeah, that’s what I’m saying. It can be useful for that for some people, but at certain levels, it’s not useful. So it’s really totally an individualized thing with this stuff.

**[0:30:43.8] AS:** Yeah, I am — I mentioned this before but I’m using the Progression app to lift and what I like about it is it gives me a routine because I don’t feel like confident enough to know that I’m lifting all the right body parts and whatever. But what’s been helpful form is I measure, am I getting stronger, right? I remember in an earlier episode, you were like, “Measure can you do more pushups? Or pick an actual strength goal,” and that’s when tracking helps me a lot. Carlos tuned me into me because Carlos tracks everything.

That’s just his personality where as I’m like, I’m big into tracking. In Truce With Food, we track very different metrics though because when we’re doing emotional stuff, it’s around stories and behaving differently and new metrics. It’s different. I’m not against data, I love data but not in that kind of molecular or very minute kind of way, it has been helpful, kind of the, getting the grey between the all or nothing, to say, “Oh, let me record.” I don’t even think of it as tracking.

I think it was like, “Let me record where I was at today,” and it’s also interesting to see how, especially if I got like a bad night’s sleep or I had a stressful week like I am less strong that day than the week before. But then maybe the next week if I honor that, I increase in strength. So it also starts to see a more accurate pattern that this isn’t linear, like you’re getting stronger and stronger but rather, there’s days before where you went back but then you went up further down the road or something.

**[0:32:05.5] JB:** You have to understand that that’s all a part of it right? It’s okay.

**[0:32:10.1] AS:** I’m fine with it. I’m just happy I’m at the gym. That’s my goal

**[0:32:13.3] JB:** Yes, but that's really great that you're just happy that you're moving and that you're at the gym and you're doing something. Because I think a lot of people have that very all or nothing mentality and this is something for me that I've had that I have to work with, which is why wearables don't work for me because like I said, I'm just better off just being in my body, just doing the workout versus having like I have to achieve a goal. Then I get all in my head and if I don't get there then I'm like, "I'm having a bad day now." Even though I know that's like completely inane, it's just how I act.

**[0:32:49.9] AS:** Well I think, and I mean, again, I'm looking at this through the eyes of my coaching work. But I think often, we feel bad and then we look for something to point to. It's like, "Oh, it was that."

**[0:33:01.7] JB:** Yeah, right? It's like when we internalize everything on our bodies, we're having a bad day so immediately we look in the mirror and go, "Oh, I feel fat." Right?

**[0:33:07.3] AS:** Right? Listen to Bob's episode, fat is not a feeling, right? It's more about — so I think often we channel a lot of that into this trackers and I should say, I used to be an extreme exerciser. Especially, I remember when I was 16, this was right after I was done with cancer treatments and I had never been — I had played sports as a kid but never like formally exercised.

I got a gym membership for my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and it was at the time where it was [inaudible] and it was this time where you had to spend like \$350 to enrol and then it was like, a certain amount of month and you had to sign up for like three years. Do you remember gyms used to have those kind of contracts?

**[0:33:43.5] JB:** Like life binding contracts.

**[0:33:47.5] AS:** I know. Now it's like, "What?" My parents were like, "Look, we're going to get this for your birthday but you have to promise to go three days a week." Because otherwise it was a lot of money for my parents. I was like, "No, I promise," and I ended up actually going like so much and I think I worked out so much in college and afterwards. But once I realized that it

doesn't really help you lose weight, I actually went the other extreme and especially that year of 2012 didn't work out at all. 2013 when I was finishing up graduate school, didn't. So it's been for me coming back to a happy medium after — I think I kind of needed to do nothing for a while. I mean I still lived in the city and was active but like this has been, being this casual about exercise has been a 20 year journey because I didn't know what I was doing. I can laugh because I'm kind of crying.

**[0:34:35.0] JB:** But it's just like having a healthy relationship with food, you have to have a healthy relationship to exercise as well. So you have now figured that out for yourself.

**[0:34:45.0] AS:** Yeah. So Juliet, if you think certain things like Orange Theory, Fitness, which they're giving you a measurement but they're not the only place that you're getting that kind of workout. Is there anything, any fitness trends out there that you think are tracking really great things that people should consider? That maybe we haven't before?

**[0:35:04.0] JB:** I think that they all have good tenets to them, they're all coming from a good place. It's not like any one of them is lying to you per se, or it's not necessarily false advertisement. So if Orange Theory is what you love to do, if Unite or Flywheel, whatever it is, as long as you're having fun and you are engaging with the community, that's what matters, if you're vibing with it. None of them are bad.

I think any place that you have coaches and trainers that actually care about you as a person and you're not just a number in the class and they know your name and they know what your goal is and they treat you like someone that they are friends with or they care about like family, I think that is what you want to look for. So that somebody's actually taking care of you, you're not just in and out of the class without ever feeling like that connection.

**[0:35:58.7] AS:** Yeah, and for my introverts out there, I always recommend to my clients who like to kind of be by themselves and they use their gym time to replenish from the world. One of the things I really like doing is like hiring a trainer for like a day or on a session and saying, "Can you give me a routine for a month that I can push myself on? What should I be measuring?" Then go back in another month, because know a lot of people like to work out by themselves.

**[0:36:25.3] JB:** Yeah, for sure. But even if you're working out by yourself, I think like you are doing, you're tracking your strength and how much stronger you're getting. Those things are useful for people and they keep you coming back to the gym when you can actually see like, "Wow, I started with lifting 10 pound weights and now I can chest press 30 pound weights. That is something that will keep you engaged and not bored.

**[0:36:48.0] AS:** Yeah, because I do think we need to see progress. I think we're creative being and so we need to feel like we're moving forward or up or around or back down, I don't know. But it's just knowing what's healthy progress for you.

**[0:37:00.0] JB:** It's all about it makes you feel, you know? I'll use Pokémon as an example. You know the game Pokémon? I haven't heard a lot about it recently but when it first came back out...

**[0:37:12.8] AS:** Then they started adding a bunch of ads and people got annoyed. That's what I heard, but I've never done it because I don't understand apps.

**[0:37:17.2] JB:** Basically it was like an insane huge phenomenon when it came out. It was crashing everybody's phone when they were, you know, so many people were trying to download it and they couldn't because everyone was on it. My brother for example he started playing it and because of that game, he started walking like five miles a day. From not walking really at all. So gaming can actually be a great way of moving your body. I'm just using that as an example with tracking or places that give you points for your workouts. If you like games, if you're someone that likes video games or something like that motivates you, then it's great. If you're enjoying it, you know what I mean?

**[0:38:01.5] AS:** Yeah, and I think though, what you're hitting on is something that's genuinely motivating and not caught between the shame/success mindset. Because a lot of times people hear, "Well what makes me feel good is, knowing I accomplished something or knowing I burned 500 calories," yet then that's really more — it's tricky, especially if you've always shamed yourself and never taken a, "Well actually, this is what I really enjoy," because you might not know what you enjoy. Because I think a lot of people think like, "Well, I really enjoy sitting on the couch," right? Or something.

**[0:38:34.0] JB:** If you caught five Pikachu's that day and you're like, "I'm so excited, I caught my fifth Pikachu," and you're like, "Wow, and it got me to walk five miles." that's pretty cool.

**[0:38:46.2] AS:** Yeah, but I think it's one of those things where you have to enjoy more than just the outcome. That's how you know it's making you feel good.

**[0:38:51.2] JB:** For sure. So anything to add as we wrap up this episode of wearable trackers?

**[0:38:57.3] AS:** No, I mean do you have anything to add? I mean. I do want to know what you guys track at Unite because you guys are smart.

**[0:39:05.8] JB:** We don't track anything as far as nobody's writing anything down, there's not any folders. Like I said about what I think is important is we know your name, we know what your goal is, we talk to you, we engage with you, "How's it going, what are, you know, are you happy with the results you're getting?" And we give more individualized like coaching for people.

**[0:39:27.3] AS:** But you do, what I liked about when I was in Philly and went to your class was you do track like heart rate and...

**[0:39:33.2] JB:** We don't track heart rate.

**[0:39:34.1] AS:** No but like, when we're trying to go up.

**[0:39:37.5] JB:** But what we do track is numbers as far as like where your incline should be on the treadmill, we give a range for that for the different hill levels and we track, when you're on a bike like the different resistance levels that you should be aiming for when you're on a flat, small, medium and a high hill. So you're not just turning knob into oblivion and not really knowing where you should be.

So we give you numbers to try and reach for but nothing as far as like how many calories or points you should be getting at the end of the workout or your heart rate, your zones. It's really about we say what percentage of effort you should be at and that's a personalized experience

but we do give guidelines to help people as far as will give you ranges. Like, “Here’ show fast a 70% might be.” But if that doesn’t feel like 70% to you, then drop it back. You know? We might say like 100% all out sprint on a flat for example. On the treadmill, there’s a card and it says, anywhere nine to 11 plus for 100% sprint.

Now, you have somebody coming in who is never worked out a day in their life, they are not getting nine to 11 miles per hour for a sprint. So then it’s their personalized experience, maybe their 100% and what that means is like, whatever time you’re allotted at 100% maybe it’s 30 seconds, you can’t go another second, you’re trying to basically have to stop after 30 seconds. That could be five miles per hour for them. So that’s why we can only give certain guidelines and ranges, but there’s not expectation like you have to be at this place.

**[0:41:16.3] AS:** Right, but I think kind of a take away for listeners is don’t rely on calorie counts for trackers, don’t do that. But find something that you know will push you, right? Pushing some days could be just showing up. But showing something that is pushing you towards growth, I think is that happy medium between not tracking or tracking at all. Understanding the limitations of this fitness trackers so that you don’t think it’s you versus maybe there’s just a faulty equation in the technology.

**[0:41:46.4] JB:** Maybe use equations they’re just based on like, just they’re so generic. They’re just generic. Like I said, when I’m on a treadmill and I put my weight in and it tells me by the end of my treadmill workout that I’ve burned, let’s say 30 minutes on the treadmill usually will say that I burned 600 to 700 calories. Yeah, that’s based on...

**[0:42:08.7] AS:** I think it’s closer to two or 300.

**[0:42:10.8] JB:** That’s based on my speeds I’m going and the weight I put in. But when I was wearing the wearable and it was going off of my heart rate, I would be burning, it would say 300. So there’s a discrepancy there. You can’t — there’s no like, “This is it,” you know? I know where I am. Like I said, if any take away from today is do not rely on these to find out the calories you’re burning, it is not the right amount.

**[0:42:35.9] AS:** Find something that's going to help you feel inspired and track your individual progress and growth and I think another important part is like, don't try to do everything at once. If you're focusing just on nutrition, okay, be active but don't zone in on there, right? Once you get your awareness about nutrition and can be more intuitive, hopefully that's how you're learning to track food less, not more, that's my whole thing. But then maybe zero in on the working out, it's too hard to do it all and that's when people then do nothing. So I think that's another big thing to do.

**[0:43:07.1] JB:** Yeah, on a last note, if you are somebody who has an obsessive personality and you're trying to work on creating a more relaxed environment around how you see food, exercise, your body image, then wearables I believe are taking a step backwards in your evolution of feeling more comfortable, confident, your intuitiveness with eating and exercise.

**[0:43:37.0] AS:** I agree, I concur. I think people think tracking is better but more intuitive.

**[0:43:43.0] JB:** Well you could track by being intuitive. Track yourself.

**[0:43:47.1] AS:** Track yourself. All right.

**[0:43:51.4] JB:** Thank you guys.

**[0:43:52.8] AS:** Thank you Juliet.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[0:43:54.8] JB:** Thank you so much for listening to the Insatiable Podcast. We hope you enjoyed today's episode. You can connect with us on social media. Follow me on Twitter and Instagram @julietunite and Ali @alimshapiro, M stand for Marie. Please feel free to also e-mail us any questions. We would love to hear from all of our listeners. You can reach us on [ali@alishapiro.com](mailto:ali@alishapiro.com) and [juliet@unitefitness.com](mailto:juliet@unitefitness.com). We'll see you next time.

[END]