



Your Functional Medicine Expert®
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[#118: Dr Jill interviews Betty Rocker on How to Transform Your Body](#)

Dr. Jill 00:13

Well, hello everybody! Welcome to another episode of Dr. Jill Live. I'm super excited to have a repeat guest here today, the Betty Rocker—[known as] Bree. We are going to dive into some of your questions and some of the things that we've both heard in our businesses and practices about body image, especially when you're struggling as it relates to mold or chronic illness and you feel stuck.

Dr. Jill 00:35

We're going to address all those things and more, and hopefully give you some really practical tips on how to overcome [challenges], have your best self, and have the body image you want. But also, [we'll explain how] accept yourself in the meantime if you're not quite where you want to be. I know how frustrating that can be, and I know we both have our own experiences with mold and some of these things. We were like, "This is not how I want to be," and yet we were stuck in the midst of that. We will give you all kinds of tips and tricks.

Dr. Jill 00:59

So let me actually formally introduce Bree. Bree, known as Betty Rocker, is an internationally known health and fitness coach, innovative entrepreneur, and motivator of self-growth. I love that she brings her personal experience and such realness to her audience. If you've known her or followed her, you've seen this in real life. And of course, your precious pup—we always love seeing him.

Betty Rocker 1:21

Right there on the couch.

Dr. Jill 1:23

Mine too. Over 3 million people have taken her free 30-day Make Fat Cry home workout Challenge, and hundreds of thousands more enjoy success in her online

home workout studio Rock Your Life with her nutrition and fitness programs and challenges. There is so much you have to offer, and if you're not following her, go over to Instagram or go to her website, and be sure and do that. So, welcome, welcome, Bree. I'm glad to have you back today.

Betty Rocker 1:48

It's great to see you, Jill! Thanks for having me. It's such a treat to be on.

Dr. Jill 1:50

It's always fun. It's such a treat because we can talk on so many levels. We talked about how functional medicine and fitness can transform your body image. Let's speak to those—I know you have a lot of clients and people as well—that either they've been in a healthy spot in the past or they know where they want to get [to]. They're maybe highly motivated, they are good at following plans and keeping the skills, but they're stuck in this physical body that doesn't feel like themselves. They're maybe just a few pounds heavier than they'd like, or maybe they're a little less strong. Maybe they're post-pregnancy or something where their bodies changed and they're like: "Ugh! I don't like this!" First of all, how do we deal with that mentally? And then, let's talk about how we can get someone to the next level, because we've all experienced that, where we're frustrated and yet we want to love ourselves. So, how do we do that, Bree?

Betty Rocker 2:39

Our friendship really speaks to the fact that fitness and functional medicine are a really great complement to each other and that they're both really important pieces of your holistic health journey as a woman—or a man if you happen to be watching or [you] have a man you love. I generally serve women, and through them, I hope to influence their partners, their kids, and all the people around them.

Betty Rocker 3:03

When it comes to what you were just asking about, I like to look at the fact that life is seasonal—cyclical—and our lives, too, are seasonal. We go through different seasons in life. I think having the expectation that we're always going to be the same—either in appearance or body weight or body fat percentage—is really unrealistic because there is this beautiful journey that the earth goes through throughout the life cycle that it has, throughout the different seasons, just as we do. And looking to find the beauty within each of these seasons that we go through, even the unexpected ones, is a really important part of our human experience, in

my opinion. And that was something that, when I was younger, I didn't really have the perspective to understand.

Betty Rocker 3:53

When we're young, we just want everything to be easy because we're learning and taking in so much information. And then, as we gain some wisdom and experience, we start to want to hold on to what we perceive that we have lost. But it's not a loss at all, and once we gain a little bit more knowledge and wisdom, we realize that there is so much beauty to be found in each of these different stages of life, and different people go through different seasons.

Betty Rocker 4:16

For instance, I haven't had kids myself, and yet so many of the women I serve have. I've gone through other seasons and other things that have set me in a place of maybe an inflamed body, or [having] gained body fat or lost muscular strength. Since I know a lot of people, one of the aspects of our holistic health is to have a physically strong, capable body that doesn't carry a lot of inflammatory burden. But of course, our body is well equipped to handle an inflammatory load, and it's also well equipped to regain strength after we've lost it.

Betty Rocker 4:53

So, I think the sort of approach of all or nothing and constantly wanting to be like we were in high school... People look back at a weight that they got used to seeing when they were 18 years old when their body wasn't even fully formed or before they had children. As women, our hormones go through many different stages in our lives. As a functional practitioner who treats people throughout the course of their life cycle, you see this all the time. But I think probably, just like me, one of the harder things to help coach people around, even when you're showing them all of their health markers on a lab chart, is the mindset with which they approach this. Because we know that the way we feel towards ourselves and talk to ourselves internally makes a big difference in how quickly we heal or how quickly we go through these seasons that we may find more challenging. So, I wonder if you'd speak a little bit about that because I think that's so interesting.

Dr. Jill 5:44

I love what you're saying, Bree. This is so critical. I'll just speak personally. When I was in the midst of the mold, I was probably 10 pounds heavier than I normally was prior to that, and it was all [due to] inflammation. There's this frustration if you're someone who can eat right, exercise, and do those things. Your body shape

changes, but then, all of a sudden, you get mold exposure, you get inflammation, or you get ill with an autoimmune disease or are post-COVID. There are people who can't exercise now—let's talk about that too in a few minutes—because all of a sudden, these changes happen. And if you're like the old me, the old version of myself was this driven, hard driver, and I was so hard on myself. I was so mean to myself and so frustrated at myself for not...

Dr. Jill 6:25

I'm just going to tell you a funny little story. I don't know if I've ever shared this publicly. When I used to play piano when I was a kid, I wanted to be perfect. I was 9 or 10 years old, and I wanted to play all the notes. If I couldn't get it just right, I would literally bite my fingers until they hurt, because I was so mad, like, "Come on, fingers, can't you... ?!" It makes me want to cry now for that little girl. That frustration at myself for not being perfect—oh!—it makes me want to cry, because how many people listen to her?

Betty Rocker 6:50

That pressure that was put on you that you absorbed and then later carried forward into your young womanhood life, [it was like], "I have to be perfect." We just absorb those messages, which are so damaging.

Dr. Jill 7:08

And that's what I want to speak [about]. If you're listening out there and you have that mindset and you're frustrated because you've gone through post-pregnancy pregnancy, post-COVID, and you can't work out, maybe you are suffering from autoimmune disease, joint pain, or something new, or you go through mold illness, which many of our listeners have gone through—that really wreaks havoc on the hormones—or you go through menopause, all of these things cause changes, and some of them cause inflammation, and you can be doing all the right things and still be feeling stuck. So, I love this concept, and I love encouraging because I had to really learn to love myself and to love myself no matter what my appearance [was]. Bree, let's talk, too, about the messages we get. I love that you stream on Instagram—on social media. That is not the norm; the norm out there is to filter yourself and be perfect. How do we combat the image that we see and the false sense of [self]? [It's] not even reality! How do we deal with that? How do our listeners deal with that?

Betty Rocker 8:02

Something that's been sticking in my mind since you shared the piano example with me is that when you have a piece of music that you're trying to play, we can define what perfection is [as] when you can play all of the notes perfectly in the piece, correct? If you were to reinterpret the notes in your own way, you would create something new. You might play them at a slower tempo; you might add some different notes or a different melody. And actually, that's not perfect to the form of the original piece, yet your version is also valid, interesting, and beautiful in itself.

Betty Rucker 8:39

I think that what we've missed sometimes is the big-picture perspective—that our tiny little microcosm of the world puts women and men into this box of what defines perfection, [which] is a false narrative in the first place. We too often base our entire lives around what I believe is a false narrative. Sure, it might be an interesting narrative that can serve us in some ways. Sure, a leaner body may be a sign of good health, but it's not always, correct? We know this from medicine. So, someone who appears to have everything going for them may have mental health issues—let's hope they don't. But you never know what's really going on inside of this perfect image of a person. So I believe this picture-perfect narrative, this picture-perfect script, this picture-perfect sonnet of music, they're just a narrative; they don't have to be your narrative.

Betty Rucker 9:42

I say 'false narrative' when it comes to the beauty image ideal because I think it's very damaging on so many levels. But if we step back from it and take that bigger picture perspective and accept that life goes through seasons and we go through seasons, that that narrative is just simply an offer to us, and we can interpret it in any way that we choose if we have the capacity, which we do, to see the beauty in all the things around us that we have, [then] I think it may be a spiritual practice, in many ways, to think about: "How can I look for the good every day?" We talk about: "How can I be grateful every day? How can I thank my body for what it's capable of doing even when we're in the midst of, maybe, sickness or illness?"

Betty Rucker 10:25

People will come to me and say: "I injured my wrist; what workouts can I do without my wrist?" Or, "I had COVID, and I really want to exercise." I say: "Your body is trying to heal; it's got this amazing capacity to heal. So what you want to think about is how you can become an ally with that process rather than fighting against it." When you're trying to push yourself to exercise too quickly when your body's already had a break or is under attack from a disease or virus, you don't want to be going hard

with exercise. Exercise creates a type of stress in your system; it's a healthy stress when we are healthy, but it can undermine your ability to actually heal yourself if you're doing too much exercise or not resting. So I say, focus on nutrition; focus on supporting your cellular growth and healing and repairing with healthy, low-glycemic-index, low-inflammatory foods. Focus on getting as much sleep as possible because of the repair processes. The cytokines are released for your immune system when you sleep. Focus on lowering your stress. Focus on being grateful for what you are capable of, what your body is doing for you in that moment, and be patient.

Betty Rocker 11:39

Because we can't see what's happening beneath the skin, we often get so impatient with these processes. Yet, the body's working as hard as it can, and you're just going to undermine its process if you don't respect and support it. It's going to go as fast as it can when you give it the support that you can give it and love it along the way.

Dr. Jill 12:00

I love that because what you're also bringing light to is the fact that often that inflammation, that extra water weight, or things that we feel if we're sick or post-COVID or post-mold, or any things that many of you who are listening have dealt with, our body is doing the best that it can to help us repair. It's actually protecting us. I always say, "Dilution is the solution to pollution," which means when we are really toxic and sick, we will actually hold on to fat to protect us because it dilutes the toxic load. And it's so frustrating, but it's actually our body doing the best, most loving thing that it can do for us to help us through that process. So I love that because again, I've been through mold and I was like, "What is going on with this body of mine?" Yet, I look back, and it was so protective and so good for me at that time.

Betty Rocker 12:44

Even [with] stomach bloating. Dilution—like what you said—can you say that again?

Dr. Jill 12:48

Dilution is the solution to pollution.

Betty Rocker 12:51

Correct. So, when you've eaten something that irritates your gut, for example, your body will retain water as it works to process that through. And people are like, "Why am I so bloated? Oh, I need to do more sit-ups." And you're just beating your body up when, really, we want to take a closer look at the root cause of what could be creating the bloating. And, if you know what's causing it and you're willing to take that consequence on, say, a special occasion, and you're just aware, maybe you take some digestive enzymes knowing that's going to happen, maybe you drink a little more water to help support the flushing through your system of that stuff.

Betty Rocker 13:26

I really like the phrase that you use. And we're just so obsessed with being so small, so thin, and so skinny, and those things aren't necessarily serving us.

Dr. Jill 13:41

As you and I [both] know, you can have a really low percent body fat and actually be way less healthy than someone who's a little bit higher in body fat.

Betty Rocker 13:50

To me, it really comes down to body composition, lifestyle, and goals. There is a myriad of factors that contribute to how each of us is going to feel our healthiest. Mental health is in the mix as well, [as are] emotional health, spiritual health, and well-being—all of these different pieces that are layered together that we have to take into consideration at an individual level. I focus a lot on strength in my programs because I feel that when you start to train for strength, eat for strength, or do stress management and sleep to support your strength goals, it really takes away that focus on, "How much fat can I lose?" Fat loss is a major byproduct of strength building without becoming bulky. The way you get bulky is actually by adding more body fat. Strength, which actually leans us out and has such protective benefits.

Betty Rocker 14:49

Again, just because we're leaner doesn't mean we're healthier. But when you're focusing on building strength for your body, a lot of the time you're focused on balancing your training, focused on resistance training, whether bodyweight training or using weighted objects, and doing plyometric like explosive exercises to load the joints and create that healthy cardiovascular system as well. I feel like that strength focus takes us to another place mentally as well. We start to think about, "Oh, longevity! How can I keep this special body that I love healthy and strong over time so that I can keep doing activities I enjoy in my later years"—the golden

years—"when I want to play with my grandkids or I want to be hiking with my partner?" Those are important aspects of health. I love that saying, "Youth is wasted on the young." It's not; we got a lot of [inaudible] experiences at that time, but we don't have the perspective yet to figure out what we need.

Dr. Jill 15:50

I love this. Let's get specific because probably the majority of our listeners do not fit this category. [Let's] say 35 to 55—a lot of the listeners are this age, and they're either in perimenopause or just a little bit before or just a little bit after. And then, some of them—again, if they're listening to you or me—might have gone through autoimmunity or mold. We talked about COVID—sometimes people have fatigue for months afterward and have exercise intolerance. So maybe before they were running a few miles several times a week or they were doing more high intensity [workouts] or doing CrossFit, and [now] they're finding themselves not being able to do that same thing.

Dr. Jill 16:25

I loved what you said, "let's get specific," because I know from my own personal experience with mold—actually, pretty recently—that I could not do the cardio stuff I was used to. But what I kept doing were sit-ups and push-ups, strength training, and those little things. Even in my most weakened state, I could do a little bit. What would you suggest for someone who's struggling with maybe post-mold [exposure], post-COVID, or hormonally [where] things are shifting and they feel like they can't do what they used to do as far as cardio but they want to stay strong? How many days a week [should they workout]? [What are] some practical tips for that kind of person?

Betty Rocker 16:58

Yes, I think this is going to vary from person to person and be a little individual-specific, but with the caveat that each of us can listen to our own bodies as we go. And then just determine if the advice I'm giving you is going to be appropriate for you and for your needs. I would suggest bodyweight exercises, which are a great way to rebuild your functional strength. And there are some specific functional types of movement patterns, like pulling and pushing, squatting, and hinging at the hips. These types of exercises can be done with just your own body weight or with simple handheld weights if you have them. But I just think rebuilding your foundation is a really smart way to go and to really take it in incremental steps as far as what I call "all or something, not all or nothing."

Betty Rocker 17:48

Say you're used to training like you used to, five or six days a week. It's probably not appropriate to go five or six days a week hard if you're just recovering from COVID. A lot of people have long COVID, and it really saps their energy. Or, if you've just recovered from a long-term autoimmune [disease], something that attacked your system like mold and these things are where you want to pace yourself. I would look into doing more yoga practice to help really support the parasympathetic system and bring you into a lowered stress state, as well as challenge your body functionally with those types of movement patterns. Also, [I would recommend] looking into my body weight programs, which are excellent. I have a functional fitness foundation course that's free. These types of things will really help you get back into a routine and get you back to moving and doing those foundational movement patterns. And you can start adding more resistance or adding... [a few] quick bursts of explosive biometrics in the mix as you start to rebuild your strength and cardiovascular system.

Betty Rocker 18:47

Now, if you are going through a season like perimenopause or menopause, that's a horse of a different color. What I recommend from my own studies in continuing education in this area particularly is that this is the time of our lives when it's a little harder to build muscle, and this is why we want to approach things very strategically. Number one, we want to up our protein intake, especially at that time of our lives. And I would recommend that to the other scenarios I mentioned as well because the amino acids in protein support not only muscle protein synthesis but [also] your cognitive function, your hormone and enzyme function, and your immune health. So, there are lots of good reasons to eat your protein with each main meal because your body doesn't have a storage tank for amino [acids] like it does for carbs and fat. However, it puts them into your muscle tissue, and if you're not eating regular protein with each meal, it will break down your hard-earned muscle tissue to get at those amino [acids], and you don't want that.

Betty Rocker 19:45

So, I recommend upping your protein intake. I really suggest potentially leaning on a whole food organic healthy protein powder supplement like mine, for instance—shameless plug—because I use these personally and recommend them to my friends and family, and I know they're the best. I also want to up my protein intake because we stop absorbing our amino [acids] as readily over 40, so there is a need for that. Again, [for] peri- and post-menopause, that's my first tip.

Betty Rocker 20:15

My second tip is to really start thinking about polarizing your training. I want you to focus on strength; I want you to focus on progressing through your strength goals. If you're new, you're going to start with a bodyweight foundation. Just like we talked about, you'll start to up your resistance as you go, and as you're [more] comfortable, adding in handheld weights potentially, maybe building all the way up to barbells. But don't go crazy into some CrossFit class out of nowhere because you could injure yourself.

Betty Rocker 20:42

I really recommend polarization. The reason I say this is because your muscles need a higher stimulus at this stage to respond, so you want to really fully recover and rest them before you get [into] that next workout hard. So, this is why I really recommend taking your rest days. You could do a hard workout on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and take a rest day on Tuesday and Thursday—maybe you do a fun yoga class on the weekend or go hiking or something else—and then you take another rest day. [What's most effective is] really, really focusing on having that split.

Betty Rocker 21:15

Another split that I like is a Monday and Tuesday workout, a Wednesday rest day, a Thursday and Friday workout, a Saturday rest day, and on Sunday, maybe I'll do some yoga or some core. I'll walk every day because walking also helps bring us into this more parasympathetic state, gets you outside, and helps keep your insulin levels stable after you've eaten. Walking after a meal is a great way to stabilize your blood sugar and help keep body fat at bay if that's something that you're focused on at this stage. If we really all knew these simple tips, if we just started implementing them at that life stage, we would see a big change.

Betty Rocker 21:51

But we hear a lot of fad diets around this time, and we hear a lot of things that are actually appropriate for a very specific subset of the population. They've been studied in a medical context but not really in a fitness context, and they get blown out of proportion and then turn into these marketing things that a lot of us fall prey to. And we may initially experience a great result with [them], but they're actually heightening our cortisol levels, which causes fat storage, [they] break down our muscle tissue, they create a lot of inflammation, and [they] can cause long-term bone loss in certain people. I'm talking about fasting, in particular. And as you're an actual medical doctor who has probably prescribed fasting to a specific group of

your patients, I'd love for you to speak about when it's appropriate and when it's not.

Dr. Jill 22:38

I love that we're talking about this. You and I have talked before; we think alike because it is such a fad. There are so many things out there [that say], "Bone broth for everybody" or "Fasting for everybody." It just doesn't work for everybody, and it can be detrimental if you're the wrong body type.

Betty Rocker 22:52

Bone broth, though, everybody, yes, right? Is bone broth good for everybody or not?

Dr. Jill 22:58

Bone broth is high histamine [inducing], so bone broth can be an issue for [people that have elevated levels of] histamine.

Betty Rocker 23:05

Thanks for sharing.

Dr. Jill 23:06

Again, I love bone broth, but if you have high histamine [levels], then you have to be careful with that—and it might be just for a season, just like these other things.

Dr. Jill 23:12

The studies with fasting [show that it] is really good for metabolic diseases. So if someone really has complete insulin resistance, they're fully diabetic—and even in that case, they may need to ease their way into it—fasting can shift them into a more metabolically flexible state. What we're talking about is—there are many different types of fasting—typically, intermittent fasting. It's one of the popular fads where people go for periods of time anywhere from 12 to 18 or more hours between their meals.

Dr. Jill 23:38

What you were saying is important because if you have an autoimmune disease, if you've just gotten over COVID, if you're a woman that has any change of hormones,

[if] you have a low adrenal function, [if] you have hypoglycemia that's reactive, and many other things, you're not going to do well in that fast. It's actually going to be a stressor for your body, or it could raise your cortisol, so you really have to know the type.

Dr. Jill 23:55

I deal with all kinds of people with autoimmune diseases, with pancreatitis or pancreatic insufficiency, or with blood sugar issues that aren't diabetic. Actually, it's so stressful because their body doesn't convert easily to glucose when they're fasting, and then their body is starving, [so] they don't do well. So it isn't for everybody. And I love that you bring that up, and especially with these hormonal transitions, I think we need to be kind to ourselves—perimenopause or menopause—because there's a lot going on.

Dr. Jill 24:20

What I see more often than that now are these people with adrenal [disorders]. Either [they have] very low cortisol or they've burned out their adrenals—they're [under] high stress. When you have very low cortisol, these high-intensity workouts and these fasting things that are all the fad don't work, and they're not good for that type of person.

Betty Rocker 24:38

I couldn't agree more. Just from my experience as a trainer and coach, and seeing people really suffer to lose body fat because they've just burned themselves out. And we talk about high-intensity workouts, and we're talking about overdoing a lot of cardio. I know, Dr. Jill, that in the past you've overdone cardio training. When you start adding more training in the mix with balanced cardio that's worked in at intervals, then we get a really greater benefit, especially in this age group that we're talking about. We do need explosive cardio to a certain extent, but it's usually a shorter amount. The load that puts on the joints has a protective benefit because it's like any other resistance load, just strategically different. It gets your heart rate up, and that's a good thing, but we don't want to overdo all these things.

Betty Rocker 25:28

I think that's what I see happen a lot with a lot of both diet and exercise tips. We see people take one nugget of truth and then spread it across like all these other [inaudible]. And, there's always been this gender bias when it comes to the scientific research that has been done for diet because we see that fasting in general seems to work really well for a lot of men.

Dr. Jill 25:50

Absolutely! That's the other thing, men seem to do really well. Most men do really well with fasting; women not as much because we have these, like you said, cycles too. Because [for] any woman who is cycling, there's a difference in your cycle, and there are times when you shouldn't be fasting and there are times when you may do better fasting, so it's important.

Betty Rocker 26:08

... if it's appropriate for you in your particular medical condition as well. I think this is why it's so important to talk to someone like Dr. Jill to understand a little bit deeper what your unique situation is and really see, "Why is appropriate or inappropriate for me?" Marketing messaging—I don't demonize marketing. I think that there are so many great companies out there offering such wonderful, valuable products. But there is a choice you make in the way you market things to people. There is a great deal of psychological research done about what people respond to, and people respond best to fear-based marketing.

Betty Rocker 26:51

I remember very early in my career, choosing to do something called aspirational marketing. That was a trend that I watched Facebook pick up really quickly in the early days of Facebook advertising—just an interesting side note—where they started squashing ads from those old diet giants that would talk about the muffin top or be very shaming. And we've picked up the vernacular of those old ads. That's why a lot of us are still stuck on low-fat and low-sugar sugar [diets] because of these ad campaigns where so much money was behind them in order to make money to sell us things. [So much so] that we picked up this perception that our muffin top was bad or that we had bat wings. These are horrible ways to describe things about our bodies that happen as we go through seasons.

Betty Rocker 27:37

Maybe we have the opportunity to reduce our body fat, but we don't need to feel shame about our body changing. It could be in response to an underlying medical condition or a season in your life that you're going through where you're very busy and fitness can't be the priority. Why do we need to feel bad about ourselves when we're prioritizing and doing the absolute best we can in our lives? We just have to remember and step back and look at the greater cultural context of where we get these messages of perfection from, [understand] that they're damaging, and that

that narrative is just there as an example, and that we can reinterpret it however we want to.

Dr. Jill 28:12

Yes. And whether it's television or Netflix or social media or any of these platforms, you're seeing filtered [images] and versions that aren't even real, and it's so hard to remember that. But, it's so important for us to continue to talk about that because so often we see those images and we compare ourselves to them, subconsciously, and we don't fit in. But what we're comparing ourselves to is something that doesn't even exist; it's not reality. So I just love continuing to bring this message out because the reality is people on the street, and you look and see images [such as] the whitewashed stuff we see in social media.

Betty Rocker 28:51

Diversify your intake if you possibly can. I love Instagram; I love the visual social media aspect of it. But I have such a diverse stream of images that I look through throughout the day and diverse perspectives that really help me stay more in touch with people around me in the real world and have a better perspective on what other people may be experiencing and feeling. I'm not trying to just follow some fitness model or some health guru or just someone who seems to have all the answers. Nobody has all the answers. Everybody has different things that can be valuable to you; even the things that aren't right for you can be valuable in helping you rule out [certain things]. There's no need to be angry or blame anyone for not giving you the perfect answer. We're all responsible for finding the answers ourselves and for looking through diverse resources. It's just how the world is.

Dr. Jill 29:47

I love that. And the last thing is that I want to talk just a little bit about food before we wrap up. If you are struggling—again, we talked about these situations where you maybe can't move like you used to move, whatever. I always want to just encourage—like you mentioned, Bree—to continue to move in whatever way you can. And it might be that all you can do is a 10-minute or 30-minute walk a day.

Betty Rocker 30:06

Walking is so underrated.

Dr. Jill 30:08

Yes. Even people who are literally disabled or are struggling with chronic illness, chronic infection, or whatever are always like: "Can I exercise?" "Can I do this?" I still encourage them to move in whatever way that is—movement is key. And if you can, incorporate breathwork at the very beginning. Say you've been bedbound, disabled, or something like that, or you've been really, really severely ill—post-COVID or autoimmune—all these things we're mentioning—or mold, as many people have, you start by moving and you start by getting that body going again. Anyone can start doing very simple bodyweight [exercises] on their floor at home. I would totally encourage you to follow your Instagram and your social [media content], Bree, because you've got some really great training tips for any area you're at, wherever you're at in your fitness training. Often, you can pick up those things and start to do them. So I love you talking about protein. What does that practically look like? What might a typical day look like for someone as far as getting enough protein and doing the things [we mentioned], especially for this perimenopausal group? We talked about their needs to maintain muscle. What would that look like?

Betty Rucker 31:12

Specifically, I would recommend that you first start by taking a look at how much protein you're eating daily in general. You can do that very simply; whatever you're putting on your plate for each meal, just look up how many grams of protein are in the foods that you're eating and start to get a baseline. On average, it's recommended that women under 40 [years of age] consume 20 to 30 grams of protein per meal. That may be a little low for you if you're training or you want to build muscle; [in that case] you may want to go a little higher.

Betty Rucker 31:35

Newer research points to the fact that going higher than the old and outdated recommendations for protein is quite safe, and we just have to get that out of our minds—that protein somehow needs to be demonized because it's not [the case]. There are many great sources of it; you want to be thinking about your complete proteins that have all nine of the essential amino [acids] that your body can't make on its own. So, if you're not eating meat, make sure that you're really paying attention and do some research to figure out this stuff, because you deserve to know.

Betty Rucker 32:04

Then, if you're over 40, I recommend [consuming] an average of 30 to 40 grams per meal. That might seem [like] a lot to some people. But if you're eating eggs for

breakfast, look at how many grams of protein are in your eggs. You're going to have on average six grams of protein per egg, so if you have two eggs for breakfast, that's only 12 grams of protein. You can boost that. You can buy a carton of egg whites and add more egg whites to the mix, which would be able to boost your protein intake up to maybe 30 grams. That way you have a little bit more and you keep your fat content at a reasonable amount because those yolks are really nourishing for us, so we want to make sure we have them.

Betty Rucker 32:38

Another trick that I use a lot is making a protein pancake. So I'll mash a banana, put in two eggs, and then add a scoop of my organic "I Love Vanilla" protein powder to it, which has 20 grams of protein. So then, we add 12 + 20—that's 32 grams right there—to my pancake, and that's delicious. If you're having a protein shake—check how many grams of protein are in the shake; it might be 20 grams—do a scoop and a half to get it up to 30 or do a double scoop to get it closer to 40 if you're looking for something like that.

Betty Rucker 33:07

If you are having a turkey burger patty for lunch, you can control what's in it. You can look up how many grams or ounces are in it and act accordingly. If you're ordering lunch from a kitchen somewhere, keep in mind that a lot of times protein is the more expensive item in the sandwich that you're getting, so pay the extra \$3 to have them double the protein on your sandwich. That's going to help you feel more full and satisfied with your meal, and you'll be less likely to overeat or crave that cookie after you eat. That's going to help stabilize your blood sugar and give your brain, body, and immune system all of those amino [acids] that they need as well. Those are just some of my practical tips for getting enough protein in different meals.

Betty Rucker 33:49

[For] dinner, [the] same thing. Last night I had salmon. When I buy salmon, I try to make sure I get the right size or piece for my needs. That's all I'm doing, and it's quite simple. Once you've looked it up a couple of times, it's not really that much work to remember how many ounces of different proteins you need. And remember, plants have proteins in them as well, and you can combine them. You just want to make sure you're aware; that's a little bit more work, but you can do it. Just don't be daunted by this stuff.

Betty Rucker 34:20

Take care of your body. And protein is not the only thing. You want your fiber-dense complex carbs that are slow digesting. You want your healthy fats. You want to eat plenty of fiber-dense fruits and veggies; these things are good. If you ever have somebody tell you fruit is bad, just run in the other direction, unless you have a medical condition and your doctor is advising you about fruit. Just pay attention to the glycemic index of how much sugar it has. If I'm having a tropical fruit in a smoothie, I'll only use one tropical fruit and use a berry as my other ingredient, like banana and pineapple or banana and mango. Those are very high-sugar fruits—the tropical fruits—so berries are going to be the lower sugar [option]. We just combine those things to get a better balance in our fruits. [These are] just things to keep in mind.

Dr. Jill 35:05

I Love it! So much practical information. One thing that people like to do is [eat] salad. Salads can be tricky. I mean, there's wonderful fiber in that lettuce and the leafy greens if you mix them. But, what I love to do is add some protein—nuts, seeds, meat, and [other] things on that salad—so that you make sure, like you said, you're still getting plenty of [protein]. A lot of times, if you go out to eat and order just a lunch salad, it has a few sliced tomatoes, some shredded carrots, and dressing. You've got sugar and a little bit of fiber, but you don't have enough protein.

Betty Rocker 35:33

It's not a meal. I would get my salad with some complex carbs, like a grain like quinoa, some sweet potatoes or some squash, or something like that, along with a protein source, for sure, and then a salad. It's another way of getting in extra greens.

Dr. Jill 35:53

Yes, and you can really make them so delicious, but you need to load the goodies on top. Awesome. So, what's any sort of final parting wisdom for patients who are suffering or maybe feeling stuck? We talked about being kind to yourself; we talked about starting with something, weight training being so critical, [about] getting enough protein, and all these really practical things. Any last bits of wisdom, especially for the person who feels stuck in their condition at this moment? We know this will pass. They maybe don't like how their body shape or body composition is. What's the last little bit of wisdom that you might give that person?

Betty Rocker 36:30

I want you to picture your best girlfriend or your best friend and try to imagine if they were going through what you're going through and came to you asking for support and advice. What would you say to them? I want you to imagine how you could say those things to yourself. Just like we talked about being allies with our bodies, we do have to be our own best ally when we're going through anything.

Betty Rocker 36:54

I had a trick that my EMDR therapist helped me do, and I'll share it with you. She helped me imagine this best version of myself, and I imagine that she's sitting right next to me, putting her arm around me, and she says: "You can do it; you're great," and she gives me all of those kind words that I often give to others that I care about. Sometimes, when I'm struggling in a moment, I like to picture her beside me. You guys, you know yourselves better than anyone; you have a vision of yourself at your best. Bring that vision towards yourself, use it as a strength for yourself, and give yourself the support and love that you so deserve. Know that it's just a few more steps. And if you can just stay the course, stay patient, and love yourself along the way, you'll get where you want to go.

Betty Rocker 37:42

You're probably going through a very important process that your body needs time to process. Think about computer systems; they don't all work at lightning speed—they didn't all work at lightning speed in the past. We're not robots; we're not machines. We have time that is needed for these hard-working cells, all dedicated to you, to do their processes. So be an ally to yourself; love yourself as you go through these journeys and stages of life that are all serving you. They're all valuable lessons, and they will help you in the long run. That's what I think.

Dr. Jill 38:16

Oh, that is so well said! So well said! I couldn't say it better. I always say, like you said, "Be kind to yourself." It's funny because I call them, "oh, sweetheart" messages, like, "oh sweetheart, you're doing this..." It's like you're talking to yourself. We do that to other people, and it's easy, but it's so hard to focus on ourselves and [be] like: "You're doing a great job. Keep up the great work. We're going to get there!" So, what a great way to leave our listeners with that message of being kind to ourselves because our bodies will respond much better than if we beat ourselves up. Awesome! Thank you for the great advice today. As always, Bree, [it is] so fun to connect.

Betty Rocker 38:49

Thank you. Thanks for having me and letting me talk with you about all these really cool topics, and thank you for listening out there. It was great to get to spend a little time with you all, and of course, [with] you, Dr. Jill!

Dr. Jill 39:01

Yes, awesome! Thank you all. We look forward to talking to you next time!