Show Introduction and Guest Welcome

Welcome to Energize and Revitalize with Dr. Amy. I'm Dr Amy Cooper-Smith, a doctorate prepared nurse practitioner. And this show is about empowering you to live a radiant, healthy, and balanced life.

Very excited to introduce today's guest, Fitz Kohler. You are a fitness expert with a master's degree in exercise and sports science from the University of Florida.

Go Gators. Yeah. Yes, ma'am. Welcome. Thank you so much for being here today. I'm very excited about our talk. Yeah, me as well. So, I've been teaching fitness since I turned 14. And I fell in love with the ability to help people not only change their bodies, but change the minds, upgrade their profession, and upgrade personal lives.

I really bought into it. What's the word, Gali? Downstream. Yep. Thank you. Effect. And so, you know, decades into my career, I believe it more than ever.

So I've been wanting to write this book for a long time, A, to make fitness understandable, attainable, fun, and to convince and compel people that they should invest in their physical and mental health, then also to combat all the nonsense going all, the people selling pills and powders and diets and garbage and lying to society.

And so I wanted to put it all in one place to boil it down. So everybody could understand that. Yeah, fitness is for them. If they do what I tell them to do, they will accomplish almost everything in life they want to accomplish.

Why Fitness Should Be Simple and Real

That's wonderful. You know, this show is a lot about, you know kind of sorting through all of the noise out there. There's so much and I think it can be really confusing for people.

Absolutely. I say that fitness is the most simple, stupid science on earth. You know, I've got this master's degree. They say, OK, the nuts and bolts is watch what you put in your mouth, move your body, get some quality sleep, have some simple mental health measures.

So it really boils down to a really simple formula. But sure, there are some nuances that can be tricky, confusing. And then again, the volume of the bad guys, of lying liars, vultures, snake oil salesmen, thieves that are distorting the truth.

reaching into the pockets of really good people who all they want is health. You know, that is what's screwing it up. If I could go and punch all those people in the nose and get them to stop, then I think the light bulb will go off for most people and they'd go, oh, it really is quite simple.

And yeah, I can do that. Then we'd see major, major upgrades in not only individuals, but society. Yeah, I get asked all the time. I saw this on TikTok and it's some sort of magic diet or magic supplement.

And I'm like, oh, well, let's talk about that. First of all, who released this? Was that an expert or was that a influencer? Yeah, yeah, you know, it's funny, I'm on TikTok, on Instagram.

I am sure you're in those places too. There are some of us who are legit and doling out, science-backed information. But this is where I want people to go.

If I gave you an apple and I put the word diet on it and said, hey, listen, This apple might be $5, but it's a diet apple. You would know right away that I was lying to you, right?

Apple is a freaking masterpiece of a fruit, really good for your health for a lot of reasons. But if I slam the word diet on it and charge you $ 5, you'd say, Fitz is trying to pull one over on me.

No, any single product out there with the word diet on it is lying to you. They're taking advantage of you, they're stealing your money. There is no such thing as diet food or diet drink.

And all diets are short term measures that lead to short-term results. So instead of going for the packaged crap that somebody's promising miracles out of, you go to the produce department.

You go to the meat department and then you make wise decisions at the farmer's market or the grocery store. But all of the quote unquote health food, nutrition food just all if it's garbage, stay away from it.

Just look to real quality products that have grown from the ground and you'll be in pretty good shape. Yep. Eat real food. Yeah, eat real foods. Simple.

Yeah, I don't like the word diet per se. Because when I say what's your diet, like I mean, what do you eat? Not saying what diet trend are you on? But so we probably need a different way to ask people about their daily habits.

Strength Training, Muscle, and Aging Well

I agree. And so my website, fitness.com, the only way you'll see that word, diet is if we are trashing them. If we're telling you why diets are stupid, diets, it kills me.

Have a friend, Tara Collingwood. She's a brilliant dietician. But she'll say healthy diet, healthy, diet. And in my mind, I think stop and not just against her, but, you know, a diet you're right, has a connotation and people here.

Oh, well, then I could do keto. No, You effing can't do Keno Keto. You can do intermittent fasting. It's all garbage. All leads to misery and suffering and failure.

So, yeah, we should change the terminology. I talk about healthy eating, wise nutrition, suggesting that there is a healthy way to have a really screwing with people, don't you think?

I think you're giving a magic bullet, you know, or something extreme. Yeah, it's confusing. It's long term, potentially dangerous to eliminate certain nutrients or you have to go down the wrong path.

But yeah, so we don t like trendy diets. Nope. I love eat real food. Also, I know I come out so abrasive. I'm like, Rob, but I am so passionate about it.

If you could help people, if we can convince them that the shortcuts are the bad ways and then It's funny when I choose the exact formula for weight loss and I simply just teach people how to eat the right amount of the food for the size specifically they want to be.

There is a legitimate formula. When I share people, people go, it's so fascinating to see the look on their face and they go it can't be that simple. No, It can be simple and then they follow it and all of a sudden the weight starts falling off and like Ali, why didn't I know this 40 years ago?

Absolutely, and I think it depends too on where people are starting. You know, if somebody's eating a large quantity of unhealthy foods by stopping that, a lot of times we can see very quick results just by eating real food, which is amazing.

Right. Right, you get so much more of it. I mean, if you're especially from the produce department, golly, You could eat a lot of food and you can be so stuffed.

You can have that wonderful feeling of satiety and fullness and still be losing weight. Hooray for that. It's hard to eat too much broccoli. Yeah. Try as you may.

So I talk with my clients, whether they're just focused on healthy aging or they are trying to lose weight, but we talk about muscle and how important it is to keep their muscle.

So what have you seen with your clients in both of those areas? Yeah, so muscle or strength training, I should say, is the fountain of youth. I would say 90% of the people aren't doing enough.

There's certainly a decent amount of group that are committed to the cause, and you can see it. But strength-training not only makes your muscles more powerful, it's your ability to lift, press, push, pull against resistance of any sort.

But it boosts your metabolism. Strength training builds bone density. So everything about you will be better. It will increase your energy. You'll stand up stronger, you will feel stronger.

That confidence goes a long way too. It spreads into your career and your personal life. And so strength training is incredibly valuable. I work in the running industry.

So I'm on the microphone at many of the largest, most iconic running events in America. It's phenomenal how many, you know, 5k runners and full marathoners come through my finish lines each year and so many of them do not qualify as fit.

And so in order to qualify is fit, a person has to be proficient in four different pillars of fitness, I call them. It is not only that cardio helps with it, which is your heart and your lungs.

Paramount to survival, right? But then it's your strength. Again, it is not just your biceps or your abs. It's all over the ability to push, pull, press and lift against resistance, and then there's flexibility, mobility.

Our shoulder girdle was meant to go in about a 360 degree direction. Can do most people do that every day? Can their shoulders move in that direction?

Their hips the same. People are working on flexibility. That's your ability to to reach and twist to the full extent. Well, that diminishes all the pain and reduces your likelihood of having sprains, strains and tears.

And then the fourth pillar of fitness is your balance. That's important so you don't fall down. We lose so many of our seniors, seemingly healthy seniors.

They trip, they fall, break their hip, and they're gone in six days. Strength, cardio, flexibility, balance, all four pillars of the fitness matters. If you're deficient in one, you won't even qualify as fit.

I'm a reformed marathon runner. And when I was training in that way, I wasn't lifting weights. When I see pictures of myself during that time, it looks doughy.

I didn't have that great muscle tone. Yeah, you know, it's interesting. Runners will say, well, a, runners often just run, and then they will only have time for running.

No. And I teach strength training for runners workshops at many of the races I announce and it is convincing them, okay, instead of running 17 miles, Run 16, run 15 and do this 12 minute strength training workout.

Flexibility, Mobility, and Pain Prevention

Not only is it good for your total body, but you're so much less likely to endure all the pain, suffering and misery that's brought on by typical runner issues like plantar fasciitis, IT band syndrome, piriformis syndrome.

Strength training prevents those things and it also helps you recover from those thing. So, you know, I think culturally, our country is just, well, the world probably has been slow to appreciate strength training.

I remember my mother telling my sister when she was in high school, she wasn't allowed to take the weight training class because she didn't want her to become a bodybuilder, which is like saying if you went for a jog around the block, you'd instantly become world famous marathoner.

Ladies, that's not going to happen. You don't have to test the hostron. Yeah, you don't have the testosterone necessary and you'd have to like put in a really meaningful effort with nutrition.

Instead, strength training will make everything about you better. And so that do not strength-training mindset is the reason all of our mothers are shattering like glass.

osteopenia, osteoporosis, that is a direct result of the do not strength train culture and you put in the fact that they smoked back then more frequently and so yeah we should have not only all the great guys in world but the women too with a intense focus on strength training and strength really does equal quality of life and also I think the muscles are sexy.

So a lot of my clients are older of that generation. And especially when they're on their weight loss journey, they'll say, well, I walk every day. Like, yeah, that's awesome.

But yeah. So when you encounter that, how do you convince people to add that strength training in? Oh, well, I just tell them what I told you. And I don't pull the punches.

Do you want to fall down? Do want black eyes? You want lose your teeth? Want to break your hip? No? Okay. Well, here we go. This is the secret to doing better.

Again, Eileen in on strength training, but it's got to go balance training too. Balance training can be as simple as standing on one foot while you brush your tooth in the morning.

Standing on foot when you're checking out at the grocery store. It's not super complicated. Then when it comes to strength I think people, I would guess to say, if I were gonna say here's $1,000, show me five strength training moves, people could do that, right?

They know a push-up, they know what squat, that's a great start. In general, start where you are, do what you know how to do. And then you look to an expert like me and say, okay, Fitz, I've been doing some push-ups on my knees and some lunges and I'd like to do more.

And I say okay well I have a whole YouTube channel with 100 videos. There's other fitness professionals doing that. In my book, not only are there 400 pages of content, there's 300 pages over 400 photos teaching people how to exercise.

So I've created incredible resources, but there's a ton of other fitness professionals who have done the same. Just start where you are right now and then the only mission you have to take on is to get 1% better every day.

You don't have Go way better. Go overboard. In fact, please don't. That'll deter you from exercising. Again, just do what you know how. Get 1% better tomorrow and then 1 percent better the next day.

And then six months later, all of a sudden you're looking at yourself thinking, holy hell, I look good. I feel great. Yeah, that really struck me about your book was all the examples of how people can do this at home.

No equipment needed. Everybody has the tools in their body that they need to start strength training, which is gravity. Gravity is like the greatest strength-training program on earth.

Yeah. For sure. All right. We're going to pause for a break from our sponsor. You're listening to Energize and Revitalize with Dr. Amy. Don't go anywhere.

Welcome back to Energize and Revitalize with Dr. Amy. I'm Dr Amy Coopersmith and my guest today is Fitz

Koehler. Before the break, we were talking about her book, You Supercharge, and all the reasons we need to eat properly and that we to move our bodies.

So we're talking strength training quite a bit, but you also mentioned flexibility. What is involved in flexibility training? Yeah, it's just moving your body in all the ways that it was designed to move.

So it is interesting. I think most people move in a linear fashion. They're always moving forward, backwards, on occasion, side to side, but usually just forward and backwards.

And so our body was design to twist in these interesting positions. All the movements we see gymnasts go through, our bodies were designed do that too.

Now, of course, many of us would think, flinging ourselves off the vault would be incredible or impossible. But yeah, your body is designed to twist, to go through these broad ranges of motion.

And if you're stunted, if, let's say, leaning forward, you can only touch your knees, well then something worth working on, right? The further you can go, the less likely you are to have sprains, strains, and tears in your hamstring and your calves and in you back.

Right? And so that's another place where we do 1% better every day. And with strength training, there are some serious rules to making progress. Each muscle, for example, should only be trained every other day to get to your best.

But if you do abs every you will stop seeing progress with your abdominals. So strength training has specific rules. But flexibility, the rules are really limited.

And so you can and you should stretch very frequently throughout the day, every day. The more you do it, The better everything's going to feel. So if you're suffering from pain and you haven't had a crash or a fall or one of those instances where you say, oh, I hurt myself.

The doctor sends you to a physical therapist. There's a great likelihood that the reason you are experiencing pain is because you were either tight or weak.

So we talked about strength training. Very important for your whole body. But the same thing.

Cancer Recovery and the Power of Fitness

for flexibility, tightness causes pain, it causes restriction, increases your chance of injury. And so, I build strength training into certain portions of my day so I don't forget.

For example, for example I have two dogs and I let them out regularly. When I'm at home here in Gainesville, and let Levi and Joey out and they instantly get down on the ground on a carpet and then stretch my hips.

I stretch them in four or five different ways. My back feels so much better. People don't realize that their back pain may not be an injury to their backs.

It may be the fact that they're hips are really tight and they are causing hypermobility in their low back. if you can tie certain stretches to certain activities, you'd be more likely to do it.

If you walk through your office door, for example, You can always hinge your elbows and forearms to the door frame. Walk forward. You're stretching out your chest.

Great. if You have a broomstick nearby or a belt, you can Always do wonderful stretches To open up your Chest and your shoulders and back. But flexibility is Oh, it's paramount to, again, preventing injuries and feeling great.

It's energizing. And when you stand up straight because you're not hunched over, you look good and you are more likely to meet your mate. You're more like to get the job, to make the sale because confident people are perceived as more trustworthy.

So stretch it out, stand straight. Absolutely. And I think people are really surprised to learn that when they hurt, they need to move. So some people when I hurt they want to sit on the couch, not knowing that they're actually making it worse.

That's right. chronic explanation we hear from folks with arthritis. They go, I have arthritis, it hurts to move. No, okay. Motion is lotion. We've heard that.

The more you move, the less bad you're going to feel and move in gentle ways. So I like to do things that are really rough. I was a competitive kickboxer.

Or I liked running. Pounding the earth. That's one of my favorite things to. Sometimes it's nice to dial it back. you can get in a pool, I know we're going to talk about this, but I did have cancer.

I went through almost a year and a half of chemotherapy and I had a ton of radiation and surgeries, and i was beaten to death by my treatment. And so when after my surgery, i started rebuilding myself back.

i just started, got in the pool and wiggled for a while. That was it. didn't do anything dramatic. Didn't even swim a lap. Just wiggling, right? starting where you are with the commitment to do no harm, it's a genius way to pursue fitness.

And if you're constantly moving in a gentle but purposeful way, you' re bound to make the progress you were looking for. And I love how you give those small examples, because it doesn't have to be a full one hour yoga session, but five or 10 minutes is going to help you.

Absolutely. And some people think, well, I'm not going to exercise because I don't have an hour. Okay, all right. Well, if I asked you simply to get down on the ground and do 60 seconds of push ups, 20 seconds in, you'd be cursing me, right?

So you can do, You can accomplish great things in a very short amount of time. If that's the way you have to go about fitness, a little bit here, little but there, as long as you are actually doing the little bits throughout your day, So now you are a breast cancer survivor.

Right. How did going through that change how you do things with your clients and with yourself? Right, so. It certainly made me more empathetic, because as you hear, I'm very pointed, a very aggressive people need to do this.

It was one of the first times I've really been beaten up so badly. I have endured various injuries and I was pregnant twice and we all have these little comebacks, right?

That was a big setback. So it did less of changing me, more than convincing me that the preaching I was doing was more meaningful than ever. The impact fitness made on my life before cancer, during cancer and after cancer was More profound than I thought.

And so, yeah, I mean, really, how do I get people to understand that they need to prepare their body to do battle today? Because you never know when injury or illness will strike.

And it will. I'm not trying to scare y'all, but something will happen to all of us. Hopefully it's not cancer, hopefully it is not ALS or Parkinson's.

It might be. Maybe you get hit by a bus, maybe you just trip over the crack in the sidewalk and you break kneecap. But a setback will come at that point in time.

The great majority of folks say, oh, well, something went wrong. I can't exercise baloney. When something goes wrong, you need to lean into your healthy habits more than ever.

That's when fitness really counts, because I got to a certain point in my cancer care. And I, gosh, I was doing what I could when I couldn't. If anybody's ever worked to do their best at the time, it was me.

But the chemo was meaner than I. I lost a ton of weight and I loss a tone of muscle. Even though I'm paddling for dear life, was still sliding backwards.

and i remember going into one of my chemotreatments and my oncologist, he goes fits. You are doing so great. I'm so proud of you." And I was gray and bald and literally every part of my body had been decimated in some regard.

And said, Dr. Gordon, I am not doing great, and I don't know why you're saying that. He goes, no, you are so doing, so I so am proud. So I grabbed my head and said what are you talking about?

I have a catastrophe. Yes, he said. If you were not so healthy and fit and committed to that coming into this, you would be way worse off. I did spend one night in the hospital for blood transfusions, which was very sad and upsetting.

But he said, if you weren't so focused on the fitness, he says, I'm giving you the meanest key bone drugs I give anybody out of all my patients. You're getting the worst.

He said Most people would have been hospitalized for a month, not just a day. Most would've had a feeding tube, which often leads to infections and all these other things.

He said, you've been getting on planes, flying around America to do keynotes and race announcing. You're suffering, but you are in such better shape than almost anybody would be without your commitment to fitness.

And that's when the light bulbs went off and I thought, oh, it really does matter. That's one of the ways chemo has impacted me or cancer. It has made me even more You know, it compelled to get people to do better and be better, not only for all the good days, but the hard days too.

Yeah, I agree that being fit before something happens is imperative to surviving whatever's going to happen to us. Well, that's right. I mean, if you're going to go into any tragedy, whatever it is, would you rather be John Cena or would rather Pee Wee Herman?

There is you know, let's go to be the muscular, strong fit person. That's the person who can handle adversity. You know Lindsey Vonn just white and blue down the mountain and Milan and split her leg open, I heard she could have lost the leg if she wasn't such a healthy girl.

She will come back. I have no doubts about Lindsey Vonn. Don't think any of us do because she's so fit. You know, if our overweight neighbor falls down and sprains his ankle, oh my gosh, what is going to happen to that guy, right?

So don't be the overweight neighborhood. Be the person who's going have their life fall apart because you've had a small or a significant injury. Just focus on it now.

One percent better. Make it happen. Absolutely, and there are also statistics that show, specifically after a cancer diagnosis, that women with breast cancer who exercise are up to 55% less likely to have recurrence of that cancer.

Oh yeah, there was actually, so we've talked about you supercharged, the exact formula for fitness, weight loss, and longevity, but I also wrote the Cancer Comeback series.

So it's my noisy cancer comeback, your healthy cancer come back, in the Healthy Cancer comeback journal. But your Healthy cancer Comebacks, sick to strong, it is on the first page, study out of Tel Aviv.

Anyways, they said that vigorous cardiovascular exercise makes a cancer patient, it's like 72% less likely to have the cancer metastasized and decreases your chances of having a recurrence.

exercise, nutrition will increase the chance you reach remission, will decrease the chances you have it spread or recur. And so yeah, we have a lot of power.

I'm a big fan of Western medicine. My success and the fact that I'm six years cancer free, I take some of the credit for that and many other cancer patients should know that they have control and they should be empowered by that.

Absolutely. I think very important when you're going through something like that is focusing on what you can control. That's it. You can't control what your put in your body and how you move your and all the rest we have to deal with and really the focusing our mindset with anything is going to help us be healthier.

A thousand percent, a thousand per cent. And listen, I was there and it was terrifying. It was scary. It was stressful. The most stress I had ever endured in my entire lifetime, all into one day and each day had that type of stress for a very long time.

But I would ask my doctor, what can I do about this? Sometimes my blood tests would go weird. So what can I do? And that's really what people need to know is there are things you can do, even if they're just traditional health practices.

When it comes to the mental health game, man, it couldn't be any more vital. You know, for me, I never had a why me moment. Some people are like, why me?

Okay, I'm a fitness expert, vegetarian, spend my whole life. I could have questioned the sanity of me having cancer, but I knew I was a fluke. And I live in Gainesville near the University of Florida that has a pediatric cancer center.

What did those babies do? Those babies did nothing.