You Need More Protein Than You Think Transcript

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Introduction to Hotness and Anna Jamtas

Welcome to Hotness, the podcast that brings you practical tools to balance your hormones and rekindle connection, confidence, and desire in midlife and beyond.

I'm your host, Dr. Liz Lister. Hotiness is a safe space for honest conversations about menopause, sex, identity, love, loss, reinvention, and desire, because you can embrace your hotness at every age.

Welcome back to Hotness, the podcast that brings your hormones, confidence and desire back online. I am so happy to share with you today my conversation with my friend and colleague, Anna Jamtas.

She is a fitness trainer. a nutritionist, she specializes in women over 40. She's also a wife and mom of two adorable little boys. Her mom was a health coach, her grandma was human rights activist, and she just has a passion for exercise science.

But she translates it into easily accessible information for us to use to have our best nutrition and exercise efforts put forward in midlife. The fun part is that it's not your typical bro conversation that's out there in this space.

It's really a sister conversation. So again, I am very delighted to share with you my conversation with Anna Jamtas. Hi, Anna Jamtas, welcome to Hotness.

Hi Liz. So happy to have you here. Thank you, I'm happy be here I have enjoyed getting to know you and getting work with you in your capacity as nutritionist and also fitness trainer.

I am enjoying those sessions. And particularly because you specialize in, we'll say women over 40. I say in midlife, right?

Why Anna Specializes in Midlife Women

40s, 50s and 60s. And better, as I like to say. So let's start off. How did you come to that lane in your work of specializing in our awesome group of mid-life women?

Yeah. Well, women has always been a passion of mine, probably because I'm a woman. I've always just been fascinated in science in general. Even starting as early as high school, I was really into human physiology and biology.

It was just an area that was easy for me to want to learn more and excel. As I matured into every different season, it was just fascinating to me that the body could change so much, yet it still was me.

It was still me going through all of these different phases. So whether it's fertility, pregnancy, postpartum, midlife, and then watching sort of this I'm very much a family oriented person.

And so watching and being witness to all of the women in my life and sort of what they were going through. It started with my mom. She was a women's health educator when I was very young.

So it's just kind of always been a passion that has been there for me. I think postpartum is when niched down and was like, I definitely really just want to focus on women.

You can't help everybody. I'm sure that you feel this way in your practice. And so for me, focusing on a population, it also helped me. It made it easier in a way to really narrow sort of the research that I wanted to do, how I want it to continue that education because Nutrition, and that's just a piece of it, is such a new science that we're still learning

so much, so I need to stay on top of that.

If I was also trying to learn about what's going on with everybody, it's very hard to do. Absolutely, that's completely true. And we're going to talk about nutrition.

We're gonna talk mistakes women in midlife make in the gym. But first, what's something that you wish that every woman over 40 knew about her body or her physiology before even walking in to see a nutritionist or a fitness trainer?

I don't know if it's so much a specific piece of knowledge, so as much as the notion that knowledge is power. And we are given this one body, we have one life to live it.

I see this in my practice at least, if women in general could make peace with themselves, earlier rather than later. I think it could be a more enjoyable, it might not be easier, but it would be more a enjoyable journey as we go through these different phases because oftentimes We are fighting this evolution, right?

Women are, we change. We fluctuate every month when we're cycling and then we go through this perimenopause phase and postmenopaus.

Knowledge, Self-Advocacy, and the Female Cycle

So we know that it's inevitable that we are going to have these evolutions. And if we could accept that, I feel like we could get to know ourselves better.

We could study ourselves and become our own experts and then advocate for ourselves in a much more powerful way later on. we can learn things about when we're cycling, first half versus second half, versus ovulatory phase and just get know our patterns because nobody really is going to advocate ourselves the way that we care.

So just, yeah, just getting to our selves better Wonderful. I lately have been using the phrase being in a loving partnership with ourselves, with our own bodies.

So that's just a way I've been referring to it. That's amazing. Yeah, I do love that. And when I was focusing on female athletes, and I still do work with a lot of them, it really is The female cycle can be used like an ergogenic aid, right?

Because we have different capabilities, we are better at certain different aspects when it comes to performance. And so, yeah, that knowledge can very powerful.

That is fantastic, I love it. I've learned so much since I have gotten to know you. Let's talk about specifics in nutrition and what women in midlife should be focusing on.

The topics that I talk, about I think with 100% of my patients is our blood sugar and protein intake. So share with us your thoughts on that in any order and anything else that you want to add to that.

Well, they're both extremely important, as you know, for a multitude of reasons. And they can go hand in hand, especially for the midlife woman. Protein is clearly…

And influenced by the hormonal changes. Oh, absolutely, 100%. Yeah. Yeah, I mean, protein is… the hot topic right now and everybody's talking about it so much that now there's memes that are making fun of it and I can absolutely laugh with everyone and that it is very hard sometimes to get as much protein as we in the nutrition field are recommending but part of is because we know how much it can change the female trajectory, if we get enough of it.

We've been under-serving ourselves for a very, very long time. The old standards were based on a male population that was not the healthiest male populations.

Protein, Blood Sugar, and Hormonal Changes

So getting enough of those amino acids, those are building blocks, are really important, not just in terms of being in an anabolic state. So building instead of breaking down, right?

There used to be this notion of building muscle, building bone, and building resiliency. We used And when I say we, sort of the nutrition industry, we used to think that once you hit like 30, 35, everything was sort a downward trajectory, just sort slow.

You were going to lose your, your bone loss was going go down no matter what you did. There was muscle atrophy, right? And so it was like this idea of trying to keep up with it.

And we now know that that's not true. We can absolutely build. we have to be more strategic about how we do it, which is where sort of this like working smarter, not harder comes into play.

and the amino acids are part of that. They're also going to play into our blood sugar regulation, right? So our insulin sensitivity, we know, that as women age, our Insulin sensitivity tends to go down as estradiol goes down.

Yes, I talk about this a lot. Yeah, so even if we're on something like a bioidentical hormone replacement therapy or menopause replacement, depending on how you want to think of it, generally speaking, we are not going to get ourselves to physiological levels.

You can, it's very hard to do, and if you're using sort of a standard Yes, exactly. If you work with a hormone expert, you can do that. It depends on who you're working with and how much they're willing to like titrate things to you.

I absolutely think it can be done. But if you are on sort of the standard dosages that are being given out regularly, You're going to feel better. it is absolutely going help you with your bone density, with you libido, all of those things.

but it may not get you to your sort of physiological peak levels in your 20s. That being said, your insulin sensitivity is going to go down. Understood.

Yes, it's different philosophies of whether to replenish to have women feeling good versus giving everyone the hormone levels of a 20-year-old, which is not my approach.

I always say there's a reason we don't want 20 year olds running the world. So that's my little quip about that. But before we'd say more about, I know that you have specific guidelines that recommend when you speak to groups for protein intake.

So can you go as based on activity level, right? So there's two different sort of categories I think about when it comes to protein, those amino acids.

Daily intake is gonna be if you are strength training. This is like the main thing that I thing about. If you were a female and you're doing strength-training at least twice a week, ideally, then I usually put you in the ballpark of two grams of protein per kilogram of body weight.

So, if you're not strength training, it could be a little less than that. It could closer to like 1.5 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight. When you do the math and you figure it out, you might come up with a number like 140 grams a protein, and that might feel extreme.

That's a lot. Yeah. So the first thing you have to do… You have focus to achieve it, yeah. You do. To even have a chance of achieving it. You have to be very intentional, especially depending on how you like to source your protein.

So the first thing that you have do is figure out what you're getting in on a daily basis right now, average. If someone comes to me and they're averaging somewhere between 50 and 70 grams of protein per day, I'm not

going to recommend or realistically expect them to start getting 140 grams in two weeks.

So baseline, my baseline goal for women is to get at least 100 grams of protein per day. Once you can do that on a daily basis without really feeling like, oh, I am shoving eggs and beef down my throat.

If you can do that regularly every day, then I say, okay, now let's look at your activity level. Steps per day. What your goals are. Strength training.

Are you an athlete? Are recovering from an injury? Has there been a surgery recently? All of these factors go into play in terms of figuring out exactly what your individual intake is.

Do you talk with women about specific types of foods or foods to avoid to help with mood? as well as success in the gym. We'll say more about that in a moment, but how about for how women are feeling in general?

How do you guide women in terms of their nutrition and what questions to ask when they're doing searches or talking to AI? how do how you advise women, in midlife, about how to approach their what they are eating?

Well, my first thought is that AI can be a great tool, but they should also talk to a knowledgeable individual in person. But that being said, I think there's two sort of overarching themes.

One is healthy fats are women's like right-hand man, or right hand woman, I should say. It's your wing woman. Healthy fats are super important in terms of being pro-hormone.

Healthy Fats and Smarter Food Pairing

So anything that's pro hormone is going to help as a building block in your body in term of our steroid hormones, our estradiol, testosterone, progesterone, When we think about vitamin D, yes, we can get it from sunlight.

It's a hormone. And so something like vitamin d is not only a hormonal in our body, helping with our immune system, right? If our system is boosted and we're feeling good, our bodies has the ability to think beyond just survival basics.

We can start to do all of these other things that we need to feel like we are thriving. So our sex hormones are going to go up. Beautiful. People forget about that.

A little bit of a low fat mindset out there. people are getting more educated and they're doing like full fat creamer and full-fat other products. But that's fantastic that people forget the healthy fats or at least they don't focus on it.

Yeah, the 50s were really detrimental to us in terms of our mentality on fat. Fat is not to be feared. It's going to help not just with your sex hormones, it's gonna help with cognitive function, you know, those fats are what's helping cross our blood brain barrier on a daily basis.

So when you're suffering from not just like a severe memory loss, but you can't remember what was on your calendar today or that person's name, that sort of recall that we tend to start to struggle with as early as our 30s sometimes.

That can play a pivotal role. The other thing that I tell women is that it's not so much something to like a specific food that's going to help them. It's more about the way that they're pairing their foods together.

So generally, one of my main rules that I give all women is no naked carbs, meaning you're not going eat sugar by itself. I don't care if you eat. Sugar I eat, sugar all the time.

The most important thing to remember is when you are consuming sugar, you're having it with a protein or with fat or both, because that will help you avoid a blood sugar spike and then drop.

And those are the things that lead to us feeling like, oh yeah, we have all this energy right away, but then we crash and we think, we're hungry again, or I'm super tired, I need to take a nap.

And that's not the case. It's just that your body is confused by the fact that you just gave it a ton of really quick energy, like fuel source, and you might not have used it to its full potential.

But then you also didn't give it anything to pair to sustain that feeling. So avoiding the crash and burn. I love it. Let's toggle. If there's anything else you wanted to add, please, by all means.

I want to talk about mistakes that women in midlife make at the gym. Both in the overall strategy and also specifics. You can get into as much detail as you'd like.

So I think overall strategy wise, when it comes to going to the gym, the biggest mistake women are making is that they are too comfortable. We get into these patterns.

I'm laughing with self-recognition. Okay. It's a safety net, it's mechanism where we learn something 20 plus years ago, we know how to do it confidently.

We feel comfortable going to this physical location and executing X, Y, and Z, knowing exactly what weights to use. And we just stay there. something is better than nothing for sure.

I'm not knocking on it.

Getting Uncomfortable in the Gym

But yes, if you are trying to improve your bone density, If you're looking for some kind of change, any sort of adaptation, you have to be willing to get uncomfortable.

And so I like to tell women, get comfortable being uncomfortable, okay. All right. Get comfortable, being comfortable. That's good. I liked that. Okay.

It's not my own. I mean, that could be picking up a heavier weight, right? And I've been there. I spent a lot of my life in the gym, and it is intimidating thinking like, I don't know if I can lift that weight up.

Like, what if it's too heavy and I have to put it back? That's embarrassing. Most of the time, everybody's focusing on themselves at the gym. That's right.

They're not watching. So keep that in mind. Yes. Pick up the heavier weight or try the new machine. Ask somebody at that facility to show you how to use it.

Gyms in general are very, they're dark, They are cold. Everything is like black and metal and it's kind of this intimidating place. And I think if women just Decided to let that go and put themselves out there and you know get out of their comfort zones That's the best thing the first overarching theme is just just try it the worst that's gonna happen All right, as you need to put it back.

I love it More specifically, I would say doing some kind of very heavy compound movement that focuses on the lower body. So thinking about like your body as a kinetic chain, a movement where your whole body has to work together to make the effort happen.

I think of like a squat using a bar, some sort of a rack system so that you can go heavier than holding onto dumbbells. Because usually women's grip strength gives out, like we, that's our limiting factor for the most part.

We can hold on to 20, maybe 30 pound dumbbells, may be more, but if you're using your whole body to push an effort, you can push in the hundreds, right?

So using some kind of machinery. The bar by itself is heavy, yeah. the bar itself, is usually around 45 pounds. There's some that are smaller, 35 to 45 lbs.

So yeah, and you start with just that and then you I also often advise women to hire a trainer at least for a stretch of time. And then, and so when I've done that, as you know that I have done this with you as well, is I end up with written workouts that i can go to the gym on my own and follow.

Right. So I can do like a series of sessions with a trainer that I then use on my own. Right? And I really feel like the trainer will be the best way to push myself past my comfort zone.

I think sometimes when someone says they've worked with the same trainer for many years, I get a little, okay. It makes me wonder, are they really pressing that comfort zone much?

Or they found an amazing trainer. I don't know. There you go. All right. Absolutely. That's absolutely true. No, but I do, in all honesty, agree with you.

Hiring a trainer is a great way to go, some people need it for the accountability factor. The way that I think trainers should be used is to, like you're saying, to get sort of this education and knowledge of a variety.

So you feel like, oh, I have a little exercise library on paper, in my head, whatever it is, things that Sometimes you don't want to pick up the bar and do a squat.

What's an alternative way to work my lower body and upper body together, right? You kind of come up with these ideas. Yes, you come with the ideas and then I have them in my little exercise album on my phone because I take screenshots and I just go to where it says exercise and just pick a workout.

Yeah, exactly. But I think the other goes to sort of my first thought for women in terms of movement and gyms in general, which is hiring a trainer is a great way to push yourself to get uncomfortable, to learn how to use new machines, right?

You don't have to hire a training just because you want to lose weight or gain muscle. It could be that you wanna learn to how use every piece of equipment comfortably with somebody there watching you, making sure you're not gonna set up the machine wrong, you not going to hurt your back, they're gonna watch your form, so that yeah, three months, six months a year, whatever it is, you can graduate and do your own thing.

Yeah, that's really great. I love that. Let me just pause us for a moment and ask you if someone wants to do a consultation with you or work with, what's the best way to reach you, Anna?

Yeah. So women, only women can reach out to me either on email or Instagram. My email is Anna at AnnaJams.com and we'll We'll put that in there. And then Instagram is my full name, Anna Jamtoss.

Jam Toss is spelled with two A's at the end and one S.

Training Tools, Contact Info, and Closing Reflections

It's the opposite of what everybody thinks. But those are the easiest ways to get a hold of me if they want to take a class or do a training or like you said, do consultation.

Beautiful. That's wonderful. I'll make sure that information's in the show notes for our episode. And want to wrap us up by asking a question I ask each of my guests.

What is one thing that you personally do to connect to your own hotness? I actually recommend this to a lot of my clients when I do most of My training at home, we have a very rough gym in our basement.

It's nothing glorious, but it does have A lot Of equipment. And so I a Lot of times when i'm training I take videos of

myself not to share necessarily but I Take videos with myself.

A Lot Of times it's because i'M looking at my form if Something feels right or not, But it also helps me realize like how it's like a reflection period for me I watch them in the moment for like instant feedback on okay I need to like shift my hips or tweak my the way my pelvis is shifted or whatever but I keep them in an album and it's like a progressive timeline for myself.

And I have all my clients, I recommend that they do this. I don't know that do. But it helps me see, oh gosh, six months ago I was only lifting X amount and look how strong I am in this one, right?

So it is a physical performance capability, but also you get an aesthetic feedback as well. Nice. And encouraging your self-confidence. I love that. Yeah, definitely.

That's huge. Especially if you only work out in a sports bra like me. Right. that is amazing. I really love the idea. So it's for personal encouragement, reflection, validation. That can be really hot.

Self- confidence is a very essential ingredient too. Aliveness and hotness. So thank you for sharing that. I love that, that's great. That's never done that I'll have to give that a try.

You have try it. Wonderful. Thank you so much. I enjoyed our conversation. People can write to me and ask more questions and make comments. And I have a feeling that we will be able to have another conversation at another time down the road.

Thank Absolutely. It was a pleasure, Liz. Thanks for listening to Hotness. Help more women find these practical tools by liking, sharing, and following the show, as well as leaving a review.

As a gift for listing, go to drlizmd.com forward slash hotness for your free midlife guide filled with powerful support for you mind, body,