

## Exercise Is Not A Cure-All



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Natalie Bacon**

[Mom On Purpose](#) with Natalie Bacon

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Welcome to Mom On Purpose, where it's all about helping moms overcome challenges and live their best lives. My hope is by being here, you are more inspired to become the mom you are made to be. I'm Natalie, your host, a wife, boy mom, dog mama, Chicagoan, and former lawyer turned professionally certified coach. If you're here to grow, I can help. Let's go.

Hello, my beautiful friends. So excited to be here with you today. I feel like this summer is just so amazing. I'm having a really great time. My kids are a little bit older, even though obviously they're still little ones. I'm just feeling really great and so riding that wave and just allowing myself space to enjoy life and make it feel lighter and more fun and, you know, embrace the chaos. So that's what's happening over here. I also launched a brand new program At Your Goal Weight, which if you listen to the last couple of episodes you already know, but I want to let you know that today is the very last day to get the special bonus during this open enrollment period, which is the success guide.

And it's a fast track implementation framework that is in this success guide. It's A PDF download. It is a fantastic bonus. I have really upleveled my content and my programs and you know, this is no exception. It's really, I think, extraordinary because what I did was I have been coaching one-to-one clients a lot in the last couple of years with weight loss. And so I've had a lot of experience coaching clients privately one-to-one. These women are paying four or five figure investments to work with me. And, you know, I challenge myself with each client to help them get better results more quickly. And I've really streamlined the onboarding process quite obviously, in the last two years. And part of that has been when I first message them, I send them this kind of long message that gives them the exact steps to do to get started losing weight today.

And I took that message and I made it into a fast track implementation and put it into the success guide that I created for you. And so this is the bonus that I think is worth even more than the course, if I'm being honest. And it's under 10 pages and really the the core key page that tells you the exact steps to take that I tell my private clients and obviously you get the full program inside At Your Goal Weight as well. But what I love about this is it

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gives you quick wins right away. So yes, you're going to go through the program, it's on demand, self-paced, because honestly that's what I love in the season of life. When everyone is trying to sell me programs where I have to get on calls, I'm like, I have three small children, I am primary caregiver.

Like it's a no and I just love a self-paced program. So you get lifetime access self-paced program, and so you can go through that at your own pace. The, you know, success guide helps you start losing weight today as you are going through that. And so, you know, as I am launching this and coming up with all of these things, you know, it's not that I'm flying by the seat of my pants, but it is a brand new program. And with that, for those of you who have businesses or work in marketing in some capacity, know that, there's a lot of testing and finding out what works. And I'm listening to all of you and getting your feedback and answering your questions and updating the sales page and kind of just deciding how I want to run this. And is it going to be open and closed?

I don't know I do know that this bonus is going to like end and only be offered sometimes and I don't know when it's going to be offered again, I just know that it will be, available through the rest of today if you're listening to this live. So head on over to [momonpurpose.com/goal](https://momonpurpose.com/goal), and when you sign up during this enrollment period by today, by the end of today, I will send you or my team will send you manually the success guide and you get that fast track implementation. And it is just amazing if I can't say so myself, I'm just I'm proud of myself for, just putting my mind to work, right? It's, like it's a real important bonus that could be really life changing for you, as long as you just do what it says. And that's pretty cool, right?

So anyways, that's enough about that. It's, kind of related to today's topic in so far as we are going to be talking about weight loss, but, I want to take a different angle and a different approach and, talk with you about exercise and how it is not like the cure all for everything, right? And, and that's kind of I think the mindset that a lot of us have. Like, it is not uncommon for me to hear from women like, oh, I have to exercise for my mental health, or Oh, I have to exercise to lose weight or something like that. And it's not that

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that's untrue, it's just not the whole truth. And so I really want to offer to you a different perspective on exercise that I hope will be extraordinarily helpful and just like powerful for you as you are making your decisions with how to use your time and how much emphasis you want on exercise and what exercise is responsible for.

So it is not uncommon at all. In fact, it's fairly common for me to have a mom come to me and say, I'm exercising. I don't understand why I'm still overwhelmed. And I'm like, I do because exercise is symptom management. It is not solving the root cause of overwhelm. Of course you're still overwhelmed even though you exercise. Or conversely it's like, I'm eating healthy and I'm exercising. Why do I keep losing and gaining the same 10 pounds? I'm like, of course. 'cause you're focusing on nutrition and fitness, which are again, not wrong or bad. Of course we would know that there are benefits to that. It's just not the root cause of what creates weight loss, which is of course a calorie deficit. And so I like to solve things from the root cause because I want to solve them in the simplest, most straightforward way.

I really take like an essentialist approach to weight loss as well as my motherhood tools like for my own sake. Because, you know, just like you, I'm a very high capacity woman and I take on a lot and I like that about myself. And also it means that I have to be really selective when I take on more just like you, I'm sure. And, that means it's like really important that we understand what we are taking on and what it does. And so lemme come back to exercise for a minute. I think that it is the most overemphasized tool for our modern health. I really do like, not because it's not valuable, but because we've assigned it responsibility to solving problems that it was never designed to solve. Like exercise is now the answer to everything. So you're feeling stressed, well exercise, you're feeling overwhelmed, exercise, you want to lose weight, exercise, you want better mental health exercise, you want better physical health exercise.

And like, it's not even that exercise doesn't have benefits. It does have benefits. It's just that I think we've like conflated what those benefits are and we've taken something that can be extraordinarily helpful for our

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mental, emotional and physical health and made it the cure all, like made it the solution. And so when clients come to me, they're like genuinely very confused as to why they're still feeling overwhelmed even though they're exercising or, why they're still struggling with these like, negative thoughts even though they're still exercising or why, you know, they're still yo-yoing between the last 10 pounds going up and down even though they're exercising. And I just want to normalize that it's not your fault. I I just think it's the way that like the exercise industry has marketed itself to us. And it's not even like through ill intentions.

I don't think this is a malicious at all. I just think that, you know, our brains love to compartmentalize and you know, a lot of times we don't have time nor do we care about the science or the like, details of it, right? We're in a hurry and we're in a rush. And so we just want to get to like, okay, what do I need to do? What's going to optimize my health? And kinda a shorthand answer to that is often exercise. Well, the downside of that is that we end up trying to solve problems with exercise that it was never intended to solve. So I thought it would be useful to just like explore what the benefits are of exercise, what exercise actually does for your mental and emotional health, why it can be helpful even though it's not the solution and the actual real benefits of exercise.

So please do not hear me say that exercise is wrong or bad or anything like that absolutely not. I am a fan of exercise Now, in this season of life, do I personally exercise? I always laugh at the question technically no. Like I'm not going to a workout class, right? However, I have three children under five years old and I am never sitting down my friends, I'm sitting down to record this. But it is, it is rare that I am sitting. And so I say that because, kinda like in our, in our modern lives in this day and age, we have also conflated exercise with a workout class or strength training. And that is a very recent phenomena and I want you to just like be very aware of that. Exercise is a relatively new concept. So for most of human history, people did not exercise.

They just moved. They walked, they carried things, they farmed, they built homes, they cared for children. Like it, wasn't that they were going to, you

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know, orange theory or their favorite hit class or Pilates, right? Movement was just a part of daily life. And so the idea of intentionally setting aside an hour to go move your body for whatever reason, is just like a very modern concept. And so I think that's really important to know again, that doesn't mean like it's wrong or bad. They obviously didn't even have cell phones then. And like, I'm all for progress and change, but I just like to take this broader perspective because you could say I don't exercise, but I move all day. And so I feel like that need of mine is, is met. And so just also considering like your own movement and how your days are, this is very different for me recording this now than it was 10 years ago when I didn't have kids and I was sitting all day.

And then if you think about kind of the progression of exercise, I think it was like the 1960s and seventies when like aerobics took off and just more of like that fitness industry definitely by the eighties workout tapes, you know, classes. And then, you know, it just kinda snowballed from there. The 1990s, the two thousands, and you know, where we are today. I think we went from like a total lack of awareness of the importance of exercise to the other end of the spectrum where we have given exercise the credit for being the solution to weight loss, to confidence, to stress, to anxiety, to happiness. And what I want to do is, is just encourage you to take a more balanced approach and see exercise as like a different way of taking care of your body because that's how you want to take care of your body because you value movement.

And you know, if you're getting older like I am, I guess we all are, right? But depending on your age, you might also want to value strength training, right? And that's something that's important to me. And I think about like integrating that pretty much as soon as some of my kids are, are in school for longer periods and like the reasons why, right? Because as I get older, it's really important to me that I get stronger but that won't take a lot of time. And I think we can kind of get obsessed with things like, and I hear it, right? I hear it from a lot of women like, oh, I just need it for my mental and emotional health. And it's not that that's wrong or bad, it's just symptom management. Okay? And so this definitely comes up with my overwhelm clients.

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It's like, you know, I am exercising and like I need it obviously for my mental and emotional health, but I'm still feeling overwhelmed and I am never surprised by that, right? Because it's symptom management. What do I mean by that? Overwhelm isn't caused by a lack of exercise, okay? It's really important here. Okay? Overwhelm is caused by the perception of your brain, right? Your brain's perception of the number of things it has to do, being too much so you can continue to exercise and not change that perception at all in your brain. And then you will be exercising and still be overwhelmed, which also is valid. Okay? So all I want to do here is, is kind of put exercise in its place, value it for the movement, value it, yes for processing emotions, absolutely. But it doesn't cause emotions. That's the big difference here.

People get confused. Exercise feels amazing when you're stressed because it, it allows you to release it. And I do think that that's valuable. I think that we just don't understand that that's what's happening. So I actually like, dance, like dance classes and you know, I remember living in the city and going to dance classes and walking to the club and like, it just felt like such a release of stress. Like I loved that I was working a ton at that time and it's so valuable as a way to like give your emotions somewhere to go. And I think that we underestimate that, in terms of it being a tool to process emotions. But I always like to say that the work is like 80/20 in terms of your emotional health health. So 20% of the time you want to be like processing the negative emotion that you're feeling 80% of the time out of the moment.

You want to be working on your thoughts and doing thought work so that you don't have those negative emotions recurring that you don't want to, right? We're always going to have some emotions that recur you know, but it's the difference between feeling frustrated and discouraged and kinda negative like 80% of the time versus feeling it 10% of the time. Okay? That's the difference between doing thought work and not doing thought work. Exercise is really helpful for processing the emotion after it's already there, right? Quite obviously, right? So you feel a feeling like stress, you move your body so that the feeling moves through you, right? Exercise is an action that you take, but thoughts create feelings and feelings drive

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actions. And so what you're doing is you're taking the feeling and you're doing something with it. You're processing it, which is great, but it, it's not what like is the cure for the feeling.

So it will come back again. You will feel stressed again and then you'll need to process it again, right? Again, totally fine. But it's symptom management. And so if you actually want to solve the negative thoughts, the overwhelm, the self pity, the frustration, the resentment, whatever it is that you're feeling, I think the best way to do that is through thought work. And the reason I think it's the best way is because it solves it from the root cause. So regardless of whether you exercise or not, you're feeling how you want to feel like that is so important and so empowering. And then exercise to the extent that you want to exercise. But if you're so dependent on exercise's, symptom management, it can become problematic because you're kind of like chasing the emotion trying to get it to go away all the time versus just solving it from the root cause.

And then also, like if you get injured or sick and you can't exercise, you know, it's a lot harder. So I am able to, you know, just keep my head on straight relatively right with these three little ones and not feel overwhelmed and be able to manage the mental load. And like, yes, is it hard? Yes, of course, but not get into like self pity a lot. And, and I don't worry that much really ever. Like I can manage my mind so well and so I don't need like a carved out workout class for that. And I think that when we say we need that for mental and emotional health, sometimes it's coming from the place of thinking that it solves the negative emotion. It's not the cure for it, it doesn't solve it, it processes it, which a good right? It's a good thing.

I'm not saying that's a bad thing. It is a good thing. I just have this, perspective because I've had the privilege of coaching so many moms, like thousands of moms, and it's very common for me to coach someone who says I'm working out and I'm still overwhelmed, right? I'm, picking on overwhelm here 'cause it comes up so much with moms, but it could be, you know, your negative emotion of choice. It could be stress, it could be self-pity, it could be, you know, frustration, right? Yes. Exercise. But just know that that's sort of like managing the symptom thought work is going to

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solve it from the root cause. The other side of the coin with respect to the work that I do when I'm coaching my clients with respect to weight loss is I take a no exercise approach. And what I don't mean is that you need to stop exercising to lose weight.

But what I do mean is that you don't want to add in exercise for the purpose of weight loss. So I have lots of, clients who are in my weight loss programs and they came into them already exercising, and I always say, yes, keep doing what you're doing. Your body's used to it, you enjoy it. Absolutely. And also don't add in any additional exercise for the purpose of weight loss because it's just like adding a challenge. Like why make weight loss harder? So of course, exercise is helpful for your overall wellbeing and your physical health and you know, you're going to get stronger from it. Or maybe if you like the cardio, right? I'm, lumping in all types of exercise here in terms of fitness and movement and all of the things, but it depends on like what you're doing. I'm sure there's a, a main purpose of it.

I just want to be the voice that says it's ancillary. Like to, it, it's parallel to a calorie deficit. It, it really has nothing to do with it at all. And I think when we rely on exercise to create the calorie deficit, what's very common with my clients anyways is that they end up overeating because they're hungrier. And so that's why you kind of end up creating a bigger challenge for yourself and you know, you got enough going on, let's not do that, right? And so you absolutely can lose weight without exercising at all or just with doing what you're already doing. And again, of course I would never say like, just sit all day and don't move your body. That's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is we've kind of gone from, you know, exercise not even being on the radar, right?

Pre 1950s, right? We're just moving our bodies and working and caring for our homes and our kids. And that's, that's literally what I do now to this whole like boom and wave of exercise being like almost overly valued as the solution to anxiety, to stress, to, your happiness. Like, and there's almost shame around it. Like if you say you don't exercise, you are kind of, you know, shamed a little bit for that. And that's just interesting, right? Because, you know, we're the masses, we're people. We want to do things

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that are positive and impactful for our health of course. And also, I just want you to take a step back and just put exercise in its place where it belongs. Yes, it's helpful. It's, it's absolutely helpful for processing your emotions. It has extraordinarily, helpful benefits for your like wellbeing and a lot of times, and this isn't the case with like my clients necessarily, but a lot of people who are just like feeling stuck and don't know where to start in life, like starting to exercise is one positive thing that can really make a difference, right?

But for most of my high achieving mom clients, you're already doing so much. Like you're not in that place where you need to just start exercising to get going. And obviously there are very real long-term health benefits if you are exercising, right? Increased longevity, like obviously improved strength and mobility and you know, even reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression and, you know, there's so many other benefits, right? Better cardiovascular health and better sleep quality. Like I'm not at all arguing with any of that. I just see for my little corner of the online world, my corner of the internet with my high achieving mom clients is that they want to do such a good job and hold themselves to such high standards that they take the assignment of exercising so seriously that they end up thinking erroneously that exercise is the solution for overwhelm and it's the solution for weight loss and it's the solution for like stress and happiness and wellbeing.

And because they're already doing all of these other things in their lives, taking care of the home and the family and the kids and they're working and like they're on the go, right? And like, I'm like this too. I get it. When you add in exercise, oftentimes it's just another thing that adds to the overwhelm and then you're eating more and then you're up and down that same 10 pounds. And so I believe in the benefits of exercise, I, just want to bring more awareness to what those specific benefits are and how it can be very helpful for processing emotion and symptom management of your emotions. And of course, like if you're using exercise for something specific, like, you know, increasing your strength, yes, have at it, but the error that I see is using it to change your feelings. So I'm going to exercise

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so that I no longer feel overwhelmed or I no longer feel stressed, which is not going to work.

It's just going to process the emotion. It'll still come back the next time 'cause you haven't worked on your thoughts in your brain. And then also using exercise as the main, or one of the main methods or modalities for weight loss. And it typically sounds like I'm eating healthier and I'm exercising and I'm still gaining and losing the same 10 pounds. And I'm like, yep, not surprising to me at all. Right? Because weight loss is a calorie deficit, like always and forever. And when you add in exercise to create that, it can just be a less direct path to the goal. And so it adds in a challenge or an obstacle. And I think that narrative isn't normalized, but I, I'm telling you my friends, the reason I'm able to get so much done and achieve my goals is to, because I take an essentialist approach.

And so for me it was like, how can I lose weight doing less? And I focused just on a calorie deficit and that's what I help my, my mom clients do, right? Your lives are full and it works extraordinarily well. And then if you want to have another goal, take an essentials approach with that. If you want to strength train to genuinely get stronger, use strength training just for that. If you want to work on your nutrition or your macros, because that's the type of health and nutrition you want to have, do that. If you want to work on your sleep or your gut health or like any of the other health goals that, are worthwhile, do that. But again, I think it's like a result of just like the marketing industry. I was listening to this business podcast the other day and she was talking about one of her clients and I, I think she said it was gut health.

It was gut health. She said, as soon as her clients started talking about the benefits of taking care of your gut health, being losing weight, it sold so much better. And I'm like, yep, there it is again. Like, you know, it's because that's what so many people want, right? It's, it's what so many of you want is to lose weight. Just be mindful of your real life and the capacity that you have. Because if you are taking on a lot of other health goals and a side effect of them could be weight loss, but it's not the main thing, then it's not the most direct path. Like just the other day someone was messaging me

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like, I counted macros and it really worked, but it was so much work. I'm like, yeah, because you're optimizing for nutrition and for calorie deficit at the same time.

It's just my approach. But it works extraordinarily well, especially for like really successful women and all that is like, you're, you are definitely one of those women if you're listening to this, like by that I just mean you take on a lot, you have a high capacity, you want your life to be full with kids and work in the home and like all of the things, right? And so adding in a goal to that like has to fit within your everyday life. And again, I see this all of the time at New Year's where we want like our goals to entertain us and to be sexy and to do all of the things. And that's why you don't do them all the way. That's why you stop. That's why most people aren't achieving their goals in March. And so I know that, and I take a more essentialist approach doing one simple, straightforward goal at a time, and it works really, really well.

So I'm a fan of exercise, but I also want to be the voice that normalizes the actual benefits of exercise and how exercise does not replace thought work. Like your thoughts create your feelings. So exercise doesn't change how you feel right now. It processes emotion, it's movement processes, emotion, like deep breaths. However you want to process your emotion, absolutely, but it doesn't like change your brain. You have to change your thoughts to change how you feel. And I recommend doing that out of the moment. I think it's the most life-changing work you can ever do. That's the work we do in Mom On Purpose weekly group mom coaching. Nothing better than that, my friends. And then also normalizing that exercise can be amazing for specific health goals related to that, like strength training for getting fit. And obviously, you know, there are other benefits, but it's not like the most direct path to a calorie deficit.

So with that, maybe you reconsider the role that exercise has in your life, or maybe you don't. But nonetheless, I hope that this was helpful just to share a different perspective. Don't let anyone shame you if you're not exercising. You know, you are doing exactly what you want to be doing in this season and that doesn't have to be approved of by anyone. You're doing an amazing job. You would not be listening to a purpose-driven podcast about

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motherhood and overwhelm and weight loss otherwise. And so I just want you to know that whatever you're doing is enough. And if you want to add in exercise, don't do it because you're pressured or you think that like, that's going to be some increase in status.

Do it because you genuinely want to get stronger or you just like the movement. Like when I would take those exercise dance classes, like I did that because I genuinely enjoy dance, like I love dancing and so that's a good enough reason as any, right? But you know, the whole reason why I did this episode was, is because I'm just seeing it time and time again of women using exercise as a tool to solve something that it was never meant to solve. So that's what this is about. All right, my beautiful friends, I love you. Thanks for being here. I'll talk with you next week. Take care.