Speaker 1: You're listening to The Healthy In Real Life podcast episode number 37. Welcome to The Healthy In Real Life Podcast bite-size tips for healthy living that you can implement right now. Join us weekly for interviews and real life advice for creating the happiest and healthiest version of yourself. Here's your host, fitness expert, author and mom of two, Gina Harney.

Gina: Hey everyone, this is Gina, creator of the fitnessista blogging brand. Welcome back to the show I'm so excited that you're here today, thank you so much for tuning in. The kiddos are back in school, we are back into the swing of our routine and while I absolutely miss just lounging around in our pajamas until 10:00 AM, I am so excited to have blocks of time during the week to get work done and crossing my to-do list.

Gina: I feel so much more centered and productive. And I'm also excited because it gives me more time to do interviews during the day for this format. So, that's exciting too. So, I'm excited to see what the next year will bring with the podcast. I do have some really amazing interviews lined up. So stay tuned for those. But before we get into this week's episode, I wanted to go ahead and read this week's five star review.

Gina: So this one says, "Incredibly informative. This has become one of my favorite podcasts. I've been working out and eating healthy for a while now and have definitely hit a plateau. Gina's tips have gotten me inspired again and have helped me understand how I may be missing the mark. Thank you so much." Thank you so much for taking the time to leave that five star review it really helps the visibility of the show. And also it's just nice little pat on the back, high five for me to keep doing my thing over here in my podcast closet.

Gina: So, if you find the show enjoyable, if you've gotten any value out of the episodes, if you wouldn't mind just taking the time to head over to Apple Podcast, or Stitcher, or wherever you're listening and leave that five star review I would be so grateful to you. Thank you for doing that. And also as a little thank you, if you do leave that review you'll just head to fitnessista.com/podcast review. So F-I-T-N-E-S-S-I-S-T-A.com/podcast review and I'll give you a copy of my barre blast workout for free.

Gina: So, this is a full length of barre workout that you can stream, you can download, it's yours to keep and it's one of my favorite styles because it combines the really burn-y intense elements of traditional barre workouts with some cardio intervals. So, you'll get a nice burn, you'll get a nice sweat, and it's just a fun total body workout. So, that's a little thank you from me to you.

Gina: So, I wanted to tell you guys all about LES MILLS On Demand. This has become my favorite online workout platform. I love it. There are over 600 different workouts on there and they completely revamped it, so I first tried it, it was when I was pregnant with P, so a few years ago. And I liked it but I felt like a lot of the workouts were more geared towards instructors, it was just a little glitchy, you could tell it was new.

Gina: They completely revamped it and added so many new videos and the LES MILLS formats are incredible. They just needed a format to match them and they absolutely created it with this one. So, their instructors are top-notch, I did their body pump training a couple of years ago and it was by far one of the hardest trainings that I have ever done, they expect so much out of their instructors. And all of their workouts are science-backed in design with a very specific purpose.

Gina: So, they're just not going in and throwing moves against the wall at you. Every single move rep has a reason and it goes with the music, so they're super fun. If you guys would like to try them out especially if you're looking for something new as we head into the fall, it's really fun. I think you guys are going to like this. So, if you just head to bit.ly.com/yaylesmills. So bit.ly/yaylesmills and you'll get 21 days for free.

Gina: So you'll just sign up, you will get access to those 600 plus workouts. And like I said, it's really fun, there's a lot of different things to choose from, body pump, barre, there are spin classes, and there's yoga fusion class, body attack which has become one of my faves, GRIT which is a high intensity interval-based workout. So much to choose from. So, I hope you guys love it. 21 days for free. You'll just head to bit.ly.com/yaylesmills.

Gina: So, for this episode we are turning the tables a little bit. So, this is an interview that I did with my friend Ali Damron for her podcast. So, it's called The Ali Damron Show. And I'll link to that in the show notes. She has also been on my show a couple of times. And we are chatting about all things postpartum fitness. So, this is a really good episode if you are pregnant or if you are postpartum. And this does not have to be newly postpartum, once you are postpartum you are postpartum forever and that is not a bad thing. It's a good thing.

Gina: And we are just talking about the safest exercises to do, things you should avoid, why I think sleep is the most important thing. We all know I love my sleep. And so many of my best tips for my mama friends out there. So, I hope that you find this episode enjoyable, I really had a lot of fun chatting with Ali. I'm very passionate about postpartum and pre-natal fitness. So, check it out, I hope you love it and let's head into the episode.

Ali: All right guys. So I am so excited, I have my fried Gina with us. We are going to talk all about postpartum fitness today. So, thank you so much for being here.

Gina: Yeah, thank you so much for having me. I'm really excited to chat with you.

Ali: Yeah. So, tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got into postpartum fitness.

Gina: Sure. So, my name is Gina and I blog over at fitnessista.com and I started blogging 11 years ago. I have two small daughters and my husband is a pilot, and I started blogging basically just as a way to find community. We are military, so we are moving around a lot. And it gave me an opportunity to connect with more fitness minded people. So, since then I've been posting quick workouts, and recipes, and just mom adventures and life. And my passion really started to evolve into postpartum fitness after we had our first daughter. And it made me realize that there's just such a lack of information about it out there. I'm a certified personal trainer, as are you, and group fitness instructor, and I couldn't believe that we weren't taught about this at all, hardly.

Ali: I know.

Gina: Like in our NASM textbook, it's like one third of a chapter of quote, special populations is postpartum fitness. Which is bananas to me because I feel like when you're pregnant there's so much information about what you can eat, and birth options, and you have the baby and they're like, "Good luck figure it out." And so, I really wanted to dive in and learn as much as I possibly could because I love creating workouts for my website but I just wanted to really make sure that the were safe.

Gina: So that involved me getting some extra certifications, taking some workshops, trainings, just learning as much as I could to help postpartum moms because I'm a fitness professional and after I had my first kid I was like, "I don't know what to do." So, I wanted to demystify it a little bit.

Ali: That's awesome. Yeah, I like how you said that. I mean, I can remember going through my personal training certification and studying it all. And it never really even dawned on me then because I didn't have kids, I wasn't in that phase of life at all. And I remember reading the special populations and it was like in there with the elderly and just being careful with them. And then when I too had my first son I was like, you see people, because I used to be a runner, and so I used to see people going back to running. And so I just assumed at like four or six weeks postpartum I could start running and it felt terrible.

Ali: And then I started doing... I was into hit then. I didn't really strength train. And so I always felt terrible at the time. And so I was like, yeah, I had no idea what to do for myself. But so I think it's awesome that you did that. So, tell us about your journey postpartum. Did you figure it out on your own, did you seek out help, how did you do it?

Gina: Yeah, I had kind of the same experience you did. I was teaching at a health and fitness resort when I had our first daughter seven years ago. So, I had to go back to teaching. They gave me two months, but I took a tabata class at six week postpartum, and I was like, "Why do I feel like my end sides are about to fall out right now?" And that was my light bulb moment. I was like, "You have to figure this out."

Gina: So, I talked to a lot of the moms that I taught with who had been in the fitness industry for 20, 30 years, and they gave me a lot of information, and then from there I just really, I am a Google fanatic, so I just googled and PubMed my little heart out and just tried to find out as much as I could. I came across Katy Bowman's work, and she is one of my absolute favorites. I highly recommend her. Her website is called Nutritious Movement, but if you guys check that out she has so many incredible videos. Her books are wonderful and she just really breaks down the human body and movement, and she really helps with the postpartum period as well.

Ali: So, does she specialize in postpartum or just all around functional movement?

Gina: All around functional movements. So like posture alignment. She's a biomechanist. So she is a scientist of how the body moves. So, yeah, anything you have going on. You can check out her website. She has videos for like foot pain, back pain, shoulder issues, diastasis, like everything you would want to know, she is my go-to girl. She's awesome.

Ali: That's awesome. So, I'm going to ask you a bunch of other questions, but did you figure right out after like your second, because how old is your second child?

Gina: She is two and a half. Oh, two and a half. She's three and a half. She's going to be four. There we go.

Ali: Okay. Yeah, I feel like she, what month was she born?

Gina: She was born in October.

Ali: Okay. So my second was born in November and so we were kind of pregnant at the same time. And I remember following you and then postpartum, again, still didn't have it together, the second time either. And I remember watching you and being like, "Oh, she has it all figured out, postpartum like how to do this." And then sometimes watching you and figuring out a little bit more. But did you... When did you start exercising postpartum or how did you start recovering from that?

Gina: Yeah. So, I actually had a totally different experience with our second child. Our first baby we had very typical birth. It was non-medicated because it was pretty normal. She was a normal size, she was eight pounds, six ounces and then our second was 10 pounds 13 ounces.

Ali: I remember.

Gina: So just over 11 pounds. I had severe ab separation, so diastasis recti and for those of you who are not familiar with that, you'll hear it every now and again but some people really don't know what it is. But the linea alba is the connected tissue that runs between your rectus abdominis, so in between your six pack muscles, and that has to thin out and spread apart to make room for the baby to grow. And everyone has it while they're pregnant, your abs are making room for the baby. And then after the baby is born, everything just comes back to center.

Gina: But if you have loss of function, that's usually your first red flag that you do have diastasis. And then if you have abdominal separation beyond two fingers but it all still depends on how deep the gap is to you. So, that's not a hard rule. That just means that you have diastasis. It's super common. It's also common in men and children, women who have not had children. So pretty much anyone can have it. But I had severe diastasis.

Gina: So my journey after our second baby was so different. I did physical therapy for eight months, and I had this post-baby board fitness plan that I had put together that had taken me months and months of research and I put so much love and care into creating that planner. I'm really proud of it. And that gave me so much extra information to add into the plan, because I learned a lot about core stabilization and super safe PT exercises that you should do if you have that abdominal separation.

Gina: So, it just, I felt like it added an entirely different layer to the plan and that made me excited because I was like, "Okay. I'm going through this and it sucks but at least I can take this and use it to help other people who are going through it."

Ali: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I can remember when you went through that. But I felt like so like you seemed like you had it all together with that. Anyways.

Gina: Oh, yeah. No.

Ali: [inaudible 00:13:33] totally. So, tell us your journey with that. Did you find out that you had that at your six week postpartum, or there were like, "Oh, it's just not coming together as much as we'd like," had you started moving and exercising before that? How did that all work?

Gina: Yeah, it's funny because I went to mine at six weeks, it was part of my appointment. And I just did not have a good experience with our midwife practice in San Diego, but they basically just sent me on my merry way even though I told them I have terrible postpartum depression and they were like, "Okay. Well, don't hurt your baby, goodbye." And they just sent me off. So I just feel like the amount of care for postpartum women is so low and it's so disturbing.

Ali: So bad.

Gina: Yeah, it's horrible. And I read something, this meme online, and it was like, "Everyone wants to hold the baby after the baby is born, but who is holding the mom?" And that just hit me right in the feels because it's so true. They just send you off and they're like, "Okay, figure it out." But there's a lack of information out there. So I started to realize that I had it once I did start teaching again. I was like, "Okay, everything still feels weird, I have this pelvic pressure happening." And so, I just got a referral to physical therapy.

Gina: And I feel like for all moms no matter what, just ask your doctor for a referral to pelvic floor physical therapy when you go in for your six week postpartum appointment because most of the time it's covered by insurance. And even if you don't have ab separation, they can look at your body and find muscle imbalances, give you exercises for you, it's just such a great resource and I feel like a lot of people don't really know about it.

Ali: Yeah, no. I think that not a lot of people know about it too. And I also think, in other countries that's part of the postpartum period that you do do that. And I think that it's super beneficial. The one thing that I do think is that postpartum here that would require you to, A, either find childcare or bring your baby with you. And B, like the expensive things and then, C, just like the time management of it. I think it's really hard.

Ali: And so, I think it's great that actually there's been a lot of... even though it's not individualized but programs online and stuff that are talking about this that at least help you get in the right place to start thinking of core stabilization and those types of things. Because I just think like the barrier of entry at PT sometimes can be really hard.

Gina: Yes, I absolutely agree. And I had to bring P with me to so many of my appointments.

Ali: I know.

Gina: And it was like, it's like that's your whole day then. So the fact that we do have access to this online is incredible.

Ali: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Totally. So then you went to PT, so did you as a fitness instructor, were you exercising in that time on your own, were you doing PT stuff only, how did that all work?

Gina: Yes, I was. I was doing exercising on my own, I taught barre and span at the times. So they were both pretty low impact options. I don't think they were hindering any of the work we were doing in PT. And I was determined to be a very good PT student. So, I did my exercises every day and I think they made a huge difference, but my ab separation was so severe, I ended up having to have it surgically repaired.

Ali: At what month did you do that?

Gina: I did it, she was two, I'm bad at knowing how old my children are apparently. It was two summers ago.

Ali: Okay. So, do you feel back to normal now with everything?

Gina: Yes. Oh my gosh, yes. And just having... because like Katy Bowman describes linea alba, she said it's amazing how this connected tissue can just close back up and repair itself, but sometimes it's so stretched out beyond measure. It's like an old sock. So, no matter what you do, you put the sock on and the elastic just falls down, that's what can happen sometimes. So, no amount of PT was going to help mine go back together.

Gina: And once I had it sown back together I was like, "Oh my gosh, this is what it feels like to have everything back where it's supposed to be."

Ali: Yeah. Yeah.

Gina: Yeah, and the nice thing is too now that I know proper core stabilization techniques from PT, when I take a barre class, or when I take any other class like Orangetheory, I can get on the floor and either do my PT exercises when they're doing traditional core work, or I have that awareness now in my core. I can do more traditional ab exercises now because I can maintain that stabilization. So, it's just the intention is so much better there.

Ali: Yeah. How long did it take for you to recover from the actual surgery?

Gina: Oh my gosh. Core-wise, I was working out again at six weeks and feeling good doing spin, strength training barre. As far as core work goes, I probably wouldn't say I feel core normal until maybe six months ago. So pretty recently. And up until then I would just get on the floor and do PT exercises when I was in a group of fitness class. Or if I was teaching a class, I would demo like one or two reps and that would be it. I would walk around and couch or sit on the floor and talk to them but yeah I was just super careful.

Ali: Yeah. So, with your program and your specialty with postpartum fitness now, if somebody has just like the run in the mill type of labor delivery pregnancy all that, when do you suggest going back to postpartum fitness and how do you suggest that they do that?

Gina: Yeah. So, usually the doctors will give you the go ahead to work out again at six weeks postpartum if you have a quote typical birth, or at maybe eight weeks if you have a C-section. And they'll say, "Go back to whatever you did before." And that's frustrating to me because there's no gradual build up to activity. So it's like, "Okay, I couldn't work out yesterday, but you're telling me I can work out today, what's the difference between yesterday and today?" And also they have no idea what you did before you got pregnant, so maybe you were a cage fighter, like they don't know. So they're just like, "Go on, do your thing."

Gina: So, I think that there are exercises you can safely do as soon as you give birth if you have no complications or like major tearing or anything like that. Some of my favorites are pelvic floor lifts or kegels, diaphragmatic breathing is a really great one. You just lie on your back, take a nice big inhale, and I like to think of my belly as like an umbrella. So, as you inhale you'll just fill up the umbrella. And then as you exhale, you exhale out all of the air out and close the umbrella. So you're just pulling your core up and in. And that's just a nice way to remember what it feels like to activate your core again because you've been holding the baby for 40-ish weeks.

Gina: And also, I think really gentle stretching is something that can feel good right after you give birth. You still have relaxing coursing throughout your body, so I would avoid overstretching but just rolling your shoulders out, reaching your arms up, or like gentle bends. Like that should... there's no reason to avoid that if that feels good. I also feel like vitamin D and time outside is such a good mood booster especially in the early postpartum period, your hormones are just all over the place.

Gina: So, I think after three to four weeks if you're feeling good leisurely walks around the neighborhood are a great idea. I absolutely think you should avoid any type of impact exercise. So even if after you're cleared to resume your fitness routine, I would say avoid it for 16 weeks and it's really hard because I've been there and I know what it feels like to be like, "Yes, I'm free. I can finally workout again," and then you're like, "Oh, I can't jump or run."

Gina: But there's so much internal healing that needs to transpire. So, even if you feel pretty good on the outside, everything internally is still working to come back to homeostasis, it's been through a lot. And impact activities if you do them too soon they can cause excess stress on the pelvic floor, and that can lead to incontinence, it can lead to pelvic organ prolapse. I just feel like it's not worth peeing your pants forever. So, it's hard to wait, but 16 weeks in the grand scheme of things is really not that bad and there are so many other safe options you can do besides jumping in high impact like plyometric activities.

Ali: Yeah. No, I agree and I think people highly underestimate the power of just walking. Like it really is amazing for you and the baby, like you said, the vitamin D aspect and just, I mean, walking for exercise at that point in the game is great.

Gina: Yes, I totally agree. And I had a couple of girls write to me after trying my plan and they were like, "At first I was bombed because it's just a lot of walking and easy strength work." I'm like, "Yep, that's exactly what you should be doing." But then you build back your fitness level safely. There is that gradual increase in your activity level instead of just, "Boom, I'm cleared, I'm just going to Orangetheory." Like no, don't do that.

Ali: I can remember being probably six weeks post pregnant, I got cleared and I can remember my living room it was dark, it was like December, it was a train wreck and trying to do burpees, and my core I will never forget that feeling it felt like a balloon had popped in there and there was nothing to hold it. It felt so terrible and I was just like, "What should I push through this?" And I've come a long way those three and a half years even after my second with realizing what should go on postpartum, but it was just like in such the depths of sleep deprivation and in it that I wasn't even thinking clearly and I just kept doing it. It felt awful. It felt like when you bend over postpartum and just squishy and there's nothing there?

Gina: Yes.

Ali: It was really uncomfortable.

Gina: Yeah. I feel like postpartum both times after with my stomach just felt like a bowl of bread dough. Just like everything is just very confused for a while.

Ali: Totally. Okay. So you start around six weeks or so trying to begin to start building things up, and then up your fitness level. So this changes the topic a little bit, but new moms are in the midst of sleep deprivation and probably breastfeeding, maybe not. But just in the midst of all that, how do you feel like new moms get the energy to work out and stay healthy or get healthy?

Gina: I feel like this is a tricky one because I really think for a new moms that sleep is way more important than exercise. So, if you're completely exhausted from being up all night and the baby is finally taking a nap, I would just lie down and try to take a nap too. And I feel like maybe that's not what people want to hear, but sleep is so important for your body, and for your hormone levels, your mood, your energy, your hunger levels. It just affects everything, and if you are completely zonked and you try to get in a workout, chances are that it's not going to be a very good workout anyway. So I feel like it's worth just resting. Maybe trying again the next day, but honestly I wouldn't focus on creating a solid exercise routine until you're only waking up maybe two times a night or less. So, I just would focus on sleep and good nutrition.

Ali: Yeah. No, I highly agree. I think that the lack of sleep is, not usually, I think it can be misdiagnosed as postpartum depression and anxiety too and it's just sleep deprivation. And so, I'm highly always encouraging new moms to really make sure that they're getting new sleep or getting as much sleep as they can so that they're not feeling as anxious and as depressed because sleep deprivation is like a form of torture. So no one is going to feel mentally good if they're sleep deprived either.

Gina: I feel like that's the hardest part of the postpartum experience. Take sleep away and it just makes everything so much harder.

Ali: I know. I can remember with my first baby going through that and being like, "Okay, if I could just sleep this off for a week I'd probably be fine." But because you can't sleep at all, often you have to bend over and take care of the baby and learn breastfeeding and all those things. The healing period lasted way, way longer than I ever expected just because of those issues. We can't just lay around and sleep like we could a few months prior of having kids. So, I think it takes a lot longer to heal that way.

Gina: Yeah. I completely agree.

Ali: So, I get this question a lot. Moms who are breastfeeding are worried that exercising too much is going to impact breastfeeding and maybe taint their milk supply. Do you get that question a lot?

Gina: Yeah. I have gotten that question. And so, research has shown that moderate exercise doesn't affect milk supply or milk composition or the baby's growth. Just that lactic acid levels increase somewhat when the mom exercises. So, and this is only if she is exercising to a maximum intensity, but it has so many harmful effects to the baby and after an hour or so everything is back to normal. So I feel like the only main concern with that is just to make sure that you're getting in enough calories to support the increased activity level and breastfeeding. So, maybe I would add in a smoothie to your day, or just on top of your meals have a really nice smoothie with protein powder and chia seeds or hemp seeds, nut butter, fruits, some almond milk, or some spinach in there. And that will give you some extra calories.

Gina: And I also just... I find that babies sometimes dislike the taste of the milk from the lactic acid. So, often moms will just pump before they work out and that way they have a bottle waiting. So if baby gets hungry halfway through the workout or as soon as she's done, they don't get lactic acid boob basically. And sweat is another factor too. So like my good friend was a marathon runner and she would just wash herself off before she would breastfeed.

Ali: Oh man. Props to her.

Gina: I know right? I'm like, you go girl. [inaudible 00:28:16] but yeah, she would just wash it off and then it was fine.

Ali: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So, we talked about what kind of exercise new moms should be doing. When do you think that it's safe to incorporate more high impact things like running or hits, plyometrics, things like that?

Gina: Yeah. I would say after the 16 week mark. And that is if you're feeling good. So, I would build up to there. So, I wouldn't just get on the treadmill and do a bunch of splints, but maybe walk for three minutes and do a nice jog for one minute and repeat that for 20 to 30 minutes. Like, "Okay, that felt pretty good, so next time or in a couple of weeks I'm going to get on here and I'm going to walk for two minutes and I'm going to jog a little bit faster for 15 second."

Gina: Just really playing with the intervals, but you're slowly increasing the amount you run, how fast you run, and then build up from there. Plyometrics are nice because you can modify. So for example you're talking about a burpee, instead of doing a full burpee, maybe try it with your hands on the wall. And instead of jumping back to plank, you'll just walk your feet back to plank, walk your feet back up and then raise your arms overhead.

Gina: Okay, that felt like a piece of cake. So now I'm going to try jumping my feet back to see how it feels. And just build up from there. So, I just think the buildup is more important than anything. Trying out the modified version and you're like, "Okay, that feels really good. That feels really simple," and then just adding on from there.

Ali: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So, I know that you do a lot of different types of workouts in your own life. What type of exercise in specific do you think new moms should be doing? Like should they start with more like barre, and yoga stuff or should they start with more with like strength training, what's your opinion on that?

Gina: Yeah, that's a good question. I feel like it really comes down to what the mom enjoys. So, I don't want to tell you to do barre if you hate barre. So it's just really doing what you enjoy and the modifying it to just depending on how you feel. I do think there are some core exercises that are great for all moms and some of those are exercises to stretch your chest. So, you're hunched over so often throughout the day, you're breastfeeding, you're changing diapers, your chest muscles can get really tight from being hunched over and that can affect our posture. So just doing some chest openers feel really good. And because your chest is strong and hunched over it can make your back muscles weak.

Gina: So, just any type of exercises to strengthen your back muscles like bent-over rows, bent-over flys, just to strengthen those. It's going to help with your posture, it's going to help with alignment, it's going to help reduce back pain. Core stabilization which we already talked about is so critical, so your diaphragmatic breathing, your kegels. You can do matches on your back so you'll just lie on your back and bend your knees kind of table top and then you'll alternate dropping toes down towards the floor. That's a nice one.

Gina: And also glute strengtheners I think are important for everyone because we all, they're a large muscle group but they're also a weak muscle group. So, these can just help to protect your low back, support your low back and your pelvic floor. So like [inaudible 00:31:30] are great, bridges, if you want to get one of those resistance band loops and just put it above your knees and do a little squat walks or leg raises, anything to just promote that glute strength is really important.

Gina: I would focus on those core exercises and then add in the things you like. So if you like to spin, you can do spin, barre, I think yoga is fantastic, Pilates is a really nice postpartum option. A lot of the exercises are done with your head and shoulders off the floor. So I would start with your head on the reformer or on the mat and just do all of the leg work from there and you'll still feel it in your core. And then after that feels good, you feel stabilized, and you can try it with your head and shoulders up.

Ali: Mm-hmm (affirmative). That's a good idea. So, we talk about a lot in this country like postpartum bodies, and getting your pre-baby body back, and all that stuff. What do you, like in your own program, what kind of results do you think a new mom should expect? Like what's realistic for them?

Gina: Yeah. So, oh my gosh. The pre-baby body thing I just like, I can't. I can't. And it's all over the place. You can't escape from it. Everyone is like, "Oh, get your pre-baby body back," and here's the thing, pre-baby body is gone, goodbye. And that is a great thing because you're not going to have your pre-baby body because you had a baby. And your post-baby body can be so much better. So you can be fitter, happier, stronger, leaner, and you birthed a live human, so you're a rock star. There's no reason to wish for your pre-baby body to come back because you can be so much better afterwards. But I just think it's so important to remember that it takes nine months to a year for your body to fully recover from everything that happened. Childbirth is a huge event.

Gina: So, it's really easy especially on social media to get into the comparison trap. But try to not compare yourself to someone who is out running marathons at six months postpartum because, for all we know, they could be peeing their pants the whole time. You don't know what the situation is. So just give yourself kindness and grace.

Gina: For me it was hard for myself because I'm sure I have a really short torso. So my babies were out like a water melon, like a sideways water melon. So for my core to come back, it took a long time. Especially compared to my friends who are tall and have long torsos. So, it's like everybody is so different. So, I just think it's important to be really strategic about your training and focus on building back your fitness levels safely because it will come back and you will be able to crash your fitness goals. The most fit ladies that I know are in their forties, early fifties. And they're crashing it. So yeah, it gives you something to be excited about.

Ali: I know. That actually has been a breath of fresh air for me. I think over the last, I think since I really started doing my online business which was about two years ago now. Seeing just women and like meeting them and them saying like they're 45 or 50 and they're crashing it on a bikini competitor stage. And not that that's in my future but just seeing that. You think of women in their twenties doing things like that and then maybe thirties are for babies and then you think of it all downhill from there. But yeah, it doesn't have to be like that at all. There's tons of women who are crashing it after that. And both subsequent pregnancies also are different.

Ali: I had a really hard time with that in my own life thinking about my first versus my second. And my second baby was actually a pound smaller and I was way bigger and it took way longer to get the weight off and all that stuff. And I was just like disrupting the process because I couldn't understand why it was so much harder the second time. And I've heard other people say the opposite. That it was harder the first time to get it off. And so, I think every time that you get pregnant and have a baby things change with that too. So, lots and lots of grace.

Gina: Mm-hmm (affirmative). One hundred percent.

Ali: So, what kind of motivational tips can you give women to keep going when they feel like they're trying and they're tired and it's not working, they're not losing weight, what do you tell moms generally to keep them going?

Gina: Yeah. I just think it's important to remember your why. Why you're working so hard, why you're doing what you're doing, and having a strong why is always going to motivate you. So, I think it's just keeping that in mind. Whatever your why is. Like maybe I want to just live a long vital life and be able to be around for my family, and play with my kids, and play with my grandkids. Like for myself that's my why.

Gina: So, when I start to feel just in a slump or like, "Oh, I don't really want to do it today," I just think about that and like, "Okay." Or one of the things I also like to do is just to start. So, even because there are genuinely some days where you don't feel like working out. You don't feel like doing anything. And you shouldn't do anything. Like that's your body telling you, "Hey, I need a break. I need a down date today." But there's also days where like, I'm just feeling a little bit lazy. So, I just tell myself to start and give myself five minutes. And if after five minutes I'm like, "You know what? I just don't want to do this today. Then I stop and I just take a down day. I'm like, "Okay. This is a day I need to rest."

Gina: But usually after five minutes of getting started I'm like, "Okay, this feels really good. This is what I want to do." And then it gives you that little extra boost to finish it out.

Ali: Yeah. No, I think the same thing. And I also think that when you're talking about why, like maybe going a little bit deeper than that you just want to fit into your size two pants, or something like that. Find something that's genuinely going to improve in your life when you are thinking about that because that will keep you going further and longer than the motivation to just be skinny.

Gina: 100%. And vanity as motivation, totally cool, totally fine, it works for a lot of people. I just don't find that it has a lot of stain power because what happens once you are in that, quote, size two pair of shorts or whatever, what's next after that? So, you just want to have a really strong powerful why that's deeper than the surface.

Ali: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I highly agree. So tell us where we can find you online and what you offer.

Gina: Sure. So, you can find me on my blog, it's fitnessista.com. So, F-I-T-N-E-S-S-I-S-T-A.com and I post a lot of workouts there, quick recipes, playlists, videos, stuff like that. I'm on Instagram a lot as well and that's just @fitnessista. And through my site I have something that I call the fit guide workouts. And so, I created these because I wanted to create more custom workouts for people to find online because I feel like you go to someone's website and they just have one workout and they're like, "Here you go, here's your one workout." And I was like, "Well, what about the person who wants to gain lean muscle versus the person who wants to lose body fat or the person who likes to workout at home versus the person who loves to go to the gym and play with all the toys there?" Because that's what I like to do.

Gina: So, I created five fit guide workouts and they're all based on different fitness personalities. So, if you just go to fitnessista.com/fitnessquiz, you can take a little quiz and it will tell you what your fitness personality is, and then you can browse the fit guides from there. And I'll create a coupon code for you too for your audience. If you guys just enter the code alipodcast. So A-L-I podcast, and I'll give you 50% off. So, if you guys want to check them out, they're really fun and I have some video workout bonuses that come with them too.

Ali: Awesome. Thank you so much. I love that you're giving that to our audience.

Gina: Yeah. I hope you guys like it. But I loved chatting with you today. It was so fun.

Ali: Me too. Yeah you too, thank you so much for being I really appreciate it.

Speaker 1: Thanks for listening to The Healthy In Real Life Podcast. For more info, check out Gina's blog at fitnessista.com.