

Joyce: *Good afternoon and welcome to the “[Millionaire Moms](#) Interview Series.” I am [Joyce Bone](#) and today Carla Birnberg, founder of MizFitOnline joins me to discuss squeezing exercise into our busy lives and generally staying healthy! Our interview will be covering all kinds of things to help people stay fit. Welcome Carla.*

Carla: Thank you so much.

Joyce: *We have a lot of ground to cover today. This is going to be all about health and fitness and Carla is going to guide us on our quest to feel good and to look good. Why don’t you start out by telling everybody a little bit about your background in health and fitness?*

Carla: I kind of stumbled into the health and fitness field.

I didn’t do a lot of athletics when I was growing up. I was raised in a Jewish family that definitely favored the brains over the brawn so I didn’t participate in team sports at all.

I was an active kid just by virtue of playing outside/swimming in the summers and by high school I did do some aerobics (this was in the heyday of Jane Fonda) but nothing more than that.

It was only after I finished my Masters in Counseling, and needed a way to earn money while I job hunted, that I decided to become certified to be a personal trainer.

I’d recently fallen in love with weight training (*Ahh Terminator 2 & Linda Hamilton arms!*) and I quickly discovered that I really enjoyed training other people to do the same.

I found, somewhat to my surprise, that I really had the opportunity to utilize my counseling skills with my clients. Much more than I thought I would, I mean.

I quickly went from training in gyms & homes to opening my own personal training studio in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

I had the studio for 4 years (until I moved to a different state and sold my business).

After the move I decided that, even though I enjoyed training clients one-on-one, I wanted to be able to help more people than just my client base.

As a result, I began to do more health and fitness writing and also started running small groups of women whose focus was goal achievement in a broad “healthy living” sense.

Joyce: *That's great. Well, I would imagine counseling would just be a natural fit for personally training people. It's at least half the battle! Counseling is a wonderful background to have as a fitness expert and writer.*

Let's talk about health and fitness as it pertains to women and especially to busy moms.

I would like to really help the busy women/moms out there who just plain don't like to exercise. We all know that as you get older you metabolism slows down. The odds of sticking to a routine you don't like are very low.

Carla: I almost think it's easier for us women now that we have kids thrown into the mix because we are busier than before. Busy people get things done.

I know I don't have the luxury of putting off my workouts till later in the same way I did before we had our daughter.

The only time I have available is in the morning & if I pass on that I miss out completely until the next day. When I was single I didn't have as much going on. I could wait, then, and often the waiting ended up with me not doing the workouts at all!

I also find that my motivation is really different now.

The majority of the women with whom I work as a coach may not love to exercise but they do it and find motivation to do it in other ways than love of the workout.

As I've gotten older exercise is far less about how I look and much more about being healthy and living a full life.

I want to stick around and see my daughter grow up and I need the energy to keep up with her!

Joyce: *Good point, when your day is extremely structured, you do have to find focus and knock things out in a timely manner. Kids will wear you out in a hurry!*

Carla: They will. And I definitely find the less I exercise, the more tired I am.

Joyce: *Absolutely. As a mom, you really do need to keep your energy levels up with eating the right foods, drinking water and exercising. But how much exercise do I really need Carla?*

Carla: Experts in the field debate this all the time and there isn't a definitive answer.

When people come to me for advice and ask that question I tell them *for them* it all depends on where they're starting from!

If they, as many women who come to me are, are currently not exercising the bottom-line answer is: **anything and starting today.**

The current guidelines suggest you need to do 30 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous exercise.

A good guideline is 30 minutes, six days a week of something.

It doesn't necessarily have to be structured exercise if that doesn't fit into your schedule as we are shooting for better health, some weight loss perhaps and longevity here----not training for the Olympics.

It can be running around with your kids. I definitely count it as exercise if I walk to the park with my daughter and we run around there for a while.

I do suggest building two or three structured exercise days into your week. We will talk a little later about specifics with regards to weight training and cardio but at least two or three days a week should include concentrated doses of both of these.

Joyce: *I think a work at home or stay at home mom could work that into their busy lives. What about the mom who works outside of the house. I've had more than one woman tell me, "I work fulltime. I feel too guilty to put my kids in the gym daycare after being at his regular daycare all day. I end up skipping exercise altogether, any suggestions? I know I need to work out." So what do we say to these moms?*

Carla: I can relate to this.

For me, even though, I am home with my daughter full time I'm still trying to work full time. I work early in the morning when my husband is still home. When he leaves our day together begins.

Some days I make time to go to the gym for a formal workout. I stopped going for a while because I too felt really guilty about putting her in the gym daycare. I felt as though day time was supposed to be our time together.

She is three now and grasps that I am going to exercise when I leave her in the daycare. She understands the meaning of the word strong and she laughs about how she, too, is building muscles. She understands that I am doing something for me, sure, but that I am also doing something for US by working out to stay healthy.

What started off as my feeling guilty has turned into a fantastic opportunity to role model for my daughter the importance of health and fitness. She thinks that everybody goes to the gym. I don't leave her in the daycare area for very long. I

don't really need more than 30 minutes. I get in, I lift weights, I get out. I don't talk.

Plan what you are going to do when you go to the gym. If you plan ahead your time will be used efficiently. You don't need to spend all day at the gym. Twenty to thirty minutes on the treadmill or thirty minutes doing a weight routine and DONE!

You can also bring your kids into the workout if you want to skip the day care situation entirely. Role-modeling that fitness and exercise can be fun at home is a great way to encourage your kids to have a healthy lifestyle.

Make it a fun and family based activity!

If they children are older try exercise DVDs at home and include them. They will enjoy participating to the best of their ability in "mama's exercise." My daughter loves dancing around to the routines and definitely doesn't feel like she is being ignored. To her it is time we are spending together and it's all just an extension of playing in her eyes.

Joyce: *When you were talking about taking care of your needs and role modeling what's important to your daughter, it reminded me of the talk they give you on an airplane where they show the oxygen mask dropping down and how adults are instructed to you first put it before placing on a child because you have to maintain your ability to function so that you can help your children. That relates to physical health as well.*

Carla: Definitely. I think guilt is often times completely our thing or "deal" as women. I know my daughter sees it as a treat to go the daycare. She gets really excited the closer we get to the gym and all she talks about is how she's going to play with the big girls.
It has really struck me lately that she doesn't dread the daycare or see it as a punishment at all. **I** felt guilty. She is happy as a clam.

Joyce: *Let's commit to taking the time necessary to get that all important exercise in. You mentioned strength training as being important. Do we definitely need to incorporate this into our workouts?*

Carla: I do. This is one area of exercise where I think for women it is a non-negotiable. You **have** to do some sort of resistance training.

The initial allure for me was the fact weight training increases metabolism. By adding muscle thereby increasing your basal metabolic rate you can eat much, much more and not gain bodyfat!

Resistance training also decreases our risk of osteoporosis, reduces heart disease risk, and reduces our diabetes risk as well. Every single woman with whom I work with must commit to do some sort of resistance training.

The cardio piece of exercise we can almost squeeze in through taking the stairs, lunging around the house, jumping rope for a few moments etc. The resistance training we really need to make a concerted effort to make time and plan for.

It's all about about functional fitness as we age. The ability to shove our suitcase in the overhead bins and carry the groceries with ease.

Joyce: *That's a good point. What about travel though? What are some tips for working out on the road?*

Carla: What I tell my clients when they travel frequently for business is **pre-plan**.

Bring a jump rope, bring an exercise DVD There are so many available now from meditative yoga to hardcore pilates. You don't even need to purchase one just rent it from Blockbuster or Netflix and use your laptop to view it in the hotel room.

Also, if you have a choice where you stay always pick a hotel with a fitness room. Many hotels have exercise rooms or the ability to use a nearby health club for free or at a reduced rate---just call ahead and ask.

The most important thing is, if you decide to bring a DVD or some equipment along, *try it out at home first*.

Be sure your travel exercise routine is second nature before you depart. The last thing you will want to do is waste precious time trying to figure out poses/a workout when you're also rushing to a breakfast meeting.

[Watch youtube videos](#). Rented videos. Practice before you go.

You're much more likely to use whatever you brought with you (or go to the exercise room) if you've planned your workout ahead of time.

Joyce: *I know when I travel on business my brain is spent by the end of the day. The last thing I want to do is spend energy figuring out something new.*

Carla: Exactly. Do the DVD a few times at home, plan a jump rope music playlist and bring it along. When I travel I use/highly recommend resistance bands. They are so easy to use in a hotel room.

Joyce: *What are resistance bands?*

Carla: They are pieces of rubber tubing.
All you need to do is wrap the ends around your hands while you use them or you can buy ones that come premade with handles.

Basically the bands work to give you resistance in ALMOST the same fashion as dumbbells---but they're portable.

You can, for example, stand on the exercise band and do the basic bicep curl we've all seen done before with free weights. The bands are small, lightweight and travel friendly. They're easy to use for a variety of exercises and great for home workouts or travel.

Joyce: *Where would you buy these bands? How do we know what to do with them?*

Carla: I found some in the dollar bin at Target.

You can really find them anywhere now.

They don't need to be fancy. The different colors correspond to different levels of tension or difficulty which varies by brand. Red might be the most difficult in one brand and pink in another. Grab one, take it home, try some exercises and see if the amount of tension suits you. If it's too heavy for your biceps you could use it for your chest. I have a bunch of different colors and lengths. The thickness of the tubing determines the resistance which determines how easy or difficult it is to use in your exercise.

As far as what to do with them I'm sure there are DVDs geared to the bands. I also have videos on my site and there are many at youtube.com as well.

Joyce: *I am going to have to check those out. It would also be fun to use with your kids too.*

Carla: My daughter loves to pretend to use my resistance bands and shout: "Look mama, I am so strong!"
It all comes back to role-modeling. She has such a positive outlook on fitness right now. It's FUN to her.
It's an important obligation as a mom to lead by example how to be healthy and fit and have fun with it.

Joyce: *In today's world where children are plagued by weight issues, it's extremely important to cultivate a love of fitness in our children. Even if they don't seem to be coming along when they are younger, eventually it will kick in.*

Carla: If you lead by example I firmly believe....ok HOPE....that eventually they're going to come on over to your healthy living path. *Children always notice what you do.*

Joyce: *What are some tips for eating well when you are on the road?*

Carla: This is an area I discuss with all my clients.

I like to find out if it's a business or pleasure trip?

If the trip is for pleasure that may, for you, mean that you don't focus at all on healthy eating & use the trip as a chance to eat what you want intuitively and enjoy!

That is a personal decision.

If it's a business trip, then you just do the same things you would at home to the best of your ability. I would encourage them to preplan in the food arena as well. In my experience it's pretty easy to find healthy carbs on the road. Fruit, oatmeal, breads, certain nuts are all great choices and generally readily available. The hardest is finding protein on the go.

I would encourage readers to bring protein items which are portable and non-perishable. I have been known to slip a few envelopes of tuna into my luggage when I travel.

I also recommend finding a protein powder that you like. There are a variety of options from egg to hemp to whey that you will be able to find one you actually enjoy. I throw a canister into my suitcase and bring it along with me. When I travel for work I'll mix it into shakes in my room or put it in oatmeal at breakfast.

Always bring healthy choices with you when travel and along with you to your meetings during days away.

Always have a snack in your purse.

ANYTHING. A protein bar, a piece of fruit--- some sort of healthy alternative in case no food is available or the coffee spread is consists only of doughnuts.

It's usually when we go too long without eating that our firm resolve to eat healthy becomes weakened and leads us to make a "bad choice" (laughs)

Joyce: *I would have never of thought to mix protein powder into oatmeal. That would make you feel full longer I bet. Traveling with tuna? Better not open that on a plane or you might have a mutiny on your hands! I noticed in the store the other day they had vacuum sealed tuna where you wouldn't need a can opener.*

Carla: Just plan ahead. Moms don't think twice about packing snacks for their young children. Remember to add a healthy snack in there for yourself as well. After all, your family needs mom happy and healthy.

Joyce: *That's true. Is there any particular powdered shakes or power bars that you recommend?*

Carla: I'm a big fan of any bar with lots of good fats. The Zone bars, the Balance bars as examples of two.
If I eat foods that are fat-free (higher in sugar usually) I tend to crash HARD later. That's the same reason why I add protein powder/some sort of protein to my oatmeal always. I find that the addition of it (& more good fats!) makes oatmeal stick with me longer --

Joyce: *That's true, if I eat oatmeal I am typically hungry 40 minutes later. You like protein bars a lot? What about fast food?*

Carla: There are a lot of bars out there masquerading as health bars but are really candy bars in disguise. That's mainly why I really only do bars when I travel. Otherwise I try to avoid processed food bars as much as I can, although I do eat it more now that we have a child. It just makes it easy when you are on the road.

I will bring my daughter to McDonald's. I want to role model that we can make healthy choices wherever we are. I don't want to make fast food a forbidden thing as, in my opinion; it gives a simple purveyor of food too much power!

I will usually get the grilled chicken salad without the dressing, also buy a grilled chicken sandwich, toss the bun and throw the extra protein on top.

I cling to the fact studies show parents are still the strongest influence, not the peer group.

Joyce: *That's true. They live with us. Peers become such a critical piece during the teenage years but at the end of the day it's what they see at home that they take with them.*

Carla: That's my biggest healthy living motivator, I think, across the board.

Joyce: *It's for your daughter?*

Carla: Yes, because I know she is watching and she is going to mimic me. I was almost less motivated before I became a mom because I was the only person I thought I impacted. I am much more motivated now.

Joyce: *I exercise for stress release as much as to stay trim. What about women who are uncomfortable working out in gym because of their size. What can they do at home? The resistance bands are one thing.*

Carla: DVDs! There are so many great DVDs out there from which to choose as well. All different kinds of workouts from belly dancing to kickboxing! I think that's the best thing now with Netflix and Blockbuster. You can finally rent those videos so you don't ever have to just buy and hope you like the workout--- you can try them out first.

Joyce: *I never thought about renting exercise DVD's before.*

Carla: Yes, like we talked about before I'd definitely recommend doing that for trips.

There's also Fit-TV which is free most places.

Anytime I want to try something new and don't want to do in public I start there.

Yoga is an example. I'm really awkward and uncoordinated. I didn't want to go and display how uncoordinated I am in a group setting. I just did a search on the television guide and taped a bunch of different yoga shows. I am going through them by myself at home.

There is really no need to go to the gym. If you are not comfortable there or you don't have the time you can definitely get a good solid workout at home.

Oh, and BOSU Balls are fantastic and really multipurpose. It can be used for everything from stretching to helping you do push-ups, to working on your balance and your core strength.

Joyce: *What about the women who are so stressed out by the end of the day all they have energy for is a glass of wine. Any tips for them?*

Carla: Yes. Have the wine. Sometimes it is about the wine, I am not going to lie. Sometimes that really is what you need at the end of a long day! We need to broaden our definition of exercise as well.

It doesn't have to be full tilt an hour of sweaty cardio---it can be gentle meditative yoga! We are not focusing 100 percent on how we look here. It's about de-stressing, it's about internal health.

Do something calming like Yoga or simple stretching.

Joyce: *Do you think it's better to exercise in the morning or at night?*

Carla: Whatever works for you.

Whatever you will actually DO.

Consider that it's also possible to break the exercise up into segments. All the studies have shown that is just fine. You can do 10 minutes of jump rope in the morning, 10 in the middle of the day, and 10 minutes at night and it's just as good as 30 minutes at either end of the day! Whenever you can fit it in do it!

Joyce: *Does it make sense to put off resistance training until the weight has been lost. Some people don't want to slow down the weight loss process or bulk up.*

Carla: I'm a stickler for this. When I had my personal training studio, I would turn clients away who would not start incorporating the resistance training immediately.

I knew they'd be happier in the long run because they'd be toned when the pounds were gone. I also knew it would help them shed the body fat that much faster.

When you do cardio, your metabolism is spiked for a 30 to 60 minute window afterwards. When you do resistance training (and you add muscle) your metabolism is elevated all the time. As a result my clients got to their goals faster.

I have had women complain and say, "I have done weights before and I have bulked up." The bottom-line is we, as women, don't have the testosterone to bulk.

If you perceive that you're bulking it's typically because you are in the phase of still burning off body fat while adding a little bit of muscle.

You will be more compact, your clothes will fit more loosely, the weight may not budge on the scale, but you cannot build enough muscle to the point you bulk up. We don't have the testosterone.

I am so passionate about it (*laughs*) I know.

Mainly the osteoporosis, the diabetes and the functional fitness but also the role modeling of being strong women!

The other day my daughter grabbed everything she could find, shoved it all in a tiny basket, hoisted it overhead and looked at me and said, "Mamma, I so strong." I thought, "That's it. That's the key to being unapologetically yourself, feeling like you are strong!"

It doesn't need to be anything fancy. It doesn't need to be long. Twenty minutes, three times a week would be fantastic.

Joyce: *What about the ladies out there, that, haven't done anything in a long time, where should they start?*

Carla: With my clients I always say set yourself up for success.

If someone came to me that hasn't exercised in five years I'd start them out with only cardio for the first week. *We'd start slow doing five or ten minutes per session which leaves them wanting more exercise and not burned out the first week.*

We'd slowly increase everything over the weeks while still setting them up for success.

There is no point in pushing ourselves to our "limits" for their first four to six weeks—in my opinion as the majority of us end up so sore we QUIT. I'd focus with clients on building up their baseline and creating a solid foundation just like when building house.

Joyce: *Let's talk about healthy eating at home. A lot of people think it's too hard to eat healthy. What do you say about that?*

Carla: I say no. Indeed it is a choice but it doesn't have to be a hard one.

I'm simple & easy in my tastes.

Fortunately, my husband has the same kind of simple palate that I do.

We tend to grill, bake or poach chicken or fish most nights and then just add a complex carb (brown rice, pasta, etc.) a vegetable and a salad. Magazines like *Cooking Light* and *Eating Clean* make it a lot easier with the recipes and tips they offer, too. I also cook on the weekends and freeze foods for the week ahead. For me success is all a matter of planning in advance and deciding eating healthy is a priority for the family.

Joyce: *What about the argument I **only** eat three meals a day and I don't snack why is the weight not coming off?*

Carla: I hear that all the time.

It is typically two different things. First, sometimes it is that the three meals are too big.

A friend for example: she was definitely only eating three times a day---but the three meals were each approximately 800 calories each.

She had been aiming for a total calorie count per day of only 1500. Once she spread out her calories throughout her day into 5 mini-meals she was less hungry, had more energy, and lost weight. That's the simple answer.

The longer one, which I will make short, is that, in my opinion, you should snack in order to keep your metabolism elevated.

I eat every three hours or so during the day. So I'll eat, let's say, 7a, 10a, 1p, 4p 7p. These are all mini-meals for the most part and contain around 400 calories each. The main thing is that I am constantly eating to keep my metabolism up and my blood sugar levels even. That way your body doesn't start to catabolize or consume the muscle and hold on to the body fat----which is never our goal.

Joyce: *That sounds like a lot of potential work?*

Carla: We're not talking big elaborate snacks or minimeals at all. Small easy items like a few almonds & half an apple.

I am not a big advocate of calorie counting but if you take the total number of calories you want to consume for the day and divide by five instead of three you'll have a sense of portion control. It's similar to weight watchers points system.

Joyce: *Why is it that successful, driven women, that are awesome at work, fantastic with their children struggle so much with weight loss?*

Carla: That's a hard question.

I know in my experience what I saw was mainly two-fold.

I would have groups of women who would have 50+ pounds to lose and would come in and say to me (and I almost didn't believe it at first): I love exercise but I just have not made it a priority!

For these very successful women they were just very busy and didn't have easily identifiable time slots for exercise. Thus they had let it all fall to the bottom of their priority list.

Once they started scheduling workouts in their day planner just like any other important meeting & they started coming to train with me they were successful.

They really did enjoy exercise and were some of my most successful clients because they also loved being pushed and challenged.

These women enjoyed the effort of the weight training or the hard work of the cardio. They simply hadn't made workouts a priority until they came to see it as another scheduled appointment in their book. They needed to come view exercise, like important meetings, as something non-negotiable.

But the other side is the stress/food connection.

Second, food can become such an easy way to release stress. We are all trying to juggle and balance a great deal. We are up early taking care of our family and then we go to work and then we come home and take care of the family again, it's simply the fact that at the end of the day the food, wine, television, couch scenario can become too alluring.

I definitely tell my clients that I entirely can relate to what they're feeling and doing—but that they'll be surprised how much better they feel & how much more energy they have for all their roles when they squeeze exercise into their days.

Carla: Oh and it is so important to realize that you are going to stumble. I know for me it's some days the couch wins out but that's okay! It doesn't become a downward spiral because this entire healthy lifestyle is a *marathon* not a sprint. There is always a new chance tomorrow.

Joyce: *That's a good point. If you go on a diet and mess up many people beat themselves up and quit. The old patterns win. You could say, "Okay I stumbled but I am going to pick myself up, brush myself off and keep going."*

Carla: One concept my clients really respond to is if they fell off the wagon, started eating junk and not exercising is **"If you came home and found your house on fire, would you put water on it or gasoline?"** Of course, they laugh and say water! And there's the key. **If you've had some bad days with regards to your "plan" you can correct it with the very next meal or good workout! Keep moving forward.**

Joyce: *You have mentioned to me another term: NEAT.*

Carla: Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis.

Joyce: *What in the world is that?*

Carla: I always wondered how my husband's family stayed so lean and thin given the fact they really don't exercise a whole lot. And then I started observing their behaviors. I realized they get a whole lot of NonExercise Activity Thermogenesis (N.E.A.T.) because they're always fidgeting! They are always on the move.

When they talk on the phone they are never sitting down but ambling about the room.

I married into a family of calorie burning machines---and that's without the gym.

It's the trite (but works) notion of parking far away from the mall and walking, it's the idea of NOT driving to a neighbor's house and instead walking over. It's

the easy idea of not sending an email to someone in the office where you work but walking down the hall instead!

For me, when I skip the gym because of life constraints. I will deliberately “forget” things upstairs and will run up and down the steps when I retrieve them. I actively play with my daughter at the playground.

All of that is N.E.A.T. There are so many little things you can do throughout the day which add up to non exercise thermogenesis or, as we more commonly like to think of it, calorie burning.

Joyce: *Wow, that’s funny. So now I have a term for my fidgeting ways, N.E.A.T.. I am “leg shaker”. Drives my husband crazy!*

Carla: People burn up to 400 calories extra per day when they are fidgeters!

Joyce: *I am going to explain that concept the next time he tells me to quit fidgeting.*

Carla: One woman I work with frequently says to me: **I am going to tap my feet all day long!** I always tell her to go for it—who knows? She could burn an extra 100 calories right there.

It really makes a difference. Park a little further away and walk. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Pretend to forget something upstairs when you are down--- it all adds up over the course of a day and a lifetime.

Joyce: *Thank you so much for sharing with us how to eat better, get more exercise and be healthy! Can you share your website address with our audience?*

Carla: It is mizfitonline.com and my email address is MizFit08@yahoo.com. The site talks a great deal about fitness and more.

I offer many instructional videos but we also talk about bigger issues of striving for balance and healthy living in our hectic fast paces lives.

The most important thing is to start *doing* something today.

Whether it’s five minutes of walking or one push up against the wall it doesn’t matter---just don’t wait. START.

Joyce: *Get out there, get moving, and [be your own SUPERHERO](#). Until next time, this is [Joyce Bone](#) with [millionaire moms.com](#). Thanks for joining us. Take care.*