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What's a girl need to know this week?

## Ten Questions for Hilliard Studio Method Instructors on Fitness at 40

Susu Bear | April 26, 2014 | [0 Comments](#)

As part of our **So This is 40 Series** sponsored by **HENDRICK MINI**, we tackle some of the issues faced when turning the big 4-0.....along with some of the fun stuff like best gifts, make-up, hair tips, and celebratory girls' trips. We've learned this month about Osteoporosis from ORTHO CAROLINA and how to best fix those lip pucker lines from CHARLOTTE PLASTIC SURGERY. And here, we interview two of the gorgeously fit-and-forty instructors from **Hilliard Studio Method**, for their learning and lifestyle tips on how they stay so slender and strong.



Here are our Ten Questions for [Amy Welton](#) and [Allison Hickman](#) on Fitness at 40:

### **QUESTION #1:**

**While it may be hard for scoopcharlotte readers to believe you are actually 40 years old, I know you have hit this major milestone and moved right past it in incredible shape and style. Have you noticed any changes or new challenges in your fitness as you moved from your 30s to your 40s? Any things our readers may recognize themselves or have to look forward to?**

**Amy:** Speaking from the heart, the best change for my fitness routine was when I made the commitment to do the HSM method in February of 2013. I have been hooked ever since!!! I have always been committed to a regular exercise routine whether it was running, walking or yoga. But never added resistance training until HSM. The changes I noticed were changes to very specific areas of my body that I felt needed a little...lift. I really think as we move into our 40's it is very important for a woman to add resistance training especially when it comes to strengthening our core and building bone density.

**Allison:** Yes! The biggest change/challenge has been the amount of time it takes to feel "good" in your favorite pair of jeans or swimsuit. I remember being able to tighten up my eating (i.e., no splurges for one week while maintaining my normal workout routine) and being exactly where I wanted to be by Saturday PM. Somewhere in my late 30's...one week turned into at least two or more.

### **QUESTION #2:**

**I know you were an avid exerciser before training with HSM. Why did you stop / switch to what seems to the uninitiated like a less challenging workout?**

**Amy:** I have always had some type of regular fitness routine. It has always been something that I do daily. I have run, walked and enjoyed yoga. I still enjoy those activities. However, HSM is different. It is an amazing, challenging and fun routine that works every part of a woman's body that we want to look good. Each class has a new routine which makes it fun and it is never boring. When I walk now, I'm so bored I can't stand it.

**Allison:** I will always love yoga and running with friends! I hope that at some point in my future this will once again become a normal part of my routine (in addition to my HSM training). Honestly, at this point in my life, time is just so valuable. I only have so many opportunities per week to invest in my 16-year marriage, raise our two children, be a daughter, friend, and volunteer. Accordingly, I desire the most effective, efficient and fun workout possible. HSM provides that...not to mention an incredible community of powerful women who promote and encourage the pursuit of an overall healthy and balanced lifestyle.

### **QUESTION #3:**

**I know from personal experience that diet becomes ever more important as you age, even if you do workout regularly. What's your secret to such slender success? You are not allowed to tell us that "you never diet, you only watch what you eat and make healthy choices!!" We need the real scoop. Have you had to give anything up food wise? Have you created any new healthy habits we can try ourselves?**

**Amy:** Great question. I really don't feel as if I deny myself anything. I really enjoy eating healthy because what I choose to fuel my body will affect how I feel all day. I can't start my day without our HSM smoothie. It is my favorite meal of the day. (*Editor's Note: Here's that recipe.*) I use organic frozen blueberries and I even have my 15 year old daughter Maggie hooked on them. I love salads – kale, spinach, romaine and I always have some type of protein to go with it. I will snack on a handful of nuts or celery with almond butter. I also love that we have clients that focus on nutritious eating. The sisters from **The Whole Tulip** always post helpful hints on their website. We also love Vani Hari, **The Food Babe**. She has really opened my eyes to all the harmful ingredients that are being used in so many foods.

**Allison:** I grew up with a family that modeled all foods in moderation – nothing was forbidden and for that I am grateful. I did have access to homemade dessert regularly which makes me quite the snob when it comes to sweets. As a vegetarian for almost 9 years, I do typically eat healthy foods. That said, I had to drastically reduce my sugar intake as I approached 40. White sugar provides empty calories and when consumed frequently, I feel less energetic and experience more drastic mood swings. My goal is to remain mindful that I am really looking for "fuel" to feed my body so that I can have energy to accomplish all that I love in this life!

**QUESTION #4:**

**What's your favorite healthy meal or snack? Don't say carrots or blueberries or I will make you go again. And what's your go-to treat or cheat? Please say wine.**

**Amy:** LOL. I mentioned blueberries in question #3! My favorite treat is a beautiful tray of different cheeses. My absolute favorite is Manchego. I adore **Luna's Living Kitchen**. It is such a treat to go there with friends for lunch. I love their West Coast Wrap-it is divine. I also love sushi with brown rice. My two favorite places for sushi are **Upstream** and **Sushi Guru**. I love a good glass of wine absolutely.

**Allison:** The most significant change to my diet occurred when I accepted Liz's challenge of making the HSM smoothie for breakfast (instead of the leftover bagel or waffle my children left behind). Within weeks of making the commitment, I felt more energetic with less high/low feelings throughout the day. This really has promoted a healthy foundation for my eating throughout the day. And yes...it makes me feel much better about that occasional glass of wine!

**QUESTION #5:**

**HSM is a notoriously challenging and notoriously effective workout. Why do you think that is?**

**Amy:** It is challenging because we don't just focus on one muscle group. You will be working so many at the same time. We may have you in a low lunge working your biceps but at the same time, you feel your core engaged and your glute is on fire. Takes your mind off the biceps a little.

**Allison:** HSM is effective because you can always make it more challenging – and it never feels like the same workout. As your body awareness becomes more finely tuned you know how to push past your comfort zone – staying lower in your legs or holding longer and more intensely. Just talk to Madison (HSM teacher) – a professionally trained athlete and swimmer about the workout – it has never become easy – ever!

**QUESTION #6:**

**What is the most challenging HSM position for you? What is your favorite? And why?**

**Amy:** Most challenging HSM position will always be plank for me. I am always trying to make my plank better and really feel my obliques and transverses abdominis engaged. I love it when you say to yourself "I can't do one more pushup" and then you have the challenge of a two minute hold- now we're talking. My favorite is literally every single gluteal exercise routine we have. I love them all. Ask Liz.

**Allison:** Plank series...after lifting heavy weights for over 15 minutes. It is my favorite because you are working every muscle in your body when you really want to fall to your knees and take a break.

**QUESTIONS #7:**

**Do you do any other forms of exercise to stay fit? What are they?**

**Amy:** I try to incorporate yoga. I love to stretch. I love a long walk with a friend or my husband Martin.

**Allison:** I currently do no other forms of exercise to stay fit. However, I really enjoy walking, yoga, hiking and golf but they are a "bonus" and not what I consider part of my regular workout routine.

**QUESTION #8:**

**What's your favorite workout wear brand? Any particular item you could not live without?**

**Amy:** **Lululemon**. I love their pants and fun tops. I need some more pants- my dog McCallie ate three pairs.

**Allison:** I love **Lululemon**! They gave me my first job after leaving the financial industry 10 years ago to raise our two children (and how I met Liz & Clary). The energy bra, cool racerback tank or wonder under tights are staples in my closet.

**QUESTION #9:**

**You've probably seen a lot of things work and not work for friends & clients as they work to maintain great shape and fitness. Can you tell us 2 or 3 things you recommend to folks who are trying to shape up? Can be a book, diet, "app", habit, practice, etc.**

**Amy:** I think the biggest misconception is that when you work out hard you can pretty much eat whatever you want. That may work for some people now but will catch up with you later. Diet and healthy choices will always affect your exercise routine and most importantly how you feel. I would encourage someone that has never tried HSM to please come and see for yourself. Try a beginner (Essential) class or one of our regular classes. I am so honored to be a part of the HSM family. We are a group of encouraging teachers who are passionate and love what we teach.

**Allison:** I highly recommend setting achievable goals and asking a friend, family member or trainer to keep you accountable. Most importantly, find some way to keep it fun...life's too short to do otherwise!

**QUESTION #10:**

**Anything you'd like to add that we haven't touched on?**

**Amy:** When will I see you again at the barre? 😊

**Allison:** Extend kindness and grace towards yourself (& others of course). If you have fallen short of your fitness expectations or goals – then learn from your disappointments and try again! Fitness is a journey and there is no one perfect way to feel strong and powerful as we age!

# # #

And on these wise words we'll end this interview. P.S. You will see me at the barre at the next Essentials Class ladies!

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