

[00:00:00] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** What's going on? Welcome back to the podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Mike T. Nelson. And on the podcast, we talk about all things to increase muscle performance, improve body composition. All of these correlate to better longevity and function. And doing all of this within a flexible framework. Without destroying your health.

Today in the podcast, we've got my good friend Ashley Van Houton. Houton. I always pronounce her name wrong. I apologize, Ashley. And we talked a little bit about women's health and more or less fitness. Now, again, this information applies more to women, but I think it also applies to everyone. We started talking about her new location that she's next to the ocean, which is very relaxing, which of course prompted a discussion of surfing and kiteboarding.

And we were originally going to talk more about women and weight training and meat, but we ended up having a really. What I thought was a fascinating discussion about goal setting, keeping the goal, as Dan John says, what are some of the costs of doing that? How would you set up programs for women or even for men?

If the goal is better body composition, how long would you spend adding lean body mass versus subtracting it? How do you set up constraints around different programs, training, nutrition, and a whole lot more. So I really enjoyed this conversation with Ashley. I always enjoy talking to her. Make sure to check out her wonderful programs that she has.

We'll link to the other podcast that she was on here and we'll also link to her great cookbooks that we have. We're in the process here. Once we're back home of. Cooking some heart that we have. So we're pretty excited about that. So she's got a wide range of stuff. Enjoy this conversation and today's sponsors are element.

You can get element, my favorite electrolyte to drink add to the link below. Today. I'm enjoying a watermelon element as I'm recording this before I go train. I threw that in with some essential amino acids, some creatine. and collagen also. So, LMN is my favorite electrolyte supplement. It's higher in sodium.

I find sodium content is higher in most, or should be, especially when you're eating a real food diet. Your real food diet in general, you don't get a ton of sodium. So adding more, which seems wacky. I have found it's beneficial training volume is more sustainable. Overall energy is better.

And especially on days that I'm doing a longer fast, I find it's much easier. I usually dump about one liter in a container, put one the element packets in some ice. And then if I'm doing a fasting day. I may drink two or three of those actually over the course of a day. Just depends how I'm feeling.

Usually I'll drink one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Then again, what I realized when you're fasting, shocker, you're not consuming any sodium. So that day you have a lower sodium intake, and I found by having more sodium and other electrolytes, not only did I drink more fluid because it's tasty, that my energy levels were a lot more consistent to.

So check them out. And then the other one is sponsored by my daily newsletter. You can get to it by going to [MikeTNelson.com](http://MikeTNelson.com) and on this one we have something called Deflex4. So you can go to the link below. It's [MikeTNelson.com](http://MikeTNelson.com) forward slash F L E X, the number four. And in this episode we've got an exclusive outtake with Ashley where I asked her the top four things women should specifically be doing to improve their body composition.

So if you are on the newsletter already, you will see this excerpt will go out to you. If you are not, you can still join the newsletter for free and you can get all the other past flex for questions delivered directly to you. So go to my team, [nelson.com](http://nelson.com) forward slash flex 4 an opt in that'll also put you on the daily newsletter.

Where you get all sorts of free content from me delivered directly into your inbox, try to make them both entertainment and also informative to help you reach your goals faster. So enjoy this conversation with Ashley Van Houton.

[00:04:56] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Welcome back to the podcast. How are you today, Ashley?

[00:04:59] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** I'm great. Thank you for having me. It's great to chat. Oh, another thing. I didn't tell you that I can just get out of the way right off the bat is yes. Since we last talked, I have moved to the like height surfing, surfing capital of Canada the East coast, which I know like probably a lot of West coast people are like, That's not even a thing, but where I live is a very popular spot for like winter surfing, cold water surfing.

And specifically I'm like on the ocean. It's very fortunate. We've moved to the East coast, on the ocean. And we're like in a bit of like hilly area, whatever, but

we can hear the ocean, drive down the hill and it's right there. And on any particular day, when we know the surf is good, the entire street is just lined up with surf bum vans and people surfing out there. And, my husband's a surfer. He does it year round. I'm much more of a fair weather person. I'm a wuss about it, so I don't really do too much, but I do love to be by the ocean. But anyway, on the windy days, there's like a Cove around here.

Just kite surfers. Kite surfers. Oh, nice. Every there, all day long. It's beautiful. And I, what's the name

[00:06:08] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** of the town or the city nearby?

[00:06:09] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** So, so I'm in Nova Scotia, which is the east coast of Canada. But where we are, it's Lawrence Town is like the actual town, and there's Lawrence Town Beach. And then it's just all along this, the eastern shore, it's just like rough, rugged, rocky ocean that just happens to have really great waves.

[00:06:28] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Oh, fun.

[00:06:29] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** And it's been incredible because I, I grew up here. I haven't lived here in years. We moved back because of, just wanting to be closer to family. And now that I have a kid and all that stuff but we didn't want to live in the city. We wanted to live out here where the nature and the ocean is.

And just being so close to being so close to the ocean on a daily basis has really been a lot more impactful than I expected it to be. I am more of a naturally like city person. I, at least up until this point, I just like being where the people are and where everything's walkable and convenient.

And so this was really like a transition for me, but being so much just closer to nature and more immersed in it and being able to, Literally walk to the ocean and it's stunning. It's beautiful. Any day I've gained so much more of an appreciation for it. And I think it has made me a little bit more of a calmer person.

I don't think anyone would, Describe me as calm generally, but like more calm. And one really cool thing about living so close to the ocean is that we don't live in Hawaii. We don't live in Costa Rica. So like the weather isn't hot and beautiful and sunny every day, but when you live in it, you can appreciate all of the different seasons better.

And you can find the beauty in it because it's not okay, we got to pack up and go out for the day and hope we catch a good day's weather. A good weather, like we can go down there and if it's crappy, we just enjoy it in the crappy weather. And then we leave when we get cold or whatever. So, it's been really cool, but all that to say, you go on lots of sport related trips, I feel and this is a good spot.

This is a, it's really, it really is for people who I think are into it and know about it and also are okay with. being cold, or if you have the right wetsuit this is the spot to be. It's very cool. And it's a cool community out here too. So anyway, I just had to tell you that. Because yeah,

[00:08:16] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** that's awesome.

Have you learned to kiteboard yet?

[00:08:19] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** I'm not even touching that. No, let's be real. I've got enough hobbies. I'm open to doing more surfing. Like again, I've only done, and my husband does SUP surfing, so he does like the paddleboard stuff. And I, but I've only done it again in like warm water, right.

Where it's like the waves are perfect and small and the beach is sandy and soft. And it's very it's one of those things where when you learn here, everything else seems easy. But I just, I don't know. I'm just so damn cold. It's so damn rocky. And you probably, I don't know if you know about this or if kite surfing is similar, but surf culture can be a little bit intimidating, oh, sure. There's the politics and the hierarchy and stuff. And I'm like, I just don't know if I need to. So I'll, we'll dabble. We'll see. And living here, maybe cause I see it all the time and I'm like, that is pretty cool. So maybe I'll get more into it, but for now I'm just enjoying like hiking and being outside and biking and being in the water.

And, we'll see if my son gets into it and we'll see how it goes.

[00:09:19] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, the nice part, I think the little bit I know and I'm not a hardcore surfer at all. I've only gone surfing without a kite three, four times, maybe if that, so I completely, absolutely suck. And I've realized. Even just being in smaller waves with my kite, I'm a horrible surfer.

Cause I make up for all my ills by just using the power of the kite, which you can't do when there's no kite shocker. But I have found that the culture of kiteboarding is a little bit more open because you have a powered source. You

can ride wherever you want. You're not destined just to drop in on these certain waves at certain.

Hierarchies and that kind of stuff which I get people grew up there. They have a better skill level You don't want to hit some dude in the face. I understand why it exists Sure, and then also with kiteboarding even if you're really good Like you could have an equipment failure you could something Could happen you could hit your kite too hard and lose all air in it Like so people are generally pretty good to each other because i've gotten my ass saved multiple times by other people I've helped other people multiple times, so it's one of those things where you go long enough, that even if you are feeling kind of dickish, you probably don't want to piss everyone else off on the beach either, because you may need that person, and everyone's pretty generally respectful.

There's a few a holes who kind of sneak in, but It's not easy to learn. It's easier to learn now than it ever has been, but it's not easy, just like surfing. So I think that keeps a lot of the ruckus out too.

[00:10:47] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Yeah. There's, there's a few holes in every sport, right? So you just, Oh, there's a few that always, yeah, they always find a way.

Yeah, no, it's just cool. It's just cool to be part of a this community, it's really, it is generally a very kind, fun community. And again, just being as somebody who loves the ocean, even just to appreciate it, it's cool to be so close because we've essentially moved from the city to a place that.

That feels like somebody's Airbnb vacation spot. And we, I haven't, I don't take it for granted that I get to see and be around this stuff all the time and the health benefits that come from that. Right. Like I'm breathing this fresh sea air and I get to ground myself in the sand and I get to just be around it.

There's Bobcats wandering around my backyard at all times. Yeah, it's real. It's I'm close. Like I said, I'm close to nature out here. So it's been cool. It's been really nice.

[00:11:36] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, this kind of leads in a little bit of the topic of the day about weightlifting and lifting for women and protein and everything else, but I've had a couple of people now move out of New York City and they did not realize the impact.

And they didn't even move next to the ocean. They just moved to rural USA. I've had two people do this now and they're like, Oh my God, I didn't realize how being away from the stimulus 24 seven made such a huge difference. And even just, I always think of places we go to kite board, like there'll be a lot of people just go hang out on the beach.

And it's like why do people do that? I think it's because it's relaxing. Like you're looking out, you have panoramic vision, you're watching small movements, I think humans want to down regulate, but that's just been beat out of us. And even the concept of movement and exercise and recreation, I just feel like we're becoming a nation of sea slugs that can't, Move at all.

And even unfortunately it happens in the fitness culture too, which I know I'm guilty of, I love weight training and I love trying to pick up silly, stupid, heavy dumbbells just for no other reason than to see if I can. But I think we're not using part of our brain and even if you learn to play pickleball for Christ's sake, go play tennis, go surf, go kiteboard learn a new skill.

You're going to suck at it. And that's part of the deal. Just go do it. Have fun. Do something else too. Yes. Lift weights. Yes. Do your cardio. Yes, do all that stuff, but it should be all of the above.

[00:13:04] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Absolutely. I completely agree that what movement and physical activity does to your brain is at least as important as what it does to your body.

And the act of learning something new, especially for those of us who are not 20 anymore, because there's a culture of this kind of unspoken thing that once you get older, it's like, well, it's kind Slowly going downhill from here. And you need to just worry more about protecting yourself from injury, which yes, is important, but a great way to protect yourself from injury is to be strong and to be capable and to be fit.

But there's this idea that once you hit a certain age, it's really, are you good? Do you have the time and the energy to learn something new and are you going to really get good at it? Like you're not 20 anymore. Really like just stick to what's. It's easy or simple or what you've always done.

And I completely disagree with that. I think that the more you try new things and get comfortable being bad at things for a while. I think that's so good for your brain and for your ego and for your spirit and all of those things. And and also the idea of spending more time doing stuff that isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Means to an end sport or workout. It's been one of the challenges for me, really moving to the country. I use that in quotes. Cause I'm literally 25 minutes from downtown, but I am in the country right now Has been that I'm not as convenient to a gym, which is always my kind of safe space for like regular fitness.

I like going to a gym. I have an okay garage gym, but for me, it's just, it's not the same. And I actually, I'm embarrassed to say it, but since I've moved out to this beautiful natural space, I'm outside, like I'm walking less because I. Essentially live on a country road and in the winter it gets dark at five.

I'm not wandering around in Bobcat country with no street lights, people. I'm not doing it. And it's cold and it's nasty. Like when I lived in the city, I could put my kid to bed and go wander around the neighborhood for 45 minutes. Listen to a podcast. There's people everywhere. There's lights. I felt comfortable and here I wasn't doing that.

And I was like, I live in this beautiful place and I'm like, not really enjoying it as much. So it was hard for me. And so I really had to focus on finding ways to. To do it within my comfort zone and also to find movement and activity. That wasn't my typical one hour gym workout or something that still made me feel like I was getting exercise and moving my body.

We've got, we live on a, we're by the ocean, but we're also on a lake and we have a pretty decent backyard. So we've been doing. Mostly my husband, let's be real, but I've been helping some landscaping stuff. Moving. We've got firewood that we've got to, where it needs to go and we've got rocks.

We're moving around and we're doing some stuff. So, and just playing with my son. It doesn't always have to be some big physical thing, but hauling him up our hill in a wagon. And, so. I think just finding like little bits and pieces and snippets especially for busy people, that stuff does add up.

That stuff does matter. If we only count our four days a week, hard gym sessions. And that's the only thing we're doing for our physical expression. That's not really good enough. It's not really enough, and I don't mean that in a quantitative way. I mean it more in an emotional, like optimizing our happiness and our health way,

[00:16:14] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** yeah I agree. I was talking to Kelly and Juliette Strad about this too. And they're real big into, yeah, do your weight training and do your cardio, but for God's sakes, go do something else. And my little secret

thing is I'm trying to get them into kiteboarding. So it's, we'll see, I'll get a couple more years.

I think Juliette's a rate limiter now, if she's listening, but. Yeah, but they're real big which I agree with of what other things can you do? And I think especially as you get older you can still learn how to do new things, like for example, I'll be 50 this year and I feel like super fortunate that I'm not super good at, kiteboarding, mountain biking, all these other things, but good enough I can go out and do them, good is it's always relative depending on who you compare yourself to.

But I know some other people who they're almost at the point now where they're afraid to try anything because they are so detrained. Like they're afraid to go mountain biking. It's Oh my God, what if I fall off my bike and hurt my hip? I'm like, it's possible. It's unlikely, but. It's possible, but if you never train for the reason to do those things you won't get there.

Like one of my clients might hurt

[00:17:22] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** anyway. Yeah. And your hips are going to hurt anyway. And you're going to

[00:17:25] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** go backwards. One of my clients wanted to lose weight to do. A big hike. And so he went out with a, a friend of his who was in much better shape and he's yeah, and I hung with them the whole time for the three days and it was amazing and he did awesome.

Like in, in all honesty, like he trained really hard as a nutrition, everything was on point, but. He went from, an okay level of fitness to pretty decent in five months, four and a half months, maybe. And granted he was, he was putting the time in, he was doing stuff for about an hour every day, nothing crazy, hard days, medium days, light days.

So he definitely put the work in, but it's not four years to go get ready. I think people underestimate even once they're older. If they wanted to really do something and they had an intelligent plan and they did it, it's not as much time investment as what they think it's going to be.

[00:18:12] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Yeah. Yeah. And I think, one thing, my husband and I were talking about this and it's nice to think about being fit and learning skills just for the pure joy of it. But at the end of the day, sometimes we



are still not. Human beings who like to be good at things. We like to compare ourselves to others.

We like to feel accomplished. And so if I can veer into the, that sort of petty arena for a minute, cause we're, we all feel it to a certain 100

[00:18:39] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** percent

[00:18:40] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** as we get older. Maintaining a decent level of fitness puts you in a higher category as you every decade that you go. Again, this is a stereotype.

This is a generalization, but like you're a fit, healthy, 22 year old big whoop. Like everybody is, but if you put effort into your body and into your fitness and to taking care of yourself and sleeping and recovering, and you try a couple of sports and you pick a couple of things you like, and you're in a decent.

Good level of fitness in your forties, fifties, sixties, that makes you way more impressive for all the reasons we've just been talking about that. A lot of people give up or are scared or, other priorities take precedence. And just, there's a lot of reasons why fitness and physical expression and all of these things fall off as the decades go by.

Continue. And if you don't let that happen, if you really work hard to maintain that consistency and prioritize fitness and wellness, as you get older, you're going to be more impressive. You're going to be in that like top percentage of people who are taking care of themselves because it becomes more rare, it's harder to do, so if you want to be, if you want to be a little petty about it just keep it up and you get older, you're going to be extra impressive,

[00:19:47] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** yeah. I've been thinking of that with kiteboarding is the exception of a couple of people, like most of the people we ride with are probably early thirties, maybe mid thirties, maybe a couple of maybe are getting close to 40.

And so in my head, I'm always just each year, it's a little bit of a comparison, like I'm still here. Like in, in. In general, I can ride longer than pretty much most people in most areas, the technical stuff is getting better, but there's, I think there is a part of your little part of your pride.

That's just yeah, it doesn't matter. Screw you people. We're going to go ride for two hours. Yeah. It's fucking go.

[00:20:22] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Or I'm keeping up or I'm doing better and I'm like, I think it's, and it's something else that's been coming up for me and I don't, Again, I don't want to be a bum, but I wonder if you can reflect this or agree with me or disagree with me, but, on my podcast, I have a podcast, muscle science for women, and I host it with my business partner, Rachel, and we create a bunch of different fitness programs, which we can talk about.

But one thing that I think we are always hammering home, and this is for everybody, but we just speak more directly to women. Is this idea of, you don't have to be perfect and you don't have to make your life about nutrition and wellness to be a fit, happy, healthy person.

Fit looking person. It's really more about consistency and doing the right things most of the time forever. Right. And that is actually hard and does require a fair bit of discipline, but it's one of those things that once you've established, this is what matters to you. This is what I'm going to do.

I'm going to make these choices. It does become your operating system and it's less of. Like this hard choice you have to make every day and we're just something you do, right? So I like to talk about how this doesn't have to be this all encompassing ruling thing. It can just become your life over time if you prioritize it.

But there's a but coming here as I am getting older. I just turned 40 And, a lot of the people that we talked to on the podcast are women in their forties, fifties, sixties, we're, we have a good range, but like it generally skews towards more mature individuals. And my friends who are in their late thirties, forties who maybe have a kid or two who are starting to get again, further and further away from their younger years where they prioritize fitness more, and they're coming to me now and saying.

I want to lose 30 pounds and I want to feel strong again. And I want to weight lift and I want to figure out how to eat properly. And I'm starting to feel like I can't just give them that line anymore of. You just got to be consistent. You just got to make better choices. Most of the time, like I'm starting to be like, no, actually in your forties and as you get older, you actually have to like, really put some effort in now, especially if you haven't been, it doesn't come as easily.

Like I, I hate to say it but it's true. And I'm noticing it even for myself. Like I can't be as. Effortless with the decisions that I'm making, I have to be a bit more mindful and pay more attention because our bodies do change the way we react to things and respond to things and recover from things it does change as we get

older, so that sort of party line of just, eat some protein, go for walks and you'll effortlessly manifest the fit body that you want.

It's not really the truth. There's more to it, I think, as we get older. Is that fair to say, or am I just being a downer?

[00:23:06] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** No I think of it in two ways, so I would agree with you. And then in my head, I'm thinking like, what I'm not sure about is mechanistically what's going on. So in my head, I'm thinking about, okay, if someone is, let's say 40, never really formally trained before, they don't have the skill set.

They don't know what it's like just because they haven't done it. Right. That it's not that they're a horrible person. They just haven't done it before. So they don't know. They don't have the identity. They don't have the confidence that they can do it because they haven't executed it before. And they have.

Many years of literally just becoming very detrained like I look at some of the vo2 max on people who haven't trained They're just relative standards resting heart rate a bunch of other stuff. It's not very good, and then in my head i'm like is that due to the many years of Not doing thing or is it due to aging and at least on myself like the biggest thing I've noticed as I've gotten older is I just can't take a bunch of time off and do fuck all nothing like I will just Like I will regress So much faster now than I ever did before.

But if I keep doing stuff and it doesn't have to be perfect by any means, I haven't noticed that my rate of progress has been any different. It might actually even be a little bit better. But the biggest thing I have noticed is. Maybe recovery, I guess you could say, just getting back to baseline does take a little longer and I have to be more Intuitive with a little bit better nutrition and sleep and movement and that kind of stuff But if I don't do anything at all for like even three four or five days I just seem to it's entropy is a bitch and it's trying to drag me back to this poor baseline much faster, I don't know if you've noticed that

[00:24:58] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** No you make a very good point. I think, aging is an inevitable thing and there are so a hundred percent slight bummers that come with it. But I think that this concept of entropy and being detrained or untrained is actually much more important because we all know many examples of people who are in their forties, fifties, sixties beyond who are killing it largely because they have maintained.

Something their entire life. And it's a really good point because one of the other things is although I'm, I have my own struggles and I struggle sometimes with not being motivated and the difference in my priorities and what I want to do pre baby and post baby and all of these things. We all have these like lifestyle things that come up, but going back to my example of my, some of my contemporaries, my peers who are asking me what to do and.

I am at a stage where, because I have consistently prioritized fitness and nutrition and health in general for the last 20 years, I don't have to work as hard as somebody who now, who hasn't done that, who's trying to do it. At 40 or 35 or 45 and so that's where that line that I was saying before about just this consistency, just try to do mostly make good choices most of the time, but for your entire life, that's the kicker.

And, so the people who are listening who are in their 20s or 30s this is the sort of, What we, would like you to take from it is if you can start this now, it will make the road much easier for you. And it's not all bad news as you get older, of course. If you have, prioritized muscle mass and prioritized doing things that make you feel good and make you feel healthy and eat properly and sleep and do all of these things, you're gonna notice these inevitable changes of aging much less.

Then somebody who is not taking care of himself. So I guess at the end of the day, this whole consistency thing is still the most important. But I'm just starting to notice as it's happening to me, as I am no longer 25, yeah, like you can take really good care of yourself and there are still shifts that you need to.

Respond to and react to and accept. And it doesn't mean it doesn't mean I'm old. Now. I can't try things to what we were saying offline. You know that it's great. It's a, such a good idea for people, especially as they get older to try new things, to learn new skills, to challenge themselves safely and reasonably because we're told that we shouldn't, and because we're told to be afraid of that.

It's really good for our brains and our bodies and our minds to, to learn new things and try new skills and challenge ourselves and to not give up. Because it gets easier to make that choice to just give up and just be. Just take it easy. Now it's a long life to do that.

Go have fun and try things and work hard. And you'll be surprised at the level of fitness and health and fun that you can have throughout the decades, but it's not, it doesn't get easier. It does get harder. So having those behaviors and lifestyles early is a good idea. I think.

[00:28:03] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah I agree.

And it, with any goal, it's so much harder to make progress and break new ground than it is to maintain. If you, you've probably seen this too. If you look at exercise or VO two max, let's say VO two max is a parameter, right? It's easy to measure. You have tons of data on it. It to take yourself from a moderate level to a better level.

It's a fair amount of work. It's a pretty, it's like for me to do it now, I need to give up a training, a strength training day. I need to make it a priority. I usually have to be in a caloric excess just to accomplish more of the training volume per se. And it takes pretty consistent effort. But once I hit that new level, it doesn't take too much to hold it.

And again I'm not at elite levels. Like I'm trying to get to 46, milliliters per kg per minute. So there's nothing crazy. Versus when people are new, yes, they have some newbie gains. Yes. They're a little bit more untrained. So yes, it's going to be easier. But after a few months, like they're literally always trying to break new ground to get to a level and you could argue because they're not at a higher level, it is a little bit easier.

Yes. But I think we forget that if we've invested, 30 years of training, like when I go kiteboard for a month in South Padre, like I. But most of my aerobic stuff on maintenance, but my strength training on maintenance and just kiteboard as much as I want yes. Am I a little bit weaker?

Does my aerobic stuff go down a little bit? Yup. But literally within two and a half weeks of being at home, sleeping normal schedule, like I'm pretty much back to where I was before, where I think if I was new, I could not get away doing that from both a lifestyle, a habits based and even just an adaptations based.

[00:29:50] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Yeah, I agree. I think. This whole conversation, what's one of the things that's bringing up for me, and it's something that we talk about a lot on the podcast, because we're answering listener questions and stuff is how difficult it can be for people as we age. And I don't mean to turn this into like a.

Either bashing age or only talking older podcasts. It's just something that's coming up for me right now.

[00:30:12] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Frankie old people, ranting podcasts.

[00:30:14] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** I never thought I'd be one of those people and here I am. The music's too loud. Anyway

[00:30:19] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** it's

[00:30:23] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** this idea that we struggle. We waste so much time and energy fighting some of the inevitabilities.

Of aging instead of, again, and when I say accepting, again, I don't mean settling. I just mean accepting that things are different in different stages of your life. And because our culture rises. Youth and the prime athletically prime ages, right. So much. And especially for women, there's this very strong culture of don't admit or show that you're aging in any way, but I think for athletes and stuff too, it can be a really hard thing to wake up one day and feel like maybe the best years of optimizing my strength or my performance are.

Gone doesn't mean you can't still do it, but like maybe at 45, you are not going to perform as well as you did when you were 25, maybe right in some sports, you could argue it's the opposite if you're in some other things, but anyway, and I think if we just spent less time trying to fight against. The fact that maybe our priorities and the way we eat and the way we train and the way we recover have to change instead of fighting it, just saying, yeah, okay, maybe they do.

Maybe I do have to take an extra day. Maybe I do have to eat even more protein than I used to. Maybe because I'm perimenopausal, I shouldn't be fasting all the time, like accepting these things and just adjusting and changing. I think it's just, it's a real fight. First of all, sign of maturity and you're not wasting your time anymore.

Instead of just fighting and being sad about why can't things be the way they used to just, they can't. And that's the way it is. And this doesn't even have to relate to aging. Like I have a lot of clients or, people who are writing into the podcast who are maybe struggling with things like I used keto for a year and it was so great and now it's not.

So do I keto harder? And it's Nope, you don't. Always try harder.

[00:32:20] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** That solves everything in your life.

[00:32:23] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Like really with fitness and nutrition, it's almost always the opposite. It's almost like this was a tool. This isn't a lifestyle. It's not your identity. It's not who you are. It's a tool that you used.

And when it is no longer working, you reevaluate and you try to do that with less emotion and more pragmatism and data based decision making and instead of thinking that you suck because suddenly this doesn't work anymore. You realize that it's just the tool that is no longer the best tool to use and let's switch and do something else.

Right. But because we tend to make. Lifestyle, like healthy lifestyle stuff so much a part of our value and our worth for some reason we really struggle with it. And people do that with fitness too. It's well, I really love my six days a week spin class or my. Hardcore hit classes, but I keep gaining weight for some reason.

Color theory.

[00:33:16] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Orange theory. And other ones. Certain

[00:33:18] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** color theory. Yeah. So, and again, we don't want to bash on any one thing in particular, but it's just the idea of if it's no longer working for you, it might not be you. It might be the thing. So let's evaluate and change. And I'm always such a big proponent of when people come work with me and maybe they have eaten low calorie food.

Ever, or maybe they haven't eaten a carb in five years or whatever. I'm just like, what is the harm in just trying something different? If you haven't done it in a while, try it. You're not going to destroy yourself in a month or two or even three of trying something new. It may completely change your life for the better, or it may do nothing.

And then we are back to the drawing board. But people, we just hold so tightly to our belief systems and it can bite us in the ass sometimes.

[00:34:02] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And that's the hardest part is that you're. I think the human brain has a very hard time with things that are not linear. Things that are dynamic, not static.

And I did a master's in mechanical engineering. My research was on, non basically very fine scale variability across physiologic systems. And I still have a hard time with this with myself and sometimes with clients to realize that their system is always changing. It's always going to be a little bit different.

It's never stagnant. So what's different, what direction do we need to go? And it seemed like we, it's very easy to measure by the intervention we did. Oh, we

did, this class, we did this keto, we did this thing and yeah, it can work for a while, but you have to look at what are the long term adaptations and you might need to do something different because there's a cost.

To everything. Like I think of even this in my own personal life of shit for probably decades, it was like, well, if I just listened to more death metal and drink more coffee and work harder, everything will work and that erotically we'll get you through a lot of stuff. And then at some point, guess what?

It doesn't work for everything.

[00:35:13] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Yeah, sadly, but you have two decades of

[00:35:16] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** this is my solution and it worked for two decades. It was amazing. And now, Oh, I can't do that anymore. It's like I did X diet or X training for so long and oops now, and then people just feel completely lost, which I understand because neurologically and even just physically you had this thing that you knew worked.

And now it's like getting dropped off in some vacant town without a map, but you don't know where the hell you are and what's going on. Yep.

[00:35:42] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Yep. That's absolutely right. I don't know. I think part of it, like part of what's kept me going. Cause I, again, I've had some identity shifts in the last few years, as far as my place in this industry and how I feel about myself and what I'm doing and all these things.

And I think it does come back to a mindset of. Being open and excited about learning and trying new things and using yourself as a, N equals one experiment, but with an, with a, with an attitude of just learning and having fun with it. Right. I think so many of us look at fitness and nutrition as a means to an end.

If I can just. Bust my ass for three months to a year and get whatever weird nebulous end state that I think is perfection. Then I'll be happy. And we all know that's not a thing. Yeah, it doesn't happen. Nobody does that. Nobody does that successfully ever. Yeah. You can work towards a very specific goal and hit it and feel good for a minute.

Great. And then what do you do with the rest of your life? So I think that's the thing. For me, what's kept me from looking back and dwelling too much. I'm like, Oh, I used to be so fit, or I used to have so much more fun with this, or I



used to work so much harder or whatever it's I'm always trying to adjust and figure out, okay, well, where am I now?

What do I want to do? What do I, what are my goals in the future? What would I like to be good at? What would I like to learn and just use it for. For your life, don't, there's no end game here or the end game is, death and we don't want to rush towards that. So, let's just have an open mind and want to learn and want to adapt and want to change.

And if you are adaptable, that's a huge sign of health, right? This flexibility thing, this adaptability thing. So I think just having that kind of mindset can really help because it can also help you take your. Injuries are your setbacks, your slowdowns and stride, right? It's not the end of the world.

It's not a condemnation of who you are as a person and your abilities. It's just your life. And can you pivot and can you adapt and can you try something new and can you have fun with it? That's it.

[00:37:52] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And Dan John said, the goal is to keep the goal. So I always think of what is the overarching goal?

So, even above kiteboarding, my overarching goal for the last decade was, trying to get my bone mineral density up and get my fat free mass index up, and I just hit those numbers via DEXA scan, but the cost is, And my body fat's a lot higher now than it's been before. Am I aware of it?

Yes. Did I know that was a cost? Yes. Could I have done other things to mitigate it? Maybe, but that comes down to schedules and lifestyle and other prioritizations of other things. And if I'm a hundred percent honest, it wasn't really the goal, so it's okay, so now I've hit the main goal.

Okay. Work a little bit more on body comp over the next year, still try to hit performance goals, et cetera. Right. I feel like in the past I spent way too many years. Oops. I added a couple pounds. Oh my God. I'm too fat. Now I got to lose those two pounds. Like I just went back and forth for nowhere for like decades, but it's.

I think it's hard because you have to then realize, okay, there's going to be a cost to this also. Am I going to be okay paying the cost associated with this goal? And everyone has their own parameters. So for for me, it was like, as long as my health markers are fine, I don't have anything weird, like all the blood work, everything else, even now, everything else came back fine.

So there's no risk to it. But. As it's probably worse being a woman in the fitness industry. Everyone in the industry thinks that, well, body comp is the thing. Like everyone in fitness must be training for body comp. That's gotta be like your top goal. And I'm like not really, like what I've, if I could wave a magic wand, would I want to be leaner?

Of course. But I think there's a level of maturity of realizing, even with the clients too, of, Hey, if you really want to maximize lean body mass gains, you are going to gain some fat. Now we can take the fat off at the end. We can try to prioritize and find a hybrid of both. But like you said, it's the maturity of trying to keep the goal, knowing what the cost is, measuring it, making sure you're You know, not on some crazy perma bulk forever and you're 60 pounds heavier than what you were before and you're just bulking bro, have some constraints within it.

But that's hard too, right? Because society and everyone pushes you into this direction of, well, this is the thing you should be tracing, even if that's not the thing you were trying to get to.

[00:40:19] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** I don't know if that question even made any

[00:40:20] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** sense.

[00:40:21] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** No, it makes sense. And even if that's not a direct indicator of health too, because again, we do have this problem where we consider the fitter you look, the healthier you must be.

And you and I both know very well that's not the case. And I've seen shredded

[00:40:34] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** people are the most. It's fucked up blood work and stuff I've never seen in my life.

[00:40:39] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** And I think like general population doesn't even realize too, that a lot of times like elite athletes aren't the healthiest people either.

Oh God. No, really good at whatever the sport is, but are they metabolically healthy people? A lot of the time? No, that's not the case. I would say by far the most common request goal that I get from individuals, women is I want to. Build muscle and lose fat at the same time. Of course, guys are the same way.

[00:41:08] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah,

[00:41:09] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** the same time. And it's so, but you know what? There's a win in there because in probably generations, decades past, the idea of building muscle was not an interest for a lot of women. So the fact that women are recognizing that muscle not only looks good, but is also healthy and good for you and a good thing to have and a good thing to work for.

So I love that. But this idea of the building muscle and losing fat at the same time. And I think a lot of really more knowledgeable, smart people in the space will say that it is possible to do. Sure. I think most smart people, knowledgeable people will say it's easier to do one at a time. Because Not

[00:41:48] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** maximally.

You can't maximally do both at the same time without a lot of drugs.

[00:41:53] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** We don't, yeah. We don't multitask well in any capacity. Correct. So it's much better to just focus on one over the other. And especially I think to some of our earlier conversation for less trained People it's even harder because you're trying to juggle a million things for people to get their head around optimizing everything you need to optimize to build muscle.

Especially again, for women, we still looking up on the internet, you might think that every woman can squat 400 pounds and we're all muscular and strong and whatever, but gen pop, especially maybe older people. And by that, I really mean like in their thirties and beyond, There is still this idea of Being smaller, not getting bulky certain weightlifting being intimidating or manly or whatever.

It really is very hard for people to get their head around the intensity and the work that it takes to build muscle tissue. It's so much harder than people think. People think you go in the gym and you look cute and you like lift weights for a couple minutes and you're done. Oh, my goodness. I'm going to have a protein shake.

I'm going to build muscle. Absolutely not. And so for me as a coach to, to get their heads around, not only do you have to bust your ass. Lifting weights really challenge yourself. You have to eat enough, which sometimes means more than is comfortable for you. You need to recover properly, which is another huge issue for probably all human beings, because everyone thinks recovery is for somebody else and they don't have to do it.

And then again, for women in later decades. Dealing with hormonal shifts, which can really impact your ability to build muscle. That's too many things to think about for most people at once, if it's your job, if you've been doing it for a million years, if you're, really dialed in, if you have a lot of time to prioritize this stuff, fine.

But for the vast majority of people, like we can barely figure out what we're going to make for dinner tonight, much less be juggling all of these things at once. So it's such a better use of your time to. Really just take a bunch of these things off the list or deprioritize them and say, look, I'm not gonna worry about X, Y, Z, but I'm really gonna until I get it down.

I'm really going to focus on this food thing and get that going and then still work out or whatever. But I'm gonna. Do that. I'm going to fuel properly. I'm going to work out. I'm going to work on, building muscle and feeling strong and doing that for a few months. And then we'll worry about the fat loss thing later.

And to your point, if you're doing this properly, you're not going to gain 30 pounds of fat in six months. If you're doing that, you've got different priorities. You're not, you're not following the rules. So, yeah I'm just a very big fan of just narrowing the focus. And trying to do, was it Ron Swanson who's your whole ass.

Don't do two things. Half ass do one thing with your whole ass. Do that, just focus on one thing at a time and you're going to get there faster. That's the other thing. Cause everyone's so worried about doing it quickly and it will be quicker if you do one thing at a time and succession progressively instead of trying to do everything all at once.

[00:44:53] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** I had if I had a year, I do the same approach for women and men. And they said, I want to have, so if you re let's say if you recomposition by, we'll say 10 pounds, meaning you could add 10 pounds of lean body mass. We'll just use that muscle. And lose 10 pounds of fat, right? So that'd be a recom difference of 20 pounds.

I don't think most people realize how profound that is, especially if it's a shorter person, especially if it's a female who tend to be shorter and smaller. If you're a six foot three guy like I am, yeah, it's not quite as profound. But I don't think people realize how different they would appear, which is really what most people want, which is great.

And then even then I would prioritize nine months of that as probably trying to gain as much lean body mass as you can. Maybe only three months for fat loss for most people. Would you agree on something like that for parameters?

[00:45:51] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Absolutely. Yep. I think, and I think, for the fat loss part of it, it should be less time for sure.

But those three months have to be pretty focused and dialed in. One of the things for me, is because fitness culture can be so, miserable and damaging. I really, right. I really struggle with The balance of, again, telling, this avatar female client look, if you want to lose fat in this three months, like you need to be on top of it.

Okay. We can't have this, check in where you're like, Oh, I just felt like it. So I ate whatever. And my coffee has, two cups of cream in it every day. Like you cannot do that. I have to do that, but I also have to say, but don't get too obsessed about it and don't, get upset if it doesn't work out there's this, it's this balance that's really tough because I do not want to create more.

Orthorexic, anxious, low self esteem women in the fitness industry. It's bad enough. I don't want to do that. I want to lead with positivity and that's why I like to lead with, let's go build some muscle for a while first, because we're going to look better regardless of the fat. You're going to look better because you have muscle on your body.

You're you'll look more attractive. That's the reality. And you'll feel more competent and you'll feel more confident in yourself. And then you're coming into it in a better place. But that fat loss phase, like I'm in this with some clients right now, and I'm like, look, like I've been nice to you for a while.

And I've been holding your hand. And I've been saying, it's okay when you go and have your wine and pizza, but it's not okay anymore, if this is what you want. And that's the conversation I have with people so often is do you want to be five pounds lighter and not have those things you enjoy? Cause that's what it's going to be for a while.

Or do you want to not lose those five pounds and actually just have a bit more of a chill? Life. Both are okay. Just know what you want because you can't have them both. I literally posted like a meme on social media today that's just people get so shocked and offended when you tell them like, Hey, if you want to drastically change the way you look, you're going to drastically change the way you live.

And people are like, excuse me, what? I don't want to hear that. And it's well, then maybe you're not ready to. Maybe you're not ready to change how you look, and that's okay. You just have to know what you're getting into.

[00:48:04] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And I, I think even taking those nine months and setting them up to know that yeah, you're going to have three months.

It's going to be pretty hardcore. You're going to meet a caloric deficit, but. If you can enter it at a higher total amount of calories, you're burning a higher VO<sub>2</sub> max, you have more muscle, you have the habits, your caloric intake of just maintenance is a lot higher. Yes. Those three months are going to be hard, but they're not going to be nearly as hard if you don't have those things set up ahead of time.

And that's my biggest thing that I see people coming in is they're like I'm weight stable on legit, 1500 calories per day. And I want to lose 10 pounds. And I'm like, Man, do you, how much do you want to suffer and is this really going to be the best path?

[00:48:51] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** What are your thoughts on, because I have my, my ideas, but what are your thoughts on obviously a really underserved and important part of this process is.

What comes after the bulk of the cut, right? So say you have a very successful nine months and you build some muscle and then you are on top of things for three months and you lose your 10 pounds or whatever, and you're feeling good and you're looking good and you're not metabolically or emotionally damaged.

And you're like, I feel good. I want to sit here for a while. I want to have fun here. What's your kind of general rules for, Like reverse dieting, maintenance calories, determining that, and being able to set a person up for success in terms of not crazy rebounding or, still paying attention to what they're doing and coming out of that successfully.

[00:49:42] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, I would say If you asked me this five years ago, I would have been like in the camp of, Oh, everybody must reverse diet. You have to, slowly increase your calories and all this stuff. And I did that with a lot of people, but most people are not so dialed in up to a Nat's ass that, an extra 15 grams of carbohydrates a day.

They're even going to notice nor care. And I also felt like I was promoting that longer period of, Ooh, but now we've got to be really careful getting you back to maintenance and you're really fragile and all this stuff. And so looking at the literature, I would say. The more severe deficit you cancel, like some, physique competitors and a handful of those that I work with.

Let's just go back to maintenance as fast as possible. Literally for some people, it's the next day. The massive caveat to all of that is, psychologically, are you okay with that? Cause if you're not, then I don't think it's as good physiologically, but we will do more of a reverse diet thing because as especially with some females, if we take them up to maintenance the next day, they may gain two, three, four pounds, mostly in carbohydrates, glycogen, et cetera, water, fluid change, whatever.

And some of them will absolutely lose their mind. And it's going to be pretty bad. A week of let's just slash all four tires on the car and it's going to be a disaster, right? So I would say it Is psychology doesn't matter. They'll do whatever. I would go back up to maintenance and I would hold their, ideally I like at least a few months, and then literally it's okay, how much shit can we get away with now? And stay exactly where you're at. Stop weighing your broccoli. Maybe don't even weigh protein. Let's just start pulling stuff out of the system. Let's start pulling constraints out go out with your friends, whatever like yes, we're gonna watch weight.

We're gonna watch maybe waist measurement performance hrv We're gonna get keep an eye on it. We're not gonna go bonkers But to teach them that hey You, because what everybody wants is they complain about hitting a plateau. But what they really want is they do want to be at a plateau, just a lower plateau than where they're at.

And the benefit of being at a plateau is if you did it intelligently and you can get back there in a good way, and you've got decent habits, I think people are usually shocked with what they can get away and still be okay. But again, most people it's like. One extreme to the next, they're like, Hey, I hit my goal.

And then it's they pull all the constraints off right away. They don't have the habits in place. They haven't done it before. They don't have the reps psychologically that messes with them. And so then they're, faced down in a bowl full of Doritos for three days in a row.

[00:52:25] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Yeah, this is all very personally familiar to me.

Yeah, no, I like that. I like that. And I like the idea of the pulling out constraints because it's, I feel like there's two camps. There's people like me and my bodybuilding days where I was a hundred percent compliant and really on it. And then the competition day came and then I had no support, no plan, nothing, and I just went wild.

And I, again, I never got to the point where I like got sick or ballooned up in weight or whatever, but I certainly wasn't doing any kind of intelligent, thoughtful. Post competition eating. So there's people like me that kind of just forget about it and go off the rails and don't pay attention at all.

And then there are people who are just so worried or so fearful about it, that they're, they just remain rigid and that can cause some problems too. So I like the idea of even if it is in a progressive way, not necessarily reverse dieting, but at least like progressively loosening the reins. So it's you can still pay attention.

And for some people. It's super stressful to track their macros, for example, for some people, it gives them a sense of feeling like control and understanding and paying attention to what they're doing. And that helps them. So finding some balance in some way to pay attention to it without being anal and crazy.

And I've just found, even for me, when I'm not like training for anything or paying attention to anything one just really important marker, like you were saying, maybe don't pay attention to your protein, but I find for women, Like only paying attention to their protein can sometimes be a nice option too, because I definitely find that it's probably more of a problem for women than for men to eat enough protein.

And I don't technically have that problem, but I do find that when I like Screw off and aren't paying attention to how I eat. My protein goes way down. And this is for somebody who loves protein. And I still find that it, it's just, it's very easy for that carb creep. And then the protein to fall off.

And if you are trying to, in a very low maintenance, easy way. Pay attention to your body composition. That's one real easy marker. It's just are you getting enough protein every day? Are you going off the rails with the carbs or not? And because so many of my female clients, the problem isn't overeating.

The problem is under eating and still gaining weight or being a weight that they don't want and not understanding how that works. So. Even just saying don't even worry about your calories. Just are you getting this many grams of protein



a day? Don't worry about the rest of it. Cause probably if you are getting that many grams of protein, you're not going to be hoovering up the Doritos.

Cause you actually are feeling right. So yeah, I like that. I like that idea of just paying attention to the things, maybe a couple of things that are going to help, but not. Obsessively paying attention to everything when you don't need to.

[00:55:01] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. My little rule of thumb is if you're weighing your broccoli in the off season, let's say you're a physique athlete, which is just the extreme of the extreme.

I'm worried. Right. And my other running joke is I don't work with a ton of physique athletes, but especially women, conferences and stuff like the last Oh, do you work with, fitness competitors and physique competitors and literally to their face, I'll be like, Only the ones that aren't nuts and I'll just stare at them.

And if they laugh, I'm like, Oh, we're cool. We're good. Cause you're a little bit crazy to do this shit. Right. Do you know if they don't and they get mad and they just go away, then great. That wasn't going to work. You're one of

[00:55:36] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** them. That's good. Self selecting there. Yeah. I like,

[00:55:39] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** yeah,

[00:55:41] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** that's funny,

[00:55:42] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** but those ironically are the people I've noticed who have gone way down and whether it's a weight class sport or a competition or whatever.

Have been much lower and been much higher That if they're at a higher body fat, like they don't ever really worry about it Right. Because they know they have the skillset and the reps that if they wanted to, they could do it and they feel like it would be executed and they're fine. So paradoxically, they're the ones who usually are the least worried about it.

The clients I find that are the most concerned about it are people who have never accomplished it because in the back of their head, the only thing they've psychologically associated is failure. So they don't think they can do it. And that is a huge source of just. General worry, which I totally understand too.

[00:56:34] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Yeah. And that's, that is one of the main drivers for the programs that Rachel and I have created. So this muscle science for women suite that we've created, we have a yeah, it's we have, we've got a couple of programs now. So we've got like the flagship, which is this 12 week overall strength training program.

And then we've got last year, we put out a glutes. Grow your glutes program because listen, we were answering the call. That's what the ladies wanted this year. I don't know when this podcast is going to come out, but we have another body parts specific program. And this one's my personal favorite again, as a former figure competitor, it's shoulders.

Because it's a very underrated aspect of body composition of men. No, but women don't know this. Oh, there's an upper

[00:57:20] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** back, man.

[00:57:21] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** We all want this, this like Coke bottle, we want this small waist. And the best way to create the illusion of a small waist is to have wide shoulders. So, and I I was a swimmer and a gymnast when I was a kid, like I had no choice, like my shoulders were going to be big for my size anyway, but it's worked out really well for me.

And I love it. And I'm such a big, I just, and it's like the first thing on somebody is do they have these like nice kind of strong shoulders? I think it's so great. Yeah. So anyway, we've created a couple we're doing body part specific stuff. The flagship program is this 12 week progressive very comprehensive training program.

But what comes with all of these programs that I think is really our selling point is first of all, direct access to us. You can ask us questions and troubleshoot and talk. We're not just selling you a PDF that you download and then you go off and make the best of it. But all of these programs, even the specific body part training ones, we are talking about.

Nutrition and how to fuel and how to recover and how to, exercise selection. We're not just saying, do these five exercises. We're saying, here's how you program a good workout. And here are, the different types of exercise and how you even set up and how maybe you would use a machine versus a free weight versus a barbell, whatever.

We really deliver with the information because To your point, what you were saying, I feel like the more informed and educated people are, the more confident they are when they feel like they have the tools to adjust and make decisions. And they know, even if they aren't in a place where they want to be, if they feel like they know how to get there, that's 90 percent of the battle.

And people who just, Feel like they don't know what to do. And that's okay if you feel like you don't. And there's a reason why there are good coaches out there who can help you. But the idea is that you don't want to have a coach forever, and you don't want to have people just tell you what to do forever.

You want to know how to do this stuff yourself. And we have a massive portion of this strength training program that is teaching people how a program is created effectively and why things are. Place the way they are and why, what progressive overload is and what deload weeks are and why they're important.

And what reps and reserve are and what rest periods between workouts are optimal and all this stuff, and it can be a little bit much for people, and if you don't want that skip ahead and just do the training program, but having that stuff. Available so that people can understand why they're doing what they're doing.

I think it makes people more empowered in the gym. It makes people feel more confident. And when you're more confident, you're going to do better and you're going to perform better. So, anyway I've been in this industry for a really long time. I've downloaded my own share of PDFs. I've worked with different people.

I've had different coaches. I've been doing this a while and I feel really good about what we're doing because I think. Education is more important than the perfect program. We do have a good program, but the education behind it, I think is more important. I think that, you can keep putting out again, great PDFs for the rest of your life and sell them for 10 bucks.

But if people don't really know why they're doing what they're doing it's just not as effective. So anyway we're pretty excited about it.

[01:00:22] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Oh, that's awesome. I always think of principles versus protocols, right? And I get. Super worried that the whole industry is being pushed to protocols only.

If you can have some fancy sounding words, you can give a mechanism that maybe only works in one eyed hairy, three footed mice and give them an exact protocol, people will be like, Oh my God, this is the greatest he or she is the best ever. And some of that information may be right. Some of it may not be correct.

I would love to see a stat on what the follow through is on that via free advice. Cause I'm still convinced that there's no skin in the game. Everybody wants those things. So it's easy to say, yes, this is amazing, but I don't think the follow through is there versus if they sign up to something like your program where they have personal advice, if they have a question, they can get an answer.

They're going to be told what to actually do. You're going to learn the principles of why you're actually doing this thing. So you're learning a skillset along the way. Oh, and by the way, it's going to cost you money, which means you are invested in the thing that you're doing.

[01:01:30] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** I 100 percent agree. And it's why I still intermittently.

Higher coaches. I know exactly what I'm supposed to do, but I'm not going to do it unless I have some skill in the game because I maybe just the motivation of I should get in shape or I should run this 10 K or something, whatever. If I'm working with somebody who I'm like being held accountable to, and I'm paying.

And it's funny because we literally, we've been getting like a bunch of questions from folks who are interested in the programs and saying Hey, could you like, give me like a sample workout or give me like people want freebies. Right. And I understand it. And I get that there's a marketing.

aspect to this that can be very beneficial. And I sometimes tend towards wanting to give people a little thing. Cause I want, I want to show that I'm willing to help you if you're willing to invest in me, in these cases. And I've talked with Rachel about it and we've talked on the podcast because of how we package our information and the offering that we give.

We think that giving away some free stuff would actually hurt the follow through not because people would be like, Oh, I got to work out now I don't have to pay for it, but because nothing we could give you in a one page download is going to accurately. Show you what you're getting from this program. So it's almost like it's underselling to give you something free.

Like you're going to say Oh, it's a workout. That's fine. But that's the tip of the iceberg of what we're doing for you. And I think I think our stuff obviously is priced very well, but something that, and these are programs like the 12 week program and the level of kind of.

Customization and stuff that we give you there. Like you could take this basic program and keep adjusting and changing in perpetuity. So you could use it forever. But I definitely agree that, yeah, it's hard in this economy. Everything's expensive, everything costs a billion dollars, but if it's something you prioritize, you'll figure it out and it will be worth it.

And you will put more work and thought and attention into it. If you've invested in it, I completely agree.

[01:03:25] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And I think. Even buying a coach is you're paying for confidence and time, right? So my main goal this year is to pick up the 175 pound inch dumbbell. I've been working on it off and on for eight years.

And this year I'm like, okay, this other than kiteboarding, this is my number one goal. So my buddy, Adam glass, who I've known for years, I said, Hey man, I want you to write an actual program. I will pay you for it. And he wrote just three paragraphs. Which was great because that's all I needed of here's the commander's intent, here's the progression, here's what I want you to do.

And, it's weird because some people are like, but you're never on this, it's so grip board, and we never see you talking about this or that, and I'm like, well, why? Why do I want 400 other people's opinions about stuff that I don't care, I'm not paying them, it's only going to confuse me. Here's the guy who's probably the lightest body weight ever to pick up the inch more than anyone, potentially, in the History of humans, who knows, at least in this modern age.

And he's a good buddy. I've trusted him for years. I've trained with him when he's been here. Why would I listen to somebody, and I paid him,

[01:04:32] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** you said 175 pounds, like a single dumbbell that you, it's like a weird grip.

[01:04:38] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. So it used to be called the unliftable dumbbell. And so what it is, I've

[01:04:42] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** seen this before.

Yeah. Yeah.

[01:04:44] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** So if you imagine like old school mustache, strongman training, Like globe, dumbbell, big globes on the end, but the handle is two and three eighths inches. So the handle is about the size of a pop can

[01:04:57] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** really thick. And because

[01:04:58] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** it's one, one solid cast piece. So for people who lift like 175 pound, one hand deadlift, it's not really that heavy.

It's heavy, but it's not that heavy, but the handle, because it's cast. Your thumb, your fingers have to support it, and then your thumb has to stop the rotation of the bell, and that's the thing that makes it just ridiculously hard.

[01:05:22] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Are you gonna try to do it with both hands, or only your dominant hand?

[01:05:25] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Well, it's so funny, because So the first goal is, pick it up with one hand however the hell I can with no other assist.

If I tilt the ever living shit out of the thing, I don't care. But then of course, it's okay, can I do it with my left hand? Can I do it flat? Can I put cans on it? And eventually my long term goal is to get to the point where I literally could wake up, roll out of bed on four hours of sleep, and just pick it up.

Right to the point where your level is so much higher that and for no other reason than I just think it's cool. Yeah,

[01:05:57] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** that is, do you have one or is there one at a local gym? How do you like train with the actual implement?

[01:06:04] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** So I bought a 100 pound replica six years ago, and then three years ago I got a 135 pound replica and a 175 pound replica.

So just the other day I got three singles, which was a PR on the 135, unassisted.

[01:06:19] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** And what's, what constitutes a lift? Like as long, you just get it off the ground? Yep, just pick it up to lockout. For a second? Okay.

[01:06:25] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah, just pick it up to lockout. Yeah, which is weird because it's so funny, like I'll have people come over here and you look at it.

And so the funniest thing ever side story was I was at a lead FTS for their, one of their learn to train seminars. Huge warehouse blaring death metal. They're playing like dark tranquility and stuff. It was amazing. There's just huge, sides of beef with eyes, guys that are dead lifting in the 700 squatting eight hundreds and in between all this rubble, there's a Thomas inch dumbbell.

And so a guy I know, JL, who's, competing in GRIP at the Arnold, like huge, huge unit, goes over there and just picks it up. And it's so funny to see all these guys stop and see him do this, and then they go back to what they were doing. But it was so funny that day to watch how many of them came over.

And tried to pick it up and none of them picked it up. It's burned into my brain of Oh, this actually is a pretty hard feat for even people who are strong now, again, these people don't necessarily compete in grip. It wasn't necessarily the thing that they were training for. And then at the Sorenex booth, like they usually put like a dollar bill, like under the inch and their little rule is if, if you're not competing there, cause obviously they have strong men and people who are, competing there.

It's if you're not a competitor and you were just an attendee. If you can pick up this dumbbell, we will give you that a hundred dollar bill. I don't think he's ever given it out maybe once or twice. So, yeah, so it's, again, it's one of those, one of those things where do most people know about it? No, but it's also something that is very difficult where you talk about setting goals.

Like I started working on this eight years ago, like the first heavy dumbbell I ever picked up that's that diameter was 75 pounds, and it's just a weird thing of can you just keep showing up every day and just get a little bit better, get a little bit better. And the biggest thing, like the coaching has helped me is just the progressions.

It's what is the next step I should be working on, right? To try to get you to a semi linear path. And I think that's the biggest thing about coaching and programs and everything else is that, It takes all the other noise and it simplifies it so that the person can execute the actions and feel that they are confidently doing the right thing.

Instead of spending an hour and a half scouring the internet, getting confused by two gurus yelling at each other about shit.

[01:08:48] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Opposite things. That opposite things. Keto is the best. No, high carbs is better.

[01:08:52] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Ah, fuck it. Doritos. Ah, here I go. A

[01:08:56] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** hundred percent. You, that was like so well put because it, it really is true that we are in an age of the most accessibility to information ever.

Which of course is also the most accessibility to misinformation, but even good information, too much of it it's so overwhelming. And then people don't know what they're doing. So that, that's honestly probably the best selling point for hiring a coach that I've ever heard is that if you get somebody good, who's the right person for you, they can distill this down and give you what you need for your goal.

So you feel like you know what you're doing and then you don't have to be overwhelmed or distracted by the outside noise. Cause there's too much of it. It's so easy to become distracted. So yeah, that's really good point. I like that.

[01:09:39] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Yeah. And where can people find all your stuff?

[01:09:42] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** Yeah. So, my website is just my name. It's just AshleyVanHouten.com. The program is Do you want to spell that

[01:09:48] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** for people?

Just because people like me have a hard time with spelling. Okay, here we go.

[01:09:52] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** My name is on. It's A S H L E I G H. So I'm one of those Ashley's. And Van Houten is V A N H O U T E N. So you can find me. There's not a lot of Ashley Van Houten's on the internet, surprisingly. So you can find me pretty easily. And the muscle science for women, it's the flagship program is muscle science for women.

com. And that's also the name of the podcast that you can find us anywhere that you listen to podcasts. And I'm on Instagram for now, even though social media



is the worst, I'm still there and you can find me on Instagram at the muscle Maven.

[01:10:27] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Awesome. Well, thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

Always fun to catch up with you. And yeah, thank you so much for all the programs. I would highly encourage everyone to check them out and good stuff. And don't forget about picking up your cookbooks if they want to learn about meat, eating nose to tail, organs, all sorts of stuff. Highly recommend those too.

I

[01:10:47] **Ashleigh VanHouten:** got you. Thanks, Mike.

[01:10:48] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Awesome. Thank you.

[01:10:51] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Thank you so much for listening to the podcast. Really appreciate it. Huge thanks to Ashley for coming on the podcast. And once again, always enjoy chatting with her. Make sure to check out her program below. We'll put links to everything that she has solid stuff as always, which is great to see if you're looking for a tasty higher sodium electrolyte drink that doesn't taste like you're sucking on saltwater and actually tastes really good.

Check out Element below. You can find it in my link there. It's my favorite electrolyte drink by far. And then, if you want to know the top four things as a female you should do according to Ashley for better body composition, Make sure to enroll in the Flex4. Go to the link below, enter your email, and you will get a compilation of this podcast and also the Flex4 questions from before.

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appropriate. And if you have even just 20 or 30 seconds, leaving us a very short review is extremely helpful.

So thank you so much. Really appreciate it. Talk to all of you next week.

You suppose they have any life on other planets? What do you care? You don't have any life on this one!

[01:12:50] **Nancy:** This podcast is for informational purposes only. The podcast is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. You should not use the information on the podcast for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease or prescribing any medication or other treatment.

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