

[00:00:00] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Welcome back to the flex diet podcast. I'm your host Dr. Mike T. Nelson. On this podcast, we talk about all things to increase muscle performance, improve body composition. And do all of that in a flexible framework without destroying your health. So in the podcast, we have Austin Stout and the topic is performance versus health.

[00:00:23] So Austin works with a ton of people on both the performance side and doing a deep dive into their health also which I find is super interesting. And we primarily talk about more of the. High level of competitors. This could be powerlifting. Austin works with a wide variety of athletes and especially competitive bodybuilders of all different forms, different stages.

[00:00:51] And he's one of the rare people I would say in that field. That's also doing a very deep dive into their health. Also works with general population. And like I said, just a wide variety of athletes and wanted to get them on the program to talk about. How do we integrate health into performance? And what happens on the extreme ends side, especially competition?

[00:01:15] What happens to people after they do say multiple competitions, especially for physique. Show after show in a very short period of time. What are some of the ramifications? What are some of the costs of that? How often should you compete? How do you know when to really push the envelope? And with competitive people, When do you push them and when do you not?

[00:01:43] And trying to have an off season to get back to baseline, restore your health, and knowing that as you get closer to competition and you're at a very high level, You're probably going to break some stuff again. So how can you recover from that? So over time you should be more successful and break yourself a little bit less each time.

[00:02:09] Make sure to check out all of his great stuff. We'll put a link primarily to his Instagram. He's got a ton of great content. He also does education and consulting services. If you're interested in a tasty ketone beverage that puts you into a state of ketosis, then 20 to 30 minutes, check out my friends over at Tecton and you can use the code TECTON.

[00:02:30] Dr. Mike, to save you some money, FYI, full disclosure, I am a scientific advisor to them and an affiliate. So you make a few dollars from it, but so far all the feedback on it has been very good. So check them out and as always, thank you so much for listening to the podcast and enjoy this conversation with Austin Stout.

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[00:02:57] **Austin Stout:** I started as a bodybuilder and primarily in that realm, as far as clients and myself. And got heavily involved in what they call the functional health space.

[00:03:09] I don't really have a better term for it. I don't either. I just

[00:03:13] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** like that term, but everyone knows what it means. And so it's, it annoys me.

[00:03:17] **Austin Stout:** Yes, I agree. So for ease of listeners, we'll just say functional health, but but to your point, A lot of people work in the functional health space don't really work in the bodybuilding space like I do so I am one of the people that brings that together.

[00:03:36] I work with even on higher level. I've been able to implement a lot of that stuff and, men, male pro bodybuilders, people that are 300 pounds in the off season with abs like those guys, so it's been interesting because there's a lot of there's a lot of overlap between those individuals and your gen pop female that maybe has a history of.

[00:03:57] birth control use or some digestive issues and things, but there are a lot of other variables that come into play when you are that big or you are even the females that are competitive and serious about competing or powerlifting crowd strength athletes because you're pushing the easiest way to think about it is, homeostasis is here and everything we do is here.

[00:04:20] So, anything, any adaptation we're trying to create is essentially taking us away from where our body wants to be, which is to be the same more or less, right? So that's why we way back in the day when everyone started talking about metabolic adaptation or The term was metabolic damage then. Right. So I know we don't really use that term anymore, but for the newer listeners, but that's where a lot of that stuff stemmed from people were starting to realize, okay, so there, there is something to this, these adaptations that happen, and then we've gone so much past that now.

[00:04:57] And looking at the interplay with the GI track and neurochemistry and the brain and all these areas. So there it's fascinating.

[00:05:06] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** Do You find that the phrase I like is that the extremes inform the means, but the means don't often inform the extremes. And I've had some longer discussions with this from like Dr.

[00:05:18] Dwayne Jackson, who, works with a lot of pros on blood work and stuff like that. And it just seems to me that knowing where the extremes are, you can then go, I don't want to say regress, but you can go back and take those lessons, those principles, and maybe Just change them a little bit to work with your general population or different population But it doesn't seem to scale the other way like if you get really good at non athletes or gen pop Yeah, there's a lot of lessons you can learn from that.

[00:05:48] It's definitely super useful in some cases in training It might be more difficult But you can't take everything that you learn and scale it to someone who's on the extreme ends Yeah, the,

[00:06:00] **Austin Stout:** I see that a lot in practice because I work with a lot of coaches on education in that space and I always find it, it's something that I never really realized, but it makes a lot of sense now that I've run into it so much as you do get these coaches that work primarily with in that functional health realm and then they get the client that is healed and feels better and wants to change body composition, but they're actually I forget, how low am I allowed to push their calories?

[00:06:27] How much, how high can we push their calories? Cause they've been in this kind of they've been in this healing mindset where it's like, we have to make sure we're eating sufficient food and so on and so forth. So it's There's almost a mental block there. When you're so used to doing that one thing.

[00:06:42] So it doesn't usually translate that way. Like you said,

[00:06:46] **Dr Mike T Nelson:** what are some of the lessons you've learned from working on the more extreme ends that might be surprising to people? Because it, again, I was talking to my buddy Ben house about this a while ago in that. The longer we've been doing stuff, we both agreed that we're constantly impressed by how freaky the true freaks actually are, like how far away and how many standard deviations the elite are from normal and that the variability seems to be quite high, even though those people are, there's not a lot of them, but the variability from them seems to be quite high.

[00:07:29] **Austin Stout:** Yeah, well, you can. Absolutely. In the same kind of goes with a lot of the those adaptations. So, for example, just the amount of

there's when you think about genetics, people think about the ability to grow muscle faster or the ability to maybe lose fat faster than somebody else or whatever, or have genetic structure advantages.

[00:07:52] But Those people also oftentimes have the ability to take more abuse

[00:07:58] with.

[00:07:59] **Austin Stout:** So it's the same adaptations are happening in terms of, downregulation and thyroid and maybe the GI tract issues and all these things. But it just takes a lot more negative input for it to happen. To those people, not all of them, but a lot of them, because most of us, if we did, had the same inputs, we would deteriorate very quickly, right?

[00:08:26] From a health perspective. So that is something that I've seen having worked with, especially some of the clients that are on that really high upper end of that genetic spectrum. They, it's like all the same stuff, it's just everything works better for them. And that also goes in the healing aspect, they generally heal quicker.

[00:08:49] It's Wolverine type stuff. So I can do the same type of stuff with them to work on their GI or hormones or whatever it might be. And it, it works twice as fast on, on that side. So it's crazy. It's like the way I think about it is it's if you, anyone's looked into like epigenetics and.

[00:09:07] The idea of that and think about we have all these switches that turn on and off to stop a slow a mechanism down or slow a feedback loop down. They have the same switches. It's just there's turn on a lot quicker or a lot slower in some cases, right? So that's the way that I like to illustrate that.

[00:09:29] Yeah. And you have the kind of the hyper responders to like the I remember Stu Philips giving a talk at ACSM, 2008 or 2010 or something, and he was looking at, I think it was a training study they did, and they tried to, nutrition wasn't necessarily controlled, and he puts the graph up of the hypertrophy response of all the individuals, and he put up all the data points on a scatter plot.

[00:09:54] And you see this kind of, general line going up with people get better with time. And then you had these two people that were way at the top of the graph and you had one poor bastard who lost, lost muscle during the study. Right. I remember asking him, I'm like, what happened to that dude at the bottom who got worse?

[00:10:15] And then again, all the volume, everything, the same training program. And what about these two people at the top? And he said these two people at the top, he called them the beef brothers, or these two farmers, and he's genetically, or who knows what they were just hyper responders to the exact same workload, and the guy at the bottom, who knows, right, and you just, you hear stories like in, bodybuilding of I've heard this from multiple people, I don't know if it's true or not, But of, Paul Dillett going to the gym, just barely doing any press downs.

[00:10:46] And you look at the guy's triceps and you're like, this makes no sense, right?

[00:10:51] **Austin Stout:** Yeah. On paper, he's probably not even training in close enough proximity to failure. The studies don't explain that, you know? And so you see that. And going back into that some of those negative adaptations and how it might translate and the performance space is females.

[00:11:15] Females generally get the highlight reel on this stuff. Males have a lot of issues. They just don't get talked about as much. And fortunately, I've been able to tap into that space a lot more, but with women, of course, the, and I would love to see some kind of, Some kind of, this would be more of like a survey, but if you look at the high level or even just the amateur level, the shelf life of a female competitor, I would venture to say is not that long.

[00:11:43] No, the highest level, I would say it's unfortunately very short.

[00:11:47] **Austin Stout:** Right. And even at the amateur level, it's just people don't know about them.

[00:11:51] So they just go away and you never hear from

[00:11:53] **Austin Stout:** them, unfortunately, and the turnover, the turnover could be for a lot of reasons. They fall out of love for it or whatever life family, have a kid.

[00:12:02] I don't know. It could be a lot of things, but but in my experience, I'm actually, I actually ended up working with a lot of those people in the, Hey, I did all this. I'm screwed up. Maybe I want to do it again. I'm not really sure, but right now I just need to feel better. The aftermath. So that's, so these are all the aftermath clients and these are the ones that unfortunately are probably not going to compete again.

[00:12:29] A lot of them. And this is where the science gets really blurry for me because we have, we do have a lot of research on these adaptations. We've looked at everything, thyroid, leptin levels, hormones. We know that we know we see amenorrhea in females. They lose their cycles. Like we know all of this stuff where things get a little muddy and this is where like your calories in and calories out crowd.

[00:12:55] argues with the functional space is the, when these women get into this position and they try to, of course they have their really terrible rebound. They compete too many times in a row. They do all this stuff, they rebound. And we have that body fat overshooting phenomenon that we see with some people where they're a lot fatter than they were when they started.

[00:13:17] Then they try to diet again, right? Because, of course I don't want to, I'm disappointed, they're discouraged and the only thing they know how to do is diet again and doesn't work the same, at least it doesn't work like it used to work. And so now they may have to diet on a lot lower calories than, otherwise did before.

[00:13:41] And we can explain that to an extent. And of course, there's a whole lot of other variables you get into like adherence because. Let's be honest, disordered eating is huge when you get into that position. So they can easily be binge eating on the weekends and during the night and things and not reporting them.

[00:13:57] So I'm not naive to that, I have definitely had many women that are very adherent. And it's almost what you generally see is it's like a lot of the weight loss is really just displaced with inflammation and water retention. A lot of the time. So it's like weight becomes a, doesn't really mean much because It's okay, well, you're now eating 1200 calories.

[00:14:19] Maybe you're losing body fat, but your face is blown up like a balloon. So who really knows? So, so that's, we run into so much of that with people. And of course what happens is you can't sustain that. They feel so terrible that they just can't even stick to the diet long enough to see anything. So now we're in a position where.

[00:14:40] We're still fat, we're inflamed, we ate lower calories, we're hungry, we probably rebound for a second time, and then they end up with me.

[00:14:52] So these are Would you argue in those cases, at least the handful of ones I've seen in that case? I would venture to say almost all of them, like from

a health perspective, like almost all of them had issues, whether it was a GI, whether it was a movement, whether it was a lot of pain, but there was always something that if I did a survey or questionnaire or testing and said, what I marked this people, my air quotes, very healthy, pretty much every single time I'd be like, No, and it wasn't like there was one thing.

[00:15:28] It wasn't like I could say, Oh, it's always GI issue or it's always this or that, but it seems like the body is so dysregulated at that point that the inputs and outputs to get just so skewed. It's hard to make sense of anything going on.

[00:15:45] **Austin Stout:** Yeah. It's always I don't like, I don't want to say always, but you have a similar cluster of.

[00:15:50] Things that tend to happen, the hormones can go a lot of ways. Usually they don't have a cycle. So we see from a hormone perspective we notoriously see very suppressed progesterone, so they don't ovulate, right? So they don't have a cycle anymore, or if they do have a cycle, there's irregularities, bad PMS symptoms, heavy bleeding, pain, whatever it might be.

[00:16:13] When they get to that point, they usually cycles generally out. G. I. Issues 95 percent of the time. Yeah, I've done a lot of

[00:16:20] G.

[00:16:20] **Austin Stout:** I. Stuff.

[00:16:21] Yeah,

[00:16:21] **Austin Stout:** and it's to varying degrees. And I say 95 because those are the people that are coming to me. For other people, that number might be lower. But of course, minor primarily that so you have that once that continues long enough, there's where we start.

[00:16:36] Things start getting really messy because the immune system gets involved, right? So the immune system is trying to regulate this. It's Hey. We have this bacterial overgrowth, or we have maybe this yeast or fungus or whatever they're dealing with immune system wants to come in and assist and unfortunately that can backfire.

[00:16:57] And now we have people with autoimmune type scenarios. Now we have experiencing a lot of joint pain or chronic pain or they're just super inflamed. And commonly ending up with Hashimoto's, hypothyroid, this stuff.

It doesn't happen overnight. It's a cascade over time. But once the immune system gets involved, it's messy when you get to that point.

[00:17:22] And that's unfortunately where they end up a lot of the time.

[00:17:25] Yeah. And so if someone comes to you at that point what would be I know you can't say specifically, but what is your thought process? Like some people, and I probably generally agree with this is that If your digestion is just, floating trash bin fire, we have to fix that first because you're not assimilating nutrients, everything is a mess, you're pissing off your immune system, you're increasing your sympathetic stressors because that's feeding back into your autonomic nervous system, and like, where do you look to go, Okay, I want to target this, and then this, and then maybe that.

[00:17:55] **Austin Stout:** Yeah. So this is where the new term is root cause coaching. Right. Yeah. I like that. Right. Which is not a bad term, but it's easier said than done because finding the root cause and that trash fire is hard, but when I'm evaluating that type of person, I'm going to, I can say, okay, well, we have one, two, three, four, five, six different things.

[00:18:19] GI is usually at the top of the list. And a lot of those people. It's very difficult to correct someone's hormone profile when the G. I. Is that far off because of nutrient deficiencies because the liver detoxification generally gets pretty taxed at that point. So G. I. Is pretty high on the list.

[00:18:39] Stress is always a component. Stress gets really tricky. So, I was thinking about this last night actually, cause I was going to make some kind of reel or something and then I forgot and

[00:18:49] Oh, you got nothing going on. Come on.

[00:18:51] **Austin Stout:** Yeah. Right. So the, and everyone talks about this, right? Stress, we have to reduce stress.

[00:18:57] And then what they do is they suggest different modalities. So I want you to go walk outside or I want you to journal. I want you to meditate, whatever. And those things are fine, except for most of these people. Are so anxious. Let's go ahead and sit down and meditate. Let's see how that goes. Yeah,

[00:19:17] good luck with all that.



[00:19:19] Exactly

[00:19:20] **Austin Stout:** a hundred percent. Most of the time they can't sit in there, they can't sit in silence for more than 30 seconds. So that's out. So when we're looking at a stress assessment, I'm looking at, we have psychological stress, we have environmental stress, family, relationships, job.

[00:19:35] Maybe training is a big stressor, of course, but what things within that are quantifiable that we can actually track and start reducing training is an easy one because it revolves around sets, reps, Intensity, we can, RPE, RIR, whatever. Training's an easy one for us to pull back, except for the fact that a lot of the time you get a lot of pushback on that.

[00:20:01] Oh, yeah. They don't like that. That's what I found out. They don't like they're only released. You're like, you're taking away my, you're taking away my teddy bear. What are you doing? I don't like this. Right.

[00:20:11] **Austin Stout:** So, so even then with the training or cardio, right, because I would argue It's probably not that intensive.

[00:20:19] It's probably not going to have a huge impact on your sympathetic nervous system, except if you're doing 25, 000 steps a day and you're already that stressed out, then it might be impactful. But I have to look in there. I'm like, okay, a, what can I reduce quickly and easily? And B, what will they let me reduce quickly and easily?

[00:20:42] So I always. While there might be other bigger things that I want to tackle, I'm going to start with the easiest path of least resistance first, what will they let me touch without a meltdown? Right? And I might have to, I might have to say Hey, like here's three or four things. How do you feel about this?

[00:20:59] And get a little bit of feedback and start there, even though I want to start over here, but I know that's not gonna, it's not happening. And I will be honest. I get some situations that are so bad that it's like a ultimatum time there. I'm like, listen, you don't really have much say in this.

[00:21:17] If you want, you already went through four coaches, you made it here. This is what we have to do. But I don't. I prefer not to be abrasive like that if I don't have to, but once we start there, I can get some buy in once we notice a positive result okay, that feels a little bit better. And then generally with the training, for example, or heck getting them to eat more food once they do it and they realize that they're not going to die.

[00:21:46] Oh, I'm still here. Everything's the same. So now my buy in increases, right? Because they're like, okay, well, I'm fine. And then I can do a little more. I can do a little more, but for most people, a lot of those steps have to take place before we can start getting fancy with supplementation and protocols and things.

[00:22:06] I can pull labs on people. I can run GI maps. I can do all this stuff, but that doesn't mean that they're in any position for me to implement. Anything. However, I will say that lab work testing is a good buy in chip for people sometimes because 100 percent because I can actually, even though they don't know what any of it means, I can explain it and say Hey, you see all these red marks on here.

[00:22:32] These are bad. Yeah. So at least that's something visual and it's better than me just saying, Hey, you need to sit down and read a book at night. But why? Well, because of this, because of these things, so the lab work can be a really good buy in chip for people, but getting past that, that initial barrier is hard because you're talking about, you brought up competitors at the beginning or performance based.

[00:22:59] These are not general population people. Their life their identity is this. Yeah. And if you, that's usually what I

[00:23:07] find is a rate limiter. If I could change one thing, wave my magic wand would be. Can we just change your identity? I'm not saying you'll never lift, not saying you'll never compete again, but just so much wrapped up in that.

[00:23:19] It makes me worried.

[00:23:20] **Austin Stout:** I ask people questions sometimes something simple. Why don't you go do something you enjoy? And if they can't tell me anything else they enjoy, well, there's problems.

[00:23:30] Yeah. You're telling me for fun, if you lift more weights. Right. That's cool. But I'm looking for like recreation, hang out with friends, pick a hobby.

[00:23:39] **Austin Stout:** Yeah. They'll say, well, I like to go for 10 mile hikes up the side of a 9 percent grade. Do you think I could run, I could start, running marathons instead of lifting. Would that be a good, I'm like, no, like all this do you see a pattern here? This is all. It's all extreme and it's all physical and I can understand it a little bit more in the younger crowd.

[00:23:57] I get some of the younger people and I get it when I was. I started, I did my first competition at 18 years old. So I literally started prepping for my first show. I was still in high school. So I'm bringing my Tupperware to school and all the stuff.

[00:24:12] So at

[00:24:13] **Austin Stout:** 18, 19, 20, 21, you don't really, you probably don't really have too much of an identity yet.

[00:24:22] You hang out with your friends. Maybe there's some social stuff. I don't know, 20 year olds probably just drink. Alcohol and socialize, but when you're 35 30, if you have no hobbies or no outlets that aren't extreme physical base, that's problematic. If you take anything away from this, if you want to work on any of these issues, having some kind of joy in your life that is not revolved around weight lifting is great first step.

[00:24:53] Yeah. I always ask people like, what do you do for fun? Do you have something that's not exercise? Same thing. It's Oh, well, what do I take up like this competitive racing or that? I'm like, can you just, you like mountain biking? Just go ride your bike. Have fun. Like I do a lot of kiteboarding, kite surfing, which can be intense, but it has a component of it's by nature social cause you're out there with other people in case, something happens to you.

[00:25:16] So it has a very nice social component to it also. Yeah, it's crazy to me how many people have no real recreation, hobbies, like even, sometimes, unfortunately, it seems to be more guys like social group to just hang out.

[00:25:35] **Austin Stout:** Yeah. Yeah. And it's, and I was, I can relate. I was that person.

[00:25:40] I did all that because I started so young that I went to school. I was full time student in college and maintaining a basic, basically a full time job in bodybuilding. It was insane. And so I didn't have any recreation. I just, that's what I did. So it's relatable, but I guess that doesn't make it any less of a problem, so, and I had to, unfortunately I didn't have anyone. Telling me these things and I had to just figure it out myself. And after I broke everything, so,

[00:26:12] yeah. And that's usually the path and I'm guilty of doing this in the past too. It's like, when did try harder ever solve anything, cause it, it seems like when you're younger, you're like, Oh, if I just go harder down this path and I just put in more effort and again, yeah, you need effort to reach your goals. But.

At some point, like a buddy of mine describes it as the people sometimes who are successful, but have pay a high cost are the people who can go in straight lines, like really fast.

[00:26:41] Like they'll appear like they're getting much, much faster progress, but the risk of them imploding or hitting a wall or something like that is, is much higher. And I think a lot of times we don't maybe in social media and that type of thing. Now we don't see. The cost of all those things, we just see the success of, so and so new competitor came out of nowhere, Hey, look, they're great for a year.

[00:27:05] And then they just disappeared. Nobody hears from them. This could be bodybuilding, physique powerlifting, whatever. Like in my opinion, those stories are unfortunately like all too common, but we still get reinforced that this is the best way to go. But we don't see the cost that a lot of those competitors are paying.

[00:27:23] **Austin Stout:** Foresight's hard. Yeah. It's, and that, and those are questions too, for people like, well, okay, well, we can, we have a path A and a path B is my way. And it's going to be challenging. Cause it's going to challenge that identity that you have. And it's going to be uncomfortable.

[00:27:41] And you're going to have to reduce some things and pull some things back. But path B looks pretty good on the other side. It's I use a line graph. It's if you had a graph and the graph cut off up here, this trajectory, but you don't see that this line dives to its death on the other end, they're going to pick that fast line every time.

[00:27:58] Oh yeah. A hundred percent

[00:28:00] **Austin Stout:** every time, but maybe just helping people understand, like, where do you want to be in a year and two years? And because the longer you put off something that inevitably needs to happen, the harder it's going to get to do it. And it's I can't imagine. losing, if you were obese and you were 70 years old, like that would be daunting, but you probably were still obese at 40, damn, I wish I would have started at 40.

[00:28:29] So it's it's not going to go anywhere as much as you, as much as you want it to. Something else interesting about the stress thing and something I've realized a lot more over the last few years is when people are running into these adversities that you're. People's perception to how challenging something is always different.

[00:28:47] So it's like when you, someone checks in with you and they report the most minor inconvenience in their whole week shot, or you get the other person like, yeah, got a flat tire on the way to work, walked the other six miles, ate my meal on the way there, had a great day, got my training in that sucks. But Oh, well, but what you generally find and you see this with successful people is.

[00:29:13] They've probably dealt with some type of adversity prior. And so how does that translate into this space? Well, on these higher tier athletes that I'm running into, like these IFBB pro bodybuilders and things, they have mostly just had this trajectory the whole time. They've never actually had much slow down.

[00:29:35] They've worked really hard. So don't yeah. Yeah. Take that away. They've worked really hard, but it's mostly just been. They went in, they did one or two NPC shows. They did a national show qualified to be a pro first or second try, crazy trajectory. Now they get hit with this thing and that's whole world crumbles because they've never really had that adversity.

[00:29:58] Whereas you get the very average person, that's been like scratching and clawing the whole time. It might not be a big deal to them to need a pull back for a few months and regulate things and get some labs and do, whatever. So I think that's interesting, but I suppose you see that in regular people or normal people all the time is the people that have had a lot of adversity, their stress, their one is someone else's 10, and that's just how it is.

[00:30:27] Yeah, that all everywhere, I remember when I was teaching, I won't say the place, there was a student who, a couple students, whatever reason they just could not meet a deadline if their life depended upon it, and it was very upfront hey, you can't turn in stuff late, that's not fair to other students, here's the policy, blah, blah, blah, and there was one other student in there who sent me an email at the beginning of the quarter, and she said, I just want to let you know that I have chemotherapy five days a week and I might be, trying to, I might miss an assignment here or there or not, being in class.

[00:31:01] I'm not trying to skip class, this is what's going on. I think she missed one day, and you would see her in class. You're like, Whoa, she looks horrible. Probably just had some

[00:31:12] **Austin Stout:** traumatic

[00:31:13] therapy

[00:31:13] **Austin Stout:** session.

[00:31:14] Yeah. And I'm thinking. But the other chuckleheads in the back can't figure out how to get their assignment turned in on time.

[00:31:21] And she's doing basically daily chemotherapy and missed one day. So it's just wild to see the differences across the board. And I'm sure it's, people are a little bit younger. Everyone's gonna get challenged at some point. You don't get out of life without having significant challenges.

[00:31:36] But it's just interesting to see people where they're at in that sort of overall perspective,

[00:31:42] **Austin Stout:** yeah, for sure. And that's, but that's why once you get that buy in and they realize that they're okay, now that 10 is a seven and the seven becomes a three and the three becomes a one and you're things don't get as scary.

[00:31:57] I think people are more held back by in this space or more held back by fear than difficulty. Something could be difficult because you're afraid of it, but I always find it funny because they'll be, I'll do anything doing anything. I'll train as hard as I can. I'll eat my meals. I'll do all this stuff.

[00:32:16] But when I tell them to train less, I'm like, well, physically that's definitely not difficult. Not training is much less physically difficult than training, but that's really scary. Right? So it's not that it's Physically difficult or painful, except for psychologically, it's difficult. So I'm like, well, not that hardcore.

[00:32:37] Then are you won't do anything you need to apparently. And because sometimes that's the stuff that you need to do. So that's, but ultimately that's where people generally fall short and then you don't see them ever again.

[00:32:51] Yeah. And with those people even ask him like, okay, so. The same thing I find.

[00:32:56] It's usually like nutrition, they'll probably do most stuff, training, they'll do whatever. But it's okay, if I told you to go meditate, do a Zen style, stare at a tree and do breath work for ten minutes in the morning, are you going to do it? It's what about going to bed a half hour early?

[00:33:09] I'm like, bro, I thought you were going to do anything. You just want to train harder, right? Okay, great. That's good. At some point that may not be the answer to every question. Right. There's

[00:33:20] **Austin Stout:** a time, there's a time and a place for sure. And it's like business life, anything like that.

[00:33:26] It requires some push and pull, trust me. If. If there was a, if there was an award for just doing more and being tough, I'd sign up for that, but I'm going to tell you it doesn't work all the time, so that's unfortunately just how it goes. So the people that have sustainability in this space probably have dealt with something and probably overcame it and while it was difficult.

[00:33:54] The ideal situation is that like with these athletes we're looking at this function, I'm using air quotes because we don't like the word the biggest difference between those people and your general population is when I help somebody that's gen pop, the idea is to fix it, don't break it again.

[00:34:10] But with competitors, you're going to break it again.

[00:34:13] Yeah. You're basically going to break the machine again.

[00:34:15] **Austin Stout:** The idea is to break it less, take these tools and the stuff that we learn. You see this with like, when you prep athletes or you work with a client, that's what we say, get to know the client's body because we, it's pattern recognition, right?

[00:34:28] We can understand patterns. And so we know sooner when they need to deload sooner, when they need to refeed sooner, when they need a break. We see that stuff over time. Those patterns we might be able to replicate with other clients, but with those individuals we know that, okay, this person's going to want to compete again, but maybe we can break it a little bit less, or when we do break it, we can fix it a little bit faster the next time, so it's different because yeah, with with someone that's not in that space, ideally it's like you fix it and you sustain it and rock and roll,

[00:35:04] yeah, but if you're pushing the limit on anything like You're gonna find where the limits are at some point, and I agree with that you know with some competitors It's okay can Where it really starts to really suck. Could that be six weeks out instead of 16 weeks out?

[00:35:21] Right. We try to limit it. You're not going to get around suffering. It's just part of the deal you signed up for, but can we make it a little bit less than last time? And then once we're done, your recovery back to normal, can that be a little bit faster and not six months, could that be two months, three months, whatever.

[00:35:38] Can we shorten those? Duration. We may not be able to change the intensity, but hopefully we can modify the duration of those times. Yeah.

[00:35:49] **Austin Stout:** Shorten the span. It's shortened the span by which we are dysfunctional in those areas. The yeah. Cause generally. You're probably going to have to, I don't know, maybe you find something different.

[00:36:01] I, when people I know with myself, I've competed a dozen times or so, and I can get further into the prep easier, but my ending point is always similar as

[00:36:14] far as,

[00:36:15] **Austin Stout:** as far as like calorically and output and stuff, it all usually is relatively similar, but I can come out of it quicker.

[00:36:23] The first half of the prep's a little bit better, but unfortunately what's happening with most of the people we're talking about is each time's getting worse, it's, it almost always goes like this. Do the first show their body has never been exposed to that type of stressor right goes pretty smooth.

[00:36:40] Maybe they have some hiccups because of an experience or whatever. Second prep maybe is a little bit better even because they've learned some things. A third one, you didn't take long enough in between, right? You didn't the adaptation is still there. You didn't take a long, you're excited.

[00:36:57] I'm good. Right. Right. Yeah. Yeah. You're pumped. You're ready. You've already got the show picked out before you finished the second show. Right. You got your third one picked and Oh, this isn't working the way that it did last time, but you make it through. Maybe, you get through it. It's not pretty.

[00:37:14] Maybe you try to do it a fourth time the same way. And you're like, Whoa. This is, I'm not responding at all, or I'm literally look like I'm six months pregnant, bloated in the morning and I'm only eating 1200 calories, like what's going on. It's like these, that is generally the life cycle.



[00:37:33] That we're seeing. And unfortunately it usually takes till you get to that point before you realize anything's wrong. Even though if you looked around at any good information, you would know you need time, but that's easier said than done,

[00:37:48] yeah. Do you, so my thought on this and because on your thoughts, is it.

[00:37:54] As an overall concept, I just think that you do various systems, you've built up a fair amount of residual stress that you just talking about homeostasis, right? You're below, like you never really got back to homeostasis and now you're just digging a bigger ditch. So I use a lot of pheromone, like heart rate variability.

[00:38:11] And one of my little rules is you can't talk to me about another show until you normalize your HRV, right? Until you show me that your stress is somewhat back to a normal. Then we could have a conversation about, next competition, what, whatever it is. Do you find that's similar?

[00:38:28] And do you use any tools or things to try to objectively measure it? Cause it's very hard. And then I find you end up in these discussions of, Oh, it's my way or your way, and you don't, you can't default any data from their system to show them what's going on.

[00:38:45] **Austin Stout:** So calories is not a good one.

[00:38:48] I'm going to say that. It's not a good one. It's a bit, well, because someone, a lot of people are thinking that they're like, well, I got up to X calories, so I'm recovered. No, that's not how that works. Body fat is probably gonna be more helpful in terms of regaining that system than calories are.

[00:39:08] We know that. The data basically shows that we've got to, we've got to regain at least enough body fat to function. But if we're looking at quantitative, Data. Yeah. HRV is great number of different lab work. You're like, I have labs on people, so I pretty much know what good baseline is for those individuals.

[00:39:27] And so I can reference that, and it's we're not going to attempt to, maybe we could do like a small deficit or clean things up a little bit, but we're not going to attempt to do anything too intensive until we're back to normal with that. And not only are we back to normal, but we've sustained normal.

[00:39:45] For a little while, because it's like, uh, you might get those labs drawn and they look good, but they've only been good for three weeks. And so I'm good. Right. Real quick. So we're good to go back into it. And that's really not the case. It's well, we need to, we got you there. We need to sustain that for a while.

[00:40:05] And God forbid you want to actually gain any tissue and look better for your next show. That's, that in and of itself is going to take tons of time for people. And it's no different with, I work with both enhanced crowd and natural and it's, it takes time regardless. So if you actually want to be productive, that's even more time tacked on to that.

[00:40:27] And so you figure, I mean you at minimum for most people, if we're talking, well, we'll say females. You are lucky if you can fully recover back to that baseline in four to five months, even probably for a lot of these people. And full calories are up, body composition, stable hunger cues is another one to look at with people because I always, when we're looking at that body fat regain, anyone that's competed or got really lean knows that you might feel physically full, but you're psychologically still hungry.

[00:41:06] You're having cravings. The things is what we see post show. Everyone says they'll be fine, but they never are,

[00:41:11] I'll be the exception, right?

[00:41:13] **Austin Stout:** I want that to be regulated as well. Like you shouldn't be super food focused. You shouldn't be, it's I feel satiated. I'm at peace with this process.

[00:41:22] Everything's flowing and feeling good. Now we might be in a position where we can explore a contest prep again. That's assuming you've made the actual physique improvements that you want to look at. But I use, so I'm using a combination of both visual data and, biofeedback. So you knew we can use things like blood glucose, nature of V and resting heart rate and all that stuff.

[00:41:45] I'll be honest. I there's ones that I like, but I do vary it a little bit from person to person because My only hang up with that is that some people get way too attached to some of that data. And so I'm like, I just, I'm like, scrap that. We're not doing that anymore. Like measuring glucose or even HRV.

[00:42:03] They're like, well, my HRV dropped 20 points. I'm like, yeah, because you didn't sleep last night. You said that two sentences ago, in the update, but they can't seem to let go of that piece of data. It's obsessive, so blood glucose is a great example. I've had people. I cause that's a marker that I'll use.

[00:42:20] And I've had people like, should I wear a CGM and continuous glucose monitor? I'm like, absolutely not. No, I'm like, that's a terrible idea because you've already, you're already wanting to check your glucose three or four times a day. I'm like, do you know where you wear a CGM cortisol is going to be your best friend.

[00:42:39] All day, you're just going to be sitting there staring at that damn, that app on your phone all day long. And that's, so the data's paralyzing for people too. So you got to pick and choose what you're looking at with certain individuals.

[00:42:53] Yeah. And to me, that's where the art of coaching comes in.

[00:42:56] Cause for sure, in general, if people psychologically can handle it and it's not. I'm like, yeah, give me as much data as I can get, but you also then have to pick your battles, cause I've made that mistake where they have a CGM on and they, Oh, it's because I ate two grapes. My blood glucose now is one 18.

[00:43:16] It's you're still fine. Like one 18, like who cares? It's right. Yeah. And especially now where they can check the damn thing, like relentlessly all the time. The early ones, you had a blackout period, cause most people didn't have the reader. And now it's horrible that you have all that live feedback.

[00:43:32] And with all the technology coming, we're just going to be inundated with more data, which when it is useful. But on the other hand, like you said, you definitely have people that it's not useful for them. Like I've even had some people like, take your measurement device and just throw it in the trash for awhile, just don't look at it.

[00:43:51] **Austin Stout:** Yeah. I have in some of those extreme cases we were talking about, scales out. I've had to remove photos for periods of time, even just to get objective verbal feedback from people because there's just too much bias. I've even done things like I've just experimented with different stuff to see how much cognitive bias there is.

[00:44:12] Because, for example, I've had people that check in on Mondays and they don't like their job. So they get up on Monday morning. But so, you know

what I'm getting in that Monday morning update is I'm giving heavy Monday morning bias in that. Oh yeah. That's the attitude that's shown in there. But if I have them write the update, maybe they're still checking on Monday, but I'm like, Hey, write it on Saturday morning and just let it sit there.

[00:44:38] Report back Monday, shoot it to me on Monday. Looks totally different. Even though the week was the same the feedback I'm getting is totally different because I'm not getting that, all that bias in there. So unfortunately, yes, data is awesome. You can do so much with data. There's now we have unlimited resources.

[00:44:59] We can make, we can look at anything, but people mentally just can't handle it most of the time. And I'm the same way. I, There's things that I know with myself. There's a few pieces of data that I use that I know I feel good with and I just don't mess with the rest of it because I know my tendency will be, I'll start noticing that OCD creeping in a little bit and I'm like, Nope, we're not doing that.

[00:45:24] So,

[00:45:25] and that's the hard part because the people who are drawn to those boards who are more competitive, they are. A lot of times, borderline OCD or frank OCD, ADHD, and that's not a knock. That's a lot of times some of the things that makes them extremely successful at things that are very difficult too.

[00:45:44] But that also presents other things you have to watch out for in the process.

[00:45:49] **Austin Stout:** Yeah, absolutely. And I'm no stranger to it. That's, that was my formal diagnosis was OCD at, in my early twenties. And was eyeopening because looking back, all of the tendencies were very obvious and I can now see so many things that I've let go of that I don't do anymore and how much improvement I've made in my physique.

[00:46:13] By doing that, it's like just. And you see this a lot in with therapy. So I have some of the, some of those individuals they're in therapy, right? They do either I suggested it or they're doing it at their own record. And once they break through, whether it's like childhood trauma or marital trauma relationship, whatever it was, once they get past it.

[00:46:36] All of the sudden stuff starts working.

[00:46:39] Oh yeah. I've seen that. I've lost count of how many times I've seen that.

[00:46:43] **Austin Stout:** It ha yeah. And it's so, so whether the, whether we have research on that is a moot point because anecdotally, it's happens so often. So, some of these some of these higher level people, we do a little bit of that in the off season.

[00:47:00] I'm like, one of the things I'm going to challenge you on this off season is we're going to explore some of those hobbies a little bit more, and we're going to, we're going to diversify a little bit, maybe I'll even challenge them with like different food selection, for example, I'm going to have you eat some different stuff and kind of just go out of the box a little bit.

[00:47:18] Once they realize that they enjoy it and they can do it and they start getting better results man, this is not only better. I like this more. I'm not as miserable, but it works. And so I think there's a lot to learn about that. And that life, if you've been competing or in this lifestyle for any period of time, it should literally just be software in your brain.

[00:47:40] Like it shouldn't take it shouldn't take so much mental energy to execute steps that you've done. 10 million times it should take basically no mental energy, and half the time people have a coach. Anyhow, what are you thinking about? What are you, there's nothing to think about, it's.

[00:48:00] It's just there. You just follow it. General population is a little bit different because habits take a while to form, but but if you've been doing it for a while and it's all, and it takes you and you like pain yourself over these, this my new show, I'm like, listen, you're going to eat every day.

[00:48:19] You're going to train, you're going to do these same things. What are you thinking about? Nothing's going to happen. I'm telling you, it's going to be there tomorrow, but

[00:48:31] yeah, interesting phenomenon. Yeah. And as we wrap up, I always think of off season as expansion and that will look radically different from one person to the next, but at my goal in my head, I'm thinking, okay, I've even told people like, go to the store and I want you to buy a different type of Greek yogurt.

[00:48:46] It could be the same macros. I don't care. I just, I need to inject some variability into your system because it's just not going to end well otherwise if you keep continuing to, do the same thing for year and year on end. For sure.

[00:49:01] **Austin Stout:** Yeah. And that's I know for me, it's become bled over into everything in my life.

[00:49:07] Like I can travel now for shows and with family stuff. And even if I get caught in an odd situation, I can adapt to it. I don't stress it doesn't matter. I'm in a fat loss phase right now, contemplating a show later in the year and technically would be, 13 and a half weeks out or so. I basically live the same exact life every day.

[00:49:28] Yeah. Maybe towards the very end, there'll be some limitations because I can't lift my legs up anymore, but outside of that you're doing the same stuff, there's no reason you have to stop going on, out to see a movie with your significant other. And it's you don't have to trap yourself.

[00:49:44] It's not like that. So. It doesn't have to be anyhow.

[00:49:49] Awesome. Well, thank you so much for all your time. I really appreciate it. And where can people find more about it? I know you have education programs. Obviously you work with clients one on one where can they find more from you?

[00:50:00] **Austin Stout:** Yeah. Easiest place.

[00:50:01] If you go to my social media, I'm Austin ST, the number, and then the number eight on Instagram, my bio, there's a link tree. So if you go in the link tree, you can have links to. Facebook profile, my emails in there for any inquiries, my education marketplace, as far as you want to look at classes, it's all in there.

[00:50:23] Awesome. And that'd probably be the best place then.

[00:50:25] **Austin Stout:** Yeah. You have any inquiries, shoot me an email. All other resources are pretty much in that link tree.

[00:50:32] Awesome. Well, thank you so much. And dr. Danny said to say hi also. So

[00:50:37] yeah, cool.

[00:50:38] Awesome. Well, thank you so much. I really appreciate it. And yeah, I will have everyone make sure they check you out.

[00:50:44] And even if they're just looking for free content, you've got a lot of great stuff on Instagram too.

[00:50:49] **Austin Stout:** Yeah, absolutely. Thanks for having me. Yeah, no

[00:50:51] problem.

[00:50:53]

[00:50:53] Thank you so much for listening to the podcast. Really appreciate it. A huge thanks to Austin stout for sharing all of his knowledge here and having a good chat over. the ramifications of health and performance, especially from all the way from the means to the extremes. Make sure to check out all of his information on primarily Instagram.

[00:51:15] It's got a ton of great content there. A huge thanks to him for being so willing to share all of it on the podcast here, looking for an exogenous ketone to potentially help you with Cognition and maybe some parts of performance. I would not say ketones are the best for all out speed and power. But I have noticed that there seems to be some weird CNS effect.

[00:51:39] With 1RM lifts or even some of the grip lifts at a higher dose, which would be around 2 cans. Doesn't work 100 percent of the time, but more often than not, I will I'll have two cans during a session that I thought wasn't going to be so good. And it turns out to be pretty good and sometimes really good.

[00:51:56] So that's been super interesting. So if you want to check them out, go to the link below and use the code Dr. Mike to save some money. FYI, I am a scientific advisor there and an affiliate. You make a few coins from them. So thanks again, Austin stout. Really appreciate everybody listening. If you enjoyed this podcast, please share it online.

[00:52:18] You can tag me so I can come in and say thank you and make sure to hit the old buttons the download, subscribe, leave us review all that wonderful stuff that helps us with the old algorithms to get better distribution of the podcast. Thank you so much for listening. Really appreciate it. We'll talk to you next week.

[00:52:41] You know something? That was a sweet number. It sure was. You know something else? What? I hate sweet numbers!

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