

The Paleolithic Solution - Episode 41

1. Question from Annette:

Okay. Okay. Okay.

I listen to your podcasts steadily. Love them. I know. Whole food. On board with it. But, as you well know like with Chia seeds, Acai, Goji Berries, and a plethora of other "SUPERFOODS!!!!" (yes caps and exclamation apropos). There is ALWAYS something.

Right now I am looking at Maca.

Background. I gave up coffee about a week ago. I HATED my life. I didn't get the headaches, but I did get the utter pleasure of a deep weariness setting DEEP into my bones and feeling as powerful as a kitten on Tylenol pm.

And so.

Though my trainer only challenged me for a week. It was so rough those first few days and now it doesn't suck as much - I thought... let's keep on trucking. And though one day I hope to welcome the bliss of the double shot americano (down from a quad w. splash of hwc) back into my arms.

Currently - I am running an experiment on myself to see how long I can go...

WHICH - brings up MACA. I don't want to eff it up by giving my body a replacement. But I do like the idea of other fun drinks to have.

So. I have a jar of roasted powdered Maca.

Is this going to de-rail my mission? Or is an acceptable warm drink to embrace?

Waiting on the literal edge of my seat for a response. It is precarious out here...

(and seriously THANK YOU for all the work. you and andy have changed my life)

2. Question from Squatchy:

Be the Sasquatch Andy. Sasquatches unite! 😊

I'm honored to have my question answered in the podcast, you guys rock. Thanks for the nickname compliments (I am male btw). A good friend of mine started calling me Squatchy back in high school, it caught on and stuck ever since.

Speaking of all this talk of mass gain. So what is a healthy way to gain some good lean mass and put on some weight without feeling like crap and uncomfortably stuffing yourself all the time, or screwing yourself up metabolically. What would you do if you wanted to gain some mass but not sacrifice health/wellbeing/feeling good in the process?

3. Question from Paleo Pete:

Freakin love the show. Another solid one as always.

In regards to mass gain and cortisol. Do you have any advice for a skinny-fat ectomorph? As this Mind and Muscle article goes over below it seems that certain types of ectomorphs

naturally produce more cortisol and therefore have a harder time gaining muscle and staying lean (double whammy). I certainly have the body type described and also have naturally high stress levels. I went from 6'1 170 and soft to where I am now 193 with some fat all over (I seem to distribute it evenly/about the same amount of fat when I was at 170) on Starting Strength and 5x5 programs but have ground to a halt on gains. I eat mostly red meat and vegetables with fat coming from coconut milk/oil, grass fed butter and olive oil. Carbs are under 50 a day. Any overall advice for a skinny-fat would be greatly appreciated. <http://www.mindandmuscle.net/node/226?page=all>

4. Question from L. Smith:

Hi, Robb. I love your site, and I've listened to your podcast for the past couple months; I really appreciate the time you guys take to put this together.

I have a question about the Paleo Diet and estradiol. I'm on TRT (Testosterone Replacement Therapy) and recent blood work showed median Total Testosterone levels, lowish but in-range Free Testosterone levels, and slightly higher Estradiol levels than I would hope for. Sex Hormone Binding Globulin was slightly high but still in range. I understand that SHBG is driven down by insulin and elevated by training. Is it possible that not spiking insulin enough could result in high SHBG, leading to elevated estradiol relative to Testosterone? Background to put this in context:

I am quite lean (always less than a legit 12%), and have always been this lean. I do workouts with an emphasis on anaerobic stuff (sprints, oly and powerlifts, and lately lots of work on rings). I am careful to avoid Main Page style WODs because they tend to negatively impact my development of strength and power. Diet is roughly Paleo; the main deviations are peanut butter and the fact that my meat, eggs, etc., are not grass-fed. About a year ago, blood work showed similar Total T numbers, but lower estradiol levels and somewhat higher Free T. At that time I ate a similar diet, but included more carbohydrate (mostly fruit). I definitely feel less zonked out with more veggies and less fruit in my diet, but I wonder if some insulin spike is necessary from a hormonal perspective to keep SHBG low. Could there be some truth to this, or am I barking up the wrong tree?

5. Question from Multibomber:

Hey Robb, thought this might be a good podcast question:

I live in Pacific Beach, San Diego, and we have a lot of vegetarian/vegan dirty hippies all over the place. I also work for an organic catering company and I have to deal with said dirty hippie vegans all the time :/ While their complete lack of muscle mass, healthy hair, and use of soap is obvious, I continually find myself defending my stance of eating as much dead animal matter as possible. In a Crossfit video with Kelly Starrett (who Welbourne claims can heal the sick with his tears), Kelly points out that dense protein sources i.e. anything with a face and a soul that was unrepentantly slaughtered and put on a plate) are critical for glucagon production. I understand glycogenolysis and the resulting gluconeogenesis, yet I am unable to completely explain why it is so important to consume dense protein sources.

PLEASE TELL ME what to say to these dirty hippies to help them understand why quinoa and black beans just don't give the body the amount of protein it needs. Is the body unable to use the protein in these sources? What are they missing out on by not having adequate glucagon secretion? Is there no glucagon secretion whatsoever without dense protein source consumption?

I ask also because I have a chef friend who is writing a cookbook for a woman he knows who has lymphoma. He's read in many places that when you have cancer, you shouldn't consume any animal products. Any help you can give me in fighting the good fight against granola, hemp necklaces, and body odor would be GREATLY appreciated!

6. Question from Geoff:

Hey Rob,

Mike Mentzer did a ton of work with the HIT one set to failure and consistently set new PRs throughout his bodybuilding career even after achieving a perfect score in Mr. Olympia. (clearly not a novice). He had to continually invent new techniques to achieve these gains, but the focus was on a decrease in volume, increase in intensity, and increase in rest period, rather than an increase in variability in activity.

Can you comment on how you feel about Mentzer's (and Arthur Jones') research, as well as what you would recommend for someone who is interested in muscle size purely for the look and is not concerned with performance/fitness? Also, Tim Ferriss used similar methodology to go from 146 to 187 in 28 days, in a well documented study at San Jose State University. For someone who has been chronically underweight his entire life, is this a good protocol to follow for expedited weight gain?

Thanks,
Geoff

7. Follow-up from Wayne:

Great episode, especially since you answered my question. 😊 Got another one now. As being in the male age group (45) where the benefits of testosterone starts to decline, what ways can one help maintain healthy testosterone levels? I know diet, looking at pictures of naked women, etc., can help, but what other ways? Any foods or supplements good for helping maintain or boost levels?

Thanks

P.S. If you do start to approach double digits in listeners you can start counting in hexadecimal, that should get you another year of single digit listeners.

8. Question from Erin:

Hi there and thanks for all the great info you are sharing. I've just recently found the podcast and am catching up. I am science geek too so really appreciate the geeked out bits. I have celiac. My diet is not Paleo, I still consume dairy and brown rice. I am an amateur figure competitor and am preparing for a show in September, so don't want to make wholesale changes in diet right now, the plan is for Paleo after the show. My prep is very sane for a figure gal, 3-4 days a week resistance work and 2-3 days HIIT, then just some low level activity with walking. Tracking and weighing. At 5'7" and currently 125, losing fat at about 1700 calories with protein 125-140 g, carbs and fat variable dependent on training or cardio/off day.

After my show, I'd like to transition to a non measuring non weighing Paleo diet to maintain about 5-7# over stage weight. Would this be a really bad idea after a contest diet, since my appetite regulation may be impaired a bit? Even though I'm dieting smartly, it's still caloric restriction and I imagine there may be a small amount of hyperphagia rebound going on. I can control it if needed, but it sure would be nice to be able to rely on hunger cues instead of a scale. I definitely don't want to go nuts with eating, but would love to be able to relax a bit about food. I feel very fortunate that I have only a minimally unhealthy psychological relationship with food after competing in figure on and off for a few years now.

Any tips for easing the transition into a non measuring Paleo plan?

Secondly, tips on buy-in to help me with my husband. He's a genetically gifted individual who's been able to eat McDonalds and pizza and keep good body composition externally. He's now 42 and is just beginning to notice a small metabolic slowdown-so now Taco Bell is less frequent He does train. He won't go get blood work done. I cook quite a bit at home

which helps, but he still goes for cereal, bread, and fast food when I'm not around. He's not the most open minded about food choices.

For his health and my peace of mind I would love it if he would make the changeover to at least more Paleo-esque. I'm thinking my best bet may be to cook some phenomenally tasty Paleo meals. Any tips for dealing with that?

Thanks so much! Looking forward to the book.

9. Comment from John:

M/40/73/210

I've been a podcast lurker for about the last seven months. I'll listen to several episodes at once, then wait for a few weeks then repeat. I really appreciate what you guys provide.

While I'm still at the linear gains level, I'm an avid swimmer and I am currently following CFFootball. I'm sure I get less than adequate sleep and eat less than 100% paleo every single day; however, I have more days where I feel great and perform well. I'm not as lean as the guys who compete in the CF games, but I don't know if I ever had a six pack.

I've been silently lurking in hopes that someone would ask my question(s) so that I wouldn't have to but here goes:

1. I've about had with docs whose specialty ends in "ologist". I've been to three immunologists, a cardiologist, a nephrologist, and I'm scheduled to see a gastroenterologist. The original symptom for which no one can find a cause: my feet swell when I eat salt...and not just a little. My wife and I affectionately refer to them as "the Baked Potatoes". When it gets to the point of discomfort, I recently found I could drink coconut water and that relieves the pressure but does little to reverse the swelling. I want to know what I can do about it...other than reduce salt intake and elevate my feet because I'm already doing that to the best of my ability.

2. As a result of an ultrasound (of my kidneys) from the nephrologist, I know I have an enlarged spleen with granulomas. Is there anything dietarily that could cause this because I'm not sick, my white blood cell count at the same time frame was fine. Could it be trauma? If so, how much? I got thrown a lot during a two-month Marine Corps Martial Arts Program.

10. Question from Marc:

Robb – Great podcast as always. Really happy to hear you talk about what fitness is. I wanted to get your thoughts on something I've observed the last 4 seasons working as a backcountry ski guide out of a lodge where all the skiing is "human powered". You hike and skin up, then you ski down. Unlike the other guides who are in the mountains constantly, I sit at a desk for 10 months and guide for 2, so I'm very aware of training and preparation. We ask our clients what they've done from training standpoint to prepare, and generally our clients essentially fall in 3 fitness buckets: CF folks (endurance and regular), marathoners, and guys who just ski.

Marathoners get hurt on day 4 (so regularly that we have them take it very easy on day 4). The power requirements of going up 10-15,000 vertical a day with a pack, skis and boots are just too much, so knees, hips, and backs just give in.

Guys who just ski tend to do OK, but generally aren't strong enough to keep up with the volume after a few days.

CF folks do great on day 1, but after 4 years and 50+ CF clients, generally level III-ish, only 8 have made it out of bed AND up the hill on day 2. So far 5 women and 3 guys have managed – on day 2 CF ladies only have about a 15% fail rate, which is the overall client avg, while CF men have an astounding 90%+ fail rate – our clients are mostly guys. On

subsequent days the guys do fine, but are way less ambitious. Ironically, given all the t-shirts, posters, and whiteboards out there, "get up and do it again" seems to be a big issue.

When it comes to mountain specific training, guys like Twight and Shaul have pretty much cracked the problem with the same general techniques as CF, but with longer efforts, and more of a strength focus than typical CF programming.

Clearly, the activity I'm talking about here is a repeated power endurance event that also requires a lot of peak strength at specific times rather than a short work capacity type effort. However, when I look at life and the kind of sports active adults do outside of a box, we are talking about a long weekend backpacking trip, a couple days of mountain biking, a weekend rugby tournament where you end up playing 4 or 5 matches etc etc.... It seems to me that, with the exception of combatives and other very specific endeavors, life is a power endurance event.

That said, the huge difference in male/female performance leads me to believe that there are psychological/social factors at play. Is the engrained idea (conceit?) that "I'm unf*ckwithable" and ready for anything lead a lot of men to push much harder than they should? (even though – or maybe because – the guides tell them to take it easy). Women don't seem to have anything to prove to a bunch of dudes and dial it down as needed. Is there something to the different psychological approach required for different efforts? 15 min AMRAP is going to hurt, A LOT. But it's done in 15 min. Climbing up a 2,500' slope 5 times in a day is a grind and you gotta get your head in a place to just work through it. Is the issue for CF that longer grinds just don't fit the business model? If you've got clients physically working for an entire hour (not just in the box but actually working) does that mean you have to cut the number of clients you can get in and out?

I'd like to get your thoughts on both the physical and psychological aspects. It seems to me like both are gaping holes in the CF definition of fitness. Needless to say we are trying to manage the group dynamics so we don't have a bunch of very fit clients staring at bacon and eggs on their second day wondering what the hell happened. We have also tried to get clients on more of a Mountain Athlete plan for the months before they come out, but it's very hard for folks to find a space to follow that sort of programming. A lot of boxes just don't have the flexibility to let a client do their own thing. Thanks for your thoughts and sorry for the blog post 😊