

Paleo Solution - 166

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Robb: Hey folks, Robb Wolf here. Greg Everett in the house. Episode 166 of the PaleoSolution podcast. This one is awesome, probably going to be the most awesome one ever because we have our long term friend Eva Twardokens in the house today. Eva, what's going on?

Eva: I'm not sure if I'm listening or really on this thing. I'm stoked.

Robb: It is gonna be weird when you do your normal walks listening to the show whether you'll be listening to yourself so...

Eva: I'll be walking in circles.

Robb: These people have been under a rock and they don't know about Eva. Eva is a two time Olympian in alpine skiing, 12 year veteran of the US ski team. She's won six national championships, bronze medal at the world championship level. She was just inducted into the skiing and snowboard hall of fame and as if that was not all enough, Eva also won a master's Olympic weightlifting championship about a year ago.

Greg: Busy.

Eva: That was '07 though.

Greg: Don't talk back Eva. You're off to a good start.

Robb: Yeah. My wife is the one that split hairs. You can't do that.

Eva: That was '07 but my girls won last year.

Robb: Okay. So not only has she established herself as an athlete in Olympic weightlifting but she's doing darn well as a coach too.

Eva: I'm not the Greg Everett level but I'm trying.

Robb: Who is? I mean.

Eva: I'm trying to get people rolling. I'm rolling the ball towards his direction and then when they get there, he can take care of them.

Robb: That'd be cool. So we're gonna talk about Eva's history as a top of the food chain Olympic athlete. She was one of the early folks that got involved with cross-fit and really interesting history with all that and now Eva's kinda branching out and doing her own flavor of strength and conditioning as really interesting insights with kinda finding a balance on the whole performance, whole longevity kind of trio and spectrum so that's kind of the big picture for the show.

Before we jump in, we'll talk about our show sponsors really quickly. We have Evolve Foods. It's kinda funny. People keep emailing, Greg and I. They're like 'I'm not sure what Rob is saying...'

Greg: Evil foods.

Robb: Evil foods or something. So think about what we're usually talking about which is usually evolutionary biology type stuff so evolvefoods.com – can go there, get some great chow.

Warren has developed some supplements and if you're more in the power athlete spectrum those things are pretty solid. Evolve foods – our affiliate software is still broken so I can't actually provide a link myself for that.

FrontdeskHQ.com if you run a service based business across the gym, yoga, Pilates, stroller strides, dog walking, almost anything where you interface with paying individuals, need to schedule appointments, track appointments, take billing, frontdeskHQ.com is your mobile app solution for that.

And then we are rolling out a new sponsor today, the Performance Menu magazine: the journal of nutrition and athletic excellence. Performance Menu is sneaking up on – where are we gonna be on the...

Greg: Our 110th issue May 1st. Crazy. So this is year nine of publishing.

Robb: Wow.

Greg: Yeah. Honestly it doesn't seem possible but it is. I've done the math several times.

Robb: Good man. Greg and I both graduated from Chico State so any type of statistical analysis we provide can typically be [Cross-talk]

Greg: But I guess 200% to 300%.

Robb: Exactly. So Performance Menu, it's a phenomenal resource whether you're looking at paleo nutrition, Scotty Hagnas has been a long time contributor to the Performance Menu. We have MMA articles, boat loads of Olympic lifting and power sport oriented material so check that out.

We'll have a banner link in the show notes because we're getting all kinds of jiggy on this advertising stuff. Eva, what's going on?

Eva: I am here. I am present.

Robb: Where is here? You're all over the planet. Are you traveling right now? Are you in Baja? Are you in Santa Cruz? Where on the planet are you?

Eva: I am still in recovery mode. I'm still getting my feet on the ground after being in Baja for two weeks. Christmas time and it's incredibly cold. It's 28 degrees here in Santa Cruz.

Greg: That's weird.

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Eva: Yeah it's cold.

Robb: That's like 28 degrees Fahrenheit right?

Eva: No, it's cold. I was out and about last night and I could not believe that I was in Santa Cruz. It's really like mountain air here.

Robb: Reno the high the other day was 20 and the low was 6.

Eva: Yeah, that's why I live here.

Robb: It's pretty chilly so cool. So you're just getting back. Eva tell people a little bit about – do you wanna talk about how your parents kinda shoe horned you to this whole skiing gig? They have kind of an interesting story even with their athletic background. Do you wanna talk about that at all or..?

Eva: No, I don't wanna talk about it. No, thank you. Yeah, I mean a lot of people – recently my father and I were talking about genetics versus conditioning and I think we were talking about a book. I said dad [Cross-talk] it'll come to me.

Robb: Is there a front cover and a back cover? [Cross-talk]

Eva: Hey, c'mon stop it. I said dad when do you think I started skiing? And he said 'well I think at -8 months' and I said really? He said 'yeah your mom skied with you and she'd probably get arrested for it these days. She skied with you through her whole pregnancy.'

Greg: Hey it's not over head squats with you on her chest.

Eva: No, I know. She probably on this day and age, she probably would've really gotten some slap for that. I always wondered as a little fetus if I could feel the movement and feel the speed. That's an interesting question that I will answer.

And then they worked as ski instructors and my mom was a college racer and my dad just had this passion for skiing and when I was 3 years old, they don't have children – this dates me so much but they didn't have children skis and children's bindings.

So my mom found children skis but she made bindings out of shelf holders and just put leather straps over my feet. They went and taught skiing and they put me on the little flat area at the ski area and I just walked around on my skis at three years old.

At 4 years old I was already skiing around and they took me to this thing called inter ski unveil and there were pictures of me skiing when I was four and I never really realized how little I was until my mom took the ski suit out that I was wearing for that little photo shoot. It looks like a onesie.

Robb: That's what ski suits are right? They're just really expensive onesies. Spider webs on.

Eva: Right. They are eastern block folks. They're from Poland so it's like we will ski and you will ski. You can't stay home and play Barbies. I always asked can we not go skiing this weekend. So every weekend and whenever I have an opportunity they had me on the mountain. They had me moving.

I think for the most part when I was little my dad wasn't really too stoked on having kids but once I came out of the bag he was like – this is science project now.

Robb: We'll make some lemonade out of that. We'll talk about your dad a little bit because he was a professor here at the university in Reno interestingly and there's some interesting background with that. And both of your parents were pretty high level athletes themselves right?

Eva: Yes. My father is an Olympian. He was a fencer and he went to the Helsinki games in 1952 and in 1957 or '58 – I always get my hands slapped for not knowing this year. He came to the United States for the world championships in Philadelphia and he won a bronze medal so I didn't wanna up him.

He had the plan. He had it in his head when he came in for that competition that he was gonna leave Poland. My mom was supposed to at the same time take a cruise in Denmark and she was not gonna go back either. So they had a long term plan to leave Poland at that time and his worked and hers didn't.

She couldn't get over for three years. They weren't too happy with either of them and to punish them they kinda held her back from making the trip to the states. Finally they let her go after three years. But they were newlyweds so that's kind of a rough go at the beginning of the marriage.

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Robb: Seriously. And then your mom was a sprinter?

Eva: They met in Europe. The college they went to was a sports college and so they did every sport. They were educated in anatomy and physiology and the sciences but at the same time they were doing gymnastics, sailing. My dad was fencing.

Their quarters were sports seasons. In the fall you're gonna sail and in the winter you're gonna do gymnastics and then spring you're gonna do track and field. They were busy doing all different types of sports that were mandatory in their college education.

Robb: Wow. That's some of that – you know when Mel Siff would talk about the GPP. Every once in a while you can get Romanoff talking about it too. The GPP was so woven into the physical education elements of this eastern block kids and provided this really amazing background.

There's still this great video of the polish Olympic lifting team, these big dudes doing 105, 110 kilos doing front hand springs and all this stuff up and down the mats as part of their warm up sequence.

Eva: Yeah I don't even think they consider a GPP because it was just part of their life. The only thing left was to specialize and that's kind of what they were preparing you for is to have this fantastic base and then you move forward to either teach a specialty or perform in a specialty.

Robb: Interesting. So tell folks a little bit about the weird connection with the whole paleo scene and your dad.

Eva: I make a joke that my dad started the whole paleo scene because Lauren Cordain and my father were life guards together at Sand harbor at Lake Tahoe and they started to travel every summer. My dad packed his bags and he came home once a week and she just gave him new food. Actually maybe she started it.

What she would give him for food is sardines and apple sauce, just here you go. Lauren at that time, he'll probably kill me for this, was eating beans and rice. My dad had a great physique. He was the oldest guy in the bunch and they had to do surf board paddling, timing, the whole life guard spill before they went on stand. Dad was right in there.

I don't know. I think that might have flipped the switch in Lauren. Here's this guy, he's 15 years older than me. He's got better body composition and he's eating sardines and apple sauce. So that's my theory on where Lauren started getting his interest in nutrition that his best friend was smoking him at older age and eating these funky things.

Robb: That's hilarious. So that's where they first kinda met but then Lauren ended up finishing his PhD under your dad at the University of Reno right?

Eva: Yes. He did his degree in physiology and my father was hoping he would continue in that direction and then he did nutrition. If you saw my dad's face when that happened he just wrinkled his nose like oh my god what are you doing? I was your mentor and now you're going into nutrition?

Greg: Pseudo science.

Robb: This was not part of the plan Lauren.

Eva: This was not part of the plan. This is not objective. So anyway Lauren went on and did great obviously and he's kinda the king or father of paleo I guess I should say. To this day my dad's just – that's all smoking mirrors and I have to say dad you helped contribute to this. Be positive about it.

I think he just couldn't believe it that Lauren his buddy, he was the best man at Lauren's wedding, got so famous in nutrition and I think it's just almost unbelievable for him this happened.

Robb: That's awesome. That's hilarious. So your parents had you out on some skis at age 3 or 4. When did you first started doing some competitive skiing?

Eva: Back in the day when I was 8 years old, my mom entered me in a freestyle contest. A free style contest in those days which was in the '70s was basically a mogul run and usually at that time ski areas weren't quite ready to build jumps so we didn't have aerials yet but we did simple ballet and for those skiers out there we did what we call out riggers and crossovers and royal Christies.

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You're kind of on this flat heel and you're crossing your legs and you're uncrossing your legs and you're skiing on one leg, doing a pistol on your skis on one leg while you're skiing.

Robb: So for people like Greg who are really into ice dancing and that's kind of their focus, did you have a triple luts or something like that?

Eva: When I got better later on, I started doing axles but with your legs crossed with skis on. So think about the falls of what those look like. And not at speed so it was kind of you really dug a nice big hole in the snow when you fell from those.

But you crossed your legs. You'd plant your poles in the snow and you jumped and you tried to get rotation in and then land with your legs crossed and then stepped out of it. So yeah. Actually...

Greg: Like a terrible idea.

Eva: Thinking back I'm like thank god I was so young and flexible because it's like let's see how much I can tie myself in a knot and then untie myself on

snow with sharp things in your hands and steps straps to your feet. So that was the beginning. I did freestyle contests – there weren't a lot.

My biggest memory of free style contests that when it did get big, I'd always had to forerun but the other forerunners were always strikers. I remember being 7 or 8 years old like hiding behind things. I just knew the striker was gonna go before me and sometimes they go after me so I'd have to watch them from the bottom and it's like you can't make stuff like that up. We're crazy.

Robb: So we're not talking about good naked this case.

Eva: Imagine the guy with a head bandana on, a freaking hairy chest, his junk flying all over the place with just ski boots and skis going down a mogul run and doing spread eagles and stuff.

I would look at my mom and look at the guy and look at her like is it okay for me to be looking at this and she would just be laughing like this is life girl. Just whatever. She would laugh at me coz I'd hide. I'd get embarrassed.

Robb: Wow.

Eva: So then at about 12 years old I started racing and I really loved racing and there were times where I did a ski race in the morning like a slalom in the morning and then I would do a free style of it in the evening coz they did at night sometimes.

It got to me a lot and I don't know why my mom didn't get tired but I did. Finally at 12 I said mom can I retire from freestyle? I won the junior nationals that year on free style and I asked her if I could retire after that and she said yes and I said I just wanna focus on racing.

And then just focused on racing, made the US ski team at 16 years old and then the rest was history. I was on the team until I was 29 and took my run at it.

Robb: Long career man. So we'll talk a little bit about some of your specific career highlights and some injuries and stuff like that but just as an aside I think it was maybe 4 or 5 years ago, Eva shot me an email or a phone call. I forget what it was and she's like 'hey man I'm selling my WRX do

you wanna buy it?' I was it's a cool car maybe I'll do that and then I sat and thought about it for a little while.

So buy a rally car from a chick who's used to going down ski slopes at nearly 100 miles an hour, I think I'll pass. That's some pretty mileage on it.

Eva: She didn't drive that thing easy. Well when I bought that car I remember looking at the gas mileage on it and it said something like 18 in the city and 26 on the highway.

Robb: And the best that you ever had was like 14.

Eva: I called the guy, the dealership after a week and I was like dude something's wrong with this car because it's just going through gas like crazy. He goes 'are you driving it hard?' I said it's a WRX what else do you do with these things? He goes 'just so you know that when the turbo's flying on that thing you're getting 9.' I'm like why didn't you tell me that before?

Greg: I don't think when the EPA test drives those things for mileage they're driving quite like you are.

Eva: No.

Robb: Yeah if they had giant slalom skiers as the test drivers they would probably change things a lot.

Eva: A lots of ski racers its true. They go into car racing after they ski. It's just kind of the same – you have the same visual for line and speed and when to speed up and when to slow down and so yeah it's all speed.

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Robb: So around like age 16 are that where the competitive element of your career really started ramping up?

Eva: That was when I was a fetus. No I'm just kidding. That was when the US ski team, the way they picked the team that year is they basically had a shootout. They invited 30 girls up to Mount Hood. We skied GS for 10 days. On the last 3 days they had time trials and they cut 20.

And then that final 10 got invited to another camp and we did sort of the same thing except it was slalom and they took out five and the final five was what they called the junior team. I was on a team that went to Europe and raced on the Europa cup and that was probably the toughest year at racing I ever had.

I had 50 starts that year and I remember the end of the season just being so burned out and my parents actually calling the team saying you know what, she's done. Send her home.

Robb: So describe for people because I was on the road for a couple years maybe three years pretty much straight between being involved with cross-fit, not being involved with cross-fit and then promoting the book and doing all that sort of stuff but I'm probably on the road 30 weeks a year – not a ton of international travel, mainly in the states but give people a little sense of what your travel schedule was like.

Eva: The bulk of our travel was in Europe and so in the fall we went over for a four week camp. We went to Austria to ski so we flew over there. We were there for a long time, came back and then November 1 we flew over to do a pre-season camp and we did the two week camp before the season started and the season generally started in team France.

We were there from then until Christmas time and the Europeans, they never thought of anyone that might be flying to another continent so they always would schedule a race on the 23rd which meant we got to fly back to the states on the 24th and it was usually a nightmare. It was something like Zurich-Chicago, Chicago-Denver, Denver-Reno.

I would always time it. It took about 24 hours to get home and we'd have just enough time to get acclimated back to the states. We'd have 8-10 days at home then we flew back to Europe. Jet on New Year's Day and we're in Europe 'til about mid February. We came home for a week in mid February and then we went back over for the spring series and that usually ended mid to end of March.

Within that last time we would fly back to the states or to Japan for races on other continents so we'd have Canadian-American races in the spring and we go to Japan in the spring and then the world cup finals we'd be back in Europe.

And then you had about a month off, April-May, two months off and then June you had a ski camp usually in Bend, Oregon or at Mt. Hood and then midsummer we would either go to New Zealand or South America to train, south of the hemisphere.

I remember really not having more than six weeks at a time at home and those times were maybe two times a year six weeks and then other times we're like less than 10 days so you were living out of a duffle bag pretty much.

Robb: How did you end up finishing high school out of all that stuff?

Eva: I don't know. I took the GED – the good enough degree. I made the team when I was going to private school and it was the private school's first couple years in business and I was their first US ski team athlete. I remember the first time they sent me I went on a trip. I had liked 7 books and it was heavy.

I usually travel with 12 pairs of skis, two big hockey duffle bags and a big backpack with my seven books and after that trip I remember my father going to speak to the head master and saying from now on she's taking one book and she'll study one subject at a time and that worked out well. They actually learned something about how they're gonna deal with a US ski team athlete.

But being in school was a pain in the butt and I have done a little bit of correspondence work which now they call homeschooling but my parents never really helped me and in that time I think it were an advantage. With mathematics and algebra, I figured that stuff out.

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I sat myself down on the desk and I wanted to be done with schools so I could go off and screw off so I would just concentrate on my schooling, do the work, take the test, get done and so some of my stuff was home school, some of my stuff was private school and my final year was home school coz I just couldn't take the travel and the training and the working on my skis and the homework all together and I figured the sooner I graduated the more I can focus on skiing.

Robb: Right. So how many times did you make a run at the Olympic team and what was all the rigmarole involved with that coz obviously it's both political and highly competitive gig getting on the team.

Eva: In '84 which was the Albertville. I was young. I was 16 or 17 and I was placing in the top 20 in world cups every race but at the time the director of the team had for Olympics and world championships there's usually a protocol on how you make the team.

He very clearly said no one will be on the Olympic team unless they place on the top 15 on the world cup. I think two top 15 finishes. I had like 16, 16, 17, 17 but I didn't have that golden 15th place and he decided to stick to his guns and he left spots open on the Olympic team. The women's slalom team had two spots open and he didn't fill them because he wanted his criteria met.

At that time I was kinda like whatever. I'm young. I've got Calgary was the next step. I'm like that does gonna be my game anyway. It's in North America and things were going well. I was skiing well. After that year was late '87 I was actually in the top 3 of the world cup overall standings and I entered the slalom and just got out go balance, sat back and my knee blew up. I didn't even fall and that was it. The Olympic Games was history.

I was on the team for 8 years before I went to the Olympics which was in Albertville in '92. And the syndicates made a big deal out of that. Here's this girl that's been on the team for 8 years and here she is finally. Just being my first Olympics wasn't enough pressure. They made a story out of it.

But I did okay in Albertville. I was slated to win a medal and I actually got quite a bit of press before that but I'm a big believer in the athletes that get less press usually perform better just because they're able to focus and I think that's why a lot of the top athletes now kind of say I'm hurt or don't talk to me or they have major guidelines of when they can do press before the event like the Olympics. So it can be really distracting.

So it was '82 when I got lucky because they wanted to stagger the winter and the summer games so '84 Lillehammer came a long so I only had to wait two years for that next Olympic Games to come along.

Robb: Tell folks a lot of this stuff we talk about and obviously you're familiar with it because you listen to Greg and I to serenade you to sleep most days and stuff like that. So we talk a lot about the interface between strength and conditioning just as a means to an end versus the skill acquisition that you need in a specific sport to be successful.

I'm kinda playing around with that stuff right now, doing old jujitsu. It's like how much in the gym time do I need that is actually going to benefit the jujitsu relative to actually make inroads into my recovery that isn't really benefiting me.

So what was kind of the mix of the skill work? How did you develop skill work at that point because you've been skiing so long? I mean it's interesting for me what did coaching involve at that point and then also what did strength and conditioning play for you and what type of stuff were you doing in that kind of peak of your career?

Eva: I could tell you when I was young my mom had me in gymnastics for three years and I think my message to parents is if you get your kid into one sport, make it gymnastics. Even if they don't make it in the sport, even if it's one year or two years and they struggle a little bit, I think if you take some gymnastics pretty much most of the other sports are pretty easy.

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I was pretty lucky I could catch a ball and throw a ball but after gymnastics everything was easy and I did a ton of other sports and it was just cake. So then talking about my US ski team career, I was too much of a conformist.

In the beginning they told us to run long distance and they tested us on the 12 minute run and sit ups and pushups and stuff that really wouldn't better your skiing that much. You would think they would test you on your back squat, dead lift and maybe metabolic conditioning.

Later on we did a thing called the box jump but in the beginning it was just if you have endurance you're gonna be a good skier. But as I got older and wiser – and my father was in the background like 'what the hell are you doing running?' He goes you need to be lifting weights.

And of course you don't listen to your parents and I was pressured by the team to be good at running cross country so I was always running and finally I listened to my dad and I started to do resistance training and work out on the track and do some track and field work.

I always felt guilty about it because it wasn't what the team was recommending and finally when the team did recommend those things I did them and there was a point where they paid for me to take gymnastics twice a week here in Santa Cruz with the local gymnasium.

So I did all the things we talked about in this podcast, strength, interval training, that's pretty much what a skier should be doing. You need to do probably a little bit more lateral stuff. When I was talking about box jumps, our familiarity with box jumps is you have the box in front of you and you jump straight up on it and jump down.

The US ski team test was a 90 second test where the box was on your side, it was a 20 inch box. You jumped up on the box and down on the other side and the other way and it were horrible. But that was actually a decent test for skiing because it was lateral and you that little plyo factor in there.

And I generally was an over trainer all through my skiing career. If I have the brain that I have now and the body I had then I think I would've been – I hate to say coulda, shoulda, woulda, I think I would've been a more successful skier.

Robb:

You've talked about that and hanging out with Greg and I in multiple situations. You've talked about that and I think it's a really interesting piece to all the stuff.

People look at the training loads of say Lance Armstrong or pick your kind of guru in a particular sport and then folks try to emulate what it is that person is doing which can have all kinds of limitations based on the fact that they're not genetically – there's a big genetic selection that goes on with all that stuff.

But it's so intriguing with me in looking back you really feel if you would take more time off, if you hadn't pushed so hard on the support and strength conditioning stuff that you probably would've been more fresh to the actual events that you needed to do.

Could you talk a little bit about that? I think it's really important to folks to kinda take that in that the strength and conditioning stuff needs to support the activity and not undermine it.

Eva: Exactly. The activity needs to take precedents. My attitude, I was a very dedicated person. My motto was leave no stone unturned. When you stand on the starting gate, you should have no regrets. You shouldn't be looking back and thinking should I have squatted more, should I have trained harder, should I have skied on these skis.

I always said leave no stone unturned so that when you're in the starting gate you have no doubts. So I worked very hard. I never missed a training program and on top of that I love wind surfing so I'd be in the weight room in the morning, bike intervals in the afternoon and then at 4 I'd drive up to Waddell Creek and wind surf for three hours.

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Looking back I just remember how I felt in the beginning of the season and one was mostly mentally scorched. Just really nervous, the fear factor was higher and all the things – that if you're an infant you'd cry and if you're an adult you have a lot of these other manifestations that come up when you are over trained. To me the first one was mental and being able to handle the pressure. The difference between...

Robb: Just look at your travel schedule.

Eva: Right.

Robb: So if you're going into the whole season, a little bit crispy already and if you were just a business person traveling to the degree that you were doing, that would crush most people.

Eva: Right. And you know that time I look back on I'm like thank god for you. That's the only thing that got me through. I know two things. One is years I blew out my knee and all I was doing was rehab on my knee and it forced me to slow down and years after that I always kicked ass.

I had something to prove. I wasn't able to over train coz I was in pain and the third thing is – I'm not gonna mention their names. So the people who were winning world cups at that time, I always called them dead wood. They didn't train.

In the summer when the season was over, they chilled out, sat on the couch and did nothing and it was really hard for me to know that no training could give me better results than over training. And I believe that almost today especially for a skier and if you're in a high level sport that over training is so detrimental and it is more detrimental than under training.

Greg: But you've had that same experience more recently too though. You've talked to me about having gone a little carried away from time to time and then backing off and ending up coming back so much better and making big PR's and just feeling better in general.

Eva: Yeah, absolutely. That was a phase too where I was going – like where I am now, I'm not really searching for too much performance. I have a base line and I get my movement's in. Performance is so – I just look at that word and its way, way to the side.

I like to perform well but I'm not concerned about PR-ing and putting it on the board and telling people what I did. I'm just happy to be healthy and moving. Anyway I have this vision of training in Chico with you guys and I remember I was doing some crazed workout. I remember you and Robb standing in the parking lot and I kept running laps around you guys were like 'she's crazy.'

Greg: Sit down.

Eva: Sit down. You guys were right. I was just – I call it squirrel.

Robb: You were both moose and squirrel.

Eva: I hope people who can't stop training that cannot just sit still and think about doing a quality training program versus just running around and getting as many mad moves in that you can. I tend to get spun up about that so now when I see that happening I just say squirrel.

Robb: I wanna talk a bunch about what you've been doing with your own strength and conditioning and the website that you have and the consulting you're doing but I think for people to appreciate the perspective that you have, you just mentioned and it really kind of impacted me. You're like I'm just happy to be healthy and mobile. And so

talk to people a little bit about having – you’ve had 8-10 major surgeries on your knee?

Eva: I've had 8 knee surgeries.

Greg: Okay. It'd be impressive if it were 10 but 8...

Robb: It's a little limp weenie.

Eva: It is a little limp weenie. I count micro fractures too. Both ACL's, both lateral meniscus, both MCL's separate times. Dr. Steadman was my doctor. He would repair as much as he could and remove as little as he could. But what happens when you're not perfectly smooth and virgin is they start to wear on that condyle on the femur.

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So what happened with me is it wore on the femur and one side I popped a quarter sized piece of my articular cartilage off the femur and on the other side I just wore it down to be thin and the surgeries for that was called micro fracture and they go in and it's a scope this surgery.

They take an ice peak and they pound the end of your femur to try to get some scar tissue to protect the bone there and those were 12 week non-weight bearing. I think it had to be something like 12-18 hours in the CPM machine and it was hard times.

Looking back at that and if you look at my right knee x-ray right now it's not a pretty picture. It looks like first in line for a knee replacement but it doesn't hurt and I have a good quality of life and I can do the things I love to do. You guys know I love to surf and I can do everything I love to do.

As long as I can keep my knees health and I can keep mobile and doing the things I love to do, I'm staying away from the knaves and I'm gonna continue to try to work out and not do anything stupid. I just can't afford it.

Greg: I know this is really kind of impossible to answer but I'm just kinda curious about your thoughts at this point of your life. Do you think those injuries and that kind of residual damage can be attributed to your chosen sport in general or do you think you are just not adequately prepared because of the type of training you were doing at that time?

Robb: Or over prepared.

Eva: I think it was a little bit of both. The statistic that the US ski team had out at the time is if you were on the US ski team for over five years, you had a 98% chance of ACL rapture.

Greg: Sounds about right.

Eva: So I was on for 12 years so I had two so I was right on the statistic. The first time I blew out my knee out I think I was really quad dominant. I never remember doing anything to work my hamstrings.

Everything was kind of back. I was front squatting. I was squatting. I was leg pressing. I was doing one legged stuff but I wasn't dead lifting and I wasn't practicing much flexibility and I just really think that my quads were huge and I had peony hamstrings. When I sat back in that position and fired my quadriceps that literally blew my knee off.

So in the first instance I think it was statistics plus a lack of correct training and the second time I think it was statistics mostly. I flew off a jump and I saw people falling skiing it's like getting up your car up 70 miles an hour on the freeway and just opening the door and jumping out. How do you like that? Except were doing it with poles and ski strapped to our feet.

If you take a dive going 70 or 80 miles an hour, coming out and being able to walk away from it is really a gift.

Greg: Yeah that soft snow starts feeling pretty hard at that speed.

Eva: Yeah and if you ever get a chance to go to a world cup race, the snow is like tile. I mean they have this thing called an injection system where they go down the course and they inject water into the snow and then it freezes overnight. So basically if they could run zambonis on ski race hills they would.

Greg: That's part of what I like about watching those races is that sound of them coming down the hill. You can tell how slick it is just from the sound, it's crazy.

Eva: Yeah I'm wondering if I had head injuries from that not knowing it.

Robb: No.

Eva: We call it rattle bucket when you just come down the hill and your head was just rattling in your helmet and you're like [Phonetic] just [Cross-talk]

Greg: You both got adult onset shaken baby syndrome.

Eva: Yes.

Robb: You mentioned it you're QL and all the muscles that keep your torso from ripping off of your pelvis were huge.

Eva: Yeah I remember people looking at my back and I had these two tree trunks back there and when I retired from racing I just also felt my back and I feel my back now and it's a regular back it's sad. I remember having to curb my fingers down by my SI joints on both sides.

[0:45:00]

If I wanna put my hands on my hips or my back back there and I'm doing it right now, it's no bueno.

Robb: So you were one of the first people to really start training with Greg Glassman in the early incarnation of the cross-fit scene. Tell people about that.

Eva: I think it as '97 or '98 but I retired from ski racing and I was doing this made for television ski events which I still had the ski wall for and the money was awesome. Everyone thinks I'm a pro skier but if you're an Olympic skier you're considered amateur.

So once I retired I got to do races like ski with the celebrities and the MCI challenge where they took ski racers that were on the team and they put us together and had us race post career but the money pots were huge.

So I was trying to stay in shape for that and I was taking spin classes to get my interval training in and who was my spin instructor? Greg Glassman. He was the only guy that didn't get you on the bike and put you on some funky music and have you just grind away for an hour. He did actual interval training and I really liked that.

After class he's like hey you should do some training with me. I was always resistant. We were at this cheesy place called spa fitness.

Greg: Sounds hardcore.

Eva: It was so hardcore. I kinda just blew it off for a long time and finally I was like okay I'll train with you. I remember my first workout with Greg I did air squats, toast bar and he made me do toast bar with straight arms, dead hang, straight legs, pointed toes and step to the bar and then I did some back extension and some lunges. The workout was great. It was a blast.

I've done a ton of circuit training through my ski racing career but this was like being able to integrate the gymnastics and the air squats. It was really fun and I loved it and so I was on his schedule. I trained with Greg. He got asked to leave the spa fitness.

He was toying with Olympic lifts with me and I was clean and jerking in spa fitness and they of course didn't have bumper plates and I missed like 115 pound jerk which is embarrassing to say right now and people were like 'wow what's that?' but I missed it and I dumped it and it was...

Robb: Sounds awesome.

Eva: So I think after that they just said you know what buddy your risk in here is too high versus the benefit and I remember I was supposed to train with Greg and he said let's go eat breakfast first. I sat down with him he's like dude they asked me to leave spa fitness and he goes I don't even know what I'm gonna tell Lauren. I'm afraid to go home.

I said you know what, start your own thing and it's gonna be okay. Not knowing that it was gonna be okay and just trying to be supportive...

Robb: I'll keep that in mind whenever you give me a pep talk in the future. You're like I just wanna get off my phone so...

Eva: No I mean I didn't know. This was a time when Greg and Lauren, they didn't have a car. They just rode their bikes everywhere rain or shine and then he started his own gym and a jujitsu place and I remember it didn't have any equipment. I do remember we had one of those twin...

Robb: Air dines.

Eva: I remember that's pretty much the closest to hurling I've ever been and he did some interval training with me on that and I remember holding on to the wall to get outside and he's really sweet. He's like 'sweety are you

alright?' I didn't even know what that thing just did to me but I just felt yeah I got, I got it hard.

And then we moved to a bigger place. We got a little equipment. Greg's like you should just start teaching some classes and so I taught free class for a while that I went to work out in myself and then I started teaching classes and charging \$5 a head and it just evolved from there.

Robb: This was around maybe '99 – 2000 – 2001 maybe that all that was going on.

[0:50:04]

Eva: Yeah and then I think I met you and Greg in '01 or '02 and I remember when certifications were still in the teens as far as how many people are there and I remember you did a talk and I was like wow who was that?

Greg: Man that guy's propeller was spinning super fast.

Eva: It was. He's got some brain cells. And super excited...

Robb: A little too heavy on the science kid – professorial.

Eva: I really liked that. I appreciated that.

Robb: There were early days with deserts like obviously I've had all kinds of in and out with the cross-fit scene and my relationship with Glassman and all that but those early days, it was amazing. Glassman was a phenomenal speaker.

The stuff that he put together for those certs and the breath of his knowledge and the way that he could convey material really get you excited about the whole thing. It was amazing. IT was some of the most exciting stuff I've ever done in my life still to this day. It was amazing times.

Eva: They were great times. I was talking to rep the other day and we're talking about the 7th avenue cert and those were good times and I will never forget them. Greg was so effective with his speaking that I would say we were all squirrel. We were all doing hand stands in the pavement showing off all our mad moves any moment we had and it was great.

Robb:

It's interesting though, around that time I think Greg still has this really great grasp of economics and markets and stuff like that, that I think he had a lot of overlap into thinking of Art De Vany and they're really incantations of cross-fit.

It was horrible but as far as the physiological response you have like he was really thinking a lot about what was the minimum you could do particularly almost an art form of what could I write on a piece of paper or like the workout of the day that was posted. How could I write this thing so that it has the minimum amount of wordage or whatever?

I was just reading something that when Dr. Seuss wrote the Cat In The Hat it only has 206 words that are used in the whole book and obviously they use it multiple times but then Three Eggs And Ham only has 50 words used in the whole book.

So Dr. Seuss had a bet with his publisher that he could write an even better book with 50 words or something like that. It makes me think of some of that earlier programming which is what are stuff like the Diane workouts and the Helen and these things had a real wicked bite to it but it had this minimum doze maximum effectiveness which I think you've really adapted a ton of that.

As cross-fit has grown into the sport of fitness and oddly enough I think it's really cool. I think that stuff's awesome but I think a little piece has been lost in that and the forgetting of this idea of let's figure out what's the minimum dose that we could do that's gonna move us – either maintain where we are.

Like if you're in a competitive ski environment or doing jujitsu or something or if you're gonna make progress, what's the minimum amount I can do versus what's the maximum I can do and still survive it which is to some degree kind of what's it grown into.

Eva:

Yeah. We took pride in how short and effective it was. Over time I've learned what a very sharp tool cross-fit is and how little cross-fit you can do and still maintain and even sometimes get better. I think that sometimes isn't looked at and that's my new mission especially I hate to admit this but I am getting older.

As you get older you start to feel things a lot more, your recovery drops a little bit and you move on in your life. You do things. You've written a book and Greg's got this great businesses going on. Just the amount of time to think about working out all day.

So I had a lot of reflection on this whole thing being an Olympic athlete and going through in cross-fit and my Olympic weight lifting experiences and I've realized [Inaudible] you've gotta really take a hard look at what you're doing because that's not why you're working out is to go have shoulder surgery.

[0:55:17]

I took a hard look at that and I thought the minimum effect of dose is the way to go. Even for a skier, even for an Olympic skier, wouldn't you think that doing the minimum effective dose would leave so much room for mental acuity, dealing with pressure, dealing with trouble, dealing with stress, all those factors.

What I'm learning, I'm also in a functional medicine internship now that stress is stress is stress whether its food, whether its sleep, whether its travel, whether its exercise. Your body process is as one thing.

And so I think in something that's supposed to be good for you like working out, it should be just that. It should be good for you. It shouldn't spill over into a place where you're hurt or that it's become an added stress in your life.

Greg: I think people forget too that the amount of work that is going to be the minimum effective dose is gonna change over time. When you're younger its gonna keep increasing for a while as you get adapted to it so if you start with this super huge amount of work you're gonna be screwed in the long term because there's gonna be a point where like you said its gonna spill over and you simply can't do it.

Eva: Exactly. At that point when you get to the point where you can't handle the volume, the mistake people make is they think now I've gotta go harder coz I'm just not getting the gains anymore but that's the time to look at some other things.

That's the time where you gotta say now do I take a right turn or left turn? Do I need to start lifting more? Do I need to do more skill work or do I need to get out and do a sport? The stimulus has to change and it doesn't mean that you go back to doing a ton of it.

But I think that people need to open their minds and look at the big picture because we're so myopic now. Like I just gotta get strain together 10 muscle ups. It's like no. Get one beautiful one and where's the 10 muscle ups gonna get you in the big picture of your life? Is it gonna make you better at your job? Is it gonna make you a better mother or father?

Greg: Make people love me.

Eva: So I think that's where I call these people – I'm not trying to steal from your food thing but the evolve athlete I've been writing some blog posts about being evolved, doing your modality of training whether its cross-fit or P90X or whatever the heck you do and just opening your eyes to the big picture and evolving and wanting more, that's where people come to Greg Everett or Rob Wolf or whoever or me, whoever else is out that want just a little bit more structure and beaten path to what their training is doing for them.

I'd say those are evolved trainees. They are people who just done it. They're just kind of not getting anywhere. They might have been hurt. They don't feel they need to perform. They don't need to put any results up on the board. They just wanna be healthy but they wanna be doing smart fun things that help them feel productive in their training and productive towards their life in general.

Robb: Eva's been rambling on this stuff for probably 5 or 6 years and my foot has interacted with her back side multiple times. Everybody has a different perspective on this like I've got my perspective. Greg's got his perspective. I was a middling athlete competing in power lifting. Greg's done some cool stuff in Olympic lifting and what not but I always feel kinda humbled.

And also wanna take a little bit of step back and let someone like you Eva or John Welbourn, John played in the NFL for 10 year straight. He's like the highest level that you could in that scene and so it's always intriguing to me to have somebody who was in that athletic scene literally at the highest level you could compete at in the world and then see that okay

you guys have kind of arrived at similar spots that I have but I never have the athletic accomplishments that you guys have.

[1:00:00]

I think that your insight on this stuff is just really valuable and it's another voice saying these same things but there's a certain validity that comes from someone like you when you've done so much and you've worked so hard. You've gone through all these surgeries and the rehab and all the rest of that so it's coming from a really different place and it's really powerful.

I've actually been goosing Eva for a long time to put more of her thinking on this stuff out there and to make her available to do consulting for folks and you've been getting quite a bit of response off that.

Eva: Yeah and I have to thank you for that. I mean you've always said I'm stubborn. I'm like a mule. And man you had to stuff your foot pretty far up my ass to get moving. I did and I thank you for that. It's what I need to do. Thank you. It's great to know that my experiences are confirming for other people.

But one of the reasons, I think for John and I, we had such a volume of experience that one of the things that people forget is we're not pointing the finger. We just had a huge opportunity to do it wrong and we did. I think when you do something wrong you are almost as better than anyone and I think it's my responsibility to steer people away and using my experience from doing it wrong from making the same mistakes that I made.

I can smell those mistakes coming up when you have clients and then you need to see the future on those things if you've experienced it yourself. I always say to people I'm not pointing the finger at you I'm just telling you I've already fucked it all up. Everything you could do wrong, I've done it wrong. I've eaten wrong. I slept wrong. I used to say sleep is for pussies and I used to have a cocky attitude and all those things that just kicked me in the ovaries.

So that's why I do have some legitimate things to say because I've actually experienced doing it. Doing it wrong and then learning how to do

it correctly. I think it's a life long journey but I think finally at this age finally figuring it out.

Robb: One of the most recent things you just mentioned that you're doing at a functional medicine intern with Dr. Dan Kalish that was the end of a fair amount of tinkering that you were doing trying to figure out some kind of wacky blood work and some energy stuff that you had going on that I couldn't really figure out. You couldn't real figure it out. We had some pieces to it but tell folks a little bit about that.

Eva: That was your fault too. I had to get a life insurance policy and I had to get some lab work done and it came out funky and I send it to you Rob and he's like 'what are you a cookie monster? What are these numbers?' I'm like I don't know. I'm eating better than I ever have in my life.

I was like on a 1 ½ year journey between doctors, hematologists and there was some problems going on. I had a tumor on my thyroid. I was like this isn't what an Olympic athlete should be doing. I should be the picture of health which I say to people just coz you're an athlete doesn't give you a certificate of health. In fact you need to look forward to some crazy shit down the road health-wise and I was going through that.

I realized that it was time in my life to start to heal myself. I'm not trying get kumbaya on you but just basically I had wrecked myself. I was pretty close to stage 3 adrenal insufficiency thyroid problem and constant body pain.

I saw a function medicine here in Santa Cruz who was an MD. She ran a bunch of tests. I started to hook on to what she was doing, kinda corresponded with some of the things you were saying. I was really intrigued with this stuff and we decided to get a second opinion from Dr. Kalish and I looked around his website and I saw he had an internship and I said do you have to have an MD to do your mentorship and he said 'no, you could do it' and so there I went.

[1:05:00]

I signed up and now that's one thing I feel I'm offering with my services from my website is I hate to use the word holistic. I am turning into a hippie you guys know that.

Robb: We already sent you some patuli so you're cool.

Eva: I'm trying not to. I'm trying to put on a good face but I'm doing the testing and I'm trying to offer for my clients some pre-testing before I send them a program. I mean if your adrenals are smoked, I'm not gonna have you do too much metabolic conditioning I'm going to have a specific protocol for each level of adrenal insufficiency and I integrate that.

Some of the people I'm programming for, I did ASI tests on them and they came back no bueno and I was like forget what I sent you last week I have to redo this and I have to send them a new program. But I think that's gonna get more popular and I think it is important to do because if you are writing training programs for people who are smoked especially distance programming the first premise as a trainer should be do no harm.

I'm really I have this opportunity to give them a test like that. Not that it answers everything but it gives me a good idea of what their stress levels are like.

Robb: You mean how to tweak some lifestyle and food and sleep. It's funny, for me what this thing has done is just kind of given some hard numbers under the hood. It really doesn't change prescriptions a ton, not in the big macro level but you're able to dial it in much more specific for the person.

For a lot of people, this is some stuff I've been talking about for a long time. For a lot of people who are scorched they have no business going down that glycolytic pathway the kind of classic meth conning type stuff.

They can lift some ways. they can do some cardio via a variety of activities whether its surfing or walking or just some very well planned intervals where you're only breathing through your nose instead of what people have done leaning over and heaving during the training but that stuff can – to pull this people out of the hole.

Eva: Yeah. I think that having a big picture is important and I'm one person that was smoked and I didn't even know it. The tricky thing is that with people who are in a stage three adrenal burnout, working out in that

glycolytic cycle makes them feel good for a couple hours after a workout that's why you can kinda smell it when someone's really smoked.

They're like I gotta work out and it's because their cortisol comes up a little bit and they're at the point where they're deficient. They can't even secrete enough. So when they exercise they get it up and they feel normal for a couple hours but then they crash again.

And then I've also effect that messes with your brain chemicals as well and so I'm also doing brain balancing which I found out that my dopamine and my serotonin were very low and I'm working on that as well and that's been a new frontier.

Robb:

Very cool, yeah. it's really interesting stuff and the things that we've talked about before and Kresser talks about it, Stephan Guyenet has talked about some of this stuff, but you can get these changes in health from bad food which then kinda works its way into stress manifestation direction that ends up affecting neuro chemistry in a negative way.

Or you have neuro chemistry affected by lack of sleep, maybe even food from permeable brain type stuff but then that ends up backfilling and negatively affecting endocrine status like thyroid and cortisol and also gut health and so its kinda interesting that you could have these problems being caused either from north bound direction, south bound direction.

And its kinda hard to pin down exactly what the cause of the factor is sometimes when you have people who are stressed out on so many different levels or not sleeping enough, their food is bad. They have a stressful work environment. They're addicted to these metabolic conditioning sessions because that session is the only thing that makes them feel a little bit better for a little while and so when you suggest taking that away it's really hard.

Eva:

Yeah. I always try to get people to be understanding about the immunoglobulin A the zig A being intact and using the example of people who get constant sinus infections and that's a huge sign your zig A is permeable.

[1:10:00]

How does your zig A get permeable? There's a million ways it can happen. It's stress. Its food stress, it can be exercise stress but I think you've talked about it more than anyone is that immunoglobulin A in the gut and how critical that is for health in general.

And how many different things can break that down and let these whatever into your system, random antigens, viruses, big protein particles that are hard for your liver to metabolize. Those all gunk up your system and then you've got this other satellite over here the brain stuff and its all connected and we've really done a fabulous job at screwing those things up and it's a deep hole to dig ourselves out of.

It takes time. It takes patience. For the most part it takes people to realize they're going to have to stop doing things they like to do and do things that they need to do. Once they start doing the things they need to do they might start liking them coz they'll feel better.

Robb: Yeah. So Eva how do folks track you down?

Eva: My website is Evatstrengthandconditioning.com. If you go there, there's a services menu. I'm not a stripper but I do almost everything else.

Robb: Perfect.

Eva: I knew I had to put something like that into the podcast.

Robb: You have to leave something for Greg and I to do so we'll stick to the stripping.

Eva: Okay. So I do everything from consulting to programming. You can sign up to have me ski with you, all kinds of good stuff. We can do an ASI test on you. I do GI tests and I'm working under Dr. Kalish. I'll be done with my certification in April.

Also on that site there is a get started page and I want to let people know that if you fill out that page, you are communicating with me and I'm expecting that you are asking me for services. I think some people have been using it as a journal and I get these emails hey I'm 27. I like long walks on the beach and then I call them back and never hear from them again so it's definitely a signup sheet. We're gonna make that more clear.

And then I have my blog and I very much understand the life of a blogger and congratulations to both of you but now I'm suffering through writing something meaningful every week and it's been challenging but very enhancing for my own knowledge.

Greg: There's the mistake you're making is you're trying to make them meaningful.

Robb: That's just way too high of standard. That creates stress.

Eva: Next year I'll make them not as meaningful. I'm gonna try to do a period of time where I write something meaningful and then sometimes – my manager always says just link to a good article you found. Write a little synopsis on it to put on a can and I'm gonna do too much of that. And then I have those dentistry articles so if people have questions on dentistry, I'm kind of a paleo dental hygienist so make sure you floss.

Greg: If you don't floss you're gonna have systemic inflammation and die.

Eva: Only floss the teeth you wanna keep. If you don't floss everyday it's like not wiping your butt after you poop.

Greg: Eva is firm believer in gum control.

Eva: That's right. I need to make a t-shirt out of that. That's good.

Robb: You should.

Eva: Can I steal that Greg?

Greg: No I stole that from that movie Schizopolis the one where Steven Soderbergh went nuts. Those of you who haven't seen it, you need to go see it. You will not understand any of it the first 12 times you watch it then it'll start to make sense.

Eva: One of those.

Robb: I'm just super stoked that Eva has finally popped her head up in the radar and is offering strength and conditioning consulting services. Like I said this has been a long time coming. It's hard to go the polish princess into do something until she's ready to do it. I'm really stoked that Eva's doing this. Very excited that the folks who listened to the podcast – that Eva will be more on her radar.

I know that we've mentioned Eva probably a couple hundred times. It kinda pales in comparison just second hand relating some of your experiences versus folks being able to interact with you directly so I'm really excited.

[1:15:00]

Eva: Well thank you for having me on and I have to say sometimes when I'm listening to you guys and I do get a little whipped that you may be talking about me, my jaw drops. I'm like I gotta go on and defend myself.

Robb: Yeah it's over. It's like my name is being destroyed. I'm surprised you haven't send us a cease and desist yet.

Eva: Well its coming. I've got my lawyers on it. Thank you so much though I had a blast.

Robb: Awesome. I'm stoked you came on today. I'm sure folks will have more questions for you down the road so maybe we'll get you back on here in the spring or summer or something like that.

Eva: We should do a video on.

Robb: We could do it. We could all meet in Sunnyvale and hang out with Greg.

Greg: There you go.

Eva: Sunnyvale? Let's go some place warm. Let's make it a trip where we have to go to a beach instead of a [Cross-talk]

Greg: Let's not add travel to it also.

Robb: I would go to Baja [Cross-talk]

Eva: You're a buzz kill. It'd be nice. Be in Baja. Lots of tequila in the sun, waves in the background.

Robb: I may not come back. Awesome guys. Greg, anything you need to let folks know is cooking in catalyst athletics land or is everything sill level four security clearance right now?

Greg: Yeah, it's all under wrap still. It's coming.

Robb: Awesome Eva. Thanks for being on and we'll talk to you soon.

Eva: Alright, take care guys.

Robb: Okay, bye.

[1:16:55] End of Audio