



**Episode 49 Transcript**

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### ***Abel Albonetti on How He Earned (and keeps) Those Abs***

**Nick Collias:** Good morning, everyone! Welcome to Boise, Idaho. It's no Dubai, but it'll do. Do? Dubai? Huh? Is that a dad joke for ya? We're here at Bodybuilding.com headquarters. I'm Nick Collias, an editor in this august establishment. To my right is Heather Eastman, another editor and a former physique maven.

**Heather Eastman:** Ooh, physique maven, that's a new one.

**Nick:** And then across the way, over to the west, we have none other than Abel Albonetti.

**Abel Albonetti:** Hi, everyone.

**Nick:** He's joining us here. You love him for his abs, I hate him for his hair. He is a Bodybuilding.com and [MuscleTech](#) athlete, Men's Classic Physique competitor?

**Abel Albonetti:** Not Classic, no. Men's Physique. Men's Physique, yeah.

**Heather:** Men's Physique.

**Nick:** Okay, and everybody tells me also, one of those guys you see on the page, or you see on your phone, and then you see him in person and then you go, "Oh, you're bigger than I thought you'd be." Do you hear that a lot?

**Abel Albonetti:** That's always good to hear, yeah.

**Nick:** And also, he is the star of a new program here on Bodybuilding.com All Access, "30 Days to your Best Abs," I believe it is called.

**Heather:** That is correct. [Editor's note: The program launched recently as "[30-Day Abs with Abel Albonetti](#)."] ]

**Nick:** And that's what he's been here shooting among many other things.

**Heather:** Among other things.

**Nick:** We put out a ton of workouts with this guy. Now, we did a profile video of you a few years ago—the Fitness 360, as we used to use those—where we got into your backstory a little bit, just to tell where you came from and how you started. But I wanted to touch on that a little bit for people who haven't seen the video. Because it's not the same old, like, "Hey, I hurt myself playing high school football and decided to lift all the time" video.

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, right, the normal stories, yeah.

**Nick:** So, what got you started in the gym in the first place? It was in your home, is my understanding, right?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, it was in my home. Well, I grew up, I am one out of twelve brothers and sisters...

**Nick:** Twelve!

**Abel Albonetti:** ...so, huge family. And so, my dad had like a weight equipment, when I was like thirteen years old. He brought it down from the attic and I started working out from there. And it was really just friends coming over, we're trying to see who can bench press the most and all that stuff, like most people start off with. And then around seventeen/eighteen years old, I was homeschooled my whole life as well. So...

**Nick:** But it was still a large class.

**Heather:** Yeah, it was a full class.

**Abel Albonetti:** Completely.

**Nick:** You think "homeschool," you think...

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah. But being homeschooled, you're not able to go out there and play high school sports. So, I was not able to go out there and play football, baseball, all that stuff. So, what I did, was after I got done with school, I had a part-time job. And we lived out in the country. So, if I wanted to get anywhere, the grocery store, to a gym, I'd have to drive at least thirty minutes to forty minutes. But I had a part-time job that was around forty-five minutes away from my house. So, right when I got done working, I would go straight to the gym. And so, during the time when all my friends are playing football or baseball, I would be in the gym working out and stuff. And so, I started working out seriously when I was around seventeen years old.

And then about that time, if we want to go into kind of how I got started in the modeling aspect, I was at the gym and this guy that up to me, he constantly came up to me. He was... an agency in Memphis. I lived in Memphis, Tennessee, at the time. And he would constantly come up to me at the gym and was like, "Hey, man, if... you need to do modeling, you need to look into modeling, I could get you jobs here and..." I heard that honestly a lot. I was like okay, I just didn't really want to do that. And long story short, he finally got me to go into his agency down in Memphis. And I went in there and he told me, promised me the world, I could do this, do that, go to New York. All this stuff. I was like whatever, whatever. And so, I ended up doing some runway stuff for Dillard's and Macy's and stuff down there.

**Nick:** Like actually on the runway?

**Abel Albonetti:** Well, it was in Memphis, so it wasn't New York or anything.

**Nick:** Or Paris?

**Abel Albonetti:** Exactly. No, it was like local stuff.

**Nick:** On the actual runway.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, it was on a runway. And so, I did that, and it was a lot of fun. So, from there I started up my social medias, like Facebook. That's when Facebook Pages just went live and stuff. So, it was just getting started. So, I started that, and I knew I wanted to do something in the fitness industry. I wasn't sure, you know, what really.

**Nick:** You're still on the fence with fashion.

**Abel Albonetti:** Exactly, because I was doing the runway stuff and I was doing kind of like photo shoots. When I turned, I think, twenty years old, is when I started doing clothing lines for, you know, like Rue 21, just different, like, teenage clothing lines.

**Nick:** Big bangs, I remember back then.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, I had the Justin Bieber hair.

**Heather:** Say the Bieber hair, yes!

**Abel Albonetti:** The Justin Bieber hair, and that was my look for a while. Even in the fitness industry, I mean I had that hair for like four or five years afterwards, because everyone was like...

**Nick:** A swole Justin Bieber.

**Heather:** Pretty much.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, that's what I was called. Back then, it was before Justin Bieber. So, it was like the Zac Efron look.

**Nick:** You were the Bieber before Bieber.

**Abel Albonetti:** Exactly, he copied me. So, you know, from there I was doing the clothing lines and my last clothing line the people flew me out, and it was exactly what you said, "You're bigger in person." So, I tried to fit into these clothes and they're like, "You're getting too big." You know, so, I had to make a decision as far as if I wanted to keep working out hard, to, you know, go into the more fitness world. And so, I love working out, so I was like, no, I want to do something else. So, about that time I was looking into fitness modeling because it was people like [Greg Plitt](#), that I would research, pull up, and he was like the first one that I looked up to. Because before that it was all, the only people that was making it in the industry was people like Jay Cutler, the huge bodybuilders. The massive, massive guys. And I never wanted to look like that. I mean I liked, I looked up to people like that, but I knew I did not want to look like that. That wasn't a goal.

So, I started looking into more research like Greg Plitt, looking in the magazines, Bodybuilding.com, doing research. And found people that seemed to be making it in the industry, just being a good-looking guy. That looked obtainable. And so, I decided to do that, so I switched over completely from the clothing lines to doing more fitness. And from there, I worked with some agencies in New York to do different campaigns for different model and stuff. So, I went out to New York stayed out there for like four weeks, doing really just photo shoots for my portfolio. And then, about that time, was a big photo shoot that I flew down to Miami. It was big fitness photographer, he shot like all the main people. And so, I flew myself out there, did a photo shoot, and from there he started posting my photos. And at that time, everything started blowing up, like my social medias and stuff. And from those photo shoots just alone, my Facebook grew to basically almost two million. And all that stuff just kind of slowly gained traction from that.

**Nick:** Have you had any more mainstream fashion catch up with you ever again? Where it's like, maybe you're not too big for us anymore, maybe our tastes have changed?

**Abel Albonetti:** Not for the most part, no. I haven't done anything with that. I mean, I did, after that, when I was 25, right now I'm 29 years old. So, when I was like 25, so I was well into the fitness world, I did some campaigns for like a [Sheex](#) commercial. It's like a brand of sheets, performance sheets.

**Heather:** Yeah.

**Nick:** Hmm. Performance sheets? I didn't know those exist.

**Abel Albonetti:** And I was in People magazine for that, and stuff.

**Nick:** What performance is going on in these sheets?

**Abel Albonetti:** I have no idea, but...

**Heather:** Use your imagination there.

**Abel Albonetti:** But I did stuff like that, but besides that I never did anything. Because to be... runway stuff to do fashion, they want people that are 6'1". And for me being 5'11", too short to do true runway stuff. So, that's why I never even really looked into it much. Because anytime I did before, even the agencies and stuff were like, "you're just too short to go just flat-out runway stuff." They just don't want that.

**Nick:** Well, I guess that's true, I hear that about women, as well.

**Heather:** Well, and you also can't fit into the clothes, like they just, it's not tailored.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, they're not made for people my size.

**Heather:** And that's one problem with guys that are working out around here, because obviously we've got bodybuilders in the building. And they can't find clothes to fit.

**Abel Albonetti:** Right. I mean, even though the industry has changed as far as people, even Barbie Dolls, they all have muscles now. But in the fashion world, it's still the case that it's like the slimmer guys, it's not have tons of muscle that are tall. Still do all the runway and the clothing lines. That's just the way it is still. So, it's, I don't know when that's going to change, later on it probably will, but right now it's still about the same.

**Nick:** Right. It's interesting to hear you say that, yeah, you had a gym at home. There maybe was a line for the bench press station on international chest day when there's twelve people in the family. But you had to travel to get to the gym. You had to really want to go there.

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, yeah.

**Nick:** What did that place represent to you at that point? Or what was the allure of that, aside from you know, "I enjoy doing it." You had to have a reason to go there.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, I mean the first, when I initially started going to the gym, I wanted to be a bigger guy. I wanted to beat my friends, because I was always an athletic person. And so, I love...

**Nick:** You just didn't have an outlet.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, I was just there to really just kind of show up my friends, honestly. And it was at that point that I decided, going and stuff, but I found that I love doing it. And to this day, I mean, I tell people that, even if I didn't see any results in the gym as far as physical... A lot of people don't believe me, but I mean I honestly to tell you the truth that I would still be going even if I did not see results physically as far as looks and stuff. Because I just love going in there, I mean, it's just what I love doing now.

**Nick:** Sure.

**Heather:** Right. Well, you can...

**Abel Albonetti:** It turned into that. You know, at first it wasn't. At first, it was going to the gym to look better, or to, you know, for my friends, to be stronger than my friends. But, later on, maybe when I got addicted to it, maybe six months to a year into working out, then it turned into something completely different.

**Nick:** Who did you learn from at that time? Like, what was...

**Abel Albonetti:** I've never had a coach or anything, it was honestly just doing research from

magazines and Bodybuilding.com. I used to read every article of Bodybuilding.com, anything that came up I would read. I was on BodySpace a whole lot. So, that's how I learned everything, I've never had a coach or anything.

**Nick:** Taking a workout and trying it, and seeing how it works.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, just trying it out and really, I was one of those people that, honestly, I would just about do too much. I'd be in the gym for two to two and half hours, just because I wanted, I knew that if I wanted to be where the person that I was looking up to, if I wanted to be where he is. I wanted to get there faster than what he did. And so, I thought in my mind, if I stayed in the gym two to two and a half hours, working that much harder I could get there quicker. And for the most part, I think that did help me a whole lot. Maybe I did do too much at first, but that mindset, I think, helped me a whole lot.

**Nick:** And then you'd come home and just crush the pantry? Eat the family out of house and home?

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh yeah, I used to eat so much food. My mom and dad were like, "Oh, my gosh."

**Nick:** "What are you doing? Where are you going? You come back so hungry."

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, I didn't have a brother until I was seven years old. So, it was a lot of girls in between there. Seven girls and five boys in my family. So, I was kind of getting outnumbered there, and then that boy came up and I was like, "Oh, thank goodness, thank you."

**Nick:** A spotter, finally.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, exactly.

**Heather:** I was going to say, I'm glad you brought up the kind of overdoing it. Because we look at some of your workouts and we're like, "Jeez, this is gonna kill somebody," because it's a lot of exercises, tons of volume.

**Abel Albonetti:** Even to this day, I still do tons of volume. Tons of volume.

**Heather:** And your workouts are kind of known for volume.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, they are.

**Heather:** So, was that something you just did from the get-go? Or is that something you learned through trial and error? Did you start of, like you said, you'd read an article and say, "Okay, I'm just going to do these five exercises, three sets," you know.

**Abel Albonetti:** Of course, when I was getting started in working out and stuff, I didn't know a lot about anything. The only thing that I really knew how to do was pretty much chest exercises. And the reason why I knew how to do that is because, it was actually a [Bruce Lee](#) movie. They did some kind of documentary on him, and it was a guy that was playing Bruce Lee and they showed him going to the gym doing flyes, bench press, and all that stuff. And he was the only one that I actually saw videos doing the workouts. So, from there I kind of learned how to do the flyes and stuff.

**Nick:** Training montage.

**Abel Albonetti:** Because my family was in a very, I grew up in a very strict family. We didn't have TV or Internet until I was 18 years old. So, anytime I needed to watch anything on YouTube, I would have to go to the library. So, if I was reading stuff off of Bodybuilding.com, I would go to the library, print it all off. But as far as looking up videos on how to do stuff, I didn't do that because I didn't have the time. So, I didn't have YouTube to watch. So, the only really workouts I had was just through that Bruce Lee video. So, I learned kind of from there how to do different exercises. People just getting into the gym I would not recommend doing the volume that I do right now. The videos that I produce for Bodybuilding.com and on my own channel are for people, it's my workouts. So, it's like for people that's been working out, I've been working out for 12 plus years, you know really hard.

So, if someone that was new to the gym, goes in there and does my exact workout, yeah, you're going to be overdoing it. Because your body's not used to that. You have to build your body up to that. Because if you do the workouts that I do, Yeah, you could drop the sets down and drop certain things to make it work for you. Because you don't need to do that much volume and that much hard work to see the same results. Honestly, you want to do the least amount of work for the most benefit.

**Nick:** A workout you can actually recover from.

**Abel Albonetti:** Right, exactly. Some people could go in there and do half the sets that I do and get benefit from. They could build muscle, they could lose body fat. But for someone like me that's been working out for So, many years, I need to push myself that much harder to see results.

**Heather:** So, are you still working two and half hours a day then?

**Abel Albonetti:** No, I've dropped it down. I've dropped it down to about an hour and half now. It used to be a lot more resting. So, when I'd go in there I would work out hard, but I would not time my sets and stuff. So, I'd go in there and do a bench press, but then sit there, get some water, not knowing that I was taking maybe two minutes rest. Now, I actually time all my rest periods. So, that's every 60 to 90 seconds I'm going at it again. So, that workout is condensed more, it's about the same amount of volume and stuff, but it's condensed.

**Nick:** Sounds like more of a cardiovascular challenge, then, too.

**Abel Albonetti:** Right, I'm burning a whole lot more calories than if I were resting a whole lot more.

**Nick:** I remember, I think it was the encyclopedia, [Arnold's Encyclopedia](#), he said, "Bodybuilders and runners, marathon runners have more in common than you think." A hard leg day of an hour and half, two hours, it is a marathon in its own way. How did you find that just timing your rest periods that eventually you would catch up, or did you really have to start prioritizing cardio more as preparation for your epic training?

**Abel Albonetti:** Well, cardio has its own role. I normally will do cardio, well, it depends on what season I'm in. You have your off season, you have your pre-contest or pre-photo shoot. And no matter what, throughout the year I'm doing some sort of cardio, because it's going to help your workouts, as well. Because if your cardiovascular system's not high, you're going to be suffering even just working out period. When I go through an off-season, I'll do cardio maybe just once or

twice a week max. Because at that point I'm trying to build as much muscle as possible. And for me, being in the fitness world when I'm trying to stay in shape, I try to stay right at ten percent or less in body fat year-round.

So, during the off-season I'll only do about two max cardio sessions. And that's going to be high intensity. So, it's not going to be your low...

**Nick:** Two per...?

**Heather:** Yeah.

**Abel Albonetti:** Two per week. Yeah, two per week.

**Nick:** I was going to say, two high-intensity sessions a day. Only two.

**Heather:** Only two per day.

**Abel Albonetti:** Only two, no no no, a week. So, that's going to be like sprinting or something just to race my heart rate up there and rest. And that's only going to last around 15 to 20 minutes. Now, when I'm getting into pre-photo shoot or contest, getting ready for anything, I ramp that up a whole lot, where I'm doing maybe three [HIIT](#) sessions a week and then doing low intensity the other days of the week, just to get ready for a photo shoot or trying to lose some body fat.

**Nick:** Right.

**Heather:** Yeah, but you do a pretty good job of kind of maintaining that, like, almost-always stage ready.

**Abel Albonetti:** Different people have different genetics. My family, my dad is a rail. I mean, he's 50 years old and he's skinny, he can eat anything and stay skinny year-round. So, for me even as a teenager, I've always been a very hardgainer. My body likes to stay relatively in a low percent body fat. As I've gotten older, I've had to watch my diet a whole lot more, of course, than when I was a teenager. Because I could eat five burgers a day and still have abs. So, that was never an issue until I got to around 25 and now I'm having to watch my diet a little bit more. But, I could honestly eat like a normal person, three to four meals a day, like normal people do now, eat fast food and stuff, and I would still stay relatively lean. Just because my body is naturally like that. A lot of people can't do that. So, I'm kind of blessed in that way.

**Nick:** So, did you have to then just start seeking out like, "How does Greg Plitt really eat?" And like, you know, follow the straight-up...

**Abel Albonetti:** And that is one thing that's changed so much is my diet over the years. Workouts have relatively stayed the same, of course I had to, every off-season or when I'm getting ready for a photo shoot, that changes a little bit where my rest periods change. But all the time my workouts have always been, at the beginning of the workout I'm going to try to lift as heavy as possible, get the compound movements in, and then throughout the workout then I'll do more isolation movements and go for more volume. That's how my workouts have always been.

**Nick:** Pretty classic.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, pretty classic. But, during the diets over the years have changed so much. Because there's different research out there, I read different things, I want to try different things. So, when I first got started, back then it was all about drop your fats. Super low, if you want to lose body fat you need to drop all your fats. And man, that tore me up. I mean I'm not going to lie to you, that was a bad idea. So, I would go...

**Nick:** Just in terms of not feeling good?

**Abel Albonetti:** Not feeling good, and being a natural guy and stuff. My testosterone dropped, even as being young, 20, I think I was 22 at the time or something like that. So, I was new to it and I was just dieting, and so I did a twelve-week diet program and it... slowly just tailored all my calories down and dropped my fats super low, and just felt horrible, it was not a great diet.

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** So, I mean, some people can do it just fine, it just depends on who you are. So, I mean...

**Nick:** Some people are also comfortable with feeling bad.

**Heather:** Yeah. Some competitors really like that feeling.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah. I do at the last four weeks. So, if I've got a photo shoot and I'm coming up to it and I don't feel bad, like four weeks prior to that shoot, I feel mentally, I just don't feel like I'm ready. Just because I don't feel bad. Which is so weird to think that, you could look great in a mirror, but if you don't feel bad, you feel like you could have done more. Which is so strange.

**Nick:** Right. That's gotta be hard to get away from.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, it's very hard to get away from. I've only had maybe two or three preps that I feel really good throughout the whole prep, and at the end of it you're like, "Wow, that wasn't all that bad." But all the rest of them, you know, it seems you have to dig deep and you feel horrible.

**Heather:** So, when did you make the switch, when did you kind of figure out that you needed fat? And now, I believe you do a version of carb cycling, so, kind of... talk about that.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah. So, maybe four or three years ago, I was doing research and found the diet, it's [carb backloading](#), at first.

**Nick:** Ah, the old John Kiefer.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah. Exactly, so I read up on him.

**Nick:** Absolutely.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, I don't even know, does he do anything anymore because I think all the research kind of went kaput, I don't know...

**Nick:** I don't know, he did a couple pieces for us ... yeah, I mean I still know people who love that approach though.

**Abel Albonetti:** See, I still use it, I still use it but, for me, it's not for losing body fat really, it's not a diet program for me to lose tons of body fat like I used to. I used to think it was, from reading all his stuff, it was like this major mega thing that you can just drop body fat by eating your carbs throughout the day...

**Nick:** Ultimate cutting plan, right?

**Abel Albonetti:** The ultimate cutting plan, and I found that that wasn't the case, for me, it was more all about energy. Because, in the morning, if I get up in the morning, I found that, because I used to work, I used to be a personal trainer like three, four years ago, in a gym. So, I would wake up early in the morning, have a typical bodybuilding breakfast: oatmeal, your protein, egg whites, and stuff. And then around 11 or 12:00, I felt like I need to take a nap and I felt horrible, I was really just drained. And so, I knew that I needed to change something up, I wasn't sure what that is. And about that time, I found the carb backloading.

**Nick:** Which, to be clear, it's like you restrict them really severely during the day, right? Like next to no carbs during the day?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, yeah.

**Nick:** And then you have them only after a certain time period, for people who aren't familiar with it.

**Abel Albonetti:** Right, so, the carb backloading, yeah, you have all your healthy fats in the morning. So, you have your protein and healthy fats which, for me, it was like coconut oil, it could be bacon, it could be whole eggs. So, all your fats are in the morning. And then you're going to go throughout the day until around, for me when I worked out in the afternoon back then, it was around 5:00. So, late in the afternoon, then you work out, and then you have all your carb sources after your workout. And the carbs are like white rice, so, anything fast absorbing, cereal, all that stuff. And I found, doing that, I had more energy and I thought it was amazing because I could go have my fats in the morning and have energy around 11-12, throughout the whole day, have consistent energy instead of crashing.

And so, from there, I kind of evolved from doing carb backloading to carb cycling with it, as well. So, when I get ready for a photo shoot or anything like that, I find, for energy purposes, I will go start off with one low day. So, let's say I have a 12-week prep that I'm trying to get ready for. I will do one day of very low to no carbs, besides vegetables. So, it's probably going to be about 50 below on carbs. And then I will have a medium day on the second day and then a high day. The medium day will be maybe around 150 carbs, and then on the high day, it will be anywhere from 200-300 carbs. And then I recycle that until...

**Nick:** Just one, two, three, one, two, three...

**Abel Albonetti:** I stop losing... One, two, three, yeah. Until I hit a plateau and then I'll follow up on the scale. The scale's not always a great way to measure that.

**Heather:** Just one way of measuring.

**Abel Albonetti:** But it's a great way if you do it in maybe a two-week span, every single day, I think it's a bad idea because it's a mind game and you're like, "Well, I didn't lose weight today," and yesterday ... or, "I woke up today and I was heavier." And the scale, it all changes depending on how hard you worked out even because if you had a really hard leg workout the day before, you're going to be holding a lot of water in your legs.

And so, that could vary on the scale and it's a mind game. So, for me, I like to go weigh myself every three days or something and then at the end of the two weeks see where I'm at. Write it all down, make sure you know where you're at and stuff. And then change it up. So, then I will do two days very low and the other day will be like a high-carb day and cycle through that. And then by the end of the prep, I mean I dig deep but I do like three days very low to no carbs and on the fourth day, I will have...

**Nick:** Dive into a bowl of rice.

**Abel Albonetti:** ...maybe 200-300... Yeah, exactly. And what that does, it slowly depletes your energy, you feel like crap by the end of that but then you have that high-carb day to have more energy. And I like to, on the high-carb days, that's normally when I'm going to be working the biggest muscle groups, so, it's going to be legs or back. And I find, for me anyways, that's the best way to keep my energy for... throughout that prep. A lot of the times, back then, I used to do a slowly just taper and I wouldn't adjust my carbs until a week or every two weeks and I would just drop my carbs all the way down until I get to...

**Nick:** Right, that's harder to come out of though, too.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, 10, and then, yeah, it's harder on your body, as well, and I found that I felt way worse doing it just taking my calories down but doing it this way with carb cycling, I found that it was just easier and the calories don't change all that much which is kind of strange, calories stay about the same. But on the low carb days, my fats are going to be higher, and then on the high-carb days, the fats are going to be lower. So, the calories just adjust, the macros adjust but the calories pretty much stay the same during that time, my proteins stay about the same throughout that whole time, so, for me, it's like 260 grams of protein a day.

**Nick:** Which is a good amount.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, it's a good amount.

**Heather:** That's solid, yeah.

**Nick:** So, aside from how you feel, how do you feel like your body has responded, body composition-wise, to these things. Which of these really gave you that next level in terms of being able to add more muscle or "Wow, this is a really successful cut."

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, I mean I do the [carb cycling](#) and carb backloading even in the off season when I'm trying to build muscle. So, I won't, in the off season when I'm trying to build, I don't have a zero carb or just vegetable carbs, I will have a medium day and then jump up to the high day but I would constantly carb cycle because I want to keep my body fat as low as possible while trying to build muscle because, at a certain point, if you build so much fat, all the nutrients that you're putting into your body, it's going to consistently go into fat. I think there's only so much you can do before

the nutrients stop going to the muscle. And so, I think even during a bulking phase, you need to have those lower-calorie days or lower-carb days to get your body in check. So, I mean I do it year-round and, for me, it's all about the energy. If I feel good going into the gym, that's what I want to feel like because if I feel crappy, I'm not going to have a very good workout.

So, no matter what my goals are, if it's fat loss or if it's trying to build muscle at the time, if I feel crappy, I don't want to go in there, I won't workout as hard, so I won't get the benefit. So, for me, it's whatever that makes me feel best every single day, that's what I'm going to do. And, for me, I found that carb backloading and carb cycling is the best way for me to do that.

**Nick:** We need to bring back carb backloading, man. Bring it back.

**Heather:** I think with this podcast, it'll come back. Now, with that, because when you're carb cycling, you naturally build in more cheats on those higher-carb days, So, do you ever just take a day off completely or do you feel like that diet, because it is so, sustainable, it just allows you to...

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, see, I don't know. See, a lot of people do have, I mean I did, too, like the binging where you would have, okay, when you restrict your carb intake for a certain amount of days and then on the third day or fourth day, they're like, "Okay, this is the only time I can have those carbs," they're going tear into some carbs and overdo it.

**Nick:** Carb backloading can be guilty of that, too, like that was the...

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, well, carb backloading's big time.

**Nick:** Like with the Pop-Tarts at night sort of plan, right?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, well, that was the carb, what, the Carb Nite, I think?

**Nick:** Carb Nite, that's it, that was the worst, yeah.

**Abel Albonetti:** [Carb Nite](#), and there was one week, I did that. I did that for two months and found that that was the worst thing I could ever do because, for me, I couldn't handle it because you would go a whole week, very low carb. So, you'd pretty much go no carbs besides vegetables for seven days. And I think on the seventh or eighth day, you could have all the carbs you wanted for that day. And so, you'd deplete your energy, you'd feel horrible right around maybe the fourth day. So, you'd start feeling drained and stuff but then on that seventh or eighth day, you could have as many carbs you want and I would pig out, I'd have Pop-Tarts every meal, I would have...

**Nick:** Every meal.

**Abel Albonetti:** I mean I would have anything that I craved.

**Nick:** A warm-up of...

**Heather:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** Pasta, pizza, anything that I wanted, that's what I would eat. And I found that, mentally, it was not good for me because I would just constantly think about that day coming up.

Okay, if I can only make it to day seven and then...

I would have like buy-ups, stock-up things for the week.

**Nick:** Just stare at them?

**Abel Albonetti:** I would go to the grocery store and buy it, put it in my room and be like, "Okay, well, this is for this Saturday."

**Nick:** I have a date with you Mr. Pop-Tart. I can't wait.

**Abel Albonetti:** Exactly, so, I mean some people can do it, if you can sit there and mentally make yourself watch how many calories you're putting in because, at the end of ... like I said, I did it for two months, and I looked back at progress and stuff and I really didn't see much progress at all because I was trying to lose body fat at the time and that's the reason why I was doing it. I mean I did lose some but it was only until I was restricting what I was eating and, for me, after the seventh day and stuff, if I restricted on that 8th day, I felt horrible, I felt worse because I was like, "Man, I wish I would have ate that when I could have, I should have." And so, I didn't really like that as much.

But now that, I'm, I guess, gotten older, done it for so many years, it's not such a big deal for me to have ... if it fits into my macros, I will have certain meals so that I don't feel deprived because I feel if you go on a diet and you're constantly thinking, "Okay, well, I can never have that donut until after my prep," after your prep, you're going to gain so much unwanted body fat because it's in your head and because you can't have it right now, then your body wants it that much more.

**Heather:** Just fixates on it, yeah.

**Nick:** Right, and then there's a classic approach to that too, right? Where it's that in-season/off-season mentality where it's like, "Well, if I want to be a truly shredded 180, I have to be a truly sloppy 230 at some point," right?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, yeah.

**Nick:** I picture you in the library on Bodybuilding.com and on the forum somewhere on BodySpace, that narrative is out there, right? Did you ever bite on that? Like all right, I guess I better just get gigantic if I'm going to get shredded?

**Abel Albonetti:** Well, the thing is, I honestly, I'm not even kidding when I said I could not get to that much weight, like just because my body wouldn't allow me to. I've only been over 200 pounds this last off season.

**Nick:** Just touched it, huh?

**Abel Albonetti:** You just touched it, just like hit the 200 and, before then, I got to maybe, 195 when I was younger and I was not athletic anymore. And I was out on vacation with my family or something and I was like rock climbing. And I couldn't even really...

**Nick:** Rock climbing at 195 ain't no joke.

**Abel Albonetti:** And I realized that and I realized that I was not athletic anymore and I hated it, I could not hold my body weight like what I used to do, yeah. So, I said, at that point, I'm never going to get my body up to 200 pounds but, over the years now, I got up to 200 pounds and I was able to build muscle or something, I got bigger so that I was still athletic at 200 pounds. Right now, leaning down for photo shoots and stuff, I'm about 190. So, when I got up to 200, I was not all just a lot of body fat, I was...

**Heather:** Totally.

**Abel Albonetti:** So, I slowly, over the years, incorporated a lot more muscle and so, I'm still athletic a whole lot more than what I used to be.

**Nick:** Sure. Sure.

**Heather:** And I think that touches on something we were talking about before we started which is people see you now and they don't realize that you're 12 years into this, that this isn't something that happened overnight, you just put a picture up and all of a sudden, you're traveling the world as a fitness model, it's like there was a decade...

**Abel Albonetti:** They don't understand, yeah, they don't understand how long it took me to build my physique, every expo I go to, they come up to me and is like, "How many years you been working out?" And I'm like, "12 years," and they're just like, "Oh," and they just walk off like all depressed and stuff, I'm like, "If you want to look like this, it takes time, it takes effort, it's a lot of hard work."

**Nick:** Thousands of workouts.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, and if it only took people a year or two years, a lot more people would be shredded and huge. But, for me, I never cared how long it would take me, it just that that was my goal and I wanted to do that and so, it just turned into something that I loved doing now and 12 years+ now, I'm still doing it and still loving it. But a lot of people think, my physique, I think that's why ... the kind of industry has changed a little bit. Now, people, like MuscleTech sponsor me, they used to only sponsor the huge bodybuilders but they want people that look more attainable, like myself, for marketing and stuff, but at the same time, I'm like, "It's still ..."

**Heather:** Still a lot of work.

**Abel Albonetti:** It's still a lot of work to get...

**Nick:** Like a decade away.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, you might not have to go to the extreme levels to get to my physique, but it still takes a very long time to do that, a lot of hard work, dieting all the time, I've never, since the 12 years, have taken off from the gym more than, I would say a week, at all. I've always, even on vacation, I'm in the gym because I love doing it. So, if I go to Cancun or some all-inclusive vacation, I'm sitting there in the gym just about every day working out because I love doing it. It's not for vain reasons anymore, I mean, of course, it helps but I'm addicted to it. And so...

**Nick:** Well, yeah, you can't imagine life without at this, I imagine. And you have been traveling the world a lot, really, being an ambassador for not only MuscleTech but for muscle in general, right?

**Abel Albonetti:** Mm-hmm (affirmative).

**Heather:** Right.

**Nick:** We were talking, before the podcast, about it, yeah, in China, in Sweden, and these places that are kind of developing fitness scenes, it's easy to forget, United States, you follow people on Instagram and you think, "Okay, yeah, muscular people are all over the place," but they're definitely not in the rest of the world, right? You stand out quite a bit.

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh yeah, for sure, I mean I've been traveling a whole lot more, recently, all over the world and, in the US, so many people ... you go to the gym in the US and there's so many big people...

**Nick:** You're not the biggest guy in the gym.

**Abel Albonetti:** I'm not the biggest guy in the gym, yeah. I don't really stand out in the gym. Now, when I start getting leaned out for a shoot and all that stuff, of course, you stand out because it's a lot more bigger people in the gym than it is ripped and big. There's a difference. But in the other parts of the world, like I went to Sweden this year, China, Dubai, those places are, just now, really starting to pick up in the fitness industry and you'll go to a gym and not one person in there, looks like they've been working out for more than a year which is good, I mean it's starting to pick up but it's completely different. So, when you go over there, being really big and ripped and stuff, people look at you like, "Oh my gosh, where do they come from? It's like a different world." China, I went over there and you're like a celebrity over there.

You'd go over there and people would just look at you like, "Oh, my gosh," you'd walk around at the mall and you'd have a line of people just wanting to take photos with you because you're big. We'd have meet and greets and we would have people stacked out the door trying to meet you because they've never met anyone with muscle like that.

**Nick:** Were there people who followed you online or were familiar with you, too?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, there was a lot people that followed you online and stuff, which is different over in China because they have their own social medias. So, they don't have Facebook, Instagram, YouTube. But they could, a lot of them still did but they're not supposed to because I went over and had my laptop and stuff, I would get on their Wi-Fi and I could not get on Instagram, I couldn't get on Facebook, YouTube, everything was blocked. But I guess they have their own way of going through that.

**Nick:** So, you don't have your own profile on Chinese social media?

**Abel Albonetti:** I do, so, MuscleTech...

**Nick:** Oh, for you, okay.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, a year ago when I got with them, they told me that they're going to create their own [social media in China](#). So, everything I produce over here in America on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, what they do is grab it, translate it all, put it in all their social medias so I have

my own social medias over there that I don't do myself but they just reproduce it and post it. So, that's how they knew me over there, mainly was through different social medias.

**Heather:** Interesting.

**Abel Albonetti:** Sweden was a little bit different, they have YouTube, Instagram, and all that stuff. So, that was really neat going out there and meeting people out there but it is just now really starting to pick up over there. It's so small over there but the gyms are starting to grow, people are actually looking into more fitness now.

**Nick:** And what sort of questions were you getting in China?

**Abel Albonetti:** In China? Well, it's hard to ... because everyone did not speak English.

**Nick:** Of course, right?

**Abel Albonetti:** They told me, at first, MuscleTech was like, "Oh, big cities, everyone speaks English," China did not.

**Heather:** No.

**Abel Albonetti:** No, I would be at the hotel, lost, because they didn't even speak English at the hotel...

**Nick:** In a hotel, wow.

**Abel Albonetti:** In the hotels even in the big cities, I was in Beijing and Shanghai, and both those are huge tourist cities and none of them spoke English so if I want to do anything, I had to have a translator at all times. So, when we had people come up and go to the expos and stuff, meet me, and have meet and greets, you couldn't really have any questions because we had so many people there that...

**Nick:** Just what? Upper chest.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, so we couldn't really translate everything so it really hard to get any kind of questions but, for the most part, everyone was wanting to know how long I've been working out and all that stuff, so, they just wanted to know...

**Nick:** Basic stuff.

**Abel Albonetti:** Like details, basic stuff, it wasn't anything in depth because I really couldn't answer it.

**Nick:** Hand position on flies.

**Heather:** Right, I know, right?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, it wasn't any of that.

**Nick:** You say, "Just watch that Bruce Lee movie man, it'll teach you everything you know."

**Heather:** We live in our own little bubble where we're worried about hand position on flies.

**Nick:** Yeah, Bruce Lee will teach you everything you need to know about that.

**Heather:** Seriously, just Bruce Lee.

**Nick:** Now, I wanted to ask you about this, either is it NeuFit or "NoiFit"? This thing is...

**Abel Albonetti:** [NeuFit](#).

**Nick:** NeuFit, okay, maybe I like Germany too much, I'm going to call it NoiFit, there's this stim unit I've been seeing you use a lot on social media recently.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Nick:** It looks pretty interesting, I just wanted to know how you got involved with that and how different that is in terms of how it feels and the results you feel like you...

**Abel Albonetti:** There is nothing like it. So, about a year ago, or two years ago, I moved to Austin, Texas from Memphis, Tennessee. And so, I moved out to Austin, like I said, just about two years ago and about a year ago, when I was in Austin, I started having shoulder issues. I had some rotator cuff issues and I was getting ready for some photo shoots and so I was having some really bad shoulder pain. And I was telling some people at the gym, some friends at the gym that I was having this real bad pain and they told me that, "You need to go see these people at NeuFit," and I was like, "Okay, I'll go in there and check it out or something." So, he contacted the main guy in there and the guy was like, "Hey, come in, I'll take a look at your shoulders but we have some other things that we want you to look at and stuff for training." And he was trying to explain to me, over the phone, what this is.

And I've done the TENS unit and stuff, that little machine that kind of just ... and that what it sounded like.

**Nick:** Right. For recovery purposes, right?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, recovery and stuff. And that's what it sounded like because I own one of those at the house. So, I was like, "Okay, this is strange." So, he couldn't really explain to me very well what it was, he told me but I just wasn't getting it. So, I went in and he worked on my shoulder for a while, and just like doing a lot of pressure points and all that stuff and then he had that machine and he would rub it all over my body to figure out where it would have this certain pain worse than others. So, he would mark it or something and then he would go around and just work on those muscles. At the end of it, it felt great and he was like, "Okay, well, that was trying to help your shoulder, now do you want to train with these things on?" He was like, "Let's do legs or something." I was like, "Okay." So, he took me in the back and there was a full gym and that's not what I was expecting, I was thinking they would hook it up and I would sit there with it on.

He was like, "No, you actually work out with these electrodes on your body." So, what they do is hook you up to these electrodes and they turn this machine on.

**Nick:** Cuff, right?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, it's like little pads everywhere. So, let's say I did it on a leg, so, it's padding up my quads and my hamstrings and my glutes. And he turns this thing on and so, I did a full workout, and I think it took 45 minutes. And after this particular workout I did, and I did nothing but bodyweight stuff, so, no weight. I was doing like wall sits and wall squats, and no-weight leg extensions. So, all I would do is just like lift my leg and squeeze up at the top with these electrodes because it makes you squeeze. They say up to like, I don't know, 100 to 200 times harder than what you can on your own. And at the end of that workout I felt like I did a two to three-hour leg workout. And I was sore for, I'm not even kidding, a week after. I could not walk the next day, it was so bad. So, I was like there's something to this.

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** They say that machine actually hooks... you hook it up and like I said, it makes you contract those muscles so much more than what you can naturally.

**Nick:** So, you have cables and stuff hanging off of you?

**Abel Albonetti:** Cables and yeah, hooked straight up to that machine. And it makes you just contract and you don't have to use as much weight as you would if you were using, you know like without it. So, it's good for helping injuries and stuff because you have to drop the weight by literally half, to even lift the weight because it just locks you up almost. It's a different kind... Like I was saying, the TENS unit, it's a different kind of current, see. So, the TENS unit, they say you can't actually work out through the current because you'll end up tearing your muscle because it's fighting, so, all it does is like tenses the muscle and releases it. This machine actually uses the same current that your brain uses to fire your muscles, and so...

**Nick:** Okay.

**Abel Albonetti:** ...that is why you're able to contract throughout that current, see.

**Heather:** Interesting.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, so, it's very interesting and I've been doing it for over a year now, and have...

**Nick:** With weights as well as body weight.

**Abel Albonetti:** With weights. So, I'll go in there and strap those things on now and squat with weights or bench press, everything. I mean every muscle group, I will have like you know, doing bench press or anything. So, you actually use weight with this thing on. So, you're getting the benefit of using weight, plus the machine. I've seen major muscle gain with this, with nothing else changing, So, I know it has to help.

**Nick:** And if you go online and look this up, NeuFit, it's still marketed primarily as a recovery tool.

**Heather:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** It is. Because the machine...

**Nick:** So, you're sort of like their Frankenstein?

**Abel Albonetti:** Exactly, exactly.

**Nick:** Like, "Now we get to experiment on a real bodybuilder."

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, because they've been doing it, they've been training themselves and stuff on it for years because like you said, it was for recovery. It's for people going in there with like a torn muscle or something and they're having to, let's say they have a torn chest or something. They're gonna go in there and get the work done to kind of help that muscle to recover and stuff. But, over the years they've been training themselves. So, they wanted me to come in so that they could actually kind of do like a research to see how this could work in bodybuilding. And now, it's been going global. They have people, they've been helping all kinds of big athletes like baseball players to pro bodybuilders come in there now. To go in there and give this a shot, and they love it, because it's something that a lot of people haven't seen before.

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** You can't really understand the feeling until you actually get hooked up to this thing. I tell people all the time, you can watch my videos and stuff, but you don't understand pain until you get under this machine. And for me, I love that. Because when I did it that leg day, it hurt insane bad but I loved it. So, ever since that day I was like, okay, I'm addicted.

**Nick:** Right.

**Heather:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** Because if it works, I'm gonna keep doing it. And it does.

**Nick:** How is that different in terms of the sensation, or how it feels afterwards, from doing BFR, Blood Flow Restriction training? Which, I've also, seen you do.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah. So, I still do blood flow, I even do blood flow with that machine, as well.

**Nick:** Oh, really? Oh, my god!

**Abel Albonetti:** So, the combination is just unreal, unreal. I don't know, the pain and the soreness is different. Like this soreness is like...

**Heather:** Whoa.

**Abel Albonetti:** Punched the mic.

**Heather:** You're good.

**Abel Albonetti:** No, the pain is like to the bone. I mean you're sore forever.

**Nick:** Still, you keep doing this and you're still getting that soreness?

**Abel Albonetti:** I'm still sore. Yeah, like even, well, I haven't been there because I've been traveling so much these past weeks. So, I'm gonna go in there this Monday and I promise you...

**Nick:** Oh, man, you're gonna get destroyed.

**Heather:** Oh, yeah, you gotta film that for everybody.

**Abel Albonetti:** I'll be sore for over a week and stuff. And I really mentally have to tell myself, okay, you need to calm down. I don't need to work out that hard when I'm in a cut. You know when I'm very low calories or something, because at that point I get too sore, and I'm sore for over a week. And at that point I am overdoing it.

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** But I love doing it when I'm trying to build muscle when I'm having more calories because I can recover faster. Because if you don't have the calories going in and you do those super hard workouts at NeuFit and stuff, I mean it makes my other workouts, it hinders my other workouts.

Like if I go in there and even do, I'm not even kidding when I say I go in there and do legs, and do my calves, and I go the next two days later trying to do shoulders. That even hurts because getting the dumbbells off to launch them up, I can't do it. I'm not kidding, when...

**Heather:** The two furthest possible... together. Yeah.

**Abel Albonetti:** I cannot walk literally because my calves are so sore.

**Nick:** That's really interesting because you think of something like a stim unit, even if it's a totally different kind of stim unit. It's not the sort of thing that's really going to boost muscle damage, you would think. Right?

**Abel Albonetti:** Right.

**Nick:** So, is just the pump and the contraction so intense that it's giving the muscle... damaging from inside? Like it's exploding?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, Yeah. What it's doing, it's tearing up more muscle fibers.

**Nick:** It actually does succeed?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, that's what they're saying.

**Nick:** Interesting.

**Heather:** And really, bodybuilding is the perfect market for that, because I can't think of another group of people that would willing go through so much pain.

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, yeah, for sure.

**Heather:** Something like that, you know?

**Abel Albonetti:** Exactly, exactly. And before then it was all about trying to help people recover. Get that motion back. So, if, someone tore their bicep they could hook up that machine where it makes that muscle contract. So, it teaches that muscle to contract again. So, those people are willing to go through pain because they wanna see their arm work again.

**Heather:** They wanna recover.

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** Right. But then they found out that it could work on bodybuilders, as well. And bodybuilders want to go through that pain. If you're like me, that's wanting to see results and stuff, you don't mind going through some major pain, if it's a good kind of pain.

**Heather:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh course, if I'm going in there and tearing muscles and stuff because of this thing, then I would never do it. But, what's great about it is, what I was saying is, you're able to use lighter weight but get the same benefits. And that's the same thing with blood flow restriction, that's why it's so great, is because when you do blood flow, you wanna drop the weight by half...

**Nick:** At least.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah.

**Nick:** Yeah.

**Abel Albonetti:** At least. And then you go for the pump, so you're not running the risk of using extremely heavy weight. And when you're in a low percent body fat, low calories, you have to really watch that or you're gonna end up tearing muscles if you go in there and just go crazy heavy weight. Because when you're in the off-season, when you're having tons of calories, your body can recover a whole lot more. So, you're able to lift heavier weight throughout the duration of your workout. But, when you're lower calories and stuff, in the back of your mind you really have to pay attention to your body, so you don't hurt yourself. Because, that's the main goal. If you hurt yourself, that's gonna put you way behind.

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** Months behind. Years behind. So, for me, I just try to stay injury free.

**Nick:** Sure, sure.

**Abel Albonetti:** And that's my main goal.

**Nick:** And if you're carb cycling or something as well, having an epic, heavy arm day is pretty different than alright, you know, I can have a pretty efficient BFR, biceps and triceps day.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah.

**Nick:** Hmm. So, speaking of being willing to go through pain, we should probably talk about your ab program you're here for.

**Heather:** We should talk about our ab program, yeah.

**Nick:** So, I'm sure you get asked about abs all the time.

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, yeah.

**Nick:** Historically, how often have you trained them, and what's been your approach that you feel like has been the most successful for you?

**Abel Albonetti:** Well, I went through all different programs with abs. Years back, when I first started getting into fitness and stuff, wanted to see my abs, I worked my abs every single day, pretty much. Because back then it was like, okay, well abs are one of those muscles that can recover very quickly.

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** So, I would work 'em after every single workout for about 15 to 20 minutes. That would either be lying leg raises, crunches, all those things. I would do all different movements, but I would do them every day. And then later on, I did that for like three years. I saw tons of results doing that, I mean I was able to...

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** ...build muscle, of course.

**Nick:** Right, there is a case for that.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, there's a case for that, but I wasn't using really heavy weight or anything. So, I wasn't doing anything crazy, where I was like sore. Because if I do that ab workouts that I do now, and if I did that every single day, it would be completely different, because I found the best results were actually using heavier weights, and working the abs just like any other muscle group. So, that meaning, doing in the 12-to-15 rep range—actually using some resistance. Now, some exercises you don't have to use weight to get 12 reps, 15 reps. A lot of people can't do hanging leg raises more than 12 reps anyway.

So that's, to me, considered like working any other muscle group.

**Heather:** You're still lifting weight. I mean, those legs aren't light.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, you're lifting weight. Yeah, right. Exactly. Or doing like sit-ups and stuff, a lot of people can't even do like a true, on a decline bench, do true sit-ups for more than those amount of reps. So, I would consider that being weighted. So, that is where I really found that benefits in my abs. Getting the big, chiseled abs.

**Nick:** Right. But the difference between like, "Oh, I think I see one," versus "Oh, there they are. Oh, I see 'em!"

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, exactly. So, now, what's amazing is, now that over the years building up my abs, my core, I'm able to go higher percent of body fat, live in a higher percent body fat, but you can still see my abs just about year-round. Even when I'm in an off-season because of how big my abs are now, because I built bigger abs. Now, back then when I was younger, when they're not well-developed, I would have to be pretty low body fat to actually see 'em. Because a lot of people get confused, they think that if they want abs they're gonna have to go in there and do crunches all day long, and they can somehow lose body fat around their abs. Now, that's gonna come from overall body fat loss.

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** And then you gotta think, body fat is a different tissue than muscle. When you're new to it, I mean I was the same way, I was thinking, okay, back then, if I crunch, all that fat is gonna turn into muscle.

**Nick:** You're just gonna chew it up.

**Abel Albonetti:** Somehow.

**Heather:** That's just gonna convert.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, it's just gonna convert. Exactly.

**Heather:** Yeah.

**Abel Albonetti:** And that's what a lot of people think. And then over the years, of course, I found out, I was like, oh, well...

**Heather:** Yeah.

**Abel Albonetti:** That has nothing to do with it. And, so, I found that working abs, like any other muscle group, let it recover, is the best way to get results.

**Nick:** Still more frequently than say, legs or back?

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, for sure, more frequently.

**Heather:** Because it's a slow-twitch muscle group.

**Nick:** This is a two-on, one-off program?

**Heather:** Two-on, one-off. So, you end up doing abs four to five days a week. Which is a lot of volume for abs.

**Nick:** Yeah. But it's a specialization program, too, to a certain degree. Right?

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, for sure. It's for a particular amount of time and stuff. Yeah. Any program that I do or anything, even other muscle groups, I will go really high-volume for... They call it an over-reaching phase. So, you really just pound out your body and then you give it a recovery phase, and that's with any muscle group. So, if I'm wanting to build, let's say my quads, I'm gonna pound it out super hard for a given amount of time and then let them rest. You know, that's great to do.

**Nick:** You think that four weeks, sort of one month, timeframe is a good over-reach?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, I think so. Sometimes over-reaching can be, if you do a phase for even a week or something.

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** That's for more like, huge muscle groups. That's more for like your legs, your back, or something. But for like your abs and your calves, smaller muscle groups, your arms, you can work those a whole lot more and over-reach a whole lot more before they just say, enough is enough.

**Nick:** Right.

**Heather:** I'm excited for this. We should do this as a challenge, because I've never actually had abs before.

**Nick:** You were a physique competitor!

**Heather:** You can look at the pictures. I didn't have abs. I'm a hardgainer in the abs and the calves. Like, I can't... I don't get...

**Nick:** Okay. Heavy weights.

**Abel Albonetti:** Mine's calves.

**Nick:** Heavy weights. We need to have like a cable-curl powerlifting competition to see who ... I don't know, you get pulled back, somebody get thrown through the roof, I could see. Have you tried the NeuFit on your abs?

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, yeah.

**Nick:** Oh, really?

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah.

**Heather:** There you go.

**Nick:** Oh, my god! You can't leave the bed if your abs don't work though.

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, really. I don't know if you've ever heard of the machines that they hook up to men to get the same contraction that like when you're in pregnancy.

**Nick:** Oh no? No, but that sounds...

**Heather:** That's a thing?

**Abel Albonetti:** That's exactly what it is.

**Heather:** Wow!

**Abel Albonetti:** Because your abs just squeeze so hard that you just lock up, and that's exactly what...

**Nick:** And you thought you were having a baby. Oh, my god! Wow! Okay.

**Heather:** Appreciation.

**Nick:** So, when you hook it up, so what do you do?

**Abel Albonetti:** You can just sit there and let the contractions... What it does... They can have it different ways. They can have the frequency just go through the motions so you can go... so, it's just on. So, you can either do ab roll-outs, you can do crunches, or, they can turn it on where it's a five-second contraction, and then it pauses for like five seconds, so, it releases.

**Nick:** Okay.

**Abel Albonetti:** So, at that point, you would want to do like a crunch, hold it for those five seconds, or a sit-up, and then go back down during the releasing phase.

**Nick:** And you feel like it touches the deep abs, as well?

**Heather:** Wow.

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, yeah.

**Nick:** Or just more superficial?

**Abel Albonetti:** You can hook it up all over, so the obliques, the abs, and everything.

**Nick:** I don't know. It sounds to me a little bit like that scene in The Princess Bride, where they have them hooked up to the machine and they just keep turning it up.

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, yeah. I don't work abs as much as what I ... I don't work it as much at NeuFit.

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** Just because it makes me so sore that, your core muscles, your abs...

**Heather:** You need 'em for everything.

**Abel Albonetti:** You need 'em throughout the week.

**Nick:** Breathing!

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah, you need 'em throughout the week. So, if I go in there and do a deadlift session, I need those to be not just deathly sore.

**Nick:** Right.

**Abel Albonetti:** Then the same thing with squatting. It uses your core a whole lot. So, I don't need to be completely just dead throughout the week, because it is gonna mess up my other workouts.

**Nick:** Yeah.

**Heather:** That is one of the cautions of working too hard, or overtraining, is that...

**Abel Albonetti:** Yeah.

**Heather:** Your body moves around pain and that's when you get injured.

**Abel Albonetti:** Right.

**Heather:** So, you have to be very careful.

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, for sure. Oh, yeah.

**Nick:** So, what's next for you then? You've been traveling. Now you're back. What's the next plan?

**Abel Albonetti:** Ah, the next plan, so, I get back this Saturday, and then the next week we have MuscleTech coming to my house. They're doing a "Why I Lift" campaign.

**Nick:** Okay.

**Abel Albonetti:** So, they're gonna come out there and film how I got started, what I'm doing now, so, kind of just my life, in general.

**Nick:** Cool.

**Abel Albonetti:** So, they'll be out there for three to four days. And then, I'm gonna be going back to China. I think the next month. And a whole lot of different photo shoots and stuff. This is when I try to, when I'm leaned up, try to do all my photo shoots and everything for pretty much the rest of the year and stuff. And then I pretty much have to stay in shape until about August or September. So, I get in shape for like March, and then stay in shape until about September-ish, and then I'll have that off-season where, holidays and stuff. It's a great time to have that off-season.

**Nick:** Sure.

**Heather:** Oh, yeah.

**Abel Albonetti:** Because spending time with family and stuff, it's a good balance. You know, you gotta have that balance in life. It's just a lot of traveling right now.

**Nick:** Okay.

**Abel Albonetti:** I really enjoy it. It's just, we were talking earlier and we were saying how a lot of people get this mindset that it's just so easy having this life. And I'm not complaining, I love it. This is what I wanted to do. This is what I love doing. But, it is tough.

**Heather:** It's a lot of hard work.

**Abel Albonetti:** It's a lot of hard work. When you go to expos all day long and still have to do cardio in the morning for forty minutes, then you have to go work out afterwards, and then by the time you get back to your hotel, you're going five in the morning all the way up until 9:00pm at night, and then when you get back, I have to edit videos, because it's all about social media these days, so I have to constantly work on that. And then I'm up until 11:00pm, go to sleep, and start all over again at 5:00am. So, this week has actually been amazing because I've been getting around seven hours asleep. And that's the most I've been getting in months now. Because when you do all that, you have to train still. So, no matter how long your days are at expos, meeting people, doing photo shoots, video shoots, I still have to go train myself and do cardio. Because if I don't, that's my job.

**Nick:** Right, exactly.

**Abel Albonetti:** Now it's my job, so, it's that much more pressure.

**Nick:** The best thing about coming to Bodybuilding.com is, we make you do like five workouts a day.

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, yeah, for the...

**Heather:** Good.

**Abel Albonetti:** ...past two days I've already done six workouts. Yeah.

**Nick:** So, you're ahead.

**Heather Eastman:** And he's still smiling.

**Nick:** You're ahead a few days. Well, Abel thank you for coming and talking with us.

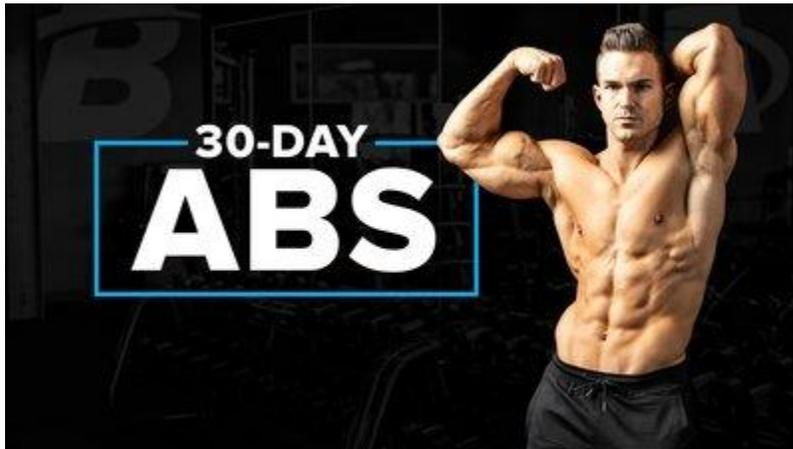
**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, yeah, thank y'all so much.

**Nick:** Where do we find you aside from the Chinese Government social media?

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh yeah, no, no, you can find me on Instagram [@AbelBodyGym](#). [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) is just "AbelAlbonetti".

**Nick Collias:** Okay. Great. And look for Thirty Days to Your Best Abs [["30-Day Abs with Abel Albonetti"](#)] on Bodybuilding.com All Access soon, as well. Thanks for chatting with us.

**Abel Albonetti:** Oh, yeah, awesome.



### [30-DAY ABS WITH ABEL ALBONETTI](#)

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