



Episode 60 Transcript

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How to Eat for Strength Without Budging the Scale

Nick Collias: Nick from *The Bodybuilding.com Podcast* here. So, the damndest thing happened to me. As a number of you have pointed out who have watched [video versions](#) of our podcast, I'm no bodybuilder, I'm no powerlifter. I'm just a guy, a pretty normal guy. I lift often, I have for a number of years now. I go for a few runs. I do a little rock climbing here and there. I'm not amazing at any of them, but I'm pretty consistent. But, then last year, late last year, I participated in a couple of competitions here in Boise, in the sport of [armlifting](#), which is a grip strength-focused sport. It's got a few pretty-unique lifts, an axle bar, deadlift double overhand, and then variations of other deadlifts and squeezing some grippers. And lo and behold, I did good enough to qualify for the World Championships of armlifting in my weight class, which is 80 kilograms, about 170 pounds.

They're taking place in Russia in May, and 15 countries and well over a hundred lifters will be there and, it turns out, I actually will be there, too. I'm going to go represent our country in Russia at the World Championships and if you are wondering what that sound you just heard was, it's the doomsday clock inching just a little bit closer to midnight. But seriously, I'm not going to go full [Jujimufu](#) here and start doing lots and lots of grip content on the podcast, but I am going to do my best to pretend to be a world-class athlete for the next four months and to use this as a way to have some interesting discussions that maybe we wouldn't have otherwise.

And, that brings us to today's episode, today's podcast. We've had [Doug Kalman](#) on the podcast a couple of times before. He's a well-known nutritionist and the co-founder of the International Society of Sports Nutrition. He's also one of the two stars of Bodybuilding.com's excellent [Foundations of Fitness Nutrition](#) series and, in his free time, he does a lot of consultant work for elite athletes and I wanted to pick Doug's brain about how to achieve maximum body recomposition, really focusing on strength and recovery while keeping weight about the same. I wanted him to give me the same kind

of initial consult that he'd do for someone more talented than me, so that we can all take in some lessons from it.

To be clear, my goal is I want to get stronger, right? Who doesn't want to get stronger. But now, I have a real goal. I want to get stronger in four months' time. But, I do not want to move up a weight class because the 90 kilogram weight class is no place that I have any business hanging out. So, Doug and I had a great conversation and, honestly, it's mostly about *my* life. But, my hope is that there's some really good nutritional nuggets in there that you can take to apply to your own lives and your own goals as well. So let's listen in.



Nick: I'm doing all right, man. Feeling sore in some odd places these days.

Doug Kalman: I can imagine because you're using a lot of, I would imagine, a lot of torque and a lot of what somebody used to call, a lot of body English.

Nick: A little bit. Yeah. Some of the movements that we train are, an axle bar deadlift isn't that different from a normal deadlift, but, some of these one-arm deadlift movements, you kind of have to coil your body a little bit. It's a different kind of position and I feel good when I'm doing it. But then, an hour later, three hours later, 24 hours later, I'm like, yeah, this touched some shit that has not been touched before.

Doug Kalman: I know the feeling from when I used to compete in, well, I don't want to say powerlifting because I only use to compete when it would be bench press competition. Not all the other stuff. So, and I always found it, I don't know, a little bit surprising of how sore I was in areas that I didn't think had anything to do with pushing a weight off my chest. Very much so. I remember after the first competition that I did, I couldn't believe how sore my back was.

Nick: Right. Once you start upping the volume a little bit, too, when everybody's training in nice, familiar, three sets of ten, three sets of 12 rep ranges, it can be pretty easy to not push that. But, my

coach is really big on this density training where you do as many quality reps as you can in four minutes or five minutes and you end up doing like double the amount of work that you would do in a normal little training session on a lift. And, yeah, it just starts to feel pretty different, pretty quickly. But, I'm enjoying it. I definitely feel like there's some potential to get stronger there.

Doug Kalman: Oh, I would imagine so. I really would. Because if you're new to it, you're learning it. You're not only learning the technique, it's all the muscle overload that you're getting. All this good stuff.

Nick: For sure. Well, I really appreciate you doing this and agreeing to talk to me. And I did, I tracked my macros for the last week like you asked, or I guess I did my best anyway. I've edited so many fricking articles about the ins and outs of macro tracking, but I've honestly never done it. And, as soon as you start doing it, you realize how totally imprecise it is.

Doug Kalman: It's an imprecise art and in that... when, unfortunately for some people that track macros that, I'm sure that you know of, they get obsessed with tracking everything and they miss the bigger picture. To just, basically, utilize a food diary and food analysis just to see what your trends are. Unless you're looking for a specific goal. But, it's basically always so that you could see what your trends are.

Nick: I guess my question for you, initially, would be, say that somebody who's preparing for the world championships of some weight class at a sport. Whether it's powerlifting, whether it's something in an Olympic setting, the biathlon even or something like that, what are the first things you want to know about them and what are the first questions that you feel like you need to have answered?

Doug Kalman: Oh, that's actually very good. When an athlete is coming to me for nutrition guidance and assessment or assessment, then guidance, I actually start out with about 10 or 11 questions that I ask the person. Some of these questions I've already asked you and you shared some of the info. So, if it's okay with you, Nick, I'd like to go over the types of questions that I ask in order to do, what I call, information gathering, so that I can be as well prepared knowing about you almost as you know about you when it comes to what your daily life is, what you're eating, what your goals are, and then how we can get you from A to B. Get you to your goal.

Nick: Sure. That sounds great.

Doug Kalman: All right. So, I actually have something that I originally called an athlete nutrition questionnaire, but basically there are 11 questions and some of it are more than questions because it's a take home. And, what I mean by that, is I have the athletes provide a food diary, ideally for three days. If they could do it for seven, that's even better. But, ideally for at least two days during the week and one weekend day. And, as you know, no matter what your life is, most people eat different on their off days, which for most people, that's Saturday, Sunday weekend days, versus the school week or the work week. So, I usually like to get an idea of what are you eating during your Monday to Friday and how do you eat, and your lifestyle, on Saturday, Sunday.

So, that's one aspect and we go through that a couple of different times and just because you get a good idea of what somebody is doing. Because, typically, people under report by about 25 percent of the total volume of food, total calories of food.

Nick: Really? That much?

Doug Kalman: Some of that is ... yes. And, it varies, honestly, it varies in between leaner people versus more obese people. But, in general, it's up to about 25 percent variance from what somebody tells you. It's like when, if you work in a hospital, and you ask somebody how many drinks of alcohol do they have per day? And, if they give you an answer, one, two, three, four, the rule of thumb is you always multiply it by three because people are not always truthful. So, with the calorie thing, again, some of it is not even on purpose. Just people don't really know serving sizes or they forgot, oh, I had a regular orange juice today and I don't normally. So, the first thing is to get a good idea about what somebody's food is like and their eating style.

But, I also like to know with that, the time of day that people do things. And, the reason that I go for that with you is, I was curious, what time do you wake up? What time do you have your first meal? What time do you start work? What time do you have a snack? When do you fit in your workout? What about another meal? And, what about if you're living a hectic life? How long do you sit in your car in traffic? Things like this. So, you get an idea of the schedule.

Nick: Sure.

Doug Kalman: Then, of course, it's always wise to know somebody's anthropometrics, their height, their weight. And, when it comes to goals related to body weight, either weight gain or weight loss. Traditionally, for weight loss, I ask the person also, when was this last time that you were at this goal weight? So, let's say, for example, Nick, it's different than you, that you were looking to lose, I'll just make some arbitrary numbers, that you wanted to weigh 150 pounds. I would ask you, when's the last time that you weighed that? And then, if it happens to be that it's more than three years, more than three recent years, that sort of gives an inkling of how realistic it might be to get back to that weight.

And, I use that as a learning tool also with clients just to say, let's take one foot in front of the other before we see whether we're able to run the marathon. So, let's not focus on that bottom number. Let's just focus on getting your body going in the direction that you want. So, and how do I do that with people is, honestly, I don't like to change the foods that somebody eats. So, I always ask for a list of all of the foods that you like and a list of all of the foods that you will not eat no matter what.

And, the reason for that is pretty simple because if, for example, if you hated broccoli and I had you eating a pound of broccoli every day or even two stalks of broccoli, you wouldn't do it because you hate it. Or, you would do it for a little while and then because it's not your favorite, you stop doing it. So, my purview as a sports nutritionist is to sort of work with what you give me and then help you make those better choices, whether it's related to the food timing, the types of foods within what you like or the serving size or all of the above. So, these are some of the things that I take into consideration. Like I said, the foods that somebody likes to eat, what they don't like to eat, if they are very, very hard set on following a specific type of eating style. Like if you said, listen, I want to gain 10 pounds but I only eat paleo-

Nick: Or Whole30 or something.

Doug Kalman: ...just an example. Or, Whole30 or Atkins or whatever tomorrow's next best seller will be. And, my idea with that is, if that's what you're doing, that's your lifestyle, so, let's make the best of it to get to your goal. Again, because it's hard to get people to change wholeheartedly and then there's maybe no reason to because, really the goal, when it comes to nutrition for most people working with other individuals is lifestyle-oriented. Now, it is totally different when it comes to sports because sport nutrition is about being bigger, faster, stronger, or leaner, not necessarily about having a low cholesterol level or having something like that. So when it comes to sport nutrition, health is actually not the first thing that comes on the forefront. It's performance, it's energy and things like this.

And, talking about energy. There's some stuff related to your own diet that I would love to pick your brain about it and let the people that are listening in understand a little bit about the relationships in between the types of foods that we eat, the macronutrients and the energy systems in the body. So, now sorry to skip a little bit all over the place.

Nick: Sure.

Doug Kalman: Going back to the questionnaire that I use with you and use with other people is, I also like to know, share a list of restaurants that you eat out or do takeaway from, and how often you do that and what's your typical order? Because if you tell me, for example, Doug, I'm always going to eat out at Chili's, for example, a restaurant chain that everybody knows, then I can help you because you're not hiding it and then we can help make the better choices for what's on that menu that would be towards your goal. So, you could still go to that restaurant if that's where your family wants to go. Or, that's where you want to go watch football. You could still eat, but now you're making a better choice that's helping you towards your goal.

And, of course, it's always wise to know besides what restaurants or takeaways people have, if they're currently taking any medicines. And, the reason why is that often there is something that's called drug-nutrient interaction. And, drug nutrient interaction, simply, is an interaction in between the medicine and something in your nutritional status or it alters your ability to digest, absorb, and metabolize certain nutrients. And, I'll give an example of that is very, very overlooked in the endocrine world, right? And, what I mean by endocrine is diabetes, it's a disease of the endocrine system, but one of the most popular medicines, one of the most popular drugs that's used to treat diabetes is known as Metformin.

Nick: Right.

Doug Kalman: And, Metformin has a negative side effect of, over time, it induces vitamin B12 deficiency, so it interferes with B12 metabolism. And, most physicians don't talk to their patients about that. And, most people don't realize, oh, I'm feeling fatigue. They're thinking it's some sort of iron-related anemia and it's really a B12 insufficiency or deficiency. So, that's an example of a drug-nutrient interaction. The doctor has you on Metformin for diabetes and lo and behold, six months later, you're B12 insufficient or deficient.

Nick: That's interesting.

Doug Kalman: That's just one example.

Nick: It makes me think of all the people are taking Metformin for longevity now, are they just, they're going to live forever but, incredibly low energy.

Doug Kalman: They probably mix with those people that follow the caloric restriction.

Nick: Exactly. That they're hungry and tired.

Doug Kalman: Yeah, so they don't move much and not really of good use. Some of the other things that I like to know and, you were, thankfully, very nice to share this, a detailed overview of somebody's workouts. You can't just tell me, oh, I go to the gym and it's upper body one day, lower body the next. Well, that doesn't tell any sports nutritionist or physiologist or trainer about your repetition range, about the volume of work that you do, about the strength work that you do, about the time between sets, the total duration of time, and all of the other things that can factor once you

walk into a gym door of any kind. Because we all know people that have, oh, I've done an hour on the StairMaster, but yet, they've done that whole hour putting all of their body weight on the StairMaster instead of putting it through their legs and standing up right. So, that one person that puts their whole weight on the screen of the StairMaster is not getting the caloric burn that they think, not getting the metabolic benefits that they think, but yet, sometimes they leave the gym after an hour and they're like, oh, I trained hard for an hour today. I can go do whatever I want to do.

Nick: Somebody, somewhere-

Doug Kalman: That's not really how life works.

Nick: Somebody, somewhere is listening to this while they're on the StairMaster and we're going to tell that person, "Stand up, God damn it."

Doug Kalman: Yes, definitely. If you have to hold on, then the intensity might be a little bit too high for you. But, that is a learned thing. And then, some of the other things that I like to do is, again, know your schedule because, again, if you're a person that wakes up, for example, when I work with a lot of the college athletes, and a lot of the college athletes will have two training sessions per day. It's not atypical for any college sport athlete to have at least 30 to 32 hours of total training time per week. And, usually, that's broken up in between sports-specific training in the morning with their team or, depending on the time of day. And then, usually strength and conditioning, mid-afternoon or afternoon.

So, most of those athletes, so, for example, if I'm working with the swim team there in the pool at 5:30 in the morning doing a first workout, most of them are not going to get up at 3:30 or 4:00 or even 4:30 in the morning to make something to eat so they can make sure that they have adequate carbohydrate and protein and so forth and hydration. They're going to roll out of bed, maybe grab a cup of coffee and a banana and walk over to the training center. On the college campus, that's how that happens.

So, my point there is, it's always important to know somebody's schedule because, again, I can't force feed somebody that, if they're not going to eat. But, what I could do is come up with a strategy to make sure they're getting adequate carbs and other nutrients during other times of the day to support their workouts for the times that they do it. Those are just some of the things, I don't want to go through them all because I think that they're important. But, and these are some of the things that I looked at, when you and I started our conversations. Even talking to you, if you don't mind, I'm going to recap this a little bit.

Nick: For sure.

Doug Kalman: You had a goal of weight gain and, of course, anybody can gain weight. It's the type of weight that somebody gains that makes a difference, right? We can all hit any buffet three times a day and become a sumo wrestler in no time. But, that wasn't the kind of weight that you were looking to gain. So, maybe you might want to expand a little bit about why you were looking to gain weight and what you were looking to do and then we can revisit.

Nick: Okay. Yeah. So, I've been basically 160 pounds for 15 years maybe, and, I've worked here for seven years and I've focused more on strength, and on overall health and just feeling good than on really adding that much size, but at the same time, I always felt like there was a pretty hard strength ceiling at my current body weight. And then, my friend and I last year, I don't know, it was maybe about August, we were looking at a picture of Eugen Sandow because what we were working on an article about him and, he's just a really interesting guy. And, he was no more than 180 pounds and

he was huge. And, we both had this realization where I think, I wonder how much stronger I'd get if I was 10 pounds heavier. But, you could call me a hard gainer I guess because I eat like a horse and I never was gaining a single pound it seemed like.

I just didn't worry about it. And I thought, you know what, this time I'm going to put on 10 pounds and just see what it does to my strength on a number of different lifts. And so, what I did was I did a kind of an iconic high-rep squat program where we have these sets of 20 and 30, and I made a whole bunch of kefir at home. Kefir's this fermented milk. And, I had an Instant Pot and I made all this kefir, and I would drink kefir and eat and do squats. And, occasionally, on squat day, I would also stop by McDonald's and get two sausage Egg McMuffins beforehand.

Doug Kalman: Wow.

Nick: And, for six or seven weeks, I did that probably twice a week.

Doug Kalman: Beforehand. Wait. Beforehand?

Nick: Yeah, no, I would squat at lunchtime and I would eat these two Egg McMuffins at probably six in the morning because I get up pretty early.

Doug Kalman: Right. So, you were actually really doing that to calorie load, to give your body, just explain for a second that the word calorie actually means energy. So, when we look at a bag of pretzels and it tells you 120 calories per serving, that's how much energy can be liberated from when the nutrients that are inside those pretzels are oxidized or burned in the body. Metabolized. So, you were really having two high fat, high calorie, low quality, I don't know, breakfast-

Nick: I mean, they were delicious.

Doug Kalman: You wanted to make sure that you had adequate calories, one, for weight gain and, two, to help you push throughout your training sessions.

Nick: And, I know that I don't like a lot of fat in my stomach before I do, like right before, I do anything that's particularly intense in the gym. So, I would, but I liked the idea of having two meals in my stomach before a hard training session. This was only twice a week. Other days, I'd get up and I'd do these kettlebell or sandbag complexes in the morning and, maybe, I would have something, like a little protein shake beforehand, but maybe not. But, on those squat days, I knew that they were a battle. And so, I wanted two meals in my stomach and I felt like it worked really well, as long as the second meal wasn't too heavy. It was usually just like, I might have some oysters and some crackers or just a small part of my lunch or something, a little bit of protein, a little bit of carbs.

And, after six weeks of doing that, or actually, I would also occasionally drink kefir before I would do the squats. After six weeks of doing that, I was 170 pounds and I was brushing my teeth one night and I noticed, hey, I'm jiggling while I'm brushing my teeth a little bit. I think that might be the natural indication that this little bulking period has ended. And so, I kind of dialed it back, took a week mostly off just because I was exhausted from eating so much at that point. Anybody who has ever done a high rep squat program can tell you, the hunger, even no matter how much you're eating, the hunger can just ruin your life.

Doug Kalman: Well, you know, the funny thing is when you're talking about the hunger, the hunger, partially in exercise physiology terms, when you're doing squats, high-rep squats, or just regular squats, but high rep, most certainly, it's very, what's called, glycolytic. Glyco, meaning sugar, stored sugar, glycogen. Stored sugar that's stored in your muscles and in your liver. And, this stored sugar

that we have, known as glycogen, is what the body breaks down to use for energy during such periods of these high-rep squat workouts. And, it's no surprise that after those kinds of workouts at you're, later in the day, ravenous.

Nick: I was ravenous for 24 hours afterwards.

Doug Kalman: Right. It's no surprise. It actually, and, also, because you are, just to let you know, you're tracking of your nutrition revealed that you were having about 35 percent carbohydrate, which is, unless you're doing it very specifically, that's low-carbohydrate, that's reduced carbohydrate. That is not necessarily the amount of carbohydrates somebody doing these kinds of workouts would, over the long term, benefit from. So, there are some tweaks that we need to make here.

Nick: Yeah. And, I'm not doing anything like that in training anymore. The style of training. Well, I guess to end the story, I did get a lot stronger on a number of different lifts and I ended up qualifying for this... You know, my deadlift and things went up significantly and I was able to qualify for this sport. But it's a sport where, in the 80 kilogram weight class, where I'm at, I'm competitive. I don't think I'm gonna set the world on fire, but I can go over there and feel hopeful about not completely embarrassing myself. But if I were in the 90 kilogram class, which starts at about 178 pounds or so, I would have zero chance because the 90 kilogram guys are monsters. And so, for me, viewing this...

Doug Kalman: Yeah. I do know. Because you and I are of similar weight.

Nick: Right.

Doug Kalman: So, I do know the difference when... I've wrestled against people 20, 30 pounds heavier than me and you could feel it. You know it. No matter how strong you are, they just have a little bit more solid to them.

Nick: Oh, yeah, yeah. And remarkably, I mean it's been, what, a couple of months now and I've stayed right up there, right around 168 to 170 pounds. And I think that, my goal here for this particular prep would really be to maximize the amount of body recomposition I can do, without having to have any risk of gaining more weight, just because there's a fear of international travel and everything else. Like, oh yeah, you show up and you think, you think you have three pounds to spare and, oh look at that, you've retained a bunch of water from international travel and you're at 179. And now you're just completely over your head in the competition.

Doug Kalman: Right, right. Yeah, most definitely. And you bring out a good point. And for anybody in the audience here that travels, anytime that you fly, the action of flying alone, being in a plane, actually makes your body for about 24 hours or so, hold water. So, you actually, and people notice it sometimes, "Oh, my shoes are so tight," when they weren't that tight when the flight began. But they're tight later in the day.

That's one way of noting that your body is pooling water. It's holding water and it happens from being at altitude like that. And so that's why when, that's why when we tell, you tell athletes that are competing somewhere, you don't want to fly there the day that we have to weigh in and compete. You want to be there, if you can, a week ahead of time or at least three, four days ahead of time so your body can adjust to everything.

Nick: Yeah, and I bought my tickets to Russia this week, and I think we have three days before the competition, just to really try to get settled a little bit.

Now you brought up something interesting, which is, I have been tracking my macros for you for the

last week, and I do tend toward higher fat, lower carb, just because I feel like that's just how I eat. That's where my tastes tend to go. I think over the course of the week it tracked out to about 45% fat, 25% protein and 35% carbohydrates.

And that was a little surprising to me because I feel like, hey I eat, I don't intentionally eat low carb or anything like that. It's just that I don't crave them nearly as much as I like fatty things. You think that's kind of surprising and maybe something that for somebody who's doing a lot of weight training and strength training over the next four months, that's something that we might have to look to change?

Doug Kalman: Yeah. Most definitely. Most definitely. The answer, short and long, is yes, I do believe for your preparation for this competition which you will dominate and win...

Nick: Of course.

Doug Kalman: Or else we leave you in Russia.

Nick: I'm representing my country on the world stage here.

Doug Kalman: Just yell "Drago, where's Drago?" But one of the things I was gonna say, yes, I would love to see a little bit more carbohydrate, slightly less fat. And it's not that you have bad fats, it's not like you're having croissants and then you're putting butter on top of butter and having full ice cream. The fats that you're including in your diet are naturally occurring fats that are in eggs. You just happen to like eggs a lot and then things like granola is a higher-fat mixture, and yogurts.

Nick: Right. And I eat a lot of nut butter, a lot of yogurt, a lot of shellfish.

Doug Kalman: Right. So, the shellfish I don't worry about, meaning like I've never really, the shellfish is not a high-fat thing. There's only two types of high-fat fish, if you will. Fried, and some people would say that fish that is darker, like salmon, mackerel, otoro, which is called fatty tuna sometimes. Those will have higher fat contents, but even those are not necessarily high, high, high fats like a piece of marbled steak or a hamburger.

Nick: Yeah, I guess I eat a lot of sardines, too. They're a fairly oily fish.

Doug Kalman: Yeah. Well, the sardines also, more likely than not you buy them canned and they're canned in oil.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Exactly.

Doug Kalman: So, they're not canned in a brine or something. But let's go back to this a little bit. That's where you get, that's where some of this fat that's coming into your diet is coming from. The nut butters, the granolas, things like this that we just mentioned.

But one of the other things that I wanted to ask you about, to talk to you about, was it seems that you have a definitive love for what I call, fermented foods, 'cause I notice very strongly in your food diary, is a heck of a lot of kimchi, and a heck of a lot of kefir.

Nick: I mean, I don't have much kefir anymore. I was kind of doing an experiment with the kefir bulk, and I felt like it was very ... That stuff's delicious. I've always been a big yogurt guy. My family's Greek and Greek yogurt is a huge thing now. But when we were growing up we just called it yogurt, and in my house, we would have plain yogurt as a condiment on the side of just about every dinner.

Whether we were having pasta, or lamb chops or anything. It would just be like a little pile of plain yogurt, and maybe my mom would put some Mrs. Dash on it or just eat it as it is. And that's something that I still do every day, almost, have a little bit of yogurt. And kimchi is just something that, it's not for everybody, but I just think the stuff is completely delicious. And a lot of times in the morning we'll have eggs, kimchi and toast. And I do definitely have a love of the fermented foods, I will say.

Doug Kalman: One of the things I was gonna say about the fermented foods is, fermented foods for those of you that don't know, are actual natural sources of probiotics. In the fermentation process, is when probiotics are born, if you will. So, for example, kimchi is a natural source of a probiotic that's known as bacillus coagulans. The same thing with kefir, along with a couple of other naturally-occurring strains of probiotics.

So, I mention this not only for the Jeopardy value, we know that when somebody is training hard and perhaps not getting enough sleep, that over time they get what's called being in an overreaching place, where their body is a little stale. It's not recovering as it once was and maybe you're a little more over-trained than you need to be.

So, when somebody goes to high training volumes, it does have an effect, at times for a good amount of people, to cause a reduction, if you will, a little bit of a suppression of the immune system. And that suppressed immune system sometimes leaves people to become more at risk for upper respiratory tract infections.

It's one of the reasons why if you ever follow anybody that does marathons, triathlons, or even some of the CrossFit competitions, from the volume of their workouts and the amount of days that they do, then after they get through their competition, they're sick for the next two weeks because they killed their immune system.

Nick: Right. Marathoners, in particular, are notorious for that.

Doug Kalman: Yeah, as a former marathon runner myself, I could tell you definitely. But that being said to you, the other benefit of the probiotics that are naturally occurring in your diet, besides again helping to support your immune system, and helping to reduce inflammation, is that there's some evidence also that probiotics help our bodies utilize protein more efficiently.

Nick: Oh, I didn't know that.

Doug Kalman: Right. Yeah, there was a study that we did a couple of years ago looking at bacillus coagulans, where we took a group of athletes and we tested them. Let's just say, whey protein alone and whey protein with bacillus coagulans mixed in, and we were able to see ... And we were looking at the differences in protein kinetics and protein metabolism in these athletes. And those people that had the probiotic mixture as part of their protein meal, if you will, had more efficiency of absorbing protein. Which means that the body, which really just means that your body does not have to work as hard to absorb the nutrients from it.

So that's a major positive for you. We will have to switch up some of these things 'cause I feel like, I know that you also mentioned in our conversations that you like to, you and your wife like to do two or three days of, I think, intermittent fasting.

Nick: Yeah, and it's something that I got into, I don't know, maybe a year and a half ago, because I had never really... I found the science behind intermittent fasting really interesting from a longevity

perspective, from blood sugar management perspective, and just from a hunger management perspective. Sometimes, it's like, "God, I'm tired of being hungry. I wonder if that would help."

And what I found that was if I arranged it around my training, where on lighter days I would skip breakfast. On Sundays, which is basically a rest day, we would not eat until afternoon sometimes. But on my training days, I would eat pretty normally. I would have a good-sized breakfast, have a good-sized lunch, solid snacks, solid dinner.

And what I found was that there was really no downside. None of my training suffered, but at the same time, I felt like I had a better control over just how I felt throughout the day, how hungry I felt, how mentally I felt. And it's been enjoyable, but at the same time, I'm open to the idea of dropping it during a dedicated prep for something that is... the world championships of something.

Doug Kalman: Right. I got it. You're open to dropping that style if there's a specific goal or reason...

Nick: Right.

Doug Kalman: ... at hand. And I'm actually gonna say to you, I'm not so sure that we need to drop it totally. If it's something that you enjoy, what we need to really focus on is what happens, because if I think again, I think that you were saying you do it two, two and a half, or three days a week. But then you're training, your training is gonna be at least probably five days a week. And possibly, and possibly three or four out of those five days a week, you might be doing what we call, two-a-days.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. And it seems like two-a-days for me, if they are gonna happen, is gonna be fairly light on at least one of them. It's, one would be more strength-oriented. The other one would be pretty restorative. But still, yeah, that's a possibility.

Doug Kalman: Well, the way I look at it, it's like when I'm working with some of the mixed martial artists that I work with doing their nutrition, and I go to the gym to watch them do their training with their coach. And they'll have two training sessions per day. And let's say that morning is sparring. So, sparring is usually very intense. A good hour of sparring, warm-up, spar and some drills and then cool down. But then, six hours later, it's strength and conditioning. Or it might be a technical workout. And they'll be, "Oh, the technical workout is not hard. We're just working on technique." But what the athlete doesn't realize, you're working on technique for 45 minutes doing... It's just not hard to you because you're a high-level athlete that's used to it. Other people would be asleep or tired from it.

So, my point to you is, yes, you're gonna have some two-a-days where both sessions might be a little bit draining to you, and some, where they won't. But the cumulative five days or six days per week with maybe three or four of those being two-a-days, which will really mean that you have to pay much more attention to staying hydrated, getting adequate protein, getting adequate carb. We do need to reduce your fat a little bit, 'cause I notice that one of the things that you did to increase your protein and caloric intake was a whole bunch of different kinds of fatty fish, if you will. Actually, it looks like a whole bunch of different type of canned...

Nick: Yes.

Doug Kalman: ... items.

Nick: That's true. I have a fondness for smoked oysters, smoked clams and sardines, which are also lightly smoked. And whenever I've kind of needed to up my protein, my plan has just been, all right, I'll just have a snack that's some canned fish at some point in the day. It usually has about 20 grams

of protein in a can. And I'll have that, either on its own, right out of the can, or with a couple of crackers and call it good.

Doug Kalman: And what I do like also though, you have been utilizing either whey protein or bone broth protein, whichever one you had available at the time. Correct?

Nick: Yes. I've been somebody who works at Bodybuilding.com for seven years now, and we have a protein dispenser in the gym, and we have all sorts of different proteins, and we do get a little employee discount.

So, I'm a believer in the post-workout shake. I tend to do either unflavored whey or some sort of plant whey. I've got some bone broth whey that somebody, or some bone broth protein that somebody gave me a while back. And it tastes pretty good. I don't know how it matches up to whey in terms of the amino acid profile is the only thing. I know that sometimes some of those more collagen-heavy proteins are reputed to be fairly low quality, especially when it comes to the leucine content.

Doug Kalman: You bring up a great point. And it's kind of funny, my research group that I work with, we actually published a paper, I believe it was during the summer of 2018, where we did a study. And what we did in the study is we compared isolated chicken protein versus isolated beef protein. And isolated beef protein that's sold on market, beef protein that's sold on market, most of them are very collagen-rich proteins on the beef end. So, it was kind of interesting for us because basically, think of it as a dehydrated chicken breast versus a dehydrated steak, if you will, right? But the bone broth is really the dehydrated bone...

Nick: Ligaments and stuff like that?

Doug Kalman: Right. So, a dehydrated, that bone that's in that steak that is then dehydrated, ground up, blah, blah, blah, is yes, going to be a poorer source overall of amino acids and protein, but richer in some of the other nutrients that have shown benefit for joint health. And which is important.

So, if you're doing a lot of lifting and you're doing, and I don't know if everybody knows here the kind of competition that you're getting in, but your kind of weightlifting or arm wrestling or armlifting competition, is one that's gonna place a lot of stress, at least in my mind, on your wrist joint, on elbow joint, and possibly on your shoulder joint.

So, when you're doing your training, not only is it smart to get more than enough protein in your diet, but also the nutrients that can help protect or rebuild things like your cartilage, your tendon, the things that surround your bones, if you will.

Nick: Right. And my coach, whose been in competitive grip sports for a really long time, he's a big believer in collagen for that, because he says that the limiting factor in people's hand strength, which is really what we're measuring in the sport, isn't muscular. It's really, it comes down to connective tissue strength. And that's a harder kind of strength to build and at the same time, it's also one that people associate more with lingering injuries.

So, he's a big believer in protein, but also in collagen for that. Now collagen is super hip right now. You see it everywhere, but it's not something you hear... You hear people talk about it, oh, for skin, and hair, which you and I could probably both use a little bit more of. But you don't hear it as much in terms of the potential it has to help people avoid injury and strengthen connective tissue. Is there decent science on collagen and connective tissue and joint health?

Doug Kalman: There's growing science on it. There's growing science and most of it came out of actually some of the studies that were looked at using gelatin. And gelatin is very similar to bone broth, by the way. Looking at gelatin and osteoarthritis and gelatin and connective tissue. And that is where some of the collagen supplementation recommendations have come out of.

And so, most of the studies say that the serving size needs to be at least 10 grams or more. And you have to be consistent with it. And one of the things that I do warn people about when it comes to dietary supplements, it's consistency over time that will give you your benefit. It's not take one pill and your headache goes away.

Nick: Right.

Doug Kalman: So, the mentality, again it's having the right mental approach, understanding that, just as important as you doing your kettlebell lifts, will be the nutrition that you put in your body. And that one kettlebell lift is not gonna make you a Mr. Olympia, if you will. But it's over time that increases the overall strength and physique and so forth.

Nick: Okay. So, there's kind of a vision of a post-workout shake coming into my mind here. What if it was something like 25 to 30 grams of whey, or something similar, and then 10 grams of collagen in that shake? So, bringing it up to closer to 40 total grams of protein, but a fairly mixed type of protein. Does that seem like a decent shake for somebody like me in this training block?

Doug Kalman: Exactly. That's seems, there'd be a couple of other goodies that we would recommend, but that would be great backbone. To have a fast-absorbing protein such as whey, and then to have the bone collagen protein, not only for the protein value, but for the joint and connective tissue recovery uses. So, most definitely.

Nick: Okay.

Doug Kalman: There are a couple of tweaks that I would make. I would make sure, believe it or not, there are a couple of, I would probably have creatine in the post-workout shake for you. Low dose creatine on a daily basis, meaning just three to five grams of creatine on lifting days. No creatine loading needed, but again, you would take the creatine, because one of the benefits of creatine, besides that when somebody weight lifts and uses creatine, you get more strength than if you just weight lifted alone, is that creatine also helps the body for energy cycles.

Actually, the function of creatine in the body is to be used to produce something that's known as adenosine triphosphate (ATP). When our bodies burn energy and ATP is what's known as oxidized or used, that ATP becomes ADP, and or, which is adenosine diphosphate, right?

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Doug Kalman: So, my point in bringing that up is its creatine or something known in the body as phosphocreatine that rephosphorylates the energy to bring it back up. So, you could think of it as creatine as being a nutrient that helps refuel your muscle's gas tank.

Nick: That's good. And this sport is, the lifts are very brief. There's very little that happens that lasts over... It's a little bit like powerlifting in that regard. There's very little that happens that's over 10 seconds long, so it makes sense to me that the creatine would be of value there.

Doug Kalman: Without doubt. And then I do think some other things would be of value nutritionally to you, but you already eat a lot of fish. I would just want to make sure you're getting at least two

grams of omega-3 fatty acids. That you're getting a smattering of vitamins and minerals. Because supplement-wise, I think that you said besides the protein shakes, you only really use Vitamin D or D3, specifically, and you probably should.

Nick: Right.

Doug Kalman: Anybody that lives north of the latitude that goes through Atlanta and through the US really, probably should be on at least 2000 units of Vitamin D a day. But, for everybody listening, I always believe it's better first, before you take something, go get a blood test or what the appropriate test is to know what your level is. It's always good to know where you start to see whether you really need to increase something or not. But in general, people that live north of Atlanta are not exposed to enough sunlight and out in the sun enough to have their body activate Vitamin D.

Nick: I remember talking to you in the past about how you would prepare for a boxing match is what you've done for a number of years. And you would say that as the training got more intense, as you were getting closer to a bout, you would start taking a multivitamin and start taking fish oil, things like that. I mean those are staple supplements that tons of people take. But what do you feel like they did for you as you were preparing for a weight-classed event, where you really want to preserve your power and strength.

Doug Kalman: Yeah, that's a great question. And the way that I look, yes, I would take a multivitamin. I would take fish oil. I would actually take Vitamin D, and I would also use curcumin. So, let me go through why. I might be a registered dietician. Well I am, I shouldn't say might be, I'm pretty sure I am.

Nick: You might be.

Doug Kalman: I am a registered dietician and I'm also a Ph.D. I'm a professor at Nova Southeastern University in Davie, Florida. And I teach sports nutrition. And I work with the athletic teams.

And why do I mention that? Is that because, I don't eat perfect every day. There are days where I don't have a wide variety of vegetables in my diet. And most people don't eat perfect.

So, to me, picking up a good quality multivitamin, helps fill the gaps. We already know from analytical data of the United States population, that, in general, we have nutrient shortfalls during different ages, or different times of your life. The nutrient shortfall just means that we're not getting enough of it through our diet. And that's why we take supplements.

So, if I looked at the sample diet that you gave here, Nick, there are a whole host of vitamins and minerals that at least according to the typical day that you wrote down here that are missing from your diet. So, I look at a multivitamin as filling the gap. I always, food first, supplements help fill the gap. And when I go over that, like I said, and then adding the fish oil, and especially for somebody like you. When they're doing a lot of training it's very inflammatory to the body. And there are good studies that show that omega-3 fatty acids that in a right dose will help reduce general inflammation. And also help reduce delayed onset muscle soreness. Two things that lifters or athletes don't really wanna have when it comes near competition time.

Nick: Right.

Doug Kalman: Right, you don't wanna be overly sore. And you wanna be recovered, you don't wanna be inflamed that way.

Nick: Okay.

Doug Kalman: And there is also great evidence, strong evidence of correlations in between somebody's vitamin D levels and their strength. So, I look when I'm working with professional athletes, we test their vitamin D and then we generally like to get it in a certain range because there's a known range of when your vitamin D levels are, let's say, around 80 or 90. Anywhere really to 50 to 80, but let's just say 80 to 90, that that correlates with greater strength than somebody that has lower vitamin D levels. And, unfortunately, many people walk around with vitamin D levels in the 30 range, which is really insufficient and does affect not only your immune system and recovery and strength, but a whole host of other things as well. Even mood states.

Nick: Are there any other nutrients, minerals that people in strength sports need to be on the lookout for in terms of a deficiency really damaging their performance more than they realize?

Doug Kalman: Well, the other thing that crosses my mind, and I'm not trying to pick a fight with any food group or people, is that just because the popularity now of either being some type of vegan or vegetarian, we cannot say enough that if somebody really is eating as a strict vegetarian or vegan wholeheartedly, they're not getting vitamin D. Wholeheartedly, they're not getting adequate B12 no matter how much they really try. Nor are they getting adequate iron. And we do know that when people have lower levels of B12 and iron, not only does it cause fatigue in the body or you get fatigued faster, but your mental abilities are impacted as well. You don't think as fast.

So, I worry about those depending on the type of diet that somebody eats. But in general, I think that we were just covering some things that I think would be worthwhile in the post-workout and daily period, which would be a couple different sources of protein, some omega-3 fatty acids, some vitamin D. And I'm a big fan also of curcumin. And turmeric, or curcumin also known as golden milk, right? Is one of the names out of India for curcumin, has strong science, really good growing science showing the benefit on the immune system. The benefit on recovery. The benefit for inflammation. And even the benefit for delayed onset muscle soreness.

So, to me those are all good reasons to include 1,500 mg or so of curcumin in the diet. That doesn't mean that we only have to take, or that you one has to take curcumin let's say in pill form. Cook with it. Make yourself yellow rice.

Nick: Right.

Doug Kalman: Cook with it in your chicken, just make sure to use a little bit of oil, it absorbs better in the body with oil than it does without, from the food form.

Nick: Okay.

Doug Kalman: So again, that's why the more colorful a person's plate, the greater variety of spices that are used, the better the athletic recovery and overall health will be.

Nick: Right. And I've been somebody who's taken that to heart over the years and really tried. We eat a ton of vegetables in our house, we eat a lot of different vegetables. We really like to cook. But at a certain point that does sometimes come at the expense of the amount of protein that you can put on your plate.

Doug Kalman: Sure.

Nick: And looking at the macro tracking that I did over the last week I noticed that I was pretty consistently up around 130 to 145 grams of protein a day. Which it hits that .8 per pound of body weight that I've heard recommended, but...

Doug Kalman: Which is good.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative). But it's not ... I think only one day of the week did I ever touch 1 gram per pound.

Doug Kalman: Not easy.

Nick: Do you feel like that's something that I need to aim for?

Doug Kalman: You know what, this might sound backwards to some people. I like to tell somebody the minimal amount of protein that you need, knowing that most Americans, most people, don't like to do minimum, they like to do more.

Nick: Right.

Doug Kalman: Right? So, in other words, if you were averaging about .8 grams per pound, you're more than well off.

Nick: Okay. And I didn't really have much in the way of shakes in the last week.

Doug Kalman: You know that's what makes up the difference. It's really hard to have a lot of food protein, but the portable protein, the drinking, the shakes in between or after a workout, or as a snack. And it doesn't even have to be a shake. Last night, I took myself one scoop of whey protein isolate powder and I took... What was it? I'm sorry. Siggi's Icelandic yogurt.

Nick: Oh yeah, that's good stuff.

Doug Kalman: And it was just a plain one, and then I mixed it together and it was sorta thick, more like a chocolate pudding kind of texture. And just sometimes mixing those kinds of foods, making your own protein pancakes or, I make protein ice cream all the time. All the time in my house I make protein ice cream. It's just ice cream that has a little bit more protein in it, about 10-12 grams of protein per serving, per half cup. You know, I'm sorry, per cup.

And these are things, there are other ways of getting it in. So, it doesn't always have to be shakes. I have one athlete right now that we do one shake and one bar because that's all they can really handle before they feel overly full. They'll have a shake after their workout, and then they'll have a bar as a nighttime snack because that's what they wanna have. And it's one of these 20-gram protein plus bars. So, I think that you're on a good trajectory, but I do think that we need to clean it up just a little bit so that we can help support your efforts in the gym. That's what I really worry about when I see like a 35% carbohydrate intake and a 45% fat.

That if we could tweak that a little bit, where maybe it was 45% carbs and 35% fat, that would be better for you.

Nick: Okay. And when you see something like that in an athlete's nutrition, what recommendation do you give them? Like hey eat some damn rice. Eat a piece of fruit.

Doug Kalman: Yeah sometimes. So, for example, I might tell them, if you're gonna have your two or three eggs in the morning please let's have two or three slices of Ezekiel bread. Or whole grain bread, right? So, this way there's some carbs coming in with that. If we're going to have... I don't wanna just say it has to be the same boring bodybuilding rice, potato, rice, potato, rice, potato. There are a lot of different kinds of potatoes that are out there. How about trying yucca?

And I'm being serious there, so it's something that we do. And I try to get people not to be afraid of carbohydrates. There's nothing wrong with having a bowl of cereal as a snack. Heck, if you wanna make sure that there's protein with it, have it with one of the Fairlife milks that are high in protein. Or what I do sometimes is I'll make an eight-ounce protein drink. Four ounces I use for my cereal, and the other four ounces I drink, instead of buying a high-protein grain cereal that your body doesn't really absorb and the people behind you don't really like. It's better to do it the way that I said.

Nick: Okay.

Doug Kalman: You know, become creative. Become creative with it.

Nick: Right. And I do find that before a workout I can have some carbs and not feel like I'm particularly full or weighted down during my workout. Whereas, I used to occasionally have a protein shake before a workout and then I had a few experiences where it felt all wrong. My energy level was all wrong, I felt kinda cloudy during the workout. And I stopped doing that. Do you think adding in... Before my workout today actually there was squash in the fridge, some roasted squash and sweet potatoes that I just grabbed as leftovers, and I had that before my workout. And it was actually a really high-quality workout as a result. I ate it about an hour beforehand and just got pretty much a blast of pure carbs before my workout.

Doug Kalman: That's the key, actually, the timing before. So, you know, when. I wouldn't be having a bowl of pasta a half hour before I go train, but if it was two hours before I might.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Doug Kalman: Now is it's an hour before I might have something lighter like you had. Heck, I could tell you that when I work, I've been fortunate enough to work five Olympics, right? And so, with the swimmers that I work with in the Olympics, competitive swimmers they'll go warm up in the pool before their race for about a half hour. Then they have their race, which may last all of 50 seconds or less, depending upon distance that they race. And then they go back to the pool for a half-hour cool down swim.

So, they're really doing an hour worth of energy expenditure, but they're really only doing all out for let's say 25, 40, 50 seconds, whatever their race might be. But we actually have a meal three hours before they come. We might drink a Vitargo drink 30 minutes or an hour before their race. Just in the same way that you had the food. Other times we'll just use a couple tablespoons of honey as a portable carbohydrate that doesn't sit heavy in them. Makes them drink water and then they're able to go into their event, or go into their training.

Honey is sort of like the natural version of Gu, if you will.

Nick: Oh, yeah. I've always preferred it, I think it's really good. And there are certain times of the year when I will take it, just a spoonful here or there because I found that it can be helpful with my allergies actually. But I've also definitely found as a little pre-workout, 'cause I don't really take caffeine before a workout. Usually I'll have my cup of coffee in the morning and that's about all the caffeine I can handle in my middle age. But do you feel like there's anything else that I should keep

in mind from that overreaching perspective?

Because one part of this story is definitely that I'm a very normal guy in my abilities up to this point in my life. I've trained very consistently for the last seven years, but never at a really high level. Never truly challenged myself toward some elite goals. And the goals that my coach and I are aiming for in the next four months are pretty significant, you know adding somewhere around 30-50 pounds to my axle bar deadlift. Which is a full body lift, pretty challenging lift.

There's a lot of changes that could happen in my body over the next four months. Is there anything else that I should really be on the lookout for?

Doug Kalman: Well, yeah, I would just say again, I wanna push you to have adequate carbohydrates, don't be afraid of things like couscous. Which is a different way of having a pasta. It's a fast-absorbing easy to make carbohydrate. If you add boiling water, your pasta's made. So again for you, I wanna to ask you to try to keep your protein intake where it is, increase your carbs a little bit, decrease the fat a little bit. You need to add more vegetables in your diet from what I saw on this page. But I would suggest a multivitamin just as cheap insurance policy, covering for what you're missing from the foods.

'Cause your whole goal is... Here is the question that I always ask a freshman athlete. What kind of an athlete is a bad athlete? It's the sick athlete.

Nick: Right.

Doug Kalman: 'Cause that sick athlete can't train. And/or they can get their other teammates sick. So, a sick athlete is no good. So, we need to keep your immune system intact. So that's why I'm saying that we wanna probably make sure just to round it out that you're getting a multivitamin along with your vitamin D3 that you were taking. And so forth.

Nick: Okay.

Doug Kalman: What I'd love to do with you over the next couple of months of training as you work your way into the championships in St. Petersburg, Russia, is to see what you're eating and to coach you a little bit, or even put together a sample different meal plan for you...

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Doug Kalman: ...to follow. You know, just I wanna make sure 'cause even in the meal plan that you gave me, you say that it came out to averaging something like 2,300 calories a day.

Nick: Right.

Doug Kalman: And you've gained weight on that amount of calories, or were you eating more?

Nick: Oh, when I gained I was eating far more than that.

Doug Kalman: Right. So, 2,300 to me is not a lot. Really, it's not a lot. That's not even 10 calories per pound of... I mean that's just slightly above the 10 calories per pound of your body weight. That's probably like 12 calories per pound of body weight. So, metabolically you could probably add in another 1,000 to your diet and not worry that you're gonna have grandma arms that jiggle when you wave to your kids goodbye for the day.

Nick: I'm a 39-year-old man though, there's something scary about adding more calories and more carbohydrates to your diet. There's just this massive societal association right now with, okay you're gonna add more carbs, you're gonna add more weight, you're gonna add more fat.

Doug Kalman: Well no, so what we're gonna do is we're gonna add a little bit of carbs, take away a little bit of the fat, which is gonna keep the calories relatively the same. I mean relatively slightly higher than what you're having now. But at the same point, because you're training consistency will be very consistent. And you're still going to do your intermittent fasting, you have to not look at how many calories did I have today? You have to start looking at what am I averaging over the week?

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Doug Kalman: And you'll see that from your scale weight and from the average that you're not getting excessive and you're not getting fat. But you're keeping the muscle that you wanna get, or even gaining a little bit more. And maintaining or gaining even more strength.

Nick: Right. And maybe having a little bit more to devote to individual workouts as well. A little bit more energy to pour into those.

Doug Kalman: Exactly. Because sometimes when you're under fed you're under energetic. You might think, oh I get enough calories. I'm a great writer, I'm great at this, I could do this, I complete everything. But are you achieving all the physical output that you can in the gym? And we don't know that yet. Maybe you could do a little bit more if we had a consistent maybe 2,700 calories a day for you.

Nick: Okay. So, there it is, 2,700. That's about three Snickers bars, right? Or five cups of couscous.

Doug Kalman: And a slice of pizza.

Nick: Yeah, exactly. All right, well, I guess one final question I was gonna have was, do you think it would really be beneficial for me to get a blood test or get a test to really see where I'm at nutrient-wise to start off before a big journey like this? Do you think that's something that people should consider doing before they start a big goal?

Doug Kalman: I really do. I honestly do. Probably if you went to your general physician and said can I have a vitamin/mineral blood test they're gonna look at you like you're crazy. They're gonna say, what you're not like in the sub-Saharan desert?

Nick: I think that's what keeps people from doing it honestly is yeah, I think I've done that where I asked my ... You know you read about it, hear at Bodybuilding.com, people say that they do it. And then I went to my doctor and I said I want this, and he said, what do you need that for? You're healthy.

Doug Kalman: Yeah. I've had a doctor say that to me before, too, and I said, well we only really know if we test. You know? And so, my point being is, yes, I do encourage it. I do think it's worthwhile. And I do think that if for example your doctor won't send you to the lab for a vitamin/mineral test, there are labs that'll allow you to come in to do those tests. Like Anytimelab.com, which is a lab chain around the United States, you can go in and have any blood test you want. Including vitamin and mineral status.

I will tell you, I have sent athletes to specific labs that will allow the testing to get done, and then we

share the reports with everybody that we need to. But yes, I'm an advocate of have a baseline. So, in this instance, it would be a vitamin/mineral baseline, including vitamin D of course. But it'd be a vitamin/mineral baseline. If you're a person that does not eat a lot of omega-3 fatty acids in your diet either through foods or supplementation, then I would also get the omega-3 test. Which you can order through the internet through the mail, they send you something to your house. You send them something back. It's pretty easy.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay.

Doug Kalman: So, yeah, I advocate having a test so we know the baseline.

Nick: All right, I'll do that. It seems like a worthy thing.

Doug Kalman: Nick, think of this, if you were literally in south Florida in my lab, right? In my testing lab, we would test your body composition. We would test your metabolic rate. We would test some strength indices, which has nothing to do with nutrition, but it's good to have that as a basis so that your coach would know. But we would be testing your metabolic rate. We would be testing your body composition. We would be testing these nutrient status because this is what you're looking to improve upon, so it's good to know where you start.

That's why you say like, oh I had my body fat tested, I went from 12% to 9%, let's say. So, you knew where you started, it's the same philosophy for when it comes to vitamin/mineral status of the blood.

Nick: Right. Well and I've been a big advocate in the past that people that before they really get serious about working out, meet with somebody who can give them a good baseline of their physical abilities and weaknesses. Somebody who knows movement screens, or something like that. That can just give you some sort of objective starting place.

Doug Kalman: Good points.

Nick: Some of the best information I've ever gotten was just from a friend of mine who gave me a functional movement screen and he said, basically you're injured in these three areas. And you just have never realized it and it's holding you back.

And it just gave me some place to start. Like, "Oh, wow, I had no idea." Okay, well now I have something to build a plan around. And I could see this functioning in the same way.

Doug Kalman: Yes. Exactly. Those who fail to plan, plan to fail. So, it's good to have a plan. And the plan besides to succeed, is that we have everything that we prepared, with everything that we could to do our best.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Doug Kalman: Right? Just like you would for college exams, or any exams, you prepare everything. Same thing for this physical contest, for this competition you're going to. You want not only to put all your effort into the lifts that you do in the gym, but remember, this is when you have to look at nutrition as fuel, not nutrition as pleasure.

Nick: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Doug Kalman: And that's not easy for everybody. So, nutrition is your fuel in order to get your body, your car from here to there. Where after you accomplish what you want, or 10% of your time, then you have the pleasure part of food. But right now, food is your fuel to accomplish your goal.

Nick: Right. And that's a mindset that I've been able to avoid for the most part as long as I don't have any candy in my diet, I don't drink soda. I don't drink coffees with a bunch of crap in them.

Doug Kalman: Nah, you eat pretty clean.

Nick: That's been enough for me to stay a lean and athletic guy. But at the same time there are times in your life when an opportunity presents itself and you just think, all right maybe I'm just gonna try something completely different now. And I think that that's the mindset that you describe is one that I need to embrace. And it'll be a little bit difficult 'cause my family is an enjoyment-based family. We like what we like, we just learn how to control the portions of it. You know?

Doug Kalman: Tell them that this is what you like now. Even if you don't, tell yourself it.

Nick: Yup.

Doug Kalman: Positive mindset.

Nick: All right, Doug Kalman, thank you so much for talking with us. This will be a good journey. And I think we should talk again as it goes on.

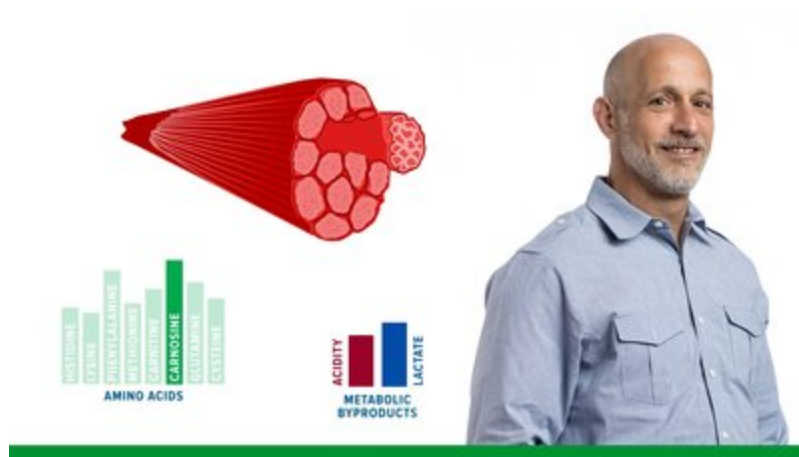
Doug Kalman: Seriously, I'd love to be along the path with you on this journey. And seeing you accomplish your goals is just awesome. It's motivating to me. So, I'm happy for you and excited and I know that you'll get there and do it.

Nick: Great, thank you. And for those who are listening, Doug's perspective is also available on Bodybuilding.com in the [Foundations of Fitness Nutrition](#) series on Bodybuilding.com [All Access](#) which is just a great 9-video course that we did that outlines a lot of the stuff that you're talking about today.

Doug Kalman: Yes. And with more precision and take-home utility than what we were able to cover in this short session. So, thank you again, and yes, everybody please go take a look at the Foundations of Fitness Nutrition on Bodybuilding.com All Access.

Nick Collias: All right, we'll talk to you again soon, Doug.

Doug Kalman: All right, take care, Nick. Thank you.



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