



Episode 13 Transcript

Release Date: Monday, March 27, 2017

Robert Irvine: Chef, Lifter, Soldier, TV Star

Chef Robert Irvine: This is it. Bodybuilding.com.

Nick Collias: That's right. Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the boardroom of beautiful Bodybuilding.com in Boise, Idaho. I'm Nick Collias, an editor for Bodybuilding.com. We've got here Krissy Kendall, who may look like she's going to start weeping every time I say the word [Fit Crunch Bar](#).

Chef Irvine: Yeah.

Nick: She just shakes her head and goes, "They're so good."

Dr. Krissy Kendall: So good.

Chef Irvine: You wait until you see the new ones. Oh, yeah.

Nick: Then we also have two other important guests here. We have Robert Irvine, a chef with many pots on the fire, and then we have these two croissant sandwiches.

Krissy: I was wondering who the second one-

Chef Irvine: They look really good.

Krissy: They are. This is what Nick does to us. I mean, I'm not going to complain, but he comes in at least once a week and I come into our little editorial pod and there's a display of just amazing-

Chef Irvine: So what are you saying? That he's a good guy.

Nick: I'm a good guy.

Krissy: He's a good guy but ruins your ... When you come in and you're like, "Today I'm going to stay on track."

Nick: You were saying the same thing when I brought these in just now. No, no, no, no. Yes, yes, no.

Krissy: I'm going to do ...

Chef Irvine: Well, you said it was a great French bakery. Well, French to me equals butter, fat, goodness-

Nick: Goodness. Virtue.

Chef Irvine: But a lot of workout afterwards.

Nick: This takes three days to make. The woman who makes these locally. I'm not begging for a sponsorship, but I would take it if she offered it.

Krissy: And three days to burn off, too.

Chef Irvine: Three days.

Nick: Yeah, it's a three-day process to culture the butter. She's French and my aunt who comes from France, says this is the best one outside-

Chef Irvine: We give her a big shout out and now she knows she's going to be in Bodybuilding.com.

Nick: She's the best. It's [Janjou Pâtisserie](#).

Krissy: If she wants to sponsor one of these podcasts, we'll have her.

Nick: But anyway, we don't need to just talk about the croissants, we can talk about-

Krissy: We have a guest here-

Nick: Occasionally as well.

Krissy: We have a more important guest here.

Nick: He's the brain behind a number of different shows. My father was just thrilled to hear that the host of *Dinner Impossible* from the past season, that's his favorite show of all time. Then *Restaurant Impossible* and *The Robert Irvine Show* which I just watched a little bit of yesterday for the first time. I have to say you are a patient soul.

Chef Irvine: It's crazy. Crazy. Yeah.

Nick: But I think that the one I watched a little bit of, "she wants a ring, but he may have had a fling."

Chef Irvine: Wow, so good. You know it's interesting. That show is four years in the making and we've just finished 180 episodes.

Nick: 180?

Chef Irvine: 180 episodes in record time. But the coolest thing about that, you said she wants a ring and he's having a fling, or whatever, and there're kind of fun stories. But the stories that make a difference are the overweight, obese kids, the family relationships. On Monday I have a guy named Hunter, he's 12 years old, burned his house down, beat his mother up, beat his family up. Single parent mom, dad was incarcerated. Came on the show 'cause it was the last hope, and went from a D student and a bad guy in seven months to a straight A's, helping kids in church, and I'm taking him to the Pentagon on Monday. That was part of my deal. So there are amazing things. Tommy Trudeau, 420 pounds, down half his weight. So there's some great stories there. There's some crazy ones like you just mentioned, but there's some great stories.

Nick: So how do you tap into a kid like that? What was the-

Chef Irvine: I think you find a common goal. For me, anybody that's military, police officer, firefighter, anybody that wears a uniform to do good. And I ask him simply, "What do you want to be when you get older?" And he said, "I want to join the military." Well, I made him do 20 pushups and he said, "I can't do pushups." And I said, "Yeah, you can." And I carried him the rest of the way, literally. I said, "You can do anything if you have help and you have a mindset to change." And he changed. So, to me, you find a common ground, and then you work on that common ground.

Nick: You're here early in the morning in Boise, Idaho. I'm always curious to ask people how do you start your day? You have a military background, do you have a very structured start to your day?

Chef Irvine: I do. Normally it starts between 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning, 'cause I film or I'm traveling somewhere. I work out, get up, eat oatmeal, work out, then I eat egg whites and all that stuff afterwards. But it's really early. I work out before I start, or travel-

Nick: Like pushups while the oatmeal's cooking?

Chef Irvine: Well it's funny, it's funny-

Krissy: What's your style of workout?

Chef Irvine: You have a great team here at Bodybuilding.com, but the hotel where I'm staying has a pretty good gym too. So I got in there this morning, did an hour cardio, met an F-15 pilot, an Air Force guy who's here. So that was kind of cool. Anything military driven I'm ... We travel 150 days a year with the military. So it's a big deal for me. That's how I run my life.

Nick: Was the military your introduction to serious training then as well?

Chef Irvine: Yeah. Well actually it was a Muscle and Fitness magazine at the age of 11 years old.

Nick: So you're at 40 years of training then?

Chef Irvine: Yeah. I got my first Weider weights way back when. And then I joined the Navy at 15 and a half and the military's been ever since.

Krissy: How did you get that first Muscle and Fitness, or what got you to pick that up?

Chef Irvine: Somebody picked it up from a doctor's office, it was an old copy, and gave it to me and I said to my mom ... And my parents are not well off or anything like that. My dad passed away two years ago with 93 cents in his pocket, so that give you an idea. So to get anything new was hard when I was a kid. But my mother bought me a set of these, the gold Weider weights-

Nick: Sure. You can still find them on Craig's List.

Chef Irvine: I would sit in my patio, read this magazine and say, "One day I want to be like that guy Schwarzenegger, and Lou Ferrigno, and all of these guys." And here I am meeting them and knowing them and 40 years later sort of thing. So it's kind of cool.

Nick: So when did you feel like you came of age as a lifter though? 'Cause 40 years, that's a journey.

Chef Irvine: Probably my mid-20s. I joined the military early. I wasn't that athletic. I played sports, but lifting was understanding the lifting part and the food part and then they go together. That takes a long time. We think guys are kind of brain dead, right? We think we can lift weights and make some noise and all of the sudden you grow muscles, and then you eat the croissants. So I think it was in the mid-20s when I figured out what food and fitness does together. I think that's my message now is that you can do this, but you need this to go with it. Food and fitness go together.

Krissy: Did you get that training in the military? Or were you going to other sources?

Chef Irvine: I was going everywhere. The military teaches you how to put on a rucksack, run five miles, shoot people, and run back another five miles and get on a plane or a ship or ... Which is great, but it's only nowadays that we're starting to think about the people that press them buttons or drive them tanks that fly those planes. Their nutrition and what it takes to actually be able to do your job. And it's literally the 21st century that we're starting to think about the people that control those billions of dollars. Think about this. It always blows my mind. We have an 18-year-old on the end of an aircraft carrier can throw a 150 million dollar plane at his whim saying, "You can go now." And yet he can't even drink a beer. Which is strange. What Fortune 500 company would ever allow you to do that? Probably none. It's an exciting time.

Nick: That guy has also been fueled by sometimes terrible cuisine over ... and then they're expected to thrive ...

Chef Irvine: Let me tell you, the military in general has terrible food. We're already in that scene we were helping him figure out what is the nutrition needed for the 22nd century, 'cause it takes that long to go through. And if we're asking a sniper to lay underground for six weeks and then shoot that one shot that's gonna change the course of a war, or a mission or something, then we better be able to feed them and give them the supplementation. And I say supplementation clean, that makes sense. Because food nowadays the way we grow it, the way we manufacture it, it's done for speed and product use. We don't think about the nutrition in the tomatoes that we grow anymore. Tomatoes are not all 6 by 6 and round and perfectly red. That's not how God intended, but that's how we get

them, right? There's very little nutrition in, so we have to think about that.

Nick: MREs in particular I feel like are something that's just always been okay, you can survive on this. You're not gonna thrive on it, but you'll survive on it. When you look at that sort of thing what sticks out as-

Chef Irvine: Well the MRE hasn't changed in fifty something years, they're ... Natick, in Massachusetts, they're actually looking at them right now. They're supposed to last 3 to 5 years in a brown atmospheric bag that's dropped from 44,000 feet, can take an impact. But if you look at the modern-day war fighter, and that means male or female, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corp, Coast Guard, they're looking for something different. We've got the cookies, we've got the biscuits, we've got the sloppy joes but if you look at all these guys that go into theater, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, where ever you want to look at now, they actually break the MREs and take what they need out and pack them. They don't carry them ... We actually waste more of the MRE than we actually eat. Yeah, it's a big change going on there.

Krissy: I don't know a whole lot about, I know what MREs are, but are they mainly just a source of calories right now?

Chef Irvine: Yep. They're calorie intake because if you think about our men and women even back to Vietnam, they don't get mess halls in the middle of a war zone. So they have to eat on the go and that gives them sustenance to be able to do their job quote unquote until they can get back to a place where they can eat correctly.

Krissy: So do you think moving forward working with that that there will be more emphasis on not just calories, but macros and proteins-

Chef Irvine: I don't think so, I know so.

Krissy: Okay. Well that's what I was trying to get at. So that is the direction that it's going.

Chef Irvine: The thing about it is the testing that NASA did way back when which was how do we put food into orbit and how do we grow food in orbit. We're way past that now. We're wearing bands that tell us the deficiency in D, B, C, E, et cetera, et cetera. We have a billion dollars of obesity-driven disease in our military today inside the military. So think about when we lose somebody and we have to bring them in from the streets. So we lose a body, we bring one in. Not at the moment, but we will do. They're already obese by our standards. So, we've got to look at how do we personalize your diet based on your job. Pilots, snipers, nurses, et cetera, et cetera. So yeah, it's gonna change big time, and it's starting now which is great 'cause the food industry has been in the military. We'll sell food, we'll sell food, we'll make a lot of money. Well, you don't make a lot of money. And the food has to get better because we're asking these men and women that average age 18 to 23 years old, right, to do a job. And it more so now than we've ever done before.

Nick: It's interesting hearing you talk about a wrist band that can tell you if you're Vitamin D deficient. So there's a bio feedback element to this that-

Chef Irvine: Absolutely, yeah.

Nick: And customization.

Chef Irvine: But I think by 2020, we'll be able to literally design a menu for you personally based on that band. And it's in testing now. It's not futuristic, it's now.

Nick: So when you think of supplementation in the military, it's easy to think of guy in the theater, he wants a stimulant maybe, or something like that. But what sort of nutrition really makes a difference for people who are out there?

Chef Irvine: Well I think when you, listen, carbohydrates are huge, right? But we can't all carry baked potatoes, pasta, rice and that's just not what it is. And field kitchens have come on so much now. We drop a kitchen literally in the middle of a war zone that we can cook at. I was in Mosul, just outside of Mosul, it's Q West, which is an airport that we own right now and they've got a kitchen there but they were living for nine months out of MREs and in concrete pipes. So nutrition is huge. Are they getting the nutrition they need right now? No, but that's why I have a Surgeon General looking into performance triads: eating, sleeping, and food. Supplementation ... Ephedra's gone, you can still get it, of course you can. The [5-Hour Energy](#) drinks that people take that they think is gonna give you that ... you know. So they're taking all these, but at the end of the day the DOD has to look at are those stimulants, are those enhancements good for the body while they're in doing what they're doing.

Nick: Right. And are they good for performance too? That's one thing that I remember learning is that [caffeine](#) works to here-

Chef Irvine: But you look at ...

Nick: Then you go up higher, it does the opposite of what you wanted to do.

Chef Irvine: But you look at athletes, and then you look at special operations guys that have to ... SEAL teams, Delta Forces, mountain guys, para-rescue, all these guys that are peak performance ... We have a doctor of human performance that watches every move they make to literally get the best out of them. Their food ... So Special Operations eat differently than our regular military. And my goal would be that the Special Operations training and food goes into our military for the next century. Is that possible? I don't know. It's expensive.

Nick: It's interesting to hear you talk about nutrition this way to because there's basically three different threads coming through you. There's the military, the strict nutrition guy. There's a chef, but then there's also a lifter who's eating for his own performance- How do you balance all of that?

Chef Irvine: So I think in all those differently. I think because I work with the military so closely in all these things, we're in the Pentagon, we have restaurants in the Pentagon, we have Camp Lejeune, Camp Pendleton, all these things that we do. We have a retail side, but when I do food for the military, the Surgeon General wants that food in boxes so they can get in retails. So when I train you in your work, it's like coming to Bodybuilding.com, right? You come to work and we eat differently when you go home, you eat very differently because of finances, because of time, because you've got kids, all the things that happen in life. And our job is to make sure that you can get that same product ... Right now in Walmart we do a vegetable kit that you can get collard greens, fresh vegetables in five minutes for a very small amount of money. Because I want people to understand what fresh vegetables are and not frozen. And there's nothing wrong with frozen if that's the last resort, but hey, it's cheaper to get fresh food. And people in this oh well, it's time saving. It's not.

Sorry, it's not. We've proven that a thousand times.

Nick: So I kind of imagine you having two speeds of eating yourself though basically there's food, and then there's food the event still every once in a while. You got to have both of those right?

Chef Irvine: Listen, food, we eat food to survive, we eat food to be able to do our job. But then there's that when I'm dining with my wife, right, that I want that to be an experience. That's very different than putting a plate full of eggs in your face quick as you can and moving on. And my job is, we have restaurants, we have dining facilities, we have food ... It's a fine line of how do I get the best possible food that taste good that gives you the macros and nutrients that you want, but without being eh. You mentioned protein bars, it's the same way. That's why we created [Fit Crunch](#).

Krissy: Well on that note too, I think something we hear a lot of, and it brings you back to Dinner Impossible, which I was telling Nick, I was like, "I'm gonna try not to bring up all my favorite episodes 'cause that would just take this whole podcast to another level." But, it's doing all of that in the time that you have. Which for a lot of people is not a whole lot of time. And that's why we hear people, "Well, I don't prep." Or, "I don't cook these meals that I should be 'cause it takes too much time." So how do you get people to realize that?

Chef Irvine: That is the number one question I get asked. I just did a seminar in Florida about 'time'. And time is one of those things that we're all so busy. I used to have a boss, his name was Peter Fraser in Jamaica, I worked at Renaissance Jamaica Grande way back in 1997, and he called me one day and he said ... I was the executive chef, 2,000 rooms. Sorry, 720 rooms, 2,000 guests. And he said, "I want you to work out with me." And I said, "Boss, I'm busy." He said, "Well, Louis Farrakhan's here." I said, "And?" I didn't know who he was back then. He said, "I want you to work out." I said, "I'm too busy." He said, "Well if you don't have an hour in your day for yourself, then you're not a good manager of time." And I said, "Okay, yeah." And I hung up. Then I suddenly thought about it. He called me back and said, "I don't really need you anymore." Like, you're gonna get fired. I went to work out, the place didn't burn down, it was still there when I got back. The reason I told you that story is because we get so tied up in our world, we forget that if you stop, it's gonna continue. And for me on a Sunday, and I travel 345 days a year. You know my schedule, it's crazy, if you follow on [Twitter](#) you'll see it. On a Sunday, I write down my whole week's schedule. I go and shop, I prep food, I put it in the refrigerator and it takes me 10 minutes to cook that food when I come back. Whether you've got four kids, six kids, eight kids, and I tell people get your schedule, shop smartly. So you get a whole chicken, you can make the whole ... Six meals can come out of that chicken. There's a soup, there's a ... And all the other things that we do. And be smart about how you spend your money and how you spend your time. Because if you spend two hours on a Sunday prepping your food for a week, you don't need time in the week. It's 10 minutes instead of making that decision of I'm late, I've got to go through the drive-thru, I've got to pick up this, and it's interesting because if you look at our families, parents will go without food to give their kids food at a quick drive-thru. It's interesting.

Krissy: That's still a disservice. Going through a fast food. It's not really any better.

Nick: As somebody with two little kids, I can speak to how easy it is to start to think in terms of that I eat this, you eat that mindset versus all of us are actually eating together, eating the same thing together.

Krissy: And setting that precedence of-

Nick: But the kids don't know any different. If they know-

Chef Irvine: But you're right. I was literally talking two minutes ago on a conference call that ... Think about this. In D.C. I did a show with Michelle Obama, I've done Fitness Counts, all these other things and I said to two kids sitting on a wall, "You want some milk?" You know where milk comes from? The supermarket. Isn't it kind of sad that we're in America and we don't know where milk ... cows that produce the milk and tomatoes and things, and I think that's our parents. That we get so busy that we don't take time, we don't sit around a table for dinner anymore. They're on Xbox's and they're doing all these things, because the smart phones have become the babysitters of the world instead of I cooked with my kids. My kids are now 19 and 15, two girls. When they were three years old I would have them in the kitchen throwing flour, using knives, burning themselves-

Nick: Making mistakes.

Chef Irvine: Making mistakes. But now they cook for themselves. They're at college, my 19-year-old's at college, she cooks for herself, she's a great cook, and she likes different foods. And I think that's one of the biggest problems we have. We don't let kids have fun around food anymore.

Nick: Or adults. Either that or it's too fun, it's only fun, right? So you mentioned breaking down a whole chicken to make a number of meals out of, but that person who's looking to you in this podcast for like, okay, I want to get my check box meals done, what's a game changing technique or ingredient or something that you think you should really do this, it just makes-

Chef Irvine: It's really something. These are called hands, right? And ovens and ranges have dials to turn the gas or electric up or down. They're the two most important things you have. To cook an eight ounce piece of fish, it takes three minutes either side in a hot pan. And three minutes to rest it. That's not difficult. Same with a steak. And I think people are so intimidated by food, and they shouldn't be intimidated by food. It's literally the pan gets hot when it smokes with the oil in it, you put the product in. You don't move the pan, you turn it over, then you turn it off. It's done. Wow, there's the new concept.

Nick: Cooking explained.

Chef Irvine: Right? And cooking is that simple. And if it's not cooked enough for you, you turn it back on, you cook it a little bit more. But what people forget is again, three minutes with a piece of salmon either side, turn it off for three minutes, it's not gonna go cold in that pan, it's gonna continue to cook at the heat that it was cooking at. It's called carry over cooking. So that salmon's gonna be perfect every time if you do it as I just said. And that's the key to cooking.

Nick: Just trust that don't just leave it in there. That's good.

Chef Irvine: No, because we cook it five minutes, then we cook it five minutes then we're not sure so we'll leave another ... And when the protein, the white stuff, the gummy stuff comes out ... And I ask people all the time, "Anybody cook salmon and that white stuff comes out?" "Oh yeah, I do!" Like they've done something good. But it's already dead, now you really killed it. That's the key.

Krissy: Do you have a similar philosophy with your training? Kind of keep it simple, or do you like to experiment around and do some of the crazy things that-

Chef Irvine: I change my training every couple of weeks. I don't lift heavy weights. I think at 50 years old, I'm running around with 22-year-old Marines and Navy guys and Army guys, I've got nothing to prove. I do the light weight specific movements, then I might go a little heavier a couple of weeks later, but I don't lift those like I'm 19 years old trying to take on the world. The body is a temple. And if you're out there and you want to be big, well you've got to eat. You've got to eat the right food, you've got to rest the right amount of time, and then you've gotta lift the right movements. Because at the end of the day, if you look at people, they all want to be somebody else instead of the best *they* can be. And it takes time. And I always say this with people that want to lose weight. It didn't take you three weeks to get that weight on. It's gonna take this amount of time. So I change it up, I like the excitement. I had a hip replacement three years ago just because of jumping and all the things I've done in the military and in real life and now I do even more of it. So trying to keep up with these young kids, 'cause when you get into a base you're like, "Oh yeah, let's mess the chef up." 50 years old.

Nick: But yeah, you've been training long enough you're not gonna get suckered into any 'how much ya' contest?

Chef Irvine: Nope. I let them go and my okay ... So we had one in Abu Dhabi a couple months ago and I worked out in the morning, and it was a missile base, a missile location. And they said, "Let's do pushups." And I'm like, "No, I did pushups already, but I'll do a bench press competition if you want." So we're in this little igloo tent in the middle of nowhere with all these missile silos, and the biggest guy, they picked the biggest guy. I mean neck like 20 inches here, big 6 foot 7 guy. And I said, "Okay, put whatever you want. Warm up." I warmed up with him then gradually added, added, added all the weight. And I said, "Okay, put whatever you want on the last set, and you do as many as you can do." He did just that, "Look at me, I'm an Army guy." And we had the whole tent full of these missile men just watching and videoing. He managed to get like 350, 360 pounds, whatever it was. He got three. I got 15. Then I sent the video to his boss and I said, "The Army strong is not Army strong anymore." But it's just funny. People see on TV, people see that you're a fitness guy, they want to take you on and you're right, I don't get suckered into those 'cause somebody gets hurt. And I don't want anybody to get hurt. And normally me.

Nick: We had a really interesting piece come out on the site yesterday that said basically '[stop going heavy on these three lifts](#).' And I feel like that's a theme. There'll be a time when it's all strength coaches coming in and saying, "It's a big three lifts, you have to build absolute strength." And then there'll be a blow back that say, "Why you chasing numbers all the time?" And it was interesting, one guy was talking about I think the leg press, John Rusin is this author, he's a great physical therapist who writes for us. He said, "People love their Instagram leg press where you put every plate in the gym, you've got three people on top of it and you're doing like this, three reps." But actually, using certain tools for incredible amounts of reps, metabolic stress is so much more beneficial in the long term.

Chef Irvine: End of day listen, there are ways to build muscle mass, elasticity which I think is really important. I mean think of your tricep. Your tricep is a very volatile muscle. A) because it's attached to a little piece here and the minute you break it, and I've done it, but people think, "Oh yeah, we can put as much as we want on it. It's gonna..."-

Nick: It'll last forever, right?

Chef Irvine: Some point, something breaks.

Nick: There are a lot of things you can prioritize in the gym though. You can prioritize strength, weight loss, suffering, I see by this neck you're a man who possibly prioritizes muscle largely in your training, right?

Chef Irvine: I do a lot of cardio. So, years ago when I was in the military, it was a lot of cardio, a lot of running, right? Pounding. I would say now that I've had my hip replacement I still do a lot of cardio but I do it not running on roads. And the only time I run on roads or in a format is when I'm with the military because they run in 5 wide, 60 deep. And that's how they run. But to me that's very detrimental to your hips, your knees and your ankles.

Nick: Sure. It's just repetitive, repetitive.

Chef Irvine: And so CrossFit and all these things, I am *not* a big supporter of that. Because the only people that get anything from that are the orthopedic surgeons. They get rich, 'cause at some point your body is not meant to be bouncing up and down 30 times its body weight on your knees, hips and ankles. And there are people that swear by it. And there are people who are gonna listen to this podcast and say, "You're nuts, you're nuts, you're nuts." Yeah, I maybe am, but you know what, I'm still here.

Nick: Yeah, that was my question. Are you cracking the aging code you think by focusing on building some muscle in the gym? Is that the answer?

Chef Irvine: I eat well, I sleep when I can, which is the toughest part 'cause sleeping is probably the most important part of the whole ... 'cause we never get enough of it. But I prioritize my training into one ... I do normally 30 to 45 minutes of cardio every day-

Krissy: And is that just, not to cut you off, is that just mainly for the cardiovascular benefits or-

Chef Irvine: It's because I need to get warm. It's very hard for me to get warm enough so I don't tear anything. Then I start with light warm up, and then I'll get to a point, I don't go to the one rep maximum, I don't ever do that. If I'm doing bench press I'll put a 45 on each end. I warm up with the bar alone first, then put a 45 on and I'll do 100 reps, four times and that's me done. I don't need to put on a stack of weight, but then my workout is like a cardio workout anyway. I don't sit there and take three minutes. I'm going from one to next, to next. When I'm in the gym it's a 45 to 55 minute, and it's over. I don't need to talk to anybody, I got headphones in, it's my time that I can think specifically about working out. And that's my escape.

Nick: And when you're done with that daily ritual, what is your head space like-

Chef Irvine: It's clear. We have a lot of projects going on. That's my time that I don't get people taking pictures, I don't get ... Normally in the gym.

Krissy: That you know of.

Chef Irvine: That I know of. It's my space, my wife knows I'm working out. If I'm working out with her then it's different, but when I'm traveling she knows that's my time. And I think you need that away from the daily grind. 'Cause I get a thousand phone calls a day, 24,000 emails, and I don't want to

deal with that. I just want music, done, focus.

Krissy: It goes back to what you said about finding just that one hour, everyone has one hour in a day. You can do it. Is it reading? Is it gonna be in the gym? Just find something, 'cause I do think that helps you then prioritize the rest of the day and focus.

Nick: Especially if you're going to be hosting a show later where people are going to be screaming at each other, you need to have a clear head, don't you.

Chef Irvine: Yeah. I find that that one hour, and you just hit the nail on the head there. It's me. It's me versus me, and the world is not there. Then I can deal with what's happening in Camp Pendleton, deal with what's happening in Korea, deal with what's happening in Las Vegas, or the Pentagon, or whatever's happening at that time afterwards. And I have a great team. We have a rule. You have to work out one hour a day, that's all my employees. My rule is that I won't call you, so if I call you, and we have a rule that ... I've got lots of rules. We have a rule that you have to pick up the phone within five minutes of me calling you no matter where you are, because somebody may call me that's really important to get it done. But if you're walking, like Dave Longstaff who will be here tonight, he's a Seal of 30 years, Army food adviser, he walks with his wife every day, and I call him when he's walking, I hang up. You got your hour. I will never interrupt that hour. 'Cause I think it's your time.

Nick: It's sacred, yeah. That's interesting.

Chef Irvine: Like you when you have your kids. That's your quality time, and I think the workout is my quality time.

Nick: And we have an odd understanding of that here, too. There's an unspoken agreement in I think a lot of departments here that if somebody goes down and wants to work out for a half hour, 45 minutes a day that that's their time and it actually makes them better at their job as opposed to you're not working.

Chef Irvine: Right. And I think that's the flexi-time mentality and the culture here is very different. If you look at Google, Twitter, all these big companies, and I've been to all their head offices and it's amazing. Pixar, you can ride around on skateboards and do all the things that have changed and look at how successful those companies are because of that. And I think that time is so precious, we don't get it nowadays.

Nick: Restaurants are a little bit rough for that too though. People burning it on both ends working long hours, working for years on end with an unhealthy lifestyle, but it catches up to them eventually. I imagine you've seen it just people cycle through-

Chef Irvine: Yeah, you're exactly right. You go in at nine in the morning, you finish at 11 o'clock at night, then somebody wants to take you for a beer, or a drink or it's 3 o'clock in the morning, you're getting home. And that's every day, that's not one ... Look at Bobby Flay who's now a runner. Look at Mario Vitale who's lost 60, 80 pounds. Rocco DiSpirito, blast from the past that got into fitness. I think we're more aware of that now. I'm normally in bed by 10 o'clock at night, which is kind of scary, but ... Unless I'm traveling, but as you get older, and you're right, it catches up. It's either around your stomach, your brain starts to lose function, so yeah, fitness.

Nick: Yeah, but it can be hard for people to visualize that on the front end, too. Because you think, oh look at that person, he's got a six day a week split, I can't possibly keep up with something like that. Or that guy, he's training for a marathon. They think almost you have to do it this way, or you have to do it all the way over here.

Chef Irvine: Yeah, it's a mindset, right? It's a lifestyle. You make a choice. And some people can stick with that, and some people can't. If you look at, again I go back to obesity and those people that make a decision to try fast food seven days a week, 24 hours a day, keep going. And I've had those on Fitness Impossible, the show I did. And it's interesting because I had a police officer who wanted to be in the FBI in New Orleans, he wanted to lose 60 pounds. A mom and daughter who wanted to lose 60 pounds to get into wedding dresses. Then I had a big guy, 400 pounds who was an all-star college athlete that had a motorcycle accident. And the show was a huge success. It never got picked up because food and fitness ... Food Network didn't want to do it, and that's fine. But I keep in contact with them every day since that show was two years ago. The guy has just started the FBI Academy. I mean, if you see what he was and where he is, and the female and the big guy, you wouldn't believe it. And they changed their lifestyles. So I think it's never too late to change your lifestyle, you just have to commit to it. And that's the hard part, commitment. Because if it gets hard, people quit. I don't have time to do it today, yeah you do. Make time. And again, if it was to make a million dollars, you would do it. Well, it is a million dollars, it's you.

Nick: So having gone through that with all those different people, how long does it take do you feel like for that to really start to stick? Is it different for everybody or is it just ... two to four months?

Chef Irvine: I think it's different for everybody. Normally three or four months of getting into that routine. And it takes you that long. Oh, I've got to get out of bed when it's cold. Yeah. And I will tell you, once you've got the bug you never lose it. One of the biggest mistakes people make when they're trying to lose weight is have a scale. No, you weigh yourself at the beginning and then throw the scale away, because we constantly watch that. And body weight fluctuates based on whether liquid intake, all the rest of it. And when we see that it doesn't move, that's when we get disheartened and we go back to oh, give me pizza, give me ... And I don't want you to not eat pizza. I don't want you to not eat what you like, or even drink beer or spirits. I want you to. But there is a systematic approach to it. When we drink beer as men, it's not the beer that does the problem, it's the yeast and the estrogen that comes from that. I'm not saying don't do it, but don't drink 10 pints of beer every day. I don't want you to eat like a rabbit either, I want you to enjoy your-

Nick: Portion control is a wonderful thing.

Nick: I want you to enjoy food.

Krissy: So how do you get people through the first three to four months? I mean obviously the people you've worked with have been able to work with you. Would you recommend people work with a trainer or have someone for the accountability?

Chef Irvine: Well I think they find ... Listen, I'm a big advocate of getting a personal trainer for a couple of weeks. Write all your food down, write all your exercises down and then follow that. And then if you want to go back and make sure you're doing okay, then you get a trainer to come in for a week after that three months. But listen, I deal with kids with cancer, I deal with ... I've got a 16-year-old right now, Kenston, who's stage 4 leukemia, who's working out and it's helping his recovery. When people say, "Oh, it's hard." Life's hard. Get over it. Pull yourself up and move on.

Nick: So you mentioned a [scale](#). I think it's interesting to think of a scale in the kitchen though as well. You obviously are somebody who knows how to quantify food, but do you find yourself getting caught up in macronutrient math, or ... ?

Chef Irvine: No, I don't. Macronutrients to me are ... Because I travel and I do so much in a day, for me to eat 10,000 calories, that's nothing. It's easy for me because I'm always on the go. But if somebody's sitting at home, they can't eat 10,000 calories. My general rule of thumb is eating every three hours from the minute you wake up to the minute you go to bed. Doctors will tell you, "Oh, you can't eat after 6 o'clock." Yeah, you can.

Krissy: I hate that.

Chef Irvine: Yeah, you can. And I'm the same way, I'm like, "Well, tell your doctor Robert Irvine says he's nuts." The protein intake obviously, and the burn rate of your body with that protein. Protein is normally the size of a deck of cards. And carbohydrates the size of the mouse that you used to use on a computer, now they've got it on the computer but ... And that way your body's metabolism speeds up. But I'm also a big believer in using instead of salt and sugar and obviously that's been refined, you can use honeys, you can use low-sodium soy sauce, you can use vinegars, fresh herbs and fresh fruit. Lemons, limes, grapefruits, oranges, because that citrus helps you start to digest immediately. It breaks down the food because it's an acid and it helps you digest the minute you eat it. And I always say when you've eaten a meal, and America is great at eating 23 ounce steaks, or 28 ounce steaks and then they feel like they can't eat anymore. Well, yeah do you know how long it's gonna take to digest that? So acid is a great way to start that burn or that metabolism before you even eat the food. When you're cooking with it.

Nick: Cut it in half and eating it later too?

Chef Irvine: Listen I'm-

Nick: That's one of my favorites. I like doing that.

Chef Irvine: But I won't do that. I think the more you make, the more you eat, the more you continue to eat. So for me I'll say, "Okay. A handful of vegetables, the 8 ounce salmon, that's enough for me for two and a half to three hours." Then I have to eat again, but it won't be the same food. 'Cause I think that gets boring and that's where we start to lose interest. Just like we go to the gym, and my assistant, not really my assistant actually, Justin, my right-hand guy, he's lost 28 pounds. He's 26, 27 years old. He can get away with that stuff, but now he does cardio, he eats well. And I think you feel better, your skin gets better, you have more energy, your outlook on life is different. Yeah, go get it done. Don't wait.

Nick: So it sounds like people come in contact with you and get swept up into that.

Chef Irvine: I like to think that I'm a positive influence on change. I told Gary Sinise this morning, he's a life changing guy in our military world. His foundation does amazing things, so we work together on a lot of things, building homes and whatever. So I look at him being the kind of the new Bob Hope and me being the beacon of hope for people that have tried change, but given up. It's like a vacuum. When I go through, I don't care how old you are, how young you are, I want to be that positive influence on your life.

Krissy: And it's obvious that you're passionate about it and people are going to come to that. And then when you make it easy to understand, so-

Chef Irvine: I try to. We started a magazine because of that. People would ask me all these questions when we go away and I'm like, "Okay, let's start a magazine, let's go out and..." And my whole vein of life is about how do I help those less fortunate? And they don't have to be less fortunate financially, they don't have to be ... It can be any kind of less fortunate. Whether an amputee, whether you're a single parent, whether you've just been thrown out of your house, cancer, it doesn't matter what it is, but my job in life is to make sure that when you go on my social media, I'm the one that's answering you. I'm the one that's saying you know what, you need to do this, you need to do this, see your doctor and then email me. And I give you my email and I literally walk you through it step by step. And I think that's the difference, a lot of celebrities, and I don't consider myself a celebrity, by the way. But a lot of the celebrities, they want the recognition, but they don't want to put in the work to help those that need help.

Nick: And those people that actually admire them, they're fans, the people who've loved them the most.

Chef Irvine: And that drives me nuts. 'Cause that's not how we run our business. Our business is based on people. So if I can help you, then I want to help you. And I'm not empty words. When I say I'm gonna do something, I'm gonna do it.

Nick: All right. Well thanks for coming and talking with us.

Chef Irvine: Awesome, Bodybuilding.com.

Nick: We'll put links to your social media if people do want to find you, but let's start with Instagram. Where do they find you on Instagram?

Chef Irvine: [ChefIrvine](#). And then Twitter is [@RobertIrvine](#).

Nick: Tumblr?

Chef Irvine: Facebook [@ChefIrvine](#). No I don't do all that. But it's funny. I'm a big believer in social media. I don't do negativity. If you're negative, you talk politics on my thing, see ya. You get 140 characters three times for me to change your mind on somebody, you don't, you're gone.

Nick: Excellent. And now you're going to go cook something for us?

Chef Irvine: Now I'm gonna cook. I'm gonna teach you out there how to cook healthy food on a budget that's amazing restaurant quality.

Krissy: Dibs on eating it. I get the leftovers.

Nick: Excellent. Great, well thanks very much for coming.

Chef Irvine: Hey, nice to see you. And don't forget [Fit Crunch](#). We have a new caramel peanut coming out, you're gonna go nuts on it.

Nick Collias: Perfect.

Krissy Kendall, Ph.D.: Excited! Thank you so much.

Chef Robert Irvine: I'll see you.



ROBERT IRVINE VS. KEVIN ALEXANDER: FIT MEN COOK-OFF

How would you compose a winning dish with a basket of mystery ingredients? Check out how the winners of Robert Irvine's and Kevin Alexander's Fit Men Cook-Off rose to the challenge!