



Episode 41 Transcript

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Kris Gethin: Man of Ultra

Nick Collias: Good morning everybody, snow on the ground in Boise, Idaho, but that never stops our guest today from getting any work done. I'm Nick Collias, an editor for Bodybuilding.com, here we also have Heather Eastman who has been on stage...

Heather Eastman: Hello.

Nick: ...as a figure competitor, but also ran a long ass distance or two.

Heather: A couple long ass distances, yeah.

Nick: And, our guest today is our only three-time guest on the podcast so far. Someone asked me the other day, "So, you're having Gethin on again?" And I said, "You know, the guy just keeps doing interesting shit, what can we say?"

Kris Gethin: You got a fetish for that, huh?

Nick: Kris Gethin, welcome once again to the podcast.

Kris Gethin: Thank you very much for having me, I didn't have to drive far to come here.

Nick: Yeah, exactly.

Kris Gethin: A little bit of snow, won't hurt anything...

Nick: I'm assuming you just ran here with your CamelBak.

Kris Gethin: Straight from the workout, yeah.

Heather: Yeah, pretty much.

Nick: Now, when we last talked with you, you had just finished up something you had just been training six months straight for, it was the full Iron Man, trained all through the summer heat and then did the full Iron Man in Coeur d'Alene [Idaho] and we were talking about, "Oh yeah, trail ultramarathons, they're pretty cool." I turn around and there you are, all signed up and ready to go, training for a race, putting training videos out there and did an ultramarathon just a few weeks ago.

Kris Gethin: Yes, I did indeed. I needed something to keep me occupied and that certainly did that.

Nick: Well, why an ultramarathon right off the heels of an Iron Man, why that challenge in particular?

Kris Gethin: Same challenge for the Iron Man, I wanted to do something extreme again to show people that look, you can be muscle-bound and you do these things. And, partly because of that, I wanted to prove to people and show you can take these impossibilities, quote unquote, into a possibility. But, I needed to be occupied myself because it's very easy for you to cross into the abyss after you've completed something, an event, because then where do you go? You've put in so much time, structure, discipline into something and when you complete it, usually an event is like the worst day of my life.

Heather: Right.

Kris Gethin: And so, I have to think of something pretty quick to fall into and I thought an ultramarathon would be pretty good because a lot of the training for that is off road. And, I much prefer to run off road than putting my knees and hips and everything through the hard surface. And, it gets a little boring, you can kind of lose yourself whereas if you're out in the wilderness, it's interesting, you know, it's meditative, and kind of relaxing at the same time. So, it's strange because when we're in the gym, we're increasing our cortisol levels, we're amped up, we're pumped up, we're trying to do the opposite when you're doing something endurance-based, you're trying to stay calm, keep your cortisol levels down and I think running outdoors in the trails is perfect for that.

Nick: Sure, absolutely and ultramarathons also have kind of an adventure narrative over them, like it's not an adventure race, you're not out in a canoe like a quote unquote adventure race, but yeah, you're out in the mountains, it's unpredictable terrain, it's not predictable streetscape.

Heather: It's not 26.2.

Nick: So, tell us about the race that you chose and why you chose that one.

Kris Gethin: I chose one called the [Frozen Fifty](#) [50K] because I thought, "Wow, this is held when there's supposed to be a lot of snow down, it's supposed to be icy conditions," I thought, "Well that's gonna be a great challenge." Because, whenever I hike, or last time was run, up Snowden which is the highest mountain in the U.K. ...

Nick: Legendary.

Kris Gethin: I've always done it in the winter. Yeah. And I've enjoyed doing it in the winter because I've just appreciated the simple things after that so much more. Like a warm cup of tea or like dry clothes or a couch, things like that.

Nick: Dry clothes.

Kris Gethin: Yeah.

Nick: You're exactly right, though.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, so I thought well this is perfect because that's probably gonna be like that on steroids, if I do this Frozen Fifty, I've never done anything that distance and I've never done anything in that condition combined, so I thought it was the perfect one. And, it was relatively low-cost, it's like an hour and a half drive from my place, so, if I was crawling over the finish line by my lips, I wouldn't have far to drive home and collapse.

Nick: And now, how long did you train for this? There's not the same sort of people when they do an Iron Man, it's like oh yeah, you have to train for a year, you have to train for two years, you did it in six months, there was definitely a time built in to that periodization.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, it was about three months. Three months preparation for that and I was splitting it up between my tempo runs, which during the week was very short, I'd run for about two hours, mostly on average. So, it would be an hour like on a Tuesday, an hour on a Thursday combined with a tempo run or intense runs and then I would have my longest, slower run on a Saturday or a Sunday.

Nick: Okay and were you still doing some triathlon-style training, you still swimming in there, you still hiking?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'm still doing that right now. So, still doing, not as much, but yeah, definitely swimming like once a week, cycling twice a week, because it was winter here and mostly indoors on my Wattbike.

Heather: So, now you're about a year into the triathlon training and the endurance training, how has that changed the way you lift or has it changed the way you lift?

Kris Gethin: It did in the beginning, the way that I was lifting in the beginning was definitely to accelerate my preparation for the Iron Man so I was doing a lot of unilateral work, a lot of balance work, a lot of Bosu ball work, core stability, but I feel like I'm a lot stronger and stable in those areas now. So, I've gone back to much more conventional bodybuilding, powerlifting...

Heather: Right.

Kris Gethin: ...sort of lifting, now very, very simplistic, that's exactly what I was doing just before I came here onto the podcast actually, because I feel that I'm stable in those areas. Like when I'm out running on these trails, I don't feel like I'm on a couple of skinny ankles that are about roll over, I feel

a lot stronger now.

Nick: Right, yeah, I remember that in one of your [Man of Iron](#) videos, you said, "If anybody's watching right now, their mind is blown seeing Kris Gethin back squat just a one plate on the Bosu ball." But, you feel like that really did pay off, maybe even just pure weak links, like people think about it, oh yeah, this is stability training but you seem like you have a different perspective on it maybe than you used to.

Kris Gethin: Oh yeah, for sure, I'd laugh at people on the Bosu balls, balancing on the medicine balls and everything, but there's definitely a power to it. Because, I do have very skinny ankles, I've torn the tendons in them like six or seven times and when you've got a heavy upper body and you've got these skinny ankles, of course, you're gonna have to strengthen them. So, I found that doing a lot of the Bosu ball works and working on a balancing ball and the balance mats and doing rotations on my ankles and all these things that you wouldn't generally put into a bodybuilder's routine, helped so much, so much and the reaction to it was very, very quick.

Kris Gethin: Because, I struggled within the first couple of weeks, but then after about five or six weeks I was really getting the hang of it and it was just my body and my connective tissue conditioning itself and getting stronger.

Nick: What was your longest training run?

Kris Gethin: For this, 18 miles.

Nick: Okay, so ...

Kris Gethin: 18 miles and that was through, that was when it was several foot of snow down. At one point, I turned around because I found myself walking through the snow instead of running because it was so high, but it was really, really enjoyable, I like that. I'd psych myself up for it.

Nick: It's great, though, it sounds like low-volume, relatively low-volume approach.

Heather: Yeah.

Nick: Like you looked up ultramarathon training programs, most of them will have you running at least four or five days a week.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, for sure. I plugged myself into the ultramarathon community so I went out to the Pulse running group, [The Dirty Soles Pulse Running Group](#), and went out with them several times and they were running the Frozen Fifty and some of those guys they just do 30 miles on a Saturday and then possibly 12 miles on a Sunday. But, again, they're smaller than me, they're lighter than me, I have to look at the point where I'm gonna have diminishing return, I'm gonna start losing muscle. Because, a lot of those guys said, "Hey, you should come and join us for this 100-mile run that's coming up now." Well, I'm not gonna do that because I will wither away, there's no way I can possibly prepare for that with the amount of volume that is required. So, there's a fine line.

Nick: Those are a mystery to me. I've watched people come across the finish line at the 100-mile races and I remember one, I was looking and I was thinking, "Wow, this is amazing, there are all these senior citizens out here, this guy's 70, he must be 80." And then, I remember looking at the

results, they're all 35, 40, it just destroys people.

Heather: It's haggard.

Nick: Just destroys people to run that race.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, yeah.

Nick: It's a whole other ...

Kris Gethin: Well, I don't know if you've actually looked into the longevity, the statistics of these extreme athletes and like strength lifters, so if you look at the ... You heard of the telomere, the telomere length, so obviously, if they look at these ultramarathon runners and Iron Man athletes, their telomere length does shorten, quite considerably. But, it won't shorten ... It'll speed up that process so not good for anti-aging, that's for sure, but for strength training, it actually assists, it helps blunt that shortening of your telomeres. So, you've gotta have a balance, exercise of course is gonna be good, that's gonna be beneficial to you, but it's the sadistic workouts that go on for like two or three hours or more, those are the ones that really hurt us so you've gotta find that balance.

Kris Gethin: I was speaking to Dave Scott, the other day, six times Iron Man world champion, and he was telling me about several of these top athletes that have heart conditions, they have irregularity now in their hearts.

Nick: Sure, sure, an ultramarathon-

Kris Gethin: They build up a lot of scar tissue there.

Heather: Yeah, you have the 50-year-old marathon runner that just drops dead one day.

Nick: Right.

Heather: Because ...

Nick: And they do damage to kidneys, internal organs, things like that, but these are specialists, too. One reason I find what you're doing completely fascinating is that you're not specializing, people love to ...

Kris Gethin: Participating.

Nick: People love to set elite goals and think that specialization is the only way to get there and you almost seem like you define it the completely opposite way, I'm gonna set an elite goal and I am not going to specialize on it.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, because I think it's good to just participate in all these things, yeah, I'll probably walk away with a lot of participation medals and never a winner. Bodybuilding was something that I definitely had that mind set when I was competing in bodybuilding. I was very, very competitive then but now I look a bit further from that because I enjoy the process so much more. Even though I may win a bodybuilding show, doesn't mean I enjoyed the process, now I really, really enjoy the process and I don't care where I come as long as I finish and to the best that I can possibly do. I'm not

comparing myself to anybody.

Nick: Sure, yeah, that's a good point.

Heather: And, do you feel like that particular mentality the "happy to be there", do you feel like that's been strengthened by participating in these endurance races where it's ...

Kris Gethin: Yeah.

Heather: Not about winning, because we've written articles where bodybuilders go in wanting to win and they are devastated when they don't even though only one person can, the rest can't, so do you feel like this is kind of ...

Kris Gethin: Yeah, it's definitely strengthened that resolve because you only have to speak to the elder statesman and people in an elderly home. And, it's a lot of regret that goes in and I think a lot of people that just put all their eggs into one basket and come second or third and then fall into a depression because of that, they'll look back on their lives and go, "Wow, I missed a lot of that process and a journey." And, when I see people that participate in these endurance events, yeah, you've got people in their 50's, 60's, 70's participating, I wanna be one of those guys.

Nick: Yeah and they don't care if they walk, they're us out there to finish.

Kris Gethin: Exactly, and they're having such a great time. And, I think there's lot of benefits that can be done and you can really improve your longevity by not going to the extreme, but just participating and enjoying the process and ...

Nick: Okay, so let's get into the day of the race then, right? What were you expecting out there after having, you know, you've done your Iron Man, you've done a couple of half marathons, I think, up to that point.

Kris Gethin: Yeah.

Nick: And at least one, what were you expecting going out there and what is the ultramarathon scene feel like out there?

Kris Gethin: Okay, well actually, I had been out there, I went out to the track just before, so I take it back when I said my furthest run was 18 miles, it was actually 20 miles because I went and ran the 20-mile loop of that.

Nick: Oh, you did that.

Kris Gethin: A couple of months before, there's a couple of guys that were going out there, they posted online and I was like, "Great, let me tag along." And, went out and did the 20-mile portion but the conditions are relatively bad then, it was quite wet, it was cooler, there was some snow down. So, the day of the race, it was nice, it was dry, it was sunny, I couldn't believe it. There was some slippy bits on the last portion, so it was a lot nicer than I anticipated so I'd worked myself up into it's gonna be tough because it had been raining that week and I thought okay, I'm gonna have to have my crampons and be really wrapped up and ready for the conditions. But, it wasn't that way, so it was really nice. We got there about 5:00 or 6:00 in the morning or something, and it was a huge

setup there. They had campfires around there, it was just a real good atmosphere ...

Nick: Huge relatively, not like in the Iron Man.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, relative, yeah. Because, the ultramarathon community is very small, it's very small, but when you see about 100 people get together, that seems huge for an ultramarathon event and it is in relative terms. And, before an event, people are normally nervous and they don't really talk to each other, completely opposite. Everyone's there for each other, everyone's helping each other out, and somebody knew that I was obviously participating because he'd brought the Train Magazine with me on the cover to sign and ...

Nick: Oh, really? That's great.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, and it was just real good atmosphere and I couldn't wait to get on the start line then and get things started off. And, I started off a little bit fast, because I think I was caught up in the atmosphere a little bit much, and you've got so many people running out the gates, but I really, really enjoyed it and I really took it in and made sure that I was aware and I acknowledged pretty much every mile of that race. I wanted to remember that, and just enjoy the view and the sky and ...

Nick: I feel like Kris is rubbing in a little bit here because I was supposed to do the 20-mile race and I chickened out because I heard there was mud out there, I just completely ... I love the cold ...

Nick: I can run in snow all day, but the mud I just fucking hate. And then, you get out here and it's beautiful, it's dry, makes me feel awful.

Kris Gethin: It was crazy because at one point, I remember messaging my girlfriend and saying, "Look, can you see if anybody's got any sun tan lotion, I'm gonna burn out here, honestly." Couldn't believe it and this was January, start of January in Idaho, just doesn't happen.

Nick: Alright, so then ... I watched the video, there's a great video you did a little 12-minute video on [YouTube](#), where you've got your camera and you're talking to it a little bit, you say you got your balls handed to you, I think, in mile four. That's only mile four of 30-ish [a 50K is approximately 31 miles]. How did that feel compared to mile 15, mile 20 as you go on, how did this experience stack up?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, definitely, mile four was harder than mile 10 probably because it was, I think it was 4,000 feet of elevation in the first eight miles. And, just less ... I think it was six days before, I'd just had a crazy leg workout with a couple of IFBB pros, Fouad Abiad, and we went all out, I thought I should hold myself back a little bit, but I thought no, I can't.

Nick: Same thing at the Iron Man, though, right?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, I know, I know. And I knew that I was feeling a little bit of the repercussions especially in my calves going up the hill, I was struggling a little bit, I was getting lactic acid buildup and there's just no opportunity to get rid of that lactic acid buildup and I think I'd gone a little bit fast out of the gate so then I just started pacing things and slowing things down a little bit. It didn't get that much easier, but it got a little bit easier, but I think it was just caught up with the adrenaline rush

and the heart rates going through the roof and I think I was just getting caught up in that a little bit much and maybe I carb load a little hard to begin with so I still try and digest my foods.

Nick: That's one of those things though about a marathon, or an ultramarathon, opposed to a marathon or an Iron Man, those happen in very closed courses, where you can dial in your watch, you can say I'm going this fast, when you're out there in the hills, there's no math to it. It's up to you to really find the balance, it's a whole different experience.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, you can't go by like your watch or your heart rate monitor or anything like that, it has to be very intuitive, can you keep up this pace for the next 30 miles with this elevation and not really knowing how much elevation is to come ahead. And, the conditions, well, yeah they were relatively dry, but there was areas that it was wet, mainly on the flats, thankfully, but when you get that mud all start clogging up on the bottom of your feet, it's like you've just added another three pounds to each foot and with that repetition of cadence, it all adds up.

Nick: Right.

Heather: Now, you talked about with long distance running and at some point you have to become lighter to be more efficient at long distance running and when you put on muscle and you have to carry that extra muscle running, I mean, it makes a huge difference in your stride. So, talking to our listeners, maybe someone who does have a lot of muscle and is considering getting into distance running, what were your lessons that you learned either the hard way or however, in how to carry that much muscle with you when you're running and running these long distances?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, it is definitely a double-edged sword because when you're running that distance, being bigger than the average person, you also have to carry more fluid and more food, so you're carrying another extra five pounds or whatever on top of that. So, you have to take that into account that not only are you going to be carrying your muscle, you're going to be carrying a lot more than the average person as well. If they got 10 liters of water, you'll probably need 20 liters, et cetera. Or, not liters, sorry, if they've got a liter, maybe two liters, you do definitely perspire a lot more, you gotta have a higher body core temperature so you'll need to take more fluid, more electrolytes out with you.

Kris Gethin: And, if you wanna retain your muscle, you're gonna have to put some glutamine, some BCAAs within that fluid. But what you'll notice is that you will have to take a smaller stride. Obviously, every stride, every plantar flexion out of your foot is gonna require more energy being heavier, so the further that stride, the more exertion, the more calories, the more lactic acid, the more oxygen you're gonna require as well, so I suggest not thinking as your steps as it being as much like a square box, but more of a wheel. So, very small steps, high cadence ...

Nick: Low impact.

Kris Gethin: Low impact, forefoot striking, ensure that you get that form right before you even go in for the mile. So, if I started running and my form started to completely go, even though I was trying to correct it, that's when I would stop until I'd get better because much like in the gym, as soon as your form goes, say if you're working chest, and then you start to work your triceps and your shoulders, there's no point, just stop there. Don't injure yourself and it's the same with the running, your form will collapse if you're heavier in the upper body, you start to fatigue, your diaphragm collapses and you start leaning forward, your posture goes, you start dragging yourself and you can possibly get

injured.

Nick: Sure.

Heather: Now, having done a couple of these longer distances, did you ever feel a point in the race when you had an advantage having the extra muscle, was there ...

Kris Gethin: Not in the run, not in the run, no, for sure. I'd say you'd have the advantage possibly mentally, because you're used to pain, you chase pain in the gym, you're trying to embrace it, so you're trying to find that long-lost partner again and again and again. So, when it does come to you in a race like this, it's like okay, now we're just gonna be partners for the next two or three hours or so.

Nick: Big pain out there on the course.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, exactly, but there's a lot of pleasure to be found in it, you know, you're used to it, so I think from somebody who hasn't embraced that as much, you do have a slight advantage there. Like when I was doing the Iron Man, I had the advantage on the bike going down the hills because of my weight, but that wasn't a case running down hills being heavier.

Heather: No?

Kris Gethin: Too much pressure on the knees.

Nick: But, with pain and suffering out there, did this give you your fix? How did it compare?

Kris Gethin: Oh yeah, yeah, I got a lot of pain. A lot of pain out of this one, because this race was very unforgiving because there's not much flat until you get to the last ten miles. Everything was either up or down, so after running for the first eight miles up, I was thinking, "God, I can't wait to go down," and then after running six miles down, I'm thinking, "Oh my God, I can't wait to go up."

Kris Gethin: Because, you're getting so much pressure, first of all, through your calves, your hamstrings, your glutes, your lower back, then going down the hill after six miles, your quads and your knees are just taking it. So, it wasn't very forgiving, but then the last ten miles which should have been easier wasn't that easy on me because I made a rookie mistake and that was to stop at the aid station for about 12 minutes, I think.

Nick: This was unique course where you do one big loop, you come back to your car basically and then you do a ten mile loop and they're basically two races, there are some people who just run the 20, just run the 10.

Kris Gethin: Yeah.

Nick: I wondered, yeah, I saw you there in this video, you're eating a pancake, you're sitting down, looking comfortable but it's pretty hard to get that train moving again, man.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, it was tough, but the thing is, I had a lot of trouble, I don't know why, I never really had this before, I had a lot of trouble keeping my calories down. And, I know from the elevation and I had my heart rate monitor on my watch, I could see how many calories I was going through

and by the time I'd got to mile 20, I think I'd gone through 8,000 calories. So I thought, I have to start getting more in me or I'm just gonna bonk here.

Kris Gethin: So, I thought right, when I get to mile 20, I'm gonna have to really feed up, I gotta get these calories in me and so I did. And, then when I got to move again, after about 12 minutes, it's like rigor mortis had just set into my body, I just could not get my legs to move, it felt like I was walking on bloody stumps and they just didn't get working and after then, properly.

And in hindsight, I should have just ate whilst walking and that would have been absolutely fine and I think that would have been better for me.

Nick: Yeah, you talk about bonking, it's interesting, that's a major difference between like a half marathon, and a [marathon](#) or ultramarathon. You can fully go through glycogen stores, you can, they say that the human body has about 17 miles worth of glycogen at any given time, you're fueling strategy really does matter a lot more in a long race.

Kris Gethin: Oh, for sure, especially being a bigger person, when I've gone out and done the Iron Man training with some other athletes who are just eating a couple of bars and gels, at that time, I've gone through like five pancakes, two meals, a couple of waffles, three bananas, eight dates, you know, just to ensure that I can continue going because you know, the muscle requires a few more calories just to maintain itself. And, especially when you're going up hills, the wattage, the amount of power we have to exert compared to somebody who's lighter is a lot more, so, yeah, when you put that into a trail running event where you have so much more elevation, and declines and various terrains, requires so much more hydration and calories. And, the weird thing is, when I was hydrating as well, I went through, I think it was like six and a half liters by the time I'd got to mile 20 and I hadn't ...

Nick: That's pretty serious.

Kris Gethin: And I hadn't peed once.

Nick: Wow.

Kris Gethin: Just sweating it all out.

Heather: Just going through it.

Kris Gethin: Sweating it all out, yeah, that was a bit of a worry. Never had that.

Nick: Yeah, did you see anyone out there with the poles?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, quite a few people with the poles, actually.

Nick: I almost told you beforehand, you should probably bring poles.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, I don't like things in my hands, I don't even like running with a water bottle in my hand, I'm just like that, I don't want my phone in my hand, nothing. Just one of those guys.

Nick: I'm the same way, but once the distance goes up and you start going up and down those hills,

I feel like the difference is just in your lower back, because going up and down those hills your lower back gets so damn sore and the poles just keep you that much more upright. That's the only reason I would recommend them.

Kris Gethin: You know, you're right there, because I remember going up some of those hills after and I would stop up one of those hills just to look at the view for just 30 seconds and that was only because my lower back was just giving out. Just to stand up straight and get moving again.

Nick: So, now that the Iron Man took you somewhere around 15 hours or something, right?

Kris Gethin: Yeah.

Nick: This was about half that.

Kris Gethin: Yep.

Nick: So, you still had plenty of time left in the day, what did you do with the rest of your day, did you just go back and have a wonderful meal or how did you reward yourself after this?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, I went straight for ... I had food waiting for me, I'd had quite a lot of food out there at that aid station on mile 20, and then I ate quite a lot when I got back and then as soon as we left there, we went to a sushi place in Eagle and I had like three meals of sushi. I was just wanting to get my calories in and when I got home, I'd still lost like seven pounds.

Heather: That's what I miss about the distance running is you can eat anything.

Nick: Oh, it tastes amazing, I mean, you know, I can have a beer any day I want, but a beer at the end of one of those tastes so good.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, everything, yeah, the senses are heightened to no end, no end. If anybody was cooking something, 16 miles away, I'd probably smell it. But it's funny, those aid stations when I got to the mile 20, I didn't eat anything at the aid stations, by the way, I just had my own food, and I had my stuff waiting in one of those bags there, but at the aid station, they did have bacon and they had M&M's and they had chips and all that stuffs. One of the funny things, and I thought, you'd never see this at an Iron Man event, they had alcohol there as well.

Nick: Oh, did they?

Kris Gethin: They had some whiskey, had some whiskey, tequila, there's some people in the Hawaiian costumes serving it, it was so funny. But, I was thinking that is the last thing I want right now. I'm trying to finish this thing. I don't know, maybe it'd sedate the pain?

Nick: Yeah, I think that's ...

Heather: That might be it, yeah.

Nick: There's a famous half marathon that they do in town here, the Robie Creek one and at the summit, they used to always have shots of tequila and cigars.

Kris Gethin: Wow.

Nick: And, I don't think they do that anymore, but it was a classic part of it and I walked that race with my sister one year and I just chewed on this cigar the whole way down and a shot of tequila and chewing on a cigar, I feel like it helped, just blunt the pain a little bit.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, it could do, yeah, you could be enjoying it so much more even though you're in agony.

Nick: Right? Exactly.

Kris Gethin: Mix that with some pain killers and who knows.

Nick: Take the slightest edge off, man.

Heather: In certain states, there's other things that they use for pain killers.

Nick: Oh, I'm sure. I mean, my concern with that has always just been, I imagine those people getting lost because, people get lost on these courses sometimes anyway. You're out there in canyons, you have to make choices one way or the other, if you're high, your choices could get a little less ...

Kris Gethin: I did get lost.

Nick: Did you?

Heather: Did you really?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, for about a mile, I got lost, I thought, wow I can't see any more of these little green flags, must be going the wrong way, so I turned around. Luckily I did, because I had gone the wrong way and as you know, when you're training for these things a lot to it is just exploration.

Nick: Yeah.

Heather: Right.

Kris Gethin: Just exploring.

Nick: That's the best way to explore.

Kris Gethin: Yeah.

Nick: Or the best way to train, yeah, absolutely.

Kris Gethin: But, there's so many times that I've got lost, which is okay because I ended up doing many more miles than I anticipated, so that's okay, I clocked it up. But then, after a while because realizing, I'm not one that likes to do these out and backs, so I like to find a loop, so then I gotta, I signed up for the premier version on Strava so I could put out a beacon so I'm sending out a beacon to my mum in Wales, funny, she loves that. She'll go on the computer to see where I am then and I'll

send one to my girlfriend because who knows where I'll end up.

Nick: Right, no I like it, I didn't know that was an option.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, you just have to sign up, it's just a couple of bucks.

Nick: Okay, so if you got too far off course then your mom could alert somebody to come rescue you?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, if I haven't got back. So, at the beginning, if I think, "Okay, I'm gonna go out somewhere that I've never been before," and I could be out there for 15 miles, I'll send a beacon message then to my father, my girlfriend, you send several people and they all get it at the same time and they can see where you are and when you're expected to get back.

Nick: Interesting. Now, with the Iron Man program, you also consistently tracked your body composition, start and finish, different health markers, different fitness markers, did you do any of that with this one or did you even just feel different after really throwing yourself into this style of running a little bit more than in the past?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, I didn't check any stats, I didn't but I definitely lost some muscle on this one, but there's several variables as to why I did. Like I went vegetarian for two months, completely vegetarian, and for one of those months I was fasting five days a week. So, I went to the ...

Nick: Wait, fasting five or fasting two?

Heather: Five days a week.

Kris Gethin: Five days a week for a month.

Nick: Oh, okay.

Kris Gethin: For a month. It was [intermittent fasting](#), so I'd have eating period, I would fast from say, 8:00 in the evening, until about 6:00 the following evening. And then, I'd eat, you know, it's healthy.

Nick: Pretty small window, though.

Kris Gethin: I'd break my fast.

Heather: Yeah, a two-hour window, yeah.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, yeah, I'd just have a couple of meals and then off to bed again.

Nick: Oh, okay.

Kris Gethin: And I'd break my fast with some cooked vegetables and raw vegetables, then my protein, then my carbs and my fats. And, I hadn't missed a meal in 19 years, so I had a colonoscopy, just had a check and I had to fast before that and I thought, okay, well, I've researched a lot about fasting, very interested to see what it's all about, I'd like to back up my [knowledge with mileage](#). So, I gave it a go for four weeks and I enjoyed it, it was nice, not to meal prep.

Heather: Isn't it?

Kris Gethin: It was nice to leave the house and not freak out because I haven't got a meal with me, so I think it actually broke my cortisol levels down because I wasn't so paranoid.

Nick: Did it stress you out at first?

Kris Gethin: It did, it did.

Nick: I imagine the first couple weeks would be ...

Kris Gethin: No, no, I'll tell you, the first three days ...

Nick: I bet that's ...

Kris Gethin: Yeah, you know but then I thought, again, it all comes down to changing your perspective isn't it? So, I was thinking, "Look, I'm not dying here, I'm not gonna starve to death, I'm not one of these people that could be in a third world country that doesn't know what they're gonna be eating. I'm okay, I'm fine with this." It was just hard to leg day, you know, train legs ...

Heather: Oh, gosh, yeah.

Kris Gethin: It requires so many calories so then I'd get very light-headed after, but the body's a wonderful thing, it would adapt, I was enlightened by it because it was just another form of discipline that could transcend into another area of my life, so I think the combination of that and the vegetarian and I was still weight training and the running.

Heather: And, I have to ask, why vegetarian?

Kris Gethin: I do it once a year.

Heather: Okay.

Kris Gethin: I go once a year, normally for about four weeks though. And, this time I just thought I'd do it for two months because my girlfriend said, who's pretty much vegetarian the majority of the time, she said she wanted to do it up until Christmas, so I said I'll do it until Christmas and guess who broke? She did.

Heather: Oh.

Kris Gethin: And, she's mostly vegetarian and I kept it up until Christmas day and had some turkey on Christmas day, and I do that once a year, I like to just remove a lot of stress that I've put on my body with the digestion of red meats and I like to clean house every now and again.

Heather: It's very cleansing, yeah.

Kris Gethin: So, I've actually implemented the fasting now, so I do it once a week, I do it every Sunday, on a non-training day, so I go high fats on the one non-training day and low carbs and then

the following day, I fast. And it's working great as part of this muscle-building phase I'm going through right now, it helps remove yourself of a lot of that unwanted, undigested proteins from the week so then when you do start eating clean, I feel that, you're able to synthesize and absorb and get the higher response from muscle protein synthesis from it.

Heather: Well, from the research I've done on it, because I intermittent fast as well, it's very good for your endocrine system.

Kris Gethin: Yeah.

Heather: It kind of lets your hormones reset and rebalance and more and more research is coming out that hormones are so key for your body composition for your mood for everything really and that's where I felt the differences, it just resets your body each time.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, for sure, and they say, the studies have shown as well for anti-aging it's great as well, so ...

Heather: Sometimes I do it.

Nick: So, now, that's a pretty small window, does that mean you were training fasted on a regular basis then?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, yeah, I did a couple of longer runs. Well, when I'd say longer runs, I ate like ten miles I was doing the fasted and I may have trained earlier in the day as well.

Nick: Right, because even a lot of intermittent fasting people still say, "Oh no, never train fasted, always train in your window." How was that experience? You say you got a little light-headed, but was it pretty rude awakening?

Kris Gethin: It was a rude awakening, but you just adapt to it, just like you get very hungry to begin with, your ghrelin hormones release itself in a protest. But then, after about three hours, they just go, "Okay, he's not listening to me, so this hunger will just go away." So, it's the same thing, you get very light-headed for a little while and you think, "God, am I going into some sort of glycolytic carb coma here?" But then, after about an hour of that light-headedness, trying to run your way back to the Jeep, you get back to the Jeep and like, "Oh, I'm okay now, I'm fine, it's okay." But, at any point that I did feel really, really bad, I would just break that fast just with salad, lettuce, cucumber.

Heather: That's always the option. Yeah.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, exactly, so it's a controlled fast, I'd still have my glutamine and my BCAAs you know.

Nick: Okay, so you're still having leucine, BCAA's in there ...

Kris Gethin: In my drink.

Nick: Because, that can be a little controversial for some people.

Heather: That's the gray area for ...

Kris Gethin: Of course, yeah, I'm not fanatical, I do it controlled, I do it my way, but I was just only having liquids. Like if you have a herbal tea, that is breaking your fast in conventional form, but I'll have herbal tea.

Heather: Is coffee breaking your fast?

Kris Gethin: Yes, it is, even decaf, anything other than water is breaking your fast.

Nick: Yeah, depending on who you ask, like we've had one researcher do it and that guy just drinks coffee all the time, he'll do massive fasts, but loves coffee, but his stance was no BCAAs, but you can drink five pots of coffee.

Kris Gethin: Makes sense because it still releases the bioflavinoid hormones that break that fast. What makes me laugh though is that you'll have some people have a bullet-proof coffee, and, you know, like 500 calories there and they still think they're fasting.

Heather: Fasting.

Kris Gethin: Yeah.

Heather: Yeah. Now, I have to ask you about your supplement company, [Kaged Muscle](#), and with this new direction that you're going in with all these endurance sports, is that changing the way you're looking at supplementation or has that affected some of your ideas for things coming down the line or ...

Nick: The Kaged Ultra Blend, is it coming?

Heather: Kind of, yeah, it's like what kind of ...

Nick: Iron Kage?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, you know what, not really, not really, what astounds me more than anything is that people from these endurance communities don't take much time and consideration to research how beneficial [supplementation](#) or *nutrition* could be for them. Instead, they're researching what is the best new wheel to put on their bike or the best new trainers, or the gadget they can put on their wrist, which I find is just astounding, it's prehistoric.

But, I think the same supplements whether it be a BCAA, your glutamine, your protein, very light fast-digesting BV proteins, they all have benefits, the only thing if I was to implement something or bring something in, is a carbohydrate drink. But, Kaged Muscle won't bring something out unless we believe it can be the best in market and I think the Vitargo's fantastic, so Vitargo S2 out there is an awesome carbohydrate, until we can bring out something better than that, there's no point us bringing something out, to be honest with you. So, I think we've got everything needed, we have got a testosterone booster about to come out, we got a multivitamin about to come out, we got an isolate. Other than that, I had all the supplements I needed for both of these events. It wasn't as if I had to go out there and purchase anything else other than a Vitargo.

Heather: So, it's more that you have to change marketing so that you actually targeting some of

these ultramarathoners.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, it be the verbiage for sure, when I've got a column in a couple of magazines and I'm talking about the benefits of, for instance, branched-chain amino acids, in a different way for the benefits for repairing yourself after a massive bench press and the stress that you've placed upon yourself. But, it's a little bit more of your central nervous system because they'll use their heart rate variability, when to take a day off. But, if they'd been taking their glutamine and branched-chain amino acids, and being better with their food and their hydration, they probably wouldn't have to take a day off. They wouldn't have to be as overtrained. They overtrain or can overtrain very, very easy and that's only because they under-nourish themselves.

Nick: Right, yeah, for many endurance athletes, supplementation begins and ends with carbs. You're talking about Vitargo, well they may know that and that's the extent of it.

Kris Gethin: Yeah.

Nick: But protein is ...

Kris Gethin: Yeah, well just think how many amino acids that you're gonna release into your blood system when you're under that amount of stress. Your body's under huge amount of stress, nervous fatigue and free radical damage, so I do like to supplement and take and eat a lot of antioxidants during phases like that. There's a lot of oxidant stress and again, another aging process that I wanna stay away from.

Nick: Sure, sure. So, what's next then, what is the year to come look like?

Kris Gethin: Well, I'm going through a muscle-building phase now for another video series, so packing on a lot of mass but still continuing with my cycle, running, swimming. But, I have entered the Iron Man at Tempe, Arizona, I've entered for the half in October and the full in November and also myself and Alex Viada are supposed to be doing an Ultra Iron Man event distance.

Heather: Oh, wow.

Kris Gethin: That is going to be completely self-supported in Yellowstone National Park where there's a lot of privatization going on in the national parks at the moment, so we wanna raise awareness and funds and we figured Yellowstone would be perfect for that. So, basically, we will ...

Nick: Just the two of you?

Kris Gethin: Just the two of us.

Nick: I like it.

Kris Gethin: And, you know, we will take all of our trash with us, we won't leave a footprint there. So, we will begin with the swim pulling a dingy with our bike, with our running gear, with our food, everything and then when we get to the bike section, we will pack that into a back pack, you know, put the bike together and cycle our distance and then we will have to put all that together into a pack.

Nick: Wow.

Kris Gethin: And run.

Nick: So, what are the distances here? You said this is an ultra.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, so we don't know yet, but we know it's gonna be further than an Iron Man. We have no idea what that distance is, we're still measuring out the course details and that is gonna be in August but again, I've got surgery in, I think it's gonna be April or May, so this all depends on my recovery. I've had a couple of torn tendons in my rotator cuff for about a year now and there was a bit of hindrance when I was swimming for the Iron Man and I thought that I may have been able to fix it. I thought, "Oh, I can rehab this thing," and then when I had an MRI in December, they said, "Oh, you've got two tendons that are torn in it, that's why it won't repair itself." So, after I have surgery, I should have had surgery then, but I thought I'll make it a part of this video series that I'm shooting right now, to show people you can build muscle, you can train around some injuries, you just have to be smart and I'll show you how.

Nick: So, at this ultra-triathlon that you're doing, are you thinking you might use trails rather than roads on it?

Kris Gethin: Yeah, as much as possible. Yeah, I wanna do trails.

Nick: Pretty unique event, I like it.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, yeah, it'll be good. The bike will be road.

Nick: Oh, okay.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, but there's a couple of areas that Alex has looked at and he said there's great lookouts there, that would be awesome for photo opportunity. And, I've had to pull him back a little bit because I'm like, "Alex, you know how heavy we are and we're gonna be carrying all this kit, and you wanna run up to some peak to take some pictures, too? Let's just try to finish this thing, buddy."

Heather: Let's get a drone.

Kris Gethin: Yeah.

Nick: But, at the same time, I mean, he does hit on something essential, which is going to a view, this race that you just did, you went up to the highest point in the area, that helps.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, yeah, it does, because it helps you appreciate what you're actually doing as opposed to thinking "Why am I doing this?" So, then you look at it, and think, "God, I'm one of the very few people in the world that has this opportunity, I'm gonna take it in." So, I do understand that point, you just have to remind yourself as you're just coughing up blood trying to get up there.

Nick: Well, we'll be watching every step of the way as well as we can, we'll have to have you on again possibly for a fourth one.

Heather Eastman: Yep.

Nick: Kris Gethin podcast here.

Kris Gethin: Yeah, let's see if I can live through this.

Nick: Alright, well Kris Gethin's easy to find, he's on [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#), and every place else.

Kris Gethin: I'm a social whore, baby, you'll find me.

Nick Collias: Oh, yeah. Alright, thanks for coming in.

Kris Gethin: Hey, thank you very much appreciate it.



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