

Craig Ballantyne: Everyone, welcome to the call. This is Craig Ballantyne and I'm here with John Romaniello. We're just going to give you guys some great information tonight for absolutely no reason at all. I just wanted to talk to John and catch up with him, and I figured why not invite everyone else on the call as well.

John, how are you?

John Romaniello: I'm doing good. It's good to talk to you. I haven't spoken to you in a little bit.

Craig Ballantyne: No, it has been a long time. So, looking forward to some great new information from you. Just before we started the recording John was mentioned he finished up a leg workout today. John, why don't you take us through that for fun?

John Romaniello: Legs are kind of a structured weak point for me. Back when I was bodybuilding my legs were actually pretty decent, I would say, relative to the rest of my physique.

Then when I got more into the fitness modeling I had to tone my leg training a lot, because you have to do a lot of stuff in jeans and tight pants and all that. They kind of want you to have smaller legs relative to your upper body.

When I stopped doing that it's been kind of a pain in the ass to try and put mass back on. We've got two things working right now. As a lot of people know, I'm actually suffering from some pretty bad elbow tendonitis that Dr. Kareem Samhouri is treating. I can't really do a lot of heavy upper body training, so I figured this would be a really good time to focus on my legs and get them back up to par.

Vinnie and I actually sat down over the phone and we put together a really good leg specialization program for me. It was nice to get his insight. The way I have it structured is I'm training legs three days a week. I'm trying to do every other day pretty much, but most of the time it's working out I'm doing Monday, Tuesday, Friday or Monday, Thursday, Friday. That way I've got a nice chunk of rest.

I have a very high rep day where I start with 20 rep squats, which is what I did today. Then it's basically two sets of 20 rep squats, so I start with front squats and move into back squats. For the front squats today it was actually pretty brutal. I did 275 for 20 reps and I did that onto a low box, which was about an inch and a half below what power level is for me. So, it was a pretty brutal set.

The legs actually went okay. It was mostly just having the bar on my interior delts for that long and it really started to hurt. But, it was overall good. Vince and I have a real cool kind of a leg specialization program that I'm going to be sharing with my blog readers pretty soon. I'm kind of writing down everything that I'm doing and keeping a record of it.

The goal is to put a full inch on my legs probably in the next eight weeks. So, I'd like to be able to do that. That way I can tie it down for the summer without having to worry about it.

Craig Ballantyne: Very nice and very interesting. We'll talk about your nutrition plan for that in a bit. How about tendonitis, what's going on there? Just years of lifting?

John Romaniello: You know what? I've been trying to work on it for about a year and a half now and what it seems there is that I actually have a little bit of nerve impingement on C7. It just looks like vertebra that's had a little tweak and leaning on something.

It's basically screwing up everything on the right side of my upper body. So, a lot of the stuff where the radial nerve dives in is just kind of swollen and all that tendon is inflamed. It's on the inside of my elbow, so it's actually medial left tendonitis, so really interesting as opposed to a lot of time you get tennis elbow, this would be more categorized as golfer's elbow.

What's going on right now is we've mostly taken care of all of the stuff in the neck. We're just going to keep treating that a little bit more consistently. Now, just breaking up all of the stuff, all the scar tissue and soft tissue damage that surrounds that nerve and the tendons in the elbow.

I'm not exactly sure how it happened, just years of heavy lifting do tend to abuse you a little bit.

Craig Ballantyne: I wish you a speedy recovery. Any other cool updates on your own training? Then after you give us some updates on that maybe tell us about something you've stumbled across with your clients in the last couple of weeks.

John Romaniello: Actually, I've just been stealing a lot, shamelessly. I've been doing a lot of bodyweight stuff recently with myself, mainly because I'm just noticing that it really has such a huge effect on my conditioning.

It's very, very different, because I can move through the exercises so rapidly as opposed to even when I'm doing countplex or kettle bell stuff, it's just a completely different effect, because you're doing so many closed chain exercises. I'm really enjoying it.

I've been doing some of that with my clients, but mostly just with myself, a lot of my own training. Again, I can't do a lot of heavy pressing movements, so doing pushup variations doesn't hurt the elbows too much. So, I've been doing a lot of the bodyweight stuff recently.

I'm getting more into some of the explosive bodyweight stuff, so doing muscle ups, which for anyone who doesn't know is a pull up variation where you go from a dead hang to actually lifting your body completely over the bar and almost into a dip position. That's something that Tony Horton does a lot of and they do a lot with cross fit. My goal is to be able to do 20 of those consecutively, so I'm working on that.

Craig Ballantyne: You don't have any problem with the elbow when you do the muscle up?

© CB Athletic Consulting, Inc.

www.TurbulenceTraining.com

John Romaniello: No, believe it or not. It's really anytime I'm using a lot of weight for a straight press or anytime I'm doing something where it's more of an extension exercise, particularly if the humerus is in line with the body.

If I'm doing just straight triceps press down or an overhead extension it hurts a lot, but for whatever reason when the humerus is perpendicular to the torso when I'm doing a skull crusher or something of that nature it really doesn't bother me as much. I'm not sure why.

Craig Ballantyne: What about pulling exercises, do any of those bother you?

John Romaniello: No, not really. I've managed to kind of angle the humerus at around 45 degrees and sometimes it will affect me as I get very close to failure and my triceps start kicking in more to assist with the pulling on, let's say, a closed grip pull up, but when I'm doing wide grip pull ups there's no pain at all. When I'm doing most row variations I don't have any problems there either.

Craig Ballantyne: Okay, cool. That kind of leads us into a question from a Facebook reader, Sash Savenko. He asks for your opinion on body weight only training for fat loss.

John Romaniello: It's great. We don't have to look any further than you to see that it is particularly effective. I like it a lot, particularly because you can do it outside. I find very few things more motivating than training in a park.

Bodyweight stuff for fat loss is particularly good, because you can just throw a lot of cool stuff in there. If you're down at a playground or a park and you have access to a pull up bar you can go from pull ups to dips to bodyweight squats or one legged squats. Then immediately after you finish that circuit just head into a dead sprint.

Mixing in those metabolic type movements with sprinting and anaerobic training mixed with aerobic training just works so many different energy systems that you're going to burn fat pretty much faster than anything else. It's great.

Craig Ballantyne: Cool. With the other stuff that you're stealing and maybe using some of your clients what's really getting great feedback from the kids these days?

John Romaniello: One of the things that I'm really working on with my clients now is getting back to a lot of the athletic stuff that I used to do with my clients.

I've just started really digging into my closet and pulling out all the training tools that I've had over the years. So, I'm doing a lot of agility ladder stuff. I'm actually training a couple of people for some combines that they're doing. So, we're doing a lot of lateral movements, shuttle runs, and things like that.

Just because you kind of get in that mindset where you sort of a lot of your day goes however the first session went, so I'm doing that with some of my other fat loss clients and they're really enjoying the challenge there. So, that's going pretty well.

Craig Ballantyne: That's pretty cool.

John Romaniello: I've been stealing a lot of that from DeFranco. I've been kind of following his blog lately and looking at his Facebook page.

They do so many cool things with their athletes there that it's hard not to want to train professional athletes all the time, so even though a lot of my clients are just your regular people it's cool to see that within three weeks time they can increase their 40 yard dash time or be able to do better on agility drills and lose fat and still meet their goals. They love it. I'm just getting such great feedback.

Craig Ballantyne: Very good. Let's go back to [Final Phase Fat Loss](#) and talk about some of the feedback you've got. What are the common questions that people have been sending in? Are there exercise substitutions that people have been needing? Anything like that.

John Romaniello: A lot of the things that people really want are bodyweight versions of all the workouts. One of the things I've done is I've created a lot of combination stuff, so I took a lot of the density workouts and I made some bodyweight workouts out of those and also did some with Karine's stuff.

I think the hardest part, as with anything in bodyweight training, is finding stuff to simulate rowing or pull up or pull down exercises. So, there's that. Then other than that people just seem to really have a hard time understanding.

This is the question I get most. They say, "John, I've always been told my whole life that I shouldn't train the same muscle back to back multiple days in a row." But, in **Final Phase Fat Loss** I have people doing pretty much two days on, one day off.

Most of the exercises have a lot of carry over, so in most circuits you have one variation of a lunge, one variation of a squat. So, people are really having a hard time coming to grips with the fact that you can do these workouts back to back and it's not going to impede your recovery. So, I just want to address that for your readers as well.

It's important to note that a lot of it has to do with your overall volume. A lot of your recovery is pretty much going to be structured not only on your nutrition, but also how hard you actually push. So, when you look at, "You shouldn't train two muscles in a row," that recommendation comes down to us from Arnold and from the bodybuilders in the golden age. What they pretty much did was they'd have "chest day" and they would train bodybuilder style.

They would do four sets of bench press, four sets of incline, four sets of cable curls, and then finish out with pull ups. So, they're doing 12, 15, 20 sets for a single body part or a single muscle group. In [Final Phase Fat Loss](#) maybe you'll have 25 to 30 total sets spread across your entire body, so no one single muscle group is getting enough volume or incurring enough micro-trauma to necessitate a full 24 or 48 rest period.

Now, of course, working your entire body is draining and you're going to have some central nervous fatigue and need to take two days off after two days on. It's really interesting that some of these old rumors really have a hard time dying. These recommendations kind of get engraved in stone and they're hard to shake people out of.

Craig Ballantyne: How sore would you say someone can't be to train a muscle group back to back, like if there's a little bit of soreness can they do it, if there's a lot of soreness shouldn't they do it? How is that going to work?

John Romaniello: I like to categorize people into three levels of soreness. Level one is just like if you try to use that muscle, just like if you trained your legs and you stand up and you've been sitting for awhile you'll notice that they're sore, you're kind of a little funky walking down the steps. You notice it, that's level one.

Level two soreness is when you are pretty much aware of it anytime you move and maybe that muscle is actually pretty sore to the touch. That's level two soreness. I would say with that one if you're an advanced trainee and you don't mind spending 15 to 20 minutes warming up you could definitely train through that.

Then there's level three soreness is when you wake up in the morning and every part of your body just hurts and you wake up cursing my name or Craig Ballantyne's name or Vince's name. If you train shoulders and now you legitimately can't lift your arms above your head then you should not be working out that day, give it some time to recover, in which case you need to consider that you probably overreached a little bit.

That's level three soreness. If it's really inhibitive to your regular everyday lifestyle then don't train that day. So, there's a couple of different levels. If it's just kind of you notice it then at that point you're fine.

Craig Ballantyne: Very good. So, Rosa Sabitino asks on Facebook, "What happens once you have completed the six week program of Final Phase Fat Loss?"

John Romaniello: That depends on where you are relative to your goal. If you still want to lose more fat I recommend taking a full week off of training and just kind of using some active recovery. Be active, run around with your kids, run outside, just enjoy being out of the gym for a little while.

Then after that week just repeat the program for six weeks. I'd say you can do that up to three times in a row. So, six weeks on, one week off, six weeks on and then so on.

If you're kind of happy where you are now and you're not trying to get any leaner, what I always recommend people do is transition into a strength based program so maybe something like Joel's first article Ripped, Rugged, and Dense. It talks about the classic five by five method, which really necessitates that you lift a lot of weights. Doing that increases neurogenic and myogenic tone, it gets a lot of type two B5 popping.

I talked about this on my blog, actually today. That's what I would suggest. What you don't want to do is go right from a fat loss program to a muscle gaining program, because now you've been operating in a core deficit for awhile and your body is going to be primed to suck up nutrients and you might put on some fat if you go right from eating 500 calories below maintenance every day to eating 1,000 calories above. Also, that could screw with your endocrine system a bit.

I always recommend people take four weeks of just training strictly for strength and still eating relatively low calories to kind of let their fat set point change. Then go from there.

Craig Ballantyne: Okay, that's very helpful. Actually, that brings me into another question. You were going to talk about things that people need to start doing, like foam rolling, ART, keeping records and stuff like that.

Let's talk about that, but also talk about what your ideal recovery/deload week is. You talk about that week off, so why don't you walk us through that as well?

John Romaniello: Okay. Just a couple things that people should quickly start doing. There's a couple of different tiers. ART, for anyone who doesn't know, is active release therapy and you can check it out at Active-Release.com, I believe. (<http://activerelease.com>)

It's basically a really aggressive sports type of massage. It's kind of a mixture of massage and chiropractics where they go in and break up some of the soft tissue scarring and soft tissue damage and work around your trigger points that's been going on.

I recommend that people have that done once a month. It is an expense if your insurance doesn't cover it and you're going to a pretty decent guy it can cost you maybe 130 dollars over the course of the month if you're just doing it once a month. I know that's pricy, so I do recommend finding someone that's covered by your insurance.

What's really interesting is the people that need it most, like the athletes and those guys, they don't want to do it because they don't want to spend money on it, but then they'll go drop 70 dollars on a pump product. You really should prioritize the things that are going to get you results.

Honestly, being able to function over the long haul, which is really what active release and all these recuperative recovery methods do, that's going to be super important and it's going to help you get better results in the long term. That's kind of the tier one. Again, it's a little bit more expensive.

Going down from there, just seeing a regular massage therapist to work through some stuff and maybe seeing a chiropractor as well could work. There's also graston therapy, which is kind of an offshoot from ART and I think it's GrastonTechnique.com.

What they do is they use these small metal tools and run them over your muscle fibers. Over time that will kind of get things back in alignment. It's really hard to think of an analogy, but if

you think about the way your muscles fibers are lined up in a muscle, a bunch of parallel lines running in whatever direction they happen to run in that muscle, and then you smoosh your hand over that, then they kind of get mashed up and tangled up with another. What graston does is it kind of smoothes them out and restores the proper blood flow and function to that muscle.

Then a step down from there would be picking up a foam roller. A foam roller you can get from anywhere between 10 and 30 dollars depending on the size. There's hundreds and hundreds of great websites that have talked about foam rolling and I should probably do it on my blog, but one of the bet guys in the industry, Eric Cressey, has a whole series of foam rolling exercises.

Really what you do is you just go over your trigger points and stuff, places where soft tissue damage tends to be the most. What that does is restore the blood flow and allows you to recover a little bit faster. Keep in mind that the key to recovery is blood. Blood is the highway, it's the pathway that gets all of your nutrients to your damaged muscles. If you have impeded blood flow then you're going to have impeded recovery. So, foam rolling really helps with restoring proper blood flow to each muscle.

My ideal deload week would probably consist of foam rolling every day, going for maybe a two mile jog outside just for fun, maybe with my dog, probably twice that week. Then doing some bodyweight exercise at the park once per week. Other than that I really like to do nothing structured on my deload weeks.

A lot of people talk about using light weights and just building up the movement patterns and everything. So, if you're going to go back into bench pressing after that week maybe just work on 135 and getting your form down. A lot of the better guys in the industry are talking about that and they've got a lot of good points, but I really believe in the deconditioning effect and really allowing people to stay out of the gym for a full week and just be active elsewhere.

So, just go do other things you enjoy. For me, in the summer it's surfing a little bit more than going to the gym. In the winter a lot of people go snowboarding and stuff like that. It should really be trying to get some cardio in, trying to get your body to move through space with some bodyweight exercises like lunges and pull ups. Other than that just do some fun stuff, get out of the gym.

Craig Ballantyne: Very good. Appreciate that. One other thing you wanted to mention was keeping records. Did you get a chance to talk on that?

John Romaniello: I didn't yet. We provide a lot of great programs for people, but we don't tell people what weight to lift, so it's really important that people get a training journal. In [Final Phase Fat Loss](#) I provide all sorts of training records.

Just kind of figure out what kind of weight you think you should be lifting and then write down how many reps you actually did with that weight or what weight you wound up using. If you don't have a record of how much weight you're lifting and how many reps you're doing you can't really progress.

You'll see your body change, but if you really are trying to take your fitness seriously then you should have a way to quantify your progress and it should be something other than the mirror and other than the scale. Using weights and make notes.

I write down how I feel at the beginning of every workout right before I start. A lot of times if I'm able to gauge my condition I'll be able to predict what kind of workout I'm going to have. If I'm feeling really good and really strong and I have a crappy workout, then I know that it's not because I wasn't motivated, it's because there's something physiologically going on. Maybe I need another recovery day, maybe I should have structured things differently, maybe I'm overreaching in terms of the weight.

If you don't really know how much you should be lifting based on how much you've lifted previously and how much success you've had with that then you have really no way to judge whether or not you had a successful workout.

Craig Ballantyne: Very cool.

John Romaniello: People really need to start keeping records, yes.

Craig Ballantyne: What do you think about focusing on trying to beat a record when you go into the gym, trying to improve on the past record?

John Romaniello: I don't know. It's very motivating, particularly for guys. Dudes are just into numbers and trying to get a PR on bench press or the dead lift. I don't think you should be

trying to hit a PR every week. You should be trying to lift more weight every workout than you have previously within reason.

The stronger you get, the better results you're going to get. The stronger you are, the faster you'll build muscle. The stronger you are, the faster you'll lose fat. There's just no downside to being strong.

The great thing about PRs and everything is they give you a sense of accomplishment. If you spend three months trying to bring up your dead lift and you're able to add 60 pounds to it, especially if you're going to enter competitions that's obviously very important.

Even if you're not, then you're probably going to achieve a lot of other things without even realizing it. If you're focusing on the dead lift your posture might be increased, because now you've got more hamstring and glute strength. You're probably going to lose fat, because you're pulling a crap load of weight.

On top of which you're probably going to see some muscular gains in your shoulders, your traps, your arms just from holding the weight on the bar. It's really cool and it's motivating. Even though you're focusing on that 60 pound gain you're going to notice all these other things as well, which is cool.

Craig Ballantyne: Very good stuff. Let's move into some more fat loss stuff here. I wanted to ask you about stubborn body fat, any gender differences there are between men and women when it comes to stubborn body fat. I know you talk about this in the Final Phase, obviously, but if you can recap what some of the best stuff is for losing stubborn fat.

John Romaniello: Sure. Stubborn fat is normally what you noticed, like when you've lost the first 30 pounds and then you have five more pounds to go or 10 more. It's really where you're going to store the last bit of your fat.

If you're down to seven percent body fat and maybe you've got, and I'll just use myself as an example and I'll make the math easy. If I'm 200 pounds and five percent body fat, then I've only got 10 pounds of fat on my body and legitimately four of it will be in my love handles and lower back.

So, if you think about that, that's 40 percent of my total subcutaneous fat in one area surrounding my waist. That just doesn't happen by accident. The reason for that is because I have some insulin resistance. You're going to notice that where you're storing your fat towards the end of your dieting is really going to be dictated by what your hormonal system looks like.

So, to answer the second part of your question, with women we're primarily going to see it in the hips, the thighs, and the buttocks, and a lot of that is estrogen related fat storage. With men primarily we're seeing it more often than not in the belly, which is a cortisol issue and in the love handles and lower back, which as I mentioned is an insulin issue.

If you have insulin issues the easiest thing to do is drop carbs. Joel Marion actually has a real good system, he calls it Priming Week, where you just cut out carbs almost completely for two weeks. If you go down to 20 or 30 grams a day then you just kind of restart insulin sensitivity.

Other things you could do for that include adding cinnamon into your diet, particularly with your carb meals. A lot of the new school bodybuilders do a lot of stuff with apple cider vinegar before carb meals and that really shows to work with insulin management and carb shuttling, which is really cool.

So, a shot of apple cider vinegar is something that I do as I'm getting to six percent and below. I do that before any meal with carbs, you can even do it before your post-workout shake.

After that it's all about trying to work with your hormonal system and your endocrine system rather than against it. One of the things that **Final Phase Fat Loss** is founded on is utilizing different workout styles that will elicit the release of certain hormones that offset other hormones.

So, if you have a problem with insulin then you want to try to increase IGF1 and one of the ways to do that is to use a lot of exercises that move your body through space a lot. So, stuff like lunges and step ups, which I call dynamic training, are going to help you release a lot more IGF1 and offset some of the insulin related fat storage.

Going back to women, one of the things that we notice is, again, the estrogen related fat. So, what you want to do there is try and do a lot of density based training and doing a lot of training in a short period of time, which is really the purpose of density training, is going to help you release a little more testosterone, which will help the estrogen related fat storage.

Now, I will qualify that by saying that there are conflicting studies on that one and obviously I kind of handpicked the ones that support my point. I don't feel bad about that, because I feel like that's what most researchers and authors do. I'll just say that even though I have conflicting research backing that particular claim, we have seen phenomenal results with it, so I'm willing to stand by the results and not so much worry about the research there.

Then for cortisol issues the main thing you can try to do is increase the amount of growth hormone circulating your body, which kind of lowers cortisol levels. To do that we just produce a lot of lactic acid. When you do that there's a concurrent increase in the amount of growth hormone your body produces and releases, which will lower the cortisol levels. That's another one of the styles in **Final Phase Fat Loss**.

Again, the stubborn fat is not necessarily that you're doing something wrong, it's that you're just missing one thing that you could be doing more right or more correctly. In that particular case, there's all sorts of dietary tricks and tactics you could use, but as long as you're doing that you may as well also structure your training to be a little bit more efficacious with regard to that particular issue.

Craig Ballantyne: Okay, great. When someone who has been really overweight and they've lost a lot of weight and they're left with all that extra skin, have you ever come up with a solution to overcome that?

John Romaniello: Unfortunately not. I've had some clients who during the course of training with me, I remember one guy in particular who is maybe my height, so he's 5'8" and he was up at 260. I think at his lowest point we had him to 158 before he started packing on mass, so that's 92 pounds. There's just going to be a lot of loose skin.

Unfortunately, there's not much we can do and most of the time they're really left with the option of surgery. You can try and mitigate it by filling out some of it with muscle, but you're not going to gain 90 pounds of muscle in most cases. So, unfortunately there's not a lot we can do. Surgery is really the only option.

One of the cool things I actually found out about recently is if you are someone who has lost a lot of fat and you're thinking about getting the skin removal surgery, one of the interesting

things that they do now is you can actually donate your skin and they use it for grafts on burn victims, which I thought was a really cool thing.

Craig Ballantyne: That is really interesting. I suppose you probably also see different responses between individuals. Have you ever been able to categorize and say, "This person probably will have more loose skin than this person," anything that comes to mind?

John Romaniello: It's really the longer a person has been overweight then the more likely they are to have a lot of loose skin. But, other than that there wouldn't really be too many telling characteristics.

I've had people who have only recently gained the Freshman 40 and then will work together and we'll drop maybe 30 of it in a given summer over the course of the time. Obviously, I'm mostly thinking of students here, but they have no loose skin issues.

Really the length of time you've been fat, or overweight I should say, and your total age. The older you get the less elasticity in the skin you have. A lot of times those things are obviously not mutually exclusive.

So, generally speaking, if you are 60 years old and you've been overweight for 30 years, then you are just going to have lose skin. Obviously, the heavier you are, the bigger you are in terms of the total fat you have, the more likely you are to have that.

Craig Ballantyne: What kind of information do you have with moms who have been, obviously pregnant? Is that the same sort of thing, is nine months going to be so long that it's going to cause problems or have you found that some moms bounce back better?

John Romaniello: Most of the time you're going to get stretch marks. If you're a very thin woman and you have a very big pregnancy you are going to get stretch marks, but you shouldn't have too much in the way of loose skin. Then again, look at all the issues we're touching on there.

Most women, the average age for women to have babies has gone up in New York, so I think the average age now is 29, whereas it used to be around 26, but 29 is still very young. Those women are bouncing back pretty quickly.

What we do see a lot though, and one of the things that I've run into is people who were overweight and then got pregnant and then wanted to get "back in shape" even though they were never really in shape to begin with. Now, let's say I start training them and they're in way better shape than they were before they were pregnant, those people are going to be a little bit more likely to have the loose skin issues.

Usually nine months, if you are not carrying around a tremendous amounts of fat prior to your pregnancy you're not really going to see that much in the way of loose skin. You're probably going to see more in the way of stretch marks. There are things they can do to mitigate that.

There are a lot of creams out there, the vitamin E creams. The more moist your skin is the more elastic it can be without getting the stretch marks, so people have been seeing some pretty decent results with that. I'd have a hard time qualifying as to whether it was the cream or whether that person just dealt with skin elasticity a little bit better.

Craig Ballantyne: Okay. That was cool. Next question while we're sticking on the gender thing. Have you noticed that certain types of exercises work better for men or women when it comes to losing fat, or maybe even certain types of training? Like you mentioned the density training works really well for the women for stubborn fat loss.

Anything else that you can say? Everyone loves to think that men and women are so different, so let's amuse them with an answer.

John Romaniello: I would say that there's a very roundabout way to answer your questions with a yes, but mostly what you're going to see is that those types of training are more effective for people who have those hormone related fat storage issues.

The majority of the people with the fat storage issues regarding estrogen happen to be women, so that type of training might prove to be more effective for women based on that, but I don't think that it's more effective for women based on anything other than that's where they store fat.

Men and women for the most part can train pretty similarly. Actually, we do have guys making incredible progress using just density training for fat loss in my facility, so there's not a tremendous difference.

Women seem to have a higher threshold for lactic acid, so in the initial stages they do a little bit better. Then guys kind of catch up and they build a tolerance fairly quickly. Unfortunately, there's no right answer. There's no boys are better than girls or anything like that.

People as individuals will react to certain things a little bit better than others and vice versa. A lot of it just happens to be trying to figure out what works for your client in that moment for their goal.

Craig Ballantyne: Okay. Very good. Now, another question you wanted to cover here was the biggest mistakes that advanced trainees are making.

John Romaniello: Yes. You're going to have two types of people. You're going to have guys who are really habitual and they kind of make really good progress with one program. They kind of fall in love with it and it is always their mainstay and they don't vary things enough.

So, one of the biggest mistakes I see people make is that they're still using whatever crazy bodybuilding routine that they've been using since they were 20 and they wonder why they're not making progress. It's really interesting, and actually I happen to know a guy like this who is one of my mentors when I first started getting involved in fitness.

Back in the 1970's he made a tremendous amount of progress on high intensity training. To this day whenever he doesn't have routine he just falls back on that, the one set to failure protocol. I don't think there's anything wrong with that protocol in general, but it's probably better that he structures his training going forward rather than just not having anything in place for after he ends whatever new routine he's on that he has something a little bit more structured prior to getting there.

That way when he's ready to go he doesn't need to just need to fall immediately back on there. So, that's one thing. I think that people rather than just staying on one program their whole life need to just have things in place to address whatever concerns that they have.

The other type of person is the program hopper. This is the person who is on my mailing list, he's on your mailing list, he's on Vince's. He gets great information from all of us. One week Vince tells him, "This is a great new program for building muscle, you should check it out." He's like, "This is awesome. I'm going to make some progress here."

Then he doesn't really see much, because he's only been on it for two weeks and then he jumps over to a fat loss program by you or me, and then he jumps onto something else by Jay Ferruggia . These program hoppers are on something for two weeks at most.

I get a couple people emailing me, "Final Phase Fat Loss didn't work for me. I've been on it for awhile now." I was like, "Dude, it's been out for two weeks. How much time did you really give it?" You see a lot of people really just not doing the right things in terms of giving something a full chance.

I recommend people stay on a program for six to eight weeks at the minimum. If it's a muscle gaining program you should be on it for 12 weeks. You have the guys who stay on programs for too long and then the guys who don't stay on programs long enough to really give it a shot. Both of these guys aren't really making optimal progress. You see that even with advanced guys.

The other thing is guys who are kind of designing their own programs and just going into the gym. They have chest day or back day, or whatever else. Way, way, way too much pressing and not enough pulling. There's nothing better than creating an issue and creating situation for where you're really just going to screw your shoulders up for getting things internally rotated because you've got these rounded shoulders from doing 8,000 sets of bench press a week and doing five sets of pull ups and rows.

Generally speaking, if I have a brand new person fresh out of the box who has never done any training before I'll probably do maybe eight sets of pressing for every 10 sets of pulling. So, it's a four to five ratio, it's really close.

For most guys who have been training a couple of years and who I know for a fact have been screwing things up for awhile I'll have two sets of pulling for every one set of pressing. So, for every time you do a set of bench press you're doing two sets of rows to try and correct years and years of mirror muscle training, as I would call it.

We see that a lot, especially in the advanced trainees. These guys who have been training for awhile, the longer they've been training the more likely they are to have that.

Craig Ballantyne: Now, we just want to clarify that rowing is different than doing pull downs, right?

John Romaniello: Yes. You're not really going to see as much in the way of scapular attraction in anything where you're doing a vertical pulling exercise just because the position of the humerus relative to the torso doesn't allow for it.

Rowing exercises are, if I had to choose one over the other from a health perspective I would definitely need to row more. I've never seen anyone screw themselves up by doing too many pull ups, but I would just say that if you're going to choose one over the other horizontal pulling is going to be much better from a shoulder health perspective than vertical pulling.

Craig Ballantyne: All right, very good. Let's move into some nutrition stuff here. We have a question from Tyler Cabers on Facebook. What are some of the best foods to eat prior to heading to the gym for a workout? How many carbs should someone consume and how long beforehand?

John Romaniello: Okay. Generally I recommend that right before the gym or in the half hour leading up to that people just start drinking their workout shake. Just start taking a couple sips of it so you've got some fast digesting carbs in there, you're refilling your glycogen stores, and you've got some fast digesting protein already breaking down in your system.

That way by the time you get to the gym and start creating some micro-trauma you're not really going to be draining your resources too much, you're kind of working with what's there. That works really well for muscle building stuff.

Then I normally recommend that you have two servings of your workout shake and you start drinking one before your workout, finish it during your workout, and then at the end of it you have the other serving. That's really what I do.

Now, that's something that's worked really well for me and my clients. It works particularly well for people who wake up first thing in the morning and start training. Just get up and start drinking that shake. A lot of people can't handle food early in the morning, their stomachs are kind of iffy, so eating solid food and then going to the gym is an issue.

Then there are also people like me. If I actually have solid food within three hours of my workout I'm more likely than I already am to throw up. My stomach is just really sensitive to intense exercise.

For the people that don't have that issue, then I would say about two hours before your workout have a nice decent mid-protein mid-carb meal. In that particular instance I would say maybe in the area of 20 grams of protein and 20 grams of carbohydrates if you're a 200 pound guy, and a little less if you're lighter, a little more if you're heavier.

All of this is completely dependent on your goal. That's really important. Everything I'm recommending now I should have mentioned earlier is really if your main goal is to try to put on some muscle. If you're looking to lose fat everything changes.

So, if you're looking to lose fat I recommend an hour before the gym have a whey only shake, just whey protein so you're less likely to incur any catabolic activity there. Then immediately after have whatever meal is in line with your fat loss diet.

I'm not a big fan of carbing up right before you hit the gym. I actually find that it impedes performance quite a bit. Having a tremendous amount of protein and carbohydrates before the gym is really not likely to help.

Craig Ballantyne: Okay. Why don't you tell us about your post-workout nutrition, and again maybe go over what you were talking about before?

John Romaniello: Sure. This is one of the things that's really happening in the industry now and I'm really kind of excited to be a part of it. In the beginning we had post-workout nutrition and you'd finish a workout and people would say, "Drink this shake." That was that.

Then people kind of started talking about pre-workout nutrition, which was like, "You should have this beforehand and something different afterwards." Then people started having peri-workout nutrition, which is stuff that you drink or eat during a workout. Now we have those three things, pre, peri, and post, because apparently we love P's we're putting them all under peri-workout nutrition and that's all of the nutrition immediately surrounding your workouts.

So, as I described I would go one serving of your workout beverage just prior and during the early part of your training and then one afterwards. Then really important if you're in a muscle gain phase, I recommend that about 45 minutes after finishing your post-workout shake you have a high carb meal with about one gram of carbohydrate per pound of lean body mass.

So, in my case that's 180 grams of carbs. Then I'll have about half as much protein, so just 90 grams of protein, which for me is mostly coming from about two scoops of whey protein and then a couple of chicken breasts. It should be mentioned that that's pretty much it for my carbs for the day.

I'll have something light at breakfast, then I'll have all of my workout nutrition, then I'll have my post-workout meal, and then that's it, no more carbs for the day for me really. So, over the course of that day I might be getting 400 grams of carbs, but it's all coming immediately surrounding my workout.

By doing that, by structuring my nutrient timing that way I'm a lot more likely to minimize my fat gain even though I'm eating in a caloric surplus while I'm gaining mass. That might seem a little high in protein in one sitting for most people. I haven't noticed an issue.

The worst that you're going to get from eating that much protein all at once is a little bit extra gluconeogenesis, which is when protein breaks down and converts into carbohydrate or glucose anyway, which is not really an issue. We don't have to worry about it in this instance, because we're not in a fat loss phase.

After that go back to your regularly scheduled eating program. That post-workout window is kind of tricky. Some people say it's very long, some people say it's very short. I'm a results guy, I'm not really that focused on trying to define the absolutes on how long you have to eat. Just about 45 minutes out you should have a big meal and that should usually be one of your biggest meals of the day.

Your two biggest meals of the day should be the meal immediately post-workout and also breakfast. That way you're likely to gain more muscle and lose more fat, or minimize fat gain in this instance.

Craig Ballantyne: Okay. Next question is from Tim Foye. Let's say he's on a 2,000 calorie per day diet, does it really matter how many meals that's broken up into?

John Romaniello: Yes. If you're having all 2,000 in one meal that's not good. You're going to run into some issues there. Not only digestively, but also in terms of your progress.

Once you get past four meals, I'm going to say it probably doesn't really make that much of a difference. I think people like the old standby of six meals because that's just what we were taught when we were little baby bodybuilders. That's kind of what Bill Phillips in *Bodybuilding for Life* and it's kind of what everyone goes with.

I would say four meals is probably the minimum and if you're one of those guys who is trying to eat maybe every 90 minutes then you might be going just a tiny bit overboard. I would say four to six meals is fine, but I would say that anything less than that you're most likely going to impede the amount of nutrient that you can breakdown and absorb in a given time frame.

If you're eating 2,000 calories and it's divided into three meals, let's say, then if my mental math is correct it's 666.6 (repeating) calories per meal, which is a lot to eat. If you're on a 2,000 calorie diet, I assume for a guy that's either a fat loss or a maintenance diet, you're not really going to lose that much fat shoving your face with 600 calories right before or after you exercise, that's just a little bit high.

Keeping your metabolic rate elevated by eating more frequently is probably a little bit better. So, if you're having four meals and one of them is your post-workout nutrition, that's a lot more manageable, I would say. Once you get past that it probably doesn't change that much.

Actually, there's also some new evidence emerging, some new studies. I'll see if I can find them on PumpNet. They're showing that less frequent dosages of amino acids are actually a little better for muscle sparing. So, it might be the case that doing four meals is actually ideal for gaining muscle and that doing something a little bit more frequent, like six meals or so, might be better for fat loss from a metabolic perspective.

Craig Ballantyne: All right. Going to switch it up here. Jose Carillo wants to know if carb cycling benefits fat loss?

John Romaniello: Yes, of course. Carb cycling has been around forever and people are getting great results from it. The traditional carb cycling approach is, I think it's two days of low carb, one day of moderate carb, one day of high carb.

What it does is keeps your body from adapting to a certain of carbohydrate intake, particularly that high carb day elevates leptin levels. So, there's a lot of benefits to it.

Jason Hunter has a carb rotation diet, which is very similar. Joel Marion takes it a step further with the Cheat Your Way Thin diet, which is very low carb during the week and then that high fat, high carb, high calorie day with the cheat day.

So, yes, it's very beneficial. It's just a lot of work. You've got to plan it out in advance and then if you're like me you're going to figure out how many carbs you're eating Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday before you go into the cycle again. Then my high carb day is probably going to be my leg workout. If I'm doing what I'm doing right now and training legs three or four times a week, then how do I work that?

Carb cycling works, but it requires you to put a lot more thought into your diet and your nutrition plan and to have things set up ahead of time. Telling someone that they need to eat low carbs and try to have less than 100 grams of carbs per day, and break that down that's like four pieces of bread, or whatever it is. Whatever examples you give them most people can wrap their head around that and kind of be like, "All right. I can do this."

When you tell people, "Today you can have 200 grams, tomorrow 150 grams, the day after that 100 grams, and then 200 grams, then 300." You really have to be on top of that. It's definitely going to work for the majority of people, but those people have to be willing to dedicate a little bit more time into planning. I find that's where a lot of people kind of screw things up.

It's definitely an effective method, you just have to actually work the method.

Craig Ballantyne: Very good, thank you. Right. That actually leads into the next question around the cheat meal.

Susie Harris wants to know if it's better to eat something high in sugar or something high in salt. She worries which one is going to stick longer to your body or be harder to work off. I'm thinking she's got kind of the wrong perspective of it.

John Romaniello: Yes. Well, if it's a true cheat meal.

Craig Ballantyne: You're not going to get something that's one or the other really, are you?

John Romaniello: Right. Okay. If you're looking at something that's salty it's almost impossible to get something salty that isn't also going to be carbs or sugary. If you're going to eat nachos

and stuff like that it's very salty. If you're eating wings, that's salty and it's also got a lot of sugar from everything.

I would say you could certainly get something that's sugary without being salty if you're getting cake or ice cream. But, if you're doing a true cheat meal the idea is to one, treat yourself and have something you really want, and two, to up regular your leptin levels by giving your body a huge dose of something it hasn't had and kicking yourself out of starvation mode.

So, if you're talking about a screw up meal, which is like crap, "I'm craving this and I don't care what it does to my diet, I'm going to eat it no matter what." In which case what's better to have? I guess something that's just mostly sugary.

At that point it basically sounds like you're either asking the wrong question or you're asking the right question the wrong way. You're either asking, "If I'm going to completely screw up my diet what is less likely to do damage?" Then I would say sugar, but try to have some protein there.

If you're asking what is the better cheat meal to have to facilitate my fat loss efforts via up regulation of leptin and other hormones, in which case it absolutely does not matter.

Craig Ballantyne: Very good. That's a great way of putting it. We appreciate the question, Susie. It really helps people clarify and understand the whole system better. That was a good question and a great answer. I appreciate that.

Now, do you want to talk briefly about all things in moderation?

John Romaniello: Yes. That's kind of the way that I do things. One of the things I notice and I get a lot of questions about this. I'm kind of a slightly newer arrival in online fitness even though I've been writing for magazines since I was about 20, getting involved with my website and everything has been recent. So, I kind of wound up picking up a lot of your readers and a lot of Joel's readers, and a lot of Geary's readers.

Everyone has their different opinions. Geary in particular has this kind of quest to get people to stop eating artificial sweeteners. I don't want to say I disagree with him, I just want to say that I don't. Blanket questions like, "I really like this protein powder, but it has aspartame in it. Is it okay to use? I can't afford anything else."

If that's your only choice why the hell are you asking that question? It's fine. It's not going to kill you. I think we can all agree that artificial sweeteners are not good for you, but chances are they're absolutely not the worst thing in the world for you.

It's just one of those things that just pisses me off. Stop over thinking it. If you're going to have your protein shake once every other day, then the amount in there is roughly equivalent per serving to a packet of Sweet 'N Low. Honestly, are you really going to waste your time stressing about that?

What's going to derail your efforts more? Not having the protein shake at all and not giving yourself a more convenient way to meet your protein requirements and your nutrition plan? Or having exposure to 0.005 grams of aspartame.

So, really all things in moderation is really serious. If you can avoid it, that's fine. Don't drink diet soda if you're having six cans a day. Don't drink soda at all if you can't not have six cans a day. But, if you're going to avoid eating food at a restaurant because it might have something that some fitness guru told you might not be good for you based on a couple of studies that he read, which were kind of conducted correctly, then you're really just shooting yourself in the foot and you're not going to enjoy your life at all.

I put up a blog post, you weren't at Ryan Lee's event, but I was there with Joel and Vince. We went out and we had a couple of drinks and they kind of got me drunk. But, I was going to worry about that. I honestly don't drink alcohol more than once every couple of months, but Joel as you know is a big connoisseur of beer and on his cheat days he likes to have a couple of beers. He's not worried about that.

It's one of those things that if you're doing it semi-recreationally and you're not totally dedicated to it it's not going to derail your efforts to the degree that you really need to be questioning what one fitness guy says versus what another fitness guy says. It's just not that important.

I think we can all agree that we shouldn't be eating processed carbs, but that doesn't mean that on your cheat day you should avoid Fig Newtons if you love Fig Newtons. Just eat the damn thing. You know what I mean? It's just like one of those things. People get too wrapped

up in what we're saying and all they can see is the inconsistencies between Geary says versus what you say, or what I say versus what Joel or Vinnie says.

The bigger picture if you look we all agree on 90 percent of things, but they focus on the 10 percent. They get all caught up and they get into this paralysis by analysis and they don't know what to do and they wind up not making progress.

Really, don't worry about it. Everything in moderation. If you like having a cup of coffee every day with breakfast, please do so. Enjoy it. Unless you're trying to diet down to two percent body fat for a bodybuilding show having a cup of coffee is not going to kill you and it's not going to screw up your fitness efforts that much.

Just one of those things that people just need to get a little bit more okay with really just accepting the fact that they don't need to be perfect in every sense. That's the main thing that I try to stress. Alcohol is very okay in moderation, artificial sweeteners are not going to kill you in moderation, stuff like that. That's a big deal.

Craig Ballantyne: That's good. That actually leads into the last main question I want to ask you. What is the mindset that your most successful clients have and what are the common characteristics of these success stories? What are the most important factors for people to overcome obstacles and blow past what they think once wasn't possible?

John Romaniello: The biggest thing I see is they all get pissed off at where they are. The anger, like that moment where they realize that they absolutely have no right to be in the shape that they are either because they're a young guy, like where I was and it was a point in my life where I wanted to be going out and hooking up with girls and having fun and doing what all the other guys that I wanted to be like were doing, which is just like every time it's hot out you take your shirt off. I wanted that and I was so angry at myself for not getting there.

Then I have parents that are angry, because now their doctor is telling they need to lose 30 pounds or they're not going to be around for their kids and they get pissed off at themselves. Ike Shooter actually wrote a great article about this that he calls Phoenix Theory. Just like a phoenix kind of is consumed by its own fire and reborn from its ashes, that's the thing that I see most with my clients.

They get just this blinding anger and they're so pissed off at themselves for letting it get this far that the anger kind of consumes them and they accept that it's going to be painful for eight weeks. Just willingly submitting and embracing the discomfort of a changing lifestyle for eight weeks, once you get past that eight week point it's fine and everything is cruising.

It's just hitting bottom, I guess. It's like what alcoholics call a moment of clarity. One moment that you realize that things just shouldn't have gotten this bad and it's either fix them now or it's probably going to kill you, or it's probably going to ruin whatever happiness you have in your life.

You only get one body and you literally have to walk around with it all day long, so you may as well love it. My clients all come to me and they're like, "Crap. I cannot believe I let things get this far." I have athletes who come to me and the guys who are most successful are the guys who had a really crappy off season.

They're completely out of shape and then that first training session they get embarrassed because everyone else is out performing them and then three weeks later they're leading the pack, because they're pissed off that they let it get that far.

The moms who are just like, "Now I'm out of shape. I can't keep up with my kids. I feel weird when I go to the PTA meetings, because I'm heaviest woman there." They get annoyed with themselves. They get really pissed off. They have this moment where everything just gets set on fire and they literally are going to change it. In that moment they come to that realization.

All of my most successful clients realize that and from that moment on their life is changed forever.

Craig Ballantyne: Very good. I really like that. Someone else asked where are your fat kid photos?

John Romaniello: I've got a few of them. I have one that I could probably put up on my blog. It might have been right before I really got involved in fitness. I might have been about 17 or 18 years old and I was down in Florida for something. While I was there my family and I went to Disney World.

I wrestled and played football in high school, so I was always a muscular kid, even though I was a fat kid I had a lot of muscle. So, I'm down in Disney World with my sleeves rolled up because I had these big arms not realizing that I was a fat ass. I take a picture with Minnie Mouse and I'm looking at this picture now and I'm like, "Jesus Christ, I was so out of shape and I didn't even realize it."

You can kind of see from my stance and everything that in that moment I was kind of okay with it. Every time I look at that picture I'm like, "I'll never get there again. I'll never be the fat guy with big arms or the chubby guy with big arms or anyone who is less than lean." I was never going to be confident in one part of my body and hate every other part of my body. It was just never going to be like that for me ever again.

So, I do have a few of them. I'll see what I can throw up on my blog. There's a couple that are pretty embarrassing. I'll see what I can do.

Craig Ballantyne: I think those sound very intriguing.

John Romaniello: Oh, they're great.

Craig Ballantyne: Then last question from Chad. He wants to know where you got your swagger from.

John Romaniello: Well, I'm from New York, we all swagger here.

Craig Ballantyne: But, your specific John Romaniello swagger?

John Romaniello: That is not how you say that at all.

Craig Ballantyne: That's how I remember how to spell it though.

John Romaniello: You know what? I'm sure I could come up with a lot of different answers to that, but most of them are going to be PG-13 at the absolute best and not necessarily appropriate. I don't know what the Turbulence Training crew is like, but the guys at Roman Fitness...

Craig Ballantyne: They tend not to want to go beyond family.

John Romaniello: PG.

Craig Ballantyne: So, that will be something that you'll have to answer in person next time Vince Del Monte is getting you drunk at a fitness seminar.

John Romaniello: Okay. By the way, I just want to tell a quick story about Vince Del Monte. This is how you know that John Romaniello is the most stylish guy in fitness.

I go to the Ryan Lee seminar and I bring all my clothes and all my SWAG with me. One of the styles, and I certainly didn't start this particular trend, but it's just one of the ways that I dress, I wear combat boots and I tuck my jeans in. It's just something that we do in New York.

Vince had never seen this before, and he was so blown away about the idea of this style that I had brought two pairs of boots with me, one black and one brown. Vince says, "I can't believe people wear that like that. That's kind of weird." I'm like, "I don't know. It's just how I do it. I've been doing it for years."

So, we're in the elevator going down to the event and this chick looks at me and says, "Damn. Your boots are nice. I love when guys dress like that." Vince goes back upstairs, puts on the black boots, and then is walking around like that for three days acting like he came up with this style.

Craig Ballantyne: That is really strange.

John Romaniello: He's a weird guy. So, at the end of it I was so proud of him for taking this step to enhance his stylistic approach to life that I gifted him with these boots. He's now got my black combat boots and he's wearing them around Canada starting trends.

Craig Ballantyne: We'll see about that. All right, my friend. Wonderful information, we appreciate it. Everyone from Turbulence Training thanks you, John Romaniello.

What's your blog again so people can check you out and get all the non-PG stuff?

John Romaniello: The non-PG stuff and all the other stuff can be found at www.RomanFitnessSystems.com.

Craig Ballantyne: All right. We'll get together again sometime soon, probably before Joel's wedding in August. Again, we thank you. John, anything else you want to add before we sound off for this evening?

John Romaniello: No. I just want to say thank you to you, as always, Craig. I appreciate the opportunity to be here and share some information with your readers and listeners. Thank you, everyone, for tuning in and checking it out. I hope I didn't offend anyone.

Craig Ballantyne: Thanks, John. We will talk to you soon. Everyone, have a good night. I'm out of here.