

Melissa Davis, PhD

Principles of Nutrition & Training Periodization for Women & Weight-Class Athletes



Episode 126



Danny Lennon:

Hello and welcome to Sigma Nutrition Radio, the podcast that brings you evidence-based discussions with the world's leading researchers in the fields related to nutrition and performance. I am your host, Danny Lennon, and you are listening to Episode 126, and today Melissa Davis is going to be on the show. Currently, Melissa is a research scientist at University of California at Irvine in the field of neurobiology and behavior with a focus on development and means of inducing critical period plasticity in adults, and she's previously completed her doctoral studies at UCI in neuroscience. She's also a consultant for Renaissance Periodization and was one of the authors of the RP-produced book, Renaissance Woman: Fat Loss, Muscle Growth and Performance Through Scientific Eating. As well as that, as an athlete, she is a decorated and elite-level grappler in her own right, having won multiple championships in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. She is an IBJJF No Gi World Champion as well as a national champion and has won the Absolute at the US BJJ Federation competition as well.

So, lots to get into in today's episode. We're going to try and look at a number of issues related to women who are training and dieting, different considerations. We'll also get into some more general concepts that apply to everyone in terms of periodizing your nutrition, and then some specifics that relate to those of you competing in weight-class-based sports, whether that be powerlifting, weightlifting, jiu-jitsu, MMA, boxing, etc., etc. So,

plenty to get through, so we won't take any more time and let's dive into this week's episode with Melissa Davis.

Melissa, welcome to the show. Thank you so much for coming on.

Melissa Davis: Hello! Nice to be here.

Danny Lennon: Can you maybe give people a rundown of your background and what you've done in academia, some of the work you've done? I know particularly you've done some work with neurobiology and behavior, and then how that's kind of translated into the information you've been putting out recently for people who are training and trying to optimize their nutrition.

Melissa Davis: Okay, sure. So I'm not sure if my PhD background necessarily translates directly. I have a PhD in neuroscience and I've studied basically brain plasticity and development throughout my graduate and post-graduate work. I think just an overarching interest in science and making decisions in my life based on scientific data and things like that have sort of driven me into reading about sport science and nutrition and things like that over the last seven years and getting involved as a consultant with Renaissance Periodization. I've been an athlete. I'm a competitive jiu-jitsu fighter, so it's sort of really relevant stuff for me. So I've delved in pretty deeply with my access to PubMed and such.

Danny Lennon: Yeah, for sure, and that's definitely something I want to touch back on later when we talk about weight-class sports, specifically, as it's a personal interest of mine as well. Maybe to start this conversation first we'll look at the issue of women are training with particularly a goal on body composition and this will be particularly relevant to a lot of the coaches listening as well who a large majority of the people that are coming to them are essentially looking for some sort of body composition change.

Melissa Davis: Right.

Danny Lennon: And as with anyone with any aesthetics-based goal, over a long period of time they're essentially just trying to decrease body fat and increase lean body mass. In the long term, how do you think they should be mapped out? Like do you prefer to see people cycle between separate phases, each focusing on a different variable, or can women successfully address both aspects simultaneously?

Melissa Davis: I think in the very, very early stages of training when they first started weightlifting, to some degree you can lose some body fat and gain some lean muscle at the same time, but even best-case scenario it's kind of inefficient, so I think definitely cycling between cutting and massing, adding lean body mass, is really important, and trying to line that up with your training so that you're at, you know, you finish your cut, you have a couple of months—whatever kind of weight-class sport you're involved in—you have a couple of months at your new body weight to train comfortably and eat eucalorically and just be ready to compete is really important. We see a lot of people in powerlifting and other weight-class sports—jiu-jitsu—just cutting weight right up to the competition and it kind of puts you in a really bad position to compete at your best when you're hungry and thirsty at the weigh-in and before you compete.

Danny Lennon: Like you mentioned, it's something that's seen so often of almost being in a dieting position at the exact time to their training cycle that they wouldn't want to be. Maybe if we look at those kind of three distinct stages you just mentioned—so we have obviously a dieting period, then you mentioned a period of more at a maintenance or eucaloric level, and then we can talk about maybe muscle mass later on—so if we take that fat loss phase first, women are obviously aiming to preserve their muscle mass as body fat levels decrease. Now, of course, a calorie deficit over this period is required and I think most people are clear on that, but what other specifics should they be addressing during this dieting period in order to try and have the most body weight loss that they're getting proportionally coming from fat loss?

Melissa Davis: Yeah, so for the nutrition end, you just want to make sure that you're not taking weight off too fast. We usually say shoot for around 1% of your body weight per week lost as your sort of maximum and that's actually a pretty fast pace, so I usually personally like to shoot more for a 0.75% just to feel safer about my muscle, and then eating enough protein. The range for maintenance is generally thought to be around 0.8—sorry, I'm doing this in pounds—0.8 to 1 gram per pound of body weight.

Danny Lennon: Do you feel that scales with someone's current body fat level, so people who have higher percentage of body fat right now, can they get away with pushing a bit more? And with those people, do you tend to train...slow that rate of weight loss down over time?

Melissa Davis: Yeah. So oftentimes if you're working with a high enough body fat, then the priority is to get the fat off first, depending on how high their body fat

percentage is. Generally, if someone's a very competitive athlete, they're probably not going to be in that super-high range and they'll want to stay more in that safe zone for weight loss, but definitely if you have someone who's over 30% body fat you can probably speed it up a little safely. You will probably sustain some muscle loss but for health reasons it's probably better just to get the fat off and then worry about that little bit of lost muscle later.

Danny Lennon: One of the things that I want to mention why it's important that people have some idea of either expected or target kind of rates per week and knowing that it'll probably slow down over time the leaner they get or it should do so they can preserve that muscle is because a lot of that dials into the person's mindset and the psychology around what's happening there. So during these fat loss phases, like it's unquestionable that the mindset of the individual is during this time going to have a massively determining role on their end result due to behaviors, etc. So what factors related to the psychology of dieting do you feel are most important for folks to understand?

Melissa Davis: Yeah. So I think one of the things that I try to emphasize the most that I think a lot of people have a lot of basic knowledge about nutrition and things like that, but something a lot of people fail to recognize when they're on a diet is that it's a temporary state. So you get people in this mindset, they're on a diet and they're looking for balance. So they're having that glass of wine or that extra piece of cake while they're on the diet because they want to balance life, and what I try to drive home with a lot of clients is that this is...it should be a very temporary thing. It should be a set amount of time with a set weight goal, probably no more than three months, and after that you can pursue balance when you're sort of maintaining weight, but during the diet it's a temporary deprivation. By definition, it's an imbalance, basically. So it's kind of a "suck it up" but for a defined period of time, and then you can get back to incorporating things you enjoy.

Danny Lennon: Yeah, and I think that's really important because especially with, I see a lot of people maybe becoming aware of flexible dieting principles where they would have read something about "if it fits your macros", and they're now for the first time realizing that, well, even when they're dieting they can perhaps include foods that they would have typically thought are bad, but on the flipside then they're not realizing that it's still a diet and it's still going to require a lot of discipline and you can't really get away with a whole pile of that type of food, and it's still going to be times where you're

going to be hungry because you're essentially forcing your body to be under-eating. One important thing you mentioned there, Melissa, was around the timeframe for this diet and you said you didn't like people pushing it beyond a three-month block of time. So let's assume a woman has been dieting and body fat's been coming successfully, and you mentioned three months is that kind of maybe upper limit before they should transition out of the calorie deficit. So if that person still feels they have more body fat to lose, do you still employ that three-month dieting block and then transition them out of that deficit for a while almost as a diet break before going back?

Melissa Davis:

Yeah, definitely. So what you'll notice if you set yourself up on a three-month diet and you set a specific amount of calories and macros and things like that, depending on the person—it differs per person—but after a certain amount of time, generally you're going to stop losing weight and you're going to have to cut the macros and cut the calories down more, and that'll happen continuously across the three months in order to keep your weight moving. So, for one thing, you're becoming smaller so you're burning less calories and your body's trying to compensate because it doesn't want to lose its fat, so you're getting hormonal changes and decreases in motivation and metabolic changes so that you're having to keep lowering calories over those three months. So if you were to try to continue indefinitely, what you end up doing is usually rebounding because people just can't handle the suffering when it gets to that little amount of food. Whereas if you stop after three months and you sort of slowly add calories back in, you'll usually see that people stay within a couple of pounds of their ending weight and you can build up the calories, and then after a couple of months of that you can start them dieting again and the restriction won't be as horrible to lose the next set of kilograms or pounds.

Danny Lennon:

Yeah, and I think it also ties into the psychological aspect if people have this kind of a set time block that they can focus on, it's more likely they can devote a really good focus for that time period as opposed to this perpetual dieting cycle where they're just constantly doing it until they feel that they're lean enough, because usually no one ever gets to a point where they say, "Oh yeah, I'm lean enough now," right? There's always something more they want. If we talk about now that they've got to this point where they do this three-month block and they're going to transition to more of a maintenance period, and you mentioned around how that will slowly increase their calories, what sort of changes are we seeing in...like

what does that practically look like for someone of getting from the place where they're coming to this end of this diet, getting back up to that maintenance level? What does that process look for someone?

Melissa Davis: So what I like to do is usually recommend they have one nice cheat meal at the end of their diet, kind of celebratory—they worked hard, they deserve it—and then what they're going to do is go back to basically what the end of their diet was plus about 250 to 500 more calories added back in, and then you'll sort of sit at that for several weeks and watch the weight usually stays pretty stable, and then you can continue to add calories like that until you're back to somewhere close to what your base was starting the first diet.

Danny Lennon: Sure, and then from that point presumably it's just a matter of deciding whether they're going back into another fat loss phase or if they're transitioning to a muscle gain phase. Is there any real difference then in what that maintenance period looks like?

Melissa Davis: If the plan is muscle gain, they can actually jump straight into that from a cut. There's no real reason not to. In fact, that's kind of nice because they're motivated to eat a lot of times. Especially for females, getting them motivated to eat enough to gain weight can be difficult, so if they're coming off of a tough cut then they're going to be hungry and ready to eat. So it can be a pretty efficient way to start a muscle-gaining phase.

Danny Lennon: Oftentimes it is put across that you shouldn't immediately jump from a deficit to a surplus and I can see kind of some reasons why people may say that, but you also have some of these other benefits. Like you say, obviously people can take in more food. Maybe if they've dieted really hard there could be a small amount of muscle mass loss as well, which will be easier to get back on I suppose during that next phase. If we then switch our attention for the moment to that prioritizing muscle gain during this next block, what principles do women need to understand in order to plan a successful muscle gain phase in terms of either the target rates of change they should look at and then the importance of the actual training stimulus they're employing?

Melissa Davis: As far as training stimulus—I'll start with that just because it ties together with the cut and the muscle gain phase—for both cutting and for massing or muscle gain phase, you want to have really high-volume lifting training, the reason being is that that's going back the kind of stimulus that will most easily add muscle back on. So when you're on a cut, you want

something that's going to be putting little bits of muscle back on as fast as you're taking them off at your deficit to help you maintain, and when you're massing, obviously, if you're not giving your muscles good stimulus to grow then you're extra calories will go towards fat. So you want—I talk to a lot of my CrossFit clients about this because a lot of their training tends to be lower volume and a lot of cardio, neither of which are good for muscle gain—so you want at least four days a week lifting, you want the volume to be two to six sets with a deload cycle then and eight to 10 reps per set, nice heavy weight around 80% of your one-rep max, and just keep that going through the whole muscle-massing phase and that'll be the most...you'll get the best muscle-to-fat ratio gained.

Danny Lennon: And in terms of how quickly they should expect that, again, do those target rates...do you have any number that you get people to aim for and do they change based on, say, the initial phase of a new training block versus the longer they go through that gaining phase?

Melissa Davis: Well, generally we say like 0.5 to 0.75% of your body weight per week to be gained on mass and, I mean, technically across the...you want to do the mass probably in about a three-month cycle also, and technically across the mass you're going to be gaining less muscle to fat as time goes on because you tend...the leaner you are, the higher the muscle-to-fat ratio tends to be. So as you're putting on weight, you're getting less lean across mass. It's a necessary sort of side effect. So the ratio gets worse as time goes on. So you technically could sort of slow the gain towards the end, but you'll also probably slow the muscle gain so I usually just say stick to 0.5 to 0.75.

Danny Lennon: And the reason for putting, again, that kind of three-month window on a gaining phase, is that simply just because the constant overfeeding is going to cause someone's...the rate of how much muscle in comparison to the overall body weight they're putting on, is that what's changing or is it simply for some other reason you're employing those?

Melissa Davis: Yeah, it's because by the time you're finishing up three months of massing you've probably put on quite a bit of fat as well, and the more fat that you have the less muscle you're going to gain as you gain. So it's just basically diminishing returns over time. You're just going to be gaining more fat and less muscle if you keep pushing it, and then you have more to take off later.

And then another thing that I think is probably important for people to realize is that how long the person has been doing structured weight training is going to affect how much muscle they can gain and it's a surprisingly...it's an upsettingly small amount. It's about one-eighth to one-fourth of the weight that you gain is going to be muscle, and the longer you've been training the less of the weight that you gain will be muscle. So that's another psychological thing to take into consideration that I think both women and men, but maybe especially women, have a kind of a harder time dealing with that fat gain because usually they're doing this at least in part for aesthetic reasons and across the mass and the maintenance after they're going to have to have that layer of fat hiding your muscles.

Danny Lennon: Yeah, I think that's where looking at this overall long-term approach and if they have a kind of clear like six-month, 12-month target that they realize, yeah, during this kind of upcoming period there may be a small amount of fat gain, but in the overall scheme of things I am progressing to where I want to be, as opposed to viewing things in like a weekly or a monthly basis. That's where I think people tend to go wrong and I'm sure you've seen that as well, right?

Melissa Davis: And I think also it's if you wrap your head around it correctly you can be really healthy to take the sort of break during the year where you're not focused on what you look like but you're very focused on what you can do and what you're achieving, so when you're massing your lifts are going to go really well. You're going to feel strong. You're going to feel good. So it's kind of nice to take the break from the aesthetics and focus on your capabilities. I think it's healthy.

Danny Lennon: Yeah, for sure, and it's actually a concept that we've talked about on the show a couple of times around having performance-based metrics for periods of time as opposed to purely body composition, and then oftentimes you actually find that it improves for a lot of people that the things they need to do in terms of their sleep and paying attention to nutrition and their training frequency and then how consistent they are, all those things they need for better performance over time in whether that's a set number they're chasing or a certain type of workout, improving that over time generally you'll see in the long-term a better body composition as well. And again, if there is some body fat gain, that can be easily dealt with afterwards.

If we do specifically turn to women who are placing a high priority on performance or maybe that's their number one thing and they're competing in a sport, like I mentioned at the top of the show I want to look at weight-class-based sports as this is my primary coaching focus, so MMA, boxing, powerlifting, and I know you mentioned Brazilian jiu-jitsu which you compete in as well, with such athletes who are obviously conscious of their body weight because they're in that weight-class-based sport and not wanting it to drift too far upwards, do you find that sometimes, specifically with a lot of women as well, that it's even more of a challenge to get them to consume sufficient amounts of calories and carbohydrates to fill the types of training volumes that they're putting in? Because I often find that there's this maybe irrational fear of food or particularly high-carb foods because they don't want to see their body weight drift up because they're conscious of where it needs to be come fight time, but they end up eating way below where they need to fill the type of performance they're doing. Are there any kind of issues that you commonly have to address when working with, say, new female clients who are competing in weight-class-based sports?

Melissa Davis: I think that the biggest thing that I run into is the sort of just poor planning, it seems, and it's not their fault, it's kind of the status quo of a lot of these sports and what their coaches do and what they're taught to do, and that's that cutting up to the weigh-in. A lot of at least female athletes in combat sports I've found are pretty open to the idea of the massing and gaining weight gain and sort of like offseason times, but there's just still this big tendency to wait until two months before the competition and then cut right up to the day of.

Danny Lennon: Mm-hmm. So then is your work with them based around getting them to a leaner body composition or closer to that target weight well before they're kind of coming in the run-up to an event so they don't have to be constantly in this deficit in that I suppose priority training phase in those number of weeks leading up to that event?

Melissa Davis: Right, yeah, absolutely. I think that one of the most important things you can do as a weight-class athlete is to have, and I learned actually a lot about this from Dr. Hoffmann at Renaissance Periodization, making a year plan, so setting up your training blocks for the whole year, structuring them around your competition, and then structuring your diet around that too. So it works very similarly for both powerlifting and combat sports because you're wanting to do your high-volume lifting and your periods when you're cutting or massing, so long before your big competitions, and

then you can sort of move to more strength, more explosive lifting with lower volume as you get closer to your competition and you're not cutting, so you're not in danger of losing muscle, so you don't have to have that high-volume lifting and you also don't get the fatigue from the high-volume lifting. So you end up being able to express that strength and power and save your muscles and the fatigue.

Danny Lennon:

Yeah, I think that's really important and I think when people hear it it makes a ton of sense but, like you mention, I think there's a large, particularly with a lot of the combat sports, there's a lot of I suppose a cultural theme that's coming through of stuff that's been passed down from coaches in the past and it's kind of just the way things have always been done. But when you kind of consider that essentially setting up someone a diet to lose the most amount of weight as possible versus setting up a diet for someone to optimize training performance are literally at the two opposite ends of a spectrum in terms of how you would optimally do that, so trying to find that balance where you're able to keep body weight on point and also fuel training, like I think the big thing there is what exactly you mentioned, having that plan of how you can do that over time instead of trying to address everything at once, which is where people fall down.

One other thing that I did want to mention was that I often get the question from a lot of women, is when they're looking at training and nutrition principles, is there anything specific to them that needs to be done? So, I mean, on the show before we've talked a bit around the potential physiological and metabolic differences between genders. So, for example, it's possible there may be differences in changes in leptin in response to dieting or differences in glycogen storage capacity or there's some research on differences in the proportion of fat and carbohydrate that's oxidized during training sessions, but so far I've only really looked at these physiological issues as something that's just interesting for me to read through the emerging research as opposed to anything really practical. So when it comes down to real-world practice and pragmatic issues, are there any glaring differences in how you feel coaches should program client nutrition and training based on gender?

Melissa Davis:

The only thing I would say is that women can handle a higher training volume because they don't lift as heavy in general. In terms of differences in nutrition, I think any differences that exist are going to be practically so insignificant as to not be something to worry about, especially when I have yet to meet anyone that runs 100% perfect diet based on the basic principles that are really important.

Danny Lennon: Right.

Melissa Davis: So I think when it comes down to the minutiae, it's not really...it's overly stressful to try to worry about those tiny details and it doesn't make enough of a difference to truly be worth considering.

Danny Lennon: Actually, something that's particularly relevant to weight-class-based sports or really anyone assessing their metrics on scale weight, how much attention do you feel you have to bring to women who are assessing things based on scale weight when it comes to, say, either their progress or even their training performance across the menstrual cycle? Because we know we can see large changes in, say, water weight, for example, weight changes up and down from month to month, which is something that guys don't have, and so it maybe has to change a small bit. Plus, on that, do you feel that there are any differences then when it comes to actually the training over the course of that month as well?

Melissa Davis: Right. So, yeah, for women it is a pain. What I usually suggest particularly if women, they know their competitions in advance, you can track your period. There are actually a couple of great apps for that that can, after you've been using them for a few months, they predict period timing really reliably, and if you've been tracking your weight for several months you can start to get a really good idea of how much you tend to fluctuate and exactly when. So if you know in advance, say, "I have a competition in six months and this is the way I need to be and the weigh-in day happens to fall on what is typically my heaviest day in my cycle, I'm bloated," then you plan your preparation, you do your cut, and you just cut off a couple of extra pounds so that you know you're well within range. I mean, it's frustrating but it's just something if you can track it and you're aware of it and you know what your trends are, you can manage it.

Danny Lennon: When it comes to actually selecting weight classes with your athletes, are there any important considerations? Say they're between two weight classes at the moment and they're making a decision on whether they're better dieting down or going up, what are the main things any athlete I think in a weight-class-based sport should consider when they're deciding what is the best weight class for them long-term?

Melissa Davis: So yeah, I would say if it's something where they're not sure that they can get down to the weight—and so it depends on sport also. Like some sports you show up, you weigh in, and they put you in the weight class right there. With something like jiu-jitsu, you sign up for a weight class

beforehand and once the check date passes there's no changing it, so you're either that weight or you're not fighting. So it sort of depends on that. If it's the case that they're just going to show up and they'll be put into a weight class, I say do your cut well in advance as well as you can, do your training, have all your training and nutrition on point, and if you come in and you weigh in a little bit heavy, just take it, work in that weight class and make a decision next time. I think it really depends on the sport whether it's more beneficial. For a lot of combat sports, for any combat sport where they're punching each other in the face, I think it's extra beneficial to get down to the lower weight class. Jiu-jitsu, five, 10 pounds doesn't make quite as big of a difference.

Danny Lennon: Yeah, for sure, and we probably should have outlined as well the differences in the lag time between weigh-in and fight. So if you have a guy fighting pro MMA, if he has 24, 30 hours to rehydrate between that, he can do a big weight cut. Whereas if you're going into a jiu-jitsu comp and you're practically weighing in before you step on the mat, you probably don't really want to be focusing on dehydrating to cut a ton of weight. So yeah, it's important.

Melissa Davis: Yeah, we actually did a whole chapter in the Renaissance Periodization women's book on the weight cuts and we kind of said, you know, if you have 24 hours, you can cut about 5% of your body weight in water and have time to rehydrate and be at your best by the time you fight. If you weigh in in that side, you just have to manage bloat and do your best. If you have 12 hours, you can take out about 3%. So there are sort of different strategies because you want to make sure you have—water cut can be okay, but you want to make sure you have sufficient time to rehydrate and restore replete glycogen.

Danny Lennon: If you could see one message that's commonly perpetuated throughout the fitness industry right now or that's particularly prevalent that you wish was less prevalent, what would that be?

Melissa Davis: Ooh, that's a good one. Can I have two?

Danny Lennon: Yeah, go for it.

Melissa Davis: Okay. I think the one, the idea that you can just gain lean muscle without dealing with any of the fat, really frustrates me because it's not true [chuckles] and you're never going to achieve your body composition goals unless you accept that necessary processes and subject yourself to them to

get there. So I hate to see people led to believe they can have things that aren't possible and sort of constantly chasing that goal that isn't possible.

And then I think the other one would be sort of relating back to the whole chronic dieting and maintenance thing, people doing these really fast weight cuts, these challenges, lose 20 pounds in 21 days or this kind of thing where they end up in this chronic dieting state because they do this super-fast diet, they lose weight, they probably lose a bunch of muscle mass, they rebound really hard because they've been in such an extreme deficit, and they gain primarily fat back, so the overall result is a decrease in favorable body composition. So I'd like to see, I would love it if that were made clear to everyone to be an illusion that weight loss can happen that fast and be sustainable. Because you tend to see those people, they rebound and then they search for the next diet, and it's this constant state of dieting.

Danny Lennon: And just to touch back on that first point, when we talk around this idea of recomposition and trying to tackle those two goals of muscle mass gain and body fat loss at the moment, are we saying then that while...like we can certainly point to things to show that in certain people it's possible that these two things happen but you're never maximizing one or the other. So, during that phase, you're just not maximizing fat loss as much as you could be or you're not maximizing muscle mass gain, so separate them out and do them in phases.

Melissa Davis: Right, right. So if someone is in their first couple of years of training and they have that propensity to gain a little bit of muscle while they're losing fat, that's great, but you know what? They also have the propensity to make huge muscle mass gains compared to other people that, say, do a dedicated mass phase and then, when they maintain and then cut the fat back out, they'll probably gain a little more muscle while they're cutting and they can spend one year and make these massive body composition changes, or they can like squeak along making those small changes until their sort of new gains era runs out.

Danny Lennon: Mm-hmm, yeah, essentially never really diving full on into one or the other, kind of dabbling in both. My other question was kind of essentially the reverse of the previous one. Are there any messages that are not so common that you wish was something that more people knew about or an idea that more people kept in mind when it comes to either nutrition or training?

Melissa Davis: So I think a super-common misunderstanding that I had for a long time as well was the fact that sort of endurance sports and strength sports counteract each other – training for one or the other counteracts the other, counteracts making gains. So, for instance, if you're training for powerlifting and a marathon, you're basically minimizing how well you can do in either. And there's sort of I guess as fitness has gotten more and more popular, people have this sort of idea that they can do everything and there's sort of this Renaissance man of sports, and I guess just I wish...it's not so much that I wish people knew that, I just think it's a really interesting thing and something that's not recognized and it probably holds a lot of people back from maximizing their success in one sport or the other.

Danny Lennon: Yeah, I totally agree. I think that's one thing that I've noticed talking to people who are competing at either a very high level or achieving particular success in one particular field, is that kind of they talk a lot about the zeroing in on that whole process and dedicating to that, which I think could be often, yeah, lost at times.

Melissa, we're coming up close on time, so before I get to the final question, now is probably a good time to let people know where they can find more about your work or where they can track you down online.

Melissa Davis: You can look up RenaissancePeriodization.com for all of the books that I have been involved in and all of the other sports scientists and very educated people who are much more specialized in this area than I am. A lot of resources and options there. And then, I guess also you can find Renaissance Periodization on Facebook and that might be a way to track me down.

Danny Lennon: Perfect, and I'll link up to that in the show notes for everyone listening so you can go and check that stuff out. Melissa, that brings us to the final question that we always end this show on and this could be to do with anything outside of today's topic, if you wish, and it's simply if you could advise people to do one thing each day that would improve their life in some aspect, what would that one thing be?

Melissa Davis: Grow, not physically but mentally. Make it a point every day to grow or change or get better.

Danny Lennon: So Melissa, I just want to say thank you so much for your time today and for your information.

Melissa Davis: Thank you. It was fun.

Danny Lennon: So there we go. That was Melissa Davis of Renaissance Periodization. And if you enjoyed this episode and the topics that were brought up and you haven't already listened to all our previous episodes, then you'll probably enjoy catching another one of the Renaissance Periodization team, Dr. Mike Israetel, who was on the show way back in Episode 43 of this podcast in what is still one of the most downloaded episodes we've had to date. So if you haven't checked that out, I will link to that in the show notes and you can go back through the archives and check for that particular episode.

Also, you can sign up to receive the Sigma Synopsis, which is a weekly email that keeps you up-to-date with the latest content produced each week, recommended resources from around the web, a lesson per week, and then usually some sort of video content per week, and it's all just put in an easy-to-consume one email that you'll get on a Friday. It's free to receive, so just pop over to SigmaNutrition.com and click on the Sigma Synopsis to get that.

And that brings this week's episode to a close. I hope you took some sort of valuable information from it. If you did, please feel free to share the show around on social media, and that's pretty much it. I will talk to you in our episode next week and until then, have an awesome time.

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