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WEEKLY MUSCLE BUILDING EXPERT *Interview Series*



Mike Westerdal Interviews John Romaniello

MW: Hey, what's going on everybody? This is Mike Westerdal from CriticalBench.com, and I am pretty excited. I've got John Romaniello, he goes by Roman, on the phone tonight. And I'm psyched he's able to talk to me tonight, because he's one of the top fat loss experts from New York. This is pretty cool, because this would be a pretty expensive consultation. So, I'm glad he's taking some time out of his day to talk to all you guys.

I sent out the email yesterday, or actually, early, early this morning and I've just been flooded with questions. Everybody wants to know more about [Final Phase Fat Loss](#). So, I got him on the phone and I'm really pumped to do this interview and this Q&A about the program, getting everybody's questions answered.

Roman is a fitness model, he's a writer for T-Nation. He's a personal trainer and he's the owner of Roman Fitness Systems. So, welcome to the call, Roman. Is there anything I left out, or do you want to introduce yourself to those that haven't heard about you?



JR: That's all right. My name is Roman. You pretty much covered everything. Thank you so much for having me. I really do appreciate it, Mike. It's nice to talk to you and all the Critical Bench guys. You guys do really good stuff and a lot of it's so much in line with what I do and with what I believe. So, it's really nice to be talking with you and sharing information. I appreciate it.

MW: Thanks, man. The feeling is mutual. Yeah, we met for the first time in person. I've been following your articles and stuff, big fan as well.

JR: Well, thank you.

MW: We met in Tampa, what, three weeks ago or so?

JR: Yeah, three or four weeks ago, in that area.

MW: I had a chance to learn a lot about this program.

I just wanted to ask you, though, there's kind of an embarrassing story how all this happened. I mean, how did the origin of the program get started?\

JR: Well, like a lot of guys who are doing fitness stuff, now, I was never like... You know, I was an athlete when I was a kid, I wrestled, I played football. But, I had to work my ass off to be like mediocre at a lot of that stuff. So, really, where I excelled was kind of the lifting. And I think that's a fairly familiar story with a lot of guys. A lot of the people who get in shape later in life weren't really born athletes. So, that was me.

MW: Yeah, a lot of powerlifters, yep.

JR: Yeah, exactly, guys who were like never really...they were big and they were strong, but for whatever reason they couldn't put it together on the field, so they didn't make great football players. But, they could deadlift the Hell out of something.

So, I did that and I did have like a little bit of a powerlifter in me. This is not impressive to you, but at one point I was pulling 660 for reps, which I've added body weight..



MW: That's impressive.

JR: Oh, thank you. It was bodyweight of just under 190. So, and in a non-competitive powerlifter, I think that's pretty good. So, I did a little bit of powerlifting. I got into bodybuilding, some competitive stuff.

The way this particular program came about was I was about 23... I first got into shape for like the first time, like really, really good shape, saw my abs for the first time when I was like 19. So then, I did four years and I did some bodybuilding and I was up to like 205. But then, I got an offer for fitness modeling, so I was maintaining like about 195 at a height of 5'8", which is really what I tell people. But really, it's like 5'7 1/2".

MW: That's pretty jacked.

JR: But, 5'8" sounds better, right? Because I'm always wearing shoes anyway, and with the shoes, that's what it...

So, I kind of did a lot of the fitness modeling and I kind of got out of it for a little while and I was trying to put on some size. I was in kind of like a bulking stage and you

know how it goes, you've been there, where you just kind of keep going and you eat too much. You've put on all the muscle you're going to put on, probably, in that eight or twelve week period. And now, you just keeping eating and now you're just getting fatter.

MW: Yeah, for sure.

JR: Yeah, it happens and it's adjustable. So, my bulking phase ended and I kind of had...the summer was approaching, but I thought I had time. I had a system down, just like all bodybuilders where you bulk up and then you get cut and then you bulk up and then you get cut. Normally, it took me, particularly, a really, really long time to get lean. So, I normally slated about 12-16 weeks of dieting.

So, I'm doing my bulking thing and it's towards the end of it and I go invited to this party. I know Elliott is actually from Long Island, so he can tell you all about the Hamptons. It's like the swanky digs out at the end of the island, on the East end. It's really cool stuff, big, expensive houses. Yeah, you've heard of it, right?

So, imagine if you took the guys from Jersey Shore and instead of being like spikey haired, over-tanned guys, it was like actually cool people. Or, really like equally douchey people, but the sons of very rich individuals. It's like a whole different kind of douche-bagger. But, it's a very Long Island thing.

It can be very cool, and you also find like Guido's out there in Hampton. But, this was in a nice place and my buddy Evan, he left me this voicemail and he rented this big house. He's leaving me this voicemail, I'm getting pumped. I'm like, "Oh, man, this is going to be sick." I don't know why in the voicemail I thought it was like a Labor Day party at the end of the summer. So, in my head I'm like, "Cool. I'm going to be shredded. I'm going to see all these people. It's going to be awesome. I don't have to wear a shirt the whole week. This is perfect for me."

The weird thing about it was it was all these people that I hadn't seen since high school. So, Evan was a tight buddy of mine, so I saw him all the time. But, he invited all these people that I hadn't seen. So, keep in mind, like I got in shape when I was in college. So, I didn't see anyone from high school.

All of a sudden, I find out the party is like six weeks away and now I'm the chubby kid again. I'm the fitness model who is fat. People had seen like underwear packaging. They'd seen magazines I'd been in and now I'm like...fat for a fitness model, by the way, is like 12% and I might have been like 14, which is just like a tremendous amount of fat to be carrying around if that's your job, to not be fat.

So, all of a sudden, I'm F'ing screwed. What am I going to do? I'm just thinking, all right. I don't know what to do here. I was like, "All right, can I really diet this off? No." So, I was like all upset and I was bummed. At that moment, like that crisis where I'm like, "Shit, am I a fraud?" Like, "What's going on here?" And that's what it was. I tried to figure out how I could lose this weight as quickly as possible.

So, I went through all the training programs that I had written and the ones that I loved and the ones that I did most consistently for fat loss. And then, I tried to figure out how to make them work. I was really, really frustrated and I just decided, "You know what? I'm just not going to go to this party, because if I try to crash diet or something, it's going to be unhealthy. I'm going to lose all the muscle I just put on and I don't want to risk that." I think that was like a really upsetting thing for me.

Now, all of a sudden, in addition to missing out, I'm also feeling like the chubby kid I was in high school and I've got that fat kid emotional baggage with me. And that's always fun to deal with. You know what I'm saying.

MW: I'm not trying to laugh at you, it's just entertaining.

JR: No, that's fine. Whatever. I got laughed at for the first 16 years of my life. I can deal with it tonight. It's fine.

MW: I'm laughing with you, not at you.

JR: I appreciate it.

Ultimately, I didn't sleep that night. I just kept thinking, what can I do? I just started going through all...cycling through the programs in my head. Well, if I do this one, I'm going to lose muscle. But, if I do this one, I'll hang on to the muscle, but it's not fast enough.

And then, eventually, I kind of like picked out what I thought would be three or four really, really good training programs. I'm like, well, what if I take the best from each one and get rid of all the crap? That's kind of what... I think it was a really good idea and I thought I was... As soon as I thought of the idea and I started putting it together on paper, at about four that morning, I knew it was going to be one of two things. It was going to be either something ground-breaking, or like a spectacular failure and I would just never speak of it again. It's been something really incredible. So, it obviously did work.

I was able to combine training styles, and because of that, I was able to continuously lose fat each week through two different means. One, obviously I was using these really good fat loss programs and then I also had something built in to help me hold onto the mass. But, rotating the styles just...the constantly changing stimulus.

My body never really adapted to any one thing. I actually was able to get extremely lean in that time period.

I wouldn't say as lean as I'd been for my photos, but I went from about 13-14% body fat to...I would say at the absolutely most, I might have been 6 ½%. I mean, I went in shredded.



MW: Did you compete in bodybuilding, too?

JR: Yeah, yeah. I did some very low level, like local competitions. I decided it wasn't for me. But, when I did compete, like it was cool. I got down to 4%. I think anyone who's really interested in it should do it once or twice. But, unless you're planning to take the extreme route, for me, it wasn't rewarding. For a lot of guys I'm sure it is, and high-five to them. But...I don't know.

MW: How long did it take for you to get to the level you got before you were going to the party?

JR: It took six weeks.

MW: Wow.

JR: Just under six weeks, actually. As you can imagine, my revenge fantasies came through and it was cool. Because, like, you know what usually happens in college is all the athletes, the put on all the weight and all the hot girls are now kind of like partied out and they don't look as good. So, it was this really awesome kind of like changing of the guard where I was not like the hot guy and it was just so validating. Everything I'd worked for. And it wasn't even that I disliked any of these people in high school. It was just that there's that like outside looking and envy that never really goes away.

Yeah, so it was the first time I'd seen a lot of these guys since high school and a lot of them just like looked like crap and a lot of the girls like couldn't take their eyes off

me and it was a great weekend. I partied a lot. I hooked up a lot. We were in the Hamptons for the whole week. I spent way more money than I should have and I hooked up with way more girls than is advisable or safe. And I had an awesome time. So, that's how that went.

MW: All right. I mean, I went to my ten-year reunion and it's just crazy how different people look. I mean, people that were like in the best shape just turned into slobs. You saw really overweight people that came back and were like the best looking people at the whole place. It totally just changes. For the majority, people just get fatter and fatter and fatter. I mean, the older you get and the more you stay in shape and stay lean, I think it's definitely impressive when you run into old friends and stuff.

JR: Absolutely. That was one of the reasons that I released [Final Phase Fat Loss](#) right around now. I was putting it together, but the reason we actually did the discount at 52% was my ten-year high school reunion is coming up in just a couple of months. And 52 was my football number. So, it was like, you know, what can we do to like tie this all together?

So, the program that first helped me get into good reunion shape is now also kind of tied-in so like being the chubby kid who just happened to play football. So, I thought that was like a cool little twist.

MW: Yeah, that's cool. What position were you?



JR: I actually started out as like just kind of a lineman, because I was a big kid. But eventually, my senior year, I think I moved and played a little bit of fullback and

defensive end. I wasn't great at the end, because I am short and it wasn't a really great position. But, I actually was a pretty good blocking fullback. I did fairly decent just like opening up holes and I had decent yardage, nothing crazy.

MW: Cool. I think this program sounds pretty interesting. I definitely wanted to talk to you about it. I mean, after seeing you at the conference, it was cool having you... I mean, it sounded a lot like hybrid training where you're grabbing different of your favorite programs and sticking them together into one thing. So, that was definitely something we're going to talk a little bit more about.

I just read your report that you let out about a week ago, I think. It was called "5 Tricks to Fix Fat Loss". Now, maybe not everybody on our call has seen the report. I'll hook them up with the PDF if they haven't seen it yet. But, could you just summarize for us what are some of the causes of why people hit a plateau in their fat loss?

JR: Well, there are a couple of reasons, and really what I did was I tried to identify what I thought were like the top five things that people run into. The first of them is there's an evolutionary component, obviously. If you're dieting too long...and Joel Marion's talked a lot about this, certain hormones like leptin just start to drop and that screws with insulin levels. So, really what happens is that your body kind of starts to battle back against you. That's one thing, and you run into hormonal issues.



Now, in terms of like actual training and nutrition stuff, your programming is often the problem. And it's not like the training program that you're on, it's the way it's setup within the context of your overall training. So, you'll run into this with people who haven't done that many programs. Because most of the time, when you have

experienced guys, like guys who follow Critical Bench and the [Lean Hybrid](#) guys, they're listening to you and you're coming from a powerlifting phase. So, all of those guys are familiar with something like periodization where you do four weeks of this followed by four weeks of this followed by four weeks of this.



Mike Westerdal, John Romaniello, Elliott Hulse

Well, most people are not getting their information from one person. They're getting it from a bunch of different sources. And for the most part, people can't stay on a single program for more than three weeks. So, they get all ADD and jump from place to place. All of those programs individually are probably very good, but the order that people are doing them in or not completing them in is really the issue. They just don't allow themselves to really get the most out of anything. So, that's an issue.

MW: Even just grabbing different programs and trying to match them together when they're not meant to go together.

JR: Right, exactly. Unfortunately, as I've said, you can't... This shit is hard. It's not... All right, designing training programs and training people and being a strength coach, it's not rocket science, but it is science and there are some really specific things that you need to do and look at. And most of these people are not experienced enough to do that, and I think they shoot themselves in the foot a little bit.

Another thing is with the diet. People don't have an understanding that they need... A lot of people aren't tracking their calories, which I think is stupid. As a bodybuilder, you just kind of do it instinctively, and then I just took that with me. The people who are tracking their calories, they're using certain formulas that may or may not be good.

The worst of them, obviously just use your body weight. You take your body weight and you multiply it by whatever number this formula gives you and that's supposed to be how many calories you eat. Well, that doesn't take into account the division between lean body mass and fat. So now, you're just eating to maintain your fat. Well, great. Who wants to do that? That's not good for a fat loss program.

The better formula, what they do is they take your lean body mass. You figure out your body fat percentage and then subtract the amount of fat and then you just multiply your lean body mass by whatever number they give you. Now, that's better, but it's not complete, because what it doesn't do is it doesn't take into account the amount of fat on your body. That's actually very important, because if you have... If I'm 200 pounds at 10% body fat and I have 180 pounds of lean body mass, and someone else has that same 180 pounds of lean body mass, but they're 25% body fat, at 240, do you really think we should be eating the same amount of food? Obviously there's going to be a disconnect there and no one seems to have seen it in the industry.

MW: Sounds like common sense, but it's weird.

JR: Right, but everyone's missed it. So, the bottom line is, if you're trying to lose fat and you have a lot of fat to lose, you can get away with eating a lot less without sacrificing muscle. So, the way I approach things and I talked about this in the report and they get a calorie formula is, if you're between...if you're like less than 6% body fat, you need to eat a lot of calories. So, you multiply your lean body mass by maybe 17. But, if you're above 20% body fat and you're trying to lose fat fast, you take that same lean body mass and you multiply it only by 13. So, you're going to see the difference there.

Sorry, I'm suffering from a cold here in New York. You guys down in Tampa don't have quite... There's a foot of snow on the ground here, by the way and I was shoveling earlier.

MW: I was going to ask you about that.

JR: Yeah, it's not cool at all.

MW: Everybody here is bundled up in scarves and hats and complaining about how cold it is and it's like 60 degrees.

JR: Unbelievable. I've got Joel here from Tampa.

MW: Oh, Joel's up there?

JR: Yeah, Joel's up here hanging out with me, staying at my place, helping with the launch and everything. He's just like, "Oh, the snow. It's unreal." I was like, it's not that bad, dude. He's spoiled. Joel's from Jersey, originally. He should be able to deal with it.



Joel Marion & John Romaniello.....Bro-Mance?

MW: Yeah, he's only been in Tampa for less than a year, too.

JR: Yeah, it spoils you immediately.

MW: That's funny.

JR: So, yeah, those are the main two reasons. And then, the other thing is just the hormonal issues. People just have to really like sit down and like look at what's going on with their body and their regional fat storage patterns. If you've lost the first 20 or 30 pounds, what you're going to notice is now that all that easy fat, that beginner fat is off your body, you're going to notice that you don't look like you did. Instead of storing fat evenly over your body, you're going to be storing it primarily in certain areas.

MW: Yeah, definitely.

JR: You know, where do you store your fat, Mike? That's a great question.

MW: Me, it's going to be my stomach and my like love-handle area. My legs always stay the same size and my shoulders and arms. It's all the same. My face a little bit, too. But mostly, face and love-handles and gut.

JR: So, that's pretty typical with most guys. It's a hormonal thing. If you're storing fat just in your belly, it's easy to say, probably, that you're suffering from high cortisol. If you're storing it just in your love-handles, it probably the case that you're insulin resistant. Going the other way, with women, and honestly, this happens a lot with men and it's easier to spot with men because it's so unusual. If you have high estrogen, then what happens is that you are actually going to store a lot of fat in your lower body. If you see a guy with man-boobs, then usually there's some estrogen stuff there.

So, you see this a lot more commonly now. I don't know if you coach any kids over where you guys are.

MW: Really, a lot of high school athletes in the gym.

JR: Okay, but they're athletes, so they're probably in good shape. So, it doesn't apply to them. But, if you've ever been at like a middle school, I did some middle school wrestling coaching. So, just like being at the school and walking through the locker room, doing some gym teacher type stuff, just making sure there's not too much roughhousing, you see, like on the younger kids today, you see a lot of little budding man-boobies on all these like 12 and 13 year old boys. It's because of all the estrogen shit that they are pumping into our food.

MW: I just saw that movie "Food, Inc" and stuff.

JR: Yeah, exactly. Oh, my God, what did you learn from that movie? You don't want to eat anything.

MW: Yeah, I'm like grossed-out even going to the grocery store lately. I'm turning into one of those health freaks.

JR: Here's something really, really interesting. Isabelle De Los Rios, from The Diet Solution program, she actually gave a talk at the Transformation Domination seminar in Tampa. She said that giving your kids soy milk, like giving your baby soy milk, is like the equivalent of giving them four birth control pills. That's how much estrogen they're going to.... That's insane!

MW: That's crazy!

JR: Right. So, the interesting statistic is that the average breast size of American teenage girls is a full cup size higher than it was ten years ago, and girls are reaching puberty a full three years earlier than they were 20 years ago.

MW: I thought you were going to say the average breast size of American men.

JR: I could imagine that is also. But, think about this, all these hormones are doing that to our women, what are they doing to our men? Think about the kind of crazy things that are happening in men's bodies.

MW: Well, maybe this has to do with pussification of the Western male that Elliott and I talk about sometimes. Guys acting like girls.

JR: You know, I think some of that's definitely like societal, but there's definitely, I'm sure, having higher levels of estrogen is going to change some sensibilities there. Absolutely.

But just quickly, to go back on track and talk about hormones, those are the things that we see. So, as you get leaner and leaner, what's going to happen is you're going to notice that you're storing fat primarily, almost exclusively, in those areas. Those areas are the hardest to lose from.



So, using myself as an example, it's my love-handles, because I'm insulin resistant. Why am I insulin resistant? Well, because I was a fat kid and I ate carbs all the time. And now, my body sucks at processing and handling insulin.

MW: Is that something that stays with you, or does that change over time?

JR: It's certainly gotten better over time. But, any time I put on fat, if it's because I'm eating fast digesting carbs, it goes right to my love-handles. So, the way your fat storage patterns are, is kind of going to always be with you, unless you do something to drastically change your hormonal environment, which is really difficult to do outside of illegal pharmacology.

But, what you can do on a fat loss plan is mitigate the effects of that regional fat storage by using certain training styles that produce hormones that offset your regional hormone pattern. So, for example, one of the hormones that affects insulin sensitivity, makes you more sensitive to insulin and less insulin resistant, is IGF-1. Insulin and insulin-like growth factor, they're kind of like evil step-twins and they hate each other. It works in that way.

So, the more IGF-1 you produce, the more you're going to offset your insulin resistance and increase your insulin sensitivity. And the more that happens, the easier it is to lose fat in those areas.

MW: What kind of training produces the growth factor?

JR: Interestingly enough, almost any type of training that involves big movement. So, you guys will do it a lot, which is nice. And you probably notice as you get leaner, you don't have as much trouble there.

The way we do it in my facility, we use a lot of dynamic exercises, so lots and lots of lunges and particularly combination movements. So, we'll do a lot of complexes, which is really fun. I wrote an article for T-Nation about complexes a little while back. And for the most part, we'll do all sorts of like really cool just, like lunges with overhead presses. And then, one of the things I have my more advanced athletes do, and this is something I actually do just with athletes across the board, we'll mix two exercises for the same body part.

Let's say, for example, I'll have them do like a forward lunge with like a nice, deep lunge to kind of activate the glutes. So, they'll do a right leg lunge and then they'll come back and do a full good morning. Then, they'll do a left leg lunge and then do a full good morning. So, over the course of that set, they're going to get maybe 12 lunges, but 24 good mornings. So, their hamstrings are going to be totally fried. Doing stuff like that produces a lot of IGF-1, for one thing, but it's also great for athletic development.

MW: That's cool. I didn't know about that. I mean, that's a lot like some of the hybrid cardio circuits that Elliott and I have in our program. So, I'm glad to see you've got some of that in this as well.

JR: When I first got my hands on [Lean Hybrid Muscle](#), one of the things that I was looking at... I was like, this is so similar with what I've been saying. That actually kind of really redeemed me almost. I felt validated. It seems like you just accidentally stumble on something and you can't figure out why it works, and it works. And you guys had all that science to back it up and it made so much sense.

I had the hormonal science to back mine up, and I'm like, all right, there are all these different reasons why this stuff is working in all the different ways that you can utilize it and all the different approaches to it. But, the bottom line is, I'm not the only one doing it. So, it must be even more effective than I thought.

MW: Yeah, and that's why we were so excited, too, the same reason. A lot of people going against what we were saying, wanted more proof, more proof. And then, we meet a guy like you that can explain the whole hormonal aspect to it. So, it's definitely great to have you validate what we're saying as well. We're on the same page here, which always feels good.

Moving along. Do you have any tips you can give the listeners right now, something that they can use right away to maybe increase hormones that are needed for muscle growth? Maybe something they could do to naturally boost testosterone?

JR: Yeah, I mean, honestly just... The main thing to do it just to try to not lower it. So, just really stay away from overtraining is one thing, and just kind of be aware of your body. Overtraining is such a nebulous concept that I don't almost like talking about it. Because, it's weird. It's kind of like talking about politics where you're going to say something and then someone's going to jump all over you because they either don't believe in overtraining at all, or they're just like, "Oh, yeah totally. You can't train more than like two days a week." But, just like listen to your body and that stuff.

But, in terms of increasing testosterone, the thing that I've found does it the most, type of training, is density training. Obviously I haven't measured this. I'm not taking blood samples from my clients and stuff like that. I'm not seeing how many nanograms per deciliter of serum testosterone they've got flowing around after a workout. But, from the research I've found and from some empirical stuff, density-based training is really great for producing a lot of testosterone. There are some conflicting evidence, but some evidence to show that it actually increases serum testosterone in women as well.

MW: So, for the people that don't know what density training is, what is that, real quick?

JR: Well, density training initially was basically just trying to... There are two ways to increase training density. Either do more work in the same amount of time, or do the same amount of work in less time than you did it. So, let's say you're doing ten sets of ten bench presses. You're either going to try and do 13 sets in that same time period, let's say it took half an hour. Or, instead of doing ten sets of ten in half an hour, they're going to do ten sets of ten in 25 minutes. So, basically, you just try to do more work in less time by manipulating one of those factors or both.



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The way I do it, because it's even more effective for fat loss, we actually use the first set to establish a baseline and then we try to exceed that with the second set. So, rather than do a specific number of reps, we do a set for time. So, I'll tell you to just do overhead presses for 30 seconds and see how many you get. Now, because of all sorts of... What actually happened was initially when I first started doing this, it was like okay, now the second time we come around to this, just try to beat that with that same weight. And I found that what we can actually do is we can increase the weight by 10 to 20 percent on almost all exercises and people will still be able to beat that first set because of things like neural activation and neuromuscular junction.

Now, I will say that I train primarily fat loss clients and a lot of them are probably not as strong as your guys. So, you're probably not going to see... For example, if you're doing overhead presses for 30 seconds with 225-pounds, you're probably not going to be able to jump it up to 260 and do that same number.

MW: Right, and you'd probably use that training at a different period of your program, anyhow. You're probably not using heavy weight. Like, we did the escalated training density by Charles Staley and stuff, so this sounds cool because you're trying to beat it in the same workout. Where with his, you record your time the next time you're trying to

beat that. This, you're trying to beat it from set to set. So, this sounds like great conditioning stuff and great for fat burning as well.

JR: Right. It is. It's great for conditioning. It's great for fat burning. It builds a lot of work capacity and strength endurance. So, the way we make it even more effective for fat loss is we just set it up in a circuit. You take four exercises, a push, a pull, leg exercise, something like that. You might do an overhead press followed by alternating reverse lunges followed by bent-over rows and then maybe some sort of abdominal movement where you're holding a plate. You record all of your reps for all of those exercises for whatever time periods are prescribed and then the next time you come around to them, you're again trying to beat all of those reps with heavier weight on each exercise.

The fact that you could do it across the board just never ceases to amaze me. It's unbelievable. Time after time, you come back stronger.

MW: Yeah, it's really cool. We were doing the same thing, beating our reps and our times every single workout. It's like, how do you keep getting better every workout?

JR: Yeah, it's one of the coolest thing I've ever seen. I just love it. That's my favorite training style, because it's just so challenge-based. What's the downside there? You're getting stronger in some capacity, even if it's only reps you can do in that time period. You're losing fat, you feel incredible and you like...it's fun and challenging. It's hard, but it's just like a really cool way to train. And again, from what I've found, it does increase testosterone.

And this is why I say that, because when we do density training in women, what we notice is that the estrogen related fat storage patterns start to decrease. So, when people are holding fat in their lower bodies, particularly in their hips and thighs, or in men, with the man boobs, when those fat storage patterns started to be like heavily affected by density training, we were able to kind of figure out that there must have been something going on there. It couldn't just be that this style of training targets butt fat. It had to be a hormonal issue.

So, what I've really kind of figured out, especially from my own response to it, through things like the way my skin reacts and my sex drive and things like that, I do notice that there's probably some measureable increase in testosterone production and release from doing that density-based training.

MW: Speaking of sex drive, that reminds me. I remember at the conference, one of the point that you presented about, you said how people can naturally tell if their testosterone is high enough. Care to...?

JR: Yeah, just like if...it's boners, dude. If you're not getting boners, something's going on. It's just like... It's a good way to measure anything. Like, anytime I'm waking up and I'm like, "Jesus! Something's going on. Maybe I'm sick." And I'm sure it will happen more as I get older, and that's an issue. But, that's because testosterone is dropping.



So, yeah, if your sex drive... Honestly, like a lot of people, when they talk about overtraining, they tell you to use motivation as a barometer for whether you're overtraining. If you start to dread your workouts, you're overtraining. That's what all the guys... Especially like the old-school, like high intensity training guys like Mike Mentzer and all those guys. That was the thing that they talked about, motivation to train.

For me, I don't know, I kind of have more of like a totalitarian/draconian mindset where I'm just going to get my training done no matter what. And it's like, it's not... I don't ever have to be motivated or unmotivated. It's just like something... It's on the sheet, to it's getting done. You know?

MW: Yeah.

JR: For me, though, like something a little bit less stringent is like my sex drive. So, if I notice that my sex drive decreases, then I know that I'm probably bordering on overtraining. So, my testosterone levels are just dropping for whatever reason, through something environmental or stress or things like that, the way cortisol affects testosterone. But, it could also just be overtraining. So, it's a good barometer for both. For not only your testosterone levels, but also where you are with regard to your training. So, watch your sex drive as well, that's a good tip.

MW: Yeah, I totally agree with that.

Moving into Final Phase Fat Loss, we've talked about a couple of the different training protocols. You also have lactic acid training and strength-based training in the program. What kind of hormone response do those create and why did you add those to the program?

JR: Well, lactic acid training was the initial training program that I wanted to use when I was trying to get lean that summer. I had kind of fallen in love with Don Alessi's Meltdown Training several years back as a fat loss program. I thought it was really good. It was a lactic acid training protocol where you would use very, very slow tempos to try and create a lot of lactic acid. And what that does is forces your body to produce a lot of growth hormone. And the growth hormone helps you lose fat.

Now, the problem is... The whole idea behind Meltdown Training and honestly, I borrowed...and by borrowed, I mean directly stole, a lot of those ideas for my version of lactic acid training. Because, I found it to be the most effective, is that you use, again, very, very slow concentric lifting speeds and then quick negative speeds.

So, you're doing your overhead press, maybe you're lifting that weight for four seconds and then dropping it down quickly. The reason for that is that your body is producing more lactic acid or creating more lactic acid during the lifting phase. So, you just kind of accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. The whole idea behind that is that you really want to just create that lactic acid so you have a greater growth hormone response.

The problem with lactic acid training, when I initially did it, was that if you do just lactic acid training on a six-week program, you're lifting weight slowly, which

necessitates that you use lighter weights to get the set done. So now you're lifting light weights slowly for six weeks and if you do that your body is going to get really good at lifting light weight slowly. The problem with that is it gets really bad at lifting big weights quickly. That was unacceptable for me, because I had, again, just put on all of this muscle and I didn't want to lose any strength.



In addition, lactic acid actually also has a bit of a catabolic element to it, and you can actually sacrifice muscle doing just that training. So, though it's very good for fat loss, I didn't want to just rely on that.

So, what I initially did was I paired it with heavy strength training to help me hold onto my muscle, like going back to my bodybuilding days. One of the things I would always do right before a bodybuilding competition, starting about eight weeks out, I would lift very heavy, three to five reps, just because that was what I found to be the single best thing to hold onto my muscle while I was dieting pretty hard.

MW: Sounds like a really good technique.

JR: Yeah, that's actually one of the main things that I would say. If anyone's like getting ready for a show or a photo shoot, switch to like doing very, very heavy training about six to eight weeks out. I mean, not to the point where you're going to injure yourself, obviously. But, weight that's challenging. Don't go crazy on the volume, but nothing is better for increasing neurogenic and myogenic muscle tone and recruiting type 2... I don't have to tell you anything. But, honestly, that's what's going to help you hold onto mass.

So, the way I did the strength training was for the retention of mass. Those two things have made it into the final version of [Final Phase Fat Loss](#), which I'm releasing.

MW: I'm going to start calling you a power model from now on, because this doesn't sound like fitness model training at all. I mean, this is good stuff you're doing. You're doing like low reps powerlifting stuff. You've got everything mixed into there. You're deadlifting over 600 pounds for reps. So, we're going to come up with a new term for you.

JR: The power model. I appreciate it. And you know what? To be honest though, I do train, in New York, I do train a lot of models. And I have some guys who are...you know, the borderline guys that are like...the do some fitness, but they're also tall and thin enough to do fashion. And they train like this. It's interesting.

I've got a guy... I think we did a high rep day with him and he was pulling like 325 and I think over the course of the session, he might have done 45 reps. And then, like three weeks later, he walked in a Michael Bastian runway show. So, it was pretty funny. It's like, you get guys who are strong without being overly big, just because they can't be overly big. You know?



MW: Strength isn't always related to muscle size anyway, which a lot of people don't know. It's your bones and your tendons and your nervous system and all kinds of stuff.

JR: You got it. And that's one of the things that always like annoys me. You hear it on all the message boards, like all the big bodybuilding boards. All these like very, very strong, but kind of fat guys always get pissed off at the really like lean, but kind of small guys. "Oh, why is he a fitness model? Why is he in the magazines?" You'd be surprised that these guys actually have to stay pretty small, because that's their job.

We've got to cut some of these models some slack. Sometimes they're just like... I'll train a guy and I've got to bulk him up, because he's getting looked at by like Polo, and then he's getting looked at by like Dolce and Gabbana like for weeks later, and now we've got to cut his calories to like 800 a day and try to get the muscle off of him. It's not easy.

MW: That sounds very tough. Definitely deserves respect.

So, who is this program for then? Who did you design it for? It sounds like it's a good fit for a lot of different people.

JR: It is. This is really what I've found. It's absolutely the best program if you're trying to lose the last five to ten pounds. If that's what you need to lose, then this program is definitely for you. But at the same time, if you still have like 20-30 more pounds, but you've hit a fat loss plateau, just manipulating your hormones via training in this way is absolutely going to help you bust through that plateau. Assuming that you're not totally screwing up your diet. I'll say that. And I do offer some nutritional strategies in the book.

MW: It's not for everybody, but definitely it's for people that want to break through a fat loss plateau. But, it's not for people that are just following a crappy diet and just think there's going to be some magic program. This is a tough program. It's a lot of hard work. What is it? Four days a week?

JR: Yeah, it's four days a week and one high intensity cardio session. And the reason the high intensity cardio session is there, by the way, instead of a weight training cardio session, is I just want athletes to stay athletic. I think that if people don't run, they get bad at running. And I think that if you sprint one day a week, you can keep your speed up, and that's really important. But, you can replace that with pretty much any cardio day. I think it's important to run.

MW: How long do the workouts take?

JR: I mean, it will depend. If you stick to the rest periods, they shouldn't take more than 40 minutes. Actually, some of them are a little bit longer and will go up towards 45.

But, I've got guys in really good condition who could burn through them in probably 35 minutes.

MW: That's what it seems like people are asking for all the time. They want to work out four days a week for less than an hour. And that accomplishes this. How long is the program from start to finish?

JR: It's a six-week program. But, if you've got more fat to lose, you could do it back-to-back. I wouldn't recommend doing it for more than like eight to ten weeks. I mean, I wouldn't say like it's a good 12-week program. Because, you do get burned out pretty quickly. I mean, it's really hard stuff.

MW: Maybe take a week off before doing it again?

JR: Yeah, you could absolutely do that. If you wanted to do like Final Phase Fat Loss and then just take a full recovery week where you were just kind of active, and then do it again, that would probably work really well as well. Yeah. I just wouldn't take like two twelve weeks straight through. I'm sure there are guys who could do it, but across the board, I wouldn't recommend it.



*Vince & Flavia Delmonte, Roman, Dana, Jesse and Mike Westerdal
Hanging out in Mexico at a club called CoCo Bongo.*

MW: You talked about keeping people athletic. So, this is a good program for athletes, too?

JR: Of course. Yeah, just because of the density stuff and the way the strength training is set up, there's so much endurance and conditioning stuff based right in there that it's...and not to mention the increase in the hormones like GH and the hormones like testosterone and mechano-growth factor. It's hard not to come out a better athlete than you went in, especially because the dynamic stuff requires so much balance and coordination. It's a really interesting program. It's not intended to improve overall athleticism, but we find that it does. And that's really cool as well.

MW: Yeah, I mean, it's really exciting. A lot of the guys over at Lean Hybrid Muscle, they want to reach a lot of goals at the same time. They want to lose fat, but they want to keep or even build muscle while staying strong. So, the main goal here is to break fat loss plateau, but do you think it accomplishes some of these other things, too? We talked about maintaining muscle mass and you've got strength workouts in there. So, does this accomplish other goals at the same time?

JR: Absolutely, because that was my goal. I was exactly where they are. Like, I wanted to lose fat, but I was not willing to give up... I didn't want to like walk into that party and be like the skinny guy with abs. Like, I wasn't Ashton Kutcher. I wanted to be like Vin Diesel. Everyone talks about Brad Pitt in Fight Club, but I was like...I wanted to be like an actually muscular Brad Pitt in Fight Club, not a 160-pound guy.

That's what I wanted. If you like saw the Twilight movie this summer, like, my girlfriend dragged me to see Twilight. Every time that kid showed up on screen, like chicks just screamed. They just screamed at the theater. That's what I wanted. Even though I was a much, much bigger version of that, that was the goal. And I think that's what the Lean Hybrid guys want. they want to be the comic book guy. They want to be Wolverine. They want to be strong, they want to be muscular, but they also want to be lean. They want to look the part. And that was my whole goal with this program and that's really what it's for.



You're going to get leaner, obviously. It's a fat loss program. But, you can stay strong. And, you'll probably increase your strength to body weight ratio, because a lot of like pull-ups and things like that in there, which is cool. And, you'll increase your overall conditioning, because the rest periods are so short, and that will carry over to everything you do.

And the density training, in particular, has implications for muscle growth, because there's just like a huge component of increasing work capacity. So, even if you're not going to gain muscle while you're on it, because you're in a calorie deficit, it sets you up in a really good position to gain more muscle down the line.

MW: Yeah, I mean, Elliott and I even think some...a lot of people argue with us, but we think based hormonally and the environment you put yourself in, that you actually can build muscle while you're burning fat. Everyone says it's physically impossible, but we've seen people do it.

JR: Yeah, I've seen so many of my clients do it. It's just... You're just... It's energy deficit, obviously, but it's also nutrient partitioning. If you're creating an anabolic

environment and you're over fat or you're carrying too much fat... Your body will build muscle and that muscle's going to burn fat.

There is so much we don't know. When people start saying things are impossible, like, they're really just trying to protect whatever reputation they have as a scientist. Things happen all the time that we see in the trenches that the studies don't account for. It's just...you can't make blanket statements like impossible or never or even always.

MW: I totally agree. That's why I love getting guys like you on the phone to learn more about. We don't know a lot about the hormone stuff, even close to as much as you know about it. So, it's awesome to get that piece of the puzzle.

All right, cool. Anything else you wanted to add in? I think we covered a ton of ground here. We've been on the phone for almost an hour.

JR: No, that's great. I think people got a lot of great information.

MW: All right. Thanks, Roman. It was awesome talking to you.

JR: Great talking to you, Mike.

MW: Everybody head over to [FinalPhaseFatBurning.com](http://www.finalphasefatburning.com). All right, later Roman. See you.



<http://www.finalphasefatburning.com>