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**Paleo Nutrition:**  
**Interview With Dallas & Melissa Hartwig,**  
**Authors of “It Starts With Food.”**

**Scott Iardella (Host):** I am very honored today to have Dallas and Melissa Hartwig on the line, authors of the great book "[It Starts With Food](#)". And really I can't thank you guys enough for being here today.

**Melissa Hartwig:** We're so happy to be here, thanks for having us on Scott.

**Dallas Hartwig:** Yes, absolutely. Thanks for having us on.

**Scott Iardella:** It's my pleasure. And before we get started, I have to tell you that I found out about your book, "It Starts With Food" from a fellow RKC, I was actually at a recent workshop and it was a strength training workshop, and she mentioned your book and I hadn't heard of it. And I'm a bit of book addict I have to say. And when she mentioned what your book was about, I got it as soon as I got back from my trip. And I literally read it, in about three days. I basically immersed myself in the book, and I absolutely loved it.

And I've read, The Primal Blueprint, Dr. Cordain's book on Paleo nutrition, most of the big paleo books out there. And I thought this was a really incredible book because of the science and the practical applications that you guys provided in the book, it was so well written, and it really explained things I thought in a new and different way. So, thanks for providing such a great resource for people. And I'd be interested to know how did this book come about?

**Dallas Hartwig:** Well, it's interesting, it was sort of a long and circular story which I'll try to keep fairly brief. But I have been a licensed physical therapist for 10 plus years, and also have done sort of lot of learning kind of

on the side on a more personal basis with health and fitness and nutrition, and together Melissa and I use to run a crossfit affiliate, and we wrote a blog and we did a lot of discussion of health and fitness and performance and nutrition and a lot of those kind of topics and started doing seminars, specifically focused around improving people's health via nutritional change.

And it just kind of went from there and we got some really great feedback from our seminars and people. The message that we put out really seem to resonate with people, and we talked about writing the book for a long time and had an opportunity to connect with the publisher that said, you know what, I love your message, I love your tone, I loved the way you kind of get in there and make this information really accessible to people. And we started writing, kind of towards the fall of 2011, and the book was released in June of 2012. So we kind of really put the expedited treatment to that.

**Melissa Hartwig:** Yeah. We just had so much to say, Scott, like we would do our workshops and we would kind of joke, like, okay this is an eight hour workshop, but we have 17 hours of material and that's not an exaggeration, there was just so much we couldn't cover on the blog, in the workshops and the book was really our attempt to like lay down our big picture, foundational kind of view of food as health and food for fitness and food for quality of life in a way that we couldn't do via our other mechanisms.

**Scott Iardella:** Wow. So it really come from all of your workshops, all of your teachings that was kind of where all those material came from, because there's so much material in this book and like I said, I went through it in three days, but I want to go back and re-read it, because there's just so much information there.

**Dallas Hartwig:** We kind of think about it a little bit like the maple syrup of paleo nutrition books, where like you start with a huge volume and stuff and you just like boil it down and boil it down, boil it down, until it gets

more concentrated, and you come up with this thing, it's like really awesome.

**Scott Iardella:** So talking about other paleo type books, so how would you say this book is different from some of the other ones I mentioned like, Primal Blueprint, Paleo Diet, Paleo Diet Solution. How is this one unique compared to those?

**Melissa Hartwig:** You know when it comes down to it, the foundation of most of these books, Robb Wolf's amazing, groundbreaking book, The Paleo Solution, Mark Sisson's Primal Blueprint, Cordain's Paleo Diet. You know, the general food recommendations are all pretty darn similar, we're going to ask that you kind of evaluate how some of these big picture food groups are affecting your health and everyone talking about sugar and grains and dairy and legumes, so that foundation, the food foundation is kind of the same.

Where we tend to differ I think is just in our focus and in our approach. So Mark Sisson's Primal Blueprint is very much kind of a lifestyle book, and it's a fantastic gateway for people exploring this concept for the first time, where he talks about some sensible vises and he talks about the 80-20 rule and people don't feel like they have to give up everything they love and be perfect in their diet. And I think that's a great gateway. While, Wolf's book, the science in that book is phenomenal, we just, we can't – I can't do the science the way Robb does the science. And if you really want to understand some of the nitty-gritty behind the scenes of how the body is working and how the food is working, he's a great resource. He also talked about things like stress and exercise, implementing more of a lifestyle stuff.

I think our book is really focused on the practical application, take information in Robb Wolf's kind of 30 day, like elimination, just try it and see how you do, and we break it down to a degree that I think a lot of people need. It's a lot of, I'm going to say hand holding, but I don't mean that in negative sense. This is a really big transition for a lot of people and the more practical advice the more support you can give them, the better their

chances of success and I think that's really the tone that we try to take with our material.

**Scott Iardella:** Yeah. Well, I think that's a great description and differentiation of how your book is different from those books. And they are all very valuable books, I mean, I think you read each of them and you learn from all of them. One approach that you talked about in the book is actually a tough love approach, what is the tough love approach?

**Dallas Hartwig:** A tough love approach is, I guess, a sort of – to be honest, it's a straightforward reflection of who we are and kind of our own personalities. We're kind of no fooling around, like if you're going to do this thing like do it and that's kind of what our tough love is really an outgrowth of that where, we challenge people. The whole concept of everything in moderation or just make this kind of baby step, kind of step wise change, you know, our experience doesn't work that effectively for the majority of the people, not saying for everyone, but for the majority of people.

So we kind of take this tough love and say like you know, we challenge people. Hey listen like, what do you have to lose, do this thing, try it, what's the worse thing that can happen, and we kind of get a little bit not aggressive with it, but to the point where we really encourage people, like we want to prompt and we just want to kind of flip that little switch in their head where people are in sort of contemplate of scenario, where they're thinking about making change, sometimes just a little bit a kick in a pants is enough to actually get them to start to making change instead of still sticking around just thinking about it. So it's a nudge that lot of people need to get started.

**Scott Iardella:** Awesome. And you find that that works for most people?

**Melissa Hartwig:** I think it does, it's funny the first iteration of the whole 30 which was really more than three years ago at this point, the tough level is a whole lot tougher, like the message that we put out was, if you can't do this for 30 days, go somewhere else, because this really isn't that hard.

And we have very much softened our approach from there, understanding that people have different backgrounds, they have different needs and especially realizing that people who have dysfunctional relationships with food, unhealthy relationships with food, issues with food addiction, issues with eating disorders, that tough love like kick yourself in the butt approach is exactly what they don't need. They already have enough anxiety and shame attached to their food choices.

So what we've tried to do in this book is provide tough love in the form of like look, we're not going to sugar coat it, here's what we think the best kind of solution is for you but we also offer a lot of support. So it really is the tough but it really is the love at the same time and I think that come through really nicely in some of the sections of the book.

**Scott Iardella:** Definitely. Yeah, I thought that was definitely worth asking about it, I really like that approach, so that's why I was asking about that. I wonder if you could provide kind of an overview of the "*It Starts With Food*" approach, so people can understand if they haven't read the book, kind of the top-line review, what is the approach?

**Dallas Hartwig:** Yeah, totally. We start with kind of fundamental premise that, essentially like food should make you healthy, the choices you make through your life, including, dietetic choices have a profound impact on your health and your quality of life over a very long period of time. And we sort of think of best case scenario as consistently making really good food choices, that improve your health and improve your quality of life, and we think food is a really powerful tool in that arsenal to improve your quality of life. So hence the topic of "It Starts with Food", is that, it doesn't really matter what that is for you, whether it is disease prevention, it is excellent energy and longevity, whether it's athletic performance, whether it's body compensation management. Whatever that "it" thing is for you, as an individual, the road to really excellent health starts with food there. So that's kind of our fundamental premise.

**Melissa Hartwig:** We kind of base our nutritional recommendations on this, kind of pyramid. We talk about it in the intro to the book, we have a lot of science in our book. We've got more than **400 scientific references**, backing up our recommendations, but relying on science alone is tricky, because as you know, you can consult you know the source of all knowledge which is Google, of course, and when you look something up, you can find 10 articles that say 10 different things about the same topic.

So we build our recommendations on a foundation of science, and then we add to that our clinical experience. We've got more than three years and tens of thousands of people who have run through our [Whole30 program](#) all reporting really similar results. And when you get that larger population reporting very similar results with the same program, that's enough to make you stand up and listen. But then there's a third piece to our recommendations and this is self experimentation or personal experience.

We can share the science, we can share our experience, but until you try this for yourself, give the program 30 days and try to figure out for yourself how the food you've been eating are affecting you individually, you're sort of always going to be missing that piece of the puzzle. So we think of this sort of pure med as three necessary, kind of, I guess maybe like a three legged stool, all supporting our general recommendations. And that's really where the rest of the book kind of starts with.

**Scott Iardella:** Okay, awesome. You know one thing that you mentioned is case studies and you know you have so many case studies of people that have had success throughout the book, and if I remember correctly, I have the book on here, but in each chapter, right in beginning is someone that has had a major, significant life change by changing the diet through your principles. So, I thought that was just absolutely amazing.

**Melissa Hartwig:** We had a hard time choosing those testimonials, we had so many amazing things to choose from.

**Scott Iardella:** Wow, but you have a ton, I mean there were ton of cases in there which is incredible. Let's talk about some of the specifics in the book, to give people an understanding of the things that you guys go into. So, one big thing that you talked about is information, there's a whole chapter on inflammation. Can you talk about why this is important for people to understand inflammation in their body, as it relates to diet?

**Dallas Hartwig:** Sure. Well, coming from an exercise physiology background and then building with physical therapy experience, the concept of "inflammation" was something I dealt with literally everyday in my clinical practice, and so then when I started to learn more about how lifestyle choices is and specially dietary choices had the potential to profoundly impact what was going on with the status of persons' immune system and what means in terms of inflammation, that concept of chronic inflammation relating to healing, start to really click for me.

But, then also this concept of chronic systemic inflammation being long-term, full body inflammation that can manifest in so many different ways, really underlies optimal health long term. And I don't think I said that quick right. I guess what I mean is a relaxed, well functioning, not overworked immune system is critical to a long-term health and that goes for everything from cardiovascular disease, to diabetes prevention to managing body weight, to preventing auto-immune disease, to all of these different things. So inflammation is really at the core, at the centre of all of these different lifestyle related condition, and diet profoundly impacts, whether you have abnormally elevated amounts of inflammation or not.

**Scott Iardella:** Yeah. I think you explained that perfectly, and you know I mean so many books that I have read, you know they say the same thing, is that so many diseases, you know the big diseases, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, they all come from inflammation which comes from poor diet, really. So it's kind of again, the title of your book, "It Starts With Food," it really does. It all starts with food. So that chapter alone is just absolutely incredible.

**Dallas Hartwig:** Thanks.

**Scott Iardella:** Okay. One of the big questions, two big questions I want to ask you about. So, I think because, and I hear this a lot and people seem to always fight on this, but why do a lot of people have a hard time understanding why grains are not healthy, especially when we have all the media around, eating “heart healthy whole grains” and things like that.

**Melissa Hartwig:** Yeah. I mean, I think a big, I think the first thing and that’s why we open the book with is, people have a hard time wrapping their heads around eliminating grains, whether they’d be whole grains or refined grains or those products, because psychologically we have a really strong connection or really strong affinity with foods that are made or based on these products. You know we’re talking about **super normally stimulating foods**, foods that are flavored that are fattier, saltier or sweeter than you’d ever find in nature, heavily processed, much of the micronutrient removed.

All of the calories still there, often very carbohydrate dense, often very sugary and many of these kinds of foods that we are so psychologically addicted to are based on grains, whether they be whole grains or refined grains. So that promotes what we call in the book, “over-carb” consumption, the over-consumption of these nutrient poor, calorie-dense, carbohydrate dense food and the more we eat them than we more want them. You tell people all of sudden, well you know perhaps some of these grains, even the whole grains that you are eating aren’t making you healthier and it’s like their world comes to an end, because we have such a powerful psychological association with these foods and because frankly without grains on your plate, people can’t imagine what else there is to eat.

**Scott Iardella:** Right.

**Melissa Hartwig:** So, part of it is the psychology, part of it is the education, but Dallas do you want to talk a little bit about the science?

**Dallas Hartwig:** Yeah, I think the concept of the whole grains being very healthy for you, something that is, and not over simplifier to be too much of a conspiracy theorist, but a lot that is a product of the unholy alliance between very large agricultural companies, and governmental bodies that can make recommendations, and you know a lot of it kind of goes back to, if you look at the actual science and you dig into what happens to humans, what happens to rats, what happens to different populations of primates when you feed them inflammatory substances, it disturbs their gut function and disturbs their immune system, and releases some of that systemic inflammation that we just talked about.

**Scott Iardella:** Yes.

**Dallas Hartwig:** And their consumption of whole grains is quite well documented, to cause some disruption in gut function or gut permeability and will have a direct consequence of up regulating immune function or increasing immune activity, which is that chronic inflammation. And so the connection between whole grain consumption, as well as refined grain consumption is a fairly direct connection in our mind when you really dig into the scientific literature, and you know if you look at sort of historic, and you look at sort of agriculture over the last year 10,000 years. You know agriculture is really about providing calories to survive a potential starvation situation, and it does that exceedingly well, but simply because you can't eat something doesn't necessarily mean you should.

And I think that's one the fundamental tenants of our recommendations is that, you should chose the food that makes you the healthiest kind of the best case scenario, not just the thing that will keep you from starving to death. You know, because what happened when we first started farming grains and using that as a primary way of feeding or families feeding or societies, it was very much about survival and very harsh on forgiving environments, and with all of the advances in modern technology and industrial agriculture and all that stuff, we sort of changed what we think about that. But, ultimately we go back to, like you should make the food

choices that promote health, that do not promote this chronic inflammation, and whole grains unfortunately, there is some misinformation out there. They are one of those foods that will promote some degree of inflammation to a variable degree person-to-person but some degree of inflammation starting in the gut, but very commonly extending to the rest of the body via that chronic inflammation.

**Scott Iardella:** Would you say, are there any grains that are maybe “less offensive” than other grains, for example, like quinoa or Ezekiel bread, you know those types, are they, would you consider them to be better and do you allow those in your clients and students?

**Melissa Hartwig:** So, we instead of saying better, we like to say less bad. People will often say, well some grains like corn or rice are the non-gluten grains or the pseudo-cereals like quinoa are those less bad.

The answer is maybe, and really the better answer is we don't really know. Gluten grains we know like wheat, rye and barley are especially problematic, especially in certain population, those with gluten sensitivity, those with celiac disease and we know this because gluten has been extensively studied, that one particular grain protein has been very extensively studied in the scientific literature.

We understand the mechanism very well, we understand the populations that affects in terms of celiac really well but they haven't done the same studies with other grains, like corn or rice, or quinoa.

While non-gluten grains maybe a less bad choice, especially for those with some gluten sensitivity or potentially celiac disease. One, we do see a lot of cross-reactivity or people who have experienced similar symptoms, when they're eating non-gluten grains, as they do with the wheat, and two, those other grains still contain protein similar enough to gluten that maybe, they cause similar problems in the body.

The answer is that, we just don't know, and when it comes down to it, grains, in general, are nowhere near as nutrient dense as vegetables and fruit.

So, I kind of can't see for the general inclusion of these on a regular basis as part of your daily diet, if they may just be slightly less bad and they're not providing the dense nutrition that something like vegetables and fruit would, it's hard to argue for case for them.

**Scott Iardella:** Okay, so the best thing, the takeaway is really to avoid grains, all together.

**Dallas Hartwig:** In general, yeah.

**Scott Iardella:** I wonder what are your thoughts are on kind of a cheat meal, once a week. Like if someone craves a grain or something, a particular food, let's say pizza for example. Is that okay to do something like that, if you're following kind of that **90-10 rule** or **80-20**, is that okay according to you?

**Dallas Hartwig:** I think the shortest answer to that is everyone has to make that choice for themselves. Our perspective based on, working with hundreds of clients and having sort of indirect experience through thousands of Whole30 participants, is that it's a delicate balance between sometimes making off plan choices, which we think are totally appropriate sometimes, but then the other part of it that the whole concept of I'm going to plan a specific cheat day or cheat meal, is almost in our opinion almost like planned failure where, we think about making off plan choices much more opportunistically, where if I happened to be going home to visit my mother in British Columbia and she's going to make me my favorite meal from childhood, it doesn't matter what's in it, I'm going to eat it, because it is so amazing.

And so that's sort of an **opportunistic perspective** rather than, well I usually have my cheat day on Sundays and it's Sunday so I'm going to eat some food that's not very good for me. We don't think that makes a lot of sense.

I think the other piece of it to is that the 90-10 or 80-20 or some sort of mathematical quantification of how good or not good, and kind of using that quoting fingers here, how good or not good you eat, I think almost kind

of steers people a little bit back towards the unhealthy psychological relationship with food, where food is misunderstood to be morally good or morally bad and we don't think that's the case.

We think that food is something we have to choose on a really regular basis. We think there are consequences of that, but we really try to steer people away from thinking about food as good or bad in a moral sense, and I think even using the word cheat, we would tend to just use the word treat in kind of the same way, like we've just made choice because something so delicious like we're going to do that, but it's not really cheat because we don't think – we're not doing anything wrong, we're not violating any sort of moral code.

And so we don't schedule treats. We think about a lot much more opportunistically, and frankly, from a sheer mathematical perspective and this is all a very gray area, the less often you eat those off planned foods, the healthier you're going to be.

If you never had another piece of pizza again in your life, you'd be really vey-very healthy and it doesn't mean there's not room in a very healthy diet for the occasional treat.

**Scott Iardella:** Okay. Well, I think it makes a lot of sense. I really love the way you put that, it's kind of about **opportunistic thinking** and minimizing those opportunities, when you're having bad food really.

**Melissa Hartwig:** And we have an entire section in the book Scott, because this is such a common question, people want to know, you know, once I come off the 30-day result, like the whole 30, how am I supposed to kind of ride my own bike and apply these rules in the real world and turn this into a lifestyle.

So we have an entire section in the book on exactly the process we go through to decide whether that off planned food is worth it or not, and if you decide that it is, how to indulge in a way that's smart and isn't going to send you totally off the rails for the rest of the weekend.

**Scott Iardella:** Awesome. Okay, let me ask you another question now, this is kind of a big one as well and it's around artificial sweeteners. You

know, my opinion is that a really fast, easy way to improve health is to get rid of the sweeteners. We know that sugar is toxic and certainly the artificial sweeteners are even more toxic than regular sugars if that's even possible. But, what do the people really need to know about toxicities of sweeteners?

**Melissa Hartwig:** Well that's kind of a loaded question, you know there is a lot of evidence, research that suggests that artificial sweeteners are linked to a wide long list of diseases, everything from you know cancer to neurotoxicity to carpal tunnel, to migraines, and that list is really long. And the anecdotal evidence is very strong, but the scientific research on it is rather inconsistent, and they're just haven't been enough long-term studies on humans, for us to definitively say, yes I think these artificial sweeteners or yes we know these artificial sweeteners have these toxic effects in the body. Now, that having been said, we're big fans of airing on the side of caution.

And there are a lot of reasons, why we think artificial sweeteners make you less healthy, that the least of which is the psychological impact of foods that are sweetened artificially, not the impact they have on our relationship with food. So when you add all these things up, in fact that artificial sweeteners may promote some of the same gut dysbiosis that regular sugar does, and you talk about the psychological impact of foods that are artificially sweetened.

And you talk about what sugar does to our hormones, and our ability to perceive sweetness, and artificial sweeteners may play into that. When you talk about all that stuff, and when you add on the fact that, maybe this stuff is actually pretty toxic in our bodies, I just can't make a case for the inclusion, in any way shape or form.

**Scott Iardella:** Sure and I agree with airing on the side of caution, I mean if there's even a shade of doubt that there's links to serious health issues with some of these sweeteners, then, it makes total sense to avoid those.

**Dallas Hartwig:** Yeah, this is interesting, just to kind of a little anecdote from my professional past but, I used to work out very closely with an

orthopedic surgeon who was a hand and wrist specialist, and so he saw a lot of people with various conditions, various inflammatory conditions, you know, inflammations of tendons and connective tissue in hand. But one thing he saw a lot of was carpal tunnel syndrome, which is a swelling of the nerve that runs through that carpal tunnel in the wrist.

**Scott Iardella:** Yes.

**Dallas Hartwig:** And so that's very much an inflammatory condition. And one of the things that he did in his practice, right out of the gate when people came in complaining of carpal tunnel symptoms, is he immediately instructed them to cease all consumption of all artificial sweeteners, because he found in his practice that that made a significant improvement in how much inflammation was going on, instead of symptomatically improved carpal tunnel. And so is that like a double blind, placebo controlled, peer-reviewed study, no, but I think that considerable professional and clinical experience counts for something.

**Scott Iardella:** Absolutely. That's really interesting you mention that, literally just this week my wife's cousin had a very similar story about being treated for carpal tunnel, and they recommended surgery. He ended up seeing a holistic physician, who made some dietary changes, I don't know exactly what those dietary changes were, but basically his symptoms completely resolved after making those changes.

**Melissa Hartwig:** Amazing, it just speaks to the power of changing the food, that you put on your plate.

**Scott Iardella:** Yeah. Before moving on, I do want to ask you about, one specific sweetener and that is stevia. In your book, I think, you do recommend, you know eliminating that one as well. Why is that? I thought that was maybe one of the ones out of those sweeteners that did have some...

**Dallas Hartwig:** Right. Well, because it's marketed as natural, right?

It's not, you know, and we kind of, you know we get little cheeky with it sometimes in our seminar when people ask us this, because we kind of say that it's stevia because it's a compound that is isolated from a plants leaf that has, you know, has a sweet taste, that we say that stevia is natural conical natural, and exactly the same way that cocaine is natural. That is a compound isolated from a plant, that you can only really get, you know, if you like work it in the laboratory pretty hard, you end up with this crystalline like powder so, you know.

But more seriously though, the issue is stevia is not that there is a large amount of damning evidence against it, it's more that when we talk about making behavioral change, when we talk about forming new habits and new patterns and new behaviors, that intensely sweet taste, whether it comes from stevia, whether it comes from aspartame or sucralose, or it comes from table sugar or it comes from honey, that sweet taste is a really powerful **neurological trigger** and it might adjust the sugar itself that people are profoundly addicted to.

There is also a component that is neurological, that is triggered by that sweet flavor and so stevia, even though it may not be carcinogenic, it may not be neurotoxic. It may be completely benign, but in terms of changing people's behaviors it steering them towards more nutrient dense foods, and not being so psychologically reliant on ongoing sort of "sugarish" or sugar tasting substances.

We think the implementation of stevia, in general, is an important recommendation too, and again it's less about, it's not just that it's not so bad, it's also that it's not really good either, like if you couldn't weigh the pro and cons, you look at. Well, maybe it doesn't have any significant cons from a physiological perspective, but if it has some cons from a psychological perspective and it's not adding anything in terms of nutrients, in terms of nutrition--

**Scott Iardella:** Yes.

**Dallas Hartwig:** There is kind of no case to be made in our opinion.

**Scott Iardella:** Okay, I was really personally interested in that and I had done just a little bit of research about stevia, I didn't see anything carcinogenic or anything like that, so, but I think what you're saying makes total sense.

**Melissa Hartwig:** But, I'll also just add this because we do this in the book, you know, we don't want people to think we're trying to like ruin their lives or where these giant killjoys where you can never eat anything that taste good ever. You know it's, we're not saying you can never eat sugar ever again, we're not saying you can never sweeten your coffee or your tea ever again. All we're saying is, we want you be really honest about why you are doing what you are doing. I'm doing this because it tastes good, because it's delicious. Not because you think all stevia is healthy because it's naturally or you think well blackstrap molasses is a good source of iron, like we are not telling yourself you are doing it because there are health reasons.

And if you do chose to sweeten your coffee or your tea or add some sugar to a recipe, use whatever you want, you know, don't try to use something that's less bad if it's going to make whatever food you're eating, less enjoyable. That doesn't make sense. The only reason you are adding sugar to this drink is because you find it more enjoyable. So if you're going to, use whatever you want, and understand that, again as Dallas said, the less often to you do this, the lessen you use, the healthier you'll be.

**Scott Iardella:** Okay, alright, makes total sense to me. Alright, here's maybe the million dollar question in the interview, and only if you are comfortable answering this. But, what is the typical day of eating look like for you guys, and you know if go through every single detail, but kind of what is your breakfast, what is your lunch, your dinner and what you kind of eat for in-between meals?

**Dallas Hartwig:** Sure, I mean that's – and that's totally, you know, it kind of varies, you know a lot day-to-day --

**Melissa Hartwig:** We walk through McDonald's at 9:00 AM, pick up our Happy Meal value meal. (laughing)

**Scott Iardella:** Right, that's what I was thinking.

**Dallas Hartwig:** But no, I mean, pretty, you know, we're busy and so, while we enjoy cooking we also aren't always able to make really elaborate, very fancy-schmancy meal. So some of the stuff like, you know, rollout of the bed in the morning, and you know, this morning it was four or five pastured eggs and some spinach and some chopped bell pepper and a whole avocado.

I went mountain biking this morning, and I was up at a place that happened to have a good restaurant, and I had two bison burgers, medium rare, no bun. I did extra guacamole on the side and I had a double side salad. That was my lunch.

**Scott Iardella:** Nice.

**Dallas Hartwig:** As far as snacks in between, it kind of depends. We don't always recommend that people choose the snack unless they really feel like their energy levels are flagging. We think that when you make consistently good food choices, you should have quite a few hours of satiety between meals, and you shouldn't necessarily be tied to the clock where you have to eat every two hours. So a lot of that is about making good food choices, at mealtime, that sets you up for success for the next 3, 4, 5 hours between meals, where you don't have to like run for the snack.

**Scott Iardella:** Definitely.

**Dallas Hartwig:** All the time.

**Melissa Hartwig:** We try to, usually our most elaborate meal as dinner, and that's usually just because we have the most time to prepare. Let's see yesterday we did some grass-fed organic burger on the grill, we did like

some rosemary in the burger, and some salt and paper, and we made some sweet potatoes spears in the oven with chipotle dipping sauce from [Paleo Comfort Foods](#), which is one of our favorite cookbooks.

And the night before, we made a really awesome homemade Tom kha gai soup, like a Thai curry soup with whitefish; I think we used cod and some zucchini noodles, and some spinach. So we tried to play around with different recipes from some of our favorite cookbooks, and some of our favorite online sites and Dallas is actually pretty good in kitchen and can whip up a pretty descent recipe all in and of himself. So, sometimes he kind of takes the range and comes up with some pretty good stuff.

**Scott Iardella:** Sometimes?

**Dallas Hartwig:** Sometimes, not so much good stuff.

**Melissa Hartwig:** Oh yeah, not that all day.

**Scott Iardella:** Alright, excellent. Real quick, just fruits, what fruit would you recommend? What fruits do you guys eat?

**Melissa Hartwig:** Sure. So, we tend to very intuitively eat fruits very seasonally. Right know it's summertime, and we've been eating a lot of fruits, it's in season, it's delicious. We can get a lot stuff relatively locally, we are doing you know, so we're doing different fruits as they come into season. Lately we've been doing a lot of berries and some cherries, maybe some melon you know they're really darkly richly colored fruits, are your best bet from a nutrient density perspective.

So strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, even some kiwi, kind of one of that rules of thumb we use, as if it's colored all the way through the fruit, like a strawberry is, that's going to be more nutrient dense, than something that's colored, just on the outside, like say an apple, but you know again in the fall when fall comes and it's apple season, we're going eat some applies and then in the winter when grapes are being imported from Chili at \$8 a pound, we're not really eating fruits.

**Scott Iardella:** Right.

**Melissa Hartwig:** Yeah, I think it's great to do a lot of fruit in the summertime, or more fruit than you might do the rest of year as long as that's a seasonal thing. And we think that varying your diet as well as some other lifestyle factor seasonally is just a really healthy way to go.

**Scott Iardella:** Cool. As we're wrapping up here can you, I wonder if you could just touch on your whole 30 program and where people can go to get more information on that?

**Melissa Hartwig:** Sure. The whole 30 is our nutritional, kind of our nutritional reset, we outline it in detail and it starts with food. It's available on our website, there are so many resources that I'll talk about in just a minute.

Essentially, the whole thirty comes in two parts, the first part is an elimination program where we ask you as part of that kind of self experiment, that we talked about at the beginning of the interview. We asked you to eliminate potentially problematic foods from your diet, for a full thirty days. So that you could experience, what life is like without some of the potentially negative effects that these foods are having on your health. So you pull them up for thirty days, it's not the whole 365, it's just the thirty day program, and then at the end of those thirty days you reintroduce those foods very systematically, very scientifically, one food group at a time, and we've got a full reintroduction schedule in the book, so that you can really evaluate how those foods maybe affecting how you look, how you feel, your health condition, your quality of life.

And then really after that, you've gained the awareness to take that information with you for the rest of your lives, you know you've done the elimination, you've done the re introduction, the program is designed to help you change the relationship with food, to change your tastes and to gain awareness, about how the foods you used to eat are effecting you, and

then going forward you can apply that information however you see fit in an educated and informed fashion. In a fashion that you couldn't possibly employ, and tell you did this form of self experimentation.

**Scott Iardella:** Awesome, you know I'll just say one quick thing, you know it's an awesome program, I mean it's super simple, outlined very well, you know it makes it really easy for people to go ahead and do this, you know for thirty days. Now, who would you say should start this program immediately?

**Dallas Hartwig:** Everyone.

**Scott Iardella:** Yeah most people, yeah you're right.

**Dallas Hartwig:** That's actually only partly joking; I say everyone only because we think this is a good place to start for basically everyone to learn how some foods that they probably been commonly eating, affect them individually. So you know being able to kind of go through that process, when we talk about the whole thirty as a awareness project, is like a learning tool, will then allow you to make more educated choices going forward.

So if you have athletic performance goals, if you have any sort of disease process, or condition kind of going on and it's a huge very far reaching effect of this systematic inflammation, sometimes exasperated or driven by food choices, and so we think, make some of those food kind of corrections, see how that effects you, take some notes, be systematic about the reintroduction of those foods, and then you can learn hail as an example, I noticed that when I eat any sort of gluten grains or anything made from wheat, rye or barley, I really get kind of messed up in the head, like it kind of makes me sad and kind of just a little bit down and kind of apathetic. When I learned that, with the systemic reintroduction of some of those things, I look at bread now I'm like, no way, no how, it's just not worth it. So anytime you have any of these kind of diseases conditions, things you're struggling with, food cravings are really big one, flagging energy levels that

are inconsistent. Any of these things can be directly and powerfully impacted by food, we think should and could be a really important driver of people to consider doing the Whole 30.

**Scott Iardella:** Awesome, so pretty much everyone should really take action with this program?

**Dallas Hartwig:** Pretty much everybody.

**Melissa Hartwig:** Yeah.

**Scott Iardella:** One other last thing I will ask you about, and then you can feel free to, you know, share your parting thoughts. But I noticed you guys have some national seminars going on, and I wonder if you would like to maybe explain what you guys cover in those seminars, and who should attend those?

**Melissa Hartwig:** Yeah, we actually have seminars, I'm going to say worldwide now, because it makes us sound so much more important, but we're actually doing some stuff this fall in Reykjavík, Iceland and some events in Karlstad Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark so--

**Scott Iardella:** Wow.

**Melissa Hartwig:** --and we have done stuff in Canada, so technically that makes us worldwide.

**Dallas Hartwig:** International.

**Melissa Hartwig:** You know, our workshops are almost a full day, they run 9:00 to 4:00 with an hour of lunch break, and we talk about nutrition a lot. A lot of it is the foundation of this workshop. We talk about healthy nutrition, some of the stuff we talk about in the book, we try to explain it in a way that's very accessible, why you need to focus on nutrition, you know, what kind of nutritional choices you can make, how to implement this, we

do a lot of Q&A. But for the last couple of months, we've been employing a lot lifestyle information into our workshops as well, so we talk a lot about, for example, the concept of health versus performance.

If you exercise, if you play a sport, if you're an athlete of some sort, how to identify whether you're training for health and what that goal looks like and how to identify whether you are training for performance and what that looks like, and how those two functions are not always the same. We talk a lot about our health equation, which factors in things like, not only nutrition but sleep and stress and exercise and recovery, and how all of those factors play together and come together to form your overall big picture, kind of health status, and how you can kind of triage for yourself and where to focus your attention on. So it's lifestyle stuff that I think is really, could be underserved in our community, where people are talking about nutrition, they are talking about exercise, they are talking about recovery and mobility but we want to talk about how to put all those pieces together, so that you can figure out, kind of in your own life where you might be deficient and how to go about moving yourself towards optimal health when just changing your diet isn't enough.

**Scott Iardella:** Wow, well I tell you that sounds awesome. I didn't realize that.

I didn't, I didn't realize that. I think you guys are actually doing more maybe down here in South Florida, in Miami. So, I may have to look at that date and I am avid learner, you know I mean anything I can learn from you guys.

**Melissa Hartwig:** Yeah, we'll be in Miami on November 17th.

Our full workshop schedule is available on our website, it's [Whole9life.com](http://Whole9life.com) and if you go to our side bar our entire workshop schedule through the end of January 2013 is listed with information about the seminars and information about how to register. So, we would love to see you in Miami.

**Scott Iardella:** Oh fantastic. Well, I wanted to thank you so much for all this valuable content information, I mean, I could easily keep you on here for another hour or more, asking you question after question, but I think you have definitely given so much during this interview. Thank you so much. Is there anything you'd like to say before we sign off?

**Melissa Hartwig:** I just want to let people know where to go to get more information, about the book in the Whole30.

**Scott Iardella:** Sure, sure.

**Melissa Hartwig:** So again our website is [whole9life.com](http://whole9life.com). Our Whole30 program is available for free on our website. It's also outlined in detail in the book, [It Starts With Food](#) and we've got tons of resources for people completing this program. We have got a free Whole30 forum available on our website, where people can ask questions, get, you know, partner up with a buddy, get a lot of support. We've got our new Whole30 daily email subscription service where every single day for your entire 30 days, you're getting a customized email specific to that day in your inbox.

**Scott Iardella:** That is awesome.

**Melissa Hartwig:** With some accountability and some other great things. So we just want people to come and check it out and really just give the program 30 days and see how changing the food that you can put on your plate really can change your life.

**Scott Iardella:** That is really awesome. Now, I am just curious if you had feedback on the email over 30 days and how that's worked for you?

**Melissa Hartwig:** Yeah, we just got our first survey back, and so far the results have been phenomenal.

More than 95% of people said they would absolutely recommend the Whole30 daily to someone new to the Whole30 and we've had emails from people saying, I have done the Whole30 before and it went okay. But now

that I have got this daily kind of newsletter subscription in my inbox every day, it really help me maximize my result.

**Scott Iardella:** That's fantastic.

**Melissa Hartwig:** So, yeah the feedback has been totally great.

**Scott Iardella:** Awesome, awesome. Dallas any last comments?

**Dallas Hartwig:** No sir, I think Melissa handled everything.

**Scott Iardella:** Alright, well thank you guys so much. This has been absolutely awesome and thank you so much, maybe I'll see you in November.

**Dallas Hartwig:** Thanks so much for having us.

**Melissa Hartwig:** It was fun, yeah. Thanks so much Scott.

**Scott Iardella:** You got it!

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**Resources mentioned:**

To find Dallas and Melissa, go to [Whole9Life.com](http://Whole9Life.com)

To get started immediately, **take action** with the [Whole30 program](#).