



Transcript of “Making Strong the New Skinny with Shana Alverson”

Bulletproof Radio podcast #110



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Dave: Hey, everyone it's Dave Asprey the Bulletproof Executive. Today's cool facts of the day is that some people's sweat doesn't stink. It turns out you have a gene called ABCC11, and it decides whether or not you're going to make wet earwax or dry earwax. What's kind of interesting there is that the earwax type you have determines whether you're going to have a certain chemical in your armpits that bacteria eat. That's what going to cause the bad smell in your armpits.

If you have dry earwax, you're lucky because you probably don't have BO. If you're searching for a perspective mate, maybe those with dry earwax are going to be more attractive because they don't stink.

On today's show, four-time CrossFit Games individual competitor and head trainer-owner of a different kind of CrossFit gym is onboard. We're talking about [CrossFit East Decatur](#), run by Shana Alverson, and we're going to talk about how women exercise, paleo-lifestyle, and kicking ass in general.

Shana, welcome to the show.

Shana: Thanks for having me, Dave. I had a little trouble getting past the earwax part of the intro.

Dave: You know you want to stick your finger in and look right now to see what kind of earwax you have, don't you?

Shana: I've already got ... I'm familiar with my own earwax ... okay. I already know.

Dave: I've never actually judged whether mine's wet or dry, because how would I know since I've never felt anyone else's earwax.

Shana: So you have no point of reference is what you're saying.

Dave: I might think it's dry, but it's kind of wet ... how could I know. Certainly I never smell, so I must have the dry kind, right?

- Shana: I smell all the time. I'm keeping it real. I work out.
- Dave: I'm just saying ... I never ... I didn't think we'd really hit on body odor as our first topic here, but I can tell you, since I started really eliminating the first trace toxins from my diet, I don't get BO. It really takes days and days, and if I get it it's because I ate something, and I can usually tell you what it was that gave me BO. It's really weird to not stink ... but I don't think that's earwax gene-related. You're just thinking ...
- Shana: I wish I could say when I cleaned up my diet I didn't stink as much, but maybe it's because I went from old-school working out in the air-conditioned gym, and now it's a classic thing that there's no climate control in your environment so, in the summertime it's like.
- Dave: Plus you live in Georgia, right? It is hot and wet in Georgia.
- Shana: Oh, man. They call it, I live in Atlanta essentially, so Hot-lanta is pretty accurate.
- Dave: Wow. The few times I've been to Atlanta I've always been amazed that you step out of the airplane and you're like, "Am I in Atlanta, or am I walking on someone's tongue." The moisture in the air is so wet.
- Shana: There's not very many good hair days during the summer, throwing that out there.
- Dave: When you have bright blue hair, every day is a good hair day isn't it?
- Shana: You'd think. You'd think.
- Dave: By the way, if you're listening in this car, Shana has this intense blue hair that's very superhero-looking.
- Shana: I'm just trying to channel my inner Wonder Woman.
- Dave: Super ripped arms, too.
- Shana: You can't even see my arms.

Dave: I can see your shoulders. Now we can see your arms ... even better.

You're been doing CrossFit since 2007, so you're old-school CrossFit. What got you into it so early?

Shana: We would have to back up probably ... I started exercising super-young, lifting weights. I joined a gym when I was in my early teens. I don't even think I was old enough to drive myself to the gym yet.

Dave: You're mid-30s now, right, so it was 20 years ago you joined a gym?

Shana: Oh, yeah, I'm 37; I'll be 38 in May. I started exercising at a gym roughly around 14 or 15. Basically my parents sat me down and they were like, "Hey, kind, we want you to lose weight." That started this life-long journey of mine for health and performance, and a lot of ... I had a lot of body issues. I used to be pretty overweight. I'm 5' 3 3/4" and was roughly 175 pounds. When I started CrossFit in 2007 I was 120 pounds, and now I'm 140 pounds, so I've actually gained 20 pounds doing CrossFit.

Dave: I'm assuming those pounds are in all the right places.

Shana: I think they are. Whether anybody else thinks so, really could give a crap. That's all that matters, I guess.

Dave: It's awesome, it's your body, and you're taking control of your biology. It's yours to make it how you want it, and I think it's awesome to have people on the show who have just stood up and said, "Looks, that's how I want, and honestly I don't care if that means weird piercings in your ears ..." or some other weird thing. If that's how you wanted it, good for you for making it that way.

I'm guessing ... because all the people I know who do CrossFit have a look like they could kick your ass and break you in two ... so I'm guessing, from what I've seen, you're pretty darn muscular and you like it that way.

Shana: I think I would consider myself a strong woman, and as far as I'm concerned my physical appearance is just a manifestation of the strong

person that I am on the inside, so it's appropriate, I guess. If you're someone who is not going to relate or be comfortable dealing with a strong woman, then you probably will be turned off by my appearance, so the rate types of people are going to gravitate towards, maybe subconsciously, that body type.

Dave: I saw a cool bumper sticker the other day that said, "Strong is the new skinny." What do you think about that? I've never found skinny to be particularly attractive.

Shana: That's a slippery-slope, Dave. It's so funny because there seemed to be these two camps, so it's like half the people are like, "Yeah, strong is the new skinny. If you don't have muscle you're a loser." Then the other half of the camp is like, "Strong is not the new skinny. You just are the shape that you are," and it's very defensive language.

Dave: I like voices of both sides that you have.

Shana: Well, it's hard to distinguish one from the other. What does that even mean ... strong is the new skinny? I guess that would be like skinny is the thing that everybody wants to be, and now strong is the thing everybody wants?

Dave: That was how I read it was that there's been this uber-thin look that's supposed to have been sexy, the gaunt, starved look ... that comes from the modeling industry because the camera adds pounds. This was on the back of some kind of 4-wheel-drive truck with kayak racks on top, driven by a woman who obviously did CrossFit.

She was basically giving a middle finger to the Barbie culture. That was okay. I can respect that.

Shana: Choices. Everybody wants different things in life, don't they? If you want to be a skinny, helpless, weak, frail, waify thing who ... you need a man to lean on as you walk down the sidewalk ... what have you. There's probably a little bit of feminism in me ... just a little bit.

Dave: Tell us how you really feel.

Shana: I probably shouldn't talk trash about celebrities, but there's one celebrity in particular who subscribes to this super-low-cal vegan diet, and she and her trainer have a workout video where they tell women they should never lift more than 3 pounds. I'm like, "Really?" I think your baby weighs more than 3 pounds, so unless you're paying someone to pick up the baby ... which probably she is.

I'm offended by that. Really? Three pounds?

Dave: Not only that. My first book, the [Better Baby Book](#), is about fertility and pregnancy health, and building strong babies. A vegan woman who lifts only 3-pound weights is simply not biologically equipped to have super-healthy offspring.

There are enough recovering vegans in the [Bulletproof Forums](#), and on paleo in general where my own experience as a raw vegan ... it did not improve my health. I did get a brief burst of really good stuff from it, but after that I got some autoimmunity.

It makes me sad to hear those things, and I'm happy to see it rejected; but you're probably towards more of the strong ... physically strong-looking side of things; and you live in the South. How do people respond to you? Do you get treated differently because you're in really good shape?

Shana: That's a good question. I don't know. I think of myself as this big ball of energy, and I don't really ... I guess I don't wait for people to relate to me. A lot of people tell me they're intimidated by me, and even men tell me, because of my personality maybe, because I'm very forward, I tend to be really frank. I try to be truthful without imparting judgmentalism at the same time.

I guess I never really consider how my physique makes other people relate to me. It has more to do with, if I feel good about myself, I'm going to project that outwards and attract other people who respond to that. I think, in general, people respond pretty well. I do get a lot of comments like, "Uh, do you work out?"



Dave: The world's best pickup line. You're all, "No. I just crush men like you for lunch." What are you going to say, right?

Shana: When they ask me if I work I just laugh, because ... yeah.

Dave: Massively obvious, right?

Shana: No, it's natural. I just woke up one day ... oh, God!

Dave: This is all butter. I just eat butter and I look like this. It's totally natural.

Shana: I will say I can relate to you because I was a vegetarian for 7 years. When I first decided, "I'm going to try to qualify for the CrossFit Games," I'm like, "Look, I've to do things the whole way," and so I started back in 2009, I guess. No, it would have been 2008, because that's when I decided, "I'm going to train for 2009," which is the first year that they had regionals and you had to qualify.

I had dabbled in raw vegan, did a work study at the [Living Foods Institute here in Atlanta](#) with Brenda Cobb I don't know if you know here. If you were a raw vegan for a while, you might know who she is. I learned you're only supposed to eat things that aren't cooked. I did. I got really skinny, but I never really felt awesome.

My physique changed pretty dramatically when I went on paleo. It's really eating meat and vegetables, pretty natural things.

Dave: What do you recommend people do. You run a CrossFit gym, or a CrossFit box, and you have clients who come through. You have men, you have women. They have to ask you how to eat, because eating is so integrally tied with training. What do you usually tell them?

Shana: What I have found is that CrossFit can be pretty overwhelming to people. It tends to be an intimidating program to get people started on, and they come in with this mentality that, "If I exercise enough, I can eat whatever I want."

Dave: Not.

Shana: Exactly, and those us who have been active for a really long time, we know how true that euphemism that you are what you eat ... that's you're building your body on the fuel that you feed it every day. "Abs are made in the kitchen," ... that's a very true statement. I would say your physique is over 90% what your intake is.

When they first come in, I throwing the diet at them ... and I hesitate to call it a diet. To me it's just the way that I eat now. When I throw that at them right off, they get overwhelmed. What ends up happening is we get them focused on their performance in the gym, which works really well because we have the whiteboard. It keeps track of who got the best core of the day, or, "Did you do better on this workup than you did the last time we did it?"

Now getting them away from being obsessed with what they're eating and burning calories, and getting them focused on performance, frees up this energy so that, then, they're like, "How can I perform better?" Then we're like ... bam ... "You have to eat right. Here's what you need to eat," and they are more receptive to it because now it's more than just ... I'm trying to get my body to look a certain way. Now it's ... it means something performance-wise as well.

That's a double whammy, and it will make them more receptive to changing ... people get addicted to the way that they eat, and they lean on it. It's a crutch. I know as well as anyone.

Dave: That makes great sense. You're coaching them in that direction, telling them, "If you don't eat right you won't perform, and if you don't eat right you probably won't look good either," so you're tying those two things together so people get it. Does it work? You're in a part of the world where obesity ... at least part of the US ... where obesity is higher on average than the West or the East Coast.

Do you deal with a lot of people who come in like, "I want to do CrossFit, and I weight 300 pounds."

Shana: Yeah. We've had multiple people at our gym along that have lost over 100 pounds. They're in the triple digits of weight loss.

Dave: That's so awesome. Talk about life-changing.

Shana: We had one girl that actually didn't break through ... she had plateaued at 200 pounds but was obsessed with getting below 200 pounds. We made her bring us her scale. It lives at the gym now; she's not allowed to weigh herself. It wasn't until she did that that she broke through the plateau, and now she's under 200 and has stayed there and continued to become a better state.

It's so easy to get focused on that number. That really doesn't mean anything. It's just messed up.

Dave: The biggest thing is means is, "Did you poop?" Sorry.

Shana: No, that's true.

Dave: "Are you drinking enough water?" "Are you inflamed?"

You've probably seen the study that says if you check your weight every day you lose less weight.

Shana: Oh, my God.

Dave: There's actually a study like that. Checking daily doesn't help you do it.

Shana: Michelle Kenney is a friend of mine. She's another CrossFit Games competitor. Some friends of mine have ... one of your competitor podcasts, Barbell Shrug. I was listening to her podcast with them the other day, and she was saying, "I got on the scale the other day and I weight 142 pounds, and I freaked out because I'm so a girl and I still have this ..."

Oh, my God! I'm getting like ... because the scales are the same thing, I'm looking at her, and she's ripped. You can see every muscle striation. It's so ... and she knows ... logically she knows that, but there's still something about that number that, in her brain, is connected to, "140 means I'm overweight."

Dave: It means no one will love me. That's bad.

Shana: Yeah, or someone's going to judge you for looking a certain way.

Dave: I certainly felt that way when I was 300 pounds. I felt unworthy, honestly. You feel like you're lazy and it's your fault, and embarrassed by it. I was doing everything I could. It just wouldn't come off because I had all the wrong data. One of the reasons that I write the stuff I write is like, "If someone had just told me, I would have done anything on earth."

It's annoying to me that I had to do so many different random things before I hit on what worked and made it repeatable.

Shana: Totally, and it can be in the trainer, too, that the conventional messages, the traditional ones that people are getting the most often, are the ones that are the most messed up.

When I first started eating a paleo diet, my dad was like, "But the doctors say you need to eat grains," and I was like, "I've been one of the 50 fittest women on earth two years in a row now, Dad. I think I'm doing all right."

Dave: You're like, "The doctors ..."

Shana: "That's not what they say."

Dave: The doctor is fat; don't look.

Shana: I know that, but it's so and the ... don't even get me started on the food pyramid.

Dave: I actually started a website once, came out with, "Choose My Plate." I came with, "Lose My Plate." I was like, "Here's what's wrong with it." I don't think it's still up, it was just a little dorky site, but it was like, "Let's fix the plate and just rearrange it entirely," where it's ... fat. All of a sudden, then people feel better.

You've gotten past that. Have you gotten you dad to try [Bulletproof Coffee](#)?

Shana: Oh, my gosh.

Dave: That's always the hardest one.

Shana: My dad and I are not ... he's not going to do anything that is my idea. I'm not even going to try. If he hears about it and he does it one day, that's cool. He's like a cat; he does what he wants. He's just going to be that way. It's okay.

Dave: I totally get it. I know that you drink Bulletproof Coffee because I sent it to you. Do you use it before a workout ... how you time your coffee intake? Nice mug there. If you're hearing this in your car, there's a Bulletproof Coffee mug that randomly appeared inside the car.

Shana: Random or not. I love that question because I think what I do for fuel is a lot different than what a lot of athletes in particular do for fuel. Understand that I have experimented with this stuff ... for me personally ... for the last 15 years I've been playing around with diet and nutrition and performance. I do.

[Bulletproof Coffee](#) is pretty much my breakfast. I have grass-fed butter. There's also some coconut cream in there to make it just a little bit lighter.

Dave: I like coconut cream in there; it's good.

Shana: I just started to use [Brain Octane](#), because that was in my January package.

Dave: Do you feel the difference between the old [Upgraded MCT](#) and the [Brain Octane](#)?

Shana: I don't know. I don't know. I have to be honest. I've only been on it for two weeks now, and I didn't use [MCT](#) really before that.

Dave: Then you're not going to feel the difference between the two. Most people, I'd say 8 out of 10, are like, "Whoa! Different," and other people are like, "I don't feel anything."

Shana: My breakfast for a really long time has been either pure protein and fat, or now it's mostly fat but occasionally, if I know I'm going to have some

time between when I drink the coffee and when I work out, I'll have some protein ... almost pure protein.

Dave: Did you see my post about women and intermittent fasting, by any chance?

Shana: No, I didn't, but I have played around a little bit, and I've played around even more with ketogenic diets, and can also give you some feedback about that.

Dave: I want to do that, but first, it looks like it got dark in the light we got from the window. You might want to turn on that overhead light, even if we get some glare; that way people can see you, because you are a super Elvira.

Shana: It's 6:00 here now.

Dave: It's getting dark. Why don't you just hop up and turn on the overhead that we had on earlier. That way people can see you. In the meantime, if you're listening in your car, we had really nice natural light and now we have some interior light, but at least you can see.

The joys of doing podcasts from home.

Shana: Is that better?

Dave: Much better. You're back. We've got a little bit of glare, but people can see your cool blue hair now, so it's totally legit.

You were going to talk about ketosis, because women have a different experience of ketosis than men do. What's your take on being in full-blown ketosis?

Shana: Women do, and also athletes do. Being someone who got into it for science and nutrition, because I was overweight, I still think I have a little bit of obsession with, "Oh, my God. I have to be skinny," ... or not skinny, but I want to be lean. I don't want any fat on my body anywhere.

That's not necessarily the best thing for performance, and so I've basically consumed less than 50 g of carbs a day for over six months. I'll occasionally carb-load, but I can go into ketosis really easily. I don't know if that's an experience that other women have had, but what I have found works really well for me is to do a version of intermittent fasting where I have almost only protein and fat before I work out.

Normally I work out somewhere between 11:00 a.m. ... usually I'm wrapped up by 5:30 p.m., so I don't have any carbs until after I work out.

Dave: That's a smart strategy, but you're still eating some carbs.

Shana: No, I am, but when I was trying to stay on the ketogenic diet, I got really depressed and was having some other health ... I mean, the depression got really awful. I was moody and cranky all the time. My performance in the gym obviously went down.

Interesting ...

Dave: Did you get PMS?

Shana: I don't remember, but probably.

Dave: Salient memory, for sure.

Shana: That could be my old age, man. Okay?

The notable thing for me was that I wasn't skinny. I wasn't as lean as I wanted to be, and that's what I was expecting.

Dave: You were getting inflammation from the protein, probably.

Shana: That's possible. I was still eating vegetables, but they're like the thermogenic vegetables which are zero net carb. Everyone right now is hearing. "

I reached out to Rob Wolff because he's someone that I've just been an acquaintance for quite a few years.

Dave: He's awesome. We hung out at PaleoFX, and we'd email back and forth for a while on coffee and stuff like that.

Shana: I could right now send him a message, and he would respond to me like that, which ... to me that's awesome. He's so down to earth. He was like, "Uh, yeah, you might want to think about eating some carbs," ... adding carbs back in.

It's been playing around with what ... you'll probably like this, too ... right after I work out I have some protein, and as a starch to add to the protein shake I started using raw potato starch.

Dave: Is it working for you? I'm doing some testing on that myself. What's your experience of resistant starch, or raw potato starch ... raw potato flour?

Shana: So far I like it. I just started this the last couple of weeks. Before that I have tried various other forms of starches. Post workout ... I'm allergic to corn. I think I react worse to corn than to gluten, which I don't ... I think that's fairly more common allergy than people know about. Corn is in everything.

Dave: Yes.

Shana: The waxy maize stuff didn't work for me, and then there was another combination called Three Fuel, make this super-quality product, but their starch source comes from waxy maize. I tried it, and I was like, "I don't know if I'm really jiving with this so much," but so far so good.

Dave: Excellent. I tried ... first potato, but I'm nitrite-sensitive, so I did potato for a couple days and, of course, predictably ... rashes. Then I switched to plantain starch, raw plantain, which is one of the higher-resistance starch things, and eventually to UCAN.

What I found was mostly gas and hives. It totally didn't work for me.

Shana: Plantain starch?

Dave: Just from any of the resistant starches, and I think ... I wrote about this in the first write-up; I have another one coming about that ... it depends on what's in your gut. It's going to cause a flare-up of whatever lives there in your colon. Even one of the guys who's a primary experimenter with resistant starch, he's like, "Oh, look. In my genetic profile of my poop I have this funny bacteria that normally is only found on glaciers." I'm like, "Do you really want stuff in your gut from a glacier?" Maybe it's good, maybe it's not. I don't know. Given that I used to have fat people bacteria in my gut, I don't know. Maybe I need a fecal transplant or something.

I don't know.

Shana: Do you mean that the knowledge he has about his own poop means he has to collect some of his own poop on a regular basis? ... and I think that's fantastic ... like, "Oh, don't mess with that spoon."

Dave: Eww! "Not those dishes. No, no." That's bad. Then again, you have dogs with you. I see dogs roaming around in the background, and all dogs know that cats make Tootsie Rolls ... so that's all I'm saying.

Shana: I was a vet tech for a really long time, so I could picture it to come out of a dog's orifice, it's been in my mouth.

Dave: Eww! You might have just reduced your kissability with that statement.

Shana: People are like, "I've got to turn this podcast off. What is she talking about?"

Dave: That's a whole new record on the podcast. We're almost to 100 episodes, and this is the first time that's come up.

Shana: It's too soon? Okay. You heard it here first. I invented the...

Dave: Every time I go to a friend's house now, especially the biohacker people I hang with, I'm going to be looking at the spoon funny going, "Is this the one?"

Shana: Stir your coffee with that.



Dave: The funny thing is ... if you're not watching this ... I said that right as you were taking a drink, Shana, of Bulletproof Coffee. I thought you were going to spit Bulletproof Coffee on your computer. That would also be the first for a podcast, so I'm glad that didn't happen.

I've got to ask you one more question, and this is something ... it's a real question.

[J.J. Virgin](#), who's a good friend and author of the Virgin Diet and really an expert in food sensitivity, she's been telling me I need to make her a Bulletproof Babe t-shirt. She's totally used [Bulletproof Coffee](#) to recover from a surgery ... not just coffee but Bulletproof, the whole products, collagen and all that ... to recover from a surgery.

She says she wants a Bulletproof Babe t-shirt, and I'm trying to figure out: should I actually make Bulletproof Babe t-shirts, or is that sexist? Is that something you'd wear?

Shana: I would wear it, yeah, especially if it was a tank top.

Dave: You CrossFit women and tank tops ... what is it? I hear you.

Shana: We work hard for our guns, and we want you to see them.

Dave: Exactly. Tank top. I'm hearing it. We're going to have to do that. J.J.'s ... she's not a CrossFitter, but she has arms that make Michelle Obama feel weak. Same sort of thing. Women with arms always want tank tops, and if you're doing CrossFitting you're going to have arms. I hear you.

Speaking of women and tank tops, what's your take on CrossFit when women are pregnant?

Shana: I'm fine with it, as long as you don't take a picture of yourself in a sports bra doing an overhead squat, and then post it on the internet somewhere; because it's really obnoxious to me. I'm sure that ... "I'm a pregnant woman doing CrossFit, so I'm going to take a photo in a sports bra and put it on the internet."

Dave: You don't like the round tummy look, huh? I get it. There's a pretty strong foundation in human performance and focus and energy and drive and all that, and you don't need to add controversy on top of it; but it is a ...

The whole kind of CrossFit brand is a little bit in your face and confrontational, not in a negative way but just like, "I can kick ass. Can you?" kind of perspective.

Shana: I think that some of the bravado was appropriate back when they were a grassroots company and they had 30 affiliates. Now they're growing so quickly. When we opened up in 2008 there were 10 CrossFit affiliates in the Greater Atlanta area. Now we're about to have our sixth anniversary, and there are 90-something.

Dave: Are you worried that they could do like what Subway did ... there's one on every corner, and then there wasn't enough people to train in them? Is that a risk? Yeah.

Shana: Yeah. It's a huge risk. Ultimately it's a great business, and I wish that they're a little bit more rewarding of those of us who've been around and doing good things for the CrossFit name for the last 6 or 7 years, and not let brand new affiliates open up across the street.

Dave: What could a person do to find a quality CrossFit gym to go to? If I was brand new to CrossFit and I wanted to find a place to go, what's the process I should go through to vet people, to understand that they can meet my needs?

Shana: That's a challenge, too. I think people naturally are going to look at CrossFit, they're going to see, "Oh, this is CrossFit Decatur, and [CrossFit East Decatur](#). They must be the same thing, just the location is the only thing that's different." In reality we're only affiliates; we're not franchises.

As long as I pay my dues and stay in good standing with HQ, I can pretty much ... I could run Zumba classes and call myself CrossFit if I wanted to.

My advice to someone who's looking for a CrossFit gym is go talk to the trainers there. What is the environment like? How much experience do the trainers have? Talk to the other clients. What has their experience been like?

I'm very proud of my staff and the fact that all of the trainers at my gym have been coaching some form of sport or exercise for 5 years or more, and you're not going to get that at every CrossFit gym.

Dave: You want to look at the experience of the people there, and that's really important because a lot of people who listen to the Bulletproof Executive radio, they're not CrossFitters. There are a ton of people who are CrossFitters who do listen to it, and for those of them who are not CrossFitters, I'm sure that they've thought about doing it.

With the amount I sleep and the amount of stress in my life, just creating content and all the things I'm working on to make happen, I don't think I would recover enough if I worked out 6 or 7 days a week ... in fact, I know for sure I wouldn't ... but I love the intensity that CrossFit brings. That is exactly how to exercise.

As Amanda Allen was saying on another podcast ... she's a world champion CrossFitter ... she's ...

Shana: From Australia.

Dave: She was saying, "I have to recover like a professional." I'm like, "I don't have that much recovery time build into my day, so I'm concerned that I would just not stick together if I did what you do."

Shana: You wouldn't be doing what she does.

Dave: Oh, God, no. If I was on her schedule, it would kick my ass. It would chew me up.

Shana: There's no way. Even our athletes that are wanting to compete on a local level, a very small scale, we're like, "If that's your goal, you just need to be doing the workout of the day every single day." We're closed on Sundays, so you would be doing 6 on 1 off. Our coaches have the

experience and the knowledge to help you scale for what is going to work best for you. That's what the coaches are there for, to give you that guidance.

Someone like Amanda Allen or myself, training to compete at the elitist level of the sport, we're doing sometimes 4 and 5 workouts a day 5 to 6 days a week, and then I've heard that there are CrossFit athletes that don't take any rest days, which I cannot fathom.

I'm 37 now, and I can't ... I don't want to use my age as any type of mental limitation because, honestly, if we're using linear thinking and evidence-based proof, I am the oldest I've ever been right now and I'm the fittest that I've ever been, so I can't use age as, "Oh, it's an illness. It just came upon me suddenly when I hit 34 years old."

I don't want to fall into that trap, but the reality is that I don't have all the enzymes that I used to have when I was younger, and I do have to pay extra special attention to my diet, to my sleep, how much stress is in my life. Just for the average person, you're coming in doing one workout a day, I think you could totally, totally recover ... definitely.

Dave: Then there's a question. I'm just watching the clock here to make sure we get out podcast done in time. It's a question that ...

Shana: I told you I could talk a lot. I warned you.

Dave: You did warn me, and you were totally right about it. No ... I've actually appreciated your comments a lot. There's the question that I always ask on the podcast, the one about your top 3 recommendations for people who want to perform better in every way, not just in a gym or anywhere else, but just ... what have you learned in your life, the 3 most important things that other people [kick ass to 00:37:13] learn.

Shana: I thought you might ask me this.

Dave: No looking at your notes.

Shana: I remember one, and this is going to sound totally obvious like, "Duh!" but exercise. I used to be really horribly depressed, suffered from

depression from the time I was a small child. My mother tells me stories about coming home from second grade and being very sad, and not knowing what was wrong. When I started exercising, my mood changed, and I think there is something very empowering and self-satisfying about working out.

There's really not that many things that empower people, particularly women, in this day and age. It's so obvious. I am stronger. I just lifted this weight. Yes, I'm powerful, and that feeling of empowerment can carry throughout the rest of your life, not just what you do in the gym.

That's number one is exercise is really important. You don't have to be CrossFit. If Zumba works for you, go for it ... walking ... any type of activity that makes you feel good and empowers you.

Number two I would say never settle. Don't settle for anything. If things are good now, they could be great. If things are great now, what if they could be awesome. If things are awesome, what is that next level going to feel like?

I think it's always okay to reach for that next level. Always reach, and you'll accomplish more.

Something that's been really important for, and more of a challenge for me, and this will be my third thing, is that you can find things to celebrate all the time. It's really easy to focus on the negative and the things that get you down in life, but I have found that looking for the little ways that I win on a daily basis are what keep me coming back, keep me motivated, keep my energy up, make me be an acceptable person to be around.

Those are my three. If I have a fourth, I would say dye your hair and find your inner superhero.

Dave: Nice. I tried that once, and it didn't last very long.

Shana: Did you have like a Mohawk?

Dave: When I was in Tibet I was like, "You know what? No one gives a crap what my hair looks like," ... this was 10 years ago ... so I just shaved it. There's no water in Tibet. In order to wash yourself, you get a little washbasin every two days outside a guest house, and you're trying to ... I'm like, "Who wants hair in that environment?"

Shana: Oh, man.

Dave: I think I went 25 days without a shower. I was like, "All right," and then my hair grew back. It was only the stubble. I went into this ... I was like, "I'm just going to look crazy because I have no job, I've been in Silicone Valley for all this time." I bleached my hair completely as light as it would go, and it was only maybe an inch long. There's a few photos of me floating me around with this bright, super-blond hair. I thought it was hilarious. It was a fun experiment because, if you work in a corporate environment, which I've done for most of my life, you just don't get to do stuff like that. Even in Silicone Valley, unless you're at some program or something, it generally doesn't fly.

It was liberating. People look at you the same, and it doesn't really matter, like you're obsessed with your own image, and then you don't.

I like your blue. That was a much better color than bleached.

Shana: It started out pink, actually. I used to play music for a living, and that's how the pink started. When I stopped playing music, everyone was like, "You're never going to get a job," but I always got a job ... so that's hogwash.

Dave: Now you don't have to have a job. You're running a CrossFit box. Speaking of that, why don't you tell people how they can find more about you and how they can get in touch with your super-awesome CrossFit facility?

Shana: Our CrossFit gyn, it's at CrossFitEastDecatur.com. It may be easier to just go [@ShanaAlverson](https://twitter.com/ShanaAlverson) on Twitter because the link is there on my Twitter profile. I'm at Shana_A on Instagram, and I'm on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ShanaAlverson). I'm a social media whore. Not really ... I just enjoy it.



Dave: Please, everybody like me.

I will make sure to include ...

Shana: Follow me on Twitter.

Dave: I'll include links to all of those on the show notes so people can find you. It's really cool having a chance to talk to someone who's super-elite fitness, but also you're running a gym. You just have a different perspective, because you see a lot of people come through and lose 100 pounds, and I appreciate you sharing that.

Shana: You got it. Thanks for inviting me.

Dave: Have an awesome day.

Shana: You, too.

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