

Steph G: Welcome to Harder to Kill Radio, a top-rated health and fitness podcast. It's Steph Gaudreau, your host.

This show is all about finding out what it takes to build unbreakable humans and passing that knowledge on to you so you can unleash your inner badass and change the world. We have another amazing guest on the show this week, so let's do this.

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What's going on. Thank you so much for joining me for Episode 70 of Harder to Kill Radio. This week we have the very cool, very nerdy and very sharp Nick Shaw of Renaissance Periodization, better known across the internet as RP Strength. Nick is the co-founder of RP Strength and in this show we're really digging into the science of nutrition and performance and if you are an athletic, a competitor, somebody who puts their all forward in the gym every week, you definitely need to tune into this show. And, if you would like to grab the show notes for this episode, you can do that at stupideasy Paleo.com and as always I'd be so grateful if you hit "subscribe" on iTunes, it helps people to find the show and spread the word about these incredible guests.

All right, let's jump in.

All right, welcome back to Harder to Kill Radio, I'm really pumped today to have a really smart dude on the show. He is somebody who I've come to know and just geek out on all the stuff that he's putting out into the world in the last year or two and so, I'm really excited to welcome to the show, Nick Shaw, of Renaissance Periodization, welcome.

Nick S: Oh, thank you so much for having me on.

Steph G: Yeah, it's a pleasure. I'm super-pumped to talk with you about all sorts of stuff science-y, nutrition, training and so, all this stuff that you guys do in the world and for folks who are not familiar your online business, Renaissance Periodization, has basically just blown up and gotten, it's huge now and has helped so many athletics, myself included, to really dial in their nutrition and their training and set PRs and crush it and just do awesome stuff.

So, for anyone who's listening who's in the performance leaning crowd, today we're going to talk about all sorts of good stuff and hopefully ask some, you know like, common questions, bust some myths when it comes to what you need to put in pie hole. And get the best results out of what you're putting in at the gym or your other training, so it's going to be fun.

Nick S: That's sounds awesome, I'm ready to rock 'n' roll.

Steph G: All right, so you know, people may obviously know about RP. I'm going to call it RP from here on out so I can save myself the-

Nick S: Totally, same here I can barely pronounce it as well, so that's fine-

Steph G: How do you, you know how you fill things out online, do you often run out of, like, character spaces when you're typing out Renaissance Periodization, cause it's ...

Nick S: You know what, luckily we just more or less kind of go by RP Strength now that, hopefully enough people know that, that they just do that. Or you know what, the beautiful thing about Google, you know, thank you Google, they pretty much run the world anyways, but as soon as you start typing in a few letters it autofills for you. So, I mean we probably personally owe them a bunch of money or something, I'm sure. But don't tell them that, they'll actually come and collect it.

Steph G: Yeah, so RP, RP Strength, Renaissance Periodization, one and the same if you're listening in and get confused.

But I'm kind of curious, like I don't actually know much of your back story and why you decided to create this extremely robust resource for people online, you know. Fill us in on a little bit of maybe[inaudible 00:04:14] your personal back story, like, you know, are you just always geeking out on stuff and lifting weights or what's the deal there, and like, why, why start to put this stuff online and what's that evolution been like for you?

Nick S: Yeah totally, some people ask, they're like, hey, when you first started RP did you think you would become really successful? I tell people, I'm like, not really. The beautiful thing about a lot of small businesses is you just sort of start something because you like to do it and you genuinely like whatever that interest is, and I think if a lot of people, if you start there, and you have something good, it just naturally grows from there. I'd be lying if I said, oh you know, we set out from day one to have whatever X number of orders or sell X number of products. Honestly, it just started as something way, way, way back when. Now I guess it's probably over ten years. I actually met my colleague at the University of Michigan, we both went to school there. A new joke, we met in the gym-

Steph G: Awesome.

Nick S: Yeah, yeah, he was, so Dr. Mike Israetel is my colleague, co-founder of RP with me. He's a professor of sports science, sport nutrition, and sort of general health and nutrition at Temple University. So we met at Michigan. He was working out there, I was working out. It's just one of those things, where if you're in the gym, you just, anyone that looks, kind of doing stuff the right way or you kind of look up to you just ... Basically to break it down, kind of give them like, you know, the bro sort of nod. It was sort of chatting, he convinced me to compete in a powerlifting meet, and again this was in 2007. I just got hooked from there.

He's a few years older than me but he already had a pretty good understanding of diet and training and all that. I didn't really know anything at the time and so he, sort of took me under his ropes and started showing me some stuff. I've always been kind of a gym rat more or less, even in high school, no one really knows what they're doing in high school of course, but yeah, I just really like to work out and loved it and so I followed that competitive nature or spirit into powerlifting.

Then it slowly became body building and that was more or less the start of RP, was just, we just liked to learn. And you know when you're lifting, right, what's the number or the goal. They just want to figure out how to get better whether it's getting leaner, growing more muscle, putting more power into your lift, something. The really cool part is, well, you can do that through science and science helps you sort through all the bs out there, because as you know, you can read for probably a million years on the internet of different nutrition stuff. It's literally, I mean totally conflicting information, some people say, well you can't eat this, you can't eat that and at the end of the day, you're like what can I actually eat because someone says like every single thing you eat is bad.

And so, just using that to figure things out, and just applying that and obviously it just started, him and I. Just helping a few friends and family and from there we just started, whenever we helped them, sort of maybe had some before and after pictures or something, started using Facebook. Again this was at least four, five, six years ago now. It just kind of grew from there. And that's the really cool part is, you know, we never really had any intentions of trying to create something bigger.

We just started off as him and I just trying to help a bunch of people. And just trying to learn what works and what worked best, and of course, you know, the cool thing about science is that's always evolving, so what we know now versus a year ago or two years ago or definitely five and ten years ago is quite a bit different. So I think that's really cool, to see those change and stuff that we've learned that actually helped a lot of people and that's really the coolest part of it all, because at the end of the day it's really just how many people can you help.

Steph G: Yeah, I love that story for a bunch of reasons. The first is that you're so candid about acknowledging the fact that, to someone like, who's maybe just hearing about RP for the first time and you go to your [inaudible 00:08:51] example and you guys have almost a 175,000 followers and you're like, dude these guys are massive, they came out of nowhere and yet here you are saying like it's been, you've been on Facebook for like four, or five or six years and really you're starting to geek out on the stuff with Dr. Mike since ten years ago or something and it slowly evolved from there, and I think, gosh, it's just so, it's so refreshing first of all to hear people just like be upfront about that and not be like yeah, like dude, we're just amazing and came out of nowhere. You know, and that it's been a process and an evolution and a slow, a relatively kind of slow, but steady one at that and I think that's just so freaking cool to hear that.

Nick S: Yeah totally you know, it's one of those things where sometimes only the good gets shown. But I think RP, we actually just had our five year anniversary last month and it's one of those things where at the beginning it really was just maybe a handful of clients that we had, and it was just Mike and I working with them personally and then just slowly but surely. Our main goal was, we really wanted to, you know, there's so many people out there that want sort of the quick fix or they want to take the shortcut or they're kind of linked to sellouts so to speak and our goal all along, and we pretty much always agreed on this, we're always like, you know, who cares if you can make a quick buck but you have to sellout or either do something that maybe isn't the right way. Just put out a good product above all else, make sure it works and you can help people. And from there, I think, I don't want to say more or less, going to take care of themselves,

but if you kind of have some help along the way of course it will kind of naturally take its course. And again it all goes back to, you have to make sure you have something that really works, above all else.

Steph G: For sure.

Nick S: Or hopefully anyways.

Steph G: Can you cast your mind back to those early days when you and Dr. Mike met in the weight room, which is the best origin story to what you do. I mean, I was thinking like, we just met each other at a car wash or something, it would be random [inaudible 00:11:03]. Can you cast your mind back, you said you had no idea what you were doing when it came nutrition, but can you remember what some of the things you were doing or the things you thought were correct, I ask [inaudible 00:11:15] that later on, like you looked back down the road and you think what the heck was I doing.

Nick S: Yeah, no, no, totally. I actually have a pretty memory of all that. So at the time, so I come from a distance running background and that was being into track and cross country. It's a lot of people [inaudible 00:11:33] 215 to 220 so people hear that and they think, oh that's crazy. So I was still in that mode a little bit. It's funny 'cause I met Mike and he's like five, six and he's probably 200 pounds at the time and now he weighs like 240. He's kind of like a giant square more or less. He's as tall as he is wide.

But, I started out, I came in, I just wanted [inaudible 00:11:59] to get bigger and put on some muscle and it's funny to look back at what the guy was like then. And there was all kind of, seafood diet, right, you see food and you eat it. You know some of the early mistakes that we made early on when we're trying to gain weight too fast and too quick and of course it's cool because you just get really, really strong.

But you don't want to downsize [inaudible 00:12:23] as you end up putting on a lot more fat and so that was something that we came to realize. But that's all, I think part of the process, because you learn, you grown and adapt and then, so, this was all before we ever represented clients. Until we're able to figure a lot of that stuff out on our own, before we start working with people. So by the time we actually started working with clients one on one, and then later through some other sources like the eBooks and templates we already had a lot of the most sort of silly or stupid mistakes out of the way. And so of course that's obviously a big benefit because you're not having to make those mistakes on other people you have to do them on yourself, because who cares at that point. It's just you or a friend or two.

Steph G: Yeah, for sure. So I think the other thing that you said that was pretty cool is that have you ever heard of the book "Rework"?

Nick S: Oh, it sounds familiar. What's it about?

Steph G: So, the guys who started this web company called 37signals which has produced software like Basecamp and stuff like that, they wrote this book. When they first wrote

this book, it just blew me away because they were like we just started the company or we started making this software 'cause we tried to solve a problem for ourselves. For ourselves personally really, how can we make this better. I think that's kind of what I hear you saying and to me when you have that sort of a basis for what you do in your life, well, we started this 'cause we just wanted to get better at nutrition for ourselves and then people started asking and then we went from there. I don't know, that always strikes me from that book and then when I hear people in the real world that I know have started these businesses and they're growing so successfully. When I hear that echoed, I'm like man that's so cool because it's comes from such an organic place.

Nick S: Yeah, totally.

Steph G: A place that you love. You're like, wow, how can I make this better for me and then I should go share it with everybody.

Nick S: Yeah, and that's essentially so after I graduated from Michigan and Mike, so he was two years ahead of me in school so he was getting done with his Masters degree [inaudible 00:14:29] we both went to New York City and we worked as personal trainers for a year. And that is really so we could have a decent knowledge of everything, and we started working with people. Clients in New York City, in Manhattan, right in Manhattan, it was really cool. That's some of the coolest and most successful people in the entire world, right? Like literally people worth hundreds of millions of dollars and things like that.

But just like you were talking about, something that we realized early on is we used to train at this gym and it had a lot of bigger time lifters and you'd see what they did and how they ate and how they trained and we just looked at each other and we're like, yeah, they're obviously doing something right, but man, I think there are some things we could probably do to help improve that and so that's really, like you said, kind of the basis idea. We knew that they had to be doing something right but if you can take that and take their obviously their genetics and improve upon that with some science.

If you can combine genetics and science, man, that's kind of how you get the best of both worlds. And that's really something that's hard to stop, or argue with because in RP that was from the beginning of our mindset where we wanted to take, you know there's always this battle of people that, you know kind of the academic side of things where you know, more higher level athletics may look down on them because well maybe they don't look the part or something but they have sort of all the knowledge in the world. But you have to be able to take that knowledge and also apply it to yourself to look the part. Because if you only have one or the other it's really easy for both sides to look down at one another between the quote, unquote book nerds or you know, for lack of a better term, you know like meatheads or something and there's always some kind of bickering back and forth between those crowds and I think the same would probably go for really any sport.

Well yeah, so if you have both, right, so if you are really knowledgeable, PhD level, and you're a high level athletic well then you start talking and people really have no choice but to stop and listen because they're like, oh well, they can talk the talk and they can walk the walk, is hard to argue with.

Steph G: Yeah. It's kind of a pattern interrupter. I find people, you know they're like, whoa wait, okay, wait what's going on, it's unexpected in a way, right? And then that's that assumption that the nerds are just not at all inclined athletically or performance based and the meatheads are just dumb, they're dumb as a brick, you know. And I think that you guys do a really great job at taking those stereotypes and really just busting them. And saying we can be smart and apply it too and that gets results for people and by the way here they are. So, there's really not much arguing with that.

I'm curious, I've got to know why you named it Renaissance Periodization, I'm so curious about that, where did that come from?

Nick S: You know, it's really funny. So hindsight's always 20/20, of course. It's one of those things that goes back to that's a cool, clever name that we thought was really interesting. Of course no one would ever copy it, so I don't think ever will. So of course, as we become more successful and grow if we're always like oh didn't you pick something easier. All right, well hindsight's 20/20, maybe we could have. But anyways, anyways, so, there's two parts to it, so Renaissance, obviously like the rebirth so we wanted, we intended to have this rebirth of science and evidence based in the fitness world, because I'm sure as you know you can look around everywhere in mind and you see all this complete bullshit for lack of a better term that just has no backing, no credibility behind it.

But because people are catering to the demands of people. People want quick fixes, they want instant results. There's always going to be that demand for it and people are out there that are willing to supply it. So we wanted to have this kind of rebirth of evidence-based science in the nutrition world, in the training world and then Periodization is also the, kind of the Sports Science World, it's the logical sequencing of phase. So you use one phase to make the next phase more successful. So in dieting maybe you do a cut or you do a mass phase where you're losing weight or gaining weight to set up the next phase to be more successful and then of course in training you can set that up based on your competitive [inaudible 00:19:09] and the things like that.

So there's sort of a very, there's always an order, there's always a reason for why you're setting something up in your diet or training program to sort of use one phase to make the next one and then you start thinking more long term and get some pretty cool results that way. But there's also, so there's a hedge fund in Long Fund in Long Island, it's called Renaissance Technologies and they are super, super successful and instead of using like traditional stockbrokers or you know. I don't know, yeah, you know, damn it, I don't know that much about the financial world, so I won't pretend to.

But a lot of firms out there that may just have really skilled people that are just kind of picking stocks, of course they're analysts, I'm sure, but maybe they're not. The cool thing about Renaissance Technologies is they have PhDs in mathematics and all that stuff and they have this brilliant elaborate equations that kind of take the human element out of it. And so they always outperform pretty much everyone else in the markets even when the market goes down or whatever they sort of always perform well. And so that was another cool thing behind the name is like, well you know what, we can take science and we can hope to do the same in the fitness world where stuff may, whatever it is, but

if we use science we're always going to perform well and always get people results, so that's the two part there on how we came up with the name.

Steph G: I like it. I like it. Although, I, you know what, so, [inaudible 00:20:40]calling RP always makes it so much easier.

Nick S: All right, totally.

Steph G: But yeah, that's cool. I always like to know the origin of the names that people chose for the businesses and you're so right, hindsight's so 20/20. People are always like, why did you choose Stupid Easy Paleo and I'm like, because Easy Paleo was already taken. Is it the best name? I think, no, to represent what I do, not really. We'll evolve when it's necessary and go from there but yeah. You're kind of, like stuck with the name sometimes, and you're like but wait, here's what we actually do and define it and people are like, oh okay, that makes sense.

So I want to dig into some of the stuff that you do. Full disclosure to anybody listening. Last year in preparation for a weight lifting meet for the State meet here in California, which is right in our backyard in San Diego I worked with one of the RP coaches, one on one, Dr. Christian Carter, and he was amazing and I hit a few at least lifetime PRs in preparation for the meet. He's lead me [inaudible 00:21:51] in my weight class and stuff like that, so I was really a huge fan because of the way that you guys set up your templates. I would love for you to walk us through, like how is a template set up in general and what does it mean, because I know people on Facebook and [inaudible 00:22:08] RP templates and I think sometimes people are like I have no idea what that means. So what's your overall sort of philosophy on the templates that you've put together and some of the features of those?

Nick S: Right. So in, I think 2014 we came out with the first RP Diet eBook and we saw that if we were able to create a product that had a lot of knowledge in it that we saw quickly how fast it took off. And so we got to thinking. So Mike and I, we're always thinking, well hey, diet coaching. It can be expensive and, you know, a mass barrier to entry for a lot of people because who wants to pay \$500 or \$600 for a three month diet coach? Because not everyone has that much money sitting around and again we thought back to when we were in college, when we wanted to learn more, we wanted to know more. If we would have had something that more or less laid out that diet coaching step by step but instead of walking you through it with a coach, it was there for people that like to do stuff on their or already have a decent knowledge, understanding of diet.

It sort of very simple, easy to follow. Just like a blueprint to get you to your goals, and really all you have to do is just follow what's listed to get results. Again we wanted to take diet coaching and make it available for the masses, so to speak. No one had really ever done that and so Mike created the templates. And again we'd already seen how well the eBook got out and it did really well, so we're like wow, let's try to make another digital product that is more or less diet coaching but instead of \$600 it costs like \$100.

And that came out in February of 2015 so actually coming up on the two and a half years now, it seems really crazy, blows my mind and our original thinking was it [inaudible 00:23:59] maybe if we can sell a couple hundred or a thousand or so of these, that'd be really cool and we'd be really happy. And then you know once people got them and started using them and then they worked, right. So, of course, everyone wants something that actually works.

Steph G: Right.

Nick S: And it was really funny because we released them in February and then about April, so again it was about three months later. So, people started posting their results and people went, wow, these RP diets templates they work. Hey, everyone try this out, they work. They actually work. Once people saw that its as if they really just started to explode from there and then of course the beautiful influence of social media and there's of course, good and bad social media. But it was really great because people would essentially, you know, do a lot of the marketing for us because they were just so happy to show off the results. And so many people, they were, we heard it a million times, I've tried everything, I've tried everything, I've tried everything, I used the RP diet templates, here's my before and after, here's my story and here.

Now we have the whole RP transformation into [inaudible 00:25:01] I mean it's coming up on 1500 different transformation stories and I personally don't see an end in sight. Because I scroll through the RP Strength hashtag every day and there's just more and more. People just really love to show their results. And again they just, people get frustrated, they've tried everything and there's just so much misinformation out there in the diet world that people just get pissed off and they get fed up eventually and heck you know what, I'm just sick of all these gimmicks where people that really have no credentials or anything like that and they're just always trying to sell stuff to, who knows if it works and who knows if there's anything behind it, is that people just at the end of the day they just want something that works and that's tried and true. I think we've done a pretty good job at that.

Steph G: Yeah, for sure. I think whenever people come along and they're like, I'm trying to cut weight class for me or whatever it is, if they're interested in enrolling in this sport but they have to weigh in, right? That's the reality of a lot of different sports, whether it's marshal arts or weightlifting, powerlifting, et cetera. Or they're looking to mass up a weight class and they're, they come to me and they're like, how do I do this? And I'm like just go see RP Strength, like they do it really well.

But one of the things that I wanted to ask you about, is like what everybody's talking and everybody is just bringing up and everybody wants to know about is macros. And I've written about macros before, I have some pretty strong opinions about them, but one of the things that I really like about what you guys do is the way you set your templates, is that you've just got different columns. Right? Basically you have your meats, your vegs, your fats, and your carbs and pick this amount from you know, take this amount, pick from this list of foods and eat it. One of the things I really loved is that I didn't have to, I'm like I'm busy and I hate to use the word busy as a qualifier but for

me to like go and log every single thing that I put in fitness pal and like keep running calculations throughout the day, like I don't have brain space for that.

So it's one of the reasons I really love your templates is because it's literally just like drag and drop, you're like, okay, I just need this much out of this category, this much out of this category right, and it simplifies the process quite a bit. But I'd love to know from your perspective and I've seen your philosophy before, it looks like a triangle. What RP does, like where do macros fit into the equation overall. Like everybody's really focusing on them right now, but where does that all tie in, to your philosophy?

Nick S: Yeah totally so, what you said about the triangle. So, we came out with nutritional priorities and that was in the RP diet book way back in 2014. So how it relates to the overall diet success especially when it comes to performance and alternative body composition, so calories in, calories out, so calorie balance. If you want to lose weight you're going to have to lower calories at some point and if you want to gain weight you're going to have to raise calories at some point. Is the most important part. But of course we know that you can't just eat Twinkies or McDonald's or something every day like that to get all of your calories.

Your macros are right after that so, really, really important, and probably in between the two of those you're looking at the vast majority of your diet success. You know there's some smaller details, things like nutrient timing, supplements and even food composition. So remember this is for performance and body composition and so, if we were to look at the priorities for just sort of general healthy eating, people that don't really care about performing they're going to shift a little bit and food quality is going to rise up to be quite a bit more important.

For this purpose we're just talking about performance and losing fat/gaining muscle. So yeah, they're really, really important so we know that, especially if you're a strength athletic or are looking to perform well or even to lose weight. Things like that, proteins are really important so it is important to kind of quote, unquote count your macros, things like that. But if you look at that and calorie balance you start to look at those bigger details and you start to focus on those you're going to get the bulk of the way there. I think that's why the rise of [Fisher inaudible 00:29:21] macro has kind of taken off. Because if you do those too, you're on your way to a successful diet.

Now again we can sort of pick at the minor details, of course, if we wanted to and sort of the benefits and drawbacks to that approach and especially if you're dieting. If you're just sort of eating whatever you want whenever you want, well, what's going to be a better dieting food when you have a limited number of calories. You know, do you want a donut or do you want chicken, rice and broccoli. Which is going to fill you up more? So that goes back to the templates in that there is a little bits of Fisher macro's approach to the templates, but not really 'cause there's not going to be, again I guess it depends on what people qualify as junk food but there's not really junk food on the templates.

Steph G: Yeah, yeah and I read on your About page, it says, "we don't recommend eating junk food." Which I think is, I mean when you come down to it, if you're going to get hyper-focused for three months and do this shit, you know, there's going to have to be some

amount of discipline there when it comes to consistency and certainly and what you're prioritizing. So, I found that to actually be really helpful for me when I was just like, three months is just going to be what it is. And we're just going to do it.

Nick S: Right, and you know it's all a trade off. So a lot of people don't like to acknowledge that you're free to make different choices that you want while you're dieting. But you have to admit and acknowledge that there are trade offs with those choices. So yes, you know what, you can eat a lot of donuts while you're dieting and you can see a lot of success. That's absolutely true. But the trade off is, you know what, if you do that approach guess what, you're eating at night, you're drinking protein shakes or something.

Calories have to be capped. They're not just unlimited, right. Especially if you want to lose weight, you can't just eat whatever you want. So, you just have to acknowledge that there's trade offs that come with dieting choices. So usually if you're trying to diet to lose weight it may not be the best choice and now, a lot of people they like to twist things around and all that but again it comes back to trade offs and acknowledging things like that, say you know what, I can eat this, I can eat junk food. I can eat all this crap, but you know what there might be a better time to do that than at the tail end of a diet. Stuff like that.

And there's another thing, you touched on something that I think is really, really cool. A lot of people, they don't want to think when it comes to dieting, they just want to look at something and be told what to do. They just want to execute the plan. They don't want, I've never used my fitness pal in my entire life. I've literally never used the app, now that being said I know it's a wonderful app. Nothing against it at all. But I've never used it. So that's the beauty of the templates, it's meant to simplify things. So you don't have to sit down and track every single thing.

So you know what, guess what, yeah there are a few grams of protein in peanut butter, but you know what, we've already taken care of most of that, it's already built in to all the calculations in the template. So it's just you sit down, you just pick foods, roughly measure. I'm not even saying you have to be perfect. Because at the end of the day we want consistency. So some people are just never going to weigh their food. That's perfectly fine, if you eyeball things and you're pretty close and you do pretty well, you're going to see results. Because at the end of the day you just want people to be able to stick to something and be consistent and if you're consistent, well you're going to see results.

Steph G: For sure. All right, let's say by comparison's sake. The previous year I used another company, who I will not disclose their name. But I used their macro based approach and I had to count everything and log everything and have a just a crazy spreadsheet where I was typing things in and sending things to the coach. And I was just like this is so much work and it almost wasn't worth it to me.

You know, I was kind of like excited. I sort of sit solidly at about seventy to seventy and a half kilos. So it's just like my set point. To compete as a sixty-nine kilo lifter doesn't seem like it would be that hard. But you know I already eat a pretty diet as it is, so yeah, it

needs a little bit of a tweaking here and there, but to really just go through all of that and just say, at the end of the day, was all that worth like two kilos or should I just compete up as a seventy five.

You know, so, that's why I really recommend your stuff to lifters and folks who come along to me. And they're like, you know, I'm already busy, I have a ton going on, I don't have a bunch of brain space to devote to the logging and all the stuff that goes along with that. So that's one of the reasons why I love what you guys do, 'cause it's just like, can you read this spreadsheet, okay good, go.

Nick S: Yeah, I know, you're absolutely right. And that was honestly, that was by design. That was intentional because at the end of the day, you know, let's be honest, you want something that simplifies things and takes less time for people. If you make people spend more time on things the chances of their success and sticking to it start to go down. Because not everybody has those luxuries unless you're a quote, unquote Instagram Fit Pro or whatever.

It's not really sustainable in the real world because people just don't have that time. So again simplify things, make it easier for them to follow. You literally just follow what's laid out on the templates and you're good to go. Because all the diet updates are built in and all that for you. So that was the idea behind them. So guess what when your weight stalls out, one, that happens to everybody, so don't freak out, don't panic that literally happens to everybody. What do you do from there, right, as far first class rule oh my gosh, panic, panic, panic, right, I can't lose weight. Well, just go to the next tab, like it's already built in. So, there you go.

Steph G: Yeah, the other thing I really like about you guys' company and your ethos and what you do is you're very clear on your website and when you go to template and stuff, like this is meant to be done for three months and after that you've got to go back to maintenance. You know like, you have to take a break.

Can you explain a little bit more as why you put that in there and like why that's a feature of what you do because I think when it comes to weight loss, and at least in the weight loss crowd like there's a lot of misconception there around how to do that successfully sort of over time. So can you address why that's built into what you do?

Nick S: Yeah totally, so, how many times have you heard from your followers, from your crowd that you just get these clients and they just say, you know, I feel like I have been dieting my entire adult life.

Steph G: Yeah.

Nick S: And or maybe sometimes longer, maybe even before they were 18 or whatever they're dieting. And so it's this idea that if you're going to cut it, just commit to a cut for a few months and be a bit more serious than you but again it comes down to trade offs and just acknowledge and just be honest with yourself and think, you know what, I have four of my best friends weddings this summer. You know what, it's probably not a good idea

to cut, maybe I will just maintain so I can live a nice balanced life, enjoy good eats and/or drinks at the events I have coming up and I don't have to worry about being really stressful. Because what happens to a lot of people is they'll be really good at dieting maybe Monday through Friday and then Saturday and Sunday, you know, oops, all of a sudden they end up eating a bunch extra.

Then here's what happens, they get the worst of both worlds because they are dieting, right. They're dieting Monday through Friday, so they're sort of building up that diet fatigue, and they're kind of, you know, as you know when you diet again it's, sort of, a burden to some extent. It is tiring. It can be exhausting and so if you're doing that Monday through Friday you're accumulating that diet fatigue. But then Saturday and Sunday come and you're just sort of eating whatever and then what happens Monday whenever you weigh in. You haven't lost any weight. So then what happens, you get really discouraged. You get really pissed off. Then you start that cycle over. You just keep repeating it.

That's how people just get burned out. They just end up a lot of times completely falling off the wagon because they're like, why am I even doing this Monday through Friday, I might as well just eat whatever I want all the time. And so, here again it goes back to commit, if you want to diet, diet. If you don't, that's totally fine, right. No one's making us diet. We're doing it because we want to. We want to lose weight or enhance our appearance or get better at sports. Whatever that reason is. But just be honest, if you don't want to diet because you don't think you can stick to it, there's literally nothing wrong with that. Right. Again no one's forcing anyone to diet, at least I hope not.

Steph G: Yeah, right, I hope not.

Nick S: And so, again just think of it, the way you can commit. The chances are, you maybe can get that diet done. Let's say you want to lose ten pounds. I'm just making up a number. But maybe you can get that done in eight or ten weeks. If you're a bit more serious about it, but if you start to linger and you don't have, maybe more free meal or something like that. Or you know your dieting Monday through Friday and not really on Saturday or Sunday. Or maybe instead of eight or ten months it ends up taking twelve or fourteen or sixteen weeks and that becomes a slippery slope. Because again, there's really only a set time you can diet without essentially just getting burned out and/or having to lower calories so low that it's just not worth it because the quality of life is going to drop quite a bit.

Steph G: Yeah, for sure and I think you sort of hit the nail on the head there, it's like, it isn't, you know we talked about it, the calorie balance and it is, this is also another one of the [inaudible 00:39:13]the templates is that, I hear from people all the time and they're like, okay so I started this diet and they basically describe their portions and it's like they literally slash their portions in half, and then they're going to do that again next week and they get to the point where they've now cut what they've eating down so quickly, either they're not adapting to it properly or, like you said that fatigue, the mental fatigue of it all is just too much to handle and then they just fall off. So is that the reason why in your templates you guys just sort of use that step down approach? What's the science behind that?

Nick S: Yeah, no totally. There's no bonus points for losing weight too fast. Because there again and it goes back to the idea of trade offs. The trade off is that if you lose weight too fast, one, performance can drop if that is a concern for people. Then it's definitely not a good way to go about it. So again, it's sort of thinking more logically long term and go, oh, you know what I have a competition in an X number of months. Maybe instead of trying to crash diet the month before, oh well you know what, maybe I should diet now and leave the month before to just maintain into it. So I can eat a little bit more and perform well and don't have to stress out over making weight.

And yeah, again, there's no bonus points for losing weight too fast, especially in strength sports because what happens if people lose too fast like you already sort of alluded to, the rebound tends to be a lot stronger so you know, people, again, that's why people do all these crazy crash diets. Fourteen days, I don't know, lemon extract, I don't even know, you know crazy stuff. Well, you know what, they are right they all lose weight really fast at first and then what happens after a week or maybe even two weeks. It's in no way sustainable. Then what happens when they go back to quote, unquote normal eating, well they gain all the weight back. So the faster you lose the weight typically the faster you gain it back. So the slow controlled way of going about it is typically better for a lot of people.

Steph G: For sure. Listen to that everybody. Take notes, I hope you're taking notes on this show. Like, go back and re-listen, like, this stuff matters. And like I said I hear from so many people that are so frustrated, they try to do this so quickly, or they just try to do it for too long a period of time without taking a break.

It's such a mindfuck, it really is.

Nick S: 100%

Steph G: I can't think of a better term for it but it becomes this really dysfunctional relationship when, you know, if you sort of take that slower, more controlled, more punctuated approach almost to sort of step down, and keep going on that path but have that structure behind you. The results are kind of, going to speak for themselves. So I just love that, you were going to enforce that, it makes me mental, no what are you doing.

Nick S: And real quick on that, I've actually done that myself. Again, it just goes back to one of the things that you sort of learn as you go and hopefully you learn before you start applying it to others. But one time when I was dieting for a body building show I ended up dieting from a little after Thanksgiving until early April, that's when the show was. Yeah, it was, it was literally awful. I, you know, can't actually explain it any better, it was literally awful. And so that's just one of those things. It's just not worth it.

And so I think that was, it was five months at least. And so you just get to the point where your calories just [inaudible 00:42:56] at the end and I was just doing tons of cardio and things like that. The rebound after it was just wasn't fun. And not only that, when you're dieting to those extremes you're just not a fun person to be around. Let's be honest because when you have to cut calories that low and all that it's just not fun

and so I definitely remember that from myself. I'll be the first one to admit it. I've never made that mistake again so.

Steph G: So we've already kind of alluded to some of the mistakes that people make, cutting too long, cutting too fast. But what are some of the other sort of like big blunders you see with folks coming in? Is it stuff with nutrient timing. I don't know, what else do you run across that you're, I know you often do these Q&A's, I see you on Mattie Rogers, on her Instagram sometimes and I'm like, oh my god, these are the same questions that I used to answer like ten thousand times [crosstalk inaudible 00:43:54], the ones that you know-

Nick S: Yeah, yeah.

Steph G: Are the big movers. These are like going to really help people. Like what are the big things that people are doing that you're just like, oh, no, let's go over this again, 'cause this is important.

Nick S: So I'll try to keep it relatively quick, one that I'm sure you know it better than anybody but the idea that to lose weight you automatically have to cut carbs. And especially if you have any interest in lifting well, performing well, that's just not true. You can eat a pretty well-balanced diet and you don't necessarily have to restrict carbs. I honestly, that's one of the big ones. People just automatically assume, oh you know I have to lose weight, oh guess what, I've got to slash my carbs. I mean that probably the biggest one that in people wanting to lose too fast or too quick, and I think they kind of tie together, because what happens when you drop your carbs, well you end up losing a good bit of weight pretty quick.

Because you lose a bunch of water weight, which is great, it's a good motivator. But again, how sustainable is that in the long run. Again some people can do it and that's fine and that actually leads to what I want to touch on one other point. This is one I've actually never mentioned before but it's something that I see a lot more now and I try not to personally say too much stuff on Facebook or all that but you just see people get really adamant that it's sort of my way or the highway when it comes to dieting and they don't want to acknowledge that there are different approaches that can get you to kind of the same place. Now again there's trade offs, of course, with all that so the way you diet performance is going to be a little bit different for general, just general weight loss. For the general population.

But people shouldn't get so caught up that it's just really crazy how, I don't know what's the word I'm look for but how serious people can be when it comes to, oh this type of diet, you cannot do it any other way. No, no, no, every other way sucks. It's just my way and so it's just a good start. And this is something I learned a lot from my colleague Dr. Mike because he's really, really good. Especially on Facebook when it comes to debates. And guess what, what's a really good way to get nobody to ever listen to your thoughts and points, is to name call and say whatever, your way is stupid, you know, you're an idiot, that's not going to be very successful.

So a good way to do it is acknowledging, you know what, I can totally see your vantage point, your approach, let's say diet approach X definitely has some validity to it, you know, and here's why I think that. And here's why I think it is successful but have you also considered that you could make these little tweaks that might also improve that. And if you're, you know, I'm sure you've seen it before and I mean it's literally everywhere, I cannot go anywhere without seeing people arguing and we have to do Fisher macro, and we have to do Paleo, and we have to be vegan and all this and it just like, okay, okay, okay.

Steph G: Diet dogma.

Nick S: Yeah, totally. You know what, how about each approach has some good things and each approach might have some not so good things and acknowledging those and being able to discuss them and sort of bring together the good in most of these you can start to see some common trends and things like that and you can go oh well, here's why this works and here's why it may not work so well. I think there might be another one. So hopefully that wasn't too long of an answer.

Steph G: No that, no I love that. And I think, you know, I get the same question and so have had several people come across, you know, we talk about RP in there, well wait I thought on that you're drinking Kool-Aid and you're taking a lot of casein that night and I'm like okay you can if you really wanted to but here's how I modified it, right, and so for example and I tell this to people all the time like I do like a coconut water and whey protein as sort of my intro workout drink and then I finish the rest of it after my work out and then occasionally I'll do another whey protein that night because sometimes I'm in the gym twice the day I'm doing Jiu-Jitsu and I'm doing strength training just depending on the meals so sometimes I do that whey protein at night. But I don't take casein because casein really wrecks my diet, and I know that.

Nick S: Sure, sure.

Steph G: You know, so we've always found a way to modify, always found a way to make it fit. And again so when people are like, are you strict Paleo? And I'm like, well, no, I eat potatoes, I eat higher carb as opposed to a lower carb Paleo approach. And there are people for whom that's appropriate and for people that might not be appropriate.

But that's where the nuance comes in, right, and I think so often people are just like, it's one way, and they don't understand that we've got these sort of umbrella statements and then you're like but wait there's more it's not that simple. And then I think that's why the nutrition world is just so like, ah. But I agree like there's just, it's interesting. Do you know the term zero-sum game?

Nick S: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Steph G: It's like, so this is zero-sum game. Like everybody's like I need to be right. You know, we couldn't all possibility have something correct in what we're saying. Like, I need to be right, I need to be the winner, I need to have the power.

I think if we all sort of just relax on that a little bit we'd actually find bits and pieces that are applicable from everybody's point of view and you know, hack your place-

Nick S: Yeah. You know and that's actually really interesting. So we kind of touched on one the performance [inaudible 00:49:48] but we have more beginner basic healthy diet templates as well. One of the cool things about them is they have sort of two tracks that you can run, one is a balanced approach, so you know, proteins, carbs and fats are more or less balanced so you get a good amount of each but there's also a low carb diet. Because it's just for people that are interested in purely weight loss and they don't really care about performance, they might not even train at all. And if you prefer a lower carb diet, if you control for calories and it's something you can stick to it's absolutely totally cool approach to take.

And so yeah, it ties back into what we just talked about a little bit. Again you have to acknowledge that there are, you know, a couple of different ways to get to the same places and they all have some validity to them and again it goes down to sometimes it's nothing more than just personal preference.

And so some people they just, I don't know maybe there's people that don't enjoy the taste of, I don't know, healthy fats, so they want more carbs or vice versa, hey that's totally cool 'cause at the end of the day calorie balance is the most important part. So if you do that and generally speaking get enough protein in your diet, the carbs or fats you can have a lot of wiggle room.

Steph G: For sure. I, yeah, I like carbs, and I love fats. So I'm always like give me a little bit of both, and I'm a happy camper. One last question I want to ask you about the stuff you see going on. I know RP does have some resources specifically for women, which I think is really cool because as Dr Stacy Sims says like "women are not small men." And I think there's at least, in the sort of weight cut, like internet ooh land out there, there's a lot of stuff that you can find for free about like here's how you do a quick weight cut for a particular sport and I'll use weightlifting as an example.

And you see all this information and a lot of it, a woman goes to apply it and she's like, I've actually gained water weight this week, what's going on, you know. So whether it's like salt restriction or salt manipulation, carb manipulation, water front-loading, you know there's lots of stuff with women that doesn't always tend to work as well as it does for men. I'm curious, what's your take on some of the unique challenges that women have when it comes to, for example, cutting. We'll use cutting as an example 'cause massing could be a whole other show.

Nick S: Hey, you know what?

Steph G: How do you guys handle that?

Nick S: So I think there's a pretty good answer there. It always comes down to, so we have a female dieting eBook that's called Renaissance Woman and one of the main features of the book and it's probably like, breaking the book up into thirds. So the first third is

more or less a review of the RP Diet book, and the middle part is all about dieting psychology. And so I think that is probably the most important part and something that really stands out so again it was written by two females PhDs, Dr. Jen Case, a PhD in nutrition, was a professor at University of central Missouri and you'll think this is really cool, she's a world champion Jiu-Jitsu grappler.

Steph G: Ah.

Nick S: Ah, yeah. I will only say good things about her because more than likely she can beat me up.

Steph G: Yeah. So, [inaudible 00:53:17] in like three seconds.

Nick S: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I don't even want to think about it. But yeah, you know, she's super smart and super qualified. The second author Dr Melissa Davis, PhD in neuroscience from UC Irvine, I believe, I think I got that right there's a bunch of California schools and actually or oddly enough she is also a world champion Jiu-Jitsu grappler. I think different weight classes though than Jen, but yeah, they both could kick my butt.

Steph G: Wow, awesome.

Nick S: But they wrote the book. And again they really spent a lot of time on the dieting psychology part of it and I think that's [inaudible 00:53:56] females they, just outside pressures or whatever but you know there's always pressure to feel like you have to meet, [inaudible 00:54:05] or look a certain way. There's just a ton about psychology there and you know feedback has just been really great on that part, because you sort of read that and like yeah, well you know, guess what why am I doing this. Make sure you're doing it for the right reasons and go from there.

Steph G: Absolutely, yeah. It's so great. And it's cool to see that as your company grows you're offering an expanded variety of things where people, no matter what your goals are and what your context is you can find something that's going to fit and help. We didn't really talk much about massing 'cause I don't often get questions about massing but there's a whole set of things there about how to put on muscle mass without gaining excess body fat. Like you know, gone are the days of GOMAD unless you're like under twenty years old basically and you can't. Like a woman my age who would have wanted to drink a gallon of milk to bulk up, that's just not going to work obviously. So how do you mass in a way that's going to give you those results to, so if you're interested in massing go check out all that stuff, there's a lot of great stuff on your site.

Well, we're almost out of time so I'm going to do this rapid fire series of questions for you. And then we'll tell everybody where they can get more info on RP. All right, first question, it'll be an easy one. Squats or dead lifts?

Nick S: Oh, you know, now probably deadlifts.

Steph G: Why do you caveat with the now, I'm curious.

Nick S: You know, I just have some kind of some little tweaks and stuff like that, so, yeah. Sucks you know injuries are part of the game but, yeah so I'll say deadlifts.

Steph G: I hear ya, favorite off-template food?

Nick S: Oh man, pizza or wings.

Steph G: An area of personal development that you are currently working on?

Nick S: Can I just say just general knowledge. Just trying to read and learn more in general.

Steph G: Yeah, absolutely. The more I feel like the older I get. The more I'm like I don't know anything about anything, so. Bring it all on. Best thing about being self-employed?

Nick S: I, wear basketball shorts every single day of my life.

Steph G: And the worst thing about being self-employed?

Nick S: Man, I don't if I have a real good worst one, but I've actually really, I mean I can't, you know what I can't think of a good answer to that because I actually really enjoy it. What would someone else say, give me an example.

Steph G: I would say, I would say taxes.

Nick S: Oh okay, oh yeah. That's an easy one. Yeah, can I say that times ten?

Steph G: Sure, sure. Taxes. I have a good accountant [inaudible 00:56:57]. Tax time is still like not my favorite time of the year. What does a typical day look like for you? What do you do from sort of wake up to go to bed.

Nick S: I have two small kids, five and three. My son's actually going to be starting kindergarten, he'll probably be in kindergarten by the time this airs. Yeah, so just kind of get them up. Make sure they're around ready for school, pre-school. Come home, do emails things like that, so actually built a home gym-

Steph G: Nice.

Nick S: It's actually really scary. I got my answer for the last question for you. What's the worst part of being self-employed? I find myself not leaving my home very often.

Steph G: You've become a bit of a hermit, I can relate for sure.

Nick S: Yeah, so that and do my emails, whenever the babysitter leaves just being [inaudible 00:57:51]with my kids until I go to bed and then usually working some more, so.

Steph G: Cool, that sounds about right.

Nick S: That's it.

Steph G: That sounds about right for most online entrepreneurs that I know. You know I think they're more like, oh my day starts with like a custom breakfast at some fancy restaurant and then I'm going to go get pampered and then, most people I know yeah, they're enjoying their time as well, but it's more like, yeah I do stuff like answer emails and talk to people on the phone and take a break to eat or whatever and like, just get back to work. You know, it's what we have to do.

And the last question is, what do you think, in your opinion, is the most important ingredient in building a unbreakable human.

Nick S: Work ethics or just hard worker.

Steph G: Awesome. I like that. Well you survived the rapid fire, so. I'm going to have to, I, I said this season one that I was going to have to make stickers or something and send them, like you know I survived the HTK rapid fire round or something, but I never did. So I don't know I may have to do that.

Nick S: Sweet yeah, sent them over.

Steph G: I always love to add people's answers to these questions, I think they're very entertaining. So to wrap up the show, let us know where we can find RP online.

Nick S: Well probably the easiest place is Instagram, that seems to be our main social media channel. Just at RP Strength otherwise at renaissanceriodization.com, Renaissance Periodization on Facebook, those are probably the three most common ones.

Steph G: Cool, awesome. For anyone who's listening at this point if you want to check out RP's templates listen for when I close the show here in a moment and I will give you my discount code for 10% off. So win-win for everybody. And yeah, Nick Shaw this has been super fun and I've really come to appreciate, you know, just your philosophy, what you talked about, the way you guys approach things and just being a general pretty solid human being all around and I hope you'll-

Nick S: Which is, yeah that's something that people sometimes overlook, what's a good business tip, just be a good person.

Steph G: Yeah, absolutely. You'd be surprised how far that actually takes you. You know, like every time you get these like, oh these entrepreneurs, like, ah you're going to tell my secret's revealed, and you're like, don't be a dick. Do good work, be consistent. It really, really comes down to the basics so often, just like nutrition and all that stuff.

This has been so fun, thank you for joining me on Harder to Kill Radio, and we'll link up everything in the show notes so if anyone wants to go grab those links they can hop over to the show notes and do that. Hope to run into you sometime soon and thanks so much for being on the show.

Nick S: Thank you so much for having me.

Steph G: Thanks. That's a wrap with Episode Number 70 with Nick Shaw of RP Strength. During the show I told you that I would give you my coupon code for RP and their templates, if you're a competitor, if you're interested in performance and you really want to dial in your nutrition. That discount code is Steph10 and you can save 10% on any of RP's really cool templates to get your nutrition in order. All right, that's it for this week. Remember you can get the show notes at stupideasypaleo.com, I'll put a link to the coupon code and everything that RP is up to and as always I'd be so grateful if you hit subscribe, that way we can spread the word about Harder to Kill Radio. Until next week when we have yet another wonderful guest, be good, stay healthy, happy and Harder to Kill.