8 Hour Ab Diet with Melissa McAllister

**Chalene**: Hey there, welcome to Turbo Charged Life with tips, shortcuts, and advice from the experts to help you create a crazy, ridiculous, amazing, fun-filled Turbo Charged Life. You're going to love this episode because it's all about reducing your body fat with fitness expert, Melissa McAllister. She's going to share with us how you can get amazing ripped abs just like hers and get this, you're not going to have to go on a diet and this program is not about exercise. You're going to love this stuff.

**Jeffrey**: Lifers, get ready to Turbo Charged, your host is a New York Times best-selling author. She's built and sold several multimillion dollar companies, founder of the smart success academy for entrepreneurs. This happily married mother of two was once voted class clown. She's committed to end the trend of Crocs with socks. Welcome your hostest with the mostest, Chalene Johnson.

**Chalene**: Nope, not a valedictorian, not most likely to succeed class clown. Yup, I'm sure Marge and Bill were not too happy about that. Funny thing is, I'm still kind of mad about it because I was trying to win best dress all year long, I didn't know it wasn’t like a campaign thing, I didn't find out until the yearbook came out that I've been voted class clown. Anyways, enough about me.

Let's talk about Melissa McAllister, our guest today. She's amazing, you guys, I cannot wait for you to listen to this episode, but I want to start it by just describing to you what she looks like. Actually, that's kind of lame. I should start by just telling you what she's like as a person because that’s what's most important and we'll get to what she looks like in just a moment but Melissa McAllister is someone I've known for almost 15 years.

She's a fellow fitness professional. She is very well-known in our industry. I love to call her Instagram famous. You may have seen her on Instagram. She's got this amazing rocking body but even cooler than that is, she's just the nicest, most humble person you'll ever meet, very unassuming, helps everybody, always wants to take care of people, she is a tremendously successful leader, she is in a millionaire’s club in a health and fitness industry. She's a coach. She is an entrepreneur who I respect and admire.

She's starting countless exercise DVDs and her body is just amazing, and that’s one of the reasons why I wanted to have her on this program is because as long as I've known her, I've never seen her body fat go up and down as many people just tend to do. I mean that’s just being human. Sometimes, you're super ripped, and sometimes you go up a few pounds but she always looks amazing and her hair is super thick and long and I've yanked on her hair before, there aren't any extensions in there. She just really exudes health and fitness.

And so, in this episode, she's going to share with us her secret that very few people know at least not until this episode of the Turbo Charged Life. So get ready to have your mind blown because this is some pretty cool stuff. All right Lifers, I'm so excited to have with us today, Melissa. Melissa McAllister, are you there?

**Melissa**: I am here.

**Chalene**: Awesome. Well today, we're excited because you're going to share with us your approach to health and fitness and nutrition and as I mentioned in your intro, you're just one of those people who you're always camera ready and every time I see you, I'm like, “She's always in this amazing shape”, but you eat and you don’t kill yourself a lot, a lot she says. And I just love your approach to training and lifestyle and we've been out to late night dinners and had sushi and then, in the last probably three or four months, you shared with me your eight hour ab diet and I was like, “No way, that’s how you do it, this is so cool.”

Now, I want to practice this by saying, to those who are listening, this program is really about sharing different best practices, so that’s not to say that this is going to work for everybody but I love this idea and it's not something a lot of people are talking about but ironically, after you shared with me your concept of the eight hour ab diet, I talked to a few others like people who I think of it's just always in impeccable shape, always, year round and I started asking them more questions about the hours in which they eat and finding more and more often that people are doing something very similar to you. So let's just cut right to the chase and explain to our listeners, what is the eight hour ab diet?

**Melissa**: Yes, if I can give you a real quick background, I have been a fitness instructor for 15 years, 15 years last month actually, and it didn't dawn on me until several years ago that there was actually a system behind what I was doing and I was always having people saying because my body fat has been in the teens from my all the way to my 20s, my 30s, and now that I'm 40, it stays there and people would always ask me what do you do and I'm like, “I don't know.”

I eat well and I exercise and I didn't realize that for 15 years I've had this system until it just dawned on me and what I do is, technically it's called intermittent fasting and what it is, is I eat within an eight-hour window and for me, it has always worked about 11:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. I eat my food and I still eat very healthy and very well, quite a bit of food too but it's only within that eight-hour window. And so, what you're doing is daily fasting for 16 hours out of the day.

**Chalene**: Wow, and when you say you didn't realize this is what you were doing, do you mean, because obviously, there had to be some thought, you--no, okay, it's 11:00, now I can eat or it's 7:00 PM the kitchen is closed but is it that you didn't realize other people weren’t doing that or did you not realize that’s what was special about you being able to keep your body fat so low?

**Melissa**: Well, it's so controversial and there has been studies on both ends of the spectrum of whether or not you should be breakfast, some people say you should eat breakfast before you work out and some people say that you shouldn't and there's goods and “bads” to both and everybody is individual and so, this has just always worked for me but I realize 15 years ago, when I started teaching in the morning, I felt better teaching on an empty stomach.

I had a ton of energy, I didn't feel weighed down and so, I would always get up in the morning, have my coffee, which I still do and, get on the computer whether Facebook or answering emails and then, I go teach and then I teach my class on an empty stomach and then I came home and I would make myself a healthy-- I should say lunch, it was still breakfast for me but it wasn’t until about 11:00 a.m. and then I would wait several hours to eat again and wait several hours and eat again and that’s how I have done it for 15 years but I never wanted to say anything publicly because 15 years ago, it was huge for everybody to talk about how important breakfast was. It should be the biggest meal of the day and so I was, like, “Oh, I don’t want to go against what everybody is saying but…”

**Chalene**: Yeah. It's so cool that you are just honest and transparent about that. I agree. I did a podcast on the “*11 Healthy Habits of Fit People*” and just said that there's a whole bunch of things that just people keep saying because they feel like, “Well, this is what we're supposed to say because everybody is saying it”, but then if you really like dig deep and you turn the lights down real low and you have a one on one conversation with these people who live a fit lifestyle, there are some things that they don’t like to share with other people because they think that they will be judged. But why not tell people, this is what I'm doing, there's no--I just don’t believe that there's one way for everybody’s DNA to be its best.

So why not share with people, this is what works for me, my body composition, the way I lead my life, the fact that I teach more classes early in the morning and so, I commend you for just putting it out there and being honest and saying, “Hey, I know everyone is saying you're supposed to eat first thing in the morning but I'm telling you that’s not what I do.”

**Melissa**: No, never.

**Chalene**: Love it. And so, did you do some research or did this just happen by accident? I mean, in terms of when you first started doing it eating it this way.

**Melissa**: No, when I first started eating that way, I didn't have any research behind it. I guess that’s why, I was so surprised to find all of the studies and all the research that has been done here recently because it was just trial and error with me, what work best with me. People are so afraid, I mean it's the same as the low-fat diet back in the day, to think that they should not exercise on an empty stomach when actually it takes about six to eight hours at least for your body to go through, it's glycogen storage, so it's sugar and your carbohydrates stores.

It takes at least six to eight hours for your body to get through that and if you were constantly eating that often, what you're doing is never learning your body to actually going to its fat stores. It's always constantly working on the carbohydrates stores. And so, about that 16-hour window, especially when you’re resting and you're asleep, allows your body to do what it's meant to do and to go into any fat stores especially here today, where people have a little extra fat stores to utilize that instead of letting it just sit there dormant or worse yet, add to it over the weeks and months.

**Chalene**: That's so interesting. And if you think about it, most of us, especially those who are entrepreneurs, we tend to burn the candle at both ends. We go to bed too late, we keep ourselves awake with just snacking, which like you said, then your body is never going into that state where we're really technically going into a place, where we can burn more fat. So is it something that you ever wake up and you teach your morning class and you feel lightheaded or dizzy, or out of energy?

**Melissa**: Absolutely not. I think anybody who has taken my class would definitely back me up that I have tremendous energy and I understand like if you're sitting here and now thinking, that might be something I would want to try but I wake up starving and all it is, is a learned habit. You wake up and your body is used to that habit of having something to eat and so it's something that you might need to ease into that you wake up and once a week, you tell yourself, “I'm going to eat an hour later”, and just go into it slowly because your body is a creature of habit and if you’ve been doing something for so long, it's going to feel like it's not for you, that’s not true. It's just you're just breaking a habit that you have in order to see if this would truly work for you.

So it's not something that you can do for three, five, seven days and decide whether or not this is great for you and it's working for you. You really got it, stick to it for quite a while to see that it's something that will help you stay your fitness that you can be.

**Chalene**: Well, after I opted in and I got your free report and I was reading to it like, “Okay, I can do this. Chalene, you can do this”, and so I thought I'm just going to give this a shot and well, let's just say that I did, the first day I did the 10 hour diet and I allowed myself 10 hours to eat and I was like, I can't pick it to 11:00 and I think it was mental, it wasn’t that I was hungry. It was just like that’s when I normally eat so I was like, “Oh my gosh, oh my gosh.”

I went as long as I could which is until about 9:00 a.m. because I teach a 5:30 a.m. class and then I stopped eating I think like around 9 o’clock at night, which for me was, I tried to stop eating like around 7:00 but I'll usually have just nibbles of something until 9:00. That’s technically, even if I'm having nibbles of food, am I correct in understanding that I'm not yet allowing the body to go through that process?

**Melissa**: Yes, you have your body, I'm not going to get technical at all on you but you have so many hormones that are designed to help you control your appetite to help speed up your metabolism and to full sensation that you have, slip them in and grill and I'm sorry, I had to hesitate there but those two hormones will not go into effect if you don’t allow your body to go through its natural process.

So if you're a person that just smacks throughout the day even at 12 times a day, every hour, you never allow your body to go through the whole process of eating a good meal, getting set aside from it, start to digest it, slowly utilize it and then what you're going to have is, that sensation of hunger coming back, which is a good sensation and allows your body to start to go back into the storage of fat because that’s what those hormones are for and if you're a snacker, which has never held, they say, your ancestors ate that you're not allowing your body to do what it's meant to do and it's to go through all of those phases.

Even for me these eight hours, I always say there's two types of people, the people that like to eat, maybe five or six smaller meals a day and people who like to eat, maybe three larger meals a day and it doesn’t matter as long as in that eight-hour window, you're eating the same amount of calories that you would eat in a 12-hour window. So you're not restricting your calories anymore in that eight hours.

**Chalene**: Wait; let's give a big round of applause. Yehey. You love it.

**Melissa**: Yehey. You get to eat. You get to eat a lot and there are studies that have been shown that, because you hear all the time that people say if you eat, six small meals a day you keep your metabolism up and that’s false information. Your metabolism is a representative of how much food you eat, whether it's three meals a day or six small meals a day. It's the amount of calories you eat, so if you had a bigger meal your metabolism spikes more, if you eat a smaller meals, takes spikes less. So it doesn’t matter whether it's six or three meals in that eight-hour period, whatever works best for you but you’ve got to eat and you’ve got to eat the calories you would in a full day.

**Chalene**: Now what happens on those days especially for our listeners who have children and/or they have to attend a business dinner or they’ve got to wake up really early in the morning, what happens when it doesn’t work, let's say with other people’s plans? How do you cope with that?

**Melissa**: That happens a lot and what I do is I try to plan, I mean, I'm sure there's surprise parties all the time but normally someone will give you enough advance notice that you have a business meeting where you're going to go have breakfast with people or you're going to go have and dinner with friends that you can move your eight-hour window around to where you might eat a little bit later in the day because you have a late dinner or vice versa because you had breakfast. You're just going to stop eating a little bit earlier in the day.

**Chalene**: Okay. And how often, do you give yourself permission to say, well, I didn't stick to it today that I didn't eat within that eight-hour window, it was a ten-hour window. Be honest, just tell us.

**Melissa**: I don’t, it's such a habit for me, Chalene and I couldn't even tell you that if I goofed or not. It becomes such a creature of habit with it but it has to happen at least, I should say, at least once or twice or I should say, let's say two to four times a month.

**Chalene**: Okay. Now, for our perfections who are out there, I stopped eating at 7:00 tonight and the whole family was in the kitchen, and I was there having a conversation with everybody and before I knew it, I had accidentally eaten four bites of my son’s spaghetti and it's 9 o’clock. Now, if that's you, would you then adjust your hours the next day?

**Melissa**: Not for something small like that, no, just take it as an oops and keep going.

**Chalene**: Okay. Yehey. I love this stuff. All right. Now, is this safe?

**Melissa**: Oh, absolutely. In fact, there have been probably more studies done on it than anything else but because people are scared by the word fasting, I think because there are different levels and different types of fasting and it's just not real publicized but there are studies and studies that have been done that I mean, they can extend your life, I mean, because it can regulate your glucose, control your cholesterol, help you manage your body weight and stuff, so it's very safe and I think what people are most nervous about is, because you're only eating in an eight-hour window, that’s it's going to drop their metabolism because that’s what they have been thought for so many years is that, if you don’t eat those small meals a day throughout the whole day, that your metabolism is going to drop and there's just study after study done that that’s not true, that if anything it does the opposite.

**Chalene**: It's funny that you should say that people are afraid of this or there's a negative association with the word fasting but every night, every one of us is fasting unless you're sleepwalking and landing in the kitchen and eating that you're not aware of. All of us are fasting, so you're just really extending that period, consistent with what our bodies were originally designed to do our ancestors and how we best use our nutrition if I'm not mistaken.

And how is it that somebody who is really unaccustomed with this? I'm used to eating at 5:00 a.m., before my class and my kids come home late and we eat a really late dinner, how would you suggest that somebody has to make some pretty major changes, how do they transition into this?

**Melissa**: This program which I think is one of the most wonderful things about it is, it's so individual, so you're going to have people that, like you, that get up really early in the morning and you still want to eat, I would say like within a four-hour window of getting up so for you, I would hope, Chalene, that you could've had a decent time to so you get a good night sleep. So those people will stop their feeding time before they go to bed, maybe two hours because you don’t want to go to bed famished.

**Chalene**: I love stop the feeding time, I'm going to put a big sign in my kitchen that says, “stop the feeding time”, that’s what I need to do.

**Melissa**: And so everybody is different. Some people stay up really late and so they're going to want to start eating later in the day and other people who get up really early but go to bed early will start eating earlier in the day, so it's very customized to each person and where they--I don’t--I'm not hungry in the morning. I don't know if it's because I've been doing this so long or that’s just in my nature. Some people get well hungry in the morning and some people can't function without having food in their stomach. So you're going to have to play with that and figure out if you need to eat early in the morning but not at night so it's a give or take.

**Chalene**: And I love that your guide actually tells people, you don’t have to do consume all of your calories in eight hours the first week. You can transition into this lifestyle because there are those of us who like to transition and there are those listening who are cold turkey and tomorrow they're going to download your plan and get started on just giving a shot to see if it works for them and what I love about nutrition and even exercise, which I think is so important to share with people who are looking to really turbo charge their energy and their life is that you have control, you're in the driver seat. If you don’t feel well, if you don’t feel right, if you're doing strength training with heavy weights, the change isn't immediate and overnight, it's gradual, you can tweak and make adjustments and if something is not working for you, just like this diet, if it's something that doesn’t quite feel right, you adjust, you tweak it and you have control.

**Melissa**: Absolutely, and it goes the same thing with the specific kind of food you eat. If you are – most your creative thinking and your energy is expelled in the morning, then you're going to have a good amount of carbohydrates in the morning. If you are the opposite at night you maybe you teach or go back and exercise and you do--you work out at night that you have the carbohydrates more towards the evening, so it's all about customizing it to your specific lifestyle and you're not doing what I do because what I do may not work for you but they're just general guidelines that I'm telling you, seem to be working pretty well.

**Chalene**: Yeah, hello? And so you'll have to check out the show notes from Melissa’s interview because I'm going to include some really great photos of her and your jaw is going to drop when you realize that she has two kids up and out of the house and that we share the same birthday by the way, but those abs, there's no filter y’all, those are her abs 24/7 which leads me to my next question.

How much of the eight-hour ab diet is about the times that you eat and how much of it is about what you eat and how much of that do you go into for those who are about to download your plan?

**Melissa**: Well that is, like we talk about before, I want people to know that they have the freedom to make it perfect for them and so I'm not real specific or everybody. I give it a sample meal or a sample diet of what to eat and it is I believe, it's five meals but that’s because the majority of the people that I have talked to, will eat about five times a day. For me, like I said for me, however though, I'm a three-meal person. Some people are more comfortable eating just little bits here and there and being satisfied, I'm the kind of person that could sit and eat a whole pizza because I like that feeling of being full, really full.

So for me, three meals work better. So I sit down and I have a substantial breakfast, a substantial lunch, and a substantial dinner and in that sample diet, you'll see that I'm really heavy on lean proteins, healthy fats, and your carbohydrates should mostly come just from fruits and vegetables. I personally am not a big grain person or dairy. I did put in there some great yogurt because I think that’s a great source of protein but I'm not a huge dairy fan or grain.

**Chalene**: So in other words, if I know I eat really clean, if I just learned how to transition to the schedule and I stick to my pretty clean eating plan whether I'm vegan or paleo, I'm going to see results even just from applying the rules and the suggestions that you have with regard to fasting.

**Melissa**: Yes, and interestingly enough, and I'm not a real big fan of studies on mice but they did a study on mice where these two groups of mice, both ate the same amount of food and both of the diets were really high in fat and one group of mice were given food 12 hours a day and the other group was given the same diet, same amount of calories, in eight hours, and that group that did the eight hour, they actually lost 28% of body fat doing it in the eight-hour as opposed to the group that ate in a twelve-hour period. So they didn't change anything about food and that’s if I can prefer one thing, the first thing you need to get control of is your eating that you are eating for fuel, not for fun, as I always say, that’s most important and then once you get that down, then start working on trying to get it within an eight hour window.

**Chalene**: I wonder if anyone else that’s listening is picturing like these little mice with six packs like bicep curls and they're all ripped and then there's this chubby mice. Well I love that and I think the next question that people will probably want to know is how do we do this when, everybody else in my family, like how do I have the determination to just, because so much of our social life, so much of how we interact with our family revolves around food. Are there times Melissa, where everyone is eating and you're sitting and drinking a glass of water? And can I have water while fasting?

**Melissa**: First, yeah, you can have tea and coffee during the fasting, anything that’s not caloric. There's too much bad stuff about diet sodas. I'm not going to tell you to drink diet soda but it's non-caloric, you're okay during those hours of fasting. And there's plenty of times that I am not eating in front of other people and they may tease me and they may joke and they may put food under my nose between I smile because I know deep down inside, if anything I'm probably inspiring them and at that moment maybe when they're enjoying, the queso and chips that’s they’ll put some thought into the fact, right, you know, is there a reason why Melissa is so disciplined and come to me later and say hey, I'd really like to get control of my health and you inspire me. So that's my mindset and there's plenty of times that I'm sitting it out.

**Chalene**: Amen, love that. That’s so true. We do, and you do find that people find to tease and poke fun because it triggers something in them where, they wish they had your determination and to see, just to kind of wear that with the badge of honor like you know you're not restricting your calories, the kitchen isn't open all day long.

**Melissa**: Yeah, exactly.

**Chalene**: Now, is there a way for people who have a tough time sticking to any type of regimen? Are there any tips you can give people that will help to keep them accountable?

**Melissa**: Well, first and foremost, if you can find an accountability buddy, I think that is the most important thing because I've always said that it's so much easier for you too and I think it say, but it's so much easier for you to let yourself down and it is somebody else and so if you have an accountability partner and you guys decide to do this together, you are going to stick to it in the beginning before you actually see and feel results for your partner than you would for yourself. And so, get yourself a partner and do this together with at least one other person and I think you'll stick to it.

**Chalene**: Wow, now have you coached other people, who have had results using your eight-hour diet, what can you tell us?

**Melissa**: Yeah, I would, my husband for one poor diet. He was a big muncher because he's such a busy man so he would just eat when he could and here, in the last probably six months, we have really stuck to this so that I can kind of see that it's not just me that it works for and he is a one lean mean machine. So him and then I do have some, people in my organization that will come to me and say, you know what, I just am having trouble. I exercise, I mean, they live for exercise and they try to eat healthy and I just can't understand what I'm doing. And so I've put them on, I've asked them to continue to eat clean but just to shorten that window to eight hours and all of them have seen positive results.

**Chalene**: It's awesome. Yeah, the before and after photos that you sent me are amazing. And I'll include as much as I can in our show links so that you don’t have to search for this. You can actually just click on the link in my show notes actually in johnson.com/podcast, actually, you'll be receiving a copy of Melissa’s eight-hour ab diet which is remarkable. Do you offer personal coaching like some would say, hey, you know, I want to hire you to do my meal planning? I know people are going to ask if you do that. Is that something you do and how are people able to work with you?

**Melissa**: Yeah, I actually do. I don’t necessarily work on a one on one basis but I do offer groups, accountability groups that I put together every month where I put like-minded people like I talked to you about before where you need that sense of accountability from other people. So I've put people together in groups where they get my one on one attention with the eight-hour ab diet and I help them structure that into their life and I help them with the fitness program and together we all learn to work that into our life as a lifestyle.

**Chalene**: What a great opportunity. You're such an incredible leader because I think you're honest with people and you show your vulnerabilities, you share your struggles with people, and people really relate to you.

If you haven't followed Melissa on Instagram, she's Instagram.com/melissamade, she's famous on Instagram y’all. You will love her accounts. So once you got the diet nailed down, let me tell you, she will handle the fitness component for you too. I am constantly going to her Instagram feed going wow.

How did you think of that? That is so cool. And you just got so many great tips but not just videos, you really explain to people, not only how to do it but all the different levels and how to start wherever you are and you're just a great role model, so that’s fantastic that people have the opportunity to learn more about you.

**Melissa**: Thank you.

**Chalene**: It has been an eye-opening, Melissa, I'm just going to put it out there right now. I'm going to spend the next seven days on the eight-hour diet and I'm going to report back to you. I know it's going to work because even when I did it, I woke up in the morning. I was like wow, my stomach is so flat, this must work. So I'm going to do it. I've just committed perfectly.

Everybody else, if you committed, send her a Tweet, say hello on our Instagram, let us know that you listened to this podcast, you know, join one of those accountability groups and let's all do it together.

**Melissa**: That’s exciting.

**Chalene**: Awesome. Thank you for being with us today and Melissa, it was great to have you.

**Melissa**: Thank you so much. It was fun.

**Chalene**: Okay. Update. So since I recorded this interview with Melissa and I vowed to try it, we did. Of course, I didn't want to do it alone, so I forced my husband, Bret, to do it with me. My sister happened other be here, visiting me at the same time, so I forced her to do it and my brother-in-law, Matt, who's like 6’5”. So, the first three days are really tough, like I felt like I was on a show of Survivor, like it was a mental thing, it wasn’t even that I was hungry. It was just, I normally come home from teaching my early morning class and I eat and at night when we watch TV even if it's not something super calorie-laden, I typically like to whine down with the kids and watch some train-wreck TV or just chill out on the couch and have some kind of a snack.

So it was more, so the habits that was tough to break but now it's been two weeks and I'm happy to report that I feel great. And so does, Bret, and I mean, I see my husband in his underwear in the morning and I got to tell you, he's looking good. I don't know, well, keep this or maintain I do feel better I feel like I'm sleeping better. I feel lighter and more energetic. I have plenty of energy from my morning workouts. It doesn’t feel torturous anymore. I haven't reduced my calories intentionally but I feel like some of the reasons why I'm experiencing, like, a little bit of body fat loss and I haven't weight myself yet but I feel, like, it's probably because I'm just naturally eating pure calories because I've limited the number of hours during which I eat.

I'm eating the same meals. I'm eating meal and the same snacks. I just think it's that nighttime extra stuff that was making a difference and I just I really feel like and maybe it's a placebo effect but I really feel like my body is a fat burning machine while I sleep. So good luck to you. I hope that you'll give it a try.

Please visit Melissa. I've posted links to all of the places where you can find her at chalenejohnson.com/podcast. And by the way, thank you, thank you, thank you so much for writing reviews. This is how we get the word out about the show. I love you guys. You're the best.

**Jeffrey**: Thanks for listening, Lifers. Chalene invites you to join her for a free coaching program designed to help you get organize, productive, and laser focused on what really matters. To sign up for a free video coaching program, please visit 30daypush.com.