**Biggest Fitness Myths Dispelled**

**Jeffrey:** Lifers get ready to turbo charge! Your host is the New York Times bestselling author. She’s built and sold several multimillion dollar companies, founder of the Smart Success Academy for entrepreneurs. She’s committed to end the trend of Crocs with socks.

 Welcome your hostess with the mostest, Chalene Johnson.

**Chalene:** Hey, I want to start this off with a big dose of gratitude. I’m so grateful for the people who tell me that they love the show and just the comments, not only the comments that I read on iTunes but the things that you guys have been saying on my Facebook wall like, “Chalene, I started to walk and I was listening to your podcast and before I knew it I walked for three hours because I had to catch up on all of your latest episodes.” Just how many of you have said that you go to your app each day and refresh it to see if by chance I’ve loaded up a new show.

That feels really good because I love doing this. I do believe it is my calling. It’s my purpose, my passion. I love doing this. I love to talk. I love to share. I love to learn things and figure them out and then offer what it is I’ve learned and my best practices with others.

It also feels really good to be able to really serve those people who are members of my tribe who I consider lifers but they aren’t yet ready, maybe that’s you. The timing isn’t right to do the advance training, to do Smart Success or Marketing Impact Academy and when the time is right, I hope that by serving you with even these fundamentals, you understand that how applying them has helped your business, has helped your life and that you will be really excited and feel very confident about your decision to do one of the advance trainings.

But until then, we get to spend this time together and I can continue to build trust with you and to serve you by sharing my best practices, the research that I’ve done and bringing to you some of the best experts on the planet.

Today’s episode is about some of the most commonly held myths as it relates to fitness. Now, you might ask why it is I want you to hear some of these things and it is because fitness is important to me. Not because of your body fat or how much you weigh. Fitness has always been really important to me because of what it does for people’s happiness, their overall creativity, how energized they feel, how resilient they are, how they treat other people.

In fact, that’s what really got me interested in fitness. I didn’t study fitness in college. My degree is in Justice, Morality and Constitutional Democracy. But I ended up learning about fitness as I started studying personal development and how to make myself better, more focused, how to get that competitive edge.

So what I’m going to do for you today is to dispel some commonly held fitness myths. But the reason why it’s so important that fitness becomes a regular part of your lifestyle, not something you do short term or for 30 days or for 90 days but something you do because you love it, because it’s your drug.

It’s because of this, it makes you smarter, more effective, more resilient, more successful. And this is true whether your profession is working in corporate America or driving the kids to and from their soccer games.

Fitness makes us a better person. It’s the best investment you can make in yourself each day. It’s not something that you’re doing to be selfish. In fact, I believe the opposite is true. If you’re putting your personal health and fitness last on the list, then what you’re doing is cheating people. You’re robbing people of all that you have to offer. You’re nicer, you’re more affectionate with your husband or your wife, you’re easier to get along with, you’re more patient while you’re in traffic, you’re more productive while you’re at work.

All of these things happen when you work out. Forget about weight loss, forget the body fat, let’s just talk about personal development. And when it comes to being a better person, living up to your true potential, fitness needs to be a part of your everyday lifestyle.

But let’s get to those commonly held myths.

Myth Number 1 that muscle weighs more than fat.

It’s kind of like one of those riddles because if you think about it, a pound of fat weighs just as much as a pound of muscle.

In reality, what people are trying to explain is that muscle is actually more dense than fat. In other words, it takes up less space. Think of fat as being fluffy almost like cotton candy. Well, gooier. Think of fat as being voluminous as taking it more space like a bowl of mac and cheese, like the old school mac and cheese where those big, huge noodles with pockets of air and gooey sauce in between. How gross is that, right?

But that’s how I want you to think about fat. Fat takes up a lot more space than muscle. And so when people say that muscle weighs more than fat, really what they’re saying is that muscle takes up less space than fat.

My own personal example of that is after I gave birth to my son, Brock. I hadn’t gained much weight with that pregnancy so by about two or three weeks after I gave birth, I was back down to the weight I was before I got pregnant, which is kind of crazy.

But here’s the thing, I couldn’t fit in any of my clothes because my body fat wasn’t the same. My body fat was much, much higher because I was nursing and because I just have given birth and I’ve produced another human being which is so coocoo crazy when you think about it. But my body fat was really high. So even though on the scale the number was even a couple of pounds lower than what it was before I got pregnant, my size was bigger.

I couldn’t wear the same jeans. Things didn’t fit the same way, and ladies you know what I’m talking about after you have a child, unless you are one of these from another planet celebrities and I don’t know how they do it.

Most women after they give birth, everything is just gooey and gross and on the wrong place and just, well, thank goodness that you have this little bundle of joy. Otherwise, it will be quite depressing. And eventually, you do lose body fat. But that body fat is very necessary. But it takes up a lot more space.

It is also a myth when people will say, “Well I started this new workout program and yeah, strength training. I started it last week and I’m up a couple of pounds so I guess I’m putting on muscle.”

No. That’s not what’s happening. You haven’t put on that kind of muscle in a week’s time. I mean, God bless you. That’s just not possible. What happens when we do start a new exercise program, whether it’s cardiovascular or strength training, the muscles are doing something that they haven’t done before and typically what happens specially if you went really hard and it’s something that you’re brand new too, your body is responding to the trauma.

Now I know that sounds like really bad, but it’s okay. Because if we put our bodies under stress, that’s what creates change or transformation. So when we place an inordinate amount of stress under the body by doing something new and we’re really sore, that soreness is in effect trauma to the muscles or tissues. Now as you know, when there’s trauma to tissues, what does the body do? It collects water. It holds on to water to kind of help repair and restore that area.

So when you’re trying a new workout program and you’re a couple days in and you’re really sore, I’ll bet you’ll notice that your soreness correlates to your weight gain. That’s why I always tell people, when you’re starting a new workout program or if you’re really, really sore, don’t get on the scale.

Let your clothes be the best judge and then, again, remember that you are probably holding water when you’re sore. And when we’re holding water that takes up space. It just does. So wait until your soreness has subsided before you get back on the scale and try not to make excuses for yourself. “Well, I’m putting on muscle.” And remember that the most important thing that you can do is not a new workout, it’s getting control of your nutrition.

The next myth we’re going to bust today is that you burn more calories while you’re working out than you do after your workout.

Well, that’s kind of a myth. There are some workouts where you’ll actually burn more calories while you’re in that hour. And then there’s certain workouts where you’ll actually have an after burn effect and especially with heavy strength training.

That means, that for someone who works out really hard, they’re going to burn more calories after the workout or what they call the “Post Calorie Burn”.

Now if you’re doing HIIT training or heavy strength training, this fat burning continues all hours of the day up to even 24 hours after your workout, even while you’re sleeping. That’s why not all workouts are created equal. That’s why, when people say, “What’s the best workout to do to burn fat, burn calories?” You know, it’s a loaded question. I think the answer is, you have to do a little bit of everything. Because there are some workouts you’re going to burn a lot more calories while you’re doing it and then there are those workouts that you’re not going to burn as many while you’re doing it.

It can be a shorter workout, more intense but you’ll burn calories at a higher rate even after the workout stops. And an increase level of fat.

Some studies report that you can burn up to nine times more fat while you’re doing HIIT training. But keep in mind that most hit training does involve impact. And that impact does take a toll on your body.

It’s a good idea to look for a combination of hit training with low impact options. HIIT training doesn’t always have to be high intensity, high impact which means, high fat burn, high calorie burn, and that fat burn and calorie burn can continue throughout the day.

This one I get all the time. I should probably have the answer tattooed across my forehead, although it wouldn’t be very cute.

But the question is, can I get rid of this? Someone will come up to me at a live event or when I’m teaching a class afterwards and they’ll say, how do I get rid of this and they’ll grab their love handles or they’ll grab a chunk of flesh around their inner thigh or just some area that’s a problem for them and they want to get rid of just that particular area. And oftentimes they’ll tell me, I love my arms, I love my abs, I love my shoulders, I just hate my lower body or I love my legs, but I can’t get rid of this jiggle on my arms.

Well, the answer to that question you already know it. In fact, I think 9 times out of 10 when somebody asks me that question, they’re just hoping that I will give them an answer that they haven’t already heard. But you know the answer. You can’t get rid of fat in one particular area and there’s no way to do that unless you make a doctors appointment and go have him suck it out.

I’m making a joke but I really don’t want you to do that. I mean, I’ve trained people for 20 plus years. I’ve seen people get liposuction and have nice results but it’s always a little weird. I don’t know how to describe. It just doesn’t look right like a year later because you’re messing with human nature.

You have the same amount of fat cells in your body today that you probably did after puberty. The only other time that you increased or produced more fat cells is actually when you’re pregnant or as you’re going through puberty and there’s just a few other rare occasions where your body might produce more fat cells and it really relates to hormones. It doesn’t relate to you getting fat or eating more food.

What happens is the size of the fat cell will increase or enlarge or it shrinks. But the number of fat cells you have has always been the same. So think about how odd it would be for our body which are – they’re so well balanced. When you take out a big group of those cells, your body has to figure out, “What do we do? How do we regenerate? Where does this go?” And it moves things around. And I don’t know. It just always looks a little weird.

So no judgment. You make the best decision for you but I would love to see you just accept the fact that not everybody is built the same and you can reduce body fat all over. We can’t pick one spot but there’s a big component to where we store and where we gain fat that is genetic. Which means, often, the first place you put on body fat is also the last place it comes off.

The good news is, as you build muscle, your body sends out these fat mobilizing hormones to your whole body and it’s dispensed from head to toe. So the answer to that question is, you cannot spot reduce. You cannot spot tone, meaning, if I just do bicep curls, I can make my biceps really strong but it’s not going to make them any leaner.

I can do crunches from now until Tuesday and my abs are going to be much stronger but it doesn’t reduce the body fat in that area.

This next myth is so strongly held that I believe it is the reason, this myth is the reason why one of the most effective programs I’ve ever created never took off on TV and that is, Chalene Extreme. It’s a program developed around heavy strength training.

Now, I didn’t mention the name so you would go out and buy it. I just want to tell you that it is all based on science and the results that people have from this program were like jaw dropping, astonishing.

Now the myth is that, when you lift weights, you’ll bulk up. In particular, this is a myth held by most women. Now I know that that myth is erroneous. I know that by lifting heavy weights, I’ve been able to completely transform my body. It’s how I’ve been able to keep my body fat lower and to make working out much easier. I don’t always have to be doing cardio. I can burn more calories by putting, what I call, that secret weapon in my body which is muscle.

Muscle is like the fountain of youth. Muscle allows us to naturally generate human growth hormone. Muscle helps us to move. Muscle gives us shape. Muscle gives us a lift. Muscle is the Bombay of the day. However, it is a very strongly held myth that you’re going to bulk up if you lift heavy.

You would be shocked how heavy I lift. I lift as heavy as I possibly can. I can’t lift more. And when I say that, I try to select the weight that I’m going to fail, meaning, I can’t do it after 8-15 reps, depending on what periodization I’m in.

But for many women they believe that if they lift heavy, it’s going to bulk them up or make them look manly. Unfortunately, those fears are perpetuated by the stuff that’s in the media. I’ll never forget that the year I created Chalene Extreme, Mariah Carey had gone on Oprah and was showing Oprah how she toned her arms and she was showing her the exercise that she did.

I was like, “Oh no, oh no, now millions of women are going to believe that’s really going to tone your arms.” And she like took her arms out to the side and if you can imagine like straining both of your arms and then twisting your hands side to side as if you’re like turning doorknobs. O lordy, lordy Michael Jordy. This is how this stuff gets perpetuated. That’s not what gave her toned arms. That doesn’t build any muscle. It doesn’t do anything except waste time. Sorry, so sorry, because this is not true.

Women can’t bulk up because they don’t have the muscle building hormone at the level that men do. And of course the muscle building hormone that I’m talking about is testosterone. Yes, we all have testosterone and some men have lower testosterone and some women have higher testosterone.

Now women with a higher testosterone level build muscle easier. Women with a lower testosterone level have a very difficult time putting on muscle. But you see, the cool thing about muscle is this, it’s gradual. It always cracks me up that people are like, “Oh I took that class and now I’m afraid I’m going to bulk up.” Really? Like you think you’re going to wake up the next day and go, “Oh no, my biceps are huge. How did this happen? I have huge biceps.”

It just doesn’t happen that way. It’s really easy to lift weights, lift heavy and then plateau where you want to plateau.

I love the size of my shoulders. I love the roundness of my booty or maybe I don’t. Maybe I want it a little higher so I’m going to continue to lift and lift heavier until the muscle lifts that booty up the way I want it to look.

But it’s gradual. I wish it wasn’t. I wish I could just go really hard for a week and wake up the next week and go, “Wooh, look at all those muscles.” But it’s super gradual, so you need to lift weights in order to reduce body fat in order to have a higher calorie burn while your body is at rest. And in order to look younger and to feel stronger, so no more twisting light bulbs in the air to tone your arms.

Now a myth that you see marketers play all the time is that ab exercises will actually give you flat abs. And I mean, I have to tell you, some of the stuff that I’ve marketed in the past with other companies kind of gives people that impression because nobody wants the truth. Everybody wants to believe that they can just lay down and do crunches and if they do abdominal exercises their abs will be smaller, will be flatter. And that’s just part of the story.

In order to have a strong stomach you need to do abdominal or core training. But your stomach, in order for it to be flat, in fact, in order for you to actually see your abdominal muscles you need less body fat.

Now less body fat doesn’t happen from just doing crunches or ab exercises. A reduced level of body fat comes in conjunction with strength training, cardio vascular training, core training and most importantly, nutrition.

In fact, if you couldn’t do any of those others, if you couldn’t do core training and you couldn’t do cardio training and you couldn’t do any strength training, you could still have an amazing six pack just with your nutrition.

I mean, it’s true. You’ve watched Survivor, right? Those people turned to a completely whole food, unprocessed diet. They’re not exercising. They’re just barely trying to survive on the super low calorie near starvation diet and they get abs without exercising.

Now, I’m not recommending that you do that but I’m hoping that you’ll understand that seeing your abs, seeing nice flat strong muscles, having a six pack isn’t just about doing those exercises. We have a layer of sub cutaneous fat just beneath the skin. And as that layer gets thinner and thinner, then you can kind of see the ripple of your muscles underneath.

All of us know of somebody who has abs even when they’re overweight. They can gain 10-15 pounds and it’s like, that’s weird, I can still see an outline of your six pack and that makes me mad.

It’s just genetics so I’m sure that other things that they’re jealous of too. Some people their abs do protrude just a little bit more. There is more definition or a rounded muscle belly which isn’t to mean that their belly is rounded but the actual belly of their muscle, whether it’s their bicep or the quadriceps is a little bit more protruding and rounded. And some people have a longer muscle belly, meaning their muscles are longer or flatter. Now those people who have a little bit more of a rounded muscle belly, you can actually see their abdominal muscles before you can someone who has a flat muscle sheet.

So, can we do anything about that? No. You can only really do the best with what you have. The genetic deck of cards you’ve been dealt. And that’s not to imply that you should make an excuse to yourself. It might mean that you’ve got to work a little harder. But the truth is, it might mean that you’ve got to work a little harder but let’s be clear that the best to work your abdominal muscles is by learning more about your nutrition.

Lose skin can be tightened with exercise. Again, this is another one of those myths that has a yes and no answer.

So here’s what you need to understand about skin. Skin is genetic. You know this. Certain races, certain ethnicities have beautiful skin that can endure hot sun and they never get freckles and they never burn and there are people like myself who are Scottish and pasty white and just looking outside, I get sun burned.

My skin is different. Certain people have amazing elasticity. In fact if you own the Turbo Jam or the Turbo Fire DVD’s you will probably know whom I’m about to talk about. It’s my friend Tony. She has seven kids and she has an eight one on the way. And I know the answer to your question is, yes. They are all from her.

I know, crazy, right? She has eight children born to her. Twins, quads and now two singles. Crazy. Coocoo crazy.

Now here’s the deal, when you see her and you see her abs in any of those videos, post seven kids, you’ll go, “There is no way seven babies came from that body. There’s no way that her abdominal wall and her skin would stretch out to hold four babies and that her skin looks like that without surgery.

Well my friends, let me you I have got a close and very personal to Tony with a magnifying glass and there are no scars. That’s her skin. God is fair.

She is soon to have eight kids, so, God is fair, right? But that’s her skin. That’s her genetic. She has beautifully toned skin with elasticity that bounces back very quickly that means she’ll always look young and means that she’s not going to have the same wrinkly, saggy skin that people the same age as her will when she’s 65 years old.

So it has a lot to do with genetics. Here’s the other thing, the longer you were heavy, so in other words when people lose weight and they have saggy, lose skin, some of that will come back over time. For some people it takes six months, for others it takes two years. But at a certain point, your skin is not going to get much tighter. So there’s a couple of things you have to evaluate. Is this lose skin that’s hanging or is this droopy fat tissue? In other words, people can lose a lot of weight which then their stomach which was formally hard and protruding can kind of droop and sag but it’s still a lot of body fat.

And then there’s people who drop all the weight and their skin is very thin and their body fat is very low and what’s hanging and sagging is lose skin. And now it’s been two years and you’re wondering, is this going to get any tighter? Probably not. So what can you do about it? I don’t know. That’s up to you. It’s up to you whether you want to go under the knife but there is no, let me save you some money, there is no skin tightening cream or vitamin or anything else you can do that’s really going to tighten that skin back to where it once was.

So you just have to be proud of the fact and wear it as your badge of honor or decide to do something about it.

I’m not here to make that decision for you. The younger you are when you lose the weight, the more likely is your skin to come back quickly.

The shorter the period of time you were overweight, the better the circumstances.

Now there’s a considerable amount of research that those who build muscle are more likely to kind of fill that lose skin with shape, meaning the shape of your muscle. So that’s a really important component if you’re trying to shrink certain areas and trying to make the skin look tighter and more toned.

It’s also really important that you’re eating the right nutrients. What you put in your body, it matters.

Nutrition has so much to do with the health of your skin. Essential fatty acids in particular are really valuable for so many reasons.

A doctor, a nutritionist can look at somebody’s skin and tell you if in fact they are healthy or they are nutrient deficient.

Essential fatty acids like fish oil or flax seed oil, oils like coconut oil and antioxidants are really important and they’re really important for you to consume them because they’re going to help the health of your skin.

It’s going to help you regenerate the cells that you need to produce new skin cells and of course, pay special attention to your hydration. When we’re dehydrated the skin lacks elasticity.

And our last myth, the best time to exercise is in the morning. Well, again that’s a myth that has [inaudible 24:01] by it. The best time to workout is the time that you will schedule and get it done uninterrupted. That’s the bottom line.

Bu there’s been a lot of talk about people who exercise in the morning having a sustained weight loss, being able to manage their health and make it a lifelong to exercise. So does that mean that working out in the morning is the best time to work out? Not necessarily from an exercise standpoint.

In other words, if I hook you up to a device that measured your output, meaning the number of calories that you burn per minute when you exercise, it doesn’t necessarily indicate that those who workout in the morning burn more calories or work at a higher level of effectiveness.

Rather, the reason why you will often hear that working out in the morning is the best is because people are able to make it a lifestyle option.

We also know that when you workout first thing in the morning, people tend to be more energetic, more productive and sleep better the night before.

In general, that’s not to say that’s right for you. I hear from thousands of people are like I know you always work out in the morning Chalene but I don’t have any energy in the morning and I can kill it when I workout in the evenings and that’s what I look forward to doing when I get home from work.

The research supports that time of day that creates the least amount of resistance for you is the best time to exercise.

One study found that afternoon exercisers, those who exercise between noon and 6PM found that their output was much higher than those who exercise in the first part of the day.

Now the theory is that the body is warmer and that we’re more awake and more alert and we have more emotions pumping through us and we tend to go a lot harder in the second part of the day.

I can tell you that personally. I exercise every morning. But when I hook myself up to a Fitbit or a bodybug, I have a much higher calorie burn later in the day. So you might ask yourself, then why don’t you workout later in the day?

I get it done in the morning. No matter how disciplined I swear I’m going to be, and promise myself I’m going to do it midday or schedule it even for an evening, I just never do it. So here’s my theory, a workout where I burn fewer calories is still a better workout than a workout that gets interrupted too often.

A recent study by the Appalachian State University found that morning workouts are actually best if you want to improve your sleep. And here’s the other thing that we know about early morning workouts, that you can often exercise in what we call a fasted state. Meaning that you have allowed your body to process the food and the carbohydrates and the nutrients that you’ve put in the night before and it helps you to be more fit and to have a reduced body fat. It really is tossup between what’s the best time to exercise, morning or evening.

Again, I personally believe that the best time to exercise is in the morning because I don’t think many people are going to demand time with you or expect you to schedule a phone call or even to return an email or answer questions at 5AM. That’s why I love to encourage people to exercise first thing in the morning. And when it comes to weight loss, we do know that exercising in a “fasted” state meaning, you’ve gone 15 hours or 16 hours without food is possibly the best way for you to reduce body fat.

And that’s much easier to do first thing in the morning than it is late in the day.

So the bottom-line is, it’s really up to you. Do what works best for your schedule but keep in mind the research. Do what’s best for you, keep a journal. Understand where the tradeoffs are. If it keeps getting interrupted. If week after week you intend to workout five times a week and you’re only getting in two or three because life is getting in the way, well then the time that you’re scheduling your workout is really not very effective. And getting your workout done even if you’re not burning as many calories is more important to your mental wellbeing, your physical wellbeing, your creativity, your patience and all of those other important reasons why we exercise.

So there you go, those are some of the biggest myths and we busted them wide open today.

I’m trying really hard to keep these episodes under 30 minutes because I know you’re short on time. There are just so many more myths that I’d love to dispel. For now, if this episode was helpful to you, let me know that you listened by tweeting @chalenejohnson and then use the hashtag #fitnessmyths and if you’re not on Twitter you could also use one of those hash tags on my Facebook wall or even on my Instagram feed. In that way I’ll know that you just heard this episode.

I love you for listening. Thank you so much for making an investment of your time with me today.

**Jeffrey:** Chalene invites you to download her new seven day diet book at cjsevenday.com.

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