

On today's episode of the RecoverMe Podcast, we meet Ashley Moeller, a bodybuilder, coach, a former employee and a dear friend of Warren's.

Ashley shares her incredible journey, going through rough experiences in senior high and college, and how society and Western medicine has shaped her mindset on recovering from injury and getting healthy. She also shares through right diet and hormone treatment, she is healthier than ever. Her journey is about health, wellness, and most important of all, happiness.

Plus, she'll share how she has gained a better understanding on how people and society adhere to diet trends and Western medicine, which are not necessarily beneficial and healthy.

Learn more about Ashley and her work at www.ashleyrayfit.com, or you can email her at ashleyrayfitness@gmail.com.

HIGHLIGHTS

5:12 I really wanted to understand why, why providers were reading one thing and saying one thing to a patient yet society publishes these other things and totally confused us people.

18:20 So that gut, important gut axis has been manipulated with Western medicine or stressors or whatnot, and all those things add up to once you're done with the athletics, once you, and like Ashley said, if you continue eating a lot, you could exercise much, which we tend to blame that. "That's the reason I got fat," or, "That's the reason I feel crappy," when really it's just a part of it. Because underlying that the hormones have changed, oxidative stress has changed, the gut has changed. Life stressors have changed so that HPA access has changed. And what I'm trying to get out of this Ashley, is it's not just the fact that you quit exercising, it's the fact that all these things occurred at once along with the high stress level of graduate school and everything you just described and boom, that's when everything went to heck in a hand basket.

24:43 And what does social media tell us when we aren't getting our goals? Eat less. "You're a loser! You're not doing it right! You need to exercise more and eat less," exactly. And that's what I'm trying to emphasize with this and your experiences.

29:25 But you know, I think that's really important is I think people, whether you're an athlete or not, it's really important to relax and not be so strict all the time, but at the same time it's really about finding that balance.

37:43 I do think it's really important. You know, if you're, if you're going to somebody to get help, you really have to tell them everything.

42:53 I think in our modern society, especially with Western medicine, the fixes should be instant and if it's not instant, it doesn't work and that's such a falsity.

TRANSCRIPTION

Warren: Well, welcome to RecoverMe Podcast, the podcast that makes you realize that you can't always control your situations, but you can control your body, and you can help your body heal and recover from life. I just had a great conversation with our guests who I'm going to introduce in a minute about toxins in our environment and all the recent news about fertilizer and oatmeal. How many healthy people out there focus on oatmeal, not realizing they're eating fertilizer? And everyone, all at once, think of the other word for fertilizer and that really sums it up. We will cover that in a future podcast. So today I want to dive right in with Ashley Moeller, who's a dear, sweet personal friend of mine. I've known her for six or seven years right, Ash? And we started out as an employee-employer relationship. She came and worked in my clinics and helped us with patient management, diet and exercise writing. She did so much stuff just like a care coordinator, if you will, for our lifestyle interventions in our clinic. And she was just a godsend.

Warren: And then she abruptly left me, gave me the finger and left. No. Okay. It wasn't that bad, but she had a great opportunity to go to Boise, which is across the state. I live in the southeast corner of Idaho. She went to the southwest corner of Idaho and it's been working over there. But obviously being a great friend as well as a coworker, we've stayed in touch and done stuff and I want to introduce her real quick and let her tell her something about herself, just because she is such an incredible woman. I'm so excited to have people hear her story because I think it's so applicable to so many people, especially ex-college athletes and even more subset than that female ex-college athletes. Ashley's story is just incredible. So Ashley, you were telling me earlier, and I knew this prior, but you have a Master's Degree in Sociology, correct?

Ashley: That's correct.

Warren: With an emphasis on medical research and you did a lot with obesity. In a matter of fact, I remember you worked here when you were doing your thesis. Can you tell us a bit about your thesis and what's your background?

Ashley: Yeah, absolutely. So actually I started with you as an intern and then that is when I was doing my research and you helped me a little bit with that with articles, and then that's also when I started helping you with research. But my thesis focused on, I studied basically what society reads as far as health issues and health concerns and I specifically narrowed it down because with the thesis you obviously have to. I narrowed it down to nutrition and food. So what I did in my thesis is I studied four of the main top magazines that people go to and then four of the top medical journals that providers publishing and go to for their research. And I did a comparison. I did an analysis of what's being talked about. And society as far as what layman's terms, what society reads and what's being talked about from what providers read and then that communication between the provider and the patient, and how it gets super confusing because obviously this intuition is a huge issue.

Ashley: Um, so my thought process was, well where, where's that gap? Where's the gap between the patient and the provider? And what does a patient reading in magazines as being, you know, lean at that time as far as marketing goes versus what the provider is saying. So it's, it's super complex and frustrating because I remember a long time ago you were like, when I was in school, you were like, "Did you hear the recent, the recent diet?" And I was like, "No, what's that?" And you're like, "It's like I'm eating a crazy amount of bananas a day." I was like, "What?!" I don't know if you remember that.

Warren: Yes I do actually.

Ashley: But I had to Google it and I was like, "No way!" I was like, this is exactly what I'm studying because you know, then these patients, they follow a diet that's being marketed like crazy on the shows on TV or magazines or whatever it may be. And then all of a sudden they get their labs done and it's, you know, completely out of whack. And so that's, that's kind of what I hope that makes sense. But that's what drew me in my passion. Like, I really, I really wanted to understand why, why providers were reading one thing and saying one thing to a patient yet society publishes these other things and totally confused us people. My history, if that makes sense. I basically studied cultural differences and different demographics of how people view food because I think that's important too. Like everybody grows up a different way and they have different cultures, religions, whatever it may be. So I also focused on that.

Warren: In your Undergrad, research was on childhood obesity.

Ashley: I love that. So my Undergrad, I focused all my studies, which one I, when I tell people I'd studied Sociology, they're like, "Oh, what's that?" But I liked it because it kept me, it allowed me to like explore a whole different area of, of things versus just one specific topic, if that makes sense. I really wanted to go into like, dietetics school, become a dietitian, but then I noticed that like my brain and passion, I really wanted to understand, well why do people pick these foods or why do they view foods this way versus this culture views it this way? And at the time as it still is, childhood obesity was booming and it was a huge topic being talked about. And so my Undergrad, I focused all on childhood obesity and again, how, how parents are teaching their kids or what they're teaching them and why.

Warren: And just for our listeners, so they know at the end of this conversation, Ashley's going to tell us how she solved all childhood obesity. We'll get to that in a minute. But Ashley lives a life too. If I may, I'm going to share my screen real quick so you can see. Ashley, this is a picture from a contest. Can you tell us when this was? So Ashley not only has an incredible brain for the health and fitness world, but she looks the part, too, if you can see that on your screen there. When did you do this show?

Ashley: That was two years ago in June.

Warren: Nice. And we'll, we'll get into this a little more, but this is Ashley's website which will give everybody the address to here at the end. But Ashley practices what she preaches, absolutely incredible physique as well as brain, so I'm excited to have her talk with us today. The reason I asked her to come and we are going to do more podcasts with Ashley, I hope, if I can talk her into it, I'll send her some money or something. But in the future because as she just shared with you, she has a lot of insight into things behind eating, things behind obesity, the cultural influences of food. Just some really neat topics that I think are missed even by obesity medicine specialists. So we're going to cover more of that. But today on, on RecoverMe Podcast, we're going to talk about, I'm going to touch on my book Obtainable, which really has a lot to do with the RecoverMe philosophy. And in particular with Ashley because Ashley is one of the six case studies in the book, if I may share that. And she gave me permission to say that. she is our ex-college athlete. And so what I hope to do with Ashley is have her share some in her own words. She was so nice. That's a 400-page book, but three pages I didn't have to write because she did. And she actually wrote that herself and then I made a little comment at the end. But I think it's so powerful because I know I see and I know she sees a lot of ex-college athletes, ex-high school athletes, even professional-level athletes that when their career's done or they get injured or they just stopped training like they used to, they get in terrible shape and feel crappy. And common thinking out there is, well, that's because you don't exercise as hard as you used to and both Ashley and I know that is so untrue. There's so many more levels to it and that's what I want to cover here. So I want to ask Ashley if she could give us a rundown and you don't have to quote the whole story or quote the book, Ash. But give us a rough review if you would, as how the RecoverMe philosophy. Tell us first if you would, how did you get yourself in the position you did and kind of maybe explain that? And then how, lead us into how that RecoverMe philosophy of letting your body heal and controlling the hormones, accounting for the toxins, being aware of oxydative stress, controlling cortisol, which is a big one. Uh, I know in your story how that all came about? Could you start with just telling us while we were together, what kind of situation you're in?

Ashley: Well, I'm going to back up just a couple of months before I met you. I had just finished out my senior year of college softball, which was a terrible experience. My first game I broke my arm and basically my knee was injured. I was out the rest of the season and I just struggled with coming back from those injuries all summer. And in that summer I had knee surgery. I didn't ever get my arm fixed, which was a mistake. But just from breaking my arm, my knee, I would say that's basically where it all started. I was super, super let down, depressed. Last minute, I found out my college coach took my scholarship away because she didn't think I'd be healthy and I had just got accepted into Grad school. So all of a sudden I had to pay out of state tuition and I would say that is where my quarters all started.

Speaker 3: That's really where it began because I saw that check come in for being an out of state graduate student and then never playing my sport that I, I just trained so hard to get back for. And then I came to you in September, but in August, right when I was moving down to school, I started getting really sick and I didn't understand what was wrong with me. I woke up one day, luckily at my parents' house and I couldn't move my legs, so my parents took me to the

hospital and I was diagnosed there with West Nile. And then that's when I came down to Pocatello because I was like, well, oh, well I got to go to school so I'm paying out of state tuition. So I went there and I was just, I was miserable. I was so sick. But I was also so stressed I had a lot of stressors at that time, so not only did I lose my sport that I love so much, I lost my scholarship and then I was in a very bad relationship and that's basically, and then being sick on top of it and trying to juggle all those things, I would say that's where my cortisol problem really did start.

Warren: Your body basically fell apart.

Ashley: Yeah. I was doing physical therapy for my knee and my arm all summer, but at the same point I had gotten so out of shape from being injured and then from being sick and not knowing it and trying to push through all of that, um, I wanted to play so bad that I was doing whatever it took to get myself back on that field. Um, so yeah, that, that was definitely, I was beating myself to the ground and then on top of being sick and not even knowing it until one day I woke up and literally could not move.

Warren: And you relate that to, as we know now, all those stressors just finally caught up to you and just changed your entire system.

Ashley: Yeah. So then it just kept going from there. I'm so stubborn and hopefully I'd like to say driven. I was so determined. Even though I lost my scholarship, I was so determined to get back in shape and get in the best shape possible. That's when I met you. And I met one of your good friends and I was like, "I want to work for that guy so bad." And so I was just, I literally was killing myself in the gym. I'm ignoring the fact that I was struggling with West Nile. I was really sick and getting dehydrated all the time, and then being in Grad school and the stress of that, my stress relief at that time and something I still struggle with but I'm more aware of is I want to exercise and I want to go, you know, 100 miles a minute all the time. And at that time I was so stressed and had such high anxiety all the time that my goto in my relief was just being in the gym. I wanted, I wanted my body back, I wanted my mind back, I wanted that happiness back that I lost and got taken from me. And that's really. That was really the starting point of all of it.

Warren: Now you bring up something interesting and I think so important for people to understand that, let me back up because I have a great place to go with this with you. But you did that one, you said a couple things in there that I think are so vitally important because I think so many people, especially driven young women, part of their goal and drive is to maintain the physique, maintain a look. And whether we convince ourselves that the gym makes us feel better because we maintain that look or not, we are driven to do that. Even though we feel crappy. Can you tell me what, what, where does that come from? Where does your need to maintain that physique or be that driven? Where does that come from?

Ashley: I think a lot of it just comes from growing up being an athlete. I grew up in a very competitive household, so everybody was in sports. So having that competitive drive is something that I have, but also social media does help. You see nowadays you see other girls on social media that look amazing all the time and I'm definitely one of those people that I tell people, "Don't compare yourself to other people out there," but I am the world's worst hypocrite. I do that. I see girls and I'm like, "I want to look like that. I want to be like that girl," you know, "I want to help people and be successful with coaching people." So I need to, I need to be better than that girl. I need to be working out more than she is or I need to be dieting more than she is or I can't eat that because you know, I need to have the best physique so people come to me. That's personally where I come from.

Warren: Oh I think that crosses the board, my dear what I think competitive family or not, goal-driven or not, I think social media has really driven people to a level beyond their bodies can control and handle, and that stressor just adds onto stuff. Would you say that in other women worked because I know you have the opportunity to work with a lot of women that they have similar stories, so not exact, very similar stressors?

Ashley: Absolutely, yeah. A lot of the women that I've helped in social media, they compare or it is the ex-athlete who was, you know, in shape, looked great all throughout college because you're so active and then they don't change their lifestyle once they graduate and they're done, and you know they keep eating the same or eating too much or they don't exercise as much so then they start putting on that weight and realize that their body has changed and it's a really hard mental and emotional thing to go through. Especially if you are an athlete and you have that love and passion for a sport that you literally have worked for your whole life and then it's done and you don't, you know, you don't have that anymore. I've noticed a lot of, and this is just one group of people specifically, but ex-athletes, they don't have that lifestyle anymore, so then they lose that physique or however they look and then they'd go do anything and everything they possibly can to get it back,

Warren: And in turn, make it worse. And that's where the disconnect is, right? Especially with ex-college athletes because if I may explain from a physiological side one, most college kids, how old are you? Eighteen to 22 in college, so pretty much indestructible if one way to look at it. But two, hormones are balanced, you haven't been around long enough to rust, we call that oxidative stress. Cortisol though, high, you have good compensatory mechanisms in place to handle it. So the other hormones are okay. The gut hasn't been exposed to that many toxins and although antibiotics may play a huge role in some people and why some people may even not get into athletics because of weight issues due to antibiotic use younger. So that gut, important gut axis has been a manipulated with Western medicine or stressors or whatnot, and all those things add up to once you're done with the athletics, once you, and like Ashley said, if you continue eating a lot, you could exercise much, which we tend to blame that. "That's the reason I got fat," or, "That's the reason I feel crappy," when really it's just a part of it. Because underlying that the hormones have changed, oxidative stress has changed, the gut has changed. Life stressors have changed so that HPA axis has changed. And what I'm trying to get

out of this Ashley, is it's not just the fact that you quit exercising, it's the fact that all these things occurred at once, along with the high stress level of graduate school and everything you just described and boom, that's when everything went to heck in a hand basket. And I think that's, that's important. And maybe I could have you expand on a little, especially after we worked together for three years, wasn't it? Three years before you trust me?

Ashley: Yes.

Warren: I shouldn't say you always trusted me, I should say. You actually took what I suggested and did it. How's that after three years? But tell me some of that, yeah. Tell me some of the why is that such a hard paradigm? Why is it so hard for people to break away from the calories in calories out theory? Because that's really what's behind this and this situation with ex-college athletes or any athletes or any one time someone got in shape and then fell out of shape. Why do we automatically assume and blame with 100 percent surety that it's just calories in, calories out?

Ashley: Well, going back to what I studied in school too, I mean that's what still talked about. I mean, it's changing a little bit now, but back then, you know, three, four years ago, it was still always calories in, calories out. And so when you're being told, whether it's on the news, TV, shows, commercials, whatever it may be, magazines, whatever you're reading, it's like ingrained in your head. That's what you need to do to get to where you want to be. And myself, I was so stubborn. I was like, "No, I can do this. I'm just going to exercise more and more and eat super healthy and limit my food intake," and that'll be, that seems like the answer. I think it's just, it's really comes down to, that's basically what society is telling people and that's what they trust, you know, and then you have somebody who's very knowledgeable in your specs. They're telling you completely opposite. You're like, "Well, wait a minute, but that's not what I'm being told over here," you know, "this is not what I'm being told every single day on the news or in articles that I'm reading or again, on social media." And I think that in my personal opinion, I think that's where it really came from. And sadly I was just so stubborn that I was studying that I was studying like, what is wrong with, you know, the obesity epidemic in general right now. And I don't know, at that time, I think I was just, I was so stressed. I had such high anxiety and depressed that I was just at a point that I was going to do whatever it took. But I was so stubborn I fell back into the whole calories in, calories out thing, and it's it really to me it came from seeing what I was seeing on social media and what I was reading in articles that are being pushed in society

Warren: And still being pushed like crazy. Hence this very podcast trying to help you, but understand that it's not calories in, calories out. It plays a role, but it's not. You mentioned some, I think so important and you keep coming back to it and I want to focus on that and that's what you call stress. I call the HPA axis. So hypothalamus, pituitary, adrenal axis. Our colleagues and friends in the alternative medicine world, like natural pass and chiropractors tend to refer to it as the adrenal fatigue. Tell me in your mind, with the added exercise, the added dieting and all that, does that affect your HPA axis? Does that affect your stress level?

Ashley: Yes, absolutely.

Warren: Yeah, it does. And I know you knew that answer. That's why I kind kinda set you up for me to be right once in a while. But seriously, exercise and dieting are very stressful on the body. Very stressful. There's a little, and I'll draw a quick picture here because I should've thought of this earlier. We have something called a diurnal cortisol salivary tests. So we have patients and we did this on new ones, Ash, way back when I have patients spit in a little, two, four times throughout the day so we can see the normal cortisol curve. And so what that cortisol curve normally looks like is it spikes in the morning to get you up, get you moving, and then it nadirs around four or five in the afternoon and then slowly climbs overnight. So the curve looks something like this if you can see that. Whereas this right here is the AM. Sorry, I'm not the best artist. I've had patients, we just had a patient last week that even though I told her, "Okay, do this, but do it on a non-exercise day," she exercises at 3:00 every day and let me show you what her curve looked like. I'll make it a dashed line. Can you see that? Her cortisol curve spiked at 3:00. In other words, exercise is a stress to the body and if you're already stressed, you're already low calorie, your nutrients are low, your body will go into what I call holy crap mode and protect you. And Ashley, What does holy crap mode look like in the mirror?

Ashley: Terrible.

Warren: Yeah. You can't lose weight, you can't build muscle. And so what do we do about it, based on that same social media, everyone's-an-expert influence, is we go to the gym and exercise harder.

Ashley: Yes.

Warren: And what does social media tell us when we aren't getting our goals?

Ashley: Eat less.

Warren: "You're a loser! You're not doing it right! You need to exercise more and eat less," exactly. And that's what I'm trying to emphasize with this. And your experience is so awesome, because it's such a testimonial to this. So let's go back to that. It took you admittedly three years to, okay finally, what's going on here? How did we start that intervention and how did we start turning this table?

Ashley: Well, during that timeframe, when I was going to the gym and doing everything I have came to you and was like, "I really want to compete in a bodybuilding show." Which, oh man, if anyone ever wants to do that, you need mentally being a really good spot. Don't just do it because you're lost like I was. So that's basically where I just started gaining weight. I felt that I was doing everything I should be doing to compete in a bodybuilding show. I was trying to follow what you recommended in your books times 10 because I was going 100 miles a minute. nd

then, you know, I was just, I noticed and it's something I still struggle with, but I'm very aware of it now. I tend to trickle food away when I don't like how my appearance is looking and I know that that's not the answer, but that's basically what I was doing. Every time I would come in to have you measured me or come into work or whatever it may be, I just noticed I was getting thicker. What's the best way that I could say it. It's not that I really got like, say heavy. I didn't think it was just more like my body got really, really thick, specifically in my arms, my upper back, my waist. I always stayed really lean, but the rest of my body just got extremely thick. I just kept gaining weight and didn't understand why. And then that's when I realized, "Okay, I'm not listening to my doctor, my dear friend." And I think I just had like a mental breakdown and I was like, "Okay, I want to do whatever it takes." There's something wrong with me. I don't feel good. I'm always tired and moody. My menstrual cycles, we're crazy. That's something else I struggled with really bad, and late-high school to college, I either would just not get a menstrual cycle and then feel miserable and then was put on medication for that. It was just being in a cycle of feeling miserable and that was where I came to you and was like, "I need help. I need to figure this out. What do I need to do?"

Warren: That is awesome because you just spoke to so many people out there. I'm sure we call that the female athletic triad. Remember? Amenorrhea, eating disorder, and osteoporosis. We never checked your bones, But we talked about that at one time.

Ashley: I was on an osteoporosis medicine, my senior year of high school throughout my sophomore year of college, and then that was just a terrible time as well because I constantly was battling my bones just hurt my shins are all the time. I actually ended up in the emergency room twice, two or three times my freshman year of college because my back was hurting so bad. But then I was just so dumb and didn't know, but I didn't have a menstrual cycle for probably close to a year at that time and I just, I wasn't eating. I was training super hard for my sport and literally my bones were so fragile that I was just in serious pain all the time. But I was so at that time, you know, I was just so driven and I just wanted to play my sport and that's all that mattered to me. I really wasn't taking care of myself in all aspects.

Warren: Yeah. And unfortunately, chalk one up for Western medicine, the solution was to give you a drug that has terrible side effects. I'm sure they probably didn't tell you, if I told you right now what side effects they have, you probably would gasp even at this late date, but that's your classic philosophy. One, we have the society and social media telling you, well, you failed because you haven't got your goals. You need to eat less and exercise more and rather than taking care of the actual problem, which is Western medicine do gives you drugs.

Ashley: Yeah. I was never told at that time to go rest, sleep, focus on those things, eat more. It's okay to go have pizza with your team. That was something I struggled with forever. I still struggle with that sometimes the allowing myself to relax. Thankfully I have a very nice gentleman in my life that likes to remind me of that. But you know, I think that's really important is I think people, whether you're an athlete or not, it's really important to relax and not be so strict all the time, but at the same time it's really about finding that balance. Obviously you can't

go pizza or whatever you want every day, but for me specifically not getting a menstrual cycle which is not normal for a female or always being like, I like to say high, strong anxiety, shaking, never sleeping. You know that really as you've taught me, came from not eating enough and just training all the time and then never sleeping.

Warren: Yeah, that high sympathetic tone we talked about aligned with the disarray of all those five tenets of health I've talked about on Obtainable and we cover on this podcast. So let's go back to you finally said, you're at end of the rope. You're getting thick all over, which is a very important little side note for listeners, especially in women. When you don't have a big belly and you're in this situation, women tend to get thicker skin and I talk about that in Obtainable, and one way to show is if your tricep pinch, if you do skinfold calipers, is greater than 15 millimeters, there may be an issue with the hormone called leptin. And Ashley and I had very detailed and long discussions on that powerful mother hormone leptin, and we'll spend maybe a full podcast on that in the future here but right now suffice it to say, if you're getting sicker all over, you're getting heavier, you're getting, the harder you try, the worse your body's looking in the mirror. It's time to step back and go, "Okay, what do I need to do a difference? So what was the first thing we did different when you finally said, "Okay, maybe this crazy, freckle faced guy knows is onto something. I should listen." What is the first thing we did?

Ashley: You checked my hormones and all my labs, my insulin, my leptin.

Warren: And where were they?

Ashley: Nowhere?

Warren: Yeah exactly. You had none.

Ashley: I didn't have any.

Warren: Yeah. And, and if I may share, I won't obviously show labs, but if I may share Ashley's hormonal panel, it fell within normal limits. And this is an important point because 99 point nine percent of doctors out there with my training will look at it and go, you're in normal limits. But Ashley, give me a nod, give me a nod. Normal limits don't mean squat when it comes to Ashley, right?

Ashley: Right.

Warren: And it's the same for every person listening. Normal limits don't mean squat, you have to look at it in a big picture. You can't, you have to look at the trees or the forest through the trees. And Ashley's hormone panel looked horrible. Everything was low. Leptin, not readable. Insulin, not readable. All the sex hormones totally off. Thyroid dysfunctioning. Why? And it all stems back to this, this lifestyle she'd adapted, trying to get healthy and trying to get a look she wanted. So hormones are off. What do we do?

Ashley: Hormone treatment, diet. You helped me with my diet. Increasing my overall calories, my overall intake. You just kept checking my hormones and I just keep coming to you as much as you said I needed to come in and I did whatever you said at that time. You also backed me off of training. I think I went down like two, you had me take maybe one to two weeks completely off. And I remember coming into work and I was like, "You're not going to believe how much I slept this weekend. I think I slept 15 hours straight." It was like an insane amount. I think I slept like a full night and half a day, which was unheard of for me. And then you're like, "Well, this is good. You know, your body is saying, 'Hey, I need that rest.'" So you have me stay out of the gym. It was either one or two weeks, which was absolute killer to me. Now I think it was.

Warren: It was two weeks, I remember.

Ashley: And then you encouraged me to do more NEAT things. So going on walks. I'm still being active, but really low, subtle. But at that time that was a huge, huge turning point for me I will never forget. It was like my body just released. I was super emotional. It was like I could not control my emotions at that time. I was sleeping all the time, which was unlike me. I never ever take naps during the day. And that was something I would come home after work or school and I literally would sit down and just fall asleep. And so that was a huge turning point for me was, "Okay, like I'm eating more. I noticed I'm sleeping more, I'm sleeping heavier. And my joints aren't hurting as bad."

Warren: That is awesome

Ashley: That was a big, you know, and, and I'm so stubborn that even at that time I would not say everything with how I was feeling. I think you were just so good at knowing me. Like, okay, this girl's miserable.

Warren: Yeah. Oh, I remember. And that's one thing I want to focus on. Two things. One, you mentioned the word NEAT, just so people that don't know what that is, that stands for non-exercise activity, induced thermogenesis or NEAT. And that's going for a walk, parking farther away from your destinations and walking, taking the stairs instead of the elevator. That's just movement and we're really encouraged, wonderful people like Ashley in this situation, to do those simple things. And if you can outside, because nothing increases brain hormone because we have a complete hormone imbalance in disarray. Nothing raises serotonin like sunlight. And so I encouraged us to do that. The other thing on what Ashley was just discussing was how she, her body literally crashed. It went into this recovery mode and it took Ashley a while to get to that point and we had the advantage of working together. I saw her every day and so when I don't have patients and Ashley's had patients working with me and then her own clients, so she consults with. If you're not with someone every day, it is hard to understand this. And trust me, it took you three years working side-by-side. Now, okay part of this, I will chalk up to your stubbornness girl, happily admit, which I'm proud of you because that's part of the reason we

get so long. We're both two mules. We will not budge and I kick. She doesn't, she bites, but I can't. Very stubborn people, but how hard is it for people to come in and see other health coach or personal trainer, their doctor who's into this world of RecoverMe on a one-hour visit and actually listen and go do it when people have hard time doing it, being next to each other every day. It's a tough situation, so I just wanted to.

Ashley: Yeah, I was in a position where I was so honored to be working with you that it was almost like I was embarrassed that I was in the situation that I was in, so I didn't want to admit. Because I knew better, you know, I'm sitting here in school studying what people are saying in society and what should be said, and even still today it's like I know better yet I still fall into the, "Okay. I'm not eating enough and training too hard." We just had a conversation over the phone about a week ago where I did it again almost a year ago. I did that bodybuilding show. My body changed within six months after that show and that was hard for me because I went from like this amazing physique to back to normal healthy ranges. I started exercising a ton. I went a whole, you talk about in a couple of your books that I believe in Obtainable, too, like take time off, go out and enjoy yourself. You're going on vacation, go on vacation. And so I did that and then I just beat myself up and I fell right back into that whole, that whole cycle, that vicious cycle. I got super strict with myself, didn't eat anything for four weeks trained like crazy. And then I just gained weight.

Warren: Oh, it's such an addiction. It is such an addiction. Oh my goodness.

Ashley: I do think it's really important. You know, if you're, if you're going to somebody to get help, you really have to tell them everything.

Warren: Yeah. Good point.

Ashley: I wouldn't sit there and tell you everything that I was feeling or going through. I was just in a very lucky spot to be working with you, for you to notice it.

Warren: Oh, I appreciate that. Well, we got your hormones balanced. And as a side note and people out there who don't have a health care provider that can do that for you, your hormones will balance on your own just by cutting back on the exercise and eating more. They really will. It comes quicker and people tend to feel better for you. Replace, optimize the thyroid, make sure the sex hormones are re-balanced, readjust the food related hormones, leptin, glucagon, insulin with diet and exercise. But those mother hormones will start adjusting, the thyroid and the sex hormones appropriately, if you cut back on the exercise. In other words, lower cortisol. So just so people know with Ashley, we had the opportunity to optimize those hormones. If you don't, the secret is backing off - lower that cortisol control, stress and do that. So Ashley, if you remember, how long was it that we did those hormones? You started exercising less. Give me a timeframe from when you started, when you woke up one morning and went, "Huh, I feel better." And then second of all, tell me about the day because we all

remember that day you woke up and looked in the mirror and went, "I'm changing again, for the better."

Ashley: It took a long time. If I remember right, it was really discouraging and really hard. And I think that's another area that's a good point to point out is you want to give up because it takes so long. But I, I really reached that point once I took those two weeks off and I just saw the emotional, physical crash in myself. You just kept telling me, "Hey, this is going to take a long time for you to recover from that you have to say consistent." And that's where I just, I trusted you and I trusted everything that you were saying. So I was like, "Okay." We did do the hormones for three years. You have me following higher calories and more consuming more in those three years. I was really strict at one point with the four months with my diet just because you were like, "Hey, we really need to get your insulin and your leptin and everything more optimized." But if I was strict in the sense of a good way, I was eating more. I was making sure I wasn't taking in processed foods. I was just at a point that I was like, "Hey, I want to optimize my hormones. I will do whatever it takes." I would say for six months to a year. I just followed things as far as diet things that you recommended. In that year I didn't allow myself to go out and have those free windows. And then that second year is where you were like, "Okay, you really need to take that time and have free windows for three hours or whatever it may be. Go eat something you're craving." At first I would come back and like, "Oh, Dr Willie, I had some trail mix."

Warren: Yeah I remember that.

Ashley: But then it was almost like I noticed a change in that second year of my metabolism and my appetite. I went from zero appetite. Maybe it was more mental, but I went from zero appetite, not wanting any of those things to I felt like I couldn't eat enough. And then that's where you told me, "Okay, well insulin and leptin is probably getting triggered," because then my appetite was like through the roof and I wanted to eat anything in sight. So a good three to four years and felt, I woke up one day and I felt amazing. I was like, "Oh my gosh, I'm sleeping eight to nine hours every night. I'm not going to the gym as much." But my weight had dropped. I went from like say a set number. I think I dropped like eight or nine pounds within a few months once I woke up and told you like, "I feel way different," and then all of a sudden I would say after three years of that consistent hormone regimen you had me on, you know, more calories, allowing time for myself to relax, whether that was going out and having some food that I never allowed myself to have before. And then, you know, but so still keeping it together, not going on this binge spree. I don't, I hope I don't put that out there. Like, "Oh, just go eat whatever you want." It's not the answer.

Warren: No, no.

Ashley: So, so strict. I never allowed myself to relax and I think that's where that whole cortisol problem was with me. I came to you one time saying, "Hey, I ate my grandma's cookies and then I went to the car and I cried."

Warren: I remembered that.

Ashley: That's not healthy and that's not good. And after that whole cortisol thing falls into place. So for me, in those three years, it was just really learning. Okay, I was really healthy with my diet. I ate a lot, not a lot, but I ate what I should be eating for my body.

Warren: Good.

Ashley: I was exercising for what I should be exercising. Really coming in tune with how I should be feeling versus no, I shouldn't be feeling, so that's kind of a long story. Hopefully it didn't go too long, but.

Warren: No, not at all. That is so ideal and that's what I was hoping you'd go to that because I think in our modern society, especially with Western medicine, the fixes should be instant and if it's not instant, it doesn't work and that's such a falsity. I use the analogy all the time with my patients about spraining their ankle. It takes one 100th of a second to sprain your ankle and eight to 12 weeks to recover from it. So Ashley lived a lifetime of low calorie, high exercise intensity, and then all of a sudden it took her a three whopping years to get better. Well, that actually is pretty darn quick if you think about it in reality, in real terms. And that's so important for people to know. You got to stick to it. You're trying to solve a problem. You're trying to fix it. You're not bandaging things like Western medicine. That's what I was trained to do. I was trained to bandage everything. But I can tell you what, what happens to bandages after they've been on for a while?

Ashley: They fall off.

Warren: They fall off. Yep. And so the long term fixes is what we're after. So just for the sake of time, Ashley, this has been so cool. I'm so excited. We've had this talk. I think you can touch. You're going to touch so many lives with what you just shared, but the three years you're feeling better and stuff. Give our listeners a rough idea what a day-to-day looks like now. If I can still see the screen, if you can still see my screen. Ashley looks incredible. She's always looked incredible. Now she maintains this look all the time. She's happy, healthy. I'm still trying to talk her into coming back and working with me, but well that's a different story. I'll hang up first and then we'll talk about that, her and I. But anyway, tell us what you do day-to-day to maintain this. And you mentioned something I just want you to touch on. Once in a while you'd get tempted. It's an addiction. How do you beat that?

Ashley: Now I'm more aware. I personally find that my legs feel heavy, heavy. If I am overtraining or I just get really tired and fatigued. If I get to that point, I either back off from the gym completely and focus on sleep. I think for anyone and everyone, but for myself personally, if I don't get enough sleep, I'm miserable and I don't recover. So that's a huge thing that I focus on now is I make sure I go to bed early, and if I'm not feeling good, I realized that missing the

gym is probably better than pushing myself to go. However, I still do fall into that trap where I always want to maintain this awesome physique and look really good. But I've finally getting to the point, I struggle with it, but I'm getting to the point it's not healthy to maintain this super lean physique all the time and be shredded. Like we see all these people on social media. Maybe it's okay to rest a little bit. You feel better, you have more energy, you're more sociable and fun to be around versus, you know, feeling yourself in the gym. So now, today I still love training in the morning. That's my thing. I wake up really early before I go to work, but my weight training years ago, before I started working with you was, you know, two hours a day in the gym literally. There for a while I backed it down to half hour, half hour a day in the gym. But now I'm able to do about 45 minutes and I might do 10 minutes of cardio just to, after lifting. And then I, as far as cardio goes, you know, cardiovascular exercise, obviously healthy, but I try and focus more on like the summer I did way more bike riding than I ever have. So I go on bike rides, walk my dogs. I'd maybe do sprints, like interval sprints with my dogs a couple of times a week. That literally would be my cardio, and I have responded so much better to doing that versus doing 30, 40 minutes of cardio every day. Another thing that I fell in love with I love is hot yoga. I struggle without sunlight. So winter I really struggled, and so I had to find something that would help me in the winter because you don't have that vitamin D and going outside and having fun. So hot yoga has really helped me with that.

Warren: Nice. Oh, that is so neat to hear because that's exactly what we've been preaching on RecoverMe. And you teach people this on your website and your coaching business, and it's just incredible. Oh my gosh, Ashley, we were going to do this again very soon because there are so many more things I want to talk to you about because you have such an amazing story and so cool. But I got to close it down. Our attention span isn't what it used to be. So let me, if I may, I have your website up on the screen. Would you say your, for our audio-only listeners, would you give us your website?

Ashley: Yeah, it's actually www.ashleyrayfit.com, and I do have an email. I always get this mixed up. It's on the website, but it's ashleyrayfitness@gmail.com. I do have a contact area on that website. You could send me an email through there. I'm also on social media as [@ashleyrayfit](#), but probably emailing me would be the best.

Warren: Very nice. And that is just, I'll spell it a-s-h-l-e-y-r-a-y-f-i-t.com, www.ashleyrayfit.com. And you do coaching and personal consults and are just at already, hopefully I know already. Anybody who's listened to this podcast knows you're an incredible wealth of information and being through the process you'll be able to help people see what they're doing and make a big difference in their lives.

Ashley: Uh huh.

Warren: Yeah. Oh well thank you so much girl.

Ashley: Thank you!

Warren: This has been really good. I'm excited for people to hear this and start to recover and feel good because that's what it's all about. So I will sign off right now. Stay tuned. Go to www.drwilley.com, d-r-w-i-l-l-e-y.com. For more information, understand the lifestyles, some of the books Ashley was talking about. And just really try to get healthy and have fun. It's about enjoying life. That's really what it comes down to. Wouldn't you agree? Ash?

Ashley: Yes I agree.

Warren: What's the point of looking at? I tell people all the time, those incredible looking models on Facebook and Pinterest and Instagram and stuff, if you ask them how they feel, they say two words - terrible. It's true. So anyway, we'll cover that in another podcast. So until next time, this is Warren Willey signing off. Thanks for listening.