

Craig Ballantyne Wants You to Live Your Perfect Day
PMR #125

May 5, 2016

Tony: Hey, Paleo nation. I'm Tony Federico, and you're listening to Paleo Magazine Radio, the official podcast of the original Paleo Lifestyle Publication.

While a certain portion of success can be attributed to unearned advantages such as family wealth, good looks, or luck, another perhaps more significant portion lies squarely within our control. What do we do with that control? How do we harness our energies to create opportunities, make connections, and come out ahead? Turning potential energy into real results takes a strategy, and with his new book, *The Perfect Day Formula*, fitness and productivity expert Craig Ballantyne, shares his winning secrets for success.

On today's show Craig and I discuss how his mother's struggle with weight loss inspired him to get into the fitness industry. How he developed his wildly successful, Turbulence Training program while still in grad school, why repetitions matter when it comes to weight training, how working with a business coach helped him launch his online empire, and how he discovered the five pillars to success. Lessons that apply equally whether you're opening a Paleo doughnut shop or striving for a six pack. Before we get started, I want to thank the sponsor of today's show, Essentia, maker of the world's only certified organic, natural, latex memory foam mattresses.

We all know that sleep is an important part of the paleo lifestyle and that a good night sleep is essential for health. What you may not know is that conventional mattresses might be limiting the benefits you get from sleep, and they might actually contribute to health problems. When I talked to Jack Dell'Accio, CEO of Essentia mattresses he told me about the effects of volatile organic compounds, VOCs which are chemicals released by the polyurethane foam used to make most commercial mattresses.

Jack: VOC's are one of those components that lead to cancers and I believe that ... I think it's very well known now out there, it's becoming more common, people recognizing that low level chronic exposure is not healthy.

Tony: Increased risk of cancer might be one aspect of VOC exposure but, even in the short term it can be detrimental to health.

Jack: It stimulates your central nervous system and that constant stimulation when it comes to sleep, prevents you from getting to your delta sleep faster and stay there longer. It's very intrusive in what you require for sleep, for recovery.

Tony: Swimming in cancer causing, stress inducing chemicals doesn't sound like the recipe for great sleep, but getting your Zs on an all natural organic memory foam mattress does. Ben Greenfield of the top rated Ben Greenfield fitness podcast says that sleeping on an Essentia mattress is like sleeping on a soft, pillowy cloud of comfort and that it's about as close as one can get to a nightly nirvana. To order your

Essentia mattress with free shipping and a sixty-day money back guarantee just to to myessentia.com.

All right folks it's time to create the perfect day. Paleo Magazine Radio starts now.

Hey, everybody. Welcome back to Paleo Magazine Radio, I'm here with Craig Ballantyne, he's the author of, The Perfect Day Formula, how to own the day and control your life. Craig, welcome to the show.

Craig: Thanks so much Tony, wonderful to be here.

Tony: For me, I'm coming from the fitness world and I was a ... I still am a personal trainer and it's what I do when I'm not podcasting. I heard about you through turbulence training, that was my connection to your work. Then obviously you're doing more with, The Perfect Day Formula, and everything else. For our audience members who haven't come across you or your work, do you mind giving us a brief rundown, the history of Craig Ballantyne.

Craig: I'd love to talk about turbulence training, my first love, that truly was. I was a graduate student back in 1998 when I went from having a couple hours to work out every day or so, to having thirty minutes because I was in the lab from 7am to 11pm doing lab work. I took all the information that I learned over the years, and I put it together in this program that got me in and out of the gym in thirty minutes. That was when turbulence training was born and then I started writing for Men's Health Magazine in 2000. I still train this way to this day, it's just a very structured short burst, metabolic resistance type training program.

It's since been featured in Women's Health, Oxygen, Prevention Magazine, National Geographic, Details Magazine when it was still around, Maxim Magazine. Pretty much all these magazines you can think of that have any health or fitness component. It's really helped a lot of people. Over the years people were just asking for more and more body weight only programs, and so that's what I came up with. I've filmed over a hundred body weight programs that are on YouTube and through our business, and it really just has allowed me to help literally hundreds of thousands of people. I have some videos on YouTube that have been watched almost two million times. They've been around for a while but, they have been watched two million times.

It's been a real pleasure to be able to help people with all these home workouts and really help them overcome excuses, just like you guys do. Helping people overcome excuses, and going to the paleo lifestyle. It's really been wonderful and I'm happy to answer more questions on that.

Tony: Let's actually go back even further to a time before you were a grad student and struggling with your fitness. What got you interested in health and fitness in the first place? Why was that your chosen path of study, and why did you dedicate your life to it?

Craig: I was always into sports and so, I started working out in my teenage years to get stronger for both ice hockey and soccer. If you go all the way back to when I was four years old, there was a moment with my mother that actually must have inspired me to go into the weight loss world rather than helping athletes training. I was four years old, as I said, and I was riding home from town ... We lived on a farm back then. I was with my mom in this old green car and she looked down, and I could see she was sad, and I asked her, "Mommy, what was wrong?" She said, "I just got back from Weight Watchers and I had another unsuccessful week, I didn't lose any weight." It really hurt me to see the hurt in her eyes and so over the years as I've learned all this stuff about how to exercise quickly, and how to get results, and how the truth about nutrition is not what big companies tell you, that I really wanted to go out there and share this information with the world.

That must have been what inspired me underneath it all but, it was me personally and selfish getting into weight training for my own needs. Eventually in college when I started, I guess I put the two together that I could take the information that I was using and help average people, regular people, all the readers of these magazines to get more results in less time. That's what's brought me to where I am today.

Tony: What were you studying? What were you seeing that convinced you that the short, high intensity metabolic resistance type training was really the way to go?

Craig: Great question. Back then it was on the cusp of when interval training was becoming known among advanced trainers, and so, I was studying that in 1998. I was studying workouts where guys were doing multi-movement exercises. At that time that was when Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa were hitting home runs every time they got up to bat, and there was a lot of controversy about a supplement they were taking called androstenedione which is a precursor to testosterone. My graduate advisor allowed me to do a training study where we had these guys come in and either take a placebo or take the supplement before a long sixty-minute resistance training workout. We monitored how that effected their hormone changes. What we actually found was the only hormone that had actually changed was estradiol which is associated with gynecomastia in men, which means growth in their breasts.

Tony: Not what people are probably looking for.

Craig: Not what Mark McGwire was looking for that's for sure. We did that study and then combined with the interval training study, and then I did another study as my Master's thesis which is ... There was a lot of controversy around people would run for a long time and they'd lose their power. They'd lose their lose their ability to do vertical jumps at a great level. My professors were noticing this, just among their other friends who were professors. They got into this marathon running and then over the years they noticed they had no explosiveness. What we did in that training study was we had guys do single leg cycling for sixty minutes. You can just imagine how boring that was for weeks on end. Then we compared their power in the trained leg versus the untrained leg and also the fitness improvements.

That was when I was realizing the downfall of slow, boring, cardio, that it basically made you weak and took away your explosiveness. I was training athletes at the time and we realized we didn't want that to happen. Also I was just reading all these, quite a few studies where it was disappointing results from long slow cardio and so that got me to go through. I've written one book, Just Say No To Cardio, and I'm working with a major publisher right now on another book about getting rid of cardio because it's not what people think it is and replacing it with short burst workouts.

All that research really brought me to where I am today with the shorter workouts, the intense workouts. So many other trainers and so many other systems have caught up, and you see it everywhere. I guess what separates my stuff is I'm very structured. We're very, very structured, we don't jump around from workout to workout. We go three workouts per week, sometimes four, and we use the same workouts for three to four weeks. Then when the body is close to adapting then we move on to a new stimulus and look for new adaptations.

Tony: When you're first implementing some of these ideas you said you were training athletes, what was the setting within which you were working? Were you working in a traditional gym or did you have the luxury of being in maybe a precursor to the modern day crossfit gyms?

Craig: No, I was in college still. In Canada there isn't a huge budget for strength and conditioning. There's a little bit more now but back then there was almost nothing for the teams. I was working with every team at our school. From men to women's basketball, to men's soccer, women's soccer. We didn't have a nice soccer team. I wasn't involved with the football team but most of those teams [inaudible 00:11:43] and I really loved it. We would go out and we will train with intervals and these guys would be in mid stunts and forms within four to six weeks of interval training, sometimes even less. They'd be losing body fat really quickly. That was summer of '98 going into '99, and it was just a huge revelation for me to see these guys make these improvements.

That again, back there wasn't a whole lot of people doing interval training. If you went to the NACA event and you talked to the elite guys, they were definitely doing it but not a lot of people were doing it. That was a big breakthrough and I really appreciated that opportunity to learn that stuff. Even years just with our amateur athletics that we have here in Canada.

Tony: What did some of your first turbulence training workouts look like? When you were in grad school, didn't have a lot of time, what kind of things were you doing? Just maybe describe a typical workout.

Craig: They were the same sort of things that I was having people do in the maze a couple of years later. You go to a gym at lunch time which was when I was going with study meant sessions and it's going to be busy gym. You need to be able to have a combination of body weight and dumbbell exercises that you can do in superset fashion. I came up with something called non competing supersets which means, in classic body training you hear about how you pair, a bench press and a dumbbell chest press. Obviously those exercises are competing for the same muscle group, and so you're not going to be able to use the heavy resistance for the both of them.

It's fine for the body, but for someone who wants to get a workout whether using almost a 8-repetition maximum intensity, we'd want to have one muscle group work while the other muscle group rests. Research didn't show me then but a couple years later confirmed what was I thinking, that we wanted to stick in the 8-repetition range. We did 8-repetition maximum compared to a 12-repetition maximum in a soccer training program, the women when they did the 8 reps, they had a great post exercise oxygen consumption. Meaning they burn more calories, they had a greater afterburns, what people are calling it these days, from using the 8-repetition maximum, compared to using a lighter weight in the 12-repetition maximum.

I have found that out through personal experience, it was a couple of years later when that study came out, so it was really, really great learning experience there. It reminded me that, "Hey, listen, we don't want to be using light weights whenever possible, we want to challenge people to 8-repetitions, and that's going to help them to burn more calories during training and after training. Also really be suitable for building lean muscle mass, and burning fat, so they actually get those amazing body for life level transformations."

Tony: When you talk about 8 repetitions are you saying hitting failure at that point like sort of a momentarily muscle failure type of situation?

Craig: Yeah, another great question. I always recommend people using 9 repetition maximums, so they're always able to echo one more repetition. I did another study back in my undergraduate where we had people train to failure, and what we found

was people were able to maximally activate their motor units and their muscles, [inaudible 00:15:01] to be able to maximally activate your muscle, once they hit 90% of failure. They were doing 15 roll ups, they were actually recruiting all their muscle fibers by repetition number 12. We didn't have to go to failure.

Because most people were training at home, training alone, that would read my programs, we would want them to stop a little bit short of failure, even if they're just using dumbbells. They don't have to worry about getting crushed by a bar bell bench press at home in most cases. Still there's no reason to train to absolute failure. It also just leads generally I think to burn out in the central nervous system, and people will get weaker over time if they always train to failure. We always stop a little bit short and still gives us those benefits and the training sessions for the after run.

Tony: After you developed your program, you graduated school, did you go right into working in a facility, did you open your own gym? What was the next step for you?

Craig: I never did open my own gym, and I was always training either in people's homes or in boutique facilities in downtown Toronto which is where I was based at the time. We had interesting clients and I trained people all ages from 14 to 81, with most people being busy executives or busy homemakers. It was really, really great because there was a lot of different psychologies that you had to work around there with their respective beliefs about training. I learned so much, and there was big breakthroughs. There was training 35 to 40 hours a week, a full load, but nothing crazy. It was mostly one on one, and there was some group/team training at night. Then eventually 2005/2006 boot camps started getting popular and I started moving into those.

I've had the training experience with almost everything and it's really been wonderful to learn from so many people and help so many people change with this type of training.

Tony: When did you pivot your business to the online space with turbulencetraining.com and websites like Early to Rise?

Craig: I was actually doing that all the way back in 1999. I started email newsletter back then, built up a few thousand subscribers. As far as being an online businessman, I didn't have any idea what I was doing until about 2002. I started selling programs and then put my turbulence training program online in 2003. 2003 through 2006, I had some moderate success. Then 2006, I hired a business coach and he showed me the way and he really helped to give me that exponential improvement in my business. Since then it's been full time since mid 2006, we've grown that business. We have a dozen employees, we have certified turbulence trainers all around the world.

It is just wonderful to just be able to help so many people. We have almost 300,000 fans on our Facebook page. We're helping and changing lives everyday. It's amazing that this opportunity came along, I don't know what I would have done 20 or 30 years ago.

Tony: Yeah, absolutely. It's hard to imagine life without the internet. It's certainly revolutionized a lot of things in addition to our exercise programming and our ability to make money by delivering exercise programming. You mentioned some issues with the conventional dietary wisdom as well, what is your perspective on diet in the role of nutrition?

Craig: I've made videos that have showed in a funny way that diet is more important than exercise. Even though I'm a trainer and I make my daily bread from selling exercise programs, I will be at the front of the line to say diet is the most important part of not only your fitness, but also your cardiovascular health. It is far more important than any exercise you can do, for either one of those. One of my funny videos online is me running on a treadmill as hard as I can while my friend, Brad Pilon who is an intermittent fasting guru standing besides me and eating pizza and drinking a soda. He is able to consume 1,200 calories in 4 minutes, and in 4 minutes I'm only able to burn I think it was maybe 50 calories on treadmill, [inaudible 00:19:21] and then sprinting.

It just shows you how great of a discrepancy there is between what you can eat in a few minutes against what you can burn. People that think they can go in on Monday morning after eating 2,000 calories of wings and 6 pack of beer while watching beer the day before, they're going to be sadly mistaken. You can't go to the cardio confessional, as I call it, and burn off those calories, it will take you hours. People need to understand that, and once they understand that, they see the value of nutrition and why it's so important. That is the number one factor in your fat loss, and in your cardiovascular and health.

Tony: As far as any specific foods that you recommend as kind of key things to focus on, do you have a meal plan of sorts that you would advocate for yourself, or even just a general template?

Craig: I am pretty close to paleo myself. I have been tested for gluten sensitivity, and I have this one gene, I have both alleles, this one gene that mark me as sensitive with gluten, so I do avoid it. I have for about 4 years now, it's very simple for me. For people that don't need to necessarily avoid it, I do recommend limiting wheat products as much as possible. We just recommend, the simplest thing for me to do is whole natural foods, avoid things from a bag or a box. Lots of foods, vegetables, groundnuts, and excellent protein sources, and healthy fats.

It is nothing secretive, I don't mind if people want to be intermittent fasting person. I like breakfast and dinner so I don't do intermittent fasting, I certainly can if I need to but I don't need to. I know it works for so many people that just don't want to do a lot of meal prep, so I'm fine with that. I actually believe Tony that every diet will work for some people, it's just a matter of finding the right diet for your personality and your schedule, and then you can stick to it. Obviously people do have gluten sensitivity and it's something they have to work around as well.

Totally whole natural foods at the end of the day, single ingredients foods. With single ingredient foods is a banana, or a piece of meat. I like potatoes, I eat a lot of potatoes, so I don't tell people to avoid that. It's just real food and when people focus on real food, and mindful eating and consistency with their exercise, they're going to have amazing results.

Tony: I think you just boiled it down right there, that's a formula that's hard to argue with. Speaking of formulas, your latest book which came out last year, the perfect day formula, it's a little bit of a pivot for you in terms of the focus. It's not necessarily about fat loss or getting shredded or improving your cardiovascular conditioning, it's more about being productive and having a flow to your day that allows you to get things done. Can you talk about how this came to be and why you felt compelled to put this information out there?

Craig: I've been writing for a personal development site that I have owned since 2011 called early to earlyrise.com. I've really always been about this productivity and being successful and helping people, whether they're trying to lose weight, or whether they're trying to get more done, I believe that there's a lot of shortcuts to success, based on science. I put this book together because it's something that I've been studying for my own personal success over the years, and I wanted to give people a formula for it. That's what we ended up doing.

The interesting thing is there's a huge crossover here because the middle of the book contains what I call the five pillars of success. The five pillars of success was something I learned from running body transformation contests since 2007 in my business. I found Tony that the people who won the contest, they always had these five pillars in place. These five pillars, if they weren't there, someone who only had one or two of the pillars they would drop out of the program after 2 weeks. You could see it coming, it was just like, "Here's a person who is going to succeed because they have the pillars. Here's someone who's refused to get them, or who can't get them, I don't know how long they're going to be around."

The five pillars are better planning and preparation, professional accountability, which is having a coach, social support, which is having cheerleaders in your life for the bad days when you need a pat on the back, and some encouragement. Then a meaningful incentive. What that means is whatever you're doing this for, whatever

your reward is at the end of the day, whether you're losing weight, or whether you're trying to make more money for your family, there has to be a meaningful incentive for what you're doing. If it's not meaningful to you, you aren't going to be inspired to keep going during the tough times.

Finally the fifth pillar is the big deadline. The big deadline is the pillar that actually has the greatest impact on our action. You've probably seen people running a race, or if you've run a race yourself Tony or if you've watched people run marathons, as they get closer to that finish line, they're summing up energy that otherwise wasn't there. It's that deadline. Another deadline, another great example of that is Christmas Eve. We all know that Christmas is coming every year, it's no surprise, December 25th every year, but what happens on December 24th? The mall is packed because of the big deadline. It springs us to action in so many different ways, and that's why it's so important. That's why the fifth is the most impactful pillar in success.

Tony: I guess this really isn't a big departure then, like you said there's a big crossover. You can take these same principles whether it's trying to lose weight and transform your body, or to build up a business. Obviously you found success in both arenas. For somebody who is maybe successful in their fitness and they feel like they've achieved their goals, why do you think that sometimes we're not able to apply that same success in the business world? Why is there sometimes a disconnect there as far as people having success in one area of their life, and maybe not in another?

Craig: I have had success in some areas and struggled in others. I can say from personal experience that struggling is just a matter of intimidation I think. It's this whole idea of. "I don't know where to get started." Hopefully that's what the pillars allow someone to do. They're able to say, "Listen, if you want to succeed you need these five things. If you need these five things to really smooth the path to success, let's take a look, let's just sit down and look at them and how would they apply to building your business. You need better planning and preparation." "Okay I can see how that would work, we need to plan who we're going to try and serve, we're going to think about all the obstacles in the way, and then plan to work around those obstacles. If we're trying to have foot traffic to our gym, or to our location, then we need to make sure that we pick the right location so that we're not hidden, and therefore people won't see us." That's better planning and preparation.

Then professional accountability, this is so important. If I would have went and got a business coach sooner than I did, I'd even be more successful today. My book would have been out years ago and I could have helped more people. I hesitated to get a coach. You do need to find somebody who's been there and done that. It doesn't matter if you're trying to lose weight, you go and get a trainer who's had success and who's referred to you by others. If you want to start a business, you go and find somebody that who's build a business that I want to have. Do they have a book out

there? Can I go read it? Do they have YouTube videos that I can go listen to those? To see if they're the right fit for me both in terms of expertise and in their morals and ethics.

You want to find a coach who's not only the right coach for you, who can show you how to get things done, but who also has respect for your belief on life and the way you want to do business. Who's not going to pressure you into making decisions you're going to regret.

Then you need just positive social support. That just means again, you're going to find more people who have been there and done what you want to do, and so that they can say, "Hey, when I was stuck, here's what I did." Those are mastermind groups, those are chamber of commerce groups. They're going online and checking out Facebook groups, or successful personal trainers. If you're trying to start doughnut shop, look for people that have had successful doughnut shops. I don't think anybody listening to your podcast is going to be trying to start a doughnut shop.

Tony: Maybe a paleo doughnut shop.

Craig: Right, made out of bacon.

Tony: There you go.

Craig: There's so many great online communities out there, and there's plenty of research that shows if you get connected with online support groups that they are very beneficial. It doesn't have to be real world, face to face, in the flesh support, it can be online from complete strangers who you might never, ever meet. It is research proven to be such as effective as in person support.

Then you go and find a meaningful incentive, that's really what inspires you to take action. Then you give yourself a deadline, which is where a lot of people, they fail on their goals in many areas of life. They will say that they want to accomplish something, but they won't give themselves a deadline with consequences. If we don't put a deadline with consequences there, then we suffer from what Tim Ferris told us about in *The 4 Hour Workweek*, which is something called Parkinson's Law. That talks about how the task will expand to fit the time allotted for it.

Everyone has had the, you have to get your essay done by March 31st in college or high school, and we magically leave it till March 30th at midnight. If it was March 24th, we would have somehow got it done by March 24th. If it was April 15th, we somehow would have waited until April 15th to get it done. That is Parkinson's Law at work, and that also is applicable to starting a business. If you don't give yourself a deadline on renting out a space, or putting together a business plan, then it will

always just sit there and forever be procrastinated upon. That's another aspect that people need to put into place for whatever goal they want to achieve.

Tony: I think that is a great point. I always think of that as positive pressure. You need that little bit of fire underneath your pants to get you moving. Like you said, if you have a goal and it's to finish something in 6 months, typically you'll figure out a way to make it happen, as long as you have that good accountability, which I think is very important. Otherwise you'll just drift off into the purgatory of lost dreams.

Craig, this has been a really great conversation, I was just sitting back and listening, for most of it just thinking, "Yeah, this is all very useful information that I could apply in my own life." I'd just like to end with, it sounds like you've kind of done it. You've got great physical health, you've got a thriving business. What's something in your life that you're striving for? What's the goal that maybe you're working on and applying the five pillars towards at this moment.

Craig: That's a wonderful question Tony. I was actually just going to mention you can also use these five pillars to find the love of your life. That is kind of something I am working on right now. Found one last year but she didn't feel the same way about me, so I'm using the same thing. Somebody might be sitting there thinking, "How do you find a spouse with the five pillars?" Well, you do better planning and preparation. What do I look for in this individual? If that's what I look for, where do I find somebody with these qualities, and how can I spend more time in these environments, and how can I get connected to these people? That's one way.

Professional accountability, I've used matchmakers in the past. People can just recruit a friend, find somebody who just has the most social connections and say, "Hey, I would love for you to help me find somebody." Most people when they're made that offer, they go, "Oh I would love to help you find somebody." Everybody knows somebody who would just be dying out there to help them, so they can go and do that. Then you have positive social support. Tell your friends, "This is my goal, I want to meet this person. When you send me an email and I say I'm too tired to go out tonight, I don't want to go to this party, you got to step up and say, hey this is your goal come on, let's go, let's have fun. Let's meet some new people." That's another thing, that's the third pillar there.

Fourth is meaningful incentive. Generally that's built in to something like that. Then fifth is a deadline, you need to give yourself a deadline for this like saying, "Hey, for the next 3 months I need to meet 6 new people or I need to go on 3 dates." You have something called process skills, which you can ... You might not be able to control that yes you're going to meet the love of your life in 90 days, but you can say, "Listen, in the next 90 days, I'm going to ask at least 6 people to go out for dinner, or have coffee or have lunch." Those are things you can control, and those are what you can put in to help you connect with your big deadline.

There you have it Tony. There is something that we can all benefit from at some point in our life, which is meeting new people, that's how you use the five pillars.

Tony: That's awesome man. If I come across some stellar ladies in the next couple of weeks, I'll make sure to send them your way.

Craig: I'll appreciate that. Thank you.

Tony: Thanks so much for coming to our show man, it's been a blast talking to you.

Craig: Thanks so much Tony.

Tony: That was Craig Ballantyne, author of The Perfect Day Formula. You can find out more about Craig by going to his website, earlytorise.com or turbulencetraining.com. Next week on the show, I'm joined by Dr. Maya Shetreat-Klein, author of, The Dirt Cure. Here's a preview.

Dr. Maya: Whether children have a diagnosis of ADHD or they don't, when a combination of preservatives and food dyes were given to them in a double blind placebo controlled trials, they found that children 2 and 3 years of age, and 8 years of age were more hyperactive when they were give those combinations of synthetic food dyes and preservatives, than if they weren't.

Tony: To learn more about growing healthy kids from the ground up, you'll have to tune in to next week's show. Until then, you can check out our full archive of paleo magazine radio episodes on paleomagonline.com. Just click the PMR PODCAST tab at the top. Thanks again to today's sponsor, Essentia, make use of the world's only certified organic, natural latex memory foam mattresses.

Thanks to you too paleo nation, without you we won't be here, and I won't have the opportunity to talk to amazing guests about modern day paleo living each and every week. It's unfortunate that I don't get to see you however, it's just one of the limitations of podcasting, but in lieu of that I'd love to know what you think about the show. A great way to do that, is to head over to iTunes and leave a rating and review. It's a small thing but it makes a big difference.

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