

**EPISODE 190**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:10] AVH:** Alright, welcome back everyone. I hope you're in a fighting mood today because we are talking to Jodie Esquibel, she's a professional mixed martial arts fighter who just had her debut in the UFC and if you don't know much about MMA, we're talking about an elite athlete who goes through some of the most rigorous, intense, physical training known to man. Including intensive fight camps leading up to her fights.

Also including weight cutting which we'll get into, we talk about that a lot. Jodie from what I can tell is very on top of recovery and wellness and stress maintenance and taking care of her body. She seems to eat pretty Paleo too.

We're going to talk to her about her first fight in the UFC which just happened in Poland and we're going to talk about her training, eating, recovery and what it's like mentally and physically to fight another human being for a living in front of millions of screaming fans.

I mean, that's not a normal day job. You know, just for anyone who's not as in to this as I am because I am personally a massive fan of mixed martial arts. It's a full contact combat sport that incorporates fighting methods, standing and on the ground so things like wrestling, jiu jitsu, boxing, judo, kick boxing, all mixed together. It's incredible because it's a feat in itself as anyone who has tried it knows, to master or get good at any one of those disciplines.

These athletes study and practice all or most of them and are able to incorporate them seamlessly in combat with another person who may have an entirely different set of skills and strengths.

It's an incredibly mental sport and it's really interesting to watch and the more you know about the sport, the more interesting it is. I highly recommend you checking out Jodie online and checking out some of her fights and definitely listening to this interview because it was one of my favorites.

I am such a massive MMA fan, I have so much respect for the skill and the dedication of these athletes. I'm so excited to talk to a woman in the sport because there's just been such an explosive growth in the visibility and the skillset of women in the sport, especially in the last sort of five-ish years I suppose.

I mean, Jodie's been around a lot longer than that and there have been women doing this a lot longer than that but the growth of the sport I think in the last five or so years can be hugely attributed to the caliber and the quality of these female athletes.

Really exciting interview, at the very least it's talking to an elite athlete about their training and nutrition and recovery. I think we can all learn a lot from it. Without further ado, here is Jodie.

[INTERVIEW]

**[0:02:53.8] AVH:** Alright Jodie, welcome to the podcast. Thank you so much for being here.

**[0:02:56.5] JE:** Thank you for your time.

**[0:02:59.0] AVH:** I actually just came from a boxing class because I wanted to mentally prep myself for chatting with you so I'm all pumped up on testosterone, I'm ready to go.

**[0:03:08.8] JE:** Good.

**[0:03:10.5] AVH:** I guess, first, congrats on your fight in Poland and your debut in the UFC, I mean, it was pretty recently but now that you've, I guess, had a little bit of time to come home and decompress, how do you feel?

**[0:03:22.3] JE:** It feels so good, I feel so happy and thankful and grateful and all that, besides catching a cold on the way back but other than that, it's kind of surreal. I go full time and I think it's all coming together and I had fun, it's the best time and an amazing experience to be able to travel so far and compete at the highest level and be healthy about it too.

**[0:03:47.6] AVH:** That's awesome, I would imagine it would be tough for traveling so far, right? Because I know, even traveling long distances, when you're not going to do an athletic competition, it's still hard on your body.

How do you kind of avoid that when you're travelling to a fight and you need to be healthy?

**[0:04:04.0] JE:** Just carefully you know. Your nutrition and your training going into the fight is key and listening to your body and the ability to be able to pay attention to all that is huge, you know, I've been leading for a long time now and the things that – man, if I knew what I knew now, when I first started fighting, then I would have been unstoppable, you know?

Of course, with time comes knowledge and the ability to stay tuned in with your body is huge.

**[0:04:31.2] AVH:** Right. I'm a big fan of yours, I'm a big fan of MMA in general so I'm going to try to kind of be half and half between asking like MMA questions and also health and fitness questions, keeping in mind what this podcast is all about.

This next question, you can answer it or not. I don't know if it's kind of political but I'm interested to hear what you think, you know, if there are differences between fighting in the UFC and Invicta, can you talk about that a bit or not?

**[0:05:01.0] JE:** Yeah, of course I can. You know what? That's cool that you're a fan of the sport too and of course without any fans and without the support, we would just be fighting for ourselves and that's not fun sometimes, you know? Thank you for that.

No, Invicta is just, that's where I came from, that's who I felt like I have the confidence to take a fight with the number three ranked girl in the UFC in her home town is because of Invicta. Because of the caliber of fighters that are in it right now because of the way Shannon runs her show.

I was confident in myself because of her, there's just nothing – there's no other way I would have been prepared without Invicta. The skill level of these women competing in Invicta is unbelievable.

You know, some of the matchups would be tougher matchups with athletes that are in Invicta right now than the UFC and I firmly believe that and the way that, because Shannon knows how to run a professional show, the show is run just like a UFC event, you know? You have a media day, you have this, this is all scheduled, everything is super professional.

And Shannon truly cares about all our athletes. The transition wasn't as grand as it would have been if I wasn't signed with Invicta and been a veteran of Invicta. She and that alone and that experience had made me better prepared for the transition.

Yeah, of course it's the UFC and it's a bigger. I mean, I fought on Fight Pass which is the same avenue that I have fought Alexa Grass at a main event, you know? Yeah, more people probably watched the fight but I'm just so thankful for my roots, you know? And what they're doing in Invicta is something amazing right now.

**[0:06:46.7] AVH:** Awesome. For people who are not into fighting, mixed martial arts, any of that stuff, people sometimes have a hard time imagining what could make a person want to fight for a living. Can you talk a bit about your background, how you got into MMA?

**[0:07:02.9] JE:** You know, I think life is about finding your passion, right? What kind of makes you feel alive and kind of that chase of a stardust is what I've been into lately and it's adrenaline for me. I have known that since I was young and not so much in just a broad sense, I mean, I did bungee jump and do that stuff too because that's exciting.

I knew that at a young age, there was going to be either – I was hanging with the wrong crowd of kids at 13, 14 and half of my friends were in sports and half of my friends were hanging out, you know, on the corner of the street, up to no good. Martial arts came into my life at a pivotal moment and I'm thankful for martial arts saving my life, you know?

I was hanging with the wrong group of kids at 14 and that's when I stepped into martial arts and my intention was never to fight for a living. But getting wrapped in to the discipline and how beautiful martial arts can take somebody's life over, in a healthy way, is where I find myself now and being able to express myself as a martial artist and having that moment of clarity, that

moment of joy and – which is fighting and actually competing at a super high level is what has been come so addicting to me, in such a healthy way.

My intension was never like, “I just want to fight somebody!” You know, it is rugged and raw and testosterone driven and it’s just a lot but I’m still thankful for it all you know? It’s definitely what makes me tick. I was a firefighter before I decided to leave the fire department because I started to train at a higher level because I wasn’t able to work the 48 hour shifts and then go to train. So I knew that I could go back and finish my career as a firefighter, I went through paramedic school.

Right now, I currently work with our state police swat team and provide medical care for them. That just goes along with the – that all sounds very giving and all that but all of that just comes from knowing myself. I know that I’m adrenaline driven, I know that I want to be able to be able to have myself in the situation where I need to react.

That’s why I find myself providing coverage for a tactical SWAT team you know? That’s because I know that I want to be able to perform in that moment and that’s what I strive for and that’s what I was able to find through fighting also, is to satisfy that need.

**[0:09:40.0] AVH:** Right. Okay, this is so cool. I want to ask about the firefighting but first when you said you got started when you were about 14, did you go directly into mixed martial arts or did you start with like wrestling or boxing, or like one discipline first?

**[0:09:56.1] JE:** That’s a great question because the time now is that people are – kids are going into MMA class right away and that’s crazy because the evolution of the sport is so young right now. But I did not, I went in to kickboxing right away and so that was my first discipline was just kickboxing.

Michael John was my first coach, he’s still my coach, one of the best striking coaches in the world, I just happen to luck out to walk into his gym. He was my first coach and Greg Jackson was – his gym was separate at that time and so we didn’t have a good portion of that.

It took me a while to transition over, I went professional kickboxing and professional boxing for a long time and then we merge into one gym and still at the beginning when we were one gym which is Greg Jackson's and Michael John's MMA. I was still resistant to MMA, I didn't want to wrestle with people, I didn't want to do jiu jitsu and that wasn't appealing to me at that time. I was kind of – there is a handful of us that were standing our ground on not going to wrestling classes.

It was gross and all the boys smelled and it was like, it just wasn't the time, you know? It was disgusting. Now I look back and I'm like, man, if I would have just gotten to MMA class, five years prior to that I would have been ahead of the game for sure. But you know, it just wasn't in the cards at the time.

**[0:11:16.2] AVH:** It's so funny you talk about that too. I got into jiu jitsu a couple of years ago and I really wanted to start with women's only classes because you know, not to be, I don't know, immature about it but like when you're on the ground sweating, wrestling, you know, mounting people. It's a little bit more comfortable maybe when you're first learning to be with other women instead of men.

Men are gross and they do stink and they're sweatier and it's gross. But I mean, there's an element of you kind of get over it pretty quick when you're trying to save yourself from getting choked out.

I guess that makes sense. But that leads me into my next question about with MMA and then you know, you've been a firefighter, you're working for the SWAT team, you're not – not only are you into the adrenaline side of it but you're also in very male dominated industries.

I mean, MMA certainly a lot has happened on the women's side in the last like five or six years especially – I think women are taking the sport further than definitely most men would have assumed would happen, which is super cool and impressive.

Do you ever have any issues or frustrations around just constantly being in these very alpha male environments or you just kind of deal with it?

**[0:12:28.9] JE:** That's a great question. Yeah, and I'm small, being in the fire department, I had to overcome a lot. I was small, I was petite and I was a female and so these guys that are you know, 190 pounds plus their pack on were like "Yeah, you're going to carry me out of a burning building?"

I'm like "Yeah dude, I am." Then I would and I would show them and in training I would make sure that I could do everything better than they could do.

Maybe it was different, like maybe I had to throw a ladder different because the center of the ladder was different to me for – you know, because of my height but I threw the ladder just the same. I made sure that I could do everything better.

I made sure that I was stronger, I made sure that I was tested on the male standards and not the female standards. I think that was a big kind of opportunity for everybody to respect me as a firefighter. Not just as a female.

I didn't want to be like overly vocal about anything, I didn't want to be that female. I just wanted them to know that I was there to do the job and I could do the job better than probably most of them and they knew that within a couple of weeks at the academy, that was very clear that I wasn't going to be treated any different and I didn't expect to be. I didn't want to be and they better be able to keep up and I knew that I was going to be headstrong from the beginning about that.

I knew that I was going in a male dominant world which was some of the old captains in the older generation didn't think that – I mean, they still don't think that women should be firefighters, you know? I wanted to make sure that I didn't add to that. I wanted them to know that I could be just as good as them.

**[0:14:12.7] AVH:** It's cool that you touched on the idea too of having the same standard because that's really what helps people gain respect, you know, be okay with the idea of equality like how can you expect people to kind of look at everybody with the same level of respect when there's different standards? Especially in areas like firefighting or the military because ultimately you're looking at, are you capable of doing the job and saving people's lives.

Being able to protect yourself and others. If there are different you know, standards for people, I mean, that just doesn't even make sense to me. I think it's awesome that that's something that you kind of focused on, that's important.

**[0:14:52.1] JE:** Yeah, I was super confusing to me when they were like, "Well yeah, I mean, okay, get the female standard" and I was like "No, just test me on the male standards" and they're like "No, you know, what if you don't make the cutoff and your score is going to be lower." I was like, "Well then I don't do the job because when we pull up to the fire, I don't go up to the female fire and say..."

**[0:15:11.6] AVH:** Exactly.

**[0:15:11.4] JE:** You know, "I'm really confused here" and they were like, "Oh okay." And I smoked the physical. I knew that – I was confident and you know, yeah, that doesn't make sense, there's not – in a different situation. That guy is still overweight with his gear on it and I'm going to die trying to get him out, you know?

**[0:15:30.2] AVH:** I think even like, women's MMA and just sort of the changes in the fitness industry in general are showing what people are capable of. I mean, men and women fought until very recently that women physically were not able to do certain things like you even look at cross fit, right? Love it or hate it.

Before that came around, I mean, the idea of women being able to do like pullups was insane, women just don't have the upper body strength, women just can't do that. And of course that's ridiculous but when people never see these – you know, these things being modeled by people that look like them.

Then of course you don't think it's possible. Having more women kind of in this areas as firefighters, as MMA fighters shows that they can do it and it's not the female version of anything, they're doing it, they're just doing it.

**[0:16:14.9] JE:** Absolutely.

**[0:16:15.9] AVH:** Yeah, have you, you said you got started when you were 14 which is pretty young. Have you always been super disciplined with your lifestyle because you were fighting and training or was that something that grew over time as you became a fighter?

**[0:16:29.5] JE:** Yeah, you know, I think that it grew from martial arts. Michael John, always instilled to us that you work hard. I mean, hard work was better than technique at that point, you know? We'd always go run and we weren't ever going to be outworked and I grew up on that and my parents instilled that to me also but martial arts really shaped that, you know?

My parents were more like super supportive and my mom and dad never held me back from anything, you know? They always kind of make fun now, "Well shit, maybe we should have held you back on something because you're out of control now," you know, "You go to the extreme ends of everything." And it's like man, I'm so thankful for that. I was never told that I shouldn't be a firefighter because it was for boys or whatever.

I grew up wanting to be a firefighter and I didn't see the problem with that and my parents would have never dreamed of telling me that I couldn't do that, you know?

**[0:17:34.7] AVH:** I'm really interested in talking to you about your training camp and your training in general because anybody who knows anything about MMA knows that it's some of the most intense, grueling kind of physical training out there.

I know I'm like obsessed with watching the UFC countdowns and the embedded. I just love watching how you guys prepare and train and I think it is a little bit unique for women because while you may not necessarily train any differently than men.

You have different challenges like hormonally for example, and then in terms of like getting lean and making weight for the fights and stuff. Have you ever, while you're training, or in your camps, have you ever had any issues with like adrenal fatigue or hormone imbalance, or any of that stuff. If so, how do you kind of deal with that and manage it?

**[0:18:20.1] JE:** I used to make 105 with – the majority of my fights with Invicta were at 105 until the end.

**[0:18:28.2] AVH:** Remind me how tall you were?

**[0:18:31.7] JE:** I'm a small 115-er. That actually just came with, that just came with knowledge of my body, I was talking about earlier, like really getting to know myself and being able to perform and getting my nutrition right and then thinking I just carried a lot of muscle, like I carry a lot of muscle. To make 105 was starting to become an issue health wise, I just – my whole camp was geared towards making weight.

Geared towards quality practices like for the last three weeks of a training, I would make sure that I was serving my nutrition and cutting my calories and running and like stuff that would never benefit me in a fight. It was just insane, I think every fighter has to do it or go through it and figure it out and find where they are comfortable. Then I started getting older and my body started holding on to things and I'm like man, 105, I barely made 105 for my last fight.

I was crying the last quarter pound out and at that point, I was like, I'm just not going to make weight and I had never done that. That's your job, you sign a contract saying that you're going to make weight at this time, at this place, weigh in is not a surprise. When people miss weight I was always like, man, that's just unprofessional and I was at the point, my last 105 fight where I was like "Man, I don't know if I can make it."

I knew that that was what I need to evaluate things. You know, my cycles weren't regular because my fat content wasn't high enough. We talk about life after fights, a lot of us fighters have a hard time thinking about life after fighting but I do not because I look forward to that also, you know? I want to have a kid, I want to have kids. I want to do all that but killing myself to make 105 was making me unhealthy and it was doing things to my body that I don't know how long it was going to take me to recover from.

That was one big thing hormonally that I was like "Man, I can still make 105 but I just don't think that I'm doing it healthy and I don't think that I'm fighting at my full capacity and I'm getting older and we're talking about fighting super dehydrated and I know enough about brain trauma

coming from a little bit of medical background, who knows what I'm doing to my health and my brain." It was just smarter for me to move up in weight and I feel amazing.

I feel like a whole different person, I feel so much healthier. Camp is so much better, practices are so much better. The last three weeks of my fight isn't worried about how I have to lose 15 pounds still. It's about making sure that the game plan's on and my sprint works and is good still and I'm not running distance to take the extra pounds off. I'm running sprints, I fight a sprint.

I fight five potentially five, five minute rounds or majority of the time, five, three minute rounds. That's a sprint, that's 15 minutes of work.

**[0:21:39.5] AVH:** Do you find a big difference fighting, people at 115 like do you notice a significant difference that people are bigger or stronger or maybe they're a little slower Do you notice a significant change?

**[0:21:50.4] JE:** I've never – I have teammates that fight at high levels at 115. I have yet to run into somebody where I was like "Man, you know what? I'm just not strong, they're just way stronger than me." The majority of the time they're like "Dude, you're so strong" and I feel so good about my strength level. I am yet to run into somebody that has given me an issue as far as strength.

I needed to adapt my style for fighting taller fighters, yes, because of course, the majority of the time I'm going to be the shorter fighter. But the majority of the time I was almost the shorter fighter at 105 too.

I mean, I'm short, it's going to be an issue no matter what. Not an issue, just something to adapt to and I feel like I have. I never ran into somebody where I have been stopped in my tracks, you know?

**[0:22:46.3] AVH:** Okay, one more question on the making weight thing because I'm so curious about this. I feel like maybe because the sport's getting bigger or people are just getting more into it and they're seeing that side of it, the weight cutting side which has existed forever across a number of different sports and it seems like it's kind of a necessary evil.

Maybe just some of these sort of high level fights that have been called off at the last minute because someone got sick or they couldn't make weight and it was kind of a bad scene. Do you think that there's something inherently wrong with this process? I think people are always going to want to be the biggest person in their weight class, right?

It makes sense to always kind of try to lean out and be – try to be as lean as possible and then you know, hydrate again before the fight, whatever. Is there a healthier way that we can go about this, is there another kind of method like you have to be within 15 pounds of your weight class off season?

Is there a way to kind of make this healthier or is this just kind of always be this way?

**[0:23:46.3] JE:** You know, I know that there's a lot of studies going on right now and California is doing a ton of leg work as far as weighing people in the day of the fight, also just to kind of start running the studies of how much our people really gaining back and what are you stepping in at. I think some people are even doing kind of maybe like brain health studies.

Some people are drawing laps before and after. I think the research is starting to be there and I think without the research, you're never going to convince a fighter that I shouldn't say never. Never is a bold word, you're going to have a hard time convincing fighter to switch from what they're doing.

Whether the bigger fighter cutting down or for instance myself walking closer to my weight class, you're going to have to come with solid evidence about health and this is what we've found, not this is what we think or we hope, or this or that. It's got to be solid because fighters are so – they're so crazy, we're so crazy.

**[0:24:57.0] AVH:** Not normal people, generally.

**[0:25:00.2] JE:** It's just not – and so for you to come and tell me that I need to do this, maybe there is a handful of fighters that are willing to hear it but without some solid evidence, it's going

to be hard to change the game. I mean, the one cool thing is that they started the early weigh in's, you know.

We weigh in, instead of at like four or five in the evening, we weigh in in the morning time from like nine to 11 and then we have like the ceremonial weigh in the evening time, so that people can see the clocks.

Is that a blessing? I guess – and a curse because from what I'm understanding, I'm a big huge advocate. I've done of lottery search myself coming from EMS and like the medical background and we did a huge campaign here in New Mexico for a post weigh in, IV hydration which is now outlawed. You know, some of the fighter, now we have nine o'clock in the morning weigh in's, are the fighters waking up at six in the morning to cut weight?

Some of those fighters cutting weight the night before and sleeping dehydrated and then they're waking up to roll out of bed to go to weigh in's, which I know some of those fighter's they're doing that. They're saying, "Man, I don't want to wake up at six AM to cut the weight." So they're just cutting the weight the night before and staying dehydrated longer.

That's the one negative thing that I see going on with the new weigh in process but I know they're trying. I know we're trying, you know? It's just going to take research and it really comes down with being in tune with your body because some people not that weighed in and not be a big deal and how old are you and what's your adrenal fatigue like and what's your camp been like?

Have you been knocked down twice in training and man, it's hard because fighters are so hard headed too.

**[0:26:53.4] AVH:** So many moving parts, I mean, it's one thing to go through this insane training camp and then you're also like focusing on the individual person that you're going to be fighting and their set of skills. Then on top of that, then you need to go through this incredibly unpleasant weight cut process.

It's just like, juggling so many things at once, but I'd love for you to talk about your nutrition so talk about the way that you eat and the way that works for you and also whether your nutrition in training camp is different than when you're not, you know, when you're off training camp.

**[0:27:28.1] JE:** Yeah, I think that nutrition is the key to it all, honestly, when I was making 105, I was – I guess I kind of counted calories a little bit or at least had to definitely deplete myself down and my caloric intake. But it's kind of like man, I'm asking myself to perform at such a high level but I'm not giving myself any fuel.

If I am giving myself fuel, it wasn't the right fuel, it wasn't good healthy fats, it wasn't good carbs, it wasn't any of that, it was super lean or you know. That's why hormonally I think I was starting to deplete myself also.

Now it's like man, I'm so happy all the time and what's cool is my off season or not in camp nutrition isn't very different from my in-camp nutrition. You know, maybe, which is cool because it's a lifestyle, right? Wellness is all around, you see fighters sometimes in their 30 pounds over their weight, depending if they're big guys, 40, 50 pounds outside of their weight class when they're not in camp and I'm like, "Man, think about your body guys."

Let's get it together. You know, you want to have sort of healthy. We got to think about longevity too and it's like man, the stuff that we're doing right now, to be in this moment, you know. How much is it worth the rest of your life health wise, you know?

**[0:28:55.4] AVH:** Right, do you have like a nutrition coach or a company that you work with or you just kind of manage it yourself?

**[0:29:02.8] JE:** You know, I've worked with a lot of the nutritionists in the game right now. One guy that's been by my side from the beginning is Mike Dulce. He is great because he's evolved also and I'm that fighter. I'm that fighter that wants to know why and when and – but what is the research say and you know, not everybody wants to take the time to explain everything to me.

Mike Dulce has always been 100% about education and furthering himself also, and you know, he did it too and he's living the lifestyle and I appreciate that about him. So he's always been

somebody that I bump ideas off of and if I'm stuck then I'll reach out and talk to him, you know? He was a big – when I decided to move weight classes, you know, obviously he was one of the people that I kind of talk to and told him my concerns with health wise and he was on board for sure. I love Mike Dulce.

**[0:30:03.2] AVH:** Cool. Can you just maybe walk us through like a general day in camp like what you'd have, what you'd eat and when you'd eat it in terms of pre or post training, or whatever?

**[0:30:14.3] JE:** Yeah absolutely. I will say I went through let's see, what fight? It's all about experimenting too, you know? I mess around with like a lot of ketosis stuff for two fights ago and I take a lot of that with me. I know that in moderation, that was beneficial to me.

Anyways, in the morning, I will wake up and I will have coffee that will be usually blended with MCT oil or coconut oil, maybe blended with – I'm on a bone broth protein kick right now.

**[0:30:55.2] AVH:** What's your favorite one? I'm such like a collagen bone broth freak.

**[0:31:00.3] JE:** Dude, me too. When somebody's like, "Yeah, bone broth" and I'm like, "Let's talk about it."

**[0:31:11.3] AVH:** Yeah.

**[0:31:10.9] JE:** Dude, that's the ultimate healer also.

**[0:31:14.5] AVH:** Yeah, I mean collagen like whenever anybody asks me, "What should I be taking to stay healthier and fix my gut?" And "My joints are always sore when I work out and I just generally feel like crap." I'm like "Collagen, collagen, collagen." I can't speak about it enough. I think it's so good.

**[0:31:29.7] JE:** Yeah, it's amazing. Absolutely amazing. I am on the bone broth protein, the chocolate one.

**[0:31:39.0] AVH:** Is it Ancient Nutrition maybe?

**[0:31:41.6] JE:** Yes.

**[0:31:42.0] AVH:** Yeah okay. That's great.

**[0:31:43.8] JE:** That's like hot chocolate if you mix it with coffee.

**[0:31:46.2] AVH:** I know, it's delicious.

**[0:31:47.9] JE:** And coconut oil, I'm like, I don't know. Yeah, there's that. I have that in my life. Because in the morning, I'm not always super hungry and it's because I practice at 10 and so, when I'm in camp, practice like – sometimes it's just hard to eat something before practice.

Your nerves, like – I get nervous thinking about it. I usually eat my first big meal after practice which will be whatever I feel. Which is so cool now that my nutrition is so on and my weight is good, is whatever I feel like. Bacon, eggs, vegetables, sweet potatoes, usually is kind of the kicker after practice and I have that every day.

I don't count calories, avocado through avocado on there, good healthy fats. When I was making 105, when you said my joints hurt I felt like I was – like my body hurt, my hips hurt, my knees hurt, my elbows hurt. I'm like, I'm 27 you know? At that time or whatever, I'm like, "I feel like I'm ancient."

Just good, healthy fats and then I'll have another practice, I'll probably do another bone broth shake, I'm so addicted to that bone broth protein right now.

In camp, I'll make a big load of bone broth too and actually have bone broth MTT oil, butter type shake in between that also. Keep that steady going through camp because you're never healthy in camp and you're always depleted.

That's one thing that's been super awesome and then strength conditioning and then I'll eat after that, usually juice. I love juicing right now too.

**[0:33:32.0] AVH:** It sounds like, I mean, first of all, you're like living the ideal world where you're not counting calories, not obsessing over macros, you're just eating intuitively what you want which is ideal.

It sounds like you're eating a pretty, I mean, not to put a label on it because if you get to eat what you feel like eating but it sounds like pretty Paleo. You're doing like a very whole foods, unprocessed, real nutrition, real food kind of diet.

**[0:33:57.1] JE:** Yeah, I don't think, I think I eat out, when I'm in camp, I rarely eat out. I make everything here, I make everything at home but I don't – people are like, "Oh you probably can't meet us for dinner" and I'm like, "It's not like I can't and I don't really eat out that much when I'm not in camp either. I just want to know what I'm eating that's all." And for dinner, it's whatever I feel like also, sweet potatoes. I shouldn't say I don't, I try to stay away from gluten.

I don't eat any wheat that I can help or gluten like that. So with that, that puts me not eating when I'm in camp and it puts me not eating out because you don't know. You don't know what they are making it with and then if you're not comfortable with saying, "Hey what do you make your sauce with?" Then you have to take that responsibility yourself. So if you're not going to ask then say you don't want it at all, or ask and that's fine.

And places here aren't as open as most places and you know I'm in Albuquerque, New Mexico and we are coming around but we're not there. We're not California or we're not Austin, you know? So you really have to prepare and you just work for [caluman 0:35:06.7] and that's what I find joy in doing too.

**[0:35:10.2] AVH:** So you mention the bone broth collagen that you're really into. Are there any supplements or vitamins or products that you add to your diet that help you keep you healthy and help you with your training?

**[0:35:24.0] JE:** I feel like honestly now that my nutritionist go on that I feel so much better, just overall healthy with good clean food and nothing processed. I'm always reading labels and all of that and I just feel like that really transferred over to overall wellness. I don't feel like before I

was like, “Oh I need this supplement and this supplement and this” and yeah, I take an On It pack and a multivitamin On It pack and I will supplement vitamin C here and there.

But really, when you are eating real food, I feel like you are getting a lot from that nutrition and I feel that in my body, you know?

**[0:36:04.2] AVH:** That’s awesome, yeah that’s ideal. You talked a little bit about the nerves going into training sessions and this is something I think about a lot because again, I’m a massive fan. I am so into this sport and I think a lot about the mental side of it as well as the physical. I honestly cannot think of something more terrifying than fighting someone in front of millions of people. People talk about sports, there’s a lot of pressure in sport in general, right?

But most sports, you don’t necessarily have to be worried about being knocked unconscious in front of all of your friends and family. I can’t fathom that pressure. I think it takes a really special kind of person to be able to handle that in addition to everything else that you are dealing with. So I love for you to talk about if you have any actual fight day routines or how you mentally prepare and deal with that pressure and what you are telling yourself mentally as you’re preparing for a fight?

**[0:37:03.5] JE:** Yeah, I think that it’s hard to get routine with your fight day because sometimes your fight time is like midday. Say you’re travelling, you are fighting overseas or whatever, you don’t ever want to be like, “Okay I wake up in the morning, I am going to get my hair braided and then I am going to have breakfast and I am going to take a nap,” because that won’t happen for you every time.

I had to learn that the hard way because I was fighting normally here in the States, in New Mexico and I could control a lot of that. I could always eat this at this restaurant or I could always make this and then you start travelling and you’re like, “Oh well that can’t happen” and then you kind of freak out a little bit. So the less stuff that you can set yourself up before you freak out about the better off you are, you know? The less routine that things get then the better off but your mental preparation comes from camp.

Yeah, absolutely, you have to start mentally preparing just as you start physically preparing because if you don't you could be in the best shape of your life and you could do all the drills that you needed to do and not believe in yourself and you're not going to win. You just have to bring the full package together and a lot of people say that the mental preparation is more important than the physical preparation and I wouldn't object to that at all.

It's all truth in the cage. Like you said, there is a lot of pressure in sports in general but you can't hide anything in the cage. You can't hide that your preparation, you can't hide your mental or your physical preparation. It is going to show if you didn't do your sprint work. It is going to show if you don't believe in your right hand because then you shy away from it or whatever it is. It's the most revealing thing I have ever experienced in my life and it's the most truth that I have ever been exposed to.

All my friends and family that are watching or fans or not fans and those people help too, you know? And I fought in somebody else's home country and you feel that energy. You feel when they get into the cage versus when you get into the cage, you know? All of that is so exposing and if you are not mentally prepared however it is that you'd tell yourself, you know some people have to make it about the other person and then you see the heated rivalries that form because that person said this about them.

And that's all just because that's what they need to get there and sometimes that's what it takes. That's what it takes for you to – “Man I am going to fight this person. We are going to get into the cage, we're both trained to beat each other up.” So whatever you have to do to mentally get there, get there man. So if people are – you know early on in my career, I had a girl that was kind of taking crap and it was, “Oh doesn't that get you mad?” and I'm like, “No we're going to fight anyway.”

We already decided that we were going to fight each other so I am not really mad about anything. I don't know why she's so mad, you know?

**[0:40:19.0] AVH:** Right, so funny. I guess this is a question that I feel like it doesn't get asked a lot because everyone asks what you do leading up to the fight and how you prepare for the fight but I don't hear very often what a post-fight routine looks like, like how you decompress, how

you recover, how you relax, how much time you may be take off before you get back into training? I suppose that would depend on sort of if you have another fight planned.

But also, is there some kind of whether it's for food or training that you kind of reverse back out of it like you wouldn't just want to stop working out altogether. What is the post – like a couple of weeks after a fight how does that play out?

**[0:40:59.8] JE:** That is such a good question and I think that honestly people need to ask more of that because I don't think people understand that post fight blues is real. I think that's why you see so many fighters fall off the wagon, fall off the handle after a fight whether they win or they lose because it's hard, it's so hard. You know for eight weeks you've thought about one thing. Everybody around you was supportive and always was like, "Oh do you need everything?"

Meals were catered to, your training camp, all of your thoughts, all of your spare time is focused on this event, you have fight week and then say it's a big fight. Say it's your first UFC fight in another country and now you're travelling and you have this huge media week and you have your first press conference and all of this emotion and then you have your fight and then you fly home and people move on with their lives and you're just stuck and you're not sure.

Win or lose, that almost doesn't matter you know? It's just like this huge and let down is kind of the wrong word but this huge let down, after this huge event that you've planned and that you've spent everything and all your energy and put it into this huge event and you're just like lost a little bit.

**[0:42:36.6] AVH:** Yeah, I think this is a really important conversation to have because I think a lot of people, not everyone can relate to the actual work that you do obviously. But I think a lot of people can relate to that feeling because I know personally I've competed in different events nothing on the scale of what you've done but similar anybody who has competed in athletic events or even, I don't know like a really big project for work or anything where as you said, you were dedicating all of your energy and focus to this one thing.

And then when it's completed, maybe you won or it was great or everything is perfect but once it's completed, it's like this adrenalin dump and then you feel aimless and then you're like well

“What’s next?” and it is very normal for people to get depressed and even if they don’t have anything next like if they don’t have something planned immediately after then they don’t know what to do with themselves and maybe having always having a goal for some people is healthy.

And maybe for some people it isn’t and they have to just keep finding the next thing in order to feel like they have something going on in their lives. So what are some ways that you combat that?

**[0:43:39.8] JE:** Yeah that’s another great question because we – actually Keith Jody and I were talking about that and we were talking about ambition and maybe for some people there’s too much ambition. Like you have to find some sort of healthy balance between ambition and to have that moment to enjoy all of your hard work and your ambition, like how do you enjoy that you know? And one cool thing about fighting, is normally we plan a couple of days to get out of town to just decompress.

Talk about decompressing and that’s real too. I think after big events in any way like you said about work, or any other sporting event, or any type of competition, or big projects and usually we do a weekend or a couple of days somewhere – where you’re just cut off from everything. So maybe a couple of days to adjust and get back and this one was a little bit extra tough just because of jetlag on the way back and so it took a little bit longer and then take a couple of days and then go off the grid and just decompress and just chill and relax and yeah, I am that person that makes the next goal.

And like, “When is the next fight?” Honestly I am healthy I didn’t really take much damage and I don’t need to medically take any time off. So yeah, it’s already in my head like I’d like to fight before March and that makes me feel calm though. That’s not something that makes me anxious. That is something that’s like, “Cool, well you can take a couple of weeks off right now to decompress.” I own a yoga studio so get the yoga studio back on track and do stuff like that, that helps and then get back on the grind at camp and I want to be completely active right now in fighting.

Because I know that that’s not going to last forever and I don’t want it to last forever. I am not going to be the fighter that’s trying to hold on. I just want to make a good solid run at that and

then play it good but that was a tangent but I do feel comfort in thinking about what's next and that's not stressful to me.

**[0:45:59.5] AVH:** Right, yeah I saw from following you on social media that you've got your own yoga studio and you teach yoga, right?

**[0:46:07.0] JE:** I do, yeah.

**[0:46:08.4] AVH:** That seems like a pretty cool way to balance out the intensity of the other physical job that you have. How long have you been into yoga?

**[0:46:16.3] JE:** Yeah, I forget about it too and it's horrible. I started practicing yoga probably about six years ago and we opened the studio probably a year after I started practicing. But that alone, I went to the yoga teacher training in the Bahamas which sounds amazing except when I got there, what I didn't understand was it was like in this little huts with no caffeine, no running water, no meat, no –

**[0:46:51.6] AVH:** Oh geez, that sounds like my nightmare. No caffeine, no meat?

**[0:46:54.9] JE:** Well that's all that stuck out to me because I was like, "Wait so where is the caffeine?" It was all vegan which is not the way I eat and I run by coffee. I mean we have Caveman coffee like come on and so then it was like, "Oh this isn't what I thought it was." So then I called home and I was like, "I think I just need to come home. I think we messed up. I think this isn't right," and they're like, "No, well you are here and if you want to go home you don't get a refund."

And I was like, "Well I spend \$4,000 to come here. You know this is crazy," so then they're like, "No you're right where you need to be," like some crazy hippie stuff and I was like, "Whatever this is crazy," and then of course like two weeks later I'm like, "Oh my god this is where right I needed to be."

**[0:47:44.8] AVH:** That's amazing, how long where you there for?

**[0:47:46.3] JE:** Nine weeks.

**[0:47:47.2] AVH:** Whoa dude, nine weeks?

**[0:47:49.4] JE:** Talk about crazy nutrition. So there was all vegan, right? So they had these peanut butter sandwiches. So I ate peanut butter sandwiches on this white bread for eight weeks. I gained like 35 pounds.

**[0:48:03.4] AVH:** Oh my goodness that is insane.

**[0:48:06.3] JE:** When I came back, my strength and conditioning coach was like, “Oh my god you’re fluffy,” and I was like they don’t work out. Our days would start at five to meditate and then we would do like a yoga practice. My poor body was used to working out like a for real workout every day. But then our nights would end like the sun would already be down and there’s not like there’s a gym there. So I wasn’t doing anything. So on top of not doing anything and eating peanut butter sandwiches for nine weeks, I gained – it took me probably three months to take the weight off.

**[0:48:47.8] AVH:** Well talk about learning your body and self-experimentation right? You learned definitively that you are not a vegan after that nine weeks right?

**[0:48:57.2] JE:** Oh my body was so mad.

**[0:49:00.7] AVH:** That’s so funny but you do, after all of this you do obviously appreciate yoga a lot and assuming it helps balance out some of that stress and the training that you get from your training camps right?

**[0:49:14.1] JE:** Oh absolutely and just taking the time, we don’t take the time to stop. We don’t take the time to stop and take a breath. Half of us, I mean we’ve talked about outside of the country like the way we breathe because we are shallow breathers and so we are lazy shallow breathers and just being able to learn how to take a deep breath. Like man, or anybody, not just professional athletes. At a workday you take a deep breath like it’s just been – yoga has been life changing. It’s definitely been life changing.

**[0:49:49.1] AVH:** That's awesome. Do you know about Brian McKenzie and his power speed endurance and all the breath work that he is doing? You know about Brian McKenzie?

**[0:49:57.8] JE:** Yes, yeah absolutely.

**[0:50:01.9] AVH:** He did that XBT program with Laird Hamilton and Gabrielle Reece but he is doing his own thing too. I had a little bit of experience with that and interviewed him for the podcast. Some of that breathing stuff like you said, literary without trying to sound too cliché it changes your life because you don't realize how much of a difference proper breathing can make in your life and how you feel. It's incredible and it is not super difficult. There is not a huge barrier to entry, you just have to be willing to put the time in and do it.

**[0:50:32.8] JE:** That's exactly – it's accessible to everybody and we're in the age of education, right? You just Google. Google healthy breathing patterns or techniques or whatever it is and that's accessible to everybody everywhere and, "Oh yeah, I work this," then why aren't you doing that when you are sitting at your desk? And opening the yoga studio was huge too just to be able to be a part of people saying like, "Oh you know I look forward to going to yoga class every day and thank you" and man that's cool, that's what it's about you know?

**[0:51:13.9] AVH:** Yeah, so I could pick your brain here for hours and I want to be cognizant about your time. So I've got a couple more questions here but I do want to cover some of your recovery tactics too like if you have any kind of words of wisdom or advice or how you deal with sleep? Also I know from following you on social media, you are a big infrared sauna guy which I am too and I know you – I believe you use Sauna Space who we actually, I just touched base with those guys.

And we are going to have them on the podcast soon too because I love their stuff. But I'd love for you to talk a little bit about the recovery tactics, not just eating and taking time off but other ways that you help recover and heal your body.

**[0:51:53.5] JE:** Dude, Sauna Space, talk about changing your life. I love my Sauna Space. I'm giddy when I think about my Sauna Space. It was such a huge recovery key for this camp.

**[0:52:15.1] AVH:** How often are you using it? Like every day, every night?

**[0:52:18.0] JE:** Every single night, yeah which was huge because boom, I get the phone call, “Hey by the way you’re in the UFC. Hey by the way you’re going to fight the number three girl in Poland.” My sleep went to probably – I am a great sleeper and I have no problem napping and I have no problem sleeping through the night. I probably slept an hour or two a night, for the first week.

**[0:52:42.6] AVH:** Oh geez.

**[0:52:43.8] JE:** Because I was sick, I was stressed out. I was like, “What am I going to do? This is crazy. Is this the right time? Do I say yes? Is it no? Well I already said yes, what about this?” blah-blah-blah training. I was exhausted and then I am trying to go to practice and so sleep, “Oh my gosh, sleep it’s it” you know they talk about, “Oh athletes should be sleeping this much” I say add two hours onto whatever study that you are seeing because I know when I sleep, how much better I feel.

And so if sleep isn’t a priority for somebody’s wellbeing it should be pretty damn close out there to the top, the number one thing is sleep for sure and so –

**[0:53:31.6] AVH:** Do you nap well?

**[0:53:33.0] JE:** I nap, yeah. I’ll do a 45-minute nap in between practice if time allows it and on big sparing days, I am usually pretty trashed after strength and conditioning. So I will be able to nap on a Monday, Wednesday, Friday. I don’t try to over nap because I do want to sleep through the night. So a nap of 45 minutes during the day on my super hard days absolutely yeah and I think –

**[0:53:59.7] AVH:** Alright tell us – Sorry.

**[0:54:01.4] JE:** Sorry. I think one crazy thing was getting off shift work when I was working 48-hour shifts and then the difference between – that was another thing hormonally that my body

was like, “This is not cool.” Which is super hard, which is why I have so much respect for everybody that works the night shifts out there, working the streets all the time because man, that’s tough on your body. But my Sauna Space, holy crap I sleep like a rock after a sauna session. I usually will eat and then do whatever I needed to do to get stuff ready for the next day.

Because when I get out of the Sauna Space, I usually like to just be able to lay down and I don’t want to mess with my phone. I don’t want to do anything with all of that after because the time in the infrared, the near infrared in the Sauna Space kind of blacks out all of that blue light that we have all day, you know? And so I didn’t know how much that messes with your sleep patterns and telling your body to wake up.

Then you lay back in bed and mess with your phone but man I could tell such a huge difference every night when I would do my sauna space. Then I would get – lay down in bed and my phone would be not next to me and I would fall asleep. I don’t even remember falling asleep a lot of the times.

**[0:55:28.2] AVH:** Yeah and do you feel that it makes a big difference with muscle soreness and stuff? For listeners who maybe don’t know what infrared sauna is, I guess it’s different from a regular sauna in that like the infrared waves help heat you from the inside out and so you may not feel as hot, or maybe you don’t sweat as much but it warms you and it helps release toxins and it’s supposed to help relax you, with muscle recovery and stuff, right?

I know when I first tried it, I’m like, “Alright this is probably a placebo. I’m just going to sit in a sauna for half an hour.” And the first time I used it I was so relaxed, I couldn’t believe it and I felt it really did make a difference with my muscle soreness because I am always tight and always sore. So do you feel like it helps speed up your recovery too?

**[0:56:12.7] JE:** Yeah, absolutely. I do and I want to know research because I thought the same thing like, “Oh it would be cool to have a sauna at my house like whatever, it is probably pretty sweet.” Then talking to the guys at Sauna Space, you’ll love them. They’re amazing and they’re so knowledgeable and talk about simulating my mitochondria and I’m like, “Hello, yes. You had me at mitochondria.” And so you know and it’s like, yeah I believe in all of that.

I really do, I don't think it is a placebo at all. I have a significant injury probably about six weeks before I got the news and a significant cartilage injury and I was on bone broth and Sauna Space regiment three weeks and I firmly believe that that helped my healing process. I mean, I believe it 100%.

**[0:57:12.2]AVH:** Alright, last question, important question, what is next? You said you wanted to fight, hopefully by March, do you have anything on the horizon, what's going on for you right now?

**[0:57:23.7] JE:** I don't. I think we'll probably give it this week and then kind of reach out and say, hey, just so you guys know, I'm totally ready and healthy. Like I caught this cold but that's the only reason why I haven't been back in the gym.

I want to say busy, I want to stay active, I feel like I'm the best I've ever been. I feel like my learning curve is so high right now and I want to give this everything, you know? I feel so good and I feel so motivated after my last fight that I don't want to take time off and I'm excited.

I'm just kind of excited about the future and most importantly, I'm super healthy and I can't stress that enough for people to feel good. To truly know your body and know what makes you feel good, not just nutrition wise, but what you're doing and what goals you're reaching and what stardust you're chasing and who you have in your life.

Man, I feel like I'm in such a good place right now that I'm just excited and I hope to fight before march. I think that that would be awesome.

**[0:58:27.8]AVH:** That's awesome, I love that you're – what you've told us over the last hour in terms of your training and your outlook is, you know, you're an elite athlete and you're kind of, you got access to the best of the best but you're still the basis of your training and maintaining your health is accessible to all of us.

It's about finding out what works for your body and eating good nourishing food that makes you feel happy and not deprived and finding the training and the recovery and the mental health tactics that work for you.

That's all stuff that doesn't have to be super expensive or next level. It's just about taking the time to kind of figure out what you need and then going for it and being consistent, right? I think that's an awesome lesson that any of us can take.

**[0:59:12.1] JE:** Yeah, that's huge and then I was thinking about people like post fight, post-fight blues and food and I think you mentioned like is there stuff you eat and yeah, like you see the fighters that have been really killing themselves to try to make weight and they do feel super deprived.

They say, let's just go get pizzas, burgers and fries and cake and you get crazy and well, it's like, I never really feel like I can't have that during camp. I don't eat – if I want to make a gluten free muffin or some cake or a gluten free cake. I'll eat a piece of cake during camp, it's not a big deal.

That's why I don't have to fall off, like it's not this emotional roller coaster with nutrition that like now I binge eat and – because I used to do that, like I used to – you don't feel good and you talk about just knowing what your body feels like and then you feel like you have a food hangover and then your stomach hurts because it's just man, it's a vicious cycle of not being well.

**[1:00:12.7] AVH:** Then you're guilty, you feel guilty because you're like, "I'm a fatty because I just ate this crappy food and I have no willpower" and then you eat more and you're like, "Screw it." It's this whole vicious cycle.

**[1:00:24.2] JE:** Yeah, it doesn't matter anyway, right? Whatever. Yeah, if I want to go out and have some French fries then that's cool, I will and I won't feel dizzy because I didn't just eat 18 burgers or whatever for the last week.

Because I didn't feel super deprived and I know I'm going to feel like crap after I eat all that anyway. It's like, man, just feel good and it's like, it's cool to eat good, it's cool.

[1:00:53.4] **AVH:** There you go, that's a good sound byte. That will work for Paleo Magazine too, it's cool. Wow, I think that's an important thing for people to remember, I like it. If people want to, if listeners want to learn more about you and follow what you're doing, what's the best way for us to basically stalk you online?

[1:01:11.4] **JE:** Yeah, Instagram and my Twitter handle are both the same and that's just Jodie Esquibel at Instagram and Twitter.

[1:01:24.6] **AVH:** Awesome. Well Jodie, thank you so much for taking the time, this has been so personally exciting for me because like I said, I'm just a big fan. Being able to pick your brain for an hour, it has been amazing.

Thank you again and best of luck with where life takes you over the next couple of months and we'll be watching and I'm looking forward to it.

[1:01:45.5] **JE:** Yeah, thank you. And next time that we're in the same area, we'll get it rolling.

[1:01:49.2] **AVH:** My god, I would die, we have to.

[1:01:50.9] **JE:** That would be awesome, let's do it.

[1:01:52.6] **AVH:** Alright, thanks Jodie, alright, take care.

[1:01:54.9] **JE:** Okay, alright.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[1:01:59.7] **AVH:** Alright everyone, thanks for listening, I hope you enjoyed this episode and if you follow me on Instagram @themusclemaven and if you ever see a video or a picture of me rolling with Jodie, just know that that is the best day of my life, even if she's choking me and it looks like I'm in pain, I'm not, it's the best day of my life, okay? Let's be clear.

Alright, next week we have Emily Shrum on the podcast, she is a personal nutritionist and coach and cross fitter and all around fitness personality. She created the Superhero Challenge and has had more than 20,000 clients taking it on and get fitter, she also just recently started in a show called champs versus stars on MTV and it airs this month I believe so we'll get to talk to her a bit more about that too.

She's really popular both in the fitness world in general and in the Paleo world because she's very knowledgeable in that world as well and the whole Keto thing and the fasting thing. She's super smart and she's really popular. I think she's going to have a lot of exciting stuff for us.

Stay tuned for that and last thing before I sign off, your fun homework for today is to go to the [Paleomagazineexpo.com](http://Paleomagazineexpo.com) website and learn a little bit more about the two-day expo that we are hosting, Paleo Magazine is hosting in Boulder Colorado this June on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>.

We are so pumped to be bringing this amazing event to Boulder which is, from what I can tell, one of the most beautiful places in the world. I've never been there but I'm very excited to go for this event and it's going to be, we're working on making this the premier Paleo health and wellness expo.

But of course, it's open to everyone. Anyone who wants to learn and be healthy and have fun and just get together with likeminded people, this is what it's all about. We've got some big names coming to headline and give talks.

We have lots of fun activities and a bunch of vendors signed up and if you're interested in attending as a guest or exhibiting as a vendor, check out the website and feel free to direct any questions, also, to social media so you can follow the expo's updates on Instagram and Facebook @Paleomagexpo. I hope I see all of you in Boulder in June. That's it, see you next week.

[OUTRO]

**[1:04:32.8] AV:** Paleo Magazine Radio is brought to you by the Paleo Media Group and is produced by We Edit Podcasts. Our show music features the song *Light It Up*, by Morgan

Heritage and Jo Mersa Marley, and on behalf of everyone at Paleo Magazine, thank you for listening.

[END]