

## How to Exercise to Prevent Sugar Cravings with Alisa Vitti

### – Insatiable Season 11, Episode 7

[INTRODUCTION]

**[0:00:47.7] AS:** Have you ever had a colleague, a family member or friend who smoked and was agitated close to their smoke break or if they otherwise couldn't grab a cigarette, or you may know someone who struggles with alcohol and has trouble resisting a or many drinks. Perhaps you have similar feelings, but they're directed towards cookies, chips other kind of carbs. We have labeled the staples of the American diet as an addictive substance for many reasons. On one hand, our agricultural policy in food production that revolves genetically altered crops that produce cheap carbohydrates represents a bigger lobby and more electoral laws than tobacco whose powerful lobby allowed cigarettes to be marketed as a healthy way to relax and safe for years including by doctors, despite widespread evidence to the contrary.

In addition to not being regulated, the sugar industry gets an estimated \$4 billion in annual subsidies courtesy of US taxpayers. On the hand, lobbies and food politics aside, food addiction and consequences require a more nuanced approach than abstinence as possible for cigarettes and alcohol. We die if we avoid food completely, and food is much more fundamentally woven into our culture in earliest memories than alcohol or cigarettes, which in all cultures are generally adulthood indulgences.

Do you remember summers at the pool with Swedish fish, or warm, salty soft pretzels from the snack shack, or holidays with grandma's amazing mac and cheese, or dad's famous mash potatoes, or like me, Friday night Pizza Huts where you cashed in your book reward for reading five books to a free personal pan pizza? Chances are if you scan your memory, some of your



best warmest memories involve sugar associating this ingredient with pleasure, celebration, ritual and reward.

For the purposes of this season, by sugar, I mean we think of as traditional sugar, like sodas, candies, cake and added sugar in processed foods, like salad dressing, breads, pretzels and other salty carbs. On the flip-side, your most difficult memories probably also involve sugar as a source of refuge. If like me, after another day of being bullied and isolated from “the cool kids at school”, you found bagels in the fridge to eat and numbed the pain of being othered, or right before a spin tap to see how far your cancer had spread, your parents took you to the Pancake House to try and bring some sort of comfort during the scariest health scare you’ve ever had. Who can forget SnackWells? A dieter’s low-fat bonanza where we thought we could eat the whole box because it was low-fat, not realizing that all the sugar was making us hungrier and hungrier.

Sugar has comforted most of us when we were isolated, in the midst of chaos, or for many of my clients, it was a lift when being emotionally neglected. Food companies methodically and relentlessly advertised to make us trust sugar and let these processed foods into our lives in a way not only we thought a warning label like cigarettes, but actually in a way we now come to see gout.

As a result, what was only used in a way that we use spices today, a little dab’ll do ya is now in the stable of our collective diets. While now it’s recommended to limit sugar, food companies didn’t create but can capitalize on our puritan Christian and capitalistic narrative of sacrifice equals reward to ignore the mind-body connection and the need for emotional intelligence and agility.

Adding insult to injury, we as taxpayers are paying to make ourselves and the environment, which is degraded immensely with our monoculture agriculture focused on sugar, corn, soy and wheat that will be processed in sugar and well, or subsiding ecological collapse in the resulting

in the pandemics like coronavirus. The decline of our personal and environmental bodies has led to an over-taxed healthcare that was never designed for the chronic diseases which in large part driven by our food supply and its consequences.

In this season 11 of Insatiable, we will look at how we as individuals and a collective can go in a sugar rehab physically and emotionally. We will explore how we arrived here, root causes of sugar addition, if sugar is really addictive and can we eat it moderately and how we can move forward with sugar and its proper pace in our life and what does that look like for you?

Without further ado, let's enter sugar rehab together.

[INTERVIEW]

**[00:04:52] AS:** Welcome everybody to season 11 episode of Insatiable, how to exercise to prevent sugar cravings with Alisa Vitti.

We have so many beliefs about working out, and these beliefs come from stories that our body is a machine. Because this story dominates often, we also don't hear the story of the miracle and ebb and flow of women's bodies and how our hormonal dance influences how we workout, eat, parent and work. To help tell us a more exciting and untold story, we have Alisa here on the show today who is a repeat guest, because she's amazing, to educate, inspire and fill in some major missing holes to how we understand our female bodies zeroing in on the connection between how we exercise and our sugar cravings.

Here is a brief bio of Alisa. She is the author of the new book In the FLO, which I recommended to so many clients and my own insatiable community. In the FLO: Unlock Your Hormonal Advantage and Revolutionize Your Life. Alisa is a women's hormone and functional nutrition expert and pioneer in female bio-hacking. She's the bestselling author of Woman Code and

creator of the Cycle Syncing Method, a female-centric diet and lifestyle program that leverages hormonal patterns for optimal health, fitness and productivity.

Thank you so much for being here today, Alisa.

**[00:06:16] AV:** I am so happy to be here. Thank you for having me.

**[00:06:19] AS:** I want to open up with what I just love about your book, is the feminine – All your books is the feminine enlightenment. Let's put it this way. But you talked about being in school and learning, and I'm not going to quote the exact passage, but you quote in the book, In the FLO, you learned that the testes are these powerhouse and efficient production and they produce 200 to 300 million sperm [inaudible 00:06:45] daily and how the men's reproductive system is just kind of glorified. Then you read this kind of, "Wa-wa-wa. After the development and release of one egg from the ovary, the female reproductive processes twofold. Basically, if we don't get pregnant, then the lining shed and is lost and a cycle begins again."

You talk about how what you wanted to read was, and I'm going to just quote a little bit of it. I love this. The female reproductive system is the crowning achievement of human evolution and reproduction. Efficient and highly adaptable. Seven hormones work in symphonic relationship to cause four highly-refined processes that take place in a given monthly cycle. When conception does occur, the process of gestation is absolutely breath-taking. You go on and on. How the process of labor and delivery, one that seems to post extreme physical danger is the peak example of how women's bodies transform into a channel of power to safely deliver the baby and preserve themselves. Can we just open up with that? I just love that perspective and why we don't hear that.

**[00:07:57] AV:** Yeah. I mean, it's so funny. Because of my upbringing, which was simply that I received no negative, no any – Nothing. I was not given any conversation about menstruation or it being a curse or body stuff or anything about sex. I came to all of these things really in this

innocent and neutral kind of way. I was also raised in an environment without sisters, with two brothers and a father who had a really positive relationship with his own mother.

I was sort of just in this environment where everybody was treated the same and expected to become self-confident people. It's in a way very gender-equal home environment that I was raised in. By no means perfect, but there were a lot of good things about that from my point of view now especially later on in my adult years looking back on that. One of the things that it created was this effect whenever I would encounter the cultural narrative. It was very jarring. I found it very strange and odd.

For example, everybody knows about the sex ed class, the first sex ed class I had in sixth grade where they talked about periods and I had not heard of a word about it until that moment and was awestruck at how extraordinary this was and how lucky I was that I was going to be the gender that got to have a period. Then quickly scanning the room of my female co-students, saw that they had a completely different reaction, and I found that really weird. Why are they reacting so negatively to this as an extraordinary?

Similarly, when I got to middle school and we were reading about reproduction, which as I write In The FLO, I was so excited to learn more about this thing. I was already so excited about from sixth grade. When I read the language about the sperm production and the testes. I was like, "Okay. Great. Yup! Awesome. Human body is awesome. Great. I had no – That felt right that the language have a lot of pride in it and excitement its capacity."

Then I got to the female part, and it was so the opposite. It was so laden with this sense of like failure if you don't reproduce and so much waste. Like, "Oh, the testes are efficient, constantly in production. But the uterus, it's not very efficient because if there's no baby in there, then it's just wasting time and wasting blood." I was like, "What?" My whole reaction to that was who wrote this? This is wrong. They got this wrong. My instinct was that I couldn't accept it the way that it was presented because I had a completely different experience of things even at such a

young age, that like it couldn't be true that it was this sad thing that was being described. It turns out it's not quite the opposite. But that stuck of me of like, "Oh! Hmm."

It only continued as I've gone through life to see that, for example, even just with sex and sexual pleasure and women having agency over their own orgasm. Most women, we've adapted a cultural narrative that like there's something to avoid "down there". It's dirty or somebody else has to do it or whatever. We have these negative associations with it, and I remember the first time I encountered that with my high school friend who I just had sex for the first time with her boyfriend. I think it was senior year. They had been together for two years and I was like, "Tell me how it was," because I didn't have a boyfriend and I wasn't yet sexually active. So I wanted to know, because I was so fascinated by this whole reproductive system. I was like, "How was it? How many orgasms did you have? Congratulations!" She was like, "Yeah, it was fine." I was like, "Didn't you help him know what to do?" and she was like, "Why are you talking?" I was like, "Well, didn't you tell him what to do? Did you do it yourself while he was doing whatever else he was doing? You were making sure you had an orgasm?" She's like, "No. That's dirty."

I literally had no point of reference for what she meant by dirty again because of my upbringing and I was left to my own innocent self-discovery. I said, "Oh! Well, just take a shower first. That's no big deal." I could not understand what she meant was that that was somehow bad.

**[00:12:40] AS:** Idea of dirty.

**[00:12:42] AV:** She was like, "No. Obviously, I showered." I was like, "Well, then what do you mean?" She's like, "That's gross." I was like, "What? Ha?" The same exact reaction I have to watching my friends in sixth grade being like, "Oh no! The curse is here," and not understanding why they felt that way. The same reaction I had when I read the material in junior high of like somebody was like drunk when they wrote this. This is not accurate. Then it's the same

reaction I had senior of high school. My good friend had sex for the first time and told me that touching her clitoris was dirty. I was like, “Is everybody crazy? What is happening?”

So, yeah, every time I confront cultural narrative, which spouts toxic mythology about women, women’s bodies, women’s metabolism. Today, we’re going to talk a lot about your metabolism. For example, the toxic mythology about your metabolism is that it’s slower compared to men, which is not true. Every time I confront this in conversation with people or in academic, literature, or in media, in articles, it’s like a slap in the face. Like, “Whoa! Oh, no! We’re getting this so wrong and it’s hurting so many women and it’s got to stop.”

**[00:13:53] AS:** Yeah. I think that’s one of the – I interviewed Laura McKowen, and she is in – Her book, we have a lot of cases about sobriety and we’re talking about the cultural myths around alcohol and how when you start to how wrong the cultural norms and narratives are. It can be so isolating, can’t it? Because you’re seeing the same thing as other people, but the meaning is so different. It’s like you got to bring people along with you and kind of be that voice. And it can be exhausting and isolating doing that.

**[00:14:25] AV:** I think I can appreciate how that maybe can be the case for people. I have never felt that way. I think maybe because I started such a young age that this is not – I don’t know anything else, but it’s never felt isolating. It’s felt like the basis upon which I am able to connect and perform relationships and find community and share my gifts, and yeah, I have a different take on it for me. But I do appreciate that for some people, especially with the alcohol thing that that can feel socially isolating. But, I think it comes down to if you’ve been indoctrinated as a young woman, a young girl to be a good girl, then that’s going to set you up for a lot of challenges.

For example, good girls, let’s take in the case of alcohol. Good girls don’t rock the boat. If the host offers you a glass of wine you say, “Yes. Thank you.” Right? That’s being a good girl. If you want to not drink, the part of you that’s been conditioned for decades to be a good girl is going

to pretty much win and you're going to say, "Yes. Okay. Thank you," and feel the peer pressure in that that you should somehow subvert your needs and desires to make other people happy because you've been conditioned to be a people pleaser.

I was fortunate enough not to get that conditioning heavily at home. Certainly, you get it in the environment around you. I don't mind being disruptive. I don't find that that's actually a real problem. I don't mind doing things that are supposedly disruptive like saying, "No. I don't drink." Because I don't, right? Okay. And I go to parties and people are like, "Oh, you want something to drink?" I'm like, "No. I don't drink." "Oh, okay. Can you get me this instead? Like water with some lemon in it or something?" "Oh yeah, sure. Cool. Okay." It's not a thing for me. It's not a thin for them, or I don't mind standing up for myself. I wasn't a good girl, for example, in the doctor's office after I helped her diagnose me with PCOS. And she said, "Okay. Now you have to do this. Take this medication. Da-da-da-da-da."

I questioned her. I said, "Why would I take medication for a disorder when it will not you cure the disorder?" She literally blinked and looked at me like, "What? Huh." She was first a little like shocked that I questioned her authority and her game plan, but then she also was listening to the question and like, "Yeah, why would you take medication that isn't going to get you any better?" She got tongue tied for minute, and I said, "Here's what I'm going to do instead." I'm 21 saying that to an adult physician.

It is important that you identify these ways in which you've been conditioned because it affects your behavior and your sense of the ability to do what it is that you need to do for yourself. If you've been made to feel so afraid that you will not be loved unless you do what is expected of you, then yeah, that's a tough like line to tow always. That's an exhausting burden. And then doing anything you want, therefore immediately feels isolating, but it need not feel that way at all. In fact, it shouldn't be. It should be that you do you and the environment of our relationship is one that is inclusive. Meaning, if you don't drink and I do and we're in a healthy relationship, then we can include both realities to coexist simultaneously without judgment, or guilt, or

shame, or whatever. If you have dysfunctional relationships, and that can be family dynamics or societal dynamics, that you feel scary, and it's also true that the world is not inclusive fully yet of women's reality. We see that most potently when it comes down to our biological rhythms, which is one of the reasons why I wrote this new book, *In The FLO*, because why is it that almost 50% of women are struggling with hormonal issues, weight struggles, blood sugar issues compared to men? Well, it's because, first of all, we haven't been told about our second biological clock. It's called the infradian rhythm, I-N-F-R-A-D-I-A-N. and then anything that you're doing that is being researched on men, like high intensity interval training is the gold standard, or intermittent fasting is the gold standard, and then you apply it to your infradian biological rhythms will disrupt your body and cause you to have things you don't want to happen to happen, like gaining weight, or having anxiety, or having brain fog, or having disrupted periods and fertility, and so on and so on.

We need a culture in the wellness conversation, in the fitness conversation, in the medical conversation, in the corporate conversation. That starts to become way more inclusive of the female biological reality, because facts are facts. You can have opinions about whether or not you like things to be inclusive or not, and I hope that you want them to be inclusive. But the facts are male hormonal biology follows a circadian pattern, and therefore they have optimal timing to do workouts at a certain time of the day, to do deep work, at work at a certain time of the day, to socialize in a certain time in the day, and it literally is rinse and repeat every 24 hours. That's a fact. The other fact is that women are not tiny men, and they have a 28-day infradian cycle that requires them to pick the timing, to eat certain things at certain times like man, but just for their infradian rhythm instead of circadian to work out at certain times at the right way across the cycle. To do projects in optimal timing for them across the cycle. And both of those things can be true and must be – They must both be given space in a healthy societal relationship. Just like the friend who wants to drink and one friend who doesn't. Those things should both be able to coexist, equally valid. And in our culture, we need to have the male experience of biological reality and the female one be included in our cultural narratives so that

women can stop having all these imbalance, the unnecessary disorders of their hormones and to start to thrive in their lives.

**[00:21:11] AS:** I love that. How did you figure out about this infradian clock? Because most of us, if our eating, our workouts, our daily or weekly schedule is on that 24-hour clock, which to what you said is really centered around men's hormones.

**[00:21:27] AV:** Yeah. It's hurting you. It's hurting you to live a circadian life exclusively. Now, how did I figure this out? Well, that's the story of how I ended up writing this second book, which is essentially that I was really excited about five years ago seeing something that was historic taking place in the media. Millennials are starting to post pictures of themselves, free bleeding on Instagram, bleeding through their pants, bleeding on to their beds, running marathons without any sanitary products, menstrual products. I thought, "Here we go. Finally! Finally! We're going to normalize women's biology," because these young millennials are like, "This is ridiculous that this is a taboo. This is my body. This is what happens." I was so impressed with their forthrightness, and I said this is the watershed moment.

I was very encouraged that the media wellness outlet specifically really picked up on a lot of stories about normalizing menstruation. In fact, for two or three years in a row, menstrual normalizing was a trend, an annual trend as dictated by the annual forecast that both well and good and in mindbodygreen did, and I was featured in them and I was so excited to see that we were finally having this historic meaning. Never before in all of recorded human history has there been never any mass media conversation about menstruation in a positive way ever, ever. I thought, "Perfect. Now there's content. More content, more universal access via the Internet by women all around this beautiful planet will equal more healthy women. The plague of women suffering unnecessarily with their health, with their weight, with their periods can finally end."

What I saw instead over those five years where I was tracking this trend was that, in fact, no. This was not happening at all. Women were getting sick still and up to the tune of 47% of women suffering from hormonal issues. When you compare with the male cohort, it's like there is no comparison. Women are way sicker with hormonal imbalances than men. I started asking the big question of what is going on. Why is this happening? Why is this the case? Because I'm a systems thinker and I like to get to the root cause of things. This is my nature.

What I found were two key things. The first thing that I found was that women were being left out of medical fitness and nutrition research. That's really important, because for example, when you go get general anesthesia, that dosage is titrated with an assumption that you are a tiny male. It's not that it's specifically researched and documented and there have been females included in those human clinical trials, right?

**[00:24:23] AS:** Scary. It's powerful.

**[00:24:24] AV:** Yeah. And it is true across the board in drugs and everything, and it's such a problem that in 1996, the National Institute of Health put out a public request that women in their reproductive years be included in human clinical trials. As of 2016, the status report showed that progress has been extremely slim. In 20 years, almost no new research has been done with women in human clinical trials. That means any time – And they know how much reliability that is and they're really working hard in the medical establishment to figure out how to fix that.

In the fitness and nutrition section, where it's not like let's say as life critical as the medical environment and complex to do the research, the fact that this gender gap in research still exists is really, really problematic for me, because women are reading all these stories about, “Oh! The latest study shows that intermittent fasting for 18 hours a day is going to confer all of these enormous benefits on your health. It's going to reduce your weight, improve your

cognitive health, protect your brain from dementia. It's going to improve insulin sensitivity. It's going to increase cellular autophagy. It's the golden standard now of living a healthy life.

Well, that research has not been done on you. That's been done on men and postmenopausal women. And I dug up some really interesting research that I put in the book about how, in fact, it's really dangerous that we're not having more transparency in these articles that says, "Hey, full disclosure. This study that shows this has only been done on this cohort. If you're not part of that cohort, you should proceed with extreme caution, because we don't know how it's going to affect you." But instead, we get the conversation that is good for you and this is good for you and that's good for you. All the while, all of that research and all of those studies have been done only on men.

Then we look at the fact that women are way sicker and more symptomatically reproductively than man, hormonally speaking, and no wonder why. They're reading all these articles, trying all of these detoxes, and workout programs, and diets. And without realizing it, they're disrupting their biological rhythm at a profound level and having not just symptoms in the area that they were hoping to improve. Let's say like weight loss. But then they actually have a whole new set of symptoms they didn't have before, like disrupted periods or things of that nature. It's really, really upsetting to see that we've been misled so much without having all of this information really clearly laid out. That was the first thing.

The second thing was that I uncovered the infradian rhythm. I am really proud to say that this book *In The FLO* is the first book to write about the infradian rhythm. And I've been doing lots of podcasts since the book came out at the end of January of this year 2020, and I've been in conversations with medical doctors who never heard of it before. That's also a problem, because it just – Again, we're studying the heck out of the circadian rhythm because, first of all, everyone has a circadian rhythm, and it's extremely important. It affects multiple systems of your body. But women have this second biological rhythm that activates at puberty and deactivates at menopause, and it's called the infradian rhythm and it affects six key systems of

your body. It's equally important as the circadian rhythm for the decades that it's active. There is no research being done on it yet, and it's absolutely something that we have to factor in when we're thinking about how we have to work out, how we have to eat, because it affects your metabolism and its speed, which I'll break out in a minute.

That led me to want to write this new book to explain these challenges that are unique to women with the gender gaps that exist in research. And what the net effect of that has done has disrupted all of our infradian rhythm so profoundly that we're having a multitude of system problems from brain chemistry, cognitive performance, weight issues, metabolic issues, immunological issues, microbiome issues, stress response issues and reproductive issues, right?

What we don't need is a fix for our metabolism and a fix for reproductive system. What we actually going to do is start supporting this deep, deep root cause, which is supporting the infradian rhythm. And then all the systems start to work optimally, which by the way is exactly what the male bio hackers are doing. They try to optimize that roots support the circadian rhythm and they can start to work much better.

This is new sciences. It's in the field of biology. This is called chronobiology. And like I said, it's a relatively young division within biology as a whole. But even within that, really, right now, only the circadian rhythm has been studied at length. And still, there's so much for research to do on that rhythm alone. But the infradian rhythm, it's a whole new green space of research that could be done that would benefit half the population and must be done.

In the book, I not only wanted to sort of share about these findings and explain why so many women are struggling, but I also wanted to give the solution, a revolutionary solution for the first time for women to really be able to get it right. instead of throwing spaghetti at the wall and hoping this workout will give you the results you want or this diet will finally be the one that helps you lose those 10 pounds, or this detox, or what – Instead of playing this unending guessing game of disappointment and money wasted and time wasted, here is the exact

biologically-based system that will allow you to eat and exercise according to what is actually happening in your body to optimize its performance. This is not just an academic thing for me. The proof is in the pudding. I've been able to maintain, for example, a 60-pound weight loss for 20 years and pregnancy where I gained like 40 pounds and lose that as well because I know how your metabolism works and I know how to work with it, and it's so much easier than you have been told it is.

**[00:31:07] AS:** I love that. Can you tell us a little bit about that? About how this infradian rhythm affects how we work? How it impacts sugar cravings and what's going on with your metabolism?

**[00:31:18] AV:** This method that I'm about to tell you about the solution that I created is called the cycle syncing method, and the three pillars of it are that you change what you're eating essentially once a week. So you have four different food patterns. You change how you're working out four times throughout the month and you focus on different tasks for different ways over the month to align with the changes that the infradian rhythm creates in your metabolism, in your stress response system and in your brain chemistry, right? You go with the flow.

This is what men do, by the way. Let me just give you a little comparison here so that you know that it's a safe idea for you to try, because I know you've been conditioned to ignore your biology on a fundamental level.

Men, For example, they know, they wake up with a lot of testosterone and cortisol. Sometimes they can see it in the form of an erection if they've gotten a good night sleep, but they also feel the urge to move their bodies. Men optimally like to work out first thing in the morning, and that actually optimizes their performance cognitively for the rest of the day.

For men, to take advantage of that testosterone when they wake up, to wake up early, to work out early and to do as much of their deep work as early on in the day as they can allows them to take advantage of their circadian biological rhythm. Then, later in the afternoon when they fall off the testosterone and cortisol cliff around 3 o'clock, they either use some bio hack, like Nutribix or upgraded coffee to extend their energy and cognitive focus and stamina, or they start to socialize, which is where a corporate culture and happy hour comes from. It comes from this male hormonal pattern. Men have been doing this for centuries, and it's a very good practice because it allows you to get optimal results in the most efficient timing that you do have based on your biological mandates.

What I am suggesting that you do as a woman is understand what your biological patterns are and then just start to work with them. So you have this infradian rhythm. You don't experience it in the course of a day. You experience it over the course of a month. As I said, the monthly cycle, but it goes way beyond your period. It goes from your brain, to your immune system, to your metabolism, your stress response, system, your microbiome and your reproductive system.

By optimizing your infradian rhythm and supporting it with the right diet, the right workouts and the right work, like men do, you're going to start to have optimal performance in your brain, your immune system, you microbiome, your metabolism, your stress response system and your reproductive system. By doing one simple and elegant thing, everything else starts to work the way that it should, and that's how nature has designed itself to be a very efficient and elegant system, not one that requires one solution for your metabolism, one solution for your reproductive system, one solution for microbiome. No. Nature would never have designed a system that is so inefficient. It's more about going down to this very deep cause, which is deep root function, which is the infradian biological clock, which you've never known about. And so you've been, by accident, disrupting it for many, many years and having all of the fallout from all those systems of the body.

The infradian rhythm, how it affects your metabolism across your cycle, let's first establish that you have four phases to your cycle; the follicular phase, the ovulatory phase, the luteal phase and the bleeding phase. These four phases have unique hormonal ratios associated with each one. Some have low estrogen, some have high estrogen, some have estrogen and progesterone. So it just depends and have low estrogen and progesterone. Depending on which of these four phases, it's going to affect your metabolism, your stress response system, your immune – All of the systems I keep mentioning. It has an impact on those systems of the body, a positive one if you support it. If you don't support it, it will have a negative impact, right? Which is what's happening to all of us today, because we're not supporting it. We didn't even know we needed to support it and that we've been having all these negative effects with our metabolism.

Let's talk about the metabolism piece to start. In the first half of your cycle, which is the follicular and ovulatory phases of your cycle, your metabolism is slightly slower compared to yourself within the month. Because in the second half, it's slightly faster. The luteal and menstrual phases, the luteal and bleeding week. Relative to yourself, the first half is a slower metabolic rate and the second half is a faster one. What that means, practically, is that in both follicular and ovulatory phases, you can and should and will feel comfortable eating fewer calories. That is good. That will optimize your metabolic response. You will store fat as fuel. You will not disrupt blood sugar levels. It will work really well for you.

In the second half, if you try to be a good girl like you've been told to restrict calories every single day and work out hard really every single day, if you try to do that in the second half when your metabolism has sped up and you legitimately need that documented 247 more calories per day during this phase. It's not just a, "Oh, it sped up how many more calories?" This they have studied. You need almost 300 more calories a day in the second half of your cycle.

When you eat that way and you eat more blood sugar stabilizing carbohydrates, complex carbohydrates, and you eat more calories overall, you're going to keep your blood sugar stable.

You're going to burn stored fat as fuel and you're going to optimize your weight. This is one of the critical keys to the kingdom in your reproductive years when it comes to having a healthy metabolism and a healthy weight effortlessly. It is not about deprivation and restriction at all. It's about looking at the facts. The facts of your metabolism are two weeks out of the month, it's slightly slower. You can and should eat less. Two weeks out of the month, it's slightly faster. You can and must eat more. When you do that, everything works really well and you will effortlessly maintain healthy weight.

I want to also dip into the stress response piece because it affects how we work out and your overall weight. In the first half of your cycle, you're resting cortisol levels are slightly lower. Again, relative to yourself. In the second half, the luteal and the menstrual phases, resting cortisol is slightly higher relative to the first half of the cycle. What this means is that in the first half of the month when resting cortisol is lower and when your resting metabolism is lower, you can and should, in order to optimize using stored fat as fuel and keeping blood sugar stable, you want to do higher intensity workouts with a cardio component, like HIIT workouts and any cycling and cardio stuff, right? Running.

In the second half, once you cross ovulation, you must not do HIIT workouts or cardio, because resting cortisol is higher and you will bring through your adrenal reserve faster, because you're already producing more cortisol even at rest, which means then that your body will start to produce more cortisol, disrupt blood sugar and program your body to store any fuel that you have as fat. Not to mention, if you do HIIT workouts or high-intensity cardio workouts in the second half, you're going to up turn on muscle wasting as well as turning on fat storage that I just described.

Again, that you look at the science of what is so in your cycle, in your life, in your metabolism, being affected by this infradian clock, eating the same way every day and working out the same way at the same time every day makes no sense is illogical and is bad for you. It's really good for you guys, because they, again, are on that rinse and repeat 24-hour clock. You are not. You

are not a tiny male. You are not a smaller version of a male with the weaker metabolism that needs constant restriction and killing yourself at the gym. You have an extraordinary infradian biological rhythm. You have a powerful and highly efficient metabolism because you have been encoded with the blueprints to reproduce tiny human beings, whether you choose to do that or not. Nature gave you the much more efficient metabolism and the much more efficient stress response.

So you have to understand how it works and then work with it, and that's what the cycle syncing method will help you do. In chapter 4 of the book, there is a chart just for the food. Chapter 5 of the book, there's a chart just for the workouts. Then in chapter 6, what's really revolutionary is that you're going to get access to the world's first time management system that includes both your infradian rhythm and your circadian rhythm, because when you're planning your day and your week and your month, you have to factor both in and for your optimal health, but also your optimal productivity.

Again, men are doing this every day. That's the corporate culture why it looks the way it looks. Early morning meetings and late afternoon happy hours, because that syncs with male hormonal patterns. You need to be able to do the same for yourself. And so I built a planner for myself that I shared with everybody in the book that allow you to do that. Those are the three pillars of the cycle syncing method; eating, exercising and planning your work in ways that are in alignment with that infradian shift.

**[00:41:10] AS:** I love that. I'm thinking about how – I remember being at a bachelorette party with the woman whose party it was. She was a trainer and it was mostly all trainers and me, and I was always thinking like, "Oh! They have so much energy." I was amazed at how they were all like pounding caffeine, right? Like all the time, and it makes me think about if we look to trainers or these people who tend to do the same workouts all the time, we don't know what they're doing when they're not on Instagram are not in class, right? In terms of having to compensate for doing the same hard workout all the time, and that catches up with you.

Because then you are over –caffeinating or you’re overwriting exhaustion, which often then leads to sugar, eating sugar, or you beat yourself up if you could push yourself as much in class every day the same way.

So I'm thinking of the downstream effects of not paying attention to this in terms of then the other choices that compound this even more. I was just thinking like, “Wow! That's probably why trainers have so much energy. It’s the over-caffeination to make up for always working out so hard and so much.

**[00:42:22] AV:** Yeah. And I think it’s really challenging for the fitness conversation. For example, when you go into a class at a group fitness class, they’re always an hour, and that's not always appropriate for you, especially if you’re near the second half of your cycle, you need to be able to stop working out after about 30 minutes. It’d be much more powerful for all of us to be on the same page, especially in the citizen environment. Men tailor their workouts. Do you notice that there are less men in group fitness classes and more women, right? It’s so interesting. Men are just default set to tailor the things that work for them individually, and women, we’re taught to do what we’re being told to do and to not individuate.

So you see that playing out in the gym, like, “Oh! Everybody's doing the same work out.” Well, that's not appropriate, because just pick any four women in the class, you’re each going to be in a different phase of your cycle. If you're all doing the same workout, you’re each going to get really different effects on your biochemistry.

If, let's say, two of you are in the follicular and the ovulatory phases and you're doing a kickboxing class, you’re going to walk out of that class feeling like an amazing human being who crushed her work out. You’re going to feel energized and you’re going to have built some really awesome lean muscle and burned a lot of fat. If you are in that class and you're the other two women, one is in her luteal phase, one who’s in her bleeding week, you’re going to walk out of that class so drained, blood sugar destabilize, hypoglycemic, which may take you hours to

recover from, or a whole day. You're going to feel depressed and anxious because of all the destabilization with your blood sugar and your cortisol and you're going to have lost lean muscle and gained fat.

It is logical that we're doing the same stuff at the same time. You have to be aware of your biological rhythms in order to optimize your outcome. This is what female bio hacking looks like. It's not the same as male bio hacking. Male bio hacking is essentially coming down to – My take on it, and of course there are many nuances, and I respect all the exciting research and innovation that's coming out of this new industry of bio hacking. But if I have to put it into a nutshell, male bio hacking is really about how do we extend cognitive focus and physical stamina beyond that 3 PM biological cliff when testosterone and cortisol really decreased massively in blood serum concentration.

You see that with upgraded coffee. You see it with timing, your work throughout the day. You see it with timing workouts. You see it with it with neutropix. You see it with using different extreme things, like cryotherapy, and heat, saunas and all of these stuff, right?

Female bio hacking does not need to factor in this energy cliff. What we need to factor in is our Infradian rhythm and simply just take of it because you have this really extraordinary biological system that nature gave you. You don't have to do much to get a lot of results. Your baseline is supposed to be super stable mental focus, super stable energy, super stable metabolism, super strong immune system, super balanced stress response, healthy, vigorous sexual desire and response and healthy reproductive system and abundant fertility. That's how you've been designed.

If you're not experiencing those things, it's not because you need to take neutropix or put things in your coffee. It's because you're eating, exercising and working in a way that's disrupting your infradian rhythm and you're going to feel compounded effects in all of the systems of your body. We just need to do things differently. We have different biological

realities, and they're both wonderful and equally valuable, and we just have to learn to take care of ourselves differently. We have to break free from this – Which really came out of this, this gender gap in medical research, the assumption that, “Well, since we don't want to do research on women, let's just assume that they're smaller versions of men.”

That has had an enormous trickle-down effect in our society, our cultural narrative and our own personal psychology. We literally assume that we should just do what the guys are doing, like how many of us have heard of these power morning rituals. Wake up at 5 AM, do a big workout, do your deep work early in the day. Well, in fact, it's terrible for women, because depending on where – People asked me and interviews on magazines all the time, “What's your morning routine?” I said, “It depends on where I am in my infradian rhythm. I have four different morning routines, and every day, compared to my husband, I need 20 minutes more of sleep. Because I, as a female, have a much more complex brain than he does as a male and I need the extra sleep to finish the self-cleaning process. I would be doing myself a huge disservice by comparing myself and my life planning compared to men, because if I woke up at the same time as my husband, he would be cognitively at an advantage the entire day and I would be at a disadvantage because I didn't finish the self-cleaning process my brain needs to perform optimally. You see?”

These little things that we just make his assumptions, like, “Oh! I should be able to get up at the same time as the men in my life,” whether you're in a heterosexual relationship or not. Or, I should be able to do the same workout that the guys are doing. Or I should be able to do da-da-da-da-da. All of that is an assumption that you've been conditioned to believe because of this trickle-down effect of leaving women out of medical research, and it is costing you so much in your health and in your life.

**[00:42:22] AS:** Yeah. And I just want to suggest for people out there starting with like definitely get the book and start with the nutrition or exercise changes, because if you're in a traditional work environment, it's so helpful to experience the benefits and the results with something

that you can control more easily. Then you can ripple-out into how you work and that kind of stuff. Because sometimes we don't – It can be hard. Because, I mean, one thing I did feel after reading your book was like we can definitely like choose to live according to this infradian rhythm, but the world is not set up for that yet. So it does require – The word ruckus comes to mind. You do have to – I don't know. I think especially about the productivity and all that kind of stuff. It can be harder if you're working in a corporate culture or something like that, but I think it's important for people.

I was telling you before we started, I recommended your book to one of my clients, and she decreased the intensity of her workouts and she's like, "I lost 3 pounds." It's like now that she has that like realization and like, "Wow!" Then it can be easier to then have the confidence to then adapt to the work as well and change it according to your point, the different routines in the morning, or the way that we –

**[00:49:42] AV:** Yeah. I mean, listen. It becomes a fun game. And don't get overwhelmed. We often can feel like, "Oh no, I have to change everything. When you start using the cycle syncing method, the first thing you want to start with is pick one. Change your workouts or change your food. Follow the chart. There are recipes and meal plans in the back of the book. You can also make it much easier for yourself and join us at the [cyclesyncingmembership.com](https://cyclesyncingmembership.com) where you can be part of a humongous community of women who have seen the light about their Infradian rhythm and are we doing this and getting all the support tools together. So you'll get recipes, grocery list, meal plans for each phase of your cycle. You get workout videos for each phase of your cycle. You get all the support around your time management. Of course, you get ongoing classes with me where I'm helping you address this issue that you just brought up, which is what if the things that are good for me don't jive with the circadian world essentially? What if my boss wants me to do a project on deadline and it's not in my optimal phase, or something to that effect?

Well, there is a ways to work with that that don't drain you if you know how to navigate both the circadian and infradian, which is what the whole time management planner is all about, because it isn't about isolating yourself and abandoning the world around you. Not at all. I live in the world. I function within the world. I run a company. I have a husband, totally no problem. You live in both the circadian and the infradian and you just have to learn – It's just building a new skill of how to learn, but I don't want you to assume that it's one or the other. It's not. It's both.

But what you have been doing is one or the other. You've just been doing the circadian, but that's not –The solution is not to drop the circadian and only live in the infradian. The solution is to do both, because both are happening inside of your body and there's a very straightforward way you take care of all these, and that's what I've outlined in the book. But don't bite off more than you can chew. Start with one thing and build your confidence and start to see, like you were saying, one of your clients lost weight for the first time effortlessly by working out less and doing it at the right timing. Well, that's what can happen not just of your weight. It can happen with your PMS symptoms. Those can start to evaporate really quickly. It can start to happen with the fact that you are getting things done that you've been putting off on your to-do list. All of a sudden, you're going to have more and more energy freed up from not being under the rock of infradian disruption and you're going to start to be more efficient, more productive, more creative. It's a wonderful new way to live and not just take care of our weight and our health. That's not the destination, weight management, and I'm somebody who's been obese. For me, that's still not the destination in my life of having the perfect weight. That's the foundation, right? Having your health working for you is your foundation off of which you springboard into creating the life that you want and using your talents to help the world around you. That's why we're here. Not to have the perfect pant size.

I mean, that's a whole other piece an mythology, I think is really toxic for women. Your destination in life is not to look perfect. You're like a unique snowflake. You hit the jackpot of the genetic Russian roulette. The sperm and the egg that created you out of the infinite

statistical analysis of that is pretty extraordinary. You're here. You have this one wild and precious life. You want to take care of your body in a way that's efficient so that you can then use all of that life force energy to use your talents that are unique to you in whatever way makes sense, because that will have such a positive impact on the world. I am really convinced that if we had all women firing on all cylinders, the world but be transformed.

**[00:53:42] AS:** Yeah, especially because I think about in ways of – Especially when you're talking about firing on all cylinders, that also means we would value rest. You're talking about your menstrual where you do napping instead of working out. I love how you talk in the book about like we expect to feel the same way every day and we think we should be in this perpetual harvest. That really resonated with me. It's like it's not about going, going, going, productivity, productivity, productivity. It's understanding, I think.

This is why I love your take on things is like when you really understand how you're build, I just think there's this increased aw for your body and everything that's happening and how elegant it is, which is just it just puts you in aw of your body rather than thinking it's just about a size or something like that.

**[00:54:34] AV:** Well, or feeling like it's a fight.

**[00:54:36] AS:** Yeah.

**[00:54:37] AV:** Like your body is always betraying you, working against you, or what's wrong with it, that it won't be the size you want, or whatever. When you get the correct information about who you are, biologically speaking, biochemically speaking, biological rhythmically speaking totally changes your opinion of yourself. It totally changes the relationship you have to your body and it totally changes your life. Period. Pun intended.

Imagine, if you had been given this information right before you got your first period, that you were going to have this incredible biological rhythm that gets activated, a second biological clock unique to women that imparts tremendous gifts metabolically, immunologically. There so much we didn't go into today that's in the book, brain-wise, and that it's unique to you and you only have access to it for about four decades. It stops at menopause, and it's a privilege how you would have felt about yourself during those pubescent years. How that would have affected the entire trajectory of your life. Whatever that feeling is you're feeling right now as I speak those words, that feeling is the pain of the opportunity cost of not having had this information at the correct time. I hope, and I bring these difficult things up not to rant and rave, but because I hope that it gives you the passion, some of the passion that I feel so that you start to make these changes for yourself, because I knew what it was like when I was struggling with my PCOS. For that whole decade, from 12 to 22, not having the correct information, not having the correct plan, that decade desiccated is – I cannot get that time back, that precious decade, and I don't know how many decades it's been for you and how much time it's been for you. But I know that journey that it's a literal unfortunate that we've all had to go through this. But it makes getting it, reclaiming it for yourself so much sweeter.

**[00:56:41] AS:** Yeah, totally. I do want to mention that in the book you even talk about how to adapt this to peri-menopause, post-pregnancy, and even menopause, right? When you start to understand your hormones, even if you're bleeding, but menopause is a powerful passage rather than the culture narrative of like you're done. There's always still time too, I think.

**[00:57:06] AV:** Yeah. No. I mean, the book is almost 400 pages. So there's a lot in the book.

**[00:57:11] AS:** I flew through it. It was so fascinating. Like – Oh my God!

**[00:57:16] AV:** Women are really responding in a similar way that they – It's like you feel sponge-like when you encounter this information, because it's the thing you needed but didn't know you were missing kind of a feeling. So you just have this voracious excitement about

learning about it. I don't shy away from being technical in the book and scientifically accurate. I know I've had some feedback about, "Oh! You were too academic, and women are not going to like that." I'm like, "No. No. No. Women are hungry for that. They want the academic staff." Of course, it wasn't women who were saying to me. Anyway –

**[00:57:55] AS:** Oh God!

**[00:57:57] AV:** I go into that. I go into in the book as well, what if your period is dysfunctional? What if you have PCOS? What if you have missing periods? What if you have amenorrhea? What if you're on the pill? How does this impact your ability to access your infradian rhythm? What does it mean? There's a whole bio hacking toolkit in there that helps talk through to all those issues. No stone is left unturned. Every question is answered. The whole plan chart by chart by chart, everything is laid out so that it is goof-proof for you to really start finally taking care of yourself in a way that's going to really change things for you. The ways that you've always hoped other things would have but could never have been possible because they were based on a different biological reality.

**[00:58:43] AV:** Yeah, and you even get into parenting too, which we didn't get into. But how you can use cycle and how you parent as well. It's not just work. It's like every area of life. Again, to kind of tie it back to sugar cravings, it's like we often want to reward ourselves when we're making things harder than they are than they need to be with sugar, or we get so exhausted from our workouts, or we don't nap during our period and we push through with workouts so that we need sugar for energy. But I feel like your plan is so elegant and can so help people feel safe in feeling different and using each phase for what it is designed to do and firing on all cylinders, as you said so.

Thank you so much for this. It's a health book, but it's an important contribution to feminism as well, right?

**[00:59:35] AV:** Well, thank you for saying that. What can I say? I love through the lens of what I've studied for female biology. It's hard not to be awestruck and be in love with all things female. If anything, this book is like my love letter to your body. Hopefully that love letter to your body will help you finally make peace with her and being in love with her too, because that's what you deserve.

**[01:00:03] AS:** Love that. I think that's a beautiful note to end on. Thank you.

**[01:00:07] AV:** Thank you for having me.

**[01:00:08] AS:** Yeah. Thank you, Alisa, and we will have links to your site, and the book, and all that stuff. Is there anywhere where you'd like people to find you? I know you also have a very great Instagram account as well.

**[01:00:19] AV:** Yeah. You'll find my Instagram account @flowliving, or my personal one is @alisa.vitti. If you want all the three amazing gifts that come with the book, go to [intheflobook.com](http://intheflobook.com) and download those there. If you need any help with your hormones at all, go to [flliving.com](http://flliving.com) for our programs, our one-on-one coaching, our spectacular female bio hacking supplements. If you need to the cycle syncing, that's [myflotracker.com](http://myflotracker.com). That will really help you start to really understand which phase you're in what to do when. Like I said earlier, if you want to join us and all the other cycle syncers, come to the [cyclesyncingmembership.com](http://cyclesyncingmembership.com).

**[01:01:00] AS:** I love that. I love that. Thank you so much, Alisa.

**[01:01:04] AV:** Thanks for having me.

[END OF EPISODE]

**[01:01:08] AS:** Thank you, health rebels for tuning in today. Have a reaction, question, or want the transcript from today's episode? Find me at [alishapiro.com](http://alishapiro.com). I'd love if you leave a review on Apple Podcast and tell your friends and family about Insatiable. It helps us grow our community and share a new way of approaching health and our bodies.

Thanks for engaging in a different conversation. Remember always, your body truths are unique, profound, real and liberating.

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