



Melissa Cohoe - 7 Minute Workout



Jean: Jean here from Jean Shaw interviews.com. And today, I have the pleasure chatting to royalty because I have Melissa Cohoe on the line who is fondly known as the “7 Minute Workout Queen”, and for good reason if you ask me.

Melissa was one of the founding members of the online health and fitness program, which is destined to change lives and is certainly a product of the product.

When I first met her, she had just set up a blog and was intending to very publicly chart her weight loss. It was a completely new journey for her because at that point, she didn't really know much about blogging or the online world.

But how things have changed.

Fast forward one year and Melissa not only has her blog up and running, but is a media expert and hosts her own regular weekly webinars, as well as often being called upon to assist and takeover those being run by others.

When Melissa is called to step up to the plate, she does so efficiently, confidently, and with such sincerity in her voice you just want to smile.

She's a real gem and a much valued member of the 7MinuteWorkout community, as practically single-handedly, she deals with all the member issues, large and small.

So, let's say “hello”, and see how Melissa is getting on with her weight loss journey and her new health and fitness lifestyle.

So, Melissa, are you there?

Melissa: I am here, and wow, that was quite an introduction. I'm blushing in

the background.

Jean: Well, you deserved it. You're always there, and you're always very, very helpful, so it's brilliant. Anyway, when I first met you, you were intending to lose 100 pounds in weight. So, how is that going?

Melissa: Oh, it's going. It's still going. I've lost about 63 pounds right now, so just over halfway, and working towards that 100-challenge goal. I've kind of reached the point where it doesn't come off as quickly now since I have kind of adapted to my lifestyle.

So, the number on the scale doesn't change as quick but as I always tell members in 7 Minute Workout, you never let the scale be your only indicator of success.

So, it's -- judge how you're feeling, looking in the mirror, take measurements and that sort of thing. I try not to focus too much on the number. The thing is I'm still trying to get to that 100 pounds, but definitely, it is a goal.

Jean: The thing is in the past, I know that you've been on several diets. You were originally a yo-yo dieter too, weren't you? So, the fact that you are still on this one, and still progressively losing weight is quite an achievement.

Melissa: Oh, definitely, definitely. Yeah, I had tried all those pills and potions, and fad diets and dropped 20 pounds in two days kinds of things.

And it was just not something that was a sustainable lifestyle, and I didn't understand how to live a really healthy lifestyle and how to starting incorporating exercise that I would actually enjoy doing. So, it's been a big change, and I'm proud to be still doing it.

Jean: Because there's certainly a difference between fat loss and weight loss, isn't there?

Melissa: Oh, definitely, definitely, yeah. I mean a lot of the fad diets that -- you lose 30 pounds in 30 days. A lot of what you're losing is your actual muscle mass because your body definitely has to work a lot harder to get and reach that fat loss.

So, definitely doing stuff like 7 Minute Workout, where you are re-directing your calories, you're building a lean muscle mass so that you're preserving your lean muscle mass, increasing it, and really trying to target a fat loss.

Jean: So, when you first started on this healthy lifestyle program, which is the 7 Minute Workout, you truly didn't ever think that a year down the line, you would be running 5K marathons, did you?

Melissa: Oh, definitely not. No, not at all did I think I would be doing that. That's definitely an achievement in itself, especially because when I was 14 years old, I had to have some surgery on my legs that I thought would always prevent me from being able to enjoy such activities as trying to do a 5K

marathon and that sort of thing.

So, definitely, building a lean muscle mass and improving my health, and reducing some of my weight on my joints have enabled me to do something of like a 5K run.

Jean: Did the doctors ever hint then that you might not be able to run again, or was it just something that you assumed?

Melissa: Yes. Actually, the reason I had to have the surgery when I was 14 years old is my legs were really bowlegged. And unfortunately, because they were so bowlegged, it was causing a lot of strain on my joints and compression, and it was really wearing away the cartilage in my knees.

The doctors had told me that if I didn't have the surgery they figured by the time I was around the age I am now, I would depend on a wheelchair, because I would have to have so many surgeries to try to repair and fix my knees. So, I feel very fortunate that way.

And the doctors, they weren't sure how things would go. There were complications after having the surgery. I had nerve damage in my feet and lots of different things, and so, it definitely was a case of I'm not sure of what I was going to be continuing to be able to do and enjoy.

Jean: Gosh. So, I suppose your inability to exercise was one of the reasons you gained weight, was it?

Melissa: Yes. When I look back now, that is definitely one of my turning points. That was at the beginning of my high school career when I had the surgery, and I had all the complications and different things I had to deal with.

And by the time I was ending my high school career, I had already become overweight and was reaching close to 200 pounds, when at one point just after surgery, I had almost even dropped below a hundred pounds.

Definitely, I would say, having the surgery and the lack of activity, and then, just turning to food for comfort rather than doing other things that I should have been doing, definitely attributed to starting that whole journey of being overweight.

Jean: So, you turned to food for comfort. A lot of people eat based on their emotions, don't they? So, you must have thought sometimes though, "I really need to diet." Or did other people suggest that you might need to diet, which is why you had all these yo-yo sessions in the past? Was it for you, or did you want to lose weight for other people?

Melissa: I think that's a great question because when I look at it now, I think a lot of times in the past, I was doing it for other people. My Mom was mentioning things. My husband would mention something every once in a while. I'd have friends that kind of mentioned or hinted things.

But I think that is the big difference between then and now. Because when I started now, it was for me. It was for me to change my whole lifestyle to become healthy.

It was no longer about just changing the number on the scale. It was changing about -- everything about my healthy life, and doing it for myself and for my family, my children.

So, I think that is a great analogy because in the past, I'd do think that I probably was doing it because other people were saying something to me.

Jean: So, because you had tried and failed, or not been able to keep up with whatever fad diet you were on at that particular time, when you said that you were going on the 7 Minute Workout, how did your friends and family feel? Or did you not tell them until you'd got into it because the whole concept of the 7 Minute Workout is a totally different concept?

People wouldn't have heard of it before, because all the exercise programs that most people promote, they get you to get all hot and sweaty, and spend hours and hours in the gym, or you have to really change your diet, and in the 7 Minute Workout initially, they tell you not even to think about your diet, don't they?

So, was there a sort of -- bit of skepticism on their behalf?

Melissa: Yeah. I mean, definitely, I still run into that skepticism a bit, and I always say, "Well, look at me." Definitely, I made a change.

I've shared this with 7MinuteWorkout members, and it's funny because my husband's always been very supportive, but when I told him I was starting this journey, and I was going to take the advice of Joel and follow what he was going to tell me, which became the 7 Minute Workout, my husband really actually was very stern to me, and said to me he didn't believe me.

And I think it was just his tough love way of saying to me "I can't keep supporting you on these up and down journeys. You need to make this a final decision and take action now."

And it was a wake up call. I did -- immediately after he said that to me, I was kind of shocked, and was like, "Well, I'm going to prove him wrong," kind of thing. And I have gone from there.

Jean: Do you think it's helped specifically though that you are Joel Thereien's social manager, and that you see him everyday, and he's helping and encouraging you to do it? Do you think you would have stuck to it had you not been in the position that you are now?

Melissa: I mean, there's definitely some advantages to having your trainer and mentor right there with you. That's definitely an advantage. But no, I think I still would have been successful with it because I had finally come to the mindset that I was ready to do it.

A lot of the power of success really does come from within, and as much as Joel may be at my shoulder or encouraging me, you really have to find the power and the mindset within that you're ready to do it and make this commitment yourself.

Jean: It also helps, I suppose, that there are so many members in the community, and they're all on the same journey with you, aren't they? They're all like-minded individuals, not necessarily because they want to lose weight, but they do all want to be healthy.

And so, what you're doing as being part of the 7 Minute Workout membership side is that you are very publicly being on the same journey as they are. So, if you were to -- not fail, but if you weren't to put the effort in, then they might feel, "Well, that's not a very good leadership role."

Melissa: Definitely, that is a little bit of pressure, but yeah – and I think the social support of the members' area is huge. I always say, I've learned one thing on this journey, that there are four keys to success at finally winning at weight loss, and those are mindset, commitment, motivation, and support.

And without having the first, that mindset that you are ready to do it, making that commitment to yourself, and then the motivation and support comes from within the 7 Minute Workout members area and the community.

And it's great that I am on the journey with the members, and doing everything with them. I'm definitely a product of the product, definitely living the lifestyle and setting that example. But also, the members keep me motivated and inspired to keep going as well.

Jean: And within the GVO office, you don't seem to be the only one that's a product of the product because on some of the videos that I've seen from the GVO sites, it seems that some of the people in the office have also lost weight, particularly Mikey P. Is that right?

Melissa: Yes, that is true. Definitely, Mike has taken all the aspects our 7 Minute Workout. My husband has been doing the program himself for a while. And then, Mike's wife is also following the program. So yes, we do have some members of the GVO office. We'd like to recruit a few more, but we do kind of go as a group when we go to the gym in the mornings.

Jean: Yes, I did catch sight of your husband, Blake, in the green room the other day, and I noticed that he'd slimmed down as well. So, that's very good.

Melissa: Yes. Yes, he's lost about 30 pounds total. So yeah, he's doing really well.

Jean: But within the community, you're wearing an awful lot of hats. So, which do you like best?

Melissa: Well, I do wear a lot of hats. I was doing a lot of focus for the social media with GVO, but since the launch of 7 Minute, I've been very focused in 7 Minute Workout and providing the support for 7 Minute Workout.

Like you said in the introduction, I am doing about 90% of it just to ensure that the members are really getting the information that they need, and getting the quality of customer service that I like them to receive. So, it does keep me extremely busy.

So, I may have to say that I enjoy every minute of being a part of 7 Minute Workout, and the members, and I do miss a little bit of not being able to focus as much with social media, with GVO, a little bit. But I think I've found my calling and my passion working with members, and 7Minute Workout.

Jean: Well, you certainly have a lot of empathy with them, which is really nice. And I love the way you shout individuals out on your webinars when they've achieved something. Without giving away any names, is there any particular story that you've come across in the – within the membership that's really struck a cord with you?

Melissa: Well, there's a few. There's a few, and obviously, on top of the list would be Mike Reid and Susan Karkeck who have really gone beyond in their weight loss journeys and have reached their goals, and lost a significant amount of weight.

But even beyond that, we have a couple of members, Rita Pepper and Don Stanton, who have both reversed their type 2 diabetes. And we also have Donna Philips who used to live in pain with her back all the time, now living a pain-free life and enjoying it.

So, those stories definitely stick out with me, but there are so many in the members' area. I love reading the blogs. I love hearing about others' accomplishments and I definitely like to give that credit to them whenever I can.

Jean: Because up until recently, you've been doing webinars nearly every day, haven't you? This is about to change, isn't it? So, you're going to get a bit of a rest?

Melissa: Yeah, a little bit of a rest, a couple of days in between now. It has been on a call every day, but now it will give me a little bit more time to focus on some other things. But I like being on the live webinars. I like interacting with the members.

Jean: Do you find that you're never able to switch off though? I mean working with the company that you're with, and you socialize with the same people and the demands of the job, do you find that even when you're not officially working, you're actually looking for information that you can share with your members?

Melissa: Oh, definitely. And I guess, my kids complain a lot. It's like, "Mom, can you just stop working?" But I mean there are definitely benefits to it. My husband and I are closer now that we work in the same environment, and have our home in the same environment.

So, we spend a lot of time discussing ideas and things that are going to improve, or how we can make changes. So, yeah, I don't think it ever turns off, but it's in a positive way. It's a great lifestyle that we're able to live now, and our kids are getting used to hearing about the GVO and 7 Minute.

Jean: So, do you ever feel guilty about spending time for yourself. I know a lot of women suffer from what they call "GASTOM", which is Guilt About Spending Time On Me, or do you never get time to spend on yourself?

Melissa: Oh, that's a great phrase. I should be doing a little bit more of spending time on myself. I think I'm probably one of those who do feel a bit guilty whenever I do actually sit down to watch a TV program that I enjoy. I kind of think, "Oh, no. I should be on the computer doing this."

So, I do feel a little bit of guilt, but I do try to – Definitely, if I'm not taking the time off for myself, I definitely take the time off for my kids. And so, I need to work on that bit about me a little more.

Jean: I think it comes with the territory of being a mother though, doesn't it?

Melissa: Oh, definitely.

Jean: But obviously, there are other benefits to the 7 Minute Workout, at least for you at the moment, because the business opportunity for some people is proving quite lucrative. And I understand that you are soon to be moving house.

Melissa: That is true, definitely. Definitely, being able to earn some income from 7 Minute Workout and losing weight, not only getting the great shape my life -- Definitely earning that extra income is definitely putting me in a position where we are able to buy a new home.

And it's very exciting for us since it's something we never thought we'd be able to do when we first moved here. We thought we'd still have a couple of years to work at that.

And the great thing is the house we lived in Canada for seven years was only 800 square feet, and the house that we're about to move in is 3,100 square feet. So, it's like four times the house. So, it's definitely like having a dream come true and realizing that the hard work is going to pay off.

Jean: So, that's really showing the skeptics, isn't it?

Melissa: Definitely.

Jean: One of the big things about the 7 Minute Workout, if you choose to use it to lose weight, is the weight tracker. How involved were you with set up of that?

Melissa: Very involved. I was involved in actually a lot of the set-up of the members' area, and testing and trying to get things to look and work well. We've also taken a lot of suggestions to add features or change features from our members in 7 Minute Workout as well.

Jean: And I think one of the good suggestions was the buddy system.

Melissa: Oh, definitely. Yes. And we got on that right away as soon as we had the Mavericks come in. And then, some members had started suggesting, "It'd be great if we can have a buddy." And we jumped on that immediately. So, it's definitely been a great feature to have being able to have that free buddy with you. And then, those who are business sponsors are able to give away seven free buddy accounts.

Jean: So, if you were to come into the 7 Minute Workout and not do the weight tracker, not even consider your food, do you think people would be able to have good success if they just concentrated on the exercises, and just drank the water and took the additional fiber?

Melissa: Yes, definitely. Yeah, they would. I mean it wouldn't be always be in terms of -- If somebody was actually overweight and really needed to lose weight, I would suggest after doing the three cycles of the program, that they do focus a bit more on their diet as well.

But for somebody who doesn't need to lose any weight at all, or has very little to lose, you don't need to look at the food tracker and the weight tracker, and you can definitely just start exercising.

You're going to start feeling better. You're going to start to notice that just in the way that you feel in terms of your health, and you'll notice different changes just in your clothing. You don't have to necessarily keep track of your weight and your measurements.

Jean: When you first started the 7 Minute Workout, you mentioned that you had a belt, and as you were losing weight, you tighten the holes on the belt. Do you still have that, or is it much too large now?

Melissa: I still have it. It's getting down there, but it is -- it's a great indication having, something like that like a belt or a goal belt that doesn't quite fit, and you want to measure against it.. But I like having that belt. I like every time I do put it on. well not every time I put it on, just a notch goes down. But definitely, as the time goes by, and the notches go down -- and it feels great. It's a good indicator of showing that success for yourself.

Jean: Well, that's really good to have something like that because people can get very discouraged, can't they, if they've been religiously working out, doing

the exercise, maybe watching what they eat and then they stand on the scales and it doesn't reflect what they've done..

Melissa: Oh, definitely. We see that a lot. I myself did because I had to learn not to let that get to me. And I told members, "You can't let that be your only indicator."

So yeah, having an article of clothing, having a belt, just even -- Try not to focus on it being so much about weight loss, and having it more be about a healthy lifestyle and getting in great shape, and improving the life that you have now so you can live a little bit longer and enjoy a little bit more.

Jean: So, do you celebrate all your successes? I know we're taught -- always told to celebrate even the little things. Do you?

Melissa: I do., I don't do that as elaborately as I did in the beginning. In the beginning I like to shop a lot and kind of buy myself things. Now I do it kind of a little bit more looking at myself and just kind of getting myself a pat on the back. I think that being able to buy a brand new house is a good celebration of the accomplishments that 'veI made. So, it's become -- I haven't quite done it as much as I did in the beginning.

In the beginning, I was really celebrating every little thing, every five pounds, that sort of thing. And that helps to keep that motivation going as well in the beginning, but I've reached the point now where I can kind of back off a little bit, not keep continuing to go shopping every time, but still give myself that praise and pat on the back thing.

Jean: That's really good. So, you're sticking to your sensible goals and things. Did you ever at any stage, when you'd lost a certain amount of weight, get a visual, like a sack of potatoes or something, and say, "Well, this is how much I've lost"? Did you every do that?

Melissa: I haven't done that, and I keep thinking I'm going to do that because I have seen people where they go at a grocery store and they put like 10, or 5-pound bags of potatoes in their grocery cart or something just to see and feel how much weight that is.

I think it's great to see and feel it because sometimes you don't . When you're looking at yourself all the time, you don't see that big change.

I have one pair of big pants I won't ever get rid of just because it's going to be a good indication for me always -- So, whenever I do feel a little bit, like, "Oh, am I really doing anything," I would just hold up that pair of pants to myself, and say, "Okay."

Jean: So, your children, they must be very proud of you, are they?

Melissa: Oh, definitely. My son doesn't quite understand as much as my daughter, but my daughter, she's funny because she'll tell me, "Mom, I'm always thinking about healthy now." And she'll talk about things like that at

school where they're doing things at school, she'll be like, "Oh, maybe we should do this." So, she's definitely adapting to the lifestyle a little bit more than my son, who's only six. But he understands it, and he'll ask me sometimes, "Mom, is this healthy?"

Jean: So, exercising, do they kind of do exercises with you? Like, when you were training for your running, did they jog along?

Melissa: My daughter did. She would come on runs with me. And I actually – She did a 5K run with us. So, that's great. My son, he'll come to the park and kind of play around the park as we're doing our little bit of running around, but I haven't quite gotten him into doing the 7 Minute exercises yet. But that's something they will be doing right in the near future.

Jean: So, when do you tend to do your exercises? In mornings, or evenings, or just when you can fit them in?

Melissa: I do them in the mornings. I find that the mornings are the best time for me in terms of how busy my day can be. So, I like to start off the day with a productive workout.

Jean: And how do you feel now when you go into the gym, because initially, it was a bit daunting, wasn't it for you? Because when you were – well, when anybody, if they're overweight and unfit, and they suddenly go into a gym where people are perhaps a bit more toned and physically active, it can be quite oppressive. How do you feel now?

Melissa: Well, definitely I had that feeling when I first walked in. But now, I just feel pride and proud. I often will get a few looks.

There are a couple of regular members that tend to watch me as I workout.

They think I'm quite strong when I'm working out. So, they will tend to kind of overlook and watch me, which makes me feel a little bit uncomfortable at times. But for the most part -- I mean, I feel at home when I walk in the gym. It's not like intimidating as it was the first day I walked in.

Jean: Are there many people who actually say, "What are you doing?" Have you managed to convert anybody?

Melissa: We definitely do have people who ask. We don't try to really – When we are at the gym, we don't really try to push anybody while we're there, just because for one, we're in and out so quickly, and for two, it's just – Yeah, if they ask questions, we definitely answer the questions for them.

I think everybody knows as I'm pulling up because now, my van is decorated all up and got 7 Minute on. So, they know when I'm coming. I think a few of them have checked things out and asked some questions.

Jean: So, you don't always go as a group then?

Melissa: Yeah, we kind of arrive as a group. Sometimes Mike's wife and I will go a little bit ahead of time, depending on what timing it is. So, there's quite a group of us, sometimes seven that will go at once, so we don't always fit in one vehicle, so, we sometimes arrive in two vehicles.

Jean: And do you record how you're getting on religiously so that each time you do the same exercise again, you push yourself for improvement?

Melissa: Yes, I do. And actually, I had just started doing that just before the holidays when we started really integrating the activity tracker into the members' area, I have a little notebook that I bring with me to the gym so that I can record it.

Then, when I get home or back to the office, then I could put it in the members' area, in the activity tracker. But I definitely really encourage that because it does keep me on track. It does make me push myself just a little bit more.

If I'm thinking, hey, maybe that day, I'm like, "Oh, I don't quite want to do this last rep," but I look at my last list I would say, "Hey, I did this much, so I need to try to push it a little bit farther."

Jean: Well, that's really, really encouraging. And how does Blake feel about that, your husband? Are you beating him in the weight that you can lift, or...?

Melissa: There's only one exercise that I beat him. I mean, he's a man, so he's got a lot more muscle mass than me. But when I do the leg press, I can push just a little bit more than he can.

Jean: Gosh. So, he must be incredibly proud of you. I'm sure he is. I'm sure he was proud anyway, but with what you've achieved –

Melissa: Yes, definitely.

Jean: Yeah.

Melissa: Definitely.

Jean: But it sounds as if you may have visitors. So, I'm going to let you go. And thank you very much for your time. And I guess your dog is growling. Have you got visitors then?

Melissa: Well, I have a feeling that my husband's probably coming home for lunch, and my dog is hearing him.

Jean: Oh, right. Well, I'll let you go because I'm sure you've got plenty of things to do, but no doubt, our paths will cross again.

Meanwhile, if anyone wants to learn more about the Queen of the 7 Minute Workout, and see about the health and fitness lifestyle which has changed her

life and that of many others, they can go to the 7MinuteWorkout.com where you'll be able to not only hear Melissa, but see her as well.

Melissa: Definitely, definitely, and I look forward to reading and working with many other people as yourself, Jean. And this was a great pleasure, and always a wonderful time just chatting with you.

Jean: Lovely, well, you take care, and good luck with the move.

Melissa: Thank you.

Jean: Okay, bye.

Melissa: Bye.

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