Louisa Nicola Joins Us to Discuss Improving Your Health to Make Better Decisions

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Dave

0:00

All right, folks, welcome to Investing for Beginners podcast today we have a very exciting show. We have somebody I'm really looking forward to talking with we our guest today is neurophysiologist. And brain coach Luisa Nicola Luisa founded neural athletics to provide scientific strategies to help athletes and investors achieve peak performance. She also has her own wonderful podcast called The neural experience, which you definitely need to check out.

So, Louisa, thank you very much for joining us today. We appreciate your time and all your knowledge. And so I guess, could we maybe start with your background? Like how did you go from world class athlete to what you do now?

Louisa

0:35

Yeah, hi, first of all, thank you so much for having me. Super excited to be here. The road that I took was extremely unconventional and unorthodox. So a bit about me. So I was born and raised in Australia. I was an elite triathlete. I somewhat retired from my career as a triathlete at around 2012. I completed an undergraduate degree and I went back and studied medicine. And I just fell in love with the brain. And I

started working with elite athletes more so around how can my athletes gain an extra edge by working on their brain? Because I thought, you know, I've got all this knowledge from understanding what the brain is, and the brain controls everything we do.

And I was really interested in understanding Well, why are these teams, you know, like, why is Lebron James? Or even, you know, at that level, why are they not working on their brain? So, yeah, in 2016, I moved to America, and just by chance, I got picked up by some of the world's best athletes. So that's how I really started with your athletics in the athletic field. And in 2018, I spoke at a conference and there was a portfolio manager in the audience. And he said, Louisa, can you provide these strategies for other people outside of the athletic space? I said, Well, I mean, you know, I hadn't been asked that before. I said, But of course, I mean, if you've got a brain, then you can really adopt these strategies. So the company now has not pivoted, we work in both fields. We work with the asset managers, portfolio managers, and Wall Street, and then we also work with elite athletes.

Dave

2:10

That's awesome. So I listened to a lot of your shows, and I listened to other podcasts that you've done. And something that kind of seemed to be a common theme was sleep. And yeah, I guess, can we talk about sleep? And this is coming from somebody that I struggle to sleep well. So can we talk about sleep and maybe how it impacts our performance and how maybe we can improve that?

Louisa

2:33

Yeah, it's so funny, because normally, when people have sleep problems, they've got trouble falling asleep, or they've got trouble staying asleep. So I don't know which one you're in. But look, sleep is our I always say this. It's our most underrated high performance tool that we have. And it's actually one of the core pillars that we work on at neuro athletics, we work on three areas, sleep, exercise, and nutrients. So nutrition for brain health. And this is also to add up to brain health and better performance. So sleep, you know, if we're not sleeping, well, first and foremost, we're not sleeping long enough. And we're not sleeping a quality sleep, we're just leaving a disadvantage at the table.

Our reaction time is it going to be as good as our decision making is going to be off our information processing speed sleep serves as emotional first aid. So I would definitely caution everybody who's not sleeping well to not go out the following day and make any risky decisions. When it comes to sleep. Let me just describe a bit of the sleep architecture for you. We have five stages of sleep. But there's two stages

that are really imperative to the human brain. Okay, and the first one is our deep sleep. It's also called slow wave sleep, because on an EEG, you see this huge, big waves, okay of brainwaves. During this stage of sleep, our brain goes through many things. First of all, it's in that stage that we get a lot of our hormones released.

So for men, it's testosterone and IGF one. For women, it's also IGF one and estrogen. So we have to be optimizing for deepsleep to get a proper release of these vital hormones. That's the first and foremost, then the second thing that happens during this stage is our brain goes through this kind of cleared cleaning system. So this system in our brain activates, it's called the glymphatic system. I speak about it often, you've probably heard of it. And it happens during deep sleep. And it's responsible for cleaning out all of the toxins and debris. So if you're not getting into deep sleep at night, and many things kick us out of deep sleep, by the way, things such as light, alcohol, medications, stress, these will kick us out of deep sleep. So if we're not optimizing for deep sleep, we're not going to get the proper recovery that we need for both our brain and our body.

And this is actually why people like Roger Federer and LeBron sleep at least 12 or 13 hours a night because it They get so much protein synthesis that occurs during the night, during deep sleep.

Dave

5:04

That's kind of insane that it seemed like there was a friend of there for a short bit kind of before COVID that everybody was talking about how little sleep they could survive on. Now, you know, it now it seems like everybody's kind of turning back to like, you know, the ideas that you're advocating for, which I think are probably a lot better. So it's interesting that LeBron and Roger Federer would sleep that much, I think my mom would probably kill me if I had slept that much when I was a kid. But I mean,

Louisa

5:30

I wish it sounds like a dream now, but my minimum is an eight hour, eight hours a night, if I don't sleep, that it's a you know, and I track and measure my sleep every night, I just, I can feel it. That's the first stage that's really important, then I will also touch on the second stage, which is REM stands for rapid eye movement sleep. And that's because on an EEG, you'll see your eyes doing this horizontal, you know, fashion, and that's where they coined the name from. And this stage is a the emotional first aid. So this is where we can actually get out, you know, emotional fortitude, I like to call it during this stage, it's also responsible for memory formation.

So and also deep learning. So we learn things throughout the day, you know, just a you're young, you're in college, you're learning something learning doesn't actually take place during the day. That's the first step, the rest of it takes place during sleep. So if you are not optimizing for these two stages, you're not also optimizing for learning. You know, some people say, ah, you know, I just see my lecture, I see my teacher writing on the board. And I, I see it, I just don't remember it the next day, as because the deep learning hasn't been taken place during sleep.

Andrew

6:44

That's fascinating. Is there an optimal amount of time to sleep to hit those stages? Well, like, for example, if I know I have eight hours to sleep, or 10 hours asleep, or six hours asleep, is there a minute in a girl interval where you can kind of hit those stages optimally?

Louisa

7:04

Well, here's the thing, you can be sleeping, this is where it goes back to quantity and quality, right? You can sleep 10 hours a night, or maybe let's just say eight hours. But I don't know if your sleep is actually quality sleep. So we generally like to say as a rule of thumb, a lot of people now are tracking and measuring their sleep through a whoop strap or maybe an aura ring, or another device. When you look at that, generally, you should have 20% of your total sleep time should be made up of REM sleep. So that's the percentage you're really looking for. And it's a two to one, or sometimes a three to one when it comes to deep to REM sleep.

So your deep sleep should be a lot more than what your REM is. But often what we're finding is people are waking up and I've been guilty of this, waking up with maybe 10% of REM sleep 10% of our total sleep time being in rooms, but REM sleep or even deep sleep. And that's when you know that. Okay, I slept throughout the night, I slept eight hours, but I didn't touch the stages. So then that begs the question, were you sleeping? Or were you just sedated?

Andrew

8:12

Which I guess what you do during the day has a lot of impact on that later on that night?

Louisa

8:18

Well, what for example, alcohol, people think that alcohol puts them to sleep when in actual fact, the active ingredient in alcohol, which is ethanol, sedates. You so it doesn't put you into sleep, it just knocks you out. So you're not sleeping? You're just knocked out through that throughout the night? Yeah.

Dave

8:36

So we're talking about the different stages of sleep. So I guess, how can we improve our sleep? So the thing that I struggle with, is I guess I struggle with both I sometimes struggle with falling asleep. But then I also struggle with staying asleep. Like I tend to wake up a lot in the middle of the night, and then have trouble falling back to sleep. So what are some things that we can do to try to improve getting to the REM sleep and the deep sleep?

Louisa

9:00

One question, are you waking up at around 4am

Dave

9:02

I don't have a clock on the side of my bed. So I don't know that my phone acts as my clock. But I don't look at it. I generally just usually I'll wake up because I have to go to the bathroom. And then I come here and then I go back to bed. And then the you know, the brain is like oh, hey, you're up now Hey, let's go do things. And it's Yeah, and I can't go back to sleep.

Louisa

9:22

The first part is let's talk about falling asleep. So when people are having trouble falling asleep, it's mainly because they've got an overactive mind, their mind is just racing 24/7 You could be stressed, you could just be having an overactive mind, it could be something that you ate, maybe you ate too close to bedtime. So some key things to put into place to fall asleep better and faster, which is decreasing your sleep latency is what we call it is you want to try and minimize light exposure from around 8:30pm At night, not talking about completely, you know, dimming the light but maybe just want to dim the lights a little bit in your apartment or in your house and then having blackout cut And throughout the night in your bedroom, maybe

sleeping with a sleep mask on. The second thing is, this is barring that, you know, by getting rid of alcohol and drugs, that's, you know, get that out of the mix.

You want to try and have your last meal at least two hours or two and a half hours before you go to bed. And then if you're still having trouble, you've got these racing thoughts in your head that's not settling down. One thing that you can supplement with is something called GABA. So GABA stands for gamma amino butyric acid, it's our chief inhibitory neurotransmitter, meaning that it inhibits the neurotransmitters from firing throughout the night. So your your mind settles down, your body settles down, so you feel more calmer. You know, I even do that sometimes when I'm struggling throughout the night, to just settle my mind down. So that's that. The second thing is, depending on what time you're going to sleep, the main reason why most people wake up is because they've run out of melatonin. So melatonin is our you've probably heard of it. It's our sleepy hormone gets released in response to darkness. And this often runs out. And that's why we wake up.

And the worst thing you can do when you wake up is view light. So I mean, maybe you should invest in some floor lighting for when you go to the bathroom. So you don't have to have that overhead lighting up above and how can we increase our you know, our sleep time so we can be sleeping longer? One thing that I've been focusing on is temperature. So I don't know if you guys have ever heard of a temperature controlled mattress? Yeah, I've been sleeping on one for about 18 months now. And I gotta tell you, it's made the world of difference.

My sleep architecture has changed. And also just the way I'm falling asleep throughout the night. So I actually said this is a bit, you know, advanced for you know, most people probably wouldn't invest in a mattress like this, but I have it set to different temperatures throughout the night.

Dave

11:53

So the melatonin that is probably something I have dabbled with taking some melatonin as well as something called valerian root, which is newer to me, I guess what are your thoughts on those, like supplements to help bridge that gap that maybe I'm struggling with

Louisa

12:07

the exogenous supplements are especially melatonin is this field, it's very controversial, because it's highly unregulated. And there have been clinical studies now to show that what they put on the label, especially in the US, so let's just say you get a bottle of melatonin, it says five milligrams on it, what they've found is that it actually isn't five milligrams, it's just says that on the label, you're actually taking 100 milligrams. And that's scary, because you're just pumping your pineal gland with all of this naturally secreting hormones that you already have.

And also think about this. Melatonin is a hormone, we can get this without a prescription from a physician. But why can't we go and get testosterone or estrogen over the counter? It's just you know, so we've got to think of it like that it really is a hormone. And you have to take it with caution. So I only really take melatonin in a very small dose, I'll take 2.5 milligrams, when I traveled to Australia, to get me back on the circadian rhythm.

So that's what I think about taking exogenous Lee, I also think with any supplement that it should just try what Mother Nature has gifted you first, using sunlight to set your circadian rhythm and doing everything I just said. And then if all else fails, maybe then start to incorporate some of these supplements.

Dave

13:25

That's awesome. So if you look like you had something to say,

Andrew

13:29

Does exercise play a part? I think when we talked to William Green, he had a great book. And he talked about how some of the best investors have talked about exercise actually being one of their priorities when it came to having high performance with their decisions. Does exercise play a role in any of this as well?

Louisa

13:48

Yeah, exercise is huge. And it's something that we focus on with our investors as well, I don't tell them exercise to look good or to lose weight. I'm just responsible for the neck up exercise, specifically, strength training, and very low intensity cardio, for long periods of time has been shown to be extremely beneficial for the brain, it can change the structure of your brain and the functionality of your brain.

And that's really big, because as we age, let me maybe this is a question for you guys. Generally, my one to one investors, people who I work on with one to one around 49, I would say the late 40s to maybe early 60s. That's where I'm working. And I would say that many people my question to you guys, what do you think average ages for a seasoned investor?

Dave

14:36

That's a good question I

Andrew

14:37

had over the map. I mean, we have a seasoned Yeah, I mean, we have a beginner audience that could go from 20s to 40s. So I would imagine, you know, because I have some in their 30s but maybe a lot in their 50s.

Louisa

14:50

The reason why I asked that is because your brain changes as you age, and it actually starts in your 20s specifically 20 Five onwards and up. And a lot of people think, you know, these neurodegenerative diseases you get diagnosed with in your late 60s, early 70s. They think that, okay, that's when it occurs, it actually starts happening in your 20s. And in your 30s. And one of the best prescriptions of all time to mitigate these effects of the brain aging process is exercise. So exercise can change, like I said, the functioning of your brain, especially the prefrontal cortex.

Now, most investors, it doesn't matter how old you are, they rely heavily on making sound decisions correct. And obviously, skill. But making decisions is primarily happening in the frontal lobe of your brain, your frontal lobe houses the prefrontal cortex, and that can age and that can also get inflamed due to stress due to lack of sleep, and exercising. When you do specific forms, like strength training, you release these things. They're Maya kinds, they're muscle based proteins, they get released from the muscle, and they travel through the bloodstream, up to your brain, and they cross your brain through the blood brain barrier. And then they go into the prefrontal cortex, and they have an effect on your cognitive processes, such as thinking, information processing speed, this is actually the best time It sounds crazy, but the best time to make a decision is within a 20 minute window of doing intense exercise.

Andrew

16:34

I mean, it sounds funny as to say it out loud. But I swear I have some of my best insights while on strength training at the gym. I'm a big fan of that. I personally hate cardio, but I know a lot of people love it. So why what is it about strength training that in this particular instance, makes it better for the prefrontal cortex?

Louisa

16:51

You know, the 90s, and the early 2000s, when it came to scientific literature was all about aerobic activity. Because when we first started experimenting on this, you could only really experiment on mice, and you couldn't get mice to lift weights. So they found that they found that aerobic activity was great for the brain because it increased BDNF, which is brain derived neurotrophic factor, it's a growth factor for the brain. But then they started doing studies. And this wasn't until around 2012 onwards, they started doing studies on strength training, and they found a whole wide array of different approach to it, and it was much better. What they found was that these Myo cons that I mentioned, okay, these muscle based proteins are only released during strength training. So literally, when you are doing a muscle contraction, think about a bicep curl, it's got to be understood, this is not your kind of pick up a small weight, it has to be 70% of your one repetition, Max to be exact.

So when you put your muscle under that tension, it releases all of these hormones. One of them is called cathepsin. B. One of them is IGF one, insulin growth factor one, one of them is Ireson, and the other one is interleukin six. And these go, they literally that we have receptors, okay, we have little binding receptors all over our organs, on our liver, on our heart, and on our brain. And so these Maya kinds when they're released, they just travel through the bloodstream. And when they go into your brain, they can have these effects. So I mentioned functional effects. So it helps with your thinking and your cognition. But there's also structural effects.

So there's an area in the brain, just deep in the temporal lobes just called the hippocampus. Have you heard of the hippocampus, it's like the C shaped seahorse shaped structure that's mainly responsible for memory formation, etc. We can actually grow new brain cells, new neurons within the hippocampus from activity like this from strength training. So that's another huge reason why we should be doing that.

Dave

18:58

So I guess, as somebody who doesn't necessarily like strength training, does aerobic, do you get any of these sorts of benefits from aerobic? Yeah, you do? Okay.

Louisa

19:09

Yeah. So but here's the thing. The aerobic benefits come in two places, they come with BDNF. First and foremost, their second thing that I believe aerobic training does is it strengthens your immunity, because you can train your mitochondria. That makes a lot of sense.

Dave

19:25

Alright, so we talked about strength training, we talked about aerobic activity, is there a time limit? Like as you know, kind of like with the sleep? Is there an optimal level that you need to achieve to get these benefits?

Louisa

19:38

Yeah, so you'd want to aim for two hours of the aerobic activity a week. And then you also want to aim for three strength training sessions per week to get these benefits.

Dave

19:49

And does it matter whether you're doing I don't know like upper body stuff versus lower body stuff? Or is it just No, no, just strength training is

Louisa

19:58

tricky. Yeah. You really just want to do it. Strength Training and both strength training. I mean lifting weights. Okay. Yeah.

Dave

20:04

All right. So that's kind of interesting. So, you know, it's also kind of interesting, because I'll be honest with you, when I think of some of my favorite investors, fitness gurus does not spring to mind, you know, Warren Buffett drink, you know, cherry cokes and eats McDonald's. And, you know, yeah, he does. You know, a lot of these other people that I think of, I don't think of them as fitness gurus, but I'm sure that this definitely definitely does help.

Louisa

20:30

Well, look, I when I speak about this, and obviously speak on the science of it, would you put Warren Buffett in the pool of you know, everybody else in terms of comparison, because I would look at him and not put? Yeah, so I, you know, a lot of people say, but, Louisa, how do you notice Warren Buffett and Charlie Munger? Do they slit? And I'm like, Well, I mean, do you really want to put yourself against them? And you want to even put maybe even Bill Ackman up there too, like, it's a different ballgame?

Dave

20:56

No, totally. Just like, I would not want to compare myself to LeBron or Michael Jordan. Yeah, trying to play basketball. It's those are the heroes and I'm a mere mortal. So it's interesting that we're talking about all this stuff. One of the things that I've always been kind of fascinated about is like habits and routines. And why does our brain like routines? Why do we like building habits? What is it about that seems to excite us, I guess, if you will,

Louisa

21:19

your brain loves, you know, being very structured everyday doesn't like to be surprised. The main reason why your brain here is existing is to keep you alive. So it doesn't like to be unstructured it hates when you're inconsistent. The best performing people are the people who are waking up at the same time every day, because your brain really works on this 24 hour clock. And so it gets very into this habit forming practice. And this is also generally because we have this thing called neuroplasticity. And if you can imagine your brain, there's, you know, there's over 80 billion neurons in the human brain, anywhere between 80 to 100 billion neurons, a neuron is a brain cell or a nerve cell, and they fire together.

And every time you produce an action, or a thought, it's like a car driving down this highway. And the more times you do it, the more accustomed becomes with going down that same highway. So every time you go

down that highway, you're strengthening this thing called the myelin sheath. And this is fatty insulating coat that surrounds the axon of the actual brain cell. And so that gets strengthened and that gets thicker. And then you're able to do things at a faster rate. So you keep going down that highway, your brain itself is like, Oh, we've been here before, we can just accelerate the pace of it more, we can accelerate the pace of this bar.

That's why people who are doing 1000s of hours of practice become good. So it loves routine. But here's the thing. It favors whatever you do most. So if you're doing a mistake constantly, you may or may not know you're doing it, it's going to favor that and that's how you're gonna go into that default system of your brain is created these pathways. And that's why it's hard to break a habit. Yeah, that

Dave

23:10

makes a lot of sense. When I was a musician, my guitar teachers used to always talk about perfect practice makes it perfect, as opposed to practicing mistakes are not going to get you where you want to go.

Louisa

23:21

Yeah, that's and that's actually very correct. Unfortunately, though, we don't know. Sometimes when we're young, what the mistakes are that we're making?

Dave

23:29

Yeah, exactly. So how does the idea of routines and building habits, how can that impact our decision making

Louisa

23:36

so if you are able to build the foundational routines that are good for your brain and good for your body, it's going to in turn affect you on a human level when it comes to decision making? Decision making is a product of Yes. past historical performance. Yes. So you can say Been there done that experience. But it's also very dependent on how well your brain is performing. That's actually like literally something that we put out there. Basically, if you want to generate alpha, if you want to get that extra edge, you have to have a well performing brain.

And if you get into these habits, it's basically like compound interest. Right? If you let's just say you have a habit of only sleeping six hours a night, maybe in your 20s, that won't affect you. But that lack of sleep. Okay, so your sleep deprivation compounds, and it compounds and it compounds and it comes to bite you in the backside in your late 30s, early 40s. And the way that it gets you is your inability to make those sharp decisions. You're you may be one day, you know, flying high because I've actually had this we had a portfolio manager.

He had 50 billion under Asset Management and he was he came to me and he was saying to me, Louisa, I'm just not feeling good. And I said, Well, what's the matter? He said, I don't know he goes, I'm just under forming. And I don't know what I've done. I've assessed my strategy. I've consulted with my team. And I don't know what is happening, this is not taking, you know, the market was fine. He didn't understand what he was doing. We did a brain scan on him, and his brain looked 65 years old. I said, Why are you so young, but your brain looks like this. So we looked back historically.

He said, Well, ever since he got into the game in his mid 20s, maybe it was earlier than that, he was only sleeping around six to not even maybe four to six hours a night. So these bad habits compounded. And now his brain, it was we saw thinning of his cerebral cortex. So his brain was actually shrinking. And that's what happens just as we get older, but he was accelerating that. So if you've got, if your your prefrontal cortex isn't working optimally, you're not going to make decisions. And not just that your rate of making a decision is increased. So what took you an hour before may take you like five hours now. So developing these habits of sleeping better, is not just setting you up for now, but also setting you up for when you're in your 60s? I keep saying that, because a lot of people now probably listening, they're like, I don't have to worry about that. I mean, 20 it does come back, trust me even earlier than that.

Dave

26:19

Well, I mean, I'm 55. So it's definitely top of mind for me. And you know, one of the things that I've been struggling with, on a personal level is, as I've gotten older, I relied on my memory for everything, I didn't write things down, I just, I don't know what your thoughts are on the whole photographic memory. I don't know that I necessarily had one. But I was able to visualize things and remember things very easily. And I still have that. But it seems to be less effective than it was five years ago. And I had a heart attack recently. And I'm on beta blockers.

And I have read that those help inhibit some of your memory. And so I've had to learn different routines and different habits to try to stay at the same level that I am. So speak directly to what you're talking about it, it does impact you. And as you start to get older, you have to change, you have to learn to adapt to those things, because you know, it does compound,

Louisa

27:15

what are some of the practices you've put in place?

Dave

27:19

To help myself, you know, I've done things like I tried to write things down more, I've tried to use some apps on my phone, to help me remember things. And I also make sure that I verify things with people more than I used to, I just try to rely on different kinds of I've tried to set up systems such that if I write something down, I will also put it somewhere electronically. So if I do misplace the paper, I have a backup of it with the electronic part of it.

And I also talk to the people that are in my life. And if we have something important going on, like Evander and I were having an interview with you today, he sends me a gentle reminder, you know, make sure that I remember that, hey, we got this going on today. Not that I would forget, you know, it's just a way of helping trigger some of those things to try to stay on top of stuff.

Louisa

28:09

Yeah, and look, without going too much into it. And without being personal, you can probably look back and you know, see some of the events if it wasn't genetic, that maybe led to this experience. And I'm actually seeing this a lot on Wall Street. And it's these practices that you don't put in place the stress that can get to you, you know, the stress of you know, my the example that I gave you earlier, the stress that my portfolio manager had with having so much money under his belt, he used to say to me the way that I am constantly stressed, I don't sleep because if I make a wrong decision, I'm gonna cost my clients millions 10s of millions of dollars, and they've got families and then this and, you know, things that I haven't even heard of.

So all of this stress that he was placing on his body, throughout the years was affecting his performance and his brain. And you know, in some instances, it can affect your heart.

Dave

28:58

Yeah, exactly. So we're talking about some of these stressors and stuff. I guess that kind of leads us How can stress impact our decisions? What can we do, I guess, lessen the impact of stress?

Louisa

29:10

Yeah. So there's this other hormone, and they call it like the Goldilocks hormone. It's called cortisol. It's our stress in our stress hormone. So it can have an effect we can have this thing called inflammation. You know, when you sprained your ankle, and you get, you know, inflammation around the ankle, the ankle, it swells. Sometimes inflammation is a good thing, because we need a bit of it. But when it's chronically inflamed due to chronic stress, it's a bad thing. That's why it's the Goldilocks, not too much, not too little, just enough is right.

So when you are constantly stressed, you are creating a constant inflammatory response. And this happens in your body and in your brain. It's called neural inflammation. And it shows up as anger, disruption in your mood, lack of sleep fatigue, EEG ability, and this, in turn has like this has detrimental effects on everything. And you just can't make. It's not even making right decisions, you'll see yourself unconsciously make these decisions that you think, Oh, I never used to do this, why am I doing it all of a sudden, your brain is always trying to keep you alive. Remember, I said that. So therefore, if it's chronically inflamed, it's got to try and fight for the survival. And so there are so many different things we can do to manage this. And one of them is evidently sleep spoken about exercise. What about nutrition, of course, no smoking, no drinking, we know that a lot of my portfolio managers, for some reason, choose to drink after 4pm Try and get them to stop doing that.

And that's proven very hard, but you know, we're getting there, I have to give them literal, you know, threats of death. But so let's just take, you know, drinking and smoking out of the picture, I call it a miracle nutrient is called omega three fatty acids, it comes in the form. So it comes in three parts, EPA, DHA, and ALA. And these are so important for your brain, they can help you in many ways, and one of them is to get inflammation under control. So if you can be supplementing with this everyday, because it's, it's very easy, you don't have to go out and eat.

You know, eating fatty fish is great. But you don't have to go out and eat, you know, 10 kilos a day, you can be supplementing with omega three fatty acids. That's just one thing that you can do to help optimize your

brain. Okay, so there's this key nutrients. The second thing that I'm finding a lot of investors and young people doing is not drinking water. But sounds simple. But if you've got just a mere 2%, dehydration, you're going to see a 28% decrease in your ability to make decisions. So there was a wonderful study done out of Harvard always referenced because I think it's like crazy, because at times, like right now, I may even be a little bit dehydrated. So focusing on hydration with water and electrolytes will be another key thing to your performance.

Dave

32:10

That's awesome. So let's talk about hydration a little bit. So How Much Water Should we consume. And you also mentioned electrolytes, can we talk about that a little bit too. So

Louisa

32:19

water, how much should consume is really dependent on who you are in your activity output. But as a base minimum, three liters, I mean, you're gonna have to do the conversion. But I always say that three liters minimum, is what you should be ingesting, that's even without exercise. And here's the thing with electrolytes. So remember, I was telling you about your brain cells. So the way that they communicate with each other, we provide this thing called a synapse.

So it's when one neuron connects with the other one. And this synapse is like an electrical impulse. And that is generated through this pump, it's called the sodium potassium pump. sodium, potassium are electrolytes. So for your brain to really function, you need these electrolytes you need adequate sodium, potassium, selenium. And another thing that we're not noticing is when you do exercise, if you do sweat, you're not just sweating water, you're sweating out, sodium, potassium, zinc, selenium. So you need to be replacing that with electrolytes as well, or you're thinking, and you're gonna get that brain fog, you know, when you wake up, you're like, Oh, my brains are foggy, you're gonna get that in the morning as well.

Dave

33:29

You know, when I think of electrolytes, I think of Gatorade.

Louisa

33:32

Yeah, well, that's sugar.

Dave

33:35

You know, I'm of that generation, that that's what we think of what is a better way to get electrolytes than Gatorade.

Louisa

33:41

So I would strongly recommend finding a quality supplement. For example, I'm an advisor at a company called momentus. And they have by far the best quality supplements on the market, they're triple certified. So when it comes to standards in America, you have to be certified. And they're triple certified. So you know that the quality of their products is next to none. So you need to be having that. So basically, you can get this jar of electrolytes or even, you know, whatever you want, and you just scoop it into water. He shake the water is much better than Gatorade.

Dave

34:16

Yeah, I'm sure. I'm sure. Sorry for all the Gatorade people out there. So but yeah, okay, so we've kind of talked about, I guess, the way I would look at is like three pillars of our health. And we're talking about sleep. We're talking about exercise, and we're talking about nutrients. I guess we didn't touch on food. So how can the food we eat impacts the decisions we make?

Louisa

34:38

Well, I always say stay away from sugar and refined carbohydrates. But you also want to be looking at how can I get the maximal amount of energy output from my brain. And when we eat, we naturally get lethargic because all of our blood supplies going to our stomach to digest the food. So I always say try and backload your meals meaning closer towards the end of the night, that's when you can have, you know, have a big dinner, for example, don't have your huge meals during the day because it's just gonna make you lethargic, especially for somebody who is in this investing standpoint. And then I don't prescribe to any type of meal in terms of any type of diet like vegan, vegetarian, I eat everything. I think that red meat is a huge benefit. It's got so many nutrients that can provide your brain and your body. But when it comes to brain health, it is the omega three fatty acids from fatty fish that you want to look at.

Dave

35:37

Yeah, I am a type two diabetic. And so I've really embraced the kind of intermittent fasting idea. And that really seems to help. It helps control my diabetes. Oh, yeah, absolutely. I'm a big fan of it. So it's kind of weird because I grew up you know, breakfast was the meal. You had to have breakfast. Yeah, their burgers. And now I don't eat until noon, at their earliest every day. And so that just seems to work for me.

Louisa

36:00

Yeah, actually, another thing is I've got a lot of diabetics I work with, I don't know if you've ever taken if you've ever had a CGM, continuous glucose monitor, what you can do is one of the best ways to control the postprandial spikes, which is the spike in glucose after you eat, is to exercise and get your heart rate up. I've managed to do that every time I eat something I actually start doing like air squats.

Dave

36:27

I don't know if I'm quite that dedicated. But it definitely, I could definitely see how it would definitely help. So yeah, it's awesome. So we've kind of touched on all these three pillars. So how can we kind of wrap this into how can this help us make better decisions with investing? Like, how can we kind of create a, I guess a plan that can help people become better investors by making better decisions.

Louisa

36:49

So the first thing I would say is, get a notebook and start studying yourself. Look at the way you sleep, if you wake up at night, you know, jot down the next day, woke up at 2am went to the bathroom, write down how many hours of sleep that you got, and start to study yourself. Because as you would know, you can pick up on patterns, you can pick up on these patterns that, you know, you may think to yourself, well, I slept bad, but I also had two glasses of wine. So maybe that's why I slept bad. So once you can get out all of the little risk factors.

Start to start with one thing always start with sleep. Don't I always say I it's with many people on this. But I say start with sleep. Because sleep can control your hunger as well. So you don't want to start with nutrition. Start with getting the basics sleep before midnight, I generally say 10pm is the best time to sleep

sleep for a minimum of eight hours. If you can say 10pm till 6am, which means that I mean be asleep at 10am. So go to sleep at around 930. Go to bed around 930. And then once you wake up, go out and get some natural sunlight to wake up your circadian rhythm. And natural sunlight has to be outside, you can't just get this through a glass window. So just start with that for two weeks. And then once you've got that underway, and you're feeling great, because I know you will be then you want to start including other things like you may say, Well, I'm going to eliminate alcohol and all of the bad food. And by bad food, I'm talking refined carbohydrates and sugar, fried foods etc.

Because we all know what's good for us and what's not. And then if you feel like you really want to optimize your performance, you can have a look at supplementing. At the end of this podcast, I'll lead people to my profile where I actually have all of these different stacks like brain optimization stacks and what I take. So that's when you can start doing that. And then you want to include exercise, maybe start with two days a week of strength training, and make sure you keep it really hard. And once you start getting on this takes a while may take six months to get these underway. Once you do this, and you can develop these habits, it will play out in your life, it will just things will just come to you that you just didn't know existed.

Dave

39:03

That's awesome. I love the kind of the organization of that. And I have this phrase that I drive Andrew crazy with it's called EDP. You have to approach things like eating a pizza, not healthy, of course, but you can't eat it all once you got to do it piece by piece. And I love the way you kind of structured that. So you can just kind of work through those different steps to help people get where they want to go.

Louisa

39:22

Absolutely. Yeah, you've got that. You've got that right.

Dave

39:25

All right. So Louisa, this is amazing. I learned a ton and I know our listeners will as well. If people want to learn more about you and the things that you're doing and what you have going on, where can they go to learn more about what you're doing?

Louisa

39:39

Yeah, so for all of the social media savvy people I am on Instagram, I'm very active on Instagram. It's just my name Louisa Nicola. I'm on Twitter. I'm on LinkedIn. I have a podcast which is a very well performing podcast called The neuro experience. It's on all major platforms. And then if you go to the neuro athletics website, neuro athletics.com.au Do you'll see everything on there in terms of our blog, our weekly newsletter that goes out to over 50,000 people, and we are going to be releasing our investors brain health course, which will be coming out very soon.

Dave

40:15

Oh, that's awesome. Very cool. Yeah. Awesome. Well, Lisa, I want to thank you very much for your time and your expertise. This was amazing. I really enjoyed the conversation and you did answer all my questions. So I appreciate that. And I guess without any further ado, folks, go out there and invest with a margin of safety. Emphasis on the safety. Have a great week, and we'll talk to you all next week.

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