

Becoming a Venus: Interview with Alison Scott



With John Barban

John Barban: Welcome to the Venus Index podcast. I'm John Barban and with me is Alison Scott. I used to be Alison's strength and conditioning coach when she was a varsity hockey player at Guelph. She was actually a two-sport athlete. She also played field hockey, and Ali is going to share with us her stories of how she went from training for her function, I guess, as an athlete to training for her Venus Index and sort of the whole path that she followed from going from one to the other. The mindset shifts and all kinds of stuff along the way that really changed the way she was viewing what the point of working out was at all and what to do about going from being an athlete to not being, I guess, in organized sports anymore.

So let's start with your history then of your training from when you were playing both sports. Let's start at when you're in university and a varsity athlete.

Alison Scott: Well, I guess when I was playing sports that the whole idea was to be bigger, faster, and stronger and ever since I was in high school, that was always the goal. I never really thought that I could be anything else. I mean I'm quite short. I'm only 5'1-¾," I like to call myself, but only in the mornings! And I always just thought that I could never be anything else other than that, but I was always stronger and faster than everybody so that was the only way that I could find pride with my body and be confident about my body. I always was athletic because it was just the thing that came naturally to me and so I just continued all the way through university

and I was training for strength and for speed more than anything else and I really wasn't thinking about what it made me look like.

John Barban: Right, and so, I guess, I apologize for contributing to that because we just trained for more strength and more speed when I was with you guys and so obviously that worked. Explain to us a little bit about where you got to I guess with that.

Alison Scott: Well, I guess it was rewarding in its own sense. I mean I've always been someone that, and I don't know what the basis of it is, but I've always put a lot of muscle really quickly. I've always been really strong and really fast for my size even way before I started training and then I started weight training very early too. I was probably 13 or 14. I was playing high-level hockey on the guy's team and they were all twice my size so I ended up training very hard at a very early age to try to get bigger and stronger, and it just came so easily to me so I've got to the point where I was squatting well over what I weigh and I could do 40 or 50 pushups in a row and I mean I was pretty happy with those numbers. It got me to a place in sports where I was really competitive and I was happy and athletic.

But at the same time it was hard because I was a teenage girl for the whole time. I was 17 when I showed up at the university, and you're very self conscious (at that age). You're body conscious and you want to look in a

certain way and it's kind of depressing when you can see your training kind of give you a look that you're not necessarily happy with, like as a woman as opposed to as an athlete.

John Barban: Right, so two different things were going on there. There was your desire to look like better and at the time you didn't realize it was actually the Venus Index to have that shape, but for your function you were training yourself into a different shape, but that was making you an all-Canadian athlete.

Alison Scott: Exactly and then at the same time I had kind of come to terms with it before. I just figured I could never look sexy and be an attractive woman because I'm short and like I said I've been stocky since I can remember and I've been training since I can remember and I always just thought that I would be like the short, stocky, flat-chested with big legs girl, and that was just my body type. So at least I had to find some way to be happy and proud of my body type and then I figured the way to do that was to be happy with what it could do because I was fast and strong.

John Barban: Right. Okay, yeah, that makes perfect sense. So it was almost a bit of goal hijacking before you even knew what that concept was?



Alison Scott: Absolutely, I just figured that I couldn't ever make my body look the way I wanted to because my legs are too short or I'm too short or whatever it is. I don't have that feminine shape. So I just figured I can never have it, so why bother to go for it. And in that case I kept training and training and getting bigger and bigger and stronger and stronger because even though I recognized that that wasn't exactly the shape I wanted to have to look like a woman, I never thought that I could really look like one of those hot women. So it didn't really bother me to keep working on being stronger and stronger.

John Barban: Because as long as you stayed within the world of sports, you're an all-star.

Alison Scott: Exactly! And then of course, like you were saying, all of that changed for me when I stopped playing sports. I stopped playing sports midway through university and I took some time off and did some traveling and then I came back. And then of course, you're in this big identity crisis because not only had you associate yourself with this sort of my life, I had always been an athlete and training. When I was playing two-varsity sports, it was 4:30 in the morning or 5:00 in the morning for field hockey and then 5:00 at night for hockey and some training session during the day somewhere in there and a full courseload. I don't even remember the first two years of university, I was so busy. So when I came back I had an identity crisis, not just for the amount of time that I had, but also then all of a

sudden now I'm stuck with this athlete's body and I'm not playing sports anymore. So there's no excuse for why, I guess excuse isn't necessarily the right word, but that's what I felt like I didn't have an excuse for my body.

John Barban: Yeah, well, identity crisis is the exact word. All right, well then that leads us to some conversations you and I had, and what you did next?

Alison Scott: Yea, absolutely. So you and I, we're still talking and hanging out and I knew that you were working on this. I knew about the men's product you were working on, like, "Well you know, what that's for women? You guys have been working on the calculations at the time and I was like, "Well, you know what, if there's a perfect size for a guy at any height, then there must be one for me regardless if I have short legs or if I have no chest or whatever I still should be able to look good." And then I'm so used to training. It was so funny I was still training hard, but the only way I knew how to train was for strength and power, and so I was still training that way and I was working out all the time and I still had this body that I wasn't happy with. You and I talked about Venus and Adonis and I just asked, "Well, what do I have to do?"

John Barban: Yeah, and that was an awkward conversation, a little bit.



Alison Scott: I bet.

John Barban: Well, it's just hard for a girl to just say, "Okay, just lay it on me. What do I have to do?" And if the answer is, "Bring certain areas down." I mean part of the answer was, and I remember we had a conversation where you understood the concept of the ratios. You wanted your numbers and then we also could correlate that to a body weight range likely that you need to be in. And it was funny because you kind of put me on the spot there and no guy ever wants to have to answer to a girl that, "Well, I think these measurements need to come down and you need to be lighter." But that was basically what I said to you and then you just did it, which was just pretty cool, and obviously you're expecting something like that as an answer.

Alison Scott: Well, I mean we all know, like if you don't have a body that you're comfortable with, you know that something has to change and it's almost never, "I would really like to put on a few pounds". I mean for some people that is what they want to do, but I mean for most people, you know that you have to get small, and especially I just spent my whole life trying to build size. I mean especially when I was really young. I played hockey with guys until I was 16 and you know some of those 16-year-old guys ended up being 6'4 and 200 pounds, and so I spent my whole time trying to get bigger, so I could be competitive. I mean even in women's hockey in the university, there are some girls that that are big, but not quite that close.

And so I spent my whole life trying to get bigger. So obviously I knew that I had to get smaller. I mean it's not like I wasn't big enough at that point in time. And it was hard and depressing because I worked out so much. It's not like I'm like, "Gosh, I really have to do something, right?"

And then also you eat so much when you're training so much and I must say even all that time where I was getting big, it's not like I was ripped the whole time. I mean I was strong and I was guess what people would consider quite fit, but I still had a fair amount of fat on me that had to come off too. I kind of always hid under that too because I just figured my size was part of my muscle and this and that. I just never believed that I could be, and that I've never been one of the really skinny girls and I was never really big, but I mean I knew that there was some to come off. So I mean I guess I always knew, but it was still depressing to hear it especially because I worked so hard and ate so "healthy" even though I knew I was eating too much but I thought I had to because I was training upwards of four to five hours a day.

John Barban: So when we talked, did that conversation make you somewhere in your head where you're thinking, "All right, so now I've got to go backwards from what I was doing?" In other words all that training has put me in the wrong direction and now you have to take some of that off. Was that part of how you were thinking?



Alison Scott: I was kind of scared because a lot of my body confidence has always come from my abilities, like the only way I ever had confidence in my body was to be like, “Well, even though I don’t look the way I necessarily want to, at least I’m faster and stronger than everybody.” Now when I look back it is silly because who cares. So I was scared because I knew that if I stopped training heavy weights that I would obviously lose some of that strength, and then I wouldn’t be able to do that anymore and for somehow, like I’m like, “Oh, if I can’t squat this or I can’t bench press this, and then what if this doesn’t work and I’m still not happy with how I look, now I don’t have either, right? Now I don’t have confidence in what my body can do.”

John Barban: Or how it looks.

Alison Scott: And I don’t look the way I want to, exactly. So it was kind of like a leap of faith. So you’re lucky that I kind of trust you.

John Barban: Oh, you are so kind! Okay, so then you would have an even worse identity crisis.

Alison Scott: Exactly, because then I would have been not how I want to look and I wouldn’t have been happy with how my body performed.



John Barban: So in other words, it wouldn't be built for show or for go.

Alison Scott: Exactly.

John Barban: Right.

Alison Scott: So it was kind of a leap of faith, but I mean I'd seen you guys do the numbers with the guys, and I mean I just really wanted something to change because I wasn't happy at all and I was training lots and lots and still not happy with my body so I figured, "Well, here it goes." I mean I always knew that maybe being smaller would help, so here goes and so I just kind of did it. And it was kind of hopeful because I trust you guys and your theories and I've seen you guys do it with the guys and I know that you guys knew your stuff and I've seen the research with you and seen the process so I was ready to take that step and just be like, "Well, you know what, let's see if I can finally have that body that I've always wanted."

Because throughout this whole time I'm still a young woman; you still want to be attractive and you're still trying to be sexy and you're trying to get out there and meet new people, and it's hard when you don't have confidence in your body and especially when you're not playing sports anymore and you have this athletic tank body, but I don't play sports anymore and then you lose that kind of identity too, and so I was just ready to really kind of grow

up and find a body that I would be comfortable with sort of for the long run. I mean all that “university is all about finding yourself” stuff and finding like the body that was going to work for me sort of in the long run and not just when I was on the ice or around the field. It was important to me too.

John Barban: Yeah, and ten years from now you don’t want to be still where people are saying, “Oh, you don’t want to still be identifying yourself as an athlete.” That’s in your past.

Alison Scott: Exactly, I don’t want to be doing that past when I’m actually playing the sports because to me, you don’t hang on to the past like that. It’s all about sort of being the person that you are right now and everyone knows that your body changes. You can’t just say like, “Oh, I’m an athlete,” when you stopped playing sports ten years ago.

John Barban: Right.

Alison Scott: I can’t identify as a hockey player well past my hockey playing days.

John Barban: Yeah, the social credibility or the usefulness of that kind of fade as soon as you are not in those arenas. Okay, so the first thing we did was we specifically targeted your legs and took some size off your legs.

Alison Scott: Right. And that was super important to me.

John Barban: Yeah. So I remember you asked me. You were just like, "How do I make these things smaller?" And the answer was actually relatively simple and so it was just stop training them, especially stop training them heavy and not necessarily stop training them altogether, but completely change how we train them. So you just walk us through the big change you made. I think that was over the summer. We weren't training together or anything, but I remember you made a lot of progress just in a few months with that.

Alison Scott: Yeah. I really took up running and I've never been a runner. I never identified with being a runner, and I guess now, I could call myself a runner. I run a lot. But I never thought I could, I'm short and I'm stocky and that's not what you normally see as a runner and I was always crappy at running because I never ran. I mean, you always think it's genetic or it's because of your stature or something, but I mean I was a bad runner because I never ran. I mean it makes some sense now. I'm a bad swimmer because I don't swim. So I took up running because it was just that

repetitive motion and a light motion that hopefully atrophied the legs a little bit and or whatever, or at least it gave me something to do because it's not like I can just do nothing. I was so used to training I couldn't just stop training, but it still get a way for me to give my legs some work but in a way that wouldn't increase in size.

And then you had to keep in mind that before this with the hockey training we did for legs, I guess genetically a little bit more muscular or put on muscle easily, but I mean I would train my legs hard and then during juvenile muscle growth when I was quite young and very early. I was lunge walking hundreds of meters and I'm a goal tender for hockey, so I was in a squat for hours a day every single day. The kind of training I did for my legs was extremely heavy and then going from that to not training them at all, I didn't even body weight squats or anything. I trained upper bodies as far as weights did. I went and ran and the running was a huge thing. It really helped me. Time wise, it kept me exercising for about as long as I used to be exercising because I could go for an hour run and then do some weight training and it gave me some space to clear my head and it really actually helped my legs and as soon as I started to see my legs come down a little bit, it just kept me running because I was like, "Wow! It's working."

John Barban: And how much size did you think you take off them I guess from when that transition until even now?

Alison Scott: I'd say that it's close to a couple of inches each and that's not even at the top of the thigh, like the widest part with most people's thighs. This was just right above the knee. My legs used to just go down cylindrically from the widest part of the thigh up by your groin and in the really wide part of your leg and it used to go straight down to above the knee and then cut off like a big rectangle and so that size came off right above my knee, which was good. I was really happy with it.

John Barban: That's what you're hoping for to happen. So you wanted that sweep from the hip to knee.

Alison Scott: Exactly, because I always had such chicken leg type thigh where it was just so wide and then straight to nothing, well, not nothing, and then much smaller calves and there is no sort of feminine taper of the leg at all. And then of course, all women who have trained legs know the pain of finding pants when your legs are two sizes bigger than your hips and waist.

John Barban: Yeah, and so I'd say even now they're your dominant feature. Before they were mega-dominant, but now I think they fit on your body perfectly now, but before they really dominated your physique.

Alison Scott: Yeah, I absolutely agree. I mean I'm happy. I mean I know that my legs are still my dominant body part. I have big legs.

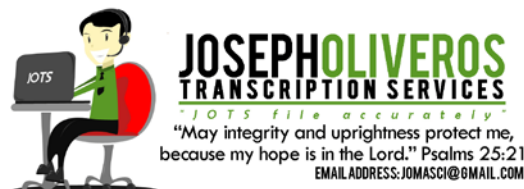
John Barban: I get it. I have big legs.

Alison Scott: I have big legs, but they fit on my body now and I'm happy with them especially now that they're leaner too. I mean I can start to see all the definition in them, so I don't feel like they're excessively big. As you said, they're still my dominant feature, but they fit on my body and I'm happy with them and I did have a fair amount of fat on me like way more than I wanted to admit, because in this and age the baseline just changes because you see so many people that are overweight or obese that as soon as you're in a certain category, you're like, "Well, I'm fit. I'm in the fit category." And I still lost about 20 pounds of fat.

John Barban: And you're 5'1.

Alison Scott: I'm just 5'1.

John Barban: And I know we've had conversations about this. Like when we came up with your numbers and said it would probably be somewhere between 120 and 115, so 117-ish range, did you even believe? I know you



said you didn't even think it could be there, but did you believe you would have that much weight to lose because you're not that big of a person anyways.

Alison Scott: Yeah, and even at my heaviest, I guess I was never what anyone would call like fat necessarily, and like I said that's just because of societal changing baselines. Since I started weighing myself, whenever you start weighing yourself in high school or whatever, I had never weighed that little and so I just didn't think it was possible, especially I trained so much and I tried to be careful about what I ate, but when I think about it, I was being careful about what I ate and not how much I ate. And so I always thought, "Well, you know, maybe I have five pounds to go or I'm just bigger than everybody else." I mean I thought I was just chock-full of muscle or whatever it was underneath that or a stocky frame. Back then I didn't know that much about physiology. I was 17, and so I never ever would have guessed that I had 20 pounds of fat to lose, ever.

John Barban: Yeah, and then as you're on your way down, so for everybody listening, Ali, she goes to school, well, now you're done, but in school in the same city that I'm in. And so in the summers I just correspond with her, coaching her sort of via email, but during school year sometimes we actually train together at the gym. I mean she does her workout and I do mine, but we still communicate. So on the way down you had mentioned, and I know we talked about this that you're a little bit surprised that our



numbers were actually what they would going to be because you just were a couple of pounds to go and you're like, "Oh man, it really is a couple more." And then, "Oh yeah, it really is a couple more." And then when you start realizing it, the message from a year whatever ago when I said, "Oh, it's probably somewhere between 115 and 120." And I know you were sort of didn't want to believe that a little bit and then now that you're there, you're like, "Oh yeah, that's exactly what it was."

Alison Scott: Yeah, exactly, because when I was at my heaviest I was probably about 135 and I was sitting there going, "There can't be more." And then I got to 130 pretty quickly and then I got to 125 and I had never weighed 125 ever when I had started weighing myself and I was like, "Oh my God, like I'm so happy to be 125, like I can't possibly. Is he kidding me, ten more pounds? Are you kidding me?" And I was so happy with my body because I had never been that light and then I just couldn't believe it. I'm like, "I really need to be at my numbers, and it's ten more?" But then I just keep plugging away and as I got closer and closer, I was like, "Oh yeah, it is ten more."

John Barban: Yeah, that was funny because you got to 125 and I knew you were happy with the progress and it's hard to say it to just somebody who doesn't look bad that there's still more to go. I do think it's shifting baselines because you already sort of more athletic looking and in a better kind of physical condition than just about anyone else around anyways, but

as far as getting to your ideal VI, which is what you asked. You asked specifically the ideal VI, we went with the calculations and then you got closer to 120 and you're like, "Oh yeah, this is starting to look a lot more like what I was after." Then there was the 120 barrier. I remember you had another psychological barrier about being into the teens, but also it wasn't that motivating too?

Alison Scott: Yeah, absolutely. I guess 125 was the biggest one for me because it was a lot of landmarks. Yeah, I never weighed 125 and it was ten pounds. I lost at least a solid ten pounds. As I said, "I dropped ten pounds. I'm lighter than I've ever been." It's like this square number and it's a nice point and I was just so happy to have hit that threshold, but then I recognized too when I was there that now I'm like, "Okay now, I love my body and everything is perfect and I look great." Especially like I just knew that I had more to go and even though I was happy, I mean you still know. And as I kept going, it was a totally rewarding feeling and then I got to be like, "Yeah, I want to be in the teens." And then I got to the teens when I was a little bit fasted and then I was like, "Okay now, I just want to be there fed, like all the time." And so it was neat and it became a goal definitely.

John Barban: And so when you started recognizing you were just a few inches away from the VI, then that's when you basically said, "Well, let's just do this."



Alison Scott: Well, then I realized, no offense, it's not like I didn't trust you, but then I really realized it was possible, right? I mean you always kind of want to believe that you're different. You're something special. You have a real outlier of a body type that won't let you quite get there and you kind of always want to believe that because otherwise you're like, "Well, how come I wasn't there before? Especially before when I was training so hard, I was like, "Really, I did all that work" And you want to believe it's not possible because it helps you justify why you weren't there beforehand anyways.

John Barban: And not because you're sitting on the couch, but because you were training and your VI still isn't anywhere near where you want to.

Alison Scott: Exactly! I think I wouldn't have felt so resistant to it had I been doing absolutely nothing because you could be like, "Well, my body doesn't look the way I want to because I'm lazy and I don't do anything and I eat everything." But then, I was eating salads and chicken breasts and working out four hours a day and so you just don't want to believe that you put in all that effort and then your body still wasn't looking anywhere close to what you wanted it to be. But once I got really close and I could see like, "Well, it's just an inch here and it's an inch here and you know I can see that that's fat because I can pinch it and I know that that's fat. That's not my body type. That's fat and I can get rid of fat because I've gotten rid of fat."

And that's when I really became like, "Oh, I can be this and I can do that and it will be real for me."

John Barban: And so the numbers are our actual measurements. Talk to me a little bit about the psychology of the actual shooting for the measurements versus a body weight. Even though there's a body weight range associated with what your ideal number should end up. Talk about that with the fact that it's not just weight loss. It's not strength. It's not anything. It's just shape.

Alison Scott: That was huge for me, mostly because I've always weighed more than everybody else and around my height and even though I wasn't necessarily that much bigger. I mean I think it had partially to do with it. I mean I did have a fair bit amount of muscle mass on me, but I know that it's not really that much more. You could watch your weight go up and down and once you start weighing yourself every single day at the same time everyday then you recognize that you know as a girl when you're close to your period, you'll put on a couple of pounds and I know that every single month the same time I put on two pounds, but it's okay if you know that it's going to come off afterwards. And then your weight from eating, I mean you might eat out a pound or two of food everyday. I mean that's a fluctuation on someone my size. It can be up to four or five pounds in one day of fluctuation. So you can't get caught up on weight because it changes so much and I recognized that once I started weighing myself all the time. I

used to only weigh myself say once a week out of fear and then I get all disappointed because every now and again you up a pound or up two pounds and then down a pound or down two pounds and it was just so all over the place.

It's this emotional roller coaster, but when you start to weigh yourself everyday and you recognize what the fluctuation is then you can actually pretty much just stop weighing yourself because you recognize that it doesn't really mean much. And then the measurements were big for me because like I said I've never really thought that I had a body type that could ever look attractive and it was really, pardon the pun, appealing to me and attractive to me that the Venus Index was based on, the research is based on physical attractiveness because I'm still coming of age or whatever at this time and I never felt sexy.

I never felt like a woman. I never felt attractive. I mean I'm 5 foot nothing. I'm totally flat-chested and stocky so I always just felt like I look like a kid. You don't want to feel like that when you're out in the world and you're trying to meet people and you're trying to like be sexy and become a woman and I felt like I looked like a child. So I mean the fact that the research was based on attractiveness really helped me and the fact the idea that I could get a feminine curve and I could get the hour-glass shape through my shoulders and my waist and my butt and I didn't have to worry about having longer legs or being taller or having a bigger chest. I could get that

shape. I really like that those measurements are based off that kind of research.

John Barban: Yeah, and like you said, it doesn't matter how tall you are or how "stocky" you are, it fits on everyone. So you don't have to have like genetically big chest and tall and long legs. It's irrelevant. I clearly don't understand how girls view this or how they react to each other, but I do know how the numbers work and it is shoulders, hips, and waist and I know what guys look at and that's what guys are drawn to. To me it seems like it would be liberating for girls to realize, "Oh, I can actually affect this. I'm not stuck with my genetics."

Alison Scott: Well, for me it was 100% liberating. I was 100% convinced every since I became aware of my body and aware that I was a sexual being that was being judged both by other women and by men. And as soon as I was aware of that I never thought that I could ever be like model pretty or one of those girls and I don't know why, but for some reason my group of friends in high school, I was the fat one. I wasn't even fat it just happened to be the group of friends, the girls that I hung out with were all tall and skinny, size zeros; those really tall, lean girls that were really skinny before they hit puberty. I was the fat one and I always just felt fat or big or whatever.

Like I said that's when I really started trying to find confidence in what my body could do and I just never believed I could like any of them because I never did. I mean I've always been short, stocky, and strong.

John Barban: So as soon as you became self-aware of your body, you just had it built into your mind that I'm not that. I'm something else.

Alison Scott: Yeah. No matter what I'm never going to be one of those girls. I guess I had to find my confidence in myself in being sarcastic and strong and fast. You try to find that in something different.

John Barban: Just other things, sure.

Alison Scott: Anything else, right?

John Barban: Yeah.

Alison Scott: And that's how I found any sort of felt confident. So Venus was extremely liberating because just the idea that I could be one of those sexy girls with my stature was just so important to me because like I said I've always felt like a child because I'm so small. I'm short and flat-chested,

all of that kind of stuff that just makes you feel so young and boyish. Not womanly, I guess.

John Barban: And so like you said, it was a bit of a leap of faith to trust us. So aside from the “faith in the numbers,” you’ve obviously done some after pictures and so faith aside, you actually do like the way it looks now.

Alison Scott: Yeah, I mean it was kind of exciting to do some those fitness photos we submitted to you guys for Venus and it was really nice because you can’t tell sometimes because you see yourself in the mirror every single day and like I said, I lost 20 pounds. But in one day I can go up or down 5 pounds and you can see that too. It’s not like you gain five pounds in water weight or whatever it is and you don’t see it. I mean you could see it. So within day to day I’d be like, “Oh my God, I’m bloated with this or I don’t look good today.” Do you know what I mean? You and I have had conversations where I’ve been so up and down within like the same day about how I look and it’s hard.

But to see it in pictures was a really big difference because it’s not like you just take pictures of yourself naked every day. If you do, it’s good for you and all the power to you! But I never have been into that practice of the daily naked picture. It’s really hard to tell, but then to look at the pictures, before and after and you’d always tell me like, “Okay, well, like pull out

your before pictures and then pull out a recent picture and/or after I had some after pictures where you can see my body. It's like, "Oh okay, I really did make some changes. I really did lose some significant weight. It's not just all water. It's not just an illusion. I did make some differences." So doing the after pictures were really neat because I was like, "Wow! I do look different."

John Barban: Yeah and putting them next to the before, which you are completely reluctant to even go look at, which I thought was kind of funny. Everyone is. Everyone just doesn't like their before.

Alison Scott: It's so funny, and then you wanted me to send you one so that you could have a before picture of me to do a before and after. And I'm like, "I don't want to send that." But then obviously you knew me when I was that size. You saw me all the time then!

John Barban: Yeah, I've seen you at the before picture size, but you don't even want to send one to me. So I see you enough at the gym and stuff that I also didn't really notice. Like I've obviously noticed you're changing, but when you sent the before, I'm like, "Wow! That's a big change."

Alison Scott: Yeah, when you put it on so slowly too you don't realize. I mean I guess one part that I left out is that after I finished playing sports, I

went to Europe and I spent a year in France, which is phenomenal, but cheese and fresh bread is really cheap over there and I was all sad and alone in a foreign country so I ate away my pain!

John Barban: Well, at least it tasted good.

Alison Scott: It tasted fantastic! Then I did some backpacking all over Europe and you're like, "Really, it's three Euros for an entire pizza and I'm in Italy and you're like whoa." You're not going to share a pizza. I was traveling with a girl friend of mine and we were in Italy.

John Barban: You'd be foolish not to bite.

Alison Scott: It's foolish not to have your own pizza, and we don't even like the same kind of pizza, and you're in Italy so you're going to have gelato and it's hot so probably twice a day.

John Barban: And then it just goes and goes.

Alison Scott: And it just goes and goes and goes. So the whole time that I was training and playing hockey, I probably weighed about 130 pounds, in

and around 130 pounds and then when I went to Europe, over the course of that year, I probably gained another five-ish pounds.

John Barban: Mostly in your face.

Alison Scott: Mostly in my face because I'm half Chinese and that's where we like to put it so that's when I really noticed, like I came back and I was like, "Oh my God, I have to make a change." Because it wasn't just gradual size that I had put on through training and like slight overeating, in Europe that was the most weight I had put on sort of in a short amount of time and it was all fat and it was all just right there in all my pictures. So I was joking with John that I should have made an album called 'Watch Ali Get Fat in Europe' because I was trying to find a good before picture for my before and after and I just decided, "Well, I guess it would be the last place that I was in Europe. Because as we traveled in country to country, it just seem like I got bigger and bigger just more eating different cultures of food and it was just too funny. So it just came to the point that I was just eating so much in all the different places and I was stressed because you're going through the stress of living in different places and people not speaking English, culture shock, so I was just laughing that that was probably what the album should have been that 'Watch Ali Get Fat in Europe'.

John Barban: And you had no exercise routine then either besides walking, right?

Alison Scott: No. And you're walking around because you're walking the cities. I know that I probably gave myself too much leeway. Well, I'm walking around four or five hours a day and so obviously I'm burning lots and lots of calories, but I mean not if you're eating the entire time and not much walking isn't going to compensate with overeating.

John Barban: And so you get the same reaction I get as far as exercise somehow adding structure to the day and helping you stick to your eating pattern. Do you know what I mean? Like sticking to it, but I don't want to stay sticking to a diet, but sticking to responsible eating pattern and eating pattern that you sort of have planned out, so to speak, versus when your exercise routine sort of out the window and then the eating pattern seems to go out the window with it.

Alison Scott: Yeah, I absolutely have to exercise and in a structured way. I mean if it's just going out for a walk because you're shopping or you're traveling or whatever, that's all fine and dandy, but it doesn't feel like exercise. So to me it just didn't register properly in my head. I mean I totally recognized that as far as calorie burning goes, exercise doesn't do

nearly as much as you hope it will be because it feels like so much work that you really not burning that many calories.

But for me, to go to the gym and run or do some cardio or do some weight training it really helps me stay focused because, well, A, very conveniently, especially if I'm running I don't eat for an hour or a couple of hours beforehand because otherwise I'll get a cramp and it's a real appetite killer for me too. After exercise I don't feel like eating for an hour or two. So if I'm really feeling or craving or I'm feeling like I want to eat and I know that I don't need to, exercising could often help me get over that because it just kills my appetite for a few hours. So if I plan my workout during the day when I know that I'm going to feel like eating but I don't need to, then if I plan my exercise that way then it actually just helps me not eat. Just in that sense that it kills my appetite, but also it keeps me accountable because I did so much work and even when you know that it doesn't burn that many calories, you're like, "Well, I did all this work and it feels good." And you feel good about your body after you exercise, I feel confident and you know that eating, especially overeating, is going to ruin that look or ruin the work that you just did or make you feel slightly worse about your body, and so when I'm exercising I'm riding that high and I'm use it to help kind of control some of my cravings and my urges more so than trying to burn calories. It just helps me stay on track as far as when I'm eating.

John Barban: And so it adds a psychological accountability in them. It's almost like emotional accountability and you sort of don't want to spoil the work you've done, so to speak.

Alison Scott: Absolutely and then just the natural high that you get when you're working out. I mean I always feel good after I work out, especially with a good long run or a good hard weight session where you're feeling a lot of push and you just feel really good and you feel confident and you spend half that time staring at yourself in the mirror anyways when you're working out or lifting weights and then you feel good about yourself. You look at your body and you can see your progress. I mean that's probably one of the areas too where I really started to see progress in my body is when I was working out and it feels good because finally you're like, "Oh, I want to wear shorter shorts and I want to wear a tighter T-shirt." And then you can see the definition coming out in your arms and your legs. At least I started to see that, which was cool because even though I had trained for so long it wasn't until I started to lose serious fat that I really saw that.

And then you really see it in the gym when you're working and those muscles are all pumped up and you can see them and that was like, "Oh, okay." And that made me feel really good about myself and then you feel like a good high and feeling really sexy and confident. It's sort of like when you get dressed up and do your hair and your makeup and you're wearing your sexy little black dress. You don't really feel like crushing a



cheeseburger because you feel so sexy and you feel good about yourself and you don't want to just sit there and eat, especially when you know that those foods make you feel bloated and make you kind of feel gross, right? And when you're feeling super sexy or feeling really good about your body, you don't feel the urge to crush food.

John Barban: So it seems to be a self-perpetuating cycle where you've looked the part and you feel the part and you act the part and it just sort of feeds on itself.

Alison Scott: Absolutely, and I noticed myself even dressing better day to day, like spending a little bit more time on my appearance, and not necessarily time but dressing better and wearing form-fitting clothes that kind of show off my body. Yeah, wearing clothes that made me feel attractive and feel sexy. Instead of when I was playing sports, for instance, I dressed the athletic part and it was gross. When I look back, I'm like, "Oh."

John Barban: So you almost chose clothes to not highlight your body.

Alison Scott: Yeah, exactly. I chose clothes that hid my body. I mean, not only because I probably wasn't very happy with my body, but also because I didn't see my body that something that there was to look at. I mean, like we

have been over, I saw my body as something that it could do something not that it was anything to look at. So I hid behind baggy track pants and big hoodies all that kind of stuff and then afterwards when I started to lose some weight and especially now, I mean I find myself I really want to find clothes that hug the body that fit closer that I feel sexy in. And then the bonus of that is that when you feel really good about yourself like that you don't feel like ruining your diet either. You don't really feel like overeating and because you know it's going to make you feel bloated or make you feel not good about yourself and so it's kind of a win-win. So I totally recommend that as like a real tip is when you're feeling good, dress the part and it really helps you own your progress and feel good about your progress and feel good about yourself. I think feeling good about yourself is actually a good way to help your diet even though it's not something that you intuitively think about.

John Barban: Yeah, well, that's a really good point, and we should probably wrap this up with that. But that was a good point, and like I said before, all of these things sort of add to each other and then the momentum starts heading all in the same direction, whereas I guess we've all experienced it and certainly a lot of experienced that happen in the other direction. So it starts with like losing your focus then like losing your motivation to train and then when you actually sort of stop training then you lose your motivation to pay any attention to the diet and then so the spiral goes both directions. You can spiral downward, but no one ever thinks you can spiral upward.



Alison Scott: You absolutely can, yeah.

John Barban: And I totally think you can, and once you ride that wave it just keeps pushing you closer to your goal and then some people ask me, “Once you get to your VI, what happens?” Well, you’re riding that spiral. Now you live that life to stay there.

Alison Scott: Exactly, and then it’s neat. Like once you’re at a place where you’re really happy with your body, I mean now I’m experimenting with different ways to help myself stay there and help staying motivated to stay there and part of that is you dress well. You feel good about yourself and then you experiment with different ways to stay there and different ways to kind of enjoy your new body and enjoy this lifestyle and find a lifestyle that you can sustainably stay there with because I mean until now I’ve been living the lifestyle of, “Okay, how to lose weight and lose size and get to my VI.” Now that I’m here, it’s the same sort of experimentation. Just like you experiment with how you lose weight, now I’m experimenting with how to live my life so that I can stay this way and that includes enjoying a touch of more food, but it still means staying with my workout so that I don’t lose any shape and experimenting with different ways to eat and different ways to just live your life. I mean it’s not just eating and working out, but it’s also different ways to socialize. I mean how you plan your eating events, even with how you carry yourself and how you dress and all the different,

it's kind of exciting. It's a new lifestyle. I mean if it's just your life, but a little bit different. It's sort of like your life at your VI and what are the new things that you're going to do to enjoy your time at VI and your life at VI so that you can stay there.

John Barban: Yeah totally, and that's something that guys are going through too with AI. There are three things: There's the way you live and ate and trained when you gained weight. There's the way you live, eat, and train to lose weight until you actually start getting your numbers to where they need to be. I guess gaining and losing weight is not the word. It's to get further away from or closer to your AI or VI, and then once you're at your AI or your VI then that's a whole new life that you have to live to be there and that's the one where as people approach it and stay there and get there, the new experiment is to stay there.

Alison Scott: Yeah.

John Barban: Well, that was good for today. I guess we're going to actually do this in two parts because we haven't even touched on nutrition, eating habits, and all that sort of stuff, and so next week I'm going to talk to Ali again and we're going to go over I guess the other side getting more into the nuts and bolts of living the actual life to get here and more strategies for

nutrition, but that was good for this week. Thanks for obviously being on, and we'll do it again. So are you good with that?

Alison Scott: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you so much for having me on the podcast.

John Barban: All right, we'll do it again. So for Alison Scott, I'm John Barban and that's your Venus Index podcast.

