

Podcast Transcript

In the Loop – Episode 23

“Looking After Yourself from the Inside Out”

Interview with Bec Cameron

Bec: [00:00:00] You know just realizing that your external body is a reflection of your internal health. So, just making sure your training your body right from the inside out, rather than just trying to punish it through exercise and dieting.

Kareena: [00:00:14] That's Bec Cameron, sharing her belief that health and fitness goals are more achievable with a positive mindset and holistic approach. Tune in to hear the whole interview on this episode of In the Loop. Hey there Loopers and welcome to another episode of In the Loop where we chat about the business end of being an influencer. I'm your host Kareena and today we're chatting with personal trainer, nutrition coach and INBA bikini athlete, Bec Cameron. Bec runs her own online coaching program, which gives her global reach and the ability to work with clients all over the world. This year Beck will be launching her very first fitness retreat in Bali, TMPL retreats. This is where she hopes to continue spreading her message and overall mission which is to help women achieve goals in a healthy, holistic and sustainable way. So, tune in as we chat with this determined woman as she shares her experiences and wisdom with as many women worldwide, motivating them all to live their best life. This week we have Bec Cameron joining us!

Bec: [00:01:27] Hey guys.

Kareena: [00:01:27] So Bec, I'm very interested to hear more about your background. I've heard you speak at various events and you have a very interesting history when it comes to coming into fitness and the reasons that you've joined us today to have a chat. So, I'd love to start right from the beginning, when did you discover fitness? When did you find out that you liked it and enjoyed it? Was that something you did as a kid or something that you found in your older age?

Bec: [00:01:50] Yes. So, I grew up loving sport. So, I first sign up to a netball team when I was in Grade 2, so I think is about eight years old and played netball all through primary school, got on to high school and I started playing volleyball and that kind of continued my love for sport. I ended up making it to the Victorian State team for volleyball, so I was playing quite a lot of volleyball and netball throughout high school.

Kareena: [00:02:17] Incredible.

Bec: [00:02:17] And from there I just kind of delved into a few different types of fitness. I got really into long distance running when I was in VCE, I kind of used that as a bit of an escape when I was going through a rough year with VCE being stressful and my parents were actually divorcing that year as well, so exercise was a really big release

for me. From there, after I finished high school, I still loved running still played volleyball and I got my first job at Fitness First as a receptionist. So, I started working in a gym and that's when I kind of got into my weight training and it all just kind of happened from there.

Bec: [00:02:56] That's interesting that you say going into your weight training. I know a lot of girls are quite intimidated by weight training, especially to begin with. What was it that made it that transition a bit easier for you?

Bec: [00:03:05] Well I think I'd always been very skinny growing up and one of the things letting me down at volleyball was that I was so skinny and I didn't have enough strength or power behind me, so I actually approached a trainer there and I said I need to improve my volleyball performance, I want to jump higher, I want to be stronger and I also wanted to look better so I wanted to start building some muscle, building that shape. That was kind of at the time where people were starting to compete, so in bikini competitions and stuff, so I'd seen a few girls on Instagram doing that kind of thing and so I also wanted to kind of change my body composition, so that was what kind of got me into weight training.

Kareena: [00:03:44] So tell me about the bikini body competitions as you said, you saw people on Instagram doing it, was that the inspiration for you trying?

Bec: [00:03:50] Yeah, I guess so. I mean I remember when I said to that trainer, 'this is what I want to look like', I showed him a photo of a fitness model with a six pack and I said I don't want to compete, I don't want to get on stage, I just want to look like this, not really realizing at the time that that's not a sustainable physique and that comp condition is just a kind of 24 hour thing that you maintain. But yeah, I definitely think it was seeing other people do it that I wanted to look like that and then from there I was like hey you know what I actually do want to get on stage and I do want to compete and give it a go as like my new challenge and new thing to work towards when I was no longer playing the sport side of things.

Kareena: [00:04:29] So tell me about the process. What did you do to prep for a bikini body competition?

Bec: [00:04:33] Yes so, it's quite a long process. I think a lot of people misunderstand it and think 'oh you know I've just got to kind of diet for 12 weeks and get lean and get up on stage' but it's not really like that, because you need to have an off season where you're building muscle and you're eating lots of food to kind of prep your metabolism so you're then at a point that you can diet down at a healthy level so you don't have to go to super low calories and you're actually going to look good on stage because you have muscle and you're not just up there as a skinny girl in a bikini, you know?

Bec: [00:05:04] Yeah, so that process as you said, it takes time. How long did you prep for your first comp?

Bec: [00:05:08] Well I actually, the first time I wanted to compete I didn't make it the whole way there, so I started prepping but I wasn't really happy with the coaches that I

was using at the time so I ended up being like 'I'm not comfortable with this, I don't think this feels alright, I think something's not right here', which I later learned it wasn't. I was on too low calories from too far out, so that kind of set me back a little bit and then I found another coach who I got to prep me for my first competition and that whole process there probably lasted about six months but prior to that obviously I'd already been weight training for one or two years in the gym.

Kareena: [00:05:45] OK. So how many comps did you end up doing in the end?

Bec: [00:05:48] I have done five so far, so I did three years back to back and then I've had this year off.

Kareena: [00:05:53] That's a lot of competitions. What is your, I guess, method of staying motivated during that time? Because I imagine, as you said, it's quite an unsustainable physique to keep outside of that 24-hour period, so how do you go from comp to comp.

Bec: [00:06:08] Well it's funny, a lot of people say how do you stay motivated, but honestly it doesn't come down to motivation it comes down to discipline. So there's days where I don't want to do something and I don't want to train and I'm tired and I'd rather sleep and I don't want to eat my chicken, I want to eat ice cream but it's not about what you want to do, you need to stay focused on your goals and stay disciplined to that. So, yeah, I always just think about the reasons why I decided to do this and why it's important to me and that always keeps me on track.

Kareena: [00:06:36] Why don't you share some of those reasons with us?

Bec: [00:06:40] Well for me, I guess because I always had a competitive sporting background, like when I got into the gym and there was no real competition about it, I wanted it to be that competitive thing because that really does motivate and drive me. It wasn't about competing against other people and winning, it was about competing against myself and trying to get myself into the best possible condition of my life and you know, hit PB's in the gym and look better and see those changes. So that was a really big thing for me and I think just you know, overcoming those body confidence issues that I've always had when I was younger and I was running a lot, I wasn't eating enough and I always just thought I needed to be skinny and that was kind of what drove me to run a lot and not eat enough. But this was a more healthy goal to achieve so in my eyes at that time I thought you know, it's fit look that I need to achieve and it's a much healthier thing to strive towards. It really did help me overcome that idea that I just need to be skinny and eat less and train more because that's not how you achieve that physique.

Kareena: [00:07:46] Absolutely. That body confidence issue is something that I think plagues a lot of young women or people in general at the moment, especially with social media the way it is.

Bec: [00:07:55] Yeah for sure.

Kareena: [00:07:55] How do you find that social media is playing into that at the moment, do you think it's improving it or making it worse?

Bec: [00:08:02] I think it really depends on the receiver. Yeah, I definitely think there's a lot of negative things about social media in that, people do compare themselves to others and people compare themselves to others who are showing their best possible angles, they're photoshopping things, you know, there is a lot of pressure coming from social media to look a certain way. But there are people that use it in a positive way as well to spread the message about body positivity and doing all the right things, looking after yourself from the inside out. So, it's really about the individual and how they perceive it, I guess.

Kareena: [00:08:36] Do you have any advice for people that are struggling with body image issues as to how you helped overcome your own struggles with it?

Bec: [00:08:43] Yeah, I think what you really need to do is set goals that aren't just focused on aesthetics, so with the weight training side of things, focus on hitting a new PB or focus on being able to do something you can't do, like you can't do push up or you can't do a chin up. So, focusing on your strength goals and just realizing that your external body is a reflection of your internal health, so just making sure your training your body right from the inside out rather than just trying to punish it through exercise and dieting.

Kareena: [00:09:16] A combination of Bec's passion for health, fitness and experience with body confidence issues has led her from her initial university degree into her current profession as a personal trainer and nutrition coach. So, as mentioned you've started work at Fitness First on reception. I know that you have since become a PT - talk to us about your personal training. What made you decide to be able to train others then?

Bec: [00:09:40] Yeah. So I think I decided I wanted to become a personal trainer when I was studying at uni, I was actually doing business and law so it was a bit of a backflip but I did a few jobs in an office role and I was like 'man this is just not for me, like it's really kind of sucking the life out of me' sitting in an office all day, not being able to interact with people and I've always loved health and fitness obviously and I also found that it really did make such a big impact on my life and getting me out of you know, a really stressful and emotional time. It really saved me during that and then it also, weight training really saved me from my body image issues as well. So, I just wanted to help other women kind of understand how health and fitness can be a positive journey for them and get them out of those holes that they might be in in life.

Kareena: [00:10:33] Yep, that's beautiful. Do you enjoy the personal training side of things?

Bec: [00:10:35] Yeah, I absolutely love it.

Kareena: [00:10:38] Do you have any plans to ever venture out on your own in terms of personal training and starting your own business?

Bec: [00:10:43] Well I do run my own business inside of Fitness First, so I essentially pay rent to be there. I've thought about opening my own studio, but I do like the commercial gym environment, there's so much equipment and you've got access to everything. If you were to try to set that up yourself, it costs an arm and a leg to set up. So yeah, I'm not entirely sure, obviously it's not ideal paying a lot of rent to operate through a commercial gym but it is good as well and you're surrounded by great people.

Kareena: [00:11:15] As you said you've got access to all that equipment that you probably couldn't if you did it on your own so that's definitely a great option for people out there that are wanting to become PT's and look at that. I'd love to move towards your Instagram because I find that a lot of personal trainers are using Instagram to market themselves. What was your reason for joining Instagram and starting to share about your journey?

Bec: [00:11:35] I was actually pretty late getting on the Instagram bandwagon, I think when I first started using it I started kind of putting out photos of a holiday where I was in Europe so it was really just about sharing whatever socially I was doing at the time and then when I decided to compete, I started posting some more fitness stuff and kind of using that to hold myself accountable and also kind of log my journey and my progress. I was writing a blog as well at that time so yeah, that was what kind of made me get into the Instagram thing.

Kareena: [00:12:08] And you've obviously grown it quite a significant amount, what tactics do you use to try and grow a following?

Bec: [00:12:15] Honestly, probably not enough. I don't really use any specific tactics I should be more organized with what I do with my content and I am trying to be more organized with that now that it's growing and kind of plan out what I want to do and making sure that I'm giving consumers what they want to see and also posting really educational and informative content.

Kareena: [00:12:38] Giving back that value.

Bec: [00:12:39] Yeah exactly. But honestly, my main tactic is just be real. I think I just try to be really honest and open with the content that I am posting so that people can relate to me and connect with me through that.

Kareena: [00:12:55] What has been the feedback from the community, when you said that you're wanting to create more content that they've basically asked for, what are they asking to see?

Bec: [00:13:02] Oh I get so many questions about a lot of my food, I'm pretty creative with my food, I keep it really easy to track and still really clean, but I like to get really creative, so people love seeing my food. Also just post to educate them on training or nutrition or anything like that. That's the general feedback that I get.

Kareena: [00:13:21] Do you have any common practices that you use with your Instagram at the moment? Like do you process a certain time of day, do you use particular hashtags?

Bec: [00:13:27] I have done that. I've tried to focus on posting at the time of day where my insights say that I have most people online and I have used a bunch of fitness related hashtags but I do find that posting at different times of day is probably better because then you reach the people that may not be following you yet. So, I kind of have stepped away from that a little bit and I'm just making sure that my posts are really good, like my actual photos are of better quality than they used to be and that my captions are really informative. That's my main strategy at the moment.

Kareena: [00:13:59] With that, what other changes have you implemented, I guess from when you started, to know that you've learned so much about the platform. What have you discovered works a lot better?

Bec: [00:14:08] I think focusing on quality instead of quantity. When I first started, I was like 'oh my gosh I need to post every day, like if I don't post something every single day then people aren't going to see my Instagram and I'm not going to grow my business', but I was just posting terrible quality photos. Now that I think about it, some of them were just awful lighting and awful quality and I've really tried to make sure that everything that I post looks good but it's also helpful and it's not just a random photo saying, "Did legs today", it's like, well that's not really helping anybody.

Kareena: [00:14:42] Okay. That's a really good point. So, as was said coming back to that value add, that seems to be the consistent theme. That is true though, there's a common misconception I find that consistency is going to override quality but what we're hearing is that it's got to come to quality all the time.

Bec: [00:14:57] Yeah. And I think a degree of consistency is important as well, but yes definitely. Quality over quantity.

Kareena: [00:15:04] So what are your plans with Instagram? What do you plan to do with the influence that you've garnered from your community?

Bec: [00:15:09] Honestly, growing my Instagram is not my first priority, growing my business and just being able to reach my message to more women worldwide is what motivates me, so I don't really have any plans other than to just keep doing what I'm doing, keep being me, keep putting out real engaging content and just seeing how that happens. That's what's worked for me so far, my online business is getting really busy, which is awesome because it means I get to help more girls all over the world. So yeah, that's where I would like to see it go.

Kareena: [00:15:42] What is the main message for people that may not have come across you yet, that you're wanting to get across?

Bec: [00:15:47] So I'm very much about holistic health and fitness so I like to make sure

that people are achieving their body composition goals in a really healthy and sustainable way, like no drastic low calories or drastic over exercising, anything like that and also really focusing on the background stuff like lifestyle factors such as stress, digestive issues, hormonal imbalances, things like that and really addressing the complete picture with people. So even I'll program them down to stress management techniques like it's not just about nutrition and training for me, it's like a really big lifestyle change to make people feel better, look better and just generally live a better life.

Kareena: [00:16:28] As Bec mentioned, there are many background factors that come into play when looking at your health holistically. Stress is a very common issue that people are experiencing. It can have an enormous impact on whether or not you are achieving your health and fitness goals, as well as an effect on your overall happiness. This is why Bec believes it's so important to focus on relieving these symptoms instead of focusing on physical factors such as your weight and appearance. You've had your own struggles I know with stress and stress management, as we all have, could you tell me a bit about that story and how you discovered, firstly that stress was impacting your life and then what you did to overcome that?

Bec: [00:17:05] Yes. So I guess I've always been a very busy person, like when I was playing sport and I was always working a few jobs and studying and all of that and it was no different when I started my PT business, I was doing like 40 plus sessions a week, I was starting at 6a.m. every day so I was up really early and training for competitions. So, I was just insanely busy as always and I think I didn't really realize that I was doing too much until after my third year of competitions. I just hit a massive wall with my strength and my strength in the gym was continually declining and I just couldn't get that back no matter what I did. I just felt extremely weak, like I could barely get my body up the stairs to go into work let alone kind of train. Yeah, my energy was just flat. My mood was flat. I just felt terrible all the time basically and went through this whole process of testing which is a really long story, but to cut it short I ended up getting salivary tests that showed that my cortisol was really low, so I was essentially at the step before chronic fatigue. It's called adrenal insufficiency. So, basically my body just wasn't producing enough cortisol which is what we need to kind of give us energy to get through the day and regulate our sleep and all of those things. That was kind of when I realized okay, stress has gotten the better of me and I need to cut back and really change some things in my lifestyle to get my health back on track.

Kareena: [00:18:36] So what things did you start implementing that helped you overcome that?

Bec: [00:18:39] So I cut back on my weight training because my body was just too stressed out, I just couldn't handle it and I started doing more yoga. So, that was a whole new experience for me, and I did really like it but weights is still my number one. But yes, so I did a lot of yoga, I meditated every day.

Kareena: [00:18:58] Do you still practice that?

Bec: [00:18:58] Yeah, not as often but I do still try and make an effort to meditate, like I meditated this morning. Anytime I'm feeling stressed I make sure that I switch off and meditate for a little bit.

Kareena: [00:19:09] Excellent.

Bec: [00:19:10] So meditation, taking some natural supplements so there's these things called adaptogenic herbs which help your body cope with stress essentially. So, I took some of those, just made sure I slept more. When I found out I had adrenal insufficiency I started tracking my sleep on an Apple Watch and I thought I was getting about six or seven hours sleep but it turned out I was only getting about four, so really consistent effort to create a pre-bed routine and you know take some natural sleeping aids like valerian root is a really good one, to just help myself one down and get an actual deep restorative sleep instead of just clocking hours in bed. So, making sure that I was getting a really good sleep and I also just cut back my work hours as well, so I had to really prioritize myself and stop saying yes to new clients and working that 40 plus session week.

Kareena: [00:20:01] So you are very busy, even now still. As you mentioned earlier, you have an online coaching business.

Bec: [00:20:09] Yes, I do.

Kareena: [00:20:10] Yes. So, tell me more about that then, how did you start and why did you start going on online coaching.?

Bec: [00:20:15] I honestly probably started just because people started asking me for programs who couldn't come and train with me at the gym that I work at so that's what kind of started me doing those online programs. From there, I realized it's a really good way for me to reach new people and spread my message and help people all over the place. I have clients in Denmark, Malaysia, the US, it's amazing how far you can reach with the internet. Yeah so that was kind of what got me into online coaching and with this whole stress thing, it's definitely helped me because now I'm probably about 50 percent in person and 50 percent online. Although I'm still working hours in the gym and I still love that and I don't want to give that up, it does give me that opportunity to have a bit more sleep during the week. You know, I don't work early mornings every single morning anymore. So yeah, it's a more balanced lifestyle, which is great.

Kareena: [00:21:12] Tell me more about online coaching from the perspective of a trainer. What is it that you have to do on a daily basis or not even daily, when you have clients?

Bec: [00:21:23] When I'm working with my online clients specifically, I give them all the same things that I my in-person clients, so they're still getting like nutrition programs, training programs and just unlimited support basically, so I am constantly on call for if they need help. It's a lot about you know, being on your emails, it's about arranging for new programs when people need them, nutrition updates, things like that and then just

servicing my community group that I have as well so making sure they're getting new, insightful information or communications from me that they need. So yeah, it's kind of like an office job when you think of it that way.

Kareena: [00:22:00] Yeah! So, you've got a global client base which is very cool. Has social media impacted that client base? Have they come from social media through to your online coaching?

Bec: [00:22:09] Yes absolutely. Like all of them are either people that I used to know, which is really cool, or people through Instagram. But even the people that I used to know found that I'm doing this now through Instagram and even most of my client base in person has come through Instagram.

Kareena: [00:22:27] That's incredible. Something that comes into play with having an online coaching business is the clients want and need to know who they will be working with. This is where Bec's personal brand comes into it. Her social media account, which is predominately health, fitness and lifestyle content, enlightens her clients into the kind of person she is and builds trust and a sense of community for her followers. This is a very big plus for any brand. So, as you said, your message is reaching people globally. From a brand perspective, are you conscious that you're creating a personal brand?

Bec: [00:23:01] Yeah, I definitely am and I'm mindful of the content that I post to make sure that it's always in line with my values as a brand and what I want to project. I don't think I realized that at the start but now that it's become bigger, I'm like wow I am actually my own brand and it's important that I do make sure all of my posts and the things that I do, kind of align with my brand values.

Kareena: [00:23:23] Is that how you base decisions when it comes to brand collaborations and working with certain companies?

Bec: [00:23:27] Yeah absolutely. I am very particular with who I work with in those sorts of collaborations because I get contacted all the time by skinny teas and all of these things that want to give you a free product to promote it. Honestly, if I don't agree with that product and I wouldn't use it myself then I'm not going to promote it to my clients or followers because I think that's where Instagram can be really bad in that, too many people do that just to make money or get free stuff and it's very misleading for innocent people who are seeing these posts and thinking, oh she's got abs and she drinks this skinny tea so I should drink that skinny tea and it's really just a laxative.

Kareena: [00:24:05] Very true. Well I guess you always have a sense of responsibility to your community. What have you done to nurture your community, whether online or in person? Is it something that you engage with them regularly, do you answer questions that they may have?

Bec: [00:24:20] Yeah, I definitely try to always answer questions that I get, so I try to be really responsive to comments and messages and things like that. I also try and make sure that I'm picking up questions that I'm getting regularly from either my in-person

clients or just people who follow me online and answering those in my post as well to make sure that I'm giving people what they want to know.

Kareena: [00:24:45] So I guess what does your future hold? What plans have you got for both your business side and your personal brand?

Bec: [00:24:52] Yeah. So, the business side I just really want to keep doing what I'm doing and keep expanding and that all seems to be moving in the right direction so that's great. I'm running a health and fitness retreat next year in Bali so that's my new business venture, which I'm super excited to do. I'm very excited for that, that's in July of next year. Personally, I would love to get back up on stage again next year, but I am taking it one step at a time, after everything that's kind of gone on with my adrenals, so working towards that but also just being mindful to look after my health and make sure I'm getting enough rest and recovery in that process too.

Kareena: [00:25:30] So tell me more about your fitness retreat in Bali.

Bec: [00:25:33] So I have just launched a health and fitness retreat called TMPL retreats so that's T, M, P, L retreats in Bali. We're running our first one in July next year. It kind of came about because I'd always said to my partner that I really want to run fitness retreats, like how cool would that be, we could go all over the world and run a retreat, it would be amazing. So, my partner actually surprised me with a trip to Bali for my birthday this year and part of that surprise was that he actually coordinated with somebody who he knows, who owns a big villa space over there to run a retreat next year. So, he surprised me not only with the holiday for my birthday but the concept of running a retreat together in July. So, it's ourselves and another friend of ours who's a really great trainer. We're running this health and fitness retreat, which is essentially very similar to kind of what I believe in with health and fitness in general, so it's very holistic. We've got a fitness event, so we've got weight training, we've got HIIT training, we've got your yoga side, your meditation side and we've also got chefs onsite who are going to prepare gourmet, really healthy food for everyone so all the food is included, and it's made by your own personal chef. Then we're also making it a bit of a holiday as well. We've organised things like a surf trip, volcano climb to see the sunrise, which I don't know if you've seen photos of that in Bali, but it is amazing, I'm so excited to do that part. Yeah and trips into town to go shopping and massage vouchers and yeah, we've just included a really holistic health approach for everyone and just made it a bit of a fun holiday too so you can kind of connect with and meet new people and yeah, I'm really looking forward to it.

Kareena: [00:27:24] That sounds like a lot to organise.

Bec: [00:27:26] Yeah definitely, we were lucky that we were in Bali we did organize a lot over there. You know, we stayed at the villas where we're running it, so we were really familiar with the venue that we're using. We also went and met with people in terms of running the surf and volcano trips and all of those things that we're doing so yeah it was handy to be over there to plan it rather than trying to plan it from Melbourne only.

Kareena: [00:27:51] Do you think that's an important step to go over there and

meet these vendors and actually organize it while you're there or is it something that can be done from here?

Bec: [00:27:58] I definitely think it's an important step because you can sign up to things online and get there and be like oh wow this place is a dump, you want to make sure that the place you're taking your clients on a retreat is a really beautiful venue, it's really relaxing and tranquil. The one that we're staying in is on the river in the jungle and there's not really much else around and it is amazing, like the most relaxing place that I've ever stayed in my life. Honestly, such a great place for a retreat. I think it's so great that we were there and made sure that it is a really high-quality venue because we do want to have that really luxury quality vibe for affordable price. That's kind of the vibe of our retreat.

Kareena: [00:28:39] That's beautiful. How many people are you going to have at any one time?

Bec: [00:28:42] So we're keeping it quite small, so I think our max is 14 for the event.

Kareena: [00:28:47] So very intimate group setting.

Bec: [00:28:49] Yeah, so we don't want it to be too much hustle and bustle, we want it to be nice and relaxing. So just nice small group environment.

Kareena: [00:28:56] Very exciting. So, people can visit the website TMPL?

Bec: [00:28:59] We do have our own Instagram page, which is @tmplretreats. So, we've got our Instagram, we've got a website with all the event details, like the schedule and the rates and the room options and all of that. The website is tmplretreats.com.au and that's got all the information on it there.

Kareena: [00:29:17] Do you have any last pieces of advice for our Loopers, again whether business or personal that you'd like to leave them with?

Bec: [00:29:23] I think my biggest piece of advice for anyone who runs a fitness business or an Instagram account in this realm, is to just be real and be you. Because honestly if you can just be yourself, people are going to connect to that, and people are going to relate to that and want to work with you.

Kareena: [00:29:42] And that brings us to the end of our interview Loopers. Thank you so much for joining us. If you'd like to continue following Bec's journey and learning more about her businesses, all the links are included in our show notes, so be sure to check them out. As always, we'd love to hear your thoughts. So, feel free to leave us a star rating or review with your feedback.