

JANINE OGG: Today's guest is inspiring health and nutrition expert Nicola Smith nee Reilly from online gem Foreverfit. now, I'm gonna get you Nicola, to tell us a little bit more about exactly what Foreverfit is.

All of that in a moment. We're gonna dig deeper into your story. but for now, can you just give us a bit of a quick intro into who you are and what you're doing?

NICOLA SMITH: Okay, so I am actually a personal trainer and nutritionist and lifestyle coach. And three years ago, I took a one-on-one business model and I took it online. So now I am an online personal trainer and nutritional coach . And I kind of also like the touch of lifestyle entrepreneur as well as I kind of always like that and we tried to set up our business, so that all we need is the engineers. And so that's what we've created, this online business platform Foreverfit.

JANINE: Awesome! And I think our listeners... we've interviewed you once before. And we're gonna probably put that interview into the show notes, too so we don't wanna cover too much of the same content. But we would like to know just how you started... Now what made you move from it, from one-to-one model to this leveraged online business model that you're in now? And how did you sort of go about getting this started? Coz when you started doing this, I think, it's probably... how many years have you been in business now?

NICOLA: Coming at four years.

JANINE: Yes. So, I don't think this is a heck of other New Zealand women entrepreneurs doing something like this in the health and fitness space. So how did you come up with the idea of the online gem and where did you

find your inspiration and was it hard when you were starting out, figuring out how to do all these stuff on your own?

NICOLA: Yes, so originally I started out because I... my partner went overseas and so he was overseas working and I was here and I had to earn an income. And if I went to go and stay with him overseas I would have no income.

And so, as a personal trainer, and I originally, I wanted to keep my clients going. And so while I was overseas, I was well I've started basically giving them information. So I've felt like I was still taking care of them. And the information just started looking like blog posts. And those blog posts, I was writing word for the world even though they're going out to the world via the internet. They were basically, I had my client in mind and I knew what she needed at that time, and I was writing information for her.

And I guess, like the thing with the internet, is it can kind of be scary when you sort of start to write blog posts and you put it out into the whole world doing it... looking in it. But it was just a case, and so I started writing for just one person. And I did that for three months before I told anybody of it, before I went and told, you know, put it on social media or anything like that. So it was just, just really personal and really friendly that it was at that time.

JANINE: That's really interesting because often when we hear clients, we get them to, you know, imagine their ideal plan that they want to work with their dream clients and it's all about, you know, figuring out who your niche is and really speak, you know, and we're talking to them about writing to their target client.

But you've sort of intuitively doing it, from the beginning. And just writing... Because you did have a client and you were talking to them and I'm guessing that when you did put those out, other people really resonated with them. 'Coz when you write like that, it's really effective, isn't it?

NICOLA: Yeah, exactly. And it's the same client because I couldn't physically train them one-on-one. That's when I started with started filming these workouts. And it's just done filming exercises 'coz I would send them an email back to where I'll say, Okay, we'll change your program around and we'll do, you know, leg raises with this and this and this, And you know, stay within the idea of what I was talking about. And she would do the exercises.

So I filmed the exercises in the living room. I put this big white sheet up in the wall with duct tape, and I did these exercises in the lounge and filmed it.

And then we started to collate this library because I was just looking after a few clients while I was overseas. And you know, all done in the living room with basically, white sheet and they loved it. I mean, just started to collate this kind of exercise library and we started to film workouts for those clients. And it all kind of developed from there because I'd made those private videos, obviously. And yeah. That's kind of how it evolved.

JANINE: It's really cool, I think, to hear stories of when people starting out. Because when you go to your site now, it's looking really sophisticated and you've got this big community. but for other women that are starting out, it's really inspiring to know that there was a time when you had a white sheet up in your living room and you were DIY-ing everything, you know. It's not so sophisticated.

And I was just showing with you before our summit that we ever did, we ended up, we had such bad audio quality, we ended up in a wardrobe and we're packing clothes around to trying, you know, get better sound quality for our interviews. And it's really great for our listeners I think, to know that people had been through the same ups and downs as them on their journey.

I was wondering if you could perhaps share a moment for you that's been quite tough in your business in terms of... a lot of our mums has these ups

and downs, highs and lows, and you know, we're there supporting them through that. So it's quite useful to hear from our guests. What have been some of your highs and lows?

NICOLA: Oh, that's a hard question. Highs and lows, I guess is I've always loved to coach, I couldn't remember it exactly. But it's like those are the situation of the outcomes here. The persistence and the patience to see it through. I think that's what it is. And I've just been searching that this is kind of my path, like, it just feels right and I would do this without being paid money to do this. I could just simply... I love what I'm doing and when people want help, I want to help them and it's, you know, people, anybody... whether they are in the online gym or not, I'll help them because they email me personally, you know? And I just want to help them and get them healthy. And it's that certainty, it is the high as well as the low, because when it's time to just like, "Is this the right path?" And it's just, you know, when you're just like, oh, you know, just scraping by. I mean you just... But at the same time, you know, six months later you're just like trusted it or went with it, and that story works. And then you know, you're in a rollercoaster ride through it, and go like, "Is this the right direction?" And sometimes you might try products and you're not sure if it's the right thing, but you always come back. So it can be a high and a low. So...

JANINE: Yeah, cool. Thank you. And how else have you got people, around you that are really supportive and can, you know, just give you that hug or whatever when you're feeling, you know, like things are getting quite tough and you've got Ben as well, haven't you? And he's quite tech savvy and he helps you with the technical side of the business? What else does Ben do in the business?

NICOLA: So, this whole business is a team creation. So he's, he is the tech side of it and I'm the content queen. I can get all the content out back and I can build the kind of website designs and get it looking pretty, but I might need him

to do the really technical stuff. But then he takes care of the members in terms of the technical issues. And then I'll take care of the members in terms of the health issues and, yes, so, it's a complete team effort. And he also has another business as well. So, he's, he'd juggle a little bit of both, too.

JANINE: And he also makes guest appearances in the trainings, doesn't he?

NICOLA: Totally. Loves it, and Ellie.

JANINE: And so, just tell us, I've been a member of Nicola's, online gym for quite some time now. And I just love it because I find it incredibly convenient, as a mum trying to fit stuff in, to know that I can go in there anytime.

And a lot of the workshops are nice and short, quick and easy, (cough) excuse me, and high impact. So that you really feel like you've done something even if you've only worked out for, for 20 minutes. And, we're gonna talk a little bit more and share some tips about, fitting exercises into your really busy life in a minute.

But I just also wanted to have a bit of a talk about the money side of things, Nicola, because this is great for our mums to hear about different models, different ways that entrepreneurs are making money from their businesses. So obviously, you've got the membership site. So people like me may come along and join up to your member... Membership site. and what are charging at the moment for the gym?

NICOLA: So the gym is, it's \$15 a month. But you can try it out for the first month for \$1 and then it automatically goes on to your \$15 per month after. But you can unsubscribe if it's not right for you after that first month. So I mean a dollar if you wanted to. And it's, yeah, and we also have like a free seven day kickstarter, too. So that's...

JANINE: So gym...

NICOLA: ... The whole membership side of it, yeah.

JANINE: That's a no brainer, really, isn't it?

NICOLA: Yeah. So we kind of dabbled in a few different avenues with our first product. So, originally, my very first thing I did was an e-book. I wrote the e-book, got that out, then we, I started creating programs. I started my first program I created with our BR30 program. it's a body reno... 30 day body renovation program.

And then I started creating, some other single products around it while at the same time doing the online gym. And so, within that time, there was a lot of things that I was trying to sell, I guess. And so there was a lot of things that, you know, selling one e-book. I was constantly trying to push this one thing but then there's this BR30 program over here at the side, you know, there's something over here. And so, over the three years, we've, we've done all these things but, all of those things have been perfect and are done.

But now we've pulled them all into the one place and so now within the online gym, you start with the free seven day kick start. You then think, I wanna do the BR30 program, you can do all the other programs. Every single apps and information video I created is within this one place. This online gym. So, it's it's a one single product. So it's much more simpler for us to manage and much more clearer up on the website.

And then the other thing that we also have is my recipe apps. So, we got the membership base website. And then we also have recipe apps. And we're just about finished a meditation app. And we want to have a yoga app finished by the end of the year as well. So those are 3 apps that we are also selling, too. But they sell on an app store that's not, it's actually amazing

that the majority of the purchases of that, I've actually, people connected to me.

JANINE: Right.

NICOLA: And what should... Really interesting. So there's the apps store, has got its own easy or own kind of linkings and things like that. So that just sort of does its own thing along the way and you get a nice little payment into your bank account, actually.

JANINE: Lovely! And so, would you say you built your model around the, you know, having a larger community and lower price point products? Because your products are really affordable, aren't they?

NICOLA: Yeah, totally.

JANINE: And so, from a pros and cons kind of point of view, it does take time to all that community so that you can be earning a decent income each month 'coz you have to sell a lot to be able to make much money. but once you have established like you have now, you're, you've got a highly leveraged business model. And so, it's really exciting about where you can take it from here, isn't it?

NICOLA: Yeah, and, I guess it has always come from the view point in there, I would always help people, I want this information to give to people for free. And so, what I'm trying to give to people, I don't want it to be expensive because a lot of my audience are mums at home. And that people who, they're originally not exercising is because their excuse is, or the reason, maybe not the excuse. It's just too, it's too expensive to go to a gym as well.

NICOLA: And so, that's why I'm trying to just, I'm trying to get some information to the people that it doesn't take a lot of time and it doesn't have to be expensive, and you can get healthy. So that's kind of why it is at that price point, to just, yeah that's what I'm trying, I'm trying to help people.

JANINE: Yeah. That's your vision, yes. It's fantastic. I just wanna back on something you said about marketing before. About how you played around with all those different products and... 'Coz now you've got something really seamless that works really well in terms of your sales funnel.

But I thought there's really great point for, our mums, 'coz they are struggling, a lot of our mums, with time. We talk a lot about having to be really clever and smart about your strategy and marketing takes up a huge amount of time and I think when you start out a business, you don't quite realize, I know we didn't, how much time the marketing of everything was gonna take. You know, we thought we were gonna be coaching. You know, and a lot of the time we're learning about marketing and what marketing is. So one, it's really important that you do it in a way that you enjoy. But two, that, you can find, you can find ways that, would be time efficient. So I mention this, as soon as you went to the, what you've got now, you saved heaps of time on marketing, because you didn't have so many products in front of you. So I just thought that it was a great tip for our mums to pull out. And so, what I'd like to dive into next is, 'coz we've started talking about that time thing, could you share a few tips with us, for our mums, about fitting workouts into a really busy week.

NICOLA: Yes. So one of the things I kind of like to talk about with people is the difference between exercise and movement. And there's a really big difference. Not only think of exercise as this thing that involves a gym membership, involves fresh gym gear, and involves a whole lot of time.

And so what I've done is we put movement and exercise into the same category. And movement is something that we want to make sure we get them each and every day and that we get lots of them because simply moving our body is, making our body healthy and that the act of simply standing, standing for one hour versus sitting for 1 hour, burns 50 more calories.

And so, if you would add that up, then you would become much more active in terms of movement. And most mums with young toddlers are fairly active and are doing this without thinking about it.

And so, often it's, it might be better building a business though, then rather spending eight hours sitting in a desk. Then that's where they want to start to look at their, that little option like, standing more, having walking meetings, talking on the phone, standing while you're having a skype meeting. Little things like that can have an absolute huge impact on your health and another in your, your waistline and things. Also your energy, your moods, and emotions. And then you can slide in a five minute workout because you got this awesome foundation of movement in your life.

But, if you don't move, somebody who just works out for one hour first thing in the morning and spends the rest of the time sitting down, that person can still be considered, classified as stagnant even if they were to work out really hard for 1 hour in the morning.

So, movement is something that is the best thing to do that you can just, if that's all you've done and that's what you started with, and it was making sure that you spend 50% of your day standing or moving and aim to get 10,000 steps in a day, and then you, you neither have to use time as an excuse about work out 'coz you work out just for five minutes.

JANINE: That can be life. Your work can be life. And how would you, you mention, you quite often mention steps in the online gym, you know, that the do your 10,000 steps. So, what tool do you use, what's an easy tool for mums to use in the everyday life if they wanna track how much, having steps they're doing?

NICOLA: I use a FitBit. they are awesome because they just sit on your wrist. but there's heaps of free apps as well that you can just get for your phone.

So, yeah, those kind of things. And your 10,000 steps is a really good aim to do. And that's an accumulation over a day. And so, they can be quite hard for somebody who's in an office job. Most, they've done a study recently, in most office workers in New Zealand, still wrap 2000 to 3000 steps. So, it's, really important to just kind of, just look at the lifestyle. It can be just a 30 minute walk first thing in the morning and an active day standing, moving; I mean, walk after dinner or before dinner. It's just a great foundation to start with.

JANINE: Yeah, I've just, you mentioned that. I started doing that, it was a bunch of us from Get It Done Mum and, client group. We did a 30 day challenge and some of them online gym members. And we had a Facebook group. And we were supporting each other and, I started doing an evening work, walk for an hour around our local hill we've got here. And I was amazed that, I was still doing some gym work outs, but on the days that I didn't fit the exercise in, from, you know, we have from the gym, I was doing these walks. And I was amazed at how the feet did, how I was feeling. just to be exercising everyday like that...

NICOLA: Yeah.

JANINE: It was brilliant and that makes me think, what is day in the life of Nicola Reilly like? What is your daily routine, look like? Smith, I should say.

NICOLA: Yes. mine changes with the times. And I, I've gone through making things really rigid for myself. And I've gone through the times when I was make myself programs and I've made it really stretch, I mean, you know, if that

work out doesn't happen on that day, you can kind of carry around this in the ocean and bit yourself up. I now go with an intuitive approach and that's, it works much better for me and it's just about making sure that I get an awesome solid foundation of movements throughout my day. I make trips being half my day at my standing desk because I run an online gym. I can spend all day at my sitting down on my bum and there's been times when I have and I feel awful.

And so, just these simple little head ups and you know, walk for 30 minutes, in the morning. But at the moment, I'm walking when it's actually warm outside. So I go for a walk about, 10:00. And then I'm walking at about 4:35 again. I'll go for another half an hour walk.

And then if we're filming that time we might, one of those walks are in between my film, an outdoor workout. And we just finished filming a yoga retreat. So my life has been all about yoga and I, I feel, I find winter as a perfect time to be doing much more yoga and stretching and I, I feel a lot of people feeling this way as well.

And so that's why we do it like our offline yoga retreat in the middle of winter because it's a time when bodies are tired and people need to rejuvenate and not be so hard on themselves and this is where, just, yeah, doing those kinds of stuff. But then I know that come, come, you know, in a couple of weeks, then it will all change, you know? I discover what my body wants and needs and I can do things that way.

JANINE: Cool, that's great. Thank you. and just for the listeners as well, if that yoga retreat interesting to you, that's what's also really great about the gym. If you, if you don't manage to join the live program, 'coz they do run as a live program, you can sign up. And that's really motivating 'coz, you know, there's a bunch of other people doing it with you.

but if that doesn't work for you for whatever reason, you can go in anytime and access all Nicola's programs. Which is fantastic like, I think, so far I've done, I've been doing the yoga program but I've done a swimming program.

I've done a running program. there's horse riding program and there's all kinds of things in there.

so being in the gym is amazing. I just wanted to touch on mindset, Nicola, and you mentioned that briefly about earlier on, but as mums sometimes we can fall into that trap of using time or, children perhaps, as a bit of an excuse, for not looking after ourselves. So, what is your perceptions about, you know, the mindset and how we think in terms of exercising? How that can hold us back.

NICOLA: Yeah, I, I have a lot of that this with clients and I, it's the same with me, as well. It's having... The way I come around it is just having a big enough reason why. Just gotta have a big enough reason why this is important to you. And my reason why is simply that it makes me feel good. It's not, to me, about the scale, it's not to me about the weight loss, it's not about burning calories, it's not because I have to. If I don't move and I don't exercise, I don't do what my body needs at this time, I don't feel good. And I get either grumpy. I feel, you know, blah. And so, it simply makes me feel good. And that's my reason why. And that's why I've go for a walk outside, that's why I'll do exercise that I do with clients.

JANINE: Absolutely. I can agree. And really reason with it. and I think that it's starting to move towards that for me, as well. Just wanting to feel good on an everyday living or have energy for my kids. because when I, when I am participating really well in the gym and on top of the exercise, I have different head ups and downs, which I find quite frustrating. When I'm doing really well, I'm like, why can't I just do this all the time? And then when I'm not doing quite so well, I'm like, you know... But just getting up in the morning seems so much easier when, when you're exercising and eating well and looking after yourself. Just, the energy is just, it feels fantastic so...

NICOLA: Yeah.

JANINE: So I do get a bit of frustration that I don't do that consistency, consistently, for myself. But I think it's also about being jinx on yourself, isn't it? Then, not feeling, your stand is too high. Just being able to, ease yourself into that and celebrate the wins and let go the losses. Yeah.

And speaking of movement, I did think that maybe we could do a little energizer or something right now and practice what we preaching and something to get us moving around a little bit. I'm sitting at my desk for the interview and you've just challenged me to think that maybe I should start doing my interviews standing. have you got something you can share with our listeners that we can do right now?

NICOLA: Yeah, so I'll just, if you're, if you're sitting or you're standing, just sit up nice and tall and have your feet, grounded on the floor so they are a foot apart. And then I would just take, have your hands palm up on your thighs and then just take a really big deep breath and lift your arms all the way up over the top of your head. Breathe into your belly, feel your belly lift. Exhale, breathe out and just spring your hands back down on your thighs again. Just do that three more times but just focus on feeling the belly, close your eyes if you want. And just think of really clearing your thoughts and just focusing right now on the present moment. So just breathe out. Let's go, two more breaths. Breathe in. neck relaxed. Shoulders relaxed. Put your feet firmly on the ground. Spine is long. And just one more. And breathe out. Okay, it's done.

For something like that, it's just, it's just turning yourself to be really mindful enough from when we're busy and we're stressed, and we're at our computer or at our desk, we just got so much going on in our age and an energizing move doesn't have to necessarily be, you know, the whole exercising movement. Energizing... it's something that energizes you can be simply, you know, three breaths and being really mindful and really focused and just let your thoughts come down; gain some clarity, some perspective. And it doesn't take time. It's just as simple as that. Even if it felt weird with your arms. Then just close your eyes and just breathe into your belly and just take a few blissful moments. Just the pause is better than nothing.

JANINE: Yeah, I can already feel the change in my body just by doing that really simple exercise and I definitely need to, like, once an hour or once a half hour do that because, because I have a short amount of time in my week. Like, I work around 12 hours a week. So I am... I'm quite a focused worker.

I can really easily fall into that habit of really getting into my work and just not even stopping for a breath. So, I'm gonna take a couple of way, away a couple of nights here for things I'm gonna do, is a result of chatting with you today, Nicola. but it would be great to finish off, the interview to, hear your tip around our quickie closing question which basically is, the world has decided that makes this complete non-sense to work more than 20 hours a week.

There's so many other fun things that we can be doing at our time outside of our work, as well. So, what would you do to rejig your business model if you needed to keep earning the same amount of money you're earning now or maybe more but in 20 hours a week or, if you already achieved that, what's your one key tip that you can give our listeners so that they can do the same?

NICOLA: Yes. So, I think, the biggest key tip here is managing your time. And I know that, working now in this business, I could do 20 hours per week if I wanted to. And, but because it's your business and it's an online business, it goes with your effort really. And you get up first thing in the morning and you're on your computer... You're doing everything and your mind is thinking about everything.

You listen to podcasts; your life is your business. And everything you do up until you sleep and you, you know, you write down everything you have to do the next day. And everything revolves. And so, I am, I'm working on this myself and this is simply just learning to create balance in my life, and creating boundaries.

And I think that can start from day one, if you set the boundaries right within your first building of your business. Then you stick with them throughout the time because often people deal with work backwards. And

so that's where I was kind of just being really strict about the 20 hours because I think this business could have been built with a 20 hours per week, it would take longer but the balance would have been there.

So now, I'm working backwards. So, yeah, you know. It's just one of those things that's just making sure that, you know, life is too short. We wanna get out there and have fun sometimes. But even though business is fun, don't get me wrong, i love it, that's how I would do it in 20 hours a week, if I wanted to.

JANINE: Awesome. Thank you. And thank you so much for being with us today, Nicola, Smith nee Reilly, foreverfit.tv, is that right Nicola?

NICOLA: Yeah.

JANINE: Yup. So go to hear her out. And, thanks very much, Nicola.

NICOLA: No problem. Thanks for having me.