

EPISODE 255

Reduce Body Fat & Increase Your Lifespan: The Surprising Benefits of Walking

Shawn Stevenson: Welcome to *The Model Health Show*. This is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. Today's episode is incredibly important because we're looking at something that is largely overlooked when it comes to the health and wellbeing of the human body.

Now for myself personally, when I first got into the field being a strength and conditioning coach, and in college working on being a clinical nutritionist, I thought that this form of exercise was pointless. Alright?

I was just like, 'If you're going to get better, if you're going to get stronger, you're going to really become the best version of yourself, it needs to be bigger, stronger, faster. You need to really put in work.'

And so when people would tell me that they've been doing this form of exercise to get in shape, I'd be like, 'What?' They would tell me that, 'Yeah so I've just been walking.'

And in my mind I'm like, 'You need to hurry up. You need to speed that walk up. Pick the pace up, buddy.' And I was just incredibly blind at the time to all of the remarkable research on just how powerful walking is for the human body, and in areas all the way from fat loss to regulating blood sugar and so much more.

Today you're going to get the definitive guide and really looking at some of the behind-the-scenes things that walking can do for the human body.

And why does this even matter in the first place? Well just before the show we were actually looking at competitive walking, alright? This is a real thing, and this is an Olympic level sport, alright?

So people are all at the starting line, they're all lined up, and they're like, 'Alright let's get going.' And bang, the gun goes off, boom they start walking.

It is the funniest thing to see, but it's a real thing, and walking has been imbued in human culture and civilization. Not the speed competitive walking, but if humans needed to get somewhere, that's what we used.

You know we're talking about hundreds of thousands of years, that was our mode of transportation was walking. But today we generally do everything but, you know?

We'll utilize cars, public transportation, bikes, and whatever, but rarely do we just walk because we don't really need to for a lot of us.

You know of course there are people listening right now that are in cities like New York City, which I absolutely love New York City, that get their walk on quite a bit more.

But for the majority of folks in the US, no longer is walking the thing to do. And so your genes are expecting you to walk, this is something that we know the human body is designed to do, and there are certain genetic programs that get expressed for health that are dormant if you're not getting enough walking in.

So again, we're going to talk about all this stuff today, and I'm really, really excited about that. But I'm also really, really excited about even though we're trying to get back in many ways to certain things that our genes expect us to do, today more than ever we are just imbued and connected with technology in ways that we probably never even thought were possible.

And with that we see the ability to have greater access to things that can really make us more healthy and vital.

Now one of the issues today is getting our hands on more organic high quality food, and this can be a challenge because as we know with economies of scale, we're looking at a situation where we see a lot of government subsidies for conventionally grown foods that are just littered with pesticides, and herbicides, and fungicides.

And the reason that this is a real problem, and I don't think it's talked about enough, is that the manufacturers of those chemicals are literally making these chemicals to be estrogenic or sometimes neurogenic. It just kind of depends on the formula they're using.

What their goal is to do is to destroy the reproductive cycle of the pest, right? So this can be from a small insect to a large rodent.

And these chemicals are very, very good at doing those jobs. And so the issue has been, 'Wait a minute. Maybe this affects us too. We're eating these foods. But we're not as small as this little insect, so it wouldn't harm this big human.'

Well research has shown conclusively that these things can- like for example when I mentioned estrogenic, these compounds, these xenoestrogens can attach to estrogen receptor sites in your body and turn on programs relating to estrogen, and this can lead to something called estrogen dominance in your body where you can see an advent of certain types of cancer, fibroid tumors, and things of that nature.

And again this is all found today, but these are practices we've been doing for decades now, and only today are we starting to wake up to, 'Wait this is actually an issue.'

But how did this start in the first place? Well it's to grow more food, and it could make the prices reduced, right? So it's kind of an advantageous thing that really got out of hand.

And because companies that have been doing those practices that are really the big food companies getting tax breaks and government subsidies, it makes food more expensive for sure when you buy the organic version of those things versus the conventional.

But this is also changing as well because more people are demanding organic. And you don't have to just even settle for going to your local organic grocer because now we have Thrive Market.

And Thrive Market is your online source for healthy, organic, and also they have categories of gluten-free, paleo, vegetarian, and all of the very best brands that ship directly to your home and they're cutting out the middle man on the price.

So we're talking about premium healthy organic products that you can get from your local grocer, but they sell them- the same products, non-GMO products, et cetera, but at wholesale prices. So they're cutting out the middle man and they're passing those savings on to you.

Plus again, it gets shipped right to your door.

Now again, they've got the very best brands, and you can shop from categories like organic, gluten-free, paleo, sustainably farmed, whatever it is that is your modus operandi for your food choices.

And here's the rub guys; all of the products there, you're getting 25% to 50% off the price you'd find in great stores like Whole Foods. 25% to 50% off, alright?

Plus by you using www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth you're going to get an additional 25% off your first purchase, alright? Already 25% to 50% off those prices you would see for your favorite products at a store like Whole Foods or your favorite local organic shop or supplement store, plus 25% off your entire first purchase.

Plus you get free shipping, and you get a free thirty day trial membership by going to www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth. I love Thrive Market so much. They save my family so much money.

And still even today I make the mistake sometimes of not ordering something, and then I'm at the grocery store because I didn't order from Thrive Market, and I'm just like kicking myself because I'm paying \$2 more for a product, I'm paying \$10 more for a product that I would have saved money on if I just went to Thrive Market and got ahead of the game.

And so it's just like making it a ritual, just going to Thrive Market, having our grocery list for things that we can get from them. Also personal care products, household cleaning products that don't contain all of these kind of harmful toxic chemicals as well.

So you can find all of those things. You also can see a list of my top twenty things, my favorite things that I get from Thrive Market as well.

So get www.ThriveMarket.com/modelhealth, and on that note let's get to the iTunes review of the week.

iTunes Review: Another five star review titled, 'Great info, relatable, feeling super smart,' by Becca21.

'I'm a runner and really like to listen to podcasts during my training. I discovered Shawn's just last week, and have already listened to five episodes. Each one provides scientific logic and anecdotal so it's very relatable and practical. I feel smarter each time I listen to it. Even in his commercials I seem to learn something. Solid podcast.'

Shawn Stevenson: Wow, thank you so much for leaving us that review. It truly does mean so very much, and just talking about the value add, and that's really what I set out to do from day one, is to imbue a massive amount of value into each and every episode.

I'm definitely going to keep it coming, and thank you so much again for leaving me that review. And everybody, thank you for popping over to iTunes and leaving me these reviews. Please keep them coming.

If you've yet to do so, please just take a minute and go over to iTunes and leave a rating for the show. It truly does mean so much.

And on that note, let's get to our topic of the day.

So today's episode, we're talking about the surprising health benefits of walking. Now again, this was something that I would just like push to the side like, 'Oh get out of here. If you're going to get results you need to go stronger, bigger, faster,' and missing the huge, huge health benefits that something like walking has.

And I think the first place to start is thinking about what the human body is truly designed for when we talk about exercise.

And this is just really an observational obvious thing that we probably don't think that much about, which is our bodies are capable of some amazing feats.

Now if you take an exercise like a barbell squat, great. Absolutely amazing for so many aspects of our health from anabolic hormone secretion, to obviously building muscle. You know, squats are just popping today because of the squat booty phenomenon, alright?

The squat booty is in right now, alright? It's so hot right now. And squats are just the big kind of exercise that's getting a lot of love today, where of course people have been squats for decades that are like, 'I told you guys. This is how you get the squat booty. It's not from doing donkey kicks.'

And no disrespect to donkey kicks, but nothing compares to these big movements like the squats, like deadlifts, and things like that.

So the question moves to taking a barbell with 200 pounds, 300, 400 pounds and putting it across your back and dropping your butt to the floor up and down, up and down for a few reps, is that natural? Is that a natural human movement?

We can do it, and it has a lot of great benefits especially if you're doing it correctly, but are we designed- is this something that our genes are expecting us to do to go in this repetitive motion, up and down?

Is this something we would see replicated in nature? No, not really. Not really. But today we have to manufacture and create a virtual- kind of a similarity of things that we would see through our evolution because our ancestors would lift heavy things occasionally.

They would move fast occasionally, but mainly they did a lot of walking.

So I'm saying this to say I love squats, no disrespect to squats, but are we truly designed to do that? No, not so much. The number one exercise that we know for certain that we are designed to do is walking. That's what our human physiology is for certain designed to do.

And the more that we can really start to open our minds and embrace that, and realize like, 'Wait a minute, this is the thing we're designed to do, and we're not doing that much of it anymore.' That might be a problem and we might be missing on some very strong benefits.

And I know there's going to be an argument in our mind about the time requirement, of how much value are you getting from walking versus doing all of this other stuff,

and we're going to settle that at the end of the show when I give you some really powerful implements that you can utilize with walking that can totally transform the game for you to help you to leverage your time so you get the most out of it, and it's going to be amazing.

Alright so first, let's start with a conversation about how we got to this place where walking is- it's missing a lot of love.

Now hundreds of thousands of years ago, before humans learned how to ride animals for transportation, they walked everywhere. If you were going to move locations, if you were going to find food, if you were going to do anything, you were going to be walking.

Now that changed when humans learned how to utilize other creatures. Now can you imagine the first guy who tried to ride a horse? Just think about that.

Like the first guy who was like- I don't know what his name might have been, Totonka or something, I don't know. But he goes over and his friends are like, 'No don't do it, bro. Don't do it. You're going to die.'

But the first person trying to figure out how to get on top of another animal so that you could ride around, because they seem to be getting there faster than you.

It's a great idea, but just think about the first guy who figured this out.

Anyways- and I'm sure humans have probably tried to ride a bunch of creatures. I'm sure like a giraffe is definitely like- as a matter of fact, ostriches.

Ostriches. Humans ride ostriches. I don't know if you guys have ever seen this, there's actually an ostrich race where they all get lined up like horses in their little cages, and then the gun shoots, and they ride. Little jockeys are like on those ostriches. It's the craziest thing you could ever see.

And the names of the ostriches would be like Flightless Frank, or like Long Neck Louie, or something like that.

But again, humans have tried to ride a lot of different creatures and find ways to get to where they're trying to go faster. And that's all good, you know that's all good in trying to be more efficient, but again somewhere along the lines we lost the benefit that our genes were expecting of us in movement.

And so today I really want to point our locus of focus to the true benefits of walking and why this really matters so much.

And I want to start with weight loss because this is one of the things that when we hear the word 'exercise,' we tend to think about for the purpose of a physical change, even though it's so much more than that, as you're going to learn today.

But if we look at the study, and this was a Canadian study that found that women who walked briskly for about an hour a day decreased their belly fat by 20% after just fourteen weeks without- listen to this, this is the most important part, without changing their diet habits.

20% greater loss in belly fat without changing their diet by walking. Wow, that's remarkable. That's pretty remarkable.

And the reason that I love this so much, and really today creating this content around this topic, is that it's such a low-hanging fruit. You know, we can have a lot of different reasons why we don't do certain types of exercise.

You know, for myself personally, being diagnosed with degenerative bone disease and degenerative spinal disease when I was just twenty years old, I thought it was a wrap for me ever doing squats and deadlifts. And I had this construct in my mind that it just wasn't possible for me anymore.

Now today I know far better, and having completely reversed the condition as a pre-requisite, but I truly feel that doing some of these movements actually helps to reverse some of the chronic issues we have with our back- specifically lower back problems because we're not utilizing our lower back.

And learning how to deadlift and things like that can be very, very useful, but many of us are in the position where- and by the way, I'm not saying- if you're dealing with an acute back problem right now, don't go and try and deadlift 225, alright? Or whatever.

What I'm saying is wherever you are right now, we need to do what we can do, and walking is such a low-hanging fruit, it's something that we all have access to.

You don't need special equipment, you don't need like a special track, or machinery, or whatever, you just go outside and walk. Shoes or no shoes, whatever. Like you don't need very much to just go walk, right?

And so again, being a low-hanging fruit, I think it is valuable for your friends and family to get their hands on this information as well. So make sure to share this with them so they can know about some of the benefits with walking, and some things they can do regardless of where they are with their health and fitness right now.

So now let's shift gears and talk a little bit about something else related to belly fat specifically, and weight loss, which is managing our blood sugar.

Now there was a study conducted by George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services that found that walking after a meal significantly blunts the rise in blood sugar.

Now the study's lead author is Loretta DiPietro, and she's a Professor and Chair of the Department of Exercise Science, and she said that, 'When you eat a meal, you wait half an hour, and then you go for a fifteen minute walk, and it has proven to be effective in controlling blood sugar levels.'

Alright so you can literally help to regulate your blood sugar. And many of these studies that I came across as effective as taking certain forms of anti-diabetic medications simply from walking. Simply from walking.

How many diabetics are truly getting educated on how they can manage their blood sugar without medication? They're just not because that's not the treatment tool that most doctors have close access to.

They're not looking at this kind of information, and it's just- it is what it is. It's not that they're bad people, they're just teaching what they've been taught to do.

If the patient is dealing with this level of blood sugar, we might need Metformin, we might need some insulin, whatever is going on instead of looking at the lifestyle factors that created the issue in the first place, and one of those big issues is many of us are not walking that much anymore because truth be told, we just don't really have to.

But today is about- again getting inspired to have this implement in your day somewhere, and if not something that you have your eyes on the prize to implement later on.

You know maybe you're in love with what you're doing right now as far as your exercise practice, but I promise you today you're going to get some things to really make you consider adding this to your repertoire.

Now in that study specifically, they found that a moderately paced walk after a meal worked as well as a 45-minute walk once a day. This was looking at adults with pre-diabetes already, alright?

So saying, 'I don't have the time to do like a full 45-minute walk,' well you don't have to because this actually works better by you simply- again have a meal, wait about thirty minutes, and go for a quick walk. You know ten, fifteen minutes can help your body to really regulate your blood sugar.

And what the lead author said is that walking is beneficial because the muscle contractions help to clear your blood sugar, helps to clear the sugar, the glucose that's in your blood.

Now researchers at Harvard Medical School found that women who did at least thirty minutes of daily walking slashed their risk of diabetes by 30%. Thirty minute walk, 30% slash in your risk of diabetes, and it's really that simple.

But are we doing this? Are we taking advantage of this? Do people even know this? That is the thing.

And so today, again it's really about putting this all together for ourselves and truly understanding the benefits and why this works.

So again, the research had mentioned that this helps to clear the glucose from your blood by that movement, those muscle contractions rather than just kind of being stagnant.

And when it comes to diabetes specifically in the relationship to weight loss, belly fat, we've talked about this before on the show, and I'll put a link to the 'Diabesity' episode that we did awhile back, so make sure to check that one out.

But essentially when your cells start to become resistant to insulin, to glucose getting into the cells because it's been bombarded with so much glucose, what's going to happen is these molecules- this glucose is going to get shipped to your liver, and your liver is going to do this process called lipogenesis, which literally means fat creation.

It's going to make fat out of all of this glucose because again, it's not getting stored in your cells properly. That's one of the hallmark pieces insulin resistance is with diabetes.

And now this lipogenesis is going to preferentially get stored on your belly. So you're literally manufacturing belly fat when you're insulin resistant, when your body is not handling blood sugar properly. That's why this matters.

That's why this is related to weight loss, and that's why this is also related to reversing the symptoms and also of course prevention with diabetes.

So on that note, let's shift gears and talk a little bit about something else with the blood that we talk about, not just blood sugar, but blood pressure.

One of the first things I came across was a study done in Korea that looked at what the impact of walking 45 minutes a day would have on blood pressure with people that are hypertensive patients, or even pre-hypertension as well.

And what they found was really surprising. They were able to essentially regulate their blood pressure, and drop it a significant amount of points, simply by getting in this daily walk.

So the researchers measured the men's blood pressure in the study following a forty minute brisk walk, and also did four ten-minute walking bouts as well.

So forty minutes at one time, and also breaking it up into four segments.

And so by the way, what does this mean with a brisk walk? We're talking about three to four miles per hour, so it's a pretty- you know just a nice pace, but not like really going too far, and not just cruising along either at a really, really slow walk as well. So a nice brisk walk.

And so after the researchers compiled all the data, they were shocked to see that this forty minute walk was able to drop the blood pressure five points.

So normal blood sugar being like 120 over 80, but sometimes that number can be 140 over 90, whatever the case might be. But it could drop that number five points from a forty minute walk.

And ten minutes- those four ten-minute bouts of walking would drop it consistently by three points.

Alright so again, real simple solution to lowering blood pressure is making sure to get in some daily walking.

And the researchers were calling these quickie workouts really beneficial because we don't want to get locked into like, 'I don't have the time, because I don't have forty minutes at one chunk, or an hour,' or whatever the case might be to dedicate to going for a walk.

But these quickie workouts, and quickies, you know sometimes it could be alright. Quickie, you know? And you don't have time to hit the gym, you get upside down and backwards, whatever. Whatever kind of long, drawn out session you might have, doing a quickie can hit the spot sometimes.

So the quickie workouts can be really beneficial as well so we want to think differently about our approach with our exercise overall, and especially when it comes to walking.

And one more study here, this was research from Arizona State University found that taking three ten-minute walks each day is a great strategy for blood sugar than simply just trying to find a thirty minute session.

The exercisers in the study who did the multiple- these mini session, these quickies, not only reduced their systolic blood pressure during the day and evening, but they also saw reductions the following day.

Alright so this isn't just something that's treating an acute symptom of just like, 'It's lowering our blood pressure now,' but it's carried over to the next day. It starts to change the terrain of the system, alright?

Because as I mentioned at the very beginning of the show, this is something our genes expect us to do and we literally start to express higher order functions of our genes.

You know as we've talked about with Dr. Bruce Lipton who wrote 'The Biology of Belief,' top cell biologist, epigenetic huge influencer in the field of epigenetics, that our genes- each one of your genes has 3,000 plus possible expressions.

So it's not that our genes are set, like you have to have this thing happen, you can actually have different expressions of your genes depending on what you do, depending on your environment, depending on your exercise, depending on your nutrition, depending on your stress.

All of these things matter, and we have the power again to implement this piece of being able to add in a walk every now and again at least. And as you learned today, you're going to get some real cool strategies on how to implement this.

But you get so much benefit, alright? From we talked about weight loss, blood sugar, and also your blood pressure as well.

Now an important point that I want to make is that walking kind of gets lumped into this category of cardiovascular exercise, right? Cardiovascular exercise.

And I think it's really a misnomer because it's not just exercise for your cardiovascular system, this is also working on your endocrine system, right? It's working on your nervous system. It's tonifying your organs, alright?

It's interacting with your liver, it's interacting with your adrenal glands. All of these things matter, but when we look specifically at what we categorize as cardiovascular exercise, we can be able to perform that stuff better if we really understand the role of oxygen and oxygenation of our cells.

And I wanted to share this here because this is important and something that again, I don't think a lot of people know about. But there was a study that was published in 'Medicine in Science and Sports and Exercise' that tested thirty healthy athletes for six weeks to record the effects of cordyceps on their performance.

And the group that added cordyceps to their daily regimen had twice the oxygen intake of the control group. And why this matters is that when performing, whether we're wanting to walk more, or specifically for doing high intensity interval training, or long distance running, this can be a very great implement or something that is a nice supportive factor in that type of exercise.

And why this matters with oxygen is that oxygen is essential in supplying nutrients to your muscles, in preventing fatigue, and also helping to prevent the build-up of lactic acid. Basically your body being like, 'I'm not going any further, bro. We have to shut it down.'

So again, we're talking about literally twice the oxygen intake by utilizing cordyceps. And also there was another study done by the same group that showed a 9% increase in aerobic activity from utilizing cordyceps.

That's incredible. 9% boost in your performance. Athletes need to know this. And also just if you're interested in just performing better in your particular exercise or your sport, I think you need to know about cordyceps.

But the key here, you have to make sure you're getting it from a great source. You do not want to just get random cordyceps out there on the streets, alright? And when I say 'the streets,' I mean like the Internet and like a health food store, alright? So not actual streets.

There's not people on the corner like, 'Hey, wassup? Got that cordyceps.' No we're talking about something that today more than ever we need to pay attention to the quality, and the way that it's extracted is very, very important.

And so you need to know that you want a dual extract of the cordyceps, alright? That's an alcohol extract and a hot water extract.

Most- we're talking 99% of companies are only giving you one extraction method. This is why I use Four Sigmatic, is I get this dual extraction. Plus it's in a simple form where like it's literally like a tea, and I can just add hot water, maybe add a little Stevia, or you know some MCT oil, whatever you want to get fancy with it.

You get the actual benefits that you see in the study because when you see a study like this it's like, 'Which form did they use? Was it the alcohol extract or was it the hot water extract?' Because you might not be getting any of those properties that you're actually looking for.

But you definitely do with Four Sigmatic, plus things you didn't even know, benefits that you're getting as well like with beta glucans, and hormonal factors, the terpenes, and things like that.

So make sure to head over there, check them out ASAP. It's www.FourSigmatic.com/model. That's www.FourSigmatic.com/model and you get 15% off of your entire purchase.

I love their cordyceps, rishi, lion's mane, chaga, I've talked about all these things. I literally use them every single day, alright? I had some this morning.

So make sure to check them out and utilize this really cool advantage with something like cordyceps. And this has been used for thousands- literally thousands of years. This isn't just made up in a laboratory like last week, alright?

This is something that's been around a lot time, and our ancestors kind of figured out this is something that can add a lot of value and health to our lives. So again, head over, check them out, www.FourSigmatic.com/model.

And now I want to talk about the relationship between walking and our immune system.

More than ever today, our immune system is a big point of focus for health and fitness, and it's because we're seeing this incredible trend of autoimmune diseases.

And as we know and we've talked about many times on the show before, this has a lot to do with the relationship between gut health, and several other factors, antibiotic use, and there's many other things that play into this condition.

And I'll put a couple of links to certain episodes we talked about autoimmune diseases, and solutions like with top people in the world, the top physicians in the world that have figured out solutions to help people to reverse autoimmune diseases from Hashimoto's, to colitis, you name it.

And so I'll put those in the show notes, but the bottom line is our immune system needs to get some love and attention.

And one of the big components of our immune system is something known as your lymphatic system. And this is basically your extracellular waste management system in a way if you want to think about it like that.

But this is a system that's really helping to move immune cells throughout your body and getting them to places that they need to be. And you know about your circulatory system, which moves around a lot of nutrients, you know this is where your blood is moving throughout your body and providing fuel for all these different cellular processes.

We know about that part, but you have four times more lymph fluid than you have blood. This is literally most of the extracellular fluid in your body, is via your lymphatic system. It's important, and there's a lot of it.

But here's the rub, your circulatory system can move because it has a pump, alright? Which is your heart and there's other things involved in that pumping action as well, but your lymphatic system does not move unless you move.

It does not have a glorified pump like your circulatory system. This is where things can get kind of hairy and can get gummed up.

You can literally start to get severe issues when you're not moving that lymphatic system. And it's basically like a one-way valve where it only can pump upwards until it gets to around your collarbone and then dump back into your system.

And we did a whole episode of kind of the hidden life of your immune system if you want to know more about this, and I don't want to spend too much time on it here. I'll put that episode in the show notes, definitely check it out. It's one of the best all-time favorite episodes, and most downloaded as well. So make sure to check that one out.

But to move our lymphatic system, the very best way if we look at the list, and way up there on the list is walking. Simply walking.

There was a study published in the journal 'Sports Medicine' that cites that during steady state exercise like walking, your lymphatic flow has been shown to increase to levels approximately two to threefold higher than when you're not doing anything.

Alright? It's right there in black and white. This is the way to really move that lymphatic system, really exercise that lymph system, and make sure that those immune factors are being able to do their job.

We need to move around because exercise is not just about looking good. It's about your immune health, it's about assimilation of nutrients. You assimilate your nutrients far better - and I've talked about studies about that many times on the show - when you exercise.

And also elimination. If you're not moving, you're not eliminating waste properly. Alright?

So this is why it matters, and this is why again for your immune system, adding in some walking is going to be paramount.

And just one more point in this category here with the immune system. There was a study conducted at Appalachian State University that found that walking caused short-term boosts in immune parameters, most notably for neutrophils and for natural killer cells.

So this is helping to boost that immune activity to- and natural killer cells for example, these are immune system weapons that are trainable. Like they learn how to take out pathogens and unwanted viruses and bacteria.

These are like adaptable ninja cells in our body, these natural killer cells. But if they're not able to move around and do their job, then you're going to be at a disadvantage.

Alright so I hope that makes sense.

Now let's move on to another really interesting category, and this is the relationship between walking and longevity. Walking and longevity.

If you look at the places in the world where they have the most centenarians, the people that live to be over 100 years old, you find a consistent pattern that they get their walk on, alright? Lots of these folks walk regularly.

Now according to a study that was published by the Public Library of Science and Medicine, walking for just eleven minutes a day is enough to extend your lifespan by two years. Two years by simply walking eleven minutes a day.

Meanwhile research from Australia's University of Sydney has found that swapping one hour of sitting each day for one hour of walking can slash your risk of early death by about 14%.

And if you stretch that out and you look at the research and look at the numbers, that could mean roughly nine additional years of life by walking, alright?

It's right there in black and white when you look at these studies, and it's kind of shocking that you don't hear more about walking, you know?

We hear about all these different fancy exercises which are all good, but we overlook just how vital this can be to keeping us healthy for many, many years to come. And literally adding more days and years onto your life.

And so how does this all work? Well researchers found that by measuring the increase of telomerase activity, and the decrease of senescence marker P16 - and these are both markers of cellular aging - over the six month period the physicians were able to show that regular exercise, specifically walking, had triggered this anti-aging process.

And so telomeres, we literally had on the person who wrote 'The Telomere Effect,' along with her co-author Elizabeth Blackburn, who won the Nobel Prize for the discovery of telomerase, which is how- our telomeres, just to summarize this, are the greatest biological marker that we have that can tell us how long we're going to live.

And these are these kind of endcasings at the end of our chromosomes, and as we age these telomeres get shorter, and shorter, and shorter.

It's just thought to be like, 'Oh well that's just how life happens. You just age.' But we've found- and we talked about this with Elissa Epel, Dr. Elissa Epel who's the co-author of 'The Telomere Effect,' and we'll put that in the show notes too.

Classic, classic episode. That there are things that we do that can literally- like you can see this, we can now measure this, accelerate the shortening of your telomeres, literally like accelerating the time that you're going to die.

And there are things that you can do to extend your telomeres as well, and this enzyme specifically, telomerase.

So walking has been found to increase telomerase activity, the enzyme that can add length back onto your telomeres. Again that biological marker within our chromosomes that tells us how long we're going to live.

Not just how long we're going to live, how long we're going to live healthfully. Alright? Plus the decrease in senescence marker. Now senescence is a program cell death, basically.

Alright so right there in black and white, walking will increase your longevity.

And there was a meta-analysis that was published in 'Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise' that looked at the relationship between various forms of exercise and telomere length.

They looked at 6,500 test subjects, and the three different categories of exercise were strength training, walking, and running.

Now what they found was that someone who participate in a single activity of those was about 3% less likely to have very short telomeres than someone who didn't exercise at all.

Now here's what's interesting. The risk declined even more substantially when someone did two forms of those exercises regularly. People who reported doing two types of those exercises were 24% less likely to have short telomeres.

And people who did all three forms were 29% less likely.

So just if you have two of those, walking, strength training for example, that is a huge, huge benefit in protecting your telomeres and keeping you younger longer.

Alright so I just thought that was really cool and something valuable to share.

And really quickly if we talk about the relationship with walking and something like stress, or even depression, you know things that we consider to be more like mental weight.

If we look at what's going on when we're walking versus doing other kind of higher intensity forms of exercise, we're seeing more of an activation of your parasympathetic nervous system.

This is the 'rest and digest system' versus the activation of your fight or flight sympathetic nervous system.

So walking helps to kind of shift gears in your body and it's a less stressful form of exercise. It's movement but it's less stress, and so it's cultivating the production and release of endorphins, and enkephalins, but also more of a parasympathetic tone for your system which just helps to relax you and make you feel good.

So it's a great reliever for stress, but also- and there was a new study, and this was published in 'Mental Health and Physical Activity' that found that walking may be an effective treatment for alleviating mild depression. An effective treatment, similar to that of pharmaceutical drugs that are utilized for mild depression.

Again this is for mild depression, we're not talking about more chronic cases, but this is something- if this is good for one thing, it's probably good for a lot of other things. So it's important to keep that in mind.

And moving forward, again we have this in our utility belt, if we're dealing with a lot of stress, if we're dealing with symptoms of depression, if we're dealing with symptoms of blood sugar disorder, how often are we walking?

I think it's again something that we need to start to pay more attention to and hopefully today's episode is a catalyst for doing so.

And so the last category that I want to talk about, because we can talk about pretty much any chronic condition that you can name and see a wealth of different studies that are relating walking to improving the symptoms, if not even reversing and preventing certain chronic illnesses.

But I wanted to talk about energy. I want to talk about energy because this is something people would come into my clinic very frequently over the years and they would say, 'Shawn what can I take for energy? What can I take? What can I take for this? What can I take for that?'

Looking at like I'm an allopathic healthcare provider where I'm going to give you a pill for the ill, I'm going to give you a drug to mask a symptom, a band-aid solution.

There are definitely nutrients out there, and great supplements, and foods, and things like that that can help cultivate more energy in the body, but the real solution is addressing the underlying cause.

And a lot of times one of those big causes was the lack of movement. Because here's the thing, when you move your body, you literally generate a form of electrical energy called piezoelectricity just from moving.

Just from moving you are manufacturing and creating energy. You've probably noticed it before that if you're feeling down, you're feeling tired but then you exercise, you work out and afterwards you feel great. You feel great.

It's not just because of the neurotransmitters and endorphins that get released, it's also because you're literally generating energy in your system. So piezoelectricity.

And walking is one of the best ways to generate more of this energy, this piezoelectricity, and cultivate that energy in your body.

Basically we're talking about charging up your cells. We're talking about charging up your cells.

So I wanted to make that point, and also I wanted to make a point about what's known today as the active sedentary.

This is why I wanted to bring this into the picture, because there are lots of folks listening right now who are in the family, and we might hit the gym for an hour a day, right?

But then the rest of the day we spend our time sitting in our cars, or sitting in our job, or sitting at home. And here's the facts, if you exercise an hour a day, you're only 4% more active than the rest of the sedentary population who don't do anything.

So just think about that for a minute. Am I saying that that hour of exercise is for nothing? Absolutely not! That's amazing! That's amazing. Sometimes you don't even need that much actually. You don't even need necessarily an hour for a structured workout.

It's great you got benefits and we are winning to a degree, but if you're spending the rest of your time sitting, you're only 4% more active than the sedentary population.

So having this new angle with walking, and being able to imbue this into our day in more creative ways, which we're going to talk about now, this is going to put you in a whole different league as far as your health, and your vitality, and your ability to truly accomplish your goals.

And so now let's talk about some implements. Let's talk about how do we effectively execute on this knowledge that we're taking in today with walking? How do we put this into our day without adding so much more to our plate and really getting the max benefits from it?

Well number one, I want you to be aware of high intensity interval training in regards to walking, because the research clearly indicates that when you are walking, if you actually change your speeds while you're walking, you actually will be burning more calories simply by changing speeds.

Now this sounds really interesting, and for a lot of us, we overlook something like this because we just- and the research shows that we have a pace that we generally walk at.

Each individual has a walking pace, and you notice if you're going slower or faster than your natural walking pace. So if you can consciously engage with that and start to change your pace where you're walking faster at some points and walking slower at some points, you're kicking up your rate of calorie burn. Alright?

So do something called interval walking, alright? Interval walking. This is one implement, and by interval walking versus just going out and walking for thirty minutes, you can get the same benefit from walking twenty minutes if you're changing speeds.

And walking fast- maybe you walk fast for one minute, then you walk slow for two minutes. Alright? Or at a normal pace, like your normal walking pace, but then you walk really fast for one minute. And you alternate back and forth.

That's getting your body to shift gears in how it's utilizing fuel in your body. It's getting your body to shift gears in hormone production to help you to accomplish these different speeds, alright?

Really fascinating stuff, but interval walking if you want to be really efficient and effective with your time, you can do interval walking.

Now myself personally, I just love to do that steady state walk because I'm implementing some of the other things that we're going to talk about. And I'm not too concerned about interval walking, but it is one of those tools that you can utilize to get the most bang for your buck.

For me, and this is another implement here for you guys, is to learn while you burn. Learn while you burn.

During a walk is a great time for you to really focus on your personal development. You know, your studies whether it's in the field of nutrition and health and fitness, or whether it's in the realm of your career.

Maybe it's consuming an audiobook or a podcast that has to do with something in your field, right?

So this is a great time to put on your headphones and listen to an audiobook or listen to a podcast that can really help to elevate your mind while you're elevating your body. Alright? So learn while you burn.

This is an efficient way to do this, an effective way to leverage your time. Because maybe you're listening to your audiobook or podcast while you're just kind of kicking back, or maybe you're cleaning the kitchen, I don't know whatever the case might be.

Those are all great, but this is just something where you can get a little bit more in- you can get a little bit more in, or you can swap out a different time that you're just maybe sitting around, and get out and do a little twenty minute walk and listen to a podcast while you're doing it. Alright?

And I know some people right now are actually walking while listening to this, and a big shout-out to you.

And this is also another place where you can walk while still getting some work done, alright? You can do a walking meeting, alright?

You can pop on your earbuds, or whatever the case might be, and you can make some calls.

Maybe it's some sales calls, maybe it's a meeting with your team, whatever the case might be. This is a great opportunity to do something like that, and to knock out a couple of things at one time.

And I was just talking with a friend of mine recently, Eric Thomas, AKA ET who's been on the show several times, number one motivational speaker in the world.

And if you missed those episodes, I'll put them in the show notes for you guys, got to check it out.

But we hopped on a call and immediately we were just doing some work together, and it was a webinar type thing, and I called him right after and I could hear he went from being in a stationary place to immediately when he got on the phone, he put on I guess his headpiece, or he just grabbed his phone and he started walking around his neighborhood.

Alright that's what he does when he gets on calls, he goes and he starts walking around. Alright?

So this is something you can make it like an automatic connection, right? It's a neuroassociation. I get on the phone, I get up and walk.

You don't have to go outside and start walking. You could even just walk around your house, alright? This is a great opportunity for that, okay? You still get work done while you're walking.

So here's some other implements, is to get more bang for your buck, especially if you're an athlete.

Again like my mindset was like, 'I'm not walking, bro.' But you can actually up the ante and make this a little bit more challenging, throw on a weighted vest. Alright?

Put on a weighted vest and go walking. Or you can, if you don't have a weighted vest, maybe you could even just grab a backpack and put some heavy items into the backpack.

But I want you to mind your form, okay? You don't want to put on a backpack and start walking around and you end up looking like Quasimodo or whatever. I'm not trying to have you do that. Just mind your form.

And also this is something that's in our culture, backpacking. This is something humans have been doing for a long time, putting things on their back and traveling.

Okay so you could up the ante that way, but not- I wouldn't recommend- because this is very sketchy if you look at some of the data out there, like ankle weights, and things like that because that can cause some issues with your joints.

Also weird shoes. There's like these strength shoes. I don't know if you guys remember this, these were hot for a minute, especially basketball players put on these strength shoes with the big pad in the front and then it was like a little platform.

So it was like a circle pad in the front at the bottom of the shoe, then there was a platform that elevates the shoe off the ground.

And I had a friend of mine who's like one of the top like personal trainers and strength coaches in the world right now, but I remember we were sixteen years old bro, if you're listening to this, and he would literally have these shoes on playing basketball with us.

And he looked like a fool, FYI, and his performance went down I'll tell you. But he got used to it and he just was like, 'Yeah this is going to- these are hops.'

I think they were called strength shoes, and it's supposed to make you jump higher or whatever. Yeah, I still jumped higher than him. No disrespect, bro.

But you don't have to wear strength shoes, okay?

Also the shapers, alright? The shapers. Come on, now. Alright fashion forward? Probably not too as well.

You know, no disrespect but there are no fancy shoes that are going to make the walking more beneficial.

And what those are called, like with the huge big soles, these are called Maximiles shoes, alright?

The big minimalist shoe movement has happened, and that makes some sense. Maximiles shoe, that's the opposite. It was like all this extra material, and like it can start to mess with your gait. And we're going to talk more about that as well.

And Katie Bowman will be back on the show, and she's just such a superhero. She's been on a few times and talking about some of these things, and our biomechanics.

Alright so again, simple stuff for implements; weighted vest, backpack, those are cool things to get more bang for your buck with the walking.

And one other tiny little implement here as far as making this more engaging is walking outside of the box. Alright, walk outside the box. What do I mean by that?

Well for several of us, maybe we just kind of walk around our sidewalk in our neighborhood. Or there's this guy at the track when I'm up there training, doing sprints and things like that, he's an older gentleman but he doesn't just walk the track.

He's like going zigzags, up and down, walking across the field, it's the craziest amazing thing you've ever seen.

Even when he's talking to a friend, like he'd bump into another guy, and they'll be talking and he's zigzagging like across and back while the other guy is walking straight. And it's just like, 'This is very strange.'

But he's making it creative. He's doing something that- and I see him do this every time I go to the track, he's there and he's created something that I guess he really likes to do and it's making it more entertaining for him I'm sure, more creative, and it's just bringing another element into it.

So walk outside the box. Make it adventurous, okay? Even having the ability to- when we're talking about exercising, maybe you walk for ten minutes and then you stop and you do fifty pushups, and then you walk for five minutes, and then you do lunges for a minute, or whatever the case might be.

There are many creative ways that you can upgrade that walk, and also be creative in the way that you're moving, in the way that you're interacting with your environment, right? Finding creative things to do.

You know, picking up a stick and like hitting some rocks or something. Whatever, like just using your environment, jumping onto things.

Maybe there's a little platform right there that you can walk across and balance like when you were a kid.

Start to see your environment differently, engage with your environment, and make it more creative.

And last point here, last point with walking, and I found this to be one of the most valuable things, is to make it social.

So this isn't taking away your time, this is adding time for you. This is adding valuable quality time to go walking with your friends or your family members, and talking, hanging out while you guys are walking and getting all the benefits we talked about today on the show.

Alright I already mentioned the walking meetings, you could do that with your co-workers as well. Like just get up and go walk and talk about business.

But this is such a great time for connection, and this is something my wife and I did a lot more than we do today, especially when she was pregnant we would go and just walk around the neighborhood.

And even when my son was born, we'd get the stroller and we'd just go walk and we'd talk. This was when we had time to connect. This was when I was working a lot more different kind of schedule running my clinical practice, and so I didn't see her as often as I do today.

And it was just awesome, it was awesome. And now today we still exercise together, but also just going for a walk is one of my favorite things to do, to just walk and hang out.

And my little guy who's six years old now, he loves to do it as well. Like generally it will be me and him most of the time when we go for a walk, and we'll just- this is a true story, I think it was like two days ago, we just went out for a walk and he's always like, 'Can we get the bats?'

So he'll go and get these little plastic baseball bats, and we'll like hit some rocks or something like that, or we'll use them and pretend that they're swords, and just like kind of make it an adventure.

Like we put ourselves inside of a cartoon or something and we have fun like that. And so again, make it social.

So these are some implements and you've got a wealth of studies and new connections to why walking is such a valuable addition to your repertoire and something you can just have right there on hand.

You don't need anything else except to just get up, and start moving, and start walking to get all of these benefits.

And so I hope you got a lot of value out of this today. If you did, make sure to share this out with your friends on social media, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram. Of course you can tag me as well, tag me in your Instastories, I love to see that.

And just help to get the word out, and so that we can add some more value to the lives of the people that we care about as well.

Alright so I hope you have an amazing rest of your day. I truly, truly do appreciate you. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon.

And for more after the show, make sure to head over to www.TheModelHealthShow.com. That's where you can find all of the show notes, you can find transcriptions, videos for each episode, and if you've got a comment you can leave me a comment there as well.

And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much.

And take care, I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.