



EPISODE 1013

The Missing Key to Our Fitness, Athleticism, and Ability to Move Well - With Nsima Inyang

With Nsima Inyang

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SHAWN STEVENSON: Welcome to The Model Health Show. We are missing a key ingredient of our fitness, of our athleticism, of our ability to move well. This missing ingredient is the key to reducing injuries, increasing our capacity, and unlocking the joy in movement that's so often missing in our desires to, quote, "get in shape."

You're about to discover what this missing element is and how to start taking advantage of it today. And funny enough, it's something that you're already doing, but if you're like me, you're doing wrong or at least inefficiently and missing out on better results because of it. And you're gonna be learning about this from someone who should not be able to move as well and accomplish as much as he does.

It doesn't make sense until you understand the blueprint. You're gonna be learning from somebody who is not only a Brazilian jujitsu champion, not only a natural bodybuilding champion, and not only an elite powerlifter. The list goes on and on with these, what seem to be strictly physical accomplishments.

But it truly is these small elements, these small ingredients stacked together, and in particular, the foundation, and also as he's going to be talking about, the ceiling. So we can elevate our ceiling, but so many people are missing out on that foundation of how we're actually able to move and to increase our capacity to be able to make sure that our systems, our physical body, our nervous system, our capacity to actually get stuff done because we don't wanna just have a strictly gym body, all go and no show.

We want to be able to use our amazing bodies to do the things that we wanna do. And nobody that muscular should be able to move that well. That's what you would think. No man should have all that power. But these elements are things that we all can learn, and we have the incredible opportunity to learn from somebody who is changing the paradigm in athleticism, in movement, and in being a stronger human.

Now, before we get to our special guest, something that I'm sick and tired of, I'm sick and tired of all these fake ass protein bars out here that are just littered with unnecessary sugars, ultra-processed ingredients, and even garbage sources of proteins. We need a real food-based bar, a real food bar, protein bar to stand up and represent for all of us, and I've absolutely found it.

Not only does it have eight plus organic superfoods and collagen-rich 100% grass-fed bone broth protein, there are no added sugars and no sugar alcohols, and I'm talking about the superfood bars from Paleo Valley. Go to paleovalley.com/model right now, and you're going to get 15% off of their incredible superfood bars.

These are the bars that I keep here in my studio, that I keep at home, that I travel with, that I give to my friends and family. These bars are truly in a league of their own because they're based on real foods. All of the ingredients are made of real foods. And they have incredible flavors, including the red velvet.

What is that, velvet? Lemon meringue, which is my Auntie Janet's favorite flavor, dark chocolate chip, and apple cinnamon. And again, right now you're gonna get 15% off when you go to paleovalley.com/model. That's P-A-L-E-O V-A-L-L-E-Y.com/model to take advantage, get 15% off right now. And without further ado, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day.

Nsima Inyang is a professional natural bodybuilder, elite level powerlifter, and multi-time Brazilian jujitsu masters world champion. Nsima has built a foundation of discipline and mastery in multiple sports, and he's now teaching countless people how to unlock their athletic potential. Nsima is the co-host of the wildly popular Mark Bell's Power Project, and he's the founder of the Stronger Human community, where he teaches strength, mobility, and innovative fitness practices to a thriving community.

Let's dive into this conversation with the one and only Nsima Inyang. Like all great trilogies, we have our third interview with the superstar Nsima Inyang. And with those trilogies, we've got The Matrix. My favorite. We've got The Lord of the Rings. But I think what's most fitting for us in this conversation is the Star Wars trilogy, because that third one's Return of the Jedi.

And you are that guy. Okay. You are that guy. All right? Just these conversations that I have about you, with you, but also about you. Talking good behind your back very frequently, and pointing to how extraordinary you are as a human being and as an athlete and What you're doing truly is you are changing the paradigm of what's possible, and this doesn't happen by accident.

These things that you've accomplished are very intentional. They're very science-driven. They're also very n of 1 testing and figuring stuff out, and then sharing it with others. And so this Yeah ... is why it's so fruitful to be able to talk to you and for people to learn from you. And I wanna start off this conversation with the Jedi.

So many people are hitting the gym today, thank goodness. They're wanting to get stronger. They're wanting to be more durable, more fit, to be able to do the things that they wanna do in their lives. But ironically, they end up feeling more stiff, more rigid, more fragile, less capable of movements. What the hell is going on here?

I'm asking the Jedi himself.

NSIMA INYANG: I appreciate that. You know what? The one person I could see myself as in that trilogy is Mace Windu, and in my mind, he's alive. I don't believe Mace died in that scene with Anakin, so he's alive. The bald Jedi is alive. But, I think that the strength training is great.

Muscle building is amazing. It's good that more and more people are sharing how powerful that is for longevity, but I think what tends to happen is you start to build your capacities within the gym. You start to build your ability to produce force. You learn how to squat, deadlift, press, do these types of movements, and then something in life makes you aware of something that's missing, but you don't necessarily know how to attack it.

It could be you see something and you start trying to maybe run, or something forces you to have to go quickly and you realize, "Oh I can't hit that split second gear to go fast. I feel too rigid to do so." Or you step off of a curb, and this actually somebody in the Stronger Human community mentioned that he stepped off of a curb and he pulled his calf.

He's what was going on there?" And the small thing that happened there was his ability to smoothly handle the force that he missed stepping off of that curb. But the thing is nothing within his practice was preparing him for that off thing that happened, that thing that he wasn't expecting to happen.

So that's why I think the biggest thing that I try to encourage people to do is learn to build a broad movement practice by learning how to do different aspects of movement. Because inherently, and we'll talk about many of these things, inherently what that's going to do is when you try something new, you become aware of what you lack, and then you have two decisions there.

Just like when I started jujitsu 11 years ago. I got beat up by a black belt that was 160 pounds, 100 pounds lighter than me, and I had two decisions. Either I could go down the rabbit hole of improving my skills so that this whole art that I was very weak at now becomes a strength, or I can say, "This doesn't matter.

It's not my thing. Let me go in the direction of avoiding said thing." Many people, because of the, as you mentioned, our paradigm of strength training and fitness is we go to the gym, we lift weights, maybe we do some running, and that's it. That's our practice. But when you then find something like you start trying to jump and you can't jump anymore, you attempt to sprint and you pull a hamstring.

Many people just lay down the excuse that I'm too old for this. But I think that by understanding and having the awareness that you are not good at this, and that awareness pulling you towards building that new capacity, you can then broaden your movement vocabulary and the things you have access to, which will help you become a stronger, more capable human being.

But it first starts with exposing yourself, hopefully on purpose, and not hopefully by some accidental injury, to things that you're not proficient at.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes. Usually those injuries are a compass, and this reminds me, even when you just mentioned blaming it on, "Oh, you're getting older," that just got me to think for the first time, this is the first time I'm thinking about this or saying this.

I got injured way more in my 20s, and I'm significantly more active now, all right? Yeah. In my 40s, right? And it's so crazy the frequency. But back then, I didn't chalk the injury up to something other than I up, right? It wasn't like blaming it on age or whatever the case might be. Whereas today in my peers, I see this with the people around me, like they'll immediately blame it on the race.

Shout out to Milli Vanilli. They'll blame it, they blame the pain on the aging factor. Yes. And what that does is it creates this window for yourself to jump out of to to not take accountability and to do the things that you would do if you were younger just to get better, and also it starts to, we'll start to hesitate and replace and negate and start to leave movements out if something happened before when 99.999% of the time that's not the right approach to take.

It's leaning into that and qualifying yourself to do those movements. And so that's what we're talking about today with Mace Windu 7.0, all right? We're talking about what are some of these capacities. And one of the things that you have been talking about is expanding our movement vocabulary, right? And so we do this in other domains when it comes to our education, if we want to become proficient at something, right?

But even the most active among us in the average person, our movement vocabulary is very limited. We're just taught a couple of words. Press, pull, hinge, and then, and do some cardio. Yeah. When there are literally, there are ... It's not just different words for us to learn, it's different languages that are possible.

And here's the craziest part. With languages, Duolingo is, that shit is still hard. With movement vocabulary in languages, it's already built into us. Our DNA has a script. We just need to do certain things to unlock it. What do you think of that?

NSIMA INYANG: Absolutely. The thing you touched on as we get older, generally as we get older, we become more responsible or we believe we become more responsible.

And inherently what happens is you also mentioned the thing of you don't do the things you did when you were younger. You don't do those things that you did when you were a child, a teenager. Even when parents see kids jumping on things, they try to tell the kids, "Stop jumping. Stop. Calm down.

Chill out. Stop moving." And what happens is you're almost setting up that human to have that outlook of "You know what? I do need to, I do need to bring things in. Stop this childish type thing. Stop hopping. Stop throwing. Stop skipping. Stop doing all these things," right? And we naturally do that as we get older.

So we think and we tell ourselves the reason why we're in this pain right now is, "I have this bad lower back. I have these bad knees. It's because I'm getting older." But we don't put it and we don't blame the fact that there are just certain things and certain capacities that we stopped paying attention to and we stopped giving effort towards.

So the thing that I love seeing, because over, over at The Stronger Human, an, a theme of our May-June challenge has been novelty. That was one of the themes, novelty. And the aspect of this novelty is people in that community are already doing broad things. There are people in there that are swinging heavy swords, learning to juggle.

There are people in there that are doing sandbags and taking those on walks, doing all these different things. But I brought in the theme of novelty because novelty and trying something new brings you another level of awareness. When you try something new, you become aware of the thing you lack. And by becoming aware of the thing you lack, you can then work on that capacity to then have it become a strength, right?

Yes. So one thing that I think I wanna encourage people to do, my friend Mark Bell, he's the host of The Power Project, he's always been saying it for years, "Follow your interests." And I truly think that's very important. So if you see something like juggling and that interests you,

do not first. I think there's a mindset thing here that needs to shift for you to actually be able to have some of the transformations I want you to be able to develop for yourself.

The first thing is a level of belief that you can learn anything you want to set your mind to. The reason why this is the first starting point of all of this is because If you see someone juggling three balls, there are some people that have a little voice and a story they tell themselves that I'm not a coordinated person.

So when they see someone doing that, they'll be like I mean, that's why it's a circus trick. It's impressive. It looks cool, but I can't do that." When they see you potentially like rolling and moving with the rope, and now you look better than before, they'll look at how graceful you look and potentially say there's no way I can look that smooth or as smooth as he looks with that tool."

So before they even allow themselves to develop the awareness of the thing they lack, they already take themselves out of the arena because their self-talk is constantly telling them about the things that they can't do and directing them towards the things that they already are proficient at. Probably aspects of strength training, you're squatting you're pushing all these things that they've been doing for years.

They stay in that lane and don't broaden their vocabulary, so they're never exposed to things that could allow them to get stronger. So the first thing again is like I even have this tattoo on my hand. I showed it to you in our first episode, limit with a line through it. And it's the biggest thing to me because I do not put a limit on anything that I can learn, achieve, and share.

And I need people to have that guiding light if they're gonna be able to then make any of the change that we're gonna be talking about now from there, there's I talk about multiple capacities, and I'll I'm gonna breeze through them quickly because I want us to be able to talk more about these different things.

But there are five things I have people pay attention to within The Stronger Human. Of course, the first thing is the mindset of belief that you can do the things that you're wanting to do, right? That'll allow you to get past the friction of being new and the difficulty of learning something new.

The first thing that I really like people paying attention to is their breath. And, there's all this stuff on breathwork, and that's cool, but I really need people to pay attention and shift how their breathing is fueling their movement through space. If anybody's listening and they're a martial artist, I would suggest that you read the book Breathe: Life and Flow by Rickson Gracie because Rickson talked deeply about how not knowing how to breathe deeply and not knowing how to have a rhythm your, with your breath is like having a hand and not knowing how to use your fingers.

There are people who have a tendency of going through life. They bend down, pick something up, they get into their car. They have all these breath hold sequences with what they do, and these breath hold sequences cause their body to seize up and have a level of tension that they don't need. They then go into the gym, and they start lifting weights.

They start pressing, squatting, doing all these things, and they have all of these aspects of breath holding while they're lifting because they're doing something called the Valsalva maneuver. That's how people have been taught to lift to keep themselves safe. In The Stronger Human, I teach people how to breathe while lifting, how to produce how to exhale when they're producing effort and inhale when they're on the eccentric of the movement so that the breath continues to allow them to cycle through the movement because the reason why I teach this is because when you go into a situation, you're fighting, you're boxing, you're doing whatever, you'll never see an athlete or a fighter hold their breath when producing force against an opponent Ever.

So why is it that we have that habit when we're lifting things? I get it. The Valsalva creates a rigid midsection, but why can't you lift without that? You should be able to lift while breathing. So I teach people how to do that, and it doesn't start with doing your heaviest loads while breathing.

It starts with going back, taking away the weight, learning how to produce force, inhaling and exhaling when producing force with sandbags or light loads, and then increasing your weight from there. Recently, I lifted a three hundred pound sandbag without holding my breath. Right? I didn't need to tighten up my core and use the Valsalva.

I was able to use the exhale to propel that sandbag off the ground. So that's the first thing. The next thing is we talk about foundation. I think foundation is something everybody knows, structural resilience. So most people are already doing a level of this if they're in the gym. They're lifting weights.

They're doing things, whether it's bodybuilding type exercises, machines, et cetera, that builds your bone density, that builds your connective tissue. That's your foundation. Then the next thing I look at have people think about is their ability to bounce, and this doesn't just I don't want people to think about, "Okay, I'm gonna go do some box jumps."

I'm talking about your low-level hopping and skipping and jump roping and bouncing because the goal for bounce is to allow you to get that spring-like ability back within your tendons and your body because jumping when many people jump, and I know you play basketball, but I know you've seen sometimes people will jump, and they'll hold their breath on the landing, right?

Their breath doesn't allow them to exhale and handle the force of the ground, and when they try to leave the ground, it's a very stiff thing. It's not a full body rhythmic action. So I teach people how to start hopping again, light hops, easy. You could get a jump rope, or you could do it without a jump rope.

You could start doing a little bit of shadow boxing to get some footwork in. But just those light plyometric hops because you'll notice that when you learn how to use your tendons and you learn how to kinda just bounce off of your body while breathing, it feels good and effortless. And a big aspect of that is you're not now holding this global tension across your whole body.

Then the next thing that I have people think about is this idea of control, and when I talk about control Within lifting, we learn how to produce force, and we typically learn how to just produce this continuous, whether its maximal force or force in one direction. But practices that build a level of control are things that allow you to aim a precise amount of force to do a specific type of activity.

So when I think about something like martial arts, grappling, and jujitsu, when you're pushing and pulling on an opponent, you're not just doing pushing the maximum amount of force. If you want to be efficient, right, and be able to do this without gassing yourself out, you need to be able to funnel the right amount of force into your opponent, right, to be able to move them effectively.

When you're juggling balls, right, you're not throwing the balls as hard as possible. You're throwing them in a rhythmic fashion, right, so that the balls can... you can just keep this going without it being difficult. You're funneling the necessary amount of force to do the thing. When you're rolling a rope for rope flow, I believe you've noticed this, you're not swinging the rope as fast as possible.

You're funneling a fine amount of force, so you can breathe efficiently and use your whole body to funnel that force and redirect it into whatever area you want to go to. When one hits a tennis ball, do they just hit it as hard as possible across the court? No. They hit it with a level of precision, accuracy, and control.

And many people who just lift don't have any practices within their movement practice that help them learn how to funnel force precisely with control and efficiency. So there are many different practices that allow that, but I think that's a very important thing for us to learn how to do, and it's something that can seep into the other activities that we take part in.

And the last thing is having a level of flow, and flow naturally comes after control when you become proficient with any activity that you do. I've been doing jujitsu for so long that I can go into the gym and pretty much get into a flow state immediately because my body understands it. But when you're in flow, you're not holding excessive tension.

You're moving. Your body's doing the things it's learned how to do, and now you're just in a flow state. Everything is moving rhythmically. Your breath is going continuously. You're not having constant breath holds. Quick, actually, aside, as I mentioned flow, one thing that I notice with many new athletes who come and do jujitsu, especially those who come from the gym, and I've noticed this with not even just with new athletes, but athletes who've been doing the martial art for a long time, is people have a tendency of when they're producing force because of the patterns that they've learned from the gym, they'll hold their breath while producing force.

They'll hold their breath and stop their body while trying to produce a force on their opponent. That takes you out of any level of flow. If you wanna be able to reach flow in anything you do, the breath has to be a continuous rhythmic component of your action. That's why, like, whenever I teach people rope flow, the number one thing I can try to tell people to do, because when anybody learns a new movement or a new action, the tendency is hold your breath.

Because we, our body, thinks that if we hold our breath, we can keep ourselves together and keep safe. So whether you're learning a new movement in rope flow, whether you're learning how to punch or kick or whatever, you're gonna have a tendency when you start doing that new thing, your body wants to hold your breath and tighten things up.

That's why breath is where we start, because I need you to learn how to fuel everything using a consistent rhythmic breath. And by going through that, over time building proficiency using your breath as your fuel, you'll be able to reach a level of flow in anything that you do over a period of time. So that's that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is so powerful, man. First of all, it's shocking that I'm upset with myself, but more of a Drake upset. I'm upset for not really paying more attention to this because it's like this is the key to life truly with, when we're talking about the breath. And ... how little attention we pay to it.

And especially in the context of utilizing this amazing body and the capacity that we have. And for many of us, we're muting it or dramatically turning down the volume of what's possible Yeah ... because of this dysfunction with our breathing. And so ... by the way, for those who are not watching the video of this episode, when he was talking about juggling, and my guys here in the studio as well that couldn't see him, he was juggling while he was talking about it as he's sitting on the floor.

And this is just for me, again my mind was like, "What the? This is crazy. This is awesome." And, it's so interesting because you've been ahead of the curve on so many things. And obviously there are a bunch of things that you've tried and tested that have not really stuck. They're not as sticky as practices, but certain things are. And for you, that reminded me of just as of this recording, the NBA finals are going on right now, Spurs and Knicks. And just seeing a video of Wemby warming up, of him getting in a lunge position. He's 7'4", 7'5", in a lunge position juggling, right? And to think about why on earth, literally, and they call him the Alien, but why on earth would he be doing this?

And what we have to understand first and foremost, we've got somebody who has so much further to fall when they fall, right? Yeah. We've got somebody who has so much more distance from where problems could take place. And yes, he is a younger guy. He's in his early 20s, but just thinking about how on earth did he make it that far with that kind of length and that kind of athleticism that he is working to express?

The explosion, all of these things, even to this point, is beyond extraordinary. And you've Yeah ... gotta look at not just the perceived talent, but what are the practices that would enable somebody to do something of that nature? And this got me thinking about our relationship and you connecting me with Kadoor as well.

NSIMA INYANG: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Okay? Ooh, Kadoor's the man. Yeah, so talk about Kadoor a little bit, because I saw- yeah ... Wemby doing that same thing, jumping up and kicking the net or

whatever he's doing. It's just like where would you even get an idea to have a capacity like that? And yeah, so I'm just gonna pass it back to you.

NSIMA INYANG: The Wendy thing I think is so cool 'cause I think sometimes we need to see people at a top level doing something to then feel a level of, okay, maybe I should do that. I didn't necessarily feel that I needed that, but seeing Wendy do that made me truly happy 'cause I'm like, okay, now people can see that this stuff isn't just, it's not just a circus trick.

There are things that are going on that the elite can notice that are gonna be beneficial for themselves. And when you think about the idea of juggling, it's not just you're juggling. Your eyes are now tracking. You're learning how to 'Cause when people start juggling initially, what happens when I told you people hold their breath 'cause these balls are moving all over the place, so the tendency is gonna be like you're gonna hold your breath.

But now when you learn and you build a level of proficiency, you can breathe while you're doing that movement, right? You can get calm. You can look around. You can go do other things while your body is doing this other thing, right? And in sports And even in life, we have to think about our awareness and our focus.

How skilled are we at being able to have an awareness of what's going on around us and take the necessary action intuitively to not go off of a curve and have our calf tweak because our body didn't know how to respond? You see, Wemby's building the ability to be able to handle multiple things at once, and I know people are gonna say they're through 3-1 right now and the Knicks are winning."

Okay. Either way he... the ability to have this broad level of perception and pretty much be an orchestrator on the court is broadening by just these simple skills that he's building which are things that all of us can do, and it's helping him on the court in that type of situation. But these are things that can help you out in life when you come across a situation where generally your tendency, let's say you have a conversation with somebody or something stressful happens, your tendency is gonna be you're gonna start holding your breath, you're gonna start getting a little bit tense.

But you understand, since you've done multiple activities where you've learned how to keep your breath going, you don't hold your breath when you're doing everything in the gym anymore. You're not holding your breath when you're doing martial arts and you're having your breath be the fuel for things.

You understand that if I can just keep breathing, have a longer exhale than my inhale, no matter what the situation is, I can stay calm in a sympathetic environment. Something I want to touch on real quick, and, before I continue, I want to give a quick shout-out to Kadour. I'm sitting on the ground right now.

Everybody listening, Kadour has this amazing book called The Seven Postures on Amazon. It's not crazy expensive, but it's something that he put his IP in that book and it's a great book to learn these capacities that allows that man to move the way he does. So quick shout-out to him.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now I want to actually No really quickly.

Before Oh. Keep that same train of thought. Yeah. Kadour is what, maybe 5'10", 5' 11"? Yeah. Yeah. And he's renowned as the greatest dunker of all time. All right? That's where he's- The first, too You know? First professional dunker. The first professional dunker to be a superstar at this particular thing, and dunking barefoot and dunking, I think he's 50 now.

And just the things that he can do Plus, 50 plus ... 50 plus, it is extraordinary. Extraordinary. And again, he's teaching oh, you see this one thing. These are the things that I've implemented throughout the years to make me as physically literate as I am. Yeah. So as you were saying, as you were saying

NSIMA INYANG: I was, I being able to, having Kodour come over here and being able to just sit with him and talk with him and learn from him is, was so great.

Helped me, again, it he showed me certain things which brought awareness to areas that I was weak. I added those things in. I had the level of friction. I worked on those things. Now

those things I don't hold the amount of tension I had before. You know what I mean? All these things work together.

But there's a broader idea that I want to bring to people because everyone that listens to your show are active. They want to have longevity in the things that they do. Some of them are like professional level athletes, and the thing that I think about is, how can we have a level of calm in a typically sympathetic type of sport or activity?

How can we have calm control over it? It goes back to when I used to power lift. I wasn't the kind of guy who would breathe heavy and hype myself up and use the nose torque. I would breathe, I would calm myself down, I would bring myself down, and then I would do the lift so that it wasn't something that stressed me out, and so that it was something that was repeatable.

I'd do my heaviest lifts that way. And when I started doing jujitsu, I started noticing that my breathing was a factor. I was gassing out. I was breathing super heavy, and my recovery wasn't great. So, I read *The Oxygen Advantage* by Patrick McKeown back in two thousand and sixteen and a bunch of other breath books, which turned me on to the idea of nasal breathing during exercise.

And the thing is when people hear about this idea, 'cause some people have probably already heard about nasal breathing during exercise, some people will have the immediate knee-jerk reaction of saying No. That whenever effort gets hard, you have to breathe through your mouth. So don't even bother with that nasal breathing stuff.

And I, I find it unfortunate that people don't peel back the layers of seeing what that could teach them and seeing what that could bring them because when you breathe through your nose inherently, you're supposed to be breathing through your nose most of the time outside of very high effort exercise.

So a lot of people have the tendency of, let's say they start sitting in front of a computer screen, and there's actually this phenomenon called screen apnea. A researcher called Linda Stone, I believe in two thousand and six, there was an observational study where she was watching people, and when they put when they had their phones in front of them or they got behind screens, they started either holding their breath or their ventilation increased, meaning they started breathing faster because they were in front of a screen.

There's a few things that could be the cause of that. Number one, the increased focus on a screen and then the posture and compounding effects. But the underlying issue is that many people have the tendency of breathing through their mouth at rest these days without realizing it. And when you breathe through your mouth, it doesn't do the things your nose does.

Your nose helps you produce nitric oxide. It warms the air you breathe. It humidifies the air you breathe. It allows you to breathe slower and deeper into the diaphragm when you breathe through the nose. And then you'd think again, when you're doing something like exercise and ventilation, which is when your rate of breathing increases, of course your mouth has to open.

That's not the case if you train yourself to learn how to breathe through your nose as effort climbs. Doesn't mean that it's gonna be at the highest levels, it's gonna still all be nasal. But the question is, this is the main thing to think about. How long and how high can I take my effort before my mouth has to open?

Because most athletes, once effort gets to around 50, 60%, the mouth drops open. Okay? So we lose all the benefits of the nose. We are now getting rid of even more carbon dioxide. But if we can keep breathing through the nose and increase our carbon dioxide tolerance, that's going to allow us to stay aerobic in higher thresholds of stress, and that's going to allow us to make an activity that typically is more sympathetic coded or more has more sympathetic tone, we can make that activity more parasympathetic and a bit more calm.

Because this is the thing, it doesn't mean that the activity is now parasympathetic. It just means do we have a more parasympathetic tone within this sympathetic activity? So for me, these days, I rarely have to open my mouth when doing jujitsu. It takes a very specific type of grappler where I'll even have to open my mouth.

But even so, I'm able to usually breathe through my nose even in the worst of situations in jujitsu. And the byproduct of this for myself has been that it doesn't beat me up nearly as much, because I leave the mats feeling chill and relaxed a vast majority of the time. So I can train multiple times a week doing this sympathetic activity of fighting people, and I can leave feeling pretty chill because I barely had to open my mouth. Actually, I use it as a metric for myself. Can I beat you without having to breathe heavily? Right? That's because I trained my ability to continue to keep nasal ventilation as my heart rate increased. And this isn't just me. I've shared this with a lot of people, and other people have done this on their own.

I mean, there are athletes who do this on the court without people really paying attention. Like Roger Federer is a great example of this. If anybody watches Hodger Federer play I called him Hodger because I watch so much jujitsu. Roger Federer plays tennis, you'll notice that a lot of time he's on the court. Usually his mouth is closed.

There are times that you'll see his mouth drop open a little bit, but Roger has this composure that I haven't seen almost in anybody when it comes to tennis. But he's also happens to barely ever open his mouth when he's breathing. I've also shared this with a bunch of people in The Stronger Human, and I've told them, "I just want you guys to mess around with this and tell me what you notice."

And the thing is, this is the thing with the nose, because it can be very frustrating to shift and try to cap your, to stop your workout or to slow down your workout by just breathing through the nose. 'Cause what's gonna happen is you're not gonna be efficient at doing this. There's a few things which it's gonna take a long time to get into, but some people have very stiff rib cages, which doesn't allow them to breathe as deeply.

So learning how to improve the tissue quality of the rib cage is gonna be important so the rib cage can move better. And some people don't have the greatest mechanics when it comes to breathing at higher efforts. Some people will tend to breathe up here as effort increases versus keeping the breath continue to be pumped by the trunk and the diaphragm.

So that's one thing. But if you use your nose as like a governor, okay? And you tell yourself, "In my next workout, I'm going to limit myself to see how hard can I go until I feel the need to breathe through my mouth, and then I'm not gonna go harder. I'm just gonna keep my intensity at that level."

If you have that as your governor, first thing you'll notice that after that session you'll feel more recovered. You're gonna tell yourself I feel more recovered 'cause I didn't work as hard because I wasn't breathing through my mouth." That is part of the, that is partly true. But the thing you're gonna notice is as you keep that over time, if you just continue to try to work and sometimes if you're into martial arts or you're doing something where you have to increase that intensity and you find you have to open your mouth, allow yourself to do it, right?

But try to have the intent of, "I'm gonna see how hard I can go and what I can maintain by breathing through the nose." You're gonna notice that your aerobic capacity, right, or your ability to pretty much keep a low heart rate at high intensities is going to improve, right? And lastly, an interesting thing right now in fitness is everybody's going crazy over the VO2 max.

There's a study I'm gonna send you after this show. It was done on 14 cyclists, and I forgot the name of the researcher, but they all had comparable VO2 maxes. The only difference between half of these cyclists, right, was that half of them had a higher lactic threshold, okay? When your body uses lactic acid, your body's continuously, when doing aerobic work, clearing and reusing lactic acid.

And lactate's a reusable resource. You can clear it and use it. It's more aerobic in nature, right? So the athletes that had a broader lactic threshold, those athletes, they all did, I think, a 60-minute workout, all the same VO2 max. But the ones with a higher lactate threshold were

able to go double the amount of time in that workout even though everybody had the same serum.

The only difference was the floor. The only difference was the floor, and everybody right now is saying, "Do your Norwegian four by fours. Do this multiple times a week." Everybody's chasing VO2 max, and they're neglecting the floor, the aerobic capacity underneath it, and that's what has allowed me to now I can do high intensity workouts, but the thing that allows my heart rate to come back down fast is my ability to nasal breathe and calm down quickly.

My broad, my aerobic base is broad, and I still have a decent ceiling. So that shift, I think, can help a lot of people when it comes to what they're seeking in terms of their cardiovascular capacity.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Summer's here, and it's time to play. Growing up, this was my favorite time of year to have fun outside for hours and also to enjoy some homemade lemonade or iced tea.

And today, we can enjoy these same summer vibes but with upgraded purpose. What if you can experience the thirst-quenching power of lemonade and iced tea and give your body an infusion of key electrolytes to fuel your performance? And what does it even matter in the first place? Electrolytes enable optimal muscle function.

Electrolytes like sodium and magnesium are essential for nerve signaling, allowing our muscles to contract and relax properly, which prevents cramping and fatigue. Sodium also helps your body and your brain to retain water, preventing dehydration that can lead to cardiovascular strain and decreased strength or power, things we don't want to happen.

If you don't know, now you know the number one science-backed electrolyte drink designed to support active hydration, cognitive performance, and a healthy lifestyle is the electrolytes from LMNT. LMNT has the science-backed ratios of sodium, potassium, and magnesium to help you to feel and perform your very best.

No sugar, no artificial colors, and nothing dodgy. The best performers in the world utilize LMNT. I'm talking about Team USA weightlifting, NBA and NFL teams, the Navy SEALs. The list goes on and on. And right now, LMNT has just released their brand-new lemonade iced tea electrolyte drink mix. The science-backed ratios of electrolytes, a light lift of caffeine from black tea, and that summertime flavor that hits perfectly on a summer day.

And right now, you get to try LMNT risk-free with their no questions asked refunds if you don't absolutely love how it makes you feel. Just head over to drinkLMNT.com/model to take advantage right now, and you're also going to get a free bonus pack of their most popular flavors with every electrolyte purchase.

Again, go to drinkLMNT.com/model. Now, back to the show. Phenomenal. I wanna talk about how we can train this practically. And for this, I wanna speak from experience as well because obviously so many years as an athlete, so many years lifting, we develop these habits. And as you mentioned just bracing. It's a form of just this protective mechanism. And for me, what really helped to kinda unlock and transition to be able to breathe more fluidly is doing isometrics, right? So having a stressor or a stressful position or situation that I put my body into that's getting all these muscle inputs, tendon inputs, ligament inputs.

So it's a stressor, and it's even challenging, but now I'm literally proactively breathing through this. And that started to kinda unlock or unglue my capacity to breathe doing other stressful movements, in particular, again... lifting. So what is your perspective about isometrics? Do you think that's a great kind of on-ramp for this, and what are some other ways that people can utilize?

NSIMA INYANG: Yeah. Okay, so you had a question about isometrics there. You also had a practical question about how people can get that nasal capacity in terms of their workouts. So let me quickly just give a quick idea. This one actually came from, I learned this from Chris Hinshaw, aerobic capacity a few years ago, and I started applying it to myself and people I work with and just anyone I give some of this advice to.

If you use an assault bike or any type of cardiovascular implement that you have at hand, it could be a skiErg, it could be a rowing machine even you could even jump rope because you don't need something where you can see your wattage, but it's nice if you have some type of piece of equipment that you can see your power output. The goal would be within a workout that's fifteen minutes, okay?

Maybe you do two of these types of sessions a week, all nasal. The goal is keeping all nasal. One workout will be ten to fifteen minutes. The other workout will potentially be twenty-five to thirty-five minutes. Again, all nasal. I'm gonna use the assault bike as an example here. Your first session will be figuring out your the peak wattage that you can have while breathing through your nose.

So you're figuring out what's that threshold that I can maintain nasal breathing, right? And once I go over this wattage, I'm gonna end up breathing through my mouth, right? So what you can do is a test. You can go to let's say one hundred and fifty watts or one hundred and seventy watts. Do that for two minutes.

Increase your wattage by ten watts. Do it for a minute. Increase your wattage by ten watts. Do it for a minute, right? Just keep increasing your watts by ten to twenty watts for a period of time until you find the place in the wattage where you're like, "Oh, gosh, I have to breathe through my mouth." And then go down about ten to fifteen watts below that and do the workout for another five, ten minutes.

That's gonna give you your baseline wattage for your power output while you're breathing through your nose. Now, understanding that wattage, you're gonna have maybe one to two workouts per week. One of those workouts is gonna be a shorter duration, ten to fifteen minutes. The second workout's gonna be a longer duration, twenty-five to thirty-five minutes.

For the shorter duration workout, you're going to work towards the higher end of the wattage that you tested. So let's potentially say that when you tested, you were able to maintain two hundred and forty watts while breathing through your nose. So now when you

do your workout that's ten to fifteen minutes, you're gonna do a ten to fifteen-minute workout at around two hundred and thirty to two hundred and forty watts.

If you find yourself that as you're doing that workout, you're like, "Oh, I have to breathe through my mouth," lower the wattage. Just lower the wattage and keep doing the workout, okay? No reason to increase intensity and breathe through your mouth, okay? Your second workout, twenty-five to thirty-five minutes, is longer.

So for this longer workout, we're gonna lower our wattage just a little bit. Your threshold that we mentioned was two hundred and forty watts, so maybe this twenty-five to thirty-five minute workout is gonna be around two hundred and twenty-five watts for twenty-five to thirty-five minutes. Because as the duration increases, you're gonna get more fatigued, right?

So the goal is to do this duration all through the nose. So we're gonna have to have a little bit lower output. Now, the goal is this. Those workouts are gonna be aerobic in nature. Your heart rate's gonna be lower. That's why you can do them twice a week and not absolutely feel tanked or just or killed.

It's something that you can maintain for a long period of time. But our goal over time is to be able to increase our power output while breathing through our nose, okay? For me, what this looked like, and it took me about Maybe it took me about a year to be able to do this, but I started out and my wattage breathing through the nose was around two hundred and fifty, two hundred and sixty watts.

It took about a year, but now I'm able to maintain around three hundred and thirty watts for twenty minutes while breathing through my nose on the exercise bike. For my size and my weight, that's a lot of wattage without having the heart rate climb and having to beat myself up. So that's what that does and what that tells me is now when I'm going and doing something like jujitsu, it's gonna take a lot more for someone to make me breathe heavy.

And when I do breathe heavily, I'll be able to hold onto that longer than they do. And if I find moments of the fight where I need to bring my heart rate down, when I come back down into a lower heart rate, that's just allowing me to recover way more than they can.

Okay? So that's a practical way, and you can take this type of idea onto any machine.

And even if you like jump roping, for example. I do this when I jump rope a lot. I'll just do a session of jump roping and just not allow myself to open my mouth, right? I'll see how fast can I go and what can I... Now, for me, it's just like I'm just pushing the boundary of what my body can do without having to open the mouth.

Does not mean I never open my mouth. Once a week, I'll have a session that's just disgusting in terms of my cardiovascular output that will make me want to throw up. That's once a week, sometimes once every two weeks, right? But it's not common because those workouts really thrash me, okay? And they will they thrash most people.

But when it comes to cardio, that's what most people seek. And I think that you don't need so much of that input to get the benefit. You need a taste of that. But most of your cardio should be within the range that broadens the base. And everyone right now is reaching for VO2 max and we're reaching four by fours.

So that's I'm gonna push that now to the side, and I wanna mention the isometrics things you talked about or you were mentioning. I think isometrics are I think you actually had an NBA strength coach that came on here talking about isometrics recently. But they're so powerful. And I think it's unfortunate that more people don't pay attention to how powerful they are.

We actually just had Keith Barr on the show. His podcast isn't out yet. But a cool thing about isometrics is that they've been proven to be the one of the best things to reduce blood pressure, which is really interesting to me because a strength training movement being, being something that can vastly decrease blood pressure and increase the strength of your tendons, right?

And let me also mention this is another cool thing about isometrics. When you're doing an isometric type work, and I think Keith Barr, he has this thing called low duration or long duration, low intensity isometrics, okay? When most people do isometrics and most of the strength training, most people think about high intensity short duration.

So I'm gonna do this max push into this squat rack for five seconds as hard as possible, right? And that's not necessarily bad, but the thing that Keith got from long duration low intensity isometrics is that it helps you develop more of something we call creep, okay? If I have this kettlebell right here, right?

And I hold this here and have a level of tension here at my wrist, okay? This kettlebell isn't crazy heavy. It's gonna take a while, but the longer that I hold this kettlebell here, the strongest parts of my muscles right now are working to keep this in place. Over time, the stress is going to slowly creep deeper into the weaker parts of my tissue the longer I hold this kettlebell in place, okay?

So if I hold it out here, right, this is a heavy kettlebell, but my bicep tendon, the longer I hold it there, the I'm going to be able to creep into the weakest parts of my tendon. So that's why, first off, doing isometrics for thirty to forty-five seconds at maybe not a hundred percent intensity, but...

And by the way, what I did right there is called a yielding isometric. I was yielding from the kettlebell going down. An overcoming isometric would be the isometric where, let's say that there's something on a squat rack and you're pushing into it, and you can't push anything. That is overcoming an immovable object.

Back to creep. That long duration, low intensity allows me to get into the weakest parts of my tendon. And most people right now, when they think about isometrics, they think about the highest amount of intensity. So I want us to switch that there. But the next thing is, when you do an isometric session, you only need to spend, and as Keith has shown, you only need to spend about ten minutes doing work on that specific tendon, and then past that, it's nothing but diminishing returns.

So you can get ten minutes of work on any tissue you're trying to work doing overcoming or yielding isometrics. And the amazing thing is, especially if you're a natural athlete, you can recover from that session, your tendons, in six to eight hours. So thinking about this, you're able to get high muscular tension.

Yes, the muscle isn't moving through a range of motion, but you're bringing tension to the muscle. You're bringing stress to the tendon you're trying to work. Because the thing about isometrics that makes them also so powerful is, for example, when we're doing bicep curls, we're going through a range of motion here, okay?

We're working the bicep. The tendon does get work at this long range, but it doesn't get as much work at this long range as if I held an, a yielding isometric right here. Now, all of that stress is at that tendon for the period of time since I'm not moving it through a range of motion. So we're able to also get more stress onto the tendon than we are with dynamic work, and we're able to recover fast from it since we're not moving through dynamic ranges of motion.

Doesn't mean that dynamic ranges of motion aren't good, but we're now able to strengthen our tendons over time, get muscular stress without the fatigue ramifications of dynamic training. And most people right now, when they think about training in the gym, it's always dynamic work. Three, no, not even three, just five days a week, four days a week, dynamic work.

What if we shifted some of our focus? Instead of doing dynamic work five days a week, maybe we did dynamic work two days a week. We did isometrics on multiple other days of the week. Because when you're doing isometrics, yes, you're hitting your tendons, but you still are getting a good amount of muscular tension.

So it's not like your muscles are doing nothing. I think sometimes we think that we need to just keep doing the dynamic training to keep our muscles or to grow our muscles. But you gotta realize, you don't need that input so much to get the effect. I'm trying to think of the

minimum effective dose to be able to get the best potential outcomes and for our aging population especially, okay?

Isometrics are what I love as a jujitsu, as a grappler, I'm not even gonna go into it here, but isometrics have been transformative for my hands and my grip. And the people I've shown it to, especially grapplers, because they do so much stuff with their hands, isometrics have been amazing. But the biggest thing too is that with a lot of people, their tendons get weaker as they age.

And if you can recover fast from this, it doesn't stress you out too much, you can do it from the comfort of your own home. You can get into a wall sit, you can get into an isometric horse stance. You can get into all these... You saw, you said Wemby was doing a juggling in a lunge, right? He was doing juggling in a lunge isometric position.

What do you think that was doing to the tendons of his knees? These things have massive effects, and you can recover from it quickly and we're totally sleeping on it.

This is the one last thing I'm gonna mention. Apparently blood pressure medication actually weakens the tendons. So this is an interesting thing.

As people get older and they start taking blood pressure medication, the blood pressure medication makes their tendons weaker. But what could be the thing that could help all of this? Maybe by adding in some just body weight isometrics or some yielding isometrics, your blood pressure could improve.

Isometrics have been proven to be amazing for grip strength. And just maybe also your tendons improve without having to need medication

SHAWN STEVENSON: Like what? All right. Dude. All right. So first and foremost, we've got yielding and we've got overcoming that he's unpacked for us. And just to understand the value, multiple levels you've already broken down. This is, we're you said it, we're sleeping on it. We're sleeping on isometrics. Just yesterday I think when I was leaving you a voice text, I just finished training my son and his friend. and they're basketball players

And it was a nice day so we went, I took them to the park, and I did both types of isometrics. It was pretty much the entire workout. We did a couple of other things. We did some banded pull-ups and, a little this and a little that. But yielding position, they got into a lunge- Yeah ... position holding a kettlebell in one hand and just holding that position.

Yeah. And today they're sore. But not so sore that it's just oh my gosh, they're gonna be prob... Again, you recover faster, especially with these inputs. They never did it before. That's why they're sore, right? And so the same thing happened with me, right? I could do hundreds of lunges, but holding that lunge position with a kettlebell in my hand for 30 seconds, I was sore the next day.

But after I did it a couple of times, it really ... what I see personally is isometrics help the, help us to adapt faster. And so side... sidebar. So yielding isometric there, lunge position, strong lunge position, and holding that kettlebell can be in either hand. And then we the final set I had them get in a rack position with the kettlebell holding it up close to their body- just for a different little input. So that was one. And later in the workout they did an overcoming isometric. There's a sign at the park at this little area where the workout, where we're doing the workout that has little workout instructions. Yeah. And I had one go on one side and the other on the other side.

And so basically this is an immovable object somewhat. I'm saying if you could probably push that shit over to be honest, activate ... 'Cause somebody said that you have, like when you're, like, five, and Sema has dad strength, all right? It's just multiple times stronger than you could imagine.

But so they have this sign, but with each one of them pushing on each side of it I'm just like, "It's a competition between you two. This is actually immovable, what you're going up against, but try to move the other person." And so I had them- ... going up into it, into a lateral isometric calf raise basically.

So the outside foot is turned and they're up on their toe. Inside foot is elevated and they're pushing into that wall. They've got the contraction with the core going on. They've got the

obviously with the legs. It's just really powerful. And so ... And that's a movement that you see very frequently in basketball, this lateral movement up against a player.

And just to think, again if they need to give somebody a bump And they're going against this immovable object, and they can bump into somebody who can move. They're gonna be a problem, all right? And so- Yeah ... sprinkling these pieces in, along with, again, maybe some jump squats are in the mix, maybe some, push-ups, some chin-ups, that kind of stuff, too.

But we're really leaning into the isometrics, and it was thanks to, again, you mentioned earlier Coach Mike Guiverra, Coach Mike G, who's worked with the most recently with the Houston Rockets. And being able to have this programming for my, my, my son, his his teammates, and also, again, seeing what they're doing has already integrated itself at the highest levels of sport.

But the- ... crazy part is this has been around for centuries. We just been- Yeah ... sleeping on it.

NSIMA INYANG: There's a few things I wanna mention. The beautiful thing that I think of what you mentioned there is you can use a tree, right? If you have some type of a stiff band and a tree, you can use a tree for certain aspects of isometrics.

You can use a sign like you were using. You don't need special equipment. You could ... I mean, I ... Makes you wonder, in within Tai Chi and certain cultures, getting to a horse stance is a very important thing for the longevity of the body. Why, though? When you get into a horse stance, it's quite uncomfortable, and you realize how weak your hips and your adductors in these areas are, the tissues in these areas, and the tendons in these areas.

And they will just sit there and hold that position, right? So you realize they're doing a yielding isometric within that position. And you can do that in any position to strengthen your ability to maintain your structure as you're breathing. And I wanna mention this. People have the tendency, just like we talked about earlier, when lifting weights in the gym, holding their breath.

When doing an isometric and you're not putting consistent force through something, you mentioned that it helped your breathing. That's so important to make sure you realize and you do while you're doing isometrics, not holding the breath. But I actually wanna ask you, why did that, why did you know that, why did you notice that helped your breathing?

What did you notice?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Because, the way that I conditioned my body was the Valsalva maneuver, right? Yeah. And to hold that tension and to breathe out on the the explosive part of the movement and to breathe in as the weight is coming back to me. And so I've just really trained... my body to do that without any real awareness.

It was just built in. Getting into the isometric position, so I'll just use an example of that lunge position, right? Or maybe a single leg elevated split squat position.

NSIMA INYANG: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And now I've got a target amount of time, so maybe it's 30 seconds, 45 seconds. And so now I'm in this position, and knowing myself, I have a separate breathing practice, separate lifting practice.

Now I get to integrate them together. And so coming into it, I know that I'm gonna have to breathe because I can't hold my breath. I can technically, but- Yeah ... it's not necessary for me to hold my breath in this strenuous position. And so I- Yes ... it was just a conscious switch. I just flipped a switch in my mind, and it just made me I was shocked at how comfortable that I was breathing deeply even under load, under stress.

NSIMA INYANG: Right. So the, this is so key what you're mentioning here because you're able to find a level of ease within something stressful. That's the broad thing here. Typically, when we're doing these types of things, whether it's isometric type work, you see people They're making all the they're, everything is like stress.

Jujitsu, stressful. Sprinting, stressful, right? Whereas when you see some of the elite athletes do these things, like you see I mean, shoot, look at Sha'Carri Richardson, her face when she's sprinting, Usain Bolt. There's this Jamaican sprinter. She's she's the oldest sprinter right now, actually, who's still competing.

I forgot her name. But you watch these athletes do something so stressful, and they're so relaxed. They find a level of ease within what they're doing because they're breathing while they're doing it. And most people, when they start doing any of this type of work, and this let's talk isometrics, they hold their breath.

The one thing I really like about isometrics is that they teach you, just like jujitsu has so many isometric positions when you're fighting an opponent, same with wrestling, isometrics teach you how to find your strongest anatomical position against a load, whether you're pushing... I have this device called the IsoFit, I-S-O-P-H-I-T, that allows me to get my body into different positions to funnel force, right?

So I have a handle that I put on this bar that doesn't move, and I can adjust the length of the bar or the height of the bar, and I can get into different types of positions, but I can find the best structural position for my body to get into to now funnel force through this object, right? But I'm also breathing as I'm funneling as much force as I'm able to funnel, right?

So inherently, you learn how to create these strong positions with your bones, with your structure. Because a lot of time when people are lifting, when people think of bad form, like bad form on a deadlift, what happened is that person found it and got out of the right form of leverage. When you see people deadlifting and their form is bad, it's because they lost the anatomical position of their structure to efficiently lift that barbell off the ground.

Isometrics teach you how to find all of these positions and then find the best anatomical structure to get your body into and maintain as you're funneling force through whatever you're doing. Like your sons were pushing through the signpost, et cetera. And now, when you're on a court and somebody wants to produce force against you and your body can literally just become a statue and pop right back at them with minimal effort.

There's an NBA player, his name is Steven Adams. He's so amazing at this. When he's playing basketball he's on the Houston Rockets. When he's playing on the court and he's under the rim, he looks like he's just, he looks like he's fighting people so fluidly 'cause he'll get his body into positions, and he does a lot of these types of things, but he'll get his body into these positions of just rooted strength because he understands how to use his structure and his breath against people.

And he looks calm while he's doing it. And that's what isometrics teach you how to do. He looks calm while he's doing it. He looks calm while he's doing it. So again, it's isometrics are so slept on, and there's something that you can do right now as you're listening to this episode. You can get into a lunge, a wall sit a horse stance.

You can do this as you're listening to the episode, if you're not driving at least.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing. Yeah. And that sprinter that you were referencing, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce. Yeah.

NSIMA INYANG: Yes. Yeah. She's I love... The reason I mentioned Shelly-Ann, many sprinters, you'll notice actually there's some sprinters that have, they look like they're holding their breath a little bit, like I think of Justin Gatlin.

But there are certain sprinters that I've seen, like Usain Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce. Shelly-Ann, and this is, this comes back to the breathing thing, and it's an even higher concept that I want people to now start even paying attention to. I've talked to a few different sprint coaches, and I've asked them, I've just wanted to see what they say.

I'm like, "What do your what do you have your athletes do about their breathing when they're sprinting?" And then, and some of them have been like, "I don't really have them worry about it. I just tell them to just breathe however they need to breathe to do it." And I found that interesting because when I've...

First off, the most efficient way that I've been able to move well in sprint has been when I've been able to find a rhythm with my steps and my breathing. And then when I watch some of the top athletes and I watch their ventilation along with their steps, it looks like they're breath, they're like their breathing matches up with their movement.

Because when you're able to find a movement that rhythmically matches with your breath, you don't have to think about it anymore. Less effort is taken because your body knows when the breath is coming on each stride. So now there's like less effort when it comes to movement and ventilation. And you would think that people would then try to think about, okay, how can I teach people how to have a level of rhythm with their breathing as they're doing these activities?

Because that could potentially improve their movement efficiency, allow them to get into a better flow because their breath is moving in rhythm with their body. So that's another thing I want people to start thinking about when it comes to their own personal movement practice.

Maybe you're doing the thing I mentioned on the assault bike, and you're breathing through the nose. Can you find a rhythm with your inhales and exhales and how much you're cycling, right? So it's not just random inhales and exhales, but there's a cadence to it and your movement. You'll find that when you're able to find that rhythm and that cadence, and I wanna loop back to what we mentioned at the beginning, the belief.

Some people just don't believe that they have rhythm. That's such an interesting thing to me. When people are like, "Oh, I, I can't dance," or, "I just don't have rhythm," you automatically block yourself off from something that I think runs underneath many amazing athletes. Their ability to control the rhythm of the game and their ability to even see the rhythm of their opponent.

So there's, Okay, you watch basketball, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

NSIMA INYANG: Okay. Boston Celtics, what's the name of that really amazing defensive player on their team?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right now?

NSIMA INYANG: Yes. He, I he didn't win Defense Player of the Year. Let me just type this in because Jaylen Brown? He had this Jaylen Brown.

Jaylen Brown had this amazing video. I think he was on the show Hot Ones when he was mentioning this, and he was saying he was talking about how, as a great defensive player, he learns how to understand the rhythm of his opponent. He was talking about how Luka Dončić has this herky-jerky rhythm on the court, and if you wanna be able to play defense against him, you have to be able to understand that.

And he said how Kyrie has this super slow and fast rhythm that you can't really tell what Kyrie's gonna do because it's so it goes all over the place. I think he also might have mentioned Jokić, but he mentioned how these players have these distinct rhythms, and when you tap into their rhythms, they become easier to defend.

And that right there, that's not just a genetic thing, 'cause I think some people just believe that certain people just have better rhythm. It's an exposure thing. It's maybe Jaylen he's been playing basketball for a long time. He's tapped into this. He now inherently understands rhythm, and he can apply that to his game and the way he moves.

And that's something that we can all do. Rickson Gracie also talked about this and has talked about this. He's, again, if people don't know why I'm referencing Rickson Gracie, he's one of the greatest grapplers of all time, historic fighter. And he mentioned and he talks about learning how to develop a level of rhythm with your breath and movement as a fighter, right?

So that's something I want you to think about. Can you Of course, when you're going through the day, you don't have to be thinking about the rhythm of your breath. You want to keep it

through your nose. You want to keep it calm. But when you do certain activities like running cardio, even when you're doing an activity, can your breath, can you figure out a way to have a level of rhythm with your movement?

Because that might improve your efficiency of breathing, your efficiency of movement, and your level of feeling of ease with how stressful this activity is

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing. This is amazing advice, man. This reminds me specifically of an athlete who believed that she didn't have rhythm and that was encouraged or fortified that belief with the people around her as well.

Liz Gleadle. And this is somebody who has a parallel track with you, having this kind of integration with rope flow on these parallel, in these parallel universes where you are doing Brazilian jujitsu and she's competing as Javelin ... Olympic athlete with the javelin, right? And so again, she is the world record holder or, sorry, national record holder in Canada.

All right? Best to ever do it in her country. All right? That's incredible. And she could do all these and by the way, this might be the most technically demanding movement in all of sport. It's so violent. And it's this one thing you have to do it, execute this thing perfectly. A high degree of difficulty, high degree of injury.

And so doing this, but then being told like, "Yeah, no, Liz is a great athlete, but she can't dance. She can't move well." Right? It's just and that She's dancing

NSIMA INYANG: all over the place

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now. Right now she's dancing like she could she literally gets paid for it. You know what I mean? Yeah. And this was just one of those things where she decided to investigate and to experiment and to, to unlock this capacity 'cause it was just locked up.

It was just glued up. Every culture around the world has music, has dance, so again, this might be attributed to, your content of melanin, for example, that is just gonna come to you

naturally. But every culture around the world has rhythmic sound and this connection with music.

And also even with the melanin content, there are people who, they can't really move that well. You know what I'm saying? And so it's something that we can unlock and train and unglue, and what tends to happen is just conditioning, right? It, what tends to happen is lack of exposure. What tends to happen is lack of experimentation.

And moving our body I think dance is such an undervalued tool to unlock athleticism and Yes ... and also, of course, the piece of, again and here's a big underlying reason. You said this earlier. This is why we're talking to the Jedi, is that even though it might be a sympathetic thing that we're doing, tapping into that parasympathetic tone.

All right? So, and I'm saying all this to say I wanna we can put a bookmark on that potentially, but In this conversation, in this parallel universe with you and Liz, utilizing rope flow. You mentioned the rope earlier. This is something that you've you brought into my life, and I utilize this practically 360 out of 365 I'm using my rope.

There's a couple of days here or there that I don't end up using my rope, but it's a big part of my daily life and my practices. Especially the time that I I always use it is before I train, before I do the intensive training session. It's just one of those things Yeah ... to kinda tap in. It's a self-assessment tool for me now as well.

But what it's done for me, one of the biggest things that it's unlocked is The symmetry. All right? I don't... It's, again, now here's the great thing. It's like it's an asymmetric thing, but it's made me more symmetrical, if that makes sense. Can you speak to that? So first of all, for those who don't know, what is rope flow?

And then talk- Yeah ... about some of these capacities that it unlocks with our athleticism and just with our movement overall.

NSIMA INYANG: Yeah. Okay. So rope flow, it's a movement practice that was developed by David Weck. He's the guy who created the BOSU ball. So, I always appreciate David, when he when he showed it to me years ago, 'cause it's helped me figure out a lot of other things and find similarities with other things.

But you take a rope, right? And you swing it from side to side, and Shawn, you mentioned it's asymmetrical as a practice, but it's symmetrical in practice. So what that means is when you're swinging the rope on one side of your body, one shoulder's forward, one shoulder's back, you're, there's a level of rotation in the spine.

So not both sides of the body are doing the same thing, but when you take the rope to the other side just now mirrors what your dominant or non-dominant side did. So this is the powerful thing about rope flow, the aspect of symmetry, non-dominance and dominance. We all have a hand. I'm right-handed, right?

So you guys have been seeing me do whatever this thing is through this show with my left hand, and then I take to my right hand, and maybe it looks a little bit easier, right? Rope flow helps you build a level of movement symmetry between both sides of your body because as you do it on one side of your body, and the breath also comes into this because, as I mentioned, when most people starting rope flow and they're trying to do new do new moves, they try to force it.

They hold their breath. I always have to remind people, breathe as you're doing it. So now it's a practice that also incorporates fluid breathing as you're moving, okay? So you're doing it on your dominant side, the whatever movement you do feels good. You do it on your non-dominant, and it doesn't feel good.

So now your brain, what your brain's trying to do is it's trying to, solve the problem. How can I make the thing that I just did really well on this side, how can I make it work well on this side? So you do those reps, you do those reps, and then boop, the problem solves. It clicks. The symmetry aspect is an amazing thing about it because now you learn how to make certain aspects of coordination that you're doing so well on the dominant side of your body, you

learn how to build that coordination on your non-dominant side when many people don't have practices that do that.

Many people, we'll do things mostly on our dominant and our non-dominant, we won't really work on its coordination. But this practice inherently helps you build that But then the other thing I love about this practice and many of the practices that I've, I was mentioning, whether it's juggling, rope flow, et cetera, is the problems that it brings about and the awareness that it forces you to now see.

Because as you're rotating on one side or as you start moving through space with the rope and maybe doing things overhead and doing throwing patterns with the rope, I know Liz probably talked about throwing patterns since she's a thrower, you notice, wow, oh I really never tried throwing something with my non-dominant side.

So now you work that throwing coordination, which isn't just a coordination of the arm. It's a coordination of the spine, the hips, the feet. It's a full body coordination to throw. And the brain. And the brain, and you develop that on your non-dominant side With breathing and with rhythm. And if you put on some music, right, and you now flow to the rhythm of the music, you're now doing this coordinated practice, pretty much you're dancing.

And the funny thing I think is so interesting is so many people in the straight training world, they look at this and they're like, "I'm not gonna go dance. Like why am I gonna go do that? I'm just gonna go spend my time training in the gym." And it's that's why you're so stiff. You don't have anything that's developing your rhythm, and it's fun.

You know what I mean? Bro. Oh my God. So, and it's also something that you can pretty much do anywhere. That's one reason I love it. You can micro dose the activity. So I don't tell people to look at it like a workout. I tell people to look at it like a, you just take a break, do some rope flow, get some fluid movement, get the brain going.

Maybe even try a new pattern, put it away, go do something else. 'Cause now whether it's rope flow you did, whether it's juggling, whether you're sitting around, you're messing with something in your hands or whatever, there's something that's building within the... I think even juggling has been shown to increase the gray matter in your brain because of all the things that it it's your center for...

there's a part of the brain, and I forgot what exactly it controls which whatever, we can maybe have something there. But that's not something we work often. You know what I mean? Our levels of coordination to throw and see. But rope flow and these practices will seep into all the other things you do.

Yeah. Whether you're someone who plays basketball and you're cutting one way and another way, you might find that, wow, okay, I, when I do this movement, it now just feels a little bit more fluid. I found that with my jujitsu. I've, the odd thing for me that I've found, and other people in The Stronger Human have mentioned this for themselves too, so now I know it's not just me, is that I've, as I've learned and developed my ability to do these different coordinative practices, my ability to now just learn more things and learn certain things in jujitsu or take up something new and actually get the hang of it, has increased.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yep.

NSIMA INYANG: It's like the learning that I've developed in certain areas, because now I've learned so many things, learning new things is just easier. I mean, I picked up the didgeridoo recently because I wanted to see how it would affect my breath, and I wanted to learn this thing of, called circular breathing, which has been shown to help people who have sleep apnea and snore.

And I was able to learn circular breathing pretty darn fast, within three days. But it's because, I think the things that I've been learning have just made learning easier. So there's a lot to it. I tried to speed run that. But, one thing I think is that you, rope flow is a very

I have a free tutorial on YouTube. The Stronger Human community's free. I have areas where you guys can just take up and learn this stuff. And it's just something that you can do. It's fun.

It can be decompressive. And it's not something that beats you up, but you just, you want to go do it. It's just a

It's fun, but it does so much for you. And

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah ...

NSIMA INYANG: I'll leave that there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: A lot of the Model Health Show community is in the Stronger Human community as well. I'm

NSIMA INYANG: so happy to hear that

SHAWN STEVENSON: So what's the URL or how can people get access?

NSIMA INYANG: Yeah. It's school.com/thestrongerhuman, or it's like school.com/about/thestrongerhuman.

One of those.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But we'll put it in the show notes ... it's,

NSIMA INYANG: It'll be there. It'll

SHAWN STEVENSON: Be there. We'll put it in the show notes. And by the way, that specific thing is one of the coolest things that I've found. So one day, of course, so you got the dragon roll is one of the movements with the rope flow.

And Yeah ... one side just came pretty quickly. The other side felt wonky. It just didn't feel right. Yep. And then one day, maybe this is a week later, two week, whenever it was, suddenly I didn't know which side was my dominant side. I switched and I was doing it, and I was like, "Okay, which..." You know what I mean?

It just like Yes ... that, it was such a cool moment where I didn't even know that this was my non-dominant side. And so for years, playing basketball, I heavily favored my right hand in all of, my, my movements, my, in finishing at the rim. Very rarely would I do anything with the left hand, especially in a layup situation.

I got to a point, and the thing was, again, like I would try, I would try to work on doing little drills to try to... But when I started doing rope flow and then I went back and started doing some of these things, all of a sudden there are many times in competition, and also of course just doing drills, that I will actually favor using my left hand in these situations.

And it just happened so quick. And so again, what this is, of course, this is a unlock for our tissues, for our movement patterns, but really what we're doing is working on our brain. And our, this has been said many times, we have this, these hemispheres, one side controlling one side of the body, one side controlling the other side.

There is so much whole brain integration patterning, and it isn't this black or white thing with the brain. There's so much about the brain and our capacities that we still don't understand. Yeah. But what we do know is that when we are using our non-dominant side, it is firing up parts of our brain that are hella sleepy, if not, just kinda dormant.

This doesn't mean we don't have the capacity. And what we have here with rope flow is the capacity to literally grow connections in our brain, to grow and develop our brain. And so it's a special tool. It's a special movement practice, and so I can't recommend it enough. I, the ropes that I use are from you.

Can you share where people can pick up a rope full rope flow rope from you?

NSIMA INYANG: Yeah, thestrongerhuman.com. There's a bunch of different options for ropes there along with juggling balls and different type. Any like anything that I use and I think is great I have over there at thestrongerhuman.com.

So, and if you guys can get all of that stuff there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Phenomenal. Phenomenal. And by the way, you know this as well, I shared this with you recently, but I give Rope Flow ropes as gifts very frequently. Very frequently- Yeah ... to guests that come into the studio just people that come by my house. I give them the rope and I'll start doing stuff.

And it, bro, and some of these people, these are athletes. And then I'll show them a couple of things like how this might translate to their tennis game or pickleball or, boxing. And Yeah ... then I'll do some more, like I'll do a dragon roll or just something a little bit more, some of these sneaks.

And they see it and they're just like, "Okay, let me " And then they'll try and do it and they're just slapping themselves. It's just like this stuff is not simple. You make it look simple because of the practice, and then once it's locked in, it's like riding a bike. And then Yeah ... so what I found, too, in, in taking your training as well in the school app was certain things I would happen onto and then I would see you do it later.

I was just like, I felt like doing this particular movement with the rope, right? That's why it's called Rope Flow. Oh. I would flow into certain things. Other things I had to get instruction on, but it's just it's such a great tool to have. It is obviously super easy to travel with.

I got one in my bag at all times and something I'm very passionate about sharing, and you shared it with me and I appreciate you for that. So, my man.

NSIMA INYANG: Absolutely, Shawn. I've gotten a lot from you over the years too. So honestly, I'm just, I'm happy that I know you. I'm happy that I can learn from you consistently, and so thank you for bringing me on again.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Of course. I appreciate it. Same. This was the trilogy. This was the trilogy. All right? But we still have so much more to come. We sometimes want our stories to continue on, and that's what we're gonna do. But we had the honor of having on the movement Jedi himself. Nseema, I appreciate you so much for hanging out with us today.

NSIMA INYANG: Thank you. Shawn.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you so much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. Definitely check out Nseema's Stronger Human community. There's so many free resources to take advantage of. Again, that URL is skool.com/thestrongerhuman. And Skool is spelled S-K-O-O-L. So it's skool.com/thestrongerhuman to get access to some incredible resources, fitness, mobility.

And also, he just has an incredible ability to communicate and to help us to understand concepts and to integrate things. So I was able to follow along with the Row Flow course, for example, and just be able to pick up these tools, and surprisingly, the way that he would describe things is just like, for me, surprisingly, I was able to pick stuff up really quickly.

And so again, great resource to check out, skool.com/thestrongerhuman. But just follow Nseema. Check him out on Instagram. His YouTube channel is fire. He's just doing some incredible things and doing it at a very high level. And I'm so grateful for you sharing your time with us today and hanging out with us and learning and being a part of this conversation.

Let's keep this conversation going. Share this out with somebody that you care about. Share some of the stuff that you've learned. Implement stuff. That's what it's all about at the end of the day. And we got some epic master classes and world-leading experts coming your way very soon, so make sure to stay tuned.

Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon