

**THE MODEL
HEALTH
SHOW**

EPISODE 378

**7 Mind-Blowing Ways
That Meditation
Improves Your Health**

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Shawn Stevenson : Welcome to The Model Health Show. This is fitness and nutrition expert Shawn Stevenson and I am so grateful for you tuning in with me today.

I am pumped about this episode, we're going to be diving deeper into a subject we've touched on many times throughout the years and we've had on some incredible experts as well.

But you know how we like to do it, we want to do these masterclasses on these subjects. And today's master class is on the actual science behind meditation and I think it's really going to rock your world.

Now, we all have a different story and how we come into our dedication and love of health and wellness. I know for me fitness was my first inroads. I grew up being an athlete, playing sports that kind of thing, but I found out that there's a big difference between fitness and health.

I lost my health when I was just 20 years old and I was a very fit person from the outside if people were to see me on the outside, I looked fit, but I was not very healthy. And from there, in recovering my health and taking my health to another level that I didn't even know existed, my inroads for that was nutrition, food was a big catalyst for me.

Because I just had this flip switched in my mind to just realize that every bite of food that I eat is literally making up what my body is made of. And I get to pick what that is, it became very powerful and empowering for me. And that was another inroads or pivot, so it started with fitness and fitness coupled with



nutrition, epic changes, right?

But nothing, nothing in my life in the success that I've seen in the different areas of my life whether it's my physical health, whether it's my relationship, whether it's my career and impact, nothing has impacted my life and benefited me more than meditation has.

And so I want to share some of the actual science and the reasons why this has been such a big impact in my life and also so that you can have some of the tools and insights and the value proposition for you to utilize it as well or to just cement in something you're already doing, or for you to possibly grab this tool and utilize it because now we're tapping into a different level of your thinking and why it matters.

And today it matters more than ever. And again, meditation is hot right now, meditation is hot like Hansel in Zoolander, "Hansel, so hot right now." It's hot right now. And again, I'm not just saying this from my perspective.

If you look at the clinical trials, randomized clinical trials which is the gold standard and they're very expensive, very time-intensive to do, if we go back to just 1995 through 1997, there was one clinical trial, randomized controlled trial on meditation. Then if we jump 2004-2006, not too long ago, there was just 11.

Now, 2013- 2015 there were almost 250 randomized, controlled clinical trials on meditation, something happened and the benefits that have been seen in these different trials are what we have access to but a lot of people don't know about, so that's what I am going to be sharing with you today.

So again, really, really pumped about this I think you're going to get a lot out of this. Now when we talk about meditation, we generally think about stress reduction, we think about the different impacts on our cognitive function even,



but we're going to dig even deeper into what does that actually look like.

And meditation obviously is associated with reduced stress. But I wanted to, before we get into the content share something that is as far as meditation is concerned and reducing stress, there's no greater food and/or medicinal herb and/or medicinal mushroom associated with relaxation, meditation even than Reishi mushroom coupled with a reduction in stress, increase in longevity, and even improves sleep.

If you take a look at a study, and this was published in Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior peer-reviewed journal they found that the medicinal mushroom Reishi it was able to significantly decrease sleep latency, so this means that Reishi helps folks to fall asleep faster.

They also found that Reishi was able to increase overall sleep time and to improve the quality of sleep because again, it's not just about the quantity, it's the quality of those minutes that you're asleep. And so Reishi was found to actually improve and increase non REM, deep anabolic sleep.

So pretty impressive benefits, I love Reishi, in the evening sitting down and having a cup of Reishi, getting ready for bed, winding down. About 30- 45 minutes before bed is just something that I've implemented in my process, in my nighttime routine for a couple of years now. I don't do it every day, but most days, and I definitely notice the difference.

So pop over there, check them out, where I get my Reishi from is Four Sigmatic, it's foursigmatic.com/model, that's F-O-U-R-S-I-G-M-A-T-I-C.com/model, you get 15 percent off of their Reishi.

This is where I get it from because they do a dual extraction, so this means there's a hot water extract and an alcohol extract to actually get the nutrients that we're



talking about. When you hear a study like this, what is the extraction method used, right? So now you're getting everything in the Reishi to ensure you're getting these benefits.

Alright, so pop over there, check them out, it's a foursigmatic.com/model, you get 15 percent off the Reishi, they've got Chaga, so many other incredible medicinal mushrooms, organic, dual extracted, done right. So pop over there, check them out, foursigmatic.com/model. And now, let's get to the Apple podcast review of the week.

iTunes review: Another 5-star review titled "I am so addicted to this podcast" by Sabine mm. "I am considering becoming a truck driver just so I can listen all day long to these podcasts. All podcasts have so much great info. Health, brain, diet, working out, etc. Amazing guests come to the show. My brain is so happy and full when I listen to these. I listen to the podcast when I get ready in the morning, when I prepare dinner, lunch, breakfast and when I drive to work."

Shawn Stevenson: That's got to be one of the best compliments I've ever heard, taking up a new form of employment and driving more just to listen to this show, that is so epic, thank you so much for sharing that. And everybody, thank you for leaving these reviews over on Apple Podcasts, it means so much to me, it really just keeps me fueled up to keep this thing going.

And if you've yet to do so, please pop over there and leave a review for the show or if you're watching this on YouTube, or you're listening on a different platform or on iHeart Radio, Spotify you can leave us a review, leave a comment, please do so I appreciate it so much. And on that note, let's get to our topic of the day.

Today we're going to be covering 7 mind-blowing ways that meditation can actually transform your health. Now again, you're going to want to take some notes or just really tune in and listen because we're going to go through a lot of different studies and some stuff that a lot of people haven't heard about yet, as



far as meditation is concerned.

#1 And so in these 7 ways, we're going to start off with number one, we're looking at the really phenomenal benefits that meditation has on your immune system. So listen to this, meditation has a significant and measurable impact on your immune system and this is reported by the peer-reviewed medical journal Psychosomatic Medicine and also OBM Integrative and Complementary Medicine.

And some of the latest studies have revealed that a meditation practice can enhance the function of your natural killer cells. So these are cells that are given the responsibility of tracking down and taking out foreign pathogens in your system, so it's helping these little— when I think about in case cells I think about ninjas, I think about little ninjas in your system but they've got to train, they don't want to be like the Foot Clan ninjas that are just getting beat up by the Turtles all the time, you want them to be like American Ninja Warriors, you want to be able to do a lot of stuff, to kick butt and to take out nefarious things that happen to be roaming in your system.

When I think of our immune cells doing their thing, this reminds me of that movie "Pray for Death" a ninja movie with Shoga Sugi. Like when I was a kid, he had like a metal ninja mask, he looked like the shredder, but he was a good guy though, and just that's what we want our immune system to be playing at that level, right.

So again, meditation has been proven to enhance the capability, the capacity of our natural killer cells, our in case cells. Also, it has been found to improve the activity of our B Lymphocytes and so these are other immune cells, and also our T cells.

And so we did a master class on these different types of immune cells and our immune system overall on a past episode and we'll put that for you in the show



notes, so make sure to check that episode out right after this one, and that's episode 321 and that is The Top 10 Ways to Fortify Your Immune System, we actually break down and dissect how your incredible immune system works.

So again, check that one out right after this one. Now the question might arise how on earth does meditation help to improve the function of your immune system? Well, this is related to this growing field of psychoneuroimmunology and looking at how our thoughts and how our emotions affect what's happening with our immune system.

And we've discussed this many times in the show thus far that your thoughts change the chemistry in your body and your emotions, that's why we feel the way that we feel with our various emotions, there's a change, there is a chemical cascade that takes place.

And it's very powerful if you think about it and very empowering that we can change the chemistry, we can change what's happening with our hormones, with our neurotransmitters, with all of our internal organs by changing the way that we're thinking. So it's really, really powerful.

And an example of this in action, it's well documented that regular exercise supports the immune system and reduces the incidence of a severely of colds and cases of flu. But there was a study published in the journal Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses, found that meditation is even more effective than exercise at preventing in reducing the severity of colds and cases of flu.

What? That's incredible. How do we not know this? It's flu season right around this time that this episode is coming out, nobody's talking about sitting your behind down and doing a meditation practice to reduce your incidence of having a cold or flu or even reducing the severity or duration of the cold and flu by implementing this.

And when you see the graphs and the numbers in this study, it's pretty jaw-dropping to see how much a meditation practice can boost your immune system and help you defend off flu and colds and also to speed the recovery.

There was like 50 percent faster recovery for folks who were in the study doing the meditation practice, so really profound stuff. We're going to dig in deeper on what's going on behind the scenes within our bodies allowing meditation to be so powerful and supporting our health.

Alright, so that's just number one, alright, number one benefit of meditation practice is the impact that it has on your immune system. And your immune system is really your defense system, there is a lot of stuff we're exposed to on a day to day basis and meditation makes that ninja system work better.

#2 Now we're going to move on to number 2 on our list of the 7 mind-blowing ways that meditation changes your health. And number 2 meditation has been clinically proven to improve your sleep quality. So the American Academy of Sleep Medicine published research showing that meditation is an effective treatment for insomnia.

The study showed that over 2 months study period sleep latency, meaning fall asleep faster, total sleep time, total wake time, so this means that there's a reduction in time being awake once folks go to sleep; wake after sleep onset, sleep efficiency, so overall sleep quality and also symptoms of depression were all improved in patients who utilized meditation.

Again, this was just a 2-month study period and meditation is found to be as effective or more effective than a lot of the prescribed sleep medications out there. It's free, there are no side effects and we need to have more conversations about this, more people need to know about these benefits.



And so what's happening behind the scenes, how is meditation able to make these improvements in folks that are struggling to sleep. Well, one of the big things that we see with meditation is a proactive kind of voluntary change in our brain waves and that's exactly what we're seeing with our sleep, there's a correlated change in our brain waves, that's how we know that we're sleeping.

This is how scientists can measure our sleep and our sleep quality is seeing us changing what's happening in our brain waves. And so right now we're in a normal, waking state which is Beta, we're in a Beta kind of high-frequency brain wave pattern, or we can get into a little Gamma, a little Bruce Banner thinking all right.

So we go from there, from beta into a more alpha wave, so this is a little bit slow down, more focused, this is where a lot of, when we hear about flow taking place we're more in an alpha brain wave state, more relaxed, calm, but we transition, all of us transition through these stages each and every night when we're going to sleep.

So from Alpha, we move there into Theta, and Theta is this very interesting state where we're really transitioning into deeper levels of sleep. And so Theta is where we see a lot of intuition, this concept of intuition which if we're looking at this from a science perspective it's advanced pattern recognition, right and more creativity, more ideas, and we see that in Alpha as well but Theta is where a lot of this interesting stuff takes place.

But from Theta we move into Delta, and Delta is associated with deep sleep. And so with meditation, we know that advanced meditators can even get themselves into a Delta frequency and get all the associated benefits from that Delta sleep, so Delta is where we're seeing a lot of anabolic hormone production, repaired of enzymes, our body is really at a different level of healing in Delta.



But all of these different stages matter, but meditation is a way again voluntarily training our brain to be able to change our brain waves, we're able to conscientiously, purposefully do that. And so what was found is that, and this was again, from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, found that meditating in the morning is proven to help test subjects sleep better in the evening.

You're creating a conscious neural pathway to relaxation. So it doesn't matter that you are— because a lot of us might think, "Well should I meditate before I go to bed?" It's a great idea to meditate in the morning to start your day and to practice creating these neural pathways so that you can tap into it really whenever you want to.

And also this neural pathway is connected with relaxation a buffer against stress, and also a profound sense of presence that will help you to sleep better in the evening. All right, so that's how it works. And another study, and this was published in Biological Psychology discovered that meditation increases the release of melatonin.

So this glorified sleep hormone that everybody's talking about, you increase your production and release of melatonin through meditation. Incredible, incredible stuff. So that's number 2 on our list of the 7 ways, these 7 mind-blowing ways that meditation changes your health.

#3 And now we're going to get into number 3. And this one is, I love this one, this one I'm excited about. Number 3 is meditation has been clinically proven to increase your lifespan.

All right, now listen to this— researchers at the University of California, San Francisco have uncovered that meditation has a major impact on your lifespan, specifically, meditation appears to protect and even extend the length of your telomeres.

We talked about telomeres before here on the show, in one of the first podcasts we talk about telomeres. I was there, front center when this science really came out and we had one of the authors actually who was involved in this study, on the show, Elissa Epel, Dr. Elissa Epel, and we'll put that for you guys in the show notes as well.

And she worked with Dr. Elizabeth Blackburn who won the Nobel Prize for her discovery of an enzyme called telomerase, that can actually add length back onto your telomeres and if you are just like, "What is a telomere?" Just to break this down really simply, we've used this analogy before, I think it is a great analogy.

If you take a look at your tennis shoes or, I'm here in LA so they call them sneakers here. But why do we call them tennis shoes, I'm from the Midwest, we call them tennis shoes but hardly anybody plays tennis. Anyways, the bottom line is this, at the end of your shoestrings, there are those little plastic endcaps right, little plastic casings at the end of them. They're called aglets, I believe.

Now, if you have those aglets clipped off and get rid of that, or even a piece of it breaks off what happens to your shoe strings— they start to fray, and if you've ever tried to lace up, like put the shoestring through the holes and your plastic casing has fallen off or broken off it sucks, you've got to put some spit on it and twist it up, try to get it— I'm sorry, it's gross.

But that's what we have to do because our shoestrings have started to fray. So our telomeres are sort of like those encasings on for us biologically on our chromosomes. So our chromosomes contain our genetic information, our DNA, our genetic information is enclosed in our chromosomes.

And as those telomeres, as we go through life, our telomeres shorten and our telomeres, the biggest thing I want to get from this in this discussion around

telomeres, this is our number one form of measurement that we have today in science for biological aging.

We can see how old you are biologically, not chronologically, because by testing telomeres we see that some folks might be chronologically 45 years old, biologically they can be 60, biologically they can be 25. I've seen this time and time again.

A specific example jumped into my head, somebody who is 39 years old, their telomeres told the story that they were really biologically 25 years old. So they were a lot younger, and you can see it, you could see the appearance, you can monitor the stuff you suspected from their lifestyle practices as well.

So we know that there are things that can shorten our telomeres faster, so speed up your biological aging and we also know there are things that can prevent that accelerated loss of telomeres and now we know there are things that can actually add a length back onto your telomeres preventing your chromosomes from eventually breaking down and fraying like your shoestrings, unraveling and having this senescence take place, right this kind of premature breakdown of the capacity of your chromosomes. I hope that makes sense.

And so telomerase is the enzyme that can add length back onto telomeres. So with this said, meditation is one of those things very bluntly can stop the breakdown of your telomeres. So I thought this was really fascinating and I want to share this with you— this was a study and this was published in the journal Cancer and they monitor the telomere length of 88 distressed breast cancer survivors.

And they were randomly selected to participate in either mindfulness meditation, supportive group therapy or no additional interventions. And after a 3 month study period it was found that the cancer survivors who implemented either the

mindfulness meditation or the group expressive therapy had no additional loss in their telomere length.

So battling with these very stressful condition treatments for cancer which are very dangerous and harmful as well, no additional loss to the telomere length, while the telomeres of the cancer survivors who did not participate in either of those groups continued to shorten. Meditation stopped the process, it stopped their biological aging from taking place, the accelerated biological aging.

Why does this matter in the context of cancer? Well, there's early evidence that suggests that shortened telomeres are associated with the likelihood of surviving several diseases including breast cancer, testicular cancer, heart disease, the list goes on and on.

If your telomeres are shorter, your likelihood of illness and reduced potentiality of recovering from the illness goes down and the longer telomeres in these different studies, these different clinical trials are generally thought to help to protect us from chronic illnesses.

So being biologically younger, you are more fortified and protected and have a more robust level of health that protects you from these different diseases associated with aging. And so what are we seeing today? We're seeing accelerated aging processes take place in different people.

I'm a great example of that. When I was 20 years old I was diagnosed with an illness that is usually reserved for folks who are much older. I basically had arthritis of the spine, right, degenerative bone disease, degenerative disc disease. I broke my hip as a teenager, right? When you hear somebody broke their hip it's joked about as usually reserved for folks who are much older.

How on earth did that happen to me? I had accelerated my aging process and the



beautiful part is, by implementing a lot of the things that we talk about here on The Model Health Show I was able to reverse my biological aging, I couldn't explain it in the beginning.

Now we have the science to affirm what took place. So no matter where you are right now, we can activate some of these things whether it's through our nutrition, our movement practices, our sleep practices, meditation now and it's taking those things that make sense for us.

You don't have to do everything, but you need to do something and finding those pieces that really work best for you and your schedule as well. So you don't have to sit, if you don't have 30 minutes in the morning, you got 5 kids, you've got 2 puppies and a spouse and a job like it's a lot.

5 minutes of mindfulness meditation, and we'll talk about some of these different types of meditation to close out the show today. But just implementing a little bit of brain training can be incredibly beneficial, 5 to 10 minutes.

And so I just wanted to share this in the context of even a chronic illness and talking about how meditation can literally increase our lifespan, but not just our lifespan, our healthspan. It's different because you can live to 80 and not have what we would consider robust health and functionality, you're just making it or you can live to 80 or beyond with great health, vitality, being active, right, that's the picture of health that we want to see.

And so it's so awesome that in this show we get to bring folks who are living that life, folks like Dr. Steven Gundry, folks like Mark Sisson, right, we get to bring these folks who are in their sixties and seventies and just demonstrating what's possible.

So I hope that you're loving this so far and we're at number 3 here on this list of



7 mind-blowing ways that meditation can impact your health. We're going to move on to number 4 now.

#4 And number 4 is the fact that meditation has been clinically proven to enhance your cognitive function, your overall brain health. So what does this look like? Meditation can actually change the physical structure of your brain and it can change the activation patterns of your brain as well.

And so what are we talking about here when we say "change the physical structure of the brain"? Well, we recently had on Dr. Rangan Chatterjee who's best-selling author, he is just killing it in the UK. No, he's not killing it, he's helping it in the context of the medical profession.

And he's had an awesome television show on the BBC, just like so powerful, but one of the things that he shared in his most recent book and on the episode and we'll put that in the shown notes for you guys as well, is that there's this mechanism, it's called a feed-forward mechanism, demonstrating that as we are continuously chronically stressed it changes the physical structure of your brain, it can actually enlarge the parts of your brain associated with stress.

So you can actually grow your amygdala, it can get larger, the part of your brain that's concerned with survival, that's hypersensitive to threats can get bigger based on our exposure to chronic stress.

So it's this feed-forward mechanism, so as we are exposed to more and more stress and not doing anything about it, this part of our brain can grow and here's the catch, the feed-forward mechanism it makes us even more sensitive to stress and so it just becomes this vicious cycle, because that part of the brain has begun to take a greater place of dominates. So I hope that makes sense.

Meditation does the opposite, right, so we're looking at growing and enhancing



parts of the brain associated with cognitive wellbeing, with calm, with focus, with the ability to buffer and hedge against stress and just to enhance pathways of happiness.

And in fact all the way back in 2012 neuroscientists demonstrated significant changes in the brain activity in subjects who have learned to meditate and here's the thing— this change that takes place in the brain actually held steady even when they're not meditating, so the work that you're doing, the practice of meditation carried over when you were not meditating, right. So the test subjects who employed this changed the way their brain was actually functioning and the patterns, the physical structure and also the patterns of activity.

Another study, and this was published in the journal Brain Research Bulletin, researchers discovered that people trained to meditate over an 8-week period were better able to control specific types of brain waves called Alpha Rhythms. This goes back to our early conversation about sleep, right?

We talked about the different brain wave states. And so 8 weeks of meditation, we're able to improve the activity of Alpha brain wave states, so that's again, more calm, relaxed, just in tune brain wave states that we all have access to, right? It makes our work easier, it makes us feel less agitated.

When we are in an Alpha state we are less likely to be overly sensitive to external stimuli. All right, so it's hedging us against that. Now the lead author in this study, this is MIT neuroscientist said, "These activity patterns are thought to minimize distractions, to diminish the likelihood that stimuli will grab our attention and our data indicate that meditation training makes you better at focusing, in part by allowing you to better regulate how things that arise will impact you."

It's taking back control of our minds. And so they were not hyperactive or excessively sensitive to the stuff going on in external world, or even in our



internal world, stuff that comes up for us. And one of the meditation practices is simply monitoring your thoughts and not being attached to them, because thoughts come and go and we think of some really crazy, weird stuff, all of us do.

And sometimes we can latch onto those thoughts, it can create fear in us and it's not even something that is real. It can create agitation, it can create anger, it can create happiness right and we can choose to latch onto any of those things but rather than us being a victim to the external the world and also just the chatter in our minds, having a meditation practice makes us more resilient in consciously creating our experience here on this planet. So I hope that makes sense.

So changes in our brain health, cognitive function is clinically proven via meditation practice. Now, I can't talk about cognitive function, focus, Alpha brain wave states without talking about a nutritional component. And I've been a fan of this for many years and this is one of the very few supplements that have double-blind placebo-controlled trial specifically for that supplement.

Because again, it's very time intensive and very expensive to put these types of studies together. But there's a double-blind clinical trial that was conducted by the Boston Center for memory and it found improvements versus a placebo in memory, brainwave patterns and focus when utilizing Alpha brain from Onnit. So this is a nootropic that is derived from Earth-grown nutrients.

And one of the most fascinating things that I saw when reviewing this study was the drastic improvement in something called verbal learning memory, so this is where you are picking up and remembering things that you're hearing right, things that you're listening to right now, for example, via the podcast, your brain is able to absorb and to allocate and to hold onto more of the data when you're utilizing Alpha brain. What? Powerful. So powerful, so cool.

And this is the flagship product from Onnit and there's 10 percent off for

everything that they carry via The Model Health Show over at Onnit, so go to onnit.com/model, that's O-N-N-I-T, so it's Onnit, O-N-N-I-T.com/model you get the 10 percent off their Alpha brain, their Shroom tech Sport and their incredible proteins, their foods, so many cool things, their fitness equipment.

But definitely if you're interested in tapping into that alpha brain wave state, and if you are somebody who is looking at different nootropics out there, which there's a big shift taking place in the nutrition world and in science looking at nootropics right now, thanks to movies like Limitless, just like being able to tap into this higher level of cognitive function into the human brain.

Now we use all of our brains, we just might not be using it very well. So saying out there that we only use a certain percentage of our brain, that's not true, that was not from science that was from the personal development realm, right. But we do know that oftentimes we're not utilizing our brains to the best of their ability.

Nutrition impacts that, obviously, because our brains are made of the nutrients that we consume and also our first signals to fire, the electrical energy that is taking place in our brain or heart or anywhere else, depends on having that nutritional currency. So definitely head over there check them out, Onnit.com/model, 10 percent off everything they carry including the Alpha brain.

#5 And so now let's jump into number 5 on our list. And when I just did that, if you're seeing this video, I thought about the Janet Jackson, it was "I miss you much video" she was like 5, 4, 3, 2 and I was like, "How does she not put the middle finger up?" When she did the countdown on her hand.

Never mind, sorry just where my mind goes. All right, so now we're going to jump into number 5 on our list of 7 mind-blowing ways that meditation impacts your health. And number 5 is meditation has been clinically proven to influence your

outer appearance as well, not just what's going on in our internal world and what's happening with our biochemistry, but literally it can change our physical appearance.

Listen to this, there are different parts of this and it is so crazy, we can just talk about one area, just even in the impact that meditation could potentially have on our skin. But what I want to look at is a weight loss study.

This research is coming from McGill's department of psychology and educational and counseling psychology and they conducted a review of 19 studies from the past decade examining how effective meditation strategies can be at combating obesity. And this research is just fascinating.

And they found that meditation in and of itself is largely effective at reducing obesity-related eating behaviors. And in fact, the researchers found that gathering and looking at all the data a mindfulness meditation practice was better than lifestyle changes, including diet changes and exercise changes at maintaining lower body weight. So long term, having this mindfulness meditation practice was more effective at weight loss and keeping the weight off. Really, really cool stuff.

And essentially what the researchers demonstrated was that meditation can change the way that you associate with yourself, that internal monologue, internal dialogue is going on within our own being.

So looking at and helping you to better associate with your thoughts, internally your emotions, your emotions involving food and eating and also your emotions and thoughts involving the outside world as well.

So meditation helps you to better associate with yourself and with the outside world, according to these researchers. So they found that the meditators were

much more aware of their bodies' cues, their internal cues of stress, of hunger and things like that and being able to properly see them and put them in the proper perspective.

So for example, when I was younger and I'd get a little hungry I'd be like, "I'm starving." I was nowhere near starving, all right. But it's just something we say and I'm just looking for food and I'm not really even hungry.

I'm probably looking back on the way that I used to live my life, I was probably mad thirsty, I was probably super thirsty, I had just eaten probably you know an hour or two earlier but it just became his habitual thing and so just a little bit of that internal feedback that I'm hungry, I'd be looking for some food, something to go snack on, usually a Twinkie.

I'm just going to throw that out there, with a hook up at the Hostess factory we can go there and rather than buying it in the store we can go to the Hostess factory was there in St. Louis and go to, there's like a thrift market inside of there, instead of getting 2 for 99 cents Honey Bun, we can get it for like 10 cents.

What do you think I'm going to do, do you think I'm going to get one? I'm getting 10, all right, Hostess Honey Bun was my, I am going to say it was my kryptonite but I guess it made me stronger. I don't know, it was defeating me but at the same time making me happy. It was hapy kryptonite, alright, haptonite. Okay, so I'll make a print out of that and put it on a T-Shirt, hashtag it, or whatever. Haptonite. So it was my haptonite.

But being able to have a practice where you can see these internal cues, these body cues associated with food and eating and cravings, it's really, really, really powerful, and just overall emotional regulation.

So that's how meditation, one aspect of how it can influence weight loss and long



term weight loss, it's not just having a practice where you're trying to watch what you eat and exercising, because those things might not be sustainable, if you don't change the mindset. This is changing how you associate with your body and the world around you, really interesting.

Now there are several other studies that affirm how meditation can affect our physical appearance and there are a lot of really interesting pieces of data looking at how this affects our skin health. But what I wanted to do rather than citing these smaller studies is to look at a really interesting study involving more of a severe skin issue when we're talking about something like psoriasis.

And so this study was conducted at the Department of Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. And what they were doing was looking at the results for test subjects who were undergoing phototherapy, so a light therapy to treat their psoriasis and photochemotherapy treatment as well.

So they had a control group who was just doing that, that was just utilizing the standard of care treatment for psoriasis, and a study group who also utilize a mindfulness meditation practice, here's what they found.

They discovered that test subjects who were utilizing the mindfulness meditation practice in addition to their standard of care phototherapy treatment and/or photochemotherapy treatment had a dramatic improvement, faster results, better results, for folks who are utilizing a meditation practice as well.

So everybody saw improvement in the study, however, they saw faster results and better results when folks were utilizing the conventional treatment and meditation as well. What? It doesn't make any sense. How can that help your skin to improve and get better faster than these different conventional treatments?

Well, just to kind of synthesize and look at a piece of this, and this just goes back



to one of the hallmark things that people look to meditation for, our skin is really an out-picturing of our nervous system. Our skin is like one of the first things to develop that kind of springs off of our nervous system when we're in development, when our actual, when we're being developed into our little zygotes and our little fetuses, as we're growing and developing.

This is a major part of how we sense the world, our skin is our first exposure to the outside world. And what we're doing instead of understanding something like that, we're trying to like rub on some Proactive, or whatever that is and the Neutrogena face wash, just trying to hit it from the outside but your skin is a representation of what's happening internally, right. And we know that, for example, our skin is influenced by what's happening with our hormones.

Our skin can be influenced by stress and these studies are affirming that to a degree that we can really start to be more empowered and not just— of course, topical stuff matters right because your skin eats from the outside in, but again what you eat as well is going to show up on your skin. And also your internal dialogue, your thoughts, your level of stress as well.

Because we know that this inflammation creates a cascade of hormones, these catecholamines that can negatively influence our skin health, that can create inflammation. And so this is one of the most profound things, we'll talk about this in a moment. Seen with meditation is that there's a reduction of these catecholamines and a reduction of inflammation.

And if we're looking at skin health the name itself information, we're talking about a little bit of an internal fire. This is a flare-up of our immune system that's supposed to be protecting us, but when we are even mentally thinking that we're in a stress state, that we need to be protected from something, inflammation can ensue.

And so that's just a small picture of how meditation can influence our skin health as well as so many different areas of our lives, but I wanted to share that with you. So in essence, meditation is one of those practices that can help to give you the glow, give you have Bruce Leeroy, that glow. I got to play a little bit of that.

[playing the song "The Last Dragon- The Glow"]

When I was a kid I wanted to have the glow, right, he got the glow, who's the master, he is like, "I am." And he got the glow. But you can get that as well, my man, Bruce Leeroy, yes his name was Bruce Leeroy, had a meditation practice along with his martial arts training, alright, so you can get the glow utilizing meditation.

#6 All right, so let's move on to number 6, we're at number 6 on our list here of 7 mind-blowing ways that meditation can impact your health. Number 6 is meditation is clinically proven to reduce anxiety, symptoms of anxiety and symptoms of depression as well. Researchers at Harvard University published new research affirming that meditation can dramatically reduce symptoms of depression and even change the physical makeup of the brains of depressed patients.

We've already talked a little bit about that and how meditation can actually change the physical structure of your brain. It's also been shown to significantly reduce symptoms of anxiety, a meditation practice. In fact, there's a recent study, and that was published in Experimental Biology demonstrated that even a single meditation session was able to reduce anxiety in test subjects.

In this study people with anxiety showed reduced stress on their artery, so they actually had objective measures, not just looking, like asking them subjective matters though, not just asking them "Do you feel more relaxed," but looking at their biomarkers.

And they found that a one-hour introductory meditation session reduced the stress on their arteries, also their internal biomarkers, so these inflammatory biomarkers can be measured and meditation just one session helped these folks to improve and reduce anxiety. Super fascinating stuff.

And so this is what people are generally when they think of meditation they think of this topic, right, they think of reduced stress, they think of reduced anxiety. Anxiety is at epidemic proportions in our world today.

And we did a show not too long ago looking at some of the mechanisms behind anxiety and some very practical solutions as well with Craig Ballantyne, and so we'll put that in the show notes for you guys as well, so make sure if you want a little bit more information on that topic, go and check that out.

But again, this is what we associate meditation towards a lot of times is reduce stress, reduce anxiety and we know just subjectively that it works, but now we've got a little bit of additional science and more are coming out right now. I already in the very beginning of the show I mentioned how many peer-reviewed studies are taking place just in the last like 5 years, it's just going to continue to grow. Meditation's hot right now, and it's just going to get hotter and hotter.

And the crazy thing is, this is something that has been utilized, practiced for thousands of years, thousands of years, and now today, is the time when we need it most. We're hyper distracted, we've got so many different influences, we've got so many different opportunities, we've got so much data just bum rushing us, constantly, flooding us from all directions.

There's never been more to do, more to see, more to experience and we need to have some practical management because the most important experience in all of that great stuff that we have access to, because it can be a big burden to us,

the most important thing that we have access to, that we need to cultivate is a relationship with ourselves, and our inner dialogue and how we're managing all of the exposure that we all have coming at us today.

So a lot of good stuff but it can be too much and we know that. This helps us to take control, internal control of how we're feeling, being able to better manage our thoughts and our thought processes.

One of the things that I saw very early on with my meditation practice was I realized I had the ability to choose, I had an ability to choose what I want to think. Whereas just before I was just a victim of my thoughts, they were just happening and wherever they wanted to take me that's where I'd go.

I realized like, "Wait a minute, I can take that thought out and implant something else." It's kind of like you know you get a song stuck in your head, maybe it's you got "Bad Bunny" stuck in your head, Bad Bunnies popping, that Bad Bunny and Drake song, right and you got that going and you're just like, "Alright, enough with the Bad Bunny."

And so you literally play something else right, you go and put a different song on to get that song out of your head, or you can conscientiously choose like, "Let me play a different song in my head." But just trying to get the song out of your head on its own just don't think about it, don't think— it's very difficult to do.

Because your brain is kind of it's like a radio station right, there's always something playing right. And so we can consciously, "Let me go ahead and put on you know a little bit of the Judds, a little Reba McEntire or the Judds Mama he's crazy over me," you want to get it to a whole different vibe, right.

You can do that more efficiently, more easily, more gracefully through meditation practice, like it really helped me to wake up to my ability to think the



thoughts that I want to think and to not be the victim of my thoughts. And not to be a victim of the thoughts that surround me.

We have sovereignty, we have the power within ourselves to choose how we want to think, who we want to be, how we want to feel. But we give our power away and we don't even realize it. And oftentimes many of us go through life not realizing that we have the power to choose.

So that's why I'm such a big advocate because I've seen the firsthand experience in my own life and for us to think like, "I don't have 10 minutes to meditate," and not see all of the massive value you get from 10 minutes, just to go and do more stuff, we're really missing the point.

We all have access to this and it's the most beautiful experience, not always easy because there's work that can be done in those sessions, but there's a lot of beauty to behold as well. And so that's number 6 on our list here, and we're going to get into number 7.

#7 So our final one here, at 7 mind-blowing ways that meditation can have a massive impact on your health, number 7 is the clinical data we now have showing that meditation can improve your heart health, your blood pressure.

Now this research is from the Medical College of Georgia and they found that meditation was able to lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke in their study participants.

And numerous studies also demonstrate that meditation can actually reduce chronic pain associated with inflammation, and if we're talking about heart disease, if we're talking about heart attacks and stroke, there is a huge inflammatory component there that meditation helps to address as well.

Now again, this isn't the end all be all, but we have evidence that it does help. Adding this practice in with heart-healthy nutrition, with heart-healthy movement practices, you're just stacking conditions in your favor that buffer you against any type of cardiovascular drama that could take place.

And not only has meditation been found to decrease levels of inflammation, but a recent report published in *Frontiers in Immunology* also found that meditation actually can down-regulate genes associated with inflammation. What? We're saving this for last.

Meditation can change your genetic expression, literally change what your genes are doing. We have this whole field of science now, this is where we're at today and looking at epigenetics and understanding that our lifestyle factors can influence the expression of our genes, meditation is one of the practices.

A study looking at 20,000 different genes influenced by meditation and many of those genes having different components associated with inflammation, a meditation practice can down-regulate the expression of those genes turning off inflammation, turning off genes associated with inflammatory processes, really remarkable stuff.

And again, the list goes on and on, but I wanted to hit 7 powerful ways that meditation, digging into the science, the practicality not just this is some woo, woo, whatever, I'm talking about the real deal science in looking at how meditation is a very practical, necessary thing in our world today.

So again, I hope you got a lot of value out of that piece and just really quickly I'm going to take you through a couple of like, so you're just like, "I want to do it, I want to meditate," or you know maybe get recharged and invigorated or maybe you want to pivot and try different type of meditation, there's so much you have access to.

And I just want you to select something that feels good to you. All right, so first of all, I think the very best way, not the only way but from my perspective, the very best way to implement a meditation practice is to learn from somebody, to have a teacher, to get some instruction first hand in meditation.

Now yoga studios 10 years ago, you didn't see it. Now you can't not see it, all right. Meditation, I'm telling you right now, you're going to see more and more meditation studios popping up in your local area.

Again, we just went through a lot of the science and practicality and people just subjectively, it's just something once you have that experience you want to engage in it more often. And so you're going to see more and more opportunities.

And so you can just get online in your local area, look for classes you can attend and get some meditation training. Alright, all different types of meditation but just try something. And just a simple, easy on-ramp, we had on a guest, Light Watkins and his book and we'll put that for you guys in the show notes, and he just talks about, I love it so much because it's such an easy onramp for many of us we have this picture of our mind when we're thinking about meditation, we're just like sitting on a hard floor, back straight, you got the mudra jumping off and you got to be in a static position.

And for a lot of people, they're struggling trying to keep their body in position and it's pulling away from their meditation because they are not comfortable. Get comfortable. Right, let's not make it harder to enjoy the process and to get all those benefits we've been talking about, to change what's happening with your brain. If your brain is distracted because you're uncomfortable, what's the point?

And so that's one of the things I really love about Light and that episode, so get



comfortable, learn from somebody, take a class or take some easy onramps from folks like Light who teaches classes but also has information out there to utilize simple meditation practices.

And with that said, there's also a ton of apps available today, meditation apps, you can just download right on your phone. I'm a big fan of guided meditations, especially when you're getting started to have somebody like a virtual teacher to walk you through the process, right.

So we've got apps, we've got guided meditations, there are meditation courses online that you could take. There's a big thing taking place now that is with this label of breath work, right breath work, this is a different kind of intentional form of meditation where we're focused on the breath.

And for me, this is a practice that I really enjoy doing, that I've been doing for many years because your breath is really tied to your nervous system right, and activating the parasympathetic nervous system, your breathing, changing your breathing and taking control of that autonomic process of breathing, which again, you're breathing is tied to your autonomic nervous system so this is in alignment with your heart beating, with digesting your food, it's all automatic, your breathing is automatic.

But what's different is that you can consciously jump in and grab the wheel or your breathing, so even though it's automatic, now that I'm talking about breathing you're probably thinking about your breathing, you might have taken a deep breath while I've been talking about this, and it's really interesting because were you not breathing before?

We don't really think about it until becomes aware and we can change our breathing. And as you change your breathing and you breathe deeper that relaxation process can start to turn on, right. And so, breathing exercises, you can

go to Dr. Google and what we're going to call YouTube— Professor YouTube and you can get some guided meditations, you can get breathing exercises, you can type that in or breathwork, right there's so much out there that you have access to.

And if you're just like, "I'm just not trying to sit down and focus on my breathing, I'm an active person." First of all, you could definitely do well with some seated meditation but you don't have to, there are many moving meditations that have profound benefits. I talked about these in my book "Sleep Smarter." Chi Gong and Tai Chi and the list goes on and on.

A study conducted at UCLA on 112 test subjects with moderate sleeping complaints found that 16 weeks of Tai Chi improved the quality and duration of their sleep, significantly more than the control group who did not take part in the Tai Chi, changing your brain waves state, moving meditations, so lots of different options for that as well. Different types of yoga as well can be meditative. And just overall, I've mentioned several times through this episode, mindfulness practices.

Mindfulness could be a simple awareness of your breathing, so this ties back to the breathwork, mindfulness could be being with your children and just being completely aware and present. That's one of the things that makes me feel the best and present and locked in.

And even in, especially those times when I've got a lot of stuff going on, if I have opportunity to sit and just like with my younger son Braden today, before school we're just sitting and just looking at him and listening to the sound of his voice, really tuning in and hearing the sound of his voice and seeing his eyes and the movements in his face and his expressions and just really being present and mindful of paying attention in the moment.

There are walking meditations, just being mindful of your feet touching the ground and how you're moving around through the world. The list goes on and on, there are many different mindfulness practices, there is mindful eating practices, that could be a meditation where you're actually there in present with your food, what an idea right, and just paying attention to the flavors and to the feeling and the texture, like just tuning in to being more mindful.

And so again, many different types of meditation practices, but today I hope you got a lot more of the tangible, practical side of meditation and why it's so valuable. And if you did, make sure to share this out with the people that you care about on social media, you can forward them this episode through whatever podcast platform you're listening on, you can email it to somebody, you could just go and grab somebody's phone and just download it and just push play and put up to their face, kindly though, all right, kindly, make it mindful.

But real talk, thank you so much for tuning into the show today, I hope you got a lot of value out of this. And again, if you really got a lot of value out of this, please make sure to share this with the people you care about.

This information is dependent upon you and how we're transforming our culture. I've definitely dedicated hard work to bring you the very best science and education possible, but for us to change the culture and to get this in more people's hands, you're part of this mission with me.

All right, so you're a part of Model Nation and I appreciate you so much. And make sure to tag me as well if you're posting this on social media, I'm at ShawnModel on Instagram and Twitter and on Facebook, I'm at The Model Health Show.

I appreciate you so much, we've got some epic guests, powerful episodes coming your way very soon, so make sure to stay tuned, have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon.

And for more after this show, make sure to head over to 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.

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