

# **THE** MODEL **HEALTH** **SHOW**

**EPISODE 499**

## **6-Pack Secrets & Getting Superhero Fit**

**With Guest Don Saladino**

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**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Welcome to The Model Health Show. This is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. On this episode, we're going to be talking about superhero training. We're going to be talking about taking our health and fitness to another level with a true superhero trainer, somebody who's trained the likes of Ryan Reynolds AKA Deadpool, Sebastian Stan AKA The Winter Soldier, Emily Blunt, who many people are advocating, who are demanding for her to become Mrs. Fantastic, AKA Invisible Woman. Also, David Harbour, who's in the recent, the brand-new Black Widow movie. As of this recording, Black Widow has just come out recently, and he plays Red Guardian, alright? The list goes on and on and on and taking these celebrities and helping them to transform into the superhero status that we see on the big screen. But also, it goes so much deeper than that, because our guest today has really worked over the years with everyday folks, with professional athletes and really helping them to tapping into more of their potential, to really tapping into becoming the best version of themselves.

And that's what it's really about at the end of the day, because as you're going to learn, it's not about having Ryan Reynolds' program or Emily Blunt's program, it's about programming and designing things around what you need right now. And so, very, very excited about this, because we're ushering a new era here with The Model Health Show, we're ushering a new era really with our society at large, because we have a great opportunity right now, there's so much influx. There's a lot of things taking place, a lot of big changes where things were very kind of permanent and cemented earlier on prior to pandemic times, and now things are really shaking up. And with things being shaken up, they're a lot easier to change. And now the question is, what kind of change is that going to be? Is it going to be for the betterment of humanity and our health? Is this going to be about health, or is it going to be about something else? Is it going to be about manipulation, control, and continuing to feed the sick care system that unfortunately as a society our health, our overall fitness and vitality, our functionality has been declining dramatically in recent decades?

I've shared these statistics many times on this show, but I'm going to continue to share them until they really get us to wake up and open our eyes and really jar us to understand how severe the situation is. Whereas this was the vast minority of our society, just 50, 60 years ago, now it is the majority. Right now, here in our society, currently here in the United States, 242 million of our citizens are overweight or obese, alright? 242 million. 130 million of our citizens are right now diabetic or pre-diabetic. Right now, 60% of our citizens have some degree of heart disease already. Right now, about 115 million of our citizens are regularly sleep-deprived, yet 70% of our citizens are on pharmaceutical drugs, as we speak already. Has it made the situation better? We need to get honest about that. Medication has its place, but why are we so severely

disconnected from what health looks like? Why are things getting worse with our health when we have so many advancements that have been made in technology and with our understanding about health and the human body, right?

Now the question is, this science that has come forward recently, number one, are we doing it, are we applying the things that we've been discovering? And largely no, we're not, because unfortunately, for the Collegiate Education to take place and to become widespread through those means, through teaching up in training new physicians and new nutritionists, those changes take time, it takes quite a bit of time for the old pages to kind of die out and to become obsolete the old textbooks, and for the new cutting-edge information to come forward. And this is why mediums like this are so important and so powerful right now at this time in human history. Because you can get immediate access to the person who's running the clinical trial on sleep deprivation and the effects on body composition and obesity. You can get immediate access to the very best trainer in the world. Truly, if we're talking about the term celebrity trainer and learn his knowledge base first-hand, what is he doing, what is he applying with his clients, you get to learn first-hand, this type of thing has never existed before, and it's such a great gift.

But also, it comes with this parallel of right now, even though we have access to this kind of information, there's also a lot of noise, there's also a lot of nefarious information that is detracting from our progress in our health as humanity. There's many distractions even for our mind, so we can't even tap in and get connected and execute all the things that we learn. So, this is so much bigger than just getting fit and having six-pack abs, but if we're going to learn about that, we've got the guy here on this episode today, to talk about that and to teach you what are the things that are proven to get you to that position? So really pumped for this episode, and as I mentioned also, we're dealing with a very complicated time right now with our health, and so, obviously, your nutrition is a major component of this, and the biggest underlying facet of this is really realizing that our immune system itself is literally made from the food that we eat, alright?

And the vast majority of our immune system being located in our gut, alright? This very, very thin lining that is separating the microbiome and a vast array of microbes existing in our gut from our immune system itself. And within this immune system, it is right there in our gut front line, because what we bring in through our diet, what we're eating, what we're putting in from the external environment into our body is a top priority of concern. Because number one, our body is going to hopefully be able to make human tissue like our immune system, for example, our immune cells as well, out of the foods that we're bringing in, but also, it needs to be there to defend against pathogens that might be coming in, it needs to be there to...

To regulate any kind of environmental toxins and poisons that might be coming in, so it's a very energy-intensive experience in the system, but one of the big underlying issues today, as we know, has to do with inflammation, so we're talking about a very pro-inflammatory pathogen that's on everybody's mind, but it's not a virus or a bacteria that does a thing, it's not... The inflammation itself doesn't come from the virus, it's the body's response, it's your immune system's response to the pathogen that's creating the inflammation, so we want that inflammatory response, which is basically sending out a distress signal to the immune system to come and take care of the thing. We want it to be appropriate, we want to make sure that it's not going too far in creating chronic inflammation. And so, what are some of the things with our nutrition that we can do to address this inflammation? Well, a study published in the European Journal of Nutrition uncovered that in addition to down-regulating inflammatory cytokines... You might hear this word cytokines, and it starts to bring up that term cytokine storm, that's become so popular.

But in addition to down-regulating inflammatory cytokines, curcumin, the bioactive, the dominant bio-active compound found in turmeric also has been found to up-regulate the activity of adiponectin and other satiety-related hormones, finding that turmeric has been proven to improve insulin sensitivity, reduce blood fats, and found to directly act upon our fat cells and our fat cells can be an underlying trigger or a mechanism for inflammation themselves, that pro-inflammatory state with our fat cells sending out a distress signal and creating more inflammation. We talked about that recently on the inflammation master class that we did right here on the Model Health Show. But another really interesting thing about turmeric and curcumin are its anti-angiogenesis properties, and angiogenesis is the creation of new blood vessels and a pathway for cells to be able to get nourishment, but also cancer cells use angiogenesis for them to grow unchecked. And so, we want to have foods that have proven selective anti-angiogenesis properties to defend the body against cancer cells, basically to starve cancer cells.

In a study published in the Journal of Nutrition found that curcumin from turmeric is also able to reduce angiogenesis, not just with cancer cells, but also with adipose tissue, so together with its effects on lipid metabolism in adipocytes, the research has noted that it may contribute to lower body fat and reducing weight gain, stating that "Our findings suggest that dietary curcumin may have a potential benefit in preventing obesity."

This is something that I take multiple times a week, I get a supercritical extract, a concentrate of curcumin and turmeric, and one of my favorite formulas is the turmeric complex from Paleovalley, and one of the reasons I really love it is that there's also some fat-soluble components of this, they also have coconut oil within this turmeric complex, so they've got... So, there's organic turmeric, coconut oil, but also one of the bio potentiators being black pepper is in there as well, in the formula. Ginger is in there, as well. It's a really incredible

formula. They do things the right way. Their sourcing is immaculate. Want to make sure that we're paying attention to the supply chain and where our stuff is coming from, that it's done right. So, I absolutely love the turmeric complex from Paleo Valley. Head over to [paleovalley.com/model](http://paleovalley.com/model). That's P-A-L-E-O-V-A-L-L-E-Y.com/model and you're going to get 15% off the turmeric complex, and also, you should know that I'm a major fan of the essential C complex as well with all my favorite vitamin C dense superfoods, Camu Camu berry, Amla berry, Acerola cherry. There is no product like it on the planet.

And of course, they've got some delicious superfood bars as well, and truly superfoods in the real meaning of the word, based on delicious cashew butter, it's got organic blueberries, organic spirulina, Acerola cherry, turmeric... This is so good, so good. If we're talking about a high-quality food bar, so emphasis on food and superfoods, Paleo Valley is it. And if you're interested as well in upgrading the whole Slim Jim paradigm, if you're doing a meat stick, they have 100% grass-fed meat sticks there as well, but their superfood bars are organic packed with dense superfoods, their turmeric complex, their Essential C Complex... Amazing, amazing, amazing. Pop over there, check 'em out, [paleovalley.com/model](http://paleovalley.com/model) for 15% off. Now, let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

**ITUNES REVIEW:** Another five-star review titled, “Fantastic Podcast” by AuntJenny5. “I just found this podcast in the last six or so months. I am sorry I did not find it much sooner. I love the content and format as well as the study-based information that Shawn provides. The content is interesting and relevant. Thank you for your hard work and an amazing podcast.”

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you so much for sharing that, and I appreciate you so much, thank you for sharing that review over on Apple Podcast, and if you have yet to do so, please pop over to Apple Podcast and leave a review for the Model Health Show. And on that note, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Today's guest is Don Saladino, and he is a celebrity fitness trainer in every sense of the word. He's trained some of the most accomplished athletes and movie stars in the world, getting them ready for performance on the field or on the big screen. Some of his clients include Ryan Reynolds, Emily Blunt, Blake Lively, Sebastian Stan, David Harbour, Liev Schreiber, the list goes on and on, and also professional athletes like Dwyane Wade, and he's been working with some of the top golfers in the world... And really, that's one of the places that he got his start in the field, was specializing with golf, as you're going to hear about today as well. So, in this episode, we're going to dive in and talk about the essential need for fitness right now more than ever, but also the accessibility of it, the access being there at a different level than we might realize and tapping into that.

And also, what are some of the foundational things that we can utilize to really tap into our very best level of fitness, no matter where we are in our lives. Alright. So, let's dive into this

conversation with the one and only Don Saladino. My guy, Don Saladino. How you doing, man? Welcome back to the show.

**DON SALADINO:** I'm feeling good, man. Thanks for having me. To Cali. I'm loving this. I'm very excited to be here.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's my pleasure, man. You took the road trip from Vegas, which of course your home base is in New York...

**DON SALADINO:** It is.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And out in Vegas, your wife's hometown, and then the drive from Vegas to here.

**DON SALADINO:** Five hours. But productive. You and I were talking about it earlier. So yeah. No, it was... For us, it's like driving from New York to Vermont, so about five hours is about what I like to handle in one day max. So, it was perfect.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You've got two teens.

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah. I can't believe that. That's crazy. My daughter's going to be 14 and my son will be 13 soon, so...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's amazing. Because those road trips, when you're at that age... If it was back in the day, it's that, are we there yet, are we there yet? But now we've got technology, we've got so many things we could do to make the process...

**DON SALADINO:** It's funny. I was thinking about that on the drive over 'cause my kids didn't say five words to me, 'cause my wife and I were having a meeting, and I was like, what did I do? I was like, oh, I was on my Discman.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** What?

**DON SALADINO:** And I brought that up when I...No, when I used to take road trips with my parents, I was on...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay. I thought you said, Now, I was like, Don...

**DON SALADINO:** No, no, no, no, no, no. I don't even know if you can find one. But I was laughing 'cause I turned to my daughter, I'm like, "You know what a Discman is?" She's like, "What are

you talking about?" And then we were in Vegas, and we saw a phone booth. There was some imagine... Some weird place in one of these shops. I'm like, "You know what a phone booth is?" She's like, "What's a phone booth?" And I'm like, "I'm old."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right. It's so crazy. The world is so different, man. That Discman. How did... What do you even do?

**DON SALADINO:** We used to run with that. You remember when they had the no-skip ones and you'd have the little hand would slip into the back end of it, and you'd run with it, but your arm wouldn't really be moving. It was weird.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Looking like, I don't know, some kind of a supervillain.

**DON SALADINO:** Like Running Man.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, right. So, I've been to your gym in NYC, Drive 495, and I never thought to ask you where the name actually came from.

**DON SALADINO:** Took about... When we... God, we had the place for 15 years. So, our lease expired last May of 2020, so it's no longer, but we... The address was 495 Broadway, and Drive was... It was the combination of having drive in the gym and driving a golf ball because it was a golf fitness facility. And it just... We didn't really love the name, it was something that took us months to think about, and finally, we were like, you know what? Let's just go with this. Whatever. And then some marketing experts that we were friends with were like, oh, we don't really like it. They're going to think of it's the 495, which is like the equivalent of your 405 here. And we just went with it. We didn't really care. And it stuck, and it was part of our 15 years of branding. So, it was very good to me at that place, but it was time to move on.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, you had a really great virtual driving range.

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah. Indoor simulators, a bar, we did corporate events, which actually in '07, in 2007, 2008, just got hammered when... Was it Bear Stearns went under, and Lehman Brothers went under, and we had to restructure most of our business plan 'cause we were doing so much corporate entertaining. And then we evolved to something else, and that's when I kind of got into training a lot of the superheroes, and then my career went in a completely different direction than I imagined it would. So, it doesn't matter.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And that's kind of unique at that time for you to target, I think you were looking at, let me work with golfers, and that was a big kind of template for you. So, when I first saw the name, I was like, I wonder if this has something to do with golf, and I didn't ask



you about it though. And then I saw the virtual setup, I was like, Man, but I just forgot to ask you about it. So, what got you interested in working with golfers early on?

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah. So, my brother was a professional golfer. He played down the Mini Tours, he was down on the Hooters tour, the Nike tour. And... God, 21 years old, 22 years old, and then decided it just wasn't for him, and then moved back up to New York and became one of the most accomplished Amateur golfers in the Met section. And my brother and I went out to title list, and we went through their whole TPI program, Dr. Greg Rose, Dave Phillips, these guys were geniuses when it came to golf fitness. And we went through their training program, and we said, we might be onto something here. What if we opened this really exclusive club with indoor golf sims, but we had fitness around it? And it was great, but it was also very confusing from a marketing standpoint, 'cause you had golfers coming in going, well, I don't want fitness, I just want golf, and then you had fitness people being like, Well, I'm not a golfer. We still built that membership, but it just took time. It was very hard to scale it. And now you see other facilities opening up that have indoor golf, but they're much more about the entertainment aspect of it and maybe some lessons and stuff like that. But we were the ones who pretty much created it. It's fun to look back on now.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's so powerful. Strength and just functionality, all these things are such a big part of all of these sports now. I remember a time when it was kind of seen as detrimental or even sacrilegious to be lifting weights if you're a baseball player, for example. We had Ozzie Smith on the show, he's like...

**DON SALADINO:** Legend. Greatest shortstop ever, in my opinion.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, man. Me being from St. Louis, it was a dream come true. When I was a kid, my two idols growing up were Ozzie Smith and Michael Jackson. And I tried to wear the thriller jacket to school one day, it did not work out for me, so...

**DON SALADINO:** I think I wore that also. It definitely didn't work out for me.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And having the opportunity to talk with him, I met him at the gym where he's... He was in his 60s, I think, when I first met him. And he was there just working on getting stronger and functionality and just... But he's very early adapter to lifting weights. And he was doing that to extend his career. He had an injury to his rotator cuff, and he wanted to find another way to throw the ball. And so, what he was doing was, a lot of people were looking at him crazy, and he ended up having this incredible longevity. 13 straight Gold Glove awards, and low-key, he was lifting weights, getting stronger. And now it's just commonality.



**DON SALADINO:** It's funny. Another athlete that was like that was Gary Player, golf hall of famer. And everyone's like, well, Tiger Woods brought fitness into golf. Yeah, he popularized it. But Gary Player would... He was literally push-ups and body weight squats with his caddy on his back. And he literally lived by that. And if you look at Mr. Player now, the guy's in incredible shape. He's older, he still swing the club, he looks great, he's always wearing black. He's just cool. But yeah. In my opinion, you have certain athletes that were doing this a long time ago, and they weren't really looked upon as like, Oh wow, well, that's interesting. Like you said, Ozzie doing it, or maybe Nowell Ryan. How did Nowell Ryan get so much longevity? I heard stories of him working out with his arm in a barrel of rice and just rotating... Internal rotation, external rotation, just... Guy pitched for what? 27 years. He blew his arm out at 40. I think it was 46 years old, he threw his last pitch and I think they said it was 97 or 98 miles an hour.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Unbelievable. Unbelievable.

**DON SALADINO:** That to me is like... That's incredible. The guy was 46, he had no hair on his head, and he was throwing the ball 98 miles an hour.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But that's what's possible. That's what's possible for us. And...

**DON SALADINO:** I agree.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Getting stronger is a big part of our longevity. Now, a lot of the science is pointing to... Even our muscles are kind of like a reservoir for anti-aging hormones, and this is... I'm so grateful to have you here to talk about this because right now in our society, there's a lot of challenge with our health, and I think that it's routinely... Unfortunately, you kind of downplayed how important the work is that you provide, which is helping people, because functionality, physical literacy is such a part... A big part of our longevity and our survival as a species. And so, the tools that you bring to the table, I feel like we need to have a Renaissance or... It can be happening right now; I'm hoping that it's happening right now towards looking to how can we become more physically literate and also just overall improving our strength as a species. So how do you see that playing into things right now with all the issues going on...

**DON SALADINO:** Well, it's interesting 'cause I almost look at what you talked about as the... It is the most important stuff, from the sleep and the nutrition and all these other things. For me, exercise is somewhat... It gets over complicated sometimes because I'm not expecting people to be the way that I am. Like I shot content with a friend this morning, we train for probably two and a half hours, which is excessive. I would never expect anyone to do that. But we got out to Muscle Beach, and then we trained in Gold Venice and did all this old school stuff, and we had fun. But I'm not expecting anyone to do that, nor am I even telling them to do that. I'm just asking them to move 10 minutes a day or five minutes a day. And if they're one of these

people who are like, "Oh Don, I just... I want to want it. I just want to be able to get off the couch. I want to be..." Just start with something very... Take a minimalistic approach. Break a sweat, move, get your heart rate pumping, allow your body to just gain a little elasticity, and let's build some confidence. And then in time...

Maybe the question is, "Well, let me try 10 minutes today." The problem that I have in our fitness world is that it's becoming very fluffy. And even though we're getting people off the couch and we're getting them to move, it's all about what new sexy exercise can I show. And then people are looking at this and they haven't really earned the right to even... Most people don't earn the right to do any of the stuff being put on social, unfortunately. But when you take someone who's not used to moving or sitting for eight to 10 hours a day and then they're trying to do a headstand on a BOSU ball, something bad's going to happen. That's a bad example, but...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's a great example.

**DON SALADINO:** But I think you get where I'm getting at, is that what I'm trying to do with the people that I work with is I get them moving. Now, my high-level people, the Ryan Reynolds, the people who are getting ready for these movies and they have to move and they have to have this performance physique, they have to live in this performance physique world, yeah, it's a little bit of a different equation there, but if we get you moving a little bit, you may want to make better choices, then you think about maybe not having the ice cream seven nights a week, and maybe not having the alcohol seven nights a week, and maybe you're even cutting back to three nights. There may still be a problem there, but at least we're going in the right direction, at least we're building a little bit of a good habit.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. That's what it's really all about me. I'm so grateful you said that because it's just going in the right direction. And we tend to have this all-or-nothing mentality a lot of times, and like you said, things can be really overly complicated, especially with the advent of social media being such a dominant force in our lives.

**DON SALADINO:** Oh, I mean, listen, everyone puts up what they want to show you. This morning, I left the gym, I was shot, I went... I met my buddy, this guy, Eric Smalls, who's... His handle's Confused Muscles. He does all the calisthenics, and I was trying to do muscle-ups. I couldn't do muscle-ups. I was like, "Okay, fine, I can't do muscle-ups, big deal, let's go work on other stuff." I'm not sitting there trying to front or trying to play it off like I'm doing... Like, "No, I'll talk about it. Guys, I was tired, I couldn't do a muscle-up. Sorry. Thank you, I think we can move on." But I think a lot of times it gets in people's heads 'cause we're always showing that perfect angle or that perfect shot or that perfect move. And I think, yeah, it's motivating certain people, but I think it's also shedding up a poor light on what fitness is all about.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right, and it's... Really boils down to simplicity. Let's talk about that a little bit because with that simplicity... You said something in our first conversation that I still think about today, which is, "somebody earning the right to do a certain exercise". When you said that, that was a shift in my... Because these are things that I think about, but you put words to it. And so, getting to a place where we earn the right to do more advanced things, what are those foundational things for every one of us that we need to invoke in our lives just for basic physical culture and functionality?

**DON SALADINO:** Move. There's certain things that we need to be able to do in our life. We need to be able to sit on a toilet, it's just how it is. So, am I telling you to put a bar on your back and start squatting 500 pounds? No, but we have to start establishing those basic movements. I think with us and the amount of sitting that we do all the time, we start losing this elasticity in our muscles, and that's why our body really starts feeling like junk. So, on day one, am I taking someone who hasn't moved in 10 years, and I'm going to get them doing plyometrics? No, but the goal is to get those joints, get some lubrication in those joints, get some elasticity in those muscles and get them to the point where I can get them moving again like they did as a kid. Now it's all at a different level 'cause certain people... Yeah, we might not be doing a 50-inch box jump, I accept that, but if I can take someone in their 50s who came in with back pain and in time, maybe work with our team of physical therapists, or maybe work with our team of nutritionists to get inflammation to calm down, and then in time, we see that their body... "Oh wow, sleep's improving. Wow, we got 15 minutes extra sleep every night, 30 minutes extra." "We're in the right direction. How are you feeling?"

Body's feeling better, not feeling so tight. I'm getting out of the car, and I can actually... I feel like I could jog across the street." "Alright, we're into something. Maybe let's start with some light jogging." "Well, how much, like three miles?" "No, like five to 10 seconds. Let's see how your body feels and just re-establishing that movement." And I think when we do that, you would be surprised on how good you can get your body to feel. And I think a lot of us just check out. I think... I'm getting older. Yeah, it's harder to put muscle on. I'm really proud to admit that over the last six months, I lost eight pounds of fat and put on two pounds of muscle for my... I didn't even know I was shooting the cover of Muscle & Fitness till four weeks before. But I came in with a strategy, I came with a plan, I was able to do that naturally at 44 years old. So, for those people saying that you can't do it, well, it's done to a level there. You can argue it to a specific point but I'm proud to say, as I'm getting older, I feel like I'm moving better, I feel like I'm working on things in my life from a rest and recovery standpoint. But for me, it's fun. It's not a job. It's something I really enjoy doing.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, that's the secret, tapping into that fun. And I love the fact that I asked you about fitness, and you immediately deferred to nutrition, sleep, all these other components that... These things matter.

**DON SALADINO:** 'Cause it all... 'Cause you know what? It all works. If you get someone off the couch and you get 'em doing something, just don't hurt 'em. You know what I'm saying? If you're breaking a sweat and they're moving. People are like, "Oh, you don't like burpees." Like, "No, I don't say... I didn't say that. I said I don't like burpees for the majority of the population, 'cause they can't maintain a plank, and they always go into excessive extension, or they can't even do a proper push-up. So why are we doing a ballistic?" "I want to get my heart rate up." "Get on an Airdyne bike. Go as hard as you can for 10 seconds. Tell me how you feel." There's just a better selection of things that we can do to be able to promote that same training effect. But we... So many of us are going to that fluffy movement, and they end up hurting themselves or they're not able to push at the rate that they could eventually be able to push at if they went in with a little bit more thought.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. I love that. So, the complementary aspect. So, obviously, working on movement, doing what we can, but having the sleep addressed, having the nutrition addressed, maybe some other services, some physical therapy, whatever needs to push us along. Now, I want to ask you to get specific, because like you mentioned, being able to sit on the toilet, that's a squat.

**DON SALADINO:** It's important.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Alright. So, we've got a squat dialed in, we probably need to be able to... If we're just looking at functionality, to be able to walk in a decent way. Hip hinge. So, what are some of the things?

**DON SALADINO:** I think a squat, a hinge, a push, a pull, and some type of a core movement. And I think at a very minimalistic approach if someone was to come in and choose those five movements, bodyweight squat, bodyweight RDL, or maybe an inverted hamstring, which would be a one-legged RDL. That would be a progression. A push-up, some type of a row or a pull-up, or if you don't have any exercise, maybe like a prone cobra. If you don't have any equipment, maybe a prone cobra. And then working on your plank or your side plank. But at a very bare minimum working on those things. Well, I can't do a push-up off the floor. Well, do it off an elevation. Anne Hathaway and I started working a few years ago, and I remember when I met her, I could talk about this. She was like, "I don't know how to do a push-up." Yes, we started her on a high desk, then we moved her down to a bench. She's doing sets of push-ups now, perfect hardstyle push-ups. She developed strength. Anne's not 20 years old. She's getting older like the rest of us are, and she's getting stronger. So, for me, that's what it's

about. It's just accepting where you're at, and let's just try and find a little bit of consistency, and that'll lead to improvement.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love that, man. That made me think about one of my mentors, really good friend of mine, he's actually in his 80s now, and he came in, and it's one of those situations where you end up learning a lot from the person that you're working with that's coming to you for assistance.

**DON SALADINO:** Oh yes, it's happened to me.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But he came in, he couldn't lift his arm over his head. And his physician, unfortunately, was just like, this is something you're going to kind of have to deal with. But we got him in touch with a different physician who had the same goal as him. He was working along with me. And cut to... It took a year, but... And we started him... Once he had functionality with his shoulder, we had him holding the Smith machine bar, we brought that down to use for push-ups. He was almost standing up the first time, but he could drop down on the floor and do full push-ups...

**DON SALADINO:** It's amazing.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** After about a year. And he's in his 70s.

**DON SALADINO:** You removed that parking brake. And you removed that parking brake. There was a shoulder issue, and you removed that parking brake, and you gave it some freedom, and then you were able to build strength. Mobility is a strong word in my vocabulary. People always refer to flexibility. They're like, "Oh, well, I'm not flexible." I'm like, "You're plenty flexible. You're doing a split and you can hold your leg in the air. You're a dancer. You might be lacking in stability." Stability, in my opinion, is the... I'm sorry. Mobility, in my opinion, is the combination of flexibility and stability. That equals mobility. Mobility is combining flexibility and strength. And it's important for us to have that. In my opinion, you can get a golfer as big, as strong as you want, as long as they're able to get into those positions that you need them to get into. And golf is the one sport, "Oh if he gets bigger if she gets bigger, she'll get too tight." I'm like, no, we've seen some big golfers out there now who can hit the ball very far and that are really strong, but they can get into positions. Dustin Johnson's a strong guy. I've worked out next to him in the gym a lot. Or Rory McIlroy and Nowell. These are strong people. And their additional muscle, as long as it's purposeful, as long as it's functional, is going to apply well to their sport.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. My son, Jordan, who's... He's 20 years old...

**DON SALADINO:** Cool.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Just this past weekend for the first time swung a golf club. He went with his friend who's an avid golfer.

**DON SALADINO:** How'd he like it?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so, I called him up afterward, and I was like, "So how'd it happen?" And he gave the phone to his friend. His friend is from Australia, Harry, and Harry's like, "Your son is a golf prodigy, mate." I was like, "What?" Well, my son is very muscular. He's very, very muscular guy. Safety on his football team, captain of his football team. But he just... It's also, he's very... He has such grace in his movements. Your definition of mobility is a perfect definition for him. 'Cause he sees himself as not being very flexible, but he can do all of these different movements, and he has stability with it, and it translates over to just about anything that he does.

**DON SALADINO:** I love it. Tell him that's pretty impressive. You never hear anyone going out on the golf course and being like, I got this. Normally, it's like, why would I want to do this for five hours?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I just knew that he was going to suck at least a little bit, but he said he's a... That's a strong word. And I looked him in his eyes like...

**DON SALADINO:** In golf, I never... You never hear that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Prodigy? He said?

**DON SALADINO:** I love it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But yeah, man, so... Now I've... Over the years, and especially recently, I really found a lot of value in carries. What do you think about that?

**DON SALADINO:** Oh, my God, I think probably the most underrated of all exercises, I mean, I think a farmer walk... It's funny, oh god what publication was it? Did an article on all the superheroes I get ready for movies, and they're like, "What's the magic exercise?" I am like, "There is no magic exercise," but the one exercise that they all did in common was, it was some form of a carry variation, so whether it's an overhead carry, or a rack carry, a farmer walk, a one-arm carry, a bottoms-up carry, every one of my clients I have to do a carry, and I just think that they're magic, it's... A carry for me as is a moving plank. It's a moving plank where you stabilize and you create stability in the entire body, it's safe, we'll get people post-rehab when they're transitioning from their physical therapists, we can get them loading heavy... We've

developed incredible shoulder pressing strength by doing carries, with someone who is, you know, has an injured shoulder. So, for me, you can go heavy, they're very safe. There's still things to think about, I don't want someone going and trying to pick up 800 pounds...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Can you detail... Let's give maybe two versions of carries. Detail what it looks like for people listening.

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah, so I think a carry would be a very basic farmer walk, so it would be like if you were picking up two suitcases and you were walking through the airport with them, envision doing that with two dumbbells or two kettlebells. For really strong people they might stand in the middle of a trap bar, and they might walk, and the purpose is to stabilize and keep your shoulders level, in good posture, and making sure that you're not arching your back, so you really... It really is a full-body exercise. But it's a moving plank. So, you train everything from the ground up.

And then there's different variations of them. You can do them one-handed. Now, I can do an overhead or have a kettlebell in my hand, and I have to promote keeping my ribs down, now we're working on shoulder stability, now we have to really lock in that Latin, and as you're walking and you're carrying a 48-kilo bell over your hand, you tell me how your body is feeling, you're going to be like, "Oh wait, I got to correct myself and get myself into this position that's going to promote strength on one half of the body to stabilize," so I hope that wasn't too confusing for the followers, but... For the viewers, but they are magic exercises, I think at the very minimal approach, start with a two-handed farmer walk. Pick up two weights, walk across your gym for 25 to 50 yards, or 25 to 50 steps anywhere in that range, I like. And then in time, as you develop some consistency, go heavier, go heavier, and go heavier, and then your heart rate is going to be working and you're going to be sweating, and then you're going to focus on creating tension in the body, which is really important for strength building and body composition.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. So good.

**DON SALADINO:** Thanks.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, you have mentioned that this is one of the things, consistent thing with the superheroes that you've worked with. I want to ask you, what was the first superhero movie that you actually were a part of?

**DON SALADINO:** Hugh Jackman's. Hugh Jackman... And I could tell you when it was, it was right when my daughter was being born, 'cause he invited me over to Australia to work with him, so that was, 14 years ago.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But I heard a story about you actually turned him down the first time...

**DON SALADINO:** No, no, I turned down going to Australia... Oh yes. Okay, so this is actually true. He was training in my gym with a buddy of mine, and wanted to start training with me and knew that my buddy was going to be leaving training, and I didn't know this yet, and he's like, "Well, why don't you start working with me," and I'm like, No, you work with my buddy Rico, I am not... " and he was like, I think He was kind of thrown off a little bit. And Rico...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You're going to turn me down? Me?

**DON SALADINO:** No, and then Rico came back to me, Rico was like, "No, no, no, I'm Leaving." I'm like, "Well, am I hearing that from you?" He was goes, "Yes", "Alright. Go tell him, I'll work with him." And so, it was one of those stories, but then him and I hit it off, I mean, he was an absolute gem, there was no social media back then, so I remember like the... I think he called up some press for me one day and I was like, "No, no, you don't have to do it, you don't have to do it." It was... Kind of reminded me of our conversation earlier, how you... I was like a purist, I just wanted to be in it, to train the client and make sure that they had a good experience and we got them ready, so it was really Wolverine to answer your question. But when we sent him them off to Wolverine, I think they put Wolverine on hold, and then it was Australia, so we he shot the movie Australia, then he rolled into Wolverine, which I trained him for about nine months. And then that point, the flood gates opened. It was just, I got a call from everyone in Hollywood and met through him, one of my favorite human beings to this day is Ryan Reynolds.

Ryan's like a brother to me. He's literally been... I can't tell you how incredible for my career. He moved out of the area, and I ran into him a couple of years ago, and it was great. But Ryan and I literally communicate weekly, and I can't say a better thing about him and his wife, Blake.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Well, there's two things. First and foremost, this speaks to your integrity, man. You got Hugh Jackman right there knocking on your door, like, "I want to work with you," and you turn him down because your friend, somebody that you are associated with, you know that he's working with him.

**DON SALADINO:** And my friend was an exceptional coach, and it was just... I think it was more about just my friend was leaving, but I didn't know that, and there was a miscommunication on that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is a thing about you man, and also about... And we talked about this a little bit before we got started, the integrity factor, and just that level of care. Those moments right there when I even heard that story, I was like, "Man, you're just a good dude."

**DON SALADINO:** Thank you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But it should be basic, just to think about the other person.

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah, it's funny, I've surrounded myself with some good people in the industry. And I'm almost shocked on how people don't have that level of integrity, I guess I get a little naïve, or I was a little naïve a long time ago. I've been in the business now almost 23, 24 years so I'm a seasoned vet, but...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's why people love Game of Thrones so much, man.

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah, Yeah, I love it, I love it. I don't even think I've... Have I worked with anyone in Game of Thrones? I'm trying to think on that. No Moore, I'm not sure if I worked with...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I am talking about in the real-life, like...

**DON SALADINO:** Oh, oh, oh. Okay.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Behind the stabbing in the back.

**DON SALADINO:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Those kinds of things.

**DON SALADINO:** That... That's actually a good example, that went right over my head, normally people always ask me, "Have you worked with someone in this movie?" And I immediately kind of go to that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We have had somebody from Game of Thrones on.

**DON SALADINO:** Okay. Okay, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Tom Hopper. My guy, he's in Umbrella Academy now.

**DON SALADINO:** Cool.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Freaking love him, man.

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But yeah, so we're just in these circles, man, it's so cool the universe we're in.

**DON SALADINO:** You got to treat people the right way. You know what, you got to treat people the right way, and you got to love what you do, and I think you've got to hold yourself to a level of integrity, I mean, that's got to be your basic elements of your business plan.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**DON SALADINO:** And if you have that, I think you have a chance.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**DON SALADINO:** And so then, after that, it's like, yes, surround yourself with a team that can really help elevate your game, and if you could do that, then you have an even better chance. But it's competitive out there, but along the way, you can't be worrying about outdoing the next person, you just got to go in and do you, and try and continue to better yourself and improve your game and be happy, I think it's that basic.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah. So, we've got Wolverine origin story that I think that was Wolverine Origins was the movie...

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah, I... Honestly, not to sound... I lose track, I really do at this point now, people are like, "When did you start working for Ryan?" And I am like, "Oh God, I don't remember... 12 years ago, I don't remember." "Well, what movie? This movie?" I'm like, "All the movies since then, I don't know."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** All the movies.

**DON SALADINO:** All the movies since then, so...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, but you got, I mean... He went from Hugh Jackman to Hugh jacked man...

**DON SALADINO:** He got big.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** He's got a great name, period, just for that.

**DON SALADINO:** He's got a great name, listen, he was so incredible for my career, if he came in right now, we'd hug each other, he's fantastic, but he literally... I've got a lot to thank him for. If it wasn't for him, I don't know, I don't know where I would have been from a training standpoint. Remember I was transitioning from the strength and conditioning world, and getting the opportunity to work with someone like that, I think was really special and was a game-changer, and then, yeah, I think my business grew because of that level... That word you said earlier, integrity, I think they realized I was a good person and that... I'm texting them late at night, or I'm checking in with them and what can I do to add value? When you've worked with people individually for years, it's like you go home and you take that home with you. If they're not, if they're struggling or something's going on, you wear that on your shirt, so... It's part of it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Obviously, you know that the other side of this is the marketing aspect, it really took you to another level, and the things that people are wanting, unfortunately/fortunately, if they can get connected with you are like, "What is The Superhero Workout? What is Ryan Reynolds' program? That's what I want, I want to look like Ryan," and you've definitely invested in some of those things, there might be videos out there done by Men's Health. But if people just get into your universe, you're always, again, bringing people back to the basics, just like, "This program is for this person for this purpose."

**DON SALADINO:** Well, it's all on donsalandino.com, no I'm kidding. Yeah, listen, there's nothing fluffy about it, I think every individual I work with, every celebrity, every big name, they're all starting at a different point, maybe structurally Ryan's better with a trap bar deadlift than a conventional deadlift, so we'll have him trap bar, 'cause that's the position he gets into more safely, and that's the movement that we can load him on. I still conventional deadlift or I might have someone else do that, so it's really... It becomes tough sometimes, because when someone calls me or messages me and says, "Well, I want that program." I'm like, "Well, this has been an evolution." This has been like, do all the programs? I just get on and just... And I don't mean to be promoting myself, that's not the idea of it, but you've got to learn to move, you got to establish a level of integrity in your movement, and then in time, intensity should increase, and for those people out there who can increase intensity, consistency will trump everything. Just be consistent. Well, is that good enough? Well, it's good enough for you. Just stop trying to... This is not about going at a level 10 every workout, this is about just being consistent going in and leaving there in a good mindset, it's the number one thing that I... It's the one thing that I've always been able to control.

Every client I've... I don't get struck by lightning, I'm trying not to lie... Every client I've ever worked with has left the session in a better place; I don't know if anyone hasn't left in a better place. That is my goal with them, is to make sure that if they're showing up, if they're having problems at work, their spouse, whatever it is, you have an hour, you have an hour and a half

to make sure that you can flip that switch. If they were on a plane for 15 hours and they didn't sleep and they're coming in hungover and dehydrated, that workout is going to shift, now, we're going to have a little bit of a different workout now, but I'm still getting them to leave there in a better place mentally. And if everyone can take that approach, if they can come in, do their training session... If it's for five minutes, 10 minutes, an hour and 10 minutes and leave in a better place mentally then it's going to happen. That should be the goal, in my opinion, unless you're training for an Olympic sport and you have to throw a disc X amount of yards or whatever it is, that's a very specific sport, but for general population, move better, look better naked, feel better, higher levels of energy, higher levels of sleep and recovery, being happier if you can do all those things... I mean, come on. We're on the right track.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, so we've got an aspect here, and I want you to talk about this of paying attention to the person and paying attention to the needs and the personality type of the people that you're working with, so if you could... You mentioned Ryan a couple of times, so his personality type as far as programming and the leeway that you give them on execution versus another actor that you've worked with.

**DON SALADINO:** And I could talk about Ryan, we're very open about this. I think it's recognizing what's going on in his life because in my opinion, working with an actor is way more challenging than working with a professional athlete. You're like, "What are you talking about? Athletes have to..." No, we know the athlete schedule, we know what time zones they're going to be on. Ryan might have a call time tomorrow at 5:00 AM, and then might have a call time the next day at 8:00 AM or 3:00 AM, you don't know what's going on, his work can get delayed an extra three hours. You don't know, so we have to always be able to adapt. So, I think it's just recognizing his environment or not just him, anyone, recognizing anyone's environment, are they away from their family? How are they handling that? Like what if he's shooting a movie for three months and he's off in another state or another country? And he's not around his family or his wife or his girls? You got to take that stuff into consideration. That's going to be tough. So, it is personal, like personal training, it is personal, coaching, it is... It is something where...

Yeah, I mean, someone like Ryan... Ryan is easy, in my opinion, to work with, because he's like... He's a machine. Do your homework. He's like, okay, and he just goes, and he crushes it. There's other people that I would never talk about on the show, but they might become a little bit more challenging and you might have to stroke a little bit more. That's part of it. It doesn't make Ryan any better, it doesn't make him any worse, that's part of what I'm here to do, I'm here to adapt to that individual, and I'm here to get them from point A to point B the easiest. And if I can do that and I can make them happy throughout the process then I'm doing my job, whether it's the best program or whether it's... Maybe not the best program, but we're keeping them consistent, I'm doing my job.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Literally, that's a game-changer, just, it's personal training. Personal, that part of it. That's powerful.

**DON SALADINO:** Thank you. I didn't make it up, but...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We've got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back. One of the biggest issues facing our world today is the health of our immune system. And our immune system has many different dynamic parts. We have an innate immune system, and we also have an adaptive immune system. Our adaptive immune system has an intelligence that helps us to adapt to any pathogen that we are faced with. And our nutrition is a big part of this equation because our immune cells are made from the foods and nutrients that we consume. And one of the most powerful nutritive sources proven to help fortify our immune system is highlighted in the study published in Mediators of Inflammation. They discovered that the polysaccharides in Reishi medicinal mushrooms were found to enhance the proliferation of T cells and B cells of our adaptive immune system. These were found to have the capacity to be immunomodulators, helping to up-level the function and intelligence of our immune system, or if our immune system is overactive, to help to reduce and bring down that immune activity. Again, this is called immunomodulation. And also, inflammation of many different viruses that we might be exposed to is one of the big issues, and one of the viruses that we're facing right now is a tropism, a target towards inflammation of our lungs.

And another study published in Patents on Inflammation & Drug Discovery revealed that the renowned medicinal mushroom Reishi, has potent anti-inflammatory and anti-allergic action, plus, again, it possesses immuno-modulating capabilities. Super remarkable. It's one of the things that's been utilized for centuries that we have access to today, but we wanna make sure that it is dual extracted, meaning that it's a hot water extract and alcohol extract, so we're getting all of these benefits that are noted in studies like these. And the place that I get my Reishi from, that does it the right way, organic, high-quality Reishi without any nefarious substances coming along from these random companies that are putting these formulas together is from Four Sigmatic. Go to [foursigmatic.com/model](https://foursigmatic.com/model), that's F-O-U-R-S-I-G-M-A-T-I-C.com/model, and you're going to get 10-15% off all of the medicinal mushrooms that they carry. And by the way, Reishi is great for your sleep as well. This is another peer-reviewed study published in Pharmacology Biochemistry & Behavior, found that the renowned medicinal mushroom Reishi was able to significantly decrease sleep latency, meaning you fall asleep faster, and increase your overall sleep time, and also increase your sleep efficiency.

So much good stuff. And this is one of the things about real foods that have a storied history, is that they're not just good for one thing, they're good for many things. Alright, that's why I'm a big fan of Reishi, and I have a cup many nights of the week before bed, about 30-45 minutes

before bed, it definitely helps with improving sleep quality, but also beneficial for our immune system. Maybe have it with a little bit of whole natural-sourced high-quality fats like MCT oil, coconut oil, maybe a little bit of ghee, whatever it is that you're into, it helps to cut the bitterness, maybe a little bit, a couple of little drops of some stevia, some English toffee stevia, chocolate Stevia, just to make it nice and palatable, or some folks have their Reishi tea all by itself. Either way, it's one of the most effective things right now when immune health is a top priority. Check it out, [foursigmatic.com/model](http://foursigmatic.com/model), and now, back to the show.

So again, the major reason that I wanted you here was to talk about this subject. And I'm very passionate, and I know that you are as well about just getting our communities healthier.

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And unfortunately, it hasn't been a major part of the conversation in this crazy time that we're experiencing, like how can we actually get people healthier? So what are some of the things that you would want to see moving forward, because, for example, personal training isn't covered with insurance, the accessibility? You might need to live... I'm from Ferguson, Missouri, we didn't have a gym around anywhere. I didn't have access, but I went to the university, I was a student there, so I did have access, I could drive to the university and work out. Other than that, there's no goals, there's no 24-hour fitness, 'cause none of that stuff was even in my area. So, what would you like to see moving forward to help to get our citizens healthier?

**DON SALADINO:** I think it's beginning with that minimalistic approach and doing things that you talk about in your books. I think it's brilliant. And it's like, "Alright, hydration." It's like, "Alright, some sleep quality, and not abusing caffeine, some basic stuff that..." Someone's drinking coffee at 9:00, 10:00, 8:00 PM, and they're not sleeping properly, well, there might be an issue. What's their alcohol consumption? All these things, I think, are things that we can make little adjustments to. And I'm not saying you have to give 'em up, but there has to be some type of a boundary, alright? And then it's movement. It's sweating, it's... You don't have to do it for an hour and doing it for a few minutes. And you don't have to have money to do this stuff. You don't have to be rich; you don't have to hire a personal trainer; you could find some good coaches out there. And make sure their coaches and they're not influencers or people who are... And that's unfair to some of the influencers, 'cause some of the influencers might actually be putting across a really good message but find a coach out there that is going to be able to deliver some content, and who you can go on and you could follow for free.

I put up content all the time on my social media, I don't charge for it, like follow me, it doesn't cost you anything, you'll get your bodyweight leg workouts, or your upper body workouts, or some cardio work, or what do you do if I don't have equipment, or if I'm traveling, or if I'm



getting off a plane, or if I'm in a hotel? And I think you can always steal from people like me. I want you to.

And so, I think those are the easy things that you can really start focusing on a bit. And again, start for a few minutes a day, but if we can make one change a month... Imagine if you could turn around to someone right now and they would just... One thing this month, just focus on one thing, what's it going to be? You have hydration, you have sleep, you have maybe doing some exercise. "Well, I think the water sounds easy. How much water? Oh, alright, half my body weight now, so I'll spend all month just working on that. And I won't be successful some days, but at the end of the month I'm going to try and get up to there." And if we get that under their belt... "That's not hard. I'm feeling better. My energy level's better." Alright, what's going to be your next change in month number two?" Alright, I'm going to start walking."

I was realizing that through my phone, I get a thousand steps a day and I'm going to start working to 5000 steps a day, it's not 10,000, fine, 6000, 7000. Month two and I'm able to accomplish that. Now, it's taking us time but think about after 12 months, if you were able to have every person that ever listened to your show make 12 big changes next year...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We could transform society.

**DON SALADINO:** What are we doing? We would transform the society, but the problem is, is everything's in a 20-day fix or 21-day program or a 90-day program, and I'm not knocking P90X at all, like your basic good movements that they came up with, the pull-up, the pushup, the split squat, yoga, all this stuff is great. You get someone training 90 minutes a day, six days a week, has been sedentary, you're probably going to see a change. My question is, is are they going to stay with that after and that's establishing habit and not doing something that's a quick fix, and then they're going to fall off, that I have the problem with. I'm not shifting gears here, but I'll have people, "I've tried the keto diet," I'm like, "Okay, fine. For some people, it's great. How did it work for you?" And they're like, "Well, I lost 20 pounds." I'm like, "Well, did you keep it off?" "No." It didn't really work for you then. I'm not bashing that diet, it was the example I wanted to give, but in my opinion, the change works if you're able to make that change that you want to hold on for a lifetime, and if not, then I think we have to take a different approach to what it is we're trying to do.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I totally agree. It's the sustainability of it. And so, I think that really goes back to the internal shift taking place to where you... It becomes something that you... In a sense, you're kind of addicted to something good for you, it becomes a requirement for you, it just becomes a part of who you are, and so if you're not checking those boxes and you're just forcing yourself for 21 days to do this thing, then we're probably going to land, not just in the place that we started from, but probably going to backslide a little bit.

**DON SALADINO:** My best friend and my training partner of 17 years is going to be 60 years old this year, in November, I will never be in the type of shape he's in. He takes his shirt off... I will never look like... He's unbelievable, the guy was doing pull-ups the other day with 180 pounds around his waist, I cannot do that that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Come on.

**DON SALADINO:** Let's be very clear. And he said a line to me probably 17 years ago when I met, he goes, "Don, this is part of my survival, this is part of my survival, this is what... I need this every day." It's become such a habit for him, and he's great at shifting gears, he's great at saying, "This isn't my day, this is what I'm going to do, I need to just move," but he does something and when he needs a day off, he takes a day off, but this is part of his survival, and when he says survival, he means this, and once this is good, you know it's like, "Is it 80% diet? Is it 20%?" It's 100% this, let's just take the right approach up here, and then everything else is going to follow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Earlier when you mentioned the photoshoot that you did, and the amount of time for you to get in that shape, you were already knocking on that door, you're already right there outside the door.

**DON SALADINO:** I have a line of... My line is, I want all the people I work with two weeks out, 365 days a year, people are like, "What does that mean?" I'm like two weeks out, if Ryan gets a call from a magazine to be on the cover shirtless, which I know he wouldn't do anyway, I'm making fun of him right now. I want them two weeks out. And for me, when I got... I've been on the cover of Muscle & Fitness, Men's Health, a few other magazines, but when I got a call to do the cover of Muscle & Fitness... I just shot it, I think a week and a half ago, maybe two weeks ago, I had four weeks to prepare for it, so in that preparation, what do I do? I just got to dial in my macros a little bit, do I intensify my training a little bit, I start maybe forcing some more reps, but it's more of a mental thing for me, I feel like I can get a little tighter and just make sure that my eating... I still had variability in the sense of micro-nutrients, I want to make sure I'm getting all my fiber and vitamins and minerals and all that stuff, so I don't eat like a traditional bodybuilder, but then I take some things from that bodybuilding world. I know where my proteins are, I know where my carbs are, I know where my fats are, my carbs are much higher than most bodybuilders. I have bodybuilders friends of mine that compete on the Olympia stage, and on my low carbohydrate days, I consume more than their highest.

I might be consuming 280 grams of carbs on my low days because my body just burns it a little bit differently, I've kind of established that... I hate to use this word, but that burn... I've established that integrity with how my body burns calories, I'm never really in a deficit, but we

tweak some things and then the body just starts tightening up a little bit, and every day you wake up and you're like, There's some veins there, I didn't really have, you see this little transformation going on, it's cool and it's fun, and then after the shoot, I'm not going there pounding a pizza or drinking 15 beers, I just start transitioning, maybe getting a little bit more calories, getting a little bit more fat, and I keep it clean and healthy, and if I want a crush or a pint of ice cream, I go do that or have a burger, I do that, but then I get right back on it and I'm not... I'm not kind of overstaying my welcome 'cause I want two weeks out, 365 days a year, so we got to stay in that area.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love that, man, that's... So, two things, number one, you're speaking about metabolic individuality, which is for me, something I've been working to impress upon culture for years, because I saw it firsthand in my practice. I had a very... I think you're just... We're indoctrinated to teach this when we're working with patients to, if this type of diet is a thing, low-fat diet, vegan diet, ketogenic diet, this is the thing that everybody's teaching? People should do this thing, but in reality, everybody is so different, so you having that higher intake of carbohydrates and still just being able to crush it, to feel good, to be at the physique that you want versus somebody else doing something different, that's what it's all about, it's paying attention...

**DON SALADINO:** And It's totally fine. I actually... I do believe in metabolic flexibility, some people might be like, That's not really a thing. I'm like, no, I do believe that we adapt and if we're eating one specific diet all the time... And you see it sometimes with vegans. I'm not here trying to talk anyone out of being a vegan, but I'll hear people will turn around and they'll say, "Oh, well, I got on the vegan diet and I feel great." What was your diet before that?

"Well, I was eating burgers and fries and drinking alcohol." "And then what did you do?" "Well, I stopped, and I went to more of a plant-based diet and I had a healthy grains and vegetables and fruits," and I'm like, "Great." On Game Changers, when they took that whole group of firefighters and they transitioned them from eating terribly to eating plant-based, yeah, they're going to lose weight. My question is how are you feeling in six months? And maybe it's time to transition to something else, maybe your body really needs other nutrients that it's not getting, and I'm not here to ever tell anyone, well, you should be doing this, you shouldn't be doing that, but if you want my professional opinion I'll give it, but I also know that if I'm doing a fat-adapted diet, and I feel fantastic out of the gate for the first six, seven weeks, in week 10, 11, 12, I felt terrible from it. I'm just like, "Oh wow, I'm just depleted, and I just don't have enough carbs and my muscles don't have a pump and I'm going for long runs and my heartrate's elevated, and then when I get higher carbohydrates in, I just feel like my sleep improved." My Ōura Ring reading's improved, then there are all these little things that show behavioral change is very obvious.

So that for me gets really fun, but that's not something you can learn overnight, you need experience, you're great at what you do. Yes, 'cause you got an education on this stuff, but you also trial and error and you spend time going through these things that were learning curves for you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, absolutely. And that metabolic flexibility is a major component for sure because that exists for all of us, we are... Human beings are incredibly adaptable, we're just... We're like... I'm not going to say we are like cockroaches, but we survive, we're survivors, you know what I mean? But at the same time... And also surviving on different types of food sources, we've done this throughout our evolution. But today, more than ever, it's a lot more cognitive versus physiological needs, and so it's just like we're trying to think our way into a certain diet framework whatever the case might be, and as you mentioned, as we shift away from The SAD diet, The standard American diet into any of these diet frameworks where we're including more real food, we're going to feel better, but we've got to give ourselves permission and some people have more flexibility than others and that all is going to depend on you as a unique individual, so I'm so glad you brought it up.

**DON SALADINO:** Beautifully said. It's perfectly said.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So we've got this metabolic flexibility component and you also mentioned the two-week out mindset, and this for me is just really about just really staying ready and having that tenet like your training partner, and for him it's about survival, so tapping and finding that thing for yourself, where you make it a part of, again, this is a part of my life, this is a part of my survival, is a part of who I am as a human being.

**DON SALADINO:** I love it. It's not work for me. It's something... I feel like as I've become more experienced and my training age has increased, I've gotten better at it, and I can almost enable success, 10 out of 10 times. I'm going in whether I'm feeling good or whether I need a day off or whether I have to scale back, I can figure out a way to find success. And for me, I think that's why I've had a high level of growth, not only in this field with work but with my own physique and my own body and instilling that same thought process in a lot of the people that I work with acting as a coach, talking to them, like, no, it's okay. Listen, man, like you haven't had a cheat meal in four weeks, you want a slice... You're talking about a slice of pizza, you brought it up three times already. Yeah, go have a slice pizza you're going to be alright. Do you really want one? Yeah. Well, is that okay? Yeah, it's fine. Go have it. It's like, it's alright. I think we got to loosen up a little bit. Taking a day off isn't a bad thing it could be a very good thing for us.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you for that, man. It feels like we're not going to send this in a email to everybody, a picture of you eating your pizza, it's just... I think for some folks, it's just these... We're just inundated with a lot of rhetoric about how things are supposed to be, we're

supposed to do this, we're not supposed to do that. When in reality, when I talked about this earlier, through our evolution, we didn't have a lot of things that we have access to today. But that doesn't all have to be a bad thing, so many things have... Create the opportunity for us to become better. But it's just us having more of a meta-perspective and taking these things and I want to mention this earlier because when I asked you about what can we do to move our society forward, you said this important word, you said a lot of stuff is free, so I'm thinking about myself in my one-bedroom apartment in Ferguson, Missouri, not having access but I've got a body and I could walk, I could hit the ground and do some push-ups or whatever the case might be, we've got to start to think about what we can do and what we...

**DON SALADINO:** Sleep is free.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's free!

**DON SALADINO:** Sleep is free. I steal that line from Paul Chek I heard him say it I think 20 years ago, it's the best fat burner and it's free. He's talking about that sleep is free, water's free, buying... Tap water, of course, but yeah, I think we start alluding to the pill or the... what can we take or what is the best when we are not nailing down the basics. I had a friend of mine message me last night about a testosterone booster, I know nothing about Testosterone boosters I'm like, I can't even pronounce it. "I saw it on the Joe Rogan show. Joe Rogan was talking about it," I'm like, "Listen, man, do me a favor. Stop sleeping three hours a night."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Let's start there.

**DON SALADINO:** I just said that to him, and he was "I know sleep, I could"... Stop sleeping three hours a night just because Joe Rogan's bringing him on, I don't know, maybe there's some truth to what the guy is saying, I don't know. I have no idea, but I do know is that you're getting a lot of the stuff that you need to be getting right, wrong. And I would focus on that first.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Man, I love you, man. Listen, my son Jordan again, he's in incredible shape, man, he absolutely is, but he was going through a period where my guy and for him, it was a part of his survival, what he created in his own mind, I got to get up before everybody and finish my workout before the rest of the world wakes up. So, he's in college but he's getting up at 4:00 AM, getting his crazy workouts done, and he's doing that, and also, he got into a little phase there, where he was staying up late as well. I was just like, you got to pick one here and eventually he started getting little colds that he couldn't shake, and he's like, "Dad should I take such and such?" I'm just like, "How much did you sleep?" "But this guy said that if I take the..." "Are you getting your sleep, how many hours of sleep are you getting, Jordan?" Just like the basics, man, but this is the thing with our culture man we tend to...

**DON SALADINO:** It's so funny that you bring this up because The Huffington Post, I'm going to throw them under the bus right now, I don't care. The Huffington Post did an article years ago about the most successful entrepreneurs, CEOs, Hollywood stars, and they start naming like Mark Wahlberg waking up at 2:30 in the morning to... Did you hear about this? I'm like... I'm rolling my eyes, I'm like, Come on man. What are you doing? Tony Robbins gets up at... Whatever it is, 4:35 AM, I'm not here telling you that... They're not bad people. Why are we glorifying that? If you have the opportunity to wake up by your natural clock every morning and it's like, that clock is 6:25 in the morning, you're waking up while the sun's rising, and you can go and you can drink tea and go for a walk outside, do it. It makes you way better than anyone else in my opinion. If you're able to do that, you're going to be establishing this equity in your body, but we're glorifying Mark Wahlberg, who wakes up at 2:30 AM to get his work out in.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** "Say hi to your mother for me."

**DON SALADINO:** It's like, what are you doing? What are you doing, man? Why are you promoting this?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But the other part that they don't put the spotlight on is the fact that even though my guy is getting up at, I guess 2:30, he's also going to bed at 7:00 PM in the evening.

**DON SALADINO:** They're not talking about that...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** They're not talking about that aspect of it. One of my... Just... I love this guy so much. Really good friend, I've had him on multiple times, Eric Thomas, top motivational speaker on the planet. His big thing, he's getting up and grinding, he's up at 4:00 AM, but what people don't understand... He's telling people like... Yeah, the big thing is like, sleep is for suckers and all this stuff. He's talking about sleeping when you...biologically, your body is good, you've slept enough and you're just staying in bed being lazy, but he's going to bed, he's going to fall asleep at 8:00 PM, you know what I mean?

**DON SALADINO:** When I had to wake up at 4:00 AM it was because I had to and I was in bed, never a minute later than 9 o'clock, and it was nine to four. Did I wish I was getting more sleep? Yes, it's not bad. It's not bad, but it's one of those things where if I had the opportunity to be able to do more, I would have... My responsibility had to get me up in the morning. I just... Tell the full message, don't say, get up at 3:00 AM, people are like, okay, I'm out to dinner, it's 10:00, 11 o'clock at night. Like, no, don't get up at 3:00 AM if you don't have to, this isn't good for you long term. No one's ever won that battle, by the way.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The grind is when you're awake and you get your sleep, you get your biological needs met, and then you grind, you execute and be dangerous while you're up, you know what I mean? Well, I can't have you here without giving the people what they want, man, which is... We got to talk... What are the secrets to the six-pack, Don? We got to talk about it. We got to talk about... This is the thing again when people are seeing the magazine cover, they're seeing Ryan Reynolds, they're seeing all these folks and it's something that we aspire towards as a physical culture, we admire the physical culture of the Greeks and the Romans, and even the ancient Egyptians, what do we do to access that physique, the illustrious six-pack, what are the secrets here?

**DON SALADINO:** It's one movement. It's only one... No, I'm kidding.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I know it's not going to be what people think, but please share.

**DON SALADINO:** No, you want to know what? So first off, for the six-pack, I probably train my abs directly maybe twice a week at the most, on a good week, so maybe it's once a week, I have a couple of exercises I love to do. I love some type of a hanging leg raise, I love like a Copenhagen plank.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Can you explain that.

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah, Copenhagen Plank would be where you're getting into a side plank position with your foot... With your leg elevated up onto a bench or a block, and you're almost taking one leg and putting it into a sprinter pose and you have to heavily engage everything from your serratus, to your obliques, to your core, so it's a way of training all of this from an anti-rotational standpoint, so I love... And I'll actually throw in a weighted kneeling crunch, I don't ever do crunches, but a kneeling crunch where my elbows will go to my knees, I actually believe in adding some type of resistance with our abs, because if we're just sitting here... I'm not going to grab a five-pound weight and do this 500 times, why am I going to sit there and just...

I like to develop my abs to be a little blockier and a little thicker... Developing... I try and make my abs more muscular, and then through nutrition, I'm able to keep my skin thinner and my fat levels lower, so when I went in for a DEXA my body fat percentage around my mid-section was at 5%, so my mid-section is lean, my body fat was higher, is 'cause my legs might hold a little bit more from a lot of the powerlifting that I ended up doing in that type of training, so I know a lot of my abdominal work doesn't really come from those abdominal exercises that I named... Ab wheels, I love Ab wheels. It came from me deadlifting and doing some form of a squat and being able to run... In college, I was a little bit of a runner, I ran a 452 mile in college, I could move at about 219 pounds, I was a big guy, I'm about 212 pounds now, so I was heavier.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's scary. That's scary.

**DON SALADINO:** I can run scary three to five miles, I was like, I was fast for a big guy, but I don't run as much anymore, but going in and hitting my cardio, not overstaying my welcome and developing strength and hypertrophy. So going in and building muscle is how I get my body to be really tight in conjunction with a proper eating plan, so when I need to get my abs a little bit sharper, yeah, the macros dial in, and everything becomes a little monotonous from day to day, but my training all year long, I train hard. If I'm training at 20 reps, people are like, well, you do you train light or heavy? I'm like, I always train heavy. Well, it's bad to train at low reps, I didn't say that I said I always train heavy. If it's 20 reps, it's heavy. If it's 10 reps, it's heavy. If it's one rep, it's heavy, it's always hard and heavy, and I have to adjust intensity according to how I feel, maybe how my readiness is, or if I'm coming off of a specific type of training, that's a lot of power and a lot of strength and I'm starting to overstay my welcome, I adjust my training to maybe work more on work capacity or muscular endurance, and then I'll maybe lose a little bit of strength, but focus on those other qualities.

So, I think it's the fact that I'm always going into a program, and when I go into that program, I commit to it and I try and be the best I can with it, but my nutrition is always tight and have trainings there and just try and be strong. It's the combination of all those things, it's just all those things working together in time, I believe is what can give you a physique that's... As I call, cover ready.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The thing is, the formula is so simple.

**DON SALADINO:** It's not sexy.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You didn't really... Most of what you shared was not about ab exercises, so I want to reiterate this because the truth is, our basic human template, like my son, my youngest son is nine, he's got a six-pack, you could see the definition, the muscles are there. We all have these abdominal muscles already there, but it can get covered up with some stuff and you can specifically target, like you said, to make those muscles thicker, but in the reality of what we want to do is to reduce the body fat and through all the other things that you said, and just have overall functionality and all the things that tie into that, it's not just the rectus abdominis, it's the whole area around that.

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah, from a functionality standpoint, for me, that's most important. If I can get up and I can get on a trap bar and pick up 700 pounds and walk 20 yards with it, my abs have to be strong, my core has to be strong. If I'm doing a Zercher squat and I've got at least 315 or 365 in my arms, and I can hold that with a perfect spine, my core is strong, and my abs

are getting a lot of work doing that. So, I still like individually touching... I always call it touching, like the abs and maybe hitting it once or twice a week, 'cause I like to feel like they're tight and feel like they're good, and I do believe it helps a little bit, but we got to get that other stuff right first, some of the powerlifters that I know, you go up to their abs and you hit them in the abs... You could shoot them in the stomach with a 22 I doubt it would even go through their abdominal wall like they're so strong, but you can't see an ab, 'cause they got a layer of fat over them, so if you remove that layer of fat, they'd probably look a little bit different, but that's by their choice, that's what they want to do, and their job is powerlifting, and they have to be able to total 2500, 2600 pounds. It's a lot of weight.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It sounds like a new good test that you could do at your new gym, the 22 test, where you shoot somebody in the stomach.

**DON SALADINO:** That won't work...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Don Saladino's exclusive test.

**DON SALADINO:** I'll stay away from that one. I'll stay away from that one.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You mentioned something earlier about the DEXA scan specifically for your abdominals. So, this is a newer technology. Can you talk a little bit about that?

**DON SALADINO:** Yeah, well, on the DEXA scan and I go to this guy, Brian Jonas, who owns DexaFit, Syosset, Phenomenal facility, you can always look him up and he can defer you to another facility in the country, but when you lay down on the DEXA table, it's about a seven, eight-minute test where you have to stay completely motionless and it'll actually break down segmentally, how your right leg, your left leg, like how much muscle is that holding, how much fat is in each side, and then you could start looking at imbalances... Oh, that's interesting. Well, you have two pounds of extra muscle in your right leg. Oh, that's interesting, I broke my left leg years ago, and I really favored it and because of that I developed a bad hip or something like that happened to where now it's starting to throw off the way that we move and how we distribute weight on one side of the body, or maybe I'm doing a lot of bilateral work and I'm pushing more with this side, 'cause this side is just not firing the right way, so I think it really... It's not only aesthetics, it's giving you the approach to be able to kind of dive in and say, All right, maybe there's something going on from a movement standpoint, maybe I'm favoring this side of the body, or maybe I'm always...

Oh wow, you know what? Why is my shoulder higher? Well, you carry a bag on that side. Oh my God, I've been doing that my whole life... Yeah, like the strap or your bag's on that side, your shoulder's always like this... Yeah, no wonder that's... Switch sides, wear a backpack, do

something a little bit differently, so I think it's not only about aesthetics, it's not always about getting that number... Everything symmetrically perfect. I work with golfers, I've worked with a lot of golfers and they're like, "Well, I rotate so much to one side and not the other, I should work on both sides," I'm like, "I don't know, man, you might screw everything up." "Well, what do you mean?" "Well, that asymmetry is what might have given you greatness, and we just have to protect you, at this point, now it's resiliency. I just want to make sure that nine months a year, 10 months a year, your body is not breaking down. I don't care if you hit the golf ball five or 10 yards further, I don't care. You're already hitting it, 320 yards. It doesn't matter. Work on your short game, stay resilient, stay healthy, make sure that when you're traveling to Malaysia, your body is not breaking down and we have the right amount of food packed with you."

Those are the things I want you to focus on. So yeah, from a DEXA standpoint, I don't know how I just got into golf, but it does... It will break down segmentally, what's going on between upper and lower halves. It told me I had... I think I had close to 12% body fat in my legs, and I had 5% in my mid-section and 6% in my overall torso, so they were like, Alright, well, what's been going on with your lower body training? Interesting, I did a lot of running and I did a lot more power lifting of my lower body, now I'm focusing a little bit more on hypertrophy, and I'm curious to see if I can get that number down a little bit, right now. Gave me some great feedback during hockey season, I'm an Ama hockey player. We play club with a group of guys, but it's right next to my house, and I can go down and play five days a week for one hour, we play... It's competitive, it's fun. Some collegiate guys, I played six... Five to six days a week last winter, and I lifted five days a week and I was eating beautifully, I lost a pound of muscle and gained a pound of fat, and people were like, "How's that possible? You're ripped. You're this and that..." I'm like, "Guys, I wasn't getting enough calories in."

I was eating... I was burning more than I was eating, this is showing the importance of not being in a deficit, and right when season ended, I transitioned, and I was able to burn eight pounds of fat and put on two pounds of muscle through that DEXA. Sometimes that data can work against us 'cause it could make you a little crazy, but if you can be... If you can use it from... What's the word I'm looking for... A positive way. If you could be positive with it and you can use it as a guide and a gauge to adjust things, I think it can be magic.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, that's great, man. That's great. So it's been amazing, man, hanging out with you, I want to ask you about a thousand other things, but I know that there's an excitement that you have going right now for some changes that are taking place. You recently closed your world-famous gym in New York City, and it just so happened to happen during COVID and the lease being ready to expire, but you're opening something else, a new baby of yours, talk a little bit about that.

**DON SALADINO:** It's funny, I thought I was going to be depressed when I close Drive. You always think, well, how am I going to be when I leave it? I couldn't have been any happier. It was a great steppingstone for me. I'm opening a facility called The Barn, it's a 2000 square foot multi-level gym, 25-foot-high ceilings, Life Fitness and Hammer Strength at Perform Better are fully outfitting it. I've got a five-person outdoor infrared sauna, a two-man coal plunge, a 90-foot sprint track, and outdoor move strong unit, I've got a podcast area, I literally... It's going to be like my Shangri-La where when I want to have a celeb in to do their transformation, or I might host some camps out of there, but this is going to be my home gym and this is going to be professionally done, it's... In my eyes, it's like the new aged home gym, it's a little excessive, it's a little overboard, but this is going to be the place where I continue to build my online business, and I'm just... I couldn't be any more excited, we're probably about a month out from being completed and all the equipment coming in, so we're really getting... The windows just went in and it's exciting stuff. I got some great sponsors; some great companies are hooking us up with some incredible equipment and it's going to be... It'll be world-class. I want to have you out. Any time you're in New York, you got to come out, eat some good food, we'll train, we'll have a good time.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, already done, man. So just with it being a bit more exclusive now, where can folks connect with you more, learn more, get more education, you've shared so many great insights, and there's so much more for you to share, where can people find you.

**DON SALADINO:** Thank you. Thank you. Donsaladino.com is really the hub. I'm pretty heavy on Instagram, but I think donsaladino.com shows all my pillars and all the ways of being able to get in touch with me and companies that I work with and projects that I'm working on, and I think at the very least, my newsletter's free, I've always given away free content and free programs, and I know through the pandemic that first month I gave away a four-week free bodyweight program, and people are still recycling that, and I put a 2.0 out that I gave away... So, I'm really into giving a lot of free stuff and I think it's fun.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's awesome, man. Well Don, you're truly one of the good guys out here man.

**DON SALADINO:** Thanks man, I appreciate it, back at you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And I'm just so grateful that you're doing this work and you were thinking bigger at a time when a lot of folks were still just kind of this brick-and-mortar paradigm, which is great, but you were thinking about, how can I impact more people, reach more people and now you've got so many different things that are available for folks, so...

**DON SALADINO:** Well, thanks for leading by example, you've got my favorite podcast, and I think everything that you're doing is unbelievable, your message is incredible, Derek and I loved having you on our podcast recently and excited to see what you have in store.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Hey man, I receive all that. Thank you so much, brother.

**DON SALADINO:** Thanks brother, I appreciate it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** See you again soon. Don Saladino everybody. Thank you so much for tuning in to the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. If you did, please share this episode out with your friends and family on social media, you can tag me, I'm @ShawnModel, and tag Don as well, he's @DonSaladino, and just let him know what you thought about this episode and listen, we've got some incredible guests coming up on a myriad of different health and wellness topics and also some powerful masterclasses, so make sure to stay ready. Take care, have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon.

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