

THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW

EPISODE 561

8 Ways to Improve Your Digestion Without Changing Your Diet

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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. It's not, "You are what you eat." It's "You are what you assimilate." Digestion is the key to life, being able to take things from the external world, put them inside of our vessel, and to assimilate those things is one of the most miraculous processes in our reality. We're literally taking stuff from outside of us and creating new human tissue. Whether it's an avocado or whether it's a Tombstone pizza. And shout out to the worst pizza name ever, Tombstone. All of these foods that humans have experimented with throughout our evolution have a capacity to become human tissue. And it's truly remarkable. But today, more than ever, we are dealing with multiple epidemics of digestive diseases. Digestive distress is impacting the lives of millions of United States citizens. In fact, a study published in the Journal of Gastroenterology determined that approximately 70 million Americans are suffering with digestive issues. Now, this is a huge chunk of our population. And I want to be clear, this data was compiled all the way back in 2012.

Alright, it's 10 years ago. So, do you think things have improved, or have they gotten worse over this time span? And you already know the answer to that. And in 2009, there were over 245,000 deaths from digestive diseases. This isn't something that's coming across on our major news networks, there aren't headlines that are denoting, and discussing this issue that is rampant. And literally hundreds of thousands of citizens are dying from these issues. And it's as if it's not even happening. But the people struggling with these issues, they know very well what's going on, and how detrimental life can be and how much of a struggle life can be when our gut is not healthy. When our digestion is unwell. It becomes much more than a nuisance. A nuisance indeed, but also it can just really diminish our quality of life. So today we want to provide some insights and some resources, and even go beyond the fork, and talk about how we can actually improve our digestion without changing our diet.

Now, of course, we focused on nutrition a tremendous amount here in the Model Health Show. It's a big part of what we do because again, even though it isn't just, "You are what you eat." It's, "You are what you assimilate." But food is obviously a major impact because it's what we are putting directly into our gastrointestinal tract. So obviously it's a frontline, high-impact situation that's interacting with our food. It's something very tangible that we can connect with. So cognitively, we can understand that our food is affecting our digestion. Unfortunately, our conventional medicine system today is still not really caught up to this very obvious tenant. If you look at the field of Gastroenterology, which we've had some of the most prestigious gastroenterologist in the world here on the Model Health Show. Whether it's Dr. Will Bulsiewicz, or Dr. Robynne Chutkan.

But these folks had to go outside of their conventional education where they're spending, we'll say 10 years in training to become a gastroenterologist. And in that 10-year time span, so they're dealing with issues and diseases related to the gastrointestinal track itself. Alright, so a ten-year education. Within that ten-year education, they'll tell you right out, maybe they learned about nutrition for cumulatively, maybe two weeks, maybe a month, in that 10-year time span. Now they're dealing with the very organs that are associated with the digestion of the food that we eat. The interaction with assimilation, digestion, an elimination of food. That's the organs that they're focused on treating, and yet they learn next to nothing about food.

There's something severely wrong. But they've come out of that with a newfound understanding because it's one thing to see that your patients aren't actually getting well from these conventional treatments. And finally having that light bulb go off that our food matters. As a matter of fact, it's a top tier thing that matters. But here's what we're going to talk about today. It's not the only thing that matters. In fact, we're going to go through eight clinically proven ways that you can improve your digestion without even changing your diet. Now, not to say that the diet is not important at the top tier thing that we need to address. But we're going to go beyond the fork today, and dive in, and look at what we can do to improve our digestion in other really important and profound ways.

Now again, to reference back to the study published in The Journal of Gastroenterology. Approximately 70 million Americans are suffering with digestive issues. And in 2009, there were over 245,000 deaths from digestive issues. And the economic consequences of these issues were nearly \$150 billion. And this was back in 2004. And again, things have continued to evolve. Now the most prevalent digestive issue isn't directly the most deadly issue. But over time, this particular issue leads to the development of the severe chronic diseases that can shorten our lives, and greatly reduce the quality of our lives.

In the year 2000, approximately 63 million Americans experienced chronic constipation. Alright, now, in the year 2000, I know we thought in the year 2000, we would be having space-aged digestion. Space-aged health. Folks back in the '70s, in the '60s, and earlier generations thought by this time we would have it all dialed in. But in reality, again, in the year 2000, 60 million Americans experienced chronic constipation.

Now, isn't it interesting that we see ourselves in such an advanced society, and yet we are the most chronically diseased civilization in recorded human history. Just because we have computers and skyscrapers, this does not mean that we're better off, not necessarily. If you look at our state of health as a society, our mental health, our physical health, it's been decaying. So, something is out of alignment, so on the surface we seem to be so evolved and advanced, but if you take a step back and look at things rationally, you see that something is severely wrong here. And I believe that we can have both, we can have this technological

advancement, but we can also be advanced in our health and wellness and our understanding of the human body. Things that our ancestors really had dialed in, were more living in alignment in accordance with nature. And again, today we're going to look at some things, we're going to go beyond the fork and talk about these eight ways to improve your digestion without changing your diet.

So, let's go ahead and dive right in. Number one, on this list of eight ways to improve your digestion without changing your diet, surprisingly, number one is exercise. A recent meta-analysis published in oxidative medicine and cellular longevity suggest that exercise can positively enhance the number of our beneficial microbial species, enrich our microflora diversity and improve the development of our commensal bacteria, a bacteria that likes to come together, work together as a community. Now, let's break this down a bit. The research has uncovered that exercise is able to enrich microflora diversity. What does that mean? So, there's one thing to have diversity, so that's having different... For example, if we use humans, there are different ethnicities, so we'll have maybe 10 different ethnicities, but maybe out of that 10, one of those ethnicities has 100 people, and then the other nine has just five people. So, the diversity is there, but it's not deep. The enrichment is where we're going deeper on not just the diversity, but wide-scale enrichment of that diversity, where we have maybe 100 of one race, 70 of another, 99 of another, 100 of another, 50 of another, so that's where we have enrichment. So, I hope that makes sense, it's very similar to our gut bacteria.

We know that diversity of our microbial species is associated with a healthy body composition with healthier cardiovascular system, healthier immune function. The list goes on and on and on, diversity is incredibly important, and it's one of those things, it's the leading edge of science right now in looking at the critical connection between our microbial health and our health overall. So, to dig in a little bit deeper here, the researchers found that exercise improves the Bacteroidetes to Firmicutes ratio, which could be a contributing factor to weight loss. So Firmicutes are a category of bacteria that are often more associated with higher rates of weight gain, whereas Bacteroidetes are a category of bacteria that are more associated with leanness. Now, I don't want this to become too black or white, because we need both of these classifications of bacteria. Now, it's when the imbalance takes place in the ratios where Firmicutes start to out-match or out-number Bacteroidetes, that's when we get into a place where we're more apt to gain weight, to gain body mass and to become insulin-resistant.

Alright, this is some of the correlation that we're seeing in the data, it's becoming more and more clear. Again, correlation does not mean causation, but it's definitely a strong association. So, we want a healthy ratio of Bacteroidetes to Firmicutes, and exercise is one of things that's been found to help to optimize that ratio. Very, very powerful. Exercise was also found to stimulate the proliferation of bacteria that can modulate mucosal immunity and improve barrier functions. So literally, protecting the lining of your gastrointestinal tract and

supporting the immune system. Really, really remarkable. These are behind the scene ways that exercise makes us better that are not talked about. The scientists stated, "Exercise can be used as a treatment to maintain the balance of the microflora or to re-balance after dysbiosis, thus obtaining an improvement of the health status." So even after experiencing dysbiosis, which is a disruption to that microbial cascade, where we might have pathogenic bacteria starting to take over our vessel and the more probiotic, our friendly flora, the supportive microbes are in a lower ratio.

So dysbiosis is one of those issues that has become rampant in our society as well. But again, even bacteria that we deem to be opportunistic or "bad bacteria," we've got to keep that in perspective. It's like, if you want to look at the Incredible Hulk, for example, it's not necessarily a bad guy, as a matter of fact, he could be a superhero, but if everybody is a Hulk, everything is going to get torn down. If that makes sense. The Hulk has a role to play. He's here to smash. Alright, but if he's asked to do something that is requiring a scalpel, well, chances are things are going to get messed up. So, all of these things have a role to play, but we need to have things in a right healthy ratio, and that's what we're really striving for. And exercise helps our microbes to naturally reach that place. This is why it's so important.

Now, the researchers did acknowledge one important caveat, and this is that excessive exercise can actually increase our intestinal permeability and compromise gut barrier function. We can tip into things where we go too far. We could do that with just about anything. So too much exercise can compromise our gut health and compromise our immune system function as well. Just to reaffirm this, we've talked about this many, many times over the years, but your immune system is largely located in your gut, your gastrointestinal tract is where upwards of about 70% of your immune system is located. Now, many people have thrown out this stat over the years, but I've been talking about this for a very, very long time, to understand that even if we're talking about infectious diseases, we have to address the importance of having a healthy gut and healthy gut integrity, because this is literally the front line of where our immune system is interacting with the world around us. It matters, it matters so much. And so, stacking conditions in our favor is very important, but understanding, yes, exercise is critical, but with all things, we can push things, push the system too far and get diminishing returns.

So, here's another really critical take away, is that exercise in and of itself, in our culture today, because we've ventured into this place where we have to "exercise", whereas our ancestors of the past and past centuries, they didn't have to think in terms of "exercising" to be fit. Fitness was just the natural way of life because people were active, people were eating real food, people were more in accordance with nature in our Circadian rhythms and all these other things. And we'll talk a little bit more about that in a bit, but it's important for us to understand that the concept of going to exercise is a new invention to try to buffer all of our lack of

exposures to the healthy things that our genes expect from us, like real food, like movement, just as a normal day-to-day thing. And this is wonderful though, we can pivot, we can find creative ways to access that and to become more fit, but in our culture, I just want you to understand this and really file this away in your mental Rolodex, is that exercise in our culture, we are programmed to believe that exercise is about looking good, exercise is about looking fit, it's a visual thing, it's a vanity thing, and I'm not saying that there's anything wrong with that, but that's not what exercise, the activity in and of itself is about physiologically for the human body.

What exercise really does that nothing else can compare to, is exercise increases assimilation of nutrients from the food that you eat. Exercise is about drawing in more nutrition into our tissues. All right. And we know this from studies, for example, on racehorses, so this is a multi-billion-dollar industry, and the loss of a racehorse could potentially cost you tens of millions of dollars, so there's some research done to look at increasing the bone density of racehorses to stave off any potential bone breaks. And so, they had a control group of horses, and then they had a study group that they gave them nutrition, additional nutrition in the form of these supplements or isolated nutrients that are noted to be helpful in increasing bone density. And that group did increase their bone density of those horses, but there was another group of horses that were given the additional nutrition and regularly walked the horses, and their bone density was even higher because that activity, that movement increased the assimilation of nutrients and making that organism, making that horse, a stronger, more robust pony.

Alright. And that's what it's really about at the end of the day. Exercise is a primary way that the human body assimilates nutrients, and here's the other part it's coupled with. Exercise is a primary driver of elimination as well. The word exercise is very close to the word exorcise. It's kind of like to get rid of, to remove. And so, we're expelling metabolic waste significantly more when we're moving our bodies. So, for example, a targeted place that exercise is affecting as far as elimination, we're talking about digestion today, so elimination is critical here, we don't want to be backed up. Alright, and so one of those primary points of emphasis is the way that exercise assists our lymphatic system, our lymphatic system. Your lymphatic system can be compared to your extra cellular waste management system. A lot of your immune system is located within your lymphatic system as well and being able to move and to process metabolic waste to get them out of your system. Alright. Now, your lymphatic system spreads throughout your body. If you were to see a picture of this like in a biology book or just on the inter-webs, you can look it up and see, the lymphatic system is branching out much like your cardiovascular system, but unlike your cardiovascular system that has your heart and the blood vessels that pump and contract and help to move this fluid throughout your system, your lymphatic system doesn't have a direct pump.

Your lymphatic system is only moving when you're moving, that's the rub. Your lymphatic system is moving and processing these metabolic wastes and moving things around in your system, only when you are moving yourself. So if you are sedentary, like much of our population is, we are the most sedentary culture in the history of recorded human civilization, and this is not something that we want to prop up and hold a trophy up on, but when we're not moving, when we're highly inactive, these metabolic wastes are just kind of gumming up our system, we are creating an internal cesspool in a sense, we're creating a situation where the basement is flooding and it's getting nasty. And stuff is starting to breakdown from the inside out. So, this, at its core is what exercise is really all about and why this is the number one on this list. And this isn't in any particular order, but this one is number one in my book because of the massive amount of impact that it directly has on our digestion, so assimilation and elimination. Alright.

So also, again, if we're even using the moniker of a movement, a bowel movement, movement, alright? Leaning in to that we want to move our bodies, move our bowels, move your body, just simply having a regular practice of going for a walk can significantly improve our digestive wellness and help to address what's going on with this chronic constipation that's taking place in our society in addition to all of the other gastrointestinal issues, but unfortunately, and here's the issue, exercise isn't often prescribed to assist in reducing the incidence of gastrointestinal issues, that is the problem, why is that at this point, all that we know physicians should automatically be prescribing exercise in order for people to heal or to treat, and literally, we've gone through studies that are saying this can be used as a treatment to help to heal our citizens, to help to heal our community.

And so, this is another one of those things that we don't got to wait around until the rest of the system that has been failing clearly. In recent decades, seeing that we have multiple epidemics skyrocketed in recent decades, and a four trillion-dollar health care system that has been siphoning money and resources from our sick society, farming sick people and then treating their symptoms superficially with drugs instead of addressing the underlying cause, which your genes, your DNA expects you to move, your digestive system expects you to move. This should be automatic, but we don't have the time to sit up here and wait around until they get their act together, we've got to take it upon ourselves. So, here's what we're going to do. How do we use this to our advantage? Well, number one, we've got to make it accessible, that's the key. Our ancestors, this was automatic because this is just how they lived their lives, if they weren't moving, you are not eating. If you're not moving, you don't got a place to stay, you're not a part of the tribe, a part of the community, it's built into the system.

Today, stuff is different. We've created ways that have dramatically reduced the need for movement, we barely have to move to eat today, barely have to move in order to have shelter or any of these other creature comforts that we have, we've created a reality that has

eliminated much of the movement that we would have had. And so we've got to make it accessible, it's kind of like drinking water, you can't drink what you don't have, so if you got a bottle around with you that you're just keeping close to you, if you're listening to the audio version you probably heard a little shing, I just grabbed my water bottle here, from my friend, my buddy Bedros Keuilian, and I just keep a bottle with me at all times because you can't drink what you don't have, so when I'm leaving the house, fill up my water bottle bring it with me. My water bottle is my sidekick, okay, I'm Batman, this is Robin. I'm Jordan this is Pippen.

So, or whatever you want to throw in here, whatever power combination, power duo, you want to add into the mix here, but just seeing your water bottle as your sidekick that's with you all the time. It's accessible. So making fitness accessible, now, here's the good news, once you become aware of this and understand that the number one form of exercise is walking by far, because it's the thing that we are biologically, physiologically designed to do, and if you've got a body, you've got a gym, if you've got a body, you can get out and walk, move your body, you don't need special circumstances, you don't need special conditions.

Now, here's another thing about humanity today, conditions can dissuade us, so if it's too cold outside, if it's too hot outside, if it's raining, if it's snowing or whatever the case might be, the conditions can dictate what we do, so we've got to have things that enable our accessibility and also enable consistency, and if possible, enable some fun because ultimately that's what makes it all fit together, is that we connect with something that we really enjoy, and I have simple fitness tools that I can use and have access to at any time, regardless of what's going on in my life, and they're literally just a few feet from me, whether I'm in my office on another floor or I'm down on the floor level, and I'm just even closer to these items that are sitting right outside of my back door, so the tools... Even today, even today, I planned on, you know what, if I've got time I'm going to head to the gym, but that gym is going to be... It's a 15-minute travel there, 15 minutes back, and I was like, you know what, I'm just going to go ahead, get some vitamin D. I am going to work out outside, use my tools that I have and have a great work out that way.

And the tools that I use today, I was doing more of a kind of core and shoulder-focused workout and I was using my steel maces, so these are these incredible tools that warriors were training with centuries ago that we've kind of rekindled this association today, and we'll put up a little bit of video for you guys to see me using these tools, if you're watching the video version, and so I'm utilizing my steel maces, my kettlebell specifically, I used a primal bell, so this is cool kettlebell designs, and it just makes it so much fun, and I actually had helped my son to paint the kettlebell, so it's this kind of angry chimpanzee face and he painted it and it looks so cool and you just want to go and pick it up when you walk by it and just do a couple of presses. So I just did a workout utilizing these tools that I have, I also have steel clubs, and I picked up these tools over time, I just got one tool and then I got another tool from Onnit.

Onnit is the premier industry leader in fitness equipment. And again, these are simple tools, you don't need to go anywhere, easily accessible, I highly encourage you to grab yourself at least one of these tools to have on hand so that that accessibility is there at all times. Head over there and check them out. It's onnit.com/model, and they're going to hook you up with a special 10% off, all of their fitness equipment as well as their incredible organic, highly curated nutrition supplements, all that good stuff there as well, and I've been utilizing Onnit and their nutrition and their exercise equipment for probably about seven years now, I absolutely love those guys. But definitely grab yourself an implement, whether it's a kettlebell, whether it's a steel mace or steel club. Get it from the people that are doing things the right way. They've got steel clubs, steel maces, kettlebells, battle ropes, oh my goodness, so many cool things to choose from, but again, just find creative ways to add to your repertoire.

I'm a big fan of these tools, but just getting proficient with your own body weight, with walking, the most important thing is that for supporting our digestive wellness, we need to be moving every day. Your genes expect you to move. This doesn't mean that you have to work out and exercise your face off every day, but movement is critical to the function and the healing of our digestive system, so make sure that we're utilizing this tool. Again, this is eight ways to improve your digestion without changing your diet, number one, is exercise. Now let's move on to number two on this list. The number two way to potentially improve your number twos and to improve your digestion overall without changing your diet is to address your stress. A study published in the Journal of physiology and pharmacology details how excessive stress can lead to alterations of the gut brain axis, ultimately leading to the development of a broad array of gastrointestinal disorders, including inflammatory bowel disease, irritable bowel syndrome, food allergies, ulcers, acid reflux, and other gastrointestinal diseases. It's that serious, stress can really mess you up, it can really mess up your digestive system to the degree it can encourage food allergies.

Now, these are things that, again, we're not talking about, we just think that there's some ghost in the machine or some mysterious reason why people are experiencing all these issues and stress can be a major culprit behind both constipation or diarrhea, so it's kind of like it can disrupt your digestion in both directions, it can back you up like a clogged faucet, or it can have you evacuating like a school fire drill, alright? Either of these are possible. Now this reminds me of several of the situations that I saw when I was doing my clinical work, working as a nutritionist, and also I was still doing work as a strength and conditioning coach from time to time as well, but just seeing how stress could really be a major force behind people's digestive issues, and one of the particular people that I worked with, she was a high-performing entrepreneur, she owned multiple restaurants, and she didn't seem to be eating that poorly considering the type of restaurants that she had, which was not the best food ever, alright? But even addressing... And we kind of have this blanket idea of make sure that we get enough

fiber in and all these different things, but sometimes the food isn't enough and true story, this woman, if you saw her, she's kind of petite, but then you see she has this significant distinction of her belly, and as I was doing her intake, I find out that she's only pooping every five days.

Even saying it, I couldn't believe it. Alright, she said the longest that she had ever gone was like eight days. I was like, where does the food go? Where does it go, alright? But it had become normalized, and for her, what was actually behind helping her digestion to where she started to go every two days, eventually, just with a couple of days of making some changes, was addressing her stress, and we can have even emotional trauma and things that happened in our past that lead to significant biochemical changes in our body, in particular in this incidence, it could lead to disordered functioning of our digestive system, so these issues in and of themselves we have to be the commander of our mental and our emotional health and not be subjected to all of the potential craziness and even beauty and opportunity that's going on in the world that can have us outside of our bodies, in a sense, that can have us so external-focused that our internal environment starts to break down. And so, with this being said, what are some tools that we can utilize to help to address this stress? Well, obviously, one of the things that has really emerged just within the last, really the last decade, because of all the studies that have come forward, but this has been utilized for thousands of years, but meditation.

And what is meditation? Now there's, of course, there's different forms of meditation and different definitions, but at its core, this is going within, this is venturing into your inner world, your inner domain and understanding that your outer world is a direct reflection of your inner world and being able to sit and to be still and to relate to yourself again. Now you can't really be out of relationship with yourself, it's an illusion, but it can seem like it, where we can lose ourselves in the day-to-day stuff. Now, by the way, when I say sit, that's not the only way that meditation can work, you can do a walking meditation, mindfulness meditation. There are many different wonderful moving meditation practices from Qi gong to Tai Chi and many others that have been utilized for centuries, but a seated meditation to just be able to sit, to be still, and one of the tools here within that frame of meditation is breathwork and breathing exercises. Just by changing your breath, it instantaneously changes what's happening with your endocrine system and your nervous system. And those are the two primary entities that are largely controlling your gastrointestinal health. Your digestion, this is all along this HPA axis, and so what's happening with your brain and with stress is immediately going to be influencing what's happening with your digestive system.

So, having a meditation practice, but it's not meditating every now and then, it's creating some consistency, having a practice, a consistent practice to where the meditation where you are breathing well, where you're more centered, whether you're establishing... Where you're establishing a relationship with yourself, that starts to bleed over into your everyday reality, it

starts to integrate itself, and you start to have a much closer relationship if you are under stress, you can get back to that place of balance so much quicker when you have that practice. So, meditation is obviously a resource to use here to address our stress and to improve our digestion without necessarily changing our diet. Walking is another stress reliever as well, so this goes back to number one here. Again, it's such a tonifying parasympathetic, rest and digest assistive force. Just a nice walk, preferably in nature, not on a treadmill where the ground is moving under you, alright. Even that process is taking away a natural part of the human gait. Alright, so not to say again, if under conditions, if it's freezing outside and there's... It's fire and brimstone and tornadoes and all that stuff outside, sure, use the treadmill that you have at home, no worries, but ideal conditions is, let's stack conditions, get that walk in and also get some fresh air, get some sunlight, if you can, and start stacking conditions that are all healing things for our digestive wellness.

Another thing to address our stress is cultivating healthy community, healthy relationships. Our relationships can be probably the biggest driver of stress and also the biggest stress relief, but primarily that relationship you have with yourself, but a close second, of course, is going to be the relationships that we have in our lives, and to cultivate healthy relationships and understand that even some relationships that might be stressful, we can balance things out with the wonderful relationships that we have to be able to have to talk therapy in a sense, to express ourselves, to share our thoughts and our positions and our feelings. It's amazing, just the practice of sharing how you feel with someone else or what's going on in your mind with someone else, when you're speaking these things out loud, answers just start coming in a sense. You start to see stuff and as you're expressing yourself, it can be just kind of therapeutic in and of itself, and cathartic, but also when you get it out, you could start to see the solutions because you're articulating them rather than having them bouncing around in your mind, like a game of pong. Is it pong? Like the Atari, I think.

So, it's a whole different ball game, but that also leads into therapy itself. It might not just be in the context of friends and family, which again, just being able to talk and have wonderful people in your life, but this might be a resource, but you got to make sure that the therapist is on a level, that they're in alignment with you as well. So, we've had some wonderful resources as far as some of the best therapists in the world here on the show, so we'll have those in the show notes for you, some resources. Marisa Peer, Dr. Caroline Leaf, Dr. Daniel Amen. We're talking about the world's best, big hearts, tons of solutions, and just getting yourself plugged in to that kind of energy and information can be helpful in and of itself, but for me, I think one of the biggest issues today with addressing our stress, that is synonymous with the rampant increase in gastrointestinal issues where we have 70 million Americans are experiencing digestive diseases right now, a big part of this is the fact that we're not listening to our gut, literally. We're not listening to our gut. We say these things, we have these cute little phrases

in our society about, "Listen to your gut," "gut check," really check in, but we're not doing that today, more than ever, people are not listening to that inner wisdom.

Because when we're talking about, listen to our gut, we're talking about a primal instinct, we're talking about the realest thing about you that science might not dictate that this is the realest thing about you, because it can't quite explain how you know stuff, how you just know in your body if something is right or wrong, if something is for you or not for you, you already know. But we ignore that, we push it to the side. We'll rationalize, we'll use our highly evolved brain, especially today, where we think we're so advanced and evolved, we'll use our gained intellect to justify going against the bad decisions that our gut is telling us not to do in the first place, or to do in the first place. "Shut up stupid intuition." That's how we're doing it. So part of addressing our stress in our lives is starting to listen to our gut. Part of healing our digestive health is listening to our gut.

Now I'm saying this, it is real, it is accessible, but it's not necessarily easy, because again, you have to work on fostering that relationship, because there can be static on the line where you get bits and pieces of a message from your gut and you're up there trying to decipher it, like you're in World War II or something, and you don't quite get the message right. So, our bodies are constantly giving us this feedback, but if we don't cultivate that healthy relationship, we might decipher things the wrong way and/or completely ignore our intuition and ignore what our gut is telling us and continue to see negative ramifications that tend to keep on happening until we finally listen to our intuition. Alright, so number two here on this list of eight ways to improve your digestion without changing your diet is to address your stress, and I'm going to move on to number three here on this list.

And number three is to optimize your sleep quality. Research published in the Journal Cell detailed how abnormal sleep patterns and jet lag, whether it's real jet lag or social jet lag can rapidly lead to unfavorable changes in your microbiome. In the study, researchers analyzed fecal samples from people before, during and after bouts of jet lag from a 10-hour flight spanning multiple time zones. They found that the jet lagged participants showed an increase in a type of bacteria known to be more prevalent in people with obesity and diabetes, it shifted the make-up of their microbiome to where there's more of a proliferation taking place with bacteria associated with diabetes and obesity. Now, here's the good news, the levels of these microbes dropped back to normal once the travelers got back on a regular sleep cycle, so that's the good news, the human body is resilient, and it is forgiving once we get back in alignment. The researcher discovered that your circadian timing system influences your bacteria balance, point blank. Common experiences like jet lag were enough to create bacterial dysbiosis in the gut, which in turn leads to metabolic disorders.

Dysbiosis isn't just about gastrointestinal unease, pain, discomfort, and something that's a nuisance, this is a hallmark or a seed for the development of many of the most detrimental conditions that are literally killing our citizens today, like diabetes, like Alzheimer's, like cardiovascular issues. As time is going on, more and more of the data is emerging on how our gut health is a foundational component in disease prevention or the activation of some of our most deadly diseases because Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, these are things he was talking about that all diseases begin in the gut. Now, here's where this gets really interesting because I mentioned in this study they're noting jet lag, but there's also this phenomenon today that's being acknowledged as social jet lag, where we are haphazardly ourselves, even though we might not be traveling out of the country or changing time zones, but we'll throw off our circadian timing system, our sleep rhythms just because it's the weekend, alright?

Not to say again, now listen, not to say that we can't stay up and do our thing and be dancing on the ceiling, alright, shout out to Lionel Richie. Lionel Richie, but the reality is, the human body is always looking to sync up with the nocturnal and diurnal patterns of life itself. Life, the Earth, the moon, the stars, the sun, it doesn't care that you're trying to go out and kick it, it doesn't care. It doesn't care that there's a new season of Bosch or Real Housewives that you're trying to binge-watch at night, it doesn't care. Your biology is hard-wired to be synced up with those things, you are made from those things, that's real. Cool thing about you is that you can, you can say, "You know what, I'm not going to do what you want me to do, sun, moon, earth, I'm going to do my own thing. I'm going to hide out in my little room, I'm going to create my own cycles," but here's the thing, again, they don't care, you are a part of it all, you could superficially do those things and choose to but what's going to happen is metabolic breakdown, you're going to suffer consequences by ignoring the Circadian patterns, the circadian timing systems that are literally located in all of your cells in your body.

The best that we know today, as far as this circadian timing system is that there are specific clock genes located in all of your cells that are again, always working to sync up and inform all of your cells, all of your tissues, your internal organs and systems how to align itself with nature right now. And the closer that alignment, the healthier we tend to be, so the common thing is, we might have a pretty normal sleep schedule through the week, we got the kids, we got work, so maybe you're getting to bed at 11:00, getting up at 6:00, or whatever the case might be, and then the weekend rolls around and Friday you're just going to stay up late, binge-watch, stay up till 1:00, 2 o'clock, Saturday, maybe some of the same, then you try to get back on point Sunday night, and then Monday, you're feeling a little chitty, chitty, it was a C-H, alright, chitty and you're wondering why. Social jet lag, that is social jet lag.

This is why people dread Mondays, Monday is the least favorite day of the week. It shouldn't be like that. Monday is wonderful. It's just a day. It's a socially accepted day that these things

happen on this day, it's just we made it up. Alright, it's just another day. The day didn't do anything to you. It doesn't deserve to be hated, alright? So it's a reframing of these things, because what we're doing is we're taking the opportunity on those days off to do stuff, we have FOMO, fear of missing out, and of course, we just want to live our lives and do stuff, but here's the thing, whether it's kicking it or whether it's watching your favorite shows, you can put those things in pockets where your sleep doesn't have to suffer necessarily, and the occasional jump out of those things, all good. Human body, as they mention in this study, after the people returned to normal, got back on the regular sleep cycle, their microbes adjusted, but I want you to know, because I'm not here to fib to you, that's what my grandma called a lie, a fib. I'm not here to fib to you and tell you that when you're disrupting your sleep cycles like that, just because it's a certain day of the week, your microbiome is shifting in negative ways.

Now, I'm also going to throw this in here because none of this stuff should hold dominion over our mind and we become neurotic about them, because the healthier you are, the more gracefully your body adjust and it's just not a big deal. So you can do those things, especially when you're in a better state of health and your body bounces back so quickly gracefully, you might not even notice the change, but when you do notice the change and you don't feel as well, or your energy is not as high or where you would like it to be, your body is giving you some feedback that it didn't like that. You know what, I didn't even like that. I don't feel my best because I'm trying to adjust from what you put me through, and that's okay, because here's another thing, the healthier you are, the easier it is when you're in that state where your body is like, I don't like that, that you have the accessibility to do things, the stack conditions to where you're back to 120 where you want to be much more swiftly. So social jet lag.

Now, it's also been found that your gut bacteria themselves, your gut bacteria, the trillions, trillions. We're talking 40 trillion bacteria that you have living in and on your body, they themselves also have circadian timing systems, they also have circadian clocks, and there's a virtual changing of the guard in a sense that happens every night, that helps to keep the ratios of beneficial to opportunistic bacteria in check. So, keep this in mind, our gut bacteria have their clock genes and their biological clocks as well, and so it's not just you throwing stuff off, it's like your whole system has to try to recalibrate and it does that much more gracefully, the healthier we are.

So, this is why we want to stack conditions in our favor, so that when our sleep might be off, but we've been consistently exercising, we've been managing our stress pretty well, and so a couple of the nights where we don't sleep as well, our sleep pattern is different because we're kicking it and we're traveling, whatever it is, you don't even know. You don't take that big of a hit, your body adapts gracefully because you stack conditions in your favor. And so to wrap this one up, the scientist in the study that we mentioned stated that, "Disruption of the

circadian clock in the host alters the rhythms and composition of the microbial community leading to obesity and metabolic problems." Not the good stuff. So just being aware of this, that we have an influence over our microbiome significantly based on the quality of our sleep.

Alright, now we're going to move on to number four on our list of eight ways to improve your digestion without even changing your diet. Number four is, there's a little connection here with the diet, okay? But this one is important, it's not thought about in a context of diet and food, but number four is, curbing your alcohol consumption. Now you're already like, "Shawn is saying I can't go out and kick it, now I can't drink?" I'm not saying none of that, you could do you, but for folks that are struggling again, we've got about 245,000 Americans are dying from digestive diseases every year, so this isn't just some superficial thing to me, I want to help to get our communities educated so they know what's going on, what's actually causing the issues at their core and so this is an important part of the conversation. So, a study published in the American Journal of Physiology, found that microbiome dysbiosis is significantly more prevalent in heavy alcohol drinkers. Keyword, "heavy," shout out to Heavy D, but keyword "heavy." Man, Heavy could dance man, Heavy D could dance.

He was heavy, but man he had them light feet, he had twinkle toes, I'm telling you. He was amazing. But heavy alcohol drinkers, so don't fret if you like to get a little sip on, but it's when we venture into excessive alcohol consumption that the wheels can really fall off. The researchers discovered that heavy drinkers have substantially lower levels of metabolism, supportive Bacteroidetes in much higher levels of pathogenic bacteria. The scientist stated, "Alcohol use is correlated with decreased connectivity of the microbial network, and this alteration is seen even after an extended period of sobriety." So even after backing off on the alcohol, the damage to the microbiome takes a significant amount of time to heal from the intrusion of excessive alcohol. Now, there's nuance here being that alcohol in and of itself includes fermentation with various substrates, so throughout our evolution, humans have been fermenting stuff and fermenting things that end up having a ratio of alcohol as well, and it's supported the microbiome in different ways. So, we want to keep this in context, but the excess of alcohol consumption is clearly damaging to the microbiome as well as damaging to our gut lining. Research cited in Molecular Medicine Report states that heavy alcohol consumption increases intestinal permeability and damages the tight junctions that line the gut, this is not good.

So, we're talking about the potential for a cascade of autoimmune issues to take place because when the tight junctions of the gut are damaged or malfunctioning. It's going to allow in larger particles, food substrates, things that should not be getting into your bloodstream, into your bloodstream. And this can lead to situations that coincide with things like molecular mimicry. So, this is where we'll just say, a structure gets into the blood stream that was able to get through one of the tight junctions, we'll just say that your intestinal lining, that those tight

junctions, maybe they are originally in the distance or the shape of a tennis racket, right? But microscopic tennis racket, but now they've been expanded to the size of the tennis net and those holes. So now stuff is getting through that would normally not get through, and maybe there's a structure of a protein sequence that is floating around in your system and your immune system is going to be called in action because that protein sequence should not be there in your system. And maybe that sequence, just to give you an example, maybe the amino acid chain is GGAA, it's just like, that should not be in the blood stream like that, and your immune system goes and takes out GGAA, no harm, no foul.

But that's not how it works, because the immune system is a highly trained assassin, alright? And it's keeping notes, anything that's abnormal, it keeps notes for future intrusion, like GGAA, be on the lookout for GGAA, 'cause they've slipped by before, and here's the problem, your human tissue, your thyroid tissue, for example, might have that same amino acid sequence that's creating a tissue itself, GGAA, and now your immune system's like, "Uh-oh, we spotted some more GGAA." And it goes and starts attacking your own thyroid, alright? This is essentially what's underpinning autoimmune thyroid conditions. Hashimoto's, for example, and we had on the wonderful Doctor Izabella Wentz, who's really a leader in the field, and Hashimoto's New York Times Best Selling author many years ago, we'll have her back on matter of fact, now that I'm thinking about this, I've been talking with her lately, and so I got to have it back on, but just to understand that, it could be targeting your thyroid, or that GGAA could be in your tissues of your ligaments, in your joints, and so now we have the manifestation of rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune-related arthritic condition, or maybe it's the tissue of your lungs, maybe it's the tissue of your heart, the list goes on and on.

You've got to understand that this occurrence, if we're talking about molecular mimicry, is kicking off by damage happening to our gastrointestinal tract, and one of the things that is really good at messing up our gut, is heavy alcohol consumption. So, in these various ways to improve our digestion without changing our diet, curbing alcohol, even though again, this is something that we consume, I'll give you that, but it's often not associated as a dietary intake thing, right? Matter of fact, we don't even think about alcohol in those terms. Most people are not going to the bar like, "Can I see the nutrition facts on that whiskey?" It doesn't happen, and this is just one of those things that are different and not under that umbrella of being a dietary intake, so that's number four on our list.

Now we're going to move on to another thing that might fall under that category as a "bad habit," as excessive alcohol consumption can be, and this way of improving your digestion without changing your diet, this one is smoking cessation. I had to add this to the list because about 35 million Americans are still smoking cigarettes, all that we know about cigarettes and the downstream effects, 35 million Americans was a significant number, and that's actually half of the number, ironically, as the people who have severe digestive diseases. So 35 million

Americans smoke, 70 million Americans have digestive diseases at this moment, again, this is based on the best data that we have, so if we're looking to improve our digestion and smoking is still a part of our lives, I want to highlight this study published in PLOS ONE, so the Public Library of Science ONE, and it revealed that the rebound weight gain that's often attributed to the cessation of smoking could be attributed to the profound changes that take place in the intestinal flora.

So, you know that folks, this is one of the reasons people start smoking or gain weight after they quit or don't want to quit, is the associated weight gain that takes place, and we tend to think it's just like this hand to mouth thing that needs to be addressed, but what's actually happening according to these researchers, is changes to the microbiome. The study noted a sharp rise in Firmicutes, the bacteria that's associated with weight gain and insulin resistance, they noted a sharp rise in Firmicutes and a decrease in Bacteroidetes after the cessation of smoking. But now here's the good news again, an increase in diversity does start to come back, the human body is resilient, it can heal, it's just about finding healthful supportive ways that we can support our microbial shift back to normalcy and circumvent that weight gain when folks want to kick that smoking habit.

So, it always boils down for me to stacking conditions in people's favor, we can't just take away something that somebody enjoys or that they might even be addicted to and replace it with things that are of far less value, both psychologically and biologically. So how can we add in things to the mix, maybe it's more time with high quality relationships, maybe it's new food experiences or new experiences period where maybe they're on adventure, maybe they're going on a trip to somewhere, they're spending more time in nature and more relaxing environment and or maybe they are now engaging in a new exercise program, something that can stack conditions in their favor to make this hit of not utilizing smoking not so abrupt and so hard on the system.

But again, finding some joy. Maybe it's a new habit, maybe it's a new activity that they're doing but finding something to uplift the spirits and uplift that biochemistry at the same time. I wanted to share that one even though this isn't a big issue for most folks who are on that kind of health and wellness focus and really dedicated to be the best version of themselves but we got to understand everybody is different. And there are people who are smoking cigarettes that are doing so many other wonderful things for their health that they're doing okay but I wanted to share this because this has to do with the rampant issues with digestive diseases in our society and smoking is another one of them that is undergirding this problem, and this is something that we can do something about if we become aware of it. Most people have no idea about this research, so I wanted to make sure that I added this one in. And now moving on to number six on our list of eight ways to improve your digestion without changing your diet.

Number six is to eat in a relaxed state/activating your parasympathetic nervous system. We have the sympathetic nervous system, which is "fight or flight" nervous system. We also have the parasympathetic nervous system, which is often called the "rest and digest" nervous system, emphasis, digest. It's putting our physiology and our biochemistry in a state where we're going to have a better association and a less stressful association with the food that we're eating. Now, the process of eating food itself is a stressor on the body. So, what do I mean by that? When we're taking something from the outside world and putting it inside your body, your tissues that have a close association, your cells know each other. It doesn't necessarily know that orange or that Hot Pocket. It doesn't necessarily know, and I don't think anybody knows a Hot Pocket except Jim Gaffigan. Shoutout to Jim Gaffigan. Hot Pocket. But it's an incredibly energy-intensive process to take that substance, to put it inside of your body and for your body to break it down and turn it into human tissue, turn it into viable usable fuel.

It's a very intensive process that requires a lot of systems to be front and center, it's a stressful event. Now, here's the rub, when folks are in a healthy state, their body composition is in a healthy state. That there is a cortisol response when we eat a meal but it's relatively low, we'll just say there's going to be an increase in cortisol by 5%. But when we're in a state of carrying excessive weight, being overweight and/or obese, we can see that cortisol release jumping up 40%-50% versus when we're in a healthy state, a healthy weight or body composition. So, the body is taking it even more seriously. There's even more stress taking place because there's so much stress already bearing down on the weight that the body is carrying to try to manage all these things. So, I want you to keep these little insights in mind. We never want to get into a place where we're thinking in terms of this food is stressing me, because we often do the reverse which is we're stress-eating. We're eating to relieve stress. But food can be a stressor and the healthier that we are, the more gracefully our body handles a situation.

But here's the thing, we'll talk about this in a moment, but eating itself is a stress reliever so there's this beautiful dance and balance taking place, especially when we're eating real things and we're doing what we're talking about here which is to eat in a relaxed state, activate our parasympathetic nervous system before we start eating. So, what does this mean? Well, even if you're running around. Oftentimes, a lot of times today we're eating on the go. Just the other day, I saw somebody pull up to the light. They was eating Oodles of Noodles at the light, alright. True story. I've done this, I haven't done the Oodles of Noodles but I've definitely, of course, eaten probably a sandwich or something while driving. But we're eating on the go, or we're eating while we're scrolling on our phone. Our attention is outsourced and so we're not present with our food. And this doesn't mean that you can't do other stuff and have a meal but especially if you're dealing with digestive distress, we got to tune back in. We got to be present with our food.

We got to get out of outsourcing our attention and get intentional on the bites that we're taking and appreciating the process of getting to bring this food into our bodies, appreciating the people who helped to make it possible, the people who grew the food. All these wonderful things can start to get cultivated but how do we do this in a practical way? Well, you know, there's this concept that's been in our society for a long time of saying a prayer before one eats a meal. Now, the prayer, we're not talking about a specific religion doing this because many different religions have prayers before eating a meal. It is the process of the pause because the prayer creates an atmosphere where you stop, and you turn within and you slow down for a moment. So, it's like this wonderful ninja way that we've had these practices imbued into our culture. Now, what happens when you're not at a table with people and you're doing a whole group prayer scenario and it's just you? What do you do? You can do a little shoutout to Chanise and Johnny Gill, silent prayer. If you know about that, what I just said, you're a real one. Alright. You could do a little silent prayer yourself. Just take a moment. Whether you're at your favorite restaurant or you're at home, just take a moment.

Breathe deep. Give thanks for your food. Give thanks and set an intention for what the food is going to do as it's now going to be living through you, and the energy that you're going to express, the love that you're going to give, whatever it is, find something that resonates with you. To just pause before you eat your meal, just take a minute, even 30 seconds, to just... Because as soon as you shift your breathing, as soon as you take a moment, you pause, that parasympathetic nervous system, it's a binary system, it's one or the other, you're in sympathetic or you're in parasympathetic. They're both not running at the same time. So, number six on this list is to eat in a relaxed state/activate your parasympathetic nervous system.

Now we're going to move on to number seven. And number seven on the list of eight ways to improve your digestion without changing your diet, number seven is to chew like you actually have teeth. Alright? Chew better, Chewbacca. Alright? I'm going to need you to chew better. Digestion literally begins in your mouth. That's where the digestive process happens. Now, I grew up in a scenario where you got to eat quick. I would huff it down. You go out to eat, I'm done. 10 minutes, we're out. Like just like... And I've seen this many times, my wife and I actually went out to eat this past weekend, and there was a couple that was sitting by us, and she was talking to my wife, I went to... I don't know, I went to order something, whatever, but I came back, and they were talking, whatever, we got there before them, alright? And they left before us, like well before us, they finished so quickly, huffed down their food and they were gone, and it wasn't like it was something abnormal or they were rushing somewhere, they were just out, and she wants to stop and get some food with her husband, but they just ate it so quickly.

Now not to say that that is wrong, that they were eating excessively quickly, but I've done this, I know many other people have. We live in a society that's on the clock. Even our children were

programmed from their early age. In high school, I think maybe collectively, after going in the line and all the things and maybe I have 15 minutes to eat. I mean, that's the way that our society has been structured to not chew very well. Swallowing largely unmasticated food, and you're just like stomach, you deal with it, whatever, you got this. That's getting away from the very thing that kicks off our digestive process, which is chewing our food.

Now, here's the biggest part of this one, and this is a huge takeaway for you today. When you're chewing your food, that process of chewing your food, you are encoding that food, with your DNA and RNA, your genetic information is interacting with that food, it's getting melded together and it's creating this familiarity with that food as it goes on to the rest of your digestive system. It's kind of like signing off like, "Oh, these guys are cool. Pass through." versus coming in, it's trying to force its way into the VIP section, like, "You don't know who I am? I'm Drake." No. If the chewing process is happening, it's already got this association, and so you don't got to tell them you're Drake. They just know. Okay? You used to call me on your cell phone, alright? So that whole process is going to happen. Alright? But again, it starts in our mouth we're encoding our food with our own information, and also a 2014 study titled the pathophysiology of malabsorption details how poor chewing has been linked to decreased nutrient absorption. I've been saying this for years.

This is 2014, I've been talking about this encoding of food for at least 15 years, at least 15 years, because it's some early data, but also just logic. Where are we doing the swabs, you know, if you're doing the DNA test, it's in your mouth. That's where your information is. Whether you're trying to find out your genetic history or you're trying to find out whose baby it is, alright? Shout to Maury. No, forget Maury, that's just terrible. That's terrible. Alright, so, but that information is in our mouth, alright? And also, the enzymes that we're producing that help to break that food down is in our mouth. So that process of chewing, again, they said poor chewing reduces the assimilation you're getting from your food. You might be buying this high-quality wonderful food, you're not even getting the nutrients you could be getting from it if you're not chewing it well.

Another study published in BioMed Research International details how the process of chewing can actually act as a stress reliever. Finding that it's tonifying and benefiting our HPA axis. The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, again, that the gut is operating on that same axis, the information... Our thyroid is along that same axis, we know about the vagus nerve and the connection between the gut and the brain but being able to tonify this system and having synergy, the process of chewing itself can act as a stress reliever. Alright, so yeah, it's not an accident that we quote, "stress eat". Even that process of chewing, but let's do this better. Let's have an intimate relationship with our treats.

Now, I'm not talking about American Pie type intimate relationships, but I'm just saying being able to be there, be present to taste the taste, to experience the mouth feel, to experience the textures, it's such a wonderful part of being alive, food is amazing, and these folks that are out here telling you to eat to live and not live to eat. I don't know. I don't know if that resonates. Because I think it's a both-end world. We don't want food to just be this primary driving force in our lives, but food is meant to be enjoyed, food tastes good so that you eat it. Now, food manufacturers have indeed manipulated this deep primal desire of humans to eat delicious things, but that doesn't negate the fact that we have that deep primal desire. And it doesn't negate the fact that it is normal and natural to enjoy food.

So, chew better, Chewbacca. Alright, be like Chewbacca and eat like you actually have some teeth. This is going to be one of those leverage points in improving your digestion without even changing your diet. We're at our final one here on our list, number eight on the list is to create a digestive routine. Get aligned with your circadian rhythms. The circadian timing system is defined as the network of interconnected cellular structures that regulate the timing of physiological processes and behavior, which includes your digestion. The circadian or biological clocks, existing within each and every one of our trillions of cells control the release of various hormones and neurotransmitters, our digestive function including the rate of nutrient absorption, speed of food transit throughout our GI tract, elimination and more is determined by our biological clocks, our circadian rhythms are determining how food is even moving throughout your digestive track at what rate, depends on what time of day it is.

Also, these biological clocks or circadian clocks in our cells control the behavior of our microbiome because our trillions of bacteria also have circadian clocks as well. A recent study cited in the Journal, Nature Reviews Endocrinology states "Disruption of the circadian system can alter microbiome communities and can perturb host metabolism, energy homeostasis and inflammatory pathways which leads to metabolic syndrome." Metabolic syndrome is this conglomeration of metabolic breakdown, which is associated with excessive fat gain, insulin resistance, poor blood sugar metabolism and balance and homeostasis and a whole host of other issues that underpin many of our leading causes of death, and this is associated with disruption to our circadian system resulting in damage to our microbiome. Also, these circadian clocks, control things ranging from our blood pressure, thermoregulation, sleep efficiency, muscular strength and reaction time, the list goes on and on, our mental acuity, but the bottom line is, what we're focused on here is the way that our circadian clock is controlling our digestive function. So, to lean into this one and how do we utilize this to create a digestive routine that is healthy in and of itself is first and foremost, we want to understand that digestion and elimination are naturally more robust when the sun is up. Throughout evolution, this is when we would be eating, and also pooping.

People don't tend to get up at night to go poop or get up in the middle of the night, "I got to go take a le dump." It doesn't usually happen. Okay, maybe you had a little tryst with some crazy food or something, maybe there might be an interruption, but for the most part, digestion really ratchets down when it gets dark outside. So, stacking conditions in our favor to get into a more normal pattern with how our digestion is actually wired up in the circadian clock, so in association with the sun, the moon, the stars, the spinning of the earth, all of that is influencing our digestion, it is that powerful. So how do we take advantage of this? Well, creating that ideal digestive routine, is going to start as soon as you wake up in the morning, and one of the things that's happening overnight is that your body is undergoing a lot of metabolic processes to kind of clean house, and there's a lot of residual metabolic waste that now need to get flushed out of the system, literally, and including our brain, the glymphatic system in the brain is 10 times more active when we're sleeping than when we're awake, and this is the brain cleaning house and getting rid of dead cells and regenerating tissues and creating new connections, and there's going to be some waste.

And also, our brain is primarily water, it's the vast majority. It's the most water dominant organ in the body outside of the lungs. Could be upwards of about 70, 79-ish percent of our brain is water, so it's kind of important, and we've got to be able to exchange these fluids, so first thing in the morning because you're not drinking while you're sleeping, unless you were maybe in the matrix or something, which this could be a simulation. We'll leave that one alone. Let's just move on. You're not going to be drinking while you're sleeping, and so when you get up in the morning, you are naturally going to be dehydrated, your urine is going to be more concentrated, so the color is going to be darker, so the first thing you could do to set the pace for that digestive schedule is to drink some water first day in the morning. Get your system hydrated again, get your tissues hydrated, the viscosity of your blood, get that back on point, provide some fluid for your lymphatic system.

So, I recommend folks do what I call an inner bath, and a lot of other folks over the years have picked up this mantra and have even featured this in some books, there's some bestselling books out there that have taken on this framework, which is first thing in the morning drinking 16 to upwards of 32 ounces of water, first thing in the morning. Again, the constant thread is making sure that this is something that we have a healthy association with, so if you're just not about drinking 32 ounces of water when you get up in the morning, you don't have to do that.

And if you are not vibing with room temperature or cold water, don't do that. My wife likes to have hot water with a little lemon first thing in the morning. So, myself, personally, I just go over, I love room temperature water, first thing in the morning, I'm drinking probably around... Most days, probably around 24 ounces of water to start the day, and that in and of itself can stimulate a bowel movement. It's just like a signal as it's going through your gastrointestinal

tract, first thing in the morning, when that circadian clock is ratcheting up for the movement of your bowels, that in and of itself can be one of those things that urges things to move along gracefully. So, starting your day like that is one of the things that can help to create a healthy digestive schedule. Another aspect of this healthy digestive routine is to give yourself some time so that you can move those bowels. So, when you're at home and giving yourself time, you get home-court advantage. So, if you don't know what I mean by home-court advantage, that's when you got your home throne and you don't have to deal with the toilets that are out there in the opposition's places.

So, you don't want to have to end up in a Johnny on the spot somewhere. Of course, we don't want to make this a neurotic thing, but at the office and you got to deal with your co-workers coming in, you got the dangling feet or whatever. If you got to go, you got to go, by the way, but just home-court advantage just tends to, just really be assistive in a healthier process because also at home, hopefully you got yourself a Squatty Potty. You know what I mean? You getting into the good position, all that good stuff, but give yourself that home-court advantage, give yourself time to use the restroom as part of your schedule, your routine, if you can. For some people, again, it's not first thing in the morning that they're having a bowel movement, maybe it's later in the afternoon, all good. But give yourself time because we definitely don't want to hold it, that's training your system to not work in a natural, normal circadian process. Folks tend to want to get that home-court advantage, so they'll hold it. If you got to go, you got to go.

But again, this is consciously, if you can create a routine where you don't put yourself in a situation where you're not comfortable or you have to hold it, or you're not going because you just don't have time. So, give yourself home-court advantage, give yourself some time to go whenever your body is attuned to going, and in addition to that, for some people, they're setting the pace of their digestive movement by having a cup of coffee in the morning as well. For some people, coffee just hits their booboo button like boop and it's just like, it's time to go, it's evacuation time. So, but again, this is not looking at the nutrition side of things, but coffee does have that association. And if you're doing that, make sure you get the good stuff. Alright, Folgers is over. Alright, the best part of waking up is not Folgers in your cup. That's a myth. Alright. They just made that up. Alright.

We want to avoid pesticides and herbicides and rodenticides and fungicides, and all of these things that are commonly used to grow coffee today that have proven, we have study on top of study, we've talked about this multiple times in the show, detrimental impact on our microbes, literally damaging our microbial genes. So, this is not good, so we might be stimulating a bowel movement but damaging our microbiome. So, if you're going to do the coffee, get the good stuff, organic, and as a matter of fact, stack conditions in your favor, not just coffee, get coffee infused with something like Lion's Mane. That's actually what I had

today. Lion's Mane in organic coffee, because Lion's Mane, this study was published in biomedical research, had test subjects with a variety of health complaints including anxiety and poor sleep quality. They were given Lion's Mane or a placebo for four weeks.

The participants who used the Lion's Mane significantly reduced their levels of anxiety and irritation versus those in the placebo group. Lion's Mane is a storied medicinal mushroom that's been utilized for centuries, but also now we have so many peer-reviewed studies showing about how it's so tonifying and helpful for our nervous system. Guess what our nervous system is doing, it's controlling our digestion. I mean, come on. Now you want to make sure that you're not just getting this from any random place. The Lion's Mane should be dual extracted and combined with organic coffee, you're only going to find that in one place, and that's Four Sigmatic. Go to foursigmatic.com/model. You can get a special 10% off discount. That's F-O-U-R-S-I-G-M-A-T-I-C.com/model. You get a special 10% off, incredible mushroom blends, mushroom coffees, mushroom elixirs, and they even have a wonderful mushroom hot cocoa as well. So, all done the right way. Again. Don't just go, you hear this stuff and go get Company X's Lion's Mane.

No, get it from the people who do stuff the right way. So, you're actually extracting the nutrients that we're talking about here, all the antioxidant compounds, the beta glucan compounds, and also the Triterpenes and the hormonal benefiting compounds. You've got to do a dual extraction, foursigmatic.com/model. So again, having this as part of your morning routine, but also at the end of the scale, because again, digestion and elimination is naturally stronger when the sun is up, we want to avoid eating super late at night. Now again, you can have an evening meal or even an evening snack, but the closer that you're eating to when you go to bed, it's going to be more disruptive to that circadian timing system. A study cited in *Frontiers and Nutrition* found that when there is a misalignment between the endogenous rhythms in Physiology and Environmental inputs such as feeding during the inactive phase, the body's ability to maintain homeostasis is impaired and a loss of this phase coordination between the organism, us and the environment, as well as internal misalignment between tissues can produce cardio metabolic disease as a consequence. The timing of food intake is highlighted as a powerful environmental cue with the potential to destroy or restore the synchrony of circadian rhythms and metabolism.

Very, very strong statement from these scientists, but if we're eating late when all our systems are ratcheting down as far as our digestive movement, this can stack conditions against us that can literally throw off the coordination between our cells internally and also us as an organism and our environment. It can throw off our coordination with life itself. It's that remarkable. Again, humans were not through evolution eating late at night, typically because it was dangerous, is when you hide out, quiet, you don't want to invoke some kind of outside forces, whether it's rival tribes or wild animals and the like, today we can do whatever we want,

whenever we want, it doesn't mean that it's okay that our bodies accept it as far as our bodies association with these things, because whatever you do, it's all good. Not to say that it's not okay in the context of you living your life and doing the things that you want to do, because you can obviously do whatever you want to do, it's honoring what your genes are expecting you to do, and also knowing like, again, the human body is resilient, and it can adjust wonderfully, but when we're doing this stuff on a consistent basis, that's what I'm talking about. Stacking condition against us for having a healthy digestion and defending our bodies against debilitating chronic diseases, and as mentioned this last study that we covered, creating cardio metabolic diseases as a consequence.

So again, today we covered eight ways to improve your digestion without changing your diet. Number eight was to create a digestive routine, honor this, honor our patterns, try to get more in alignment with the natural flow of things, consciously creating a flow and a pattern can be something that's very helpful without, again, necessarily changing the food that you're eating, now, obviously, our nutrition is important, it's the very stuff that we're making our bodies out of, and we're going to continue to provide the very best information on nutrition and wellness and fitness and mental health, and healthy relationships and all aspects of creating a phenomenal life and being the best version of yourself, that's what we're all about here on the Model Health Show and if you enjoyed this episode, please share it out with your friends and family on social media. Tag me, I'm @Shawnmodel on Instagram and on Twitter, and at the Model Health Show on Facebook. And of course, you could send this directly from the podcast app that you are listening on and make sure that you're subscribed to The Model Health Show on the platform that you're listening on, you're listening on Apple Podcast or Spotify or SoundCloud, wherever you're listening to the show and of course, make sure that you're subscribed to our YouTube channel because we have exclusive content on YouTube every week and you don't want to miss it.

I appreciate you so much for tuning into the show today, I got some epic shows coming your way very, very soon, so make sure to stay tuned. Take care, have an amazing day, and I'll talk with you soon. And for more after the show, make sure to head over to themodelhealthshow.com. That's where you can find all of the show notes, you can find transcriptions, videos for each episode, and if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that this show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much. And take care, I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.