

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

**EPISODE 598**

## **Secrets To Unlocking Your Best Physique**

**With Guest Gunnar Peterson**

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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. What does fitness mean to you? Oftentimes, fitness is associated with aesthetics, with our outward appearance, but in our culture today, we're making a shift towards looking at functionality and how fitness translates over into doing stuff in our lives, being able to move through the world efficiently and effectively, to reduce our prevalence of injuries, to reduce pain, to have functionality long into our lifespan. On today's episode, we're going to be diving into some of the diverse ways that fitness impacts our lives. And this is a very, very special episode for me personally, because when I started the Model Health Show, wanting to really target all the different areas of our lives that constitutes health, because health isn't just one thing. We can get tunnel vision and believe that food is everything, and food matters for sure. We know that food matters because it becomes who we are, becomes every cell in our body is made from the food that we eat. We can get hyper-focused on the exercise component, but health is more than just exercise and nutrition. It's more than our sleep. We know how vital sleep quality is today more than ever.

What about our stress inputs? What about our relationships? What about our finances? And the work that we're doing in the world. All of these things have an incredible impact on our overall health fingerprint that we have right now. Our personalized blueprint for our health is including all these different ingredients. But for that fitness component, I had one person in mind when I started this show to get his wisdom, his experience, his personality out to more people, and today, I finally have him on. We're now in the ninth year of the Model Health Show, and so to have him on at this point is number one, it's a long time coming, and number two, it's really special, and you're going to hear why in this episode, why the timing of this is even divine. So I'm really, really excited about this because this individual had an impact on my thinking in the health space and the impact that I was having on the people that I was working with for many, many years. And so, we're going to be talking about fitness, we're going to be talking about the paradigm and mindset around fitness, and we're definitely going to have some fun along the way.

Now, when it comes to fitness, obviously, there's so many different things that we can get our hands into, and today, more than ever, we need to have some diversity. We need to have some inputs because life is going to happen. We might not be able to make it to the gym at a certain time, or maybe we want to leverage our time when we're working out and be able to work out in our backyard and to get some Vitamin D, to get some sunlight and some fresh air at the same time. What are some simple tools that we can utilize? Obviously, if you have a body, you have a gym. You have the ability to do a ton of different movements and to gain a new level of fitness just with our bodies alone. But what if we can add in a few tools? What if we can add in

just having a couple of kettle bells around, or some cool time-tested pieces of equipment like steel clubs and steel maces, and all the remarkable exercises that we can do with those tools? And today, things like battle ropes have become super popular. And these are all things that we don't have to go to a gym and wait in the line and travel to get access to these things.

We can have these pieces at our own homes. And over time, I've grabbed a piece here, grabbed a piece there over the years, and now I have these really cool implements that I utilize on a regular basis, and so does my family. I've got my son, Brayden, here in the studio with me today. Say hi, Brayden.

BRADEN: Hello.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And he uses these tools as well. And I get my exercise equipment from Onnit. And Onnit is also an industry leader in pre-workout supplements and post-workout protein. If we're talking about protein, if you're doing a plant-based protein or if you're doing a grass-fed way protein, so not the conventional stuff, they're doing things the right way. And Onnit is one of the few companies that actually put their supplements through peer-reviewed clinical trials. In fact, their pre-workout supplement is based on the storied medicinal mushroom cordyceps. And the study that was conducted on their pre-workout supplement, Shroom TECH Sport, this was done at Florida State University. This was a double-blind placebo-controlled 12-week clinical trial, and the results of their study found that Shroom TECH Sport, again, this was based on the medicinal mushroom cordyceps, they found an increase in bench press reps by 12%.

How much do you bench bro? 12% more. They found an increase in both combined bench press and back squat reps by 7%, so doing the superset jump-off. They also found an increase in cardiovascular performance by almost 9% by utilizing Shroom TECH Sport from Onnit. Go to [onnit.com/model](http://onnit.com/model). You get 10% off their incredible supplements, superfoods, and fitness equipment. That's [onnit.com/model](http://onnit.com/model), that's [O-N-N-I-T.com/model](http://O-N-N-I-T.com/model) for 10% off. Everything that Onnit carries are exclusive with the Model Health Show. Check them out. [Onnit.com/model](http://Onnit.com/model). Now, let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

**ITUNES REVIEW:** Another five-star review titled gratitude by SF 2021. Shawn, thank you so much for your content, the impact that you have is so profound. You are helping more people than I can imagine. I always feel a sense of understanding and peace no matter what you are speaking on.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow, thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you so much for sharing that over on Apple Podcast. I really do appreciate that. And if you get 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.

Our guest today is the legendary Gunnar Peterson. And he's a Beverly Hills-based personal trainer whose clients include celebrities, professional athletes, and everyday folks. Gunnar's the former Los Angeles Lakers' director of strength and endurance. And he's widely recognized for his expertise in functional training and his commitment to developing and implementing innovative fitness technique. With nearly 30 years of experience in the fitness industry, Gunnar's dynamic approach, boundless energy, and sometimes risky humor only adds to the effectiveness of the experience that his clients enjoy. His clients include the very best from every domain of professional athletes, including athletes from the NBA, NHL, NFL, MLB, from the USTA professional tennis, from professional soccer, boxing, just a few of his celebrity clients include Jennifer Lopez, Matthew McConaughey, Angelina Jolie, Kendall Jenner, Ben Affleck, the list goes on and on and on. Very, very special occasion to have in studio with me today, the one and only Gunnar Peterson. We're going to start this episode off a little bit different.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Oh wow. Hell yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I've got a book here, a special book for me personally, that was gifted to me from my wife when I was in college. And I was working as a personal trainer.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** That's hilarious that you pulled that out.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** At the University of Missouri-St. Louis. And this was the first book. Part of me being here with you right now is because of this book. It added to my repertoire. It added to my insight. It got me reading about health and fitness. And it's thanks to this guy right here, Gunnar Peterson.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** That is so funny. You did not let on at all if that was happening.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Nope.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** That's funny.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, man. You've been in my world for quite some time. And I'm just such a huge fan and really grateful to have you here. And the timing is divine because you're moving and shaking. We might get into that a little bit later, but I want to ask you your superhero origin story. Alright, you started off... You shared a little bit in the book. This was back, what, 2005, 2004 maybe when that came out.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** The book came out January 1, 2005. Just an easy day to remember, yeah. So, I wrote it in '03, '04, going along... Limping along as it were.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Well, in the book, you shared how you got interested in health and fitness. So, what was the igniter for you, for Gunnar Peterson?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I was a fat kid. I can't say fat. Just did. What's going to happen? Yeah, I was a fat kid and... But I also didn't understand. I didn't know why I was fat. As a kid, first of all, you don't... Why is this happening to me? And I know some adults who still carry that mindset and they need to lose it. But I said to my mom, I used to complain about it all the time, and she looked one day and goes, "Do you want to do something about it, or do you just want to keep complaining?" Oh, I said, "Of course, I want to do something." Having no idea what that entail.

And she took me to Weight Watchers. I was 10 years old. And she took me to Weight Watchers in Houston, Texas. And that was weird because I'm a kid, I'm in a room with adults who are fighting their weight and who are psychologically in a very different place from a developmental standpoint that a kid is and who understand more... I mean, it was the '70s. So what they understood about exercise maybe not obviously what it is today, but they understood the interaction between exercise movement, nutrition, alcohol, sleep, to whatever degree they did, which no matter what it was more than I did as a 10-year-old. So, you have to stand up, say your name, and get weighed and write it in your little book and...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's a hell of an introduction.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I don't know that it's the right way to go. I don't know that that's the right thing to do for a kid. And I'm sure there are a psychologist who would say, "My gosh, don't ever do that." At the end of the day, it was good for me, right? Maybe not in the short-term, but in the long term. I connected some dots about nutrition that I never would have and about the role exercise plays, and so works out, right?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, did you start working out, like good stuff to get it in?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** No, I was super active as a kid. I just ate garbage, I mean. And through no fault, my mom... So, my brown paper bag lunch the next day changed immediately. And I had tuna fish on whatever it was. It wasn't white bread anymore. And it was mustard instead of mayonnaise with the tuna. And I got a Fresca was the drink back in the day.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Fresca?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah. So that became the drink versus whatever regular soda. People like, "Why didn't you drink water?" I don't know because that's not what we drank then.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** And I got an apple instead of an ice cream sandwich. So, I started and I dropped 5 lbs. before the next meeting, which was shocker but it was great to see it. And I started cheating on the diet immediately. I started cutting corners. I can have this. I can sneak that. I can do this. Because now I know the game which, of course, I didn't. And then the weight loss plateaus and then you lose 3 or 1 and then that's not interesting anymore, so your habits revert, but now at least you have some knowledge.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah, that's the thing about all of this stuff. Unfortunately, in our society, we see these things as failures, but it really is giving us data that we can... We can't turn it off, especially once we do something, we get some feedback, your brain and your body knows.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Oh yeah. Yeah, I know. Look, what I've learned about nutrition since then, I've forgotten more probably than I know, but I have so many little bookmarks of, "Do that. Don't do that. Oh, that's a good idea. That's a bad idea." So at least now... And this is why I took my kids to a nutritionist a long time ago, and I said to them, "Now you know. Now you have an understanding, so you can't be a victim." That's the part I don't like. I don't like when people say, "I'm eating healthy. I don't know." And you look at their diet, you go hmm.

There's a big difference between health or perceived health and what you could do to change your body composition. There's health, and then there's because it's healthy, it doesn't mean you can go unlimited quantity. And so all that stuff plays in. So I just told my kids, I don't want you to be a victim. I want you to understand the choices you make are your own, and you're gonna live and die by 'em, so at least go in knowing. That's really, that's the power of the information.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, that's so important. So often we come into things as a victim. We have no idea about any of it, so we just buy into whatever this person is telling us.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Which is a derivative of entitlement, which is a super unattractive quality, especially in an adult. More understanding and forgivable with a child, but as an adult, you're entitled to have X, Y, Z work out for you in your life. You're not. You're not. And you're holding the reins of this. This is your show, so make it work.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Inform yourself.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Well, you're the guy. You are the guy. I think if we're talking about putting incredible physiques on screen for some of the biggest movies of all time, television, the whole thing, Matthew McConaughey, J-Lo, Kim Cattrall, Ben Affleck, the list goes on and on and on.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** But you got... In fairness, and this is not faux humility, those people do the work, and they do the work without fail, and they are consistent, and they apply themselves and they prioritize and they will not be denied. So hopefully, as the trainer, the person piecing together the program on the fly or even if you have time leading in, you're just helping them stay closer to the straight line than deviating way over here and having to come back to. You're getting 'em to do, it looks more like a slalom than... But they get the credit. So, the people who take all the credit, you can't take the credit for those people. You can't look at them do it, I'm happy they came, I'm happy they stuck with it, I'm happy whatever I provided was enough to get them to keep coming back because it's the consistency that wins the day, and they earn it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Alright, man. The humble vibes.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** It's true, it's not humble. You just got to keep it real.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay, well, keeping it real goes wrong. Alright, that's a Dave Chappelle, a skit back in the day. But here's the thing, man, there was a time, and still it's happening when people are just like, Gunnar, got to see Gunnar, you got to see Gunnar. Gunnar's the guy. And people are coming to you for your expertise and understanding what moves need to be made to get people to where they want to be. But you had to figure this stuff out for yourself first.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Oh yeah. Still do.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Your gym is like one of the "hottest places in LA" truly. And coming to that space, that's kind of like... That's your workshop in a sense, right? So, I'm wondering, how did it get started? Like how did you go from that kid who was cutting corners to finding yourself in the gym lifting heavy stuff?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** The gym is probably the most fair place in the world to me, meaning, whatever you put back, whatever you put in, it's equitable in terms of what you give back. And I think people go in or I've seen people go in and they give 40% and they want a 100% back. And I'm like, you're going to get 40% back. And when you leave, if you start dickin' around with your diet or your sleep or your recovery protocols or your stress levels, that's going to come out of that 40%. So, you have to... To me, you go in and you give a 100%, which doesn't mean

every workout looks like a Rocky montage, but it means every workout, you got to give 100% of whatever you have that day. And we don't all come in at 100% every day. That goes from pro athletes to Academy Award winners. You just don't, so you have to give 100% of whatever your 100% is that day. And you will get that back every single time. And if you're doing resistance training versus just cardio, that's a physiology thing. You speak to that...

There's a return on that investment, the EPOC post-training that you're going to get. So, if you put in that work, it's going to keep paying you. It's going to pay dividends well beyond what you thought you were doing in the gym. So, people, Oh I really didn't do much. Say, don't do that. Don't beat yourself up for what you didn't do. Give yourself credit for what you did do, because there are going to be days when you can give 200%, and there are going to be days when you can give 50%, but that 50% better be 100% of what you brought in. It's a lot of math right there for a trainer. Most of us are just counting on our fingers.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, this picture, you in your book, it's back in 1986, and you got the biceps jumping off here. It looks like you might be in front of like a Camaro, probably had like a flaming eagle on the hood of it, whatever.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** So, hang on. It's in a tank top. I haven't looked at that f\*ck\*ng photo. It's in a tank top, and I think it says, this is the last time I ever wore a tank top.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It does. Yes, it does. And it's not just a regular tank top, by the way, it is one of those drawstrings.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** You said '80s. It had to be.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh, here you are. This is the one I was talking about. You're jumping out here at the sun roof, at the car with the biceps, so.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** That was at Duke. That was in front of my house. Senior year at Duke University.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow. So, was this when everything really started clicking was in college?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** So, in college, the fraternity I joined was ATOs at Duke, and it was athletes, it was all varsity athletes, probably football players, wrestlers, some swimmers. So, I train differently. I learned to train. There was a different intensity. I got access to the varsity weight room, strength coach, then strength coach, actually just retired strength coach emeritus Sonny Falcone gave me access to the weight room if I opened it, closed it and cleaned it in the Summer, and I did, so I had a different... I was different than just the gen pop gym. I got that



and my thought was, I'm never going to be as strong as these dudes, but I could definitely master the form and do everything right, and so I started reading and...

And I got caught up into it, but no, it didn't all connect then because I mentioned it was college, the nutrition was nowhere near where it should have been, it was nachos and beer. And it's just what we did. So, when I got out is when I started applying or learning more about nutrition.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Got it, got it. So, was this a time when you were also thinking about coaching other people? When did that kick into play?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** No, but it was super empowering as a former fat kid, to know that I was doing this, and I was seeing real changes. My body wasn't what it started out to be, and I was... Not that... It wasn't like molding clay, but A, you're young, B, you have time to really get after it. And then you're applying things you're learning, so I wanted to shout that from the rooftop, and I say, "You got to see, there's this exercise, or there's this machine, or I learned to do this, or..." and I was just eager and passionate about sharing it, and I still think I have that. I mean, I look at so much fitness stuff today, it's crazy, and I just... And I forward it to buddies of mine who are in fitness, which is funny 'cause now, they're all younger, because the group that came with me, they don't all still do it or still want to do it, or care. They have a routine, and I just I'm not into... I do different stuff all the time, and I'm open to it. And not that that's wrong, what they're doing, because if it's working for them, by all means, run with it.

But now I end up sharing that with people 10, 20 and 30 years younger than I am. I have a guy whose strength coach of the Lakers now, which is the job I had. He was actually on my staff when I was there. Ed Streit, great dude, great fitness mind, and I still forward him stuff, and I think he's 30 years younger than I am. But to me, it's not about the age. We're colleagues, we were... And I used to say when I was there, "I'm not the head of this department, we're a three-headed monster." It's me, Ed, Chatten, we were the three guys, and I want us to approach that, I don't need titles and I don't need hierarchy. I want us to be stronger as one, and we shared fitness stuff between... It was like trading baseball cards when I was 10, it was that kind of thing.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah. So, would you say that that's one of the best qualities to have, ideal qualities to have is just to remain open?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I wouldn't tell you what quality to have... I will tell you, for me, that was a great quality to have, and it still is. Having that child-like, childish curiosity and staying open to trying stuff, I think that keeps you in the game.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, So, where did the transition happen to self-practice, self-sculpting, self-work, to, "Let me help this other person, let me start helping other people to accomplish some goals?"

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** It was never help. It was always like, do this with me. And it's hard, and I train early. So, training partners are harder to come by when you're going at like 4:00 and 5:00 AM, and you get them and they stick with it, but then somehow, they always fall off before I do. I mean, I still train that time. So, it was more like, "Hey, we should do this together, 'cause here's why," and I'm excited about it, and I'm... I won't say I'm pitching it, because I'm not selling it, but I'm trying to pull you in because, A, I want the company, and B, I know you'll benefit from it. So, it wasn't like a help other. Sorry, I'm not as altruistic as that. But then it started, a guy asked me to train with me, and my morning guy who was training with me had blown me off that day, so I trained alone, and I think I was leaving the gym at about 6:30, 6:40, and a guy stopped me to train. It was early morning, but I know it was like before 7:00.

And he said, "I'd like to train with you." And I just kind of like this, and I said, "Yeah, but I go early." And he said, "That's fine." And I thought, "Maybe he can hang, fine," and then he said, "What do you charge?" And I went, "Wait, that's not in the script." And a friend of mine said, "You got to do that, that's what you do, you should do that." And so, I moonlighted. I had that guy before work. And then, I got a friend of his, so then I was... Two people before work, and I was working at a talent agency, and then I go to work all day, and then later, I added somebody after work. And after a very short period of time, I thought, "I'm making more money with three people than I am at that other job in a week," and I quit.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Alright, so this is our first-time face-to-face talking, and this is nuts, because... Just a short version of this, my health was tragic, absolutely messed up, alright, when I was in college. I did some things to turn my health around, got myself healthy, but I didn't look like a guy who lost weight, I just looked like somebody who was gone from looking very sickly to somebody who's radiantly healthy, to the degree that people started coming up to me at my university, like, "What did you do?" And so, a friend of mine's sister who went to the university, she stopped me one day, she was like, "What did you do? You look so healthy. Would you work out with me?" And I was like, "Absolutely." I was like, "I can meet you on Saturday, whatever." Then she said, "How much should I pay you?" And it was just like time froze. She was like...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I've never heard anybody else, but that's... Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** "You would pay me to do something I would do anyways?"

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** For sure.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It changed... I didn't know that that existed, I didn't know that that was a thing. And so that's when it all began for me. And this is true story too, I was like, "\$7?" I...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Stop it...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I swear to God, because the job that I had was like \$7 an hour. So, that's where I started.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Should've at least gone to \$8.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I don't know, I didn't know. I was going to do it anyways, and I was just like... Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yet another trainer who's a bad businessman. It's a time... It's a forever story, right. I'm that guy. I'm that guy still, it's just business. Whatever.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But that's... When you said that, I was just like, "This is why I connect with you so much," because again, it's something you would have done anyways.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** If that guy had said, "I'm cool," I would have said, "Tomorrow, 5:00 o'clock?" And we would have worked out together until he fell off. And I don't know what I'd be doing, but I wouldn't have done that, right.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's so amazing. And then also, here's the thing, too, and I want to ask you about this. Being in that environment, it tends to be magnetic to other folks as well, when you're training people. And so, people were coming up to me, seeing me working with her or other people. My professors became my clients, as well. We talked a little bit about this before we got started, the faculty at the school, and just, people seeing this thing, they wanted to take part in it.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah. And to me, there's a part of that evolution where you get to invent or re-invent yourself. Like, the person I became as a trainer on the gym floor was not the person, I was working at the talent agency. Not that I manufactured a persona, but it's a different work environment, so you're slinging around different terms and you're acting a different way, because now you are not only the boss, but you're the only boss. And in the other corporate side, there's a hierarchy that you're very well aware of, so you act and speak, and, I don't want to say you mind your P's and Q's, but you do to whatever degree, whereas in the gym, you're just... You're in a gym, so you let it fly.

And for me, I like that. And when you get that positive feedback, clearly, they like it too, because they keep coming, they keep paying, they send friends. Somebody else asks you, a stranger says, "I want to do that. It looks like fun," well, whatever. All of a sudden, you're like, "I'm good at this." And I will say I was hesitant in the beginning, right. I did it, and then I started to see myself from the outside like, "Well, I'm becoming something," and then I looked around more at the field, and I felt... Not imposter syndrome, but I thought, "I'm not certified. I don't really know how to train people. I know how to work out, but I don't how to train people," and then I looked around at other trainers, right, the field, and I thought, "These guys all look like they're doing it the way I am, you're just doing... It's a job, not a career."

And there's a big difference, and I thought, "If I got serious about this, I could smoke these people, I could crush this field," and I don't feel like that in other fields. Any sport... I never did a sport well enough to think I could be the guy in this. I never wrote anything where I thought I could be this type of writer or that could be a career in anything, and in this, that's what I felt. So, I started doubling down on my education, so the stuff I had learned from reading, now I got serious, and I formed a system of reading, and I went into back journals, and I went on to tapes. I'm listening to William Cramer from Ball State tapes, and I'm listening to Paul Chek stuff, and I'm reading the National Strength and Conditioning Association book cover to cover. I'm even going back and reading Arnold's Education of a Bodybuilder, regardless of what people think of that book, it's called the encyclopedia of body building. It's an encyclopedia, and you can flip through, and you can pick up a lot of little things, cues, pointers, form, position, and I started just putting all this stuff together. And then I thought, "I've got to get certified," so I went and got certified through American Council on Exercise.

At the time, I had enough knowledge of... That was not super challenging, and then I did... I thought, "What do the guys at the top have?" So, I thought, "What do the guys in the top strength and conditioning have?" That's sort of beyond... Or at least in my mind then, beyond trainer, and those guys have the NSCA CSCS degree. So, okay, I've got to get that. Got that, and then I thought, "I'll keep that in my pocket in case I ever want to transition into pro sports," and so you start just amassing, and I would fly to seminars, and I would go anywhere. I'd fly to Orlando for... I did Orlando, I did Phoenix, I did Boston, I did San Diego, San Francisco, anything where somebody was speaking. I'd go see Juan Carlos Santana, I'd see Vern Gambetta, I'd see Paul Chek, Mike Clark. I'd see any of those guys presenting, and I thought, I've got to learn. Whatever they're teaching, I've got to learn."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** And then you start putting together what works for you, or you... Not that you Guinea pig it on people, but you start applying different things you're learning, and you go, "Wow, that's making my programming more effective, they're benefiting from that. I have

to put this together; I have to piece that together." And we talked prior, too. You start saying that, and people start hearing it, and then somebody starts parroting it and you're like, "No, no, no, no, no, that was mine, I... Trial and error, I came across that after X number of thousands of hours of tweaking this, you can't just poach it." And I'll always give the credit.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Bob Guy, he... That's a big thing of what I do, for Mr. Universe had peripheral heart action and I started reading about that, and I go, "That just makes sense." All these people claim, "I don't have time to do strength training and cardio. How can I get the most out of this? I don't have time to train two, three hours a day," blah, blah. And I go, "Okay, I got it," and I would try to understand how I could get more out of the body in less time, because time's the one commodity you can't make more of, right, and that applied to every single person that was working with me. And when I came across a peripheral heart action, I just went so deep. Maybe, as a body builder, it's not the best way to gain mass, but that wasn't the group of people that were coming to me. So, the ones I had that were wanting to change body composition, right. Decrease fat, increase lean tissue, but not gain massive size. That kind of training works.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, I want everybody to really pick this up, you're talking about simple principles, investing in yourself and just taking what you're focusing on doing with your career, your livelihood, and becoming world class at it, and that required you to dig into these different resources. And we started the episode with this, I feel the same way about giving flowers and giving credit, this is why I started this episode off with your book right here, that sits on my bookshelf...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** It's so funny.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Years before we had this conversation, G-Force, The Ultimate Guide to Your Best Body Ever. And during this time, again, Hollywood's brightest were coming to you specifically to get camera ready.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Hollywood's brightest then, 'cause Hollywood's brightest now, I still see...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, facts, yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** 'Cause you apply the same principles, and you try to maintain... And we didn't touch on this earlier, but... Don't say faux humility, you're a trainer, you are... Whether you like it or not, you are in a service industry, and the people, the trainers who, "I'm not in a service industry, I'm almost a scientist." Okay, maybe, but people are coming to you for a

service, if you think about it in just the rawest form of the word, they're not coming to you for a product, they're coming to you for a service, you have to serve. It doesn't make you less than, it doesn't make you lower than them, it's a service, so provide the service and keep getting better at your service, so that when they come, it's not just a workout, it's the experience. I'm not selling fitness, I'm sharing energy. I'm not selling anything to you, you're coming for a service, and I want it to be top to bottom from when you pull in in parking to when you leave exhausted, cursing me and my parents. I want that to have been a terrific experience to the point that you don't even think about coming back the next day or two days later, that's just a given.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Alright, so, man, so powerful, thank you for sharing that. And this isn't faux humility, I'm not going to let you be humble today. I'll do it for you, I'll be your Jiminy Cricket, and just say like, "Man, the impact you've had on so many different lives, again, you didn't even realize..."

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I had no idea, that's so funny.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The impact that you had on my life.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** If I'd known that was in there, I would've tried to come up with something clever to push it back, but you just whipped it out to the book, the book. The book.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah, just...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Just the book.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** For now. Man, so again, being that person, that go-to person for celebrities, when did that start? When did you start working with celebrities and having celebrity clients?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** The first celebrity I worked with was Kelly McGillis.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You're talking about Top Gun?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Not for Top Gun, but after that. And...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay, but still, she's the actress from Top Gun?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah, she's... To me, this is funny, I have such a problem with the term... And I don't want to say this anywhere linked to Kelly, 'cause it's never been said about her, but

when people refer to an actor or a performer as a B actor, or that... And I think, why would you do that? Anybody who was ever A, to me, is forever A. So, to me, Kelly was an A-list actor then, so I say to you, I started at the top, that's the first person. First boxer I ever worked with, Mike Tyson. First tennis player I ever worked with, Pete Sampras, Kelly McGillis, those are people, bam, bam, bam. That's top shelf across the board, and I think I provide an experience and an environment that speaks to that, that merits that, and that's what I want to work with. I like... We touched on this before we started, I like being around driven, successful... It's hard to say they're over-achieving, because who knows what they were supposed to achieve, but highly achieving people. I love being around that, that gets me fired up, that keeps me going. What could I do more? What could I do better? I'm not doing enough. Not beating myself up for, but just keeping my fire stoked. So, I like being around people like that.

I don't want to be the guy who has to cajole you and lift you up and gas you up to just... Come on, man, let's get this done and let's go on to the next thing, 'cause if we wrap this in this time, we could do this and this and this and still have time for more stuff. That's how my mind works.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Awesome. So, question, have you seen the new Top Gun?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Of course, I saw the new Top Gun... I saw the first Top Gun; I went to that movie 10 times in the theater.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Take my breath away.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** It was just... I don't know. It was, as a young man at that time... When did it come out? '85, '86, something? Had to be.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Something like that, yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** It was everything. As a guy, you're just like... It's jets and motorcycles and workout and volleyball, and there's a love story, and America, and I'm all for that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Pheromones on ten.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Oh yes, for sure, for sure.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's amazing. So, one of the things that I appreciate about you, and shoutout to Ed Mylett for circling me back into your world and catching you online and all that good stuff. And I saw that a lot of things you were doing were very practical as well for your clients, and also for yourself. Am I mistaken in... see if I say this. I saw that there was a toilet in your squat rack.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Oh yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Let's talk about that.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** The toilet... I actually designed a piece of equipment years ago called the bottom line, never got it manufactured. Again, I can design it, but I don't know how to do manufacturing and marketing. But it started... 'cause people would say to me all the time, "I can't do squats, I can't do squats, I love squats." And I think the NSA used to call, maybe they still do, the king of all exercises, and there's some people online, the trash it and you don't need them. Maybe they're talking about exiling a barbell with two times your body weight, okay, maybe we don't all that, but that movement pattern is functional, we did it to sit in this chair, and when they say that, I'd say, we'll try this, and I designed this piece of machine that stopped your knees from traveling too far and you could adjust the height. You could adjust the height of the front bar, you could adjust the height of the seat, you could clip bands on to it, so you could add resistance, you could obviously put a bar on your back, but that was too complicated. So, at one point, I don't know, I had said to somebody, did you use a restaurant today? Yeah, what do you mean? Well, show me like how you do that. And I had them sit on a bench and I go, that going to the bathroom, that's that movement pattern and now we're going to add weight.

And then I said, it's just like going to the bathroom. And I said that for 15 years. And then we were doing some construction at the house, and we had... It's a clean new toilet by the way, and we had an extra one and my contractor said, I have all this stuff in the back that I'm going to return, we didn't end up needing or using. And I said, Can I take the toilet? And I took it to the gym and put it in there, and at the time, there was a guy working on my gym who, I don't want to say he poo pooped it 'cause...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Come on.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** But it's too easy, but he definitely didn't approve of it and thought it was stupid and whatever, and then a very high-profile person was in my gym, posted a picture and the toilet was in the back and the person said, and if you're wondering if that's a toilet in the background, yes, because Gunnar is into some psychological badassery. And I died at the quote, it went viral. People went nuts, I've got people, at least five that have written me that have a toilet in their gym one's in England, one's in Alabama, one somewhere, wherever. And they say, we did this 'cause of you and they have a little sign which was funny, I'm going to get known for that. But to me, look, it keeps it light. Let's not all be so serious about working out, we don't use it all the time. At the end of the day, it's a box squat. Right?



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** That's what we're talking about. Go down, there's a target for you to hit, you're aware of it, spatially. You're trying to push your hips back to touch it, that's all contributing to quality squat form.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. And ultimately, that's what we want. We want to be able to be functional, want to be able to have effective movement in the real world. And so, there's a quote that you share with me. You said that "If it's not sustainable, it's not successful". Let's talk a little bit about that.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I think that applies to everything from your training to your nutrition, to your sleep patterns, to your workload, to your romantic relationship, to your friendships, it just... It has to be something, however you structure it and set it up consciously or unconsciously from the beginning, if you can't maintain that it's not going to be as good as it could be. You'll be able to get something out of it for sure, but you have to set it up in a way that you can repeat it. 'cause it's through the repetition that you get the benefits. Very few things you can do one off, maybe a bungee jump one off and you go, wow, I don't need to do that again, but very few things you do one time and get any real benefit from.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, the brain is always craving patterns and repetition and also being able to free up mental space to do other things, and so yeah, that consistency is such a huge thing, and being able to have something that is sustainable when there's so much flash in the pan kind of here today, going today's stuff out there, I love that you stay true to these principles, but also keeping that open mind and there are more efficient and effective ways than even what we're doing right now, so just staying open to that, but they're still this core. And I want to ask you about this. I want to talk about the practical application or practical need for a fitness today in our lives, because if we look at healthy aging, you mentioned earlier, you just... You didn't really get into it, but some of the people that came into the field when you did, they might not be doing this because they're not doing anything, they might have run themselves down or they might not have taken care of things that are more functional, like Ronnie Coleman has jump into mind, like, he's destroyed himself.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I haven't seen the documentary, but I just had a conversation with him about a couple of days ago, someone said, I have to see it, and I was a huge fan of his coming up, obviously, he just... He said he broke barriers, he did, it was unheard of what he was... The poundage's he was lifting, the physique he presented on stage year after year after year, like, how does a guy do this? And he's paying a price. Sylvester Sloan always says the check comes due. So certain things, you did all your own stones for a long time, somewhere along the line that knee, that shoulder, it's going to start singing.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, what are some of the things that you implement in your programming for people to have some sustainability? Because I would imagine, again, you want to give people things that are not just for them to look good on television, but for them to be able to move effectively through their lives, period.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah. I mean, it comes to performance aesthetics and feel. And you can shuffle that order anyway you want. For the athletes, and I see this, having worked with a number of them over a number of years, it's maybe the only demographic across the board that puts performance first. Ultimately, more people should probably consider performance because you're going to need to perform and by perform, I just mean move and do whatever your daily life requires, whether it's lifting the sack of dog food out of the back of the car, whatever your thing is, you have to be able to perform. Looks, we're a very visual society. I mean, driving over here I saw billboards, I saw things on side of the buses, I saw people in t-shirts all on some level highlighting the body beautiful, whatever that is, from that marketer or that advertiser or that person, wearing that shirt standpoint, right, that's... So, we can't say, Oh, I don't care what I look like, I just... No, we all care on some level, that's why we have mirrors, right. You do, you looked in that mirror... Everybody in here look in that mirror today. Some maybe for a lot longer than others, but you do care about that, and that's not just this, we do care, we may not do anything about it, but ultimately, we all want to look good, we all want to present our best self for whatever reason, and that's a whole another book.

And the other one is for feel. Not tying I look good to I feel good, but tying the exercise made my body healthy and when it's healthy, and I do certain movements, I feel better by the end of my day, in the middle of my day, when normally I didn't feel as good as I could have.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So good. We've got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back. If you want a sure-fire way to damage your microbiome, then look no further than that dirty s-word, sugar. Data publishing in advances and nutrition uncovered that excess sugar creates a clear pro-inflammatory environment in our gut. There's even recent data published by scientists at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center showing that mice who were fed diets high in sugar developed worse colitis, this pro-inflammatory, very, very detrimental inflammatory bowel disease. And the researchers examined their large intestine and found that more of the bacteria that can damage the gut's protective mucus layer was driven by the increase in sugar consumption. Another study cited in Science Translational Medicine describes how sugar is likely making negative alterations to our gut bacteria. Again, having healthy, robust amounts of probiotic friendly flora controlling our system, and keeping in-check the opportunistic pathogenic bacteria is key for all manner of health and wellness, from helping to reduce our risk of diabetes and obesity, to reducing our risk of autoimmune conditions.

As it stands right now, the average American consumes about 100 pounds of sugar annually, mostly in the form of added sugars. But, what can we do to pivot from this, in fact, there's a sweetener that not only doesn't damage our gut health, it actually improves it? A recent study published in food quality and safety found that in addition to having natural antibacterial effects against pathogenic bacteria, raw honey is able to improve overall gut microbial balance. How sweet it is when we're talking about the benefits of honey, long renowned for its anti-microbial impact, we're talking about the external applications, but it has these internal applications as well, but the key here is making sure that your honey is not coming along with pesticides and heavy metals and all these other things that are common in bee products today. We want to make sure that we're dedicated to sustainable bee keeping as well, and this is why my honey that I utilize, it's in my cabinet right now is Bee powered, super food honey from Beekeeper's Naturals.

Go to [beekeepersnaturals.com/model](http://beekeepersnaturals.com/model), you get 25% off taken off automatically at checkout. That's B-E-E-K-E-E-P-E-R-S naturals.com/model for 25% off. They do third party testing for over 70 plus pesticide residues or heavy metals and negative bacteria like E Coli and salmonella to make sure that you're not getting any nefarious things along with your healing, delicious super food honey. Again, go to [beekeepersnaturals.com/model](http://beekeepersnaturals.com/model) for 25% off. Now, back to the show. So, you just said this term, "The body beautiful", you've witnessed first-hand the transition of what our society kind of deems as beautiful and the target that people are going for with their body composition, the exercises that they're doing. Because there was a time where people were looking to be as slim as possible, to, we get the Jennifer Lopez era and things start changing. So, let's talk about that change 'cause you got to see it first-hand. We went from the pancake to the pound cake. Alright, let's talk about it, Gunnar.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** No, I got to, I don't have...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I just made that up.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I don't have anything to write that down with. If I ever use that I'll quote you, I promise.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I can't believe I said that.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** It's so good.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Sorry.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** But think about how that happened, because when Jennifer made that a thing, I don't think it was, "I'm going to train to look like this and then I'm going to sell this to the world.", I think it was, "I look like this, and this is who I am, and I like myself, and you should like me for who I am and not want me to look differently." And I can't put those words in her mouth, but when you see how she carries herself and how... It's way more to me about people accepting a bigger butt over, you know, a pound cake over a pancake. It's about people liking themselves and being comfortable with who they are, that's so empowering. I think of what you've given back from a confidence standpoint to... And that transcended, that wasn't just to women her age, that was younger women. Like she... That went down the chain and up the chain, and that's really powerful.

Hats off to you for doing that and making people... Moving people in a way that helps them do more in their lives, 'cause they're not criticizing themselves all the time. I think people are so hard on themselves about certain aspects of their physical, and I can fall into that too. I mean, I can easily look in the mirror and go, "I wish this looked different or this looked different." but I'll attack it in the gym or at the dinner table. You've got to go the other way and say, "But I'm glad this looks like this." You should always count... In my opinion, you should always counter it with something positive. People talk about your diet, right, that changes your body, but the words you hear, and that's your auditory diet. That changes how we respond and think. You should be very careful about what you take in and negatively and critically. There's a lot of that going on and some of that you got to push away, just like you got to push away from too much food, too much bad food.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, and I love that so much. And this is where I had a feeling you would turn the answer, but I was going to share with you that, you know, I just recently read, which a lot of people don't think about this because you just see the success afterwards, but she was really torn down early on in her career about her phys... The way her body was built and people telling her she needs to lose weight.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** They crushed her.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** She's too curvy, all these different things. And you're saying the most incredible answer, which is, it's not that she went at it like, "Let me get my butt as big as possible," or whatever the case might be, it's, "This is what I have, and let me make the best of what I have. Let me make them... Let me go for a greater expression of my genetic potential."

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** That, but also, "Hear my voice when I sing, watch me when I act, and realize that this is the package that comes in here and get on board with that. Because you like the singing, or you like the acting, learn to like the package." Stop trying to change the package to fit, because she has all the other tools, all the other skills. And eventually, her constitution's

so strong that you bend that, right? Dwayne Johnson talks about making a dent in the universe, she bent that. And now it stays bent, and that is the way it goes. And we see people different. We accept people more. I don't know that you could give Jen credit for all that but look at commercials now versus commercials 20 years ago. There were only good-looking people in commercials 20 years ago, and now, not to say good or bad, I don't need that backlash...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** What society deems to be the superficial definition of beauty.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Again, beautiful, right? The symmetry of the face, the hair, the teeth, whatever. Now you see people in commercials and it's... Frankly, it's refreshing, because you look at that and go, "Oh, that products for me. Oh, that, I might need that," or... And I think from an advertising standpoint, that's genius. On some level, that was Jennifer ahead of the game, "This is who I am. If you like this voice, this acting, this look, it comes in this package. Take it." And through her perseverance, they did. Opened the door for a lot of people.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. For sure, for sure. And of course, this whole definition of what beauty is and what an ideal body is... This goes back, of course, thousands of years, to different cultures. Like the Ancient Egyptians, the Greek, and Romans were very noted for the aesthetic aspect of focusing on their culture and the physical culture of people.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Statue of David, it was deemed the perfect male body. That's, I mean, That's a hell of a statement.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Right, right. But this crosses cultures. There's some cultures where being thicker than a Snicker is like ideal. Having that on you, that means that your fertility is about that life, you're more likely to be a great mate and all these other things, but these are the social conditionings. And, like I said, it crosses cultures, and now we're at a place where I'm seeing it, but also, I'm hoping we do more of it, of celebrating our uniqueness. Celebrating our beauty. And having this crossover, there's going to be a natural crossover where people see another culture representative of that body makeup and like, "I want to be more like that." And that's good, but what you're saying, and I love this, this is one of the most important things from this episode today, is couple that with appreciating who you are and not trying to hate yourself into change.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah. And I think it's great when you see a person who's in a moment being heralded for their physique, and they tell you what they did to get it and they're honest about it. Because that's, I think, what the public needs to hear. You need to know that that person did an hour of fasted cardio in the morning and then strength training for 60 to 90 minutes five days a week, and their diet was restricted to this calorie and this macro nutrient. That's the way they strategize that, and they slept this much and drank this much water. Then

you realize, "Wow, that's why they look like that." If they can sustain that, cool, but if they can't, then the next time you see them, they're going to look different. That's just... It's not sustainable, it's not successful, and that's what that comes to. So, I don't like when you see someone present an extraordinary physique or a heretofore unseen level of physicality on screen and then they go, "You know, I really didn't think about it. I was so focused on the script and really getting the character down. I did some... I did a little bit of this or a little bit of that, but that wasn't my focus," 'cause they don't want to seem like they were too narcissistic, and you go.

"No way. There's no chance your body went from what I saw you in the movie two years ago to this without concentrated effort." Just own it. Just be honest to the fans and to the future fans, to the youth. You don't want to say to the youth, "Hey, you can do very little, and you'll have this kind of transformation." Be honest with what it takes. That's, I think, your responsibility. I'm not a role model. Okay, maybe you're not a role model, but there are people who are going to look to you for guidance and try to go, "How do they look like that? I want to look like that." You have to map out for them what it actually takes, it's a lot of... I mean, you know, it's a lot of work.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Facts.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** It's a lot of work.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And also, if you're cutting corners, can you be honest about that as well? Because there are some... There are some shifty things happening out there on the streets as well.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Totally. But a lot of it's socially not acceptable. I'm not saying if you're using PEDs that you have to own that, but you can say, "I do everything..." I mean, and I don't know. There's a way to do it, I'm not going to write their script. But it's strange to me when you know people are working really, really hard and they're diligent about it, and they're sticking to calorie... They're living in a calorie deficit for however long, and they're really on their grind and they go, "Yeah. I don't know, it's just my body sort of evolved this way. And I'm glad I'm happy with the look that I gave the character when it was on screen." You're like, "No. You're not. You worked for that." But talk about how hard that work is.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. I'm not anti- very much anything. I'm very...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Same.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Pro, honesty.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Oh, it's all...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** And the person who said, "I took growth hormone for this role 'cause I wanted to present this character on screen." Hats off dude. Wow, great, good to know. I'm not saying I'm going down that route, or your followers are. Maybe the weaker ones who look for that... And again, I'm not against any of that, I'm saying, "Do what you want to do, but exhaust all the right avenues first, not that that's a wrong one, got to tip toe." But see how far you can go on your own because it's pretty amazing what the body can do.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Facts.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** And then add where you want.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Whether it's over the counter or whether it's under the table. Whatever you want to do, that's a completely individual decision, and I don't judge that. What I don't like is when you lie about it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Man. Gunnar Peterson, we hear what Gunnar Peterson, the legend. I got to ask...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Well...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You about this because fitness is so much bigger than just fitness. And you already mentioned we've got the performance side, the aesthetics, the feel, but you've had the opportunity to see first-hand in your own life and all the people that you've worked with, how does fitness cross over into other areas of our lives? Our relationships, our work, and things like that.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** We have something written in the gym that says, "Everything you do inside the gym makes everything you do outside the gym better." And I see that every day in my own life and in other people's lives. So, the take home from that is, it will make your... Obviously, whatever your physical tasks are in life will be easier because you're training above and beyond that. Whatever you're carrying, lifting, pushing, pulling, handling, lunging whatever in the gym, whatever you have to do in real life, easy, because you've already done it and you've done it heavier. It improves your patience, it improves your quality of sleep, you're

a better spouse, you're a better parent, you're a better friend, you're more resistant to injury, you're more resistant to disease, illness, your rate of absenteeism goes down at work, you become a better employee or a better boss, you earn more, that's rewarded. That reward, whether it's finance or whatever, people look at you and go, "Well, this guy's always healthy, always upbeat." Your moods are better, improved moods.

And this is all science. I'm not telling you, and you're like people go, "I don't really feel that way." Scientifically, you do. All those are all things that happen at a physiological level. And then your self-confidence goes up because of all those other things that have happened, because of what you did in the gym. And then that just, to me, opens up so many other doors. How can you not want to work out? And I'm not saying work out with me, or work out the way I work out, I'm saying, "Do something physical." You have a brain and a body. You're arguably working your brain every single day, work your body every day. Different levels of intensity, different durations, what... Do something, move it. What's McConaughey's thing of, "Break a sweat every day," just break a sweat, come on. It doesn't mean go crazy, it doesn't mean run a marathon, it means move your body, respect what you have, the machine.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You only get one.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I remember it was Jim Rohn who said that "Take care of your body, it's the only place you have to live."

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah. Great line.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That stuck with me a long time ago.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Great line.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** There's so much that's coming forward right now. We still have a lot to learn about the human body. We're not even really close to cracking the code that we've been looking for, but we're seeing some interesting things, for example, we know that strength training has some very unique and kind of exponential benefits. And one of the things recently discovered were these myokines that are getting produced when we are engaging our muscles under resistance. And these myokines are one of the most remarkable things for protecting



our brain from degradation and just improving cognitive function overall. And so, there's so many benefits for us to extract and we have it in us. It's kind of like this built-in pharmacy or this built-in grocery store that we have access to, and all we got to do is just do something and we get all these benefits. And I want to ask you about this as well, obviously, you've worked with a wide range of people, a wide range of body types, what are some of the things that we can... Because I want people to be able to get some of the knowledge from Gunnar Peterson as well. Are there some consistent things that you have, just about everybody doing when they come to work with you?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I mean, I touched over a second ago, push, pull, squat and lunge, carry, rotate, different movement patterns. I'm big on the planes of motion because look at where our eyes are on our head, we tend to be more proficient in the sagittal plane, right. But you have to be able to move in the frontal plane and then transverse plane as well. So, I put movement patterns in specifically, and of course, I load them so that when you have that... Right, if I have you going... If I, have you doing a side lunge with dumbbells and coming back and repeating that, when your toddler breaks for the pool, that's an easier move because you don't have the dumbbells. So little things that transfer like that, transverse plane, knee rotation. A lot of people worry about working in rotation, under load. If you look at your life, even from getting in the car and reaching for the seat belt, its transverse plane, it gets stuck that's under, like you're working that, you have to... Your body, if you train that way, that's never going to mess you up.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It won't be a surprise to your body.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah. And it's not going to ruin your day and it's not going to pull something. So, we add that movement too, and you do it standing, seated, lying, you're going to do things in all planes of motion, but I have a ton of gym equipment, I mean, to the point where I might argue that... I might agree with the argument that I have a problem, but I don't want to do anything about it. So that's the first part of the battle, right. So, I'll do all those movements with different kinds of equipment. It keeps your body ready for something new, but you're still grooving the movement patterns so that you become more proficient.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Mmm. Love it, love it. These are the basics. It sounds like again, but leaning into that more, and I want to ask you about this specifically... You've repeated this multiple times, so I just want to point this out...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** That I'm repeating myself?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I mean, it's a tenet that we tend to look past.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Time to go.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Because we tend to think it's when we associate the accomplishment of fitness, what's glorified is being in the gym and sweating, and that's where you're grinding and making it happen. But you've mentioned the importance of nutrition several times throughout. So, let's put that... Let's take that, we're going to put that to the side. We're going to make it a given.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** We're going to deny it. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And now we're looking at, okay, but what about somebody's getting camera ready, they've got their nutrition component dialed in, and they're coming to see Gunnar and they're wanting to drop some body fat, alright. So, we know the movement patterns, right? But let's talk about so are we doing... What's the rep range look like if we're going to... If you want to get a little bit leaner, drop a little bit of body fat, what does that look like? Are we doing lots of sets, low reps, like...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** It's going to be... Rep range is going to be here, this is... People are going to hate this, I didn't learn anything, I can't take anything away from that. It's going to be anywhere from five to 20 reps. It's going to be anywhere from seven to 12 or 13 maybe movements. And we're probably going to go through it three times, and the intensity... I'm going to play with the intensity. There are so many variables to tweak right, I don't want to say the permutations are endless 'cause then mathematicians go, "No, they're not." And they give you a number, but I can tweak volume, I can tweak intensity, I can tweak weight, I can tweak uh... I can tweak, rest. You can play with sequencing, there's so many ways to keep it fresh. And one, I want to keep it fresh for you to stay mentally engaged, and two, I don't want your body to ever get used to this. I want your body to always be adapting to what we are throwing at it, because it's through the adaptation comes the change. The change is what you came for initially, so if we... One day it's not always bigger muscles before smaller muscles, sometimes it's we prioritize the ones that... I know we can't isolate, but we will give more focus to areas that need more focus that we see, that we know even though we may not be able to see it, like we know you're not strong in X area or in X movement, we may hit that early on when you're fresh, or we may hit it later on.

Years ago, I saw somebody who said they never do any Olympic lifts towards the end of a workout when the central nervous system is more likely to be fried and it's such a tactical lift, and all I thought was, "Okay, I get that. That makes perfect sense to me." But I would hit the Olympic movements towards the end of a workout, because what if you're an athlete and it's in the fourth quarter or over time, when you need to be as strong and as explosive as possibly, and you've never encountered that in a training stimuli. I want to get you there so that when

we go to over time, when we're at the buzzer and you have to maximally exert from an explosive standpoint, your body goes, "I got this." And we've done it, maybe we didn't do it with a ton of weight, but you're only going to be doing it with body weight in sports, how great if you've already been there under load and now, you're fresh, right? If you look at teams in over time, a lot of times, the best conditioned teams can prevail in over time. Obviously, momentum, if they came from a deficit and then they caught up and they were tied at the buzzer, but sometimes it just comes out of conditioning. And if we can get you conditioned to do that, why wouldn't I train you like that?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Mmm.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** And I would.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I would.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love this because... So, this is really, identifying an important tenet which is, there isn't some magic within the rep range, it's about what you're doing within that. Now, here's the real question. So that was a little bit of a set-up question. Are we going to muscle failure? Are we getting close to muscle failure? Are we leaving a lot in the tank? What is your preference if we're looking at?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** So, the answer is yes. Because it's going to depend what you bring that day.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** What if you... What if we're... Or say you're an actor, and you're just transitioning from night shoots to day shoots, and I catch you in that moment and your body is still regulating, getting used to now turning your energy systems around, circadian rhythms are all completely off. I can't... I don't want to... It would be irresponsible to pick one of those for me to now push you under load to momentary muscle failure or tactical failure. Why would I do that to you, and risk, especially when you're in the middle of a production, you're getting injured? I'm not doing that; I'm pulling back now.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Getting sick as well.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah, sure. Alright, you're too taxed, you can't recover. That manifests itself and now you're sick, and now you hold up the entire production, that's a problem. I'm

getting a call probably; they're always going to blame the trainer. So... No, so no, I'm not taking you to failure, but you're fresh, We're in the off season. Oh, for sure. We're looking for X, Y, Z goal. Yeah, we might go to failure today. Yeah. Oh, I wasn't even planning to go to failure, but you come in ready to go and I'm like, "Oh, this person is... We're changing this today." I'm going to... I write every workout out the night before, and I print them up, and I have them for each person, and I've done it for literally, probably 27 of the 30 years I've been doing this, and I have them on there, there's nobody's name, I put initials and the date and then the work out.

And what I tell them is I reserve the right to edit this, it's not a bible, it's a template, it's how I see this happening, but if during it, something happens or I notice something or you divulge something, I'm going to change that, but if not, that's what we're going to follow, so that could be you're hung over. That's an easy one, right? So, I think, "Okay, I'm not going to try to punish you and push you, but I'm going to push you so we get the most out of this in your current condition," that could be... You didn't tell me I haven't seen you in two weeks, and you didn't tell me you got a boob job, the last time I saw you, and now the doctor says you can come back, but you can't do anything to your upper body, or you can only do light cardio, whatever it is, I look at that and I go, "Oh, I got to amend, I have to make changes, I got to edit right now." So, what I had planned may not be the best thing for you, so I will go to failure for sure. What were the other ones you said?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Just prior to failure or just leaving a lot in the tank. It's kind of like going through the motions.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** And sometimes you've got to leave it in the tank because they say, I'm squeezing this in and I have to be on set at this time, and I know that means they're going to have a 12-hour day. I can't gas you right now, you won't be able to perform the way you perform, which makes you who you are, which is why you got to me in the first place. Same with athletes, right? Game day lifts are completely different from off-day lifts, travel day lift different from game day lift, post-game lift, different from pre-game activation, off-season lift different from everything else. So, you got to... And especially if you're working with guys in the off season or girls in the off-season, sometimes they're doing four different things in a day, so I can't have... If they're seeing me and then going to boxing and then doing a beach workout, I have to go, where are you fitting me in? Why did you choose to put me in that slot, who told you that and why, 'cause I want to understand, and then I want to give you my feedback, and that's going to be goal-dependent, it's not that the strength and conditioning always comes before footwork or hand-to-eye or whatever, it's going to come where it comes based on what your end goal is. Where do we give it? Did you take a nap, did you do this, did you sleep? So, you got to be... You have to be flexible in your programming. And if you're not, and you're like, "This is how I do it, and this is... " You're going to be... This is short lived for you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah, man. That's some of the best advice, because life is constantly changing, there's always... Nothing is staying the same. It's just that's a part of life. Life is movement, life is change, and so it's great to have that template, but we can do this especially, if we're working in this field, if we're working with people, or we can do this for ourselves, and I literally do this every day, I'm checking in and seeing what range I'm going to go based on...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** You do it for yourself.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Me too. I do it for myself. And I have people come in and I usually put them on a piece of cardio, whether it's a treadmill an elliptical, I put them on some kind of repetitive movement pattern cardio to elevate the core temperature, but it's also a way to get them to realize they're in the gym now. You're in the gym and we're taking all that outside noise and we're going to dial it down. And then towards the end of your three, four, five, eight minutes, whatever, what we do. And it's not scripted like that. Because some days I see you're antsy-, you don't want to be on there a long time, sometimes I see you're antsy- and you should be on there for a long time because you need to get out of whatever head space, you're in when you walked in to be in the gym mode. And I'll say usually, how is the body feeling that is anybody who's ever trained me, he's going to go, "Oh my God, he says that all time." I do, 'cause I want you to tune in to how your body's feeling. "I feel great, or I'm sore as sh\*t, or I feel like I didn't sleep, or I feel..."

I don't know what... My shoulders, or whatever it is, I'm going to factor that into how we proceed from there. But I need you to check in with you before I check in with you. That's... I can't just come over and assess it. I can't... Sure, I can watch you walk on the track, and if you're limping, I go, "Oh, well, that's going to be a problem." But if you're not, I may not know you're... You're hiding it, or you're not even tuned into... So, I'm going to ask. But it forces you to check in.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I'm going to ask you one more question in the same line of thinking, and I kind of have a feeling what the answer's going to be. Again, for...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Now I'm predictable? Now that's some b\*llsh\*t.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is... So, again, if the target is fat loss, are we doing... Or is there a preference? Are you leaning towards circuit training? Straight sets? Supersets?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** So, if... With... If I'm taking the peripheral heart action approach, just 'cause I know it works, I've seen it play out so many times, I'm going to create an aerobic

environment through what might normally be considered anaerobic movements and how I sequence them. So, I want your heart rate to come up and to stay up. But I don't want you to forgo strength training, so I'm going to find ways to... Force your heart to work consistently versus having it just jump and then drop back. I'm not just trying to... I'm not just trying to get your ATP, I want... I want to get all the systems, and I want you to feel that all the way through. And I want you to leave feeling exhausted, but not beat up. So, I'll sequence it. I might do a basic one. If we're doing a dumbbell bench-press, I may do shoulder-off, glute-off dumbbell bench press, and then have you get up and pick up a weight and do a Bulgarian split off the end of the bench, and then drop down and do a weighted hollow-body hold on the bench, and then get up and get on a VersaClimber for 60 seconds. So, I did... If you're looking at its in... I don't want to say body parts, but if you're looking at it in regions of the body, an upper extremity moves, a lower extremity move, a core move, and then something that spiked you higher than those movements probably did from a heart rate standpoint. So, I know you're elevated, elevated, elevated, spike, come down, elevated, elevated... Like that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Got it. And then we would just repeat that cycle?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** No, so that might be the first, what's that, four movements? I might have another one in there that's five back-to-back-to-back. If you're training every day, I'm probably going to use some kind of a modified push-pull program, because I don't want you just to do everything all the time. I think over... There's a burnout that comes, and also, your whole body just feels beat up, I don't need you to feel that way. I want you to feel energized, not drained, exhausted, but invigorated.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Got it, got it. So, there's a lean towards circuits here, and...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah, but... And yes, you're not wrong. Circuits are such a... To me, circuit training is such a... It's a catch-all, and it sounds way more random. Like if you think you do any four things three times, versus the four that I just mapped out, if you didn't have purpose and thought behind that, your yield will be far less than mine. So, people go, "Oh, I just did a little bit of this." I watch people in public gyms all the time. They do a little bit of this, a little bit of that, a little bit... And I think... I mean, cool, but if you could change that up and add in one little thing, that could have been effective, but the way you did it was so poorly planned. Unfortunately for you, 'cause you spent the time, what you're going to get out of that is going to be far less, really, than what you deserve.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** And that's where it's like, "Hire a trainer." I'm not pushing my field, I don't get anything out of this for me, but hire a pro. You would no sooner... If you had never gone

scuba diving, you would no sooner go rent tanks and jump in the water. I mean... Get a pro. Take a lesson. Same thing with tennis, I've talked about that before. How about this for a frustrating afternoon: You don't play tennis; I don't play tennis. We go buy two tennis rackets and a can of balls, and we get out on a court. That would suck. That would just be awful. We don't know how to grip the racket, we don't know what a swing-through looks like, a follow-through, we don't know the difference between forehand and backhand, and we certainly don't know how to serve or keep score. That's a frustrating afternoon. However, the two of us take the same money, go hire a tennis pro, and take a lesson? Within 10 minutes, you are stroking the ball, and you feel like, "It's fun. This is engaging. We're doing something together." The payoff is so much more. Same money, same time. But you had an ego and... "I don't need a pro; I don't need a lesson." No, you do, and you do need a lesson in the gym. I heard my own tone. I'm on my soapbox now.

But I see it all the time, "I don't need a trainer." I'm not saying you need a trainer all day every day, but it doesn't hurt. I travel... I hire trainers, 'cause it's... I want to see what they're doing. Maybe I'll pick up something. I like to talk to people in the field. It's not putting anybody on the spot, it's like, "Let's do a workout." And I've been to some places where they have no plan. And I've been to some places where I see things that they do, and I think, "Wow, if I ever did that, I would lose everybody who trained with me." And then I see others, and I'm like, "This person is so prepared." I mean, where they are, they're probably not going to... Maybe they don't want to reach great heights in the field, but there are just such good quality trainers out there, they're all around the world, but especially, you see 'em in places, you're like, "You're so good. Like, you should be... You're in this area where you're never going to be, you know, "discovered", and maybe that's not your goal, but man, you're good at this." And then you see others, you're like, "Dude, you should never leave this gym, 'cause you'd be fired anywhere else you went."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, you know, again, you've... You've helped to shift the culture in fitness and training for many years, but what's next for you? What's coming up for Gunnar Peterson?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I'm moving tomorrow to Nashville. How about that?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Wow.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** We got a property. It has a 2500 square-foot building on it. It has acreage, so there can be some outdoor components to it. We're adding about 10,000 square feet to it, and it's going to be... It's going to be my lab, my candy store. It's going to be all the stuff, you know... Everything you ever dreamed of, but it's going to be the place... I have a sign in the gym, in my current gym here in Beverly Hills, that says, "There's no place I'd rather be," and that's going to always be... You know, like right now, there's no place I'd rather be than right here. I was excited to do this. When I got your text, and when Ed Mylett said, "You've got to meet

him," I was... Like, I've been fired up to come on this. I've followed you for a long time. I even comment on your stuff, and I'm like, "No place I'd rather be." I had mapped this out. When I got back in town about five years ago, I worked back from this what I was going to do, so I had it, bang, bang, bang, and I was on, you saw, five minutes early. And... So, I like to always be where I want to be most. And so, my new gym will be that it will be that place... I guess when you talk about a gym, you can't say it'll be that place on steroids, 'cause then, people...

But it'll be... It'll be that place augmented, right? It'll just be everything I've wanted. It hopefully can deliver a product that people want that they're into. I'll never push it on people, but I want that buzz to be "What is that place? I want to get in there." And I want 'em to leave feeling as happy as they were when they got there.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Amazing. Well, the bright lights in Nashville are going to get a little bit brighter with you there.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** We'll see, we'll see.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And... Man, it's just been such a great opportunity to hang out with you. Thank you so much for making me a part of this plan. You know, you're about... You're literally moving tomorrow, and so, to be here with you in this moment is really, really special, and again, I know you didn't know the impact that you've had on me and my thinking. And so, I'm just really grateful for you.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I dropped... I dropped my wife and daughter off at the airport this morning. I drove back to check on the progress of my gym, of which there was not as much as I had hoped of the dismantling. I worked out in the gym for about an hour and five minutes, literally in the parking lot, in the wreckage of the equipment, and I was just like, "I'm doing this," and went home, showered, and came over here. It was all mapped out, and I'm like, "This is a great day."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** What's that Burke Chrysler line, best day ever!

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Best day ever, yeah.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Yeah, you just... If... I think if you go into your day knowing or hoping that it could be that it's way more... You have a much higher chance of having it be that.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Facts, facts. Man, well, thank you so much for, you know, just being you. I mean, this is amazing, like, to sit here with you and to hear these insights. And obviously, people are going to want to jump into your universe a little bit more. If they're not in Nashville now, where can people follow you, get more information, just kind of get into your universe?

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** I'm on Instagram, Gunnarfitness on Instagram. That's... That's kind of it. Well, I do... I do answer everything at some point. It may not be in real-time, like, it's not a live dialogue, but I try to get to 'em and respond, and... And... You have to give back, and that sounds so corny, but... So many people get to a certain stage, and they don't... They don't respond, they don't answer. Like, how do you not answer those? It's just... If someone's not coming at you hurling insults, why would you not just respond? It's... It takes a second, even if it's just an emoji, like, right back, thumbs-up, or... You know, stop sign, can't... Whatever it is... So, I try to write back and stay on it, and... I mean, really, as a trainer, what you're... What you're doing is, you're holding the gym door open for people, right? I want you to come in. Whether it's with me, whether it's on your own, whether it's with someone else, I want you to benefit from your relationship with the gym the same way I have.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Amazing. And by the way, the book is still out there on the streets, G-Force... I know you see your... Your baby self, man. And, you know, this really introduced me to using the stability ball in all kinds of creative ways, you know, that I... Again, I was working with people, I was taking what I learned from you and implementing this with the people I was working with, and even from that, you know what it's like just being in a gym and working with people. There's this creativity that just takes place if you care and you're paying attention, and... You know, one of the interesting things that I've seen...

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** And nobody owns an exercise, so when you see somebody do something, and that looks like you could benefit from it or enjoy it, do it! And go ask them! As a rule, people in a gym like to talk. I mean, obviously, they've got headphones or... You know, AirPods in there. They're... That's probably the international sign of "Don't bother me." But if they don't, you can ask a question. And in my experience, they're often open to giving you maybe more time or information than you wanted. They're just happy somebody recognized that they were doing something that they had created and, you know, "Why do you do your... Hey, quick question, why do you do your dips like that? You're pushed all the way forward." If you look at like Charles Glass and Mike O'Hearn, they come forward almost in a ball, and they're lowering down, it's like a gymnastics move. I think Charles Glass had a gymnastics background if I'm not mistaken. And you're like, "Why'd you do that?" And they'll tell you. "Puts more emphasis on the triceps, you get to..." And they're happy to share that with you. Ask 'em. You'll learn, you'll grow... Who knows?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Well, I'm encouraging everybody to ask you.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Ask away.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So, head over... Check out Gunnar on IG @Gunnarfitness. And I'll see you in Nashville, man. I'm going to come see you.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** Oh. Bring it. Come on through.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Let's go.

**GUNNAR PETERSON:** It'll be fun. Thank you very much for having me on here, and again, thank Ed Mylett for connecting me like that direct. It was just cool to see it from afar, but now it's cool to be up-close and to be on. It's always an honor to go on someone's show. You know, there's a... There's a finite amount of time, so when someone has you on, I'm like, that's... I'm excited. Thank you for having me.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Hey man, it's totally my pleasure. Everybody, check out Gunnar Peterson at Gunnarfitness. The legend, Gunnar Peterson. Thank you so much for tuning into the show today. I hope you got a lot of value out of this. This episode, as mentioned, was very special for me, because starting The Model Health Show, part of the premise was, of course, addressing all the different areas of health and wellbeing, with fitness being a huge component. Our guest today, Gunnar Peterson, was on the top of my list of people that I wanted to share his experience and his insights and wisdom with more people. And so, having him on the show today, it was just a very special experience, and just so happened to be his last day in Los Angeles, where he's had this iconic gym forever that he was sitting here with us, so really, really grateful for that. And again, his book was the first fitness book that I've ever had, and I was gifted this by my then-girlfriend now-wife! This is part of the recipe in her becoming the one, the one for me! You know, she invested in me. I could see that she was respecting the work that I was doing and what I wanted to do and to be of service and help others. And she shared with me that by giving me that gift, that she believed in me, and that she believed in what I was doing. And so again, really, full-circle moment today. And so, I hope that that came through in this episode.

If you enjoyed it, please share this out with your friends and family. And of course, you can tag me, I'm @shawnmodel on Instagram. And tag Gunnar. He's @Gunnarfitness. Go and follow Gunnar. Blow him up in the most loving way, and please share this episode, take a screenshot and tag him so that he can see the love and really see what we're about here with the Model Health Show family. I appreciate you so much for tuning into this episode. We've 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

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