

THE MODEL HEALTH **SHOW**

EPISODE 737

The Truth about Belly Fat

With Thomas DeLauer

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SHAWN STEVENSON: Welcome to the Model Health Show. This is nutritionist and bestselling author, Shawn Stevenson. And I've got a question for you. What do you think of when you hear the words belly fat? Now, is belly fat something that has to do with vanity or is it something to do with our overall health? Now we're gonna be unpacking belly fat today in a way that you might have never heard before. We're gonna look at what belly fat actually is and how the process of fat loss, specifically targeting belly fat, is that even possible? We're gonna be looking into that as well. So today's episode is all about having a good relationship with your BFF, not your best friend forever, your belly fat focus. Because awareness really is the first domino. Understanding how all of this stuff really works and stacking conditions in our favor to make sure that we have good metabolic health moving forward.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now, our special guest is an absolute expert when it comes to metabolic health. And when you hear his story and where he came from, what he's gone through with his own metabolic health, it is going to trip you out. It is an incredible story. But when I went to see him recently to do an interview for his incredible platform, I saw something there that is also at my studio that I share with my guests, and it has to do with how our cells are communicating. Now, one of the most essential things that enables our cells to literally talk to each other, that enables signal transduction are electrolytes. Electrolytes are minerals that carry an electric charge. Now, there's a certain electrolyte that has gotten drag through the media, through popular culture and really framed as a villain, and that electrolyte is sodium. Now, according to the FDA, over 70% of the sodium in the average American's diet is coming from ultra-processed fake foods.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's coming from ultra-processed foods. From things like Pop-Tarts and potato chips, and the list goes on and on, fast foods. This is where we're getting the bulk of our sodium intake, very low quality sodium and really a one-trick pony because there isn't just one type of electrolyte or one type of sodium. Sodium is one form of a salt. There's also potassium salts, there's also magnesium salts. There's many forms of magnesium, many forms of sodium. That highly refined sodium found in ultra-processed foods, that can be problematic, absolutely. But what happens when we start to shift away from having a diet largely made up of these ultra-processed foods and we're eating more real foods? Are we certain that we're getting the sodium that our cells really need to have a high level of communication and also to protect our metabolic health? Because a meta-analysis published in the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews uncovered that study participants placed on a low sodium diet did have slightly lower blood pressure in the short-term because that's what we often think about when reducing the sodium, is because of hypertension.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So they found that lowering sodium intake did slightly lower blood pressure in the short-term, but they found that restricted sodium also led in the more medium to longer-term, eventually led to elevated triglycerides or blood fats, elevated stress hormones, and accordingly elevated blood pressure. So short-term, reducing sodium, reduces blood pressure, but if you do that for too long, blood pressure is going to be elevated. So there's a balance here. We need sodium. It is a critical nutrient to human health, but we don't want it coming in in that one-trick pony version from ultra-processed foods predominantly. And also a study that was published in the Journal Metabolism that was done by researchers at Harvard Medical School found that low salt intake directly increases insulin resistance in healthy test subjects. So with that being said, make sure that we're eating foods that are naturally rich in sodium, but also what I saw at my special guest recording studio, what we have here at our studio is the electrolytes from LMNT.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Go to drinklmnt.com/model and you're going to get the highest quality electrolyte supplement in the world. And they're also, by the way, with every electrolyte purchase, they're going to send you a free bonus pack, a free gift as well. Now, a fascinating study published in the journal Neuron found that magnesium, which is one of the other electrolytes in LMNT, incredible ratios, magnesium is able to restore critical brain plasticity and improve our cognitive function, right? So our brain is critically dependent on sodium, magnesium, and potassium is the other key electrolyte in this equation. And LMNT has hundreds of thousands of data points on the optimal ratio of these electrolytes. And by the way, professional sports teams and all professional sports are utilizing LMNT now. Just because contractually they got to have Gatorade on the outside of that container on the sidelines. I'm telling you right now, I've got the inside information here. Many professional teams are now utilizing LMNT, and I know this because these high level athletes and teams are now partnering with LMNT. So again, it's something really special. It's getting away from all the highly refined sugar that's unnecessary to have in our electrolyte supplements and just delivering the high quality electrolytes that our bodies need to perform. Go to drinklmnt.com/model for a special gift of electrolytes with every purchase. And now let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five-star review titled His Knowledge and Insight is Invaluable by Mrs. Peestew. I discovered Shawn on Cynthia Thurlow's podcast and was instantly drawn in. He's so down to earth and you can tell he really cares about people and their health. This year I started a health journey after losing my mother to cancer and gaining a lot of weight. I've made so many positive changes in the past six months to my diet and lifestyle and have lost 30 pounds. I find Shawn's knowledge and insight to be an invaluable addition to the podcast and books I listen to on a daily basis. I can't wait to get my cookbook. So glad I found this guy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh wow. I'm so glad you found me as well. And thank you so much for sharing your voice and sharing your story. Man, that's so powerful. Thank you so much. And if you have to do so, please pop over to Apple Podcast and leave a review for The Model Health Show. And without further ado, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Thomas DeLauer is an expert in diet, nutrition, and mindset. And he's one of the most watched fitness experts in the world on YouTube and social media. Now, what I really love about Thomas's approach is that it's backed by science. He's utilizing the latest peer-reviewed data to affirm certain points and also being able to examine and cross-examine different ideas. Because one of the interesting realities right now is that there's affirmative data on just about every perspective. And so looking at what is the majority of the data saying and what could be most helpful for people right now, in particular in this conversation about belly fat. So let's dive into this conversation with the amazing Thomas DeLauer. Alright, Thomas, we got you here in the studio. It's good to see you, man. How are you?

THOMAS DELAUER: Good to see you, man. Thanks for having me.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Listen, we got to talk about belly fat. We got to talk about the secrets that should not be a secret. This is something that has been plaguing our society recently, our expanding waistlines. But there's a science behind all of this stuff. And for me, it's always about what is it? What are we dealing with? So let's talk about belly fat. This is one of the things that's really plaguing our society right now. And working as a nutritionist for many years, people would come in, is just really the the biggest thing that people wanted to address. And a lot of times people would be content with having different health conditions as long as they didn't have belly fat. But belly fat can actually be a big reason behind a lot of our chronic conditions. So let's break down and talk about first and foremost, what is belly fat really?

THOMAS DELAUER: Yeah, man, we got to break it down into kind of two categories first, because if you were to do like a Google search for belly fat, the first thing that's gonna pop up is really just probably all this clickbaity stuff talking about like, oh, this is gonna reduce belly fat. This causes it. At the very core of belly fat, kind of the scientific term for it's more central adiposity, right? It's where for whatever reason, which we can talk about reasons in a little bit, you have this propensity to store most of your fat around your midsection. And most of the literature does suggest that central adiposity is linked to a number of different health risk factors, right? So then it kind of begs the question, 'cause people will say, well, it's just a matter of like your genetics and you're just gonna store fat around the belly fat region just because it's your genetics.

THOMAS DELAUER: But then there's these other correlative links that show like, okay, well eating certain kinds of foods, eating high amounts of high fructose corn syrup and this and

that is gonna lead to more central adiposity. So you have to really like look deep to understand that, okay, there are some things that might directly contribute to belly fat. But putting that aside for a second, one of the things that people get confused with when they're looking at belly fat is belly fat versus visceral belly fat, right? Visceral belly fat is the fat that isn't necessarily like the typical jiggly subcutaneous fat, but it's the fat that is the true culprit. That is the one that is legitimately linked to health conditions. And although central adiposity like having fat around the midsection is not good and certainly is bad, when it comes down to the correlative links with disease states, it's the visceral belly fat that's the real problem.

THOMAS DELAUER: But what ends up happening with a lot of people is they'll have a lot of visceral fat, and that's gonna protrude their stomach and then whatever fat they do accumulate subcutaneously, just like underneath the skin, the typical fat, it's gonna protrude more and look like more. That being said, we've all experienced or we've seen people or we know people that are just seem to disproportionately store fat in their midsection. And there's some literature that had even talked about women having like gluteal-femoral fat like fat around their buttocks and their legs actually being like cardiometabolic protective compared to central adiposity. So like in women specifically, if they had fat around their hips and legs to a degree, if they weren't morbidly obese, it was actually cardioprotective. But once the fat was soaring up higher, it was problematic. And when you reverse engineer a lot of those diets, you do see a lot of things.

THOMAS DELAUER: You see a lot of comorbidities, you see a lot of high glucose, you see a lot of hypertension, you see a lot of these things that then if you really want to get down to it, you have to do your homework. You have to kind of reverse engineer this. And that's where you get out into somewhat anecdotal land, where you say, okay, we know that visceral adiposity is bad. What are the main things that lead to visceral adipose tissue. And right now, in addition to just a simple caloric surplus, it's in a hyper caloric state. It's going to be high amounts of trans fats, high amounts of saturated fat and/or high amounts of fructose. Now, people hear fructose, they say, oh my gosh, I got to get rid of all the fruit. And we're talking a completely different situation. We're talking concentrated amounts of fructose while you're already in a caloric surplus. So we could unpack those in whatever direction you want to go, 'cause there's a lot to be said about belly fat especially if you're gonna be nuanced and not clickbaity with it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely. Yeah. So, there's something really unique about belly fat as well and the way that our body is storing that energy. And there's even different receptor sites that are located in that region and also different hormones are gonna be interacting with our belly fat. Let's talk a little bit about that.

THOMAS DELAUER: Yeah, man. So that's where it gets wild. So you have what are called glucocorticoid receptors. Glucocorticoid receptors are extremely sensitive to cortisol. Now, you hear the word cortisol and like the first thing that pops to mind for me is like those commercials in the... Do you remember those commercials like in the '90 that were like, I don't know, they're all kind of late night infomercial type things where it's like cortisol, the starvation hormone, it's gonna make you like gain all this fat and this and that. First of all, cortisol can be equally fat burning as it can be fat storing, right? It's a stress hormone that can actually help you burn fat if it's at the right time. And so we should never be demonizing cortisol, but there's a couple situations where cortisol is exceptionally bad. One when it's chronically elevated, okay, but two cortisol does not usually increase in tandem with insulin.

THOMAS DELAUER: That is a very unique situation that is kind of almost a phenomenon to our own era. In other words, when you're stressed and you also spike your insulin is when you run the risk of storing fat easier, right? And the reason that that happens is because specifically in the belly fat, or specifically in the visceral belly fat, there are glucocorticoid receptors, which means that they are much more sensitive to that cortisol response. So it makes it much easier for fat to accumulate based upon cortisol kind of triggering these glucocorticoid receptors. So basically in human terms, it blunts lipolysis from occurring, it stops the fat mobilization from occurring at the belly fat area. So in theory, you could unpack that a little bit more and say, okay, if it's stopping lipolysis, then theoretically one could be still burning fat elsewhere, but potentially not burning it there, right? Which kind of helps us understand the question of why there's so many people that are like skinny fat and like they're like, I've done everything but it's this last bit here. You know? And again, that's not scientifically rooted, right? That is lots of little pieces that you have to kind of put together because it's a very hard cohort to study in like a metabolic ward to try to figure out like what directly isolates belly fat.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. That's so fascinating, right? Again, we have this phenomenon of being "skinny fat." We also have a phenomenon of what we've dubbed as chubby muscles where we have a lot of intramuscular...

THOMAS DELAUER: I haven't heard that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Intramuscular fat. Kind of marbling of a steak. We're a little bit more marbled because of this really interesting interaction with fat and muscle. We think of them as kind of being dichotomous, but it can be a fuel source for our muscles. But when it happens in abundance, we start to have some problems. And so now we've got very specific metabolic issues happening with excessive intramuscular fat, visceral fat, subcutaneous fat. But you mentioned something so fascinating, which is storing fat in certain places can be

protective of our health potentially, and specifically noted, women, but there's some thick guys out there too as well.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But specifically, this, for me, is gonna be pointing to the ability also for us to make some shifts and not to villainize fat, by the way. We got to make that clear, just like not villainizing cortisol, but we want to... Of course having, being too lean for example, which is not the concern for a lot of people. We can lose out on a vital resource, right? Something that can help with our nervous system and be a potential useful source for different things, cognitive function, whatnot. But more importantly, we want to focus on building muscle as well. And so I wanna circle back and talk about exercise because specifically around the hips and the thighs and that kind of stuff, a lot of potential there for building muscle and kind of our metabolic furnace. So I wanna circle back and talk about exercise in a moment, but I wanna talk about the storing of this caloric energy that is kind of getting targeted more to our belly fat. You mentioned trans fats, you mentioned saturated fats and you mentioned fructose. So let's unpack these. Each one of these, let's start with trans fats.

THOMAS DELAUER: Yeah, I mean trans fats are just no matter who you are on the nutritional spectrum, all these different tribes that combat one another, vegan, this, that whatever. One thing we all kind of agree on is that trans fats in the way of not the naturally-occurring trans fats that are in like a little bit of steak or something like that, or a burger. I'm talking about hydrogenated oils, partially hydrogenated stuff, the margarine, things like that. There are what are called CIS bonds in those fats that are... They take 40 to 50 days to fully break down in the body. So first and foremost, they take a long time for the body to fully break them down. Now, in case people don't know, like a trans fat is a fat that is artificially made stable, okay? So if you have an unsaturated fat that's like an oil and you put it into a lab and you artificially saturate the bonds of that oil, you're basically making that oil a solid.

THOMAS DELAUER: And you do that in an effort to make something more shelf-stable. So it's in a lot of the processed stuff that we see on the shelves today. Well, what happens is those trans fats trigger quite an inflammatory cascade. And the simplest way to explain it for the sake of this podcast is they're so difficult for the body to assimilate and they're such an unnatural compound that it triggers a degree of inflammation. And there is quite a bit, a lot of evidence suggesting that it allows for what are called lipopolysaccharides, LPS which are basically compounds in the gut that leak through the gut and ultimately get into the bloodstream and trigger an inflammatory cascade that happens there.

THOMAS DELAUER: We've all probably heard the over-marketed term "leaky gut" before. And unfortunately, it is over-hyped and over-marketed and therefore, people tune it out, but it is a very real thing. And that leaky gut is when the junction proteins in your gut become so either

atrophied or dead or they go through apoptosis or they denature, in some way, to the point where what would normally be this hermetically sealed environment of your gut now has the ability for particles that are larger to slip through. And when this happens, the result is inflammation because you've got more that your body has to deal with that it's kind of unfamiliar with dealing with. Well, trans fats are a heavy, heavy link with this. So what happens is... I mean, we... A lot of us know the whole idea behind inflammation at a very simple level and we won't go crazy detail because it's beyond my pay grade.

THOMAS DELAUER: But essentially, you've got this heightened immune response that happens as a result of just basically dealing with something that is a little bit out of the ordinary. But when this happens, you have a high degree of interference that happens. So insulin resistance, all these things metabolically become disrupted. That is one way in which visceral fat is formed from trans fats. There's also some preliminary evidence suggesting that it just flat out stores easier because it's harder to break down. Fatty acids, when you consume a fat, it's gonna get broken down. It's gonna get broken down into fatty acids and then broken down into a glycerol backbone.

THOMAS DELAUER: And these are components that the body can assimilate and use, but a trans fat is a Frankenfood. It's not a real food, right? So the body is like, "Wait a minute. We lack the normal enzymes to kind of break this down," which... And say what you want about the FDA, at least they even tried to kind of outlaw trans fats. But in an effort in doing so, all they did is say, "Okay. Well, you have to limit the amount per serving." Okay. So what do they do? They just decrease the serving size. So it's like if you go and you get something like peanut butter and it says it's got partially hydrogenated soybean oil, that is a game on. That is a trans fat. Margarine, shortening, that is a pure dang trans fat. So sometimes people say, "Well, it's safe, we know... 'Cause it's illegal now. You can't be putting it in food." No, it's... You got to read the fine print. They limited the amount per serving. So they just lessen the serving sizes. So the trans fats as a whole, the bodies has a very hard time breaking them down. And there's some studies in rhesus monkeys that demonstrate that. It's a scary world with those.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. Yeah. Being that these are not newly invented per se. As you mentioned, there's some naturally occurring trans fats. But in the quantities that we're seeing today and utilizing technology to create this new compound, we're seeing also this emergence of this new category of assaults on our systems, which are these obesogens. And so, some researchers at Boston University had pointed this out a couple years ago. And looking at like, basically, the title of the paper was, "Is our food making us fat? Is our food making us sick?" And identifying this category, this emerging category of obesogens that go beyond just the kind of caloric management piece of belly fat accumulation. And looking at, are there specific compounds that are causing us to gain weight? Just by their nature, their

interaction with human metabolism is creating dysfunction. And trans fats are sitting nicely in that category.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And thank you for mentioning the serving size piece. This is real talk. This was like, almost 20 years ago now, I was working at the university gym. And I would bring... I had this cereal bar, this Kellogg's cereal bar that looked like this super healthy thing. I had it because I bought it because I was trying to be this fitness guy. And it had partially hydrogenated oils in it. And once I came across a paper, and I started digging into it. And I found that... And this was around the time getting close to where New York restaurants was banning trans fat in their restaurants. And I was like, "Why are they doing that?" And then I saw it was in my food. And then I started to dig into this. And I was teaching people coming into the gym about this like crazy for years. This was almost 20 years ago. And you just mentioned, it is still in our food supply.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But there was a crafty little trick of making it with the serving sizes and a certain allowable amount. And that crafty trick is, we might get a bag of whatever it is, potato chips or cookies or whatever it is. Knowing that that one bag is a typical serving size. But then they'll say, "Oh, it's four serving sizes, right?" Serving size, one cookie. Nobody's doing that with these little cookies. You're eating like 10 of them. And so that's another way, again, it's just like so rampant in our food supply. And trans fat is one thing. You also mentioned saturated fat as well. And again, I think we're going to probably hear there's naturally occurring saturated fat versus something else.

THOMAS DELAUER: There's also just flat out too much. It's like saturated fat is one of these things where, especially in the world of overnutrition. And this is the operative thing here because people could cherry-pick this and then say certain things. But the reality is, is that in the world of overnutrition, when you're already above maintenance calories, things change drastically. And it's not apples to apples with different macronutrients and different things. If you are at your maintenance calories, if you need to burn 3000 and eat 3000 to have equilibrium, if you eat 100 calories more of sugar, it might do something more than 100 calories of saturated fat. It might do... And even if you got down to, "Hey, you're going to gain the same amount of weight," we could put that aside for now because weight is one thing. But where you gain it, what it does, can definitely be dictated by what it is. So, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Where you gain it, the receptor sites in the gut.

THOMAS DELAUER: Precisely. And with the saturated fat, there is a lot of evidence suggesting that in an overnutrition state, that saturated fat essentially, I mean, to make it very simple, it kind of spills over, right? So it makes it so that you ultimately can become more insulin resistant as a result of what's called lipotoxicity. So too much fat causes high blood

sugar, just like too much sugar causes high blood sugar. And it does so by occupying receptor sites. It does so by once you reach a certain point, you have a cascade of inflammation that therefore stops the insulin receptor from being able to receive the signal from insulin. Insulin can't dock as much. What's interesting is that if you look at the kind of dichotomy of it, like the plant-based community versus, say, even the low-carb community.

THOMAS DELAUER: The low-carb community demonizes the sugar side for being the culprit for high blood sugar, ultimately leading to visceral adipose tissue. The plant-based community demonizes the fat. And it's funny because you look at both sides and you're like, "But wait, you both have almost exactly equal arguments." Because when you're looking at the relationship between high glucose and visceral fat, because there are definitely evidence that suggest that when glucose levels are high, insulin resistance and visceral fat are closely tied together. So how did you achieve insulin resistance? How did you get there? "Wow, it's because you eat too much sugar." The other side is saying, "It's because you eat too much fat." Well, it actually depends on how you get there in the first place. And like some of the smartest people that I know in this world have just kind of put it out there, saying, "The safest way to be in terms of your fatty acid composition is try to keep your saturated fat to about 25% or less of your total fat calories."

THOMAS DELAUER: And the simple fact of the matter is, is that excess saturated fat in a caloric surplus can lead to insulin resistance just as much as too much sugar can. It's hard for people to fathom because it's like two different axis, right? But they end up intertwining at the end of it. So it kind of coincides with the sugar equation too, the sugar, the fructose. With fructose, it's not the same as regular glucose, right? So with fructose, you go and eat an apple and get X amount of fructose. Where fructose becomes a problem is, again, when we have so much that we're not utilizing it. Fructose can only contribute to what is called liver glycogen. So that means when you eat... If you theoretically just ate 20 apples right now, you better go out and go for a walk. Not because that fructose is going to spike your glucose. Fructose doesn't even affect your blood glucose.

THOMAS DELAUER: Fructose, well, it can to a certain degree through a wraparound way. But fructose goes directly through the portal vein to the liver, okay? And the liver can only hold so much in the way of glycogen before it spills it over and contributes to belly fat, de novo lipogenesis. So with fructose, it's a very slippery slope because you can only hold so much. Now, when you exercise, one of the first places you pull from is your liver glycogen. So you could absolutely offset high amounts of fructose. But what we have here is a perfect storm of being sedentary, consuming high trans fats, high saturated fats, and a bunch of high fructose corn syrup, which is just concentrated fructose. So you've given yourself a triple whammy by eating most processed food while not being able to even remotely burn it off because you're sedentary.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh my goodness. This isn't an accident, what's happening to our families, to our society with this rampant increase in obesity, belly fat. What we're eating is targeting this phenomenon. It's just like it's stacking so many things against us. And if you think about it, humans have been overeating stuff forever. Whenever we get the chance to, our ancestors would overeat. But now we're overeating and something else is happening. And you just mentioned as well, the sedentary component to it. But the food itself is affecting our metabolism in such a way that we're just kind of predisposed to not being able to process this the same way. And being that you mentioned exercise, there are certain forms of exercise, I would imagine, that's going to potentially target. And we've heard this in our field for many years about spot treating, right? That's one of the things people would come in and say, like, I just want to get rid of this. They would literally grab it, grab their belly fat and just like kind of shake it at me.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's happened a time or at 30. And spot treating fat loss is not the way we want to think about it. But there are certain things that, again, because of those receptor sites, because of the impact of certain hormones, one of the coolest moments of this conversation so far is mentioning how cortisol can be potentially supportive in fat burning and also in fat storage, depending on how all this stuff is functioning together. And it reminded me of how even with our thyroid hormone, which is kind of like a hub of our metabolism. If cortisol is not on its job, you're not burning fat. It's that important for our metabolism. With that being said, what are some forms of exercise that we can do that could potentially help to reduce belly fat faster?

THOMAS DELAUER: Well, if you don't mind, I mean, I'm going to give a background of how we burn fat in the first place that paints a picture. And we'll keep it simple, but we burn fat as a result. Typically of catecholamines, which are things like adrenaline, norepinephrine, even cortisol. What these are, are essentially catalysts that say, "Hey, there's a right... The right amount of stress that it's time to allow hormone-sensitive lipase to snip off basically the glycerol backbone of a fat molecule. You've got triglyceride, which is fat in its storage form. When there's just enough stress, i.e. Exercise, it's enough stress to say, "Hey, we need to snip off the glycerol backbone." So triglyceride is three fatty acid molecules bound to a glycerol molecule.

THOMAS DELAUER: Okay. That's literally fat in storage form. Tri, three fatty acids, glyceride, glycerol backbone. What happens is when you burn fat hormone-sensitive lipase, which is an enzyme that is triggered by adrenaline or cortisol or epinephrine, its job is to act like a pair of scissors and cut those fatty acid molecules off of the glycerol. So then you are left with three fatty acid molecules and they're floating around and they go into the mitochondria and you get burned. They go into the cell and get burned. So you've got fat mobilization and fat

burning, which are two different things, right? So that's how that works. And then the glycerol backbone, in case people are wondering where that goes, that eventually just goes to the liver. That goes through what's called gluconeogenesis, can get reconverted back into glucose, it can get broken down and excreted, a number of different things.

THOMAS DELAUER: Now, the reason that I mentioned that is, remember earlier, I talked about the influence of cortisol on fat in a negative way. Well, if we reverse that whole situation, what is the best way that we can inflict just enough stress to get a high amount of concentrated stress so that our body burns more fat? And in this particular case, we could even theorize or speculate that it would be more belly fat based on what we know with the glucocorticoid receptors. And there is some evidence to back this up. However, I can't go on record and say that, "Hey, this is guaranteed going to only burn belly fat." But the evidence is quite strong against like shorter bursts interval training. That kind of fat loss means simply because you are inflicting quite a bit of stress, but you're doing it for a short amount of time that your body can actually recover from. The dose makes the poison.

THOMAS DELAUER: If you were to go out and you were to run 100... 100 meter repeats, you would be toast and your cortisol levels might be elevated to such a degree that it's actually counterproductive, right? Again, I can't say wholeheartedly that's going to make you gain fat. It's probably not because you burned a lot of calories doing that, but it's a lot of stress on your body. It's about finding the dose that makes the right poison in this case. And so it's like... For high-intensity interval training, the evidence has been suggesting that like, "Yeah, this is really effective, especially with visceral fat, with these that have high glucocorticoid receptors." Now, you get into a territory that is... Opens you up for scrutiny when you talk about this. So I'm careful with it. But there's also a lot of evidence that one of the reasons, say, fasting or intermittent fasting works for so many people is because when you go periods of time without eating, you're elevating those stress hormones.

THOMAS DELAUER: But again, it's one of those things where you don't want to be doing it for too long. So there's a large body of evidence. There's also counter bodies of evidence to this too, that suggests that, "Hey, like when you do your training in a fasted state, perhaps you are increasing those catecholamines enough, just a little bit more that maybe you could squeak a little bit more fat reduction out of it that way." The reality of it is probably just the fact that you're in a deeper deficit at that point. So maybe it's just happening to the fat a little bit more. And that begs the question of like, if you lose fat as a whole, you're going to also lose belly fat. So it's hard to specifically spot reduce. But in terms of exercise, your best bet for spot reduction is going to be aiming towards maybe like 30-second intervals with like a one to two-minute recovery, then a 30-second interval, high intensity and then recovery, high intensity and then recovery.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right, you mentioned a couple of really great things there. One of them was how our bodies release that energy, break down those stored fatty acids. And then you mentioned the potential, because it's one thing to get released, it's another thing to get burned, right? So there can be a reabsorption...

THOMAS DELAUER: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: In some ways. And one of the forms of exercise seen to actually displace some of that released energy, you just mentioned this with the apples example, is like you better go for a walk. That can be really helpful. So let's talk a little bit about that. We know high intensity interval training has been a popular term recently. Are we doing it? Maybe not. Maybe we haven't really got the memo, but I'm glad that you're bringing this up in the context of like specifically targeting belly fat. But now there's the emergence, even though it's been around a long time, but more really intelligent people in this field are talking about LISS. Let's talk about that.

THOMAS DELAUER: Heck, yeah, man. I mean, that's in my jam. I mean, like just a low-intensity steady state, just going for a walk, zone one, zone two. I mean, you are in a category where as a percentage of the calories that you're burning, you're burning a heck of a lot more actual fat calories. Now, you gotta be real here. If you go out for a run in zone three or pushing into zone four, the absolute amount of calories you're gonna burn is gonna be more. There's no denying that. Nobody's saying that going for a run for 60 minutes versus walking for 60 minutes, that walking is gonna burn more calories. But as a percentage of the fuel utilized, you're using much more fat as a fuel source. The higher you start going up in the intensity, and this is coming from someone that loves my HIIT cardio that is a runner. I love my high intensity cardio, but I also keep it real 'cause I know that like if I go for an hour and a half walk and handle a bunch of work calls and Zoom calls on a phone, the phone when I'm...

THOMAS DELAUER: I know that, "Hey man, I just walked for 90 minutes or two hours and I might've burned 600 calories or so." But almost all those calories are coming from fat because I haven't been tapping into a state where I'm going out of what's called beta oxidation. And a good way to kind of put this into a perspective that people might see, like caffeine, for example, caffeine mobilizes fat. That gets people excited 'cause their thing's, "Oh, if I drink some caffeine, I'm gonna be burning fat." Well, caffeine mobilizes the fat, but now it is your responsibility to take that fat and burn it. So the reason that caffeine is an effective fat loss aid is because it does part of the step for you, but it does not absolve you of your duties to still go burn the fat.

THOMAS DELAUER: It did mobilize it, but now it's available to be burned, so that's why I always say like, Yeah, man, like go have a cup of coffee and then go for a walk. Utilize those

lipids that you're circulating. And the reason I mentioned that is just 'cause it just illustrates this point. So it's like you go for a walk. Like the fats are hopefully already somewhat liberated... One of the little hack that people might like to is like there are some pretty solid evidence that sitting in a sauna mobilizes fat very effectively. It can also actually oxidize too, because it's just your heart rate goes up. So sitting in a sauna, mobilizing fat and then you're going for a walk, right after you get out of the sauna. You've got fats mobilized, you've already got them circulating, it's a great time to go and oxidize them. And people ask, well, what would happen if I just went for a run? In that case, well, you'd still burn fat, but the problem is that you also start tapping into your carbohydrate stores, you run the risk of breaking down muscle, which we're now seeing is one of the largest predictive indicators of longevity and also leanness. So you wanna do what you can to preserve muscle. It doesn't mean you never do higher intensity cardio, but the nice thing about walking is, yeah, you're preserving muscle, you're very unlikely to break down a bunch of muscle going for a walk unless you are in a very severe deficit.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So good, man. Now, you know about this at a level that a lot of people don't, because you've been through this process of really utilizing your body as your masterpiece in many ways, and really a field of research for yourself because of what you did to transform your own fitness. Let's talk about your superhero origin story alright, because again, you are walking representation of what's possible, because the fit guy that people tend to see and they get information from, they might not realize that you came from a very, very different circumstance. So let's talk about that.

THOMAS DELAUER: Yeah, man, I guess it's been about 12 years now, I guess like, no, 13, almost 13 years, I was pushing 300 pounds, so I was very, very overweight, morbidly obese. I was officially type two diabetic, and I managed to reverse that. Yeah, and it was a really rough time in my life. I didn't think that it was a rough time in my life because my whole entire goal... I was very myopic. I was in the private equity hedge fund world, and my focus was that, I was a young guy, make money, make money, make money, you know, at all costs, I can take care of the rest of when I'm older, and you know get healthy when I'm older. I was drinking seven Monster energy drinks a day, the fully leaded kind at the sugar and all. I was a mess man, I was a mess. And it was just like, money will solve all my problems. Let me do that typical kinda hard charging American guy, like living the dream, right? And then I've told the story a million times, so I'll abbreviate it in case people have heard it, but there was one day like Jack in the Box was my thing. I was always going through Jack in the Box. So Jack in the Box translucent tacos were like my jam. If you can't hold it up and see the sunlight through it, it's not greasy enough, go back and dip it in the fryer again. And so I used tacos totally crazy 'cause they were the two for 99 cents, so it was three for 99 cents, but either way, no, I would end up with four. So I would end up usually eating four tacos.

THOMAS DELAUER: And one time I went through the drive-through, and I pulled in to a little stall right out of the drive-through and someone... And I was on the other side of town. I used to always go on Thursdays, I had meetings on the other side of town, so I would go to the other side of town, and that's when I would gorge on Jack in the Box, because I was like, no one will see me here. They didn't see that I was 300 pounds and assumed that I probably live leave the Jack in the Box anyway, but on Thursdays, it was Jack in the Box day. So I go and I pulled to the spot and this guy that I know, he's an acquaintance, but he's not a friend, drives by in the green Ford 4Runner, and he just nonchalantly, like acknowledges my existence. He just holds his hands up and waves like what's up Tom, and I like face full of tacos. And it hit me like a lead balloon, and then I'm like, it's not like this dude was my friend. He so nonchalantly waved at me like he was just like, that's exactly what I'd expect Thomas to do. What's up, man? It wasn't like. Oh my God, Thomas is at Jack in the Box.

THOMAS DELAUER: He was like, yeah, that's exactly where I expect him to be. And it just hit me like, I was like, Oh my gosh, man. How people see me was always important to me because it was not something that I'm proud of, but as a kid, I was always kind of a people pleaser. And so it was like I was driven into making a change pretty much by shame, because I felt like, man, this is how people see me. No way, here I am like trying to make all this money and live the American dream and impress people and do this shit. And I'm not hiding from anybody with this, so it was literally like that day that I'm just like, I don't wanna go to Jack in the Box. I'm like screw this.

THOMAS DELAUER: And I think I did go two more times over the next couple of months, but it lost its appeal at that point because it was sexy for me when it was a secret, it was like this is... It was weird, it was almost like I knew it was bad, and it was like a rebellious behavior from my eating disordered childhood, but then it was like, no, the fun is out of this. And I literally just turned my life around after that, and I knew the only way that I would change my life was if I got fucking obsessed, because that's how I succeeded in everything else I did. That's how I was successful in track, that was how I was successful cross country and rugby, when I was a kid, as an athlete. And it was how I was successful at a young age in the private equity world, because I would get obsessed. So I was like, you know what, Thomas, you're gonna get fucking obsessed with this stuff. The only problem is I got obsessed and it stuck, 'cause I really, really liked it, and I still do it now. So it was that day at Jack in the Box, that pivotal moment that have paved sort of the Thomas Delauer that people see today.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We talked about this before about this, our alignment with Jack in the Box, and just how it's so blatantly... They're literally a Jack in the Box is meant to be a gift that scares the shit out of you, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: And it scares you. It's one of the things that I use as an example all the time, those two for 99 cent tacos, getting four of them is cheaper than getting an avocado, which is the way that our economy is structured to make something like that possible, government subsidies. But I'd pull up my most vivid memories of living in Ferguson, Missouri, and eating fast food pretty much every day, the number one spot for me was Jack in the Box, that jumbo Jack with cheese, the two for 99 cent tacos, the mozzarella sticks.

THOMAS DELAUER: The curly fries.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The curly fries. Alright. They're just out here... And the funny thing was, it seemed like Jack in the Box was the least busy of all the other fast food places. This is like people know... 'cause it's called Jack in the crack. That was the nick name, right?

THOMAS DELAUER: Or my mom used to call it Jack in the snatch.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Jack... Oh shit mom.

THOMAS DELAUER: I don't even know if we can say that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Either one. Of course, I mean, hey, snatch can mean many things. Shout out to Brad Pitt. That's a movie, by the way, just never mind. Alright, so with this being said, it's really interesting how different... Our stories can start in so many different ways. Yours was one through the lens of shame, and we don't want necessarily a negative energy to be the thrust that gets us to move, but the problem we have today is that we tend to blanket label these emotions. Sometimes a negative emotion like that can be a catalyst for change. And eventually though you fell in love with it, so it's like reframing and using that energy towards something else. So I just wanna shout out to everybody who is in a place where they're struggling, trying to figure things out and looking for that button to push, that's motivating them. And for you, it goes back even further. You said you're disordered eating childhood. Let's talk a little bit about that.

THOMAS DELAUER: Yeah, man, that was... So I ran my first marathon when I was 11 years old, and it was... Like I enjoyed it. I ran my first 10K when I was either five or six. So I was a runner from a very, very young age. And to flash forward for a second, I'm sure that my sort of extreme athletic background allowed me to lose weight a lot easier when the time came. So I just wanna make sure that people know that I'm aware that maybe it was easier for me because I was fit as a kid, and I just let it all go. I know there's people that have just struggled their whole life, and although I can't personally resonate with that, I just, I hear you and I acknowledge that, 'cause I've heard it before, like but you were a fit. I know. It is easier when you're fit before and you do that.

THOMAS DELAUER: So there was a lot of my childhood where I was so focused on being a runner that being light and being skinny was very, very important. And there was a lot of anxiety in my childhood. And my mom and dad got divorced when I was about 12. And through that time, it got really rocky. When I was 13... When I turned 14, I went into what was called the Independent Study where I basically was essentially homeschooled, but it was through in the school, so I could still participate in sports and still had elected classes on campus. But my mom and dad went through a rough divorce and my mom fell on hard times and had some stuff. And I had no choice but to get my worker's permit and work as many hours as my worker's permit would allow me to legally work, and then I would go to another job and work under the table to help support mom, and also just pay for my own stuff while also going to school. It was a stressful time, and during that time, I found relief in abstaining from food.

THOMAS DELAUER: It was weird, it was like, I felt control by if I didn't eat... It was one thing I could not control, and I remember putting my fingers around my wrist. And if I rattle my wrist, around in my hands, it was like a win. And it wasn't because I wanted to have the skinniest arms in the world, but it was like... It was one thing I could control. I'm like, Oh cool, I'm doing something right. I'm like starving myself. And I went to psychotherapy as a kid for it. It wasn't like it was... And it wasn't just for that. It was just like, there was a lot of stuff. When I was 13, when I was in eighth grade... Oh, always pushing the name, what is it? Trichotillomania or whatever, I was pulling my hair out. So I... Pulling gobs of my hair out. And I was a laughing stock of middle school, 'cause I just had this bold spots all over the place. For a while, I didn't even know I had them. I was pulling hair out. Of course, you would think you would know you'd have bold spots, but I was just pulling hair out. And it wasn't until kids were pointing, I'm like, Oh my gosh, I'm actually pulling my hair out. So I was a kid on low dose Xanax just to manage this stuff.

THOMAS DELAUER: And it was a mess, dude. It was a mess. And there's a lot of like as an adult, I've gone back and I like harbor resentment towards my mom, for like, oh, she drives this. And then I realized like, no, my mom was doing the best that she could. She was a good mom. She put us... She encouraged us to do lots of interesting things. Some things were pretty extreme, but she never put a gun to our head to do it. It was like... I was just a kid, a kid with issues that was dealt pretty rough hand and I just got through it. But then it's interesting because it wasn't until a couple of years ago, really in the last year that I've reversed... Looked at this stuff and I'm like, do you think that I ended up so obsessed and possibly overweight because it was almost like rebelling against my past? It's just an interesting... People do interesting things, like I went the complete other direction. I went from being anorexic to just like this masochistic behavior of just eating my feelings and just diving into that even though I knew it was terrible for me. I knew it was bad, but it didn't matter.

THOMAS DELAUER: It just didn't matter. And I almost wanted to in a weird way, just be like, I'm sticking it to you, parents, for giving me a hard childhood. And it was just a weird time, and then... So I'm glad that I was able to have that course correction, and where I can look at the way that I look at it now, 'cause now with a six-year-old and a three-year-old that at the time of us recording this, it's like I am very careful with how I talk to them about food. I don't dance around it like pathetically. I still hit things head on. They still need to know that some food is just... That's just not good, and that shouldn't be in our body, and it's a shame that it's out there. But at the same time, I handle it with grace because I know that they're gonna be tempted by those things, and how do I teach them the food is fuel in a healthy way, so I'm like, maybe I can help change a generation that way, right. So yeah, it's a lot, man.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, man, thank you for sharing that. Again, people see you now and they might not realize all the things you've been through related to food. Food is such a huge part of our lives and our reality, because it's one of those things we gotta eat. And in our society today, the things we're presented with as food is often not really food. And so it's leading to all manner of dysfunction, and there's a lot of unnecessary suffering that's happening. And so that's why I'm so passionate about this and also a lot of this too. And thank you for sharing that of... We go to that moment, sometimes of thinking about the culture we came from and blame our parents or blame this, or blame that, and it's not to say that we haven't gone through things, but it's realizing like the more I'm doing that, the more I'm outsourcing my power to change and kind of...

SHAWN STEVENSON: You said the key word was course correct, that combination of insights right there, where what tends to happen, if we don't have guidance is we tend to swing it like a pendulum. A lot of times would just like our parents or complete opposite, or we're engaged in this one behavior and we swing right to the other. And through grace, through experience, hopefully we land at a place of balance. And not only did you do that, but you're helping other people to do it and helping to reframe our motivations, right. So you mentioned a potential negative catalyst, but also finding right now, you've got a very positive catalysts with creating a positive model for your kids. That's so remarkable because what tends to happen, of course, is like they're going to pass on those character traits, And we can make it easier for future generations just to be healthy, just where it's just what we do. It's just how it is. Whereas right now, it's the opposite. We got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back.

SHAWN STEVENSON: One of the major reasons that people give for not being able to cook home-cooked meals on a consistent basis, is not having the energy to do it. Energy can be one of our greatest assets, and it can also be one of our greatest deficiencies. Obviously, our lifestyle factors play a huge role in the availability that we have to access energy, but there

are a few recent discoveries that are adding to energy equation, like a few things ever have. Numerous studies, including a study published by the Federation of American societies for Experimental Biology or the FASEB journal, found that exogenous ketones can be up to 28% more efficient in generating energy than glucose alone. If this is about cognitive function, if this is about energy, you've got to utilize these ketones, but not just any run-of-the-mill ketone esters that had its time in the sun, but something far better has been brought to the world by HVMN. Go to hvmn.com/model, and you're going to get 30% off your first subscription order of ketone-IQ.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Ketone-IQ is now clinically proven to improve our cognitive performance and also bolster our energy for sports performance. In fact, studies have found up to 15% increased mean power output after recovery by utilizing ketones. And the bio-availability of ketone IQ is in a league of its own. Check out ketone-IQ today. Go to hvmn.com/model for 30% off your first subscription order. Now, back to the show.

SHAWN STEVENSON: If you could, I would love to talk about... You've briefly touched on this throughout this conversation, but there's a lot of infighting, there's a lot of diet wars right now where different people, as well-intentioned as they may be, who are a lot of times our friends and colleagues, who believe that their diet framework is the way that human should be eating. And so you mentioned, we've got one group that's very high on vilifying carbohydrates, another group that's vilifying fats. And the reality is our ancestors ate food that contained all this stuff, and the question is who is right? And from my perspective, they're all right and wrong as well. Again, it's under the guise of trying to help people, but we're in-fighting about macronutrients when 60% of adult's diet in the United States is ultra-processed, fake food, riddled with all those compounds you talked about earlier, and synthetic versions of those things. And so let's talk a little bit about that, the diet wars and where should we really be pointing our attention.

THOMAS DELAUER: Let me open this with a study that I'm sure you've heard of, the famed nature study on the monkeys, that were eating a more whole food diet versus... Yeah. And there's gonna be a point where I mention this. There was a study done in nature that looked at monkeys, and they gave monkeys... And before our people kind of poo-poo the monkey thing, just like remember that when you're looking at larger like longevity studies, it's about as good as you're gonna get when you're looking at monkeys because the next best thing is rodents, the next best thing after that is gonna be in vitro stuff because you can't put humans in a metabolic ward for 120 years and watch everything, but you can do that with monkeys. As messed up as that might be, you can do with monkeys.

THOMAS DELAUER: So this nature study took a look at monkeys, and it gave them sort of a diet that emulated what they would eat in the wild. Okay. To the kind of stuff they would eat,

they would give them varying sources of fat, varying sources of protein, varying sources of carbohydrates, and they found that when they would give young adult and old, three separate categories of monkeys, a caloric deficit of 30%, it didn't do anything to their lifespan. It didn't change their life span. And here, we've had this talk of caloric restriction is very important for lifespan. Very little changes occurred with these monkeys. There were some cardiometabolic improvements, as far as their lipids were concerned, but even putting young monkeys in a calorically restricted state just didn't change their life span.

THOMAS DELAUER: But then you look at other studies, and there is another famed monkey study that looked at almost the exact same thing, except they gave the monkeys monkey chow, which was basically isolated, singular protein, isolated... It was sugar and it was sucrose, and I can't remember the other carb source, but it was basically just garbage carb sources, singular fat sources. When they put those monkeys in a caloric deficit, it did extend their life span. The reason that I mentioned this is because when you are eating cruddy food, clearly being in a deficit becomes much more important than when you're eating wholesome food. And this shines a light on the way we look today, because 60 plus percent of our diet is processed food, so we require a deficit, just to offset that.

THOMAS DELAUER: So you've got this large crowd of people that are saying, like it doesn't matter what you eat, it's just calories in calories out, and they're so spot on correct, but we're missing this point of us as human omnivores... Whether you're an omnivore today or not, our history was as omnivores. Eating everything we could just get our hands on, right? Different indigenous tribes eating different groups of things. So let's just put down the fight for a second and realize that when we are not dealing with a crisis of abundance like we are now, almost anything in its natural form would go. It's like eat the stake, eat the fat, eat the honey.

THOMAS DELAUER: Eat this, like enjoy it because you got food, this wonderful, glorious thing to celebrate over, you got food, but we're not there anymore. Now, we need to celebrate when you abstain because we have too much, right? So now we go, hey I'm proud of myself, I didn't eat all that chocolate cake, like you hear those kinds of things. We celebrate because we are able to abstain from something that we have so much of. So the caloric restriction question is so much more important now, but that's not enough for people because we need to take it further, we need to know what's best. And we're all just trying to find the best thing. But it's not sexy to say that all food is good, as long as it's coming from just its whole form. That's not sexy.

THOMAS DELAUER: It doesn't sell, that doesn't get clicks, that doesn't get attention. And I'm not saying the people that are creating the content to get the attention are even bad people, they're just trying to get by, they're just doing their thing, and they might sincerely feel passionate about that. It's fine. It's not like they're just doing it for clicks, those people that

truly believe that. There are people that just, that is their livelihood, and they are so passionate about it. So they're not wrong. But what we're all missing here is that if we all could bind together, we could fight a war, and we could actually stand a fighting chance. But instead, we're fighting each other. It's like, guys, the fight is out there. Why are we fighting in this fucking house? We're all in this house, we're all human beings. And sorry to curse on that, but it's like it pisses me off, man, 'cause this is like, the war is out there. It's like, you're vegan? Cool. Good for you.

THOMAS DELAUER: Like you're conscious of your health. You're carnivore? Good for you, you're conscious of your health. You're paleo, you're keto? We're all on the same team, like let's go get 'em. But instead, you're sitting rivalry.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, exactly. Ronald McDonald is fucking everybody up at the same time you know. Wow, so with this being said, and thank you so much for directing our attention to something real, what are some things that we can focus on to make whatever diet framework or lifestyle choice, focusing on real whole foods, to make that more sustainable for us? Again, when the terrain out here is very different, what are some of the things that we can do that people can walk away with today for them to, yes, reduce some belly fat, but also just make our diet choices and our lifestyle more sustainable?

THOMAS DELAUER: Yeah, man, I say, first and foremost, whenever you possibly can start your day with a movement, just because that's like... You're checking so many boxes there. When you start your day with movement, you are putting yourself in a spot where you set the framework for the day, you've also gotten the hard part out of the way, you've also set and sent a message to your family that you are important and that you are taking care of yourself, and it sets the tone for them too, but it also triggers hormones and changes that happen throughout the day that might make you make better choices. So then it makes the second part, which is eating wholesome foods and shopping the perimeter and cooking at home, it makes that part that much easier.

THOMAS DELAUER: So that's number two, is eat at home. Like, you got an amazing cookbook, and that's not just a plug for you. It's a real thing, like whether they pick up your cookbook or another cookbook, cook at home.

SHAWN STEVENSON: They should probably pick up my cook... Yeah.

THOMAS DELAUER: They should probably pick up yours. Apologies, 'cause they'll keep my ass in the way if I say it like that. But the reality is, is that just eating at home, it's... I went through a phase, when our kids were young, where we started to eat out more. Granted, we would poke around it, and we kinda make it work. We had our select things, but we were just tired,

right? And I felt the connection of our family like break apart. But I also felt like it was like, my gosh, I'm jumping over dollars to save nickels, like figuratively speaking, with my health. I'm doing, just do all this stuff. It's so difficult. And when we brought it back to cooking in the house, it was so much easier to maintain my body composition, I thought clear, it just everything just came easy. I slept better. You don't have the mystery things to say what you want, but like MSG keeps me wide awake. If I go out to eat, and I have an MSG, I'm wired because it's an excited toxin. It's designed to do that, so I feel amped.

THOMAS DELAUER: So that's a huge one there. The other thing is just a simple grocery store trick, which a lot of people know, but that's just like shop the perimeter, right? The perimeter is where the magic happens. The perimeter is where the limited shelf space, but that's all you really need, right? The stuff in the aisles, it's the garbage. You don't really typically need the processed stuff. The frozen section is fine 'cause there can be some good stuff in the frozen section. And then, additionally with that, it's like if you're going to prep, prep like one part, the part that's most difficult for you.

THOMAS DELAUER: So this has been a trick of mine for a long time, because meal prep is really difficult for people. They say, I don't want a meal prep 'cause it's just too much to take on. But when you try to meal-prep your carbs, your proteins, your fat, so you're thinking of it like a body builder, it's daunting, and it's depressing. But when you say like, okay, what is the hardest thing for me? And typically for people, it's like it's hard for me to get the protein in, it's hard for me to... Okay, well then find your favorite cookbook, find whatever, and make up a bunch of just the protein part.

THOMAS DELAUER: Because everything else you can fill in the gap, is easy. Like you can always microwave a sweet potato if you need to. You can always cook up a bull of a rice, you can always grab an orange or an apple and get your carbs, you can always... It's easy to get those ancillary things, but the protein is the toughest one. And if you can nailed the protein, the rest kind of falls into place, at least from a meal perspective. But some people are like, I have no problem getting protein, it's hard for me to find good healthy carbohydrate sources. Okay, then prep the carbs. So just prep the one thing that is the most difficult for you. It was an utter game changer for me because it's like, now I go home, I can grab my protein, I've got it. Okay, wife made delicious turkey burgers, boom, I got 12 of them. So that's no problem. All I need to do is fill in the gaps, but my one most important piece, that protein, is prepped and ready.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love it. So that's a game changer, because a lot of times when we're obsessing about doing meal prep, it's the whole thing, and it makes it more complicated, just even making two proteins. What about that? Just throwing something in the Crockpot, maybe something in the oven, then you got your proteins for the week. You know, that's a

great tip, because like you said, it is generally much easier to like... We could throw something in the rice cooker or whatever the case might be, but the protein is what tends to take more time in the preparation as well. So that's awesome. Start your day with movement, eat at home. Is there anything else?

THOMAS DELAUER: Those are the basic ones man. I mean, we could get into the particulars of specific working out and everything like that. I would say if you had to make a spreadsheet of how you can kinda carve up your workouts, I would say four days per week of doing some kind of cardiovascular training and three days a week of resistance training and have maybe two of them overlap, so you have some rest days. It's just like, you don't need to do anything crazy and find that minimum effective dose, 'cause everyone wants to go hog wild and they're like, I'm gonna start a workout routine, and I say you can get by with two days a week of resistance training. It's totally fine. The minimum effective dose that leaves you feeling fresh, that you can get down and play with the kids, do things like create your environment.

THOMAS DELAUER: You were on my channel not that long ago, and we were talking about just walking and stuff. There was a study in, I think it was in Endocrine Reviews, that took a look at like walkable cities versus not walkable cities. Okay? Not even looking at the demographics or how much the people walked, it was the mere size of the blocks, where there are sidewalks, things like that, it was purely looking at that blueprint. Walkable cities had a 43% obesity rate, which is still sad, but the non-walkable cities had a 53% obesity rate, so 53 versus 43. And the non-walkable cities had a 30% to 50% higher diabetes risk, simply by creating the environment that encourages movement. So little things that you can do, setting your gym shoes out in the morning, having your clothes ready, all these things that would take will power, right? Creating the environment that you establish new habits to walk more, park further in the parking lot from the grocery store. Take your phone calls while you're on a walk. You gotta create that environment 'cause your environment dictates everything. You talk about the microculture in your home with food and stuff like that.

THOMAS DELAUER: What about the fitness microculture in your mind? People say when they move to houses that are on highways where they can't go walk, like they're like, oh, I used to be so healthy until I moved to a place where I couldn't really walk. My wife and I just bought a different house and the reason we bought it, outside of it being a great home, was, oh my gosh, the walkability is amazing. This is gonna change our life 'cause right now we're in a spot where we can walk, but you can't really walk to anywhere, and so just not saying everyone has to get up and move, like literally move houses, but that environment is huge.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, and just to think through that lens as well, and I love that so much, man. Can you let everybody know where they can connect with you, learn more?

THOMAS DELAUER: Yes sure, on Instagram is at Thomas Delauer. YouTube, just type in Thomas Delauer. What I usually tell people, I've got topics on just about everything, but metabolic health is usually my world. So anything specific to metabolic health, fasting, whatever, just type in Thomas Delauer and then whatever the topic is. So Thomas Delauer, belly fat, Thomas Delauer cortisol, because we've got literally thousands of videos, but it's hard to search for them. So it's like just kind of make it your routine to be like, Thomas Delauer, and then whatever search term you're searching for.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, you've created an incredible archive, and thank you so much for doing this work. And of course, first and foremost, the work on yourself. It's so aspirational and amazing. I don't know if you regularly check in because I mean, it's just mind-blowing like to come from your childhood circumstances and you were working out here when you were a little kid and going to school. And that's not normal, man, it's just really remarkable. And to see your transformation and your perspective of food and nutrition and being able to teach and serve other people and also carrying this on with your kids, and we were talking before the show, just even just us thinking about our family lives and all this stuff, it really matters, and it matters more than ever. Ad you being an example for so many other people and getting out and sharing your voice, it's just so special, man. So I just appreciate you for that.

THOMAS DELAUER: I appreciate that, man, really.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. Thomas Delauer everybody. Remember that fat is natural, as long as you have natural fat, whether we're talking about in food or on our bodies, we don't wanna villainize fat. It's okay to have a little bit of thickness, there's nothing wrong with that at all. We're just looking at not venturing into a place where we are harming our health by carrying excessive belly fat in particular, because we know, according to the data, that carrying a lot of visceral fat in particular can be incredibly detrimental to our health, dramatically increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, the list goes on and on and on. We need to protect ourselves, protect our health and protect the health of the people that we care about, so that's why this conversation is important.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's not about not having body fat. We all come in a variety of amazing shapes and sizes. What we wanna do is no matter what size or shape that we are at, express the best potential that we have by taking care of ourselves, by employing high quality movement, by being mindful of our sleep quality and managing stress in an effective way. And we can all get out of balance from time to time, and that's okay, but it's making it so that our culture is that whenever we get out of balance, we find our way back into homeostasis, we find a way back into those ingredients that it really helped to have us have great outcomes when it comes to our genetic expression and our health overall. So it's totally natural to have fat as long as that fat is natural.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Alright. Now, of course, we've got some incredible master classes and world class guests lined up and coming your way very, very soon, and there's an incredible resource out there for you right now at book stores and online retailers nationwide, the Eat Smarter Family cookbook. So make sure to pick up a copy today, it is a confirmed USA Today national best seller, number one cookbook new release in the country ah, amazing. We've got empowering education around our eating culture with our friends and family and how that impacts our health outcomes, and of course, delicious, mind-blowing food as well. And that's what it's all about at the end of the day, eating amazing food with amazing people. And you're amazing, and I appreciate you so very much for tuning into the show today. Take care, have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon.

SHAWN STEVENSON: 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 could find transcriptions, videos for each episode. And if you 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 the show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much and take care.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.