

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

**EPISODE 740**

## **The 5 Biggest Muscle-Building Mistakes**

**With Jay Ferruggia**

**You are now listening to The Model Health Show with Shawn Stevenson. For more, visit [themodelhealthshow.com](https://themodelhealthshow.com).**

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Welcome to the model Health show. This is nutritionist and bestselling author Shawn Stevenson. And I've got a question for you. Can building muscle actually make you smarter? A randomized control trial published in the archives of internal medicine found that resistance training promotes cognitive and functional brain plasticity. In addition, we know that merely contracting our muscles triggers the release of myokines that have been found to fortify our immune system, improve our cardiovascular health, and even improve our cognitive function.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So our ability to maintain our memories. So reframing and looking at our brain as a functional muscle as well. And it's really this integration because it's our brain and our nervous system that enables our muscles to work in the first place. But we also have this interesting phenomenon of what we call, "muscle memory". Right now, does our muscle cells actually have little brains in them? Well, in some ways they do. Because it's this integration with the nervous system and our cells being able to maintain and supply data back and forth to the brain. And so it's really this beautiful dance happening when it comes to movement. And it's one of the greatest capacities as human beings that we have is to invoke movement in all these different creative ways.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But here's one of the most important takeaways from today is that when it comes to our muscles, if you don't use it, you lose it. And so we're looking at what is the key to maintaining longevity, functional longevity with our body, with our muscles, and also with our brain and cognitive performance as well. Well, the latest data is confirming that it is through resistance training that we're seeing a gigantic leap in functional longevity, and not just our lifespan, but our health span. And so it's not just muscle strength. And this is the key. The latest data is affirming. It's also building and maintaining muscle mass.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now, this does not mean that we need to walk around with hulking amounts of muscle on our frame. If you're into that, that's cool. But for all of us, for every walk of life, for every demographic, for every sex, we need to build and maintain muscle

mass. It is one of the greatest gifts that we have as human beings to choose to put more muscle on our frame, but to create and build muscle that feels good on us. That also, dare I say, looks good on us as well, but most importantly, allows us to live a long, healthy life. And so here's the key and what this episode is all about is practical, real world science on building and maintaining your muscle. And we're gonna look at this through the lens of the biggest mistakes that people make when working to build muscle.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** In fact, we're gonna go through the five biggest mistakes that people make when working to build and maintain their muscle. And we're gonna learn from somebody who is, I'm talking about elite when it comes to understanding how to build muscle. And I think that this is going to be one of those episodes that impacts your life for many, many years to come. Now, it's really important to understand that it isn't just about the stressors or the environmental inputs, the strength training that enables us to build muscle. There are key elements that are driving our muscle contractions and also the recovery and healing of our muscles as well to build back stronger. And so protein is obviously of critical importance because these are truly the building blocks.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** These amino acids are the building blocks that are making up these tissues, but also there are key minerals that are critical in order for our muscles to function in the first place. The most important minerals being electrolytes. These are minerals that carry an electric charge that enable muscle contraction in the first place. And so if we're deficient in these things, we simply cannot fire or recruit muscles in the same way. And also this can lead to unnecessary fatigue. This can lead to muscle cramping, and also lack or slowing, degrading in the ability to have our muscles to be repaired. And so electrolytes are truly important. And actually it was at my special guest house. I was just over there doing a show years ago and he gave me these electrolytes. And honestly, I took them. And then they just sat in my cabinet for like three months. And then my wife went to do yoga. She went to a hot yoga class, and she came back and she was just kinda feeling depleted and just kinda low energy. And I was like, you probably need some electrolytes. Let me grab you some... I got some in here.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And I grabbed them, add them to water, gave them to her. And then I went to my office. I came back like 20 minutes later, and she's like bright-eyed and

bushy-tailed and like working. I'm just like, what the... What happened to you? And I realized like, okay, I gave her some electrolytes, but this kind of change in her energy was very notable and very strange. And I was like, this is interesting. And so I utilized them the next day. And usually, sometimes if I got a long day, if I'm recording a lot and doing multiple shows and doing interviews and media and all this stuff, around four or five o'clock. I might not really wanna be chatty Cathy at that point, I might just wanna be a little bit more reserved. But it was like four or five o'clock and I was walking around in my backyard, I'm just thinking about, I haven't called such and such back yet.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Or I need to leave this voice text for such and such. I said, I'd get back to him, whatever. I was just like thinking up people for me to get in contact with, which is not like my personality, especially at the end of the day. And I was just like, what is going on? Maybe it's just I'm having a great day, but I had those electrolytes that day as well. It's just like I'm putting two and two together. I'm like, this might be something special here. And so I start to look into the science and contacting the creator as well. And one of the creators is actually somebody who's, for me, been such a inspiration and mentor. And I was shocked that I hadn't utilized or looked into these electrolytes sooner because of my level of respect for him. And I'm talking about New York Times bestselling author, Robb Wolf, who's become a really good friend. And so having the science and having this connection and understanding the integrity, that's why I decided to really get on board with the incredible electrolytes from Element.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Go to [drinklmnt.com/model](https://drinklmnt.com/model). And not only are you going to get the best electrolyte formulation based on hundreds of thousands of data points from different people, we're talking about high-level athletes to everyday folks on the optimal ratio and the most important electrolytes for performance, cognitive performance and physical activity as well. And no unnecessary sugars, no artificial colors, none of the nefarious stuff that we typically find in these "electrolyte drinks" that have become popularized in recent history, in particular, through the lens of sport. Again, go to [drinklmnt.com/model](https://drinklmnt.com/model), get yourself hooked up with their incredible electrolytes. And when you go to that link, you're going to get a free gift, a free sample pack of electrolytes with multiple flavors with every purchase. All right. So they're giving you a free gift right now when you go to [drinklmnt.com/model](https://drinklmnt.com/model). Get hooked up

with the best electrolytes in the world. And on that note, let's get to the Apple Podcast review of the week.

**ITUNES REVIEW:** Another five-star review titled, “Thank You So Much”, by Bee boop@2. I've been listening for years and I cannot say enough about this man. He truly cares about health and wellness of human beings. And without his guidance through these podcasts, I would still be so confused about health and food. He breaks it down and he cares genuinely. He is an amazing human making a change in this chaotic world. Thank you so much, Shawn.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Thank you. Thank you so much for leaving that review over on Apple Podcast. Thank you for seeing me. Thank you for your incredible words and affirmation. I appreciate that so very much. If you had to do so, please pop over to Apple Podcast and leave a review for The Model Health Show, spread the word so we can get this goodness into more people's hands and hearts. And without further ado, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day. Jay Ferruggia is one of the most elite fitness coaches in the world. He's an advisor for teams and athletes in the NFL, MLB, WWE, and many other high-level organizations. He's also been a key contributor to many of the most popular fitness publications in the world, like men's fitness and men's health. As a matter of fact, he wrote a column for Men's Health Magazine for 10 years specifically speaking to folks who were struggling to build muscle. And in this conversation, that's gonna be our focus. What are the five biggest mistakes that people make when working to build this all important tissue called muscle? Let's dive into this conversation with the one and only Jay Ferruggia.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Fortunately, a lot of people are getting aware of the importance of having muscle. Specifically, not just muscle strength, but muscle mass for longevity, for being able to produce myokines and our cognitive function, functionality, all these incredible things. Even our cognitive function, again, is deeply dependent on muscle.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But there's been this sort of camp of gym bro versus the nerds and come to find out that focusing on muscle contraction, building muscle actually can make you

smarter. The list goes on and on with the benefits, but I want to bring you here today to talk about how to do it. How do we actually build muscle? And this is coming from somebody, not only are you a legend, but you're from that place of struggling with putting on muscle, and so you know the mistakes that people make. And so we're gonna talk about five biggest mistakes that people make when working to build muscle. But first, can you start by sharing how you started off training for years and not being able to put on any muscle mass?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah. As a kid, I was overweight and I was fat and I was unathletic, but then I got to the point where I was skinny fat. And I started training in eighth grade and I trained hard for five straight years all through high school. I graduated high school at the same height I am now, 6 feet tall, 147 pounds. So that was the result of all that work, all that eating. So I was like, "Man, this ain't working. I got to dig deeper and try to figure this out." So in college, I would just order every book, take every course. I switched my major up. I went into college actually as a communications major. I didn't want to host, like Sway, like host a radio show or direct films. And then I switched my major to exercise science. And just that became my obsession. At first, it was just selfish. I was like, "I hate walking around at 6 feet, 147 pounds. So I just did all the deep diving. And it was all experimentation for the next 10 years or so. And finally figured it out, got myself up to 220 something and had multiple, multiple people experience those kind of gains in my gym. You met one of them recently.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Who was telling you stories. Like without fail, 30 to 50 pounds we would put on these guys over the course of one, two, three years. And so I combine the science and the real world experience.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And you worked with him, was it like 20 years ago?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** It was 20 years ago. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And he's still, again, he's about that life, very thick guy, different mindset.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You had such an impact. This is why, what really inspired me to ask you to come in today was that conversation, talking with him.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Wow.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And just like, man, Jay has some of the most valuable information. Because what you were having him do back then 20 years ago are many things that are popular today.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Exactly. Nobody was doing that back then. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's amazing, man. But also, again, I wanna set the tone for this. This is important for everybody. Men and women, and of course, like your wife is about their life. Shout out to Jen. And this is important for our immune function, for our cognitive function, for our cardiovascular health, for just being functional. And now most notably, all this data on longevity is deeply tied to our ability to gain and maintain our muscle mass. So let's dive into five biggest mistakes that people make. What's the first one?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** The first one is excess volume. Just too much volume. People do too much. And we could go a lot of different directions with that. But first of all, like any kind of like class, kind of circuit style training where you're just doing a bunch of stuff and getting like huffy puffy, out of breath, sweating. Most mainstream people associate that with something productive. It's really not. It just skyrockets your adrenaline, your cortisol, your stress hormones, but it doesn't really do anything. There's not enough loading to build any muscle. And so people are like, well, I'm burning fat. Yeah, but you could do other things that are less stressful on your system, so excess volume. And then again, with the kind of the huffy puffy like circuit stuff that people are into, short rest periods are part of that.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So now there's been meta-analysis now on rest periods in between sets.

Generally, people who don't know a lot about training will be like, oh, I should just rest 30 seconds, go again, go again. But now we know this for a fact that two minutes beats the brakes off of one minute in terms of muscle gains. Three minutes, even better. Two is like double the gains. Three isn't significant, but it's still better. So three crushes, one minute. Now that sounds boring to a lot of people. It's the exact opposite of running around, doing burpees and all that kind of stuff. But if you wanna build muscle, you gotta embrace monotony, simplicity, just the boredom of doing the same things over and over again, and then obviously eating enough to recover from that and to fuel that. So those would be a few things that fall under excess volume.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** And then another thing is in terms of, let's say you get your training dialed in. Okay, that looks like a good program, but now let's determine how many sets you need. And so again, we have recent meta-analysis compared doing five sets. So let's say chest. So you and I do five sets a week, 10 sets a week, 15 or 20. The best gains were in the five and 10 set group. So doing more isn't getting you anywhere. Now what's interesting about that too, and this is crazy, is if you take two to three minutes rest between sets, you need far less volume. If you rest 45 seconds to 60 seconds, you need far more volume because you're not allowing for recovery of your CNS. So now each one of those sets, you're not recruiting enough muscle fibers, so you need more to make up for them.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** That's why I call that kind of junk volume. There's a lot of things that could be counted as junk volume. So those would be some of the things in excess volume. Doing higher reps, so now we have studies as well. And when I say studies, like I'm always backing this up with 30 years of experience and then talking to other coaches.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Because to me, that's first and foremost. A study doesn't prove anything, maybe it validates like, oh, we were doing that 20 years ago, now we know why. So there's a lot of kids nowadays who are in their 20s and 30s, like, studies show this, studies show this. I'm like, yeah, but dude, real world experience first. You know what I mean?



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So I'm leading with some of that 'cause I know you and your audience like that, but really it's real world experience.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Absolutely. Yeah.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** The thing with doing higher reps is that it causes unnecessary fatigue. So if you and your twin brother go and do the same program for 12 weeks, but on every set you do six reps and he does 12, he's gonna experience more fatigue, more central and peripheral fatigue on a day-to-day basis, where he might be like, oh, I'm a little tired today. Or he might be like, I have CNS fatigue. It's just, he's basically doubling the volume that you did. He's doing extra reps. And so the higher up we go in the volume, the more central and peripheral fatigue we'll have. And some people, they don't feel anything from that, but some people, if you have low recoverability, if you're a hard gainer like myself, you actually do tend to notice that a lot. So when I work with someone, what I'll do is I'll take their program, be like, okay, let's lower the reps to generally five to eight. Let's lower the volume to six to 10 sets per body part per week, and let's increase the rest periods from two to three, from one minute to two to three minutes. That all sounds like, wow, that's so boring. But making gains is fun. It's not boring once you start making gains. So excess volume, again, there's like kind of a lot of bullet points under excess volume, but that's basically how I would sum it up.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. This is sounding like this is not equal out to the results that we see in Rocky Montage.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** No, no, no, no, no.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You know what I mean? But the thing is, and I'm so glad that you mentioned this, 30 years of experience. We overlook anecdotal, what we put this label as anecdotal data. And the thing is, a lot of times science catches up later, especially in this context of muscle building.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** There've been people that have figured this stuff out long, long ago, and now we're getting these peer-reviewed studies to affirm what a lot of folks had already figured out. And actually using the gym as your laboratory basically, you're a master scientist in that. And I want to ask you about this in particular. So with our slowing our rep range, what does the weight look like though? Is this like getting to fatigue once we get to that six rep range, eight rep range? Like is it still like... What does that look like?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah. And the reason I like lower reps from beginners, which is counterintuitive, and I've been saying this since the beginning of my career, you can go back and read stuff I wrote in 2000. I've been saying this, and most people say, no, beginners should use higher reps. The reason I disagree with that is because every rep you do, let's say over five or six, there's more of a risk of form breaking down injury. You know this, if you're practicing a sport, a pitcher has a pitch count. We know we don't wanna practice under fatigue because then your technique is horrible. So what we wanna do is minimize fatigue and we want our form to be perfect. So if I take someone who's a novice, let's say I take Braden for example. I say...

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** My youngest son.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yes. I say do a set of 20. After five, he's gonna start breaking down stabilizers, intramuscular, coordination, things like that. It's really hard. But if we do those 20 reps doing five sets of four or four sets of five, now we can make each one perfect 'cause it's a lot easier to say, all right, we gotta do one, and then I'll break up that set of five. I'll say, Brayden, just do five sets of one rep, but without taking a rest, do one. Okay, cool. Now, next one. There is less chance of injury actually, so most people, again, counterintuitive like, oh, but I'm using lighter weight, there's way more chance of injury doing high reps. High reps is a skill. You need to know how to breathe, you need how to stabilize all those things, so all we start with lower reps. Now, let's say you're a novice or an intermediate, I would still start you with five to 8-ish, unless you have a serious knee or elbow issue and you just can't do it.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** I'm gonna start you with lower reps for a few different reasons, the same reasons there, it's gonna minimize fatigue, you're gonna make strength gains easier and faster, and people love to see progress. And the other thing is that if you do a set with 85% of your one rep max or more... So for simple math, let's say you can bench press 100 pounds. If you use 85 pounds, every muscle fiber is recruited from the first rep. If you do less than that, 70%, 60%, whatever, you only get full fiber recruitment during those last few reps to failure. And again, in the case of Brayden or someone, I wouldn't want you going to failure 'cause that's when we start breaking down, your elbows flaring, they're like, oh, my shoulders injured. So there's a lot of powerful stuff about low rep training, and this was something before we had any signs, it was introduced to me from the guys like Arthur Saxon, George Hackenschmidt, Bosco, Steve Reese, Reg Park in the early 1900s. These guys, they didn't know the science, but they just knew anecdotally when you do higher reps, they would say, it tires you out, it fatigues you, you're not building strength. So they would treat it as practice.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Alright, I've got questions, man. I got question.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Alright.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is bringing up a little bit of resistance pun intended in this conversation because there's also people who have a perspective of TUT, the time under tension. Let's talk about that. How does that play into this? Does it not matter as much?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Totally irrelevant. We now have the science that shows it's totally irrelevant.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** All right. Time under tension, so we don't need to be added this certain amount of time doing the thing.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** No. So back in the day, we used to think 40 to 70 seconds, it was ideal for

hypertrophy. And here's the thing too with studies now, I can look at all these studies and where the 28-year-old or 32-year-old kid is going to say this, and it's definitive black and white, I could say yes, but there are cases when we could break those rules and that studies irrelevant, that study means nothing to me. So you could look at studies that say every muscle is the exact same. So you can train your delts the way you train your quads, the way you train your lats. From real world experience, people know that your quads generally, and your delts generally respond to... Especially if you're a non-responder or a hard-gainer, might need those sets of 15 to 20, shoulders might need those sets of 15 to 20. It doesn't matter how long this lasts, it's more just the contractions and what's happening there. We just know from years and years of experience, some of the guys with the biggest quads did 20 rep sets. And it wasn't just that they were dummies, they figured out if I do fives, my quads don't grow as much as when I do 20s. Now again, you're risking that excess fatigue, so you gotta decide what's right for you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Got it. Alright, so there's going to be some muscle distinction here as far as the rep range.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** A little bit. Yeah. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** OKay.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** I wouldn't do that, again until you're more advanced. I would say just generally start out five to eight, on most stuff out of 10 maybe. And then be smart about it. If you're like, hey, my knees don't feel good if I squat for fives. Cool, do eight. Still hurts, do 10. Still hurts, maybe then we gotta do 12. It depends. So that's where, again, it depends where we can't just go 100% by the studies, it's individual with certain things.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Alright, so how should the weight feel once we... If we're in the rep range of six to eight, how should the weight feel once we get to eight?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah. So I like... Again, I'm going to keep you further away from failure, the more of a newbie and nervous you are, because again, we're just risking injury and we're

risking form breaking down. And form, technique, execution, whatever you want to call it, that's the first form of progressive overload. So I just want better form. So you can... Even you and I at our level, I was gonna say, anyone at any level, form has to be first. So you and I could use the same weight for weeks on end, if our form's getting better, we're improving intramuscular coordination, our CNS is recruiting more muscle fibers, we can make gains. So sometimes people get carried away with progressive overload, meaning, I gotta add one more rep than I did last week, or I gotta add five pounds or just put on those little magnets on the bar, but that's not how your body works, so you... Progressive overload, I always say form first and foremost. And then what should those reps look like? We get more advanced. Me and you go to the gym, they should be probably within one to two reps or failure. Now, failure again, grey area, for me, failure is perfect form. So you're gonna be struggling 'cause for hypertrophy, now we know this unequivocally, you need three things. So you need mechanical tension...

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Although, actually there's an asterisk here. We used to think you need mechanical tension, you need metabolic stress, which is just a pump, that feeling when you're muscle swell up and you need muscle damage. Recent studies have proven that these two don't matter, but I could argue that. Okay? But what we know unequivocally is you do need mechanical tension. Now, there's still some people who don't know what that means. I still see a lot of people and even friends that I respect thinking mechanical tension is heavy weight. It's not heavy weight, it's the involuntary slowing of the contraction speed. Meaning when you get to those last few reps, let's say I'm doing curls, the first few are like this, the last few slow down, no matter how hard I try to move that up, I can't. So that's an involuntary slowing of contraction speed, that's what's required to maximize hypertrophy. So I need to get to the point where as fast as I try to move the weight, I can, it's still slowing down. Now, should that be all the way to failure, or should that be one, two reps shy? It's kind of individual. It really depends. For most people, I say one to two with perfect form, finish with one, two. Some sets, you should do that, it just depends on the exercise and the individual.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** If you're shaking like you're having a nervous breakdown, your eyes are popping, that's too much, you're gonna feel that the next day, it's gonna negatively impact your workouts. But you're working hard involuntary, slowing contraction speed, perfect form,

we don't let any form break down and then that's the end. Now, if you are someone that for whatever reason we determine like, hey man, you're under a lot of stress right now, you're not sleeping a lot, even you have gut health issues. Like training too hard can negatively impact your gut health. I go, alright, Shawn, it's not a good idea for you to go to failure right now, let's go three reps shy. If you're going three rep shy failure, we're gonna have to do a little bit more volume. So where I might say, hey, let's do eight to 10 sets a week, maybe you're gonna do 12 sets, 13 sets, nothing crazy, but you're gonna need to make up a little more volume based on how you're training.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I did not even think that you would talk so many times about the central nervous system, we don't think about that part.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And that's really what's deciding which muscles are firing, the muscle recruitment, all this stuff, and honoring that, making sure that our recovery is good, making sure that it's there to... Like you said, I love that you mentioned how you can feel, like even the recovery process. If you feel beat down from doing the chest workout a week later, when you say that you probably went too far. But having soreness is not the issue. Let's talk a little bit about that too. What is the ideal range? I know it's gonna be individual, I know it's a tough question, but getting that soreness, how long should we go until we're lifting with that muscle group again?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So soreness is a really poor indicator of a good productive training session. You could never get sore, I don't like to get sore. And sometimes I'm like, oh, what did I do? Why did I get sore? And if I train somebody and they get sore, I almost feel like I let myself down in some way 'cause I don't want people to get sore. And so soreness comes from doing too many eccentrics, like slow eccentrics, and it comes from stretch position movements. So for example, a chest fly, overhead stuff for lats, chin ups, a Romanian or stiff legged deadlift, so doing too many stretch position movements it's not a good approach for hypertrophy because we don't want a lot of soreness. 'Cause again, when I went back to... I talked about mechanical tension, metabolic stress, muscle damage. Muscle damage, we don't want a lot of

that. We used to think back in the 80s and whatever, muscles are torn down there in the work and they're re-built stronger. That's not really what happens. There's a whole other science to that, but that's not really what happens. We just need that mechanical tension. And what I was saying before is you can get that mechanical tension...

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** I forgot to mention, some people think it means heavy weight. We used to all think it meant heavy weight. Any rep range from five to 30, you can get that mechanical tension, but obviously doing third, you're doing 25 more reps and adding a lot more excess fatigue versus doing that set of five.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I love it, man, thank you. Like the soreness question is just like stuff is popping up for me too, and just to be able to hear your feedback is...

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah, you don't need it. I don't like it. I don't think it's definitely not a good indicator of anything productive happening. And too much is bad. If you have too much soreness, A, definitely don't train, but then adjust what you're doing next time 'cause you shouldn't be getting really sore like that. That's causing all kinds of cytokines and all kinds of new problems that we don't want.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah. And honestly, it just reduces your desire to perform.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Exactly. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Especially with sore hamstrings, it's just like that's probably the worst vibe of any soreness is like sore hamstrings.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** It's the worst.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's trying to drag your legs around.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah. And let's just touch on that for one more second because to what you said there, a lot of people don't love training the way I do. I want them to. And if I make them

sore and I make them beat up and then the next day they're like, I have less energy. I'm just a stock broker, I have more energy, now I'm training, I have less energy. I don't want that, I want you to feel better. So it's good, again, look like on paper like is this all I'm doing? No soreness, no fatigue, but you're gonna feel better and you're gonna build muscle, and again, it's ideal for longevity and all the things we talked about.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Awesome, awesome. Alright. Biggest mistakes, we've got five, we're going through number one is excess value. Let's move on to number two. What do you got for us?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** We kinda covered it, it's just not lifting heavy enough. So I talked about the benefits of the low rep training. Again, if you're over 85% of your one rep max, you have full fiber recruitment, and then you're just avoiding excess fatigue, more reps are gonna cause more soreness, they may actually negatively impact insulin sensitivity, which is crazy. And, yeah, so that's really the thing. And if you go to most gyms, most people are trying to get somewhere and they're just using the weight that's just way too light. You're not getting that mechanical tension, you're not getting anything. So I would say just train heavier is really a huge thing for most people. Now, there are people who ego lift and they're just training way too heavy, but that's a whole another thing.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So you've gotta find that pocket for ourselves.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** A sweet spot. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah, which again, is generally somewhere between five and 10 reps within one to two reps shy of failure.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But for any of us that are looking to add more muscle to our frame, and if we're not seeing the results, one of the things to pay attention to is, am I actually lifting heavy enough to get this response? Alright, but also within that, you've already shared it with perfect form, having great form.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Perfect form is key. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Okay, alright, let's be more in number three. What do you got?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So selecting the right exercises. Now, we've all seen the list for years and years and years, top 10 exercises, bench squat, deadlift, nothing wrong with any of those, all good exercises. But for most people, you want variations of those exercises. So when we look at an exercise, we wanna look at, okay, does this exercise... Does the resistance profile of this exercise match your body strength curve? Does it line up well? Does it fit your structure? So what might be good for me might be different for you, might be different for Ann, might be different for Jordan, for Brayden. Let's say we all get together, we're all gonna squat. I might say, hey, you've had low back issues, so I'm gonna have you do a staggered stance, the stance, goblet squat. And then just knowing Brayden's age and his height and how many kids I've worked with like that, I'm gonna say we're gonna have you do a safety squat with heels elevated. Jordan does everything perfect, so you can just do a regular back squat. Maybe Ann, I look at her and I say, and you know what? We're gonna have you do a trap bar deadlift, which is a hybrid. So we're all squatting, but it's different for each one of us.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** And then maybe you, you're like, I just wanna work on my quads. We're like, okay, we don't want to risk low back, so let's go on something really stable like a hack squat. So it's five different people, six different people, we're squat, maybe we're doing six different types of squat. It's gotta fit your structure. So even if I said, hey, here are the five muscle building exercise, if it doesn't fit you, if it hurts your shoulder, don't do it. Doesn't matter who says it, doesn't matter Phill, he says it, whoever says it, it's gotta fit you. So it can't cause pain, it's gotta line up well with your structure. And exercise should align with gravity. You see people doing this or they're pressing like this, it's like, yeah, gravity only goes this way, bro,

not this way, you know what I mean? And then we would just want big compound movements that recruit a lot of muscle fibers. So the movement patterns, squat, hinge, vertical press, horizontal press, vertical row, horizontal pull, those things are really important. Isolation stuff is kind of just icing on the cake. If you don't have a lot of time, I wouldn't even worry about doing bi's, tri's, lateral raises, things like that, we want those big exercises that recruit as much muscle as possible.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Got it. Alright, so if we have time, then we could dabble in those more isolation exercises. But for 90% of us probably focusing on those compound movements because even working on your back, doing pull-ups and lap pools, you're going to be working on your biceps. But the key again, is picking the right exercises for you. I'm so glad that you mentioned this because I know you hear this a lot too. It's just like, well, I can't do that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Especially when it comes to things like squatting, but just like do you get up and down out of the chair?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Just being able to inquire and have people to think about where are some movements that I do incorporate this that might not be this stereotypical version of a squat? The ass to grass, barbell, all that, there's dozens, maybe 100 different ways that you can perform the squat.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah. Yeah. And so what I do that's very different from what most people do, most people go in and they'll go right to that main compound exercise first. So walk in right to the squat rack. You wouldn't do that in any other physical endeavor, obviously, maybe you do your warm-up, whatever, but you're still going to your big compound exercise. It might take 20, 30 minutes for you to be ready for that. So what I'll do first with most people that are advanced or have been trained a few, especially guys our age, I'll have them get a hamstring

pump first. So meaning the squats are never gonna be the first exercise, maybe it's leg curls, maybe it's glute-ham raises, I might have them get a glute pump too. So maybe we'll do hip thrusts with a bar or a machine, so now everything back here is pumped up. So when I squat down, it's gonna feel so much better, and I've also had, let's say an extra 15, 20 minutes just to get blood flowing. There's a pump, my CNS is more fired up, and maybe you tell me your back or your knees and whatever bother you.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Okay, let's do a single leg. So now maybe you're gonna do a step-up or a rear-foot elevated split squat, now when I have you go squat, it feels amazing. There's never been anyone that I did this with that didn't say that was a game changer. Like for example, the other day, I got a message from Chad Gable, he's WWE super star, and he was on the Olympic Wrestling Team. So high level athlete. We just started working together not too long. He's been following my stuff and dabbled, but he never had me put together a program for him. He's like, dude, I've never felt this good my entire life. It's unbelievable. Now, some of that was reducing his volume and all the other things we talked about, but the sequencing that I do, game changer. And then certain people, most people, and a lot of people aren't gonna like to hear this, can't do a chin-up, shouldn't do a chin-up because they don't have the shoulder mobility or the thoracic, which is your upper spine mobility to get your arm directly overhead.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So what I do is either I'll start them with a pull down. Now, if I move my arm from directly overhead to a 30 degree angle, allowing my torso, much less likely that I'm gonna get elbow and shoulder problems. So we can do that on a pull down, or we can do that on a modified chin-up, where if I'm leaning back here on rings or a bar, and I put my feet up, now I can lean back. You could also do that on one of those Gravitron machines, or just put a band around the chin-up bar and lean back as you're doing it. Most people don't have the core strength to be able to do this without a band or something.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So just the positioning is really important on a lot of things too.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, yeah. So this is one of the biggest reasons that I would love folks to follow you, to get more in tune with your work, is just being able to have access. It's like a superhero utility belt of different movements, and that can be... Just even when you said it, like a game changer to get the hamstring pump and then going over like... We don't think about things like that. And also, again, there's so many variations to exercises, you gave... You just shot them right out, just those varieties of different squats for different family members. But the bottom line piece for all of this is that these are all inputs that are required if we're going to build muscle.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And the vast majority of us can do these movements at some capacity. And so having a coach, having somebody who's 30 years of experience and actually helping the highest level folks to just everyday folks that are just trying to get healthier, it's priceless, man. It's priceless. Got a quick break coming up, we'll be right back. No list, no gifts. Here are just a few benefits of building muscles seen in peer-reviewed studies. Building some muscle mass can significantly improve your insulin sensitivity, improve your overall hormone health, improve your cognitive performance, improve your immune system, protect you against injuries and speed recovery, and defend your body against age-related degradation. This is just a small slice of what a little bit more muscle can do. Now the barrier of entry to building more healthy muscle and reaching a state of physical fitness is easier than ever. Having a few key pieces of equipment at your house can absolutely change the game for you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Kettlebells, steel clubs, maces, battle ropes, all of these phenomenal, multifaceted pieces of equipment are readily available to ship directly to your door. Go to [onnit.com/model](https://onnit.com/model), and you're going to receive 10% off some of the most premier training equipment in the world. Simple piece of equipment that you can do dozens, if not hundreds of different exercises with. Plus, they've got incredible programs as well to teach you different techniques for unconventional training to truly create more functionality in your health and fitness. On top of all that, Onnit is also one of the world leaders in human performance nutrition. They've got the most remarkable pre-workout supplements and post-workout protein that you're going to find, all sourced from Earth-grown ingredients, nothing synthetic.

They also have put their own products into real world clinical trials to affirm their efficacy. Again, go to [onnit.com/model](https://onnit.com/model). That's [O-N-N-I-T.com/model](https://O-N-N-I-T.com/model) for 10% off everything they carry. Now back to the show. All right. So we've got excess volume. Number one, we've got not lifting heavy enough. Number two, we've got selecting the right exercises for you. What's number four?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Now, you gotta do those exercises properly. So technique, execution, that is huge. And that's really the biggest thing I see when I go into public gyms. And the mistake that stands out is, wow, we gotta work on that because there's no... It's an interesting thing with lifting. Nobody would go play golf for the first time, oh, yeah, I know how to play. Or you wouldn't step onto the basketball court the first time. But people go to the gym like, yeah, I know what I'm doing, I'm fine. It's like, not really, bro. That doesn't look good. That doesn't look safe. So you really need to learn execution. That's the most important thing. And people are just in a rush, like, oh, I wanna put two plates on the bar, whatever. It's like, now, slow your role. You gotta slow down. You gotta do fundamentals. That's really the most important thing is just get really good at the exercise because we all know people, and I've done it a million times. You have nagging shoulder injuries, nagging back injuries, my knees hurt. All these things, it's like you wear it almost as a badge of honor. It's like battle scars. Yeah, I've benched, it's like, but that shouldn't really happen. Once in a while, you get too amped up, you do something stupid. Okay.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** But you shouldn't be getting injured all the time. You should be recovering pretty well. So execution is really important. And you just need to kind of think about your positioning from head to toe and everything. I can go into a few things real quick here. For example, any exercise you do, you should never shrug. Pick any exercise, your shoulders should always be back and down. So you should always be free. You could do Stevie Wonder Your head around a little bit. Anytime that neck is tight and there's tension up there, it's wrong. I don't care if it's a lateral raise, I don't care if it's a squat, a bench press, whatever it is, you want to create as much space from your ear to your trap here. Most people just have that habit, so make sure that's down and back. Every exercise locked down and back, you're gonna be safer. You wanna avoid shoulder injuries when pressing, just keep those scapula down and back. That's it. You're doing overhead pulling, like a chin-up or a pull down, don't excessively

let that come out. So just stay locked down and back. Something like that.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Super simple. Most people should be doing some type of deadlift, some type of hinge. What most people do that's incorrect, and I used to teach this, we used to teach this back in the late, early until, all throughout the '90s I think we taught that. You'd have that huge stripper arch in your low back and then drive back. That's the worst thing to do. You want a neutral spine. So before you squat or before you deadlift, you almost do like a little bit of a posterior pelvic tilt. You pull your rib cage down, you brace your abs like you're gonna get punched and just keep that neutral position. And again, that basically goes for everything. You're not gonna get hurt doing a curl, but I would just want to rehearse, mentally rehearse that position. Always know, okay, head up tall. I got space here. Shoulders are back and down, spine is neutral. And just practice at all times. So simple things like that can help you avoid those injuries and that's just good form on everything. The other thing I would say for form is if you're new to an exercise or you're just listening to like, man, I should probably work on my form, been doing things kind of sloppily. Just slow down the reps for a while.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So do fewer reps like we talked to earlier. Do sets of five to eight and maybe do a three to four second negative. Now, that's not something... Again, it doesn't matter about time under tension, it's just kind of a learning thing.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So it could be a few weeks, a few months, just slow down the negative a little bit. And then a key phrase that I always say is master the transition. So if I'm coming down in four seconds, it could be a press, it could be a squat, whatever, master the transition from where the eccentric or the negative of the rep ends and the concentric or where the positive begins. 'Cause most people, they might go three, two, one, and then just bounce and ricochet out of the bottom.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Master that transition. We control that eccentric, and then don't explode.

Now, if you're an athlete, let's say I'm working with a basketball, football player, eventually I may want them to explode, but at first, I don't want that. I don't want momentum, it's not gonna... People will say, well, you recruit more fast-twitch fibers if you explode. Maybe it's arguable. At first, I don't want that. We could do that later on. And even if I do want you to explode, I would still say this, come down, master that transition where we change direction, and then we could explode all the way through the rest of the lift. That's not gonna make you slower, no matter what anyone says, especially if you're still playing your sport, you're still doing some med-ball throws, you're still doing plyos, jumps, sprints, whatever, you're just gonna be safer and there's gonna be less wear and tear in your joints, so you're gonna perform better on the field.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** A lot of times, especially, sometimes someone will say to me, like you said before, people will say, I can't do that lift anymore. I'll be like, maybe you can. If I teach you how to do it, you can. And one of the things is if you come down and squat and then you bounce out of the bottom, imagine your spine. If we had an X-ray on your spine, what happens if you have two, 300 pounds and then you bounce? There's that little minute of compression. We can eliminate that. If you come down slow, master that transition and go up, we don't have that compression where all of a sudden, you know what I mean? So just mastering that transition is really the main thing I would say to people, be hyper aware of that.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. You're not a car with those springs.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** No.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You're not a Jeep Cherokee.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** No.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You know what I mean? Man, that's incredible. So now, and by the way,

that cue with keeping our shoulders down, I started doing that with the dips quite some time ago because that would bother my shoulder. And I have to add a lot of weight on the dips for me to really feel it 'cause I could do dips all day.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But what it was was I was like tucking my... Bringing my shoulders up a little bit. But once I got that cue, bring them down, it's just it's been a piece of cake.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now, you said not to shrug, but what if you're doing shrugs?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So I generally don't even prescribe shrugs that much, I think you can get... If we look at anatomy and how things work, you can get traps doing rows a lot safer. A lot of people that do shrugs end up with neck issues or headaches or things like that. So I generally don't prescribe them early on. And then later, let's say we've been working together for a few months, you're like, man, I want those traps, like Goldberg or something, then we'll prescribe them. But I would be like, Shawn, how's your neck? How's your neck? How's your neck? You know what I mean? Just be careful there. And then I'll probably modify them to where I would have you lean, even if you're just sitting in this chair, have you lean forward and shrug up. And that way, we kinda get your neck out of the way a little bit so you don't get that bunching in here. So just small modifications like that on every exercise. And then I trained with your son Jordan. Like, every exercise, none of this is proven by science, just 30 years where I go, hey, man, just try to actually do a thumbless grip on that. And you're like, oh, my elbow doesn't hurt anymore.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Which lift? Let's talk about that.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So actually on any type of press, a lot of people... So you always press with your hands wide open. I'm sorry. Push-up, push-up, push-up. And generally, that tends to feel pretty good for people. But then once they start on a barbell or a dumbbell or a machine,



simply closing that grip makes it feel completely different. So if we're on something safe, like a machine now, I press, and I had Jordan do it, but he's super athletic. It would be risky. I press dumbbells and bars thumbless like this. And what it does is just sets you into a little bit better position for your shoulder. Elbows feel better. If you have a machine, then it's super safe. Then I would just go keep it open until it got really heavy. Just something simple like that. Like, I have so many of those where it's like, I never heard that before, and I was like, man, I just figured it out over 30 years, but it does work. A lot of those things, a lot of those tricks.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah, that's what he said when he came back from lifting with you. It's just like, man, Jay showed me this one little thing, and it's just like I felt it. It was like so... Yeah, man, it's so awesome. All right, so we've got the emphasis on technique, and this is one of the biggest mistakes that people make, just going in there willy-nilly. And maybe you read the side of the machine like, okay, I'm supposed to do this, and it's cool to experiment. We're experimental creatures, but at the same time, you want to get good at something, getting some training, getting some education, and getting these cues as well. And we've gone through four...

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Just to touch on that, again, to get good at something. Imagine you're a baseball player or a golfer, you're a swing. You don't swing until you could barely stand up and the swing gets so sloppy, you're never gonna get good at it if you do that. So again, that's why these kind of lower fatigue sessions where we keep the reps lower, we keep the rest periods longer, we can master the exercise. And then once you master the exercise, that's when you get the gains. People sometimes just use the muscle confusion principle. Just do something different every time they go into the gym. But that would be like Mariano Rivera came out and threw one pitch, his whole career. He's the greatest relief pitcher of all time. He didn't just come out and be like, oh, I'm going to throw a splitter, I'm going to throw a curveball, I'm going to throw a fastball, whatever I feel like doing 'cause then he would have never gotten good at that. So you gotta get really good at an exercise, and then you improve inter and intramuscular coordination. And that's when the gains actually happen. So you actually have to stick with an exercise for a long time to see the results from it.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Everyone's kinda like, we live in this immediate gratification society, and I

get it, you want things to happen overnight, but you gotta do the same thing over and over and just approach it with that mindset of mastery. How can I get better? How can I get better each week? And that always is a really happy moment when I'm working with someone. For me, they're like, oh, I just had this light bulb moment but I finally figured out what you mean by moving my pinkies here or there. I was like, yes, that's it. Because, again, that's what's really gonna lead to the gains. You can't just pile on the weights. Your body doesn't work like that. Your connective tissue recovers six times slower than your muscles do sometimes. So it's like you have to give that connective tissue time to adapt. If you're just every week... And sometimes you can do it, especially if you're younger, you could put five pounds. Like Jordan could put on five, 10 pounds every week on a lift for, let's say, six weeks straight. But eventually, he's gonna have something be like, oh, my elbow or shoulders. I try to tell everyone out, like, slow your roll a little bit. The body's not a machine. You can't just linearly go up and up and up.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So what I always tell guys, especially our age is, look, progressive overload is really important. You can't use the same load forever. You're not gonna change the way you look, you're not gonna build muscle, which is what we're talking about here. But just go in and assess how you feel that day. Last night, maybe I didn't sleep as well. Maybe my nutrition wasn't great last night. And I go in and I start warming up like, man, that's weird. What is that weird little tweak in my shoulder? Now, 15 years ago, I would have said, who cares? Rub some blue heat on it, which is like this horse liniment you put on so it feels like it's on fire, you don't even feel it. And then we just start powering through it. And then you're like, yeah, I think I gotta get shoulder surgery. [laughter] You know what I mean? So it's like, you've gotta listen to your body. That's why when I give someone a program, especially someone who's type A or OCD, I'm like, bro, just chill. It doesn't mean you have to go up. It doesn't even mean you have to do the reps I have listed that day. If I listed six to eight and you're like, I just don't feel it, my shoulder hurts, I have to do 12-15. Do 12-15 that day.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Lighting it up along the way.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Lighten it up. Yeah, you have to listen. If you're just going in, like, I have to beat the logbook, I guarantee you're getting injured.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Oh, man. All right, we're at number four here on these list of biggest mistakes. What's number five?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** The last one. And again, there's overlap here. We kinda covered it, but it's just not training hard enough, meaning the proximity to failure. So there's two definitions of intensity. The textbook, the scientific definition of intensity is percentage of your one rep max. So again, simple math. If I could bench press 100 pounds, if I do 85 pounds for one rep, and it's easy, that's more intense than if I do 70 pounds for 13 reps, even if that's way harder, there's a higher perceived level of effort. But the meathead definition of intensity is just perceived level of effort.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So we kinda wanna do both. We need to lift a little heavier, like I alluded to, closer to one rep max, but we really need to work hard, hard but smart. So we wanna be, again, if you're trying to gain muscle, general rule of thumb, one to two reps shy of failure. We know this from real world experience, plenty of people who have produced results over the years, and now from studies. If you go... And this is the other thing, when I mentioned, I think I alluded to this a little bit earlier, if you use lower rest periods, you need more volume to make up for it. If you are further from failure, you need way more volume to make up for it. And then at some point, if you're really more than four reps from failure, it's probably a waste of time. You could probably just be walking the dog and vacuuming. Like you're not really getting much out of that. So there is... Basically there's a theory known as the effective reps theory, meaning that there are only five stimulating reps in a set. Whether you do five reps or you do 35 reps, it's the last five reps before failure. Even Arnold knew this before we had the science. He would say, it's those last few reps when you're really struggling, that's what causes the growth. And he was right. People said it before Arnold, and they were right. We didn't know the science. Now we know the science behind it. Again, involuntary slowing and the contraction speed.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** So we have five stimulating reps. Possibly, maybe it's only three, maybe it's

four, we don't know. But there's a max of five in a set. So if you wanna be more efficient, do sets of five. You know what I mean? Do sets of eight and leave one or two in the tank. That's again why I lean towards lower reps. But we need to get within one to two reps shy of failure. Train hard enough and again, chase progression, but smart. So progressive overload. Oftentimes, I would say the first rule of training is progressive overload. That was the younger me. That's why I didn't mention it here. It's still super important. We need to be doing more weight or more reps with the same load, but not every single week. We need to progress through form or technique first, listen to our bodies, but then we have to... Like if I started a new exercise today, let's say I'm doing 60 pound dumbbells, if I'm still doing 60s in a year, I guarantee I haven't changed. I should be doing 65s, 70s, 75s eventually. And so progress may look like if you invested in a stock, it's not just going to go straight up, it's gonna go up, it's gonna plateau, it's gonna go down. But you just stick with it over time and then eventually it gets easier. Like, Frank Zane was one of the greatest bodybuilders of all time.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** A lot of people argue that he should have beaten Arnold in some contest. And Frank Zane said the same thing. Maybe I just 'cause I'm such a meathead, I pick 60s there, he said, I'll grab the 60s on a dumbbell press and I'll use them until it's no longer challenging. And then I'll go to the 65s. Whereas again, some of this progressive overload beat the logbook mentality is you get those little magnets now you do 61 and a quarter next week, the following week you do 62 and a half, then you do 63 and three quarters, then you do 65, but again, you will break down doing that. So it's train hard enough, train within two reps shy of failure, but be smart about it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** This is fire. This is so good, man. Thank you. I wanna circle back to number four on the technique. You mentioned a really important part of fitness. You mentioned explosiveness and working with a lot of athletes over the years and putting in distinct things for that purpose versus trying to be explosive on a squat, for example.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And this is something that we didn't know each other for a nice portion

of our lives, but we happen upon some of the same things. And I would basically pair things. So I've got my squats for this purpose, and then I've got my box jumps over here for this purpose. I'm specifically doing explosive movements over here.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yes.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And then I've got my strength aspect, my muscle-building aspect on this thing over here. So, yeah, man, that recipe, it just... Sometimes talking with you is just like, damn, I did that right. But then sometimes like, damn, I should have did this instead.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah. Yeah. But that's important that you bring that up. I think no matter what age, no matter what stage you're at, you should include, again, for longevity, you should include some of that explosive stuff. It doesn't have to be hang cleans, it could just be simple stuff like, let's just throw a 10 pound medicine ball. Let's do simple jumps. Maybe, most people, as they get older, especially if they haven't sprinted in a while, I wouldn't say start sprinting on flat ground, but we could sprint pushing a sled to make it less impactful. We could sprint on a steep incline like Walter Payton used to do hill sprints, things like that. You need to incorporate some kind of sprint, some kind of jump, and some kind of throw as you get older because you're gonna lose that. You're gonna lose fast-twitch fibers faster than you lose muscle size, which is really critically important, too.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah. Thank you for talking about that, that's absolutely true. When we're kids, a lot of the... But a lot of the stuff is happening in younger populations too, for kids that are just sitting around and gaming all day and not really moving throughout the day. Not to disrespect gaming, but there's also this movement of fit gamers right now, too.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Really?

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

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** I don't know nothing about that. [laughter]

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But it's because of the cognitive benefits as well. Like just having faster reaction time, all these different things.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah, yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But anyways, keeping that in mind that even with kids, our bodies work on this use it or lose it basis, but it's much more notable. Because when you're a kid, you're made of whatever Gumby is made of, you know what I mean? You're just made of like...

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Oh, you can't get injured. It's almost impossible. Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But as you get older and things become more rigid and more fixed, if you're not using these certain movement patterns and muscle fibers, your brain is like, okay, I'm about efficiency.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Your central nervous system. I'm about efficiency.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** My person, this person needs to be really efficient at sitting in a chair, and it will cater things to that. And if you try to do something else, especially something else very quickly, your body's going to give you that feedback, like you can't.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so giving your body those inputs in particular as you're getting older, if you don't use it, you lose it. Sometimes we don't do it and then we lose it, and then we blame it on being older.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And so there... And we've got so many examples of this. We're seeing it right now with LeBron James, as my son calls him, LeBron James. He's out here. It's insane. He averaged 30 points a game last year.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** That's nuts. And it's just like... Even my son, he's watching the clip of him a couple of days ago, he's like, dang, he could still do it. Like bro, just you already knew he could still do it, you see the way that he's training. And by the way, sleep is a big part. I quoted him actually in my first book, this a big part of his training.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The recovery part, he invests in his body.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But also again, making sure that you're doing these movement patterns consistently, but also I wanna point to this and ask you about this as well, the mindset around that. Keeping that curious mindset, that youthful mindset and not buying into the bullshit that again, I'm getting older, I can't move fast. How many examples do we need of people who are not buying into that and they're doing these exceptional things? But we just have a culture that as we get older and me having kids, I've been a dad longer in my life that I haven't been a dad.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I see it all the time, man. Even 10 years ago, I go out, take my kids to the park, I'm the only parent that's running around with them, chasing them, going up the slides and all that, but I'm not doing it because I'm trying to make myself do what I'm doing because I have a spirit of play.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And also again, then you start to see the outcomes 10 years after that. It's very different when you see the parent when we get together for the parent-teacher conferences. So can you speak to the mindset around you working with athletes, you working with different people in different demographics, how important is the mindset around your fitness?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** It's everything. It all starts there. You have to want to... There's a few different directions I go with. A, I think it's a sense of pride and it's... You and I are a few years apart. I'm older than you, so I wanna be better than you. We go to the gym, I wanna be stronger than you. I'm always gonna have it. I'm always gonna chase that. If I train with my friends at the same age, I wanna be better in some way, I wanna keep up. And nobody that I know that you look up to or admire ever mentions their age. It's just like you don't even think about it.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's true?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** You're just... It never occurred to me on 49 now, I shouldn't be able to do this stuff. Never would occur to me. It's just you have that same kind of aggressive, relentless mindset of like, let's just keep getting better, let's keep getting better. Maybe you gotta adjust things, maybe you don't recover as fast, you have to accept reality like, maybe it takes me an extra 48 hours, whatever it is. Okay, cool. So how do we change our training? And we didn't cover in this podcast, which you alluded to there, obviously the recovery, the sleep, the nutrition is everything we're just talking about in the gym stuff. But I think it's just a sense of pride. I think everybody has a duty as a human being, as a man, a woman, to be your best, your most elite self. I think that's the best thing we can do because then we can be better for everybody else. Some people might say, well, you should be serving. And I say, yeah, I can't serve unless I'm my best self, meaning I'm my healthiest self, I'm my most confident self, my fittest, I feel the best, I have adequate muscle, I have adequate strength. You never know when things are gonna go down, you're gonna need to use that.



**JAY FERRUGGIA:** But I just believe in holding yourself to a higher standard, and I think it's such a let down when you see people that are in their 40s, 50s, 60s and say things like... And it really personally gets to me when someone says, oh, I'm over the hill, you can't do this at my age. I remember being in my 20s, training clients that are 38, 45, 49, which I can't speak to anyone older than that, but they would say, oh, wait till you get to my age. And then I would get to their age and I was like, nothing happened. Then wait till you get to my age. I'm there, nothing happened. I'm better. I'm better. I'm leaner. I'm stronger. What are you talking about? Just stop making excuses. Eventually, we're all gonna be in a pine box, but I'm not gonna let any self-limiting belief hold me back until then I don't think anybody should. Nobody that you and I associate with does that, it's just hold yourself to a higher standard, set the example. And I know, as well as you do, most people don't wake up super excited to go to the gym.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** They don't wake up super excited to eat salmon and sweet potatoes versus eating pizza and Big Macs. So it's up to you and I, and I think it's up to everybody that's listening to the show right now, choose to be that positive influence. Choose to be that inspiration. There are times where I could eat a huge cheat meal and it would have no impact that I'd actually wake up looking leaner and fuller the next day, but I'm with someone at dinner that I know they can't afford to do it, so I'm saying, no, I'm eating salmon and sweet potatoes tonight. I choose to be that inspiration.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Yeah.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** There are times I could go out, you know me, I drink maybe an average of once a month, but if I'm with someone who's struggling with alcohol, I won't drink. I always choose to set that example, and I think that's what everybody should choose to do. Choose to be the example, choose to inspire other people. Kobe said the most important thing is that you inspire others so that they can be great in whatever they do. So it's a responsibility, but what better way to live life than choose that responsibility every day, that everything you're doing, you're doing at a high level.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** My man. What you said that one day we're all gonna be in a pine box, I

don't think you're gonna be in a pine box, I think you're gonna get your ashes converted into a dumbbell or something like that. 'Cause you could do wild stuff with ashes now. People get turned into diamonds.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** That's true.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** You're getting put in, turned into trees. You can get yourself put into a firework and all kinds of crazy stuff.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Let's get little mini dumbbells and all my friends will just rock them out of their ass. [laughter]

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Man, my God, this has been so valuable. Man, thank you so much. And before I let you go, can you just speak briefly to the stuff outside of the gym. I know we touched on it a little bit, we mentioned sleep, food matters, just touch on that a little bit because if we're gonna build muscle, it's a lot of the stuff that's not in the gym that is gonna make the difference.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah, so as a younger man, I used to think it was just calories, and then when I realized that it wasn't, I found actually, wow, I recover faster by not eating junk food. Meaning I was on a seafood diet, it's fast food, it's pizza, all of these things, and I was thinking that would help you recover fast, but you're causing gut distress, you're causing inflammation. So food quality, first and foremost, protein, lead with protein. If you're trying to gain muscle, you're gonna need carbs, so don't go on keto, don't go on low carbs. I would generally start someone at a gram of protein per pound of body weight maybe depending on their body fat levels, at least a gram of carbs per pound, if not two, if not three, if you're a skinny hard gainer. And then fat, we're going to be 0.4, 0.5 grams times body weight generally. But basic stuff that you probably talked about a million times, meat, eggs, chicken, fish, rice, sweet potatoes, fruit, those are gonna be really the main staples. And to build muscle, I like to have someone eating three to four to five times a day. I don't like intermittent fasting for muscle gain, especially again, coming from a hard gainer background. So yeah, just high quality food, eating enough.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** And again, if you have those hard gainer genetics, you and I were talking about it before, it becomes a job, but you gotta commit to it. Like, do you wanna build muscle? Then you're gonna have to eat when you don't feel like eating. You have to meal prep when you don't feel like eating. It becomes a pain in the ass, but you do have to do that. And then you could do all the things to recovery. Sauna is great. Ice, could argue on the science of ice. But sleeps first and foremost. If you're not sleeping, I don't care about the blue blocking glasses and the red light and this, that, and the other thing, like just optimize your sleep and that's it. That that's going to be the biggest game changer. And all the old bodybuilders and all the old strength athletes from the 1900s, they knew that before we had any of this stuff. They were just like, get to sleep, that's gonna be the game changer. So those are really the most important things.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Awesome. Man, super valuable, man. I love this platform because people can click play and get a master class from a master like you.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Thank you. Thank you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's super special, man. But the most important thing is that we apply what we learn.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So where can people connect with you? Just kinda get more into universe, check out programs and things like that.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah. So if you go to [maximum muscleplan.com](https://www.maximummuscleplan.com), I'll send you kind of a high level overview of what we discuss here today. And then just all the other stuff will be there too.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Awesome, and you gotta show social media, what about those?

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** Yeah. Renegade Radio is a podcast, social media, I am @Jay Ferruggia.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Boom. Boom. My guy, thank you so much, man. Man, I appreciate you.

**JAY FERRUGGIA:** My man, it was a pleasure. Thank you.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Let's go. Jay Ferruggia, everybody. Thank you so much for tuning in to the show today, I hope you got a lot of value out of this. Building muscle is one of the most important action steps for our longevity, for having high-level cognitive function well into our elderly year. What the latest science is indicating is that being able to build and maintain a healthy amount of muscle can slow down the aging process effectively. So our chronological age is very different from our biological age. As we get into those advanced years, we can be functionally and cognitively much younger than what the calendar may say. And that's the special breed of people that we are working to build right now. We have that potential already locked inside of ourselves, and taking action on this information is how we can start to unlock this for ourselves and also to encourage this in other people.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So please share this out with your friends and family, you can send this directly from the podcast app that you're listening on, or you can send this out to social media. Take a screenshot of the episode and tag me. I'm @shawnmodel on Instagram and tag Jay as well. I'm sure that he would love to see the shot-outs, but sharing is caring truly. And I appreciate you so much for tuning in to this episode. Today we've got some epic master classes, world class guests coming your way, very, very soon, so make sure to stay tuned. Take care. Have an amazing day and I'll talk with you soon. And for more after the show, make sure to head over to [themodelhealthshow.com](http://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 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, I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.