



EPISODE 801

10 Fitness Secrets Every Busy Parent Needs to Know

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SHAWN STEVENSON: Don't fall victim to these fitness parent traps. Use these science backed tips right now to transform your health. On this episode of The Model Health Show, we're going to be diving into 10 fitness secrets that every busy parent should know. In our culture, we get the labels of the soccer mom or soccer dad. We're shuffling our kids from here to there. We've got after school. We've got intramurals. We've got all these different sports and clubs that our kids are participating in, and we want our kids to do the stuff, but oftentimes what gets neglected is us, is our own health and fitness, and we end up drudging through these things and just trying to hold it together.

Well, on this episode, we're going to be diving into some real world, science backed, but also real world application, proven strategies to ensure that we're caring for ourselves so we can show up better for our kids and ourselves. Now, we're going to kick things off with number one. On this list of 10, again, 10 science backed fitness secrets that every busy parent should know. And number one, if you're a parent, you know, that it's not always possible to shuttle off to the gym and to try to get back and to fit in a structured workout with the time constraints of getting our kids where they need to be. Now we're going to address that a little bit later, but to kick things off, number one on this list is to get in some exercise slash movement snacks.

Now, what inspired this episode is based on my real world experience and spending time with a lot of parents at all these different events and just seeing how we run ourselves into the ground and seeing the impact that it's had on me. I'm on child number three going through all the things right now. I've picked up some wisdom along the way and been testing things. And this concept of movement, snacks, of exercise, snacks really does show up in the research. And there's so many cool and creative ways that we could fit these things in. For example, if we're at our child's sporting event, like I was just this past weekend for my son's AAU basketball tournament.

And this one was actually out of town. We had to travel to Las Vegas. It was a three day tournament. It was a lot. It was a lot. And there's multiple games each day. You know, the first day on Saturday, you got two games. Sunday, you got two games. Monday's a championship game. Should you be fortunate enough to get there and at these events, there's usually some set or some modicum of some bleachers to sit on. And most parents are just going to park their behind on the bleachers and just find a spot to sit and take up that space. All right. Some people bring out the most elaborate seats with them that fit onto benches that fit on to bleachers, right? They got the cup holders.

SHAWN STEVENSON: They've got the recline. They don't have recliners on them. They don't really have that. But just space age comfortability and that's great. We can utilize that but simply having some time during these games, which are gonna be there anyways, to take a stand during the games. Take a stand and there's a certain percentage of parents that I've noticed Over this experience that stand up a lot during the games and this is showing up in the research.

For example a new study Published in the Journal of the American Medical Association tracked the sitting work behavior of nearly Half a million people for about 12 years. Individuals who predominantly engage in sitting at work exhibited a higher risk of mortality from all causes, a higher risk of death from all causes, 16 percent greater risk of death, early death. Specifically, and a 34 percent higher incidence of developing cardiovascular disease compared with those who predominantly did not sit. This is the key. Even after adjusting for sex, age, education, smoking, drinking, body mass index, sitting behavior still stood out. Now again, in this study, this did not say that they're standing all the time.

Just people who stand a little bit more and sit less often. And during our kids events, whether it's a soccer game, he's going to be a soccer player. Basketball game, swimming tournament, whatever the case might be. This is an opportunity for us to take a stand, at least for some of the time. And as a matter of fact, it isn't just about our physical fitness. This is also our cognitive health as well, because a study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, track the impact of standing adaptable desk on the cognitive function of students for a course of several months. And after compiling the data, the scientist stated " continued utilization of standing biased desk". So again, not standing all the time was associated with significant improvements in executive function and working memory capabilities. So to reiterate this point. This is an opportunity for us to get in some movement slash exercise snacks during these busy days where we're shuffling our kids around, where we're attending these events, where we're attending their games and their matches.

This is an opportunity for us to take a stand. And dare I say during this time, we can even sneak in a little mobility work. Now, if you're watching me on the video version, you'll probably catch me out there at the game here. Sitting in a resting squat at least for a couple of minutes throughout. Maybe I'll get in a little hip flexor work, you know, just leaning over, touching the, touching the old toes, just being able to move around a little bit more. That's what standing offers the ability to do. And at this event in particular, I noticed that one of my son's teammates, his grandparents come to a lot of the events and not so coincidentally, even in their senior years, they're very mobile. They're very active. They're very cognitively sharp and it's just these things that I'm picking up.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I'm noticing. This doesn't mean, again, that everybody's standing all the time, but it's an opportunity. Sometimes these kind of tips just, we might not think about them, but having this opportunity to be on the ground literally and seeing the behaviors of parents and people who are seemingly a little bit more well adjusted and just exuding a little bit more energy, a higher level of fitness. There's certain habits that I'm noticing. And another one of these that stood out during this Las Vegas tournament trip. We got all the boys together, got all the kids together and went and did a couple of things like taking them to the Bellagio, you know the the fountain it, you know does the music in the, The water does the dancing basically and there are a bunch of flights of stairs or there was escalators.

All right to get there and to get to the tram and all these things and I noticed something. The only adult that was taking the stairs was me. And the kids, the boys were all about this. They were racing up the stairs and I partook in that. All right. I've created that culture with my son. Actually it is my son who took off first up the stairs and so the other boys are gonna follow him up there and they just did that as a habit. And this is not to negate the fact that the escalators right there, we could take a load off, take that the escalator, but this is an opportunity to get some movement snacks in. And I felt it, like all those steps that we were going up and coming down. It was a little something, you know, you definitely experience some inputs, some muscular inputs and signals by utilizing the stairs.

Many of the same muscles that power your body through squats and lunges are used to propel you up stairs, quads, calves, glutes, and core to name a few. But what makes going up a flight of stairs so unique and uniquely challenging is that stairs force you to work against gravity in a remarkable way. Because stairs are much steeper than most hills that you'll ever encounter and because of the alternating single leg presses that you have to do to drive yourself upwards, climbing stairs tends to accelerate your heart rate faster than other forms of movement and makes you breathe faster to take in more oxygen. Now, the combination of swift changes to your heart rate and breathing that happens when you encounter stairs is one of the reasons that climbing stairs for your exercise is one of the fastest ways to improve your VO2 max.

So if you see a set of stairs, you could see it as an opportunity. And it's just getting in these little movement snacks, or if you have the audacity, if you're just like, I don't really have a gym around. But you find yourself a set of stairs. Just going up and down the stairs is a phenomenal workout backed by several studies. Including a randomized controlled trial that was published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine. It took a group of inactive young women who were otherwise healthy and split them into two groups. One group was designated to a stair climbing program. While the other group functioned as a control group who didn't change their exercise habits.

SHAWN STEVENSON: In the stair group, the stair climbing was progressively increased from just one ascent up the stairs a day in week one to five ascents a day in weeks seven and eight. Training took place five days a week on a public access staircase, which was right around 199 steps. 200 steps at a very moderate stepping rate, by the way of 90 steps a minute. Each ascent took about two minutes to complete. Now the test subjects agree not to change their diet or other lifestyle factors over this study period.

So they only doing these very moderate pace and just one ascent a day in week one to, again, five ascents a day. So it wasn't a lot of input, but there's something special about doing these stairs. Now, after compiling the data at the end of the study, the stair climbing group had increased their VO2 max by over 17 percent compared to the control group. Now this might sound like a small amount of exercise for them to do to invoke such a significant amount of improvement in their cardiovascular fitness. At minimum, the stair climbing group did just two minutes of exercise in a day. Maximum they did a combination of about 10 minutes of actual "work or exercise" not talking about their ascent or rest in between in a day. All right, 10 minutes of exercise got those Remarkable benefits. So again, this is an opportunity for us when we are carting our kids around to get in some exercise and movement snacks, just changing our perception, seeing the world a little bit differently, seeing the world as a playground and also just taking the time to take a stand.

Standing up when we get a chance just at least for a few minutes and alternate standing sitting. Maybe you can do a little bit of mobility work. You can be the cool or even weird one who's doing a little bit of mobility. Not all you don't gotta go too far. You don't gotta, you know, break into the splits or whatever. You don't gotta do a percolator. You don't gotta do all that. All right. I don't know what kind of events you're at. But this is just an opportunity for us to get in some movement inputs and all of this adds to our overall fitness bag. All right, so that's number one on these ten fitness secrets that every busy parent needs to know.

We're gonna move on to number two and number two is to avoid plastic water bottles to the best of your ability. Of course, you've got to make sure that everyone in your family is hydrated. Your kids for their respective events and of course yourself as you're taking them around town and supporting them. Now the science here is too hefty to ignore anymore. A new study Published this year in the proceedings of the national academy of sciences Analyzed samples from three major brands of bottled water and discovered that a liter of bottled water, bottled in plastic, contained 110,000 to 400,000 particles of plastic or liter. The study authors noted that 10% of the plastics found in the water were microplastics while 90% of them were nanoplastics. This is even more concerning as the researcher stated "nanoplastics are believed to be more toxic since their smaller size renders them much more amenable compared to microplastics to entering the human body".

SHAWN STEVENSON: We know that water bottled in plastic is a primary source of microplastics and nanoplastics entering the human body. And if we're dedicated to our fitness and the health of our children as well, we've got this. To acknowledge this we've got to stop messing around with this and get educated because this isn't a joke. So many studies are flooding in, flooding in. Right now revealing where these plastics are ending up in our bodies. For instance, a brand new study published just this month as of this recording Cited in the Journal Toxicological Sciences examined 23 human testicles and found a shockingly high amount of microplastics in all of them. That's right.

These microplastics that we're drinking from these bottle waters are ending up in our balls. Now this is one of those places where it's, I mean, this is just nuts. We've been talking about this for so many years. And now again, these studies are flooding in affirming that these microplastics are showing up everywhere in the human body that they're looking. The testicles had a plastic concentration of about 330 micrograms per gram of tissue on average and the researchers found 12 separate varieties of microplastics in the testicles with Polyethylene, which is used to make plastic water bottles. Being the most common.

I don't want I don't want that. One of the scientists stated, " the impact on the younger generation might be more concerning. Now that there is more plastic than ever in the environment". Another study published this year in the New England Journal of Medicine tracked the cardiovascular health of over 250 patients. Polyethylene plastics, again, the primary plastic used for plastic water bottles. Polyethylene plastics were detected in carotid artery plaques of 150 patients. Now, there were other types of plastic particles found as well. The conclusion of the study found patients with carotid artery plaque in which micro and nanoplastics were detected had a higher risk of a composite of myocardial infarction stroke or death from any cause after 34 months of follow up than those in whom micro and nanoplastics were not detected. These plastics ending up in our heart are literally contributing to a significantly higher incidence of death from all causes. This is not a joke and again I'm, just giving you some of them. I've been talking about this for years.

As a matter of fact, I've been talking about this for almost 20 years! Going back to when the evidence was a little bit more scant, but still concerning, I was sounding the alarm. And if you're watching the video version of this episode, you could see some highlights from this. There's videos of me from about 15 years ago on YouTube teaching on some of the concerns about our drinking water, including insights about plastics disrupting hormone function. All right, and now, and now after all this, we're experimenting on our population. We've got some alarming evidence. And 20 years goes by, and now all these studies, if you look, you're going to find it. Everywhere they look in the human body, they're gonna find the plastics. We're becoming Barbie and Ken dolls. All right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And this isn't, this isn't just like, oh, this is like a superficial issue. No, no, no. This is contributing to all cause mortality. This is contributing to a higher risk of heart attacks, and strokes, and metabolic issues, and altering the way that our body fat is functioning and altering our brain health and cognitive function. So again, this is one of those things for us as busy parents to be mindful of. Let's come into the game. We know that we're getting the kids out here. We know that they got the bottled waters, what's offered out there at these different events. It is just, it is what it is. It is changing. There are different options that are showing up and being more prevalent right now.

But for now, fill up your own stainless steel, or glass bottles from your own home water filter, or glass bottled spring water dispenser. Bring your water with you so you don't find yourself in those situations where you got to go for the plastic bottled water. Now do the best that you can do the best that you can. Sometimes you're going to have to get the water in the plastic. It's okay. There was a time when I would just go dehydrated rather than drink it. That has its own issues as well. Okay. You don't want to be in a place where we're so neurotic that we're not going to drink water. But we do want to be aware.

This is about awareness. This is not about being inundated. This is about making smarter choices based on our ability to choose because we're more aware of the options. That's what it's all about. All right, so in Las Vegas it was especially more complex to get the ideal water now, of course we could use a task rabbit or something, you know, postmates, or something get some water delivered just about anywhere, you know at your hotel. That kind of thing but there were times where I grabbed the, you know, maybe a little Fiji. You know, it says BPA free on the Fiji so I assumed. Again, this was over 10 years ago.

Hey BPA free. That was a big concern. It's a plasticizer chemical bisphenol A. But there are so many more bisphenols used as plasticizer chemicals. Bisphenol S for example that has many of the same hormone disrupting qualities that BPA has so it's health washing. But again, they're acknowledging. Hey, we're trying to do our best and do better. Not do their best. Let me not say that they're trying to do better by saying, Hey, it's BPA free. We're not using this plasticizer chemical, but what plasticizer chemicals are you using? Because you got to use some because you're using plastic. All right. But I did my best when I came across some water bottle in a glass, grab me a couple of them bad boys. And that was the primary water that I was using. So let's do the best that we can. And also in line with hydration, especially as we're out here running around, cognitive function needs to be at a solid level and also the performance of our kids, the performance of these young athletes. We know at these concession stands at these different sporting events and what we've been programmed to utilize as a culture has been things like Gatorade and Powerade.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And we know that these are littered with artificial chemicals, newly invented chemicals and ingredients that are known to cause hormone disruption to human bodies. All right. And also this, this abhorrent amount of sugar as well. It's just not necessary. Not to mention, of course. The bottle and the blast it all right now. With that being said, those days are over. There's a huge transition that's taking place right now. There are dozens of major professional sports teams that are utilizing other than that sugar laden garbage that we've been programmed again. The reason I'm saying this about professional sports teams is that these athletes have such an influence on what our kids are doing.

And it just, it is what it is. We trying to be like Mike out here. All right. I want to be, I want to be like Mike. It's like, God, it's iconic. All right. But with this being said right now, top performers on team USA weightlifting, NBA teams, and entire NBA teams are now utilizing this. NFL teams, entire NFL teams are now utilizing this. Navy Seals, the list goes on and on, are utilizing the electrolytes from LMNT. LMNT is a science backed, zero sugar, electrolyte drink designed to support active hydration and support our healthy lifestyle through all that we're doing. There's science backed ratios of sodium, potassium, and magnesium.

Again, they have hundreds of thousands of data points to dial in again, working with athletes to everyday folks that need high levels of cognitive performance. They've dialed in these ratios to ensure that you feel and perform your best again, zero sugar, no artificial colors or dodgy ingredients to hold you back. And the researchers at McGill university found that in particular, the electrolytes found in LMNT are able to function as a quote on off switch in the brain for certain neurotransmitters that protect the brain against neurodegenerative diseases, but also improve cognitive function. So definitely check out LMNT, go to drinkLMNT.com/model. And with every electrolyte purchase, you're going to get a free sample pack to try out all their different flavors. I'm a huge fan, huge fan of LMNT. I noticed the difference, especially when you're traveling, doing a lot of stuff. These electrolytes are so freaking helpful. And I always, always travel with LMNT.

They're easy to travel little packets that I can add to my water bottle. And this is what I'm using for my son in between his tournament games. He's utilizing LMNT. All right. When we're just not giving him that garbage stuff, we're not. And of course, again, we do our best. But as we learn, as we know better, we do better. And so this is what we're utilizing for my family's performance. Not just myself, but my entire family. Check them out drinklmnt.com/model. So number two on this list again was to avoid plastic water bottles to the best of your ability for yourself and your family. And number three on this list of 10 fitness secrets that every busy parent needs to know.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Number three is to have a plan for your food. Now when we're hustling and bustling and moving around and sometimes again, just even being able to have a home cooked dinner is just not possible on some nights because we've got events going on and we do the best that we can. But just having a plan ahead of time and not finding ourselves in a situation where we're pulling into a drive through, that's going to do us a lot of good. Now, much of the ultra processed foods on the market are peddled to our children. So we need to be mindful of this for ourselves. So we're not compromising our own nutrition, but also for our kids.

An analysis that was published in the BMJ determined that approximately 60 percent of the average American's diet today is made of ultra processed, newly invented foods. Wow. A study that was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that nearly 70 percent of our children's diet is made of ultra processed foods. Now this is Factually, we've got mountains of studies on this now. This is factually contributing to multiple health epidemics, but one sobering issue for young athletes has been highlighted in a meta analysis of over 50 human studies on diet and bone health. And this was published in the Journal Nutrients, the scientists found that the people eating the standard, quote, Western diet, high in ultra processed foods, had significantly lower bone mineral density, higher risk of fractures, and higher rates of bone loss.

Now this one is especially close to me. Because at the age of 15, when I was already running a four, five, 40 yard dash, again, I was just a kid, 15 years old, all these aspirations of being able to elevate myself, elevate my family and going to college to play sports. It was at track practice doing a 200 meter time trial that I broke my hip. My Iliac crest broke off just from running. I didn't fall. No one ran into me. There was no trauma besides the act of running as every child should be able to do. But because my diet was about 90 percent ultra processed foods, and this is just what it is.

Each day, I'd have a bowl of cereal or some muffins. You know, Hostess mini muffins was my jam, the little blueberry joints. Thanks for watching! All right, some juice, some milk. Ironically, I was drinking a lot of milk, but this ultra process, like just sick cows. Don't just don't even get me started, all right. For lunch, my usual lunch, most of the week was a personal pizza. All right. They had the personal pizza and I get a pretzel with cheese and I take the personal pizza and I dip it in the cheese all right, damn the pretzel. I just want, I want that cheese. I'm gonna dip my pizza. Yes, and if people saw I was the fit guy. I was the fastest kid in my class, All right. They just said I was falling apart. I was making myself out of this garbage and then for dinner if my mom happened to make some food it was often there might be some home cooking element involved.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But most of the time it's ultra processed foods You know, the mac and cheese jump, jump offs, were frequented as well, you know, canned ravioli, those kinds of things, but my mom could cook. My stepfather was an executive chef at a high end restaurant, but we were living below the poverty line ourselves. A lot, dealing with a lot of issues, a lot of addiction, a lot of struggles going on in the family. And, you know, my first job was at McDonald's. So, you know, after school, I'm going there, you know, make a little extra money. And that's what I mean for dinner. So when I'm saying 90 percent of my diet was ultra processed food, I'm not exaggerating. That's why my hip broke. There wasn't something innately wrong with me. It was the ingredients that I was making my tissues out of. And when we know better, we do better because if it wasn't for that, and the sequence of events that happened after that.

I wouldn't be standing here with you today and I'm very honored. I can't even believe that I'm about to say this, but I've been able to impact the lives of millions of people because of the struggles that I went through. But we want to pass this on and do better for our children. Give them a better opportunity because these processed food companies are coming at their throats. They're coming at them. Their goal is to make lifetime customers, to grow them from birth. That is their modus operandi and we've got to change this now. Most of the food at these events is hot garbage. It just is what it is. It's garbage pail kids and that sh*t. But this is changing. This is changing in some places because That's the thing about all this as this education is getting out. Just like with again 15 years ago, I got videos talking about these issues with water, 15 years. And now this year so many studies are coming out. Finding like, Oh, you know what? If you drink water out of these plastic bottles, it's going to show up in your heart. Oh, it's going to show up in your balls. Oh, it's going to show up in your brain.

All right. When you look, you're going to find it, but some places are changing. And actually I had a really interesting experience at Mamba Sports Academy. Yes, that Mamba. All right. Kobe Bryant, he had a lot of his daughter's tournaments and he partnered with this company, Mamba Sports Academy, before his passing. And at Sports Academy, they've got all the things, not only do they have some great basketball courts for the kids to play, but they've got, they don't got all that ridiculous ultra processed food as options. There are a couple of those things, but they've got like a high end like smoothie bar They've got minimally processed snacks. They've got the recovery room. They've got like the normatec boots and hyperbaric oxygen. They've got the training area where they got, you know, the sleds and all the new equipment and the kettlebells and steel clubs. They're really stacking conditions for these kids and also minding the nutrition, right? Healthier options for the kids as they're competing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love it. You know, this isn't the only place that's doing that. But here's the key is to simply plan your meals so that you can control the controllables. Plan your meals so that you can control the controllables. If you know that you're going to be having lunch in between, plan that out.

Make like the solar system and plan it out. Hope you caught that. Shout out to Big Sean. That's a Big Sean bar. Well, I'm Big Sean too! Just doing a little bit of planning. We know where we can strategically put in. Okay. So we're going to be at this place. You know, there's, we can go and get lunch, you know, fill in the blank. Or we can bring along our lunch if need be or oh this facility actually has some great options where we can sit down and grab you know lunch or you know after the tournament is over we can go to you know fill in the blank for dinner, right. Just being mindful of this and also this is potentially a right use of technology where we do have door dash and uber eats and all stuff there have been many times at these tournaments which i've been to so many. So many.

Where I've utilized like a Uber Eats or DoorDash to deliver some goodies my way. Like actually at this tournament in Las Vegas this past weekend, I found a great place that made blended drinks, you know, made different smoothies and things like that and they delivered it right to me. You know, it was just like 20 minutes to get the order delivered right to me. So we can utilize technology as well. And, but again, the most important thing is plan your meals so that you can control the controllables. You don't wanna find yourself in a pickle out here on these streets trying to sacrifice ourselves for our kids and end up feeding them hot garbage and feeding ourselves hot garbage if we're dedicated to our fitness.

Now, again, this is not a black or white. This is not a Michael Jackson thing, all right? Sometimes we make compromises. Sometimes you don't get the ideal thing. But a little bit of planning can go a long way as it's said by the iconic Person who's the subject of all about the benjamins, Benjamin Franklin. If you fail to plan you're planning to fail. All right now moving on. Number four on our list of 10 fitness secrets that every busy parent needs to know. Number four, Right there coupling along with our food number four is to always bring trusted travel snacks along. Always bring trusted travel snacks along with you. So you don't got to be out here on the streets buying from the dealer. All right. Bring your own. All right. B Y O S bring your own snacks. All right. If you keep healthy options on hand, you don't have to compromise your standards. Now there are a lot of fake healthy options out there as well.

All right. They're doing a little bait and switch. They're doing a little hokey pokey. They're doing a little David Blaine, a little Copperfield. I just came back from Vegas. So, you know, these things are top of mind, but forgive me. If you think about some of these "cereal bars" or, "protein bars". These are just glorified candy bars.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Let's look at something like a Clif Bar that you could find on most store shelves. The Clif Bar that has this kind of iconic, like, fitness, he's doing a fitness thing on the wrapper itself. It contains 16 grams of ADDED sugar. This is not the sugar that's naturally contained in the ingredients. ADDED sugar. Alright, now. Clif Bars are definitely better than a lot of other stuff. But when we know better, we can do better. We used to get Clif Bars all the time for my youngest son. That was one of his favorite, like, after school snacks when we pick him up. You know, gotta make sure even if I'm heading out the door to get my son, we'll just say when he was like five or six, you know, like, kindergarten age, preschool, all that kind of stuff. But before we left out, my wife would be like, Hey, you got Brayden's snack, right? Don't want to forget his snack because Brayden's going to be pissed. All right? Same thing, my wife, she's leaving out to get Brayden. Hey, babe, you got Brayden's snack, right? Cause we don't want the wrath of this little one who don't got his snack.

All right. So basically, and this is the term out there on the internet. I didn't make this up. We're his snack b*tches. All right. And it just, it is what it is. We work for him now. All right. But these cliff bars were a favorite. And again, it was just, it was better ingredients doing a little bit better. But now, and this is for my guy. He even asked for these. Now we're using real food ingredients that also importantly, we don't want to overlook this, has high quality protein, a nice fraction, about 10 grams of incredibly bioavailable protein in the form of 100 percent grass fed bone broth protein. Now, these superfood bars contain, again, 10 grams of protein and only about eight or nine net grams of carbohydrates.

And i'm talking about the superfood bars from paleo valley and i've got something extra special for you This is a hookup of all hookups Listen in. All right. This is a very limited time thing. And I'm going to share this with you. So be ready. This is really awesome. For a limited time Paleo valley is going to hook you up with a buy one, get one free box of their superfood bars. All right. Buy one, get one free. Bogo. Bogo. They've got four amazing flavors. The red velvet, lemon meringue, dark chocolate chip, apple cinnamon. For a limited time, buy one, get one free. You've got to use this exclusive link. Go to themodelhealthshow.com/superfoodbars. All right, all together is one word themodelhealthshow.com/superfoodbars. Again, this is a limited time. Buy one, get one free box of their superfood bars to try out. Definitely take advantage. Set your family up for success by stocking up on higher quality snacks. These superfood bars are gluten free, grain free, soy free, with no added sugar.

There's nothing else like it on the market. Definitely check them out. And also they've got some amazing grass fed meat sticks as well, and a bunch of different varieties. Just head over there, check them out. Go to themodelhealthshow.com/superfoodbars to take advantage of this very, very special limited time buy one, get one free offer for their boxes of superfood bars. All right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now making sure that we got our snacks on hand can come in a variety of different forms. It's just really easy with the superfood bars, with Grass fed meat sticks and things like that because they keep for a long time. They're easy to travel with but things that are more perishable like packing up and bringing along a container with some fruit. Bringing along some trail mix that you might make other little snacks. Maybe boil some, you know, some eggs hard boiled some eggs or something like that. There are so many different ways to slice and dice this to bring your snacks along so you're not reaching for the hot garbage that's out there at these different events and concession stands. So that's a major key alert.

All right. Now moving on to number five on our list. Number five on this list of 10 fitness secrets every busy parent needs to know. Number five is to fit some structured exercise in when you can. Now we've got a lot of responsibilities. You know, some people have multiple kids and they're doing different things. Like one kid is playing tennis. One kid is, you know, playing basketball and, you know, they're, they're also doing after school chess club, right? It's just like moving the kids around a lot of, you know, it can be very stressful and we need to acknowledge that. I was inspired to do this because I saw the impact that it was having on people around me and also myself.

All right, because we love our kids and we want to give our kids these advantages, but we cannot run ourselves into the ground in the process. And so fitting in some structured workouts is essential as well. Yes, we get into exercise and movement snacks, but let's do our best to schedule some workouts for ourselves and get creative. That's what this is all about because I wanted to share this with you because I just experienced this. I didn't get a workout in one of the days that I wanted to, which was the first day of that tournament. But here's what was interesting. The tournament was at a YMCA. Hey. a really nice one in Las Vegas.

And I noticed, okay, being that it's at a YMCA, I'm like, I know that they got a gym here too, right? So I go to the front desk. I'm like, Hey, you guys got the, you know, some weightlifting equipment and stuff like that. He's like, yeah, it's upstairs. So I trot myself upstairs. And because I'm a paid person at this event, I'm already, I already got the part time membership basically for the YMCA for that weekend. I had access to it. And so I was like, you know what, tomorrow in between the games, I'm going to utilize the YMCA because I'm already here and that's what I did. And it was just me and this couple was up there. Their kid was playing in the tournament and it was, you know, mom and dad and they were up there training.

Other than that, it was just us. So I had a whole gym to myself practically, but I got it in. I found a creative opportunity. To utilize my environment and to not stress myself out because now here's the rub I could have went to the hotel gym that morning. But the game was at 8 a.m. The first game, whoo! The first game on that Sunday was at 8 a.m.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Meaning that we needed to be there by 7:30 by the way. Plus the travel time plus getting everybody up and getting everybody together. I'd have to really cut into my sleep in order to go and get a workout in and to be dragging through the day. It just wasn't a smart thing to do wasn't efficient. So what was I going to do? What I was relenting to do prior to knowing about this ymca was hey! We'll do the tournament in the morning and then you know after the tournament's over in the afternoon I'll get this workout in. But when you're on the road, you got a lot of stuff going on and people are getting together and the kids are getting. You don't know what's going to happen.

I might get more curve balls thrown my way and make me sacrifice my workout. So I saw this opportunity and I took advantage. And then another day on this trip, however, the next day I utilized the hotel gym, which I don't know about you, but like going to a hotel gym, like one of the hotel gyms, some hotel gyms, just let's just call it what it is. They're pretty whack. All right. They might got like a treadmill and then, you know, maybe a little miniature universal gym, but some places have nice hotel gyms that a lot of people are using. Okay. And it's just weird walking into a hotel gym because you know like none of these people are regulars here But you feel like they already know what they're doing. Like they've already figured they already got their spot, you know, their little location. They're doing their thing. They're locked in. Maybe they're over there, you know at the dumbbells Maybe they're you know on the treadmill whatever the case might be. But it seems like they're more comfortable you walk in and you got a kind of establish yourself Like I know what I'm doing here too. I know I haven't been here and I don't know what to do. The layout is and you just kind of walk around aimlessly.

It just, it's just kind of awkward vibes. All right. But I did a great workout there. I did some, some legs. I did single leg Bulgarian split squats. I did some walking lunges. I found there was like a little pathway back behind the cardio equipment. Nobody was walking back there. So I was able to do some walking lunges. Just got some cool stuff in and I was sore for days. All right. I just did a few things, probably like seven sets, but they were very efficient. I knew what I was doing and I just use what was there. So be intentional about fitting in some structure. Workouts whenever you can, you know, some days the tournaments are later in the day, you know, if we're at home and we're just driving maybe an hour, hour and a half for a tournament and I can, you know, go to the gym beforehand, that's all good.

Sometimes I don't have that amount of time, you know, even with the travel time to get to the gym. So rather than hustling to the gym, I found, especially this past year, I've worked out outside at my home more than I ever have in my entire life. Now I've been doing this all the way back to when I was living in Ferguson, Missouri. All right. And I, you know, living in an apartment complex.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So I'd be that guy. I'm out there working on the lower parking lot. And I just needed a couple of dumbbells and I was out there doing, you know, lunges and, you know, squat presses and all this different stuff. I just use my environment to the best of my ability. It's always great if you could stack it, right? Stacking conditions, getting the fresh air, getting the sunlight, and being able to get in a high quality workout as well. And so just training at home and over the years I've gotten pieces of equipment. Over time a piece here piece there to now. I've got all these really cool things that keep me inspired and offer up a lot of creativity to utilize them.

So Please invest in yourself. Get yourself a couple of pieces of really durable and highly functional pieces of equipment like a steel mace, like a kettlebell. The very best place to find these items that I get all of my equipment, like my steel clubs, steel maces, my primal kettlebells, and even our yoga mats are coming from Onnit. They are the premier company who really brought a lot of these things to the market head over there. Check them out as on [it.com](https://www.onnit.com) for slash model. That's [ONNIT.com/model](https://www.onnit.com/model). They're going to 10 percent off all of their fitness equipment and also all their. Human performance supplements. So they do randomized clinical trials for some of their supplements.

So they're really really good about their quality and again, just picking up some of these different pieces of equipment. Invest in yourself. Get yourself a piece of equipment. Get yourself a steel mace. Now if you've never used a steel mace before it will humble you. You think you're a strong guy, you think you're a strong lady. Mmm, you might think that you're strong. You probably are strong. But we're not strong in all the ways, you know, we're introduced to new things. Oftentimes it's not just a muscular thing. This is a mobility thing. This is a neurological thing and being able to do certain movements and doing the infinity swing with the steel mace will humble you.

All right. So I recommend starting off with a smaller weight to get the gist of it. But also if you're listening to the audio versions of this podcast. Pop over to the YouTube because on the YouTube right now at this very moment, you're watching videos of me utilizing the steel mace outside and doing all kinds of cool, very, very remarkable exercises. So being able to train unconventional training, very, very efficient and effective workouts. [Onnit.com/model](https://www.onnit.com/model). But again, the key is to fit in some structured exercise. When you can be intentional about it because life is going to happen and if for some reason you got to pivot make sure that you do don't let too many days go by and start to neglect yourself. You've got to invest in yourself to make sure you show up better for everybody else.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now number six on our list. Now this one you got to stick with me on this one because this one is so important yet overlooked. Number six is to respect the poop. I said it. Yeah, respect the poop. It is so vitally important to ensure that our digestive health, our family's digestive health, our children, and their digestive health is on track. Literally this process of Digestion, assimilation and elimination is a cornerstone of human health.

We've talked about this on multiple episodes of the model health show with the likes of some of the very best award winning gastroenterologists in the world. Like Dr. Robin Chutkan, we'll put for you in the show notes, Dr. Will Bolsiewicz, the list goes on and on. Now, most recently Dr. Elisa Song shared with us, she's a board certified pediatrician. She shared a very sobering reality that after we stop changing our kids' diapers and potty training them, most of us as parents don't really talk about or are aware of our kids' poop habits anymore. We just kind of lose touch. And she, as a pediatrician, finds out these shocking stories about kids and their irregularities with their poop habits. And so, as we're running around and doing all this stuff for our kids, we want to make sure that we're respecting the poop. And a lot of time for everybody to use the bathroom.

All right in whatever way that looks. Because not only is this critical for the health of our microbiome, our digestive system, and the health of our colon, the list goes on and on. But it's just one of those great ways to start a day, all right. To get rid of the old and start the new day, all right. And so sometimes when we're running out the door Got this thing on Saturday got to get the kit in here.

No, no, no, no No. We start to hold it in and we become not just physically constipated, but emotionally and mentally constipated. All right, by not getting rid of the waste. And so, as busy parents who are dedicated to our fitness and the health of our children, we've got to respect the poop. Make sure that we're allotting time to use the bathroom. And also when I'm traveling, by the way. I've got a travel squatty potty, right? It folds up. It's just like literally full folds up into this very small rectangle and the legs kick out. So, you know, we've done an episode way back in the day on the biomechanics of pooping. As we evolved as a species, as humans have evolved, what we are designed to do and how conventional toilets can foil that process and cause a lot of physical problems and Digestive problems and we'll put that for you in the show notes as well. But these are little things that I've picked up along the way. And also just making sure that we're eating high quality food that supports healthy bowel movements, making sure that we're drinking plenty of high quality water, you know, so whatever that looks like for you. I'm a big fan of fruit, especially for kids. A variety of berries and things like that, you know, and also just whatever's in season.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So this could be mangoes. It could be kiwis. It's all really good for the health and support of our digestive function. But also for supporting our microbiome because when you're eating that blueberry you're eating that blueberries microbiome. You're getting that data that file transfer. When you're eating an avocado, you're eating that avocados microbiome as well. And this is really powerful. You're basically walking around like a very powerful walking talking human Napster. I've got all these files shared and I'm just saying this there's like I think there's a documentary coming out about Napster and all the files sharing how to change music. So that inspired that little Analogy, but just keep in mind these different inputs are going to support your digestive health. So Respect the poop. All right, you don't want to have all that ab work and then your stomach is protruding because you're full of sh*t, all right. Let's just call it what it is. We got to respect the poop, all right.

Now moving on number seven on this list of 10 fitness secrets that every busy parent needs to know number seven is to make your family's sleep a priority. You can run yourself right into the ground depriving yourself of sleep And I mean that literally. Literally, put yourself in the ground. Sleep deprivation can impair us so much that it makes everything in our lives harder to do. A study cited in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, analyzed the relative effects of sleep deprivation compared to consuming alcohol. All right, so they're looking at the relative effects of sleep deprivation compared to drinking alcohol.

The study recruited 39 subjects. These were 30 employees from the transportation industry and nine from the army. After just 17 to 19 hours without sleep, performance on some tests was equivalent or significantly worse than that of having a blood alcohol level of 0.05%, which is a blood alcohol level that can get you convicted of a DUI in some states. According to the researchers, response speeds were up to 50 percent slower for some of these tests. When the test subjects were sleep deprived, then at that level of blood alcohol, after longer periods without sleep performance, reach levels equivalent to the maximum alcohol dose given to the subjects, which was a blood alcohol of 0.1 percent where they are legally drunk again. So going on a little bit further with their sleep deprivation, put them into a place where they were performing as if they were legally drunk.

This is not a joke. We are putting ourselves and our families in jeopardy when we're not resting and taking care of ourselves. It impairs us significantly. Our reaction time, our ability to utilize our executive function. This was noted by researchers at UC Berkeley who did brain imaging, looking at the brain, the sleep deprived brain and a well rested brain and seeing there's a significant reduction in activity in the prefrontal cortex after just a short amount of sleep deprivation.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So that's the part of our brain responsible for executive decision making, for social control, for distinguishing between right and wrong. And that part of the brain goes cold where they also see a much more heightened activity of the amygdala, right? So this is more of the survival based aspect, more emotionally driven part of the brain and just being able to handle a lot of the stuff that we're facing.

We're not going to handle this healthfully, you know, just, there's a lot of stuff that's going on with our families, with our kids, and a lot of things for us to be able to manage. And we can do this. We can, we're so powerful because that's the power of a good parent. We're going to sacrifice ourselves. We're going to show up. We're going to do whatever it takes, but I'm telling you that you don't have to sacrifice yourself. Instead of sacrificing, you can actually look at the root of that word, which means to make it sacred. We can make these practices sacred. We can honor our family by taking good care of ourselves so that we can take good care of them so we can show up better for them so that we can be consistent for them.

Not to mention, if we're serious about our fitness, a lack of sleep will kick your metabolic health right in, as my grandmother called it, right in the crotch. A study published by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine tracked the impact of not getting enough sleep on visceral belly fat accumulation over a five year period. The study used CT scans and revealed that people who slept less than six hours per night had a 32 percent gain in visceral body fat compared to a 13 percent increase among those who slept six or seven hours per night. That's more than two times less. more belly fat accumulation from not getting enough sleep.

Now, what about for ourselves and our kiddos when it comes to performance, right? Being great at their sport for us being great. If we're taking part in a sport or some kind of fitness activity to be really good at it to be efficient to be our best selves. Well, researchers at Stanford University set out to examine the benefits of sleep on athletic performance. The test subjects were members of the men's varsity basketball team and the results they saw were absolutely shocking. After increasing the amount of sleep, that these athletes got with the average ending up being about eight and a half hours. The athletes ran significantly faster. Players shaved nearly one full second off of their sprint times. Their shooting improved dramatically. Players saw their free throw shooting and their three point shooting improved by about nine percent. They felt less fatigue.

They felt less daytime sleepiness and improved their reaction times as well. And to top it all off, something that's really important and special for our children, for us to support is that these athletes reported improvements in their mood. In their overall physical wellbeing, both during games and also during practices, they just felt overall better about themselves, about their performance and just overall better mood.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All right, so Getting high quality sleep is important for our entire family and thankfully we've got great resources to support our family's sleep hygiene. Right now, of course, I have an international best selling book called sleep smarter that's available everywhere that books are sold. That can be a resource for you.

But we've got so many incredible episodes of the model health show as well addressing very practical simple things that we can do to improve our sleep. And also we've got to just have this mental affirmation for ourselves and intention to make our sleep a priority.

Now, moving on because again if we're looking at fitness for ourselves as parents and performance for ourselves. We've got to be mindful as we're doing all this stuff to mind our sleep and our recovery. But also for that relaxation, we've got to beware of number eight and number eight is beware of the alcohol trick. To unwind from the stressors of dealing with our kids and oh, they can definitely stress us out. Many of us turn to alcohol to help us to relax. Now this is definitely one way to do it. All right, this is not to villainize that that is a thing. It's a way. But this is a big old but it's a big old but there are so many other ways for us to decompress, All right. There's so many other ways and also just to be mindful if this is about our fitness. Since alcohol is quickly burned as fuel in the body. Because you know if you think about utilizing carbohydrates, You know, fats and different macronutrients.

We can store these things in our tissues. Alcohol is unlike any other macronutrient and it is a macronutrient. Your body can run processes using alcohol, but your body's not storing this alcohol. So it takes a sneaky route to influencing our weight and our body fat. Researchers found that frequent alcohol consumption could lead to something referred to as fat sparing, where fatty acid oxidation is suppressed. As soon as alcohol comes into your system, your body stops burning body fat immediately. The alcohol is the priority substance to you. So this is why it's called fat sparing. In addition, research that was featured in the Journal Clinical Endocrinology found that even a moderate intake of alcohol can have an inhibitory effect on our body's major satiety hormone, leptin.

Now this manifests with several studies indicating that folks tend to eat more and to make poorer food choices when they're drinking. All right. Now, I don't know if this has ever happened to you, but it happens. All right. So just keep these things in mind. And also a joint study from the USDA and the NIH determined that increased alcohol consumption is directly associated with increased consumption of unhealthy foods. So again, it's affirmed right there in the data, but even a little too much alcohol can lead to extra body fat storage. And the amount depends on your genetics, of course, gender, age, gut bacteria, violence, current levels of body fat and several other factors that make up your own unique metabolic fingerprint.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So some people handle it better than others. But, just keeping in mind that this alcohol trick of relaxation might not be the ideal way for us to decompress from the stress and getting our kids where they need to be and just overall life stress. And I want to share one more study with you in this particular topic.

And this was from researchers at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. And they found that people who were already overweight and consuming alcohol had a much more difficult time losing weight than those who were non drinkers. The study also noted that people tend to underestimate their drinking, which is another important thing that might set off a light bulb for some people. All right. Be mindful, be aware of the alcohol trick. It is a very complex terrain when understanding all the different impacts that it has on the human body. But we're looking for this as a big part of our culture. It's a huge, huge part of our culture. And in particular in the context of relaxation of letting one's hair down.

It's Friday night, I just got paid. Shout out to Johnny Kemp. Just got paid Friday night money in my pocket. Now, moving on now again, by the way, that's just saying to be aware, be aware, be aware of the alcohol trick. We might lean towards that and we might find ourselves leaning towards it. More and more that tends to happen as well, because it's also very addictive as well. So just be mindful of that and utilize, which we're moving on to number nine here. Schedule some actual downtime and recovery. You are not a machine. All right. I know that John Connor was trying to warn us about AI and the machines, but you are not one of them. You are, you are a human being. You are a person. And there are certain laws of the body in this universe that we need to acknowledge and to support.

And so actual downtime and recovery time helps to rejuvenate and heal every aspect of your physiology. All right. Of course, from recovering from your workouts, but also recovering and healing your brain, recovering and healing your immune system recovering and healing every aspect of your health. We know for example that the human glymphatic system in the brain is ten times more active when you're asleep than when you are awake, and this is your brain's glorified immune system cleaning system to get rid of all this metabolic waste. To really make room for new growth and development. All right, so new Axons and dendrites and myelin and all this stuff all the magic happens when we are sleeping to heal the brain to make room. And also to start to develop aspects of our memory a lot of memory processing takes place during different acts of aspects of relaxation and of sleep in particular. But A lot of times when we're looking for some downtime, what do we do? We stimulate ourselves in a different way. We get onto our phones, we turn the TV on. Now these things can all be a part of relaxation. Yes, absolutely. But in particular, our phone is such a stimulating device that we start to produce chemicals associated with stimulation.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Our brain starts firing a different way because we're addicted to our devices. We're addicted to our phones. And so having some downtime. Instead of going right to our phones, let's give ourselves a little bit, just five minutes, just two. Start with two minutes. Just be still, close your eyes and take some deep breaths.

It can do wonders to shift your body even temporarily from that fight or flight sympathetic and start to nudge you into that parasympathetic rest and digest that is so powerful, so healing, so rejuvenating. You're probably going to find that you want a little bit more. You know, start with those two minutes, but you're probably going to find that it feels really good. And just the process of being still and closing your eyes, your biology starts to shift over. There starts to be some really notable changes with your neurochemistry, right? With your endocrine system as well. So, be still. Alright, take some time. Schedule some time for actual downtime and recovery. Alright, so having a little time for some meditation. I've been on it. Take some time. All right, with all this stuff going on, I was not, I've been meditating for so many years, but just this past year has been the toughest year of my life, really, you know, my since transforming my health and being in this field, this has been the most challenging year of my life.

And I'm just now adjusting and and healing, you know, so many challenges losing people, you know, different changes, you know, my family structure and it's just a lot and all the while being so passionate and motivated to serve and to support wellness of our families and our communities and just taking on that burden and really working and really taking time and contemplation to find. Stronger ways to do that because change is happening right now, thankfully, but we've got a lot more work to do. And so just adjusting to all that this past year has been tough. But having that meditation practice, I see the difference. Of course I knew that, of course, but just finding how we can start to just, Oh, well, you know, just take this thing out and do this thing instead for me is such a valuable tool.

And so also with that recovery and downtime, this could just be. You just do, take in some time, put your feet up. You know, kick back, get in a comfy chair, couch, put your feet up, maybe even take a nap, right? Maybe put the TV on, right? Kick back and watch a show, whatever the case might be. Yes, that can be a part of that recovering downtime as well. You know, getting yourself doing some mobility work, maybe scheduling yourself a massage or something like that, but decompress and be with your family, right? So a lot of this stuff we're doing for them. But we're not necessarily with them Right and being able to sit down and have meals together and communicate right keeping the phones out of these moments Right? And we know all the science around this Around how eating together impacts our health outcomes, which is highlighted in the eat smarter family cookbook so many studies on that. And, these are ways that we can help to fill our own cup, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: So tuning into something that is affirmative, you know, maybe, you know, putting on some inspiration, listening to music and dancing, you know, singing, doing some art, you know, journaling, whatever feels good to you. Getting out and playing, you know, doing things yourself that feel good, that rejuvenate you, that make you feel good.

You know, that's what it's really all about as well. You know, so schedule some actual downtime and recovery. All right. At least once a week. At least once a week, promise me, promise me, you're going to do that for yourself. All right. Cross your heart. All right. Promise me you deserve it. Last one on our list of 10 fitness secrets that every busy parent needs to know. Number 10 is to be present and enjoy the process. That's really at the end of the day, what this is all about. We're taking our kids to these different events and their sporting activities and all this stuff. Soak it in. Enjoy the magic of it. Don't miss it. Because you can't get these moments back. Find ways to make it memorable and fun in ways that fit your unique family.

Sometimes we go on these like mini trips, you know, maybe it's just an hour and a half drive for the tournament. You know, it's a multi day tournament and you know, we can turn around and drive back. But sometimes we'll just stay in the local area, get a hotel room and you know, my wife and I and my youngest son will just hang out together and stay at the hotel. And this is a time where we, you know, maybe we'll get room service and watch a movie together. And make our own little tradition, you know, this is actually where I'm really putting him on game on classic movies All right. So like the last one that we did was the lost boys All right Iconic. All right, these are man. I'm making sure that he's getting educated in the good stuff all right. So just keeping these things in mind that. We can find opportunities to make this process fun and enjoyable but not making the fun a freaking other job because sometimes we can find ourselves doing that. It depends on our own temperament.

We got to be mindful of that. You know? So on this recent Las Vegas trip, Las Vegas is a Mecca for so many events and experiences and concerts and other performances. You know, I saw billboards for everybody from Adele to Bruno Mars to Drew Hill, but I want to talk about the elephant in the room. I don't like, When they switch out the band members and don't tell us about it. All right, because the Drew Hill on the billboard was not the Drew Hill that I know. All right, you got Cisco, you got Nokia, then you got like Stanley. I don't know Stanley. You got, you know, Bob or whatever, like, I don't know these guys, so like you, you're just going to act like they're, we don't see, they're not the same, you know, so I don't know if anybody else is on that as well, if I want to see Jodeci, I want to see Jodeci, if I want to see, you know, uh, New Edition, give me New Edition, all right, I don't, I don't want a New Edition to New Edition, so, but what we did was, we found that there was this great Cirque du Soleil movie performance Michael Jackson won.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So we took my son to go see that it was epic. You know, it was just taking advantage of the moment, right? Just doing a little planning to add in something for this experience for all of us. But I'm telling you right now. Most importantly, we will make sure that we had plenty of downtime and recovery.

All right. So I hope that these tips are helpful for you and we've got to prioritize ourselves. We've got to take care of ourselves as we're taking care of others. Life can get hectic. There's a lot of stuff going on, especially if you have kids, it's a whole different reality. You know, we become Mom, we become dad. We become someone new. There's a new version of ourselves when these beautiful spirits show up in our arms and it is an incredible responsibility. But that responsibility, the foundation of that is being able to show up for them. It's being able to sustain their livelihood. It's being able to be our best for them.

So that's the mandate. I appreciate you so much for tuning into this episode. If you got a lot of value out of this, please share this out with your friends and family. You can share this on social media, of course, take a screenshot, share it out with other parents. And of course you can share this directly from the podcast app that you are listening on to share some inspiration. We've got some epic masterclasses and 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. That's where you can find all of the show notes.

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