



**EPISODE 820**

# **7 Daily Habits That Will Make You Smarter, Healthier, & More Successful**

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**SHAWN STEVENSON:** On this episode, we're going to dive into seven daily habits that you can use to make yourself smarter, healthier, and more successful. Let's dive right in. Habit number one is to get your nutritional security. Your body is literally made from the food that you eat, whether we're talking about your brain tissue, your heart tissue, the tissue that makes up your muscles. The list goes on and on every single part of you. When you look at yourself in the mirror, when you see other people, you're looking at the food that they ate and the food that you ate respectively. So what we're eating truly does matter, but there are two specific nutrients that I want you to target on a daily basis because they go above and beyond now.

Keep in mind that there's a vast array of nutrients that are critical for human health. But again, these are the two to target every single day with intention. And the first one is omega 3 fatty acids, DHA and EPA specifically. And you're going to find out why. Now, number one fats make up the majority of your brain tissue. Certain fats are particularly important because they're able to cross the blood brain barrier and to provide structure and signal transduction for your brain cells. Now, omega 3s, DHA and EPA are some of the most critical components of the fatty membranes that make up your neurons. They're so important for the structural integrity of the brain that a study published in the journal *Neurology* Using MRIs revealed that people consuming the lowest amount of EPA and DHA in their diets had accelerated brain shrinkage.

So their brains were losing volume because they were not giving their brains these critical nutrients. Now the researchers noted that the lack of EPA and DHA in the diet was particularly harmful to the memory center of the brain called the hippocampus. They found that people who are not hitting that baseline amount of DHA and EPA lost neurons at a rate that was equivalent to two additional years of abnormal aging. Essentially, they were accelerating the aging of their brains by not getting in these key nutrients. Now, does this shrinkage? Shrinkage is already not a fun word. Alright, keep that in mind. Now, does this shrinkage of the brain translate to any mental degeneration that we can actually point to? Well, a landmark study of 6,000 people published in *Archives of Neurology* found that people who consumed low quantities of these omega threes had a 70 percent greater risk of developing Alzheimer's.

Now, Alzheimer's is knocking on the door of being in the leading five causes of death in the United States. It's at epidemic proportions.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And this is one of those underlying reasons. If we're not providing your brain with the raw materials that build your brain cells, that build your neurons. You are, of course, going to experience accelerated degeneration. Now, what is this baseline amount? Well, according to these researchers, it's 2 grams per day. Alright, so, anything under that, you're putting yourself at risk. So, I want to implore you, every single day, target getting in 2 grams of Omega 3's DHA and EPA. Now, where are we going to find these critical omega 3s? Well, of course, we want to target food first. And that primary category that tends to come to people's minds is seafood. Now the question is, does the science affirm this? Well, a notable five year study that was published in the journal Neurology in 2016 found that adults who ate at least one seafood meal per week did, in fact, perform better on cognitive skills tests than people who ate less than one seafood meal per week.

So it does appear that seafood, being a primary source of DHA and EPA, really notable for is a valid source. So, but in particular, it's the fatty fish. So this is going to include things like mackerel, salmon, sardines, but even more so. If you look at the data and talk to neuroscientists, talk to people who are actually studying the brain, looking at the human brain. And one of those being Dr. Lisa Moscone out of NYU, who's been on the model health show multiple times, one of my favorite people, friends and colleagues. And she shared with me that the most dense source of these Omega threes, DHEA and EPA, is actually found not in the fish itself. But in fish eggs, so we're talking about caviar and fish roe salmon roe. Now if you're like me hearing about caviar and fish eggs It just was a little weird coming from the environment that I come from but when I looked at the data and understanding like now I can see why this is so valuable.

There tends to be a marked improvement in health for people that are eating caviar and salmon roe specifically for the endocrine system and the nervous system. And this is largely because they're so dense in these omega 3 fatty acids. And also another notable source is from egg yolks, in particular, if the chickies are getting in those omega 3s through their diet. All right, so egg yolks can be a remarkable source. Grass fed beef can be another source. If you're looking for the plant version of these omega 3s, it's not DHA and EPA. It is ALA. Now, our bodies can convert a small amount of the ALA that we eat to into DHA and EPA, but that conversion process. And for the average person, according to the data, it's somewhere around 75 percent is going to be lost in that conversion process, trying to process and turn ALA into the omega 3s that the brain actually needs.

So if we're looking at things like chia seeds, hemp seeds, walnuts, these are all great sources of plant based omega 3s. But again, These are not the form Omega 3s that directly translate that directly cross the blood brain barrier and nourish our brain cells. So we want to keep that in mind and ideally target real whole food based versions.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Of these omega 3s and also again people have different spaces with their ethics and their nutrition protocols. We want to keep that in mind. Obviously, there's a ton, there's a ton of scientific evidence on fish oil. But also a step down from that but not in quality. But just in the ethics, if people are trying to avoid fish consumption, for example, then we have krill oil, which is another really dense source of these omega 3s, very rich in astaxanthin. It's a microscopic shrimp. And then from there, there are algae oils, which if you are a fully plant based individual, I implore you, please make sure that you are consuming an algae oil on a regular basis, but circling back to fish oil, which is what most people are utilizing to get those Omega 3s.

There are some great fish oil companies out there, but keep in mind many fish oil companies are in fact putting out products that are rancid, that are highly processed. And those Omega 3s are damaged. And so where would you find a great source that is processed correctly and find these Omega 3s? Well, for myself and my family, we've been utilizing a wild caught salmon roe supplement that doesn't just have two Omega 3s. It actually has four. And one of them is really unique. And you would not get that in conventional processing. And it's made from 100 percent wild caught fish from fishermen who are dedicated to regenerative fishing practices. And what really puts it in a league of its own, it's not just the fact that it has these Omega threes, it has other cofactors like selenium, like vitamin D, like B vitamins, like choline that you simply won't find in a conventional omega 3 supplement. And I'm talking about the incredible wild caught fish roe from PaleoValley. Go to [PaleoValley.com/model](https://paleovalley.com/model). And they're going to hook you up with 15 percent off their amazing wild caught fish row.

And also just store wide, they've got some incredible grass fed meat sticks. They've got some incredible superfood bars that are made of real. Nutrient dense foods, no binders and fillers and artificial ingredients and other remarkable supplements as well. Again, done the right way, all organic, no binders, fillers or nefarious things. Just the very best supplements that you're going to find and real food based snacks for yourself and your family. That's P A L E O V A L L E Y.com/model for 15 percent off. So definitely check them out.

So that's number one of these two primary nutrients that I want you to target every single day to make yourself smarter, healthier, and more successful. We've got to make sure that our brain is on point. And the second category of nutrients for you to target. So number one was omega 3s specifically DHA and EPA.

Number two, is protein. Now, protein is an all encompassing term that tends to block people from the opportunity to really understand what it means and what it does for the human body. Most people are hazily aware that protein is composed of amino acids and that those amino acids are used to build and repair your body's tissues, your muscles, your skin, your bones, your internal organs.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now, let's take a moment to truly appreciate this because your body doesn't exist without proteins. You'd just be a pot of minerals and fat. All right, you wouldn't even have any structure. You wouldn't be able to put yourself together. In many ways, protein really is the building blocks of the human body. So we hear about you need to get your protein in. There's a reason for that. It's not just about these kinds of metabolic effects as far as body composition and things like that building muscle. No, no, no. There's so many aspects of your body that if you don't have protein, adequate amounts of protein, you simply can't build things.

Now what are some of those other things that I want you to be aware of and why this matters so much? Well, Protein, yes, to build tissues, but also protein provides fuel for energy to support your immune system function, to regulate vital processes in your body, like again, your metabolic health, growth, digestion, but protein is also utilized. Amino acids are also utilized to build your immune system cells. All right, so keeping you alive, if you don't have an immune system or a high functioning, intelligent immune system, we have the innate and adaptive immune system. Of course, but these immune cells are largely built from proteins. If you don't have these things available, your body's just going to try to do a patchwork job on making things.

And if you're deficient, this would likely translate to an immune deficiency. Now, it's not just our immune cells. Our hormones as well. Many of our primary hormones like insulin, oxytocin, adrenaline. You need adrenaline. All right, not just for this situation, Keanu Reeves situations. All right, you need adrenaline just to get up and get going to exercise. If there is something that you need to really have a lot of energy for. You need that. You gotta have that. Also, protein is needed to build thyroxine hormone as well. So, your thyroid hormone that controls the metabolism of all your cells. Alright, pretty important. So again, it's not just you need to eat enough protein.

How to get your protein in for vanity reasons. This is about the functioning of your metabolism overall. Also, protein is needed. And by the way, there are specific peptide proteins. But protein is needed to make HGH. I can go on and on and on. You need proteins to do all these different things. Build immune cells, build hormones, build your tissues. This isn't just, hey, you got to make sure to get your protein in. No, truly, this is critical to your health and performance every single day. One other thing to lay it on real thick. Protein is also needed to build your circadian clock cells. All right. So we know now that the circadian clocks within ourselves, these are functional genes and proteins that control the function of all of your other genes and proteins. So getting in adequate amounts of protein is truly an epigenetic controller. It is a circadian regulator, all right. So your body can just be in sync and when to produce all the things that you want your body to produce at the right times.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So again, just laying it on thick here, but circling back to the practical applications with protein. This is an all around player nutritionally that can help you to manage your blood glucose, burn body fat, and even help to regulate your appetite. Researchers at the University of Kansas Medical Center used fMRIs and discovered that adding in more protein, specifically for your first meal of the day, literally decreases the signals in the brain that stimulate appetite and lead to overeating. That's special. Alright? And this isn't just, again, protein, to get enough protein to build your muscles. We need, yes, we want that. But also we need protein to regulate our appetite, to build hormones that regulate our appetite, to build our immune cells, to build our heart. You don't have a heart beating in your chest without protein.

You don't have muscles to move you throughout the world without protein. All right. It is that important. You don't have bones to do bone things. All right. If you don't have adequate amounts of protein. But here is the curve ball with this whole situation. There is a popular narrative that, especially here in the United States, we're eating too much protein.

We're already eating too much. And this is what's largely contributing. To our epidemics of cardio metabolic issues. Now is this actually the case? Is this what the data says? Well research conducted by the U.S. military incited in their peer reviewed journal of nutrition Uncovered that despite the generally accepted belief that protein intake above the RDA increases cardiometabolic risk. Higher protein diets are associated with lower bmi lower levels of visceral fat and improved cholesterol profile compared to protein intakes at RDA levels. Their data took into account an array of other confounding factors, including age, sex, carbohydrate intake, and physical activity. And the scientists found that a higher ratio of protein can actually lower your risk of developing cardiometabolic diseases. Mm, mm. Popular narrative, but. What does reality say?

Now we're going to talk more about what is really contributing to our epidemics of cardiometabolic disease and dysfunction, but RDA, recommended daily allowance, recommended. Who's recommending? You should think about that a little bit, but I want you to keep in mind that the RDA is currently 0.4 grams of protein for each pound of body weight that you have. Now with this said, the RDAs are essentially assessing what the average person needs in order to avoid a deficiency. All right. Not what is optimal for human health and functioning. This is so you don't start to fall apart. All right. And this is for the average person. And the average person in our society is messed up! Messed up.

We come from that. But there is a better way. And part of that is having a reorientation with our protein intake.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now the international society of sports nutrition, daily protein recommendation is 0.9 grams of protein per pound of body weight and leading experts like Dr. Gabrielle Lyon, who we've had here on the Model Health Show, really good friend and colleague, is one gram per pound of ideal body weight. So the weight that you want to be, Alright, so if you're 200 lbs and you want to be 150 lbs or 170 lbs, targeting that amount of protein. Now, please keep this in mind, these are just still recommended amounts. This is not based on you as a unique individual and your specific lifestyle, your unique metabolic fingerprint, your unique microbial fingerprint and your ability to digest and assimilate nutrients. And so many other factors, you know, your activity levels, your training. Your protein intake is going to be unique to you. So these are just some barometers and chances are for the average person, they're not getting in enough high quality. Because what people view as protein, that idea of what protein is, is as diverse as Dennis Rodman's hairstyles.

All right. Now I just was rewatching the *Last Dance*. So that's where I was just popping in my head. But there's a lot of ideas on what that looks like. All right, because KFC has got protein. All right, they got protein. They got the Kentucky Fried Chicken. All right, but also there is Wild Caught Salmon. All right, both are protein. One is much higher quality than the other, all right. So keep that in mind, we want to target not just the quantity, but the quality of protein. So that was number one on our list of these seven daily habits to make you smarter, healthier, and more successful. Now you can start to see how this can lean towards.

Our success and our performance and how we're showing up in our lives, how we're showing up with our families, how we're showing up in our work. And this is really fueled again by these principles, these daily habits. Now we're going to move on to number two here on this list of daily habits. And number two is to get your move on. In our culture exercise is seen as a means to make physical adaptations To look fitter, to lose fat and to change our body composition. But these things are really just a side effect of what exercise actually does.

Yes, we get those things, but they are again, a side effect of what exercise actually does. Now, I want to ask you a question. If we're talking about being smarter, if we're talking about being healthier, if we're talking about showing up and performing at our best. What is the number one thing that's derailing our ability to show up? In particular, we just talk about productivity and work performance in the average person's life today. What's the number one thing that's blocking us from that? The number one thing, according to the National Institutes of Mental Health, the number one thing today is depression. Depression is now the leading cause of absenteeism in the United States. Now the question is, does movement, does exercise provide a science backed defense? Well, a very, very recent study, and this is a meta analysis published in the BMJ and it included 1039 randomized controlled trials and nearly 130,000 participants.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And it revealed that physical activity is 1.5 times more effective at reducing mild to moderate symptoms of depression, psychological stress and anxiety than medication or psychotherapy. Now, keep in mind, this is not to negate the value in specific context when medication is applicable and effective, or psychotherapy is applicable and effective. All of these things are tools that can be utilized today with an intelligent, caring practitioner providing those things. But the data, the largest amount of data ever compiled looking at this subject matter has found that exercise simply works better. It simply works better and that's okay. Again, this is looking at depression. This is looking at psychological stress. Who doesn't have the psychological stress? That sound a little bit like Theo, psychological stress, the pudding pop, right?

Who doesn't have that exercise? It helps us. And we know it does. Anxiety. This is what it's really about. Get your move on daily. We're talking about seven daily habits to help you to be smarter, healthier, and more successful. We've got to move our bodies. Now, how does it work? This is the benefit of the Model Health Show. Cause we, we, we peel back the layers. All right. We peek behind the curtain. All right. What's going on? The Wizard of Oz boy, who's back there. Shout out to Wizard of Oz. There's a, there's a prequel. What's with the prequels? There's so many prequels of everything and they keep getting us. Now the prequel we got the House of Dragons, that prequels out here on the streets.

It's hot. It's got people tripping. All right. In the Game of Thrones itself, by the way, it's a little assessment. We were all like, you know, kind of just grossed out with the Lannisters, the brother and sister hooking up. Yes. I'm sorry if I'm spoiling it. I'm sorry, spoiler. I should have said spoiler alert first. All right, just like what that's what is this? Put the with The House of Dragons. Spoiler alert! We got the uncle and the niece and we're like with you. Come on. We want them to be, stay together. It's just weird. They messing with our minds. All right. But shout out to the prequels. That was super weird anyways, but we got prequels on prequels. Here on the model health show, we're taking a peek behind the curtain. Allah, the Wizard of Oz and talking about, okay. We see this result, but why what's happening behind the scenes, making this phenomenon take place. Now, when it comes to exercise and movement, reducing the symptoms of depression, psychological stress, and anxiety. One of the primary reasons is that your muscles are themselves an endocrine organ that is producing hormones, that is storing hormones that affect our mood and behavior.

It is a reservoir that we can build that contains anti aging, if we want to use that term, mood improving compounds that help to make us more resilient in the face of stress. And so this is something that we can proactively do and build if we're talking about building muscle and just the activity of using our muscles in general.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Also when we're using our muscles, part of that stress reducing equation is that it triggers the release of endorphins and other neurotransmitters and hormones associated with improvements in our mood. So it increases our resilience because exercise, especially more strenuous versions of exercise, is a hormetic stressor, right?

So this is a category of stressors that build us back stronger, that help us to become more resilient. This is paying attention to the fact that if we're able to heal, adapt from that stress, because it's not just about strenuous exercise all the time, all the time, all the time. It's the input, then the recovery and we come back better. Also, exercise is well noted, Health psychologist Kelly McGonigal shared here in the Model Health Show, and it's one of the most viral things we've ever shared. I mean, it's just about a hundred million views now on that clip, that we shared out there on the interwebs, but the fact that exercise sensitizes our brains to more pleasure. So it makes the brain more sensitive. to feel good things, things that make us feel better, healthier inputs, because our brain can become sensitized to sadness, to depression, to looking for things that make us feel bad, right? It's just gets conditioned to do that. So exercise does the opposite.

It's really remarkable. Now, what else is exercise doing here? Well, researchers at NYU, including my amazing friend and colleague, Dr. Wendy Suzuki, have affirmed that exercise actually stimulates the creation of new neurons in the hippocampus. So this is the memory center of our brains. This is a brain region that has huge roles in learning and memory and exercise, stimulates the creation and maintenance of these cells. So what does this translate to in the real world? Well, one study looking at students who exercise before class found that it improved their test scores by 17%. Another study looking at employees who exercise regularly found that they're 15 percent more efficient than those who do not regularly exercise.

Meaning that an employee who is active only needs 42.5 hours in a week to do what the other person, the average person who's not physically active does in 50 hours. So we're literally saving time or creating more time for ourselves by being more efficient. Now a randomized controlled trial published in the archives of internal medicine found that resistance training promotes cognitive and functional brain plasticity. While a Stanford study found that walking improves brain activity. They found that walking increased creative inspiration by an average of 60 percent versus sitting. Now, this effect was seen anywhere between 5 and 16 minutes of walking. And this enhancement, this ability to think more creatively was specifically what they noted to be divergent thinking. So being able to think outside the box, coming up with new solutions and new ways of looking at things. All right, so this is what exercise is all about. It's about improving and supporting the health of our brain, our mental health, and of course, our metabolic health overall.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So number two here on this list of these daily activities is to get your move on, all right. This is going to spill over into every single area of your life. If we're making sure that we're being physically active and as the data indicates, A couple of days of strength training each week, you know, this could be anywhere from two to six, depending on your goals and your particular workout format. I'd highly recommend if you're not acclimated to strength training, get yourself a trainer, like just maybe a session or two, and just learn some of the basics on what you can do. There's a bunch of stuff that you could do at home. And also that walking recommendation, In that particular study, just looking at that boost of creative inspiration, five to 16 minutes.

But you know, there's these different step count goals that people have. The bare minimum, according to the data is 4, 000 steps a day, bare minimum, just for, again, we're looking at the kind of the RDA amount, like just not to hit a deficiency. But once we get to 8, 000 steps a day, 10, 000 steps a day. We're really getting into some premium territory with more and more benefits getting unlocked. So make sure that we're walking every single day, daily. Make sure that you are getting some walk time in. You can make that time really count by stacking that walk. This could be a time for you to do some podcast listening to catch up with friends and family to have some walking meditation time. You know, just some time just to, to have some free range thinking. All right, people want free range food, but to have some time to let your brain be free range and just to, just to be, just to be present. So moving on, we're at number three on our list of these seven daily habits that will make you smarter, healthier, and more successful.

Number three is to sidestep or stiff arm. I pictured the Heisman trophy, stiff arm, highly refined sugar. To keep your body and your brain in a state of high performance. This is the number one thing to minimize in our modern culture. Let's start with the impact on your brain. Even though your brain accounts for only about 2 percent of your body's mass, your brain is gobbling up about 20 percent of your daily caloric intake. It is a hungry, hungry organ. Now this is because your brain has billions of neurons. and trillions of synaptic connections. There's a lot going on upstairs and there's an immense amount of data and energy being exchanged, making it our body's most energy dependent organ. Researchers at Harvard noted that your brain will gladly confiscate roughly half of the sugar energy that you consume in any given meal.

When it gets the opportunity, it's going to gobble it up. And this is because through evolution, sugar was more at a premium. It was not something that you come across as easily as you do today. The landscape of sugar consumption has changed dramatically. In the 1700s, the average Westerner consumed about four to six pounds of added sugar each year.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Whereas that number today, and this is according to the journal advances in nutrition, the average American now consumes 80 pounds of added sugar each year. This is sugar that is added to the foods, the already existing sugar contained within those foods. So it is a dramatic change very, very quickly. Now, what happens when all that sugar is driven into the brain at one time? Well, we develop as we do with our fat cells, as we do with other organs in the body, we develop insulin resistance in the brain. And this is one of the hallmarks seen with Alzheimer's and dementia. In a study published in the journal Neuroscience uncovered that a diet high in added sugar reduces levels of brain derived neurotrophic factor in the hippocampus.

Specifically, the part of our brain deeply involved in memory and learning. Now brain derived neurotrophic factor or BDNF is involved in memory formation, growth and differentiation of our nerve cells and a whole lot more. And low levels of BDNF are associated with dementia, Alzheimer's and depression. Now there's also a startling connection between sugar consumption, our growing waistline as a society through sugar consumption, and the size of our brain itself. A recent study published in the journal Neurology sought to find out the connection between our waist size and the size of our brain. The researchers found that as the size of our waist gets bigger, the size of our brain tends to shrink, specifically the gray matter of our brains, which is responsible for things like muscle control, self control, sensory perception, and many other factors.

And so, again, this is not about a vanity thing. This is about making sure that we're not going overboard and we're getting ourselves to a place where our brain is being hindered because of our interaction with sugar in our modern environment. All right, now, of course, there are other factors that are influencing, environmental factors and psychological factors influencing our struggles today with obesity. But it is definitely our relationship with sugar is a big driving force. And so if we can sidestep, if we can stiff arm, especially added sugar every day, do our best to just get that away from me. Just give it a little stiff arm. Get that, get, get, get up off of me. All right, with the sugar. Now, this is coming from, let me, let me remind you. All right, let me give you an average day when I was 20.

For example, let me give you an average day. Wake up, hot cakes and sausage from McDonald's. All right, lunchtime, we get the Chinese food. You know, Ferguson, Missouri got some fire Chinese food, not going to eat there unless they got bulletproof glass. Alright, we get the whole order of pork fried rice, and a grape soda, grape vest, all the, yeah, whatever, okay? I'm doing it. Alright, dinner time, family can uh, SpaghettiOs maybe? Alright, a box of Velveeta shells and cheese maybe? You know, with a little, I don't know, little, little this, little that, little, little fish sticks? Alright, all of this is equating to an enormous amount of sugar. We're not even talking about the Hawaiian punch that I'm definitely sipping on through the day.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** I am, I was a chemist making Kool Aid. All right. So all of that abnormal amount of shit, but I didn't know it was just what was instilled in me in my environment. And I had no idea that that was impacting my health so deeply. And if you know my story, my body broke down dramatically. I was diagnosed with an advanced aging disease, arthritis of my spine, disc degeneration, spinal degeneration. I broke my hip at track practice as a teenager. That doesn't make sense, but it's because of that abnormal exposure to sugar. So I know about that life.

Many of us do, but we've got to take back our bodies and our minds, you know, and find this is the key though. We can't just be like, don't have that bowl of cereal. Don't even get me started on this. I had cereal every night. I almost forgot every night, every night. All right. What would that look like? Usually honey nut Cheerios. All right. Me and the B were family. All right. Not like biological, you know. Familial brother, but like, you know how it's like your auntie's kids, right? He was like me and the B was like, that's my little cousin. All right. And he had that good cereal. So I know what that life is like, and we cannot pull away, take away somebody's joy and replace it with stop eating your honey nut Cheerios.

Here you go, start chugging this wheat grass. All right. Take away your cereal. Here's a nice plate of chicken breast, dry chicken breast for you to enjoy. This is going to get you to that. We have to replace these things with things of equal or greater value, while providing these other environmental inputs. So we're not so consumed because many of us were addicted to this sugar exposure. And so we've got to have environmental things to support that change. Right? So that's why the movement matters. That's why getting our nutritional security matters. And that's why having supportive people and supportive education in our lives matters.

So again we want to be mindful of our interaction with sugar in particular. Here's the action step: Avoid liquid sugar. This is the thing seen in the data to be most detrimental to human health. We're able to consume such a dangerous amount of sugar at one time. So skipping on the sodas, skipping on the so called fruit juices that have like 0 percent juice or even, and I'm, this is just to be mindful of this, even juice itself, even if it's a hundred percent pasteurized orange juice, for example.

Now this will come along with some vitamins and minerals that the Vest Soda doesn't have. Let's keep this in mind. All right. They're not the same. But at the same time all of that sugar that you can consume at once with a tall glass of orange juice. Which I was doing most days as well can really throw off our insulin sensitivity and impact our liver function get shuttled to our brain and disrupt our cognitive function as well. So avoid liquid sugar and just don't what the unicorn frappuccinos and all this. I don't even know what they got out here.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Now, you know what that's the, just don't all right I think they got a grimace shake All right. Just don't shamrock shake. Why? Just don't. All right. Be, be weary, especially those coffee like beverages that people get hooked on out here. They start their days with this stuff. And this is one of the other takeaways is especially for that first meal of the day, making sure that it is a meal that is high in protein as the data indicates, it sets you up for a much better day. High in protein and low specifically in added sugar. This doesn't mean don't have a little fruit, little, little berries, little kiwi. All right. There's no, no talking about that little melon. That's fine. But once we get crazy with the pancakes and the French toast and all that stuff to start the day. I'd rather see you do breakfast for dinner and I'm a fan.

Okay. But to start your day. Let's avoid that. Now if you're like a lot of people and you're just like, I need that sugar to help to get me through the day. There are so many better options. Obviously we've got the 24 hour energies out there, right? Those kind of, that domain of, you know, all those artificial ingredients. We've got folks who are going ham on a variety of coffee beverages. But if you're looking for a clean, sustainable energy that is backed by science, a recent study published in the Journal of Physiology found some remarkable results on improving brain activity and cognitive function. This was a randomized double blind placebo control crossover study, and it found a near 10 percent improvement in cognitive function very quickly after utilizing a specific form of ketones.

Now, where do you find these remarkable ketones? There's one source of ketones that stands head and shoulders above the rest and that's Ketone IQ. Go to [ketoneIQ.com/model](https://ketoneIQ.com/model) right now, and you're going to receive number one, 30 percent off your first subscription order. But number two, this is new. Listen, this is new. You're going to receive a free six pack of ketone IQ as another bonus. Now this is new. Take advantage of this right now. Here's the coolest part. They have a 60 day money back guarantee. If you don't notice the difference in your energy, in your cognitive performance, you will receive a full refund. They truly do stand behind it. So all you have is better energy to gain and nothing to lose. So head over there, check them out. [KetoneIQ.com/model](https://ketoneIQ.com/model) 30 percent off your first subscription order. Plus a bonus six pack of ketone IQ.

All right, now we're going to move on to number four on our list of seven daily habits that will make you smarter, healthier, and more successful. Number four in our world today, we had to talk about this. Number four is to be mindful of social media. A recent study conducted by the University of Copenhagen found that many people suffer from what they dub as Facebook envy. With people who abstain from using this popular social media site reporting that they feel significantly more satisfied with their lives again after taking time away from Facebook.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Another study published in the American journal of Epidemiology assessed over 5,000 test subjects and found that overall regular use of social media had a negative impact on an individual's health well being. All yet another study carried out at the University of Pennsylvania and published in the Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology found that using social media less often than you normally would leads to significant decreases in both depression and loneliness, simply limiting the time that we're on.

Not saying got admitted, but just reducing the time that we're on these things, we immediately start feeling better. Now, what's going on here when we're utilizing social media and why do we feel so much better when we're not using it as often? Well, there is a tremendous amount of neurochemistry involved when we're utilizing these social media apps in particular, and we've had some of the leading experts in the world. And so we'll put that episode for you with Adam Alter, New York Times bestselling author, and a couple of other great resources on this topic of social media for you in the show notes. So this is something we need to get educated on. It's been a part of our lives for such a short time. If you've been on the planet for, you know, a few decades. But kids that are born in the more recent generations are born into it.

Like we know what it's like to not have access to these things and just again, have much more free range thinking time to just be. And so what these researchers are sharing with us is that there are brilliant engineers who are crafting these social media Apps and just many of the features of the internet in general to keep us coming back for more, to keep us addicted. They do not want you to leave the app. Now, with this being said, there are many different psychological hooks that are being used and making it a little bit like a game or a casino experience. Because there's a dopamine factor where dopamine is this kind of seeking behavior driving us to seek reward.

And dopamine is heavily involved in social media apps. And it's a wonderful thing that we have dopamine to drive us to discover, to adventure in life. All right. That's why we have dopamine. It was long before the advent of social media, but to, to seek out, to grow. But if we don't find something. We tend to give up and so we want that reward. We want to eventually find something and there's this powerful Feedback loop that takes place because every time you swipe on social media you find something and your brain says keep looking, there's more. And you find something so you seek, find, seek, find, seek, find. Before you know it, you find yourself in that internet black hole where time disappears. And you might have just gone on your app, just check a couple things, and next thing you know, you've scrolled through 20, 30, 50, 100, a couple hundred different things, alright? You don't have to put your hand up and admit it, but it happens out here, okay?



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And it's not something that, again, this is some kind of human failing. This is designed to make you do that. And it happens to millions of people every day. So, if we're going to be smarter, if we're going to be healthier, if we're going to be more successful, we've got to be mindful of our interaction with social media because it's not that you're using these apps. These apps are using you. Absolutely. You are the human capital. All right. So how do we do this? Well, we could do a couple of simple housekeeping strategies, which is turning off the notification for these various apps that, you know, if somebody likes your posts or you got a DM or somebody posted, you don't have to have those things popping up on your phone and sending you a notification.

Pulling you back, it's like, again, throwing that hook out and you're just a big old human fish. Mermaid mermaid, whatever. All right, and you're just getting pulled right back into that matrix. So turning off those notifications if you don't need them, take them off your phone, turn off. And many of these apps, they start getting aggressive like they Instagram for a time period recently. They were just like constantly putting that out there. Like hey, you don't have your notifications. You don't want to miss nothing. We miss you and just kept putting it up there and I could easily, you could ask them to leave and hit the button to turn the notifications on. All right. So turning off those notifications, also setting aside time each and every day for some undistracted deep work, or undistracted deep family time.

If you come to my house, you're likely going to find that my phone is not near me. All right, if I'm hanging out in the living room with my family, for example, you'll probably find my phone is on the kitchen counter, just keeping it at a distance. Because even if it's by you, if you see that bad boy and you've had that black hole internet, getting pulled in your brain is constantly, if it sees it, and this several studies have indicated this, that just the sight of your phone pulls your attention away from what you're supposed to be focused on. Because your brain knows there's so many goodies in there.

All right, so keeping your phone at a distance when you're having your undistracted deep work. So if you really want to focus on getting some work done I keep my phone when I walk into my office, my phone goes on the bookshelf behind me. That's several feet behind me. And I just, I don't have it around. If I do, if I have it around I tend to pick it up. They're called just checks, right? I might just pick it up. I'm just looking at the time, but oh Text me. And what the data indicates is we have something called a switching cost or this kind of mental residue where when we are distracted with this other thing, it takes us time to get back focused and in flow with what we should have been focusing on and wanting to be focused on in the first place. So if you can keep your phone away from you, make it a habit to keep it at a little bit of a distance so that you're not engaged in those just checks.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Because right now, some of the newest data is pointing to the people picking up their phone, you know, a couple hundred times a day. So it is like it is getting crazy. Also, and this is my biggest recommendation is to set aside some phone free time first thing in the morning and the last thing in the evening. So rather than going right towards your phone in the morning and by the way, you could set things off so that's, which is great because these phone companies know and I think they knew some lawsuits were looming like My phone is making me, you know, it's got me fired from work, right?

It's just, it's all these different psychological ploys in the phone. So now they have these capabilities or where you could put your phone on, do not disturb. And only certain people can have access to you, all this kind of stuff. All right. So there's different ways to go about that. So you're not picking up your phone again, seeing all these messages and notifications first thing in the morning. If you're using your phone as an alarm clock, and that's your excuse. Because it's an excuse. People are like, well, my phone is my alarm clock. That's why, you know, I turn off the alarm clock in the morning. You can get an alarm clock. They're still out here. The innovations and alarm clocks are crazy.

Alarm clocks now because a lot of people don't even use them. The alarm class now can play your favorite music. Obviously you could play your favorite motivational quotes and phrases and give you a little, a little nudge, a little personal message. Your alarm clock could tell you a joke to start the day. It's crazy. You know what these innovations have done but we don't necessarily need to have like. For example, there is Alexa out there And by the way, I'm sorry, if anybody's turned on but I try to say it really good of Alexa out there, cuz she'd be listening or he'd be listening. Whatever Alexis, whatever. All right now I don't know if you knew this by the way, I just found this out this week like a couple of days ago. My son was trying to be quiet about something, you know, I think Maybe my wife was on a call and so he whispered to Alexa something, right? So it was like, Alexa, turn on the alarm for, you know, 20 minutes.

And Alexa whispered back. Alexa was like, alarm set for 10 minutes. Like he whispered, Alexa whispered back. It's cray cray. So maybe it's just my luddite behavior of like all this technology is so new and all the things that just enthralls me. It's so impressive. Like this stuff blows me away when I see it, but um, just keep in mind We don't have to have our phone right by us. Especially when we're going to bed, especially first thing in the morning. But if you do, you could set it on certain processes or, you know, airplane mode or whatever the case might be so that you don't get flooded with things that pull you into the internet. All right. So I have some phone free time so that you can choose what you do for you to start the day. Same thing before bed. And also this gets us from staring at a screen potentially as well to help improve our sleep quality. So keep in mind, this is not a mission against social media. It's a potentially wonderful tool.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** For education, for connection, for entertainment. It exists and it's not going anywhere, but we need to put it in a proper place in our lives and take back control of our own minds and have a better relationship with social media and with our phones in general. So if we're going to be our very best, if we're going to be our smartest, healthiest, most successful version of ourselves, we cannot let these apps use us as human capital. We want to use them when we want to, when we choose to, and that comes with more intention. All right. So moving on to number five on this list of seven daily habits that will make you smarter, healthier, and more successful. Number five is to invest in real connections.

All right. So again, this is getting offline connecting in the real world. Now connecting online. Of course, this can help to supplement and support our relationships, but we need that real world human connection. And we had on the director of the longest running human study on longevity. It's about an 80 year study that has been going on right now. He's the fourth director looking at what are the qualities, what are the actions, what are the conditions that lead to longer lifespans. And their research indicated that it is the quality of our relationships that have the biggest impact on how long we're going to live. It is our relationships that are influencing what we're eating, influencing our sleep, influencing our exercise and movement practices.

It is an epi life controller influencing so many different things about our reality, right? And also just that connection. And let's dig in a little bit on why that is, especially in the real world. Keep in mind, the hippocampus, the memory center of the human brain, is particularly vulnerable to stress. And a study published in Scientific Reports found that oxytocin protects hippocampal memory and plasticity. Oxytocin, often referred to as the cuddle hormone or sometimes the love hormone, promotes bonding between people and is released when you're in close connection with your friends and family. This is a superpower that we can activate when we are investing in real connections.

Another study published in the journal of Regulatory Peptides, revealed that oxytocin has a calming effect on the brain and nervous system, helping to reduce cortisol levels and even promote better sleep. So keep this in mind, invest in real connections, spend some time in the real world with your friends and family as much as you can. And by the way, a little hack here, which shouldn't be even given that label, but a 20 second hug, a 20 second hug has been found to provide a nice boost of oxytocin. Now you don't got to sit up there and count. Come here baby. One, two. All right, you don't got to do that. All right, just be there present in the hug and time is just gonna go by. And so give yourself permission because this has such a remarkable impact on every area of our lives. Give yourself permission to spend time with people that make you feel good, that you truly love and that you have real connections with.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** So whatever that looks like, this could be spending some time and setting aside time, scheduling time to have workouts with your friends or your significant other or your kids. I've been working out with my son, my youngest son, a lot. The past couple of weeks, this could be, of course, having meals together. You know, this could be going on walks together. This could be just hanging out, playing some games together. Games are still out here. So whatever that looks like for you, giving yourself permission to do that, because chances are, these are the things that really make life worth living.

Number six on our list of seven daily habits that will make you smarter, healthier, and more successful. Number six is to sleep like you're getting paid for it. Because in many ways, that quality sleep is paying you back huge dividends. A brain imaging study that was conducted by researchers at UC Berkeley, looking at the sleep deprived brain and the well rested brain, found that there is a direct, swift, reduction in brain activity in the prefrontal cortex. The part of the brain that is most responsible for things like social control, for distinguishing between right and wrong, for decision making, for impulse control, all right?

So that part of the brain starts to shut down, starts to go cold, and this happens, and they were just looking at just 24 hours of sleep debt. That's it. All right, versus a well rested brain where there is this kind of robust activity in that part of the brain. But here's what they also found. When the sleep deprived brain was analyzed, there was heightened activity. There was, dare I say, a quiet riot going on in the amygdala, right? So parts of the brain that are more associated with emotional responses, all right? So our brain literally starts to change in function when we are sleep deprived. So what does this lead to in our lives in the real world when we're sleep deprived and how our brain is functioning?

Well, the study published in the Journal of Applied Psychology found that this contributes to something this growing epidemic of cyberloafing, alright, cyberloafing. They found that the less quality sleep people got the night before, the more likely they were to wander off their assigned task. The connection with poor sleep quality was incredibly strong. Each hour, according to researchers, "each hour of disturbed sleep would on average result in cyberloafing during an additional 20 percent of the assigned task". All right, so instead of doing the task, we do the just check and we start just kind of scrolling on our phone. The more we're sleep deprived, the more likely we are to find ourselves scrolling and "cyberloafing".

Also, another study published in the Lancet, analyzing the performance of physicians. So they took them through a simulation, they had them complete a procedure. Then they sleep deprived them for just 24 hours, which is not abnormal in certain aspects of hospital care and of medicine. They had them complete the same exact task to do the same exact procedure.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And here's what happened when they were sleep deprived. They made 20 percent more mistakes. Mmm, and it took them 14 percent longer to do the same exact procedure. All right, so we're losing efficiency and effectiveness under this umbrella of working harder, doing more team no sleep. All these different monikers that we have in our society. We're really losing Functionality and effectiveness and really becoming a hazard to ourselves and others so, sleeping like we're getting paid for it. It shows up in our lives. We perform better. We show up better. We have more creativity. We get things done more gracefully and What do we do? What are some solid tips for this?

Well, of course, we've done masterclasses on improving your sleep quality. We'll put a couple for you in the show notes, but a couple of quick tips that have been affirmed in the date. And also many people have been shouting these from the mountaintops. I've been talking about this now for about a decade, but what we can do to improve our sleep quality.

Pretty quickly is making sure that we're sleeping in a cool and dark environment because our skin has photoreceptors that pick up light as well. And so just making sure that we're blocking out what we are dubbing light pollution from the outside and also in our rooms. If we can make sure that we're minimizing any abnormal light exposures while we're sleeping because researchers at Cornell university found that shining a light in an otherwise dark room, putting a tiny light behind a subject's knee was enough to disrupt their sleep cycles. So getting your room nice and dark and cool because of thermal regulation and many studies have affirmed that sleeping in a cooler environment improves wake after sleep onset.

So you don't wake up as often improves sleep latency, so you fall asleep faster and improves overall sleep quality. Also, before bed, right, you can have the fanciest sleep sanctuary imaginable, but if you're staring at your phone or computer screen or television right before you go to bed, you're suppressing melatonin. The researchers at Harvard have affirmed that you are suppressing melatonin for about 30, 60 minutes after turning off the television or getting off your phone. If you're staring into those abnormal artificial lights. So give yourself a little bit of screen free time before going to bed. And also, this goes back to what we talked about earlier, getting some movement in, especially in the early part of the day, that helps to align your circadian rhythm.

If you can get some exercise and movement in, in the morning. So this has been shown in numerous studies to help to improve your sleep quality at night. All right. So make sure that you are making your sleep a priority. Become a sleep warrior, a sleep savant. All right. Get plenty of that yummy, delicious sleep.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Stock condition your favorite to do that so you can be dangerous when you get up. So you can be in a good way, in a good way. All right. So you can be at your very best. All right. So we're going to move on to number seven on our list of seven daily habits to make you smarter, healthier, and more successful. Number seven is to be hydrated or you'll be devastated. So look just throwing a little poetry. Why not? I was a poet and didn't know it. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It's from the *Last Dance* again. Okay, Michael Jordan. Apparently his last day as a bull. Phil Jackson got all the guys together. Write, you know, their experience down and they all like, they put into this coffee tin, they burn it or whatever. It's like this kind of, you know, ceremony, this unity thing. It's like a lot, everybody's crying, whatnot. But apparently Michael Jordan wrote a little poem. And he wasn't known to be a poetic person to any of these people. Matter of fact, you know, they didn't see that kind of side of him. And so, yeah, I'm just throwing out a couple bars here.

Shout out to Michael Jordan. Now with this being said, why does this matter? Be hydrated or be devastated? Well, a study published in medicine and science and sports and exercise found that just a moderate level of dehydration in healthy test subjects led to impairment in executive function, which includes things like spatial recognition, grammatical reasoning, mental math, and more. So again, it's affecting cognitive function. And why is that? Well, your brain is mostly water. Your brain is mostly water depending on which research you cite 70 to 80 percent water and also where you are in your lifespan as well. Baby's brains are more watery, more water rich, should I say? But just keep this in mind that when we are dehydrated, we're literally losing brain volume. Your brain is experiencing shrinkage.

Now, this is shrinkage that can expand if stimuli Whoa, this is never mind. All right, but you don't want your brain to be proactively shrinking when it doesn't have to but this is shrinkage that can be fulfilled. Okay, this is crazy. You can improve your brain volume and keep it at optimum levels. If you're making sure that you're getting in enough water and also your entire body, your hormones and neurotransmitters are moving throughout your immune cells, red blood cells, it's all moving throughout your body on a water superhighway. It is a water medium where everything is taking place. Every activity and reaction of your mitochondria, every, Hormone activity, every, every enzyme activity, every thought, it's all happening in a water medium. Drink your water. So you could be smarter. It is that simple. I did it again. I did it again. All right.

So we've talked about this. There isn't a cookie cutter amount of water. There is a semi appropriate equation, which is to take your body weight. Divide that by two. number in half and whatever number that is, target that many ounces of water. And once you get to 200 pounds or over and you cut that in half, just stay at 200.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Don't go any more, any higher than that. That's a hundred ounces. So two hundred and a half, it's a hundred, a hundred ounces, one 50 and a half, 75, 75 ounces. All right. Now that's not a set in stone number. All right, because it depends on your activity levels, it depends on your microbiome, it depends on your own, like the temperature in your environment, so many other factors can influence your need for water.

So the best place to get to is not following some kind of foundational metric, but paying attention to your body's needs. Your body will tell you when it's thirsty. Many of us, because those signals are a little bit disrupted. We need to be at least temporarily proactive in drinking enough water. So that's my encouragement for you and giving you that baseline number to go for. And how do you do this? You can't drink what you don't have. All right. So keep that bottle with you. Keep it with you. Stay, stay strapped. All right. Stay ready. Okay? You have a license to carry. Carry that water bottle with you. Make that your best friend, your compadre, your counterpart, your sidekick. Keep that bottle with you. Get you a bottle that you like, that you want to keep around. Alright, maybe put stickers on it. I don't know. Whatever you like. Just make sure that you keep that bottle with you because you cannot drink what you don't have. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. If you did, please share this out with your friends and family.

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