



EPISODE 868

Burn Fat, Eliminate Injuries, & Increase Your Healthspan - With Mark Sisson

With Guest Mark Sisson

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SHAWN STEVENSON: What if the most popular exercise for fat loss was flat out wrong? What if this form of exercise was not only not getting people fitter? What if it was one of the leading causes of injuries and chronic health issues like immune system dysfunction? Today, you're going to find out the truth about this form of exercise and most importantly, the right form of exercise, the most science backed time tested form of exercise to help you to burn fat, prevent injuries and get into the best shape of your life. Before we get to our special guests, I want to point out, I was just talking with my guys here in the studio. So many of my friends are 20, 30, 40 years older than me. And our special guest today is 71. He's about to turn 72 years old. He's one of the fittest people I've ever met. He's a walking, talking representation of what's possible.

And it's just so inspiring. It's like literally when I see them, I'm like, I want to be like that in 30 years. I want to replicate that, they are a model. And that's why I bring them here to learn from. This is why it's called the model health show to provide these models and these templates and these blueprints for us to follow to achieve the goals that we truly want. Now, obviously, a nutrition is a big part of this. He'll mention this a time or two. You can't talk about exercise without talking about the thing that our body is actually made out of. But there are certain things that have long revered, been associated with longevity. For instance, something that's been utilized for thousands of years, in certain cultures, bees are the most distinguished, most cherished assets of the environment.

And we need to give a lot more respect to bees. Obviously, there's so many different things that are influenced and controlled by the population of bees, and making sure we have healthy populations of bees to pollinate so many of our foods. But our ancestors knew about this for thousands of years. That the food products and also the importance of the bees and how they live their lives are very important. The queen bee lives on average one to two years, whereas the worker bees live on average about 150 days. Alright, and that's in the winter, by the way. In the summer, it can be around 15 to 30 days. So we'll put the average worker bee's life at about 100 days, so the queen bee lives more than 7 times longer than the worker bees. And the queen bee is exclusively eating royal jelly. Now, you might be like, Well, I'm not a queen bee.

I'm not Beyonce. Alright, hold your horses. First of all, if you like it, you should have put a ring on it. Number one. Number two, a study published in Advanced Biomedical Research found that royal jelly has the potential to improve spatial learning, attention, memory. It's been found to have antimicrobial benefits, anti tumor benefits, anti inflammatory benefits. And researchers in Japan found that royal jelly has been found to facilitate the differentiation of all types of brain cells. And it has the power to stimulate neurogenesis in the memory center of the brain. What?! It's a powerful, longevity food. Couple that with one of my other favorite nootropics, because royal jelly is now really being lifted up as one of these powerful natural nootropics.

One of my other favorite things is called Bacopa. In a randomized, double blind, placebo controlled human trial. Published in 2016, found that, after just six weeks of use, Bacopa significantly improved speed of visual information processing, learning rate, memory consolidation, and even decreased anxiety in study participants. Royal Jelly, plus Bacopa, is found in the Royal Jelly brain nootropic from Beekeeper's Naturals. Go to [beekeepersnaturals.com/model](https://www.beekeepersnaturals.com/model) And you're going to get 15 to up to 30% off of their incredible nootropic. Their superfruit honey, one of the staples in my cabinet at all time. Their propolis immune spray.

Again, 15 to up to 30% off when you go to [beekeepers naturals.com/model](https://www.beekeepersnaturals.com/model). That's B-E-E-K-E-E-P-E-R-S [naturals.com/model](https://www.beekeepersnaturals.com/model). Again, you get 15 to up to 30 percent off storewide, so head over there, check them out, invest in your health, invest in your longevity, give yourself those one or two things that really add in that extra 1 to 5 percent benefit in your energy, in your cognitive function, and just get you feeling better so that you can pour into yourself and pour into the things that you love, pour into your family more than ever. Go to [beekeepersnaturals.com/model](https://www.beekeepersnaturals.com/model). And now let's get to the Apple podcast review of the week.

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

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thank you so much for leaving that review over on Apple podcast. I truly do appreciate that. And if you get to do so, pop over to Apple podcast or wherever you're listening, if you're listening on Spotify, rate the show, I truly do appreciate that. It means a lot. Thank you for sharing your voice. And without further ado, let's get to our special guest and topic of the day.

Mark Sisson has been shaking up the world of health and fitness for over 20 years. He ignited the ancestral health movement in 2006 with his wildly successful blog, Mark's Daily Apple. And his best selling book, the Primal Blueprint. He helped popularize the ketogenic diet and the concept of intermittent fasting with his New York Times best selling books, The Keto Reset Diet and Two Meals a Day. He gave millions of health minded grocery shoppers access to healthier sauces and dressings with his Primal Kitchen Food Company. And now he wants to change the way the world trains and moves with his latest project "Born to walk". Let's dive in this conversation with the one and only Mark Sisson. My man, Mark, so good to see you. Thank you for coming to hang out with us.

MARK SISSON: Thanks for having me back, Shawn. Great to see you. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Truly my pleasure. I'm so happy to talk to you. Listen, you were an elite Marathon runner. Long distance runner. We're talking about world class. And now you are sharing and really getting the word out that it's this chronic cardio jogging and long distance running that's in many ways destroying our health. So, how did we get from there to here?

MARK SISSON: Well, okay. So this is a very nuanced opening to a complex subject. But basically I was one of a handful of people in the country running these sort of sub 220 times in the marathon in the late 70s, early 80s. In those days, the only people who ran were runners. Like, you self selected to be a runner because you were an ectomorph, right? Skinny, you had great lung capacity, typically longer legs than torso huge pain tolerance, right? You were willing to hurt yourself for long periods of time, dig a hole for yourself.

In, so, so when I was running, the only people who ran were runners at least when I started. In the 70s there was a movement that happened that was the perfect storm of marketing by

Nike making a thick shoe this concept the end of the 60s begat the me generation. It's all about me. I got to get out and take care of me I got to go do things to improve my health. And so a book came out in 68 Called aerobics by Ken Cooper. Dr. Ken Cooper. His theory was that the more you did exercise that raised your heart rate the longer you'd live. It was pretty a pretty simple statement and he recanted it probably 10 years later and said whoa, not that much.

Don't do that much. But he promoted this concept of aerobics and cardiovascular health. So now we have books on running starting to come out books on cardiovascular strength. This notion, which was never proven that maybe it was a good way to burn calories and lose weight. So a lot of people started running, like tens of millions of people started running, thinking it was the single best thing that they could do for themselves. It's now been 50 years since the running boom and the not many people have lost weight engaging in a running program. It's a not a very good choice of weight loss strategies it still has a very high injury rate, like 50 percent of all people who call themselves runners, get injured every year. And at any one point in time 25 of everyone who claims to be a runner is injured.

It is, for most people, it is hormonally, biomechanically, mentally, too stressful. It's a stress that we put on the body on a regular basis that doesn't lend itself to health or longevity or anything else. So now I, this is a bold statement to make out of the box. I don't want to who say, Well, I'm Mark, I love runners. But for the vast majority of people who take on running it is probably more appropriate to walk. To walk a lot, to sprint a little bit once in a while, and to lift weights. If your strategy or if your goal is to improve your body composition decrease your risk for certain diseases, lifestyle diseases, heart disease cancer metabolic diseases if you want to reduce your risk for that. If you want to be, look better naked, which a lot of people, go into this because they want to look fit, they don't want to just be fit, they want to look fit too. So, there's a kinder, gentler, easier strategy than grinding out metronomic mile after mile, day after day, year after year in pursuit of this elusive goal that never comes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Wow. I mean, just to kick things off, just the concept, what you did for me was to really bring it right in front of me that this is a new invention, essentially, and this was, and if we're being honest, the number one reason I'd say that people are doing cardio

like this is for fitness. They want to lose weight. They want to burn fat. And it's been hammered into us psychologically that doing this type of cardio is the best way for you to get fit, to burn fat. And for us to have this revelation, that's what you did for me was like, this just started like 50 years ago. Like this wasn't a thing where people were doing this in the name of fitness and weight loss. There were people, again, you mentioned self selected to, to challenge themselves and to have these feats of physical endurance and strength. And this dates back thousands of years. But as a culture, people were not running in order to get fit.

MARK SISSON: It was antithetical to health for our ancestors to run. Now, so, so, I wrote a book about this. It's called Born to Walk. And it's a play on the title of a book that came out about 15 years ago called Born to Run. And in that book, Christopher McDougall, who's a great guy and an amazing storyteller he hypothesized that humans are born to run. And the rationale was a mixture of anthropology, looking back at our ancestors and how they lived and how they were persistence hunters. Looking at biophysiology, like we are designed with these two long legs that and feet with longer toes that are not opposing toes and short forearms but longer upper arms, a nuchal ligament in our neck that allows us to run without our head bobbing like other animals would do.

And he put this great story together that we were born to run because we were persistence hunters and we were able to, over time, an hour, two hours, track a beast down on the plains of Africa and jab a spear in it and have dinner. But, it's a great story, but where it gets, like, off track is that and my theory is that we're born to walk, so all of our ancestors walked a lot. I mean, that's all they did. They walked every day, lots, carrying heavy things, lifting heavy things, lifting weights, stones, or carcasses, or carrying babies, or climbing trees. So they were working their muscles in a high intensity concept. They sprinted once in a while. Yeah, typically, they were able to sprint away from danger.

Or towards something that they wanted to eat for dinner. So, lots of walking a little bit of sprinting, and then daily movement throughout the day, squatting and lifting and doing all these things. That allowed them, every once in a while, especially the men, to go out on a persistence hunt. That allowed them to track a beast, see the footprints and start tracking a beast. So, it wasn't as if they were running seven minute miles for two hours to, outrun a

gazelle. They were hiding, crouching, walking, jogging, sprinting, hiding, sniffing, strategizing, and eventually outwitting the beast who then, you know after a couple of hours of being chased this way was exhausted, and then they could go up and jab a spear in it.

But those same ancestors wouldn't then do it the next day typically because there's no there was no long term strategy for doing this every single day, and you'd kill a beast like that and the meat would last a couple of days or maybe a week or whatever. And on the off days you wouldn't go "Hey boys, let's go out and do it. Let's train for our next hunt. Like let's go jog", because the burning of those fat calories that they had stored was a waste of that energy that they were spending so much time trying to get and attract and then kill and eat. So it's it's a bit of a mis allocation, mis application of anthropology and biological science to think that we were born to run.

We're born to be able to run. And for that, I'm very thankful, and I was able to run. I was one of those self selected runners who was able to run, chose to run on a daily basis partly as a result of access to calories. Like, carbohydrates every single day. So in the early days of running, it was all about carbo loading. Not just once in a while, but every single day. Can I get a thousand grams of carbs into me after my 15 mile run today, so I can go out and run 20 tomorrow? That is a completely different concept than an overweight person hearing that jogging is good for you and buying a pair of thick running shoes and heading out the door and struggling and suffering and grunting and groaning and feeling like, well, this has got to be valuable. I must be melting the fat off because I'm sweating and I'm tired and I'm exhausted when I get back from this workout when in fact, I can argue that all of those things are problematic.

The fact that you're probably running too, at too high a heart rate for your body to be burning fat efficiently. So you're burning the glycogen in your muscles. Which your brain then says, wait a minute, if we're gonna burn off all this glycogen, we gotta replace all that. So you get back from your run, and now you're hungry. So now you tend to, whether you consciously or unconsciously do it, you tend to overeat. And because you're going to do it again the next day and the next day and over time we see people you know who are engaging in a running program thinking they're going to lose weight, and they don't they just it just never happens.

So, but and then while they're doing it they're incurring the potential injury of an, repetitive use injury from running too much.

All of this could be mitigated by a well thought, well planned walking strategy where you can walk to a certain heart rate, burning fat the entire time, never dipping into your glycogen stores, not exhausting yourself, not secreting the stress hormone cortisol, which happens with most runners on a daily basis. They're secreting stress hormones. And a walking strategy that then allows you to have enough energy to go to the gym and lift weights a couple of times a week, which you should be doing. If you read any of the longevity books that have come out in the last couple of years, whether it's Peter Attia, Gabrielle Lyon, whether it's Andy Galpin, Andrew Huberman. They're all saying that muscle mass is one of the key drivers of longevity.

Well, running on a regular basis is catabolic. Running tears down muscle tissue. So, it's, again, it's antithetical for most people to be running. Okay, 2 3 percent of the population, go ahead, if you're competitive and you want to go run, but if you're not a competitive runner, if you don't have that genetic predisposition to be able to run without injury, with good form, burn fat most of the time recover easily and you have a great pain tolerance, go ahead and run your five k's and ten k's. Most people would be so much better served, again, with a much more well thought strategy for building a large, strong, robust aerobic base from walking putting on some muscle power and strength with two lifting sessions a week, not five, not two, and one High intensity workout a week where they're sprinting and the sprinting doesn't have to be. By the way, it doesn't have to be running sprinting could be on an assault bike could be on an elliptical machine could be on a Indoor bike or an outdoor bike, you know. Just something that gets your where you give an all out effort for anywhere from 20 seconds to 40 seconds with a couple of minutes rest in between.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is gonna be a tough pill to swallow still and you know that. You're already doing the work and chipping away these layers, but for me, in reading your book, it was just like, it became so obvious, layer after layer of why we've been misguided. And if you just think about the results, a lot of folks, again, thank you for mentioning this. If you love to

run, if it's just like you're, this is your thing, or you're really good at it and competitive, you're not trying to take it away. But you're saying, for our sake, for our fitness, for our longevity.

The science clearly shows that this is not ideal. This is ideal. And part of that, I want to break some of these pieces down because you mentioned, for example, that carb loading and the carb refuel. And you've talked about this in our past conversations about being a glorified sugar burner. But if you think about the impact of, going out on that long run. And by the way, you were logging a hundred miles a week.

MARK SISSON: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: For years.

MARK SISSON: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Like just this, but there are many people who are getting in, 20 miles a week or whatever the case might be. And you're going to have a natural propensity to go for those carbohydrates and chronically keep insulin working it's ass off. And you talk about hyperinsulinemia, for example, in the book and being one of the results. And partially, this is just part, we're going to unpack all this. Partially why so many people who are running to get fit are still finding themselves struggling to lose weight sustainably.

MARK SISSON: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So let's talk about the insulin.

MARK SISSON: Yeah, so, so, insulin, is this hormone that we secrete in response to an excess, well, to nutrients coming in, whether it's an excess or not but particularly with things like carbohydrates which turn into glucose in the bloodstream, and with an excess of glucose in the bloodstream. While glucose is a fuel, the body wants to sequester it in the cells, and so, in order to do that, we secrete insulin from the pancreas as a response to a high level of glucose in the bloodstream. That's fine. That's a good thing.

And the body also wants to sequester amino acids and fats. So a high level of insulin means that you're fighting, your body is fighting to take these nutrients out of the bloodstream and put them into the cells. The problem arises if you have too much of these carbohydrates and insulin raises too high a few things happen, one of which is you tend to store excess fuel in fat cells, which is not a good thing.

So now you're trying to lose you.. So so what happens is over time, you've filled the glycogen in your muscle cells. That's where that's the storage arena for glucose The storage form of glucose is glycogen now you burn that glycogen off because you're running at too high a heart rate too fast a pace if you will for your body to be efficiently burning Fat, the body has these different modes of fuel extraction, low level activity is fat burning almost a hundred percent as you start to increase your level of output. The amount of fat contributing to your energy goes down and the amount of carbohydrate or glucose or glycogen rises to the point where now you're not burning any fat and you're burning predominantly glucose or glycogen that becomes problematic because again, as you exhaust those supplies, you, now you come home and you, Your brain says, we got to refuel, we got to refuel.

So you eat more of these carbohydrates. It raises the insulin, trying to get that excess into the cells. High insulin basically locks fat into the fat cells. So, when you have hyperinsulinemia, when you have high insulin levels, you can't even get fat out of storage to combust it, even if you want to. So, over time now, sometimes, you become insulin resistant because the, some of the cells go, Hey, we already have a lot of nutrients. We, we don't want any more. There's no room for any more nutrients here. So now you're insulin resistant and the pancreas thinks, Well, we just got to shout louder. We got to work even harder. So you secrete even more insulin and now you get into a type two diabetic situation. So it's quite often that you see people who are going down this path and thinking they're going to improve their, their health outcomes. But because they're trying to do the work every day in their mind, I'm struggling.

I'm suffering. I'm doing the work. It's valuable. I'm tired. I beat up. It must be working. It must be doing something. I'm sweating a lot. That must be the fat melting. None of which is true. So you get into this mindset where you're thinking you're doing all the right things because it feels valuable and in fact, it's the exact opposite. Now, you're compromising your body's

ability to burn its own stored body fat. Look when we say we want to lose weight. What we mean is we want to lose body fat. We don't want to lose muscle mass, even though you can lose muscle mass, and that's a form of weight. In fact, many, like, long term runners, over time, their body composition changes. While their weight stays the same, now they have more fat and less muscle because running is catabolic in that regard.

So, one of the tests we talk about in the book is, the, what we call the fat max zone. The heart rate at which you're burning the most amount of fat without tapping into your glycogen stores. And for a lot of people, that's a heart rate that is so, dictated that you can't you can't stay below it. While you're running. I'm trying to, I'm trying to describe this. Like, like for most people's easy running pace is already a heart rate that's too high to be burning mostly fat. So you'd have to say those people don't even earn the right to run until they've done the work building an aerobic base, burning mostly fat, which means mostly walking.

So that fat max heart rate, that maximum fat zone, which 180 minus your age. And people go, well, Mark, I'm 45 years old. That means I, I have to keep my heart rate at 135 or less to burn fat. The answer is yes, you do. But, Mark, I can run at 165 beats a minute, 170 beats a minute. Why would I not do that? Well, because it's stressful. You haven't trained for it. You're not good at burning fat. You're great at burning sugar. Congratulations, you're great at burning glucose and glycogen. But all that means is you're going to get hungry after your events. You're not going to burn off your stored body fat. And you're going to, now, for the rest of the day, you're going to be exhausted or tired from your workout.

You won't want to play with your kids. You won't want to go throw the football with your son. You won't want to rake the leaves. You won't feel like walking around. Just, which is most of what we should be doing in our lives is just constant movement throughout the day. Which is why, once again, why walking is such an amazing opportunity to do that. So, so, all of these things converge into an opportunity, not an opportunity, a lack of an opportunity to optimize your health. Now you're you think you're doing all these wonderful things for yourself, when in fact, it may be not the opposite. Look, it's better than sitting on the sofa, but it's still not an efficient way to do the things that you say you want to do. You say, I want to get stronger, I want to live longer, I want to decrease my risk for heart disease, I want to look good naked. All

these things, I'm telling you with this particular walking, lifting, sprinting strategy, you'll get there in a much more linear fashion than trying to do it through running.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, that pendulum swing of sitting there on the couch. That's 0 percent hard. We tend to swing all the way to the 100 percent hard. And we can't rationalize the fact that walking is number one. I want you to talk more about this. You're able to more efficiently burn fat when you're walking. All right. So I want to come back to this. But for our psychology and our culture today, you already mentioned it. We're like, it's, but that's not hard enough. It's not hard enough, Mark.

MARK SISSON: We've been told, and you see it everywhere in the fitness culture people are always trying to invent new, hard things to do, right? And we've heard, no pain, no gain. And, you got to earn the right to.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Thanks, Mr. T.

MARK SISSON: But so we have you know, these boot camps and these orange theories and these and soul cycles and all these. And they're amazing, they're wonderful. But in my mind, they're only wonderful if you're fit enough to do them and you do them once, maybe twice a week. But some people say oh i'm gonna you know I do that I do a boot camp today a soul cycle tomorrow and they do these hard things every day. Once again thinking that they're going to get somehow fitter and stronger and live longer as a result of it. And what's happening is it's tearing people down. And they're getting burned out. And there's a section in the book we talk about the obligate runners. Like somebody who feels like the day's not complete if I didn't run. Like, like the day's a waste if I didn't get my work, my hard workout in, right?

And one of the things that I try to stress over the years in educating people about how the body works is, yeah, you do hard things once in a while, and then you give your body time to Recover. You have to recover from a hard workout. Like one of the reasons I say only lift weights twice a week is because if you could do it every single day You're not doing it hard enough to stimulate a gain. So in my case, I work out I lift every three or four days and the

reason I do that is when i'm lifting hard enough intensely enough that I couldn't do it the next day. I'd be too sore to do it the next day. Now the next day I can go for a walk, and that's a recovery day for me, and that's literally assisting my recovery from the hard things that I do.

So, I'm saying, you you don't have to do these hard things every day to get fitter and healthier. You're better off, again, building a base and then choosing those hard opportunities once in a while where you do the work. And then your genes respond by building more muscle, by building stronger energy systems, by increasing capillary perfusion into the muscles, by increasing the amount of mitochondria in your muscles that are where the fat actually burns so that when you're sitting at rest, now you're burning more fat and more fat. You've heard many people talk about recently that, that it's really muscle mass is what increases your body's rate of metabolic rate, right? And so you can, the more muscle you have, the higher your metabolic rate is. And for a lot of people, that's like, okay, that means I'm going to burn more fat at rest or at low level of activity throughout the day.

That's a good thing. So I think people get they get caught up in. Once again, the hype and the marketing of okay, we got to do these hard things and here's a new hard thing, we just invented, and it's a 45 minute hard workout. And you come in and you pay us 35 bucks to do it with a bunch of other people, and there's loud music, and then you do it again tomorrow and the next day on the next day. And it just that stuff as a lifestyle does not work.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, it's digging yourself into a hole.

MARK SISSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And part of it, of course the initial allure a lot of times and you know some of these things can be very addictive. Especially if you start to see some results from going from doing nothing or a little to nothing to doing something. But we're talking about efficiency. We're talking about sustainability. And part of this, yes, when we're walking, our body is far more likely to grow and grab stored body fat for fuel. And part of this is, on the other side, running frequently, going for long jogs, is very catabolic. It just, it is what it is. And we're, when we're talking about this, we're also talking about what's happening with our

hormones. And so, we're going to have higher levels of catecholamines, things that essentially is fight or flight response. And there's a subsection in your book where it's titled, *Fattened by Fight or Flight*. Let's talk about that.

MARK SISSON: Yeah, so, cortisol is a primary stress hormone secreted in a typically a life or death situation. What the body perceives as a life or death situation. So, we have an immediate frightening If event adrenaline, epinephrine is secreted, but over time cortisol is secreted to prepare the body to either deal with an immediate assault like a sprained ankle or a cut. You're a, again, we go back to our ancestors. This was a great survival benefit to have this hormone that would be secreted by the adrenals that would enhance recovery in the short term from an acute injury. Great. That happens to us today when we have these acute traumas. But where the problem is when we secrete cortisol chronically over a long period of time.

When chronic cortisol production lowers your immune system. So it's one of the things that happens almost immediately. It happened to me my entire career. I get colds and flus six times a year. I haven't had a cold or the flu for, eight years, but I used to get multiple of these sinus infections, or colds, or flu because I had suppressed my immune system so much through the secretion of, chronic secretion of this stress hormone, cortisol, day and day for weeks, months, years at a time. Now, one of the things that happens with cortisol is that it is, it's, it promotes belly fat and visceral fat. So, People who secrete a lot of cortisol on a regular basis, whether through the stress, just daily stress of living, bad relationships, problems at work, overdue bills, body doesn't recognize the difference between these different things.

Public speaking is a very stressful thing for some people, right? It's just, it, and yet, it's the adrenals are secreting this cortisol, and what it, the effect it will have is, again, suppress the immune system. It'll encourage the, what we call gluconeogenesis, which is literally stripping the muscle tissue down in your body to make glucose to send to the brain, so the brain has glucose to work on in periods of, life or death. And again, this whole system is not recognizing that public speaking is not a life or death situation or an overdue bill is not a life or death situation. But, running chronically day in and day out and secreting this stress hormone because you have not trained appropriately. When you've trained appropriately I'll take a step

back and say most of the world class elite athletes, they train at zone 2, this max fat, this fat max heart rate, or lower.

85 percent of their training is a very low level. aerobic base building a little bit of their training is this high level stuff because they know that when they do the high level training, they're going to secrete cortisol. But they don't want to secrete cortisol day in and day out. It's going to suppress your immune system. It's going to be catabolic. It's going to tear down their muscle tissues so even the elite athletes know to pace themselves. So much in their training that so much of it is done at a low level of heart rate which would equate for most citizen runners to a walking pace. Once again, walking is gonna generate a stronger aerobic base.

It's gonna not secrete these. Walking is anabolic. Walking is literally anti catabolic or anabolic. Running, almost, fast running, metronomic fast running is, almost by definition, catabolic. I ran 100 miles a week for 7 years. And I weighed 140, 5'10 I weighed 142 pounds. I weigh 172 now, same body fat. I'm carrying 20 pounds more muscle, plus some extra bone density plus a little bit more. Fat and water to to account for all of the 30 pound difference, but I weighed 30 pounds less and I lifted weights. I went to the gym and I lifted weights because I knew that weight training was going to be beneficial for an elite athlete. But I couldn't keep it on, I couldn't keep the my body wouldn't let me keep it on because running is catabolic. If you look at the best marathoners in the world today.

They're like five eight hundred and nine pounds, 118 pounds, their legs, lungs and a head. That's their genetics, priests, you know, predisposed to being able to deal with lots of pain over long periods of time. But that's not and it's not necessarily benefiting them. They've just chosen to participate in this sport where they're digging a hole for themselves and they're seeing if they can outlast everyone else in the race. That doesn't make it healthy. That doesn't even make them healthy. It just makes them good at performing at that particular event. So, so even at the elite level, you notice that athletes are sacrificing health in the name of immediate performance, like today, next week, or this year in my season, but they're not doing it to be healthy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Holy moly. All right. You mentioned earlier, and you've touched on this throughout, but the fact that you said this really jarring statistic. But you expanded on that in the book, which was essentially somewhere in the ballpark of like 50 percent of runners are injured at any given point, each year, 50 percent over the course of the year. But at any given point, it's around 25 percent of runners are sidelined with an injury of some sort. People are getting hurt more frequently. And, again, it's just like part of the culture and it's something we've come to accept, but this is abnormal. This is something we don't have to experience and you really bring to light in so many different ways. And I ended up talking to my wife, like when I really love a book, I'm just like spouting off things to her.

And like, did she's like, Oh, okay, babe. But the fact of and it really, our health is built from the ground up, truly. If we're talking about our association, the impact with the ground, our connection to movement, it really starts with our feet and that intimate connection with the brain and what's happening with our feet. And how much of that gets turned off because of the way that our shoes are designed. We simply do not interact with the ground because of the modern style of shoe. And just yesterday, again, I saw somebody. Getting after it on the treadmill. All right. He had the I've never even seen these shoes. They were the thickest Sold shoes I ever seen they look like he's walking on marshmallows.

Yes. All right, and in the moment, I'm sure again He's like all these and I've seen with my youngest son I remember taking him to get some shoes when he was little he puts him on he runs through the store it's just like I'm super fast dad. And you're really bringing to light that there was a change that happened In conjunction with the running boom. It was the shift in our shoes. Yes. So let's talk about that.

MARK SISSON: So when I started running in the late 60s and early 70s I ran in chuck taylor's. I ran in thin minimalist sneakers because there were no running shoes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So John Travolta in Grease like that, that was real.

MARK SISSON: Yes. That was real. That was a running shoe that doubled as a running shoe. Then in the late 60s early 70s along came a shoe out of Japan, the onitsuka tiger, and it was a

Pure running shoe. But it was still one quarter inch thick I mean it was a it was as minimal a shoe as you would ever see. I ran in those for a while in those days. Even if you were a well a fit self selected runner, skinny, ectomorph, and you had good form, it was still your feet that told you 45 miles is enough running for this week.

Because you didn't have the cushioning available. You had these thin shoes that were almost like running barefoot on, and then you're, now you're running on pavement, you're running on concrete, you're running on hard surfaces, which human feet didn't really evolve to run on. Well along comes Bill Bowerman and Phil Knight in the early 70s. And they say we've got all these great runners the Oregon track club, which is one of the best running clubs in the world at the time competing on an international level. And Bowerman goes as a coach I would like my guys to put in 80 miles a week, 90 miles a week, 100 miles a week to compete on the international scene, but we can't do it with these thin shoes because even though the runners have good form. There's a point at which they can't take the pounding anymore, so let's create some thick shoes.

So they started creating thicker and thicker sold shoes. Now these shoes were intended for great runners to be able to run more distance. They weren't initially intended to allow overweight runners with bad running form to become heel strikers and slap the ground as they pounded the pavement for, three miles, four miles, eight miles at a time. But over that course of the first decade of running shoes, these soles became thicker and more and more people started running not because they had great form but because these shoes forgave their bad form in the short term. So it's one thing if you run barefoot, if you're overweight and you run barefoot down a sidewalk, you will immediately run with good form because you'll land on the balls of your feet and you'll sink your knees a little bit lower just to absorb the shock, the impact, if you will, of running.

But now you put thick shoes on somebody and that haptic sense, that, that sense that you get from direct connection with the ground, now it's it's diverted away because you've got this cushioning. Well, it doesn't mean that now you're running with great form, it just means that you're, that your bad form is now being forgiven in the short term, but all of those impact, those trauma forces are still going up the kinetic chain from the bottoms of your feet

all the way up through your hip. So, as shoes got thicker and thicker over the years the rate of injury did not decrease one iota. It stayed the same. The rate of injury may have increased over the years because people are now thinking that these cushion thick running shoes are somehow absorbing all the shock and allowing them to run more and more miles.

Over time people you so what's happening here? What's happening is because you're not barefoot. You don't feel the ground underneath. Now, let's take a step back and realize that we're born with bare feet. We're born with our feet expecting to feel everything we step in. The entire kinetic chain in the human body starts with contact with the ground, as you said, starts with these tens of thousands of nerve connections in the bottoms of our feet, that by the time we put our weight on the forward foot, those nerve connections have given all the information the brain needs. In order to organize your entire kinetic chain so it knows exactly how much do I scrunch the arch around this rock or over this twig or to absorb the hole in this, in, in this divot. How much do I bend the toes, how much do I roll the ankle outward a little bit so that I don't tweak my knee, how low do I bend my knee to absorb the shock if there's how much do I rotate the hip to absorb this.

All of these different connections, what we call this kinetic chain, that is the organization of all of the joints from the foot all the way up through the body to the neck. This kinetic chain requires input from the brain in order to perfectly align everything so that if you're stepping on rocks or you're stepping on a, if the ground is tilted outward or inward, that you don't bend a knee or tweak a hip or twist an ankle, but you need the information. Without that information on the bottoms of the feet, the brain has to guess. Well, I think I roll the ankle a little bit. Or maybe I bend the knee sideways and the knee is not supposed to bend sideways. And this gets exacerbated like with hiking boots and stiff sole shoes where you get no information and now you step sideways the wrong way on a rock and now you do tweak.

A knee or roll an ankle. Well, running shoes took away all that information. Now, it's one thing if you're running down the road, and it's flat, and you, okay, it's not gonna, it's not gonna have that immediate negative impact. But if you're running trails, or if you're running on varying surfaces, you want, you really want that information, you want that, that haptic input to be with every footfall guiding your kinetic chain. People will say, well, Mark, I have flat feet. I

have I'm knock kneed, or I'm, whatever the, wide hips, whatever, I've zero arches. Doesn't matter. You're born with a perfect alignment of your own kinetic chain. Your kinetic chain will work, provided you keep using the small, intrinsic muscles of your feet, and that you are able to give that brain the input it needs in order to, how to organize your kinetic chain to ideally absorb the shock of that footfall. Whether you're walking, Or running or sprinting or dancing or setting up to make a slap shot in hockey or hit a golf ball or a baseball.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Listen, even today, I was talking with somebody who they were told that they have flat feet, right? They're from another country.

MARK SISSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I was talking about the fact of, this art support being promoted in culture, right? You just need some some art support. You need to add these to your shoes and whatnot, or, and, but the thing was, I was like, when you were at home, back home, did anybody tell you have flat feet shoes? It's like, no, this wasn't even a thing, and I didn't have any problems. But now knees a little funky, hips actin up, back pain, all this other stuff, and wearing these very, I guess, insulated shoes that are insulating you from this genius that you're, this kinetic chain has.

MARK SISSON: That's a great, a great way to put it. Your feet have genius in the bottoms of them, if you can unlock that. And the shoes that we wear today, they typically, first of all, they restrict The big toe. The big toe is supposed to be able to abduct, pull away from the other toes. It's the most important toe in the foot. And like when we're walking, we will plant the heel and roll off the big toe. When we're running we tend, with good form, we tend to land more on the midfoot and still pronate, that is, roll into and push off the big toe. But the big toe needs to be It needs to be available to push off, and when we scrunch it up against all the other toes and into a narrow toe box shoe, and then we elevate the heel, and that's another issue with a lot of these running shoes, is that the heel is elevated.

What that does is it tilts the body forward. immediately. So now you almost feel like you're running faster because you're tilted a little bit forward, but it's creating a immediate

imbalance in the center of gravity. And it's throwing the muscles maybe of the lower back off a little bit. So this forward tilt offsets the gravity. It shortens the calf muscle. Because now the calf muscle isn't going all the way to the ground, it's already been raised up with his heel. That short calf muscle then puts pressure on the Achilles, and maybe on the plantar fascia area. So all these issues that people have with their feet that they think, Oh, it must be genetic.

I have bunions. It must be genetic. No, you have bunions because you've been wearing crappy shoes your whole life that have squeezed your big toe against the other toes. Often in the name of fashion, because people think, well, the narrower the shoe is, the prettier it looks. Well, may look cute for a while, but not until you've, then you get the foot problems. You get the bunions.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Get the hammer time in your shoe.

MARK SISSON: Exactly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Shout out to boomerang Eddie Murphy.

MARK SISSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But yeah, used to get the bunions and all those things. This is what's so fascinating is that there's a big shift in people's awareness happening right now It's not big enough yet. But again, this is just a part of the culture, you know These are the types of shoes you wear These are the types of shoes that you know are just standard, especially if you're gonna be in the workplace, right? You're supposed to cram foot bind yourself.

MARK SISSON: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And you have all these residual issues that This is the unfortunate part. We don't tie it back to our footwear.

MARK SISSON: Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But now you're talking about again how the Achilles even the sole of our foot that data isn't there. And our calf and the knees are involved hip problems back problems can be traced back. So often to what people are wearing on their feet.

MARK SISSON: To footwear. So again in the book we talk about what does that mean to me as somebody who's going to engage now in a new program that involves a lot of walking. Well, one of the first things I say is don't you know don't walk so much in those thick cushioned shoes because you're missing many of the benefits that are available from walking when i'm walking in minimalist footwear i'm walking in My minimalist footwear. I make, I make the Palova shoes. But any form of minimalist footwear, where you, every step you take walking, is strengthening, is realigning the intrinsic muscles of your feet. It's reinforcing that strong kinetic chain. You don't get that with the thick. Cushioning once again, and I see a lot of companies introducing, rocker type shoes where you're rolling forward, but your foot is still Constricted in the shoe and you're not using any of the small muscles.

So over time, it's no wonder your arch atrophies. And the intrinsic the other small muscles of your feet they atrophy over time. Now when you get, you know, you get into a barefoot situation and you say, I'm going to go sprint barefoot, it hurts because you haven't worked that out. It's like saying, I want to build stronger biceps. And somebody says, well, you can't. We're gonna put a brace on your arm so that you don't hurt your bicep while you're wanting to build a stronger bicep. No, you got to work that muscle. When you have weak arches, that's your fault.

That's on you for choosing the footwear that you've chosen and we can build back strong arches. Now it may, if depending on how long you've been doing this, it may take some time and you have to ease into it. But you're not at the mercy of your parental genetics that you know, your parents gave you weak arches. No, they didn't give you weak arches. It's your lifestyle that created that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, use it or lose it. Yeah, can you talk a little bit more about peluvas? Why you got into this? What makes them unique? Let's talk about that.

MARK SISSON: Yeah, so I've been a fan of barefoot for a long time. As a runner, I did not like the thick cushioned shoes. I used them, and that was what was available, but I got injured as a result of, in my case that cushioning and that instability that created caused problems in my knees. And so I got chondromalacia as a result of that. And ironically, I spent a year not being able to run because of this chondromalacia. And then I was in a miracle cure with orthotics. Now, why did that happen? Well, because when I was pronating in my thick cushion shoes my knee wasn't used to that. But as soon as I put in the orthotics and stopped pronating, my knees got better, but my hip got worse. It just moved its way up the kinetic chain because I was still not getting that input.

So you see all of these you're only as strong as the weakest link in your. So, not a fan of footwear always liked going barefoot, was an early adopter of minimalist shoes. I was one of the first guys to wear the five toed shoes. Loved them, but I didn't think, I didn't like the colors, I didn't like the styles. And I thought, this is really something that people ought to be doing. People ought to be spending more time in a barefoot like environment. Now, ideally you'd go barefoot, but look, outside it's cold it's concrete and pavement and Hardwood floors and tile and nails and all kinds of stuff you could step on. So it's inappropriate to be going barefoot outside for most people and so what's the alternative?

The alternative is to have a foot shaped shoe that allows your toes to articulate Individually allows you to feel the ground underneath. So when we're wearing our peluva shoes, which are only like nine millimeters thick, we feel everything we walk on. Like, we look for uneven surfaces to walk on because it feels so good. The brain senses, again, this knows exactly how much to articulate the toes, scrunch the arch, roll the ankle, do all these things. So, like, we look for cobblestones in Europe. We walk on cobbles a lot because it's foot, we call it foot candy. Every, it just feels like you're getting a foot massage doing that.

When I'm doing trails and sometimes I'm running trails. And when I say I'm running trails, I'm hiking, but then I break into a sprint for, I'm doing a combination walk and run. I'm looking for, again, gnarly rocky surfaces to walk on. I was in Hawaii on the big island a couple of months ago and I did an amazing workout, 45 minutes of walking just on cooled lava that's you know, just gnarly crunchy, every time you step the foots in a different angle in a different

orientation. But because I'm not running I'm walking I'm able to utilize that step as a strengthening step so that my foot is benefiting from that work rather than maybe if I were running along that lava thing I'd be like, oh my god, I got it. I got to watch out that I don't really twist an ankle, roll an ankle, but because I'm walking, I'm able to benefit from every footfall.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing. Amazing.

MARK SISSON: Yeah. So this is one of our latest models. It's a, it's the sport mesh, the strand sport mesh. Again, it's got the five, five toe articulation. It's automatically splaying your toes out. So even if you have like. Many people have bad feet as a result of decades of wearing, restrictive shoes. And for those people, even if you buy a minimalist shoe with a wide toe box, it doesn't mean your toes automatically seek this beautiful, wonderful splay. So what we're doing here is we're we're basically inserting the toes into individual toe compartments here and allowing that realigning and that strengthening. Again, it's a wide, thin, flat, flexible shoe, so it's only nine millimeters thick. It's got zero drops. So even though this looks like a

regular shoe normal shoe on the outside. It is a regular shoe, but it's it's made to look like a shoe. It's still zero drop. So it's the same distance, nine millimeters off the ground from the metatarsal to the heel. And again, and it's very flexible and you can, it's got amazing ground feel. And it's got a stylish look and we make these in, we make a leather lace up for the workplace. We make a desert boot that I'm wearing today. See if you can see that. And women's styles we've got a loafer. It's, we, because the whole concept here was, if you're going to be spending a lot of time on your feet, which I want you to do, and you're going to be walking a lot, which I want you to do, I'd love, I'd rather you have access to different styles for all occasions, rather than just when you're walking outside, or just when you're hiking, or just when you're in the gym. I look at it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: For me and my experience is like foot rehab.

MARK SISSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's like rest restoration really for my feet. I've been wearing the peluvas for over a year. Anytime I go for a walk, I throw them on. And by the way, you also talk about this in the book of like, even going from, you don't go zero to a hundred, even with these type of shoes as well. You work your way into it. And the first thing is you'll probably notice is like, you might have a little bit of trouble getting your toes into it, but now of course, like they slide in it on and off really easy now.

MARK SISSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And also like I have this basically, my intelligence has been turned back on with my feet. Like I can lift my individual toes, like stuff that I, when I, work with people, I check out what they can do. Most people can't even, get their toes to communicate their brain in their toes. And so this is for me, it's like nourishment. I put these on and I walk, I train, I do some sled work with these on and. These are something for me personally, again, I'm into the fashion as well. So somebody's like, well, I don't want to wear, you can't wear these to the workplace. That's one thing that you're conquering with these different styles. But also again, I'm here, I've got these, these dunks on right now, but when I get home, guess what?

I'm throwing on my peluvas and I'm going to go for a walk. That's what I pretty much do every time I leave the studio. So you've been a big part of my life and really helping to rehab. And also what I've noticed is. My performance on everything just so happen to get better whether it's basketball, whether it's you know certain things that i'm doing with my training jump rope, whatever. It's just like this intelligence.

MARK SISSON: Your feet are stronger. I mean, I think that's a great point that most people have lost Any sort of connection that their feet have with the universe. Look, our, this is our contact with the universe, is our foot on the ground. And to have assumed that, well, feet are feet, they don't matter, and all that matters is, from my ankles up, or whatever. It's, I think that foot health is the new sleep. Right, I think it's gonna be one of the most important things. Courtney Connelly, who's chiropractor who's probably one of the smartest people in the foot health space would say that big toe strength is one of the greatest predictors of longevity because of old people, you need the mobility, you need to be able to not trip at

night, you need the strength to be able to catch yourself if you do trip. So big toe mobility is critical for longevity.

This notion that we can train our feet in peluvas or bare feet throughout the day and then throw on the kicks great or throw on your basketball shoes. I'm not saying play basketball in these. I'm not saying go run in these. I'm saying walk in these lift in these. Drop the kids off at school. Walk the dog in these go to work spend all day if you're on your feet as a cashier, or waiting tables or a nurse. We have a lot of nurses who are loving that peluvas now.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

MARK SISSON: I just I did, I just had a hip replacement and I'm like, I'm rehabbing like nobody's business. It's amazing. So yesterday I did the the Santa Monica stairs, which is a set of a hundred stairs going straight up. I did six times. It was a bit of a, it's a challenge and I do them fast.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's unheard of. Weeks after, it's been a couple of months.

MARK SISSON: Yeah. And but afterwards I walked a mile right afterwards as a recovery. Again, walking is anabolic. I didn't. I didn't just stop the workout. I literally went for a mile walk afterwards. And I've been doing this for like 15 years with minimalist footwear, with my own shoes for two and a half. Every step I take, I'm conscious. I literally am aware of what's going on with my toes and my ankle and my feet. It's amazing how you can get into that space where you feel improvement and you feel the rehab happening. Whether it's, every single step is a positive ratchet forward it, but to be able to sense the ground underneath and that be your contact with earth. Rather than floating along on some cloud, that cushioned shoe, that shortens your calf and, and really doesn't have any. Serve any purpose other than to allow you to, walk longer distances feeling like you're on a trampoline, which I don't even get what that's about.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, this isn't a video game. This is real life.

MARK SISSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I tend to have a healthy amount of skepticism. So even over a year ago, when we connected and you told me about the shoes and I was just looking at him every few days, I just see him sitting there like, okay, let me try him on. It took months for me to just really buy in like, whoa, I'm different. I feel better.

MARK SISSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is nourishing to me. And it became a part of my life every day. And you didn't even know this. You didn't even know he's just told me that. And and it took a year, so over a year later, here you are. And I'm a huge advocate. And that's why, I actually connected with your team and I was like, can we do something to get more people to put these on and just to start walking!

MARK SISSON: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Nourishing their feet, healing their bodies again from the ground up literally. And they were gracious enough to give us a 15 percent discount. So if people go to peluva.com/model, all right, that's P E L U V A.com/model. Use a code model at checkout. This is important. Use the code model at checkout. You get 15 percent off storewide.

MARK SISSON: Awesome. Awesome. You hit upon a you said it took a little while to get your feet in the first time. We say, if you're, if your feet slide right into these shoes, you want these shoes. If your feet don't slide right into these shoes, you need these shoes, right? So, so it takes some people 10 or 15 minutes to get them on the first time. And it's indicative of a lack of awareness. Like people say, I think my toes are in. Well, dude, they're either in or they're not. It's like, like, well, like they feel like they're in, but I don't know. And we'll press on the toes and, work them to get them in the first time. And once you get them in the first time, you spend, an hour or two walking around the house or doing whatever it is you do. The next time it'll be a little bit easier. And the next time it'll be a little bit easier.

And over time, again, your feet slide right in. You're like, okay, this is how my feet are supposed to be. They're supposed to be articulating is the term we use for toes. They're supposed to be moving up and down and back and forth. And I mean, I can splay my toes outward now, just the same as I can do my hands. And it's a lost art. Literally, we evolved to be able to do this, to be able to have a wide stance and place a platform on the ground from which to, navigate this planet, not be scrunched into narrow little, casts that are like stilts for some people and, hobble around earth. No, we're supposed to be using all of that information and building upon a stronger kinetic chain.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Another little thing that I do. Even yesterday, I went to do an interview on this big show, but inside of my regular, "regular shoes", I had on the paluva socks.

MARK SISSON: Okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right? And so even just wearing those around the house, for example, it just like, that data, it starts to reassociate your brain and the separation of the toes.

MARK SISSON: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right? So the paluva socks as well, I highly recommend. And just, again, even You know, if I'm in the studio, I've many a time I've come in here and regardless of the types of shoes I have on, I've got the peluva socks on.

MARK SISSON: Yeah, the peluva five toed socks. Obviously you need, so, do you need socks to wear peluvas? No. In fact, I don't wear socks with my peluvas. I designed them to be as, as tactile as possible, these shoes. But some people need socks. Some people are like, I'm a sock person, whatever it is, the sweat. Factor whatever. So we make five toed socks for sure that fit into the five toed shoes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I usually don't wear the socks with when I have the beluga shoes on, by the way. But it's just one of those things.

MARK SISSON: No, it's great. It's a great. It's a great Yeah, it's a supplement. It's an introductory way to do this. Yeah for sure.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So in your book, you really bring us again front and center with the fact and this is something you stated, "the struggle ethos. There's this struggle and sacrifice, pain, you mentioned no pain, no gain, ethos is pervading modern fitness culture". Right? And so for us mentally, to be able to accept, and that's what this conversation is all about. To accept the fact that you do not have to beat yourself to a pulp. And struggle and strain. And for us in our culture, it's like, this is one of those things we look for every day. Like, if I didn't do this, then, it's a loss. And it has to be hard to be fit has to be a struggle and you're here to say listen, we've been lied to. The reality is very different. What you are designed to do. You're born to walk.

MARK SISSON: Yes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And it's so interesting that you get all of these benefits and you go through all the benefits forward and back in the book is very, and I love it's so reader friendly, very easy read and it's built in with a bunch of cool stories. And I want to circle back to this story because this recently was a conversation with my youngest son and I, and you being an elite marathon runner. The marathon itself, the distance, 26.2 miles. We watched one of his favorite YouTubers. Ryan Trahan is just, it's one of the things my youngest son and I have like connected on and he's just like the sweetest guy. He does all these little, like going and visiting, hotels that get one star reviews to try and make a five star review. But he is really into fitness.

And he signed up and he did a half marathon on one of his videos and he had these super thick sold shoes, all the boxes. And my son asked during, he's like, how long is a marathon? And I was like, actually, cause I got your book right there. I was actually, it's 26.2 miles. But that amount was based on this, his kind of mythological story, right. And it goes back to this idea of something where the runner, and I want you to share the story. But the distance was made up. It really wasn't factual. We're closer to factual based on what actually happened, right? Let's talk about that.

MARK SISSON: Yeah, so the story that most marathoners will cite as the reason that they plunked down their 300 entry fee to The LA Marathon or the New York Marathon is I want to be like this guy Pheidippides. I want to go struggle and suffer and beat myself up and the story was that Pheidippides was a messenger runner who theoretically ran from this battle on the plains of Marathon, this battle against the Persians that they, that the Greeks had had into Athens. And it was apparently 26.2 miles. And he gets into the town square and tells the people rejoice, we win, we won. And he collapses dead. And so that's the, that's the theoretical reason that everybody wants to do a marathon. I want to do the 26.2 miles that this guy did, but I don't want to die.

I want to come close to dying, but I don't want to die. Well, Pheidippides was actually an actual character or actual guy. And in the course of three days, he actually ran 306 miles. Back and forth to try and to get the Spartans to participate in this battle against the Persians on the Plains of Marathon. But the Spartans were having a holiday and they said, Nah, get out of here, pal. We can't, we can come Tuesday, but we can't come today. So then he had to run back and tell his generals, No, they can't come and we have to reconfigure our strategy. So he ran, actually ran 306 miles in a period of like three and a half days, took one nap in between.

So it's, if you really want to honor this guy you'd run 300 miles but be that as it may, what happened was a poet in the 19th century, this guy, Robert Browning co-opted the story and talked about this marathon experience that this guy did. And he and he went from the plains of Marathon where the battle was to Athens and then dropped dead in the poem. Well then in 1896 in the first Olympic Games de who was the guy who organized the game, said, we should have a marathon. We should honor this guy. And so the marathon was, they measured the distance from Athens to Marathon, and it was 25 miles. So the first marathon was 25 miles.

Well, then 1908 in the London Games, the Queen wanted the race to start at Windsor Palace and finish at the Olympic Stadium. Well, that was 26.2 miles. So then it became 26.2 miles and that became the standard. So it got this, it was all over the place. What was this about? It was honoring the sky Pheidippides and what was the distance? And so it became 26.2 miles,

like, like on a, almost on a bar room bet. But that's what, but that's what people plunked their money down to do today.

SHAWN STEVENSON: For me, reading this story in your book. The part that jumped out to me was the drop dead part.

MARK SISSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: At the end like why don't I don't want that like why are we aspiring to do with this?

MARK SISSON: Well, and also.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Go ahead.

MARK SISSON: No, what's interesting is most people who finish a marathon whether you're the elite, you know the top podium finisher or back of the pack. If you showed up at the hospital the next day and drew blood and had a blood work, blood panel done. They would think that you would maybe had a heart attack the day before. So it's that devastating an undertaking to most people to engage in a marathon. That's why I say, look, if you want to do a marathon once in your life, knock yourself out, literally. And maybe two, but maybe if you had a good time the first time and then you want to run faster the second time, go for it.

But if you're a man and you haven't broken three hours by the second time. That's not your sport. Like, find another sport that's more fun. Don't beat yourself up doing this every day. There's lots of other ways to do it. And again, we get back to what is the original reason that people want to do this? They say, if you say, Mark, I want to be stronger and leaner and fitter and happier and healthier and more productive, what's the best way to do that? I would say the last thing you want to do is start running. Okay, there's a lot of other, there's 50 other things that you can do that are going to be more effective in making in, and you and I go back, as far as we go back, saying 80 percent of your body composition is determined by?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Your diet.

MARK SISSON: Your diet. So, to think that you can run off a bad diet, that you can somehow exercise away a bad eating strategy, that doesn't work. We know that now, after decades of that. So, if 80 percent of your diet, of your body composition happens as a result of your diet, And you're engaging in whatever activity you choose to refine that last 20 percent ain't going to be running because we talk about body composition being largely, muscle mass, low body fat competence across a wide variety of different metrics. So not just your VO2 max, but. Your dead hang time, your ability to maybe deadlift your body weight, how long can you hold a plank, how fast can you run a mile, I mean, again, toe strength, big toe strength. All of these different metrics are what comprise a healthy individual, a strong, fit, lean, happy, healthy individual.

So if you're a runner and you say, well, I'm 60 years old and my VO2 max is in the top 1%, I'm like, okay, that means nothing to me, because VO2max is just one metric. I would rather be in the top 10 percent of VO2max deadlift capability, dead hang from a bar, time, plank, whatever other metrics, speed, sprint speed I'd rather be in the top 10 percent of all of those than focus everything on being in the top 1 percent of VO2 max. But not be able to dead hang for 30 seconds, not be able to go ski because I'm afraid I'm going to twist a knee because of all my running.

So there's a, part of me is suggesting that unless you're an elite, elite, racing athlete, pick a, pick, have a fun life, enjoy your activities, and don't struggle and suffer and sweat and groan and strain and get injured, in the pursuit of some ephemeral goal that probably isn't going to happen as a result of the choice you just made anyway.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Final question. Yeah. How much walking is ideal? Do you give us any insight?

MARK SISSON: Yeah, I mean, as much as you can do. There are people I know who do 20, 000 steps a day. I, that's great. I mean, I don't, I would say there's maybe a sweet spot. What I talk about is minimum effective dose. Like, there's a point at which the benefits continue to accrue, but they're just not as drastic as the original first, four or five hours that you do. So if you can find six hours a week of walking, but then, take your phone calls pacing up and down

on the, on the phone. Or get a treadmill at work or a desk, a tread desk. Find a group at work that, that on lunch break you, 20 minutes to eat lunch. Go walk for 40 minutes for the rest of the drop your kids off at school. When you're taking your kids to school, park like, a mile away and walk the last mile with your kids and get them involved.

Park at the end of the parking lot when you go to Costco. I mean, there's all ways in which and what's interesting is, one, one final note about that. Like, people will say, well, Mark, is one 50 minute walk better than then five ten minute walks spread throughout the day. And the answer is no it's probably better to do the five ten minute walks because With the 150 minute walk the mindset is I did my walk.

I'm done for the day. I don't have to move. Whereas now I'd rather you do that walk and move. But if the alternative is walk ten minutes to take a break walk ten minutes throughout the day. Now, you're moving throughout the day much of this is based on the concept of humans being, having a requirement to move constantly throughout the day. We are not designed to be sitting lying down on a sofa stand, even standing still at a stand up desk. We're designed to be moving throughout the day. So, yeah, find ways to move throughout the day.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Amazing. Right before we got started, my pedometer is sitting right over there. So I usually have that on nowadays, just tracking things. And what I found is that I get the most steps in on days that I'm lifting weights.

MARK SISSON: Interesting.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And this is because when I'm at the gym after I do a set, I usually walk around. I'm not doing anything unusual, it's just I had no idea. I get a few thousand more steps in, like literally 2, 500 to 3, 000 steps in on days that I'm lifting weights. And so, there's so many different ways to reframe, but you know, then again, there are people who sit there on their phone in between their sets, right? I just get up and.

MARK SISSON: I just, by the way, they sit on the, they sit on the equipment while they're checking their phone too.

Cause they're going to do three sets in a row. And that, that bothers me in the gym. You know what I'm talking about?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Of course.

MARK SISSON: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Of course. Yeah. Of course. The thing is it's one of those things and it's just blatantly here. And I think this is a paradigm changer and it's going to take a little work to get to our psyche. Because again, we believe that struggle is necessary for fitness. And nothing can be further from the truth. If you think about things that resonate with the word or the belief about health, struggle, pain, agony, injury. These things don't necessarily resonate with health versus joy, movement, fun, play, fun, play. All these things really are indicative and it's a change in our mindset. So Born to Walk is available right now. And people, what's the best place for people to pick up a copy and also.

MARK SISSON: Yeah, well, your favorite bookseller, I mean, Barnes Noble, Amazon it's coming out on Audible in the next week or two, that's a little late, but and then we have a website borntowalkbook.com and we have some free downloadable PDFs that are support behind this as well, for sure. Awesome.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Well, again, it's always amazing hanging out with you. You've been very influential, even when you're. You're the type of person and the work, and people don't know the amount of work you put in to create things like this and what you go through, but you do these things for us and you've become a staple in my life, even when you're not around, you're still around. I'm rocking the paloozas or I'm utilizing some primal kitchen chipotle mayo or whatever the case might be, or just the mindset shifts that you've provided me with over the years. And I just really appreciate you.

MARK SISSON: Thanks, man. I appreciate you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Awesome. The one and only Mark Sisson, everybody.

Thank you so much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. I love hanging out with Mark Sisson. One of my favorite memories in doing the Model Health Show was going to his place. Years ago in Malibu and sitting down to have a conversation with somebody is so impactful in the lives of so many people. And again, just to get that inspiration and to see what he's doing and where he's doing his things at, to get a look at his space and, just the way that he was communicating.

And I picked up so many things from that experience. Unfortunately his home that we recorded in all those years ago, was lost in a previous fire here in Los Angeles. And actually, as of this recording, Mark came in under really difficult circumstances because his daughter's home was lost. It was burned to the ground. And so he took some time still to come and hang out with me and to really support this mission and this education that he worked so hard for to help and serve people. And he has such a positive disposition about it because he knows that his daughter is okay because she's got him and they've got family.

If you got family, you've got everything. And so things can be rebuilt, but it's just about community and empowerment. And I highly recommend supporting Mark and his projects. Definitely pick up a copy of born to walk. And I'm telling you right now, fix your feet. We've got to get our feet together, our fitness, our function from the ground up. It's a game changer. Definitely check out peluva. Go to peluva.com/model. That's P. E. L. U. V. A.com/model. Use the code model and you'll get 15 percent off. I've been walking in the peluvas for over a year. All right, and again, I came into this with skepticism, all right, but I couldn't deny it over time and just seeing the changes in my health and my body and, just really helping again to rebuild our health from the ground up.

And for me to stand here today, over a year later and to say, like, I actually stand behind these shoes. Like again, it took me time, but that's just how I operate. I want to make sure that it's right. I want to make sure that it's done with integrity and the people behind it have integrity and Mark is definitely one of those people, so. Check them out, support yourself and your health and also support Mark in this new project, Born to Walk. Get yourself some Peluvas, take advantage of the discount.

We've got some amazing, oh my goodness, some amazing guests coming your way very soon, some powerful masterclasses. 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. You can find transcriptions, videos for each episode. And if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome. And I appreciate that so much and take care. I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.