



EPISODE 874

Sleep Smarter-Doctor's Pharmacy Repurpose

With Guest Dr. Mark Hyman

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SHAWN STEVENSON: Welcome to the Model Health Show. This is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. Thankfully, the importance of sleep wellness is becoming more and more a part of our culture, but we've got a lot of work to do. Just because we know something doesn't mean that we're doing that thing. Today, it's well established that our sleep quality has a deep, intimate impact on our body composition, on our cognitive function, on the health of our immune system, our cardiovascular function, our microbiome. And to put it all together, to sum it all up, on how long we're going to live. There was a 2012 study published in the journal PLOS ONE, looking at one of the most important biological markers that we have that determine how long we're going to live, which is our telomeres.

The researchers uncovered that being short on our sleep by being sleep deprived on a regular basis is associated with shorter Telomere length. So we're burning through our telomeres faster. So again, this is one of the most accurate biological markers that we have determining how long we're going to live. Our lifespan is directly associated with the length of our telomeres and we're just burning through them. It's like a fuse on a Bugs Bunny cartoon. Just lighting that bad boy going right to the dynamite. All right. But again, people are waking up to this. You see what I did there? Waking up, sleep, and I love it.

I'm so grateful for this because it's so important. It's one of the most human activities that we can do. This is something that's built into our genes. It's built into our DNA to sleep, to rest, to recover, to heal, because it's during sleep that is really known as this really glorified and powerful anabolic stage to be in growth, repair, recovery. We come back better when we allow ourselves to get adequate sleep. And so today I wanted to share some science to keep pushing this conversation forward. As of this recording, and I just saw this and this inspired this, we're at the 10 year anniversary of the first edition of my international best selling book, Sleep Smarter.

And so initially, and this was about 12 years ago, 11, 12 years ago, I was working in my clinical practice and working as a nutritionist and seeing people day in, day out, and getting their sleep dialed in, getting their nutrition dialed in.

But for some people, for a nice percentage of people, they were not getting the results that everyone else was getting, and it just had me, ironically, sometimes staying up at night trying to figure out, like, why can we not get this person's blood pressure down? Why can we not get this weight off? Why can we not resolve their Psoriasis or whatever the case might be and specifically when I'd seen so much success with people with similar cases through nutrition. Specifically and also movement practices addressing stress stuff like that. But eventually thankfully I started to ask people about their sleep quality and realizing through the years of work that I already done that most people want change, but they don't want to change that much to get it.

And so, helping them to improve their sleep quality without turning their world upside down, that inspired my research and putting together those science backed tactics where they can change their environment, oftentimes, or change very small things they're doing during the day to help them to sleep better at night. And so that led to the creation of the book. And I was talking to literary agents at the time. And also having conversations with publishers and most of them were like, you know what? This is a great idea and concept, but sleep books just don't do well. We really want to see more of like the next thing in nutrition or an exercise book or something like that.

And I just really was firm in knowing that this is what needs to be shared with the public. This is what's missing from the conversation about health and wellness. And at the time again, there had never been an international best selling book on sleep wellness. Well, I decided to put it out myself and at the time again, I was just sharing and wanting to get people healthy, educated, and inspired. And the amount of sales of that book, which I didn't have any context. I didn't know what a good number was. But once I had a conversation with another agent and told them the success of the book thus far on my own. Like, I saw his eyes get big. Like, he was like, what? And so, what happened after that was, I received 11 offers from publishers, including the big five publishers, to be able to redistribute and create a version of Sleep Smarter that I initially wanted to create.

All right, 11 offers. And so it went from like, nah, this, people are not really interested in this, to like, this is a game changer and we want to be a part of it. Since then many books have

come out addressing sleep wellness, including many of my friends and colleagues, but Sleep Smarter was the book to set it all off. And I'm so grateful for this. I'm grateful that this was allowed to come through me. That life allowed for this to take place through me because I had no idea. I was just doing what felt right with my spirit. And so being at this 10 year anniversary of that edition, the initial edition, in about a year, we're going to hit the 10 year anniversary of the major distributed version of sleep smarter.

So I'm sure that we'll do some special things around that. But today I want to share with you a conversation that I had on sleep wellness with strategies, with some of the science on how it impacts our metabolic health and body fat, for example, that I had with one of my greatest mentors prior to opening my own clinical practice. And just even right around when I was finishing up my degree, I was studying him online and he invited me out to his place in New York City to interview me about sleep wellness and it was just one of the coolest experiences and a real full circle moment. And so i'm beyond grateful to be able to share this with you today. Now one of the biggest revelations that i've had in the past 10 years on improving and protecting our sleep quality is the impact of the air quality in our bedroom while we sleep.

It's something that most of us just don't think about and we take it for granted because it's something that we can't see. But our ability to breathe and the air in our environment, it is the number one nutrient. It's the number one life giving force that we have. And unless there's a blatant breathing problem, We can overlook this, but our bedrooms are very often sealed spaces that are swimming with pollen, mold spores, dust, environmental pollutants, volatile organic chemicals from the off gassing of our furniture and our beds as well. Byproducts from cleaning products and literally billions of other particulates that are sealed into our bedrooms with us. And it's not always feasible for us to crack a window and use a fan. But if we can, we should, but something that I'm advocating for all of us to do is to get a proven air purifier into our bedrooms as part of our sleep sanctuary, because instead of being able to fully relax and go into our parasympathetic nervous system and go through our sleep cycles, efficiently. Our bodies are battling with the air quality In particulate matter in our bedrooms at night, and we don't realize it.

We live today in these new homes with all of these newly invented chemicals and chemical complexes that have been used to make all the building materials and all the stuff, just stuff and stuff and stuff in our house, and we don't realize the impact that it's having on our air quality. So how do we know a high quality air purifier works to improve our sleep quality at night? Well, a recent study was done measuring objective sleep data from 100 participants, including several physicians. The researchers analyzed their sleep quality without having an air purifier, and they measured their sleep quality with the most effective sleep friendly air purifier on the market called a Jaspr.

After compiling the data, when participants used the Jaspr air purifier while they slept, they spent 18 percent more time in the deepest, most anabolic stages of sleep. They improved their sleep latency by 5 minutes, meaning that they fell asleep faster. And they slept for about 25 more minutes on average. There's a difference between being in your bed and being unconscious and actually going through your sleep cycles efficiently. And improving the air quality in our bedrooms is one of those things, it's overlooked, it's one of those things we set it and forget it. It changes the environment in a positive way, that just makes our sleep quality better.

Again, you don't know what you don't know, and I'm shocked. Myself, because I've already done so many things, "right". And my sleep quality is really great, but I'm shocked that my sleep has gotten even better! And what I've noticed personally is that I'm actually recovering faster and I'm sleeping again. This is for me personally. I'm sleeping a little bit less because my body is fully charged and ready to pop out of bed in the morning. When you put a Jaspr in your bedroom within about 30 to 45 minutes, the air is about 95 percent cleaner. Head over to [Jaspr.co/model](https://jaspr.co/model) and you'll get 200 off of your Jaspr today. Again, that's [Jaspr.co/model](https://jaspr.co/model). That's J A S P R. So Jaspr is spelled a little bit differently. It's J A S P R.C O/M O D E L. You'll receive 200 off today. Discounts automatically apply, but you can use a code model at checkout as well. Now, this is definitely an investment and with the quality of materials used, the high tech sensors and the data that Jaspr gives us and its pure cleaning power, Jaspr has been working diligently to get the price as low as possible.

But knowing what I know today, this is something that I would budget for and get into my home as soon as I can. And please don't make the mistake of settling for random air purifiers because they simply are nowhere near as powerful, or as effective as Jaspr. You need to put like five or six run of the mill 200 air purifiers and run them on their highest speed all the time to remotely match what one Jaspr does. And doing that with the five or six random air purifiers is going to be noisy, it's going to create a lot of clutter, and it still will not match the capabilities of Jaspr. Jaspr filters 99 percent of particles down to 0.1 microns. It is a three stage filter with air scrubber technology. It captures hazardous mold, bacteria, and other pathogens. It's whisper quiet. It has a fantastic dimmer, which I really love, which is great for your sleep sanctuary. And it has a lifetime warranty. Again, go to [Jaspr.co/model](https://jaspr.co/model) and use the code model for 200 off right now. And now let's get to the Apple podcast review of the week.

ITUNES REVIEW: Another five star review titled Best Podcast Ever by Birdieboo22. I've been a listener for about four years and finally getting around to leaving a review. Mainly because I'm not sure I can accurately explain how amazing this show is. I've learned so much, found so many amazing products I now love, found so many great books to read, and followed so many of the amazing guests from the show. I imagine people around me get tired of hearing me say, Oh my God, I learned something so good on my favorite podcast. But really, I hope it leads them to become a listener. Because honestly, I think everyone should listen to find ways to become better, healthier, and more well informed versions of themselves. Thank you for all your research, your books, finding the best guest, making the information entertaining and easily understandable. Just thank you.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You just gave me life. You have no idea. That really hit my heart. Thank you so much for sharing your voice over on Apple podcast. I truly, truly, truly do appreciate that. And if you have to do so, please pop over to Apple podcast and leave a review for the model health show really does mean a lot. And without further ado, let's get to this very special episode of the Model Health Show where I'm being interviewed by one of the leading physicians in the world. Truly one of the pioneers in integrative and functional medicine, Dr. Mark Hyman. He invited me over to his place in New York. I was out doing some media and he invited me to stop by. Again, this is when Sleep Smarter is really just taking off and, so this was a few years back and it was such an affirmation moment for me to understand my impact

that I've had on somebody that's impacted me so much. And we've been working together and doing things for many years ever since. And I'm so grateful for that, but this conversation is so rich with insights. I wanted to share with you because number one, we're going to talk about why it matters, right? So looking at some of the data around our sleep and our metabolic health, right?

How our sleep impacts our body composition and our ability to burn fat. We're also going to talk about some truly science backed tips to improve your sleep quality starting tonight. Including the best time of day to exercise to dramatically improve your sleep quality. We're also going to mention why sex is somehow often referred to as sleeping together. We're going to cover the impact of meditation on sleep and also a type of moving meditation that's been found to significantly impact Melatonin metabolism and so much more. All right, so I think that you're truly going to enjoy this conversation. This was my appearance on the Doctor's Farmacy with the one and only Dr. Mark Hyman. Enjoy

DR. MARK HYMAN: Welcome to the Doctor's Farmacy. I'm Dr. Mark Hyman. That's Farmacy, FARMACY, a place for conversations that matter. And we have a great conversation today with Shawn Stevenson that really matters about a number of things, including sleep. We're going to get into that. Shawn is the author of the international bestselling book, Sleep Smarter, which is important for all of us because sleep is underrated and very important. He has been featured in Entrepreneur Magazine, Fast Company, Forbes, Men's Health Magazine, The Dr. Oz Show, ESPN, CNN, many other ends. And many other media outlets. So you can go find more about Shawn at themodelhealthshow.com. So Shawn, welcome to the Doctor's Farmacy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Such a pleasure to be here.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Well, you're quite an amazing guy. I've done your podcast a bunch of times and you always know way more than I think most physicians and experts then someone who's actually come from a background is really around sports and fitness. And it's just kind of amazing. Your expertise goes so deep and I wish most doctors knew what you do. And the truth is we've sleeping two hours less than we did a hundred years ago per night. And that is

interesting stat. And also the quality of sleep is terrible and tens of millions of Americans have sleep problems. And it's something that we don't really deal with very well in medicine. We say, Oh, take Ambien or Ativan or take Xanax.

Whatever. And those have serious consequences and they reduce the quality of your life. They increase mortality. They increase the likelihood of cognitive impairment and cognitive dysfunction, dementia. I mean, these are real issues where people are dependent on these pills. So how do we get from our sleep deprived and disrupted sleep culture? What's causing it to fixing it?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Hmm. That's such a great question. You know, today, more than ever, there is, there's a epidemic for sure with sleep deprivation. And we're seeing this show its face in so many different areas. I think the first step is actually understanding the value of sleep. And so, for example, you know, real talk, nobody's waking up in the morning like, you know what, I want to look terrible today. You know, everybody wants to look good. And if we understood just how much. Our sleep quality affected our body composition. I think it would start to push that conversation forward. So there was a really cool study that was done at the university.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So sleep and weight are connected.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh my goodness. University of Chicago did a really fascinating study. So they took folks and they put them on a calorie restricted diet, which is what I was taught to do in a university setting, which doesn't necessarily work by the way.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Exactly.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But they put them on this calorie restricted diet and during one phase of the study, they allowed them to get eight and a half hours of sleep. So sufficient sleep. Another study, another phase of the study, same people, same exact diet. They're not cutting any more calories. They're not exercising more or less and now they sleep deprive them. So then now they're getting five and a half hours of sleep. They take three hours away. At the

end of the study, they compiled all the data and they found that when folks were getting a sufficient amount of sleep, they lost 55 percent more body fat. Just from sleeping.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. And I didn't say weight. They lost actual fat mass. Not muscle. Which is crazy. Like how, I'm not saying you're doing like eight days a week CrossFit, right? You're just sleeping better. And the question for me is immediately like, Oh my goodness, how, how is that happening? And so it's during sleep that we release. This is crazy, melatonin, just super glorified sleep hormone, which it really isn't that. It's kind of a regulator of your circadian rhythms, period. But it actually is a really profound fat burning hormone as well. So the journal of pineal research found that melatonin is..

DR. MARK HYMAN: That's that a gland in your head that releases melatonin. It's like..

SHAWN STEVENSON: Pineal gland, correct? Which that's not the only place. So we'll get back to that in a moment.

DR. MARK HYMAN: It's like your third eye gland basically.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So the pineal gland.

DR. MARK HYMAN: And the response to light and all the artificial light and the fact that.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It suppresses it, it has to have darkness. So the journal of pineal research found that melatonin increases your mobilization of something called Brown adipose tissue, or brown fat. And this is a type of fat that actually burns fat, right?

DR. MARK HYMAN: That increases your metabolism.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes. And the reason it's brown versus the white adipose tissue is kind of the stuff we think about when we're trying to get rid of fat. Brown adipose tissue is brown because it's so dense in mitochondria, right? These kind of energy power plants I know you've

talked about many times on the show. But it's such a metabolically active tissue. And so if you're not getting adequate sleep, you're not producing that hormone nor you get your greatest secretion of human growth hormone during sleep. This is the most, it's also known as the youth hormone in a way.

DR. MARK HYMAN: It's the Repair hormone.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Kids have so much HGH. This is why they have so much energy. It's muscle sparing and also it's a big component of you healing.

DR. MARK HYMAN: And recovering.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so you're missing out on that and Cortisol, that's another one. So if you're sleep deprived one of the very first things we see is an increase in your cortisol levels.

DR. MARK HYMAN: That's the stress hormone.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly. Exactly and cortisol has this interesting ability to literally break down the muscle that you're working so hard to build.

DR. MARK HYMAN: It's terrible.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Gluconeogenesis, a process called gluconeogenesis, break down your valuable muscle tissue and turn it into fuel because it's this stressed, hyper, alert, cautious, dangerous state your body thinks you're in because you're sleep deprived. And I can go on and on. I'll show one, share one more.

DR. MARK HYMAN: I always stop there. I always say stress is bad because when you have high cortisol, it does everything you don't want, right? It shrinks your memory center in your brain, causes Alzheimer's. It causes you to lose muscle and gain fat. It causes your sex hormones to get screwy. It has so many horrible effects and it's not worth getting stressed about stuff that doesn't matter. You know, like stuff, there's stuff that does matter that you

have to worry about. But the truth is most of the things we react to and stress about are just our beliefs or thoughts and not really real, right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's a, and I even focused on that as well because a lot of folks have what we call clinically just a lot of inner chatter. You know, the brain is a very vocal and kind of noisy organ, you know? And so the great thing is, a lot of our needs are met, especially if people are listening to this right now.

DR. MARK HYMAN: It's like the crazy ant that lives in your head, you know?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. Right. But we have so many things covered in our lives that our ancestors didn't have to worry about, but the human mind is so expansive so we can manufacture things to worry about and that worry can push us. And I often tell people, you know, when people are coming into my clinic that you can overeat your whey fat, you can under exercise your whey fat or under move your whey fat. You can under sleep your whey fat and you can also overstress your whey fat for sure. It has a huge component for our overall health and our body composition too.

But I was going to share Stanford University. They found that just one night of sleep deprivation has a dramatic effect on suppressing leptin. Right? And that's that kind of glorified hunger hormone. I mean, I'm sorry, satiety, satiation hormone. And ghrelin on the other side has this uptick and that's that hunger hormone, right? So just one night.

DR. MARK HYMAN: And it makes you crave a ton of carbs.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I want to ask you this. I was going to say. I know you've been up late before.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Oh yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But I don't know if it's me or if anybody else listening, have you ever been up at like two o'clock in the evening? Maybe at a party, maybe just kicking back, watching TV. And you're like, you know what? I really want a salad right now.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Nope.

SHAWN STEVENSON: No, no. If that's ever happened, please inform me. I don't get a craving for broccoli. I want salty, sweet, crunchy, like I want, yes, yes. Because your brain is literally starving for glucose. Just one night of sleep deprivation. We're seeing about a 14 percent reduction in glucose reaching your brain.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah, I know. It's true. I remember working many nights in the emergency room, delivering babies, being up all night. And then exhale. All you wanna do is eat carbs and sugar. You know, I'd go to McDonald's and get the apple turnovers and the french fries like in the middle of the night.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh, the apple turnovers.

DR. MARK HYMAN: It was the only thing that was open in the hospital.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Two for 99 cents.

DR. MARK HYMAN: It was only closed between two in the morning and six in the morning. Otherwise it was open 20 hours a day. It was the only thing open in the hospital. Can you leave it? And I would go. You know, be sleep deprived and stay up all night. And I, I totally craved carbs.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Wow. And you did that work on that food. And now what you're made of now and the work that you're doing, it's just like exponentially, you see that. I thought about this the other day, we're putting folks in space on vending machine consciousness, right?

DR. MARK HYMAN: Astronaut food.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Just imagine if we can get people on really healthy, real food and what we can create as humanity. It's exciting.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So what's exciting about your book about sleep is that you, you break it down. You talk about 21 strategies that are very specific to actually fix your sleep because I'm sure many people are listening. Maybe even half or more have sleep issues, whether it's not enough sleep, whether it's disrupted sleep, whether it's poor quality sleep, whether it's other more serious things like sleep apnea. People often don't know they have it. So can you walk us through some of the key strategies and what really matters?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Sure. So I've been really. Working to press this into public awareness for about five years now. And this was because seeing people in my office coming in and, you know, they're struggling with their blood sugar, for example, and we had about right around 75 percent success rate with, you know, getting folks off. You know, lisinoprials and metformins and all this and working along with their doctors.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Blood, sugar and blood pressure pills.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. And here's the thing that 25 percent of folks who weren't getting those results, ironically, that would really bother me. And I know you've probably felt the same thing. Yeah. Ironically.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Kind of 20 percent that what are you, what are you missing? Right.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so it took about five years in practice, maybe a little longer before I had the audacity to ask, how was your sleep?

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And what people would tell me blew my mind. I couldn't believe they're even sitting there.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so, And this is another thing that we know is that folks don't really want to change too much to get the result they want, and I knew that. And so I just dug into

the research and I wanted to find clinically proven strategies that people don't have to turn their world upside down. And once I implemented those with the patients I was working with, it's like the floodgates would come off, the weight would finally come off, their blood pressure would finally come down, their symptoms of depression would start to dissolve. And I was just like, this is really something special, I need to tell more people about this,. And so eventually it's compiled into these 21 strategies, and for me, again, some of these things are going to be a reminder for folks today, but I want to talk about something that a lot of folks still don't have a big awareness of, and this is the fact that your gut and the health of your microbiome has a huge impact on your sleep quality.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So your poop and sleep are connected? What a concept!

SHAWN STEVENSON: In a way.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Okay, let's dig into that one.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Don't do the two together.

DR. MARK HYMAN: No, that's not a good thing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: You know, that's called accident city.

DR. MARK HYMAN: That's gonna blow people's mind and even my mind. Tell us how the microbiome and your gut affects your sleep and what you can do about it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Absolutely. So let's start with a basic component. And I know, again, these are going to be things people have heard about before, probably on your show, but let's start with serotonin.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So it's pretty well known.

DR. MARK HYMAN: By the way, there's more serotonin in your gut than there is in your brain.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly. Upwards of 80 to 90 percent of your body serotonin is actually located in your gut produced by your enterochromaffin cells, by the way. All right.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So those are, those are special cells in your intestinal lining.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes.

DR. MARK HYMAN: I'm just translating all the big words. See?

SHAWN STEVENSON: I like that. We're like flipping places because I would do this for you. So here's what's so interesting is that serotonin, we talked about melatonin being important for our sleep and our circadian rhythm. Serotonin is a precursor or a seed to make melatonin. So already right off the bat, your gut environment, these cells in your gut are helping to make this compound that's related to your sleep quality. And with melatonin, is what I want to liken it to. It's like that manual gear shifter for you to go through your sleep cycles properly and to actually get recovered. You need melatonin to be produced. And we'll come back to that. So that's number one serotonin.

DR. MARK HYMAN: You can't just take melatonin?

SHAWN STEVENSON: I'll answer that in a moment.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Okay. Okay.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's tricky. So, well, I'll just, I'll just tell you, so I looked around because some of our colleagues would feel that, and this was just a theory that if you take supplemental melatonin, it's going to you reduce your body's ability to produce it itself. And that's actually I couldn't find that anywhere. There was no evidence of that. What I did find was taking supplemental melatonin taking too much or too frequently can downregulate receptor sites for melatonin. So your body can still produce it. But the receptor sites that actually do something with the melatonin can get downregulated.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So the key is there but the lock isn't.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, so you we do need to be mindful of that and we can come back and talk about that. But here's the biggest probably aha moment hopefully of this episode is that it's not just serotonin that's producing the gut. And so check this out. And I just came across this. I'll share this with you today. This was in the world journal of gastroenterology. Listen to this. They found that there's upwards of 400 times more melatonin in your gut than in your brain. Because you talked earlier about the pineal gland. That's what I was taught in school. It's produced by pineal gland in the story. This study found that you can actually have a pinealectomy, which is a removal of your pineal gland, which I don't recommend, by the way. Don't do that. But.

DR. MARK HYMAN: It's like a frontal lobotomy, you know, go, go there.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And you don't, and you don't actually lose those levels of melatonin that's located in your gut right.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So you're a gut brain and a brain brain.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly. And that, that's, that's something really important to understand too. Your gut is really, it's often referred to as a second brain. You know, it's, we can call it the enteric nervous system. There's like 30 neurotransmitters, just like your brain. It's like a mass of nerve tissue.

DR. MARK HYMAN: 60 percent of your immune system and most of the genes in your body as well. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That vagus nerve. So UCLA researchers found that. The vagus nerve, which we thought was just kind of like the brain communicating more, telling the gut what to do. 90 percent of those, the communication from those nerve fibers from the vagus nerve to the brain is your belly, your gut telling your brain what to do in many ways. Totally nuts.

DR. MARK HYMAN: And the other thing people should know is that when you're stressed, not only is your cortisol high and you lead to more fat accumulations towards belly fat. But it actually, it blocks your cells ability to burn calories because the nerves in the vagus nerve help you metabolize your food, which is a relaxation nerve. It also has the effect of decreasing absorption of nutrients. So not only are you not absorbing, but your, your, your metabolism just slows down, which is amazing. It's just because of the nervous connection between your stress nerves and your, and your relaxation nerves and all your gut functions.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's so profound, but this is just getting out of that isolation thinking, you know, that's what I was taught in school as well. It's like .

DR. MARK HYMAN: That's functional medicine. The body's a system.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes. Everything is interconnected and it's just a beautiful symphony if everything's working well. So, Caltech researchers to kind of get to how does this all connect? They discovered that, and this was just, I mean, it's just been around for years, but this is more of a recent, like, okay, meta analysis. Now we know that certain bacteria in the gut communicate with cells that produce these sleep related hormones and neurotransmitters. So your gut cascade, your microbiome, has a huge impact on your sleep quality. And so now the question is, what do we do about it? How do we protect or support our microbiome?

And that's one of the things that's going to help improve your sleep quality. So let's just go through a couple. The biggest thing in my opinion is avoiding things that mess it up. So one of those would be eating processed foods. So that crazy amount of sugar has a tendency to feed pathogenic opportunistic bacteria, right. So that's one thing avoiding haphazard use of antibiotics. They have a place, but we shouldn't be using antibiotics every time you get the sniffles, right? And that's literally what when I was a kid just give him some antibiotics, right? We would even like if my mom had some antibiotics, you know, just totally negligent.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah, give him whatever's in the cupboard.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Also pesticides, herbicides, rodenticides. Heavy metals. These things, side literally means to kill by the way, but these have a pretty, because they're meant to kill small things. Guess what? Your microbiome is made of, you know. And so..

DR. MARK HYMAN: How many millions and millions of people are taking acid blockers? Which also terribly disrupt your gut microbiome.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, we're looking at that the wrong way as well. And so just avoiding those things But also what I want people to do is support their microbiome by, you know. And this is should be just Captain Obvious at this point and me working at a university for so long as a strength and conditioning coach before I did my clinical work. I work with people from all over the world and I would ask them about their fermented foods and every culture had something.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. So whether it was like some kind of kefir or like, you know pickled whatever right? And so making sure that we're getting us at least, you know every couple of days get a serving in of some fermented food or beverage.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Gotta eat the kimchi.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

DR. MARK HYMAN: I got a jar in my fridge.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I love kimchi and my mother in law makes it for me and she's from Kenya. So they had like fermented a fermented, like kind of similar to kombucha, like she knew about this, like 20 years ago. And I'm like, what is this weird stuff she's growing in the kitchen? It's freaking me out. She had grass. Like first time I came to visit and they were growing grass, you know, like it was wheat grass. But I was like, Hey, why's your mom got grass in here? She get it. I didn't know. So anyways, I didn't know. But that is a big component here is like, shifting gears and having a more targeted perspective about supporting that gut

microbiome, but also, and this is a really cool takeaway for everybody today, is making sure we're getting in servings of what I call good sleep nutrients every day.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah, what is that? Cause eating first sleep, nobody really talks about that. So what does that look like?

SHAWN STEVENSON: The first one I'd share, and this one is from the public library of science. And so they found that vitamin C, which we know about vitamin C, we tend to associate it with the immune system, right? It's powerful antioxidant, but they found that folks in there in this particular study that were deficient in vitamin C had a tendency towards waking up more frequently. And getting vitamin C levels elevated, reverse their symptoms. All right. So that's just one example.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So iron is the other one. If you have a low ferrin. Ferrin is another one.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. That's, Oh my goodness. That's huge. And especially more so for women. It tends to be. And another one, this was published in the journal sleep. All right. This is the big journal, and what they found was calcium, right? And so this goes back to that story that I was told about calcium. It is important for sure. But folks who are deficient in calcium had more interrupted sleep patterns as well. And so by getting those calcium levels up, but how do we go about that? I'll just pass it over to you rather than drinking like homogenized, glow in the dark, you know, like from a mutant cow, like what other sources of calcium, calcium do we have?

DR. MARK HYMAN: Oh my God. You know, it's, when you look at the data on calcium, it actually isn't as great as we thought for bones, but the best absorbability and use is actually from greens like arugula and greens that we can have dark green leafy vegetables. Also, there's some great sources like tahini, which is basically ground sesame seeds. Also, different things people might like, I like, which is sardines with the bones in them and, and salmon with the bones in them, like canned salmon. Those are really great to eat because they have a lot of great absorbable calcium.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly. Calcium is kind of like an end product from this like biological transmutation. So bones have a great source of it, but.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Now people say, well, you don't, you need, you need milk. I'm like, well, where do you think a cow gets their calcium from? It has strong bones. Have you ever seen a cow bone? They eat grass. They should eat grass anyway.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's this really fascinating process. It's kind of like, like a biological transmutation of sorts where certain things come together to create bone, right? So like, you need silica. You need.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Boron.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Boron, right?

DR. MARK HYMAN: Vitamin K2, yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: All of these things come together to make this magic happen. So, and by the way, I want to give some sources with vitamin C. Obviously, we know about citrus. Fruits like strawberries, sweet peppers, but there are these quote superfoods as well, like camu camu berry. This might be the highest botanical source of vitamin C, super tart, tangy fruit. It's like a Amazonian thing, amla berry, acerola cherry. Those are super, super high sources of vitamin C. Another one, and this was, this is the last one I'll share. There's a whole list in Sleep Smarter.

So this was a study conducted by University of Oxford found that omega 3s can help folks to get deeper, more restful sleep. Alright, so it helps with those, modulating those rhythms which it makes sense because it has to do with your brain. Yeah, right your brain Has these gates, you know, you have the blood brain barrier, but the gate allows in certain VIPs, and it's only like 30 things right and one of those is a mega.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Well, you can have a leaky brain and then you get more trouble.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh my goodness.

DR. MARK HYMAN: You know about the leaky brain.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is like you're already you're getting into some territory . This is super fascinating stuff, right? Leaky gut leaky brain who knew? Right who knew. So exciting and also There's some researchers came across the brain. It kind of has its own nerve, immune system in a way.

DR. MARK HYMAN: It does. It has its own lymphatic system, which is like the clean the brain every night and guess how you do that?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Sleeping.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yep.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's 10 times more active.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah. I mean, we know if you, if you don't sleep, you're a much higher risk of Alzheimer's because you can't clear out the garbage and your brain gets toxic.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. It's fascinating. It's run by the glymphatic system.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So that's like a little shout out to the glial cells that help to run it. The body is just incredible. So eat plenty of good, good sleep nutrients every day.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Magnesium though.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh, that was the last one actually.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Okay. I was like, that's the first one I go to with my patients.

SHAWN STEVENSON: This is the big one. I was saving the best for last. I first learned about the benefits of magnesium, probably from you. And this was again, like you've been talking about this for like 15 years.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah. I'm getting old.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And, I was like, holy crap, because it's responsible for so many biochemical.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Oh my God. 300 enzymes.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so what that means for people, it's just like, so magnesium is responsible for these, well, now we know like over 325 processes. What that means is there are 325 things your body can't do or can't do properly when you're deficient on it.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And..

DR. MARK HYMAN: And it, by the way, magnesium deficiency affects 48 percent of Americans and it's caused by stress, chronic magnesium deficiency. It's caused by stress, it's caused by coffee, alcohol. And you know, not having enough in our diet, which comes from mostly plant foods, beans, greens, nuts and seeds.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, absolutely. And this is one of the things that we can do something about, but like you said, it's a, it's kind of like an anti stress mineral. And so just the amount of stress that we're exposed, even, even today, even our environment is stressful. It's different. You know, we're indoors a lot more, processed air, and we're not getting access to sunlight. Like, just our reality is more stressful. But then put on top of that our work demands, relationship demands. You know.

DR. MARK HYMAN: How would you know if you're magnesium deficient?

SHAWN STEVENSON: You can get a test done, you know, but I really always.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Most of the tests are very inaccurate. Red cell magnesium is better, but it's mostly symptomatic. And actually the way we really have to diagnose it is called a magnesium load, magnesium load test where you give people a high dose of IV magnesium and then you collect the urine for 24 hours. And if nothing comes out, it means their body sucked it all up. And if it all comes out, it means they have enough. So I think, you know, magnesium testing is tricky, so you got to go by the symptoms.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly. Exactly. That's the thing. And what I was going to say is I always err on the side of how do you look, feel, and perform, you know? And in my practice, there were only a couple supplements I would recommend. Magnesium was generally, and maybe for 80 percent of the people that came in. Because it, there's a such a tendency for people to be inefficient in it and so, but here's the issue. So food first, obviously. Anything green is gonna be a good source of magnesium.

So just keep that in mind. Kale, collard, mustard greens. But outside of that, supplementation can be tricky because we have this bowel tolerance. Right? So even if you take a little bit more than your gut can handle at that moment and you might need to really get your magnesium levels up, you're gonna activate what we call clinically disaster pants, which means the poop, potentially pooping in your sleep, right? Like the whole thing, this goes full circle.

DR. MARK HYMAN: It's a little accident, milk and magnesia, right? Magnesium citrate is what they give people before they have colonoscopies to clean out their bowels, right? It works.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, and there's different forms and some are going to be better for different people. But what I, I don't know if you've done this or looked into this, but like topical magnesium.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah, you can use topical magnesium. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's what I do. Even brought some with me when I travel. You know, keep it in my bag and I love it. I think it's fantastic.

DR. MARK HYMAN: It's important and people can, you know, overlook symptoms that are all caused by magnesium deficiency, right? Sleeplessness, insomnia, anxiety, palpitations, muscle cramps, menstrual cramps, seizures, you know, arrhythmias, palpitations, all those things are caused by magnesium deficiency. And it's interesting in medicine, we don't really think about it, but it's used as a "drug" in the worst cases because drugs don't work. For example Preterm labor someone comes in having a baby too early you give them intravenous magnesium.

Someone comes in and they're having high blood pressure and seizures in pregnancy, they give them intravenous magnesium. People have heart cardiac arrhythmia where their heart is beating crazy beats in the emergency room and none of the drugs work if you give them magnesium. It's pretty interesting and it's something we use all the time in medicine. We don't think about it in this way, but it is probably one of the most powerful things for sleep for people.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, absolutely and Oz told me that he would use it for open heart surgery. You know to keep that heart going that's, it's profound. Yeah, it's really profound.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So and it's it's sort of the relaxation mineral It's an antidote to stress.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We've got a quick break coming up. We'll be right back

This episode is brought to you by the incredible team at Organifi and their phenomenal superfood blends. Not only does their best selling green juice blend have the most powerful green superfoods. It also has a therapeutic amount of ashwagandha. A double blind randomized placebo controlled trial published in the journal of psychological medicine had test subjects with a history of chronic stress to consume ashwagandha or a placebo over the course of the month and a half long study period. The group that received ashwagandha exhibited a significant reduction in scores on all the stress assessment scales compared to the placebo group and the serum cholesterol levels of the test subjects were substantially

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DR. MARK HYMAN: So, besides the nutrients, the processed food, all this stuff we're eating, what are the other key tips that people need to know if they're not sleeping in? And what are the other causes of sleep issues? Cause you mentioned the gut microbiome being a cause, right? So you can take all this stuff and eat the right diet, but if you don't know what the cause is, like, so tell us about what the causes are that are common. And then what are the, what are the other key strategies to actually help people sleep?

SHAWN STEVENSON: That's such a good question. One of the biggest causes that I would see is having a upside down cortisol level or Abnormal cortisol rhythm. You know, so folks or having their cortisol too low in the morning making it very difficult to get out of bed.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Mm hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And then it's too high at night.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Mm hmm.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And so they're just like up and so this cortisol rhythm and by the way, so Cortisol has definitely gotten a pretty bad name and rightfully so, but it's not all bad.

You actually need cortisol to like make thyroid hormone. It's just if it's produced at the wrong time in the wrong amounts, then it could be a problem. And so to help folks to reset that cortisol rhythm, what we call a cortisol reset, this is super low hanging fruit and anybody can do this. This is so cool. And I've seen so much good success with this. Appalachian..

DR. MARK HYMAN: You're hanging on the edge of my seat here.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So Appalachian State University did a study and they went to find out, would the timing of your exercise affect your sleep quality? And so they took test subjects and they had them train exclusively at 7 a. m. for one phase, train exclusively at 1 p. m. in the afternoon, and then train exclusively at 7 p. m. for the final phase of the study. They compiled all the data and they found that morning exercisers, first of all, they tend to spend more time in the deepest, most anabolic delta stage of sleep by exercising in the morning.

They found that they had a tendency to sleep longer. They had more efficient sleep cycles overall and here's something cool. They also found that the morning exercisers on average had about a 25 percent greater drop in their blood pressure at night. Which is kind of correlated with that deactivation of that sympathetic fight or flight.

DR. MARK HYMAN: And one o'clock wasn't good?

SHAWN STEVENSON: 1 p. m. It was negligible in the change and they did see some benefit with the 7 p. m. Ironically, which you got to be careful with that because that might get your body temperature too high your cortisol can get elevated.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But I even have a children's book that I read to my son when he was little and they like take people take the kid through a bedtime ritual with the characters. One of their rituals like old timer type things is doing exercise before bed right? Like tire yourself out, I guess, is the approach that, you might think. And there's a difference between getting great high quality sleep and passing out from exhaustion. Right?

DR. MARK HYMAN: Because then people are tired and wired and they fall asleep and they wake up because their cortisol is so high.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly. Exactly. And so what we want to do and how does it work?

DR. MARK HYMAN: Work out in the morning.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It gets that cortisol rhythm. It gets that cortisol elevated in the morning to kind of put it back on track. Because it should be elevated if it's a normal rhythm somewhere around. At its peak, maybe eight to 10 a. m. and gradually drop as the day goes on. And so, but the question is, well, you know, maybe I can't. I have whatever in the morning, you know, kids, work, whatever. I work out in the afternoon, just five minutes, four minutes. You can do Tabata, right? 20 seconds of exercise, 10 seconds of rest. Set your phone timer. Incredible. First of all, you're gonna get some fat burning benefits, right?

And that post exercise oxygen consumption, right? You're gonna be burning more calories. But also it's going to help with your sleep quality at night. And so that's one of the big low hanging fruits, is just to get in at least five minutes of exercise in the morning.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Amazing. That's pretty cool.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So fix your gut, exercise in the morning, take the right supplements. What are the big things people can do?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Now this one is a little bit more common knowledge now. But the question really is, what are we doing about it? And this is our issue with our tech, right. This is like the most pervasive thing we're dealing with right now. And Harvard researchers have confirmed that the blue light spectrum coming from your iPhone, from your desktop, from your. They found that at night, this does in fact suppress melatonin production and elevate your cortisol. Not during the day. During the day, there's no impact. But at night, and here's

what they found, and this is just an approximation. Every hour you're on your device at night, you suppress melatonin for about 30 minutes.

So, you might be up on your device or watching TV for three hours and you go to bed because you're just physiologically exhausted or just like, I really should get to bed. You're not even producing adequate melatonin to take you through your sleep cycle for almost two hours into sleep. And so again, this is why we're waking up tired and we're not really getting high quality sleep is because we're destroying this process of producing melatonin.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So our friend Dave Asprey as he's Blue blocker glasses, what do you think of those that is that the real deal and all the things on your phone where it says night shift and yeah lux on your computer those really work or?

SHAWN STEVENSON: So I'm very big into like I need some proof. You know anecdotally, I love them when I put them on I get sleepy, you know I have my and I went through the spectrum because I..

DR. MARK HYMAN: Doing with glasses.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, I mean literally I was doing this like six years ago. I ordered some like wood shop like

DR. MARK HYMAN: They were the sexy ones they have now.

SHAWN STEVENSON: I don't know how my wife even liked me, you know, like if somebody came to my house in the middle of the night and was like, are you building a stool? So I went from that and I just gradually got some cooler ones. But we are starting to see data trickle in now that it does help with that kind of sleep onset and that feeling of being tired. And also potentially we're seeing a little bit evidence that it can help to make your sleep cycles more efficient. That's with the blue light blocking glasses. With the apps on the phone, we don't have anything yet. So, but that doesn't mean that they don't work. We just don't know yet. So.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Does it take out the blue light on the phone or not really?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, that's the, that's the question. Like, is it actually doing the job that it's saying it's doing? It's like, so anybody has an iPhone, for example. It's a tool that's built in night shift, you could set it and forget it. I do it, for the desktop laptops. Flux. I've been using that for about seven years probably.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Dot L U X. You can download it. It's free online.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. And it just takes out. Supposedly kind of cools your screen off, you know, well in essence warms it up. If we're looking at the Kelvin scale .

DR. MARK HYMAN: More orangey, but yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And you can easily, like if you're a designer, like you can just click a, click a button and then you can turn it off and turn it back on. But I've, again, just in my practice, so many people would say just by doing that, they would sleep better. They'd have less eye strain or headaches. And so these are things that keep in our back pocket.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So, it also speaks to the question of, you know, creating a great sleep environment and, you know, light and sound, but also, people are talking about EMS and wifi and electromagnetic frequency and effect of that and cell service. And there are people even going so far as to create Faraday cages around their beds or in their bedroom, which essentially means putting a special cage over your bed or in your room that blocks out all like lead, like a lead lining your room. And it says to block out all electromagnetic frequency is that real?

SHAWN STEVENSON: You're making yourself your own zoo animal. It's kind of, it's really interesting, you know? But.

DR. MARK HYMAN: I, for example, I notice when there's like a hurricane or a storm and the electricity goes out and the Wi Fi is off and the phone's out and the electric's out, it's like, I know I sleep way better.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. So truth be told, this is, I have my Wi Fi, I'm kind of out in the woods a little bit where I live. I live in the Midwest and I have a timer on my Wi Fi, it shuts off. The evening because we do have some evidence that this stuff is affecting us. We just don't know to what degree and it's so new. You know, humans, these, these waves exist but we're just now starting to really play with them in a major way.

And so, you know, even on flights, you know, it's just like that used to be the time I just kind of disconnect. Now I'm doing emails, you know, because we've got wifi exposure everywhere we go and just these electromagnetic fields. We don't have enough evidence, like long term data to know the impact. But so for people, and this is one of the biggest things as well, is. And when you mentioned earlier, and we talked about, you know, having that kind of eye protection, what I would really encourage people to do is to create an evening routine.

I think this is a huge key because we used to get ready for bed when we were kids, right? But then we get grown up, it's just like, forget it. Like I could do what I want. And it's literally, it's creating these neural associations in your brain. And so for you, if your bedroom, the sleep sanctuary you want to create, is the entertainment hub of your house where you're working in your bedroom or you're watching TV in your bed. Even if you have the intention of going to sleep, you're going to have neurons that are firing, expecting you to watch TV, right? And plus, here's something, this is just a little.

DR. MARK HYMAN: A lot of people watch stuff on their phones, on their computer.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right, anywhere. But I'm going to put this in parentheses. I know some people are going to take action immediately when I say this. There was a study done on, and this was Italian couples, and they were like, you know, in their 40s and 50s, and they found that these couples that have a television in their bedroom have 50 percent less sex.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Ooh, watching more on TV, but less in real life.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So, yeah, exactly, you know, and so I know some people have pauses to go get the television out of their room. Welcome back. You know, they just went and did it,

but it's a distraction. Also it just, because of the diminished sleep quality, there's a huge impact on your sleep quality. And your..

DR. MARK HYMAN: Your libido, your hormones.

SHAWN STEVENSON: yeah. And your ability to even produce sex hormones and the reverse as well. So your sex life also influences your sleep quality. And so when you have an orgasm.

DR. MARK HYMAN: You're talking about the big O in sleep.

SHAWN STEVENSON: The big O, yeah. . When you have an orgasm, we produce a cocktail of chemicals. So like prolactin and..

DR. MARK HYMAN: Oxytocin.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oxytocin, yeah. And so..

DR. MARK HYMAN: It's the love hormone.

SHAWN STEVENSON: We see this significant uptick. And by the way, so, with male test subjects, they saw prolactin increased about four times more. And this is also a big pathway to relaxation. Four times, four to ten times more prolactin produced when the male would have an orgasm with their partner versus having an orgasm by himself, right? And so this is what we see instead of like, you know, somebody has an orgasm, then they go get a bowl of cereal or whatever Versus if they're with their partner and they fall asleep and we actually have this term in culture called sleeping together, Right. And so there's this intimate connection there, but.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Oh its true, sleep together right?

SHAWN STEVENSON: That might be a part of your evening routine, but don't be so robotic about it. Like, you know, it is time for missionary. Right. I'm not saying to do that, but

understanding that, and what I would recommend people to do is to have a screen curfew ideally. And just 30 minutes. I'm not asking for everything, 30 minutes.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Well, people don't realize how much on their screen. I got this new app that's on the new iOS operating system, which is screen time. And it tells you what you're doing, how long you're on it, how many times you pick up your phone. I think it's a shock for most people. You know, my nephew was, was on his phone a lot and he didn't realize it. And he would write screen time to send me a report every day, you know, screen time, two hours. I'm like, all right, send me the screenshot of your screen time. And it was like seven hours a day. Oh man, that's crazy. A thousand pickups a day. You know, where you pick up your phone to look at.

SHAWN STEVENSON: That is insane, right?

DR. MARK HYMAN: It's insane.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And I don't think it's abnormal, you know? Right.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah. He's not at the highest end of the spectrum. He might, I don't know. I mean, I think it's, I would be interested to get the data from Apple and what the, I mean, if they actually would produce a study on the data, it would be fascinating.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But this is the big barrier of entry for when I say having a screen curfew is like, what do I do with my hands, Shawn? Well, what do I do in that 30 minutes before bed? Here's the thing, you have to do something just like with any habit, you have to replace it with something of greater or equal value. You can't just like screen curfew and just sit there and twiddle your thumbs or do something that you hate. And so this could be getting lost in a great book. This could be, audiobooks are fantastic. You don't have to stare at your screen for that.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Listen to my podcast or your podcast.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Perfect. Right? Go to bed with that kind of knowledge, you know, just processing in your mind or hanging out with your loved ones, your significant other. Maybe you can actually talk to your partner. I know this is revolutionary what I'm talking about. But maybe you can actually have that intimate connection and possibly that can lead to an intimate connection, you know. For me, I have a practice where it varies from time to time, but right now I'm doing a little bit like some foam rolling, right? Kind of trying to encourage that sympathetic system activation, right?

DR. MARK HYMAN: Hot bath.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Hot bath. Magnesium bath. Yes.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Epsom salt, which is magnesium.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Help set yourself up for victory, you know, these simple practices and you're going to find number one, you're going to sleep better, but then your, your mornings are going to get better. A great morning really starts the night before. You know, and that's kind of one of the last points I want to share is that a great night of sleep Starts the moment you wake up in the morning So I already shared about the exercise but also just getting some access to sunlight a light exposure. So we want to avoid Artificial light at night and get more natural light during the day.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Right. And it can be a especially, you know, we're in New York City right now It can be a little bit of a challenge, you know, so there are hacks to it. But especially during the times of year that we can.

DR. MARK HYMAN: There's satellites, you know, the full spectrum lights. You can watch your face in for 20 minutes if you can't get it's a little thing you can buy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yep. There's so many different things even just basic light boxes that are prescribed for like seasonal affective disorder. This is like clinically proven to work. Yeah, right. I thought you're talking about the new infrared stuff.

DR. MARK HYMAN: No, no the light boxes

SHAWN STEVENSON: Oh, yeah, the new infrared stuff is really cool as well. So there are many different options. They've got visors. They've got earbuds You know, there's so many different things But the very best thing is just getting connected to nature, getting some natural light. And here's why. Innovations in clinical neuroscience found that getting sun exposure in the morning helped people to sleep better at night because folks that were getting adequate sunlight had a greater drop in cortisol levels in the evening. Right? So getting that sunlight helps to reset that cortisol rhythm. Yeah. And the question is..

DR. MARK HYMAN: Pineal gland too.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes. Are you taking advantage of it? And sunlight triggers your body to produce more serotonin. You know, and the list goes on and on. These really basic things, are we doing it? Because if we're not and then wondering why we're struggling with our sleep, these are the things we need to address first before we jump to something dramatic.

DR. MARK HYMAN: So is your experience that people follow these 21 strategies for optimizing your sleep that they can overcome their sleep issues?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Man, I've received the most, now it's published in about 20 different countries.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Amazing, Sleep Smarter, great book.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah, and I've, I received the most incredible messages like literally . Man, it just, it's, it kind of gets me choked up sometimes because I, I was passionate about this, but I didn't know the impact that was going to have. You know, and, people, I mean just message people with struggling with their sleep, you know, 10, 20 years and you know just

applying some of these things because the thing is just we don't know what we don't know oftentimes. And also giving people making it fun as well to learn about this because let's be real sleep isn't a sexy topic. The neck the dune diet or exercise program, the Brazilian butt workout, whatever that's sexy.

DR. MARK HYMAN: You can get a better butt by sleeping better. Sleeping smarter.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Exactly and so making this Making it something that people really look forward to and they're They're excited about is really what I set out to do. And I, I think I've done it. So I'm really, really happy about that.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Oh, that's amazing. So, if, you know people are gonna start today, what are the, the top five things that they should focus on in sleep?

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah. We can just go in order. So number one, low hanging fruit. Get that five minutes of exercise in the morning, at least to help the reset that course.

DR. MARK HYMAN: That seven minute workout in New York times.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Great.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah. Even that, you know, it's just like, they're really.. Turn on michael jackson and turn the thing on a timer, 30 seconds, 12 exercises, 10 second break in between.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Or you could just put on the Michael Jackson and like moonwalk and try to, well, try to be right. It's more like a sun walk. A lot of people do. But, so that's number one is yes, waking up and getting some movement in. The second thing would be to, if at all possible, get some exposure to natural light, natural sunlight. If not, then some artificial lights that we have access to that do the best job possible. Do that just to keep that rhythm on pace. The third thing would be. And this goes back to kind of creating that sleep sanctuary, you know.

We want to create a strong neural association with your sleep. And so make your bedroom a place where relaxation takes place. And it's not like the place you're like hanging out watching TV and doing your work. Keep that stuff outside your bedroom.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Sleep and sex, that's it.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes, the double S. Right. Happens to be my initials as well. I'm just throwing it out there.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Sleep smarter, Shawn Stevenson. The sex and sleep.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Who knew? Who knew? So those three, so create a sleep sanctuary. The fourth thing would be to make sure that we're taking care of our gut microbiome. And eating plenty of good sleep nutrients. It's of the utmost importance because, as we've talked about, a lot of your sleep quality is resulting from what's happening in your, in your belly. Alright? And the final thing would be, and I think we've been kind of teetering on this throughout this conversation, we need to have a practice to kind of calm that inner chatter. And so a study that was published in the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, published by them, found that meditation in the morning, it actually helps to improve sleep quality at night and improve sleep latency.

So folks fell asleep faster. They had more efficient sleep cycles and they tended to sleep longer and many of the people in this study had chronic sleep issues. You know, so effectively having a solution for Insomnia what we label as insomnia without drugs, right and we have access to this like this is something we can all do and so. But I want to also point Folks too, this doesn't mean you have to just sit in a closet with the lights off and like, you know, Ohm, which is cool. Like I, I, the, the humming and the, it just depends on you, you know, what kind of flavor of..

DR. MARK HYMAN: Meditation in the car.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Mindfulness practices. There's also research indicating mindfulness practices help.

Qi Gong. I find that for folks that have a really busy mind, really. Active kind of hyperactive folks just by nature do really well with tai chi and qigong and there's great research indicating how those are effective. With qigong there was a study done that found that um Folks who did the qigong practice had more melatonin metabolites like basically their body was either processing it or are using it better.

And that's really fascinating in itself. And these things have been done thousands of years. Ambien was made like yesterday, right? And so having a practice to kind of calm down, calm this inner chatter, because what we want at the end of the day is for all of us, even to be successful today, we're going to have a lot of tabs open on the computer screen of our mind, which is great because we're able to communicate and have solutions and interact. But when we go to sleep, we would just want one window open and that's a sleep window

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: So to be able to minimize those windows I think it takes a practice and it's called a practice of brain training and we call it meditation today. But, so finding a practice that really vibes with you and incorporating that on a regular basis is going to help your sleep quality.

DR. MARK HYMAN: It's so powerful. I know a friend of mine, Emily Fletcher, who's going to be on this podcast, created a company called Ziva Meditation where she teaches meditation online and in person. But she, she was a Broadway star and had anxiety and insomnia and got turned on to meditation. It changed her life and she change their career to share it with everybody. And it's powerful. I've been doing meditation for, you know, 40 years and took a bunch of breaks when I had kids and was stressed and you know, didn't think it was as important. I was doing yoga. I figured that was okay. But I, a number of years ago I started back again twice a day for 20 minutes and I do it.

You know, I can do it in a car, I can do it in a train, in a plane, but I do it in my house, bedroom in the morning and it has profoundly impacted the quality of my life. Not just sleep, but my happiness, my ability to not be reactive in my life, to enjoy my life, to be more present with

the people I love, to do more focused work. And you know, there's a, there's a really powerful tool and people don't realize how easy it is, how simple it is. It's not mysterious. You don't have to have, you know, beads on and sit on a cushion and burn incense and it's like none of that nonsense. Unless you're into that. Well, if you want to do it, fine. You know, I used to meditate in a zendo, you know, in cold mornings and in the middle of the woods with no, you know, with no plumbing. And, you know, that was fun, but, you know, that's, you can't.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Was it?

DR. MARK HYMAN: Yeah, I actually liked it other than my knees hurting, but like it was, it was really powerful to do like 12 hours a day of meditation and be in silence.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And these are the things that people want to hear, Mark, because for somebody who's in the position that you're in to have helped so many people to say that this is such a huge part of your life. We cannot really overstate that.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Because I'm too busy. I'm too busy. Well, I hate to say I'm probably busier than anybody can imagine. Ask my assistant who makes my schedule, but it's it's crazy. But if I do that, I just feel more grounded happy And more able to be more productive and be more successful. So it's like 40 minutes a day, but it gives me so much more quality of the rest of my time to allow me to do the things I do easier, better, faster, more effective.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's competitive advantage today.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Totally. Yeah. I mean, you think of like the Seattle Seahawks, the Chicago bulls, I mean, these were. You know, title winning teams and they were all meditating, you know, you got Phil Jackson wrote a book called sacred hoops about, you know, teaching his players in the Chicago bulls to meditate in the Lakers to actually be more focused and credible, you know.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And the results speak for themselves.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Exactly. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: People are going to be like, well, he did have Michael Jordan.

DR. MARK HYMAN: And Kobe Bryant and Shaq. Yeah.

SHAWN STEVENSON: But you still have to put the pieces together and you got to execute. And you know, that's a big part of it is helping you to show up better. You know, to be your best self, your best version of yourself. And for me, I've been, I've had a meditation practice for about 12 years. My mother in law taught me and again, I was very resistant because it's just like, what is this? You know? And, but I had the opportunity to just, just put my disbelief to the side for a moment and engage with it. And the very first meditation that she taught me and she, you know, she was a TM teacher. She was a teacher for various, you know, chakra meditations, all this stuff. And again, she's from Kenya. And so even her story and getting to where she is with her..

DR. MARK HYMAN: Mother in law.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yeah.

DR. MARK HYMAN: She's crazy.

SHAWN STEVENSON: She is my biggest inspiration for sure. But and so I realized I did the first meditation and I woke up like I really realized that I hadn't really had a conscious thought, really, my entire life.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Just reactive.

SHAWN STEVENSON: Yes, just living, I was kind of in the moment in a sense, but I wasn't aware that I was aware. And it changed everything for me. And so now like you said that that patience the kindness. You know If people would know, you know from my past and me growing up versus the person I am today. I'm so I'm so much more patient I'm so much more understanding. There's a space there. It really makes me feel.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Fought and reaction.

SHAWN STEVENSON: And it also is a gift for other people, because I can show up and bring a different energy when there's chaos. I can bring a different energy when there is frustration, or there's, you know, upsetness and anger, and I'm so grateful that she taught me this practice and it's just definitely, it's a big part of my life too.

DR. MARK HYMAN: This is an amazing conversation because it connects all the dots, right? So all the things you do to create health also help you have better sleep, also help you fix everything, right? Whether it's the food you eat, taking care of your microbiome, optimizing your nutrients, exercising, meditation, protecting your space and creating a safe space to sleep in. All these things have. Multiple spillover effects on everything that matters, right? Not just your health, but your well being, which includes your relationships, your work, your life force, your vitality.

I mean, you know, if you live a life that's depleted and empty because you're exhausted or you're not sleeping or you're stressed or your body's not working. I mean, we, we don't realize the power when we access these very simple physical doorways to our health that has a spillover effect on our emotions and our cognitive function and our just our spiritual life. All those things are impacted by these simple things that we easily can access that don't cost any money. You know, it's pretty amazing.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It is it, definitely is.

DR. MARK HYMAN: Well Shawn. It's great to have you on the Doctor's Farmacy. This has been a great conversation. I really appreciate being here.

SHAWN STEVENSON: It's my pleasure. Thank you for having me . Thank you so much for tuning into this episode today. I hope that you got a lot of value out of this. If you did, please share it out with somebody that you care about. You could send this directly from the podcast app that you're listening on via text message. You can share this on social media. Of course, take a screenshot of the episode, tag me. I'm at Shawn model and share the love that way as well. But listen, we've got some amazing, amazing masterclasses and world class guests coming your way very, very soon.

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