# Rethinking Fitness After 40: How To Exercise Smarter, Not Harder Transcript

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## Introduction to the summit and guest

Hello. Hello. Welcome back to the summit. I'm your host, actor Sharon Stills. And as always, I am excited to be here with you. It is my privilege and my honor to let you eavesdrop on these very important conversations that can change the way you age, you grow, you heal, and just how you feel in your everyday life from today forward.

And today is super exciting because I'm interviewing someone who I just met and I'm super excited about him already. And so I'm going to be learning alongside of you what Mr.

Robby Stahl, the fitness doctor I love that does. He has a very I would say, you know, specific medical lens. He has 27 plus years in kinesiology, which is the study of how the body moves.

And so he is looking at your exercise from a neuro biochemical somatosensory. And if you don't know what those words means, do not worry. We're going to explain them to you.

So he's really about piecing together movement and exercise for you to help you with your aging process, to help you with your mental health and all the things so that you can move properly, safely, strongly, and make sure that your workouts are the best for what you need is so welcome, Robbie.

And we just found out we're neighbors, so welcome neighbor. Welcome to the summit. Thank you, Doctor Sharon, it's awesome to be here with you. Yeah. Thanks, sir.

Thanks for taking some time out of your schedule and, Kevin, to educate the audience and so I always love to ask, you know, how did you how did you become the fitness doctor?

How did how did this become your interest and how did you start working. You know, more with like over 50 and I'm assuming women, but maybe I'm assuming wrong.

So you tell me.

## Robby Stahlu2019s background in fitness and research

So here's, here's here's a quick snapshot of what could be the boring details, but I'll make it so fast that it's not going to be boring. I read my first exercise physiology university textbook at the age of 12.

I was totally naturally into the sciences of the human body. How they function, the physicality, the endocrine system. Not a great student, but you'd find me in the library studying biological sciences, especially as it related to human performance outside of or actually inside a high school.

I already started a professional career training people. I had all the athletes in school and the girls, as well as guys paying me to write training programs for them.

Went to college to be a doctor and physical therapy. Outside of school. I actually focused in, and fitness because fitness was so much more interesting to me than, than physical therapy aspects, especially in my 20s.

But long story short, come to find out. And just everything very condensed here. 87% of people who exercise get injured exercising and really interestingly, I worked with some of the best athletes in the world, also worked with physique athletes.

People get on stage and compete with their appearance. I had like three clients get divorced because of getting ready for bodybuilding shows, and what I found is the fitness industry is incredibly kind of, you know, there's a lot of

ego, there's a lot of performance and body composition.

How do I look in the mirror type of aspect? And for me, that was not what fitness is about. It's about your functionality. It's about you living the best quality of life you could possibly live and having a very long life as a result.

So really expanding Healthspan into longevity. So what I did, along with a team of doctors, this is university professors, physiologists, orthopedic surgeons, and biomechanics with doctorates as well.

What we did is we did a five year research study looking at over a million case subjects of what really does the body need to be most functional. And all this pain, stiffness and issues that people get over the age of 50, how could those best be corrected from exercise?

Because typically what happens is in exercise you break your body down while you're getting more fit. So to be more, become more fit, you don't have to be a genius.

Go out, move, do Arabic exercise, lift some weights, eat some good food. Most of us know how to do that, but you do kind of need a genius level approach beyond the age of 50 to fix your body, to get a therapeutic result in simultaneously get the very best fitness results.

So through five years of research, through a million cases, studies we went through, and then we practiced our system, put it into practice and basically prove some of our methodologies for ten years in our facility.

And then we made this available for everyone global. So that's that's the track record. Awesome I love it. I'm like because I always say to patients, you know, obviously I'm a physician, I know the importance of moving our body.

But I always say to them like, don't just go out like you need to find someone who knows what they're doing because you don't want to injure yourself, because an injury can just set you back on so many different levels.

And we want this to be beneficial. So why don't you tell? I'm curious to know, like, what do you mean by neuro biochemical retraining? Somatosensory retraining?

Like what is your framework and how does this differ from other exercise protocols out there. So and it's the policies but a little word correction neuro biomechanical, chemical, but you know, biomechanical. So this is this is really the best context to understand it in every part of your body has unique physical needs.

So like, for example, the foot. Let's look at the foot. The toes are meant to splay. In other words have a decent gap between the toes. Most people wear shoes that are absolutely like casting their feet and remove their biomechanical dysfunction from their feet.

So in training we would actually improve toes play. We would make it so they don't load the heel so much. We would teach them how to use the foot as a tripod so that they're optimizing the mechanics of the foot the way they're intended to be used, going up to the ankle, you know, the way your foot bends back toward the ankle.

This is really important. This is just one little aspect of of biomechanics, and how the body should function. So if we look at the shoulder, there's very specifics of how the scapula should move and how your, your shoulder joint should move.

And all these things change due to posture, due to poor breathing mechanics, due to those who exercise regularly, train their body with machines, get really fit and overly develop prion moving tissues that then create a big ratio of strong prime movers.

So the tissues that are like in a squat, for example, your quadriceps, well, then you have glute muscles that would function as a stabilizer.

## Biomechanics, pain, and neuro-biomechanical retraining

And depending on how you do your exercise, you'll over develop your quads under develop those stabilizers, leading to lack of stability in your pelvis, which then affects your lower back health and all these little biomechanical intricacies as we age.

And then we start losing functionality due to chronic age. It makes exercise very difficult for most, so they have a lot of pain, dysfunction and stiffness while having to have willpower also to do exercise.

So what we do from a neuro biomechanical approach is one we make exercise comfortable because number one, most people show up to exercise and movement with the wrong energy and the wrong emotions to get the very best results.

So this can be trauma from childhood. This can be an argument with a partner the previous day. There's going to be lack of sleep stress. This can be holding thoughts of I have knee pain, I have back pain, I have this issue.

And and so what's happening? Or those individuals that are just super, gym rats, gym goers, a lot of times they have pain and stiffness because they're training with pain.

They're thinking, no pain, no gain is the way to go. So all of this emotional energetic dysfunction actually gets trapped into the tissues. And you have sensory systems like the somatosensory system, which is basically a sensory system that sensing where body is and and space and emotions and pain and all these things that are sending triggers back to your central nervous system in your brain, and then your body's sending signals to make action happen.

Coming back. Well, emotion gets mixed with that. So you have this a physical degradation and dysfunction. As you age. You also can have emotional aspects.

And the more life you've lived in, the more stuff you've done physical, the more likely you are to have these issues. So that's normally thought of like, oh, this is really positive to be fit.

And it is. This is gigantically drastically super important. But one of the number one things that makes us physiologically lose functionality and capability as we age is we start to have body mechanics issues.

And so when you think about biomechanics, body mechanics, that more simple terms could be replaced by biomechanics. And so your body mechanics, as you start to lose some of the functionality there, you're not able to signal all your muscle cells.

So in the last 15 years, muscles have actually began to be looked at as their own organ system, because organs are known as secreting signals to others, other organs, and getting messaging across and having sending signals and processes that happen in other organs and other tissues.

So the muscles actually do that. These secrete something called myo kinds, and they have all kinds of stimulating events throughout the entire body. And then so when the muscles are activated properly, because your can't do list is growing because you have pain, stiffness, dysfunction and other issues related to, chronological age and or other health factors like you address, doctor share that are inflamed.

Why does your back hurt? Okay, well, maybe it's systemic, but why your back? Why not your knee? Why not your neck? Why not your shoulder? Well, the answer is always emotional.

And you very likely have something going on physically in that area that if addressed along with the systemic inflammation, that's where you really get a huge anti-aging effect.

So neuro biomechanical retraining is just mind energy and motion and all these mechanical specifics so that when you become more fit, you're creating a therapeutic result within your fitness, where fitness does equal health.

Because fitness for most people doesn't just equal health, it ends and ends up being aging and dysfunction and degeneration. Because as the last point here is you exercise is a degenerative of stimulus and an inflammatory stimulus.

So if you don't use it like you would a medicine and the right dose and the right amount per individual, you can easily overdose or dose in the wrong way where you're getting deleterious or negative effects.

Cool. So let's let's take like the two groups of women that are most likely listening. And we're going to assume they're perimenopausal menopausal. So in their 40s, 50s beyond.

So there's probably one group that has exercised. And what would you want them to know to know like if what they're doing is right and what needs to change?

I know we hear a lot about, you know, the aerobics of your younger years are not so important as you age. And it's about building muscle. Like, I just did a video for Instagram before about muscle being like our most important organs.

So yes, I hear you. And that is true. So like, what would you say to them? And then I'd like to also speak to the woman listening who either has been to tired, to depressed, not in shape and is not doing any exercise.

And where does she start? Well, the most important thing for all women to know is you are absolutely 1,000,000% worth taking care of yourself, and you deserve to.

And you don't have to have justification for anyone. So, reason why I say that is we do a lot of psychological work as well. And the biggest thing that women, face in this happens in money success.

This happens in health success. They're so good and they're so engineered to be taking care of others that often they don't take care of themselves. And so the first thing that's incredibly important for you to know is you are worth it.

And when you go to exercise, you don't have anything to change. You're working. You're walking around with $1 trillion machine. You that's your body. And all you got to do is love yourself into exercise and exercise does not need to be painful and does not need to be what the fitness industry has been telling you your whole life.

It should be comfortable. It should be enjoyable. It should optimize your mechanics, and you should feel absolutely amazing about your body and yourself during and after exercise.

And if you exercise that way, which we can get into the actual how to do that. But if you exercise that way, you're going to look forward to doing it.

You're going to get amazing results, and you're it's going to be a great process that you're going to repeat. And therefore, willpower is no longer needed to get yourself more fit.

All right. So let's get in. Let's get into the how to what what how do how do we accomplish that. And what are the ladies need to know okay. So the first thing that we got to do is we need to forget some things.

So sets and reps and how much weight and all this and exercise intensity stuff and hit training and all that stuff. Unless you're already biomechanics, what I call biomechanically optimized, which is you have a really strong understanding of your alignment and positioning from toe to head, which for 99% of the people is not going to be the case.

And so you want to get rid of sets, reps, intensity, all that. It doesn't matter. So you take a set number of exercises and exercises. Strength training is really important to do.

And so is aerobic and so is mobility. And you want to address all of them. But here's the thing to know is that if you

really strength train properly, you're going to get the results of mobility, some endurance and a lot of strength and one form of exercise.

And so the form of exercise you want to do is exercise movements and motions that train all your tissues. Number one. And you want to focus on learning the very detailed mechanical specifics which we'll get into next.

It's kind of a loaded answer of how to sew in. When you start doing exercise, forget about how many and all the pressure and just connect on self. So for example, if you're going to do a squat, you would feel your feet.

You would feel your toes trying to spread and grip the floor. You would feel the tripod of your foot behind the big toe, behind the little toe, and at the center of the heel you would feel your knees aligning with the second and third toe, you would feel your pelvis be in a position called neutral.

You'd be feeling your breathing mechanics breathing in big. And when you go down into the squat, you'd be drawing your abdomen in. You'd be contracting your pelvic floor.

Because for women, it's so important to be training for pelvic floor. With exercise, you can't just crank out abdominal exercise. Think you're going to be okay.

And your 60s, 70s and 80s, 50% of women by the age of 70 have vaginal prolapse.

## How women should approach exercise after 40

So it's a big risk factor for pelvic floor. If you're not exercising properly, continuing on posture, you feel proper elongated spine. These are some of the specifics to get you some understanding.

It's not about thinking externally like, oh, I'm going to do another rep who cares about another rep? What matters is your functionality and feeling that because you're conditioning functionality in you.

So if you mix the right emotion with the right physicality and you do all of your exercises, that way, you are going to be of your results. Literally by research we've proven this, you will get 20 to 60% more fitness results without changing sets, reps, weight or anything else.

And the reason why I'm going to make this science very short and simple. Follow me on this. Let's say you're doing a dumbbell curl, okay. Doing a dumbbell curl.

If you watch my bicep ball up right, you can see that bicep curl up. Okay. The point of me showing you that is you see all my muscle fibers move. So you would assume whether I'm lifting 5 pounds or 30 pounds, you're using all the muscle fiber.

Not actually the case. Depending on how much load you lift, you recruit more of your muscle fibers. So the reason why the whole fitness industry is stuck on thinking, hey, more weight, more weight, more weight in this linear path, adding to dysfunction because the body's misaligned, not right motion, not the right body alignment.

The position your strength train your tissues in is the position they strengthen in. So yes, you recruit more muscle fibers, better performance into this function.

So how do we make that whole thing so much better if we focus that deeply on internal awareness and interception, inner connection you will get more neurological drive just like more weight, except for you're doing in a very healthy, functional way where you're thinking about and lighting up all of your neurons for proper functionality.

And when you exercise that way, you're training your body and your tissues to become very functional. So once you finally get to adding more weight sets, reps and approaching these things, you're doing it with functionality so you get the best results.

So the big question mark that I do leave you with is like, okay, but how like which exercises and how do I apply the mechanics. And for that we do a free right.

We have a free, workshop that we provide. We do this once a quarter, and you can actually come and learn about your feet and your ankle and your knee and your hip and your back and your pelvis and your shoulders, your neck. You will go through your whole body.

I'll show you how to self analyze, see your mechanics, and I'll give you a ticket for absolutely free, because there are quite a bit of details behind that aspect.

I love this, I mean, you know, it's kind of what I say to patients. It's like it's not just what you're doing, it's not enough to just take the right verb.

It's like, or eat the right food. It's who are you being while you're doing that? And so as I'm listening to you, I'm thinking, you know, so many people are just like, all right, I got to get another rep, all right? I got to do another rep.

And you're not even you're not even present. You're not even in your self. And so you're really like, inside out. Like, I'm a big proponent and teach mindfulness and I'm like, oh my God.

This is like mindfulness exercise. Like, how cool is that? Yes, exactly. You're exactly when you exercise, it should feel like physical meditation. But I'm going to say it again, when you exercise it should feel like physical meditation.

And if it does, it is probably having some level of dysfunctional result for you. Yeah. Because even what you were saying, I was thinking of that kind of reminds me, you know, in a yoga class.

Right? You're really thinking about your alignment. But no one takes that to the gym, which is what I hear you saying is so important. Exactly. Yes. Yes, yes, exactly.

And then, you know, the performance, the sets, the reps, the weight, the ranges of motion, all these things are important, but they just don't come first.

And so in your hierarchy, approaching your fitness, just consider that those things come last. And if you're really connecting on the right energy standpoint there, you can literally change your biology through your mindset, your energy and your motion.

So you know, by having the right mindset and then right, having the right physical components, you start really X, you start getting exponential results from a fitness process.

You get so much more than most people would out of fitness or fitness routines, exercise training. Yeah. And like I, I crave I love exercise, right. So I like crave it.

That's always been a thing for me. It's like if I don't do it, I'm like, I need to go do that. It's not like, oh, I want to do that because I just know how good it makes me feel. Yes.

Yeah. But I, you know, because you're, you're you're in biomechanics makes sure, you know, you can always improve on your posture and how you're standing and what you're doing.

Yeah. And you know, so interesting Doctor Sharon. So there's research on like what percentage of the population actually wants to do high intensity exercise and like feel the burn.

Right. And so like it's only 4 to 5% of those who exercise really want to feel that. So 95% do not. And so but the fitness industry is like cramming down people's throats that stuff.

And they're trying to fit into this box that they don't necessarily need to. And you can get amazing results. And by the way, so your perception of comfort when you're unfit, your perception of comfort, comfort, which, by the way,

your exercise should always be comfortable.

Yes, I did say that you can get in mainly fit and always have comfortable exercise. Your perception of comfort is going to change with your physical adaptation.

So your body is going to physical adapt. Your mind is going to physically, physically adapt.

## Mindful movement, comfort, and fitness mindset

So for example, for me, I can do a pretty intense exercise and I can feel very comfortable because I'm practicing. I've been practicing the things that I'm sharing with you for so many years that when I do intense exercise, it's a slow, steady build up over a sustained period of time to where you will eventually train intensely.

But it's going to be comfortable and it's going to be therapeutic because of how you arrived there. So I have two questions because I asked you like, what are women who are exercising need to do?

And what are women who are not exercising need to do? But I think the answer is they all need to do the same thing. They all need to get aligned and mindful, and you're much more about that than you need to do three days of weight training.

Yeah, I mean, they're so person. So let's say Susan and Tammy. Okay. So Susan and we're just I completely hypothetically made up this name. Okay. So Susan is, a couch potato, okay.

She's she's she's wanting to improve her fitness. She's, like, starting to go on walks. And. Are their diets okay? Maybe she went and saw Doctor Karen for her first visit.

She started to try to figure these things out. So, Susan's fitness routine is going to have less volume, less intensity. And she's going to take a much less, weight less reps approach, than Tammy, who has been working out five days a week for the last 20 years.

But, you know, when you go to start really improving your fitness or your body mechanics and approaching fitness in the way that I'm explaining and suggesting you're still going to start with the same process, it just might look different in terms of like, what is the dosage of of exercise?

But it's still the same. It's like Doctor Sharon for you. You've been exercising for years. If I worked with you personally, we would start with the same kind of process and find out your comfort.

Look at your biomechanical deficiencies and we start optimizing where you have certain motor control, deficiencies, like you maybe don't have the right pelvic alignment, knee position, posture, shoulder, scapular humeral rhythm, which means how your scapula moves with the shoulder joint.

We're going to look at all those details. I'm going to get you really connected with self. And then as you optimize your movement then we're going to start to add load and strength.

And then we're going to start to play with all the performance variables. That's, that is like that is how if you take all the science of exercise and you say, what is it?

What does it say? This is what it says you. And just thinking you really are a fitness doctor like I've never I've never had a conversation like this before about working out.

You know, we talk about making sure you have good alignment, but I don't think we really dive that deep into it. And so I try to down it. I want to like, how would you define being fit or define fitness?

I'm curious. Being fit is having your freedom of motion and capability to do everything that you want to do in life and show up feeling like your very best self from the inside out.

That's what fitness is. And it's not just physical, and it's not just mental, emotional, energetic. It's both you. You must have to truly be fit. You must have the right mind, energy, emotion and physicality.

We could even say spiritual realms as well. But you have to really be fit. You need all of those things. And the other thing is, is so like, what is fitness and science?

This is what fitness is. The fitness means the ability to, generate offspring. That's if you go look it up in a scientific book. That's the way you're going to see fitness means to generate offspring.

But if you think about it in that in your own self, or so if you think about that from parents to child, you're able to generate kids like these days, as you know really well, Doctor Sharon, a lot of people are not able to have kids as well as they were 50 or 100 years ago.

Well, there's a lot of health factors, reason, whether it's producing that. So if you look through and what I believe is the macro world matches the micro.

So if you see things on a larger scale, it's the same exact thing going on in a more micro-scale if you start really kind of looking at relationships.

So inside your body to be able to stay optimally functioning human, you need to regenerate your own cells. And the more you have dysfunction in health and different body issues, the less healthy you're going to be able to regenerate your own cells.

So being fit and exercise, what it actually does is it trains you to have resistance to fatigue and resistance to degeneration. That's what you're actually doing.

The reason why you get stronger is because you're training your body to not be fatigued as easily, and you're also braking, training your body to not break down as easily.

So if you're doing that in a really functional way, you also feel good. And if you bring in the energy and the motion in the mind, you're getting the best of mind energy of motion and the physical aspects as well.

I love that, I love this perspective because it's really it's like fitness as a spiritual practice.

## Osteoporosis, safe training, and starting gradually

And then of course, as we're aging, it's, you know, it's also about like flexibility and stability because most women and men reign how to, you know, there's falls and that sets them off or osteoporosis and that sets them off down a path of, you know, destruction and health degradation and fear and fear because they're scared.

They're scared to move. They have oh, now I have osteoporosis. Now I could get injured moving, moving the wrong way. And that starts to become really scary.

And then I'm losing the functionality I once had. And that leaves people in a position of, well, what do I do? And so the best thing to to know to do is that to start with comfort, you're sure as heck are not going to be doing some insanity workout.

You know, be, you know, P90x type of stuff like that. That makes no sense. And so to approach it with the right physical aspects and the comfort and relief, it should feel like a soothing process.

And if you start there and you kind of just can steadily build up over a sustained period of time, I think most people would be absolutely amazed that the results they're actually able to produce.

And so for women who do have osteoporosis, because that's a huge concern. You can help them that they can exercise and do it safely and not be worried.

Absolutely. Yeah. And that's because of our process of mechanics first. And we actually restrict range of motion at first. So you should really you should exercise.

I think this is a really important take home message for everyone to is you should you should not exercise to what you can do unless you have years and years and years of adapting to fitness.

So what you should train to. So if you can do ten pushups and you just started exercising, you should absolutely not do ten push ups. Why? First of all, you don't need to take advantage of the amazing results you're going to get up front.

You don't actually need to push yourself that much, because almost anything you're going to do is going to be more than what you're doing before. And your body needs to adapt.

So your your, your cells, like basically your whole body. I'll spare you the science details. All of your body is adapted to doing what you did before.

So all you need to do now is a little bit more than what you did before. And you start building a new baseline, and then you start building from that.

And what you can do is usually drastically more than what your body's actually adapted to in terms of stimulus for fatigue and stimulus for breakdown.

all right. So where where do we find the free class. Because I know I want to go to it. I'm sure a lot of the other women listening want to go to it. So do you have a website you can send us to?

Yes, absolutely. You would go to body fit dot fit. And you could register for our next, workshop which we call the Full Body Fix. And when you go there, by the way, you're also, as you register yourself in, you're going to have an opportunity to schedule a private consultation with us so you can come and meet with one of our clinical experts, get a full evaluation done, talk about your fitness and what the proper protocol for you would be to do.

And so all of that is available through Body Fit dot fit.

## Where to find the workshop and closing remarks

Awesome. Well, thank you for this new lens. I you definitely opened my my aperture into looking into fitness. And, you know, for everyone listening, this is, you know, whether you're suffering with anxiety or depression, just want to, you know, improve the aging journey, right?

We are all about aging in a graceful and happy and healthy way here. This is important stuff. And so checking in to see, you know, your alignment and your how you are moving.

So that you can do it safely for many, many years is a beautiful gift to give to yourself. So thank you, Robbie, for what fascinating work you do. And go check out Body Fit Dot fit and get get aligned right.

I'll see you there. I want to I want to make sure I'm aligned. You know, there's a there's always I feel like something you could tweak to make things better for yourself.

So thank you for being here. I found this fascinating. And, anything last words you want to say? Leave the ladies with? Yes. It's been absolutely an honor to connect with you, the viewer and listener.

And also with you, doctor. Share. Thank you. All right, everyone. Well, we'll be back with another talk, so stay tuned because we've got lots more coming up in the summit.

And we will see you at the next talk. So bye for now.