Free Medicine: Why 30 Push-Ups a Day Can Change Your Health Transcript

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Why Daily Movement Matters

Think about what human life looked like even just a few generations ago, lifting, hauling, pushing, carrying, and that was just Tuesday. Your great grandparents weren't going to the gym.

They didn't need to. Muscles were under load much of the day, simply as a condition of being alive. We've engineered almost all of that out of our daily existence.

we sit to work, we set to eat. In fact, if you're watching me on YouTube right now, you'll notice that I have a standing desk to do this for the very reason that, I don't want to sit, to all this stuff.

And I do stand, Most of the day, so that is one thing that I've implemented. I think I started standing about five years ago to do the podcast. And I also stand to write the podcasts, I stand, to work on my formulas.

About 80% of my day in my work day anyway, is spent standing. and I highly recommend that as well. But the point is that we generally are very stationary.

Welcome to Vitality Radio, the podcast that helps you make sense of natural supplements and thrive without pharma drugs. I'm Jared St. Clair. I grew up in a health food store and spent over 40 years now figuring out what works and what doesn't so that you can make confident, informed decisions about nutrition, supplements, and your health.

Welcome back to Vitality Radio. I'm Jared St. Clair. And today I am starting something brand new. It's a new series. We've been doing a lot of those this year.

It's not a supplement, it's a gym membership, any kind of special equipment, red light or whatever. Just something your body was literally built to do that most of us have quietly stopped doing and the science behind some of these things is genuinely remarkable.

Now, to be totally frank with you, I'm not the guy who has always had my fitness habits dialed in. That's actually part of the reason that I wanted to do this series.

I know a lot about what goes into your body. Have spent decades in this industry studying ingredients, supplements, formulations, all that kind of stuff.

Reading research, but the daily movement stuff has not been consistent with me. It's really been a work in progress. Find myself very, very busy on a regular basis.

Most of it's self-inflicted. Yes, I anticipate you may be one of these people as well.

Introducing the Push-Up Challenge

And I mean, Hardly ever spend time on entertainment really, other than travel and listening to music. Usually while I'm working, hardly ever have the TV on any of that kind of stuff.

But while was making lunch, I was listening a YouTube video and it was a doctor talking about pushups. And it inspired me to do this episode. It's really just been in the last five or six years, and I'm 53 years old, almost 54, that I've started taking some of these things a little bit more seriously.

Not just my diet, not just supplementation, but actually trying to form habits that will really help me in Similar to what you might think of financially, you know, with starting early, investing your 401k or whatever it is, those types of

things that many of us put off until, it's near retirement age.

Well, the same thing can be said about physical fitness. And as I said, I got this idea from a doctor and I'll tell you, the video was real simple and what caught my eye.

I'd never listened to this guy before. He's a British guy. And I really liked him quite a bit, actually. Usually like doctors that much. So I've only watched one video of his, so I can't say that the rest of this stuff's good, but I liked this one a lot.

And the title was just do 30 pushups a day. It'll change your life or something along those lines. So I was like, you know what? I'm going to check it out.

I watched it, I loved it. And I decided I want to share it with you. and it sparked the idea for this series. something else I've issued a little challenge to my wife and our two daughters that live with us at home.

We're going do this together, which means I pretty much have to do it now. Nothing like a little family accountability to get you off of the couch or just away from your computer long enough to drop and do 30. So let's get into it.

And I'm going to explain why this habit is so incredibly powerful and why, of course, in our modern age with so many other things, some of this stuff has kind of gone by the wayside.

The body was not designed for the life that most of us are living right now. Think about what human life looked like even just a few generations ago. Lifting, hauling, pushing, carrying, and that was just Tuesday.

Your great grandparents weren't going to the gym. They didn't need to. Muscles were under load much of the day simply as a condition of being alive. We've engineered almost all of that out of our daily existence.

we sit to work, we set to eat. In fact, if you're watching me on YouTube right now, you'll notice that I have a standing desk to do this for the very reason that i don't want to sit, to Most of the day.

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and I highly recommend that as well. But the point is that we generally are very. stationary, I guess is the right word, we're just not moving like we should.

We've got to get that going. And, you know, a lot of times we think about cardiovascular exercise with that and cardiovascular exercises fantastic for sure.

Muscle, Hormones, and Sarcopenia

But this push up thing is a big deal and I can't wait to share with you exactly what this can do for you. Let's talk about first something called sarcopenia.

Every time that you lower yourself to the floor and push back up, you're loading your chest, your shoulders, triceps and your core all at the same time.

That mechanical stress activates a cellular pathway called mTOR. Your body's master switch for muscle building. When mTOR flips on, it kicks off muscle protein synthesis, which is just your body rebuilding those fibers a little stronger than they were before.

One more thing happening at the hormone level besides the mtor thing is that, and this doesn't get talked about nearly enough, is when you place mechanical load on your large muscle groups, Research shows it directly stimulates testosterone release in men and women, and it enhances your muscle sensitivity to anabolic signals.

Resistance exercise appears to be a direct stimulant to testosterone production when sufficient muscle mass is loaded. Most people think of testosterone, of course, as a male hormone, but I think you and my audience know better.

Women produce it too, And it is still the dominant hormone in a woman above estrogen. which a lot of people don't actually know. I talked about that on the Just Ingredients podcast just the other day.

And it's, so we have to recognize that this is not a man thing. This is a everybody thing, pushups and testosterone and how it works for muscle is really, really big because Muscle maintenance is largely because of testosterone, muscle strength is because testosterone.

So I want to talk about maintenance right now. Starting in your 30s, you begin losing muscle mass at a rate of about 3-5% per decade. I don't know if that sounds like a lot, that's only 10% by the time you're 50, but After 50, that rate picks up dramatically.

In fact, there's research indicating that we may be losing in America 1% per year after 50. That process is called sarcopenia. Not everybody's ever even heard of sarco penia, but when I discovered what sarcomenias was years ago, I started talking about it on the show.

Cause I think it's a big deal. One of the reasons it such a deal, especially for you women in the audience is osteoporosis. Your bones are living tissue.

They are not this, you know, calcified thing like a rock, they are a living issue and they stay dense because your muscles are pulling on the bones, loading them, sending them a signal that says you're needed.

Stay strong for me. When you lose muscle, You lose that mechanical force on The bone. The signal weakens the bone density. follows muscle mass down often at the same timeline.

The research backs this up big time. There's actually a name now for what we're talking about and years ago that I'm aware of didn't exist this actual technical name for it.

And it's just simply called osteosarcopenia. It's described in the literature as hazardous duet. Studies have consistently found that both muscle strength and muscle mass directly influence bone mineral density, that as muscle changes, bone density changes with it.

A 2022 pooled analysis in research literature found that sarcopenia and osteoporosis not only occur together in the same individuals with striking frequency, but share the underlying pathways, hormonal, mechanical, inflammatory.

They are deeply intertwined and the data shows that people with sarcopenia have more than twice the risk of a low trauma fracture compared to those without it.

Bone Health and Osteosarcopenia

So it's not just about the bone. It's very much about muscle as well. When I say fight sarcomenias, I mean fight Sarcopena and osteoporosis because they are truly part of the same battle.

Now, how do you fight sarcopenia beyond push-ups? Well, I talked about supplements a lot. Let's talk about that for just a minute. Protein, which of course you don't ever have to get through from a supplement if you want to.

You can just get it in your diet. And that's one thing that my wife and I have really been focused on lately since we started the GLP-1 metabolic optimizer formula that we came out with a few months ago is really getting plenty of protein to make sure that while we're losing fat, we are maintaining our muscle because the last thing we want is to get weaker.

That's another reason why I decided to start doing these 30 push-ups a day, which by the way, I'm actually

shooting for 40, but regardless, my goal long-term is get up to 100 or even more than that.

But we're starting at 30 or 40. I can do more right now. in that range and we're going to kind of push and see how that goes. And I'll get a little bit more into that here in a minute.

But protein is big. It's a really, really big deal for muscle strength, for preventing sarcopenia. So make sure you're getting plenty of protein. There's plenty you know, 75% of your body weight in protein grams, even up to a hundred percent of bodyweight or your lean muscle in proteins grams is a good target to shoot for.

Not always easy to do, which is why sometimes, and something that I do every day, is protein supplement in the Rebuild Plus that we use here at Vitality and that use at our house.

The other supplement you can consider for this, if you haven't already started doing it, This one almost belongs in the vital five at this point is creatine.

Creatine is massive for skeletal muscle protection and also for muscle endurance, making the push-ups easier, a 2024 review in research literature specifically advocated for combining resistance training with creatines supplementation as a strategy to both treat and prevent sarcopenia.

And creatine has also been studied for its effects on bone. Accumulating research shows it has a favorable effect on both aging muscle and on-bone mass, which makes sense given what we've talked about.

So if you're wondering about brands, I use Nutrabio Creatine. It's my personal favorite. Of course, the Vital 5 Magnesium is a big deal too because it keeps the muscles more limber, more loose, all that type of thing can help with recovery.

and then protein. I use the Rebuild Plus. But this isn't about the supplements. This is about push-ups. And I do have to tell you one thing though, I'm just going to put it out there.

i don't know exactly when this episode will air. Now that I am on YouTube, i'm actually recording these about four or five weeks in advance, which is very new for me.

So, by the time this comes out, we may already have this, but it is in the works. We will have the world's purest creatine in The Vitality Label. Very, very soon.

I cannot wait to talk to you about that because this stuff is phenomenal. Best creatine I've ever found. Well, let's talk about what else is happening with your body when you're doing pushups, because it's not just about muscle.

In fact, it is shockingly not about just muscle, there's so much more to it. The heart. We talk cardio when we talk the heart, we're always talking about heart rate and all that kind of stuff.

Protein and Creatine for Muscle Support

monitoring our heart rate when we're walking, when running, or when doing high intensity exercise, that kind of stuff. But when you contract large muscle groups hard and repeatedly, your heart has to answer that demand immediately.

More blood, more force. Do that consistently and over weeks and months, you're heart adapts to becoming efficient for you. There's a study from Harvard published in 2019 that followed over a thousand active male firefighters for 10 years.

What they found was that the men who could do 40 or more pushups had dramatically lower rates of cardiovascular disease events over the following decade compared to men.

Who could only manage 10 or fewer. Now that makes sense, right? Just physical fitness alone. But. That was done

based on pushups, and the guys that could do four times as many push-ups had significantly less heart disease.

It matters. Blood sugar, something that many of us are concerned about. I just mentioned the GLP-1 formula and what my wife and I have been using it, my daughter's using.

We are all about balancing blood sugar. That's a huge part, if not the biggest part of metabolic health. But what about push ups? How do they impact that?

Well, your muscle is the primary place where your body actually stores and burns glucose, blood sugar. Normally, getting sugar out of the blood and into your cells requires insulin, but something interesting happens when a muscle contracts.

It brings glucose transporters to the cell surface on its own, independent of insulin. Research has shown that actively contracting muscles can take up glucose at rates 50 to 100 times higher than resting muscles without needing insulin to make it happen.

Every push-up, your muscles are pulling sugar out of your bloodstream directly. The more muscle you have and the more regularly you use it, the better your entire body manages blood sugar around the clock.

That matters enormously because chronically elevated bloodsugar and insulin resistance are the upstream drivers of type 2 diabetes. And over decades, they quietly damage your Blood vessels, kidneys, nerves, eyes and just about everything else.

What about posture and core? We don't necessarily think of these things when we think push-ups, but a proper push up is not just an investment in your arms or your chest.

Holding your body in a straight line from head to heels requires your deep core muscles, your glutes and your muscles along the spine to fire and stay fired for the entire time.

Every pushup is essentially a moving plank. Do that consistently and those stabilizing muscles get stronger, which actually pulls your shoulders back, supports your lower back and lifts you out of the forward hunched posture that years of desk time and screens can create.

When you exercise, even briefly, your working muscles release chemical signals that your brain picks up on and responds to.

Heart Health and Blood Sugar Benefits

One of most important things that follows is a rise in something called BDNF, brain derived neurotrophic factor. Think of it as fertilizer for your neurons.

It supports brain cell health, helps form new connections, and helps resist the slow decline that comes with aging. Research consistently shows that people who maintain regular physical activity have meaningfully lower rates of both dementia and depression.

Regular exercise has been demonstrated to reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's after age 65, And a significant part of that connection runs through BDNF.

And on a shorter time scale, a burst of physical effort in the morning tends to leave you sharper and more focused for the hours afterwards. Now let's talk about the habit because this is really where the rubber meets the road.

And here's the thing that I love about this one and why I decided to start episode one of free medicine this way. Habit is challenging for most of us.

It's challenging to make a habit. it's easier to break a habits. We all know this, right? We talk about willpower and

everything else. But what I've learned, I guess, about habit is probably a better way to put that is that if we start with habits that are easy to maintain, we started to build momentum.

And the thing that I love about 30 pushups is. It's a minute or two. And what I'm doing is I am doing half of them in the morning, half them at night, and that's how I building the habit.

Like I said, I actually shooting for 40, but I recommend at least 30. 40 is great too, 20 in morning and 20 at nights, just depending on your capacity and all that.

But you can't really make time and excuse for this, right? Because it literally takes almost no time at all. It takes no equipment, no gym, not commute, nor parking, now waiting for a machine that someone else is using while they scroll on their phone.

That strips away all the excuses because time, we already talked about, is also not an excuse. And daily consistency is where real benefit lives. None of these adaptations come from one heroic session.

They come form showing up in a small, repeatable way until your body has no choice but to change in positive fashion. One practical tip worth mentioning is the one I mentioned earlier, splitting those 30 pushups into two sets morning and later in the day.

And this matters actually, not just because it's easier to do, because that actually is easier than to 15 now and 15 later, but because of what I talked about with mTOR, that pathway.

is activated in the morning when you do 15, and then it gets reactivated in afternoon when we do another 15 or in evening. A moderate set flips it on and keeps it active for roughly a day or so.

Second smaller set or similar set later tops up that signal and keep the building window open longer. You're essentially getting two stimuli for the price of one daily commitment.

Posture, Brain Health, and BDNF

And here's something that I've noticed and I suspect many of you will find the same. When you lock in one daily physical habit, as I said before, it starts to pull other things with it.

The pushups lead to a slightly better walk, better bedtime, a better meal after you do those 15 push-ups in the morning. Sleep leads to eating with a little bit more intention.

Eating with little more attention leads more exercise, maybe putting away your phone a bit a more, avoiding the blue light. You know what I mean, right?

It's just one thing after another. So starting with small, simple habits. that you can commit to and then prove to yourself because this is important too.

This has to do with your reticular activating system. It has do do how the brain actually works. When we prove ourselves that we can't commit a thing and do that thing on a consistent basis, we become more adept at doing the next things again and moving into better and better, bigger habits.

Now, modifications. Let's talk about this. You might be thinking, I can't do 15 push-ups. And if you're not in the type of shape that requires that, that's okay.

It's completely fine because you have to start somewhere. There's no judgment here. There's a lot of things I can't do that I wish I could do. I was, I got to do 15 pull-ups.

Okay. So I get it. Thankfully I'm not having any trouble doing the pushups, which is why I am already at 40 and I'll keep moving up from there, but you may be at five or 10. You may not be able to one or two, depending on your

health condition, your status, age, those types of thing.

The good news is. There's a whole bunch of ways to modify pushups. You can start on your knees, of course, instead of your toes. Same pushing pattern, less body weight.

If that's still too much, hands on the counter, body at an angle. if you need to go easier than that, stand at a wall and push off of it. All of these count.

all of them work. The same muscles are firing in the same pattern. the heart still responds. Your bones still get the signal. your brain still gets the lift.

M-torque can still be flipped on. The only variable that changes is how much weight you're actually moving. As you get stronger and you lower the angle, you will move more weight.

Wall to counter to knees to floor. Your body adapts to each level as you reach it. And one day you look up and your doing real push-ups and doing them easily.

So start where you can start. Do what you do. Build the habit. Keep going.

Building the Habit and Modifying Push-Ups

What was interesting And I'd love you to do this for me on, on this episode, either on YouTube or, uh, in your comments on Spotify, where you can comment on these shows if you'd like is tell me how this is working for you.

If you decide to. So many commenters on the doctor's video were saying, I've been doing a hundred pushups a day for five years and I feel incredible and all this kind of stuff.

plenty of anecdotal evidence to go with all of the clinical evidence. So let's wrap this up. This episode is the first one of free medicine. The short version is simple.

30 pushups a day fights the muscle loss that starts quietly in your thirties and speeds up after 50. It gives your heart real work. it protects your bones and it protect your brain.

There's a Chinese proverb that says the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is today. That's where I am. I hope that's what you are.

that is where my wife and my daughters are, that probably exactly where a high percentage of people listening to this episode are so plant the tree today I will tell you what I plan to do as soon as I hit stop on this recording as i'm going to drop and do my second 20 because it's the evening now I already did the ones in the morning it is time to my evening ones If you have any questions about anything you heard on this show or any other questions regarding your health call us 801-292-6662.

Jump on our website vitalitynutrition.com or you can check us out in person if you're in Utah. I'd love for you to do that at our South Ogden location 1735 Skyline or our bountiful location 107 South 500 West and if it didn't catch me on the Just Ingredients podcast You can catch me over there as well.

We'll link to that in the show description. we talked a lot about some really fascinating stuff, primarily wrapped around cortisol and how cortisol impacts our health.

And I've had a lotta people tell me it was a really useful conversation. So check it out. Thanks so much for joining me on Vitality Radio. I'm Jared St.

Clair, and this has been Vitalty Radio Podcast. Thanks for listening to the Vitality Radio Podcast. If this episode helped you, follow the show, share it with someone and explore trusted education and resources at vitalitynutrition.com.

Wrap-Up and Listener Resources

See you next time. Hello, everyone. I hope you enjoyed this week's episode of Vitality Radio. Just a reminder that this podcast is for educational purposes only.

This podcast has not been evaluated by the FDA. Thank you.