

THE MODEL HEALTH SHOW

The Model Health Show with Shawn Stevenson Session #83

Show notes at: <http://www.theshawnstevensonmodel.com/83>

Announcer: This podcast of The Model Health Show is presented to you by Shawn Stevenson with Rare Gem Productions. For more information visit theshawnstevensonmodel.com.

Shawn Stevenson: Welcome to The Model Health Show, this is fitness and nutrition expert, Shawn Stevenson, here with my beautiful cohost and producer, Jade Harrell. What's up Jade?

Jade: What's up Shawn?

Shawn: How are you doing today?

Jade: Today I am excellamic!

Shawn: Excellamic!

Jade: Excellamic.

Shawn: Tell me about it, what is that?

Jade: I'm excellent and dynamic today.

Shawn: Bam!

Jade: Goes the dynamite.

Shawn: I likes it. Very nice, very nice. Well, I hope everybody else is doing...

Jade: Excellamic...

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Shawn: Today because we've got an amazing show for you to make your day even better.

Jade: I've missed you.

Shawn: It feels good to be missed. I've missed you as well.

Jade: You've been all over the dad gum world.

Shawn: Cloud hopping. I call it getting my boy band on.

Jade: That's exactly what it seemed like. How wonderful to spread the love.

Shawn: Yeah. And it feels good to be home, for sure. We've got an amazing show for you guys because on my travels I had the opportunity to connect with a guy that is so phenomenal. I don't even have a word for him. He is just an amazing human being and his talent level is just sky high. Literally, that's when I first saw him. He was up in the sky doing a handstand flip thing. It was crazy stuff!

He is actually a finalist on a television show that is pretty popular called American Ninja Warrior. We are talking about a percent of a percent of human beings who can complete these different feats physically. He is one of those people. I had the opportunity to connect with him and we've got him on today.

The funny thing, and why we really clicked and I knew this was meant to be and that I had to bring him on was that just a couple of weeks ago, funny enough, I was invited by a friend of mine who actually started a foundation called The Good Dad Project, which I'm a part of, and he invited me out to a brand new American Ninja Warrior training facility called Core in St. Charles, Missouri. They have different obstacles and I'm just thinking this is going to be like kiddie obstacles. As soon as you get there they have an 18-foot wall they want you to run up. It's like, are you serious?

Jade: I know that spoke to your spirit.

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Shawn: Yeah I was all in after the first time of falling.

Jade: Right, right, right.

Shawn: I got it together and had a great time and shared some pictures out there on social media and I will put some in the show notes for everybody.

Jade: God love it. How well timed for overcoming the obstacles too.

Shawn: Exactly. And that's partially again why I brought him on because there is definitely a parallel there to the obstacles that you can overcome physically to the obstacles that we face in our lives.

Jade: Now you said a percent of a percent of people. Though he's another super hero, like yourself, we need another version for us mere mortals.

Shawn: Yes, and that's really what we do. We really boil this stuff down and make it applicable for everybody to take something away and be able to apply this stuff to your life because we're all superheroes in our own right. We just have to flesh out those gifts and talents.

Jade: I'm ready to run over a speed bump now.

Shawn: First, let's give a huge shout out to our show sponsor, onnit.com. Head over to onnit.com/model for 10% off all of your health and human performance supplements. I've got to talk to you guys a little bit about SHROOM Tech.

Jade: That's my stuff.

Shawn: There are actually two different SHROOM Tech. There is a SHROOM Tech Sport which is what we use for our pre workout. There is also SHROOM Tech Immune. This is some powerful stuff. Of course, we just mentioned the fact that I've been traveling a lot. I hopped on a flight a few weeks ago to Dallas and then back to St. Louis then L.A. and then back to St. Louis, then to Austin and

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back to St. Louis. Boom, right in time for holidays when everybody's got a lot going on, stress is high, and there is one particular family member.

Every year he comes over (it's a kid, preteen) and he's sick every holiday. He gets somebody in my immediately family sick. The last two years it was my baby boy. He got him sick and what tends to happen is the baby incubates it, upgrades it, and gives it to my wife.

Jade: There you go. And it takes her on down.

Shawn: This year he was straight because he's been on this stuff. But, my wife has a tendency, especially during the holidays, to do extra stuff. She really toned it down this year but still she was doing a little extra stuff and she ended up getting sick from this family member.

This time he was so sick he literally laid there the whole time on the futon. He is usually running around at least.

Jade: You guys prepare for when he is coming.

Shawn: Yeah, you've got to get ready. So she ended up getting pretty sick and had the shivers and the aches and coughing and mucous. Here's what I did because I sleep with this woman so a little whatever is going to be jumping off of her and saying "whee, we're going to jump on him too!"

Jade: Get him.

Shawn: I loaded up on SHROOM Tech Immune. Why it's so potent is the fact that one of its major factors is chaga mushroom.

Jade: I've been doing the chaga after you said that. It's in there!

Shawn: Chaga is a powerful immunoregulator. It modulates your immune system. So if your immune system needs to raise. If it needs to lower it will help to bring it down. Sometimes we can be in a state of autoimmunity where our system is too active. This is why these things are so important and valuable.

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These are immunomodulators and they are adaptogens. These help you adapt to your conditions.

They have been used for thousands of years but we kind of lost track of it in our western mindset about health and nutrition. Now we are getting back to real stuff like getting our medicines from real plant foods. This is all so valuable because it's a great source of beta-glucans. They are polysaccharides. They are long-chain sugars. Poly means many and saccharide means sugar. For some of it might be many sugars, that's bad.

Jade: That's not a good thing.

Shawn: It's actually the shorter chain sugars that are sweeter. Those are the ones we have to be careful about. The longer the chain the more bitter it gets. Bitter is better.

Jade: Bitter is better.

Shawn: That's where you find the medicines. The alkaloids, the different plant medicines that actually do cool stuff to your immune system and keep you healthy and vital. Chaga is one of the main things in SHROOM Tech Immune. It also contains turmeric extract. Turmeric is really potent for anti-inflammatory ability. There is an active compound called curcumin which a lot of people buy as a supplement.

But, the curcumin compound in turmeric in specific studies in particular, has been shown to be anti angiogenesis. That basically means it cuts off the blood supplier, the energy supply to cancer cells. This is clinically proven. How powerful is that?

Jade: And it's in there. It's in this little bottle. That's nice.

Shawn: It is a powerful immune system booster, anti cancer, and is just amazing.

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Jade: We've been really benefitting from the chaga just in itself so I can just imagine, I'm putting it on my order.

Shawn: It's just incredible stuff. Especially when you know you are going to be traveling or you've got something you are trying to get on top of. If you take a human being and they are 100% themselves then you chop them down to 40% of their capacity that's kind of where my wife was at.

I felt something trying to get to me so it took me from 100% to 90%. You can still function and can still take care of business. You can still exercise and I had to take care of the house too. I did it well because I loaded up on this stuff. It's just giving your immune system that extra boost.

I want to give a huge, huge shout out to the SHROOM Tech Immune and the SHROOM Tech Sport as well.

Jade: It was a safety net in this case.

Shawn: These are just two of the amazing formulas they have. Again, use the coupon called ModelHealth. Or, go to onnit.com/model for 10% off all of your supplements. And, you get 10% off the Hemp FORCE protein and the Earth-Grown Nutrient Green Superfood Blend as well. That's Model Health exclusive guys. So head over there and check them out.

Now let's get into the iTunes review of the week.

Jade: I appreciate that hookup by the way.

This is very recent. This has five stars. It just says, "Thank you" from Richard Headcheese.

"I love your show. Thank you for being an inspiration to all the people who need help with helping nurture their body to wellness. The show truly puts health as a top priority for the individual. P.S. Thank you Jade for pacing the show with your real-life experience and goofy comments. The information Shawn gives is great and it's nice to have something to

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apply it to. P.S.S. I am a psychology undergraduate student and think it would be awesome if you guys talked to a behaviorist about habit formation to compliment all of the awesome knowledge about lifestyle change. Love you two. Keep up the diligent work.”

Shawn: Wow, that is incredible.

Jade: Yes, that’s very good.

Shawn: Thank you so much for leaving that review. It totally made my day. Thank you so much. I thank everybody for leaving the reviews on iTunes. We read them all.

Jade: Thank you, especially for going that much deeper and really expressing how it touches your lives, how it may be improved, how you benefitted from it, and even getting down to the good and goofy. I absolutely love that.

Shawn: It speaks right to you.

Jade: It does. I live there.

Shawn: Thank you so much, everybody for leaving those reviews. Now, let’s go ahead and get into the topic of the day and our special guest.

Our guest today is Travis Brewer. He is a Ninja. We’re talking about somebody who is in, again, the percent of a percent of human beings that have the capacity to, right now at this time, complete some of the physical feats that he does. It’s just phenomenal.

Of course, we’re going to link everything in the show notes, link you to his website, and link you to his incredible Instagram just so you can see some of the cool stuff he can do. But the incredible thing about this guy is that he’s teaching others that they have the capacity to do some amazing things physically as well and just teaching health and vitality through movement. He’s got an awesome message to share and plenty of great takeaways for you today.

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I'd like to welcome to The Model Health Show Travis Brewer. How are you doing today, man.

Travis Brewer: I'm doing great. Thank you so much for having me Shawn. I really appreciate it.

Shawn: It's my pleasure. Probably the greatest connection in my travels was hooking up with you and, of course, we are like kindred spirits. We connected instantly. I don't know if everybody out there watches American Ninja Warrior, but if they have they have probably heard of you. Give everybody a background of how you even got to a place where you were physically capable of being on a show like that and not just being on the show but being a finalist. Where did you come from? Tell us your superhero origin story.

Travis: Well, thank you very much, I appreciate the compliments. It's been a long road and it's been a lot of hard work. But at the end of the day, the journey is the experience so that's what I encourage anyone to first realize when you are first getting started. Appreciate every step of the way. I started when I was young. I actually did gymnastics when I was a little kid but nothing too crazy. I was doing it in elementary school and once I was in middle school I stopped to pursue other sports.

I did football, soccer, lacrosse, and track in high school and always thought I wanted to just be an athlete and play sports in college and beyond. But, once in high school, in my senior year, I actually ended up blowing out my knee and tore my ACL, LCL, and PCL. That kind of ruined any opportunity to play in college. I was kind of devastated and wondered what I was going to do.

In college I ended up not really playing a sport and ended up making a club soccer team toward the end of the year after rehabbing for a couple of years. I went on and thought my sports career was over. From there I ended up moving out to California.

I always wanted to live by the beach and I loved being active. I loved surfing and being by the water. That's what brought me out to Los Angeles. I ended up getting a job in real estate and knew this was not the end of the road for me.

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This was not what I wanted to do. I really wanted to be an athlete that could push the limit. I know I had a God-given gift to inspire positive energy through movement and so I was sitting here at my desk a six or seven years ago and I thought, you know, this is not the end of the road.

Before work and after work I would always do workouts on the beach. I would go to Muscle Beach and did my pull ups and sit ups. I did my callisthenic training and would go surfing after work and on the weekends. I knew that was what I loved to do. I remember just sitting on the beach one day and I told myself that was not the end.

I ended up going to grad school trying to revamp my life. I ended up going to Pepperdine and getting an M.B.A. and then focusing on starting a business in health and wellness and specifically starting a clothing line. I wanted to become the athlete that would basically wear the clothes. I decided if I couldn't be a professional athlete I could at least wear the clothes that the athletes would wear.

While I was doing that I ended up entering some competitions and I basically got discovered doing Ninja Warrior. I would literally just go train part time at the beach doing calisthenics but also would go to a Parkour gym doing Parkour and free running at a gym in Los Angeles. AT the time I was basically doing Parkour and one of the guys who was a finalist on the show, the second furthest ninja at the time, Justin McGrath, and we were training kind of going trick for trick.

He asked me if I was trying out for the TV show American Ninja Warrior. I told him I didn't even know what that was. He said he and his brother drove down from Seattle and were competing in the show that weekend. He said I should try out for it.

I asked him if I needed to audition or be there. He said to just show up. He said he was a really good friend of the producer and said I should come watch. I was like, "okay, I'll come watch."

To make a really long story short, I kind of fell into being on the show. They had gone overtime on the show one time and they were supposed to finish all of the

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first round on one day and they didn't finish because one of the obstacles was broken. So they needed a walk on to go test it the second day before they finished the last 15 people to run. They said, "Hey McGrath, where's your friend? Let's throw him in."

They threw me in and I ended up advancing to the next round. They said that wasn't supposed to happen and that's how I first got on the show. I just always stay positive and always say believe you be whatever you want to be when you grow up and it will happen.

Shawn: That's an incredible story.

Jade: Way to pull through.

Shawn: Yeah. There's so much there. I think this was also from early on when he kind of got the lesson of pushing through and kind of defining who he is as a human being.

Jade: And sticking to that, because there were those challenges that kept saying no and this is not going to go that way and you are shut down here. And you said, "This isn't what I want. I really want to do this and be this. That's where I want to reside." You got it! I love that.

Shawn: I want to take a step back and actually ask you about this because I know there are a lot of people listening to the show that have experienced injuries and there are a lot of athletes out there listening as well and looking to take their game to the next level. Or, maybe they were former athletes and something happened. I want to talk about that. When you had that injury and blew your knee out, tell me what happened with your psychology then. I would assume your identity was really tied to being an athlete.

Tell us how you dealt with that situation and what go you to the place you were like, "I'm still going to use my body to express myself."

Travis: My whole existence was being an athlete. I was captain of the soccer team. I played football. I was nominated for athlete of the year at my high

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school. That is just who I was. I just knew I was going to play sports in college. When I blew my knee out I was speaking with some schools and I was devastated. Not only did I tear my knee but I tore my ACL, LCL, PCL, and all the nerves in my knee. That means I couldn't wiggle my toes after I tore my knee. They didn't know if I'd be able to walk again.

This was not in the game plan that I wrote. It was hard. I had to have immediate surgery and, as you guys figured out, they were able to connect the nerves again. I was able to walk again. But I ended up going to college on crutches. If I couldn't join a sports team I wanted to join some sort of team. So I ended up joining fraternity of all things.

I ended up tearing my knee again freshman year and then again sophomore year trying to just come back too fast to play sports again. I really thought it was over. I knew deep down in my heart that it wasn't over. If it wasn't college sports it had to be something else. I didn't know what it was but I just never gave up.

It's kind of ironic because after graduating college I wished there was a show American Ninja Warrior that I immediately could have started training for. Fortunately I entered a couple of competitions with calisthenics, specifically. That has really blown up with street workouts and the World Calisthenics Organization put on free-style calisthenics or free-style gymnastics body-weight competitions. I was the champion in the World Calisthenics Organization battle of the bars competition.

These things have only taken place in the last two years and Ninja Warrior, for me, in the last three years. It wasn't until I turned 30 years old that I was able to become a professional athlete again. All through my 20s that was what I wanted to be and I didn't know how to do it but I never gave up. I kept training. I would always train by the beach. I would always do my workouts. I continued to do it not knowing what I was training for except that deep down in my heart I knew I did need to be training for something.

Jade: You are speaking to the spirit here. Not only did you continue when you didn't necessarily know what was around the corner. But you knew the things you were doing today would get you there and get you in the direction that you

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had set forth that you had already written in your heart, that you had already determined in your spirit that you would be there and kept doing it; even though you didn't have the end picture/end goal completely defined.

Shawn: That's right, training.

Travis: You have to have blind faith. That is the way you've got to operate your life. You have to operate through the existence of belief and through your intuition. That's what I deeply believe and how I try to operate as much as possible.

Jade: You know what else I see, when you were broken you kept operating as if you weren't. And now that you are all put back together you work as hard and go as hard as if you can't break. That's awesome.

Travis: Thank you.

Shawn: You are a superhero, man. So, That's incredibly powerful on so many different levels. I'm sure a lot of people can actually resonate with that. One of the big takeaways right now that I want everybody to get is the fact that you should never stop training because your moment, your day, something is going to come when your training is going to transition into something in your reality. It's making sure that you are prepared.

It's one of those quotes of "Expect the best but prepare for the worst" kind of thing. But at the same time there is so much value there in understanding that it doesn't matter if there is some particular thing off there in the future but right now, just working on yourself and becoming a better human being on every level that you possibly can. Of course, we're already hearing that this wasn't just a physical thing. There was a lot of mental and emotional work that needed to be done. You are a very physically fit guy but also mentally and emotionally strong as well. That's what I kind of want to shift gears to, actually. But with that I want to give the foundation of the question that I asked you when we first met. I rarely ever ask this question but I felt compelled to ask you this, I asked what your mission is. You said this profound thing. So, tell us a little bit about what your mission is and what your message is with what you are doing.

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Travis: My message is simple, it's to spread positive energy through movement. I was kind of meditating and thinking about what my gift in life is. When I turned 29 I had this big epiphany moment when I wondered what I really wanted to be doing with my life. I was working in real estate and trying to figure out what kind of jobs I wanted to. I knew it was fitness, philanthropy, and following strong spiritual practice was what I wanted to be focusing on for the next decade or so of my life. That is when I had the turning point and went to school to really focus on what it was that I wanted to do.

In doing that I really wanted to be able to give back and make the world a better place. I really wanted to be able to perform and overcome obstacles and teach people how to do that. It's being the strongest I can be physically and mentally and spiritually.

More importantly, what I want to do is help raise the consciousness of the world and by doing that spread positive energy and teach people how to move and be as strong as they can in their body because that, again, will translate to being strong mentally and spiritually as well.

Jade: What it did was change the landscape in a few ways. It changed the landscape. It carved out a new path for you. But you mentioned you wished there was something like that when you were in college. You also changed the landscape that now it exists because you said yes.

Travis: Thank you, you have just always got to keep believing, even when you can't see the end of the road, just keep believing it will come. You will attract whatever it is that you want if you have a strong enough faith.

Jade: You had that ah ha moment?

Travis: Yes.

Jade: Was there ever a point where you were saying, "oh no."

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Travis: Yeah, there was always a time when I just didn't know if it would work out. But at the end of the day you have to follow through with things that you love to do. I also love what I do. I love moving. People always look at me now and they say, "you do such extreme stuff." It is either very dangerous or very taxing or very strenuous and very hard. But I also progress every year to become better and be able to raise the bar.

When Shawn met me I was doing handstands 18 feet in the air. But I also learned how to do a handstand on the ground then one foot off the ground, two feet off the ground. It is years of practice and perseverance and keeping a positive mental attitude while I do this every time. It's the same thing with strength training. It's compounding and trying to do a dance move in body-weight training called a plant. It is something I had to work up to just like everyone else has to work up to it.

People always see success from people but they only see the last 10 percent of the road when there is 90 percent of the stuff that you never really see that people have put into the work for it. You have to find something you are driven to do and then you realize internally you are progressing a little more every day. It isn't necessarily what other people see out of you but you know it because when you get to the last 10 percent of the road everyone will see it.

Shawn: Exactly. Let's really drill down now, for everybody, and get something more visceral as to why what you teach in your message would be so valuable in their lives. Let's talk about how overcoming these kind of physical obstacles that we see. For me, for example, when we went to this incredible American Ninja Warrior training facility, the warped wall, which I mentioned, where you basically run up this wall that kind of flips back out at you. Then there was the obstacle called the salmon ladder. You are in the air and you are on a pull-up bar. You have to take that pull-up bar while you are dangling in the air and ratchet it up another couple of feet over your head. You have to pull the bar out and throw it up to the next level while you are in the air. There was another one called the devil stairs.

Travis: Yes, devil stairs.

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Shawn: There are all of these crazy things, different obstacles, that you can master and it was really interesting to see kids do it too, like my son who had just turned 14 right around his birthday. But, to see him go at it. Somebody else in the group had brought their kid and I think he was maybe 13 or 14 blazing through this stuff. They don't have all of the programming that we have. Seeing how they attack these things and just kind of know that they are going to do it even though there is fear there. Let's talk a little bit about that and how overcoming these physical obstacles can translate to overcoming the obstacles in our lives.

Travis: I'm so glad you brought this up. As kids we attack the playground with such positive energy and so much fearlessness. As we grow up we get so scared. It's funny. I train a lot of people now and enjoy teaching workshops. But so much of it is people afraid to do a handstand or afraid to do a flip. But they used to do that when they were a kid. I tell them they can do the same thing they could do when they were a kid but it's reprogramming and rewriting that fear and connecting the movements through your body.

A lot of what's so beautiful about Ninja Warrior is it is an obstacle course. It is considered the world's hardest obstacle course. What I love to take pride in is helping to teach people how to overcome obstacles. If you can overcome obstacles physically it makes you that much stronger to overcome them mentally and spiritually as well. These kids will attack these obstacles with no fear and it's like teaching these adults how to do it, we think more. We're more calculated and think this could happen or that could happen. A kid is just like, "oh I'm going to do it."

That is the mindset you have to have. You have to have that positive mental attitude that you are just going to do it. It's unfortunate that as we grow older we are exposed to so many more bad things that can happen and we keep those in our brain. But we need to realize that when we are born and when we are young we don't think about all of the bad things that could have happened and we need to continue to come back to that mindset of a young child that anything is possible with a positive mental attitude.

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Shawn: I love that. I tend to think of a good example on an obstacle course is like an 8-foot wall or 7-foot wall and facing that wall. For all of us in our lives we have barriers that come up. We hit a wall often times in our lives, especially when we are focusing on progressing and proving ourselves. We talked about this on an episode of overcoming obstacles. We'll put that one in the show notes. We have a barrier in front of us but it's an invisible barrier. To see this physical wall in front of you it has a lot of translation in the real world as well. It really matters how you approach it.

It's not just trying to necessarily ram into it or trying to find a way around it though those things could work. You might injure yourself and you might take a lot longer. Or maybe you can go over it if you have the right approach. Of course, then you have to look at what's on the other side of the wall, continue the journey.

I really appreciate that and just even kind of expanding my own thinking about how these physical obstacles can actually translate into our lives. Are there any other examples that you can share like that?

Travis: I've got a perfect one for you, specifically the warped wall. It's difficult, it's 14 feet up in the air. But so much of it is technique. You have to have a certain amount of power and a certain amount of reach. But, beyond that it's technique. Some people might not know this but I actually failed the warped wall the first year I did the TV show. That was devastating for me because I've practiced it at a Parkour gym here in L.A. dozens of times. I had actually never failed the warped wall until I got on the show.

The warped wall on the show was a little different than the one I trained on so I just wasn't prepared and had gone as fast as possible trying to set the fastest time and had kind of gassed out. There were a couple of different reasons I wasn't able to do it. That didn't stop me from knowing I could overcome it the next year. I got over the warped wall the following year and did the handstand on top when I got on top of the warped wall.

Now I am known as the guy that does handstands on the warped wall. That never would have existed if I just believed it had gotten me. I had a bad day and

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life goes on. It is technique. I rewired it and practiced it again. To be honest, I didn't practice it that much because I knew I could do it. I just had to do it the right way. It's all about your angle. You have to be leaning back and you have to trust that you are not going to fall on your back and land on your head but you are actually going to run up the curve of the wall as opposed to falling back on your head because it is an awkward position. Once you walk up the wall you jump up and have that leap of faith to grab the top. It's all about trust.

Jade: Do you look at the obstacles as, "I know I've already achieved this," or "I know I can achieve this" or do they become new challenges. For example, this warped wall, when you experienced it on the show it was different than what you had practiced but did you consider it the same obstacle or do you take them on as new challenges?

Travis: One of the things that makes the show so difficult is that you don't get any practice on any of the obstacles. A lot of people will go and recreate a salmon ladder and a warped wall and devil steps. But, the show can always change the specifications or dimensions to however they want so you never know exactly what it's going to be. You have to attack it with and "I can do this, I've done something similar to this." Or, you can look at it as if it is brand new because they always have you do an obstacle that no one has ever seen before every season as well.

Jade: Surprise!

Travis: You can't prepare for everything in life. You can do the best that you can but what I train for in calisthenics, body-weight training, is to make my body as optimally strong and connected as possible and I feel I have the best opportunity to do anything on the show.

Jade: Anything that comes his way.

Shawn: Awesome. Before we start trying to push a lot of weight externally with dead lifting and squatting, which I love, I am a barbell guy, but before doing all of that stuff I really feel we should gain some mastery over our own body and be able to do body-weight movements. I think that's really, really important. I think

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that's a good segue into asking you basically give people some really great takeaways in how they, themselves, can be more ninja-like and gain some of the skill set you have, especially with you paving the way. What are the small takeaways that people can take, maybe three or five things that the average person can do to gain more control and ability over their body?

Jade: Wonderful question.

Travis: Yeah, excellent. I am glad you asked that. I actually trained someone yesterday. There are five things I work on specifically with anyone with body-weight training. What is so beautiful about body-weight training is you really don't need much in terms of equipment. If you have a pull-up bar and some parallel bars you can really accomplish most anything. Of the five things I try to work on with people to kind of master their body, one of them is the good old fashioned pull up. Just start doing some pull ups. Focus on those lats and a little bit of biceps, that grip, and strengthening the core and bringing up the knees while you do some pull ups.

I also teach people just the standard push up, you know, how to do a pushup with correct form and for an added variation to lift a leg up in the air or do with a one-arm pushup. The standard pushup really isolates the chest, doing some dips, you can even add some variation with some dip hops or dip walking but really isolate those triceps. And then don't forget the legs. We've got to do legs so we are teaching people how to do regular squats, squat hops, pistol squats which is a one-legged squat.

Through Ninja Warrior I have added a fifth one, grip strength. You have to have grip strength with whatever you do to be able to hold on for life like there is no tomorrow. So I focus a lot on grip with single bar, monkey bars, crab grip, picking up with pinch grip. But those are the five key takeaways that you really try to master coordination of the body. And don't forget the most important one, if you had to select one, it is the core. All of those kind of isolate and bring it back to the core and strengthening the abdominals and strengthening the stomach, obliques, lower back. Having a strong core connects everything with what you do so plank holds and sit ups and all of that was really important for anything going inverted and swinging and being a ninja.

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Shawn: Got it, awesome. Let's expand on some of these. I know some people are like, "yeah, I've got this." But some people are like, "Bro, I'm not doing pull ups."

Jade: I won't be the everyday ninja tomorrow.

Shawn: Of course, one of the most impressive things, and Travis you know this too, when you see a woman bang out some pull ups. It's just like, wow, she's in the club.

Travis: Yeah, I respect that.

Shawn: Also, I want people to know that it's very, very much attainable. I've seen people who are 300 pounds do pull ups. I've literally seen that before. But also, I've seen people who are so weak and have no upper body strength be able to do this. Let's talk a little bit about progression. What do you think are the best things to help people to get there.

Travis: I train so many people that come up to me and tell me they want to be able to do what I do but I can't even do a pull up. I tell them let's get started. They have these resistant rubber bands that you can get online. You tie a big strong rubber band over a pull up bar and wrap it around your knees or step onto it on your foot and start repping out resistance pull ups. It helps you get started.

I trained a guy at a gym here in Los Angeles who has lost over 100 pounds. When he got started he could barely do a pull up. He was just not going to quit. He started out using a resistance band and now he uses resistance bands for doing a muscle up. For those that don't know it's a pull up that goes into a dip. He is on that level now. He can rep out 15 pull ups now and it's been a year. But he is moving on to his muscle up. He never quit. He hit his rock bottom. He was over 300 pounds and wanted to get better. He asked if I would help him and I told him of course, let's get started.

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Those are the people that motivate me whenever they ask. People that just don't give up and that progress every day not matter what level they are at. Those are my heroes.

Shawn: Awesome. You know, I think that's really a valuable distinction to with that strategy of the assisted pull up. A lot of people have probably seen assisted pull-up machines or assisted dip machines. But what I really like about that strategy of using the resistance band is the fact that you are using your body and space instead of being confined in that machine, which I am not really a big fan of, the assisted pull-up machine.

What you said was basically throwing that resistance band over the pull-up bar and sticking your feet in there and just pulling yourself up. I've seen many women do that. It's so impressive to even see them do that. But it's taking away and varying the resistance band that you use is taking away some of the effort and it can really help you be able to move your body in space and get the form down in a more natural way.

Travis: I'm a huge proponent of body-weight movement. I stopped lifting weights a couple of years ago. But I am all for using resistance bands or using other things that can help you get moving because I really think if you can use your body as much as possible and not rely as much on weights or machines it really just makes you that much more connected with your body and you can move that much more efficiently.

Shawn: What I like people to do also is to do negatives.

Travis: Negatives are great.

Shawn: They are freaking hard. A lot of people, especially if they are new to doing that movement, will think it's not a big deal. Basically what a negative is, if you want to practice negatives with doing pull ups, you get yourself some kind of platform, something to stand on (maybe a chair, maybe a stool) to get you so you don't have to pull yourself up. Then you grab a pull-up bar and hop up there and hold yourself up and slowly lower yourself down. You do the negative portion of the exercise.

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There is an eccentric portion and there is a concentric portion. You just do the negative portion, you lower yourself. Maybe it takes you five seconds to go down slowly. I promise you your lats are going to be on fire the next day. Then you immediately grab that bar, hop yourself up there and do it again. Maybe you do five or eight reps of five seconds. There are so many different ways you can vary this stuff but have you got any recommendations on doing the negatives, like any kind of sets or reps that people should do?

Travis: Absolutely. Negatives are great, especially if you have a partner. Yesterday I was training someone who could barely do ten pull ups. We were breaking them down into five sets of five. He did five the first time and then he was getting to about two or three on the second set. When he came down on the second one he was gassed so I told him I would assist him. I pulled him up into the pull up and told him he would come down as slowly as he could. I told him I wanted a ten count as he came down. I had him hold his chin at the bar for ten seconds and then lower down as much as he could. He did it for the first one and then we put him back up there for the next one.

He couldn't even hold that chin up above the bar for four seconds but told him I would spot him as little as I could but have him hold himself up. And for that last one he could barely hold his chin above the bar for a second, I assisted him and told him he was going to hold if up there even if he was squeezing with all of his might and he couldn't hold himself up there.

I told him I would hold him up there for ten seconds because we were wanting to go to muscle failure. We want to exhaust those muscles to the nth degree because that's how we build and repair those muscles and that's how we have that muscle memory more importantly of how to hold on and where that muscle is going down.

We will rest a day or two and then do it again and the muscles will remember when they were coming down and will know they need to pull up. It is strengthening that muscle just as much as coming down, you are strengthening it when you are coming back up as well.

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Shawn: Powerful stuff.

Jade: Yeah, that is powerful stuff. I remember I felt like I was in shock when you did that for us Shawn. I sat in the car for 15 minutes after you were gone just staring into space. What just happened here?

Shawn: Also, this brings us to the point of partner workouts and just having that person there to assist you. I've helped hundreds of people just by holding their feet when they are on that pull up bar and when they bend their knees and I hold the bottom of their legs and help them to elevate themselves and they can go the negative from there or I can actually help them to do both portions just giving them some guidance. You know this Travis, sometimes you don't even help them that much, it's just knowing that you are there.

Travis: You can give them a finger and it makes all the difference in the world.

Shawn: Exactly.

Travis: A finger on each ankle is all you need and it can make all the difference in the world.

Shawn: That can translate over from the pull ups to the pushups. If you want to make the pushup even a little more difficult you can have somebody press down on your back against you or maybe even sit on your back or even lay on your back. There are so many different strategies with that but let's talk about the on ramp for that.

What I like to do is have people do incline pushups to start with. What do you think about that?

Travis: I love it. Incline and decline pushups. Both are great. A really good one to strengthen the core is actually if you have a wall you can walk your legs up a wall so you are holding your legs up at a 45 degree angle and pushing back against the wall as hard as you can with your fingertips. Just holding that alone is tough but if we are able to hold that then start doing pushups on top of it.

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That's a great way to strengthen your core and get your pushups done at the same time.

Shawn: Wow, I've actually done that before but I've never thought about it or detailed it like that. I was basically working into the handstand pushup and kind of being in that intermediate space. I had never thought about that.

Travis: Yes, progression for the handstand pushup.

Shawn: With incline pushups. I would imagine just having the parallel bars would be a great place to start people with incline pushups. Your feet are on the ground and then your hands would be up on, just say right now we are in the studio and we have this counter where all of the equipment is so this is where I am basically standing up and then leaning forward and tipping over just enough so that I am in a standing pushup position. What we used to do is using the Smith machine bar or a bench-press bar and I put it at different positions so that the higher up you are (the higher up you are standing) the easier it is. The lower it does the more difficult the pushup gets until we get to that place where we are full on straight on the ground just you and your body weight which Jade can just bang out.

Jade: I didn't even know you had progressed me that way.

Shawn: She was just crushing those pushups, it was crazy. Her own body weight, just knocking them out.

Jade: I was.

Shawn: I was just like, do 15 and she was done. It is nothing.

Jade: I made it look like that. But inside I was screaming.

Shawn: You are karate man.

Jade: I bruise on the inside.

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Travis: Even if you go to a gym that has a bench press or just a bench you can just walk up to the bench and put your toes on the bench and put your hands on the ground and do the pushups that way and vice versa you can put your toes on the ground and put your hands on the bench and you can scoot your feet forward or backward to add or make the resistance easier. I love doing those, they are so good for you.

Shawn: Absolutely. So one of the things that I want to encourage people to do, especially with this and mentioning how important the core is, your core is going to be functioning throughout all of these different movements we are talking about but especially when we are talking about doing pushups and decline pushups. Your core is what's going to keep you stable so I want to encourage people to make sure you are not poking your butt out too high or that you are sagging in. People have different tendencies. Some people have a tendency to poke their butt out and that's just who they are. But some people also just kind of collapse.

So you want to make sure your body is nice and straight and you've got your spine in a neutral position when you are doing those pushups because that is where you get into the real benefit with your core, not trying to bang out 5,000 sit ups. It is using your core and all of the different movements because it's going to extend out that time that your core is going to be doing work.

I also want to touch on and ask you, you already mentioned it but the best core exercises, what do you think they are. I know you said planks. Is that the best one?

Travis: Planks are a really good one. I teach planks everyday. As an added variation to a plank I love adding resistance to it. I will be in a plank position. For those that don't know about the plank position it's kind of like if you are starting a pushup you have your shoulders and your butt, everything, flat as a board and then what I like to do is actually stick an arm out and then put my right arm straight ahead even with my nose and then I will stick my left leg out. I will have one arm and one leg off the ground and really tighten that core. It's really tough but an amazing core exercise.

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If that's too easy for you I will also get my elbow and my knee (the ones off the ground) and I will bring them to each other while I am in the plank position and then extend them back out. I love doing those as a great core exercise strengthening.

Shawn: That's ninja level.

Jade: Just challenge yourself a little.

Shawn: Let's talk about the ja level without the ninja.

Travis: Okay. Even beginner level, getting into that plank position and holding it and holding a leg off the ground for five or ten seconds and then switching legs. Another game I love to do, I'll be in that plank position and lift my right arm up for five seconds then put it back down. Then I will pull my left arm up for five seconds and will do around the world, left leg then right leg. And if I still have some energy I might try to increase it next time and next week I will do it for ten seconds, 15 seconds. But it is an amazing way to work the quadrilateral and strengthen the core and just keep it fun by adding a little variation and game to it at the same time.

Shawn: What we tend to think about is the abs and the six pack and the rectus abdominis muscles. But here's the news break, everybody has those muscles.

Jade: They are somewhere in there.

Shawn: They are underneath other stuff. But what we really want is to have our waist to be smaller with our clothes fitting better and the pants and that kind of thing. How do we make our waist smaller faster? Well this is where things like planks come in because it's not just your rectus abdominis, you've got your obliques. There is also a very thin sheath-like, paper-thin muscle called the transverse abdominis or the TV. This muscle is what holds everything in. It's like a built-in girdle. That muscle really doesn't work until it has to. When you are in a space like that where you are holding your body weight up over the ground that muscle has to turn on to keep everything pulled in. That's kind of the muscle that will give out over time if you are sitting too much and are inactive. That's

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when stuff starts to have that spill over, the belt spill over. This is the holiday season and my aunts during the holidays used to unbutton the pants and walk around and I didn't want to see their panty hose.

Jade: Hey, that lets the muffin free.

Shawn: Muffin top! So that is the muscle that really gives out. Doing planks is more bang for your buck than doing a bunch of sit ups because you are going to be working that TV muscle so much more. Thanks for adding that in.

By the way, one more on ramp exercise I just thought of just now was the bird dog. Basically you are on your hands and knees. You are on all fours and then you do what Travis was talking about, you stick the left arm out and then you stick the right leg back. But still try to keep that neutral spine.

Jade: That's a pretty exercise.

Shawn: It's the bird dog, point at that bird.

Jade: Yes, but then the other leg goes back. It just makes you look so graceful when you can get it.

Shawn: That's right, as long as you're not wobble wobbling.

Jade: Well two seconds long, I can do two seconds.

Shawn: More than two seconds, Jade. Don't you fall down.

Jade: I'm building.

Shawn: You can do 30 seconds each side easy. But let's move on a little bit because I want to touch on a couple of other quick things with everybody. It's so funny and I know some people were probably surprised when you brought up grip strength. I know this to be true, at that obstacle course at Core we had a wall where there were some little things sticking out of the wall that were maybe

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an inch wide and we had to use our fingertips to pull ourselves up across the wall.

We were hanging from the wall and had to pull ourselves from left to right maybe 15 feet. Some were high and some were low, just from our fingertips. My son did it first. He did it and I was like, "oh, I've got to do it."

Jade: You have to now.

Shawn: That was hard. It was incredibly difficult. Grip strength is important for so many factors in our life, especially if you are into exercise. It plays a huge part. That's one of the first things that will give out on you. So let's talk about some of the things that we can do to improve our grip strength.

Travis: Grip strength is extremely important. The obstacle you were talking about is actually called the ultimate cliffhanger. It is one of the more popular obstacles on Ninja Warrior. But for me what has been an amazing sport to take up is actually going to a rock climbing gym. I never really spent much time in a rock climbing gym before doing Ninja Warrior but what a fun and challenging way to not only increase your grip strength but overcome obstacles. You have to find the right pattern and go the right route. It can be challenging, not only to find the right route or the most efficient route, but to do it with ease and do it the right way.

Outside of going to a rock climbing gym, I do a lot of grip strength training at my house. I do a challenge. It is a pretty intense challenge but I try to hang from a bar for seven minutes a day. I break it up and obviously don't do seven minutes at a time, I do about a minute or two minutes at a time. But even if you break it down to 30 seconds at a time there are different types of grips you can use.

I also find myself doing different things. There are grip balls you can play with, stress relief balls that you might have seen that people have at their desk and that kind of stuff, I have one in my car. I have a grip machine that instead of being stressed out by traffic I use the stress ball and strengthen my forearms and work on my grip. There are a couple of different ways you can increase your grip. I find myself picking up my book bags/back pack. I will be holding it with

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two fingers just trying to make a challenge out of the day. You have to be creative with your grip.

Shawn: I love that. So basically, you are seeing through different lenses and I am picking up so many little things and looking for ways to challenge my body throughout the day and just those little things can add up to some big results. There's another thing called the fat grip. You can put on existing bars and it is like a wider grip for you to do your pull ups or to do the hanging that you are talking about. But let's touch on one more of these categories really quickly because we've got to touch on the lower body.

You said the pistol squat. This is a single-leg squat. So what are some of the on-ramp exercises to get people to be able to do that.

Travis: A pistol squat is a one-legged squat which is a very difficult move. The progression for doing that, I was actually teaching someone yesterday the progression, is getting a wall or a pull up bar next to you (the vertical bar going up to hold the pull up bar – you can use that column) and putting your hand on the column, one hand or even two, and then come down and squat. Work on your balance. Come down as low as you can. You might not be able to go all the way down the first time but mark your progress. If you can only go down halfway the first time that's fine.

Go an inch lower the second time and an inch lower the third time. Just progress. Another great thing is the resistance band that we were talking about when you are using a pull up. Use it as something to hold onto when you are doing your pistol squat as well. That's a great way. I also do a lot of work with the TRX which is another body-weight exercise. They have some grips that hang from a bar and it is a strap. I teach people just to do pistol squats with that as well. It's the progression which is more important than being able to do the hardest thing possible.

Shawn: I like that. I'm going to try out that resistance band one. I never thought about that. It's smart. How I started doing them was just using a bench or stool. I would encourage you to do both portions the sitting down part and

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the getting up but just have a stool behind you and extend that one foot out in front of you and just sit down using one leg and then stand back up.

Jade: Bar stool, I will probably start with a bar stool.

Shawn: A bar stool? It has to be a bar stool?

Jade: It has to be up high.

(laughter)

Shawn: For me, I was using a bench at the gym.

Travis: I've used my kitchen counter top before. I get my roommate to use his kitchen countertop.

Shawn: That's what I was going to say. Because on a good day I can go in there and I can do ten each side for a few sets of pistol squats. But some days I need a little assistance so I actually go to the squat rack and have those two bars that kind of guard people from going too deep or falling out of a squat and will have those there in case I need to reach over and just help myself up. You can do that too. There are so many different ways to go about it but I think pretty much everybody, if you are capable of walking, you can use a bench or stool and just extend one foot out in front of you and sit down. Just practice doing that. You are going to hit some muscle fibers that you are not hitting.

It's also one of those movements that really helps to get your hips online.

Jade: I would love to go into that some more, especially for us women because that tends to be an issue.

Shawn: On a recent episode we had on Dr. Kelly Starrett. He is one of the most phenomenal individuals in talking about this stuff and how to reset. He calls it reorganize your pelvis and spinal integrity. Doing pistol squats is one of those great movements that helps to get your body to kind of get itself sorted out. That's awesome.

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What I like to do often times is ask my guests a particular question and I want to toss this out to you because I would love to hear what you have to say about it if you're ready.

Travis: Oh yeah, always ready.

Shawn: That's my boy. What I want to know is what is your model that you are trying to set with your life? What is the example that you are here to set with the life that you are living right now?

Travis: My model is similar to my mission. It is to spread a positive energy through movement and teaching people to overcome obstacles physically will help them mentally and spiritually. I would like to teach people specifically through that model to live a life of Pi.

I have created a brand and kind of have a mantra called Pi which I teach as positive energy. So energy is spelled innergy. It is the internal energy within. Always live with positive energy and you can do anything and you, yourself, your spirit and your soul are the vessel and the engine to overcome anything that you want to overcome but you have to have a positive attitude.

I tell people to live by the Ps, have a positive attitude, live with purpose, always be persistent, and realize that you are a powerful being. With those lessons you can do anything.

Jade: Yes.

Shawn: Awesome man.

Jade: I have one more P.

Travis: What's that?

Jade: Push away from the plate.

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Shawn: Oh my goodness.

Travis: There you go.

Jade: I can do this.

Shawn: You, you.

Jade: Ninjas don't even worry about that.

Shawn: Practice those pushups, right.

Jade: Push away.

Shawn: The plate moves, is the plate even there? Is there a spoon? So man, let people know where they can get connected with you.

Travis: The easiest is online travisbrewer.ninja or my Instagram is [tbrewer314](https://www.instagram.com/tbrewer314) the same as my [Facebook](#) and my [Twitter](#). And then I have a link for my YouTube and all my social media on my website but I'll be coming out with some apparel, making some ninja pants and some other good stuff and just more about workshops and more philosophy and ninja training that will be coming out.

The easiest thing is to just look on the website and all my contact info is on there about any of the things I'll be teaching or providing.

Shawn: Awesome man. It's been such a privilege to have you on. I really do appreciate you. I appreciate your spirit. You are just an amazing human being and I look forward to many more collaborations with you in the future.

Jade: Absolutely.

Travis: This is just the beginning, my friend.

Shawn: Awesome, awesome. Everybody, thank you so much for tuning to the show. One of the great things that Travis mentioned was innergy and really

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understanding that it's not something, a lot of people come to me and want to have more energy, they are looking for something outside of themselves to give them energy, when in fact, we create energy. We are an energy generating being and there is something called piezoelectricity that is created just by moving. Understanding his message of teaching positivity through movement is something that energizes our life so I highly encourage you to take advantage of that and just to start to employ some of these little tidbits and strategies that we've talked about here today because you will see it transfer over into your life in so many different positive ways.

Everybody, thank you so much for tuning in, take care, and I'll talk with you really soon.

Travis: Much love, thank you for listening and thank you for having me.

Jade: What a treat.

Shawn: I want to thank you for tuning in to The Model Health Show and make sure, for more after the show you head over to theshawnstevensonmodel.com. That's where you can find the show notes and if you've got any questions or comments make sure to let me know. And, please head over to iTunes and give us a five-star rating and let everybody know that our show is awesome and you're loving it. And I read all the comments so please leave me a comment there and take care everybody. I promise to keep giving more powerful, empowering, great content to help transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.