

## Surprising Longevity Secrets from a Fitness Titan – Kathy Smith with Dave Asprey – #723

Announcer:

Bulletproof Radio, a state of high performance.

Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today, we're going to talk about fitness with someone who, I would call a fitness titan. In fact, that's what Forbes called her. None other than Kathy Smith. She's been doing this health and wellness thing for almost 40 years, of focusing on how does she keep herself amazingly fit and healthy and how does she help people do that.

We're talking about she pioneered her first fitness video in 1981. And if you're like a lot of people listening to the show, you never actually pushed a VCR tape into a VCR thing and if you have, you saw the little stripes at the bottom because the heads were misaligned and all that stuff I did when I was high school. Yeah, that was the first fitness videos and CDs and DVDs and laser disks, none of that crap. But she's been doing it for so much time, more than 20 million of them sold, super authentic and someone who's built a life and a lifelong business with connecting mind and body.

And you're going to find this to be really inspirational. You're going to learn something about how you can actually be incredibly vibrant no matter what you're doing, no matter where you are and no matter how long you've been doing something that you love. This is the second time she's been on the show. I've been on her show. And Kathy, it's an honor to have you back on Bulletproof Radio.

Kathy Smith:

Oh, it's always so much fun. You're my hero in so many ways because I feel this alignment with you because you're ... I'm turning 69 this year and when I was your age, but younger. You've heard the story before that I lost my parents when I was late teens and that sent me on my journey of fitness, wellness, healing the mind, pulling myself out of a depression.

And so, so many of the things that I hear you talk about went through a lot of stages at different ... Kind of at the same time, you are maybe a little earlier including ... Since I was a product of the 70s, all of the mushrooms and the psychedelics and all of that. That was happening at that point. Not medicinal marijuana but actually just smoking the marijuana and all that time period of self-discovery, meditation but most importantly for me it was, as you mentioned, the fitness. And I started running, just to run away from my pain and my anxiety and my fear and my depression and I found this little gem of something called endorphins and everything else that happens when you work out that just helped me out of that period.

So, really loving the journey.

Dave:

I'm still stuck on the fact that you said you were 69, sorry. And Kathy, no human who sees you would be, "69? Yeah right, whatever." I found that incredible amounts of knowledge happen when I get to interview people who are around 70 and older, because hey, I'm in my late 40s. So that means you've got another couple of decades of experience that I can draw from, that our listeners can draw from. And you clearly have the brain and the energy to be able to just say, "Hey, this is what happened. I've seen this one before."

And what I want to know is given that you have this history vision, which is way more accurate than my mine, what has changed in the fitness industry over those four decades when you've really paid attention to it? So, walk me through kind of the cycles that you've seen and tell me where we are today.

Kathy:

Definitely. So let me wrap my arms around this right now. First of all, I want to just say one thing as far as technology. So, you started with the introduction with the VCRs and the VHSs. Honestly, before that and 1978 was my very first product and that was an exercise album.

And 1978 was my very first product and that was an exercise album. So, the way we exercised in 1978 was that you put an LP on. You put another turntable. There'd be a poster on the wall with pictures of me, and you follow along. And from there, we did go to the VCRs, the DVDs, the interactives. Now, I have apps and we're doing Zoom calls and Zoom workouts. So, technology changed and I've always been a technology junkie. I've loved it.

And so, that was one of the things of how you do deliver information. So, you have that side of the equation and then to your ... Kind of what I think you're directing your question to is the fitness side. And we've seen it go through the cardio phase, the big running boom of the '70s, which launched into the big aerobics craze in the '80s which high impact, headbands, let's get physical, you're in the club. The clubs became the place, the social ... That was the social center. That's where you went to meet people, meet men, meet women, meet girls, meet boys, have fun, get sweaty together.

And that then went into ... And at the same time, you have Gold's Gym coming up and you have the whole strength training and Arnold and all of that. And I want to backtrack just even before that because a good friend of mine, Jack LaLanne ... And Jack LaLanne, he was starting in the 50s with his little outfit and telling people about mind, body and nutrition.

So, I think the strength training became popular, and then you have all of these little different ... I'm going to try ... Offshoot is what I'm trying to think of. You have these offshoots of cardio strength training mind-body. And when I started my first aerobics video or my first video, I put my hands up like this and I said, "Think about your fitness, it's cardio, it's strength and it's stretching mind-body balance," that type of thing, so to have that balance between the three.

So, those three things interestingly enough have not changed that much through the years. What's changed is how we approach that. So, strength training can be anything from let's lift heavy weights to let's do TRX, to let's do our own body weight, to let's do tubing. And that's where the product side, with these businesses, multi-billion dollar business was born because all these different products to help you work out at home, at the gym in any kind of situation.

The same thing happened with cardio. So, we had everything from boxing to stepping. Step aerobics, I don't know if you remember that, but that was Gin Miller out of Atlanta. We had spinning that came with Johnny G out of Los Angeles, and all of these different ways of how do you get that workout. And more importantly, how do you get motivated to do it. So I think the big thing and the thing that I talked about when I get up in front of people is ... And this is interesting because I'd like to hear your feedback on this. But I would get up, when I would start my talks in the '90s ... Let's say 1990, I'd get up, I go ...

Back in the '90s, I was saying this already. I'd say, "Okay," and I'd shout out to the group. There's a thousand people. I'd say, "Okay, so what's your excuse?" And I'd say, "What's your excuse for not taking better care of yourself? What's your excuse for not exercising? What's your excuse for not eating right? And if you give me an excuse that I've never heard before, I'm going to give you a free book like my new book."

And so, I would do is I'd go around to start listening to people's excuses of why was it that we know we're supposed to exercise. You know you're supposed to do some strength training. You know everything you preach on your podcast, people know that there's a rhythm to your day and circadian cycles and all the stuff that we're learning along the way. So, what is holding you back? And that became my fascination because I love human beings. I love the way to understand how they think.

So I'm not just up here preaching, "Okay, I want you to do 20 pushups, 20 squats, 20 jumping jacks." It's like that could be an exercise for the day. But let's say you don't want to do it because you have incontinence, and you have leakage if you do jumping jacks. Let's say that you have a shoulder issue and you can't do a pushup. Let's say that you don't like to sweat. Or let's just say ... I mean, I've heard them all Let's say you've gone to the hairdresser, you blew out your hair that day and you don't want to get it messed up.

So you start to get into people's minds of, "Okay, what's preventing you from taking these steps into this lifestyle." And then I like solving it. And I really have loved solving along the way. And to your point, directing people to movement pattern that they will love. You love to ... I mean, people go, "Oh, I hate to work out." And I say, "Okay, imagine you're in your second grade class. It's like bell goes off, recess. You're running outside of the playground. Are you happy? Are you excited about that? Or do you want sit in your chair longer? You're excited to go outside. What do you want to do when you get out there?"

Let's go back to that playful spirit of what turns you on so much that it's fun to do, and that's what I try ... It could be dancing. It could be stepping, spinning, biking, hiking, whatever. I try to help people find that and that's how the business developed because we had all of these niches that people filled.

Dave:

I love it. There's something to be said for finding something you like. What about time? It seems like so many people that I talked with is like, "Look, I have a job. I have a commute. I have a family. I'm trying to go school or learn some more things. I like to relax. I just don't have time to do an hour of cardio or something every day." What do you say to that excuse?

Kathy:

It's funny. I used to be a little more positive when I look at the answer to that excuse, because I get it. I mean, I get it. I was in an audience once where a woman said, "My mother has Alzheimer's. I have to drive to the facility. I have four kids. I have a job," whatever. And you realized that there isn't a lot of time in a day. But at one point, we all have to look at our lives and just see how we're living them.

If you honestly don't have enough time to take care of yourself and put yourself on your to-do list at all ... I mean, you have this long to-do list, and if you can't put yourself on the to-do list, then maybe it's time to evaluate the life a little bit. But that's one way I would answer. The other way is we have so many shortcuts now. And it's one of the things I know that I wanted to bring up today at one point because I know you interviewed Dr. Jim Stray-Gundersen on blood flow restriction training.

Now, I'm involved with Be Strong and I've been using blood flow restriction training for over two years now. And that is what ... And I knew you would love it because that shortens your time. You can give me 10 minutes, I can get you into a state where you're changing your whole body chemistry because it's not just as you know, and you talk about it a lot. But it's not just about firming up or getting the core a little stronger or the butt a little higher or the arms more buffed. It's all the systemic things that happened when you work out on the cellular level.

And those are the things that you don't want to avoid by saying, "I don't have enough time." So, you do the little hacks that you talked about, but the one of the biggest ones, and you've talked about it. I know you've gotten the word out there. It's growing across the country. But blood flow restriction training is one quick way that you can shorten your time.

And then I would say the others, and I guess I know you've talked about this, so I don't want to be redundant at all, but HIIT training. Just go hard, go fast to go home, that sort of thing. It's like don't get into this ... You don't need an hour, especially as we age and this is the one thing I do want to talk about because what's kept me in the game for all these years is that I have known when do you go hard and when do you back off and go gentle and do your yoga and your recovery and let your body heal.

And what the biggest mistake I do see people especially the real fit people ... I mean, if there's a tip that you can say like for two decades or whatever, an extra two decades, I've known so many specifically men, that gym, they'd be pumping that, chest pressing, big weights, whatever not listening to their bodies and by 45, 50, mid-50s, it's shoulder replacements. It's things like that.

They haven't balanced the idea of you can't put that much stress on your joints forever. I mean, you can do it for a short time. You can have fun with it. So, it's not saying don't have fun. It's like find the balance.

Dave:

I really like that perspective. I've seen far too many former bodybuilders in their mid-50s in constant pain and others who are triathletes or swimmers or big wave surfers and things like that and they kind of beat themselves up. Their recovery isn't a masculine thing to do, the yoga relax, recover, get a massage sort of thing. It's like, "Oh, I'm going to go push."

Eventually, it seems like it catches up with you. That's one of the reasons that I started Upgrade Labs. Here's all the recovery tech because recovery takes a long time. Recovery is boring. Sorry, like could you rest? I didn't want to rest. I want to get more rest and less time because I actually have stuff I like to do.

So, I'm thinking even that can be hacked. And it's funny, you-

Kathy:

Even that, I have to say I mentioned this earlier about having a daughter who's an Olympic athlete. And the Nike team was all these medalists. There's 20 of them that came up for altitude training up here in Park City and the thing that you see is, to your point, so much of their day is on the recovery, the rebuilding. The "Oh, the Achilles isn't feeling quite right." "Oh, the energy level." "Oh, the stretching out." "Oh, the hamstring ..." And so to be able to bring that down to a period of time where it doesn't take that much time but you're giving it attention is just vital, or else again, you just pay the price 50 and beyond.

Dave:

Things that I wished someone had told me when I was younger. I did this six days a week, an hour and a half a day, half cardio with weights on a treadmill and half maxing out all the machines and all. It didn't make me lose any weight but I probably could have used a little bit more sleep and maybe an every other day routine would have been metabolically healthier for me.

So, we're talking about accelerated recovery there, and when it comes to putting on muscle or just doing that side of things in less time, the blood flow restriction with Be Strong. I believe in that so much that the intermittent hypoxia is an extension of that sort of thing. And for six years now, that's

been a part of what we're doing at Upgrade Labs, whole body intermittent hypoxia via two different mechanisms to up-regulate this thing called hypoxic inducible factor one, which blood flow restriction does.

So, everyone who subscribes to my box. I sent a box of curated stuff every quarter. Subscribers last quarter actually got the Be Strong bands in the box.

Kathy:

Can I hold one up? No, I knew you did that, so that was exciting. But it's just one of these and this goes on my arm and then you have this to pump it up and that little ... And it goes right at the top of your arm here, and then you pump it up and these barrels fill up and it modifies and restricts the blood flow slightly.

And to your point which I'll let you to continue, I didn't mean to interrupt you, but it impacts the oxygen.

Dave:

In fact, Dr. Jim Stray-Gundersen was on episode 705 on Bulletproof Radio talking about all the amazing science behind this. And I think this is awesome because you've been progressive and always evolving for 40 years. And so for you to be able to say, "Okay, I used to do it this way in the '70s or '80s or '90s," and, "Oh, look, now we have this thing that lets me restrict the blood flow in my arms and legs," do the exercises that you want to do but spend less time on it.

And you're completely happy to do that instead of falling into that trap where, "This is how it has to be, and it's always going to be this way." And I find so many people over time, they lose the flexibility where they're not willing to reconsider something that they've already "solved" even though, "Wait, it's not working as well as it did." What allows you to maintain that flexibility or has allowed you to do it for your entire life?

Kathy:

Well, I've always had this insatiable curiosity. I love learning. I love trying, that's why everything you do, I'm right there. It's like I hear it, I see it, I do it, I try it. I see if it works for me. I see what aspect will work for me. I see what I'm doing that's similar to that.

But I think it's a Buddhist philosophy of always looking at things with young eyes, fresh eyes, like you've never seen it before. And I don't know. I started studying Buddhism again and actually went in Hinduism with Paramahansa Yogananda at self-realization fellowship literally about 45 years ago.

And that philosophy where you get up and you're very present, you're very right now, you're very much like, "Teach me something," as opposed to, "Oh, I know that." I see people all the time, I'll say something ... I'm going to tell them something or they asked me a question about like time restricted eating or whatever, and literally the words come out of my mouth and it's like, they have the answer and they know why it doesn't work or whatever it might be.

They've already decided. They've made the decision of that it's ... And I think that this idea of how do you stay open to being coached. Through the years, with tennis, with skiing, whatever, I've had coaches say, "You're very coachable," because it's like, "Show me. I'm going to repeat it. I'm going to mimic you whether it's dance or tennis or a movement pattern." It's something I've been good through the years because if I'm boxing, if I'm working with a boxer like Michael Olajide who fought for the middle heavyweight champion of the world, and I'm working with them. I'm there. I'm here.

It's like elbows in, here too, [inaudible 00:19:15], and you're like you're doing this and I used the hip. And pretty soon, that relates to Tai chi which relates to yoga, which relates to Kundalini which relates to pelvic floors and they all ... When you start to see how everything connects and how all these different disciplines that whatever you're using in that yoga class ... For some people, "Oh, yoga is just for stretching."

Oh, my gosh, 40 years of yoga. Yoga is for changing your life and changing the way you think and becoming aware where every single body part. I have this technique I used, this energization technique where you start with your left foot. And imagine coming up your body and imagine on a scale through one to five, this is a one, no tension. This is a five ... Like completely an isometric contraction.

So, now you go up in the morning, I do this, where you start with left foot. And you go, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, right foot. Left calf, right calf. Left thigh, right thigh. Glute, lower abduct, arm, neck. Okay, all of it ... Releases one muscle group at a time. And it took me years. Imagine going, release here, release here. I mean, release in this side of your neck.

So, anyway, that energization exercise which is something from a meditation technique that I learned through self-realization because ... I'm called the Kriyaban, which is a certain type of yoga, and that's a technique you learn. Now, you take that technique and that's just body awareness. It's learning where your body is any time in space and time. Where's your body? Even listeners right now, where's your body right now because have you fallen into that old person posture? Which is aging posture? Or are you doing some posterior activation for your posterior chain activation?

Are you doing something that pulls your shoulders back every single morning at least four times a day? I noticed you just ... Even a little adjustment, you said it just a little bit.

Dave:

I better pull my shoulders [crosstalk 00:21:26].

Kathy:

It doesn't have to be unnatural but in general, when people are sitting, don't think about sitting on top of your sit bones and that neutral spine, and then that back, that very natural way that everything ... And then including what you talked about in your podcast recently with the whole tantric yoga and that lower pelvic floor and that what everybody thinks when you work your core. You get in your plank and you're working your core, which is fine.

But there's so much down in the lower part of your ... And internally with your core muscles that when you start to get that in yoga and some of your other disciplines, you bring that back to your strength training. So, now, you're in your CrossFit class, you're not going down and letting that lower part just hang out between your anus and your vagina or your penis or whatever. That is like that's the first thing. It's like lift, go.

Anyway, it's all these things that become ... That they're interdependent. Did I get off track? Sorry.

Dave:

I don't think so. You're just incredibly enthusiastically curious, and I think that's what's kept you doing this. As to whether you know why you're that curious, that could just be who you are and how you are. Was there something in your childhood or something that made you just more curious than the average person? Because you are more curious and you've maintained your level of curiosity for longer than most people.

Kathy:

Yeah, it's a good question. I mean, I'd say the only thing that comes to mind ... I'm trying to think of a couple ... A couple of things come to mind, but one, I was raised in the military and my dad was an Air Force pilot and I bring that up because there have been studies and there's all kinds of talk about people ... Military kids either become depressive and alcoholics or kind of outgoing and curious and successful-type of people.

And the reason being is that every two years, you're transferred to another location and if you're going to succeed, if you're going to be able to fit in, you have to be able to go up and ask people, "My name is Kathy. What's your name? And where do people hang out at the school? And what is there to do?" And you have to keep asking questions if you are going to ...

When you're in 7th grade, you're the newest kid in that 7th grade class and you have no friend in the world. And then again, in 9th grade, and then again in 11th grade, but starting from the time you were a baby. And I think that you start to get rewarded for asking questions and I think, in a way being curious.

So that might be a little bit of it. And then the other side, I think there's just a bit of ADHD type of thing that, it's like my mind ... I think that's why the meditation exercise is so good because I have ... I mean, a lot of us talk about this and I'm sure other people experienced this, but I have lots of thoughts. I get up in the morning and I got four new products I want to create or not even products but ideas or people. And that gets my juices flowing and I free flow. I let things just ...

That's where my energy comes from. I meditate and then I try to ... I know when I need to calm the mind but there's just a fun factor for me for just letting it run and finding out what comes up because I do make some pretty neat connections during that time period.

Dave:

So, it's built in there. You're always creating. I find that there's a personality type that's like that. It's relatively rare. A lot of entrepreneurs do it. A lot of innovators do it, but they don't become entrepreneurs because they're so innovative that they can't run a business or ask for help or something.

And then there's certain states like that that are programmable through yoga, through meditation, through neurofeedback, through electrical stimulation. You can turn on creativity and innovation on someone who has forgotten how to do it. But I also would hypothesize that for you because you've done such a good job on maintaining your fitness that your brain is capable of doing that.

So, you have more knowledge and more wisdom and you have the energy of a young brain in there. It's like, "Oh, look, I have all these knowledge to pay with," which makes it easier to innovate because you've seen so much and you can take that with whatever is new and say, "Ah, I've seen it."

Now, of all of the fitness trends you've seen over your life, what is the single dumbest one?

Kathy:

Shaker Weight? Do you remember? Shaker Weight is that was the infomercial [inaudible 00:26:17] but as far as ... By the way, sometimes gimmicks ... Only because this is my entrepreneurial side. Sometimes, a gimmicky thing, if it gets somebody doing anything like I'm for it. So, if somebody picked up, I don't ... Did you have in Canada, the shaker weight? Which is basically-

Dave:

No, I'm American. Yeah, that was so funny, like you couldn't not look stupid holding this-

Kathy:

I know. You say it yourself, "Okay," and especially they tell me where they decided to put it, you kind of go like, "Okay." But Shaker Weight was hysterical. I mean, they sold a part of it because it's such a good great gag gift, I think it's not ... I don't want to just any particular movement style, but there are certain movement styles or what happens is people get into a habit of doing the exact same thing the exact same way.

And it was especially when it is like a woman lying on the ground doing leg lifts, lifting her leg up and down 30 times and then leg circles, and then circle the other way and it's really small muscles. And now, I'm not against working stabilizing muscles and obviously, it's all important. But instead of being able to combine that with some functional workout, full body, it's just like let's just come here and we're just going to circle our ... We're just going to do this and this and this, and over and over. And they're paying money for that and then they're wondering why they're not getting results.

And so, it's the idea that anything that professes to be the only answer, even with my own stuff, I do not say this is the only way. I found this is the best way, the best way for me. I'm trying to find the best way for you. But the only way ... And when people really narrow it down to one particular form of exercise ... I mean if it's functional, that's even fine. But even if you do weight training with no cardio, or cardio with no stretching, at one point it's like, "Okay, get a balanced approach to this thing but I'm trying to think of like really gimmicky."

There has just been ... Because I was on HSN. I was on QVC. I sold a lot of stuff on all of these home shopping networks. And so, it's just mainly the promises. And sometimes, the thing isn't that bad, like taking ... Suzanne Somers had the little spring thing that was about this big and it went like this. And you can make your bust bigger and you put up between your legs. And there was a range of motion about three inches, squeeze, squeeze. But women loved it because you got it at home and you put up between your legs and you squeeze, squeeze and you went ... And you felt it in your inner thigh. It was a small range of motion.

And people say it's a gimmick. Well, if it's one of 40 things you're doing and you're watching TV and you want to throw it between your legs, go for it. But what happens is people, it gets like this is going to be your fitness routine. So that's where the gimmick is. The promises are the gimmick. A lot of times, just having a small device that might do one thing is fine.

Dave:

I actually have one of those devices. I think it's the same one. It's like you stick it right out in your butt cheeks and squeeze it. That's the one?

Kathy:

Yeah.

Dave:

Believe it or not, a Chinese medicine grandmaster in his 70s along the lines of Mantak Chia who's just on the show was like, "Dave, you should order one of these gimmicky things." And I'm like, "Are you kidding me?" And it's like pink plastic. It smells like a cheap sex toy. It's like, "Well, I can't use it outside."

Kathy:

I've never heard putting it between your butt cheeks. So-

Dave:

I don't know, it's like curved and it goes all the way up there. And I'm like, "All right, I'm going to try it." Anytime someone who has way more experience than me and has said he's doing it for decades, I am not that arrogant to say that's stupid. Like I say, it looks stupid but, okay, I'm going to try it.

So, I did it. And you know what? You do it for like a week and I'm like, "I could feel differences in ..." And it's not really your pelvic floor. It's like your lower ass, for a lack of a better word. But this is weird but what it did and the reason that he thought are useful for me, it actually straightened my whole posture because I spent a lot of time at a desk. And I mean, I write books for a living as a part of, very small part of my living. But I spent a lot of time on it.

So, you tend to just kind of get focused. So it did really changed how I walk, like my head moved back. I'm like, "Okay, that's kind of cool. It's a gimmick." I don't think it's my entire fitness routine and I don't think most people are looking at the little curve on the inside of my butt. But, okay, yeah, it worked.

Kathy:

Well, no, that's perfect. And I love to hear that it's working on your posture because that's a thing. I mean, that is a big thing that people do not talk enough about. And lower back, rhomboids, how do you get up and do that posture chain activation every single day. I mean, something as simple as bringing your elbows down and pulling them behind you and just getting the neck and the chin up. I mean, there's much more advanced things and things you can do on the floor.

But literally at your desk every day, take that break for that. And to get up and just ... I know you know this already but you get out of that seat and get that nitric oxide also just like movement through your system and do something intense. I mean, I have people when I do speaking engagements, just get them up for two minutes and push and really like push. And the energy, and to your point, the brain function and the energy in the room after sitting for 30, 40 minutes, getting up and pushing with a high knees, in and out, jumping jacks, couple of pushups.

So, I'm big in doing that throughout the day. And to your point, we started this conversation off with this how do you get people that don't have the time, just break it up. I mean, the science is over and over, it is out there and there's one science research paper after another about don't sit all day long. Get those hips throughout the day. Make them two minutes, make them four minutes. Get a 10-minute one. And anybody can do it then.

Dave:

It's so cool. It's all very doable if you have the motivation and you have a system to make it a habit. And the habit part, I think, has been a big part of the excuse for me and for a lot of people. And my wife, Lana, said, "You know, I'm going to do this ..." She read BJ Fogg's book and on habit formation, Tiny Habits ... and said, "All right, I'm going to try this," and she said every time she's blending, she usually makes a Bulletproof matcha in the morning.

And so, every time she's at the blender, she does squats. So the whole time it's blending, she's doing squats in the kitchen which I think is hilarious. But that habit over the course of six months, you could bounce a quarter off of her backside and it wasn't like that before. And it's funny, it's not that big of an investment because the time was already spent holding the lid on the blender so there's no tea all over the ceiling, like okay.

But the difference of applying it because it's a habit seems to overcome some of the excuse side of things as well. Do you make habits-

Kathy:

You've heard of potty squatties, right?

Dave:

Of course, yeah.

Kathy:

Yeah, that's the other one, just like every time you go to the bathroom, just give yourself 10 air squats, and that adds up in the course of the day also.

Dave:

It also discourages you from going to the bathroom, and so you save time. I'm kidding. Now, you do some other stuff that is really cutting edge in the world of biohacking, which is awesome. You're talking about nasal breathing. I've had the Buteyko Clinic guys on. Patrick McKeown has been on the show and I sometimes actually tape my mouth shut because, what the heck, why not? Tell me what you do with nasal breathing.

Kathy:

Well, I started because I had Patrick on my podcast. And my daughter turned me on to them, the athlete. And she started doing it to increase performance. And so, she was telling me about it. I read about it, then I listened to your podcast with Patrick. Then I had Patrick on. And so, I have a slight, very slight ... I've had through the years, not now, but exercise-induced asthma. And it was not medication time or anything like that but I would notice that I could ... There are certain times where if I would go up for a really hard run and I wouldn't warm up, that I would irritate my lungs.

So anyway, I had that going for me and at the same time, I lived at altitude. And I know there's a lot of benefits of moving at altitude and then there was just this idea of when you hear the science behind it that we're meant to breathe through our nose and what happens is that we become mouth breathers. As young kids, it changes the way that our face are actually ... The makeup and the proportions in your face.

But literally, it's sleep apnea, it's snoring and I happened to be dating somebody also who was a big snorer. And snoring is a big problem for not only the sleeper but the second-hand snorer which is the person living with the sleeper, I mean that can be a deal breaker almost in a relationship, is because there's no sleep, then I'm not a happy puppy.

So, I started playing around with it and I started with the BOLT test which is basically you inhale maybe at four or five count, you exhale, hold it how many seconds without gasping for air, can you hold it. And I noticed that especially at altitude, it wasn't that great. And really I mean 20 seconds, a 20-second hold is considered pretty average. You can try to get up to like a 40-second hold. And I found I was like, the first time was like 13 seconds where I had to breathe.

So, I started playing around it and basically, playing around means in the morning, going through my routine and doing everything and just literally not anything ... Nothing coming through here. It's all through the nose. Then I started in exercising. I went to my first ... I cycled with a group of cyclists. And I went to my cycling group and what I did ... And this is indoor during the winter. And what I did is I

started noticing, everybody even the warm-up was like this ... They're breathing. And I don't know if you can tell or not, but they're breathing through their mouth.

And I'm thinking, "Wow, it's just the warm-up right now." So I was breathing through my nose and I noticed there was an uncomfortable feeling because what you're really trying to do is train yourself oxygen hunger as well as carbon dioxide build up and training yourself to deal with that carbon dioxide load.

And when you do, it takes about a month. For me, it took about a month. But when you do with exercise, for instance, you go on your hike or you go whatever and maybe you pull the pace back just a little bit so that you can stay in nasal breathing for the entire time. Now, I can stay in nasal breathing. I just did ... Our chairlift opened over at Deer Valley. I'm in the city since chairlift opened. And so I hiked to the top and so I started about 7,000, go to 9,000 feet. And it's only really at the end that I use mouth breathing but I tried to do the whole thing doing nasal breathing.

And what's happened is just this kind of thing you're talking about, about this energy, this invigoration, this idea the stamina that you don't gas out in your workouts soon. You've learned to tolerate that carbon dioxide load and you've learned to use oxygen more efficiently and get more oxygen in your system because it's this correlation between you have to ... The carbon dioxide determines also how much oxygen is going to get into the blood cell, into the cells, into the bloodstream and into your cells.

So, playing around with that balance has just been remarkable. And it really has helped my sleep. It's helped complexion. It's helped energy. And mainly as I said when it comes to cardiovascular or workouts, I'm not fatiguing as quickly. So, it's been really one of these things that I love playing around with. And I recommend it to people. Most people I talked to about it, they don't quite get the concept. They don't quite understand why it might be useful, or it sounds like how could you work out and not breathe through your mouth.

Dave:

It sounds impossible.

Kathy:

And if you're sprinting, if you're in your sprint, you're going to have to use your mouth breathing. But most of us don't have to be doing that, and then all of a sudden when you start noticing this, you're sitting on a plane. You're sitting anywhere and you see people with their mouths open and they're breathing like this. And then you think about the immunity side of this. And Patrick talked about this on your show, but nitric oxide, the biggest reservoir in our body is in our nasal cavities.

And so, when you breathe through your nose and you start to release that, that helped. It's immunity booster. It's great for heart health. There's a lot of reasons. But especially during when you want to keep your immunity strong, there's so many other filters in your nose that can help prevent certain things from getting into your system as opposed to just dropping that mouth open and breathing, be a mouth breather. So, I'm observant of it now.

Dave:

I have made the same shift. I was blown away when I interviewed Patrick and then it took a while to really build the practice and I also catch myself mouth breathing sometimes. But even the change in your teeth, and if you just get it done at night ... And what blew me away the most was like, look,

congestion happens. I get some pretty mean allergies when the pine pollen is so thick up here in British Columbia. It's like a yellow cloud. You can see it from space sometimes or so much ...

And during that time, breathing in your nose doesn't always work. And he says, "Just do it anyway. And magically, your body doesn't want you to die so your sinus passages will open up." I'm like, "Really?" Well, it turns out it does work. You just have to be uncomfortable for a little while and then it happens.

I also find it's tough if I'm like right now, I'm talking a lot. And when you talk a lot, it's hard to close your mouth. Okay, I'm going to say the rest of the things that I was going to say. So, if you spend all day on Zoom or you spend all day talking, which for me, an eight hours of talking in a day is pretty normal. I'll do a couple of episodes. Then someone interviews me. And then I have team meetings and blabity blah. And that doesn't help with that. Do you find the same thing when you speak, that you still-

Kathy:

Exactly. That's why you have to find time for it at other times during the day. And you're right, during the sleep, you start with ... I know I bought the tape. You buy a little tape but it's not scary. It's a tape that you will ... It will fall off if you need to really put your lips apart. But it's the idea that you start to settle into this really also peaceful state.

So, there's a technique and I know you know the breath of fire technique. But that breath of fire where it's an explosive inhaling and exhaling through the nose like before when I want to relax. And it's just like ... And then after about a minute to 75 seconds of that, you just lie back and then you don't even feel like you need to take a breath for a while because now you have this oxygen. You're just full of this oxygen. And now, you just sit there and you go into this very peaceful calming state.

So, the breath is ... I mean, if there's anything, if there's any big takeaway from like if you wanted to say what would you sum up everything about pro-aging. And everything we've talked about, it's like learning about your breath because your breath controls your emotions. It controls your health. It controls so much of like how well you're going to sleep. And if you can start to see that your breath can make you ...

And if I'm feeling off one day, I get up, like things are off. What could have been? What did I eat the night ... So, I go through a checklist. What did I eat? What did I drink? What did I do? How much have I been training? Because some of my stuff will be, oh, over-training. And we haven't mentioned much of this but I think it's worth noting that as you get older, you know that exercise causes inflammation, so you want to do all the things to minimize that.

And the one thing is, but if you are an exercise junkie and you love the feeling, you love the high, so you want to do one mountain peak and then another mountain peak and then a bike ride. Then you wake up the fourth day and you feel like the truck hits you or whatever. Or you just feel, not even like the truck hit you. You just feel ... For me what it feels like is just, and this is ... It's like I want to bite somebody's head off. It's like I feel there's kind of an anger.

Dave:

Yeah, you're cranky.

Kathy:

You get cranky. And I'm going, "Damn, why am I so cranky?" I'm like scaring myself right now. That's when I know and that's what you look. It's like, "Okay, now I need to go into that breath. Then I need to

look at adrenals. I need to look at liver. I need to like just settle back a little bit. I need to do something that's going to help restore."

And if I do that, then I don't get sick. And I don't break down. But if I don't listen to it, that's when I get hit ... I haven't done this in many, many, many years but I would get hit with such bad lung stuff and whatever 20 years ago because I would just push.

Dave:

Learning how to self-modulate is important. I'm thinking about your comment on breath work. The number of incredibly, many standard deviation, more energetic people than average as they age who talked about breathing on here is amazing. So, you just talked about it. John Gray talks about it. Mantak Chia talks about it. Barry Morguelan talks about it. Stan Grof who invented holotropic breathing, and I interviewed him. He was in his 80s, same thing, breathing.

And it even showed up statistically enough across all the interviews on Bulletproof Radio that when I wrote Game Changers, analyzed what people said made the biggest difference for them, it statistically popped up as something meaningful. So, if you're listening to this and you're saying, "Look, I am 30 years old and I think I breathed pretty well, thank you very much." Look, people who are two or two and a half or three times as old as you have figured this out over the course of their life. And certainly, I know that breathing has been really transformational for me.

You just heard it here from Kathy Smith. And if you just look for those threads, you'll realize, look, you should probably figure this out and get on top of it because it's not that hard and you change a habit. So, when you go to sleep, you sleep with your mouth closed. Or when you exercise, you breathe with your mouth closed. Really what's it going to do? To make it really easy for you, you'll have better teeth. There, now you have an excuse.

Kathy:

That's great. Well also, you'll handle ... You know what? This is the other thing. You'll handle stress and you'll handle ... If you're running companies, if you're wanting to be totally successful, breathing ... That is the biggest thing that I've noticed. You have to practice it when you're not in stressful situations because then it becomes second nature. And all of a sudden, you're in there having a baby. When I was having my two babies, the doctor would come in, "What are you doing exactly?" And it's different than Lamaze breathing. When you get into breath, it helps you handle of pain.

When I was in a shootout in LA, I was in my Range Rover and somebody dropped outside of the car. Cops were chasing. He dropped behind my car with a semiautomatic gun and they're shooting on both sides of the Range Rover. And some bullets are going through but I'm with my assistant and we're in the Range Rover and we're like head on the console. And my assistant said, "What should we do?" I said, "Breathe." And it's just like ...

And then it's just like because it keeps you very present because what are you going to do in this situation? You're in a really bad situation. It happens in business. Something is going on. Now, if I go, "Oh, my god ..." You go to that place and it's like start yelling at people or whatever. If you go into, "How are we going to solve this?" When I was doing all my video productions, and the video productions are expensive. When I started, they're quarter of a million dollars for each production. So, I mean, I have \$10 million in video production and you're on these shoes and there are long days.

And you're there sometimes until 7:00 in the morning and it's still 2:00 in the morning because it's not done until you get it. It's not like, "Oh, I wanted to go home now." It's like, "We got it. We got to get this done." And so what happens is that something goes wrong and everybody is going, "You did it.

You did it. Who did it?" And I remember the director saying, "I don't care who did it. Just get it fixed," that sort of thing. And that's what the breathing does. It's like let's not go into like, "How did this happen? How did it go wrong," like, "How do we fix this right now," and the more present ...

And I do something on my speeches. Now you've probably heard this one, but this is really powerful for me. It's called BLT, Breathing Listening Technique. And so, I'll be in the audience ... I mean I'll be on stage and I'll have the audience. And I'll just say, "So, let's take a breath in for a count of six, one, two, three, four ... And exhale. Now, this time when you take the inhale, inhale up. Listen for a sound and name that sound in your mind ... And exhale. We're going to do it one more time. Inhale ... Find a different sound ... And exhale. And I lied, I'm going to do it one more time. This time in the top of your inhale, hold your breath and see if you can hear your heartbeat ... And exhale."

So what I do is I do that with the group. And I do it like four or five times like that. And I just show them how in a matter of 30 seconds to a minute, you pull yourself out of the past. You're not thinking about the future. You're here and now. And when you're here and now, and we're just like exchanging energy like we are now. This is where the power comes from, and this is where that mindset just every single moment of your day of getting here and now, and here and now, and here and now.

And that's where ... It just brings joy in my life because there's no worrying about what didn't happen or, oh, my god, whoops, what's going to happen. It's like right here. And that's where ... I mean, I could almost go into an emotional state with that because that's where I'm really connected with Dave or the audience or whatever, not wondering anywhere and in which way. And I just find that when I do that, I get a lot more done in the day and I have a lot more time for myself.

Dave:

Wow. That's amazing, the power of breathing. We have time for maybe one more question for you. And I'm pretty sure that breathing is going to be one of the answers here, but if someone came to you tomorrow and said, "Look, Kathy, I want your top three fitness recommendations." You got 40 years of training people. You've created all sorts of cool stuff out there. You only get to recommend three things for someone to do. What would you recommend?

Kathy:

I said consistency is the key to all of these. Just every single day of your life, your body is meant to move. Find ways so that you enjoy doing that. And get sensual with it. I think people forget about the playful side. I mean it can be, I get up in the morning and I'll (singing) and I'll start going and like I'm going to put my (singing). And you're there. It's 30 seconds, your tea is going. You walk over, I put my music on, I do one turn, maybe like you're saying about wife, I squat. Done, three minutes. But it woke my body up.

Do I call it exercise? No. I don't call it exercise but I do call that it's that synovial fluid. And remember, we have these bodies with all these lubrication and stuff and especially as you age, you got to wake those guys up. I mean, [inaudible 00:51:35], same thing. Get those hips moving and don't forget to ... That was one, consistency. Do something every single day.

I mean, I would say strength training. And I'm just directing this to women, but obviously it's men also. Strong women stay young. That's just my mantra. Strong women stay young, without muscle. And remember, muscle is everywhere in your body. So, it's your pelvic floor. It's the vaginal wall. It's all up and down. It's the phase. I mean, people go like, "How do I ..." If you don't do things that even create the collagen, and if you're not doing things that create muscle in your body, thinks the skins starts hanging.

Plus no more adventures in life. No more adventures in life because all of a sudden it's like, "Oh, I can't walk the camino that I did this year." "I went to Burning Man this year and it was fun and my first time and ..." Those adventures are ... I can have those adventures because I know my body will tolerate whatever. If you're not strong, then all of a sudden by the time you're 45, it's like I go out with these ... I was rowing with a girlfriend of mine, 45 years old. We were in Portugal. We have to take our two-man kayak but they were heavy.

She's got her side. She goes to pull it up. She goes, "Kathy, there must be something wrong. I can't lift this side." I go, "Okay, you take my side." I go on her side, I lift it up. She couldn't lift the other side because at the age of 45, this is not an old ... Your muscle mass starts decreasing, decreasing after the age of 30. And so if you're not doing things to maintain it, you will not have a lifestyle. So, that was strong women stay young or strong people stay young.

And then, I don't know ... Is that enough or do you need another one?

Dave:

That was three, right? Move every day, consistency and strength training.

Kathy:

Yeah. Consistency is sort of move every day. But I think it's strength training. I mean, no, that sounds two. I mean, you're wanting fitness, because this thing about staying young, it's like keep trying new things. So, stay curious.

Dave:

There you go.

Kathy:

Keep trying new fitness things because there are so many fun things. I mean, we mentioned blood flow restriction training. We mentioned Be Strong. But there are just ... If you've never been on a bosu ball, if you've never used a TRX, if you've never used ... Try all these things and each one. And if you want to spend your money like on something depending on whatever income level you are, keep increasing your at-home little tchotchke that we talked about because you don't want to have to go to a gym all the time because like COVID might happen or it's raining outside or you don't feel like it. And besides, you want to be able to do things throughout the day.

I also want people to know that even if you're living in an apartment in a city, I have written blogs about how do you build your fitness legs corner with \$25 or \$25,000 or \$250,000. So, I mean there's something for everyone out there.

Dave:

Well, Kathy, it's always a pleasure to speak with you. I prefer doing it in person in Salt Lake like we normally do. But until all this virus stuff gets handled, it sounds like it's going to be remote and be like this one. Thank you for continuing to do your work. I'm still just having a hard time believing that you're 69. I think you're probably 49 and you just changed the birth certificate so you could claim this. But keep doing whatever you're doing. Your energy levels are amazing. You look amazing, and I always learn stuff when I talk with you. Thank you.

Kathy:

Thank you, Dave. Thank you, thank you, thank you, my hero.

Dave:

Your website, KathySmith.com. You're super well-known. People won't have a hard time finding you at all. And thanks for taking an hour of your time to share your knowledge with a whole lot of people.

Kathy:

I appreciate. And I appreciate you. Thank you, everybody. Thank you, Dave.