

Your Body is Trying to Tell You Something...

Are You Listening?

This is the TD Fitness Podcast with Coach T., episode number 71.

Welcome to the TD Fitness Podcast, giving you healthy living insights for your physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. Now, your host, certified health coach and personal trainer, Coach T.

Hey, guys. This is Coach T. from the TD Fitness Podcast, and in this episode, what I want you to take away is that your body is oftentimes trying to tell you things, but we're not always attuned to what our bodies are saying. We're often not listening. Okay? That's a big takeaway from this episode. I want to dive into that and unpack it a little bit so that we can get a better understanding for how we can recognize some of the signals that our body is giving us and how we can react to those so that we can take care of ourselves and be our best selves.

Recently, I completed some training on a new aircraft, and whenever I do these types of things, I'm often reminded that airplanes tend to fly better when they are being flown regularly. If they sit for a while, then you're prone to maintenance issues. The same thing is true with your car. Right? If your car doesn't run for a long time, if it just sits there, and you don't ever do anything with it, then you're more likely to have maintenance problems. Unless we take action to fly or to drive these machines, or we inspect them regularly to ensure they're ready to go, then they're not going to perform the way that we want them to. If you never clean your computer and take off some of the unneeded and unwanted items, if you don't update your antivirus regularly, if you don't turn your phone off from time to time, those devices are going to run slower and get bogged down over time.

It's not just machines or equipment, either. Right? Maybe you grow apart from another friend simply because you've lost touch over the years. Just last week, our pastor used an example in church about how he was drinking a bottle of juice, and he read on the label that you should shake well before drinking, because it said that separation is natural. The point is, if you don't do something, if you don't shake it up, then those ingredients are going to separate from one another. From machines, and devices, and relationships, even bottles of juice, without someone like us taking some type of action, then things just have a natural tendency to decline, to become less than optimal, or worse, to break altogether. Guess what? Our bodies are no different in that regard. We are not self-regenerating. We have to take action to protect ourselves, to protect our health, and to protect our well-being.

Why don't we do that? Why don't we do all of those things that we need to do to maintain our bodies? We generally know what those things are. Right? I mean, exercise, proper nutrition, rest, reduce stress. All of the things that you've heard before, all of those things help us to be our best selves. Well, the truth of the matter is, if there was nothing else to worry about, no jobs, no one else close to us, no family or kids, no obligations, no errands to run, no schoolwork, maybe, no travel, no distractions, if we didn't have any of that other stuff, then it would really be easy to take care of ourselves, but our lives are full of those other things.

That's not a bad thing. It's just life. That's the way it is, but the really dangerous thing about all of this, in your vehicle you have the check engine light to tell you when maintenance is required. Your computer or your phone may stop working if they need maintenance, but that's not a catastrophic event. Right? Well, maybe your phone not working is a catastrophic event

to some people, but that's a different topic, but what are the signs that our bodies use to tell us that maintenance is required? I think we can all agree that we don't want to wait for our bodies to stop working before we take action. No one says, "When I have my heart attack, that'll be a good sign or reminder for me to start living better." I mean, no one says, "I'm good for now. I'll just wait for my stress-induced mental breakdown to occur, and then I'll focus on my body again." We don't say those things.

The problem with deteriorating health is that most of the signs are insidious. They come about gradually over time, and we become accustomed to those very slight changes, those changes in our posture, those changes in our behavior, and those changes to our health and well-being. Let me say that again. We become accustomed to the slight changes in our bodies, those insidious signs of declining health. Why is that? Well, it's because we're too busy to hear the whispers. We're too busy to notice those minor annoyances, and then we just brush it off as getting older, or we accept that new state of being. Our busyness, in a sense, prevents us from countering the declining health, either because we're too busy to notice, or because we're too busy to do anything about it.

I want you to remember this. Every single day, we will become less healthy simply because we age, because our organs fatigue over the years. That's unless we do something about it. The body is meant to move, just like your car is meant to run and airplanes are meant to fly, so my question to you, are you listening to your body? I mean really listening. For those of you who are married, or you're in a relationship, or you've been in a relationship, this is equivalent to your partner saying, "Are you listening to me," when you're obviously daydreaming. Right? I mean, it wouldn't be smart for me to wait for my spouse to, my wife to say, "It's my birthday," before I decide to do something about that. That's just not a good look, so don't wait for your body to tell you, "I need some attention." Take care of yourself before problems arise.

How do we know, or how can we recognize, the signs and the symptoms of decline? How can we tune into those whispers from our body before they actually become screams or cries for help? Well, there are three areas that I'll touch on here in this episode that you need to pay particular attention to. The first is digestion. The second is aches and pains, and the third is signs of stress. Let's start with the first one, digestion. Again, if you think about this from a communication standpoint and from the view of listening to your body, then I would call this the, "It's not you, it's me," issue, because here's why I say that. We tend to try to change our bodies by sending our own messages to our bodies. We alter our diets. Maybe we consume more or less of certain types of foods. We restrict calorie intake. We try to eat clean. We fast. We take supplements, so our messages to the body say, "Hey, I want you to be healthier so I can feel better or so I can drop a few pounds."

Well, if you didn't get the results you're looking for, did you ever stop to think that maybe it's not what you're putting into your body, but rather how your body is or is not processing those foods, drinks, and supplements that you're taking? You may recall from episode number 66 the saying goes, "You are what you eat," but from that episode, I hope you know that you are not what you eat. You are what your body digests and can metabolize. Often, we provide that one-way communication to tell our body what we want, but we usually don't listen when our body talks back. For example, your body sends signs and signals to tell you, "I'm not absorbing what you're giving me. I'm not able to metabolize that. There are some other things that I need you to fix before I can use this healthy food that you're giving me. I'm not equipped to handle this new approach."

There are a number of different ways in which our bodies can send those signals. Some of those signs include not going to the bathroom often. For example, if you're doing number two less than once a day or number one less than two times a day, you're just not going to the

bathroom that often, that's a sign. That's a signal. If you're straining when you go to the bathroom or you feel like you need to go, but you can't, if you see undigested food in your stool, if you have loose stools, or stomach pain, or bloating, even reflux, bad breath, even, or if you feel hungry after you eat, all of these things, and there are many others, other signs too, but all of these are signs. If you have any of these consistently, then maybe you've decided to brush it off as normal, but I'm here to tell you that it's not normal, so you should consult with a registered dietitian if you consistently suffer from any of these issues.

This is the exact reason why I include a digestive questionnaire and assessment that was created by our partner registered dietitians. That's included within the Fit Life program. I want you to take note of the things that you thought were normal and recognize that they may not be normal. That's the first step in fixing it, and the fixes may not be earth-shattering. Right? Maybe you just need to hydrate more so your body can properly digest all of the extra fiber you're eating, for example, or maybe you need to supplement a certain vitamin to help with digestion and metabolism. Again, these are things that a registered dietitian can tell you, or you can use the registered dietitian tools within the Fit Life program. That's number one, digestion.

Number two, aches and pains, and this is probably the one that we just brush away the easiest. We do that most often, just kind of dismiss it. Lower back pain, joint pain, soreness, pain when you have to move quickly for some reason, or maybe even pain when you're just moving slowly. Pain when you're lying down or sleeping. Pain when you squat, when you reach overhead, when you bend over, when you turn your neck or when you climb or walk down stairs, maybe even when you lift your small child, or possibly you get cramps just from normal activity and movement.

Folks, do not accept this as normal. These are conditions that can come about from a number of different things, some of which you should see a doctor for, but many of them are due to a general lack of movement and/or muscular weaknesses or imbalances. A perfect example is the core. I've seen in clients, and I've experienced this myself, actually, a weak core musculature. That's your abs, your obliques, and your lower back, all of the supporting muscles through your midsection there. That can lead to lower back pain. The fix is proper core exercises.

I wrote a post sometime ago called "Training Your Core The Right Way." I'll link to it in the show notes, and in that episode, I talk about specific exercises that you can use to build your core the way that it's supposed to be trained. Also, podcast episode number 32 was called "No Holdin' Back, Let's Talk Low Back Pain." That's another episode about the core. In fact, that episode number 32 was part of a three-part series on common pain. Number 33 was knee pain. Number 34 was shoulder pain, but I talk about all of those in that three-part series.

If you want to understand the importance of muscular balance, then you can check out episode number seven, where I talk about what I describe as the single most important movement concept. It's a simple fix to rid yourself of joint pain. We go into the joint-by-joint approach, and how one thing affects another in the body. It's all interrelated. I'll link to all of these in the show notes. You should definitely check them out, but here's the takeaway here. You do not have to live with pain. You can do a lot more to affect this than you think. We tend to shy away from movement and exercise because of pain, but the opposite approach usually serves us well. If pain is due to underuse, weakness, or imbalance, the way to fix those issues is through use, strengthening, and balance. Okay? You have the power to do this.

We've talked about digestion. We've talked about pain. Now for the one we really don't tend to notice until it's too late, and that is stress and mental fatigue. I'll ask, do you tend to forget things because you have a lot on your plate? Are you sleeping poorly or consistently

getting less sleep than you need? Think about the last time you actually woke up on your own in the morning versus having to use your alarm to wake up. Do you suffer from headaches? Do you feel jittery or on edge? Do you worry a lot? Do you find that your mind is constantly racing, you're just thinking about the next thing, and the next? Have your friends or loved ones told you that you seem to be somewhere else when you're with them?

I'm not going to presume to tell you that I know exactly what your mental state is, but what I will tell you is that as a society, we are more stressed than ever right now. Surprisingly, we often don't want to admit it, but much of it is self-induced, because many times, we find it hard to say, "No," to people or other obligations. We pack our calendars, our own calendars. We fail to incorporate downtime and time to just think. We'll consistently skip vacations, or when we do go on vacation, we take work with us. We feel tied to those beeps, buzzes, and the dings of our smartphones. Well, guess what? Each of those little alerts causes a reaction in your body similar to the addictive effects of cigarettes or alcohol. Speaking of which, overuse of vices such as alcohol or cigarettes, or too many sweets even, can also be a sign of stress, because we use those things to escape.

Your takeaway for all of that stress, the first step is really being honest with yourself as to what things in your life are external stressors that you have to live with, things like an ailing relative, for example, or other things that are beyond our control, so figure out those things that you can control or that you can omit from your life right now. Once you figure that out, then it's easier to take some of that extra away so that you have more time to deal with the truly important things, or you have more time to decompress so that you can ultimately thrive.

I'll wrap it up there. Before signing off, though, just to kind of put a bow on this, the body is an amazing machine. Just about everything we, some we notice and some we don't notice, but everything that happens means something with our bodies. We often don't notice that things have been going downhill until they really start to go wrong, and I mean fast, so I'll circle back to my initial question. Are you listening to your body? I mean really listening. What is your body trying to tell you with the signs from digestion, from aches and pains, or from constant stress? My advice to you is to listen. That's it. Just listen. Look for those signs. Listen for those whispers, because your body is forced to get your attention. Right? You want to catch it before it's forced to get your attention with a scream. Listen to the whispers.

All right. That's all I have for you in this episode. I will leave you with a quote, and this one's from 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, verse 19. It says, "Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God?" I just want to encourage you to treat your body like the temple that it is. Take care of it, and it will take care of you. The show notes for this episode number 60 ... I'm sorry, number 71, tdfitness.net/071 is where you can find those. There's a bunch of links to all of the references I mentioned. As always, I want to thank you guys for listening. I want you to have a blessed week. Coach T., out.