

Life Balance and Thriving in 2023

This is the TD Fitness podcast with Coach T, episode number 120.

Welcome to the TD Fitness podcast, giving you ways to live a healthy lifestyle without giving up the things that make life worth living. And now, your host, certified help coach and personal trainer, Coach T.

Alright, what is up TD Fitness family? Happy 2023, and welcome to the very first podcast of this year. What I'd like to do, I spent a lot of time thinking about the content plan and what I could give you all in 2023 and what would serve you best. And as I thought about that leading up to the holiday break and really had some time to think about it, one of the things that I continue to come back to, and I know you guys have heard me talk a little bit about this before, but one of the things that I continue to come back to is the fact that we're busier now than we've ever been.

So some of you are like me, constantly working to balance the demands of being a husband or wife, a parent, balancing demands of your profession or your passion, and really your own personal sanity and health. My wife and I have been married now for 17 years, and we have been blessed with two beautiful daughters. And I've also been in the military now for over 25 years, and 14 years ago, it doesn't seem like it's been that long.

But 14 years ago, I created TD Fitness. And I have run it from the beginning, providing health related content, personal training, health coaching, life coaching, all in an effort to help others. And I've also been fortunate enough and healthy enough, fit enough, to participate in and complete six Half Ironman races and a 140-mile-long full Ironman race of swimming, biking, and running all of that after the age of 40-years-old.

And now I know that there are many who have been married a lot longer than my wife and I have, and a number of folks who've successfully raised more children than we have, and maybe even a lot more people who've served in the military longer than I have too. And certainly those who've had more distinguished careers and individuals who've run an extremely successful business and maybe done more long distance races than I can even count and probably with a lot faster times than I do too.

So believe me when I tell you that I consider each of these things absolute blessings in my life to be able to take part in these things. But I don't think it necessarily has to be where you're just excelling in one area. You know what I mean? Oftentimes we feel like we have to pick one area to excel in, in our life, and that means sacrificing in other areas. And like I said, I don't think it has to be that way.

Balancing it all is certainly a challenge, but we do need to prioritize. But it is entirely possible, and I believe this deep down, it is entirely possible to thrive in each of the important areas of your life, as a spouse and as a parent at your job, or you're calling in service of others, and in the domains of both mental and physical health.

So that's what I want to help you do in 2023. That's where my focus is going to be. And as I said, balancing the many demands of life can be challenging. I mean, it certainly is for me. But through all of those opportunities that I've been granted, I've learned not just how to be a husband, but to be part of a happy and thriving relationship. And not just to be a parent, but to be an engaged father who makes time for our girls. And I rest well every night.

My stress levels are relatively low, and I don't think that these things are necessarily unique to me. But I do know that there are many who struggle with balancing all of those types of things as I do at times. But I'm confident. I am confident that you can not only balance all of these things, those family obligations, a demanding professional career and staying fit, with a relatively low level of stress. You can actually thrive in each of those areas.

It doesn't matter who you are, but it does take an informed approach. It takes some deliberate action and focus. And again, that's what I want to help you achieve in 2023. In 2022, I focused on growth in different areas of our lives. So this year, I want to help you become a more balanced individual, one who manages health, home and service. And who specifically am I talking to here? Well, I am in a position of leadership now where I have a lot of responsibility.

So my thoughts tend to go to those who are in demanding roles, whether it's a caregiver, a leader, a business owner, or anyone really filling a role where you serve others at some sacrifice to yourself. Because the truth is, that the demands of leadership and servanthood are extremely noble, but it can cause us to focus on only that part of our lives, and that can come at a detriment to our own personal mental health, physical health, and to those around us.

But even if you're not filling one of those roles, my guess is that you still have several competing demands in your life. And I want each of you to know that you can live a life of lower stress, you can be healthier, you can be present at home, and you can do all of these things while being productive at work. I know you can. I've done it. So the way that I've learned to approach this in my life is through a combination of mindset, discipline, and really patience. And I use this approach. I've coached others through it as well and the truth is that anyone can use it to get the most out of life. Because better living isn't about what you have, it's about how you use what you have. And each of us has something special. Each of us has something unique. Each of us also has our own challenges to deal with and to overcome.

But by identifying each of those things, the pros and the cons, we can be better at taking a realistic approach to getting more out of life. So why have I decided to focus on this aspect of living now? I said it earlier, I truly do believe that we need it more now than ever. We are more connected now, and that creates obligations both socially and professionally. Our boundaries are virtual now versus physical.

The line between you and the rest of those in your life. It used to be in years past, probably before many of our lifetimes that are listening to this now, when you came home, you were home. If somebody wanted to see you, they had to come to your house or you had to leave your house to go see them. But now, I mean, look at this. I am virtually talking to you all now. And I can do that with a click of a button. And most of us are tethered to our phones, which in many cases is that mechanism for connection.

So because these barriers have been broken down and when we have easier access to one another, easier access to information and easier access to ourselves from those who require things from us, that causes us to lose a little bit of independence, a little bit of privacy, and all of those things kind of add up and can weigh heavy on you, and it can cause stress.

On the fitness side, we are less physical now. There are more and more jobs that keep us sedentary today than there were 25 years ago even. Most people don't even have to walk to work. I mean, we have escalators, we have dog walkers, we have mobile food delivery. Each of these things and many more like them, requires us to be more deliberate about getting exercise.

One of the benefits of today's connectedness is that we have access to fingertip access really, to fitness resources now, but it's still on us to get up and use those resources. And when it comes to nutrition, as a population we've been less deliberate and less diligent about what we put into our bodies, about meals and social eating and social sharing.

Portion sizes have over doubled in the past 20 years or so. Industry and food producers cater to those quick on the go or appealing foods that sell. And many of these options are often less healthy. And on top of that, we're balancing, again, we're balancing nutrition with everything else. So why is this all important? As much as anything, it's really about the example that you set. Maybe it's an example you set for your coworkers or those that you have the opportunity to lead.

Maybe it's an example that you set for your kids or others who observe you closely. As a leader at work, I often advise new leaders that people are looking at you and trying to decide whether or not they want to be like you. What do they want to aspire to? I do many things that I saw my dad do. He did many

things that he saw his dad do. So we have to be deliberate, and I have to be deliberate about what my kids are observing of me.

So again, you can serve others. You can thrive at home and live a healthy life. You just have to find your way of managing those competing demands. I've been able to do it through my outlook practices and a bit of temperance, and it didn't come overnight, believe me. These are things that through trial and error, I have learned about myself and also pieces of just my professional role here as a trainer and coach, whether it's bits of psychology, whether it's habit management, instilling habits, managing health and fitness demands, those types of things. All of that has come over time.

And I've put more rigor and thought into how to combine my approach with the principles that I teach. And I've come to understand that there are really those three components to what's worked for me thus far. It's really been put to the test over the past year and a half I'll tell you, as I've filled the most demanding leadership role of my career to date. And the way that I've come to approach that healthier balance in my life is through mindset and discipline and patience. Your mindset sets your foundation. Many of you know my mindset is defined by my faith, and I also read a lot about stoic principles. So think of your mindset as what you tell yourself.

Secondly, a disciplined approach defines the way that you conduct yourself. And then finally, patience is the way that you treat yourself and others. So my goal is to share a bit about how I've done it, what I've learned, where I've faced challenges, all in an effort to help you reach your goal. So the way that I plan to approach this in 2023 is really by focusing on one broad area of life at a time.

So for the first couple of months here, there will be a series of episodes just like this one, video casts if you're viewing this on social media and podcast if you're listening to it in an audio player. But a series of episodes here over the next couple of months where I kick off the year talking about stress management and focusing on mental resiliency in our lives.

I think it's important to start there because with a new year, there's a lot of expectation, and we tend to put a lot of pressure on ourselves. We have resolutions. We have goals for the new year. We have things that in looking back in hindsight over the previous year, maybe things that we had hoped to do and maybe didn't get around to or weren't say, didn't achieve those goals. But as we put this pressure on ourselves, it causes stress.

And then there are expectations that others have of us, as we step into a new period of our lives or a new year. So I really want to focus on the stress management piece first, and really the mental resiliency, because that is a bedrock of so much more that's to come. There's been a lot of research into different ways to break down or categorize how we classify these different areas of our lives where we need to thrive.

One way is by referring to these different areas as domains or pillars, if you will. In the special operations realm in the military, this is what I've been a part of for my entire military career. We refer to four domains or pillars. They're the mental domain, the physical domain, the social domain, and the spiritual domain. So my goal is to provide you with a video cast and podcast series focusing on one of these pillars at a time.

So again, we'll start with the mental pillar. That's the mindset, mental attitude and dealing with stress. In a couple of months, I'll do a number of episodes focusing on the physical pillar or the physical domain. That's where we focus on fitness and nutrition. And then later in the year, we'll move to the social pillar, and I'll provide a series of episodes focusing on your role in the family, in my life that's the social piece that I feel is most important. And you all know that the role that faith plays in my life. So I'm not necessarily going to dedicate a series of episodes on that domain or that pillar, but as a man of faith, it plays a part in everything that I do in each of the other areas of mental health, physical health, and family health. So that's how I plan to approach the podcasting for 2023.

I want to be more active on the podcast. Last year, I focused on short clips of content delivered via the Fit Vids, and I think that went well. But now I want to spend some deliberate time focusing on these different pillars or domains of our life. So that is the plan for 2023. I am excited about it. This is the first episode of the year. You can expect one of these about every week.

So I'm really excited about it. I hope all of you had a wonderful holiday season and have maybe taken some time just to reflect and think about the things that you want to accomplish in 2023. Again, not to put pressure on yourself, but really just to spend some time in thought, reflection and be realistic with the things you want to accomplish.

I'm going to help you step through these things, and it's going to follow the template of my 10 or 12 steps for personal growth as applicable to each one of these domains. I'll pick one of those each week, and we'll talk through that. And I'll share examples of successes and failures that I've had. I'll share challenges that I've faced. And again, hopefully that can provide you with a little bit of insight. Let you know that you're not going about this journey alone. But also hopefully give you a sense of how doable it is when you try to take all of these things that we're balancing. I mean, all of us are balancing so many things in our lives, but we can do it. We can do it. We can not only keep an imbalance, but we can thrive in each one of those important areas of our life. From the mental, the physical, and the social.

So thank you guys for listening. It has been an honor to kick off the year here with you. I look forward to many more episodes throughout 2023. Hit me with questions. I'd love to hear them. You can hit me through tdfitness.net. If you get the newsletter, then you can just reply to that newsletter that comes directly to me. But if you do have questions, I would love to address those from week to week. I'm here for you.

Thank you. Have a blessed one, Coach T signing off.