



Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Hello and welcome to Unstress, I'm Dr. Ron Ehrlich.

Movement, look, it's such an important part of keeping healthy throughout each and every day. Now I want to share with you a short calculation of how much time we have to move or be still in a week in all our lives.

Stay with me on this one. You may need a pen and paper.

Now, there are 168 hours in a week. Say, you spend eight hours a night sleeping, and incidentally, I don't believe that's optional, it's a biological necessity. It's your life support system but [we've talked about sleep elsewhere](#). That's 56 hours of sleep a week, but you're not moving so that leaves 112 hours, waking hours. Now if you think going to the gym for three or four times or hours per week doing a repetitive activity is going to do it for you, I think you need to think again and many of us are spending a lot of time sitting.

My guest today is one of Australia's, if not the world's leading personal trainers. [Aaron McKenzie](#). Now like many of us that face challenges, Aaron's passion sprang from a desire to overcome his own health issues and a constant drive to learn more that allowed him to achieve optimal performance. He runs his gym in Sydney and has trained elite athletes as well as guiding people like me and, hopefully, you.

Now, I've always enjoyed exercise but I've known Aaron for almost 10 years and he's inspired me. I mentioned that in my book, and I wanted to share him with you today. He's been working as a personal trainer for almost 20 years, throughout that time developing a holistic model for movement and health, integrating sustainable lifestyle changes, coupled with practical, functional ... That means every day ... movements in his programs.

The thing I've always found so inspiring about Aaron is the way he combines breathing, nutrition, and movement into his functional movement programs and that is not just the movement of muscles but all the tissues of the body, cardio, respiratory, digestive, lymphatics.

Now here's some insights that Aaron shares and I thought I'd share with you. He says, "Gym equipment's overrated." People spend too much time traveling to gyms and what they get there, they perform inefficient training. People spend too much money on unused gym memberships ... I think we can all relate to that ... motivational trainers, training trends, as opposed to movement coaches, not to mention unused personal gym equipment.

People need to learn how to feel and move their body, not sit on machines. Coaching needs to be focused on improving the individual's movement capacity, not motivating people into lifting too heavy, too fast, or getting too fatigued.

Now we'll also talk about daily activity and embracing three key movements. That's the way to go and we'll try to build them into a daily routine with slow controlled diaphragmatic abdominal breathing. Now breathing is one of those pillars. The five pillars: sleep, breathe,



movement, nourish, and thought. The thing I love about Aaron's approach, he's always learning and he's constantly evolving and looking for a balance and I love this term that Aaron uses to describe movement, "Nurture the body."

Wow, who would have thought? I'm actually doing more of my own workouts now at home, myself, so I started this online progression program which we'll also talk about.

I hope you enjoy this conversation I had with Aaron Mckenzie.

Welcome to the show, Aaron.

Aaron Mckenzie: Hi, Ron, how are you?

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Good, good. Now, Aaron, exercise, you as I've said in my book, you are a great source of inspiration for me. You have been for many, many years and I wanted to share a lot of that with my listeners. People when they think about exercise, they think about gyms, they think about membership, they think about machines and rows of machines. That's not how you're working, can you share with us what the philosophy is behind your movement, your exercise?

Aaron Mckenzie: Definitely, it's one that utilizes the body. The focus is on the individual, not a fancy environment, and it's just simplicity. We want to provide a service that allows people to learn about their own body, learn how they can move, and just enjoy that process of getting more out of life by having a healthier, fitter, stronger body, and that doesn't require expensive equipment, doesn't require huge amounts of time. It's just a commitment to gradual development and just making consistent changes over time and then the body will adapt.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: I heard you use the term nurturing.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yes.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Which was the first time I heard you use that in a gym space. Go on, tell us about nurturing the body rather than flogging yourself.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, I think that's the shift that people are looking for. I really like that as a term when I'm teaching because people come in with this expectation to get a result. They've got to really force their body to change and it has to be this hard and kind of extreme process-

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: [Extreme process.](#)

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah, no pain, no gain, but really the body will adapt and if you just take your time and you nurture the body into change, that's a far more enjoyable process. You really feel good all the time. My goal is to feel good in my body every day.

I've trained my body to extreme levels in the past and forced it to change and just not enjoyed the days after.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: That happens to a lot of people and it happens in a lot of gyms and just we do have a rise in whole Crossfit phenomenon which has been great. Getting people moving and it's community-based fitness and it's kind of stopped the larger gyms being the dominant force, which has been awesome, but I think the intensity is what people are looking to manage better. I definitely still train hard but it's not always hard. I just listen to my body and teach people to self-assess. "What does your body need today?" and we go through a warm-up process like you did the other day, which is really cool.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yup, yup.

Aaron Mckenzie: Learn that and teach that so that that way people can work out, "What's right for me to do today? What do I need to do today?" and regardless of what that is, whether you're feeling really good or you're feeling a bit rundown, the workout should still nurture you into that next development as opposed to force you or hurt you. Everyone's talking how you need this excess stress to induce a response and have that adaptation, but not to the extremes that people are doing it.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, now you deal with elite athletes.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yes.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: You deal with ... I don't know and I say this ... ordinary people like me and you ...

Aaron Mckenzie: Oh, no.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Okay, yeah, anyway ...

Aaron Mckenzie: Anyway, yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: The point being there's a real range of people there.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, people, definitely.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: You've kind of gone through your own journey. You mentioned that you've trained hard. I mean, you've been doing this for a while, tell us a bit about your journey to this point.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, to this point. I started with skateboarding which I really enjoyed as a movement and as a form of expression and then I went through a transition in my later teen years where I thought this was childish, whatever and I went on to martial arts, which I thought was ... It's great. I just love that and got into the gym and it really helped me

set direction in my life. It just gave me a sense of purpose. I loved, straightaway, I loved sharing what I was learning and loved the martial arts environment as this kind of community people together, connecting, and other people trying to develop themselves alongside each other.

Then I went into just being a personal trainer and continue with martial arts with Capoeira which is very much a community-based kind of approach to movement.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: That's the Brazilian ...

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, the Brazilian martial art with ...

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: What is it called again?

Aaron Mckenzie: Capoeira.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Capoeira.

Aaron Mckenzie: It's a mixture of acrobatics and dance and music and song. It's a very kind of complete art form. I never really liked fighting or anything like that but I love the self-expression. Fortunately, now, this is kind of the next kind of up and coming thing which is great, worldwide people are doing this movement flow stuff, which is what I've been doing for quite a long time. Then the gymnastics strength stuff is really big now as well, which is using body weight, the calisthenics approach.

The merging of those is great, plus we have all the yoga, have pilates, the core conditioning stuff and I've just been driven by all of that and I just love integrating. My approach has always been an integration of what I've done in my life and a continually evolving approach.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Cause in your sessions, there are three phases to a session.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yes, yes.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Tell us ... and that's how ... Like when I do work out at home, I've been inspired by that. Run us through those three parts.

Aaron Mckenzie: You have the three basic parts there. You're working with your mobility, so there's this self-assessment process. We use a massage ball. We use a foam roller and then just go through movements but a dynamic stretch, if you will. It's not like static stretching but just going through and just feeling your whole body, where's it at today.

Then we go into this warm-up process where we go through into main whole body movements, so pulling, pushing, and leg movements. There are all different diverse movements that the body does so we use those in a structured format so that a group can move through it. Then go into core conditioning, new stability work which is to give you that postural endurance so you can align the body so you feel good.



Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, yup.

Aaron Mckenzie: Whenever you say posture, everyone sits straight now and that kind of balances the body to make sure that it's ... Cause if you just go in and just do the hard movements and the big movements, then sometimes there's little imbalance that slips away. It's just trying to feel the body, where is it at? Move it through these big ranges of motion and strengthen it through these full ranges emotion, using the arms, using the legs, pulling and pushing and then go through and do this stability work to keep everything aligned and structured.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Cause underlying it all is this idea of doing movements in functional-

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: That's what we're doing every day-

Aaron Mckenzie: To live better.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, so incorporating that kind of, you said, push, pu ... go on the ...

Aaron Mckenzie: Pull, push, legs.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Pull, push and legs, but there's also that flection and extension ...

Aaron Mckenzie: Extension, yeah, the balancing component.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: The balancing ...

Aaron Mckenzie: If you pull one way, you push the opposite way and you do a mixture of different pulling and pushing movements in different directions so the body's stimulated into balance.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: We talked about the other day, was where the classic is someone goes in the gym, does bench press, does a bicep curl, goes on the ground, does some crunches, and then does a plank, and it's all closing, I mean to the very position that we're trying to pull people out of. Cause most people are sitting for long periods and hunching over and their respiration is hindered because of that position, so they're in this closed position.

We do a lot of pulling movements to really open people up. We still do the pushing and the flection movements but you get all that extension and the hanging has a big part. I just tell people, one you can do every day, hang every day to traction out your spine and reverse the



effects of being on the phone and in front of a screen and driving in a car and then just deep squat to get those hips nice and mobile.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: They're two really basic things plus a bit of walking.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: That hanging, when we're talking about hanging-

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: We're talking about literally, on a bar with your arms holding onto the bar-

Aaron Mckenzie: Locked out, yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Just letting the weight of your body hang.

Aaron Mckenzie: Pull you down and you can start with your feet on the ground and doing that and I find it, it's hugely therapeutic for people and it's balancing out the compressive forces of gravity that we're under that are pushing us down. Plus it's the inner ape that's within us to break you out and swing off things, those genes are just less suppressed if we don't activate them.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: When you grip onto something and just traction out your shoulders, it's getting that activation of those genes so that the body is healthier and it also, yeah, it counterbalances that compressive force.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Now, I think the first time I worked out with you was probably almost 10 years ago-

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah, at least.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: You introduced me to that resting squat.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yes.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Tell us why that's so good.

Aaron Mckenzie: Good, yeah, yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: It's so simple but it's so good.

Aaron Mckenzie: If you look at the hips they've evolved around that position. The structure is that you can get your body into the ground for a ... If you think about it, for a

second, it's pretty obvious when we have a bowel movement, we've got to evacuate the bowel and it's far better to be closer to the ground than high up.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: We've been doing it for millions of years like that.

Aaron Mckenzie: Definitely, definitely.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: I mean you were the guy, not only introduced me to the resting squat, but also-

Aaron Mckenzie: [The squatty potty.](#)

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Squatty potty, but I mean, honestly, [I've included that as a major postural stress.](#)

Aaron Mckenzie: It is. It is. For the bowel, it's very important for you, ascending colon on the left, descending colon on the right, and unless you're getting right down there, you're not compressing that area of your body to allow for that full evacuation of the bowel.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: The decompression of the lower back by being in that position is awesome as well, plus it just allows you to maintain hip flexibility, ankle-knee flexibility-

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: What about people with hip and ... I mean, I'm fortunate, I think-

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah, you started and you got into it, yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Cause I can get down to that but I notice young guys in the group can't because they got tightness in their hips or their hamstrings.

Aaron Mckenzie: Their quads, their calves, their hips, their gluts, and all that.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, so should they be hanging onto something?

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, definitely-

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Like?

Aaron Mckenzie: You've got to gradually progress into it, so holding onto something so that you can decompress or de-load the body a little bit, so that there's less force going in there and then gradually increase that is a great way to start. That's like people when they're starting with the hang, they do a bit of both. You're getting that tractioning from a low bar hang or just hanging off like a balustrade or something that's kind of hip height and then tractioning into that deep squat.



Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: It feels really good, but it's a great way to gradually build that amount of force going in there.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Now, I just did, as I say, having worked out with you and love that, love the whole environment of the gym, but have found my time now at home-

Aaron Mckenzie: At home, yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Just recently, [I did this fabulous program that you've devised called progression.](#)

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Which I got so much out of, tell us about that, the idea of that.

Aaron Mckenzie: That obviously from my training history and working with Anthony Minichiello, so he's obviously got a fairly decent connection through the media because of his profile.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, yeah, Anthony, for those that ... Not everybody is a rugby fan.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Anthony, tell us what he ...

Aaron Mckenzie: He's probably one of Australia's best football players and he came back from a severe spinal injury. He had multiple disk bulges, two surgeries, da, da, da. We started working together. It's about eight, nine years ago, probably just after I met you and he made an amazing comeback.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: He did.

Aaron Mckenzie: A very phenomenal comeback and ...

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: I think he was ... Then ended up playing some of his best football.

Aaron Mckenzie: Oh, totally, totally, and he was written off, everything, everyone thought, "He's finished," and to make a comeback like that which was phenomenal to see and we always talked about whenever he finished, we'd try and get this message out to everyone, cause it's so important.

[We've developed this program to make it user-friendly, to help trainers develop in this way.](#) People that are already personal trainers, group instructors, group fitness instructors integrate



into what they're doing but then also a general populations program that it's more simplified and just gradual in the sense that you can start off doing minimal and then if you've got more time, use it.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yup.

Aaron Mckenzie: The whole purpose of it is to really allow people to have that sense of development and realize that you can change and he's a true inspiration. I mean in the sense that he couldn't do up his own shoelaces and league level athlete that's reduced to that.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: His injury is that severe that ... and he was really written off but we just went through a process of just building his body up slowly and then over the course of six months, he was making a full comeback and then it took longer than that to really recover but in six months, he was amazed at how strong he'd become and that just kept developing further and further.

It was just an example of what we all can do. It doesn't matter where you're starting. There's always somewhere to go and we always felt that this is such an important message for people cause people kind of they to exercise. They go out and like we talked about, they go a bit too hard.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yup.

Aaron Mckenzie: Then I think, oh, it's not for them and that nurturing part, I guess comes out of that, is that, you've got to listen to your body, work with your body, give it what it needs, and then allow it to develop. Don't force it. Listen to it and if you just make gradual progression, it can do amazing things.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: The other thing I really got out of it, because now doing a lot of the workouts at home and using some of the ... A lot of the exercises that you've shown me over the years was it reminded me of the importance of getting my repetitions, not locking into ... Like, I thought, "Wow, I'm doing 20 or 30 push ups, fantastic." You're going, "Hang on, don't do that all the time."

Aaron Mckenzie: All the time, yeah, mix it up.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Mix it up.

Aaron Mckenzie: Totally.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: This mixing up is really important.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah, definitely. The classic is people go to the gym, they do three sets of 10 or guys that are trying to get stronger, they'll do five sets of five. You're

doing five repetitions of a movement, having a bit of a rest and doing that five times through. The limiting factor of that is that you're molding your body cause you've got to think about everything that you do. [You're constantly adapting your body to the environment that you put yourself in.](#) If you just do that, you'll mold around that, just like you can sit in a chair all day and mold around that.

You become weak outside of that, so we encourage a diverse range of reps so you do low reps, the heavy lifting and then do really light stuff which is very therapeutic and increases blood flow and increases the aerobic capacity of the muscle and then everything in between to build some tissue, to build some muscle mass as well as and then give it more endurance. If you get a broad spectrum of conditioning on the body and use a mixture of different reps and loading parameters, the body's going to be more balanced.

Our program really tries and teaches that in a simplistic way. We just move reps by three every day so as an example, we'll do 15 reps on a Monday, 12 on a Tuesday, nine on Wednesday, six on a Thursday.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: All the slightly different movement ...

Aaron Mckenzie: Different variation, yeah. Oh, we change movements every day through the course of a week. It's like a weekly checklist but then when you come around next week, you're going to do the same movement but with different loading parameters. You can learn how to adjust your body position and it's all a beautiful process just to understand how you can make things harder or easier and get the benefits of getting all different fibers through the body facilitated.

It gives you a much better healthy response for life so if you go and play any particular sport, it's so diverse, cause the whole concept of sport is to try and trick the other person and compete with them, but it's an unpredictable environment.

Like if I took Anthony as an example and I'm trying to take him back in when he was healing, back into this very strenuous, unpredictable environment, so you've got to condition him for that.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: You have to do this variety of different movements and variety of different loading parameters to stimulate the body into being into more balance. It sounds very complex when I'm talking about it now.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: No, no, no.

Aaron Mckenzie: The thing is diversity, not just repeating the same thing.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, I thought it was really interesting, too, going back to this three stages of your workout which is getting mobility first.



Aaron Mckenzie: Yes.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: You actually focus on this rather unusual, getting the wrists in different positions.

Aaron Mckenzie: Oh different positions, yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: When we're doing our stretches, the wrists actually get warmed up in different positions and you drew the analogy, "Hey, if you ever fell and you had to put your hand out to take the load," having that inbuilt into your daily routine prepares you for that kind of trauma ...

Aaron Mckenzie: Ah, prepares you, yeah, yeah. Cause you need to-

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Or movement.

Aaron Mckenzie: These three-dimensional pressures, from toe-tip all the way through the fingertips, from the cranium, your skull, down to your sacrum, your coccyx, you've got to have these strength and these diverse range of pressures going in there. Cause otherwise, you just mold around a limited amount of pressure, so anything outside of that becomes fragile. The whole program needs to be anti-fragile for life.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Right, build resilience.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, build resilience, just like you do in all other areas of life, emotionally, financially, so that that way, you've always got a bit of a reserve so you can handle the stress. Life is unpredictable. You can make it quite protected and simple but reality is you want to enjoy it.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: You don't want to just put yourself in a cardboard box, in a padded box and you're too scared to do anything. You want to enjoy, put yourself out there, play different things. Go rock climbing, dance, pick your grandkids up, throw them around, run around, do all these different things, and if your body's healthy and you've got a program in place that conditions your for that, you're going to enjoy it.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, yup.

Aaron Mckenzie: It'll feel good.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Look, the other thing I always loved about the gym was that ... Apart from the fact that you taught me how to go to the toilet properly at that stage in my life, it was a real eye-opener and it has made a big difference ... was also that nutrition was such an important part of that, [nutritional stresses that we're faced with all the time](#).

Aaron Mckenzie: Totally.



Dr. Ron Ehrlich: That's a big part of the rehabilitation, I know.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah, yeah, big time.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: Is to bring that into your life and the community fitness movement has this huge opportunity. I've always said, personal trainers, they've got a massive opportunity to branch out into this health coaching field.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, well, life coaching.

Aaron Mckenzie: Life coaching, yeah, in all areas of your life. I mean whether it's you're a group fitness instructor or whether you're a personal trainer, the market is growing literally.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: Obesity is huge. It's getting bigger and bigger every year. People are crying out for help and having this community fitness environment is a perfect opportunity to teach people by example and to create a space where people can get this coaching. Part, when people come to the gym space that I've created, they're learning about life.

They're learning, "Oh, how can I prepare good food? What's a good strategy for shopping? What are good recipes?" Learning about sleep-wake cycles, [all the things that you talk about in your book](#) are part of what we do because ... and people need coaching through that and it's a process. You can't just do it all straight away. You've got to layer in the changes so having [this community environment](#) allows people to come back in ... and all the research points to that small groups really help create change.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yup.

Aaron Mckenzie: You've got a support network. You've got an environment that you feel safe. You've got an environment and you got fellow people that are sharing a journey with you and it's a beautiful thing to do in your life.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, I know.

Aaron Mckenzie: You can layer it in and fortunately for me, been doing this for quite a long time, I've got clients like yourself that I've had for a long time. It's just great to watch the evolution in their life. It's such a gift.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Now one thing that people often do associate with doing exercise is hydration and we were talking about that the other day and we both read this great book called [The Salt Fix](#).



Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah. It's awesome.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: You really stressed the importance of this.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, especially with movement, cause movement is a large stressor and [if you read The Salt Fix, great book-](#)

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: We'll have links to that.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah, it explains the relationship with depleting salt, the adrenal stress, da, da, da, but when you're sweating when you're training, you're losing obviously electrolytes which is sodium in the blood and if you're not replacing that, you're in trouble. If you just drink water without the minerals in it, then you're further diluting the body and losing ... You're going to stress the body more.

A lot of people drink water and then wonder why they urinate or they have water at night and then they've got to get up and go to the toilet cause they don't have enough of the salt there. We have energy and we have a mortar and pestle there and we have Celtic Sea Salt. People if like it a bit smooth, they can crush it but we encourage people to have it before and after workouts and salt their food, da, da, da, because if you read the book, it goes through all the research and shows you that it's really important.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, it's interesting, isn't it? Because the two things that seem so central to basic biochemistry, [cholesterol](#), which is part of every cell in our bodies, important for every hormone and salt, which is so basic to our existence has been demonized.

Aaron Mckenzie: Totally.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: I think there's a problem there.

Aaron Mckenzie: There is a big problem.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: It does, it's in need of these kinds of grassroots approach. Now that's why the community fitness-based approach is great cause I get people coming in having the salt before and after, a week later, they're telling me, "Oh, you know, I don't get cramps anymore. I actually feel like my thirst is being quenched when I drink water now. I don't go from a squatting position or a lying position and stand up and feel a light-headed anymore," which are all the-

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, the low blood pressure.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, they're all symptoms of low sodium. I spent the better part of my life training quite hard and it's really in the last five years, I've really brought that training intensity down. I think back, I've always put a bit of salt in my water and understood the importance of it, but I spent all that time salt depleted, without a doubt and suffering-



Dr. Ron Ehrlich: It's not just though sodium, is it? Cause something, this Celtic ...

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, no, no.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: We're not talking about Sax Table Salt-

Aaron Mckenzie: No, that type of salt ...

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: With sodium and chloride, we're talking about a salt that has 60 or 70 different trace elements.

Aaron Mckenzie: Trace elements, yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Trace minerals and they're really important.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, that's a big point of difference.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: What about people who do push themselves ... I mean I see people push themselves hard. I see people running and I know people run for lots of reasons.

Aaron Mckenzie: Oh, different.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Meditate, it's kind of a form of meditation.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, it is a stress release, definitely, without a doubt.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: What should they be doing for the people that are really pushing hard? I mean we're talking about us, ordinary people getting up and moving and not overdoing it and blah, all of that, but there are people who genuinely enjoy pushing themselves hard.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: What would you say to those people?

Aaron Mckenzie: I'm one of those people. I've been one of those people and I'm just recovering from it but I think, it's just learning to listen to your body is the biggest thing. If it's taking you longer and longer to warm up, there's something going on there. If you only feel good once you've warmed up ... I was guilty of just training for long periods of time, training a couple of times a day and you feel great when you're training cause you're getting that natural release of endorphins, endogenous morphine and it feels awesome, but you start to notice little niggles and things like that and I'm all for movement.

I'm never going to stop moving. I love it. It's my life. I like teaching it. I move all day, da, da, da, but I've really looked at the intensity. You've got to look at what's your real motivation, what are you trying to get out of it and like you said, it's a great stress relief. For me, it's my

best form of meditation to just be at one with my body in training and moving my body, but you've got to try and work out, "What's right for me? What's going to give me the health that I'm after, as well as the fitness and the movement capacity?"

Some basic things I tell people, if you enjoy running, mix it up. Get into a gym where they've got a nice program and they're doing lots of different movements [or get on progression.io](https://www.getonprogression.io).

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: [Yeah, we'll have the links to that.](#)

Aaron McKenzie: Yeah, and start a program like that so you're getting some different motions going. Cause your body will just mold around that running stride and if you're exhausted, fatigued, then it's not going to get prettier. As people fatigue and you can see people running long distances and their stride starts to look more compressed and they look heavier and they're beating up the joints because they can't recover from it fast enough. Work on your flexibility, improve your stride, get better technique, and try and feel fresh when you're doing it and don't totally exhaust yourself.

If you're doing any type of endurance exercise, if your goal is to improve cardiovascular fitness, put a heart rate monitor on and don't go over 140. It's around 180 minus your age, you don't want to go past that, cause if you're going past it, you're stimulating your body to too high intensity. You bring that intensity right down and, say, if you've got an example, like Centennial Park, and you run around that and you try and keep that heart rate at a certain level. Then every time, if you're getting fitter and you keep it at the same level, but you're getting faster with the same heart rate, you're actually fitter.

If you have to turn up and force yourself to run around faster, you're just pushing your body harder. Maybe you've turned up with a bit more mental energy that day, but you haven't actually gotten any fitter. Make it measurable if you enjoy cardiovascular fitness. Use a heart rate monitor to control it but also focus on improving ... Like we've talked about big part of the workshop was improving your respiratory mechanics.

Cause that will improve-

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: The breathing is going to be whole.

Aaron McKenzie: Your health so much more than just trying to force the movement, so I encourage all the foam rolling ... In our program, we go through it, the massage ball and foam rolling to really open up the rib cage and mobilize the rib cage so you can take a deeper breath. If just now, if you're listening to this in the car or wherever, you breathe deep into the bottom of your lungs and feel that belly expand, your rib cage expand and then you exhale and just let it come out. Then you can force that exhalation a little bit to squeeze that stale air out before you take another breath and then breathe in.

That allows for you to feel more relaxed, calmer, but also, you're using different pockets. If you're just breathing shallow in your neck but you're trying to train harder by running or cycling or whatever, you're not actually going to improve the health of your body and the



tissues, you're just going to force your body to work harder in a pattern that may not be so good for you.

Taking that approach to running, I think it can become very healthy. I've got some great clients that are great long distance runners and some of them that are sprinters and stuff like that. I just encourage them to get some diversity in their program and if they're long-distance runners, do a mixture of sprinting and long distance and then do long distance that is really low intensity and try and improve your cardiovascular fitness in a gentler way rather than forcing it.

Then just getting onto fat for fuel, rather than-

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: Depleting the body of glycogen and forcing it back in and that's been a big shift. I had the café before with the gym, trying to get people onto this nutrition path, but now I'm really encouraging eating less and having two good meals a day and not being so stressed about this post work out meal and really trying to minimize the amount of carbohydrates. I think when you're training too hard and too frequently, you crave more carbs because you're depleting glycogen all the time.

I still have a little bit of carbs but predominantly what I'm eating is fat and fueled by that.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Right.

Aaron Mckenzie: That transition can happen when you train at a lower intensity, when you train at too high or intensity, it's very hard to make that shift into fat for fuel as a clean fuel source.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, so this whole idea that's been almost ingrained in these athletes of carb loading before a long event-

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, for an event it may be different.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Okay.

Aaron Mckenzie: If you're competing, you might use that as a method to compete with, but in terms of actually just training ... I train fast, I've trained fast for the last two years. I don't eat until after I've trained in the day and sometimes I train the middle of the day, sometimes the morning. Depends when I've got a nice gap and I don't eat until about one to three PM.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Right, right. Okay, so you won't eat before you exercise.

Aaron Mckenzie: No.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Is there a better time to exercise? Is there a better time of day?

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, obviously, you're going to feel a bit stronger, not very early, but mid-morning and then there's an afternoon sweet spot, as well, that I know in myself and working with athletes, that that's when I'm stronger. Like we've talked about before, it's got to be practical and I encourage people, first thing, I find that my clients over the years, that have trained first thing are the ones that stick it out for the long run.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: When you pay yourself first with some movement and it doesn't need to be intense. 10 minutes in the morning first thing and if you enjoy breakfast, have that after. I break my fast at one to three PM, depending on the day, but get that movement done first and it doesn't have to be too intense. Just move your body, pay yourself first.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: I found the biggest breakthrough for me was going to bed a bit earlier.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yes.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: I could wake up earlier because going to the gym early in the morning worked really well.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Thanks to that bird that got you up.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: That's right. That's right.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah...

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: That's right. When I used to go to bed at 12 or ... Cause I used to think, "Oh, I do all my best work at night, once the kids are asleep, I do all my be-"

Aaron Mckenzie: Yeah, you're all creative, da, da, da, da.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Oh, man, that was a big breakthrough for me because I stopped doing that and suddenly exercise came easier and from exercise a whole lot of other stuff came easier.

Aaron Mckenzie: Yes.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: [That's sleep business.](#)

Aaron Mckenzie: I find for me, my biggest thing is turn the screens off by nine PM.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: No screens after nine PM and then I wind down, chill out a bit, and then I'm up at 5:30 every day, so if I'm not in bed by 9:30, I'm not going to feel good and

I'm not giving my best the next morning to the clients that are coming to see me to learn from me. I'm enjoying my day the next day. I'm like you, I love study. I love reading. I love learning to be able to do what I enjoy and do it better. It is easy to fall into that trap to just get on that screen and research because it's unlimited.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yup, you can get lost.

Aaron Mckenzie: At our fingertips now and just get caught up ... and it's 12 o'clock and I've got to get up the next day at 5:30 and, yes, I've improved my knowledge of the area but then I've made tomorrow harder.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: Shifting that, I now study mostly with Audible [and stuff like that](#) and then also just through the day and then I try and really chill out at night so I can enjoy the morning.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah, now listen, before we finish, I always like to ask a guest, what do you think the biggest challenge ... and you may have identified one there already-

Aaron Mckenzie: Yes.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: What do you think the biggest challenge is for people in our modern world on this health journey that we're all on through life? What do you think?

Aaron Mckenzie: Keeping it simple. I mean like you said, you've just got to get to bed on time, eat whole fresh food, do a bit of movement, and just love the people that are around you, that are important to you, and just speak to that. Don't make it complicated. I think our big thing is all of the carrots. All the things that people gravitate towards that cost them more money, cost them more time.

We're talking about with expensive gym memberships when they're full of machines or where they're filling up their garage with all fitness equipment or whether they're buying all this latest stuff in their quest to get lean and it's all the distractions. Our biggest challenge is put that bloody phone down, get off that screen. You get off Instagram, I love it as a learning tool, but people scrolling there, that's our challenge.

I think we're going to look back and think of mobile phones, in particular, as like cigarettes, very shortly. I think that it's going to come out how bad these things are for us and we're going to think ... I know we're giving our kids. I know it's pretty extreme but it's like giving a kid a cigarette almost.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Yeah.

Aaron Mckenzie: I think they're important functional tools, I'll use my phone every day, don't get me wrong. I use the screen but I think we're just getting too connected to it. We're too dependent on it for fulfillment and for joy and all that and I think the more we



put it down ... I know for myself, the more I connect with my son, my wife, and my clients and just have those really meaningful connections, I think that's where the gold is.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: Great. Aaron, thank you so much for joining us.

Aaron Mckenzie: Thank you.

Dr. Ron Ehrlich: [We'll have links to Aaron's Progression Program on our webpage. It's all about developing yourself and learning how to work with your body in the moment. What do you need today? The tagline for the Progression Program fits in beautifully with my Five Pillars. Move your body every day, that creates balance and improves your movement capacity incorporating hormonal, muscular, skeletal, and lymphatic, and respiratory balance. I love that. Nourish, food, good food. Hydration, clean environment, breathing, and of course, thoughts are things, so make them work for you.](#)

The last factor that he incorporates in this Progression Program is recover and he talks about the importance of sleep. Now I started the Progression Program a few weeks ago and I got a lot out of it. It reminded me to mix it up. It reminded me about keeping good form. It reminded me not to repeat the same exercise, do the same repetitions, with the same patterns, approach my workouts, get these more holistically. Who would have thought? Listen to my body and of course, I love that term nurture.

We'll have links to Aaron's program on our webpage and, also listen, don't forget, get onto our Facebook page or drop me a line. I love and I learn from your feedback and guess what, it shows you care. Until next week, this is Dr. Ron Ehrlich. Be well.

[**You can click here for more information on Aaron's Progression program.**](#)

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