

## 008-Kit-Laughlin-Podcast

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Interviewer 1: Hey there! Welcome to the Move Smart Podcast. I'm Justin Goodhart here with my co-host Sean Maples. Our goal is to bring in amazing people to give you world-class tips in movement, mobility, strength training, gymnastics, barrecore, nutrition, wellness, stress management and basically anything that's going to make your body better, so your life will be better.

Our motto here is "Be healthy to be strong, be strong to be youthful, and live long to maximise that youthfulness". Because the longer and stronger you're able to pursue your highest purpose, the better every single person on the planet will become, and we want that for you.

All right everyone, I am just amazingly excited and honoured to have Kit Laughlin on the show with us today. I'm here with Kit and my co-host Sean. Kit is an international author, speaker, teacher and, I think, just generally a renaissance man. Really, the Leonardo Da Vinci of stretching, if you will. He's done a lot of really cool stuff at a high level in a variety of fields.

He's the creator and founder of Stretch Therapy which really spans that continuum in stretching from rehab to performance enhancement. He also teaches stretching and movement workshops around the world, has presented to physiotherapists, nurses, doctors, chiropractors, you name it. He's consulted for elite athletic teams from many sports throughout Australia, was a stress management consultant for years, co-teaches meditation retreats in Australia and South East Asia and a little fun fact for you, he wrote, produced and directed The Comeback, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger in 1980. So, a little [SL: factlet 0:01:44] for you.  
[laughter]

Like Ryan Hurst of GMB Fitness said "If you don't know Kit, then you don't know Stretching". I'm just thrilled, beyond belief, to have him on the show today.

Kit, welcome to the show, huge honour having you here. I tried to cover the main stuff, but is there anything else you'd like to add to that?

Respondent: No, no, that's way more than enough. That's enough to get us going anyway.

Interviewer 1: All right, cool, let's dive right in then. Can you talk a little bit about your perspective on stretching? What makes it unique and how has it developed and grown over the years?

Respondent: Let me address the last part of that question first. That is, how it's developed over the years, because unlike many systems that are on the

planet today, we don't really claim to know anything about what we do. I know it sounds a bit silly to say that, possibly, but in a field that's just littered with experts, we don't really claim to be experts at all. The reason is that compared to say strength training or aerobic training (I have a background in both of those; I was an Olympic lifter, not a very good one, for many years, but I was also an elite runner), **we really don't know anything about stretching**. I was a much better runner than lifter, and so, as a result of having exposure in middle distance running and Olympic lifting, it gave me a unique perspective on physical activity for a start, and then secondly it was mostly through the running and the many, many injuries that I had, that I realised that my lack of suppleness was probably a major contributing factor **[to those injuries]**.

When I started stretching I went to dance classes, believe it or not. At the age of twenty-seven I was the stiffest guy in the room by a country mile, but I went to dance classes and I went to these, not dance classes per se, but what they call limber classes, which is the warm-up classes that every dance student does first thing in the morning in order to prepare themselves for the day's actual classes.

What they call mobility these days is what these classes were, for dancers. Just picture this, you come into this room at nine o'clock or eight o'clock in the morning, I think it was, beautiful wooden floor, and there's all these bodies sitting in side splits, rolling through side splits into front splits, doing full backbends and all this kind of thing, and that was them warming up for their warm-up class. And that's normal, by the way.

But me, I mean I couldn't touch my toes. My body was amazingly stiff in every direction, and I can tell you honestly that there was no joint of my body that was naturally flexible. Since I've got to know Tom Myers and Robert Schleip, in particular really well, Schleip has posited this continuum of fascial tightness, from "Viking fascia" he called it, where people like me who are just tight in very joint and who are as far away from hyper mobile as you can possibly imagine, all the way to the other end of the spectrum which he called "Balinese Temple dancer" **[at the other end of the continuum]**.

Now, the easiest way he says, to see where you are roughly on this continuum is to pull the skin of the inside of your forearm. So, if I do this like this, and just grab this skin here and try and pull it off my forearm. See how it won't come off, but when my main guy Dave Wardman does that (and he is the most flexible guy in our group); when he pulls his skin, it comes away from his forearm about two inches.

Now this is just a rough and ready thing, but when I first met Dave I realised **[this aspect about him]** straight away. Firstly, he's a very unusual specimen because he's actually got a lot of power in his body even though he's flexible, and secondly, he had the capacity to develop

full flexibility meaning full **side splits**, **full** backbend, all that kind of thing.

Anyway, getting back to your original question, and I'll try to make this as brief as possible, because honestly there are just ten thousand alleys that we go down. When I first started stretching there was no system that was universally recognised as being likely to be effective for someone who is naturally stiff. There just wasn't one.

If you know yourself, and I don't know what your own physical backgrounds are, but if you were a strong guy then you got into power lifting or Olympic lifting or something to do with that end of the continuum. If you were someone loose maybe you went off to yoga classes or dance classes or something else, and you took your own set of attributes in that direction. If you were aerobically talented, like I knew a guy who had never raced before, but when he raced in his first City to Surf, he came third. It was the very first City to Surf that had ever been run, so it's a long time ago now, but he was naturally gifted aerobically. So, where do you think he went, activity, athletic-wise? He went straight into middle distance and long distance running.

However, if you want to have what I call a *plastic body*; if, for example, supposing you said to me today "OK, let's go rafting tomorrow". Now I've never rafted in my life, but I know that I could paddle a canoe, or however you go down the rapids. Or, if you said "Let's go climb up a mountain tomorrow", I could do that too. I'm not particularly good at any one thing but I can do most things. We're talking about, if you like (and I know Ido speaks about this as well), but we've been talking about this **specialised generalisation** way before Ido drew breath, actually. We are the generalists in this area, and we've been doing it for a very, very long period of time.

The other thing that's important to mention is that my system started through my own experimenting on myself, and it continues today in exactly the same way. When I first discovered the Contract-Relax Method, this is how it happened. I was in Japan, I was a live-in student at a martial arts dojo and I was having a workout at a local ward gym. Every ward has a gym in Japan, and the membership's very inexpensive.

I was sitting next to some, I think it was, leg extension machine, or something like that, and I had my legs apart and I was trying to work on the pancake, and I just reached forward and held the machine and pulled myself towards it, and pulled back at the same time, so I was doing an isometric contraction, and I had never heard about this or read about this, but I could feel straight away, as soon as I did that contraction and then used my arms to pull myself a bit more deeply into the stretch, I went past the point that I'd stopped at only a moment before.

Now, I'm a researcher as you probably know, we've mentioned that in the introduction, but I've got a Masters degree in Science and I did five

years of fully funded PhD research at the university as well, all that stuff's on my website, and back pain was the key case study. The thing is this, when I actually got myself into that academic environment and started trying to find out exactly what it was that I'd been drawing on in my own training, that's when I came across the P&F Handbook, as you've probably heard it called, the Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation Handbook which a lot of people think they know about P&F Stretching, but in fact what is surprising if you go back to the original textbook, is there's almost no mention of stretching in the book.

Interviewer 1: Hmm.

Respondent: The book itself is a book of patterns, movement patterns, to re-educate the cerebrally and/or spinally injured in the population. What they are is a set of manual therapist applied techniques, in fact was developed by a doctor and three nurses at an institute in the US. What they would do, supposing someone was recovering from a car wreck and was [temporarily] paralysed from the neck down, not an uncommon thing, these people would take that person and they would help them to roll on their side, help them to get one arm underneath, help them to sit up, and then eventually to stand up. And that would be what they would call one of their Spiral Diagonal Patterns.

In fact, the textbook is just hundreds of those kind of patterns. On page 98, I recall, there was mention of four or five techniques that they had used with these people to improve their range of movement, and that's where everyone's understanding of P&F Stretching came from. But, there was absolutely zero detail in that handbook about how to do Stretching, no detail whatsoever; [the book] just mentions the five techniques, contract-relax, hold-relax, agonist-antagonist, and a couple of others.

Interviewer 1: What was the name of that book again?

Respondent: Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation Handbook. I can send you this by email later.

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Respondent: But look, it will be useless to your audience because it has no details on stretching in it. I took that idea, the P&F idea from that core book, and it was only a sentence in one paragraph mentioning the different approaches, and I applied that P&F technique, the contract-relax technique or what they call the hold-relax technique in the original text book, I applied that to all of Iyengar's poses in the book called Light on Yoga, which is still in my view the best text book on Yoga on the planet.

It's a very shoddily bound book. When you open it up the spine will break and the pages will fall out. My copy's in a loose-leaf binder. Anyway, it's still a great book. What I did is that I took apart the major

poses and applied this technique to them, and it just made an extraordinary difference to my own experience of living.

So, over a period of time, I started to teach these things in Japan. When I went to Japan, my martial arts teachers could not understand how someone who called themselves a martial artist didn't have the same kind of flexibility that they have, but most westerners do not. I mean there are some westerners, and certainly Ido's students are demonstrating some superb flexibility these days, but the average western person who spends his or her life sitting at a desk experiencing their life as stressful, ([that's a fact] that no-one ever mentions), the body simply adapts to the position you hold it in the most. Or, put that another way, if you incorporate movement and other things into your daily life, then the body simply adapts to that.

The body's adaptations are, what I call, *motiveless*, the body, there's no malice...

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Respondent: ...there's no malice in what the body does. It is simply responding as best it can to the environment that it finds itself in. This thing that we live in is the ultimate adaptation machine, which is why we have concert pianists, why we have all the incredible different things that humans can do.

If you think about this from an evolutionary perspective, when a human baby pops out, it can't do a damn thing. It is years and years and years before it can even, in the crudest way, take care of itself. Whereas, when a foal, a young horse is born, as you know, within an hour it is walking, trotting, cantering and galloping. Within an hour. I've seen this with my own eyes, because I grew up in the country. But, human beings, well let me think, my brother's son is four now, he is walking and running, yes, and he's started to talk intelligently, but he is completely helpless.

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Respondent: He needs support. This is the thing that I think a lot of people don't realise is that we are the ultimately plastic thing that's born on the planet. Given the right environment or, and this works both ways too, I mean, somebody who's had massive trauma at the hands of a paedophile or something like that, they develop in a specific way, and they carry those wounds with them forever, very many of them.

But someone who's brought up in a good environment and is encouraged to experience X, Y and Z, they simply, they take that plastic... I mean John Locke, the Scottish philosopher spoke about *tabula rasa*, I'm sure you read about this, the idea that a human being comes into the world and it's a clean slate or an empty slate.

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Respondent: That's not strictly true, but it's truer for humans than it is for any other animals on the planet.

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Respondent: In my own case, I grew up in the country, we didn't do any of the kind of running around, playing football, and all the other things that kids did. However, I learnt to ride a horse, I learnt to ride a motorcycle, I learnt to make things, build things, do you know what I mean?

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Respondent: But, none of those things involved any flexibility. Had I been exposed to gymnastics classes or dance classes or yoga classes or something like that, during that same period of time, my body would be completely different to what it is now, I'm sure of that. Having said that, that does not mean that you are fixed and bound by your environmental conditions currently and your past history. It only constrains it; it only drives it or gives it a particular shape and flavour.

Let's bring the conversation back to the here and now. For someone who wants to be able to move like a dancer, or have the kind of strength that gymnasts have, or to be able to squat and to Snatch and Clean, the way Olympic Lifters do, you have to have the required range of movement to allow that to happen. Doing the activity itself, and only that activity, is usually the least efficient way of acquiring that range of movement.

What we do, and that's what our first program that you mentioned, the Master the Squat program, all it is if you think about it from a big picture perspective, not think about the detail of it, all that is is a set of challenges for the body which the body can either do, in which case you'll do the movement and it will feel comfortable and good, and you'll be exploring, OK maybe my left ankle is a little bit tight today, blah, blah, blah, or, you won't be able to even squat down, in which case you've just uncovered **the next** goal. I need to work on that fundamental movement pattern, or another movement pattern.

You lie face down, put your hands underneath your shoulders, relax the body and press the shoulders off the ground or what we call the Cobra pose in Yoga, or floor backbend. How does that feel? Where do you feel that? For example, most people when they do that pose all they feel is a cramping in their lower back, and no-one ever talks about this. We like to say "There's an elephant in the room".

When you do these kinds of things, although when you watch a Yogi do those kinds of things, or a dancer do those kinds of things, it just looks effortless, right? If that movement pattern is not in your body, that **demand is going to** be experienced by the body as a *challenge*, [**or a**

threat]. If you're tight, it will react by closing up: no organism has ever reacted to stress by opening, lengthening and relaxing. It just never happens. It always creates protective tension.

Interviewer 1: All right, let's take a quick time out for a second. If you want access to information I don't share anywhere else and get instant notifications whenever I post a new video or blog post or podcast, please be sure to go sign up for my mailing list. It takes five seconds. Obviously, you're not going to get any spam or BS and your info stays private. You also get a free e-book called The Movement Manifesto, which is basically seventy-five essential movement and training principles that have been really critical in my development.

You can go do that at [wellroundedathlete.net/tips](http://wellroundedathlete.net/tips).

All right, back to the good stuff.

That's an interesting distinction. I've got a lot of questions that I'd like to, sort of, move on a little bit. I wanna re-highlight what you said there, about how the body is motiveless in its adaptations, and so really whatever you throw at it, or whatever you don't throw at it also, is what it will adapt to, so...

Respondent: Sounds good.

Interviewer 1: ...we see that a lot. Then, really that the human body is just the ultimate adaptation machine, and I think that's so key. It sounds like...

Respondent: Let me interrupt and just point out something that's critically important to understand and what differentiates this system from any other that I know of so far. If you're relatively stiff and you try to achieve a new position with your body, the feedback that you're getting from your own body is completely inaccurate.

When you go into a new stretch position, when you reach the end of your, you Justin's range of movement, or Sean's range of movement, when you reach the end of that, the body responds by experiencing pain. Yeah?

Interviewer 1 & 2: Yeah.

Respondent: But, you're nowhere near the end or your actual range of movement capacity. This is an unique aspect to our work, and it plays into those two questions you put to me perfectly: when you experience pain at the end of a range of movement, that is simply the end of the range of movement that the brain knows from past experience it can do. And it just feels like me moving my hands around now. There's just the sensation of the movement. As soon as you get to the edge of the known world, if I can put it that way; when you're standing on the edge of your map, you're looking into the abyss; that's how the body experiences this.

Look, let me give you a perfect example. When we run our Stretching classes, we might say something like “OK, today its side splits”. Now, you can just look at the looks on guys’ faces. I mean, unless you’ve got side splits in your body, trying to slide down into side splits is a terrifying experience...

Interviewer 1: [laughter]

Respondent: ...and no-one ever talks about it. That’s what we’re talking about. We’d say the elephant in the room is fear. When you start to prod or poke your primal self, and that’s what happens when you take yourself to the end of a range of movement in any exercise, it’s just side splits is the good one to talk about because so many muscles are involved. It’s not like bending your finger backwards, you know, that’s just a sensation. When you do that with your legs, that’s terror for some people.

So, we say “OK, that’s what we’re dealing with, that’s the reality of the situation here”. So, what can we do to reduce [the intensity of] that experience in the body, so that the brain learns that this new position we’re trying to get into, is not a threat to it. That is the guts of our system, right there...

Interviewer 1: Beautiful, I love it, I wanna...

Respondent: ...and it plays into the two things you were talking about. The plasticity: plasticity is something that has to be explored. It cannot be taught by numbers or do six repetitions or ten repetitions of X,Y or Z. This is the other massive difference between our system and other systems out there. There are no prescriptions like that at all, there are just challenges. Can you do this? Can you do that? And if you can’t do this or can’t do this, well try this, this, this and this. Little bite-sized, digestible chunks of experience, which in time lead to the capacity to do X, Y and Z.

It’s very simple. We are simply showing this complex system where we want it to adapt, and how we want it to adapt.

Interviewer 1: Beautiful. I really love that analogy that, when you’re going to end range of motion, you’re literally going where your body’s never gone before, you’re entering the unknown world to your body...

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer 1: ...you’re literally staring into the abyss and...

Respondent: [laughter]

Interviewer 1: ...that can be fearful, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah!

Interviewer 1: I like that description of it.

It sounds like you sort of came into this world of flexibility and things like that, as an adult. It was not something that you did as a child. I think that offers a unique perspective because a lot of people are coming into this as an adult. What is the difference...

Respondent: Can I just comment on one thing that you've said there. In fact, almost every Yogi, every dance person and every gymnast that I've known have all started as kids. This is one of the problems with some systems: they reproduce the kind of conditioning techniques that children use. I was working with one coach, for example, who told me that his elite athlete, his lead athlete had, at that point when I was watching him, eleven thousand hours of training in his body, and he was only sixteen.

Interviewer 1: Wow.

Respondent: That boy is going to experience life differently to you two, unless you've had an [similar] background. But, here's the thing: those techniques do not work for adults.

Interviewer 1: So, let's dive into that a little bit. What is the difference between children's bodies and adult bodies and what does that mean about how we as adults should begin to approach stretching, both sort of theoretically, but also practically?

Respondent: Practical, look, we're all about practical. If we can't actually demonstrate it or do it or experience it then I don't think we really have any right to pontificate or talk about it, you know.

Interviewer 1 & 2: Yeah.

Respondent: That old expression, "You have to walk the walk as well as talk the talk" seems to me in any field of human endeavour, there's a lot of truth in it. That's not to say that we can't have theoretical perspectives generated by people outside our worlds that might be useful, but in my experience, and I'm speaking here as an ex-researcher, or I suppose I'm still a researcher but just not an official one, best practice is usually followed years behind by the research that explains how best practice works. That's my experience, anyhow.

Interviewer 1: Yeah, that's what Charles Poliquin would say. He'd say "The leading Olympic coaches are ten years ahead of the researcher".

Respondent: Yes, I think that's an exaggeration, but certainly five or seven; look that's a detail, right; **the point itself is well made.**

OK, so firstly, the metabolic turnover in children's bodies is extremely rapid, and so children have absolutely no trouble doing certain kinds of

activities seven days a week. So, the normal gymnastics, heavy gymnastics training is five days a week, with a half day on Saturday where they flog them with different activities, but still, six days a week. If you watch them training, and I've watched them training, it is all playful activity, and they do not concentrate on the kind of form that an adult will need to concentrate on.

Also, in my opinion, the way children are trained, which is basically, do this, do that, and do something else, so basically a kind of follow the leader thing, most adults simply don't respond well to that. See, a child is following directions because he or she trusts the coach basically, or their parents have said, "This is what you're doing this week, or this month, or this year. You've shown some skills at it, do you want to continue?" and the kid's said "Yeah, I'm having a lot of fun, I'll keep doing that", and then that refines into a more structured process later on.

The big difference between children's bodies and adult's bodies is their fascial structure, and also that children are fearless. You're not fearless, I'm not fearless, you're not fearless, that's just reality. With the development of the ego [as a child, then a young adult], one of the things the ego becomes aware of is that it's vulnerable.

When you watch a young gymnast doing a back-flip on the floor [that's one thing, but] female gymnasts I'm talking about now, they can do that on the beam. You get up there on the beam, that thing's four and a half feet, or whatever it is, off the floor, the floor is a long way down. All of those skills that you can manifest standing on the floor, I mean the beam is about that wide, it's actually way more than big enough to balance on, not like balancing on a, we're doing a lot of balancing practice on fence rails which are about that round. It's like a highway compared to that, but nonetheless you're four and a half feet off the floor.

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Respondent: Guess what, you start thinking about it.

Interviewer 2: That's a really good point, yeah. I teach boys gymnastics and I will say that the majority of boys are absolutely fearless. You occasionally get one that's afraid of doing inversions, but for the most part, once they're introduced to movements, all of sudden it's boom, second nature to them, when are we doing that next, it was fun. And...

Respondent: This is the key word, Sean. It was fun.

Interviewer 2: Yes, yes.

Respondent: It's play. It's play. We call our work structured adult play, that's what our work is all about. But say, getting back to your boys, when you stretch those young boy's bodies, the tissues you can feel. I mean if you're a manual practitioner as I am and you work on those kids, and

I've worked with lots of young kids, lots of old people, and everyone in between, you can feel that those children's bodies have an elasticity or a suppleness that a sixty year old adult male body just simply has almost none of.

Now, what is the difference here? Well there are two key differences. One is the mental state that's driving the body, and the other is the actual substrate, the body itself. Now let me just elaborate on that a little bit, and then I'll shut-up for a while and let you ask me questions because this is also key.

This is a fact, what I'm about to describe is a fact, and yet it's little known, and yet I've checked this with many surgeons and doctors and it's a hundred percent accurate.

A guy told me of an operation he was part of, only two weeks ago, and he said "We had this seventy-five year old guy come in and he was all hunched over like this", he said "he had such an extreme kyphosis", so curvature in his thoracic spine forward, "that when he lay down on the operating table, or when he was put on the operating table his head was nearly eighteen inches off the table".

Interviewer 1: Wow.

Respondent: It's not unusual. And his body was completely twisted up, but as soon as that anaesthetic hit, and this is key, you gotta listen to this, this is just magic, as soon as that anaesthetic hit, the guy's body over a period of two or three minutes just simply straightened out and relaxed completely on the table.

Interviewer 1: Wow!

Respondent: Now, here's the thing. When any adult body is anaesthetised, that body on the table has perfect flexibility up to the range of movement of the joints. And in fact there's a class of accidents called spontaneous dislocation, that happen on the operating table, when a nurse or an assistant moves, say, the ribcage a bit quickly and the ribs dislocate from the sternocostal margins or from where they articulate with the vertebrae at the back, because there is, listen to this, there is no tension in the body.

But, Michael, my friend told me, he said "The fucking incredible thing was when that anaesthetic wore off, this guy just curled right back up again like a prawn".

Interviewer 1: Wow! [laughter]

Respondent: Here's the thing: this is his mind's perception, conception and experience of his body. His own self is literally nothing more, his emotional self, physical self, [these are the same] thing, nothing more than what the brain tells the body to be. What the brain understands itself to be—and

its understanding is always inaccurate. That's our system. We show the brain "A-ha! A-ha! I can be like this, I can be like that. Oh, look at that, oh fuck, that feels fantastic", and so on and so forth. That's how it works.

And, all I've done is explore this for, I'm sixty, I can't remember, sixty something now, and I'm still learning it. It is the most exciting thing. We have just re-incorporated some five thousand year old dynamic martial arts stretching stuff into our routine, and it is changing my body at a rapid rate.

Look, I'll just say one more thing and then I'll shut up, or I'll try to shut up. The body adapts much more quickly than we think it will. Our experience is wrong, wrong, wrong. Now let me just explain what I mean here. When my crew and I, when we started doing men's gymnastics training following a well known protocol, about three years ago, we all just assumed, I mean no-one spoke about it because we're all doing interesting things together, we were doing a lot of rope climbing and a shitload of stuff that we'd been doing on the strength side, because I run something called the Monkey Gym as well, and any odd object that you can think about, we've got in there. We just thought when we started, because all of the guys are your age, in their twenties or thirties, and we thought, OK, well, you know, the old guy will limp along as best you can and within a year or two, the young guys are going to be way ahead, but guess what, that just didn't happen. There's nothing exceptional about my body, I can tell you. I mean, it's a train wreck in lots of different ways. If you saw my spinal X-rays, you'd say "Oh my God, you should be in a wheelchair".

Interviewer 1: [laughter]

Respondent: I'm not exaggerating. That's what a chiropractor said to me only a while ago. The fact is, it's all just inaccurate and when we look at an X-ray, we're not actually looking at the body, we're only looking at a very small sub-set of the systems that the body comprises. I'll try to be quiet now, but I'm just saying, what we found, and this is what I'm finding with the Chinese martial arts stuff too, the dynamic stuff is affecting my body just as quickly as the other young students. It's not taking time. I can stand, for example, on both my feet and I can just bounce my flat hands, with my hands in this position here, off the ground.

Now, it takes me about, might be five or ten seconds to warm up to that level of stretch, but it's quick. Here's what most people don't realise. There are two completely different stretch receptor systems in the body. One is position dependent, and that's what slow stretching affects, so yoga, and also there's that fascial dimension which is another layer on our understanding, which no-one really understands that much about yet. Then there is the time and position dependent ones, and that's what all quick activities use.

Have you not noticed, you can have a yogi, for example, who can sit in perfect side splits, but who can't do a side-kick. It's not just a strength thing, those receptors are different. I've seen people who are flexible in the static position sense, and who do not have good dynamic flexibility, and I'm seeing much more the other way, people who have awesome dynamic flexibility and who have very poor static flexibility.

Now, I'm exaggerating a little bit, but not much. The reason is those systems are different in the body. We need to train both.

Interviewer 1: So then, when you're approaching again adult bodies, how do you then start to change the mental perspective of people, and change their physical experience that actually cause these more flexibility?

Respondent: By doing the things that we want to get into, but at a level of intensity that the body does not experience as a threat, and...

Interviewer 1: That keeps coming up again and again.

Respondent: ...Man, it's the guts of it, and the thing is, no-one ever talks about this. People just say, do this, do that. No-one ever says, "Well when you get into this position here, where do you feel that? how does that feel?" and this is the key question "How can you change that feeling?". Because the feeling is the experience. If you're only experiencing pain and discomfort, where's the incentive for the body to open up and adapt along those lines? I mean, it's just not there. This thing protects itself.

What's more; this is really crucial: all of what I've been talking about in terms of the capacity to relax and so on under anaesthetic, or how to actually re-make the maps in the somatosensory cortex, which are our flexibility, all of that is out of conscious control. In our system, we simply use the bones and ligaments and tendons and fascia as the tools to contact and re-make the maps, so that the experience of doing these things changes.

Interviewer 1: Beautiful. You know, I just read this book by Todd Hargrove, who I had on a couple of talks ago, A Guide to Better Movement. I don't know if you're familiar with that, but he talks about that and how, he uses the analogy of the nervous system as sort of an extremely intelligent but over-protective mother, and to open up and unlock this mobility you've really got to send as much good news as possible. Show that you're responsible, and that you can progressively move into these new ranges. That it doesn't need to be a fearful experience.

Respondent: You can be allowed on that bicycle without killing yourself.

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer 1: Exactly.

Respondent: Exactly. I've never read any of Todd's stuff. A lot of my students have spoken to me about his good work and I will in time get into his book, there's no doubt about that. One of the reasons that I don't explore a lot of other people's stuff until I actually bump into them in the real world, is, and this might sound anti-intellectual, but I don't want to be too influenced by other things at this point in my own development. I'm trying to understand things from first principles as much as possible.

Having said that, because our stuff seems to be getting some traction, here and there, I'm now bumping into people like Todd, and Ido and Coach Sommer and all the other people **in the field**. I actually haven't met Ido yet, I look forward to doing that at some point. I've met literally hundreds of people who are involved in the things that we're involved in, and it's all come about because they've found my stuff interesting or have had something to say in it, or whatever. The thing is its evolving naturally, rather than...

Look, the big thing is this, this is such a critical thing to understand. I know you two understand this from what you've already said, but we live in a world where everyone knows all about something, but knowing about something and being able to do it and experience and then talk about it from the experiential perspective, that is a completely different perspective. I'm interested in the latter perspective.

Look, I'm not anti-intellectual, I know more about the philosophy of science than most people, because that was my research area for, well, more than ten years. I've written extensively about this, too. I understand physics at a decent level, maths at a decent level, so on and so forth, but the fact is those things have almost nothing to tell us about what we're talking about today.

Interviewer 1: Yeah, and I think that idea that there are so many people out there that have information overload, that know so many things, but I was reading this book the other day and it redefined knowing as doing. In other words...

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer 1: ...if you are not doing something, you don't know it. And I really like that redefinition, because it just calls bullshit on all the people that know all these things, but don't do it. You don't know something unless you do it.

Respondent: And, there is a further level. If you have the right kind of background, and I would say that my own particular, very fortunate background, is one example of what that sort of a background could look like, through your own experience and exploration, you might then be able to articulate some generalised perspective. That's my own gift.

I'm not particularly good at any of the things that I can teach. If we posit some sort of conceptual triangle where we have ultimate strength at one corner, ultimate aerobic fitness at another corner, and ultimate flexibility at the third corner, I'd be right in the middle. I can do all of those things, to a low level of capacity. The difference is, because I've had so many difficulties in my own body, and I've worked very hard to overcome those difficulties, I now have some understanding of how others might also approach a similar problem set.

Interviewer 1: Beautiful.

Interviewer 2: I'm curious. You've mentioned Ido's name a couple of times and we're talking about an individual's, I guess, need to develop flexibility or need to experience flexibility in the body. How do you feel about his protocol, his Corset protocol for developing flexibility and adding load in order to do that?

Respondent: Well, firstly, I'm not familiar with the Corset protocol, but weighted stretching is something we've been doing forever. In the "Master the Pancake" program that we just released a couple of days ago, one of the things that I'm doing is I've got two benches set up in the corner of the studio, and so that my feet can't slide further apart, and I've got my legs apart at about a hundred degrees or so, which is the pancake position. When you're in a pancake, you should have the legs apart and still be able to hold your feet. The yoga perspective on this is called Upavista Konasana, and that's the angle that the legs are set at, is the extent to which they can be spread apart, and you can still hold the inside of your feet.

In fact, that's a more difficult forward bending position than if you can actually sit in side splits because, as you know, if you can sit perfectly in side splits you simply roll over onto your tummy. Nothing actually gets stretched [more]. Very few people are that flexible, but if your legs are at about that intermediate position, somewhere between ninety and a hundred and ten degrees, that's where the maximum stretch on the abductors and the hamstrings at the same time occurs.

When your legs are together, like when you're doing a pike, it's all hamstrings.

Interviewer 1: How would you add load to something like a pancake stretch?

Respondent: Oh, easy. You set up the benches the way I described. So you've got the two benches in the corner of a room, so they can't spread out to the side, and when you stand on the two benches, you've got your feet turned out and you've got one foot against one wall and one foot against the other wall, and your ass is pointing back into the corner of the room. Right. You take a kettlebell, the one I'm demonstrating on the video, I start with

a sixteen kilogram kettlebell first, and let the weight pull me down to the floor, between my legs.

I do bent leg versions, straight leg versions, and then I move in between the different angles, between one leg and the other, and then I do the same thing with a twenty-four kilogram kettlebell. That's about where I'm working at at the moment.

Interviewer 1: Cool.

Respondent: Very, very effective.

Interviewer 2: Oh yeah. Having done this myself I can tell you that it just revolutionised how I viewed flexibility by adding load. It really is important. I think that anyone teaching flexibility or mobility will be doing this type of loaded work in the future.

Respondent: We have, honestly, we were so far ahead of the curve in this stuff, we just didn't realise it. We've been doing weighted stretching seriously, for twenty-five years. What's more, my partner Olivia, and another guy, [Dr] Joe Hope, who's a mathematician at the university I was working at, he and she together, because they both had very well developed calf muscles, but incredibly tight calf muscles, and so they developed something they call pre-exhaustion stretching which we're going to unleash on the world in the next six months or so.

What that is, is you absolutely flog the muscles that you're going to stretch, and what they would do, is they'd do multiple repetitions with as heavy weights as they could. For example, on a heel raise exercise. Just like the bodybuilders stretching or strengthening, I should say. And they would work that muscle to failure, one leg at a time, and then they do a single leg dog pose, which is also one of our signature exercises. And, they work the stretch while the muscle's in a completely flogged state, and they both have flexible ankles now, that's all I can say. They were people in whom no stretching technique touched their calf muscles at all.

Here's another aspect of our work. We have a million tools in the toolbox because the cookie-cutter approach just doesn't work. I can tell by looking at your two bodies, just via Skype, you actually need different approaches to stretching. I can see that, just in your faces. Now, you might think that I'm bullshitting you, but I'm not. Your bodies are quite different, I can see that, and I haven't even seen them yet.

Interviewer 1: Yeah. [laughter]

Respondent: So, where's this fiction come from that four sets of a figure four exercise done five times, that's going to give you internal rotation and hips. That's bullshit. It might work for you [referring to Interviewer 1: 0:41:00], and it might not work for you [referring to Interviewer 2:

0:41:01]). So, our whole approach is we'll try this, see what it feels like, and then try this to modify the experience. If that doesn't work, try that, and if that doesn't work, try something else.

Interviewer 1: Yeah, I love that idea of building your toolbox. I think that's so important for anything whether your warm-ups, or your strength training, your flexibility, your mobility training. I consider that really every great coach should do that, and then every great individual, every great mover, physical culturist or whatever you want to call them, should have in their own toolbox for their own bodies. I think that is so key.

Can we talk a little bit about, you said, we all need individual approaches, but what do you see, what are some maybe ranges for the frequency and duration of the stretching you use. Maybe like in the course of a week.

Respondent: Well, the first thing is, and again, Ido is hardly the first person to say this, I mean what's his saying?, "Move every day" I think is his saying. Well, that's shit. Of course, I mean that's just so obvious. We have to move every day. Well, we're moving every day even if we're static, or sitting on a couch. That's a form of movement too, right, it's a non-movement.

Interviewer 1: Isometric... [laughter]

Respondent: [laughter] Well, unfortunate, normally. Yeah.

Anyway, of course, we have to move every day, so if we are going to move every day, and if there's benefit and utility in moving, then it's worth thinking about "OK, we've only got so much time in our normal daily lives, if we're going to move, what is gonna comprise that movement, and what's gonna give me..." My friend Paul Chek says this perfectly. He said "What's the best bang for the buck exercise?"

Now the full squat position is an excellent bang for the buck exercise. There's not a day goes by, well I use a squat toilet, I built one myself last year and wrote about it extensively, the squatting position is a fundamental position, but there are also many other fundamental positions which the squat won't affect at all. For example, the standing lunge is another fundamental position because it's the movement template for running and jumping. So, we need to do a full squat, we need to do a lunge of some sort, we need to do some kind of chest opening or thoracic extension movement and there are a whole bunch of other things.

We would not make it, again this is kind of like I'm anti the sets and reps activity... We wouldn't say you have to do this, this and this every day, but if you expose yourself to a range of those movement challenges, say over a week or a month, you'll know straight away which are the ones

you need to do. They're the ones you can't do, or the ones that feel uncomfortable in your body.

And of course, what do people capitalise on, here's a classic one. If I ever go and teach a class in a yoga studio, and those yogis come in, what do you think is the first thing they stretch when they all sit down? Or dancers?

Interviewer 1: Hamstrings?

Respondent: Hamstrings. What is the muscle group they least need to stretch?

Interviewer 1: Hamstrings?

Respondent: Hamstrings. But they want to look flexible, right? The role of the mind in all of this is something that's not adequately explored in my view. You know the old marine saying, "If you want to be all you can be", and I'm using it in its widest and deepest sense here, then firstly you have to have courage. I mean that seriously. You have to have the courage of looking at yourself face on and seeing what you and your body actually need. Not what you *want* necessarily. Now in time, the needs and wants they become much closer together.

In my body, for example, backward bending is absolutely fundamental, and so I do some most days. Why do I do it? Because I suck at it, I have to do it. I have to do it and I'm getting older. The guy who is demonstrating front splits on the back of my book, when we took that photograph of him he was sixty-six years old, and when I first met him he couldn't touch his toes. Now, in that photograph, his hips are square. Now, I say to you, Sean, your boys doing front splits, how many of them can sit in front splits with square hips?

Interviewer 2: One of them.

Respondent: Not too many. One, that's right. See, just one, and so here's the thing. When I first met Elvin, he's a scientist and he won't mind me talking about him, when I first met him, he was utterly rigid at both the personality and the physical body, but he had guts, he had courage, and he looked at what his body was like at that age, whatever it was, fifty-nine I think or something like that, or fifty-eight, and when he started coming to classes, he's a really smart guy, he very quickly realised, "Ah shit, I need this, I need this, this, this and this", and he just sieged it. He worked on those things. Next thing you know, two, three years down the road, he's living in a different body.

Most people who are doing the kind of strength training and skills training that we're interested in, they don't devote anywhere near enough time to their mobility and flexibility work. In fact, usually, it's a bit like ab-work in the conventional body building gym, it's what you throw in at the end of the workout because you know you've got to work on your

abs, right. But, they're not serious about it, the mind's somewhere else and it's just kind of like a token thing, I'll just do a few sets of crunches at the end.

Now, stretching, in my view is something that needs to be done at the end of a skill workout. Not at the beginning. So, whether we're working with Olympic lifters, whether we're working with people who are doing gym training for different things, like gymnastics strength training, we'll do the stretching session at the end. It won't be the parts of that person's body that they want to stretch, necessarily. It will be what they know from past experience, different workouts, what they need to stretch.

If someone actually has the balls and the gutsy approach to actually confront their own shortcomings in their body, they can transform themselves within a couple of years. That's a very important point here. Robert Schleip told me, just a quick digression here, all the body turns its own tissues over at different rates. The slowest material to turn over in the body is the enamel in your teeth, but each atom that comprises enamel in your teeth is actually different, roughly every seven years or so. Your stomach lining literally turns itself over every forty-eight hours. The gut lining turns itself over in, I think it's four or five days, something like that, and the body digests all these components and re-uses them.

Same if you're a runner. You destroy blood cells in the bottom of your feet: those blood cells get recycled. The half life of fascia in the body is about six months which means that if you incorporate movement and the kind of stretching and strengthening approach that we recommend, and I've got to speak a bit about developing strength at the end of range of movement in a moment too, because that's completely different to the weighted stretching we're talking about.

If you employ these training systems, whether it be Ido's systems, or my systems, or one of the other movement/flexibility based systems, and you do it where you're courageous enough to confront your own shortcomings, you'll be living in a different fascial body within two years or so. We found that two years is about it.

Interviewer 1: So, there is really hope for people even if they get into this as adults? Even though, like you said, I think it kind of goes deep. You've got to have the courage, you've got to have the clarity of what issues you're facing, and you've got to approach them head-on. Honestly, that's hard to do. In your body, that's probably the easiest area to do it, is physically. With relationships, with your personal development, I think that's just...

Respondent: Everything.

Interviewer 1: ...yeah, it can be hard, but it's absolutely worth it.

Respondent: Well, do you want to live a lie, or do you want to actually live authentically, that's what it comes down to.

Interviewer 1: Yeah.

Respondent: You know, and at my age, in fact I was like this when I was twenty, I'm conscious that my next breath could be my last.

Interviewer 1: Yep.

Respondent: I'm not fucking around, do you know what I mean?...

Interviewer 1: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: ...but I'm also having the most amazingly good time, at the same time too. [laughter]

Interviewer 1: [laughter]

Respondent: It's a question of what you want. We used to say this, when I did a lot of strength training, they used to call me the phantom trainer, or the phantom and the reason was that I'd be in and out in less than half an hour. I'd go into the heavy weights room, which is an Olympic lifting gym, but I'll tell you a quick story. About ten years ago I was attacked by some mystery virus, and [within a week] in fact I was carted off to hospital. I was in intensive care for ten days, and when I came out of hospital, I'd lost, I'm not exaggerating this to make a story, I had lost in that two weeks which included the week leading up to the hospitalisation, I'd lost twenty-two kilograms...

Interviewer 1: I believe it, I believe it...

Respondent: ...at a body weight of eighty kilograms. So that means, that's one quarter of my own mass I consumed myself, over one quarter, right. OK, so, and then I spent the next six months; they never found out what the virus was, we'll talk about that another time, they never found out what it was, but when I came out of hospital, I was sleeping, resting, inert, for sixteen to eighteen hours a day. My partner looked after me. I couldn't do a thing. That lasted for six months.

Interviewer 1: Wow.

Respondent: Now, I remember this clearly, it was January 5<sup>th</sup>, it was exactly ten years ago, or nine and a half years ago, January 5<sup>th</sup>, I walked into the heavy weights room, and I walked up to the squat rack and there was the empty bar sitting on the rack. I put it on my shoulders, set myself up, and dropped down into a full back squat, and I did four repetitions with the empty bar and I was flat on my back for another week. That's how weak I was.

Interviewer 1: Wow.

Respondent: But, I kept doing it. I had one or two sessions a week only, and I would only do back squats or front squats. My body is better designed for front squats. In that year, I did my best ever back squat, best ever front squat, and my body weight went up to eighty-eight kilograms. So, I went from sixty-seven kilograms to eighty-eight. Now people will tell you that's impossible. When you're recovering muscle that you used to have, trust me, it's possible. That's two very rapid sessions. I'd be in and out in usually half an hour, and all I would do is back squats or front squats and I put weight back on my shoulders, traps, arms, everything.

Interviewer 1: Wow.

Respondent: That's the only exercise I did in that year, apart from walking around. I mean, I was a basket case, and I had zero flexibility. When I came out of hospital, my body had literally reverted to what it was when I first started stretching. Couldn't touch my toes, couldn't reach my fingers past my knees, as for getting legs apart, that's the last range of movement to come back. It's only coming back now.

Interviewer 1: That's such an amazing story. So, ten years ago you said, so you were like early fifties, right?...

Respondent: Yeah, that's right...

Interviewer 1: ...I just think that's such an amazing story of the body's ability to adapt and rebuild. You literally rebuilt your body from nothing, and at fifty years old and...

Respondent: ...and, it was a different shape. When I was an Olympic lifter before, I didn't have big glutes, I was one of those quad lower back type lifters. You've seen them. But because my form was so much better, when I started I couldn't do a damn thing, I just couldn't do anything. When my body developed [again]; honestly it's a bit like, there were no drugs involved here, it was a bit like Lance Armstrong's body when he had testicular cancer and he redeveloped his body, you might recall, it was actually a different shape when he redeveloped it.

That's absolutely possible; my body, my glutes are well developed now, hamstrings are way better developed than they used to be, and it was nothing to do with what I did, it was just by having good form and knowing what good form looked like in the deep squat. That's how the body developed: it developed exactly as it needed to develop.

Interviewer 1: Beautiful.

Respondent: I tell you this, and I mentioned this once before, but we do live in an adaptation machine. We simply need to know how to tweak it to adapt in the way that we want, because at the moment the body is adapting

unconsciously, as I mentioned before, in a direction that most people don't want. Right? It's adapting, whether you want it or not, all the time. So, when you are clear about that, you say "OK, this is what I need, and so I'm gonna select from the toolbox these things, and we know what they are because we've tried to do a Cossack squat and we find we can't get our legs apart, or we've tried to do a backbend and we find the hip flexors are so tight my back just goes straight into spasm, or I can't get into the snatch bottom position, why, because my upper back and middle back are too tight, blah, blah, blah.

You acknowledge that and you say "OK, instead of practising power snatches, I'm gonna get the flexibility I need to actually practise a proper snatch. Or, in the case of legs apart, I'm not gonna do bad Cossack squats, I'm gonna do Cossack squats at my present level of ability, and I'm gonna pay attention to the shape of the arch, the alignment of the knee, the way to hold the upper body.

Now, all of those things individually are known, but our system, I think, puts them together and says "Try this, try that, try something else, by the end of the session you'll know exactly what your body needs, and this is the most efficient way to get that".

Interviewer 1: Awesome. Kit, I've loved this conversation, it's been very inspiring for me. I'm pretty sure I'm gonna go sign up for one of your workshops right after we get off the call here.

Respondent: [laughter] Please do. I'd love to meet both of you, and I really hope that we can. We've got workshops coming in the US later this year. Also in Europe we're running a Stretch Therapy for Gymnastics Strength Training workshop and an Into the Stretch workshop in Piacenza, one in York, one in London. You would be so very welcome.

Interviewer 1: I'd love it. I wanna be respectful of your time. Do we have just another couple of minutes, I've got one more question.

Respondent: Yeah, of course.

Interviewer 1: I wanted to talk a little bit about the jaw and the feet because I think those are two areas that can have some really interesting cascading effects in the rest of the body, and they're very little thought about. Most modern people have had their foot in a, sort of, foamy cast for their entire lives. Can you talk about the jaw and the feet and why they're so significant.

Respondent: I'd be delighted to. You're actually talking about two of my favourite body parts, by the way. Not that there's any body part I don't like, but let's start with the feet.

Logically, from the physics perspective and from a body perspective, the feet are the foundation. I mean, let's just explicate just why that's the

case. They're the foundations because we live in a sea, an invisible sea of gravity. Everything that we do is working against gravity's tendency to pull us to the centre of the earth. Once you understand that, you understand a huge amount about what we actually need. In the sea of gravity, working on your jaw muscles will not change your postural alignment. Working on your feet alignment cascades upwards through the body as the body adjusts to that alignment.

Now, the most common problem in today's world, and Nike published figures on this twenty years ago and nothing's changed, about seventy percent of runners they claim are pronators. That is to say the ankle rolls in under load. I've got a twenty-two minute video on Youtube, it's a free download, it's called The Foot Sequence, where we literally start with spreading the toes, we start with bending the toes in all directions, we start with aligning the arch, we start with the feeling of how the body's weight is positioned on the foot, and we go from there.

Every knee problem that I've ever encountered has its genesis in foot alignment and/or hip restrictions. Look, just think about the body for a moment, in this fashion. The ankle has a huge range of movement. The hip has a huge range of movement. The knee only moves in **one** plane, **[in two dimensions]**. It's exactly the same in the shoulder. The shoulder has an incredible range of movement, the wrist has an incredible range of movement, and the elbow only moves in two **directions, or one plane**. Elbow problems and knee problems are the result of problems further up or further down that kinetic chain. It's as simple as that, mostly.

I have a friend who's a knee replacement surgeon, and he told me he has never done a knee replacement where the lateral part of the knee is worn out. It's always the medial side of the knee that's worn out.

Interviewer 1: Interesting.

Respondent: If you look at this foot sequence, we actually show people that the alignment of the arch is not a property of the foot itself. It comes from the external rotators **[of the hip joint]**. When you stand on your feet, if you lift your toes up and stand on your feet, and this sequence takes you through all this, most people have more of the weight on the joint behind the big toe and the heel than they do on the outside of the foot. So, what we say is, without looking at your feet, try to put some weight on the outside of your feet, and straight away you'll see the legs externally rotate, that's cued by the external rotators, and when you externally rotate the thighs and the hip joint, guess what, the arch pulls up off the floor.

It's hard-wired into the body, all this stuff. We just need to wake it up. The reason it's asleep is exactly the reason you mentioned before. The proprioceptors, as sense organs, are most numerous in the soles of the feet, and second most numerous in the palms of the hand. Hardly

surprisingly, this is how we get traction on the world. That's the feedback that we need.

When you feel your foot in the right position on the ground, the proprioceptors are how we feel that. When you separate the proprioceptors from the experience of standing, walking, running, jumping from the world by wearing running shoes, something I haven't worn for eight years now, I've been wearing Five Fingers since I first discovered them and I do a whole lot of stuff barefoot as well. All our workshops are done barefoot, full-stop. What we've done inadvertently by developing the shoe is that we have insulated ourselves from the most important proprioceptor response the body has. That's the ones from the feet.

Here's how it works. Remember that adaptation I was talking about before, if you take away stimulation, the body simply reverts to a lower energy configuration, and the lower energy configuration in alignment in the human body is pronated ankles, and anteriorly tilted pelvis, and a slumping middle and upper back, and a head forward posture. That's the low energy configuration of the body.

Look, this will illustrate it perfectly. When you get excited about something, what happens? Boom, you straighten up immediately. When you sprint, all the alignment mechanisms of the body are working perfectly. You don't have to tell yourself to cue your core, or make the arches work properly, it happened by itself. Now, the trick is to have it happen at a level of intensity that doesn't injure the person who owns the body that's half asleep. That's our stuff. It's about scaling that.

I go walking every day, out the back of my house, next time we talk I'll show you a picture of what it looks like, but out the back of my house, right over there, is a mountain. Well, it's called a mountain, it's only a couple of hundred metres vertical height, but it's rough, it's a bush mountain. My partner and I go walking there every day.

We're not going for a walk around the block on concrete, wearing running shoes, thinking that we're doing something good for our body, we're actually crawling over rocks, under something, walking along fire trails where they're slippery. We're coming down this hill, for example, where these little pebbles on this hard clay base, you'd better pay attention or you could be skating right to the bottom of that hill, and we do that every day. And, guess what? It wakes the body up. This thing craves the right kind of stimulation, and whatever you give it, it will adapt to.

Now, talking about the jaw. I have a jaw sequence on YouTube too, and it's a free download. I've had people say they've done those four or five exercises and it changed the way they feel, on the spot. That's accurate. Listen to this. Stretching your neck muscles and your jaw muscles will change your mental state. Stretching your calf muscles will not.

Just think about this for a moment. When you look at someone, like the way you two are looking at me now, the way I'm looking at you, how much meaning is contained in this part of the body. If you want to know what someone's thinking and feeling, you don't look at their quads.

Interviewer 1: [laughter]

Respondent: I know it's a funny thing to say, but do you get the deep truth of it? I mean, it's...

Interviewer 1: Oh yeah, Oh yeah, I love that quote. I love that quote.

Respondent: ...and so, getting back to the jaw, the jaw in a physics sense just happens to be... Do you know it's a gliding, sliding joint? There is no position that the mandible sits in the jaw joint. It can be forward, backwards, up, down. It's completely mobile. Where it sits is a function of the balance of forces around that joint, and that's tension. If you grind your teeth at night-time or clench your teeth, well they're the things that the dentist do, the first thing they'll want to do is to reshape your bite. That is bullshit. The bite is only a function of tension. The best approach by far and certainly the least invasive approach, is to work on the tension patterns first and then see how the jaw sits, because this joint is the last joint the body has to resolve forces which begin in the feet.

Interviewer 1: Interesting.

Respondent: The last joint. Also, sorry one more thing, your attitude to life, the way that you think, the way that operate, is literally reflected in your jaw. You can see it. You can see it, right there.

Interviewer 1: Yep. Yeah, I noticed...

Respondent: We're looking at resistance, that's what we're looking at. *Resistance*, baby. I'm not being critical of you, I'm exactly the same. [laughter]

Interviewer 1: [laughter] Guilty. I carry a lot of tension in my jaw. I've been stretching it lately though.

Respondent: This is what's so cool about this stuff. If we just acknowledge there's this thing, what do I do? How do I get from here to there? We identify the state that we want, and then, this is where intelligence and pain [play their roles].

Sean, playing back to a question I never fully answered of yours before, the difference between children's bodies and adult's bodies is far more than their fascial system and their muscle system. It's about how they think. They are not rigid. There is much less resistance to opening in different ways in a child than there is in an adult. An adult will give you ten thousand reasons why they can't sit in side flips, right? It's the

structure of my hips, it's my genetic inheritance, it's what, you know, blah blah, blah blah, blah blah blah. It's endless.

This is the thing. For most adults reality is not what they're interacting with in the real world. It's what's going on between the ears. Well, direct experience will not let you get away with bullshitting yourself like that.

Interviewer 1: [laughter]

Respondent: So, what we do is we gently and supportively create the environment where that perspective is re-made. Where the experience is re-made, and guess what? the perception changes as a result of the experience changing. We are working on some really deep stuff here, using what looks like stretching exercises. It's so cool, it's so much fun.

Interviewer 1: Wow! My mind is blown. Like I said, I enjoyed that so much. I really loved the directions and the many things we discussed. I wanna be respectful of your time, so let's go ahead and wrap it up. We can bring you on again some time in the future, but man, I think people are really gonna get a lot out of this.

: One more quick thing, what's one book and one general piece of advice that you would give to people? One book you're reading or really would recommend to people, and just advice for movement, for life, whatever? You can keep it pretty short, if you like.

Respondent: Well, you probably notice, that's kind of a difficult thing for me.

Interviewer 1: [laughter]

Respondent: Well, as for books, I hate to sound as though I'm blowing my own trumpet, but you could do a lot worse than starting with one of mine. I mean, I've written a few of them, but if people want, they can find out that stuff, I don't want to recommend my own stuff. I can tell you though, that in my own field, the definitive book has not yet been written. I do have a manuscript for my next book, and that's what next year's work is about. It's actually bringing that to fruition.

I would start with Stretching and Flexibility, for most people, or if you're not as able overall, I'd actually start with my book Overcoming Neck & Back Pain, because it deals with back things, leg things, hip things, shoulder things, neck things.

One of the questions you asked me was about grace in the body. Why we think grace and ease in the body is so important.

Interviewer 1: Hmm, hmm.

Respondent: Let me explain that now, and that might be a good way to finish up, although I could keep talking forever.

The reason we've identified the goal of our work as being grace and ease in the body, is that because although everyone loves that idea, when I look around, if I sit in a mall and look around, I don't see it anywhere. Some young kid who's wanting to start off in gymnastics strength training or the stuff that we are all involved in, but they've got a shoulder issue, like people love to use the word issue these days, I call it a problem, but people like the word issue for some reason...

Interviewer 1: [laughter]

Respondent: ...or they've got many issues, my very strong advice is, "Well, don't waste your time trying to do muscle-ups when you've got a shoulder issue". The shoulder issue didn't develop by itself. It's not the hand of a malicious god reaching down saying "I'm gonna give this guy Rotator Cuff Syndrome". No, it's something in your movement pattern, or your daily life habits which has created an adaptation in the body which you are currently experiencing as a problem. It's an adaptation, baby, just the same as all the other adaptations we want to get. But it's a maladaptation. Why? Because it hurts us.

The reason we call the goal of our work, grace and ease in the body is because it's not very common, and it's what I want for my own body. I want to be able to do everything, actually. So, we start with that. Of course, from there it can be taken to elite level flexibility, it can be taken to elite level strength, it can be taken to any one of the manifestations of this extraordinarily plastic thing that we live in.

As I've mentioned before, some of us are gonna become concert pianists, and some of us become movement specialists and others become academics, but we are all adapting in our own way. If we want to adapt with grace and ease and have the experience of being alive a pleasant one, largely, we are gonna have to pay attention to the things are just niggles now, pain a little bit later, and then an injury a little bit later down the road if you don't do something about it.

How do you find out what these are? You expose the body to a range of gentle challenges and with your awareness fully in the body, asking yourself the key question in our work, which is "How does this feel? What does this feel like? How can I change this feeling?" The complete antithesis of doing five sets of exercise "X"...

Interviewer 1: Yeah

Respondent: ...a completely different approach. It looks the same. If you came into our gym, watched people working, they would be doing the same stretching exercises that you've seen before. Maybe one or two new ones, but the position the body's being put into is, honestly I won't say it's the least important part of our system, it's important, but the most

important part you can't see as an observer. You can only experience it internally.

Interviewer 1: Hmm. Brilliant stuff. I'm super excited to look more into your work, attend the workshop, pick up your book. I'll post again for everyone listening. I'm gonna post show notes where you can find out more about Kit, maybe get his book. I think they're all available on Amazon, or at least a couple of them are, and then, as well...

Respondent: May I just interrupt and say, "Don't get the books" and I'll explain why. Firstly, the Amazon versions of the books are out of date and they're gonna be expensive. We hold all the remaining stock of our own books. Long story, Global Financial Crisis, publishing company in crisis, contract for my next book was rescinded and all of the stock of my previous three books was returned to me at their cost. I mean, it's the most amazing deal for an author.

Interviewer 1: Wow, wow.

Respondent: We are in the process, in fact I'm working on this today, in fact I'll start this morning, I'll be releasing the book *Stretching & Flexibility* in both a PDF version, and DRM-Free by the way. All of our products are DRM-Free. We don't want people to copy them to their friends but, if they do, we take the Bill Reilly position: we regard it as free advertising.

Our Mastery programs, they're ten dollars; Master the Squat, Master the Pancake, they're also DRM-Free. You can download them in HD, you can download them in Standard Definition for your phones. So, you've got the information with you forever, but the books are gonna be released in PDF version and, this is really exciting, *Print on Demand* version.

If you order it from Amazon, it'll take about a month, I think, for them all to be up there, maybe six weeks, but if you order them then it'll be second edition (S&F) or fifth edition (ONBP) respectively, so you'll know which edition they are.

In the meantime you could do a lot worse than spending a couple of hours on my Youtube channel, because firstly there's about a hundred and fifteen videos there, and they're all free. Some of them are twenty minutes long too, by the way, and a lot more detail than most of the mobility and stretching videos that you'll see. Then there are my Vimeo on Demand channel, which is my latest baby, and honestly, Vimeo on Demand is a great platform for us.

So, look, I'm sorry I hogged the conversation, hideously, I know...

Interviewer 1: [laughter]

Respondent: ...but there's so much that I want to share with you guys and...

Interviewer 1: I've loved it!

Interviewer 2: We're very grateful.

Respondent: ...we're not about the money. We want to get the information out there. What we charge on our Vimeo channel is just enough to keep the whole enterprise going. It'll never make me rich, and my girlfriend's always saying "Get off the computer for God's sake, let's go and do something".

Interviewer 1: Kit, that was amazing. I really enjoyed that conversation. I feel like it could go on. I'm at a standing desk, though, so I've been standing still for, like, an hour and twenty minutes...

Respondent: [laughter] That's excellent, good

Interviewer 1: ...I need to do some squats or something.

We'll definitely bring you back on the show again.

To recap, you can find Kit on Youtube.  
His website kitlaughlin, which is K I T L A U G H L I N dot COM, and then, yeah, he's on Vimeo,  
Stretch Therapy, I believe, on Facebook, you can find him there.

Yeah, definitely check out his site, like I said, I'll post show notes so you can find out upcoming workshops and stuff like that.

Huge honour having you here Kit, we'll definitely bring you on again.

Respondent: A sincere pleasure.

Interviewer 1: I'm excited to meet you at some point in the future, as is Sean, and yeah, thanks again.

Respondent: I hope so, I hope we can. We can do some fun things together, I think. Thanks so much. Let me respond to your closing.

Thank you so much, seriously, for giving me the opportunity to talk to your audience indirectly, and to talk to you two directly. I really would like to meet up with you and to work with you in the future. I know it's conventional to say at the end of situations like this, but I mean it. Whatever little things I can help you with or show you, I will be delighted to do that. That's what we do. That's our program.

We're all gonna be dead soon, let's face it. OK, sooner for me probably, than you two, but it's gonna happen to all of us, so why not... My philosophy, I'll sum it up, it's very brief, "Do some good, have some fun, make some money".

Interviewer 1: Yeah. [laughter] Words to live by folks. Let's end it on that note.

“Do some good, have some fun, make some money!”

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Also if you enjoyed this show and share it on Facebook or Twitter, whether that’s to all your friends, or just one, email me a screen shot of that and I’ll send you a PDF of my ten must have books that took my training and movement to the next level.

If you have any suggestions for guests you’d like to have on the show, be sure to email me them as well.

Thanks so much for listening. I really appreciate the support. I hope you found something useful. I’ll see you next week.

[End of recorded material]