



Flex Diet Podcast Learn Something New

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SPEAKERS

Michael Nelson



Michael Nelson 00:00

There's Dr. Mike T. Nelson here, back again with another flex diet podcast. And today is just me again, as always, this is brought to you by the flex diet certification, go to flexdiet.com or flxdt.com get on the waitlist to be notified the next time that it opens, which is going to be around mid April, if you're listening to this, once this podcast comes out, we're gonna have lots of free content for you on the daily newsletter. They're also all things about how to increase lean muscle mass performance, and do it without destroying your health in the process. So today, the topic is a difference between exercise versus recreation. And why I think recreation and learning a new skill is something you shouldn't do, especially as you're getting older. So one of the concepts I talked about in the flex diet cert under the exercise intervention is a difference of what I feel is between exercise versus recreation. Exercise, to me is something that you have an explicit goal that can be easily measured. Most of those are usually performance goals, or things that are a little bit harder to measure, like adding lean body mass, adding muscle, and you're going to track things in the process, you will be tracking your volume, once you did for exercises, obviously nutrition is a big component of that whether using the habit based items as I teach in the flex diet cert or maybe more advanced macro based learning, both of those can work just depends upon what you were doing, where you're at on your nutritional journey. But you'll have very much set things that you're going to measure, and you're going to track them with some detail. Recreation, on the other hand, I think is movement that's just fun, doesn't necessarily have to be tracked. Right. So I get a little nervous when I look at a client's training. And the only thing I see is training for one to two hours doing

weights, maybe some metcon stuff, six days out of the week. And unless you're trying to be a more high end, professional athlete, if you enjoy doing training, that's perfectly fine. But I think learning new skills should also take priority in their learning new skills is more of a form of recreation, especially as you get older, it's just human tendency to not want to do things that you suck at. And by also definition of learning something new, you haven't done it much, or at all, you're going to suck at your first couple reps. And that's okay. That's part of the learning process. And so even clients that I teach in person, which is not that much now, as most of my work is online, but even in person, they always feel bad when they're learning a new lifts, say a deadlift that their form isn't perfect, quote unquote, well, if they've never done a deadlift before, your first few reps are gonna suck with that you just haven't done it. Right, same idea with learning a new skill. And as I said, as we get older, it's easier and easier to kind of fall into the habit of doing similar things all the time. So for some people, this may be adding variety to their gym lifts. This may be adding something as simple as fat grips to some of their training, using the newfangled machine in the gym. I think all of that can be useful if it fits in with your goals. I would argue, of going beyond that and trying to learn skills where you have to be a little bit more athletic. And by athletic I'm thinking about coordination of hands, eyes head. Think of the sensory information that comes in, right visual information. vestibular input from the inner ear, right, aka, quote unquote balance, even though balance is a lot more complicated than that. proprioception is a fancy word for where your limbs are in space. So if you have both arms out, you can close your eyes and still touch your nose and not poke your eyeball out. Because your joints are giving your brain information where your limbs are in space, even with your head not moving and your eyes closed. Recreation is a combination of all of those movements. I especially like things where there's a ball or an object involved where you have to interact, let's say, tennis, baseball, even throwing and catching a ball just Ultimate Frisbee, etc. Most winters are though I haven't the past couple of winters I'll play broomball and broomball. Just think of that as like poor man's hockey, where we put on hockey equipment and run around on frozen lakes, or frozen rinks with special shoes, no skates, and we use plastic brooms and hit a ball around instead of sticks with a puck. Some similar idea though, I'm also a big fan of moving your body through space. So this can be used in other implements like skateboard, longboard downhill board, road biking, I'm a little bit bigger fan of mountain biking, myself, obstacles, trails being outside. As people know, I'm a huge fan of kiteboarding, right, so attach yourself to a big upside down parachute looking thing and let that pull you across the water. So now with that, I am in control of the power source and have to coordinate everything at the same time. If you're learning and you're new to that sport, or any sport, especially things like kiteboarding, that can come with high risk, because the wind can pick you up and throw you around. Take a lesson, it is well worth your time. And if I stay with the example of kiteboarding. Just think about all the coordination things that your brain has to execute, especially when you're learning, you've got the hand position of

where I move the bar. Right, so the bar is attached to these 400 foot lines that are attached to the kite, the kite looks more like an upside down parachute. And by moving the bar, this moves the kite through the air. And as I move the kite through the air, not only does that change the position of how the kite is capturing the wind, I am now actually creating something called apparent wind. I'm moving the kite through to create more power, which is why once you get going in and you're writing on the board, you can then sometimes do what they call park the kite, I can leave the kite in the same position because of the speed is forcing air over the kite. Right just like an airplane wing is sort of as you go faster, it's generating more lift because of the speed that you're moving through the air. So the nice part about kiteboarding is when you're learning, you get automatic feedback, right, and you can one watch the kite. So you can use your eyes for visual feedback. And you can try to coordinate with that how that feels through the bar. As you get better, you'll be able to have a really good idea of where the kite is, without watching it. You have lots of lots of reps. So now your brain has mapped literally that kite at the end of those lines to your hands. And you can feel where it is in space. At the example I use of this, if you've ever driven in a little bit vehicle that sits up higher, and you dock when you go into a parking ramp. ducking inside a car isn't going to do anything. But if your body has mapped that car, the appropriate ception it thinks that you're getting close to it right. So it's kind of reflexes to try to move out of the way. And so anything that we're holding on to and if you're a hockey player, you have a very good idea of how the stick is an extension of your body, you can feel where the puck is and how to move it around. So same idea. With kiteboarding again or with learning any new skill, take your pick juggling tennis, whatever, most of the time, you're going to have visual feedback immediately of are you going in the correct direction or not. The good part about that is that while it can be very frustrating, having that feedback right away is what you need when you are learning like sports and things that would be really hard to learn is if that is very much delayed and not as immediate. Over costs are much higher. So I think learning a new skill involving a ball or object or moving yourself through space, especially like whiteboarding where you're holding on to the power source at the same time. The amount of I guess I'll use the word neural plasticity. That's a whole different topic. The amount of new things your brain is trying to map is very high. And as we get older, we tend to Not to do those things right. And we know for healthy aging, using our brain is going to be very key. And our brain designs a ton of real estate to coordinating movement. So my argument here is take up some recreational sport, learn something that is new to you. And you can do this by even just learning a new component of an existing sport. So again, if I'm using the kiteboarding example, I'm learning to kite board now on a surfboard, a surfboard is completely different than my normal kiteboard. The normal kite board looks more like a wakeboard, where my feet are solid in bindings, I can angle the board pretty hard to create a fair amount of force because my feet are set in space. On a surfboard, it's exactly how it sounds, I can move my feet more around on the deck of the surfboard. Now, they're

not necessarily fixed in space. So I'm not using straps. And the surfboard is also what they call a directional, meaning it only goes one direction, the cardboard I ride is symmetrical. So I can ride either direction, because it doesn't matter what is the front part of the board. On a surfboard, only the nose is the front part. So when I change direction, so I'm coming in to my left, and I want to leave going to my right to keep it simple. And a general kiteboard if it's symmetric, I just changed what is going to be facing front, no big deal. On a surfboard, it's directional. So now I have to move my feet around on the board to keep the nose going in that direction. So again, now I'm having to coordinate movement of the kite movement of the board movement of my feet on the deck, as all of this is happening at the same time. And to add complexity to it. If I go too slow, because the surfboard I have is a moderate size, the board's gonna sink, or if I step off the midline wrong, especially if I don't have much power, the board is gonna tilt and off I go. So last time I went out, I literally spent a whole day trying to just do one fugly looking transition, right. And in all honesty, it wasn't super fun. It was hard, and it was pretty frustrating. But those are kind of hallmarks of neural plasticity, where you have to make mistakes in order for your brain to figure out what is better. So as weird as it sounds, for every transition that I didn't make, I'm getting feedback on, you know, what was better, what wasn't, oh, wow, I made it three quarters of the way into the turn. So that was better. Oops, I didn't go fast enough, I sunk. Oops, I went a little bit too fast. I powered up the kite and it just picked me up right off the board. It's I'm getting constant feedback all the time. As much as people don't like making errors. Dr. Andrew Huberman has talked about this to definitely recommend his podcasts and all of his stuff. Making errors are part of what drives neural plasticity. So as we get older, we want to make smaller and smaller errors. And we have to do things in a little bit more incremental progress. If you're young, you can probably make bigger gains in learning something new, by making bigger mistakes and taking bigger leaps. As you get older, you need to take a little bit smaller kind of pieces of the elephant as you're eating it. So what I'm working on now, when I go back to South Padre, again, for kiteboarding is riding the board in just different foot positions. First, that these are the positions I'll need to be in as I'm executing the turn. Once I'm good at that, then I will try to link them through a turn. And my first goal is just to make it through the turn, I don't even care what it looks like. I don't care how slow or how fast I go or how pretty it looks. That's the first goal. After I'm able to execute that going both directions, then I can worry about trying to make it pretty, trying to go a little bit faster, get a little bit more speed going into it a little bit more speed coming out, I can now work on trying to modify that motor task. So I would argue that learning something new, especially a sports skill, to integrate all those parts of your brain that are probably not used to that degree on a daily basis is going to be good for mental health, brain function, especially as you age. And when you master those things, even if it's something very small. You have a sense of accomplishment and the hope process should be relatively fun. Even though certain parts of it are going to be frustrating that frustration is actually needed to move the changes in

your brain what's called neural plasticity. So don't get too negative or down on it, by definition, you're doing something new, and you haven't done it before. So you are going to suck, and that's okay. So I would encourage you to pick up something and start sucking and getting better at it. And you will be able to add more movement, more variety novel things via recreation, in addition to your normal fitness and exercise plans. So if you want to know more about exercise versus recreation, check out the flex diet certification, go to flex diet, calm, FL dxdt.com. And you'll be able to hop on the waitlist there. And I will be sending you daily information on how to increase muscle mass performance, all without sacrificing your health. And in keeping with the theme of this podcast, I am now headed out to do some snowboarding. And I've been snowboarding since 1992. But this will be my first runs on my new snowboard, which I'm super excited. And again, keeping with the theme, it's new. So it's probably going to be quite different than what I've had before. The first couple of days I expect are going to be harder but there's definitely going to be fun and I'm looking forward to figuring it out. So thank you so much. Appreciate you listening, take care. Talk to you soon.