

**EPISODE 306****[INTRODUCTION]**

**[00:00:19] AVH:** Hey everybody, welcome to Paleo Magazine Radio. I'm your host Ashleigh VanHouten and I'm happy that you're here with me again today. I hope you're doing great as we're listening to this. It's going to be March something. So, the end of winter is in sight which always makes me happy and there's lots of cool stuff coming up in the spring, in the summer that I'm excited about, not least of which is Paleo f(x) which happens at the end of April and I will be attending again this year. I actually skipped it last year because I've been a bunch of years and I love it, it's so much fun I kind of wanted to try other shows last year so I ended up going to KetoCon in Austin instead.

But I'm back at Paleo f(x) this year. I'm not 100% sure about my involvement yet, I'm may be moderating some panels. I may just be hanging out and saying hi to people and eating snacks, probably record a couple of podcasts. Whatever I do, it's going to be fun. The event is such a great time always.

Just bring together a ton of excited, interesting people who like to learn and share and I know I've got some of my friends coming with me. I'm going to have Beth Lipton, one of your favorite Paleo Magazine Radio co-hosts who is going to be there hanging out. She's also a recipe contributor to *Paleo Magazine*.

We've got my favorite and my only doctor, Dr. Gabrielle Lyon who is going to be there speaking at the show again, she's fantastic. You know, all the usual suspects. So, I'm really looking forward to it. I hope that you come and if you do, if you see me, say hi and maybe we can do some pushups together or something. Eat some beef jerky, I don't know, whatever nerds get up to at Paleo f(x). Yeah, that's coming up.

And this show, this episode is a short one, I'm going to read an article that I think is actually a really good relevant one and a great way to maybe start off your week.

But before we do that, the show is brought to you by Me, this time, okay? Because I am the biggest supporter of this podcast. Because I'm the host and if I didn't support it, then who would? Just a reminder, that I'm doing a lot of other things outside of the podcast. I write for *Paleo Magazine*. I've done that for years and I love it. I also host a series of health and wellness networking events called Human Potential Parties, all over North America and you can find out more about that on my website, [ashleighvanhouten.com](http://ashleighvanhouten.com).

I've been slowing down a little bit on those events, I've done three of them last year and I'm hoping to have another one maybe in New York this summer but I've got a couple of other things on the go so – but those parties are always super fun, really great gathering, I can talk about that a little bit more maybe in a future episode.

I also have a free newsletter for you every Monday morning if you go to my website again and put your email address. And every Monday, I send you sort of a download about what's coming up in terms of events, recommended reading, things that I've been checking out that I really like whether it's articles or podcasts or just other people putting out great information, recipes, workouts, all kinds of fun stuff in that newsletter every week. And it's one of my favorite things to do every week is just kind of put together a bunch of stuff and I'm excited about and share it with you guys.

Check that out if you'd like to on my website. That's my shameless plug for the day, this one is going to be a quick episode but I think a useful one. The article that you can find online at [paleomagazine.com](http://paleomagazine.com) as well as a ton of other exclusive content that you can't get in the magazine. This one is from a friend of mine, Ryan Munsey. He's actually been on my podcast before and I've been on his actually, now that I think about it.

He's a fantastic super smart guy, he's the author of a book called *F\*ck Your Feelings*. I would say the word but I don't know if you're listening to this in the car with some young kids so I'm trying to be good.

But he is a co-founder and podcast host at the Better Human Project. He's a high-performance consultant, writer and speaker. He's worked as a fitness model, nutritionist, gym owner, corporate wellness consultant, this guy has kind of done it all. His clients include Olympic athletes,

special forces operators, entrepreneurs, C level executives around the world. But he's just a great guy. He's just a great, smart guy that's always trying to learn and share what he's learning with the rest of us.

That's what I appreciate about him. He wrote this article for *Paleo Magazine*, it's called *5 Ancestral Habits to Help You Master Your Mind*. I mean, who couldn't use this information, right? I think that it's useful to connect the fact that our lifestyle habits reflect our mental health and vice versa, right? It's not just about eating the best food or doing the best workouts. It's about mental health and how all of these things are connected.

Without further ado, here is his awesome article that's going to teach us how to get our minds right. *5 Ancestral Habits to Help You Master Your Mind*.

[ARTICLE]

**[0:04:57.6] AVH:** The rapid progress of our modern world has resulted in an environment that our biology has yet to fully catch up to. While it's certainly true that some adaptations have been able to occur for some folks (hello dairy!), the fact is, our bodies don't operate optimally with little movement, constant eating, never-ending daylight, and a nervous system that's constantly stuck in the "on" position. These five habits from our past can help you achieve more, be happier, and optimize your health.

Number one. Move to Improve Your Mental State. Our physiology dictates our mental states, or feelings, which drive as many as 95 percent of our decisions. Neuroscience defines feelings as mental experiences of physiological states. Armed with this information, we can change our mental experiences in any moment by altering our physiology. For examples, look no further than altering your posture (stop hunching over in depressed, submissive shapes), working out, or simply walking more.

Yet we don't move as much as our ancestors, who averaged 5 to 10 miles of walking, the equivalent of 90 to 110 minutes, every day. Today, the Mayo Clinic defines "sufficiently active" as only achieving 150 minutes 2.5 hours of activity per week. Only 46.5 percent of Americans reach that very threshold, in fact most Americans average 7.7 hours sitting per day. Our ancestors came

close to our weekly movement totals daily, making our modern standard for “healthy living” four to five times lower than our biology is used to. No wonder we’re inflamed, obese, sick, and unhappy.

What can we do to feel better and happier? At the risk of oversimplification, we can move more. We can strive to make daily movement a priority and incorporate as many movement practices into our routines as possible. Start or end your day with a walk. Walk or bike instead of driving. When you do drive, park as far away as possible. Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator. Lift weights, practice yoga, surf, swim, paddle, wrestle, dance. The more variety in our movements, the better. We know these actions are all important for longevity, but they’re also good for improved happiness and decision-making.

**[0:07:06.5] AVH:** Number two, Lighten Your Mood and Motivation by Maxing the Chemicals in Your Head. The sedentary, artificial world that we have created for ourselves—air conditioning, fake light, institutionalized workplaces, buildings, etc.—is wreaking havoc on our primitive biology. To balance this out, let’s talk about the chemicals in our heads. Not the ones we hate Monsanto for spraying on our foods, but two of the neurotransmitters that serve as the language of our nervous system: dopamine and serotonin.

Dopamine and serotonin. Dopamine was once thought to be our brain’s reward over play button. New research shows that dopamine is involved on the front end of actions, fueling our ability to begin tests and strengthening the perseverance necessary to see them to completion. For high performance, you want to boost your dopamine.

Serotonin, another well-known neurotransmitter is associated with positive moods, happiness and an overall sense of wellbeing. Not surprisingly, research has shown that a lack of sunlight and a lack of movement have both been linked to reduced serotonin levels.

To increase your motivation, drive mood and overall sense of wellbeing, naturally boost your neurotransmitters through morning sun exposure especially within one hour of sunrise.

Your eyes have receptors that when exposed to morning sunlight top off both your dopamine and serotonin levels. This effects benefits you later too when serotonin is released in the

evening after a few hours without blue light to trigger melatonin production and initiate the sleep cascade.

Want to feel good and stay motivated to start tasks? Get outside, touch the ground and trees with bare skin, expose your skin and lens free eyes to the sunlight. Do it for the chemicals in your head and to feel happiness.

**[0:08:40.5]** Number three, Manage Biology Designed to Store Fat with Intermittent Fasting. As recently as a 100 years ago humans did not have the easy food availability that we enjoy today. It was unheard of for a great-grandparents to walk across the street to a grocery store, gas station or fast food restaurant. Yet today more than half of us live within a 10 minute walk of readily accessible foods and food like products. With smart phones, we don't even have to leave our couch to have food or groceries delivered to us.

Thanks to thousands of years to food and security, our brains and bodies are biologically designed to hoard. We are wired for times of feast or famine. We are driven to eat food until there is no food left or we can't stomach anymore. We're also biologically designed to store fat as fuel for later use during those times of lean resources that almost never come today. For our ancestors, these instincts didn't cost the problems we experienced because they lack consistent access to food and expended a great deal of energy to acquire that next meal.

Today, we can impose our own time of lean resources with intermittent fasting, going for 16 to 20 hours daily for several times a week without food. We can utilize time restricted feeding windows, choose high quality foods and generally seek to work with our biology rather than cave into societal norms and convenience.

**[0:09:54.9]** Number four, Help Your Eyes and Get Better Sleep by Adjusting Your Screens. We average 10 hours of screen time every single day and few would predict this trend as ever likely to downshift. Our eyes are not accustomed to this much exposure to blue light at a constant focal distance. They're adapted to scanning the horizon for threats, then refocusing on objects in our immediate path, and constantly shifting back and forth.

Staring at intense light at a fixed focal distance for long periods is an unnatural thing in itself, but it's much worse when we examine what else these screens are doing. Many of us have heard of the harmful effects of blue light, but another issue is the flicker rate that prevents our eyes from blinking as much as they should, causing eye strain and dry eyes. Another consideration is that glossy screens create reflections that force our eyes to focus through something called double images. Matte screens reduce this phenomenon, but they're found only on select e-readers. If you're reading this on a screen right now, relax your eyes and look for your own reflection in your screen. That is what I am doing by the way. That's the double image that your eyes are subconsciously working to ignore at all times.

As for the high output of blue light, experiencing light in this range of the visible spectrum after dark tells our brains it's still daytime. It disrupts the normal release of serotonin and production of melatonin, disturbing sleep—both in quality and quantity. We can mitigate this effect with the use of blue-blocker glasses or apps to reduce white and blue light in our screens.

The obvious solution to this problem is to limit screen time, especially for children, and especially after dark. This includes exposure to phones, computers, and televisions. Set an upper limit for daily screen time along with a daily cut-off time for yourself and/or your kids.

When using screens for extended periods, set a timer and use the 20-20-20 Rule. Every 20 minutes, stand up and look 20 yards away for 20 seconds. While standing, flex your glutes as hard as you can and stretch your arms out with palms up for an extra postural reset.

**[0:11:49.1]** All right, number five, Avoid Information Overload by Managing Your Tech. A 2007 study found that we are exposed to the equivalent of 174 85-page newspapers' worth of information each day, holy molly. That was in 2007, before Facebook took over the world, before Instagram, Snapchat, streaming TV, and all the other distractions that dominate our lives today.

We're on information overload, and this constant bombardment of neurotransmitters on our nerve cells can lead to something scientists call "excitotoxicity." Ooh that's a tough one. Okay. Think of it like type 2 diabetes for the brain. Just as a lifetime of sugar overconsumption desensitizes insulin receptors and exhausts the pancreas, overstimulation of excitatory neurotransmitters like glutamates leads to mental exhaustion.

To protect ourselves rather, we can audit our relationship with technology and incoming information. For example, check email only at certain times of the day, turn off notifications on your computers and phone, and don't answer incoming phone calls unless they are scheduled or important. Put your devices on airplane mode for set periods of the day like early morning and evenings before bed and sleep with your phone in airplane mode with wi-fi turned off.

You can also employ digital detoxes on a weekly basis, perhaps every Saturday or Sunday, while simultaneously making those relationship or family-focused days.

This can also be combated by seeking to spend more time in parasympathetic, or "rest and digest," states with activities like a sauna, ditch your phone obviously, yoga, meditation, walking in nature, and breath work. The point is to make sure we use technology, rather than letting it to use us. These practices help to limit distractions and boost productivity.

**[0:13:30.3]** Like most Paleo enthusiasts, Ryan Munsey is not calling for an end to technology or evolution but rather an awareness of how our environment and habits affect our health, partnered with an intentionality to activate the innate health-producing mechanisms within our biology.

And that's it. That is the fantastic article from author Ryan Munsey that I am going to take with me throughout the rest of this week just to be mindful, just to pay attention to the little things. I am going to get off the screen right now and go look out at the horizon for a minute, have some deep thoughts. I hope you do too. I hope you enjoyed this quick episode and I hope that you come back next week. I hope you leave our next review for me on Apply Podcast so we can keep this thing running.

If you ever have any recommendations or thoughts or suggestions or feedback for the podcast, please let me know. You can reach out to me on Instagram @themuslemaven or you can send me an email at [ashleigh@paleomagazine.com](mailto:ashleigh@paleomagazine.com). I'd love to hear from you and I hope you have a fantastic week. Thanks for listening.

[OUTRO]

**[0:14:32.8] AV:** The intro music for Paleo Magazine Radio is a song called Stronger performed by Alter Ego and I hope you love it.

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