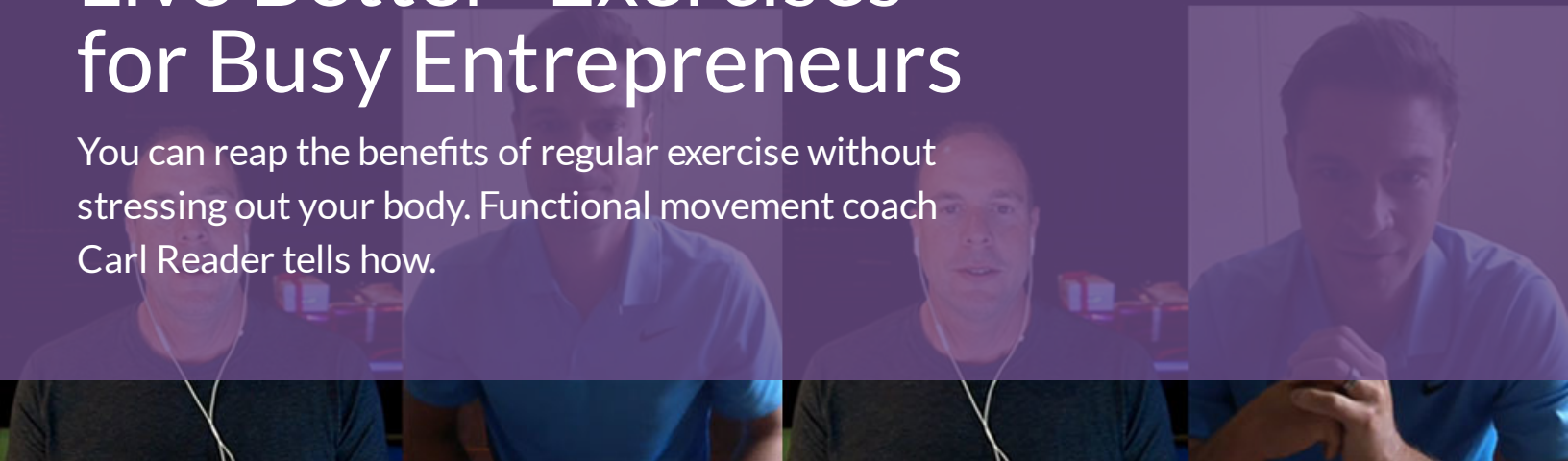




# Essential “Move Less, Live Better” Exercises for Busy Entrepreneurs



You can reap the benefits of regular exercise without stressing out your body. Functional movement coach Carl Reader tells how.





James Schramko and Carl Reader

**James:** James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 792. Today, we're going to be talking about movement of your body, which is, I guess, a slightly side topic to the core of the SuperFastBusiness podcast. But it's so important, as I've discovered, as I age, and [we have had guests coming on the show talking about these things](#). And I've had tremendous feedback in the past about these types of topics, because we can't escape it. It's going to get us one way or the other, this whole health thing.

And I fully think around about a quarter of the conversations and things I'm talking to students about would relate to personal optimization, which obviously a big part of that is you; like the hardware that your brain is contained in is part of the package that drives your business. You get the hardware, the software, and your business will often be a reflection of your wellbeing.

So today, I want to bring on a special guest. His name is Carl Reader. He is a functional movement coach. Welcome, Carl.

**Carl:** Thank you, James. Thanks for having me.

**James:** Now, you reached out to me, because you've listened to a few other episodes we've done in relation to health. And you thought that what you teach is a good fit for our audience here at SuperFastBusiness. And I've got to say a couple of the key topics you suggested hit my sweet spot. I don't know if you've listened to the episodes where you've heard me talk about my own situation, where I've had this sort of onset of osteoarthritis. I've pretty much got the trifecta of things you talked about, which was neck pain, back pain, joint pain.

We've gone deep with a few guests before on [topics relating to doing DNA samples](#), we've done gluten fasts, we've done blood tests, we've done core exercises; I've had a lot of help from my community with everything from inflatable balls through to exercises I can do to strengthen my muscles. And I'm happy to say I've got way better mobility, way less inflammation. I'm in so much better shape because of our community who are so generous in sharing.

And you've stepped up to the plate. And in fact, I think you've been helping or working with some of the people in our community already. So why don't you just let us know first, how you got here in terms of being on this show and the lead up to it, and then a little bit of a sample of what you've been working in your field to give us a feel for what your topic expertise is, Carl?

### **The lead up to guesting on SFB**

**Carl:** Yeah, so I started as an exercise physiologist, and I've been helping patients the last 20 years working with their back, knee, shoulder pains. And I realized early on in my career that a lot of the exercises weren't working for a lot of people. So later I went on a journey of discovering that, what are the body's optimal movements. And so I've been working a lot with functional movements.

So basically, understanding what the body's natural movements are that it uses for everyday life movements like pushing, pulling, squatting, and looking at the optimal techniques to do those. And as I started introducing those optimal techniques to my patients, we started getting great results, and my own body as well.



And then I reached out to communities and other people and started sharing my knowledge and insights into saying, if we just move the body correctly, it almost automatically starts to fix itself. And so I wasn't taking any credit for that. But just saying, let's just give it the basics.

It's kind of like [the sleep topic](#). If you just give your body that adequate sweet sleep, you know, you're not in control of what's happening at two o'clock in the morning. Your body's doing it automatically. And so when you give the body its intended movements, natural movements, functional movements done correctly, you get tremendous results.

### **A journey of awareness**

**James:** So it sounds like you're setting train tracks for your body to roll along in a uniform way each time and get a consistent result. When I think back about my office job period, which was most mostly between 1991 and 2008, I spent a lot of time in the office. And I reckon, especially when I was building my own online business, I spent a heck of a lot of time at the computer, and I know I have bad posture, and I put a lot of load on my neck.

And also, I'm conscious that I carry, especially back then, I had an enormous amount of pressure and stress. I had a stressful job. I lived in an expensive city, have a lot of kids, had bills to pay; I had expectations from everyone around me, the manufacturer, the team, myself, my family, my parents; I really felt like everything just literally rested - it was pushing on my neck.

And I was not shocked to discover that I'd started forming osteophytes on my vertebrae or whatever, where they're sort of trying to reduce the movement to save my body from pinching nerves and so forth. So it was a big wake up call when a few years ago, I could hardly even turn my neck. And I think, maybe I just pushed myself too far, like physically, and I was bombarding my body with gluten, which it doesn't like, apparently.

I was inflaming myself and I got so neutralized to that, that I just thought that was normal, that this gassy, bloated, burning pain, I mean, literally, if I would eat a piece of sourdough now, I would get this nuclear ball of fire in my neck, and my elbows, and my wrists, and my knees. So this journey of awareness of myself, I mean, the fact that I'm so old now and just discovering some of this, if we can get to someone a bit earlier, that would be my intention.

**Carl:** Absolutely.

**James:** So I want you to speak directly to someone who is most likely putting in a pretty solid work week, almost certainly spending a lot of time at the computer, especially this year, in a confined space or similar space at all times, and may even have restrictions on what sort of exercise they can do. And I also would love it if you could speak to the type of exercises we shouldn't do, because some of those might surprise our listeners, especially one you mentioned to me before, I thought it was very interesting.

And as a somewhat amateur surfer, I can truly relate to trying to find that balance between progression and then getting sidelined when you tear something, break something, twist something, hurt something, damage something; it can really be painful, being on the sidelines, having to wait it out until your body gets stronger and recovers again. And you know, now I've learned basic things, like apparently, you're not supposed to shuffle heavy shopping bags with your foot sideways, you know, to get them out of the doorway and those sort of things.

Time for you to unload, Carl, give us your best shots.

## Training smarter, not harder

**Carl:** Well, I think for the younger guys and the older guys, it's important not to follow too many of the fads. There's a lot of fads out there and, you know, you then look at sort of the magazines, Men's Fitness, Men's Health, and they sort of want to be like that, and they get caught up that that's the ideal way of training.



And a lot of what I prescribe and what I do, that's so little, and I think it's like, you've got that book, [Work Less, Make More](#), and it's the same, train smarter not harder. And I'm getting across to younger guys, it's not about how hard you work. You've got to lose this principle of, you've got to punish your body to get results. And just keying in and dialing in the right exercises, you know, going into your own pace each at different base levels.

Some guys, you know, work on their bell curve, some guys are genetically adapt for high-level intensity stuff. High-intensity training has become quite a buzzword now. But for someone who's sitting in the office nine to 10 hours a day, just going for a walk is high intensity. So you don't need to go and smash, like, heavy weights, heavy CrossFit sessions.

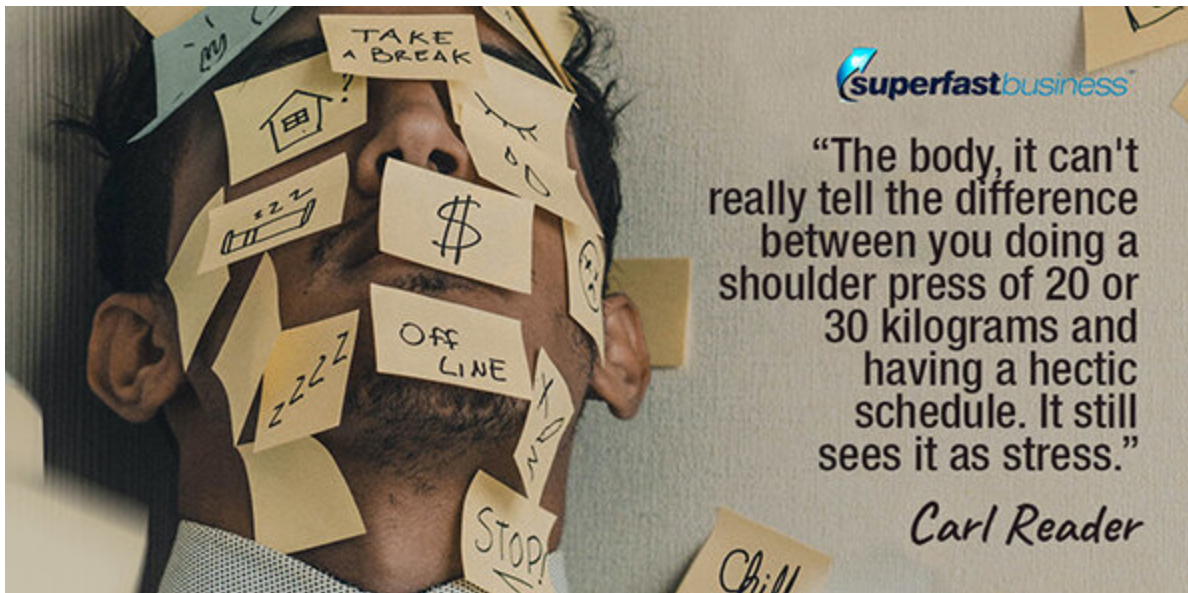
What is quite scary, to be honest, and it's not a scare tactic, is that we've seen, and it's across the board is, we've seen quite a lot of increase in cancers in younger people, and it's because they're running four or five marathons a month. They're doing high-fitness training, and they're pushing themselves too far.

And what's important for young guys especially, and everybody needs to remember is that, when you're doing heavy exercise, it's actually quite an inflammatory event, and it can trigger off a lot of things in the DNA that we're still trying to understand at the moment. So just by being wise about your exercise is so important.

**James:** You know, Carl, I'd never seen a happy jogger, ever. When I'm walking along the beach with my surfboard, I see joggers in the sand. I see them on the Corso, I see them on the street, and they always look stressed. They look like they're a heart attack waiting to happen, and I just think, that can't be right. It just doesn't seem right.

And I'm sure some people's bodies are designed for that, but to speak to your example of doing less, I found just a simple change of pulling back on how much I eat, and especially pulling back a bit on the carbs, because I really loved my carbs. Especially when I found gluten-free, acceptable alternatives for things like bread and pasta, etc. through the help of a friend of mine, Tamas. I pulled back on the carbs a bit; I just got that appetite down a bit and I lost about, I'm going to say, five or six kilograms in the last few months, very slowly.

I can feel the weight lifting off my joints. I can feel that spring in my step. And this is from doing absolutely less. I didn't add anything. I didn't change anything with my exercise regime. I simply just consumed a little bit less of particular food groups, and started to trim back. But I feel like it's just lifting me off. It's like gravity doesn't hurt me as much as before.



“The body, it can't really tell the difference between you doing a shoulder press of 20 or 30 kilograms and having a hectic schedule. It still sees it as stress.”

*Carl Reader*

**Carl:** Fantastic. You know, the body, it can't really tell the difference between you doing a shoulder press of 20 or 30 kilograms and having a hectic schedule. It still sees it as stress, you know? And I think it's so important for entrepreneurs who are going through, if they're under a lot of pressure, even the fact that they're busy, is that...

**James:** Or anyone living in 2020. Like, pretty much the whole of society.

**Carl:** 2020, exactly. You know, like I said to a CEO the other day, You're so stressed. And now you want to go do 150 bench presses. You know, you don't need to do that. And it's the psychology that, as you said, we've got to punish ourselves. We've got to get out that mindset. It's a mindset shift.

**James:** So we pull down the poster that says, some saying about pain leaving the body. I've seen it in the gym some time. You know, what is it? Success is pain leaving the body or something like that, no pain, no gain. So you're saying like, the big first step is, let's get some context to what high intensity actually means to us. So if we're pretty dormant, then a walk might be a fantastic improvement to our regime, rather than getting depressed because we're not going off and doing our high-intensity workout every day.

I do see some of my friends on Facebook with agonized faces, where they've just spat out some kind of peloton session; they're trying to be in the top one percent or something, you know. I know they're going to have a heart attack. It's just not even a question. It's like, when?



## How to change the mindset

And I wonder, how much do you think people are driven by external motivations versus internal programming from things that have happened to them during their life? Like, having worked with people, I find, sometimes you can't tell someone something and they get the message easily.

You have to really work at it, you know, through metaphors, or sometimes they just have to hit the edge and have a blowout to know. But the people I'm describing, they've even already been in the hospital bed before. It's not even their first time. And I just think, how? And I know some other guy, normally, he does millions of air miles a year, and he's overweight, and he looks unhealthy, and he will have a blowout, if he keeps up. So how do you help your customers, or I'm not sure what you call them; I'm sure you don't call them patients...

**Carl:** No, not anymore, no. Clients.

**James:** ...clients, how do you help them mentally deal with what has to change, to throw off these things that have been planted there, either whether it's internal or external?

**Carl:** Often, I don't want to be blunt with them, but I always say, you know, is this working for you? And they stop and they get so much revelation of like, no. You know, you've been doing the same thing over and over. And are you using weights? Are you improving your fitness? Yes, I am stronger. But how is your back? Well, I can't move. So you've got a stronger core, but you can't move because your back is so sore.

Okay, well, how is that working for you? And then they'll often say, "Well, Carl, there is no other way. If I don't do 1000 situps or 10 minutes of planking." And I said, "Well, that's where I want to help. There is another way. You can still get great results doing functional and doing less, you know, so you don't need to be lifting heavy weights unless it's to build strength gains, unless you want to be a bodybuilder, then that's another story."

## A matter of self-awareness?

**James:** Would you say most people are a little low on the self-awareness scale? I'll give an example. I saw a news article today. A lady, it was in some other country, went to the doctor to see them about a back pain she'd experienced from a few days ago. And then she delivered a baby in the bathroom while she was waiting between the blood tests. She was literally carrying a baby, let's say for nine months, because apparently the birth was a very happy, healthy baby; and didn't even realize, and only three days prior, felt a back pain.

Now I'd say that's very, very low on the self-awareness scale. Between that and someone who might be in your situation is like, obviously highly educated, practicing this for a living. You've read all the research, you've done lots of different tests and experiments, you've seen your clients over a period of time, it gives you a fantastic data set, a lot like I do with businesses, where do most people sit when you start dealing? Like for example, someone listening to this, where are they most likely to be?

**Carl:** That depends if they've got a background in sport, because that always helps the body. But I do find a lot of people don't have a good understanding or awareness of their movements. But also, they don't know that, if I can just backtrack a bit, one of the biggest problems, James, about 30 years ago or even a little bit longer, we were having a lot of back problems picking up stuff incorrectly, and they can use technique that was taught.

See, I've traveled, I've had the privilege of traveling the world, and wherever you go, and you ask people to pick something up, they're always going to go, 'Oh, yes.' That use your knees, keep your back straight. And that technique was an approach to stopping people hurting their backs temporarily, but what's happened is it's filtered through the whole movement industry, and it's caused the whole world to move dysfunctionally.

## Squats and stairs done right

So if you look, if you go to the gym now and you're to do squats, 10 out of 10 times, a personal trainer or physio will say, "Don't let your knees go past your toes and don't overcorrect your back." So we try to undo these bad habits. When I was in Australia and New Zealand, people are much more aware than they are in South Africa, and these people know what a hamstring or quads are. Where here, they still have no idea. It's sort of huge.

But when it comes to moving, I think people aren't aware that they're moving incorrectly. Like, a great example is climbing stairs. There's a correct way to climb stairs. And when people say what do you mean the correct way to climb stairs? You just climb stairs, and I'm going, 'No. You look at how you climb stairs, how much strain you put on your knees.'

If you look at how you squat, how much pressure you put through your back and your knees, it's because no one or not many people are teaching you how to move. And just last thing, I just said there was like, there are a lot of people teaching people how to exercise, but not how to function correctly.

**James:** Okay, well, I can't let you go too much further without asking you how you're supposed to climb stairs, because I got an almost two-year-old who's doing a lot of climbing stairs right now, and maybe it's a good time to get the good technique.

**Carl:** Yeah, well, the big thing is, it's important if you have a wide stair, a step or a tread, because if you've got a narrow tread, what happens is you just put the edge of your foot on the step and then the knee goes too far forward, and then you drive, you put pressure to the knee to lift your whole body right up. So essentially, your knee, instead of just being a hinge joint, becomes the power joint, which you don't want.

So you want to sense the non-aligned knees. The big takeaway here is, don't let your knee go too far forwards when you climb the stairs, and a lot of the guys will say, "Well, my knees are not in front of my toes," but you've got to get the knee, it must go halfway. So it mustn't go too far, if I use my finger here, it mustn't go too far forwards, so that you're pushing from your hip joint, which is your glutes as opposed to your knee joint.

**James:** I mean, this applies to me because when I go surfing from this place, there are stairs, and I'm carrying a surfboard, so it's heavy. At the moment, I'm conscious to try and carry it on each side to balance it out, because I know we're like completely asymmetrical, and it's very easy to favor one side. And some of the boards are a bit heavier than others; the longer they are and the bigger they are, the heavier they are. There is quite a lot of stairs at this place. And I'm wondering, would a simple thing be to just make sure you only take one step at a time instead of two?

**Carl:** That would help a lot in terms of pressure on the knee, but also on your lower back, because if you've got one side stronger, like you mentioned, you're going to find you have lower back issue.

**James:** I got plenty of lower back issues.

**Carl:** Especially when it's 90 degrees. If the stairs are quite high then you're going to struggle with your back there.

**James:** Yes.

**Carl:** And your technique is not right.

**James:** Honestly, I could talk endlessly about low back, especially neck and the extraordinary situation of living with permanent pain, and somehow accepting it and even turning it into an advantage; being extra sensitive to that, I think, sometimes can be an advantage. I'm super aware; like if I get stung by a blue bottle, I'm really able to manage the pain because it's like a new different type of pain, and I can actually enjoy having the relief from the usual pain, and I can revel in the intensity of it and the fact that it's going to go away. So it's a really interesting scenario.

So we've covered how to climb a stair correctly.

**Carl:** Can I jump in with the back pain?

**James:** Oh yeah, you've got to be careful.

**Carl:** Okay. So with squats, most people will say how really, really powerful squats are for lower back pain. And the reason for that, James, is because when you squat correctly, and I want to say correctly, you actually functionally unlock the lower back, and you distribute the weight to the hips and the joints, and you get all the powerful muscles that are there to actually support the lower back. Squats done incorrectly can be devastating on the back and on the knees.

**James:** I think I've probably done those before. Carl, would you make a video for us of how to do a correct squat that we can put on episode 792 at SuperFastBusiness.com with a link back to your website?

**Carl:** I have a video. I can send you the link, yes.

**James:** Oh that would be amazing.

**Carl:** And it looks nothing like a usual squat. And I think most people would be shocked to see the actual functional squat. It would be like, that looks nothing like I've been taught in gym. I'm saying, well that's the problem. That's why we struggle so much.

**James:** And what makes your technique right and the other people wrong? Is this one of those things that's going to spark a fitness debate in my blogosphere? Or is it just when people do the research, they're going to find there is a correct answer?

**Carl:** I think that in terms of research, we still try and do, you know, it's almost saying, like, if you're assuming that that technique is right, why should you research it? But because of my background working with back pain and also just the clinical side, we've really seen guys moving the knees back trying to stop over-arching in the back, stop compensating. So as a whole industry, we try to get back to what are the body's optimal techniques.

I feel like I've just been on that journey at a much younger age and trying to discover that. So it's more of my observations. I can't scientifically go and prove that that is the technique. But as you've seen the guys move and as we apply these techniques, it's going in that direction.

## **What about standup desks?**

**James:** Right. So we've got the squat, what are the other essential things we should be aware of that could build up our correct functional movement or protect us from a mistake that we're all making? And just while we're here, let me just throw this one in. What's your take on standup desks?

**Carl:** Sure. I think it's good to take a break from sitting. But some people who have got back pain, standing for a long time can also be quite painful in the back. I like the idea you should be moving, so even standing for three hours in a perfect posture is not good for you. So I would say it's a good break from the sitting technique if you want to get a standing desk, but the key is that people got to move. You can't stand perfectly for five hours.

**James:** And should you have one of those little mats underneath where you stand?

**Carl:** Mats in terms of like a wobble thing?

**James:** Some people have like little squishy mats or some kind of shock absorption or texture underneath, or is it okay to have some carpet or floorboards?

**Carl:** I would rather stand barefoot on the ground, but if they don't like to do it in the office... But sure, you can have a mat, but it's not really - I think the idea is to break the sitting posture.

**James:** I'd say an enormous portion of our audience would be barefoot when they're listening to this podcast, as I am now. I've still got zinc all over my face. I've been out for a surf. Barefoot, board shorts, and a T-shirt is the standard SuperFastBusiness attire, especially since it's summer here. I had a standup desk, and I used to put it up and down. It was electric.

I've come up with a new solution now, which is, because this house I bought has actually had a desk built in. So it's like, I gave my standup desk to a client. And you know, he came and picked it up. It was kind of sad for me to see it go. I was happy for him to retrieve it. So my main solution now is I just spend way less time at the computer. I would only spend five or six hours at a desk in a week.

So I'm probably spending less time in a week at a desk than most of my clients would spend in a day or even half a day, some of them; and tragically, a third of the day for the truly sad workaholics, but hopefully they went and listened to [Episode 791](#), and they're now out of that habit, because in that episode, we talked about how to stop doing most of the things you're doing and still make more money, which is really right up the alley of [Work Less Make More](#).

So back to the essential exercises that we can learn. We can go and watch the video that you're going to make for us or give to us, and start to power up a bit.

## The pros and cons of planking

**Carl:** So a very common exercise that's being used at the moment is the plank. We see that across the board. It will definitely strengthen your core, but it's not functional. And I think if you ask yourself, when would you ever do the plank? You'd probably never do this unless you're at the gym.

**James:** Not ever. Unless you were maybe on TikTok or something.

**Carl:** Exactly.

**James:** I'm not even doing a plank for exercise because it looks too difficult.

**Carl:** Yeah, and I was joking the other day and I was saying, have you noticed in the fitness industry, most of the exercises, like, they don't have human names? So you've got the plank, the bridge, the pole, the clam, the caterpillar, and I'm like, when are they going to start doing human movements?

**James:** What about yoga names? They're bizarre.

**Carl:** Even the yoga names. Like, you know, you've got...

**James:** Downward dog.

**Carl:** Exactly. But you know, the plank, what I'd replace it with is called, I don't like this, but I call it, because people can resonate with it, it's called the upright plank. So it would be as if, if you would take someone in a plank position, and then actually make them stand up, you'd be actually in a position if you are holding signs, if you're carrying, we've just gone through like a bit of a drought in Australia, but if it was carrying water and they were holding their water like this, and I said, "If I was to just stop you and take a photograph, you're in the perfect upright plank position." And that's a functional position as opposed to lying on your elbows, and you know, every single bone muscle is working.

## Related experiences from surfing

**James:** I do sometimes lie down on my surfboard on my elbows just to break it up a bit. But I'm usually sort of arching my neck or unlocking my vertebrae. Like today when the waves are pretty big and you get absolutely rumbled in the whitewater, it's kind of like this full body random message, I can actually feel my bones clicking when they're unlocking because they've just been moved around by the ocean.

It's so hard to explain, but I actually could go in feeling a little bit, sort of, you know, 50/50, and come out feeling invigorated, and you don't even have to pay for the message. Like, you literally just have to subject yourself to Mother Nature, and take a few beatings.

**Carl:** I think that with surfing, as I can relate to the surf as well is, what I like about that time is, you actually have to relax underwater. It's like you go explain to the beginning surfers, the more you try and fight the whitewater, and you actually subconsciously let go, and as you said, it's quite relaxing because you're not going to beat the ocean.

**James:** Well, we were taught this technique of imagining that you're in this giant spa bath and that it's so relaxing and enjoyable, you actually don't want it to stop. That's what David taught us in the [Maldives](#). So when we do get held under, which is inevitable if you go for a surf, it's like, 'Okay, this is happening now. I'm just going to take my time. I might open my eyes, might see where the sun is. And in a while, the waves will let me go, and I can just gently float to the surface.'

But if you panic, you burn a lot more oxygen, and it's very stressful. You can tell if you're edgy or panicking a bit, because you might start getting cramps and things. This is a really bad thing to have happen to you when you're out in the water. You don't want to get your leg lock up, and you want to be trying to paddle.

If you combine it with some other little random things like being flipped upside down, caught by seaweed, and having a cramp, and being out of breath, and getting stung by a blue bottle, then you've got, like, the absolute worst nightmare for a beginner, even if it's one-foot waves, and you're never going to do it again. It's a tough learning curve for a sport. And if you surf over there, you obviously sound like you're in South Africa, you've probably got other things to worry about too.

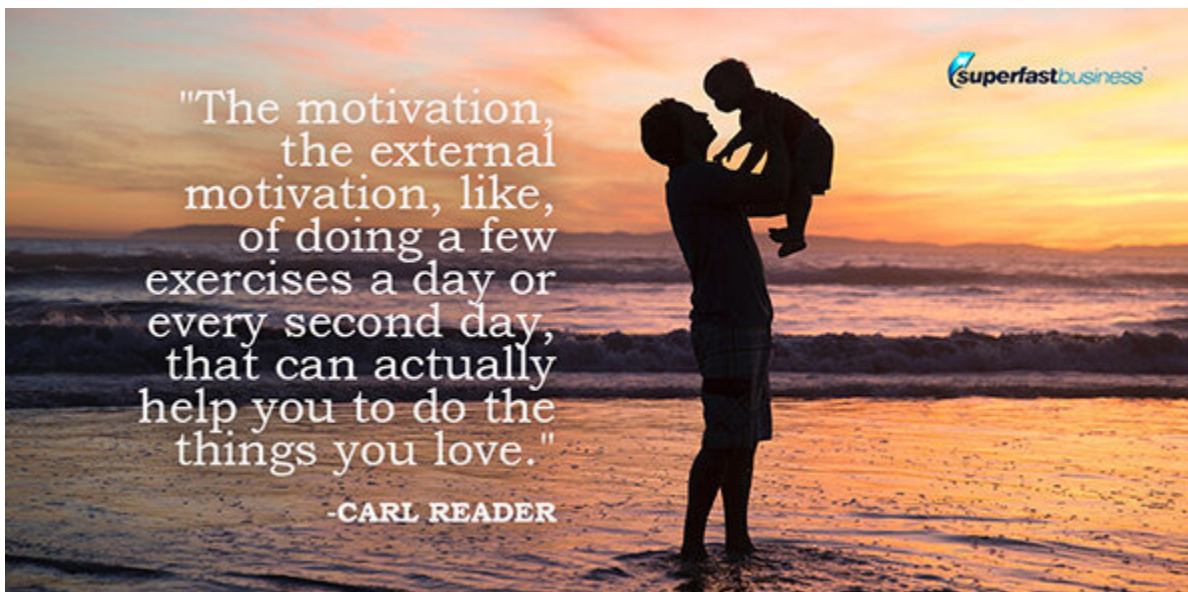
**Carl:** We've got the sharks, yeah.



**James:** I know. Like that to me, that's next-level scary. And I think if you didn't have some of the best waves in the world, I can't imagine surfing would be too popular, because it's probably cold as well, right?

### Motivation that lets you do what you love

**Carl:** It is, yeah. But I think tying it back to that, surfing with the exercises, you know, people are 30, 40, 50, want to go out and have that lifestyle, if you're a surfer or in your community, but you don't have the mobility, or, you know, when I take a pummeling, you know, I'm mobile. I haven't popped a shoulder or knee or my back's not sore for six weeks.



I think, you know, as you said, the motivation, the external motivation, like, of doing a few exercises a day or every second day, that can actually help you to do the things you love. I'm a big golfer as well.

**James:** I would've guessed you're a golfer from the shirt you're wearing. It's like, it screams golf, and there's nothing wrong with that. And you've got great posture. I imagine you've got an extraordinary swing. So yeah, I truly relate. For me, having mobility, it's critical to me because I've got a young child now. And I want to be mobile for the next 20 years at least, so that I can have a lot of enjoyment and the moments together, we go surfing together and all those things, I'm sure.

So I'm playing basketball, I'm doing tennis, I'm walking, I'm surfing. I surf every day, so I think my surf fitness is fantastic. My pulse has lowered a lot. I can move so much better. And I've got good sort of overall strength. And now, I want to progress my surfing. I want to be grabbing rail and tucking into barrels and stuff.

**Carl:** Squats.

**James:** Yeah, it's like, it's at odds with this sort of osteoarthritis. I have to explain to some of my younger surf buddies why in the middle of winter, I feel like the Tin Man, you know, I need to squirt some oil in there. I got at least got to warm up before I can crouch down low. It's not easy to do that stuff. However, I'm finding like new highs, and partly while you're here, it's perhaps a selfish episode, in a way, but I guess it's my show, and I can curate whatever content works out.

So okay, you've got your functional plank, which you will show us a picture of at least, I'm sure. What else can we do?

### **Are there any benefits from stretching?**

**Carl:** What I want to just touch on, James, which I think would be very helpful for the listeners, is that we got to stop seeing muscle as a piece of plastic that you stretch. So the idea is that if you've got a tight muscle, you've got to stretch it and stretch and stretch it and hold it. And there's so much controversy over how long we should all stretch and when you should be stretching. But it's actually the mind, the brain that governs the length of muscles.

So I've got to say that what makes you tense makes you tight. That's stuck in the traffic, if it's anger, if it's just work...

**James:** Oh, it's like I was saying, if you're having a bad surf and you start cramping up, it's like, because you're tensing up a lot.

**Carl:** Exactly. So what makes you tense makes you tight. And when you're moving correctly, your muscles work in highly coordinated sequences. So poor movements, it affects the sequencing of the muscles working together, that keeps you tight. When you move functionally, correctly, it reorders the muscle sequences, and then you get automatic flexibility.

So I've rapidly improved my mobility by never doing any stretches. You should stretch if you've got a long session, and you've got to maybe walk or surf for five hours, and you can stretch to try and loosen it a bit. But to try and stretch to improve posture and balance muscle imbalances, that's a long way to go. And again, you can ask people who've done stretches, and they'll say, 'I've been stretching for years, and it hasn't really made a difference or it's made a small difference,' you know?

**James:** I don't stretch much, but kudos to you if you're surfing for five hours. I think I went for an hour and 20 minutes today and covered five kilometers. So that's truly an Iron Man effort. And I know some of the athletes do that, but that's just like the next level. When I go to the Maldives, we surf three times a day for two weeks. I drop five or six kilos. I get super fit. That's my sort of post-winter tune up.

But I do like those little roller balls and the inflatable balls to lie on. I've noticed those things really open me up. Are they good or bad?

**Carl:** They're good, especially for you, too, surfing that often, you want to get what's called flexion exercises. You'd only be doing too much extension because you're really lying on the board having to extend as you paddle.

**James:** Yeah, always like that.

**Carl:** Yeah, exactly. So you want to start doing a little flexion. The idea is sitting on the ball working.

**James:** I don't really work. I just lie on it.

**Carl:** Okay, good.

**James:** I generally lie on it and relax, or I just move my hips side to side to relax them. But it's really just, like, to take the pressure off my neck and back. I can feel it unlock when I lie down there, because it's gotten out of place because my muscles aren't fully working together yet to keep it in the right spot. Obviously that's why the osteophytes developed.

The other thing was I got this Hyper VRE sort of little roller that vibrates. That can really ease things up as well, you know, when it gets too tense. But I know that all that tension is a result of the fundamentals not being there in the first place, which I'm sure that's what we're talking about here to correct that.

**Carl:** With your neck as well, so a lot of listeners with you, neck's is a common problem, especially with desk jobs. I often joke around and say that the fitness industry is way ahead in the robotics and in the world of business because a lot of the movements in the fitness industry are robotic, so you'll see the old school sort of stretches with, like, look down, heads to the side, and swivel to the left and right.

But when you look at functional movements, you actually want to train your whole body. You want to include all those movements. You don't want to just be... you want to look down and include the whole spine, not just the neck. So we've got quite the isolated, like in the medical industry, sort of where the problem is, you focus on it, and we just target that specific area, which when it comes to movement, you don't want to do that.

**James:** So it's a lot more whole body movements rather than micro movements.

**Carl:** Correct. So you want to move your whole body, not just isolate the neck, chin and look down; that kind of robotic sort of - that can put a lot of strain on the neck as well, ironically.

**James:** When I went to a chiropractor for a little while, it didn't seem to help me much. He used to make me push my chin to chest and try and stretch that back thing, and it never felt quite right, and the guy turned out to be a real d\*ckhead as well. Crazy thing, I ended up like, as a charity, helping him out with his struggling business.

My team built him a website, and he opened it up, and he just basically said it's the most ugly website he's ever seen in his life, and shredded to pieces. He didn't pay a cent for it. It was like a gift. And so I stopped going, which was funny. Funny how those things sort of stop and start. But yeah, I found sometimes when I've tried to get help, I wasn't getting the solutions that I would have hoped for.

## Stress, health and longevity

**Carl:** It's so difficult, because a lot of it is mind-body as well, you know? You can have all the best posture but if you're under a lot of stress, taking it emotionally...

**James:** I think a lot of people listening to this are under stress. I feel it. I see it every day. I answer 1000 posts a month in SuperFastBusiness, and people come with a lot of stress and toxin and tension. And guess who's taking it out for them? I'm the one dealing with it on a volume basis, and I have to have a way to process it.

The funniest thing ever, or maybe the saddest thing ever, probably a bad word, is this kinesiologist that someone referred me to once. She actually passed away of cancer or something, and I think she just dealt with too much toxin. She must have soaked it all up and had nowhere to go.

**Carl:** Yeah, you know, the thing is that with the movements, it's a great way to detox. So anything, like you said, walking, exercising, and again across the listeners, you know, sometimes again, less is more. If you are under stress and you aren't like, enjoying your exercise, working hard; obviously, like you said, you're going to stop coming back. And that's not all about the coaching. It's just removing stuff, like getting more clarity, removing mess. And it's again, our mindset; we've so been indoctrinated or ingrained in our minds that we have to put full throttle all the time, you know?

**James:** Yeah, the entrepreneurial A-type. Yeah, hopefully we've dispelled some of that message, especially when we've covered things like sleep and, with the work; you absolutely don't have to do more or work harder, or work more hours. You don't have to lift heavier weights or lift them more often to be a better athlete. I've heard that, you know, the biggest problem they have is overtraining.

**Carl:** There you go.

**James:** Because they're so driven. They just train too much. Is that a common thing?

**Carl:** Yeah, it's sort of that type-A personality, you strive, you know? I think for me, I've been facing COVID and homeschooling and just life, like you said, 2020 has been a bit of a weird year, a smack in the face. And it's just had to really consolidate. And it's actually great because I'm able to do my own exercises and then share what I'm doing, and it's amazing just how much you can get from doing so little, and it's effective.

I think that's the most important. You get results. Now, I'm not a bodybuilder, but I want to live to 80, 90 and not have to worry about shoulders and knee pains, you know?

**James:** And what other things would you recommend as we're closing out? There's got to be one or two.

## The press-up versus the pushup

**Carl:** Yeah, the press-up. So it's the modified version of a pushup. And a prime example would be surfing. So when you're on a surfboard, you don't do a pushup, you don't look at the board and go up and down, up and down. You know, you arch back slightly and you push back on to your knees or you jump. So the pushup is a very functional exercise, but it's not taught correctly, in my opinion.

So the pushup is actually going to look like a press-up on a surfboard, where you're going back onto your knees or back, and that actually strengthens all your pecs, or its core and your upper body muscles, functionally as opposed to doing pushups.

And pushups is another part of common exercise many people do, you know, if they think they might exercise. So your upright plank, your press-ups combined with squats done correctly can provide tremendous benefits and have a lot of pain-relieving effects as well.

**James:** Yeah, I don't know if it's terrible or not, but one of my shaper friends gave me a tip, and that was to put my hands slightly apart, like to put my leading hand a little bit further forward and my backhand a little further back when I press up, and it automatically twists my body as I stand up so that I can be in the right foot position. And I don't know if that's good or bad from a movement perspective, but it definitely helps me get a better late take off.

**Carl:** No that'll help you, I mean, that's a functional tweak for surfing to get you in the right position.

**James:** It saves me having to do a last-minute twist, you know? It's like, it's all in one movement now.

**Carl:** Are you goofy or regular?

**James:** Goofy.

**Carl:** Okay. I don't know what your break is in Manly, but you'll find it might be great if you can ride both sides?

**James:** Oh, yeah, I can ride both. We get a lot of straight-handers around these parts. But yeah, like lefts and rights. When I go to the Maldives, there's a lot of rights. So I'm doing a lot of backhand. Lately, I've been really working, and thanks to one of our previous guests, I've been getting some coaching on doing barrel riding stance. So now I can take off and drop my left knee to the board, like almost not even stand up.

So I can just like quickly transition from lying down to my left knee on the board, my left hand in front of the knee, and then pointing my shoulders down through the tube and dragging my right hand into the wave face. So that's been giving me a more stable late takeoff, looks good, and it's just getting that movement, I've had to practice and practice that now to get past that stiff point where I can just quickly switch into that stance. So it takes practice.

But this is exactly why I want to be moving better, I want to be nimble on my feet. And the more I am, the more I can unlock my next level of surfing like a video game, and it just gets incredibly exciting. I know that a lot of barrel time is coming my way when I can dial that one in. So I feel like I'm getting closer.

**Carl:** Well, there's a squat for you, you know, or like a lunge positioning, and it'll help your back, because you are, in barrel-riding, depending on the size of the wave, you know, you actually are twisted as well, depending on how your gravity is. But it unlocks a lot of our enjoyment. That's the reason why a lot of entrepreneurs want to have their own business. And that's, I think you spoke about this a while on your show, it's the capitalist paradox where [you can actually become so busy, you don't have a life](#), and that's the irony.

**James:** That's it. The daily surf has become a mainstay of, I have to build my business and my routine around that, or I'm not going to be happy. And it's forced efficiencies, it's forced leverage, it's forced me to be a better coach to my students, to have a lot more discipline with my routine and schedule. Like, today is a good example; all I've done today is two podcasts. That's it. I did one this morning at 9:40 and one this afternoon at whatever time we started. I'm going to say, gosh, 5:20, 5:30.

So I've basically had the entire day off, except for a little bit of work in the beginning and the afternoon. And that's my entire day, and it's a workday today. So that sort of schedule has unlocked everything for me. Now, I'll still do a few forum posts, and I'll answer questions, and I'll check emails and check in with my team. But they're optional, and I can do them on my own agenda, which is important.

### **How often is enough to be fit?**

Speaking to that, how intensive is this exercise agenda that you're talking to us about, the exercises you're going to give us? Do we do them every day? Do we do one a day? Do we mix and match? Is there a schedule for them?

**Carl:** It's difficult to be prescriptive, because again, it's a bell curve. But I think, you know, the idea would be to try to do at least twice a week, and it's probably going to take five to 10 minutes. It's not a lot, it's not intense. You can use your body weight; if you have excess weights at home, you can use that to better effect for what you need. But for the average person, just getting started is the key part, you know, just to remove all those barriers, thinking, I've got to do 45 minutes now.

And part of the coaching that we do is just helping them to just get that started, but the key thing is to do them correctly. So if you are working with someone or a trainer over in Australia or someone like myself, it's to invest in the time to learn to do it correctly, because even if you're doing the exercises, and it's good that you're doing it, but if you do them incorrectly with the wrong form, that can often accelerate other problems like back and knee problems, and then you know, you're on the wrong track.

**James:** Right, so you're pretty much saying, we can actually move less and be fitter or be healthier. What outcome are we getting by doing the right activities less often than doing the wrong activities more often?

**Carl:** Well, there's wear and tear, you know? And obviously, you have to have a constraint, some sort of resistance. But it's just knowing where you're at and getting your baseline and then working from there, not comparing it to the guy on the gym magazine, or punishing your body with all those things we spoke about. And then cardiovascular, you know, for different people between any age, but you go for walks or a light run, or surfing, swimming is important.



But it's not to be confused with strengthening. We do need to add strength, some sort of strength component. Again, it doesn't have to be heavy, and it doesn't have to be long.

**James:** Cool.

**Carl:** Which is encouraging, especially to busy people who are stressed already. You don't want to be adding more stress to their life.

**James:** Everyone's busy. It's amazing how busy you can be even if you have nothing in schedule, like an entire day can just fly past. And even trivial inconveniences like having to meet a cleaner or something, you're paying to do something you don't want to do, can still be a pain in the ass. It's funny, you know, how you can shift what is a problem at one point in your life to what could be a challenge for you later on. But it's about keeping real and getting it all in perspective.

**Carl:** Absolutely.

**James:** So Carl, I want to say thanks for coming along and sharing your functional movement ideas with us. There are a few takeaways that I've certainly picked up. There is, you know, don't beat yourself up if you're not doing an intensive HIT routine every day. Start off small, get to know yourself better. Use some of the exercises that Carl is going to share on the episode here. Are there any other things that you think would be important takeaways from this, Carl, that we should mention at this point?

## **More than weight loss and looking good**

**Carl:** Just a quick little physiology thing, is that skeletal muscle was probably seen as just to provide movement. But now, through science, has shown that the skeletal muscle actually becomes like an endocrine organ. Every time you contract your muscles, you're actually releasing what's called myokines, which are chemical signals that actually regulate inflammation in the body.

So it just encourages people to think that it's not just about losing weight. It's actually when I do these exercises, I actually am releasing hormones into my body that are actually going to provide tremendous health benefits. So it's not just weight loss or looking good.

**James:** But if you flog your body, you might end up getting an over release or a bad chemistry thing happening where you might induce nasties, so you've got to watch it. Now, someone listening to this, if they like what you're talking about, they want to get in touch with you, you've got a website over at [CarlReaderCoaching.com](http://CarlReaderCoaching.com).

**Carl:** That's correct.

**James:** What else do we need to know in that regard? We'll put a link to your site next to the videos on episode 792 at [SuperFastBusiness.com](http://SuperFastBusiness.com). If you want to get in touch with Carl, you could send him an email, perhaps, or you could send me an email, I'll flick it across to Carl. So whatever works there. Thank you for sharing.

I actually feel like a little weight has gone off my shoulders just from doing the work to find out about this stuff. And it takes a bit of pressure off knowing that we're kind of on the right track here, and I'm interested to try some of these exercises and see if we can get some more performance gains as well with minimal effort in a safe way.

**Carl:** Sounds good. Yeah.

**James:** Thank you, Carl.

**Carl:** Thank you for having me.



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