

The Future of AI and ChatGPT in The Fitness Industry

[music]

0:00:11.8 Mike Vacanti: Hello, Jordan.

0:00:12.5 Jordan Syatt: What is up, Michael?

0:00:14.4 Mike Vacanti: Jordan, I had a way that I was gonna start this podcast, this weekly upload that is gonna go on forever for the foreseeable future, but I'm pivoting. Based on the last 10 seconds, I'm P-ing it up. Based on what's going on with you, you're exhausted. You only slept two hours last night. You're still here. We're doing back-to-back pods today. We're banging 'em. These might be the best two podcasts we ever do, not because you feel like it, not 'cause you wanna be here right now. There's probably a million things you'd rather do than this podcast right now, but we're banging out back-to-backs because you're doing what you're supposed to do. You're doing your duty rather than doing what you feel like doing in this moment.

0:00:50.4 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. Man, I'm fucking tired. I was really hoping we're only gonna do one podcast today, but I love how you're bringing the heat. You're gonna carry the load for us today and...

0:01:02.3 Mike Vacanti: You're carrying the load.

0:01:03.9 Jordan Syatt: No, no, you're carrying the load. I'm just sort of... You're carrying...

0:01:06.6 Mike Vacanti: You have the rock on your back going up the hill right now on two hours of sleep, and there's a lesson in there. There's a lesson in there that all of us can derive from this, which is, Do the right thing even when you don't feel like it, even when no one's watching, like Jordan's doing right now for us.

0:01:22.0 Jordan Syatt: Love it.

0:01:23.0 Mike Vacanti: Now, now we got... And that might be work, that might be making content, that might be getting your workout in, that might be dialing in your nutrition, that might be a million things in life. But however that resonates with you, take it and run with it today. Next up, Jord. By the way, I'm amped up from the leg day I just had.

0:01:40.4 Jordan Syatt: I was gonna say, you must have had a great workout this morning.

0:01:43.2 Mike Vacanti: I did. I literally just finished it like 18 minutes ago. Got a little protein here. Anabolic window. [laughter] You loved the Super Bowl.

0:02:00.5 Jordan Syatt: Oh yeah, I did love the Super Bowl.

0:02:03.4 Mike Vacanti: David, can we quickly just splice in? I believe the exact words and tonality from Jordan a few weeks ago were, "Of course, I'm not watching the Super Bowl."

0:02:12.6 Jordan Syatt: I think I said, "Absolutely... "

[chuckle]

0:02:15.1 Mike Vacanti: "Absolutely not."

0:02:15.3 Jordan Syatt: "Absolutely the fuck not," I think is what I said. [laughter] And you got so mad. You were like, "Alright..." [laughter]

[video playback]

0:02:27.0 Mike Vacanti: Will, you watch the Super Bowl?

0:02:28.5 Jordan Syatt: Absolutely not.

0:02:29.5 Mike Vacanti: Oh, okay.

[back to the present]

0:02:33.0 Mike Vacanti: However, sometime early in the third quarter, I got a text on my phone, Jordan Sy-ett saying...

[chuckle]

0:02:41.7 Jordan Syatt: Sy-ett.

0:02:42.4 Mike Vacanti: Sy-ahhh [chuckle] saying... [laughter] Someone used to mispronounce Jordan's name. We got a good kick out of that. "Dude, this game's amazing." I could go back and read them, but you were into the game.

0:02:54.2 Jordan Syatt: Dude, yeah. So I wasn't planning on watching it, but my wife was like, "I wanna see the halftime show." So I was trying to help her figure out how to get it. Oh, this reminds me we need to cancel our subscription to whatever the fuck we got so we could watch it. And then I caught the last 50 seconds of the first half, and I was like, "Oh wow, this is pretty close." Watched the halftime show, which I was like, "What are all these marshmallows running all over the field?" [laughter] And I was also like, "Man, they're really high up." I was like, "That looks dangerous." Especially I was like, "She's pregnant and she's going really high up there." I was like, "Man, that's crazy." And then the second half started and I was like, "I'll watch a little bit," and I got sucked in immediately. It was just like immediately, and a great, great game. I liked it a lot, so.

0:03:49.7 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, you were commenting on individual plays. I was getting texts, like you were really into it.

0:03:55.5 Jordan Syatt: Smith-Schuster coming out hot, you know?

0:03:58.6 Mike Vacanti: It's about time. I drafted him this year. He didn't do anything all season long.

0:04:02.0 Jordan Syatt: Oh, really? [laughter]

0:04:05.1 Mike Vacanti: This is not gonna turn into the Fantasy Football podcast. Now, and the reason... We don't even have to get into it. I'm glad you enjoyed, and I'm glad it was a...

0:04:11.8 Jordan Syatt: Let's get into it. Let's go into it.

0:04:14.0 Mike Vacanti: I was telling you on the phone, there's a corner of Twitter that takes such pride in hating sports. It's like a hyper self-improvement sector of Twitter that reminds me of the people who in any conversation will remind you of the fact that they don't own a TV and that they never watch TV and they only read books. It's kind of like that degree of arrogance around never watching sports, not knowing anything about sports, only caring about whatever insert interesting thing is, and...

0:04:47.9 Jordan Syatt: If it's not productive, they don't do it.

0:04:49.8 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, yeah.

0:04:51.6 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, which is, they're lying because... [laughter]

0:04:53.7 Mike Vacanti: And I think you and I both did that at some point in our lives, by the way, so.

0:04:57.1 Jordan Syatt: Oh yeah, when I was younger, I used to be like, "I haven't watched TV since 1984."

0:05:02.0 Mike Vacanti: Yeah. [laughter] But that's what it reminded me of. When you're like, "I'm absolutely not watching the Super Bowl," I was like, "Alright."

0:05:08.4 Jordan Syatt: But that wasn't why I said it. I usually don't care about football, and...

0:05:12.7 Mike Vacanti: But my point was, it's not a football game, it's a cultural event.

0:05:16.4 Jordan Syatt: It is a cultural event, but usually football, I'm not the biggest fan of. And I'll tell you why. There are a lot of great things about it. The reason I'm usually not a big fan of watching football is because, for example, there could be 20 seconds left in the game, and those 20 seconds could be like 15 minutes.

0:05:40.4 Mike Vacanti: That's basketball.

0:05:41.5 Jordan Syatt: No, no, no. Maybe I'm exaggerating a little bit, but maybe like two minutes could turn into 15 minutes with timeouts, challenges. Basketball is faster, but I think basketball is much faster-paced.

0:05:55.9 Mike Vacanti: Basketball end of game can take forever with fouling. Football end of game is not slow.

0:06:00.7 Jordan Syatt: Well, at any point in time in a game, like with... The play is like... What's the average length of a play? 7 seconds?

0:06:09.6 Mike Vacanti: Sounds right. I don't know.

0:06:11.1 Jordan Syatt: So for me, it's like, "Oh," like the average length of a play between 5-9 seconds probably, and then it could take a couple of minutes to get back. I'm like, "Oh, this is just a little bit boring for me." And it's probably also 'cause I don't know all the plays and all that stuff, so it's like, that makes a big difference. Like the announcers were like, "This is the second time they're in that play." I was like, "How the fuck did you know that? That's crazy that you can see that." When I see it, I just see a mash of people. And I understand all the downs, I understand throwing versus... I understand the basics, but I don't know the in-depth plays, which is probably why I get a

little bit bored of it.

0:06:45.5 Mike Vacanti: Understood. When I think Super Bowl, I think commercials, I think overeating, I think chicken wings and Buffalo dip, I think like having laughs with whoever you're hanging out with, I think Justin Timberlake ripping off Janet Jackson's dress or whatever and her boob falling out. I think stuff like that. [laughter] Seriously. I don't think like... 'Cause I don't really care about a random Chiefs-Eagles game, like I'm not gonna be sports betting, I'm not...

0:07:11.1 Jordan Syatt: But I feel like that wouldn't even be a big deal now. Remember when that was a huge deal?

0:07:15.4 Mike Vacanti: Yeah.

0:07:16.4 Jordan Syatt: Remember like when... [chuckle] I remember in high school, if someone had taken nudes and the nudes circulated around the school, it was a huge deal, like people... And now it's like...

0:07:26.7 Mike Vacanti: You're talking about like a peer in school?

0:07:29.0 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, like someone in school. If one of the kids took nude pictures and then someone sent them all around, people were like, "Oh my God, your life is over," and now it's like, if nudes get leaked and people make a big deal out of it, it's like, people are like, "Relax." [chuckle] People don't care about that stuff anymore. It's so funny how times have changed.

0:07:49.4 Mike Vacanti: It's interesting. I think... We're close in age. We're four years apart.

0:07:54.0 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:07:54.7 Mike Vacanti: I think you just showed one of the... 'Cause there's not a... There's differences between generations, but as you get closer together, there's not that many differences. I think that was one of the differences in tech, because there was no Facebook. Not that you're putting nudes on Facebook, but there were just less phones, less pictures, less of that. I can only remember one or two instances where some girls' nudes were circulating around the school, but that wasn't a thing when I was in high school.

0:08:25.0 Jordan Syatt: Dude, I remember these three girls in high school took naked pictures of themselves together, and they were circulated, like people printed them out and circulated it around the school on paper. [laughter]

0:08:42.4 Mike Vacanti: Goodness.

0:08:43.4 Jordan Syatt: Like it wasn't going around on phones, it was literally on paper. Yeah, so I think we're... Yeah, people would send them around via phone too, but yeah, it's pretty crazy how times have changed. And I was like, "Yeah, whatever."

0:08:58.9 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, there's less... And that's a different example.

0:09:00.5 Jordan Syatt: Like the Janet Jackson Super Bowl fiasco.

0:09:03.4 Mike Vacanti: Correct.

0:09:03.9 Jordan Syatt: Was just like, that was a huge deal, and now it's like that wouldn't make a

big deal at all.

0:09:08.4 Mike Vacanti: There's way more sexualization of everything in culture, in movies, in entertainment, on the internet. Like Rick Fit's question in yesterday's Q&A in the mentorship talking about potentially making content around porn, masturbation and weighing back and forth, all of that has just become so normal in society, for better or worse. We're not gonna make moral judgements here on the personal trainer podcast.

0:09:33.4 Jordan Syatt: Not yet.

0:09:34.6 Mike Vacanti: Even though we want to, but we're not... We're gonna... [laughter]

0:09:39.0 Jordan Syatt: We should.

0:09:39.9 Mike Vacanti: We're not... We said. We cut out something where we had a spirited debate, and it's my fault.

0:09:47.8 Jordan Syatt: I don't even remember what it was.

0:09:49.3 Mike Vacanti: Okay, then I'm not gonna remind you, but I don't know how to walk a line.

0:09:52.4 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

0:09:52.8 Mike Vacanti: I run through a brick wall. Whereas you are more intelligent than I am, and I'm like a bull in a China shop.

0:09:58.7 Jordan Syatt: I'm not more intelligent.

0:10:00.8 Mike Vacanti: Actually, this translates well into something. You know the advice that's like, "You should write at a second grade level so that you can have a bigger audience and that so more people will be able to get your content?" I hate that. Now, I understand you shouldn't be making content specifically to impress coaches using big words, using very specific anatomical terms that your ideal client isn't gonna understand, right? You want to make it basic enough for the person who you want to reach to understand. But if you're writing at like a kindergarten level or whatever the bar is, fourth grade level, I don't know, writing so that anyone can understand it, I don't think you actually want a client who reads at a third grade level. I don't think you wanna work with that person as an online fitness coach.

0:10:49.7 Jordan Syatt: This is an interesting discussion, 'cause I very often say, you should be able to make something so simple, a 5-year-old can understand it. With that being said, I think it's different in terms of what you are capable of doing versus what you actually do. So for example, you should be so well-versed in your knowledge and how to apply this and all that and how to explain it, that if you needed to, you could explain it to a 5-year-old. But obviously, you're writing in a 5-year-old level, like 5-year-old, it's like, I don't know what their reading level is, but not very good. So it's like probably finding the balance between that second grade level and college level. It needs to be somewhere in the middle. It's like... I think that even... Unless your target market is highly educated people within this arena currently, you know what I mean? It's very difficult.

0:11:57.5 Mike Vacanti: I'm with you. There's... If the majority... So there are multiple purposes to writing. Like writing is how we think. It's really hard... It's hard to just sit there and think. Like writing and fleshing out your thoughts is a good way to think. If you're intentionally dumbing

yourself down, then you're dumbing down your thinking. And maybe you're doing writing that's non-content-specific writing, but... I don't know. I've just heard in too many guruji places like, Never use big words and always make it so simple, a third grader can understand it, and when I think of, going way back years, the people who I've worked with who don't understand grammar and just give me a block paragraph that's a whole run-on sentence, it's like I don't wanna be working with third grade reading people.

0:12:50.1 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. Yeah, I'm having all these different thoughts now, 'cause I agree in some ways, I disagree in other ways. I think it depends on so many things, not least of which who you want your clients to be, also potentially the way in which you're distributing your content. Like if I'm doing a 60-second Instagram reel or an Instagram caption where it's relatively quick content to digest, I'm not gonna make that complex 'cause I don't have enough time to fully explain the nuance, so I'm gonna make it more dumb down and simple and practically applicable. Whereas if I'm doing a podcast or a YouTube where it's 30, 45, 60 minutes, well, now I have the time to explain it in a very high level way, and then go back and break it down and say, "So this is how we explain it in a high level. Let's go back and break it down so you can understand it if you didn't understand that," and then reiterate it again at that high level so now you can internalize it.

0:13:51.6 Jordan Syatt: I think the longer form content, whether it's an article, YouTube, podcast, whatever, that's when you can use a much higher level of communication, but in the short form content, I think it does make sense to "dumb it down" just so that you can get people who maybe if they only saw the higher level discussion and they didn't understand it, especially nowadays, they might just quit. They might leave. They might go to something else. It's like so many different reasons. So using it as a way to get people into your gate, like open the gate to them so they feel a little bit more welcomed and not like, "Alright, well, this is gonna be way over my head all the time," and then slowly educate them. That for me is... My best client is not the one who comes in super educated, it's the client who comes in wanting to become educated. It's the one who's willing to learn and like, "Hey, teach me, teach me, teach me," 'cause sometimes the ones who are already super educated, they're stubborn and they have their ways. Like it's, "Well, I know this is true, so how come you're doing this?" It's like, "Shut the fuck up." There are other reasons why, whereas the people who are really willing to be educated by you, I think that's the best client.

0:15:07.8 Mike Vacanti: Agreed. And I think the people who are willing to be educated by you are going to fire up dictionary.com if they don't understand something in your content, similar to what you and I have done when consuming people outside of the fitness industry over the last five years, it's like, "Oh, I don't really know what he's talking about. I'm gonna Google that word. Oh, that's interesting. I didn't even know that word. That makes sense in that context." I think a lot of that learning, that person who wants to learn is gonna figure out what you're saying. I also think that you're right, that on short form content, if your goal is simply maximize audience growth, sure, cast a wide net, dumb it down, make it as palatable for as many people as possible. I agree with that, if that's your goal.

0:15:54.4 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, do both. Do a little bit of both. But yeah, I think that makes total sense.

0:15:58.8 Mike Vacanti: Alright. I have a question that I think you'll want to talk about.

0:16:02.6 Jordan Syatt: Okay. [laughter]

0:16:04.5 Mike Vacanti: "Hey guys, thank you very much for the content." This is from Momo. Shutout Momo.

0:16:08.3 Jordan Syatt: What's up, Momo?

0:16:09.4 Mike Vacanti: Here is one for you, and I have one very... I have a small opinion on this that I'm gonna voice and then I'm just gonna let you take it, because I have no idea. "How do you think the AI ChatGPT and co will change the online fitness trainer industry? What should trainers focus on that will not be displaced by the technology in the near future? Thank you again for your great efforts. Keep pushing. Momo."

0:16:40.0 Jordan Syatt: So funny. I literally just had a conversation about this 30 minutes ago.

0:16:44.3 Mike Vacanti: Good. Perfect. I have no idea. The only... And I'm more skeptical of AI than the average person, and I'm more pessimistic about what ChatGPT specifically is going to bring in terms of usefulness, not only in the fitness industry, but in any industry. And I'm pessimistic specifically about ChatGPT, not AI long term. I think it's gonna do a lot, but I think it's over-hyped right now. To answer your question, Momo, I think the one thing that coaches should continue to do to not be displaced is to put out really good content, specifically to build depth and relationship with individuals who follow you, because I think that's one thing... Like I don't think humans will be able to relate to computers and have relationships with computers in the near future, maybe in the distant future, which is a scary world to me, I don't think humans will be able to have that same relationship like they do with other human beings, and so building connections with your audience by helping them for free consistently over a long period of time is one thing you can do to secure your future against the potential disruption of AI.

0:18:12.8 Jordan Syatt: Yeah. There's so much we can talk about with this. I know the person I was just talking to like half an hour ago, she was saying, she's worried about almost like a doomsday thing, like, "Well, what if it gets smarter than humans?" And I'm like, "It's not like an I Am Robot type thing. I'm not worried about that. Maybe it's naivety on my part, but I'm not worried about that. What I am worried about, and we don't have to go into this, is how... We can already see how what we search online is censored and there's censorship across the board by... It's humans who are controlling what we see. They decide what we're gonna put at the top of the Google search.

0:19:01.9 Mike Vacanti: On Google for example, yep.

0:19:02.4 Jordan Syatt: Google, YouTube, all this stuff. The Twitter Files coming out showed us that this is real. And they also showed us that it's not just internally at these companies, but the CIA and the FBI have been involved in it as well. And these companies create relationships with these government entities, and these government entities can say, "Hey, anything posted about this, we want you to downgrade or remove from your platform." It's like... This isn't just a conspiracy theory, this is real. There are now... There are trials going on about this because of everything that came out that leaked from Twitter. So I'm more worried about the information that will be pushed on to generations that anywhere they search, they will only be able to find a single narrative based on whatever group is in power wants them to see. That's the only worrisome thing for me. In terms of ChatGPT for example, I've been playing around with it a lot, and I think there are some amazing pros and some pretty clear cons. The... For example, you can go in ChatGPT, and I've played around with saying like, "Hey, write me a caption... An Instagram caption on the benefits of fiber." And it will write out a legitimate caption explaining the health benefits of fiber, why you should have it, how much you should have. It'll do it.

0:20:26.6 Jordan Syatt: The issue is, it's... Even though it's decent and it's a great starting point, it does lack personality. It lacks personality and it lacks consistency with subsequent captions. So it might give me one voice in one caption, but then I ask it to write another caption and it's a completely different voice. And if you want to stand out in the fitness industry, the one thing that's

gonna make you stand out is you, that's what's... It's not necessarily even the information as much as it is you. 'Cause the information is readily available to everybody, the reason people wanna work with you is because it's you and it's you giving the information, it's your personality, it's your voice. And so if your voice is constantly changing 'cause you're only writing your captions with ChatGPT, it's... There's not much continuity, and it's very difficult for people to really resonate with you. Now, you could use it as a starting point to get a base framework. If you're struggling with writer's block, you're not sure how to begin, cool, you could use that and then inject your own personality and voice in there. I think that would be a very smart way to use it if you were going to use it.

0:21:38.2 Jordan Syatt: You could even use ChatGPT to come up with content ideas. Hey, you can literally say, "Give me a 100 point content idea list for fitness and health." And it will do that for you. There are some really... It doesn't have to write anything, it can just give you content ideas. So it's... There are many great ways to use it, and I would actually prefer you use it from the perspective of, just use it to spark ideas that only you can then mold with your personality and your thoughts and your history and everything that you can bring to the table. The way to stand out is to be yourself, because that's really the main difference. It's... The knowledge, the information, that's gonna be similar across the board, but you are the... You're the variable and you're the asset, and so that's where I would say using yourself as the draw as opposed to necessarily the information.

0:22:32.0 Mike Vacanti: How have you found the accuracy of the information as it relates to fitness or nutrition?

0:22:41.2 Jordan Syatt: Thus far... Specifically in regard to fitness nutrition, no other topics?

0:22:45.0 Mike Vacanti: Right.

0:22:45.7 Jordan Syatt: Thus far it's been great. Thus far, the accuracy has been fantastic. I haven't done deep dives for example, in high-level strength training program design, I haven't done that yet on ChatGPT. I haven't done high-level individualization for, let's say, "Well, how would I deal with a petite woman who's 4'11", 110 pounds. And how would I go about making a meal plan for her that's sustainable?" I haven't done that high level stuff yet. And I think that... It would be very interesting to see that. But in terms of basics like benefits of fiber, benefits of cardio, benefits of strength training, motivation, these basic things where it can just spit out basically pretty run of the mill generic responses, the accuracy has been there for sure.

0:23:33.3 Mike Vacanti: It's interesting because my understanding is, ChatGPT crawls the internet and takes hundreds, if not thousands plus of results or published information and then somehow comes to a correct answer. And so, to take something that isn't super high level in fitness, but a question like, "How much protein per day is optimal for losing body fat and retaining muscle mass?" Or a question like, "What are the main factors in losing body fat?" These questions that have many different answers, another, "What is the best diet for preventing heart disease?" Where you have... Some people think you only eat vegetables, and then some people genuinely think you only eat saturated fat, like literally... And protein. Like, "Carnivore is the best for heart health. Vegan is the best for heart health." With all of those ranging opinions, and I guess I could play with it more, I'm just adverse to it for a handful of reasons. I don't know, I'm curious what the accuracy has looked like for you, and maybe the ones that you have tried looked good, but you haven't gone super deep.

0:24:53.4 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, I haven't gone super deep and specific yet. It would be interesting to see... It may just give me a content idea, like, "Asking ChatGPT, how do I lose fat?" Seeing what ChatGPT spits out and then making a video response to that would be a cool piece of content to make which I might try and do at some point in the next day or so.

0:25:12.4 Mike Vacanti: Even long from, doing a handful of them for a video.

0:25:16.6 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, seeing how that goes. Yeah, that would actually be very interesting. But yeah, that'd be cool. Like you do a Q&A on Instagram, and take people's questions, put the question in ChatGPT, see what ChatGPT says, and you give your critique of that answer. That actually would be a really cool content idea.

0:25:35.3 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, we'll see. Another piece of this is, it feels early to me. Neither of us can predict the future. And so, I think what matters more is, once a technology has actually gained some more mainstream traction, then starting it, but right now, I would say the worst thing you can do is have analysis by paralysis, sit there, not do anything, and be worried about what... How AI is gonna ruin everything. It's like, well, it hasn't ruined everything yet, so let's get while the getting's good. Let's make hay while the sun shines.

0:26:14.7 Jordan Syatt: I think it's... The other person I was just talking to, she was saying she's worried that people aren't gonna have to do the work anymore. And I understand that, but that's what people said when calculators came out. It's like, "Oh my God, they're not gonna do the math anymore." It's like, "It's okay." But I do think, things are so easy for us as is right now...

0:26:38.8 Mike Vacanti: How dear you.

0:26:44.5 Jordan Syatt: Especially if we're living in these Western countries, or in a first world country, and we have all of these tools to us, things are so easy already. It's like... Just adding in these things is not gonna all of a sudden make people to be like, "Alright, well, I'm gonna go viral on all these..." 'Cause you still have to put in the... There's still work, there's still work you have to do. And it's not gonna make a big difference on that front. I... What I think is a very interesting thing from a cultural perspective, is the potential mental health effects that I see across the board with social media, and as things get easier, it seems like mental health will get worse. As more things get easier for us to do, ordering groceries just straight delivered to your door, and all of these things take the responsibility away from you, where now you just have more time to sit down and look at bullshit on social media and see people arguing and be fed this propaganda. I think as things get easier, we actually see a greater decline in mental health, because now people... Like before, even something as simple as going on a drive, walking around the grocery store, putting everything in the cart, paying for it, going back, packing up your car, going... Unpacking it, bringing it back to your refrigerator.

0:28:14.3 Jordan Syatt: This is several hours of work. Whereas now it's like you could just either go and have them put it right into your car so you don't have to go in and do all that stuff, or literally deliver it right to your house. And so what are you doing with all that free time? Well, now you're spending your free time looking at shit that is specifically designed to create an emotional response out of you, there's a lot of fear mongering, there's a lot of... All this bad stuff that I think is creating a massive decline in mental and emotional health as a result of things being too easy.

0:28:41.2 Mike Vacanti: We are 100% aligned on this. I think what this creates is, the need for you to take personal responsibility on how you use those additional hours. Okay, improvements in technology, improvements in productivity have made my life easier. Do I want my life to be easy? If I have extra free time per day, does that mean I'm gonna scroll Twitter with those extra two hours, or does that mean I'm gonna go sign up for X class, learn Y skill, do Z difficult thing, increase the amount of cardio? Do something to build my body, do something to build my spirit, do something difficult, even though I don't want to in the short term, but because I know that's best for me. Which is definitely hard and something that I've struggled with over the last five years, probably,

specifically. But, it... We're not completely hopeless. We don't... Even though it's hard to resist easiness, we can create difficulty for ourselves and it seems to just becoming more of an individual responsibility to do so.

0:29:52.2 Jordan Syatt: It's funny. I think this is probably the major reason why ice baths have become so huge. 'Cause the first thing people say about ice baths, before any of the potential health benefits are, "Oh yeah, it teaches me to do hard things. It makes me do something I don't wanna do." Which is like... It's such a unique thing in the history of humans to literally go out of your way to make yourself very uncomfortable. Because before, you were uncomfortable all the time.

0:30:26.9 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, for all of human history.

0:30:28.2 Jordan Syatt: For all of human history, we've been uncomfortable, and it's like we've been trying to make ourselves more comfortable, more comfortable. And now we've reached this turning point where it's like, "Hold on, I'm too comfortable. How do I make myself less comfortable? Because it's... Life is too good, it's too easy." So now people are... People are taking trash bins, filling it with ice, then getting in cold water, or some people are spending \$20,000 on a fucking ice bath thing, that you could literally spend a fortune on to then... Just for cold water to get into. And I think people are... They're excited at the thought of doing something hard. They're like, "This is really difficult, I wanna do this." It's almost like Jordan Peterson, how he talks about how when he speaks to a crowd, how people are really excited when they hear him talk about taking responsibility for things, like they need to take responsibility, they're yearning for it. It's another aspect of this, people are yearning for doing something hard.

0:31:29.7 Mike Vacanti: Difficulty.

0:31:30.2 Jordan Syatt: And it's funny because an ice bath, if we really break it down, it's an easy way to do something hard, if that makes sense.

0:31:40.8 Mike Vacanti: 'Cause it's quick.

0:31:41.5 Jordan Syatt: It's quick, it doesn't take much time, and it... You're not... I don't even think you're supposed to do it for a long period of time. But you get in, you deal with it, and then you're done. It's like, "Okay cool, I did my hard thing for the day." And then you carry that with you the whole day. It's almost like... If it causes you to then embrace that and continue to do hard things, that's... Then I think it's getting the benefit. But if that's your one hard thing for the day, it's sort of you just trying to be able to tell people and maybe tell yourself that you're doing hard things when really you're not. That is hard, but you're not... What are you doing afterwards?

0:32:18.6 Mike Vacanti: I'm not a cold water immersion guy myself, but I'm still gonna defend those people here in a few ways. One, I completely agree with you that I... My hope is that if that's your first step, that then you do other hard things to make your life better.

0:32:36.8 Jordan Syatt: I hope so, yeah.

0:32:36.9 Mike Vacanti: Two, Jordan hates cold water immersion, hates.

0:32:41.7 Jordan Syatt: I hate it, I hate it.

0:32:44.0 Mike Vacanti: So I think you're slightly biased. Three, I get the blunt hypertrophy inflammation, yadda, yadda, sure. Alright. All these fake natties on the internet talking about milking the last micro pound of muscle gain. It's like, "Okay, well, sure." Don't do ice baths if...

0:33:03.8 Jordan Syatt: Relax.

0:33:04.6 Mike Vacanti: If you're trying to gain as much muscle as physiologically... As much muscle as is physiologically possible, sure. Never do ice baths, and do all the things that are optimal, eat the right amount of protein, blah, blah, blah. Have your training optimum. Four, there are psychological, dopaminergic benefits to ice baths. I've talked about this before, but the story of the cocaine addict whose marriage was falling apart, who, with three ice baths per day, replaced the habit of snorting lines constantly, and was able to abstain from hard drug use for a number of years and got his life together as a result. It's in the book Dopamine Nation. There is not only a spike... And by the way, again, I don't take cold baths, I think there are way better ways to do hard things. But, there's a spike in dopamine post ice bath, that is sustained for two to three hours. Meaning it's not like... Cocaine's like this, video pods, shoots up, shoots back down, cocaine. That's why people who do lines do them constantly, they're going to the bathroom in the club every 20 minutes, just busting lines off of keys.

0:34:20.1 Mike Vacanti: Don't do this kids at home, I am anti-drug, bringing back the 1990s DARE.

0:34:25.1 Jordan Syatt: D.A.R.E. [laughter]

0:34:34.1 Mike Vacanti: The... Your dopamine levels after an ice bath don't crash back down, they stay elevated for a number of hours and they slowly come back down. So there are those real benefits, but that's what I'll say in defense of ice baths.

0:34:51.6 Jordan Syatt: I have nothing against them from like, if you wanna do them. I'm like... You know how you were saying it's annoying when people are like, "Yeah, I don't watch TV, I never do that." It's like, this is the same people who are like, they've got to share with everybody that they're doing their ice bath. I'm like, "I don't give a fuck about your ice bath." And it's... I just see everybody doing it, and everybody talking about it, and I'm like, "God damn, keep it to yourself for..." [laughter] Everybody's like, "Get in the..."

0:35:23.3 Mike Vacanti: You don't have... Hit the mute button, you don't have to consume it. What do you mean keep it to yourself? What if...

0:35:27.7 Jordan Syatt: Alright, alright, now you're playing... Alright, alright.

0:35:31.0 Mike Vacanti: Keep your calorie deficit to yourself. I don't care about your calorie... What.

0:35:35.0 Jordan Syatt: It's just, I... It... People are just jumping on the bandwagon and they love to talk about how they don't watch TV and then they are doing the ice baths. And it's like, "Alright, yeah we get it. That's cool. Great." I don't know, it's just... There. It's not. I think people are just looking for the ego content. They're just looking for the ego content. That's what they're looking for.

0:35:57.0 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, I think there's a lot of that. I'm also gonna defend your position now, that do hard things that are actually productive. Like you training jujitsu hard for the last number of years, that's a hard thing that you do every single day that takes longer than an ice bath, and also gives you a skill that has value in life to a greater degree in my opinion than an ice bath gives.

0:36:23.9 Jordan Syatt: Without question. [chuckle] Yeah.

0:36:27.2 Mike Vacanti: Well, unless you're on cocaine withdrawals and you're trying to... Then I'd probably see.

0:36:30.7 Jordan Syatt: Or if you're running away from a murder in an ice storm, and you need to jump into a frozen lake to escape and your body's adapted to it. Then yeah, great. You win.
[laughter]

0:36:39.1 Mike Vacanti: Hey, but if you wanna optimize the amount of muscle you have, never ever go in cold water. It's like, alright, what does optimize even look like for a non-drug user? Really, like you can gain... I don't know what, it depends on how tall you are, but 20, 30...

0:36:55.5 Jordan Syatt: Half an ounce of muscle more over a year.

0:36:58.3 Mike Vacanti: If... Let's say you can gain something like 40 to 50 pounds of muscle over a lifetime, 20, 30, 35, let's call it 40. And so what, is it gonna be 38 compared to 41 over a 20-year window? What does three pounds of muscle look like on a 5'10" male? It doesn't look like anything. People get confused about that too. They see before and afters of someone losing fat and they're like, "Oh, I wanna see crazy before and afters of muscle gain." No, you don't see muscle gain on your...

0:37:29.3 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, good luck.

0:37:30.0 Mike Vacanti: Yeah, it takes a long time. I'm all riled up.

0:37:35.8 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, that was... I like that topic.

0:37:36.9 Mike Vacanti: I did too. We need to do hard things. There's a Søren Kierkegaard quote about this, about sometimes life will be so easy that the only thing we yearn for is struggle itself. Something along those lines, which... I think we're approaching that time. There are people in the world who aren't approaching that time and who are still struggling on a daily basis.

0:38:01.9 Jordan Syatt: Yeah.

0:38:02.1 Mike Vacanti: I hesitate to say this because I don't ever want to discourage anyone from being active, I think it's really, really good, especially in this day and age, to be active. But I also think it's important to have a comprehensive understanding of truth in certain realms. And something that I see sometimes, are people who want to optimize strength gains and are very interested in making strength and muscle gain progress in the gym, and also are very active, and like things like, pick up basketball, backyard football, martial arts, things of that nature. And I think a lot of people don't realize that those additional activities are amazing in and of themselves, but they do make it harder to progress in building strength and muscle. Agree or disagree?

0:39:01.1 Jordan Syatt: Well, obviously the classic, it depends. It depends on how much they're doing. If they're doing it for...

0:39:14.7 Mike Vacanti: Three to five hours a week.

0:39:15.3 Jordan Syatt: Yeah, it inherently makes it harder just because you're expending more energy, there's less time that you can put into the gym, there's less effort and energy and intensity that you can put into strength training. So yeah, absolutely. I think that in the fitness world, especially in our end of the fitness world, I know I used to struggle with this a lot. I assumed people

wanted to be as... To be bigger and stronger than they really did. I think for the average person, especially my average client, they don't want to be as big and strong as a lot of fitness people do. I'll never forget. Do you remember Martin Berkhan? Do you remember one of his client testimonials from years ago? You have to remember this, 'cause Martin's client testimonials were legendary at the time. It was just like, "Holy shit, this guy's producing insane client results. And one of his client testimonials, there was a guy who had told him he wanted to look like Brad Pitt in Fight Club. And then he put a side-by-side picture of his client, and then Brad Pitt, and his client's physique was way more impressive and he was like... I think he did a pretty damn good job. And I'll never forget that was a genius way to show that client transformation from a marketing perspective, but also from the perspective of... Even for guys who say they wanna get big muscles, a lot of them are like, "Well, I don't wanna get like a body builder though."

0:40:50.8 Jordan Syatt: They're like, they want to be lean, and have... They wanna be toned and defined. They don't wanna get as big and bulky. So for that, I don't think it's gonna impede people, like the average Joe or Jane from really achieving what they want. But if you want to achieve pretty insane levels of muscular development and strength development, or advanced levels, or even high, intermediate to advanced. Then yeah, you're gonna have to start reducing the extra activities, so that you can put more time and really intensity into your training.

0:41:24.4 Mike Vacanti: I've just seen in myself and in so many clients, stall out on strength progress and find less enjoyment in training. And then reduce other activity and watch results in the gym skyrocket. So I'm not making a judgment call on whether or not the sacrifice of optimal progress for the enjoyment and benefit of the other activities. I'm not making a judgement on what you should or shouldn't do. But I'm saying... In fact, if I was to make a judgment, I'd say, do those other activities. I think it's probably the right path for most people from a mental and physical health perspective. But those extra activities do make it harder to make that progress in the gym.

0:42:07.0 Jordan Syatt: 100%.

0:42:08.8 Mike Vacanti: And that's something you need to realize, especially if you're kind of the neurotic type who is really trying to make as much progress as possible. Understand that that extra stuff you're doing isn't helping you, sports specifically.

0:42:21.2 Jordan Syatt: I have that conversation occasionally now, but I used to have it all the time when a lot of my clients were powerlifters.

0:42:28.9 Mike Vacanti: Mm-hm, I bet.

0:42:29.7 Jordan Syatt: When they wanted to compete... Even recreational, not high level. I mean recreational men and women, who were between 18 and 60, who were competing in powerlifting, and they're telling me how they're doing, whether it's CrossFit, or they're going rucking and all this stuff and it's like... And then they're also trying to do powerlifting. I'm like, "Well yeah, of course your max hasn't increased." You already have a relatively intermediate to high-intermediate level of strength, so your progress is going to be slow anyway. And then you're going on 12 mile rucks throughout the week, of course you're gonna be... Not only is it gonna be more difficult because of that lack of energy, but I remember Eric Cressey would talk about this all the time. He would always talk about how he... If you're... He's a baseball guy. So baseball is a very anaerobic, alactic sport, quick, explosive. When you run from home to first or any of the bases, it should be a couple seconds, it's not a long duration thing. When you take a swing at the ball, boom.

0:43:39.7 Jordan Syatt: It's quick, explosive, it's powerful, anaerobic, alactic, as powerful as it gets. So he's like, "Why am I gonna have someone go on 45 minute runs, and train the complete

opposite energy system that they need to be training, when they're a high level professional athlete in this sport?" So if you're trying to compete at a high level, then it makes sense to, at the very least, minimize, if not drop those things entirely. But if you're just a everyday, "I wanna strength train, but I also wanna do this, and I also wanna do this." Go for it, but yeah, it inherently makes it harder, for sure.

0:44:17.2 Mike Vacanti: Great episode. Thank you so much for listening. We hope you have an incredible week. One quick thing before we're done, we have one ask, please subscribe to our YouTube channel at Personal Trainer Podcast, we're gonna drop it down in the show notes as well, a link to our YouTube channel. We're going hard on YouTube, we're putting all these episodes on YouTube, we're putting shorts on YouTube, we have shorter... Or shorter micro-content on there, five to 10 minute videos, and we would really, really, really appreciate if you would drop us a subscribe on YouTube. We're pumping these out, we don't have advertisers here on this podcast, we're not spamming you with Peloton this, and protein powder that. So, in exchange for this episode, we'd really, really appreciate if you subscribed to our YouTube @personaltrainerpodcast. Thank you, we love you. See you soon.

0:45:06.8 Jordan Syatt: This guy says he's not a sales guy, that was amazing. What a pitch.

0:45:10.7 Mike Vacanti: The pre-workout is still coursing through my veins.

0:45:13.8 Jordan Syatt: Alright, we're gonna go record next week's episode right now. Let's go.

0:45:14.0 Mike Vacanti: Bang.