

S4E51 Transcript

MS Hope: A Conversation with Mathew Embry

Geoff Allix (00:01):

Welcome to Living Well with MS, the podcast from Overcoming MS, the world's leading multiple sclerosis healthy lifestyle charity, celebrating its 10th year of serving the MS community. I'm your host, Geoff Allix. The goal of our organization and this podcast is to inform, support, and empower people with MS to lead full and happy lives. We're excited you could join us for this new episode. Make sure to check out this episode's show notes for more information and useful links. You can find these on our website at www.overcomingms.org/podcast or in whichever podcast platform you use to tune into our program. If you enjoy the show, please spread the word about us on your social media channels or leave a review wherever you tune into our podcast. Have questions or ideas to share? Email us at podcast@overcomingms.org, or you can reach out to me directly on Twitter, @GeoffAllix. We'd love to hear from you. Finally, don't forget to subscribe to Living Well with MS on your favorite podcast platform so you never miss an episode.

Geoff Allix (01:05):

And now let's meet our guest for this episode. Welcome to today's episode of the Living Well with MS podcast. On today's episode, I'm joined by Mathew Embry. Mathew Embry was diagnosed with MS in 1995 and is now living relapse free, which he attributes to lifestyle modification, following recommendations from his father, a research scientist. He created the documentary Living Proof, available worldwide on Amazon Prime, to discuss his life story. He also has the MS Hope website, which includes resources about his recommendations for lifestyle modification. Although there are some differences between the MS Hope approach and OMS, there are many more similarities. So welcome to the Living Well with MS podcast, Mathew Embry.

Mathew Embry (01:51):

Thank you for having me on the podcast. I really appreciate it.

Geoff Allix (01:55):

And for any of our listeners who aren't aware of who you are, and it is in the show notes about your documentary, Living Proof on Amazon Prime, which I'd definitely recommend. But if they are unaware of you, could you just tell us a little bit about yourself? Where you're from, your life, and MS in your life as well.

Mathew Embry (02:17):

Yeah, sure. I mean, again, my name's Mathew. I live in Calgary, in Canada. I'm 46 years old now... Or sorry, 45. I'm turning 46 this year.

Geoff Allix (02:29):

It's my birthday next week and I'm 51 next week.

Mathew Embry (02:33):

Yeah. And I was diagnosed with MS in 1995, when I was 19. And what I've done is, over the years and over the past decade, I guess, I really tried to share my journey with people all over the world, and how I've implemented science-based nutrition, exercise, and vitamin D and just different strategies to be able to control my MS. And it's been really interesting because my job is, I'm a filmmaker. That's what I do. I'm a director, producer. So I've been able to integrate both my journey with multiple sclerosis and my craft as a filmmaker to be able to share information with people that will hopefully make their lives better.

Geoff Allix (03:21):

What's the main name of the approach? MS Hope approach, would you call it? I know you sort of have the name of the diet and you have the...

Mathew Embry (03:30):

Yeah. Well, the diet's actually called the Best Bet Diet, and that was created by my father, my dad, Ashton Embry. He is actually Dr. Ashton Embry but he's a research scientist... He's not a medical doctor, he's a research PhD. He created that diet back in 1995. And the diet is... You can find it on MS Hope.com. And MS Hope.com is kind of an outreach website. It's one that we tried, I tried my absolute best to distill the information to make it as easy for people as possible to learn about it and to be able to implement it into their lives.

Geoff Allix (04:09):

What would you say are the core principles then of your approach?

Mathew Embry (04:14):

The core diet principles are dairy free, gluten free, low saturated fat, low sugar. We don't have beans in the diet either. Eggs are limited. And for sure, we ask people, make sure people get their... If they're allergic to eggs checked, things like that. And lots of vegetables, lean meat, fish, lots of fish, if you can get it. And then we have a whole list of supplements, high dose vitamin D and then regular vigorous exercise is part of the program.

Geoff Allix (04:54):

Okay. So I think, yeah, there is a lot of overlap between your, the diet, and the whole MS Hope approach and Overcoming MS, certainly. And I would say to people who are new to these programs, I think those overlaps, and I hope you'd agree... Those overlaps, things like dairy, they're the big hitters, really. Well, exercise is one, you really... And that's a classic thing. My father who had MS, he was told not to exercise. So the approach has drastically changed. I'm trying to think of other things because there's so many overlaps really. And the diet's quite similar, low saturated fat, low process or no processed food. Definitely no dairy. Vitamin D's in both of them. Exercise, both of them. What's your thoughts on smoking? That's one didn't come [crosstalk 00:05:47].

Mathew Embry (05:46):

No, no, no, not at all. Smoking's not... A no go.

Geoff Allix (05:48):

I kind of assumed that because it's just bad for you, but you don't mention that. Yeah. Overcoming MS, they do say no smoking, straightaway. Definitely. Not just on the fact that it's a really bad idea for everyone, but actually specifically for people with MS. So what does a typical Mathew Embry day look like?

Mathew Embry (06:10):

I get asked that question quite a bit and it's... I don't want to come across like it's boring, but it's certainly routine. And I think, yeah. I've got two children, I've got two dogs and I manage a career as well. And for me, I try to... It's very routine. I get up, I have a breakfast that's in line with the Best Bet Diet. And then 90% plus of the time, I exercise right away. And if you get ahold of me and if you want to work with me, you'll often get an email from me saying, "Well, I'll meet you after 10:30 or I'm available after 10:30 in the morning." Because that time for me is work too. It's getting to the gym, it's doing runs. It's getting some activity. And it's a huge part of my process. Just, it's major. And it's somewhat non-negotiable. If I can't get that workout in the morning, sometimes you'll find me on the... Downstairs, on our elliptical trainer at 10 o'clock at night. It's so, such part of the fundamentals of my program.

Geoff Allix (07:14):

So it doesn't have to be morning? It's flexible around lifestyle?

Mathew Embry (07:19):

It is. And I really try to share with people, if you follow me on social media, things like that, I try to share with people how to do that because it's not easy to be able to find that time. So I try to share tips and strategies that I've learned to be able to make that time daily. And that's about eliminating things in your life, but it's also, to be able to add it. Because that can be really hard for people. And then the remainder of my day is, like most other people, I work. I have to do my job. You know, I have to have my responsibilities with my family, family responsibilities.

Mathew Embry (07:52):

I try to make time for prayer and meditation, these mindful pieces. And that can be walking too. But definitely time to be in my own head, and training that mind to control negative thoughts, which is... That is not an easy process.

Geoff Allix (08:10):

Yeah. We are recording this a few weeks before it actually goes out, but we're right in the middle of the Ukraine war, really. Which I mean, especially over here, it's very easy to start doom scrolling through news and that's another thing. I mean, it's a core part of OMS. One of the pillars is meditation and mindfulness, which you just touched on there. But I know that's... It's not, again, it's not really mentioned, but would you say that's an important aspect? Whether that be traditional mindfulness or meditation, like audio, or it could be prayer, you mentioned. It could be... I mean, I think walking. Why we say mindfulness rather than meditation I think is, you can be mindfully walking. You can be mindfully riding your bike.

Mathew Embry (09:02):

Yeah. I agree.

Geoff Allix (09:03):

You don't have to be sitting there with your fingers in the right pose and doing some yoga mantra.

Mathew Embry (09:10):

Yeah. I totally agree with you. And I think that those practices are really personal. I don't feel like I should, that I have the right or anything to tell someone how to do that. I just think that there's a lot of ways that you can access that. Well, it's tough because you have to make the time. Right? So once you make the time, then it's about implementing a practice. And I agree with you. Going for a long walk in nature or even just finding that space mentally to be able, just to stop. Try to tune out the negativity, and just... It's training the mind. And that's how I see it. I see it like it's a discipline thing. Diet's discipline. Exercise is discipline. And the mindfulness is being disciplined with what thoughts you're going to entertain and how you're going to learn to control those two streams, almost. Like the good and the bad thoughts coming at us. It seems to be a little uncontrollable.

Geoff Allix (10:01):

Yeah. I think it was someone, it might have been Jon Kabat-Zinn or someone like that who said, "If you can't find half an hour for mindfulness every day, you need to find an hour for mindfulness every day." Which I think is a pretty good quote.

Geoff Allix (10:15):

So, talking about exercise then. You're sort of saying you exercise every day. I mean, I've seen things where they've said actually... I've looked through loads of exercise programs really just to sort of advise people. I've tried to sort of dip into most of the big ones, whether that be the MS Gym, Gretchen Hawley. You know Gretchen and-

Mathew Embry (10:41):

Yeah.

Geoff Allix (10:41):

... Gretchen does a lot of stuff with us, and a lot of those MS specific exercise things, and some of them are very much like, oh, no more than five times a week. Some of them seven, some of them even down to three, I think. But I think you say every day you do some exercise, is that right?

Mathew Embry (11:02):

Yeah. Yeah. I do. And again, I'm not an expert or a doctor, so I'm not giving advice for people to do this.

Geoff Allix (11:12):

This is the advice of a filmmaker.

Mathew Embry (11:13):

I don't want to come across... Yeah. This is what I do. And I think that I share that journey where this is what I do every day. I try my best to exercise every single day. And I think people have posted on my thing, "Oh, you need a rest day," or "You got to give your body a break." And I just don't buy that. I just don't, because there's been too many times in my history and the last 20 years where I've been, let's just say fatigued, where I'm just super tired, and mentally I get some brain fog. If I would've taken a rest day, I would've sat down, but I have gone to the gym or gone for a run and I feel a hundred percent better afterwards. I've like restarted my day. And so I had to learn that in my process, but I mean, there's just too many times that that's happened.

Geoff Allix (11:54):

But can you adapt what you do? So, I mean, like... So personally, today I have a weekly session with my, we have this neuroactive thing, which is we have a neurophysio and she does a weekly session with us. It was quite a muscle workout. You know, I was doing a lot of dead lifts and my legs are feeling it definitely. But then tomorrow I would be like, okay, tomorrow's going to be more of a cardio day. I'll probably go on the bike. I'm not going to work the same muscles. I'm going to be looking at... So.

Mathew Embry (12:32):

Sure. Yeah. That makes sense.

Geoff Allix (12:34):

Does that work? Is it like, okay, well, if I've done a lot of cardio today, I could do a lot of strength tomorrow or swimming or something different?

Mathew Embry (12:46):

Well, yeah. I mean, again, I'm not an expert in this, but one thing I have learned over the years is I just kind of listen to my body. And my body will give me cues for what it almost wants to do. And I just kind of listen. I'm like, all right, you want to do this today? Let's go do this. So people post, "Can you set up a regimented workout plan?" I'm like, "Well, I can't really, because I don't really know what I'm going to do."

Mathew Embry (13:04):

I know I'm going to the gym. I know I'm going out to nature, but once I get there, I kind of change it up. And that's also part of my process that I share. Sometimes that changing it up is an internal dialogue that's happening while I'm doing it. And I think that's another part of the process. Where, I get to the gym, I'm only going to be here for 20 minutes, but then 15 minutes in, I'm renegotiating with myself to go a little bit further.

Geoff Allix (13:30):

Yeah.

Mathew Embry (13:32):

And if I'm too structured, then I find, I can't have that same, listening to what the body wants. But I wouldn't overdo anything if that makes sense.

Geoff Allix (13:42):

Yeah. So you're not going to injure yourself.

Mathew Embry (13:44):

No.

Geoff Allix (13:45):

Yeah. There was an interesting... A guy in the UK, Scotland, I think, called Graeme Obree, who was a cyclist. And he had the one-hour record for a while and he was quite an interesting character because he made his own bikes. And they made really weird, structured bikes and they ended up banning all of those because you have to use a normal bike eventually. But one of the things he said was that he would go out, he'd get fully in his cycling gear and he'd go out, get on his bike and be on the road before he'd allow himself to say that he ate too much to go cycling.

He'd go through all the prep. So you wouldn't have that excuse of... He'd be there, he'd be on his bike and then say, "No, my legs are really sore. I really shouldn't be doing it, and I'll get off." But he had to make himself, even if he knew he was [crosstalk 00:14:31].

Mathew Embry (14:30):
I understand.

Geoff Allix (14:31):
And I thought, "Yeah, okay, I get that." You've kind of... And then once you take that first step, you're like, "Yeah, actually it's nice. It's outside and it's yeah." Or make yourself run in the rain. You know? If it's raining, I'm still going to go out running. I'm just... Because once you do it, it's okay. It's all right.

Mathew Embry (14:47):
Once you do it. And then the question is that conversation is daily and that's... I also try to share with the people, I've been in this for over 20 years. I still get it. I get it. You know, yesterday morning I woke up and it was minus whatever, here in Canada. I don't want to run outside. But as soon as I get going, then I'm like, let's go.

Geoff Allix (15:04):
Yeah. And so one of the things I've seen, sort of hashtags and things, and the saying you have is, "No cheat days." So does that apply? Is that for everything? Or is that for exercise, for diet? What do you mean by... When I see your hashtag, "No cheat days," what does that mean?

Mathew Embry (15:25):
Again, this is in response to so many people asking me if I've had a cheat day. That used to be one of the most often asked questions. So I'm like, "Well, no, I don't." And I think that's... The part of this program is the vigilance and the discipline. And I try to really share that with people that there's no kind of off switch here. Let's say when it comes to dairy, there's been recent science that's come out to demonstrate how problematic dairy could possibly be. Well, if you're going to have that once a week, I think that works out to about 15% of your life. You're going to be having dairy. Well, don't expect to be at a hundred percent if 15% of your life you're eating things that are detrimental to you.

Mathew Embry (16:07):
So then, well, and if that's your level, if 85% is as high as you want to get, okay, then that's as high as you want to go. But you're only going down from there, in my opinion. So then the question is, okay, with no cheat days, well, every single day is an opportunity to reach and pursue optimal health. And it's up to you. As each choice comes in, each meal you have, each time you exercise, each opportunity you take to be positive and do these types of things, how high you want to take your life?

Geoff Allix (16:35):
And how would you measure progress for people? Let's say specifically with exercise, how would you measure someone's progress? Because it's, we're not typical of the general population. I've got MS, you've got MS. So how do you measure your progress with exercise? Because I've come from a background where I ran, I did marathons. I did a lot of sports and stuff and my kids are crazily sporty. So it's all about times, it's all about distances, all about weights. But how do you measure progress now?

Mathew Embry (17:11):
For me it's still, it's incremental. And I try to share that with people. I mean, I'm doing things too that are quite, whatever that would mean, at a level where they're competitive, but for me it's still... It's incremental shift. So if someone's struggling with disability, like with disabilities, okay, can you walk to the end of your driveway today? Well then, can you walk to the end of your driveway plus a little bit down the block and get back? And it's like, you've got to be able to find those. And I think your point to make, to find those measurables is really important because how do you know if you're getting better?

Mathew Embry (17:48):
I don't know.

Geoff Allix (17:48):
Yeah.

Mathew Embry (17:49):
And so in someone's journey, maybe it's walking around the block, in one year, is a big thing. Well, that's fantastic. That's the goal. Measure every single day, how you are going to get there. And that's one thing I talked about too, is hard accounting. And that hard accounting is when are you going to, when do you decide to do that? Are you going to do that weekly? Are you going to do that monthly? Where you're just accounting for your time and you're holding yourself accountable for what you've done. So for me, it's a little bit of a blur right now because it's races that I'm going for, I'm trying to achieve. But I'm still trying to figure it out, can I do this? Can I do that? What is this going to take? And then trying to measure how I feel on a... Almost on a daily basis.

Geoff Allix (18:33):
Yeah. And I think the smart watch is quite a handy thing to have, because that's the thing I use. I'm like, "Okay, I've got to do as many steps as I did yesterday." Try and just... Because I know, yeah. I'm not going to increase it. If I increased it by a thousand steps every day, then before I knew it that'd be, I'd be running constantly. But if I could just get... Yeah, that's my benchmark. Just like, okay. Just a little bit further. If we could just get a little bit further.

Mathew Embry (18:59):
Yeah.

Geoff Allix (19:01):
Because yeah, I mean, and we are middle aged men, so ultimately, we're not maybe at our athletic peak. I know I'm not going to hit the physical things that I did before I had MS, and certainly when I was 20, but yeah. But if I'm improving a little bit each time.

Mathew Embry (19:21):
Yeah. But you're bringing up a really interesting idea that I've been giving a lot of thought to lately about sports systems. Because you said something interesting. And just what you said. You said, "I'm not at the peak of my life." Well, you're not at the peak of your life in regard to where you were in a certain system. So when you were 25, that may have been peak athleticism for you at... For 25 to say 28-year-olds.

Mathew Embry (19:44):
Okay. But at 50 or 45, whatever I am, what's peak athleticism at where I should be?

Geoff Allix (19:50):
Yes. That's a very good point. Yeah.

Mathew Embry (19:54):
And I think it's about... What I think, where our society globally maybe has gone wrong, is we stop. Once you're through college sports and maybe you played semi-pro or something or whatever the case, then it's just like, "Well, that's as far as you go." And like, that's the peak. Well, for me, I redefine that. Where I'm like, no, no, no. I need to find out where my peak is now at 45, and how am I competing there? Because no one cares what I did yesterday, but people still care what I do today. So am I still at the peak? Or can I... Am I finding the peak of where I should be today?

Geoff Allix (20:27):
That's a really good... Yeah. A good way of looking at it, I think for, yeah. Because a lot of people I think, who are not necessarily diagnosed, but certainly coming around to lifestyle modification. A lot of the people I come across are in that age range of certainly thirties, forties, fifties. And so yeah, maybe they shouldn't be judging... And it's very

difficult to judge yourself against who you were before. Before I had MS. My balance is a bit shot now. It's like, I'm not going to be doing some of the things I was doing then. So. But yeah, I'm a nearly 51-year-old guy with MS, so I'm doing well for that.

Mathew Embry (21:10):
Yeah, exactly.

Geoff Allix (21:11):
Yeah.

Mathew Embry (21:12):
Yeah. I get it.

Geoff Allix (21:14):
And what would you say is the best type of exercise for people with MS?

Mathew Embry (21:19):
Well, this is a good question. I mean, I actually met Dr. Jelinek in Australia years ago. It was one of the... Well, one of the peak experiences of my life, probably. He's such a hero to me and we were able to talk and he said something that really stuck with me. He said the two words, "Vigorous exercise." And I was like, that's it. That's exactly it. That's what I've been doing. It's vigorous. And it's getting the blood flow and it's... So the question becomes, okay, well then it doesn't really matter what you do as long as it's vigorous. As long as you're getting the blood flowing and you're getting that, the prosody out of the brain, whether that be the blood, or I don't know how the lymph system works, but all those types of things are just kind of flow. Like the blood flow. So that's where I share with people. And I do Q and A's, I'm like, "I don't care what you do. Just do something."

Geoff Allix (22:14):
But you're actually... So when you say that blood flow, you're getting out of breath, you're getting like-

Mathew Embry (22:19):
Yeah, I'm getting out of breath, I'm sweating, I'm turning red.

Geoff Allix (22:25):
Yeah.

Mathew Embry (22:25):
You know, I'm doing all those things. And that's what I remember Dr. Jelinek said that he did too. It made total sense to me. I'm like, that's so... That's what I've been doing as well.

Geoff Allix (22:32):
He also lives near to an outdoor swimming pool, which I'm really jealous of, but.

Mathew Embry (22:36):
Yeah, right.

Geoff Allix (22:37):
Yeah. If I had a 50-meter outdoor swimming pool and lived in a country which was warm enough to use it every day, that'd be fantastic. So, yeah. So I think that's a key point there. So you, so it's really that sort of getting out of breath, not just like doing bicep curls and getting big guns, is not necessarily going to do everything for your health in that respect then.

Mathew Embry (23:06):

I don't know. I can't necessarily speak to that because I didn't, that's not what I've done. It's been 26 years now of vigorous exercise. And whether that's running, swimming, sports, all sorts of different things. And I think that blood flow component has been major for me. And I think if you are lifting weights and you're doing that thing and you are getting the blood flow, then maybe that does it too. But I don't, I just don't know. I've also looked online and seen like apparatus that they're creating to create that type of blood flow for people who maybe can't stand up. They pump the legs and they pump the arms, they just... To get that blood flowing. And I'm really interested in that for people. And I just think that blood flow and that circulation is just so important for good health.

Geoff Allix (23:53):

So that comes on to the point I was going to make. People with mobility problems. So what would you suggest if someone's, maybe they're in a wheelchair, maybe they're bed bound, can they still do exercise in that way?

Mathew Embry (24:09):

That's a tough question. I mean, I think that's where experts like Dr. Gretchen Hawley come in, where they can offer people solutions to that. And then again, I also look at these other apparatuses or these medical devices. Can these be... I don't know if they're helpful, but I think we should look at them. And if they are creating additional blood flow for people who are immobile, then that seems really important. But the one thing I do share over and over too is just, do what you can, whatever stage you're in. Just from my perspective, you got to keep moving.

Geoff Allix (24:46):

Yeah. There was, I can't remember. It was one of the MS exercise specialists was just showing that people could do essentially running in a chair. Doing the upper body bit of running, you can get really out of breath. And there's a guy I interviewed, Marc Webb, who... He plays wheelchair rugby.

Mathew Embry (25:05):

Right. Wow.

Geoff Allix (25:05):

And I think, yeah, that, I mean... Yeah, he's not got the balance and everything to use, for his legs, but that looks like a pretty full-on workout. And it mentioned something else that I've seen you bring up as well about team sports. So what do you think the benefit of team sports is?

Mathew Embry (25:25):

Again, that's a complicated question. I think that there's... Like for team sports, I think they're, it's so important to learn how to get along with people. You know, that's one thing for sure. The other aspect is I think it also holds you accountable. And I think that's also important in this journey. You know, the accountability mirror for me is literally looking at myself, but I also... Just because I've gone public, I'm now accountable to all these people.

Geoff Allix (25:56):

Yeah.

Mathew Embry (25:56):

So, if I say, "No cheat days," well, I better live it. And if I haven't worked out, whatever the case, I have a sense of accountability. And then also too, I think for people... I mean the one thing with people I worry about sometimes with MS is they may feel, "Because I have MS I can't participate at a certain level." And that's where I think a team sport could be really important. Where, you go swim with people who don't have MS, or don't talk about this type of stuff. Well, that's good too. I think that's all really great to integrate it, to be able to integrate into other populations and not feel less than, or those types of things that I think something people can struggle with. Maybe I have at times wondered, you know.

Mathew Embry (26:40):

Actually, that's not true. I've always been pretty, "I have MS, I'm coming for you."

Geoff Allix (26:46):

And how about if people have heat issues? Do you have anything to deal with that side of things? Because I mean, I think it goes both ways actually as well. Because I mean, I have heat issues and I don't deal with heat well, like high temperatures well, since I've had MS. But I've been snowboarding a few times with MS, and I just, I go snowboarding now. I don't have a whole load of thermal stuff on. Really quite limited amount, compared to what I used to have, when I was younger. Because when it's cold, I'm great. But when it's hot, much less so.

Mathew Embry (27:20):

Interesting. Yeah. Interesting.

Geoff Allix (27:23):

[crosstalk 00:27:23] The other way around, where they go, "Oh I know, heat's great. I'm fine with heat, but no to cold. I'm terrible."

Mathew Embry (27:27):

Yeah. I'm that. I'm that person. [crosstalk 00:27:30].

Geoff Allix (27:29):

You live in the wrong place.

Mathew Embry (27:32):

Even before doing this interview, I had to get a sweater because I'm like, I'm going to get cold here. I've had to find ways to stay warm. And I think that's... It's no different than with the cooling. And it's interesting you bring it up because someone just wrote me, they're going to send me a cooling vest. And for me, I don't really, I don't necessarily need it, but I'm like, "Okay, great." And I actually thought, "Maybe I'll go on social media and see who needs it?" And then I'll give it away and then see how they do. Like if they write me back and say, "This has been fantastic, maybe I'll send it to you."

Mathew Embry (28:00):

Like, if this has really helped me, then go for it. It's about finding environments that you're able to do it. Like you said, in the snow, that sounds great. And it's about finding the gear. I mean, if you see me at the gym, I come in with a tank. I have another layer on. I wear these types of wool shirts to the gym because I know I've got to be able to heat up. And once I can heat up, then I'm good to go. But getting there is challenging for me, but you can put me in a sauna for a long time.

Geoff Allix (28:33):

Oh I see that. Yeah. I mean, it is funny, isn't it? I don't know if there's much research we've done on this because it does seem to affect everyone with MS, one way or the other. But I've literally, I've been in the sauna once since I've been diagnosed with MS.

Mathew Embry (28:48):

Really?

Geoff Allix (28:49):

And that was at Glastonbury Festival. Glastonbury's not so far from me so I go quite a lot and there's a sauna there and you can... It's a place where you can get a shower, which is an important thing at Glastonbury Festival. But it was terrible. I literally, I thought I'm not going to get out of here. This is so... It was like, I just couldn't walk.

Mathew Embry (29:15):

Wow.

Geoff Allix (29:15):

Really. And then I basically laid down on the grass for about half an hour because I was just in terrible state. But yeah. I just, yeah. Be interesting if there's some research done. I'm sure there... Maybe there is. But just avoid it, basically, is what you're saying. You want to go for warm? I'll go for cold.

Mathew Embry (29:30):
Yeah.

Geoff Allix (29:31):
[crosstalk 00:29:31] look at each other. So I look through your outside window, I can see there in front of the... Nice and cold outside.

Mathew Embry (29:36):
Yeah. It's cold.

Geoff Allix (29:39):
The way you looked at that was with worry. I'd look at that as, yeah, I quite fancy [inaudible 00:29:45]. So one more exercise question. More weight or more reps, would you say is good for you with exercise?

Mathew Embry (29:55):
Again, this is from a personal experience, I'm a rep kind of person. For me, it's all about reps. I got weights downstairs, nothing more than 25 pounds. That's been part of my process. Again, I'm not an expert in this, so maybe there's someone who knows more, but my process has been endurance running, low weight, high reps. And that's been over 25 years now.

Geoff Allix (30:26):
I was thinking this today because I was doing some reasonable weight for me, now, but I'm kind of still going with what I did when I was younger, which was, let's start out with three sets of eight. Then you do three sets of 10. Then you do three sets of 12. Once you can do three sets of 12, you go up a weight, you go back to three sets of eight.

Mathew Embry (30:49):
Yeah, I remember that. Yeah.

Geoff Allix (30:52):
And I was doing that today and I thought, "I don't know if this is the best way of doing it." I don't know whether I should be [inaudible 00:30:58]. Why am I stopping at 12? I've seen some exercise stuff with you and you seem to be actually almost like you're not really doing reps. You're like, "Actually no, I'm going to do a lower weight and I'm just going to keep doing it for a lot longer."

Mathew Embry (31:14):
Keep doing it. Yeah. For a lot longer. And I don't use things like weight benches and that type of stuff. I try to do a lot of balance as well. If I'm doing weights, I'm lifting my legs at the same time and trying to figure out, not like jumping jacks, but always moving.

Geoff Allix (31:30):
Yeah.

Mathew Embry (31:31):
That kind of thing. So I don't really use those traditional machines either that much.

Geoff Allix (31:36):
And that's-

Mathew Embry (31:39):

I see it like a... I have a really paleolithic kind of perspective of my body. So I just think, "What would a cave person do?" You know, they'd lift a rock and they'd... What would they need to do?

Geoff Allix (31:55):

And that applies to so many things as well. Vitamin D. We would've lived somewhere sunny and we might have worn a rabbit pelt round our waist or something. Yeah.

Mathew Embry (32:07):

Sure.

Geoff Allix (32:07):

We'd have got loads of vitamin D. We wouldn't have had dairy because we didn't have a farm full of cows, let alone cheese. We just ate what we could find. And we did loads of exercise. We got loads of vitamin D. We ate natural food that we could forage and find. And basically, we're almost saying, I mean, I don't... This paleo is sort of like almost tagline now, isn't it? And that's not necessarily... Sometimes you think, "Really? They actually eat that?" Like Bulletproof coffees and things, but yeah, if you sort of think, yeah, it does make sense. A lot of that stuff, that's kind of how we're made, isn't it?

Geoff Allix (32:50):

It's really interesting to speak to you. I think there's a lot of stuff. There's certainly... I mean, I don't like this idea of Overcoming MS or MS Hope being in competition because I've certainly heard that sort of thing in the past. I just think we need to look at the overlaps between all these things, and there's so many similarities. And in fact, the more I speak to you, some of the things which may be that are not necessarily highlighted by your website, like, "Yeah, don't smoke. Do something mindful."

Geoff Allix (33:15):

And all those things like vitamin D, we mentioned, exercise, whole food diet is... I just think, yeah. For everyone really. So could I ask you one last question though? Something we often ask people. If someone's newly diagnosed with MS, what would be your key, best piece of advice to them?

Mathew Embry (33:41):

Change their diet right now.

Geoff Allix (33:43):

And go-

Mathew Embry (33:45):

... Right now.

Geoff Allix (33:45):

Full on? Like you have to do it a hundred percent?

Mathew Embry (33:49):

Yeah.

Geoff Allix (33:49):

Yeah.

Mathew Embry (33:50):

Yeah. Because I think that it's... I mean, I don't want to get too kind of out there, but illness is... For me, now I've had this over 25 years. Okay? So I have a very different maybe perspective now. I almost see sometimes, not all the time, but sometimes illness can be a call to adventure and it can be... It can change your whole journey. For you to go, "Okay, here I am today. And here's where I want to go, to opt towards optimal health." Well, going towards optimal

health is going to... You're going to have to transform your life radically. Because your life to that point, got you there. "Okay. Got it. Now, what do I have to change to not have this outcome, which is illness or disease?" The key component to that, one of the keys, is nutrition. And that is very hard to shift. It's very hard to change.

Geoff Allix (34:45):

And one of the things that George [inaudible 00:34:49] says, it's like turning around an oil tanker as well. So yeah, it's not a quick fix. You're going to have to... And like you're saying, start day one. Because if you don't start turning the oil tanker, it's not going to turn. It's going to take a long time to turn it around. You need to turn, keep it going in another direction is a difficult thing.

Mathew Embry (35:06):

Yeah. And then I think that... but it can start right now. If you're listening to this podcast, you can go to your fridge and change. And that's where I try to tell people, "It's you. You have the power to have incredible transformation in your life right now. You just need to decide." And then I also tell people too, "Find the outcomes you're looking for. Find the people who you look at and you think, hey, that's what I want to be." And then go learn what they did. You know? And the thing is people who normally succeed in something, they want to tell you all about it because they've enjoyed it, and they enjoy where they are. And so they... Why would you not want to share it? And so you're in luck. Not only can you find the person you want to aspire to, that person's very likely going to want to help you get there.

Geoff Allix (35:57):

Okay. With that, thank you very much, Mat Embry, and I'd encourage everyone to have a look. The links are all on the show notes. Mathew is... I call you Mat again. Sorry. I keep saying-

Mathew Embry (36:08):

That's okay.

Geoff Allix (36:09):

I want to call you Mat. So Mathew's all over social media. You'll find links to all his different social media outlets, but yeah. Check out the MS Hope website as well.

Mathew Embry (36:19):

All right. Thank you very much.

Geoff Allix (36:27):

Thank you for listening to this episode of Living Well with MS. Please check out this episode's show notes at www.overcomingms.org/podcast. You'll find all sorts of useful links and bonus information there. Do you have questions about this episode or ideas about future ones? Email us at podcast@overcomingms.org. We'd love to hear from you. You can also subscribe to the show on your favorite podcast platform, so you never miss an episode.

Geoff Allix (36:55):

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Geoff Allix (37:38):

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