



Live Better, Longer: Tips to Improve Sleep Quality and Stress Management with Dr. Andrew Abraham (ep-60)

[[00:00:00] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Poor sleep, like, literally accelerates your biological aging. So it's not just about feeling tired. And proof to this is when we do a the time zone change, when we have to do spring forward or anything like that. When we lose an hour that next day studies have shown we have much higher incidences of heart attacks that next thing just from losing an hour of sleep.

[00:00:22] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** If I told you to get more sleep and reduce your stress, it sounds like obvious advice. But even though we all know sleep and managing stress are important, their true impact on our health span is profound. When it comes to extending not just our lifespan, but our healthspan, the science behind sleep and stress is too compelling to ignore. Joining me again to explore this topic is integrative medicine physician and Orgain founder, Dr. Andrew Abraham. As we continue our series on the four pillars of health span, today we're diving into the two that often get overlooked, quality sleep and effective stress management. In this episode, we explore how poor sleep is linked to chronic conditions like Alzheimer's and heart disease, and why building strong, supportive communities may be one of the most powerful things we can do for our health. Welcome to Ask Dr. Ginger, the segment where I answer your questions about all things nutrition. Today's question is a great one. What role does diet play in improving sleep quality? Are there specific foods or eating habits that support better rest? I love this question. And this short answer is yes, absolutely. There are several nutrition and lifestyle habits that can support more restful sleep. And I talk about this with my clients all the time. One of my most used tips is to limit alcohol and caffeine consumption later in the day as they are both sleep disruptors in different ways. Alcohol can cause blood sugar changes while you're sleeping

and caffeine is actually a stimulant. And this includes caffeine and hidden sources like chocolate or even tea. There's also research that shows a lack of sleep causes people to consume more calories or make more unhealthy choices the next day. I find small adjustments like these can make a bigger difference than you think. So in our last conversation, we covered the first two pillars of health span. That's exercise and diet. And I'm super excited to talk about the next two pillars, because I think they're so important but maybe less talked about, sleep and stress management. I feel like everyone's like, "Sleep more" or "Be less stressed," but it's a little bit more complicated than that. So we need to spend some time here, and I'd love to start with sleep. So maybe you can talk to me about. What happens in our bodies during sleep that links sleep to long-term health.

[00:02:56] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah, first I'd say sleep is probably one of the most critical functions for us. It's really when the body shifts into repair mode. So during sleep for us, your brain clears out metabolic waste. We have something called the glymphatic system, which clears out this metabolic waste, so basically it's a nightly detox for our brain. Our muscles are being repaired, our immune system is being strengthened, hormones like growth hormone, melatonin are released. Also during REM sleep or rapid eye movement, this is when our memory consolidation happens. Simply, put sleep is when the body heals, it's when it resets, it's what it regenerates, and without it, everything from metabolism to our cognition starts to break down.

[00:03:37] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** It's like a master regulator, it sounds like.

[00:03:40] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** That's right.

[00:03:41] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Well, we know that getting poor sleep is negative for a variety of reasons, but how much damage can long-term sleep deprivation do, would you say?

[00:03:52] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah, and I'd probably say that I'm a walking experiment of this. I mean, during the early days of Orgain for many, many years, I slept for very few hours every night. And I think chronic poor sleep is a major risk factor for nearly every age-related disease. So as we think about our stress hormones, like cortisol and inflammation, that goes up when we don't sleep well. Insulin resistance, actually. So our risk for blood sugar and increased blood sugar, and diabetes goes up because it increases insulin resistance, our immune function goes down. You'll notice that if you have a couple nights of poor sleep, you're a lot more prone to getting sick. We talked about that glymphatic system, so if you had an elevated risk of Alzheimer's disease actually because you have decreased amyloid clearance, which we need a substance in the brain that we need to clear in order to avoid Alzheimer's disease. But even scarier, it correlates with higher rates of cardiovascular disease and in cancer. So poor sleep like literally accelerates your biological aging. So it's not just about feeling tired. And proof to this is when we do a, the time zone change, when we have to do spring forward or anything like that, when we lose an hour that next day, studies have shown we have much higher incidences of heart attacks that next day, just from losing an hour of sleep. So it is critically important across the board.

[00:05:10] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** I want the time change to stop, because the research shows that it's not good for us. It needs to stop.

[00:05:16] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Me too, you just got to sleep an extra hour earlier and try to offset it, but yeah.

[00:05:20] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Yeah, it's really challenging. I feel like we have these blanket recommendations, like drink eight glasses of water a day, sleep eight hours a day. But I find that that's not right for every person. How do you approach the sleep recommendations? How do help guide people there?

[00:05:35] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah, I think the bottom line is everybody's different, right? Some people thrive on seven, some may need closer to nine. Some are okay on six and a half. I think your genetics, age, your activity level, your health status, all play a role. But more important than just looking at an hours of sleep or hitting a number, it's really that sleep quality and consistency. How much deep sleep are you getting? That's really, that restorative sleep that matters the most. If you're sleeping eight hours and you have 30 minutes of deep sleep, it is not ideal. I'd rather sleep seven and have an hour and a half of deep sleep, right? So it's the quality of that sleep. Are you waking up rested? Are you dreaming? Are you staying asleep through the night? I think that's where the real insight lies. It's not just how many hours you sleep. I think you should look at the quality of your sleep.

[00:06:21] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** I keep a little eye on my Fitbit helps tell me, how do you track it? How do you know of this stuff?

[00:06:26] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah, so I track it using the Oura Ring. So I have a ring that kind of just goes on my finger. I tried something on my wrist. I don't like sleeping with something on my wrist, but everyone's different. And that has helped to track my sleep, and tell me how I'm doing in the morning. But you can't become obsessive about it. Sometimes I wake up and I'm like, wow, I felt pretty good. And then I look at my sleep score and it says you had a horrible night. And then subconsciously, my day is ruined. But I think you have to learn a healthy balance, take the information and apply it to you in a way that's realistic.

[00:06:55] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** It's that way with so many forms of tracking. I love tracking in so many ways. I think it's interesting. You learn stuff about yourself, but you have to be especially careful with food tracking. It can be such a double-edged sword. I think sleep tracking too, it can kind of mess with your relationship to those positive things. So I like it and it's challenging.

[00:07:14] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** That's right. I agree with you.

[00:07:17] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** You mentioned REM sleep and deep sleep. Could you talk me a little bit more through especially REM and its role?

[00:07:25] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Sure. REM sleep is really all about kind of memory consolidation and that's why that's when we have rapid eye movement, that's when kind of our body goes into a state where we're from a brain perspective, that's where we are getting that rejuvenation. And that's really important. Counter that to deep sleep as we think about restoring our muscles, our body, our organs, that's that deep sleep that we get into. And deep sleep usually happens, right, most of it happens right when we fall asleep for a bit, versus REM goes in these cycles of about 90 minutes or so. That's why they say If you're going to take a nap, it's better to take a shorter nap, a 20 minute nap so that we don't get into these cycles. That's the most restorative for you versus staying too long.

[00:08:03] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** In some of my intake forms, it'll say like, do you wake rested? And sometimes I hear like, well, I sleep for enough time, quote unquote, but I don't wake rested. So maybe there's a problem with REM or deep sleep within like their quality perhaps.

[00:08:18] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah, I think that's right. I mean like what we think about as we think about deep sleep, it's when we think about restoring our tissue and boosting immune function and growth hormone, that's all deep sleep or that slow wave sleep, and that's that physical restoration. But when we thinking about like memory learning, even our emotional regulation, that's REM sleep. And as we age, we actually get less deep sleep and REM. So we have to protect these cycles as much as possible, so that we could maintain both kind of our mental sharpness and also our like our physical vitality, how well we feel.

[00:08:49] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Yeah, absolutely. So if people are waking up after sleeping for eight hours and like not feeling rested, they should look into that. Or I'm forever telling people to go talk to their doctor. Like maybe you need sleep apnea testing or something, like let's look into it, not just let it go.

[00:09:03] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah, and it's one of the most undiagnosed things we have is obstructive sleep apnea. A lot of people would say, I'm always tired, I don't know why I'm tired. I snore a little bit. I don't know how bad it is. It's not that bad. And then they find out they have obstructive asleep apnea. They use a CPAP machine and they wake up feeling like a new person. And that's because the body is getting the right oxygen, you're getting the right deep sleep and REM finally, and your body is renewed.

[00:09:26] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Yeah, I'm very interested in sleep apnea and a barrier to a lot of my patients. They're like, well, I don't want to wear the machine or I don't want to get the sleep test. And there's certainly barriers with getting treatment for this. But I always like to tell people, do you know what's on the table here? Like we're talking about you're struggling to hit your weight goals. You're never going to do it, if you have sleep apneas. Type 2 diabetes, a hypertension, they're all so tied to sleep apnoea, and we're not going to gain traction if this is untreated for you.

[00:09:55] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah, it's a great point you make. I remember during my residency training, I had a patient with uncontrolled high blood pressure, and he had gone to two doctors, and had been tested, and had taken a lot of medication. And then I asked him, does your wife notice that you snore at night? She says, yeah, she says I snore really loudly. And then, I said, have you ever been tested for this? And he said, no, we did a test and it turns out that he had severe obstructive sleep apnea. We solved it through a CPAP machine, and he ended up coming off all of his medications. It was just that, he was on two medications for blood pressure, and it was just the fact that he had

obstructive sleep apnea that was causing this hypertension, which gives you an idea of how important it is to address.

[00:10:34] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Yeah, I mean it could be the difference between taking multiple medications or not or hitting your health goals or not.

[00:10:40] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** That's right.

[00:10:40] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** That's really interesting. I do educate a lot about working towards consistency with sleep habits, because I know that you almost give yourself social jet lag, where you're going to bed later. Your weekends are hugely different than your weeks. How important is consistency?

[00:10:56] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** I'd probably say it's now from what I've read and seen in the studies, it's probably the most important thing. It's crucial. Like so the brain and body, they thrive on rhythm, right? So irregular sleep disrupts the circadian regulation, the hormone balance, even the metabolic control. So even if your total hours are the same. So if your hours, if you sleep at midnight, and you wake up at six, and then you go to bed at nine, and you wake up at these different times, it changes. So a consistent bedtime and wake up. And I think here's the hard part, even on weekends. Like I know during the weekend we're saying we're going to sleep in, and I think that's obviously fine, but a consistent bedtime and wake up if you're able to achieve that even on the weekends that actually supports much better energy mood and long-term health. So that consistency is key.

[00:11:42] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Yeah, yeah. I think it's something people should focus on more. I do have some really challenging situations. My nurses, my truck drivers, I actually have a couple engineers I work with who do night shift. I mean, what can you share about people that have these unusual schedules?

[00:11:57] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah. I mean, during my residency, that was the hardest part for me. We worked, you know, every, every three days we worked a 30 hour shift. So it was no, no sleep 30 hours every three days, and it's a real challenge, but not impossible. So, you know, some of the key strategies using blackout curtains, making sure it's completely dark, white noise to mimic the night, avoid screens and caffeine, caffeine at all after their shifts. I would say like short-term low-dose, low- dose usage of melatonin helps for those to reset a little bit. And then what they call anchor sleep, a consistent four to five hour block at the same time daily, and then you nap as needed. So having that anchor block is really important. The other thing that's coming to light now is actual light, light exposure therapy to help reset the circadian clock. Like making sure that you're resetting your circadian clocks through light when you wake up. So even imperfect routines help when they're done consistently.

[00:12:53] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Yeah, I like the idea of the anchor sleep. That's very interesting. One thing that I see with some of my patients is like, they're not maybe fueling correctly with nutrition through these long nights, and then they get off work at like three, four in the morning. They're super hungry and they're making choices that aren't really great for them. Like a lot of people are just grabbing fast food on the way home, or eating foods that are just sort of comfort foods. So I'm often working with people that are working night shifts to create a new schedule where, okay, this is your lunch. Well, that might be at midnight or this is you snack that might at 2 A.M. So we need to fuel correctly so that you're not starving when you get off at 3 A.M. and fueling incorrectly. So that's a lot of the work that I do with folks.

[00:13:35] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** And I think it's critical. I think a lot of times on a night shift you're in survival mode and you're just eating whatever is available, and you are even consuming caffeine to stay awake and so forth. And I thing trying to adjust that, to pretend it's during the day, and having those healthy habits during the days will help you recover a lot better.

[00:13:51] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Yeah, yeah. I hope this is really helpful to folks because those schedules can be really challenging, but there is a way that you can utilize your tools to make it better.

[00:14:01] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yes, for sure.

[00:14:02] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Well, we should talk about stress management. This is a really hard one. And whenever I talk about stress with people, they're like, well, there's nothing I can do about the fact that I take care of my sick parent or I have three kids or I work two jobs. I mean, I always tell them, I'm not trying to take your stress away or change your life, but we do need to talk about how stress is affecting you, and how you can interact with your stress in new ways. How do you talk about stress with people?

[00:14:29] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah, I mean, first I explain how bad it is for you, right? Chronic stress is as horrible as it relates to inflammation, higher blood pressure, glucose. It disrupts your sleep, even your digestion. You're basically always at a low level fight or flight mode. So you're always in that sympathetic activated mode. And over time, this leads to wear and tear on the body that accelerates aging and disease risks. So I don't think we could avoid stress in our life. As a matter of fact, some stress is good for us, and it's important. It's how we react to stress. And that's why a lot of monks are considered the healthiest or happiest in the world because the way they react to stress or how they process stress is completely different than how we do. So I think it's inevitable and it's part of life but I think how we react to it is how you manage and mitigate it.

[00:15:18] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** What happens in the body when we experience chronic stress? Like, what happens?

[00:15:23] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah, I mean, you're going to have a consistently elevated cortisol level, you're gonna suppress your immune function, increase inflammatory levels, increase your glucose, blood sugar, really everything in the body is affected through stress, because it affects all kinds of different organs and systems in the bodies. So it's turning, keeping the body on when it should be off.

[00:15:44] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** That's a great way to describe it. And then it's just on all the time. And I talk to people about how cortisol is fight or flight. And if you're getting chased, I always say chased by a tiger, then it spikes, and you escape, and it does its job. But now it's like pumping all the times. And it just puts us into this really challenging health state where our hormones are disrupted, and we are retaining fat for protection, and craving sugar like crazy. And we can't get control over it. And it's hurting our immune system too.

[00:16:14] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** That's exactly right. It's exactly right. And I think once people realize that, they would be more inclined to take measures to mitigate it as much as possible.

[00:16:24] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Yeah, I want to hear more about that because I do think this is a challenging one to help people with. Is there a link between chronic stress and the age-related disease we're talking about? Dementia, heart disease, things like that.

[00:16:36] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Absolutely. So, chronic stress contributes to heart disease because we're getting a higher blood pressure inflammation. Dementia and Alzheimer's because of disrupted sleep, metabolic syndrome, which leads to diabetes and other diseases, autoimmune conditions. So, it really affects everything. Our gene expression, telomere length, which is a sign of longevity, our brain structure, it literally shortens your health span.

[00:16:59] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** I think that's just the bottom line here. Like, the consequences are great, and so we have to deal with it, and it's also hard to deal.

[00:17:08] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yes, for sure.

[00:17:10] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** This episode is brought to you by Orgain. Plant protein sometimes gets a bad rap for its texture, but trust me, it doesn't have to be that way. Orgain's organic plant-based nutrition shake is velvety smooth, and with 16 grams of protein, it's a great vegan alternative to Orgain's dairy-based shake we mentioned in episode one. It's loaded with 21 vitamins and minerals, and comes in two delicious flavors, vanilla bean and smooth chocolate. I mean, you've been through a lot of stress. You went through a big health issue. You started this incredible company. How have you, how has your relationship to stress changed over time?

[00:17:52] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** I've improved quite a bit. It's still certainly a work in progress, and I still have a lot of work to do as it relates to stress. But I've really changed my perspective, and I think I have a few anchors that help me a lot. So walking for me, movement and a clear mind, exercise, I mean there are studies that show exercise releases endorphins in a way that prevents you from needing to go on an antidepressant in many cases or coming off an antidepressant. So exercise, finding that breath work. I found that just breathing for 10 minutes before going to sleep has a really big impact for me on going to sleep. Even when I have trouble falling asleep, I do something called 4-7-8 breathing, where I breathe in for four seconds, hold for seven, and breathe out for eight many times. And if I do that, my body goes from the sympathetic state of stress into a parasympathetic state. So I do it now throughout the day. I think it's really important. Also, trying to have a bit of boundaries with tech. I am attached to my laptop, email, phone, all of that kind of stuff. Can I try to put it away for 30 minutes even at night? Or when I wake up, is it the first thing that I reach for or can I do that breathing exercise in the morning? I think that's important. And then we talked about community in the past, talking to people, whether that's a coach, a therapist, a friend. I

think all of these things help normalize high stress. So it's important to find whatever help you release. It's an outlet. If it's watching funny videos before you go to sleep at night, whatever it is I think you now more than ever you should prioritize and make these things like non-negotiable.

[00:19:28] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** I think the really big challenge for giving advice about stress management is it's so individualized. Like, I can't just look at you and say, "Do this, this, and this," because like it's so personal. I mean for exercise, there's some pretty clear guidance. For diet, there are some dietary patterns that are evidence-based. But for stress, it's like who are you, how do you respond to stress and like what do you need to make it better?

[00:19:52] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Everyone's different, right? Everyone's and you have to find what allows you to take you away from the stressor, and whether that's exercise, whether that watching a movie, whether it's reading, whether it's meditating, deep breathing, you have to find out what you can incorporate in your daily plan. Just like someone that says, I have a very tough time with nutrition. And I'll say, well, just have a salad with olive oil and vinegar before a meal, just something small. And they do. And whatever that one thing is that improves their nutrition, the same way you could think about it about stress. If you can't breathe, deep breathe for 10 minutes. Can you deep breathe four two, right? Can you download an app and meditate for three minutes? And again, it's baby steps, but they add up.

[00:20:34] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Yeah, I do like to explore all the different ways that an individual can address stress and your breathing that just takes a couple minutes, I think is a very interesting thing that people could just insert into their day or before bed. I like the idea of like watching videos that are funny or texting a friend. Some people say like, oh, don't have any screen time, but maybe that's relaxing to you. I mean, that's possible. Meditation is great. There's like hour long meditations and there's three minute meditations. Exercise, I hear from a lot of my clients is a huge relief. Going for a walk, drinking a cup of tea, I mean there's a lot of different things people can do, and

we need to think outside the box, and get creative with like what do I need and what relief stress for me because it's so different for everyone.

[00:21:17] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Everyone's different and whether it's laughter, whether it is if it's walking, people say I don't want to walk necessarily outside of my house. What if it is time in nature, right? Because we know that lowers blood pressure and improves mood. What if you journal, what if you have cold exposure, right? Everyone's going to be a little bit different. One thing that really helps a lot of people and for me is any kind of volunteering or acts of service. If you take the focus off of you, I think it's a big boost to your mood and oxytocin, which is a good feel good hormone. So stress relief doesn't necessarily mean you have to slow down, it could be about reconnecting with meaning or movement or whatever it is for you that'll make a difference.

[00:21:54] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** I like that you brought up volunteering. I am personally addicted to volunteering, and people are forever telling me, stop volunteering so much because it's adding extra things to my plate. But actually, it's something that I enjoy a lot. And I do find it is like a stress reliever in some ways. And a lot of people right now are looking for a way to be more active or do something for something that they believe in. And I think volunteering could be really powerful. And a lot of people don't think of it that way.

[00:22:19] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Well, I have to tell you, for me personally, obviously I went through my cancer journey, and one of the things that's most important to me that anyone that reaches out that's dealing with cancer, I reach out to them, I try to help them in any way that I can. And truthfully, as helpful as it is to them, it's actually more helpful for me, because what happens is the stressors or the things are bothering me or what I think is stress on my plane suddenly goes away, because my problems are small. And I think what we'll find in our lives is that usually vast majority of our time, if we compare our problems to others or are able to help others in more need, our problems and our stress tends to diminish.

[00:22:58] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Such a great point. Yeah, I really like thinking about giving back as a way to take care of yourself also. It's a great message. Well, in our first conversation, we talked about exercise and nutrition as two pillars, and now we're talking about stress. And but I do see this, maybe I'll call it a domino effect of the pillars where maybe a client isn't sleeping well and then they can't work out or they don't have enough energy for nutrition. Like they're all intertwined. So how do you look at them so that all four pillars are standing up straight?

[00:23:31] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah, I think you have to do a little bit in each. They all depend on each other in some way, right? So I'd say they're foundational, like working out and your diet influences stress. It can reduce your stress. So we know that if I wake up in the morning and have a donut and coffee, all of a sudden I've spiked my blood sugar, I've spike my cortisol, I'm going to have more stress. So having a stable blood sugar curve reduces those mood swings and cortisol spikes. Something like omega-3s we talked about, that reduces neuroinflammation. Right? So that's that's a key component. Exercise, and we've talked about this extensively, it's one of the most powerful anti-stress tools we have. It increases endorphins, it regulates cortisol, it improves sleep, all of which directly buffer stress. So while I'd like to say all of them are their own thing, they're all intertwined. And the magic happens when you do a little bit in all of the more you pay attention a little to all. You can't, for example, I can't have a diet, exercise great, and sleep two hours a night. The same thing, I can't sleep eight hours a night, exercise well and only eat fast food. It basically wipes them all out. So you have to make sure that you're preserving and you're paying attention to each of them because these four pillars are what stand up the house, and you can't stand up a house with three. So you need all four to a certain degree, and it just takes a little bit of consistency to make sure that the foundation is strong.

[00:24:53] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** It is challenging. It's actually challenging and good that they all are interconnected, because they have to be by nature, and they're all like interplaying. So I think one thing that's helpful to focus on is like, what pillar do you need the most support for you and trying to focus, right?

And like your sleep is bad. And so that's knocking them all over. So like what is causing what? And I do a lot of work with people trying to like unravel where do we need to focus first to try to get control of other things.

[00:25:22] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Very true, exactly.

[00:25:24] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** We started episode 1 here talking about the healthcare system, and I know that's like a huge conversation, but what's your perspective as a medical provider on the healthcare system and the pillars and preventative care, like where do we need to go next with this?

[00:25:43] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah, it's a great question. I'd say the healthcare system is good for some things, not great for many. So I think more than anything, we have to be empowered with our own health. You go to a doctor now, well-researched because you could read everything online and go in there with really good research. I would say that medicine has a place, but the most important medicine or is our pantry, and the most importantly doctor in our life is yourself. You are kind of the the most important bigger in determining how long you're going to live and what diseases you get or don't get. A doctor, of course, will help guide you. And I think you want to find a good doctor and you want to make sure you're getting the right blood work and everything. But at the end of the day, it's what are you doing in these four pillars? Because as we talked about the blue zones, they don't really see doctors. And it's because they don't need them. Right? So yes, health care is important. But I will say, going back to what we talked about before, our healthspan and lifespan have the biggest gap in the world. In a country that is the richest and the most scientifically advanced, we are the most debilitated. And that's not because of anything other than ourselves. And our health care system is a little bit broken, but we could bridge that gap through these four pillars.

[00:26:57] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Advocating for yourself is really important and getting yourself into the right type of health care providers is really important. I do like helping people navigate like how to get where they need to go and how to ask the right questions, too.

[00:27:10] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yes, for sure. You got to make sure you ask the right questions and get the most out of your doctor. But at the end of the day, it's up to you.

[00:27:17] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Yeah, absolutely. We have to be our own advocates. I'm super inspired. I got so many ideas about like, hey, I'm doing this pretty well. And I think I could expand here or there. I might need to focus on this pillar today. If you had a takeaway for our listeners, like, the takeaway from this pillar conversation and health span is.

[00:27:39] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Yeah. So I wish I could give you just one, but I'm going to try to keep it brief. I said it earlier that we just don't know how good we're supposed to feel. I would say first, muscle is medicine. Strength train is your health insurance policy as you age. We talked about supplements, but you can't out supplement a poor lifestyle. Sleep, food, movement, stress management, those are the core. Those are four pillars are critical. Aging is malleable. You have more control over your biological age than you think. Small consistent changes leads to massive long-term results. But I will say, like the final thing I'll say is within that, it's really important to remember to enjoy life. My favorite food in the world is pizza and a warm chocolate chip cookie, right? So be disciplined and good most of the time. But I'm always going to splurge and have a slice or three of a delicious pizza every once in a while and a warm cookie, because what's the point of all of this if we aren't, we can't really enjoy ourselves from time to time. So I think it's perspective, it's moderation, managing your four pillars and enjoying life. And I think if you're able to do all of those things, you'll see wonderful results, and be happy.

[00:28:46] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** Really glad to hear you share that message because pizza is also my favorite food and people always ask me like, oh, do you ever eat pizza? I'm like, yeah, quite often, because it's important to have a good relationship with food and like have that community connection and like not be too stressed about all of the pillars too. So like do the pillars, don't let them fall over, but also don't like hold them so rigid that they're going to crumble anyway, right?

[00:29:12] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** That's exactly right. You have to be able to actually do them. And I think the way to get to consistency is letting yourself enjoy life a little bit from time to time. Most of the time do things right, but from time to time, do things that kind of make you feel good and warm your soul. And I that's where the magic happens.

[00:29:29] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** That is the most beautiful way to end. Thank you, thank you for all this amazing messaging. This was like one of my favorite conversations I've had, and I think it's gonna speak to people in a lot of powerful ways.

[00:29:41] **Dr. Andrew Abraham** Thank you so much, Ginger. It was an honor for me. I appreciate it.

[00:29:44] **Dr. Ginger Hultin** I'm walking away from this conversation with Dr. Abraham feeling truly inspired, and I hope you are too. It's important to know what impacts our health, but also to get tangible advice on how we can make changes for the better. As Andrew shared, we can't eliminate stress or guarantee perfect sleep every night, but we can build a toolkit to support ourselves where we need it the most. Whether it's breath work, setting healthy boundaries with technology, or simply recognizing when to slow down, the sooner we integrate these habits into our daily lives, the better equipped we'll be to support our long-term health. I hope you enjoyed listening to this episode just as much as I enjoyed recording it. If you did, please follow The

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