



JAMESSCHRAMKO

Business Owner Body Tune-up with Zac Mason

Business and body health meet in James's chat with fitness coach Zac Mason. This episode is especially for busy entrepreneurs keen to get into shape.



Zac Mason

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. This is episode 1014. Today, we're chatting with Zac Mason. Hello, Zac. Good to see you.

Zac: Likewise, good morning.

James: You're in your white T-shirt representing the good guys. I'm here in my black T-shirt. We've got a nice little contrast happening.

Zac: Yeah, soon to be muscle fit and slim fit T-shirt.

James: That's right. So we're going to talk about that, actually. I'm titling this episode, Business Owner Body Tune-Up. And I could be talking about anybody who's listening to this podcast, because the vast majority of the population are not in great shape, especially entrepreneurs who spend a lot of time hunched up on computers, or traveling. It can really wear and tear your body, as I've found out.

And we're going to share the story about how you've come into my life. We've made a few changes, and we're starting to see some things happen. Because I think those lessons could have a profound impact on anyone listening who doesn't feel like they're in absolute perfect health. What do you reckon?

Zac: Yeah, sounds good.

James: [laughs] So you're a straight-to-the-point guy. I met you because I have a few clients. There was a guy I was on the Maldives trip with who had told me that he'd gotten into shape working with this fella called Zac. And then there was another gentleman on the trip who just started with you, who was in, not the best shape, let's be honest, not great shape.

I'd seen him before, and the last time I'd seen him to when I saw him arrive, I'm like, wow, you know, something's happened here, not in a body shaming sort of way, but more into like, Hey, you know, health wise or whatever, this looks a bit scary. And because I'm always looking out for my clients, and I want to make sure that their business is going to be okay, and I have this fundamental belief that if the business owner is not okay, then that can actually extrapolate across to the business.

So I'm always looking for my clients to be in good shape, to be healthy, because if they disappear, things can happen, especially in micro businesses, where a lot of the business is still largely dependent on the founder, especially for strategy, sometimes for performance of actual work or expertise.

So anyway, I've got two people now who have referenced you. And then I start seeing you popping up on socials, you're friends with a lot of my friends, like [Will Wang](#) and others. They keep saying, Hey, this guy, Zac. And eventually, you made your way into my community. And you also found yourself up here on a little surf trip, which was great to actually meet the man in person, finally.

Getting business owners back in shape

Of course, you booked yourself onto the Maldives trip. So I was keen to get to know you more anyway. And as part of you coming on board my community, I had a look through your slides that you were presenting at business conferences. Because your target market is busy business executives, it's mostly men, right, who have basically got themselves out of shape and want to fix it.

Zac: Yep, yeah, that's bang on. So I found that that particular, I guess you could say niche or just segment of the market, often they were in great shape in their teens, in their 20s, it's just a butterfly effect of the business, getting married, having kids, the compound effect. I'm sure you're familiar with that.

James: Well, that's exactly me. You know, in my teens and 20s, I was ripped, like 21, 22, 23, I was going to the gym four days a week, I had muscles, I was very lean, I was sailing two times a week, I was extremely fit, had a low pulse rate, I was so buff. But then of course, I got married, I've had five kids, I spent a lot of time in a dealership. We work seven days a week for a long time. I built my business after hours, till three in the morning, I was sleep-deprived for a good couple of years. And I let myself go. Let's face it.

Now of course, 10 years ago or almost 10 years ago, I took up surfing, I started to get my health back a bit, and then of course, we had the pandemic. And I think I carry a lot of stress of my clients as well. And I've done 13 years of one-to-one calls with people who are in pressure situation.

So here we are, we're walking through the national park together, talking about the upcoming trip to the Maldives, and you just gently popped out, Hey, you know, if you start now, you could get in pretty good shape by the Maldives. And that was kind of the seed planted. And then I had a look at your slides as part of what I do to help you, and damn, those slides, when I went through them, I'm like, I'm learning stuff here. And I can actually implement this stuff.

And since then, I've started implementing the things that you talk about. And it's already created a massive difference. And I can tell because I'm pretty tuned in - firstly, I'm tuned into my own body and what it's telling me, but I'm also aware in my history of where there's been fulcrum points that are going to have a profound effect for the rest of my life.

But I can tell you, up until now, I've never been aware of some of the things you talked about. And it has made a profound impact. And some of these things maybe people know about, maybe they don't, but if you don't know about these things, and we talk about it today, then it's going to have an impact if you want to try it out.

So firstly, let's just point out, Zac is not a doctor, and I'm not a doctor. So nothing we talk about in this episode is medical advice. I'm just sharing my own story and the reflections that I've had, as Zac has showed me some things, and I'm sure Zac's information is of a general nature that you should still check with your own doctor or whatever, especially if you're taking medications and things, you know, go and seek professional guidance before you change anything, because I don't want to harm anybody. But I don't know if I've missed anything, Zac, but it's probably important just to put that one out there.



Zac: Yes, yeah, I think these days, it's too easy for anyone to hop online and say, Take this, take that, buy this supplement, do this protocol. Yet, everyone I speak to, I say, When's the last time you had a blood test? And they go, Uhm, ahh, err, which means, they don't know. So please, please, just get a regular blood test, that's like your dashboard in the car when the lights start popping up, well the physical version for us is blood test.

So start there, make sure you're not deficient in anything, then you can start to add. It's always good to add things to the body and nutrition, but it can be difficult to take them away, especially if problems develop. So yeah, just check with your doctor first.

James: You know, just on that, I think that the profound difference that I've experienced since we've started working together is everything up until now was a restriction. You can't do this, or you're not allowed to do that, and it's not sustainable. I think the way you approach things is super sustainable, which I like. And it's been very easy for me to sustain it since we started. But it's also having a tremendous impact. I'm actually lowering my biometric age. I can see it on the chart.

Zac: Yeah, I saw that. What's it dropped to now?

James: Dropped down today by a year. So in short, in just a couple of - I don't know - two weeks, I've already reduced my biometric age, which technically means perhaps I could live an extra year, I don't know. But it's going to continue to change because I'm on a good trajectory now.

How Zac became the fit guy

But you weren't always the fit buff guy in a white tight T-shirt, were you, Zac? You used to work long hours. And as hard as it is to believe, you had a pretty unfit, unhealthy look about you a few years back.

Zac: Yeah, I would fall into the, like, skinny fat category. Like my legs weren't big, my arms weren't big. But I carried a lot of fat around my butt, belly, chest, and in my face as well. And that was just a result of just not knowing what to do, not knowing what worked. And then, like most professionals, working too much, relying on takeaway food.

And as you would know, you get into those environments, the majority of stressed-out people who are working a job love to drink. They get a drink, I get a drink, we go out and get a KFC this day, kebabs that day, beers at the pub on that day. And that just became too easy until I realized I was on that trajectory of being the 30 or 40-year-old with the overused dad bod, and I never really wanted to be that version of myself. So I kind of dropped the hammer and said, Well, let's commit to the gym and see what happens.

James: And of course going to the gym isn't enough, is it? I've talked about this on previous episodes where when I joined a gym briefly a couple of years back, the instructor that was walking me around the equipment, he had a very minimal idea about nutrition and food and diet. Like, I knew more than he did, which is scary, really. Like, I would say I have a good base understanding of good foods and bad foods.

But what's really brought it in is a significant change in one area, which I'm sure we'll cover, and then a deeper awareness of the next layer of things, like the macro nutrients, etc. So you actually went on a journey, you ended up becoming a really super buff, gym bod, contestant type, and I'm sure during that process, you had to go and eke out the best possible information you could. Where did you find it?

Zac: In a way, I guess, it happened organically. So I had a buddy who was an ex bodybuilder. And he kind of took me under his wing a bit like, you know, Rocky and Mickey scenario. He was telling me what to do, teaching me how to train, telling me what to eat. And I was like, kid in a candy store. I'm like, wow, this is amazing. I get to train with a bodybuilder.

He got me ready and prepped for my first competition. Even though I didn't want to do it, he just kept pushing me into it. Because you know, something good would come from it. And after I stopped training with him, I actually hired a professional coach who had got several people like their professional status in the league and worked with thousands of people all over the world for specific competition.

And he kind of told me everything, and you worked with him for over a year straight. And he had completely changed the game from a nutritional point of view, training, recovery. And it's kind of taught me everything I needed to know about those areas.

James: And I think you ended up going from being a gym instructor to taking your program internationally. And you're helping these people virtually now, like you've been helping me.

Zac: Yeah, yeah, correct. So it's a funny story. So when I finished bodybuilding, I wanted to get into the industry, because I felt like this is something I want to do. It'd be like a surfer, who then wants to open like a surf shop or be a sort of coach. It's kind of how it felt. And long story short, I got a job in the gym.

And I didn't want to be a PT at that point. But when I saw what the PTS were doing, I was like, is that what they're doing? Like, I could do a lot more than that, I could probably add a lot more value considering competitions and nutrition and all that. So that gave me the confidence to have a go at it and go qualified.

Six months later, I went full time PT. Only because of the advice I got. And if I remember correctly, it may have been from [Chris Dufey](#). So I was looking for an online fit pro coach to help me start a program and sell it online. But I had no qualifications. And I wasn't a PT yet. And I got a piece of advice. It said, Look, go work in the gym, earn your stripes, get results, perfect your method before you take it online.

And I didn't know any better. So I said, sure. I'll do that. And it turned out that that was the best part for me. And then in 2018, I officially took the method online once I proved it wasn't just working on me, it was working with other people as well.

James: What do you call the method?

Zac: Metabolic recall method.

James: Right. And where can people find out about this?

Zac: Pretty much on my [Facebook](#), or [LinkedIn](#). So just my name, Z-A-C, Zac Mason. I mean, I put everything, you know, about my result of clients, my processes, me, all on there, like way more than you would get on a website.

James: I love your posts. Your LinkedIn is great. I've learned a lot there. Like the tests where people who eat a lot more protein, past a certain point, there's no real benefit after a certain point, etc. Or it doesn't matter whether you eat early or late, etc., for people, it can be different. So I appreciate all the research-backed stuff you've been posting.

The three things that make a difference

When I think of you, I think there's three main categories, right? It comes down to nutrition, which clearly is a massive one, workouts, like the exercise component. And then there's the mindset part. Would you say they're the sort of three main elements that are going to make the difference for people?



Zac: Yeah, correct. And I don't like to put too much importance on just one of them. You've probably heard people say, like, it's 80% nutrition 20% training or 90:10. No, it's 100% commitment to nutrition, it's 100% commitment to feeling stronger and fitter and being healthier. And it's 100% commitment to building habits in a healthy relationship with both of those things, mentally, so that you can continue doing them for life. So that's how I look at it.

Looking at what you eat

James: Let's talk about nutrition first, given they're all important. This made a huge difference for me because, like most people, I've found my way into doing things. Like keto, I've tried low carb, I've tried fasting, so lots of different things, and I can get results. I can drop weight.

But then of course, you end up putting it back on if you're not careful, or you can't sustain it, which is pretty much all things. Especially if you travel, especially if you're in other countries, especially if you've got kids or things that make it more difficult. Or also, and very importantly, your partner. If you don't want to have a meal, but they're ready for a meal, that can be quite awkward.

So the big change for me is you sort of made me aware of calories and calorie budgeting. And I always thought this was something they do at Weight Watchers or Jenny Craig, apparently one of those has gone out of business recently.

Zac: Yeah, Jenny Craig, yeah.

James: Yeah, so in Australia, one of them's gone out of business. But I always thought that calorie counting sounded like hard work, it was difficult. I basically resisted it, because I didn't want to do the work for it. And I didn't really understand how important it is.

But in short - and I'll let you explain this in a better way- basically, if you work out how much energy you're using in a day and how much your body needs, and then you can work out the amount of calories that you can consume to maintain that, that's kind of your number. And if you lower that, then you end up with a deficit, and you'll start dropping weight. And if you increase it, then you end up with a surplus, and you start gaining weight. Is that sort of a really layman's terms of the energy budget?

Zac: Yeah, you basically summed it up correctly. And I have a habit of getting way too technical with this kind of stuff.

James: Yeah, well, don't worry, I'll untechnical it for you, because this is what's blown my mind is you put me on to an app. And I resisted the app, because oh, another thing to download, I don't want to download it, it seemed like I'm going to have to work everything out. This is going to be laborious. But it was actually the complete opposite.

Once I got it, I was hooked. I mean, it took care of my, you know, your natural addiction to gamification, etc. This thing has a barcode scanner, or you can take a photograph of stuff. A barcode scanner is amazing, because it actually already is pre-loaded. And you can just click on it, if you consume something.

So you set your budget, you put in your weight, and your age, and height, and all of that, and what you want it to be. And you can also even set your macros, if you do want to do keto, or you do want to do fasting, it actually caters for all of that. And you can check your carbs, fat, and protein. And basically, as you eat, you just add whatever you eat and you don't go over budget, and the next day, this is the best thing about it, the next day you start from zero, like you've got a whole budget again, it's like this neverending bank account that keeps filling up.

You wake up and you've got, like in my case, I've got about two and a half 1000 calories, again. And here's the thing, I've never been hungry using this. It has drastically improved my awareness of food, I've got way better understanding of what foods have fat or protein or carbs. It's once you've eaten something, it's already in the register. So you just click on it again, you can even have it repeat them if you want it to go that scheduled.

And also, if you're making stuff at home, you can build meals. So you put all the things you've got in the meal into it, that's a meal, just click once, boom. And if you ever have that meal, again, just click on it again. So the big outcome for me, this is the simplest way I could say it, I was overeating.

And being aware of my budget has allowed me to stay under budget. And the weight is just falling off, it literally is just falling off. We're 10 pounds down in a week from just doing nothing except not stuffing my face with as many calories as before, eating exactly the same stuff, but less of it.

Zac: And like you said, you're not hungry or you've been saying like, do I have to hit the budget? 'Cause I don't actually feel like it.

James: Exactly. Yeah, like, I can easily come under budget. And especially, once your stomach start shrinking after the first few days, it's just super easy. I think I could keep this up for the rest of my life, because I haven't missed any meals. I'm actually eating more often. And I'm eating more variety of food than I was before, because I'm not just trying to do keto, or I'm not eating nothing until lunchtime. Right?

So the more extreme you go, the harder it is to sustain, I suspect. So what really opened my eyes, when I was looking through your slides, it shows the different calories of different kinds of foods, like a black coffee is just a couple of calories, a croissant or a packet of chips, I mean, obviously they're not great food for you to eat. I already don't eat gluten. I know you don't eat gluten. So it makes it a lot easier with baked goods and stuff.

Zac: Yeah, this rules out a whole bunch of calories that we don't need.

James: But those Starbucks things they have with the whipped cream and the sugars, like, that was never going to be a good option anyway, right? But under this regime, you could still have it if you really wanted to. Right? Because you budget.

Zac: Correct, yeah. Look, I had an ice cream last night. But I budgeted for it. I looked at it. And I said, Well, it's 964 kilojoules. So we divide that by four, it's about 240 calories. And I didn't have a protein shake yesterday, I just ran out of time. I said, Well, I'm going to reallocate that protein shake calories to my panna, coconut, gluten-free, dairy-free ice. I want one right now, they're so nice.

I had one of those after dinner, and it just fit perfectly in the budget. So I woke up this morning, same weight, feeling fine. No issues with my gut because I didn't eat gluten, I didn't eat dairy. And I'm not saying everyone should not eat gluten and dairy. I have an intolerance. So you've got to be aware of these things, which is why at the start, we said check with your doctor, get blood tests. Rule out all the things that cause problems, and then get rid of them, and you'll instantly feel better by default.

James: That's it. Well, I know the foods that upset me, and definitely gluten is one of them.

Zac: Yeah, you're onto it. Yeah.

James: But I love dairy, you know? Like, one thing that's changed for me is just having a glass, well not quite a full glass, like 200 milliliters of kefir. I don't know how you pronounce it properly. There's five definitions if you look it on Google, but kefir, like that Russian probiotics super juice, like, it's got 250 billion strands of good bacteria, right? It just destroys colds and all sorts of things. I love that. The gut is so important.

But anyway, I've just noticed my body's running clean. I already eat pretty clean food anyway, but I was eating too much of it. And of course, I wasn't creating deficits, so I was just starting to slowly put it on. There are other elements, of course. But one thing is once you get the calorie counter and you start adding it, it's just so easy.

And you can then synchronize it to other things. What you did is you encouraged me to get some scales that have some biometrics, like the body fat, and it works out how old you should be, and all of that sort of stuff, your biometric age. But that can talk to the app. So now when you stand on the scales, it just synchronizes, and it charts your weight. So that's very easy. I like the low-friction aspect of that, once a day, keeping tabs on stuff.

But you give other practical advice, like have a tighter T-shirt, don't get loose clothing. I'm going to have to change this T-shirt now, it's almost redundant after a week of - I'm going to have to donate my shirts and go for the next type of T-shirt down, because rather than just buy bigger clothing to compensate for getting bigger, won't it be better to just keep trim and fit and live a little longer and feel amazing?

Zac: Yeah, you get the extra bonus of not just wearing a shirt that complements your physique, but the early warning signs. So as soon as this shirt feels tight, Uhm, I've probably gone a bit over this week, I need to just shave a few things off. And then within a few days, everything's feeling good again.

James: So in short, the first point is if you're aware of your budget, you can basically eat all the time, and whatever you want, as long as you stay on the budget. And now you can throw out all the can't do this, you're not allowed that, etc. If you don't want to do that, you don't have to, which for me, is like, Ah, thank goodness. Because, you know, my wife was like, Oh, if you're on a diet now, how are we going to eat? I'm like, No, it's not actually.

I'm going to eat all the meals. I'm going to eat the same things I've always eaten. Just not going to stuff my face until my body's telling me it can't fit anymore. Right? [laughs] It sounds silly. But, you know, if you don't get good sleep, or you get stressed out or whatever, you're not going to eat properly, and it all goes to crap. But if you track it, it's easy.

Briefly, one question I had around that is, I'd heard somewhere that there's like different values for calories, like thermogenic properties or whatever. Like, is someone going to say, Oh, but a calorie is different for carrot versus whipped cream, or is a calorie a calorie?

Zac: A calorie is a calorie just like a kilo is a kilo, a pound is a pound, a millimeter is a millimeter. It's a unit of measurement. So to say that a calorie is different is like saying, Well, I went down to BP and they gave me a liter of fuel but the liter of fuel at the Shell was different. No, no, it was a liter. How the car uses that fuel can be different, right?

So to give you an example, if you eat steak, that's going to take the body a little bit longer, and it may consume more energy to digest the steak versus a candy or chocolate bar. That's because of the way it's digested. So proteins will demand more energy to be digested, sugars and fat demand less energy to be digested.

However, it's such a small amount, almost inconsequential, like, to your overall metabolism. But it does help. Like, if you can get an extra five percent calorie burn added to your total metabolic burn for the day, then that's a bonus. And also, the benefits of eating more protein, you'll be more full, it's going to help you recover from your workouts and maintain the muscle mass that you have. Whereas a lot of people in general, specifically business owners who don't have a lot of time to think about nutrition and prepare meals, are not eating anywhere close to the optimal protein range.

James: Gotcha. And just within that, you can make choices. So for example, if you still wanted to have an alcoholic drink, you're out with friends, and you don't want to be that guy on the diet or whatever, you can still have a drink, but maybe you choose one that has less energy.

Zac: Yep, exactly. And I think this is another thing that it's a bit of a like, bit of a myth that people think alcohol calories are different. They're not. A glass of wine is going to have about 140 odd calories. Depending on what beer, like if you have an IPA, it might be 220 versus a low carb, say pure blonde might have 80. So it can vary quite a lot. But yes, you can still enjoy your drink without blowing your budget. Yeah.

James: And again, I've found it's so easy, just take anything - like I've got a can of sparkling water here, if it has a barcode, scan it, it's already in there. Hit one serve, boom. And then it remembers it forever. So I found it really, really easy. Some things have got a lot more energy than what I thought and some things have like a high fat content, or even some of the things like potatoes or whatever, sweet potatoes can have quite a lot of protein.

You know, like sometimes you don't realize how much. Or some things might have a lot of salt. But I like that second screen that has the macros, because then you can balance out and make sure you're not eating all of one type of food. And it takes care of all that secondary stuff. And I'm sure there's the third and fourth and fifth layer. I'm not there yet, but I don't care, because it's already working for me. I feel amazing.

How much are you moving?

So that's the food side of it. Let's talk about exercise, right? Should we go for the big ones? Like, we hear about cardio, and then we hear about weightlifting. You're a fitness pro, you've seen different executives go for this, and it's probably not practical for everyone to have a fully equipped gym. Are we still able to keep up the muscle content of our body?

Zac: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So the way to look at training is you're placing a stimulus, a resistance on your muscle, so that it has to get stronger. So if you haven't trained at all and you start adding a stimulus, like just lifting a little bit of weight, that's going to be a new stimulus, your body's going to be forced to get stronger.

You don't need 250 machines, and a thousand kilos' worth of weight plates to do that. And actually, even during COVID when the gyms were shut down for like six months at a time, I only had two dumbbells, and you might remember everything was sold out. So any possible way of getting equipment was impossible.

But throughout that time, I probably only, like I would have been training consistently for a long time, right, but I only probably lost five percent of my peak strength. Just using two dumbbells at home, didn't have a bench. And I was pretty much using the floor as my bench. So my point is you can do a lot at home with just two dumbbells and even a resistance band. But you have to keep it simple.

James: Nice. Well I liked that I can still surf, and I can just add in some extra exercise if there aren't waves or whatever.

Should you get a DEXA scan?

Now, you made me go and do a DEXA scan. Can you just talk about that? Because I can't figure out why that isn't done by every single person every single year. Like, why has this been such a secret to the world? Because it just seems absolutely mind-blowing what it does and how low the radiation is and how cheap it is.

Zac: Yeah, exactly. Like, all the reasons you just said is why we should do one. However, what I've noticed is feedback from clients is that some people will go to get one. And though they might ask the doctor like, Oh, I want to get a DEXA scan, the doctor will say, No, you don't need one of those, that's for people with osteoporosis. You don't need that.

James: That's criminal. That is outrageous.

Zac: Yeah.

James: I mean, this thing, I got my scans here. It takes a picture of your skeleton, it takes a picture of your fat and your muscles. And it tells you everything you need to know about your fat content, your muscle content, your bone density. That would help if you feel like you might be at risk of injury, it also picks up like, your bad fat, you know, that visceral fat, if you're very likely to have a heart attack or whatever else.

So it was interesting for mine where they said I'm in no danger of that dangerous type of fat. It's like, apparently, you can be fairly fit but a bit chubby, is what I've sort of concluded from this. I've got good, dense bones. But I'm carrying a reasonable amount of muscle, but I also have a lot of fat, I got a sh*t ton of fat on this body. Even though, people are surprised, I don't look that fat. I'm just hiding it everywhere, I think. [laughs]

Zac: Well, you're quite tall. Like, tall people, it spreads out.

James: You know, I've got good muscles around my chest and arms and legs. But it's just everywhere. There's like, there was something like 27 kilos of fat, I'm like, okay, a good portion of that can go, and I'm just going to get healthier and lighter, and it's going to be better on my bones. And that's what we're working towards. And we've already lost - well, we're getting close to five kilos of that gone, disappeared from just a week or two ago with no effort. Like, zero effort, changing nothing except eating less.

Zac: A couple of minutes a day of like, pressing buttons, you know?

James: Which I'm actually enjoying, like I would miss it now if I don't have it. And I've done my Oura ring fit out. So that's coming. When that arrives, that's going to be a game changer, because that will actually accurately log my tracks.

Zac: Ordered my new one as well.

James: Right? Did I encourage you to change fingers, did I?

Zac: Well, the missus knew I wanted the new version. So she got this for my birthday. And I'm going to get a smaller size so I don't have to use a rubber band out in the surf.

James: Nice. Well, you know, and Zac, you're 30 years old, as we record this, you're in pretty good shape at 30. I'm a lot older than you. I'm literally decades older than you. But I plan on getting back to that, where I was in my 30s. I'm sure I can do it. Actually, I looked at some pictures of me in my late 20s when I was running the dealership and having all these kids, I don't look that healthy in these pictures. So I want to be a better version of myself.

I think that's an important message. It wouldn't really matter how old you are listening to this. There's still hope for you. Would you agree with that?

Zac: Absolutely. I literally just posted before this call a video of a guy named Joe Stockinger.

James: Who's 90.

Zac: Yup, and lifting 184 kilos, which is 405 pounds, at 90. That's a lot of weight. That's like three times my body weight. And he's doing that at 90 years old. I mean, most people at 90 aren't alive. But if they are alive, they're being pushed around, nursed around, they're on one of those stairlift things. Just shows what's possible. Yeah.

James: Totally. I want to be alive in my 90s, but I want to be super fit and healthy. So the DEXA scan. It really struck me, Zac, the best thing about what you do, it's so incredible, is you can actually prove the results from what you're doing. It's 100% provable. There is absolutely no debate, no argument.

When the next time I go and do a DEXA scan and compare it to this one, there will be a result. And it will be 100% provable that there has been a change, all the metrics will change here or there. Why do you think people aren't getting them?

Zac: First one is they're not aware of it. Second one is doctors aren't helpful. They don't believe in alternative things and scans that they haven't done. And they're not experts in body composition, and nutrition, and muscle mass, unless you find a doctor who does specialize in those things.

James: I just can't understand why that's not the most basic thing of all.

Zac: Yeah, I mean, look, I'm doing my best to get all my clients to do them.

James: [laughs] And I am too. Like, if you haven't heard of a DEXA scan, look it up. The guy said that it's about the equivalent of three days' worth of radiation from the sun.

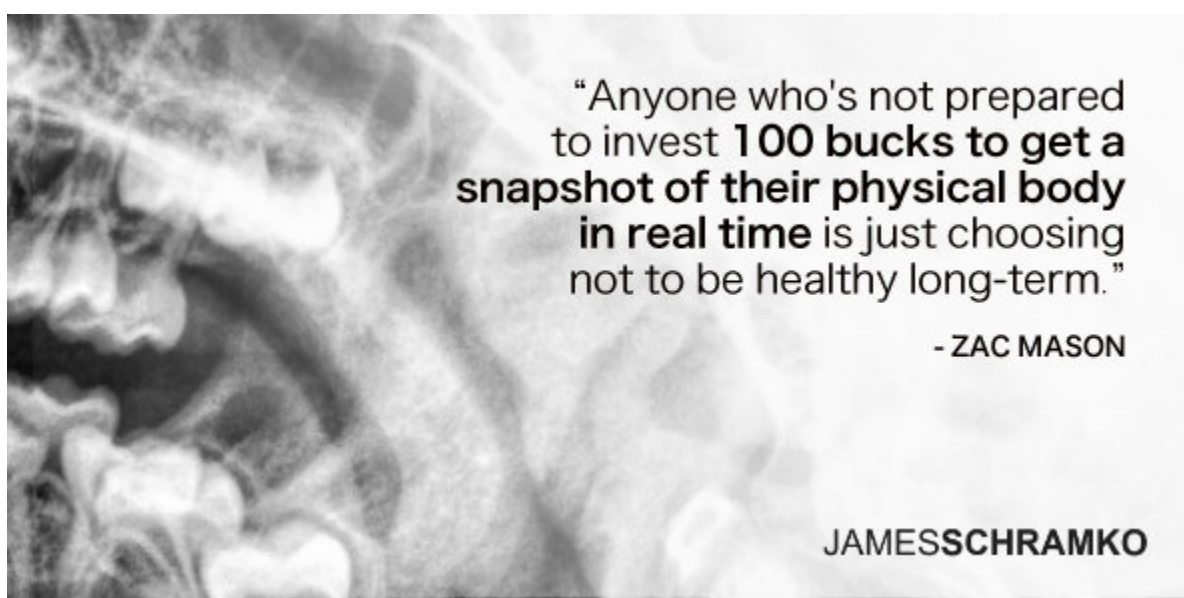
Zac: It's much less than an x-ray.

James: Well, you know how I know it's not that dangerous? Because the person, the practitioner, and the doctor in the room is right next to you the whole time. Like normally they run and hide behind lead, right?

Zac: Yeah. [laughs] Close the door.

James: When you do an MRI or something, they're like, get the hell out of here. Like the lights are flashing, you know, okay, this is some bad stuff. But when they're standing right next to you the whole time, and they're doing it every single day, you're going, Okay, well, this can't be.

You know what I thought? I felt like I'd been picked up and put in Gulliver's Travels or Jack in the beanstalk, and I've just been popped on a photocopier machine. I felt like Jack being photocopied by a giant, and it only takes like seven minutes. It's super, super easy.



Zac: Yeah, super quick. It's cheap. I mean, anyone who's not prepared to invest 100 bucks to get a snapshot of their physical body in real time is just choosing not to be healthy long-term.

James: That's it. I think that would be one of the biggest takeaways from this episode. If you haven't done a DEXA scan, it'll blow your mind. It gives you a starting point. For me, it's very motivating. I actually imagined paddling my surfboard with 10 kilograms less, or what's that, 22 pounds less chub, but all the same muscle. I'm just going to be a better surfer, and I'm excited by that.

Zac: And, you can possibly drop a few liters off your board to get a little bit more radical if you want.

James: I've got some boards there with less liters that I can't surf at the moment, because I used to be lighter. When I first started surfing, and I was walking every day in Manly, I basically was lighter than I am now. But you know, having another baby, let's face it, anyone who's got kids understands this. For a while there, it destroys your sleep, it reprioritizes everything around this small human who needs complete....

And you've got that to look forward to maybe, Zac. But you know, I want to say as someone who's had kids, who has a sort of a high-level strategic advisor to businesses, where I'm really having to get absorb a lot of people's pressure, I'm able to conquer this now with just a few simple things. The app, the scales, the DEXA scan, they set me up. They're the train tracks that allow me to roll along.

And the fact that I can eat anything I want, anytime I want, is also a massive bonus, as long as I don't go over budget. And the thing is, Zac's actually hooked his app into my app. So he's keeping an eye on me, and he can see that I'm not blowing out my budget, and that I am actually charting good progress. And I actually like that peace of mind, having some accountability.

For me, that's exactly what I'm providing the people I coach, is a watchful eye, a constant companion in the journey. Because doing it yourself, you end up off track sometimes. And it's kind of like, if no one sees you off track or whatever, you might just end up staying there.

I like the little questions and the probes. How are you going with your exercise? I'm keeping an eye on your weight, it's looking positive, you should be this by then. And looks like you're hitting all your macros. Do you want to change this or that? And it's amazing. It's really good to have that. And I appreciate it. So anyway, a big public thank you. It's making a big difference to me.

Zac: No, thanks for trusting the process. Yeah.

James: So what about people who are traveling? Is it possible to still do your exercise and maintain this?

Zac: Absolutely. And the story you mentioned at the start of this podcast about one of your clients and his results. He was overseas. And he dropped that first 15 or 16, if I remember correctly, overseas, traveling almost every week, eating out at restaurants, training at whatever gym was convenient.

So it's just about being able to plan ahead. But when you have these systems, you can plan ahead. When you know how much you're going to budget for dinner, then it becomes easy, right? But there's a difference between calorie tracking and calorie planning. Now that you're using the app, you're able to plan ahead and you know. It's top of mind, okay, this is what I'm going to eat, not going to blow it out.

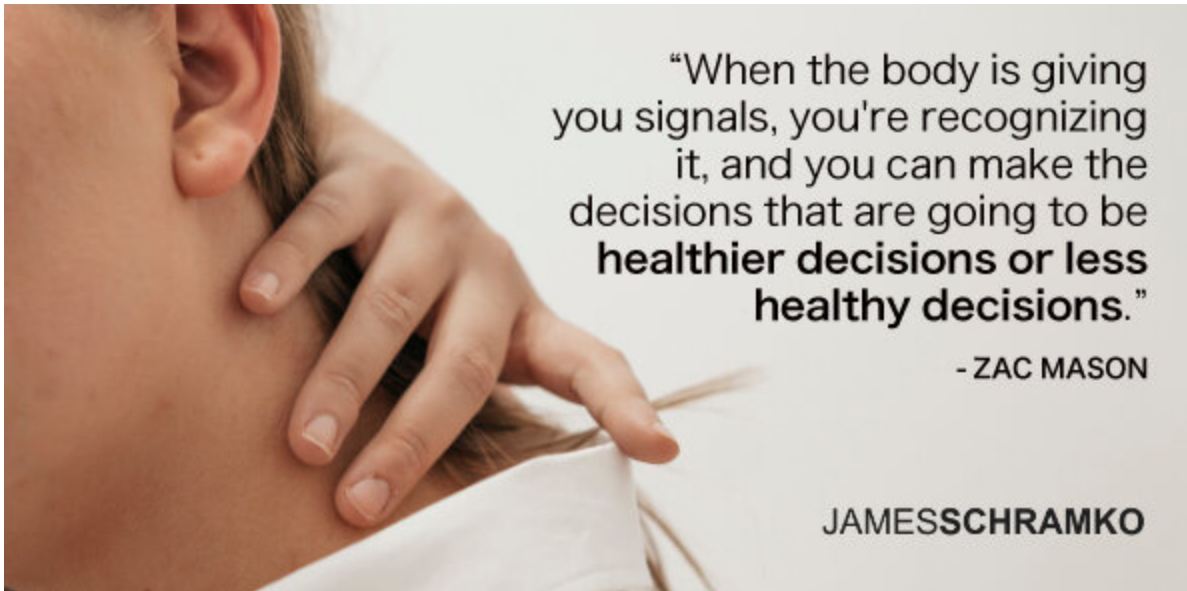
And then you're not trying to pick up the pieces afterwards and then be like, Oh, wow, I just ate 2000 calories and had no idea. Like, now you do have an idea before you eat it. And you're already having that, like self-accountability. So it's the same principles. And it's just about planning ahead, like very simple stuff, like Google, what hotel am I staying at? What's the gym look like?

James: What's the restaurant menu?

Zac: Yeah, the menus, even surrounding, like restaurants near Noosa. Boom, pops up.

James: Well, I'm traveling this week, and I already know what I'm going to have for dinner, one of those nights. And I know that, that day, I probably won't eat too much. And I'm going to enjoy a really good steak and some potato. But I'll definitely stay under budget.

Also, I'll pack a little protein bar, which I know the macros of, to have a preemptive strike. You know, to knock the edge off the hunger, if it comes, which it's not coming anymore. Like, that's why I've messaged you before, saying, do I actually have to hit my budget? Because I'm not going to get there unless I go and stuff some food in my face, because I'm not hungry.



Zac: Yeah, and I don't believe in force feeding yourself. Like, if your body's saying, I don't want food, that's your body telling you what it doesn't need and needs. So that's one thing I love about this process, is like you said, it brings awareness, that's one of the biggest things you said before, is by doing the tracking, you're now, it's top of mind and becoming self-aware. Now, when the body's giving you signals, you're recognizing it, and you can make the decisions that are going to be healthier decisions or less healthy decisions.

The mental aspect of fitness

James: It's sort of wandering into the mindset part here, let's go a little deeper, just already, we've covered the fact that it doesn't matter how old you are. You don't have to be that motivated to do this. As long as you get some benchmarks, and you look at those benchmarks, and you could either say, you know, I'm happy to be carrying this much fat, or this little muscle, or these frail bones, or I want to make a change.

And you know, even when you hop on those scales, it tells you, you put in your actual age, and it'll tell you what your metabolic age, I can tell you. If that metabolic age is older than your actual chronological age, that's pretty motivating. The number one thing, I want to get my metabolic age less than my chronological age. That's a very important benchmark for me. Because it's like having insurance.

I've got a young family still. So I want to be around for a long time and look after them. So that's a good motivator. Also, I want to surf better. Did I mention that? [laughs] Let's talk about a couple of other mindset things, maybe about habits or minimum effective doses, etc.

Zac: Yeah, the minimum effective dose is really the philosophy behind everything. Because the way I see it is, if you can get the result you want doing minimal workouts that don't chew up your time, that don't chew up your mental bandwidth, that don't suck all your energy and rob that precious time that you have for family, or that where you want to allocate your energy in your business, as a lot of my clients, their priority is not working out, it's not getting jacked, that's like, not last on the list, but it's behind quite a few other priorities.

And I'm not the guy to say no, it needs to be number one priority. Because like, no, that's not how it works. However, the minimum effective dose is basically getting that like, all the juice out of the squeeze. It's getting the maximum results from three workouts a week, it's eating the foods you would normally eat, just in a way that puts you into a metabolic deficit. So you're not putting on more body fat, you're just slowly shaving it off over time. And that's kind of the high level philosophy behind it, if that makes sense.

More gains doing less

James: Well, I've heard you actually forbid clients from working out too much.

Zac: Yes, so three workouts a week is the limits, unless you can prove to me over many months that you deserve a fourth workout. There's just no need to do it. And the reason behind that is because one, it complicates scheduling.

So if you're trying to do four or five workouts a week, and then all of a sudden you've got to fly to Sydney for a client meeting, or you've got a conference, or your manager's just called in sick, and now you got, you know what I mean, so all these things pop up, you miss that fourth workout. Now you've got to do five next week? Come on.

James: So you're beating yourself up unnecessarily.

Zac: Yeah. And then you miss a workout, instantly you feel bad. It takes the wind out of your sails. And then if you miss a second day, it just starts this compound effect of like, a negative spiral. And then that's when the stress hits, or something might happen. And the next immediate thing to reach for is the food or the sweets or the alcohol.

So what I look at is if, Hey, if we can just get you the body shape you want in three workouts a week between 25 to 40 minutes, are you happy with that? Like why do you need to train five days a week to look like this? If you can look like this in three days a week, it just doesn't make sense to me.

James: Ah, yes.

Zac: Work out less, make more gains.

James: It is, there's a 64:4, isn't it? Like I said to you, you asked me the other day how the exercise is going. And I said, I haven't started the exercises because firstly, I've been surfing every day, the surf's been good. But also I've just been concentrating on getting the food right. And the food is making a huge difference.

But I have started doing the exercises now. I've set up my workspace for the exercises, and I've got the equipment. I sent you off everything that I've got, and you sent me back a plan that works with the stuff I've already got. So you're not making me go and get strange things that I don't need or want, or that aren't going to work. And I was able to start. So that's been a good innovation. And it should continue sort of to phase two.

Normally, at this point, I'd summarize the episode, but I'm going to see if I can lean on you a little bit, Zac. This is your part where you can put a nice summary for someone who's listened all this way into this episode. They're interested in the fact that I'm getting a result.

What you can take away from the episode

I'm not an affiliate, this is not a promotion. This is just genuine, heartfelt gratitude for having Zac appear in my life and make these suggestions that are really working for me. And I wanted to share it to my audience, which is the great joy of having a podcast, is you can have these discussions and little light bulbs go on out there. What message do you have for our listener?

Zac: It's a good question. We've covered so much great stuff.

James: Then just summarize the 64:4. Like, if you can take just three things away from this, what would be your top three things.

Zac: The first thing is, keep it as simple as possible, and start with what you have. So you're a great example, you started with nutrition. You just got the nutrition right first. And then we've got it systemized and it's great. Now you're moving on to minimum efficient workouts.

You're not saying, Alright, next Monday, I'm going to cut this, I'm going to have salad for lunch. All right, no more desserts. Wifey, throw out all of this, and then kids are not doing that... Like, you're not overhauling, stressing everyone out. So start really simple with what you have now. And feed that motivation momentum of just little baby steps forward.

The second thing is, if you want to get results long term, you've got to keep this top of mind. So plug in some data. Learn how to plan calories, not just track them. Get the DEXA scan, get a snapshot of your body, how it looks right now, because you can't ignore what it says, right? It says you're 28% body fat, that's what you are. You're overweight, you can't deny that, you can't hide it. And then like you said, the metabolic age will give you that kick up the ass that you need to say, Well, gotta fix this.

And the third thing is that anyone can do all this by themselves. All the information's out there. I've learned all this from other people, from Google, from YouTube. But if you want to compress three to five years into like, six months or a year max, that's when you need to hire someone.

Now, whether you hire me or anyone else, it doesn't matter. But by hiring a coach or a mentor, you're going to speed up results, you're going to be more accountable. And you're going to shortcut the like, pain and suffering of having to learn yourself, and then bash yourself up later being like, Oh, I wish I did this 10 years ago. Like, you can literally do it now. Just save all that headache. So that would be my summary.

James: I don't know when you came up here, but it can't have been that long ago. Just a couple of weeks. Three weeks?

Zac: Yeah, maybe like three. It was the last weekend of April when the surf was pumping. Can't forget that.

James: Yeah, so it's basically about three weeks coming on to four. And I've gone from absolute zero to feeling way better. Losing a stack of pounds, plenty kilos. And seeing, you know, the future laying out in front of me, it's looking really positive, because it's very, very consistent. And I'm not in a race.

Zac: There's one key thing that changed when I gave you that insight and we were walking along the beach. I said, you can achieve this by then. At that point, I think we said, was it like 95 kilos thereabouts?

James: Uh-hm. Yup. And just for context, from 103 to 95 was what we were talking about. I already got to 98.2 or something like, in just 10 days.

Zac: Yup. Yeah. So less water weight, less inflammation, less food weight from eating all the stuff you don't need. But there's one key change that happened after you got the DEXA, and I kind of wanted to say it, but you said it, you beat me to it. And then you said, no, no, the goal needs to be this.

James: Yeah, the goal was too soft. It was like, oh my god, like, almost 30 kilograms of fat, like there's easily we can get rid of half of that. Right? If I got half of that, I'd be a good fat percentage, and it would be very healthy, and I'd be in a much better state. So it was clear to me that the goalpost needs to change. But I have no doubt that we'll get there. It's just time. Time unfolding, doing the same things I'm doing now. We will get there.

So this can be continued, I'll hold myself accountable to a future episode. I've still got the Maldives in mind. So we've got June, July, August, we've got three or four months. I feel like there'll be a significant change. Maybe people will notice that I changed over the progressive podcast, maybe a little bit skinnier in the face or whatever.

If people say, what have you done? What's the difference? And I've already had one person say, it was another busy entrepreneur, just like the one you helped. I made him a Loom video. He goes, What have you done to yourself? You look fantastic. And I said, Two words for you, bro, Zac Mason. That's it.

Now if you want to chat to Zac Mason, look him up on LinkedIn or Facebook, he's @ZacMason. If you want to email Zac, then just flick me an email, reply to any of the emails from the podcast. Ask for an intro to Zac, I'll just forward it to him and have a chat to him. If you want to know all about the apps and the different equipment that he recommended or whatever, he's the guy to ask about that. That's not my field. But I'm very happy with what's been going on. I appreciate it. And let's hope we get a lot of good surfs together in the future, Zac.

Zac: No doubt we will, 100%.

James: All right, so that's episode 1014. I've been chatting with Zac Mason. We've been talking about getting that business owner body into better shape. It's way, way easier than you might have thought it was.



**Build a sustainable
business and lifestyle
with James's help**