



Making Magnificent Machines — Mike Petrella's Install, Build, and Refurbishment Secrets & Third-Party Collaboration Techniques (Masterclass for November 2023)

Lawrence Neal: All right. So, welcome everyone to the October 2023 membership content with Mike Petrella. We do this every single month. It's typically with someone in high-intensity training on the subject of business or growing your HIT business and all aspects involved in that or personal training.

So really getting into the operation and trying to help you guys become the best personal trainers or turn your team into a great team of trainers who can deliver great results, great experiences for clients.

As I said, today we have Michael Petrella. He's a master HIT-certified Sparta trainer, MedX hit-certified through IART, and I'm sure through many other different accreditations. Also, he's winner of the most innovative training program with the world head of family social council, he owns and operates STG strength and power and STG health and wellness in Ontario, Canada, which is one of the finest and best- equipped to private strength and conditioning facilities in the world.

Now, none of you really needed that introduction because I'm sure many of, about Mike P. He's always my go-to resource for all things machines and many other things about just running a successful HIT business, and also just topics on personal training, but I really always think of Mike first whenever I have any content I want to create on machines in particular.

Mike, firstly, hello. Good to see you. And thank you for doing this.

Mike Petrella: How are you doing today?

Lawrence Neal: I'm very good. All the better for being with you. And if everyone could probably tell that my voice sounds a bit funny and that's because I've got a terrible cold, but thankfully, Mike will be doing most of the talking today.

So, what we're going to do today is we're going to really, try and talk about a couple of points in relation to some of the most popular machine brands that all of you use, know, and love. And we narrowed it down to what we think are the most popular machines, mainly on the secondary market that we see hit owners operating today.



So, it's MedX, Nautilus, Hammer Strength, Pendulum, maybe Prime. And in relation to these, what we're going to be talking about is not so much maintenance, But more talking about like, how does it, what do you need to do in order to, uh, actually if you don't have the skills slash interest, or they're really the skills is the main problem yourself as an owner or as an individual in your team to actually maintain these machines, like, how do you go about that?

There are a few options here. And I guess before, before I talk anymore, I really want to head over to you, Mike, and think we start with... so let me think about this. So maybe this just applies. This is like a blanket topic. So, it maybe applies to all machines, but as we were saying before we got into this today, it's a lot of my, a lot of our colleagues, they run these businesses.

They love these machines. They love to use these machines or do training experience. I know in myself, I'm one of these people, and I know a lot of owners who just have no interest or skills in building, maintaining, cleaning, looking after these machines and I just wanted, if we could tackle this from a few angles, is it, should we start with what do you think about that? Firstly, as someone who's like that what would you do? Where's your mind go? And you think, what would you do in that situation?

If you were that individual, would you skill yourself up? Would you try to delegate that practice, that, that role to someone in your team? Like, how do you think about that?

Mike Petrella: When I start thinking about what I have interest in and what I don't have interest in... I met a gentleman years ago. He was a very interesting person that his viewpoint on life is that any problem that he had, he wanted to be able to solve it himself. And the reason being is that way nobody could control him.

And so, I'll just give you for instance, he had a downpipe in his house first, so he learned how to plumb like he's not a ticketed plumber, but he wanted to know how to do it.

Now, obviously, there would be financial savings from that. But his point of view was if something breaks in my house and I have to get somebody to come in, I'm at their mercy. I'm at their time schedule. If someone tells me all, I can't get to your house in a week, he doesn't have plumbing for a week.

Now there's nothing nefarious about that, but he always just felt that he never wanted anybody to have anything over him. So, he would learn how to do plumbing.



Now, he might not have interest in plumbing, but now he can do it. And now, since then, he's been able to plumb rental properties himself and his own places, and he has those savings.

Now, what I find very interesting about that, is he will now, if needed, and it makes more sense for him from a time perspective and from a financial perspective to hire a plumber. He will do that, but he will only do that once he has acquired those skills himself.

So, for instance, if we're talking about exercise machines, I can maintain everything myself, but if say I was out of town, something broke down. I do have people around that can do these things, so I have no issues with hiring somebody out for stuff, but I always remember what his viewpoint was and learned a little bit from him.

There are all kinds of things that I have absolutely no interest in doing, but I try to make sure that I can do them because of some situation occurs where it's 100 percent on me or, I just No, no one's around or someone wants to gouge me for prices, and I know what a job's worth, and they want to ask three or four times. No, I can go do it myself.

And when you have that ability, I find it makes life easier. You could even get into the old philosophy. I think Joe Rogan has talked about it a few times. I forget where I read it and only a warrior chooses pacifism; everybody else is doomed to it.

In a much more stripped-down version, if you can't maintain literally one of the hallmarks of your business, one of the pillars of your business, then you're at somebody else's mercy.

And again, it's not like they're trying to get you, they're trying to shut down your business, but certainly having that ability. gives you a lot more peace of mind.

You know that you can sort these problems and these issues out and you can even look at it as a leadership thing: something happens in your business, it might be someone who can clean better, there might be someone who can maintain better, there might be someone who can market better, there might be somebody who can sell better.

But if you can't do all those things to at least a proficient standard, that's not great leadership when things go – that's how you know if someone's a good leader or not – It's not when things go good, but things are good. It's really easy to be a leader. It's when things go bad and everyone in the room starts looking around and who's going to step up. That's where leadership actually starts.



Again, I don't think necessarily maintaining a Nautilus machine makes you some sort of crazy, intellectual, proficient person, but because we rely on these machines so well, I think that most people would appreciate it. Be better off to almost make up an interest for them that, hey, this is something I really want to know.

There might be a mechanic in my business that's just better. There might be a guy or a girl down the road that could do it at half the, or twice as fast as me and half the price of my time. And it's, it'd be great. Go hire them. They're going to do a great job. But if you need something in the morning, it's 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock at night, no one's going to be coming.

If you can do it yourself, will you at least have that skill set? It's going to make life a lot easier.

Lawrence Neal: Mike, I did not see this going in this direction, but I love it. This is almost a philosophical conversation now or discussion.

And before I comment further, I just want to also say that Mike and I have done obviously a lot of content already on machines and maintenance, and I will link to resources we have already on how to maintain MedX and Nautilus so that you can get started on learning how to do this yourself, which is what Mike's saying.

I love this because it's a big weakness of my own. Mike, give me a keyboard and a laptop. Put me in front of someone to have a conversation, those things I can do well. Now, I'm good at building relationships, good at conversations, pretty good at selling, not too bad at marketing, could be better. I'd be quite good with technology, laptops, etc.

And just creating stuff on the internet, not too bad at personal training either and working with people. But when it comes to doing anything that involves building or fixing something, it's definitely not something that I'm not going to sit here and say I'm bad at it. Or I don't have the ability to learn it because I do.

It's just, um, for whatever reason I have this aversion to want to do that stuff. And there's plenty of stuff in my household that I will pay someone to do. And it is like you say, it's, it because I might be waiting a long time for that thing to happen.

Great example, our oven just went the other day, the element in our oven just went. And it was my daughter's birthday, and my missus couldn't bake the cake that she wanted to bake because the oven wasn't working. And do I wish I had the skills where I could just fix that for her?



Yes. But instead, we waited for it. Because we only currently rent this property and waited for our landlord to actually come in himself. He couldn't even get someone because again, this is another issue. The supply of trades people, maybe this is the same in Canada. This is terrible in Galway. In Ireland. Yeah.

Because it's just, who wants to learn that skill now, right? Especially with AI on the horizon and all the robotics and stuff. But so anyway, long story short, we've got it fixed, but it took a lot longer. And so that is a problem. And there is a deep-seated desire in me to want to have that skill, but it just, I guess I can be a little bit lazy.

And I always do that calculation. Like my time is worth X. If I can spend this amount of money and save this much time, it's actually better off for me, right? Because there's an opportunity cost. So, I could be doing other things. And I always use that argument to never learn this stuff. So that's and so what you said there about having that skill set, just in case it really resonated with me.

The second thing, I don't know if this is also what you meant as well is by having like base level competency, like you made that quite clearly. You don't have to be like a master at this stuff. You just have to have some competency you'll actually be better at sourcing suppliers and know when you're being taken advantage of.

And when you're actually getting a good deal, right? Because someone will say, oh, we did X, Y and Z and it cost X. It took this much time and you're thinking I could do that, and it'd take this much time, so they always so I learned that, for instance, and I'm doing podcasting and audio production.

I think a lot of people will. Pay like an audio engineer or whoever to publish to produce a podcast or whatever not having those skills themselves. And they end up paying a fortune, not really realizing that actually there may be overspending because they don't understand the work that goes into it.

Where am I going with this? So, I feel like, yeah, if you, again, if you have those base level skills, roughly how long it takes to produce, decent audio, for instance. And so, I don't have that problem with Andre, who will be producing this. He does a wonderful job at a very affordable rate, but I think that I've certainly made that mistake in the past.



So those are my initial thoughts. I really like where we're going with this. So, what you're saying essentially is this is a core aspect of your business. You need, you should develop a base level competency and just understanding how to maintain, how to clean these machines effectively.

Maybe even more than that, maybe even install them, set them up just so that, in lieu of having those skills available to you, you can do it in an emergency situation.

Mike Petrella: Yes, and to bring it all back to machines. I'll just talk about what you say you're very strong at is some of the technical stuff with the laptop stuff.

We here at STG, we have a company that does all of the SEO for the website, and they do a better job than I ever did, and they can show me all the Google stats to prove that. But I know how to write my website. I still designed and built my website, and I did put in SEO in the background. I spent some time on YouTube trying to figure it all out and again, I just want to know how it was because if they didn't come to the party or they didn't do a good job or their price was just absolutely enormous, I want to be able to do that.

Now, like you said, the smart business move is what my time is worth this, how much they're going to charge me. And does it all make sense? And a lot of times it does. And like I said, we hire someone to do that, but I can do SEO. On my own website, as for the machines, I'll tell you about just how crazy you can get in and the lack of people coming up.

A lot of your members probably know the name TK Star. It's an equipment brand from 1977 and it's 1 man basically runs the whole show. It's Tom Kinney. I would say probably a good number of your members have at least 1 or 2 of his machines. He makes everything by hand. Now, I do not have the ability to Cut everything out of stainless, weld it all, knurl it all, literally do leather stitching by hand.

He does the whole thing, and he can't even get somebody to learn his craft. He would love to pass it down. He's getting older now. And getting back to what you were saying about Not having enough labor people, if I was, 17, 18, 19 years old living in New York, and I had some sort of passion for exercise and passion for building things with my hands, I'd be living at this guy's house because he would just love to, to pass it on.

So even as far as machines go, I don't have that level of ability. I can't build a machine from absolute scratch. And I would have to hire somebody like him to build me something. I do have



an understanding of welding. I do have an understanding of upholstery. I do have an understanding of design. I can't build one.

I can't, I can fix a car, but I can't build a car. No, I can fix a machine, but I can't build a machine. At least not yet. So yeah, it's all about just having that understanding, but that also allows you to go into those worlds of, I want to talk to Tom about, hey, I want this machine, but I want this changed on it.

I know, to a decent degree, what's possible and what's not, I'm not asking for him to completely invert something that just won't make it no longer work or no longer function as planned. And certainly. With these machines, they're getting, in my opinion, more complicated. If you look at an original universal machine, it's just.

Like a lever weight stack, essentially, and most people could pull one of those apart and put it back together relatively easily. You get into something like a MedX Leg Press, that's not where I would start somebody. It's a somewhat complicated machine, but once you understand the basics it can still be applied and to get specific on how I would start somebody, if they did have an interest to learn.

You go to any mechanic school, and they give you something when the first challenge is, okay, take this apart and put it back together. That's just a very simple way. Get an old machine, and you can still buy old models, machines relatively cheap. Put it in a spot where you got some space.

The tools are very simple for now. You need a nine-sixteenths and three quarters ratchet and socket that will get you 90 percent of the way there. A set of Allen keys and then a flat screwdriver to take the clips off the chain. That's Now there's a couple other machines that have some things here and there, but like with those four tools, you can essentially take apart and put a Nautilus machine back together.

And I would start by just taking off a couple pieces, take lots of pictures. And the first time I took an engine apart and rebuilt it, it was picture after picture. We didn't have digital cameras back then. We had to get those pictures developed. Just take lots of pictures and even just, taking the seat off your machine.

If you've never done it, it's probably going to be some nine, sixteen volts underneath. Probably two or three of them, take it apart, see how it works, put it back together. And you might crack



the wood in it because you over tighten it once or twice. And I would do it on some brand-new machine that you just installed into your place.

But just get something to work on in a completely different field. I helped a kid learn how to drive a standard transmission this summer. Never driven a car that was standard. It was actually, it's one of my client's kids. And it was a favor to her. We can get into that another time. She went out and she bought, like a 1, 500 car.

So if he blows up the clutch, it's really not that big a deal. But yeah, just one step at a time. Okay. Here's how you start first. Here's how you make sure you don't stall it. Don't even worry about shifting in a second. Don't even worry about anything else, just one thing at a time. And then you could essentially take every part of the machine apart, get some pictures.

It's really easy with our phones and digital cameras now, and just slowly put it back together. And the nice thing about most Nautilus machines, they really don't go back together backwards. If you put, you might be able to put a pad on the wrong way. It will feel weird. But for the most part, the frame is only going to bolt up one way.

The big pieces only bolts up one way and just go through that process. And eventually you get tricks here and there and you find different tools here and there. And, you can make things go pretty quickly, but it took you half a day to pull, a nautilus chest fly apart and put it back together.

And eventually you can do it in 20 minutes. It's, you still got to go through that process. Like everything else. None of us personal trained somebody. Day one in the, in, we know we weren't just interested in being personal trainers. We probably went to the gym, grabbed a dumbbell, we did something stupid, we probably got tennis elbow once or twice or whatever, you learn the process and I understand that everything else, it can be daunting, but the nice thing is in the pantheon of mechanical stuff, a Nautilus or a MedX machine, is not terribly complicated.

Quite literally, it's not rocket science.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, this is so good. What you just said there in terms of giving us almost a step by step on how you would go about developing this competency, what tools you need. And I think have you ever read the book art?

Was it Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance? You ever read that? You ever heard of that?



Mike Petrella: You know what? I've read half of it. One of my friends, who's actually a martial artist, he's not a motorcyclist, I'm kidding, he's a martial artist, he gave me that book. And he gave me that, and he gave me the Book of Seven Rings...?

I don't know if I'm saying that right. It was a famous Japanese swordsman. He was so good at his craft that He basically went his whole life without ever suffering a defeat, and at some point, he switched from metal swords to wooden swords, and the book's largely about his training techniques and philosophy, and I can remember I read that one through, and then I had the other one, and I think I moved.

I think I've had it packed in a box. I remember it was a pink book and I was halfway through, and I didn't find the book. Something like that, but I know which book you're talking about.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah. Yeah. I do not, I've only read half too.

Mike Petrella: And there you go.

Lawrence Neal: It's one of those books where it's so popular and everyone tells you to read it.

And I, yeah, so I can't sit here and say this book is, but at least my understanding and memory of that first half relates to the idea of. Yeah. There's a quality in learning how to main obviously the metaphor used in the book is maintaining one's motorcycle, but it's, I think it transfers what we're talking about.

It's those who read the book and know it very well, probably be like, no, Lawrence, you're completely misinterpreting it. But humor me. But no, it just got me thinking like, there's this, there's something meaningful and fulfilling about, learning anything, obviously. And something so important as this in your business, if you go from having zero competence to being able to, practice and eventually.

Fix, take apart and rebuild these machines that is I can imagine being massively rewarding. I know just for myself and it's going to sound hilarious. Like when I built my son's cot, like that was a big achievement for me, and that's like the easiest thing ever. I think it's a big achievement for me.

It was like, that's probably a bit hyperbolic, but it felt good.



Mike Petrella: I know what you're talking about. And then that pride that you did something. With your own two hands and it's gonna give quality of life to your family and I get it.

Lawrence Neal: And I say that with some embarrassment just because it's like such a simple thing to do, but for me, it's actually, a little bit more challenging.

So that's why this really does resonate with me. And you've definitely motivated me. This is outside the realms of just maintaining exercise machines, but just, I think. Taking this more seriously in my overall life as well. This is a great start.

So, the thing I want to touch on next to you, Mike, is okay, let's say people listening to this, they develop that base level competency, right? Which is important as a backup and as a way to actually get things done now. But longer term, especially if you're scaling your business and maybe you want to spend time on other activities. I love this idea of working with local companies to outsource this function.

And since you probably know the industry better in a terminology [sense] and just the whole mechanics and engineering side of things, help me understand this. It's funny, I was actually talking to a client recently and we were talking about this idea of, okay, look to, because I know some of our colleagues do this, but they actually partner with a local company who have, I don't know, the playbook, the SOP for maintaining their machines or.

Whatever it is, cleaning, maintaining, probably is more of the thing. But then also, let's say they order new machines, they need them, what do you do when you order a machine? You want it all to be, to go from looking like a, an old second-hand machine to a brand new one. You have it, what painted.

What do you do? What sort of technical stuff you go through when you do that? Is it sandblasting? Is that one of the things?

Mike Petrella: Okay, so you're asking about how to refurbish a machine and then using a company to maintain the machine.

Lawrence Neal: Before I get into like, how you build that relationship, what's actually just off the top of your head when you get a new when you buy a second-hand machine, so you can tell I'm so ignorant about this, when you buy a second-hand machine, and it's like, shocking condition, and you want to take that.



That machine and make it look like it's brand new because you want it to sit in a luxury studio. What's the process you go through to do that?

Mike Petrella: So when we're refurbishing a machine, the main things you want to look at is obviously the paint, which is largely on the frame.

There might be some other parts that that get some paint, but you're looking at largely the frame. And then, of course, the next big thing is upholstery and on anything that's over, say 10 years, there's a good chance there's some cracks in the upholstery just because the cleaners that people use and the sweat from the clients, they just break down vinyl pads over time.

And the last thing that can get a little tricky, you almost have to have a, I guess we'll say again, a baseline knowledge of the machines is this functioning. Is this smooth? Some of the Nautilus machines, even brand new, weren't the smoothest in the world, every Med X machine was very smooth.

So you have to have a kind of an idea that, okay, I'm pushing into this or I'm pulling into this. And is this feeling the way that it should be? Because when we start dealing with friction issues, then it gets a little bit more complicated. So, we'll cover that last. So, you pull the machine apart and this would be a good time to start taking pictures if you're not used to doing it.

And you take. The frame and any sort of painted piece. So, let's just say you have a Nautilus blue machine, and you want to change it to black because that's what we do at our place when we do it. Anything that's got blue, it's got to come off the machine. The grip's got to come off. The upholstery has got to come off.

And then what we do is we send that to a sandblaster and a sandblaster is just a process and a gentleman who takes it sand and at a high speed with a gun just shoots it onto the metal and it pulls the old metal off it, and it breaks it down to bare metal. So that way the new coating, whether you use paint, or a harder coating can adhere to the metal better.

So, like we, for instance, we tend to use powder coating because it looks just like paint, but it just it's stronger. It's more durable. It's going to last longer. So, we send it out to a sandblaster and then it gets transferred to a powder coat or a painter and then it comes back, and it looks brand new.



Unfortunately for us that's two separate processes. A lot of sandblasters have the ability to powder coat. A lot of powder coaters have sandblasters on site. Unfortunately, ours do not. So, it's two stops, but it would certainly be nice if you had somebody who could do that for your business locally.

Lawrence Neal: That's where your situation is locally.

Mike Petrella: The guy who does our powder coating, you have to have a pretty big oven for some of the pieces. There's people that will say powder coat, a set of rims for a car, cause they'll make them look really nice. And the last you have to put them in basically an oven to cure it.

And you only need an oven so big. That for a wheel for a car, but if you want to take the frame off, say a Nautilus compound, like you need something large so that's what he specialize in. He can do big pieces, but he doesn't sandblast. So that's how we take care of the frame, the upholstery.

And I was actually talking to a gentleman who owns a gym in New Jersey the other day more often than not. You can find somebody very local that does upholstery. There are two or three guys within 10 minutes of my place. Only one of them I consider to be any good. The other two I tried, screwed up, in my opinion, very simple tasks.

I had to get it redone. So, whenever I got any new upholstery, I sent it to this guy. I normally give him the old one. The wood may or may not be good. He can rebuild the wood backing if needed, and he can either make it brand new from scratch, or he can just. put in a new topping or needs foam. Like, he pretty much knows what to do and he does a good job.

If that isn't available, the guys in the States, they're very fortunate. There's a company called Full Circle Padding. And if I need something on, and I know it's going to be challenging and I know it's got to be done a hundred percent, correct. It's expensive for me to use them because I lose about 30 or 40 points on the dollar plus shipping plus brokerage plus time, but they do everything perfect.

So that is in the States. They have the luxury of that full circle padding. They do a great job. I can't speak highly enough for them.

Lawrence Neal: You mentioned them a bunch of times. They're on my list because of you that I recommend to people.



Mike Petrella: Great. Thank you. They're great. But normally you can get somebody local.

At least I can get somebody local. And just because I can use Canadian dollars and there's no shipping involved; it cuts the cost down sometimes as much as half. But so that's where you go with the upholstery.

Lawrence Neal: Just on the upholstery — Let's say you want to find. A local alternative. Maybe you're not in the States, or maybe you just want someone who you can like, actually go to their location.

What would you do? How would you find that, that business?

Mike Petrella: Automotive upholstery. You find someone who does custom cars. A pad for an exercise machine will be insanely easy for someone who can do a custom car.

Lawrence Neal: Genius. So, you just Google automotive upholstery, car upholstery. Done. Love it.

Mike Petrella: Yep. And you know what?

There's somebody in every town who does that because car culture is so huge. And like I said, I think all three of the people that I have mentioned in my town, I think all three of them specialize in automotive upholstery. That's like their main bread and butter of their business.

Lawrence Neal: That is, everyone listening to this, that's worth your monthly membership right there.

That one tip, like that is to me, that's just genius. Oh, I don't know. Maybe it's not worth it. I don't know. It's to me. Continue Mike. Okay. See, we're going through the different steps. Is that all the steps?

Mike Petrella: Those are the first two. That's upholstery and that's frame. So now we get into the mechanical.

Friction things. Now, this is where different brands are, these different systems and you got to get into it a little bit, but we'll start with a typical Nautilus machine. So, the main points of friction



are anywhere that you have an articulation out of bushing or bearing. And then of course the weight stack itself.

So, when we're getting into the bearings, assuming that it has some sort of sealed bearing, I just use a typical grease gun. You just put it on the nipple. That just does a coupler one or two pumps and just move the movement arm through a few repetitions. And you'd be surprised how many times You just have a dry bearing, and you don't gotta put in new bearing.

Most of the bearings on these machines are for applications that can run like 10,000 RPMs for a thousand hours or 10,000 hours or something like that. You are never gonna wear out a bearing on an autos machine, at least you should, unless something really crazy got into it. So, a lot of times, just a little bit of grease.

You don't have to over grease everything. If you see grease coming out [00:29:00] from the middle and you've overdone it, one or two pumps last you, 10 years, when you're getting into the bushings will wear down over time. They were brass bushings, and they were soft. It's difficult to get new brass bushings because they don't have a lot of application.

And this is the time where you would want to put in new bearings anyways. Eventually, you'll understand that there's only three or four bearings that pretty much will redo all the Nautilus machines in the line. But to get things started, you just take any piece that you're not familiar with. Once you take it to a bearing shop.

And again, bearing shops are insanely common. They will measure it up. They'll tell you the part number, you order it and you just precedent. So that's pretty simple when it comes to the guide rods, if they get bent, which is very common, especially when these things have been moved over the years, they can be straightened, but it's difficult.

You need someone who's really good and you need a perfectly flat table. And realistically it's easier. Maybe not cheaper, but easier to just buy new guide rods. You just take the old one to a place where they sell steel. Again, anywhere that sells steel, they're just soft, stainless-steel rods. They'll cut them to spec for you on site.

And you just put them on brand new guide rods. But you need holes in them as well.

Lawrence Neal: And they'll cut the holes as well, will they?



Mike Petrella: No, that's a stack pin. A stack pin is like what goes around in the middle, and it's attached to the top plate. I don't think I've ever come across a bent stack pin because it's hard and steel.

It resides in the plate itself. I'm talking about, for instance, MedX doesn't have guide rods. And I know what you're thinking about there and we can get into MedX in a second. I'm talking on the Nautilus. You have guide Rods. Most excise machines still have guide rods. I see. I think MedX is about the only machine that doesn't have a guide.

I don't know if the Imagine Strength ones are using guide rods or not. I haven't seen the mechanical yet, but if the rods appear to be straight, and the way you just look at them, they're straight, you just put them on the ground, it might not be a perfectly flat surface. If you just roll them and you will know instantly whether that thing is relatively straight or not.

If it's got a wow in it, it will show up. You don't need a real trained eye to see it. You will know if assuming they're straight, you'd be surprised how far you can get with just taking brake cleaner. And I believe the original Nautilus. recommendations were alcohol and brake cleaners, mostly alcohol. And you just put it on those guide rods, you just wipe it down and it will pull so much dirt and grime off, and it'll make them shine perfectly.

If there is some sort of abrasion that over the years has caught has happened and you're not like the brake cleaner is not working, 90 percent of the time the brake cleaner will work. I believe the original Nautilus recommendation was like 2000 grit sandpaper real fine stuff. And I don't think you're going to hurt anything if you took 2000 grit sandpaper with a little bit of brake cleaner and that would grind it real smooth.

And then what I do, and this is more of a personal preference, but you get either a Teflon or a silicone spray. And again, some people say you have to go Teflon. Some people say you have to go silicone. I don't really find one to be greatly better than the other. And you get one of these things, you spray it on, you basically let it go dry, and then you wipe it off, and it becomes incredibly smooth surface.

It actually permeates right into the metal itself, but it doesn't leave any sort of wet residue like a WD 40 product would. And then your guide rods are set and again, if you have it in your nice studio and things are climate controlled and your clients respect the machines that should pretty much outlast you like you, you'll probably never have to do that again.



The last thing on a Nautilus machine, which we don't have to get into with medics is the chains. If you have a machine that's over 20 years old, assume the chain is stretched. It most likely just is, um, putting on a new chain. You can get real cheap chains, Chinese manufactured. I've used it, and I've never had an issue with it, or you can go as far as getting stainless steel chain from Japan or made in America.

It's four or five times the cost. It'll probably never break down. It's hardened. It's resistant to any sort of corrosion. I've seen a couple guys do it. It looks cool. It shines. It's way over the top. I've actually never done it, but that's like your top end. You'll probably never have to touch it again.

Is it necessary? Probably not.

Lawrence Neal: How much does that kind of thing cost?

Mike Petrella: I don't know. I've never bought it, but just by looking at it per foot, I think it's about four or five times the cost of just buying your average chain. And I think even your cheapest standard for 40 roller chain, which is used on Nautilus machines, I think it has a breaking strength of about 5,000 pounds.

So, do you need a stainless version of that? Probably not, but it's cool. I like it.

Lawrence Neal: I'm going to ask you a question now. I'm trying to understand what a guide rod is, because I always thought when you were talking about guide rods, you were talking about the stack pin, right?

Mike Petrella: Yeah, so if you just look at a Nautilus machine, there's just two stainless steel rods on either side of the stack rod that goes and generally it comes into the bottom of the frame and the top of the frame it just rides on.

So MedX got rid of those to try to eliminate friction essentially. The majority of exercise equipment probably, I don't even know if there's another brand that uses that MedX where they pick the stack up from underneath and they don't have guide rods.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, no, I can't. I can't think of one. Yeah, no, I get what you mean now. Okay, perfect. That's very helpful. So, what's next on the list?



Mike Petrella: One more thing: So, we're talking with the chain. Let's assume that the chain looks like it hasn't been stretched. The machine is functioning well, but there is a lot of rust on the chain, or it just doesn't look like it should.

I believe the original Nautilus recommendation was a 30-weight oil. Basically, a lightweight oil. I actually played around with that over the years, and I had a dual squat sent to me from California and I bought it because the guy was basically giving it away. This is, probably 15 years ago now.

And he is, I believe, the only machine I bought that had clearly been left outside for some period of time. So, I had to redo a bunch of it. And the chains were completely rusted from top to bottom. And at the time. I didn't know how to put on new chains or buy new chains or anything like that.

So, I wanted to see if I could just fix them. And all I did was I took them off and I just put them in like a dish with some heavy-duty cleaner. It's soaked off. You wouldn't believe how much it came off. And then I put a second basically made dish and I ran it in 8090, which is a heavyweight transmission oil, and I basically brushed it in and then I let it sit for a couple of days and for a couple of days.

The chains actually glow red because that's what the color of 8090 oil is that was easily over a decade ago. I have never touched those chains since. I've never had a speck of rust. So, if you have the time and you can let them hang up and brush in, I don't know if anyone else has done this, but I use 8090 transmission oil.

It just soaks right into those chains, and it works great.

Lawrence Neal: Cool tip, pro tip. All right, so where do we go from here? What's next?

Mike Petrella: So that's basically start to finish on a Nautilus machine. What I would use to maintain it, how you'd refurb it when you're getting into the MedX machines. It's interesting.

There's less maintenance largely because there's less moving parts in terms of there's no guide rods, so you don't have to worry about anything like that. There's no chain. So, if you were to say you're taking like a brand-new car versus a car from the 70s, you don't really rebuild cars today.

If something breaks, you put on a new part. That's how it is. You. Back in, even just the 90s down the road from us, there was a guy and his whole job was rebuilding starters and alternators on



cars. You don't rebuild starters and alternators anymore. You just buy a brand new one. That's how it is.

So, a lot of these new machines don't really have rebuildable parts. Like you don't rebuild a Kevlar belt. Once it's stretched, it's gone. You can't tighten it back up. There might be an adjustment somewhere, there's not much you can do. Yes. Something goes in the movement arm.

It's generally a solid welded piece of steel. You don't fix that. You basically have to get a new piece and stuff like that. So, what becomes more important with the maintenance on the newer stuff is just being good with your sockets and your wrenches and your ratchets. It's everything is bolt on bolt off.

I off the top of my head. I really don't think about it. Too much maintenance for MedX being, maybe grease the bearings once a year outside of that, they just last. And the only thing that really goes on them is upholstery and grips because they're just wear items, right? And again, you get new upholstery, you get some new grip scent.

And that's how it is. If something gets If something on it has fallen and something on it has either broken or bent, there's talented people that can fix stuff like that, but again, more often than not, you just buy a new piece and you bolt it on, so there's actually less maintenance on the MedX, but for me, I'm actually the toughest part about that is getting those stickers to line up right when one has come off or peeled off or something like that.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, the shields drive me absolutely insane.

Mike Petrella: Oh, the magnets on those shields are absolutely brutal. And I've seen people glue them on and it certainly works. But if you want to get at anything, it is nice to pull off. But there's. Yeah, those shields were not the best idea that MedX ever came up with.

Lawrence Neal: No but no, that's a really good point.

Maybe that's one of the reasons why a lot of our colleagues like buying MedX. Obviously, they love them because they're great machines to exercise on, but to know that actually they're probably the lowest maintenance options as well is appealing. Do you mind if we shift gears now into talking about...



How would we work with a third party on maintaining this or is there more to say that you'd like to share before we just move on quickly?

Mike Petrella: I just had one more thing about machines. Obviously hammer strength is one of the other brands that are very prevalent. I think probably almost every person I know in this space that has a gym has at least one Hammer Strength machine, if not multiple.

And I'm sure I've said this on your podcast before in other places if I was going to open a commercial gym a membership-based gym It would be predominantly Hammer Strength because they're so easy to maintain. They're so easy to move. There are people really can't hurt themselves on it because a lot of them don't have the range of motion that a Nautilus or a MedX machine has, and if you wanted to get started in this maintenance process, getting just a hammer strength chest press and going through that would be a great place to start because I'm pretty sure my hammer strength wide chest, the entire machine comes apart and goes back together, Take care.

With a three-quarter inch ratchet wrench and socket. I think you can do the whole machine with that. And how simple is that as a start?

Lawrence Neal: Even I could do that, Mike.

Mike Petrella: Yeah, everybody can do that, right? Everybody can do that. But that is a really nice place. And again, even when we come to moving machines, moving a MedX Leg Press is a Herculean task, whereas moving most Hammer Strength machines, you and a buddy could probably drag it, no weight stacks and whatnot. So, I would say most people should probably start there.

Now, as for partnering with local businesses, I'll give you a great example: So, when we moved our gym in 2019 to the current space that we're in, we had to move over a hundred machines. So even though I'm very proficient at moving exercise machines, to do that job yourself would just take forever best, best always, and the best tools and the best trucks, the best lift gates.

It's just a huge task. So obviously I needed help. To get it done in any sort of reasonable manner. Now, again, we could talk about how we started this. If something goes bad, I want to be the guy that would step up and say no, this is how you do this. And you take the lead on certain things, but you still need manpower for this particular job.



So, some of my trainers helped. And one of the reasons why they were great help is because I have over time shown them how to move exercise machines, little tricks and trade there, right? If that's part of. In my opinion, what the training for the people who work in your facility should be.

Again, I don't expect any of my anybody at my gym to be able to, for lack of a better term, match my performance and how fast I can move an exercise machine. But if I were to say to, for instance, my, my GM spike, and you've talked to several times. Hey, Spike, I'm out of town. We need this machine moved because something is coming in.

He would, it would still be a bit of a task because he's not as experienced as I am, but he could do it. I would have no, no reservations that he'd be able to get that job done. And just cause he's done a few of them, now he's helped me out. So that's been transferred to him. Now what really made this job more bearable was I hired mechanics, car mechanics.

One of them is a client of mine and he brought a buddy who worked with him and actually after the move, he became a client for a little bit too. So that was pretty good. These guys are so technically proficient at working on things far more complicated than an exercise machine. They don't have to figure out the basics of an autoist machine.

They learned that in day one of automotive school. They can do things so much more technically. Their skill set is so much, it's much better than my skill set is. I'm good at Nautilus machines because that's what I do, but if I gave them a machine that was insanely complicated, chains moving every which way, movement arms every which multiple movement arms and some of the double machines, to them, it's a walk in the park just because their skill set is so great.

So even my dad who would have been in his late 60s at the time, but a class-A mechanic, I would send him on a machine with somebody who, maybe it was like 25 or under and they had to do the back breaking moving of stuff.

But he was just unbolting stuff left and right, machines were apart in two seconds and stuff like that. And then when we got it to the next place, I didn't have to tell him how to put it back together. He's a mechanic. He knew how to put it back together. And again, he was extremely proficient.

Hiring mechanics, or if you have any mechanics that are clients, they are invaluable for stuff.

Lawrence Neal: And specifically, car mechanics.



Mike Petrella: If you were to say, Lawrence, hey, I want to get an exercise machine mechanic. Where are you going to find that? Yeah, I don't know. I don't know who that is. I probably know a dozen people that could qualify for that.

That's not what they do. If someone said, hey, I need my gym move. I can help them out. I'm a personal trainer slash gym owner. That's where I spend my time, right? But these guys spend eight hours a day. Mechanical and they do things that are far more complicated. And again, just like I said, every town has an upholstery guy.

Every town has dozens of mechanics. Every small town has a mechanic job. Every big town's got dozens that are vying for business. So, it's not like we're short of people that are mechanically minded, and you can just go to Google and say, local mechanic near me. Now they might not be interested in the job.

I get in this case; the mechanics were people that I knew. One of them was a client of mine, but I didn't have to teach them anything. In fact, I even picked up a couple of tips from them. I look at machines like there's, this complicated part of this machine and they'd be like, oh yeah, I already did that.

And I said how'd you, do it? And they showed me a trick that I never thought of. And they showed me a tool that I hadn't heard of. I go out to, we got this place in Canada, it's called Canadian Tire. It's like where you buy all kinds of general stuff. You can, you can buy almost anything there.

It's like Walmart, but with a bit of an automotive flair to it. And you go and buy certain tools. And I didn't know that tool existed. And it turned a, a 20-minute job into a two-minute job. Because that's perfect. And he just didn't know. They have taught me stuff along the way.

Lawrence Neal: Love it. Okay. So, what we're going to now, and I'm just wanting to be respectful of your time, Mike, you got a 20, 15 minutes, 10, 15 minutes. So, where I'd like to get to, as we start to wrap up here, is just make sure we give people an idea of how do you go about finding third parties to all the things that we need to look after machines effectively.

So just to jump back, you talked about. Sandblasting equipment and painting it again. This is gonna sound like a stupid question, but what are we Googling? We're trying to find those local third parties to help us with that.



Mike Petrella: One of the reasons why I look for powder coating, obviously, it's very durable and it lasts longer.

Most places that do paint. Again, it's largely in the automotive section and you have got to find somebody who's got a paint booth that's willing to paint your exercise machine and there's people that will do it, but it's not their thing. Whereas when you get into powder coating, they powder coat everything doesn't matter what you hand up.

They will powder coat it. I remember the last time I was at my powder coating, not my powder coat shop at the place that I use, they were doing streetlamps. Big, heavy streetlamps, they're out about for every 5 years, the city takes them down, they bring them to this place, he redoes them, they get installed back and they look good as new, right?

If I took a streetlamp to your average car shop and said, hey, can you paint this? They might look at you funny. So, for some reason, powder coating just has this reputation where if you bring it to them, they'll do it. So that's one of the other reasons why I like to use that process. And I'm sure if you just do a typical online search for powder coating near me again, it's not like it's a rare thing.

All kinds of people are powder coating. These days, I just find that it's easier to find somebody who will do that for something like an exercise machine than painting it again. And that might be just relative to my area.

Lawrence Neal: No, that's fine... I found a bunch already. I just typed in powder coating near me, and I found places.

It's funny because obviously I live in Ireland where things like quite a lot of things quite far away from each other. Relative to people that live in Ireland, so the closest the first listing is there's a Dublin listing here. There's a listing here, so with Dublin, just for those listening it would be about 2 hours from me, 2 and a half hours in by car.

And then there's also 1 here in Mayo, which is probably about an hour and a half, but that's a good start. It's a good start. These are 2 powder coating companies. So anyway, sorry, please go on. This is great.

Mike Petrella: One quick note about powder coating is powder coating goes on thicker than paint. on Something like a Nautilus machine where there is a bearing or a bushing pushed into a



hole, it has to be reamed back out because it will basically cause a decent amount of friction in the machine because it's not sitting in there properly, whereas the paint will probably be relatively the same thickness to what Nautilus would have done.

Back in the day. So that's just a quick little tip. If you get a nice powder coat machine, put it all back together. It looks beautiful and it's not functioning right. There's a good chance you didn't remount the holes. And again, that's a 32nd job. It's not a big deal, but I remember the first time I powder coated machine, I came across that myself.

So just in case someone wants to do that for the first time, that's easily the best way. And when you get something powder coated today, again, in a private setting, it's going to last a very long time.

Lawrence Neal: Okay. So, what about sandblasting? Is that the next thing here? You sandblast it first, right? Then powder coat. Am I correct?

Mike Petrella: Yes. Yeah. So, whether you're painting or you're powder coating, you want bare metal. I know I've actually seen machines. They just took it and they just painted over the old paint. Does that look bad? Yeah, but you know what? I should say it. This most of them look bad. Some of them.

I don't know what kind of paint they're using or what kind of process they're using, but for the amount of time and money they probably saved, it's not bad. It's not bad at all. But more often than not, it doesn't work good. And if you want to do it right, you definitely want to get down to bare metal.

Lawrence Neal: Got it.

So where are we going to get it sandblasted? What are we Googling when we're trying to find fair bodies for that?

Mike Petrella: Same thing. You just Google sandblaster, and I would imagine that you'll even find more sand whereas, whereas powder coating, any sort of paint, if you're a painter, you're a powder coder, there is a bit of an art to it to be really good to make really nice product.

Anybody can sandblast. Even around here I can go to any sort of local store. I can buy a sandblaster. I can set it up in my garage with just normal hydro, or it's fine. I say the term hydro.



All of our electricity is through a hydroelectric dam. So, when I say hydro and can, everyone knows what it means, but just normal electricity in your house.

And obviously, if it's a really big piece, you need a really big sandbox. That's where it gets the problem. But say, I want to take some small pieces off the machine. Sandblasting is very easy. You just, you see the paint just come right off. You gotta buy a bag of sand and it's really easy.

You'll probably find, if you do a Google search, you'll probably find multiple sandblasters within that hour and a half timeline.

Lawrence Neal: I found one right down the road. SmartBlast.

Mike Petrella: Yeah, it's very common.

Lawrence Neal: Very dangerous though, right? You wouldn't want to spray your skin.

Mike Petrella: No. With that being said it's, if you put it right against your skin, it's gonna hurt like heck, but you could just say the same thing with a power washer.

You wouldn't put it right against your skin, so don't do that, guys. Don't do that. You want to wear some eye protection and stuff like that, but it's not incredibly dangerous. If you can use a reciprocating saw that's more dangerous than sandblasting is.

Lawrence Neal: Okay. Okay. Okay, great. We find that's pretty straightforward. Then you literally Google sandblaster, sandblasting near me, and you'll find a 3rd party to help with that. Just what's the last what's the final piece of it in terms of working with 3rd parties? Because we talked about sandblasting powder coating upholstery.

In that order, right? And then functionality smooth functioning. Who do we... is that again a car mechanic...?

Mike Petrella: A car mechanic would probably do that quite well. I find that the functioning is one of the things that you're almost going to have to learn yourself. The mechanic could get on it and he could look at it from a mechanical standpoint, this seems fine, and he thinks it's fine.

And then if you know what you're going for, what it's supposed to be like, cause you have that experience. I'm not saying they can't figure it out. These are smart people, but that's one of the



things where certainly having a feel and a history is going to be very helpful. And then the last thing I would add to this is again, the moving.

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Now, this is probably the most expensive thing if you can't do it yourself. If you, again, you'll get movers everywhere, people, move houses. If I wanted to call up movers, probably a dozen movers in my town and I would say, hey, I want this gym moved. They'll move it, but they'll take one look at it and they will charge.

Exceptional money for it. And again, the guys in the States, they're pretty lucky. They got Dave Goalder. I've talked about him multiple times. Very talented.

Lawrence Neal: What's his pricing like though? Is he very expensive? I have no idea. He's one of a kind, right?

Mike Petrella: I have only paid him to like, basically pick up a machine for me.

Then move it to Buffalo, New York, which is like the closest town to the Canadian border where I am. He doesn't have the paperwork coming to Canada, so I meet him in Buffalo. He transfers the machine to my truck and that's the business that I do with him. So, I'm paying him for all the transportation as well.

Now I know that Dwayne has used him to basically set up entire gyms. I got a feeling Luke has probably used him. I think I remember him doing something like that. And there's probably a couple others that are their names are escaping me now. He can't come into Canada. So even if I had the money and the time and I hired him, he just can't come into this country to do that.

So, you'd have to ask them, but I would be willing to guarantee you he's not cheap. Now he's the best. And he would certainly see a lot of time and headaches and it will be done perfectly. But he's probably pretty expensive, but there is no Dave Goalder that I'm aware of anywhere near me, anyone does anything like that.

So, I would just be hiring a typical moving company, the same moving company that would move my couch or move a piano. And they've never done an exercise machine. So I don't even know how they'd quote it out, but the cost would be insanely expensive. So, what I would get people to do, you'd be surprised how well these machines move.



When you learn how to take the weight stacks off of them, you can take in some cases like half the weight of it off and then you just move the plates individually. And then what you want to invest in, and again, Dave Goalder has got two or three of these on his truck. It's called a hand truck. And a hand truck is essentially a dolly that has a second set of wheels.

So, it's got four wheels, two that are on the ground at the bottom at the base, and then two that come down that put the dolly on about a 45-degree angle. And you can get them rated up to about 1500 pounds and 1500 pounds is enough to handle most exercise machines, especially with the weight stack off. And once you get it to a pivot point, the weights, the machine will just, it'll just sit on it, and you can just wheel it around.

And you'd be surprised how well you can move these machines around with a hand truck. We also have pump jack at our place, which again, if we had something on a skin or we have something that just has a bit of a different. center of gravity, we have that. We also have what's called piano carts, which are just small rectangular devices that you can put under machines.

And again, like everything else, you find tricks of the trade and you get good at moving. Like I know that, machine A is going to move better if I use this strategy and machine B is going to move better. I've used this strategy, and you get better as you go. But by learning how to pop a weight stack off and getting what's called a hand truck you can do a lot and you can save a lot of money and again, you get pretty good at moving these machines around while they're relatively intact, all these machines will come apart and you move down by its absolute most broken-down form.

You can get them almost anywhere, but if you want to just keep it relatively. intact for ease of putting in the next spot and not having to spend a couple of hours putting everything together. You don't spend five minutes to put a weight stack back on hand trucks are very valuable.

Lawrence Neal: This is great.

I'm Googling because I'm so good about this stuff that I'm just loving this learning process because I'm Googling everything you're saying. That makes total sense. And it's all coming up and these really useful tools.

So, what, when you took them out, if you were of a furniture moving company and why that's so expensive, we're literally just talking about hiring a company to come into your studio.



Or let's say, I don't know, are you talking about you bought a bunch of kit is sitting in storage somewhere and you want it moved into a location or, and, or are you talking about, hey, moving company, here's my studio. Here's all my pieces. I want them moved into this formation, which is totally different.

You talk about both of those scenarios when you talk about them being so expensive or something.

Mike Petrella: They'll quote you whatever you want. If I got machines sitting in a storage container, and I want them moved into my facility, they'll do that. If I need them transported from one place, I'm telling you right now that it's not their specialty.

And if they break anything, they're going to want to have good insurance to fix it. I would imagine a lot of shipping are not shipping. A lot of moving companies would probably even just tell you that this isn't what they do. Like it just isn't their specialty. But I do use a guy, for instance, if there's a machine in Ontario, which is the province that I'm in Canada, Ontario, if you want to Google, that is huge.

Ontario is bigger than most states and it's bigger than many countries and when I was younger, I had the time to go and do these big, road trips. We drove 6, 7, 8 hours there, 6, 7, 8 hours back for singular piece. I don't have that ability anymore. So, you can hire somebody to do that kind of stuff.

I know what it costs me to move a singular machine, not crossing any borders. A lot of times it's flat ground to flat ground. I know what that costs. So, the idea of moving, let's say a 12-piece circuit. And it's not really their specialty. They're just going to charge for it. They say, yeah, we'll do it, but this is what it's going to cost to do it.

Especially if something is already in your facility and you can control enough of the variables, it's going to be probably in your best interest to do that yourself because those costs could add up pretty quickly.

Lawrence Neal: So, all that stuff you said there in terms of the hand truck, etc. That's great. If we're talking about just moving something in a location, but what we're leaving out there is if you have stuff in one location, move it to another, we're going to need a vehicle.

So, what you're saying is hiring your own truck, essentially what?



Mike Petrella: So I rent my own trucks. In fact, this would be a. This would be a fun note that we actually, as one of our other businesses we actually plug. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Brantford Penske. But so Penske trucks is a big brand. If you even just Google Mr. Penske...

Lawrence Neal: This is your business, is it one of your businesses?

Mike Petrella: Yeah, so like we do other things outside the gym. If you look at the overall business of everything that we do, there's things that are just completely non-gym related. But one of the things that we took on a few years back is Penske rental trucks.

So, we'll rent everything from like a 16-foot truck to we will actually, we don't do many, but we can rent you a transport truck.

Lawrence Neal: Is this just for Canadians or Americans as well?

Mike Petrella: Penske is an American company. Now we are part of, with Penske Canada, like we, I don't think we've ever rented a truck that's gone across the board.

I don't even know if we can do that. No one's asked anyways. But the nice thing is we actually have trucks. On our lot all the time, so even if I, so I have a 2, 2 gym facilities, and then we have the clinic facility currently, and they're all very. Close to each other, but if I want to say, move a machine from 1 to the next.

Typically, you get a pickup truck, you take it all apart. You put it in a pickup truck. I'll grab a 26-foot straight truck, which is a big truck and I'll use the lift gate and it just it's the greatest thing there ever was. But certainly, getting a rental truck that has a hydraulic lift gate.

Will make your life so much easier. You can do a lot with a trailer, and you can do a lot with a pickup truck, but if you're gonna move some heavy stuff and you're gonna move multiple things, getting a rental truck that's got, a very heavy-duty suspension, heavy duty wheels and tires, and a hydraulic liftgate that's the way you wanna do it.

It's. But basically, Dave Goalder, who I reference, he's the best at this. He obviously has a hydraulic liftgate on the back of his 53-foot trailer, otherwise you're relying on a forklift everywhere. And actually, we have a neighbor who has a forklift... he's nice enough to let us use that too.



So, anything that's heavy duty and hydraulic, these things do make A difference, but a lot of people aren't moving stuff quite as heavy as me and quite as often. So, you, again, the hand truck is gonna work a lot, but if you need to transport down the road, anything with a lift, gate's gonna be your best friend.

Lawrence Neal: Amazing. Dave Goalder. He is, he how old is he now? He can't be getting, he can't be a young man anymore for person of time.

Mike Petrella: I'm not sure how old Dave is, but it's been a few years since I've seen him myself. But he's got to be, he's got to be in his 60s, I think.

Lawrence Neal: This is the thing, because I think to myself, like you were saying about this, is it TK Star, the name of that guy's company?

Yeah, Tom Kinney, yeah. It's you've got, these guys aren't getting any younger. Clay Steffee, right? They're not getting any younger and they've got this amazing skill set, which we want to see being passed down. And I don't know, I don't know, maybe all the innovations around, robotics and AI, and...

Mike Petrella: You know what, if I were to look at somebody Tom, I don't think it's that big. The time's going to come, relatively soon anyways, who knows what the future's going to bring. But I don't think a computer's going to replicate what he can do for some time. And that's because he's got all these years of knowing how a human being is going to interact with his machines and how things are going to feel.

When he puts certain angles on his machine, it's just right. And he's gone through so much trial and error and I'm not sure a machine is going to overcome this. I was just watching a video this morning, and they're trying to build artificial intelligence for racing, like for car racing, and they've been building this artificial intelligence for figuring out how to make the absolute best lap times.

And the guy was showing all his programming and graphical user interfaces and stuff like that. And they spent like a year on this, like how to set the best lap times with this AI. And within a few minutes he was able to crush the AI still with just what a human can do. And the only way they can make an AI better than a human currently is they basically have to cheat.

And he was showing how they deal. This would happen okay, if you make it so the tires never wear, it's never equated that the tires wear, because a human can feel when the tires are wearing,



but the AI can't, so just, okay, we're going to take out tire wear, and then, okay we're going to take out how we're going to deal with you got to slow down or speed up at certain sections to deal with mileage and stuff like that.

The AI couldn't figure that out just yet. Again, if we take that equation out, then the AI could do better. And this was a relatively simple task that was done 100 percent on a computer. They weren't even racing real cars. And the humans still today had a big leg up. So that seems like a task that an AI is going to surpass a human relatively quick.

Lawrence Neal: I would say so.

Mike Petrella: Yeah. But for an AI to design a machine, then weld it perfectly, and then... Stitch it all with, everything being just bang on and then just having you get on it and think, wow, somebody really figured this thing out. I don't know if we're there yet. I think maybe you could probably get a human who is real smart to design something, then you get some sort of AI factory to build it much more efficiently. Once those jigs and once those patterns have been...

Lawrence Neal: We still might need that, like that, that human oversight at least. Yeah.

Mike Petrella: Yeah. I happen to have a client. He's a, what's called a pattern maker. And if you want to go down a rabbit hole of real intelligent people, Google a pattern maker.

And essentially their job is to create something that doesn't exist. You have an idea that something needs to happen, or something needs to be invented and there's no blueprint for it. It doesn't exist. Nobody makes it. You take it to a pattern maker and it's his job to essentially create it.

Lawrence Neal: Give me an example.

Mike Petrella: Just you think of something that you need done and you don't know what to buy to do it. Like even a lot of military applications that they do. Oh, I'll give you the last example I know he was working on cause I was in his shop: a company came to him. They want to build the fastest boat possible at, I think, 32 feet.

They have these big these big speed runs in jibber, watch the Ozark show on Netflix. Yeah. Yeah. Great. So once a year they bring all the top speed boats in, and they race them flat out and they



see who can get the top speed. So, this company comes in and says we want to build a boat, now a boat exists, but we need it to be faster than everything else.

We need the hull to be completely redesigned, we need the aerodynamics to be completely redesigned, we need it at every single speed for it to do a certain thing, to interact in a certain way, and we need you to come up with it. He's okay, and that's what he does. And he just goes out and he builds them, basically the mold you did out of wood.

And then it's funny, he'll spend thousands and thousands of hours. And then once they have it, they will then convert it over to fiberglass or carbon fiber, whatever they make it out of. And they'll burn what he made because it's proprietary information. So, he'll spend a couple thousand hours building this on his bare hands.

And then the second that it's done, they burn it. Which is just the craziest thing. I hope he's not compensated. Oh yeah, no, he gets paid. He gets paid for it. But they will, they, they say, we needed to do this, that, and there's no boat in the world that currently does that, can you make it happen?

And he says, yeah, and that's what he does. And a lot of times he gets projects where, say, we needed something that will do, X, Y, and Z very efficiently. And they don't tell him what it is, and he knows it's military application, and he's just smart enough to figure out that there's probably two or three other pattern makers that are making stuff that's going to go along with it, and he would need all three pieces to make it work, so he doesn't even know really what it's for, he can, he's smart, he figures things out, and he'll make something that works.

Doesn't exist for a tank or a bomber or an oil ship or whatever. And like I said, it's a, it has to fit these parameters and there's nothing that we can currently buy that does. And he'll go out and make it.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, this is I've just finished listening to Elon Musk's latest biography, which I highly recommend for anyone watching, listening to this a very, very unbiased take on his whole life.

So, it doesn't put him in a good light necessarily. It's both the good and bad of Elon Musk. And he just has companies full of these types of people, right? They had to build rockets in a new way that had never been built that way before in a much cheaper way.



They had to build the Tesla prototypes in a, building those cars in a completely new way. What you're saying really reminds me of some of the people he's employed in those businesses.

Mike, this has been amazing and really useful as always. Thank you so much for doing this. Any final thoughts on machine maintenance in particular, this philosophy of being self-taught in terms of just developing a base competency, but also tips around working with third parties.

Mike Petrella: First thing, and I probably again said this on your podcast before, if you start by buying quality product, obviously Nautilus and MedX are two of the big go-tos. You've already saved yourself a lot of headaches because unless it's been left outside, or it's been dropped over very standard.

Like I said, a little bit of brake cleaner on a guide rod, a little bit of grease in a bearing, maybe you got to get a new upholster or whatever, it's there. They're designed to last forever. So, buying quality stuff at the get-go is the first big step to making your life easier.

Then after that, just start with some of the easy stuff. Again, pull your pads up. You never pulled a pad off the machine. It's not complicated. Pull the pad off, put it back on. You just start to get a. A feel for it. There're some pretty good people in our space who know a lot about this.

I get people reaching out to me maybe once a month say, hey, have you ever taken apart? Whatever, can give me a tip. I'm more than happy to help. And I do the same thing. Other people have seen stuff that I've never come across. I don't think anyone's ever said I'm too busy or I'm not willing to help.

There's lots of people that are going to help that way. And then if you do find that the job is just too big or you're in over your head or, even myself, I consider to be pretty proficient at this. And when we moved our last gym, it just was too big for one person. There are experts and, yeah, you got to pay them, but they're willing to help and some of the ones we talked about, just a typical car mechanic is going to be great.

And I'd be willing to bet that most of the people who are listening to this that are training people on the regular, there's one car mechanic in your facility already, and they probably got a bunch of elbow and shoulder issues that you're currently dealing with. And I have my one mechanic.

If he's got to work on a Mopar, a Subaru, he comes in cursing every single time. And they're probably willing to just help you out.



Lawrence Neal: Trade services, right? Trade services.

Mike Petrella: Yup, and you know what? I always make a point of trying to pay these people who give me a hand. Not just fairly, but beyond, because that way, if you have to ask for a favor, they're more than happy to help, but you would be surprised how much goodwill you can get with beer and pizza. Make sure they're well fed. Like I said, I always make sure to pay, but sometimes they won't accept it.

But beer and pizza is currency just about everywhere. And it gets down to just like everything else in life, forging good relationships with good people is always going to make your life easier.

Lawrence Neal: Absolutely. Awesome stuff, Mike. This has been amazing as always. So much more we can cover too. You give me other ideas, so I'll definitely be reaching out to you for more if you're open to it, especially to talk about, Pendulum and Prime and I know you're yet to actually experiment and use Imagined Strength, but obviously keen to get your take on that when you can finally do that.

Mike Petrella: I'm looking forward to using their stuff, especially with Clay Steffee being their engineer and the gentleman who owns it. I've been trying to figure out before, before social media, like before Facebook, the big place that everyone spoke was on the Dr. Darden chat board.

And there was a gentleman on the West Coast and he had a real good physique. And I think he's the gentleman who owns Imagine Strength and I have not had the time to go back to the Darden board like 15 years ago. Even when I've seen his name, I thought it was his name, but I wasn't sure, but I'm almost positive he goes back to the Dr. Darden board. And I think I'd like to spend the time to, to verify that, but I'm not sure.

Lawrence Neal: Jeff Turner.

Mike Petrella: Yeah, and I'm almost positive that it was Jeff Turner and he was doing some case studies with John Castler, probably '06, '07 or something like that, and he was in pretty good shape back then, and I seen a picture of the guy today, and he's in good shape and we're talking like over 15 years ago now, but I want to say that I actually was talking to him back then about all kinds of, high-intensity stuff, but I'm not positive on that. Yeah.



Lawrence Neal: Okay. Interesting. Interesting. Yeah. Yeah, happy to connect you if needed, Michael. I'm sure you've probably, maybe you've already got the contact details.

Mike Petrella: I just got to spend the time to go back on the old Darden archives and see if it was him.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, absolutely. What is the best way for members to contact you if they want, maybe have a question about a machine or just want to follow what you do?

Mike Petrella: Most of everything we do now is on Instagram, we've moved off some of the other platforms, so even off there we were talking about how Facebook has just, gone into directions that are no good, but generally once a day I check my Instagram and it's just [at] Mecca of the North, and that comes directly to me.

Lawrence Neal: Perfect. Email as well, or just leave that for now.

Mike Petrella: Yeah, email is stgstrengthandpower [at] hotmail [dot] com, even with email I'm bad now. I've gotten worse over time, getting back to emails because I get so many emails that are just not relevant stuff. Like people that either don't know me or don't know the business or they're pretending to be spam.

My spam filter is huge. And then the ones that still get through are crazy. Whereas at least on Instagram, it's oh, here's their profile, you could quickly check out to see who they are, if they're legitimate or you have mutual friends. So, I find that I have stuff sitting in my email that I have to once a week or something like once a month, finally get through.

But for whatever reason, when I get an Instagram message or a text message, I tend to, however my brain works, I respond back quicker.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, no, totally makes sense. I understand that. Mike, thanks so much for doing this. This has been so valuable. I know this is what we're speaking about today is of interest to many of the people in our niche and to many of I've had a lot of questions around this stuff.

So obviously. For those tuning in today there's also a transcription for this if you prefer to read or want to read it back and there'll be links to everything Mike's mentioned during this episode today, it'd be bulleted list below this there'll also be a link to a post we did where we already tried to.



Bring all the resources about maintaining machines and setting up machines, et cetera, and cleaning machines in one place. We'll also link to that as a rebuild on this archive we've got on this stuff. Cause it's useful. Mike, thank you so much. Really appreciate you taking the time.

Mike Petrella: Thank you, Lawrence. Have a good one.