

A photograph of two men, Rob Gronkowski and Matt Iseman, smiling. Rob is on the left, wearing a white t-shirt. Matt is on the right, wearing a blue patterned blazer over a light blue shirt. A white banner with a blue border is overlaid on the image, containing the text 'EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt'.

EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Hosts: Rebecca Gillett, MS OTR/L, and Julie Eller
Guest Speakers: Rob Gronkowski and Matt Iseman

Although social distancing has become our current way of life, it's more about physical distancing. Whether you're safe at home with family or alone, when you live with arthritis it can feel very isolating, even without a global pandemic. But you're not alone. It can be challenging with limited options to eat healthy and stay active, much less keeping yourself occupied.

In this episode of the Live Yes! With Arthritis podcast, hosts Rebecca and Julie get the inside scoop from retired, three-time football champion Rob Gronkowski (known by fans as "Gronk") and TV personality and longtime friend of the Arthritis Foundation, Matt Iseman. They share details on what they're doing to survive and thrive while in COVID-19 isolation.

They also talk about the realities of living with chronic pain and the toll it can take both physically and emotionally. Gronk and Matt share their personal stories, shining a light on why it's important to come together as a community to make sure people with arthritis and chronic pain don't feel alone.

This dynamic duo also discuss details about the **COVID-19 Celebrity Challenge Event — Survive & Thrive: Together in Isolation** — which will be livestreamed on the Arthritis Foundation's Facebook page on Wednesday, April 22, at 8:00 p.m. ET. Celebrities will face off on various physical and personal challenges to provide an authentic peek into their lives as they try to survive and thrive, adjusting to a life in COVID-19 isolation. CBDMEDIC™ is presenting this event, with 100% of the proceeds benefitting the Arthritis Foundation.

Additional Arthritis Foundation resources:

Visit the Arthritis Foundation [Care & Connect resource center](#) on our website, which is full of information, resources and ideas to help you survive and thrive during these challenging times, including the latest coronavirus and arthritis news.

Check out other episodes of the [Live Yes! With Arthritis podcast](#) on Coronavirus and Arthritis, CBD, Wellness in Challenging Times, Staying Home Ergonomically, Physical Activity and more.

If you're considered using CBD as a treatment option for your arthritis, learn [What You Should Know About CBD for Arthritis Pain](#) in the Arthritis Foundation's CBD Guidance for Adults With Arthritis.

We understand how difficult times are right now, with anxiety and stress over the COVID-19 crisis and how it's affecting people living with arthritis. We want to know how this new normal is affecting your ability to manage your physical and emotional health, as well as your experience of care. Please take 10 minutes to share your insights and tell us how you're doing at arthritis.org/insights.



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Share your experiences and learn from others in a Live Yes! With Arthritis Connect Group or Online Community at <https://www.arthritis.org/liveyes>. Join the Hot Topic discussion forum: Coronavirus and Arthritis; and get your questions answered by a rheumatologist and infectious disease expert.



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

LIVE YES! WITH ARTHRITIS PODCAST:

SURVIVE & THRIVE EPISODE WITH ROB GRONKOWSKI & MATT ISEMAN

Released April 17, 2020

PODCAST OPEN:

Welcome to Live Yes! With Arthritis, from the Arthritis Foundation. You may have arthritis, but it doesn't have you. Here, you'll learn things that can help you improve your life and turn No into Yes. This podcast is part of the Live Yes! Arthritis Network — a growing community of people like you who really care about conquering arthritis once and for all.

This is a special edition of the Live Yes! With Arthritis podcast, featuring special guests: retired pro football player Rob Gronkowski and TV personality Matt Iseman — both true Arthritis Foundation Champions of Yes!

Our hosts are arthritis patients Rebecca and Julie, and they are asking the questions you want answers to. Listen in.

Rebecca Gillett:

Welcome to the Live Yes! With Arthritis podcast. I'm Rebecca, an occupational therapist living with rheumatoid arthritis.

Julie Eller:

And I'm Julie, a JA patient who's passionate about making sure all patients have a voice.

We're so excited for this special episode of the Live Yes! With Arthritis podcast. The COVID-19 Celebrity Challenge Event — Survive & Thrive: Together in Isolation — will take place on Wednesday, April 22, at 8:00 p.m. on Facebook Live.

Rebecca:

That's right. We are really excited to have our special guests today join us to talk about this event coming up and give us a preview.

Julie Eller:

Some very special guests. Why don't you guys introduce yourselves?



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Matt Iseman:

Oh, OK. I'm Matt Iseman, host of "American Ninja Warrior"! I won the "New Celebrity Apprentice," where I competed for the Arthritis Foundation. And the reason I chose that is: I have rheumatoid arthritis. I was diagnosed in 2002. So, I've been living with it almost 20 years now. And for me, it just came about where my life was torn apart by RA. The medication gave me it back. And I know a lot of people either don't respond to the medication, or they were diagnosed before the medication, or we don't know what's coming next. I just want to advocate, get the story out there, raise awareness, raise money, so more of us can be Champions of Yes.

But nobody cares about me! Because of our next awesome guest, which is?

Rob Gronkowski:

I am Rob Gronkowski. I am one of Matt's biggest fans. (Matt laughs)

Rob:

And I care deeply about Matt. And I can't wait when I'm on his show doing some crazy ninja warrior. Thank you, Matt.

Matt:

There it is, Rob. That's it, buddy. Take you up on that.

Julie (laughs): Yeah.

Rob:

I played in the NFL for nine years, won three Super Bowls. But I mean, as you know, playing the game of football, it is pounding on the body. And you're taking hits every game. Every practice you're taking hits, and not just taking hits. On top of it, you're also running a lot, cutting a lot, planning a lot, and your body and joints are taking a beating.

I've never been diagnosed with arthritis or anything, and I'm trying to prevent all that from happening. And I currently just work out, train and have some fun. And watch "Ninja Warrior" sometimes.

Matt (laughs):

That's my new best friend. This guy's the best! I've watched enough of him.

Rebecca (laughs):

I think that actually you've been busy, Rob. You have actually been making the circuit though. Some WWE, a little bit "The Masked Singer." I wouldn't say that you aren't doing a whole lot right now.

Rob:



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Ah yes, actually I'm not doing a whole lot right now, but I had some stuff come out recently. "The Masked Singer" just came out. I actually just got booted off the show. I actually made it four rounds. What can I say, my singing and dancing skills are unbelievable! I can't even believe I'm not on the show still, you know. I got voted off. I mean, I don't know what they were watching or listening to. My singing voice was A+.

(laughter)

Rob:

But that was a great experience for sure. Just learning how to sing and dance together is definitely a difficult task. It's another level of conditioning and another level of like cardio and working tight, but different muscles and doing it together. Doing, you know, singing, using the brain muscles while coordinating with the body. It was difficult at first. I had to practice a lot. Even to remember my first song. It was the first song I ever learned in my life, "Ice Ice Baby," and it was for that show. It's definitely a process, and I give a lot more respect to that industry, to the artists, to the singers out there, and especially the dancing, too.

Matt:

Britney Spears is the greatest athlete on the planet is what Rob is saying.

Rob:

Exactly. I mean, they are athletes for sure. I just know how much work goes into that and how much dedication you've gotta do in order to sing and dance like that. It's just incredible what they do.

Rebecca:

Yeah, and you had to do that in a costume.

Rob:

Oh yeah. The costume made it like 50 times hotter.

Matt:

How big is the head? Heavier than a helmet.

Rob:

Yeah, definitely heavier than a helmet. I would say about, probably 20 pounds total.

Matt:

Oh my God!

Julie & Rebecca (laughter):

Oh my gosh!

Julie:



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Carrying another person on you while you're trying to dance.

Rob:

Yeah, it trapped the heat in there, and I was literally sweating from my head to my toes.

(Matt laughs)

Rebecca: Ouch.

Julie: Oh my gosh!

Rebecca:

It's hard enough to coordinate dance moves, and then to have that on... (laughs) It kinda feels like us people with arthritis, trying to move and be coordinated... (laughs)

Matt (laughs):

It helps out the arthritis, I would say, a little bit. Motion is lotion.

Julie:

Yup. Motion is lotion baby. I say that all the time.

Rebecca:

Motion is lotion. That's right. (laughs)

Rob:

Because the movement. I really, truly think it's medicine if you're just chilling out. I was just kidding earlier about my joke that I'm retired and sitting on the couch. No, I like sitting on the couch after a full day of working out and moving and everything because you do need your rest to recover. You need your body to let it do what it needs to do after a hard day.

Matt:

Rob, when I got diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, I couldn't do anything high impact. I had to stop doing basketball, and even jogging. Couldn't do any of that. So, I started doing yoga, really low-impact swimming and things. What about you, now that you've gotten away from football? What do you do to keep fit?

Rob:

Exactly man. I actually got away from that hard impact on the body type of workouts. And same thing. I need the body to heal. The hardest way that you can possibly impact your body is through sports. I mean, playing football, you... obviously collision, you're lifting heavy, you're getting strong.

All you want to be is that guy on the field that, you know, is dieselled up and ready to go. And I got away from that a little, to heal up. And taking all those hits and everything, all the scar tissue builds,



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

inflammation builds, and I got away from those type of workouts, and I need to recover. Doing yoga was great. It's elongating your muscles. Making your muscles feel looser and less dense.

Body weight workouts, band workouts and yoga, I've been doing a lot. And then also getting treatment on my body like massages and stuff like that to help me recover. You know something, it's been like a year now. And I'm feeling really good. It feels great. I feel kinda like I have a new body, yeah. As long as you're just dedicated and committed to it.

Rebecca:

Yeah, that's amazing, you said for the first time in like 10 years, you feel pain-free.

Rob:

Oh yes, for sure, for real. I mean, all those injuries, all those surgeries I've had, I've just been trying to take care of myself. Do the right workouts, do body weight workouts, build my core, build the core strength, the inner strength first, before putting on heavy weight to make sure my base is solid and my base is strong, too. And overall just getting the treatments, eating right. I like to do salt baths, too, but that sea salt is magnesium. Salt in a bath. I get it 102 degrees and just sit in it for 30 minutes and just let the muscles relax and kinda like thaw out. So it feels good, man. Just going with the flow. I wake up every day not having those aches and pains and everything. It feels real good. I feel fresh. I like it.

Julie:

That's such an important thing, I think, in my arthritis experience. Salt baths have always been really, really helpful. One of the things that I think is impressive about what you've done since kind of stopping football is finding some of those low-impact things that still make you happy and bring you joy. And I think it's one of the things that's really tough for people who are facing new, chronic pain, to accommodate their lives in a new way.

Rob:

You know, when you're in pain, anything, doing anything, is not pleasant. I mean, even going to a meeting isn't that pleasant. To go for a walk is unpleasant. I've been there before. I've been in massive amounts of pain all over my body. Surgeries all over my body. And I feel like, though, you can kinda come back from anything, you know. I believe that.

So, just find new routines. Yoga. I just love to stay active, so playing basketball, shooting around. And making sure my form is on point, that's crucial. Making sure the form is on point so your body lines up perfectly, and that's when your body can truly heal.

Rebecca:

Yeah, I'm an occupational therapist actually, Rob, and I have rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. I've had 14 surgeries. I know you've had like nine, right? But one of the things that we teach is neuromuscular exercise as well, and like you're talking about right now, having the right form...

Rob: Yes.



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Rebecca:

...I mean, you can do all the stretches you want, but if you don't have your body in proper alignment, you're actually causing more injury possibly to your joints or to your muscles.

Rob:

Exactly. That's what form is all about, to get you flowing normally, and then if your form isn't the right way, if it's off and then you're lifting heavy, then you start compensating a lot. And when you're compensating, that's what starts causing the problems on your body.

That's why I like to warm up before I get going anyways. After I make sure my body is warmed up and my neurological muscles are with my brain, are aligned up, too, to get going, to get moving, you know? As you get older, you got to learn these tricks to keep going.

Julie (laughs)

Matt:

Man, it sounds like you're feeling better than you have in so many years. Any plans for a return?

Rob:

Oh yeah. Big time. I'm gonna be a mascot.

(laughter)

Matt: Oh yeah!

Rob:

So I'm gonna be a pirate. (screams)

(laughter)

Matt:

You were tailor-made for that, Rob.

Rob:

Yes. And I'll be on the pirate ship in their stadium. With my sword and my... (scream)

Matt:

Well you better be there that first home game.

(laughter)

Rob: Yeah.



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Rebecca:

I'm actually from the Tampa area. You would be the perfect pirate mascot.

Matt:

I think we just got Rob his next job. He's not going to need a another one.

(laughter)

Julie:

Sounds like "The Masked Singer" really prepared you for this next career move. Congratulations.

(laughter)

Rob:

I really love being in costume and, you know, no one knows who's under it, so...

Rebecca:

You're both very active. And I know, Matt, you said that you used to play basketball, but you've moved to yoga and swimming. So, I think a lot of what Rob was just sharing, you probably relate to.

Matt:

I think what Rob said was key there. When you start to feel these limitations with arthritis... For me, what was key was to find new ways to keep ... to try to keep ... going. And it's not perfect every day, and there are days when it's different. It's hard to get out of bed. But you know, you just said it: Motion is lotion. The more I move, the better I feel. And that's been one of the challenges right now. We're all locked at home. All the gyms are closed. And you're having to find ways to make do at home. And some days it's just getting a walk, getting out, getting that fresh air.

Rob, maybe you've felt this. There's something about a team and going to a gym. Even if you don't know people, you feel like you're there, other people are holding you accountable, or going to a class. When I work out alone, I struggle. So, for me, that's one of things I've missed. Tried some online classes, but I'm always looking for suggestions from people. And just ways to hold myself accountable. Because otherwise, I can end up sitting on the couch playing PlayStation or going through a bag of Cheetos.

(laughter)

Rob:

Oh man, a bag of Cheetos.

Matt:

(laughs) The orange dust gets everywhere!



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Rob:

Hey dude, your playing video games and eating a bag of Cheetos doesn't really go together because your controller is going to be really Cheeto-upped.

Matt:

I left the bag on my chest, Rob, and just put my face in like a... (gobbling noise)

Matt:

It's shameful. (laughs)

Rob:

It means you're a professional gamer.

Matt:

I would say that. I would say I'm high level.

Julie:

I think as we are considering all the different ways this pandemic has changed our lives, it's important to see how we can come together — and come together virtually. Matt, I loved what you were saying about, you know, having those people to hold you accountable and navigate those challenges with. And some of the reasons I'm so excited to have you guys a part of our Facebook Live COVID-19 Celebrity Challenge Survive & Thrive event. Can you tell us a little bit about why this cause is important to you and what made you choose to take up this mantle? Rob, we'll start with you.

Rob:

There was never really an off season, so I would just, well... wear and tearing my body for so long, it was actually, you know, my first year off to really just let my body heal, and my life, and it feels fantastic. To get on board with the Arthritis Foundation, I mean, I understand what they're going through, having that pain that is just throbbing. Having pain that is just aggravating. And it's cool to share my experiences on how to maybe get rid of that pain, and how to help your body feel better, and how to take away that aggravating pain. To go out there and live a healthy life, because I was in all that pain, too, and you've gotta find ways.

All that type of stuff is great ... to team up with and share what I've been through and what has helped me and to hear everyone else's ideas, too. I've heard of so many other players, too, that have arthritis, that are older, that are retired. So, I'm here to represent... I'm here on behalf of the CBDMEDIC team, which has partnered with the Arthritis Foundation, and I represent the CBDMEDIC brand. We've all come together for a better cause to help get rid of pain, to help people that are suffering to feel better, to enjoy their life.



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

It's important to me, because, you know, what it's like to be in pain, how it can affect your whole mood, how it can affect your day. I just wanted to sign up, help raise money and help people get through this time. Especially this difficult time that's going on, this pandemic that's going on. To help people out there that are at home. Help them with some tips. Also help them raise money and raise awareness to what's going on with the Arthritis Foundation. So, it's crucial, you know. Raise money to help get the goods to the people that need it. Help them feel good.

Matt:

I totally agree, Rob, and the great thing, too, is we're building community. We all feel isolated, we all feel alone. And with chronic pain, that's how we feel all the time. So right now, reminding everybody: You're not alone. Hopefully we can raise some money, too. We know there are a lot of things that need your attention, that need your dollars, right now. If you can, it's a great way to lend your time and build that future to a brighter future, so we can all be Champions of Yes.

I was around Rob's age when rheumatoid arthritis started impacting me and went from being in the best shape of my life to, in about a year and a half, becoming an old man. Where my body was just ravaged. And to have your physical well-being taken away like that is such a huge blow. I mean, it doesn't just impact you physically, it impacts how you work, it impacts you emotionally, it impacts your relationships.

And for me, I know when I was diagnosed, I didn't know anybody who had rheumatoid arthritis. I thought, man, I don't want that to be the case for anyone else. I wanna share my story. And so I've really been adamant about talking about living with RA.

This is tough when you're locked down. It's a tough time when your routine is shaken up. And just to let people know... I think one of the best messages that we have is: We're all in this together. You're not alone. There are 54 million Americans with arthritis, and we can team up. We can make a difference. And especially having people like Rob out there, who've been at the highest level, and who really ... who we've all seen go through those injuries, and to imagine the pain he was in, to coming out of it. I think it's incredible for people to look up and see someone like Rob talking about, "Hey, this is how I'm dealing with the impact. This is how I'm dealing with ways to keep my body healthy." I think it's great to let everyone know, you're not alone. And even the strongest among us will have pain, too. And we all, we all can learn from each other.

Rebecca:

Yeah, for sure.

Julie:

Matt, in your story you share that when you were first diagnosed, you didn't know anybody else that had rheumatoid arthritis. And I think having arthritis and getting chronic pain and existing within this space can be such an individual experience. It's so isolating in that way. And right now, we're at a moment in time that is inherently isolating. We're socially distancing. We're staying far apart, which



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

makes people who live with chronic pain, who live with arthritis, a little bit more equipped. We know how to deal with it.

Matt: Oh yeah.

Rebecca: Yeah.

Matt:

And I actually heard someone... I don't like the term, you know, social distancing. I thought, and I heard people go, "That's not the right term. Physical distancing"...

Rebecca: Yes.

Matt:

...but still being socially connected. And the way we're doing it is like this, on Zoom, on Facebook. A text, a phone call is great, but seeing someone's face, I don't know, it's just, it's much more impactful. I feel like it's a much better way to feel connected, particularly when, you know... I live alone. (laughs) I'm looking, walking around my house. All I see is, well, pictures of me, but (laughs) there's nothing else.

(laughter)

Matt:

There's a lot of pictures of me. There's nothing else. So, it's nice to be able to connect with other people and feel like you're around humanity again.

Rebecca:

Yeah. Pain can feel really isolating, right? We know that a lot of people with arthritis report feeling isolated and anxiety and depression. And this being stuck at home really makes that amplified. Do you guys have any ways that you would suggest to people how you're coping that might help them? Is there anything else that you guys are doing to kind of help keep your sanity while you're stuck at home?

Rob:

Oh yeah, big time. You've got to FaceTime friends, like Matt said. Seeing someone else's face after, you know, being home alone for two weeks is big. You've got to find things around the house. I would say just sitting on the couch and watching TV for 12 hours straight won't be the answer. I mean, yes, you can watch TV. That's great and everything for a couple of hours. You've got to keep the mind going. And, you know, you can read, do a puzzle. And also at the same time, it's an opportunity to take care of your body. I mean, doing Dead Sea salt baths here. I also have an infrared sauna now that I ordered, and it came.

Matt:



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Oh, how is it?

Rob:

It's a one-person, but it heats up to 145 degrees, and it makes you sweat from, like, the inside out and...

Matt:

How long are you in it?

Rob:

My longest has been 65 minutes, and...

Julie & Rebecca: (laughter) Wow.

Rob:

I drink about 80 fluid ounces of water with the electrolytes while I'm in it, and it's fantastic. It literally makes you feel like everything is drawn out of you. Your inflammation levels just totally go down when you get out of it. One other thing I've been doing, too, physically distancing yourself from people, maybe walking at night or in the morning, too, where there's no one even around. And just going for long walks in the nature, getting fresh air, getting fresh oxygen. I mean, that definitely has helped me big time, man.

Matt:

The other thing I found I'm doing, I found some online courses. There's this thing, the Great Courses ... and Master Class. I've been doing both of them. I'm learning how to cook.

Rebecca (laughs) Nice.

Matt:

I've cooked more during this time of isolation than I have in my entire life. I'm eating better than I ever have in my entire life, because I'm cooking this, you know, a lot of it's organic. I'm trying to make better choices. It's one of those things where I thought, "I didn't know how food was made..." (laughter) My mom just made it appear, or the phone would. I'd call and food would come. And now I'm learning how to do it.

It's really been gratifying, I think, as this pace has slowed down, to find the silver lining, and to be like, "OK, I can't work. I can't have the interaction with friends. But I'm going to try to improve." I've cleaned my house, cleaned my kitchen. I'm going through all my old John Elway jerseys. Sorry, Rob. I'm...

(Rebecca laughs)

Matt:



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

... I grew up in Denver. I'm a Broncos fan, and it's just been ... to find those little victories, whether it's working out, or doing the sauna, or cooking, or improving yourself. I think those are really important victories to have. To just kind of look back at the end of the day and go, "You know what? I did that. I did something positive today, and I feel better." Because otherwise, these days just kind of bleed into one another.

Rob:

All the fine activities. Oh, cleaning, that's also one. (laughter) Clean the house. You can always organize and clean, so that's another big one right there.

Matt:

Your kitchen's looking spotless, Rob.

Rob:

Uh, it is until I cook, and then I got to...

(laughter)

Rebecca:

Hey, you're not a good chef if you don't make a mess. That's what I tell my husband all the time. Speaking of chefs, in this awesome event that we're doing, in this great celebrity challenge event we're having, we have a chef who's joining us. So, Matt, if you want to test out those new cooking skills, maybe you should do the cookoff with Chef...

Julie: Ming Tsai. Iron Chef Ming's on? So...

Rebecca:

Yes. He's going to be on our challenge.

Matt:

It would be great, because I can do, like, a 10-minute chicken in 47 minutes. I am so slow... (laughter) ...in the kitchen. It is pathetic. So, it'd be great. We'd just need, like, a seven-hour time window for me to do anything.

Julie:

These would be rapid-fire challenges, Matt, so you need to speed up. (laughs)

Rebecca:

Yeah, that's going to be a fun part of the event. So, our event is called the COVID-19 Celebrity Challenge Event — Survive & Thrive: Together in Isolation. CBDMEDIC has been great to come to the Arthritis Foundation, along with Rob, and say, "Hey, we want to support the Arthritis Foundation." 100% of the fundraising proceeds are going to the Foundation and our efforts. Rob, what are you excited most about this event?



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Rob:

I'm just excited to chat with everyone, to hear everyone's stories. To see what they're doing during this time, just seeing what they're doing to keep their mind occupied. Just seeing what they're doing to keep their body healthy. And that's what it's all about. You listen to everyone else's stories, and then you're picking up from it and figuring it out from there. Seeing how they're dealing, coping with everything, and picking up from them is going to be eventful.

Matt:

I love hearing other people's hacks, how other people have figured out how to exist in this, particularly in the arthritis community, because we're all going to have some similar challenges. That's why I love the community that we've built in the Arthritis Foundation, where you have all these people who understand the challenges we face.

To be in a community of people who get it, that's what's great, and to hear their solutions. I'm excited, yeah. It's always a good time when we get the Arthritis Foundation together. Because I feel like it embodies that spirit of Yes. That Champions of Yes. And this idea of, "Hey, we'll get through this." Because that's what I think the whole country needs right now.

Rebecca:

Yeah. We need some Yeses, right? (laughs) We're stuck in the No, stay at home, you can't do this, and you can't do that. So, this is going to be something that's really great.

Matt:

Well, right. One of the issues, I think, when you start dealing with arthritis, you notice the limitations more. And when you start to focus on... "Hey, let me focus on what I can do," all of a sudden you're surprised by how much more you can accomplish.

Rob:

Exactly. Great point.

Julie:

That's exactly right. I think showing the world and showing each other how we overcome them together in a Facebook Live event is just a little symbol of how we can do that together as a community, Living Yes. So, we're so glad to have you guys. It's April 22, at 8:00 p.m., and we can't wait to see you all on Facebook for this very special event. Thanks for participating.

Rob:

Alright, no problem.

PROMO:



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Now more than ever, managing your arthritis is extra challenging with stay-at-home orders that keep us isolated. We want to understand how COVID-19 is impacting you, so we can help make a difference. 88% of those with arthritis say they feel anxiety and fear these days. Do you agree? Go to arthritis.org/insights and speak out.

Julie:

I think one of the things that we know is tough is that it's hard to talk about your pain. Especially for men, it's even more difficult to say, "Hey, I'm living in pain, and this is not OK, and I need to go talk to a doctor, because I think maybe I have arthritis." Do you guys have any advice for people who are experiencing chronic pain, about ways that they could or should start talking about their pain and engaging with that?

Rob:

That's actually the first step. Realizing that you are in pain instead of ignoring it. And I've done that before many times. You just keep putting it to the side. The pain's right here, and you just shift it over here, and it just keeps building up, building up, building up. And eventually, it's so built up, and it explodes all over. And then you can't even focus. The longer you wait, the worse it's going to get.

It's something you should never be ashamed of. The first step is realizing it. And experience why you're going through that pain. And at the same time, talking to people, and then finding ways to get rid of it. Pain just doesn't go away ... you just wake up and it goes away. It's a process. You've got to be dedicated to it, and you've got to also talk about it. You've got to get that out of your system, too. So, it's a whole process that could take some time. But if you're consistent with it, you can get rid of it.

Matt:

I think, especially coming from you, Rob, to me, that's a powerful message. Because, you know, you're a modern-day gladiator. And in football, you don't show weakness, right? Rub some dirt on it. Just walk it off. I think Rob nailed it. I think it's accepting it with yourself.

One of the things that I love about the Arthritis Foundation is you have community here. If you are like, "Hey, I'm the dad of the family. I don't want to burden my kids." Then you can find people in the Arthritis Foundation. You can find a group of other dads going through the same thing.

If you're a mom, the same thing. You can find people who are going through what you're going through. You feel like, "Hey, we're in this together." You start to find people, I think, who understand what you're going through. And that makes it so much easier to talk about what you're going through, or even if you just listen. Listen to the stories of other people. All of a sudden, you'll be saying, "Hey, that's me."

Rebecca:



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Yeah. They're going through what I'm going through. And then when you hear they've come out the other side, then it gives you that hope that it can change, because I think that's what it is. It's this isolating thing of when you're in this pain, you worry, is it ever going to get better?

Matt:

Rob, hearing your story about coming out on the other end of your body feeling better than it's felt in as long as you can remember, that gives people hope. And I think that's something, that when you're in chronic pain, that's what you really... you love to have that hope.

Rebecca:

Yeah. It's so important.

Rob:

Yes. Exactly. That's a great point, Matt.

Matt:

Well, that's why we appreciate you sharing your story, man. It's inspiring.

Rebecca:

Yeah. It really is. I have so much respect for you. When you came out and retired, and you said, "I wasn't finding my joy, and I was working through all that with some pain," that meant a lot. Because you can see how much you fought through and how disciplined you were to get through and make it through. But then you knew yourself better, and you knew your pain. And decided, "You know what? For the sake of my health, mentally and physically, I need to do something else for myself and heal my body." And that's a hard part for a lot of us.

I ignored my pain for a long time. I didn't know people who had RA like me at 26. I didn't get to connect. And that's probably been the best thing for me, when I came to know the Arthritis Foundation, is: finding other people who I could look up to, who did that, just like what you did and said, "You know, I love this thing, and I've been doing it for so long, and I'm passionate about it, but you know what? My health should come first." That, to me, is so powerful in what you've done.

Rob:

Thank you. Yes, that is important. Without health, what can you do? Sometimes if you're in such acute pain that you can't even have a meeting. You can't even go for a walk. And it's just affecting your overall lifestyle totally. You want to hop on it, and you want to start getting to the root of problem.

Julie:

When you see people who you respect and looked up to, your role models in this world... When you see them having those tough conversations and navigating these really tricky waters of chronic pain and arthritis, that's when you get the confidence to do it yourself. I've had arthritis since I was 7, but



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

whenever I was a kid, I really loved Tom Brady. I still do love Tom Brady. (laughter) I begged and begged and begged to get a Tom Brady jersey whenever I was a kid. I still have it to this day.

Rebecca:

She still fits in it, by the way.

Julie:

I do. (laughter) If I was going to my rheumatologist appointment, or I needed to have a shot or do something like that on a weekly basis, I would throw my Tom Brady jersey on and feel a little bit stronger and feel a little bit more confident. I think that people of all ages have that confidence boost when they get to see people like you living their Yes, with their chronic pain and with their arthritis. So, thanks for doing what you do.

Rebecca:

Yeah. Both of you. I think of Matt. I think of the "American Ninja Warrior" as our arthritis, right? Like, you get these crazy challenges. (laughter) You have to train for them. You just don't go and deal with it. No way. You have to do some intense training.

Matt:

And you fall a lot. You fall a lot.

Rebecca:

Yes. You fall a lot.

Julie Eller: Yeah. (laughs)

Matt:

You fall a lot in this arthritis journey.

Rebecca: You crash.

Matt: Yeah.

Rebecca:

You have to start all over again sometimes when you don't make it. But your goal is to just get to the end, but it takes hard work.

Matt:

You see one person on the course at a time, but nobody does it alone. And whether it's training with their other competitors, or the support of their family and friends, you see these people. The only way they can attack these obstacles and overcome them is by having that support structure. And it's the same thing with arthritis. You need to find and develop that support structure.



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Rob:

Yes, yes definitely. You've got to have a great support cast and then also, on top of it, you've got to have a good routine.

Rebecca:

Do you guys feel that your singing and dancing, and the humor that you use, helps with your coping skills? Especially right now, right? We need all of that.

Rob:

Big time. Especially singing and dancing. I'm going to let you know, like... I was on that show. I made it four rounds. You got to give me some credit. (laughter)

Rebecca: I do.

Rob:

I beat Lil' Wayne and Chaka Khan. (laughter) I mean, I don't know how I did that. But what I've learned from it big time though was, too, was... When I was done performing or when I was done practicing, just the way I felt after the day of practicing or after the performance from just singing and dancing... Just the way you feel, it's great. You feel like you're healing. It's kinda therapeutic in a way. It's like, after a game, you get that feeling of just endorphins rushing. You feel calm but you feel alert, and that's the same exact thing it felt like after I was done singing and dancing for a day.

Matt:

For me, standup comedy has been one of the best things for me. Just emotionally, physically. The idea of being in a room and making people laugh, being around the laughter. When I get on stage and do standup, and I'm in a room of people laughing, when I get off, I feel like I've just won a title.

We know there are endorphins that are released when you're doing these things that you love. And so, for me it's laughter, singing, dancing, whatever it is. Finding those things you love that stimulate that in you. Those are the things I think are gonna be so key. We talk about the working out, and this is one of those things that isn't just physical. This is the emotional side that is so important to tend to when you're dealing with these battles with chronic pain. And finding that joy, finding those ways that you can try to get that joy every week, or if you can every day, I think that those highlights are the things that keep you mentally right. They keep you happy.

Julie:

That's exactly right. And what we're learning from our patient community is that, in the age of coronavirus, anxiety and fear and depression ... our stats are going up, up, up. So, finding those things that you can have in your life that give you that joy, that make that endorphin high possible, are so, so important.

Matt:



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Well, Julie, two things I think right there: Singing and dancing and laughing, they typically happen with other people. And I think right now, with this isolation that we're in, it is easy to just be lost in yourself and... That's when it's important to actively choose these ways to re-engage these things that stimulate you and give you that high. That natural high.

Rob:

Yes. The natural high, that's what it's all about. (laughter) I might have to do that now. Do a couple songs, you know. Dance for about an hour and keep myself occupied. And get that endorphin rush going. And Matt, like you were saying after comedy, I bet you after that feeling, after you got off stage, I bet you didn't even think about any pain or anything.

Matt: No. I think we've got a new rule: If people aren't feeling good, we just tell them stop, collaborate and listen. (laughter)

Rob:

Correct. Collaborate and listen.

Julie:

Oh my God!

Rob:

Ice is back with my brand-new invention. (raps) "Something grabs a hold of me tightly, flow like a harpoon daily and nightly. Will it ever stop? Yo, I don't know. Turn off the lights and I'll glow. Light up a stage and wax a chump like a candle. Rush the speaker that booms, I'm killin' your brain like a poisonous mushroom. Deadly, when I play a dope melody, anything less than the best is a felony..." Alright, I can keep going.

Matt: That's amazing! (laughter) Vanilla Ice is giving a standing ovation right now.

Rob:

That was the first song I learned for White Tiger. And let me tell me you, after I learned the whole song, it felt amazing. You're right, there was zero pain in my body after that. (laughter)

Rebecca:

That was awesome. I think you're gonna have to do a remix with Vanilla Ice now.

Rob: Yeah, yeah. I should.

Rebecca:

By the way, I saw your White Tiger pushups video. Is that going to be part of the celebrity challenge next week?

Rob:



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Oh, that's actually a great idea, the Tiger pushups. Oh, also I learned how to juggle on YouTube during this time. I learned how to juggle, so now I can juggle three things, three balls at one time, yes. Three balls at one time. (laughter)

Rebecca:

What's next? What's the next chapter? Matt, I know you've got something cool launching today. What's next for you?

Matt:

I've got my podcast game show, Factorious. It dropped today, April 14. Get it wherever you get your podcasts. Factorious, it's a ton of fun. There are two new episodes out every Tuesday, Trivia Tuesdays. There'll be a new episode out, "Ninja Warriors" coming back. We don't know when, so listen for Factorious for now.

Rebecca:

Rob, what about you? What's next?

Rob:

Just chilling. That's what's kind of next. You don't really know what's next until this quarantine ends and what's going on with this pandemic. I've got a TV show coming out...

Julie:

It's all coming back. (laughs)

Rob:

Now it's all coming back, because there is a lot of things. But you know, when you're quarantined, you forget a little bit. (laughter) I'm not really sure exactly the date that it's coming on. They're working on that, but it's all shot, all done already. Also my CBDMEDIC line. It's a topical cream. It gives, you know, relief for about 46 hours, and it's all natural, too. And then on top of it, we're going to come out with an ingestible line that I'll be representing.

Rebecca:

One of my last questions for you two. We're going to do a rapid-fire question, so I'm going to set a timer and do 54 seconds. Why are we doing 54, Julie?

Julie:

Because there are 54 Americans with doctor-diagnosed arthritis.

Matt: 54 million.

Rebecca: 54 million.

Julie:



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Oh, that's what I meant to say. (laughs)

Matt:

There are only 54 of them. Look, there goes Steve. (laughter)

Julie:

54 million Americans with arthritis, like, with doctor-diagnosed arthritis, Rebecca.

Rebecca:

That's right. One of our challenges for the Arthritis Foundation: We have our walk coming up as well. It's a Campaign 54. So, you tell 54 of your friends about arthritis, you move 54 seconds.

Julie:

And you ask for donations of 54 dollars from your friends. Yup.

Rebecca:

So, there you go. You ask, tell or move 54 to represent the 54 million people with arthritis.

Matt: Yeah.

Rebecca:

So, I'm going to do a rapid-fire question thing. Alright, who wants to go first, Matt or Rob?

Matt:

I'll go first, 'cause he's a champion. He's gonna win, no matter what.

Rebecca:

We're going to do 54 seconds.

Julie:

54 seconds is your cutoff.

Rebecca:

Alright, ready?

Julie:

Yup. Matt, what's one thing you can't live without?

Matt:

French fries and chicken fingers. That's two. Ah, french fries, french fries, french fries.

Julie: (laughs). What's your favorite food?



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Matt:

French fries. French fries and chicken fingers. But I'm learning to cook now. Chicken supreme is my new favorite dish. Um, my mom's Thanksgiving dinner. God, I'm so awful at this. OK, Thanksgiving dinner.

Julie:

Got to give the mom a shout-out. Love it. What's your favorite form of physical activity?

Matt:

Uh, well now, skiing. But I used to love playing baseball, but I can't do it anymore. So, skiing! I'm terrible. I'm making this so long. Sorry, keep going.

Julie:

(laughs). What's your favorite way to manage your pain?

Matt:

Swimming and recuperation, rest. I'm doing too much of that. Swimming. I can't do a single-word answer on these. OK, keep going.

Julie:

What's your favorite quarantine snack?

Matt:

Cheetos. No. Um, hot soft pretzels that I've been making. So good.

Julie:

And if you could have any superpower, what would it be?

Matt:

To be Rob Gronkowski for a day. (laughs)

Rebecca:

Stop. You did that in 55 seconds by the way.

Matt:

What did I tell you ... I didn't even do it in time.

Rebecca:

I'll ask this round. Are you ready?

Matt:

You've got to ask the questions slowly to him, 'cause I have no chance.



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Rob:
All right. It's supposed to be one-word answers, right?

Rebecca:
Yeah, yeah. Matt has a problem with one answer.

Matt:
Ah, I did terrible.

Julie:
Alright, are you ready, Rob?

Rob: Ready.

Rebecca: Go.

Julie:
Rob, name one thing you can't live without.

Rob:
Oh, CBDMEDIC.

Julie:
What's your favorite food?

Rob:
Oh, uh, my mother's chicken souffle dinner.

Julie:
What's your favorite form of physical activity?

Rob: Walking.

Julie:
What's your favorite way to manage pain?

Rob:
Walking and putting CBD ointment cream on.

Julie:
What's your favorite quarantine snack?

Rob:



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Oh, uh, oh, it's healthy protein donut.

Julie:
If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

Rob
Oh, uh, to fly.

Rebecca:
Awesome, did we make it?

Rob:
That was way faster than 55 seconds.

Julie:
That was a minute and two seconds. I'm sorry, Rob.

Matt:
I am the champion. "Buddy, you're a boy, make a big noise, playing in your streets, gonna be a big man someday. You got mud on your face, you big disgrace, kicking your can all over the place. Singing we will, we will rock you."

Rob:
We will...

Matt:
We will rock you. OK, help me out, who... I want to go a concert with, to see Rob in concert.

Rebecca:
Yeah, I think that's your next thing, isn't it?

Julie:
The next fundraiser.

Rob:
I'm a champion, everyone wants a piece of me.

Matt:
He's cutting a promo right now on us.

Rob:
Trying to get it from me. Ain't no one getting it from me. I'm quarantining by myself.



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

Rebecca:
Oh, I love it.

PROMO:

Get connected with others online through the Live Yes! Arthritis Network. It's free to join, and you'll meet others who can help you, and you can help them. In the Online Community, you can discuss your coronavirus concerns in the Hot Topics Forum and get answers from health experts. Connect with others virtually at arthritis.org/LiveYes!

Rebecca:

Well, we just want to say thank you, Matt, thank you, Rob, so much for joining us on our podcast. This has probably been the most fun podcast we've ever recorded, Julie?

Julie:

I would say so, and we always like to end our podcasts with the top three takeaways.

Rob:

Alright, I'll go with this one. The deal with, you know, acute arthritis, or sore muscles, or anything like that... Stay active. And by staying active, you don't got to hound your body. You don't got to put a lot of pressure on your joints. Just stay active, go swimming. Can be something easy, a big walk in a park for an hour and a half.

Second is, I would say: Eat, look, check out what you're eating. Eat cleaner. You know, a lot of foods will cause inflammation. When you have inflammation in your body, it can trigger that pain. And then make it more acute, and then that's annoying.

And then third, I would just say, we probably didn't really talk that much about it, but it is spreading, you know, spreading awareness. Spreading not just awareness of just one thing, but like awareness of love, awareness of kindness, awareness of raising money to help people. Awareness of this time that we're going through, and of people going through difficult times, and helping them.

Rebecca:

I love that. Thank you, Rob. What about you Matt?

Matt:

Rob nailed it. What I want to say is: Yo're not alone. Remember this, there are 54 million Americans with arthritis. Find someone, ask for help. I'm learning how to cook. This is a time ... give yourself a new goal. It doesn't have to be grand, whatever it is, but choose something so you feel like you're accomplishing something now.



EPISODE 11 SPECIAL EDITION
Survive & Thrive: Together With Gronk & Matt

And the final thing, I would say is: Don't forget, in 2020 or 2021, the White Tiger tour will be coming. Which is a reminder, the most important thing: Have fun.

Julie:

And you can get a special preview of the White Tiger tour, by coming to our celebrity COVID-19 challenge: Survive & Thrive. April 22, 8.00 p.m. Join us on Facebook Live. We're so excited to have the gang back together for some really fun celebrity challenges.

Rebecca:

Well, thank you guys so much for joining us. We really appreciate your time, your effort and your enthusiasm to help raise awareness. And raise money for the Arthritis Foundation. Thank you.

Matt:

Ah, thank you guys.

Rob:

All right, no problem.

PODCAST CLOSE:

Thank you for tuning in to this special edition of the Live Yes! With Arthritis podcast.

Please join us on the Arthritis Foundation's page for a special Facebook live event — The [COVID-19 Celebrity Challenge — Survive & Thrive: Together in Isolation](#), featuring retired pro football player Rob Gronkowski and TV personality Matt Iseman. Join us on Wednesday, April 22nd, at 8 p.m. Eastern Time. This event is made possible by CBDMEDIC. 100% of the fundraising proceeds from this Celebrity Challenge event will support the mission of the Arthritis Foundation.

Be sure to follow us on social media for more updates and details.