

## **Sawbones 201: The Presidential Fitness Test**

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**Intro (Clint McElroy):** Sawbones is a show about medical history, and nothing the hosts say should be taken as medical advice or opinion. It's for fun. Can't you just have fun for an hour and not try to diagnose your mystery boil? We think you've earned it. Just sit back, relax and enjoy a moment of distraction from that weird growth. You're worth it.

[theme music plays]

[audience cheers]

**Justin:** Hello everybody and welcome to Sawbones: a marital tour of misguided medicine. I am your cohost, Just McElroy.

[audience cheers]

**Sydnee:** And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

[audience cheers loudly and at length]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Thanks.

**Justin:** You said you were gonna talk to them.

[audience laughs]

**Crowd member:** We love you, Sydnee!

[audience cheers]

**Sydnee:** Aww. Thank you.

**Justin:** That's fine. It's your time. I'm on your dime. That's fine.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** He jokes, his feelings are really hurt about this. I'm gonna hear about this all night. [laughs]

**Justin:** Alright.

**Sydnee:** I'm kidding, I'm kidding.

[audience laughs]

[audience member shouts out]

**Justin:** That's about all the yelling, I think, for tonight. I think we're about cool on that. Syd, what's the show about?

**Sydnee:** Uh, we're—

**Justin:** This week. No, I know what Sawbones is about.

**Sydnee:** You just walked right into it.

**Justin:** This is our post-200<sup>th</sup> episode, so yes, I do know what the show's about. I mean this specific episode tonight, for DC. What's up, DC?

[audience cheers]

**Sydnee:** Well, when we go on tour, we try to find topics that will relate somewhat to the area that we're in. And so, since we're in DC, we thought we should do, you know, something related to the government. And I was thinking it was important, you know, since we have this show, to discuss presidential fitness—

**Justin:** Whoa, whoa, whoa!

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Whoa. Okay. We've been in DC all of three hours, let's just go ahead and start getting buck wild here. Very political. Though I'm into it, okay, come on.

**Sydnee:** No, no.

**Justin:** Presidential— who is fit to lead? Let's do this, Syd. Come on!

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** I'm heated up. I saw a picture in the back, Christiane Amanpour was on this stage once. I'm ready.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** No.

**Justin:** Presidential fitness, here she goes. No holds barred.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Sydnee McElroy lets loose.

**Sydnee:** This is not— no. Justin.

**Justin:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** As much as I would love that, that's not the show. Um, we're gonna talk about the Presidential Fitness Test.

**Justin:** Oh.

**Sydnee:** You know, the one you had in gym class.

**Justin:** Oh, okay.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yeah, I know. It's still a medical show.

**Justin:** Okay, that's fine.

**Sydnee:** Do you remember the Presidential Fitness Test?

**Justin:** I... faked sick on the day.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** That sounds like a whimsical vignette, but it's true. I didn't— they told me how far I would have to run, I think? And I'm the same guy who once asked a gym teacher, "Will shooting on the shorter basketball rim in the gym impact my ability to make the basketball team?"

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Which he told me no, but the answer is yes.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** I mean, in the grand scheme of things, sure.

**Sydnee:** This test, I think for a lot of us, like, you get these nightmares of gym class, having to do these pull-ups and things. And I started wondering, where did this come from? Why did we have to do this? Why did the president care if I could sit and reach very far on this board? Where did this come from? So, here's the story of the presidential fitness test.

So, in the 1950s, a series of studies began to come out that were very alarming to Americans, that said American kids are not fit. They are very unhealthy. All they do is sit around and watch TV all day and they're just, they're unhealthy. Specifically, in 1953, Dr Hans Kraus and Bonnie Prudden published an article entitled "Muscular Fitness and Health" in the Journal of the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation.

**Justin:** Snappy. Snappy title. Jumps right out at you.

**Sydnee:** I know, it's easily memorable. So, they published this article that said, "You know what? American youth, they need to get healthier. They're very unfit. There's a huge problem. We've been watching gym classes, they're not really doing anything to make our kids fitter." And they followed this up with an article two years later in the New York State Journal of Medicine that said, "We compared a bunch of American kids," they had like, what, 4400 six- to sixteen-year-old American kids, "with 3000 of their European counterparts on a very basic fitness test." It was like this 90-second test that basically involved, like, do a leg lift, do a sit-up, now do, like, a leg lift backwards, we'll hold your legs down and raise the top of you up. Anyway, it was very simple. There were, like, six movements. And on the test, like, 60% of American kids couldn't do it. But only 8% of the European kids they tested couldn't do it.

**Justin:** Oh. I'd love to run those stats now, eh?

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] So, they published this and everybody kinda freaked out. Because they presented it to the President and they said, look, everybody here is unhealthy. We're all unfit. And this was very alarming to political leaders and specifically military officials, who said, "Whoa, who's gonna be fit enough to, you know, join the military?"

**Justin:** Just a generation of dough kids.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** G-nothings, unfit to defend our shores.

**Sydnee:** That was essentially the fear, is that all these kids, that's what television has wrought. And so, Eisenhower formed the President's Council on Youth Fitness, initially to try to research and figure out, like, how can we make kids healthier? And they had this pilot study of over 8000 school kids and that's where it began. Well, Kennedy picked this up and ran with it, because he was all about fitness. He actually published a couple different articles in Sports Illustrated, one specifically about the "soft American".

**Justin:** [laughs] The Justin McElroy story.

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I wouldn't say that.

**Justin:** You can— that was enough laughing. I think—

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** We all agree that about the first bit of the laughing was the good amount of laughing.

**Sydnee:** Everybody knows—

**Justin:** That spiraled from, like, "My husband is so funny," into like, "My husband could do a sit-up".

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** Everybody knows you're on that slow carb bean kick now. You know, you've got it.

**Justin:** Yeah.

[audience cheers]

**Sydnee:** So anyway, he started involving community groups, there were all these educational films made, and they actually did another survey in 1965 that showed that kids were actually getting fitter. That there were some

improvements from that. But that was not far enough. LBJ took it the next step in 1966, when he said we need an actual test. It's not enough just to teach the kids, we need to test them and see who is fit and who isn't. And then make them feel terrible about it.

And so, the Presidential Physical Fitness Award that you get for passing the Presidential Physical Fitness Test, is born. And initially it was supposed to reflect skills that you might need if you were in the military. So like, on the original test, one of the things they would have you do is just hurl a softball as far you could.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Wink!

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** If you follow.

**Justin:** A head from an enemy that you defeated.

**Sydnee:** No!

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** To try to scare the bad guys.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] The origin of pull-ups, which I can't do— I'll talk about that, I can't do any. The origin of pull-ups comes from climbing ladders, like in a submarine or a ship or something. That was the thought, was like, then you can do it really fast. Your arms are really strong. [laughs] So, do some pull-ups.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** And then just like, general things for endurance and fitness. So they were like, I don't know, have them run a mile. They used to have them do, like, a broad jump. Like, just stand there and jump as far as you can. That was part of the original test.

**Justin:** How do you think that you, as a government official, like, decide the good amount for jumping?

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Like, at one point is it like, "Mm, good jump. Good jump" [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Like, you come to a half-meter gap on the battlefield, your commander's like, "Who can jump over this?" and you can look at them and be like, "Everybody."

**Sydnee:** [laughs] And they also included the stuff that would endure, like the sit-ups and the push-ups and the sit and stretch, they call it the V-sit. It's that wooden board that you had to put your feet against and then reach as far as you could. That thing. So, those were all in the original test. And if you could do this better than 85% of American youth, that's what you had to— to get the award, you had to be in 85<sup>th</sup> percentile or better, then you got a certificate that said the President thinks you're great and is very proud of you.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** That's very nice of him. Or her.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. You're a very good fitness boy or girl.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Feeling better already.

**Sydnee:** And PE teachers were instructed to really focus on those kids for like, school sports. So like, if you're looking for somebody to recruit for the football team, who gets the Presidential Fitness Award? And they were actually— there was one gym teacher who was talking about that time period and said, you know, and then they told us everybody in that kinda middle range, like 85 down to the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, maybe you encourage them to do intramural sports. And then everybody below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, and this was the quote, "The ones below that would do best in French Club."

[audience laughs and groans]

**Justin:** That's like, official? That's like the official word?

**Sydnee:** [laughs] If you can't do pull-ups, you should learn French.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** And if you can do a pull-up, you could also learn French, why not? It's a lovely language.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Because apparently French kids were doing more pull-ups than us anyway.

**Justin:** Right, yeah. Yeah! Cool time to take a dump on French. Apparently they're doing pull-ups like crazy over there!

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** So, in 1972, Nixon expanded this with what was called the Presidential Sports Award. Because they felt like we're only giving awards to these kids who do this one test well, we need to recognise kids who are sporting really good, too.

**Justin:** Right.

**Sydnee:** So, there were like 67 different categories that it eventually grew to. And you had different specifications depending on what category you were in. So, for instance, there was the Tae Kwon Do category.

**Justin:** Nice.

[audience cheers]

**Sydnee:** And there were like, you had to keep a log, you had to go for four months—

**Justin:** "50 punches today, very good."

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** "Sweet knife-hand strike."

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] And there were actually criteria set up by people who were experts in each sport to justify whether or not you have mastered it, or done it well enough to get the award.



**Justin:** And you have to, like, go to their dojo and beat them.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** And then you get— and then you send \$6 to the President.

**Justin:** Personally?

**Sydnee:** This is how much it cost. [laughs] You send \$6 in, and for that they give you like, a certificate as well as a blazer emblem.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** It just says, "Please beat me up". But then they try and they'd be like, "Actually, this kid is surprisingly fit."

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** They also gave you luggage tags. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** Because that's what you want your luggage to say. "I got the Presidential Sports Award".

**Justin:** That's what I want in an airport, is people challenging me to test their strength. "Oh, so you can do push-ups real good, eh? Let's see some, sport."

**Sydnee:** Now, by the 70s, this whole program had started to come under some criticism. There were a lot of gym teachers and a lot of people who studied physical education who were saying, you know, basically all this test does is take the top 15% of kids who can pass the test, whether or not they're the fittest or the best athletes or whatever, and we focus on them, and everybody else we just say, "You're not fit, bye." And that's it. And grades suffered. And of course, it was humiliating, because your classmates, like, counted the sit-ups for you. Do you remember that? They would pair you with somebody? And they would count them for you. And so then you had the personal humiliation of every time you came up looking this person in the eye and they're like, "Seven."

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** “I think you’re gonna get in eight,” like, that’s it. And, I mean, it was humiliating.

**Justin:** Or you had a cool friend who would lie. Which is what everybody did. The Presidential Cool Test.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** And to top that off, in 1975 they did another youth fitness survey and they didn’t really see a lot of improvement. So then they started to question, is any of this working? So they started to try to make some changes. Under Carter that whole division of Health and Human Services kind of changed to, like, why don’t we focus on disease prevention? Why are we doing all these weird military-style exercises all the time? Like, let’s stop the jumping jacks. And so, in the 80s, the test still continued, but they started to look at other percentiles. Like, maybe we should just judge you against yourself. Like, how’d you do last time? How are you doing this time? Have you done any activity in between?

So, these ideas started to take root, but then under Reagan the whole thing kinda went back old school. Because under the Reagan administration they said, “Listen. Let’s just give an award to everybody”. So if you’re in that 50<sup>th</sup> to 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, we’ll give you something called the National Physical Fitness Award. It’s not as good as Presidential, but it’s an award. And then we’ll move on. And then we’ll also make May National Fitness Month, and also Sports Month. And also, we’ll make a fitness postage stamp, because we love fitness. So, that’ll encourage everybody. And then they, instead of replacing the test, they really just kind of codified it into the test that, if any of you took it, you probably remember. This dates back to 1985. This is when they set in stone the Presidential Fitness Test. And they did not get rid of it all. And it involved the sit-ups, it involved the endurance run or walk, which is usually like, a mile, it involved the pull-ups, or— and this is the thing I remember the most. You could do the flexed arm hang.

[audience cheers]

**Justin:** Now, Sydnee, I’ve heard this story, but maybe you should share with the class.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** So, in my gym class in middle school, they made all the girls do the flexed arm hang, assuming we couldn't do pull-ups. Which, for me, was a fair assumption. I couldn't. But then they also— based on that, I assumed, like, "Well I guess I should be able to hang from this bar. They're saying I should." So, they put me up on the chair and got me in position over the chin-up bar. And, like, all you do is hang there. That's the whole thing. And they put me up there, and then they moved the chair. [laughs] And I instantly just— straight down. Like, instantly. Split second. And they're timing you and it's like, "Oh. Well. You weren't ready, let's try it again".

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** This was like five times. I can't hang for a second, at all.

**Justin:** As somebody who's hung with you for like, eleven years, I can say that's not true. You're a total great hang.

[audience awws]

**Sydnee:** Aww.

**Justin:** But upper body strength is not Sydnee's— I mean, as somebody— no, it's not. We've done, like you ever have those things at Cosi? I go to Cosi, but like, you probably have your own kids' science museum where it's like, they have ones like test your strength, pull these two iron bars apart, we'll measure. And I would literally like, "Sydnee, are you doing it? Sydnee. No, sweetie, just pull— Syd?"

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** I was worried about you for a grip.

**Sydnee:** I have floppy noodle arms, they have no strength.

[ad break]

**Sydnee:** So you would do that and it was traumatizing. They would make you do, like, a shuttle run, where you would run 30 feet, pick something up, run back, lay it down, pick something else up, run back, lay it back down. And it was exhausting. And then, of course, the V-sit, or the sit and reach, to see how flexible you were. And then they had, like percentiles. Like, if you're sixteen, you should be able to do it this much if you're a boy, and all that stuff. So, throughout

the late 80s and the early 90s, this continues, and they add things like, if anybody remembers the great American workouts on the Whitehouse lawn? Just a bunch of people out there working out. [laughs] Like, "We love fitness!"

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** There was a Family Fitness Award. They added a participant Physical Fitness Award, which was just if you did the test at all, here's a certificate.

**Justin:** Nice. Okay, yeah, I can get down with that.

**Sydnee:** Which is nice. At least if we're gonna have this stupid test, at least everybody gets a, you know, certificate. And then they named Arnold Schwarzenegger in charge of the Council on Youth Fitness, and everybody got really excited, because it's like—

**Justin:** Yeah, it's inspiring.

**Sydnee:** There's Arnold Schwarzenegger, I could be like him if I do this V-sit.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** And they continued with this focus on, like, let's take this weird test and this idea and expand it to adults. So they even came up with this Silver Eagle Award.

**Justin:** Oh my God.

**Sydnee:** For seniors who could pass a fitness test.

**Justin:** Stop. Slow down, tell me everything.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** That's it. It was just an award.

**Justin:** Oh.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** They published— this was one of my favorite things to see at this time and I don't remember— I feel like I was at the right age where I could have gotten a copy of this, maybe, from school. There was something called the Nolan Ryan Fitness Guide.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** That was released by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and distributed for free to any American who wanted it. Just, hundreds of thousands of copies were sent out to schools and families and all you had to do was, like, request one and they mailed it to you. Now it's a PDF. You can go find it, you can read the whole thing, it's all—

**Justin:** You too can be like Nolan Ryan. It's so weird that America just, like, picked their paragon of fitness. It's like, well, that's it. Nolan Ryan.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** What we want is a legion of Nolan Ryans ready to beat back the hun.  
[laughs]

**Sydnee:** And it's all like, it's all kinda baseball theme-y.

**Justin:** Of course.

**Sydnee:** So it's like, a chapter, like—

**Justin:** You mean grenade?

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** I'm onto your game, Uncle Sam.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] It's all like, "on deck for physical fitness," or, "hitting a grand slam," which is not about hitting a grand slam at all. And then they're also— there's advice for, like, "how do you find time to work out with your busy baseball schedule?"

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Useful advice we can all take something from. Has baseball just been an advanced grenade training ground this entire— I'm thinking like, have we been

trying to train our best and brightest to catch grenades, hit grenades away with sticks, throw grenades to their friends while their other friends catch grenades that are coming from a long distance away? The metaphor breaks down, as you can see.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] There's even a whole section in this fitness guide that taught you how to like, treat— it was like medical advice from Nolan Ryan on how to treat like, common injuries.

**Justin:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** And, I mean, I'm sure he had some.

**Justin:** His baseball schedule's busy, but it's not so busy he can't take the time to give some unqualified medical advice.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** So, at this point it was kinda like, everybody was really excited about this whole idea of what the President's Youth Council on Fitness was and the tests that it employed, and now we've got awards for everybody so we're good. That seems to be enough, everybody's happy. Parents are happy because everybody gets a certificate, so we're all fine. And then by W's administration we're holding, like, fitness festivals on the national mall and we're giving out National Fitness Awards to whole states. Like, Alaska won the first National Fitness Award.

[audience cheers]

**Sydnee:** Go Alaska.

**Justin:** West Virginia, hang in there.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** I didn't look to see if we've ever won one, but...

**Justin:** No.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Hey, listen. I'm playing my part, you know? I'm trying, I go to Tae Kwon Do class two times a week, when I can make it. And... doing my best.

**Sydnee:** This was also the beginning of the official adult fitness test. Which was basically the same idea of the kids' fitness test, obviously there's just different thresholds. You know, if you're a kid, you're only expected to do, like, I dunno, 44 sit-ups. That's kind of a lot.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That's in a minute.

**Justin:** I was about to say, you just kinda threw that out there. 44.

**Sydnee:** No, that's really what it is. It was like 44 sit-ups. Could you do that?

**Justin:** No.

**Sydnee:** I don't think I could.

**Justin:** I could get ten and feel like, "Mm, good, yes."

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** "Very fit. Mm, excellent job."

**Sydnee:** No, I mean it was pretty— like, if you were a sixteen-year-old boy, you had to run a mile in six minutes and eight seconds.

[audience shocked]

**Justin:** What?

**Sydnee:** That's intense.

**Justin:** Yeah, Syd! That's really fast for a long time. What is this test? What are we gearing up for, more specifically? "Listen, our citizens are gonna need to be able to run very fast. We've been running the numbers and it would be great if you could run so fast. Can you throw this back at me as fast as you can?"

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** I think what's also hard about that is like, if you're gonna do an adult fitness test, I'm gonna assume it's like, it'll go back down. Right? Like, all these numbers will go back down? There's no way we're expected, like, now, I'm 34. I can't do that many sit-ups. Right?

**Justin:** Yeah. Yeah, I'm trying to remember my peak sit-up years.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** So, they launched the adult fitness test with the help of the Biggest Loser contestant Bernardo 'Bernie' Salazar, which of course brought a lot of attention and excitement. Everybody remembers that, right?

**Justin:** Yeah, I missed that one season.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** So, as we've talked about, I mean, this is great. The idea of everybody getting excited about getting active and moving more and getting healthy, that's great. I have no problem with that, of course. I'm a doctor. It would be weird if I did. But, nobody still is saying, "You know what? We've got a lot of research and evidence at this point, there are a lot of angry gym teachers and physical education, like, people who study this, who are saying we're still doing it wrong. Could somebody please fix this? I'm glad you're all so excited, it's great that Arnold Schwarzenegger is involved, we're all very happy. Nolan Ryan, that's cool guys. But seriously, could somebody get with the times?" And then we finally see that under the last administration, under President Obama.

[audience cheers and claps]

**Justin:** He's here, that's so cool.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Thank you so much.

**Sydnee:** You did put Joe Biden on the list again, right?



**Justin:** Joe Biden's always on the list.

**Sydnee:** Okay.

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Justin:** He told us he wasn't gonna make it out.

**Sydnee:** He's not gonna make the opener, he's waiting for the big show.

**Justin:** Yeah.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** But you were saying, sorry.

**Sydnee:** So, fitness was of course still a priority, but then the focus of the council started to shift more towards instead of just these specific tests, why don't we, one, talk about nutrition, and two, why don't we talk about, like, personal health and fitness. Personal fitness goals. How can you kinda set, like, what do you wanna achieve for you and for your health. And get everybody into that healthy zone, that general area that we kinda of accept as a healthy zone. As opposed to just focusing on, like, pitting all these school children against each other in these battles of humiliation in gym class. Why don't we just get everybody healthy?

**Justin:** Yeah, I mean, the test is already, like, horrifically ableist. Like, also, do we really need to reinforce that, like, "Oh, you can't do that many pull-ups, you're not a real American"? Like, get bent, that sucks.

**Sydnee:** Well and that was actually also a big part of it, was how do we— like, let's have fitness programs for everybody, because not everybody can follow the exact same fitness program.

**Justin:** But also, while we're at it, government, I don't exactly trust you to talk about nutrition. I saw the pyramid.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Um, that's a lot of bread, my dude. Are you sure?

[audience laughs and claps]

**Justin:** Like, did you see the base? That tan behemoth at the bottom? That's like all Cheerios and it always shows a whole loaf of bread, which is no accident. Because it's like the base that we're built on, is like, "Oh, first off, eleven breads". What?

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Your triangle sucks. Mine's just beans.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

[audience laughs and cheers]

**Justin:** It's fine, it's fine.

**Sydnee:** And you're right. The focus on what kind of nutrition and what we think of as healthy eating, that was all part of it as well. But a big feature of this was in 2012, they finally got rid of the Presidential Physical Fitness Test.

[audience cheers]

**Justin:** Yay!

**Sydnee:** The actual test, yes. It was done away with, it was replaced with what was called The Presidential Youth Fitness Program, and this does involve trying to, I mean, running and doing push-ups and things like that, but it's not a percentile test, you're not pitted against your classmates. There's something called a fitness-gram. I had to ask Rileigh about this, because I know about this—

**Justin:** Somebody shows up at your door like, [sings] "Well I guess you should do push-ups better"

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Ding-dong.

**Sydnee:** The idea is that you're more measured against— like, first of all, the question is are you doing activity? And if yes, you're kinda gonna pass. Because none of it's linked to grades, you know, you're not gonna get graded based on

how well you do any of these things. It's a lot more about encouraging everybody to do something. To stay active.

**Justin:** Or to lie.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** And again, the goals are based on their own performance and they're supposed to work slowly to meet them over time, and nobody's counting your sit-ups and I don't think you have to do— well, no. Rileigh told me you still have to do pull-ups. The pull-ups are still there.

**Justin:** That's weird.

**Sydnee:** But you don't get an award, and that's nice. Now, that's great, but you can still find the remnants of this. As I was reading I found there are multiple different schools that still publish the old Presidential Fitness Test, that still give the old Presidential Fitness Test.

**Justin:** They just didn't get the memo. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** No, because I even saw, like, I was looking at the website for all the new information on it and they had requests from gym teachers. Like, where do I find the certificates for the Presidential Fitness Award? And they're like, "We don't do this anymore." [laughs] You can't, you can't. But I'm guessing there are probably, like, stashes of them in desks somewhere. Just run them through the copier and hand them out again.

**Justin:** Now you just get a handy brochure that tells you how your body's like a battery and if you do too much exercise, you'll wear it out.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** It's helpful.

**Sydnee:** I would love to do a whole episode on that, but I think, I mean, it's just the whole thing is your body isn't like a battery. It doesn't...

**Justin:** There, episode over.

**Sydnee:** It doesn't wear out when you do exercise. Please, if you feel so inclined, do some exercise. Thanks.

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** So anyway, you'll still find schools, like, there are schools that still hold multi-school fitness competitions where they bring in students from all over the tri-state area and they all compete in the Presidential Fitness Test.

**Justin:** Okay, I'm sorry, the idea that there are presidential fitness contests going on that the President no longer sanctions is so wild to me. That's like some dystopian stuff, like, "Oh no, the President says that—" no, he doesn't, he literally said, like, the last person said, "Stop. No more tests in my name" and then there are still schools like, "No, the President demands our tests". That's wild!

[audience laughs]

**Sydnee:** And they hang up records of, like, who did the most, you know, sit-ups. On the wall in the gym. Still. To this day. I dunno, but I mean, I will say all of this was done away with under the Obama administration. As I looked for updated info, on like what is happening now, what is the future of the President's Youth Council on Fitness and Nutrition, what is the next step? There was, um, nothing. So I don't...

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Well, that's gonna do it for us this week on Sawbones.

[audience cheers]

**Justin:** Thank you so much to The Taxpayers for the use of our song "Medicines" as the intro and outro of our program. That's at [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org) website that is the home of [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org) the podcast network that we are a proud member of. And thanks to Rileigh for introducing us.

[audience cheers]

**Justin:** And thank you to you, thank you to this beautiful auditorium, and, uh, that is gonna do it for us. We've got a brief intermission, so get some posters or use the bathroom or whatever, and we'll be right back. And... what? Yeah, posters, right? There's posters? There are posters?

**Sydnee:** He said tell them about them.

**Justin:** Something about posters.

[audience laughs]

**Justin:** Crack team I've got behind the scenes, crack team.

**Sydnee:** They're good ones. Buy them.

**Justin:** That is going to do it for us for Sawbones. My name is Justin McElroy.

[audience cheers]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Too late, too late.

**Sydnee:** And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:** And as always—

[audience cheers]

**Justin:** No, that's it! Don't drill a hole in your head, end of show!

[audience cheers]

[theme music plays]

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