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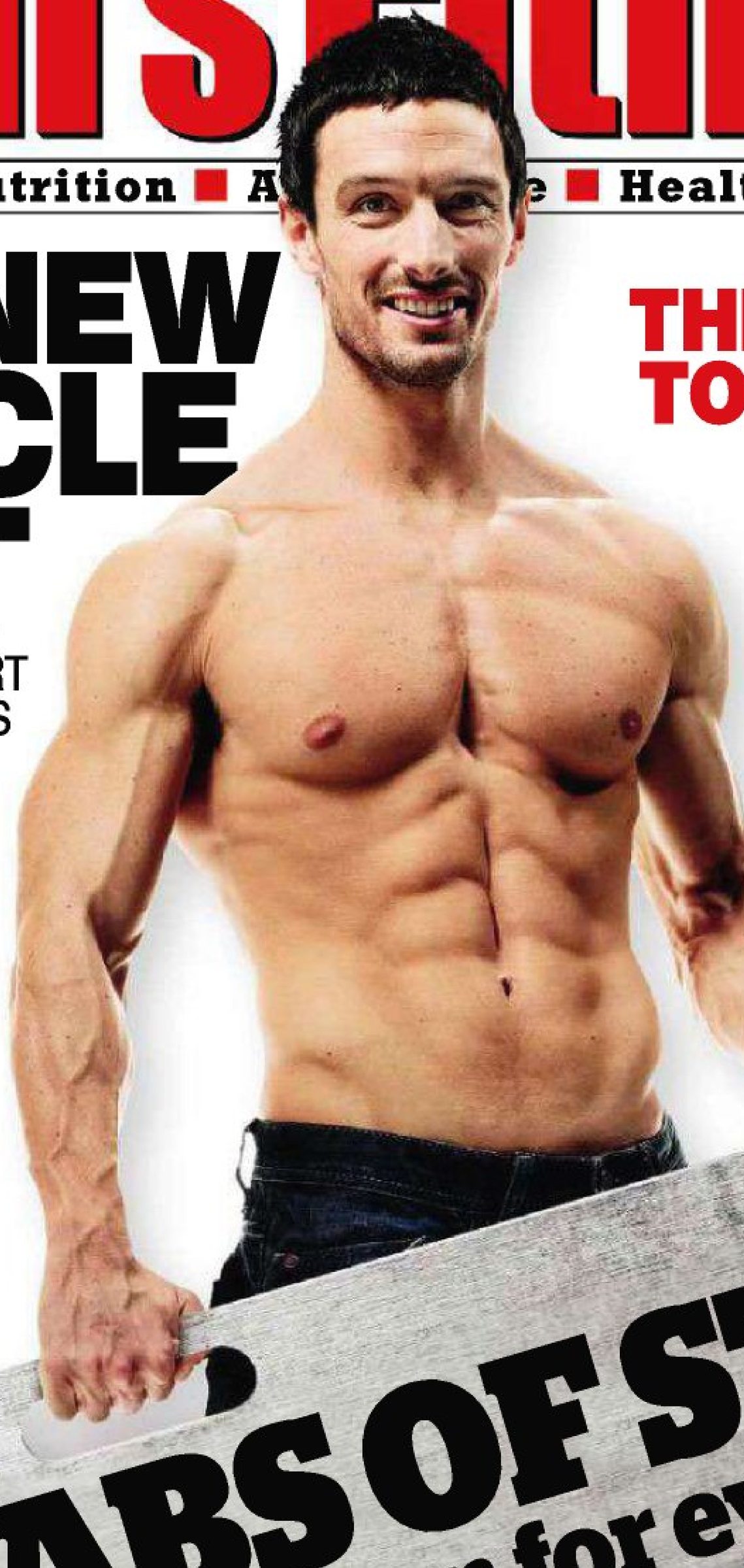

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Contents April 2011

Editor's letter

When you see a guy in the gym with a cover model body, it's tempting to think he was born lucky. You envy his athletic, muscular genes while cursing your own dodgy ones. After all, we all have a natural shape and you can't do much to change how you look.

If you think that, though, you're only half right. While it's true that you have a natural frame, it is possible to alter it – and we explore the ways to do so this month in Control Your Body Shape (p54).

Do you carry extra weight that you find hard to shift? Then avoid doing endless crunches and instead do bodyweight moves such as chin-ups, which build muscle and torch fat. Or perhaps you struggle to pack muscle onto your skinny frame – in which case ditch long, slow cardio efforts and limit yourself to three gym sessions a week.

Whatever your starting point, the advice in our story will get you on the road to building a cover model body. How you handle the envy of fellow gym-goers once you get it is up to you.

Jon Lipsey Editor

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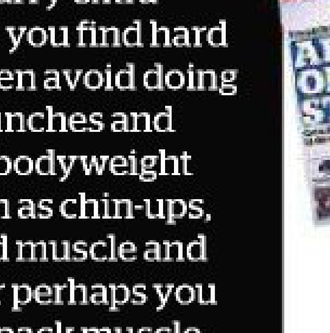


See p71 or go to mensfitness.co.uk

On the cover

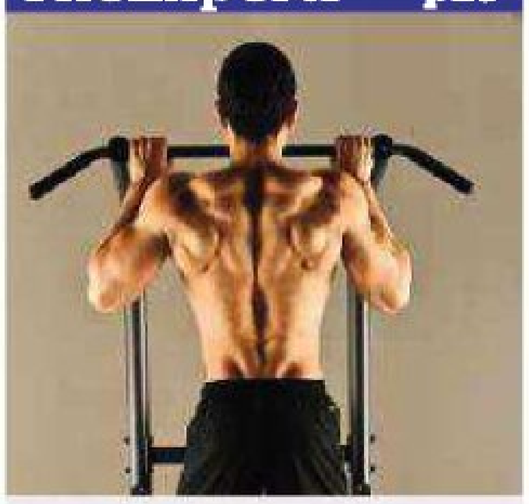
Photography **Glen Burrows** Model **Toby Rowland@WAthletic**
Make-up **Emma White Turle**

FitList p13

Why de-stressing is the key to making women want you p22

✚ Immunity-boosting tips that help you dodge colds ✚ Four steps to swapping your gut for a six-pack ✚ How to wake up with a spring in your step

TheExperts p29



Double your pull-up power in just four weeks p32

✚ Champions League winner José Mourinho shares his man-management secrets ✚ De-junk your cardio training to race faster ✚ Eat like a caveman and get stronger and healthier

Features p40

Creatine decoded: the science of a super-supplement p60

✚ The rules of training for your body shape ✚ The world's most effective self-defence system ✚ Budget adventures that blow your mind, not your wallet

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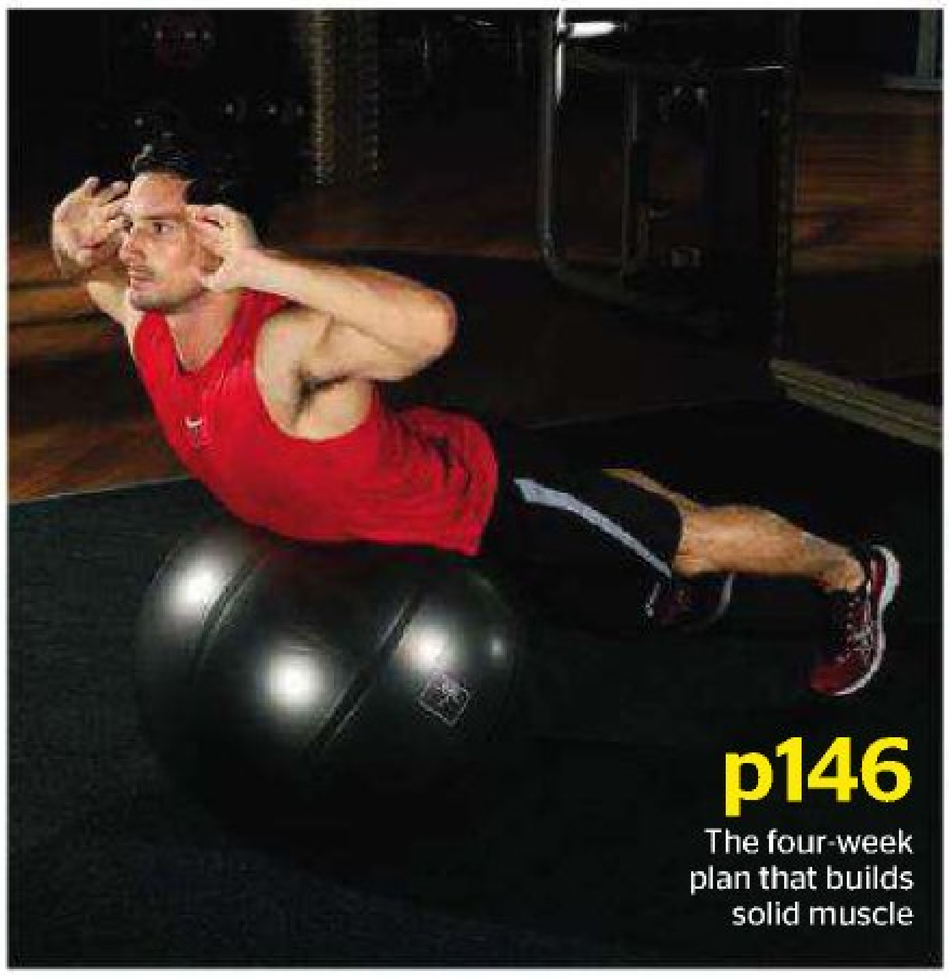
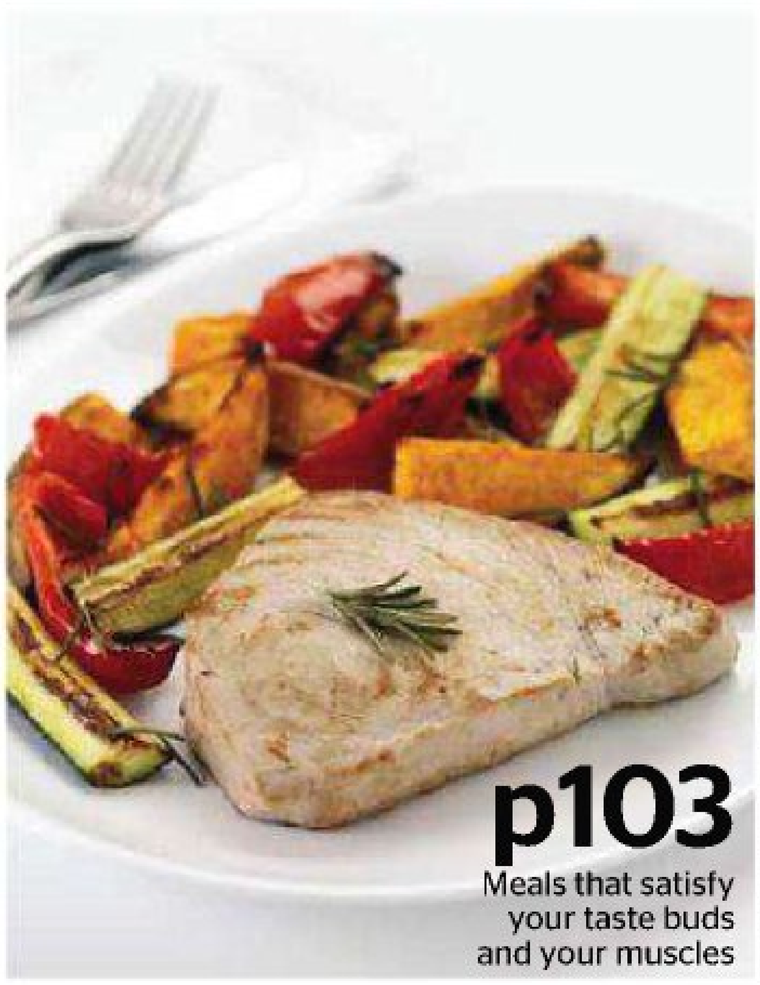


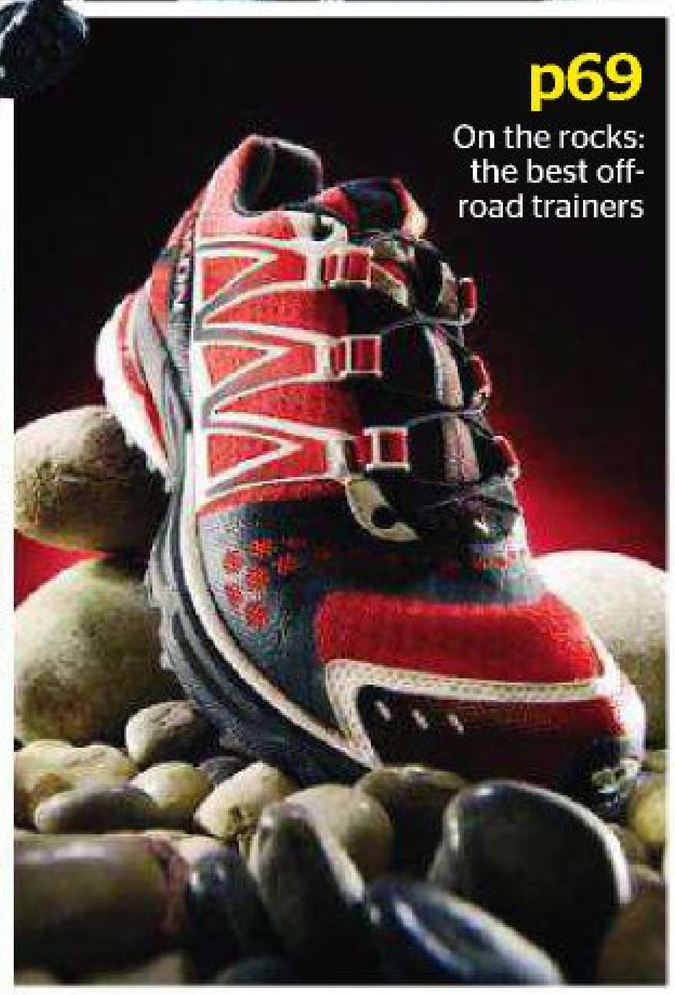
p146
The four-week plan that builds solid muscle

p40
How to get out of this situation unscathed



p103
Meals that satisfy your taste buds and your muscles

p83
MF runs hot and cold during Tough Guy



p69
On the rocks: the best off-road trainers

GearHound p69

Bang on time: our pick of the latest fashion watches p74

✚ The best new off-road shoes, tested and rated ✚ The world's two most advanced football boots go head to head

OutThere p83

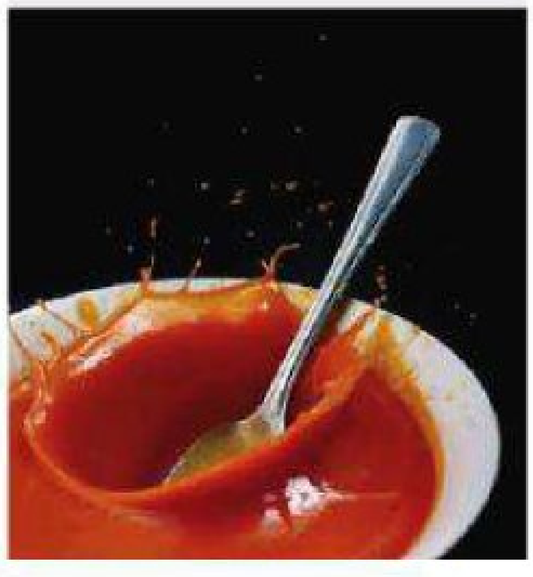
***MF* heads to Bangkok to train with champions at the world's top Thai boxing camp** p96

✚ We tackle Tough Guy, the UK's most sadistic race ✚ The six-week plan that primes you for long-distance bike rides

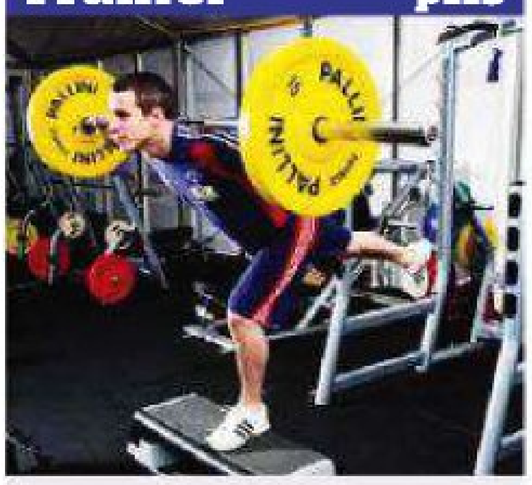
EatFit p103

Tomato soup is quick, tasty and healthy – we test the best p106

✚ Your perfect post-workout muscle snack ✚ The Chinese starter that helps you lose fat ✚ Tricks to stop mindless snacking



Trainer p113



Get fighting fit with moves from Britain's judo champ p137

✚ Sculpt your best ever body in just 15 minutes ✚ Expert advice on building bigger arms ✚ The exercise that's a total body workout ✚ Boost your strength and fitness without the gym

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The *MF*ers

The staff of *Men's Fitness* aren't happy unless they're working up a sweat. Here's what we've been doing this month

Nick, digital editor
What I've been up to Leaping into frozen ponds, running up endless hills and crawling through tunnels lined with live electric wires in the Tough Guy adventure race. None of the obstacles is easy, but there's nothing that can prepare you for getting a powerful shock on the head in the dark. Read about how I fared on p83 and see a video of me in action at mensfitness.co.uk/links/toughguy.

Joel, features editor
What I've been up to Doing an 'experimental' marathon training plan with CrossFit Central London. Although there's a bit of distance work, it also incorporates short, explosive sprints, kettlebell swings and tyre-flipping to keep my legs and back strong. Full report in an upcoming issue.

Claire, designer
What I've been up to Learning to ski in Vaujany, near Alpe d'Huez, France. It reminded me that the secret to being good at most sports is to relax – if you tense your muscles they won't perform the way you need them to. Although I wasn't carving my way down black runs, I did make it down a blue within my first week with only a few bumps and bruises.

Mark Bailey, feature writer
What I've been up to Getting punched by coppers and bear-hugged by MMA fighters, under the guidance of self-protection expert Tony Blauer. I found out that nothing can prevent you flinching when you're attacked – but Blauer's SPEAR system can convert this natural reflex into a powerful form of self-defence. See p40 for the full story.

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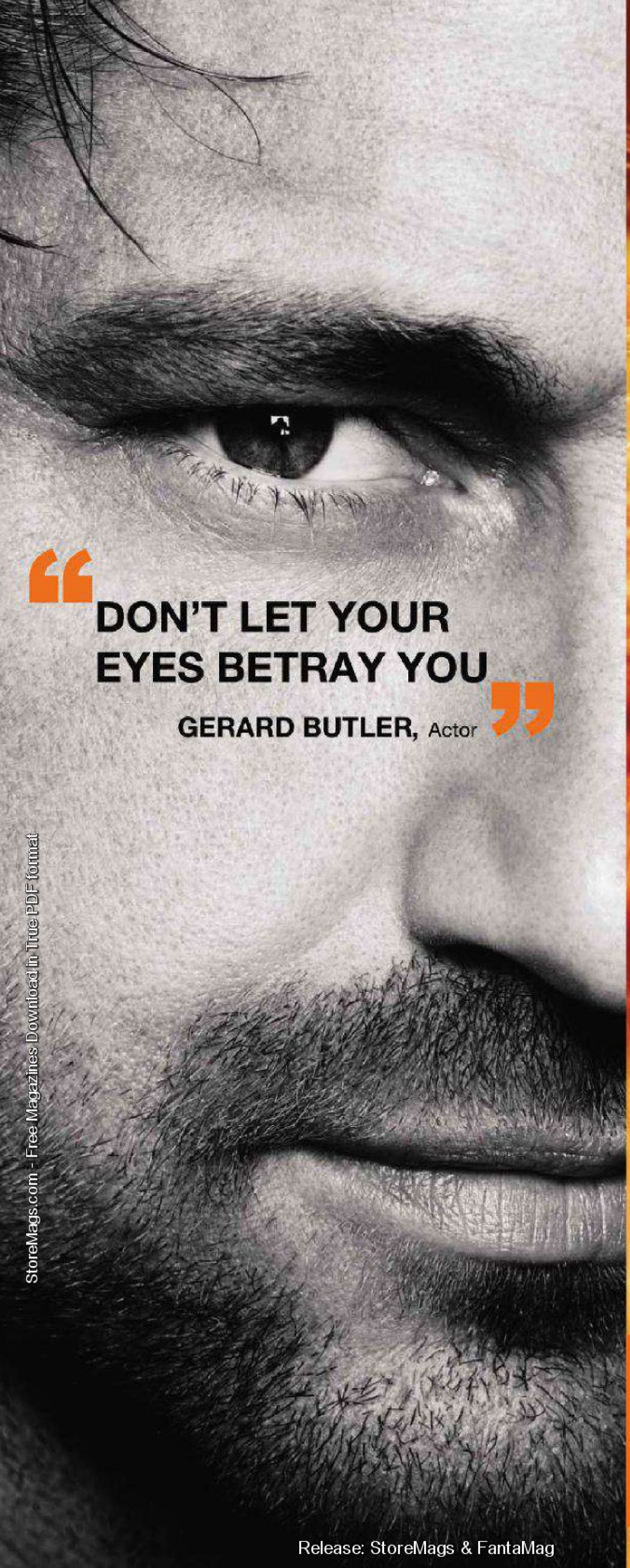

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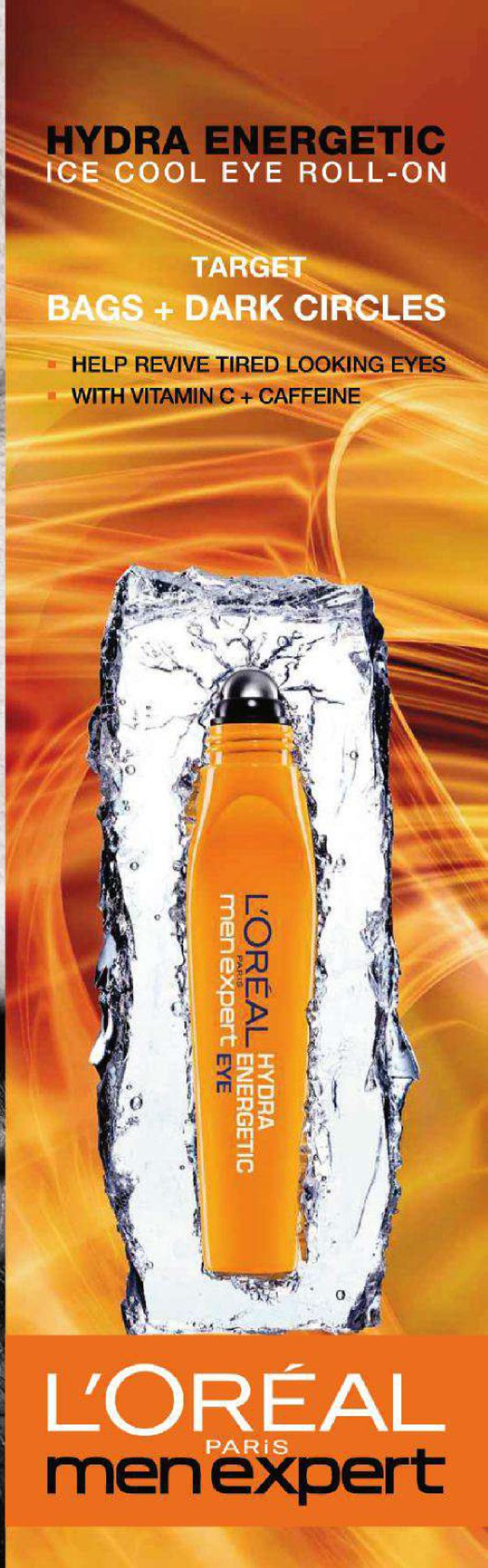

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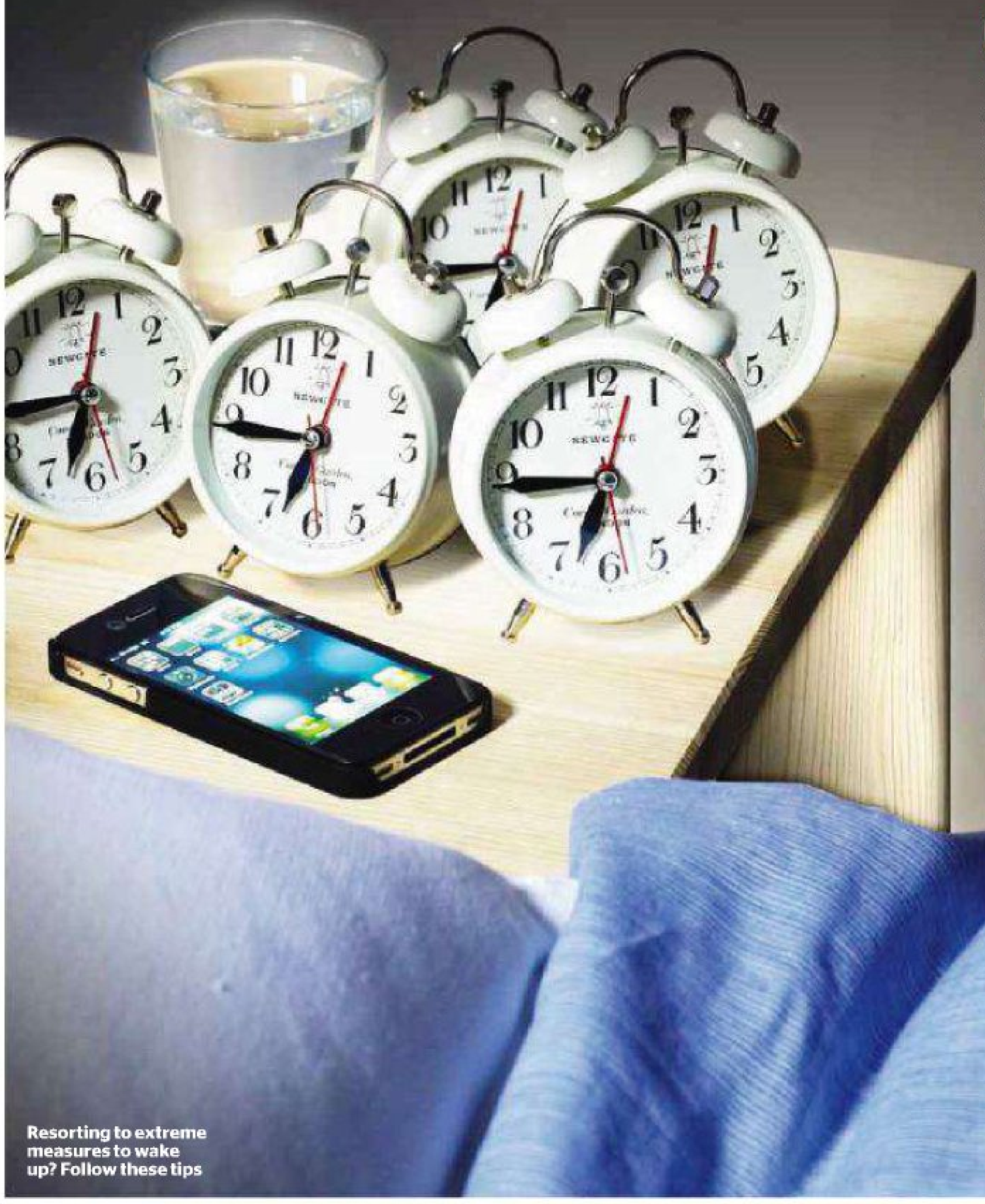
Jump-start your day

Ensure you leap out of bed every morning with these tips from sports therapist Kim Ingleby



Resorting to extreme measures to wake up? Follow these tips

1 Sleep at the right time

The best hours for quality sleep are between 10pm and 6am, which is when your body's natural rhythm focuses on physical and mental repair. So getting your seven or eight hours' kip in this window is the best way to ensure you get all the rest you need to wake up feeling alert and ready to tackle the day. You can help matters by keeping your bedroom dark and well ventilated and turning off all electronic equipment, which can disrupt sleep. And leave sleeping in till noon to the teenagers.

2 Snack smart

There's no magic food that will give you energy, but a bedtime snack high in the mineral magnesium – Brazil nuts, seeds and yoghurt are great examples – can help you drop off more quickly and sleep more deeply, ensuring you wake up fresh and alert. A study published in the journal *Neuropsychobiology* found that when researchers gave rats a diet low in magnesium their sleep was shorter and lighter.

3 Avoid caffeine and booze

You're never going to wake up feeling good if you've spent hours tossing and turning before you nod off. Avoiding stimulants – tea, coffee, energy drinks and alcohol – will allow your body to be primed for sleep, helping you drift off quickly and sleep deeply so your batteries are fully recharged come morning.

4 Set the agenda

Have a pen and paper by the side of your bed. As soon as you wake up write down three things that you are going to make happen that day: one work, one training and one fun. Having a clear list of objectives will give your day a purpose and reason to get started, and help you stay productive, focused and positive. If your work ambition is 'quit' or 'strangle boss', you may want to re-assess your employment situation.

5 Fuel your fire

Which will make you leap out of bed faster: a big, hearty breakfast or a bit of limp toast with warm orange juice? Starting the day with lean protein, complex carbs and essential fats will fire up your mind and body, so try porridge with blueberries, almonds, manuka honey and cinnamon or wholemeal toast, poached eggs, tomatoes and bacon. Planning is key, so always make sure you have plenty of wholesome foods in stock.

6 Get moving

Not hungry first thing? Work out to work up an appetite. Have your trainers by the end of your bed – as long as they don't smell too bad – and slip into them as soon as your alarm starts beeping. Before you know it your heart will be pumping and you'll be wide awake. You'll also have got your day's workout done and dusted nice and early, freeing up your lunchtime or evening for other relaxing activities.

7 Think positive

The best way to make sure you jump out of bed every morning is to have something to look forward to. Make plans to do something you enjoy, or maybe start a new hobby – something you could never find time for. Make that time now and you'll make every morning that little bit easier.

'Having a clear list of objectives will give your day a reason to get started'

Not to be sneezed at How to allergy-proof your house

One in three Britons will suffer from an allergy during their lifetime, according to the Royal College of Physicians, with conditions from itchy eyes to asthma and other respiratory problems often caused by household allergens. Here's how to protect your home.

Dust mites

Your bed could contain up to two million allergen-filled faeces deposited by microscopic arachnid dust mites, says Allergy UK. Keep the eight-legged freaks at bay by using allergen-proof bedding such as silk or by washing your sheets at 60˚C. The critters like damp, warm conditions so leave your bed unmade to keep it cool and dry.

Mould spores

Mould thrives in warm, damp areas and can cause sneezing and itching for some people. Scrub problem areas such as shower curtains and behind kitchen units and keep doors closed when showering or cooking to prevent damp air spreading. The World Allergy Organisation suggests using a dehumidifier to keep humidity below 50 per cent.

Pets

They may be man's best friend, but dogs and other family pets can cause allergic reactions by releasing irritating allergens in their dead skin, saliva and urine, which can infiltrate your respiratory system. The Allergy Relief Centre recommends that you shampoo your pet weekly, keep pets out of bedrooms and use a high-filtration vacuum cleaner.

Words Joe Warner, Mark Bailey **Photography** Danny Bird, Shutterstock. Kim Ingleby is a sports therapist and mental strength performance coach (energisedperformance.com)

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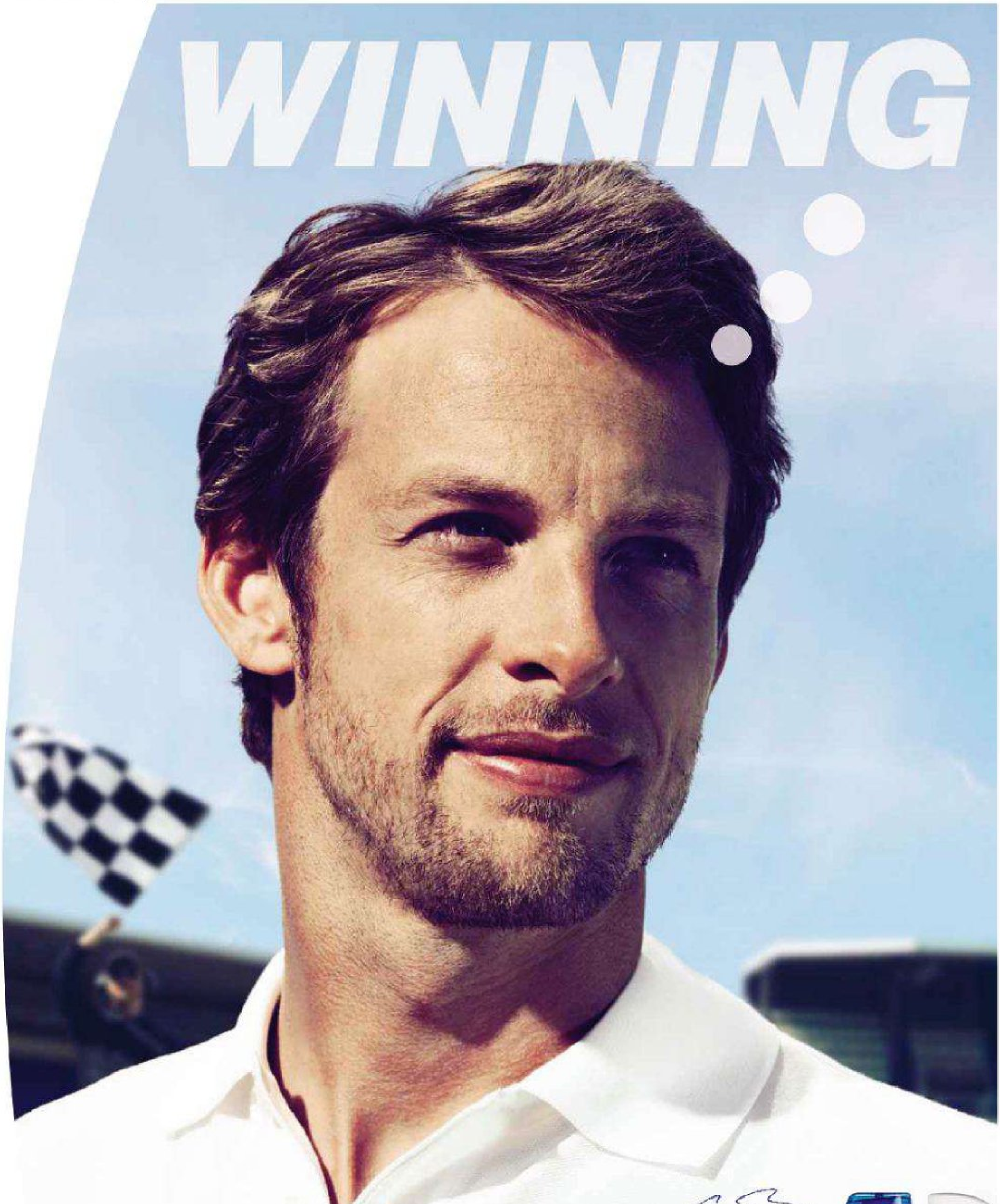

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Peel appeal

For some fruits, goodness is skin deep

Orange

Whether at half-time in the changing room or after full-time in the pub, a few slices of orange are delicious and refreshing. But while the juicy pulp is quickly scoffed, eating the peel is seen as a red-card offence. Chucking the skin in the bin means you've dumped a flavonoid called hesperidin, which has been found to lower blood pressure and levels of bad cholesterol. If you can't get the peel down, drop it in a blender and blitz it into your post-workout smoothie.

Lemon

Lemon zest is also packed with phytochemicals that promote good health. Like orange it has hesperidin, which acts as an anti-inflammatory alongside its other health benefits. It also contains limonene, which increases the levels of toxin-fighting enzymes in your liver. Grate a lemon over a salad for an instant health hit

Lime

Ever since sailors began relying on citrus fruit to stave off scurvy 500 years ago, the lime has been known for its high level of vitamin C, which storms through your body mopping up cell-damaging free radicals. What is less known is that limes are rich in flavonoids that stimulate the digestive system to promote optimal absorption of nutrients from food. And you don't even have to eat lime peel to feel better: simply scratch and sniff the surface to release a compound that gives immediate release from cold congestion and nausea.

Gym Jargon

The terms you hear all the time when you're working out – and what they really mean

Clean and press

1 A move that requires every muscle in your body to lift a barbell from the floor to over your head.
2 What you should do with that manky T-shirt that's been in the bottom of your gym bag for three weeks.

Forced reps

After your muscles fail, a spotter steps in to enable you to crank out some extra reps, usually by helping you lift the weight to the top of the move so you can lower it back down slowly or, less commonly, by threatening to lasso your plums with a stretch band.

'Just. One. More. Rep.'

The anguished cry from the guy doing bench presses at the end of his set as he pleads for his spotter to lift the entire weight of the bar into the rack.

'It's all you!'

The anguished response from the red-faced spotter who is desperately struggling to upright row the entire weight of the bar into the rack.

Hack squat

1 An extremely effective variation of the powerful lower-body muscle-building exercise in which the bar is held, then lifted, behind the legs.
2 Any high-rep, short-rest squat workout that leaves you coughing like an asthmatic miner.

Learn everything you ever wanted to know about the gym at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/knowthegym**

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Boss the midfield like

Darren Fletcher

Turn in a huge performance every week with these tips from the Manchester United and Scotland star

1 Practice makes perfect

'To be a box-to-box midfielder I practise running from box to box! The best way to get better at something is to do it over and over again until it becomes easier. So I always do two or three all-out shuttle runs between the penalty boxes, or from the goal-line to the halfway line, at least twice a week after normal training. A lot of the midfielders do it – Ryan Giggs started years ago and still does them. What an inspiration that is.'

2 Play with your heart

'To play for a club like Manchester United you can never quit. You have to keep going until the final whistle and never settle for second best. Even if you are tired you must always keep running and never give up. Of course you need to be fit in the first place – that's why I train so hard – but that extra ten per cent you need to never give in comes from inside.'

3 Lead by example

'I like to chase down every ball – even if it's a lost cause. Putting in that effort, even if I don't make it, is never a waste. It can lift the crowd, raise the atmosphere and up the tempo, motivating other players to dig that little bit deeper.'

4 Watch and learn

'Another way to improve is to watch someone better and see what they do during a game. When I was breaking into the squad, Alex Ferguson told me to watch and learn from the best players so I did. Watching them make decisions and how they deal with certain opposition enabled me to learn much quicker.'

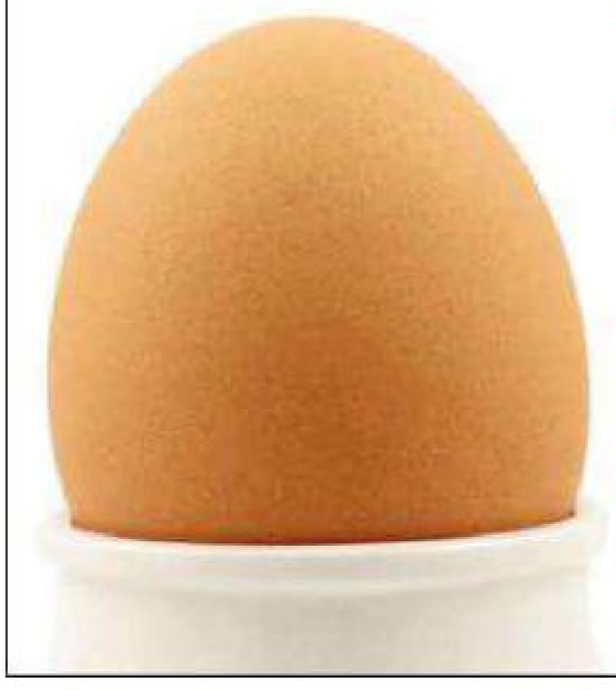
5 Fuel your engine

'To keep playing at the highest tempo for 90 minutes means I need to be fully fuelled before and during the game. I like to be really full before kick-off so I eat a plate of pasta, mashed potatoes, rice and chicken. That sounds like a lot, but that's how much I need. And then Jaffa Cakes at half-time for some quick energy.'

> 'To play for a club like Manchester United you can never quit'

Darren Fletcher wears the Adidas AdiPURE IV boot. See prodirectsoccer.com.

BEAT BALDNESS



Thinning on top? Don't worry, your hair is still there – it's just so small that you can't see it, according to new US research. This might seem like cold comfort, but scientists hope the finding will make baldness easier to treat. Until then, here are some tried and tested tips from hair guru Philip Kingsley (philipkingsley.com) to slow down premature hair loss.

Cure 1 Keep it clean

Shampoo daily. Many men avoid washing their hair regularly because they're alarmed at how much hair is in the plughole afterwards, but keeping your hair clean and well nourished can help it stick around longer.

Cure 2 Eat right

Hair is made from protein so it is important you eat plenty of food rich in high-quality lean protein such as turkey, chicken, fish and eggs. Ideally, you should have a sizeable portion of protein at both breakfast and lunch.

Cure 3 Take vitamins

B vitamins, ferritin (which helps store iron for hair cell production) and zinc are all important for new hair growth. A blood test can identify whether you're deficient in any of these and need supplements.

Words Joe Warner **Photography** Shutterstock
Source *Journal Of Clinical Investigation*

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– Richard Whitehead, GB Paralympian, 200m World Champion and Marathon World Record Holder.

REPLENISHES 4 MINERALS LOST IN SWEAT

KEEP SWEATING

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9 ways to fight off a cold

Stay sniffle-free with saunas, soup and singing 'Happy Birthday'

'The single best way to beat off bugs is to wash your hands thoroughly and regularly'

1 Don't rub your eyes

Whether you think you are holding a winning lottery ticket or Gisele Bündchen has just strolled into your spinning class, whatever you do don't rub your peepers. According to the NHS, a duct links the eyes and the nasal cavity, and any virus can easily transfer from your eyes to your nose and throat and cause an infection.

2 Keep it clean

Do we really need to say it? The single best way to beat off bugs is to wash your hands thoroughly and regularly. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend you scrub your digits for around 20 seconds – as long as it takes to sing 'Happy Birthday' twice. In your head, though, not out loud.

3 Take D, not C

Don't get us wrong, it's great to have some vitamin C in your system mopping up damaging free radicals, but it won't do anything to prevent or lessen the effects of a cold. Instead, load up on vitamin D, because a study published in the *Archives Of Internal Medicine* reported that people with a vitamin D deficiency are more vulnerable to colds. You get it from sunshine and it's found in some fish, but it's worth popping a pill to get a decent daily dose.

4 Get hot and steamy

Not in bed – at your gym. Taking a sauna can halve your risk of picking up a nasty bug, according to an Austrian study. Over a six-month period it found that subjects taking a sauna twice a week experienced significantly fewer incidences of common cold symptoms compared to a control group who didn't get hot under the collar.

5 Then have a cold shower

An ice-cold shower increases the number of white cells in your blood, whose main responsibility is to seek and destroy any nasty invaders. Research from the Thrombosis Research Institute in London says that this spike is caused by your body's metabolic rate, which increases in an attempt to warm you up.

6 Outrun the bugs

There's more to exercise than beating your 10K PB or getting a six-pack. Regularly working out will also keep your immune system firing on all fronts. A US study found that, over the course of three months, people who did little or no exercise fell ill almost twice as often as those who exercised five times per week.

7 Sleep soundly

As well as making you grumpy, getting less than seven hours of shut-eye a night makes you three times more likely to succumb to a cold compared with those getting eight hours or more, according to American research. But quality is more important than quantity: if you spend just eight per cent of the time you are supposed to be sleeping awake, your risk of getting a cold increases fivefold.

8 Wrap up warm

Your mum lied – going outside with wet hair will not result in an instant cold. But being exposed to cold temperatures can reduce the effectiveness of your immune system. A study published in the *International Journal Of Tuberculosis And Lung Disease* concluded that any lowering of your core body temperature makes you more susceptible to infections.

9 Soup it up

If you've already succumbed to the lurgy, all is not lost – the old wives were right. The NHS says that there is 'evidence to suggest that there may be some truth in the belief that eating chicken soup helps to relieve the symptoms of a cold'. That's thought to be because it contains immune-boosting protein, keeps you hydrated and has anti-inflammatory properties.

Words Joe Warner, Mark Bailey, Shelley Portet **Illustration** Comicstripper

There's a tasty cold-fighting smoothie at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/immunitysmoothie**

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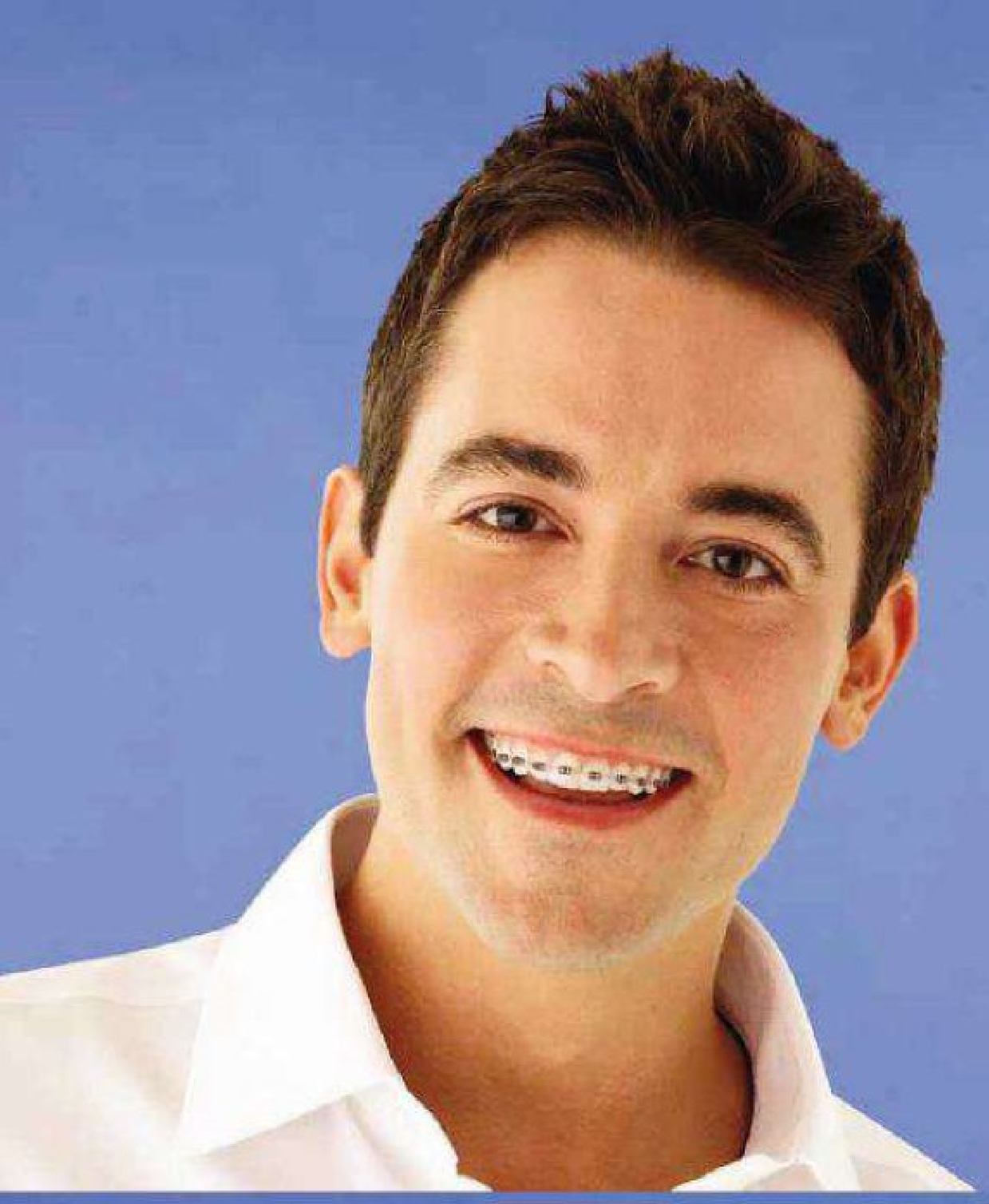

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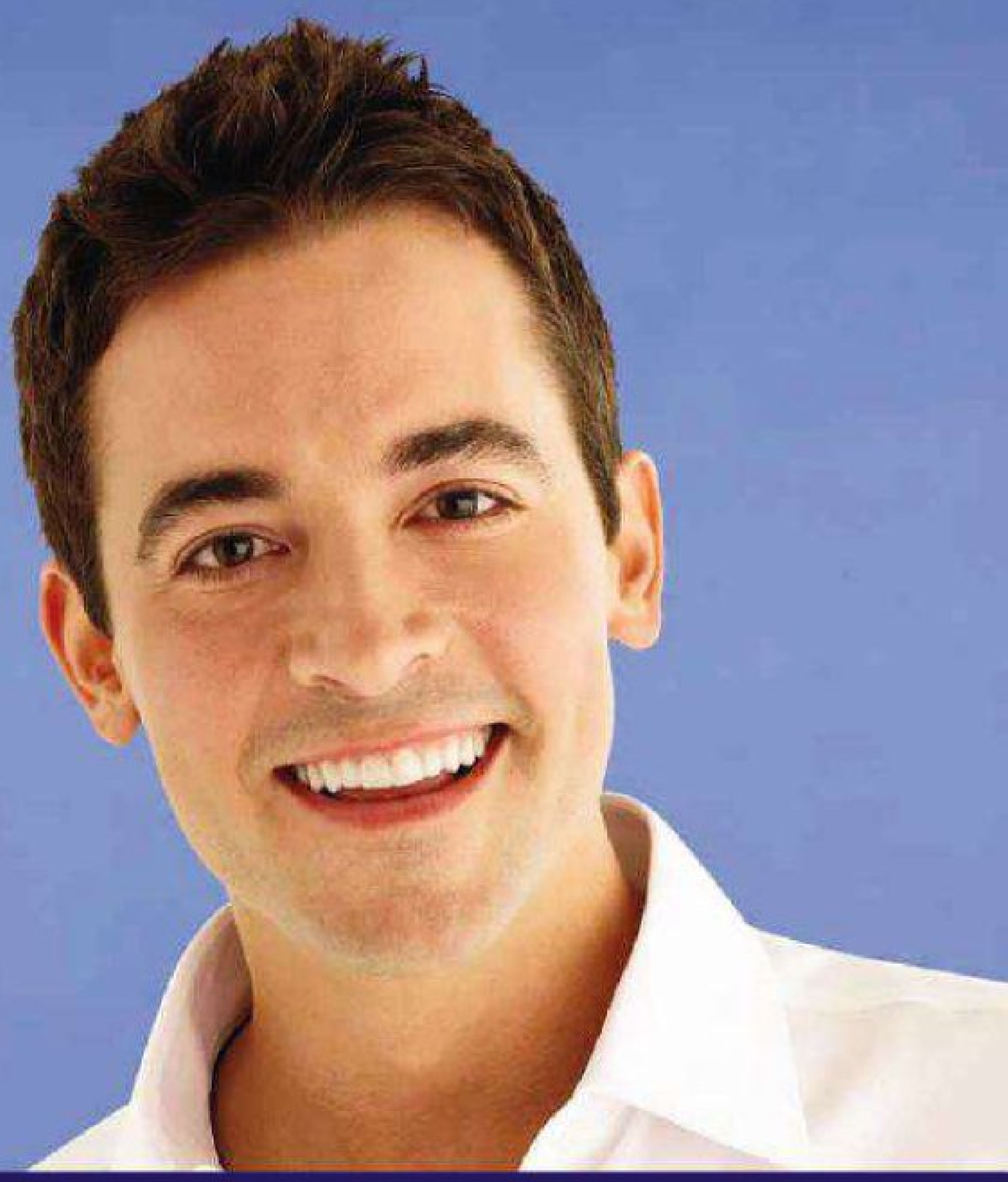

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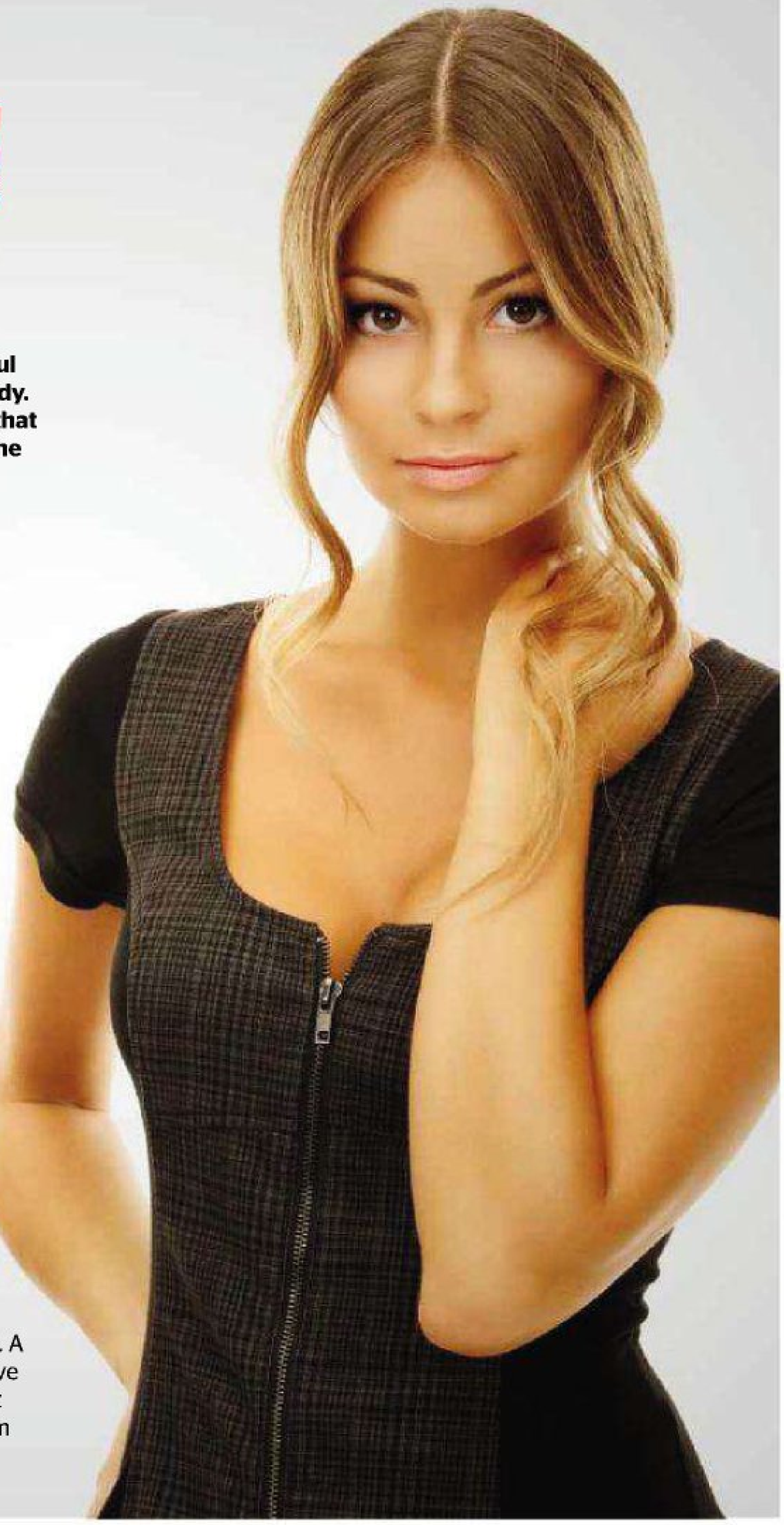
Become more attractive instantly!

And feel healthier and happier by ditching stress

You don't have to be rich, powerful or funny to be successful with women – you just need to chill, according to a new study. Research from the University of Abertay in Dundee found that woman are attracted to men with lower levels of cortisol, the hormone that's released due to stress. Here are four ways to stay chilled, whatever the world throws at you.



Get some sleep

To get a girl into bed, try spending more time there yourself. A study published by the *Scandinavian Journal Of Work, Environment And Health* says a proper night's sleep will keep stress at bay. It reported that reduced quality of sleep resulted in heightened cortisol levels. Aim for around eight hours per night so you can stay awake when you really need to.

Listen to music

Whether you prefer Beethoven or Britney, music reduces stress levels and the amount of cortisol coursing through your veins, according to a Japanese study that found music was an effective relaxation tool by distracting you from anything playing on your mind. So carry your MP3 player at all times and stick your earphones in whenever you can. Try to avoid singing and dancing though.

Pick a pepper

Bell peppers are packed with vitamin C, an antioxidant that is beneficial in bringing blood pressure and cortisol levels back down to normal levels after you are exposed to a stressful scenario, according to research by Germany's Institute for Medical Psychology. This found that subjects given vitamin C had lower blood pressure both before and for up to 40 minutes after they were made to feel stressed, compared with a control group.

Have a laugh

Laughter is the best medicine, especially when you're stressed. A US study found that laughing was an instant and highly effective way to reduce cortisol levels. Even if the situation you're in isn't funny – for example, watching inexplicably long-running sitcom *My Family* – forcing out a chuckle can be enough to trick your brain into kick-starting the process that alleviates stress.

Gym Crimes

We see them, you see them – those bizarre acts performed by people in your gym that have you wondering whether to laugh or cry. If you're giggling uncontrollably or filled with rage, we want to know – email joe_warner@dennis.co.uk

Balls up

Where A gym in central Leeds
Witnessed by An *MF* reader who prefers to remain anonymous
Crime 'This fella was working out in shorts that were so small they were essentially nothing more than a pair of pants. I've worn more in the bath than this guy had on – seriously.'
Verdict Guilty of crimes against unsuspecting eyeballs.

Weak wrists

Where Fitness First, Baker Street, London
Witnessed by Joel Snape, *MF* features editor
Crime 'One guy was making a bunch of us wait by using the gym's only squat rack and only Olympic bar to perform no less than ten sets of wrist curls.'
Verdict Guilty of wasting other people's time.

Hairy horror

Where A leisure centre just outside Glasgow
Witnessed by *MF* reader Charlie Abbott
Crime 'After a quick swim I walked into the changing room to be greeted by a rather hairy gentleman blow-drying his undercarriage. Don't get me wrong, technology is great, but what's wrong with a towel?'
Verdict Guilty of extremely unnecessary nudity.

Words Joe Warner, Simon Miller **Photography** Shutterstock

For fitness lessons from the hot girl at the gym, go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/ladyfit**

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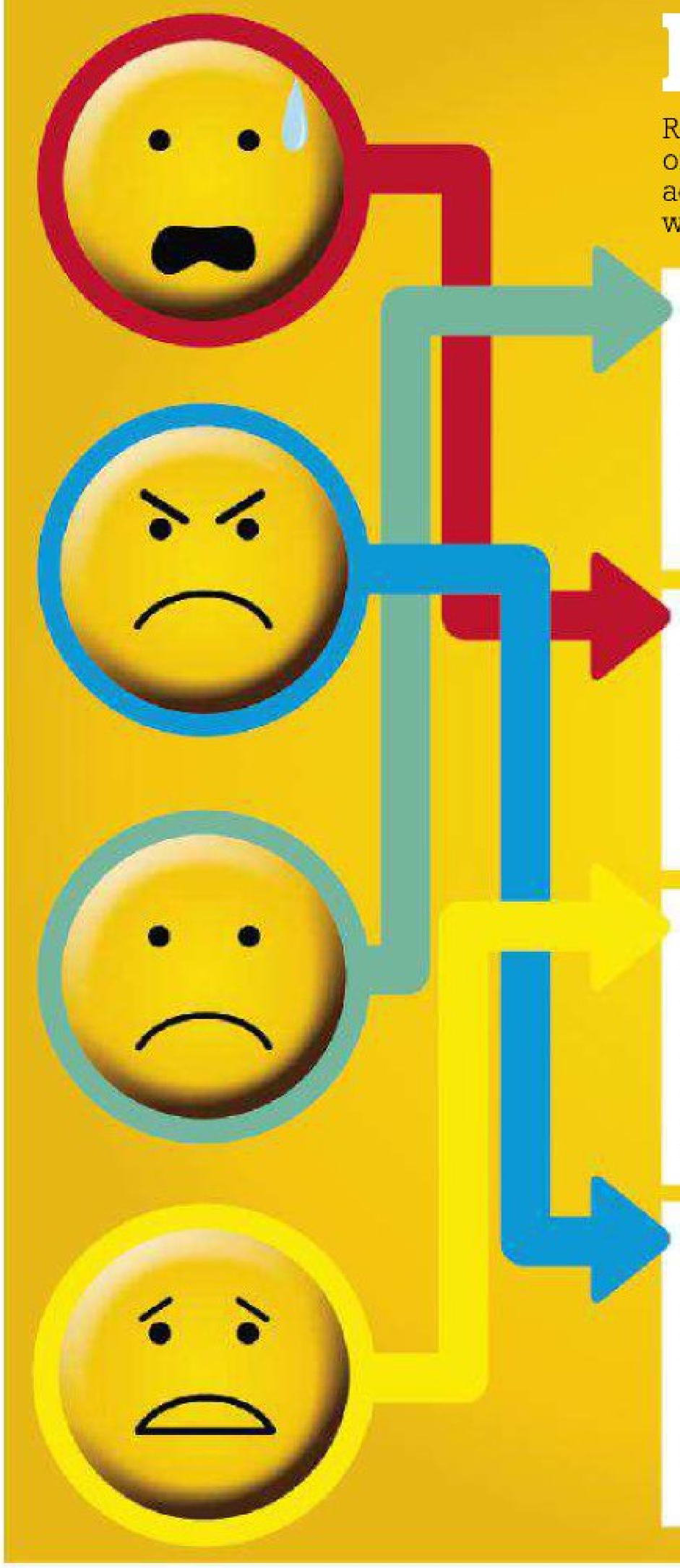


Feel-good food

Recession, rising prices, job insecurity – it's no suprise that one in four British men admits to feeling down at the moment, according to mental health charity Mind. But while comfort eating won't help you feel better, food can fix your mood. Here's how.

Eat **oily fish** to beat depression

Eating oily fish – such as sardines, herring, salmon and mackerel – more than once a week can reduce mild to moderate depression, according to Finnish research that studied the moods of fish consumers. These fish are rich in omega 3, an essential fatty acid that is linked to improved brain function and mental health.

Drink **tea** to beat stress

Tea can help you leave stress behind sooner, according to a University College London study. It found that tea drinkers' levels of the stress hormone cortisol fell 47 per cent 50 minutes after a stressful event, compared with 27 per cent in the control group. They also had less of a cortisol spike following stress after six weeks of the trial.

Eat **Brazil nuts** to beat anxiety

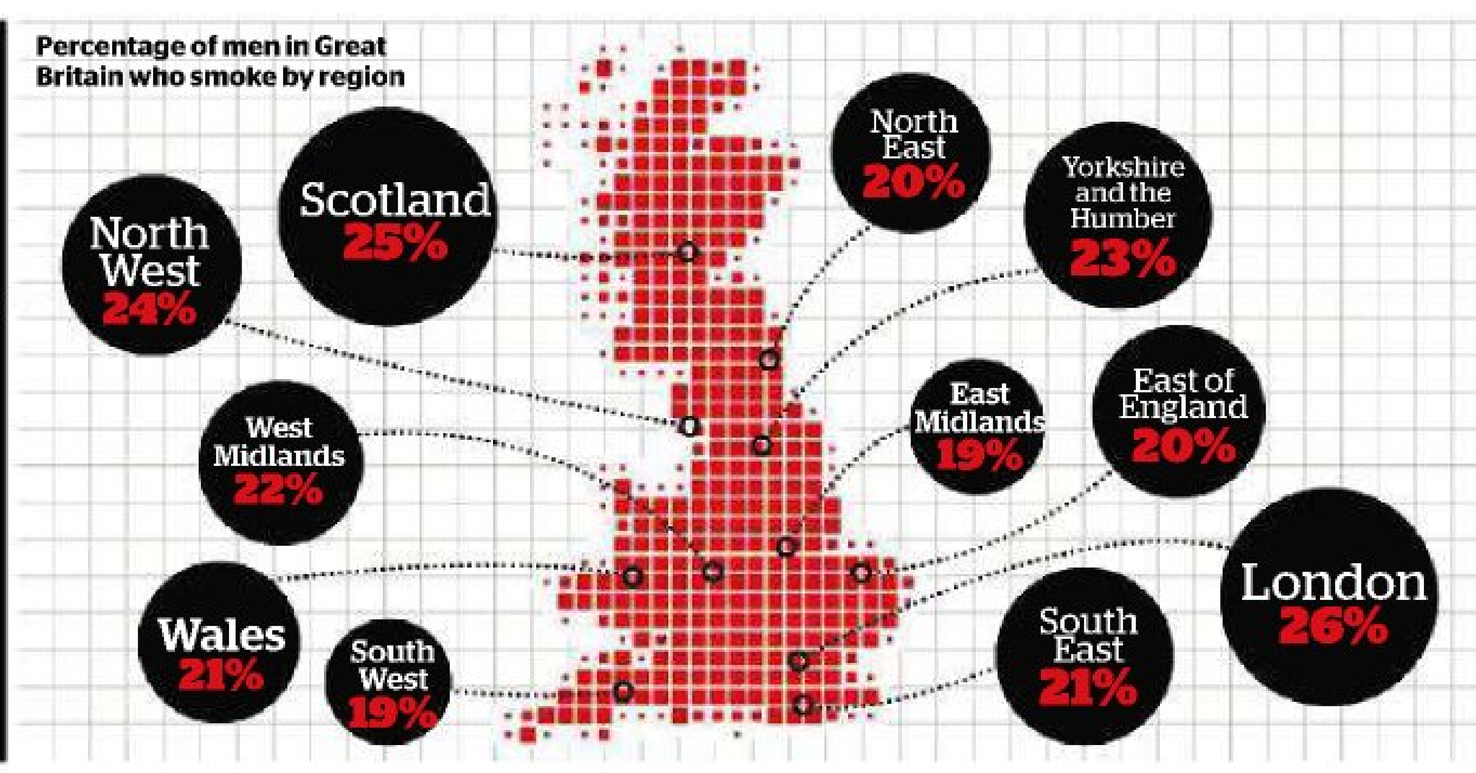
Brazil nuts are packed with selenium, a mineral linked to improved mood. A study published in the journal *Biological Psychiatry* found that the less selenium in the diet the more reports of anxiety, depression and tiredness. Buy shelled ones because trying to crack the shells can make your mood worse.

Eat **pasta** to beat rage

If you're losing weight or gaining muscle, protein should make up a large part of every meal. However, if your main concern is that you're in danger of turning into The Hulk then go for a huge serving of carbs instead. A study published in the *Journal Of Psychiatric Research* found that male subjects reported a sense of greater calmness after a high-carbohydrate meal compared with eating a high-protein meal.

The big smoke

We all know the dangers of smoking: heart disease, cancer and smelling worse than a hot dustbin. And although the number of British men who smoke has fallen from 51 per cent in 1974, 22 per cent of British men are still turning their backs on both medical advice and the wind to light up. Men from London are the Britain's top smokers, with 26 per cent having a regular fag.



Words Joe Warner **Photography** Shutterstock **Source** National Office of Statistics General Lifestyle Survey.
If you want help and advice on stopping smoking, go to smokefree.nhs.uk.

Try our stress-busting smoothie. You'll find the recipe at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/nostress**

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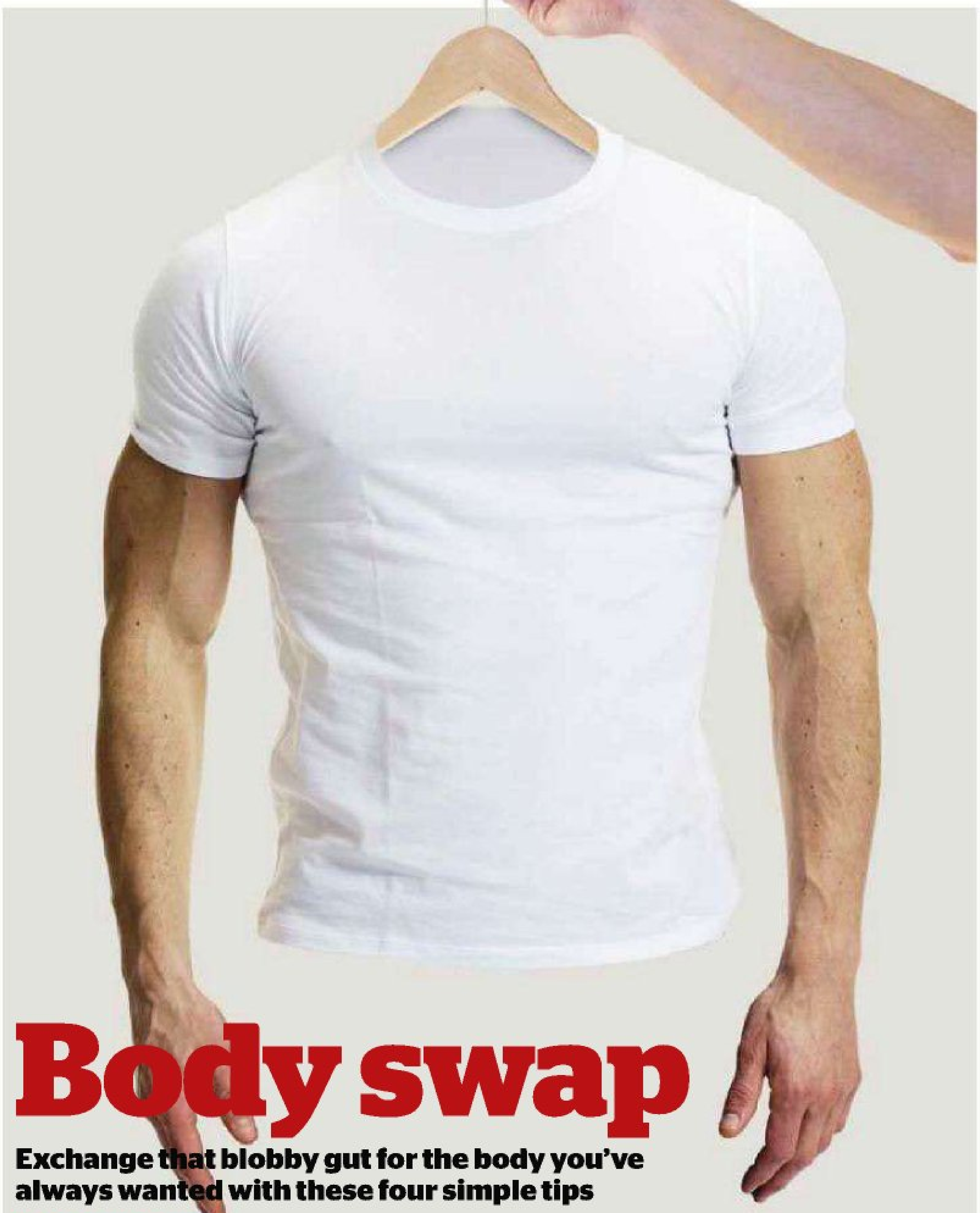


Body swap

Exchange that blobby gut for the body you've always wanted with these four simple tips

Take your time

If your table manners are more James Corden than cordon bleu, you need to take your time over each meal. A recent study in the *Journal Of Clinical Endocrinology And Metabolism* found that subjects who ate at a moderate pace felt fuller after fewer calories, thanks to the release of hormones that make you feel full. If you usually wolf down your grub, lay down your knife and fork – assuming you bother using them – between each mouthful to slow down.

Keep a food diary

Putting pen to paper after each meal can help you shed fat without feeling hungry. A report published in the *American Journal Of Preventive Medicine* found that subjects who kept daily food records lost twice as much weight as those who didn't. Doing so makes you more aware of what you are eating and whether it's the right choice. Never have a pen handy? Grab your phone and use the camera to take a quick snap of each meal, which will have the same effect.

Play the weighting game

When you lift weights you may burn fewer calories during your session compared with cardio, but you'll continue burning calories for longer after your workout is over, which will result in greater fat loss, according to the *Journal Of Sports Nutrition*. But a few biceps curls won't do the job – do moves that involve as many muscle groups as possible, such as squats, overhead presses and deadlifts, and keep rest periods between sets as brief as possible.

Keep cardio hard and fast

Spend most of your gym hours jogging on the treadmill? You're wasting your time. To burn maximum fat calories you need to perform short, sharp bursts of cardio, called high-intensity interval training. A Canadian study found that this type of exercise increased fat-burning by 36 per cent over the course of an hour-long session. As a bonus it also improved cardiovascular fitness by 13 per cent.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Five life lessons from history's greatest names

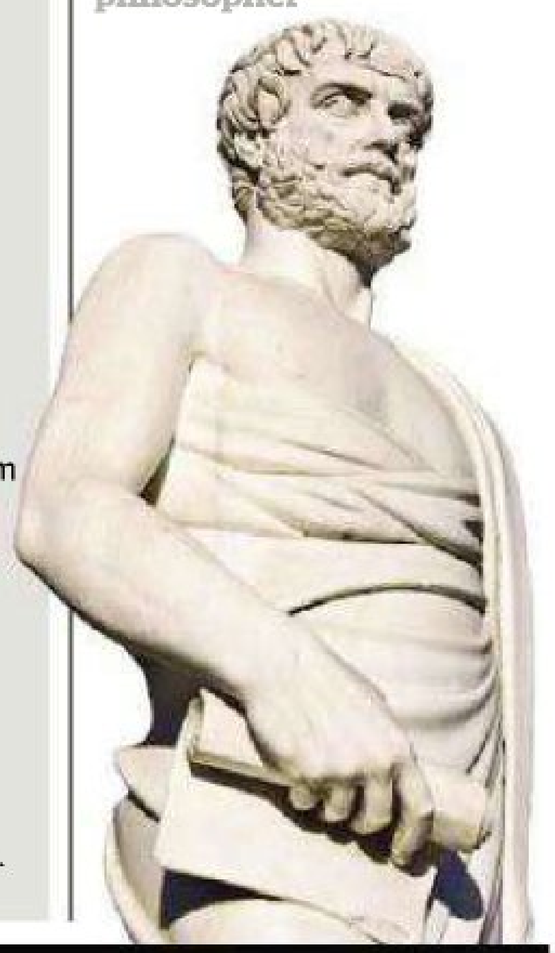
'Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.'
Ralph Waldo Emerson, author and poet

'Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude.'
Thomas Jefferson, third President of the USA

'Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence.'
Vince Lombardi, American football coach

'If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. Then quit. There's no use being a damn fool about it.'
WC Fields, actor and comedian

'We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.'
Aristotle, Greek philosopher



Words Joe Warner, Simon Miller **Photography** Danny Bird

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the Experts

Edited by Joe Warner

A-list Trainer

Special adviser

Real Madrid boss José Mourinho gives *MF* some pointers on leadership, motivation and man-management

What makes a good leader?
A good leader can manage individuals without ever forgetting that he leads a team. He can also make people believe in him over a long period of time. To motivate people for a short period like a World Cup or a certain match is one thing, but to keep motivation, self-belief and confidence at a high level over a long period of time is crucial. To be able to do this, a leader must be honest, and must make everyone respect the human qualities he has rather than just his reputation.

How do you get the best out of your players and your team as a whole?
By being a good leader! You need to have the ability to make people believe in a project and to feel like they are part of something and part of a family. I persuade them that everyone is important, everybody has a role to play, and that we can only achieve our goals if we work together. If you do this and live through the good times and the difficult times together, then week after week, month after month you'll become much stronger.

'I persuade people that everyone is important. We achieve our goals by working together'

How do you balance having a close relationship with your players and making hard decisions that they might not like?
I think the only way is to be honest with them and to make them understand over time how difficult the manager's job is. Players normally concentrate on themselves and

›

Words Ben Ince **Photography** Getty

Mourinho's ability to get the best out of superstar footballers has been the key to his success

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don't think much about the jobs of other people, so you must teach them. You must show them and put them in your position. If you can do this – and make sure that they realise the importance of their contribution – then it becomes easier for them to accept your decisions, even if the situation isn't the easiest for them.

How do you manage a star player with a big ego?
I think that the individual differences between players are more important than their stature within the team. You must try and get inside each player's head and decide what works best for him, and whether it helps him more to receive positive or negative feedback.

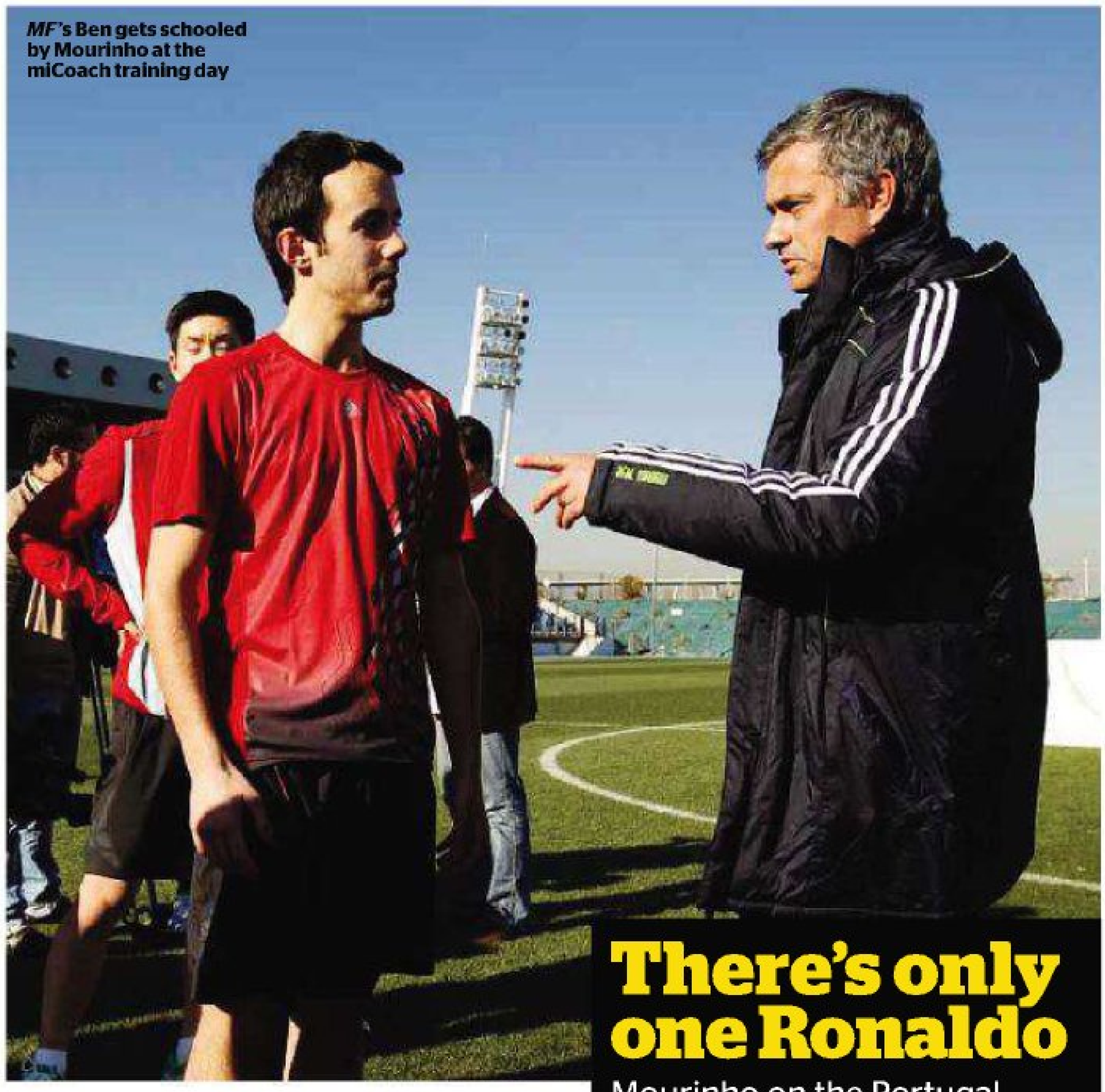
'In crucial moments in a match you must take risks, especially when the game is open and anything can happen'

You're known for making dynamic substitutions and taking risks to influence games. How do you know you're doing the right thing?
I never know! There are some decisions that I make from the bench that are in the moment and that I haven't prepared for, but most decisions will have been studied before the game. You have to analyse the game before it starts to try to make up for unpredictability. But of course, in crucial moments you must take risks, especially when the game is open and anything can happen. As soon as I feel that, I do it.

You've taken high-profile jobs at clubs that demand instant success. How do you handle the pressure?
For me, coaching a small team or a big team is basically the same situation, and pressure from the outside doesn't really concern me. The real pressure is to create a structure that supports me within the club and works well for the players. That's why I feel comfortable and I've enjoyed working in very high-profile jobs for the last ten years.

After all the success you've had, what keeps you motivated?
It's all about being happy. My family and football make me happy, so I can't see myself ever being without either of them. I don't need the motivation of winning one more cup or one more championship and I don't need trophies. I just need happiness.

José Mourinho is an ambassador for the new Adidas miCoach pacer unit, which is designed to provide real-time coaching and help you become faster for your sport. Download the free miCoach app at adidas/micoach

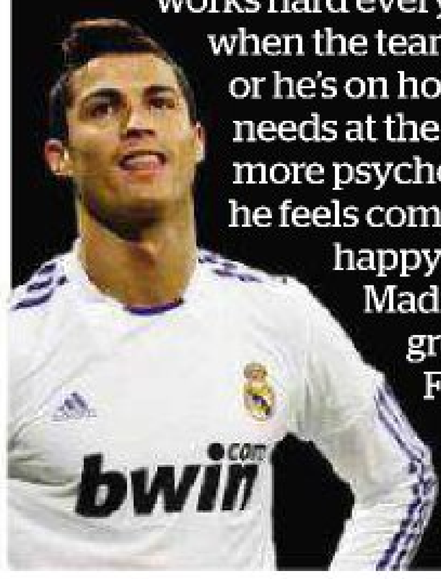


MF's Ben gets schooled by Mourinho at the miCoach training day

There's only one Ronaldo

Mourinho on the Portugal striker's impressive fitness

'Cristiano is special because he takes complete care of himself. He always wants to be in top condition and he works hard every day, even when the team isn't training or he's on holiday. His needs at the moment are more psychological, but he feels comfortable and happy at Real Madrid and he's a great character. From a physical point of view he's perfect.'



Mourinho's moments

Highs and lows for the man in the coat

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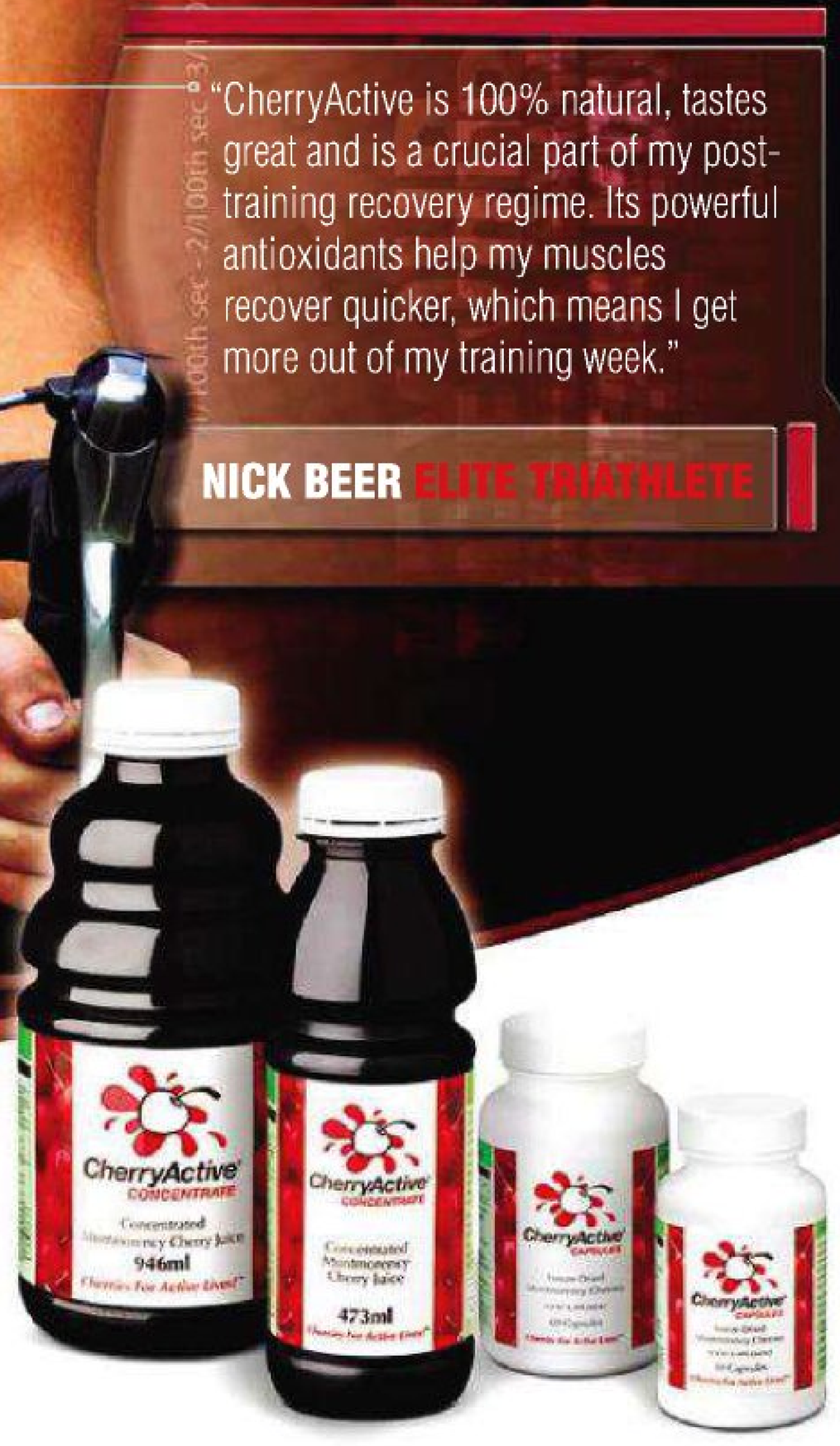

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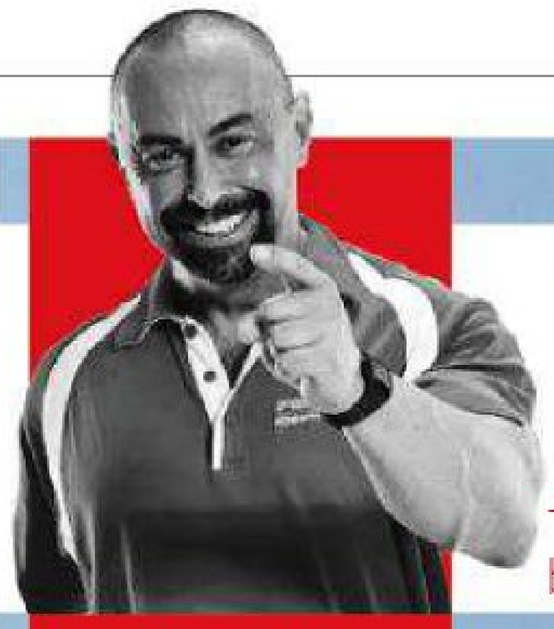

Charles Poliquin talks...

Pull-up power

The classic upper-body move isn't easy, but you must master it to pack on muscle

Muscle expert
Charles Poliquin

Why you should listen to him
He has trained Olympians in 18 different sports and is the world's leading authority on strength and conditioning.

"Everyone in the weight room should be able to perform 12 pull-ups. Period.

But look around your gym. How many people do pull-ups? I'd wager not many. That's because pull-down exercises and assisted pull-up machines have replaced this once staple muscle-building super move. Even those people still sticking to classic bodyweight lifts are performing them so poorly that they are getting only a fraction of the potential benefits and are also placing enormous shearing forces on their shoulder joints.

One reason a lot of trainees don't perform pull-ups is because they believe they're too difficult. But that's why you *train* – to get stronger and better at the hardest moves. Here are four different approaches so you can build impressive pull-up power, whatever your current ability might be."

Photography Danny Bird **Model** Mark Hughes@WAthletic

For more workout tips from Charles Poliquin go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/preacherman**

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Reach for the sky

Did you know? The record for most pull-ups in one minute for a male athlete is 50, set by American Jason Petzold on 20th June 2009

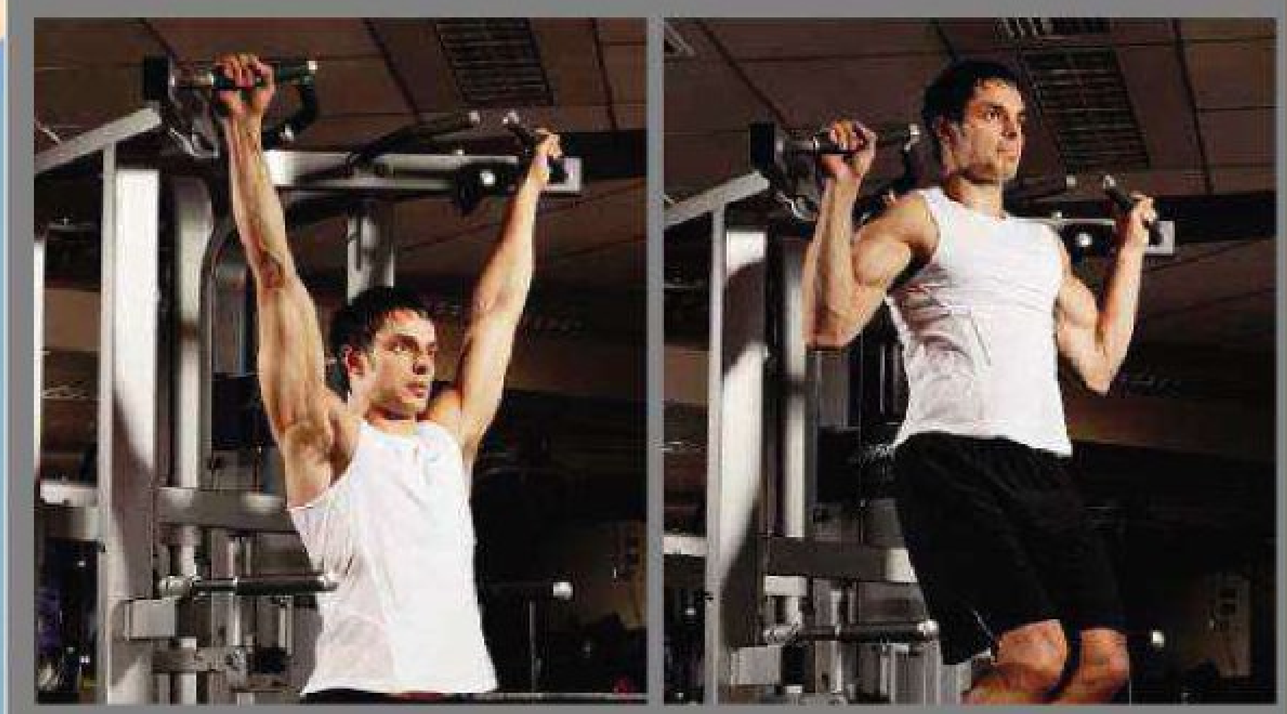
Beginner
To increase the number of pull-ups you can do, first increase your time under tension. On your final rep (even if you can only do one), try to take 30 seconds to lower yourself back to the bottom. This will increase your muscles' time under tension, forcing them to grow stronger fast.

Intermediate
More advanced individuals should try ten sets in one session. If you can do six pull-ups in one go, divide that by two, so that's three pull-ups. Do ten sets of three reps. In your next session try to increase the total number of reps. Just make sure you leave at least three days between pull-up workouts.

Advanced
Shoot for a specific number, say 30, as quickly as possible. Perform as many sets as it takes to get to 30 reps and then, next time you do 30, try to beat that time. Leave at least five days between attempts.

Super-advanced
Once you can get to 12 bodyweight reps it's time to add more load. You can hold light dumb-bells between your ankles, but for heavier weights you need to secure weight plates to a belt using a chain (most gyms have them). Once you can do ten to 12 reps on a given weight, increase the load. Anyone who can do three dead-hang pull-ups with an additional two-thirds of their bodyweight is pretty impressive!

THE PERFECT PULL-UP



Hold the bar or handles with an overhand grip, hands just wider than shoulder-width apart.

Extend your arms fully in the down position and let your body hang straight down, but don't swing.

Keep your chest facing the ceiling, squeeze your lats and pull up until your chin is above the bar.

Lower slowly to the start position without swinging your legs.

Q+A
Ask Poliquin

Got a question for our muscle expert? Email **mfexperts@dennis.co.uk**

Q What's the difference between a pull-up and a chin-up?

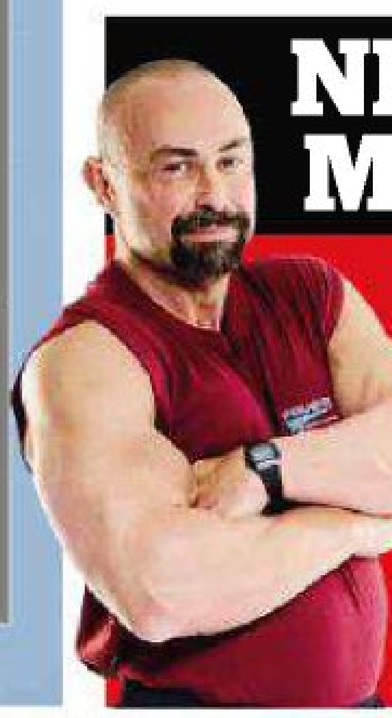
A It's all to do with the grip you use. A pull-up is performed with a pronated grip (palms facing away from you). A chin-up is performed with a supinated grip (palms facing you). A semi-supinated (parallel) grip, where your palms face each other, may be considered a hybrid of the two.

Q It seems as if you don't like resistance machines. Why is this?

A I am not absolutely against machine exercises; they do offer variety to your workout. But my clients want results as quickly as possible, and the fact is that machine exercises are simply less effective than free weights, which will give you the most bang for your buck in terms of muscle fibre recruitment. Therefore, most of your workout time should be dedicated to working with free weights, while machine moves should be limited to 20 per cent of your total training time.

Q I want to add muscle mass, so how often should I change my workouts?

A The key is for you to ensure you change your loading parameters frequently. Varying loading parameters is more important for increasing muscle mass than it is for increasing strength. This is apparent if you carefully examine the routines of elite weightlifters versus elite bodybuilders. The loading parameters you must change the most frequently are reps and sets; and unless you are a total beginner, I would make at least minor changes to these parameters every week. The next most important variable is tempo, which I would usually advise you to change once every two weeks, followed by exercise choice and order of the exercises.



NEXT MONTH

Poliquin reveals his top method for adding muscle fast

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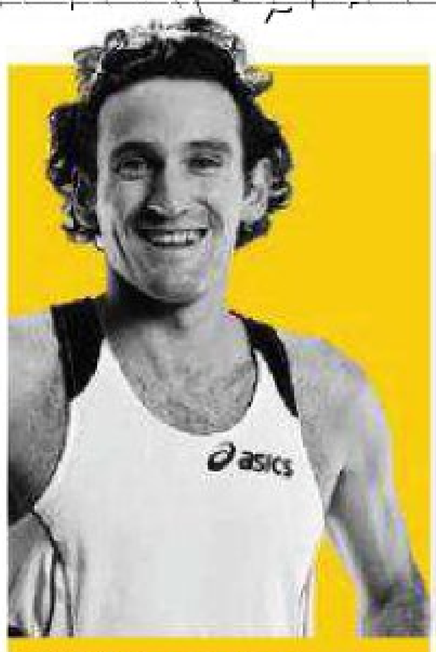


Cardio expert
Tim Don

Why you should listen to him He's an Olympic triathlete and was the 2006 ITU trialthon world champion

Tim Don says...

Throw out your training mistakes

How effectively you train is just as important as how often

"Sometimes when I'm training I can't help but throw my arms up in the air. But it's not part of some fancy exercise – it's in despair. That's because I see so many guys who make the effort to go to the track or pool, only to then spend their precious training time doing things that won't result in an improved performance. I reckon most people I see are doing at least one thing inefficiently, and it can turn a training session into a total waste of time.

Eliminating simple errors can result in dramatic increases in performance for less effort. It's a no-brainer!"

Wasted effort? You can't maximise your performance if you're making these errors

Poor swimming stroke

The problem

I see it in the pool all the time: people thrashing about amid a blur of arms and legs. If your stroke isn't efficient then you'll waste time and energy – not only when you train, but also when you race.

The solution

With swimming, technique is everything. The best way to fix your stroke is to get some one-on-one coaching, otherwise you may only swap one error for another. Just a few sessions can make you a better swimmer overnight. Alternatively, try some video sites online.

Training until you're out of gas

The problem

Do you finish every training session dead on your feet? That's not smart. You should feel as though you are able to do it all again if someone held a gun against your head. If you couldn't, you've trained too hard and you won't have time to recover before your next session.

The solution

Make your programme more realistic. You need to train hard to get better, but not to the extent that it leads to injury or overtraining. Remember, there are no medals to be won in training, only in races.

Not knowing when to stop

The problem

You end the session feeling good, so you decide to do a bit more. This is a common problem among every level of athlete, from beginner to elite.

The solution

If you've stuck to your session goals and feel good at the end, it's all right to call it a day. This shows that you're getting fitter and that your programme is working. Don't jeopardise your success by then pushing yourself too hard.

Wearing baggy shorts in the pool

The problem

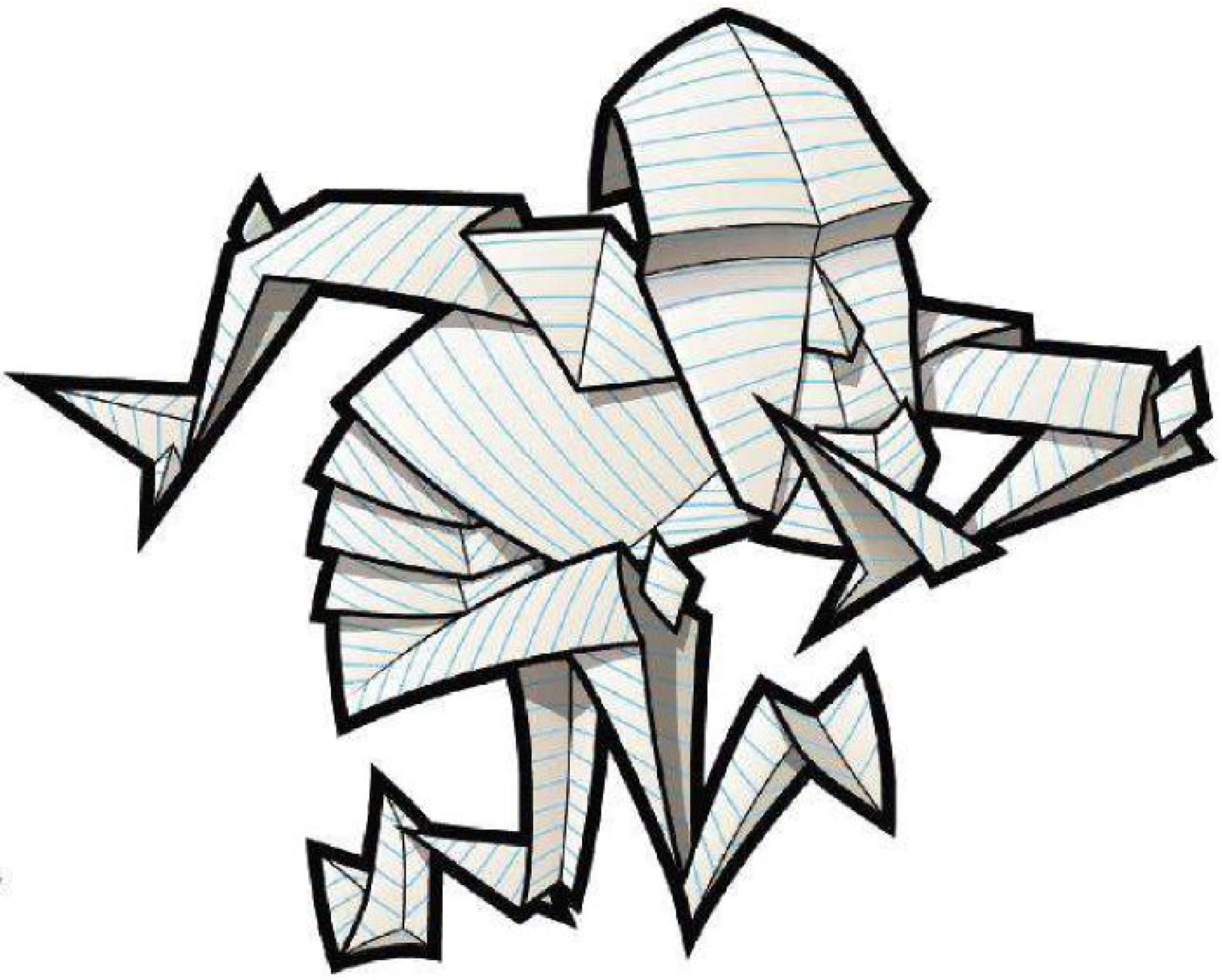
You're doing a serious number of laps in baggy shorts.

The solution

Buy the proper kit. You wouldn't do a 10K run in your work shoes, would you? Drag shorts are great for specific sessions, but you shouldn't do every single lap with added resistance.

Photography Danny Bird **Illustration** Kevin February

Tim Don tells you how to keep your swim, cycle and run training fresh at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/dynamicdon**



Starting like a sprinter

The problem

It's frustrating to see someone start a session too fast, only to have to stop halfway through. Pacing is a huge challenge for athletes, and there's nothing worse than having a storming start, only for rival after rival to overtake you towards the end.

The solution

A heart rate monitor will keep you at the right level of intensity – I use a Garmin. Training at 80 per cent of your maximum heart rate feels fine, but how long can you sustain it? Working at 60 per cent may feel too easy at first, but it will allow you to work harder for longer.

Not tapering

The problem

If you've ever continued training right up to race day to try to get that little bit fitter, then you're not alone – but you are decreasing your chances of achieving your goal.

The solution

Even if you feel you haven't done enough preparation, don't go overboard in the final weeks to try to make it up. All you'll do is deplete your energy stores and risk overtraining. Rest before your race, then load up on carbs and enjoy the big day.

Q+A

Ask Don

Got a question for our cardio expert?
Email **mfexperts@dennis.co.uk**

Q How long before the start of my race should I eat? Do I need to leave hours so the food digests or can I eat just before the race to feel energised?

A This is a very individual thing. To find out what to do for a race, try eating about two hours before a hard training session and see how your body reacts, then adjust the timing depending on the results. Good, staple pre-training foods include cereal, bagels, bananas or energy bars. Eat even if you are not hungry: you need calories to fuel your effort!

Q What should be in my drinks bottle on longer bike rides?

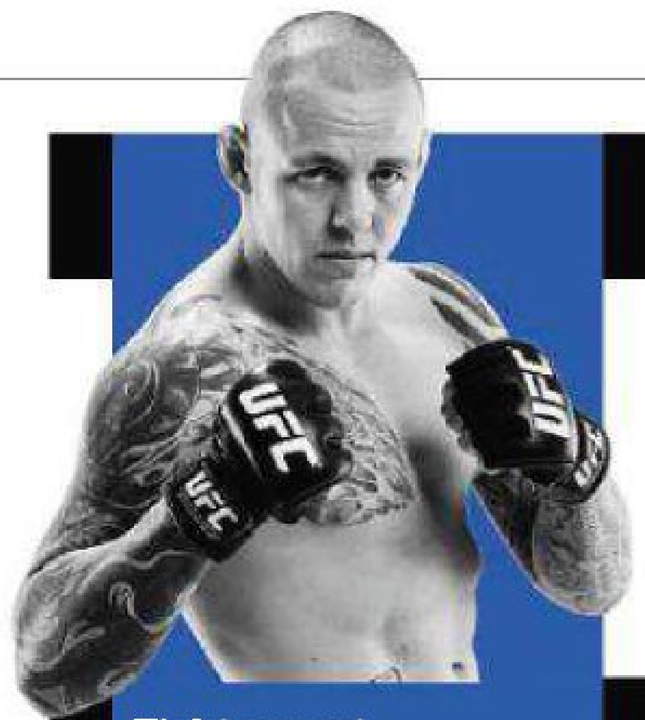
A I always have one water bottle and one full of Zipvit energy drink (zipvitsport.co.uk), plus a caffeine gel on really long rides. If you are in the saddle for more than two hours it's vital to keep your energy levels topped up.

Q I want to run a PB in my next race. Is it worth attempting a best on a treadmill beforehand?

A Do you normally run on a treadmill? If so you could attempt it, but not too close to the actual race. But it's also important to train outdoors to better prepare you for race conditions. Treadmills are a useful training tool but they don't replicate the wind, rain, long climbs and steep descents of a genuine race situation.

Q I like doing long swim sessions but never take a break to drink some water. Am I risking dehydration?

A It's always worth having a water bottle on the side of the pool so you can have a swig every few laps, especially if you train first thing in the morning before you've had a decent amount of water.



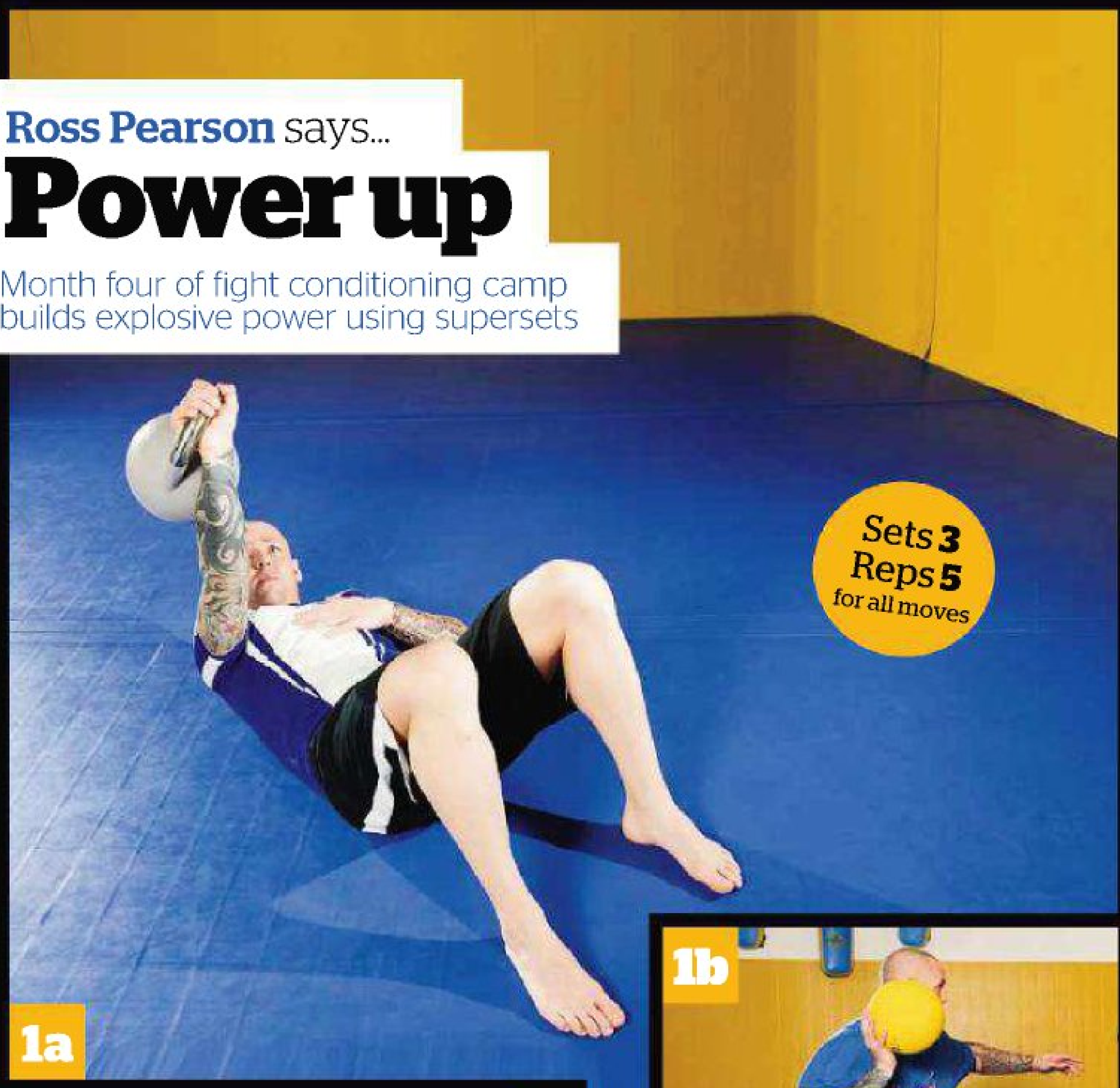
Fight expert
Ross Pearson

Why you should listen to him
He was the *Ultimate Fighter* season nine winner, and has a professional record of 11 wins and 4 losses.

Ross Pearson says...

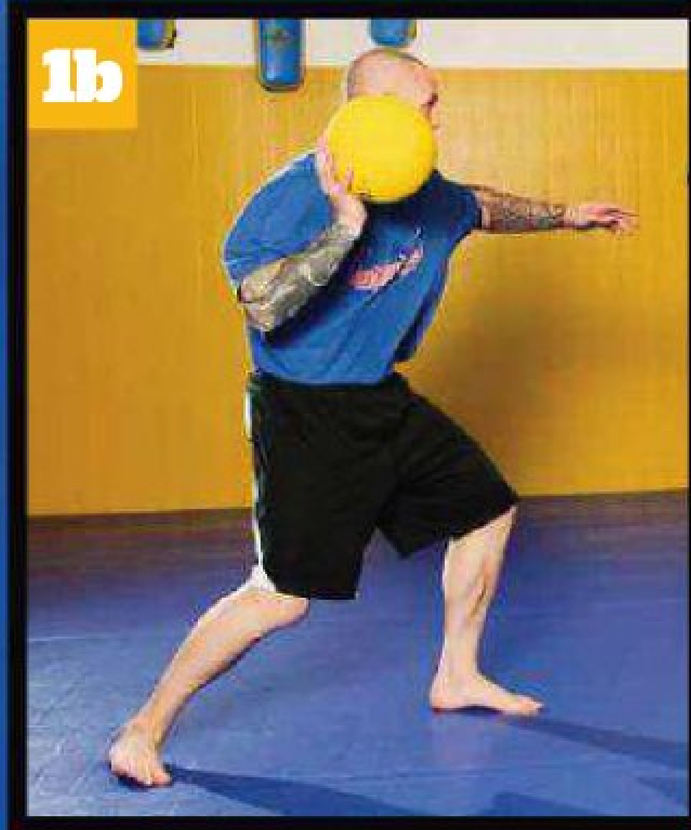
Power up

Month four of fight conditioning camp builds explosive power using supersets



Sets **3**
Reps **5**
for all moves

1a



1b

1 One-arm press superset

1a Kettlebell press
▸ Do a one-armed kettlebell press with a weight that only just lets you finish the reps. Start with your upper arm on the floor and press up until the kettlebell is directly above your shoulder.

1b Medicine ball throw
▸ Throw a medicine ball at a wall as hard as you can, twisting your hips to mimic throwing a punch. If you're in a gym where smashing balls into the walls is frowned on, get a friend to catch it.

> My last fight lit a fire in me. I smashed my knee in the first round picking up my opponent after he tried to take me down. I tore the lateral ligament and chipped my bone, and after that the gameplan went out of the window. I lost my range and I was on the end of my opponent's punches all the time.
>
> But it'll be good for me. I'm angry with how I performed – I feel like someone has stolen from me. I was out for nine weeks, and now I'm training harder than ever with explosive power moves like these. There are things I did well in the fight, things I didn't, but in the long run I'll learn from it all.

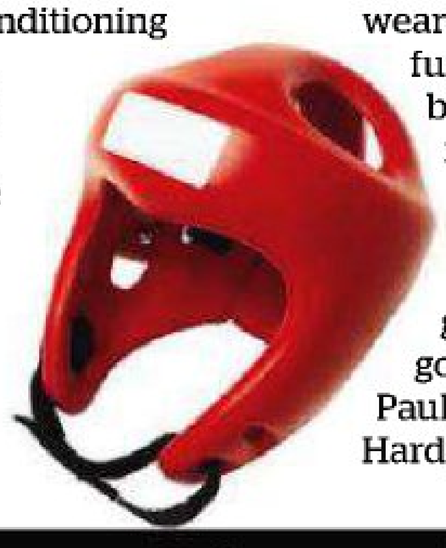
Q+A

Ask Pearson

Got a question for our fight expert?
Email **mfexperts@dennis.co.uk**

Q How do you plan your training to make sure you're fresh?

A I'll sit down with my coach, Barry, at the start of a camp and we'll plan everything out – when we're going to do strength workouts, when we're going to do conditioning and technique, and so on. There's no point in having heavy sparring sessions on the same day as you've done a brutal workout, so we avoid clashes like that. When my coach isn't around, he'll write out a workout for me and I'll get it done.



Q Nobody seems to agree on whether headguards are a good idea for sparring. What's your opinion?

A I've got one, but to be honest I rarely get it out of my kitbag. I can see the point in wearing them if you're trying to protect further damage to a broken nose or a cut, but I don't like wearing a headguard myself – I feel that it blocks my peripheral vision and I take more punches, which I think must be worse for me in the long term than going without one. That said, I know good fighters who do use headguards: Paul Daley, Dean Amasinger and Dan Hardy all wear them occasionally.

To watch video of Ross Pearson doing these strength moves go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/pearson**

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Photography Danny Bird, Tom Miles. Thanks to UTC UK, one of the Britain's premier mixed martial arts gyms. For more see utcuk.com

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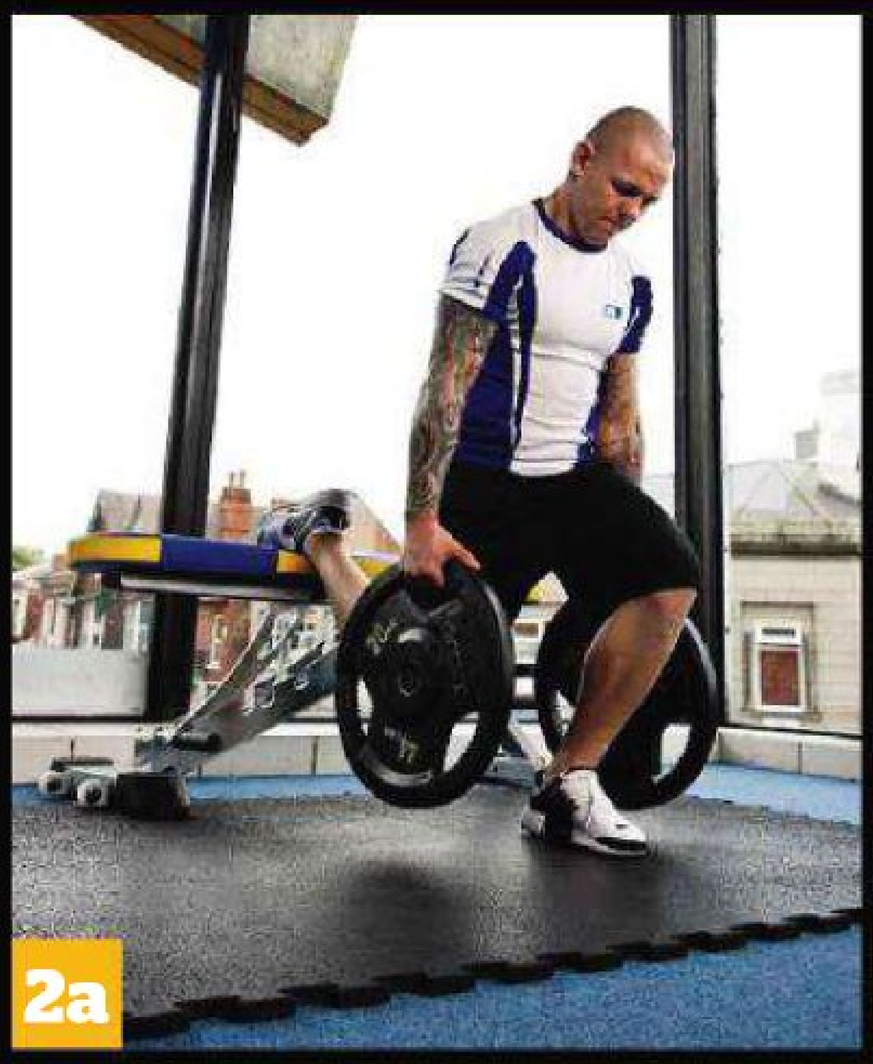
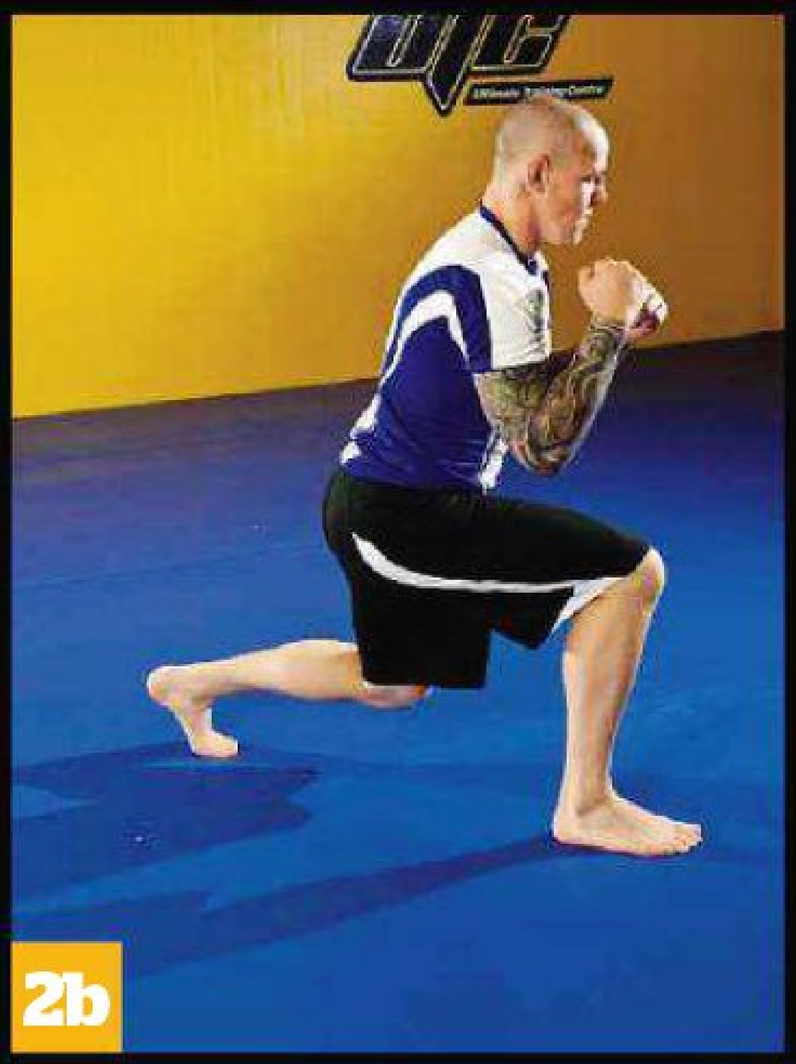
2 One-leg superset





2a Bulgarian split squat

▸Hold a weight plate in each hand and, keeping one instep on a bench, squat down until your trailing knee brushes the floor. Push back up with your glute and do a full set on each leg before moving to the next move.

2b Jumping lunge

▸Lunge forward, making sure that your front knee doesn't go ahead of your toes, then jump into the air and switch legs. Instead of doing your lunges as fast as possible, make them explosive and aim for maximum height.

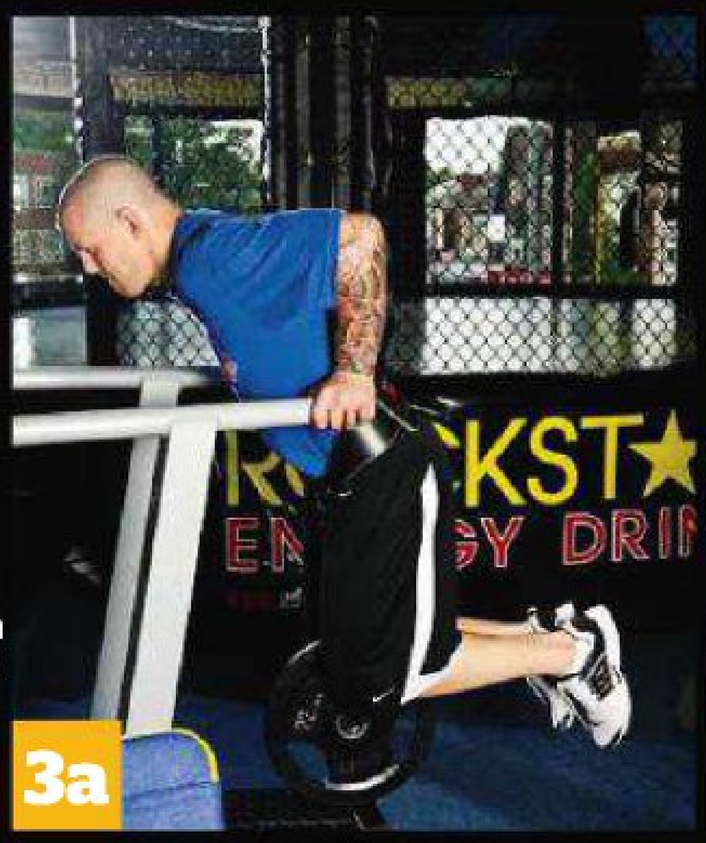
3 Triceps superset

3a Weighted dip

▸Perform the dip wearing a weight belt or holding a dumb-bell between your ankles. Stay upright to emphasise your triceps and not your chest.

3b Flying press-up

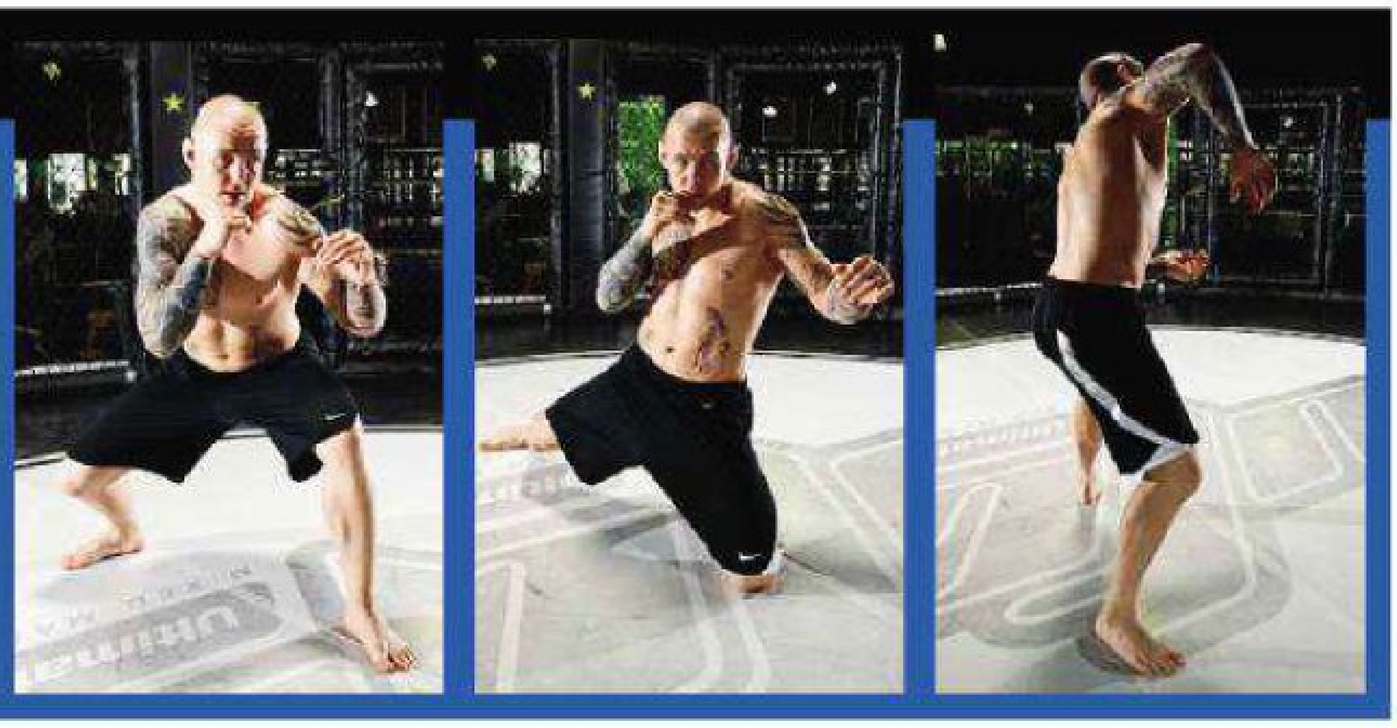
▸Do a press-up, then push off explosively from the bottom of the move, and throw your arms out above your head before bringing them back in to catch yourself. Top tip: don't do this on a hard floor. If you can't manage it, do a ballistic press-up where you press up explosively so your hands leave the floor.



Fight move **Wrestling shot**

When punches aren't working, it's time to take your opponent down. Here's how Pearson does it

▸Bend your knees to duck under any incoming fists and prepare for your 'shot'.
▸Drop your lead knee to the floor, driving forward with your hips so that you keep your momentum.
▸Bring your trailing leg to the front, then use it to stand again – this is where you'd pick your opponent up, so mimic the movement with your arms.



Muscle expert
Dr Kevin Currell

Why you should listen to him He's a senior performance nutritionist who works with Olympic athletes at the English Institute of Sport. For more see eis2win.co.uk

Dr Kevin Currell says....

Eat like a caveman

Stay away from man-made foods and keep it natural to feel instant benefits

"Whether you want to lose body fat, increase lean muscle mass or just eat the best diet for general good health, you could do a lot worse that look back in time for inspiration.

Although our ancient ancestors rarely reached a ripe old age, they never suffered from obesity. That's because they were far more active than we are today and ate a diet rich in animal meat, fish, fruits and vegetables and without refined sugar or grains. Trans fats, processed foods and all other man-made ingredients were, obviously, totally absent.

In short, they had a high-protein, low-carb, nutrient-dense diet, and numerous studies have proven that it can lead to better health and reduce the risk of certain diseases, including diabetes. It's also great for both losing fat and adding muscle.

However, our bodies – especially the brain and muscles – need carbs to function properly, so although removing simple sugars and refined carbs from your diet is a good idea, you need to make sure you still eat wholegrains, such as oats and brown rice. There is a wealth of research on the health benefits of wholegrains, and carbs are really important when trying to build muscle. Recent research has shown that if you lift weights with low glycogen stores (which come from carbs) the adaptations to that training session are greatly diminished."

Eat this

Lean meat and fish
Flesh such as chicken, turkey and tuna are great sources of protein for muscle-building and feeling full.

Good fats
Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, found in oily fish, olives and nuts, are vital for your immune system, vitamin and mineral absorption and even fat loss.

Vegetables
They're packed with fibre and a wealth of nutrients.

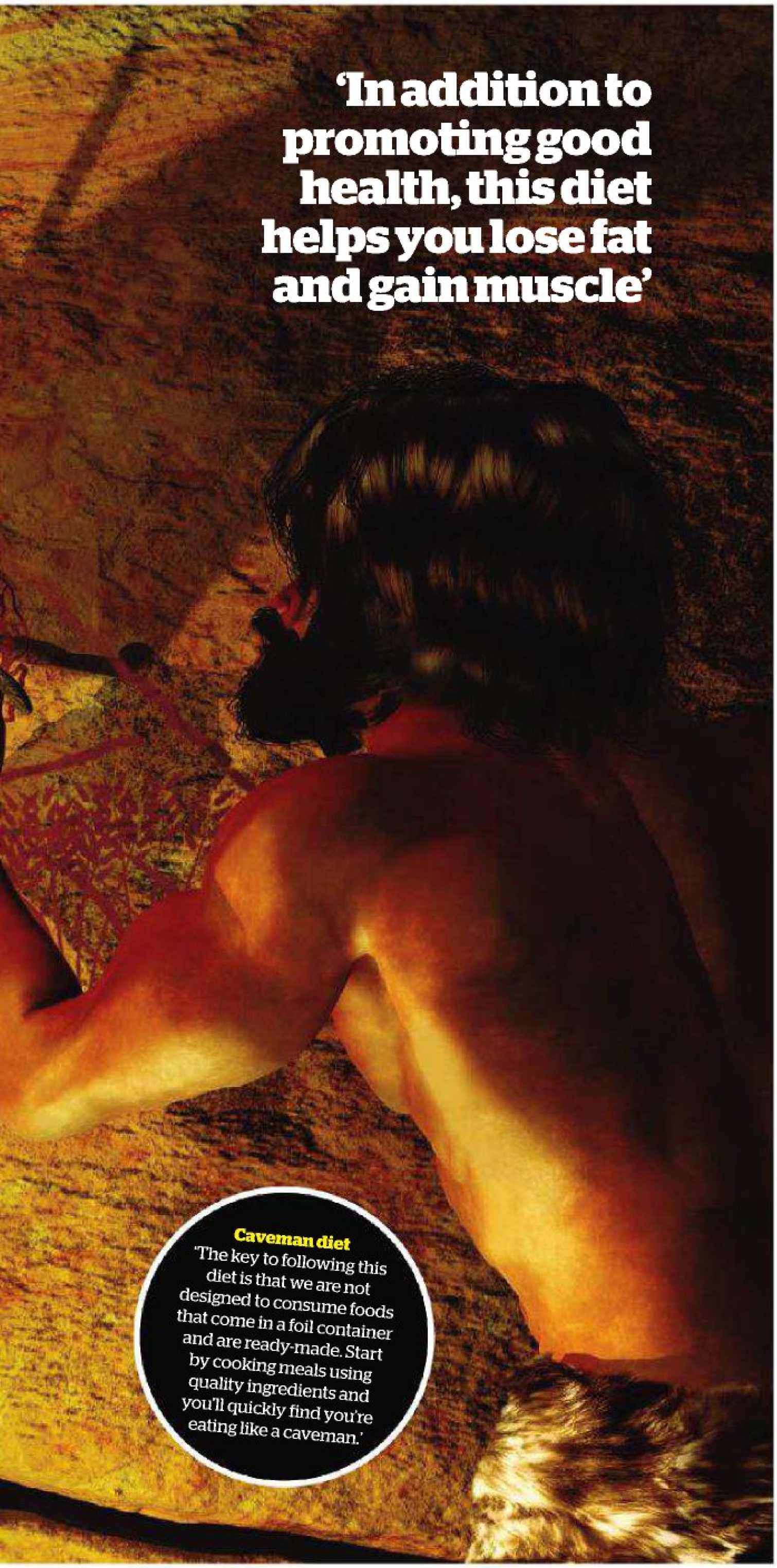
Don't eat this

Simple carbohydrates
Sweet snacks and biscuits provide only a quick boost of energy that quickly subsides, leaving you feeling low. Instead you should opt for wholegrains, which give you slow-release energy and B vitamins.

Trans fats
These are man-made fats that are found in heavily processed items and junk food. Because these aren't natural your body can't process them and they often end up being stored as hard-to-shift body fat.

Illustration Barry Downard

For more great fitness-boosting nutrition tips go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/nutritiontips**



‘In addition to promoting good health, this diet helps you lose fat and gain muscle’

Caveman diet
‘The key to following this diet is that we are not designed to consume foods that come in a foil container and are ready-made. Start by cooking meals using quality ingredients and you’ll quickly find you’re eating like a caveman.’

Q+A

Ask Dr Currell

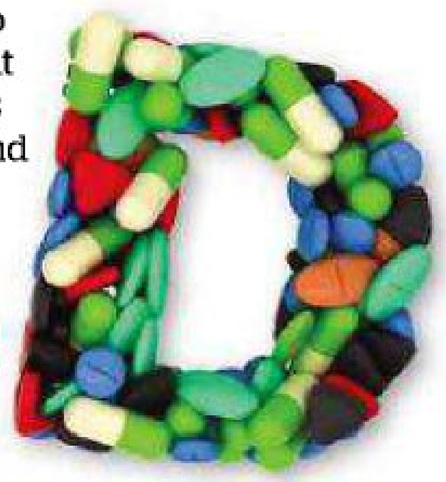
Got a question for our nutrition expert?
Email **mfexperts@dennis.co.uk**

Q Will a ‘cheat’ day a week – when I can eat what I want – help me lose weight?

A From a physiological viewpoint it probably won’t do much good, but it is mentally good for you to reward yourself for eating well the rest of the week. It may also help you stop thinking about what you’re craving all the time: knowing you can eat it on a Sunday, for instance, can help you stay on track the rest of the time.

Q I’ve read a lot recently about British people being deficient in vitamin D. Should I take a daily supplement?

A Vitamin D is very important to good health and, although it is found in some natural foods, our bodies manufacture it when our skin is exposed to sunlight. Twenty to 30 minutes a day is enough, but at some times of the year that’s not practical. The amount found in many supplements will not do too much, so if you are worried about being deficient ask your GP for a blood test.



Q I am a vegetarian. What should I eat for protein?

A The most important thing is to vary the type of protein-rich foods you eat to make sure you get all of the amino acids you need. Meat replacement foods such as Quorn are great, as are nuts and dairy.

Q What’s the healthiest way to cook vegetables?

A Nutrients seep out of vegetables when they are exposed to water and heat. That means boiling veg for ages can drain out much of the goodness. Steaming, stir-frying and microwaving allow more nutrients to be retained.

How many cups of coffee should I drink a day, max?

Two

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WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Whether you're aiming to be an MMA fighter or just don't want to get beaten up outside the pub, the SPEAR self-defence system claims to harness your instincts to prepare you for any violent situation. *MF* tries it out... the hard way

Words **Mark Bailey**
Photography **Naki Kouyioumtzis**

On the face of it, self-protection guru Tony Blauer's unique system of personal defence – codenamed SPEAR – sounds fantastic. Unlike boxing, which discourages blinking in the face of punches, or Muay Thai, where you're expected to greet kicks with a smile, Blauer actively encourages you to embrace your cowardly instincts. The idea, he claims, is that you can use the same reflexes that shy away from sudden movements to avoid attacks and use your natural physiology, rather than hours of training, to toughen yourself up.

It certainly looks impressive on YouTube, and the theory is sound. Which is why I've come, early on a Saturday morning, to sit in a Manchester gym alongside brawny policemen and professional fighters... and watch a 1981 episode of *Parkinson*.

Startle at the beginning

Thankfully, there's method in this madness. Blauer, whose system has been used to train US Army soldiers, US Navy SEALs, police officers in England, UFC fighters and civilians, is teaching the basics of his system. Its scientific cornerstone is that the body's genetically hardwired 'startle-flinch' response to an attack is faster and more reliable than any learned combat skill. To prove it, Blauer shows us a classic meeting of minds between Parky, Muhammad Ali and comedian Freddie Starr. After reeling Ali in with a long, macabre ghost story, Starr suddenly lunges at Ali's face. The three-time world heavyweight champion instinctively flinches against this 'attack' from a diminutive funnyman in a white frilly shirt.

'It's an amazing example of the startle-flinch reflex and the science behind the SPEAR system,' says Blauer, looking tough and tanned at 50 years of age. He boasts veiny, muscular forearms and the deep growl of a WWE wrestler. 'Why didn't Ali just parry his attack? Why didn't he nail him? Think of Ali's muscle memory and his reaction times. The lesson is, if you're surprised, you will fucking flinch – you, me or Muhammad Ali. The question is, can you convert that into something useful?'

Don't blink

Blauer, who was born in Montreal and now lives in San Diego, grew up as a Bruce Lee junkie with a passion for tae kwon do, wrestling and boxing. In 1979 he set up the self-protection research company Blauer Tactical Systems and developed

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various pioneering concepts, including the Panic Attack System, a no-holds-barred fight simulation designed to acclimatise people to the raw intensity of a street attack.

Blauer's epiphany, though, came in 1988, during what he calls a 'sucker-punch drill'. Blauer, playing the defender in the scenario, was only allowed to parry or evade the incoming blows, but his attacker could encroach, distract him with verbal assaults and throw shots anywhere, any time. 'If I tried to do complex motor skills learned from martial arts, like parries, I got hit,' he says. 'But when I just flinched, my arm blocked the attack. That proves your reactive brain is faster than your cognitive muscle memory.'

Certain he was on to something, Blauer intensively studied the science, psychology and biomechanics of the body's natural flinch, which he discovered 'sparks an instinctive withdrawal away from the danger and the raising of the arms to protect the head'. Blauer's research involved watching hours of CCTV and surveillance footage of fights, car crashes and attacks and reading detailed medical studies. 'This reflex is so fast you find trauma wounds on the forearms of car crash victims who somehow raise their arms before they hit the dash,' he says.

Armed with this information, Blauer used it to develop the Spontaneous Protection Enabling Accelerated Response (SPEAR) system, which converts the natural flinch reflex into protective or combative solutions. 'It's behaviourally based around what the body wants to do and grounded in science, which makes it the most natural way to protect yourself,' explains Blauer. 'That's why we're the only system verified by doctors on three different continents.'

MF's Mark tries to stay calm as he's manhandled by SPEAR instructor Zeb Glover

Surprise attacks can defeat learned martial art skills

On *Parkinson*, Ali reacted to Starr with pure reflex

Tip of the SPEAR

The theory makes sense, but I'm joining Blauer's Personal Defence Readiness instructor training programme in Manchester to discover exactly how the SPEAR system converts this raw, primal self-defence mechanism into a weapon.

Everybody here has something to learn. Other attendees include Marc Duncan, an MMA fighter based in Holland who's eager to experience a 'simple, no-bullshit way to defend myself', and Ricky Lam, a tae kwon do instructor from Leeds who hopes it could help him in 'a real-life confrontation when my skills won't work'.

Before we begin the physical drills, we're taught the two crucial physiological building blocks of the SPEAR system: keep your elbows extended beyond 90° and splay your fingers out. First, I'm instructed to bend my elbow at 90° and push against a partner's chest as he attempts to bear-hug me. After a brief struggle, my arm swiftly collapses. Next, I extend my arm beyond 90° and try again. This time I can resist.

'Pound for pound your extensor muscles, which extend or straighten a joint or limb, like your triceps, are stronger than your flexor muscles, which bend a joint or limb inwards, like your biceps,' says Zeb Glover, one of Blauer's instructors. 'Keeping your elbow extended beyond 90° and splaying your fingers recruits these extensor muscles and activates all three heads of the triceps, making your protective flinch stronger.'

I'm starting to understand. With these simple physiological tweaks, I can galvanise my flinch to block an attack.

Basic instincts

The SPEAR system teaches you to convert your natural flinch into protective or combative postures. There are three main stances: primal, protective and tactical. To demonstrate the 'primal' stance, Blauer moves a hand towards my face. Sure enough, I instinctively pull away and raise my hands close to my face. 'That's the primal flinch, which defends against close attacks,' he says. 'Now we convert that.'

The second, 'protective' stance, used to block attacks from a distance, requires me to extend my lead hand (beyond 90°, fingers spread), position my other hand protectively near my face and adopt a powerful sprinter's stance with my legs. To demonstrate its efficiency, 'attackers' attempt haymakers, but I'm able to push away the blows.

This is beginning to make sense. Because this protective stance mirrors my instinctive startle-flinch reflex, I'm able to adopt it incredibly quickly, shifting from my instinctive primal flinch to the

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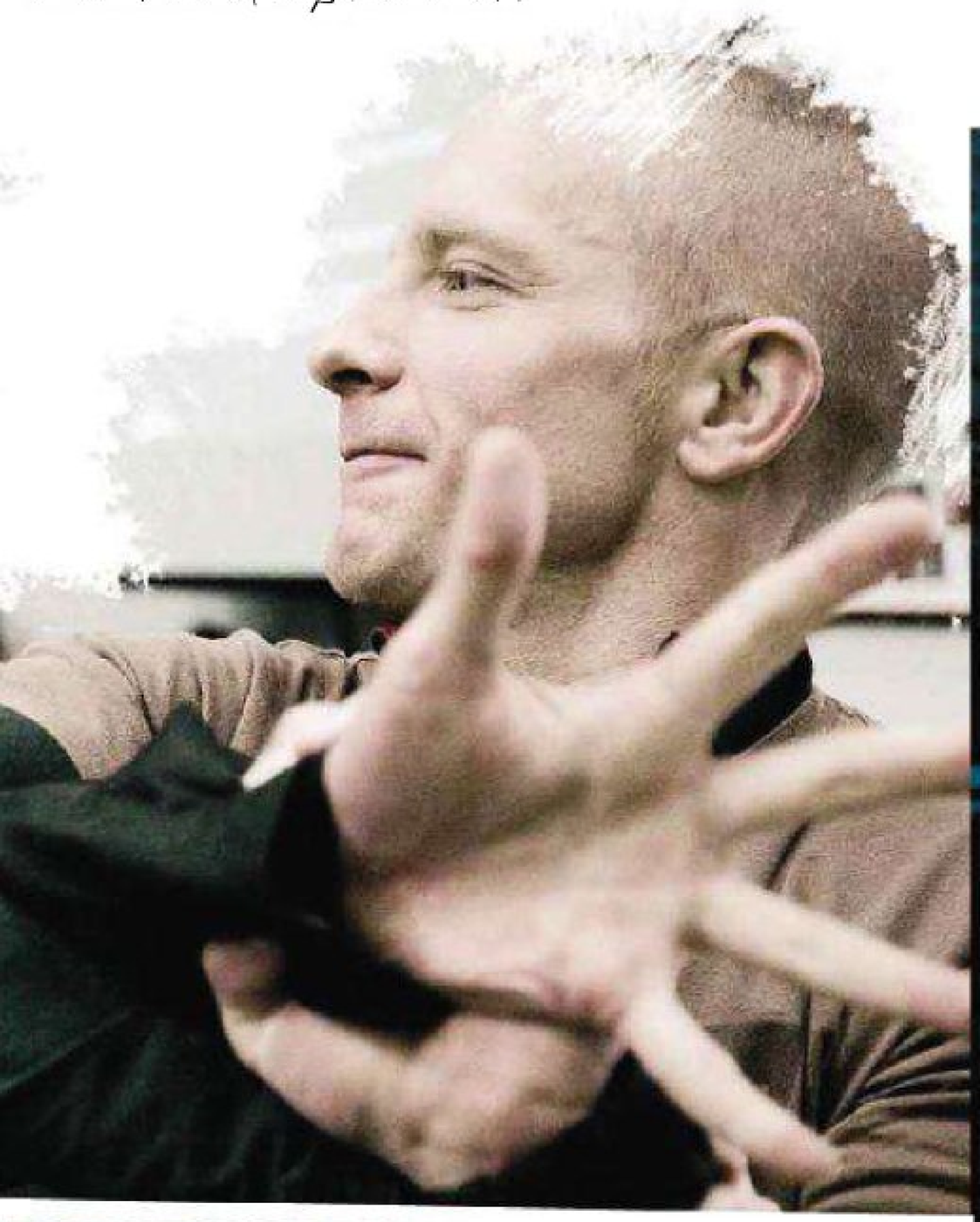

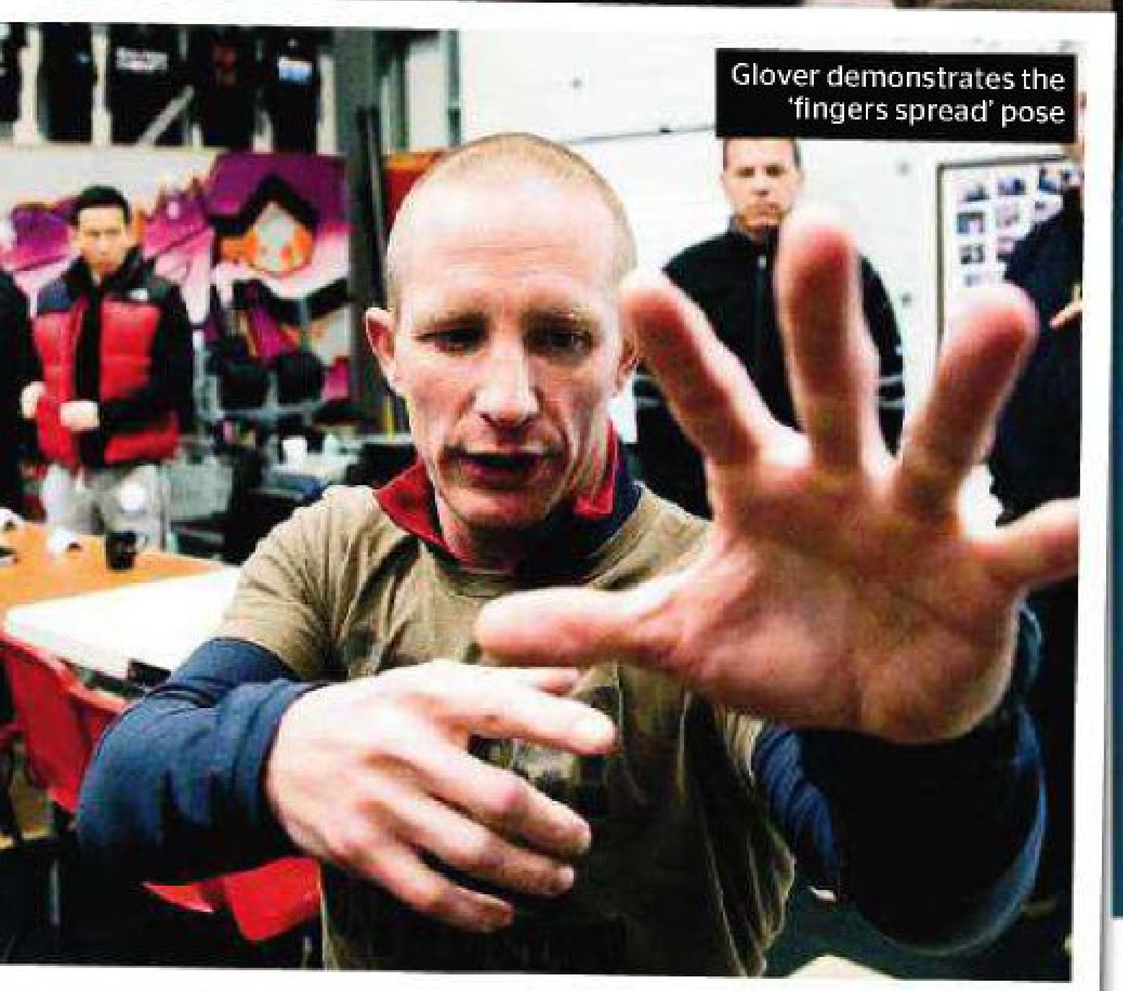
Glover demonstrates the 'fingers spread' pose

Ready for battle

SPEAR teaches you to convert your instinctive flinch into these three defensive and combative stances

1 PRIMAL
During the initial shock of a surprise attack, your primal startle-flinch reflex kicks in. You will withdraw instinctively away from the threat and raise both your hands to protect the 'command centre' of your head. This is your natural defensive mechanism and will spark into action quicker than any defensive 'skill' you could learn through cognitive muscle memory.

2 PROTECTIVE
Convert this instinctive primal reflex into a protective shield by extending your leading arm beyond 90° and spreading your fingers, intersecting the eyeline of the attacker with your hand. Your other hand should protect your face. Bend your knees into a powerful sprinter's stance. With these physiological adjustments, you recruit more muscle power to push away or block the danger.

3 TACTICAL
To form a more attacking tactical stance, move your torso to face the threat and shift your axis forward, putting pressure on the balls of your feet. Drop your head low and look through your thumbs. Aim to drive the ulna bone of your leading forearm into the attacker's centre mass, a sensitive area of nerves in and around the neck.

protective stance in milliseconds. That gives me speed. My strength derives from having my elbows extended beyond 90° and fingers splayed, boosting the natural power of the flinch, as demonstrated in the earlier drills. This is my own lightbulb moment: the SPEAR system exploits the speed and kinetic energy of the flinch and the muscular power of my extensors to create a naturally strong protective shield.

'All the drills exploit the speed, power and reliability of your natural flinch reflex'

The third stance – 'tactical' – is a more offensive posture which again mirrors your natural flinch mechanism, but with your weight further forward, your head tucked behind your hands and the ulna bone (the hardest part of your forearm) used as a weapon. During drills, we aim for the attacker's 'centre mass' – the sensitive nerve area which intersects the sternum, pec and neck. I practise a drill in which an attacker circles me and I repeatedly try to block, push away and counter his attack by flowing through the three stages of the SPEAR stance. It's quick, natural and effective.

More advanced drills teach how to recover from being tackled, deal with 'malfunctions' (for example, when your arm gets clamped against your body) and unleash an armoury of instinctive combat skills, such as rakes, palms, elbows, kicks, sweeps and knees. The SPEAR system can also be adapted to cope with specific scenarios such as knife attacks. Each of the drills prepares you for different situations that you might face, but they all have one thing in common: they exploit the speed, power and reliability of your body's natural startle-flinch reflex.

Another dimension

How the drills are performed, however, is just as crucial to the SPEAR system. 'We follow a three-dimensional philosophy which includes psychological, emotional and physical training,' says Blauer. That means your 'attacker' screams verbal threats and assaults you with force. 'You need to experience the fear, the

strength, the speed and the sounds,' says Blauer. 'It helps to stress-inoculate you.'

This core belief lead Blauer to develop High Gear, an impact-reduction suit which allows students to perform fight drills at maximum intensity. This Darth Vader-like assemblage, which costs around £1,000 and includes a masked helmet, a chest guard and leg and arm pads, weighs just 3.5kg. Made from lightweight smart foam, it allows optimum movement to ensure drills play out at a realistic speed and, crucially, reduces but doesn't negate pain, giving you accurate biofeedback so you know what a blow feels like without getting badly hurt. Even the mask ratchets up the fear factor, transforming your attacker into an intimidating, unknown entity.

'I wanted the drills to be credible, and High Gear makes that possible,' says Blauer. The kit is used in advanced SPEAR training to enable drills to be played out with the visceral intensity of a street fight, but has also been quickly adopted by professional fighters. MMA instructor Greg Jackson, who trains UFC welterweight champion Georges St-Pierre, is a fan.

Training scenarios can include ambushes, pub fights, bus assaults and attacks by multiple assailants. There are YouTube videos that demonstrate the blistering power and pace of High Gear drills, as bodies collide in a flurry of raw, instinctive punches, elbows and knees. or collapse to the mat in a frenzied grapple for supremacy.

These drills may look crude, but they acclimatise the student to how a street attack might actually feel. 'High Gear drills are scenario-based and controlled, but you learn how to deal with the force of an attack,' says Glover. They demonstrate how the SPEAR stances and close-quarter combat tactics can be 'instinctively' executed in a high-pressure situation. It is a wake-up call for technically trained fighters unaccustomed to the ugly brutality of a brawl. As Blauer says, 'It's not about what's right, but who is left.'

Blauer, 50, has worked on defence techniques for most of his life

'The High Gear suit enables drills to have the visceral intensity of a street fight'

Stay out of trouble

Despite all these physical drills, SPEAR is not a martial art, a style or a technique. It's a self-protection system and therefore places heavy emphasis on avoiding

Fighting chance | How to ensure your survival in violent circumstances

What if... I'm punched in a bar?

Try to identify 'pre-contact cues' from your attacker (on the right in all pictures), such as a sharp intake of breath. Allow your instinctive flinch to fire, but ensure your leading arm extends beyond 90° and splay your fingers. The speed of your flinch and your natural strength will help you to block the punch. If necessary, adopt the tactical stance, subdue your attacker and escape.

What if... I'm grabbed while at a cashpoint?

Your instinctive flinch will cause you to raise your shoulders and drop your chin to protect your throat. When you flinch, spread your arms to prevent the attacker getting a tight grip. Grab at your attacker's forearms and pull them away. Unleash elbows to the ribs or kicks to the legs until you can swivel around and push him away.

What if... I'm tackled by a thug?

Your natural crossed-extensor reflex will lead you instinctively to grab hold of the attacker. This makes you vulnerable. When you're being driven off-balance, recognise the danger and release your hand. Splay your fingers and drive your leading forearm into the attacker's central mass until he can no longer sustain the tackle. Engage your core and drive the attacker away.

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confrontation. The system is built upon the three Ds: detect, defuse and defend. 'We don't just teach defensive tools,' says Blauer. 'Ideally you can detect or defuse a confrontation first.'

That's why Blauer refuses to glorify stories fed back to him from the front line about how SPEAR has saved lives. 'You wouldn't want a driving instructor talking about his students getting in car crashes, so I don't like talking about my students having to fight,' he says.

Detection includes everything from highlighting your vulnerabilities – do you always walk home alone on Friday night? – to telegraphing auditory, visual and tactile cues before an attack. Blauer dissects a haymaker punch in slow-motion,

'We don't just teach defence. Ideally you can detect or defuse a confrontation'

pointing out the attacker's target glance, his sharp intake of breath, the flinch in his fingers and the flex of his pectoral muscles. 'By reverse-engineering attacks, we train your brain to mentally blueprint the attack and catalogue the pre-contact cues,' he says. 'That will stress-inoculate you and give you extra time to react.'

SPEAR also teaches you to defuse an attack, using choice speech and non-violent postures. 'If they can be persuaded to talk, they can normally be persuaded to walk,' says Blauer. The course reveals how active listening, such as nodding and repeating what an attacker says, or using humour to break the tension, can help to deflate aggression.

Blauer's instructors also demonstrate how non-violent postures, such as the 'negotiating position' (both hands up at shoulder level, fingers splayed) or 'crossed arms' (bottom hand holding your lat, top arm on your triceps) appear to an aggressor as communicative, non-hostile stances, but can be converted into a SPEAR stance if necessary.

Master of the universal

After sampling the system, I'm impressed by the programme's philosophy. This isn't a series of drills, but an entire system which trains you physically, psychologically and emotionally to detect, defuse and defend against attacks. I'm also struck by the range of its applications. 'I've taught military units in the Middle East and 50-year-old care workers, but the principles are the same,' says Glover. 'You're harnessing the speed and power of your natural flinch.'

'It's universally applicable because everybody already has the tools,' Blauer says. 'Cavemen would flinch when they fought off sabre-toothed tigers. Roman soldiers, knights, the samurai... they all flinched. The desire to protect your life is the most basic human principle but, for many of us, it's been forgotten. SPEAR just teaches you to use tools you already have.' MF

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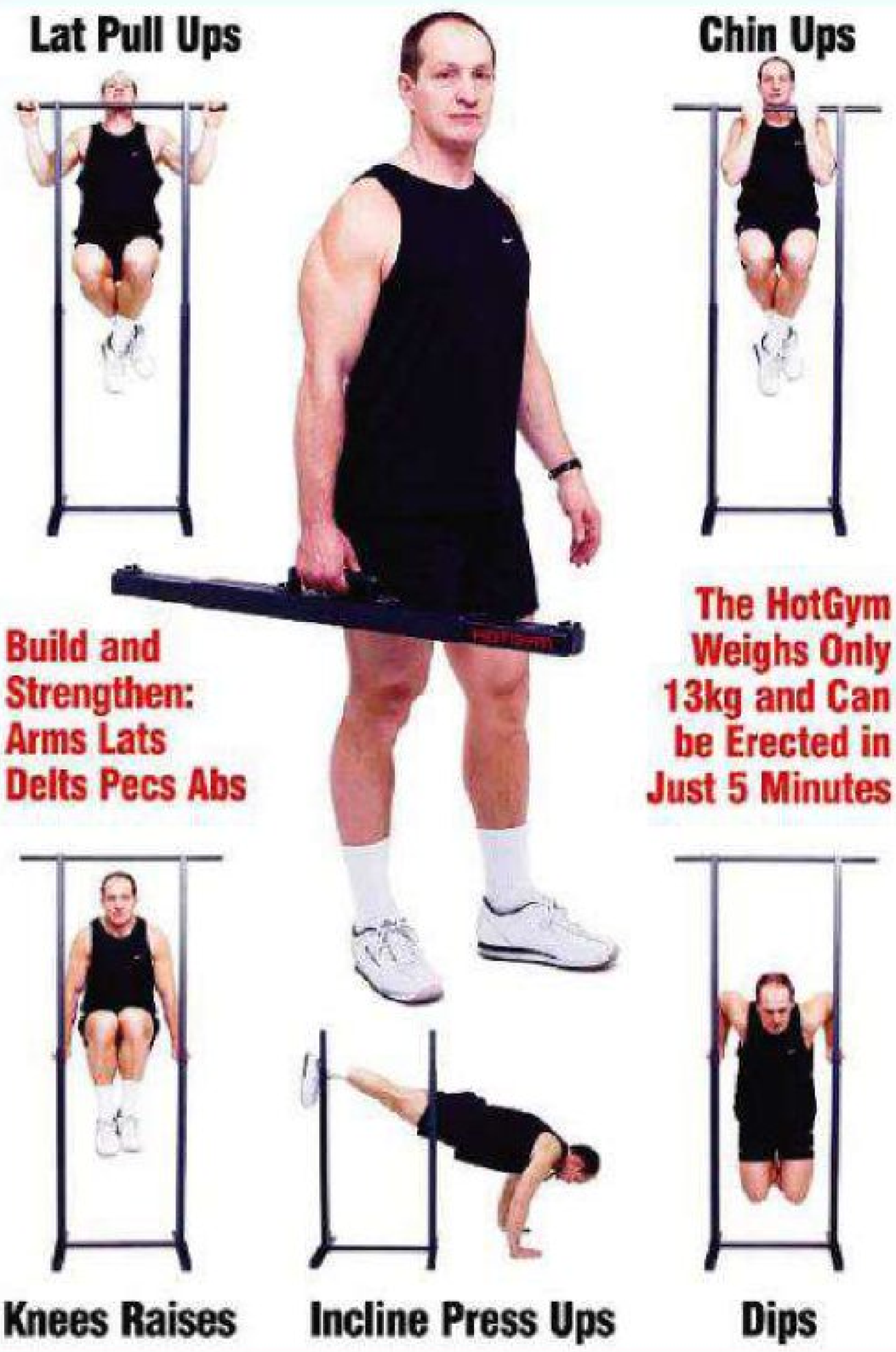

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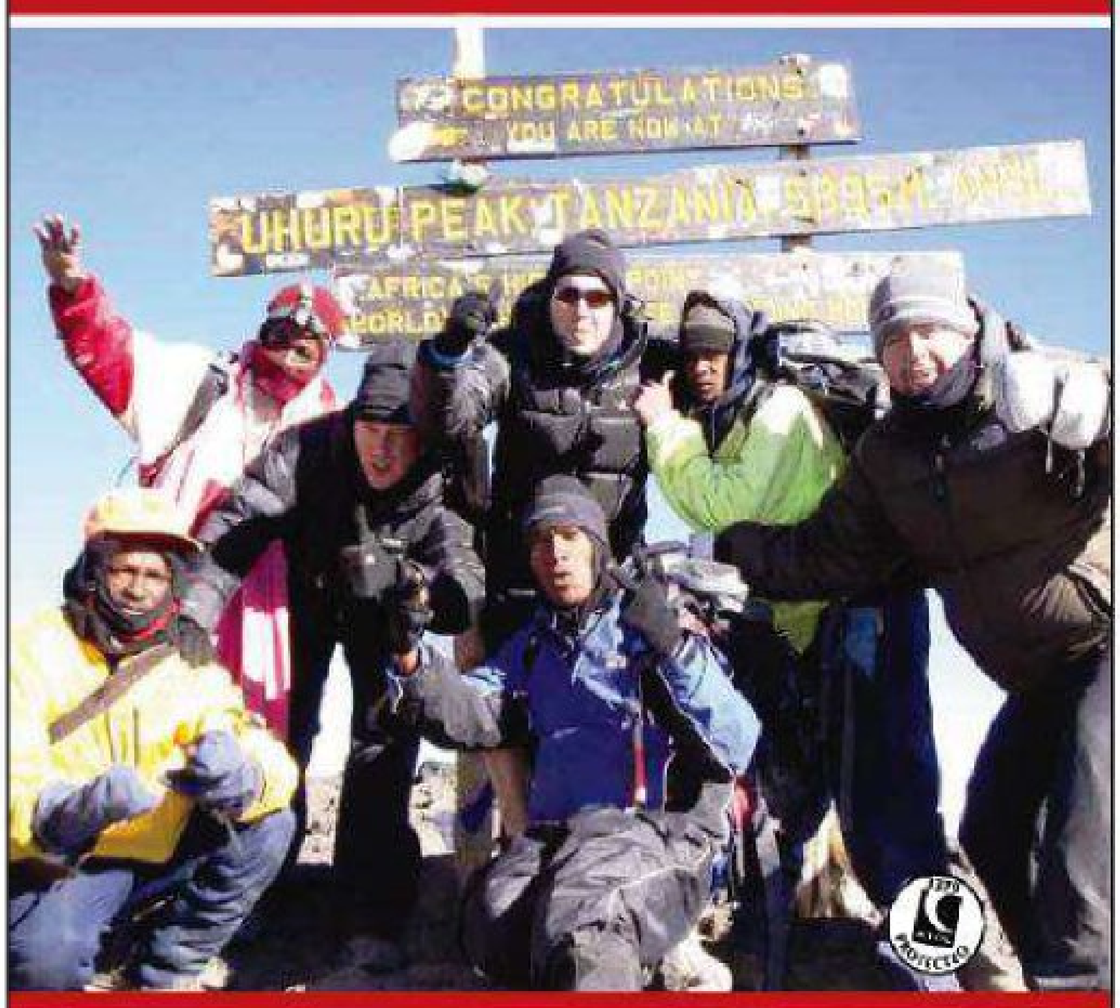

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CHEAP THRILLS

No money? No problem. *MF*'s experts show you how to have the adventure of a lifetime on a tight budget by heading off the beaten track

Words **Joel Snape** Illustration **Mark Thomas**

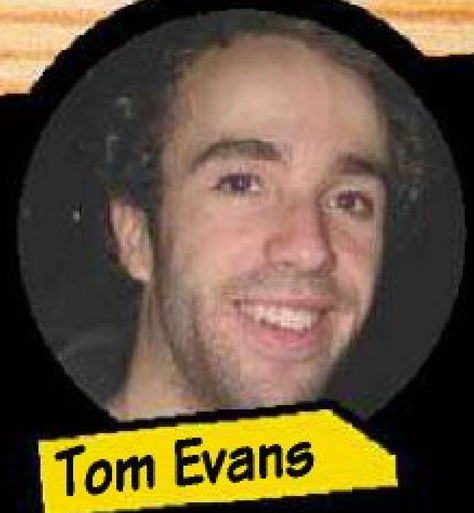
THE EXPERTS

Kraig Becker

Having climbed Kilimanjaro by the notorious Machame route, Becker now runs theadventureblog.blogspot.com, featuring stories from adventurers around the globe.

Tim Leffel

Leffel is an award-winning travel writer with more than 20 years' experience. He is the author of *The World's Cheapest Destinations* and *Make Your Travel Dollars Worth A Fortune*. Visit timleffel.com.



Tom Evans

A keen climber, cyclist, skier and all-round sportsman, Evans cycled around England on his own aged 18, climbed Kilimanjaro at 19 and trekked to Everest Base Camp at the tender age of 20. Visit exceedpossibility.co.uk.

Dave Cornthwaite

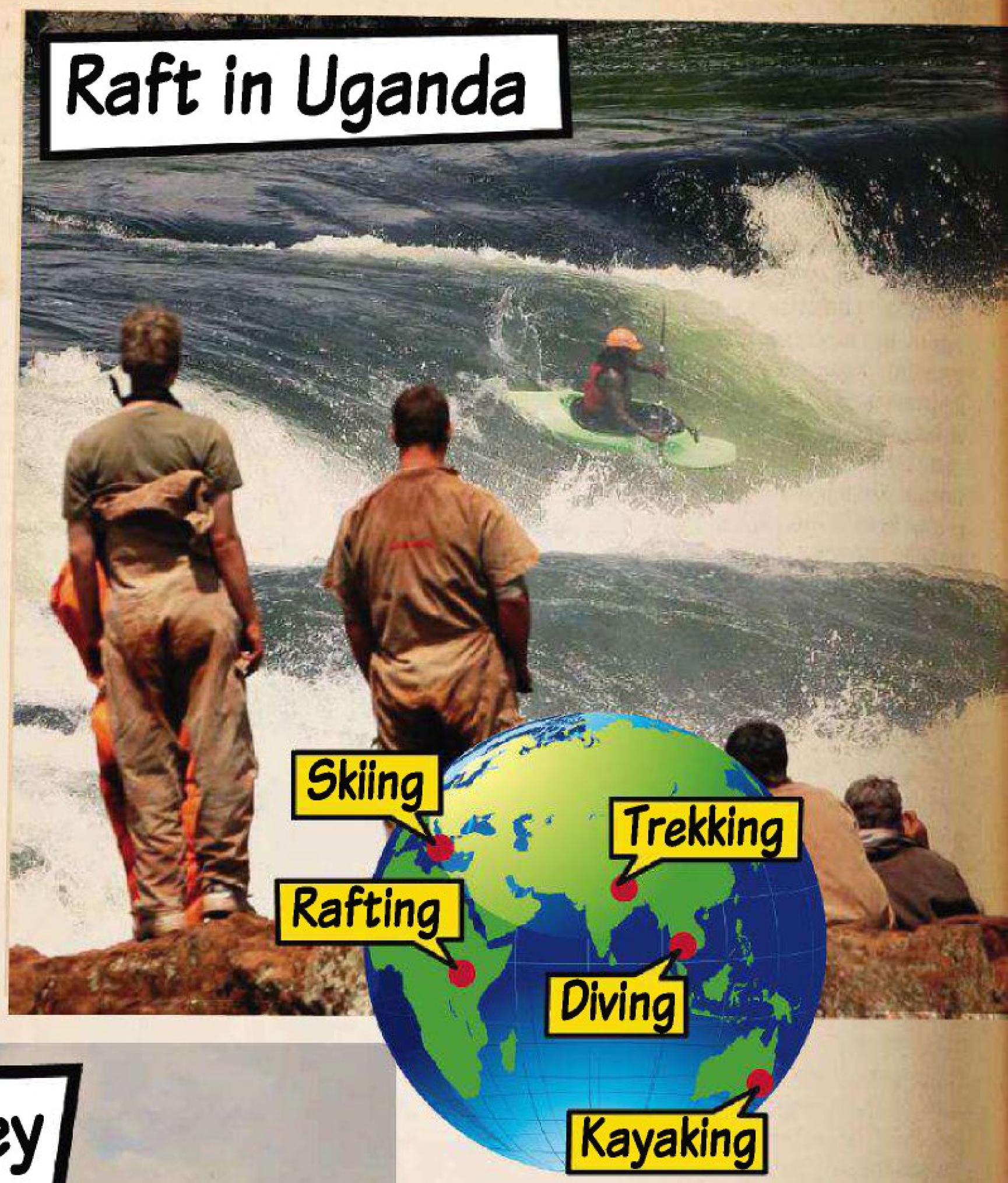
Adventurer, endurance athlete and motivational speaker Cornthwaite has already skateboarded across Australia and paddled a stand-up board from Bath to London. His next project? A tandem bike ride from Vancouver to Las Vegas. Visit davecornthwaite.com

Grade five rapids and safaris on a shoestring

'Jinja, in Uganda, is the thrill capital of Africa,' says Tom Evans. 'It's near the source of the Nile and offers white-water rafting up to grade five, which is hard to find in most countries, all in beautiful surroundings with great weather. Your best bet's a two-day rafting excursion, which gives you access to more out-of-the-way rapids and lets you spend a night on the banks of the Nile. While you're there, you can also try mountain or quad biking. Another option is Murchison Falls, where a camping safari is much cheaper than you'd manage in Kenya or Tanzania. You might even see tanks, since it's so close to the border of the Democratic Republic of Congo.'

Typical deals
Flights to Uganda's capital Kampala typically cost around £400, with shared minibuses to Jinja the cheapest option from there. Set off in the morning, because rush hour can add two hours to your journey. If you book ahead, two days of river rafting will cost around £150. If you're prepared to try haggling when you arrive, you should be able to cut that figure in half.

Other low-budget thrills
'Fully outfitted white-water rafting trips are available at less than £30 a day in Nepal,' says Leffel.



Combine skiing with a beach holiday on the Mediterranean, all on a budget

'Most people don't know that there's good skiing in Turkey,' says Tim Leffel. 'Check out Uludağ near Bursa, Mount Erciyes near Kayseri, and way out east in Erzurum.' For people with more money there's world-class heli-skiing in the Kaçkar mountains. Alternatively, if you head for Saklikent after March, you can ski in the morning, then hop in a car and hit the warm waters of the Med in the afternoon.

Typical deals
EasyJet does flights to several locations in Turkey starting at around £30, and you can get transfers to some of the main ski routes from Istanbul. From there you can expect to pay 'around £30 a day, lift passes and gear hire included,' says Leffel.

Other low-budget thrills
'Romania offers some of the cheapest skiing in the Alps,' says Leffel. You can pick up a package holiday to the popular resort of Poiana Brașov for around £300. Alternatively, says Cornthwaite, 'head to Borovets or Pamporovo in Bulgaria.'

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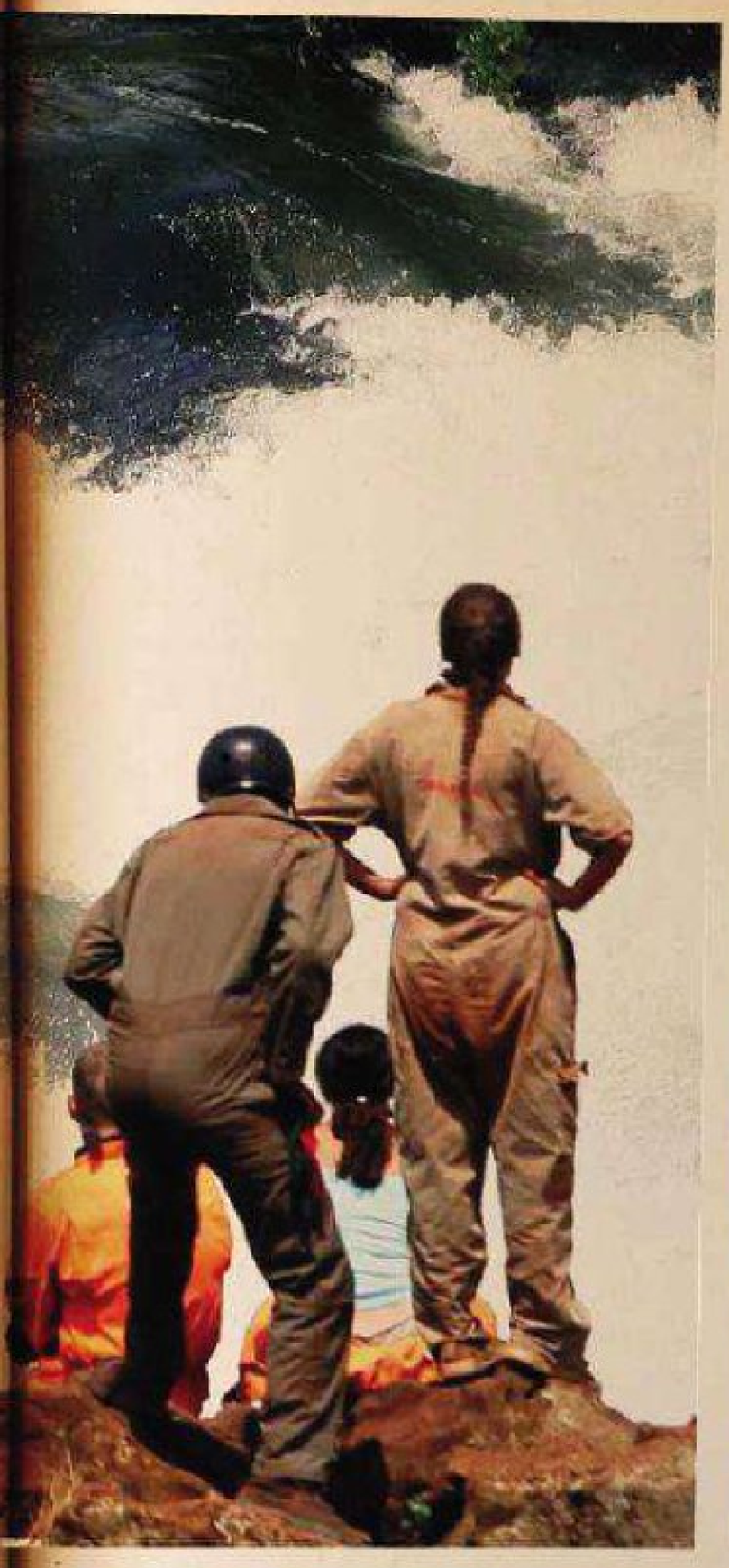


Deal directly with the locals and you could explore the Himalayas without paying sky-high fees

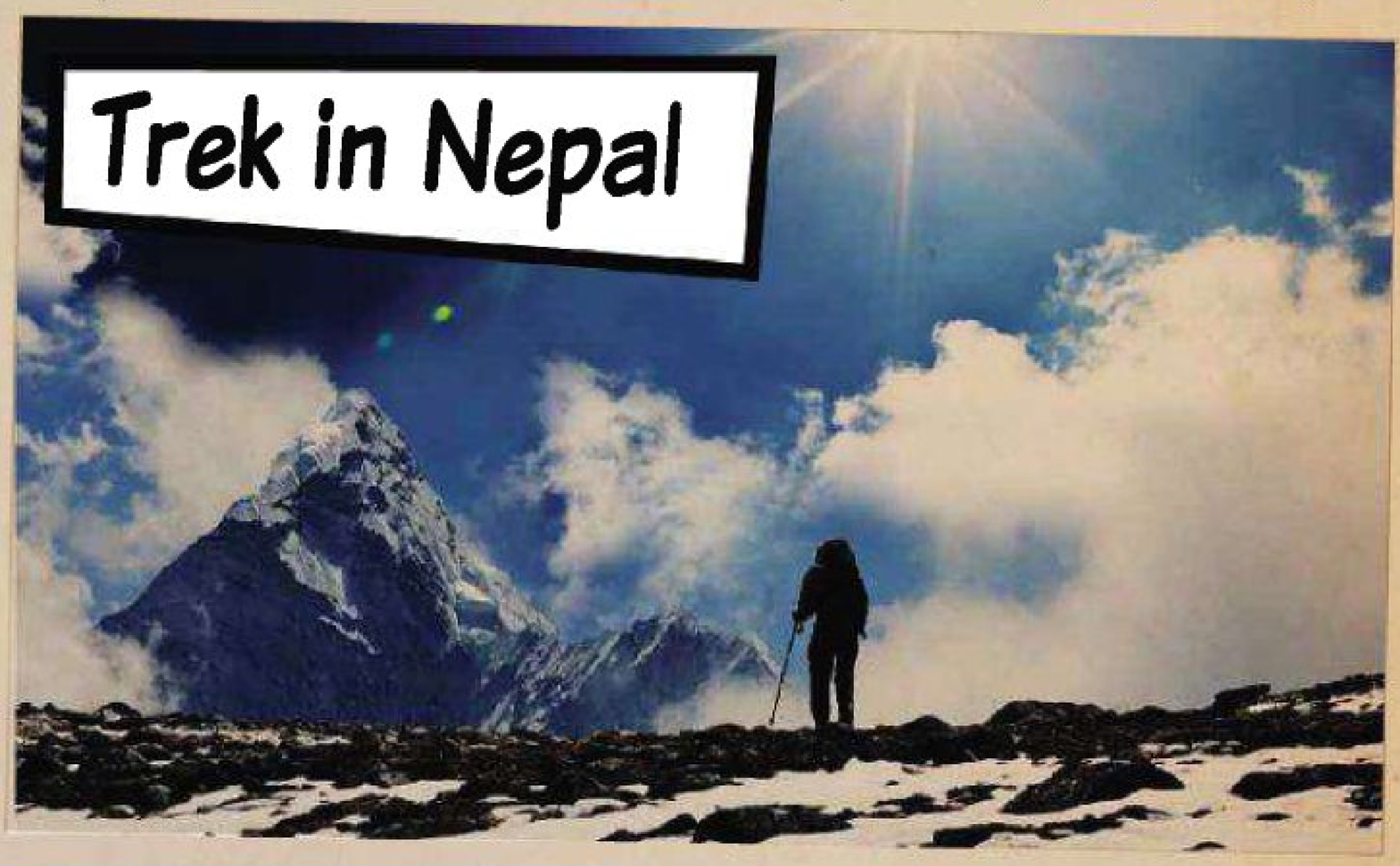
'You can easily avoid the large fees of big Himalayas trekking companies,' says Tom Evans. 'Just turn up in Kathmandu and find your own personal guide and sherpas for a much lower price. Camping will reduce prices even further, but it can get cold and the tea houses and hostels are pretty good. Kathmandu is also worth looking around for a few days, thanks to its vibrant night life.' Best of all, because you're dealing directly with the guides, they make more money, since they aren't doing bulk-discounts for the big tour companies.

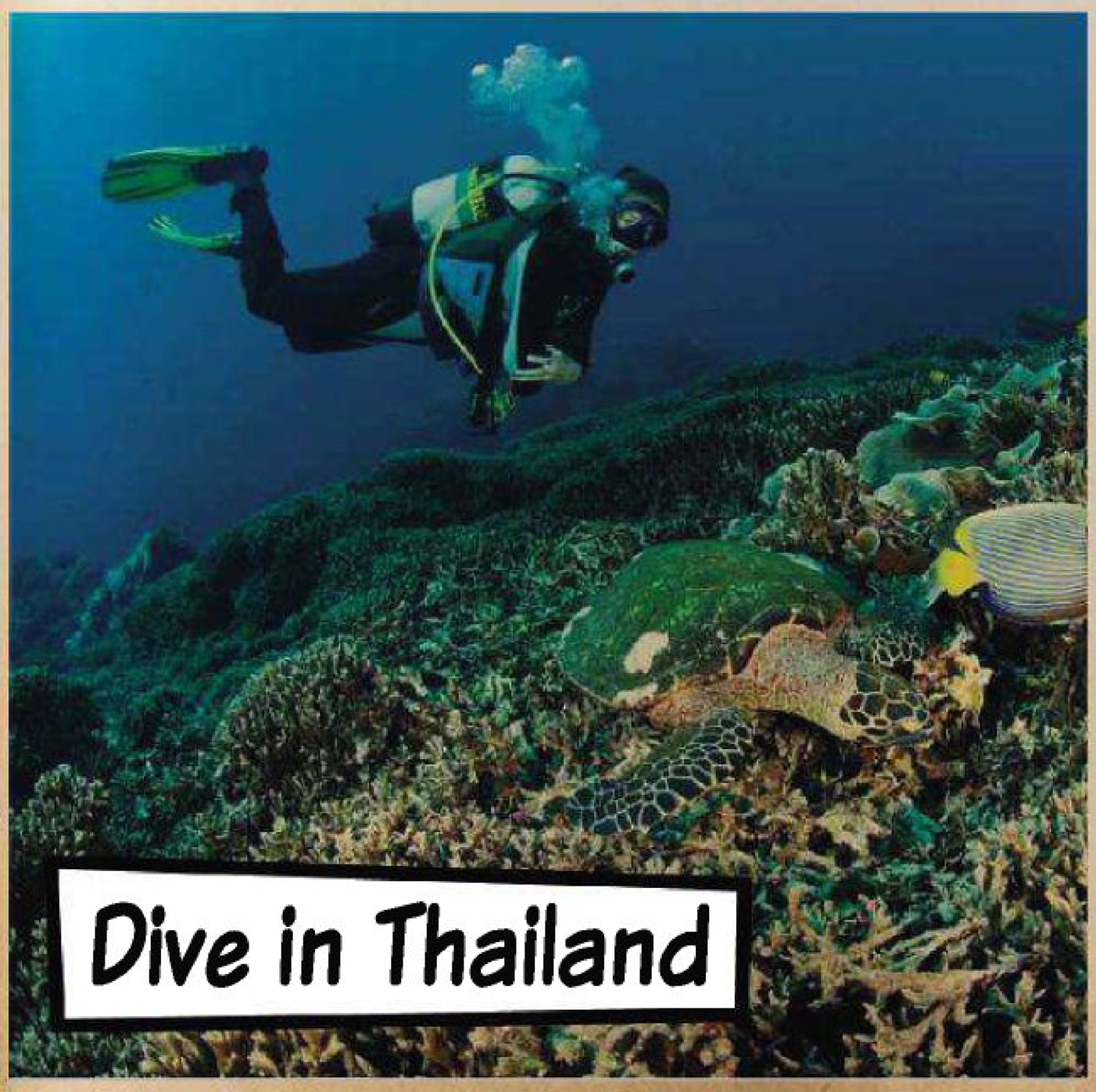
Typical deals

There's no need to book guides or accommodation in advance. 'Guides start at about £6 a day, but if you're willing to find your own way and take your own bags, you don't need one,' says Evans. That also gives you the freedom to choose your own meals and sleep where you like, with hostels starting at £5 a night. Expect two weeks with a guide and porter to cost under £200, even if you tip well.

Other low-budget thrills

'You can hike a lot of the trails in Peru independently,' says Becker. 'Just steer clear of the Inca trail, which tends to get massively crowded and frequently shuts down for cleaning, sometimes quite unpredictably.'





Pick up your PADI certificate in a freezing British quarry or stay in Thailand for a pittance? Hmmm...

'I'd definitely recommend Thailand for those looking to get dive certified,' says Kraig Becker. 'In Phuket, for instance, you can take lessons and get a whole set of dives out of the way for a small fraction of the cost of doing it elsewhere. It's a quick, easy and inexpensive way to learn to dive in a fantastic setting.'

Typical deals

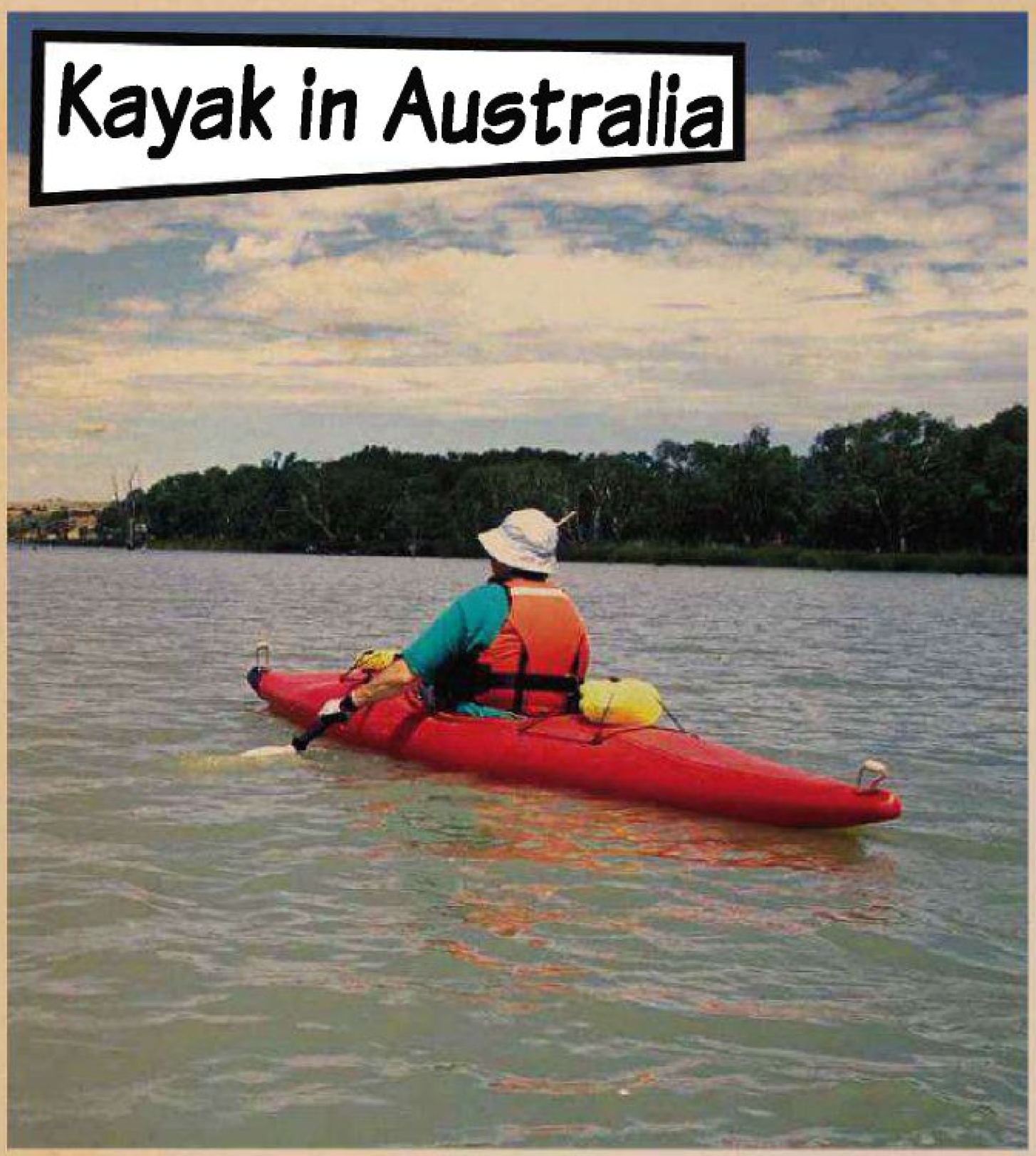
For the internationally recognised PADI Open Water Diver course in the UK, expect to spend around £400 and train in swimming pools or freezing cold water for a couple of weekends. The same course on Koh Tao will cost you roughly £200, including four nights in a hotel. It's even cheaper if you're already qualified: 'Certified divers can get two dives a day for around £30,' says Leffel. Everything else is even cheaper. 'Curries and pad Thais run from £1 on the street to £2 in a restaurant. Beer will double the cost, but if you can stomach it, Mekhong rice whisky is around £3 for a 750ml bottle.' And if you're tired out, a muscle-soothing massage is under a fiver.

Other low-budget thrills

The island of Roatán in Honduras offers some of the cheapest diving anywhere: a seven-night package, including five days of diving instruction and three-star accommodation, costs around £450.

Scribemage.com

Kayak in Australia



Get away from it all Down Under with an unforgettable canoe trip through deserted scenery

'The Murray is Australia's most iconic river,' says Dave Cornthwaite. 'You can spend days on the trot without seeing anybody, but there are petrol stations and townships so you've always got access to food. I'd highly recommend paddling in the Riverland region near Renmark – it's very accessible from Adelaide, and you can get information and hire canoes from Riverland Leisure Canoes. For anyone wanting a paddle longer than a couple of days there's a 150-200km stretch between Wentworth in New South Wales and Renmark that would take five or six days. It's really remote, with gorgeous scenery and wild camping opportunities.' Check riverlandcanoes.com.au and discovermurray.com.au for more info.

Typical deals

If you're camping, your only serious expense is likely to be flights. 'Book more than six months ahead and you should be able to get there for £550, which is pretty reasonable,' says Cornthwaite. 'I'd advise a 12-hour stopover in Malaysia or Singapore so you aren't wrecked by jetlag when you arrive.'

Other low-budget thrills

Head for Peru or Bolivia and check out the Isla Uros, a series of islands in Lake Titicaca made completely from reeds,' says Cornthwaite. 'It's super-cheap to get around and absolutely beautiful.'

No frills, all thrills

Really pressed for cash? Our experts share their tips for a no-budget holiday

Look for trouble

'When a destination has been getting negative media coverage, that's when you'll find the deals of a lifetime,' says Leffel. 'Pull up a map, read some message boards and figure out where the problems really are – then just avoid those areas.'

Sleep rough

'Waking up in the wild is just beautiful, and unless you're somewhere with serious weather you can get a freestander so you don't have to faff around with pegs,' says Cornthwaite. Evans points out that many hostels will allow you to set up a tent nearby and just charge you for water and showering. 'It's way cheaper than a bed.'

Eat local

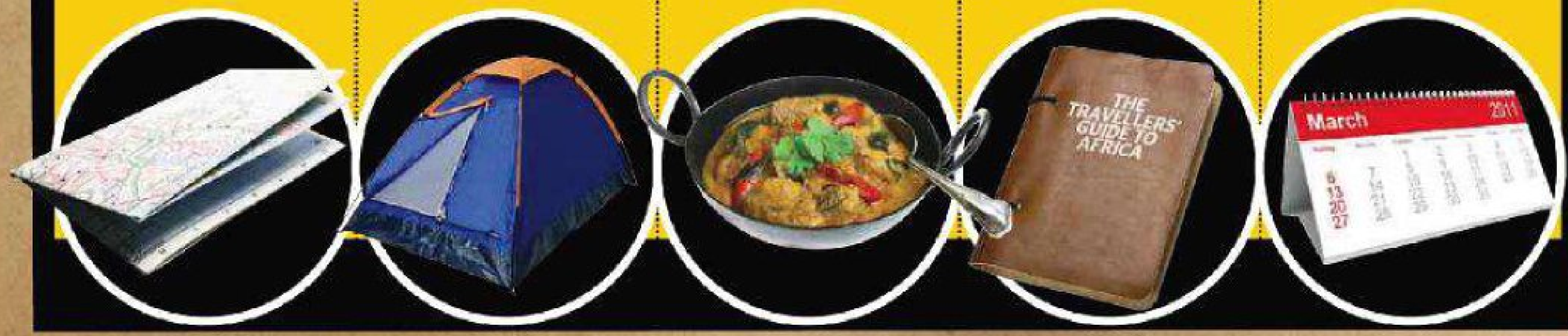
'Food is a lot cheaper when you eat what the locals eat,' says Evans. 'Don't go to Mumbai for a McDonald's – go for curry. In Africa, tuck into rice and beans. It's more tasty and a lot cheaper.' Investing in a stove will broaden your options and lessen your chances of food poisoning. 'You can buy a decent stove for £120 and it'll last forever,' says Cornthwaite.

Ignore the guidebooks

'Try places off the beaten track,' says Evans. 'Look for somewhere that the *Lonely Planet* might not recommend too highly but that local people flock to. It's bound to be cheaper wherever there are fewer tourists. It's the same with countries – more people go to south-east Asia, so it tends to be a lot more expensive than Africa.'

Plan ahead

Although improvising on the ground has financial benefits, cheap flights typically go to early birds. 'Your flights will probably be your biggest expense,' says Evans, 'so try to book six months in advance.' Always check the details, though – there's no point saving £100 if it means you get diverted to Minsk and lose three days off your holiday.



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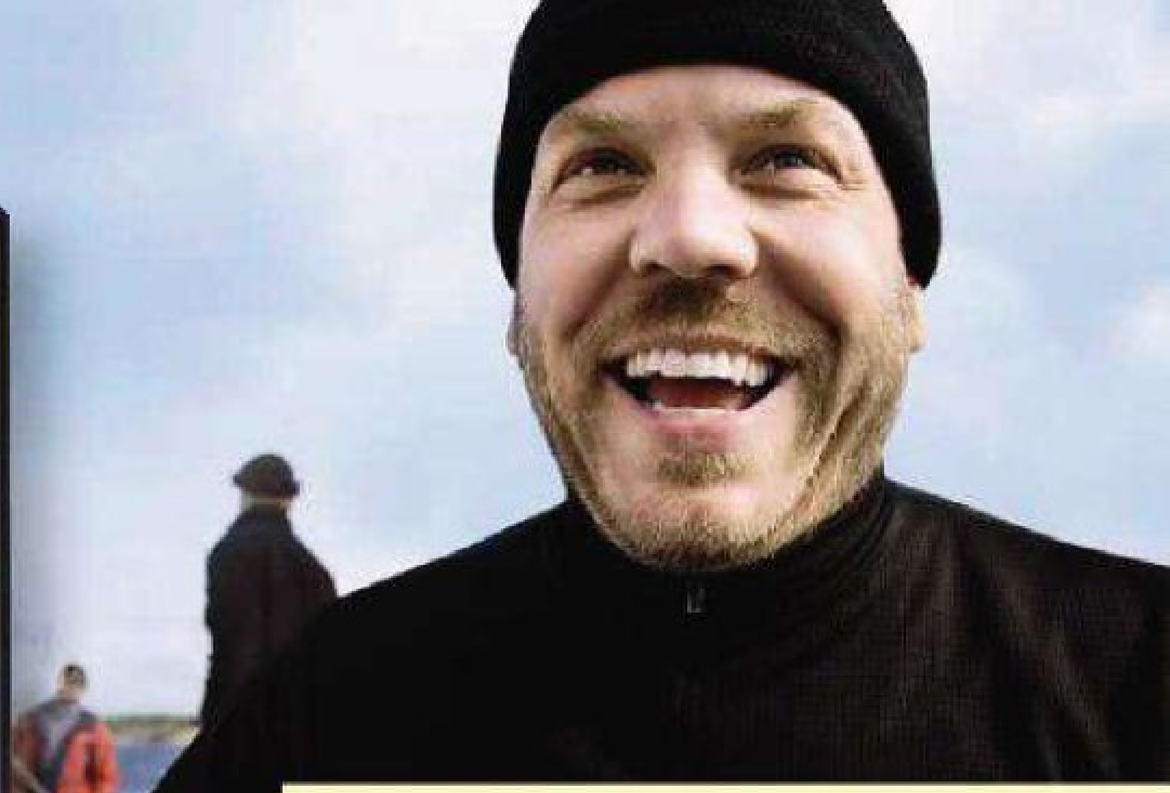

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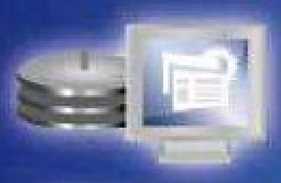

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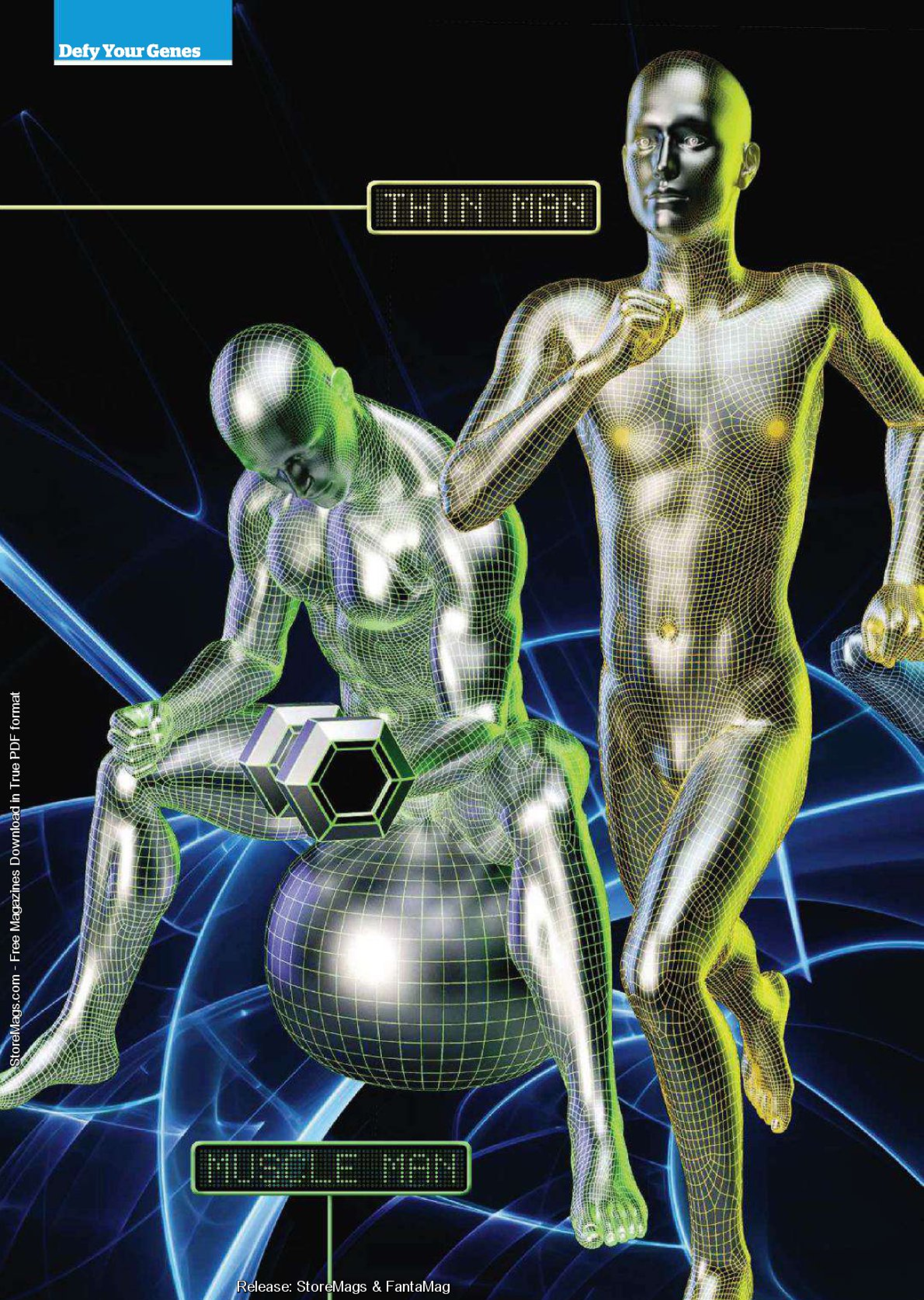
Defy Your Genes



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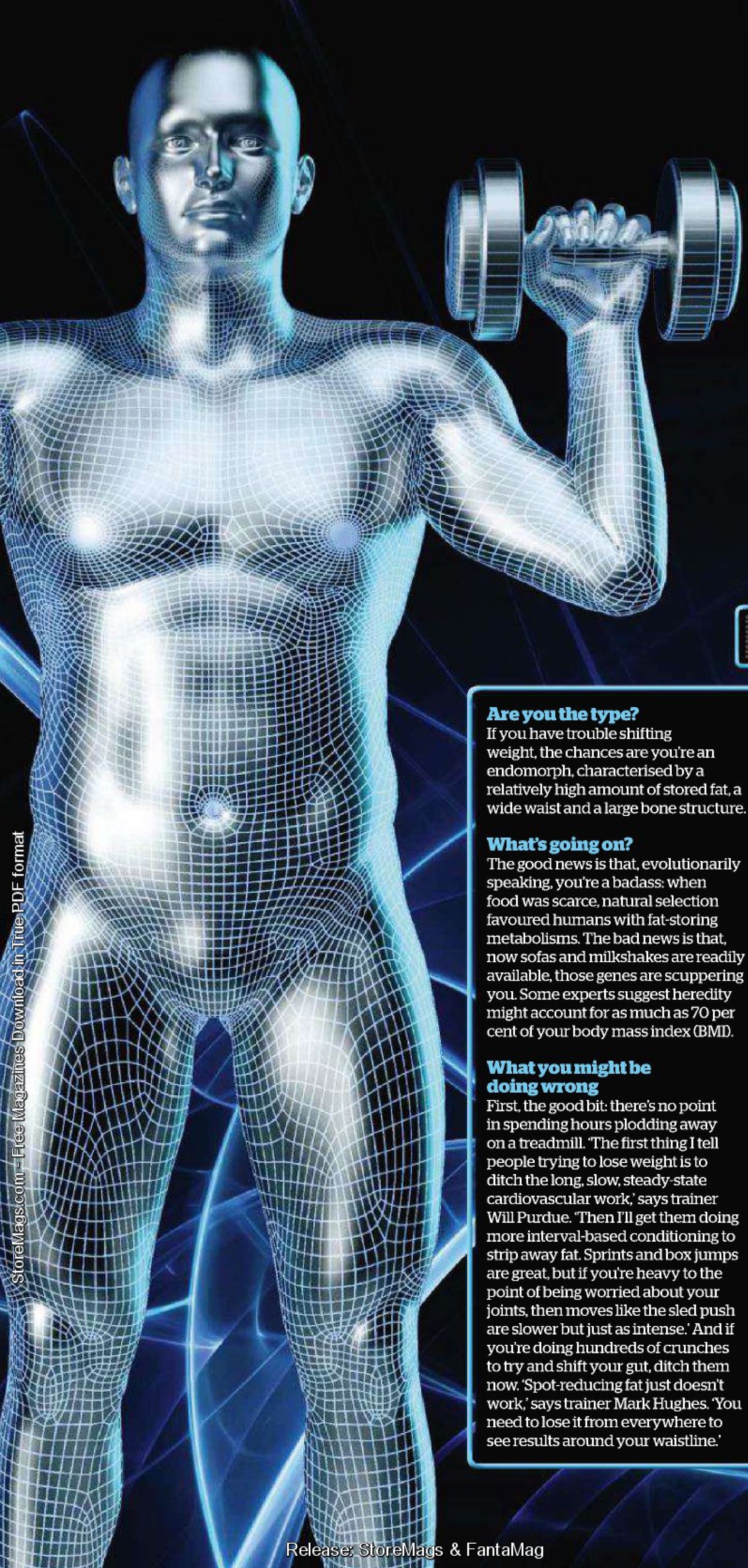
Control Your Body Shape

Whether you pack on muscle with ease, struggle to shift your gut or stay lean despite hours in the gym, training smarter can maximise your potential. *MF* explains how

Words **Joel Snape** Illustration **Peter Crowther**

The idea that human body types are genetically pre-set is nothing new. Plato mentions it in *The Republic*, which was written around 380BC, and 19th-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche referred to the idea in *The Antichrist* years before the American psychologist William Sheldon popularised three broad 'categories' of body in the 1940s.

Since Sheldon's conclusions were published it has become widely recognised that most people have a body type that marks them as either an endomorph (big with high body fat), an ectomorph (lean) or a mesomorph (muscular). Over the past decade, science has discovered more about the genetics that go into making you the shape you are – and what you can do about it. Read on to discover how you can get results, whatever your genes.



FAST FACTS

THE LOOK Pear-shaped
WHY? High tendency to store body fat

DO
- Train with intensity
- Watch your carb intake
- Build your shoulders

DON'T
- Do endless crunches
- Jog for hours
- Drink sports drinks

Are you the type?

If you have trouble shifting weight, the chances are you're an endomorph, characterised by a relatively high amount of stored fat, a wide waist and a large bone structure.

What's going on?

The good news is that, evolutionarily speaking, you're a badass: when food was scarce, natural selection favoured humans with fat-storing metabolisms. The bad news is that, now sofas and milkshakes are readily available, those genes are scuppering you. Some experts suggest heredity might account for as much as 70 per cent of your body mass index (BMI).

What you might be doing wrong

First, the good bit: there's no point in spending hours plodding away on a treadmill. 'The first thing I tell people trying to lose weight is to ditch the long, slow, steady-state cardiovascular work,' says trainer Will Purdue. 'Then I'll get them doing more interval-based conditioning to strip away fat. Sprints and box jumps are great, but if you're heavy to the point of being worried about your joints, then moves like the sled push are slower but just as intense.' And if you're doing hundreds of crunches to try and shift your gut, ditch them now. 'Spot-reducing fat just doesn't work,' says trainer Mark Hughes. 'You need to lose it from everywhere to see results around your waistline.'

What you should be doing

'Combine hypertrophy work – basically, muscle-building – with conditioning to strip away unwanted body fat,' says Purdue. 'A four-day split might go something like: Monday, upper-body hypertrophy; Tuesday, lower-body conditioning such as sprints or sleds; Thursday lower-body hypertrophy; and a Friday "repetition" day on the upper body, when you'll do lots of reps at relatively low weights.'

What to eat

You'll have to watch what you eat more strictly than people with other body shapes. 'Get your carbs from vegetables,' says Purdue, 'and steer clear of white bread and rice.'

What else?

'There's evidence that extra weight around the midsection indicates high stress levels or a low ability to handle stress,' says Purdue. 'Try to minimise the effects of the stress hormone cortisol by getting plenty of sleep and avoiding overtraining.' And avoid sports drinks. 'They're full of carbs,' says Purdue, 'and they'll spike your blood sugar through the roof.' And, of course, steer clear of the booze.

Money moves

'Get used to using your body,' says Purdue. 'Work on bodyweight moves such as the press-up or chin-up, and moves that force you to use good technique such as the Turkish get-up.'

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MESOMORPH

Are you the type?

If you are, you'll know it from the jealous looks. Mesomorphs look well built without setting foot in a gym, and pack on muscle the instant they pick up a dumb-bell. If this sounds like you, you've hit the genetic jackpot – but you can make the most of your DNA with some tactical workout tricks.

What's going on?

It's all to do with satellite cell-mediated myonuclear addition – or, in layman's terms, the number of cells surrounding your muscle fibres and your ability to add more by training. In one study of 66 people, the top 17 'responders' experienced a 58 per cent gain in muscle cross-sectional area, while the bottom 17 gained nothing. If you're a good responder you've got a head start, but losing fat and training efficiently can work wonders.

What you might be doing wrong

'Mesomorphs often won't train as hard as they can,' says Hughes. 'I usually give them timed workouts, to give them goals to aim for and raise their workout intensity.'

What you should be doing

'I get mesomorphs to train athletically,' says Purdue. 'So I might do sprints, box and vertical jumps or other plyometrics. They respond well to low reps and power moves. Alternatively, interval sprints will pump up their metabolism and strip away fat.'

What to eat

Although the usual caveats apply, the good news is that your body will respond well to whatever healthy food you put into it. 'You can eat a moderate amount of carbs,' says Hughes. 'And err on the side of more when it comes to protein.'

What else?

'Mesomorphs respond well to creatine,' says Hughes. 'It'll aid their recovery from athletic workouts and help them work out harder.' You should also factor in recovery days. 'Although the explosive nature of athletic workouts minimises the eccentric [lowering] portion of your moves, which helps stave off muscle soreness, some light movements on your rest days will help get the blood flowing and keep you fresh.'

Money moves

'You'll respond well to power moves,' says Purdue. 'Try pairing a strength move with a power move that works the same muscles. For example, superset five reps on the deadlift with five on the power clean.'

FAST FACTS

THE LOOK Well-built
WHY? High metabolism, responsive muscle cells
DO
- Train like an athlete
- Time your workouts
- Set personal bests

DON'T
- Take your body for granted
- Eat whatever you like

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Are you the type?

You've got the build of a marathon runner – lean, but short on muscle. It can be hard to pack on size despite hours in the gym.

What's going on?

The same research that's so flattering to mesomorphs shows that some individuals fail to respond to strength training. The worst 'responders' in the study mentioned above saw no change in their regulation of myogenin – a key gene responsible for muscle growth – while others on the same programme saw theirs spike by 65 per cent.

What you might be doing wrong

First, ditch the treadmill. 'Ectomorphs often gravitate to long, slow distance work, but it's the worst thing they can do,' says Purdue. And it may be tempting to pack your routine with classic bodybuilder moves such as the biceps curl, but that's another mistake, says Purdue. 'I often see ectomorphs focusing on isolation moves, whereas big, compound movements such as the squat will involve more muscles and give you the hormonal boost that helps build muscle. I'll still use isolation moves, but they're supplementary to the main workout moves – 80 per cent of moves should be working big muscle groups.'

What you should be doing

'Compound movements, sets in the eight to 12 rep range and quite a lot of volume are what you're looking for,' says Purdue. 'So a system such as German Volume Training is ideal.' Popularised by *MF*'s own muscle expert Charles Poliquin, GVT prescribes ten sets of ten reps in key moves such as the bench or squat. And there's no need to live in the gym to put on muscle – quite the contrary, in fact. 'If you're working out four, five days a week you'll be speeding up your metabolism too much,' says Hughes. 'I tend to limit my ectomorphs to three workouts a week, keeping the actual training time after a warm-up to 45 minutes or less.'

What to eat

Good news: you don't have to steer clear of carbs. 'Ectomorphs should respond well to carbs, which will spike blood sugar and help to drive protein to their muscles,' says Hughes. 'Stick to the complex kind, such as sweet potatoes and brown rice.' Aim for 2g per kilo of bodyweight per day of protein minimum, but be wary of overdoing it.

What else?

'It's important for ectomorphs to use supplements properly,' says Hughes. 'I'd advise a carb/protein shake to drink before and during your workout, and either another one or a good meal afterwards.'

Money moves

The deadlift is your best friend: people with long arms should find it relatively easy, and it uses the entire body so it'll pack on mass. Although squats and benching will do wonders for your physique, taller ectomorphs might find them difficult. 'Your longer levers might give you trouble getting below parallel in the squat,' says Purdue. 'That's when I recommend the leg press.'

FAST FACTS

THE LOOK Lean and long
WHY? Difficulty building muscle
DO
- Train with compound moves
- Get enough protein
- Use isolation moves as 'finishers'

DON'T
- Overemphasise isolation moves
- Do too much cardio

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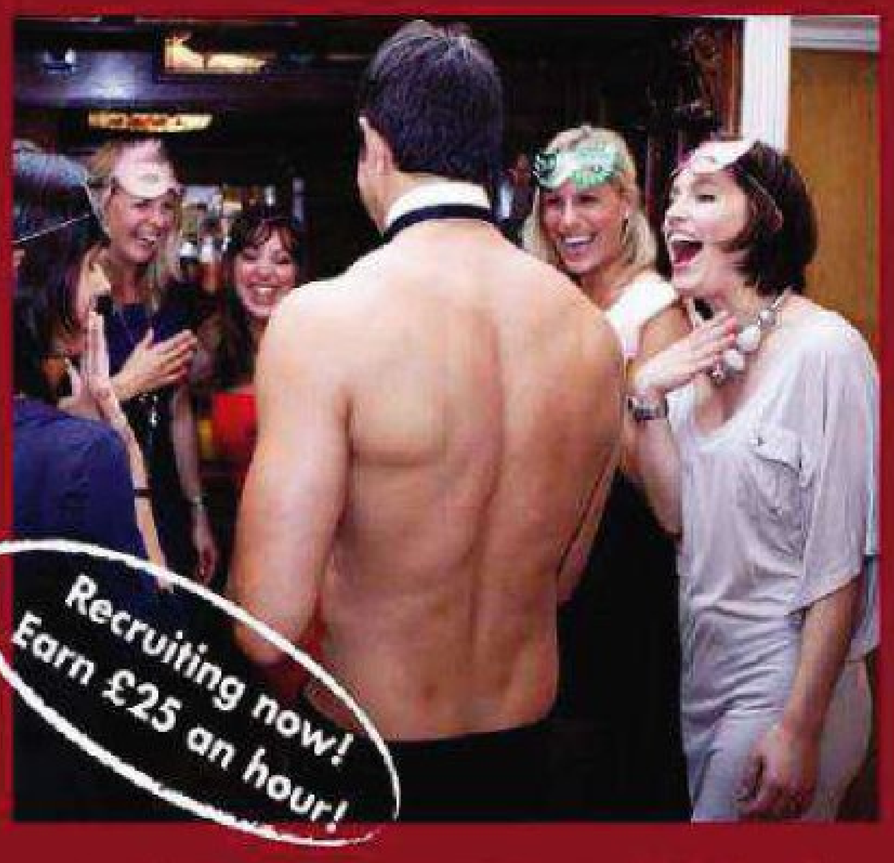

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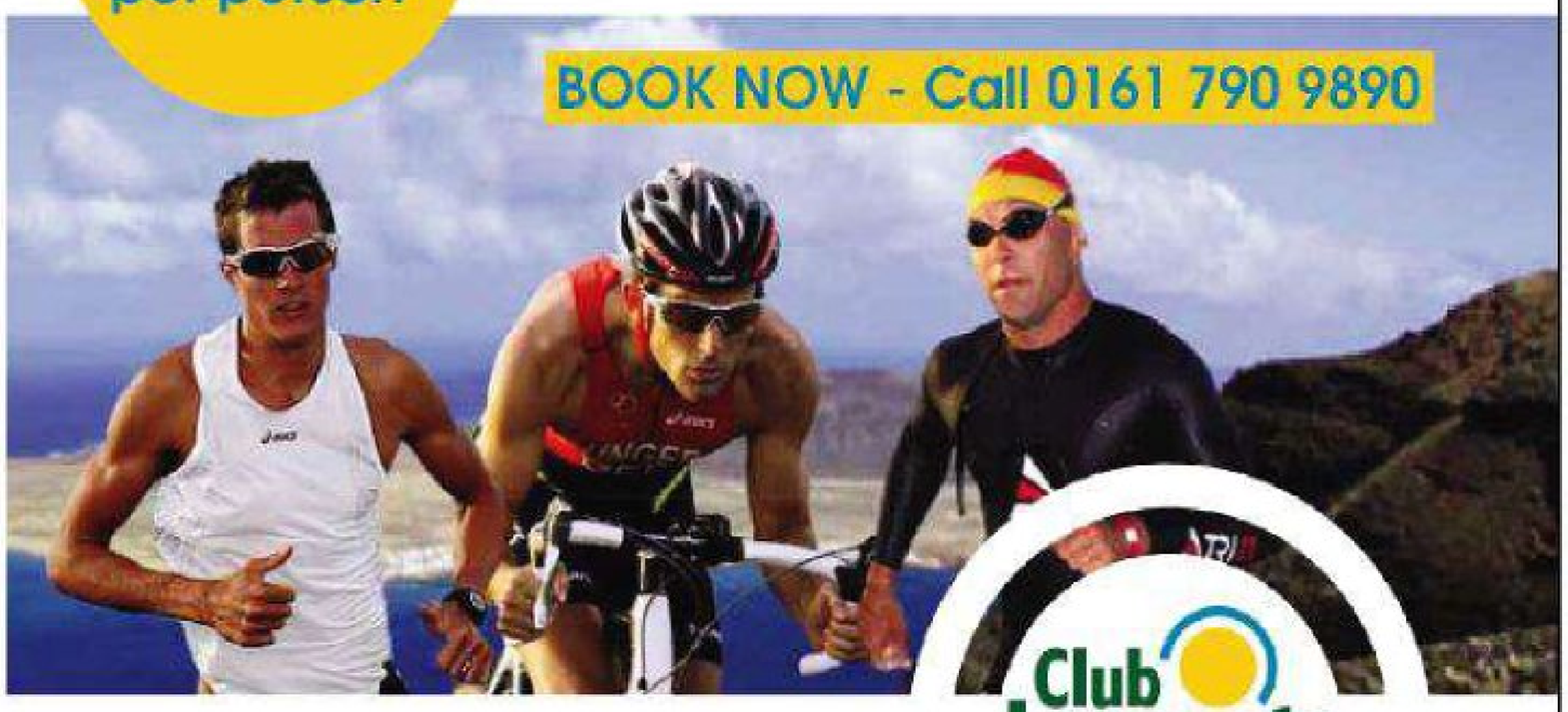

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CREATINE IN THE DOCK

It's a highly effective supplement with lots of fitness benefits, but it still attracts controversy. So what is the real truth about creatine? *MF* investigates

Words **Nathan Ditum** Photography **Danny Bird**

In the last few weeks of 1997, three unconnected US college wrestlers, all fit young men training for competition, died in unusual and strangely similar circumstances. Billy Saylor, 19, a student at Campbell University, North Carolina, died of cardiac arrest shortly after using an exercise bike on 9th November. Two weeks later, on 23rd November, 22-year-old Joseph LaRosa, in his final year at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, died of heatstroke during a workout. And on 9th December, Jeff Reese, aged 21, was found dead on the floor of a shower room at the University of Michigan following kidney and heart failure.

The deaths were linked by the press almost immediately, as journalists hunted for a common thread running through an unprecedented cluster of tragedies. A week after Reese's death, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provided the possible link, announcing an investigation into the part that the dietary supplement creatine, taken to increase power, may have played in the young men's deaths.

It's easy to see why the FDA looked to an external agent such as creatine. Healthy young athletes shouldn't just die, especially not three at a time, and these were the first ever deaths to be registered in connection with collegiate sport in America. Creatine use was still a relatively new phenomenon, which explains the mistrust filling the headlines and comments that followed. 'Deaths raise suspicions: FDA begins scrutiny of creatine' read one article in *USA Today*, while student paper *The Minnesota Daily* described creatine as 'The threatening unknown'. The University of Michigan's assistant wrestling coach at the time, Marty Morgan, said what many seemed to be thinking. 'When the FDA comes out with its study,' he predicted, 'I'll guarantee you there was some kind of supplement imbalance in [the wrestlers'] bodies.'

This was by no means the only time creatine has been mentioned in connection with health risks. In 1998 baseball player Derek Bell of the Houston Astros claimed that creatine use had seen him hospitalised with kidney malfunction on two occasions ('I guess I didn't drink enough water with it,' was his explanation). Then, in 2001, the

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Glossary

Creatine monohydrate

The most common form of creatine supplement. Essentially creatine with a molecule of water added.

'Healthy young athletes shouldn't just die, especially not three at a time, and these were the first ever deaths to be registered in connection with US collegiate sport'

Glossary

ATP

Adenosine triphosphate (ATP) is the chemical used by animal cells as an energy carrier. It turns into adenosine diphosphate (ADP) when it loses a phosphate as part of the energy-conversion process.

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Creatine

French Agency of Medical Security for Food (AFSSA) published an article on its website stating that creatine represented 'a potential carcinogenic risk' for supplemental users. And as recently as August 2010, an unusual cluster of serious muscle injuries – which saw 12 members of the McMinnville High School football team in Oregon hospitalised – was linked to creatine on an ABC television news report.

Smoke without fire?

This amount of anecdotal testimony and suspicion raises the question: what clinical evidence is there to support the notion that creatine is potentially harmful? 'None,' is the emphatic response of Dr Jeff Stout, associate professor at the University of Oklahoma's health and exercise science department. 'The only side effect that has been shown in clinical studies is weight gain. The other side effects reported by the media are fiction and not supported in the scientific literature.'

Dr Richard Kreider, head of the department of health and kinesiology at Texas A&M University, agrees. 'I have been amazed at all the hyperbole and misinformation regarding creatine supplementation that has appeared in the popular media,' he says. 'Often, this emanates from so-called "experts" who are apparently not highly knowledgeable about the creatine literature, have never conducted any research on creatine (or in some cases no research at all) and/or have an apparent agenda against nutritional supplementation in general.'

The great majority of the scare stories can be pulled apart with a little research. AFSSA, for instance, made its pronouncement after misinterpreting existing clinical trial data. It simply read the results wrong. And despite the concerns of ABC News, the report into the McMinnville football incident by the Oregon Public Health Division identified an 'intense, short-duration, repetitive burst of resistance exercise' along with 'heat and unrecognised dehydration' as the cause of the injuries, specifically discounting creatine supplementation.

As for the three wrestlers, several studies indicate that creatine – far from causing dehydration or contributing to the dangers of high-temperature weight-loss workouts – might in fact aid thermal regulation. But the most revealing detail is the almost entirely unreported fact that two of the wrestlers had never even taken creatine, and the third had stopped so long before his death that the effects had dissipated entirely.

Myths and legends

It's clear that creatine is poorly understood by many people. Let's attempt to correct that by starting at the very beginning. Creatine is a naturally occurring compound that plays a central role in delivering energy to the body's muscles. You have it in your system now: it's found in food, especially red meat and fish. Beef will give you around 2g per kilo, while a kilo of herring provides around 5g. It's also produced by the body itself, mostly in the liver and kidneys, and then carried by the blood to the muscles.

Creatine's job is to supply the chemical reaction that releases energy to the body. Think of creatine not as the battery that powers muscle movement, but the electricity that charges the battery. The battery itself is adenosine triphosphate (ATP), which provides immediate energy for short bursts of intense muscle activity. According to Kreider, this means 'maximal effort exercise lasting up to six to eight seconds', which would include sprints and resistance exercises such as press-ups and squats. ATP provides this energy by breaking the bond between two of its three phosphate molecules, which results in the creation of adenosine diphosphate (ADP). Creatine is able to convert ADP back into ATP so it can be used by the muscles again, in effect taking the used 'batteries' and recharging them.

Supplementing your diet with creatine maximises the body's supply of creatine phosphate for use in powering muscles. 'The total creatine pool in the muscle averages about 120g for a 70kg individual,' says Kreider. 'However, the body has the capacity to store up to 160g under certain conditions.' To use a slightly different metaphor, your muscles are like petrol tanks that are usually three-quarters full (less for vegetarians), and creatine supplements enable you to fill up completely.

Glossary

Micronised creatine

Creatine ground into smaller particles – sometimes one-twentieth the size of the regular kind – which may speed absorption.

Performance enhancer

Of course, none of this would really mean anything if that extra creatine just sat dormant in the muscles. So the crucial point is this: increasing the body's store of creatine is clinically proven to benefit performance. 'Creatine is one of the most researched supplements, with over 500

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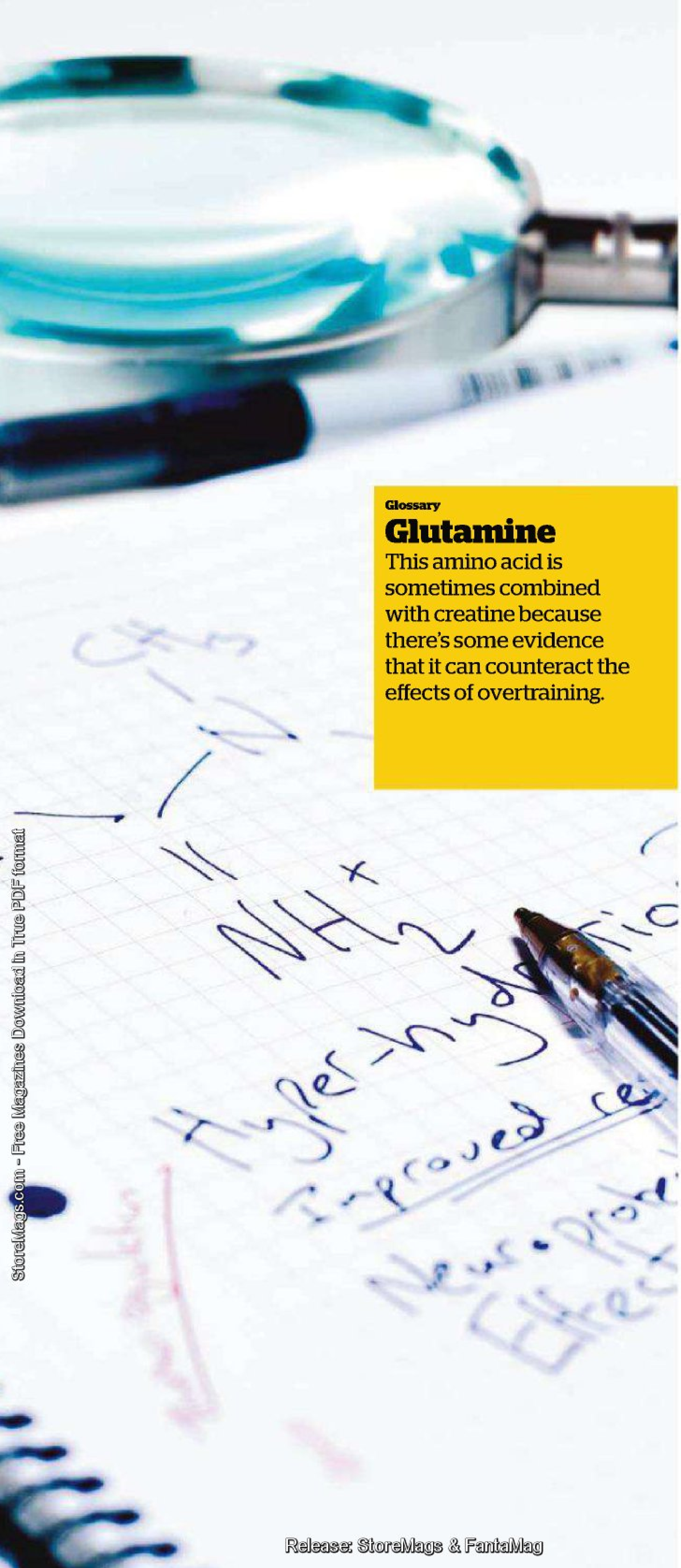

human clinical studies published,' says Stout. 'Based on these studies we've seen that elevating skeletal muscle creatine levels through supplementation increases sports performance, improves training adaptations, promotes muscle growth and, in some studies, reduces fat.'

Ultimately this means using creatine could help you to lift heavier weights. One study looking at single-rep deadlifts had participants take 20g of creatine per day for 28 days or a placebo. At the end of the study

Glossary

Glutamine

This amino acid is sometimes combined with creatine because there's some evidence that it can counteract the effects of overtraining.

'The only side effect that has been shown in clinical studies is weight gain. The other side effects reported by the media are fiction'

period, those taking the supplement had increased their maximum lift by an average of 8.2kg, 2.9kg more than the placebo group.

Creatine may also speed up your recovery times. A similar test examining multiple sets of combined bench presses, squats and power cleans saw those taking the supplement enjoy a 41 per cent increase in lifting volume above that of the control group.

Lastly, by enabling you to lift heavier weights for longer, creatine is also proven to increase lean muscle mass. In short-term studies (up to seven days) on a dose of 20-25g per day, average muscle mass increases range from 0.7kg to 1.6kg. In longer trials these increases can be an average of 3kg greater than the control group.

Scare stories

So if creatine has such a wide and solid base of peer-reviewed evidence behind it, why do we keep reading misinformed scare stories? Ben Jones, a trainer from Lifetime Health & Fitness, suggests that to the outsider, it can be difficult to distinguish creatine from less reputable bodybuilding aids. 'Often it's not the people doing the training that have those concerns, but people that are outside the training community who don't understand it,' he says.

'If your friends are going to the gym, hanging out with men who are unfeasibly large and buying things that make them look big, that might be a concern. To people

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not involved in sport and not aware of the differences between a food supplement and a drug, where is the distinction? Maybe it seems like a bit of a gateway drug. Once you've used this, are you going to get on to anabolic steroids?'

Free market

Another problem is with creatine itself – or rather with how it is marketed. Creatine first became popular as a supplement in the mid-1990s when a synthesised form began to be marketed widely at affordable prices.

Glossary

CEE

Creatine ethyl ester. This form of the supplement contains ethyl ester, a fat-soluble salt which some research suggests increases its speed of uptake into the body.

'To people not aware of the difference between a food supplement and a drug, where is the distinction? Maybe it seems like a gateway drug'

Outside of the cells in our bodies, creatine can't exist as a stand-alone substance, and the synthetic form that became common then and still dominates the market today is creatine monohydrate: creatine combined with a molecule of water. Until a few years ago, Jones says, there were just a handful of processing plants in the world, usually promoting a uniform product with outlandish on-the-tub claims. It was an unattractive shop-front, at odds with the product's genuine scientific credentials.

Now creatine production is more widespread, fitness websites and health food shops stock dozens of different brands, and the different types of creatine supplement – creatine phosphate, creatine citrate and so on – are ingested in different ways. The problem with this crowded marketplace is that the manufacturers' claims can actually reinforce negative and unscientific statements about the supplement. For instance, a manufacturer of creatine phosphate might say that creatine monohydrate 'can lead to bloating, cramping and dehydration', describe it as 'gritty' or suggest it leads to stomach discomfort – none of which is provably true.

On top of all that, there are genuine and expected limitations of creatine. For starters, creatine supplementation holds no benefits at all for certain people. 'About 20-30 per cent of the population don't respond, mainly due to their diet,' says Stout. 'For example, if your diet is high in fish, chicken and beef then there's a chance that creatine may not be helpful because there's plenty of creatine in this type of diet anyway.'

Who benefits?

Creatine's effects are not necessarily desirable for everyone, either. It has less of an impact for endurance athletes, while sprinters and others for whom speed is a key consideration – such as those who play rugby or football – should be careful not to bulk up too much.

More than anything, Jones is keen to stress that, although it might be 'the standout supplement of the last 15 or so years', creatine is not a 'wonder supplement that will do everything for you'. Unless your training programme is carefully designed and very disciplined, you're unlikely to replicate the kind of benefits recorded in closely monitored clinical trials. More generally, creatine needs to be part of a wider approach to health and fitness.

'The critical word is "supplement",' Jones says. 'It's an adjunct to your diet – it's not there to make up for deficits. People see supplements as some kind of silver bullet that will compensate for a poor diet. Nothing is going to do that for you. And if you're not training and following a progressive resistance programme or a programme for your sport, you won't get results no matter what you take or what you do nutritionally.'

For all these caveats, though, the bottom line is that creatine works. It increases the

Creatine FAQ

Do I need to take creatine?

If you weight train or do a sport that involves repeated power movements, such as sprints or throws, you're likely to see benefits from taking creatine because it's ideal for short periods of all-out effort with brief phases of recovery.

How much should I take?

You probably already get around 1g a day from food – more if you eat a lot of beef or fish – and produce another 1g from amino acids. 'This will leave your stores about 40 per cent below their maximum,' says Nikhil Rao of the University of Virginia. 'The best way to fill up seems to be with doses of around 3g.'

When should I take it?

Some manufacturers recommend taking creatine before a workout, but if you do, make sure you drink plenty of water – it's hygroscopic, which means it can draw water into your bloodstream from surrounding tissues or muscles. After a workout is the ideal time to take creatine.

Should I take pills or powder?

It's up to you. Pills are more convenient and don't need measuring out, while powders tend to be a bit cheaper. Crucially, though, there are no reputable studies indicating that one form or the other is more easily absorbed or effective, so it's really down to personal preference.

Do I need to worry about side effects?

No clinical study has ever connected any side effects to creatine, although you can err on the side of caution by making sure you drink the recommended amount of water (around 500ml) with your dose.

Conquer Kilimanjaro

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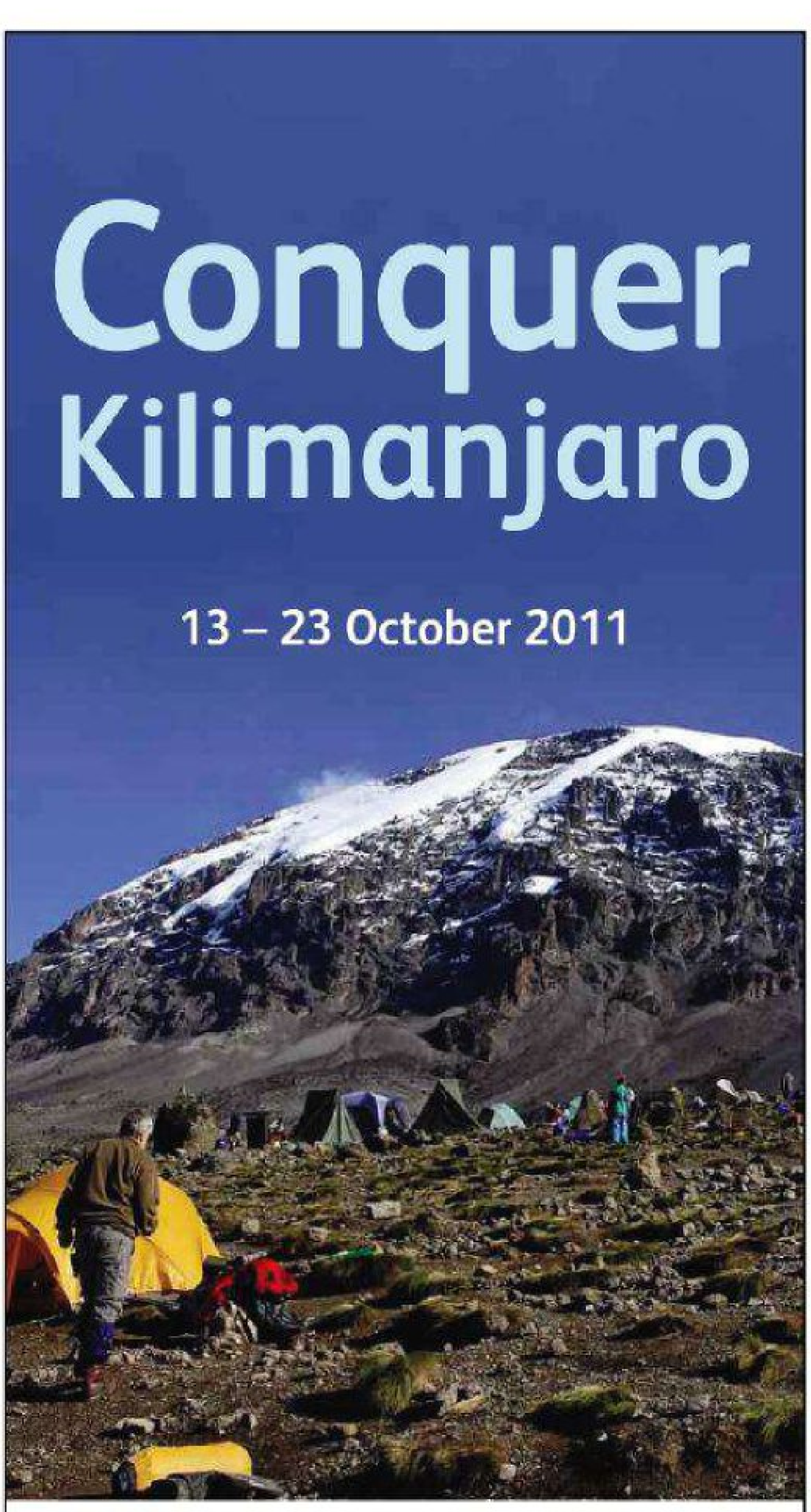

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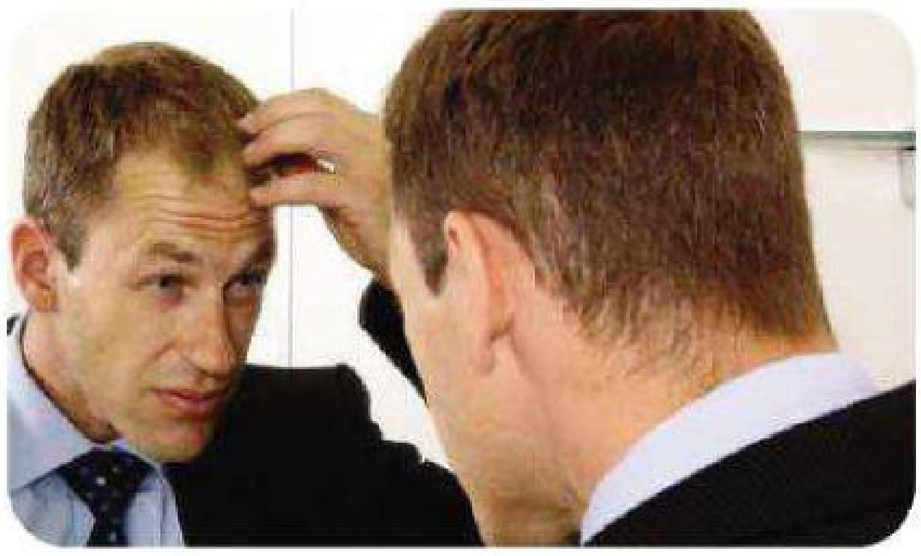

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Glossary

Creatine citrate

The most water-soluble type of creatine supplement. Typically more expensive than creatine monohydrate.

energy supply to the muscles, and allows longer and more intense workouts that build greater fitness and muscle mass. And there's no evidence whatsoever that it comes with any serious side effects – even anecdotally reported minor effects such as cramps and gastrointestinal discomfort are absent from clinical trial data.

Weight drop

In the end, Michigan coach Marty Morgan's guarantee proved hollow. The FDA announced in May 1998 that creatine had not contributed to the deaths of the three young wrestlers. As more information became available, the tragedy appeared less mysterious than it first seemed.

All three athletes had been engaged in drastic short-term weight loss in order to make competitive weight classes. All three had worn rubber suits – LaRosa's under two additional sweat suits – and denied themselves water during workouts performed in temperatures of up to 33˚C. Saylor was attempting to lose three kilos in a single day, and LaRosa two, while Reese, the only wrestler available for the 68kg class when a team regular picked up an injury, was given four days to lose 9kg. The attempt sent him into what the chief medical officer described as 'metabolic derangement' and killed him.

It's a shame the facts have taken so long to catch up, as recent work with creatine has looked into its potential as more than just a muscle-building tool. 'After the incredible success of creatine as a sports supplement, many scientists turned their attention to its role in potentially improving the lives of those with disease,' Stout says. 'One very promising area of treatment may be in the elderly and in those with neuromuscular diseases. Creatine has shown signs of having neuroprotective effects, meaning it might have the capacity to protect or improve vital brain functions in those with diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis [a form of motor neurone disease], multiple sclerosis and strokes.'

Kreider points out that these neuroprotective qualities may extend to sporting head injuries, highlighting recent studies 'showing that kids with traumatic brain injury have better outcomes and survival rates when put on a course of creatine than kids who don't get creatine. Same with concussions. In contact sports such as [American] football, it makes sense that they should be taking creatine.'

There's still a lot of work to be done and a great deal about creatine for scientists to understand, but the potential is massive. As Stout says, 'This is just the beginning'.

'Creatine has shown signs of having neuroprotective effects, meaning it might protect or improve vital brain functions'

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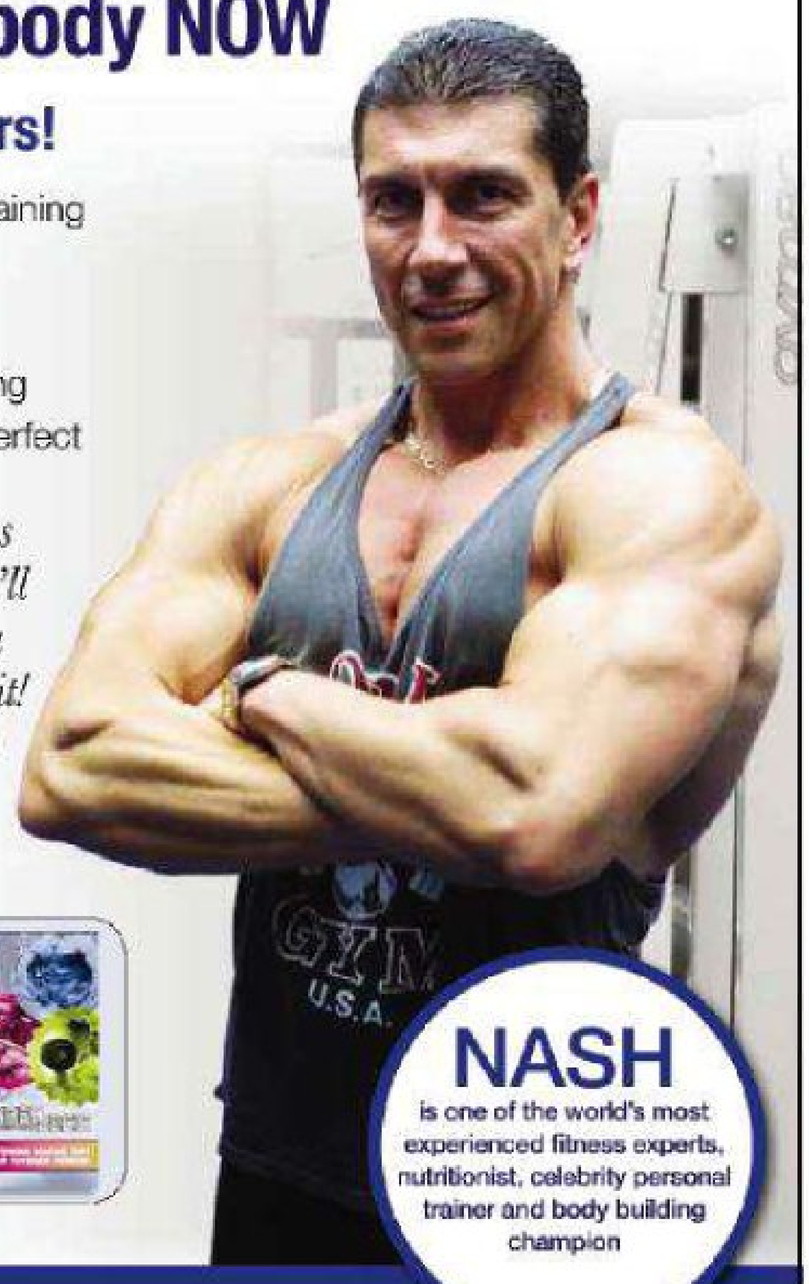

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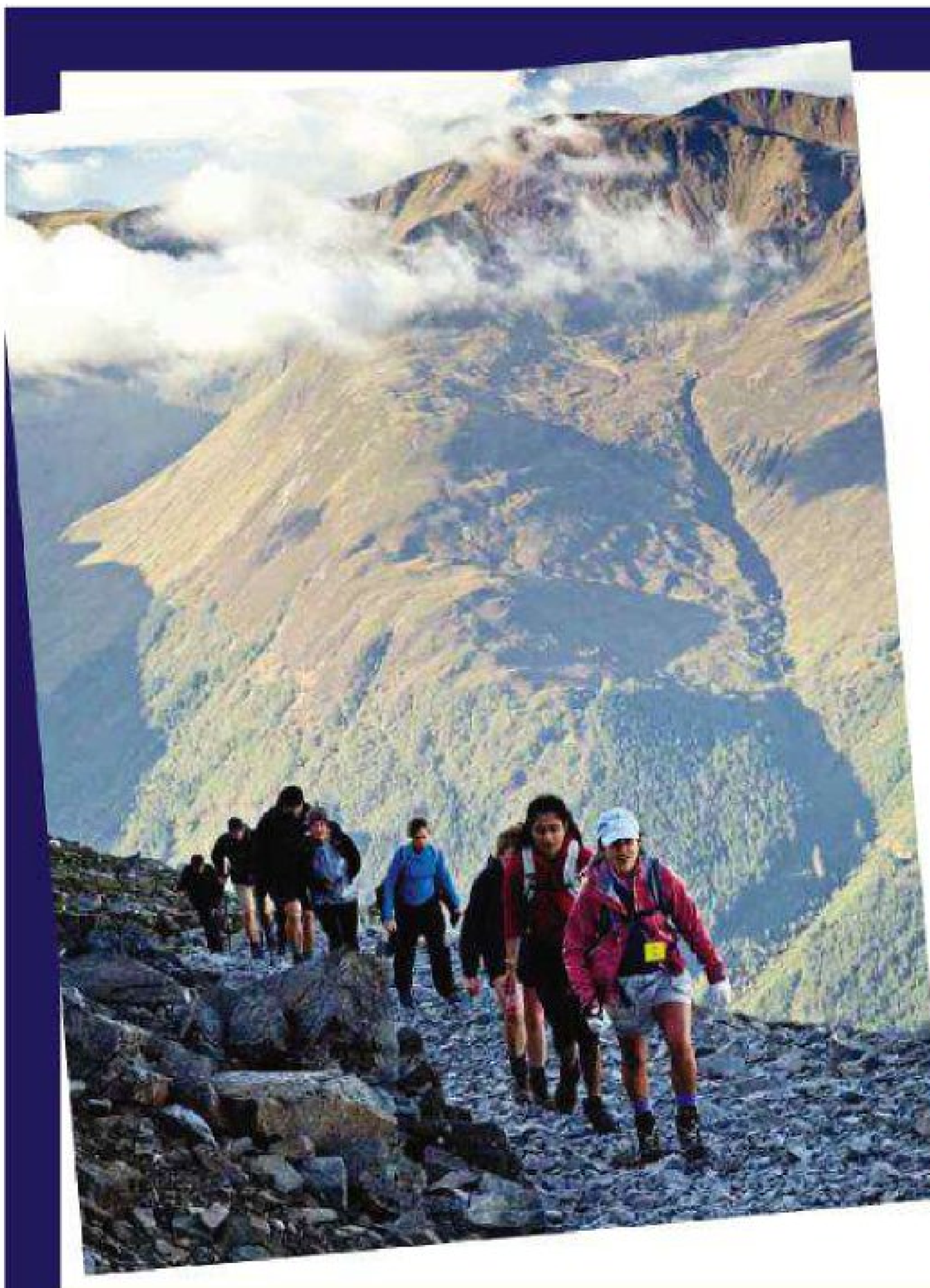

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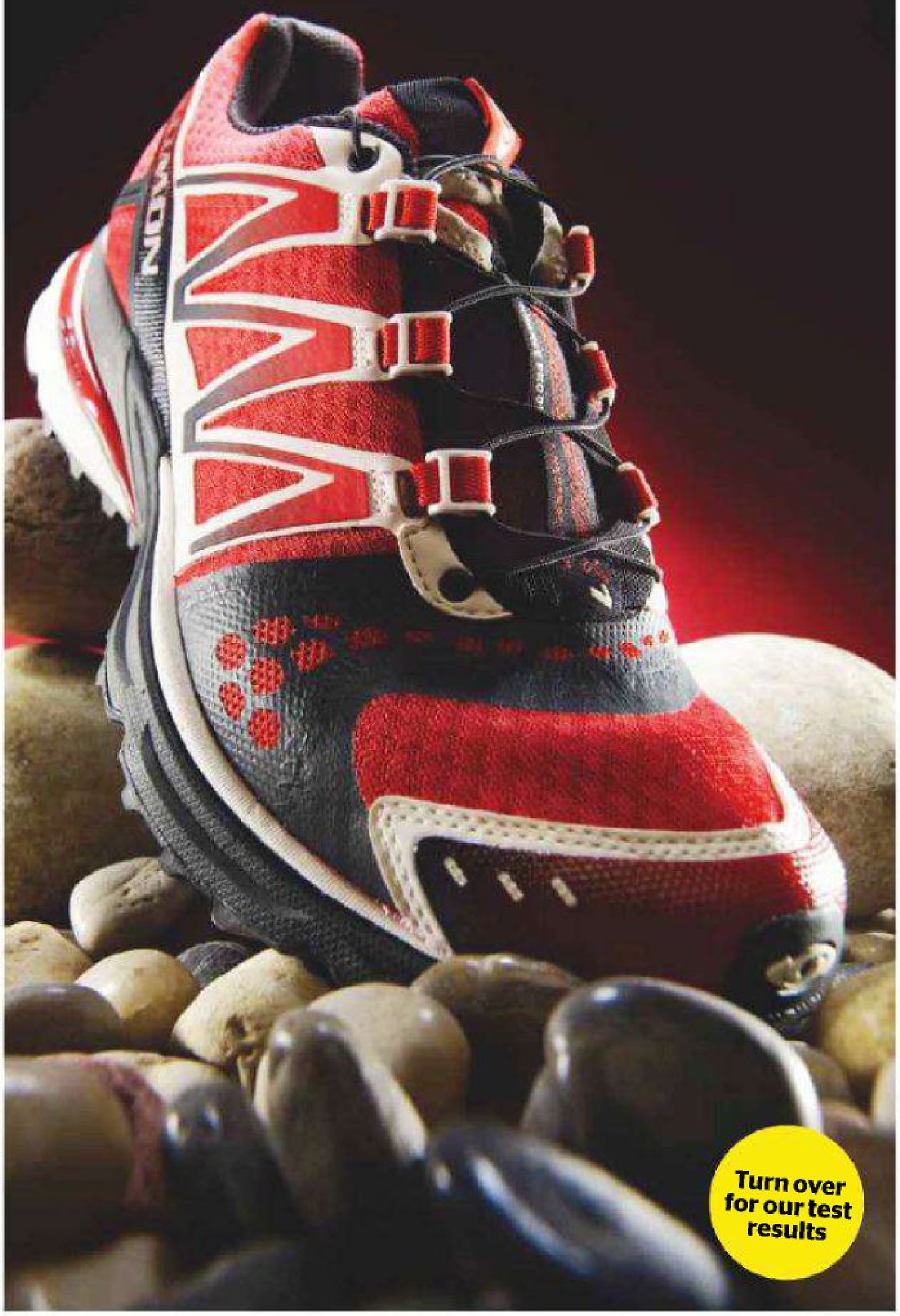

Words Ben Ince **Photography** Danny Bird **Shoe pictured** Salomon XR Crossmax

Turn over for our test results

How to choose a trail shoe

Fit

'When buying road shoes, you need ones that are specific to your gait, but this isn't the case with trail running shoes,' says champion trail runner Jez Bragg. 'The overall fit, comfort and suitability for the terrain are the most important things to consider. The trail shoe market has been heading down the minimalist route recently, so many shoes are neutral or lacking in any support at all. A lack of support does help to reduce weight, but you'll need to have sufficient foot and ankle strength to wear those shoes.'

Protection

'Choose a shoe that's suitable for the terrain you'll be running on. A stiff sole will provide better protection against rocks and uneven ground than a cushioned one will. Cushioned shoes are better suited to a mixture of road and trail and longer-distance runs. Front-of-shoe toe protection, bump strips and thicker materials will help to protect the foot, but they also add weight.'

Tread

'Probably the biggest difference between road and trail shoes is improved grip. Deep-lugged shoes will give you the best grip on the fells or muddy trails, although this usually means sacrificing comfort. Many trail shoes have similar treads to road shoes but stiffer, with slightly deeper lugs, and made from a stickier rubber for better grip. Occasional trail runners will find this type of shoe less severe and better for all-round use.'

Upper

'Trail shoe uppers vary greatly, so what you buy depends on where you'll be running. I find waterproof uppers a waste of time because if you're running through streams and deep puddles, the water will always get into the shoe – but for all-round use, including hiking, they're a solid option. Most manufacturers use mesh material of differing stiffness and gauge, and some offer layers of cushioning. Lightweight shoes will have minimalist uppers which are great for racing but may not be as durable or provide the comfort required for longer training runs.'

1 Puma Nightfox £75

While the cushioned heel of the Nightfox gives it greater shock absorption and a softer ride than a lot of trail shoes, the trade-off is a lack of protection on the forefoot, especially around the toe area. It's certainly versatile enough to be used on the road, but you might want something more substantial to tackle the toughest off-road terrain. High-visibility reflective strips will keep you safe at night.

THE GOOD Excellent value for the runner who occasionally ventures off-road

THE BAD Lacks protection in key areas

puma.com

2 UK Gear PT-1000 £95

UK Gear has built the PT-1000 to survive an impressive 1,000 miles (1,600km) of running on a variety of testing off-road terrain. It's also the first running shoe ever to be endorsed by the British Army, bearing its crossed swords insignia as a mark of quality. Unsurprisingly, its sturdy design provides significant protection around the heel and forefoot.

THE GOOD Tough and durable, a bit like the Army

THE BAD Stiff sole provides little comfort or cushioning

ukgear.com

3 Patagonia Release £85

With a shock-absorbing forefoot, a cushioned insole and a waterproof yet breathable upper, the Velocity manages to deliver a comfortable and secure ride in a variety of off-road conditions. It's also surprisingly light, despite having deep-lugged treads that provide excellent grip. Reflective panels in the toe and heel will help to keep you safe in the dark, too.

THE GOOD A dynamic lacing system that provides a precise and secure fit

THE BAD Honestly? Very little

patagonia.com

4 Mizuno Wave Cabrakan 2 £85

Despite looking fairly cheap and ugly, this shoe has a number of redeeming features, including a comfortable, cushioned midsole and a tread with serious grip. Unfortunately, the upper seems to offer little protection, and the fact that it's water resistant rather than waterproof means your feet will be getting wet sooner rather than later in heavy rain.

THE GOOD Solid protection around the heel

THE BAD Doesn't look very nice and won't keep your feet dry

mizuno.co.uk

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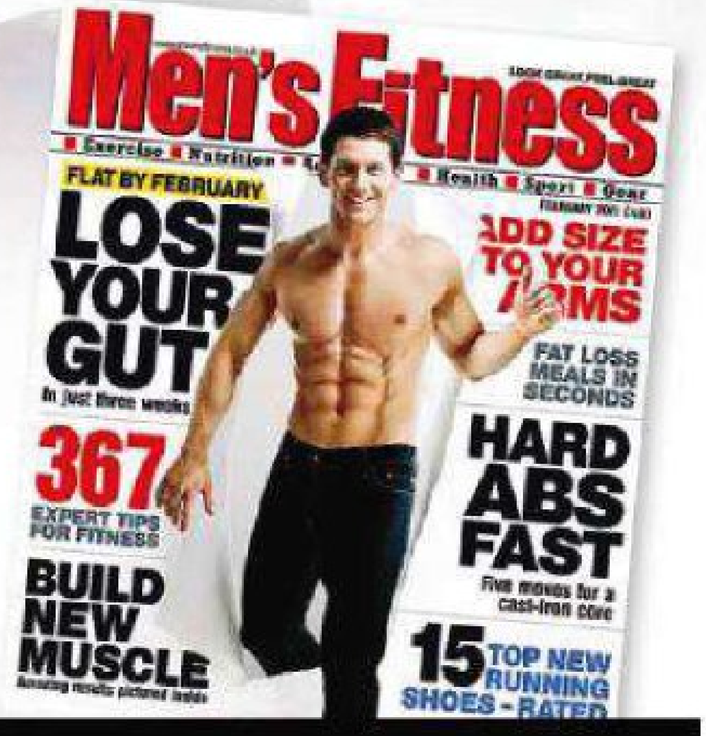

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5 Mammut Claw £110

This shoe is waterproof but still offers good breathability, thanks to a lightweight upper that has solid protection around the heel and toe area to safeguard your foot from debris and sharp objects. A stiff sole ensures you stay protected underneath without suffering from a lack of comfort or cushioning, while Mammut's Reptilia tread pattern will give you a solid footing on uncertain ground.

THE GOOD Flat profile laces are extremely lightweight and non-absorbent

THE BAD Expensive compared with other shoes on the market

mammut.ch

6 Scarpa Epic £84.99

Thanks to a 'ribcage' design that wraps snugly around your midfoot, the Epic is extremely light and offers a secure fit. It also provides great protection for your feet, especially around the forefoot, where Scarpa's Armour Lite abrasion-resistant shell ensures your toes won't suffer on treacherous terrain.

THE GOOD Deep-lugged treads provide excellent grip

THE BAD Substantial lacing adds unnecessary weight

scarpa.co.uk

7 The North Face Single Track £89

This lightweight, neutral trail shoe is suitable for racing as well as everyday training, and its high-impact cushioning ensures comfort. Despite this, it still offers a high level of protection, thanks to a stiff sole and a Snake Plate forefoot designed to handle all manner of trail debris, while its high-abrasion outsole adds vital traction.

THE GOOD A solid all-rounder

THE BAD Not the grippiest tread you'll find

thenorthface.com/eu

8 Salomon XR Crossmax £95

The XR Crossmax aims to combine the best elements of road and trail shoes to suit runners of both disciplines, providing decent toe and heel protection without too much bulk on the upper. Two shoe options – neutral and stability, both with stiff, protected soles – ensure that over-pronators are catered for whatever the surface, while its stylish design looks great in all conditions.

THE GOOD Innovative and handy draw-cord lacing system

THE BAD The low-profile tread isn't suited to extreme off-road conditions

salomon.com/uk

There are loads more trail running shoes at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/trailrunner**

Words Ben Ince **Photography** Danny Bird

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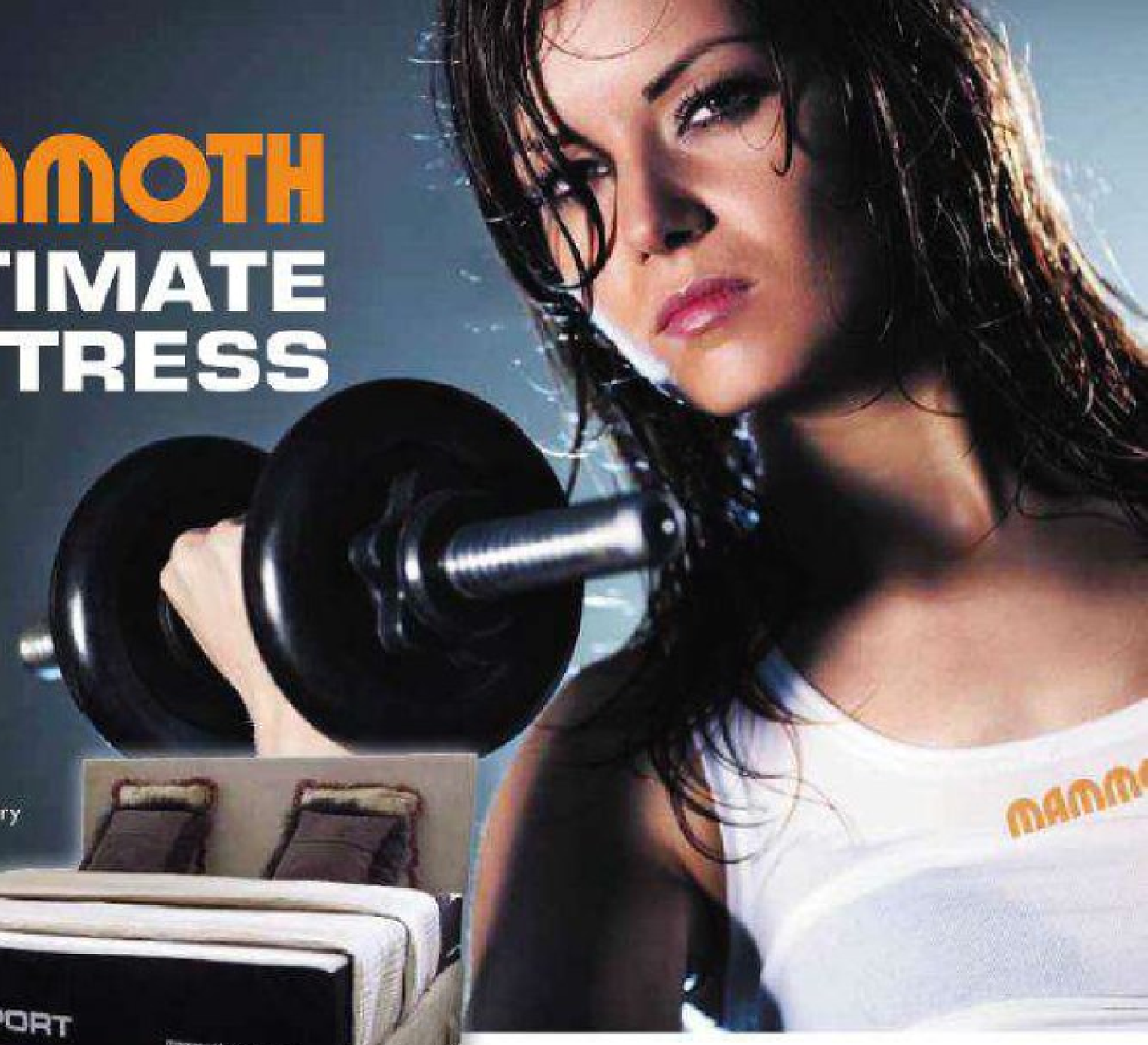

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WHY WE THINK EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE A MAMMOTH MATTRESS >>

SPORTS PERFORMANCE AND RECOVERY SPECIALISTS

If you are looking for a great nights sleep, help with back pain and/or improved performance, read on.....

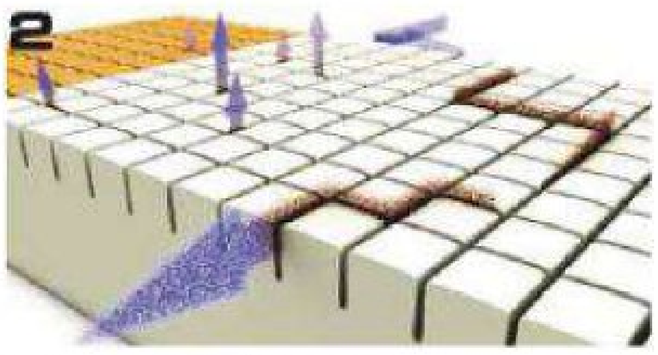
Hailed as the 'ultimate health mattress', Mammoth's new sport mattress range has been tried and tested by many of the UK's top athletes, including Premiership & England footballers, rugby players and Olympians. Passing rigorous testing, this mattress is having a huge impact on sports performers as well as health and fitness enthusiasts generally, thanks to Mammoth's V-Max technology structure. V-Max is a trio of technologies that combine to make the ultimate health mattress.

(1) First in the V-Max technology trio is Mammoth's use of 'high-specification foam'.

High-Specification Foam for Postural Support & Comfort

Unlike memory foam which is known to overheat causing discomfort and dehydration, this new superseding medical material is even recommended by the Department of Health, thanks to it's cooling properties.
Mammoth's research and development team has taken the technology one step further by creating 'castellated zones' that mimic the shape of the body for the ultimate in postural support, spinal alignment and back care.

(2) Secondly, **cooling air-flow channels** between the castellations allow the mattress to shed excess heat and moisture, so you do not get hot and sweaty in the Summer months.

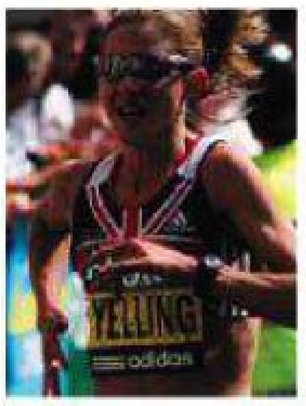


Cooling Air-Flow Channels for Deep Sleep

Ensuring a tranquil deep sleep, the castellations also work independently so you are not disturbed by your partner during the night.

THE INDEPENDENT

The Mammoth: Making the Independent's top 50 Fitness Essentials



"I've just made one of the best sleeping investments of my running career and got a fantastic Mammoth mattress. It's really helped with recovery and quality sleep."

British Olympian
Liz Yelling

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ernestjones.co.uk

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watchshop.com/versace-watches.html

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ernestjones.co.uk

4 Nixon The Sentry £119.99
surfdome.com

5. Christopher Ward C40 Speedhawk £590
christopherward.co.uk

6 Raymond Weil Tango £850
raymond-weil.com

7 TW Steel Grandeur Diver TW71 £495
twsteeluk.com

8 Nite MX10-201GS £285
nitewatchshop.co.uk

9 BOSS Black 1512496 £250
bosswatches.co.uk

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Storeking.com

10 TAG Heuer Carrera Calibre 1887 £2,350
tagheuer.com

11 Tissot T-Sport PRS516 Automatic £855
tissot.ch

12 Storm Aquanaut Silver £199.99
stormwatches.com

13 Swatch Chrono Automatic £239
swatch.co.uk

14 Pulsar PF8137X1 £69.99
argos.co.uk

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accurist.co.uk

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dolcegabbana.com

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seiko.co.uk

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citizen-watch.co.uk

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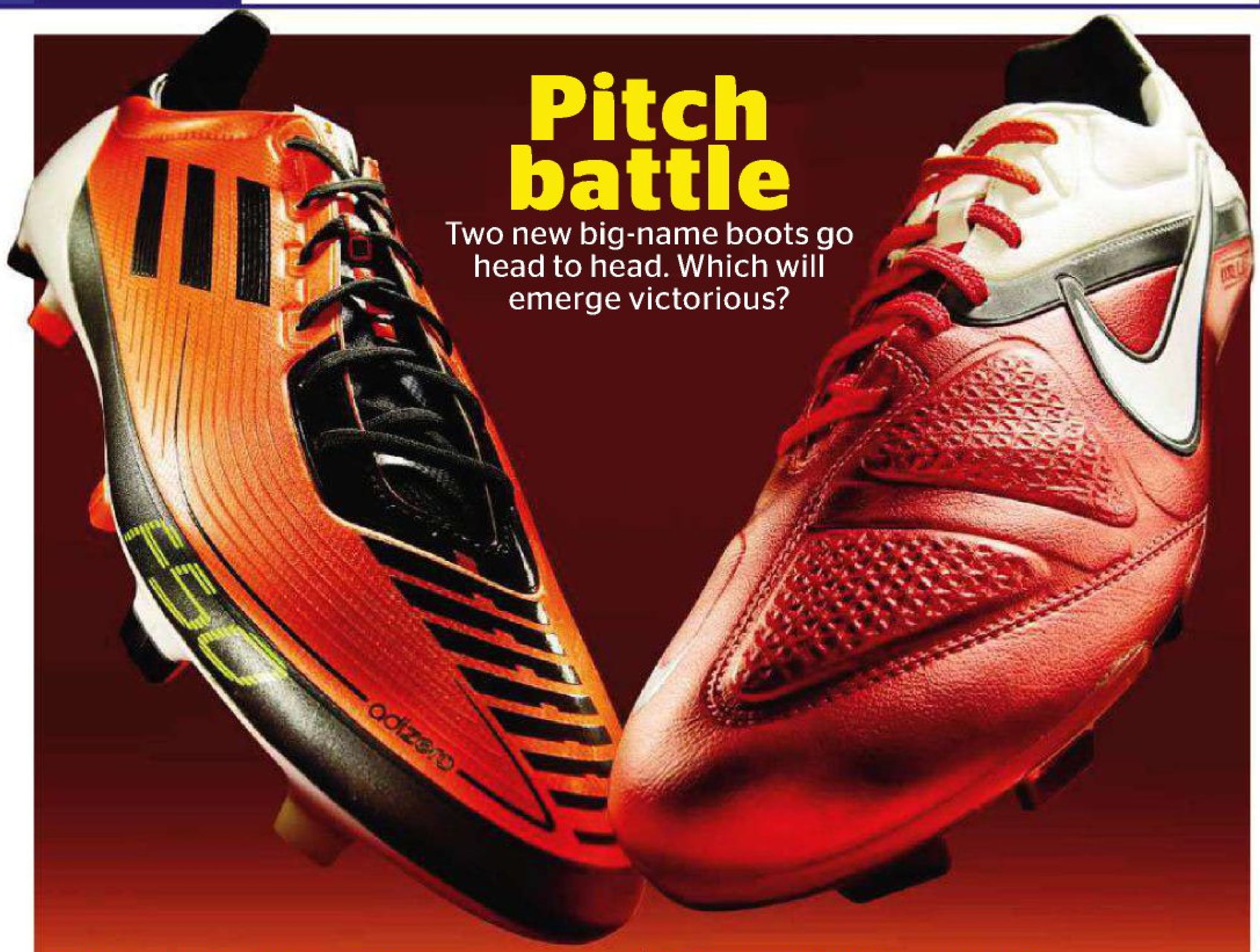
Pitch battle

Two new big-name boots go head to head. Which will emerge victorious?



Adidas F50 AdiZero Prime

Transfer value £210
Preferred position
Winger/forward
Special skill
Weighing a mere 145g, the new AdiZero F50 – as worn by supercharged Spurs left-winger Gareth Bale and Barcelona's world player of the year Lionel Messi – is said to be the lightest football boot on the planet. Constructed from AdiLite material, it's designed to help pacy players hit top speed as quickly as possible.
Needs to work on
The lightweight construction inevitably means the F50 lacks cushioning, offering hardly any padding on the heel or tongue and very little protection for your feet, so mind your metatarsals when the tackles come flying in.
prodirectsoccer.com

Nike CTR360 Maestri II Elite

Transfer value £235
Preferred position
Midfield playmaker
Special skill
A grippy pad on the instep and two large cushioned pads on the forefoot are designed to assist your control and first touch. We're not saying you'll be quite up to the standard of CTR360 wearers Rafael van der Vaart and Jack Wilshere, but you might be able to receive and distribute the ball quicker and more accurately.
Needs to work on
Although you'll appreciate the protection when the going gets tough on a Sunday morning, the CTR360 is noticeably heavier than many of the new generation of boots – and that could be draining in the 80th minute on a park quagmire.
nikefootball.com

Cold snap

The camera that keeps going in the chilliest conditions

Olympus TG-610 £250

Digital cameras have advanced no end in the last ten years, but they're still susceptible to going haywire after a bit of rough treatment. The new Olympus TG-610 is different – you can freeze it, drown it or smash it, and it'll still keep on taking 14-megapixel snaps and shooting movies in HD. It considerately makes exporting content easy, thanks to an Eye-Fi card that automatically uploads wirelessly to your computer or website whenever you're in range. USB compatibility also makes it easy to charge anywhere.
olympus.co.uk

Words Ben Ince **Photography** Danny Bird

fitnessfaqs.com

StoreMags.com

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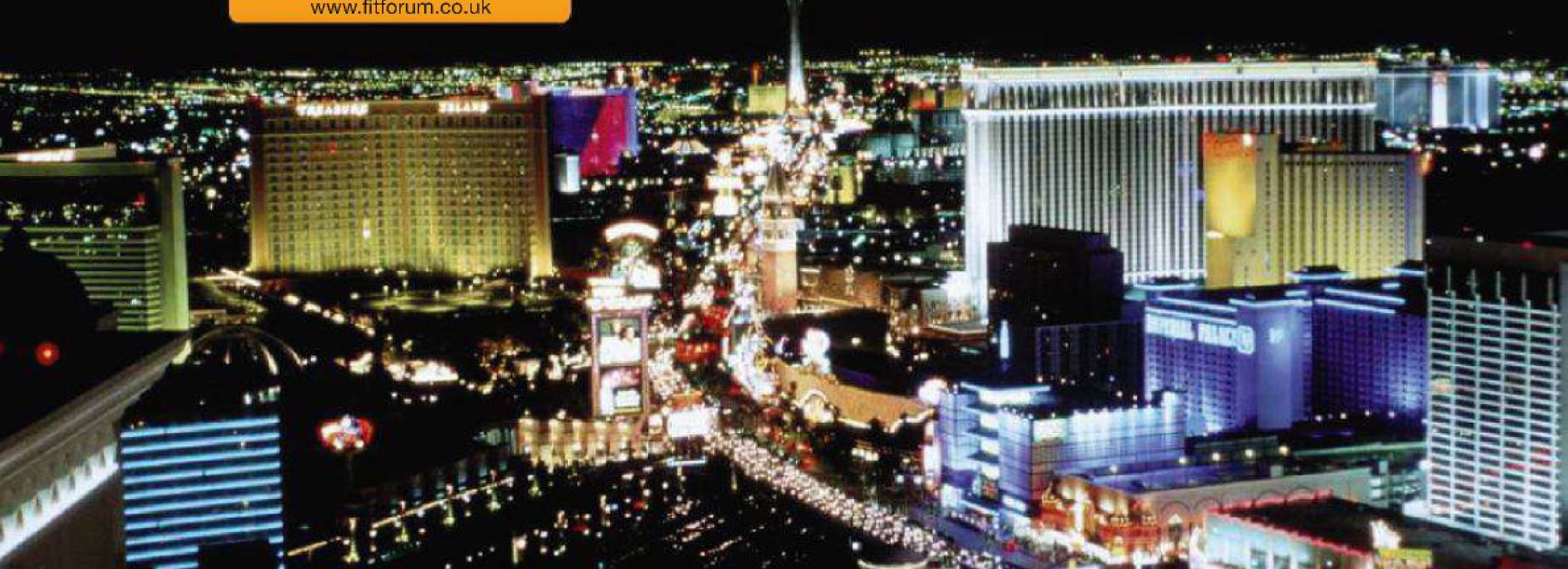

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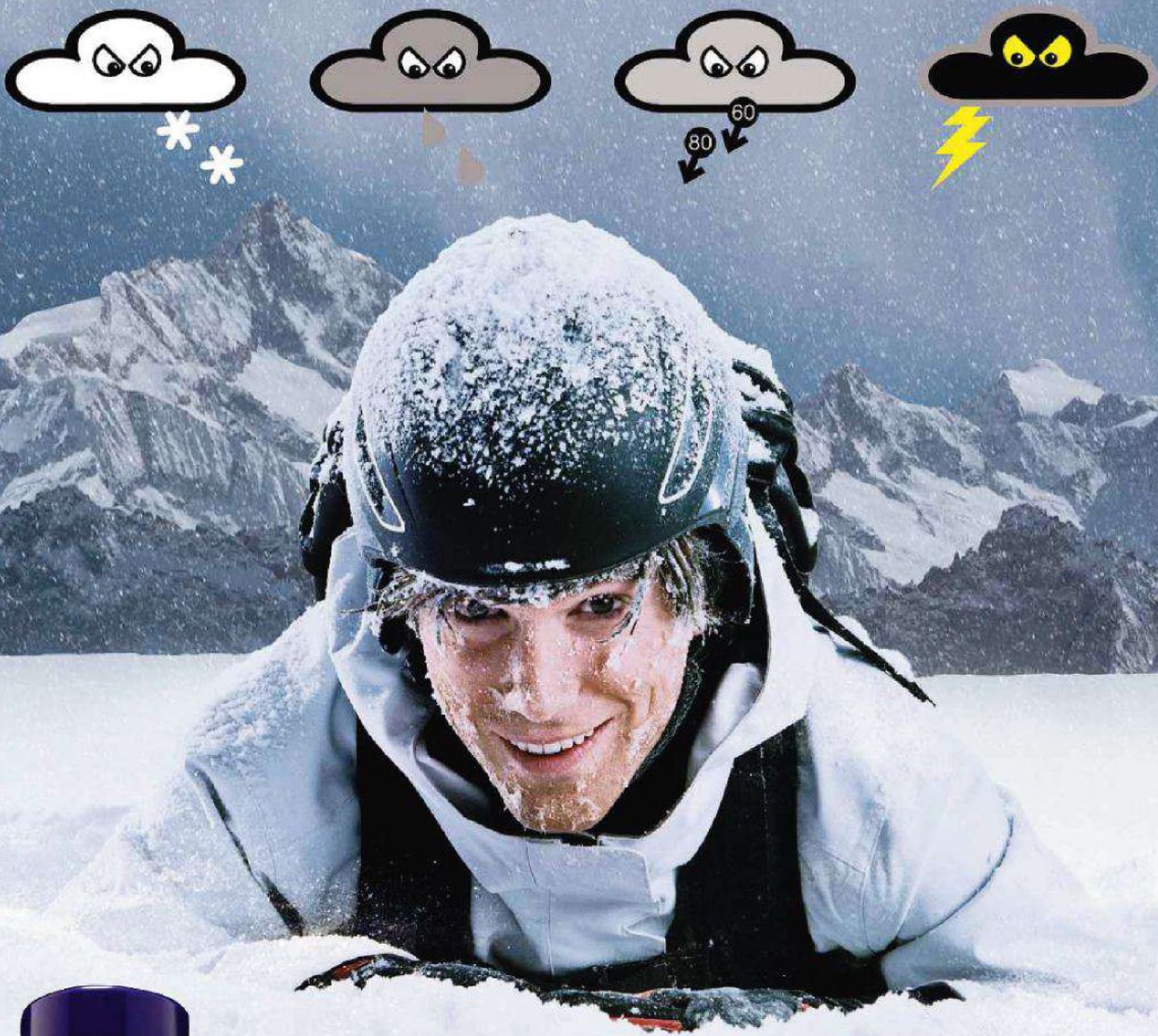
COLD WET WINDY WINTER HATES YOUR FACE



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Storemags.com

MF says relax

Reward your hard work in the gym and office with this four-step revitalising routine

1 Rituals Bushido foaming cream bath
£9.90 for 500ml
When you're at the gym a quick shower is the only option, so indulge yourself for once by running a bath and pouring in this rich, creamy foam. The bamboo extract soothes your skin while the ginger has revitalising qualities. Think twice before surrounding yourself with scented candles, though.
rituals.com

2 Dermalogica Stress Relief treatment oil
£14.80 for 100ml
Once you're out of the bath, de-stress by massaging this treatment into your skin. The organic silicones are soothing while the sandalwood, lavender, orange and clary sage combine for a calming effect. It also contains extracts of tea tree and ylang ylang, which are said to fight the negative mental effects of stress.
dermalogica.com

3 Skinceuticals Hydrating B5 Masque
£34.25 for 75ml
By now you should be comfortable enough with pampering not to flinch at applying a hydrating face masque. The key ingredient is hyaluronic acid, which hydrates and relieves stressed skin. Use it at night after washing your face, leave to penetrate for ten to 15 minutes – and don't answer the door to a mate while it's on...
skinbrands.co.uk

4 Dior Homme Dermo System Anti-Fatigue Firming Eye Serum
£37 for 15ml
The eye area is often the place where men first show signs of ageing, so complete your revitalising routine with this anti-fatigue serum. The Cafexyl formula helps to lighten the pigments involved in developing the dark circles that make you look older and tired.
dior.com

WHAT'S NEW

Fragrance of the month
BOSS Orange Man
BOSS says it aimed for 'sociable and relaxed' men with its new fragrance, which sounds a bit like a euphemism for drunkards. The reality is more respectable, however, and the aroma of wood, apples and oranges manages to be both masculine and playful.
£45 for 100ml
Nationwide

WHAT'S NEW

Sisleÿum For Men Anti-Age Global Revitaliser
Sisley's first ever skincare products made specially for men match the quality of its much-coveted women's range. The Sisleÿum brand launches with two anti-ageing, revitalising post-shave products: one for normal or oily skin, the other for dry skin. The former is oil-free, mattifying and has a gel texture. The latter is a cream and is more soothing.
£150 for 50ml
sisley-cosmetics.co.uk

ON TEST

Hair wax

Five tubs to tame your locks

Fish Flexyfish Defining Spray Wax
£3.56 for 200ml
Using a spray rather than a tub is an interesting innovation but it means that you lack a bit of control when applying the wax. This coconut-scented liquid hold is best suited to longer hairstyles.
boots.com

Garnier Fructis Style Surf Hair Texturising Wax
£2.99 for 75ml
If you know exactly what sort of style you're after, reach for this honey-scented wax. It's satisfyingly pliable in your hands and allows you to shape even short hair with precision.
Available nationwide

Kings Texture Hair Wax
£5.99 for 100ml
This dense wax smells faintly of joss sticks, but the styles it lets you mould are a lot edgier. It's good for creating sharp, spiky looks, even in short hair.
Available nationwide

VO5 Styling Wax
£2.89 for 75ml
This ferny-smelling, satisfyingly gloopy wax feels as if it gives you a high level of control over your look, even if you've got fairly short hair.
Available nationwide

Shockwaves Re-create Styling Wax
£3.22 for 75ml
Aimed at the indecisive hair-styler, this fruity-smelling wax can be reshaped so you can change your look throughout the day.
Available nationwide

Words Hayley Thatcher **Photography** Danny Bird

For expert tips on how to style your hair using wax go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/stylemeup**

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YOUR SKIN.”

Martyn L, London
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Out There

Edited by Chris Miller

Live life in the fit lane

Race Report **Tough Guy**

TOUGH LOVE

***MF*'s Nick Hutchings takes on the race billed as 'the world's safest, most dangerous taste of mental and physical pain, fear and endurance' – and tries very hard to enjoy it**

Race details

What Nancherrow Tough Guy
Where Old Perton, Staffordshire
Disciplines Running, climbing, wading
Fitness level Intermediate
Winner's time 1hr 11min (although officially no-one won because no-one completed all the obstacles. German Knut Hohler reached the finish first)
***MF*'s time** 2hr 8min
More info toughguy.co.uk

***MF*'s Nick discovers that this is one race where feeling 'on fire' isn't so great**

Photography Tom Miles

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What's the Tough Guy, then?

It's a seriously vicious obstacle course race of around 13km. The first section of the route, called Country Miles, contains off-road trails, slippery hill climbs, and lots and lots of mud. The second section – The Killing Fields – features massive climbing frames, neck-deep frozen ponds, postman's walks, underground tunnels filled with electrically charged wire and burning hay bales. If you can't face doing it on your own you can enter as a team that runs together.

It can't possibly be as brutal as it sounds, can it?

From a pure fitness point of view it's not much different from an off-road 10K, but you need a will of iron to deal with the freezing water and electric shocks. I've run lots of road and trail races and never thought about quitting, but there was a point during the Tough Guy when I started to feel that if I had to wade through any more freezing water I might die. It took all my will power not to curl up in a ball at the side of the course and cry for my mum.

'It took all my will power not to curl up in a ball at the side of the course and cry for my mum'

Is the start just a load of people crapping themselves then?

Your starting point is determined by the entry fee option you've gone for – it gets more expensive if you want to start up the front. When it's time to race, you make your way to your allocated pen, then after a wait of up to 20 minutes, during which people scream and throw rugby balls at each other, a cannon is fired and the pens are opened up at staggered intervals.

Do the horrible obstacles start straight away?

No, but the first 200m is still chaos. Unless you're right at the front or the back you're caught in a huge sprinting throng of people all shoving and tugging each other. But because a lot of the entrants aren't regular runners, the crowd quickly thins out and you can scythe through the pack. It's another 500m or so before you hit the first obstacle – a collection of wooden bars you scramble over, plus some knee-deep trenches filled with icy water.

So is that it for the running?

Oh no. Once you've got through the first set of obstacles, you run along an off-road track for a couple of kilometres before you get to more wooden bars and a series of torturous hill climbs. There's only one hill but you have to go up and down it seven times. I tried to run the whole lot but burned out by the time I got to the fifth climb and had to half walk, half scramble up the last two.

You can tell it's near the start – Nick's face hasn't lost all hope yet

This used to be a form of execution on the Spanish Main

The postman's walk: about 50 times more brutal than it sounds

If you're near the front, you have to smash through ice to get into the ponds

Don't look at the photographer, Nick, he won't help you

And you hadn't even got to the Killing Fields yet...
That's right, and you've still got another kilometre to go – and some burning bales and army-style netting to get past before you get there. Oh, and there's a knee-deep trench filled with water, which is broken up by wooden fences. You have to drop off a mud bank into the water, wade across, climb out, run around a fence and go back through the water the other way. Then you repeat this seven or eight times – all to make a total progress of about 100m.

So it doesn't take long before you're extremely cold and wet, then?
You can't really feel what your lower body is doing for the rest of the race, because from this point on you spend as much time in the water as you do on the land. This means that you have to run conservatively to ensure you don't twist an ankle.

What were the worst obstacles you had to face in The Killing Fields?
Definitely the freezing water features. I kept banging into very sharp, very hard slabs of ice, and as soon as I got up to nipple-depth my chest tightened, making it hard to breathe. In the Water Tunnel you have to duck under a series of submerged pipes – cue savage brain freeze. After the fifth or sixth dunking I started to feel feverish and began hallucinating that the *MF* photographer, who was standing nearby taking pictures, was racing with me, and

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Tough Guy terrain tips

Here's how to tackle some of the obstacles the race will throw at you

Climbing frames

You'll already have gone through some water by the time you reach the frames so your motor skills will be impaired by numbness. You need to watch where you're putting your hands and feet, rather than just feeling your way.

Water drops

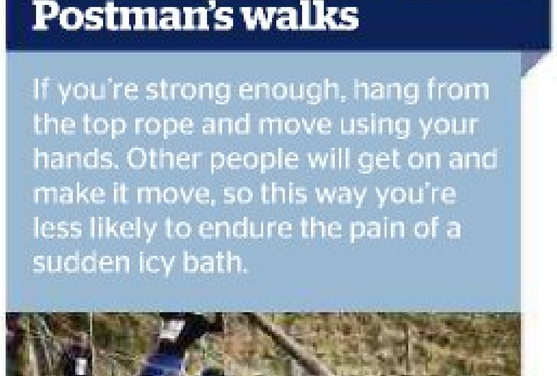
When you jump off banks into muddy water you won't be able to tell how deep it is, so drop into a crouch as you land. Although more of your body will get wet, you're less likely to suffer an impact injury.

Postman's walks

If you're strong enough, hang from the top rope and move using your hands. Other people will get on and make it move, so this way you're less likely to endure the pain of a sudden icy bath.

Deep water

When the water is chest deep, swim rather than wade. You'll get through it a lot faster if you use four limbs rather than two to power yourself across.

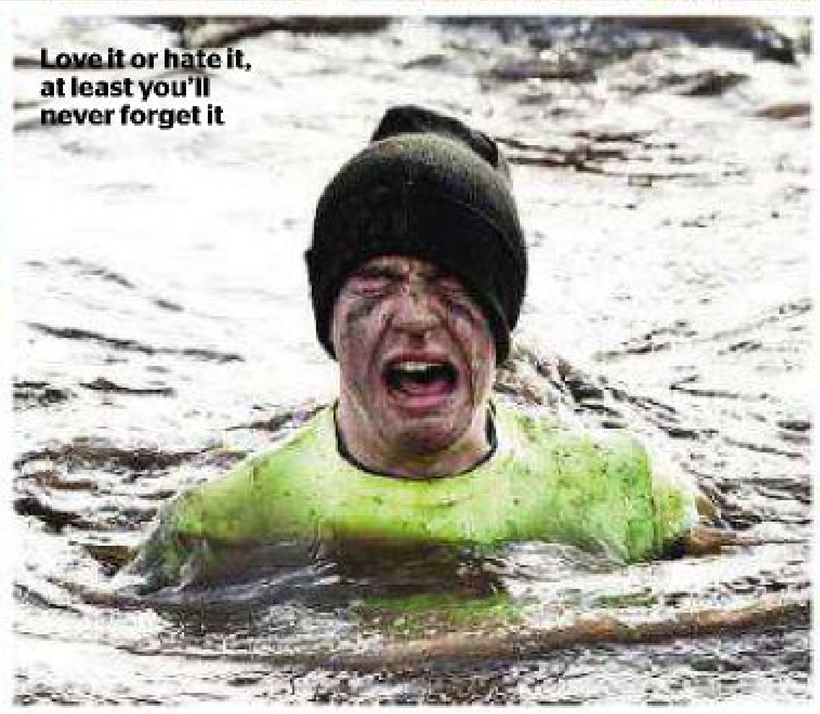


I think I pleaded with him not to leave me a couple of times.

So if you're not bothered by a bit of cold water, it's not too bad?

You'd need to be not bothered about crawling through tight tunnels while being almost electrocuted too. The first time you encounter the electric shocks is on a climbing feature called the Tiger, where you run under frames that have a load of wires hanging off them. It hangs low enough that you can't avoid touching it and the charge is powerful enough to make you scream in pain when it shocks you.

The second bout of shocks are way worse, though. They're in a shelved subterranean crawl space called the Vietcong Tunnels. It's pitch black in there so you don't know where the electric wire is, but the giveaway that you're in for a terrible time is the multitude of shrieks you can hear ahead of you. Once the first piece of wire touched my head I became a fully fledged member of the scream brigade. I dived away from the first shock and caught the next one on the ear. By the time I'd got out of the tunnel I'd been shocked five or six times, moving between pieces of wire like a electrified pinball.



That sounds like enough for anyone. Is that the last obstacle?

Not by a long shot. I had to get through several more water features, crawl across a bog on my belly to avoid scalping myself on low-hanging barbed wire, clamber over some tyres, then run half a kilometre uphill to the finish. And to add insult to injury, there was another dirty big pond just before the end.

Would you do it again?

No bloody way. Absolutely not. Wouldn't consider it. But it was certainly the most memorable race that I've ever entered. Now that it's far enough in the past that I can look at water without shivering and wanting to cry, I can think back on it and feel very proud that it didn't break me. Fair play to anyone who goes back for more. MF

Next race 29th January 2012
Anything sooner? The summer version of Tough Guy – Nettle Warrior – takes place on 31st July 2011. The good news? There's less of the icy water. The bad news? You have to take on every obstacle twice. And, as the name suggests, there are super-strength stinging nettles along the way to keep you on (and off) your toes.

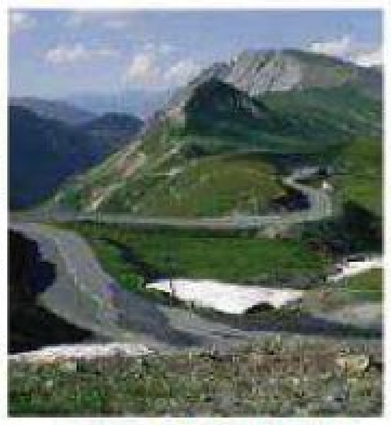
To see a video of *MF* taking on the Tough Guy, go to **menfitness.co.uk/links/gettough**

Name: Discover Adventure

Occupation: Cycle tour organisers

We organise and run a wide range of cycle challenges throughout the year, from short four-day rides from London to Paris to longer 13-day trips cycling from Land's End to John O'Groats. New for 2011 is our Charity Etape Cycle, which involves tackling a stage of this year's Tour de France in central France over two days. We offer full support on all trips with an experienced cycling crew, mechanics, cooks and leaders. Registration fees start from £99. We also operate a UK-based training weekend where you can check your fitness and boost your confidence.

Choose from these challenges:
- Land's End to John O'Groats
- London to Paris
- Geneva to Nice
- Classic Cols of the Tour de France
- Cycle Etape 2011
- Marrakech and Atlas Mountains
- South Cape Cycle
- Ho Chi Minh to Angkor Wat



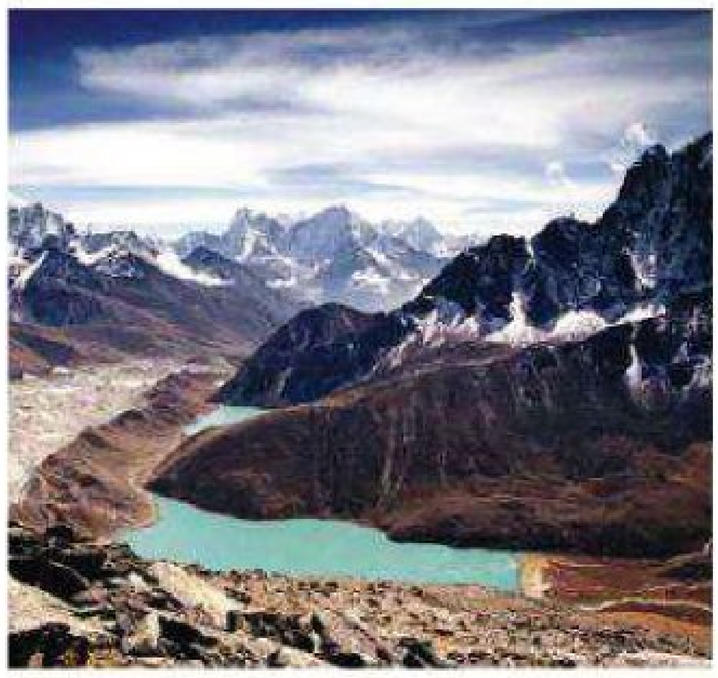
DISCOVER Adventure

More info: Visit www.discoveradventure.com or call 01722 718444. Use promo code Mensfitness.

Name: Intrepid Travel

Occupation: Global exploratory adventures

There's no doubt that the Nepalese Himalaya boast some of the most spectacular scenery on Earth. Thankfully Intrepid Travel offers over 30 ways to explore it! Our Active range covers classic treks, trekking peaks and stunning alternatives to the better known routes. Here's our top three for Nepal in 2011.



1 Everest via Gokyo
This incredible 15-day alternative to the traditional Base Camp route travels via the glorious Gokyo Valley and its five stunning glacial lakes (pictured above). From £1,035

2 Annapurna Sanctuary
Combine ancient temples in Bhaktapur with the classic ten-day trek to Annapurna Base Camp for total cultural and scenic immersion! From £695

3 Island Peak
Summit this spectacular trekking peak (6,189m) on a beautiful trail that passes by small villages and monasteries, before a challenging ascent to the peak. From £1,735

To see which adventures made it into Intrepid's Top 20 Must Do Trips, visit www.intrepidtravel.com/top20.

More info: Request Intrepid's Asia 2011 brochure or to book call 020 3147 7777 or visit www.intrepidtravel.com/mensfitness

INTREPID

Name: Timex

Occupation: GPS-enabled training monitors

GPS Training comes down to earth with the Global Trainer – the first GPS-enabled watch worthy of the Timex Ironman name.

Get pace, speed, distance and more on your wrist. With industry-leading SiRFstarIII™ GPS technology and ANT+™ compatibility, Global Trainer System records your performance across several dimensions, providing real-time data on a customisable screen. Download performance and route data to Timex Ironman online training log software powered by Training Peaks.

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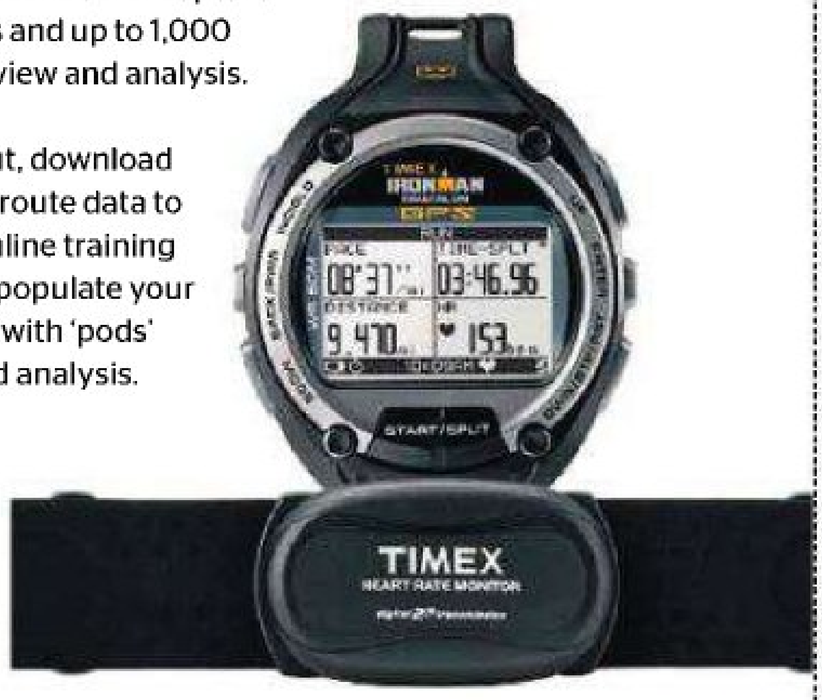
After your workout, download performance and route data to Timex Ironman online training log software, and populate your online dashboard with 'pods' of information and analysis.



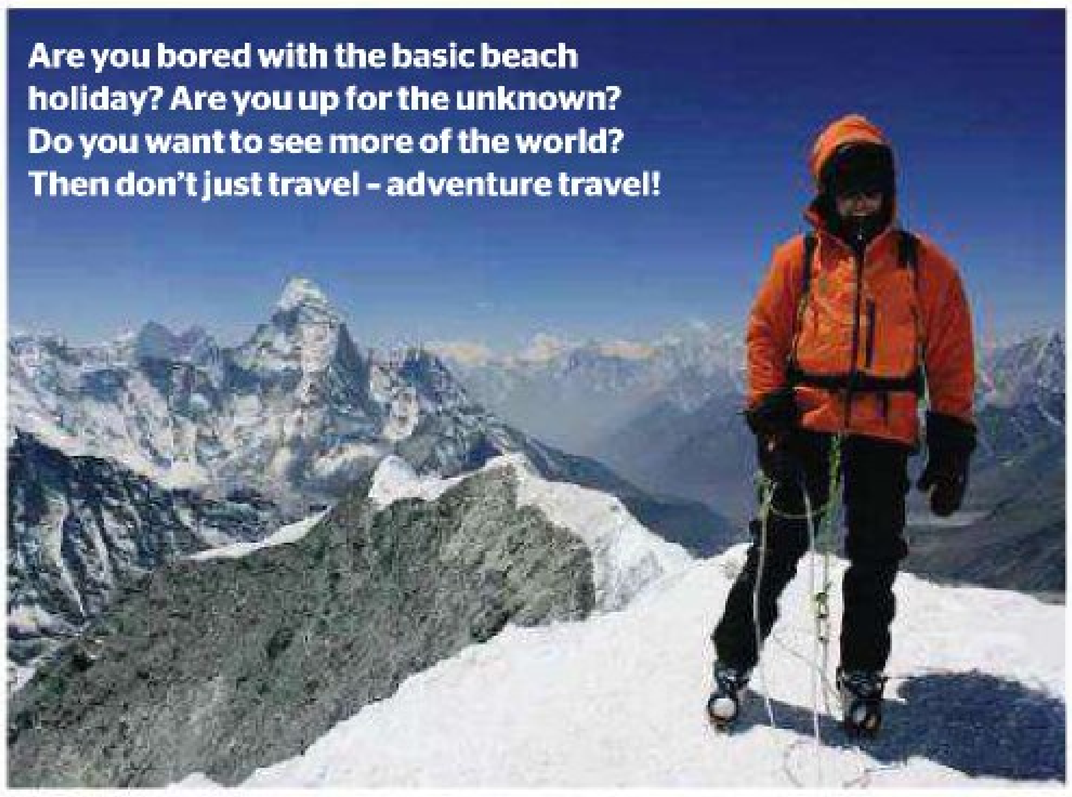
Product shown
Timex Ironman Global Trainer
RRP £250 or £300 with HRM

More info: For stockists, go to www.findastockist.co.uk

TIMEX IRONMAN

Name: Imaginative Traveller

Occupation: Organising affordable adventures



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6 Classic British walks with great pubs

The best places to head into the countryside and work up a thirst

1 Youlgrave to Bradford Dale

Where **Peak District**
Walk distance **20km**

Starting in Youlgrave, not far from Bakewell, this is a route that takes in the best of the Peak District, including babbling streams, trout pools and grassed lanes, as well as the picturesque stone-built village of Monyash. It'll take you a day to complete the walk – and waiting for you at the end is the Peacock at Rowsley, a hotel serving high-class cuisine made with local ingredients alongside an impressive wine list.

Difficulty ▮▮▮▮▯

2 Nash Point to Monknash

Where **Vale of Glamorgan**
Walk distance **8km**

This mostly level walk includes two nature reserves, a stretch of the wild Glamorgan coast and the ruins of Monknash Grange, and along the way you'll find a warm welcome at the Plough and Harrow. Specialising in traditional ciders and real ales, including the locally brewed Otley 01, it's a fixture in the *Good Beer Guide*. If you stay too long and can't complete the walk there's a bus stop outside.

Difficulty ▮▮▯▯▯

For full details of these walks go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/pubwalks**

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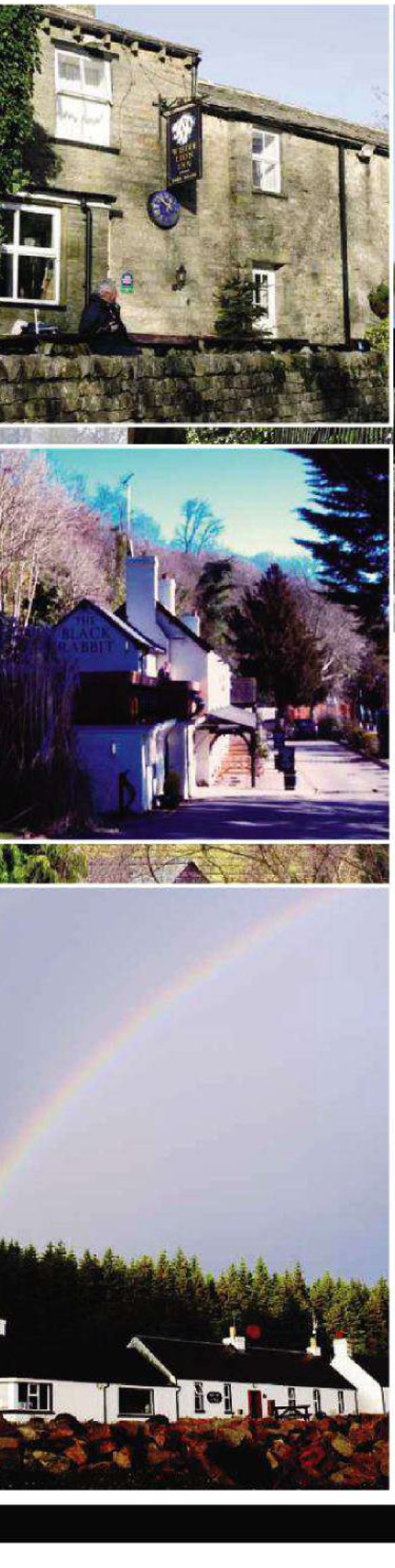

3 Buckden and Yockenthwaite

Where **Yorkshire Dales**
Walk distance **11km**

You won't get to see the full glory of the Yorkshire Dales without putting in some serious legwork, and this 4½-hour trek will definitely work up a thirst. Part of it is along a Roman road, while you'll also spot ruined castles and – if you're lucky – wildlife along the River Wharfe. Refresh yourself along the way at the George in Hubberholme, which overlooks the Wharfe and offers Yorkshire ales from the Black Sheep and Copper Dragon breweries, and the White Lion in Cray, a 17th-century drover's inn famous for its Sunday lunch.

Difficulty

4 Great Malvern to Herefordshire Beacon

Where **Malvern Hills**
Walk distance **16km**

From Great Malvern's 11th-century priory a path takes you south through the woods to the Worcestershire Beacon, the highest point of the Malvern Hills at 425m. It continues along the ridge – from which the view includes five counties and the Welsh hills on a clear day – to an Iron Age fort on the Herefordshire Beacon. You can hike back if you like, but after 16km it seems reasonable to take a bus back into Great Malvern and the characterful Nag's Head, which serves traditional ales alongside a range of malt whiskies and Belgian beers. Although naturally you'll want to try the famous local water.

Difficulty

5 South Stoke and the Arun River

Where **West Sussex**
Walk distance **8km**

Sitting beside the Arun River is the Black Rabbit, a former boathouse that has been converted into an elegant and inviting pub with an extensive menu. This walk, which starts in its car park, is gentle enough for families to manage and takes in the ancient hamlet of South Stoke, Swanbourne Lake and the edges of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust centre. As the route circles back on itself, you can either return to the Black Rabbit or divert into picture-postcard Arundel town, with its fascinating castle and charming, well-preserved centre.

Difficulty

6 Road to the Isles

Where **Knoydart**
Walk distance **32km**

The Daddy of all pub walks. The Old Forge at Inverie on the Knoydart peninsula is classified by Guinness as the most remote pub in mainland Britain and it's unreachable by car, so if you want to enjoy the pub's lively atmosphere and magnificent seafood, you'll need to strap on your boots and start from Kinloch Hourn early – making sure you get advice from the local rangers' association (scra-online.co.uk) first. Alternatively you can take a boat from Mallaig to Inverie, base yourself in the town and spend a few days exploring the breathtaking surroundings.

Difficulty

Words Chris Miller **Photography** Ben Ince, Alex Carpenter

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Jurassic Beast Sportive

Spectacular scenery and leg-shredding climbs in this challenging road event

The details

What Jurassic Beast Sportive
When 8th May 2011
Where Bovington, Dorset
Fitness level Intermediate to advanced
Disciplines Cycling
Details ukcyclingevents.co.uk

What to expect

This epic cycle takes place on and around England's historic Jurassic coastline, setting off from the National Tank Museum in Bovington for an 163km loop of the stunning Dorset downs. Breathtaking views of Corfe Castle, Lulworth Cove and Poole Harbour will help to take your mind off the punishing climbs. A shorter, 106km route is also available for less experienced riders.

'Breathtaking views will take your mind off the punishing climbs'

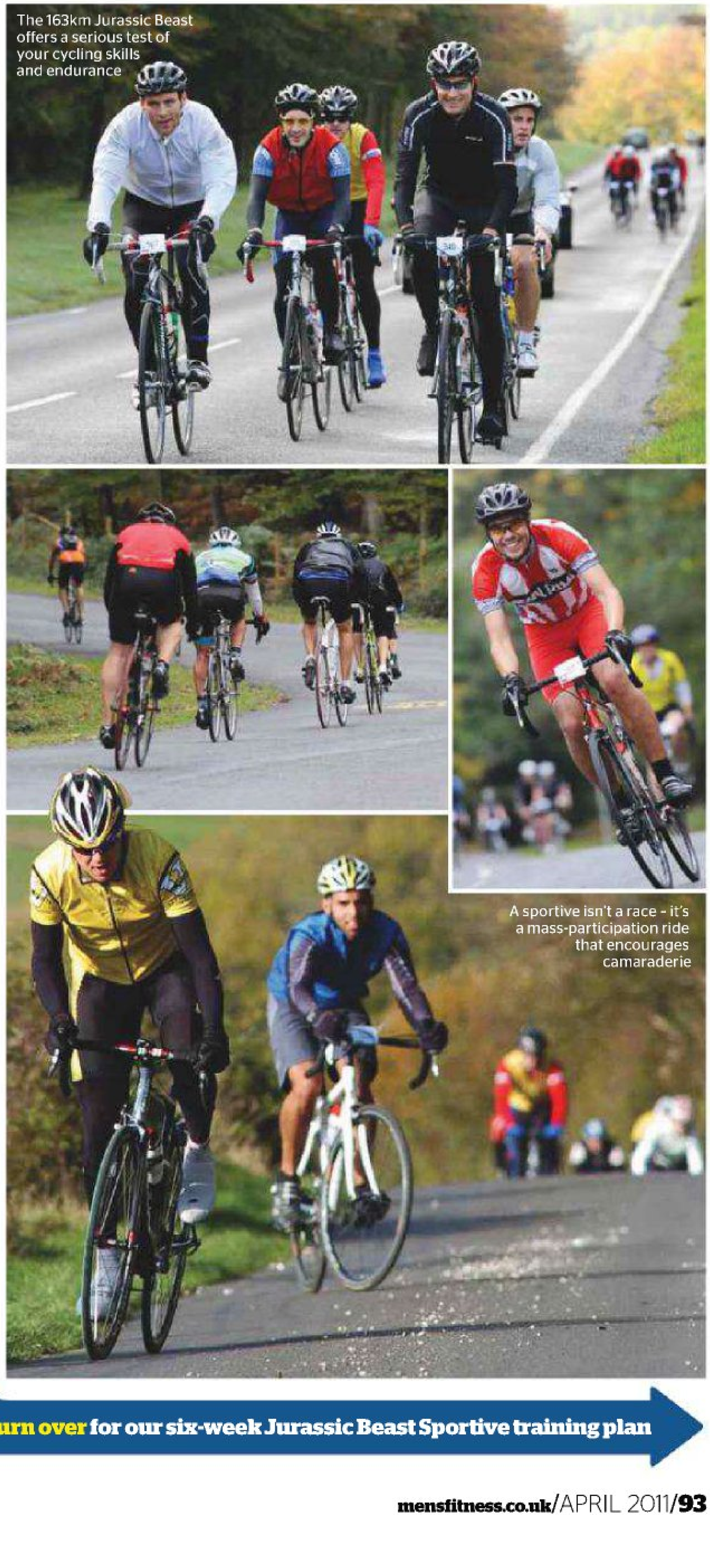
Expert tips

'Sportives are meant to be challenging, and the Jurassic Beast is a tough one,' says UK Cycling Events director Martin Barden. 'The longer Epic course is particularly undulating, so remember to pace yourself and not start out too hard. You should also make use of the three feed-stations located around the course, since nutrition is vital for maintaining energy levels in this kind of endurance event. Finally and most importantly, remember to look up and take in the amazing vistas the course has to offer – focusing on the view at the top of the hill makes it much easier to forget how hard it is.'

Essential kit

Gore Xenon SO Jacket £169.99

Although it's spring, there's every chance you'll still take a pounding from the elements on this exposed coastal route, which makes having the right clothing all the more important. This Soft Shell jacket from Gore is windproof, breathable, water-repellent and also extremely aerodynamic, which helps to minimise energy-sapping wind resistance. **gorebikewear.com**



The 163km Jurassic Beast offers a serious test of your cycling skills and endurance

A sportive isn't a race – it's a mass-participation ride that encourages camaraderie

Turn over for our six-week Jurassic Beast Sportive training plan

Stordkage.com

Six-week Jurassic Beast training plan

Prepare for the prehistoric thrills and spills of this fiercely undulating route

Mike Redshaw
is a coach, sports scientist and physiotherapist with thetrilife.com

'A 160km sportive is a challenging event that requires endurance, strength and correct pacing. This plan will also develop your speed, climbing ability and aerobic fitness.

'The first couple of weeks focus on aerobic conditioning and technique, getting you into a routine and preparing you for some of the tougher sessions ahead. Rest days are important because this is when your body adapts to your training and you get stronger.

'The midweek bike sessions can be done in the gym on the turbo, but you should get out on the road whenever possible, especially on the weekends.'

Effort levels

1-3 Easy up to a gentle pace
4-5 Able to have a conversation
6-7 Getting out of breath
8-9 Can't talk, uncomfortable
10 Flat-out sprint

Fitness level
Before starting this plan you should be able to cycle 65km.

Overgearing
Using a higher gear than is comfortable. Ride in a gear that feels sustainable, then go two clicks into a more challenging gear.

Hill reps
Cycle up a 6-8 per cent incline for 4-5min. Try to maintain a consistent pace all the way to the top

Spin-ups
A short burst in which you gradually increase the cadence. In a 30-second spin-up, increase it by 5rpm every five seconds.

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	Rest	Cycle 15min at level 3, 30min at level 5 and 15min at level 7. Keep the cadence at 85-90rpm.	Rest	**Overgearing** Cycle 20min at level 7, 2min at level 3 and 20min at level 7. Keep the cadence at 75-80rpm.	Rest	Cycle 3hr 10min at level 3, including 3x20min intervals at level 5-6. Keep the cadence at 80-85rpm.	Cycle 15min at level 5, including 6x30sec isolated leg training (pedal with one leg only, alternating), 2min at level 3, 15min at level 5 including 6x30sec **spin-ups** (going up to 110rpm) and 2min at level 3, then immediately repeat the whole session. Keep the cadence at 85-90rpm.
2	Rest	Cycle 15min at level 3, 30min at level 5 and 15min at level 7. Keep the cadence at 85-90rpm.	Rest	**Overgearing** Cycle 20min at level 7, 2min at level 3, 10min at level 9, 2min at level 3 and 20min at level 7. Keep the cadence at 75-80rpm.	Rest	Cycle 3hr 30min at level 3, including 3x20min intervals at level 5-6. Keep the cadence at 80-85rpm.	As Sunday week 1.
3	Rest	Cycle 5min at level 3, 30min at level 5 and 25min at level 7. Keep the cadence at 85-90rpm.	Rest	**Overgearing** Cycle 20min at level 7, 2min at level 3, 10min at level 9, 2min at level 3, 20min at level 7, 2min at level 3 and 10min at level 9. Keep the cadence at 75-80rpm.	Rest	Cycle 4hr at level 3, including 3x20min intervals at level 5-6. Keep the cadence at 80-85rpm.	**Hill reps** Do 3 hill reps at level 6, then 3 at level 8-9, with 4min at level 3 between reps. Keep the cadence at 75-80rpm.
4	Rest	Cycle 15min at level 5 and 15min at level 7. Keep the cadence at 85-90rpm.	Rest	**Overgearing** Cycle 20min at level 7, 2min at level 3 and 10min at level 9. Keep the cadence at 75-80rpm.	Rest	Cycle 5hr 30min at level 5, going up to level 6-7 on any inclines. Keep the cadence at 85-90rpm.	Rest
5	Rest	Cycle 30min at level 5 and 30min at level 7. Keep the cadence at 85-90rpm.	Rest	As Thursday week 3.	Rest	As Saturday week 3.	As Sunday week 3.
6	Rest	Cycle 30min at level 3 and 10min at level 6. Keep the cadence at 85-90rpm.	Rest	**Overgearing** Cycle 20min at level 7, 2min at level 3, 5min at level 9, 2min at level 3 and 5min at level 9. Keep the cadence at 75-80rpm.	Pack your kit and try to visualise the ride.	As Tuesday week 6.	RACE DAY Warm up thoroughly beforehand and eat and drink well afterwards.

This plan will prepare you for the climbs of the Dorset downs

Words Ben Ince. Before each session warm up by cycling for 10min at level 1-2.

You'll find more great events to enter at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/signmeup**

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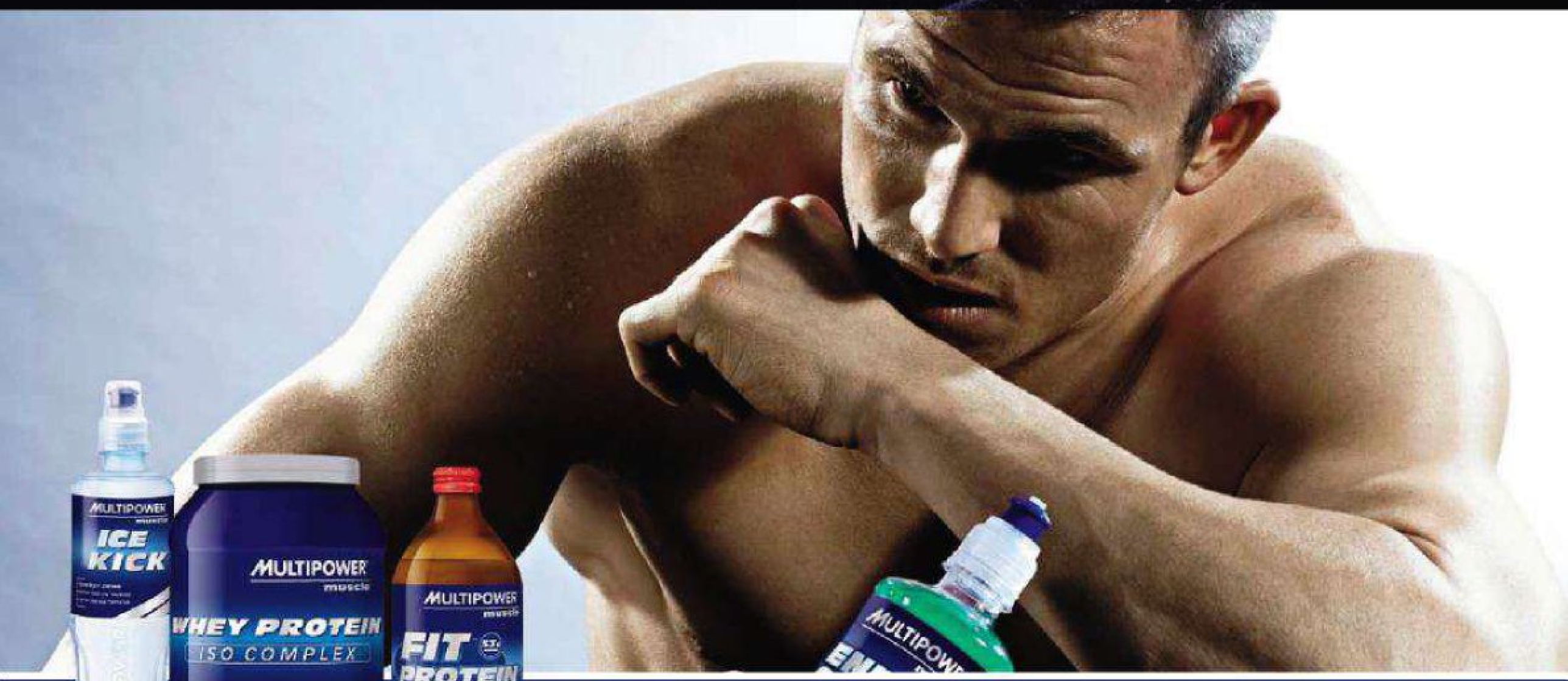

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Alive and kicking

Fairtex Pattaya is home to some of the world's leading Muay Thai fighters, but anyone can train there – if they can handle the pace. David Andrews packs his handwraps and books a ticket to the gym where champions are made

Photography **Adam Yurman**

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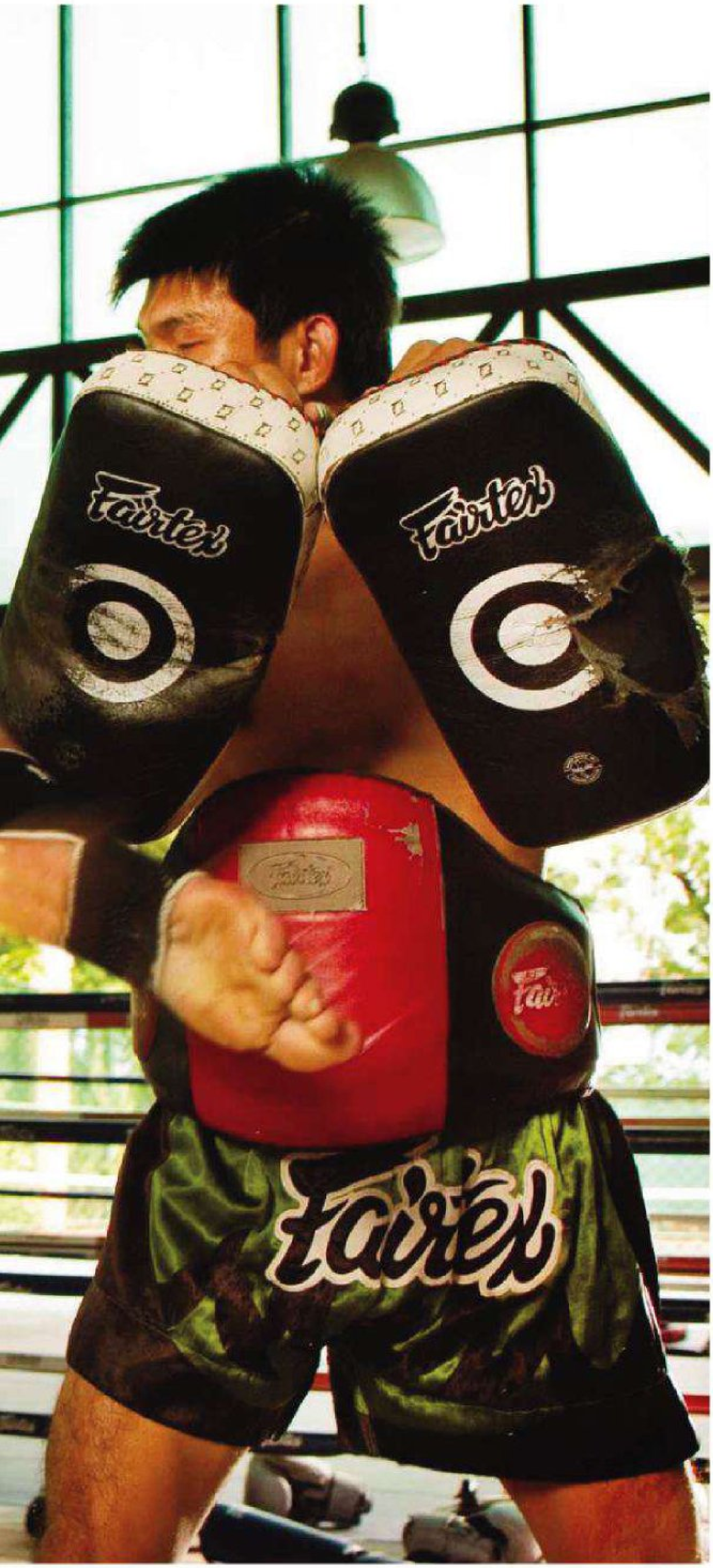

I try to stay light on my feet, my leading leg bouncing and ready to strike at the pad holder's signal. In the oppressive heat, there's no let-up for my lungs as I struggle to take a deep breath. I attempt to block out the pain in my shoulders as I throw a double jab, then a right leg roundhouse kick. Immediately another double roundhouse follows, then a push kick followed by a shuffle forward to jab, but just as I move, the trainer sweeps my leading leg.

Somehow I manage to stay on my feet while he smiles at my inexperience. I look to the side and see two minutes left on the timer. I can barely muster the energy to throw another punch. My trainer calls for me to relax, use less power and concentrate on technique and speed. This is the start of my first session at the Fairtex Muay Thai camp in Pattaya, Thailand. To make it through four hours of training today I need to calm down.

Fighting fair

With eight world and 12 Thai champions to its name, Fairtex Pattaya is perhaps the most highly respected Muay Thai camp on Earth. It's also a world-class facility with more than ten full-time trainers, four full-size rings and a vast bag work area. Its current list of active fighters includes Yodsanklai, winner of *The Contender Asia*, a Muay Thai version of the Sylvester Stallone reality TV

'My trainer smiles at my inexperience. There are two minutes left and I can barely muster the energy for a punch'

show. He's a former WBC super welterweight champion and Thai national champion, nicknamed 'The Boxing Computer' by the Thai media in recognition of his flawless technique.

Fairtex isn't all pros, though. Around me on my first day are nearly a dozen other Westerners (*farang* to the locals), at levels of ability ranging from the serious fighter in practice for an upcoming fight to the man on holiday looking to lose a few kilos and take home a story. The visitors are mainly a mix of Australian, British, French and Dutch, with the occasional American. Some will no doubt fall prey to the local and exotic nightlife on offer – it's not unknown for tourists to pay out for a month's training and accommodation, then go out to the local bars and sleep through the training.

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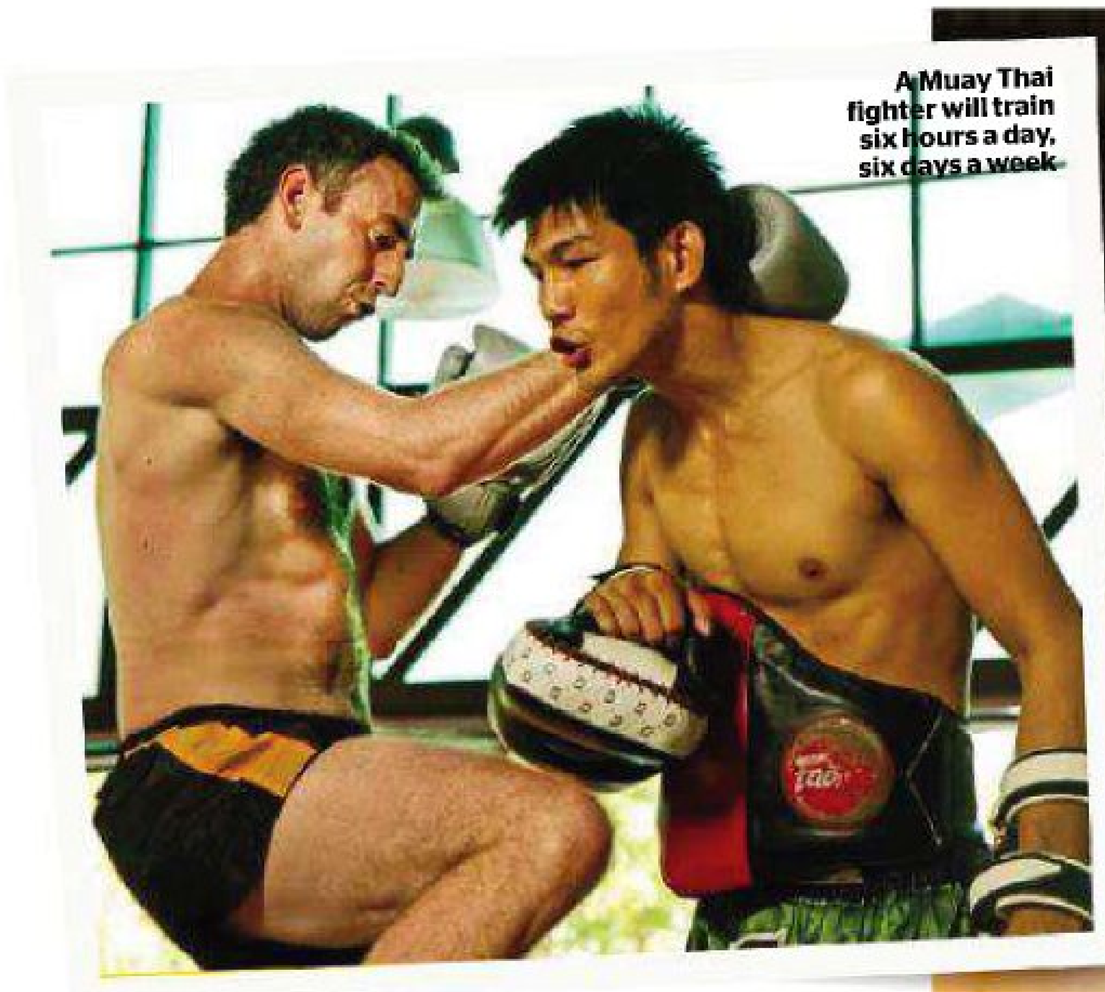


A Muay Thai fighter will train six hours a day, six days a week

I decided before arriving to guarantee myself eight hours of sleep a night and to avoid alcohol, to allow my body full recovery. I need to keep a clear and focused mind, and even though I'm here to train rather than fight, I aim to build my strength, speed and technique over the coming week.

Early start

However hard I focus, of course, I'm unlikely to get as good as the locals. It is not unusual for a Thai boy to start his fighting career aged eight or nine, and to have a record of 100 fights by the age of 18. The national sport of Thailand, Muay Thai fighting has its roots deep in the medieval ages when hand-to-hand combat went alongside armed conflict, and early forms of the sport were included in military training.

Its popularity was ensured in the 18th century by the Thai warrior Nai Khanomtom. Captured during one of the battles between Burma and Siam (as Thailand was then known), he was allowed the chance to fight against Burma's best fighters so that the country's king, Hsinbyushin, could see how Thai and Burmese martial arts measured up. When Nai defeated the champion with a dazzling flurry of kicks, punches and elbows, the king insisted he fight nine more in return for his freedom. After beating them all he was released and returned home to be hailed as a hero, and Siamese boxing became a national sport.

As Thailand grew and developed cities that needed protecting, soldiers learned Muay Thai along with the use of weapons, and its popularity grew with competitions taking place at various national festivities. Time-keeping was initially carried out by floating a pierced coconut shell in water. When it sank a drum would sound and signal the end of a round.

Could be a contender

These days the rounds are counted off by an electronic timer next to the ring – Fairtex fighters train in four-minute rounds instead of the standard three, to ensure they have plenty in the tank – but otherwise little has changed. Holding my pads in the ring is Naruepol, another participant in *The Contender Asia* and

MF's Dave squares up to welterweight champion Naruepol

the 2005 welterweight champion of Thailand. Before we start, he tells me about his training programme: six hours' training, six days a week. Three hours in the morning then again in the afternoon, made up of running, skipping, light weights, pad work, sparring, heavy bag work then press-ups and sit-ups. At the age of 27 he has a record of 170 fights, 130 of which were wins. In *The Contender* he was beaten by Yodsanklai, but only after giving top Canadian fighter Trevor Smandych a sound drubbing. He's friendly, but I wouldn't want to mess with him.

The pad work begins with basic punching techniques before we start to work on roundhouse kicks, which I'm encouraged to swing like a baseball bat, connecting with my shin instead of my foot. This is followed by a succession of further kicks including the *teep*, a push-kick that's almost like a boxer's jab, one of the signature techniques of Muay Thai. We move on to elbows and knees, then Naruepol starts to throw kicks back, which I'm expected to block with my shin. Even doing this at half-speed hurts – my shins clearly aren't fully conditioned yet.

When the bell finally rings, I raise my arms above my head to help open my lungs and take on as much oxygen as possible. In a climate where daily temperatures rarely drop below 30˚C and humidity 90 per cent, throwing and blocking kicks and punches for four minutes makes your body feel as if it's been placed in an oven, and the deep breaths of warm air only make things worse.

After a minute's rest it's straight into knee strikes. Naruepol offers advice on my foot placement and we go through the technique two or three times until it's correct. The combinations start flowing: knee strike, jab, cross, then roundhouse. Naruepol urges me to rotate my hips more to increase the striking action of my kicks, but with every move I feel my energy wane. I suck in a deep breath and this time shout out 'Yaa' as my shin connects with the bag. I focus my efforts and dip into my energy reserves. Seeing a Thai fighter in the ring next to me perform ten roundhouse kicks without losing any power only makes me more determined.

The longest day

After a bowl of pad Thai at lunch I return for the afternoon session, feeling fatigued before we even start. I put this down to it being my first day at the camp and tell myself my body will adapt. After some skipping, it's straight back into the ring for more kicks – two in succession, then three and four followed by a combination of punches. The first round saps my strength

'The pictures of world champions on the walls create an aura that is overwhelming'

but by the third I'm starting to relax, finding a breathing pattern that works for me.

After the fifth it's on to the bags to practise low kicks on both legs. My shins glow a deep red from the battering they receive, but adrenaline floods my body and I feel an immense sense of achievement. We finish the day with three sets of 20 sit-ups, after which I walk back to my apartment and have the best eight hours' sleep ever.

On day two I wake with serious aches and pains. My trainer takes out some boxing liniment and massages my legs. The warmth produced by the oil helps revitalise the muscles and he informs me that the sweat produced while training along with the oil will help cool me down. The weather is the worst thing – the pad work in this heat leaves me holding on to the ropes at the ›

Talking Thai

A guide to Thai fighting terms

Muay boran
The ancestor of Muay Thai, which allowed headbutts and didn't use gloves.

Mongkhon
The traditional headgear worn by a boxer during his entrance to the ring. It's believed to bring the fighter prosperity and protect him from danger.

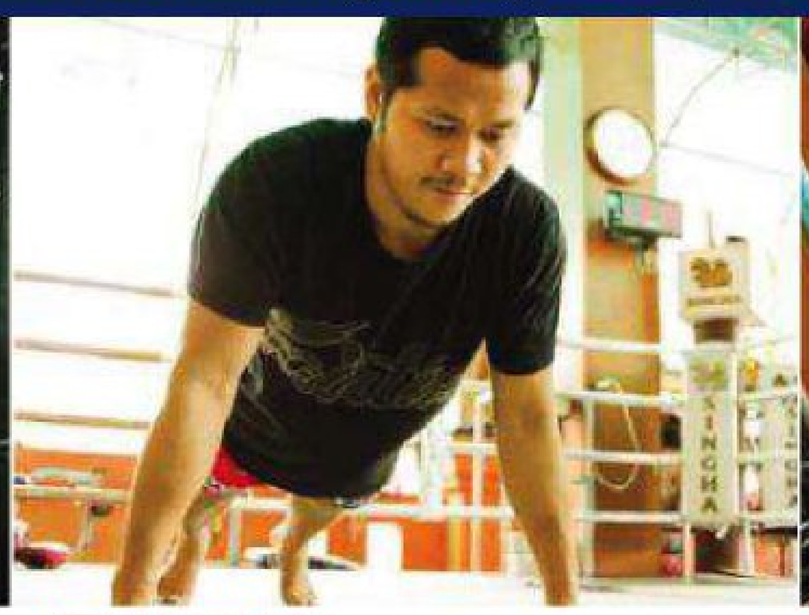
Wai khru
The dance performed inside the ring before a fight as a sign of respect to the trainer. Each gym has its own *wai khru*, designed to demonstrate its fighters' control, style and prowess.

Sarama
The traditional music that accompanies every Muay Thai fight. The tempo will vary, increasing as the rounds progress to urge the fighters to push themselves.

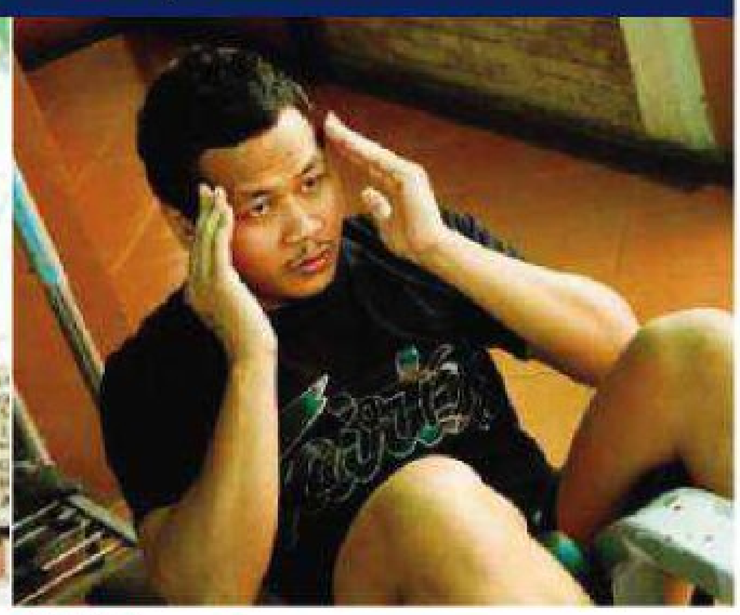
Get fit first

Yodsanklai's moves for getting in shape before you head to Fairtex

1 Skipping
Sets 5 Time 3 minutes
An excellent cardio workout that also improves footwork. Start by bouncing on the balls of both feet, then add movement rather than keeping static.



2 Press-up
Sets 5 Reps 20
Push-ups are carried out on the knuckles to develop strong fists and aid your punch. Do them at the end of a session or, if your fitness is up to it, in the minute's rest between rounds.



3 Crunch
Sets 5 Reps 20
The local fighters crank out hundeds of crunches. You should mix in leg raises and back extensions to work your whole core.

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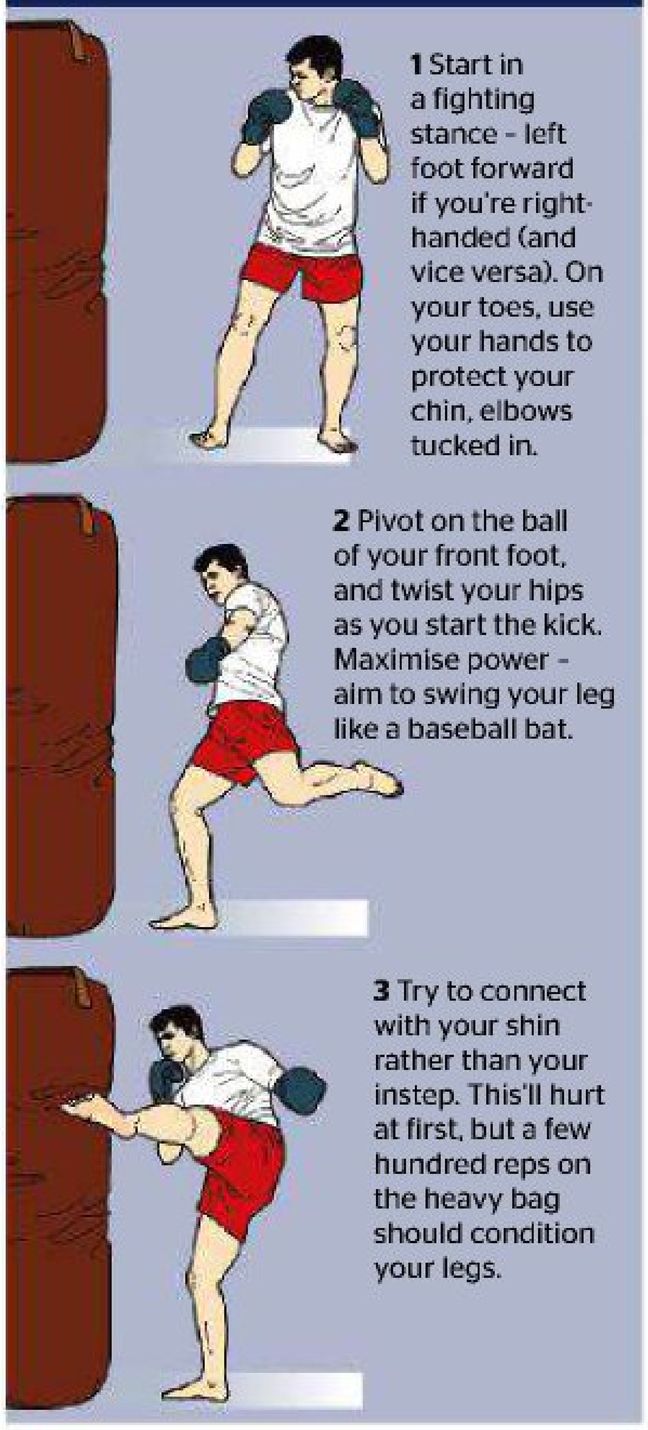
‘With my new-found fighting fitness I get two or three offers of a fight’

Killer move

Here’s how to do Muay Thai’s signature thigh-smashing roundhouse



1 Start in a fighting stance – left foot forward if you’re right-handed (and vice versa). On your toes, use your hands to protect your chin, elbows tucked in.

2 Pivot on the ball of your front foot, and twist your hips as you start the kick. Maximise power – aim to swing your leg like a baseball bat.

3 Try to connect with your shin rather than your instep. This’ll hurt at first, but a few hundred reps on the heavy bag should condition your legs.

Illustrations Sudden Impact

end of the first round – but the atmosphere keeps me going. The fighters training in the four adjacent rings and numerous pictures of world champions that adorn the walls create an overwhelming aura and a desire to prove your capability.

I push myself on, concentrating on breathing technique while trying to stay light on my feet. Even though my body is screaming for me to stop, doing so only makes it harder to restart my movements. Returning to bag work again I grin, trying the Thai approach of smiling at any pain felt. For five minutes I have a permanent grin on my face as my burning shins take relentless punishment against the fixed bags.

Road to recovery

As the days pass and I near the end of my week’s training, I find my recovery rate gets faster and I’m able to push myself further with each session. My reaction times are quicker, the kicks flow with more hip rotation, the knee strikes feel more powerful and my breathing becomes more manageable. The daily diet of chicken, prawns and rice with plenty of fruit and water also helps.

With my new-found fighting fitness, I get two or three offers of a fight from some of the trainers. With Fairtex having its own Muay Thai stadium in Pattaya and weekly scheduled fights, there is always an opportunity for a Westerner to test his skills. I meet an Australian guy with a record of two fights who has come over and booked himself in for three months. He tells me that after two weeks of training he’s signed up for a fight that’s due to take place next week. I decide this visit is not the one for me to launch my Muay Thai career – there is no pressure to do so, but the opportunity is there should you wish to take it.

On my last day I find myself training next to Yodsanklai himself. At only 25 years old he already has a record of 225 fights with 162 wins, 58 losses and five draws. Having started at just eight years old he now fights as often as every four weeks during the fight season. I introduce myself after training and he suggests I listen to music and go for walks as a way of relaxing after training – and drink a mug of hot milk in the evening. Who am I to argue with the champion? I play my iPod during the walk back to the apartment, not forgetting to pick up some semi-skimmed on the way. MF

For more details on training at Fairtex Pattaya, including training with champions Yodsanklai and Naruepol, go to fairtex-muaythai.com. You can book a fighting lesson with leading Muay Thai boxers for around £60. Flights to Thailand from the UK start at around £420 return.

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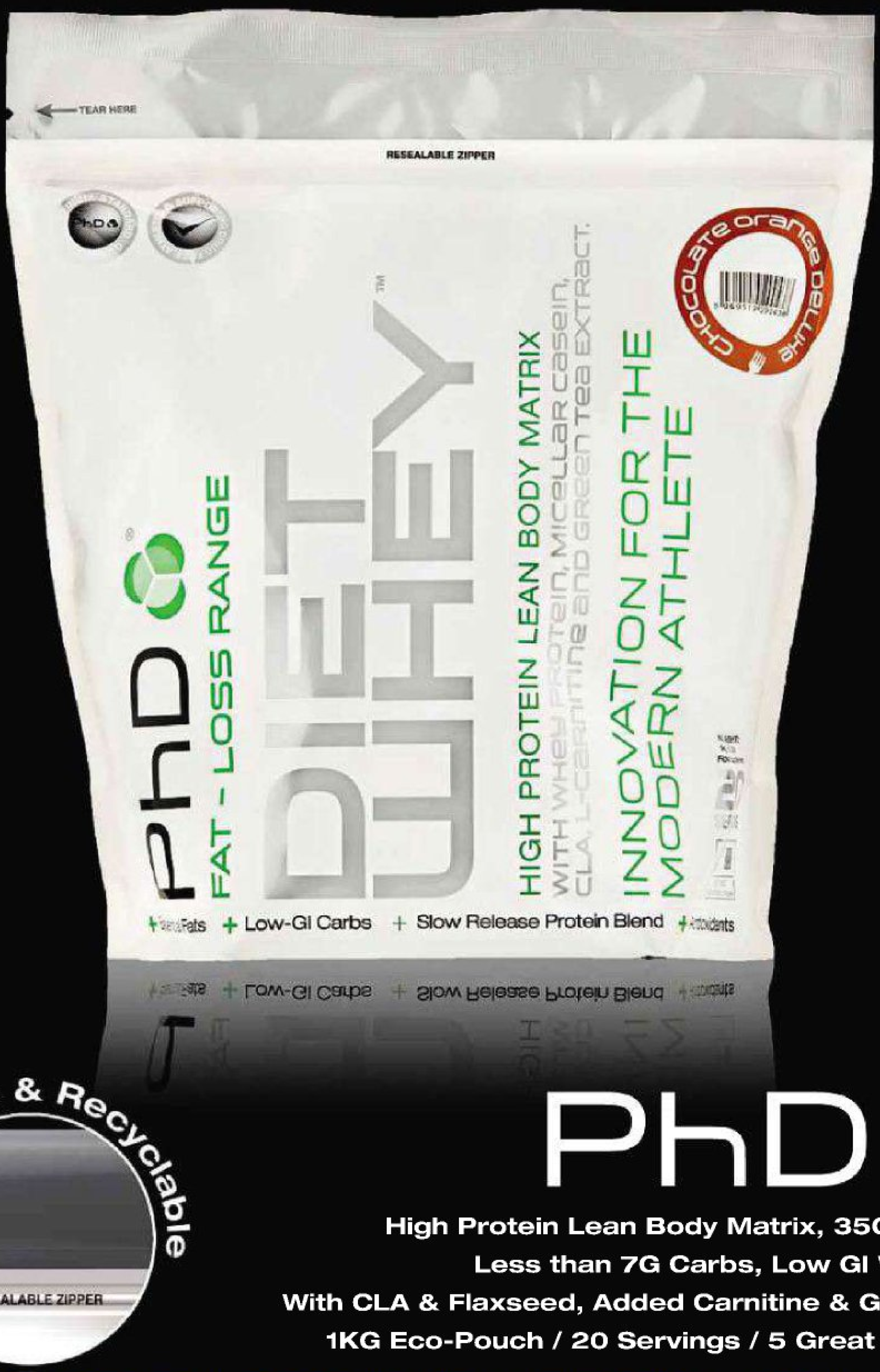
BURN FAT : BUILD MUSCLE



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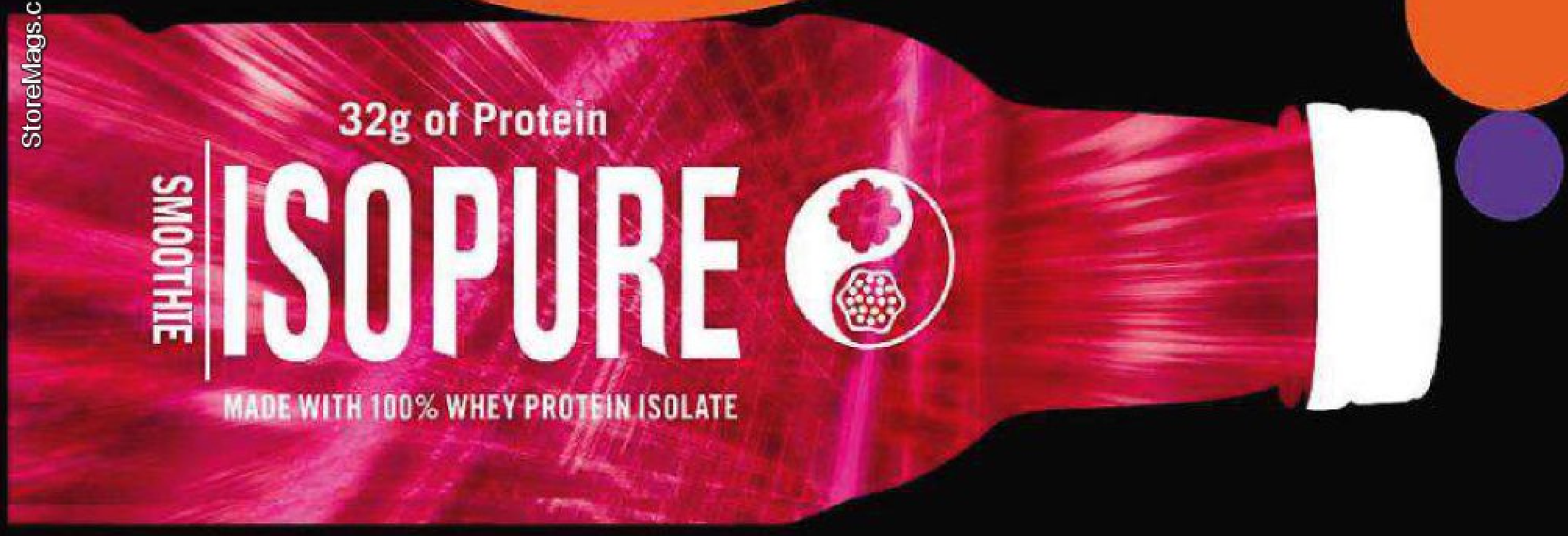

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Fitness fish

If you're building muscle tuna steak is a perfect high-protein food, but eating it regularly makes for a dull dinner. Cook this easy meal to give both your muscles and your taste buds what they need. Apart from the protein, **tuna contains plenty of selenium, a mineral that helps to kill off harmful free radicals that interfere with muscle growth.** High levels of zinc will boost your testosterone too, while its coenzyme Q10 content is great for keeping energy levels up. And alongside this colourful array of nutrient-packed roast veg, it makes for a sweet-tasting, mouthwatering muscle meal.

Quick tip
Cut the vegetables into chunks of a roughly similar size before roasting them so that they all cook at the same speed.

Red pepper
How many? 1
Red peppers are full of vitamins A and C, which are essential for a healthy immune system and for fighting off cell-damaging free radicals.

Courgette
How many? 1
Courgettes are low in calories and a great source of manganese, which helps the body to process protein and produce testosterone.

Sweet potato
How many? 1
Sweet potatoes are high in immunity-boosting vitamin A and betacarotene, a powerful antioxidant that helps to lower cholesterol in the blood and maintain a healthy heart.

Rosemary
How much? 1 sprig
Rosemary is high in dietary fibre, as well as being a source of calcium, which you need to maintain strong bones.

Words Ben Ince **Photography** packshotfactory.co.uk **Food styling** Jayne Cross

Inside

104 Gym Snacks
A convenient way to get yourself a post-workout hit of protein

106 Food Test
Slurp your way to good nutrition with one of these hearty soups

108 Fat Loss
You can use seaweed to shed weight. It's true – science says so

110 Attack Snacks
Declare war on the tempting titbits that keep you tubby

Storeykeys.com

Fowl mouthed

Building post-workout muscle has never been easier or tastier

Chicken and cheese wraps are a fast food restaurant staple, but use your own fresh ingredients and they turn into muscle-building snacks. Blending quality carbs, protein and fats with a variety of essential vitamins, this grilled chicken wrap will help you to pack on bulk and recover faster after a testing workout.

What you will need

1 **wholemeal tortilla wrap**
80g grilled **chicken breast**, shredded
20g **cheddar cheese**, grated
30g **cabbage**, shredded

What you will get

Wholemeal tortilla wrap
A wholemeal tortilla wrap is packed with carbs to help replenish your muscles, and it's also full of energy-boosting B vitamins.

Grilled chicken breast
As well as providing a large dose of lean protein for muscle growth and recovery, chicken contains vitamin B3, which helps to prevent fat storage.

Cheddar cheese
This dairy product is a great source of casein, a high-quality muscle-protecting protein. It also contains high levels of bone-strengthening calcium.

Cabbage
Cabbage is high in immune system-boosting vitamin C and dietary fibre, which your body needs to maintain a healthy digestive system.

Words Ben Ince, Joe Warner **Photography** packshotfactory.co.uk, Shutterstock

What supp? Your sports supplement questions answered

Q What is omega 3 oil and why do I need it?

A Omega 3 is an essential fatty acid. 'Essential' in this case means the body can't make it so you need to consume it periodically, especially if you take frequent exercise.

'From a physique standpoint, studies have shown supplementation with omega 3-rich fish oil increases weight loss and reduces waist circumference when compared with a similar diet without fish oil,' says Myprotein.com nutritionist Laurent Bannock. 'Studies have shown that supplementation results in decreased body fat and increased lipid oxidation [fat burning].'

A recent study with athletes showed other benefits. 'They recovered from fatigue more rapidly, experienced faster healing from injuries, saw faster muscular development, found it easier to lose body fat, reported less joint pain, were more mentally focused and had better skin, better mood, and uninterrupted sleep,' says Bannock. 'They were also able to train more often without overtraining symptoms.'

There's another fitness-boosting wrap at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/wrapitup**

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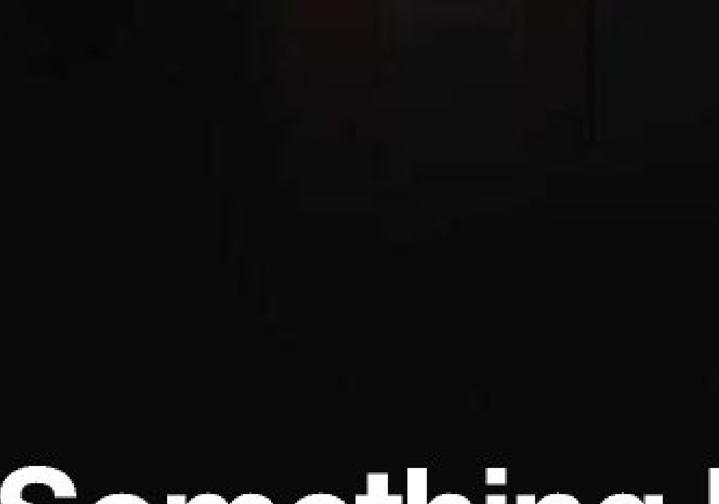
Body for Life

Something life changing is coming

The Body For Life 12 week exercise and nutrition programme back in the UK for 2011



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Abbott Nutrition

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Bowled over

Easy to cook and rich in nutrients, soup is ideal for a healthy light meal

There are times when you just can't be bothered to cook a healthy meal from scratch. When that happens, don't reach for a pasty – opt for a convenient and nutritious carton of soup. The tomato variety is packed with immunity-boosting vitamin C and filling fibre and is also rich in lycopene, which helps to protect your cells from the effects of damaging free radicals.

Which tomato soup tastes the best?

New Covent Garden Food Company Plum Tomato & Basil

The texture is creamy, while the flavour is understated but very enjoyable.

Salt 0.3g per 100g
Sugar 4.9g per 100g

£2 for 600g newcoventgardenfood.com

Sainsbury's Tomato & Basil

While you can certainly taste the basil, this suffers from an otherwise bland flavour and a distinct shortage of tomato chunks.

Salt 0.3g per 100g
Sugar 4.1g per 100g

£1.75 for 600g sainsburys.co.uk

Men's Fitness BEST IN TEST

Yorkshire Provender Tomato, Wensleydale, Red Pepper & Rosemary

Generous chunks of cheese complement the rosemary in this mouth-watering soup.

Salt 0.3g per 100g
Sugar 3.6g per 100g

£2.29 for 600g yorkshireprovender.co.uk

Tesco Tomato & Basil

With large chunks of tomato and a hint of pepper, this great-value soup is simple, tasty and filling.

Salt 0.3g per 100g
Sugar 4.9g per 100g

£1.50 for 600g tesco.com

Waitrose Tomato & Fresh Basil

Brimming with basil, this soup is certainly not lacking in flavour, but the consistency is a bit watery.

Salt 0.2g per 100g
Sugar 5.4g per 100g

£1.32 for 600g waitrose.com

Fit kitchen

Tefal Vitacuisine Compact

Steaming may not be as manly a cooking technique as, say, barbecuing but this gadget should keep you happy – it has enough features to both feel hi-tech and make cooking easier. Its three separate compartments allow you to prepare multiple dishes simultaneously, without the flavours leaking between levels, saving you time and effort. It also comes with a space age-sounding Vitamin Boost button, which Tefal claims will increase vitamin retention by up to 45 per cent by regulating cooking conditions.

£99.99 tefal.co.uk

Cupboard essential

Walnuts

These crunchy nuts can help to build muscle and boost your brain

Walnuts are high in protein and low GI – so they release their energy slowly – and make an excellent addition to a variety of meals, as well as being a tasty snack on their own. Not only are they a good source of monounsaturated fats, which increase energy levels and reduce muscle inflammation, but they also supply a shot of the amino acid l-arginine, which aids in the manufacture of muscle-building creatine. Walnuts also contain high amounts of omega 3 fatty acids, which your brain cells need to create neurotransmitters that improve brain function.

Quick tip Try a handful of walnuts in your porridge in the morning for extra health benefits and added crunch.

Words Ben Ince **Photography** Danny Bird, Shutterstock

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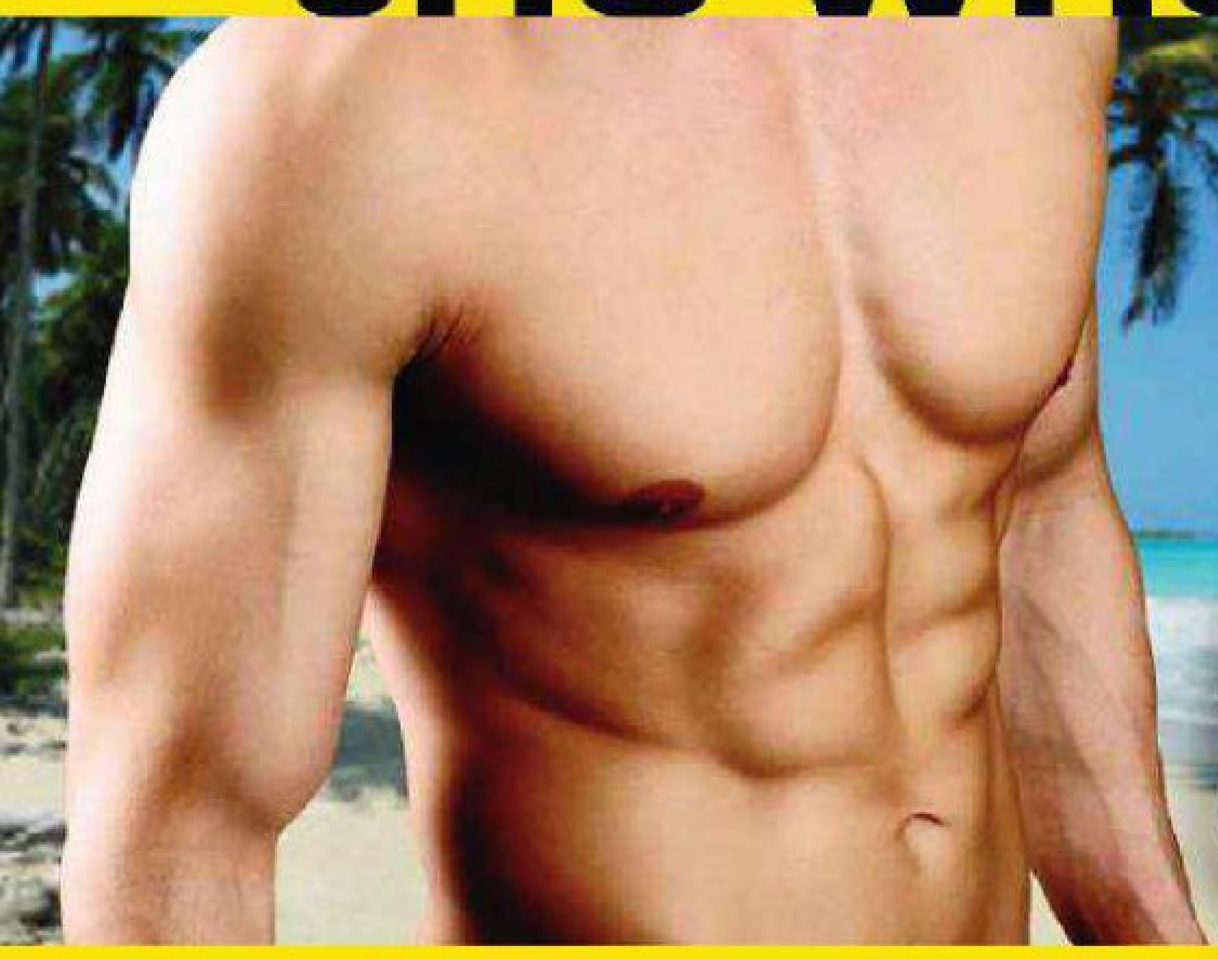
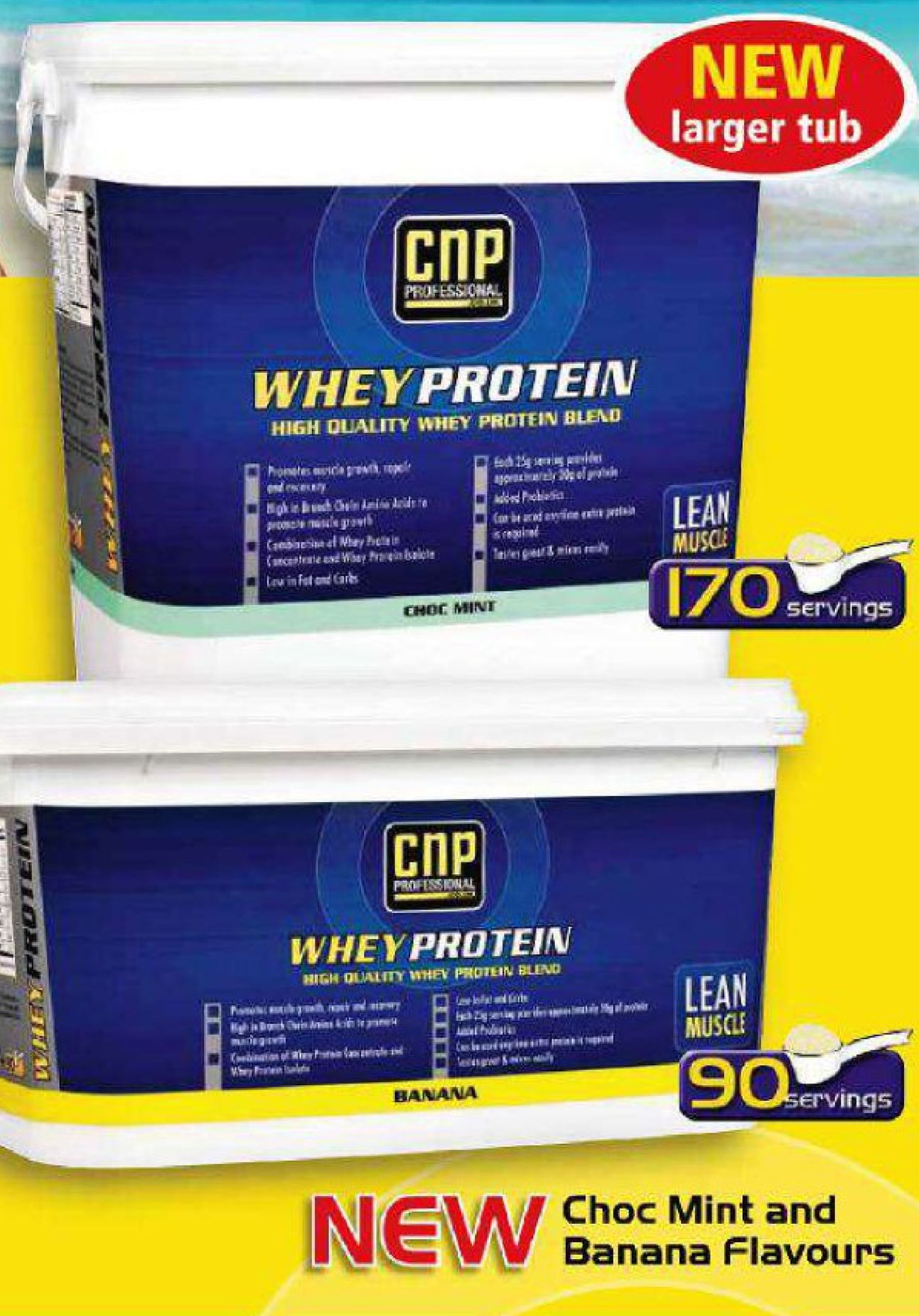
NEW Flavours

the whey to a beach body



NEW larger tub



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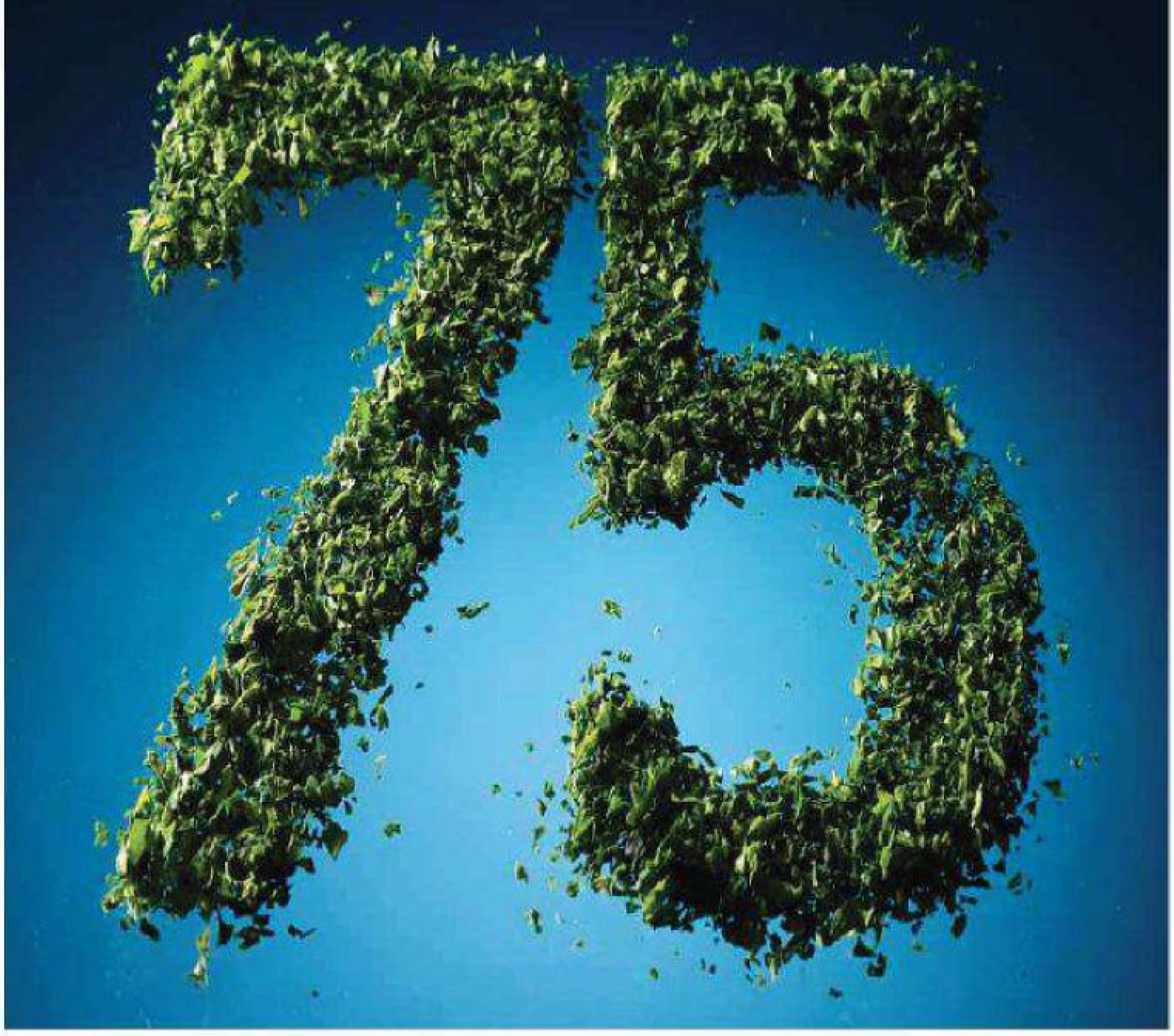
fitorfat.com

Top tip

Eat seaweed to stay slim

Finding healthy choices on a Chinese restaurant menu can be tricky, but ordering seaweed will at least get you off to a good start. According to an ongoing study at Newcastle University, alginate – a natural fibre found in seaweed kelp – could **reduce the amount of fat available for absorption in the body by more than 75 per cent.** Seaweed's high fibre content will also help keep you feeling full, while its broad range of vitamins and minerals offer additional health benefits, from bone-strengthening vitamin K to muscle-relaxing magnesium. You'll maximise the health benefit if you avoid the deep-fried variety and resist the temptation to follow it with prawn toast and tempura.



Nutrition Q&A

Dr Sarah Schenker is a nutritionist at the British Nutrition Foundation and an accredited sports dietician.

Q Will eating late at night make me fat?

A It won't necessarily cause weight gain if your energy intake is not exceeding energy output. The problem is that you are more likely to go for fatty and sugary snacks at night, which can easily tip you over your total calorie requirement. Try to regulate your appetite by eating five to six small meals during the day consisting of wholegrain carbohydrates, protein and plenty of fruit and veg. Staying well hydrated can also control hunger pangs, so drink plenty of water. For a healthy late-night snack, choose foods that promote fullness such as beans on toast and a glass of apple juice; hummus or cottage cheese with wholemeal pitta and veg sticks; or a bowl of vegetable and bean soup.

Fat-fighting apple and banana smoothie

This sweet, nutrient-packed smoothie will help you beat the bulge

What you will need

1 **banana**
1 **apple**
Pinch of **cinnamon**
1tbsp **honey**
2tbsp low-fat **natural yoghurt**

Why you should drink it

Banana
Bananas are a fat-free source of natural energy and hunger-curbing fibre. Their potassium content will also boost your metabolism.

Apple
Apples are rich in a fibre called pectin, which helps keep you feeling full and prevents the cells from storing fat.

Cinnamon
This spice helps to reduce blood sugar levels and increases your natural production of insulin to help you lose fat.

Honey
Honey is a great source of natural energy and also helps boost your immune system.

Natural yoghurt
Yoghurt is full of protein, which helps curb appetite.

Words Ben Ince **Photography** Danny Bird

For more ways to lose fat go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/fatlosstips**

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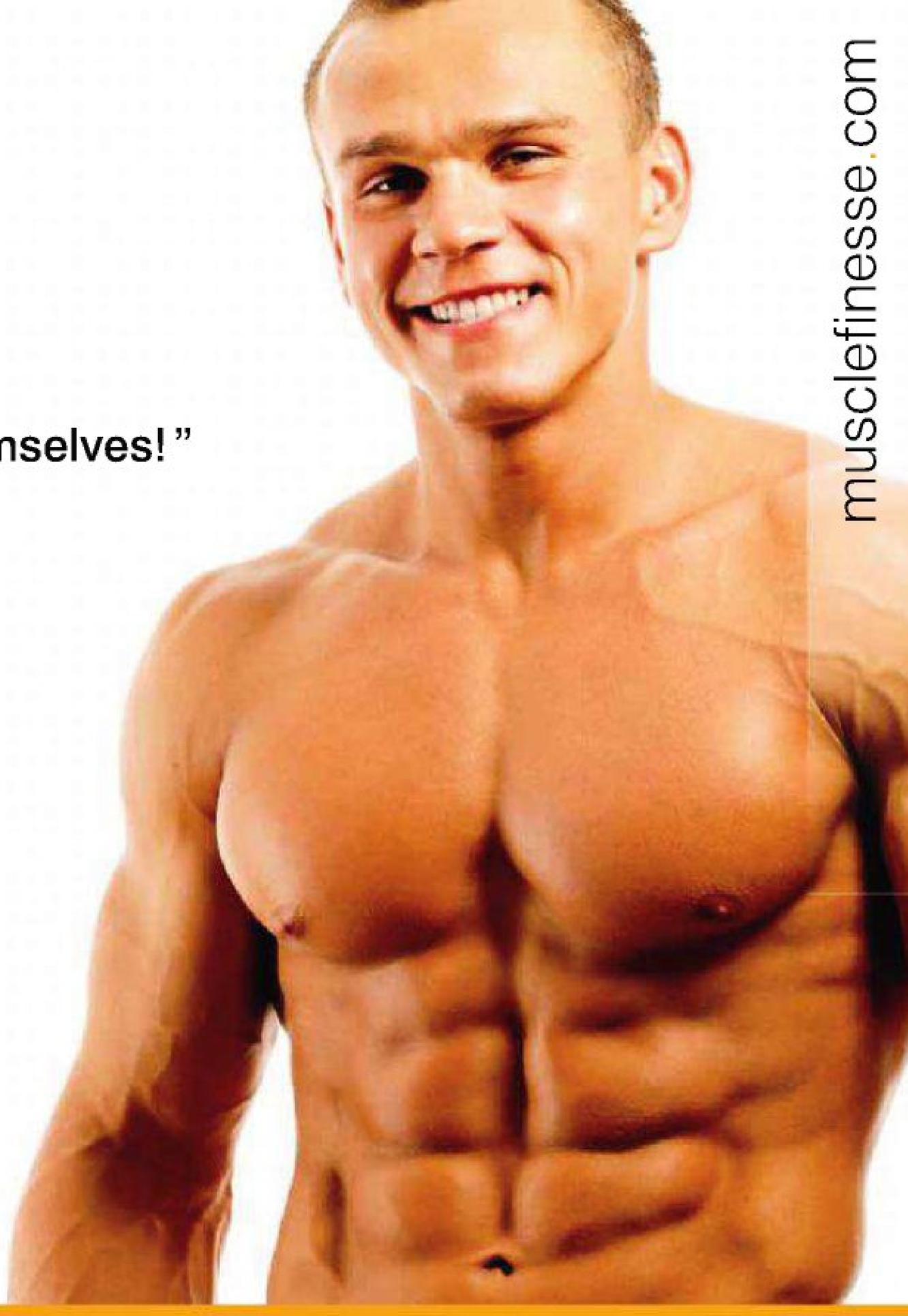

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Mind over fatter

Find yourself snacking mindlessly? Here's how you can break your bad eating habits and get slim

1 Don't make it easy

Easy access to snack foods will invariably lead to munching, so do what you can to minimise temptation. 'Put in some interruption that will make you think twice before snacking,' says Professor Brian Wansink, author of *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*. 'If you've got a packet of sweets on your desk, you won't think twice about eating them because they're right in front of you, but if you put barriers in the way, it'll really test how much you want them.' Wansink found that office workers ate 125 less calories a day when the sweets were placed two metres away from their desk compared with when they were sitting within arm's reach.

2 Forward planning

'Think ahead and be prepared for all outcomes,' says nutritionist Lucy-Ann Prideaux (simply-nutrition.co.uk). 'Take a moment to think about how you would like to eat and, more importantly, how you would like to feel at the end of the day.' Preparing healthy meals and snacks to take with you to work may be time-consuming, but your body will thank you for it in the long run. 'Your day won't always go to plan, however, so make sure you give yourself a degree of flexibility in your food choices,' Prideaux adds. 'Always try to assess whether or not the food that's available to you is a good option to fuel and nourish your body.'

> 'If you put barriers between you and your sugary snacks, it'll really test how much you want them'

3 Drink more water

'It's very easy to confuse dehydration with hunger,' says Wansink. 'We know our body is craving something and we just assume it's food – but frequently it's liquids, especially in active people. I would guess seven times out of ten what people think of as hunger is really just slight dehydration.' You don't necessarily have to drink water, but make sure the beverage is low in caffeine and sodium. 'Caffeine and sodium dehydrate you even more, giving your mouth a feeling of thirst that can lead you to snack.'

4 Use the hunger/fullness scale

'Recognising and working with your body's physiological hunger and fullness cues can really help to control snacking,' says Prideaux. 'Imagine your hunger on a scale of one to ten. You're starving at level 1, mildly hungry at level 3 or 4, comfortably full at level 7 or 8 and completely stuffed at level 10. If you train yourself to eat as soon as you reach level 3 or 4 and to stop eating as soon as you reach level 7 or 8 – between which points your blood sugar levels will be at their most stable – then over time you'll become much more aware of your body's hunger and fullness signals, and you'll be far less inclined to indulge in mindless snacking, boredom eating or comfort eating, all of which are common causes of weight gain.'

5 Get new habits

One great way to reduce snacking is to invent some sort of condition every time you have cravings – and we don't mean a made-up disease that can be cured with peanut M&Ms. 'Tell yourself you can have anything you want from the vending machine if you are going to work out that day, or if you have a light dinner, or some sort of trade-off,' says Wansink. 'If you regularly stop by the shops on your way home from work and buy a chocolate bar, take an alternative route to reduce that temptation or say, "I can only have the chocolate if I go for a run when I get home". That way, either you break the habit or you alter it so you're getting something positive out of your snack.'

Words Ben Ince **Illustration** Danny Brid

You'll find 50 snacks with under 100 calories at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/healthysnacks**

fitnakaga.com

TRAINING THE BEST

When it comes to training and nutrition, strength coach and PhD Nutrition team member Phil Learney doesn't just talk the talk – he walks the walk

When he isn't overseeing the workouts and nutritional plans of Olympic athletes, professional sportsmen, A-list celebrities and captains of industry, Phil Learney – one of the most qualified strength coaches in the UK, and voted one of the top trainers in London by *Time Out* magazine – practises what he preaches.

He trains hard to get in shape to compete at strongman and powerlifting competitions, and in his most recent powerlifting meet he posted scores of a 270kg squat, 175kg bench press and 275kg deadlift for a combined 720kg. To get into strongman shape, Learney uses a variety of PhD Nutrition products.

Educating the masses

Learney has consulted for PhD Nutrition on all performance-related matters since the company's launch in 2006, and enjoys nothing more than helping to educate clients, sporting bodies and other personal trainers through Fitness Industry Education (FIE) about the importance of nutrition as the driving force behind better physical performance.

'My role with PhD is great because it allows me to work with a company that knows nutrition inside out,' says Learney. 'It's my passion, and it's very important to me that I make the right recommendations so that my clients perform to the highest of their capabilities.'

If you have a question for Learney, go to phd-supplements.com and click on the 'Ask The Expert' section. More details can also be found at phillearney.com.

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PhD Nutrition has a huge range of products to help you meet your strength, speed and power goals

V-Max Pump

The ultimate pre-workout drink. Each serving of V-Max Pump enables your muscles to power through even the toughest of sessions, thanks to its potent blend of arginine, beta-alanine and citrulline malate that creates the perfect combination for building size, strength and power.

Pharma Whey HT+

The updated version of Pharma Whey adds Hydro-Tech+. This contains hydrolysed whey protein isolate, which ensures the 37g of protein in each serving is even faster-acting and reaches your hungry muscles even sooner. The result is faster recovery from training and reduced muscle soreness.

Recovery 2:1

Recovery 2:1 has the perfect post-workout ratio of fast-release and slow-release carbs to replenish energy. Each serving also provides 24g of high-quality whey protein for increased strength, as well as L-Glutamine and creatine monohydrate to aid muscle recovery. It's available in three flavours.

Growth Factor 50 Brownie

This new muscle-building snack from PhD Nutrition is the most effective and most delicious protein bar available today. Each brownie contains a whopping 50g of top-quality protein, in addition to glutamine peptides and healthy fats for maximum muscle recovery and growth.

All PhD products can be purchased from all good health stores, official PhD web partners or directly from www.phd-supplements.com

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Edited by Simon Miller

Trainer

Making your best even better

Tip of the month

Flat bench yourself bigger

Using a flat bench rather than a Smith machine will make your chest and shoulders bigger and stronger, according to a study published in the *Journal Of Strength And Conditioning Research*. Those using the flat bench as opposed to a Smith machine found that **not only was there greater muscle activation when attempting a heavier load, but that the medial deltoid was far more active as well.** The study concluded that anyone looking to increase strength and muscle mass should opt for the free weight flat bench in order to achieve optimal gains.

Photography Danny Bird **Model** Toby Rowland@WAthletic

Inside

114 Guest Expert
Educogym can get you ripped – fast

122 Must-Do Move
The snatch: all-over body workout

125 12-Minute Muscle
Feel the benefits of a quick routine

127 Knowledge
Working the body's forgotten muscles

130 Home Workout
Supersets in your own living room

134 Gym Talk
Use your brain to work your arms

137 Sports Drills
Train like a world-class judoka

143 Abs & Tips
Build your six-pack with the side plank

145 Main Workout
Boost your back, chest and legs

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The 15-minute body

A new training technique promises to get you ripped in just three 15-minute sessions a week. *MF* reveals the secrets behind the Educogym workout method

Not having enough time to train is the biggest barrier between you and your fitness goals. One solution is to be ruthless with your time by giving up something else, like sudoku or eating or sex. Alternatively, you could turn to Educogym, a training method that takes a great big wrecking ball to time barriers.

Each Educogym session takes only 15 minutes but has the muscle-building and fat-burning effect of a much longer workout. 'Longer just isn't necessary,' says Richard Kingston, a personal trainer and Educogym ambassador. 'Once a muscle has reached failure that's all you need. Repeatedly going to failure isn't going to help and is possibly counter-productive because it can be too catabolic.'

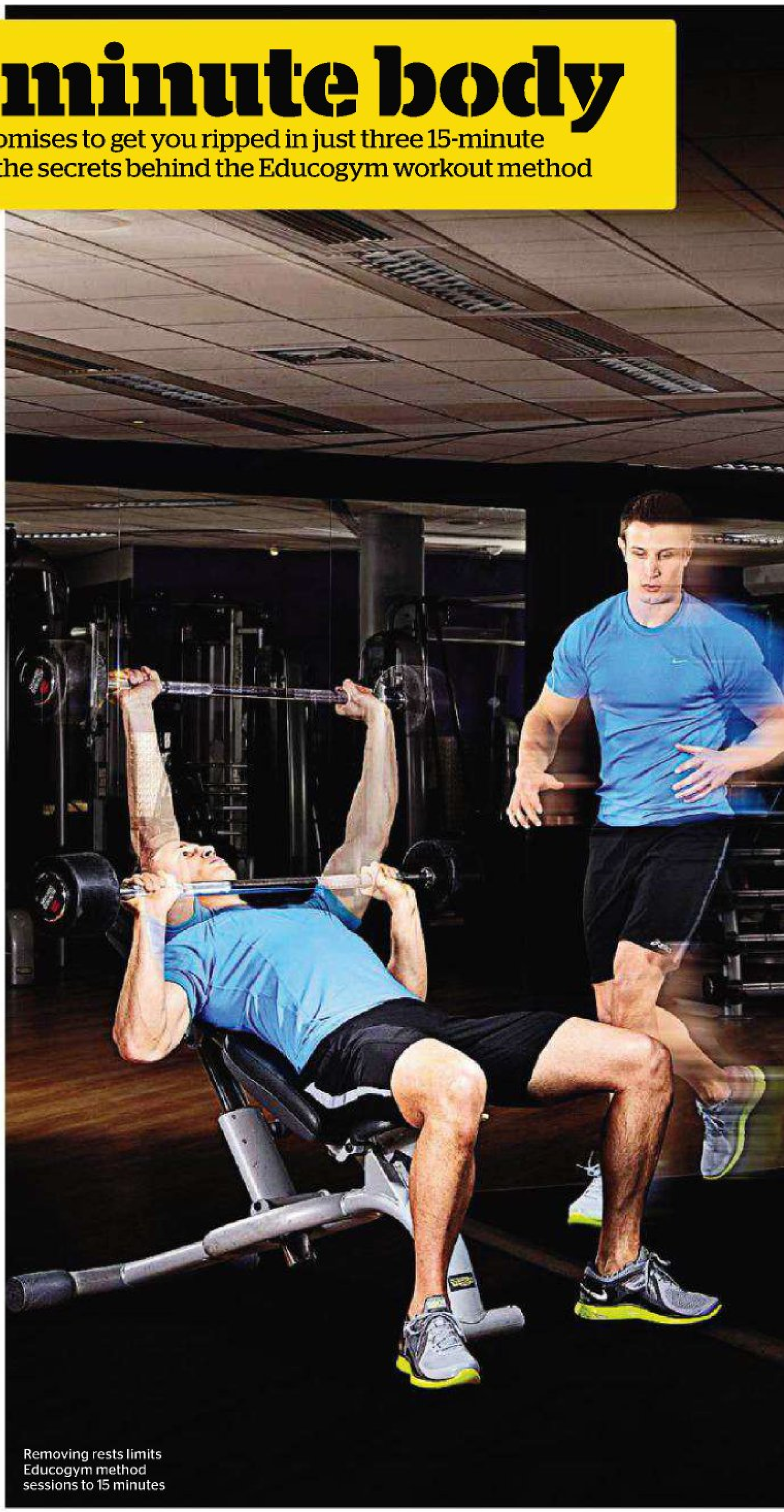
The compact routines are achieved by removing rest and arranging exercises in a drop set circuit. Instead of resting when you finish a set, you drop the weight and carry on. And you don't rest between exercises, either. 'Muscle fibres work on an all-or-nothing principle, which means with every set only a certain percentage will be fully recruited, while others won't be recruited at all,' says Kingston. 'If there's a rest period between sets, the fibres that have worked will have time to recover, causing them to work again, while others won't be activated at all throughout the entire workout.'

How to do each workout

- **Three workouts a week**
- **One day chest and back; one day shoulders and arms; one day legs**
- **Do three sets on each exercise for six reps, taking each to failure. Drop the weight after each set**
- **Don't rest between sets or exercises**
- **Do bodyweight moves such as the pull-up on an assisted machine so you can reduce resistance as required**

This month's trainer
Richard Kingston

Richard Kingston has 14 years' experience as a personal trainer, and has had clients from the England football team to supermodels. He continues to train people one-to-one while acting as an abassador for Educogym. Visit **educogym.com.**



Removing rests limits Educogym method sessions to 15 minutes

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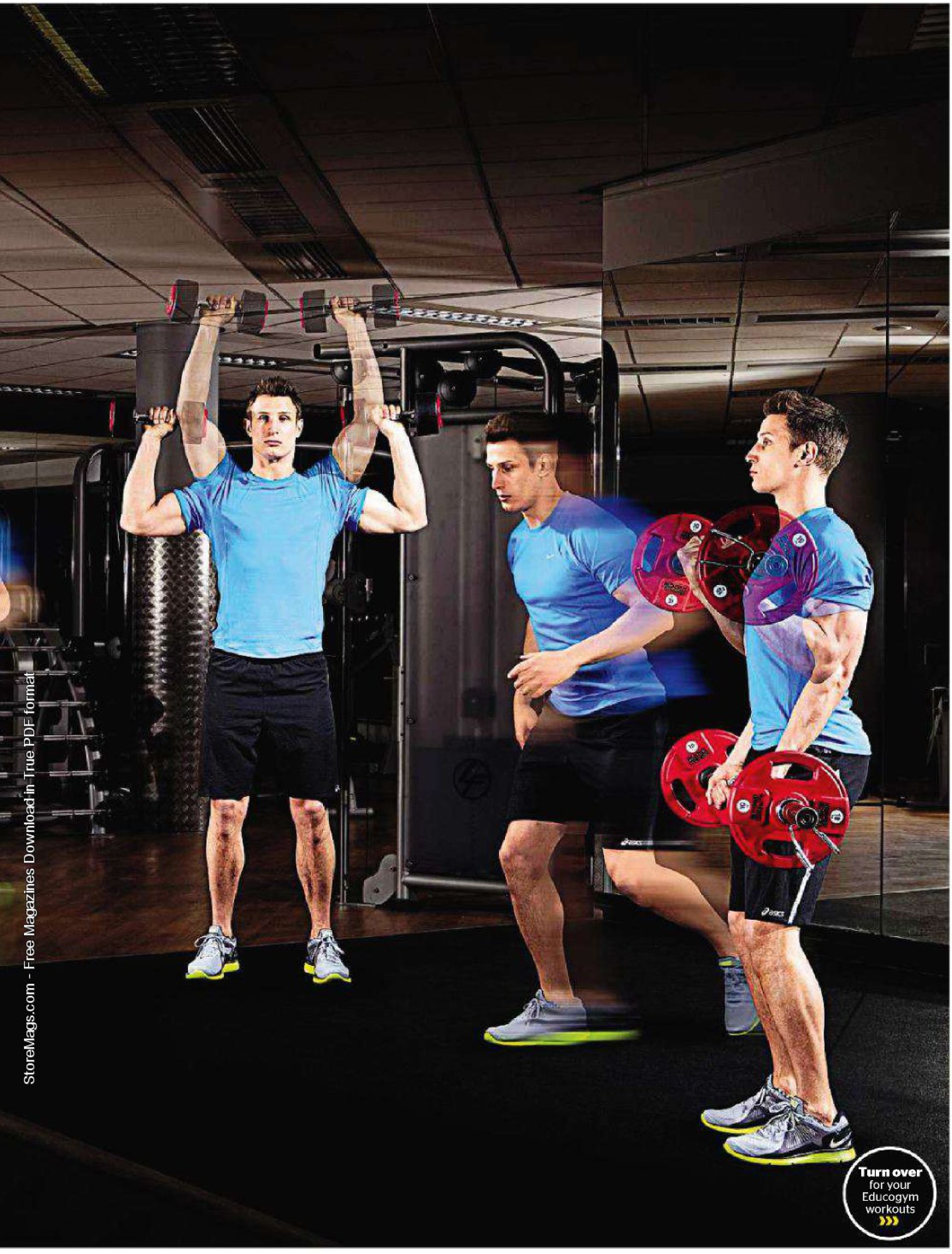

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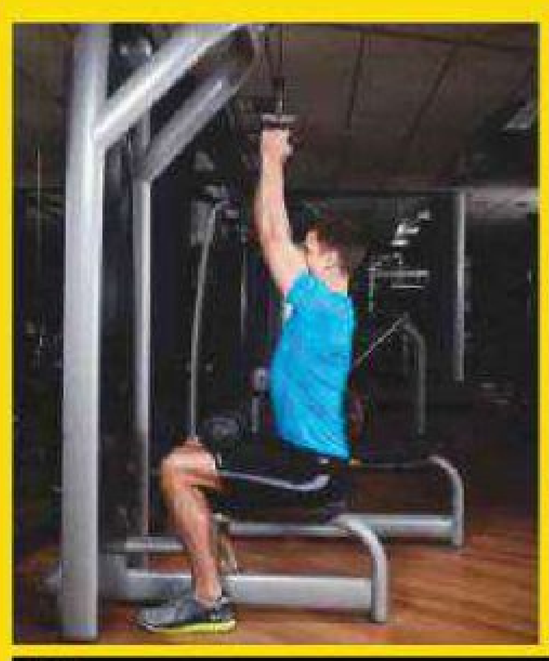
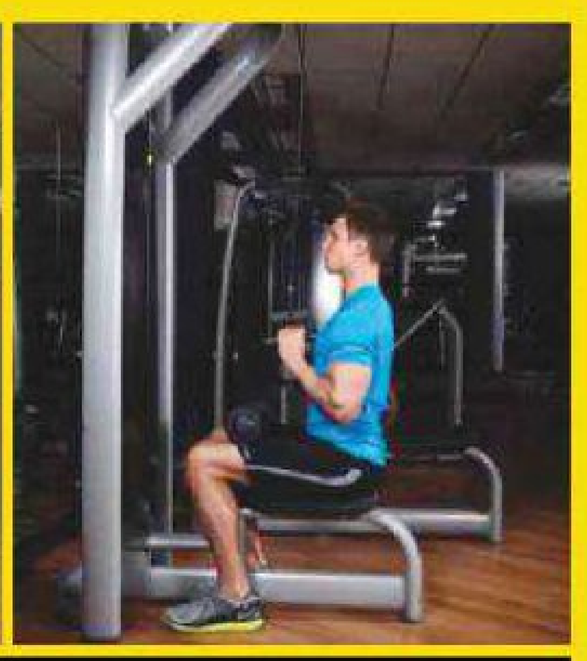
Day 1 Back and chest

1 Chest press
Sets 3 Reps 6

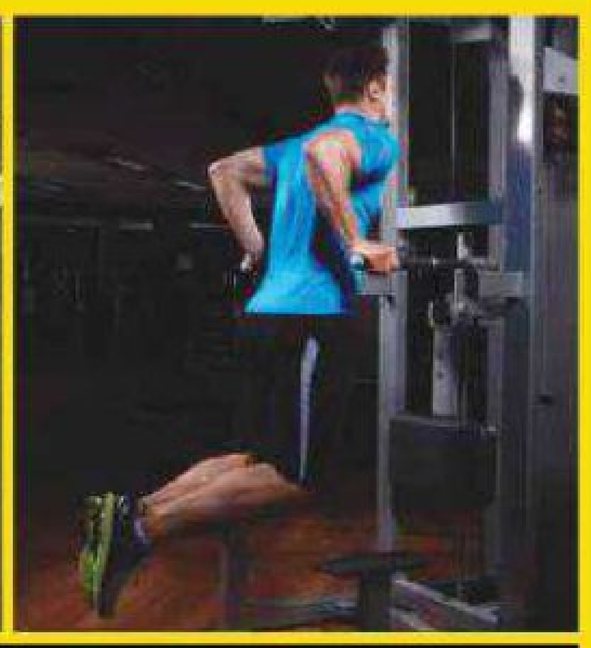
- Sit on the machine with your feet firmly on the floor and grab both handles with an overhand grip.
- Push the handles forward using your chest until your arms are fully extended.
- Bring the handles back to the starting position, resisting the weight.





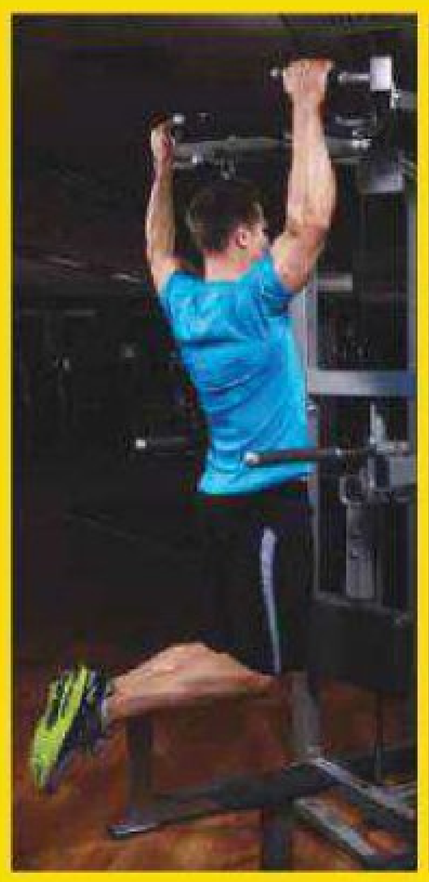
2 V-grip pull-down
Sets 3 Reps 6

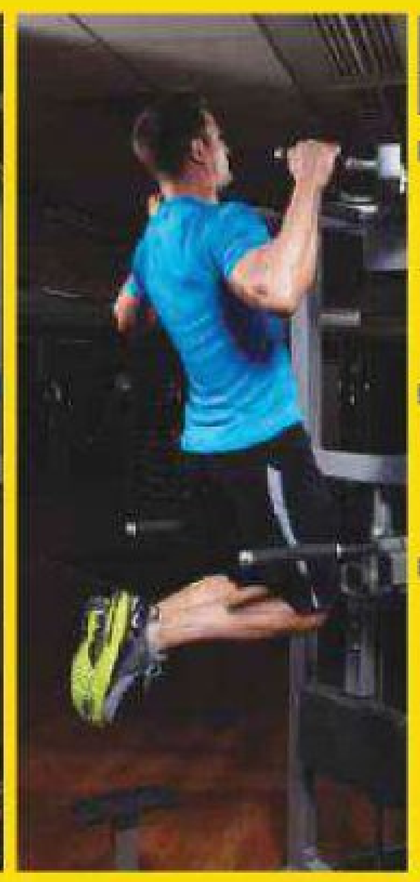
- Adjust the pad so it sits snugly on your thighs.
- Looking forward and with your torso upright, grasp the V-grip.
- Pull the grip down to your upper chest and squeeze your lats at the bottom of the move.



3 Dip
Sets 3 Reps 6

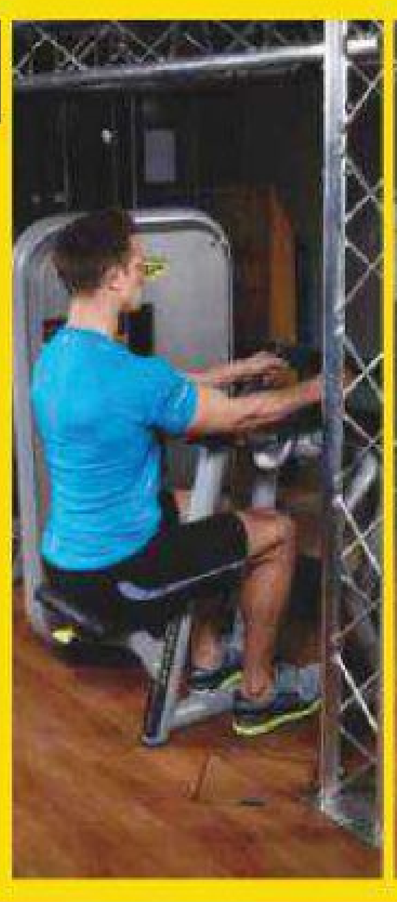
- Grip the parallel bars slightly wider than your hip width.
- Point your elbows straight back.
- Lower slowly, focusing on your chest muscles, and push back up powerfully.

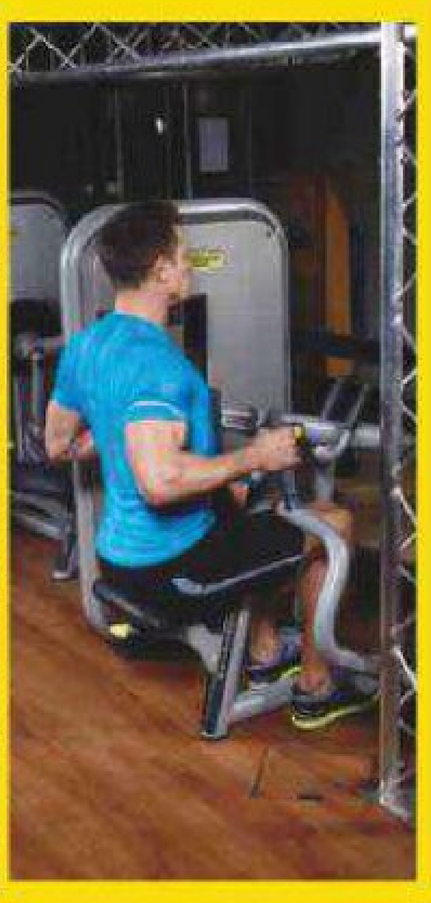




4 Pull-up
Sets 3 Reps 6

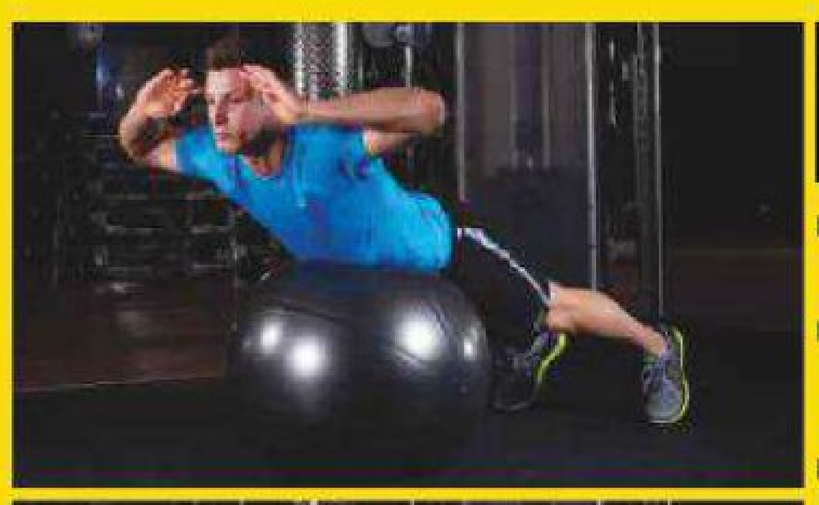
- Grip the bar using an overhand grip with your hands just wider than shoulder-width apart, extending your arms fully.
- Let your body hang – don't swing – and pull up until your chin is over the bar.
- Squeeze your lats as you pull up and lower yourself back down without swinging.

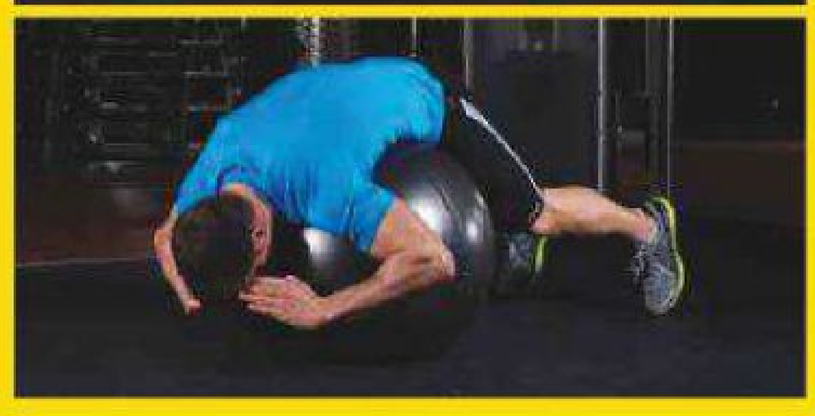




5 Seated row
Sets 3 Reps 6

- Grasp the handles on a seated row machine with your arms almost entirely extended.
- Pull from your back and squeeze your lats when your elbows are as far back as they can go.
- Fight the weight as you return to the start position and repeat.





6 Gym ball back extension
Sets 1 Reps 20

- Lie on the ball and place your legs shoulder-width apart.
- Slightly bend your knees to brace and wrap yourself around the ball.
- Curl your chin towards the ball then extend up, bringing your elbows back.

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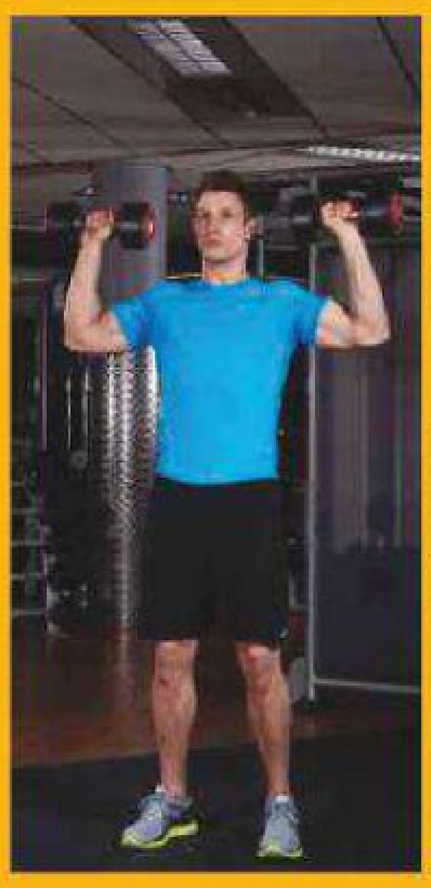
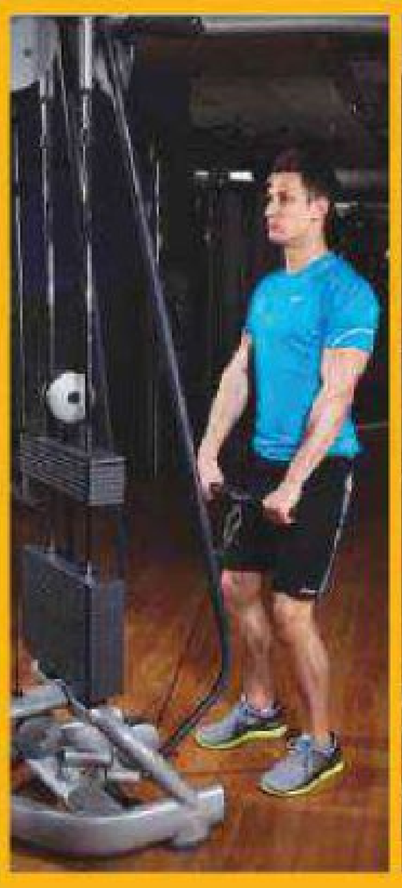
Day 2 Shoulders and arms



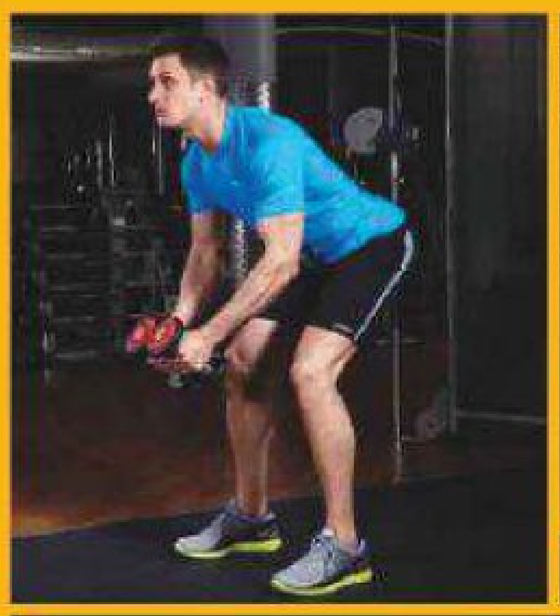
1 Shoulder press
Sets 3 Reps 6

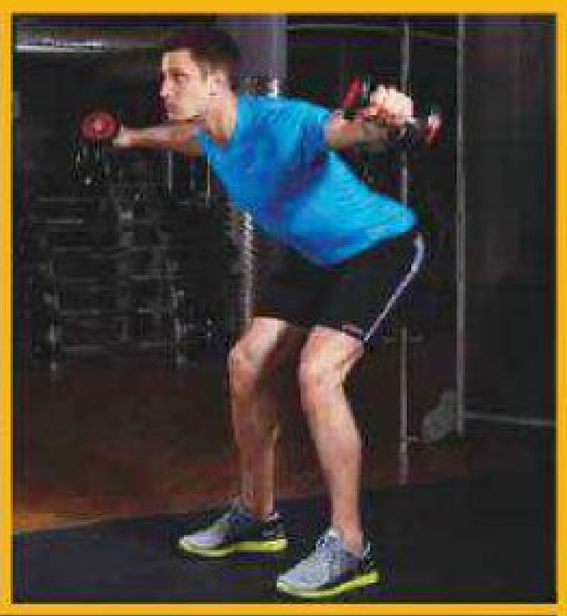
- Hold two dumb-bells and stand with your feet just narrower than shoulder-width apart.
- Press both weights directly overhead.
- Lower the weights slowly. Keep your core braced throughout.



2 Upright cable row
Sets 3 Reps 6

- Set up a bar on a cable machine and grasp it with a shoulder-width overhand grip.
- Stand close to the pulley and pull the bar up to your chin, allowing your wrists to move if necessary.
- Slowly lower the bar and repeat.



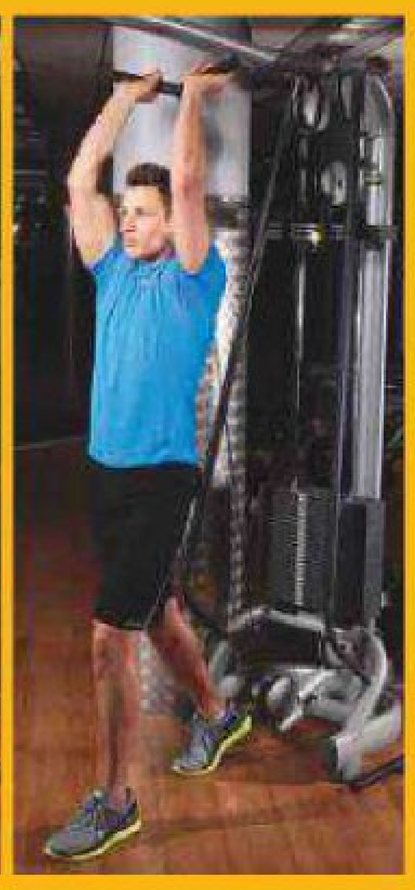


3 Reverse flye
Sets 3 Reps 6

- Hold a dumb-bell in each hand and lean forwards from the hips until your torso is almost parallel to the ground.
- Keep the weights out in front of your stomach and, with your arms straight, bring the dumb-bells up to ear level, squeezing your shoulder blades together.

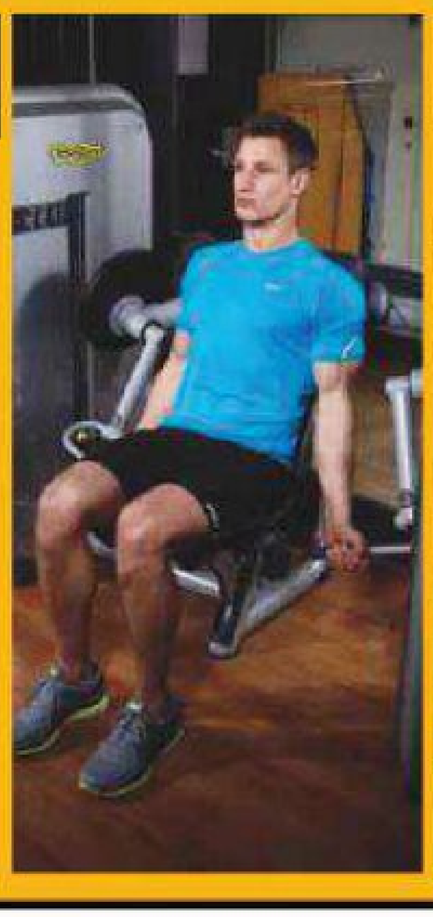
4 Triceps overhead extension
Sets 3 Reps 6

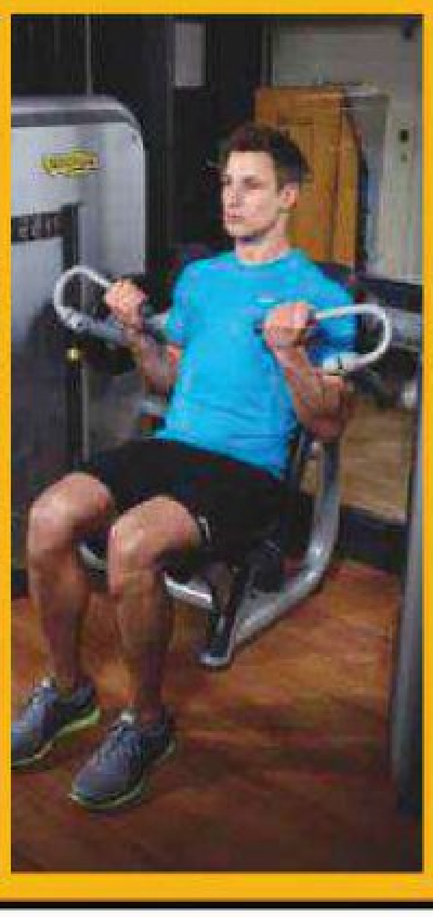
- Set a handle on the lowest setting of a cable machine.
- Facing away from the machine, grab the handle so it's behind your neck and extend your arms directly above your head.
- Lower the handle until you've returned to the starting position and repeat.

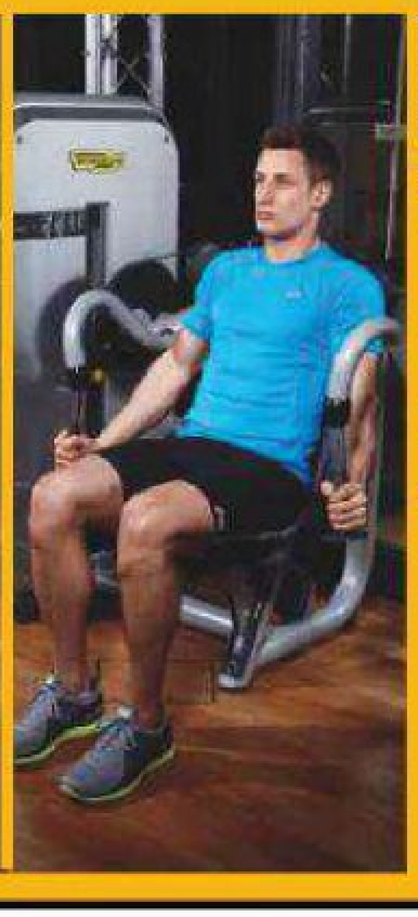


5 Biceps curl
Sets 3 Reps 6

- Sit down at a biceps curl machine and grab both handles with an underhand grip. Alternatively you can do this with an Olympic bar if preferred.
- Curl the handles up to your chest before slowly returning to the start position.





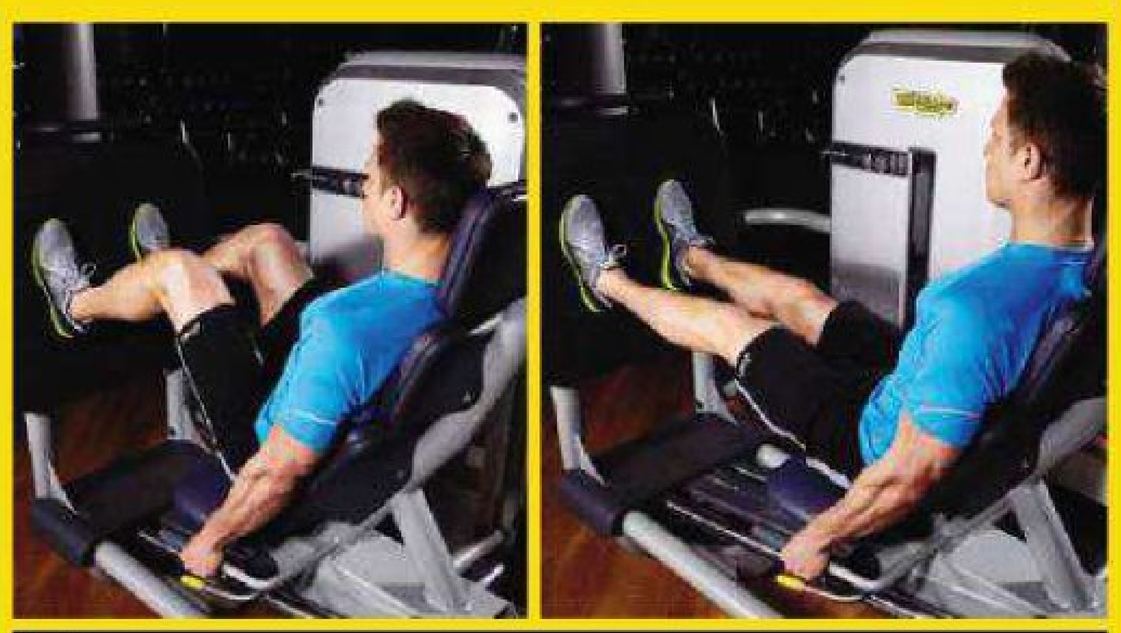


6 Triceps press
Sets 3 Reps 6

- Sit down at a triceps press machine and grab both handles with an overhand grip. Alternatively you can do this on a cable machine if preferred.
- Pull down the handles to your thighs, squeezing the triceps at the bottom of the move.

Turn over for your Day 3 workout

Day 3 Legs

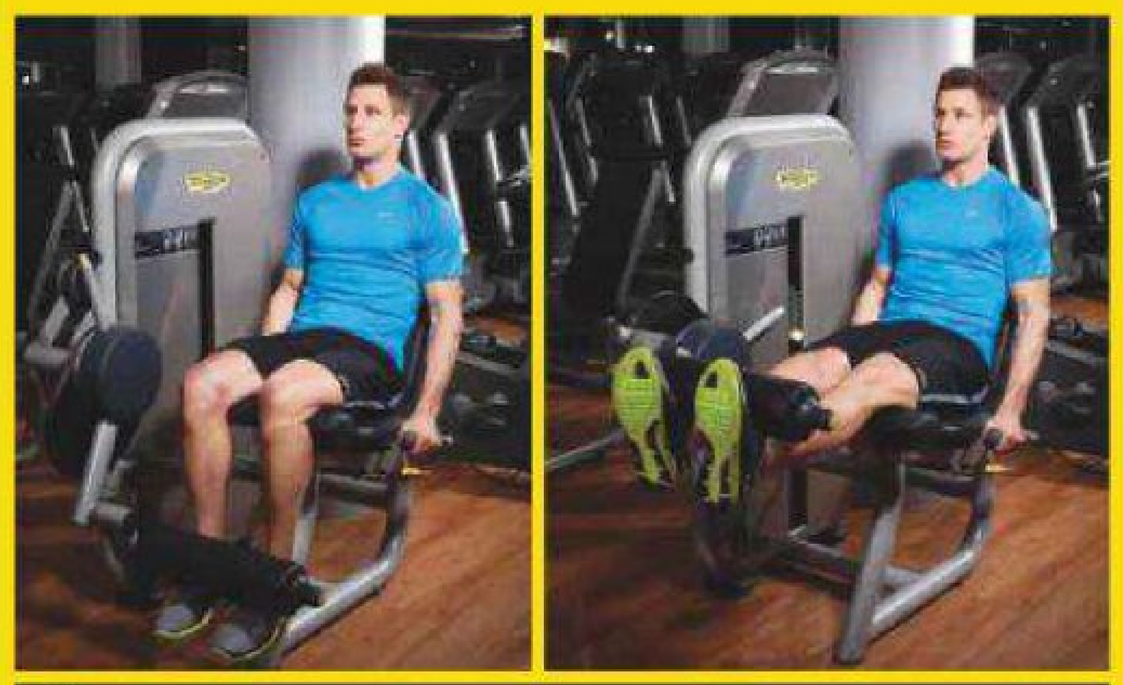


1 Leg press
Sets **3** Reps **6**

- Sit down at a leg press and place your feet shoulder-width apart. Alternatively you could perform a squat.
- Grab the handles and push through your heels to lift the weight.
- Hold at the top for a one-count and then slowly return to the starting point.

2 Hamstring curl
Sets **3** Reps **6**

- Sit at a hamstring curl machine and lock your legs so the pad is resting just below the knee.
- Push from hamstrings to curl the bar towards the floor until your legs are at a 90˚ angle.
- Slowly return the weight to the starting position to complete one rep.

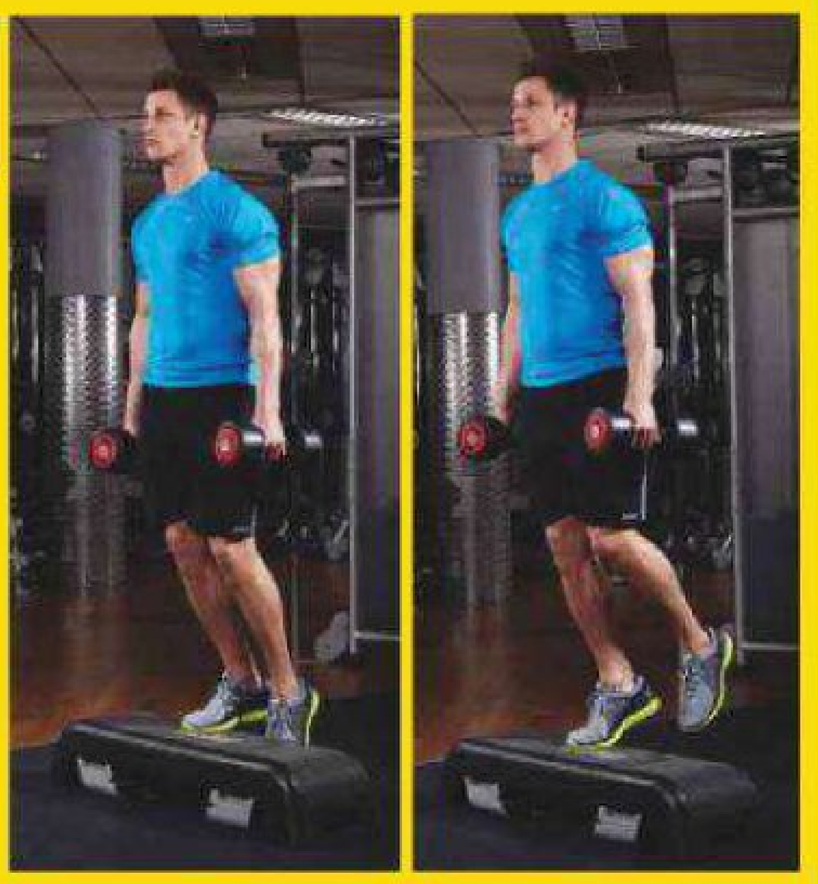


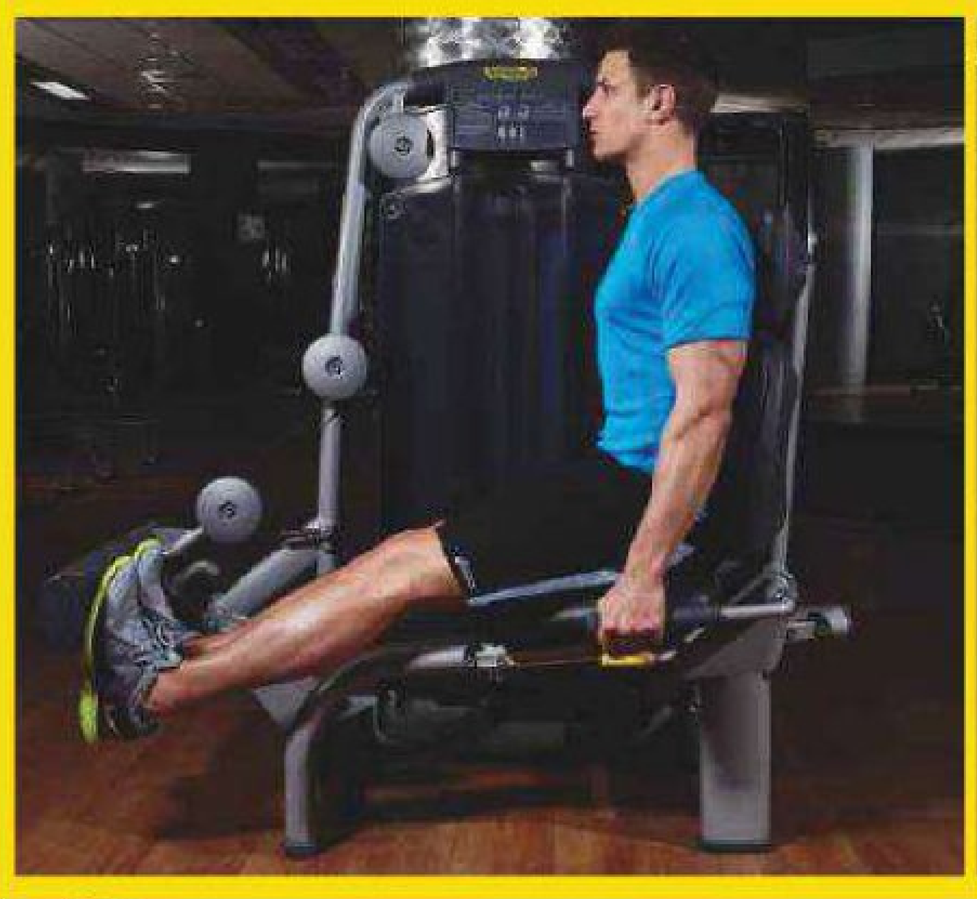
3 Leg extension
Sets **3** Reps **6**

- Start with the padded bar at shin level.
- Raise the bar by straightening your legs, then return to the starting position.

4 Standing calf raise
Sets **1** Reps **20** each side

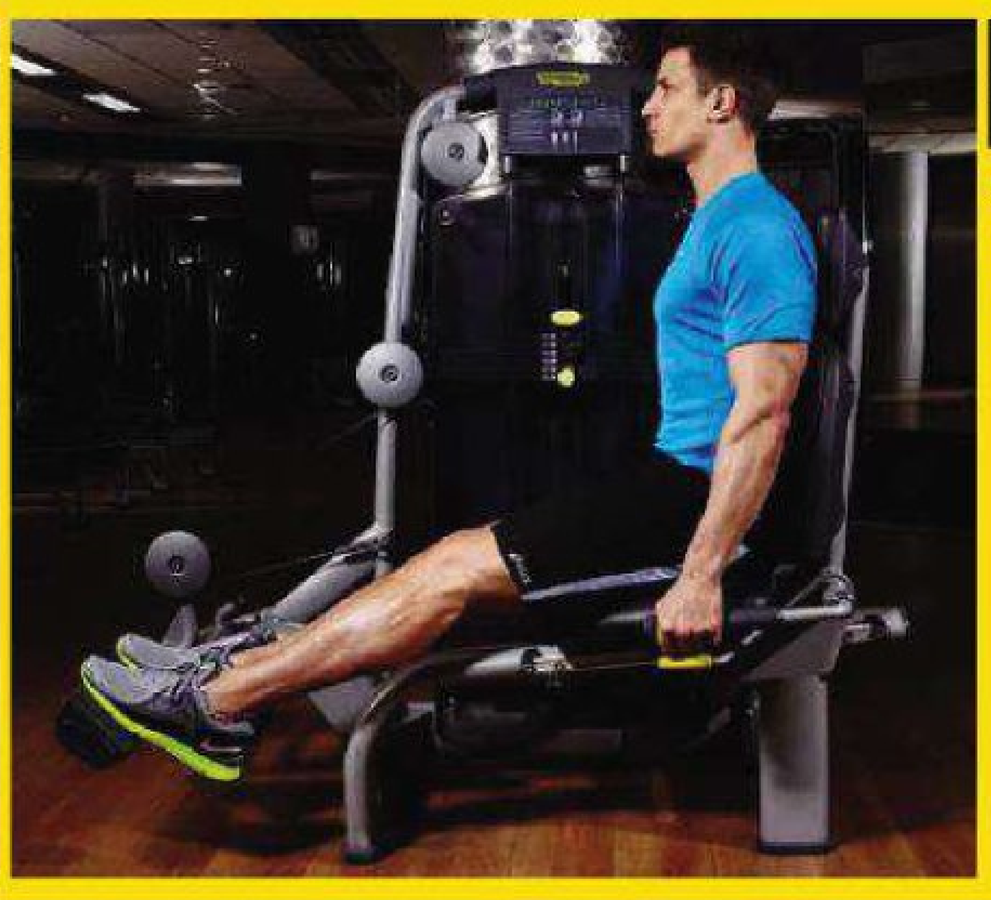
- Grip a dumb-bell in each hand and stand on a step.
- Take one foot off the step. When you've got your balance, slowly stand up on tiptoes, keeping your leg straight, then lower back to the start.
- Switch legs after 20 reps.





5 Seated calf raise
Sets **1** Reps **20**

- With your toes flat against the bar, press it down, keeping your legs straight throughout the move. MF



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Words Simon Miller **Photography** Duncan Nicholls
Model Russell Lee@WAthletic

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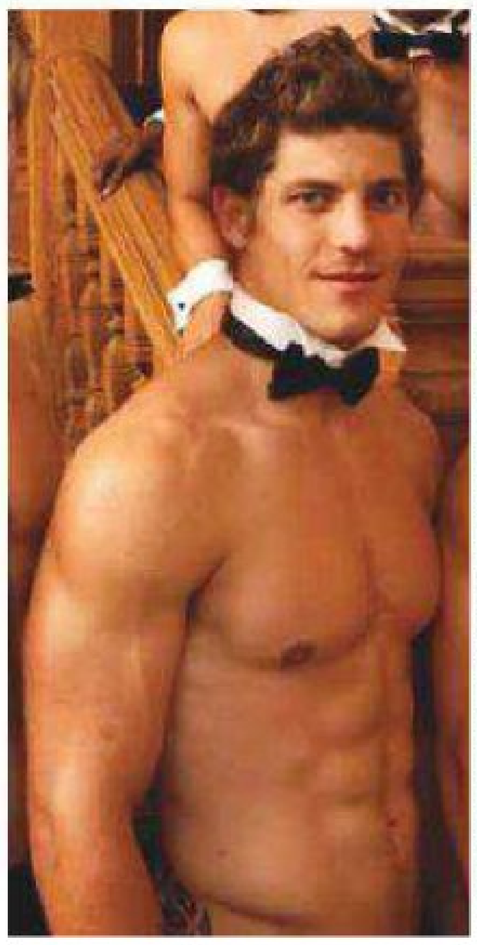
Name: Kyle Palm

Occupation: Butler in the Buff

I earn £1,000 extra a month. I'm a Butler in the Buff.



Q What's your occupation?
A By day I work as a personal trainer but by night I'm a Butler in the Buff.

Q What is a Butler in the Buff?
A Exactly what it sounds like! We attend parties, serve the drinks and look after the guests, wearing a bow-tie, collar and apron. It's good fun and very professional.

Q How much do you earn as a Butler?
A We get paid £25 per hour plus travel for flexible work in the evenings and weekends. I earn between £500 and £1,500 a month, on top of my day job.

Q How did you become a Butler in the Buff?
A Someone suggested I should apply, so I looked on their website and sent in some photos. It's a great job – there are 200 of us working across the country and they need more. Anyone with a good body and personality can apply by going to www.butlersinthebuff.co.uk/becomeabutler. I highly recommend it!

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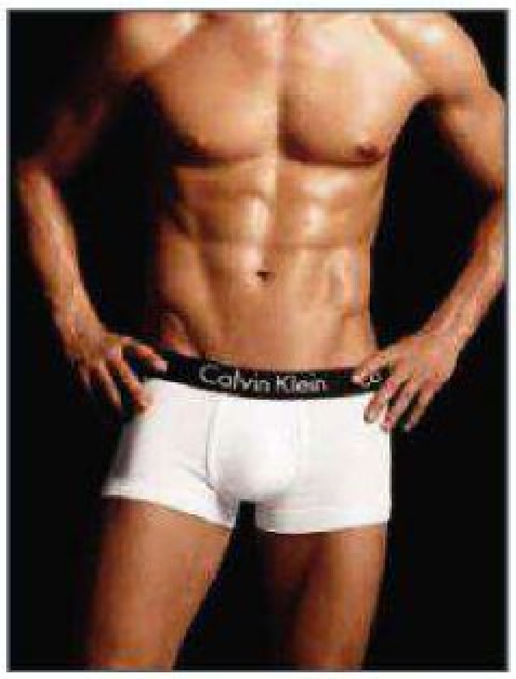

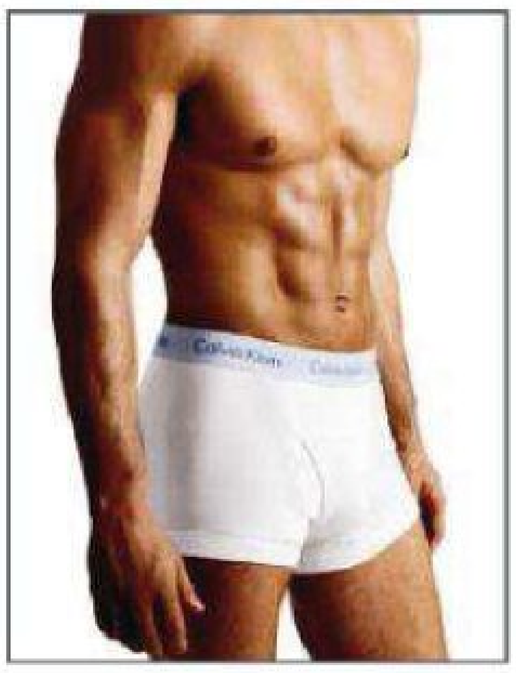

■ **More info:** Visit www.iwantpants.com or call 01792 812147.

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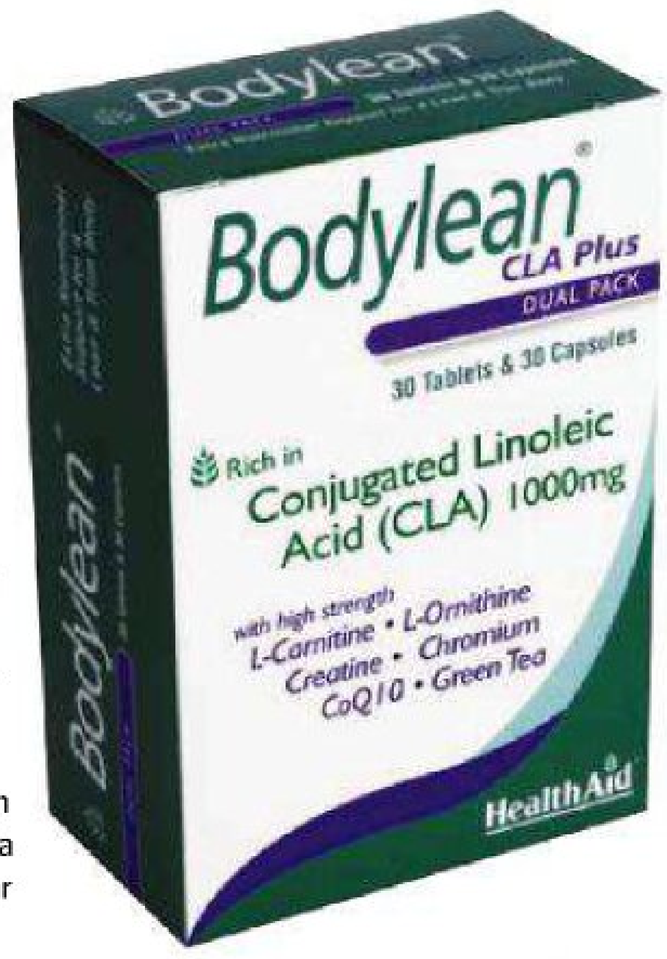

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Snatch

No sniggering at the back – this is an effective whole-body muscle-building lift and nothing else

This Olympic lift builds flexibility and co-ordination as well as muscle. 'Commonly linked to powerlifting, **this posterior chain move improves explosive movement, strength, speed and core stability,'** says personal trainer Mark Gordon (fitness2health.co.uk). 'Numerous sports mimic its movement pattern in some form – for example, lifting a rugby player in the lineout. As with all big lifts, you need to ensure you set up correctly and focus your mind completely on the lift to get it right.' This is a tricky move so do it using a light bar to perfect your form before you start lifting serious weight.

TARGETS

Whole body

How to do it

- Stand with feet hip-width apart with your shins touching the bar.
- Squat down, keeping a natural arch in your back and your chest out, and grip the bar with hands wider than shoulder-width apart.
- Push down through your heels and straighten your legs to lift the bar, keeping it close to your legs.
- When it reaches your thighs, pull your shoulders back and bring the bar up fast, 'flipping' it over and onto your fingers while getting your body under the bar by dropping into a squat position.
- Finish by standing up out of the squat with your legs fully straightened, holding the bar directly above your head with your arms extended.

Perfect your form
Concentration and form are key to not only performing a successful lift, but also making sure you avoid injury. 'Feet stuck to the floor, hands wide, shoulder blades pinched, chest pushed forward, core switched on, eyes straight ahead and you're ready,' says Gordon.

For another muscle-building snatch variation go to **mensfitness.co.uk/links/snatchmore**

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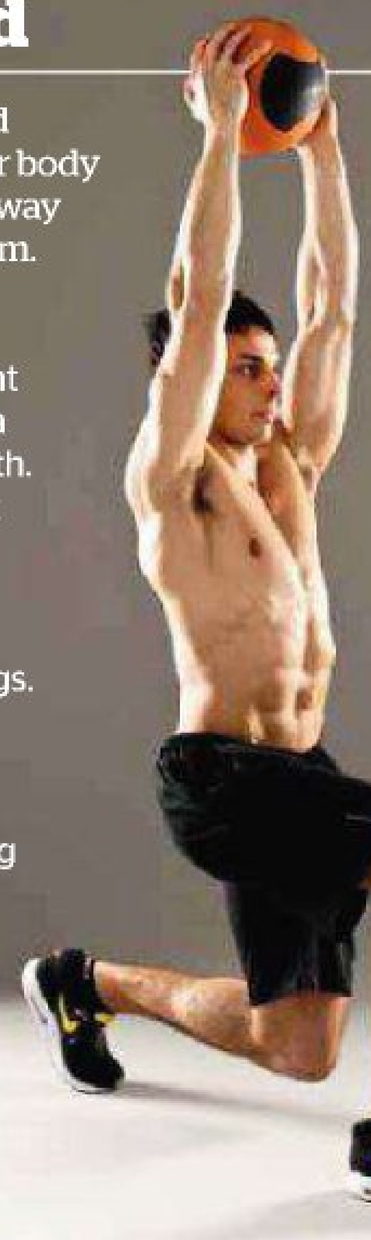
Four moves to boost your snatch

Medicine ball overhead lunge to bend

Increasing the strength and stability of your core, upper body and legs, this is the perfect way to improve your snatch form.



How to do it

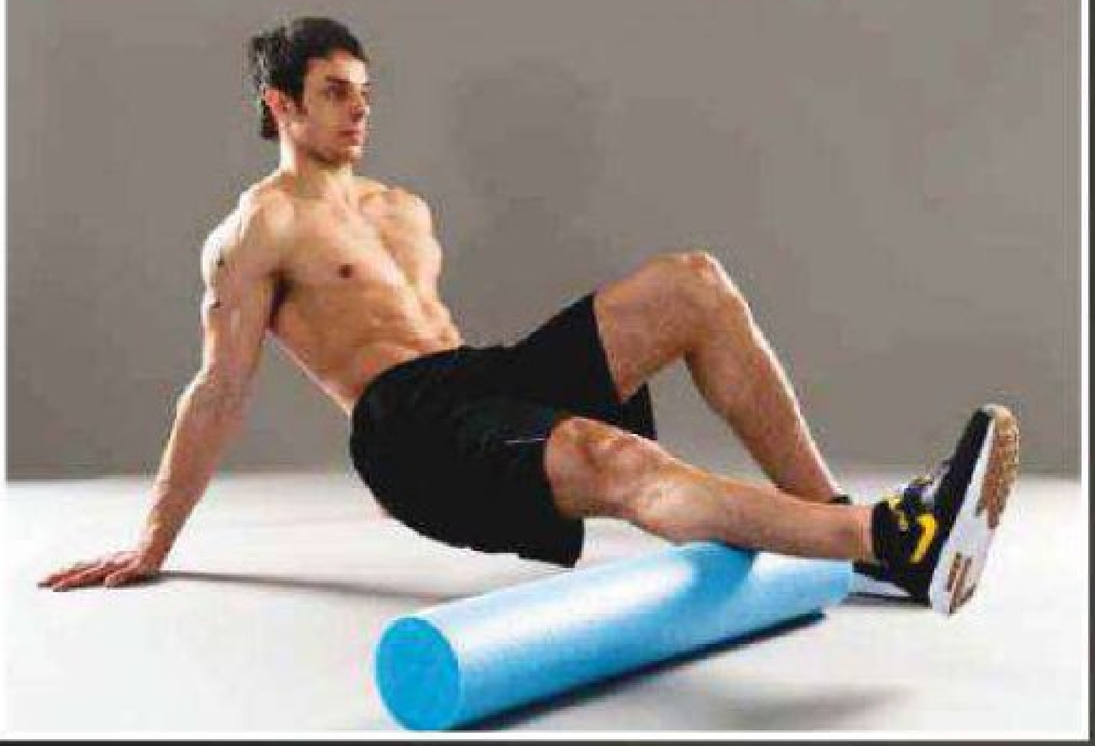
- Stand with one leg in front of the other while holding a medicine ball at arm's length.
- Bend over from the waist and then swing the ball upwards above your head.
- As you swing upwards, lunge forward with your legs. Hold the stance when your arms are fully extended.
- Return to the starting position and repeat, lunging with the other leg.

Calf foam roller

When lifting a heavy weight above your head, you need to make sure that every muscle is able to take the strain and stay stable. The foam roller is a great way to add a layer of support to your calf muscles and give them the extra strength they need when performing a snatch.

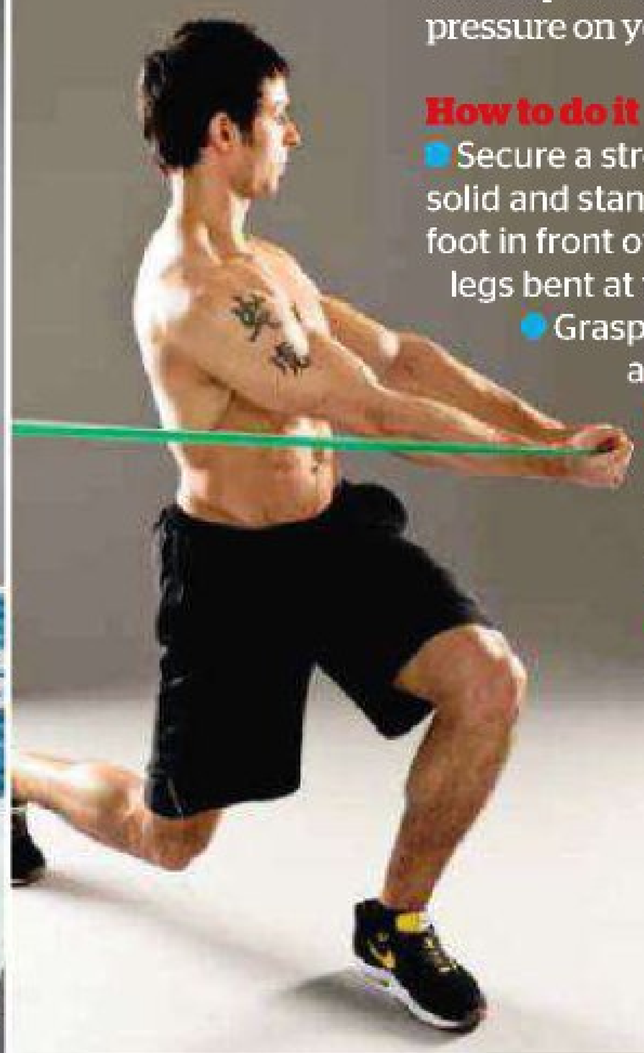
How to do it

- Get a foam roller and put it under your calves.
- Lift your body off the floor using your hands and, with your toes pointed out, slowly move the roller from your calf to your knee.
- Repeat as necessary or do it with one leg at a time to increase the difficulty.



Thoracic rotation

To increase the weight on your snatch, you need good mobility, posture and technique as well as strength. This move will help in this, as well as reducing the pressure on your back and shoulders.



How to do it

- Secure a stretch band to something solid and stand next to it with one foot in front of the other and both legs bent at the knee slightly.
- Grasp the band with both hands and pull it across your body.
- As you pull, twist your torso against the resistance before slowly returning to the starting position.
- Be sure to work both sides of your body.

Kettlebell clean

Whether you're a beginner or an expert, you can never work on your form too much. This move will increase your strength and stability as well as improve your clean technique.

How to do it

- Hold a kettlebell by your side and keep your back straight and chest out.
- Push the kettlebell between your legs before driving your arm forward, using your core, hips and legs to lift the weight and flip it over onto the front of your shoulder.
- Slowly return to the start then repeat the move, using the downward momentum get the next rep started.

Words Simon Miller **Photography** Tom Miles **Model** Richard Scrivener@WAthletic
Kit supplied by escapefitness.co.uk, jjbsports.com and nike.com

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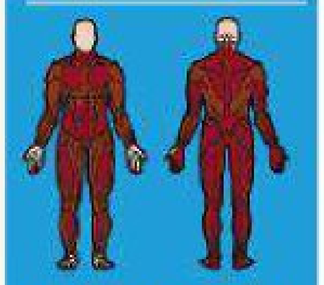
Hell's bells

Maximise your muscle growth in minimum time with this dumb-bell routine

TARGETS



Whole body

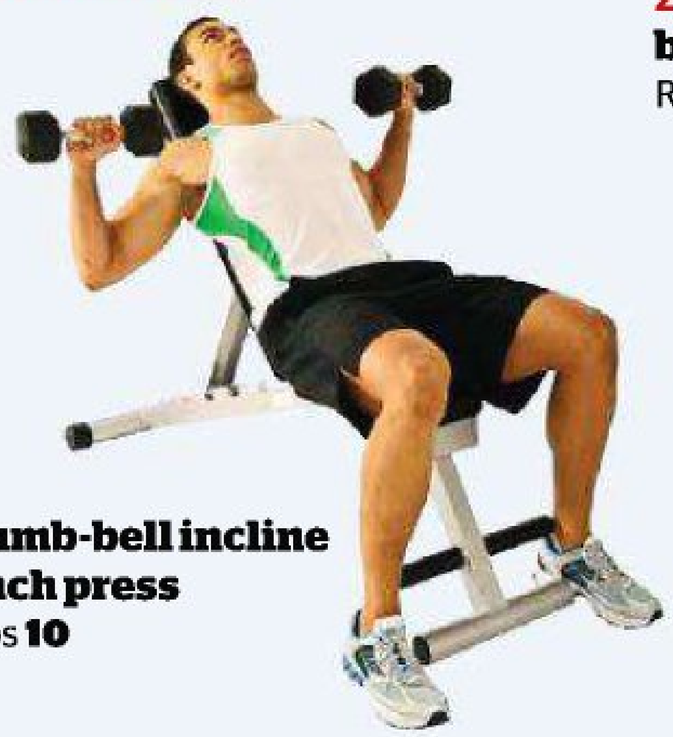
DO THIS

Level Intermediate

Kit Weight bench, dumb-bells

- Warm up with three minutes of running on the spot and dynamic stretches.
- Do the exercises in order without resting.
- Rest for 60 seconds and then repeat. Do three circuits.

START



1 Dumb-bell incline bench press
Reps **10**

2 Dumb-bell incline bench row
Reps **10**

4 Dumb-bell high pull
Reps **10**

3 Dumb-bell squat to press
Reps **10**

Fit Note
Pick the heaviest weight you can manage for each exercise without compromising good form. If it feels like you could do more reps the weight is too light.

5 Dumb-bell seated Russian twist
Reps **10** (both sides equals one rep)

6 Lower body rotation
Reps **5 each side**

FINISH

PERFECT FORM

1 Dumb-bell incline press
Set the bench at around 45˚ and sit with your back and head supported. Hold the dumb-bells at chest height with palms facing forward and elbows out to the side. Press the weights straight up, then lower slowly back to the start.

2 Dumb-bell incline bench row
Set the bench at 30˚ to 45˚. Lie with your chest on the bench and let the weights hang straight down. Draw the dumb-bells up to your sides and squeeze your shoulder blades together. Lower slowly.

3 Dumb-bell squat to press
Hold dumb-bells at shoulder-height, elbows out to the sides. Squat with a straight back, then stand up and simultaneously press the weights overhead. Lower the weights as you drop into the next squat.

4 Dumb-bell high pull
Hold dumb-bells in front of your thighs, palms facing back. Bend forward at the hips and pull the dumb-bells up in front of you, leading with your elbows. Rise up onto your toes and squeeze your traps.

5 Dumb-bell seated Russian twist
Sit with your torso at around 45° to the floor, keeping a straight back and your knees bent. Hold a dumb-bell in front of your chest and rotate from side to side.

6 Lower body rotation
Lie on your back with your arms to the side and hold your legs vertical. Rotate your legs to one side until your feet almost touch the floor. Return to the start and repeat on the other side.

Words Pete Muir **Photography** Tom Miles **Model** Mark Hughes@WAthletic

For another 12-minute workout visit **mensfitness.co.uk/links/teabreaktraining**

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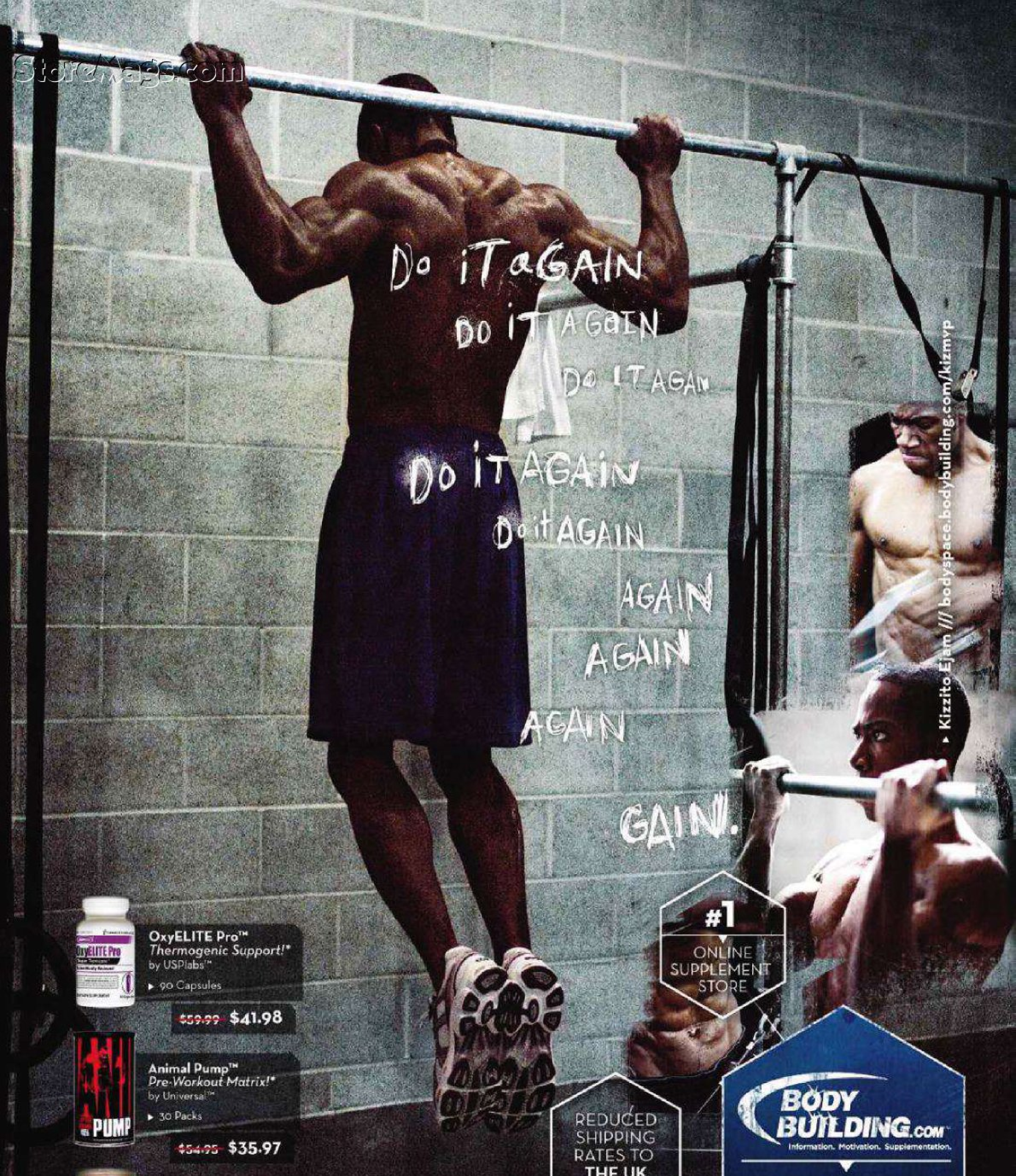
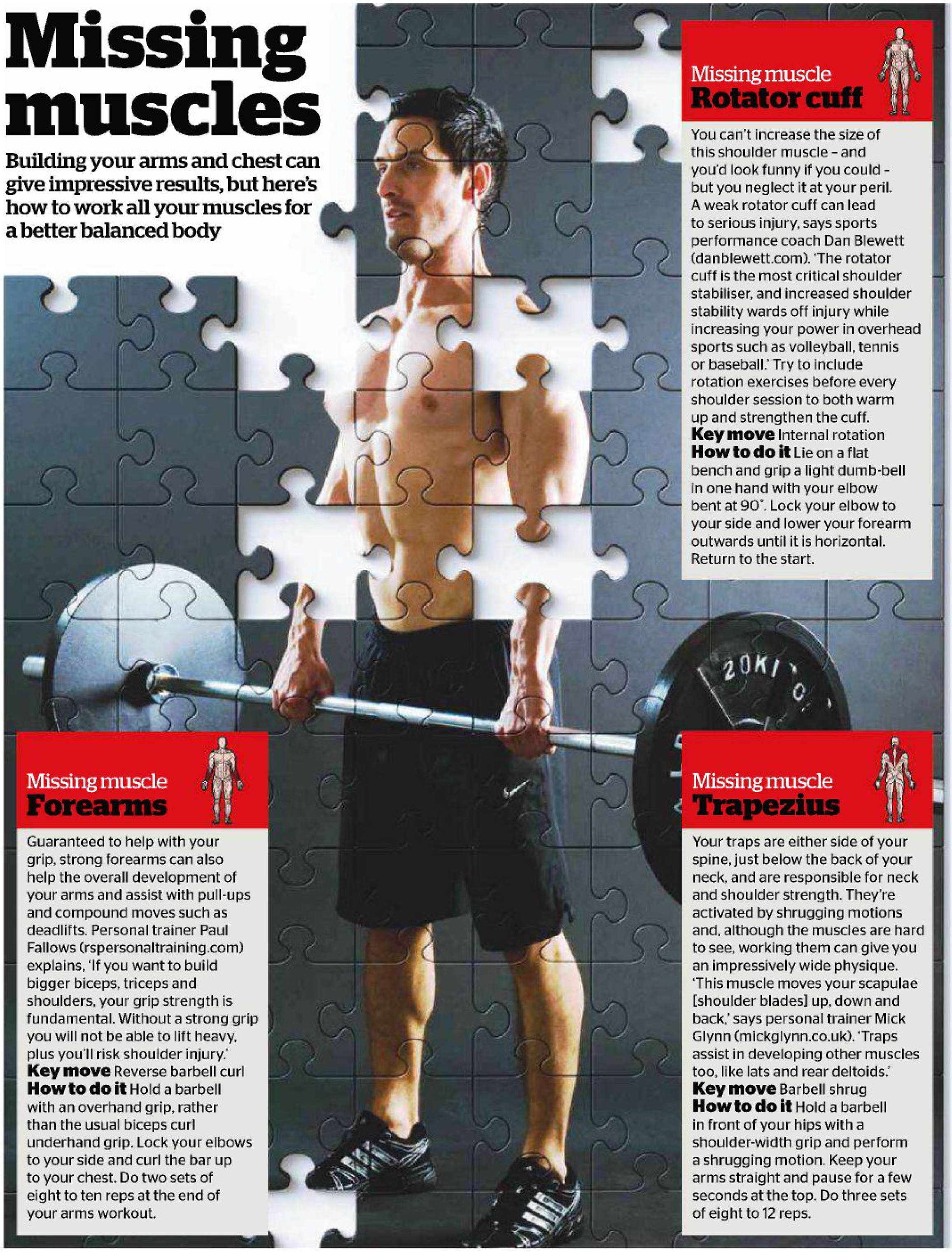


Missing muscles

Building your arms and chest can give impressive results, but here's how to work all your muscles for a better balanced body



Missing muscle
Rotator cuff

You can't increase the size of this shoulder muscle – and you'd look funny if you could – but you neglect it at your peril. A weak rotator cuff can lead to serious injury, says sports performance coach Dan Blewett (danblewett.com). 'The rotator cuff is the most critical shoulder stabiliser, and increased shoulder stability wards off injury while increasing your power in overhead sports such as volleyball, tennis or baseball.' Try to include rotation exercises before every shoulder session to both warm up and strengthen the cuff.

Key move Internal rotation

How to do it Lie on a flat bench and grip a light dumb-bell in one hand with your elbow bent at 90°. Lock your elbow to your side and lower your forearm outwards until it is horizontal. Return to the start.

Missing muscle
Forearms

Guaranteed to help with your grip, strong forearms can also help the overall development of your arms and assist with pull-ups and compound moves such as deadlifts. Personal trainer Paul Fallows (rspersonaltraining.com) explains, 'If you want to build bigger biceps, triceps and shoulders, your grip strength is fundamental. Without a strong grip you will not be able to lift heavy, plus you'll risk shoulder injury.'

Key move Reverse barbell curl

How to do it Hold a barbell with an overhand grip, rather than the usual biceps curl underhand grip. Lock your elbows to your side and curl the bar up to your chest. Do two sets of eight to ten reps at the end of your arms workout.

Missing muscle
Trapezius

Your traps are either side of your spine, just below the back of your neck, and are responsible for neck and shoulder strength. They're activated by shrugging motions and, although the muscles are hard to see, working them can give you an impressively wide physique. 'This muscle moves your scapulae [shoulder blades] up, down and back,' says personal trainer Mick Glynn (mickglynn.co.uk). 'Traps assist in developing other muscles too, like lats and rear deltoids.'

Key move Barbell shrug

How to do it Hold a barbell in front of your hips with a shoulder-width grip and perform a shrugging motion. Keep your arms straight and pause for a few seconds at the top. Do three sets of eight to 12 reps.

Words Simon Miller **Illustration** Peter Crowther

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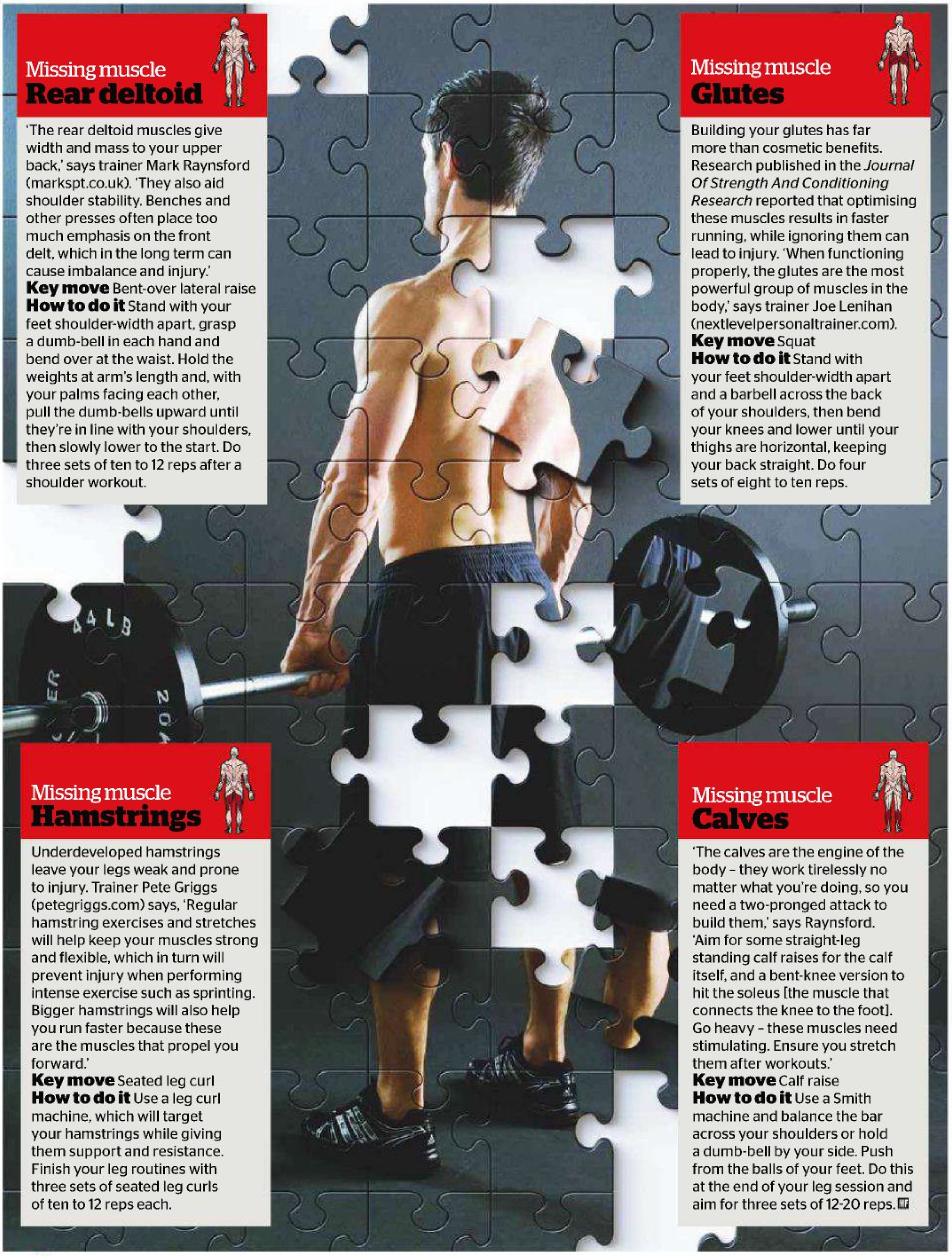

Missing muscle
Rear deltoid

'The rear deltoid muscles give width and mass to your upper back,' says trainer Mark Raynsford (markspt.co.uk). 'They also aid shoulder stability. Benches and other presses often place too much emphasis on the front delt, which in the long term can cause imbalance and injury.'

Key move Bent-over lateral raise

How to do it Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, grasp a dumb-bell in each hand and bend over at the waist. Hold the weights at arm's length and, with your palms facing each other, pull the dumb-bells upward until they're in line with your shoulders, then slowly lower to the start. Do three sets of ten to 12 reps after a shoulder workout.

Missing muscle
Glutes

Building your glutes has far more than cosmetic benefits. Research published in the *Journal Of Strength And Conditioning Research* reported that optimising these muscles results in faster running, while ignoring them can lead to injury. 'When functioning properly, the glutes are the most powerful group of muscles in the body,' says trainer Joe Lenihan (nextlevelpersonaltrainer.com).

Key move Squat

How to do it Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and a barbell across the back of your shoulders, then bend your knees and lower until your thighs are horizontal, keeping your back straight. Do four sets of eight to ten reps.

Missing muscle
Hamstrings

Underdeveloped hamstrings leave your legs weak and prone to injury. Trainer Pete Griggs (petegriggs.com) says, 'Regular hamstring exercises and stretches will help keep your muscles strong and flexible, which in turn will prevent injury when performing intense exercise such as sprinting. Bigger hamstrings will also help you run faster because these are the muscles that propel you forward.'

Key move Seated leg curl

How to do it Use a leg curl machine, which will target your hamstrings while giving them support and resistance. Finish your leg routines with three sets of seated leg curls of ten to 12 reps each.

Missing muscle
Calves

'The calves are the engine of the body – they work tirelessly no matter what you're doing, so you need a two-pronged attack to build them,' says Raynsford. 'Aim for some straight-leg standing calf raises for the calf itself, and a bent-knee version to hit the soleus [the muscle that connects the knee to the foot]. Go heavy – these muscles need stimulating. Ensure you stretch them after workouts.'

Key move Calf raise

How to do it Use a Smith machine and balance the bar across your shoulders or hold a dumb-bell by your side. Push from the balls of your feet. Do this at the end of your leg session and aim for three sets of 12-20 reps.

Check out our forgotten muscle group workout at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/flexorsandglutes**

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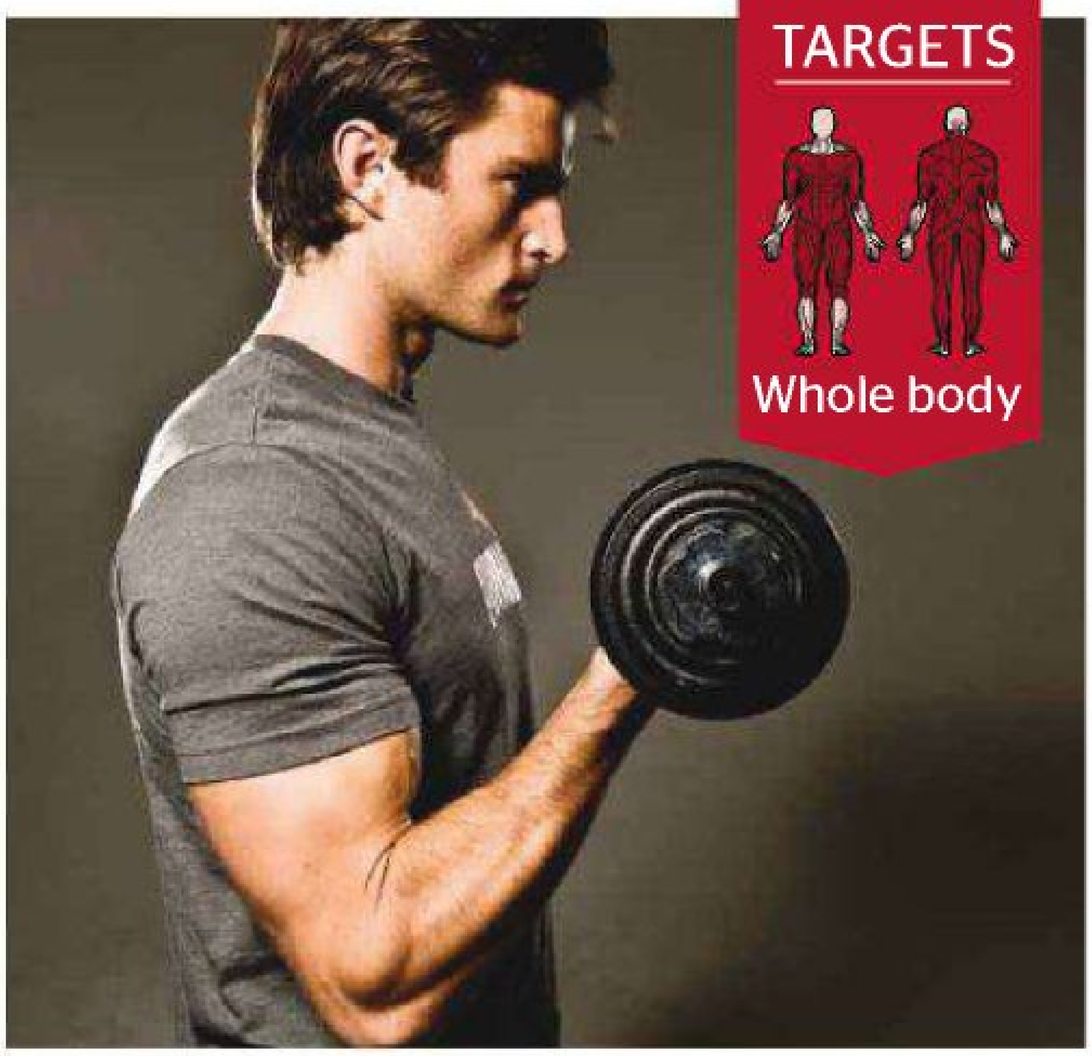


TARGETS

Whole body

Super charged

Use the superset training method to cut workout time and add muscle

One of the most common excuses for missing a workout is not having enough time to train. That's why we're always thinking of ways to make your workouts fast and effective. This routine, which takes less than half an hour, uses a training method called supersets, which involves doing two exercises back to back without rest.

This is effective because it reduces your rest times and also keeps your workout intensity high, so you burn plenty of calories during your session as well as extra calories after your session as your body tries to recover.

These are antagonistic supersets, which means that they hit opposing muscle groups such as your chest and back, so one muscle group recovers while the other works hard.

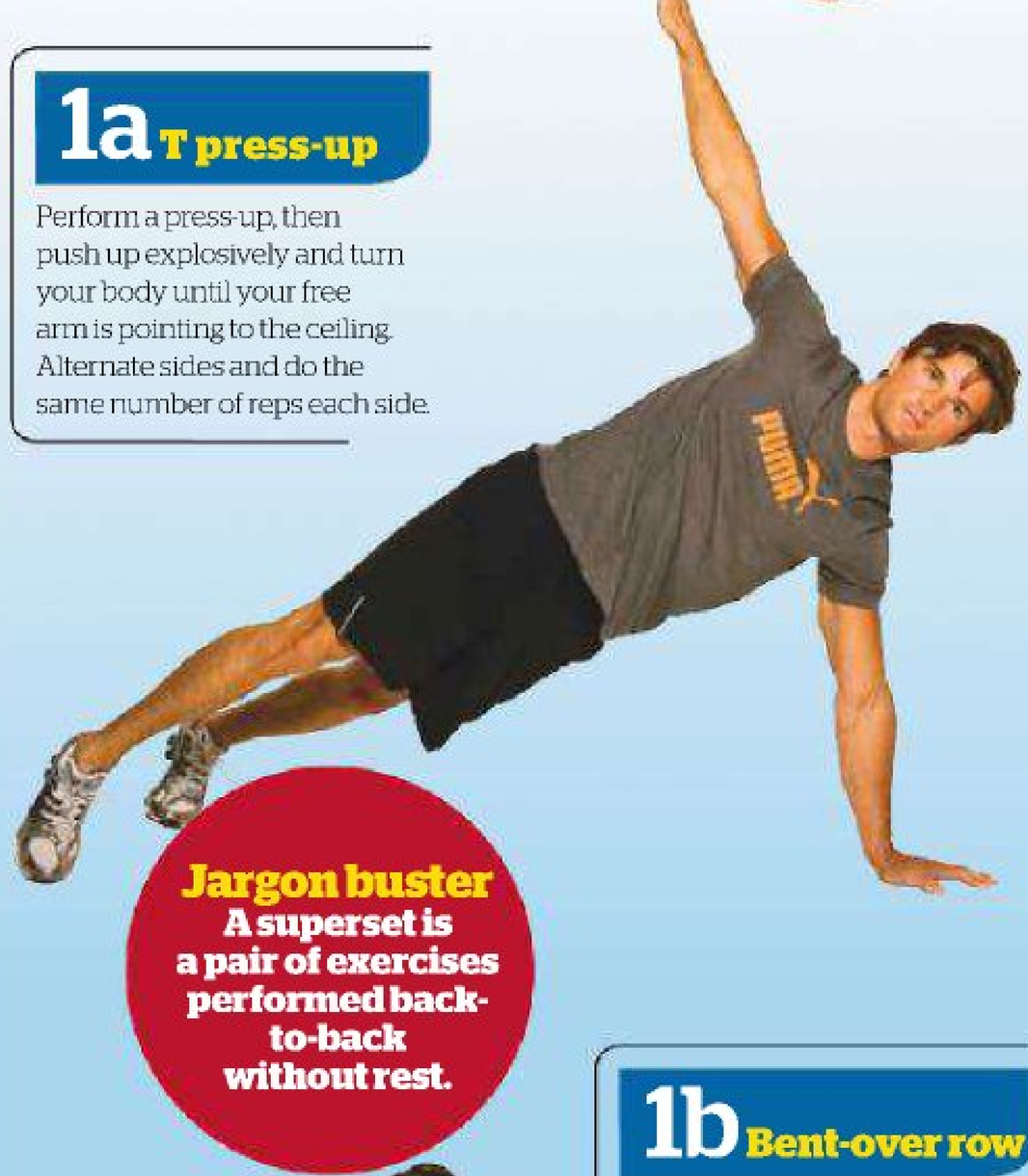
Do one set of 1a then, without resting, do one set of 1b for one superset.

How to do this workout	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
How many workouts should I do per week?	3	3-4	4
How long does each workout take?	8min 40sec	19min	29min
How many times should I do each superset?	1	2	3
How many reps for each superset?	12	10	8
How much rest between supersets?	60 sec	60 sec	60 sec
How much rest between groups of supersets?	n/a	100 sec	90 sec

Superset 1

1a T press-up

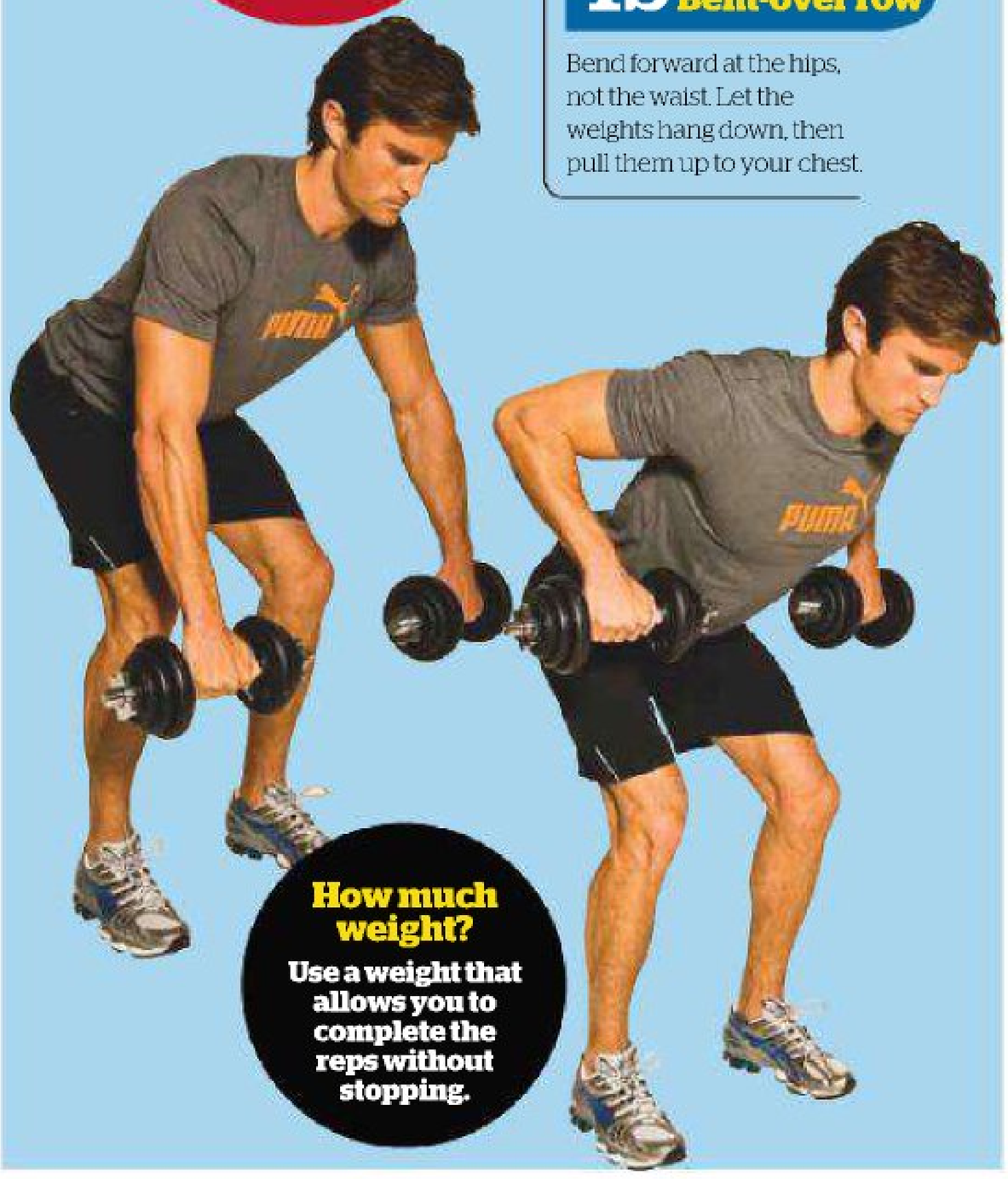
Perform a press-up, then push up explosively and turn your body until your free arm is pointing to the ceiling. Alternate sides and do the same number of reps each side.



Jargon buster
A superset is a pair of exercises performed back-to-back without rest.

1b Bent-over row

Bend forward at the hips, not the waist. Let the weights hang down, then pull them up to your chest.



How much weight?
Use a weight that allows you to complete the reps without stopping.

You'll find more home workouts at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/homeworkouts**

Words Jon Lipsey **Photography** Tom Miles **Model** Peter Sheath@MOT

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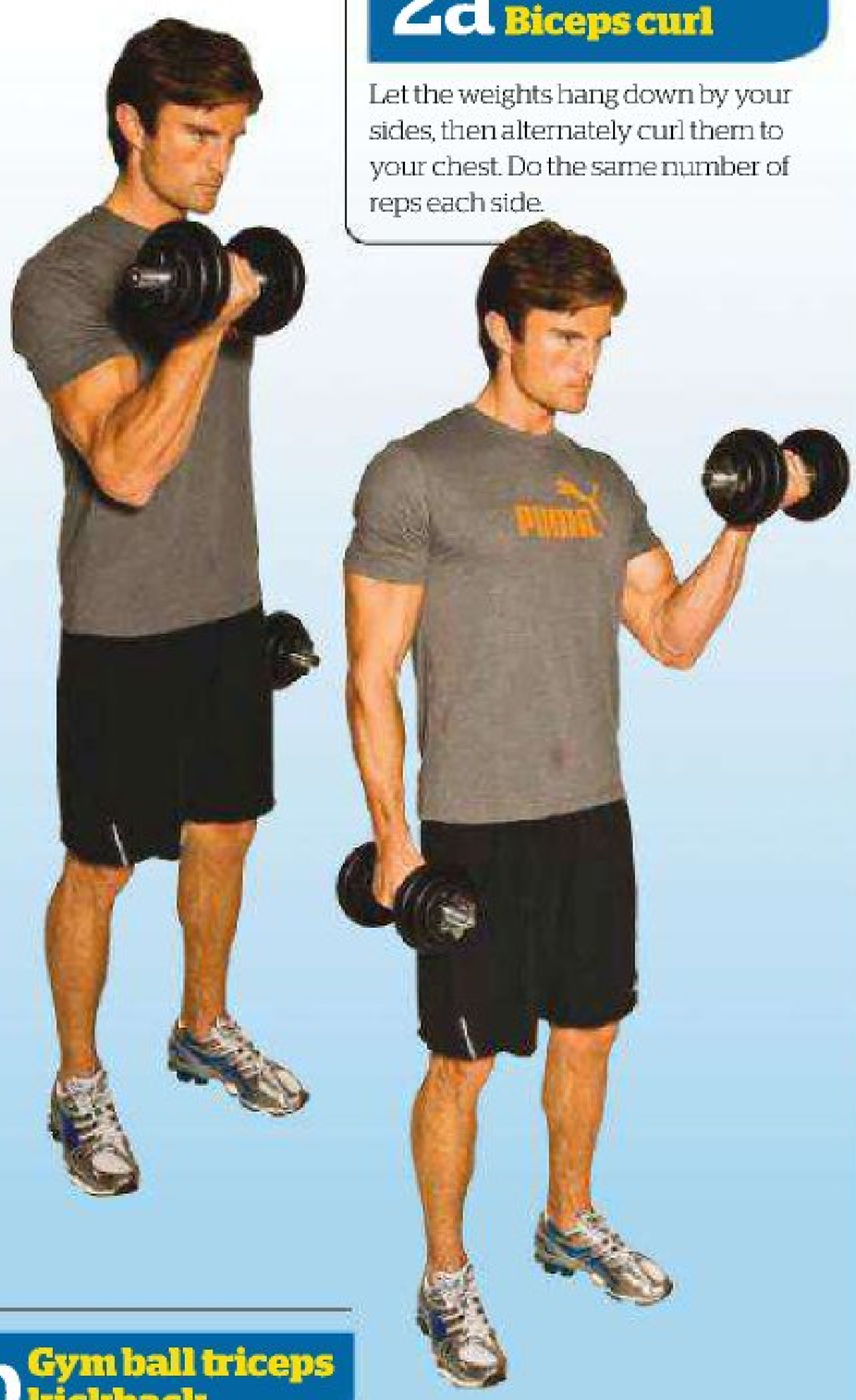
Superset 2

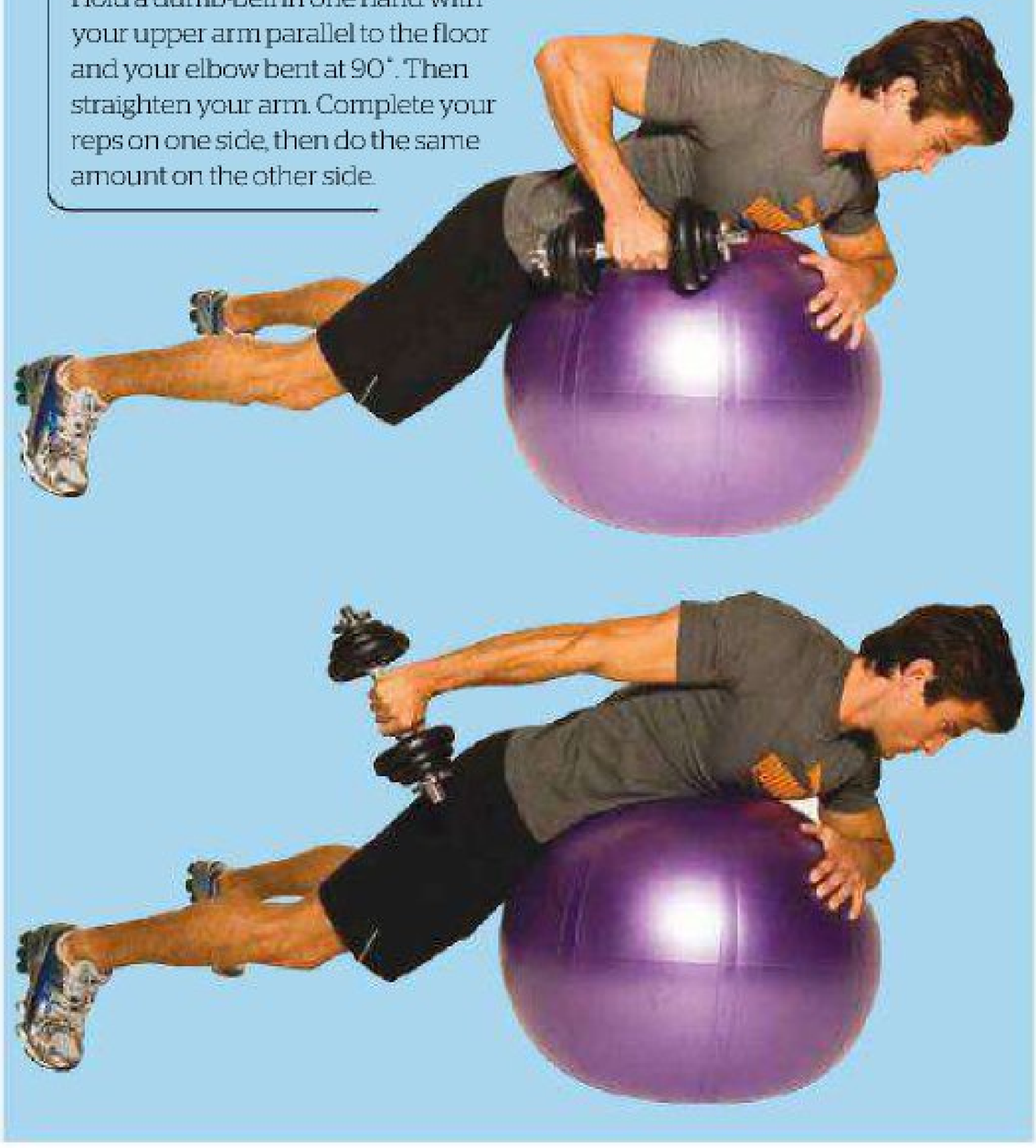
2a Biceps curl

Let the weights hang down by your sides, then alternately curl them to your chest. Do the same number of reps each side.



2b Gym ball triceps kickback

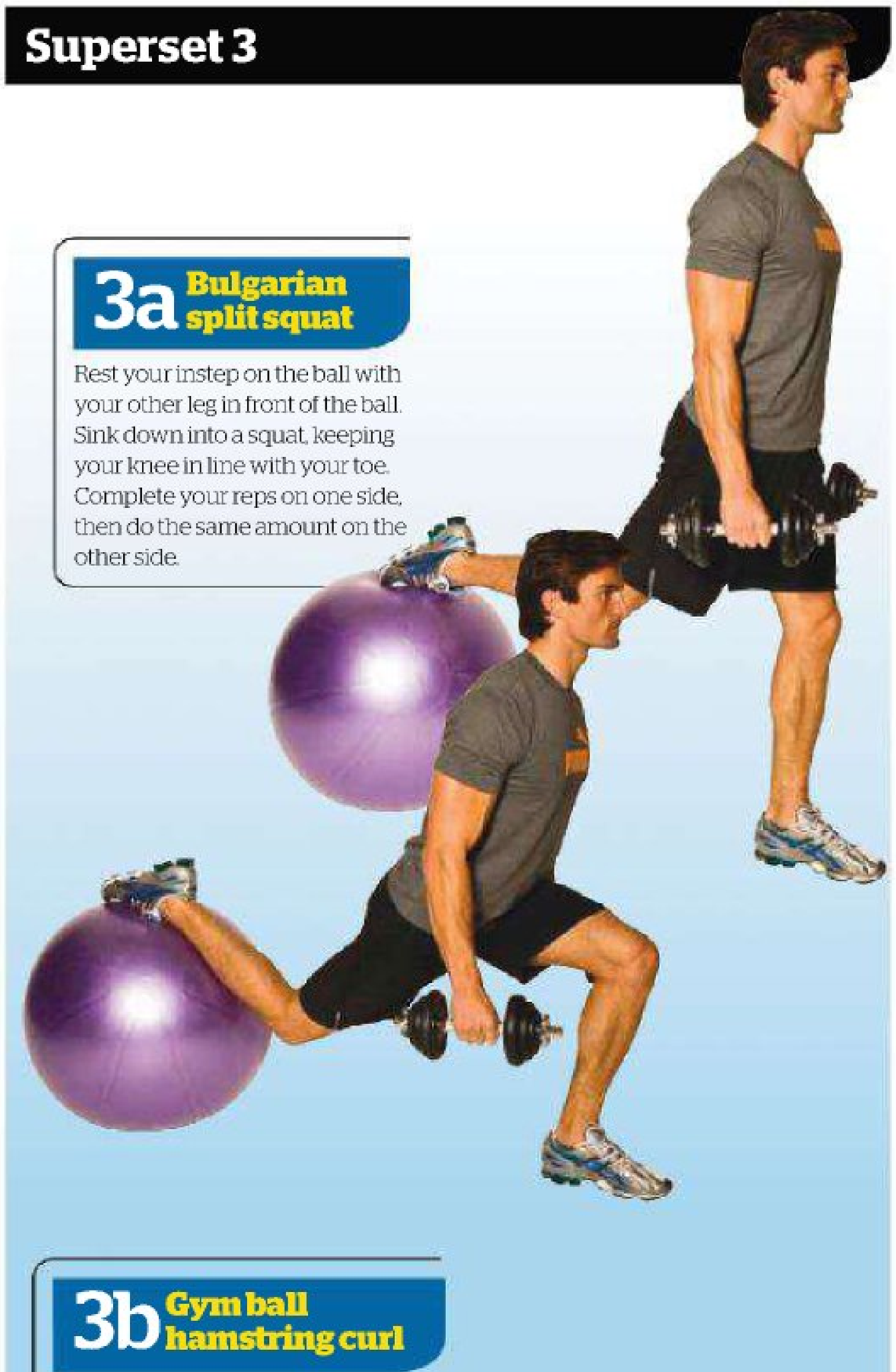
Hold a dumb-bell in one hand with your upper arm parallel to the floor and your elbow bent at 90°. Then straighten your arm. Complete your reps on one side, then do the same amount on the other side.



Superset 3

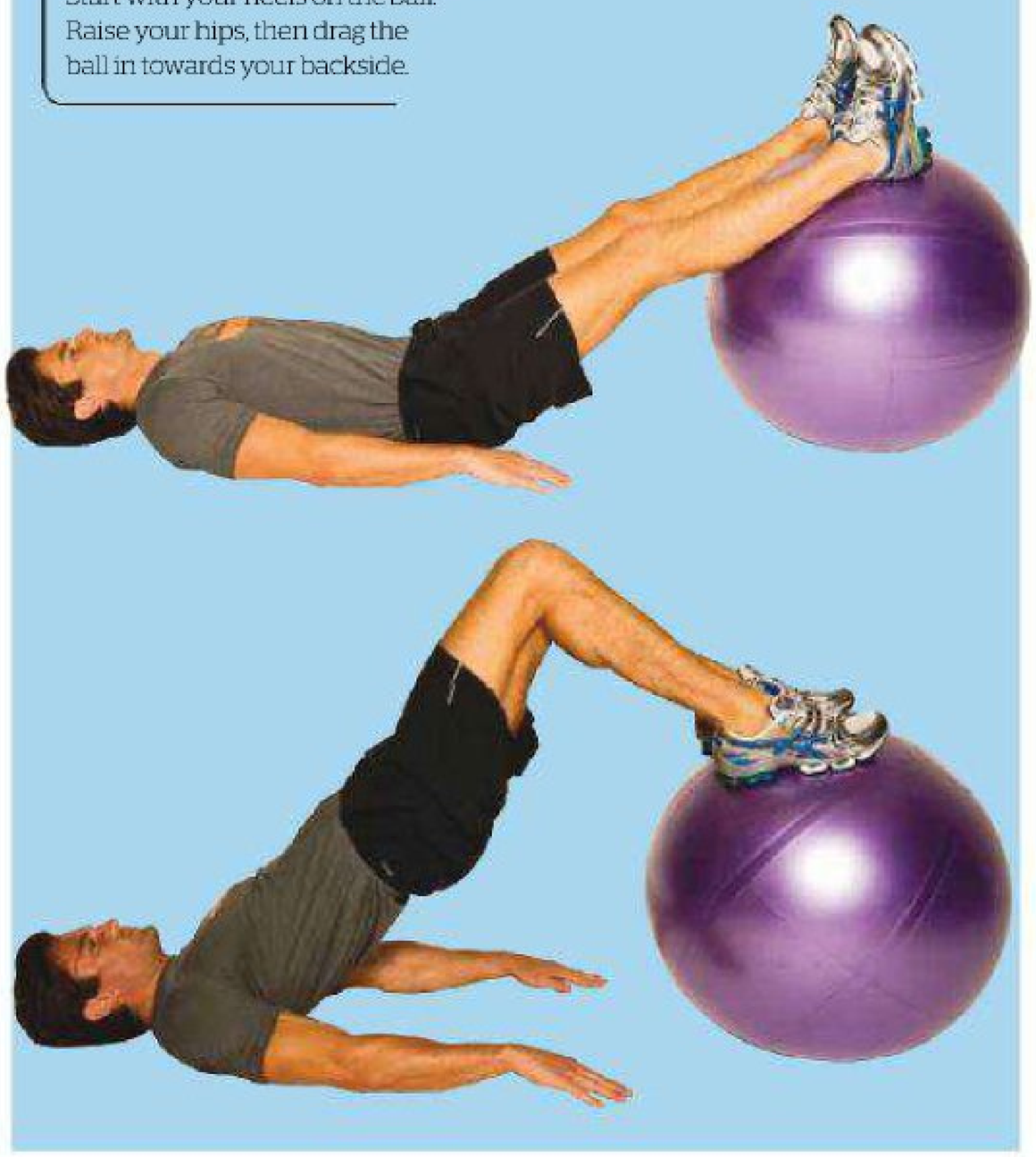
3a Bulgarian split squat

Rest your instep on the ball with your other leg in front of the ball. Sink down into a squat, keeping your knee in line with your toe. Complete your reps on one side, then do the same amount on the other side.



3b Gym ball hamstring curl

Start with your heels on the ball. Raise your hips, then drag the ball in towards your backside.



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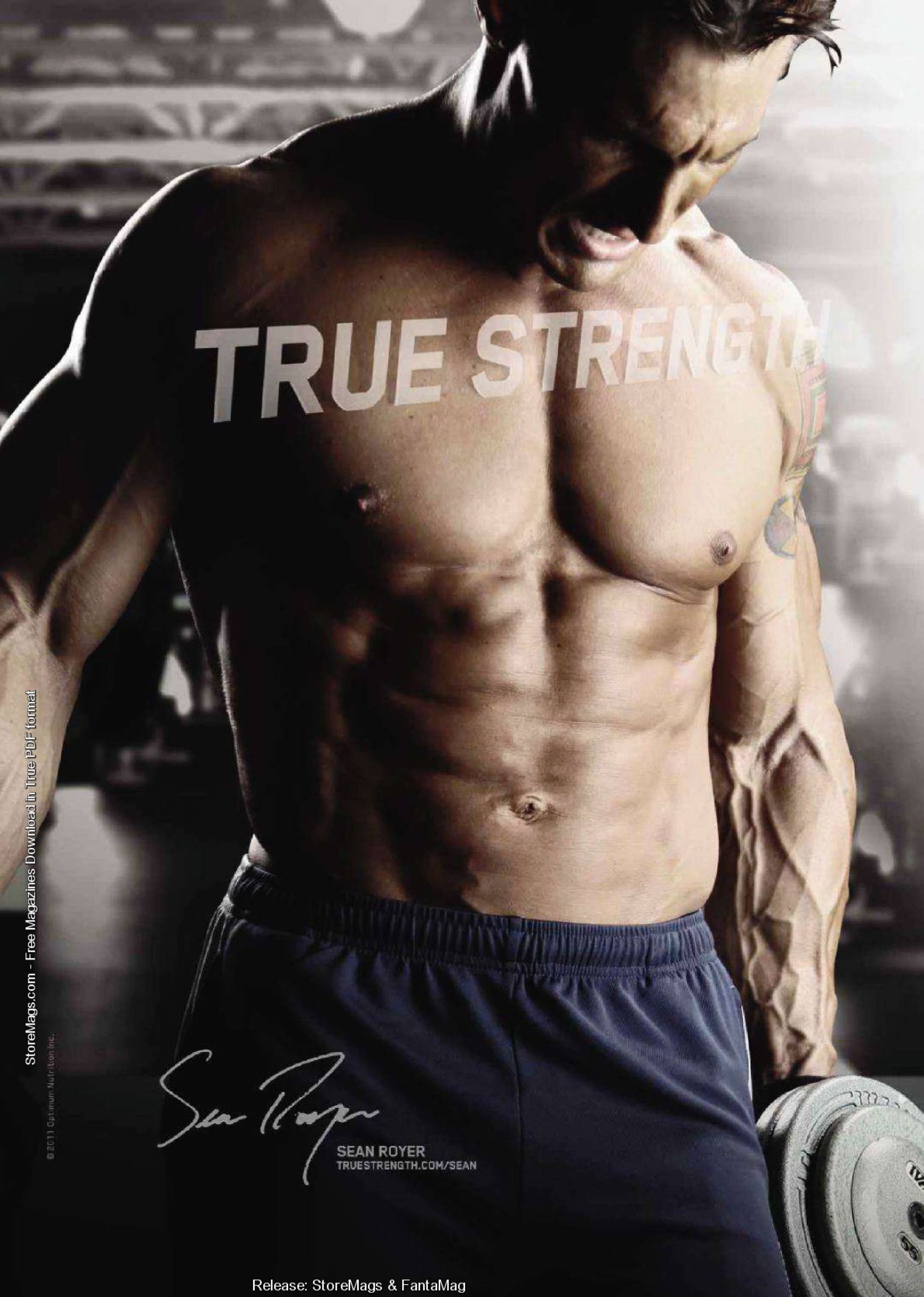

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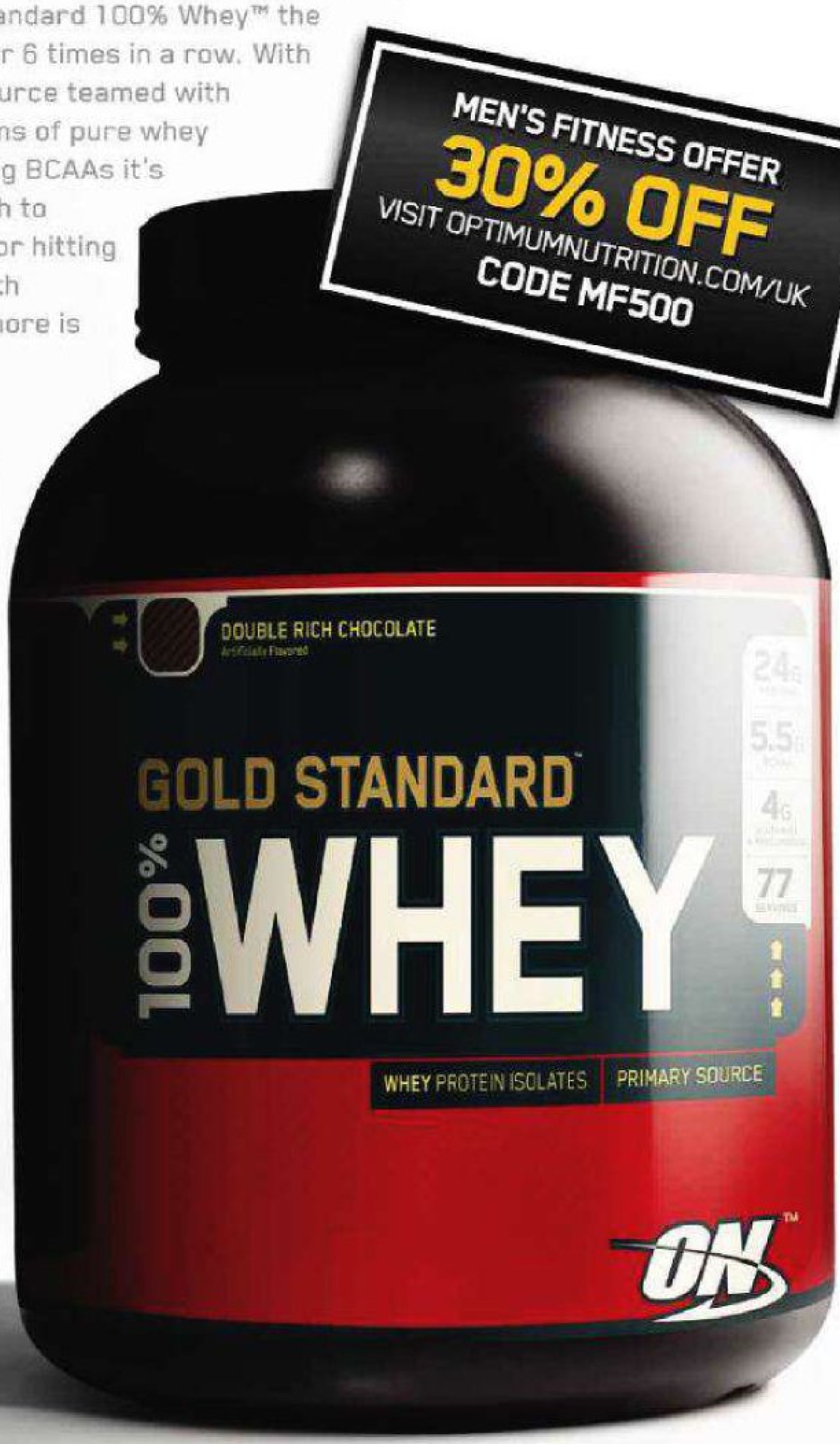

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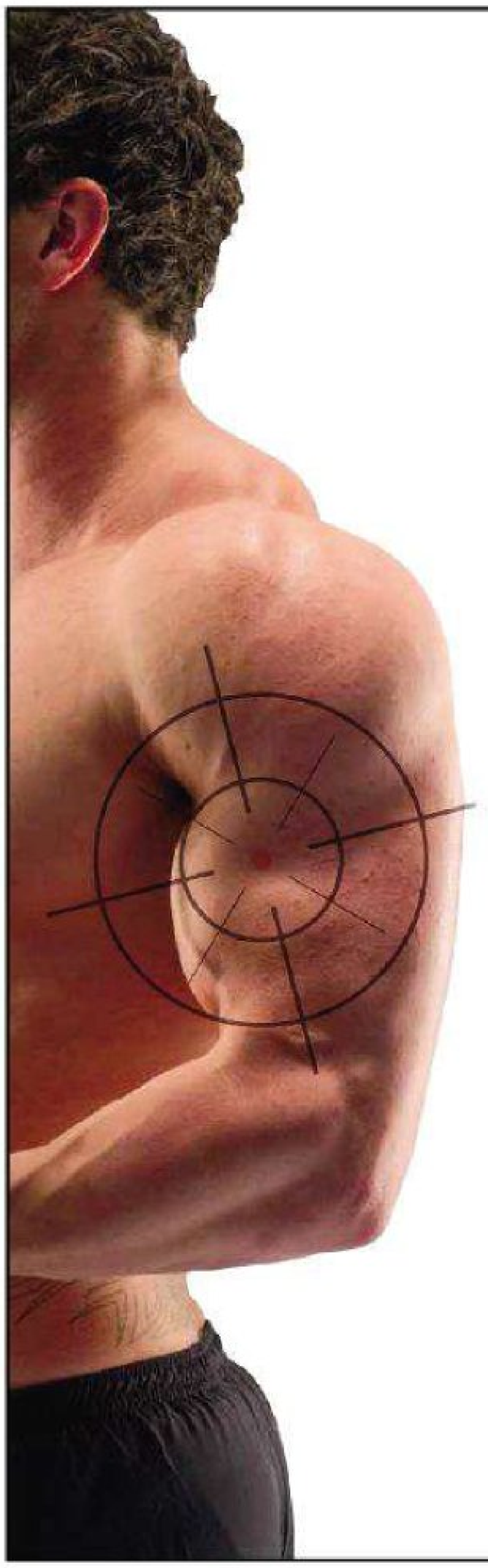


How to win the arms race

Do you do biceps curls again and again until you risk RSI? Our trainers know there are smarter ways to train your arms

The Panel

Jack Lovett, Spartan Performance

Andrew Stemler, CrossFit London

Mark Gordon, Fitness2Health

John Penny, Reebok Gym

Question 1 **What's the most common arms myth you've heard?**	**Following pro bodybuilder workouts will give you huge arms.** Instead you should focus on compound movements and solid nutritional principles.	**Bigger is better.** Some bodybuilding regimes prioritise size over health and performance, and too many athletes follow these to the detriment of their sport.	**The biceps muscles are the biggest part of the arm.** In reality, the triceps group comprises two-thirds of your upper arm.	**Biceps is the biggest muscle group.** In fact the triceps is the biggest and deserve equal attention for a fuller arm definition.
Question 2 **How often should I train my arms?**	**Once you've got to grips** with a structured, strength-based programme, direct arm work can be added once or twice a week.	**In reality, you're using your arms all the time** anyway, so just make sure that you vary the time, load and type of exercise you do to facilitate rest and variation.	**Like all major muscle groups,** your arms should be trained at least once a week.	**You should train your arms two to three times a week,** allowing for recovery days in between.
Question 3 **What do most people neglect when training their arms?**	**The rest of their body!** Doing compound exercises releases loads of growth hormone, so you can develop your arms without working them directly.	**Most people focus on their biceps and triceps,** but it's essential to balance your training to develop your grip strength and healthy shoulders.	**Most people neglect to train their forearms,** which they should work on a different day to their biceps and triceps.	**People tend to neglect their forearm muscles** such as the brachioradialis. Work it by improving your grip strength.

New fitness gear

Stretch ladder

What is it?
A slotted strap designed for stretching to improve mobility and aid with difficult stretches.

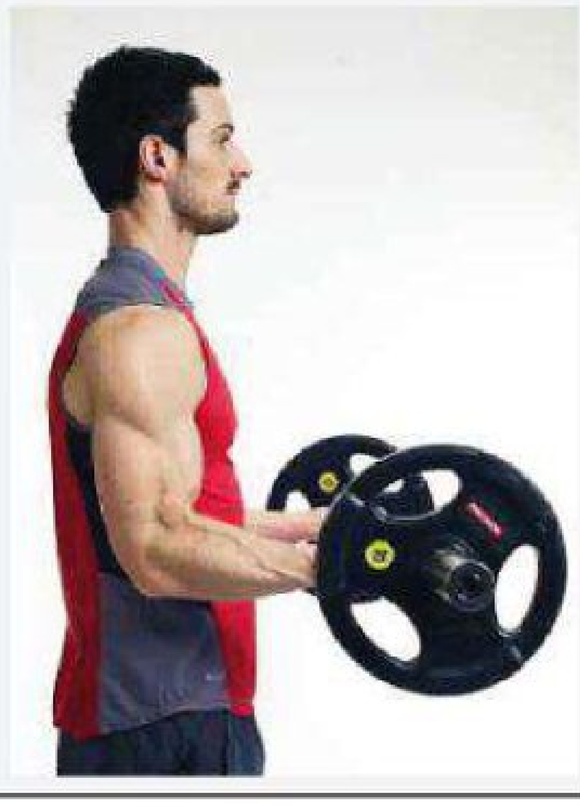
What's it good for?
The Stretch Ladder aims to speed up the stretching process: by slowly working your hands down the ladder you can reach deeper into a stretch than you ever could before. Aimed at people who need to increase their suppleness, it's a great tool for your post-workout stretching.

Stretch ladder from £6 yogaladder.com

Lifting lingo Key gym terms explained

Partial reps

This term doesn't refer to doing an exercise you're fond of - 'I'm quite partial to the odd bench press...' In fact, it's a way to boost muscle growth by adding a few extra reps. It simply means performing an exercise partially. For example, you'd take a biceps curl only to your lower chest, so you're carrying out half the move. Even though you're not attempting the full range of motion, you're still working the muscle - and pushing it further than a normal set would.



Try the partial reps workout you'll find at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/partialtraining**

Words Ben Ince, Simon Miller **Photography** Danny Bird
Model Alex Nardelli@WAthletic, Toby Rowland@WAthletic

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Throwing for gold

Combining explosiveness, endurance and an iron grip is the key to being world class at judo. Top British judoka Euan Burton shares his training secrets

Words Joel Snape **Photography** Naki Kouyioumtzis, Getty

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Euan Burton

Age 31
Height 1.86m
Weight 81kg
Achievements
- 2010 Bronze medal, world championships
- 2007 Bronze medal, world championships

What's the ideal body type for judo?
You can be any shape or size in judo. That's the great thing about it – in a lot of sports, unless you're genetically predisposed to them you're never going to be good at them, but in judo you can always find a way to win. There are guys who are shockingly bad at explosive stand-up judo, but because they're amazing in *newaza* [groundwork], they can win. You have to get to a point where you're good at everything and have one thing that you excel in.

So what do you focus on in your training programme?
One of my big strengths is my conditioning. Matches are five minutes, but you really want to be in shape for a ten-minute fight, because there's a three-minute overtime if there's no score in normal time. Also the fights get closer together throughout the day – in the early stages you might get an hour or two between fights, and then between the quarters and semis you might only have five minutes to recover. And then you'll get a long break before the gold medal match, which can be quite disruptive. You need to be able to recover from an all-out effort really quickly, but also stay focused throughout the day.

So what would be the schedule for a typical week's training?
When we're getting ready for an international competition, we'll do judo technique every morning for two or three hours. On Monday we'll do open *randori* [sparring] where the emphasis is on trying to score rather than grip-fighting and being defensive.

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After that I'll usually do a strength session on Monday afternoon and take Monday evening off. Tuesday morning will introduce a new 'concept' to work on for the week, then on Tuesday afternoon I'll do conditioning. Wednesday morning is usually a technical development session. Thursday morning is a tough drilling session with very little technical stuff. Friday morning is just *newaza*, very little standing *randori*. Saturday will usually be yoga or some sort of recovery session.

'You need to be able to recover from an all-out effort quickly, but also stay focused all day'

Do you strictly do judo for your conditioning work?
We use the rower a lot, too. It's hard on your forearms and it's a full-body exercise, just like judo. It can be difficult to monitor the intensity of your workout on a judo mat – you might have ten five-minute fights one night and feel fine, then you do it with different people and feel like you've been in a car crash. It's easier on a rower.

What's your next big competition?
I'm looking at the world championships again next year, and then obviously it's the Olympics after that. Longevity in judo is all about how injury-prone your are, how clever you are and how much you can push yourself physically without breaking your body.

Euan Burton is an ambassador for Maximuscle. **maximuscle.co.uk**

Euan Burton's judo workout

Part 1
Grip strength

'Dominating the fight for grips is such a big part of the sport now,' says Burton. 'If you're always fighting from a bad grip you're in trouble. Some guys will fight from a grip that isn't ideal because they're constantly working on techniques that can compensate for it. But as a general rule, if you win the grip fight, you're at a huge advantage.'

1 Plate flip
Sets 2 Reps As many as possible in 60 seconds

- Hold a plate between your fingers and thumb. Rubber weight plates work best. Start with 5kg and work up.
- 'Flip' the plate and catch it. You can flip it from hand to hand or alternate hands between sets.

Burton says 'This is great for your pinch grip, which transfers really well to judo.'

2 Plate grip farmer's walk
Sets 3 Distance 10 metres

- Walk holding a weight plate in each hand.
- Keep your core braced throughout.

Burton says 'If you can use a heavy enough weight, you'll be able to feel this working your legs and core as well as your fingers.'

3 *Gi* pull-up
Sets 3 Reps 10

- Throw a judo uniform (*gi*) or a towel over a pull-up bar.
- Hold both ends of the *gi* or towel as you do pull-ups. Remember: straight arms at the bottom, head as high as possible at the top.
- Add weight by holding a dumb-bell between your feet.

Burton says 'If your pull strength is good enough to get someone off-balance, that's half the battle.'

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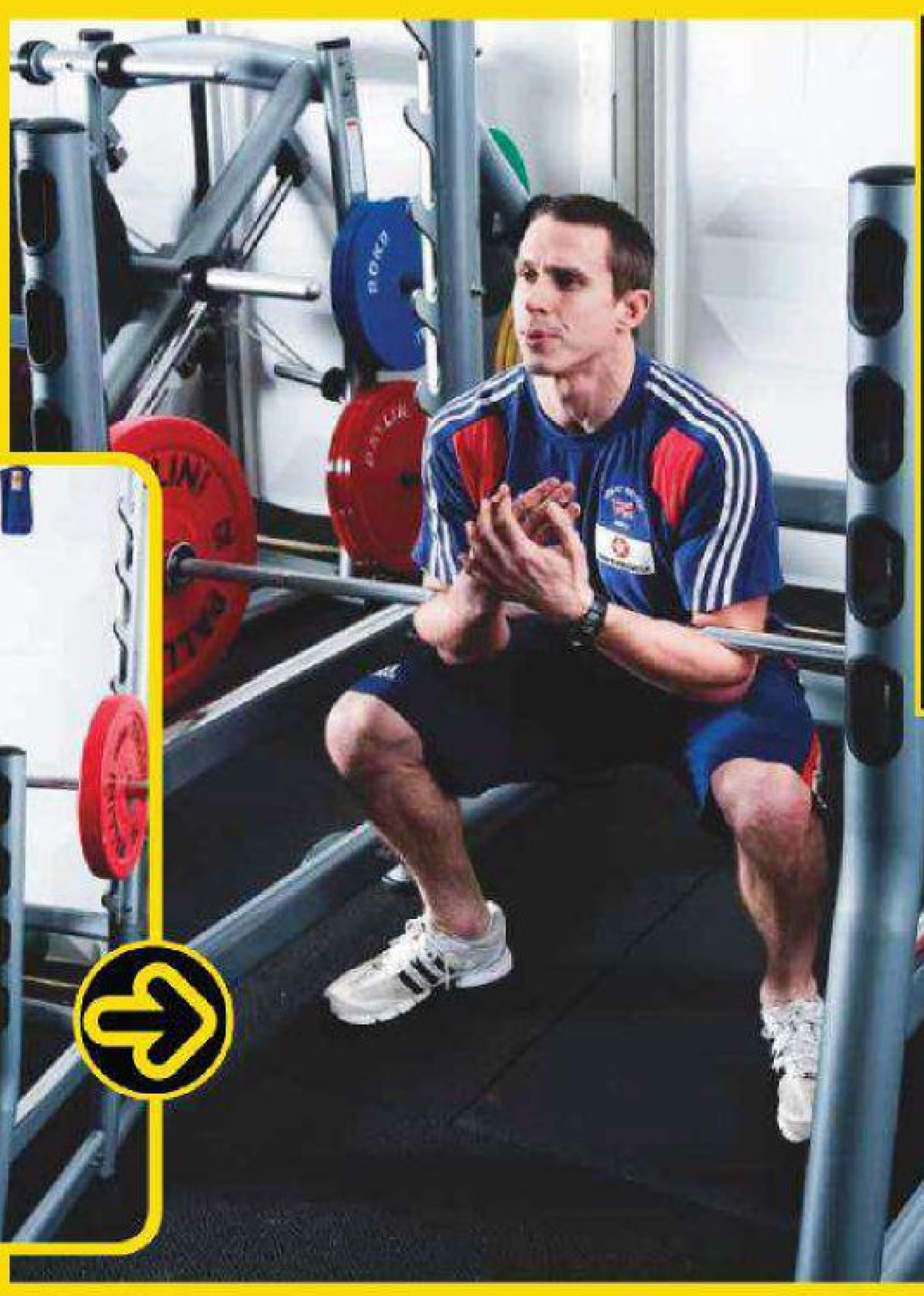
Part 2

Explosive strength

'Being explosive is huge in judo,' says Burton. 'You've got to be able to go from being very relaxed into a throw as fast as possible.'



1 Zercher squat
Sets 3 Reps 5

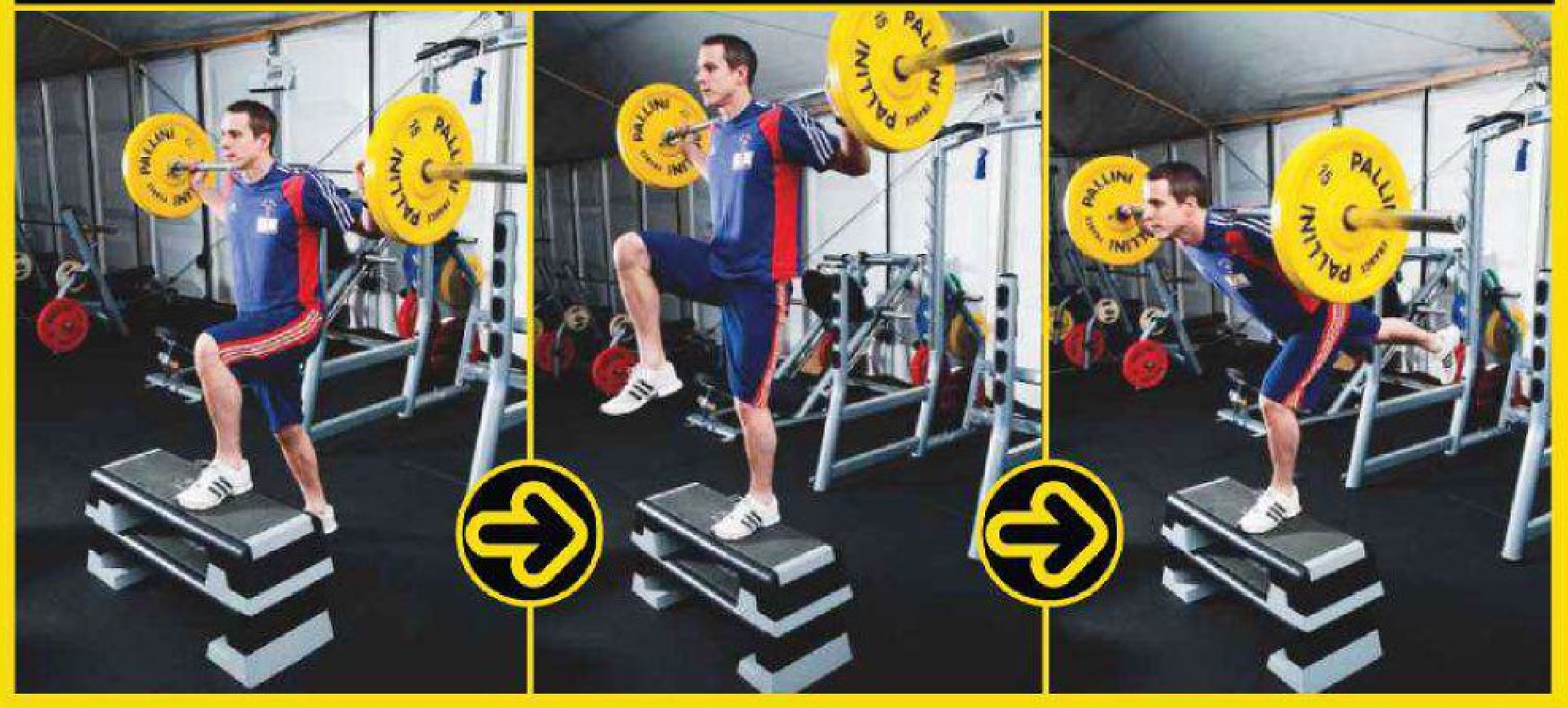
- Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and hold a barbell in the crook of your elbows.
- Start the movement by driving your hips back, and squat down until your upper thighs are parallel to the floor. Drive back up through your heels.

Burton says 'I'm working on a technique in which I drop very low, so I need to be able to explode from a really closed position. Zercher squats help this. It's also a little bit easier on your flexibility than the back squat, if your feet and ankles aren't that flexible.'

2 Single-leg step-up/good morning
Sets 3 Reps 5 each leg

- With a barbell held in position across your shoulders, step up onto a box or bench. Raise your trailing leg and push it out in front of you.
- Now push your leg out behind you and lean forward, as you would if you were doing a good morning.
- Finally, reverse the whole move and step back down. Try this move with an empty barbell before you add weight.

Burton says 'This move is about being able to maximise the power you can generate driving through your hips off a single leg, but it's also about having control on one leg, which is crucial for a lot of throws.'



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Euan Burton's judo workout

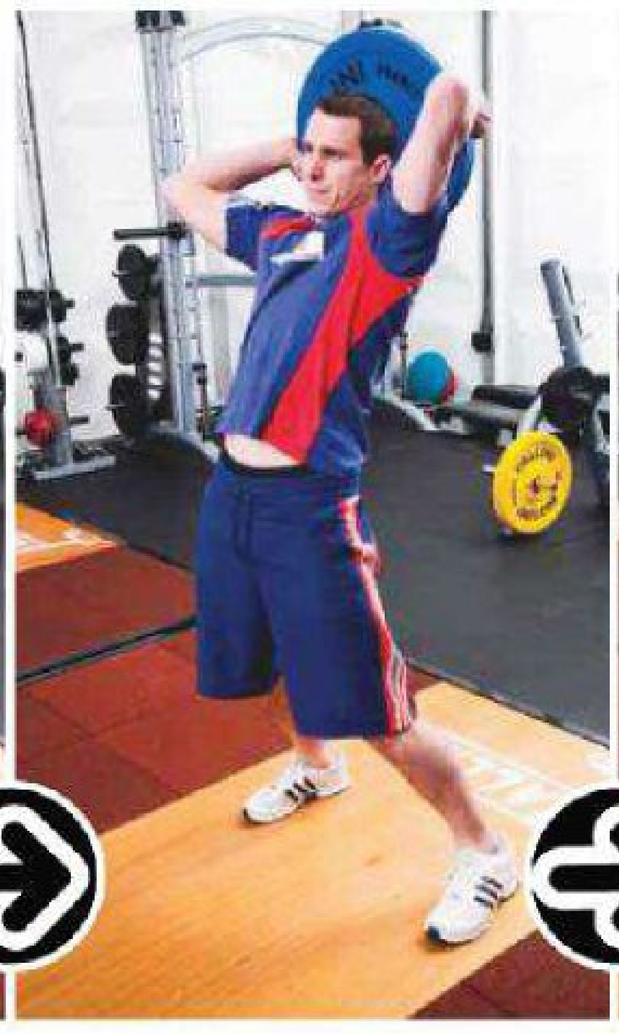
Part 3
Core work

Judo players get their core strength from sparring and sport-specific moves rather than crunches. 'A strong core is important, both for throwing and avoiding being thrown,' says Burton. 'It's part of everything you do.'

1 Windscreen wipers
Sets 3 Reps 10

- Hang from a pull-up bar or, if you want a test of grip, a small pair of towels.
- Raise your legs, then lower them to one side and then the other, like a set of windscreen wipers.

Burton says 'This is quite an advanced move. If it's too hard at first, just bend your legs.'



2 Halo
Sets 3 Reps As many as possible in 30 seconds

- Hold a weight plate or kettlebell in both hands, then move it in a circular motion around your head.
- Change directions after each circle.

Burton says 'Not only will this work your core in an upright position, it'll work your shoulders through a wider range of motion than you can manage in most moves.'

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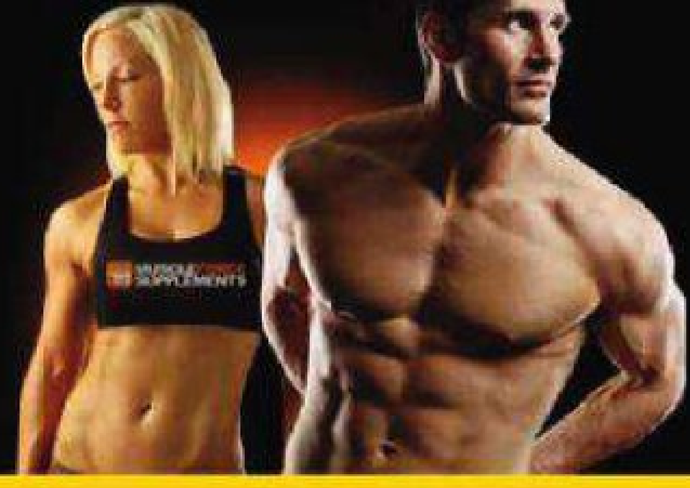

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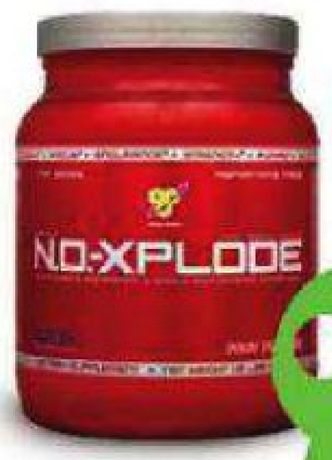

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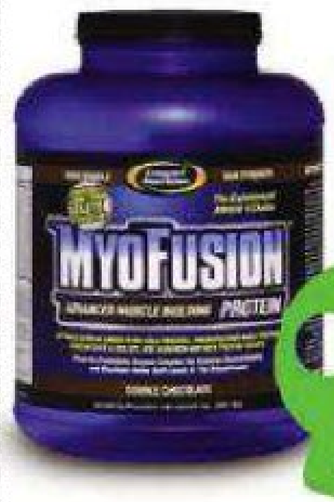

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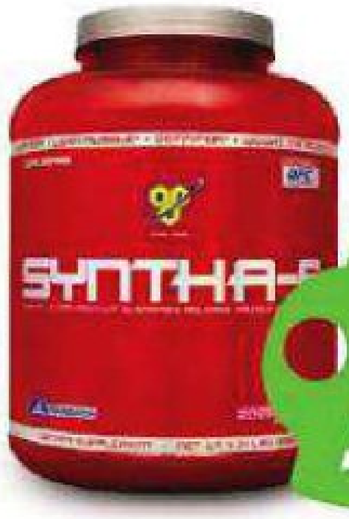

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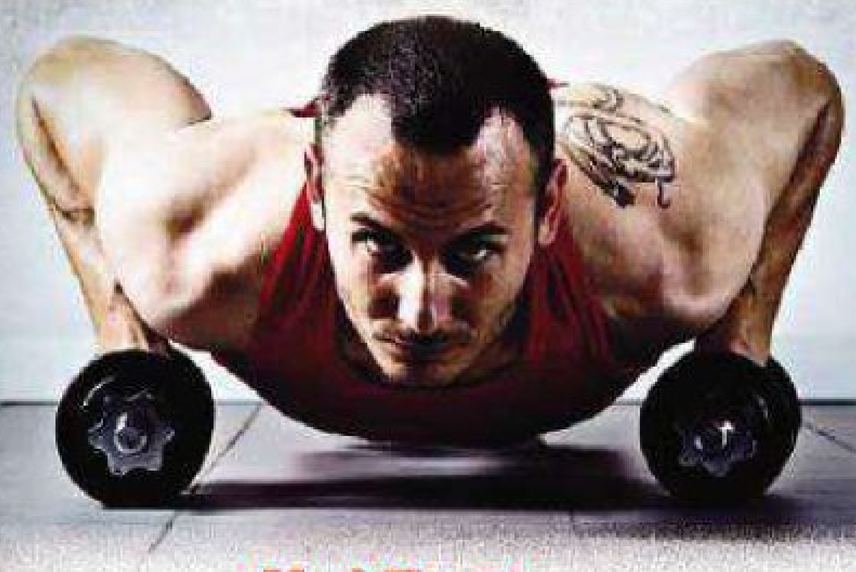

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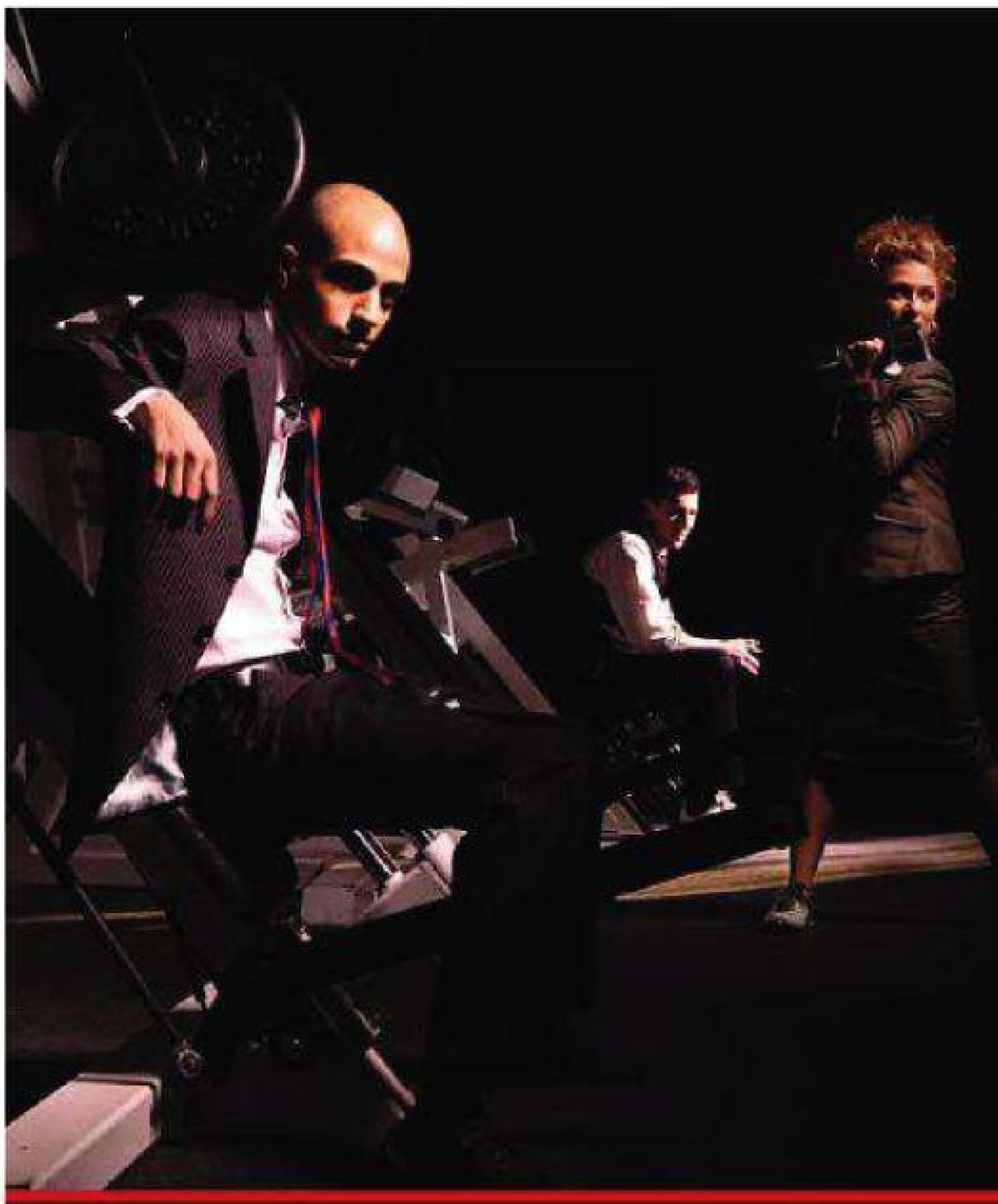

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Abs move of the month

Side plank snatch

Add an extra hit to the side plank to strengthen your abs, back and hips

Why you should do it

'The side plank is a must to increase your core strength because it hits your deep-lying core muscles,' says personal trainer Tony Fulford (tffitness.co.uk). 'Adding the snatch boosts your core stability and raises your heart rate for a valuable added calorie burn.'

How to do it

- Start in the bottom position of a side plank with one arm straight and your hip on the floor.
- Grab a dumb-bell or kettlebell (start relatively light to assess your strength) and lift the weight above your body in a straight line with your free arm, using a snatch motion.
- Lower the weight back down before performing the move again.

Intelligent muscle

Throw of strength

Explosive plyometric drills such as overhead throws can significantly increase your strength, according to a study in the *Journal Of Strength And Conditioning Research*. Throwing a medicine ball against a wall and catching it after the bounce will help with your overall power. The study also showed, however, that to increase throwing velocity – to assist with sports, for example – it was typically more beneficial to stick to conventional upper-body weight training.

Test yourself **Single arm cable pull**

What it tests

'This exercise tests the strength of your sling systems [groups of muscles and connective tissue that combine to perform complex movements], spinal stability, core strength and functionality of the chain of muscles,' says personal trainer Claud Serjeant.

How to do it

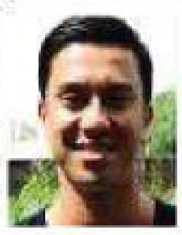
'Set the handle on the cable machine to the highest setting and load it with a third of your bodyweight. Hold the cable with your right hand and put your left leg forwards in a split stance. Keep your head up and look at the top of the machine to maintain a straight spine. Pull your bellybutton inwards to contract the deep abdominal wall for spinal stability and injury prevention. As you pull the weight with your left hand, make sure to maintain good posture and reach with your right hand. This rotates the upper body.'

Can't do it?

'If the exercise is too difficult to complete, start by doing it with a quarter of your bodyweight and build from there.'

How you rate

Reps	Level
15 or more	Excellent
12-14	Good
8-11	Average
0-7	Poor



CLAUD SERJEANT is a former pro tennis player and a personal trainer at London's Move Three Sixty **(movethreesixty.com)**

Words Simon Miller **Illustration** Sudden Impact **Photography** Danny Bird **Model** James Farmer@Model Management

We've posted more abs workouts and moves at **mensfitness.co.uk/links/abssomeofthis**

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TOWER OF STRENGTH

Build big arms, a huge chest and powerful legs in three workouts per week

The secret to phenomenal muscle growth isn't really a secret at all: you simply need to plan your workouts to give your muscles time to recover, grow and shift serious weight the next time you call on them. This workout follows the classic split of focusing on back and biceps, chest and triceps, and legs on separate days. Training in this manner allows you to push harder because each body part gets the maximum time to recover. You start with big compound moves to trigger blood flow and growth hormone release, then move on to isolation exercises that take each muscle to fatigue, creating the perfect circumstances for growth. After four weeks you'll see significant size and strength gains, setting you well on the way to the muscular physique you want.

Words Simon Miller **Photography** Duncan Nicholls
Model Toby Rowland@WAthletic

How to do it

Timing Workouts should take about 30 minutes, including the warm-up.

Warm-up Spend five minutes doing bodyweight moves such as press-ups, squats and lunges.

Weight Choose a weight that allows you to complete all your reps but no more.

Tempo Take one second to lift the weight, pause, then take three seconds to lower.

Rest Rest for 30-45 seconds between sets and for one minute between exercises.

What you do

Monday Chest and triceps p146

Wednesday Back and biceps p148

Friday Legs p150

Turn over for your chest and triceps workout »»

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MONDAY
Chest & triceps

1 Ballistic bench press
Sets **4** Reps **8**

Target **Chest, triceps**

This variation on the bench press will not only engage your pectorals and triceps but also help to improve your explosive strength. To shake things up for an additional challenge, try performing it on a Smith machine, letting go of the bar at the top of the movement before safely catching it. Be sure to adjust the weight.

- Lay down on a bench, keeping a natural arch in your back.
- Hold the bar with hands wider than shoulder-width apart and lift it from the rack, holding it directly above your chest.
- Lower the bar slowly to your chest, then push it up explosively as if you were trying to throw it off you - but don't let go.

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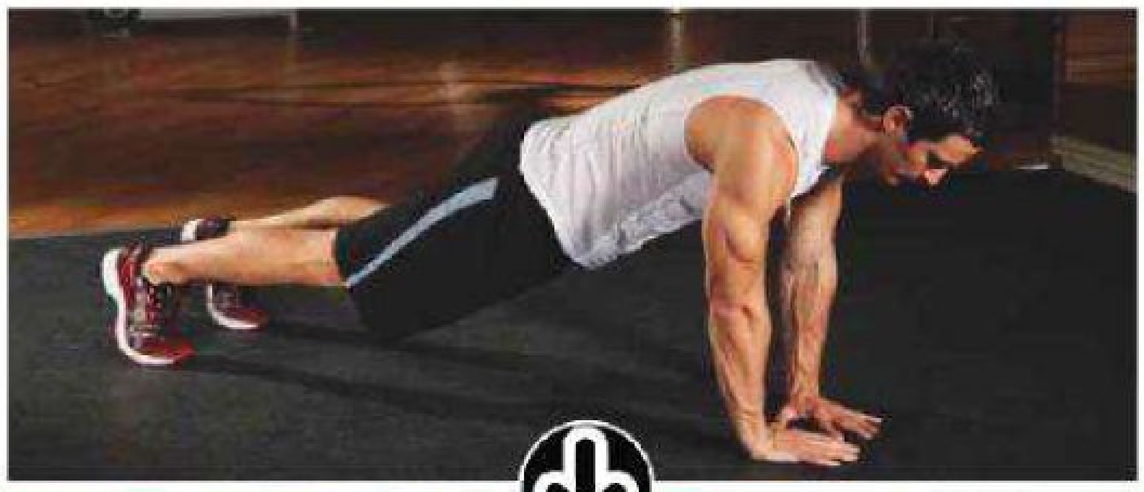
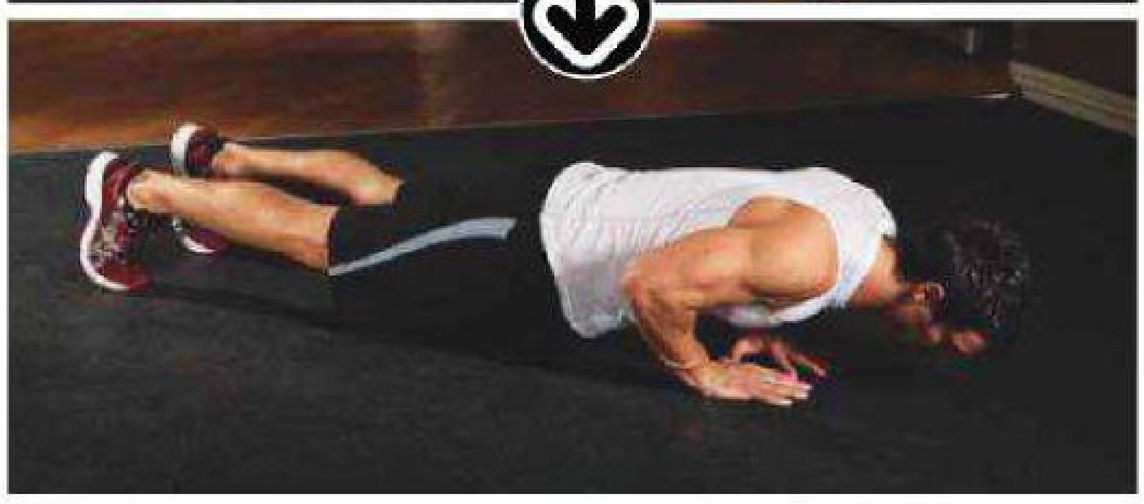
2 Fold dip
Sets 4 Reps 6-8

Target Triceps, abs
Another variation on a classic, this will target triceps and abs in a different way to challenge your body after the bench press. The targeted muscles will grow as well as strengthening your core.

- Grip the bars either side of your waist.
- Lean forward to take pressure off your shoulders and draw in your knees as you dip.

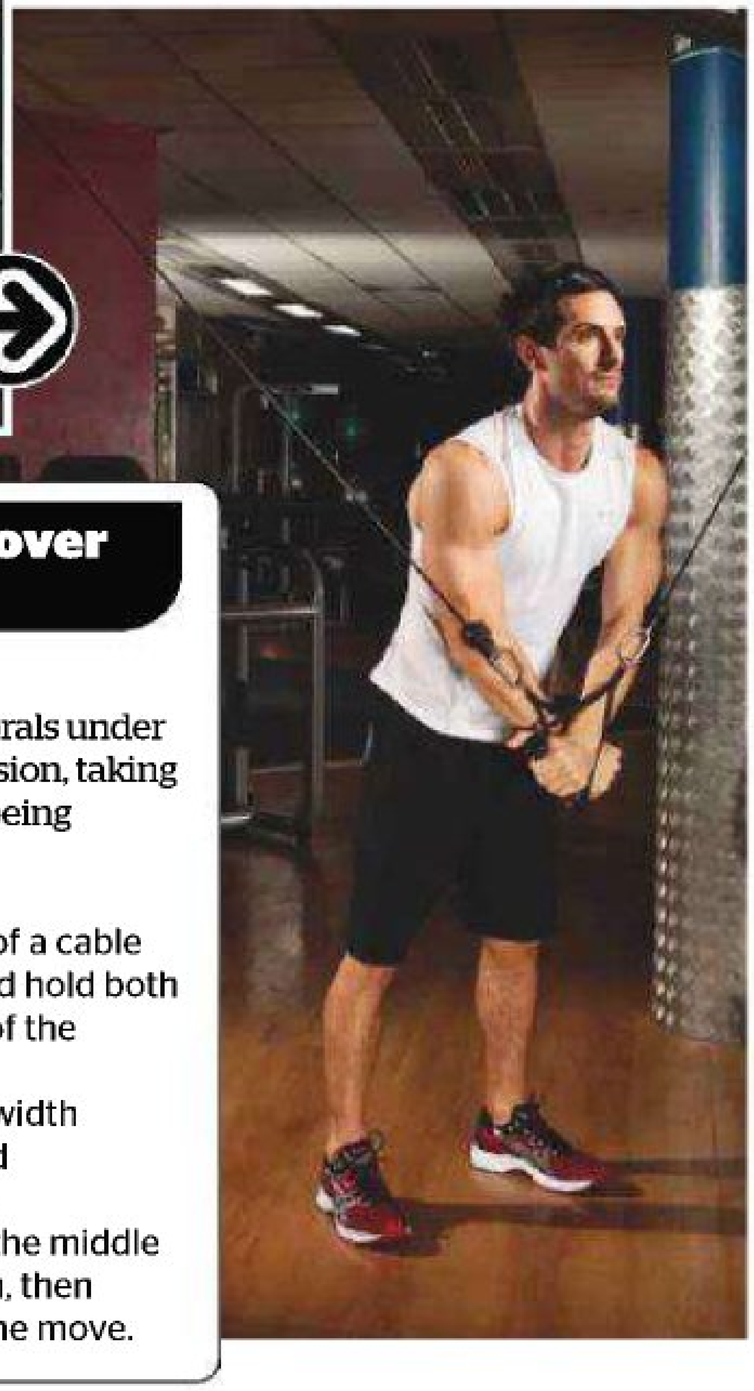




3 Diamond press-up
Sets 3 Reps 12

Target Chest, triceps
With your chest and triceps starting to get fatigued, switching to this alternative version of the traditional press-up is a good way to shock your body once again. Make sure you warm your wrists up first to get the most out of the move.

- Get in a press-up position and place your hands together so your two index fingers and two thumbs are touching, creating a diamond.
- Bend your elbows and lower your chest to the floor before pushing back up to the starting position.



4 Cable crossover
Sets 3 Reps 12

Target Chest
This will put the pectorals under a constant state of tension, taking them a step closer to being completely fatigued.

- Stand in the centre of a cable crossover machine and hold both cables, placing some of the tension in your arms.
- Stand with feet hip-width apart and lean forward from the hips slightly.
- Pull the cables into the middle until your hands touch, then return to the start of the move.

5 One arm press-down
Sets 2 Reps 10 each side

Target Triceps
Using only one arm in this classic move allows you to home in on the muscle while concentrating on form.

- Set the cable at head height and stand up with your back straight.
- Tuck your elbow into your side and pull the handle down.
- Squeeze your triceps at the bottom of the move before returning to the starting point.

Turn over for your Wednesday workout »»»

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WEDNESDAY

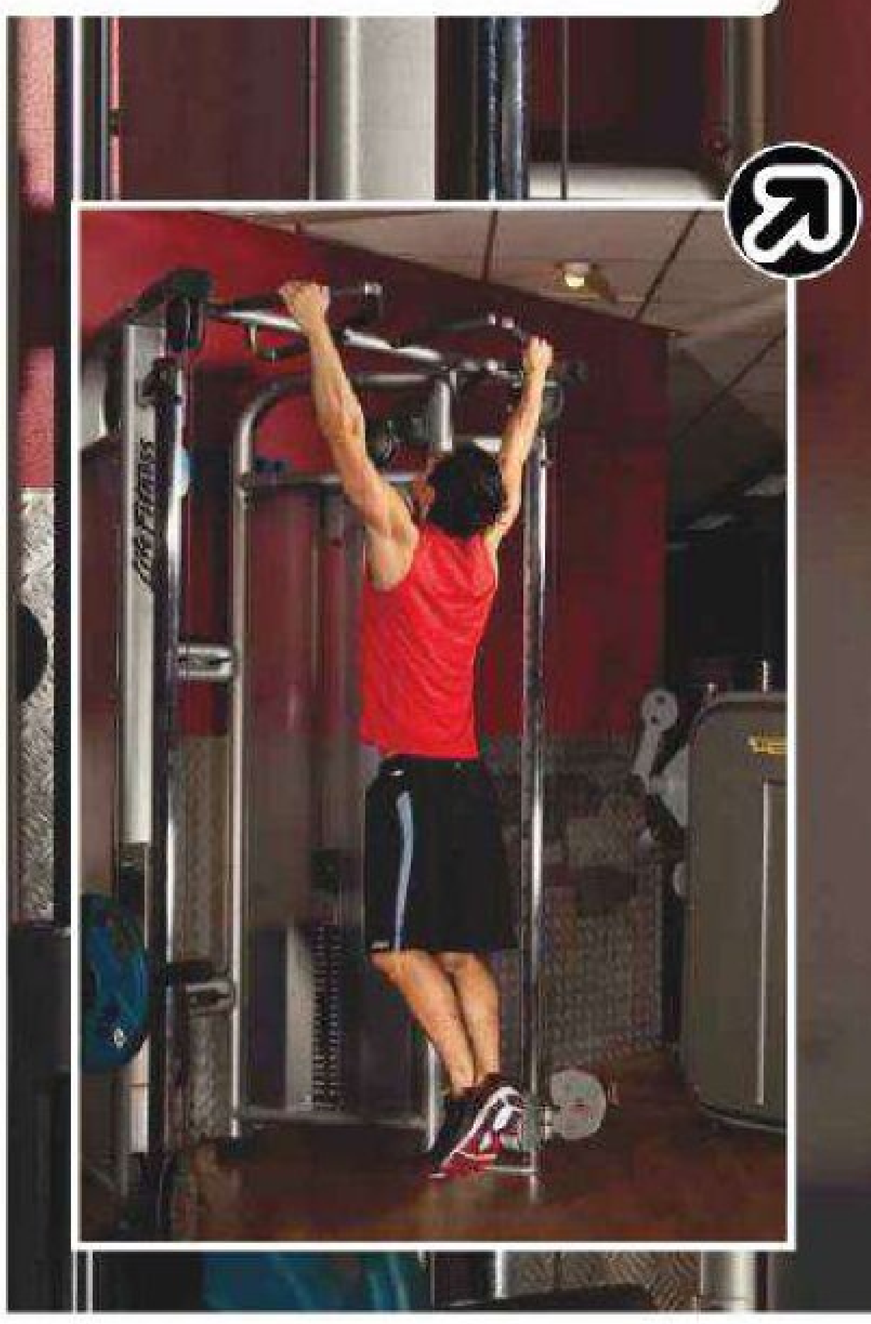
Back & biceps

1 Pull-up
Sets 4 Reps 8

Target Biceps, lats

Starting a back routine with pull-ups can increase your size, strength and overall development. It's a tough resistance test that will produce an early growth hormone release and put you in a good mindset for the rest of your workout.

- With an overhand grip and your hands just wider than shoulder-width apart, let your body hang straight down from the bar.
- Pull yourself up until your chin is over the bar and squeeze your lats.
- Lower yourself to the start and repeat.



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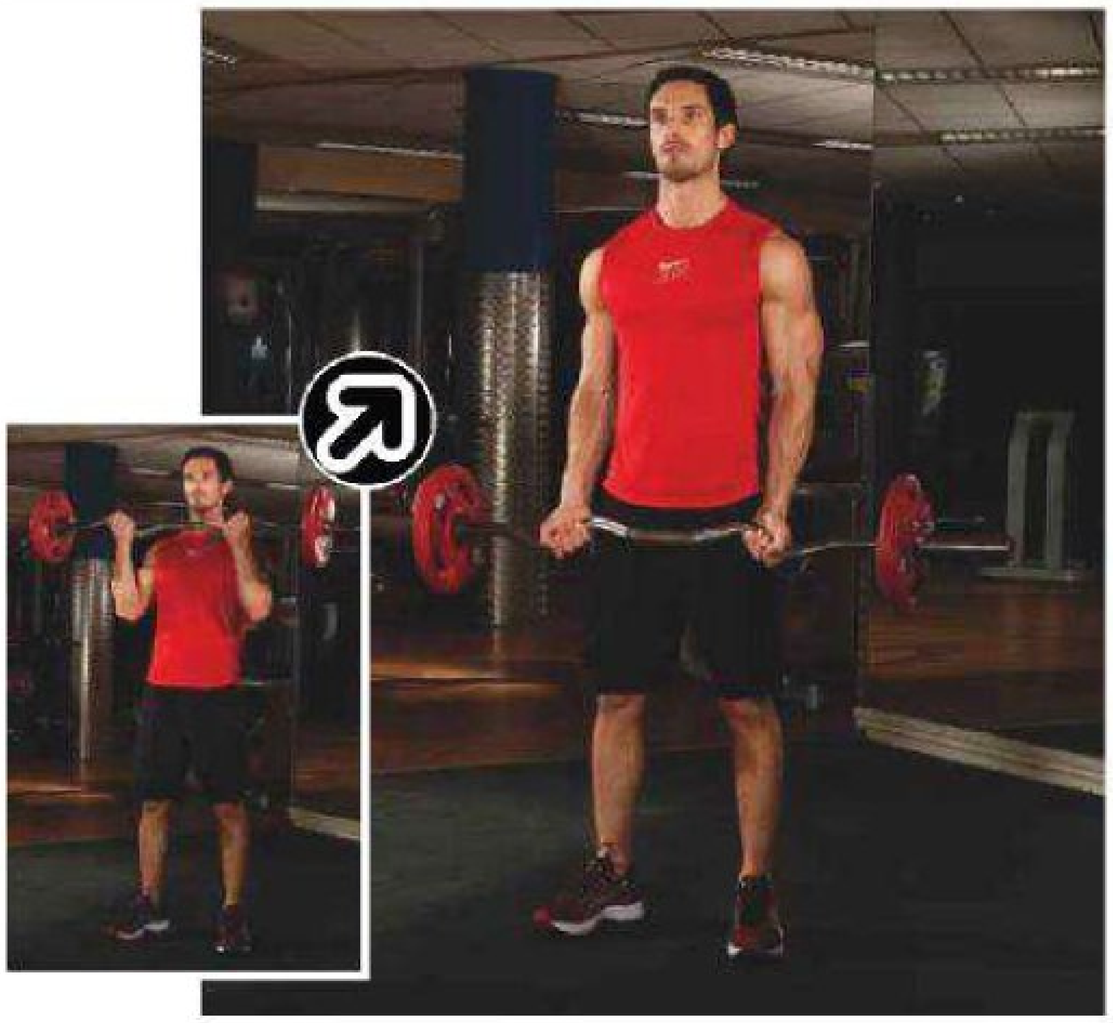
2 EZ-bar biceps curl
Sets 4 Reps 8

Target Biceps
Despite the name, using the EZ-bar isn't an easy option – it takes the strain of curling off your wrists and elbows to focus on your biceps.

- Stand with feet hip-width apart, holding an EZ-bar at hip height.
- Keeping your elbows close to your sides, squeeze your biceps to curl the bar up to shoulder level
- Lower the bar slowly back to the start position.



3 Dumb-bell shrug
Sets 3 Reps 12

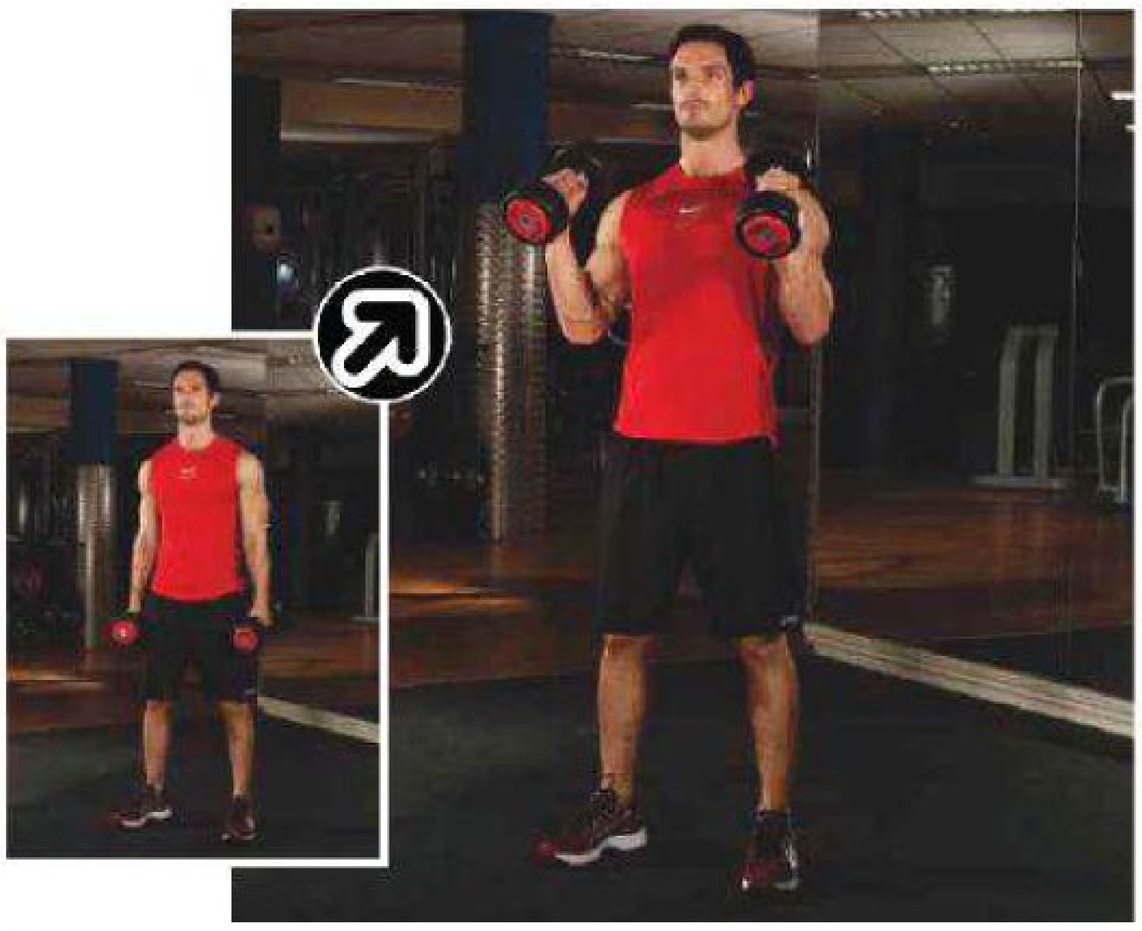
Target Traps
The shrug is essential for building the upper back, which frequently comes under strain from other exercises.

- Grasp a dumb-bell in each hand and hold them by your sides with your palms facing your body.
- Retract your shoulder blades and maintain a natural arch in your back.
- Use your traps to lift the weights. Hold the up position for one to two seconds.

5 Gym ball back extension
Sets 3 Reps 10

Target Lats
Your lower back may get a good workout from deadlifts, but for a balanced physique it needs to be worked more directly. This exercise will do just that, bringing your workout to a strong finish.

- Lie face down on a gym ball with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Slightly bend your knees for balance and then curl your chin towards the ball before extending up, bringing your elbows back.



4 Hammer curl
Sets 3 Reps 10

Target Biceps, forearms
Targeting both the biceps and the forearms will aid your overall development as well as increasing your grip strength.

- Begin by tucking your elbows in to your sides and grip two dumb-bells with your palms facing in.
- Curl the weights up to your chest, maintaining the hammer grip throughout the movement.

Turn over for your Friday workout »»»

FRIDAY Legs

1 Deadlift
Sets 3 Reps 8

Target Quads, glutes
The deadlift will add size everywhere, but especially the back and legs. For this routine, we're focusing on the beneficial effects it has on the lower half of your body.

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, shins close to the bar, and use an overhand or alternate grip (one hand overhand, the other underhand) with your hands just outside your knees.
- Look forward, keep your shoulders back and push up through your heels and move your hips forward as the bar passes your knees.

Turn over for four more legs moves »»»

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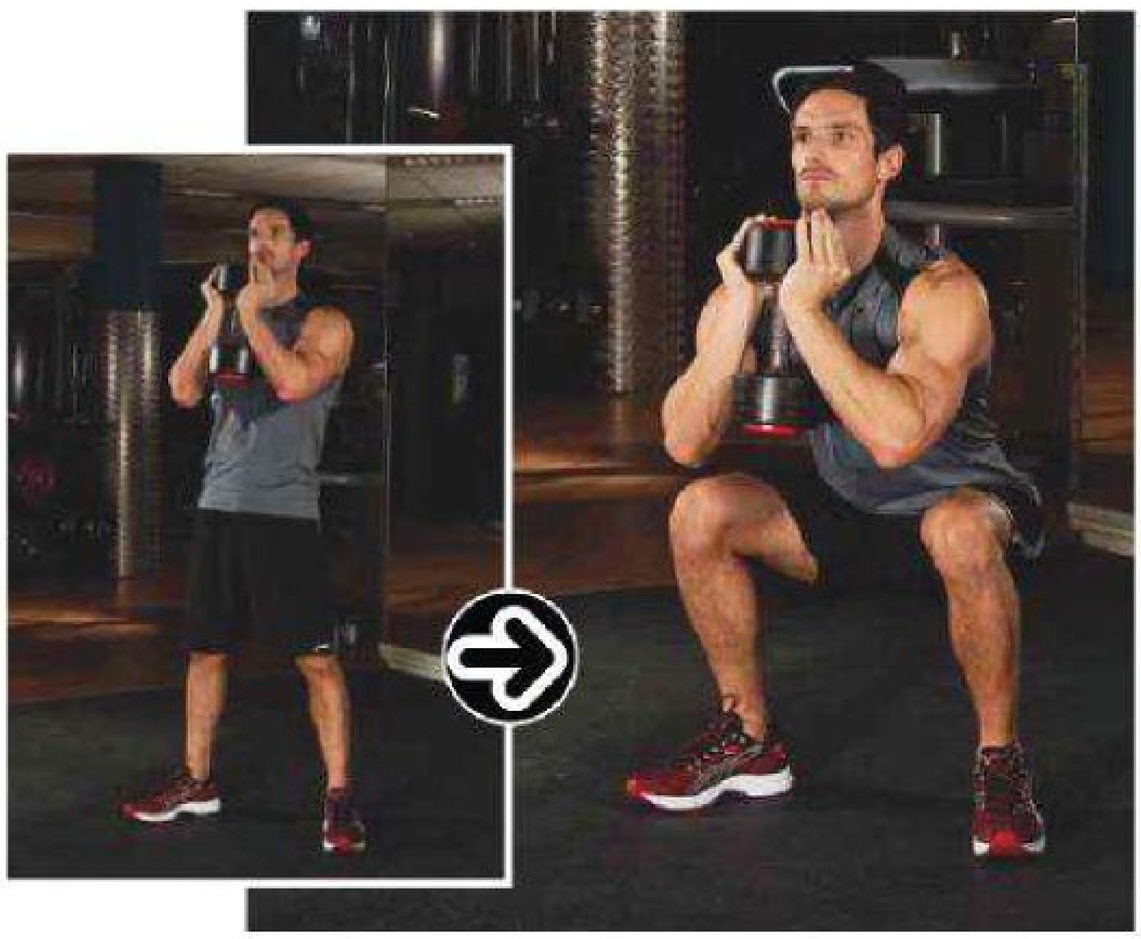
2 Sumo squat
Sets 3 Reps 10

Target Quads
While the standard squat is still a worthy part of any routine, the best way to exhaust your legs is to introduce the sumo variation after performing some deadlifts. It hits your inner quads particularly hard.

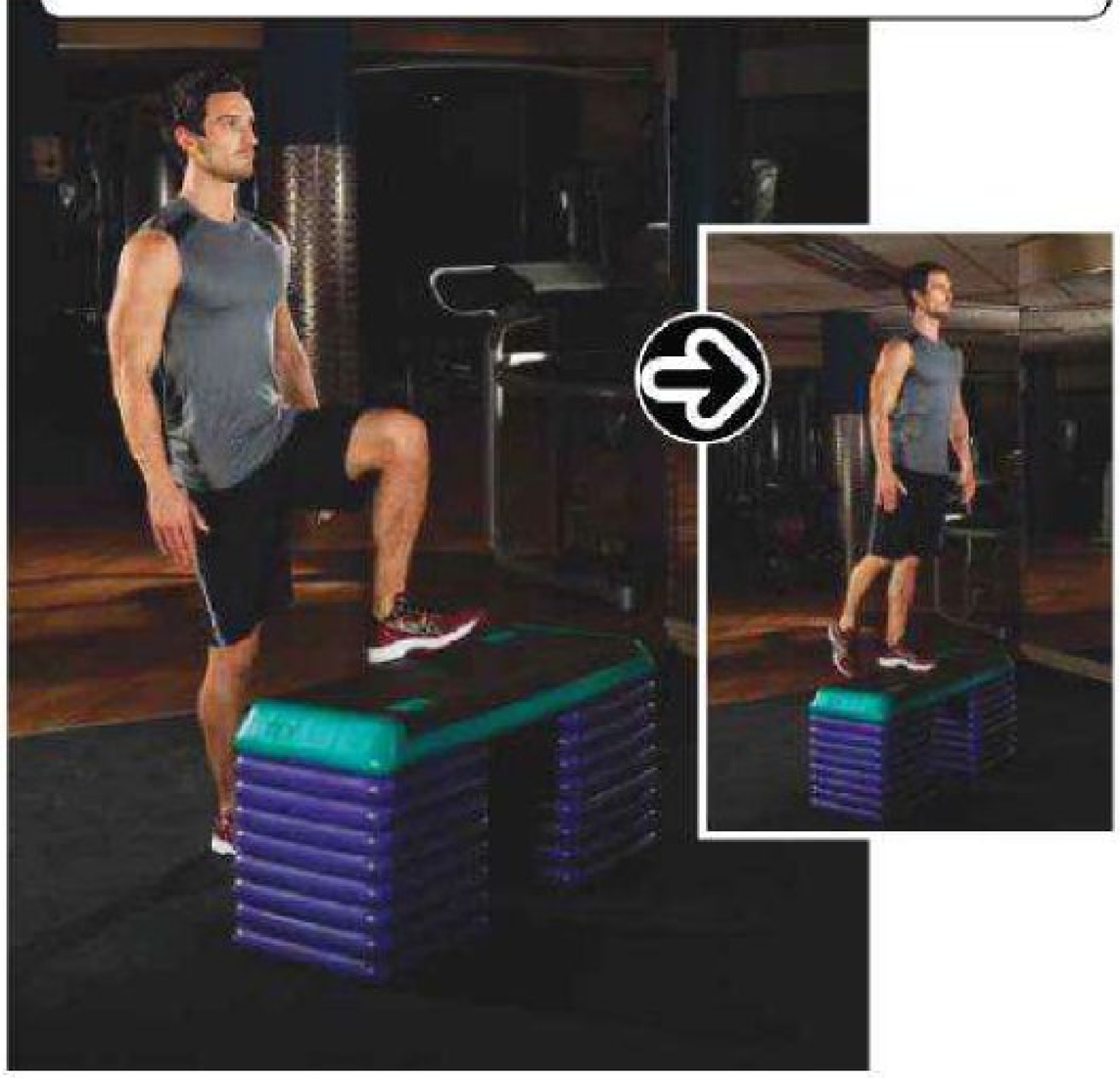
- Take a wide stance and point your toes outwards.
- Hold a dumb-bell by its end and squat down until the weight is just above your knees.
- Finish the move by pushing back up through your heels.



3 Step-up
Sets 2 Reps 10 each side

Target Quads, glutes
A top move for functional strength – we all use stairs every day – and it hits the typically under-trained glutes as well as the quads.

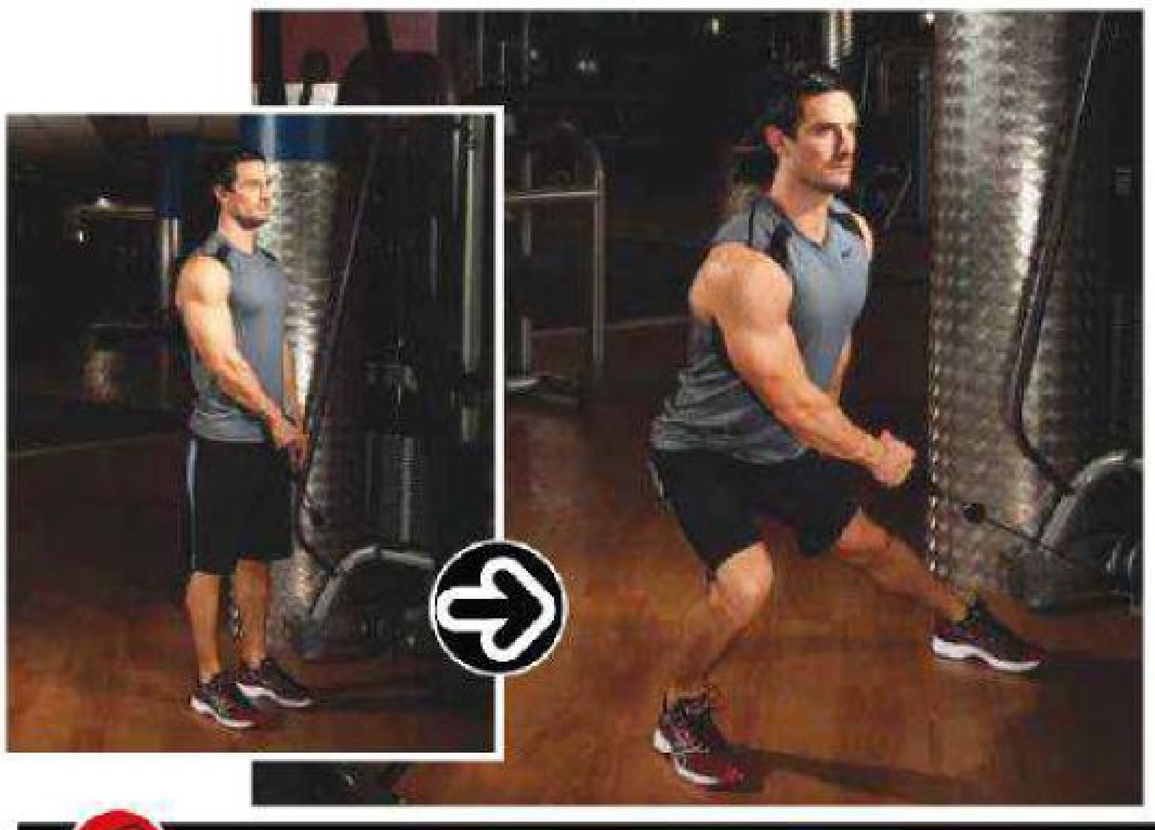
- Look forward and keep your back upright.
- Hold dumb-bells by your side and step up with one leg.
- Step down with your trailing leg and repeat, then switch legs.



4 Cable side lunge
Sets 2 Reps 10 each side

Target Quads, hamstrings, glutes
A complete workout for your legs, with the bonus of hitting your glutes as well. This will take the target muscles close to exhaustion.

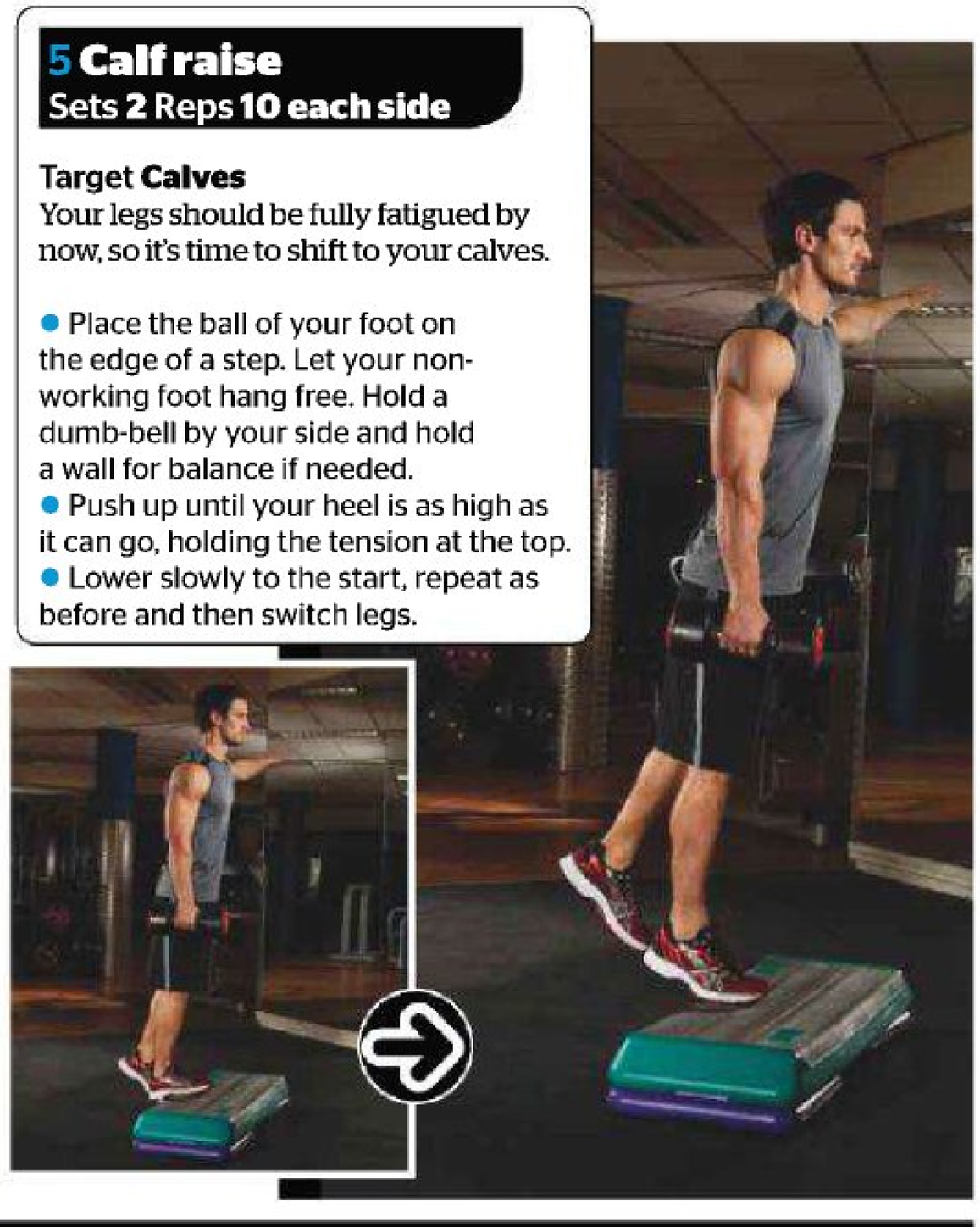
- Stand side-on to a cable machine with a D-handle attached to the bottom clip.
- Reach across your body and grasp the handle, then take a big step to the side, bending your leading leg as it lands.
- Reverse the move back to the start and repeat on both sides.



5 Calf raise
Sets 2 Reps 10 each side

Target Calves
Your legs should be fully fatigued by now, so it's time to shift to your calves.

- Place the ball of your foot on the edge of a step. Let your non-working foot hang free. Hold a dumb-bell by your side and hold a wall for balance if needed.
- Push up until your heel is as high as it can go, holding the tension at the top.
- Lower slowly to the start, repeat as before and then switch legs.



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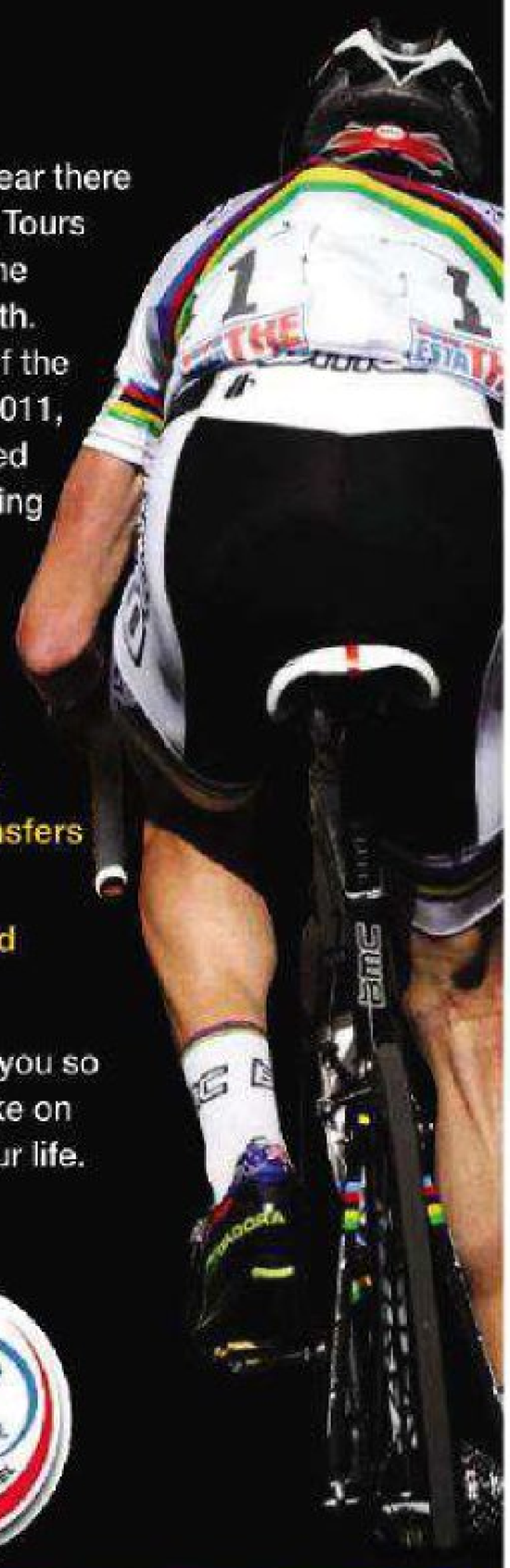

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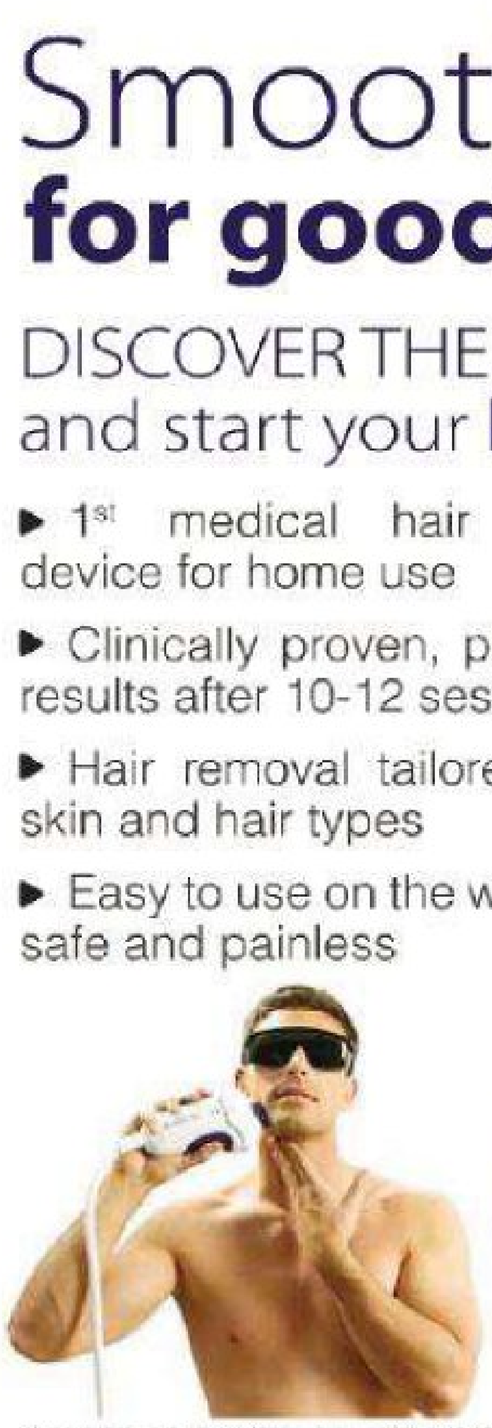

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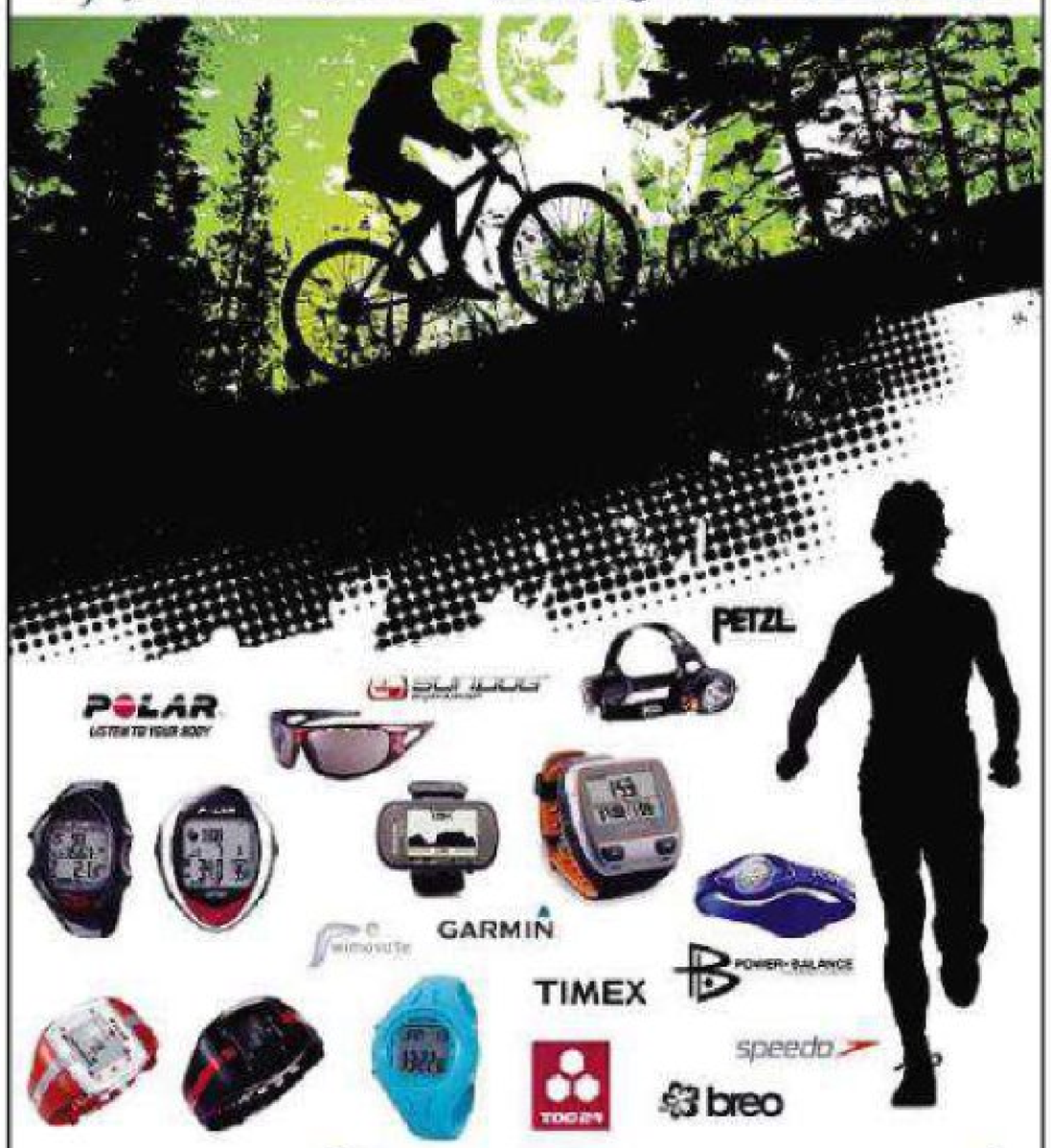

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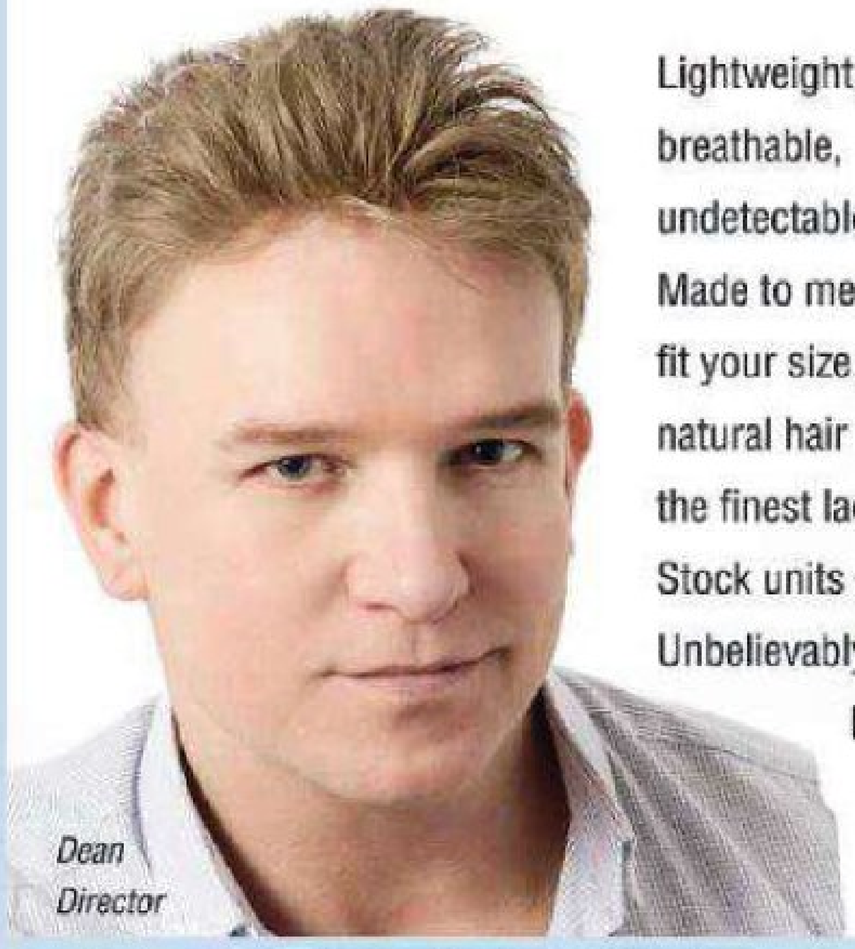

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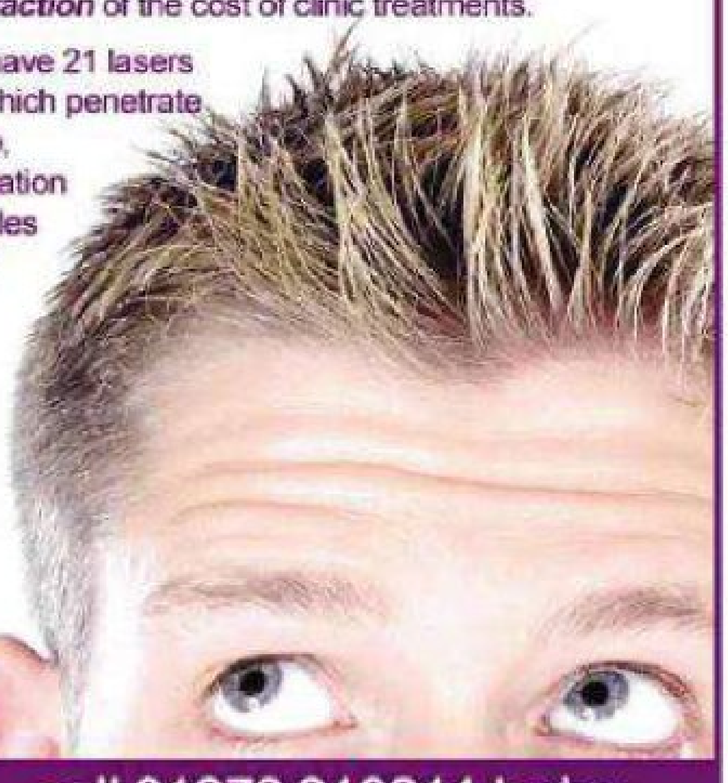

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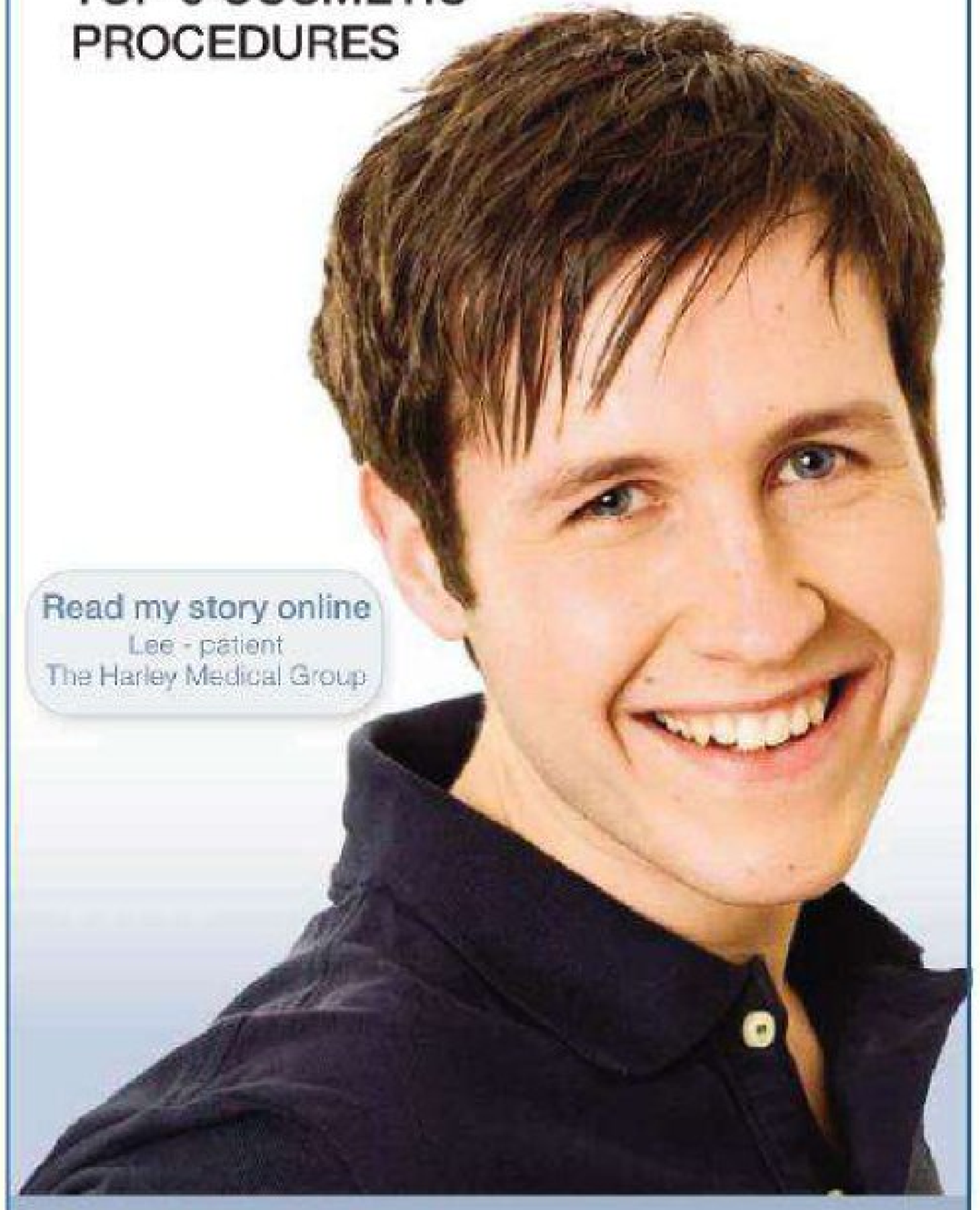

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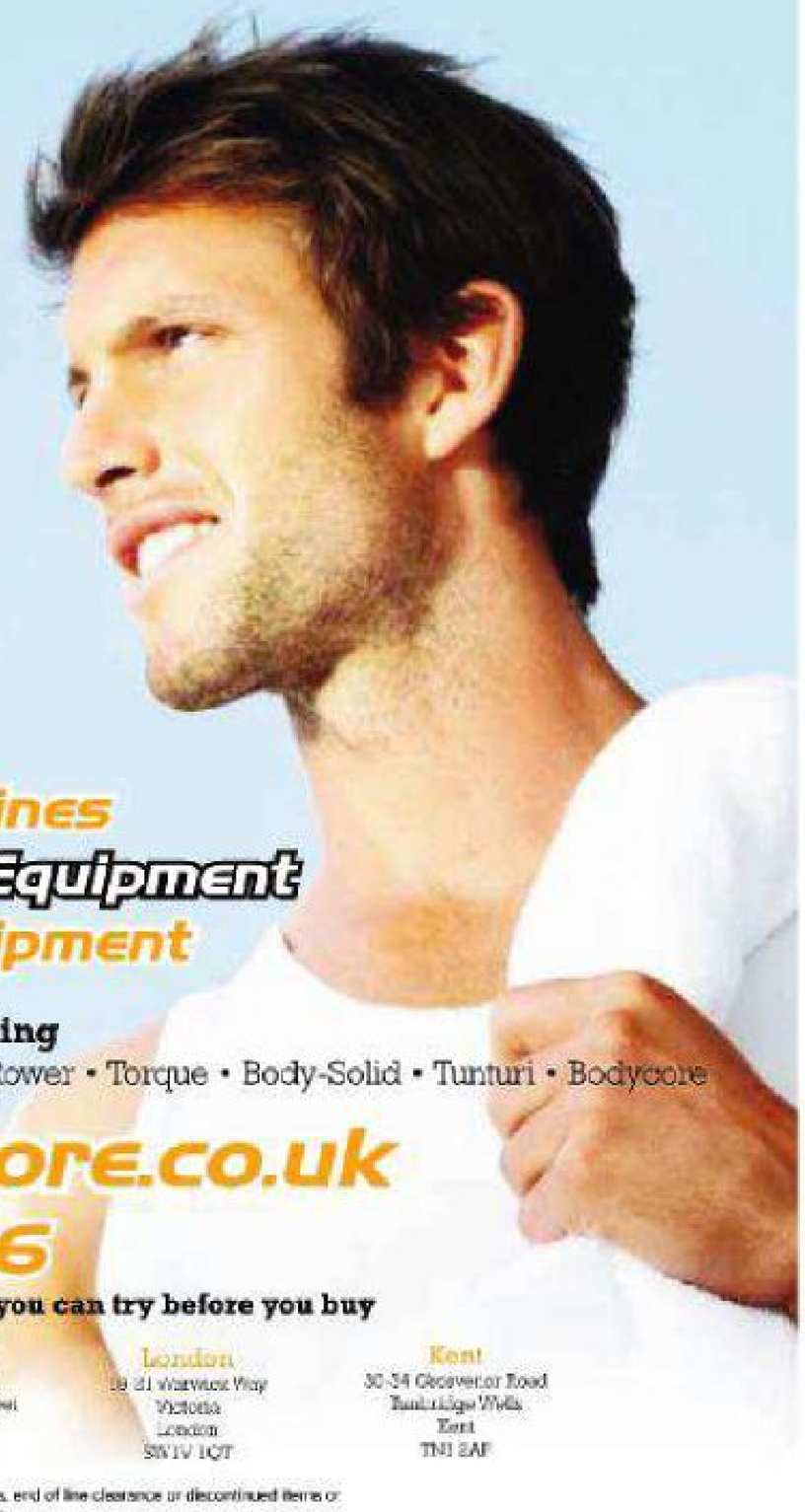

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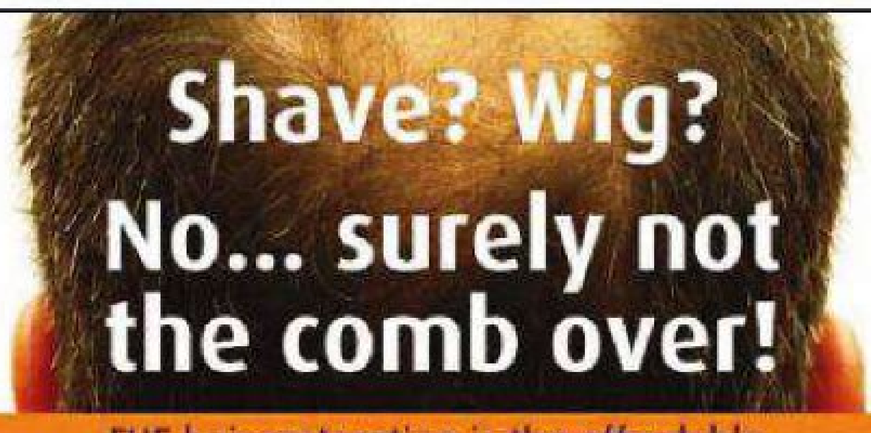

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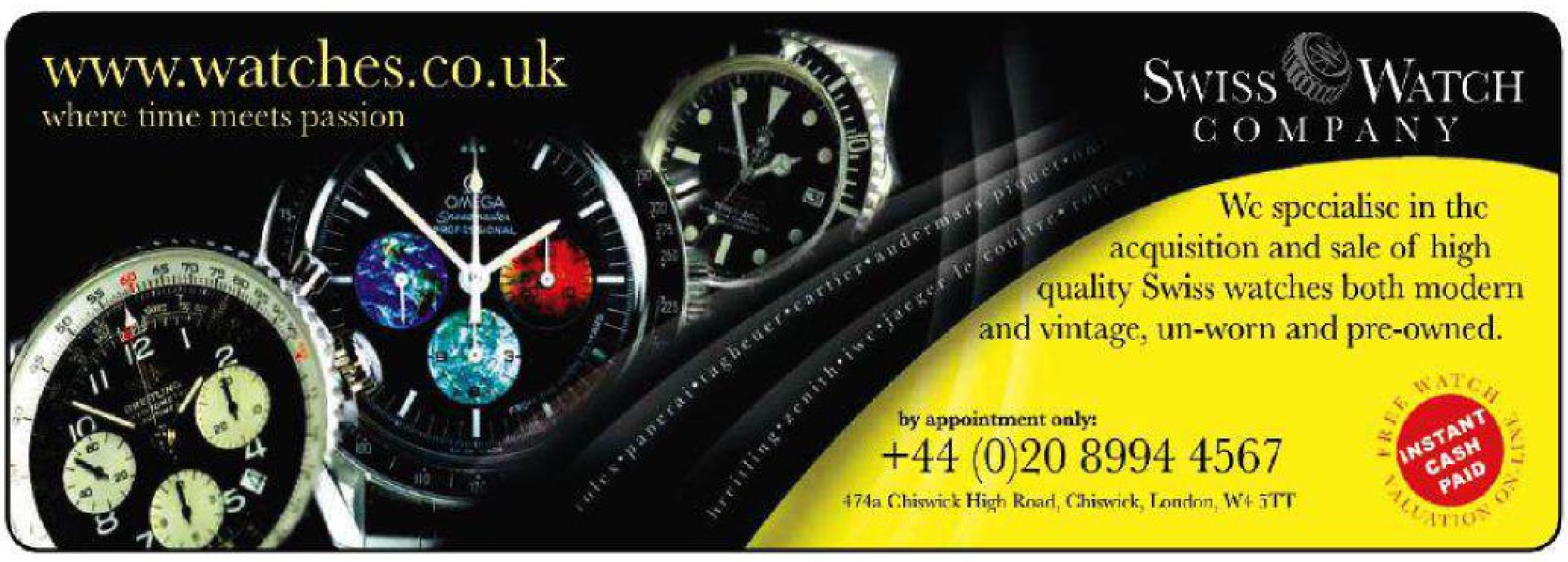

VICTORIA PENDLETON

Britain's Olympic gold medal-winning cyclist on London 2012, top-secret bikes and being 'a bit mental'

With the new velodrome built and just over a year until London 2012, are you beginning to feel the buzz?
It's been like that since I stepped off the plane from Beijing! As it gets closer and with the cycling venue opening it's on everyone's minds. I'm already into a two-year training plan, so it's always in my mind.

Does the appeal of a home Olympics help with motivation?
Absolutely. Had it not been a home Olympics, I might not have continued. I felt that in Beijing I'd had the performance of my life and had never been fitter or stronger. I thought maybe that was all I'd got. Having an opportunity for a home Olympics, I knew it would be crazy not to give it a go.

expectation, and I do sometimes struggle with it, especially if I've had a bad training day.

You get to ride some pretty sexy bikes on the track. Is Chris Boardman building you a superbike for 2012?
Yes, but we don't know about it yet. The guys who work on the bikes are known as the Secret Squirrel Club. The reason we don't know anything is we might get a bit bitter if we don't get selected and give it to the French! So it's all top secret.

As a sprint cyclist, you need a lot of power in your legs. What's the best exercise for that?

'It's easy to get caught in a bubble where your life is dependent on how fast you can ride round in a circle, which is a bit mad'

How important has team psychiatrist Steve Peters been in helping you to prepare?
Steve has put everything in perspective. It's easy to get caught in a bubble where your whole life is dependent on how fast you can ride round in a circle, which is a bit mad. It doesn't define me as a human being. I don't think I could have achieved what I have without Steve. Some people think I'm a little bit mental – Chris Hoy mentions it in his book. But I'm an emotional person and I accept it and learn to control it.

After winning gold in Beijing, is it tough to be the one to beat?
Yes, it's hard. It's a lot easier when you're aiming towards something than when you've achieved that goal. It's not physically different, but you have a lot more

The squat is the key for sprinters. Most of the other exercises are back, glutes and quads orientated. We do deadlifts, trap bar deadlifts and cleans, and a lot of explosive exercises combined with step-ups. I work on hip stability and medial glute strengthening as well as general conditioning. My one-rep max for the squat is 130kg. I do Bulgarian squats to maintain leg strength without putting strain on my lower back. I put my leg on a bench behind me and have 32kg dumb-bells in my hands.

You're promoting EA Sports Active 2. Do you play the game at home?
Absolutely. It's good fun, but it's effective, too. Some of the core workouts help you get the right range of movement so you really feel your muscles working.

EA Sports Active 2 is available on Wii, PS3 and Xbox 360

Words Mark Bailey **Photography** Getty

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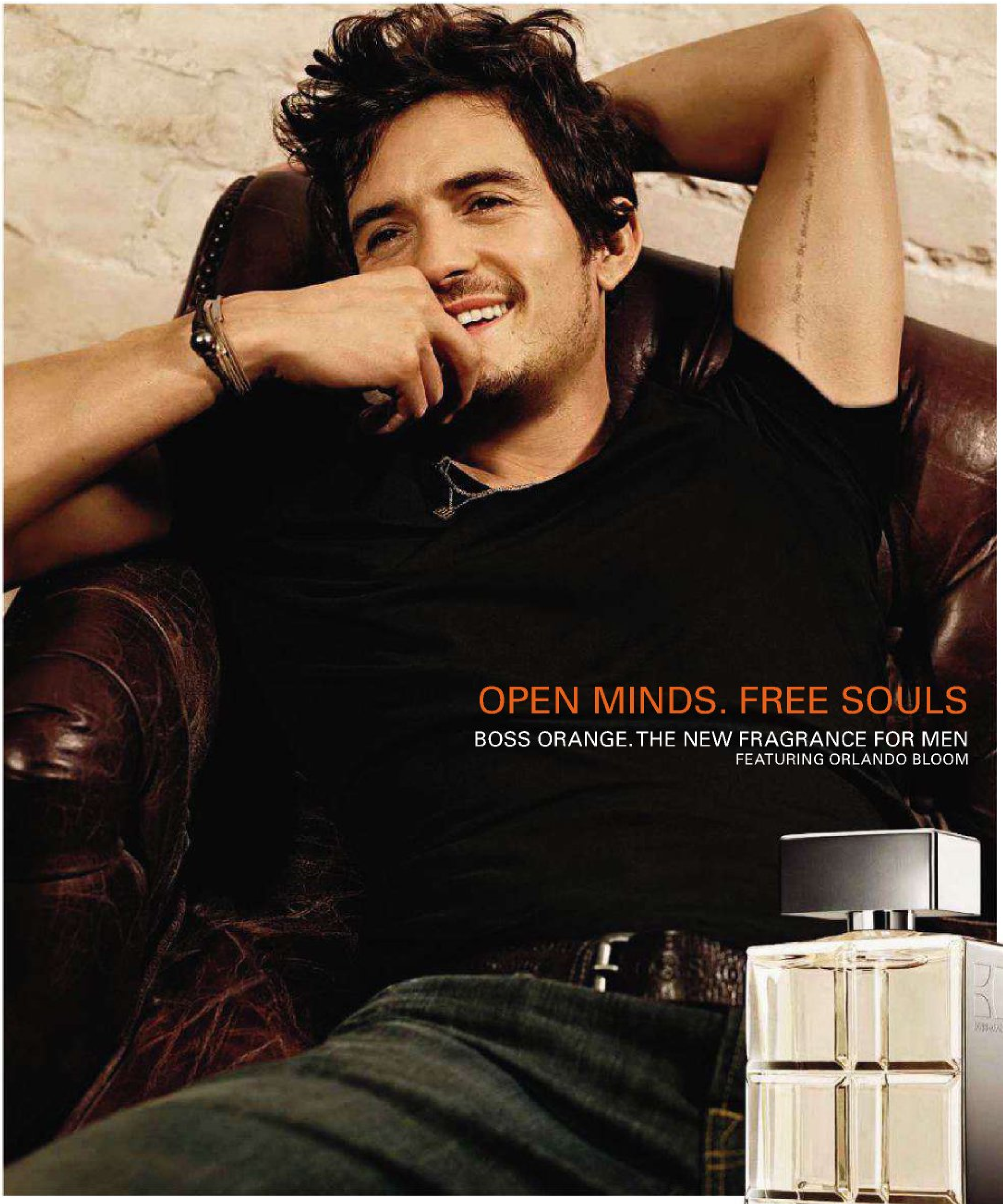

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