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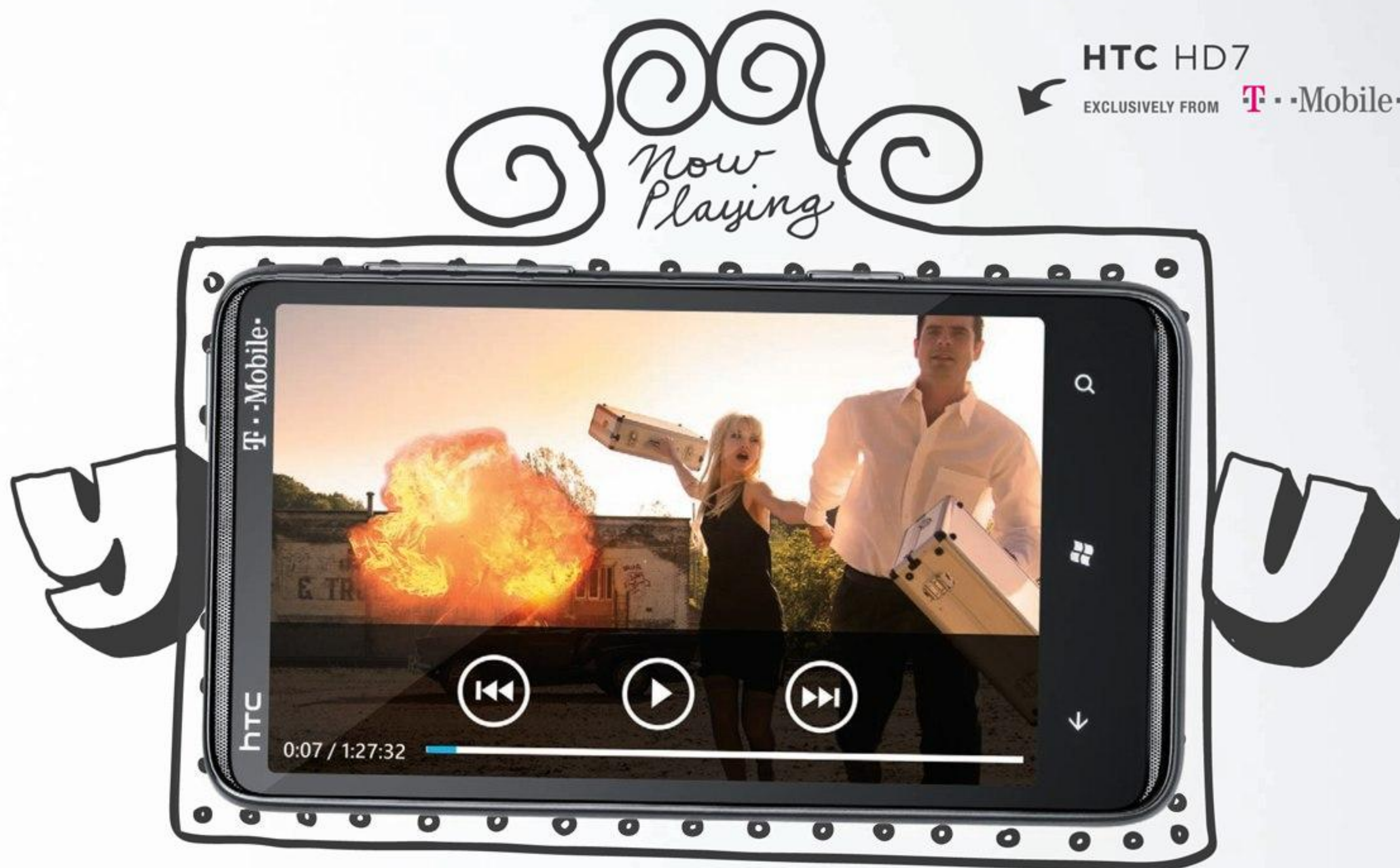
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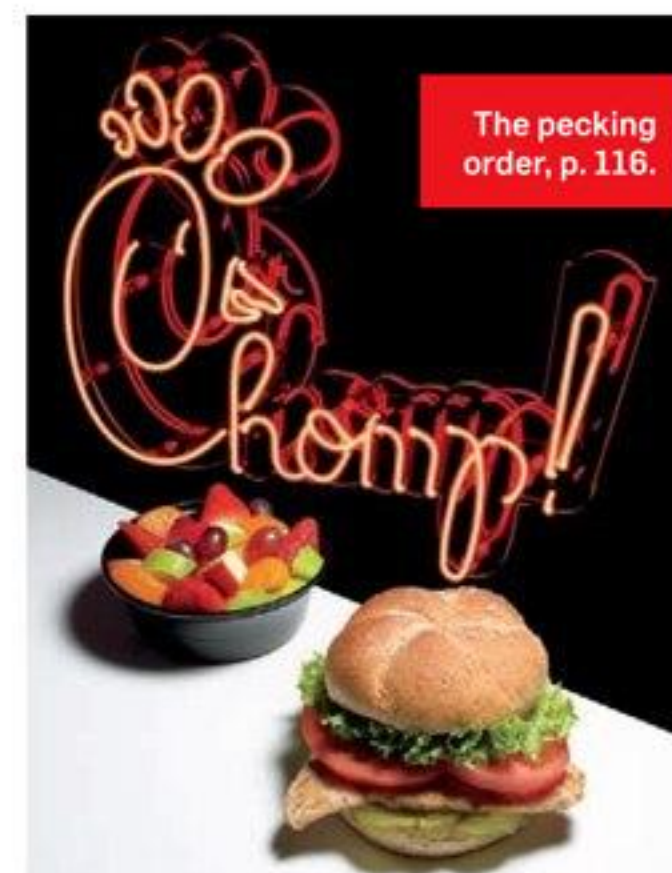
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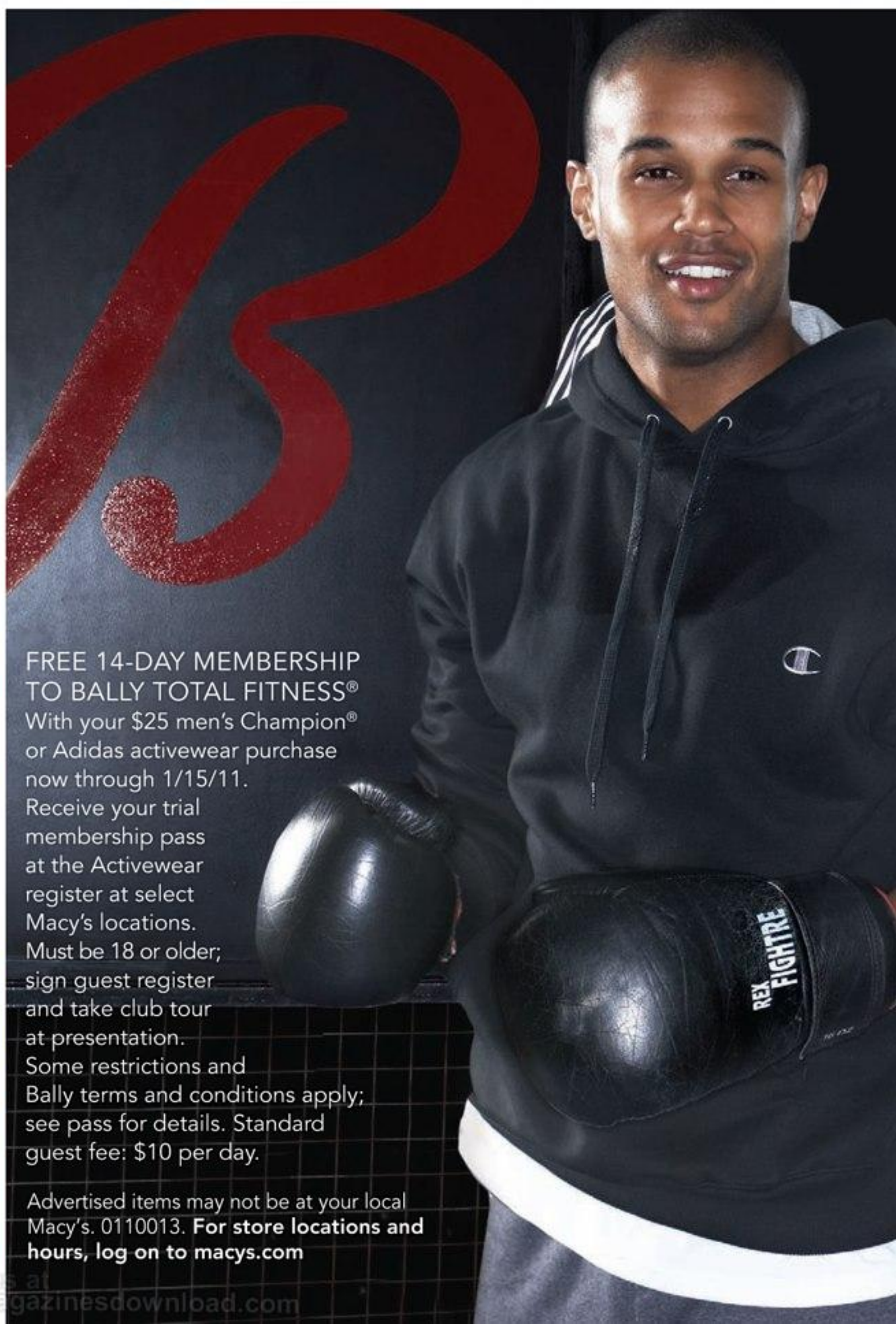
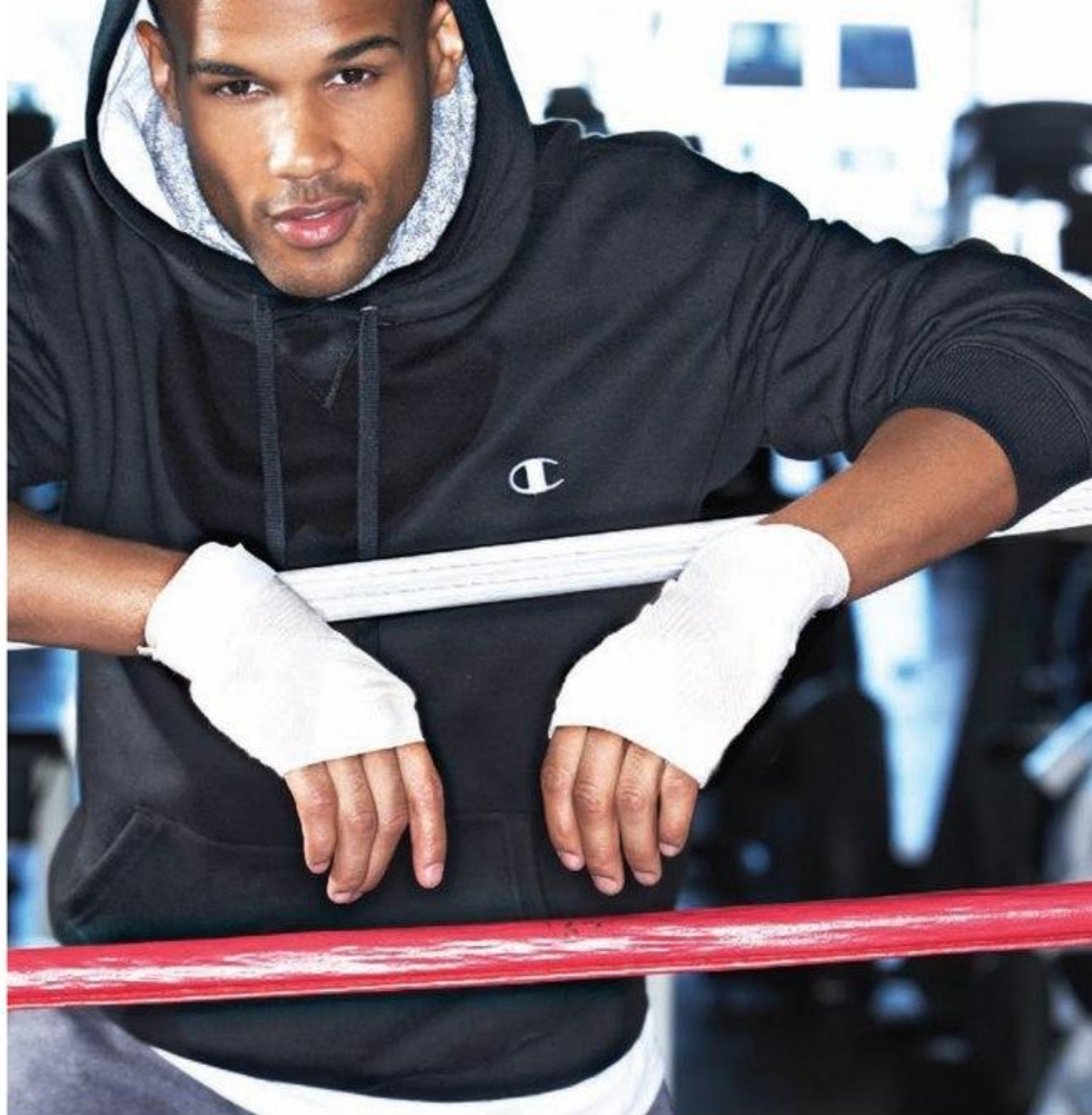
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Play by Hedlund's rules, p. 112.



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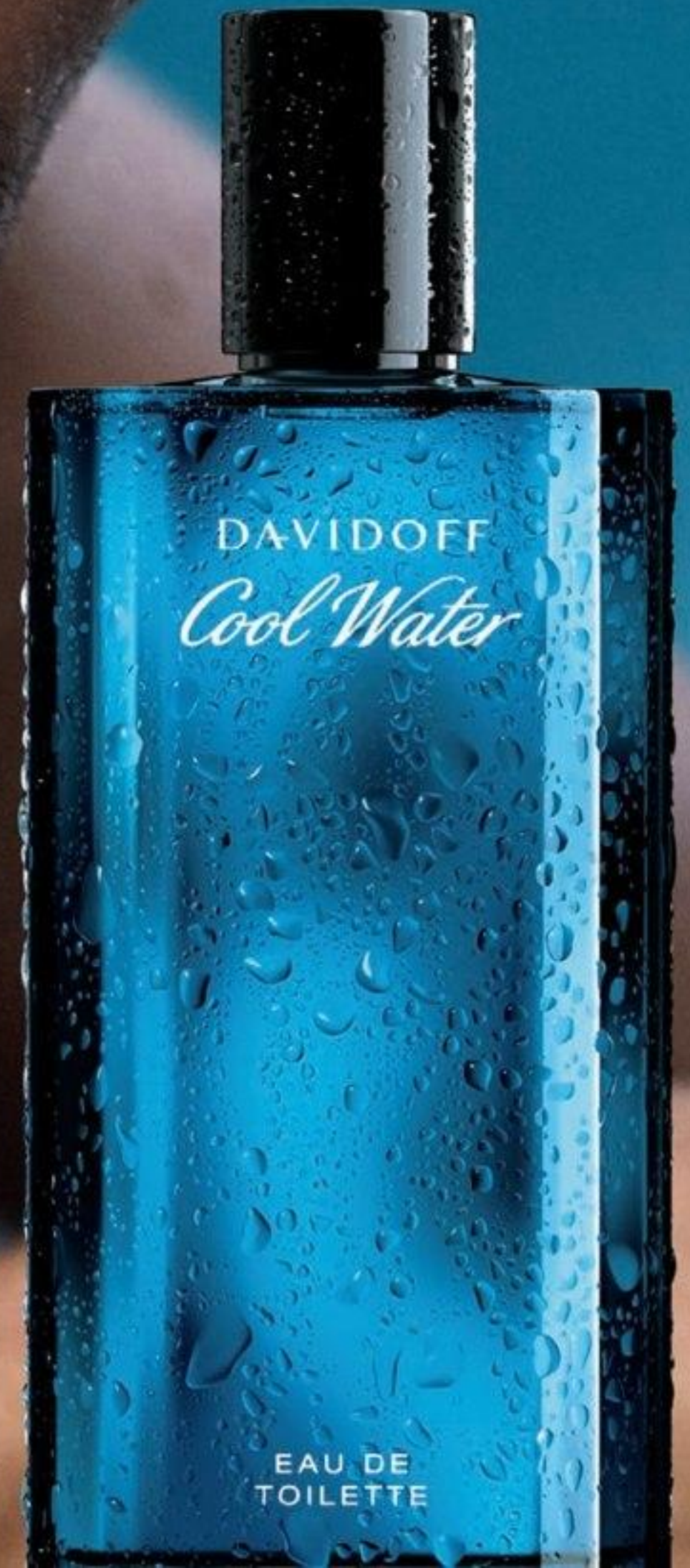
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A New Era—of You

How to muster up some anger and make it work for you

SOME MOMENTS IN TIME seem to spontaneously generate their own labels: The Roaring Twenties. The Me Decade. The Greed-Is-Good era of the 1980s. Well, I have a suggestion for the as-yet-unnamed years of 2000 to 2010: The Angry Decade.

It seems as though everyone in America is feeling pissed off (maybe because so many of us are feeling pissed *on*). The rage may have started with 9/11, our need for revenge, and our lust for war. Then it steam-rolled with the growth of blogging, where we could all post sneak attacks on people, ideas, and institutions, unleashing our own anger—and in the process, inciting the anger of others. Add in a financial meltdown that robbed us of our personal security, and replace TV's traditional talking heads with a new breed of screaming, crying heads, and you have a great recipe for rage. Pan-fried fury. Resentment ratatouille. Slow-burn stew.

The problem is, anger is the crack cocaine of emotions. It might feel good in the short term, but over the long term, anger is really bad for us. It ratchets up stress levels, in turn driving up levels of the hormone cortisol, which tells our bodies to store fat and stop building muscle. And more important, anger distracts us from what's really important. Free-floating anger lashes out in all sorts of dangerous directions; the next thing you know, we're screaming about every slight and injustice, from broad strokes like "death panels" and Ground Zero mosques to the little details of life—a blown call at a junior high hoops game or a blown bulb in an office desk lamp. That's a lot of energy wasted on stuff that isn't important—energy that could be used for everything from rejiggering your workouts or your 401(k) plan to finding a cure for cancer or a solution to oil dependence.

Well, it's a new year—and a new decade, if you want to look at it that way. In this issue, you're going to hear from a guy who decided to stop stewing in his anger and instead use that anger to help others. You might know Travis Stork, M.D., from his Emmy-winning TV series *The Doctors*. As an emergency-room physician in Nashville, Dr. Stork has spent innumerable long nights patching up people who've suffered heart attacks, seizures, diabetic comas, car accidents, strokes. And what angered Dr. Stork was the realization that every time he patched someone up, he would send them back out into a war zone. Not a war zone where bullets were flying—but a war zone where fat was flying. Indeed, obesity is linked to everything from car accidents to cancer, and in a world where two-thirds of your adult patients are



either overweight or obese, it's hard for a doctor to cure the emergency-room symptoms but never be able to help with the actual disease.

In this issue, Dr. Stork takes action. We're thrilled to present an excerpt from his new book, *The Lean Belly Prescription*. Not only is it a revolutionary look at weight management, it's something else: proof that anger can be channeled into positive change.

So the next time you're mad—at the Internet, at our politicians, at the talking heads on TV—forget about posting an angry diatribe on Twitter. Instead, figure out how you're going to channel your anger into positive change. Maybe it's as simple as putting in a serious workout at the gym; maybe it's as grand as becoming involved in a community program to help the disadvantaged. Either way, an angry mind is a terrible thing to waste.



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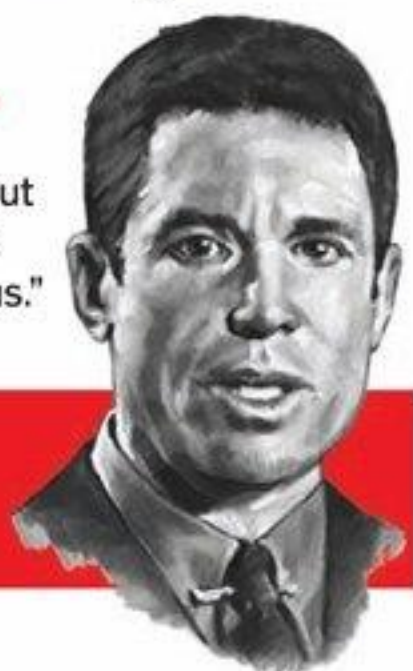
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How top doctors stay strong and healthy

As director of the Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center, **David Katz, M.D., M.P.H., FACPM, F.A.C.P.**, thinks about how to stop obesity every day. "The science is decisive, but this knowledge isn't enough to lead to action for many people. Bridging that gap is my focus."



ON CALL THIS MONTH The Weight-Loss Doc

How I build muscle

DISCIPLINE

"My daily routine in my home gym is 40 minutes on a four-limb elliptical machine, 5-K on a rower, 20 chinups, 15 pullups, a 3½-minute torso raise, and a 3½-minute leg raise."



How I stay lean

FIBER

"I eat a diet of foods that score highly on the NuVal rating system (nuval.com), which I helped create. That includes plant foods high in fiber, like vegetables, fruits, beans, lentils, whole grains, nuts, and seeds. It also means high-quality protein like fish and seafood; low-fat organic dairy products; dark chocolate; and, in moderation, good beer and wine. By eating well, you fill up on fewer calories."

How I boost my mood

AFFECTION

"Every day is better when I hug my wife; better still if I hug my wife and kids. I don't always manage it, and I know I will look back and regret every chance I missed."



HOW I RELAX

RIDING

"I go horseback riding twice a week. It's very physical, but more important, it's a mind/body activity involving two minds: If you're stressed, the horse knows it, and the ride doesn't go well. Any activity that you love doing that also involves physical exertion will reduce stress, whether it's hoops, cycling, or martial arts."



How I gauge my weight

CHINUPS

"I rarely weigh myself. Instead I check my strength-to-weight ratio by doing 20 chinups daily. The ease or difficulty tells me how I'm doing. I'm 47 now and my goal is to hover around 160 pounds, my high-school graduation weight, because that's close to the optimal weight for many guys."

Our Advisory Board

CARDIOLOGY

John Eleftheriades, M.D., is chief of cardiac surgery at Yale School of Medicine.

Prediman Krishan (P.K.) Shah, M.D., is director of cardiology at Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute, in Los Angeles.

Eric J. Topol, M.D., is a professor of genetics at the Scripps Research Institute, in San Diego.

DERMATOLOGY

Adnan Nasir, M.D., Ph.D., is the director of dermatology at Wake Research Associates.

EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Travis Stork, M.D., is a faculty physician at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and the author of *The Lean Belly Prescription*.

EXERCISE SCIENCE

Alexander Koch, Ph.D., C.S.C.S., is an associate professor of exercise science at Truman State University, Missouri.

David Pearson, Ph.D., C.S.C.S.*D., is a professor of exercise physiology at Ball State University.

FAMILY MEDICINE

Roland Goertz, M.D., is president of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

GASTROENTEROLOGY

Mark Welton, M.D., is chief of colorectal surgery at Stanford University School of Medicine.

INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

James N. Dillard, M.D., D.C., C.Ac., is the medical director for the complementary and alternative medicine program at Oxford Health Plans.

MENTAL HEALTH

Thomas Joiner, Ph.D., is a professor of psychology at Florida State University.

William Pollack, Ph.D., is an associate clinical professor at Harvard Medical School.

Have a question for our advisors? Go to MensHealth.com/askthedocs.

NEUROLOGY

David S. Liebeskind, M.D., is an associate professor of neurology at UCLA.

NUTRITION

Alan Aragon, M.S., has 18 years of experience helping regular Joes and pro athletes lose fat and gain muscle.

Jeffrey Blumberg, Ph.D., F.A.C.N., F.A.S.N., C.N.S., is the director of the antioxidant research lab at the Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University.

OPHTHALMOLOGY

Kimberly Cockerham, M.D., teaches ophthalmology at Stanford University School of Medicine.

RELATIONSHIPS

Debby Herbenick, Ph.D., M.P.H., is the associate director of the center for sexual health promotion at Indiana University.

SLEEP MEDICINE

W. Christopher Winter, M.D., is the medical director of the sleep medicine center of Martha Jefferson Hospital, in Virginia.

SPORTS MEDICINE

Andrew J. Feldman, M.D., is the director of sports medicine at St. Vincent's Medical Center in New York City.

Nicholas A. DiNubile, M.D., is an orthopedic surgeon at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and the author of *FrameWork for the Lower Back*.

UROLOGY

Larry Lipshultz, M.D., is a professor of urology at Baylor College of Medicine.

Judd W. Moul, M.D., F.A.C.S., is chief of the division of urologic surgery at Duke University Medical Center.

WEIGHT LOSS

David Katz, M.D., M.P.H., FACPM, F.A.C.P., is on call.

Jeff S. Volek, Ph.D., R.D., is an associate professor of kinesiology in the human performance laboratory at the University of Connecticut.

00:02

2-second lifesavers

Outsmart cravings!

Before you succumb to a snack craving, picture your previous meal. In a British study, people who used this strategy ate a smaller snack than those who didn't stop to think about what they'd put into their mouths recently.

Save your skin!

Add about a tablespoon of flaxseed oil or ground flaxseed to your protein shake, yogurt, soup, or salad. It's packed with essential fatty acids that help your skin stay hydrated, say researchers in Germany.

Shed pounds easily!

People who halved their daily TV time burned an extra 120 calories a day, a recent Stanford study found. Doing this could help you lose 12 pounds in a year.

Feel great instantly!

To relieve shoulder tightness, do the swan dive stretch every time you exit your office. Raise your arms skyward, grab the top of the door frame, and lean forward as far as you can. Hold 30 seconds.

Credit for grooming in our story on Drew Brees in the October 2010 issue should go to Michelle Pace/London Calling Salon.



IT'S NOT THE BACK SEAT

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 **TOYOTA**
moving forward

LIFE'S QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

Q WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS TO A MAN'S BRAIN WHEN HE HAS A CONCUSSION?

RAY, LUBBOCK, TX

Think of your head as a big egg: The shell is your skull, the white is your cerebrospinal fluid, and the yolk is your brain. A violent impact causes the yolk to vibrate and sometimes even bash into the shell. If the force is strong enough, you'll end up with a concussion. And yet for all that trauma, there's often no evidence of injury because the damage is on the inside. "It's known as the 'silent injury,'" says Mark Lovell, Ph.D., director of the University of Pittsburgh medical center's sports concussion program. But don't assume that if you didn't black out, you're fine—any knock to your head that results in vomiting, dilated pupils, or loss of smell or taste should be checked out by a neurologist. Same goes for headaches, dizziness, or memory loss that persists for longer than 5 days. For the full bonk breakdown, see at right.



1 Impact

The most common causes of concussion are falls, motor vehicle accidents, impacts related to sports, and explosions. In each case, the trauma causes enough force—either linear (forward and back) or rotational (side to side)—to make your brain slosh around in its syrupy cushion of fluid and hit the skull wall.

2 Firestorm

Any serious brain trauma can damage your neurons, the cells that govern the flow of chemical messengers known as neurotransmitters. Worst case, those damaged neurons lose control of the neurotransmitters, allowing them to accelerate to as much as five times their normal speed. The resulting chemical firestorm can lead to memory loss, blurred vision, dizziness, headache, and nausea.

3 Hibernation

Mission control—your brain's cortex—detects the neurotransmitter imbalance and tries to fix the neurons by calling for a surge of healing glucose. At the same time, calcium neurotransmitters start constricting the blood vessels, delaying glucose from reaching the neurons. Your brain function slows until bloodflow returns to normal.

4 Recovery

It can take several weeks for your neurons to heal. But if you sustain another concussion during this period, you could suffer permanent damage and a lifetime of headaches—even, down the road, dementia. Your best bet: Rest and refrain from any activity with a high risk of a head bonk. Headaches? Take acetaminophen; do *not* use aspirin or ibuprofen, which may increase your risk of brain bleeding.

Is there a natural Viagra?

TREVOR, CAMBRIDGE, MA

There's no surefire boner builder that can match the little blue pill or its chemical cousins, Levitra and Cialis. These ED meds can take a man from flaccid to fully engorged in 30 to 60 minutes—while even the best natural supplements are hit-or-miss in terms of timing and duration. Before you self-medicate with a natural supplement, know that ED can be the initial sign of a serious underlying condition, such as heart disease, says Larry Lipshultz, M.D., a professor of urology at Baylor College of Medicine. That means you could be missing early and potentially lifesaving warning signs. But what if your erections are hard and you just want them harder? Then you could consider a supplement. Of what's available, Korean red ginseng is the best, Dr. Lipshultz says: Most men respond well with few side effects. In one Brazilian study, two-thirds of men who popped 1,000 milligrams of Korean red ginseng three times a day for 12 weeks reported harder, longer-lasting erections than before the study. The downside: You'll have to take the stuff every day. We like Vitamin World Korean Ginseng (\$13 for a 2-week supply, vitaminworld.com).

All the cold remedies in the drugstore just relieve symptoms. Is there anything that actually battles the virus?

NATE, BURLINGTON, VT

In this fight, your immune system is on its own. "There's no antiviral treatment for a cold," says Birgit Winther, M.D., an associate professor of otolaryngology at the University of Virginia. But there is some good news: An over-the-counter drug

Photograph by CHARLES MASTERS, food styling: Susan Ottaviano/Halley Resources

A promotional poster for the TV series 'Spartacus: Gods of the Arena'. The central figure is a muscular man, Spartacus, wearing a green loincloth and arm guards, holding a sword aloft in his right hand. He is shouting with his mouth open. The background is a bright, hazy arena setting with a stone wall on the left and a distant crowd on the right.

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may help disable your enemy. A recent study in the *American Journal of Rhinology and Allergy* found that people who used a decongestant nasal spray containing oxymetazoline (such as Afrin) three times a day had lower levels of the rhinovirus in their mucus. By wiping out some of the virus, you may be able to slow its spread through your body, says Dr. Winther, who coauthored the study. Just make sure you wait to use the spray until the second and third days of your cold, when rhinovirus levels are at their peak concentration in your mucus. Plus, spraying for longer than 3 days can cause swollen blood vessels, leading to more congestion. Two additional drug-free tactics: Take frequent sips of water or broth during the day (a cold can dehydrate you) and catch those z's. People who sleep less than 7 hours a night are three times more likely to catch a cold than people who sleep at least 8 hours a night, Carnegie Mellon and University of Pittsburgh researchers report.

I'm worried that my father may be heading toward diabetes, but he's not concerned. What are some risk factors?

JUAN, NEW HAVEN, CT

Ask your dad some personal questions: Is his waist bigger than 40 inches? Does he exercise less than three times a week? If the answers are yes, he may be at risk of developing diabetes. And is he both urinating excessively and feeling constantly thirsty? If the answers to those last two questions are both yes, drag him straight to the doctor—he may already have diabetes. If he resists, tell him this: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that there are 5.7 million undiagnosed cases of diabetes in the United States, and having the disease *doubles* his chances of dying at any age compared with a person who's diabetes-free. "Being overweight and inactive hinders the body's ability to use insulin, raising blood sugar," says Vivian Fonseca, M.D., the American Diabetes Association's vice president for medicine and science. "One way your body sheds excess glucose is through urination." Your dad will probably be given an A1C blood test, which can be used to diagnose diabetes without fasting. Encourage healthy lifestyle changes by offering to do them with him, says

I've heard that cooking broccoli and other vegetables reduces their nutritional value. Is this really true?

RYAN, MANCHESTER, NH

It isn't even entirely true for broccoli. When you've steamed this vegetable, your body is actually able to absorb more of its disease-fighting carotenoids and polyphenols, according to a report in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*. However, steaming broccoli *does* reduce its vitamin C content. And that's the lesson: It all depends on the nutrient and the cooking method—or the lack of one, since going raw can be the most nutritious option. Your best bet: "Balance your diet with a mix of raw and cooked vegetables," says T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., a professor emeritus of nutritional biochemistry at Cornell University. When you want your vegetables hot, use the chart below to maximize your antioxidant intake.

How cooking affects antioxidant levels in six vegetables

	Broccoli	Carrots	Bell peppers	Brussels sprouts	Spinach	Asparagus
BOIL	Okay	Best	Okay	Best	Okay	Best
STEAM	Best	Good	Good	Good	Best	Good
MICROWAVE*	Okay	Okay	Best	Good	Best	Best
RAW	Best	Best	Best	Good	Best	Best

*Avoid microwaving if you want to preserve the texture of your vegetables.

Dr. Fonseca. People who have prediabetes (fasting blood sugar between 100 and 126 milligrams per deciliter, or mg/dL) can reduce their risk of developing full-blown diabetes by 58 percent with moderate physical exercise 150 minutes a week and a 7 percent reduction in body weight, according to the Diabetes Prevention Program.

My washer smells kind of funky. Is there some trick to cleaning it?

SAM, ANNAPOLIS, VA

Turns out your washing machine can clean your clothes but can't clean itself. Dirt, grease, bacteria, mildew, and skin cells form nose-wrinkling residues that stick to the outer tub, and the machine's normal wash cycle isn't really able to clean them away. The only way to scrub this tub is by running it empty on the hottest cycle with a dose of washing-machine cleaner. Linda Cobb, a cleaning expert and owner of the Queen of Clean website (queenofclean.com), recommends citrus-

based Smelly Washer (\$17, smellywasher.com) because it can bust the crud without using any harsh or toxic chemicals. If your machine still stinks after the treatment, check the owner's manual for the location of the drain filter. Most washers have a filter in the back that you can unscrew. As much as a gallon of water could pour out, so keep several towels on hand. Once you've finished draining (and screwed the filter back in), do a final sniff test. All clear? Going forward, drain your washer annually, and make sure you always use the right amount of detergent when you wash your clothes, says Cobb. "If you use too much, that nasty residue builds up faster."

My back and leg muscles are tighter these days. What's a good way to test my lower-body flexibility?

JAMAL, GAINESVILLE, FL

If you're parked at a desk all day, your body stiffens up. Sitting shortens your hip flexors, the group of muscles that originates on each side of your spine and pelvis and connects to your inner thighs, says Bill Hartman, P.T., C.S.C.S., co-owner of Indianapolis Fitness and Sports Training. "Tight hip flexors can limit your range of motion and are frequently the cause of lower-back pain." He recommends this simple test: Start out by sitting on the foot of a bench. Now recline on your back, bring both knees to your chest, and hold them there. Then lower your left leg, return to the starting position, and repeat with your right leg. If your thighs don't lie flat against the bench, your hip flexors are too tight. To fix the problem, do Bulgarian split squats three times a week, he says. Assume a wide stance with your back to a bench. Place the top of your left foot behind you on the bench and lower your body until your left knee is just above the floor. Hold this position for 30 seconds, and return to the starting position. Switch legs, and repeat. That's 1 set. Aim for 3 sets with 30 seconds of rest after sets 1 and 2.

ONE-WORD ANSWER®

"What's the best way to increase my bench press?"

Squeeze

Just before you lift the bar off the rack, squeeze the metal as if you were trying to crush it in your bare hands. "You will 'lock up' proximally, meaning the center of your body will reflexively activate to give you more trunk stability," says Eric Cressey, C.S.C.S., a Boston-based strength and conditioning coach who works with many pro athletes. This, in turn, will enable you to lift more weight. Maintain your clench throughout the whole set.



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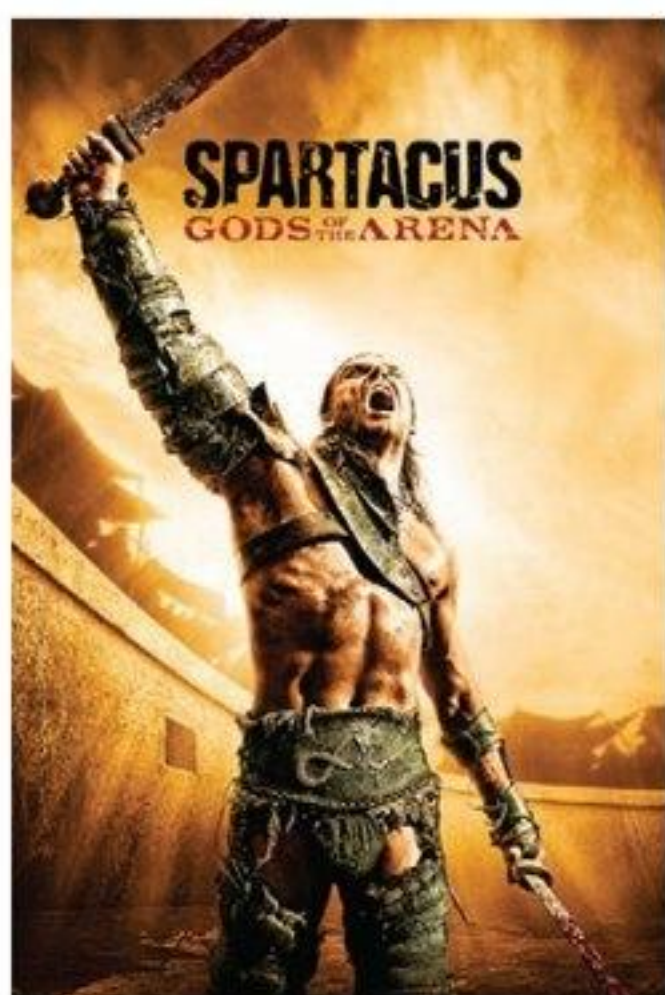


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VICTORINOX



Premieres Friday, January 21

Before Spartacus struck down his first opponent in the arena, there were many gladiators who passed through the gates onto the sand. *Spartacus: Gods of the Arena*, the highly anticipated prequel to Starz' hit series *Spartacus: Blood and Sand*, tells the story of the original Champion of the House of Batiatus, Gannicus, in a more ruthless time before Spartacus' arrival where honor was just finding its way into the arena.

starz.com/spartacus

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ASK MEN'S HEALTH

I'm wondering if I pass too much gas. What's normal?

JIM, REHOBOTH BEACH, DE
Believe it or not, various researchers have studied flatulence frequency, and according to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, the average guy passes gas 14 to 23 times a day. "Many people think their own output is excessive," says William Chey, M.D., a professor of internal medicine at the University of Michigan. "But it's normal for men to produce anywhere from a pint to 4 pints of gas a day." That's because a backfire is your body's way of regulating the amount of air in your stomach as well as the gas levels in your intestines. Stifling your urge to pass the gas can produce abdominal cramping or even rumblings, technically called borborygmi. Still think you're too gassy? See your doctor. Your body could be having trouble processing certain sugars, such as fructose or lactose, or starchy carbs, such as wheat or corn.

Why are triglyceride levels so important, and what's the best way to lower my score?

HANK, BEAVERTON, OR
These blood fats increase your risk of heart disease and stroke because they mess with your circulation in two critical ways. "First, when your triglycerides are high, your body makes the harmful LDL cholesterol particles smaller, which means they can lodge in artery walls more easily," says Patrick McBride, M.D., M.P.H., a cardiologist at the University of Wisconsin. Second, your body produces less HDL (good) cholesterol, its primary defense against the buildup of artery blockages from plaque. Aim to keep your triglyceride count below 150 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL), and have a lipid panel done every 5 years—or every year if you have high cholesterol, says Dr. McBride. To lower yours, exercise at least 3 days a week for a minimum of 45 minutes a day. And tweak your diet: Eat more vegetables and whole grains and fewer refined carbs; choose monounsaturated fats (olive oil and canola oil, for example) over saturated fats; and limit alcohol to no more than two drinks daily. Crunching nuts can also help: People who ate 2½ ounces of nuts daily for 3 to 8 weeks reduced high triglyceride levels by as much as 10 percent, according to a study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

If a soft-bristle toothbrush is best for my teeth, why do they still make the medium and firm kind?

JULES, SECAUCUS, NJ
To clean grout? Actually, it's because there's a perception—an incorrect one—that a firm toothbrush cleans teeth better, says Matthew J. Messina, D.D.S., of the American Dental Association (ADA). "So people ask for them and companies label them that way." The bristles on soft brushes have finer, more flexible filaments that are gentler on your teeth and gums, yet still clean efficiently. In fact, researchers from Poland recently found that 37.5 percent more hard-brush

When I run in winter, I'm either too hot or too cold. What should I look for in a cold-weather running jacket?

TRE, JEFFERSONVILLE, IN
Your body temperature can rise 1 degree as you pound the pavement over a 45-minute run, so you should dress as if it's 20 degrees warmer than it actually is. To let some body heat escape, you need to layer yourself with garments that breathe yet also shield you from the chill, says Lisa Jung, a gear tester for *Runner's World* magazine. "Breathable materials or ventilation features are critical; otherwise your sweat can accumulate and dampen your base layer, and you'll feel cold," she says. If it's cold and dry out, wear a long-sleeved merino wool base layer, like Icebreaker's GT Baselayer Sprint Crew (\$90, icebreaker.com), with a wind-blocking soft-shell vest, like Mountain Hardwear's Transition (\$90, mountainhardwear.com). If it's cold and damp out, throw on the same base layer but zip up a more protective shell, like the Arc'teryx Accelero (\$130, arcteryx.com). It weighs about the same as a dress shirt, yet repels wind and water.

STEP 1 BASE LAYER



Lightweight merino wool is soft enough to wear next to your skin. Unlike a synthetic material, it keeps you warm even when it's wet.

STEP 2

COLD AND DRY



Knit panels near the armpits and on the back increase breathability. Luminescent details add visibility.

COLD AND DAMP



Made from an ultrabreathable yet water-resistant fabric, the Accelero has an extra layer in the shoulder and an elongated back for weather protection.

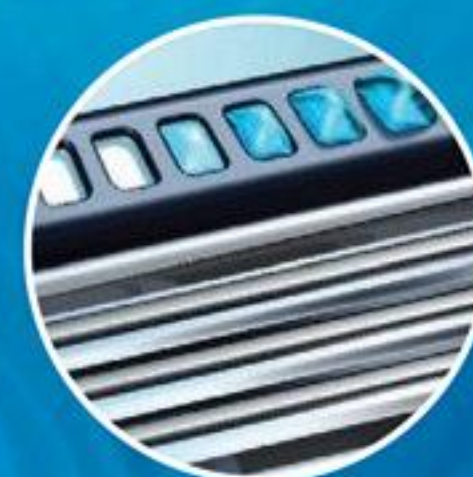
fans than soft brushers suffer from receding gum lines. But even if you know to buy a brush labeled "soft," no universal regulations set any bristle standards. Your best bet is to choose brushes that bear the ADA seal, which means the bristles have met strict requirements for softness. ■

Have a question no one else can answer? Ask at MensHealth.com/experts.

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THE BEST WAYS TO DRINK, TRAVEL, CHEER, AND SEDUCE IN THE NEW YEAR

Do this

Ring in the New Year right

Not everyone loves champagne. Peter Birmingham, general manager and beverage director at Hatfield's in Los Angeles, has the best inexpensive alternatives for your countdown toast.

2

André & Mireille Tissot Crémant du Jura \$25
Made from organic chardonnay grapes, it's light on the tongue but has the flavor backbone of expensive bubbly.



1

Riva dei Frati Prosecco Superiore Extra Dry \$16
It's the real deal from northern Italy's wine country. Try it with olives.

3

The Bruery Saison Rue \$12
Why not beer? This bold one is as complex as a fine wine, with wheat, citrus, and rye flavors.



Escape the winter blues

Snap the cold with these best trips to hot-weather destinations, picked by Robert Reid, U.S. travel editor for Lonely Planet

1



Best domestic trip

Death Valley, CA

Terrible in the summer but lovely in the winter. Catch a sunrise at Zabriskie Point, clamber around sand dunes, and see the Ubehebe Crater, a leftover from a volcanic steam explosion.

2



Best international trip

Vietnam

Walk the beautiful ancient-meets-modern city of Hanoi, eat your fill of street food in Hue, and suit up with the famed tailors of Hoi An—all on a strong U.S. dollar. Still time? Tour Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong Delta.

3



Best unsung trip

Nicaragua

Make the storied city of Granada your home base. Book a boat trip to Lake Nicaragua's beaches, take a canopy tour of Mombacho Volcano, learn to surf at the Survivor crew base of San Juan del Sur, or fly to the Corn Islands to snorkel.

Host an amazing Super Bowl party

This year brings two new TV choices: built-in 3-D or Internet connectivity. Go with the Net. Super Bowl XLV won't be broadcast in 3-D, and even if it was, you'd have to buy glasses for all your friends. Internet allows you to browse stats as the game goes down, and you still have a versatile TV long after the trophy presentation is over.



Best TV

Sony Internet TV starting at \$1,000 for 40"



My favorite Super Bowls

By Michael Oher (*The Blind Side*), offensive tackle for the Baltimore Ravens and author of *I Beat the Odds*, due out February 8

XXX

1996: Cowboys 27, Steelers 17
Maybe it wasn't the best game, but it was the first one I watched—and your first is always the best.

XXXIV

2000: Rams 23, Titans 16
It was the game that came up one yard short. That's life, and that's football.

XXXV

2001: Ravens 34, Giants 7
The Ravens win! If I don't list it, Ray Lewis will never forgive me. And you want Ray on your side.

XLII

2008: Giants 17, Patriots 14
Everyone picked the Pats. The Giants showed that how you play is all that matters.

Make a resolution and keep it

Top New Year's resolutions, according to *Men's Health* readers 1 Lose weight 2 Gain muscle 3 Find a girlfriend
Flip to this month's foldout poster to help accomplish 1, 2, and, with some luck, 3

Make the right Valentine's Day move

We polled more than 7,500 *Women's Health* readers on what they wanted for V-day, and many said they'd rather have dinner than a gift. And they're picky about what kind of dinner...

- 1 At a nice restaurant (46%)
- 2 He cooks for me (31%)
- 3 We cook together (23%)

Why?

"It's not about the money—it's because we don't have to clean up! You only have to pay attention to each other," says Carolyn Kylstra, the *Men's Health* Girl Next Door. "Pick a place with well-spaced tables. Real intimacy is difficult if people are listening."

A Rockford Fosgate® 710-watt sound system so you can lose yourself.

A 40-gig navigation system so you can find your way back.



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MH BULLETINS

The latest news on health, sex, nutrition, exercise, and weight loss

MY OH MY!

What's on your bedroom menu? If you're like three out of four Americans, oral sex is involved. But there's a slight enthusiasm gap between the sexes, according to Indiana University's National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior.

When people ages 25 to 29 were asked if they had performed oral sex on an opposite-sex partner in the previous month, half the women but only 40 percent of the men said yes.

Data from the survey also showed that the higher the number of sex acts employed in a session, the more likely she is to reach orgasm. Debby Herbenick, Ph.D., M.P.H., one of the coauthors of the study, says attitude is key: "Be excited about it. A woman is often concerned that her partner isn't into it." She might just reciprocate.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
BILL DIODATO

WEIGHT LOSS

Edited by Maria Masters

BULLETIN

ON OUR RADAR

Overcome your genes

Don't blame DNA for your gut. A British study found that even if you've inherited a genetic susceptibility to obesity, regular exercise can reduce this risk by 40 percent. In fact, people who have obesity-prone genes may benefit from increased physical activity more than people whose genes guard against it, researchers say.

5

PERCENTAGE OF U.S. ADULTS WHO COMPLETE A CHALLENGING WORKOUT ON ANY GIVEN DAY

Source: American Journal of Preventive Medicine

A GOOD FIND

Calcium, which may prevent some dietary fat from being absorbed, is a weight-loss weapon. In an *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* study, dieters with the highest calcium intake from dairy foods lost 60 percent more weight than those with the lowest. Aim for 1,000 mg a day—the foods at right are good sources. Avoid supplements; a U.K. study says they raise your heart-attack risk.

SEEING IS LOSING

It's easy to devour a tub of popcorn in a dark theater. Likewise, **paying attention to your food helps you control how much you eat.** In a study from Germany, people who were served a supersized meal in total darkness consumed 36 percent more food than those given regular portions. But when study participants dined at well-lit tables, that difference dropped to

20 percent. In the dark we receive less information about how much we're eating, says study author Benjamin Scheibehenne, Ph.D. So look at your food, not the TV.

DON'T DIET DRUNK

A glass of wine before dinner isn't as harmless as it seems. **Just a bit of alcohol may sabotage your weight-loss plan,** according to a new British study. In that experiment, people who drank alcohol-spiked juice 30 minutes before lunchtime ate 15 percent more food at a subsequent buffet than juice-only drinkers. One theory is that alcohol whets your appetite and makes food tastier, leading you to eat more. So save that glass of wine for after dinner.



CHARLES MASTERS (calcium foods), food styling: Susan Ottaviano/Halley Resources; THOMAS MACDONALD (pasta)



FOOD COURT

The crime

1,366

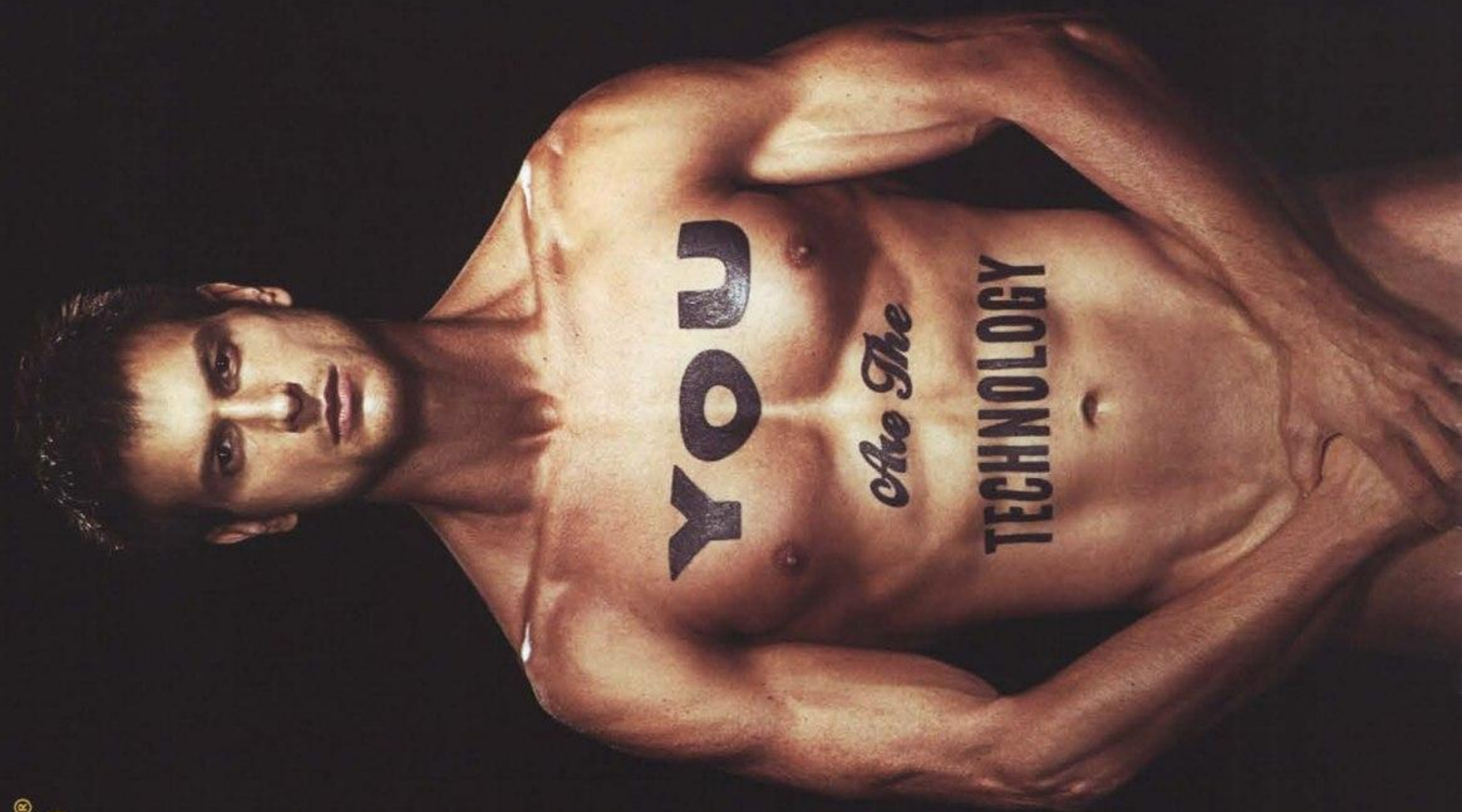
Number of calories in Outback Steakhouse's No Rules Parmesan Pasta with Chicken and Scallops

The punishment

2.6

Number of hours you'd have to spend chopping wood to burn 1,366 calories

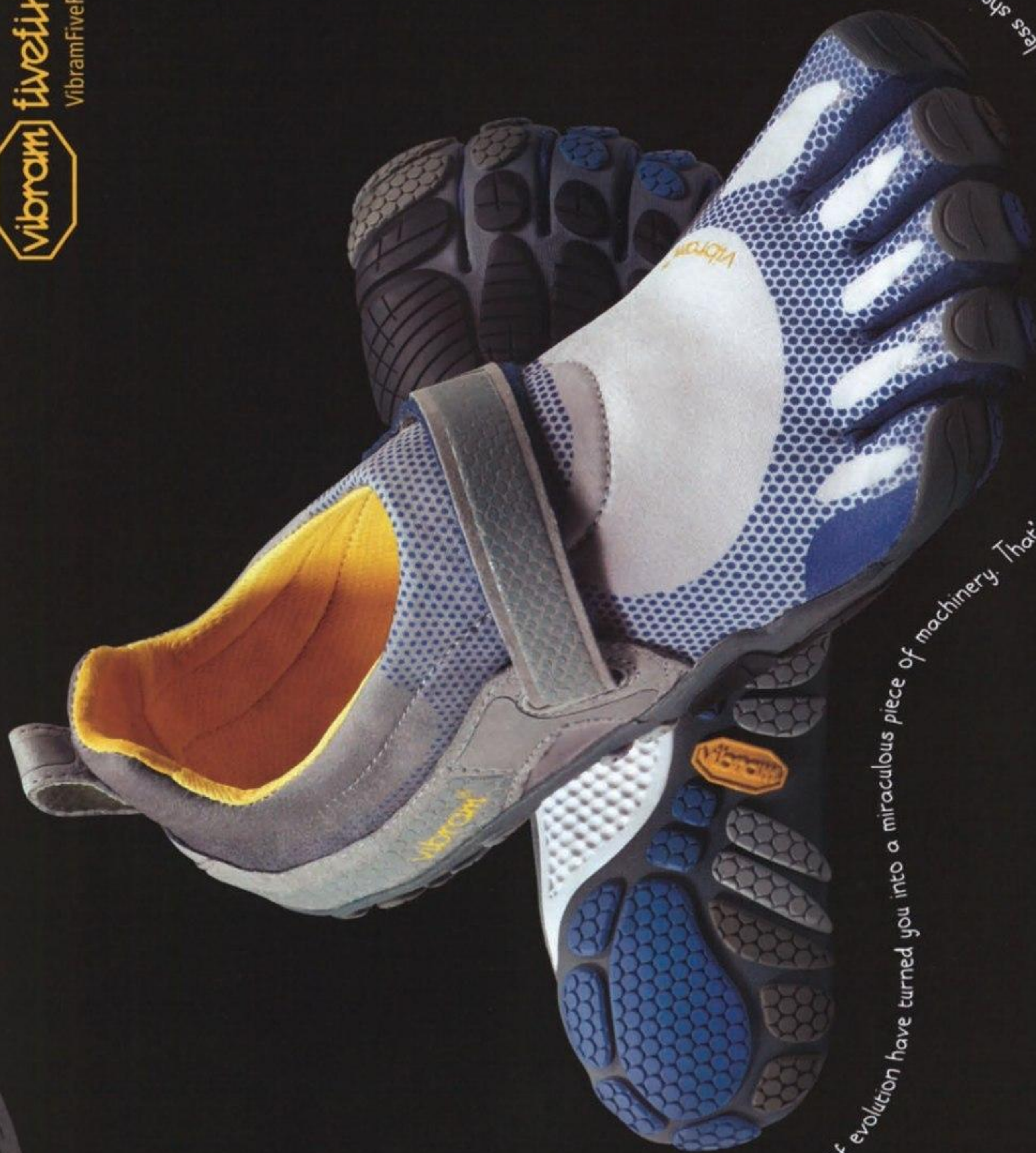
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ERECTION RETURNS

Winning—even vicariously—can lead to sex. Researchers from Villanova and Rutgers Universities who tracked Web searches before and after the last two U.S. presidential elections found that **porn searches spiked in blue states after Obama's win, and in red states after Bush's win.** "After people vicariously win competitions, their testosterone rises," says study coauthor Patrick Markey, Ph.D. Try a couples' game night, making sure you play on the same team as your wife or girlfriend. "Even winning at chess can boost testosterone," Markey says.

The thrill of politics (or any competition) can work as a stimulus plan.

THE WELL-CHILLED MAN

Feeling stressed? Channel Peyton Manning. **Women prefer calm men, and can sense a man's calm just by looking at his face,** a study from Scotland found. Researchers measured levels of testosterone and cortisol, a stress hormone, in college-age men, and took their pictures. They then had women rate the photos for attractiveness, masculinity, and health. The women favored the men with low cortisol levels. Study author Fhionna Moore, Ph.D., says testosterone levels didn't affect the women's assessments.

ON OUR RADAR

Achy breaky heart

A breakup from out of the blue slows your heart, and that slower heartbeat may be a marker of hurt feelings, Dutch researchers say. In an experiment, people were asked if a stranger in a photo would like them. When told that they'd been "rejected" by a person in a photo, their heart rates dropped—and the slowdown was considerably more pronounced when they were rejected by someone they had guessed would like them.

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN WHO SAY THEY FELT PAIN DURING THEIR LAST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE

Source: Indiana University National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior

30

WALK AWAY—INTO TROUBLE

Listen up, married people: Walking away from an argument can be a warning sign of divorce, say University of Michigan researchers who evaluated how 373 couples resolved conflicts. After 16 years, 46 percent had split—and a strong predictor of divorce was the tendency of one partner to withdraw during an argument while the other tried to discuss the situation calmly. Study author Kira Birditt, Ph.D., says leaving the scene can be viewed by the other person as a lack of investment in the relationship, not as a way to cool down.

HOW STRONG IS YOUR STRIDE?

Stanford University researchers analyzed a single stride sequence to determine which muscles activate and when. We asked a trainer how to strengthen your weak spots to run your best.

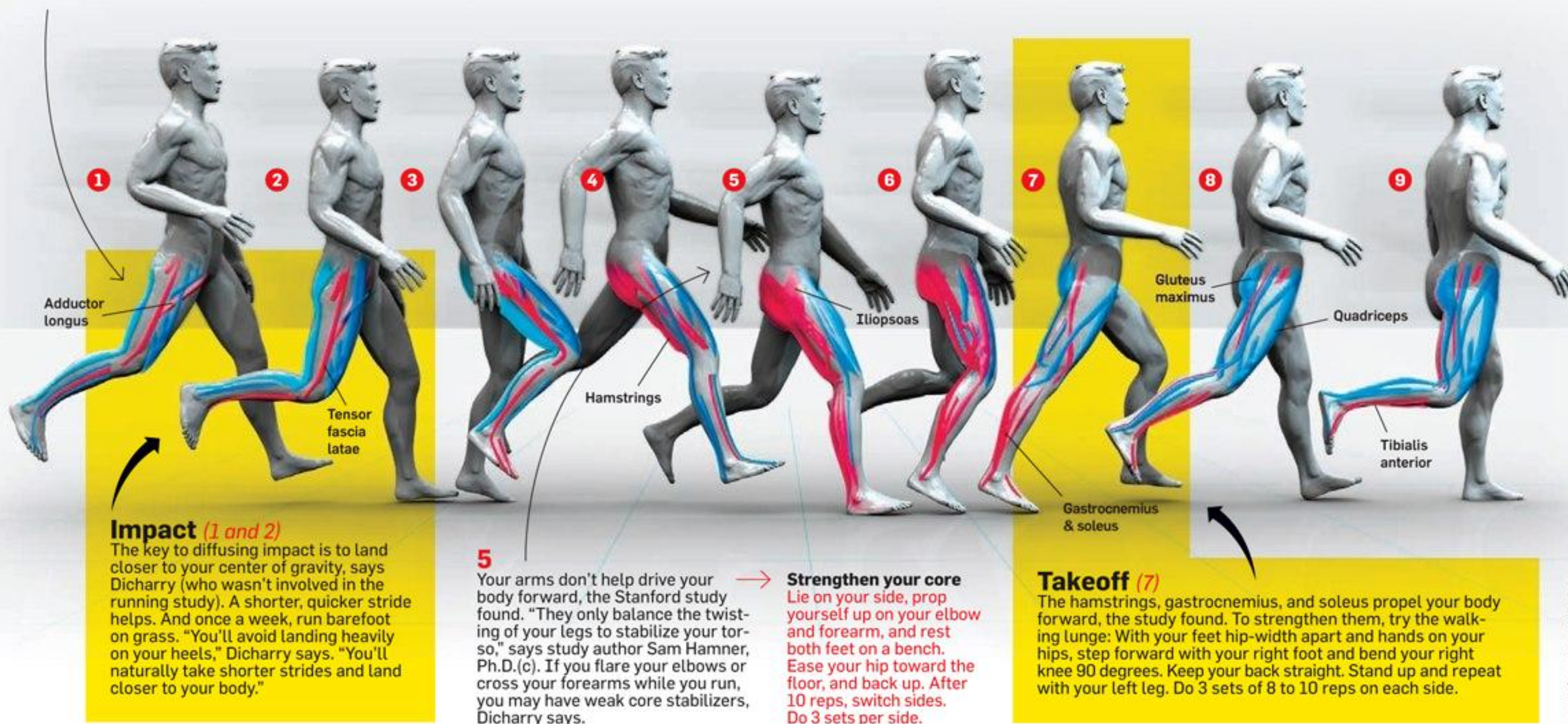
1 Most runners don't extend their hips properly because their legs don't stretch back enough, says Jay Dicharry, C.S.C.S., director of the Speed Clinic at the University of Virginia. They compensate by landing in front of their body, adding to the impact.

→ **Stretch your hip flexors**
After a run, kneel on one knee, keeping your back straight. Tilt your pelvis backward and hold for 60 seconds. Repeat three times on each side.

2&3

Compressive force peaks during the mid-stance phase of your gait, while you're on one leg. "Stabilizing muscles [in your core and glutes] have to keep you from rotating or leaning too much so you don't increase stress on the body's tissues," says Dicharry. These muscles are often underdeveloped in runners.

→ **Strengthen your stabilizers**
Stand on one leg for 30 seconds, 10 times per leg, each day. An ideal time: while brushing your teeth.



Impact (1 and 2)

The key to diffusing impact is to land closer to your center of gravity, says Dicharry (who wasn't involved in the running study). A shorter, quicker stride helps. And once a week, run barefoot on grass. "You'll avoid landing heavily on your heels," Dicharry says. "You'll naturally take shorter strides and land closer to your body."

5 Your arms don't help drive your body forward, the Stanford study found. "They only balance the twisting of your legs to stabilize your torso," says study author Sam Hamner, Ph.D.(c). If you flare your elbows or cross your forearms while you run, you may have weak core stabilizers, Dicharry says.

→ **Strengthen your core**
Lie on your side, prop yourself up on your elbow and forearm, and rest both feet on a bench. Ease your hip toward the floor, and back up. After 10 reps, switch sides. Do 3 sets per side.

Takeoff (7)

The hamstrings, gastrocnemius, and soleus propel your body forward, the study found. To strengthen them, try the walking lunge: With your feet hip-width apart and hands on your hips, step forward with your right foot and bend your right knee 90 degrees. Keep your back straight. Stand up and repeat with your left leg. Do 3 sets of 8 to 10 reps on each side.



NUMBER OF DAYS SUPERBACTERIA MRSA CAN SURVIVE ON ARTIFICIAL TURF WHEN MUCIN (A COMPONENT OF SNOT AND SALIVA) IS PRESENT

Source: Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise



A RACE TOO FAR?

Guys who run marathons year after year must be superfit, right? Maybe: In a Minneapolis Heart Institute study, men who'd completed marathons for 25 consecutive years showed surprising levels of arterial plaque—62 percent more than sedentary men. Study author Jonathan Schwartz, M.D., says the physical stress of training and races, including elevated heart rate and blood pressure, can expose tissue to a damaging acidic environment. "This may be another example of 'Everything in moderation,'" he says.

ON OUR RADAR

Wetter water

High-pH alkali water hydrates you better than bottled water does, a new Montana State University study found. People who drank mineral-enhanced H₂O instead of plain water for 2 weeks lost less fluid as urine and were more hydrated than plain-water drinkers. Study author Daniel Heil, Ph.D., says the minerals and pH-spiking compounds may help your cardiovascular system retain more water. Try Akali glacier water (akaliwater.com), the type used in the study.

PERFECT TIME TO START

If you're starting a workout program, here's some encouragement for the new year. **Sedentary men who exercise just once a week can make sharp fitness gains,** a recent study from Thailand reveals. The men performed a moderate-intensity cardio workout once a week for an hour. After 12 weeks, their average resting heart rate was down 11 percent, and their VO₂ max—a measure of aerobic capacity—was up 24 percent. Get started: Schedule one workout on the same day each week, and make it a can't-miss appointment.

SINELAB (runner illustrations, based on images in a study from The Journal of Biomechanics), Kallista Images (MRSA cells)



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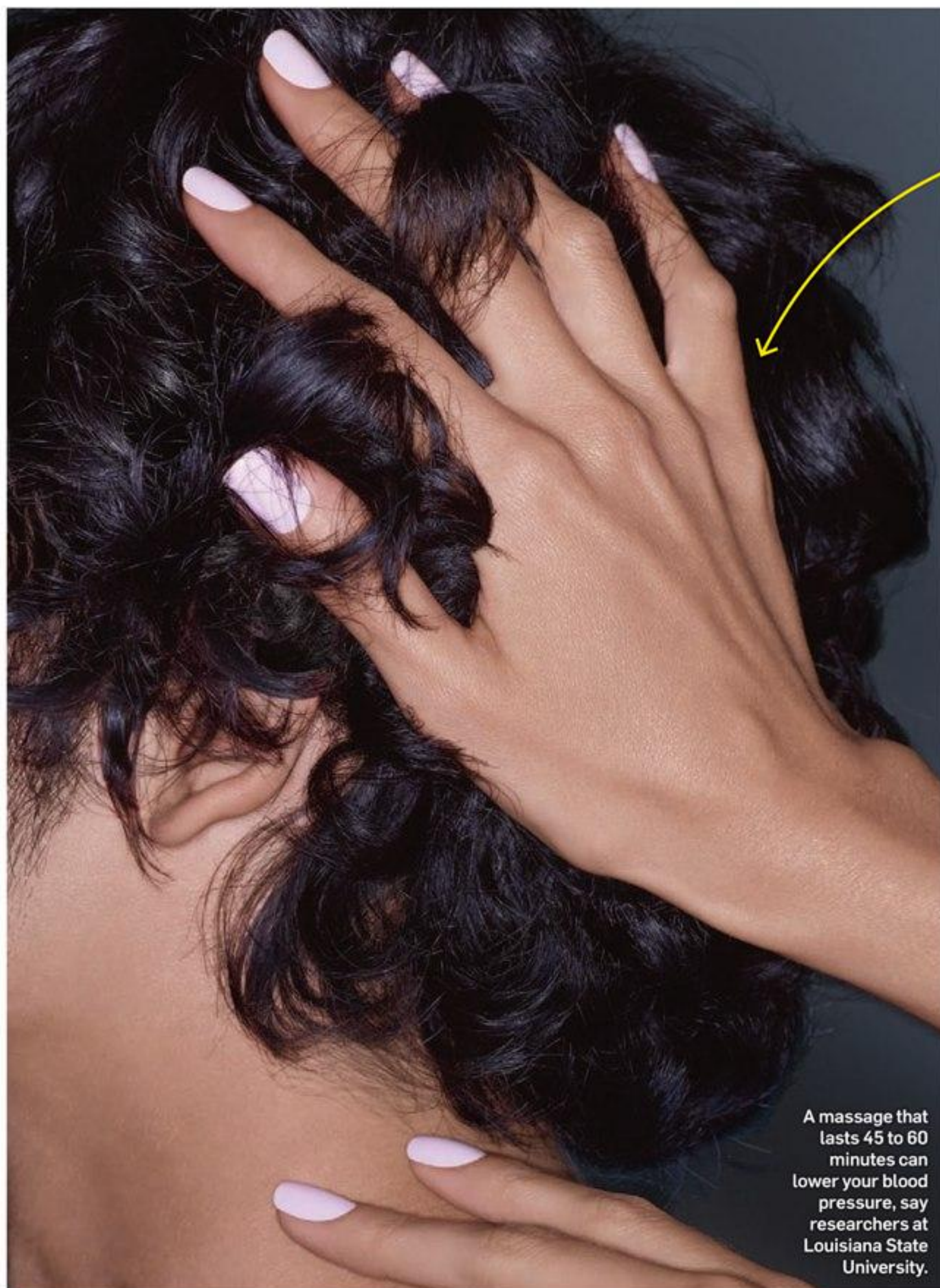


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A massage that lasts 45 to 60 minutes can lower your blood pressure, say researchers at Louisiana State University.

GIVE FLU THE FINGERS

Hit the massage table now to stay out of the sick bed later. **Massages may help you fend off the flu**, according to a study in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. People who received a 45-minute Swedish massage had an 18 percent spike in infection-fighting white blood cells. "Deep massage may move white blood cells from a man's lymph nodes into his bloodstream," says study author Mark Rapaport, M.D. Find a certified massage therapist at findamassagetherapist.org.

TOWEL OFF

Hand dryers are full of hot air: **Restroom air dryers can leave your hands covered with germs**, according to a recent U.K. study. The reason: Air dryers won't budge residual germs that paper towels can slough off. Hot air the only option in the loo? You'll kill the most bugs by holding your hands steady under the dryer for at least 30 seconds.



PERCENTAGE OF DRIVERS WHO ADMIT TO NODDING OFF BEHIND THE WHEEL IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS

Source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

THYROID THREAT

What do some hot dogs and spinach have in common? Nitrates. In a study in the *International Journal of Cancer*, **men who consumed the most nitrates—often found in leafy vegetables—were more likely to develop thyroid cancer** than men who took in the least. One theory: Excess nitrates trigger a hormone thought to promote tumors. Play it safe by eating nitrate-free meats and organic produce, which may contain less of the compounds.

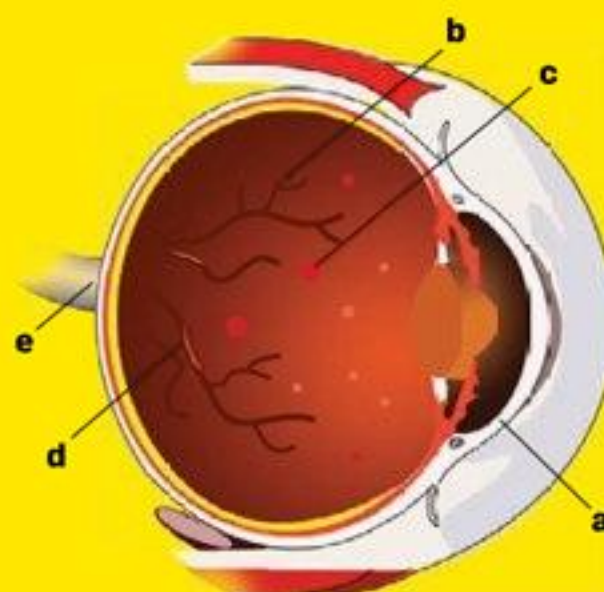
ON OUR RADAR

A ticking balm

Your topical pain reliever might have a scary side effect. When University of Minnesota researchers slathered mice with a cream containing a known tumor promoter and then one with capsaicin—an ingredient in some muscle rubs—the rodents developed larger, more numerous cancerous lesions than when the tumor promoter alone was applied. While preliminary, the findings raise questions about the safety of capsaicin creams.

AN EYE OUT FOR TROUBLE

How's your vision? Fine? Have your eyes checked anyway—you could dodge ocular illnesses and other diseases (see right), says Kimberly Cockerham, M.D., an associate professor of ophthalmology at Stanford University.



Chronic watery eyes (a) may signal hyperthyroidism; excess thyroid hormone causes orbital tissues to swell and become irritated.

High blood-sugar levels due to diabetes can starve blood vessels of oxygen, causing

your eyes to grow new, collateral blood vessels (b).

Over time, untreated high blood pressure can cause narrowing of eye blood vessels and hemorrhaging (c) in the area.

Plaque from a clogged carotid

artery (d) can break off and travel into your retinal blood vessels—a warning sign that you're at risk of a stroke.

A brain tumor is one health threat that can increase pressure in your brain, which puts stress on the optic nerve (e).

From top: BILL DIODATO, hair: Kim Gray/Timothy Priano, makeup: Vitorija Bowers/Kate Ryan; BROOKE PELCZYNSKI



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WHEN SNACKS ATTACK

If it's cream-filled and sold in a convenience store, skip it. **The phosphorus compounds used as additives in junk food like Twinkies may raise your risk of cardiac and kidney diseases,** according to a study in the *Journal of the American Society of Nephrology*. Scan ingredient lists: The additives go by monikers such as "disodium phosphate," "monocalcium phosphate," and "sodium aluminum phosphate."

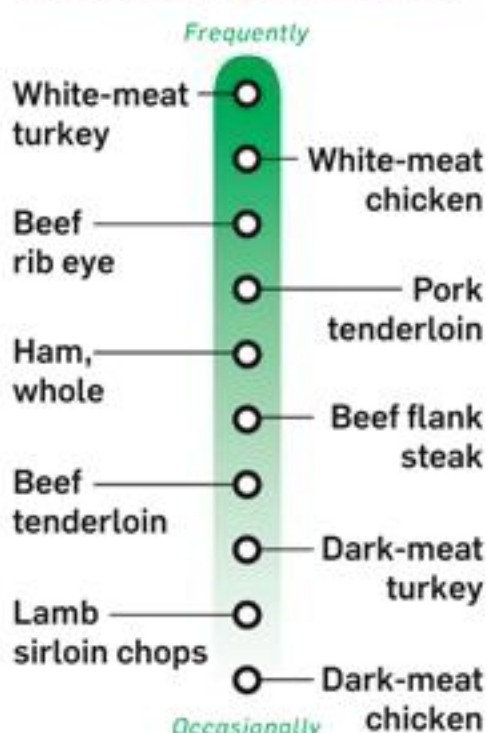
85

AVERAGE AMOUNT OF ANTIOXIDANTS, IN MILLIGRAMS, YOU GAIN BY CHOOSING 8 OZ OF BREWED TEA OVER BOTTLED TEA

Source: American Chemical Society

THE PROTEIN SPECTRUM

Cold weather means cravings for mass quantities of meat. Use this guide to make the smartest protein picks.



Meats are rated by protein-to-calorie ratio and density of nutrients (vitamins B₆ and B₁₂ and zinc, e.g.). Poultry is skinless and beef is select grade.

Source: Valerie Berkowitz, M.S., R.D., Center for Balanced Health

WHEY TO GO

A simple shake may help your heart. In a Washington State University study, **men who drank a daily shake with whey protein for 6 weeks dropped their blood pressure by about 8 points.** Whey may improve the function of blood vessel linings so they regulate blood pressure better, says Susan Fluegel, Ph.D., the lead study author. Take a cue from the study and add 28 grams (one scoop) to your next postworkout shake.

OMEGA-POWER

Fish-oil supplements may help prevent pancreatic cancer, according to an *International Journal of Cancer* study. Participants who took at least 850 milligrams

of omega-3 fatty acids a day reduced their risk of developing the cancer by 53 percent. Omega-3s may help halt the growth of cancer cells, scientists say.

STEALTH HEALTH FOOD

Herring

This small, affordable Atlantic Ocean fish has a pleasant fishy flavor when smoked, and a briny taste when pickled.

Why it's healthy
Herring packs more omega-3 fatty acids than salmon does, and just one fillet contains 30 grams of protein. Plus, it's a good source of essential B vitamins.

How to eat it
Pickled herring is great atop a salad of fresh greens and chopped apple. Or try smoked herring on a slice of dark rye bread slathered with sour cream.



From top: BARTHOLOMEW COOKE, prop styling: Liz Ciganovich, Jupiter Images



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INSTANT STRENGTH

Now you have another reason to launch a fitness program: **Beginners can add strength quickly, say Brazilian researchers.** When men with no training experience performed squats, they increased their 1-rep max more than three times as much as lifters who had at least 2 years of experience—and they pulled off the improvement in only four workouts. One possible reason for the impressive, fast gains: Communication between your mind and your muscles improves as you learn, allowing you to recruit more muscle fibers and lift heavier weights, the researchers say.

TARGET: ABS

Training your abs isn't as complicated as it seems. "The six-pack, or rectus abdominis, is actually one muscle, so all ab exercises cause activation," says Stuart McGill, Ph.D., author of *Ultimate Back Fitness and Performance*. But certain exercises can trigger other regions of your core, such as your obliques, for a complete ab workout. Use these tips from McGill to simplify your approach and see faster results.

THE OBLIQUE SOLUTION

For the most activation of your obliques, try rolling planks. Hold a side plank for 10 seconds, rotate to a plank for 10 seconds, and then hit the other side for 10 more seconds. That's 1 set. Do 6.

PROTECT YOUR SPINE

Your abs are structured to resist motion, not create it, so try to avoid exercises that involve bending or twisting your spine.

SIX-PACK SECRET

Stop trying to suck in your navel toward your spine, says McGill. Instead, brace your abs as if you were about to be punched in the stomach.

THE BEST ABS EXERCISE

Try "stir the pot," one of McGill's favorite moves. Assume a pushup position, but place your elbows and forearms on a Swiss ball. Move your elbows in a circle, making sure that your core doesn't rotate.

BUILD ABS FASTER

"The ab muscles are designed to work together," says McGill. Trying to target your upper and lower rectus abdominis separately isn't efficient.

78

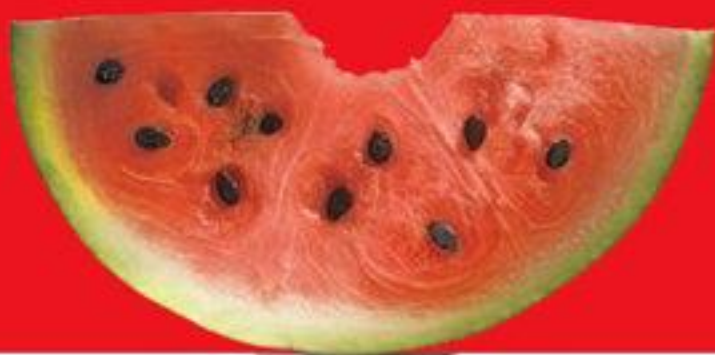
PERCENTAGE OF PHYSICALLY ACTIVE MEN WHO WOULD EXERCISE AT HOME IF THEY HAD THE EQUIPMENT

Source: Mintel

ON OUR RADAR

Rep booster?

Protein isn't the only thing that'll help your muscle fibers. Citrulline malate—an amino acid—may boost the amount of weight you can handle, say researchers in Spain. When men consumed 8 grams of the supplement before a workout, they performed more reps than men who skipped the dose. That's because citrulline malate, which is similar to a compound found in watermelon, might buffer fatigue. But more research is needed to determine if eating the fruit would have a similar impact.



THE FORGOTTEN WORKOUT

Want to boost your bench? University of Missouri scientists have found that a workout based on a classic 1950s routine might be the best way to build strength. To find out for yourself, start by choosing the heaviest weight you think you can lift six times. This is your base weight. Then follow this 4-set routine, resting 3 minutes between each set.

Set 1 10 reps with half of your base weight **Set 2** 6 reps with 75 percent of your base weight **Set 3** As many reps as you can with your base weight **Set 4** If you were able to complete 5 to 7 reps in set 3, use the same weight and perform as many repetitions as you can. If you completed more or fewer reps than that, use the table on the right to increase or decrease the weight. Then do as many reps as you can. For your next workout, use this amount as your new base weight, and repeat the entire process.

IF YOU COMPLETED ...

0-2 reps
3-4 reps
8-12 reps

TAKE YOUR BASE WEIGHT AND ...

decrease by 5-10%
decrease by up to 5%
increase by 5-10%

From top: SCOTT McDERMOTT, grooming: Mia Sarazen, Mike Kemp/Getty Images



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THE BE

EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS

Wilde at Heart

OLIVIA WILDE—NOW
BLOWING CIRCUITS
IN *TRON*—ON HOW TO
FLIP HER SWITCH

When Olivia Wilde was just 18 years old, she married Tao Ruspoli, a man 9 years her senior. "You're going to change as you grow older, and that messes up a lot of relationships," she says. But 8 years later, the two are still going strong. The key to long-lasting romance, Wilde says, is to accept that nothing stays the same. The best you can do is adjust along the way.

Ease pressure

"Even in the beginning, we never put pressure on ourselves," she says. "We were, like, 'Maybe it'll last a week.' And therefore it's lasted years." She attributes much of that to a lack of jealousy on both their parts. When you actively look for things that might hurt a relationship, you turn minor issues into larger ones.

ST LIFE

EDITED BY JASON FEIFER

Do your own thing

"Tao is great about saying, 'You go. Have fun. I'm staying home.' It's so important to have that independence," she says. You know it yourself: Everyone needs evenings of their own. If a woman feels anchored to a man's plans, she may start to resent him for the fun she's worried she's missing. Not everything has to be a couples' event.

Hold your tongue

Of course it's important to speak up if you feel hurt. But know the difference between a real problem and your own insecurity, Wilde says—and sort your feelings out in your mind before rushing to express them. "I think what ruins relationships and causes most fights is insecurity," Wilde says. "So be secure. It can be hard to force, but you need inner peace if you want peace around you."

Photograph by JAMES WHITE, styling: Kate Moodie, hair: Terry Millet/Leonor Grey/The Magnet Agency, makeup: Melanie Inglessis/Nars Cosmetics/The Magnet Agency, manicure: Jenna Hipp/John Masters Organics/Tracey Mattingly, Jean Paul Gaultier sweater, Kasit Workshop jeans

“What ruins relationships and causes most fights is insecurity.”



Q My girlfriend is wild in bed, but swears she's only slept with three men. Is she lying?

BRIAN, STOCKTON, CA

Not necessarily. Her experience and enthusiasm could mean she slept with one dude a thousand times, or with a thousand dudes one time each. A better question: Who cares? She's wild in bed, and you're her boyfriend. I don't see the problem.



Step one when sleeping with a wild woman: Check for fangs.

We've been dating for 2 months, and she's taking a week-long work trip. How often should I call?

JASON, BOSTON, MA

This is tricky. If you keep calling her like a lonely kid, you'll just be another task on her busy to-do list. And if you go silent, she'll think you don't care. So make yourself

available, but don't be over-eager. Text this the first night: "Hey, how was your day? Thinking of you." Call on the second, near bedtime. At the end of your chat, simply ask how she'd like you to play it for the rest of the week—a call every night? A text? It's thoughtful, not clingy. Let her know that whatever she wants works for you.

I'm sleeping with a woman who keeps asking me to pull her hair. Um, how hard?

CODY, SIDNEY, MT

Don't ask me, ask her—at the right moment. Run your fingers up the back of her neck, then grasp a large section of hair just below the back of her head. Pull gently at first so her head pulls back just



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slightly (grasp close to the roots so the sensation is on her scalp). Now ask, "Want it harder?" Believe me, she'll tell you.

She often asks, "What are you thinking?" I'm not keeping a secret! What's she looking for?

STEVE, GREENSBORO, NC

Anything. Anything at all. You may not be keeping secrets, but you're so quiet that she's feeling left out of your head. When I ask this question, it's because I want to feel more connected with the guy sitting or lying beside me. I want insight, access. What women want, Steve, is to feel close, and not just physically.

My girlfriend sometimes sleeps in her ex-boyfriend's boxers. Can I ask her not to? NICK, LUBBOCK, TX

Women can be sentimental, but sometimes comfortable boxers really are just comfortable boxers. We like *them*, not the guy they came from. Hell, I still have a high school boyfriend's pair—he lent them to me when I spilled something in my lap. (Sexy, right?) But if hers bother you, admit you're jealous and say she's welcome to yours. Hint: Flannel or jersey fabrics never fail.

FRIGHTENING PHENOMENON OF THE MONTH

Grand-fathering your ex

Calm down, it's not as gross as it sounds. Nancy Kalish, Ph.D., author of *Lost and Found Lovers*, says this phrase describes a rationale some people use to justify an affair with a lost love. It's okay, they think, because that person came before their current partner—so it doesn't feel like cheating.

But of 1,600 people Kalish surveyed who'd reconnected with a past love (while married, in two-thirds of the cases), only 5 percent ended up in a more permanent relationship with the lost lover. For most, grandfathering just messed up their marriages.

If you're with someone you have no plans to leave, don't connect with a lost love, Kalish advises—even if she reaches out first. "Let it go," she says.

"What part of your body do you wish men paid more attention to in bed?"

BREASTS

That's an issue? Yup: It's the top response in an *MH* survey of 605 women. As relationships go on, many men seem to focus less on their partner's breasts. Keep the enthusiasm up!



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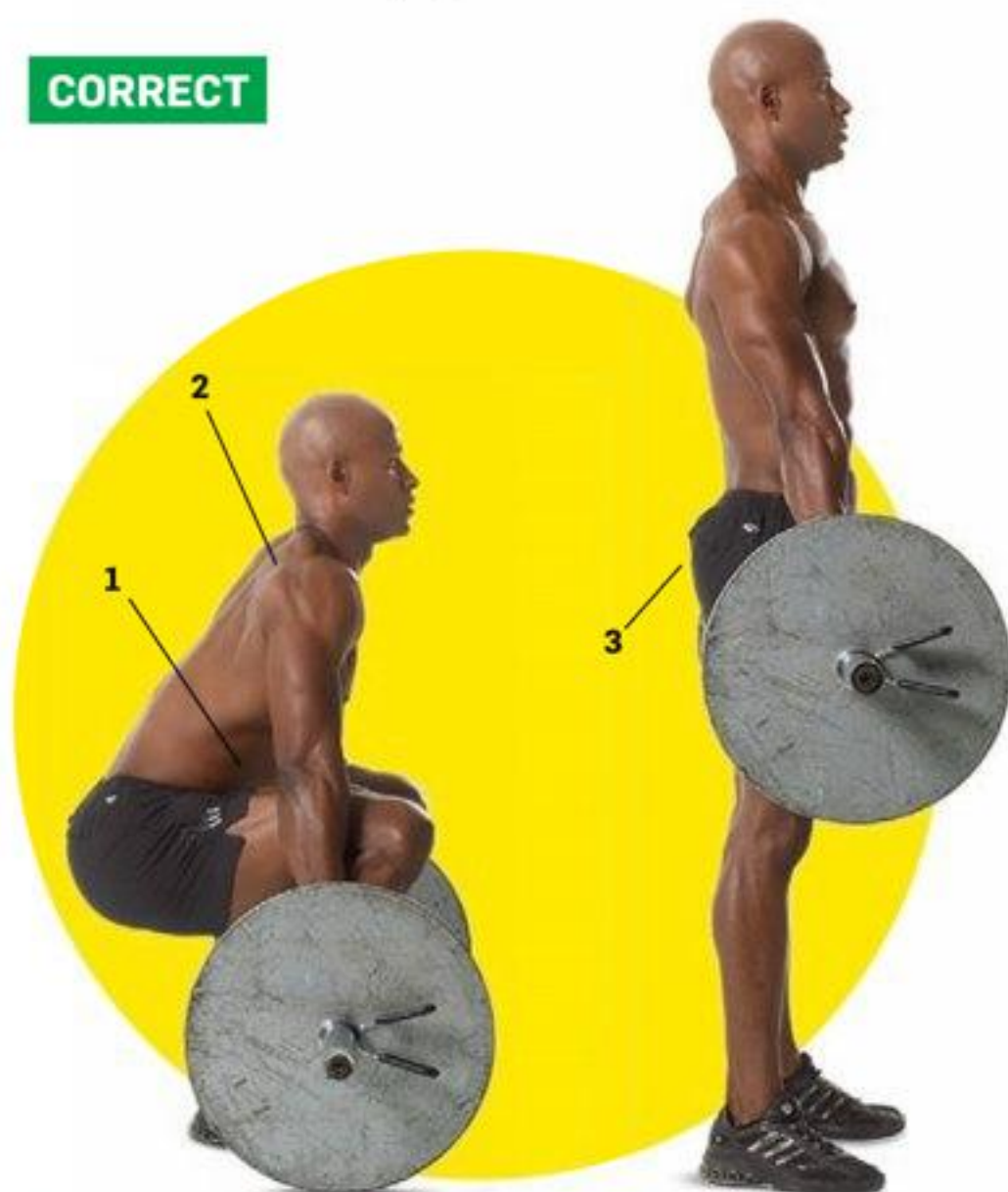


Why Your Back Hurts

DON'T LIFT A WEIGHT WITHOUT FIRST KNOWING HOW TO PROTECT YOUR BACK

Fitness pros always tell you to brace your core, but they really mean this: Save your spine. Stiffening your core while doing almost any exercise helps keep your spine safe and allows you to use heavier weights. *Men's Health* fitness expert Bill Hartman, P.T., C.S.C.S., shows how proper form makes a difference on the deadlift.

CORRECT



1 Prepare to be punched

Most exercises involve your core, so protect it. Tense the muscles of your midsection and then try to make yourself as tall as you can. This helps keep your spine's highly flexible lumbar section stiff so it's naturally arched, not rounded or overarched.

2 Lock your shoulders

Pull your shoulders down and back so your shoulder blades can't move. (In other words, flex your lats the way a bodybuilder does.) The strong muscles that control your shoulder blades originate on your upper spine, so this helps brace your upper back.

3 Squeeze your glutes

Contracting your butt muscles "locks" the hinge between your sacrum and lumbar regions, making your lower back and hips move as one unit. Do it when you push your hips forward (like when you're rising from a deadlift) and during pushups and planks.

Thoracic region

Cervical region

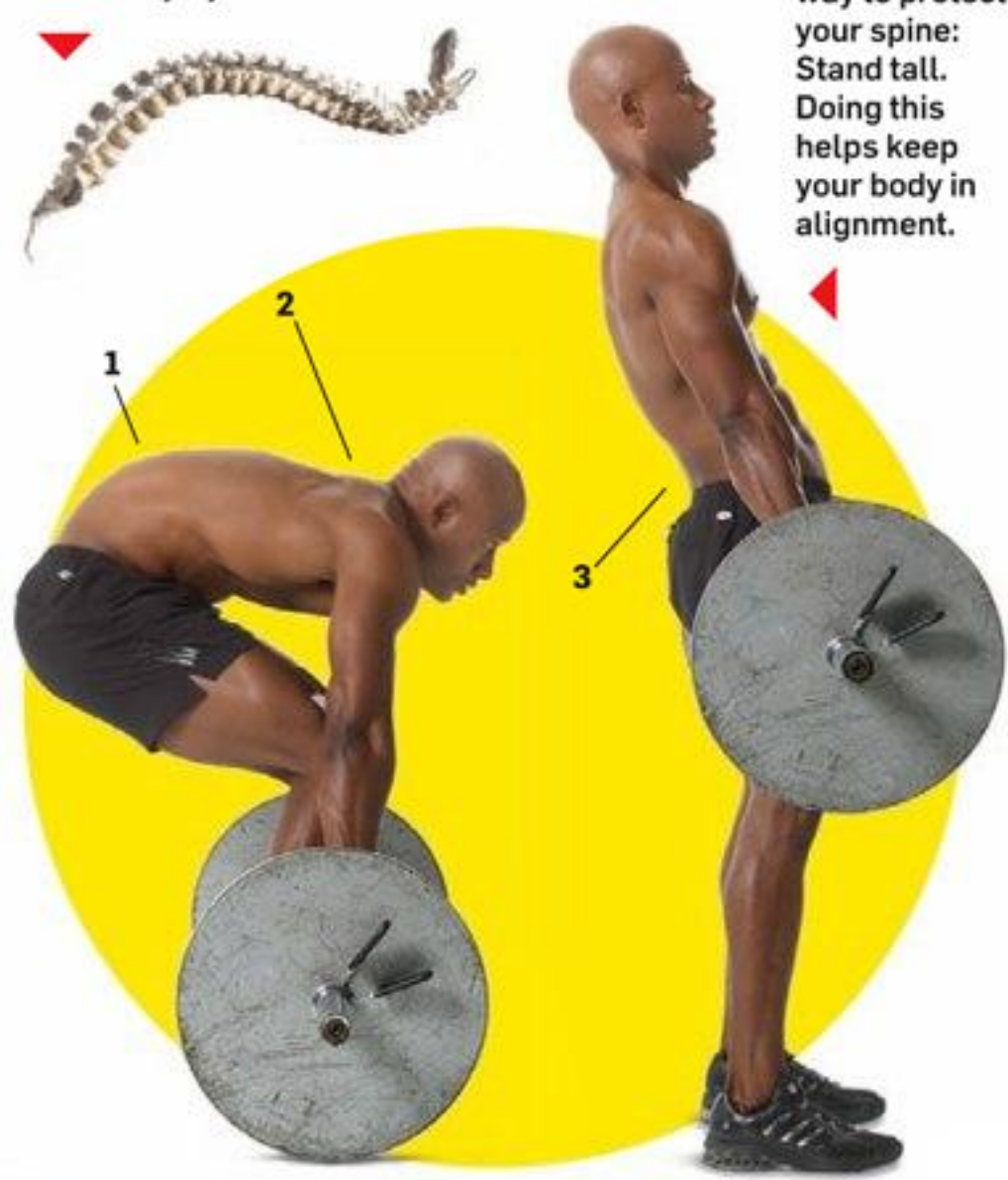
Lumbar region

Sacrum

Coccyx

INCORRECT

Bad deadlift form puts your entire spine at risk of injury.



The easiest way to protect your spine: Stand tall. Doing this helps keep your body in alignment.

1 Your back is rounded

Your lumbar spine is the most vulnerable spinal structure because the posterior ligaments surrounding it are weaker. Lifting weight with your hips too high puts a lot of stress on these ligaments; that can lead to muscle spasms and lasting lower-back pain.

2 Your shoulders are loose

When you don't stabilize your shoulders, your back is more likely to round. The pressure then shifts the fluid in the center of the lumbar disks, resulting in bulges or disk herniations. "It's like squeezing one side of a water balloon," says Hartman.

3 You hyper-extend

By overarch your lower back, you overload the lumbar area. The result isn't good: stiffness, progressive arthritic changes, pain, or even stress fractures. So when you stand up, make sure you squeeze your glutes to avoid hyper-extension.

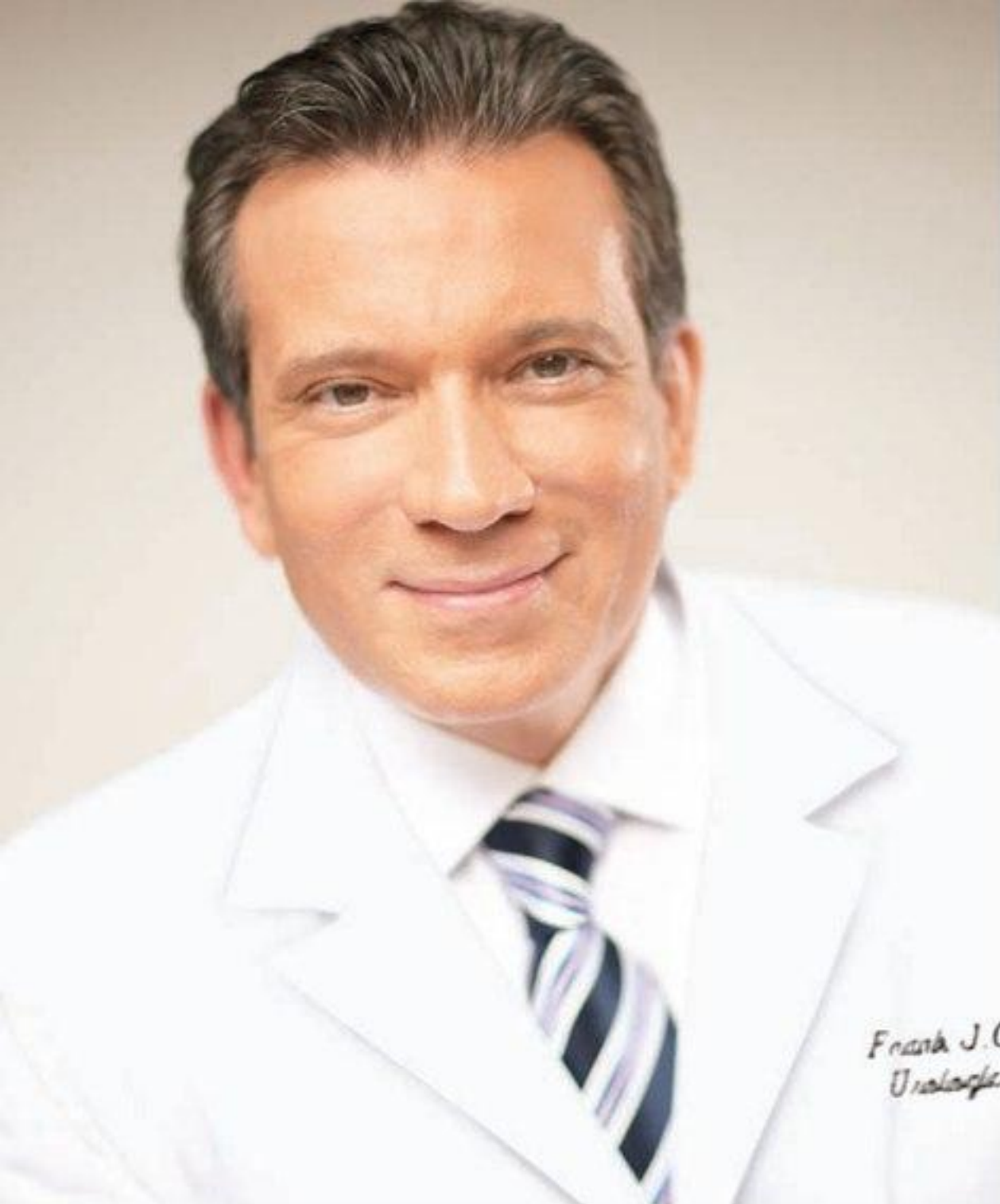


Watch your form

It helps to have someone check your form, but if you're not at a gym, let a video game console help out. *Your Shape Fitness Evolved* (\$50), a new game for the Xbox

Kinect, uses tracking technology to watch and correct your form as you perform *Men's Health* workouts in front of the TV. Bonus: Unlike your buddy, it isn't distracted when a woman in short gym shorts walks by.

LUCAS ZAREBINSKI (spines); BETH BISCHOFF (barbell exercises); grooming: Scott McMahon

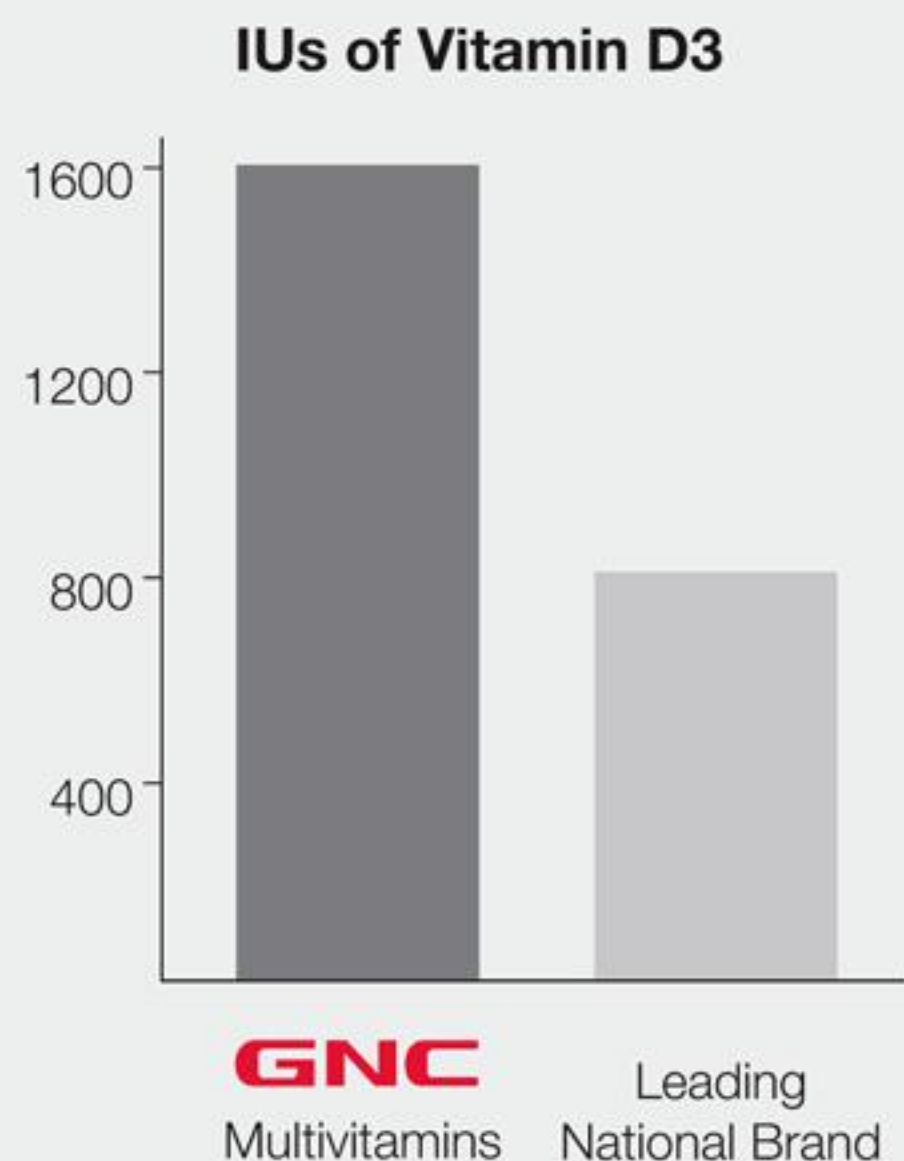


Frank J. Costa
Urologist

"Most of us don't get enough vitamin D. This is why I encourage my patients to have a simple blood test for deficiency. New research shows that vitamin D supports colon, breast and immune health in addition to bone health. Supplements are your best way to get vitamin D as opposed to the sun's damaging rays."

Dr. Frank J. Costa, MD

World renowned physician and health expert



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Muscles by Mario

IF *EXTRA* HOST (AND NEW DAD) MARIO LOPEZ CAN MAKE TIME FOR FITNESS, SO CAN YOU

1 Trick your muscles

"I like to keep my muscles guessing," he says. "I run, I swim, I box at least three times a week, I do a little jujitsu, roll around." Lopez could be a lab rat at Arizona State University, where researchers found that mixing up reps, sets, and loads helps you speed gains by not allowing your muscles to adapt to a routine. For best results, try lifting 3 days a week. Alternate among heavy days (2 to 6 reps), moderate days (3 to 7 reps), and lighter days (5 to 9 reps).

2 Count on cardio

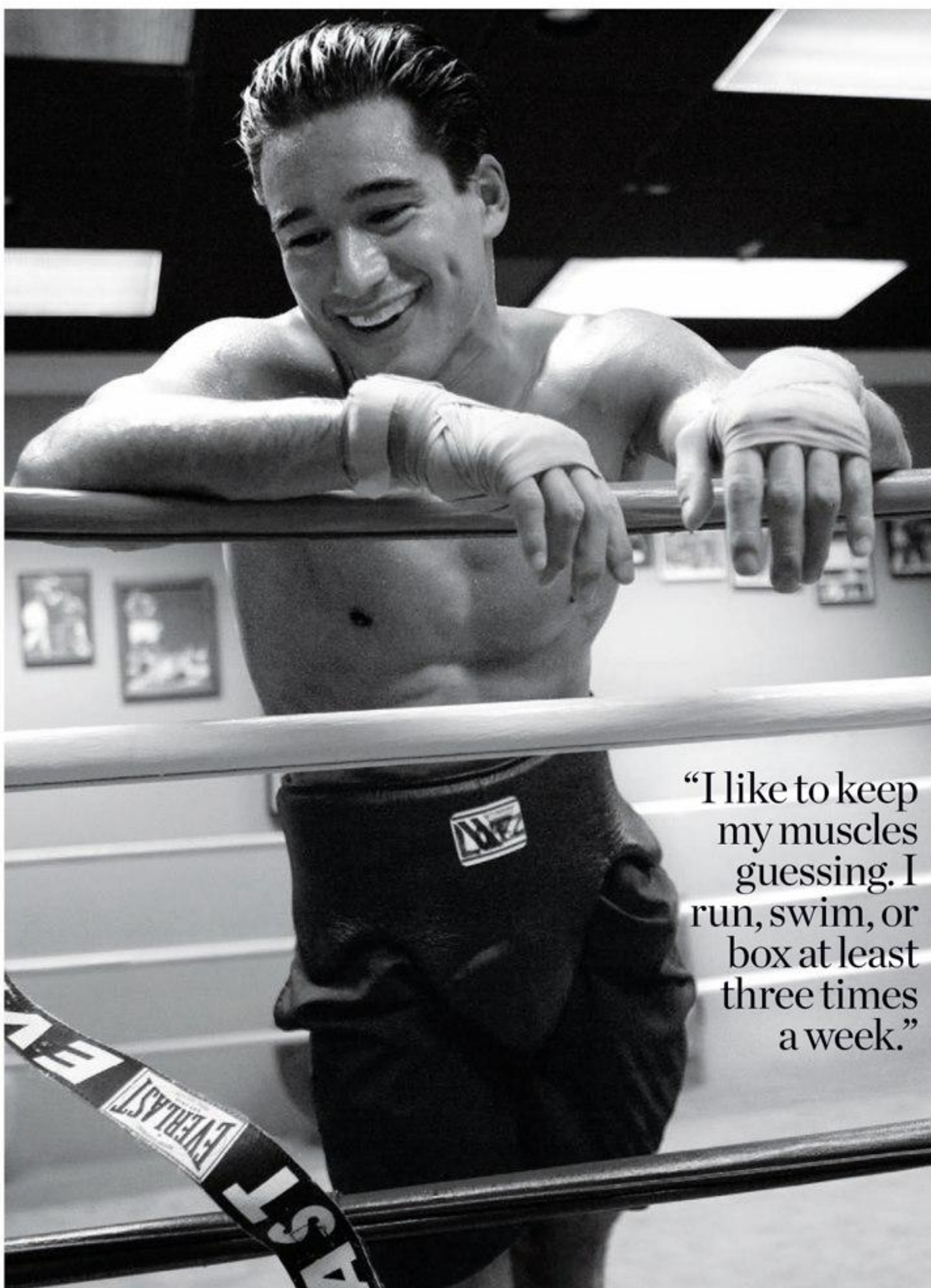
He competes in sports, but even if Lopez misses a practice, he never skips cardio. "A lot of times, whoever's in better shape is going to win," he says. For on-the-go cardio, especially if you're traveling, use an easy-to-pack jump rope. Jump 30 seconds, rest 30 seconds. Do this 5 times total—and switch jump patterns (both legs, one leg, alternating legs).

3 Time your workouts

Lopez loves fighting three-round jujitsu bouts called smokers. "Physically, emotionally, and mentally, it's very draining," he says. That's because working against a clock (instead of counting reps) makes him push harder. Mimic your own smoker: Set a 5-minute timer, pick an upper-body and a lower-body exercise, and do 4 reps of each, using a weight you can lift 8 times. Alternate until time's up, with little resting. Break 1 to 2 minutes. Repeat twice.

4 Use your body

No gym, no worries: "I live up in the hills in L.A., so I run a lot of them," he says. Snowed in? Do your cardio at home. Conduct 10 reps of explosive push-ups (press up so your hands leave the floor) followed by 10 reps of alternating lunges (on each leg). Without resting, do 9 reps of each. Then 8, 7, 6, and so on to 1. You'll do 110 reps and blast every muscle.



"I like to keep my muscles guessing. I run, swim, or box at least three times a week."

10-minute workout It's easy to turn any routine into an arm-swelling experience, says Craig Rasmussen, C.S.C.S., a fitness coach with Results Fitness. Add these two exercises to the end of any workout, and you'll stretch your shirtsleeves in only 4 weeks.

DO THIS

To achieve the best results from this two-move combo, select a weight you can lift 10 to 12 times for each exercise. Do 6 or 7 reps of one exercise, and then switch to the other. Repeat until your 10 minutes have expired, resting as little as possible. Repeat this combination once a week for up to 4 weeks.

1

Dumbbell hammer curl

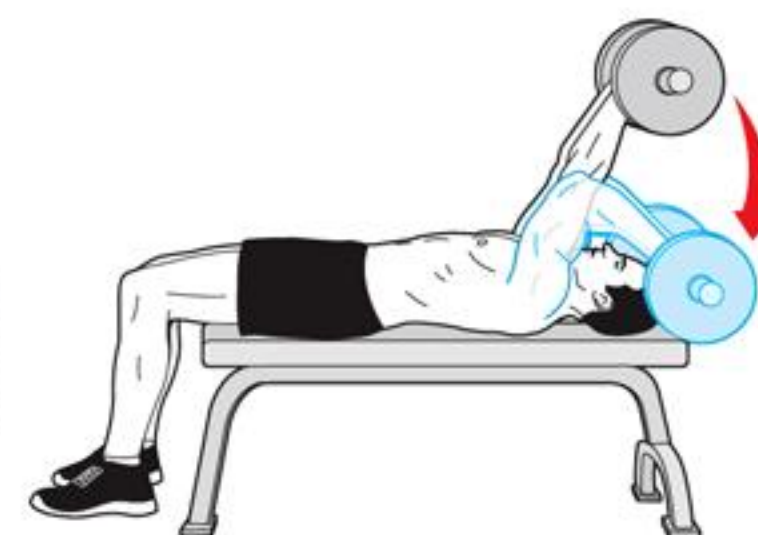
Hold a pair of dumbbells at arm's length next to your sides, with your palms facing each other. Without moving your upper arms, curl the dumbbells upward, bringing them as close to your shoulders as you can. Pause, and then slowly lower the weights back to the starting position.



2

EZ-bar lying triceps extension

Grab an EZ-curl bar using an overhand grip, your hands a little less than shoulder-width apart. Lie faceup on a bench and hold the bar above your forehead. Keeping your upper arms still, bend your elbows to lower the bar until your forearms are just past parallel to the floor. Pause, then lift back up.



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when it comes to endurance and conditioning, it's fair to say that lance armstrong has made an art of it, lance would also be the first to acknowledge the help he's had from experts like elite cycling coach chris carnichael and strength and conditioning trainer peter park in achieving such excellence. we sat down with lance not long ago to take a deeper dive into how the 7-time tour de france champion trains to prepare for one of the toughest sporting events on the planet.

lance armstrong's endurance & conditioning circuit

for lance armstrong, the road leading to a big event like the tour of california or the tour de france starts in the gym. from august to march, lance works with strength and conditioning trainer peter park. Here, peter incorporates a variety of circuits into lance's regimen, including this one, which emphasizes building stamina, strength and conditioning. add this circuit to your workouts at least twice a week, making sure to warm up and cool down properly before and after.



3. bulgarian split squat with weight

standing, place the top of your left foot on a chair or bench at knee height or below while holding a 25- to 45-pound plate or a 15- to 25-pound medicine ball above your head with straight arms, shoulders lowered and engaged. (beginners can hold the weight at their chest or side.) bend into the right leg, lowering until your left knee reaches the floor, or nearly so. raise back up. repeat for 15 to 20 reps on each leg.



2. back extension & hold

lying on your stomach, bring your elbows close to your sides, hands underneath the shoulders and palms off the ground (knees and toes stay on the ground). lift and lower the torso for 20 reps. then bend your knees to 45 degrees, squeeze knees together and point your toes down toward your shins and hold for 20 to 30 seconds. for a more advanced version (shown below), extend your arms and legs out and hold the extension for 20 to 30 seconds.



1. walk-out & hold

from a push-up position, walk your hands out in front of you and then walk them back; repeat for 6 to 8 reps. on the last repetition, walk your hands out and hold for 30 seconds.





4.

one-foot hamstrings curl on stability ball

lying on your back, place your heels and the bottom of your calves on a stability ball. lift your hips and squeeze your glutes to come into a bridge on the ball. lift your straight right leg up and roll the ball toward your glutes with your left foot, using your hamstrings. roll the ball back out, keeping the right leg lifted. repeat for 15 reps on each leg. (beginners can keep both heels on the ball as they curl in and out.)



go to facebook.com/MasterTheShift to find videos from lance and blogs from his team of experts, including strength and conditioning coach peter park. and enter for your chance to win a new 100% electric Nissan LEAF.





5.

medicine ball push press

in a standing position, hold a 10- to 20-pound medicine ball at chest level with both hands. squat down, come up and throw the ball up as high as you can. repeat for 20 reps.



6.

ball slam

in a standing position, hold a 10- to 15-pound medicine ball with straight arms overhead, then slam the ball as hard as possible to the ground. pick up ball and repeat for 20 reps.

make it harder

when you're ready to progress to increase the intensity of the endurance & conditioning circuit, here's how peter suggests upping the ante:

- ▶ increase the time. start with 15 minutes, doing as many circuits as possible with perfect form. after a few weeks, do 20 minutes and try to get more circuits done in that time.
- ▶ add an upper-body endurance circuit. do these four moves in a row, repeating each for as many reps as you can before moving to the next; the circuit should take 15 to 20 minutes.

▶▶ push-up

▶▶ pull-up

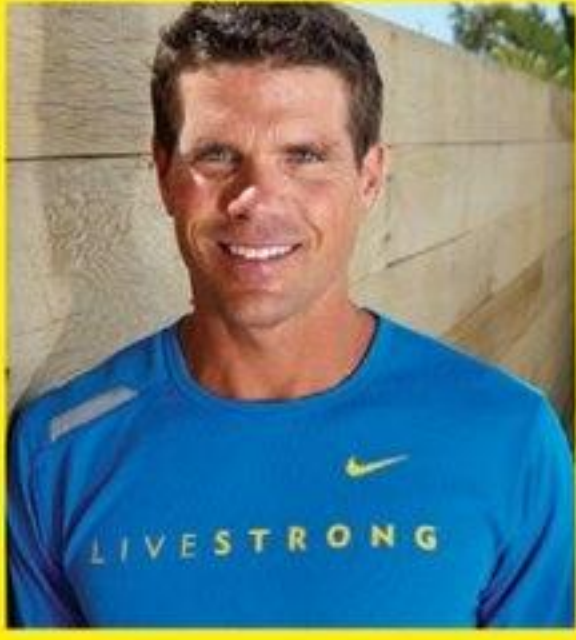
▶▶ dumbbell push press

hold two 20- to 40-pound dumbbells at shoulder height with palms facing in. squat down, pushing the hips back, and come up and press the weights overhead.

▶▶ bent-over row

hold two 20- to 40-pound dumbbells at shoulder height with palms facing in. lean over with your butt out, back straight and legs slightly bent. keep your shoulders down and stable as you row, pushing the weight back as you squeeze the shoulder blades together. repeat the press and row for 15 to 20 reps each.

- ▶ replace the endurance & conditioning circuit for one of your usual strength-training sessions to mix things up and keep your body challenged. make sure to get 24 to 48 hours of rest between strength sessions.



don't forget your core

round out this circuit by working your core, which includes your abdominals, lower back, hips, glutes and, more generally, your entire pelvic area. "it's the foundation from which all movement stems," explains peter park. "most people are internally rotated and forward flexed from sitting most of the day and the normal core routine of endless crunches just reinforces that bad pattern. to counter that, we need more stability work, such as planks and chops, along with more posture and extension work." peter recommends working your core 2 to 3 times per week for 10 to 15 minutes, with 24 to 48 hours of rest in between. here's a sample routine from peter that hits all parts of the core:

1. glute bridge

lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor about 6 to 12 inches apart. lift your hips, squeeze your glutes at the top, hold for 2 to 3 seconds, then lower your hips to return to the starting position. concentrate on activating your glutes to lift the hips. repeat for 12 to 15 reps.



2. front plank

come into a plank (push-up position) with your elbows bent to 90 degrees and forearms on the floor. engage your glutes, stomach and legs to hold the position for 30 seconds to 1 minute with little or no movement.



3. side plank

lie on your right side with hips, legs and feet stacked and your right arm bent to 90 degrees and forearm and hand on the floor. lift your hips, bringing your body into a straight line. tighten your glutes and engage your legs and core, holding the position for 30 seconds. lower down and switch sides.



4. back extension

using the glute-ham machine (most gyms have one), place your hands behind your head and do 12 to 15 reps of back extensions. for each lift and lower in the extension make sure to squeeze the glutes at the top of the move, keep your back straight and hinge from the hips.



5. ball crunch

lie on a stability ball so the middle of your back is on the top and middle of the ball, knees bent and feet flat on the floor. lift your hips, squeeze your glutes and do 12 to 15 crunches, keeping the ball still and engaging the abs as you lift and lower in with each crunch.



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how do you maintain peak fitness year-round?

fitness is a year-round commitment. for me, it's always been easier to maintain some level of fitness in the winter. the structure that i've always had with the tour [de france] means that there's only one month that's important and that's the month of july, and one race that is really the grand-daddy of them all. i've never needed several peaks throughout the year: i've just needed one. the way [cycling] plays out, it's a hard sport—some would argue the hardest sport in the world—and it's virtually impossible to race from the first pro tour race in january all the way through to the last in october. so you've got to find the periods that mean a lot to you and focus on those.

how does the training you do with peter park, your strength and conditioning coach, fit into your goals for the year?

peter and i have been friends for a long time but we've really been working closely together for the last few years. it was that relationship that kind of started this whole idea of a comeback [to cycling] a couple of years ago when i was in southern california, and focusing on the chicago marathon, he and i started training every day. our main thing is trying to strengthen the core; work on flexibility—flexibility is a big deal for me in trying to get my hips and my lower back as flexible as possible; and obviously the strength stuff that's associated with all those things. much of what peter and i do is not that traditional; if you think about strength, people think, i'm going to go to the gym and i'm going to get on a few weight machines, and i'm going to do leg curls, and i'm going to do squats—these very traditional things. ours is quite a bit different: a lot of it just has to do with a few pieces of equipment in the gym (which is my garage) and gravity and body weight, and your willingness to suffer. how many of those reps you can actually endure? we start this stuff in october or november and the first week you do certain exercises and you think, i'll never be able to get to a certain point, and it's amazing how quickly you get there. within a couple weeks you look back on it and think, that was easy.

when you are training hard what do you think about when it comes to fuel and hydration for you?

improper nutrition and hydration are really the quickest ways to hurt performance, whether it's training or racing. when the body starts to run out of fuel or become dehydrated, we know that immediately performance is cut. it matters even on a more casual training ride or session because you could say, if i had hydrated properly and eaten properly my training on that particular day would have been at a level that was 10 percent higher. the adaptation at that level is different. we really try to focus on that stuff for races, but for training it's important too. i'm a little bit fortunate because i always have a car with me, and food and clothing and bottles and all the things i need to stay topped off in training. but on hot days, especially, not enough hydration or food is the quickest way to kill a performance.

what does recovery mean for you?

for cycling, recovery is the most important thing we have. if you consider a three-week race [like the tour de france], it's absolutely essential every day; it's not as if you can recover every other day. you've got to recover for 22 straight days and of course we all have tough days, we all have long days, hot days, days where you're doing six, seven, eight hours on the bike, you're doing four or five or six major climbs; obviously you're not going to recover 100% from that. but it's the guy who can be the most consistent for three weeks that wins. there have been a lot of great riders, big talents, that have one bad day. if you have a bad day on the alps or the pyrenees or the time trial, it means minutes—and it's all over. so you have to focus on recovery. with that are the things we all know: you have to rest properly, you have to sleep properly, your diet has to be totally perfect, at least for what we do. you have to eliminate distraction, eliminate stress, make your day as efficient as possible. during the tour it means that from the minute you get off the bike, you have a plan: put food in the body right after the stage, go to the hotel, get a massage, see the chiropractor, get to dinner, lay in bed, go to bed. it's a very simple monk lifestyle but the simpler the better.



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Porchetta-Style Pork Loin with White Beans

THIS ITALIAN-INSPIRED RECIPE LENDS DEEP, RICH FLAVOR TO A LEAN CUT OF PORK

YOU'LL NEED

- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- Grated zest of 2 oranges
- 1 Tbsp fennel seeds
- 1½ Tbsp chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- Salt and fresh cracked pepper to taste
- 1 pork loin (about 2 pounds), preferably with a thin layer of fat still attached
- 2 cans cannellini beans (also called great northern or white beans), drained
- Juice of one lemon

HOW TO MAKE IT

1 Preheat the oven to 450°F. On a cutting board, combine the garlic, orange zest, fennel seeds, and 1 tablespoon of the rosemary. Chop the mix until it forms a paste. Scoop it up into a small bowl and add the oil.

2 Season the pork with salt and pepper and rub it all over with the paste. (If you like, you can let it marinate up to 4 hours in the fridge before cooking.) Then place the pork in a roasting pan and bake until a thermometer inserted into the middle reads 160°F, 25 to 30 minutes.

Take the meat out and let it rest 10 minutes.

3 In a saucepan, heat the beans, lemon juice, and remaining rosemary until warmed through. Season with salt and pepper. Slice the pork and serve with the beans. **Makes 6 servings**

PER SERVING 362 calories, 47 grams (g) protein, 22 g carbohydrates (6 g fiber), 9 g fat, 134 milligrams sodium

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Photograph by CHARLES MASTERS, food styling: Jamie Kimm/Apostrophe, prop styling: Thom Driver/Halley Resources

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For a twist on the dish, use lemon zest and sage instead of orange and rosemary.

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JOSHUA CARVER'S BELLY COST HIM, SO HE TIGHTENED HIS BELT

THE SETBACK I was born prematurely, so I joke that I've had issues with weight all my life. But it's true. I ate as much as I could in high school to add size for sports. I kept it up through college and after, and then straight into my job as a pharmaceutical salesman. That's when my gut really started growing. Man, it was embarrassing: There I was, a clearly unhealthy guy talking to health-care providers about drugs that lower cholesterol and treat diabetes. How could I be taken seriously?



WEIGHT BEFORE

240

WEIGHT AFTER

185

VITALS

Joshua Carver,
34, Puyallup, WA

OCCUPATION

Pharmaceutical
salesman

HEIGHT

6'2"

REACHED

HIS GOAL IN
4 months



THE WAKE-UP CALL

In September 2009, I blew out my knee and ankle. Shortly after the operation to repair them, I had to prepare for my son's baptism—and I needed a new suit. I stood in the fitting room, barely squeezing into a pair of size 38 pants, and thought about how much my weight was costing me. Literally. I couldn't keep spending money on hospital bills and new wardrobes. I *needed* to change.

THE FOOD

When you work long hours, as I do, you assume that fast food is your only dinner option. But I realized I could cook a meal at home in the same amount of time it took me to drive to a Jack in the Box. I didn't need to be a great cook—healthy meals are simple to make. Breakfast is a few eggs with turkey, rolled into a wrap. Lunch is a grilled chicken sandwich or salad. Dinner is a lean protein, like shrimp or salmon, with a side of steamed broccoli or green beans. All good stuff.

THE FITNESS

I started hitting the gym after work—both to de-stress and, at first, to lift when fewer people were watching. I started small,

using **cable-based exercises like crossovers and lat pulldowns (go to MensHealth.com/cable to learn these moves)**, and gradually adding weight. I'd walk at least a mile every weekday on my lunch break. On weekends, I'd run 3 or 4 miles. I skipped the cart during golf, and I coached my 9-year-old's baseball team. I made fitness fun.

THE REWARD

After I lost the weight, I felt better representing my company. My sales improved. I called in sick less. My bosses even asked me to talk with the rest of my team about living a healthy lifestyle. Now I think of myself as a whole new person.

Why use cables?

Because they're perfect for novices and pros.

1 They work multiple joints during exercise, allowing for enhanced total-body fitness.

2 They require good posture. You build your back as you improve.

3 No need for a spotter.

Source: Mark Peterson, Ph.D., C.S.C.S., of the University of Michigan

“Now I think of myself as a whole new person.”

JOSE MANDOLANA (Carver after): THOMAS MACDONALD (food); food styling: Annie Edwards

EAT THIS NOT THAT!

Panera Bread's "You Pick Two" menu

Half Asiago Roast Beef Sandwich
+ Broccoli Cheddar Soup (cup)

540 calories
32 grams (g) protein
48 g carbohydrates
(6 g fiber)
24 g fat

1,660 milligrams (mg) sodium

Half Chipotle Chicken Sandwich
+ New England Clam Chowder (cup)

800 calories
31 g protein
55 g carbohydrates
(4 g fiber)
50 g fat

1,870 mg sodium

Watch your soup picks—the broccoli Cheddar soup is made with milk, while the clam chowder is made with cream (and packs 117 more calories of fat).





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VEGETABLES or VEGETABLE JUICE

tie

Didn't expect this one, did you? Unlike sugar-packed fruit juice, low-sodium vegetable juice, like V8, has relatively few calories and is still very nutritious. It's a smart choice if you're not eating enough vegetables. It's also a healthy, antioxidant-packed alternative to a sugar-packed drink, like a typical store-bought smoothie.

PASTURE-RAISED MEAT over FACTORY FARM-RAISED MEAT

You don't need to be a tree hugger to prefer sustainably produced chicken and beef. Pastured chickens roam around and consume vitamin-rich bugs and grasses, so their meat has 21 percent less fat and 28 percent fewer calories than conventional chicken. Grass-fed beef, likewise, is 11 percent lower in calories than conventional beef. Plus it has 36 percent less fat and a healthier balance of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids.

FRESH FRUIT over DRIED FRUIT

Dried fruit is nutritious, but by weight it has more than twice the calories of fresh. And because its water content is lower, you have to eat more to feel satisfied. In fact, fresh fruit beats any other fruit product, including juice. A medium orange, for example, has just 62 calories and 12 grams of sugar, along with 3 grams of belly-filling fiber. By comparison, 8 ounces of Tropicana Pure Premium OJ has 110 calories, 22 grams of sugar, and 0 g fiber.

BACON over TURKEY BACON

Turkey is a relatively lean meat, but turkey bacon isn't 100 percent bird. It can contain up to twice as many different additives as regular bacon has. Both turkey bacon and real bacon give you a mouthful of sodium, and the difference in calories is negligible—but at least real bacon makes your kitchen smell good. Plus, it's not *that* indulgent—one slice has 25 calories.

SOFT CHEESE over HARD CHEESE

As cheese ages, it loses moisture and becomes more dense in calories and fat. To cut calories without cutting out cheese, just eat smaller amounts of aged cheese, or go with a soft variety, such as mozzarella.

REGULAR PEANUT BUTTER over REDUCED-FAT PEANUT BUTTER

Reduced-fat peanut butter might seem like an easy way to save a few calories, but the manufacturer probably took out much of the fat in the peanuts and used soy protein and corn-syrup solids. That means you're trading healthy fat for double the carbs, all to save a measly 19 calories.

Nutrients found in vegetables may boost your immune system.

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LUCAS ZAREBINSKI, (produce); food styling: Roscoe Betsill; Mitch Mandel (V8)



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5 Ways to Cheat Death

SCIENCE HAS PLENTY TO SAY ABOUT BEATING THE REAPER. HARNESS THIS INSIDER KNOWLEDGE AND THEN PASS IT ON TO YOUR GREAT-GRANDKIDS

Live higher up

The science A 2009 study of people in Switzerland found that those living at high altitudes had a 22 percent lower risk of dying of coronary heart disease.

Why it helps Nobody's quite sure. Scientists say the extra UVA exposure, which means more vitamin D, could be one benefit. About 77 percent of Americans have a D defi-

ciency, a condition that may lead to bone disorders and heart disease.

Your move Most people can benefit from taking in 1,000 IU of vitamin D daily, so eat more D-rich foods, such as seafood. (Salmon, tuna, and mackerel are good bets.) Or take a vitamin D₃ supplement, says study author Adit Ginde, M.D., M.P.H., an assistant professor of emergency medicine at the University of Colorado at Denver.

Make relationships last

The science Adults with strong friendships and/or community involvement lived an average of 3.7 years longer than the normal U.S. life expectancy, according to a 2010 review by researchers at Brigham Young University.

Why it helps "Social support is linked to better immune functioning," says study author Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Ph.D., an associate professor of psychology at Brigham Young. And with meaningful bonds in your life, you're likely to take fewer risks that endanger those worthwhile relationships, she adds.

Your move It's often easier to schedule an event than to plan an open-ended get-together. Sign up at a site like groupon.com, which feeds you constant ideas (and discounts). If a good event pops up, rally your troops.

Brush your teeth

The science People who brushed less than twice a day had a 70 percent higher risk of death or hospitalization from heart disease than those who brushed three times or more, according to a 2010 U.K. study.

Why it helps Oral bacteria can enter your bloodstream, possibly triggering plaque buildup in your arteries.

Your move Brushing and flossing remove bacteria, but many people floss incorrectly, says Judy Kreismann,

R.D.H., M.A., a clinical associate professor of dental hygiene at New York University. Floss right: Wrap the floss so it forms a C around the front of one tooth and a C around the back of the adjacent one. Move the floss up and down.

Breathe clean air

The science People who live in cities with relatively good air quality live a few months to a year longer than average, according to a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Why it helps Dirty air carries micro-pollutants that can trigger inflamma-

A trusty brush, some fresh air, and a few friends may help you live a longer life.

tory reactions, says study author Arden Pope, Ph.D. "Even mild inflammatory responses can contribute to cardiovascular disease."

Your move No matter where you live, you can trade sidewalk jogs for trail runs. Streets equal more air pollution from passing vehicles, and deep breathing increases your inhalation of the stuff, says Pope.

Accept your age

The science In a 2009 study from Germany, researchers asked people how they felt about their age. Those who were happy with their age lived an average of 2 years longer than people who were bothered by it.

Why it helps Acceptance of aging—rather than denial of it—is related to healthy behaviors, says study author Dana Kotter-Grühn, Ph.D., a psychologist at North Carolina State University.

Your move As people age, they tend to compare themselves with their younger selves, which leads to some disappointment, says Kotter-Grühn. Instead, compare yourself with your contemporaries; plenty will be worse off (and others will be inspirations).



Travis Stork, M.D., is the author of *The Lean Belly Prescription*.

THE WORLD OF HURT by Travis Stork, M.D.

Q I work outside in the cold, and my toes frequently go numb. How long before I'm doing damage?

Chris, Worcester, MA

When I lived in the mountains of Colorado, it was rare when my feet weren't at least a little numb after a prolonged winter outing. The real concern: reaching a point when you can't feel your toes at all. That's when your cells

start to freeze and it's time to head indoors and seek heat. As for prevention, you should avoid boots that are too snug (which can diminish circulation) and take plenty of breaks to move out of the cold and rewarm your feet.

A NASTY BRUISE ON MY THIGH HASN'T GONE AWAY AFTER 2 WEEKS. SHOULD I WORRY?

Bob, Park City, UT

I wouldn't worry much that the bruise is still there, as long as it's improving and you don't have any other symptoms with it. Normal bruises can take a couple of weeks to disappear. Extensive or unexplained bruising can signal a blood clotting issue or other problem, so if that's the case, it's time to see a doctor.

Dear Subaru,



"On an adventure near Lone Pine, CA, our son Jeremy started smacking things with a hiking pole. Sadly for him, it had to be taken away, thus the stomping tantrum. Just another typical family moment, in front of a not-so-typical backdrop." – Chris R., Newbury Park, CA.

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RESOLUTION REVOLUTION.

Let's face it—most New Year's resolutions never stand a chance. They're too big, too vague, or too altogether unattainable. To help you get on track for long-term success, we've put together a list of big-picture goals with measurable results that everyone can achieve—think “run a 10k race by February” instead of “run more.” Get the picture? Good. This is your Resolution Revolution.

 *Michelob*
ULTRA

TOP 5 LIFESTYLE RESOLUTIONS FOR 2011

- Run a race, bike a century, improve your golf game: Set aside 20 minutes each day to train for a goal.
- Reduce stress: No emails after 10PM and get at least seven hours of sleep per night.
- Stick to a budget: Limit unnecessary expenditures. Drop your change in a coin jar each night and treat yourself when it fills up. Change feels good, doesn't it.
- Get organized: Cross one item off your to-do list daily.
- Enjoy more quality time with family & friends: Devote one-hour of your time to those that are most important in your life.

RESOLUTION REVOLUTION BE STRONG. BE ULTRA. SWEEPSTAKES

For more tips on how to stay focused and fulfill your goals year-round, visit [Facebook.com/MichelobUltra](https://www.facebook.com/MichelobUltra). Plus, enter the Resolution Revolution: Be Strong, Be Ultra Sweepstakes for a chance to win:

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Not Your Boss's Chinos

THE COTTON CASUALS MAY BE AN OFFICE STAPLE, BUT NEW VERSIONS ARE REDEFINING HOW (AND WHERE) THEY'RE WORN

"Most guys wear chinos too big, or with pleats, or with the wrong shirts," says Steve Evans, senior vice president of global merchandising at Dockers. But slimmer fits, lower rises, and scuffed-up finishes make chinos worth another look.





KEEP IT CAREFREE

A little wear and tear on the fabric's surface makes this pair more casual than traditional styles. You can rock them from Saturday morning to Saturday night.

REDEFINE RELAXED

The right chinos can be as versatile as jeans—but better. The cotton is more pliant than denim, so these pants are softer on your skin and easier to break in.

STEP OUT

Jeans will always seem casual, even when you dress them up. But chinos, worn with the right jacket, can carry you into any high-end club.

1 You may think of chinos as crisp and lightweight, but check the racks: You'll find pairs of thick cotton twill pants that can stand up to winter chill.

2 If your chinos are of a neutral color, be brazen with your shirt. Large, colorful checks are playful—and more relaxed than stripes or small checks.

3 Instead of relying on your shirt or sweater for bold color, browse the chinos spectrum, from reds and rich browns to forest green and royal blue.

4 Like chinos, the traditional boat shoe has been recently reinvented. Styles like this acid-blue high-top add a dash of punk to a preppy mainstay.

5 "You don't have to go automatically preppy with chinos," says Evans. A leather jacket adds a bit of attitude without clashing styles.

6 Neutral chinos like these are a blank slate, so you have the freedom to add creativity. A patterned tie does the job without being overwhelming.

The shoes to match

Sneakers and desert boots can work well with chinos, but versatile loafers are a safe bet for almost any occasion.

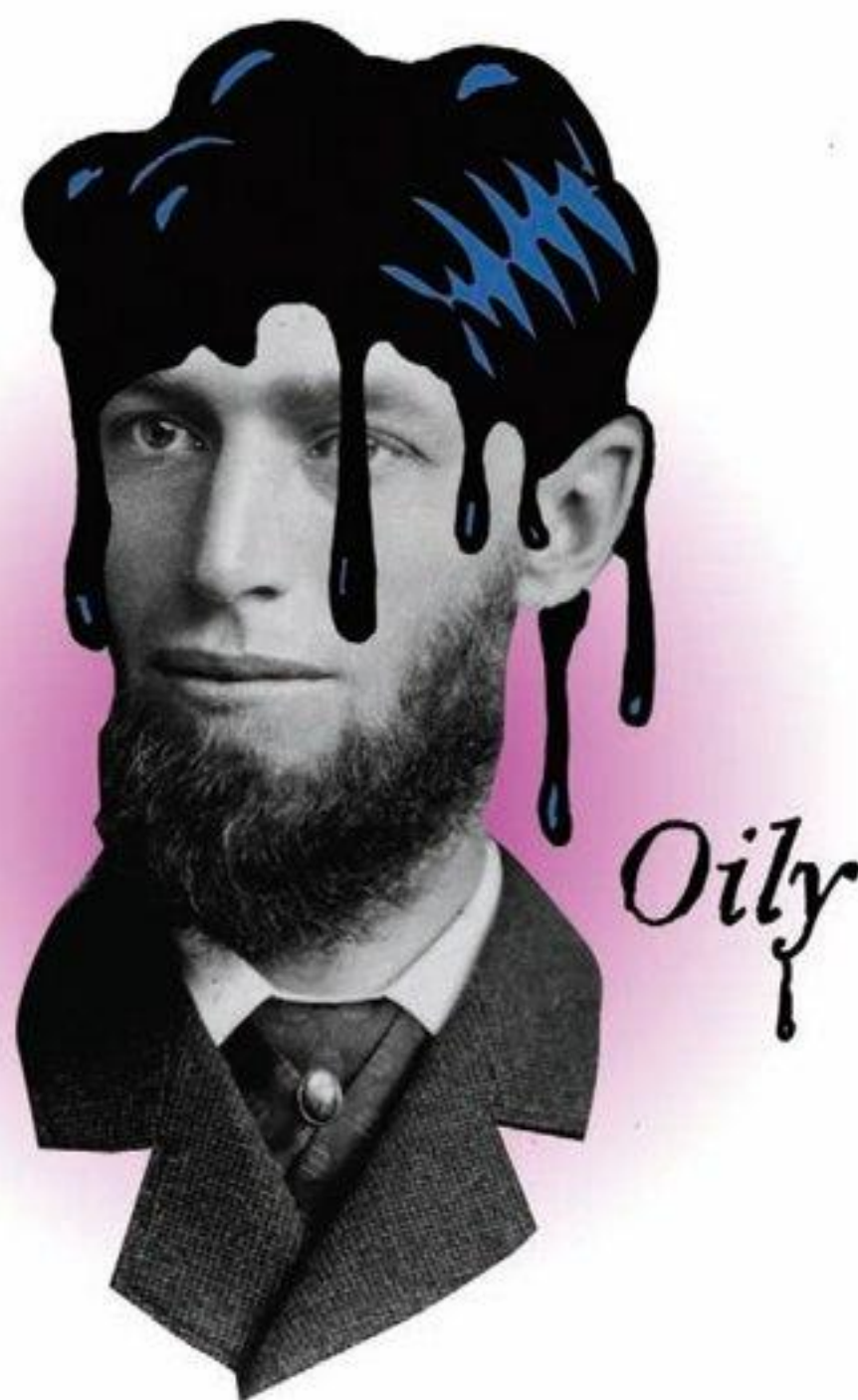
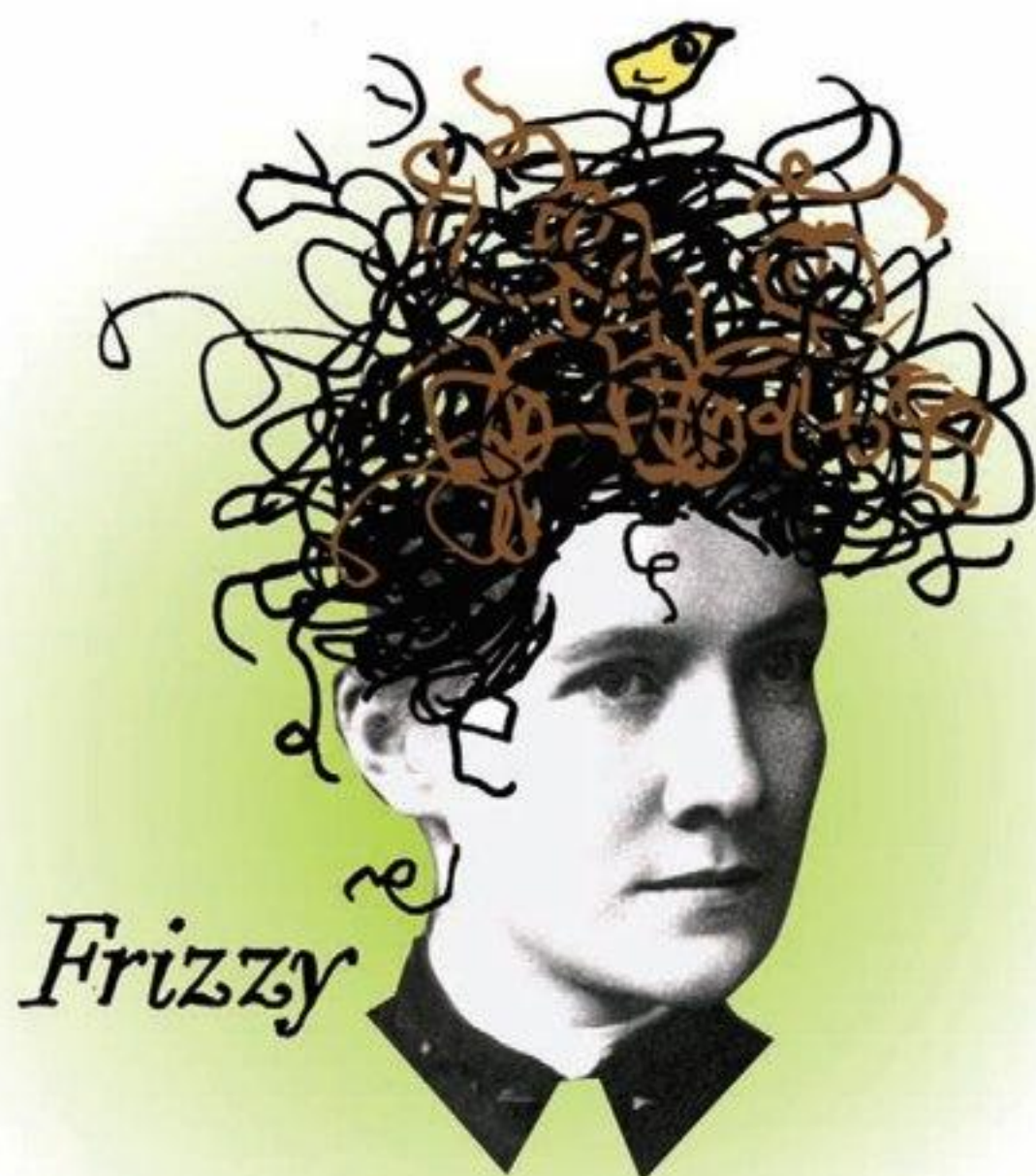


Sperry Top-Sider (\$85), sperrytopsider.com

Cole Haan Air Aiden (\$190), (888) 282-6060

Fratelli Rossetti (\$700), (212) 888-5107

Opening page: Dockers khakis (\$65–\$175), dockers.com. Above left: AG Adriano Goldschmied khakis (\$140), (310) 275-2621; Billy Reid shirt (\$215), (212) 598-9355; Shipley & Halmos jacket (\$415), (212) 826-8900; Lacoste sneakers (\$95), Nordstrom.com; Victorinox Swiss Army watch (\$450), (800) 442-2706. Middle: Dockers chinos (\$65), (800) 290-6064; Gap jacket (\$80), gap.com; Shipley & Halmos sweater (\$220), (212) 826-8900; Sebago shoes (\$140), (866) 699-7376; Victorinox Swiss Army watch; Broner Hat & Glove Company hat (\$50), (800) 543-4482. Right: Apolis chinos (\$160) and belt (\$140), apolisglobal.com; DKNY Jeans jacket (\$350), (800) 777-4524; Boss Black dress shirt (\$145), (800) 484-6267; Gentry tie (\$85), gentryman.com; Billy Reid boots (\$475), (212) 598-9355



Perfect Hair Solutions

IS YOUR HAIR UNRULY? "DON'T OBSESS ABOUT CHANGING OR STRUGGLING AGAINST WHAT YOU HAVE," SAYS STYLIST ANTONIO PRIETO, OWNER OF ANTONIO PRIETO SALON IN MANHATTAN. INSTEAD, LEARN TO WORK WITH IT

Fine or thinning hair

Known enemies Thick, moisturizing conditioners and styling products. A heavy coating of moisture weighs your strands down and makes them clump unflatteringly, exposing your scalp.

Secret weapon: Have your hair cut every 3 to 4 weeks. "Don't try to compensate with extra length—it only makes you look like you're trying to hide something," says Prieto. If balding is your challenge, have the thinning areas cut slightly shorter than the fuller parts so they blend seamlessly with the rest of your hair.

Oily hair

Known enemies Over-exposure to blow-dryer heat, and vigorous brushing or combing. "That triggers

more oil production on the scalp," says Craig Whitely, owner of the Grooming Concierge in Los Angeles.

Secret weapon: Use fewer brushstrokes, to reduce the amount of oil you distribute from your scalp. If you want to be creative, squeeze a lemon into 1 cup of water and use it to rinse your hair after shampooing, Whitely says. The acid strips away excess oil buildup. (The fresh scent is a bonus.)

Dry hair

Known enemy Frequent shampooing in hot water.

Secret weapon: Wash your hair in lukewarm water twice a week—max. That way you won't scald already dry ends or scrub away your hair's natural oils with detergents. Then style it using a natural boar-bristle brush. The bristles spread the oil from your scalp to parched

strands down the length of the hair shaft. "This creates more evenly moisturized hair and a healthier scalp," says Whitely.

Curly or frizzy hair

Known enemies Frequent washing, which can turn your natural curls to frizz, and vigorous towel drying, which makes the frizziness even worse.

Secret weapon: Don't dry your hair aggressively; just blot it, says Erica Fleischman, owner of Erica Fleischman A Men's Salon, in Manhattan. "Blotting reactivates the curls without shocking them," she says. The way you dry your hair sets the stage for how it behaves the rest of the day.

Dandruff

Known enemies Rushed rinsing. Daily shampooing and conditioning is important for removing flakes and keeping your scalp clean and moisturized, but be sure to rinse your hair thoroughly. It's vital to clearing residue from your hair, Whitely says.

Secret weapon: Sunshine. Ultraviolet light can be effective in resolving many flaky-skin conditions. Try a noontime run outdoors to help clear dandruff.

Dull hair

Known enemies Styling products applied to wet hair. Since many pomades and volumizers are water-based, adding a dab to wet hair just dilutes the effect. "The product will work best with a dry base," says Fleischman.

Secret weapon: Beer. Just take one into the shower and massage it into your hair a few times a week after shampooing. Then rinse. The hops may help coat your hair and add volume, Fleischman says.

Whatever your hair type, there are ways to make it look great.

Your hair issues, fixed

Whatever your situation, there's a shampoo for it

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THIN



Lab Series Root Power Treatment Shampoo



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MEN'S HEALTH MAGAZINE

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Fall with Grace

When your heel hits slippery ground, you may glide forward and fall. But if you do it the right way, you'll spare yourself the worst of the damage, says Thurmon Lockhart, Ph.D., director of the locomotion research laboratory at Virginia Tech. He helped design a slip-training program for UPS delivery drivers, and his tips can work for you too.

ARMS

As you begin to fall, fling your arms forward and up so your center of gravity moves forward; this may stabilize you. If you're still falling, quickly lower your arms to your sides. (Don't extend them backward, because you'll land on—and possibly break—your wrists.) Now your arms will hit the ground before your hips do, saving you from a more damaging injury.

HEAD

Tuck your head as close to your chest as possible. You'll shift your center of gravity forward, which can help you regain balance (or protect your head if you hit the ground).

EYES

Point your gaze straight ahead. This provides you with the best view of what's around you and which nearby objects to avoid.

TEETH

Grit your teeth so you don't bite your tongue upon impact.

THE THING YOU'RE CARRYING

Whatever it is, fling it aside (unless it's a baby). Because your muscles are contracting at an unusually high rate, the weight of anything you're holding can strain them.

LEG

Which leg is slipping? The opposite leg will automatically stomp in an attempt to help you regain balance. The opposite side's elbow should be bent so you can land on your arm and dissipate some of the force away from your hip.

MUSCLES

Your muscles will naturally tense. Let 'em: Tense muscles protect ligaments and bones.

BUTT + CORE

Land flat on your rear, and then, in a single, smooth motion, roll onto your hip (the one opposite your slipping leg) to help diffuse the force of the fall.

WALK SLOWLY

If you're on slippery ground, take slow, short steps, and extend your arms out to your sides as if you were on a tightrope. Doing this helps you balance and positions your arms closer to where they'll need to be to save you if things go south.

IF YOU FALL FORWARD

Fall into a pushup position. You'll avoid a nasty head (or face!) injury, and your bent elbows will reduce impact on your wrists.



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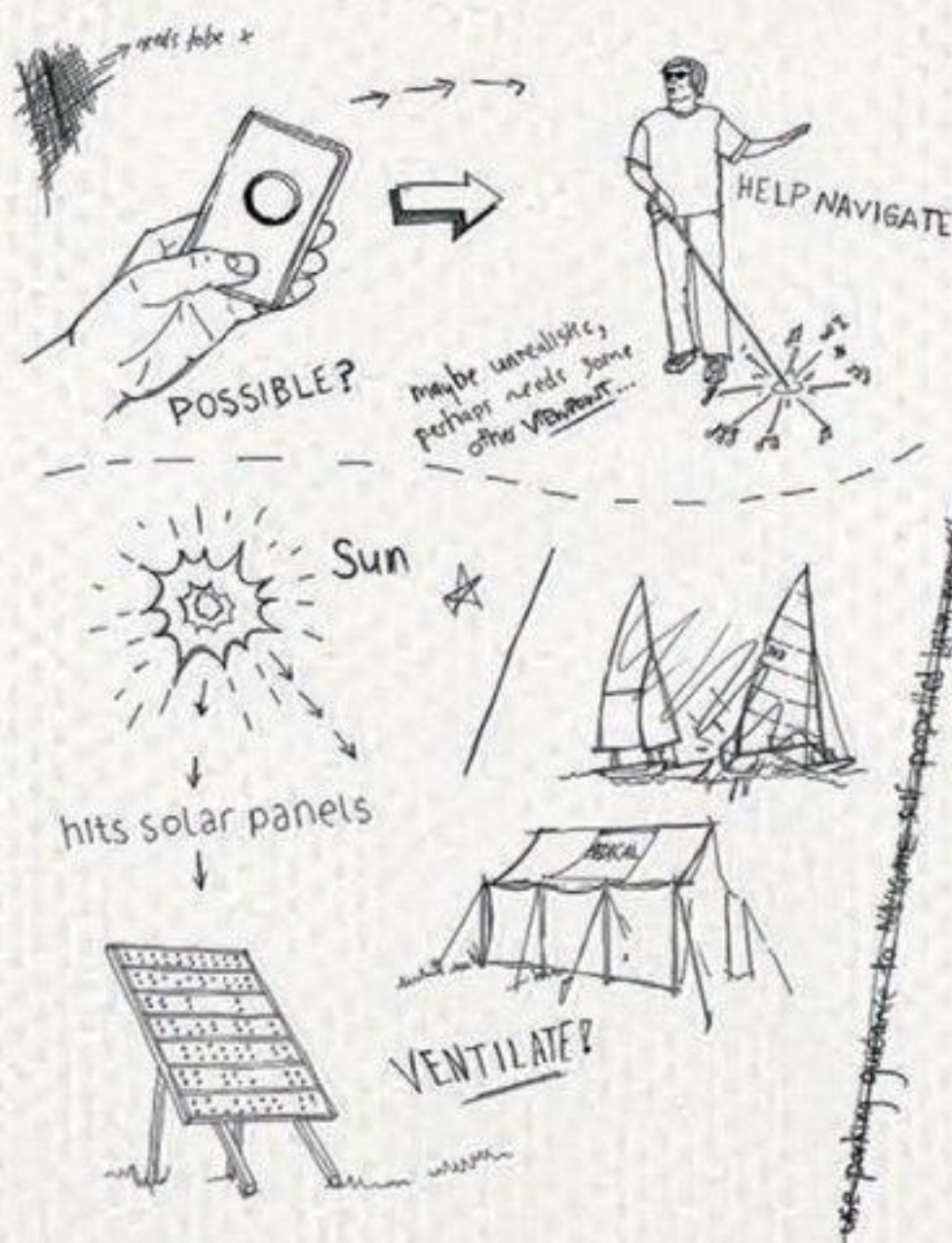
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Your 2011 Budget, Balanced

PRIME THIS YEAR FOR SUCCESS BY STARTING ON THE RIGHT FINANCIAL FOOTING

Budgeting sucks. But a budget is your single most effective weapon for fighting debt and planning your future. "You're the CFO of your own enterprise, and I know of no successful CFO who operates without a budget," says Eleanor Blayney, C.F.P., a consumer advocate for the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards. Follow this plan, assembled by the budget gurus at J.J. Burns & Company, to mobilize your money, cut wasteful spending, and end this year in the black.

STEP 1

Track your spending

Writing down every purchase can grow tiresome. Simplify the process by paying all your bills online through your checking account and making the rest of your purchases with a debit or credit card. Do this for 3 months.

STEP 2

Analyze your expenses

At the end of 3 months, take a look at where your money went. You can do it the old-fashioned way, with a notepad and your debit- and credit-card statements. Or you can sync your cards with Quicken or Mint.com. "Not all budgets are the same," says J.J. Burns, eponymous president of the wealth-management firm. "They vary according to lifestyle." So find your economic status below, and compare your spending.

STEP 3

Build your budget

Now that you know how much you're spending—and *should* be spending—you can build your budget accordingly. The easiest approach is to create an Excel spreadsheet with columns for budgeted and actual expenses in each category you want to track. A lot of people go crazy with this, trying to track every last item (lunch, beer, concerts). That's tedious. Our advice: Use the five categories below, and within these cat-

Not all budgets are created equal. They vary according to lifestyle. Plan smart.

egories list all the expenses you pay online from your checking account (so your rent or mortgage payment falls under housing, cable television bill under pleasure/personal, and so on).

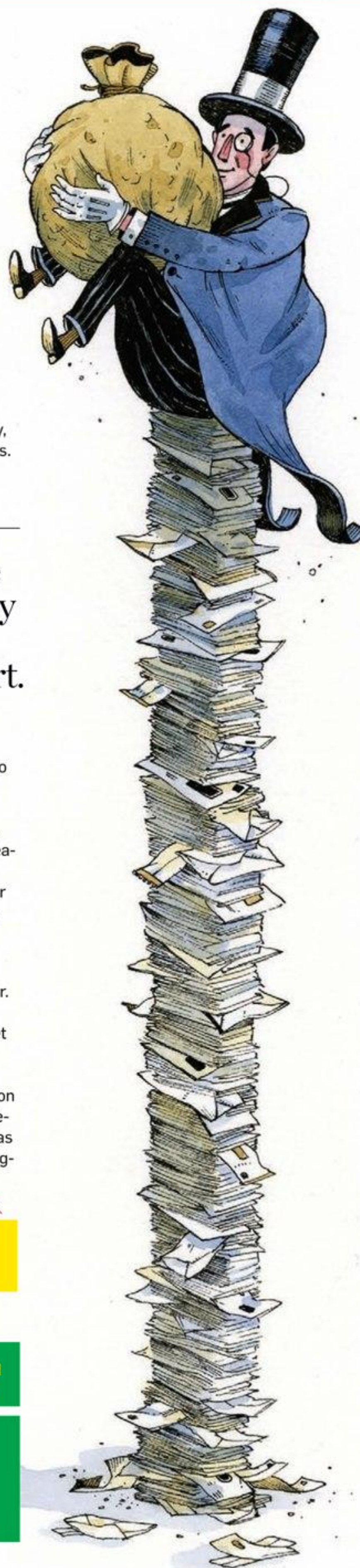
Also, under living expenses and pleasure/personal, add a line for cash. Or use only your debit and credit cards for living expenses and track accordingly.

STEP 4

Run your business

Congratulations! The hard part is over. Now all you have to do is enter your expenses on your budget spreadsheet each month, and you'll see if you're running a tight (or sinking) ship. The course corrections you make to stay on track are key, says Burns. "If your lifestyle changes, your budget needs to as well," he says. "If your plan stays stagnant, so will your financial growth."

For sample budgets to help you start your financial planning, go to MensHealth.com/2011budget.



The science of the rich

Three study-based ways to not budge from your budget

1

Stay humble

People who lack financial confidence often make the best financial decisions. In a 2008 study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, people who were told that budgeting was difficult estimated their expenses more accurately than those who were told it was easy. Reassess your budget every 3 to 6 months to see where you can cut needless purchases, and focus more on smart financial planning, says Eleanor Blayney, C.F.P., a consumer advocate for the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards.

2

Stay happy

You're most likely to splurge on luxury goods when you're low on self-esteem, a 2010 Cornell University study found. People may buy flashy things to help soothe their bruised egos, the researchers believe.

3

Stay focused

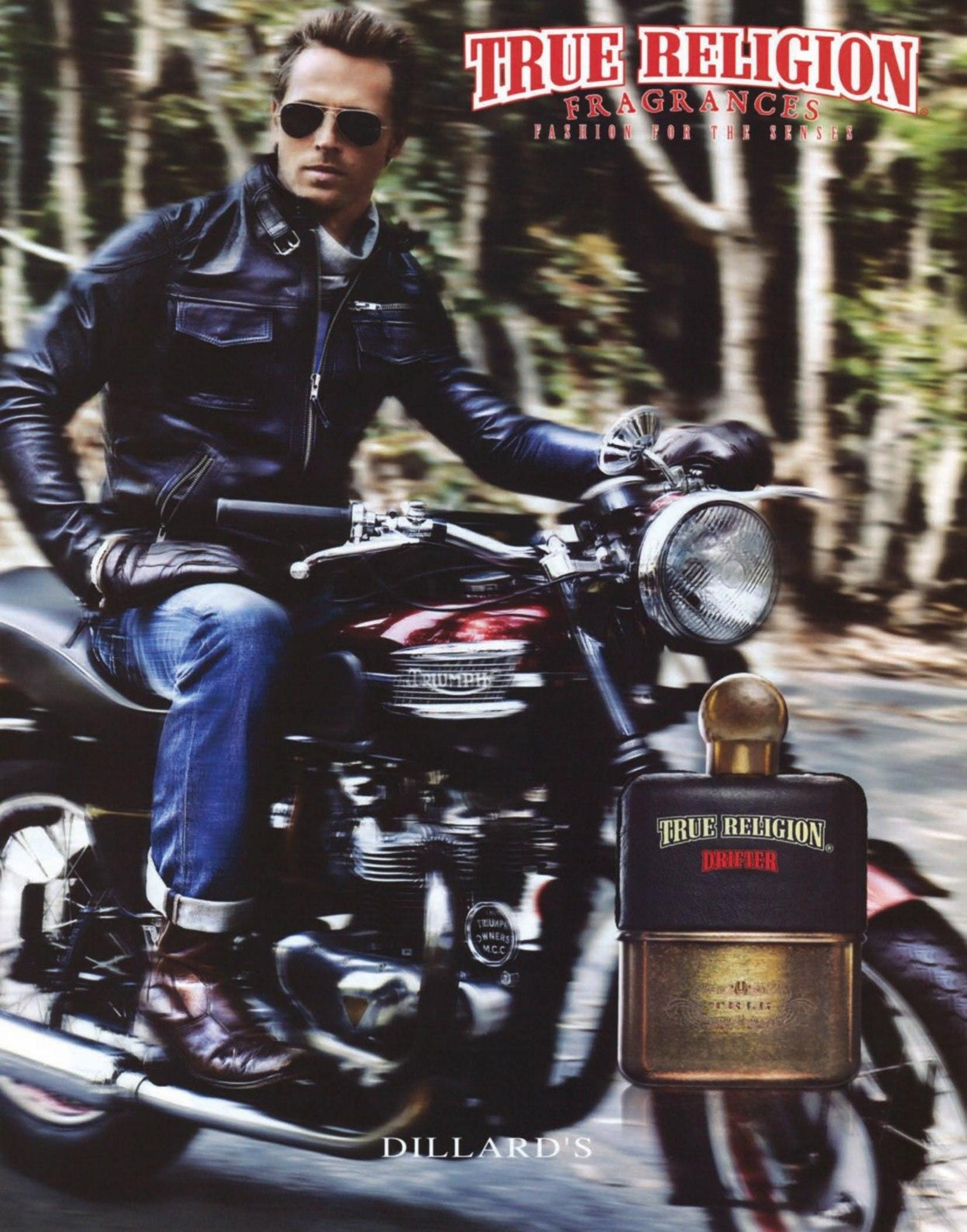
Long-term money planners have higher FICO scores and enjoy a lower cost of credit as a result, according to a 2009 study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*. The gain: Better-than-average long-term planning can cut nearly \$20,000 on a 30-year mortgage on a \$200,000 home, according to the study.

Illustration by JOHN HENDRIX

Recommended budget allocations	Renting	Single with home	Married with home	Household with kids
Housing	35%	45%	37%	37%
Living expenses	40%	25%	25%	30%
Emergency/insurance	2%	6%	8%	10%
Pleasure/personal	15%	14%	20%	15%
Savings	8%	10%	10%	8%

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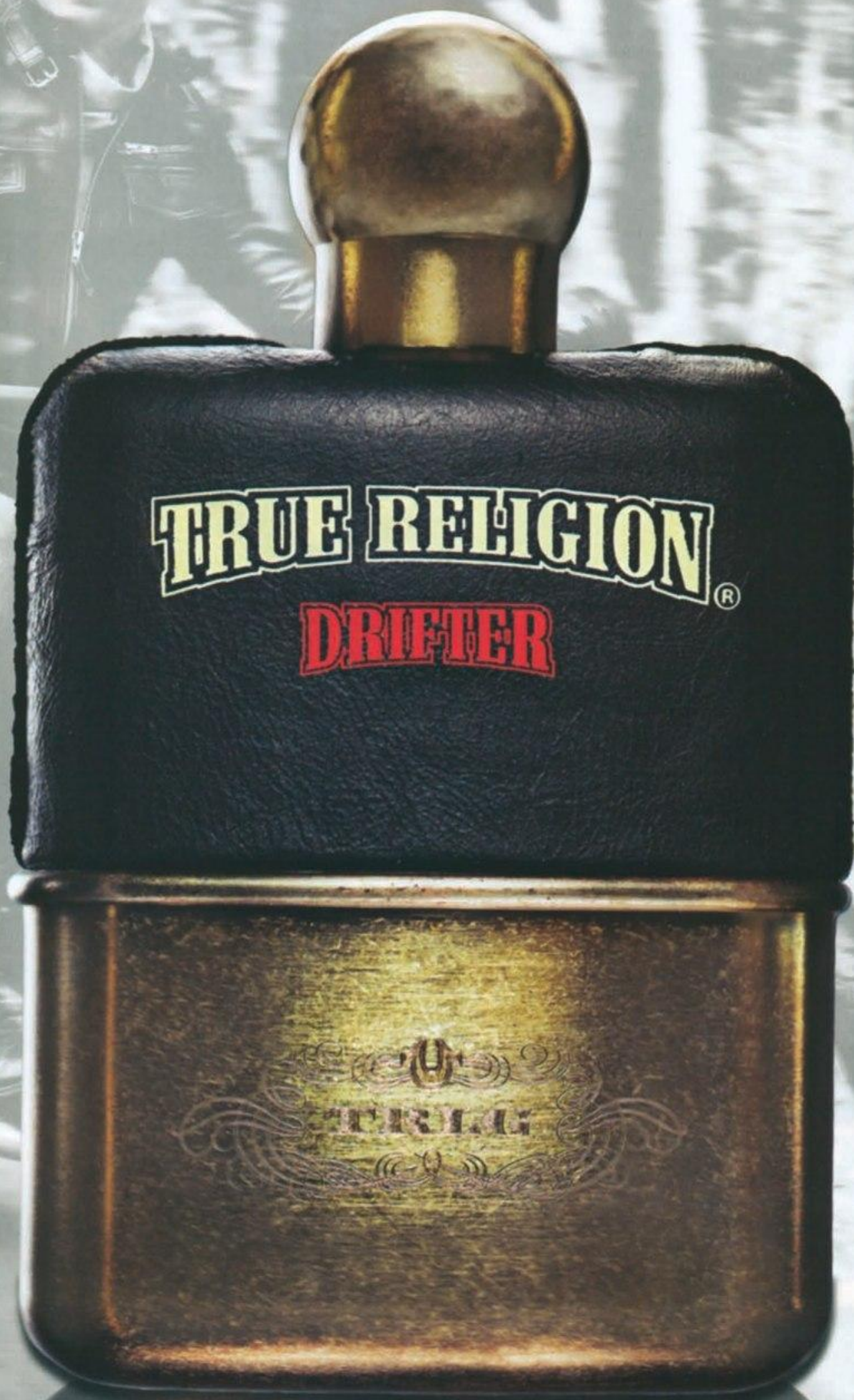


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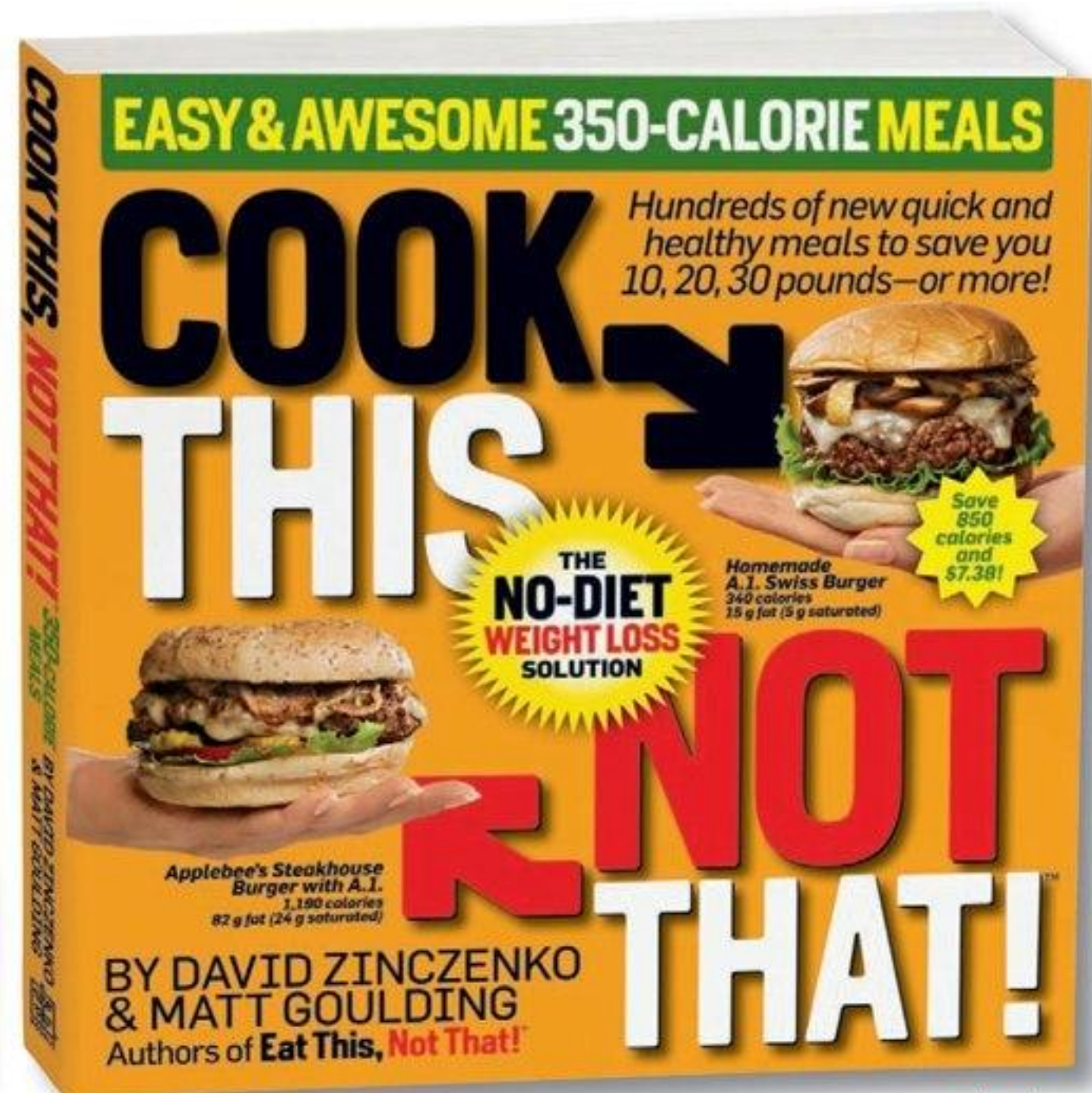
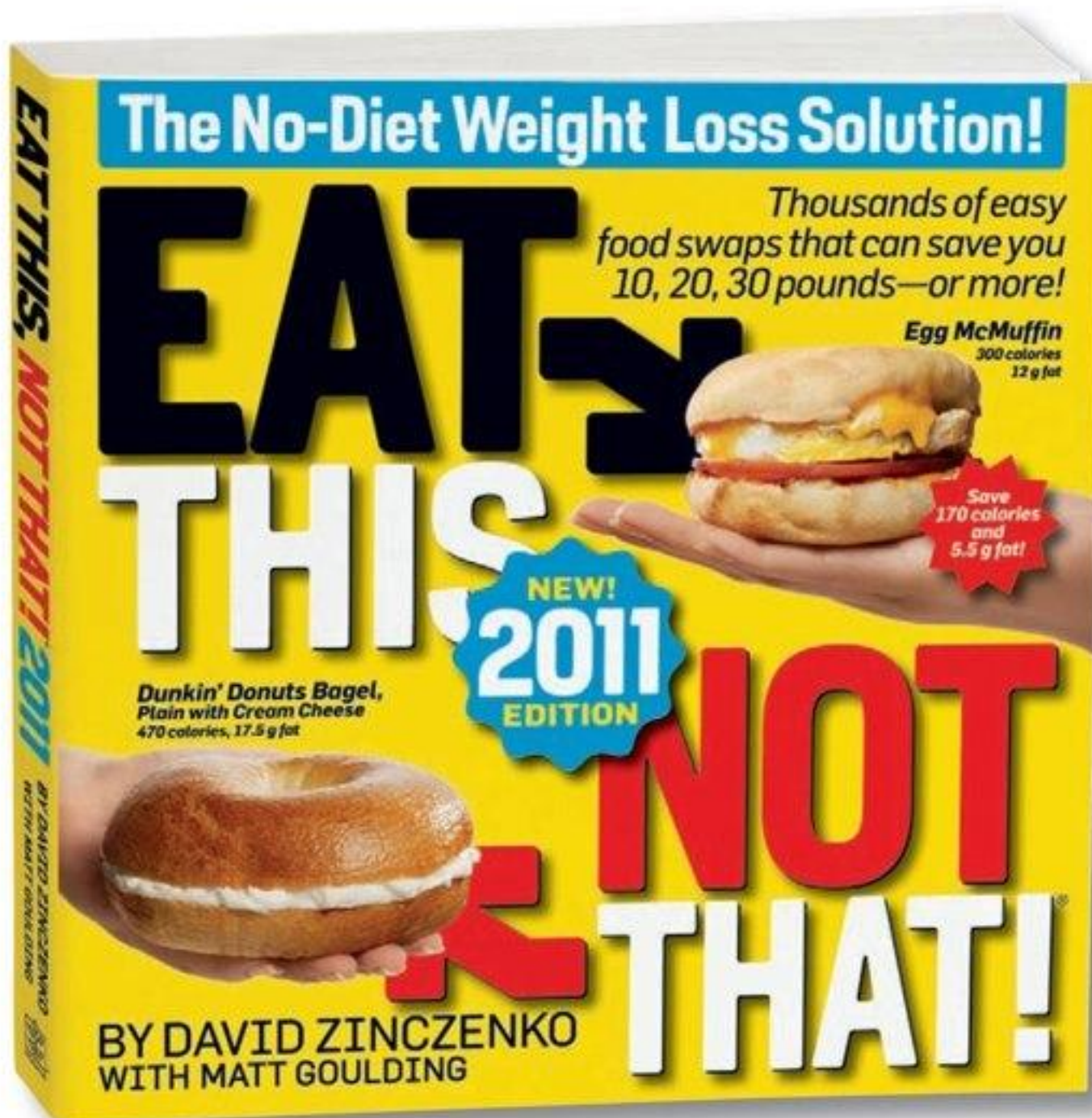
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Craving Tex-Mex?

At On the Border, pick Grilled Fajita Chicken Tacos over Southwest Chicken Tacos and save 770 calories! (Do that once a week, lose more than 11 pounds this year!)

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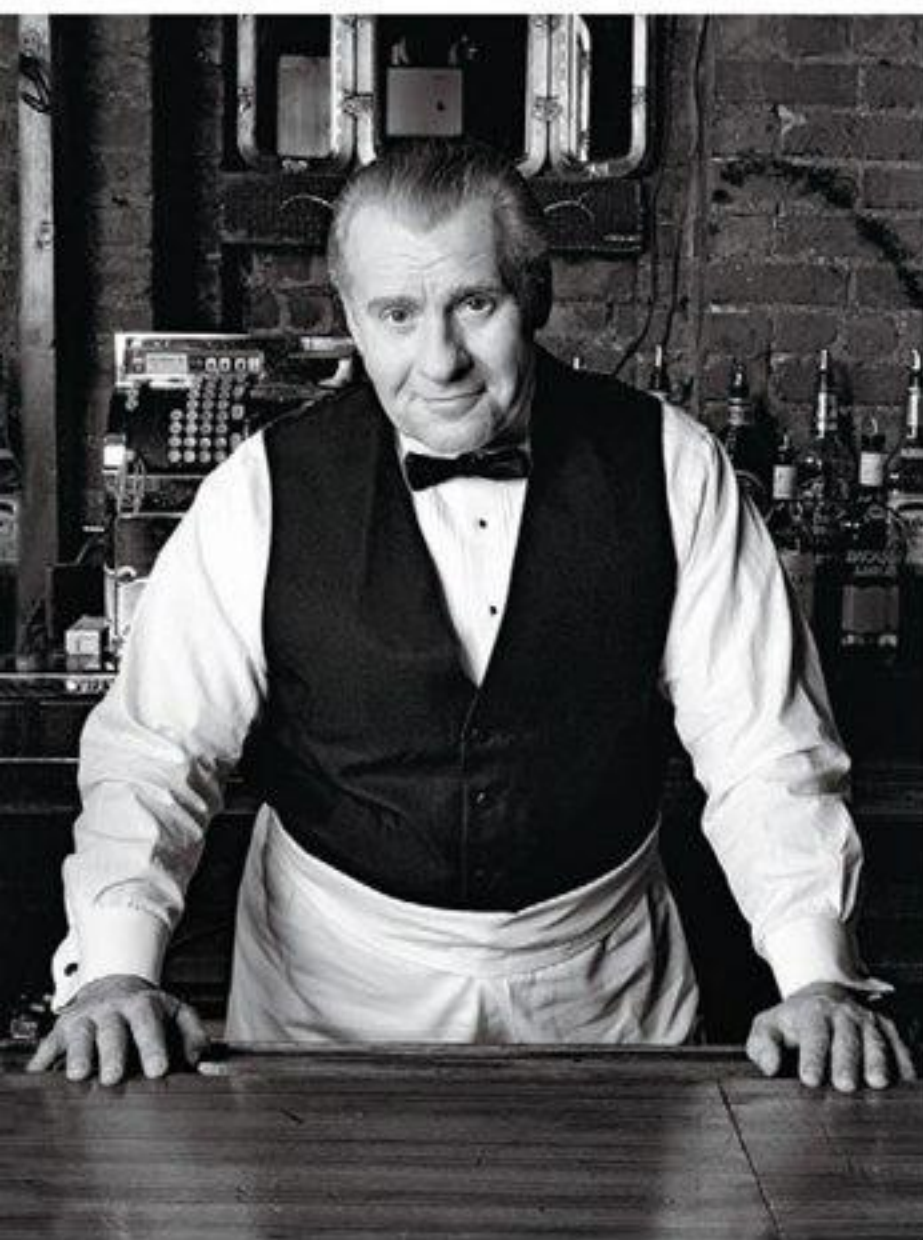
Choose a 100 Grand bar instead. You'll cut your fat intake in half and save 100 calories!

Hungry for Hot Wings?

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Jimmy

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Q I LENT A FRIEND \$500 AND HE HASN'T PAID ME BACK. IT'S BEEN MONTHS. HOW CAN I MAKE HIM PAY UP?

EDDIE, MEMPHIS, TN

This pal of yours—does he like his kneecaps? (Kidding!) Just nicely bug him once a week. If you don't see the cash after a month of acting like his mom, then up the ante: Say you're in a bind of your own and need the dough for taxes, mortgage, whatever. The reality is that if he simply can't pay, no amount of nagging will make the money appear. If you say nothing, he'll do the same. Your friendship will suffer either way, but at least you won't blame yourself.

My fiancée is generally low key, but her family is argumentative. She yells so much with them that it freaks me out. Is this a bad sign?

Bert, Dunbar, WV

Prepare for some yelling in your future, my man. That's what people do—reenact what they saw and heard growing up. But here's the thing to look for: What happens *after* her family's screamfests? Are they close? Are they happy? Is fighting just their way of airing differences and then moving on? Because if that's the case, well... it isn't my way, but it may be a heck of a lot healthier than letting problems fester.

I agreed to be in my buddy's wedding, but then he changed it to a "destination wedding"—in Greece! I can't afford that. Now what?

Mike, San Antonio, TX

Next time my pal Christos comes in here, I'll have to ask him how to say "bait and switch" in Greek. Hey, there are two reasons couples do destination weddings: One, they like to travel. (Good for them.) Two, they want to shake off all the people they felt obligated to invite. The tradeoff: Some of the people they *want* there won't make it. They know that. Just explain the situation

early, because the longer you wait, the more you'll mess up their plans. Then buy them a nice gift and take them out to dinner before they go. Toast with ouzo.

I started dating a woman who's on a totally different work schedule. Can we make it work?

Tony, Las Vegas, NV

Make it work? For now, you're golden. Less time together means a better quality time when you do hang out, and probably a little more energy when you take her home. So



give it a go. A few months down the line, though, she'll want more from you, and it might take more effort to amp things up. But by then you'll know if she's worth it.

I invited some coworkers to my New Year's Eve party but excluded a boss we don't like. The guy's miffed. Do I have to make it up to him?

Delmar, Santa Monica, CA

Yeah, maybe you botched the office politics on this one. Could have been nicer about it. But no corporate bylaw says you have to sing "Auld Lang Syne" with the office tool. Your party, your guest list. *Not* your guilt.

My cousin scored me a part-time job at the store where he works, but the boss upped my hours. I'm a student and can't swing the extra time. If I quit, do I hurt my cousin?

Tim, via Facebook

If you order a beer and I give you a keg, well, maybe I think I'm being generous, but what good does it do you? Same here, pal: The boss knew the deal going in. If you were being unreasonable, then I'd tell you to be thankful you have a job. But you're not, and your cousin won't think so either.

TIP JAR

HEAT THE DRINK

Guys come in here shivering and then order a cold one. Why not warm up? Here's a hot drink I love, from barkeep Jenni Pittman at Proof on Main in Louisville, Kentucky. It's part hot toddy, part old-fashioned.

Old Kentucky Toddy



You'll need

- 1 orange slice
- 1 lemon slice
- 1 maraschino cherry
- 2 oz bourbon
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 dash Angostura or orange bitters

How to make it

Place the fruit in a mug or tall glass. Lightly crush the fruit with the back of a spoon. Add the bourbon, honey, and hot water; stir. Add a dash of bitters if desired. Makes 1 serving

Jimmy's app is full of tips and drinks: MensHealth.com/iphone-jimmy.

From top: Michelle Pedone, styling: Randi Packard, grooming: Pascale Poma/Bernstein & Andrulli; MITCH MANDEL, food styling: Annie Edwards; KAGAN MCLEOD; Monte Isom



Dan Abrams is chief legal analyst for NBC. Write to him at MensHealth.com/experts.

YOUR ATTORNEY ON CALL Dan Abrams

Q I agreed by e-mail to do some freelance work, but then had to back out. The client says the e-mail is a binding contract. Is that true?

Antonio, Santa Fe, NM

An e-mail can be as binding as a handwritten note or even a more formal contract. You agreed in writing to perform a service, and the client agreed to pay you a certain amount. The question is what exactly you promised to do and whether the client suffered damages

as a direct result of your (in)action. The client can't really force you to do the work, but could sue you if he or she lost money because you backed out. So when it comes to business matters, think carefully before you e-mail, text, or even tweet.

JUST BEFORE I MOVED 6 MONTHS AGO, I GAVE MY PERSONAL TRAINER ONE LAST CHECK. HE STILL HASN'T CASHED IT. IF HE NEVER DOES, AM I STEALING?

Justin, Los Angeles, CA

No. When you pay by check, it's the recipient's responsibility to cash it, not yours. In fact, banks are generally under no obligation to cash checks older than 6 months. But to avoid any future hassles, why not remind him to cash it as soon as possible?

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'Tis the Season to Be Sober

By Rick Moody

THE MASSES OF MEN look back on their high school and college years with fondness and a sense of satisfaction for a job well done. Not only did they manage to become educated, but they also had a good time, went to a few parties, fell in love, saw a concert or two, and learned to play an instrument, among other accomplishments. I, however, am among those men who have plenty of awful memories of college, most of them having to do with nights when I drank way too much, said any number of things that were not clever, and tried to pick up many a good friend's girlfriend, among other misdeeds.

Which is one of the reasons why I don't drink anymore. Why, then, do so many people try to make me drink again?

It seems true that at college reunions they often expect you to be like your 21-year-old self, and your efforts to train yourself out of your boorish adolescence are doomed to go unacknowledged. But I'm nearly 30 years out of school and almost 24 years past my last binge—and just last year, when I returned to my college town, faculty members at my alma mater still said things to me like, "It's just wine!" Even though I have to reiterate my position any number of times, I don't hold it against anyone, because in the end it's my job to keep myself away from the next glass. That's why I'm writing this.

Just as there are people who somehow want you to drink, there are places where the issue is bound to cause disturbances. One of those places is France, where, it seems, visitors who speak the local tongue badly are not the only ones who become objects of disdain. I have endured seven or eight lectures about the disagreeable self-righteousness of Americans who opt out of wine with a meal, never mind the number of cigarettes smoked in my general direction in order to emphasize the point, as if my choosing to not suffer from lung cancer or cirrhosis has aroused their righteous indignation.

But after France and college reunions, the holiday season is the greatest affront to the purposefully sober or the deliberately modest drinker. So let me tell you this before someone tells you otherwise: For whatever reason, if you choose not to drink your holidays away, your reason is good. You could prefer celebrating without the prospect of cloudy senses; you could be trying to avoid putting on the nearly inevitable 10 pounds; you could be turning over that proverbial new leaf. You could just hate the taste of alcohol. All good reasons!

And yet, that holiday office party? There will be people vomiting in the men's room, losing their keys, their cars, their dignity. That Christmas gathering with your family? It's axiomatic that people will be loosening the screws and bringing up the past. And I won't even bother mentioning New Year's Eve.

How to hazard these slings and arrows of sobriety? First, wherever possible, try not to be alone with your decision. Nothing is lonelier than the sober person (or even the light drinker) in a heavy-drinking crowd. You don't have to be alone, though, because others feel the same way. It could just be the one coworker who gets a nasty headache from wine, or the rake who finally went straight after multiple rehabs. Doesn't matter. There's safety in collectivity. Take a friend along.

Second, you can always go late and leave early. I have often found that one 10-minute trip through the room is enough to convince people who aren't really paying attention anyhow that I really did show up and stay.

Third, make yourself useful. So many things happen at a holiday gathering that require looking after. And as it turns out, some of those things are kind of fun. All those people who are allegedly having fun at the punch bowl with their slurred lines and off-color jokes? The conversations you'll have picking someone up at the airport or while working the kitchen will, I promise you, be more intimate, more memorable (because you'll actually remember them),

People will be vomiting in the men's room, losing their keys, their car, their dignity.

and less fraught with peril. Contentment, it turns out, has a fair amount to do with an absence of excessive or antisocial behavior.

Fourth, if all else fails, you can always bow out of holiday events. Go to a movie blockbuster or go bowling, or do whatever you had wanted to do this month that you somehow got talked out of. Remember, the people who are angry or sullen about your nonattendance at holiday events are often the ones with dubious records in the sobriety department.

I did recently receive an invitation to go out for coffee, over the holidays, from a woman I knew well in college. I can't tell you how many times I passed out in her apartment—I literally cannot tell you. But I do know that in the decades since, I have risen to the occasion and been a better friend to her, one who has made amends directly. It's probably why she got in touch. And this is the part of the holidays that far surpasses the parties: People like her come into town and want to get together. I suspect, in this case, she's not going to offer me a drink.

Rick Moody is the author of The Ice Storm and other novels. His most recent is The Four Fingers of Death.

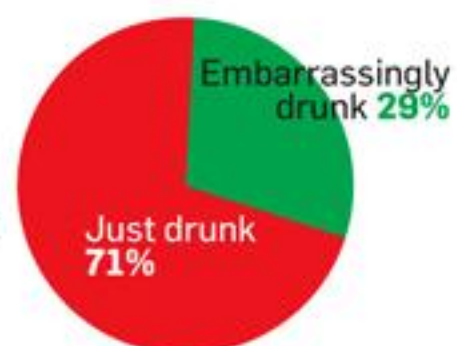
Holiday cheers? We surveyed 200 men to find out how they blend booze with festivities.

How do the holidays affect your drinking habits?

I drink more: 52%
I drink less: 2%
No change: 46%

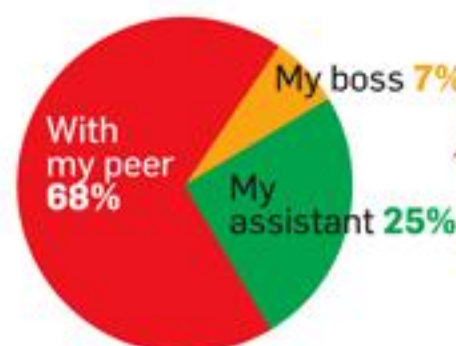
Have you ever been drunk at a holiday work party?

Yes: 66%
No: 34%



Have you ever drunkenly hooked up with a coworker after a holiday party?

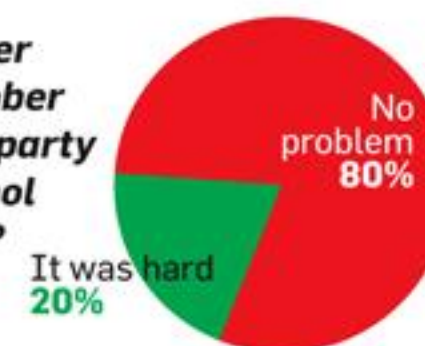
Yes: 26%
No: 74%



68% say it went great

Have you ever remained sober at a holiday party where alcohol was served?

Yes: 72%
No: 28%

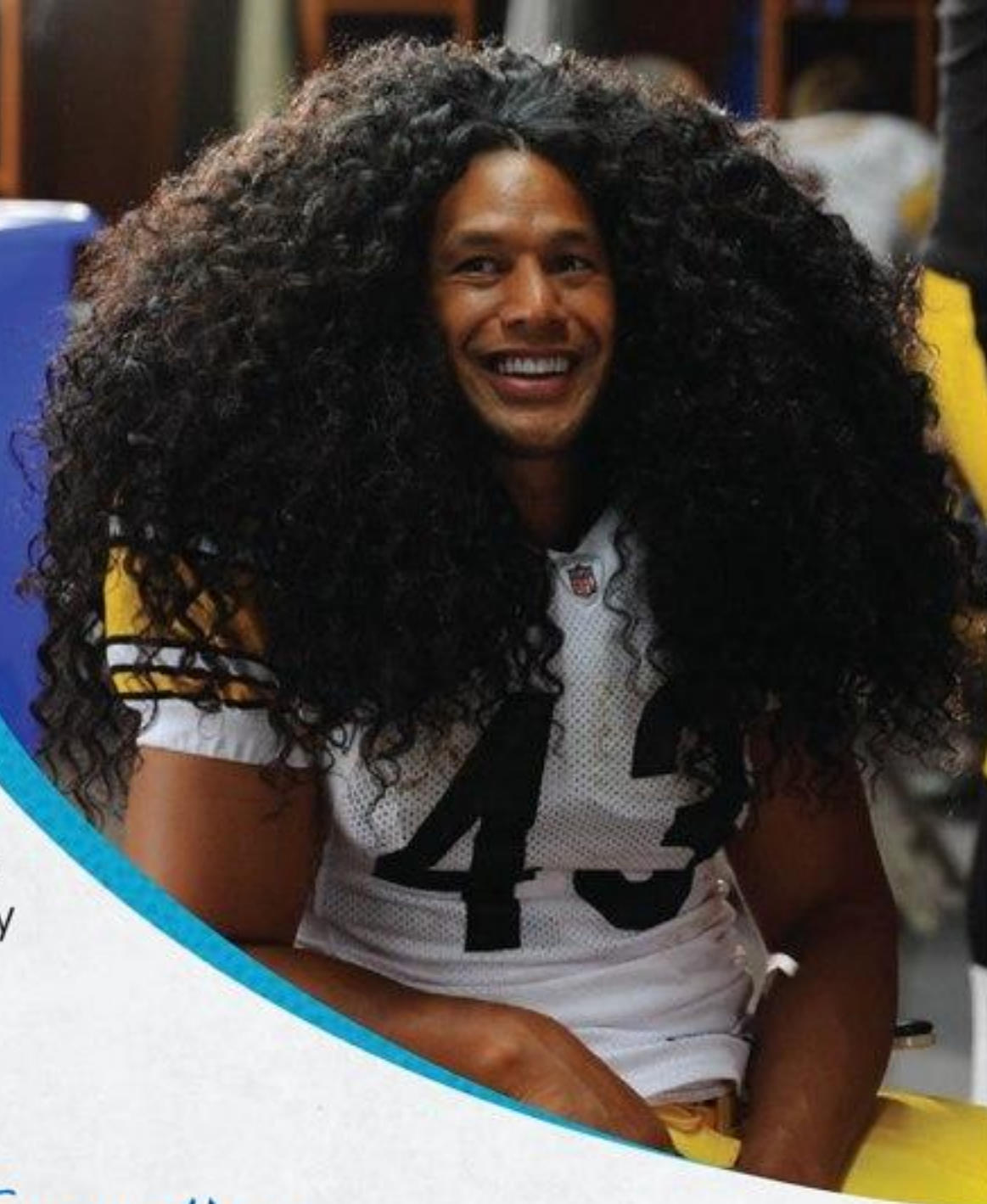




How To Have A Ridiculously Awesome Super Bowl Party

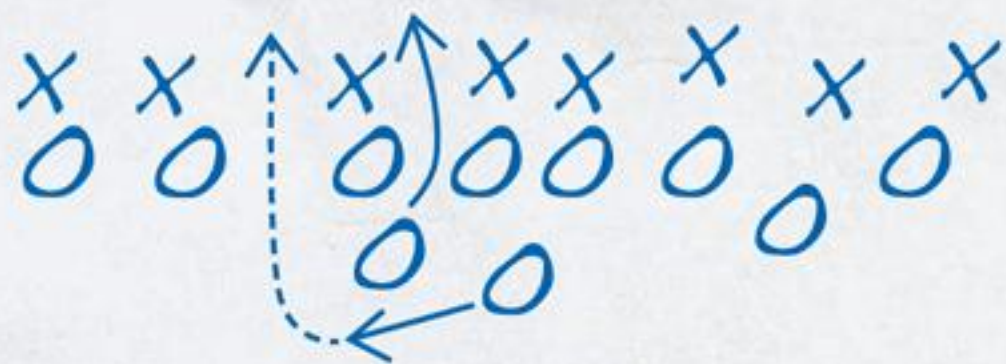
FROM THE OFFICIAL SHAMPOO OF THE NFL

Don't have a front-row seat in North Texas this year? Take the ball by the laces and lead your friends to the next best thing—a ridiculously awesome Super Bowl XLV party in your own man cave.



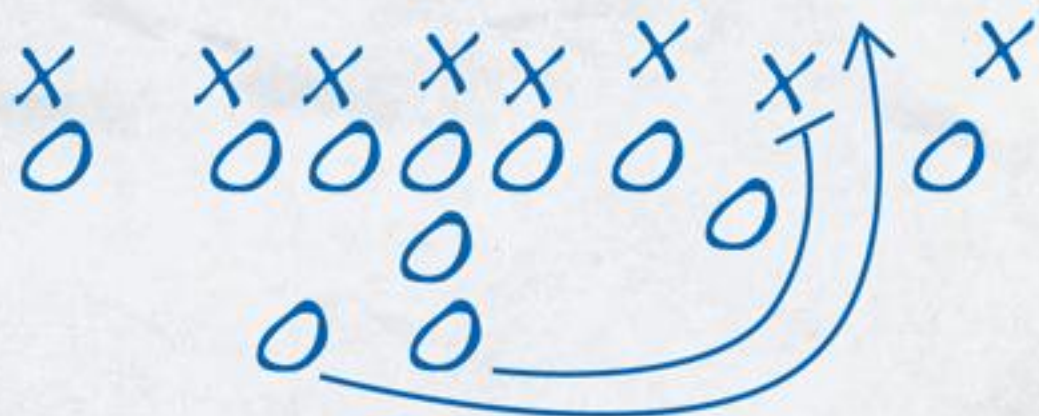
Tight Formation

Upgrade your perfect formation to a ridiculously-elite level. Plush chairs, check. Ear busting surround sound, check. Awesome food that will make your guests wish they had an extra mouth and two extra stomachs as they chow down all day long, check.



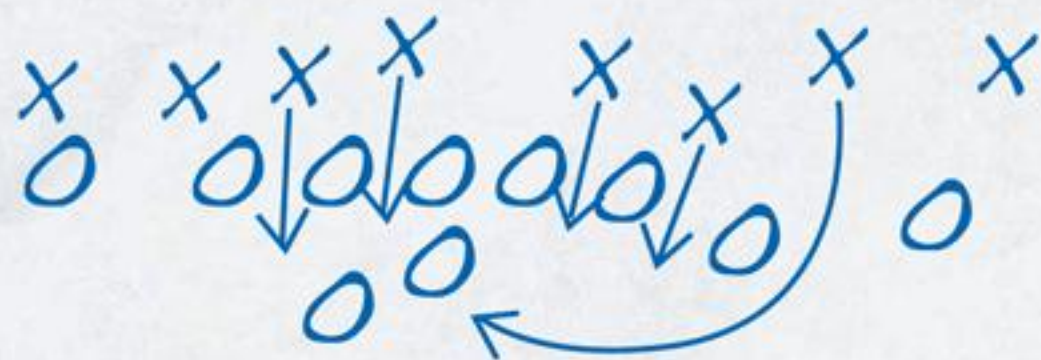
The Fake

Host a pre-game touch football face-off. Just for fun, right? Nope. This is where smart guys turn into animals. Play to win by knowing your opponents.



The Sweep

Make the party ridiculously interesting with a football quiz that proves once-and-for-all who has the cred to back up their smack. Hone your skills at **TroysHair.com**.



The Blitz

Take a page from Troy's playbook and run the blitz on the dirt, oil and build up that makes hair look flat. Get **Head & Shoulders Hair Endurance for Men** and see the jealousy your friends display over your ridiculously full and thick looking mane.



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*Vs. Unwashed Hair

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RANKING AMERICA'S CITIES

THE BEST & WORST CITIES FOR MEN 2011

Our 10th annual ranking of the nation's top towns for men, along with tips for turning your own zip code into a contender for 2012

Every competitive endeavor has its dominant figure: Jordan. Woods. Francis. What? You've never heard of Alan Francis? He pitches . . . horseshoes. Francis has won the horseshoe pitching world championship 16 times, prompting the

New York Times to call him "perhaps the most dominant athlete in any sport in the country."

So now you know what we mean when we say Madison, Wisconsin, is almost "Franciscan" in its reign over our annual Best & Worst Cities rankings:

The city has the most number one finishes in the history of our metropolitan melee.

Madison's secret? Midwestern consistency. When we delved into data from the usual assortment of alphabet agencies (CDC, FBI, EPA), we found that the capital of the Badger State kept throwing ringers in the key categories of health, fitness, and quality of life. (See MensHealth.com/metrogrades for the full list of stats.) All told, we

crunched the numbers for 37 different criteria, from man killers (heart disease, cancer, and so forth) to man thrillers (ratio of single men to single women).

When all was said and done, we checked our math and then checked it again, because close only counts if your last name is Francis.

RESEARCH BY JACLYN COLLETTI

The 10 best

- 1 Madison, WI
- 2 Fargo, ND
- 3 Plano, TX
- 4 Burlington, VT
- 5 San Jose, CA
- 6 Lincoln, NE
- 7 Austin, TX
- 8 Aurora, CO
- 9 Virginia Beach, VA
- 10 Seattle, WA

#1 Madison, WI

Ward off a brain attack

The men of Madison have the second lowest rate of death from strokes. Credit well-timed medical intervention. "Madison is a community with a high proportion of doctors, and people take advantage," says Matthew Jensen, M.D., a professor of neurology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. If your BP is inching up, see

your M.D.: Research published in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine* showed that people who regularly followed up with their doctor to manage their blood pressure were less likely to die during the study period than those who stayed away.

#3 Plano, TX

Tap your competitive spirit

To understand why Plano finished first in weight training,

just imagine Dillon, the fictional Texas town of *Friday Night Lights*. "Plano is filled with overachievers," says Thomas Jensen, a certified personal trainer in the super-ripped city. "That competitive edge gives them an advantage in all aspects of life, including fitness." Put yourself in the same mindset by trying to outdo a friend when you lift. In a study published in the *Journal of Strength*

The 10 worst

- 91 Toledo, OH
- 92 New Orleans, LA
- 93 Charleston, WV
- 94 Baltimore, MD
- 95 St. Petersburg, FL
- 96 Memphis, TN
- 97 Detroit, MI
- 98 Birmingham, AL
- 99 Philadelphia, PA
- 100 St. Louis, MO

and Conditioning Research, people chest-pressed 11 percent more weight when competing against others.

#4 Burlington, VT

Use friends as medicine

Stroll down Burlington's main street and you'll see something strange: frequent displays of friendliness in place of urban indifference. Heartwarming, right? Possibly heart saving, too. A recent Swiss study reveals that people with supportive social networks are less likely to die of heart disease. Expand your presence in the community—join a basketball league, volunteer at a food bank, attend city council meetings. "Burlington government has lots of opportunities for citizen input," says Ben Littenberg, M.D., director of general internal medicine at the University of Vermont.

#9 Virginia Beach, VA

Raid the icebox

It's easy to be among the leaders in produce consumption when there's a cornucopia next door. "Practically

everyone in Virginia Beach lives within a 15-minute drive of a farmers' market," says local dietitian Darden Chronister, M.S., R.D. If fresh produce is in short supply or out of season, go with frozen fruits and vegetables: They taste better and retain more nutrients than canned or even fresh stuff that's been sitting too long. (See "Sub-zero Heroes," in this issue.)

#10 Seattle, WA

Tell cancer to take a hike

The Emerald City's endless opportunities for outdoor recreation—along with the resulting boost in mood and fitness—may be one reason for its enviably low cancer mortality rate, says Alan Kristal, Dr.P.H., a researcher at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. A recent study in the journal *Cancer Epidemiology* reported that men who regularly participated in sports and outdoor activities had a reduced risk of several cancers. Visit localhikes.com to find nearby trails.

JULIE STEWART

Illustration by MARK ALLEN MILLER



It's Super Schlub!

MOVIE HEROES AREN'T AS BIG AND BOLD AS THEY USED TO BE. IN FACT, THEY'RE A LOT LIKE US

By Joel Stein

I grew up knowing one thing about myself: I was not, and would never be, an action hero. Action heroes were hulking, steroided men who did not feel the need to smile or apologize during a confrontation. They had names like Stallone, Schwarzenegger, Willis, and Van Damme. They were, in short, not Jews.

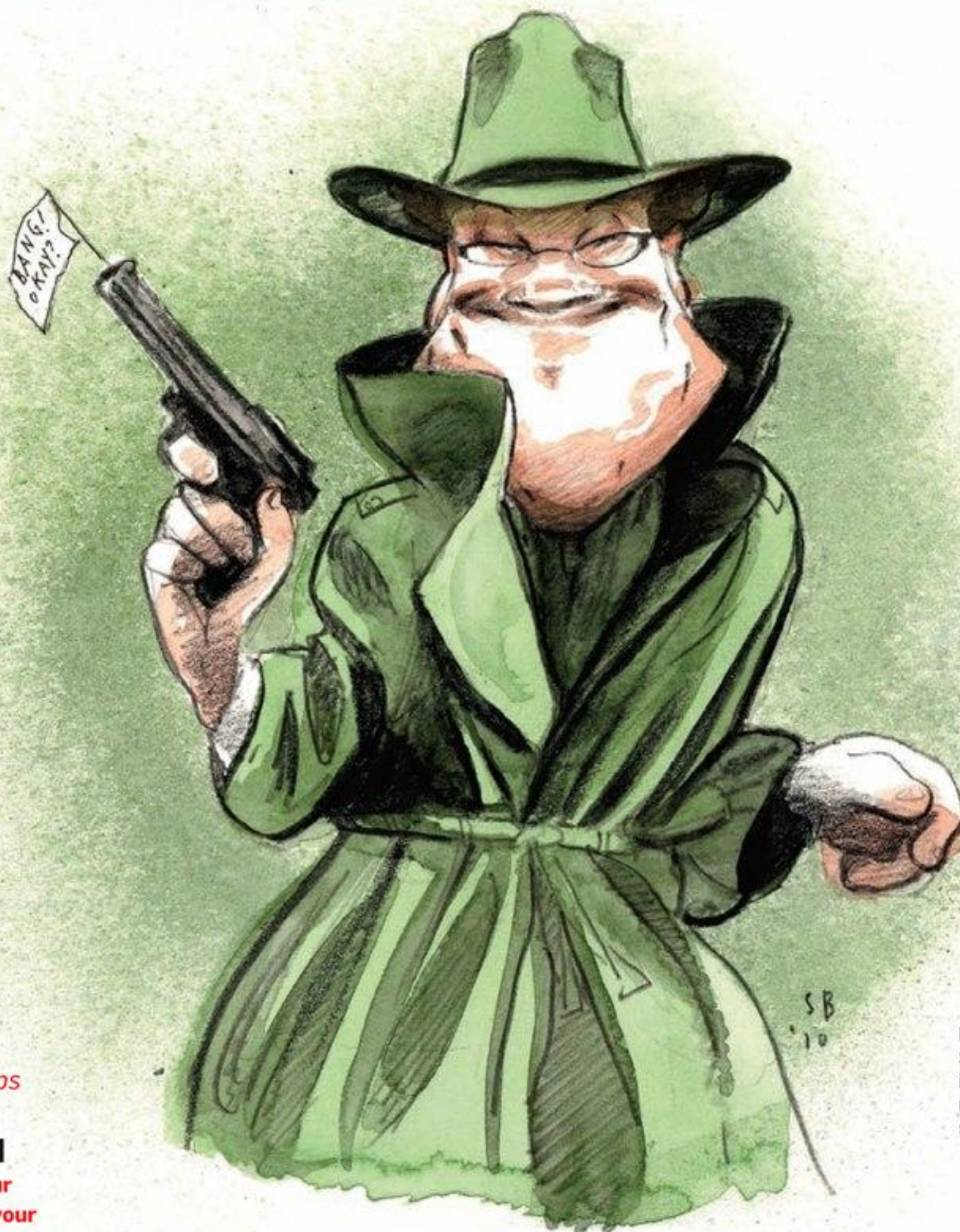
But now we're moving away from muscle men. In January, Seth Rogen plays the Green Hornet—on the heels of Jake Gyllenhaal saving ancient civilizations, Tobey Maguire in a Spidey suit, and . . . hey, what is it with action heroes these days? They're smaller and wimpier, and disappointingly more like me. I have only one guess why: Producers think the average man wants to feel that if terrorists busted into the movie theater, he could draw upon some power deep within his tub of popcorn and Bruce Lee them through the screen.

It's a reasonable assumption. We're in desperate times; any one of us might be in a terrible situation and need to take control. But quite frankly, I know my place: I'm more likely to need saving than to be the one doing the saving. And the idea of being scooped up by a guy like Seth Rogen—a man whose arms are just as flabby as mine—is emasculating. Some ballooned-up Austrian, sure. But the neurotic guy with the nervous laugh is supposed to be the sidekick, not the hero. Or, actually, the sidekick's sidekick.



Be bold

Putting your feet up on your desk and hands behind your head can spike your confidence and feelings of power, says a 2010 study in *Psychological Science*.



Never fear, Seth Rogen is . . . well, maybe we'll still fear.

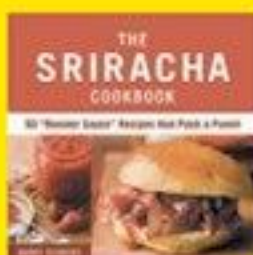
Besides, "action hero" isn't a long-term employment strategy. An average-looking, semifit, in-the-moment hero might win a damsel after saving the world, but by the third date, any woman who really likes such a man would start talking him out of doing such dangerous work and pushing him back to sales and his weekend cover band.

I'm a man who needs a night off from manly expectation. That's why I go to the movies. I want to watch tough guys dispose of bad guys with confidence and ease. And I'll be a hero if I need to be; I know we all have to step up. But for now, I go to sleep scared at night. Not scared of terrorists, exactly. Just of being saved by Seth Rogen.

A man's JANUARY and FEBRUARY

Showtime debuts *Shameless*, TV's next great screwed-up-family saga.

Support your rooster sauce addiction with *The Sriracha Cookbook*, by Randy Clemens.



Bulletstorm for Xbox 360, PC, or PS3: You win points for creative kills!



Read Teju Cole's *Open City*, a beautiful portrait of a man who, like us all, tries to find where he fits in.

Comedian Michael Showalter (of *The State* fame) publishes *Mr. Funny Pants*, a memoir about being just that.

Swords, blood, and codpiece style? It's *The Eagle*, this year's gladiator blockbuster.



New year, new music

Destroyer *Kaputt* (1/25)
Try: "Savage Night at the Opera"
The album is sophisticated, melodic, poetic—a perfect backdrop to an at-home dinner date (and naked dessert).

The Decemberists *The King Is Dead* (1/18)
Try: "Don't Carry It All"
This folk-infused indie rock comes with simple pep, inspiration from R.E.M., and the right attitude to defrost your morning.



Fujiya & Miyagi *Ventriloquizzing* (1/25)
Try: "Tinsel & Glitter"
The British electronic trio (don't let the name fool you) mixes beats that fuel your party but are chill enough to unwind with.



Fill 'er up.



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*23 city/34 highway mpg. Based on 2011 EPA mileage estimates for Accord 4-cyl. Sedan models with AT. Use for comparison purposes only. Actual mileage will vary. [†]Car and Driver, January 2011. © 2010 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

Accord

HOW TO DO EVERYTHING BETTER

SLAM THE SERVE



START WITH PERFECT GRIP

Hold the paddle as if you're shaking hands—with your fingers wrapped around the handle. Place your slightly bent thumb along the side of the handle that faces your opponent. Lay your index finger across the base of your side of the paddle. This grip provides you with greater control throughout the match. Now add a dose of unpredictability with a little spin:



TOPSPIN

Hold the paddle at a 45-degree angle so the top edge is tilted toward your opponent. Start the stroke below the ball, and swing up and forward.



BACKSPIN

Hold the paddle at 45 degrees so the top edge is tilted away from your opponent. Start the stroke above the ball, and brush the ball downward and forward.



SIDESPIN

With the paddle and your index finger parallel to the table, swing side-ways to brush the ball.

For all spins: The closer the ball is to the tip of the paddle, the more spin it will have.

Source: Larry Hodges, a USA Table Tennis—certified coach and member of the USATT Hall of Fame

Fix a dented ball

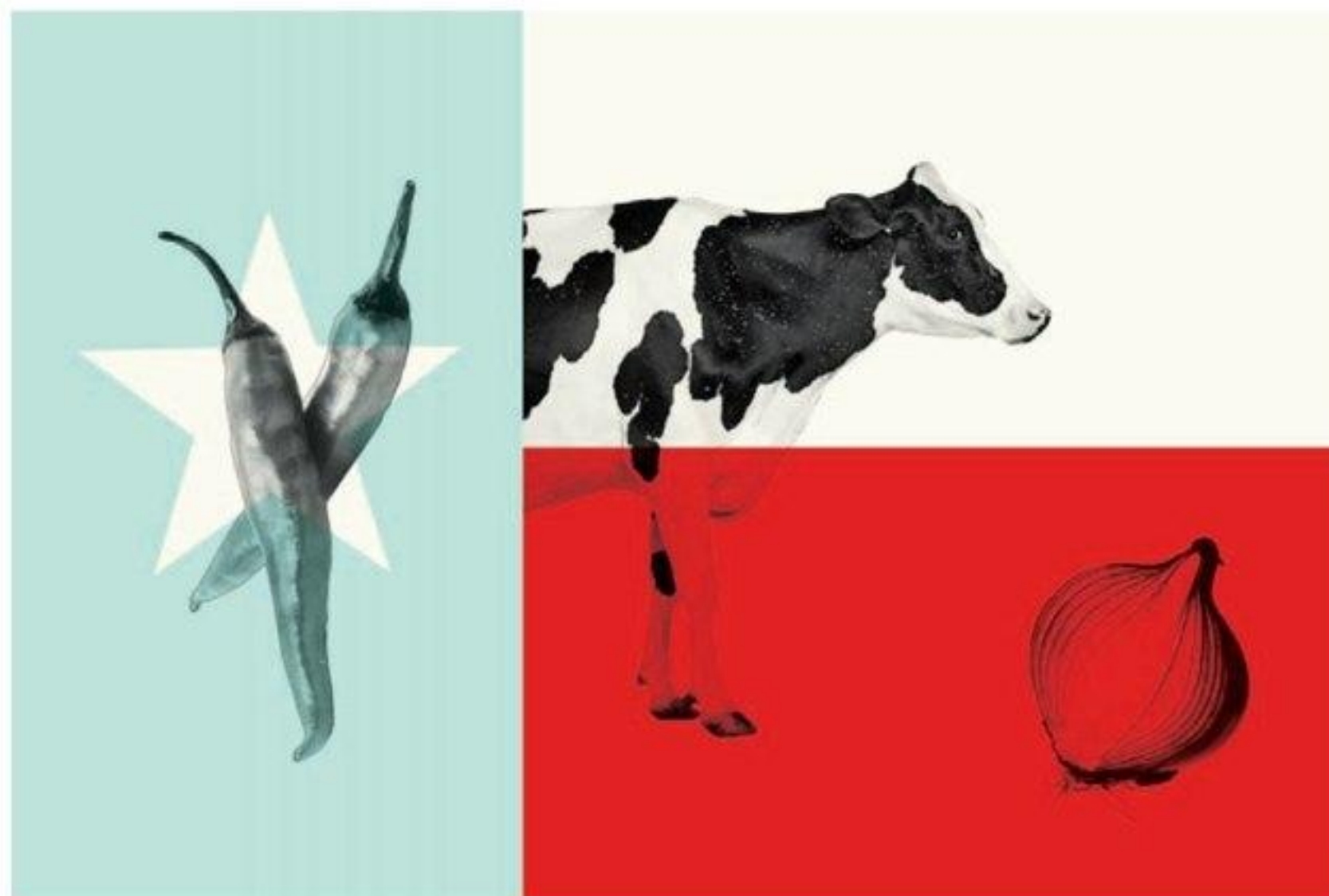
Heat the ball Wearing an oven mitt, hold the ball in front of a hair dryer set on hot. Rotate the ball, but refocus the heat on the dent every few seconds. The dent should pop out in about 30 seconds. Don't overheat the ball—it may explode!

Cool the ball Hold the ball under cold running water for about 15 seconds, rotating it so it hardens and cools evenly.

Source: Robert Malloy, Ph.D., professor and chairman of the department of plastics engineering at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell

THIS MONTH

- Improve your table tennis skills
- Cook up authentic Texas chili
- Quickly find what you dropped
- Stay warm at the big game
- Block static shock
- Locate a wall stud
- Defog your car windows
- Organize your wardrobe
- Make a perfect snowball



MAKE REAL TEXAS-STYLE CHILI

Improve your tailgate chow with an assist from the Lone Star State

STEP 1

Make a chili puree

To achieve deep, robust chili flavor, Texas chili starts with dried chilies. Try two ancho, one pasilla, two guajillo, and two chipotle chilies (available in some supermarkets and from thespicehouse.com; or substitute 4 tablespoons of pure dark chili powder and three canned chipotle chilies, and continue with step 3). Making the puree is a three-part process:

Toast Heat the stemmed chilies in a large dry skillet over medium-low heat, turning them frequently until they're fragrant and lightly charred—about 8 minutes. (A cast-iron skillet works best.)

Soak Place the chilies in a large bowl of just-boiled water and soak them until tender, about 20 minutes.

Puree Combine in a blender with 1 cup of brewed coffee.

STEP 2

Sear the meat

Texas chili is made with chunks of marbled cuts like boneless beef short rib, braised until tender. Cut 2 pounds into 1-inch chunks and brown them all over in a large, heavy pot with 2 to 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove them (and juices) and set aside.

STEP 3

Assemble the chili

Aromatic vegetables like onion and garlic round out the flavor, along with herbs, spices, and beer. In the pot you used for the meat, sauté a large chopped onion and two minced garlic cloves until softened. Return the beef and its juices to the pot and add ½ teaspoon each of ground cumin and dried thyme, and 1 teaspoon of dried oregano. Then add your chili puree and a 12-ounce bottle

of beer—whatever you're drinking. Cover and simmer on low until the meat is very tender, about an hour and 15 minutes.

STEP 4

Thicken the stew

Real Texas chili is thickened with masa harina, a type of corn flour. Find it in the international aisle of your grocery. (No go? Use finely ground cornmeal.) Ladle 2 cups chili into a bowl and stir in 3 teaspoons masa harina or cornmeal. Return the mixture to the pot. Simmer 15 minutes. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper.

STEP 5

Serve with toppings

Diced red onion adds crunch, grated Cheddar adds richness, and pan-toasted corn tortillas complete the meal.

MAKE YOUR FOOD TASTE SMOKIER

No need to light up the grill in winter. These ingredients add smoke without fire.

CHIPOTLE HOT SAUCE

This mahogany-hued condiment adds a complex kick of heat to burritos, huevos rancheros, or roast chicken—without the need to open a can of chipotles. Tabasco makes a great version. \$4, countrystore.tabasco.com

SMOKED SEA SALT

For the ultimate steak, sprinkle a pinch of this seasoning on the meat before serving. Its salty/smoky combo ratchets up savory flavors better than regular table salt. Try Maldon Smoked Sea Salt on steamed vegetables, fish, and even chocolate ice cream. \$8, surlatable.com

ROASTED RED PEPPERS

These slow-cooked peppers add a sweet, lightly charred flavor to a mild-tasting sandwich (like turkey and spinach) or salad (mozzarella and basil).

Source: Tim Love, chef/owner of the Lonesome Dove Western Bistro, Fort Worth, Texas




FIND THAT SMALL THING YOU DROPPED

Screws, contact lenses, fingernails that flew off the clippers—they hit the floor and seem to disappear. So make them bigger: Turn on a flashlight and lay it on the floor. Small objects cast big shadows. Source: Spike Carlsen, author of *Ridiculously Simple Furniture Projects*, due out this spring


HOW TO DO EVERYTHING BETTER

SURVIVE LAMBEAU FIELD ... IN JANUARY


An arctic scientist and a Midwest football coach show you how it's done




A base layer traps your body's warmth; it should be made of a synthetic fabric that draws sweat away from your body (unlike cotton, which absorbs wetness and holds it against you).




Next, add insulating layers, followed by a heavy down jacket. The final layer should shield you from wind and rain.



If it's not snowy or windy, feet follow the clothing formula: synthetic base layer, then warm socks and loose shoes or boots. If it's ugly out, put on thin socks, then ziplock bags to keep the heat in, and another pair of thin socks to keep the bags on. Loose-fitting shoes don't restrict circulation.



Spread a blanket between you and your lady. No lady? Buddy up. Seriously, don't think you're too macho for this. You'll trap twice the body heat.




Wear mittens (waterproof are best) that are slightly big for your hands. That way there's more space in them to fill with heat packs. (Mittens are better than gloves; your fingers can share heat.)



Cold surfaces suck heat out of you. So sit on an insulated pillow to buffer your butt from the chill.



When it's cold, your body's core retains heat to warm your organs, which deprives your limbs of blood. Aid circulation during the game: Swing your arms, clap, stomp, and wiggle your toes.



Source: Phil Camill, Ph.D., arctic researcher and associate professor of environmental studies at Bowdoin College; and Bret Bielema, head football coach at the University of Wisconsin

LOCATE A STUD WITHOUT A STUD FINDER

Turn on an electric shaver and run its base across the wall. The pitch will dip when you pass over a stud.

Source: Spike Carlsen

Avoid being zapped when you touch something

Quick science lesson: When two dissimilar materials touch and then separate, they undergo triboelectric charging. For example, when you move around while in contact with a surface (such as the floor), you become electrically charged. It's no biggie in humid air, because moisture dissipates the charge. But static builds up in dry winter air. When you touch a conductor of electricity, such as metal or another person, the charge flows out of you. That's the spark you feel. Want to avoid it?



CHANNEL IT

After walking outside for a while or entering a building, take a key out of your pocket. It's just as charged as you are right now. Hold the metal part and touch its tip to the first metal thing you see, like a doorknob. The electricity will flow painlessly from you and through the key, zapping the knob.



CHANGE THE AIR

Use a humidifier. The more water vapor in the air, the more surfaces are covered in moisture, and the less charge you'll accumulate. Plus, it's a good way to stop your skin from drying out.



DRESS RIGHT

Polyester doesn't absorb moisture well, so it won't dissipate a static charge. You're better off with cotton or wool, both of which do a better job of dissipating the charge.

Source: Mark Horenstein, Ph.D., a professor of electrical engineering at Boston University



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HOW TO DO EVERYTHING BETTER



PREVENT YOUR CAR WINDOWS FROM FOGGING

You know how to hit the defog button. An even better move: Stop fog from collecting at all

AVOID THE WET STUFF

Window fog builds because the air inside your car is moist. When temperatures drop, the air can't hold the moisture and much of it is deposited on your windows. So don't bring any new moisture in. Damp umbrellas or sweaty gym clothes go in the trunk. And if there's snow on the ground, sit down and smack your boots together before swinging your legs in.

WASH YOUR WINDOWS

You clean the outside of your windows, but you should also give the inside a regular spray and wipe. Dirt gives moisture a base to settle on, making it easier for fog to form.

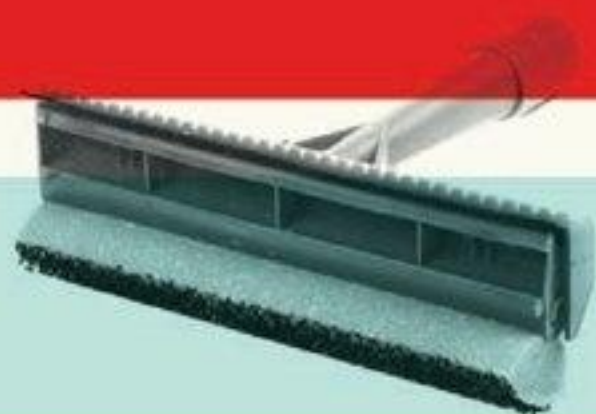
DON'T SMEAR THE GLASS

Wiping the windows is everyone's first instinct—but all it does is move moisture from your windows to a rag, without removing it from the car. So if you just entered the car, don't wipe the windows. Just put the defrost on high heat with high blower and allow it to work.

PULL IN FRESH AIR

If you set your AC on recirculate, you just redistribute the moisture in your car. (And your breathing and sweating create more moisture.) By letting new, dry air circulate in, you effectively keep moisture out.

Source: The guys at Ford's climate-control center



ORGANIZE YOUR WARDROBE

De-stress your morning routine with these closet-decluttering strategies, provided by Peter Walsh, host of the new series *Enough Already with Peter Walsh*, on OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network.

- 1 Eliminate surplus**
Separate items into piles by type (shirts, pants, jackets). Pitch anything that doesn't fit now or is a throwback to the '80s. Reduce the total to what will reasonably fit in the closet—any more is overkill. Keep like items (and maybe similar colors) together; that way you'll remember what you own when you go shopping.
- 2 Partition closet space**
Each linear foot of closet space can house 12 pairs of pants, 13 to 15 dress shirts, or 6 heavy jackets or suits. Assign space for each type of hanging item; use masking tape to divide the hanger rod into sections. This sets clear limits, and you won't be hunting for that one shirt.
- 3 Don't forget the dresser**
Store clothes you wear every day, like socks and underwear, up top. Stuff you wear to work goes next. (Consider having your dry cleaner box your dress shirts—folded shirts are easier to store and pack, and there are no hanger creases.) Rarely worn items go at the bottom.
- 4 Keep weeding things out**
Before you put everything back, turn your casual shirts and pullovers inside out. When you wear one, return it right-side out. After 6 months, take anything that's still inside out—and not seasonal or for special occasions—and donate it.



Win a snowball fight

FIND THE SNOW

Grab snow from near the base of a tree. Trees give off warmth, which can soften snow—and soft, wet snow always makes the best projectiles.

PACK IT

Snowballs are best when they're 2.6 to 2.8 inches in diameter—about the size of a tennis ball. Any larger and they won't fly fast or may break up en route. Make a bunch and store them in sunlight; the slight melting will make them even more hard packed.

ATTACK

Don't aim directly at your opponent. Instead, throw your snowball to the right or left of him; you'll make your foe jog away from that direction. Then throw your kill shot to where he's heading.

Source: Gordon Ferguson of Yukigassen USA, professional snowball fighting competition

Slide Preis/Getty Images (snowball)

Featuring Workouts Created by Men'sHealth

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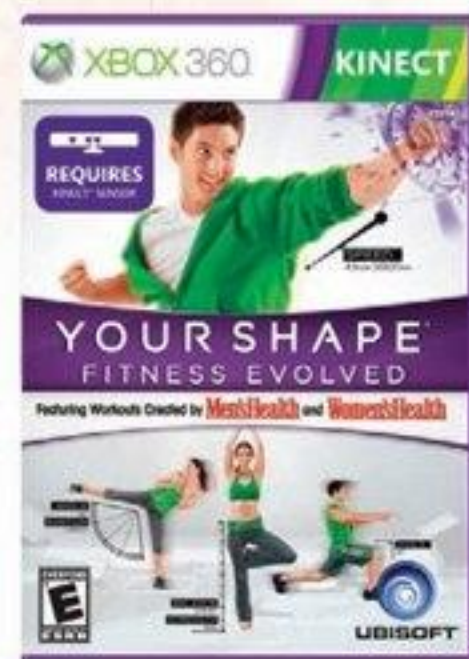
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You hit the gym to work on your body, right? Now put the same energy into your career.

Flex Your Success Muscles

These 6 workouts can turn you into the corporate alpha in no time

BY GIL SCHWARTZ • COLLAGE BY JAMES VICTORE

DO YOU SOMETIMES FEEL WEAK and tired? Do you see a big, powerful dude at the office beach and think, *Boy, I wish I had business chops like Bob?*

Well, you too can have sharp edges and a rock-hard core. All you need is the proper workout. That's what we'll be doing here today.

Take our friend Larry. He's been tapped by the boss to present the activities of his group to the Board. There he is at the front of the room, sweating like a little girl. Looking down at his notes and fumfering. You can feel his career mojo going limp right before your eyes. He's clearly not fit enough to make this kind of play. Bye-bye, Larry—it's back to the Petaluma office for you.

Then there's Fred. He can sit in one place discussing the tax advantages of interstate funds transfers for hours. The rest of the room is so bored you can hear hearts stopping and bladders bursting, but does Fred move? No. He has been building up his job strength, acuity, and endurance—day by day, rep by rep, year after year. Just look at those career muscles rippling under his \$120 shirt!

Yes, pal, that's what it takes. You hit the gym, the track, the street for your body, don't you? Now use the same approach for the way you earn your bread. Think of each part of your career as a muscle group that needs to be exercised in order to reach peak performance. Follow my program, and you'll be the envy of every suit you know.

1 Ditch the PowerPoint crutch

Presentations pose a very special kind of challenge. Not everybody is good at them. In fact, most people probably suck at them, especially at the beginning when they're flabby and out of shape in this area. That's why PowerPoint was invented. Using PowerPoint, everybody is equally boring, within a factor of plus or minus 20 percent. It's the great equalizer. Your goal is

to progress to the level where you don't need PowerPoint to be boring. Seriously: The great ones sneeze at PowerPoint. They fly off the cuff, with nothing but bullet points to guide them.

On the other hand, you must watch out for the problem of being too good at presenting. I was at a meeting a while back during which a certain industry guy was being discussed. The group agreed that Bob was terrific on his feet. "He's just a showman," said the top executive at the table, with whom nobody disagreed, then as ever. The good news is that people in business are supposed to be a little awkward in front of crowds. We're not motivational speakers or circus performers, after all.

Targeted exercise There are always intensely tedious industry think-tank gatherings taking place somewhere. Have your PR department arrange a booking for you on a panel. Rinse and repeat. After you have mastered panels, you may move on to speeches. **Warning:** This is an incremental process. It takes years to develop the proper muscles in this arena. Those who rush it will fall into the sea in a flaming and public ball of wax.

2 Motor through meetings

Sadly, meetings are the heart of our business day. I know a senior guy who can sit through meetings from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. with only a 15-minute lunch break. He's always behind closed doors, kicking ass and taking names.

Targeted exercise Book as many meetings as you can—but only 3 days a week. Go light on the in-between days. Walk around. Talk to people. Eventually work up to attending meetings for which you are completely unprepared. Stay awake, look intelligent and sharp. Contribute at least one comment to the meeting without being discovered as having no idea what people are talking about. Repeat at least four times a day, 3 days a week. Build up your daily meetings as your strength increases.

3 Give good phone

We hit a tipping point a few years ago with e-mail. Once a real boon to business, e-mail became a burden as millions of poor workers were forced to walk around like Jacob Marley in Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, weighed down with heavy e-mail chains. Really successful operators now know that a 2-minute phone call is far superior to a stupid e-mail chain that lasts all week and includes multiple "attaboys" and "gotchas." Conversely, bad phone usage leads to egregious time wasting and rampant idiocy, as conference call heaps onto conference call and nobody can get up to take a leak for hours. Mastery in this area is all-important, and for that you need the right occupational muscle groups in working order.

Targeted exercise Execute 10 short, punchy phone exchanges before noon, four times a week. Rest. Then repeat between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Practice the phrase, "Hey, I gotta

jump," as a means of disengaging from calls within the 2-minute window. **Caution:** Do not employ the "Hey, I gotta jump" strategy with senior officers. In these cases, the exercise is to let them talk as long as they want to, until they say, "Hey, I gotta jump."

4 Go the distance

People who are great at business have the amazing ability to pull critical all-nighters when necessary. They are tireless. Their will to complete a task to perfection can, in a pinch, transcend the needs of their bodies. The great secret all power players share is that they can endure a few sleepless nights. You must gain the important insight that showing up one day being very, very tired is not the worst thing in the world. You're just playing hurt.

Targeted exercise Once a month, pick a night to stay up very late working on a critical project. We're not talking about midnight or 1 a.m., either. Keep yourself awake until 3 a.m. or later. Before you collapse at that hour, set your alarm for 6:30 a.m. When it rings, get up, take a shower, and in spite of the fact that you want to die, go to work. Pursue a full schedule. Note that you have *not* died. At 3 p.m., take a 15-minute nap. Go home at a normal hour. Sleep well that night. You will eventually develop the ability to operate normally in inhuman conditions. This is a powerful muscle indeed.

5 Throw back a few

Being a practiced rummy used to be a requirement in business. That's all changed now. It's perfectly acceptable to go out for drinks and order sparkling water—if you're a recovering alcoholic, or a wuss. Still, drinking with pals, customers, and enemies is one of the great pleasures of a man's working life. Build-

ing strength in this area is a matter of starting small and working your way up to the heavy weights. Unfortunately, in my career I did things just the opposite. I reacted to the free scotch served at corporate functions rather badly, pouring flagons of booze down my throat and disgracing myself many times. It took years for me to realize that the liquor was not going to run out, ever, and that I didn't have to drink it all at once.

Targeted exercise Have two drinks at every business-related function, even drinks after work. Repeat until your system can assimilate that amount of alcohol while remaining

Think of each part of your career as a muscle group that needs to be exercised.

sentient. Move to three now and then, but don't strain yourself. Injuries in this area can cripple you for a lifetime. On occasion you may do some powerlifting to see what you're capable of, but only if spotted by good friends.

6 Grow a pair

The musculature that supports your cojones is perhaps most important of all. We all have those muscles. Only some of us use them. You can be one of these people, if you are careful and don't allow any short, sharp shocks to your gonads. In that area, as in so many others, it is better to give than to receive.

Extremely targeted exercise Find somebody who has pissed you off. Ascertain that they are of equal or lesser size than you. Kick ass, with restraint. Don't tear or pull anything. But make sure the jerk feels it. When you have mastered this exercise, you may move on to bigger asses. You will find your balls growing larger as you do so. This is not a bad thing. ■

Workouts that fuel success

In a recent British study, workers reported higher productivity and lower fatigue after they exercised. Use these tips to move up *while* breaking a sweat.

Sprint out of your slump

Aerobic exercise boosts stamina during the day, says kinesiologist Curt Lox, Ph.D., of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. If you can break away, try a few quick sprints—you'll trigger the release of hormones that keep your juices flowing so you can power through your afternoon.

Jump to it

Find a secluded spot and try high-intensity exercises, like jump squats, to lift your heart rate. A recent study in the *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology* found that such exercises can boost the rate at which you process information, giving you a competitive edge when it comes time to work.

Shift your core focus

Stretch to loosen your abs and lower back, and exercise to strengthen them. "Strengthening your core and increasing flexibility by stretching can improve your posture and lower-back health," Lox says. "These are essential if you have a desk job." Head to MensHealth.com/absupgrades/ for key workouts.

Just breathe

When you sense stress building, take a few deep breaths—5 seconds each for inhaling and exhaling. "Simply being aware of how your body reacts to stress can lead to decreased cortisol levels in the brain, which lessens the effect of stress," says Duke University psychologist Jeffrey Greeson, Ph.D.

RACHEL GRICE



Subzero Heroes

Raid the freezer section to whip up tasty meals this winter

BY MATTHEW KADEY, M.S., R.D.
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHARLES MASTERS

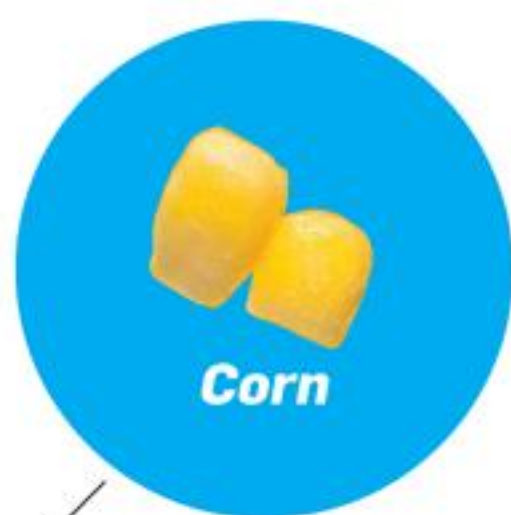
APPROACH THE FROZEN-FOOD AISLE WITH CAUTION. Behind those frosted doors lurk sodium-tsunami pizzas, dangerously sweet frozen desserts, and boxed entrées sauced with chemical cocktails. But you can also find your shortcut to stellar winter meals: frozen fruits and vegetables. • Think of frozen produce as your secret weapon, held in suspended animation until you need it. Pre-prepped frozen produce can be the foundation of a range of superfast dishes, from smoothies and soups to stews and sides. • An unexpected bonus: In winter, frozen produce can be more nutritious than the anemic fresh fruits and vegetables on display in other areas of the supermarket. That's because the frozen stuff was harvested at peak ripeness, when it was dense with nutrients, says Barry Swanson, Ph.D., a food science professor at Washington State University and spokesman for the Institute of Food Technologists. "The subsequent flash-freezing during the first 24 hours of harvest locks the fruit or vegetable into a nutrient- and antioxidant-rich state." So go ahead. Crack open a cold one.

Prop styling: Brian Byrne/Michele Filemoro and Megumi Emoto



There are many words to describe the dark Arabica coffee beans and light sugarcane spirit of Veracruz, Mexico. But when those contrasting flavors come together, there is only one word that can perfectly describe it: Delicioso. For original Kahlúa recipes, visit kahlua.com

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Corn

Compared with lowly canned kernels (and off-season fresh corn), frozen corn is king when it comes to taste, texture, and nutritional power.

1 CORN-TOMATO SUCCOTASH

In a large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of oil on medium and cook 1 diced onion until it's soft, about 4 minutes. Stir in 2 cups of frozen lima beans, 2 cups of frozen corn, and 2 minced garlic cloves. Cook until the beans are tender, about 12 minutes. Add 1 small can of diced tomatoes and 1 seeded and minced jalapeño. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

2 CORN PUDDING CUPS

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Pulse 1 cup of thawed corn kernels in a food processor until they break down. Remove the blade and stir in another cup of thawed kernels, 2 eggs, ½ cup plain dried bread crumbs, ½ cup low-fat sour cream, 1 small seeded and diced jalapeño pepper, and ¼ teaspoon salt. Spoon the mixture into 6 greased muffin cups. Bake until they start to turn golden, about 25 minutes.

3 CREAMY CORN-POTATO CHOWDER

Heat 1 tablespoon of oil on medium in a large saucepan. Cook 1 diced onion, 1 diced red bell pepper, and 2 minced garlic cloves for 4 minutes. Toss in 2 cups of frozen corn kernels, 1 pound diced Yukon Gold potatoes, 1½ cups of low-sodium vegetable broth, 2 bay leaves, 1 tablespoon of chopped rosemary, 1 teaspoon of red-pepper flakes, 1 cup of low-fat milk, and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat and simmer, covered, until the potatoes are tender, about 15 minutes. Remove the bay leaves; ladle half the soup into a blender, puree it, and return it to the pot.

HEALTH BONUS *Although it's thought of as a nutritional dud (thank you, Mr. HFCS!), corn is chockablock with yellow-orange carotenoids called xanthophylls, which have been shown to protect against cataracts and age-related macular degeneration.*



Green peas

Even in season, truly delicious fresh peas are elusive—their sweetness turns starchy almost immediately after they're picked. Frozen peas retain their flavor for months.

1 BUTTERMILK PEA SOUP

Heat 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil in a large saucepan on medium. Add 1 thinly sliced leek or onion, and 2 minced garlic cloves; cook for 4 minutes. Stir in 4 cups of reduced-sodium chicken broth, 3 cups frozen peas, 1 teaspoon ground cumin, 2 teaspoons dried thyme, ¼ cup fresh mint leaves, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer for 15 minutes, and then puree in a blender until smooth. Return to the pan, stir in ¾ cup buttermilk, and simmer 5 minutes more.

2 PEA FRITTERS

Cook 1 cup of peas according to the package instructions, drain, and then mash them with a fork. Stir in ¼ cup whole-wheat flour, 2 tablespoons chopped scallions, and salt to taste. Form into 4 patties. Heat 2 tablespoons of butter in a skillet on medium. Add the patties and cook until lightly golden, 1½ minutes on each side. Serve as an appetizer with sour cream.

3 CHICKEN PEA CURRY

In a large saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon of oil on medium. Add 1 diced onion and 1 pound cubed chicken breast. Cook until the chicken is no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Stir in 1 diced sweet potato, 1 sliced carrot, 2 minced garlic cloves, and 1 tablespoon minced ginger. Cook for 3 minutes; stir in 1 tablespoon curry powder, ½ teaspoon red-pepper flakes, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Cook 1 minute, and then stir in 1 cup of frozen peas, 1 can coconut milk, and ½ cup water. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer 15 minutes. Stir in the juice of 1 lime and garnish with cilantro.

HEALTH BONUS *Each cup of peas contains a laudable 6 grams of fiber; a diet high in fiber (35 grams a day or more) has been linked with reduced risk of heart disease.*



Winter squash

Sure, fresh winter squash is available now, but choose frozen instead. There's no need to freeze, peel, cut, seed, or puree—it's ready to go straight from the box.

1 SQUASH-APPLE SOUP

Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large saucepan on medium. Add 2 chopped shallots and 1 tablespoon of minced fresh ginger; cook for 3 minutes. Add 2 packages of frozen squash puree, 3 cups reduced-sodium vegetable broth, 1 diced apple, 1 tablespoon dried sage, and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil, then simmer, covered, for 15 minutes. In batches, process the soup in a blender until smooth. Serve with a swirl of sour cream.

2 PENNE WITH WINTER SQUASH AND RICOTTA

Cook 8 ounces whole-grain penne pasta according to package directions. Meanwhile, sauté 2 chopped shallots and 2 minced garlic cloves with 1 tablespoon of oil in a skillet on medium for 3 minutes. Stir in a 10-ounce package thawed squash puree, ½ cup light ricotta cheese, ½ cup grated Parmesan, ½ cup water, the juice of ½ lemon, ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg, and salt and pepper to taste; simmer 5 minutes. Drain the pasta and toss it with the sauce. Serve topped with chopped parsley and more Parmesan.

3 PAN-SEARED PORK CHOPS WITH MAPLE-SQUASH POLENTA

In a medium saucepan, bring 4 cups of water to a simmer, and then whisk in 1 cup coarse cornmeal until it begins to thicken, about 1 minute. Reduce to medium low and cook until thick, whisking frequently, about 15 minutes. Meanwhile, season two bone-in pork chops with salt and pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a skillet on medium and sear the chops until cooked through, about 5 minutes on each side. When the polenta is done, stir in 1 cup thawed squash puree, ¼ cup grated Parmesan, and a drizzle of pure maple syrup. Add salt and pepper to taste.

HEALTH BONUS *The orange glow of winter squash is a sign of its beta-carotene, which your body converts to immunity-boosting vitamin A.*



Wild blueberries

During the summer, intensely flavorful wild blueberries sell for sky-high prices at local farmers' markets. Frozen ones, though, are priced right—and available year-round.

1 WILD-BLUEBERRY CORNMEAL PANCAKES

In a large bowl, combine ½ cup of yellow cornmeal, ½ cup whole-wheat flour, ½ cup frozen blueberries, ½ cup milk, 1 mashed ripe banana, 1 egg, 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, and 1 teaspoon baking powder (stir in more milk if the batter is too thick to pour). Heat 1 tablespoon of butter in a large skillet on medium. Drop the batter in, ½ cup at a time; cook until the pancakes are golden brown, about 3 minutes per side. Serve topped with pure maple syrup and thawed blueberries.

2 SEARED CHICKEN WITH BLUEBERRY SALSA

In a bowl, combine 1 cup thawed wild blueberries, 1 diced small red onion, 1 diced red bell pepper, 1 seeded and diced jalapeño pepper, ½ cup torn basil leaves, the juice of 1 lime, 1 teaspoon honey, and ¼ teaspoon salt. Serve over seared chicken or fish.

3 HIGH-PROTEIN BLUEBERRY-YOGURT SHAKE

In a blender, combine 1 cup frozen wild blueberries, ½ cup plain Greek yogurt, 1 scoop plain or vanilla whey protein powder, 1 banana, ½ cup pomegranate juice, ¼ cup walnut pieces, and ½ teaspoon vanilla extract. Whirl until smooth.

HEALTH BONUS *Cornell researchers who ranked the antioxidant power of 25 fruits found that wild blueberries had the highest overall levels, and a study in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry found that wild blueberries pack about 50 percent more antioxidant power than regular cultivated blueberries.*

For bonus recipes featuring frozen produce, check out MensHealth.com/freezer-burn.

Your freezer rules From store to stove, make the most of your frozen produce

TEST THE BAG Make sure you can feel the individual fruits and vegetables. "A bag that feels like a block of ice has most likely been thawed and refrozen, degrading the flavor and nutrients," says Barry Swanson, Ph.D. **GO FANCY** If you can, choose the USDA "U.S. Fancy" shield on bags or boxes of frozen produce, not the lower-grade "U.S. No. 1." **STAY PURE** Steer clear of frozen fruits and vegetables with added

sweeteners, salt, or sauces. The only ingredient should be the fruit or vegetable itself.

TOSS SOME Those peas you've had since Super Bowl XLII should be compost. Frozen fruits and vegetables last about 6 months and 1 year, respectively, before their flavor, texture, and nutrients begin to degrade, says Swanson. **THAW NOT** If you're making smoothies, soup, chili, or stir-fry, there's no need to defrost your produce.

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Rev Up Her Sex Drive

Stoke her sexual self-image—and reap the rewards in bed

BY GRANT STODDARD

WANT A PHENOMENAL SEX LIFE? Tweaking your technique and rethinking that nickname for your penis can help. But those things come second to an overlooked fundamental: ensuring that your girl feels sexy. Always. It sounds simple, because it is. But it's also something men neglect to do. Think about it: When was the last time you told your wife she was so hot you couldn't keep your damn hands off her? Yeah, that's what I thought.

While a woman's sexual self-esteem isn't wholly dependent on her man's words and deeds, you can still play a huge role in pumping up her ego. And you know what happens when a woman feels sexy? Sex happens. More sex, and more pleasurable sex. That's because a woman's attitude toward having sex is strongly correlated with the way she views her own sexual magnetism. It's science! Men may experience mojo fluxes due to income or status issues, but "women are more likely to have body-image insecurities and concerns about aging," says Debby Herbenick, Ph.D., a professor of human sexuality at Indiana University.

Consider this your to-do list for cranking up your partner's libido—and enjoying the best bedroom boost you'll ever experience.

She needs you—sort of

A woman who's secure in her sexuality has the confidence to wield her power at will, according to a University of Ottawa survey of 932 women. This "sexual autonomy"—that is, her ability to actively seek out her own satisfaction in addition to making you feel pretty great, too—can help her comfortably initiate



sex with a partner, communicate her preferences, and take charge of ensuring that she has an orgasm . . . or three. "Highly sexual women not only are confident about their sexuality but also engage in situations in which they're more likely to be satisfied," says lead study

author Jocelyn Wentland, M.Sc. "Women who are sexually autonomous are more comfortable touching themselves during sex."

Your move Bring home some accessories. A study from the Center for Sexual Health Promotion at Indiana University reveals that

Photograph by MARK ANDREW, styling: Inessa Selditz, hair: Vassilis Kokkinidis/Ford Artists, makeup: Rebecca Alexander/Roy Brown Pro, prop styling: Chelsea Moruskin/Patricia McMahon, Aeropostale tank, H&M bloomers



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women who use vibrators have higher sexual functioning than those who don't—meaning they're more likely to experience arousal, lubrication, orgasm . . . the works. Try the new line of Trojan vibrators now available (perhaps shockingly) in some drugstores—the Vibrating Tri-Phoria (\$40, trojanvibrations.com) or the fingertip-mounted Vibrating Touch (\$17).

While she's deftly wielding her new toy, tell her how hot it makes you to see her touching herself. Add a compliment about her appearance down there while you're at it. A woman who has a positive genital self-image finds it easier to reach orgasm; she's also less anxious about sex and more likely to use a vibrator, according to another recent Indiana University study. "When you're performing oral sex on her, tell her she's beautiful," Herbenick says. "Remember when you were 16 and would have killed to see a naked woman? Now is your time to be grateful—audibly grateful and appreciative."

She really is the best ever

What better way to figure out what makes a woman a smoldering sexpot than to ask the smoldering sexpot herself? Of the participants identified as "highly sexual" in the University of Ottawa survey, 61 percent said they thought they were better at sex than most women were, and 90 percent said they felt confident about their sexual ability. "Like men, women want to feel that they're good partners—that they can give good oral sex, or be good at sex," says Herbenick.

Your move Cut to the chase. Beyond making guttural noises at the appropriate times, you can actually enhance a woman's sexual self-esteem by being frank and specific about your own sexual desires. "Women who understand the sexual needs of their partner are more able

to fulfill them and balance these needs with their own," says Kristelle Heinrichs, M.A., a Vancouver-based therapist and coauthor of a study that identified 31 frequently cited factors affecting a woman's sexual self-esteem. "This can improve the satisfaction and confidence of both partners in the relationship." The trick is to pair your own desires with sexual compliments that are couched in your feelings about her. "Say, 'I can't stop thinking about last night. You really blow me away,'" suggests Tracey Cox, the author of *Supersex for Life*. "Make it about her. Saying 'you turn me on' is far more powerful than saying 'I was so turned on last night.'"

You're her rock

Women in long-term relationships that they describe as loving, stable, and respectful are more likely to have high sexual self-esteem, according to Heinrichs's study. "Creating an environment of trust and security can be an extremely important factor influencing how women feel about themselves," says Ian Kerner, Ph.D., a sex therapist and the author of *She Comes First*. He says some of his female patients report difficulty in achieving orgasm because they feel unsure or insecure about where they stand in a relationship. Once they work through the insecurity, he says, many experience more pleasure from sex.

Your move Share your world. "Telling her you love her helps, but she also needs reassurance of a future," says Cox. "Talk more about plans that include her: 'Next year for your birthday, let's go to Italy' or 'I'd really like to work in New York one day, but only if you'll come with me.'" Another good way to earn her trust: Leave your phone in plain view and your

e-mail open on your laptop. "It shows that you're not texting an old flame or expecting anything incriminating to arrive, and that your conscience is clean," Cox says.

She just can't turn off the hotness

A woman who feels great about her physical appearance is more likely to desire sex and to feel a greater level of satisfaction when she

Kiss her deeply when you come home from work. And build tension—always.

has it. In a 2009 study from the University of Texas at Austin, researchers recorded women's physical sexual responses (desire, arousal, lubrication) to erotic material. "Women with higher levels of body image or body esteem reported higher levels of sexual desire," says study coauthor Brooke Seal, Ph.D. In other words, the more attractive a woman felt, the more she wanted to be sexual.

Your move Compliment her while her clothes are on. As with comedy, the secret is in your timing. So the experts advise spreading the love out over the course of a day to keep your whispered words potent and meaningful. "Give compliments in the moment, but also after the fact; and say them outside the bedroom when there's no chance or expectation of sex," says columnist Emma Taylor of EMandLO.com.

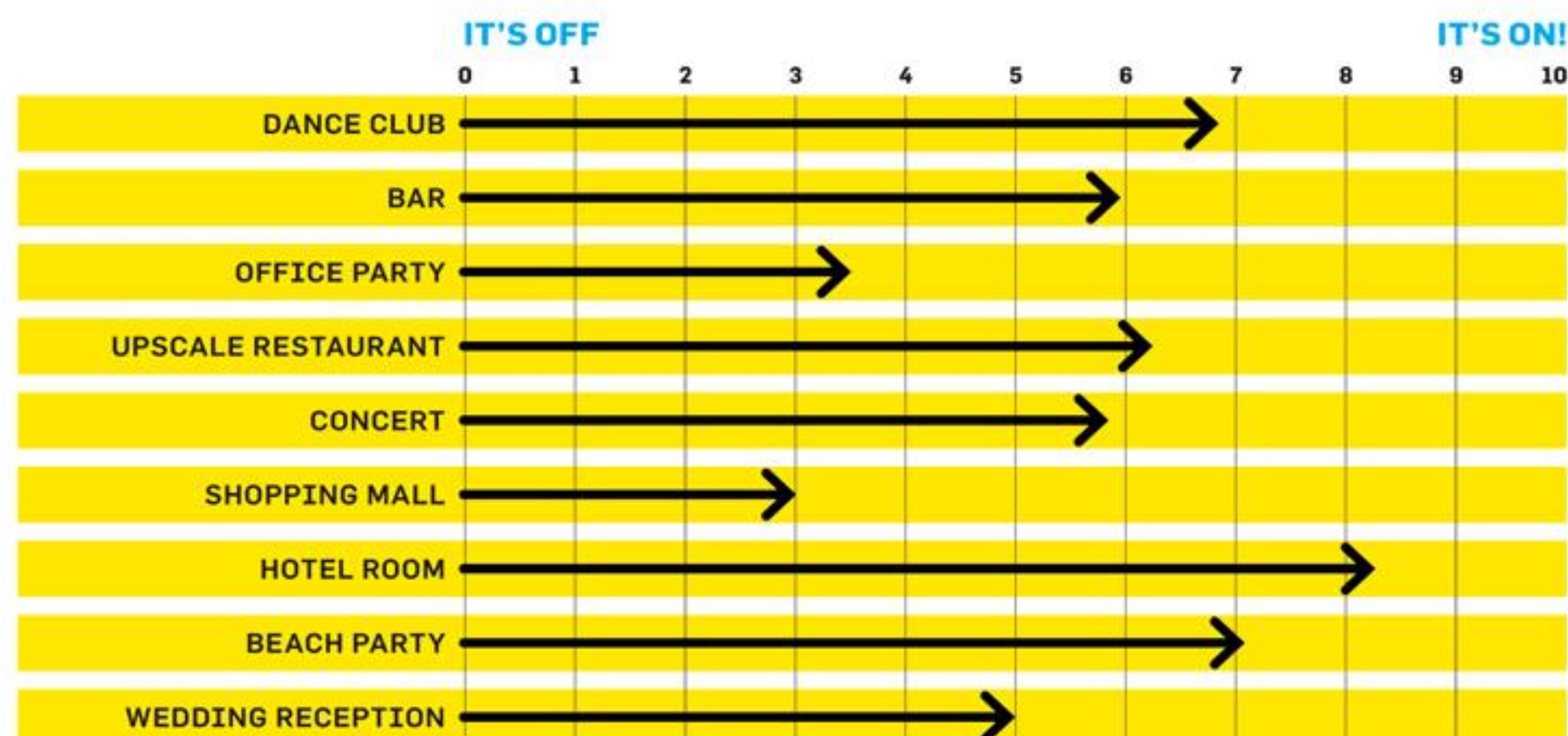
She simmers to a boil

As life turns busier and busier, your free time for the things you love—having sex, say—becomes squeezed out. It would be easy to write this off as a mere fact of life, but a sustained drop in sack time can send her sexual chutzpah plummeting. In Heinrichs's study, women said they felt guilty about the perceived infrequency of sex with their partner, and this, not surprisingly, produced a dip in sexual self-esteem. "When women regularly engage in intercourse and have positive experiences, they feel better and better about their sexuality and themselves," Heinrichs says. More sex, it would seem, leads to more sex.

Your move Ditch the calendar. Instead of scheduling sex, which can make sex feel decidedly unsexy, rip up your playbook and fit some R-rated fun into stolen moments. Squeeze her butt in the morning as she makes coffee. Kiss her deeply—for 5 seconds or so—when you come home from work. And build tension—always. "Let her know you're constantly lusty after her in a situation where neither of you can act on it," says Cox. "Something like, 'I kept sneaking a look at your picture on Facebook today—you look so sexy' or 'I can't stop thinking about what you did the other night. It's like it's stuck on replay in my head.'" ■

Where she's in the mood

837 women reveal the settings that make them feel sexy





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Wegasm



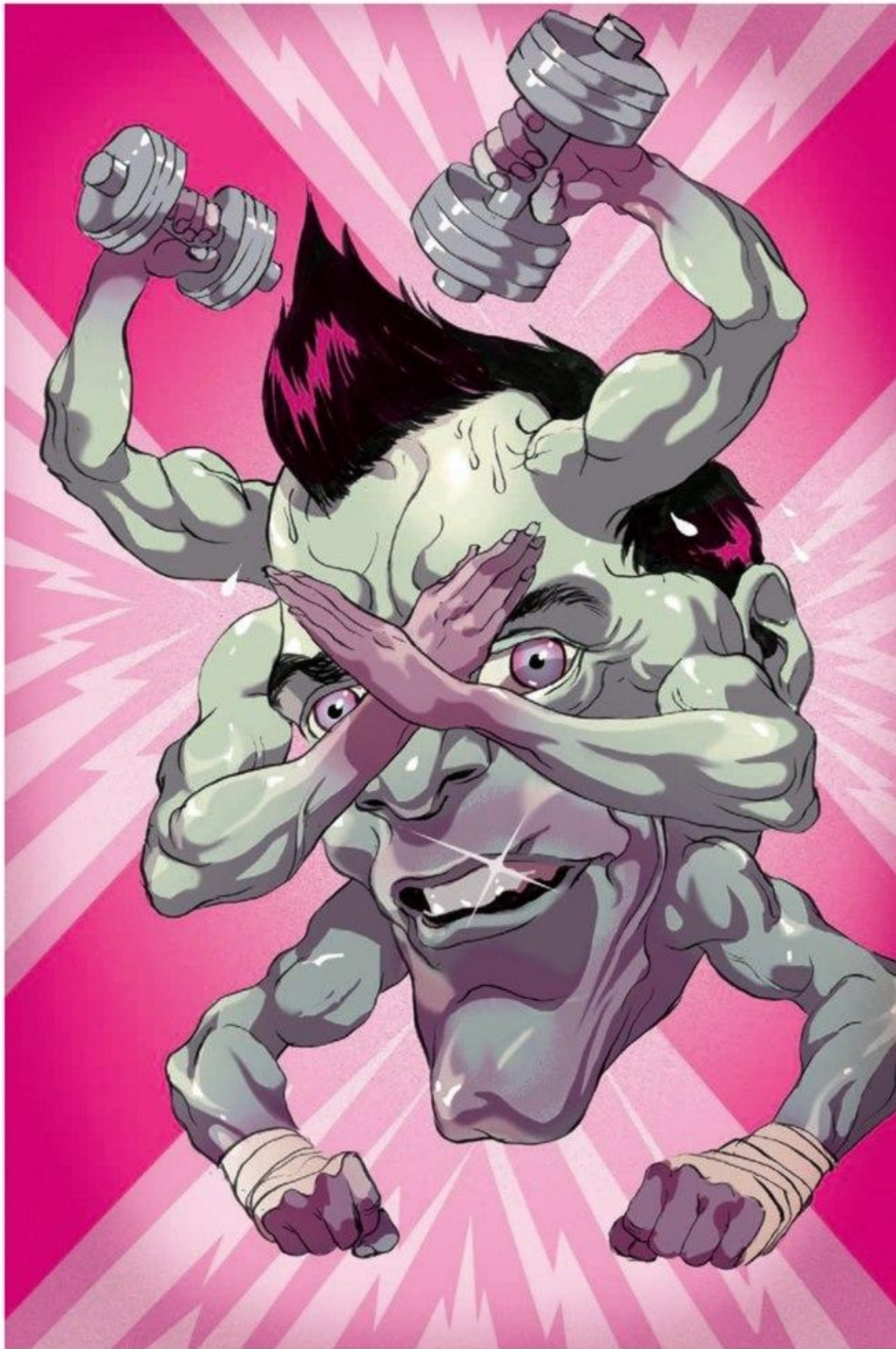
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The Power of P90X

Tony Horton used to be a stand-up comedian. Now he's the front man for P90X and a millionaire exercise guru. So is he an infomercial salesman? Or a fitness savior?

BY JOE KITA • ILLUSTRATION BY TOMER HANUKA

IT'S 11:30 P.M., and a man steps off the elevator in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Tony Horton enters the lobby wearing black shorts, a black sweater, and despite the hour, dark glasses. But two guys in their 30s, who just left the bar, recognize him.

"You're Tony Horton!" says one in disbelief. "Dude!" is all the other can utter. Both men tell him they're following his P90X workout program, which is sold relentlessly through infomercials across America. They boast of their results, showing off suppos-

edly flatter guts and bigger biceps. One claims to have the DVDs in his hotel room at this very moment: "I use 'em when I'm on the road!"

By the time Horton finally breaks away, he has signed autographs, mugged for photos, struck his signature forearm-crossed "X-Man"

pose, and even done a handstand by the front desk. Finally he exits the hotel and settles into the backseat of a private car that's been waiting to take him to QVC headquarters, in nearby West Chester.

That's right. Horton is heading to QVC—the network darling of little old ladies in quilted housedresses—to sell his P90X workout program. (“Just two easy payments of \$64.95, plus \$9.43 shipping and handling.”) He'll do an hourlong taping at 1 a.m. (right after Joan Rivers sells jewelry), grab a few hours of sleep in a back room, and then do more tapings at 6 a.m., 6 p.m., and 10 p.m.

It's hustle like this that has enabled Horton to hawk a reported 3 million P90X DVD sets, in addition to his fitness accessories, nutritional supplements, and other workout programs. Not bad for a 52-year-old former stand-up comedian and theater major who lacks a college degree or, for that matter, any type of fitness credentials.

“Hey, George Bush became president. What was *his* experience?” asks Horton. “A lot of trainers are certified up the yin-yang and live in rent-controlled apartments out behind convalescent homes because they can't make a buck. Sorry I have a sense of humor, sorry I'm not certified, but my philosophy is based on 25 years of training everyone from moms to Bruce Springsteen.”

Indeed, what Horton and the company behind him, known as Beachbody, do exceptionally well is excite people. Meet Horton in a hotel lobby or watch his infomercial, and you'll start to believe—in him, in his program, and most important, in your own potential to transform yourself. It happens that quickly. QVC alone has sold 135,000 units since P90X debuted on the network in 2008. That equates to more than \$17.5 million shelled out by customers.

Beyond the compelling marketing, there are two reasons why P90X is so popular. First, Horton is the perfect front man. At 5'10" and 180 pounds with 9 percent body fat, he is genuinely ripped. He says he can consecutively do 110 pushups, 80 dips, 35 pullups, and eight 260-pound lat pulls. Plus, he can hold a handstand for a minute and even do a backflip off a wall. To prove it, he often drops to the floor and pumps out a few reps of whatever exercise he's talking about. His motto, which he wears on the back of his shirt, is “Bring It!” Along with the brawn, he has a full head of hair and—even under the harsh QVC makeup lights—no telltale signs of any nips or tucks. And, to the delight of the housedress set, he's not married.

But second, and most important, P90X—unlike the garbage heap of other “miracle” infomercial products—can deliver results. That's because it's built on such proven fitness principles as consistency, intensity,

and variety, and you don't need special gadgets—just a pullup bar and dumbbells (or resistance bands). Simply pop a disc into your DVD player, move the couch out of the way, and follow along with Tony and his gang. In fact, Horton's critics claim there's nothing new in his workouts; if you do anything 6 days a week for 90 days, you'll lose weight and build muscle at any age.

Horton says with a shrug, “You can't reinvent the pushup. Plyometrics has been around forever, yoga has been around for even longer, and Kenpo karate is nothing I invented . . . but the sequence, the pace, and the variety of my workouts is something that never existed before. P90X is hard. But do your best and forget the rest. If you're in trouble, hit the pause button. If you can't do this move, here are two ways to modify it. I just want you to show up, man. That's all I want you to do.”

Regardless of whether you ever pick up the phone (“Two easy payments, nothing to lose, give us a call!”), the chief elements of Tony Horton's exercise philosophy can be incorporated into any workout. Here's how.

P90X Principle 1 **Bewilder your body**

Horton claims to have “exercise bipolar disorder,” which means that although he works out regularly, the specifics of what he does each day depend on how he feels. So he may swap speed drills for strength work, chest for back, or even karate for Pilates. He often doesn't decide until 10 minutes beforehand, or improvises on the fly. He calls this approach “muscle confusion.”

“Look at all the people who've been going to gyms for years and still look the same, or those who tried exercising and quit,” he says. “That's because they're doing mundane, myopic routines, and they're bored. Let's break the mold.”

Before Horton became a celebrity himself, he says, he trained lots of celebrities in Los Angeles. He says one of his clients, Billy Idol, nicknamed him “Muscle Confucius” because of his varied approach to fitness. And there is wisdom in it. If you're training for life rather than a specific event, mixing it up will help you burn more calories, protect yourself from injury, achieve a balanced physique, and keep you motivated.

Your body doesn't respond to repetition, Horton says. It responds to novelty.

P90X at your place Schedule your workouts a month in advance, reserving exact times for each. (Horton blocks out 20 on his desk calendar at the start of every month.) Pencil in cardio, strength, speed, and flexibility days, but stop there. Let your mood determine your specific workout when each day arrives. Always be open to new things. If it's a cardio day, hop onto a different machine

Bring it!

In Tony Horton's new book, *Bring It! The Revolutionary Fitness Plan for All Levels That Burns Fat, Builds Muscle, and Shreds Inches*, he uses a variety of circuits to help burn fat. Try this one: Do 20 reps of each exercise, rest 30 seconds, and repeat.



BURN

Pivot punches

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and knees slightly bent. Bend your elbows as shown. Twist your torso to the left by pivoting on your right foot, and throw a punch with your right hand. Then twist to your right and punch with your left hand.



BLAST

Lateral shuffle

Stand in an athletic stance. Shuffle to your left by moving one foot and then the other. Do this four times, and shuffle back to the starting position.

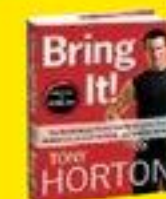


Try to keep your leg nearly straight as you kick it up.

BLITZ

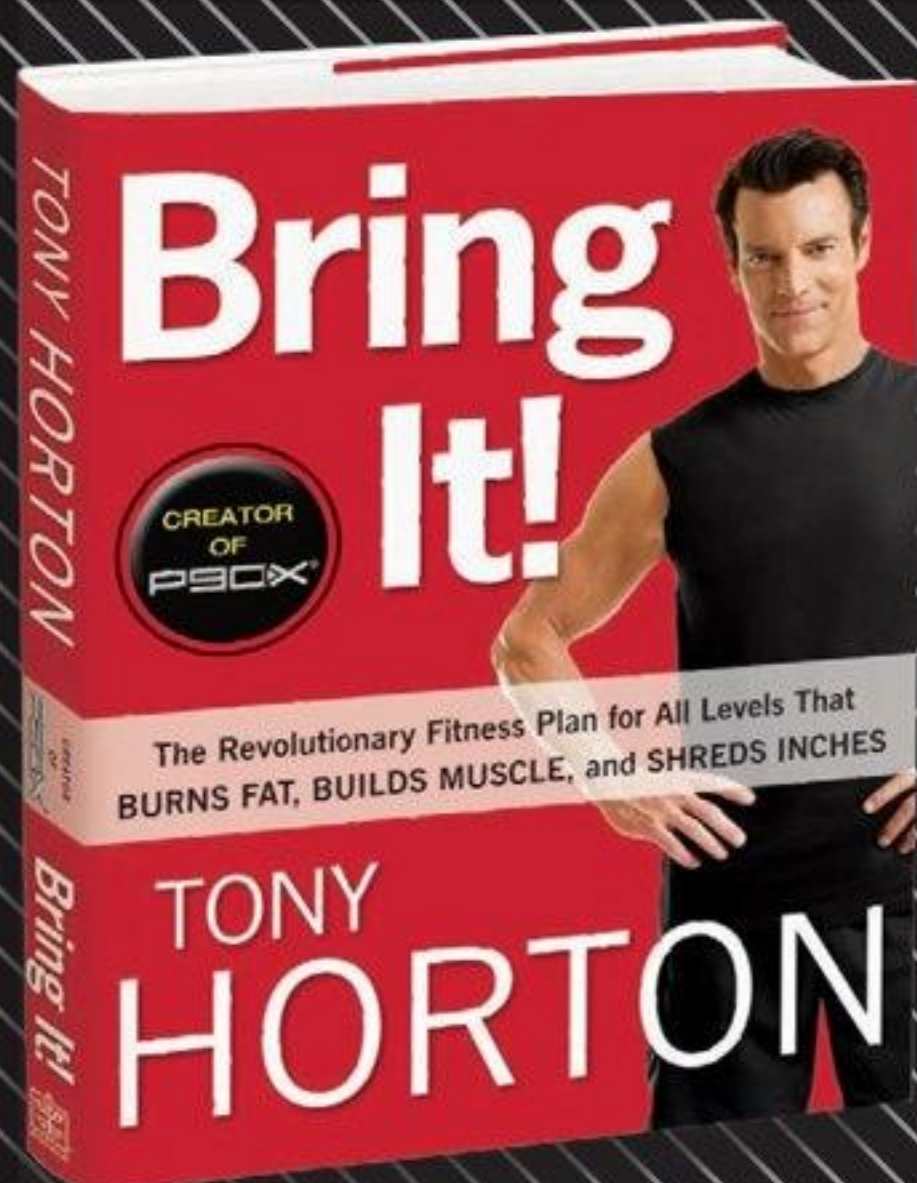
Front kicks

Assume a staggered stance, with your feet about 12 inches apart. Balance on your front leg, and then kick forward with your back leg to about hip height. Do 10 reps, switch legs, and repeat.



For information on Tony Horton's new book, *Bring It! The Revolutionary Fitness Plan for All Levels That Burns Fat, Builds Muscle, and Shreds Inches*, visit MensHealth.com/horton.

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Fitness

or into a kickboxing class. If it's a strength day, try using free weights instead of a Nautilus machine. "Your muscles shouldn't know what hit 'em," says Horton.

P90X Principle 2

Work your weaknesses

Here's some more Muscle Confucius: The more you dread doing something, the more value it holds for you. So if you hate stretching or intervals, that's probably because flexibility and speed are your weaknesses. Since no man likes to feel inferior, we avoid dealing with our weaknesses and end up training our strengths. Wrong move.

"The only reason I'm as fit as I am," says Horton, who used to be a spokesman for NordicTrack, "is because I kept doing things that were hard and that I couldn't do well."

P90X at your place Select one exercise or facet of fitness that you struggle with, and commit to improving it. Schedule an occasional "weakness day." Once you overcome the initial aversion, your improvement will be dramatic—and the success will motivate you to take on more of your weaknesses.

P90X Principle 3

Find (and flirt) with the Line

The Line is your discomfort threshold. It's the one pushup beyond what you think you can do. It's that extra agonizing rep after you've finished a set. But it's not just the effort that's important; it's the desire to want to go there again and again. That's the secret to becoming fit.

And it's the reason Horton scoffs at walking, riding an exercise bike while reading, or doing any mild form of cardio as a sole means of fitness. "Walking is just a waste of time for most people," he says. "We're primates and we walk—that's what we do. And even though it's better than doing nothing, it's not enough. You have to find that Line in whatever you're doing and continually push it out."

P90X at your place Use Horton's discomfort scale to gauge where you are during your workout.

10 = so brutal, so awful, you're miserable.

9 = just short of the above.

7 or 8 = really hard, but you're maintaining form and hanging in there.

6 = it's not a 7 or 8, but you're working as hard as you can today.

5 = you can do more . . . but you're not.

1 to 4 = unless it's a recovery day, you're wasting your time.

The Line is at 6, 7, or 8 on the scale.

P90X Principle 4

Train resiliency, not vanity

Horton says that if a law were passed that limited him to one type of exercise, he'd pick yoga. And for once he's not joking.

"Yoga is resistance, it's balance, it's coordination, it's stamina, it's even cardiovascular, depending on how you do it. . . . I can turn yoga into anything, and it's the reason I can do this"—he drops to the floor for clap pushups—"and this"—he hops back up for high leg kicks. "Ever see a 65-year-old guy run? That should be incentive enough."

Indeed, as you age, you lose your flexibility. That means by age 65, you'll practically be prepping for rigor mortis. "I put off yoga for 4 years because I thought it was silly," says Horton.

P90X at your place Swallow your pride and enroll in a beginner's yoga class taught by an instructor with at least a 200-hour certification. Flowing vinyasa styles, such as ashtanga, are more rigorous. Once you know the basics, you'll be able to practice on your own. (There's a good chance you'll be the only guy in a class of very fit, flexible women, though, so you may not want to.)

There's another advantage to yoga that is fundamental to Horton's exercise and life philosophies. Although it sounds contradic-

Always be open to new things. Your muscles won't know what hit 'em.

tory coming from someone ironically nicknamed Tony Humble, he says that "externals," such as weight loss and muscle definition, should never be your primary motivators for working out. "Focus instead on the internals," he says. Are you less fatigued? Do you have more energy? Are you sleeping better? Do you feel stronger? Are you happier? Yoga helps you become more aware and mindful of all these things, and they're what will keep you working out long-term.

IT'S 2:10 A.M. QVC is now featuring the Stan Herman Collection. And Horton is finally looking a little tired as he sits on the stage steps sipping a smoothie. It seems like a good time to ask him a philosophical question: Tell us, Tony, what's the one thing fitness still hasn't brought you?

After an uncharacteristically long pause, he says, "Honestly? Nothing. Fitness and healthy eating have changed my life from soup to nuts. There's no area that it hasn't given me confidence in—physical, mental, emotional. I feel blessed that in some weird way I've been given this opportunity to help people. . . . For me, fitness isn't about how long I'm going to live; it's about the quality of life right now. And let me tell you, man, I'm one happy dude." ■



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Too Much of a Good Thing

Vegetables? Go crazy. Sex? Have at it. But pace yourself with these other health boosters (including coffee)

BY JIM GORMAN

PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCAS ZAREBINSKI

A LIFE LIVED AT FULL THROTTLE CAN'T BE SUSTAINED. Eventually we start calling it a night and asking for the doggie bag after a couple of rounds. We begin feeling more sorry for than envious of Charlie Sheen. But what about overindulging in the stuff that seems so good for us? Sleep, for instance. Or coffee. Or antioxidants. If those things are inherently good—even lifesaving—can't we just gorge ourselves on them? After all, who ever heard of someone going on an antioxidant bender?

Nobody: That's the problem. So we combed the research and consulted experts across a range of specialties. In our process of elimination, we were thrilled to hear that it's difficult to OD on sex or masturbation. Ditto fruits and vegetables. But the dark sides of other health-enhancing moves surprised us. Toxicologists have an expression for this principle: "The dose makes the poison." That's never been truer than with these five "good" things.



Pace your coffee intake to stay healthy—and stave off caffeine addiction.

Food styling: Roscoe Betsill

Good/bad thing #1: Sleep

If a deficit of nightly sleep can make you gain weight and lose mental sharpness as well as increase your risk of cardiovascular disease, then scoring tons of shut-eye must be just what the doctor ordered, no? No. In a 2010 study in the journal *Sleep*, men who logged 9 or more hours a night were 43 percent more likely to have heart disease than 7-hour sleepers—regardless of their age, BMI, physical activity, alcohol use, and preexisting diseases.

But you may be among the minority of people who naturally need a lot of sleep—which is okay, as long as you feel refreshed the next day. “If you’re still sleepy, something may be affecting sleep quality, such as sleep apnea or restless leg syndrome,” says Clete Kushida, M.D., Ph.D., medical director of Stanford Sleep Medicine Center. “These conditions fragment sleep, so they can actually make you sleep longer.” If you suspect one of these is a factor, your physician can refer you to a sleep center for evaluation.

Wake up easier If you’re just sleeping too much, set your TV timer to wake you up—the light-and-noise combo is more rousing than an alarm clock, says Christopher Winter, M.D., a *Men’s Health* advisor and medical director of the Martha Jefferson Hospital sleep medicine center in Charlottesville, Virginia. “Light tells your brain to stop making the sleep hormone melatonin,” he says. “This is better than leaving the curtain open—flickering TV light is more bothersome to your brain than steady light.”

Good/bad thing #2: Antibiotics

Use the right tools for the job. We wish doctors would internalize this message better. Many insist on banging in nails with screwdrivers by prescribing antibiotics—which fight bacterial infections—for viral ailments. “When a doctor doesn’t want to be wrong because there’s a slight chance a patient has a bacterial infection, or if a patient insists, then antibiotics are more likely to be prescribed,” says Lauri Hicks, D.O., medical director of the CDC’s “Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work” campaign. Upper-respiratory infections are classic examples. They account for 75 percent of all antibiotics prescribed by general practitioners, yet their cause is viral about 90 percent of the time. What’s the harm? Antibiotic overuse can spawn resistance in fast-evolving bacteria, such as NDM-1 and the skin infection MRSA. Also, antibiotics can kill off beneficial bacteria in your body.

Battle better Ask your doctor if your condition could resolve itself without a prescription, or whether a first-line antibiotic, like amoxicillin or penicillin, would be more appropriate than a broad-spectrum antibiotic, like azithromycin. “There’s a perception that newer antibiotics are more effective, and that’s not always the case,” says Dr. Hicks. “Good old penicillin is still an important initial therapy, and it leaves options for further treatment.”

Good/bad thing #3: Coffee

Your daily java provides long-lasting health advantages. Recent research suggests a link between coffee consumption and lowered risks of Alzheimer’s disease, liver cancer, and prostate cancer.

But beware the telltale buzz of caffeine addiction, which can set in if you slurp more than 300 milligrams of the stuff each day. (A 12-ounce Starbucks standard brew has 260.) As your body adjusts to regular caffeine exposure, your fatigue-regulating adenosine system—which is hijacked by caffeine—becomes more sensitive, and you’ll feel sluggish in your noncaffeinated moments, according to a 2010 British study. The buzz that addicts feel is merely the *emergence* from fatigue-causing withdrawal symptoms.

Spread out your fix Pace your daily intake. “Better to spread it throughout the day to prevent overdose,” says James D. Lane, Ph.D., the director of Duke University medical center’s psychophysiology laboratory. “It’s the high peak of caffeine in your blood that causes problems.” If you normally drink 12 ounces with breakfast, limit yourself to half that in the morning, and have the other half at lunchtime.

Good/bad thing #4: Ibuprofen

When knees and muscles ache, wounded warriors in a hurry to heal dose up on “vitamin I”—ibuprofen. And if the recommended 400 milligrams of magic relief from pain and swelling don’t quite do it, well, pop two more. In fact, why not head off workout pain by gulping several ibuprofen tablets *before* going running or playing hoops? So goes the logic that leads men to pop them like Tic Tacs.

Ibuprofen leads a broad pack of painkillers known as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs. These drugs decrease production of prostaglandins, which can act as pain and inflammation messengers. When used habitually or preventively, though, they deter those hormones from doing another vital job: generating tissue-building collagen. Injured bone, ligament, and muscle can’t heal as quickly or grow at the same rate, says Stuart T. Warden, Ph.D., an assistant professor in

Indiana University’s department of physical therapy. “Taking ibuprofen before a workout won’t reduce soreness and can actually decrease the effectiveness of exercise,” he says. NSAIDs also inhibit cyclooxygenase, an enzyme thought to be involved in the protection of the heart and stomach linings; this

Toxicologists have an expression: “The dose makes the poison.”

effect can lead to an increased risk of heart attack in susceptible people, as well as nausea, diarrhea, and intestinal bleeding.

Ease the pain Stop the prophylactic pill popping and head for the pool after your workout. “The best treatment for muscle soreness is gentle exercise, like hydrotherapy—so walking or running in a pool for 20 minutes is one option,” Warden says. The movement alleviates the fluid buildup that causes pain.

Good/bad thing #5: Antioxidants

Free radicals: They’re as scary as they sound. These cell-damaging molecules are thought to contribute to arthritis, diabetes, stroke, cancer, and heart disease. Your potential lifesavers? Antioxidants. Those in beta-carotene and in vitamins C and E attack and neutralize the roaming free radicals. But antioxidant supplements are a different story—they might actually sideline your body’s antioxidant defenses. In a German study, young men who exercised for 4 weeks saw an improvement in their sensitivity to insulin—a known exercise benefit that helps prevent type 2 diabetes—while those who exercised for 4 weeks while supplementing with vitamins C and E saw no boost.

Let nature do its thing Score your antioxidant infusion from a balanced diet; you’ll hedge your bets in favor of any still-unknown benefits, and avoid megadosing. “It may be there is something in whole-food ‘packaging’ that makes the nutrients better absorbed or used than they would be in supplements,” says Katherine Zeratsky, R.D., L.D., of the Mayo Clinic. ■

Drop that scale! And that BP cuff . . .

Be careful that you aren’t testing and measuring yourself into an obsession

We’re big fans of at-home health monitoring; the easier it is to measure your weight, body fat, blood pressure, and other vitals, the better. But there’s a catch. “With such easy access to technology, some people tend to monitor their health more closely than they ought to,” says Elias Aboujaoude, M.D., director of the Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Clinic at Stanford University school of medicine. When you find yourself unable to go to work or out on a date without weighing yourself first, it’s time to step back and reevaluate your behavior, he says. Remind yourself that if your BMI or blood pressure hasn’t dramatically changed in the past couple of days, it probably won’t in the next few. Unless your doctor recommends otherwise, stick to weekly monitoring. Try unplugging the device or removing its batteries after each use, or place a note with the date of your next reading on your scale or BP monitor, Dr. Aboujaoude suggests. The idea is to place obstacles between you and the behavior you’re trying to stop. If you still can’t tear yourself away from your tech, stash it in the basement or someplace without easy access.

RACHEL GRICE

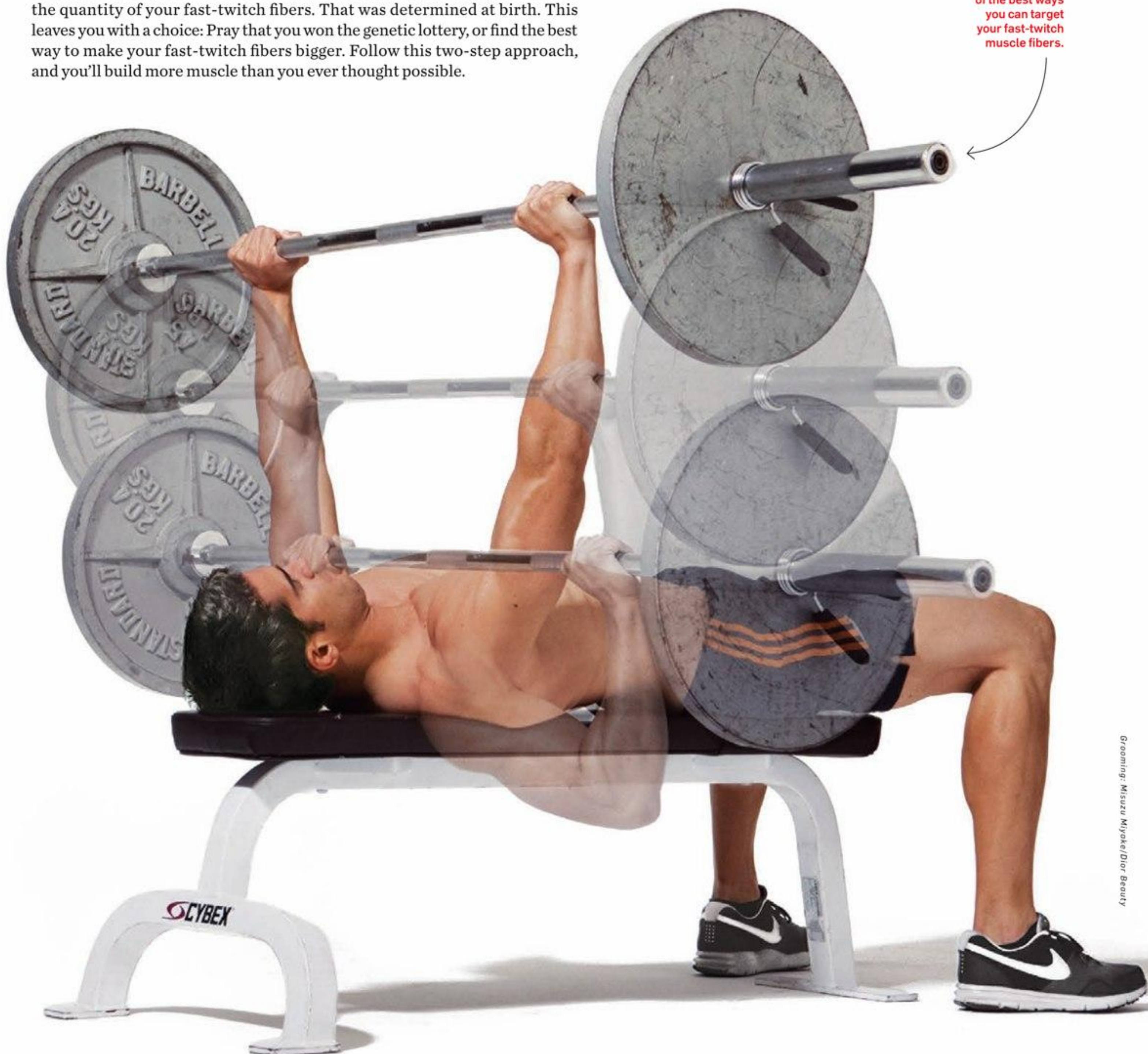
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BY BILL HARTMAN, P.T., C.S.C.S. • PHOTOGRAPH BY ASGER CARLSEN

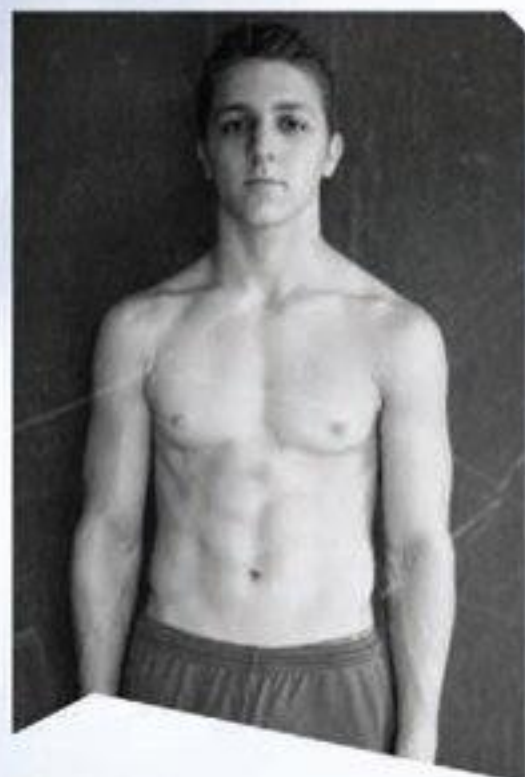
WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING A BETTER BODY, every guy is looking for an edge. And while some men might opt for a 'roid trip to an underground pharmacy, the rest of us want a safer, smarter shortcut to more muscle. And I've found your advantage: fast-twitch muscle training. It's the X factor that'll help you pack on new muscle, add strength, and even burn more fat. • But before I reveal the secret, let's make one thing clear: Nothing can help you increase the quantity of your fast-twitch fibers. That was determined at birth. This leaves you with a choice: Pray that you won the genetic lottery, or find the best way to make your fast-twitch fibers bigger. Follow this two-step approach, and you'll build more muscle than you ever thought possible.

Doing bench presses is one of the best ways you can target your fast-twitch muscle fibers.



Grooming: Misuzu Miyake/Dior Beauty

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STEP 1
Test your 1-rep max on the bench press (see "How to test your 1-rep max," right). Then rest 5 minutes.

STEP 2
Select a weight that's 45 percent of your 1-rep max. (So if your max is 225 pounds, you'll start with about 100 pounds.) Try to perform 5 reps in 5 seconds.

STEP 3
If you succeed, rest 1 to 2 minutes and then repeat the test, this time using 5 to 10 percent more weight. Keep adding 5 to 10 percent until you can no longer complete 5 reps in 5 seconds.

STEP 4
Calculate your **fast-twitch ratio**: Simply divide the heaviest weight you could lift in 5 seconds by your 1-rep max. If you lifted 135 pounds in 5 seconds and your max is 225, your ratio would be 60 percent.

5-rep test
1-rep max

= fast-twitch ratio

How to test your 1-rep max
Using a spotter, perform a barbell bench press. Start with half of your estimated 1-rep max, or 1RM (the amount of weight you think you can press only once). Do 5 or 6 reps with perfect technique. Now add 10% more weight but subtract 1 rep. Rest 2 minutes. Repeat this pattern until you do 1 rep with about 90% of your estimated 1RM. Rest 3 to 5 minutes, and try your estimated max. If you achieve it, then that's your true 1RM. If you fail, then use the 90% weight; if it's too easy, add 10% to your estimated 1RM.

THE WORKOUT

Now that you've determined your fast-twitch ratio, select one of the workouts below to do as your upper-body routine at least twice a week, making sure you never do an upper-body routine two days in a row. Alternate between exercises that share the same number (1A and 1B, for example) until you complete all exercises in the pairing. Then move on to the next exercise. Select a weight that allows you to perform at least the minimum number of reps listed.

If your fast-twitch ratio is 60% or higher



Size and strength workout

EXERCISE	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	REST
1A Barbell bench press	3 sets of 4–6 reps	4 sets of 3–5 reps	5 sets of 2–4 reps	3 sets of 6–8 reps	2 minutes
1B Lean-away pulldown	3 sets of 8–10 reps	4 sets of 6–8 reps	5 sets of 4–6 reps	3 sets of 8–10 reps	2 minutes
2A Dumbbell incline bench press	3 sets of 8–10 reps	3 sets of 6–8 reps	3 sets of 4–6 reps	3 sets of 8–10 reps	1–2 minutes
2B Dumbbell row	3 sets of 8–10 reps	3 sets of 6–8 reps	3 sets of 4–6 reps	3 sets of 8–10 reps	1–2 minutes
3 Face pull	2 sets of 12 reps	2 sets of 12 reps	2 sets of 8 reps	2 sets of 8 reps	45–60 seconds

If your fast-twitch ratio is less than 60%



Speed workout

EXERCISE	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	REST
1 Dynamic effort bench press	N* × 5 reps	N × 5 reps	N × 5 reps	N × 5 reps	1 minute
2 Dynamic effort inverted row	N × 5 reps	N × 5 reps	N × 5 reps	N × 5 reps	1 minute
3A Dumbbell incline bench press	3 sets of 8–10 reps	3 sets of 6–8 reps	3 sets of 4–6 reps	3 sets of 8–10 reps	1–2 minutes
3B Dumbbell row	3 sets of 8–10 reps	3 sets of 6–8 reps	3 sets of 4–6 reps	3 sets of 8–10 reps	1–2 minutes
4A Dumbbell scaption	3 sets of 10 reps	3 sets of 8 reps	3 sets of 6 reps	3 sets of 8 reps	1 minute
4B Face pull	2 sets of 12 reps	2 sets of 12 reps	2 sets of 8 reps	2 sets of 8 reps	45 seconds

* N = the number of sets you can perform using the dynamic bench press guidelines

THE EXERCISES

Barbell bench press

Lying faceup on a bench, grab a barbell using an overhand grip that's just beyond shoulder width and hold it above your sternum with your arms straight. Lower the bar, pause, and press the bar in a straight line back to the starting position.

Lean-away pulldown

Sit in a lat pulldown machine and grab the bar using a shoulder-width, underhand grip. Lean back until your body forms a 30-degree angle with the floor. Hold this position for

the entire exercise. Without moving your torso, pull the bar down to your chest. Pause, and slowly return to the starting position.

Dumbbell incline bench press

Set an adjustable bench to an incline of 15 to 30 degrees. Lie faceup on the bench and hold the dumbbells above your shoulders with your arms straight. Lower the dumbbells to your chest. Pause, and then press the weights back up to the starting position.

Dumbbell row

Holding a pair of dumbbells, bend at your hips and knees and lower your torso until it's almost parallel to the floor. Let the dumbbells hang at arm's length from your shoulders, your palms facing behind you. Bend your elbows and pull the dumbbells to the sides of your torso. Pause, and slowly lower them.

Face pull

Attach a rope to the high pulley of a cable station and hold an end in each hand. Back a few steps away from the stack until

your arms are straight in front of you. Flare your elbows, bend your arms, and pull the middle of the rope toward your eyes so your hands end up in line with your ears. Pause, and reverse the move to the starting position.

Dynamic effort bench press

Perform a barbell bench press. On the first set, use the heaviest weight that allows you to do 5 reps in 5 seconds. Then add 5 to 10 percent more weight and try for 5 reps in 6 seconds. Rest, and then keep adding

5 percent to 10 percent more weight until you can no longer complete the 5 reps in 6 seconds. Then move to the next exercise.

Dynamic effort inverted row

Grab a barbell secured at shoulder height, using an overhand, shoulder-width grip. Hang with your arms straight and your feet elevated on a bench. Pull your shoulder blades back and lift your chest to the bar. Pause, and slowly lower your body to the starting position. Do 5 reps in 5 seconds. If that's too hard,

place your feet on the floor. Do as many sets as you did on the dynamic effort bench press, and move on to the next exercise.

Dumbbell scaption

Stand holding a pair of dumbbells at arm's length next to your sides, your palms facing each other and elbows slightly bent. Without changing the bend in your elbows, raise your arms at a 30-degree angle to your body (so they form a Y) until they're at shoulder level. Pause, and slowly lower the weight back to the starting position. ■

Marc Megna, Certified Strength and Conditioning Coach, knows exactly how to train and supplement for sport-specific goals and a sought-after athletic physique. **Marc's #1 protein choice is always Nitro-Tech® Hardcore Pro Series.** "I know Nitro-Tech delivers **high-quality, fast-absorbing whey protein** to my muscles after I train," says Marc. "Plus, the protein component delivers **24 grams of BCAAs** with every full daily dose [BCAAs are important building blocks of muscle]. And it has an additional university-studied musclebuilding ingredient, making it **by far the best protein formula I've ever used!**"

REAL-LIFE SUCCESS STORY

BEFORE



AFTER



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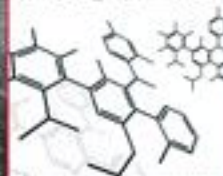
"You can build a strong chest by working it from different angles. Help this major muscle group grow with a Nitro-Tech shake after every workout."

"Rock-solid, rounded biceps are a must, and with Nitro-Tech's additional university-studied musclebuilding ingredient, it really helps you pack on lean muscle."

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The Lean Belly Prescription

Flat abs are the key to a healthy, happy life. So start right now (doctor's orders!)

BY TRAVIS STORK, M.D. • PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARTHOLOMEW COOKE

IN THE SHORT TIME I HAVE WITH PEOPLE IN the ER at Vanderbilt University medical center, my focus is obviously on their acute injury or illness. I may help a patient survive his most recent mishap, but the ultimate accident that costs many of my patients their lives isn't really any accident at all. It's a lifetime of making unhealthy choices that lead to a premature death. The culprit: visceral fat, which inflates

your abdomen and deflates your health prospects at the same time. Beat that fat and you're on a win streak for life.

And that's why I wrote a book called *The Lean Belly Prescription*. I find it difficult to discharge my patients back into a world where they'll grow more obese, more out of shape, and more frustrated by weight struggles. It's heart-breaking to see them in the ER again 2 years

later, with another heart attack, another stroke, another obesity-related complication.

I have the power to write a prescription for medicine, but what I really want is to write them a prescription for a better life. And now I have.

Even though I'm hoping to help you tackle sweeping change in your life, you don't need to feel intimidated. The key is to swap the excessive calories that fatten you up for fewer calo-



ries that still fill you up and keep you full. You can be satisfied and lose weight at the same time. Just three small changes are all you need. In a Baylor College of Medicine study, one group of adults took on three simultaneous health goals while a second group attempted one goal at a time. Eighteen months later, those who'd embraced multiple healthy changes were 25 percent more likely to have stuck with them.

The reason may be that three changes are mutually reinforcing. Start by adopting any three strategies from the following list. Base your choices not on what you're willing to give up but on what you love to eat. Modify your menu as I propose, and you'll be on your way to a lean belly.

1 "I love cheese and yogurt!"

Who doesn't? More and more evidence suggests that consuming at least three servings a day of calcium-rich dairy can help strip away fat. Researchers at the University of Tennessee found that people who did just that, taking in 1,200 milligrams of calcium a day, were 60 percent less likely to be overweight than people who consumed less calcium. And a study in *Molecular Systems Biology* suggests that yogurt-based bacteria may also reduce the amount of fat absorbed during digestion. If you love cheese and yogurt, eat at least three servings a day. Or stick with just yogurt: Another University of Tennessee study found that people who cut 500 calories a day and added three daily servings of yogurt lost 81 percent more belly fat over 12 weeks than those who didn't eat the yogurt. (Just beware of the brands with excess added sugar.)

My prescription Have 1 cup of milk with breakfast, 1½ ounces of cheese at lunchtime, and 1 cup of Greek yogurt for an afternoon snack, every day.

YOU COULD LOSE 3 pounds in 4 weeks

2 "I love pasta and rice!"

Then go for it. Just learn to love the whole-grain versions. The reward: In a Penn State study, people who cut 500 calories a day and ate whole grains lost twice as much belly fat as the 500-calorie cutters who ate refined carbs. If you crave carbs, try switching your refined carbs—white bread, white rice, regular pasta, and refined-flour products such as cookies and crackers—to whole-grain versions. The study authors credit the extra fiber in whole grains with helping to reduce calorie intake, control blood sugar, and keep insulin (the hormone that tells your body to store belly fat) in check.

My prescription Replace your refined carbs with whole-wheat and whole-grain varieties, and combine them with a balance of lean meats, vegetables, and healthy fats.

YOU COULD LOSE 8 pounds in 4 weeks

3 "I love soda!"

Consuming liquids is an important way to fill your belly, but it's important to pay attention to what you're guzzling. A study in the journal *Obesity* reveals that Americans consume about 200 calories a day from sweetened beverages, four times as much as they were consuming four decades ago. Beverages now account for 21 percent of the calories we take in every day, nearly double the amount from 40 years ago. So if you're looking to reduce your calorie intake painlessly, focus on drinks. In fact, a study by Johns Hopkins researchers found that cutting sugary liquid calories had a greater impact on weight loss than cutting food calories. Replace sweetened drinks with more-wholesome ones to help get the soda monkey off your back.

My prescription If you need more flavor and fizz than plain water offers, try flavored seltzer, or make your own low-calorie soda: one part juice, two parts seltzer.

YOU COULD LOSE 4 pounds in 4 weeks

4 "I love to graze!"

If all-day chewing is a habit, change what you're chewing to fruits and vegetables. A study in the *British Journal of Nutrition* found that dieters who ate the most folate—found in leafy greens like spinach and romaine—were 8½ times more likely to lose at least 10 percent of their starting weight after a year than those who ate the least. Another study found that an average person of normal weight consumes almost two servings of fruit a day, while an average overweight person consumes less than one. If you love to graze on a variety of foods, eat at least two pieces of fruit and at least three servings of vegetables (focusing on those leafy greens) each day. While you're at it, add a cup of beans to your regimen: A study in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* found that bean eaters have smaller waists and lower blood pressure than those who don't eat them.

My prescription Have a piece of fruit with breakfast, a salad with lunch, and a serving of beans with dinner, and eat a serving of berries for dessert or a snack. (Focus on spinach, broccoli, and brussels sprouts, and sample the entire fruit smorgasbord—berries, apples, citrus, tropicals. No, supersweet fruit juices don't count.)

YOU COULD LOSE 6 pounds in 4 weeks

5 "I love breakfast!"

Then eat it every single day. A Purdue University study showed that eating more protein for breakfast can help you feel fuller, so it may help you avoid overeating for the rest of the day. Another study in the *International Journal of Obesity* showed that dieters who cut out 1,000 calories a day and ate two eggs and toast every morning for 8 weeks lost 65 percent more weight than those calorie cutters who ate a bagel with cream cheese. And never skip breakfast; eating it regularly cuts your risk of obesity by 78 percent. Always include protein (milk, eggs, yogurt, quinoa), whole grains (cereal, steel-cut oats, whole-wheat toast, quinoa again), and whole fruit.

My prescription Eat two eggs, whole-wheat toast, two slices of bacon, a cup of low-fat Greek yogurt, and an orange within an hour of waking up.

YOU COULD LOSE 4 pounds in 4 weeks

6 "I love to snack!"

There's no need to rid yourself of the habit. If you snack strategically, you'll build more healthy foods into your diet, keep your belly full, and avoid the binge eating that leads to huge calorie payloads. For a smart snack, combine foods from three food groups, and make sure at least one of them is a protein. Eating a three-part snack like this about 2 hours



before mealtime will dramatically decrease the amount you eat later on, undercutting your appetite and keeping you from dietary indiscretions at the vending machine or at dinner.

My prescription Enjoy two daily 200-calorie snacks—one midmorning, the other midafternoon. Combine protein (nuts, yogurt, cheese) with whole grains (crackers, black-bean chips, pita) and produce (fruit, celery, carrots), and the wait for the next meal becomes bearable.

YOU COULD LOSE 7 pounds in 4 weeks

7 "I love milkshakes!"

Then make shakes a cornerstone of your diet, but with a few healthy, delicious modifica-

tions: It's time to bring on the smoothies.

In a study in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, people who drank a protein-rich smoothie for breakfast consumed the fewest calories at lunchtime, compared with those who drank a carb- or fat-laden one. And since I've already noted that adding three servings of yogurt to your daily diet can help you lose 81 percent more belly fat over 12 weeks, make yogurt the main ingredient in your smoothie.

My prescription Drink two smoothies a day—one as a meal replacement and the other as a snack: Blend 1½ cups fruit or berries with 1 cup yogurt or milk and 1 tablespoon each of peanut butter and protein powder (add half a

cup of water if it's too thick for your liking).

YOU COULD LOSE 4 pounds in 4 weeks

8 "I love fatty foods!"

Then use them as allies in the fight against belly fat. When researchers at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston put 101 overweight people on either a low-fat or a moderate-fat diet for 18 months, both groups had lost weight after a year. However, the moderate-fat eaters lost an average of 10½ pounds—60 percent more than the low-fat group—and kept those pounds off for 18 months. Healthy fats (the kind in olive oil, nuts, fatty fish, and avocados) can help you drop pounds because they keep your belly fuller longer. Don't skip animal fats like butter, cheese, or beef, either—just limit portions, since these foods are dense in calories. Wean yourself off fried foods and fatty processed foods—they're a heart-health risk factor.

My prescription Have eggs at breakfast, a handful of nuts at 10 a.m., a salad with avocado at lunch, cheese rolled up in a slice of ham for a snack, and a reasonably sized steak (7 ounces or less) or salmon fillet at dinner.

YOU COULD LOSE 4 pounds in 4 weeks

In 20 minutes: Flat Reap the belly benefits of what scientists term nonexercise activity thermogenesis, or "N.E.A.T." No gym membership required.

Tap more energy

People who spent at least 20 minutes a day outdoors felt they had up to 20 percent more physical and mental energy than those who stayed inside, scientists at the University of Rochester found.

Clock some cardio

Just 20 minutes of playing a sport can raise your heartbeat to 88 percent of maximum and burn 160 calories. It can be as beneficial as a formal workout, according to a study in the *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*.

Harden your core

Sit on a Swiss ball for 15 to 20 minutes every hour at your desk, recommends Charles Staley, C.S.C.S., author of *The Unnatural Athlete*. The ball will keep you in motion while also strengthening your core muscles, alleviating back pain.

Burn calories

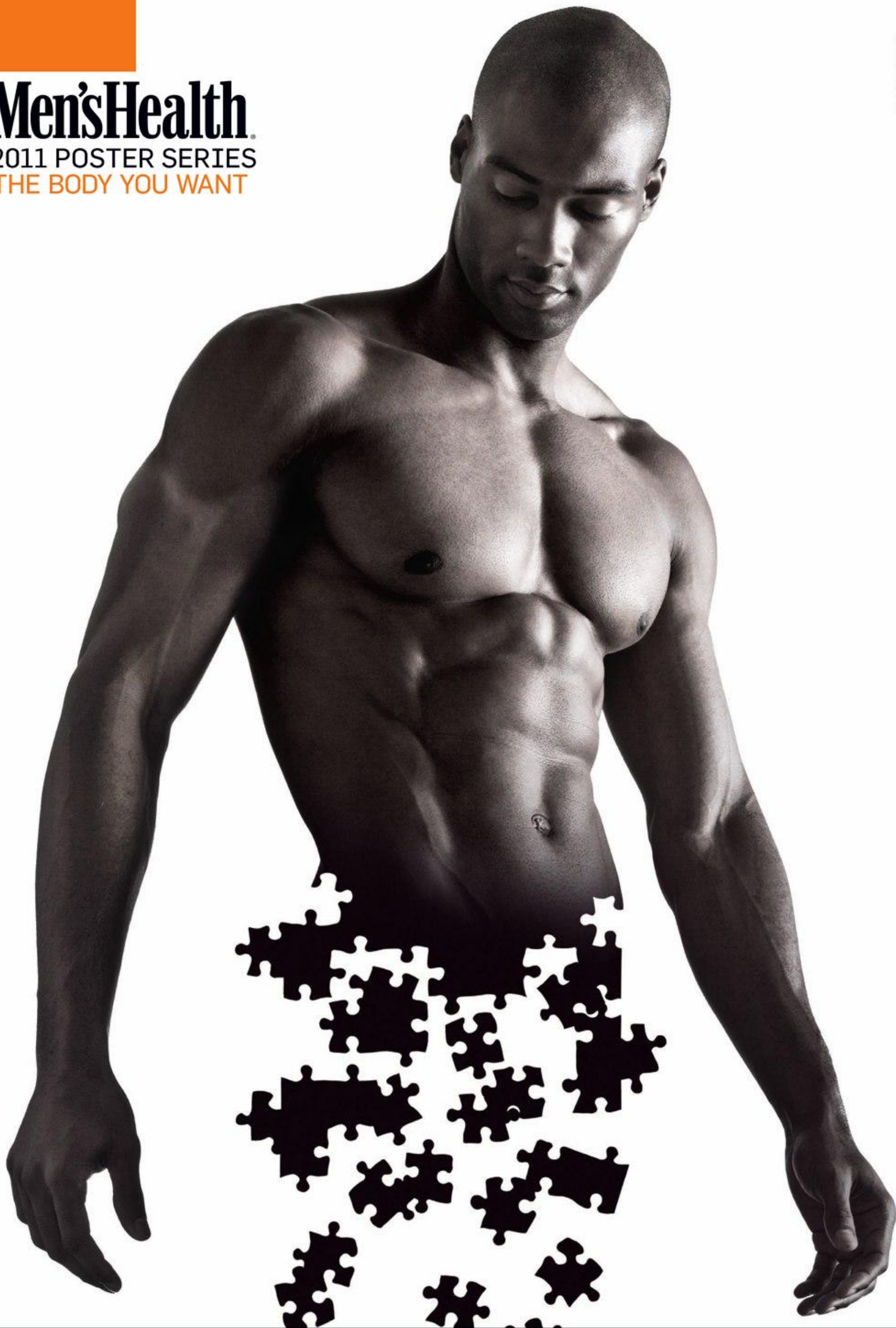
While you're talking on the phone, stand up. Doing this can help you burn up to 53 calories for every 20-minute conversation. In fact, a new behavior that eliminates as few as 100 calories a day can start you on the road to serious weight loss.



Find out more about Dr. Stork's plan to help you achieve the body you want by going to MensHealth.com/leanbelly. You'll find stories of guys who have lost big, and extra weight-loss tips as well.

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THE BODY YOU WANT

Can you gain muscle and lose fat? This 10-exercise plan proves that anything is possible in the new year.



THE LEAN BELLY WORKOUT

Pair these exercises with sensible eating, and celebrate your six-pack in 2011!

BY TRAVIS STORK, M.D. • PHOTOGRAPH BY BARTHOLOMEW COOKE

STRIP AWAY BODY FAT

If your goal entering the new year is to leave some lard behind, I applaud you. It's the single best thing you can do for your health. But once you've lost it, how do you keep it off? Here's what researchers at the University of Pittsburgh discovered in a recent study: Combining diet changes with exercise is the best way to succeed. Pair the workout below with this issue's "Pick Three to Get Lean" strategies from my *Lean Belly Prescription*, and your body fat doesn't stand a chance.

DIRECTIONS

This plan consists of two workouts, A and B. Alternate between the two workouts 3 days a week, resting a day between each session. For example, do Workout A on Monday and Friday, and Workout B on Wednesday. The following week, do the opposite. Perform each workout as a circuit. That is, do one exercise after the other, resting as little as possible after doing the prescribed number of reps for each exercise. Once you've done all five exercises, that's one circuit. Catch your breath, and repeat the circuit two more times.



For all of Dr. Stork's nutrition and fitness secrets, order your copy of *The Lean Belly Prescription* at MensHealth.com/leanbelly.

WORKOUT A

1

Plank

(Hold 30 seconds)

Assume a pushup position, but bend your elbows and rest your forearms on the floor. Your body should form a straight line. Now tighten your core muscles and hold that position.

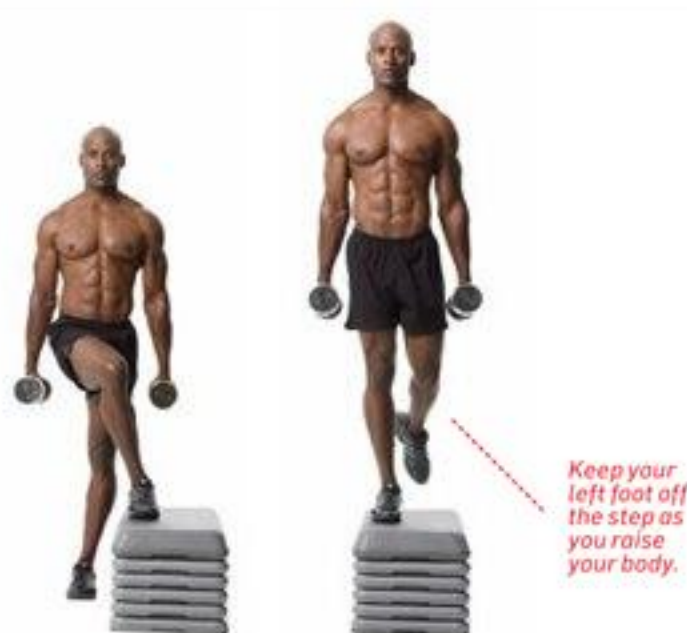


2

Crossover dumbbell stepup

(8 to 10 reps each leg)

Grab a pair of dumbbells and stand to the right of a bench or step. Cross your right foot in front of your body and place it on the step. Push off your right foot to lift your body off the floor. Lower back to the starting position. Do all your reps, then turn around and repeat with your left leg.

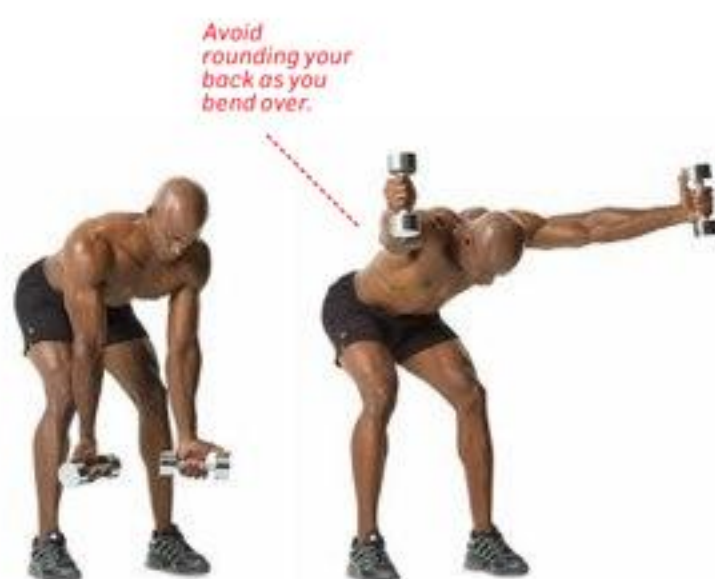


3

Bent-over Y raise

(10 to 12 reps)

Grab a pair of dumbbells, bend at your hips, and lower your torso until it's nearly parallel to the floor. Let your arms hang straight from your shoulders, and slightly bend your knees. Now raise your arms so they're at a 30-degree angle to your body (forming a Y) and are in line with your torso. Pause, lower, and repeat.

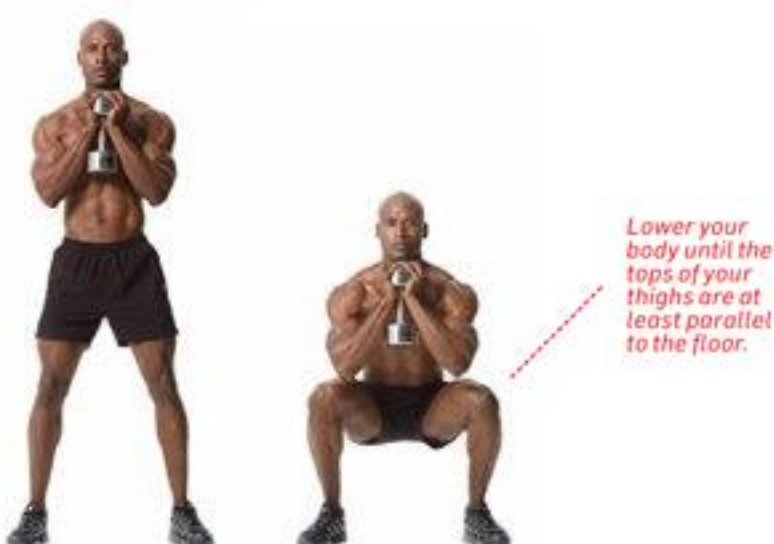


4

Goblet squat

(12 reps)

Stand with your feet slightly beyond shoulder width. Cup the end of a dumbbell with both hands and hold it vertically in front of your chest, your elbows pointing down. Keeping your back naturally arched, push your hips back, bend your knees, and squat. Pause, and push yourself back up to the starting position.

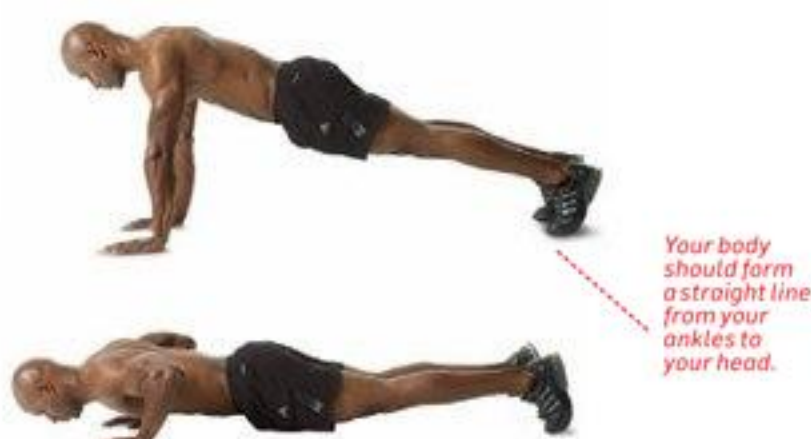


5

Pushup

(10 to 12 reps)

Kneel on all fours and place your hands slightly wider than your shoulders. Set your feet together and straighten your arms and legs. Then bend your elbows and lower your body until your chest nearly touches the floor. Pause, and push yourself back to the starting position.



WORKOUT B

1

Side plank

(Hold 30 seconds)

Lie on one side with your legs straight, and prop up your upper body on your forearm as shown. Raise your hips so your body forms a straight line from ankles to shoulders, and hold.

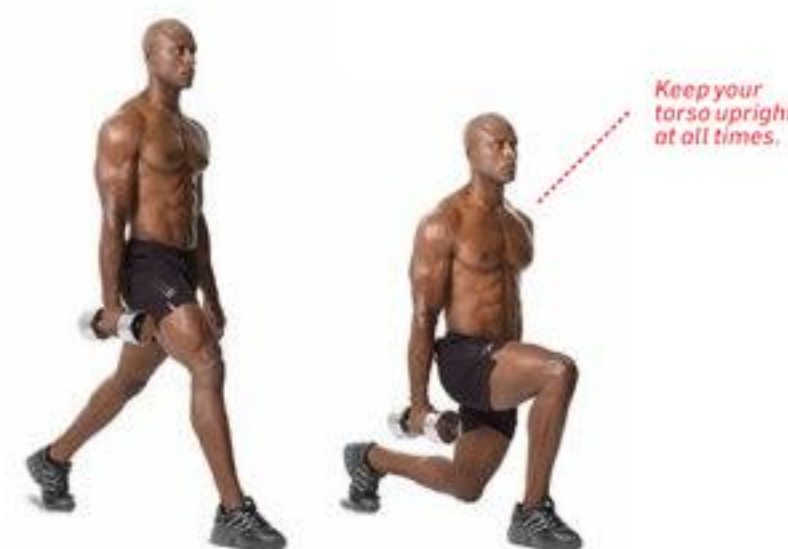


2

Offset dumbbell split squat

(8 to 10 reps each side)

Hold a dumbbell in your right hand at arm's length next to your side. Assume a staggered stance with your right foot in front of your left. Slowly lower your body as far as you can. Pause, and push yourself back up to the starting position. Do all your reps, and then switch arms and legs and repeat.

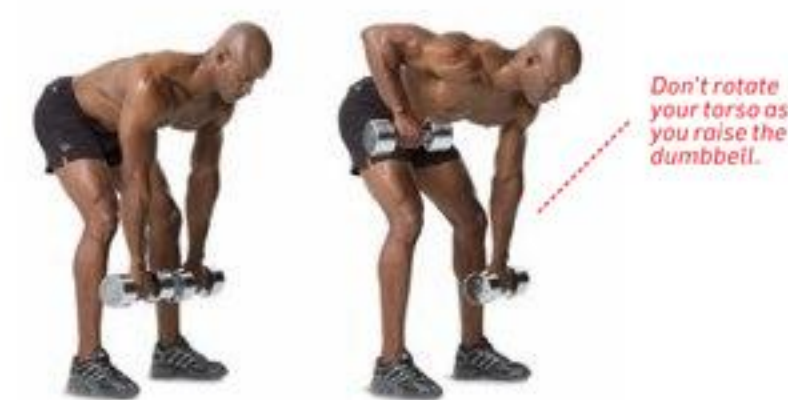


3

Alternating dumbbell row

(8 to 10 reps each arm)

Holding a pair of dumbbells, bend at your hips and lower your torso until it's nearly parallel to the floor. Let the dumbbells hang at arm's length. Without moving your torso, lift one dumbbell to your side and slowly lower it. Then repeat with your other arm. That's 1 repetition.

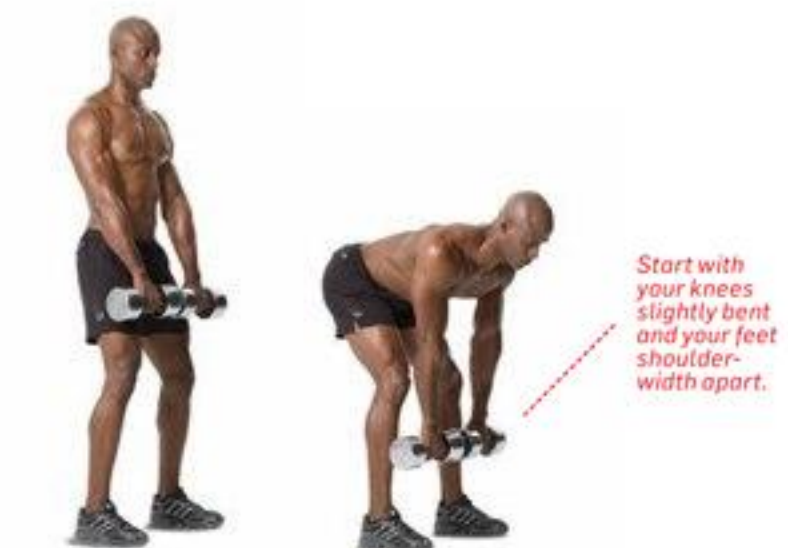


4

Dumbbell straight-leg deadlift

(10 to 12 reps)

Hold a pair of dumbbells at arm's length in front of your thighs as shown. Without rounding your lower back, bend at your hips and lower your torso toward the floor. Pause, and return to the starting position.

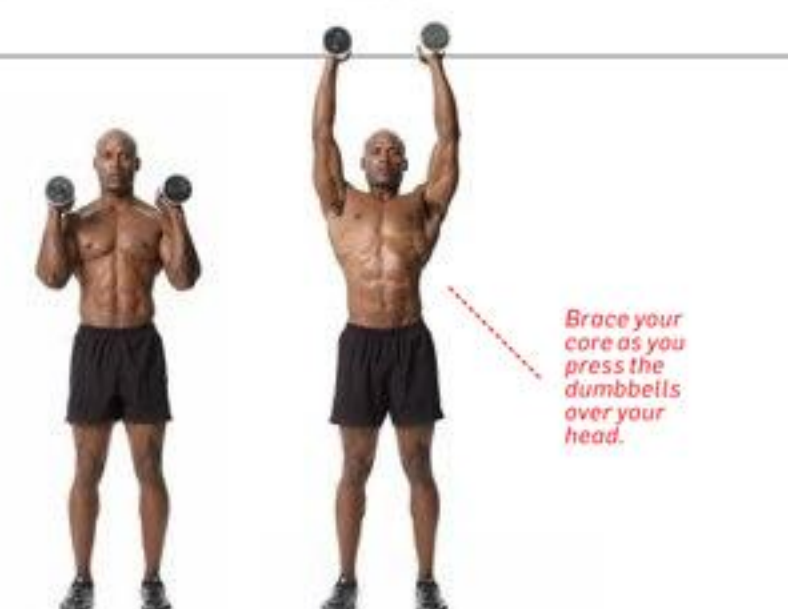


5

Dumbbell shoulder press

(10 to 12 reps)

Stand holding a pair of dumbbells just outside your shoulders, your arms bent and palms facing each other. Press the weights directly over your shoulders until your arms are straight. Then slowly lower the dumbbells to the starting position.



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The Healing Power in Your iPod

Music is an invisible force that can help lift your spirit, build your body, and improve your mind. Are you listening?

BY BILL STIEG • ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID DRUMMOND

THE OPENING CHORDS MAKE THE HAIR ON MY arms stand up. A spotlighted Roy Bittan is at the piano, playing the quiet intro to “Racing in the Street” as Bruce Springsteen waits in the shadows. I first heard them perform this song 31 years ago, so nostalgia is a factor, no doubt. But 8 minutes later, by the time Bittan is crashing through the glorious chords of the song’s extended coda, I’ve been transported, dazzled, exhilarated. There are quivers down my backbone.

This is a familiar sensation, one I indulge in to the tune of hundreds of dollars a year in concert tickets—from aging-boomer arena shows to ear-catching new bands in clubs. I go in knowing I’ll howl like a fool at a Neil Young guitar solo, well up like a wuss as Carole King harmonizes with James Taylor—and love every minute.

Such is the power of music over me. And even though the volume usually isn’t turned up to 11, music has a hold on nearly all of us—insidious, ubiquitous, and irresistible. Companies know this and have been messing with your vulnerable synapses for decades through shopping soundtracks and commercial jingles. But you too can tap into music’s power (minus the amplifiers and overpriced tickets) if you want to work more efficiently, train harder, think quicker, and maybe even live longer.

Just listen.

IT’S 6:45 ON A WEEKDAY MORNING AND I’M AT the piano with a cup of coffee, plunking through the four simple chords of Hank Williams’s “Weary Blues from Waitin’,” a tune

meant for guitar, which I don’t play. When the cracked-voice country yodel on the last line of the chorus (“Oh sweet ma-a-ma, please come home”) emerges from my amateur throat, it sounds lame. But it feels so good.

Today’s immersion in music began 45 minutes earlier with “Black Coffee in Bed” by Squeeze, and a carpet jingle on TV (“800-588-2-300, Empire—today”). Then I heard snippets of Costello and Petty on MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*. Humming in the shower. The *Today* theme. At the piano, some Hank, and Radiohead’s equally simple “Creep,” complete with f-bombs. Driving to work, there were more songs on the radio and from CDs, and a jingle from a gas-pump screen. As I walk across the parking lot to the office, I helplessly hum the last song I heard.

This isn’t my fault. I was—we all were—born this way. “We’re musical beings,” says Teresa Lesiuk, Ph.D., an assistant professor of music therapy at the University of Miami. “It’s like we’re hard-wired for music. We’re ready to take it in, we’re ready to interact with it.” Moreover, the experts I spoke with—neurologists, musicologists, guitarists—all agree that man is probably exposed to music more frequently now than at any time in history. “It’s beginning to be looked at as a resource,” Lesiuk says. “How can this help people?”

To start with, it helps me wake up. This morning, Joe Scarborough was nattering about the president when I heard the organ intro and thumping drums of Squeeze—a “bumper” for an impending commercial. I like this song. I opened my eyes. My brain was

beginning to stir. Daniel Levitin, Ph.D., a psychology professor at McGill University and the author of *This Is Your Brain on Music*, tells me I’m off to a good start. (He’s not in my bedroom; we talked by phone.) Music with a beat, he says, leads to a brain process called spreading activation. “That’s a fancy name for when a bunch of neurons start firing at a certain rate, say in response to music, and other neurons that have nothing to do with music start firing in sympathy.” Indeed, a Japanese study found that people who listened to music after a nap were less sleepy than those who didn’t tune in.

I never realized it, but this shot of aural caffeine is amplified whenever I sit down at

We’re probably exposed to music more now than at any time in history.

the piano in the a.m. “Playing an instrument activates disparate parts of your brain,” says Levitin. “It’s waking up the decision-making center, the motor center, the sensory center that feels the touch of the instrument on your fingertips, the auditory center, and the visual center to the extent that you’re reading music or watching your fingers.”

Of course, the idea of playing music before breakfast may seem absurd to most sane people. But even a short session of Guitar Hero can serve the same purpose. My quick hit of piano noodling makes me feel ready for anything—or at least my drive to work.



Human beings are
easily hooked,
experts say—our
brains seem
hardwired to
respond to music.

FOR THE FIRST PART OF MY 45-MINUTE

commute, I listen to talk radio or news. But eventually I must have music; silence simply won't do. In fact, Australian research suggests that silence isn't ideal for driving—it lets you think about things other than driving.

My mix, using the radio and CD changer, is mostly indie and classic rock with the occasional nostalgic wild card, like marching band or Broadway or folk. And that's what matters for driving, a range of research shows: Within reason, music that makes you feel good is best for alertness, reaction time, and maintaining a safe speed.

Again, the key is "within reason," since research has also shown that the faster the music, the faster and less safely you'll drive. For example, a study from Israel discovered that a lot more speeding, red-light-running, and accidents took place as the tempo of music

increased. Similarly, a study from Memorial University of Newfoundland found that drivers listening to hard rock crashed more often on a simulated course than those listening to industrial noise did. I know this from experience. I have avoided ZZ Top on freeways ever since "La Grange" led to a speeding ticket.

That said, it's still best to listen to *something* while you're behind the wheel. Levitin says the daydreaming reverie of driving causes many of us to sleep at the wheel, in a way. "If you choose the right music when you're driving, it can stimulate you enough to hold your interest, and keep you conscious, aware, and awake," he says.

The problem, he adds, is that "if the music is *too* interesting or *too* absorbing, it draws you too deeply in and away from the road." Moderation seems to be the key—as with driving itself. Nothing too loud, too fast, or too distracting.

ONCE AMERICANS ARRIVE AT THE OFFICE

in the morning, they increasingly seal themselves off with earphones. A 2010 survey of workers who use computers (and don't interact with customers) found that 95 percent of them listen to music at least 30 minutes during the workday, usually through earphones, according to a 2010 survey by CIMI Corporation, a research firm in New Jersey.

Of course, for most of human history, music has been making physical labor—from rowing a Greek galley to mowing a half-acre lawn—more bearable. But can it help in the white-collar world?

Lesiuk, the University of Miami music therapist, has found that, generally speaking, if people listen to music of their choosing, they can decrease 9-to-5 fatigue, nervousness, and irritability while at the same time enhance their enthusiasm and relaxation. The net effect: They become better problem solvers.

Even a tiny dose of tunes can have an effect. One Italian study found that people who listened to up-tempo music experienced the biggest boost in bloodflow to their brains, compared with when they heard slower tunes or nothing at all. But Lesiuk believes there's probably a psychological component, too; people can convince themselves they can't work as well without a soundtrack. For instance, she's had IT workers decline to participate in her research because the experiment required that music be shut off for a period of time.

There are exceptions—and I'm one of them. While I'm sure I'm more efficient at physical efforts (like cleaning the garage) and visual tasks (like playing around in Photoshop) as music is playing, I can forget about reading or writing in the office. I can't concentrate. Lesiuk says hearing lyrics and reading words simultaneously probably divides my attention. She has also found that the more skilled someone is at a task, the better he or she does with music playing. If you're not skilled, music is just another stimulus that hurts your concentration. If you're not following this, turn down the music.

IF ANY PLACE SEEMS TO HAVE SPROUTED


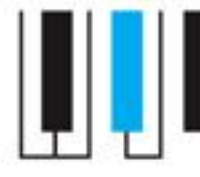


more earbuds than the American office, it's the American gym. I used to be a purist, running roads and trails, and even the treadmill, without music. Now I'm less pure and more happy. An upbeat mix loaded into an old Nano makes my runs faster and more pleasant, no question.

This is not news. The link between rocking out and working out has been confirmed on treadmills and stationary bikes; cyclists use less oxygen while pedaling in time with tunes, and runners perceive less effort and have 15 percent greater endurance when matching tempo to stride.

One of the leading researchers in this field is Costas Karageorghis, Ph.D., of the sports psychology department at Brunel University in

Awaken the musician inside you

Piano lessons as a kid? Garage-band guitar in high school? Never played anything? Whatever your experience, technology makes it easier than ever to make music.

The instrument	The tech	The trick	The benefit
Your voice 	No need for public humiliation. Software (try karafun.com) lets you record yourself along with karaoke tracks (karaoke.com) or your own CDs.	Breathe better by relaxing your abs (you heard us!) and let your gut jut out so your diaphragm can do its work.	Besides the workout you'll give your lungs and diaphragm, you may also boost your immune system, German studies show.
Piano 	Buy a teaching keyboard, like the Yamaha EZ-200 (\$170, amazon.com). Keys light up so you can find the notes. Spare the fam—use headphones.	Simplify by just learning chords, and hum or sing the melody. Find chords on the Web or buy a "fake book" of melody, lyrics, and chords.	Less stress. In a study in <i>Medical Science Monitor</i> , keyboard players showed fewer immune-related genes in their blood, indicating lower stress.
Guitar 	You're not Ted Nugent yet. The Amazing Slow Downer (ronimusic.com) is software that lets you change the tempo of a song without altering the pitch.	Countless rock, folk, and country songs are based on just three chords. Learn G, C, and D, and hundreds of songs are within your reach.	Better language skills. Musicians' brain stems had more-robust linguistic encoding, a study found, which may explain their language-learning skills.
Drums 	Go simple with the Remo medium Festival Djembe (\$115, remo.com). Or pound Yamaha's DD45 portable electronic drums (\$100, amazon.com).	Find a drum circle (drumcircles.net) for helpful support. At home, play along on an electronic pad with midtempo songs—and use headphones.	Upper-body training and less stress. Japanese researchers found that drumming breaks improved office workers' moods and lowered stress.

Sources: John David De Haan, associate professor of voice, University of Minnesota; Pamela Pike, Ph.D., assistant professor of piano pedagogy, Louisiana State University; Joseph A. Baldassarre, D.M.A., professor emeritus of music, Boise State University; Jonathan Haas, director of NYU Steinhardt Classical Percussion Studies

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the United Kingdom. He helps organize a half marathon in London called Run to the Beat, during which live bands perform and specially chosen songs are played along the route. (Go to ministryofsound.com/runtothebeat to download the playlist he designed for the 2010 race.) Karageorghis says most athletes benefit from syncing their songs with their intended pace—starting with midtempo tunes, for instance, and then increasing the beat. If you know the music well, he says, you'll find it easier to push yourself during the most exhilarating passages, since athletes naturally increase effort at these moments.

It works on your strength, too; combining music and mental imagery helps muscular endurance. A Canadian study determined that lifters who played music while they pumped iron for 4 weeks completed 56 percent more repetitions of their 10-rep max. And if that doesn't convince you that the iPod is the best (legal) performance enhancer on the market, consider an Israeli study in which athletes who listened to upbeat music *before* a workout experienced a boost in peak power output, unlike when they warmed up in silence.

One way music helps us exercise is by diverting our attention, which lowers our level of perceived effort and makes "hard" seem more like "fun," Karageorghis says. Similarly, Australian researchers found that distracting free-throw shooters with upbeat music allowed them to perform without negative thoughts interfering, so they made more shots. I find that when I'm playing golf, I can block memories of bad shots by humming. (And I hum a lot on golf courses.)

THERE'S ONE PLACE IN AMERICA WHERE music is virtually unavoidable: the mall. Background music is a big, multinational business, with increasingly sophisticated research producing ever more targeted playlists. Muzak, the 75-year-old granddaddy of the field, sells its music services (for stores, offices, on-hold)

with promises to relax customers, encourage brand loyalty, improve employee productivity, and of course, boost sales.

An analysis of the data from 32 studies of background music in the *Journal of Business Research* finds clear implications for "return on investment" if music is piped into a business. The conclusions: Customers prefer music to silence, especially music they like; the slower and lower the volume, the longer they'll stay. Which may not seem to explain the thumping soundtrack at Hollister, but in fact its young, female clientele loves it loud, the music fits the store's image, and "tempo has the greatest effect on arousal," the study review says.

An excited girl is more likely to spend.

In a U.K. study, people would sign their name to support a charity regardless of the type of music playing, but if the music was uplifting, they'd volunteer to distribute leaflets too.

In another experiment from the United Kingdom, researchers compared bank environments that had easy-listening and classical music piped in to ones with no music. The music actually made the banks seem more dynamic. The same researchers also conducted an experiment that compared bars with background music to those with no music or with music playing in the foreground. The background music, they found, made the bar seem more peaceful. One study even found that playing French or German music spurred shoppers to buy French or German wine.

Fair warning, then: Retailers are out to lull you into spending. Maybe it's best to listen to a podcast while you're at the mall.

I HAVEN'T BEEN SICK SINCE THE YEAR 2000.

It's weird. I'm also a (usually) happy guy. This can probably be attributed to genes, luck, and a wonderful family, but I can't help but suspect that—you guessed it—music is medicine, too.

A review in the *American Journal of Public Health* calls music "the most accessible and most researched medium of art and healing." The review mentions the successful use of music to control pain in cancer patients as well as its role in improving their immune response, decreasing their anxiety, and reducing their psychological and physical symptoms. In one University of Wisconsin study, heart-attack patients who listened to relaxing music for 20 minutes showed slower heart and

Music diverts our attention during exercise, which lowers our level of perceived effort.

respiratory rates and less demand for oxygen—up to 1 hour after listening.

Then there's this research from the University of Maryland: Music that evokes joy can improve blood-vessel dilation by 26 percent. And scientists in Germany say that singing in a choir boosts immune function—and just listening to choral music lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

I believe it. Around Thanksgiving I dig out a shoebox of Christmas CDs, and for the next 6 weeks our house sounds like an upscale department store. There's a CD of German carols and hymns by a boys' choir that moves me beyond words, which is fitting because I can't understand a word they're singing.

One Canadian study I've read refers to the "chills phenomenon" of music; the physical indicators of emotional arousal, such as blood volume pulse and electrodermal activity. That Springsteen show did it for me and so does the choir: My dermis is electrified. The chills study validates this, charmingly: "Strongly felt emotions could be rewarding in themselves." I'll even sing along phonetically, recalling my days in junior-high choir, and can practically feel those blood vessels opening wide. ■

Listen carefully: Here's how to enjoy your music while saving your ears

Noise of 85 decibels or louder can damage the hairs of your cochlea, a snail-shaped structure in your ears. Your iPod at full volume can hit 105 decibels. Worse, hearing loss tends to occur over time, unnoticed: "If you keep introducing noise trauma to the ear, you can cause permanent damage," says Theresa Shaw, Au.D., a senior audiologist at New York University. So do this:

1

Turn it down

"If the person next to you can hear what you're listening to on your iPod, it's too loud," Shaw says. One study showed that an iPod exceeds 85 decibels when it's set between 60 percent and 70 percent capacity.

2

Seal yourself off

Ambient noise on planes and trains can top 100 decibels, tempting you to turn up your MP3 player. Use noise-canceling headphones like **Audio-Technica's ATH-ANC7b** (\$200, shopaudiotechnica.com).

3

Plug your ears

Concerts can reach 115 decibels, but foam earplugs can cut that by 25 decibels. **Try some Aearo ER 20** (\$24, amazon.com) plugs: In a Brazilian study, musicians said they allowed them to clearly hear the music.

4

Take breaks

Where loud music is playing, step outside for 15 minutes every 2 hours. The hairs on the cochleas can be overtaxed, causing a form of short-term hearing loss, and stepping away lets them recover.

5

Don't be dumb

Wear hearing-protection earmuffs when you mow the lawn or run any loud machinery. But don't slip your earbuds under the muffs to listen to music—you'll just negate their effectiveness, Shaw says.



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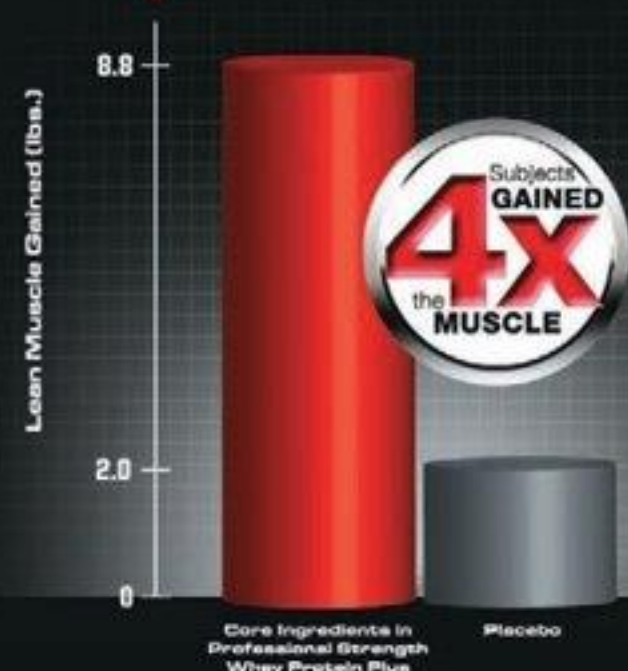


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NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

Part one
LOOKING BETTER

GARRETT HEDLUND'S BREAKTHROUGH WORKOUT

Skinny farm kid Garrett Hedlund transformed himself into *Tron*'s hero. All it took was hard work and the threat of a skintight suit

By Claire Martin
Photographs by Art Streiber



Other kids practiced to make the track team. Garrett Hedlund didn't have time for that, so he chased cows instead. • His family's 400-acre cattle farm in northern Minnesota was at the end of the bus route, 2 hours from school. When he arrived home, he spent his time plowing fields and mending fences. But Hedlund wanted to be the fastest kid in his grade school, so

chasing wayward bovines during weekend cattle runs became his practice. "Everybody else would drive a truck or a four-wheeler, but I'd go out in my boots," says Hedlund, the country lilt still in his voice despite 8 years of living in Los Angeles. "When a spooked cow took off, I'd run as fast as I could to chase him back to the herd."

Soon he was one of the best runners at his school. His speed propelled him into wrestling, football, and cross-country. These things tend to snowball: You prove to yourself that you can succeed at one endeavor, and that gives you the confidence to try another. "You're gaining the strength to conquer obstacles," Hedlund says.

Perseverance became habit, and that habit kicked in when Hedlund made the leap to acting. He had to train heavily for supporting roles in *Troy* and *Friday Night Lights*. But then he reached leading-man territory with the big-budget *Tron: Legacy*, and all that prep just wasn't enough.

"When Garrett came in, he was a little skinny and a little soft," *Tron*'s lead training instructor Logan Hood says. Hedlund's character is a futuristic gladiator, a guy who's playing a video game from the inside as he hurls discs at opponents and competes in a vicious version of motorcycle roller derby. "We

needed him to look more like an action hero—lean with muscle mass."

For men with competitive spirits—and Hedlund counts himself among them—a challenge can be rousing in itself. But vanity is also a fine motivator, and Hedlund had reason to worry: He'd be wearing a skintight action-hero bodysuit throughout the movie. "They do a body scan so they can formulate the suit around you. It's three-quarters of an inch of foam rubber that fits you like a glove," he says. "If you have a belly, your scan's going to have a belly."

In other words, he needed to shape up. Fast.

Hedlund had been there before. His career sputtered for years because he was either too big or too small for the roles he wanted. At 160 pounds, he was passed over for the role of a soldier-type guy. Too thin. So he worked out and put on weight. But then he was too bulky for the skinny-

Styling: Brian Boyé, grooming: Rawna Copri/Solo Artists, production: Lilius Hohn/lehproduces.com, Levi's shirt and jeans, Jockey tank top, Calvin Klein boots



intellectual part that came up next. Eventually, being able to quickly transform his body (and convince skeptical casting agents that he could do it) became a matter of survival.

There are easy ways to shape-shift, of course: You can starve yourself, or overeat, or just do curls all day long. But Hedlund knew such tactics would be unsustainable and downright dangerous. He'd be yo-yoing through cycles of muscle-imbalance injuries, plus giving in to the inevitable bounce-back binges that follow extreme dieting.

Real weight control requires commitment; once you build a healthy foundation, your body will transform in whatever way you need it to. So during those lean years of his acting career, long before he could afford a gym membership, he regularly ran 2.2-mile loops around the reservoir near his L.A. apartment. Then he'd head home for what he calls "a living-room prison workout" of pushups, situps, pullups, squats, and squat thrusts.

But squat thrusts alone don't make an action hero. Which is why Hedlund turned to Hood, a former Navy SEAL who had helped train the conspicuously toned cast of the movie *300*. Hood had 9 weeks to do with Hedlund what normally would take 6 to 12 months. The plan: "Garrett didn't repeat any workouts, which helped keep him engaged," the trainer says. "If you don't know what you'll be doing when you walk into the gym, you don't fall into a rut."

Hood needed Hedlund to become leaner and more athletic while adding muscle mass, so part of his workouts involved circuits of farmer carries, bear crawls, tire drags, and box jumps—with no rest in between. Try it. A combination like this builds strength from all angles, and busting through at a fast pace keeps your heart rate up and burns fat.

Hedlund didn't love the work at first. "But then he started to connect the dots: Doing stuff he didn't like was going to make him good at the things he does like," Hood says. That's because these exercises help train your body for real-world movements. Not all do. Take crunches: How often do you need to lift things while lying on the floor? But a ball slam is basically a crunch in a standing position. It mimics the way you move throughout the day, and how Hedlund had to move onscreen.

In addition to slimming him down and hardening him up, Hood focused on Hedlund's shoulders. Strength there is key for any physical demand, action sequences included. Without strong shoulders, you're more likely to injure yourself. "We did a lot of overhead presses," Hood says. Most days he'd also squat heavy, deadlift heavy, or do heavy push presses—a version that should be part of any workout.

Hedlund started as a sloucher, but by the time filming began, he was walking into the gym with swagger. It wasn't just confidence showing, though: It was the result of stronger core and back muscles, which helped his posture and gave him a visible physical confidence. "If he stands taller and pulls his shoulders back and down, he looks more imposing, more heroic," Hood says. "Body-fat percentage doesn't matter. It's really about how you look."

And how you feel.

"You might think the thinner version of yourself is going to be the most positive or confident, but that's not how it is for me," Hedlund says. "When I'm over 200 pounds, that's when I'm the most confident version of myself."

But he's also comfortable with a less sculpted self. Perfection is never what he strives for. That's an impossibility; being afraid to screw up only limits you. It's why Hedlund says he thinks of life as a new car—one you've already scratched. Now you're free to roam a little looser, to take gravel roads, no longer fearing a ding or a dent.

There are many correct ways to do something, and a setback isn't the same as a failure. That singular insight is the source of his confi-

dence, he says. It's what allowed him to overcome all the bumps a farm kid hits as he auditions and struggles and finally breaks through in Hollywood.

Where did he learn that? Maybe back home: When Hedlund was 10, his best pal was a steer he raised for competition. The animal won a blue ribbon. "I came home from school one day and the steer was hanging from the tractor bucket," he says. It was a shock; he was so focused on nurturing it that he never considered what came next. But after a good cry, he had no choice but to accept that dinner came from the backyard. "Now when somebody says, 'I saw a bird die when I was 3 years old and I don't eat meat,' I'm like, 'Are you kidding me?'" he says. "I eat steak. I eat everything."

You're slapped down, you learn, you adjust and move on.

This winter will be huge for him. His career will change. *Tron* is a legend relaunched, and another movie, *Country Strong*, puts him alongside Gwyneth Paltrow and Tim McGraw in the kind of open land that was his first training ground. There's an endless horizon when you live at the end of the road in Minnesota. There's also an endless yearning for forward progress. Garrett Hedlund is on his way. ■

THE *TRON* WORKOUT

Garrett Hedlund whipped himself into action-hero form by doing a variety of daily workouts, like this one from *Tron* trainer Logan Hood.

Warmup

1 *Rowing*: 10 minutes, with your average wattage equal to your body weight.

2 *Bag sprawl*: Jump over a barrier, such as a heavy bag, and then drop and do a pushup. Stand back up and repeat in the other direction. Go for 40 seconds, rest 20 seconds, and repeat four times total.

Workout

3 Pick up a barbell, and don't put it down until the circuit below is complete. Hedlund did 7 reps of an exercise before moving to the next, resting only after completing the circuit. That's a huge challenge, so begin by doing the circuit with just 1 rep each (so that's 7 reps total after doing all seven moves). Rest as needed, and repeat for 15 minutes.

1. Deadlift
2. Row
3. Hang clean
4. Front squat
5. Push press
6. Good morning
7. Back squat

For instructions on all these exercises, visit MensHealth.com/tronwork.



AMERICA'S BEST 2011 & WORST RESTAURANTS

**We're fighting a battle for our waistlines.
Here's the lowdown on our allies—and our enemies**

By Clint Carter

Walking into a restaurant these days is like stepping onto a nutritional minefield. Safe passage is elusive, and dangers abound on all sides: sandwiches made with fried chicken instead of bread, pasta that packs over 1,500 calories in a single bowl. The edible enemies that hide in the shadows, masquerading as wholesome dishes, are even worse. The danger of a misstep? An exploding waistline. >

Photographs by James Wojcik

The fact is, most restaurants are dangerous to your health. Every meal we eat out adds an average of 134 calories to our daily intake. And if you eat out as often as the average American man does (at least three times a week), those calories could tack on at least 6 pounds of mass every single year. Let's be clear: That's flab—not muscle. And if you eat out more, you gain more. • So what's the solution? We're not going to give up restaurants anytime soon. In 2009, 49 percent of the money the average American spent on food went toward dining out—that's about nine times what we spent in 1975. We're also not interested in spending our hard-earned cash on bland diet fare. A 2009 consumer research report found that even though most of us want to see healthier items on menus, only 20 percent of us actually order food based on nutritional considerations—probably because few of the options billed as “healthy” are as appealing as the other choices. Restaurants need to offer alternatives that are not only good for you, but also tasty enough to rival the calorie bombs ticking alongside them. • And that's where this list comes in. We're naming the best restaurant chains, the ones that make scoring a healthy meal a deliciously easy task. We're also exposing the worst ones, where finding a decent entrée is an achievement worthy of a bloodhound. Follow our lead, and you'll enjoy the tastiest lean meals from America's biggest restaurants—and save your waistline and tastebuds from mutually assured destruction.

seafood place

BEST

Red Lobster

Red Lobster not only ranks highest in the seafood category, but our nutritional analysis also taps Red Lobster as the best all-around sit-down restaurant. And it's not just the Lobster's abundance of heart-healthy seafood that helps it edge out the competition. See, even though seafood chains like Bubba Gump's and Captain D's also offer fish prepared in healthier ways, their options are typically limited to just a few varieties of seafood. At Red Lobster, on the other hand, you can always order any one of a dozen or more varieties of fish on the menu. And the chain relies primarily on simple cooking techniques, like broiling, blackening, and wood-fire grilling, to accentuate the fresh flavor. One caveat: Unless you order from the Fresh Fish Menu, expect a heavy dose of sodium. Sorry, can't win 'em all.

Top Pick

Blackened Rainbow Trout

with fresh broccoli and coleslaw

610 calories

34 grams (g) fat

830 milligrams (mg) sodium

Rainbow trout is a sustainable fish with low contamination levels. Wood-fired or broiled both work fine, but ask for it blackened—you'll enjoy a robust coat of smoky spice without extra calories.

WORST

Long John Silver's

It's fitting that this seafood chain was named after a nefarious pirate. Long John is perhaps the biggest villain in the restaurant industry. Why? Because of the restaurant's preferred method of cooking seafood: boiling nearly everything in a hot bath of partially hydrogenated soybean oil. That means any heart-health benefit you might receive from the seafood is negated by a boatload of nasty trans fats. Order a Fish Combo Basket and you've just dropped a 12.5-gram trans fat mortar shell right into the depths of your belly.

Survival Strategy

If it's fried, you don't want it. You can head off the relentless trans fat assault (and save on calories) by ordering from the Freshside Grille menu, which pairs grilled seafood—salmon, tilapia, or shrimp scampi—with rice and vegetables.

sandwich shop

BEST

Subway

Here's some good news: The leanest sandwiches in America come from the chain that's easiest to find. More than 23,700 Subway shops are spread out across the nation, which means your ride to work is about 59 percent more likely to swing you past a Subway than a McDonald's. Walk into any Subway and you'll find at least ten 6-inch subs that come in under 400 calories—and that includes the cheese toll. Plus, you can embellish your sub with as much produce as you like. You won't find heirloom tomatoes or fresh-picked arugula, but by fast-food standards, the Subway counter is a veritable farmers' market.

Top Pick

Roast Beef and Swiss on 9-Grain Wheat (6-inch)

360 calories

9 g fat

890 mg sodium

No other sandwich on the menu—not even the oven-roasted chicken—manages to pack 30 grams of protein into so few calories. Just don't ruin it with mayonnaise; Subway's soybean-oil

spread will cost you 110 calories per tablespoon. Instead, opt for mustard or marinara sauce to give your sandwich a kick.

WORST

Quiznos

In this case, *Q* stands for queasy. That's how the Quiznos menu—bloated with mayonnaise-spiked salads, oily dressings, briny bacon, and other waistline-threatening accoutrements—makes us feel. Sixty-five percent of the regular-size sandwiches carry more than 500 calories along with unhealthy overages of sodium. And the chain's tuna melt is quite likely the worst in the country: A large contains 1,260 calories. Even the regular-size version packs 870 calories, as many as you'd take in from two McDonald's Quarter Pounders with cheese. These submarines will sink your diet.

Survival Strategy

Stick to the chain's Roadhouse Steak Sammies, a line of modestly sized flatbread sandwiches. Two Sammies make for a decent lunch of about 500 calories. If that's not enough to fill you up, order a bowl of chili or chicken noodle soup on the side.



chicken chain

BEST

Chick-fil-A

Chick-fil-A manages to pull off one feat that no other fast-food chain can match: Not a single entrée on the menu—not the Spicy Chicken Deluxe nor the Sausage Breakfast Burrito—packs more than 600 calories. In fact, only three entrées breach 500, an accomplishment bolstered by the fact that Chick-fil-A's grilled chicken sandwiches taste just as good, if not better, than the fried versions. The cast of sides also scores points, since many of them, like the fruit cup and the carrot-and-raisin salad, don't visit the deep fryer on their way to your plate. Even the chicken salad and the coleslaw, while heavy on mayonnaise, make decent upgrades from fries.

Top Pick

Chargrilled Chicken Sandwich

with a large fruit cup

400 calories

3.5 g fat

1,120 mg sodium

Protein accounts for more than a third of the calories in this sandwich, and when you eat it with a side of fruit, you've satisfied 16 percent of your day's fiber needs—and filled your stomach. Bottom line: You won't find a better meal at any fast-food joint in the country.

12 MONTHS OF RESTAURANT SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

JANUARY

Avoid the combo meals

A recent survey of New York City restaurants reveals that combo meals account for 31 percent of all burger-chain purchases, and the average calorie toll exceeds 1,200 per meal. Defend yourself by ignoring the preset combos and building your own meal with a couple of nutritious items instead.

FEBRUARY

Order small cups

A Duke University study found that when people order drinks at fast-food joints, they tend to pick the medium size regardless of the volume of the cup. That means restaurants can control how much you drink by deciding how big to make their "medium." Keep portions under control by sticking with the small soda. (You'll get at least 8 ounces, which is plenty.)

MARCH

Eat more plants

Most restaurants offer a vegetable side other than fries. Order it. A University of Florida study that tracked the diets of two groups of young adults—an overweight and a normal-weight group—showed that both groups ate about the same number of calories. So why the difference in body weight? The thinner participants ate more calories from vegetables.

APRIL

Drink up

If your stomach is growling as you enter a restaurant, reach for the water first. In a Virginia Tech study, two groups ate low-calorie diets, but only one group also drank 2 cups of water before each meal. Over 12 weeks, the water drinkers lost nearly 5 pounds more than the control group. The reason? Water, like food, fills the stomach, blunting appetite.

MAY

Ban the handouts

What do tortilla chips, dinner rolls, and breadsticks have in common? All of them are made from cheap refined carbohydrates, loaded into baskets, and doled out free of charge to patrons. Take the bait and you'll end up with a few hundred worthless calories tacked onto your meal. The better option? Tell the server to save the basket for another table.

JUNE

Order by number

The health-care reform law will require chains with 20 or more outlets to post calorie counts on menus. Until then, do some digging to find out how many calories are in your favorite restaurant meals. (A copy of *Eat This, Not That! 2011* could help.) A study in the *American Journal of Public Health* shows that people regularly underestimate calories in foods by nearly half.

WORST

Church's Chicken

Shockingly, Church's is one of the few remaining fast-food purveyors still pumping partially hydrogenated oil into its fryers, a fact that's even more unsettling when you consider the chain's specialty—fried chicken. In case you forgot, partially hydrogenated oil is the primary source of trans fat in the American diet, so anything submerged in the stuff becomes an instant hazard to your health. If you eat just one spicy fried chicken thigh, you've taken in more than double your trans fat limit for the day. It gets worse if you build a full meal around the chain's chicken. A half dozen boneless BBQ wings with a large side of fries will deliver a full 15 grams of trans fat—about 7½ times the recommended level. But wait—there's more bad news. Those six wings and fries also serve up 1,155 calories, 50 grams of fat, and a whopping 3,000 milligrams of sodium.

Survival Strategy

Choose wisely and you may just make it out alive. Go for the Spicy Chicken Sandwich, which carries a reasonable 456 calories. Coincidentally, it's also among the few items on the menu that's not polluted with artery-clogging trans fat. Make it your go-to entrée, and for a side dish, choose a regular-size portion from the following nonfried options at Church's: mashed potatoes and gravy, corn on the cob, Cajun rice, or coleslaw. That will keep your meal hovering right around 600 calories if you skip the soda.

pizza parlor

BEST

Domino's

The pizza industry's ingredient-sourcing policies aren't worthy of praise (see "The Domino Effect," in our December 2010 issue), but when it comes to nutritional considerations, Domino's reigns supreme. Its plain pie ranks among the leanest available, and it boasts far more vegetable-topping varieties than the competition. Plus, unlike Papa John's, Domino's offers a thin-crust option for all its pizza sizes, and its pepperoni and sausage

toppings are lower in fat than Pizza Hut's.

Top Pick

Philly Cheese Steak Pizza

thin crust, 2 slices (based on a large pie)

460 calories

27 g fat

940 mg sodium

Want the leanest possible pie? Just skip the toppings and toss the cheese on the floor. But what's the point? You might as well gnaw on the pizza box. The Domino's Philly pie features plenty of lean beef, and the mushrooms,

onions, and peppers provide a nice hit of fiber-rich vegetation.

WORST

California Pizza Kitchen

While CPK's pies all have a relatively thin crust, their awkward sizing makes it difficult to eat a healthy portion. A 10-inch pie isn't enough for two people, and ordering one for yourself means a 1,000-calorie meal. Turning to other items on the menu, like the dozens of salad and pasta options, usually makes things worse. You

might think you're doing yourself a favor by ordering the Waldorf Chicken Salad with Dijon Balsamic Vinaigrette, but you're actually padding your belly with 1,485 calories. The healthy-sounding Asparagus and Spinach Spaghetti with Grilled Chicken Breast is just as bad, with 1,340 calories.

Survival Strategy

Split a pizza and a dish from the Small Cravings menu. Sharing the Four Seasons pie and the Asparagus and Arugula Salad makes for a meal that's around 563 calories.

italian restaurant

BEST

Romano's Macaroni Grill

Check out this story of restaurant redemption: Macaroni Grill used to be one of the most fattening sit-down chains in America. But things took a sharp turn for the better when the company recruited a new CEO in 2008. What followed was a multiphase plan to improve the nutritional quality of the entrées, and the chain has since become the caloric conscience of the red-sauce restaurants. In December 2008, a basic Fettuccine Alfredo at Macaroni Grill had 1,220 calories—the same amount you'll find in the Fettuccine Alfredo at Olive Garden today. Now the Mac Grill's Fettuccine Alfredo has a mere 770 calories. That's a 37 percent drop!

During that same time, the chain trimmed its Seafood Linguine from 1,230 calories to 650, its Lobster Ravioli from 1,350 to 710, and its Chicken Marsala from 1,180 to 810. Everything became, well, reasonable—exactly as it should be. The food tastes great, too, so it's well worth the sauce stains on your shirt.

Top Pick

Spaghetti Bolognese

710 calories

30 g fat

1,470 mg sodium

"Bolognese" means meat sauce, and at the Mac Grill, ordering it on your pasta instead of choosing spaghetti and meatballs with tomato sauce will save you 260 calories and 16 grams of fat. Want something lighter still? Try the meatless Capellini Pomodoro, a tomato-based pasta with angel-hair noodles, which weighs in at only 490 calories.

WORST

Olive Garden

Sure, Italian food can be rich and starchy, but a true Italian doesn't let that stop him from looking svelte in his Dolce & Gabbana suit. The U.S. obesity rate is more than three times that of Italy's. And why is that? Perhaps because of restaurants like Olive Garden, which combine the richness of Italian food with oversized American portions. Fully half of the dinner options on the Classic Pastas menu exceed 1,000 calories. Bottomless portions of carb-heavy breadsticks and dressing-soaked salads don't help.

Survival Strategy

Come here for lunch, when the portions are smaller, and skip the bread and the salad. Two great options under 450 calories: Venetian Apricot Chicken and Linguine alla Marinara.

Adopt one every time the calendar flips and be leaner by the end of 2011

JULY

Slow down and then decide

A study published last year in *Psychological Science* reveals that the mere sight of a fast-food sign on the side of the road is enough to make people feel rushed, which can lead to impulsive decisions—and dangerous nutritional choices. Sidestep your impulses the next time you eat out: Plan your order before you walk through the door.

AUGUST

Don't exaggerate the occasion

You're 45 percent less likely to make healthy choices when you identify a meal as a "special occasion," according to a 2008 study in the *International Food Research Journal*. The problem is, study participants identified "special occasions" several times a week. Unless you know what you're celebrating, stick to your healthy habits.

SEPTEMBER

Keep it simple

Beware of menu verbiage. The longer the name of an item, the more fattening it tends to be. IHOP's original French toast has 920 calories, but the Strawberry Banana French Toast has 1,060. At Applebee's, a burger has 770 calories while the Steakhouse Burger with A.1. Sauce swells to 1,190. If you can't check calories, have the simply named entrées.

OCTOBER

Avoid peer pressure

What your friend eats might be making you fat. A study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that your risk of obesity jumps 171 percent when a close friend becomes obese. Friends may influence your eating habits, the study authors suggest. Don't let them dictate your meal ("Let's share the chili cheese fries!") when you eat out.

NOVEMBER

Listen to your gut

Try ordering a smaller meal—you might be surprised at how full you feel. In a Penn State study, people ate 30 percent more food when they were served bigger portions, yet felt no more satisfied than those who'd received smaller portions. Start by ordering less than usual (the Whopper Jr., say), and then gauge how satisfied you feel before ordering more.

DECEMBER

Watch the alcohol

Your boozy buzz just might be making you eat more. A study in the *Journal of Psychology & Behavior* found that drinking alcohol before a meal prompted people to consume 19 percent more calories. In the mood for a drink with dinner? Save yourself from calorie overload by holding off on your drink order until you've settled on a healthy meal.

breakfast diner

BEST

Bob Evans

Even though the breakfast at Bob Evans is fattier and brinier than anything you'd make at home, it still beats out the other chains. Take Denny's, for instance: Thanks to calorically careless cooking methods, a single scrambled egg packs in 120 calories and 10 grams of fat. At Bob's, a scrambled egg has only 84 calories and 5 grams of fat. But to net a decent meal, you still need strategy, and it goes like this: Forget the premade burritos, the greasy sausage scrambles, and the stuffed French toast. Instead, construct your own healthy meal from basic breakfast elements.

Top Pick

2 scrambled eggs, home fries, and fruit dish

390 calories

16 g fat

1163 mg sodium

Choose eggs for belly-filling protein, and always pair them with a side of fruit. Have home fries instead of hash browns and you'll save 161 calories, 2 grams of fat, and 414 milligrams of sodium. If you build a reasonable breakfast foundation, you can even afford to add on turkey sausage, bacon, or a parfait.

WORST IHOP

Here's the short stack of IHOP foibles: Nearly every combo encourages you to order bacon or sausage, every regular order of pancakes comes crowned with a scoop of butter big enough to plug the mouth of an ice-cream cone, and nearly every omelet is packed with meat and cheese and often garnished with rich toppings like sour cream or hollandaise sauce. The fat assault is so severe that your omelet can contain as much as 82 grams of it—just 10 fewer than you'll find in a stick of butter. Just call it the International House of Pudge.

Survival Strategy

Turn to the "Simple & Fit" selections, which come in under 600 calories. Try the whole-wheat French toast topped with fresh banana—just take it easy with the syrup.

mexican chain

BEST

Chipotle

Think of Chipotle as Subway for Mexican food. The chain's customizable approach puts you in charge of your meal, helping you avoid a surreptitious load of fat. What's more, the chain is a major supporter of conscientiously raised meat and dairy, including hormone-free pork.

Top Pick

Steak Burrito Bowl

with black beans, cheese, and green salsa

425 calories

16 g fat

980 mg sodium

For a robust, healthy dish with plenty of belly-filling protein and fiber, pick the Burrito Bowl instead of the regu-

lar burrito. You'll save nearly 300 calories just by skipping the tortilla.

WORST

On the Border

Grilled meat, beans, and salsa make for a healthy Mexican meal. That's why it's such a shame that On the Border tends to favor breaded fish, fried tortillas, and creamy sauces instead. Order the cheese and onion Tres Enchilada dinner, for instance, and you'll rack up about 1,600 calories. The dessert menu is just as bad. Pick one at random and odds are you'll net an additional 1,000 calories or more. Just say *no mas*.

Survival Strategy

Remember this formula: two soft tacos with a side of beans, vegetables, or both.

family restaurant

BEST

Ruby Tuesday

Sometimes the "best" restaurant is the one that inflicts the least damage, and that's the situation here. The chow coming from family restaurants—think T.G.I. Friday's, Outback, and Applebee's—is notoriously bloated. Ruby Tuesday boasts the most numerous healthy options with its Fit & Trim menu—more than a dozen entrées come in under 700 calories. (Applebee's also

has a healthy menu, but it offers just five options.) Venture onto the rest of the Ruby Tuesday menu and you'll find more smart choices. The chicken and seafood entrées are fairly safe, and a half rack of Memphis Dry-Rub Ribs has 460 calories—about half what the half-rack ribs at Applebee's have.

Top Pick

Barbecue Grilled Chicken

with white Cheddar mashed potatoes and fresh steamed broccoli

550 calories
20 g fat

2,061 mg sodium

The barbecue chicken and cheesy potatoes pack plenty of indulgence, and broccoli adds a bit of greenery.

WORST

Cheesecake Factory

No restaurant chain exemplifies America's portion problem more than Cheesecake Factory. One of the leanest regular dinner items is a hulking

cheeseburger called the Factory Burger, which delivers just about as many calories as a Double Quarter Pounder with Cheese. What's more, the average full-size sandwich contains nearly 1,400 calories, and the average pasta dish clocks in at 1,835. Worst of all, you'll find a measly four entrées spotlighted as "healthy."

Survival Strategy

The Small Plates & Snacks menu items are generally the leanest fare.

chinese restaurant

BEST

Panda Express

Given Panda's penchant for blanketing breaded meats with syrupy sauces, it's surprising to note how many entrées are under 300 calories. And since you can put together your own meal, it's easy to eat healthy. Pair an entrée with a side of

vegetables and a chicken egg roll—a formula almost guaranteed to net a meal with fewer than 700 calories.

Top Pick

Broccoli Beef with Mixed Veggies

(instead of rice or noodles) and a chicken egg roll

400 calories

16.5 g fat

1,660 mg sodium

Make Broccoli Beef your go-to entrée to keep the calorie total at 400.

WORST

P.F. Chang's

The entrées at this higher-end Chinese restaurant will cost you twice: Once when the check arrives, and again when your body deals with the high-calorie payload. It's hard to find an entrée under 600 calories. The chain tries to pass the buck by

claiming that its dishes are meant to be shared, but that's never specified on the menu. And unlike other chains, Chang's doesn't help you find the healthy items on the menu. You'd assume a dish called Lemongrass Prawns with Garlic Noodles would be relatively lean, but it delivers 970 calories. It's the luck of the draw—just call it Chinese roulette.

Survival Strategy

Seafood is safest. The two salmon-based entrées are both under 700 calories. On the appetizer side, your best bets are the spring rolls and seared ahi tuna.



burger joint

BEST

Wendy's

The Wendy's menu is built on the same bedrock foods as every other burger joint: beef, cheese, and fat-fried potatoes. But the chain trounces the competition in two ways. First, several of its burgers, including the Double Stack and nearly the entire line of Jr. Burgers, fall below the 400-calorie threshold. Not enough beef for you? Not a big deal. The quarter-pound Single has only 470 calories, and if you add bacon but hold the mayo, you're facing a still-reasonable 550. Wendy's sides also surpass the competition's. The chili strikes a perfect balance between flavor and nutrition, and customers can replace fries with chili, a side salad, or a baked potato in a standard value meal at no extra charge, a courtesy that's

rarely granted in the world of fast-food restaurants.

Top Pick Jr. Cheeseburger and a Small Chili

490 calories

18 g fat

1,560 mg sodium

For great flavor and smart portion control, order two satisfying favorites—chili and a cheeseburger—for under 500 calories.

WORST Dairy Queen

DQ is the only fast-food chain that specializes in both burgers and ice cream, and both sides of the menu are driven by the same excess that gives fast food a bad name. Granted, burger-and-shake joints are bound to have calorie-dense choices, but there's no reason they need to inject

each food item with egregious amounts of sodium and spike the desserts with trans fats. The indulgences at DQ include basket meals that rack up at least 49 grams of fat each, large malts with 1,300-plus calories, and the iconic Blizzard, a blended soft-serve sundae that averages over 800 calories for a medium serving. It's even served from a beverage cup, the better to scarf down alongside your burger and fries.

Survival Strategy

Stick to entrées under 500 calories, like the Original Cheeseburger or any regular-sized hot dog. If you want a treat, order a small ice-cream cone.



For more belly-saving tips, go to MensHealth.com/eatthis2011, and pick up a copy of the fully updated 2011 edition of *Eat This, Not That!* by MH editor-in-chief David Zinczenko with Matt Goulding.

AMERICA'S BEST BURGERS

Check out four more of the healthiest fast-food burgers

Best Small Burger



Burger King's Whopper Jr. (no mayo)

260 calories

10 g fat

460 mg sodium

Skip the 80-calorie glob of mayo and this becomes one of the noblest fast-food burgers in the country.

Best Double Burger



McDonald's McDouble

390 calories

19 g fat

920 mg sodium

McDonald's modest patties allow the chain to boost the beef-to-bun ratio without inflicting the heavy fat tariff of a typical double burger. Plus, it's only \$1.

Best Quarter Pounder



Hardee's Little Thick Cheeseburger

450 calories

23 g fat

1,180 mg sodium

The Hardee's quarter pounder with cheese stays under 500 calories. Just don't mistake it for the Little Thickburger, which has an extra 120.

Best Low-Carb Burger



In-N-Out Protein Style Double-Double

520 calories

39 g fat

1,160 mg sodium

"Protein-style" means you skip the bun in favor of lettuce. This low-carb burger succeeds where other versions fail, by avoiding oversized patties and mayo.

Part three LOVING BETTER



Ask a group of ladies what they look for in a man, and buzzwords fly. Confidence. Independence. Humor. Kindness. Looks. It's as if we women are all seeking the exact same guy. (Hot damn—lucky dude.)

But here's the rub: We reorder these priorities depending on where we are in our lives.

"What a woman looks for in a partner changes as she ages," says Helen Fisher, Ph.D., a professor of anthropology

at Rutgers University and a relationship expert, whose most recent book is *Why Him? Why Her?*

So if you want a decent shot at success, you have to recognize what she values at this stage of her life—and know what to expect if you plan to stay with her. A woman who once prioritized, say, grinding to Lil' Wayne on the dance floor will eventually start to prefer intimate conversation accompanied by a glass of Barolo and a plate of homemade Bolognese.



What Every Woman Wants

Do you know what women desire? We went out and asked 1,400 women in their 20s, 30s, and 40s about their deepest dating and sex secrets. All you have to do is listen

By Carolyn Kylstra Photographs by Alisa Connan

These changes extend into the bedroom, too. Very few women become set in their sexual ways. Quite the opposite: A *Men's Health* exclusive survey of nearly 1,400 women found that sexual tastes shift with the passing years. To be specific (and the women we asked were *very* specific), two-thirds of the women in their 30s and almost half of the women in their 40s revealed that their sexual palates had evolved in the past decade. And change can be good.

For example, a woman who once avoided being on top because she worried about how her double D's looked might eventually become sexually confident, knowing exactly what she wants, how she wants it, and how to guide you there. Sex becomes *more* of an adventure with age, it appears.

But that doesn't mean you have to wait. Whether the woman you're dating or living with is in her 20s, 30s, or 40s, here's your guide to hitting her hot spots.

20s

With youth comes beauty, ambition, and energy, but also inexperience (and its annoying sister, insecurity). Our survey revealed that trying to label women in this decade of discovery is about as easy as predicting what getup Lady Gaga will wear to her next awards show.

What she wants

JULIANNA GUILL, 23, star of *The Apparition* and the TBS comedy *Glory Daze*, explains.

CONVERSATION Talking to her boyfriend after a long day is essential. "I want to be able to talk about my life, what I do, the people I meet on a daily basis, the things that happen to me," she says. "And I want someone who's excited to hear about this stuff and share the same with me."

ADVENTURE

"Women in their 20s are excited about life and everything that's coming," Guill says. "We want to do new things and explore. I want to travel and experience other cultures. I want to be politically and socially involved. Women in their 20s want partners who want to do all those things with them, and who also have dreams and goals of their own."

COMPASSION

A man should "care about other people and have empathy," Guill says. "Without that, I would have a very difficult time relating to someone." Devote a few extra hours a month to a cause.

FRIENDSHIP

A keeper is "genuinely interested in who you are and who your friends and family are," Guill says. Show enthusiasm when she invites you to hang with her sisters.

17%
are up for sex on the first date if there's chemistry

1 IN 5
have had intercourse with only one partner

KINDNESS
was the highest-ranked quality in a long-term partner

9 IN 10
have talked dirty during sex

38%
had two or more orgasms during their most recent sexual encounter

27%
didn't reach orgasm during their most recent sexual encounter

30%
say they want more oral sex performed on them

33%
keep their pubic area bare

HER DATING PROFILE

A woman in her 20s has three priorities, says Nina K. Thomas, Ph.D., a psychologist based in New York City. She wants a career, personal identity, and a relationship. There's also a good shot that she'll walk down the aisle: The average American woman marries when she's 26, according to the U.S. Census. But whether she's husband hunting or taking aim at the glass ceiling (or both), expect her to be a social butterfly. "Coming out of their teen years, they want excitement, they want to go to parties, they want an active lifestyle filled with adventure," says Robert Axel, Ph.D., a New York City psychologist.

Win her over

Befriend her friends: The math minds behind the online dating site OkCupid analyzed 3.2 million user profiles and found that the most common phrase straight women use is "my girlfriends." Also in the top 20: "close with my mother." "More than any other adult age group," Fisher says, "a woman in her 20s still has strong ties to her own family and strong ties to her girlfriends." So if you date a younger woman, you'll face the friend gauntlet. Be up for anything, especially if it offers a chance to bond with her besties—road trips, dance parties, brunches. Pay attention when she talks about her friends; remember names and stories. "She's going to want you to fit in," Fisher says.

HER SEXUAL PROFILE

In our survey, women in their 20s were least likely among all the age groups to achieve orgasm during their most recent sexual encounter. And the National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior reports that they were also more likely to feel pain during that encounter than women in their 30s and 40s were.

One possible reason: They're fairly new at sex and eager to please—sometimes before they're fully lubricated. "Women in their 20s tend to be trying every move in the book, and some positions are not as comfortable as others," says Debby Herbenick, Ph.D., the *Men's Health* relationships advisor and coauthor of the study.

Ignite her lust

Let there be light, says Herbenick. During sex, even a little light—like a candle—is better than total darkness, and not just because you can take in more of her lithe form. "It allows you to see how she is reacting to what's going on," Herbenick explains. You'll be better able to gauge her pleasure (or pain).

ESSENTIAL SEX AND RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Show her kindness

For their most desired trait in a long-term partner (out of 10 traits listed), 58 percent of our survey respondents picked kindness. "Showing kindness is as easy as bringing her a towel after sex, or glass of water or wine," says Joy Davidson, Ph.D., a sex therapist based in New York City. "The best form of kindness isn't forced; it's about giving special treatment to someone you care about."

Listen to her

Of the same 10 traits, 39 percent of our survey respondents picked listening skills as most desirable in a long-term partner. When she says she likes something, make a mental note and mention it later—that'll impress her, says Isadora Alman, M.F.T., a California-based sex therapist.

Keep her happy

Forty percent of the women who took our survey indicated that they had two or more orgasms during their most recent sexual encounter. After you've reached orgasm, take a couple of minutes to regain your senses, says Davidson. Then challenge yourself to become a multiple threat by showing off your oral or vibrator skills. (Don't have a vibrator? See below.) Not only will she adore the continued attention, but eventually you'll be ready for round two.

Bring her a friend

Fifty-six percent of our survey takers said they've used a vibrator, so toy shopping might not be as uncomfortable as you think. Embarrassment-free shopping is what the Web is all about (try babeland.com or mypleasure.com). There's no better time to break it out than after you've reached orgasm, and she still wants more.

ALEX HOWE

Our survey backs this up. In response to the question, "What makes a man good in bed?" Courtney, 20, says, "If he can pick up on subtle hints, changes in body movement or sounds, he's amazing. The more he makes it about me, the more I can make it about him." And when we asked

for best-sex-ever stories, Jen, 22, said, "He kept telling me how sexy I was and how tight I felt." So pay attention, and speak up about your desires so she'll feel comfortable speaking up about hers.

She's bound to like variety: The NSSHB study found that the more acts

you engage in during a sexual experience (manual, oral, and vaginal sex), the more likely she is to have an orgasm. So stretch out foreplay and mix it up. And keep in mind that in our survey, a plurality (45 percent) of the women in their 20s said the ideal time for penile-vaginal sex was 15 minutes or less.

30s

Obsessions with socializing and fitting in are on the wane. Women in their 30s are more interested in being happy. She may have a lot on her plate—career, friends, a home—but she's independent and ready to indulge her desires. Our survey revealed a sexual awakening: Women at this stage have learned to enjoy themselves.

28%

are up for sex on the first date if there's chemistry

SENSE OF HUMOR

was the highest-ranked quality in a long-term partner

48%

had one orgasm during their most recent sexual encounter

22%

had two orgasms during their most recent sexual encounter

“Women in their 30s are more balanced, more grounded, and better partners.”

2 IN 3
have used pornography during sex

60%
have had more than five sex partners

33%
want more oral sex performed on them

19%
want more kissing

14%
used a vibrator during their last sexual encounter

26%
keep their pubic area mostly shaved or waxed

HER DATING PROFILE

Many women at this age are starting to see themselves as mothers, says Thomas, the New York psychologist. “Their selection process is much more guided by the idea of settling down and having children.” That’s good news! All you men who complain that women date only jerks, rejoice: The more serious a woman becomes about finding a life partner, the more likely she is to reconsider the nice guy she might have once overlooked. You’ll enjoy a more fully formed individual, too, Fisher says. “She’ll be more economically stable and therefore able to express more of who she really is.”

Win her over

A date with a woman in her 30s tends to be more intellectual and less social:

visiting museums, cooking dinner together, with a lot more one-on-one time. Ask about her passions and tailor your date accordingly. Check out the lecture lineup at the local university, for instance. If any of her favorite authors are slated to speak, take her. Come up with ideas that’ll give her something to witness, to think about, and to talk about afterward.

Warning from Axel: Women in this age bracket are “quick to break up with a man who isn’t ‘the one.’” To improve your odds, Fisher, an anthropologist, endorses online dating, where both parties can find exactly the kind of person they’re looking for. Try Match.com or eHarmony (or other paying sites) to find women who are serious about finding a long-term partner.

What she wants

NADINE VELAZQUEZ, 32, star of the FX show *The League*, dishes.

ACTION “I didn’t care for sex in my 20s. But now I understand songs and movies about sex and why people are so sex-driven. It’s like I turned 30 and suddenly, overnight, I became hungry!”

MATURITY “My husband has had to adapt,” Velazquez admits. The pair married 5 years ago, when she was 26 and he was 38. “Men who’ve dated women in their 20s and 30s have told me that women in their 20s are babies, just like I was. They are bratty, selfish, the whole nine yards. And women in their 30s are more balanced, more grounded, and better partners.”

HONESTY Velazquez says she and her husband are more honest with each other than any other couple she knows. That has helped her develop into the woman she is today because she’s not afraid to be herself. “It takes a lot of courage for a man to be that open,” she says. “It’s such a gem to be able to have a man who can both tell me what he’s thinking and accept what I’m thinking.”

FUN When she was younger, Velazquez would go out because that’s what everyone else was doing. “Now my attitude is, if it’s interesting and there’s a reason for me to be there, I’ll be there.” Her suggestion for a fun date night: “Spend a Friday night playing games—charades, Mafia, Words with Friends on my iPhone,” she says. “I would never have wanted to do that in my 20s.”

HER SEXUAL PROFILE

There’s another upside to all that buzz-killing biological-clock talk: Women in their 30s are having a lot of sex. And they want more—tonight! Researchers from the University of Texas at Austin surveyed 827 women between the ages of 18 and 65 about their sexual thoughts, fantasies, and behaviors. As expected, women with declining fertility (from 27 to 45) acted in ways that increased their odds of having babies (not necessarily consciously). These women thought more about sex, had more frequent sexual fantasies, had more instances of sexual intercourse, and were more likely to want to have sex with someone they’d known only a short time. However, Fisher believes that the reproduction-expediting explanation might be too simplistic: “It could be that women in their 30s simply know their bodies better than women in their 20s do. They’ve figured out what they like, and they’ve figured out how to tell men what they like.” Your mission, should you choose to accept it: Listen to her!

Ignite her lust

Among the age groups we surveyed, we found that women in their 30s are most open to using toys in

bed. For instance, 14 percent indicated that they’d used a vibrator during their last sexual experience with a man, and 42 percent said they wished they’d used restraints (like handcuffs) the last time they had sex. For a set of restraints that won’t hurt her wrists (or yours), try the Lelo Etherea Silk Cuffs (\$50, lelo.com). Not sure if she’s open to the idea? “Baby steps,” says Gloria Brame, author of *Come Hither: A Common-sense Guide to Kinky Sex*. “First pin your girlfriend’s wrists over her head while you fool around, and judge her reaction. If it makes her really hot, chances are you’re with the kind of person who’d be interested in being restrained.” Then casually ask her about it at another time—not while you’re naked.

Another tip our survey fairly shouted: Be more vocal. When we asked women what they wanted to hear in bed, women in their 30s said they wanted to hear how good it feels. “I like any sounds—I like to know he’s into it as much as I am,” says Miranda, 31. “I love to hear anything about how I make him feel, how I’m doing, or how I look, any dirty talk,” says Tiffany, 30. And, “You are so sexy, I can’t get enough of you,” always works for Karla, 36.

40s

These women know what they want, and they're not afraid to ask for it. Maybe it's because they've done the marriage-and-kids thing, or maybe they're just successful, self-assured, and feel no pressure to settle down. Our survey revealed that a woman in her 40s might be demanding, but that has its upside: more adventure between the sheets.



29%
are up for sex on the first date if there's chemistry

KINDNESS
was the highest-ranked quality in a long-term partner

86%
had one or more orgasms during their most recent sexual encounter

68%
reached orgasm before their partner did during their most recent sexual encounter

28%
want more oral sex

38%
have used a blindfold during sex

69%
have masturbated in front of a partner

1 IN 4
have had intercourse with 20 or more partners

30%
keep their pubic area mostly shaved or waxed

HER DATING PROFILE

Expect 40ish women to be bold—in their relationships, in their careers, and in their approach to having fun. It's hormones, Fisher says: In their early 40s, estrogen and testosterone levels drop, but testosterone doesn't go down as much. "And so you see more expression of the testosterone system as women grow older," she says. What this means: "A woman in her 40s is going to be more direct, more decisive, more tough-minded, perhaps more daring and independent."

Win her over

Bring enough energy to match hers. "When she wants to go off and do something," Fisher says, "she'll want a man who's eager to jump up and do it with her." This can mean anything from hiking to gallery hopping. "They're not calling up their girlfriends to meet in the bar anymore," Fisher says. Don't worry—she isn't going to expect you to replace her girlfriends. Instead, she'll want someone who's able to enjoy the world with her. To impress her, check out some luxury bargains on jetsetter.com and sweep her off for a weekend getaway.

HER SEXUAL PROFILE

Women in their 40s love sex. In our survey, this was the age group most open to considering sex on a first date (58 percent). These women were also the most likely to have had an orgasm during their most recent sexual encounter (86 percent). "A woman in her 40s is, for the most part, relieved of the worry of having babies, so she can be more relaxed about sex and have it more often," Fisher says.

Ignite her lust

When we asked women in their 40s how their attitudes had changed in the past 10 years, this was the refrain: "I want sex more often!" Said Norma, 42, "I've become bolder in expressing what I want and in suggesting new things for us to try." That's your cue!

Women of all ages in our survey said they want more oral sex performed on them. Some of their tips: "Use your fingers as well as your tongue," advises Rose, 41. Laina, 40, wants a delicate touch. "Nibble my thighs and be gentle on the clitoris." Larisa, 41, adds, "Clearly enjoy what you're doing. Being hesitant is a turnoff, a rejection of the most intimate part of me." ■

What she wants

ELIZABETH MITCHELL, 40, star of the ABC hit show *V*, shares.

ATTENTION

Mitchell has played both lesbian and straight characters. She jokes, "When I play a straight woman, I flatter, and when I play a gay woman, I listen." Take note: "Listen to what she's talking about—if she mentions something once, she's probably interested in it. Bring it up again later. She'll be so impressed!"

APPRECIATION

"My husband [of 7 years] tells me daily that he thinks I'm beautiful," Mitchell says. "As a result, I feel comfortable walking around naked in front of him. I feel that when he looks at me, he's unconditionally thinking I'm hot. I'm all for it."

COMPLIMENTS

"There's nothing sexier than really taking someone in—looking at everything, and not in a critical way," Mitchell says. Pay attention to all sensory details: "What do her lips taste like? What does she smell like? How does her hair feel? Take the time to pay attention to these details, and a woman is going to notice your effort."

INDEPENDENCE

Mitchell is not a fan of neediness. She's independent and strong, and pleased to be married to a man who's her match. "A man needs to know himself, have his own passions, likes, and interests, and he should want to talk about those passions with me," she says.



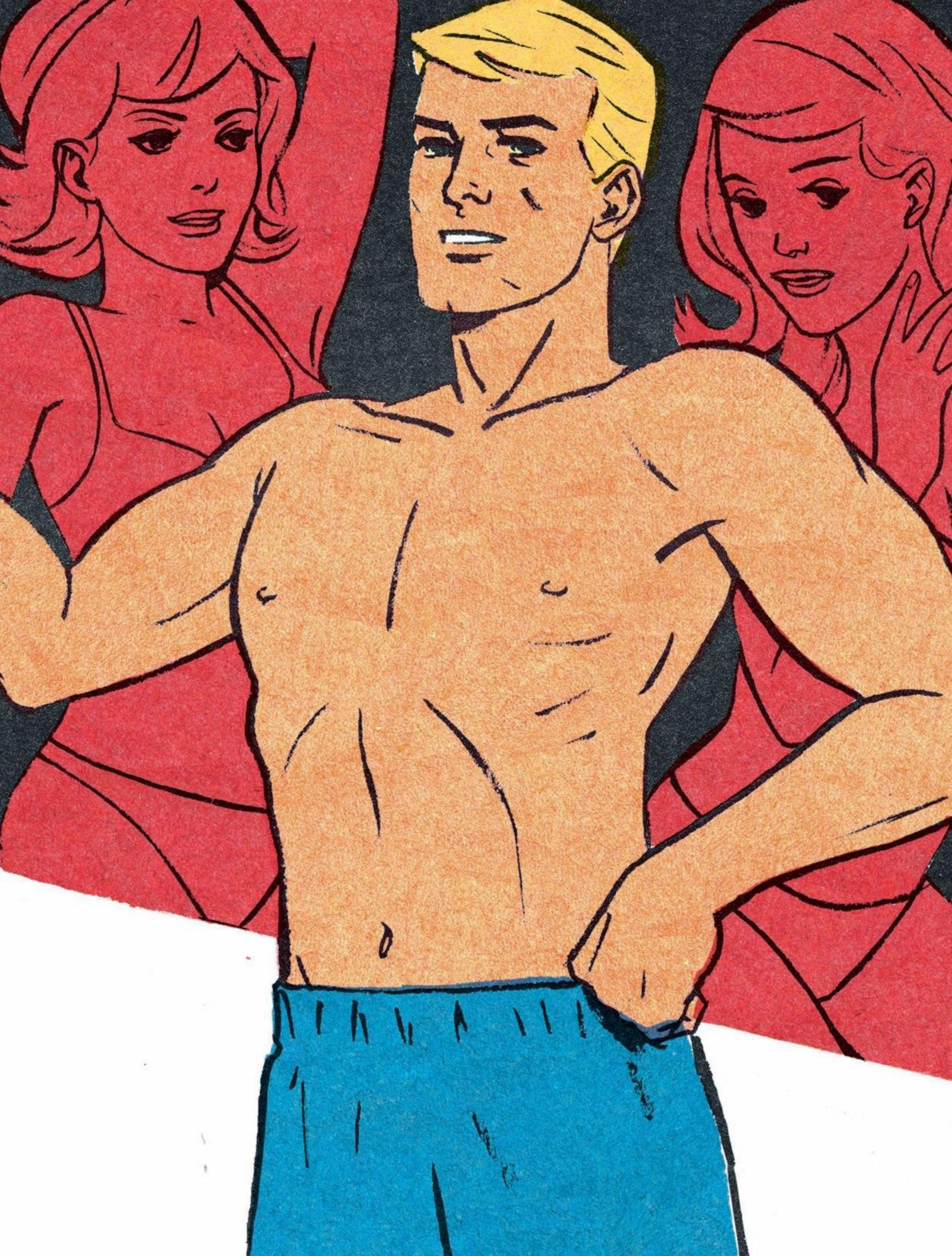
Part four
FEELING BETTER

YOUR HEALTHIEST YEAR EVER!

☐ CHECK YOUR VITALS AGAINST THE AVERAGE GUY'S. THEN REMIND YOURSELF: IT'S NOT ABOUT MAKING THE CUT. IT'S ABOUT SETTING THE BAR

Illustrations by
Patrick Leger

By Laura Roberson



You

wouldn't ask an average guy to stand beside you at your wedding. After all, you want someone you can call your *best* man. Nor would you brag to your buds about your amazingly average sex life. (Then again, maybe you'd be perfectly happy with seven or eight times a month.) And you probably wouldn't tell your boss that you put "just average" effort into that critical project—unless, of course, you have only an average aversion to unemployment. • Guess what? Settling for average health is an even dumber move. That's because in the past half century, "average" health has come to mean overweight, sedentary, and significantly more vulnerable to illness than men were a generation or two ago. "Our bodies have changed over the years," says John Elefteriades, M.D., chief of cardiothoracic surgery at Yale University's school of medicine. "We've engineered physical exertion out of our lives, and we eat all day. It's time for our bodies to revert to the way they're supposed to function." • Fortunately, this isn't the average men's magazine. We've scoured the latest research and talked to the nation's top docs to bring you two dozen strategies that can help you achieve chart-topping vitals. Follow our advice, and you'll reengineer your body for optimal performance—in the bedroom, at the gym, and most important, on the exam table. • So go ahead, dust off your tux. In a few months, you'll be your own best man.

Protect against Heart disease

ODDS THAT THE AVERAGE 40-YEAR-OLD GUY WILL DEVELOP HEART DISEASE IN HIS LIFETIME: **1 IN 2**

PERCENTAGE OF MALE HEART-DISEASE SUFFERERS WHO NEVER SHOWED ANY SYMPTOMS BEFORE IT KILLED THEM: **50**

Tame that temper

If you frequently find yourself flipping the finger at other drivers or yelling at the TV when your team tanks (um, Cowboys?), repeat this mantra: *Lose my cool, lose my life*. According to a recent study review in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, angry outbursts are more likely to cause heart dis-

ease in men than in women. While the reason for the gender difference isn't clear, the effect on your arteries is: chronic inflammation that can lead to a chest-clutching clog. Can't manage your anger? Maurice Schweitzer, Ph.D., a psychology researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, recommends

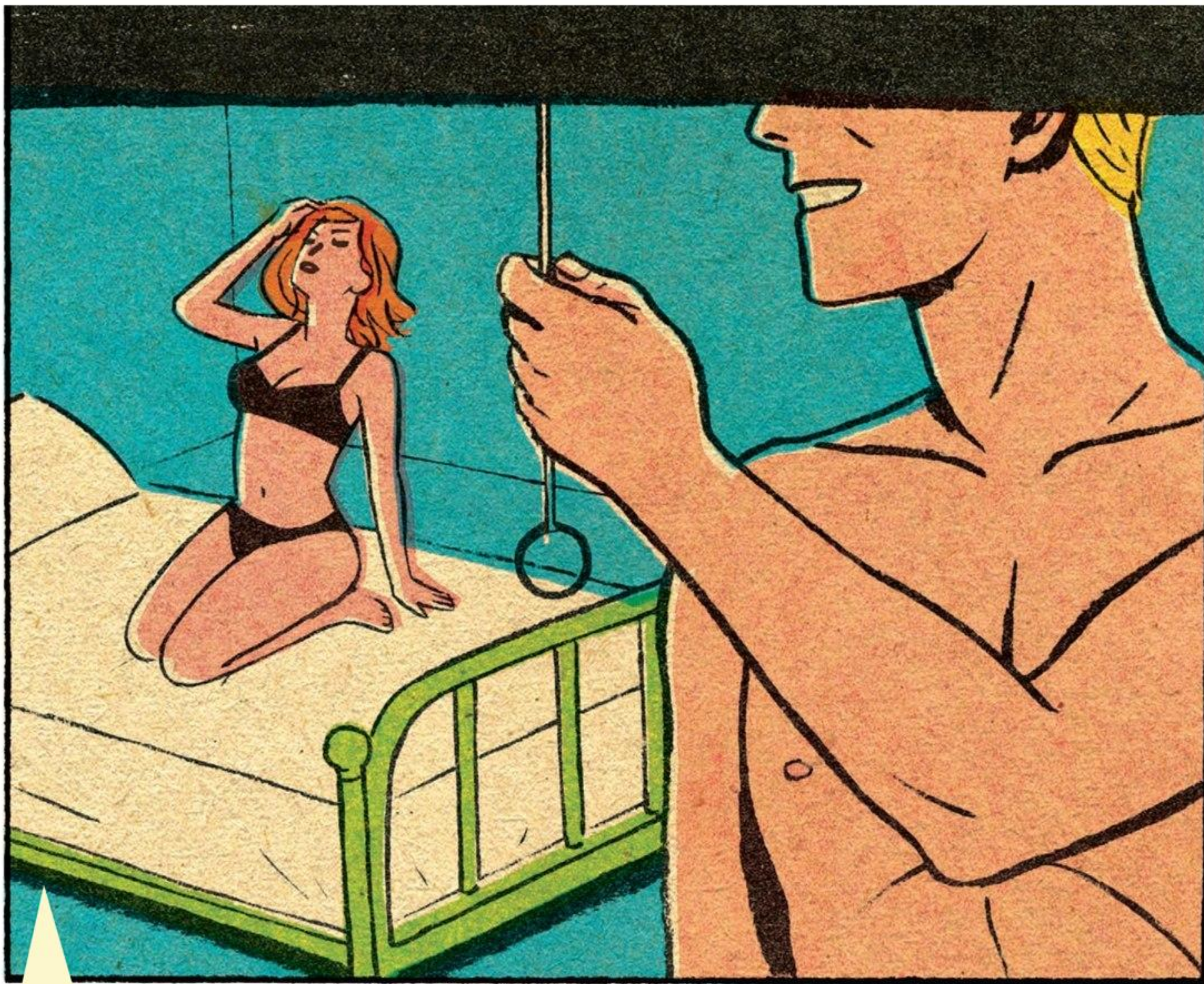
eliminating the little everyday irritants in your life—that leaky faucet, your cluttered desk at the office, those unanswered e-mails lingering in your inbox. This way, when the bigger triggers hit—and they will—your short fuse won't already be smoldering.

Lower your heart volume

Listen up: Is your work environment annoyingly noisy? In a 2010 study in the journal *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, people who were chronically exposed to loud noises while on the job were twice as likely to have heart disease as those who toiled in blissful silence. "Noise exposure may trigger the release

of stress hormones, which can constrict coronary arteries and reduce blood supply to your heart," says study author Wenqi Gan, M.D., Ph.D. So interrupt the aural assault by taking periodic "quiet" breaks of 10 to 15 minutes: Wear noise-canceling headphones (see this issue's *Special Report* for a recommendation) or

go for a stroll to a less populated part of the building. Also consider turning off the ringer on your phone and muting your computer to eliminate the occasional shrill bursts of noise.



Improve your

SEXUAL HEALTH

Flex your sex muscle

While your *bulbocavernosus* isn't the kind of muscle you can work in the gym (unless you want to be thrown out), it's worth training, especially if you suffer from premature ejaculation. "When this muscle contracts, nerves send a signal up your spinal cord to suppress arousal and keep you going longer," says Darius Paduch, M.D., Ph.D., an associate professor of urology at Cornell University. To find the bulbocavernosus, place your fingers behind your scrotum and try to flex the muscle there. (If you feel your stomach contract, you're squeezing the wrong muscle.) Now move your hand to your stomach, and while keeping your abs relaxed, begin masturbating. When you're about to reach orgasm, flex your bulbocavernosus. Once you get the hang of it, flex during sex. "This won't bring you from 2 minutes to 20 minutes, but you can definitely progress up to 5 to 7 minutes," says Dr. Paduch.

Practice makes perfect

Ejaculations don't just feel good—they're good for you. "I've seen men lose up to 2 inches off their erections because they didn't masturbate and have enough sex," Dr. Paduch says. "Your penis is basically a big muscle—it will atrophy if you don't use it." His Rx: Masturbate as often as you'd like to be having sex. "What really matters is having an adequate outlet. Your penis doesn't care whether that outlet is sex or masturbation."

PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO SUFFER FROM
PREMATURE EJACULATION: **18**

OF THOSE, PERCENTAGE WHO HAVEN'T SOUGHT HELP
FROM A DOCTOR: **96**

LENGTH OF TIME A MAN WITH P.E. LASTS: **20 TO 80 SECONDS**

TIME THE AVERAGE GUY LASTS: **7 MINUTES**

Achieve optimum **FITNESS**

PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO ARE SEDENTARY: **37**

PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO EXERCISE TO OFFSET THEIR UNHEALTHY HABITS: **16**

NUMBER ONE CHALLENGE THE AVERAGE GUY FACES WHEN IT COMES TO EXERCISE:
STAYING MOTIVATED

Show her what she's missing

Before working out, flip through photos of a former flame who broke your heart. A 2010 study in the *Journal of Neurophysiology* found that viewing images of a woman who spurned you activates the areas of your brain that control motivation and reward. "Rejection—that sense of loss—stimulates desire," says Christopher Proulx, M.S., C.S.C.S., an assistant professor of movement science at Westfield State University. "And this desire increases your level of adrenaline—the same chemical response that occurs in preparation for physical activity." This may enhance your focus and overall performance.

Lift with the underdog

Believe it or not, seeing your buddy's scrawny biceps may be more motivating than seeing some other guy's anaconda arms coiled around a barbell. A 2010 study in the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* found that people work about 30 percent harder when they're competing against those they see as easily beatable. "Men produce higher levels of testosterone when they're winning than when they're losing," says Proulx. Also a factor: The chance that your less fit friend will surpass you. "Which is more embarrassing," Proulx asks, "being beaten by someone who's bigger than you, or someone who's weaker?"

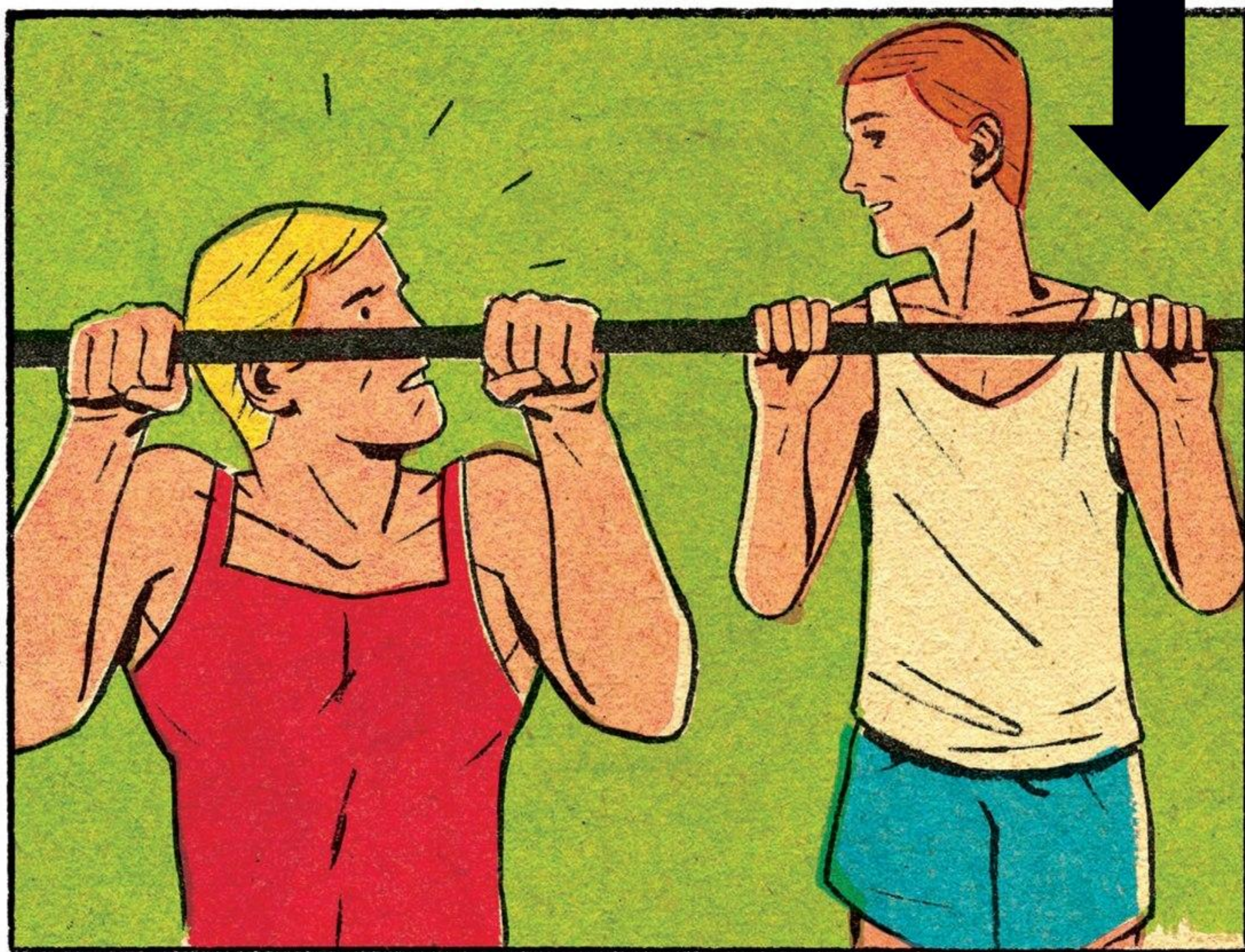
YOUR MOST VITAL VITALS

Testosterone

AVERAGE GUY: 511 NANOGRAMS/DECILITER
TARGET: ≥ 650 NG/DL

Helps diagnose: Decreased sex drive, erectile dysfunction, infertility

Improve your number: Exercise is already a natural T booster, but you can raise this hormone even higher by popping a piece of caffeinated gum before you start sweating. In a recent study from New Zealand, athletes who chewed Jolt gum prior to exercising had testosterone increases that were 12 percent greater than those of the gum-free guys.



Stave off Prostate cancer

AVERAGE MAN'S RISK OF DEVELOPING PROSTATE CANCER IN HIS LIFETIME: **1 IN 6**

PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN YOUR RISK OF DEVELOPING THE DISEASE IF YOU ALSO HAVE HYPERTENSION: **50**

Eat your chicken naked

Take hypertension out of the prostate-cancer equation by following our blood-pressure tips on this page, and then further manage your risk by skinning your favorite protein: chicken. In a 2010 study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, prostate-cancer patients who ate the most skin-on chicken were more than twice as likely to face progression of their disease as those who consumed the least. By contrast, scarfing down *any* quantity of skinless chicken appears to be prostate-safe. Blame the fact that grilling or broiling poultry skin results in formation of heterocyclic amines, compounds shown to damage DNA in human prostate cells.



Recruit from the farm team

Almost everything in nature has a natural enemy, and for prostate cancer, it's cruciferous vegetables. A recent study in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* found that men who ate more than one weekly serving of broccoli or cauliflower had a 25 percent lower risk of developing aggressive prostate cancer. Credit a storehouse of antioxidants and glucosinolates, bitter-tasting compounds that shield your DNA from damage.

YOUR MOST VITAL VITALS

Sperm count

AVERAGE GUY: 89 MILLION/MILLILITER
TARGET: > 40 MILLION/ML

Helps diagnose: Infertility, celiac disease, infection, tumors

Improve your number: Kick your Coke habit. Danish scientists recently found that men who guzzled more than a liter of cola a day had 40 percent less sperm than nondrinkers. Focus instead on finishing your salad: A 2009 Spanish study found that men with the highest sperm quality also ate the most lettuce and tomatoes.

YOUR MOST VITAL VITALS

Blood pressure

AVERAGE GUY: 121/71
MILLIMETERS OF MERCURY
TARGET: 120/80 MMHG

Helps diagnose: Heart-disease risk, stroke risk

Improve your number: Don't let revenge leave you cold. People who focus on blaming others when conflict arises face an increase in systolic blood pressure, according to a 2010 study in the *British Journal of Psychology*. Anytime you feel you've been seriously slighted, reappraise the situation. "Try to understand the aggressor and what circumstances may have triggered the behavior—stress, for instance," says Maurice Schweitzer, Ph.D., a psychology researcher at the University of Pennsylvania. "This gives you a richer context and better insight, and can help moderate your reaction to the outburst."

Tame your Blood pressure

ODDS THAT THE AVERAGE GUY WILL HAVE HIGH BP WHEN HE'S 35 TO 44 YEARS OLD: **1 IN 5**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS A 50-YEAR-OLD MAN WITH NORMAL BLOOD PRESSURE WILL OUTLIVE ONE WITH HYPERTENSION: **5**

Prevent SKIN CANCER

NUMBER OF SUNSCREEN BOTTLES THE AVERAGE GUY USES IN A YEAR: **1.5**

NUMBER OF 8-OUNCE BOTTLES HE'D GO THROUGH IF HE APPLIED THE RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF SUNBLOCK EVERY DAY OF THE SUMMER: **11**

Respect your enemy

A false sense of confidence can be fatal: People who use high-SPF sunscreens tend to go out in the sun when it's stronger and stay there longer, putting themselves at a greater risk of melanoma than those who slather on a low-SPF formula, according to recent French research. "People mistakenly assume that if they put on high-SPF sunscreen, they're good to go the whole day," says David Leffell, M.D., a professor of dermatology at Yale school of medicine. His advice: Stick with a photo-stabilized SPF 30 sunscreen, such as Neutrogena's Fresh Cooling Body Mist Sunblock (\$10, neutrogena.com), and set your watch or smartphone to remind you to reapply every 2 hours. Also, wash your beach clothes with SunGuard to increase the UV rating to 30 (\$2, sunguardsunprotection.com), and throw them in the dryer before you head out—the laundering will tighten the weave of the fabric, providing extra protection, say Henry Ford Hospital researchers.

Uncover a mole

Tell your wife or girlfriend you need to examine every inch of her body—doctor's orders. Jump in the shower together, lather up, and before you towel off, look her over for irregular, dark, or raised moles, or sores that don't heal, says Dr. Leffell. Monthly self-examination may catch melanoma earlier, when it's easier to cure, he says. Is she balking at the idea of you playing detective with her dermis? Tell her this: In a 2008 Northwestern University study, couples who were the most satisfied gave skin exams that were three times more effective than those of discontented duos.

Scale back your BP

Not only can regular trips to the fish market help your waistline, but a seafood diet is also low in sodium and rich in magnesium and taurine, two compounds that can slash your risk of hypertension, according to Japanese researchers. Seek out seaweed, a natural source of magnesium that can be added to soups (it's also commonly found in sushi), and freshly harvested, taurine-rich shellfish, such as oysters and scallops. Going fresh helps you avoid an unwanted shot of sodium-laden preservatives.



Fight DIABETES

ODDS THAT THE AVERAGE GUY WILL DEVELOP DIABETES EVEN IF HE'S DISEASE-FREE AT AGE 40: **1 IN 3**

INCREASE IN A MAN'S RISK OF DIABETES IF HE BOOSTS HIS DAILY TV-WATCHING TIME FROM LESS THAN AN HOUR TO 4 OR MORE HOURS: **TWOFOLD**

Go a little nuts

Eating almonds can help ward off insulin resistance (a red flag for diabetes), according to a 2010 study in the *Journal of American College of Nutrition*. When people with prediabetes ate 2 ounces of almonds (about two handfuls) each day for 16 weeks, they experienced a 23 percent drop in fasting insulin levels, while those who said no to nuts saw a 19 percent increase. The credit goes to oleic acid, a fat that triggers the release of GLP-1, a peptide that can improve insulin sensitivity.

Look forward to commercials

Some health threats can be beaten using brute strength: A recent UCLA study found that lean people with low muscle mass are 67 percent more likely to be insulin resistant than their more buff counterparts. Having a sculpted physique may help your body use insulin to regulate blood sugar, the researchers say. Our advice: Cut your TV time to an hour a day, and during commercials, crank out a few sets of body-weight squats, lunges, or pushups.

Find body-weight exercises at MensHealth.com/fitness/body-weight-exercises-1.

Watch your Body weight

PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE: **70**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS A MAN LOSES FROM HIS LIFE SPAN IF HE WAS OBESE AT AGE 20: **13**

SIZE OF THE AVERAGE GUY'S WAIST: **40 INCHES**

MAXIMUM WAIST SIZE THAT COULD FIT INTO THE ESCAPE POD USED BY THE TRAPPED CHILEAN MINERS: **35 INCHES**

Never assume "healthy" is healthy

Beware the Subway diet: Diners grossly underestimate the calorie counts in "healthy" fast food, according to a recent study from Cornell University's Food and Brand Lab. When people ate a Subway meal with as many calories as a McDonald's meal, they misjudged the Subway meal's load by 21 percent (159 calories). "Not only do you underestimate the amount you eat, but you end up indulging later because you thought you were so good at lunch," says study author Brian Wansink, Ph.D. His advice: Estimate the number of calories in your healthy fast-food meal, and double it. "You'll be a lot more accurate," he says. And, of course, use our own 2011 edition of *Eat This, Not That* as a guide: Go to MensHealth.com/eatthis2011.

Calculate your grains

Exercise won't offset the waist-inflating effect of white bread, according to a new study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Among exercisers, those who ate refined grains daily had 12 percent more visceral fat—the most dangerous kind—than those who consumed the least amount of the processed stuff. The researchers also found that people who ate the most whole grains had 17 percent *less* belly flab than those who consumed the least. The catch: Continuing to consume refined grains offsets the fat-blasting effect of whole grains. Pasta, English muffins, white bread, and pizza are your primary offenders. Cut these carbs, and replace them with at least three servings of whole grains a day.

YOUR MOST VITAL VITALS

Resting heart rate

AVERAGE GUY: 75 BEATS PER MINUTE
TARGET: **≤ 60 BPM**

Helps assess: Cardiovascular fitness, heart disease, stroke

Improve your number: Speed it up to slow it down. During pickup games, volunteer to play guard rather than center—you'll raise your heart rate (and improve your cardiovascular fitness) more, according to a 2009 *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* study.

Lower your Cholesterol

PERCENTAGE OF MEN CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR HEART HEALTH WHO LIMIT THEIR DIETARY CHOLESTEROL INTAKE: **25**

PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN HDL (GOOD) CHOLESTEROL IN MEN WHO STARTED EATING THREE EGGS A DAY: **20**

Pop a pistachio

Eggs aren't the only shells you should be cracking. In a new Penn State study, people who ate two servings of pistachios a day slashed their LDL (bad) cholesterol by an average of 13 percent. "Phytosterols in nuts act almost like a drug—they bind cholesterol in the GI tract and block its absorption," says Paul Ziajka, M.D., Ph.D., a clinical lipidologist with the Southeast Lipid Association. Why pistachios? They pack a higher concentration of phytosterols than any other nut, according to a 2005 study from Virginia Tech.

YOUR MOST VITAL VITALS

Blood sugar

AVERAGE GUY: 104 MILLIGRAMS/DECILITER
TARGET: 70 TO 99 MG/DL

Helps diagnose: Hyperglycemia, hypoglycemia, diabetes, prediabetes

Improve your number: In a 2010 University of Massachusetts study, researchers analyzed people's blood-sugar responses to seven snacks: half a glazed doughnut, skim milk, an apple, oatmeal, wrinkled peas, smooth peas, and walnuts. The least jarring bites? Wrinkled peas and walnut halves. Sprinkle the nuts with cinnamon (a blood-sugar tamer) and try the shriveled legumes instead of chick-peas in homemade hummus.

YOUR MOST VITAL VITALS

LDL cholesterol

AVERAGE GUY: 126 MILLIGRAMS PER DECILITER
TARGET: < 100 MG/DL

Helps assess: Heart-disease risk

Improve your number: Here's one more reason to skip fast food. In a new study in the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, teens with high blood concentrations of perfluoroalkyl acids—chemicals found in such grease-resistant packaging as Chinese food containers, pizza boxes, and burger wrappers—also had high LDL. Researchers aren't sure why the link exists, but they're confident the problem isn't limited to teens. "The control of cholesterol is uniform throughout our lives," says Yale cardiologist John Eleftheriades, M.D. "So this would likely translate to adults."

Beat DEPRESSION

PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO SUFFER FROM DEPRESSION: **4.4**

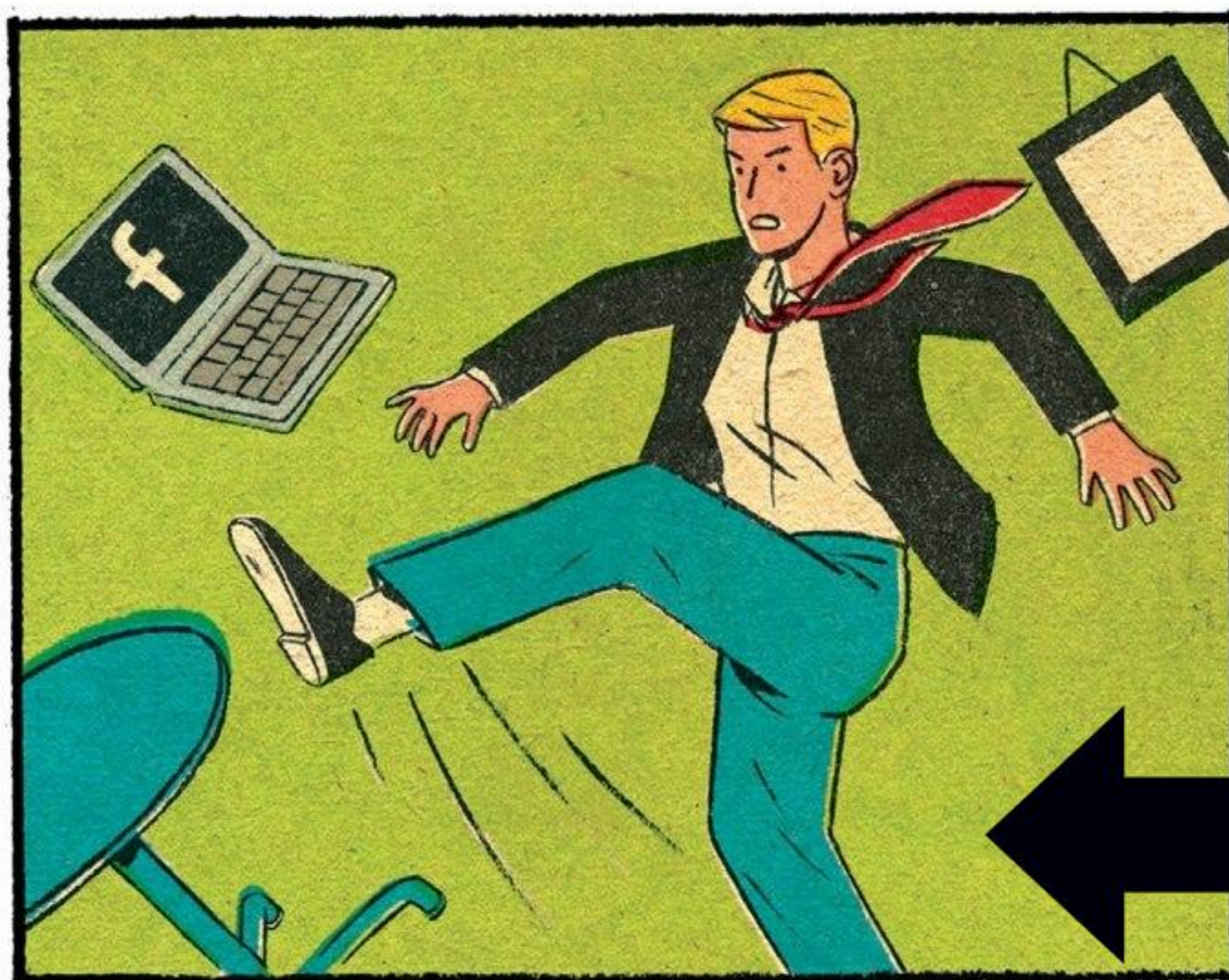
PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO TAKE ANTIDEPRESSANTS: **6.7**

Watch your diagnosis

Why are so many more men being medicated for depression than actually suffer from it? Part of the disparity is due to the fact that SSRIs (the most commonly prescribed antidepressants) help treat other problems, including premature ejaculation and migraines. But that still doesn't account for all the scrips being written, says Michael Addis, Ph.D., director of the Men's Coping Project at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. "There's a lack of knowledge about what these drugs are appropriate for—and many illnesses have symptoms that mimic depression, including thyroid disorders and celiac disease," he says. Compounding the problem is the fact that a third of primary-care docs say they won't ask about mental health at all, and half say assessing psychological issues causes them to lose time and money, reports a new study by University of Cincinnati researchers. That disinterest may prompt a lot of knee-jerk prescription writing. "Don't let them jump to a quick diagnosis," Addis says. And if you have any doubts about whether your blues are truly depression-related or instead a symptom of something else, seek a second opinion—from a psychiatrist or psychologist.

Un-friend depression

Facebook may actually be the antisocial network. British scientists recently found that Internet addiction is linked to a greater risk of depression and is often characterized by overuse of social media sites. "People make positive, sound-byte-caliber posts on Facebook—'the changing leaves are beautiful,' 'I just heard an awesome song,' and so on," says Addis. "The discrepancy between what you're feeling and what you think everyone else is feeling can make depression worse. You can develop a pretty stilted view of the world." Consider "hiding" your most Pollyannaish pals, and then strive for perspective by bumping up your real-time interactions. "Facebook needs to be supplemented by face time and phone conversations, so the unscripted truth can unfold more completely," Addis says.



A man with dark hair and a black t-shirt is sitting in front of a red boat. He is looking off to the side with a slight smile. The background is slightly blurred, showing the boat's structure and some greenery.

ST

Part five
LIVING BETTER



COMING BACK RONG

THREE MEN

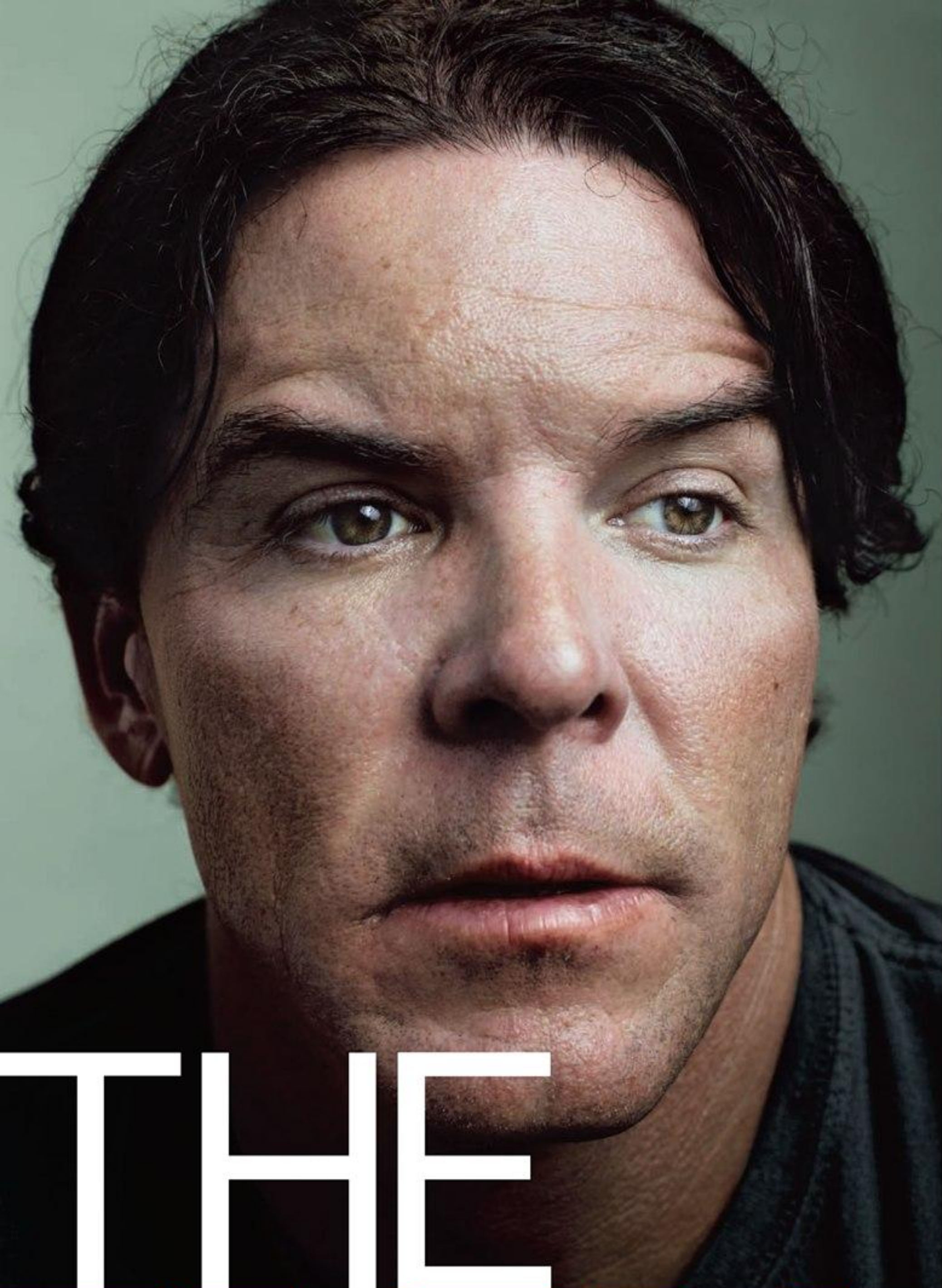
OF THE GULF COAST,
EACH WITH A
DREAM

BATTERED BY KATRINA'S GALES
AND FRIED IN BP'S OIL SLICK.
EVERYTHING THEY HAVE
IS IN TATTERS, EXCEPT

THEIR
SPIRIT

COULD
YOU BE
THAT
RESILIENT?
YES.
DISCOVER
HOW...

*By Oliver Broudy
Photographs by Daymon Gardner*



Along the beach, condos gaped like dollhouses. “You could see a bed, kitchen furniture... the rest was just gone.”

grandfather, one of the area's first big land-owners and charter fishermen. Along with one other family, the Walkers have dominated the charter fishing business in this area since the 1920s. There's even an island named after them on Bayou St. John.

Growing up in Orange Beach, Alabama, Walker has seen his share of disaster. Here, Katrina caused only flooding; wind damage was minimal. The real killer was Ivan, which hit like an avalanche in 2004, piling 30 feet of shattered boats and dock debris in Walker's front yard.

Ivan brought a halt to the inshore charter fishing business Walker was running. Ninety percent of the docks were wiped out, including the one his grandfather had built half a century before. All along the beach, condos gaped like dollhouses. “You could see a bed, kitchen furniture, the refrigerator sitting there—the rest of the condo was just gone,” Walker recalls. One day he saw four tires poking out of the surf. Excavation revealed a pony emblem on the hubcap—a Mustang, buried upside down.

As the 13-foot storm surge ebbed, it left in its wake the usual lesson: Disaster is built into the equation. You can insure yourself against it. You can even draw a line of colored paint the length of your dock so when the storm scatters

THE ADAPTER

It was supposed to be a paradise, a 220-acre resort with 1,000 condos, a million square feet of retail space, a 10,000-seat amphitheater, and its own marina with easy access to the Gulf.

“My office was right there on that corner,” Rob Walker says, indicating a two-story building overlooking the marina he once managed. With a fleet of boats at his disposal, he ran 200 charter fishing trips a year. It was a sweet gig, while it lasted. Then came the real estate crisis, and paradise faltered. When the oil spill hit, its doom was sealed.

Curiously, 5 months on, Walker is doing better than ever. Given the fate of the resort developer, whose property went on the auction block, that success seems counterintuitive. How does a little guy stay afloat when even billionaire developers go under?

But then Walker is little only in a figurative sense. Physically he's huge, first of all, with shirt-stretching biceps and a chest like the engine casing on a 250 Evinrude. But his spirit is also amply proportioned, and it's continually refreshed by a legacy reaching back to his great-

the boards all over the neighborhood you'll know which ones are yours.

But you can't dictate when disaster hits. Even if you live in a non-hurricane zone, some other demon of man or nature is bound to find you eventually. Knowing this gives you a choice: You can ride out the bad times and seek advantage in the aftermath—or you can bemoan your fate and do nothing, and end up like that Mustang, wheels up in the surf.

After Hurricane Ivan, Walker contracted with the local government to help clean up. The

job took him 2 months, working every day from dawn to dark and living on canned tuna and MREs. It was in the wake of Ivan that the national news media descended on the area; the exposure began jacking up real estate values. That's when Walker made his move, taking a job as fishing director for a luxury resort marina.

The timing was perfect. "When they hired me it was all just dirt," he says. And because he was in from the beginning, he ended up handling more than just boats. Before long he was sitting in on management meetings and working directly with the developer, Alex Baker.

Baker was basically a hurricane in human form. "I wouldn't say I wasn't intimidated by him, but most people are," Walker says. "He's got this air about him, and he really likes to put that fear in people."

But Walker didn't run from this storm either. When you can bench 405, running rarely seems necessary. Impressed by his confidence, Baker let him hang close, giving Walker a priceless opportunity to model the developer's mojo and revamp his ambitions to match.

"Just to be able to talk with someone who does these sorts of things," Walker says, "and be in the meetings with him to see how all those deals work, I learned a lot from that."

Together with his innate sense of timing and the insight he gained from working with Baker, Walker was well prepared to respond when the oil spill hit.

"I didn't want to leave," he says of his old job at the marina. "I felt very secure being with them for 5 years, and I got to know a lot of good people. But I knew things were about to change. So I meant to make that move."

The move was to leave Baker's employ and sign on with British Petroleum, helping to clean up its mess just like he cleaned up after Ivan; that's what you do when you love your community. Walker knew BP wouldn't stick around forever, but the resort was in dire financial straits and BP paid better money in the short term. By the time BP scaled back operations, in mid-September, Walker had already used his earnings to buy a new boat, a cherry-red Kenner packing 200 horses.

The boat is the first step in his plan to rebuild his charter fishing business to the level it was before Ivan, and then to take it further, using everything he learned from Alex Baker. The work may not offer the same security he had before, but it does give him independence and room for growth. Sure, he's taking a gamble—the oil could return, for one thing—but it's a calculated gamble. That's what entrepreneurs do.

On the day I visit Walker, he takes me out on the bayou to show me the island that bears his family name.

"This is Walker Island right here," he says, indicating a low stretch of sand and saw grass dotted with a few storm-stunted live oaks. Standing at the wheel, he also points out a

school of mackerel leaping after blood minnows on the far side of Robinson Island, the tidal current charging in through Perdido Pass, and half a dozen other features of the area. It's this tactical command of the landscape that made him such an asset to BP after the spill.

In a larger sense, it's this same sense of command that has always ensured his future. And that's what it comes down to, ultimately. Learning to command the landscape instead of letting it command you. There will always be forces you can't control, whether they're hurricanes or market crashes or the greed of oil con-

How to handle a knockdown

Four major life crises, and 12 ways to hit back hard

YOU'VE BEEN FIRED

1 Pump yourself up. "Look at it as an opportunity," says Karen Salmansohn, author of *The Bounce Back Book*. Make a dream-jobs list, and then write down the qualities that make them so great. Post the qualities by your computer so they'll be at the top of your mind as you search.

2 Remember that the landscape has shifted. "There are lots of new careers right now," says Salmansohn. Job coach Joel Garfinkle, author of *Land Your Dream Job*, points to the green sector. (Heck, somebody has to sell those solar panels.) Home energy systems might be the next boom. Some other fast-growing possibilities: vocational teaching, physicians' assistants, and personal training. For the latest career outlook information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, visit their website at bls.gov/emp.

3 Treat job searching like online dating. You're on LinkedIn, right? Garfinkle says networking possibilities also abound on tweetmyjobs.com, doostang.com, jobster.com, myworkster.com, ning.com, and ecademy.com. (Advice to the employed: Join now. You never know.)

YOU'VE LOST A LOVED ONE

1 Grieve in your own way. "Grieving is an individual process," says Maureen Erdlen, L.S.W., C.T., a bereavement coordinator for Penn Wissahickon Hospice. "Often, men who are grieving tend to want to stay busy," she says. "It's perfectly normal to go back to work."

2 Lean on people. "Your friends won't know how to help unless you tell them," says Erdlen. Sign up at CareCircle.com, which will broadcast your specific needs and let friends schedule ways to help out. And talk to your financial advisor. Don't try to deal with things like debt, inheritance concerns, and funeral expenses when you're not thinking straight, says Rob Russell, president of his own financial planning firm in Dayton, Ohio.

3 See a doctor. "Physical responses to grief can include digestive problems, excessive fatigue or lethargy, sleep disturbances, tightness in your throat or chest, increased heart rate, or palpitations," says Erdlen. Depression is also a risk. Have your health checked out by a pro, and stick to a routine that prioritizes enough sleep, a healthy diet, and exercise.

YOU'VE BEEN DUMPED

1 Throw a breakup party. Treat the breakup the way Jon Stewart treats the news—with a sense of humor, says Salmansohn.

2 Change your ex's name to "teacher" in your cellphone. This will remind you of the lessons you learned, she advises. Still blaming your ex? Man up, already: You made mistakes too.

3 Stop talking about it. Reliving every tragic detail 50 times will only make the pain linger, so shorten the tale every time you tell it, advises Salmansohn. You'll hit radio silence—and stop boring your friends—pretty quickly.

YOU'VE LOST YOUR HOME TO FORECLOSURE

1 Forget mortgages. At least for the time being. Refine your rental search on zillow.com and rentals.com, where you'll learn rental market trends for specific neighborhoods. Once you find a place, negotiate the lease, says Russell. "Instead of a 1-year lease, maybe you can sign an 18-month lease for a lesser amount."

2 Plan your next home purchase. "A foreclosure will stay on your credit report for 7 to 10 years, but FHA loans may be available within 2 or 3," Russell says. "The speed at which you can buy your next home depends on how bad financially the foreclosure was and whether you can save enough for a large down payment." Contact a local consumer credit counseling service or a HUD-approved housing counselor. And visit federalreserve.gov/consumerinfo/foreclosure.htm to find other resources in your area. "The bottom line is to create savings, repair your credit, and operate within a budget."

3 Live below your means. "Cable TV is unnecessary when you're trying to get back on your feet," says Russell. And look for other ways to save: Trade in your car for a less expensive one, drop your home phone line, pack your lunches. Sound depressing? It needn't be, says Salmansohn: "Surround yourself with triggers that keep you focused on a better future." Buy a new key chain as a reminder of the new house keys it'll hold one day. And take some home-improvement courses; a fixer-upper will be very affordable now.

JERILYN COVERT

glomerates trying to cut costs. The question is, can you navigate the turbulence caused by these forces and maximize opportunity?

After one last swoop through Terry Cove, we head back to the dock. That's when Walker's cellphone rings. It's a prospective buyer for the resort marina, and he wants to know if Walker would like to manage it. After he hangs up I ask if he's going to take the job or stick with the charter idea.

He thinks about it for a second.

"If I'm at that marina," he says, "I can kind of do both."

THE SELF-S



In early 2010, Keilen Williams was finally beginning to make serious money. Shrimp distribution deals with Costco, Walmart, and MGM Grand Las Vegas awaited his signature. The 200,000 bags that would carry his brand all over the country had already been ordered. Everything seemed to be going his way. He was even expecting a \$115,000 check from the city of New Orleans to help defray his expansion costs. Then came the oil spill. Demand for Gulf shrimp vanished, as did the distribution deals and the financial pledge from the city.

"I was looking at half a million dollars just this year," Williams says when I finally catch up with him in downtown San Francisco. A slight figure in loose-fitting jeans and a polo shirt pulled over a long-sleeved layer against

San Francisco's chill, he waits in the lobby of a veterans' organization, in the hope they can help him find Bay Area housing.

"I've had enough of Louisiana," he says.

His sentiment is understandable, given the spill and the constant threat of hurricanes in the state, plus the corrupt swamp politics that makes it so hard to secure help for recovery. But it's still odd how untroubled Williams seems as he collects his paperwork and heads out the door. Until now, he'd spent his entire life on the bayou. He grew up pulling crawfish from the crawfish hole, camping out under the oaks, and sledding the levees on scraps of salvaged cardboard. Those levees were built by his grandfather, a descendant of slaves and Indians.

How do you walk out on that kind of history? How do you start over?

For Williams, the process began about 13 years ago when he joined a group of shrimpers who, he claims, maintained mafia-like control of the local waters.

"They were like family to me," he says. "These guys were the best of the best there is. Like top-gunner shrimpers."

Even before shrimp season began, they'd park their boats in a line half a football field wide just past state jurisdiction, and the 2-foot tide would sweep the shrimp right into their nets. "We were catching 6,000 pounds a tide," Williams says. "Six thousand pounds, at \$3 a pound." You couldn't get in that line unless you

TARTER

“Bill Gates started his business in a recession. Walt Disney went broke. In other words, going broke is just leading up to our final destiny.”

belonged to the group. If you tried, says Williams, you'd find a thirty-aught-six leveled across your bow.

Based out of Empire, Louisiana, these guys controlled everything. They even had cops on their payroll, Williams claims, remembering times when they'd hole up at a local bar, post a guard at the door to keep outsiders away, and run a wandering, U-shaped line of cocaine from one end of the bar to the other.

Membership came with a price: namely, the willingness to fight competing interests, particularly the Vietnamese shrimpers descending on the area, by any means necessary. Many men in the group had served in Vietnam. “They couldn't believe the fact that the American government sent these people to their area,” Williams says. “I had to go with them on flatboats, dive overboard, and drill holes in peoples' boats to prove I was one of them.”

And almost all of them were white guys. “I was one of the only blacks,” says Williams. They called him “Tee Neg.”

“You know what that means?” he asks. “Little nigger. That's what that means in French.”

And here's where your brain starts to hurt. To summarize, you've got a black man—part red man—

working with the white man, drilling holes in the boats of the yellow man. It's the kind of story that crosses all boundaries—a story that only a country as kooky as ours could produce. And Williams was right in the middle of it.

For the most part he didn't take their racism seriously.

“It was funny to me,” he says now. Being black, he saw it from the other side as well—Vietnamese shrimpers who assumed that just because of his skin color he would share their hate of the white man. In truth he didn't hate anybody. Nor did he fully identify with his own community.

“Those people where we're from,” he says, “they can get a job paying minimum wage, and

they're going to work their hardest and they're going to be satisfied with that for the rest of their lives.”

This was not Williams. His vision was bigger than that.

Eventually you see enough of life to realize that membership in any tribe is voluntary. The only one you belong to categorically is your own. And if you belong to no tribe but your own, then you're subject only to your own rules and expectations. At that point, the options become infinite. And in a world in which megastorms prowl our coastlines and vast multinationals drive our fragile economies, that extra degree of freedom can make all the difference.

It did for Williams, after Katrina. In 2005, the hurricane laid waste to both sides of the river, black and white. On the west side, it washed out the estuaries that sheltered the shrimp, bringing an end to the era of 6,000-pound catches. On the east side, in Phoenix, the only structure left standing was Williams's grandmother's house. The rest was kindling and cement steps leading nowhere.

Williams's own home and boat were swept up like lost poker chips. All he had left was his 2003 Saturn and his captain's license. But by then he had learned to see past his immediate circumstances. With the captain's license he landed a 2-week job servicing offshore oil rigs; he used the \$1,400 in earnings to buy shrimp from his “mafia” friends. With the Saturn he hauled the shrimp to New Orleans, 200 pounds at a time, and sold them on the street to the public.

“It was like a famine,” he says. “We were selling that much shrimp.”

This was old-fashioned American entrepreneurialism at its finest, and his fellow citizens rewarded him for it. After 2 weeks he'd raised enough money to rent a pickup, and soon he became widely recognized as the guy who stood on the tailgate dangling jumbo shrimp from a monofilament line in front of passing traffic. His unique style of salesmanship eventually earned him the name “New Orleans Shrimp Man,” which ultimately became the name of his brand.

Now we come to the oil spill. A considerable setback, you might say. Five months on, when I talk with him, Williams is living in an Oakland motel room, his business wiped out, his BP

compensation “pending,” his future uncertain. As we walk toward the waterfront, he admits that his savings have shrunk to about \$40. But this doesn't seem to bother him either. The amount of money in his pocket doesn't define him any more than the color of his skin or which side of the river he's from. With money or without, he's still the same person, capable of the same greatness.

That fact is fixed within him.

“Bill Gates started his business in a recession,” Williams observes. “Walt Disney went broke. In other words, going broke is just leading up to our final destiny.”

At times he can sound like a crazy man. At other times, like a man who truly is bound only by those rules and expectations he regards as relevant to him.

“I want to go skiing, I want to learn to surf,” says the man who just lost everything. “The military wants to pay me \$700 a month to take a class, so I'm going to helicopter pilot school.”

At this point in his life, the world is simple. He sees life as he did back when he was a kid, in a time before he was exposed to racism, before Katrina, before spilled oil. In those days if you wanted something to eat, you only had to cast a line and reel it in. It was that simple. And it's no more complicated today.

Decide what you want and go after it.

Williams's immediate plan is to start a crew boat service to supply the ships that come into the bay. He's already researched it, by working for one for a month. He's in the middle of explaining how he can do it better when a high-powered cruise boat dashes by.

“That's a boat job I could get, too,” he muses, “driving that boat.”

A moment later we arrive at the ferry terminal and, noticing the schedule, he points out that all the ferries stop around 10 p.m. And therein lies another opportunity, for a late-night water taxi between downtown San Francisco and Sausalito. It works in New York, so why not here?

He does miss Louisiana. The smell of the air when the rain's coming. The hot sauces. The gumbo. And the shrimp. “I definitely miss the shrimp,” he says.

His history there is indisputable. But then history itself is just another tribe of sorts. It will claim you if you let it, and jealously forbid your escape. The same reasoning explains why we hang onto jobs long after we've grown bored with them, or stay in relationships that we've outgrown. Calling it “loyalty” puts a positive spin on it. But ultimately if you understand your past, you know that you can honor it without being bound to it.

A new man may live within you. Why wait for disaster to find out who he is?

THE FIGHTER



"When you had Dad and Grandpa doing this for generations and generations, you just want to keep it going."

Down at the lacy edge of North America, past the reach of the last blues radio station, where storms trample the horizon like distant elephant herds, a man sits next to his boat, mending a tear in a shrimp net. Then the door of a pickup slams and his father ambles over, and talks to him the way only a father can.

"We fucked, Charles. Just letcha know. We fucked."

His dad's name is Charles, too. Charles Robin III. He's Charles Robin IV, 28 years old, a sixth-generation shrimper. Or perhaps ex-shrimper. The summer harvest was just about to start when the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded and oil began fanning toward the wetlands they work, in St. Bernard parish.

The recent news comes directly from the BP work site down the road, where in typical ballsy fashion, the elder Robin interrupted a U.S. Coast Guard admiral who was trying to eat his lunch. The encounter yielded the following intel: BP is about to downsize its Gulf cleanup program, and when it does, that will be the end of many of the jobs that have been keeping local fishermen afloat. Hence the grave prognostication relayed to Robin IV.

It hasn't been easy down here for the fishermen.

Katrina made disaster commonplace. Like so many others in the region, the youngest Charles lost his home. After that he lived on the 52-foot shrimp boat his grandfather had built, until that sank out from under him. From there he moved into a FEMA trailer. It was nearly a year before he lived in a real house again, and only after he'd rebuilt one from the ground up. By that time his daughter was born; she began having negative reactions to the house's tainted drywall, which had come from China. Eventually she landed in the hospital with pancreatitis, and he had to rebuild the house all over again.

But things had begun to go bad even before Katrina, when farm-raised shrimp imports flooded the market about 10 years ago. Hard and rubbery, crammed into ponds full of pollutants and disease, and raised on antibiotics, that stuff wasn't just bad for business. It was an insult to tradition, to generations of Gulf shrimp raised on nothing more than sunlight and the bounty of the ocean. The succulent shrimp were fished from those waters by men with boats that bore the names of their grandmothers.

Like his dad, Robin IV is a shrimper born and bred. His shrimping legacy goes back further than he can remember, to when his father built a harness for him at 2 years old to keep him from toddling overboard. Along with his bred-in-the-bone wisdom, he has also inherited his father's stocky build—a working fisherman's body, low to the deck for stability on rocking seas, with huge forearms for hauling line. His people have been working these waters since 1784, when they came over from the Canary Islands. That's the key to his persistence.

"When you had Dad and Grandpa doing this for generations and generations, you just want to keep it going," he says as he weaves a spindle of black thread through his net. "That's what I'm trying to do. Keep it going. That's what I love. That's what I was born to do."

Like bicyclists in a peloton, each generation follows in the draft of the one before, barreling down through the ages. It's an advantage in a life filled with uncertainty. When you're confident of your purpose, you worry less and devote more energy to constructive endeavors.

Even so, in recent years it has sometimes felt to Robin IV as if history itself were dying right out from under him. Five years ago—6 months after Katrina took his house and illness threatened his livelihood—his grandfather killed him-

self. The grandson still remembers finding the .22 handgun his granddad would carry when he went trapping muskrat and otter, before regulation prohibited firearm use. Now it lay on the kitchen counter, along with a couple of bullets. The bullets had dents in the back where the hammer had struck. Even these Katrina had ruined, so in the end, Robin II used rope.

It was a devastating loss. And then came the spill. Robin IV had just finished rigging a boat he had bought from his cousin when it hit. Doing cleanup work for BP carried him for a few months, but today his shrimp prices are still down 50 percent from last season. Even worse is the uncertainty. His father thinks 80 percent of the oil is still out there lurking in the Gulf depths. Who knows where it'll end up? If what the Alaska fishermen who survived the Valdez spill have been saying is true, the worst is yet to come.

"They fished for 1 year, and then after that year the fish never did come back," Robin IV says. "It ruined their whole fishing grounds."

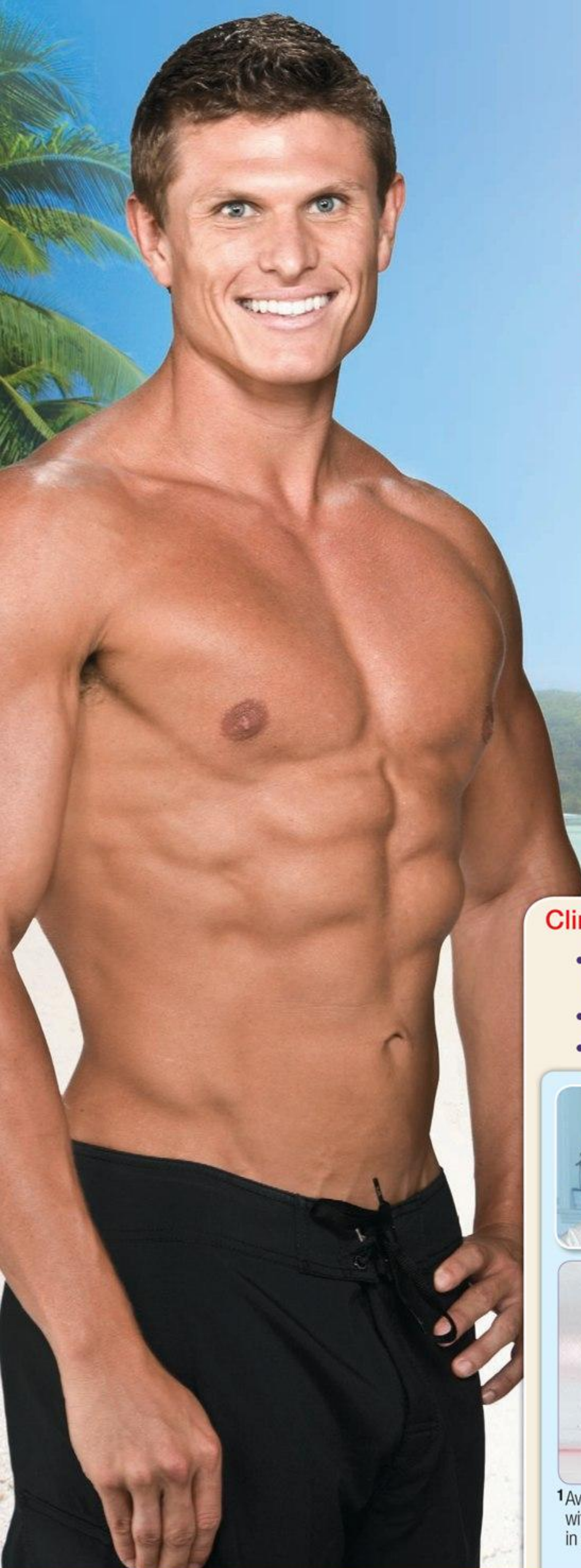
Now he rises from his net repair, and a question rises with him. With everything that's happened, how come he hasn't been broken? The answer reveals itself slowly over the course of the morning. It is written in the knuckle-busting nature of the work itself, the unceasing maintenance and daily devotion. To own a boat you need to know how to do everything—not just navigate, but do carpentry work, mend nets, weld, repair engines, and of course catch fish. In other words, it requires versatility and self-reliance. As a fisherman, you grow up with these principles.

"We do everything ourselves," Robin IV says. "We're a very independent people."

Powerlessness is endemic to the world most of us live in. But it's hard to feel powerless when you can fix anything in reach with your bare hands. This is why it helps to be good with a hammer, to feel comfortable changing a tire, or rebricking a chimney, or painting a house.

Because once you assert control over what's near at hand, then you can extend that principle outward, building confidence as you go. It's this kind of confidence that allowed Robin III, tanned by the sun and flecked with boat paint, to walk up to that Coast Guard admiral and demand some answers. The kind of confidence that allows his son to keep fighting for the life he loves.

Now he finishes stowing the ice in the hold, cranks the engine, and casts off. Soon we're chugging down Bayou La Loutre, passing the homes of other survivors and stormswept empty lots. Busted docks and half-sunk boats litter the shore. As we approach the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet the breeze freshens, lifting away the reek of diesel. This is where you get that kingly feeling, when the land opens up, and the despair drains away, and you begin to feel like anything is possible. ■



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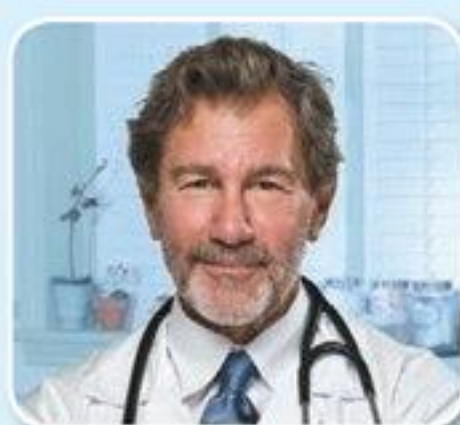
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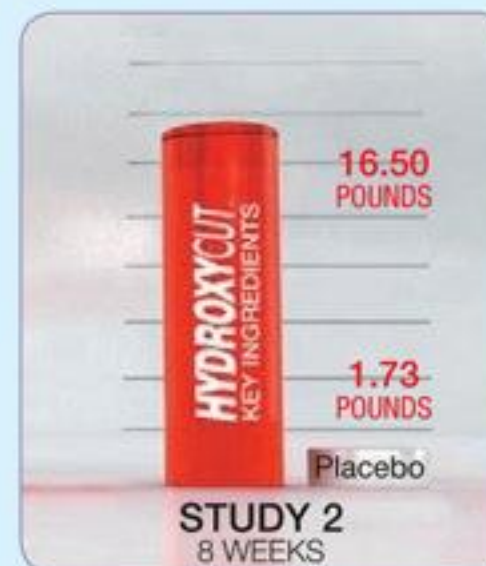
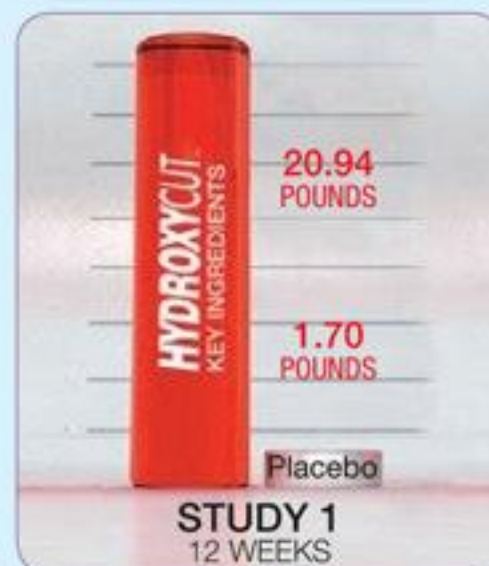
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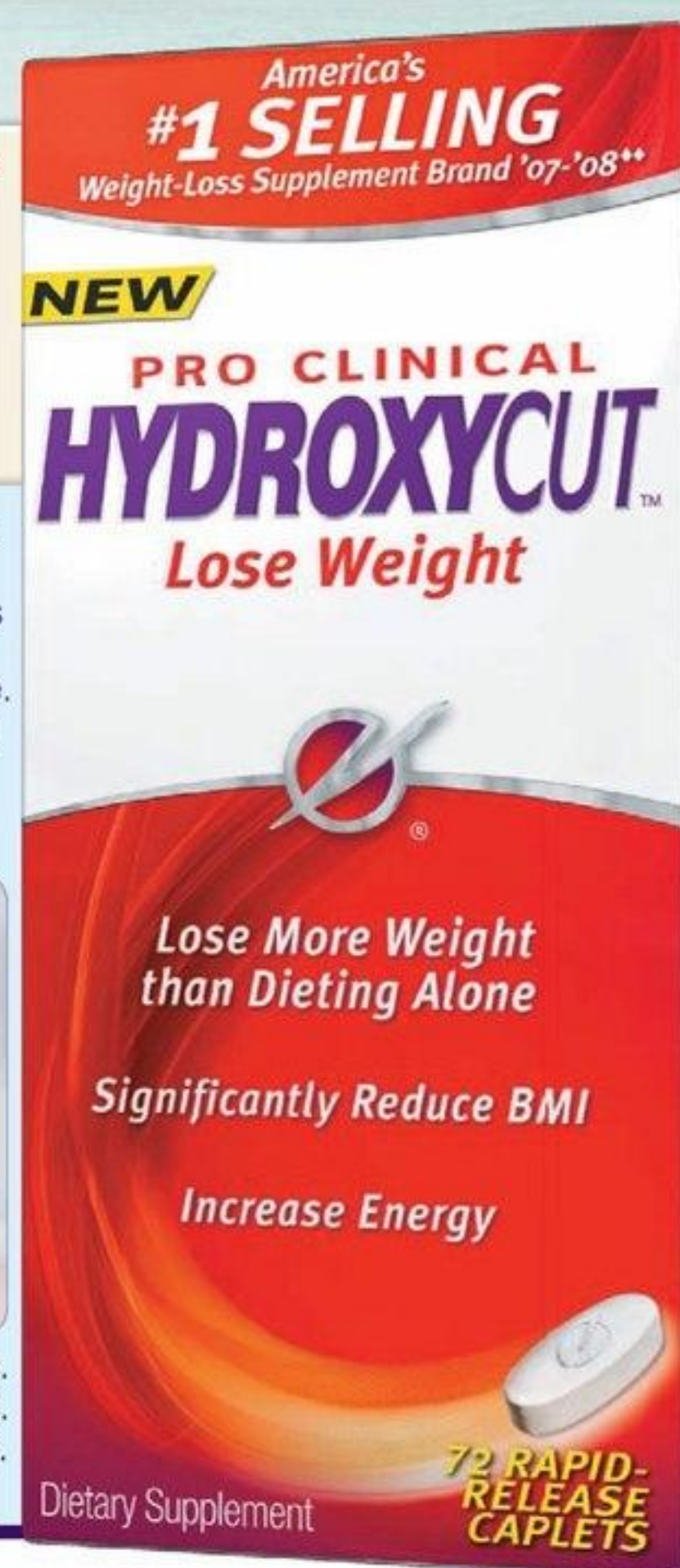
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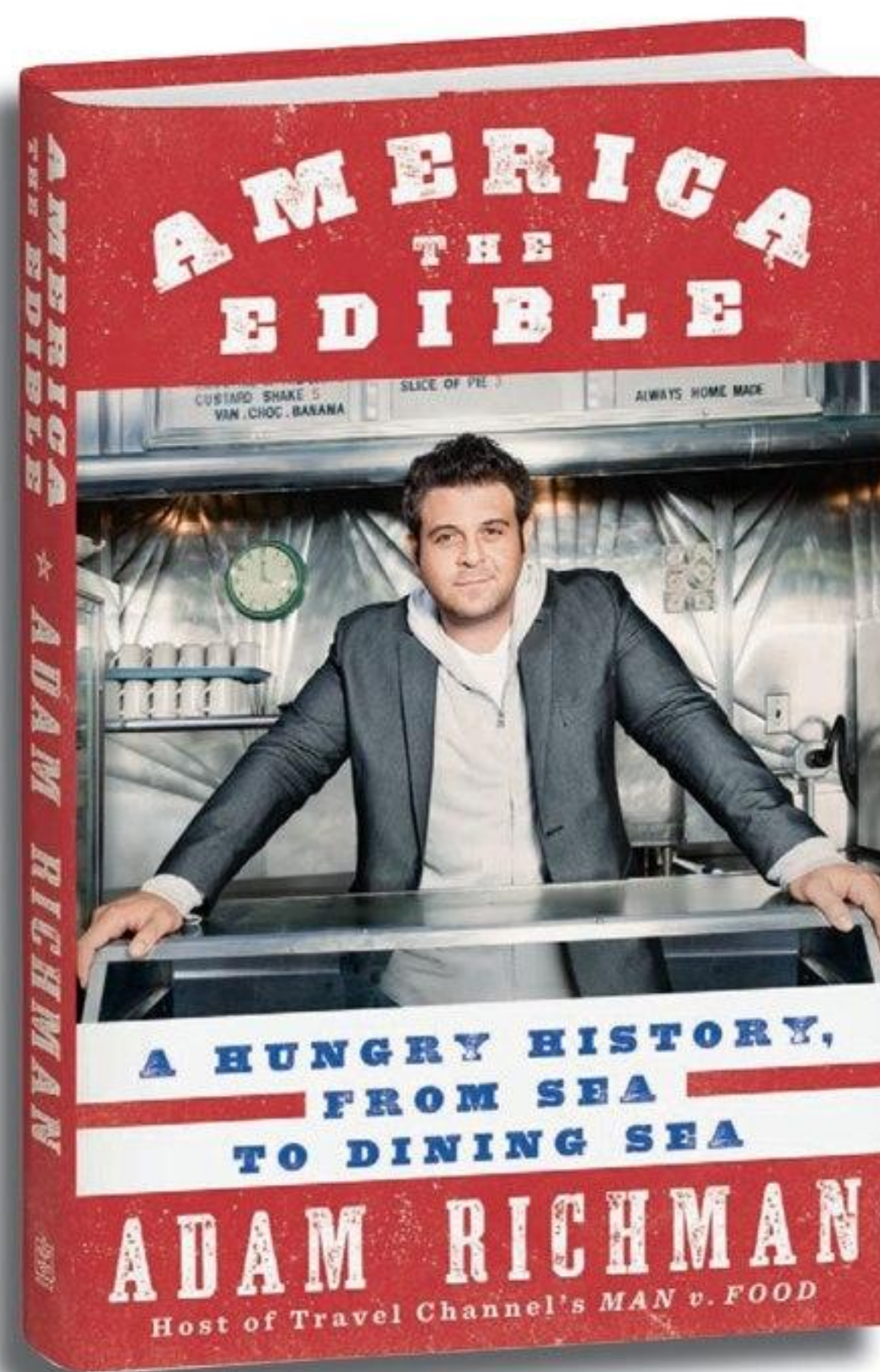
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MAXIMIZE YOUR ODDS—OR AT LEAST KEEP YOUR SHIRT—WITH THIS GUIDE TO BETTER GAMBLING



Largest slot machine jackpot ever hit

Number of men who call the slots their favorite casino game: **1 in 6**

Battle the one-armed bandits Two-thirds of men think a machine that hasn't hit in a while is due—a faulty assumption that can lure people into playing longer. And now that slots have gone digital, it's easier for the house to produce the illusion of a near miss. "In a game of skill like archery or soccer, near misses provide useful signals that you're improving at the game and that a 'reward' might be on the way," says University of Cambridge

behavioral scientist Luke Clark, Ph.D. "Games of chance don't work like this, but near misses generate similar brain responses that encourage further play." Minimize losses by packing your iPod. A 2009 study in the *Journal of Gambling Studies* found that gamblers who listen to music while playing are better able to estimate elapsed time. This skill lets you get out of Dodge before losing your loot. The key: Choose music with a slow tempo (100 bpm).



Number of hands the average pro poker player folds

Give good face That steely glare isn't fooling anyone. "In our study, neutral and untrustworthy faces had little impact on opponents' strategies," says cognitive scientist Erik Schlicht, Ph.D. "But people are more likely to make mistakes against trustworthy faces regardless of their hand." His advice: Smile slightly.

Percentage of online gamblers who are men

SIXTY-EIGHT

Hedge your bets Though illegal, online gambling will grow about 42 percent between 2008 and 2012. If you think you might be enjoying gambling too much, a common amino acid available as a supplement can help stifle urges, the journal *Biological Psychiatry* reveals. While not a substitute for psychological intervention, N-acetyl cysteine (\$10, drugstore.com) may limit compulsive behavior by chemically balancing the brain's reward zone.

Percentage of men who drink while they gamble



Stacked deck Sure, boozing and betting don't mix (one 2010 study found that it chips away at your stash 20 percent faster) but you might want to abstain from gambling altogether if you have a history of alcohol abuse. In a 2009 study, researchers at the University of Cambridge linked both habits with two neuropsychological impairments involving impulsive behaviors and bad decisions.



Hawaii and Utah
The only U.S. states where all forms of gambling are outlawed

Try investing Adding funds that invest in gaming operations to your portfolio may be a safer way to get in on the action. For instance, USA Mutual's Vice Fund (VICEX) has generated returns of 7.83 percent since 2002—trumping the S&P's return rate of 5.25 percent.

Percentage of men who've made a bet in the past week

46

Percentage who've wagered sexual favors with their wife or girlfriend

61

Percentage who've bet on their own weight loss

30

Bet your life Wager on personal goals (weight loss, a job promotion) and compete against others at stickK.com. The site boasts a success rate of 74 percent when money is on the line. Or compete against yourself. If you fail, the cash can go to a friend, charity, or "anti-charity"—a nonprofit whose values you disagree with. How's that for incentive?

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